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Saudi Arabia

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tourism renaissance

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Editor's Letter

Passion is the heartbeat of every story we tell, infusing our words with a depth of emotion that transcends mere description. It's the unwavering enthusiasm that propels us to share our most cherished experiences, igniting a fire within us that refuses to be contained.

Travel, in particular, is a testament to the power of passion—a journey that extends far beyond the physical confines of a destination. It's the exhilaration of stepping into the unknown, the thrill of discovering hidden treasures, and the warmth of connecting with fellow travellers along the way. With each adventure, we weave a tapestry of memories that become etched in the fabric of our souls, forever shaping who we are and who we aspire to be.

As we gather to explore the pages of Travel Turtle, let us be reminded of the profound impact that travel has on our lives. From the bustling streets of Riyadh to the serene landscapes of Qatar, each destination holds a story waiting to be told—a story of discovery, adventure, and the boundless beauty of the world around us. Attending travel marts such as OTM and SATTE were the highlight of this month.

In this issue, we invite you to embark on a journey unlike any other—a journey that transcends the boundaries of time and space, transporting you to far-off lands and distant horizons. From captivating interviews with tourism board leaders to firsthand accounts of our team's explorations, every page is a testament to the transformative power of travel.

So let us dive into these pages with open hearts and open minds, allowing the stories within to awaken the wanderlust that lies dormant within us all. For in the pages of Travel Turtle, we find not just words on a page, but the echoes of our own adventures waiting to be discovered once more.

Do share your feedback at bharti@travelturtle.world.

Happy Reading!

Bharti Sharma

Bharti Sharma
Editor

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





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**



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Korea Tourism Organization unveils K-Incentive Scheme 2.0 for Indian Travel Agents

Leveraging the inaugural program's success from last year, K-Incentive Scheme 2.0 was unveiled at an event in New Delhi, in collaboration with Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI). The benefits include providing travel agents with prizes up to USD 30 per passenger and support for quick, simple, and hassle-free tour visas for visitors to Korea between February and September 2024. The program encourages Indian travel agents to explore and promote regional destinations such as Busan, Gangwon-do, Jeollanam-do, and Jeollabuk-do.



Singapore's Mastereign Group and STIC Group announces exclusive partnership to pioneer educational tours

In a significant move to enhance educational tourism, Mastereign Group (Singapore), a leading provider of enrichment training and educational tours, and STIC Travel Group (India), India's foremost travel services representation and airline GSA Company announces an exclusive partnership agreement. This collaboration marked a milestone for both organisations, aiming to introduce innovative educational tours specifically designed for Indian students.

Taiwan opens 'Tourism Information Centre' in Mumbai

Taiwan Tourism Administration (TTA) announces the opening of Taiwan Tourism Information Centre (TTIC) in Mumbai, India, declaring with it, its determined comeback into the Indian market after more than three-years of Covid-19 pandemic induced break from the market. The Information Center is located at the famous Raheja Platinum on the prominent Andheri-Kurla Road, a landmark business hub.



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.



RWC unveils their state-of-the-art technology platform, 'RW Cruise Buddy'

RWC unveils their state-of-the-art technology platform, 'RW Cruise Buddy,' during a Press and 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."



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Akasa Air
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Akasa Air announces international operations

Akasa Air, India's fastest-growing airline announced international operations with the addition of Doha, capital of Qatar, as the first international destination to its rapidly expanding network. Starting 28 March 2024, Akasa Air will operate four non-stop flights a week, connecting Mumbai with Doha, enhancing air connectivity between Qatar and India. Bookings for flights are now open on Akasa Air's website www.akasaair.com, Android and iOS app and through multiple leading OTAs, with return fares starting at INR 29012.



Visa application volume from New Delhi sees 10 per cent YoY growth in 2023

Visa application volumes from New Delhi continued to stay strong in 2023 and closed in further to the pre-pandemic levels with restoration of travellers' confidence to explore global destinations and easing of travel restrictions. According to VFS Global, the visa application volume from New Delhi registered a 10 per cent year-on-year growth in 2023. When compared to the pre-pandemic numbers, visa application volumes from New Delhi reached 82 per cent of the 2019 levels.

Amazing Thailand media briefing highlights Thailand's latest tourism offerings at SATTE 2024

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) shines spotlight on Thailand's diverse tourism offerings towards sustainability at the Amazing Thailand Media Briefing as part of its 15th participation in the South Asia's Travel and Tourism Exchange (SATTE) 2024. Ms Sudawan Wangsuphakijkosol, Minister of Tourism and Sports, said "I am determined to elevate Thailand to be a quality and safe destination that delivers a valuable experience to our visitors from India through Thailand's Soft Powers and promotes Thailand to be an all-year-round destination."



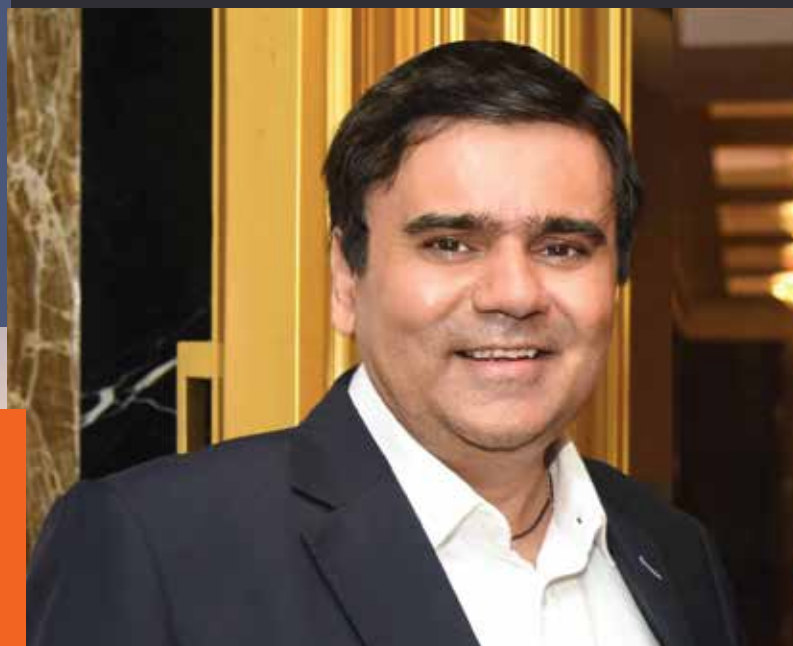
Air India launches its new brand track: 'India Takes Flight'

Air India, India's leading global airline, unveiled a signature track defining its sonic identity, 'India Takes Flight', reflecting the sound of a bold, vibrant, and confident India. Air India's new sonic identity is a jugalbandi (musical collaboration) featuring recent Grammy awardee and acclaimed musician Shankar Mahadevan, renowned percussionist and composer Taufiq Qureshi, celebrated lyricist and writer Prasoon Joshi, and London's revered Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.



Siyam World Maldives receives TravelLife Gold Certification

Travelife is a non-profit flagship program that supports tourism destinations, businesses, and travellers in implementing innovative solutions for the continuous development of sustainable tourism. To achieve Travelife Gold Certification, a resort must meet 163 sustainability criteria, including minimising waste and energy use, addressing social issues, supporting employee welfare and wildlife protection, and supporting the local community and local businesses.



Nexa Travel and Incentive appoints Global Destinations as their India Representative

Nexa Travel and Incentive, a leading DMC of Turkey with more than 15 years of experience in the travel and events business, is delighted to announce the appointment of Global Destinations as their official representative in India. This strategic partnership aims to strengthen Nexa's presence in the Indian market and offer unparalleled travel services to customers across the country.



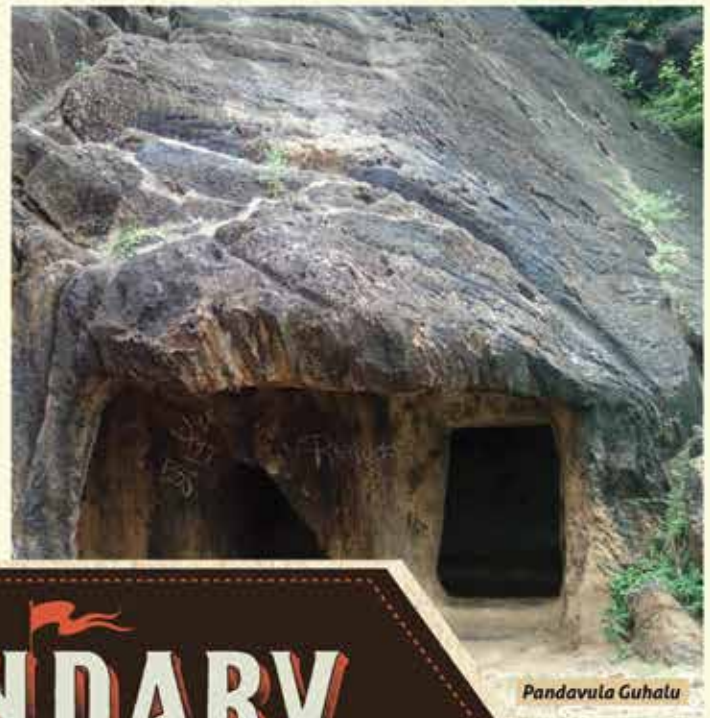
PHDCCI's 6th Global Film Tourism Conclave unveils report to boost India's film tourism sector

The event featured addresses by esteemed dignitaries including the Guest of Honour, Dr Vinay Sahasrabudde, President of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Representatives of the Ministry of Tourism and Tourism Boards of various states. Furthermore, the renowned filmmaker duo Abbas Mustan, famous scriptwriter and filmmaker Mr Rumi Jafry, singer Hariharan, Actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Grammy winner Flutist Rakesh Chaurasiya were honoured for their significant contributions to the Indian film industry during the session.



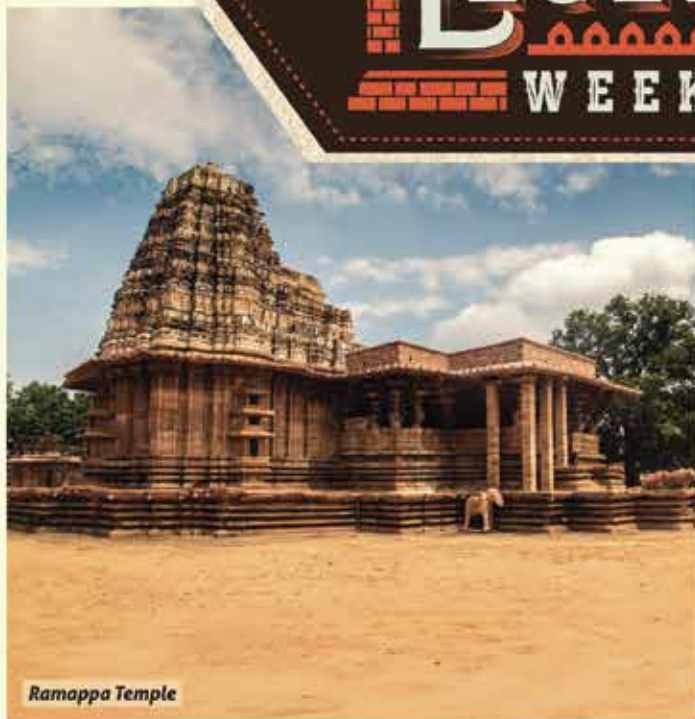


Warangal Fort

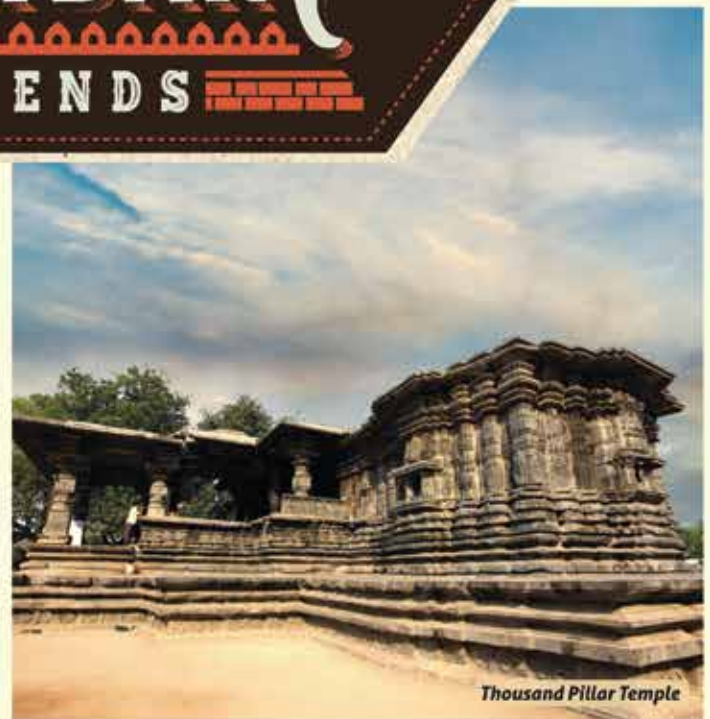


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TEMPORAL TOURISM

A journey through time

A fascinating concept blending adventure and imagination, offers travellers the unique opportunity to journey through time. Unlike traditional tourism, which focuses on exploring different locations in the present, Temporal Tourism transports individuals to various historical periods, allowing them to experience the sights, sounds, and sensations of bygone eras.

- Bharti Sharma



Temporal Tourism, also known as Time Travel Tourism, involves the exploration of historical periods and events through immersive experiences. These experiences can range from visiting meticulously recreated historical sites to participating in re-enactments of pivotal moments in history. The essence of Temporal Tourism lies in its ability to transport travellers to different epochs, providing them with insights into the customs, cultures, and lifestyles of the past.

Glimpse into the past

Several notable examples highlight the diversity of Temporal Tourism experiences available to travellers.

These include the following:

Living History Museums: Institutions such as Colonial Williamsburg in the United States and Beamish Museum in the United Kingdom offer immersive experiences where visitors can interact with costumed interpreters and explore reconstructed historical villages.

Time-Travel Events: Special events and festivals, such as Renaissance fairs and medieval tournaments, allow participants to step back in time and immerse themselves in the ambiance of past eras.

Historical Re-enactments: From battles to courtly dances, historical re-enactments bring pivotal moments in history to life, providing audiences with an authentic glimpse into the past.

Garnered interest

The popularity of historical dramas, movies, and television series has also contributed to the interest in Temporal Tourism. Many travellers are inspired to visit locations featured in their favourite historical fiction or period dramas. While exact numerical data may be limited, these trends and indicators suggest a growing interest in Temporal Tourism among travellers worldwide. As the industry continues to evolve, we may see more comprehensive data and analysis emerge to quantify the size and impact of this niche segment.

Ingredients

The audience for Temporal Tourism encompasses a diverse range of individuals, including history enthusiasts, cultural explorers, and those seeking unique travel experiences. Travel agencies and tour operators catering to Temporal Tourism offer a variety of packages tailored to different interests and preferences.

Packages may include:

Guided Historical Tours: Comprehensive tours led by knowledgeable guides, offering insights into significant historical sites and landmarks.

Themed Experiences: Immersive experiences centred around specific historical periods, such as medieval banquets or Victorian tea parties.

Educational Programs: Workshops and seminars designed to deepen participants' understanding of historical events and lifestyles.



Destinations acing Temporal Tourism

Several destinations around the world are renowned for their Temporal Tourism offerings. Some of the best include:

Rome, Italy: With its rich history spanning millennia, Rome offers visitors the opportunity to explore ancient ruins, medieval churches, and Renaissance palaces.

Kyoto, Japan: A city steeped in tradition, Kyoto boasts well-preserved historical districts, ancient temples, and traditional tea houses.

Petra, Jordan: The ancient city of Petra, carved into rose-colored rock, provides a mesmerizing glimpse into the civilization of the Nabateans.

Machu Picchu, Peru: This ancient Incan citadel nestled in the Andes Mountains offers breathtaking vistas and a fascinating insight into pre-Columbian history.

Collaborations in future for the 'Past'

As travellers increasingly seek authentic and meaningful experiences, the demand for Temporal Tourism is expected to continue growing. Advances in technology, such as virtual reality and augmented reality, may further enhance the immersive nature of Temporal Tourism experiences, allowing travellers to interact with historical environments in new and exciting ways. Additionally, collaborations between heritage organizations, tourism boards, and private enterprises are likely to expand the range of Temporal Tourism offerings, catering to a diverse array of interests and preferences.

In conclusion, Temporal Tourism offers travellers the opportunity to embark on a journey through time, exploring the wonders of history in immersive and captivating ways. With its growing popularity, diverse offerings, and promising future, Temporal Tourism is poised to remain a captivating niche within the broader travel industry, appealing to adventurers and history enthusiasts alike.



TAIWAN



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For more information, please contact:

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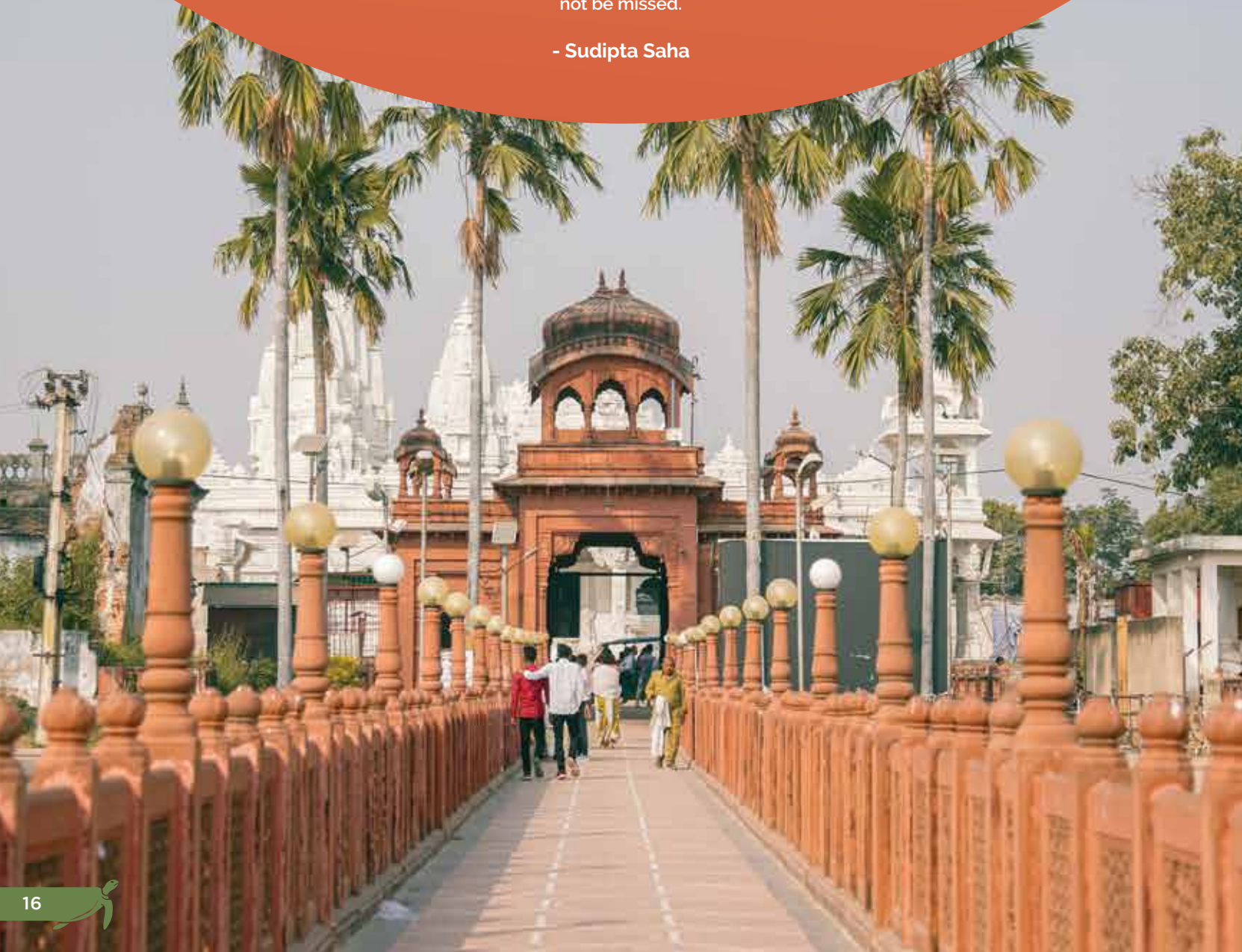
INDIAN SAGA

BIHAR

Enticing the traveller in you!

Bihar has an unmatched history and is known for its cultural and historical significance. Known for Buddhist tourism, Bihar has weaved its way and is geared up to flaunt its diversified tourism products, so if you are open to exploring the beautiful landscape and scenic vistas, the state offers an experience that should not be missed.

- Sudipta Saha



INDIAN SAGA

Over a period of time, the state of Bihar went into a shell, but under the dynamic leadership of Shri Abhay Kumar Singh (IAS), Chairman Cum Secretary, Dept. of Tourism, Bihar, the state has geared up and has been showcasing its diversifying tourism products on various national and international platforms. His passion and desire to showcase Bihar and its rich culture and heritage is not just commendable but also strengthening the position of the state on the tourism map of India.

Experience the blissful Bihar

Bihar is beyond anyone's imagination, it has many-sides to be explored and experienced, apart from the Buddhist and Jain circuits. "We intend to offer an array of experiences to the visitors and therefore we have segregated the experiences into various circuits such as religious tourism, culture and heritage and thirdly, we speak very

emphatically about eco-tourism which is a puller for new gen travellers. North Bihar is a different geography located on the foothills of Himalayas and has dense vegetation. The Valmiki Nagar Tiger Reserve is one of the finest reserves in the country with more than 52 tigers. We have the seven mighty Himalayan Rivers that merge with River Ganga, and in the southern part are the Kaimur Hills in Rohtas," states Shri Abhay Kumar Singh.

Strengthening tie-ups with tour operators

The stunning landscape and natural beauty will fill your heart with solace and tranquility. Home to wide variety of flora and fauna, some impressive waterfalls, the state makes a perfect destination for eco-tourism. Shri Abhay Kumar Singh further mentions "Nowadays, tourism is turning into experiential tourism and for having the highest quality of experience you require more and

more professional tour operators. If they themselves have experienced something then only they will be able to sell their clients best of the experiences. We want more and more tour operators from Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Bengaluru to come and set up their offices in Patna so that they can have real one-to-one collaborations. Similarly, we want tour operators from Bihar to establish a good network all across the country as this can have a resonating effect, where there is a piece of cake for everyone and in the process, the beauty of Bihar is showcased to everyone."



Abhay Kumar Singh



INDIAN SAGA



Sushil Kumar Singh

Encouraging tourism policy

The tourism department of Bihar has recently launched their meticulously designed tourism policy in order to elevate the tourism sector and offer a more viable system. "The highlight point of the policy is that any sort of infrastructure be it a dwelling infrastructure such as hotel or resort or experiential infrastructure be it entertainment zone, adventure zone or any theme based restaurant all these are covered under the policy and we offer around 25-30 per cent of capital subsidy," shares Abhay Kumar Singh. He further mentions, "Moving on, River Ganges is one of the primary assets and if any operator is willing to promote river tourism and intend to bring vessels it is taken care under the policy; also other high-end activities such as setting up golf

course also have opportunities under the tourism policy. For operators willing to set up their offices, or operate high-end buses, caravans; they are also being offered subsidies in this policy. For homestays, we are working on a new policy and will certainly launch it in a short span of time. Bihar is going to introduce its own film tourism policy very soon."

Enabling unforgettable journeys

Bihar has always been known for its Buddhist circuit but in the past few years, we have seen Bihar flaunting its diversified landscape and pristine beauty. The state is all set to lure its visitors and offer them a range of varied experiences, best-suited for an enticing holiday. Sharing his thought on how tourism is flourishing in Bihar, Sushil Kumar

Singh, MD, Jatak Travels shares, "Foreign tourism arrival in the state have increased by 30 per cent as compared to previous year. We all know that Bihar is a land of culture and numerous Buddhist tourists from the European country visits the state to experience the Buddhist culture. Bihar has enormous scope; recently, if we look at the infrastructure a huge development can be seen. Also in the last two years, many hotels chains have come up in the state. We have the biggest Convention Center in Bodhgaya with the capacity of 2000 pax and another Convention Center in Patna accommodating around 1000 pax which again shows that there is huge scope in the MICE segment as well. Bihar is not just blessed with culture, history and heritage but it is also fortunate to be known for its eye-catching and striking arts and crafts."



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Saudi Arabia

A Journey into the tourism renaissance

In the heart of the Arabian Peninsula lies a land of ancient wonders and modern marvels: Saudi Arabia.

- Tripti Jain



OFFSHORE BINOCULAR

Beyond its desert landscapes and historical significance, the kingdom is undergoing a profound transformation in its approach to tourism. From embracing changing travel trends to promoting women's participation in the sector, Saudi Arabia is poised to redefine itself as a dynamic destination for global adventurers.

Pioneering a tourism revolution

At the helm of Saudi Arabia's tourism renaissance is Vision 2030, a visionary blueprint for economic and social reform spearheaded by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Central to this vision is the development of the tourism sector as a catalyst for economic diversification and cultural exchange. With ambitious plans to invest in infrastructure, hospitality, and cultural attractions, Saudi Arabia is laying the groundwork for a tourism revolution that will showcase the kingdom's rich heritage and natural beauty to the world.

Shifting tourism trends

Gone are the days when Saudi Arabia was solely known for its religious pilgrimage sites. Today, the kingdom is embracing a new era of tourism characterised by experiential travel and authentic cultural encounters. Travellers are increasingly drawn to immersive experiences, whether it's exploring the ancient Nabatean city of Al-Ula or discovering the vibrant arts scene in cities such as Jeddah and Riyadh. With a focus on showcasing its diverse landscapes, from pristine coastlines to rugged mountains, Saudi Arabia is positioning itself as a compelling destination for adventure seekers and cultural enthusiasts alike.

Breaking barriers, creating opportunities

In Saudi Arabia's evolving tourism landscape, women are playing a pivotal role as both visitors and professionals.

Recognising the importance of gender equality and empowerment, the kingdom has implemented initiatives to promote women's participation in the tourism sector. From issuing tourist visas for solo female travellers to opening women-only hotels and recreational facilities, Saudi Arabia is creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for women tourists. Moreover, women are increasingly taking on leadership roles in the industry, driving innovation and diversity in the kingdom's tourism offerings.

Building bridges through tourism

As Saudi Arabia opens its doors to international visitors, it is leveraging tourism as a powerful tool for cultural diplomacy and global engagement. Events like the Riyadh Season and the Jeddah Arts and Culture Festival serve

as platforms for showcasing the kingdom's vibrant arts scene and fostering cross-cultural exchange. By inviting artists and performers from around the world to participate in these events, Saudi Arabia is not only enriching its cultural landscape but also building bridges of understanding and cooperation with the international community.

Preserving the past, protecting the future

In its quest to become a leading tourism destination, Saudi Arabia is committed to sustainability and environmental stewardship. Conservation projects aimed at preserving historical sites and natural habitats are underway, ensuring that the kingdom's treasures are safeguarded for future generations. Additionally, sustainable tourism initiatives promote responsible travel practices and support local

communities, contributing to the long-term viability of the tourism industry. By prioritising sustainability, Saudi Arabia is not only preserving its heritage but also charting a course towards a more resilient and inclusive tourism sector.

As Saudi Arabia embarks on its journey towards tourism excellence, it is embracing change, diversity, and inclusivity like never before. From Vision 2030's ambitious goals to empower women and diversify the economy to the kingdom's embrace of changing tourism trends and commitment to sustainability, Saudi Arabia is poised to captivate the hearts and minds of travellers from around the world. As the kingdom unveils its hidden treasures and invites the world to explore its wonders, a new chapter in Saudi Arabia's storied history is being written—one of innovation, opportunity, and boundless hospitality.



Alhasan Aldabbagh

Saudi Arabia

Epitomising global tourism landscape

As Saudi Arabia continues to unveil its treasures to the world, the kingdom stands poised to redefine the global tourism landscape. Alhasan Aldabbagh, President, APAC, Saudi Tourism Authority (STA) shares about exciting developments reshaping Saudi Arabia's tourism landscape.

-Tripti Jain



In recent years, Saudi Arabia has emerged as a vibrant and dynamic destination, enticing travellers from around the world with its rich culture, stunning landscapes, and unparalleled hospitality. Under the visionary leadership of the Saudi Tourism Authority (STA), the kingdom has embarked on a journey to transform its tourism sector, offering diverse experiences that cater to the evolving preferences of modern-day explorers. Saudi Arabia presents remarkable opportunities for travellers worldwide.

Saudi Arabia's Tourism Vision

Recognising the immense potential of the Indian travel market, Saudi Arabia has prioritised efforts to attract millions of Indian visitors in the coming years. Alhasan talks about India's significance and shares, "India is a strategic partner in our vision to position Saudi Arabia as a top global destination. We are committed to fostering strong ties with Indian travellers and providing them with unforgettable experiences."

Easing access

Facilitating seamless travel experiences, Saudi Arabia has implemented various visa initiatives to simplify the entry process for visitors. From

leisure visas to stopover programs and visa-on-arrival options, the kingdom aims to enhance traveller convenience and accessibility. Alhasan explains, "Our visa initiatives reflect our commitment to welcoming visitors from around the world with open arms, ensuring a hassle-free journey from start to finish."

Changing perceptions and driving awareness

In the quest to showcase Saudi Arabia's diverse offerings, the STA has launched compelling promotional campaigns targeting key markets worldwide. From high-profile sponsorships to collaborations with influencers, these initiatives seek to challenge stereotypes and highlight the kingdom's cultural richness and modern allure. Alhasan shares, "Our promotional campaigns aim to inspire travellers and showcase the true essence of Saudi Arabia—a land of boundless possibilities and unparalleled hospitality."

A luxurious oasis

On the pristine shores of Red Sea Global, Saudi Arabia unveils two new jewels in its hospitality crown - the St. Regis and Six Senses hotels. Nestled amidst breath-taking scenery, these luxury properties redefine opulence,

offering guests an immersive experience marked by unparalleled comfort and indulgence. Alhasan shares, "These establishments as a gateway to the kingdom's treasures, where travellers can immerse themselves in unparalleled luxury and natural beauty."

A paradisiacal haven

Set to captivate discerning travellers, Sindalah Island emerges as a haven of exclusivity and leisure. With its promise of world-class hotels, a prestigious yacht club, and a championship golf course, this idyllic retreat beckons visitors to indulge in the ultimate luxury experience. Alhasan shares, "Sindalah Island epitomises Saudi Arabia's commitment to redefining luxury tourism, offering discerning travellers a sanctuary of unparalleled beauty and sophistication." With visionary leadership, strategic initiatives, and a steadfast commitment to excellence, the Saudi Tourism Authority charts a bold course towards a future where Saudi Arabia emerges as a premier destination for discerning travellers. They invite the world to embark on a journey of discovery and adventure in Saudi Arabia, where every moment promises an unforgettable experience.



VFS GLOBAL

Embracing the future of tourism

The travel and tourism industry is undergoing a profound transformation, propelled by technological advancements, changing consumer preferences. GB Srithar, Head of Tourism Services, VFS Global shares his perspectives on the future of tourism in his new avatar.

- Tripti Jain



In navigating the dynamic tourism landscape, VFS Global, a leading provider of visa services, stands as a beacon of innovation and collaboration, by embracing change and leveraging technology to create a more connected and sustainable travel experience.

Resilient foundation

The pandemic has reshaped the way we travel, placing a heightened emphasis on safety and hygiene. India is a very important source market for the world. Srithar shares, "The Indian travellers are extremely discerning and knowledgeable when it comes to travel. VFS Global is providing seamless services for the Indian audience to travel all over the world."

Enhanced travel experiences

Technology has emerged as a powerful catalyst for innovation in the tourism industry, revolutionising every aspect of the travel journey. Srithar highlights the efforts to harness the power of AI, AR, and digital platforms to provide travellers with immersive and personalised experiences. "From virtual destination tours to contactless visa applications, technology is reshaping the way people explore the world.

By embracing technology, we are enabling travellers to embark on unforgettable journeys with ease and convenience," he adds.

Enriching travel ecosystem

Collaboration lies at the heart of success in the tourism industry, and VFS is committed to fostering strong partnerships with travel trade stakeholders. Srithar shares the importance of collaboration in driving growth and innovation, stating, "We work closely with tour operators, travel agencies, and destination marketing organisations to curate diverse and compelling travel experiences for our customers. By cultivating strong partnerships, we are enriching the travel ecosystem and creating new opportunities for travellers."

Resonating ideas of the industry

India's emergence as a key player in the global tourism market has spurred a demand for unique and culturally rich travel experiences. Srithar emphasises the importance of understanding the nuanced preferences of Indian travellers, and shares, "Indian travellers are seeking authentic and immersive experiences that

resonate with their interests and values. We are dedicated to catering to the unique needs of Indian travellers and providing them with unforgettable journeys."

Sustainable future for tourism

As the world grapples with environmental challenges, sustainability has become a pressing concern in the tourism industry. Srithar expresses VFS Global's commitment to shaping a sustainable future for tourism, and adds, "We recognise the importance of responsible tourism practices in preserving our planet for future generations working with our client governments, and we hope to do more in the space of sustainable tourism practices."

The future of tourism is rooted in innovation, collaboration, and sustainability. Under the leadership of GB Srithar, VFS Global's tourism services will work with client destinations on pioneering initiatives to redefine the travel experience. By embracing technology, fostering partnerships, and prioritising sustainability, they are poised to shape a brighter future for tourism—one that is inclusive, immersive, and sustainable for generations to come.



EMBRACING THE BULA SPIRIT

With significant tourism growth observed in 2023, Fiji has emerged as a premium destination for Indian travellers. Robert Thompson, Executive Director of Regions, Tourism Fiji shares insights into Fiji's strategic approach and perspective on the expanding Indian market.

- Naina Nath





Robert Thompson

In 2023, Fiji exceeded its 2019 tourism performance. "In 2023, we outperformed our 2019 numbers, a notable achievement in our sector. We are happy with our progress, especially from India, where we're significantly ahead of targets," adds Robert Thompson. In December alone, Indian arrivals to Fiji surged by 300 per cent compared to December 2019, contributing to an overall annual growth rate exceeding 100 per cent. This positive trend continues, with strong forward projections.

Entering new markets

Fiji has a 360 plan for marketing the destination in India, including organising their own roadshows, partnerships, airline collaborations, B2C and B2B familiarisation trips, and so on. Robert Thompson further shares, "Despite being a small-budget destination, when it comes down to marketing, Fiji recognises India's significant potential. We have strategically allocated resources to assess India's performance as an emerging market. Collaborating with trade partners is integral to our strategy, leveraging platforms such as Make My Trip, Use My Trip, Thomas Cook, SOTC, and other niche partners who have a strong presence in specific segments of the market." Additionally, Fiji is focusing on tier II and III cities in India due to the promising growth potential of such

regions, while also maintaining efforts in tier I cities. Participation in trade fairs further strengthens their outreach efforts. Fiji aims to gradually intensify these activities to align with the pace of growth in the Indian market.

MATAI Certification Program

Fiji offers a certification program for travel agents known as the MATAI program, which translates to 'smart' in Fijian. Upon joining the program and completing the course, agents enter at the bronze level. Progression through the program is marked by registering for higher tiers. Upon reaching the gold level, agents' names are featured on Fiji's website for customer referrals. Each tier offers exclusive benefits, including access to private events and travel perks for agents and their spouses. Adding to it, Robert Thompson further mentions, "Although the MATAI program has been running for about 20 years, the re-launch featuring the tiering system is approximately three years old."

Expansive air routes

For Indian travellers, Fiji's primary airline connectivity has traditionally been through Singapore, facilitated by partnerships with Singapore Airlines and other carriers. While Hong Kong also serves as a route, Singapore remains the preferred option. "An interesting development in the past year has

been the resurgence of traffic via Australian hubs, particularly with direct flights from Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru to Australia operated by Qantas, Air India, and other partners. Travellers are now extending their Australian trips to include Fiji, benefiting from Fiji's visa-free entry status," shares Robert Thompson. This trend has contributed significantly to the growth in Indian arrivals to Fiji. Indian travelers enjoy visa-free access to Fiji, contrary to some misconceptions about visa-on-arrival requirements.

Top inbound markets

Fiji's top five inbound markets are led by Australia, which accounts for approximately 50 per cent of arriving traffic and has consistently held this position for an extended period. Following Australia, New Zealand ranks second, with North America occupying the third position. China holds the fourth spot, while Japan rounds out the top five. "India currently falls around the ninth position, but recent growth trends suggest a potential for advancement in rankings, possibly overtaking European markets soon," adds Robert Thompson.

Ever-growing MICE and wedding tourism

The MICE segment is a significant focus for Fiji, particularly drawing interest from the Australian and New Zealand markets. "While

traditionally the emphasis has been on meetings and conferences, there's growing interest in incentivising trips to Fiji," says Robert Thompson. Logistically, accommodating large groups can be challenging for a small island nation such as Fiji, but innovative approaches, such as staggered arrivals in waves, are being explored to manage larger groups effectively. He further elaborates, "There is a rising trend in combining high-end incentives with visits to Fiji. For instance, platinum-tier groups may start their journey in Australia and extend their trip to Fiji for a luxurious experience." These developments present promising opportunities for Fiji's tourism industry.

"As for destination weddings from India, while it's a significant market, there has been a slight softening in inquiries for Fiji following the 'Wed in India' announcement made by the Indian government, earlier this year," explicits Robert Thompson. However, Fiji remains an attractive option for couples seeking a picturesque and romantic setting for their special day. While capacity constraints may limit the size of weddings, Fiji continues to welcome couples looking to tie the knot in its stunning locales, often suggesting combining a wedding in India with a honeymoon in Fiji for the best of both worlds.

GITB 2024

FOSTERING INDIAN TOURISM ABOVE AND BEYOND!

In the heart of India's vibrant tourism landscape, The Great Indian Travel Bazaar creates a whirlwind of opportunities and path for the Indian travel industry. Dipak Deva, Chairman, FICCI Tourism, Art and Culture committee and MD, SITA, TCI and Distant Frontiers highlights this year's GITB agenda.

- *Tripti Jain*

Organised annually by the Government of Rajasthan, Ministry of Tourism, and FICCI, GITB stands as a testament to India's commitment to fostering inbound tourism. As GITB gears up for its 13th edition in 2024, anticipation runs high for the transformative impact it promises to deliver. With participation from over 280 foreign tour operators and 300 Indian exhibitors, GITB 2024 is poised to unlock India's tourism potential like never before.

A confluence of global players

At GITB 2024, the stage is set for a vibrant exchange of ideas, partnerships, and opportunities. Dipak Deva shares, "GITB serves as India's premier platform for engaging with global players in the tourism industry. With over 55 countries represented by foreign tour operators, GITB offers a unique opportunity to showcase India's diverse offerings and forge strategic alliances that drive industry growth. From the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas to the sun-kissed beaches of Goa, GITB acts as a gateway to the myriad experiences awaiting travellers in India."

Facilitating meaningful connections

Central to the success of GITB is its ability to facilitate meaningful connections between buyers and sellers in the tourism ecosystem. Dipak Deva emphasises, "It is more

than just a trade show; it is a catalyst for fostering collaboration and driving business outcomes. With over 11,000 structured face-to-face meetings expected to take place, GITB 2024 provides a platform for forging partnerships that transcend borders and cultures. These connections pave the way for innovative tourism products and experiences that resonate with travellers from around the world."

Adapting to changing landscapes

The resilience of the show is evident in its ability to adapt to changing landscapes, including the challenges posed by the global pandemic. Dipak Deva reflects, "It has played a crucial role in revitalising India's tourism sector post-pandemic. Through initiatives such as the G20 Tourism Expo organised last year, the event has served as a catalyst for rebuilding confidence among travellers and industry stakeholders alike."

Championing sustainability

In an era where sustainability is paramount, it is leading the charge towards responsible tourism practices. Dipak Deva shares, "FICCI is committed to making sustainability a cornerstone of GITB's ethos. Through initiatives such as the Sustainable Tourism Committee, we aim to promote eco-friendly practices and raise awareness about India's

commitment to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals."

Charting a smooth future

As we look towards the future, the possibilities are endless. Dipak Deva envisions the show to bring about a change in the industry. Speaking on the same lines he shares, "Each edition of the show presents an opportunity to showcase India's diverse

tourism offerings and attract specific segments of travellers. With a special focus on making India a global wedding tourism destination at GITB 2024, the event is poised to chart a new course for India's tourism industry. Through collaboration, innovation, and a steadfast commitment to excellence, GITB continues to pave the way for a brighter, more inclusive future for Indian tourism."



Host State



RAJASTHAN

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Ministry of Tourism
Government of India

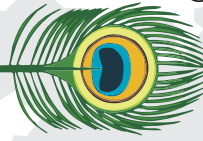


13th Edition

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THE GREAT INDIAN

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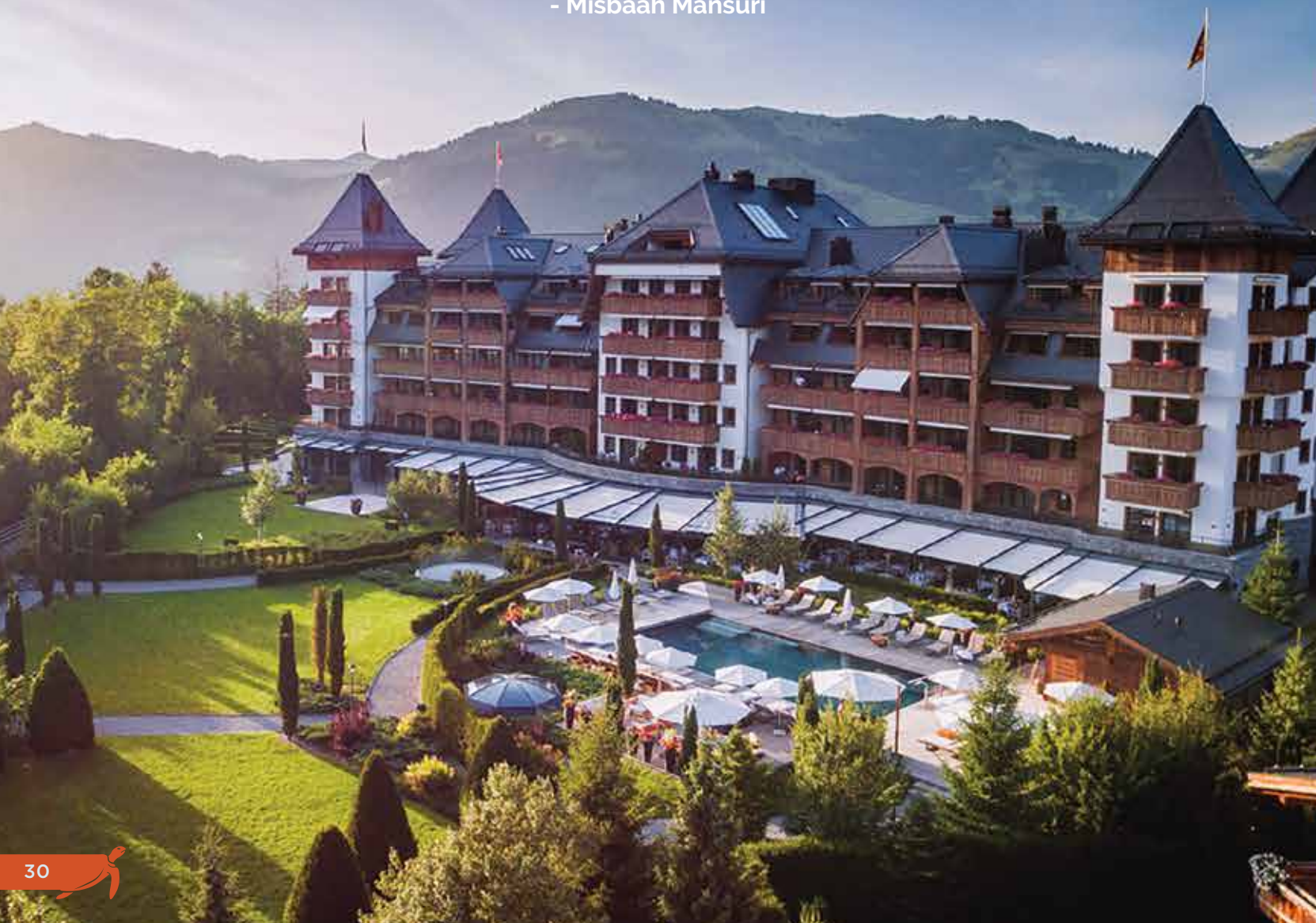
HEADS IN BEDS

The Alpina Gstaad

An ethereal wonderland

In a whimsical setting where Alpine charm and contemporary indulgence intertwine, The Alpina Gstaad stands in what can be called 'the Beverly Hills of Gstaad', ready to take your breath away.

- Misbaah Mansuri



HEADS IN BEDS

Stepping into The Alpina Gstaad is like being enveloped in what feels like a fairy tale setting on five acres in Oberbort, the exclusive hilltop area of the village which is in Saanenland, cradled by the majestic Bernese Alps. This idyllic retreat combines traditional Swiss charm with modern sophistication, far beyond its prestigious hilltop location. Merely a 10-minute amble from the quaint main street, the hotel stands as a sentinel over the picturesque meadows and rugged mountains that define Gstaad—serving as a beckoning gateway to the myriad of winter sports and summer adventures that lie in wait.

First impression

The air here, crisp and laden with the scent of pine and fresh snow, sets an awe-inspiring backdrop against which The Alpina Gstaad reveals its grandeur. As I made my way through the property, every step offered a scenic vista, a postcard-perfect panorama that shifted with the light of day, from the soft hues of dawn to the fiery spectacle of sunset. The hotel, while echoing the architectural vernacular of the region with its timber facade and balconies cascading with blooms, boldly asserts its contemporary essence the moment you cross its threshold. Inside, The Alpina Gstaad transcends the expected, blending the warmth of Alpine hospitality with the sleekness of modern luxury. The lobby, a harmonious meld of stone and wood, greets guests with a welcoming glow, leading into spaces adorned with modern art that contrast with the traditional exteriors. This juxtaposition continues as you discover the hidden gems within—like the cutting-edge cinema, a nod to nostalgia with its vintage popcorn maker amid the latest in audio-visual technology.

The rooms

Accommodations at The Alpina Gstaad are swish, characterised by strong attention to detail in the chalet-style decor—complete with timber walls, hand-painted furniture, and fireplaces. I love how they melded glossy contemporary style with the warmth of alpine tradition. Each room and suite, wrapped in the comforting embrace of pine features its own balcony, presenting vistas of the Alpine landscape—views so captivating that the hustle and bustle of the outside world simply melted away.

The attention to detail in the design was remarkable. My room featured a red-leather desk that added a



pop of colour against the natural wood, while banks of windows flooded the space with light, framing the mountain scenery in a living portrait. The antique Swiss farmhouse armoire added a touch of rustic charm, complemented by the modernity of glass pendant lamps beside the bed, whimsically designed to resemble bulbous cowbells. It was these thoughtful touches that infused the room with character and charm.

Stepping onto the balcony, I was greeted with a prime mountain-view perch that became my favourite spot to breathe in the crisp Alpine air and soak in the serene beauty of Gstaad. It was a peaceful retreat where the grandeur of nature was always in all its glory.

The bathroom was a haven of luxury, anchored by a deep-soaking tub that promised relaxation after a day of exploring. The Alpina Gstaad offers a range of room categories to suit various needs and preferences, from the cozy 355-square-foot Deluxe Rooms to the more spacious Junior Suites, Deluxe Suites, and the opulent Grand Luxe Suites. My favourite accommodation, however, has to be the two-story, 4,305-square-foot Panorama Suite featuring stellar vistas of alpine peaks from its private spa equipped with a sauna, whirlpool, and hammam.

Dining

F&B options at the property are ravishing serving up offerings where freshness and craftsmanship take centre-stage. Under the guidance of Executive Chef Martin Göschel, the Michelin-starred Sommet by Martin Göschel restaurant delights diners with a globally inspired tasting menu. We love the inclusion of exquisite dishes like saddle of lamb or poached oysters, alongside a specially curated menu for vegetarians that tantalisingly tease our taste-buds. For enthusiasts of the region's beloved melted cheese dishes, the Swiss Stübli offers a warm, wooden-walled ambience where raclette and fondue, made with ingredients from local artisanal farms, are the stars of the show. The Cigar Lounge presents an impressive spectacle, designed to captivate even non-smokers. To capture the essence of Havana, the designers were sent to Cuba for inspiration, resulting in a space adorned with polished dark wood, tufted leather seating, and a walk-in humidor, all contributing to its nostalgic allure. We loved new Japanese Whisky Bar across the hall, which serves rare bottles in a moodily lit space.

HEADS IN BEDS

Amenities

The Alpina doesn't just rest on its aesthetic laurels; it's a treasure trove of amenities. Whether basking in the summer sun by the outdoor pool or enjoying the expansive indoor pool in the chill of winter, each moment here feels like an escape. For a hotel with just 56 bedrooms, suites and 2 residences, The Alpina Gstaad is flush with amenities. An outdoor pool is the resort's focal point come summer; a generously proportioned indoor pool in winter. The Six Senses Spa offers a diverse wellness experience, highlighted by a unique 'healing grotto' lined with bricks of dusty-pink Himalayan salt, in addition to the traditional saunas and steam rooms for a comprehensive rejuvenation. Guests also have the benefit of daily complimentary fitness classes, enhancing the spa's holistic approach to health and wellness. We tried the sound healing session, led by Pascal, wassomething else. The soothing tones and resonances filled the room, enveloping us in a cocoon of sound that seemed to resonate deep within, facilitating a profound sense of inner peace and balance. Following the sound healing, we tried the Six Senses Signature couple's massage. Our therapist's adept touch and intuitive approach to massage therapy were incredible, lulling us into a trance of sorts.

Verdict

The property, an elevated retreat enveloped by the Swiss Alps, displays a traditional exterior that belies its array of progressive restaurants, exceptional facilities and cossetting rooms – the property is deservedly regarded as one of the region's most impressive hotels. Service, too, is assured and efficient. I also love how the design team has done a good job of endowing a superficially conservative property with pleasing progressive elements, and The Alpina Gstaad certainly does feel like one of Gstaad's more forward-thinking properties. There is an incredible natural high that comes from being surrounded by the great spirit of the palace. It is being polished, primed and opened up with reverence; so too are you. There are few better places on earth to be rocked into your whole and most exuberant self.

Starting price from CHF 1,100 for a Deluxe Room Schönried, double occupancy, breakfast included. Starting price from CHF 12,000 for the Panorama Suite, for 6 pax, breakfast included.



Nadine Friedli, General Manager

The Alpina Gstaad How has 2023 been for Alpina Gstaad?

The year 2023 has proven to be a very successful year for The Alpina Gstaad. Notably, strategic investments were made to enhance guest experiences, with a particular focus on the spa and biohacking facilities. The commitment to continuous improvement and innovation has resulted in elevated standards and a positive impact on overall guest satisfaction. Also, after a decade of opening, we are set to be Switzerland's first Climate Positive Hotel, a true testament to our pioneering environmental leadership in luxury hospitality – proving that they can co-exist harmoniously

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

As General Manager of The Alpina Gstaad, I'll blend continuity and improvement. Keeping what works, we'll innovate, adapt, and invest in team training. Empowering my full team, fostering open communication, and recognizing contributions will ensure a positive team spirit. My leadership will be transformative, inspiring with a clear vision, and providing individualized support for my very motivated and high-performing team.

What was your approach during the pandemic?

At The Alpina Gstaad, we found ourselves in a fortunate position. The primary European lockdown coincided with the hotel's initially planned inter-season closure on the 15th of March 2020. Due to the situation in Europe, we adapted the opening time in summer and opened the hotel later than usual. The picturesque countryside with its stunning mountains, pure air, fresh mountain spring water, and a lot of outdoor activities undoubtedly gained greater appeal for numerous European guests who had endured weeks of lockdown.

Switzerland is inundated with properties, what gives the property an edge over the rest?

Beyond the amazing hotel facility, there's a unique ambience that makes our guests feel at home instantly - an intimate coziness & friendliness of our hosts that set our property apart. In the lap of luxury and surrounded by unparalleled natural beauty, The Alpina Gstaad offers an experience that goes beyond the expected, ensuring guests not only stay in a hotel but find a home away from home.

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

During my winter getaway at The Alpina Gstaad, here's how I'd spend a perfect day. I'd start with

a tasty breakfast, having the hotel's special avocado toast to fuel up for skiing at Eggli around 10 AM.

After around two hours on the slopes, I'd grab lunch at The Alpina Gstaad Offcut Food Truck, enjoying the incredible views over Saanenland.

Back at the hotel in the early afternoon, I'd relax in the cosy atmosphere before heading to the Six Senses Spa. After a few dips in the indoor and outdoor pools, I would enjoy a Six Senses Spa signature massage, as well as a sound healing session with our head Therapist Antonis. The afternoon would be all about rejuvenation & self-care.

As the evening comes, a quick energy boost in the Biohacking area's cryo chamber would be on the agenda. The night, I would kick off with an aperitif at the Lounge & Bar, soaking in the warm vibes & live music.

To top it off, dinner at Sommet by Martin Göschel would perfectly finish the day, with the discovery of Swiss products & ingredients that most people are unaware even exist in Switzerland.

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

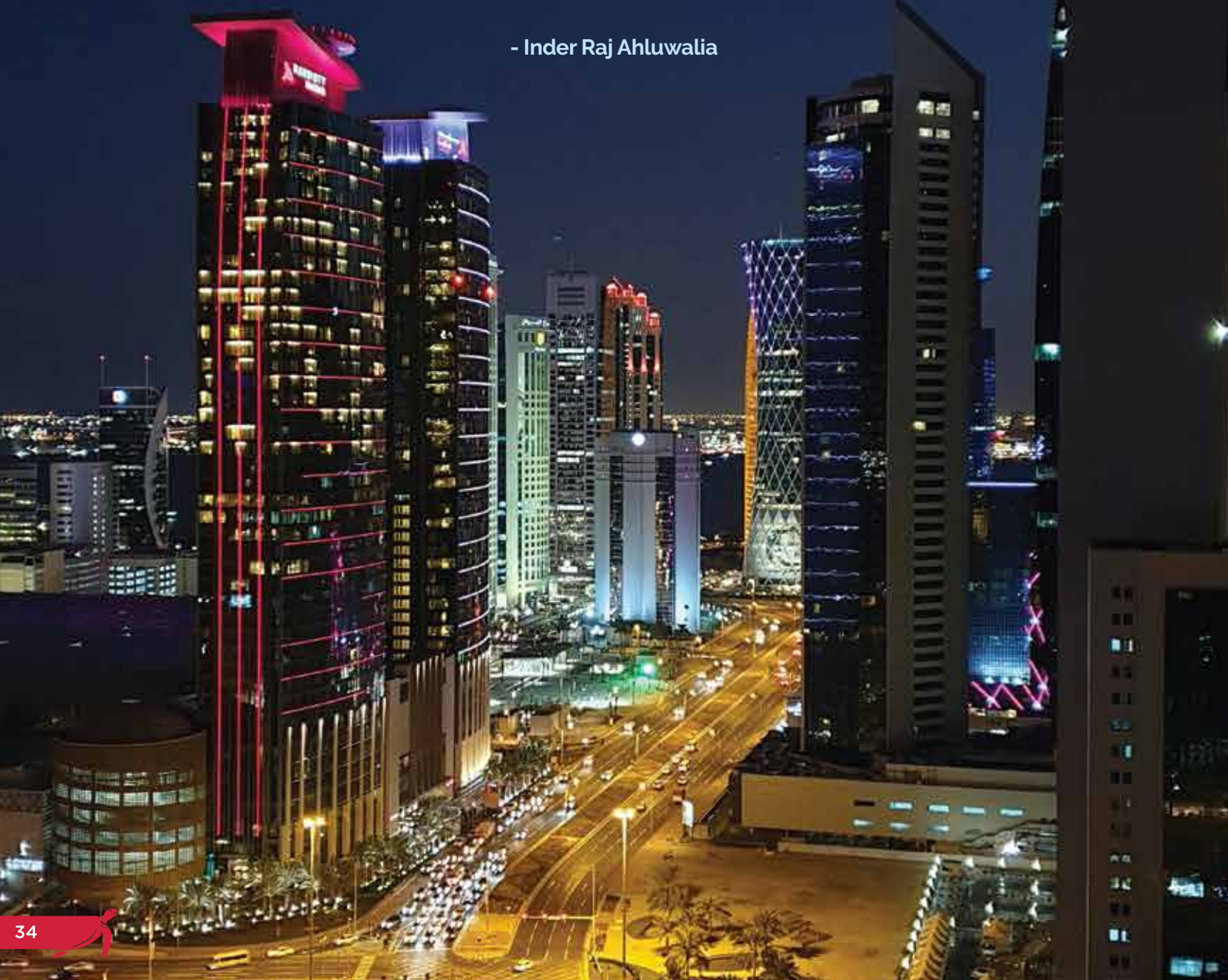
We've got exciting plans in the works for our food and beverage offerings. Our focus will be on elevating the experience at our Gourmet restaurant, Sommet by Martin Göschel. Plus, we're gearing up to introduce some smart innovations to enhance our breakfast area.

OFFSHORE BINOCULAR

CALL FROM QATAR

Seated at a table in the sun, in the heart of Palace Vendome, the 'mother of shopping malls', one can imagine themselves to be anywhere in Europe. But it isn't part of the Western World at all. Just the beautiful city of Doha!

- Inder Raj Ahluwalia



OFFSHORE BINOCULAR



The mall inspires amazes and awes! Cafes, restaurants, and food stalls curl around a large pool with periodic fountain shows. Quaint food and coffee carts stand beside wooden cabin shops and hordes of faithful visitor's mill about or sit around sipping their coffee. It is a place that 'breathes atmosphere'. With an area of over one million square metres, housing 580 outlets, most of them elite world designer brands, Palace Vendome is the proverbial 'soul of shopping' and beckons world shoppers.

An 11,500 square kilometre peninsula that extends north into the Arabian Gulf, Qatar is a dynamic, modern country built on the foundations of its deep cultural roots, and is a 'Feast For The Senses'. And its capital, Doha, is its heartbeat.

The tone for my Doha visit had been set by my hotel itself. That is if you can call Waldorf Astoria Lusail a hotel! Huge enough to get lost in - it's the size of a football ground - it is grandiose, swanky, luxurious and immensely impactful. It doesn't just charm and embrace guests. It gives them an affectionate bear-hug.

The 160,000 square metres Meryal Water Park on Qetaifan Island North is linked to national themes, and is a major symbol of the country's development. Old buildings, structures, and automobiles illustrate work in the past. Featured is the tallest water slide construction in the world: the Icon Tower will stand an incredible 85 metres high, with 12 of the park's total of 53 waterslides. There are also 45 dry rides. A buggy took us to the tower, and from the 6th floor, the views of the city and sea were about as good as they could get. There was music everywhere; the staff was friendly, and the wind bracing.

Doha's most famous beach is home to the city's most



celebrated 'sit-out' spot. B12 Beach Club is a strung-out, spaced-out swanky affair that offers a day-to-night, 'sun and sand' experience with its exuberant beachy vibes and resident DJs. The complex comprises a long, wooden-floor courtyard, straw roof, easy seating, bars, cafes, food outlets, and the city's largest floating park. And loads of atmosphere! The Bistro BY B12 offers indoor and outdoor dining with what they call 'Bistro Menu', 'Standard Menu' and 'VIP Menu'. This is fine dining in a bohemian atmosphere. You eat delicious food, facing a beach, the sea, and Doha's prominent skyscrapers.

Thus satiated, I was in the right mood to appreciate the right things. And prominent among them is Souq Waqif, whose myriad traditional charms personify the heartbeat of times gone by. The large souq comprises numerous streets, intricate alleys and buildings housing an assortment of goods and traditional Qatari artefacts. There is the 'Souq Waqif Falcon Hospital'; 'Birds Centre' - with falcons for sale; 'Aahed Bin Ali Trading Office W.L.L.'; 'Arumaila Boutique Hotel'; 'Qatar's Majles' - stocked brim-full with old clocks, lamps, photos, copper items, and food; and the inevitable 'Spice Market' with its pungent aromas. And there's loads of atmosphere. It may or may not have anything to do with all this tradition and atmosphere, but I was as ready for lunch as anyone ever was. And there's no better eatery around than Parisa, that, as the name suggests, offers the finest, most delectable Persian cuisine. Housed in a bungalow-type building, the restaurant's interiors are adorned with Persian wall-hangings and artefacts. While the food and service is excellent, the sea views did one no harm at all.





OFFSHORE BINOCULAR



Don't miss visiting the Doha Exhibition Convention Centre (DECC), that is now playing host to the riches of the world. I ducked my head in, to be welcomed by the 'Doha Jewellery & Watches Exhibition', a top-end gathering and display of the world's leading brands. Bvlgari, Rolex, Ali Bin Ali, Chanel, Van Cleef & Arpels, Patek Philippe, Piaget, Chopard, Tiffany & Co. You name it, they were all there in the centre's vast halls and passageways.

If you happen to be in town at the right time, don't miss out on the 'Qatar International Food Festival', a ten-day annual affair that has become a local event hallmark. Sprawled across a spacious park, the festival features local and international food stalls, some isolated stand-alone ones, others part of a group. There's a vast culinary choice that includes Qatari vegetarian and meat dishes, traditional Arab food, snacky fare, and vegan. There's a 'cooking studio' where experts impart cooking lessons; small bazaars; and roving musicians. Spicing things up nicely is 'Dinner in the Skies', which involves a whole table yanked up by a crane, enabling one to dine high above the ground.

Having done what I felt was justice to Doha; I decided to venture out to explore a bit more of Qatar. A little more than an hour's drive with a guide, the last bit through desert, pitched us headlong into a true desert

delight. Ras Abrouq is a desert haven where breath taking natural landscapes merges with top-tier hotels and dining options for a high-quality getaway experience. The beach showcases stunning natural scenery, with limestone formations like cliffs, pillars and rocks creating a unique landscape. The sedimentary rocks and large mushroom-shaped limestone structures provide a surreal sight.

Our watering-hole and stopover was a treat. Real seduction material! Surprising, welcoming, and delightful, 'Our Habitas' resort sprawls in the desert and edges the bluest of seas. 42 well-appointed villas cover vast spaces, a spacious reception cum lobby area, cum bar welcomes guests with its colourful, easy decor, and a large swimming pool seems to literally merge with the sea. Minutes in, and we were led to the poolside dining area for a late lunch.

Seated there, watching the sea, we were served tandoori prawns, salad, steamed cauliflower, a humous platter, khus khus, and Arab pastries. It was all a bit much, but good sport that I am, I didn't complain, and just kept eating.

If all this wasn't enough, sunset featured Arab ballads amidst twinkling lamps, an incense-induced calming-session, and tiny cups of richly-brewed Arab coffee.

What more can I say...?

Featuring numerous undiscovered experiences, Qatar is rapidly emerging as one of the world's most exciting travel destinations. According to H.E. Saad Bin Ali Al Kharji, Chairman of Qatar Tourism, several factors contribute to this favourable situation. Offering a mix of rich Arabian tradition and heritage that has played host to global guests for decades, Qatar captures the essence of the whole of the Middle East in one accessible, safe and beautiful destination.

With a futuristic skyline, iconic architecture, luxurious hotels, and beautiful beaches along the Arabian Gulf, Qatar offers everything from poolside stays to desert adventures and immersive art experiences. Visit Qatar's ambitious goal is to welcome over six million international visitors annually by 2030, making it the Middle East's fastest-growing destination.

They will continue to open new hotels and attractions. Qetaifan Island hosts a new water park; Meryal has world record breaking water slides; and Al Maha Island has the newly built Lusail Winter Wonderland. In 2024, some 80 unique events are slated to be held in Qatar.

With the recent launch of Qatar's Third National Development Strategy (NDS3) for 2024-2030, and the remarkable influx of over 4 million visitors in 2023, they are purposefully realising their objectives.



Amora Beach Resort Phuket

A haven for tropical 'Escapes'

Amora Beach Resort Phuket offers an unimaginable tropical adventure; a space where one can experience the essence of vibrant hospitality and modern lifestyle amenities. Located on Bang Tao Beach, this newly reimagined retreat offers a blend of energising activities and relaxing experiences. Lars van der Most (Lars) General Manager | Amora Beach Resort Phuket shares insights on what makes Amora Beach Resort a tropical temptation.

-Naina Nath





Amora Beach Resort Phuket is a premier destination offering an exceptional tropical experience. With a total of 264 contemporary rooms and suites, guests can indulge in comfort and tranquility. The resort features a range of amenities, including a 2000 sqm event lawn, a grand ballroom, four spacious meeting rooms, wellness facilities, and vibrant entertainment venues such as NORA Beach Club. Situated in an upscale area of Phuket, the resort caters to travellers seeking exceptional dining, ambiance, and a variety of activities amidst stunning beachfront surroundings. From chic rooms with private balconies to an all-new beach club, it allows you to immerse yourself in tropical luxury.



Lars van der Most (Lars)



Attracting diverse visitors to Phuket

India serves as a significant market due to direct flights from Phuket to Mumbai and New Delhi. The region offers various amenities catering to travelers with different purposes. Adding to it, Lars Van Der mentions, "Our top five source markets for the property and the destination are Britons, Germans, Indians, Russians, and Chinese. Phuket aims to attract Indian travellers, especially those interested in MICE and wedding events."

Holistic hospitality

Amid constant expansion plans and

growth strategies, Amora Hotels collaborates with local GSAs in many key source markets. Speaking on the partnership, Lars Van Der says, "This partnership extends to Amora Phuket, which underwent redevelopment, enhancing facilities tailored for MICE and wedding business. Alongside beachfront allure and nearby golf opportunities, the property offers wellness facilities and a diverse range of family-friendly activities, catering comprehensively to couples and families alike. We are a fully integrated resort that offers something for everyone."

Beachfront bliss

Amora is a beachfront resort with direct beach access, a rarity in Phuket. The establishment offers a comprehensive selection of facilities to cater to diverse guest preferences. These include a waterpark, kids club, spa, fitness center, three distinct pools, an expansive activity lawn, and ample meeting and event spaces. "Among its highlights is the renowned NORA Beach Club, a beachside entertainment venue acclaimed for its exceptional culinary offerings, vibrant ambiance, and live entertainment

featuring both local and international bands and DJs. The club features a built-in stage, DJ booth, expansive bar, spacious dance floor, indoor dining restaurant with an open kitchen, and various lounging areas, available for exclusive rental," adds Lars Van Der.

Additionally, the resort provides customisable zoning options, allowing for the rental of entire wings, complete with private pools, ideal for lavish parties and exclusive events. He further shares, "With access to specialised companies experienced in hosting Indian events, including



HOTELLIGENCE

decorations, music, and catering, we can seamlessly facilitate weddings, team buildings, MICE events, and product launches within the resort premises or on the beachfront. Committed to providing a fully integrated experience, the resort ensures there's something for everyone, catering to the diverse needs and preferences of its esteemed guests."

The Abundance of Amora Phuket: A 5-star experience

Positioned to cater to every segment and travel purpose, the resort features new facilities, including a 2000sqm event lawn, a 360sqm ballroom with a built-in LED wall, four large meeting rooms, wellness facilities, 264 rooms, and several entertainment venues, including the acclaimed NORA Beach Club. "We feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to redevelop the Resort during the challenging times of recent years, resulting in the establishment becoming the newest 5-star Resort with the top 3 most rooms on the beachfront from Bangtao to Layan," explains Lars Van Der.

Extending to over 3.2 hectares, the Amora Phuket offers 14 room buildings, each not taller than 3 stories, creating a sense of abundant space, openness, and

flow. With 11 different room categories, including sought-after options like the Amora Superior rooms and Amora Grand Rooms, every accommodation features either a 4sqm balcony or a 12sqm terrace on the ground floor.

Tailoring services to Indian tastes

Aroma Beach Resort Phuket caters extensively to families, corporate clients attending MICE events, and wedding celebrations. Collaborating closely with an Indian caterer, the resort has tailored its services to include Indian cuisine favorites, enhancing the breakfast experience for guests. Additionally, some clients opt to bring their own chefs, a practice accommodated by the resort's facilities. "With direct flights originating from Mumbai and New Delhi in India, we

anticipate a significant portion of our clientele to come from these cities. However, recognising the extensive travel culture within India, Phuket is expected to draw visitors from various regions, facilitated by the convenient transit connections."

Situated nearby are Boat Avenue and Porto de Phuket, where guests can find a selection of Indian restaurants to further enrich their culinary experiences. "We are truly excited to have the

chance to welcome back our friends from India. After being closed for redevelopment of the Resort and NORA Beach Club, we are ready with an all-new product. Whether it is for a family holiday, a romantic couples' trip, weekend golf, bachelor/bachelorette party, teambuilding, MICE group, we cater to all travel purposes. Welcome to the newest Resort on Bangtao beach, where all your desires are exceeded," states Lars Van Der.



Western Australia

GRIPPING THE INDIAN MARKET IN ITS AWE!

Western Australia is the experiential capital of Australia and is uniquely beautiful in its true sense. The destination offers impeccable experiences and breath-taking landscape, awe-inspiring wilderness and boundless natural adventures that makes Western Australia a premier destination. Melissa Forbes, Executive Director Marketing, Tourism Western Australia shares on the offerings that make Western Australia a preferred destination for Indian travellers.

- Sudipta Saha



Melissa Forbes

Choose your experience

Western Australia is untouched and unknown pristine destination. Be it untouched wilderness, the baffling rock formations and ancient aboriginal sites or sweeping green vineyards of world-class wineries and unbelievably clear ocean waters, it is a dream destination for travellers. "We don't have mass tourism. We are a big destination that offers

outdoor and wildlife experiences that are incredible and untouched. When we talk about Australia, travellers generally think of Sydney and Melbourne but Western Australia is the essence of purity," says Melissa Forbes. She further adds, "A lot of our experiences are based in nature and outdoors, the coastline and distance in diversity, up in the north, we have the Kimberley region

where there is a red cliffs that come down to the white beaches and the blue beaches. From the unique rock formations of the Pinnacles, to the abundant marine life on the Ningaloo Reef offers untouched and unique experience. A string of pristine beaches stretch the length of the Coral Coast while just a few metres off the shore, Australia's largest fringing coral reef is the perfect place to swim. Further down the coast, we have the Margaret River region bursting with epic experiences and unfathomable landscapes, an amalgamation of outdoor adventures and epic surf to top-notch wines and serene beaches."

Positioning as a new age destination

By September 2023, visitor numbers have recovered to 87 per cent of pre-pandemic levels, and India grew to become WA's seventh largest international market, with 27,000 visitors spending an estimated \$91 million in the state, driven by an increase of nearly 50 per cent in spend per person. Therefore, while speaking on how they intend to position Western Australia in the India market, Melissa Forbes mentions, "For us, it is capitalising on the fact that we don't have huge awareness and therefore we are positioning Western Australia as up and coming destination

and a new edge destination. I think for us, we know that it is about outdoor, nature and wildlife experiences, so in India, we intend to position Western Australia as a premium destination and a destination for experiential travellers. It is a destination for people who like to explore the place, experience different landscape, activities as well."

Plans ahead

Western Australia is actively promoting the destination through innovative campaigns. Speaking on the same line, Melissa Forbes shares, "We are keen working with celebrities and ambassadors, in previous year; we have worked with Australian cricketer Adam Gilchrist, Brad Hogg and Mitchell Johnson to help leverage the Western Australian experience to Indian audience and use their popularity to tell the story of Western Australia. We would also like to work with Indian celebrities and influencers, bring them to Western Australia to experience and produce a content of their visit in order to reach the mass in Indian market and make Western Australia visible on different platforms. We know Bollywood is a popular vehicle to tell a story and reach the mass, therefore, we are looking at the potential means to collaborate with the Bollywood industry."



Fulfilling the oceanic dream

Island Life Travel

Island Life Travel has been navigating the trends of the market and featuring Maldivian hospitality at its best.

Nausheen, Managing Director, Island Life Travel shares the intricacies of decision-making while exploring collaboration with other departments, and the delicate balance between luxury offerings.

- Tripti Jain



In the ever-evolving landscape of destination management, the role of strategies takes centre stage, steering companies towards growth and resilience. Island Life Travel is the one-stop for travellers visiting Maldives. A destination management company (DMC) that will take care of all the nitty gritty of your trip. The financial journey of a Destination Management Company is akin to a well-choreographed dance, where each step is crucial for success. Strategic financial decisions, meticulous planning, and collaborative efforts with other departments define the trajectory of growth.

Balancing luxury with viability

The Maldives, renowned for its luxurious tourism offerings, poses a unique opportunity for DMCs. Nausheen shares, "Our approach involves seamless coordination between sales, post-sales, and finance teams. Constant communication ensures our customers have an exceptional holiday experience while maintaining financial viability for sustained success."

Financial chessboard

The journey of a DMC involves a nuanced game of financial chess. Every move matters and

strategic decisions play a crucial role in the company's growth and success. Nausheen emphasises, "Managing finances within a DMC involves intricate planning and execution. From revenue forecasting to cost management and cash flow analysis, every aspect demands meticulous attention."

Navigating the financial waters

A critical aspect of DMC operations lies in handling international transactions, especially concerning guest payments and the associated documentation. "Accounting is a vital skill in the business world. Managing accounts involves a high level of responsibility, especially when dealing with remittances. Strict adherence to procedures and compliance with regulations is essential for the smooth operation of the business," shares Nausheen.

Weathering the storms

Operating in a destination like the Maldives brings unique challenges, including seasonal fluctuations and unforeseen circumstances impacting tourism. A proactive approach to financial forecasting and risk management is vital for

stability and adaptability. Nausheen adds, "In the face of uncertainties, we employ comprehensive financial forecasting that includes revenue, cost, cash flow, and capital expenditure. Regular budgeting, reviews, and adjustments, along with seeking professional advice, form the pillars of our risk management strategy."

Synergy for success

Success in destination management is rarely a solo act. The finance department collaborates closely with other units to optimise processes and achieve shared goals. She shares, "I work with sales and post-sales teams to ensure smooth financial transactions before guests reach their destination. The process doesn't conclude until the funds are securely in place. It's a collaborative effort where effective communication is paramount."

In the pursuit of excellence, Island Life recognises that maintaining a delicate balance between luxury offerings and financial prudence is essential. It's the synergy of financial acumen, strategic planning, and collaborative efforts that helps a DMC towards sustained success in the dynamic world of destination management.

TÜRKİYE

A warm welcome awaits you!



HE Firat Sunel

The rich cultural tapestry and historical essence of Türkiye have been creating a buzz in the minds of the travellers and set the stage for a flourishing exchange of tourists. Ambassador of Türkiye to India, HE Firat Sunel explores the growing relationship between the two nations in the realm of tourism.

-Tripti Jain

The exchange of cultural richness, historical narratives, and warm hospitality creates a space that transcends borders, fostering a stronger bond between India and Türkiye. In the world of tourism, these shared experiences pave the way for a journey of exploration, understanding, and mutual appreciation. As Ambassador Sunel, aptly shares, "The spirit of hospitality is a shared value, enhancing the warmth experienced by visitors in both the countries."

FEAST FOR TRAVELLERS

The allure of Türkiye lies in its diverse pool of history, ancient wonders, and vibrant landscapes. From the turquoise waters of the Aegean to the mysterious terrains of Cappadocia, Türkiye offers a visual feast for travellers. Indian tourists are captivated by the harmonious blend of tradition and modernity, creating a captivating mosaic that beckons exploration.

ROOTED HERITAGE AND CULTURE

Türkiye boasts an ancient civilization that has shaped the course of history. The cultural commonalities between the countries have a rooted share in traditions and values. The travellers have multiple cities and places they can explore in Türkiye. Ambassador Sunel highlights, "Türkiye is a country of choice for Indian tourists, with Istanbul, Antalya, and Cappadocia standing out among the most preferred destinations."

ENCHANTING LANDSCAPE

Recent years have witnessed a steady increase in the number of Indian tourists visiting Türkiye. In 2022, 2.3 lakh Indian visitors explored the enchanting

landscapes and historical wonders of Türkiye. The estimate for 2023 rose to 2.7 lakh visitors, reflecting the growing popularity of the nation among Indian travellers. Ambassador Sunel sets an ambitious target, stating, "By the end of 2024, our goal is to host more than 3 lakh Indians."

EMERGING AND DIVERSIFYING

From January to November 2023, Türkiye welcomed 52.7 crores of international visitors, with Russia, Germany, the UK, Poland, and Ukraine ranking as the top tourism source markets. Ambassador Sunel shares, "India stands out as one of the key emerging markets for the Turkish tourism industry. We aim not only to maintain the current source markets but also to develop and diversify, fostering greater people-to-people interactions between Türkiye and India."

A BRIGHT FUTURE!

To enhance bilateral tourism and encourage more visits between the two nations, Türkiye has planned a series of collaborative initiatives and promotional campaigns. These include joint marketing campaigns with Indian travel agents, multi-city roadshows, and participation in tourism shows. Ambassador Sunel mentions, "We have many activities in the pipeline throughout 2024, which seek to familiarise Turkish culture with Indian audiences. These efforts aim to showcase Türkiye's unique offerings and attract Indian travellers with diverse interests." As the two nations deepen their collaboration in the realm of tourism, the shared voyage between these two nations takes on new dimensions. Indian visitors to Türkiye will have all that caters to their tastes and diverse interests.



EXPERIENCE THE TRUE BEAUTY OF Kalimpong

The serene and picturesque landscape of this majestic hill station 'Kalimpong' is yet to be explored and experienced. This small hill station is adorned with charismatic gardens, lakes and mountain ranges making it an apt destination for adventure and leisure travel.

- Sudipta Saha



TRAVEL THERAPY



In order to promote Kalimpong on national platform as an upcoming adventure destination, the Department of Tourism along with Gorkhaland Territory in association with Department of Information and Cultural Affairs, Gorkhaland Territorial Administration and with the financial assistant of Department of Tourism, West Bengal had organised Kalimpong Winter Tourism & Cultural Festival 2024. The festival was celebrated in the city's Town Hall which saw a participation of travel and tour operators from various cities. The two-day trip was organised for the delegates to give a first-hand experience of the city and showcase the diverse tourism products available in and around. The festival was organised with an intention to attract more and more travellers and offer them a pristine environ for a mesmerising and rejuvenating holiday experience.

Well, during the Kalimpong Winter Tourism & Cultural Festival 2024 an initiative was

taken to showcase the adventure activities available in Kalimpong. The delegates were taken Deolo Hills locted at an elevation of around 2000 m that offers a spectacular panoramic view of Kalimpong. From At Deolo Hills, the delegates were made to experience the paragliding activity which is indeed a highlight for adventure seekers travelling to Kalimpong. The paragliding activity is organised keeping all the safety measures in concern and are performed by instructors who are well-trained and experienced. This pristine region becomes an adventure destination for nature enthusiasts and hikers who want to explore its wildness.

Kalimpong has an interesting history to narrate and with ancient Buddhist monasteries, centuries old churches and exquisite revered temples Kalimpong marks the Bhutanese history till it was wrested by British rulers. Amongst the several tourism sites, The Jang Dong Palrifo Brang (Monastery), Thongsa Gomba (Bhutanese

Monastery) is a must-visit spot. Located at an altitude of 4.100 ft, the city offers a magnificent view of Kanchenjunga and other Himalayan peaks. Well known for its stunning mountain views, great hill walks, bird watching, it also offers a great chance to visit several flower nurseries. Nature Interpretation Centre is a museum that contains information, pictures, photographs, and books on ecology and the environment. So whether you want to explore the Himalayan landscapes, enjoy the local cuisine or visit historic sites, and immerse yourself in the tranquil atmosphere of this delightful destination, Kalimpong makes a perfect destination for travellers seeking for relaxation and adventure.

Regardless of all Kalimpong is a year around destination. The city houses an arrays of accommodations adorned with all facilities and designed to offer you a relaxing stay. Explore this unexplored 'Kalimpong' and explore the mesmerising beauty of India's North East region.



INDIAN ESCAPE

Ayodhya

Reshaping spiritual tourism landscape

Nestled on the banks of the sacred Sarayu River, Ayodhya emerges from the mists of ancient mythology as a city enshrined in history and spirituality.

- Tripti Jain



INDIAN ESCAPADE

Known as the birthplace of Lord Rama, Ayodhya is not just a geographical location but a sacred destination that beckons pilgrims and seekers from across the globe. In recent years, the destination has undergone a remarkable transformation, evolving into a vibrant spiritual tourism hub that seamlessly blends tradition with modernity.

Echoes of the past

Ayodhya's illustrious past resonates through the pages of Hindu epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. According to legend, it was in the sacred precincts of Ayodhya that Lord Rama, the seventh incarnation of Lord Vishnu, was born. The city's historical and religious significance draws devotees and scholars alike, seeking to unravel the mysteries of its ancient heritage.

The resplendent Ram Mandir

Central to the city's spiritual allure is the grandeur of the Ram Mandir, a magnificent temple dedicated to Lord Rama. After decades of fervent debate and legal battles, the foundation stone for the temple was laid in 2020, marking a historic milestone in the cultural landscape of India. The temple complex, with its intricate architecture and serene ambience, stands as a testament to the enduring faith and devotion of millions of devotees.

Cultural renaissance

Beyond its religious significance, it is experiencing a cultural renaissance that celebrates its rich artistic heritage. Traditional arts, crafts, and music flourish in the narrow lanes and bustling bazaars of the city, offering visitors a glimpse into its vibrant cultural tapestry. Festivals and cultural events, such as the Ayodhya Art

Festival and the Ram Leela performances, showcase the city's artistic prowess and provide a platform for local artisans to shine.

Developmental endeavours

Recognising the potential of Ayodhya as a spiritual tourism destination, the government has embarked on ambitious developmental initiatives to enhance infrastructure and amenities. Modernisation efforts include the expansion of transportation networks, the development of world-class hotels and accommodations, and the implementation of smart city technologies to improve connectivity and accessibility. These initiatives aim to provide visitors with a seamless and enriching experience while preserving the city's cultural heritage and natural beauty.

A pilgrimage circuit reimagined

Ayodhya's strategic location within the heart of India's cultural and religious landscape positions it as an integral part of the pilgrimage circuit. Pilgrims embarking on spiritual journeys to nearby destinations such as Varanasi, Prayagraj, and Mathura often include the holy city in their itinerary, creating a holistic pilgrimage experience that transcends boundaries of time and space. The city's sacred sites, serene ghats, and ancient temples form the backdrop for spiritual seekers seeking solace and enlightenment.

As it emerges as a beacon of spiritual tourism in India, its transformation from a city of ancient lore to a modern pilgrimage destination is nothing short of miraculous. With the inauguration of the Ram Mandir and the revival of

its cultural heritage, the city invites visitors to embark on a soul-stirring journey that transcends the ordinary. As Prateek Hira, President & CEO of Tornos & Indian Frontiers, shares, "Ayodhya has already proved its mantle, breaking all footfall records in the sphere of domestic tourism, and I am confident that very soon, with the efforts of the inbound travel trade and the government of Uttar Pradesh, and will be a preferred destination for the inbound tourists as well."

In the hallowed precincts of Ayodhya, where the divine meets the earthly, pilgrims and travellers alike find solace, inspiration, and a deeper connection to the spiritual essence that permeates every corner of this sacred city. As it continues to evolve and flourish, it stands as a testament to the enduring power of faith, heritage, and the timeless allure of spirituality.



Prateek Hira



Antarctica21

Exploring frozen frontiers in Antarctica

In the realm of Antarctic exploration, Antarctica21 stands out as a beacon of innovation, excellence, and sustainability. Juan Cristobal Del Pedregal Bravo, Senior Commercial Director, Antarctica21 shares how they are shaping the landscape of Antarctica Tourism.

-Tripti Jain





Antarctica, the majestic and enigmatic continent at the southernmost tip of the Earth, has long captivated the imagination of adventurers and explorers alike. With its breath-taking landscapes, pristine wilderness, and unique wildlife, it remains one of the last great frontiers for intrepid travellers seeking extraordinary experiences. In recent years, the allure of Antarctica has grown exponentially, drawing travellers from across the globe to embark on unforgettable expeditions. One company at the forefront of Antarctic exploration is Antarctica21, renowned for its innovative approach and unparalleled commitment to providing exceptional journeys to this remote region.

Pioneering the path to Antarctica

Juan sheds light on the company's pioneering spirit and its role in shaping the Antarctic tourism landscape and shares, "Antarctica21 was founded with a vision to offer travellers a truly unique and transformative experience in Antarctica. We recognised the potential of this pristine wilderness to inspire and awe, and we set out to make it accessible to discerning travellers seeking adventure and exploration."

Flying high across Antarctica

One of the hallmarks of Antarctica21's approach is its innovative use of air expeditions to reach the White Continent. Juan explains, "By offering flights from Punta Arenas, Chile, directly to Antarctica, we've revolutionised Antarctic travel, significantly reducing the time spent crossing the treacherous Drake Passage. This game-changing approach not only provides travellers with a more

comfortable and efficient journey but also allows for a greater focus on exploration and discovery once in Antarctica."

Crafting unforgettable expeditions

At the heart of Antarctica21's success lies its commitment to crafting unforgettable expeditions tailored to the interests and preferences of its guests. "We understand that every traveller is unique, with their dreams and aspirations for their Antarctic adventure which is the reason we offer a range of expedition options, from active adventures such as snowshoeing and kayaking to more relaxed experiences focused on wildlife viewing and photography," adds Juan.

Sailing into the abyss

Navigating the icy waters and unpredictable weather of Antarctica presents a myriad of challenges for expedition operators. Juan reflects on Antarctica21's approach to overcoming these challenges and shares, "Our team of experienced captains, guides, and crew members are experts in Antarctic navigation, ensuring the safety and comfort of our guests at all times. With meticulous planning and attention to detail, we strive to provide a seamless and unforgettable journey for every traveller."

Protecting Antarctica for future generations

As custodians of this pristine wilderness, Antarctica21 is deeply committed to promoting sustainable tourism practices and minimising its environmental impact. "We recognise the importance of preserving Antarctica's fragile ecosystems for future generations, which is the reason we adhere to strict

environmental guidelines and work closely with organisations such as the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) to ensure responsible and sustainable tourism," shares Juan. Furthermore he adds, "Our ships Magellan Explore is not zero emission but our company is certified as Carbon Neutral, but we are working towards becoming more and more environment friendly. Our new ship Magellan Discoverer coming in 26/27 season will improve with new technology." In the realm of Antarctic exploration, Antarctica21 stands out as a beacon of innovation, excellence, and sustainability. With its pioneering air expeditions, personalised itineraries, and unwavering commitment to conservation, the company continues to redefine the boundaries of adventure travel. Antarctica is not just a destination; it's an experience that touches the soul and leaves an indelible mark on all who venture into its icy embrace.



**Juan Cristobal Del
Pedregal Bravo**



Taiwan

Creating strides in the tourism landscape!

The Taiwan Tourism Administration (TTA) recently opened the Taiwan Tourism Information Centre (TTIC) in Mumbai, India, marking its comeback into the Indian market after a hiatus of over three years. Joseph Chang, Director of Taiwan, Tourism Administration's Singapore office, shares the country's strong intent to revitalise the Indian market.

- Naina Nath



Hassle-free visa solutions for Indian travellers

Presently, there are two convenient methods for Indians to obtain a Taiwan visa. The first option is available to those holding a valid Schengen, UK, or American visa, regardless of its expiration status within the past decade. In such cases, individuals can apply for the visa online, known as the e-visa or easy visa. Alternatively, Indian tourists can benefit from the GuanHong visa, tailored specifically for tourist groups. This visa is applicable when there are more than five tourists traveling together. To proceed with this option, individuals must collaborate with a local travel agent who will facilitate the application process. Subsequently, the agent will submit all necessary documents to the Taiwan Authorities for evaluation. Upon approval, the visa will be issued accordingly.

"Taiwan offers a variety of attractions and activities that cater to diverse interests, ensuring that every Indian visitor can find

something to do in Taiwan. Many Indian travellers may not have previously considered Taiwan as a new destination. We invite all Indian customers to explore Taiwan and experience all it has to offer," mentions Joseph Chang.

Skyward bound

Prior to the onset of pandemic, China Airlines operated direct flights from New Delhi twice a week. However, these flights have not yet resumed. There is optimism that they may resume operations in the near future, particularly due to the current need for airlines to acquire new aircrafts. The potential reintroduction of direct flights from New Delhi by China Airlines depends on their acquisition of new aircraft, which would significantly enhance their operational capacity.

"Additionally, other Taiwanese national carriers, such as Yiba Airlines, are considering launching a new route connecting Mumbai to Taipei, with plans to extend connections to North America. This proposed route could serve as a convenient stopover for Indian travelers en route to North

America, leveraging Yiba Airlines' extensive network to major cities in the region. However, similar to China Airlines, Yiba Airlines is also awaiting the acquisition of new aircraft to facilitate this expansion," adds Joseph Chang.

Anticipated timelines suggest that new aircraft acquisitions for both airlines may materialise around the fourth quarter of 2025. In the meantime, travellers from India can still access Taiwan conveniently via connecting flights through major hubs such as Hong Kong, Bangkok, and Singapore, utilising carriers such as KT Airways and Singapore Airlines.

Beyond Taipei

As the capital city of Taiwan, Taipei offers a wide range of attractions and activities. However, beyond Taipei, there are numerous more options to explore. In the east-north area near the E-Line, visitors can enjoy the scenic seashore. Additionally, leisure farms provide opportunities for unique experiences, such as sampling local wines produced by nearby wineries.

ADVERT



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.

TRAVEL BACK IN TIME

A peek into Telangana's heritage

Echoes of Heritage: Temples, Forts, and the Bazaars of Hyderabad engaging the travellers through the past of the destination.

Step into the heart of Telangana, where the past whispers tales of valour and artistry. From the iconic Charminar standing as a testament to the region's architectural grandeur to the lively folk dances celebrating life's vibrant hues, Telangana invites you to immerse yourself in a tapestry of heritage that's both timeless and ever-evolving.

Thousand Pillar Temple, Warangal

Take a captivating journey from Hyderabad's bustling cityscape to the majestic Warangal Fort, the rich historical tapestry of Bhongir Fort, Panadavulu Guhalu, Ramappa, the Thousand Pillar Temple, and the Ghanpur Group of Temples. Traverse through the temples and forts that bear witness to the tales and revolutions that shaped the independence of Telangana.

Bhongir Fort

We start our weekend adventure by leaving the city and traveling 48 kilometres to reach Bhongir Fort. This historic fort, tucked away in a picturesque setting, whispers tales of bygone times. Savour the expansive views that Bhojagiri has to offer, explore the ruins, and sense the echoes of the past.

Ghanpur Temples

About 72 kilometers from Bhongir Fort, the Ghanpur Temples provide a tranquil haven from the busy city life.

The drive to this spiritual retreat is picturesque and offers peace of mind as you get closer to this 12th century temple complex. A heavenly symphony of stone, the complex's principal temple is devoted to Lord Shiva and has about 22 temples. The temple's architecture, with its ornate pillars and finely sculpted walls, transports visitors to a spiritual realm. The Ghanpur Temples stand as a cultural gem, diligently preserved over centuries.

Pandava Caves

The Pandavula Guhalu, also called the Pandavula Gutta Caves, are tucked away in Telangana's rugged landscape and hidden behind mystery and old stories. About 25 kilometres from Ghanpur Temples, you can embark on a journey to uncover the enigmatic charm and historical significance of these captivating caves. According to local legends, the Pandavas from the Indian epic Mahabharata sought refuge in these caves during their years of exile. The natural formations and quietude of the caves evoke a sense of reverence, making it easy to

imagine the presence of the Pandavas in this mystical setting. The Pandavula Guhalu Caves are a testament to nature's artistic prowess.

Carved by the hands of time, the caves boast unique rock formations and intricate designs that tell stories of centuries gone by. As you venture deeper into the heart of the caves, the untamed beauty of the surroundings heightens one's sense of exploration.

Ramappa Temple

Our next stop takes us to the exquisite Ramappa Temple; a UNESCO World Heritage Site nestled in the town of Palampet, 25 kilometres from Pandava Caves. Built during the Kakatiya dynasty, this architectural marvel is dedicated to Lord Shiva and showcases the mastery of Kakatiya art. This is believed to be the only temple to be named after its artist. Marvel at the intricate carvings, the floating brickwork, and the serene surroundings that transport you to a bygone era.

Thousand Pillar

We reach Warangal's Thousand Pillar

Temple by following our heritage trail. This temple, which was constructed in the twelfth century, is evidence of the Kakatiya dynasty's mastery of architecture. Stroll among the thousand pillars, each of which narrates a tale of artistic grace and devotion. The temple's lush greenery enhances its serene ambiance, rendering it an ideal location for solitude.

Warangal Fort

Five kilometres away from the Thousand Temple, we embark on a time travel that takes us to the impressive Warangal Fort, a fortress that was once resounding with the opulence of the Kakatiya dynasty. This historic wonder's military and architectural genius is demonstrated by the enormous stone gateways, the fine carvings, and the vast grounds. Walk through the ancient corridors and let the history of Warangal Fort unfold.

Shopping spree

Our journey comes to an end with a fun shopping spree as we head back to the energetic city of Hyderabad. See the marketplaces near Charminar, where modern business and historic architecture collide. Hyderabad's shopping scene has something for everyone, from traditional handicrafts to modern delights. Whether you are looking for souvenirs or local cuisine, the markets have something for everyone!





OFFSHORE BINOCULAR

STRENGTHENING INDO-SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM TIES

In an era of globalisation, the tourism sector stands as a beacon of international cooperation and cultural exchange. Neliswa Nkani, Hub Head Middle East, India, South East Asia, South Africa Tourism shares the significance of this partnership.

- Tripti Jain

Among the myriad of partnerships, the bond between India and South Africa emerges as a particularly dynamic and mutually beneficial. India is a crucial market for South Africa, and the ties extend far beyond mere economic transactions. It's about fostering lasting connections and understanding between our peoples.

A shared path towards growth

In recent years, India has emerged as a key contributor to incentive travel in South Africa. Neliswa shares, "India is the biggest contributor to incentive travel to South Africa. This trend underscores the allure of South Africa as an incentive destination for Indian corporates seeking unique experiences and value for money. With a favourable exchange rate and diverse offerings, South Africa has become a top choice for companies affirming its status as a premier destination for incentive travel."

Strengthening cultural ties

Beyond economic transactions, tourism serves as a bridge for cultural exchange and understanding. Neliswa emphasises, "Tourism allows for social cohesion and collaboration

between nations. India and South Africa share rich cultural heritages, and tourism play a pivotal role in deepening these ties. Events such as the upcoming Cricket World Cup in 2027 will serve as platform for fostering cultural exchange and mutual appreciation between the two nations."

Targeting tier II markets

Recognising the potential for growth, South Africa Tourism has shifted its focus to tier II cities in India. Neliswa shares, "The growth of any tourism economy in India lies in tier II cities. By engaging with cities such as Jaipur, Nagpur, and Cochin, South Africa Tourism aims to make the destination accessible to a wider audience. This strategic approach reflects a commitment to inclusivity and reaching untapped markets within India."

Customising experiences

Understanding the diverse preferences of Indian travellers, South Africa Tourism is customising experiences to cater to their needs. Speaking on the same lines Neliswa shares, "We are going to start speaking to you in your own language. By providing information in regional languages such as Hindi and

showcasing Indian faces in promotional materials, South Africa Tourism aims to resonate with Indian travellers on a deeper level. This personalised approach enhances the overall visitor experience and fosters a sense of belonging."

Driving economic growth

Tourism serves as a catalyst for economic growth, creating employment opportunities and driving development. Neliswa shares, "In tourism, one tourist creates eight jobs. The tourism sector in South Africa contributes significantly to the country's GDP and empowers local communities. By promoting inclusive tourism initiatives and supporting women-owned businesses, South Africa Tourism aims to maximise the socio-economic benefits of tourism for all stakeholders.

As South Africa celebrates 30 years of democracy and looks towards the future, the partnership with India holds immense promise for both nations. India hasn't changed, the world has changed. India has become consistent. Through strategic collaboration and a shared commitment to fostering meaningful connections, India and South Africa are poised to unlock new opportunities for growth and prosperity.



Unrivalled destinations in Madhya Pradesh for a Luxury glamping getaway all-round-year



Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board has set up Tent Cities with comfortable and modern facilities at various Tourist places in the state.

Tourists will be able to experience glamping and the thrill of adventure activities throughout the year.

Madhya Pradesh is an ideal destination for experiencing luxury glamping at the serene yet exhilarating spots of the state. The 'Heart of Incredible India' lures tourists with its diverse heritage while its tourist destinations exhale multi-hued flavours that oscillates through culture, religion, wildlife and gastronomy. The Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board has envisioned opulent glamping retreats to offer an array of comfortable and luxurious tented suites set amidst the tranquillity of nature.

Kuno Forest Retreat

Luxury Tents in the Wild

The spacious and comfortable tents in Kuno radiate the charm of glamping with the stunning backdrop of the Kuno Forest in the Sheopur district. This Wildlife Tourism destination has a serene natural beauty and the travellers can savour various kinds of experiences including the Palpur Fort and Dob Kund. One can enjoy the jungle safaris, moonlit strolls at night and endless hours of stargazing.

Gandhisagar Forest Retreat

A Magnificent Glamping Escape

Nestled amidst the panoramic splendour of the Gandhisagar Dam at Mandsaur district, Tent City offers a breath-taking experience of waking up to the gentle lapping of waves against the shore, surrounded by verdant forests and the vast expanse of the Gandhi Sagar Dam. This idyllic escape promises a perfect blend of adventure, luxury, and cultural immersion.

Jal Mahotsav

More Than Just a Glamping Getaway

Escape the ordinary and immerse yourself in the extraordinary at Hanuwantiya Tent City, tucked away in the scenic landscapes at the backwater of Indira Sagar Dam in Khandwa. Whether you are seeking a romantic retreat, an adventurous family trip, or a culturally enriching experience

Hanuwantiya Tent City promises to create lasting memories.

Chanderi Mahotsav

Indulge in Rich Legacy of Textile City

Chanderi Tent City is an opulent glamping destination located in the city of Chanderi at Ashoknagar district renowned for its exquisite Chanderi Sarees. The tent city is a perfect place to experience this rich heritage. Plan a visit to the tent city and indulge in the stunning views surrounding the banks of Laxman Sagar Lake.

Mandu Utsav

Feel the zeal with history, culture, heritage & nature

Tent City of Mandu Utsav located in the Dhar district is the perfect luxurious glamping destination to relax and unwind in the 'Heart of Incredible India.' The tent city is set within the ruins of the medieval city of Mandu, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The tents are beautifully decorated in traditional Indian style and offer stunning views of the surrounding hills and valleys.

The fully furnished luxurious camping retreats with spacious, air-conditioned tents spotless linens, en-suite bathrooms, private balcony, premium amenities and carefully chosen experiences are a perfect destination to explore. Engage in adventurous water, land and air activities ranging from speed boating, parasailing, and kayaking, boat rides, zip-lining, trekking, jungle hikes nature walks,

wildlife safaris that etches a lifetime memory. So, pack your bags, pack your spirit of adventure, and pack your thirst for discovery. While returning do not miss to take away intricately carved and designed souvenirs representing the rich culture and folk traditions of the state made by local artists. The magnificent Tent Cities of Madhya Pradesh awaits you. Get ready to create memories that will last a lifetime.

Kuno Forest Retreat

Tents - 25

✈ Gwalior (176km) 🚆 Shivpuri (70Km)

☎ +91 9624799166

🌐 booking.kunoforestretreat.com

Gandhisagar Tent City

Tents - 50

✈ Indore (287Km)

🚆 Bhawanimandi (49Km)

☎ +91 7808780899

✉ booking.gsff@evokeexperiences.in

Jal Mahotsav, Hanuwantiya

Tents - 103

✈ Indore (139Km) 🚆 Khandwa (49Km)

☎ +91 9755501954, 8236087667

✉ bookings@jalmahotsav.com

Chanderi Mahotsav

Tents - 25

✈ Gwalior (250Km) 🚆 Lalitpur (37Km)

☎ +91 9826055595

🌐 chanderifestival.com

Azerbaijan

The subtropical nirvana

The enticing landscape, ancient mosque and the marvellous modern architecture, Azerbaijan is one such destination which is known for its astonishing variety of experiences. Florian Sengtschmid, CEO, Azerbaijan Tourism Board shares on what makes Azerbaijan an ultimate travel experience.

- Sudipta Saha



Enrich your experiences

The modern cityscapes and Arabian nightesque exotica makes the landscapes of Azerbaijan phenomenal. India travellers have always been fond of Baku because of the mesmerising and entertaining nightlife, vibrant culture, seaside, shopping and much more. "All these bundles of concentrated experiences in the city have been attracting Indian travellers a lot. We have also seen an appreciable growth in the numbers of day visit to the regions. Our intention is to diversify experiences that will simultaneously increase the number of Indian travellers visiting Azerbaijan. We also aim at offering experiences such as culinary travel, mountain experiences, winter snow in summer, waterfalls, tea plantation, and handicraft villages. We are also introducing new destination and experiences in Azerbaijan apart from Baku. When we speak about sustainable and responsible tourism, Azerbaijan has received 2 million visitors last year. Azerbaijan is a luxury destination meeting the expectation of every individual," adds Florian Sengstschnid.

Azerbaijan offers unique experiences from an astonishing day trip to delicious local Azerbaijani breakfast in the old city of Baku or explore Azerbaijan's latest UNESCO World Heritage site, there are myriad of experiences to explore. Adding to it, Florian Sengstschnid says, "Apart from Baku, there are other destinations which offer

immense opportunity for travellers to explore and experience the majestic charm of Azerbaijan. Gabala which is in the north-east along way the mountain range, Shahdag with a beautiful mountain resort, we would also like to divert tourists to Sheki in the north-west which is beautiful UNESCO world heritage site nestled in the mountains known for the handicrafts."

India, a growing market

The destination is so competitive in itself, one can find affordable luxury in Azerbaijan. Speaking on the potential of Indian market, Florian Sengstschnid mentions, "India is a positive market and after six years of working with Indian market and Indian partners, the business have been growing. New flights by Indigo and Azerbaijan Airlines have made the destination more viable and also have made the destination more affordable. Last year, we have received around 1, 20,000 Indian visitors and this was an increase of 100 per cent as compared to 2022. In January 2024, more than 10,000 travellers from India visited Azerbaijan which was an increase 140 per cent as compared to January 2023. We expecting to double the number this year and the market seems very optimistic."

Incredible opportunities to explore

From snow-capped mountains and bubbling mud volcanoes to sandy deserts and subtropical

forests, Azerbaijan is one of must-visit destination. "We look at diversifying into weekend travellers, solo women travellers, family travellers. We have also welcomed a lot of Bollywood actor and actresses, TV stars in order to spread the news on the destination. We had around 10-12 Bollywood movies shoot in entirely or partly in Azerbaijan. We see that the beautiful landscape of the country and because of its diversified climatic change from sub-tropic to desert moonlight, to high mountains and lush greens, there is such a lush green, there is such a diversity which very much meets the needs of Bollywood industry," shares Florian Sengstschnid.

Whereas speaking on the plans for 2024, Florian Sengstschnid mentions that we continue to roll out our communication in cities not only focusing in Delhi or Mumbai. This year, we go to Pune, Hyderabad, Kolkata which group of series soon and we will be partnering with media on distributing news especially in the field of luxury travel, family travel and making Baku and Azerbaijan a preferred destination.

The Azerbaijan Tourism Board also intends to explore the Indian wedding market. "We have our cooperation last year, and we continue with wedding sutra and other platforms to disseminate on the potential of Azerbaijan in the wedding market. We have a lot of branded hotels capable of hosting Indian weddings, even some of the operators in Azerbaijan precisely desires to tap the Indian wedding market," shares Florian Sengstschnid.



TRAVEL THERAPY

Anantum Gateway Resorts

A window to nature

Redefining luxury and comfort at Jim Corbett, The Anantum Gateway Resorts are a perfect getaway from the mundane week.

- Vatika Singh



TRAVEL THERAPY

An incredible journey to Anantum Gateway Resorts, nestled in the serene beauty of Jim Corbett National Park was no less than a thrilling experience. The journey was a blend of luxury, adventure, and a deep appreciation for nature's wonders.

Enroute a memorable journey

Our adventure began with a lively bus ride from New Delhi, accompanied by 42 members of the Enterprising Travel Agents Associations (ETAA). As we embarked on the 250km journey to Jim Corbett, the air was filled with excitement and anticipation. With music playing and laughter echoing through the bus, the five-hour ride passed in a blur of fun and camaraderie. Upon our arrival at Anantum Gateway Resorts, we were greeted with traditional Indian hospitality. The staff welcomed us with tilak and flower garlands, embodying the warmth and charm of the local culture. It was a heart-warming start to our unforgettable stay at this luxurious retreat.

The tranquil escape

Anantum Gateway Resorts stands as a testament to luxury and comfort in the heart of Jim Corbett. Surrounded by lush greenery, this regal property offers an idyllic escape from the chaos of city life. One can immerse themselves in the tranquillity of the resort, where mellow cottages, a plush dining area, and a stunning pool beckon you to unwind and rejuvenate. As you explore the property, you'll discover 167 deluxe rooms, each meticulously designed to ensure your utmost comfort and relaxation. From the moment you arrive, you'll be enchanted by the serene ambiance and breath-taking views that envelop you. But the allure of Anantum Gateway Resort extends beyond

its luxurious accommodations. With a banquet hall spanning 10,000 square feet, it's the perfect venue for weddings and special events. And for those seeking a space to host conferences or business meetings, the state-of-the-art conference hall, spanning an impressive 63,000 square feet, awaits your next gathering.

Where heart resonates with nature

The true essence of this resort lies in its seamless integration with nature. As you stroll through the well-manicured gardens and pathways, keep your eyes peeled for glimpses of wildlife that call this place home. From spotted deer gracefully grazing nearby to colourful bird species flitting from tree to tree – every moment spent here feels like a magical encounter with Mother Nature herself.

So whether you're seeking solace in nature's embrace or planning a grand celebration surrounded by breath-taking beauty, Anantum Gateway Resort promises an experience unlike any other. It felt like immersing yourself in luxury while immersing yourself in the wonders of wildlife. An unforgettable journey to unfold at this hidden gem in Jim Corbett National Park Ramnagar was truly enchanting.

At Aaradhyam Restaurant, we embarked on a culinary journey where every dish is a masterpiece, from delectable desserts to flavourful Indian and continental cuisines, the elegant dining experience at limelight, their multi-cuisine restaurant, and savouring the essence of Jim Corbett amidst charming ambiance and delightful flavours made every minute an ecstasy.

Awards and rewards

As active participants of our tour, all members of our group were felicitated for their enthusiastic engagement throughout the journey. It was a moment of pride and solidarity, highlighting the spirit of unity and teamwork among us.

At Anantum Gateway Resorts, guests have the opportunity to choose from a variety of luxurious accommodations tailored to meet their preferences and needs. Among these options are the Sky View Glass Suite and the Plunge Pool Cottage, each offering a unique and indulgent experience.

The Sky View Glass Suite is specifically designed to cater to families, providing spacious rooms and modern amenities that guarantee a comfortable and enjoyable stay. With ample space for relaxation and bonding, this suite serves as a haven for families looking to create lasting memories together. Additionally, the suite features contemporary furnishings and expansive glass windows that offer breath-taking views of the surrounding landscape, allowing guests to absorb themselves in the beauty of Jim Corbett National Park.

On the other hand, the Plunge Pool Cottage offers an unparalleled luxury experience, epitomizing sophistication and elegance. This exclusive accommodation boasts a private plunge pool, allowing guests to indulge in leisurely swims and unwind in privacy. The cottage is adorned with elegant furnishings and upscale amenities, creating an atmosphere of refined luxury and tranquillity. Whether guests seek relaxation or romance, the Plunge Pool Cottage provides an exquisite retreat where every moment is filled with indulgence and serenity.

Exploring the Wilderness of Jim Corbett

No visit to Jim Corbett is complete without exploring its breath-taking wilderness. From thrilling Jeep safaris to tranquil nature walks, there's something for every adventure enthusiast. Jim Corbett National Park is home to a diverse range of wildlife, including the majestic Royal Bengal Tigers. It's a sanctuary of natural beauty and a haven for wildlife enthusiasts. Although we couldn't spot the royal beast but this definably made us promise ourselves to encounter the tiger's captivating allure in our next visit.

Preserving Wildlife and Nature

As travellers, it's our responsibility to preserve the natural beauty and wildlife habitats we encounter. Anantum Gateway Resorts is committed to promoting eco-friendly practices and raising awareness about conservation efforts in Jim Corbett National Park. By supporting sustainable tourism initiatives, they ensure that future generations can also enjoy the wonders of this pristine wilderness.

Anantum Gateway Resorts offered us a truly magical retreat. From the warm hospitality to the luxurious accommodations, every moment spent in Jim Corbett was filled with wonder and delight. Moreover, our stay underscored the importance of preserving wildlife and the environment. Anantum's commitment to eco-friendly practices reminded us of our responsibility as travellers to protect the natural beauty and wildlife habitats we encounter. As we bid farewell to this enchanting destination, we carried with us not just memories of luxury and adventure, but also a renewed determination to contribute to the conservation of our planet's precious ecosystem.





DISCOVER BAHRAIN

An island 'Paradise' in the Middle East

India is a focus market for Bahrain with a strategic approach. The destination aims to elevate its tourism industry by targeting key markets and highlighting its distinctive offerings, including beach-centric projects, cultural landmarks, and the tradition of pearl diving, all contributing to its charm as a premium family-friendly destination. Sally Sedky, Head of Tourism Marketing, Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA), shares on Bahrain's targeted initiatives to amplify its appeal among Indian travellers.

-Naina Nath



Growth driven landscape

Bahrain and the broader region have seen notable advancements and observed influx in global tourist numbers, particularly from the Indian market. "There is a concerted effort to further bolster these figures, with plans to elevate KPIs in the upcoming year through various events and collaborations across diverse sectors. The GCC stands out as a primary source market for Bahrain, alongside India, the UK, Germany, and China. We are trying to focus now more on enhancing these numbers and raising our KPIs for this coming year," adds Sally Sedky.

Bahrain's targeted approach

In 2024, Bahrain plans to implement various marketing activities in India targeting both trade and consumers. "Collaborations with trade partners will be a key focus, aimed at demonstrating Bahrain's interest in attracting more Indian tourists. Efforts will concentrate on promoting Bahrain as a preferred destination for FITs, MICE, as well as weddings within the Indian market. Additionally, Bahrain will work to position itself as an appealing filming destination for Bollywood," mentions Sally Sedky. She further elaborates, "The focus extends to both tier I and II cities in India, primarily targeting cities directly accessible via Gulf Air's flights or those with convenient access to such cities. The Middle East region is witnessing substantial growth as a prominent tourism hub, evident from various perspectives."

Strengthening bonds

Bahrain's positioning is increasingly robust within this

landscape. Collaborative efforts with neighboring GCC countries are integral and the collective aim is to position the GCC as a unified destination. Speaking on the same line, Sally Sedky shares, "We're collaborating closely with the Saudi Tourism Authority, Oman Tourism, and the UAE to collectively promote the GCC as one destination. Joint promotional packages are being developed for international tourists, specifically targeting the Indian market, to showcase combined offerings such as Bahrain and Dubai, Bahrain and Abu Dhabi, and Bahrain and Oman. This collaborative approach underscores the commitment to promoting the entire region as an enticing destination."

Unique family-friendly appeal

As the only island nation in the Middle East, Bahrain is uniquely positioned to offer a distinctive experience, particularly appealing to families. To highlight this aspect, considerable emphasis is placed on promoting Bahrain's island status. The focus is on developing new projects centered around beaches and the sea, catering to a wide range of beach and water-related activities.

"Bahrain is the only island nation in the Middle East and we are actively emphasising on it. This hidden gem is the only island nation in the Middle East and offers a diverse range of experiences for all. Whether you're seeking leisure or business, Bahrain is the ideal destination for a memorable

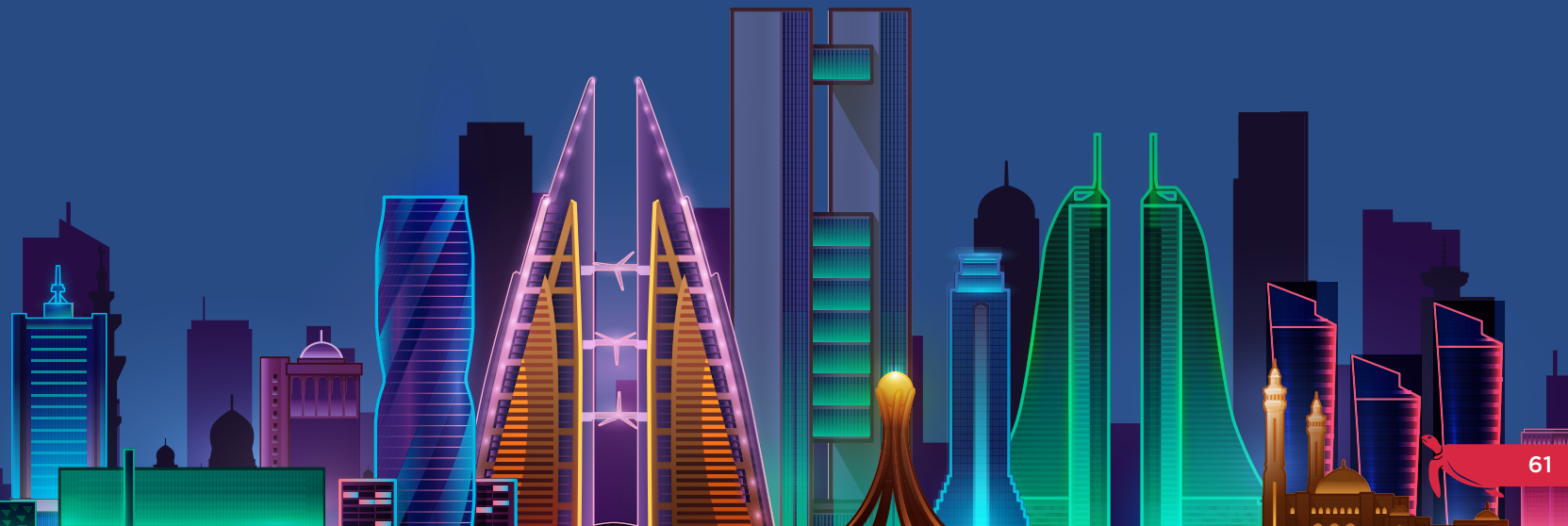
getaway, with a wealth of activities and attractions to explore," shares Sally Sedky.

Numerous waterfront projects are in the pipeline, featuring a variety of amenities such as restaurants, cafes, and entertainment facilities along the coastline. Additionally, a significant number of hotels, ranging from four to five-star accommodations, are set to open between 2024 and 2026, many of which will provide direct access to the beach.

With a concentrated effort on beach and sea activities, Bahrain aims to enhance its appeal as a premier destination for families seeking leisure and relaxation amidst stunning coastal surroundings.

Dive into history

Bahrain is famous for its pearls, known for their exceptional quality, and the nation's rich history associated with them. "Pearl diving is our primary USP and visitors have the opportunity to take part in the pearl diving or snorkeling experience, which is a great tourist-friendly activity. As for the cost, this activity is relatively inexpensive, akin to other water-based recreational activities. Tourists interested in pearl diving are welcome to participate in this activity and have the chance to gather up to 60 oysters. Any pearls discovered during the experience can be kept as a memorable souvenir. As for the cost, this activity is relatively inexpensive, akin to other water-based recreational activities," adds Sally Sedky.



Advocating for change

IGLTA commitment to LGBTQ+ Tourism

The IGLTA Foundation serves as a driving force in empowering LGBTQ+ friendly travel businesses worldwide, focusing on leadership, research, and education. LoAnn Halden, VP-Communications, IGLTA and Thomas 'TJ' Chernick, Partner Engagement Director, IGLTA Foundation share insights about their India Initiatives.

- Naina Nath



LoAnn Halden

Established in 2012 as the philanthropic arm of IGLTA (The International LGBTQ+ Travel Association), the foundation actively supports various initiatives aimed at advancing LGBTQ+ travel. The foundation's efforts include the Fellowship program, providing networking opportunities and mentorship for LGBTQ+ travel professionals; the Transgender Advisory Group, which develops and disseminates resources to support gender-diverse travellers; and the Emerging Destinations & Communities program, assisting LGBTQ+ friendly businesses in destinations lacking governmental support or a well-established LGBTQ+ tourism infrastructure.

The growing annual tradition

In 2023, the IGLTA Foundation

launched its inaugural one-day LGBTQ+ Travel Symposium in India at the LaLiT New Delhi, marking a significant milestone. Building on this success, the foundation announced the upcoming second edition. LoAnn shares, "Recognising India's importance as a key market, both for the association and the foundation, the India-focused symposium will become an annual event, aimed at furthering inclusivity and diversity within the region."

Efforts of IGLTA and its foundation

The association and its foundation work closely to address the increasing interest in LGBTQ+ travel within India. IGLTA has appointed Parth Patnaik as the Membership Development Manager in the Delhi area, tasked with expanding and connecting the network of Indian businesses interested in welcoming LGBTQ+ travellers. This year, the foundation provided a fellowship to LGBTQ+ travel entrepreneur Nakshatra Bagwe, founder of The Backpack Travels, covering his travel expenses to participate in the symposium. "While IGLTA primarily operates online, we place significant value on fostering in-person connections. IGLTA's participation in the LaLiT pavilion at the Great Indian Travel Bazaar in Jaipur

this May highlights the strength of their partnership," shares TJ.

Leveraging networks

The collaboration between the Lalit Suri Hospitality Group and the Keshav Suri Foundation has been instrumental in furthering the goals of the IGLTA Foundation's India Initiative. "As the chair of the IGLTA Foundation India Initiative, Keshav Suri has played a key role in the symposium's growth from its inaugural year to its second edition," says LoAnn.

The involvement of private sector companies is important to advance LGBTQ+ travel inclusivity.

"Their participation not only offers vital support but also extends the reach and impact of initiatives," adds TJ.

Connecting with LGBTQ+ communities worldwide

The trend of LGBTQ+ family travel is on the rise, with various forms emerging, such as same-sex couples travelling with children or parents journeying with their LGBTQ+ offspring. "The growing popularity of traveling for Pride or other LGBTQ+ festivals and events presents exceptional opportunities to engage with local LGBTQ+ communities and like-minded individuals while exploring new destinations," shares LoAnn.

He adds, "The media holds a crucial role in shaping perceptions. While discussions on LGBTQ+ travel are on-going



Thomas 'TJ' Chernick

in India, there's a need for the media to accelerate awareness by sharing positive narratives that enlighten and empower."

Opportunities in LGBTQ+ Tourism

"Developing LGBTQ+ tourism in a market as vast as India poses challenges due to its scale, but it also presents incredible opportunities. Building a robust network and conducting outreach in such a large and diverse market requires time and dedication, but IGLTA is committed to collaborating with Indian businesses for the long term. Having on-the-ground presence is essential for establishing strong connections, understanding local dynamics, and fostering sustainable growth in LGBTQ+ tourism across India," adds LoAnn.



EVENT AFFAIR

CELEBRATING THE BEAUTY OF MALDIVES WITH TRAVEL TURTLE'S TOP 20 MALDIVES



EVENT AFFAIR



Amidst a backdrop of azure hues and whispers of the breeze, the unveiling event of Travel Turtle's Coffee Table Book, 'Top 20 Maldives,' transformed into a mesmerising soiree, igniting the allure of the Maldives for an eager audience. Hotel representatives from the Maldives, alongside travel agents and DMCs gathered to celebrate the grand unveiling of the 'Top 20 Maldives' cover. With an ambiance resonating with the essence of the Maldives' tropical charm, the event became a resounding success, where guests revelled till the wee hours of the night, immersed in the enchanting allure of the island paradise.



SATTE 2024 concludes successfully highlighting Sustainable Tourism and Industry Collaboration

The 31st edition of SATTE 2024, South Asia's leading travel show concluded. The three-day event, organised at the India Expo Mart, Greater Noida, was a resounding success with an overwhelming response from buyers, exhibitors, industry leaders and travellers from across the globe. On the final day, the event witnessed buyer-seller meets, featuring various destination presentations, highlighting diverse offerings from national and international tourism boards. Buyers and sellers engaged actively, generating ample future business opportunities. The event also witnessed several panel discussions and brainstorming sessions on paving the way for the sector's growth and expansion. The event also created a platform for strategic discussion on subjects such as Vision@2047, MICE tourism, tangible and intangible heritage, the market of South Asia and its momentum, and how to boost inbound tourism in India.



IATO celebrates its Annual Day in Retro style

The Indian Association of Tour Operators held its Annual Day Celebration at the iconic Heritage Transport Museum, transforming the venue into a nostalgic paradise with the theme of Retroistan. Families of the members were treated to a day filled with games and activities, evoking cherished memories. From three legged races to drawing competitions for kids, there was something for everyone to enjoy. The event culminated in a grand closing ceremony, where exciting prizes were awarded, marking the end of a memorable day steeped in camaraderie.



2024 edition of OTM receives an overwhelming response

An extraordinary roster of over 1600 exhibitors and over 35,000 industry experts from 60+ countries and 30 Indian States & UTs attended the premier travel expo in Asia, which took place from February 8-10, 2024, at the Jio World Convention Centre, BKC, Mumbai. Bringing together new exhibitors and international travel destinations, the event witnessed the launch of new nations via OTM in the Indian market. Furthermore, places that were previously advertised in India are having a significant influence by displaying themselves with larger pavilions. In comparison to its 2023 edition, the show's scale has increased by more than 50 per cent.



OTOAI hosts a roadshow in collaboration with Korea Tourism Organization

The Outbound Tours Operators Association of India (OTOAI) successfully orchestrated a dynamic roadshow in collaboration with the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO), unveiling the much-anticipated K Incentive Scheme 2.0. This strategic initiative, launched at the Yashobhumi Convention Centre in Dwarka, Sector 25, Delhi, marks a pivotal step in our ongoing efforts to elevate Korean tourism. The event showcased OTOAI's prowess in bringing together a diverse crowd, reinforcing our commitment to spotlighting Korea's vibrant culture. The overwhelming response received stands as a testament to the collective endeavour to boost Korean tourism.



OTOAI hosts members meet evening in collaboration with Qantas Airlines

The Outbound Tours Operators Association of India (OTOAI) organised a spectacular Members Meet Evening on the 15th of February 2024 at the prestigious Kylin Skybar in Vasant Kunj, Delhi, in collaboration with Qantas Airlines. The event, attended by an impressive gathering of 100+ members, emerged as a dynamic platform for OTOAI members to delve into new horizons and opportunities within the outbound tourism landscape. This soirée garnered tremendous support from the Qantas Airlines team, underscoring the airline's vast potential to entice tourists. Mr Riaz Munshi, President of OTOAI, emphasised the association's unwavering commitment to enhancing members' knowledge and expertise. He expressed satisfaction in providing exposure to emerging outbound destinations from India, echoing the success of the event as a testament to the fruitful collaboration with Qantas Airlines.





ITDC introduces new mascot 'Adyant' with a fresh new tagline

India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), a public sector undertaking under the aegis of the Ministry of Tourism, unveils its mascot Adyant-beginning to the end, and tagline "सबसे श्रेष्ठ आतिथ्य की ओर" in a grand ceremony led by Dr Sambit Patra, Chairman, ITDC. The event was attended by esteemed dignitaries including Ms Manisha Saxena, IAS - Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Mr M.R. Synrem, IAS - Managing Director, ITDC, representatives from travel and trade associations, FICCI, CII, ASSOCHAM, Senior ITDC officials and AIHTM students.



Tourism Western Australia & BE Perth organises roadshow in India

Western Australia's first India Roadshow post-pandemic wraps up, following three days of meetings with India-based tourism, travel and trade partners. The roadshow, which was run in collaboration by Tourism Western Australia (WA) and Business Events Perth, saw 16 WA hotels, attractions, experiences, and Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) present their product to more than 300 Indian agents in New Delhi and Mumbai. Tourism WA Managing Director Carolyn Turnbull said India was a priority market for the state, representing an enormous growth opportunity for the WA's visitor economy. "India is one of our fastest recovering markets post-pandemic, and now is a crucial time for us to strengthen our relationships with in-market agents to leverage this potential and ensure we are maximising the growth of this market," said Ms Turnbull.

APPOINTMENTS



Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation

TTDC and Commissioner of Tourism appointed Thiru C. Samayamoorthy, IAS, as the new MD. Prior to this, he served as the Chairman and MD of TTDC, the Principal Secretary of the Tourism Commission, and the Principal Secretary of the Housing and Urban Development Department.

VFS Global

GB Srithar joins VFS Global as Head of Tourism Services. He joins VFS Global from Singapore Tourism Board (STB), where he spent over 27 years in a career that spanned multiple functions, including Human Resources, Organisational Development, and International Marketing. Srithar will support the Client Governments by offering specialised services in Travel, Trade, and Tourism Services. This support will add value and enable these governments to achieve their strategic goals of boosting tourism and trade in their respective countries.



Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation

Sanjay Kumar Jain takes charge as the CMD of IRCTC. A qualified Chartered Accountant (CA), Mr Jain's career is a blend of leadership roles in policy making, commercial ventures and developmental ventures of the Govt. of India and PSUs. He brings with himself more than three decades of extensive experience of handling important portfolios in Ministry of Railways, PSUs and Department of Public Enterprises, Min of Finance, Government of India.

Heavens Portfolio

Heavens Portfolio appoints Yamini Singh as Regional Director of PR and Marketing in India & Middle East. Yamini was recognized on the '40 Under 40' list at the India PR and Corporate Communications Awards by exchange4media in 2023. In her 14+ years of experience, she has worked extensively on building B2B & B2C communication strategies and integrated campaigns focused on building brand awareness and enhancing client reputation.



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CENTARA LUXURY

CENTARA
GRAND

CENTARA

CENTARA
LIFE

COSI

CENTARA
HOTELS & RESORTS



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