

India's Leading, Multi-Award-Winning Travel Magazine

VOLUME 6 | ISSUE 07

JULY 2026

₹200/-

PAGES 64

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बाबा बासुकीनाथ धाम, दुमका



ॐ नमः
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श्रावणी
मेला

श्रावण मास के पावन अवसर पर
'बाबा बैद्यनाथ और बाबा बासुकीनाथ' की
भूमि झारखण्ड में पधारने वाले समस्त
कांवरियों एवं श्रद्धालुओं का
हार्दिक अभिनंदन एवं जोहार



श्री हेमन्त सोरेन
माननीय मुख्यमंत्री, झारखण्ड

सूचना एवं जनसम्पर्क विभाग, झारखण्ड

EDITORS LETTER

"The bamboo that bends is stronger than the oak that resists." — Japanese Proverb.

I came across this proverb recently, and for reasons I couldn't quite explain then, it stayed with me. Perhaps because it isn't really about bamboo at all. It's about life. About knowing when to hold your ground and when to gracefully adapt.

The thought resurfaced while I was at ILM Asia-Pacific in Singapore, listening to conversations that sought to define the future of luxury travel. Somewhere between those discussions, it struck me that luxury itself has become beautifully fluid. It is no longer a measure of excess, but of emotion. Of experiences that linger, of destinations that transform, of moments that ask nothing of us except our presence. Sometimes, the greatest luxury is simply finding a place where the world becomes quieter, even if only for a little while.

The last few months have mirrored that very philosophy. Geopolitical realities nudged travellers towards different destinations, familiar itineraries gave way to unexpected ones, and yet the desire to explore remained wonderfully intact. Travel, much like water, has an extraordinary way of finding its own course. It bends, it reroutes, it reinvents itself, but it never truly stops flowing. And perhaps that's what has always made this industry so remarkable. Its greatest strength has never been certainty; it has been adaptability.

That quiet evolution is reflected throughout this issue. Our cover story explores the rise of Gig Tourism, where the boundaries between work and travel continue to blur. We wander through the untamed beauty of Sabah—a destination that has occupied my own bucket list for years—and discover a gentler definition of wellness in Lanserhof, where luxury is found in stillness rather than spectacle. We also bring you an insightful conversation with the leadership of Mauritius, a destination that continues to reinvent itself while remaining timeless in its appeal.

While curating this edition, I found myself equally inspired by stories of legacy. In an era captivated by startups and disruption, organisations like Riya Travels and Clubside Tours & Travels remind us that relevance is not inherited; it is earned, nurtured, and renewed over time. Reinvention, after all, belongs as much to legacy as it does to innovation.

Every issue of Travel Turtle is, in many ways, a reflection of the journeys shaping our industry—and of the ideas shaping us as travellers. I hope that as you turn these pages, you discover not just new destinations, but new ways of looking at the world. Because sometimes, the most memorable journey isn't the one that changes your location; it's the one that quietly changes your perspective.

Stay curious. Stay connected. And as always, keep growing with Travel Turtle.

Bharti Sharma

Bharti Sharma
Editor

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





Travel Turtle Team

Publisher: **Harish Chandra Uniyal**

Editor: **Bharti Sharma**

Executive Director: **Sudipta Saha**

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

Assistant Editor: **Tripti Jain**

Sub-Editor: **Itika Nindrajog**

Contributing Editors:

Inder Raj Ahluwalia

Misbaah Mansuri

Marketing Executive: **Rishi Arora**

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Art Director: **Pankti Anjaria**

Rajas More

Legal Consultant: **Aditya Singh**

Photographer: **Khurshed Ahmad**

Circulation: **Pradeep Kumar**

Accounts: **Dinesh Kumar**



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

Editor: Bharti Sharma

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to Arabia

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- * Tokyo • Hakone • Osaka • Kyoto
- * Luxury 5-star hotel stays
- * World-class golf experiences in Japan
- * Scenic golf near Mt. Fuji
- * Private luxury transportation throughout
- * Guided sightseeing experiences
- * Seamless blend of golf, culture & leisure
- * Ideal for premium FIT travelers
- * Private guided city tours & curated experiences

COMMUNIQUE



Hong Kong Air Cargo appoints Aeroprimé Group as GSSA agent for Delhi, India

Under the agreement, Aeroprimé will manage cargo sales, marketing, customer engagement, and business development for Hong Kong Air Cargo's Delhi operations. The partnership aims to tap into the growing demand for air cargo services between India and East Asia while giving customers better access to Hong Kong Air Cargo's network and cargo capacity.



Dr. Shankar Ghosh unveils new vision for West Bengal Tourism

In a landmark initiative marking the beginning of a new era for tourism in West Bengal, the Hon'ble Minister-in Charge, Department of Tourism, Dr. Shankar Ghosh, convenes his first consultative meeting with representatives of the State's leading national and regional tourism and hospitality associations. The meeting was attended by Hon'ble Minister of State Ms. Purnima Chakraborty, Additional Chief Secretary Mr. Barun Kumar Ray, IAS, Director of Tourism Mr. Soumitra Shankar Sengupta, senior officials of the Department, and representatives from across the tourism industry.

IATO announces theme and leadership team for 41st Annual Convention

IATO is all set to organise its 41st IATO Annual Convention from 10th to 13th September 2026 in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh 'City of Destiny' and the 'Jewel of the East Coast.' The theme of the convention is 'India: The World's Next Tourism Opportunity' informed Ravi Gosain, President, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO). Ravi Gosain also announced that Sunil Mishra – Honorary Secretary will be the Chairman of the Convention along with Deepak Kumarr Bhatnagar, Honorary Treasurer as the Co-Chairman of the convention. Vijay Mohan, Co-Chairman- IATO Andhra Pradesh will be the coordinator.



HRAR elected new leadership for 2026-28 tenure

The 36th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Hotel & Restaurant Association of Rajasthan (HRAR) was successfully held at Hilton Jaipur, in the presence of Founder Members, Past Presidents, senior hoteliers, restaurateurs, tourism stakeholders and members from across the State. During the AGM, the members unanimously constituted the new Executive Committee for the forthcoming term.



Air India Express strengthens India-UAE connectivity with Northeast India services

The new routes are expected to provide travellers from Northeast India with convenient access to two of the UAE's key aviation gateways while reducing travel time and dependence on connecting flights through other Indian cities. The services will cater to leisure travellers, business passengers, and the large Indian diaspora residing in the Gulf region.



Villa Park named Best Family Island Resort at Fashion Travel Awards 2026

There are family resorts, and then there are islands that seem to understand how families actually travel. Villa Park, set in the whale shark waters of South Ari Atoll, belongs firmly to the latter. Named Best Family Island Resort in the Maldives at the Fashion Travel Awards 2026, the resort has been recognised for an experience that feels generous, unforced and made for every generation.



Saudi introduces 'Package Visa' initiative

The initiative builds on Saudi's wider efforts to simplify visiting the country. Since launching the tourist e-Visa, Saudi has introduced several new ways to visit, including visa on arrival and the Stopover Transit Visa. Together, these initiatives have supported the country's rapid tourism growth, with Saudi welcoming more than 29 million inbound visitors in 2025.

Tourism India Alliance to host TEX 2027 in Mayfair Lake Resort, Raipur

Tourism India Alliance (TIA) announces the next edition of its flagship event Tourism Exchange (TEX 2027) will be held from 7th to 9th January 2027 at the magnificent Mayfair Lake Resort, Raipur.

Expected to bring together more than 350 delegates and 50+ exhibitors from India and overseas, TEX 2027 will serve as a dynamic platform for tourism professionals to connect, learn, collaborate, and explore new business opportunities across the tourism ecosystem.



Visit Maldives reports highest annual revenue in eight years

Visit Maldives Corporation (VMC) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 9 June 2026 at Meeruma Hall, reporting its strongest financial performance in eight years and highlighting a year marked by tourism growth, strengthened governance, and expanded international destination marketing activities. During the meeting, shareholders reviewed and approved the Corporation's Annual Report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025.



Tourism Western Australia announces 2026 Pair'd Festival program

Pair'd Margaret River Region unveils its 2026 program – a masterful, multi-sensory celebration of wine, food, music and culture, that will utilise the region's incredible natural assets as the backdrop for the four-day festival this November (19-22).





Centara Grand at CentralWorld becomes one of Bangkok's leading integrated MICE destinations

Located above CentralWorld, one of Asia's largest lifestyle and shopping destinations, the integrated venue accommodates events ranging from executive meetings and incentive programmes to international conventions, exhibitions, product launches, gala dinners, and large-scale corporate gatherings. With capacities ranging from 10 to 6,000 attendees, the destination offers organisers a single venue capable of supporting events of virtually every scale and format.



Ministry of Tourism and Google India sign MoU to boost digital promotion of India's Tourism

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, and Google India Pvt. Ltd. have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote India's tourism through digital technologies, Artificial Intelligence (AI), data-driven insights, and capacity-building initiatives. Exchanged in New Delhi in the presence of Union Tourism and Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, the MoU strengthens India's digital tourism ecosystem under the Incredible India initiative.

Air India welcomes its third line-fit Boeing 787-9 aircraft to the fleet

Air India, welcomes VT-AWC, its third line-fit Boeing 787-9 aircraft, to its fleet. The aircraft completed a non-stop journey of 17 hours and 14 minutes from Boeing's facility in Charleston and landed in Delhi on 4 July 2026. The factory-fresh aircraft marks another milestone in Air India's fleet modernisation journey and features a three-class cabin configuration with 30 Business Class suites, 28 Premium Economy seats, and 238 Economy seats. The aircraft is equipped with state-of-the-art interiors, including Thales' AVANT Up inflight entertainment system, offering customers an enhanced long-haul travel experience.



IndiGo launches 'IndiGo Lite Fare' to offer greater flexibility to customers

IndiGo Lite builds on IndiGo's focus on offering tailored options for the evolving needs of travellers in India and globally. Customers benefit from a lower base fare, an auto-assigned seat at no extra cost, and a cabin baggage allowance of up to 7 kg. They can personalise their journey by adding services such as check-in baggage, preferred seats, meals, or Fast Forward up to one hour before departure via IndiGo's website or at the airport. IndiGo Lite travellers will also continue to earn and redeem IndiGo BluChip points, ensuring loyalty benefits remain available across all fare types.



TAAI hosts its members meeting at The Meriton Hotel, New Delhi

TAAI Northern Region held its Members' Meeting at The Meriton Hotel, New Delhi, bringing together members of the travel fraternity for an evening of industry interaction and knowledge sharing. The highlight of the meeting was an insightful session by Mr. Ritam Saha, Assistant Director – Passenger & Cargo Services, India, Nepal & Bhutan, IATA, who shared the latest updates on IATA and developments concerning the airline industry and BSP.

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GIG TRIPPING

WHEN THE EXPERIENCE BECOMES THE DESTINATION

The new-age traveller is no longer chasing places. They are chasing moments.

- Bharti Sharma

There was a time when travel began with a destination. Paris was about the Eiffel Tower, Switzerland about the Alps, and New York about Times Square. Today, that equation has changed. Increasingly, travellers are choosing why they want to travel before deciding where they want to go. A Taylor Swift concert in Singapore. Tomorrowland in Belgium. Wimbledon in London. The FIFA World Cup across North America. Formula 1 in Monaco. Paris Fashion Week. These are no longer events tucked into a holiday, they are the holiday itself. Welcome to the era of Gig - Tripping, where unforgettable experiences have become the biggest motivation to travel.

The Rise of Experience-Led Travel

Travel has become more personal than ever. Instead of ticking landmarks off a bucket list, travellers are investing in moments they can never recreate. This shift has fuelled one of tourism's fastest-growing trends: planning an entire itinerary around a concert, festival, sporting event or cultural celebration. A Coldplay fan doesn't simply book

tickets to a concert anymore. They book flights, extend their stay, discover local neighbourhoods, reserve the city's best restaurants and turn one evening into a week-long holiday. The destination is no longer the headline. The experience is. This evolution reflects a broader change in traveller behaviour. Experiences have become a form of social currency. They create stories, memories and emotional connections—something today's traveller values far more than simply collecting passport stamps.

A Multi-Billion Dollar Tourism Opportunity

What started as a niche trend has rapidly become a powerful economic driver. The global live events industry has witnessed remarkable growth since the pandemic, while destinations are increasingly recognising concerts, festivals and sporting events as tourism assets rather than entertainment alone. The numbers tell the story. Taylor Swift's Eras Tour became one of the highest-grossing concert tours in history, with fans travelling across countries simply to secure tickets. FIFA World Cups

generate billions in tourism revenue for host nations. Formula 1 races consistently fill hotels months in advance, while festivals such as Tomorrowland attract visitors from more than 200 countries every year.

For destinations, these events extend visitor stays, increase average spending and introduce travellers to experiences they may never have considered otherwise.

The Taylor Swift Effect

Perhaps no event demonstrates the power of gig-tripping better than Taylor Swift's Eras Tour. When ticket sales opened, fans didn't just search for the closest venue. They searched the world. Many found it easier or cheaper to fly overseas than buy resale tickets at home. Entire holidays were built around a single concert. Cities hosting the tour witnessed surging hotel occupancy, packed restaurants, increased airline demand and booming retail sales. Economists even coined the phrase "The Taylor Swift Effect" to describe the measurable economic impact her concerts had on local economies. It proved one simple point: a single event can become a destination's strongest tourism campaign.

Luxury Travel is Joining the Movement

Gig-tripping is no longer driven only by Gen Z or music lovers. Luxury travellers are embracing it with equal enthusiasm, but with a different lens.

For them, it's not just about attending the event. It's about how they experience it.

A Formula 1 weekend now includes private yacht parties, Michelin-starred dining, luxury shopping and exclusive paddock access. Wimbledon becomes an elegant London escape with Centre Court tickets, afternoon tea at The Ritz and evenings in the West End. Even music festivals are seeing demand for VIP hospitality, private villas and curated post-event itineraries.

Luxury today is defined by access, exclusivity and experiences that money alone cannot easily buy.



Sports Tourism Takes Centre Stage

Few sectors illustrate gig-tripping better than sports tourism.

The upcoming FIFA World Cup 2026, hosted across the United States, Canada and Mexico, is expected to attract millions of international visitors. Likewise, the Olympics, Formula 1, Wimbledon, The Masters and the Ryder Cup have evolved into global tourism magnets.

Travellers are no longer flying thousands of kilometres simply to watch a match. They are extending their journeys with luxury stays, destination experiences, culinary trails and regional exploration.

For travel advisors, this opens opportunities far beyond ticketing. Every major sporting event becomes the foundation of a premium, high-value itinerary.

Festivals That Put Destinations on the Map

Music festivals have transformed into tourism brands in their own right.

Tomorrowland in Belgium is perhaps the perfect example. What began as a music festival has become a global pilgrimage, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors from over 200 countries each year.

Recognising Asia's growing appetite for live entertainment, the brand has now expanded with Tomorrowland Thailand, signalling how destinations are increasingly using global entertainment

brands to drive tourism demand.

Likewise, Coachella has become as much about fashion, luxury hospitality and lifestyle as it is about music. Glastonbury, Ultra Music Festival and Burning Man each attract travellers seeking an experience rather than simply attending an event.

Increasingly, tourism boards are partnering with festivals because they understand one simple fact: festivals bring visitors who stay longer, spend more and share their experiences with the world.

Travel Trade Opportunity

From Destination Selling to Experience Selling

Gig-tripping is creating a new playbook for the travel trade. The event becomes the anchor, while the destination becomes the story built around it.

Instead of selling a hotel or a city, advisors can curate complete, high-value itineraries that drive longer stays and higher spends.

- Wimbledon → Luxury London Stay + Afternoon Tea + West End + Michelin Dining

- Tomorrowland (Belgium/Thailand) → Festival Pass + Luxury Resort + Gastronomy + City Escape

- Formula 1 Monaco → Grand Prix + Yacht Experience + Riviera Luxury + Fine Dining

- FIFA World Cup → Match Tickets + Multi-City Journey + Local Experiences

- Coachella → Festival + Palm Springs Wellness + Luxury Desert Retreat

- Paris Fashion Week → Designer Shows + Shopping + Luxury Hotels + Exclusive Dining

For the travel trade, the opportunity is no longer just to book a holiday—it is to design an unforgettable experience.

Why It Matters for the Travel Industry

For travel advisors, gig-tripping is much more than a passing trend - it's a commercial opportunity.

Today's traveller isn't looking for a standard package. They want someone to curate an experience around a moment that matters to them.

Instead of selling London, advisors can sell Wimbledon. Instead of Belgium, they can sell Tomorrowland. Instead of Monaco, they can sell Formula 1.

The event becomes the hook, while the destination delivers the rest of the story.

This approach not only increases the value of every booking but also encourages longer stays, premium accommodation, destination extensions and bespoke experiences — all translating into higher revenue for the travel trade.

India's Appetite for Experiences is Growing

India's luxury outbound market is evolving rapidly, and gig-tripping is becoming an increasingly important part of that story.

Affluent Indian travellers are willing to cross continents for a once-in-a-lifetime concert, a Grand Slam final, a Formula 1 race or an iconic cultural festival. Younger travellers are driving the trend, but families, HNIs and multi-generational travellers are embracing it just as enthusiastically.

For destinations and tourism boards, this represents a valuable opportunity to engage Indian travellers through experiences rather than traditional destination marketing.

The Future Belongs to Experiences

Travel has always been about creating memories.

What has changed is where those memories begin.

For a growing number of travellers, the journey now starts with securing a concert ticket, a seat at Centre Court, a Formula 1 pass or a place at the world's biggest music festival. The destination follows naturally.

Gig-tripping is not replacing traditional tourism, it is redefining it. It reflects a broader shift from sightseeing to storytelling, from itineraries to emotions, from destinations to defining moments.

For the travel industry, the message is clear. The future traveller isn't asking, "Where should I go?"

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SABAH

Where nature writes the story

There are only few destinations that can blend wilderness, culture and adventure, Sabah is the perfect destination. Julinus Jeffery Jimit, Chief Executive Officer, Sabah Tourism Board shares his thoughts on the destination's future, hidden gems and growing appeal among global travellers.

-Tripti Jain



Julinus Jeffery Jimit



OFFSHORE BINOCULARS

Located on the northern tip of Borneo, this Malaysian state is a place where ancient rainforests meet turquoise seas, where wildlife thrives in protected habitats, and where communities continue to preserve traditions that have shaped the region for generations. Sabah's appeal lies in its diversity. A single itinerary can take travellers from the misty slopes of Mount Kinabalu to the wildlife-rich banks of the Kinabatangan River, and from vibrant cultural villages to the crystal-clear waters of Semporna. Every experience feels connected to the destination's natural rhythm, creating journeys that are both exciting and deeply rewarding.

The land below the wind

Nature is undoubtedly Sabah's greatest asset. Kinabalu Park, Malaysia's first UNESCO World Heritage Site, showcases exceptional biodiversity, while the state's extensive rainforests provide sanctuary to iconic species such as orangutans, proboscis monkeys and the Bornean elephant. River cruises through Kinabatangan offer rare opportunities to observe these animals in their natural habitat, making wildlife encounters one of Sabah's most memorable experiences. The marine side of Sabah is equally captivating. World-renowned dive sites, thriving coral reefs and idyllic islands have earned the destination global recognition among divers and ocean lovers. Places such as Sipadan and Semporna reveal an underwater world bursting with colour and life, while pristine beaches offer the perfect setting for relaxation. Culture adds another layer to Sabah's charm. More than 35 ethnic groups contribute to a vibrant cultural landscape reflected in local traditions, cuisine, festivals and community

experiences. Visitors are welcomed into a destination where authentic encounters are part of everyday life. As travellers increasingly seek meaningful journeys, Sabah's commitment to sustainability has become one of its defining strengths. Conservation, community empowerment and responsible tourism continue to guide the destination's growth, ensuring its natural and cultural treasures remain protected for future generations.

Charting tomorrow

"Over the next five years, I see Sabah evolving into one of Asia's leading destinations for sustainable, high-quality and experience-driven tourism," says Julinus. According to him, Sabah's growth strategy focuses on attracting travellers who value authentic experiences while ensuring tourism creates meaningful benefits for local communities. "We remain committed to growing visitor arrivals while attracting high-value travellers who appreciate nature, culture and authentic local experiences. We are strengthening air connectivity, expanding community-based tourism and encouraging investment in premium tourism products that create greater value for Sabah."

He believes the destination is well positioned to meet changing traveller expectations. "As global travellers increasingly seek meaningful and responsible travel, Sabah offers experiences that are both unforgettable and sustainable."

Beyond the familiar

Sabah is often associated with Mount Kinabalu and orangutans, yet Julinus feels its diversity is frequently overlooked. "One of the biggest misconceptions is that Sabah is only about climbing Mount Kinabalu or seeing

orangutans," he says.

He points to Sabah's tourism pillars of Culture, Adventure, Nature and Sustainability as the foundation of its appeal and shares, "We are home to one of the world's richest biodiversities, spectacular islands and marine parks, vibrant indigenous cultures represented by more than 35 ethnic groups, world-class diving, wellness experiences and authentic community-based tourism. Travellers can enjoy an extraordinary diversity of experiences while exploring the authentic side of Sabah."

Hidden treasures

Among Sabah's lesser-known attractions, Julinus believes Kudat deserves greater recognition. He shares, "The pristine beaches of Kudat deserve far more global attention.

Located at the northern tip of Borneo, Kudat offers powdery white sand, crystal-clear waters and breathtaking sunsets while remaining wonderfully unspoilt." Adventure seekers can also explore attractions operated by local communities. "Travellers



OFFSHORE BINOCULARS

should experience places such as Taralamas River Canyon and Murug Turug, where rainforest treks reveal stunning river canyons and waterfalls while creating opportunities for local communities," he adds.

A commitment to conservation

Sustainability continues to shape Sabah's tourism identity. "What truly distinguishes Sabah is our unwavering commitment to sustainability," says Julinus. Visitors can witness conservation efforts through attractions such as the Bornean Elephant Sanctuary and Sabah's network of protected marine parks.

He adds, "Sabah is home to six marine parks, Kinabalu Park, two UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and the Kinabalu UNESCO Global Geopark. More than 30 per cent of Sabah's land area has been gazetted as Totally Protected Areas. This reflects our commitment to conserving forests, wildlife and marine ecosystems while ensuring tourism benefits local communities."

Power of partnership

The travel trade remains an important driver of Sabah's international growth. Julinus says, "The travel trade remains one of our most valuable strategic partners. There is significant potential for products centred on wellness, luxury nature experiences, diving, birdwatching, adventure, golf, cultural immersion and community-based tourism." He believes, collaboration is key to long-term success and explains, "At Sabah Tourism Board, we believe in TEAM, Together We Achieve More. By working closely with industry stakeholders, we can create stronger tourism offerings and deliver greater value to visitors."

The rise of meaningful travel

Changing traveller preferences are creating new opportunities for Sabah. Julinus explains, "Travellers today are increasingly seeking authentic, purposeful and immersive experiences.

Visitors want to experience local culture, explore pristine rainforests, connect with communities and support conservation. Sabah offers meaningful journeys that allow travellers to experience Culture, Adventure and Nature, with Sustainability at the heart of every journey."

One perfect introduction

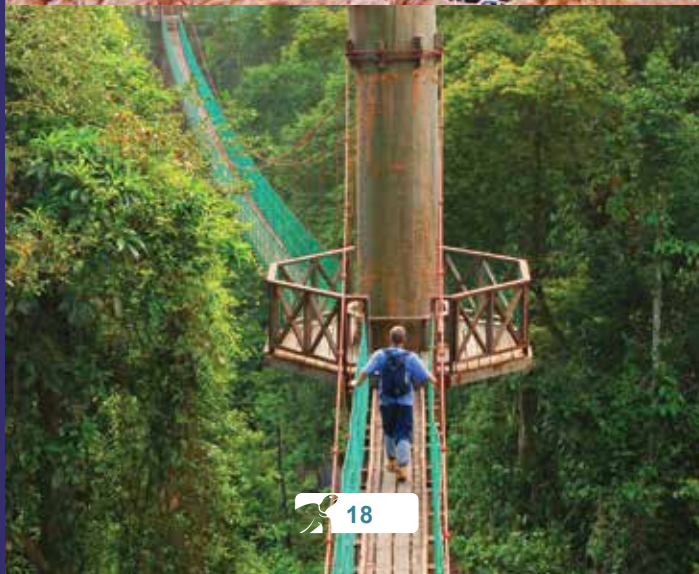
For first-time Indian visitors, Julinus recommends experiencing Sabah's rainforest and marine wonders together. "If I had to recommend just one experience, it would be spending a few days exploring Sabah's unique combination of rainforest and marine wonders," he says.

The journey begins with wildlife encounters along the Kinabatangan River before moving to the islands of Semporna. He explains, "Imagine starting the day on a wildlife cruise, encountering orangutans and proboscis monkeys in their natural habitat, and then unwinding on pristine islands surrounded by crystal-clear waters and spectacular coral reefs."

For Julinus, this experience captures the essence of the destination. "Very few places in the world offer such extraordinary biodiversity and contrasting landscapes within a single holiday. For Indian travellers seeking adventure, nature, relaxation and unforgettable family memories, Sabah offers an experience unlike any other."

A destination that endures

Sabah's greatest strength lies in its ability to offer experiences that feel genuine. Its rainforests, islands, wildlife and cultural heritage come together to create journeys filled with discovery and connection. Guided by sustainability and enriched by local communities, the destination continues to evolve while staying true to its identity. As Julinus describes it, Sabah is the 'Land Below the Wind, Naturally Inspiring, Beyond Ordinary' - a destination where every journey becomes a story worth remembering.





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OFFSHORE BINOCULARS

Mauritius beyond the beach



Dinesh Burrenchobay

As Mauritius targets 100,000 Indian visitors annually, MTPA Chairman Dinesh Burrenchobay discusses visitor growth, new opportunities, and why India remains central to Mauritius' tourism ambitions.

- Naina Nath

OFFSHORE BINOCULARS

Five months into his tenure as Chairman of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA), Dinesh Burrenchobay is focused on growth. Speaking during MTPA's recent India roadshow, he outlined an ambitious vision centred around stronger connectivity, wider geographic reach, and a renewed effort to showcase a side of Mauritius that goes far beyond its famous beaches.

100K Vision

India recorded its best-ever performance for Mauritius in 2025, with 75,808 visitors arriving on the island. Growth has continued into 2026, with 25,930 Indian arrivals recorded between January and mid-May, a 19.1 per cent increase over the same period last year. Dinesh says, "My ambition is to move from 75,000 visitors to 80,000, then 90,000, and ultimately reach 100,000 tourists a year. With India already ranking among Mauritius' top five source markets, I believe the potential for further growth remains significant."

Beyond metros

While Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, and Hyderabad continue to drive arrivals, Mauritius is now looking further afield. Dinesh shares, "We should go to the Tier II and Tier III cities now. We recently took our roadshow to Indore for the first time, as we wanted to build a stronger presence beyond India's major metros. The focus is not just on new cities, but also on new audiences, with Gen Z and

first-time international travellers playing an increasingly important role in its strategy."

Cultural connect

India's importance extends far beyond arrival numbers. Dinesh believes Mauritius shares a natural connection with Indian travellers, making the island an easy choice for families, weddings, and multi-generational holidays. He explains, "A large part of our population has Indian roots, so visitors immediately feel welcome. This familiarity, combined with a wide range of Indian cuisine, cultural landmarks, and family-friendly resorts, has helped Mauritius strengthen its appeal across different traveller segments. We have also noticed a shift in the market itself. Indian travellers have evolved. We're seeing more families travelling together, and they are looking for a wider range of experiences than ever before."

More than beaches

Mauritius may be famous for its beaches, but Dinesh believes that's only part of the story. "Mauritius is much more than sun, sea and sand. From cultural experiences and local cuisine to trekking trails, heritage sites, and visits to Ganga Talao, the destination is placing greater emphasis on experiences and storytelling. You'll see more of that in our communication over the next six months," he says. The emphasis on experiences is also reflected in MTPA's trade engagement. Its latest

familiarisation trip to Mauritius brought together 80 travel professionals, of whom 26 were from India, the largest international contingent.

Weddings & MICE

Beyond leisure travel, Mauritius sees enormous opportunity in both weddings and meetings. Dinesh talks about the potential of MICE industry in Mauritius and shares, "The MICE market is showing a lot of potential at the moment. Indian weddings also remain a major focus, but we believe the destination can offer far more than beachfront ceremonies. We have old colonial houses, historical sites, and unique venues that can create very different experiences. The goal is to encourage planners to look beyond traditional formats and explore the island's wider offering."

Understanding India

For Dinesh, growing the Indian market isn't only about promotion. It's equally about understanding what Indian travellers want. He adds, "We also need our hotel groups to better understand the Indian market. From accommodating the unique requirements of Indian weddings to creating experiences that go beyond the traditional beach holiday, we believe the industry must continue adapting to changing expectations. Indian travellers have evolved in the way they travel and we have to evolve with them."

Easy access

Connectivity continues to play a critical role in Mauritius' growth story. Daily nonstop flights by Air Mauritius from Mumbai, Delhi, and Chennai, alongside services by Air India and IndiGo, have made the island more accessible than ever for Indian travellers. Dinesh says, "As soon as you introduce direct air connectivity to a destination, especially from India, visitor numbers increase. Mauritius enjoys a distinct advantage through its visa-on-arrival policy. You don't have to worry about visa complications when travelling to Mauritius. We need to educate the Indian travellers about how simple is the process."

The bigger picture

Dinesh is confident Mauritius' growth story is only just beginning. He concludes "India will definitely remain in the top four or five markets for us. Our vision is straightforward: stronger partnerships, wider market reach, and greater awareness of what Mauritius truly offers. As the destination continues to evolve, one message remains clear. Mauritius wants to be on top of every Indian travellers mind. The ambition may be 100,000 visitors, but the bigger objective is changing perceptions and showing travellers that Mauritius is far more than a beach holiday."



Journeys designed
for better living at

Lanserhof



Eva-Maria Hasenauer

Modern travellers are seeking journeys that offer more than relaxation, placing greater value on experiences that enhance wellbeing, improve quality of life, and create lasting positive change. Eva-Maria Hasenauer, Chief Commercial Officer, Lanserhof Group shares the journey behind creating the brand.

- *Tripti Jain*

HOTELLIGENCE

Across Europe, health retreats and preventive wellness destinations are attracting a growing audience of professionals, entrepreneurs, and discerning travellers who view health as their most valuable asset. Among the names shaping this evolving segment is Lanserhof Group, a collection of award-winning health resorts and clinics that has spent over four decades refining a philosophy centred on preventive healthcare. With destinations in Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom, along with a new opening in Marbella, Spain, Lanserhof has created a unique model where medicine, hospitality, nutrition, and wellbeing come together in one seamless experience.

Rooted in the belief that good health is the foundation for a fulfilling life, the group has built a loyal international following that returns year after year in pursuit of renewal, balance, and long-term vitality.

Healing through place

The journey begins with the destination itself. Every Lanserhof property is carefully positioned within landscapes that encourage calm, reflection, and restoration. Alpine peaks, forest trails, fresh mountain air, and coastal views

become an integral part of the guest experience.

"Our original Lanserhof in Austria is a very beautiful location because we are on a mountain looking down over spectacular scenery. Guests love the views and the connection with nature. The surroundings play an important role in supporting the healing process. People feel different when they are immersed in nature and away from the pressures of everyday life," says Eva-Maria.

From Lanserhof Tegernsee near Munich to Lanserhof Sylt on Germany's northern coast, every destination reflects the group's belief that environment can profoundly influence wellbeing.

A journey tailored to you

Personalisation has become one of the defining trends in luxury travel, and Lanserhof places it at the centre of its philosophy. Every stay is designed around the

individual rather than a standard programme. Eva-Maria shares, "When guests arrive, we already know quite a lot about them through consultations and health questionnaires. The first thing they do is meet their dedicated doctor. Each guest has one doctor who follows them throughout their stay. Together they look at lifestyle, family history, health concerns, and goals before designing a programme that is completely personalised."

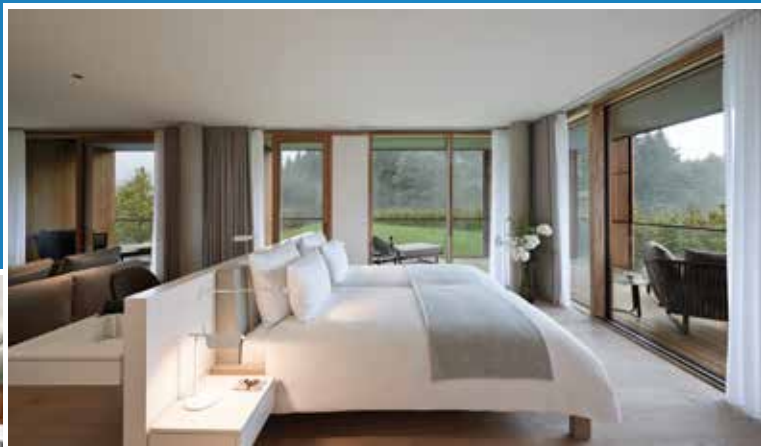
Medical consultations, diagnostic testing, lifestyle assessments, and detailed discussions allow the team to create a highly customised treatment plan. The result is an experience that feels deeply individual, creating a sense of trust and care that extends throughout the guest journey.

The power of gut health

At the heart of the Lanserhof philosophy lies a deep

understanding of gut health and its influence on overall wellbeing. The concept was originally built around digestive restoration and has since evolved into a comprehensive approach that combines modern medical science with natural healing techniques. As Eva-Maria explains, "The core idea is health prevention, and gut health remains a very important part of our philosophy. Over the years we have evolved the concept into a holistic blend of science and natural techniques."

Nutrition plays a central role in this journey. Every guest receives a personalised dietary programme designed around their individual health profile, lifestyle, and goals. Rather than following a one-size-fits-all approach, Lanserhof creates tailored plans that support the body's natural regenerative processes. She adds, "The diet is crucial and completely customised. The foundation is largely plant-based, and we adjust the intensity according to each person's needs and health objectives. We like to create space between meals because it allows the body to process food properly and supports natural regeneration."



HOTELLIGENCE

Beyond traditional wellness

Lanserhof offers an experience that extends far beyond the traditional idea of a wellness retreat. Each day is carefully structured to combine movement, medical consultations, therapeutic treatments, nutritional guidance, and educational experiences. Guests follow personalised schedules that keep them engaged throughout their stay while helping them develop a deeper understanding of their health.

The day often begins outdoors with gentle exercise before moving into consultations, treatments, and therapies tailored to individual needs. Eva-Maria describes the experience as an active and immersive one, explaining that "Guests are very engaged during their stay. They exercise, receive treatments, attend lectures, learn new skills, and discover practical ways to support their health. This is an intentional intervention in health. The goal is to stimulate the body's natural ability to rejuvenate and create sustainable change."

A natural fit for India

India's longstanding connection with wellness traditions creates a

natural synergy with the Lanserhof philosophy. Practices such as yoga and Ayurveda have shaped generations of health-conscious living, and a growing number of Indian travellers are embracing preventive health as an essential part of their lifestyle. Eva-Maria believes this cultural foundation makes India a particularly promising market. "India has a rich wellness heritage. People already understand the importance of looking after themselves, which creates a natural connection with what we do," she says.

Interest from Indian travellers has grown steadily, driven by increasing awareness around nutrition, fitness, longevity, and mindful living. Lanserhof already welcomes Indian guests through referrals and repeat visits, and the potential for future growth remains significant. "India is one of the most exciting growth markets for the future," adding that more travellers are actively seeking experiences that enhance both their wellbeing and quality of life.

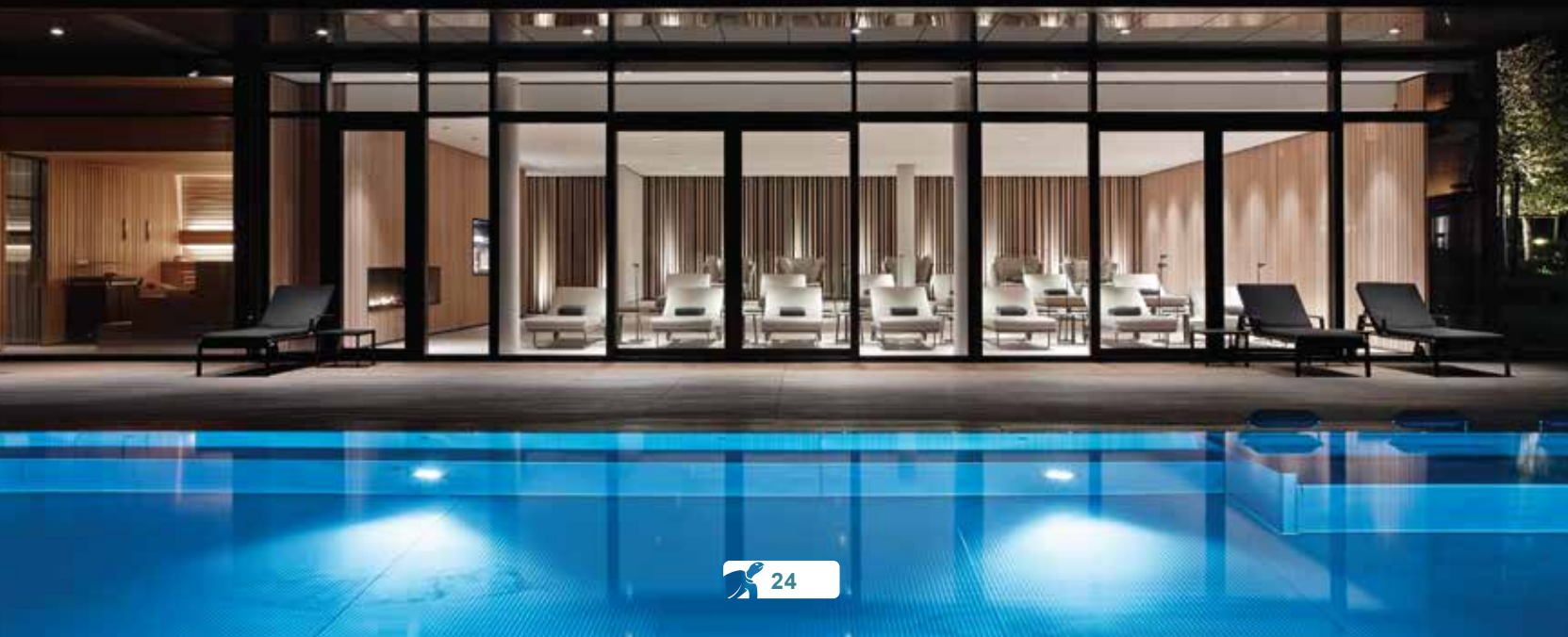
Wellness is the new luxury

Wellness tourism continues to emerge as one of the most dynamic segments of the global travel industry. Travellers are

increasingly seeking destinations that offer meaningful transformation alongside exceptional hospitality, creating new opportunities for brands that place wellbeing at the centre of the guest experience.

Lanserhof's blend of preventive healthcare, personalised attention, and restorative environments reflects this shift perfectly. As the

pursuit of healthier and more balanced lifestyles becomes increasingly important, journeys focused on wellbeing are set to play an even greater role in the future of travel. For Lanserhof, the journey is about more than a temporary escape; it is about empowering guests to return home healthier, stronger, and better equipped for the years ahead.



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CONTACT NOS

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A portrait of GMJ Thampy, a middle-aged man with a mustache and glasses, wearing a dark blue suit, white shirt, and patterned tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a bright, modern office interior with a white wall and a plant on the left.

Riya Travel Group

The journey of a travel icon

The story of Riya Travel Group began with a dream, a willingness to embrace change, and an unwavering belief in creating value for travellers. We had the privilege of listening the story from the source, GMJ Thampy, Founder, Chairman and Managing Director of Riya Travel Group.

- Tripti Jain

Over four decades, Riya has evolved from a modest enterprise into one of India's most respected travel conglomerates, with a presence across multiple travel verticals and international markets. What makes this story particularly compelling is the way Riya grew alongside the changing aspirations of travellers. Each milestone reflected a deeper understanding of customer needs, creating a business that consistently expanded its horizons while remaining rooted in service and trust.

An unexpected beginning

The foundations of Riya were laid in 1980, during a period when India's travel industry was still finding its modern identity. The journey itself began with a path that looked very different from what eventually unfolded.

Reflecting on those early years, GMJ Thampy shares, "When I first came to Mumbai, my plan was actually to move to Canada, but opportunities in the travel industry led me down a different path. What started as a manpower business gradually evolved as we understood the changing needs of our customers. The biggest turning point was when we expanded beyond ticketing and began building a complete travel ecosystem."

That decision to evolve beyond a single service laid the foundation for future growth. As customer expectations expanded, Riya expanded alongside them, creating a seamless ecosystem that catered to every stage of the travel journey.

Building beyond boundaries

Growth at Riya was never driven by speed alone. Each expansion reflected careful observation, strategic planning, and a

commitment to staying relevant in a rapidly evolving industry. Today, the group operates across leisure travel, corporate travel, visa services, forex, cruises, MICE, and travel technology. Such diversification emerged from a deep understanding of emerging opportunities and long-term market trends.

GMJ Thampy explains, "Our growth has been gradual and strategic. We have always paid close attention to market trends, customer expectations, and changes in the travel ecosystem. Whenever we identified an emerging opportunity, we invested early and built capabilities around it."

This forward-looking approach helped Riya stay ahead of industry shifts. Long-standing customer relationships became an invaluable source of insight, enabling the company to anticipate changing travel patterns and adapt accordingly.

Strength through every storm

The travel industry has experienced numerous challenges across the decades. Economic shifts, geopolitical developments, natural disasters, and global crises have tested businesses around the world. For Riya, each challenge became an opportunity to learn, strengthen operations, and prepare for the future. Leadership during uncertain times played a crucial role in maintaining confidence among employees, partners, and customers.

Recalling the industry's most challenging phase, GMJ Thampy says, "Lockdown was the toughest because the entire world came to a standstill. The crisis forced us to think differently and find solutions. During that time, patience,

resilience, and responsibility towards every member of the Riya family became our top priorities."

Taking India to the world

As Riya expanded internationally, the company gained valuable insights into the complexities of global business. Entering new markets required far more than geographical expansion. Success depended on understanding local cultures, customer expectations, and business environments.

GMJ Thampy believes that thoughtful preparation remains essential for sustainable international growth. "Every region has its own business environment, customer expectations, and regulatory landscape. It is important to thoroughly understand the market before entering it. Companies must offer a clear value proposition and differentiate themselves through innovation, expertise, or service excellence."

Partnerships that last

Relationships have always been central to the travel business. Airlines, tourism boards, hospitality brands, and travel partners collectively create the experiences that travellers enjoy. Over the years, Riya has cultivated enduring partnerships that continue to contribute to its success. These collaborations are built on trust, transparency, and shared ambitions.

According to GMJ Thampy, "Many of our partnerships have persisted for years because they are built on open communication, consistency, and a shared focus on growth. The strongest partnerships are those that embrace innovation, share a common vision, and remain committed to delivering better experiences for travellers."

Embracing the future

Having witnessed the transformation of aviation from paper tickets to highly sophisticated digital platforms, GMJ Thampy remains optimistic about the future of travel. Technology continues to reshape how travel products are distributed, purchased, and experienced. Greater personalisation, richer airline content, and enhanced customer choice are creating exciting possibilities across the travel ecosystem.

Looking ahead, he observes, "The airline industry is becoming more dynamic, with technology enabling greater flexibility in how travel products are distributed and sold. Having witnessed the industry's evolution from paper tickets to today's highly digital environment, I believe technology will continue to transform travel, but the human touch will always remain important."

A legacy in motion

The story of Riya Travel Group is ultimately a story of vision, perseverance, and continuous evolution. From a young entrepreneur arriving in Mumbai with aspirations of building a future, to leading one of India's most influential travel organisations, GMJ Thampy's journey reflects the transformative power of determination and adaptability.

As travel enters a new era shaped by technology, connectivity, and changing consumer expectations, Riya Travel Group continues its journey with the same spirit that inspired its beginnings more than four decades ago. The destination may have expanded, yet the vision remains unchanged: creating journeys that connect people, opportunities, and experiences across the world.



Sentosa

Where every journey becomes a story



Addison Goh

Singapore has always offered a seamless blend of modern attractions, cultural diversity and world-class hospitality. Addison Goh, Divisional Director, Business & Experience Development, Sentosa Development Corporation (SDC) shares about the bond shared between India & Singapore for travel.

- Tripti Jain

OFFSHORE BINOCULARS

Sentosa, an island destination that continues to reinvent itself while remaining deeply connected to the essence of meaningful travel. With pristine beaches, immersive attractions, luxury resorts, wellness experiences and nature-rich spaces, Sentosa has evolved into a destination that caters to travellers across generations. Today's travellers seek more than a checklist of attractions. They look for experiences that create memories, strengthen relationships and offer moments of discovery. Sentosa's tourism vision reflects this shift, focusing on experiences that combine entertainment, wellness, sustainability and human connection. As the island prepares for its next phase of growth, it is strengthening its position as one of Asia's most dynamic leisure destinations and an increasingly popular choice for Indian visitors.

A new wave of discovery

Sentosa's tourism landscape is constantly evolving, bringing fresh experiences to repeat visitors while ensuring first-time travellers have plenty to explore. "Travellers today are looking for unique experiences that leave a lasting impression. Our focus is to continuously introduce new attractions, refreshed hospitality offerings and innovative concepts that add value to every visit. Sentosa has always been a destination where people can discover something different, and that commitment remains central to our plans as we continue expanding the island's tourism offerings," says Addison. The island has recently welcomed new adventure attractions, refreshed luxury resorts and expanded leisure offerings. Future developments, including new attractions and hospitality projects, are set to further elevate the visitor experience. These additions are designed to complement Sentosa's existing strengths while creating fresh reasons for travellers to return.



Travel that brings people together

One of the strongest themes shaping Sentosa's future is the desire to encourage genuine human connection. Addison shares, "Travel has become increasingly meaningful because people are looking for opportunities to reconnect with family, friends and loved ones. We observed that many travellers spend a significant amount of time on digital devices, even while on holiday. Our aim is to create experiences that encourage people to be present in the moment, engage with one another and build memories together. Those shared experiences often become the most treasured part of any journey."

This philosophy has inspired a range of initiatives, including interactive family experiences and the introduction of a unique beachfront postbox where visitors can send handwritten messages to loved ones. Such concepts are designed to bring a sense of nostalgia, reflection and personal connection into the travel experience.

The rise of wellness

Wellness tourism is emerging as one of the most influential trends in global travel, and Sentosa is embracing this movement with purpose. "People are leading increasingly busy lives and are actively seeking destinations where they can slow down, recharge and focus on their wellbeing. Sentosa offers a natural environment that complements wellness experiences beautifully. Through wellness festivals, beach activities, mindfulness programmes and nature-based experiences, we want visitors to leave feeling refreshed, inspired and energised," says Addison. The island's wellness offerings include yoga sessions by the beach, sound healing experiences, outdoor fitness activities and dedicated wellness festivals that bring together relaxation and entertainment.



OFFSHORE BINOCULARS

Building a greener future

Sustainability continues to play a defining role in Sentosa's long-term development strategy. The island is investing in environmental initiatives that support both conservation and responsible tourism.

"Sustainability is deeply integrated into our vision for Sentosa. Across the island, we are implementing initiatives that support environmental stewardship while ensuring that visitors continue to enjoy world-class experiences. Future developments will maintain a careful balance between tourism and nature, preserving significant green spaces and enhancing biodiversity wherever possible. Our goal is to ensure that future generations can enjoy the same natural beauty that visitors experience today," explains Addison.

Solar energy installations, habitat enhancement projects and reforestation efforts form part of the island's broader sustainability agenda. Sentosa is also exploring regenerative tourism initiatives that allow

visitors to contribute positively to environmental conservation efforts during their stay.

Strengthening the Indian connection

"The Indian market is incredibly important to Sentosa. Indian travellers appreciate experiences that bring families and friends together, and our destination naturally aligns with those preferences. From adventure attractions and luxury stays to celebrations, wellness experiences and family activities, we offer a wide range of experiences that appeal to different travel segments. We continue working closely with travel trade partners to create itineraries that resonate strongly with Indian visitors," says Addison.

Family travel remains a major focus, although Sentosa is also seeing growing opportunities in weddings, celebrations, incentive travel and corporate events. The island's compact layout, extensive accommodation options and diverse experiences make it particularly attractive for groups travelling together.

Hidden gems and quiet moments

"One of my personal favourite locations is the Southernmost Point of Continental Asia. It offers a remarkable combination of sea views, lush greenery and vibrant attractions all within a single setting. Visitors can enjoy beautiful sunsets, spend time with family and simply appreciate the surroundings. Places like these remind us that travel is often about slowing down and enjoying simple yet meaningful moments," shares Addison.

Nature trails, coastal walks and tranquil green spaces provide visitors with opportunities to explore the island at a gentler pace. These experiences complement Sentosa's adventure and entertainment offerings, creating a well-rounded destination that appeals to a broad range of travellers.

The next chapter

Sentosa's continued evolution reflects a broader

transformation taking place across the tourism industry. Travellers increasingly seek destinations that offer authenticity, wellbeing, sustainability and emotional connection alongside entertainment and luxury.

As new attractions emerge, sustainability initiatives expand and wellness experiences flourish, Sentosa is strengthening its position as one of Asia's most compelling leisure destinations. For Indian travellers seeking a destination that combines excitement, relaxation and meaningful experiences, the island continues to offer a journey that feels fresh with every visit.



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JHARKHAND'S

BOLD VISION FOR TIMELESS TOURISM

Every destination has a story waiting to be discovered. For Jharkhand, that story has been written in its lush forests, majestic waterfalls, sacred shrines and vibrant tribal traditions. A new policy vision sets the stage for sustainable growth, community empowerment and investment-led development.

INDIAN ESCAPEDE

The state is home to some of India's most untouched landscapes, where nature and culture exist in perfect harmony. Today, that story is entering a new chapter, one driven by a bold vision to transform Jharkhand into one of the country's most promising tourism destinations.

The National Stakeholders' Consultation 2026, organised by the Department of Tourism, Arts, Culture, Sports & Youth Affairs in New Delhi, marked a significant milestone in this journey. Bringing together policymakers, tourism professionals, investors, industry associations and travel companies, the consultation provided a platform to unveil the Draft Jharkhand Tourism Policy 2026 and the Draft Homestay Policy 2026, while inviting valuable suggestions from stakeholders before the policies are finalised.

The proposed framework focuses on improving tourism infrastructure, encouraging private investment, promoting rural entrepreneurship and creating experiences that celebrate Jharkhand's unique identity. As travellers increasingly seek

authentic destinations, Jharkhand is preparing to welcome them with experiences rooted in nature, heritage and local culture.



Shri Hemant Soren

A VISION FOR TOMORROW

Tourism has become one of the key pillars of Jharkhand's long-term development strategy. Under Vision

2050, the Government of Jharkhand is looking beyond conventional economic sectors and positioning tourism alongside technology, manufacturing and infrastructure as a driver of inclusive growth. The state's abundant natural assets provide a strong foundation, while progressive policies aim to unlock their full potential through sustainable planning and strategic investments.

Leading this vision is Hon'ble Chief Minister of Jharkhand, Shri Hemant Soren who believes tourism has the power to reshape perceptions of the state and create opportunities across regions and communities. During the National Stakeholders' Consultation, he engaged with global investors, industry associations and tourism stakeholders to strengthen partnerships that will contribute to Jharkhand's development journey. Meetings with representatives from Singapore, FICCI, EaseMyTrip, MakeMyTrip and other organisations reflected growing confidence in the state's investment ecosystem and its commitment to transparent governance. Hon'ble Chief Minister of Jharkhand, Shri Hemant Soren shares, "Jharkhand is committed to creating an investor - friendly ecosystem through transparent governance, policy support and continuous stakeholder engagement. The objective extends beyond attracting visitors; it is about creating an environment where investment, innovation and local participation work together to build destinations

that generate employment while preserving the state's cultural and ecological heritage."

TOURISM THAT EMPOWERS COMMUNITIES

At the heart of Jharkhand's tourism roadmap lies a simple yet powerful idea: tourism should benefit the people who call these destinations home. The proposed Draft Homestay Policy 2026 reflects this philosophy by encouraging community-led hospitality across the state's villages and smaller towns. Local families will have the opportunity to welcome visitors into their homes, allowing travellers to experience authentic cuisine, traditions, festivals and everyday life while creating additional sources of income for rural households.

Presenting the proposed tourism policies during the consultation, Hon'ble Minister for Tourism, Arts, Culture, Sports & Youth Affairs, Jharkhand, Shri Sudivya Kumar, highlights the transformative role tourism can play in expanding livelihood opportunities across the state. His address focused on creating a tourism model where economic development and community welfare move together. He shares, "Jharkhand should be known not only for its mineral wealth but also for its natural beauty and tourism potential. While a five-star hotel may directly employ around 200 people, developing 100 homestays could support livelihoods for nearly 500 individuals."





Shri Sudivya Kumar



POLICIES WITH PURPOSE

The Draft Jharkhand Tourism Policy 2026 outlines a comprehensive strategy to strengthen the state's tourism landscape through improved infrastructure, investment incentives, destination development and enhanced visitor experiences. Alongside eco - tourism and wildlife tourism, the policy encourages growth across pilgrimage tourism, adventure tourism, heritage tourism, tribal tourism and rural tourism, ensuring that every region of the state has an opportunity to participate in its tourism story.

Equally significant is the government's decision to seek recommendations from industry stakeholders before finalising the policies. Tour operators, hospitality leaders, tourism associations and investors were invited to share practical insights, making the consultation a collaborative exercise rather than a one-way announcement. This approach reflects an understanding that successful tourism policies are built through partnerships

between government and industry. The proposed framework also places emphasis on sustainability. Protecting forests, waterfalls, wildlife habitats and tribal heritage remains central to future tourism development. As destinations evolve, the focus is expected to remain on responsible growth that preserves the very experiences travellers seek.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

The consultation also strengthened Jharkhand's engagement with the travel industry. Representatives from FICCI, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), EaseMyTrip, MakeMyTrip and the Singapore High Commission explored opportunities for collaboration across tourism promotion, hospitality development, skill enhancement and destination marketing. Among the notable announcements was EaseMyTrip's decision to sign an MoU with the Government of Jharkhand to promote the state

through digital campaigns and collaborations with travel influencers. MakeMyTrip also expressed interest in showcasing Jharkhand's destinations through its extensive digital platform, helping introduce the state's experiences to a much wider audience.

FICCI highlighted opportunities to develop nature tourism, destination weddings, sports tourism and MICE tourism, recognising Jharkhand's growing appeal as a destination capable of attracting diverse traveller segments. These partnerships demonstrate how public and private sectors can work together to strengthen destination visibility while improving tourism infrastructure and visitor experiences.

A DESTINATION READY TO WELCOME THE WORLD

Jharkhand has long been admired for its scenic beauty and cultural richness. The National Stakeholders' Consultation 2026 demonstrated that the state is now complementing these strengths with progressive policies, strategic partnerships

and a long-term vision for sustainable tourism.

The proposed Tourism Policy 2026 and Homestay Policy 2026 represent more than policy documents; they reflect a commitment to empowering communities, attracting responsible investment and creating meaningful travel experiences rooted in authenticity. As infrastructure improves, destinations become more accessible and local participation expands, Jharkhand is steadily carving a distinctive place on India's tourism map.

For travellers, it promises journeys through waterfalls, forests, heritage sites and living tribal traditions. For investors, it offers a supportive policy environment and emerging opportunities. For local communities, it opens new avenues for entrepreneurship and economic growth. Together, these elements position Jharkhand at the threshold of an exciting tourism future, one where nature, culture and development come together to create a destination that is both inspiring and enduring.



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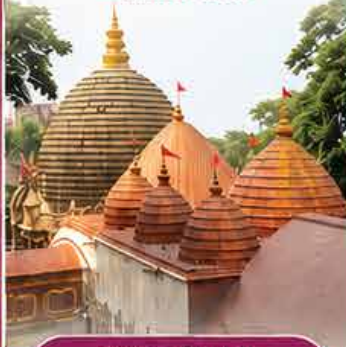
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Karim Makhoulf

Gateway to new journeys

Royal Jordanian Airlines is strengthening its presence in India while opening the door to richer travel experiences across Jordan and beyond. Karim Makhoulf, Chief Commercial Officer, Royal Jordanian Airlines shares their goals for the Indian market.

-Tripti Jain



India's outbound travel market is entering an exciting phase. Jordan is emerging as a destination that blends history, heritage, adventure and authentic hospitality. At the heart of this growing connection between India and Jordan is Royal Jordanian Airlines, which is positioning itself as more than an airline. It is becoming a facilitator of meaningful travel experiences. India represents one of the most promising tourism markets in the airline's global network.

With increasing connectivity, stronger engagement with the travel trade and a renewed focus on destination promotion, the airline is working to introduce more Indian travellers to the wonders of Jordan while providing seamless access to a wider international network.

A market on the rise

India's travel story is being shaped by a new generation of explorers. Rising incomes, greater international exposure and a desire for unique experiences are encouraging more Indians to discover destinations that offer culture, authenticity and diversity. Karim says, "India is undoubtedly one of our most strategic growth markets and an integral part of Royal Jordanian's long-term vision for Asia. It is a market with a rapidly growing outbound travel segment, increasing disposable incomes and a strong appetite for discovering new destinations."

Jordan's appeal aligns naturally with these changing preferences. From the rose-red city of Petra and the dramatic landscapes of Wadi Rum to the healing waters of the Dead Sea and the vibrant streets of Amman, the country offers experiences that resonate with travellers looking for something memorable and immersive.

He explains, "What excites us most is the shift in traveller preferences. Indian travellers today are looking for experiences that are authentic, culturally immersive and different from the traditional leisure destinations. Jordan is uniquely positioned to meet those expectations."

Amman takes centre stage

Connectivity remains one of the most important drivers of tourism growth, and Royal Jordanian is strengthening its role as a bridge between India and the wider world. The airline's Mumbai service has received a positive response, reflecting the growing interest among Indian travellers in exploring Jordan and connecting through Amman.

Karim shares, "The response to our Mumbai service has been extremely encouraging and has reinforced our confidence in the Indian market. As demand continues to grow, we are planning to increase capacity on the route next year to provide travellers with greater flexibility and connectivity." The airline is also studying opportunities to expand its footprint in India. Delhi is being evaluated as a potential second gateway, a move that could further enhance access to Jordan for Indian travellers. "Our objective is to make Amman an even stronger gateway for Indian travellers, offering seamless connections to more than 60 destinations across the Middle East, Europe and North America," he adds.

The rise of experience-led travel

The modern traveller is placing experiences at the centre of every journey. Cultural immersion, local interactions and flexible

itineraries are becoming increasingly important when choosing a destination.

Karim shares, "Indian travellers have become far more discerning in the way they travel. They are increasingly seeking experiences rather than simply destinations, and they value convenience, flexibility and meaningful travel."

Multi-country itineraries are also gaining popularity, allowing travellers to maximise their time abroad and experience multiple cultures within a single trip. Jordan's location and Royal Jordanian's extensive network create an ideal combination for such journeys.

Through initiatives such as ExploRJordan and RJ Holidays, travellers can access curated experiences that combine convenience with destination discovery, making it easier to explore Jordan and continue onward to other international destinations.

Building tourism together

Travel agents and tour operators continue to play a vital role in inspiring travel and shaping destination awareness. Royal Jordanian recognises the value of these partnerships and is investing in long-term collaboration across the Indian market.

"The travel trade remains one of our strongest partners, and we view these relationships as essential to our long-term success in India," says Karim.

The airline is working closely with travel partners through joint marketing campaigns, destination-focused promotions and customised holiday packages that encourage more travellers to consider Jordan. He explains, "Our focus is on

developing joint marketing initiatives, destination-focused campaigns and attractive holiday packages that create value for both our partners and travellers."

Inspiring the journey

In a competitive aviation landscape, Royal Jordanian is focusing on what makes it unique: a close connection between the airline and the destination it represents. "Royal Jordanian combines the efficiency and connectivity of a modern network carrier with the warmth and personalised service of a boutique airline," says Karim.

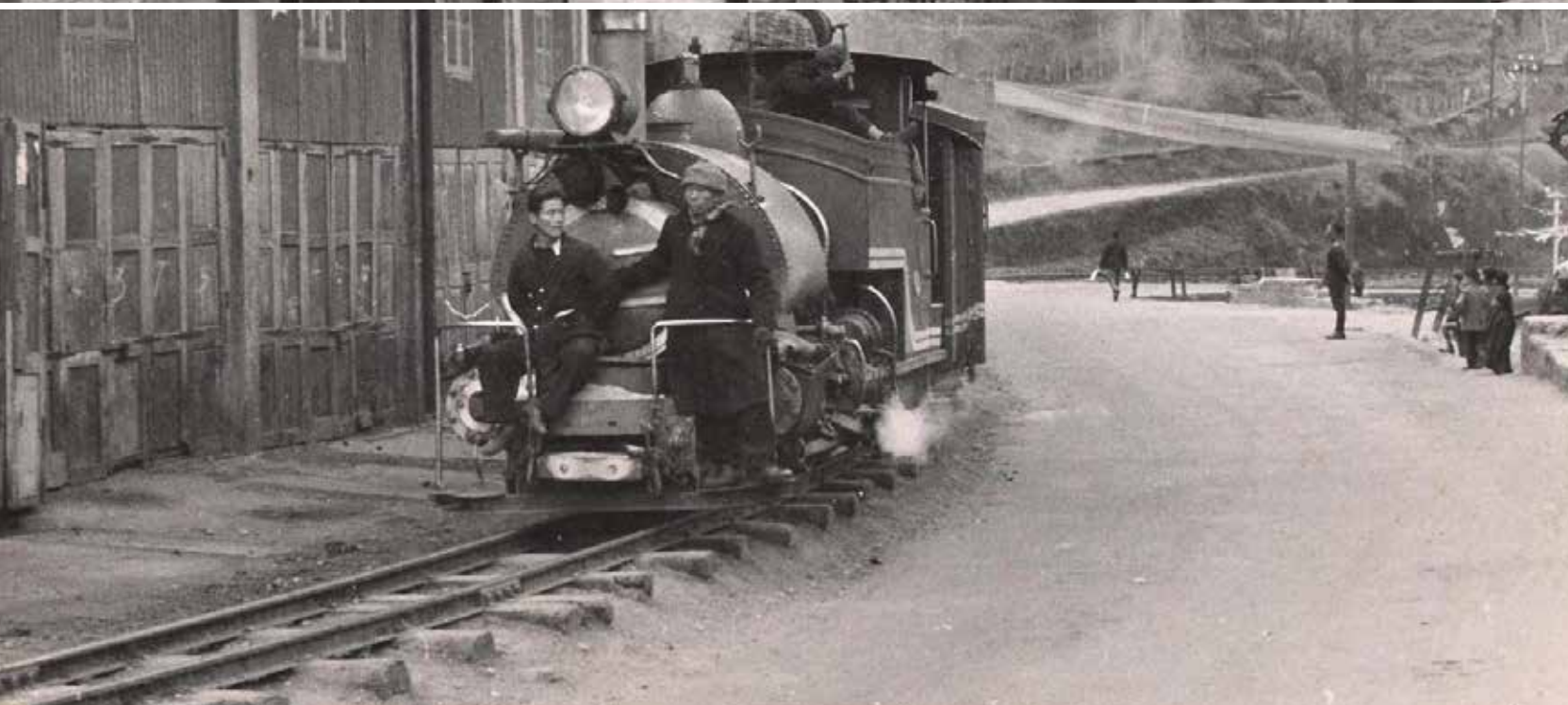
This approach extends beyond transportation. The airline is actively promoting tourism experiences that encourage travellers to engage with Jordan's culture, history and landscapes. "Through initiatives such as ExploRJordan and RJ Holidays, we are not simply selling flights, we are inspiring travel and creating complete travel experiences," he adds.

The next step

Royal Jordanian's vision for India is rooted in growth, connectivity and tourism development. Increased capacity, network expansion and stronger destination promotion are expected to play a key role in the airline's future plans.

As Indian travellers continue to embrace new destinations and richer travel experiences, Jordan is steadily finding its place on their travel wish lists. Supported by Royal Jordanian's expanding presence and tourism-focused approach, the journey between India and Jordan is set to become even stronger, opening the door to discovery, culture and unforgettable experiences.

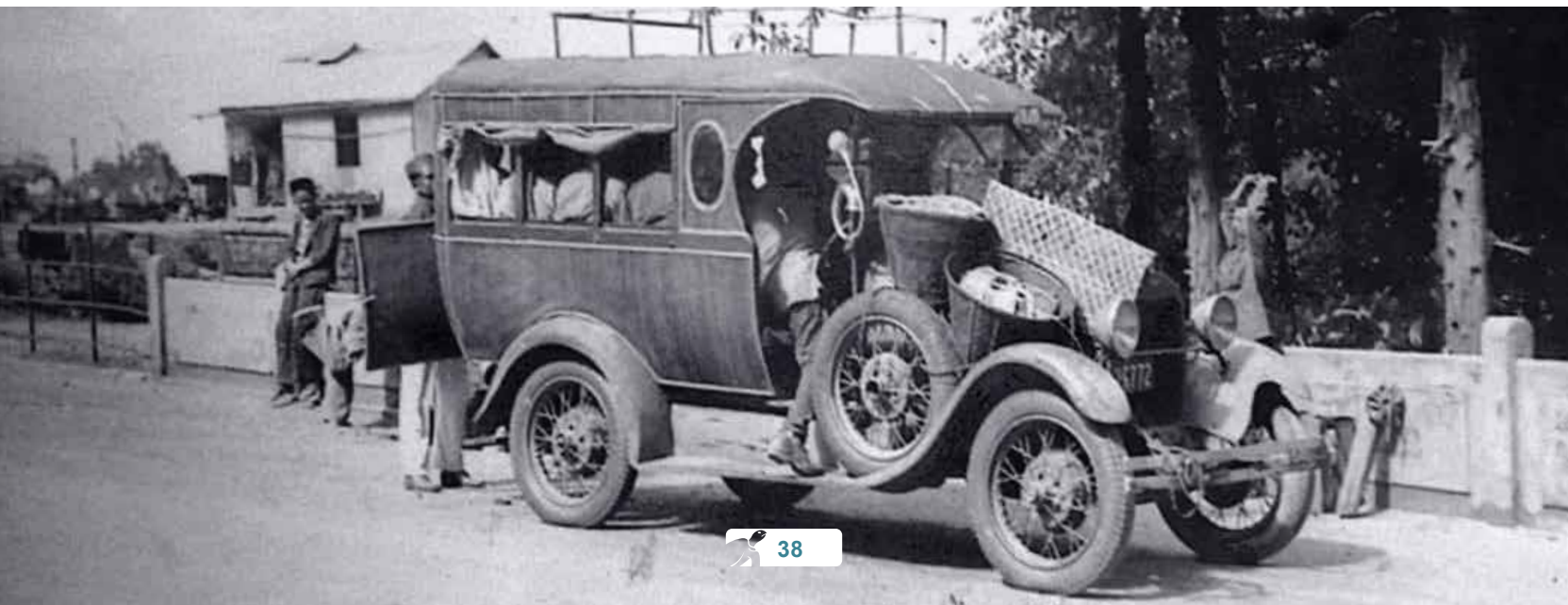




JOURNEY ACROSS GENERATIONS

There is something reassuring about businesses that have quietly stood the test of time. They rarely make headlines, seldom rely on grand claims, and yet their reputation travels farther than any advertisement ever could. Clubside's story begins in Darjeeling, long before tourism emerged as one of India's fastest-growing industries.

- Sudipta Saha



In tourism, where destinations evolve, traveller preferences shift, and unforeseen challenges become part of the profession, longevity is perhaps the strongest endorsement a company can earn. For more than six decades, Clubside has been one of those names that have quietly shaped travel across Eastern and Northeastern India, not by chasing the spotlight, but by consistently delivering experiences that travellers remembered long after they returned home.

Where it all began

The hills attracted visitors even then, but travel was vastly different from what it is today. Roads were unpredictable, infrastructure was minimal, and organised holidays were still finding their feet. Visitors came largely for the cool climate and the tea estates, while foreign travellers depended on a handful of operators who understood the region well enough to navigate its challenges.

It was during this period that Sagar Periwal found himself taking over Clubside Motors. There was no elaborate business plan or carefully drawn roadmap. The opportunity arose when the previous owner decided to step away from the business, and having already been associated with the automobile trade through Himalayan Automobiles, purchasing the company became a practical decision. What followed was not an overnight transformation but years of patient effort, learning the nuances of an industry that demanded resilience as much as entrepreneurship.

Running a transport company in the hills during those years was not easy. "Biggest challenge was to find manpower in Darjeeling, dealing with drivers was very difficult, cars were not reliable and the terrain was not great with very frequent landslides and business overall was very limited. Only few companies used to operate like Mercury, Orient Express and SITA and we used to get some business from them", says Sagar Periwal. It was never about the size of the company but about respecting the



work itself. Sagar Periwal often reflects that any business, regardless of its scale, rewards those who treat it with sincerity and never take it for granted. That philosophy would eventually become the thread connecting three generations of the family.

Breaking new ground

By the time the second generation stepped into the business, tourism was beginning to change. Travellers were no longer looking merely for transport; they wanted experiences that extended beyond a single destination. Recognising this shift, Suresh Periwal gradually moved Clubside away from being solely a car rental company and transformed it into a destination management business. Accommodation, sightseeing, local guides and carefully planned itineraries became part of the services, allowing visitors to spend more time exploring the region instead of simply passing through it. The timing proved significant. Interest in the Himalayas had grown steadily following the

successful ascent of Mount Everest, and Darjeeling, home to the legendary Tenzing Norgay, found itself at the centre of the world's fascination with mountain exploration. Adventure tourism was beginning to gather momentum, and Clubside recognised the opportunity well before it became fashionable. Trekking expeditions, mountain experiences and longer itineraries gradually became an integral part of its portfolio, introducing travellers to landscapes that were still unfamiliar to most visitors.

What distinguished the company, however, was not merely its willingness to embrace new experiences but its ability to venture into regions that were still largely inaccessible. "I had realised that to be able to make this sustainable we would have to increase our areas geographically and more experiences to offer, so we started operating in Sikkim, Assam and Meghalaya in addition to Bengal. Guaranteed service delivery was a key aspect so we worked hard to ensure any service

once committed was delivered and that became a motto for us and as a company, we still ensure that we follow this principal in all our offices. We also procured a number of high end imported cars from auctions in Delhi which allowed us to provide better and more comfortable transport to our guests travelling to this region. This was the time, where, I had also started visiting Delhi and meeting agents here very regularly which helped to keep them aware of the sector and to create new programs. and itineraries which ultimately resulted in better business," says Suresh Periwal. Clubside was among the earliest operators to navigate that process, opening doors to travellers who wished to experience the state's monasteries, mountain passes and unique cultural heritage. Around the same time, it also became one of the first companies to facilitate overland journeys from India into Bhutan, creating itineraries that connected two Himalayan destinations at a time when such travel was still relatively uncommon. These initiatives were never viewed as milestones within the company; they were simply responses to what travellers wanted and where the possibilities lay. Looking back today, however, they represent important chapters in the evolution of tourism across Eastern India. By introducing destinations that had previously remained beyond the reach of most visitors, Clubside quietly contributed to broadening the region's tourism landscape, helping international and domestic travellers see far beyond the familiar image of Darjeeling.

As tourism continued to mature through the following decades, the company also realised that growth could not depend on a single destination alone. Expanding geographically was no longer a choice but a necessity, provided it could be done without compromising the standards that had gradually become synonymous with the Clubside name. That philosophy would shape the company's next chapter as a new generation prepared to carry the legacy forward.



Carrying the legacy forward

As the business expanded across Sikkim, Assam, Meghalaya and eventually much of Eastern and Northeastern India, the Periwal family resisted the temptation to become another operator trying to sell every corner of the country. The travel industry has, over the years, become increasingly competitive, with companies constantly adding destinations to their portfolios in pursuit of larger volumes. Clubside, however, chose a different path. Instead of measuring success by the number of destinations it could market, it focused on those it knew intimately, where every itinerary, hotel, vehicle and local experience could be personally monitored.

It is perhaps this disciplined approach that explains why the company continues to enjoy relationships spanning decades. In an industry where partnerships are often short-lived and driven by pricing, Clubside has quietly built its reputation on reliability. International tour operators who first worked with the company years ago continue to place their confidence in the Periwal family, with some partnerships now extending across generations. The trust did not emerge from aggressive marketing campaigns or ambitious expansion plans; it was built over years of delivering exactly what had been promised.

The next gen way!

That philosophy found renewed expression when the third generation entered the business. Amit and Sumit Periwal inherited a company with a rich legacy, but they also stepped into an industry that was changing faster than ever before. Technology had transformed the way people planned holidays, travellers had become far more informed, and expectations had risen considerably. A comfortable hotel and a sightseeing itinerary were no longer enough. Today's traveller looks for authenticity, meaningful interactions and experiences that create lasting memories rather than simply filling an itinerary.

Instead of viewing these changes as a disruption, the brothers saw them as an opportunity to refine what the company had always believed in. Amit, who spent his early professional years working with leading travel companies in Delhi before returning to Darjeeling, brought with him a broader understanding of the inbound tourism market. Exposure to some of India's largest travel companies helped him understand what international operators expected from a destination management company and, equally importantly, what often went wrong on the ground. Returning home, he recognised that Clubside's greatest strength lay not in becoming another national player, but in deepening its expertise across Eastern India.

Today, the responsibilities are clearly divided. Amit oversees sales, operations and marketing, while Sumit manages finance and strategic planning. Their working styles may differ, but they are united by the same principle their father repeatedly emphasised over the years: never promise what cannot be delivered, but once a commitment has been made, honour it regardless of the cost. It is a philosophy that occasionally demands difficult decisions, including turning away business that falls outside the company's operational strengths. Yet, for the Periwal family, protecting their reputation has always taken precedence over chasing numbers.

Amit Periwal shares, "This measured growth has also influenced the way Clubside responds to changing travel trends. Rather than abandoning traditional itineraries in favour of fashionable experiences, the company has gradually reimaged them." A journey through Arunachal Pradesh, for instance, is no longer limited to the well-known monasteries of Tawang. Travellers are increasingly encouraged to venture into places such as Ziro Valley, Namdapha National Park and Dong Valley — destinations that remain relatively untouched but offer an entirely



different perspective of the region. Similar efforts have been made across the Northeast, where the emphasis is steadily shifting from hurried sightseeing to immersive experiences that allow visitors to connect with local communities, landscapes and cultures.

Growing with purpose

The company's expansion into the Andaman Islands and its growing involvement in cruise handling, luxury train operations and the MICE segment reflect the same philosophy. "Every new vertical has been added only after ensuring that the required infrastructure, local expertise and operational control are firmly in place. For the family, growth has never been about widening the map as quickly as possible; it has always been about ensuring that every new destination lives up to the standards that travellers have come to expect from the Clubside name," mentions Sumit Periwal.

Looking back over six decades, it becomes evident that the company's story mirrors the evolution of tourism itself. It has witnessed the emergence of adventure travel, the opening of destinations that were once inaccessible, the rise of domestic tourism, periods of political uncertainty, natural disasters, global pandemics and rapidly changing traveller behaviour. Through every phase, adaptation has been necessary, but the foundation has remained remarkably consistent.

Perhaps that consistency explains why the conversation with the Periwal family rarely centres on awards, despite the many national recognitions the company has

received over the years. They speak more often about people—the drivers who have been with them for decades, the travel partners who continue to return year after year, and the guests who now send their children and grandchildren to experience destinations they themselves discovered through Clubside years ago. In many ways, these enduring relationships have become the company's greatest achievement.

The journey continues

There is a quiet confidence that comes from building a business over generations rather than chasing immediate success. The Periwal family understands that tourism is an industry shaped as much by trust as by destinations. Roads can improve, hotels can become more luxurious and technology can simplify travel planning, but none of these can replace the reassurance of knowing that someone at the other end of the journey genuinely stands by their word.

As Clubside looks towards the future, with plans to strengthen its presence across Eastern India and explore new opportunities in experiential travel and MICE tourism, its ambitions remain firmly grounded in the values that first defined the company decades ago. In an age where growth is often measured by scale alone, Clubside offers a quieter, perhaps more enduring lesson—that lasting success is rarely built on how many journeys a company sells, but on how many travellers return with the confidence that every promise made along the way will be kept.

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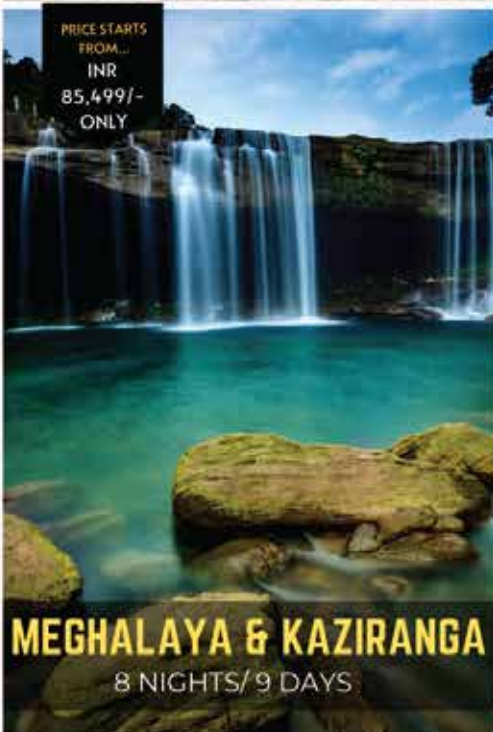
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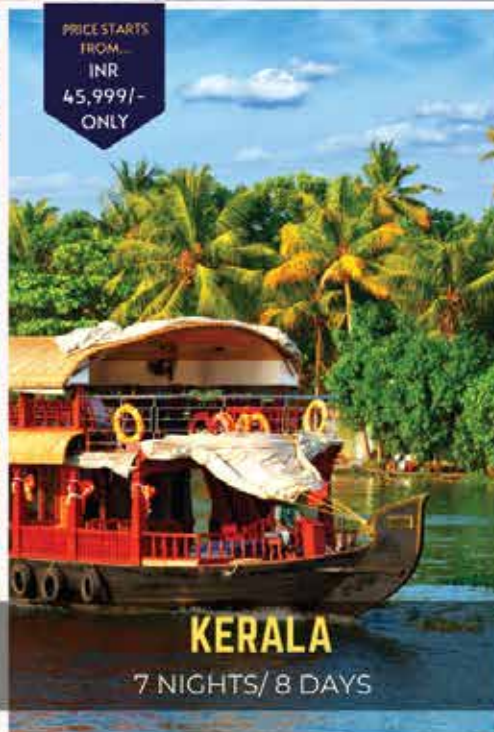
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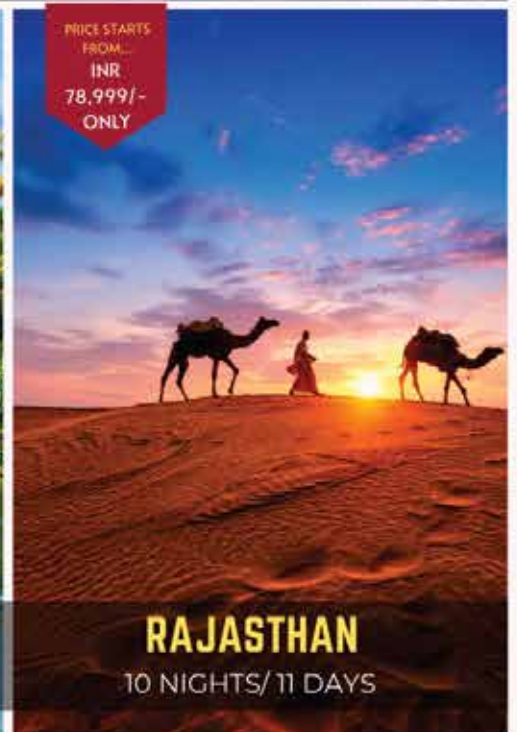
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Furavevi Maldives

Beyond the lagoon



Faizan Khan

This year marks an important milestone for Furaveri Maldives. Faizan Khan, Country Manager, Middle East & India, Furaveri Maldives discusses their first decade, the importance of the Indian market, and why genuine hospitality continues to define the island resort.

- *Naina Nath*

Since opening in 2016, the resort has spent the past decade welcoming travellers from around the world while steadily expanding its offering. Speaking to us, Faizan reflects on Furaveri's journey, the growing importance of the Indian market, and why genuine hospitality continues to remain at the heart of the guest experience.

Life on Furaveri

With no shortage of luxury resorts across the Maldives, creating a distinctive identity is no easy task. Faizan believes Furaveri's greatest strength lies in its generous spaces, personalised service, and relaxed island atmosphere. He shares, "Spread across the pristine Raa Atoll, Furaveri is home to 169 villas, including beach villas, overwater villas, and spacious two-bedroom luxury residences." Just a scenic 40 to 45-minute seaplane journey from Velana International Airport, Furaveri offers the kind of tranquillity many travellers seek in the Maldives. "Our blend of luxury, privacy, and value is what makes us stand out. We want every guest to experience genuine Maldivian hospitality."

Celebration central

The Maldives has long been one of the world's most sought-after destinations for celebrations, and Furaveri has built a strong reputation in this space. Weddings at the resort are held at its dedicated Wedding Pavilion, while vow renewals, anniversaries, family gatherings, and private celebrations are all carefully tailored to individual guests. Furaveri has also expanded into boutique corporate retreats and small MICE programmes. "Every celebration is customised around our guests' requirements. Our island setting allows us to create experiences that feel both personal and unforgettable," shares Faizan.



A decade later

As Furaveri celebrates ten years, Faizan says the biggest achievement has never been measured by buildings or facilities alone. He shares, "Our greatest achievement has been consistently delivering memorable guest experiences while building strong relationships with our travel partners." Over the years, the resort has expanded its villa categories, introduced new dining concepts, and continued enhancing its guest offering. Sustainability has also become a stronger focus, with marine conservation, responsible resource management, and environmental initiatives now forming part of its daily operations. He adds, "Protecting the Maldives' unique natural and cultural heritage remains an important responsibility for us."

India, a priority

India has been one of Furaveri's top five source markets for the past five years and remains a key focus for the resort. He shares, "We continue to strengthen our presence through trade partnerships, roadshows, FAM trips, joint marketing campaigns, and dedicated support for our travel partners." He believes Furaveri appeals naturally to Indian travellers, whether they are planning a honeymoon, family holiday, destination wedding, or wellness retreat. Catering to Indian travellers is also a priority. Ocean Spice, the resort's dedicated Indian restaurant, serves pure vegetarian and Jain

meals, offering guests a familiar dining option during their stay. "We look forward to welcoming more Indian travellers to experience our beautiful island," he says.

Why trade matters

For Faizan, travel agents remain one of Furaveri's strongest ambassadors. "Travel advisors are essential to our growth," he says. The resort continues to invest in long-term relationships through regular training sessions, marketing initiatives, familiarisation trips, and dedicated sales support. He believes giving agents first-hand experience of the property allows them to recommend the resort with greater confidence. "Strong partnerships have always been a big part of our success, and we look forward to growing together with our travel trade partners," he says.

The next decade

As Furaveri enters its second decade, Faizan believes the focus is clear. "We will continue strengthening our partnerships, expanding our presence in key markets, and enhancing the overall guest experience." At the heart of that vision is a commitment to delivering the same personalised service that has defined the resort since day one. "Furaveri promises unforgettable experiences and the true spirit of Maldivian hospitality. The goal isn't simply to welcome more guests, but to ensure every visitor leaves with memories that inspire them to return," he shares.

This Monsoon, Let the Rains Lead You to the Heart of India



The heart of
Incredible India

There are destinations that reveal themselves slowly, and then there is Pachmarhi in the monsoon.

As the first rains sweep across the heartland of India, the Satpura ranges undergo a dramatic transformation. Forests turn emerald green, waterfalls burst into life, rivers swell with renewed energy, and drifting clouds wrap ancient hills in an almost dreamlike veil. At the centre of this seasonal spectacle lies Pachmarhi, the Queen of the Satpura Range—and Madhya Pradesh's only hill station—where nature invites travellers to slow down and truly experience the monsoon.

Where Nature Comes Alive

The rains rejuvenate every corner of the region. Waterfalls such as Bee Falls, Apsara Vihar and Duchess Falls become even more captivating, their cascades thundering through dense forests and rocky landscapes. Trails weave through lush woodlands, hidden valleys and sandstone formations, revealing panoramic views at every turn.

What sets Pachmarhi apart is its location within a protected biosphere, where rich biodiversity meets ancient landscapes and mythological heritage—from the revered Pandav Caves to forest paths that feel untouched by time.



For birdwatchers, monsoon is among the most rewarding seasons. The forests resonate with the calls of the Indian Paradise Flycatcher, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Crested Serpent Eagle and Grey-headed Fish Eagle, offering a glimpse into one of central India's richest ecosystems.



Trekkers too find endless rewards. Routes leading to Dhoopgarh, Madhya Pradesh's highest peak, become especially magical as clouds drift across the horizon and sunsets paint the sky in shades of gold and crimson.

RUN THROUGH PARADISE: PACHMARHI MONSOON MARATHON

42 km categories. Participants run through misty forests, rain-kissed roads and scenic trails, where every kilometre becomes a journey through one of India's most unique monsoon landscapes.

Adding to the excitement is the Pachmarhi Monsoon Marathon, scheduled for 26 July 2026.

Set against the rain-washed Satpura hills, the marathon offers a World Athletics and AIMS Certified Route across 5 km, 10 km, 21 km and



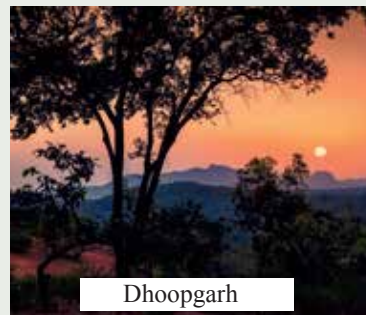
Bee Falls



Apsara Waterfall



Rock Climbing



Dhoopgarh



Cycling



26 July, 2026
Sunday



Join the **PACHMARHI MONSOON MARATHON:**
<https://www.townscript.com/e/pachmarhi-monsoon-marathon-232014>

A Season to Celebrate

Beyond the marathon, Pachmarhi offers an experience defined by immersion rather than adrenaline. Nature walks, cycling trails and guided forest explorations allow visitors to engage with the wilderness at a slower pace—far removed from crowded hill destinations. For travellers seeking a refreshing escape, Madhya Pradesh Tourism invites you to discover a place where monsoon is not a season to avoid—it is a season to celebrate. This monsoon, let the rains lead you to the heart of India.

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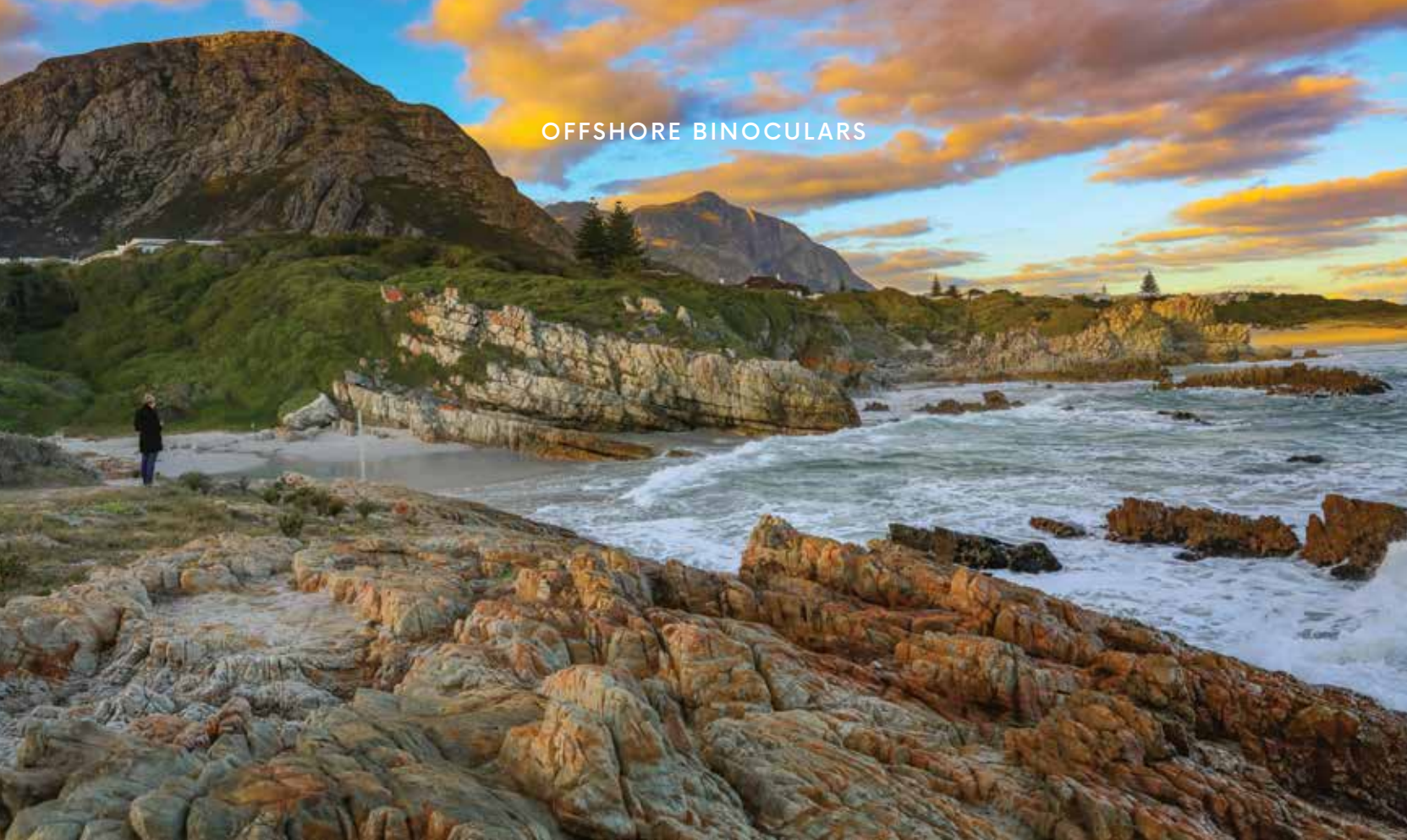
OFFSHORE BINOCULARS

Hermanus

Oceanside Paradise

I'm not given to fancy clichés,
but don't mind declaring that
this little town by the sea
promises a 'whale of a time'.
Literally!

- Inder Raj Ahluwalia



OFFSHORE BINOCULARS

Ranked as the best land-based whale-sighting spot in the world, Hermanus is a quiet, scenic retreat for holiday makers out seeking rest and total peace and quiet by the sea. Till the whales come, that is.

120 km east of Cape Town, hugging the coast in the Overberg region of South Africa's Southern Cape, forming a rather long gentle loop along the huge bay, Hermanus is aptly known as the 'Riviera of the South', attracting hordes of overseas travellers and local city - slickers for cosy weekend getaways.

The town has a short, simple history. In the early 1800s, one Hermanus Pieters, teacher and shepherd at the Caledon Farm

Boontjieskraal, followed the Elephant Path down to the sea and discovered a fresh spring where he knew he could camp for a few months with his livestock. The teacher soon made this his home, and as the news of the idyllic scenery spread, Hermanus became an established fishing village by the early 1900s. Then came the tourists...

Sure, the town is small, but there's plenty to do! One can explore the lush Valley of Heaven and Earth and treat oneself to tastings at world - renowned wineries. Or feast al fresco on the rich bounty of farm - fresh fruit; succulent seafood; salads; and home-baked breads. It's great to wash it all down with local wines.

Dining at the famed Ocean Basket on Greek Salad and a mixed seafood platter that had Kingclip (quite delicious) from the bay itself and Calamari that had come all the way from Argentina, it was quite the kind of good living I could easily get used to. A bonus came my way by way of a couple of local gentlemen who sidled up to me and told me their stories about how they had seen whales do it all at their very doorstep for some fifty years.

One can soar up high above the ground and enjoy a superb view of Walker's Bay. There are over 50 km of footpaths and walking trails in the Fernkloof Nature Reserve. One can soak up the sun at a dozen beaches,

lagoons and tidal pools in the Greater Hermanus area from Fisherhaven to Klein River. Or muster up some energy and enjoy sporting facilities that range from golf and bowls, to riding, cycling, paragliding, diving, canoeing and kayaking. With whales being at the centre of things here, Hermanus also has the world's only whale crier, who patrols the streets blowing his kelp horn to alert everyone to the whereabouts of the whales, and is happy to answer questions and be photographed. To make an appointment to interview him, contact the Hermanus Tourism Bureau. Chances are you'll relish meeting him and listening to his yarns about whales.



OFFSHORE BINOCULARS

Thanks to the town's compactness, and my fondness for walking, I believe I managed to see most of the local sites. The highlight was spending some quality time at the local site. The Old Harbour is the focal point of village activities, and quite the place to imbibe local flavour. The cliff-top entrance offers a panoramic view of Walker Bay and with a bit of luck, whales in the water below. The Whale House caters to the huge interest in whale watching, while the Old Harbour Museum depicts the history of fishing and whaling.

All too soon it was time to leave, and I felt that certain lonely feeling that has gripped me so often when I have left exotic places around the world. I turned and looked over my shoulder from the hotel reception. No whales..! Just a calm blue sea stretching into eternity! But soon they would come. And a sleepy little town would literally come alive overnight and be galvanised into action, as people from the world over would flock here to see those magnificent creatures of the deep, about whom we know so little.

Fact File

- Hermanus is 120 km east of Cape Town, and a scenic drive.
- Several hotels of different categories provide a mix of accommodation. One can also use a caravan camp.
- About a dozen restaurants, including Continental and Italian, are located within a mile of each other. The highlight is the fresh seafood, always worth sampling.
- The best time for whale-watching is from June through September, when they make the local bay their temporary home. But the town itself is a year-round tourist destination.



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.

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HEADS IN BEDS

Mandapa

Sacred Stillness

Hidden within Bali's lush Ayung River valley, Mandapa, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve invites guests into a slower, more soulful rhythm where ancient traditions, thoughtful design and profound hospitality come together in one of the island's most restorative sanctuaries.

- Misbaah Mansuri



HEADS IN BEDS

Some luxury hotels impress from the moment you arrive. Mandapa, a Ritz - Carlton Reserve does something quieter. It asks you to slow down. Long before I reached the resort, Bali had already begun working its quiet magic. The roads from Denpasar narrowed as they climbed into Ubud, weaving through villages fragrant with incense, temple offerings balanced carefully on doorsteps and emerald rice terraces that seemed to ripple endlessly beneath the afternoon sun. The traffic gradually dissolved into forest, and almost without noticing it, the pace of life changed. Mandapa sits in one of the most spiritual corners of Bali, nestled along the banks of the Ayung River. The name itself comes from the Sanskrit word for temple, and unlike many luxury resorts that simply borrow local aesthetics, this one feels deeply rooted in its surroundings. It was conceived as a contemporary Balinese village, where nature, architecture and spirituality exist in quiet conversation.

The resort itself seems to breathe with the jungle around it. Frangipani flowers drift onto moss-covered stone paths, butterflies dance between heliconia blooms, and the gentle sound of the Ayung River rises through the valley below. Time begins to stretch.

It is no coincidence that Mandapa has become one of Bali's most celebrated retreats. Designed by the Bangkok-based firm P49 Deesign, with interiors by Jeffrey Wilkes, the resort was envisioned not as a conventional hotel but as a living Balinese village. Traditional pitched roofs, locally sourced stone, carved timber and open-air pavilions blend almost seamlessly into the

landscape, allowing the surrounding jungle to remain the true focal point.

Unlike many contemporary luxury resorts that compete for attention through spectacle, Mandapa embraces restraint. Buildings sit low within the valley rather than dominating it. Pathways meander through gardens instead of directing movement with rigid precision. Everywhere you look, there is a feeling that nature arrived first and architecture simply followed. That philosophy became even more apparent as we were escorted to our villa.

Our villa

Hidden behind dense tropical foliage, our one-bedroom pool villa felt wonderfully private, almost invisible within the jungle.

A carved wooden gate opened into a secluded courtyard before revealing an expansive residence surrounded by towering banana leaves, flowering ginger plants and ancient frangipani trees. The architecture felt unmistakably Balinese yet entirely contemporary, combining dark timber, volcanic stone and soft neutral textiles in a way that never distracted from the landscape outside.

Floor-to-ceiling glass blurred the boundary between indoors and outdoors, allowing sunlight to filter gently through the trees throughout the day. Every room seemed deliberately positioned to frame the surrounding greenery, making the jungle itself part of the interior design.

The bedroom centred around an enormous king-sized bed beneath soaring timber ceilings, while handcrafted carvings and woven textiles quietly celebrated

Indonesia's extraordinary artisanal heritage. There were no unnecessary decorative flourishes. Everything felt purposeful, elegant and deeply calming.

One detail particularly caught my attention. Waiting inside was a beautifully framed personalised welcome featuring my photograph alongside a handwritten greeting from the team. Beside it sat a beautifully bound book celebrating Indonesia's centuries-old Tenun weaving traditions, carefully selected local gifts and a thoughtfully prepared itinerary tied together with natural cord. It was an incredibly personal welcome, but never one that felt performative.

The bathroom was equally impressive. Rather than feeling enclosed, it opened onto a private tropical courtyard where enormous bird's nest ferns framed a deep freestanding bathtub. Morning light filtered softly through the leaves, transforming what could have been an ordinary soak into something almost meditative.

Luxury here wasn't measured by marble or gold finishes. It came from space. Space to breathe. Space to think. Space simply to exist. Outside, the villa continued to unfold.

Our private swimming pool stretched alongside manicured lawns shaded by mature frangipani trees. Traditional Balinese parasols stood beside oversized loungers, while dense bamboo created complete privacy without ever feeling enclosed. Throughout the afternoon, dragonflies skimmed across the water as squirrels darted through the branches overhead.

It became impossible to tell where the villa ended and the jungle began. More than once, I found

myself postponing plans simply to spend another quiet hour beside the pool, listening to the sounds of the river echoing through the valley. Perhaps that is Mandapa's greatest luxury. It doesn't constantly encourage you to do more. Instead, it quietly reminds you how wonderful it feels to do less.

The same philosophy carried effortlessly into the resort's culinary experiences, where meals became an extension of Bali's landscape and culture rather than simply moments between activities.

On our first evening, we made our way to Sawah Terrace, Mandapa's all - day dining restaurant overlooking emerald rice paddies and the Ayung River beyond. As dusk settled across the valley, traditional Balinese dancers began performing beneath flickering lanterns, their graceful movements accompanied by the hypnotic rhythm of the gamelan. Dinner felt less like entertainment and more like an invitation into Balinese culture.

The menu celebrates Indonesian cuisine in all its regional diversity, and each dish arrived layered with remarkable depth of flavour. Rich beef fell apart effortlessly beneath the fork, smoky satays arrived accompanied by deeply aromatic peanut sauce, while vibrant sambals provided bursts of chilli, citrus and fermented shrimp that transformed every bite. It was here that I began to understand why Indonesian cuisine deserves far greater global recognition.

The evening ended with traditional desserts that drew on coconut, palm sugar and tropical fruit, while dancers continued telling centuries-old stories beneath the stars. It was an unforgettable introduction not only to Mandapa, but to Bali itself.



HEADS IN BEDS

Breakfast by the River

Mornings at Mandapa unfold slowly. The valley wakes gently, with mist rising above the Ayung River and the first rays of sunlight filtering through coconut palms and towering bamboo. At Sawah Terrace, breakfast is served against a backdrop of emerald rice fields that seem to stretch endlessly beyond the restaurant's open pavilion.

There is an impressive buffet of tropical fruit, freshly baked pastries, Balinese specialities and international favourites, but the à la carte menu deserves just as much attention.

Each morning became an unhurried ritual. Fresh dragon fruit, papaya and sweet Balinese mango arrived impossibly ripe, while buttery pastries emerged warm from the oven. Indonesian coffee carried rich chocolate notes, lingering long after the final sip.

Nothing felt rushed. There was always another pot of coffee, another conversation with the attentive team, another reason to remain seated a little longer. Breakfast at Mandapa isn't simply about the food. It is about beginning the day at Bali's pace.

Foraging with Chef Eka

One of the resort's most memorable experiences came the following morning, when we joined Executive Sous Chef Eka Sunarya for Mandapa's signature foraging journey.

Leaving the resort behind, we wandered through nearby rice paddies, tropical gardens and village pathways, learning about herbs, edible flowers and native ingredients that have shaped Balinese cooking for generations. Lemongrass, torch ginger, turmeric, kaffir lime leaves and wild basil grew almost effortlessly from the fertile earth, each carrying its own story, medicinal use and place within local cuisine. The experience culminated in a beautifully prepared lunch where many of the ingredients we had just discovered appeared on our plates, transformed into elegant yet



deeply authentic dishes. It created an entirely new appreciation for Balinese cuisine. You weren't simply eating the landscape. You had walked through it first.

Dinner at Kubu

If Sawah Terrace celebrates tradition, Kubu is where Mandapa showcases culinary artistry. Hidden beside the Ayung River, the restaurant is reached via softly illuminated pathways before opening onto a series of private bamboo cocoons suspended above the water.

It is one of the most romantic dining settings in Bali. The sound of the river becomes your soundtrack while candlelight flickers against woven bamboo walls, creating an atmosphere that feels wonderfully intimate without ever becoming theatrical.

The tasting menu reflects European technique while remaining deeply respectful of Indonesia's extraordinary produce. Every course displayed remarkable precision.

Delicate seafood, beautifully aged meats and seasonal vegetables arrived with restrained elegance, allowing each ingredient to speak for itself rather than disappearing beneath unnecessary complexity.

Sunset at Ambar

Later that evening we climbed to Ambar, Mandapa's dramatic clifftop bar overlooking the valley below. Appropriately, Ambar translates as "sky" in Sanskrit.

As sunset coloured the surrounding jungle in soft gold, guests gathered quietly around handcrafted cocktails inspired by local botanicals, tropical fruits and Indonesian spices.

Unlike Bali's louder beach clubs, there is a wonderful sense of calm here. The soundtrack is provided by live jazz rather than booming speakers. Conversation remains gentle. The views do the talking. Watching darkness slowly settle across the valley while sipping cocktails became one of my favourite moments of the entire stay.

HEADS IN BEDS



A Different Kind of Wellness

Wellness has always sat at the heart of Mandapa's identity, but unlike many luxury resorts, it extends well beyond massages and facials. Everything here feels rooted in Balinese philosophy. Our journey began with the Mejjit Massage, one of the resort's signature treatments. Using long rolling movements, acupressure and deeply rhythmic stretching techniques, the treatment targeted muscles still carrying the fatigue of long-haul travel. Rather than simply relaxing the body, it seemed to reset it. By the end of ninety minutes, tension had dissolved completely. The experience continued at the open-air Yoga Pavilion, suspended above the jungle canopy. Morning

breathwork and guided meditation encouraged stillness rather than performance, allowing the surrounding sounds of birds, flowing water and rustling bamboo to become part of the practice itself. Nothing felt choreographed. Nature quietly became the instructor. Perhaps the most unusual experience was meeting Ibu Ketut Mursi, Mandapa's renowned blind healer. Known throughout Bali for her intuitive energy healing, she has spent decades working with guests seeking emotional clarity, spiritual balance and inner calm. Without relying on sight, her heightened sensitivity allows her to guide deeply personal healing sessions through touch, intuition and generations of inherited

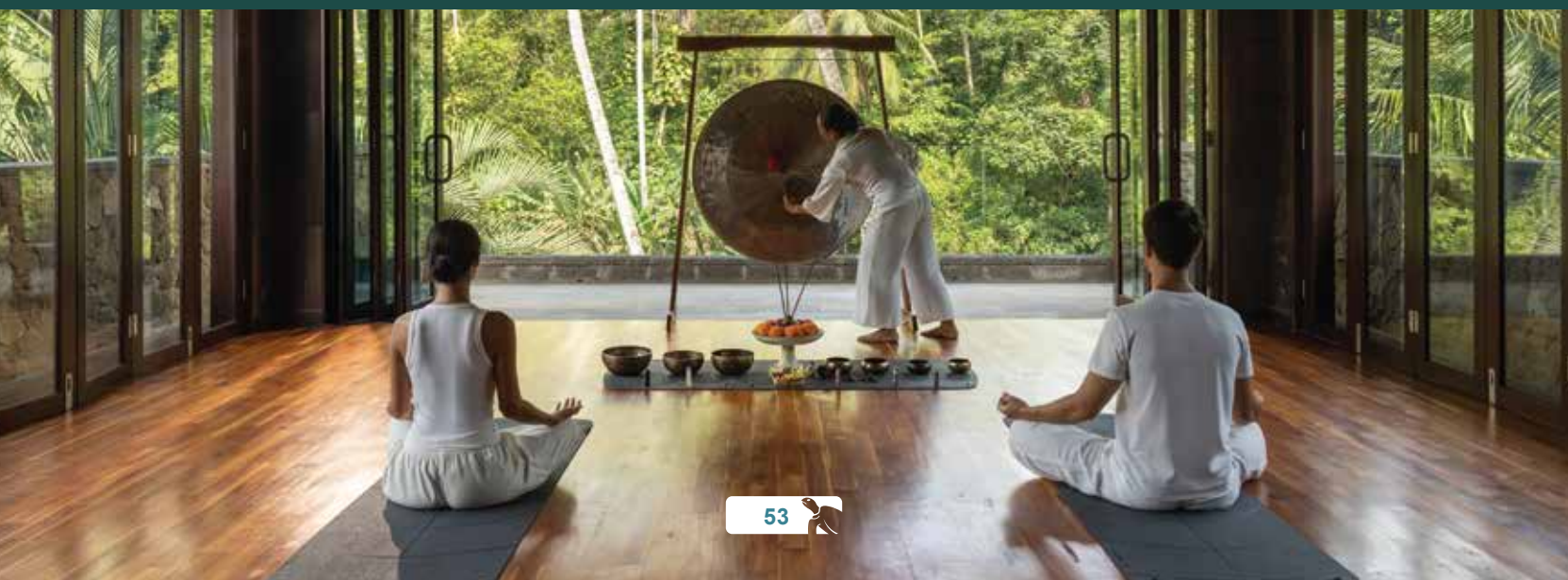
Balinese healing knowledge. Whether or not one approaches such practices from a spiritual perspective, the experience is undeniably moving. There is something profoundly grounding about slowing down enough to simply listen.

Final Thoughts

Many luxury resorts promise tranquility. Mandapa quietly delivers something deeper. It reconnects guests not only with nature but with themselves. Luxury here is measured neither by extravagance nor excess. It is found in birdsong drifting through the jungle each morning. In handwritten welcomes waiting inside your villa. In conversations with

chefs, healers and local villagers who generously share their knowledge. In dinners beside a flowing river.

In afternoons where doing absolutely nothing somehow feels like the most valuable thing of all. Long after leaving Bali, I found myself thinking less about individual experiences than about a feeling. A feeling of slowing down. Of breathing more deeply. Of noticing things that everyday life often rushes past. Mandapa doesn't ask guests to escape reality. Instead, it gently reminds them how beautiful reality can feel when experienced at a different pace. It is not simply one of Bali's finest luxury resorts. It is one of its most soulful.





ASEGO BOLT

The future of smart travel

Flight delays, misplaced baggage and unexpected disruptions have become increasingly common, making seamless assistance an essential part of modern travel. Recent industry reports indicate that more than 25 million bags were mishandled globally, while over one - third of flights experienced delays exceeding an hour, highlighting the growing need for real - time support throughout a journey.

The new expectations of travellers

Today's traveller values convenience as much as the destination itself. A missed connection, delayed flight or lost suitcase can quickly change the mood of an entire trip. Financial reimbursement remains important, yet it often arrives long after the inconvenience has passed. Immediate assistance during the moment of disruption has emerged as the real differentiator.

Families heading on holidays, business professionals travelling on tight schedules and solo explorers navigating unfamiliar destinations all expect quick solutions that minimise stress. The focus has shifted from simply recovering financial losses to ensuring that travellers continue their journey with confidence and comfort.

From protection to assistance

Traditional travel insurance has long served as an important safeguard against unforeseen situations. The evolving travel landscape, however, calls for a more proactive approach. Travellers increasingly seek services that respond instantly rather than waiting until the trip concludes. This changing expectation has paved the way for travel assistance solutions that work alongside insurance by providing support exactly when travellers need it. The

emphasis has moved towards preventing inconvenience from becoming a major disruption, creating a smoother experience from departure to arrival.

A smarter travel companion

Recognising these changing needs, ASEGO has introduced ASEGO BOLT, a travel assistance solution designed to provide practical support during some of the most common travel disruptions. By combining real - time baggage tracking with airport lounge access during eligible flight delays, the offering focuses on improving the traveller's experience rather than simply compensating for inconvenience.

One of its standout features is global baggage tracking across airlines and routes. Travellers can monitor checked luggage in real time, reducing uncertainty during transit. The service also includes compensation of up to ₹66,000 per checked-in bag, for up to two bags, if luggage remains unrecovered within the specified period.

Flight delays can be equally frustrating, particularly during long layovers. ASEGO BOLT automatically activates premium airport lounge access when eligible flights are delayed by more than 60 minutes. Travellers gain access to a network of more than 1,300 lounges across over 100 countries, offering a comfortable environment to wait before continuing their journey.

Adding value for travel advisors

Travel advisors continue to play a significant role in helping travellers plan memorable journeys. Today's customers increasingly seek expert recommendations that extend beyond flights, hotels and itineraries. They appreciate

Travel assistance is no longer optional - it's essential!

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- Global lounge access across 100+ countries in case of flight delays
- Real-time baggage tracking with guaranteed compensation of ₹66,000/bag* up to 2 bags, if not found within 96 hours



thoughtful additions that enhance convenience and provide reassurance throughout their trip.

Travel assistance solutions allow advisors to strengthen customer relationships by addressing concerns before they become problems. Offering services that provide real-time support reflects a deeper understanding of traveller expectations and creates opportunities to deliver a more comprehensive travel experience. For travel professionals, this represents an opportunity to evolve from booking facilitators into trusted travel partners who prioritise the comfort and confidence of every client.

The future of travel confidence

The travel industry continues to innovate, creating experiences that are faster, smarter and more connected. Alongside these advancements, traveller expectations are also rising.

Reliable assistance is becoming an integral part of the journey, complementing traditional travel protection with immediate support whenever disruptions occur.

Whether embarking on an international holiday, attending an important business meeting or exploring a new destination solo, travellers increasingly value services that keep their journeys on track. Solutions that combine technology, convenience and responsive assistance are shaping a future where confidence travels with every passenger.

As travel becomes more dynamic, assistance is steadily moving from an optional add-on to an essential travel companion. The industry's focus is shifting towards creating journeys that are defined not only by where travellers go, but also by how well they are supported every step of the way.





RX India hosts WTM spotlight India Leadership Gala in New Delhi

RX India hosts the WTM Spotlight India Leadership Gala officially unveiling WTM Spotlight India ahead of its inaugural edition, scheduled to take place from 2-4 March 2027 at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi. WTM Spotlight India is the newest addition to RX's globally renowned World Travel Market (WTM) portfolio and has been designed to connect international travel suppliers with India's rapidly expanding travel market.



IATO hosts a luncheon for members and announces the theme of the 41st Annual Convention

The Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) hosts a special luncheon to announce the theme and leadership for its 41st Annual Convention, scheduled to take place in Visakhapatnam from 10-13 September 2026. Held under the theme 'India: The World's Next Tourism Opportunity,' the convention aims to bring together tourism professionals from across the country for insightful discussions, meaningful networking, and destination-focused engagement. The luncheon also introduced the Convention Chairman and Co-Chairman, setting the stage for an event that will showcase Andhra Pradesh's tourism potential and strengthen India's position on the global tourism map.



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ASEGO launches Built & Beyond, a conversational series

ASEGO successfully hosts the inaugural edition of Built & Beyond, a first-of-its-kind conversation series designed to bring together the next generation of travel entrepreneurs who are carrying forward some of India's most respected travel brands and family-led businesses. The event was hosted at ASEGO Headquarters in Mumbai and witnessed participation from leading travel trade media, industry stakeholders, and travel professionals.



SATTE unveils Industry Report 2026 in collaboration with EY

The launch of the SATTE Industry Report 2026 brought together policymakers, industry leaders, and travel professionals to explore the trends shaping the future of Indian tourism. Developed in collaboration with EY, the report presents valuable insights into the evolving travel landscape, highlighting opportunities for innovation, resilience, and sustainable growth. The gathering served as a platform for engaging discussions on the sector's future, reinforcing the industry's collective commitment to strengthening India's position as a leading global tourism destination.





Via East DMC hosts a networking night for NIMA Agents

Via East DMC hosts an insightful evening for the NIMA – Network of Indian MICE Agents, spotlighting the growing MICE potential of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. Addressing the gathering, Pranay Nath, Director, Via East DMC, shared that these destinations are emerging as preferred choices for Indian corporate groups and travellers. He also highlighted the company's expanding global footprint with new offices in Dubai and Canada, strengthening its destination expertise and international reach. Neha Pranay Nath, President, Via East DMC, spoke about her passion for Japan and noted the rising interest among Indian travellers in South Korea and Taiwan, inspired by their rich cultural experiences and enhanced accessibility.



KTO hosts Korea MICE roadshow 2026-Mumbai

The Korea Tourism Organisation (KTO) India successfully hosts the Korea MICE Roadshow 2026 in Mumbai, bringing together key stakeholders from India's travel trade and corporate sector to explore Korea's expanding opportunities in the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) industry. As Korea continues to strengthen its position as a leading MICE destination in Asia, the roadshow highlighted the country's world-class convention infrastructure, innovative event experiences, seamless accessibility, and comprehensive support programs.



EVENT AFFAIR



ITB India hosts networking evening

Travel industry professionals came together at the ITB India Networking Dinner for an evening dedicated to meaningful conversations and valuable networking. The event provided an ideal platform for tourism stakeholders to exchange insights, strengthen existing partnerships, and explore new opportunities ahead of ITB India 2026. Representatives from across the travel ecosystem engaged in discussions focused on collaboration, innovation, and industry growth.



Bingo holidays in association with Atmosphere Resorts hosts an evening

Bingo Holidays, in association with Atmosphere Resorts, hosted an exclusive evening for the travel trade, highlighting the Maldives as a leading destination for premium island holidays. The showcase offered valuable insights into Atmosphere Resorts' distinctive properties, immersive guest experiences, and the evolving preferences of luxury travellers. Industry partners explored new opportunities to promote the destination while engaging in meaningful discussions on the future of high-end leisure travel.



TOFT India strengthens industry bonds with a networking dinner

TOFT India hosts its Networking Dinner, bringing together valued partners from the lodge and destination management community for an evening of engaging conversations and meaningful networking. The gathering celebrated the collective commitment of industry stakeholders towards advancing responsible wildlife and nature tourism while strengthening relationships across the travel ecosystem. Attendees exchanged ideas, explored opportunities for collaboration, and reaffirmed their shared vision for sustainable tourism. The evening reflected the importance of strong partnerships in driving positive change and fostering a more resilient, responsible, and future-ready travel industry.



APPOINTMENTS



Korea Tourism Organisation

The Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) appoints Ms. Cho Yoonmi as the new Director of its New Delhi (India) Office, effective 30th June 2026. Ms Cho brings over 25 years of experience with the Korea Tourism Organization, carrying deep institutional knowledge and an in-depth understanding of Korea as a destination to her new role in India. In her new role, Ms Cho will lead KTO India's efforts to deepen Korea's presence in the Indian travel market.



Tamil Nadu Tourism and TTDC

The Government of Tamil Nadu appoints Dr. V. P. Jeyaseelan, IAS, as the Director of Tamil Nadu Tourism and Managing Director of the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC). In his dual leadership role, Dr. Jeyaseelan will be responsible for steering the state's tourism strategy, strengthening destination promotion, and overseeing the operations of TTDC, the state's nodal agency for tourism development.



RezLive.com

RezLive.com, appoints Mr. Gaurav Khandelwal as Vice President – Sales, India & Nepal. In his new role, Gaurav will lead the complete Sales function for RezLive.com and its XML/API business across India and Nepal, spearheading the company's next phase of growth in these key markets.



Visit California

Visit California announces Julie Coker has been named the organisation's next – and only second ever – president & CEO, succeeding longtime leader Caroline Beteta, who announced her retirement earlier this year. In this role, Coker will lead Visit California, the private industry-led nonprofit organisation marketing California as a premier travel destination, and will simultaneously serve as a strategic advisor for the Governor's Office of Business & Economic Development (GO-Biz).



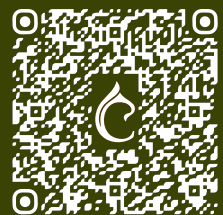


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