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EDITORS LETTER



January reminded me why travel is never just about places. It is about moments. Quiet ones, often unnoticed, that stay with you long after the journey ends.

I remember standing in a long queue at an airport early one morning, passport in hand, watching people around me. Some were tired, some excited, some anxious. Different destinations, different reasons, yet all moving with a shared sense of purpose. That moment stayed with me because it felt like the travel industry itself. Always moving. Always hoping.

The month took me from Spain to Mumbai. FITUR in Spain felt like a gentle opening note to the year, a gateway not only to the Spanish market but to conversations shaped by culture, heritage, and long-term relationships. There is something deeply reassuring about walking exhibition halls where people still believe in face-to-face conversations, in eye contact, in trust built over time.

Almost immediately after, I found myself at OTM Mumbai, India's own gateway to the global travel industry. The contrast was striking. Different pace, different energy, yet the same heartbeat. An industry driven by people who show up, year after year, with belief in what travel can do.

February brings with it SATTE, and with it, a sense of anticipation. SATTE has always felt personal to me. It is the gateway to the South Asian travel industry, a space where ideas are exchanged not just in meeting rooms, but over coffee, over hurried lunches, over familiar smiles. This SATTE Special Issue carries that spirit. Our pages are filled with brands that reflect commitment, consistency, and courage.

While I was travelling, my team was equally on the move. One colleague was in Bengaluru for Brand USA Travel Week, listening closely to stakeholders shaping India-USA travel narratives. Others travelled to Chiang Mai and The Hague, experiencing destinations not as tourists, but as observers, absorbing stories, nuances, and perspectives that matter to our industry.

This issue brings you insights from Rail Europe, voices from cruise professionals, and the timeless luxury of the Myconian Collection. You will also read about platforms and partnerships that reflect how the industry is expanding, carefully and thoughtfully, into new markets.

What ties all of this together is not scale or spectacle. It is intent.

As we step into February and gather again at SATTE, I feel hopeful. Hopeful for meaningful conversations. Hopeful for steady growth. Hopeful for an industry that continues to value relationships above all else.

Here's wishing you a fulfilling February and a month of purposeful business and genuine connections. Stay curious. Stay connected. And as always, keep growing with Travel Turtle.

Bharti Sharma

Bharti Sharma
Editor

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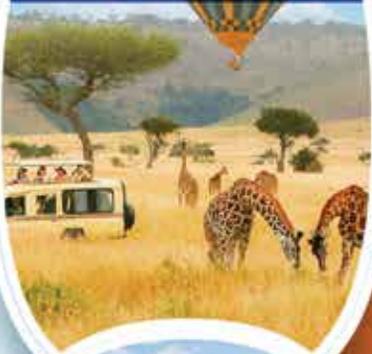


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Air India and Singapore Airlines signs commercial cooperation framework agreement

Air India and Singapore Airlines (SIA) signs a commercial cooperation framework agreement that will pave the way for a deeper, more integrated partnership through the development of definitive joint business agreements. The strengthened collaboration aims to enhance connectivity between India and Singapore, offering customers greater choice, improved convenience, and expanded benefits.



Saudi Tourism Authority and TBO Academy engage Hyderabad travel trade at exclusive destination showcase

Strengthening its presence across key Indian source markets, the Saudi Tourism Authority (STA), in partnership with TBO Academy, hosted an exclusive destination showcase in Hyderabad, engaging over 130 travel trade partners from the region. The event aimed to deepen destination knowledge, enhance sellability, and reinforce Saudi Arabia's position as a high-potential outbound destination for Indian travellers.



Princess Cruises celebrates 25 years of inspiring journeys in India

Princess Cruises celebrates 25 years of operating in India, marking a milestone in establishing premium cruising as a preferred holiday for Indian travelers. Represented by Cruise Professionals, the brand has evolved from a new concept to a top choice for outbound travelers, emphasizing long-term partnerships and market growth.

Centara Hotels & Resorts launches Himalayan Hideaway Resort Pokhara, The Centara Collection

Centara Hotels & Resorts announces the official opening of Himalayan Hideaway Resort Pokhara, The Centara Collection, marking the group's first-ever property in Nepal and further expanding its international portfolio of distinctive destinations. Nestled in the serene hills of Kaskikot, just 35 minutes from Pokhara, the resort offers a secluded Himalayan retreat where contemporary comfort meets the natural beauty of the surrounding mountains.



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New Committee of FHTR takes reins with Surendra Singh Shahpura as President

The Federation of Hospitality and Tourism of Rajasthan (FHTR) successfully concluded its Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Jaipur, marking the commencement of a new leadership term for 2026–2028. The General Body unanimously elected the new Management Committee, reflecting strong unity, confidence, and a shared vision for the future of Rajasthan’s tourism and hospitality sector.



Telangana launches initiative to encourage longer tourist stays

The Telangana government announces a new initiative to encourage visitors to extend their stays in the state, as part of its effort to strengthen Telangana’s position as a premier tourism destination. Tourism and Culture Minister Jupally Krishna Rao highlighted the plan during a workshop organised by the Telangana Tourism Development Corporation, stressing the need to enhance visitor experiences and promote longer visits.



Aeroprime Group welcomes launch of Air Cambodia’s new corporate identity system

Aeroprime Group welcomes the launch of Air Cambodia’s new Corporate Identity System (CIS), marking a significant milestone in the national flag carrier’s brand evolution and long-term growth journey. Air Cambodia officially unveiled its refreshed brand identity, including a new logo and aircraft livery, at Techo International Airport (KTI) in Phnom Penh. This is the airline’s first comprehensive brand update since 2009 and reflects a renewed vision,

Norwegian Cruise Line unveils Norwegian Aura, its largest ship ever, set to debut in 2027

Setting a new benchmark in size and scale, Norwegian Aura will measure nearly 1,130 feet in length, weigh 168,000 gross tons, and accommodate 3,840 guests at double occupancy. The vessel is 10% larger than her predecessors Norwegian Aqua® and Norwegian Luna™ and has been designed with a strong focus on family-centric, immersive experiences, complemented by reimagined guest favourites.



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LIVE WIRE

Last Chance tourism

Before It Slips Through Our Fingers

Traveling to the edge of disappearance, chasing moments that may never exist again, and discovering what our urgency reveals about us.

- Bharti Sharma



The Moment That Made Me Pause

I was scrolling through Instagram, half-awake, half-bored, when a reel stopped me cold. An influencer, cinematic music swelling, windswept hair, tears in her eyes. She was being proposed to in Iceland, on a black-sand beach framed by ice and drama. Reynisfjara. A perfect moment, frozen forever for them.

Except it is not frozen.

The glacier behind them no longer exists.

What lives on as a memory, a photograph, a milestone in their love story, has already slipped into history. The landscape changed. The ice retreated. The place moved on without us.

That reel stayed with me. Not because of the proposal, but because it quietly captured the idea of last-chance tourism. Traveling not just to see beauty, but to see it before it disappears.

Strike While the Ice Is Cold

Last - chance tourism is exactly what it sounds like. Journeys to destinations threatened by climate change, erosion, over - tourism, or time itself. Glaciers that are melting. Islands that are sinking. Coral reefs turning pale and brittle. Ancient towns hollowed out by crowds and rising seas.

For many travellers, the motivation is simple. See it before it is gone. For others, it is more complicated. A mix of urgency, guilt, awe, and the quiet fear of missing out on the world as it once was.

But urgency has consequences. When everyone rushes to see something before it disappears, it often disappears faster.

Too Many Cooks Spoil the Broth

There is a cruel irony at the heart of last-chance tourism. The very act of visiting fragile places can accelerate their decline. Foot traffic erodes ice caves. Boats damage coral. Infrastructure expands to meet demand, not sustainability.

The intention may be reverent, but the impact can be reckless.

Unregulated tourism turns urgency into pressure. It prioritizes volume over value. It mistakes access for appreciation. And in doing so, it risks turning living landscapes into exhausted exhibits.

This is where regulation is no longer optional. It is essential.

A Stitch in Time Saves Nine

If last - chance tourism is here to stay, and it is, then it needs boundaries.

Regulation can take many forms.

Visitor caps. Seasonal closures. Mandatory local guides. Strict safety protocols. Limits on social media driven geotagging. These are not barriers to travel. They are acts of preservation.

Quality tourism matters more than quantity. Fewer visitors who stay longer, learn more, and contribute meaningfully can do far less damage than thousands chasing the same photograph. Travel should not be a stampede. It should be a conversation with a place.

Look Before You Leap

Safety is often overlooked in the romance of disappearing destinations. Glaciers crack. Ice caves collapse. Coastlines shift. Weather patterns grow unpredictable.

When places are marketed as once-in-a-lifetime experiences, risk is sometimes glossed over. Influencer culture rewards drama, not caution. But responsible promotion must tell the full story. Adventure without education is negligence.

Clear guidelines, trained professionals, and honest communication protect both travellers and destinations. A safe experience is not a lesser one. It is a sustainable one.

Places on the Brink

- Glaciers retreating faster than predicted
 - Low-lying islands facing rising sea levels
 - Coral reefs under stress from warming oceans
 - Historic coastal cities threatened by erosion
 - Polar regions opening to tourism for the first time
- Seeing them is powerful. Protecting them is urgent.



The Writing on the Wall

How we promote last-chance destinations matters as much as how we visit them.

The language of doom sells, but it also invites panic travel. Instead of “see it before it is gone,” the message must shift to “see it with care, or not at all.”

Promotion should highlight context, not just aesthetics. History, science, local voices, and long-term impact deserve as much space as beauty shots and viral reels.

A place is not content. It is a living system.

Take Only Memories, Leave More Than Footprints

Perhaps the real question is not whether we should travel to

endangered destinations, but how we define the value of being there. Is it enough to witness? Or do we owe something in return?

Last-chance tourism, when done right, can create advocates, not just visitors. People who leave informed. Who donate, vote, share responsibly, and support conservation long after the trip ends.

The goal should not be to collect disappearing places like souvenirs. It should be to slow their disappearance

The Last Word

That proposal on the black sand beach will live forever in a frame, a caption, a memory. The glacier will not.

Last-chance tourism forces us to confront an uncomfortable truth. Travel is no longer just about discovery. It is about responsibility.

The world is changing whether we watch or not. The question is whether we arrive as witnesses, or as caretakers.

What Responsible Last-Chance Tourism Looks Like

- Limited visitor numbers
- Locally led experiences
- Strict environmental guidelines
- Transparent risk communication
- Promotion focused on education, not urgency

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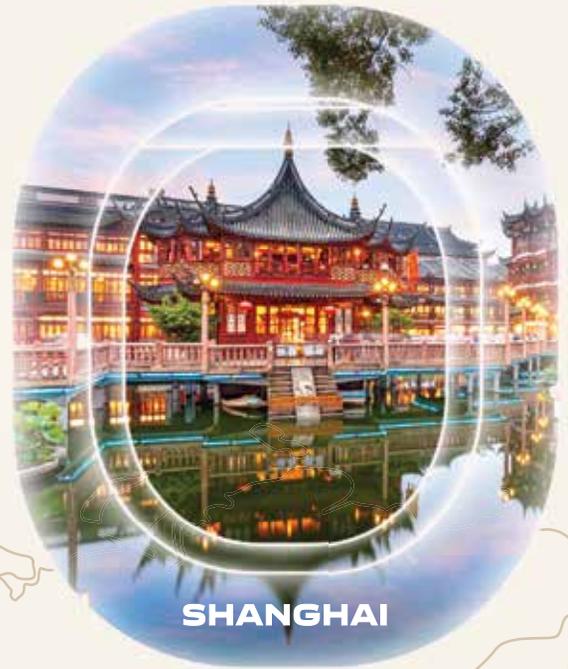
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Budget 2026 - 27

A Travel Turn or A Waiting Game?

The Union Budget 2026–27 unveiled a broad, confident vision for India's travel and tourism industry, emphasising connectivity, quality experiences, human capital, sustainability, and global competitiveness.

-Tripti Jain



PUBLIC EYE

This year's budget reflects a deep understanding of tourism as a powerful economic engine and cultural bridge that connects people, places, and possibilities. Stakeholders across the tourism ecosystem have responded with energy and optimism, buoyed by measures that strengthen traveller confidence, support industry scalability, and elevate India's global tourism brand.

This Budget blends smart policy, enhanced infrastructure, and a people-centric approach that places India's diversity and heritage at the centre of its travel narrative. It marks a step forward in transforming tourism from a recovery-led phenomenon into a structured growth story for the decade ahead.

TCS Rationalisation

A standout announcement that drew widespread industry appreciation is the rationalisation of the Tax Collected at Source (TCS) on overseas tour packages, now set at a flat 2 percent.

This adjustment directly impacts the way Indian travellers plan and budget for international trips. Lower TCS means more disposable income at the point of travel and fewer financial hurdles for travel organisers and travellers alike.



Sunil Kumar R

President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI)

"India Budget 2026 reflects initiatives towards a progressive approach for the Travel & Tourism Industry. While we welcome impactful measures such as the reduction of TCS to 2 percent and the focus on tourism circuits, infrastructure, and skill development, the much-awaited industry status for tourism

continues to remain unaddressed. The reduction in TCS provides immediate relief to Indian tour operators, and we now await detailed clarifications on the announced initiatives."

The TCS rationalisation resonates deeply within the industry, particularly among outbound tour operators who anticipate improved liquidity and a smoother cash-flow cycle. By easing these financial touchpoints, the Budget empowers tour operators to design innovative experiences and attract a wider base of international travellers.



Himanshu Patil

President, Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) and Director, Kesari Tours

"The Union Budget 2026 sends an encouraging signal for India's tourism and travel industry, with a strong focus on infrastructure development, skilling, and destination enhancement. We particularly welcome the reduction of TCS on outbound tour packages to a flat 2 percent, which will ease cash-flow pressures and create a level playing field for Indian outbound tour operators. OTOAI looks forward to further clarifications on implementation."

Building the global narrative

Global tourism today is driven by strong destination branding and active marketing ecosystems. Industry stakeholders have reiterated the importance of reinforcing India's global narrative by enhancing overseas promotional investments, establishing

specialised promotional bodies, and simplifying visa processes.



Ravi Gosain

President, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO)

"While Union Budget 2026 takes positive steps for domestic tourism and infrastructure, India still needs a stronger focus on international promotion. We need a dedicated India Tourism Promotion Board, increased marketing funds, simplified TCS for travel packages, better access to credit for operators, and streamlined visa processes. If we want to compete globally and increase foreign tourist arrivals, a larger budget and a more focused overseas strategy are essential."

This perspective highlights the need for an integrated approach to global positioning that matches India's incredible cultural and experiential depth with an equally powerful promotional engine.

Connectivity unleashed

Tourism thrives where accessibility thrives. The Budget places significant emphasis on improving infrastructure that knits the country together, including highways, high-speed rail projects, aviation expansion, waterways, and coastal connectivity initiatives like seaplane services. These interventions expand the nation's travel geography by bringing lesser-visited destinations into mainstream consideration.

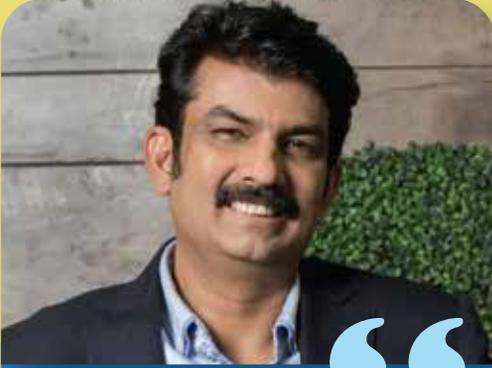
Each new road, rail link, or flight path enhances the ability of travellers to explore remote and culturally significant places, yielding economic opportunities for local communities.

This strategy enriches India's tourism



PUBLIC EYE

landscape by balancing metro-agglomerated travel patterns with emerging regional possibilities.



Rajesh Magow

Chair, FICCI Tourism Committee and Co-founder & Group CEO, MakeMyTrip

“The Budget reinforces the government’s sustained focus on travel and tourism as a long-term growth driver. The rationalisation of TCS on overseas tour packages is a welcome step that addresses upfront liquidity impact on Indian outbound travellers. The government’s infrastructure-led investments have played an important role in supporting the growth of domestic tourism, and it is encouraging to see this momentum being sustained. Continued focus on regional connectivity and destination development, along with an emphasis on skilling and the creation of a national digital repository for destinations, will help improve destination discovery and enhance the overall traveller experience.”

Destination value

India is rich with heritage, nature, culture, and wellness finds a clear spotlight in the Budget’s destination focus. Multi-dimensional programmes aim to unlock the potential of heritage sites, wildlife precincts, coastal waysides, and eco-rich regions, involving local communities, artisans, and service providers in value creation. The Budget outlines strategic enhancements for tourism circuits,

especially those centred on cultural and ecotourism themes. Fifteen archaeological sites are chosen for destination revitalisation, enabling immersive storytelling for travellers seeking deeper engagement with India’s history and culture.

Medical and wellness tourism receives a structured push through the establishment of regional medical hubs that integrate world-class healthcare, therapeutic sciences, and recovery experiences. These hubs are positioned not only as treatment destinations but as holistic travel experiences, blending clinical quality with rejuvenation and well-being. Introducing a National Institute of Hospitality, enhanced training programmes, and targeted skill upgrades for 10,000 tourist guides in priority destinations are forward-thinking steps that equip professionals with the tools to match global standards. These measures enhance service delivery and deepen cultural interpretation, helping travellers connect more meaningfully with India’s lived experiences.

Catalysts for Growth

Tourism’s designation as a priority economic sector with improved access to credit and financial instruments continues to be discussed within industry chambers. A vibrant tourism economy flourishes when its entrepreneurs and small-to-medium operators have access to affordable financing, tailored credit lines, and supportive tax structures.

Enabling structural credit support could empower tour operators, hoteliers, guides, and MSMEs to innovate, expand, and diversify offerings. Such financial inclusivity strengthens domestic tourism businesses and enriches the wider tourism value chain.

Beyond financial support, streamlined compliance and digital integration across processes enhance operational efficiency, boosting confidence for industry stakeholders to scale their ventures.

A season of optimism and purposeful action

The collective industry response to Budget 2026–27 reflects optimism rooted in purposeful action and a belief in the sector’s long-term trajectory. There exists a shared recognition that tourism in India

is about livelihoods, shared experiences, cultural pride, economic resilience, and global connection.



Jagdeep Bhagat

President, TIA

“For the tourism ecosystem in the country, the Union Budget 2026 is disappointing. There are no immediate measures announced for the benefit of tourism stakeholders. While plans for high-speed corridors and cultural hubs sound promising, without an effective mechanism to maintain and manage existing infrastructure, little will change. The reduction in TCS benefits the traveller more than the tour operator, highlighting the government’s lack of clarity on whether it aims to grow domestic, inbound, outbound, or MICE tourism. Tourism will only flourish with a 360-degree approach that supports all verticals of the industry.”

A budget that inspires travel forward

Budget 2026–27 positions India’s tourism sector on a vibrant growth trajectory. Its mix of financial rationalisation, infrastructure investment, skill development, destination enrichment, and global aspiration cultivates an ecosystem made for tomorrow. India’s tourism story continues to unfold with intention, energy, and purpose. For travellers, operators, communities, and destinations, Budget 2026–27 promises not just progress, but travel that is transformative, inclusive, and inspiring.

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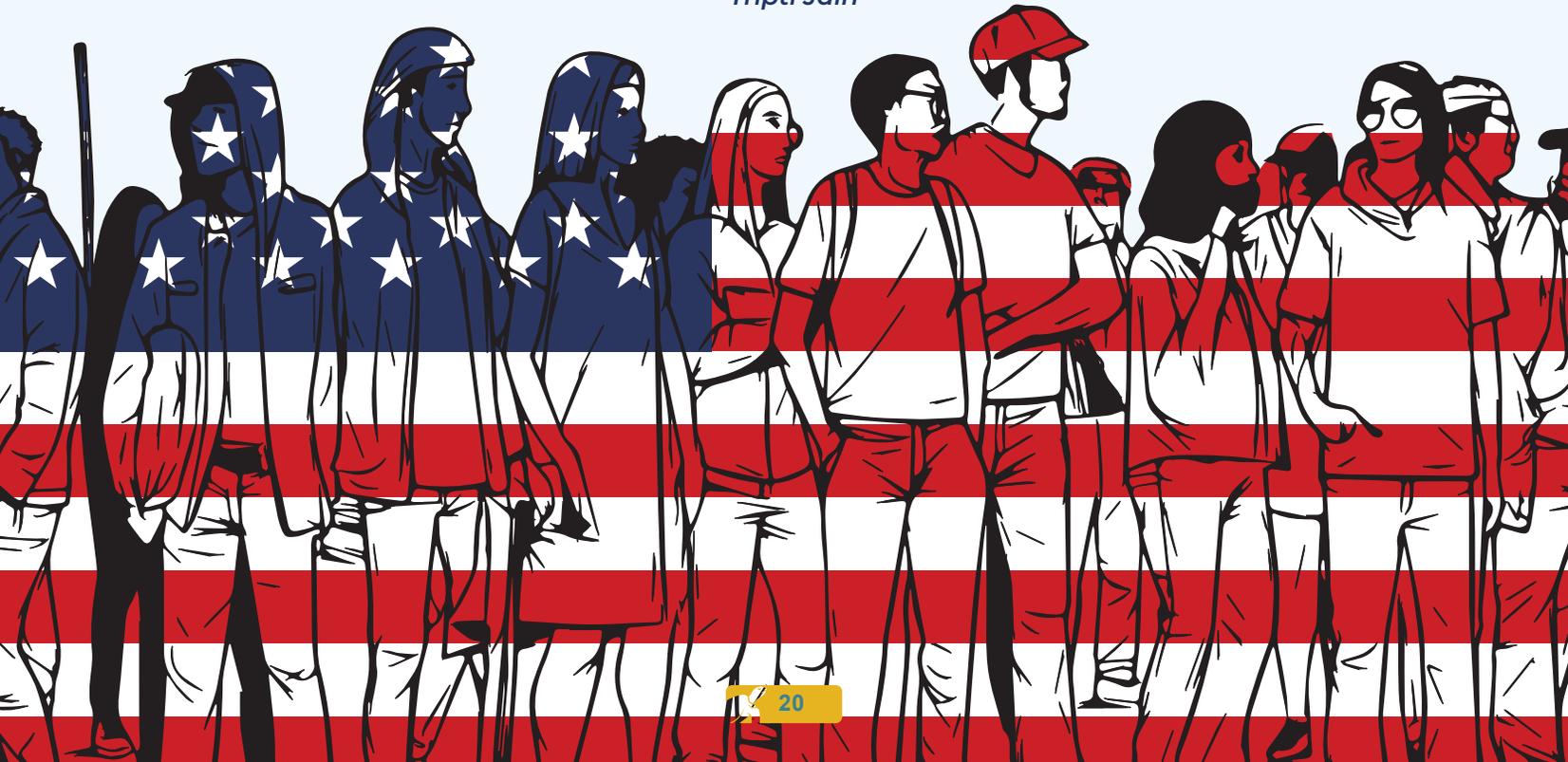
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EVENT AFFAIR

Stories inside Brand USA Travel Week India

Brand USA Travel Week India unfolded in Bengaluru, bringing together destination storytellers, tourism leaders and Indian travel professionals in one vibrant setting. The showcase felt like a gathering of passionate voices united by a shared love for travel.

- Tripti Jain



Conversations flowed with warmth, laughter echoed across networking tables and each interaction carried a glimpse of the experiences waiting across the United States. Carefully curated dinners, media engagements and business meetings created a rhythm that balanced professionalism with genuine connection. From the opening networking evening to focused tabletop sessions, participants experienced a journey that mirrored the diversity of the American landscape itself. At the centre of this experience stood Brand USA, presenting a destination narrative rooted in inclusivity, creativity and endless discovery.

A leadership moment that set the tone

The emotional heartbeat of the event resonated through the words of Fred Dixon, President & Chief Executive Officer, Brand USA, whose presence reflected both strategic vision and personal passion. He shares, "Travel Week India felt like a celebration of curiosity and connection. Every conversation reminded us that travel begins with inspiration and grows through relationships. The enthusiasm from our Indian partners captured the spirit of the United States as a destination where stories unfold in countless ways."

His reflection mirrored the atmosphere across the venue, where participants moved seamlessly from introductions to storytelling, often discovering shared experiences that strengthened professional bonds.

Marketing with emotion

Engagement deepened as marketing conversations highlighted the human side of destination storytelling. Leah Chandler, Chief Marketing Officer, Brand USA, spoke about crafting narratives that resonate beyond brochures and campaigns. She explains, "Indian travellers seek journeys that feel personal and meaningful. Our storytelling approach celebrates moments that travellers carry home, whether it is a



neighbourhood café discovery or a cross-country road trip. Travel Week India created a space where these stories came alive through dialogue."

Trade relationships also flourished through the insights of Jackie Ennis, Vice President, Global Trade Development, Brand USA. She shares, "Each meeting felt like a conversation among friends exploring new possibilities. Partners shared ideas with enthusiasm and curiosity, creating a collaborative energy that strengthens the bridge between Indian travellers and U.S. destinations."

Voices that brought experiences to life

The showcase gained depth through destination representatives who shared heartfelt stories about their cities and regions. Michelle Revuelta, Vice President, Media Relations, Choose Chicago, described the joy of connecting Chicago's personality with Indian travellers. She elaborates, "Chicago carries a spirit of creativity and warmth that resonates with visitors. Conversations during Travel Week felt like inviting partners into the city's neighbourhoods, culinary scene and architectural wonders through storytelling."

Family travel dreams found expression through Juliana Leveroni, Senior Director of Communications, Experience Kissimmee. She shares, "Kissimmee thrives on shared memories. Interactions here revealed how families envision holidays filled with laughter, theme park adventures and relaxed villa moments. These conversations felt joyful and inspiring."

California's iconic allure took centre stage in discussions led by Melissa Yunk, Director, Global Communications, Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board. She explains, "Los Angeles represents creativity and cultural diversity. Dialogue with Indian partners reflected a genuine excitement for experiences ranging from Hollywood glamour to beachside sunsets and vibrant food scenes."

Culture, community and the soul of travel

Regional storytelling added warmth and authenticity to the narrative, highlighting experiences that go beyond landmarks. Sharon Calcote, First Assistant, Louisiana Office of Tourism, shared the emotional resonance of cultural tourism. "Louisiana invites travellers into its music, festivals and culinary traditions. Conversations during the showcase felt like sharing pieces of our heritage and watching curiosity spark among partners eager to bring these experiences to life," she shares. Historical charm and intellectual vibrancy emerged through the perspective of David O'Donnell, Vice President, Strategic Communications, Meet Boston. He says, "Boston tells stories of history and innovation that inspire exploration. Engagements during Travel Week reflected a genuine appreciation for experiences that blend learning with leisure." Urban energy reached its peak through the voice of Tiffany Townsend, EVP, Global Communications, NYC Tourism + Conventions. She shares, "New York City thrives on diversity and creativity. Conversations here captured the excitement travellers feel when imagining their own New York story, from iconic sights to neighbourhood discoveries."

Moments between meetings

The most memorable moments often unfolded between formal sessions. Laughter during coffee breaks, spontaneous photo exchanges and shared travel anecdotes created an atmosphere of camaraderie. Networking dinners transformed into storytelling circles where destination representatives and Indian partners discovered common passions. These unscripted interactions reflected the true spirit of Travel Week, showcasing how relationships grow through genuine connection. Participants described the experience as immersive, collaborative and



deeply inspiring, with each conversation adding a new layer to their understanding of the U.S. tourism landscape.

A showcase that felt like a journey

Brand USA Travel Week India captured the essence of travel itself. The event offered discovery, connection and inspiration in equal measure. Participants experienced the United States through voices, stories and shared aspirations, creating a tapestry of moments that extended far beyond business objectives. The showcase reaffirmed the United States as a destination where diversity meets possibility. Indian travel professionals left with renewed enthusiasm, enriched knowledge and a sense of belonging within a global travel community.

Carrying the spirit forward

As the curtains closed on Brand USA Travel Week India, a feeling of gratitude and excitement lingered among participants. The event celebrated relationships that continue to evolve and stories that continue to inspire journeys. Leadership vision, destination narratives and heartfelt conversations collectively shaped a memorable experience that captured the soul of American travel. The legacy of this showcase lives on in every itinerary crafted, every story shared and every traveller inspired to explore the United States. Travel Week India emerged as a reminder that travel begins with conversation and blossoms into experiences that stay with us long after the journey ends.





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As Indian travellers explore Europe with growing confidence and complexity, Björn Bender, CEO and Executive Chairman, Rail Europe explains how Rail Europe is simplifying the journey while embracing a rapidly changing rail landscape.

- *Naina Nath*

Björn Bender

For Björn Bender, India is no longer an emerging market on the horizon. It is a strategic growth driver. As European rail expands with new operators and cross-border services, his focus is clear. Make complexity manageable, and make rail easier to sell and experience, especially for long-haul markets like India.

Trips that Matter

India's outbound travel to Europe is rarely casual. Björn shares, "For many Indian travellers, a trip to Europe is a major milestone. These journeys often include multiple countries, stretch over longer durations, and are planned well in advance. There is also a strong multigenerational component. Comfort, clarity, and the ability to adapt plans matter. We see complex itineraries and long stays, which make flexibility and cross-border connectivity essential." For Rail Europe, this means offering products and distribution models that support layered journeys, while working closely with Indian travel advisors who guide travellers through Europe's rail system with confidence.

Behind every Itinerary

In India, travel advisors remain deeply involved. Björn explains, "Unlike more mature markets, Indian advisors are engaged throughout the entire journey. From itinerary design to managing changes on the go, their role is hands-on. That shapes expectations. Reliability and post-booking support are not optional. "Our role is to simplify the European rail ecosystem and provide tools that make rail easier to sell as

part of a broader European trip. Trust, in this case, is built on clarity and responsiveness."

The Flexibility Question

Rail passes continue to resonate strongly with Indian travellers. "Rail passes fit well with the way many Indian travellers experience Europe," he says. The appeal lies in the ability to move across destinations while retaining some freedom over timing and routing. But flexibility alone is not enough. "The focus will increasingly be on clarity and usability." Travellers and advisors want to understand exactly what flexibility means in practice. Clear conditions, digital access, and simple explanations become crucial, especially for first-time rail users in Europe.

Managing a Changing Network

European rail is evolving quickly, with new operators and expanded cross-border services entering the network. While this creates opportunity, it also increases complexity. Björn says, "European rail is becoming more diverse. Our strategy is focused on bringing this complexity together into a single, reliable access point. Rather than expecting partners to navigate multiple systems and rule sets, we position ourselves as the aggregator that makes selling simpler."

Rail Within the Bigger Journey

For long-haul travellers from India, rail rarely stands alone. It fits into a larger itinerary that begins with an international

flight and continues across several countries. "Rail remains our core expertise, but its value is greatest when it works seamlessly alongside other transport modes," he says. The priority is ensuring rail integrates smoothly with flights and other transport modes. By offering consistent cross-border content and distribution solutions, Rail Europe helps advisors build coherent, end-to-end journeys without friction.

Priorities for the Next Phase

Strengthening high-growth markets like India remains central. Björn explains, "In markets like India, our priority is to keep strengthening our partner ecosystem. That includes tools built specifically for group travel, such as Rail Europe Group Easy, and a multi-provider distribution model that brings multiple European operators into a single access point for FIT travel." Artificial intelligence also plays a role, though in a measured way. "We are using AI practically and responsibly to help structure and present rail content more clearly." The goal is not automation for its own sake, but clarity, especially in markets where local rail knowledge may be limited. At its core, the strategy is straightforward. Make international rail easier to sell, easier to manage, and easier to integrate. As Indian travellers continue to explore Europe in more ambitious ways, Rail Europe is positioning itself as the bridge between growing demand and an increasingly intricate rail network.



THE BUSINESS OF STAYING RELEVANT

Understanding India's outbound shift through sharper engagement, real conversations, and deeper market commitment. Lubaina Sheerazi, CEO and Co-founder, BRANDit shares how she has spent years helping global destinations and travel brands decode India.

- Naina Nath



Lubaina Sheerazi

India is no longer treated as a market to test. It is a market to build. Through representation across tourism boards, luxury hospitality, niche DMCs, and experiential players, BRANDit sits at the intersection of global ambition and Indian outbound demand, watching the shift unfold from the front row.

Strategic, not supplemental

BRANDit's portfolio includes national tourism boards, luxury hospitality groups, niche DMCs and experiential players, all treating India as a core growth market rather than an add on. Lubaina explains "Our current client mix reflects how the Indian outbound market has evolved. That shift is visible in the kind of brands choosing to invest here. Over the years, some destinations arrived needing a reset. Others were entering the market for the first time. In both cases, our approach remained consistent. Build patiently. Stay present.

Resist the temptation of short-lived visibility spikes."

Today, the focus is on brands willing to commit to sustained engagement, particularly across MICE, destination weddings, luxury and experiential travel. As Lubaina puts it, "The market is maturing, and so are the conversations we are having with our clients. The dialogue has moved beyond introductions and launches. It is now about scale, segmentation, and year-round presence."

Travel with intent

Planning now begins with a clear reason. Lubaina says, "Trips are being built around a certain purpose. A celebration. A wellness break. A culinary trail. A multi-generational reunion. The reason shapes the route. Indian travellers today are far more self-aware about why they are traveling. Most importantly, they are confident and globally exposed. They research deeply and expect thoughtful curation, not generic packages."

Even within established destinations, there is a desire to move beyond the standard circuit. She adds, "Travellers are now asking, what else can I see, and how do I experience this differently! That curiosity is pushing demand for more layered itineraries and greater interest in regional depth. Expectations are specific, and cookie-cutter packages struggle to hold attention."

The Gypsy Travel Festival 2026

TGTF is designed as a consumer travel showcase that brings destinations, hospitality brands and experience-led travel companies directly to the Indian traveler. Unlike traditional trade events, it is built around conversations with end consumers.

Lubaina shares, "TGTF has moved from a curated travel showcase to becoming a serious consumer

engagement platform. This year, that shift was visible across the show floor. With partners such as Amazing Thailand, Visit Sapporo and Magical Kenya, the emphasis was on immersive storytelling rather than static booths."

But the real shift showed up in the audience. "Visitors were not browsing casually; they were evaluating destinations," she says. In other words, attendees were not drifting through the space collecting brochures. They were asking detailed questions about itineraries, visa processes, sustainability, seasonality, and niche experiences. Many already had their travel windows mapped out.

What they walked away with was clarity. A clearer sense of product differentiation and how a destination aligns with their own travel style. It allowed for real decision making, in a way scrolling through websites often does not. For the industry, it is a reminder that Indian consumers are ready for platforms that go beyond surface-level promotion.

The pressure points

Opportunity exists, but so do expectations. "The biggest challenge today is speed," says Lubaina. Air capacity shifts, currency fluctuations, global events and sentiments change quickly, and representation companies are expected to respond just as fast. Then there is the digital overload, "the noise". Indian consumers are flooded with travel content across platforms. "Standing out requires sharper storytelling and far more precision than before." Visibility without differentiation fades quickly.

Accountability has also tightened. "Representation today cannot rely on visibility alone; it must demonstrate tangible business impact." Campaigns are expected to show measurable outcomes across trade, media, and digital

channels, not just presence. But interestingly, the upside is that the industry is being pushed toward smarter planning and more disciplined execution.

Choosing depth

Lubaina is clear about where she wants to take BRANDit. "Our priority moving into 2026 is depth over dispersion." Instead of spreading thin, the focus is on becoming a strategic partner, offering sharper market intelligence and clearer direction, and going deeper with existing partners.

Lubaina also wants to build platforms and conversations that connect destinations and Indian travellers in more meaningful ways. Not every engagement needs to look the same. "Technology and data will play a larger role in how we plan and measure impact, but human insight will remain at the core." For her, numbers inform decisions, but instinct and experience still guide them.

Evolve or be left behind

The travel trade remains central to this ecosystem. "The travel trade has played a foundational role in shaping the growth of outbound travel in India." That role is not diminishing, but it is changing. "Just evolve continuously," adds Lubaina. Specialisation, deeper product knowledge, and genuine collaboration with destinations will define who thrives. Training and real familiarity with the product are becoming non-negotiable.

India's outbound journey is still unfolding. The scale is undeniable. Exposure is global. But the next chapter will not be shaped by noise. It will belong to those who move beyond surface visibility and build genuine understanding in a market that now knows exactly what it wants.

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MYCONIAN COLLECTION



*Mykonos,
My
Way*

Myconian Collection Hotels, Resorts & Villas is a portfolio of 15 five-star properties shaped by one family's vision and nurtured over five decades. George Daktylides, CEO & Founder, Myconian Collection Hotels, Resorts & Villas shares more about its legacy.

-Tripti Jain

HOTELLIGENCE



In the heart of the Cyclades, where whitewashed architecture cascades toward the Aegean and mythology lingers in the salt-kissed air, Mykonos has evolved into one of the world's most compelling island destinations. Amidst this magical landscape is situated Myconian Collection Hotels, Resorts & Villas. From honeymooners and celebratory groups to MICE delegations and multi-generational Indian families, the collection is designed to serve every segment with equal finesse. The brand continues to grow thoughtfully, guided by personalised service, prime locations, and a deeply rooted Greek warmth.

A LEGACY BUILT, ONE HOTEL AT A TIME

The journey began in the 1970s with the opening of Myconian Korali, the first property that would lay the foundation for a hospitality empire. George reminisces about the first property of the collection and shares, "Our first hotel opened back in the seventies, and from that moment onwards, every step we took was very slow and very mature. We never rushed growth. We allowed each

property to develop its own personality, its own rhythm. Today we count fifteen hotels, and every single one has been created from the scratch with dedication, attention to detail, and above all, love. Our philosophy has always been simple: we care about satisfied clients. Everything else follows naturally."

The most recent addition, Myconian Kykloi, opens this season, marking another milestone in the family's steady expansion. Furthermore, he adds, "Expansion for us comes at the right moment," he explains. "We move forward carefully so that we can avoid mistakes and maintain the standards we are known for. Hospitality is about longevity. It is about creating something that will still be meaningful twenty or thirty years from now."

PRIME LOCATIONS, TAILORED EXPERIENCES

Mykonos may be globally renowned, yet it remains intimate and accessible. Every Myconian Collection hotel occupies a prime address, ensuring effortless connectivity to beaches, nightlife, heritage sites, and the island's charming town centre.

Highlighting more about the same



Marios Daktylides

George shares, "All of our hotels are located in prime areas so that we can fulfil the different needs and wishes of our guests. Mykonos is a small island. From one side to the other it takes around forty-five minutes, and from our hotels most key attractions are just fifteen to twenty minutes away. Guests can reach a museum, a beach, a beach club, or the town very easily and very comfortably."

The collection is structured to serve diverse travel segments. Families often prefer resorts such as Myconian Imperial and Myconian Sunrise, where space and amenities cater to all generations. Couples and honeymooners gravitate towards Myconian Utopia, Myconian Korali, and Myconian Ambassador, drawn by privacy and panoramic views.

He adds, "It always depends on the segment of the client and what they are looking for, we do not focus on only one market segment. Our hotels can support families, honeymooners, MICE groups,

celebrations, and experiential travellers equally well. Flexibility is one of our strongest advantages."

INDIA: A GROWING CONNECTION

India's outbound travel landscape is expanding rapidly, with Greece emerging as an aspirational destination. George views the Indian market as a promising long-term partnership. He shares about his observations about the Indian market and shares, "Indian travellers have started discovering Greece more actively in the past two years. We are building on that momentum. We understand that awareness takes time, so we are working closely with our partners in India to position Mykonos as a destination for all types of Indian travellers. In the future, we truly believe we will become a preferred name for this market."

He recognises the cultural parallels between Greece and India and adds, "Indians are very family-oriented, and Greeks are the same. Family is central to our lives. Multi-generational travel is something we see increasing globally, and Mykonos is ideal for that. Grandparents, parents, children, everyone can find something they enjoy on the island."

Food remains a key



HOTELLIGENCE

consideration for Indian travellers, and the group is responding with a thoughtful initiative. Further he explains, "Starting this year, we are considering introducing a small Indian restaurant concept within the collection. The idea is that the chef may rotate every month from one hotel to another, so that our Indian guests can enjoy familiar flavours during their stay. It is a trial project, and we are very interested to see the response and the impact it will create."

SERVICE AS THE SIGNATURE

Luxury in Mykonos carries international prestige, yet George believes the real differentiator lies in personalised attention. He says, "Our number one asset is

door-to-door sales calls and individual conversations. Our partners appreciate that we come to them directly and share our news personally. Strong collaborations happen when both sides bring energy and willingness to work together," he shares.

A GLOBAL ISLAND

Mykonos attracts a diverse international audience, supported by its international airport and global reputation. Shedding more light on the major source markets George shares, "We have around fifteen to twenty percent of our guests coming from the United States, ten to fifteen percent from the UK, and strong representation from Brazil and other European

clubs that preserve the feeling of the old Mykonos, and accommodation options for different budgets. The island is accessible to a wide audience." He encourages travellers to explore beyond stereotypes and adds, "Greeks themselves spend their holidays here. You can enjoy three or four days of a very good vacation with a reasonable budget. The island has a bit of everything, and that is its true strength."

WHERE HISTORY MEETS HORIZON

A visit to Delos, the sacred archaeological island near Mykonos, remains a highlight for George. He shares, "The first thing everybody should do is visit Delos. It is the place

unwind. The island adapts to you."

A VISION REALISED

One of the projects closest to his heart is the development of the Elia area, where seven Myconian Collection hotels now stand. George shares, "When we started in Elia around the year 2000, it was a piece of land where many people could not imagine such development. We had to dig into the mountain and create hotels like pieces of a puzzle. Looking at it today, it seems natural. At that time, it required vision, courage, and patience. Seeing that transformation is one of the most rewarding experiences of my career."

AN OPEN INVITATION

The Myconian Collection



the service we provide. Because we are a family-run company, we remain very close to the operation. Everything is done from the beginning with care. We focus on personalised service, understanding each guest's expectations, and creating experiences that feel genuine rather than standardised." This approach extends to B2B relationships as well. "We prefer to meet our partners personally, to sit down and discuss ideas face to face. We do not rely only on trade fairs. We believe in

markets. Now we see Indians coming up as well. This mix of nationalities creates a vibrant atmosphere and ensures that our brand remains stable across different markets." Mykonos often carries a perception of exclusivity linked to high-profile visitors. George sees a broader reality and emphasis, "Mykonos offers something for everyone. You can find very beautiful products at good value. There are restaurants where you can dine without paying a fortune, beach

where, according to mythology, Apollo was born. It represents the origins of our civilisation in this region. When you walk through Delos, you feel the history and the energy of thousands of years." He recommends a five-day stay to fully embrace Mykonos and adds, "Five days and four nights allow you to explore the beaches, visit Delos, enjoy the town, and relax properly. Mykonos is for young people, for families, for couples, for those who want to celebrate and for those who simply want to

embody a rare blend of family values, strategic growth, and heartfelt hospitality. Fifteen properties across Mykonos offer diverse experiences united by a single promise: personalised service and authentic Greek warmth. For Indian travellers exploring new horizons, Mykonos presents a destination rich in culture, celebration, and connection. For travel partners, it offers collaboration grounded in trust and long-term commitment.



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islandlife

Travel



Dheeraj Ranjan Kumar

DMC Hub's vision One window, many worlds

DMC Hub is emerging as a strategic step forward, designed to bring structure, scale, and consistency to destination management. Dheeraj Ranjan Kumar, Founder Director, Balitrip Wisata | Founder & Group Principal, DMC Hub shares the vision behind creating the brand.

- Tripti Jain

environment. Partners look for reliability, speed, accountability, and a single coordination window that simplifies destination handling. Our journey with Balitrip Wisata helped us build strong operational depth in Bali, and DMC Hub represents the next natural step toward a multi-destination ecosystem driven by processes, technology, and partner-first execution."

Designing for the modern traveller

Traveller expectations continue to evolve toward richer experiences, flexibility, and seamless service touch points. Travel partners seek dependable destination collaborators who support them in delivering memorable journeys with consistency and efficiency. Dheeraj explains, "Traveller expectations now revolve around faster confirmations, curated experiences, smoother on-ground execution, and higher service standards. DMC Hub supports travel partners by integrating strong destination contracting, robust execution capability, and a structured B2B workflow powered by technology and SOPs. The focus remains on enabling partners to deliver trust to their customers through consistent service and transparent coordination."

Built for the trade

DMC Hub has been conceptualised as a comprehensive B2B platform catering to diverse segments within the travel ecosystem. The platform supports travel agencies, tour operators, MICE planners, corporate travel specialists, group organisers, and digital distribution partners seeking structured land arrangements. Dheeraj reflects on its market

vision and explains, "India outbound remains our strongest market and continues to inspire our growth strategy. DMC Hub has been designed with a global mindset that supports scaling across destinations while maintaining a uniform standard of service and accountability. The platform empowers travel partners to access reliable destination support and structured workflows that simplify operations and enhance customer satisfaction."

Execution at the core

A distinctive strength of DMC Hub lies in its dual ecosystem approach that bridges source market expertise with destination execution. India-based teams manage sales, quotations, and partner engagement, and destination teams oversee contracting, logistics, and guest experience delivery. This alignment ensures responsiveness and operational control across the journey lifecycle. Dheeraj highlights the execution philosophy and shares, "DMC Hub thrives on deep on-ground execution supported by payroll teams including drivers, guides, airport representatives, and guest relationship managers. This structure creates consistency in delivery and enhances accountability. Flight-inclusive fixed departures form another strong pillar, supported through series operations with leading airlines such as VietJet, Singapore Airlines, and Malaysia Airlines, enabling reliable group movements and structured travel programmes."

Collaboration as the catalyst for innovation

The future of travel thrives on collaboration that unites destination partners, travel trade stakeholders, and technology

platforms into a cohesive ecosystem. DMC Hub encourages this collaboration through transparent contracting, joint sales initiatives, and technology-enabled distribution that accelerates confirmations and enhances operational clarity. Dheeraj concludes and shares, "Innovation in travel emerges from stronger systems, deeper collaboration, and shared accountability between partners. DMC Hub aims to foster long-term relationships through structured destination partnerships, trade engagement, and a culture that values consistency and trust. The platform represents our commitment to building an ecosystem where travel partners grow with confidence and deliver exceptional experiences to their customers."

Platform with purpose and perspective

DMC Hub stands as a reflection of evolving industry needs and a forward-looking vision that prioritises structure, scalability, and trust. The platform blends operational depth with strategic collaboration, creating an environment where travel partners access dependable destination support and travellers enjoy seamless journeys.

As global travel continues to expand, DMC Hub's process-driven model and partner-first philosophy position it as a meaningful contributor to the next phase of destination management. The platform embodies a journey that connects markets, strengthens partnerships, and delivers experiences shaped by reliability, innovation, and shared growth.

The evolution of the global travel trade reflects a growing demand for efficiency, trust, and deeper collaboration between source markets and destination partners. Travel companies are reimagining their operating models to deliver seamless coordination, faster confirmations, and reliable on-ground experiences that strengthen traveller confidence and partner relationships. Built on years of operational expertise and B2B relationships, DMC Hub extends a vision that connects travel partners with dependable destination ecosystems. The platform represents a shift toward process-driven delivery, stronger contracting, and a unified workflow that empowers travel professionals to focus on growth and customer experience.

A decade of foundations

The journey toward DMC Hub is rooted in a decade of building destination expertise and B2B trust. Bali served as the starting point for a structured ecosystem encompassing contracting, transport, operations, and guest experience teams. This foundation paved the way for a scalable model that could be replicated across multiple destinations. Dheeraj shares, "DMC Hub was created from a clear understanding of what travel partners truly need in today's



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Beyond brick & blueprints Phuket9

Guided by a vision rooted in long-term value and heartfelt hospitality, Phuket9 has spent over two decades curating spaces that blend comfort, culture, and contemporary elegance. Miss Papachorn Meppa, Chairman & Managing Director, Phuket9 Real Company Ltd. about the journey of the brand.

- *Tripti Jain*

Phuket9's portfolio celebrates diversity in lifestyle while maintaining a consistent commitment to quality. Each development reflects a narrative of craftsmanship and emotional resonance, inviting residents to experience Thailand as a place to belong rather than simply visit. From private pool villas nestled in serene landscapes to boutique condominiums designed for modern urban living. Luxury real estate in Thailand has evolved into a story of lifestyle, emotion, and purposeful design. Phuket9 Real Company Ltd stands at the centre of this transformation, shaping residences that capture the rhythm of tropical living and the aspirations of global homeowners.

Tropical dreams, thoughtfully designed

Phuket9's projects across Phuket and emerging Thai destinations embody a design philosophy that balances luxury with warmth. Spacious layouts, seamless indoor-outdoor transitions, and natural materials create residences that feel immersive and inviting. The company's signature private pool villas remain a highlight, offering privacy, generous living areas, and resort-inspired amenities that cater to families and lifestyle investors alike.

Papachorn Meepa shares her perspective on this design ethos and shares, "Every Phuket9 project begins with an emotional blueprint. We imagine how families will gather, how sunlight will enter the living spaces, and how the surroundings will shape daily experiences. Tropical living carries a sense of calm and celebration at the same time. Our villas and residences aim to capture that balance so residents feel both relaxed and inspired in their everyday lives."

This philosophy extends to boutique condominiums that blend

functionality with refined aesthetics. Smart layouts, curated interiors, and landscaped communal areas create environments where residents enjoy both privacy and community.

Living communities with soul

Phuket9's evolution reflects a shift from standalone properties to integrated lifestyle communities. Developments increasingly incorporate wellness facilities, leisure zones, and hospitality - inspired services that elevate everyday living. Residents find themselves surrounded by curated experiences that enhance wellbeing and social connection.

Papachorn Meepa highlights the intention behind this holistic approach and explains, "Modern homeowners seek more than a beautiful residence. They seek an ecosystem that supports wellness, connection, and meaningful living. Our integrated communities combine hospitality elements, wellness spaces, and leisure facilities so residents feel they are part of a vibrant lifestyle rather than simply occupying a property."

Smart home technology and sustainability - driven planning further enrich these communities. Thoughtful landscaping, energy - efficient solutions, and wellness-oriented design principles ensure that each project remains future - ready while preserving the natural beauty of its surroundings.

Welcoming Indian families into the Phuket9 story

India's growing affinity with Thailand has opened new opportunities for Phuket9 to create culturally attuned living spaces. Indian buyers value spaciousness, privacy, and celebratory environments that accommodate extended families and social gatherings. Phuket9's

design adaptations reflect a deep appreciation of these preferences. Speaking on the same lines Papachorn Meepa explains, "Indian families bring a beautiful sense of togetherness and celebration into their homes. Our larger villa configurations and private pool residences resonate strongly with these values. Spaces are designed for multi - generational comfort, festive gatherings, and moments of shared joy. This cultural understanding allows us to create homes that feel familiar even in a different country."

Design influenced by culture and celebration

Indian cultural influences have inspired thoughtful modifications in layout and functionality across several Phuket9 developments. Open-plan living areas support family interactions, adaptable kitchens cater to diverse culinary styles, and landscaped outdoor spaces offer ideal settings for celebrations and intimate events. Papachorn Meepa reflects on the importance of cultural empathy in design and shares, "A home carries memories of rituals, traditions, and celebrations. Cultural sensitivity allows us to create residences that honour these emotional dimensions. Partnerships with Indian event planners and hospitality experts add another layer of comfort for our clients, ensuring their lifestyle needs are seamlessly supported."

Growth anchored in relationships

Phuket9's future vision includes strengthening engagement with the Indian travel trade and real estate community through familiarisation trips, investment showcases, and collaborative partnerships. Relationship-driven growth remains central to the

company's philosophy, reinforcing trust and shared aspirations with global stakeholders.

Papachorn Meepa shares her outlook on this collaborative journey and says, "Partnerships create pathways for growth and understanding. Engagement with the Indian travel trade allows us to share Phuket9's story in an authentic way while learning from market insights and client expectations. Long-term relationships inspire innovation and ensure our developments remain relevant and meaningful for international buyers."

Building tomorrow's lifestyle legacies

Phuket9 Real Company Ltd continues to shape Thailand's luxury real estate narrative with a blend of emotional intelligence, design excellence, and cultural sensitivity. The company's journey reflects a commitment to creating homes that transcend physical structures and become cherished spaces of belonging. Papachorn Meepa's leadership philosophy reinforces this enduring vision and shares, "Real estate carries the power to shape legacies. Our goal is to create residences that families treasure across generations, spaces where memories unfold naturally and investments grow with confidence. Phuket9's journey remains guided by passion, empathy, and a belief in the timeless value of thoughtfully crafted living environments."

Phuket9's story unfolds as a celebration of tropical elegance, meaningful design, and global connections. Each project invites residents into a lifestyle defined by comfort, beauty, and emotional resonance, reinforcing the company's position as a creator of destinations that truly feel like home.



Skyward Synergy: Air IQ & Udaan Hotels

Air IQ and Udaan Hotels & Resorts are complementary forces, creating value for travel partners through a blend of distribution strength and hospitality excellence. Ajay Wadhawan, Executive Director, Air IQ & Udaan Hotels shares about the legacy.

- Tripti Jain

India's B2B travel landscape is evolving into a dynamic ecosystem powered by connectivity, technology, and strong trade partnerships. The brands reflect a shared vision rooted in accessibility, quality, and scalable growth. Their journey represents a strategic alignment of air distribution capabilities with immersive hospitality offerings, giving trade partners an integrated platform that enhances both reach and revenue potential.

Purpose with precision

Air IQ's foundation lies in enabling travel partners to access products and services that strengthen their competitiveness. The company's philosophy focuses on empowering trade associates with resources that elevate their business potential and expand their offerings.

"Air IQ's philosophy revolves around supporting trade associates, tour operators, and travel partners with content that may otherwise remain out of reach due to limited demand or accessibility. Air tickets, hotels, and ancillary services form the backbone of this support system, creating a comprehensive ecosystem that benefits the entire trade community. Our role also extends to airline and hospitality partners who seek wider distribution, and our network offers them a powerful platform to connect with markets across geographies," shares Ajay.

Vision 2026

A clear roadmap guides Air IQ's future growth, with expansion of its trade base and business volume at the core of its strategy. The brand's ambitious outlook reflects confidence in the strength of its network and the resilience of India's travel trade.

"Our vision is to enrol over one lakh



Ajay Wadhawan

trade associates, expanding from our current base of more than seventy-seven thousand partners. This growth aligns with our goal of achieving at least forty-five percent increase in business volume by 2026. Every step of this journey focuses on enhancing value for partners, strengthening distribution channels, and building sustainable growth across all verticals," explains Ajay.

Himalayan harmony

Udaan Hotels & Resorts stands as a hospitality brand defined by its commitment to quality and experiential stays. Each property reflects a blend of scenic charm, service excellence, and culinary distinction.

"Udaan Hotels & Resorts places top priority on product and service quality across every property, regardless of size. Each location is thoughtfully chosen, offering spectacular Himalayan views and immersive surroundings that create memorable guest experiences. Our reputation for exceptional vegetarian cuisine further

strengthens the brand's identity, resonating with travellers seeking comfort, authenticity, and delightful culinary journeys," elaborates Ajay.

Two brands, one promise

The synergy between Air IQ and Udaan Hotels & Resorts forms a powerful proposition for B2B partners. Together, the brands deliver an integrated travel solution that simplifies planning and enhances value creation.

Ajay highlights more about this and explains, "Our trade associates benefit from a seamless combination of air and hospitality solutions. Air IQ's distribution capabilities complement the experiential stays offered by Udaan Hotels & Resorts, enabling partners to curate comprehensive travel packages with ease. This integrated approach strengthens partner relationships and enhances overall customer satisfaction."

Market momentum

India's B2B travel sector is

experiencing steady growth supported by digital transformation and a collaborative ecosystem. The market's maturity allows both established players and emerging businesses to thrive through innovation and adaptability.

"The Indian B2B travel market demonstrates remarkable maturity and continues to strengthen with the entry of new participants. Technology-driven coordination plays a significant role in shaping success, and partners who embrace advanced solutions position themselves for sustained growth. The industry's evolution reflects a collective movement towards efficiency, transparency, and enhanced service delivery," says Ajay.

Charting tomorrow

Growth remains a defining theme for both Air IQ and Udaan Hotels & Resorts, supported by a well-planned expansion strategy across travel and hospitality verticals. The roadmap reflects a commitment to consistency, quality, and partner-centric innovation.

"Our expansion journey spans all verticals including Air IQ, Air IQ Online, TripXL, and Udaan Hotels & Resorts. Each initiative follows a structured approach that prioritises operational excellence, product innovation, and partner satisfaction. Continuous focus on delivering reliable services ensures that our clients receive the quality and value they expect from us," concludes Ajay.

Air IQ and Udaan Hotels & Resorts represent a compelling example of how distribution strength and hospitality excellence can converge to create meaningful value in the B2B travel space. Their shared vision reflects a commitment to empowering partners, enhancing guest experiences, and driving sustainable growth across markets.

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Moumita Mukherjee Paul

India's outbound traveller is evolving with confidence and clarity. Decision-making today blends aspiration with awareness. Moumita Mukherjee Paul, Director of Sales & Marketing – India, Centara Hotels & Resorts shares about the pulse of the brand in the Indian market.

-Tripti Jain





HOTELLIGENCE



Families seek immersive value, honeymooners look for exclusivity with emotion, and corporates prioritise venues that inspire. Within this dynamic shift, Centara Hotels & Resorts is witnessing remarkable traction across three distinct yet complementary destinations: the Maldives, Dubai and Nepal.

Maldives magic

The Maldives continues to anchor Centara's India momentum. Properties such as Centara Grand Lagoon Maldives, Centara Mirage Lagoon Maldives, Centara Ras Fushi Resort & Spa Maldives, and Machchafushi Island Resort & Spa Maldives are recording strong year-to-date occupancy from Indian guests, with festive periods delivering impressive surges.

Shedding some light on the same Mounmita shares, "The Indian market has embraced our Maldives portfolio with tremendous enthusiasm. We are seeing organic demand driven by seamless connectivity and our ability to offer differentiated experiences within the same brand family. Families appreciate the all-inclusive value, couples celebrate milestones in our overwater villas, and honeymooners gravitate towards intimate, adults-only escapes."

The Atollia concept, where Centara Grand Lagoon Maldives connects via footbridge to Centara Mirage Lagoon Maldives, has become a powerful conversation starter in the trade. She adds, "It offers Indian

guests something refreshingly layered. One moment you are enjoying refined overwater luxury, and the next you are stepping into the energy of the Maldives' first waterpark resort experience, complete with the Candy Spa for children. It is a dual-island narrative that speaks to multi-generational travellers who want variety within a single stay."

At Centara Ras Fushi, romance takes centre stage. Overwater serenity, curated dining and uninterrupted sunsets have made it a favourite among Indian honeymooners. Meanwhile, Machchafushi Island Resort & Spa continues to attract diving enthusiasts drawn to its celebrated house reef in South Ari Atoll. "There is a visible rise in experiential travellers from India. Guests are asking about marine life, reef access and immersive activities. That curiosity aligns beautifully with what Machchafushi offers," adds Mounmita.

Dubai pulse

Dubai remains a dependable powerhouse for Indian outbound traffic, and Centara Mirage Beach Resort Dubai has carved its niche within the competitive landscape. Speaking more about the product Mounmita shares, "Indian families travel with scale and spirit. Centara Mirage Beach Resort Dubai responds to that energy through beachfront access, a vibrant waterpark complex, themed entertainment zones and diverse

culinary experiences including familiar Indian flavours. It feels celebratory, which resonates strongly with our guests."

Metro cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru and Pune continue to drive volume, with emerging Tier II markets showing growing promise. The property also sees rising interest from corporates seeking incentive venues that balance work and leisure. She emphasises, "MICE is an exciting vertical for us. Organisations are prioritising experiential venues that encourage bonding and reward performance. Dubai offers infrastructure and connectivity, and our resort adds personality and engagement to that equation."

Himalayan chapter

Centara's newest narrative unfolds in Nepal with the launch of Himalayan Hideaway Resort Pokhara in early 2026. Positioned amid dramatic Himalayan landscapes, the property signals a thoughtful expansion into experiential and sustainable tourism. Mounmita elaborates about the destination and says, "Nepal holds emotional and cultural resonance for Indian travellers. Himalayan Hideaway Resort Pokhara combines local authenticity with modern comfort. Guests can participate in curated trekking experiences, immerse themselves in cultural encounters and explore wellness programmes inspired by Himalayan traditions, complemented by our signature Cenvaree Spa therapies."

Segments in motion

Families and multi-generational travellers represent the strongest demand segment across all three markets. Child-friendly facilities, engaging kids' clubs and thoughtful dining options continue to influence decision-making. MICE enquiries for both Dubai and the Maldives are steadily expanding as corporates seek distinctive incentive environments. Mounmita shares, "India is a relationship-driven market. Our trade engagement strategy reflects that understanding. We are investing in familiarisation trips, co-branded marketing initiatives, roadshows and webinars to deepen product awareness. Competitive trade rates, flexible booking policies and dedicated sales support further reinforces our commitment to the Indian market. We believe in building shared success stories anchored in trust, transparency and consistent engagement."

A strategic embrace

Centara's trajectory across the Maldives, Dubai and Nepal illustrates a calibrated blend of product strength and market sensitivity. Each destination speaks to a different traveller emotion: celebration by the sea, family vibrancy by the skyline, and introspection beneath the Himalayas. For the Indian trade, the proposition is clear. A diversified portfolio, seamless connectivity and experiential depth create multiple selling narratives under one trusted brand.



TamTamWorld

The world of travel, perfectly connected

TamTamWorld unveils a connected future for travel trade with its new B2B partner portal. Oubaid Ghoorun, Director, TamTam shares about the platform and how it can benefit the B2B market.

- *Tripti Jain*

The global travel industry continues to evolve into a digitally driven ecosystem where agility, connectivity, and efficiency define success. Travel professionals seek tools that simplify workflows, accelerate sales cycles, and strengthen collaboration across markets. In this landscape, TamTamWorld has introduced its B2B Partner Portal, a solution designed to bridge operational gaps and create a unified environment for distribution, inventory management, and partner engagement.

The platform reflects a broader industry shift toward integrated travel ecosystems where technology empowers agents to expand networks, maintain control over operations, and deliver seamless experiences to clients. TamTamWorld's latest innovation positions the brand as a facilitator of smarter travel commerce, combining automation with human expertise to support long-term growth across global markets.

From vision to reality

India's dynamic outbound travel landscape played a pivotal role in shaping the platform's development. The country's rapidly expanding travel trade, coupled with increasing demand for diversified itineraries and faster booking cycles, created an opportunity for TamTamWorld to deliver a purpose-built solution.

Oubaid shares that the portal emerged from a clear understanding of evolving partner expectations. He shares, "India has consistently remained a strategic growth market for us, and the expansion of our partnerships revealed a strong need for scalable digital infrastructure. Travel professionals today value speed, flexibility, and the ability to grow their own distribution ecosystems

while remaining closely connected to trusted destination expertise. The B2B Partner Portal was developed as a step toward building a connected travel ecosystem where inventory, payments, and collaboration coexist within a single intelligent environment."

This vision reflects TamTamWorld's commitment to empowering agents with tools that support independence alongside strong operational backing.

One interface, endless possibilities

The platform's architecture mirrors the real-world workflows of travel professionals. Agents gain access to flights, fixed departures, transfers, and sightseeing services across multiple destinations, enabling them to curate comprehensive itineraries from a single dashboard.

Oubaid highlights the importance of flexibility as a core differentiator and explains, "The portal was designed around the everyday realities of travel professionals. Agencies of varying sizes operate with distinct commercial models and payment structures, so flexibility became a fundamental principle. Multiple payment options and adaptable pricing frameworks allow partners to align the platform with their business strategies. The ability to create and manage sub-agent networks further strengthens distribution, giving partners greater control over pricing, workflow, and expansion."

Technology that enhances human collaboration

Efficiency remains a central promise of the B2B Partner Portal. Centralised inventory and real-time pricing accelerate confirmations, streamline

transactions, and reduce administrative effort. The platform also preserves the personal relationships that form the backbone of the travel trade.

Oubaid emphasises that the technology strengthens partnerships rather than replacing them and says, "Our objective focused on reducing friction across the booking journey while preserving the collaborative spirit that defines strong travel partnerships. Automation enables faster confirmations and clearer transaction management, and destination teams remain closely integrated to provide personalised expertise. Communication flows seamlessly between digital tools and human support, ensuring that partners experience both operational efficiency and meaningful collaboration."

White Labelling: Empowering brands to scale

White labelling emerges as one of the portal's most compelling features, allowing partners to present TamTamWorld's inventory under their own brand identity. Agencies can maintain consistent client experiences while benefiting from robust contracting strength and operational infrastructure.

Oubaid explains how this capability unlocks scalable growth and shares, "White labelling empowers partners to build their own brand presence without the complexities of contracting and backend management. Combined with sub-agent onboarding, the platform creates a distribution framework that supports expansion across new markets. Agencies gain the freedom to scale, maintain brand consistency, and deepen client relationships while relying on TamTamWorld's operational expertise."

Encouraging momentum

Early feedback from partners highlights strong adoption driven by the platform's ease of use, comprehensive inventory access, and flexible commercial structure. The positive response reinforces TamTamWorld's commitment to continuous innovation.

Oubaid shares insights into upcoming developments and elaborates, "Partner feedback has been highly encouraging, particularly around the platform's intuitive interface and integrated service offerings. The next phase of development includes visa application support and an AI-powered WhatsApp quotation system designed to accelerate response times and simplify enquiry management. These innovations aim to strengthen operational efficiency while enabling agents to expand their distribution capabilities with confidence."

A connected future

TamTamWorld's B2B Partner Portal represents a meaningful step toward a more integrated and scalable travel ecosystem. The platform empowers agents to operate with greater efficiency, expand their networks, and deliver richer travel experiences through a unified digital environment.

A future shaped by connectivity, collaboration, and innovation continues to define the brand's trajectory. TamTamWorld's latest initiative reflects an understanding that the business of travel thrives on partnerships supported by intelligent technology. The portal stands as an invitation for travel professionals to embrace smarter workflows, accelerate growth, and participate in a global distribution network built for the next era of travel commerce.



IslandLife's Maldives Mastery

IslandLife Travel has built its identity around this very belief, choosing depth, relationships, and destination intelligence as the pillars of its growth. Sanket Mishra & Puneet Gera, Associate Director and Head of Sales, IslandLife Travel shares more about their dynamics with the travel trade industry.

- Tripti Jain

A destination as distinctive as the Maldives calls for expertise that goes beyond standard contracting and routine bookings. IslandLife Travel has built its identity around this very belief, choosing depth, relationships, and destination intelligence as the pillars of its growth. The brand's single-minded focus on the Maldives has shaped a product that feels curated, dependable, and deeply connected to on-ground realities. For the Indian travel trade, IslandLife represents clarity in a market often defined by overwhelming choices. Every itinerary reflects thoughtful resort selection, seamless logistics, and an understanding of evolving traveller aspirations.

Through specialist eyes

IslandLife's philosophy revolves around doing one destination exceptionally well. This approach allows the team to develop strong resort partnerships, preferred agreements, and nuanced product knowledge that translates into tangible value for partners and travellers alike.

Sanket sheds more light on the dynamics and shares, "Our journey with the Maldives has been built on relationships and trust. Every resort partnership carries a story of collaboration, mutual growth, and shared commitment to the Indian market. That depth allows us to curate experiences that feel personal rather than transactional. Travel partners appreciate clarity in pricing, flexibility in solutions, and insights that help them guide clients with confidence. The Maldives offers incredible diversity, and our role is to translate that diversity into meaningful choices for every traveller segment."

Maldives continues to shine

The Maldives remains a strong performer for the Indian outbound market, driven by proximity, visa



Puneet Gera

ease, and aspirational appeal. IslandLife's sustained volumes and long-term contracting amplify these natural advantages, creating a reliable pipeline for travel partners. Speaking on the same lines Puneet shares, "The Maldives holds a timeless charm for Indian travellers. Connectivity has become smoother, resort portfolios have expanded across price points, and experiential offerings continue to evolve. IslandLife's partnerships allow us to offer preferred value along with operational ease. Travel agents benefit from quick confirmations and clear communication, which enhances their ability to close bookings efficiently. The destination's ability to cater to couples, families, celebratory groups, and wellness seekers ensures consistent demand throughout the year."

The evolving Indian traveller story

Indian travellers today approach the Maldives with curiosity and



Sanket Mishra

awareness. Aspirations extend beyond iconic water villas, opening doors to family experiences, wellness journeys, and celebration travel.

Sanket reflects on this transformation with optimism and says, "Indian guests arrive with a deeper understanding of the destination. Interest in curated dining, marine adventures, spa rituals, and immersive island activities has grown significantly. Families seek resorts with engaging kids' programmes, couples look for private experiences, and celebration travellers value personalised touches. Longer stays have also gained momentum, allowing travellers to truly unwind and explore resort offerings. IslandLife's role involves guiding partners through these evolving preferences so that every recommendation aligns with guest expectations."

Simplicity and trust

IslandLife's trade engagement strategy centres on

responsiveness, transparency, and proactive support. The company invests in training initiatives, co-branded marketing, and collaborative promotions that strengthen partner confidence.

Puneet elaborates on the company's collaborative ethos and explains, "Travel partnerships flourish through consistency and open dialogue. Our teams prioritise quick turnarounds, accurate information, and dependable after-sales support. Training sessions and joint campaigns help partners stay updated with resort developments and seasonal offers. This collaborative approach transforms selling into storytelling, allowing agents to present the Maldives with authenticity and clarity. A strong ecosystem benefits everyone, from resort partners to travel advisors and ultimately the traveller."

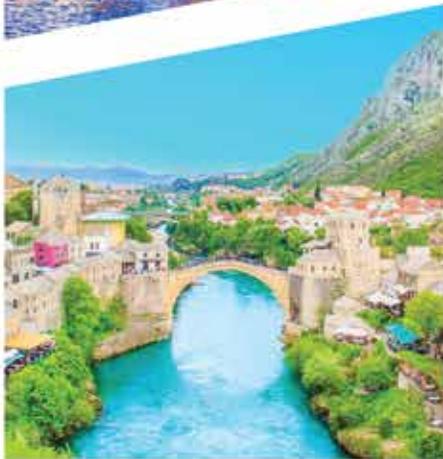
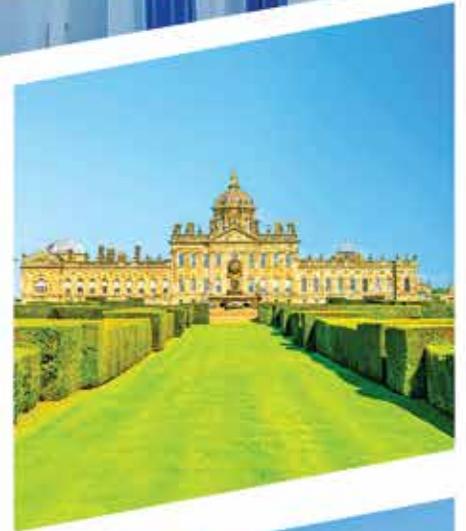
Crafting product with purpose

IslandLife's product philosophy balances luxury with accessibility. Resort selections span premium icons, boutique hideaways, and value-driven properties, ensuring suitability for varied traveller profiles. Detailed itinerary planning, seamless transfers, and personalised touches enhance the overall guest journey.

The brand's journey reflects the power of focus in a dynamic travel landscape. A specialist approach, supported by enduring partnerships and destination expertise, has shaped a brand that resonates with the Indian travel trade. The Maldives continues to inspire travellers with its natural beauty and evolving experiences, and IslandLife's role as a trusted curator adds depth to that inspiration.

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DISCOVER THE WORLD – INDIA

SETTING SAIL WITH GREATER CONFIDENCE

Understanding India's new appetite for cruising, and why the Indian cruise story is just getting started. Dipti V. Adhia, Country Director, Discover the World – India shares that the cruise conversation in India has moved well beyond curiosity.

- *Naina Nath*



Dipti V. Adhia

nationwide, serving as a strategic growth engine for international travel brands and enabling them to build meaningful, scalable success in the Indian market.

More than representation

Discover the World – India does not see itself as a traditional sales office. The model is far more integrated. Dipti explains, “Our core strength lies in outsourced sales and marketing, where we operate as a natural extension of our clients’ teams. We combine strong local market intelligence with a global perspective.”

That local intelligence matters in a market as diverse as India. Over the years, the company has represented major global names and helped them find their footing here. Today, its portfolio reflects a strong presence across aviation, cruising, and hospitality, built on steady engagement with the trade rather than short bursts of activity.

A cruise portfolio with layers

Cruising in India is no longer a one-size-fits-all conversation. Dipti is clear that different segments need different entry points. She says, “At the entry level, Carnival Cruise Line has played a role in introducing Indian travellers to ocean cruising, particularly families and first-time cruisers.”

What is interesting, she adds, is how quickly behaviour is shifting. “Indian guests who once preferred shorter 3 to 5 day sailings are now increasingly choosing 7 to 9 day itineraries. This shift signals comfort and repeat intent.

At the other end of the spectrum, brands such as AmaWaterways and Nicko Cruises appeal to travellers looking for slower, culturally rich journeys. Windstar Cruises and Oceanwide Expeditions attract those drawn to smaller ships and remote destinations. The range allows the

company to match aspiration with the right experience, rather than pushing a single product.

Education before expansion

If there is one word that keeps coming up in Dipti’s narrative, it is education. She says, “Our marketing approach in India is strongly trade-led, education - driven, and digital. Cruise products can be complex, and simplifying them for the trade is essential. Webinars, virtual trainings, product videos, and sales tools form a steady backbone of engagement.”

But the strategy does not stop at screens. FAM trips, roadshows, and in-person sessions continue to play an important role. There is also growing attention on Tier II and Tier III cities. Awareness in these markets is rising quickly, and with it, the appetite for new travel formats. The intent is consistent: equip partners with knowledge so that they sell with conviction.

A traveller who wants more

Indian cruise travellers today look very different from a decade ago. They are younger, more experimental, and far more informed. Dipti shares, “There is rising demand for experiential travel. The themed sailings, cultural itineraries, and adventure - led journeys. Are getting popular. Expedition cruising, once considered niche, is slowly entering mainstream conversations among well - travelled Indians. Another visible trend is demographic spread.

Furthermore, she adds, “Cruising is attracting families, couples, multi - generational travellers, corporates, and even spiritual travel segments. We are seeing meaningful growth in interest from Tier II and Tier III cities. Digital discovery has played a role here. Travellers are researching more, comparing

more, and asking more detailed questions before booking.”

The gaps that remain

Growth, however, comes with its own set of challenges. Dipti says, “The primary challenge remains understanding of the cruise product. Many travellers still compare cruises directly with land holidays, without fully understanding inclusions or onboard experiences. That is where trade training becomes critical.”

There is also the question of alignment. Not every cruise suits every traveller. First-time cruisers, in particular, need careful guidance. Add to that practical considerations such as visas and air connectivity, and the booking journey can feel layered. Yet Dipti remains optimistic. Familiarity is increasing, and with each successful sailing, confidence builds.

Growing together

For Discover the World – India, the next phase is about steady, structured growth. Dipti shares, “Our vision is to build on our global legacy with renewed energy, driving growth through innovation, collaboration, and strategic representation. Strengthening partnerships across leisure, luxury, MICE, and niche travel segments will be central to that ambition.”

She is clear about the company’s role in the ecosystem. “Our goal is to be a trusted growth partner and a strong bridge between global travel brands and the Indian market. The opportunity ahead is significant, and we grow stronger when we grow together.”

Indian travellers are asking for deeper experiences and better value. The travel trade, she believes, will shape how confidently they step into new formats like cruising. As the market matures, collaboration and clarity will matter more than ever.

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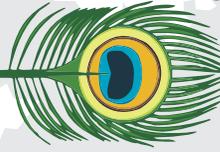


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Cruise Professionals

Oceans of Opportunity

India is entering its most defining decade for cruise travel, driven by aspiration, awareness and a deep appreciation for immersive global holidays. Nishith Saxena, Founder & Director, Cruise Professionals, has positioned the brand as a leading voice in India's cruise ecosystem.

- Tripti Jain



Nishith Saxena

India's outbound travel appetite has evolved from sightseeing checklists to experience-led journeys. Cruise holidays reflect this evolution with remarkable clarity. They combine destinations, hospitality and entertainment into a seamless narrative that unfolds at sea.

The aspiration effect

Cruising in India is expanding on the strength of aspiration. A new generation of globally aware travellers is seeking curated journeys that balance comfort with exploration. Families are choosing cruises for shared celebrations. Nishith observes this shift with enthusiasm and shares, "Indian travellers are evolving rapidly in their travel choices. They are researching destinations in depth, comparing experiences globally and prioritising journeys that deliver both enrichment and ease. A cruise holiday answers this aspiration beautifully because it offers multiple countries, diverse cultures and world-class hospitality within one thoughtfully structured itinerary." Short-duration sailings introduce first-time cruisers to the format with clarity and confidence. Long-haul voyages across Europe, Alaska and Asia attract seasoned explorers seeking scenic depth and cultural immersion.

The value narrative

Cruise holidays present a powerful value proposition. Accommodation, gourmet dining, live performances and destination access converge into a single investment. Indian travellers increasingly recognise this layered benefit.

Talking more about the same Nishith explains, "Value in cruising extends far beyond price comparison. When guests calculate the inclusions such as premium staterooms, diverse dining venues, Broadway-style entertainment and the ability to wake up in a new destination every day, they understand the holistic return on their holiday spend. The cruise format maximises time and minimises logistical stress, which enhances the overall experience."

Flexible payment plans and early booking advantages strengthen appeal. Structured packages provide transparency and clarity, two qualities Indian consumers deeply appreciate.

Advisors as experience designers

Cruising thrives on expertise. Nishith views travel advisors as essential architects of the cruise journey. From selecting the right ship to identifying ideal itineraries and cabin categories, professional guidance enhances guest satisfaction.

Explaining more about cruise bookings he shares, "A cruise booking involves meaningful decisions. Guests rely on advisors to interpret product nuances, explain destination highlights and personalise the experience according to family preferences. This advisory role builds trust and ensures long-term loyalty."

Cruise Professionals invests significantly in trade engagement through masterclasses and knowledge sessions. He adds, "Education empowers advisors. When they understand ship

features, onboard innovations and destination strengths in depth, their conversations shift from transactional selling to experiential storytelling."

The Princess perspective

Among premium cruise brands, Princess Cruises commands strong resonance in the Indian market. Saxena describes its positioning with clarity and conviction. Nishith highlights the pulse of Indian travellers and shares, "Princess Cruises represents refined comfort combined with destination immersion. Its itineraries across Alaska, Europe, Japan and Australia align perfectly with Indian travellers who prioritise scenic depth and cultural richness."

Longer port stays encourage meaningful exploration. Spacious staterooms and attentive hospitality create familiarity and warmth. He elaborates, "Indian guests value service that feels personal. Princess delivers attentive hospitality along with culinary diversity, including vegetarian and regionally inspired options that make families feel comfortable. The MedallionClass innovations enhance convenience and personalisation, elevating the onboard journey further."

Destinations that inspire

European and Mediterranean sailings remain strong favourites among Indian families. Greece, Italy and Turkey attract summer departures with consistent enthusiasm. Alaska's dramatic landscapes and Australia-New Zealand's coastal charm are witnessing increased traction among repeat cruisers.

Nishith highlights the rise of experiential curiosity and explains, "Indian travellers are expanding their horizons toward Japan, the Panama Canal and expedition-style voyages. There is a growing appetite for journeys that offer storytelling, cultural immersion

and natural wonders. This signals a confident and globally aligned traveller mindset. Advance planning is increasing, and longer itineraries are gaining preference among affluent segments."

Crafted for Indian preferences

Culinary variety and celebratory energy shape Indian travel behaviour. Cruise Professionals collaborates closely with partners to curate experiences aligned with these expectations. Nishith shares, "Food plays a central role in Indian holidays. Guests appreciate vegetarian, Jain-friendly and regional options presented with authenticity. Cultural familiarity enhances comfort and strengthens satisfaction."

Onboard programming often incorporates themed evenings and milestone celebrations that create lasting memories. He emphasises, "Our objective is to ensure every guest feels understood. When comfort and exploration come together seamlessly, the cruise becomes transformative."

Charting the next chapter

India's cruise market demonstrates steady year-on-year expansion with rising repeat travellers and premium cabin uptake. Growth from emerging cities and enhanced air connectivity adds further momentum.

Sharing about the dynamics of cruise experiences for Indian travellers Nishith concludes, "India stands at the threshold of becoming one of the most dynamic cruise source markets globally. The next phase will be defined by education, premiumisation and deeper destination engagement. Our commitment remains anchored in building awareness, empowering advisors and delivering exceptional experiences that inspire loyalty."

Beyond bookings

Diverse Hotels Marketing

Diverse Hotels Marketing Pvt. Ltd. has built its identity around this philosophy, offering global hospitality brands a meaningful gateway into the Indian market. Digvijay Diwakar, Founder, Diverse Hotels Marketing shares about his journey.

- Tripti Jain



Digvijay Diwakar

Hotel representation has evolved into a specialised craft that blends storytelling, relationships, and market intelligence. Diverse Hotels Marketing's approach revolves around curating distinctive properties, strengthening trade relationships, and ensuring that each hotel's narrative reaches the right audience. As traveller expectations shift toward immersive experiences and personalised luxury, it continues to adapt with agility, ensuring its

partner hotels remain relevant and desirable across evolving market segments.

Representation rooted in authenticity

Diverse Hotels Marketing views representation as an extension of the hotel's identity rather than a traditional sales function. The company invests in understanding each partner's brand ethos and translating it into impactful engagement with travel trade stakeholders.

Sharing his philosophy, Digvijay says, "Diverse Hotels Marketing was created with the idea of giving partner hotels a voice that resonates within the Indian market. Each property carries its own story, experiences, and destination charm. Our responsibility involves presenting that story authentically to travel partners and travellers. This connection - driven approach builds trust and creates sustainable business relationships."

Tracking trends

The evolving tourism ecosystem is opening doors to new traveller segments and source markets, creating opportunities for hospitality brands to diversify their reach. Diverse Hotels Marketing actively studies these trends to refine its representation strategy. Speaking on the same lines Digvijay shares, "Emerging markets bring excitement and learning into the tourism space. They expand opportunities and offer insights into changing guest behaviour. Travellers today seek meaningful experiences, personalised service, and emotional connections with destinations. Our representation strategy aligns with these expectations, ensuring partner hotels remain attractive across diverse traveller profiles."

2025 reflections

The year 2025 witnessed dynamic shifts in travel patterns across global and regional markets. Domestic leisure travel emerged as a strong contributor, supporting hospitality demand and sustaining business momentum.

Reflecting on the year, Digvijay explains, "Domestic leisure travel demonstrated remarkable enthusiasm and became an important pillar for hospitality growth. This segment created consistent engagement opportunities for partner hotels and reinforced the importance of diversified markets. The experience strengthened our confidence in domestic travel as a dependable contributor to future growth."

Expanding possibilities

The beginning of 2026 has brought encouraging signs of recovery and expansion across travel segments. Diverse Hotels Marketing is embracing the year with a focus on collaborations and portfolio enhancement.

Digvijay explains, "The new year has started with positive business sentiment and promising opportunities across segments. Collaboration stands as a key driver of growth for representation companies. Discussions with new luxury brands are progressing, and each potential partnership adds depth to our portfolio while creating fresh opportunities for travel partners."

Inbound revival

Inbound travel is gradually regaining traction as global travel sentiment improves. Diverse Hotels Marketing anticipates renewed interest in India's diverse experiences, supported by proactive trade engagement and storytelling. "India's cultural richness and experiential diversity continue to inspire international travellers. Improving global travel sentiment is creating optimism for inbound tourism, and representation companies play an important role in translating this interest into bookings through consistent trade engagement," shares Digvijay.

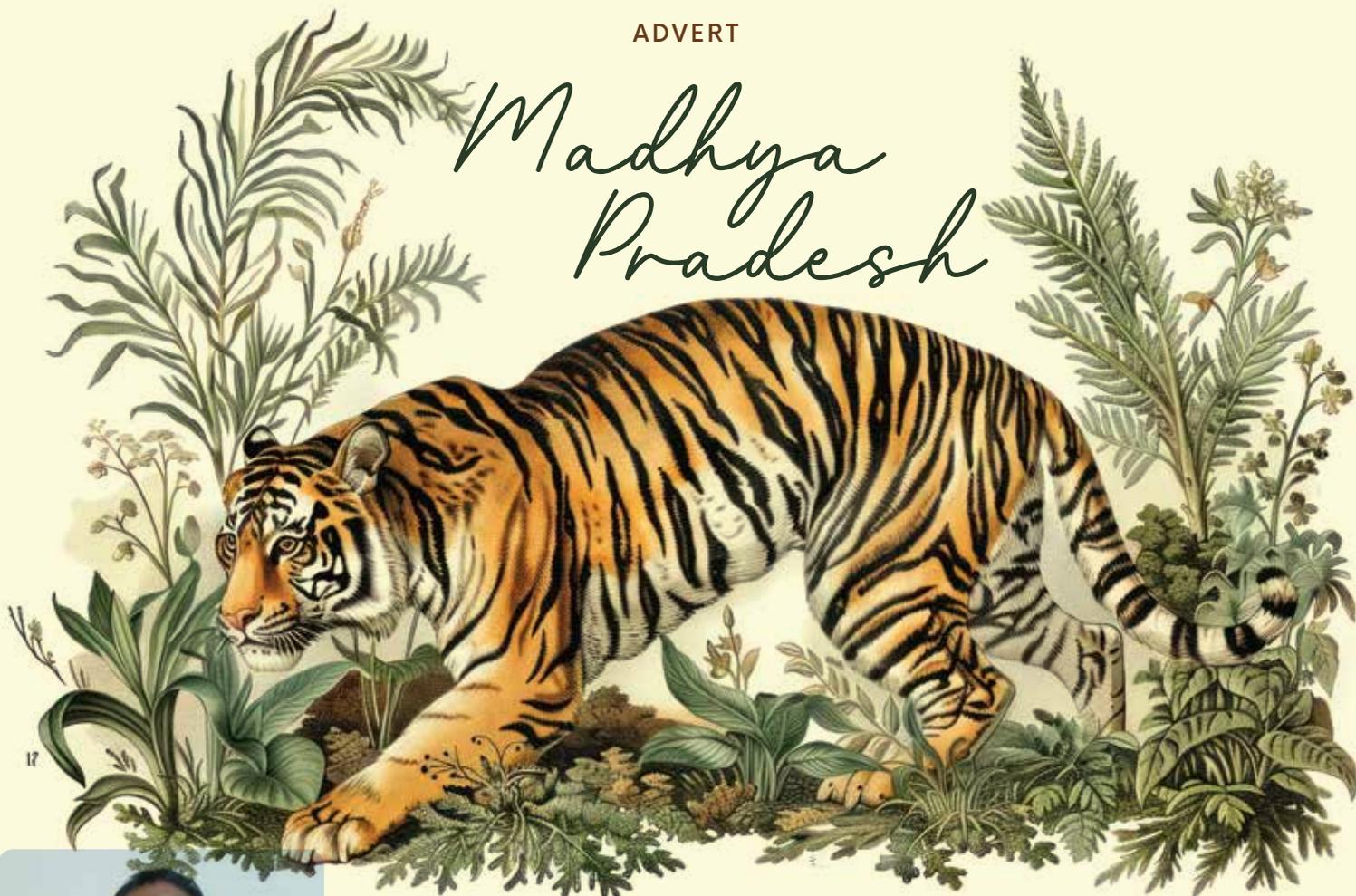
Crafting meaningful hospitality connections

Diverse Hotels Marketing continues to shape its journey around curated partnerships, relationship-driven strategies, and a deep understanding of market dynamics. The company's commitment to authentic storytelling and collaborative growth positions it as a trusted bridge between global hospitality brands and the Indian travel trade. As 2026 unfolds with renewed optimism, Diverse Hotels Marketing stands prepared to amplify hotel narratives, strengthen partnerships, and create impactful market presence.



ADVERT

Madhya Pradesh



Dr. Ilayaraja T

India's Living Cathedral of the Wild

"Our forests are living legacies — not only of biodiversity, but of balance. In Madhya Pradesh, we are shaping wildlife tourism that protects ecosystems, empowers communities, and offers travellers experiences that are as meaningful as they are magnificent."

~ Dr. Ilayaraja T., Secretary, Government of Madhya Pradesh, Tourism Department and Managing Director, Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board.

Enter Madhya Pradesh — where the forests unfurl like a green manuscript of time, and every dawn carries the hush of a thousand unseen lives stirring beneath the canopy. This is not merely the Tiger State; it is the Leopard State, the only Cheetah State, and the singular realm where all three great cats share one sovereign landscape. Here, wilderness is not a backdrop — it is the narrative.

With 11 National Parks, 24 Wildlife Sanctuaries, and 9 Tiger Reserves, Madhya Pradesh holds India's most expansive and diverse protected area network. From the mist-veiled meadows of Kanha and the dramatic

escarpments of Bandhavgarh, to the teak forests of Pencha, the riverine ravines of Panna, and the rewilded savannahs of Kuno, every forest reads like a chapter in an epic of survival, balance, and beauty.

In 2025, nearly 15 lakh travellers stepped into these sanctuaries — drawn not by spectacle alone, but by trust in a landscape where conservation has translated into confidence. This is wildlife tourism shaped by decades of stewardship, where science, community, and soul converge.

What distinguishes Madhya Pradesh is not only abundance, but orchestration. Its integrated wildlife circuits allow journeys that flow seamlessly from tiger trails to leopard realms, from cheetah corridors to birding

wetlands, from river forests to ancient grasslands — offering a rare continuity of ecosystems, experiences, and emotions within a single state.

Yet here, the experience extends far beyond the safari jeep. Madhya Pradesh is redefining wildlife tourism as a sensory immersion — through forest walks, cycling routes, river meditations, night-sky encounters, and buffer zone adventures that transform spectators into participants. The forest is no longer something you observe — it is something you inhabit.

The wilderness here is also becoming a sanctuary for well-being. Forest retreats, mindfulness lodges, nature therapies, and slow-travel experiences are weaving

wellness into wild landscapes, allowing travellers to find restoration not in luxury alone, but in silence, shade, and birdsong.

At the heart of this green renaissance lies community. Rural homestays, village tourism, and forest-edge livelihoods are empowering local households, strengthening women-led enterprises, and ensuring that conservation benefits are shared, not siloed. In Madhya Pradesh, wildlife protection and human dignity rise together.

Madhya Pradesh is not just a destination — it is a living philosophy of coexistence, where the roar of the tiger, the stride of the cheetah, and the whisper of the forest form a single, resounding chorus.

Explore the Wildlife Capital of the World *Madhya Pradesh*

A land where silence breaks
into stories of the wild.



Imagine a silent forest! A silence ended by the wailing of Peafowl, the alarm call of a Rhesus Macaque or the cry of a Spotted Deer. And then, the crunching of leaves brings a majestic Tiger into view, the glare of its eyes arresting.

With 11 national parks, 24 wildlife sanctuaries, 9 tiger reserves and 3 biosphere reserves, Madhya Pradesh offers the finest such sightings for wildlife aficionados.

Bandhavgarh and Kanha

Experience a close tiger encounter under the shadows of an ancient fort at **Bandhavgarh**. Stay in a treehouse, watch Langurs sunning themselves and Spotted Deer stitch golden lines through meadows on a lovely February day. Walk into biologically loaded **Kanha**, which is not just India's leading tiger habitat, but also has other mammals, birds, reptiles and insects in incredible number. Spot **Swamp Deer, Bears, Indian Bison and Pythons** in its stunning **Sal forests**.

Pench

Relive the adventures of **Mowgli** in **Pench**. Enjoy solitude listening to the forest's chorus — jungle fowl, cicadas, owls, and distant thunder. Take a **night safari**, follow tracks of **Indian Wild Dogs** or watch **Leopards, Porcupines, Pangolin, Wolves and Foxes** from a tree-observation platform.

Panna and Kuno

Enter a lush landscape punctuated by the **Pandav and Raneh waterfalls** at **Panna**. Indulge in a boat safari along the **Ken River** to spot **Eurasian Eagle Owls and Black Ibises**, not to forget **marshy crocodiles**. Zoom in on rare **Vultures** and listen to the music of the **Indian Paradise Flycatcher**. Glimpse life in a tribal village that skirts the edge of this biosphere reserve.

Be part of India's successful wildlife revival programme at **Kuno**. Join a **Cheetah safari** to try and witness the world's fastest land animal in its natural habitat. In February, the tawny savannah grass and open horizons increase the chances of a sighting. Live the slow life in the Satpura National Park area and allow yourself to be gilded on a boat.

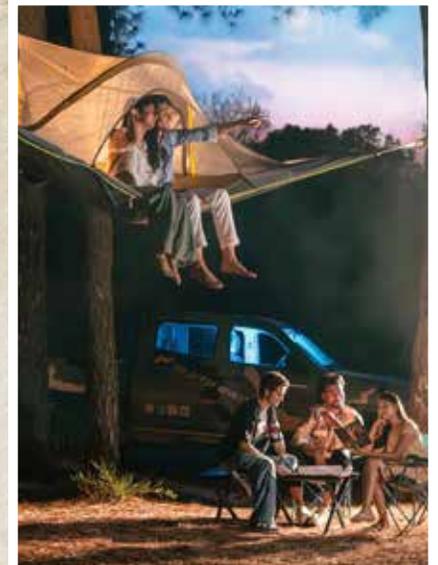
Trace the pugmarks of sloth bears. Watch families of Wild Boars make their foraging way and observe a Crested Serpent Eagle wheel overhead seeking its prey.

Van Vihar, Bhopal

Drop into a city-wildlife interface at **Bhopal's Van Vihar**. Managed with modern zoo principles, carnivores live in expansive enclosures and herbivores roam free, while migrant birds enjoy the **Upper Lake**. **Bhimbetka's** heritage mixes with wildlife at **Ratapani**, home to **Sloth Bears and the shy Indian Wolf**.

Gandhi Sagar

Gandhi Sagar reservoir sees water, sky, and forest melt into one another allowing **Bar-headed Geese, Painted Storks, and Pelicans** to rest along small islands. The scent of Mahua fills **Sanjay-Dubri**, where **Leopards** rule. Savour a fab February at **Madhav National Park**, whose Sakhya Sagar Lake sees **Demoiselle Cranes and Tufted Ducks** lazing in the reedbeds. Madhya Pradesh is truly, a living, breathing epic — written in claw marks, wingbeats, and rustling leaves.



These destinations are well connected through an extensive road and rail network. Additionally, Madhya Pradesh is a pioneer in introducing intra-state air taxi services, connecting major tourist destinations across the state. Visitors may check the flight schedules to conveniently access the nearest city to these wildlife destinations.

The *Hague* Dutch culture at its finest!

The Hague can surprise you with its exciting though subdued nightlife, its ambience, and its attractions that are so easy to see.

-Inder Raj Ahluwalia

OFFSHORE BINOCULARS

Ask the Dutch about their cities and some will term Rotterdam as 'serious', Amsterdam as 'fun and leisure-oriented' and The Hague as 'also there and very important, of course'.

Diplomats and bureaucrats rubbing shoulders doesn't really promise anything exciting. Or does it?

Small it may be, but the city is undeniably of huge national importance. It is the home of the Queen of The Netherlands, the seat of its government, and the permanent headquarters of the International Court of Justice. Add national governance, and all the resident foreign embassies and missions, and it makes quite a package.

Sure, there are no great crowds to talk about, no bustling cafes, no noisy carnivals around. But then the cafes aren't empty either. In fact they are mostly full, with an international clientele meeting and relaxing over a drink at the friendly downtown pub as though their lives depended on it.

Dubbed the aristocrat of Dutch cities, The Hague is nicely spread-out, green and leafy. And the sea is close enough to lend its salty flavours and freshness. Old buildings straddle wide, tree-lined boulevards, and every corner has spacious parks and gardens. One finds an interesting urban mix of new architecture and older monuments.

The enormously proportioned Binnenhof is the centre of political life. The grand structure contains other grand structures within its confines, like the 13th Century Knights' Hall, which glitters with stained glass windows and pretty tapestries. It



is worth while touring the Knights' Hall and the adjacent Parliament Buildings. This done, move on to admire one of Rembrandt's finest self-portraits displayed proudly in the Mauritshuis Museum. Equally worthwhile is the Dr. Anton Philipszaal which features performances by the Netherlands Dance Theatre.

A grand building and local landmark, the Noordeinde Palace, the home of Queen Beatrix, is worthy of a stopover. The Queen receives ambassadors and visiting heads of state in the palace, and when the flag is fluttering on its grand dome, it means she is in residence.

A brief stop at the Historical Museum is enough to acquaint oneself with Holland's interesting history and past, illustrated by a collection of very important documents. A short walk across the Plein and it is time for a coffee or beer at one of the smart cafes in the Lange Woorhout. A short tram ride brings one to another famous town landmark, the celebrated Gemeente Museum which features a large Mondrian exhibition every December.

On the face of it, the imposing building set in the midst of carefully landscaped and flowery gardens, looks rather quiet and unpretentious. But don't get fooled! The International Court of Justice features more legal affairs of world significance than any other institution anywhere.

The most upscale local address is Wassenaar, where palatial villas string out elegantly around the Duinrell Leisure Park, a large green belt between farms and meadows.



OFFSHORE BINOCULARS

Much praise has been heaped on The Hague's architectural composition, with a new spirit permeating its buildings. Neoclassical vistas have been made more daring and exciting with a new surge of building activity that has harmonised the old and the new. The Binnenhof is a case in point, its large medieval hall, formerly used for state occasions, now embraced and influenced by the daring modern curves of the Tweede Kamer, the Netherlands' celebrated House of Commons.

A veritable treat awaits those with fondness for food. Local cuisine reflects the city's cosmopolitan flair, both in terms of its variety and quality. Indonesian food is highly recommended, and an absolute must is a visit to The Hague a la Carte, a special culinary festival in the Plein, which features local caterers' very best preparations.

Designer boutiques and charming Oriental shops tempt you as you stroll along pedestrian precincts, while the Lange Voorhout antique market offers a different sort of experience. In the Old-City area, shopping is still a pleasure as one wanders and browses through narrow arcades and promenades with their popular shoe shops and art boutiques.

Comes night time and there is swinging entertainment, with gaming, films at the super cinema which offers a choice of several different films, and dancing at local discos. The nightlife may not be roaring, but it certainly beats to a fast tempo. And it is on seven nights a week, through the seasons.

The city's environs beckon with myriad attractions. A fantasy world awaits the visitor at Madurodam, the Miniature Town that features high on national tourist itineraries. The 'live' miniature complex shows to good effect, the country's heritage and traditions. Reduced down to a scale of 1:25, are Holland's famous landmarks including rail stations, airports, castles, palaces, and of course, windmills.

A short drive brings one to the resort suburb of Scheveningen, which boasts the country's best beach and pier. Awaiting your leisure is a network of health and

recreation facilities, large casinos, the opulent beachfront Kurhaus Hotel-considered the country's finest-and carefree sunbathers who couldn't quite make it to the Bahamas.

Sunbathing and gambling apart, Scheveningen offers reasonably-priced late-night shopping, and simple sporting pleasures like motor cross, volleyball, and even simpler pleasures like kite-flying and sand-castle building. A second harbour has been transformed into a lively maritime stretch with shops, small cafes, traditional boats, a genuine sea-front atmosphere, and loads of activity.

Not bad for an 'also there' city...!

The best approach is via Amsterdam, from where The Hague is a couple of hour's drive, with coach tours available. One can hire a car at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport itself and drive around. There is varied accommodation, ranging from deluxe category down to budget-class and also guest-houses and camp sites. Several tours are available, the most popular being day tours that also include other places of interest like Delft, Aalsmeer, Madurodam, and Scheveningen.

About the author

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



HEADS IN BEDS

InterContinental Chiang Mai

A Northern Stillness

At InterContinental Chiang Mai The Mae Ping, Lanna craft and calm luxury make time feel softer

-Misbaah Mansuri



HEADS IN BEDS

Chiang Mai announces itself differently from Bangkok. There is no immediate urgency, no sensory overload. Instead, the city reveals itself gradually through softened light, temple bells carried on the air and the slow choreography of daily life. I felt this shift almost instantly upon arriving at InterContinental Chiang Mai The Mae Ping, where the city's historic soul is held with restraint rather than spectacle.

Set along Sridonchai Road, the hotel occupies a site layered with history. Once the iconic Mae Ping Hotel, it has been reimagined as a contemporary sanctuary rooted deeply in Lanna culture. The interiors are led by PIA Interior Company Limited, with a clear focus on Chiang Mai's artistic heritage and local craftsmanship, including details shaped by master artisans of Chang Sip Mu. From the moment I stepped inside, it was clear this was not a hotel designed to impress loudly. It was designed to endure quietly.

Arrival

I arrived late morning, welcomed with a refreshing drink that tasted faintly of citrus and herbs. Check-in was seamless and unhurried, accompanied by warm smiles and a sense of genuine ease. The lobby felt calm and expansive, with natural materials, soft textures and subtle references to northern Thai craftsmanship woven into the design.

And then there was the staff. Not simply polite, but instinctive. The kind of hospitality that feels less like a service standard and more

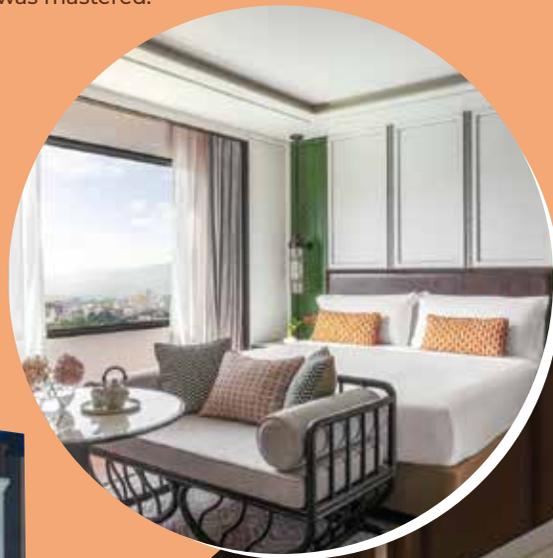
like a cultural reflex.

Every interaction carried a gentle certainty: someone anticipating a need before it became a request, a preference remembered without performance, an ease that made the hotel feel quietly human rather than perfectly managed. It is rare to feel both looked after and left in peace, and here, that balance was mastered.

The Room

Our Premium Mountain View Room with Club Benefits opened into a space that felt both refined and rooted. Floor-to-ceiling windows framed views of the surrounding landscape, where mountains hovered faintly in the distance and the city unfolded below in a gentler rhythm.

The interiors drew heavily from Lanna traditions, interpreted through a contemporary lens. Handcrafted details appeared



HEADS IN BEDS

throughout, from intricate woodwork to tactile textiles. The palette was warm and earthy, designed to soothe rather than stimulate.

The bed was deeply comfortable, dressed in crisp linens that invited rest without ceremony. The bathroom felt spa-like, with stone finishes and thoughtful lighting that softened the edges of the day. Everything in the room seemed to serve a single purpose: to make you feel at ease. By evening, as the light shifted and the city dimmed, the room became a cocoon. One that made staying in feel just as appealing as stepping out.

The Spa

That afternoon, we headed to ii Spa, a space dedicated to stillness. The spa draws inspiration from Hong Mor Muang, a traditional Lanna healing philosophy focused on balance, grounding and holistic wellbeing.

Our signature massage began with a brief consultation before we were guided into a treatment room scented lightly with herbs and warm oils. The massage was slow, deliberate and deeply intuitive. Long, flowing movements eased tension while

grounding pressure anchored the body. It felt less like a treatment and more like a ritual. Somewhere midway through, my breathing changed. My shoulders softened.

Thoughts slowed. This is the quiet power of northern Thai wellness. It does not overwhelm. It restores. When the session ended, I felt not just relaxed, but recalibrated, as though something internal had gently realigned.

Sunset at HONG's Sky Bar

As evening approached, we made our way to HONG's Sky Bar, perched high above the city. Chiang Mai stretched out beneath us, temples and rooftops catching the last light as the sky shifted from gold to indigo.

A signature drink arrived, aromatic and refreshing. Then the food followed, far more serious than bar bites. The poached chicken with spicy sauce was outstanding, tender and chilled, jolted awake by a vivid, mouth-tingling heat that felt distinctly Sichuan in spirit. The Sichuan dishes balanced fragrance and fire with

confidence, assertive without becoming blunt. HONG's focus on regional Chinese cuisines shows in its restraint and clarity. From this height, Chiang Mai felt expansive yet intimate. This was not a rooftop chasing spectacle. It was designed for reflection.

Breakfast at The Gad Lanna

Mornings began at The Gad Lanna, overlooking the 600-year-old Chang Kong Temple. Breakfast leaned into northern Thai flavours alongside well-executed classics. The Thai omelette stood out: golden, softly puffed and precisely seasoned.

The restaurant's ethos centres on northern Thai recipes and local sourcing, and that intention carries through in freshness and clarity. Breakfast did not feel routine. It felt like a continuation of calm.

Club Benefits

Club InterContinental access became part of the daily rhythm. The offering was generous and structured, with enough quality and variety to replace a meal if needed. Evening service, in particular, felt considered rather than token. Service followed the same tone as the rest of the

hotel: warm, attentive and never intrusive. It quietly elevated the stay by offering choice and flexibility.

Sense of Place

What distinguishes InterContinental Chiang Mai The Mae Ping is its respect for context. From Lanna-inspired design to spa rituals rooted in local healing traditions, everything feels anchored.

The refurbishment reads as a tribute rather than a theme, using layered materials and artisan detail to create a hotel that feels contemporary but unmistakably northern Thai.

In a Nutshell

InterContinental Chiang Mai The Mae Ping offers a rare kind of luxury, defined not by excess but by attentiveness. From restorative wellness rituals to grounded dining and instinctive service, the hotel invites you to slow down and inhabit the present.

The real anchor is its people. Hospitality here feels instinctive, delivered with warmth that never asks for applause. A sanctuary that feels grounded and elevated in equal measure.



How would you describe the past year for InterContinental Chiang Mai The Mae Ping?

The past year has been very strong. We focused on building our heritage-driven identity while expanding wellness, sustainability and guest satisfaction. One major milestone was the opening of ii Spa, a standalone wellness sanctuary rooted in Lanna healing traditions. It was recognised at the World Luxury Spa Awards 2025 with three titles, which was incredibly affirming for the team. Alongside that, we launched the Club InterContinental Lounge, offering a more culturally rich experience for Club guests. We were also honoured by Robb Report Best of the Best 2026 as a heritage-inspired haven and awarded Trusted Thailand status by the Tourism Authority of Thailand. These recognitions reflect consistency rather than singular moments.

In a competitive Thai hospitality market, what truly sets the hotel apart?

The hotel was deliberately positioned as Thailand's first living museum, celebrating the heritage of the ancient Lanna Kingdom. Every element, from architecture and craftsmanship to dining and wellness, immerses guests in northern Thai culture while maintaining InterContinental standards.

How do you ensure longevity and relevance in a crowded market?

The foundation is always people. Facilities and technology matter, but genuine hospitality comes from kindness, care and attention to detail. In Chiang Mai, we were fortunate to build a team that embodies humility and warmth naturally.

That culture creates consistency and trust, which guests remember long after they leave.

If a guest had 24 hours at the hotel, how should they spend it?

An ideal day could begin with sunrise experiences such as a hot air balloon flight or dak bat, the traditional almsgiving ritual. Breakfast at The Gad Lanna would follow, featuring northern Thai flavours. The afternoon might include temple visits or a spa ritual at ii Spa. Evening could unfold with dinner at Kiti Panit or a traditional Khantoke experience, ending with a stroll through the Night Bazaar.

What role does F&B play in the overall guest experience?

Food and beverage is a central pillar. Our dining venues are designed as cultural touchpoints that tell stories through flavour and craft. Northern Thai cuisine at The Gad Lanna, personalised service in the Club Lounge and interactive experiences like tea blending all help create emotional connections. These moments foster loyalty and make the experience memorable.

Adnan Yucel

**General Manager,
InterContinental Chiang Mai**

India - Thailand Tourism Ties



Ravi Gosain

When culture, faith and travel come together! Tourism between India and Thailand is far more than an exchange of travellers, it is a reflection of centuries old civilisational ties, shared spiritual values, and deep-rooted cultural connections.

- Ravi Gosain, President, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO)



From ancient maritime routes to the spread of Buddhism and Hindu philosophy, the relationship between the two nations has evolved organically over time. Today, tourism has become the strongest bridge sustaining and expanding this bond. India and Thailand share a remarkable cultural affinity. The Ramayana, known in Thailand as Ramakien, continues to shape Thai art and traditions. Buddhism, which originated in India, remains central to Thai society. Hindu deities such as Lord Ganpati, Lord Brahma, and Lord Vishnu are widely revered in Thailand, symbolising a harmonious coexistence of faiths that feels instantly familiar to Indian travellers. "Tourism between India and Thailand is not just about destinations, it is about shared heritage, faith, and people - to - people connections that transcend borders."

Tourism as a Two-Way Cultural Exchange

Thailand has consistently been among the most preferred international destinations for Indian tourists. Before the pandemic, Indian arrivals crossed two million annually, driven by Thailand's excellent connectivity, warm hospitality, scenic beauty, and cultural familiarity. At the same time, Thailand remains an important source market for spiritual and Buddhist tourism to India, with Thai pilgrims visiting Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, Kushinagar, and Nalanda. This two - way movement of tourists is unique because it is deeply rooted in culture and spirituality. Indians feel culturally at ease in Thailand, while many Thais look to India as a spiritual homeland. This cultural comfort creates opportunities to promote tourism that goes beyond leisure and shopping, towards meaningful, experience - based travel.

It is in this context that a new spiritual landmark in Phuket has emerged, adding a powerful cultural dimension to Indo-Thai tourism.

A Personal Experience in Phuket

Recently, I had the opportunity to visit Phuket on an invitation to attend the first anniversary celebrations of Lord Shrimant Ganpati Bappa Devalai in Rawai. The visit was both professional and deeply personal. Witnessing such a significant Indian spiritual symbol in Thailand was a moment of pride and reflection.

The temple is a replica of Pune's iconic Dagdusheth Halwai Ganpati Temple, one of India's most sacred Ganpati shrines. Built with remarkable attention to detail, the temple stands today as a prominent Hindu spiritual and cultural landmark in Phuket.

"Seeing a replica of Pune's Dagdusheth Halwai Ganpati in Phuket is a powerful reminder that faith and culture know no geographical boundaries."

Open daily with free entry, the temple welcomes Indian tourists, Thai devotees, and visitors from across the world. It has already become a focal point for the Thai-Indian community and a place of spiritual solace for travellers.

Devotion Beyond Borders

What makes this temple truly special is the vision behind it. The temple has been built by Ms. Papa Son Mipa of Phuket 9, a respected Thai businesswoman and a staunch devotee of Lord Ganpati. Her devotion led to the creation of this sacred space, reflecting how faith can transcend nationality and geography.

Her initiative stands as a shining example of how individual passion can contribute to cultural diplomacy and people-to-people engagement between nations. The temple is not merely a place of worship, it is a symbol of shared values and mutual respect between India and Thailand.

Architecture, Location and Tourism Potential

The architecture of Lord Shrimant Ganpati Bappa Devalai is both majestic and serene. Inspired by

traditional Indian temple design, the idol and sanctum evoke the spiritual aura of Pune's Dagdusheth Ganpati, while blending harmoniously with Phuket's tropical surroundings.

Located in Rawai, close to the scenic Rawai Beach, the temple enjoys an excellent setting. Its proximity to popular tourist zones makes it easily accessible and an ideal addition to Phuket itineraries. "This temple adds a new cultural and spiritual dimension to Phuket, making it more than just a beach destination for Indian travellers."

For Indian tourists, a visit to Phuket has traditionally focused on beaches, islands, and leisure activities. Since, Phuket is very popular among Indian couples and family visitors, the presence of such a prominent Hindu temple offers an opportunity to combine leisure with spirituality enhancing the overall travel experience.

Spiritual Tourism in Both Directions

The impact of this temple is not limited to attracting Indian tourists to Phuket. It also has the potential to inspire Thai devotees to explore India more deeply. Visitors who experience Indian spiritual traditions at this temple may feel encouraged to visit India for their own spiritual retreats, particularly to Maharashtra and other religious destinations.

This creates a natural cycle of tourism:

- Indian tourists visiting Phuket find cultural familiarity and spiritual connection.

- Thai devotees are motivated to travel to India to explore the roots of these traditions.

"Such spiritual landmarks create a two - way tourism flow, strengthening cultural understanding and deepening bilateral tourism ties."

Tourism as Cultural Diplomacy

In today's world, tourism plays an increasingly important role in cultural diplomacy. Temples, heritage sites, festivals, and spiritual centres act as soft power

instruments, fostering goodwill and mutual respect.

The Lord Shrimant Ganpati Bappa Devalai in Rawai is a powerful example of how tourism and culture can complement formal diplomatic efforts. It reinforces the idea that tourism is not just about economic exchange, but about shared stories, beliefs, and values. India and Thailand are uniquely placed to build on this synergy by promoting spiritual circuits, cultural festivals, and heritage tourism through joint initiatives.

A Call to Indian Travellers and the Travel Industry

I strongly encourage Indian travellers visiting Phuket to include this temple in their itinerary. It offers not only spiritual peace, but also an emotional connection that makes one feel at home even while abroad.

I also urge Indian tour operators, travel agents, and destination management companies to promote this temple as a must-visit cultural attraction in Phuket. Including such landmarks enriches travel programmes and adds depth to the tourism narrative.

"Tourism becomes truly meaningful when it connects people to culture, faith, and shared heritage."

Looking Ahead

As tourism continues to grow between India and Thailand, the focus must be on experiences that foster understanding and cultural appreciation. Initiatives like the Ganpati temple in Rawai demonstrate how faith and tourism together can create enduring connections.

My visit to Phuket reaffirmed my belief that tourism is one of the strongest bridges between civilizations. The Lord Shrimant Ganpati Bappa Devalai stands today not just as a temple, but as a symbol of friendship, devotion, and the timeless cultural bond between India and Thailand.

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BIZ

The **BLUEBERRY** *way of travel*

Blueberry Holidays Group has carved a distinctive space in the global B2B landscape by building its identity around value-driven excellence. Jitendra Tolani, Director, Blueberry HolidaysGroup shares more about the brand philosophy and ideology.

-Tripti Jain



Jitendra Tolani

In a travel ecosystem defined by speed, scale, and rising expectations, brands that endure are those rooted in clarity of purpose, innovation, and a people-first philosophy. What began as a travel agency in Djibouti in 2013 has grown into a dynamic group with a presence across Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and India, serving partners in more than 28 countries. At the heart of this evolution lies a commitment to authenticity, simplicity, and meaningful travel experiences.

The DNA of value and authenticity

For Blueberry Holidays Group, philosophy is embedded in every itinerary curated and every partnership nurtured. The company approaches destination management as a long-term relationship business built on trust and shared growth.

Jitendra shares, "Our core philosophy centers on delivering value-drive excellence through authenticity and simplicity. We believe that beliefs and principles form the DNA of our organisation. Each experience we curate is designed to create genuine connections between destinations and travellers. Relationships with our customers, partners, and shareholders are built on trust, transparency, and a shared vision for growth. Sustainable and meaningful travel remains integral to our approach, ensuring that every journey adds value to communities and strengthens our partners' business outcomes."

This clarity of vision translates into a product that balances operational efficiency with emotional resonance. Travel, in Blueberry's framework, becomes a platform for connection and measurable value creation.

Agility meets global strength

In the competitive B2B travel space, agility and reliability define leadership. Blueberry's strengths lie in its flexibility, powerful international network, and ability to deliver seamless, personalised experiences to clients across more than 30 countries.

Speaking more about the same, Jitendra explains, "Agility and flexibility define our service ethos. Our partners trust us

because we offer seamless experiences supported by a strong global network. Quality remains uncompromised at every touchpoint. Ethical behaviour, innovation, and performance guide our daily operations. We curate distinctive sport, culture, wellness, and entertainment packages that reflect deep destination knowledge. Every product is designed to be competitive, experiential, and aligned with evolving market demands."

From high-profile sporting events and immersive cultural circuits to refined wellness retreats and large-scale entertainment travel, the group's portfolio reflects diversity and expertise. Comprehensive ground handling, bespoke itineraries, group management, and customised MICE solutions form the backbone of its DMC offering.

From Djibouti roots to a multi-continent presence

Founded in 2013 in Djibouti as a travel agency, Blueberry's transformation into a multi-regional group reflects steady, strategic expansion. The brand strengthened its footprint across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East through partnerships and consistent service delivery.

Jitendra sheds light over the roots of the brand and shares, "Our evolution reflects a clear strategy backed by experience. Over the years, we expanded our offerings, strengthened partnerships, and grew our market presence to serve clients in more than 28 countries. My professional journey of over a decade in the travel industry, including my tenure as Regional Director of Kenya, shaped our understanding of regional dynamics and global expectations.

Today, Blueberry operates as an integrated group with the capability to deliver comprehensive DMC services across continents with consistency and reliability."

Strategic collaborations with local suppliers, hoteliers, transport providers, and event partners have enhanced destination depth. This integrated structure allows the group to provide end-to-end solutions across leisure, luxury, MICE, and special-interest travel.

Redefining destination management for the future

Blueberry's long-term vision centers on redefining destination management by combining global expertise with local authenticity. The group aspires to be the most trusted and innovative DMC partner for travel agencies and tour operators worldwide.

"Our vision is to create transformative travel and event experiences that inspire and connect.

We aim to deliver measurable value to our partners through strategic thinking, operational excellence, and destination authenticity. Sustainable tourism and community growth are fundamental pillars of our long-term roadmap. As outbound travel evolves, curated and meaningful experiences will define success, and we are committed to leading that evolution," shares Jitendra.

This forward-looking strategy integrates innovation, destination storytelling, and scalable operational systems designed to support partners across diverse markets.

A strategic growth engine

India holds a significant position in Blueberry's expansion strategy. Rising disposable incomes, improved aviation connectivity, and growing appetite for experiential travel have accelerated outbound momentum from the country.

Blueberry's established networks across the UAE, Africa, and Asia position the group to support Indian travel agents exploring destinations such as Dubai, Kenya, and emerging experiential markets. Customised packages for MICE, luxury FIT, curated cultural programs, and high-volume group travel continue to drive engagement. Increasing outbound demand from Tier II and Tier III cities, supported by digital awareness and enhanced international connectivity, further strengthens the opportunity landscape.

Crafting journeys

Blueberry Holidays Group stands as a brand shaped by conviction, clarity,

and consistency.

Its journey from a regional agency in Djibouti to a multi-continent DMC group reflects strategic foresight and a deeply rooted service culture. Value-driven excellence, ethical practice, innovation, and relationship-building remain central to its identity.

As global travel advances toward personalisation and purposeful exploration, Blueberry's commitment to authenticity and measurable value positions it for sustained leadership. Through curated experiences, agile operations, and enduring partnerships, the group continues to design journeys that inspire connection, elevate destinations, and empower travel partners worldwide.



Amit Tulsani, Manager - Business Development, DMC

"India represents a dynamic and high-potential market for our DMC business. Outbound travel demand is expanding rapidly, driven by aspirational travellers, enhanced aviation connectivity, and a growing appetite for immersive experiences. Our strength lies in delivering tailored ground handling, curated tours, luxury FIT programs, MICE movements, and seamless group operations across our established networks in the UAE, Africa, and Asia. Indian travel partners are actively exploring destinations such as Dubai, Kenya, and emerging experiential markets where we bring operational depth and destination expertise.

Growth from Tier II and Tier III cities is particularly encouraging, supported by digital awareness and evolving consumer confidence. Blueberry is fully prepared to lead with sustainable, value-driven outbound solutions that empower Indian agents and create long-term partnerships."



JW Marriott Maldives Kaafu Atoll Island Resort

Lagoon Whispers

JW Marriott Maldives Kaafu Atoll Island Resort is an intimate retreat crafted for families, couples, and multi-generational travellers seeking immersive island living. Paravee Mavichak, Director of Sales & Marketing, JW Marriott Maldives Kaafu Atoll Island Resort shares why the Indian market is important.

- Tripti Jain



Paravee Mavichak

A short speedboat ride from Velana International Airport leads to a sanctuary where turquoise lagoons embrace Maldivian design heritage and modern comforts. From expansive overwater villas to curated culinary journeys, the resort positions itself as a refined haven where Indian travellers discover familiarity within exotic surroundings. With thoughtful design, tailored cuisine, and personalised service, the property blends exclusivity with warmth, creating an experience that resonates deeply with guests from India and beyond.

A market close to the heart

India continues to shape the Maldives' tourism landscape, and for the resort, the market represents both emotional and strategic significance. The combination of proximity, strong air connectivity, and evolving travel aspirations fuels growing interest among Indian families and couples. Paravee reflects on this momentum and shares, "India holds immense importance for us considering the strong flow of travellers to the Maldives. The location of our resort plays a defining role since guests reach us within just 15 minutes by speedboat from the airport. This effortless transfer resonates beautifully with Indian families travelling with children or elders, as it removes waiting time and allows them to begin their holiday almost immediately. India currently sits within our top ten source markets and we envision it moving into the top five as awareness of the resort grows."

A balanced international mix enhances the resort's cosmopolitan character, with guests arriving from the United States, China, Russia and CIS countries, alongside the Middle East. This diversity enriches the island atmosphere and fosters cross-cultural interactions that elevate the guest experience.

Indian flavours in island form

Cuisine often becomes the

emotional bridge between destination and traveller. The resort's culinary philosophy embraces this understanding through personalised dining experiences and a dedicated focus on Indian tastes.

Paravee highlights more about the cuisine at the property and explains, "Cuisine stands out as one of the most talked-about aspects among Indian guests. Our Indian Ocean cuisine restaurant, led by an experienced Indian chef, allows us to cater to diverse preferences, including vegetarian and specific dietary requirements. Guests often meet our chef upon arrival, creating an opportunity to discuss favourite dishes and food sensitivities. This interaction enables us to curate bespoke menus that make travellers feel truly at home even in the heart of the Indian Ocean. Such thoughtful culinary engagement transforms dining into storytelling, where familiar spices mingle with Maldivian ingredients and global techniques."

Villas that echo Maldivian Heritage

Accommodation at the resort reflects a harmonious dialogue between local craftsmanship and contemporary luxury. Overwater villas with private pools define the signature stay experience, appealing strongly to both Indian honeymooners and families.

Paravee shares insights into the design philosophy and says, "Indian travellers gravitate towards our overwater pool villas, each spanning approximately 155 square metres. The spacious layout offers a sense of freedom and privacy that guests cherish. Design inspiration flows from traditional Maldivian homes, featuring high ceilings, thatched roofs, and intricate lacquer work. Every element reflects local culture, allowing guests to immerse themselves in island heritage while enjoying modern comforts. Large layouts, soothing textures, and panoramic lagoon views create an ambience where relaxation unfolds naturally."

Celebrating family journeys

Multi-generational travel from India continues to gain momentum, and the resort's villa mix responds elegantly to this trend. The Ocean Residence, a three-bedroom villa with a water slide, emerges as a distinctive centrepiece for extended families. Paravee reminisces a memorable incident and shares, "A recent Indian family spanning grandparents to grandchildren created a beautiful holiday narrative at the resort. They reserved the Ocean Residence along with neighbouring villas, allowing everyone to gather during the day and retreat to personal spaces at night. The residence's water slide and expansive living areas foster joyful shared moments, which is exactly what multi-generational travel is about."

Moments of celebration

Indian weddings carry vibrant traditions and grand celebrations, and the island setting lends itself naturally to such occasions. The resort accommodates destination weddings with guest lists of up to 200, blending Maldivian romance with Indian festivities.

Celebrity visits and social celebrations contribute to growing awareness. Paravee shares, "We enjoy welcoming Indian celebrities and influencers who celebrate special milestones with us, creating inspiring stories that resonate with travellers back home. These collaborations strengthen our connection with the Indian market and showcase the island as a setting for meaningful celebrations."

Tailored for taste

Indian travellers often seek flexibility in dining, particularly regarding vegetarian and Jain cuisine. The resort's personalised approach ensures comfort and culinary satisfaction. The ability to blend authenticity with innovation reinforces guest confidence and elevates overall satisfaction.

Paravee elaborates, "Our team remains deeply attentive to dietary

preferences. Guests with vegetarian, Jain, or allergy-related requirements receive curated menus crafted in collaboration with our chefs. This proactive engagement builds trust and ensures every meal becomes a delightful highlight rather than a concern."

Finding the perfect stay duration

Short transfers encourage spontaneous getaways, yet the island's immersive offerings invite longer stays. Paravee recommends, "A minimum of four nights allows guests to truly absorb the island experience, from wellness rituals and culinary explorations to water adventures. Easy access from the airport also inspires shorter two- or three-night escapes, giving travellers flexibility to plan quick yet memorable breaks."

Growth rooted in experience

Expansion plans within the broader portfolio signal a dynamic future, with brand transitions and upcoming developments shaping the Maldives' hospitality landscape. Paravee maintains a forward-looking optimism, emphasising experiential depth as the resort's defining strength.

She shares, "Our focus remains on crafting meaningful stays that blend intimacy, culture, and personalised service. The Maldives continues to evolve as a destination, and we feel excited to contribute to its story by welcoming more Indian travellers and introducing them to our unique island personality."

JW Marriott Maldives Kaafu Atoll Island Resort emerges as a sanctuary where convenience meets curated luxury. Proximity to the airport, culturally resonant cuisine, expansive villas, and thoughtful service create a compelling narrative for Indian travellers seeking both comfort and discovery. The lagoon waits, the villas whisper stories of craftsmanship, and each sunset paints a promise of unforgettable island moments.



EVENT AFFAIR



TravelBullz launches Sensational Singapore trade initiative

TravelBullz, in collaboration with the Singapore Tourism Board, executed the "Sensational Singapore" B2B trade campaign to strengthen Singapore's appeal in India. A three-city roadshow provided travel agents with curated products, exclusive offers, and insights into luxury, honeymoon, family, and DINK segments. The initiative aimed to drive destination confidence and reinforce Singapore as a high-value travel choice.

Thai AirAsia X hosts travel partners meet in New Delhi

Thai AirAsia X, in partnership with APG India, hosted a landmark Travel Partners Meet in New Delhi to celebrate its first year of operations in India. CEO Ms. Pattra Boosarawongse engaged with key industry leaders who supported the airline's entry into the Indian market. The event highlighted the airline's growing network from Aerocity, strengthening the tourism corridor between India and Thailand through dedicated travel partners.



PATA India Tourism Powerhouse focuses on data-driven growth

The 4th edition of the PATA India Tourism Powerhouse brought together global experts and policymakers to discuss the future of Indian tourism. The event emphasised data-driven strategies, sustainable growth, and global benchmarking to strengthen the 'Incredible India' brand. It served as a platform for thought leadership and knowledge exchange among industry leaders.



Sariska Safari Lodge is a boutique, eco-friendly luxury lodge located on the edge of Sariska Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan. Surrounded by the Aravali ranges, the region is rich in wildlife, Mauryan-Buddhist heritage, serene lakes, and captivating night skies. Set across 6.5 acres, the lodge offers a tranquil escape where sustainable living meets refined comfort, creating a truly immersive wilderness experience.

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EVENT AFFAIR



OTM 2026 brings global travel industry to Mumbai

OTM 2026 was held at the Jio World Convention Centre, Mumbai, gathering over 2,200 exhibitors from 60+ countries and 45+ National Tourism Organisations. Recognised by NielsenIQ as India and Asia's leading travel trade show, the event attracted more than 50,000 trade visitors, including 1,000+ VIP buyers. The three-day event showcased the largest and most internationally diverse edition of OTM to date.



Day 2 | 6th February 2026



10:50 AM - 11:30 AM Building India's Corporate Travel Ecosystem: A \$20B Journey
 Bhavin Modi, Chief Commercial Officer, GarudaTravel by MakeMyTrip
 Geetar Shekhar Nagarkar, Group Head - Corporate Travel & Logistics, Reliance Industries
 Shuheem Karol, Assistant Vice President - Corporate Administration, Aditya Birla Group

11:30 AM - 12:00 PM What India's Top Corporate Travel Buyers Expect from the Industry Today
 Ajay Bhatt, Group Head - Corporate Services, Oracle Industries Group
 Divendra Saraya, Executive Director - Recruitment & Travel, Deloitte
 Ranjit Nair, Global Compliance & Travel Risk Consulting Services

11:30 AM - 01:30 PM WTO President's Address on the State of the Global Travel Market

02:30 PM - 02:38 PM
 Anshul Kothari, Chairman, Ministry of Labour & Employment
 Anshu Sharma, Director, Ministry of Labour & Employment

02:45 PM - 02:55 PM
 Anshu Sharma, Director, Ministry of Labour & Employment

03:00 PM - 03:15 PM
 Anshu Sharma, Director, Ministry of Labour & Employment

Benny Sanki, Managing Director, FCM Travel India
Dr. Sanjay, Managing Director, Corporate Travel, Hospitality & Director Assistant, (Moderator)

Sri Arun, Managing Director, Travel Hub
Mohit, Managing Director, Travel Hub

EVENT AFFAIR





Sri Lanka Tourism hosts awareness session in Delhi

Sri Lanka Tourism hosted an exclusive awareness session in Delhi to highlight the island's cultural heritage, natural landscapes, and diverse travel experiences. The event included strategic presentations, panel discussions, and networking opportunities with local travel partners. Emphasis was placed on sustainable eco-tourism, luxury heritage stays, and immersive destination experiences.



Taiwan Mega Roadshow strengthens tourism ties in India

The Taiwan Mega Roadshow in New Delhi provided a strategic platform for business networking and cultural exchange. H.E. Paul Shih and H.E. Chen Mumin underscored the importance of the Indian market. Discussions focused on deepening bilateral ties and strengthening long-term tourism partnerships between Taiwan and India.



SATTE India hosts exclusive networking evening in Delhi

SATTE India hosted a networking evening in Delhi, bringing together prominent members of the travel trade fraternity. Celebrating 33 years of excellence, the event fostered meaningful conversations, valuable collaborations, and strengthened industry connections ahead of the SATTE India 2026 fair at Yashobhoomi.



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EVENT AFFAIR



Dharana at Shillim launches new wellbeing programmes

Dharana at Shillim announced a new suite of clinically driven long-stay wellbeing programmes, designed to address modern health challenges. The expanded portfolio underscores Dharana's focus on evidence-based healing, structured wellness journeys, and sustained clinical engagement for lasting results. The launch reinforces its global reputation as a leading destination for holistic health and wellness.

Utah Office of Tourism engages Indian trade and media

The Utah Office of Tourism hosted trade and media networking events in Mumbai and Delhi to deepen engagement with the Indian travel ecosystem. Over 70 travel trade partners and media representatives participated, highlighting India's importance as a long-haul market. Utah's Indian visitation is expected to grow significantly by 2030, with higher-value travel and longer stays driving increased spending.



JW Marriott Maldives hosts hi-tea showcases for Indian market

JW Marriott Maldives Kaafu Atoll Island Resort conducted exclusive hi-tea showcases in India, engaging key stakeholders from the premium travel segment. Led by Ms. Paravee Mavichak and Mr. Naushad Ahmed, the showcases highlighted luxury island experiences, mindful hospitality, and bespoke offerings designed for experience-led escapes. The events reinforced the resort's presence in the Indian luxury travel market.

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EVENT AFFAIR



Uganda Tourism Board hosts exclusive roadshow in Delhi

Uganda Tourism Board, in partnership with the Uganda High Commission in India, hosted a destination training and networking roadshow. The session highlighted Uganda's biodiversity, national parks, mountain gorillas, historical landmarks, equator line attractions, coffee trails, and spiritual tourism opportunities. Indian travel partners gained valuable insights into immersive experiences and adventure offerings in Uganda.

Banyan Tree showcases global portfolio in Delhi

Banyan Tree hosted an evening in Delhi, highlighting its global portfolio of luxury resorts and wellness sanctuaries. The showcase covered properties from Thailand to Singapore, emphasizing heritage, architectural innovation, and mindful luxury. The event reinforced the group's commitment to creating exceptional spaces that combine purpose, elegance, and immersive guest experiences.



Creative Travel celebrates Annual Chaat Party

Creative Travel hosted its Annual Chaat Party 2026, bringing the flavours of 'Purani Dilli' to the city. The vibrant afternoon celebrated long-standing industry partnerships with legendary street food, music, and dance. The event provided a lively platform to kick off the year's collaborations and strengthen connections within the travel fraternity.

APPOINTMENTS



Sun Siyam Resort

Sun Siyam Group announces the promotion of Deepak Booneya to Group Chief Executive Officer. The appointment marks a significant milestone in the Group's ongoing evolution, underscoring its focus on long-term growth, brand elevation, and purpose-driven leadership. Under his leadership, the resort portfolio strengthened its brand positioning, elevated guest experience philosophies, and advanced key strategic initiatives that honour the Group's island heritage while enhancing its global luxury appeal.



Ebix Group

Ebix Group announces the appointment of Arun Batra as Managing Director of Ebix Travels, reinforcing leadership across its travel and mobility portfolio as the Group sharpens its focus on growth, integration, and execution. In his new role, he will lead Ebix's travel and mobility businesses across domestic and international markets, with responsibility for overall performance, governance, and long-term value creation.



Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation

The Government of Tamil Nadu appoints J. Innocent Divya, IAS, as the new Commissioner of Tourism, with additional charge as Managing Director of the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC), as part of a major administrative reshuffle involving senior IAS officers across key state departments. As Commissioner of Tourism and Managing Director of TTDC, J. Innocent Divya is expected to play a pivotal role in shaping the next phase of Tamil Nadu's tourism development, with an emphasis on sustainability, inclusivity, and long-term growth.



Clubmed

Club Med announces the appointment of Rohan Kulkarni as Senior Business Development Manager for India, marking a strategic move to accelerate the brand's growth in the Indian market. In his new role, he will lead Club Med's business development efforts across India, with a strong focus on strengthening trade relationships and building new partnerships with travel agents and tour operators.





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Rawai Beach

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All apartments at Grand Kata VIP are designed for maximum comfort, featuring spacious kitchens, elegant bathrooms, comfortable living areas, and large balconies. Ideal for both short and long stays, they offer a refined balance of luxury and home-style living.

1-2 bedroom suites with kitchen

Kata Beach

Ideal for FIT & family travellers.



WEKATA LUXURY

Our hotel offers affordable luxury in the heart of a vibrant tourist district, just a 10-minute walk from the beach. Fully equipped apartments with kitchens, separate bedrooms, and spacious living areas provide superior comfort, combining the privacy of home with high-end hotel services.

1-2 bedroom suites with kitchen

Ideal for FIT & family travellers.

Kata Beach



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Our generously sized rooms are designed for families who appreciate refined comfort. Featuring elegant bathrooms, premium amenities, and beautifully appointed living spaces, they offer a serene retreat where every detail invites relaxation and indulgence.

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