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Travel Scapes

JUNE 2022, PAGES 52, ₹100

VOL. 10, ISSUE. 06

Finland

*Happy and Hearty escape
to Northern Europe*

VETA

*A Noteworthy Night
Of Glitz, Gaiety
& Glorious Recognitions*



TITLIS GLACIER MOUNTAIN

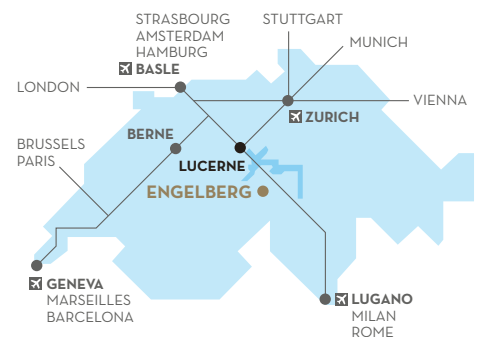
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TITLIS CLIFF WALK



TITLIS GLACIER PARK



PUBLISHER'S NOTE



Varun Malhotra
Publisher & CEO

Dear Readers,

For the last two months, the travel industry has been swinging out of the void that covid-19 has created in the past two years. As the world has now almost opened its doors for everyone, it is spreading the light of hope to take their long-awaited trips while ticking off the bucket list experiences. It's finally the time to say "Bon voyage"! Since the outbound travel has picked up in full swing in most of the destinations, we touch based with the outbound experts and this time, we spoke with a plenty of leaders to understand the exact survival scenario of tourism post COVID. Do read our "Spotlight", "In Conversation" features along with some strongly opinionated "Guest Column".

It is no doubt that our travel fraternity has shown an unbreakable strength to make a compelling comeback and prepared well in advance for all the future uncertainties. To acknowledge their efforts, award their resilience and appreciate their brilliance, we made a show-stopping re launch of VETA yet again in the month of May. The 4th edition of Versatile Excellence Travel Awards (VETA 2022) took place after a good gap of two years and felicitated the travel industry's maestros with the well-deserved label. Meet and greet, glitz and glamour, dance and cheers - too much of excitement was packed in this one gala night! In case you missed being a part of it, TravelScapes, in this June issue, has given an extensive coverage with all the insights and interesting details about the show. And yes, do not forget to check out the picture and awardees gallery.

This is not all! Since the travellers have started to pack their bags, how can we forget to help you in deciding your next bucket list destination- the one that also helps you getting rid of the scorching summer. Finland, a perfect European destination that instantly hits our minds so, moving forward, we have covered some enticing "must-do" experiences in Finland that you may want to cherish. Spare some quality time, plug in the mind-calming music and read through each page. I am sure you will instantly fall in love with Finland, just like we did at its very first glance!

Share with us your valuable feedback and suggestions at varun@versatilemedia.in

Happy Reading!

Varun Malhotra

TravelScapes

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Kerala Tourism launches first Water Street in Kottayam

Kerala recently inaugurated its first STREET project in Maravanthuruthu, a town located in the Kottayam district. Through Sustainable, Tangible, Responsible, Experiential, Ethnic, Tourism (STREET) project launched early this year, Kerala Tourism plans to highlight the state's interiors and rural hinterlands on the tourism map. The project is conceived by the State Responsible Tourism (RT) Mission and is inspired by the 'Tourism for Inclusive Growth' slogan of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the department has said in a release.

Launched at select locations in seven districts of Kerala, it consists of theme-based streets where visitors can experience the speciality of each location. Green

Street, cultural street, village life experience street, experiential tourism street, agri-tourism street, water street and art street are the themes planned for each location. The STREET project will be implemented in the public-private partnership (PPP) mode, and have local bodies and residents as stakeholders.

According to the Responsible Tourism Mission, stretches of backwater, beaches, rivers and natural canals will be considered under the water street project. Depending on the destination, various suitable water based tourism circuits and activities will be developed. Country boat rides; house boats; floating restaurants, theatres and markets; fishing experiences, etc. are some of the activities being considered.



MOT showcases India's travel products opportunities in Incredible India reconnect 2022

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India is organising a series of virtual roadshows with Indian Missions overseas to reconnect with its existing partners and explore new ties and opportunities.

India's vast range of travel products and opportunities was on display at the Oman edition of the Incredible India Reconnect 2022 virtual roadshow.

The Incredible India Reconnect 2022 Virtual Roadshow started with opening remarks from Amit Narang, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman. He talked about India and Oman's bilateral relationships and how

the same may be leveraged for the promotion of tourism.

It was followed by the remarks from G Kamala Rao Vardhana, Director General (Tourism), Ministry of Tourism, Rao discussed about the recovery of the tourism sector and how India was ready to open up its borders once again.

The first Incredible India Reconnect event signalled the start of great efforts between the government and the market to encourage bilateral tourism by recognising the issues, challenges, and opportunities in an attempt to strengthen and build momentum on two-way growth phase.



India-Nepal cooperation on rising trajectory in religious tourism

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will pay a visit to Lumbini, Nepal, on the occasion of Buddha Purnima. At Lumbini, Prime Minister will offer prayers at the sacred Mayadevi temple and, separately, participate in the Shilanayas (foundation laying) ceremony of a Centre for Buddhist Culture and Heritage to be built with Indian assistance.

PM Modi's visit to Lumbini at the invitation of Prime Minister Deuba underscores the shared civilisational and cultural heritage of the people of both the countries and will further deepen the bilateral relations.

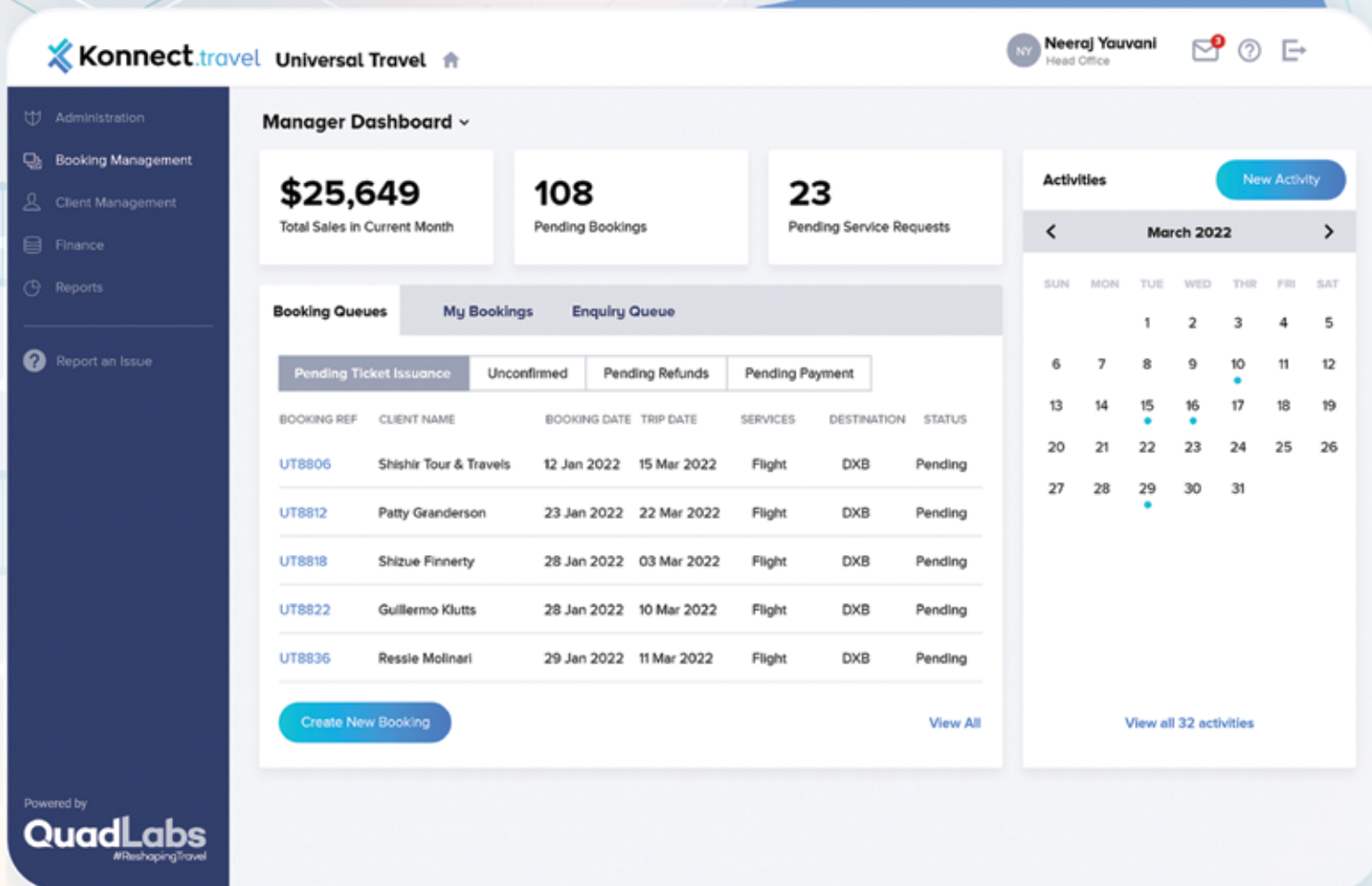
Durgeshman Singh, former Nepali Ambassador to India, said, "Culture brings people closer and the visit will add value to public life and society."

Modi is said to be using soft power diplomacy by visiting Nepal at a time when the geopolitical dynamics are rapidly changing and even Nepal has witnessed a division of opinion on issues like MCC and BRI. Nevertheless, the visit offers an immense opportunity for Nepal.

Tourism is the mainstay of the Nepalese economy and religious tourism is one of the main contributors to the Nepalese tourism industry. Not only has it generated thousands of jobs, but, has also promoted Nepalese culture, lifestyle and traditions. Nepal has a lot to offer to tourists, from the high Himalayas to the jungles of the Tarai plains teeming with wildlife, and, from the scenic grandeur of its rolling hills to the rich cultural heritage of its inhabitants.

UP govt to develop 14 tourist circuits

The Uttar Pradesh government will develop 14 tourist circuits to promote tourism in the state, a minister said. One of these 14 tourist circuits would be dedicated to martyrs, Uttar Pradesh Minister for Tourism and Culture Jayveer Singh said. Braj Bhoomi, the birthplace of Lord Krishna, would be developed as a new tourist hub displaying its ancient culture, the minister said after inaugurating the four-day Amrit Sangeet Utsav here. The state government will develop new infrastructure and provide a facelift to Mathura with the cooperation of people, he said.



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SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THR	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Booking Queues [My Bookings](#) [Enquiry Queue](#)

Pending Ticket Issuance [Unconfirmed](#) [Pending Refunds](#) [Pending Payment](#)

BOOKING REF	CLIENT NAME	BOOKING DATE	TRIP DATE	SERVICES	DESTINATION	STATUS
UT8806	Shishir Tour & Travels	12 Jan 2022	15 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8812	Patty Granderson	23 Jan 2022	22 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8818	Shizue Finnerty	28 Jan 2022	03 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8822	Guillermo Klutts	28 Jan 2022	10 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8836	Ressie Molinari	29 Jan 2022	11 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending

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Rajasthan top destination for investments in Tourism

In Rajasthan, the Principal Secretary of tourism Gayatri A Rathore said that Rajasthan is not only a preferred destination for tourism but also regarding tourism investments along with its allied projects.

She highlighted the fact that maximum number of MoUs and LoIs were signed in the tourism sector for the Invest Rajasthan Roadshows: Rs. 11,906 crore for 363 projects, which is expected to bring in employment opportunities for 57,138 people.

Rathore spoke at the first roadshow for the Rajasthan Domestic Travel Mart (RDTM), 2022, which was organised at Hotel Clarks Amer. The event was together held by the department of Tourism and Federation of Hospitality and Tourism (FHTR). The RDTM is scheduled to be held from July 22 to 24 in Jaipur. The principal secretary said that combined with its cultural and royal heritage, Rajasthan is a sought-after destination in areas concerning wildlife, eco-



rural, wellness, leisure, pilgrimage, weddings, among others.

Rathore said that the Rajasthan Tourism Policy has emphasised the scope of rural tourism, film tourism and heritage tourism. Favorable policies and efforts have helped tourism witness a speedy recovery from the pandemic.

MOT sanctions ten projects under coastal thematic circuits

Gangapuram Kishan Reddy, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Development of Northeastern Region, Government of India, said that cruise tourism is one of the most vibrant and fast-growing sectors of the leisure and travel industry. The promotion of coastal tourism through beach tourism, lighthouse tourism and cruise tourism will help communities such as fishing communities to find other livelihood opportunities and supplement their income. He said that through the Central Financial Assistance Scheme, the Ministry of Tourism has been supporting tourism infrastructure by developing ports and cruise terminals,



lighthouses and river cruise circuits and purchasing ferries. He further added that the government is also working towards developing dedicated terminals for cruise passengers and cruise vessels. "The government has recognised cruise tourism as a niche tourism product to attract tourists", the minister said while alluding to the initiatives for the sector.

The minister said that

under the Swadesh Darshan scheme, the Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned ten projects under coastal thematic circuits worth Rs. 648.80 crore across various States / Union Territories. The government has also sanctioned 228.61 crores for various projects on developing cruise terminals and related infrastructure at major ports under the "Assistance to Central Agencies for Tourism Infrastructure Development" scheme.

Goa Government to develop eco-tourism in forest areas

The Goa government will develop eco-tourism in the forest areas and parks of the coastal state, state Minister Vishwajit Rane said. Rane said that discussions were held with officials of the forest department for the development of eco-tourism and to improve infrastructure in wildlife sanctuaries in the state.

"Following discussions with forest dept officers, we have decided to give thrust to development of forest eco-tourism within forest areas and forest parks. We will improve infrastructure of Dr Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, Bondla

Wildlife Sanctuary, build camping areas, jungle trails etc," the state forest minister tweeted. "We will carry out these activities with guidance from experts in order to ensure that people are more interested in and visit forest parks. Camping areas and jungle trails will be prioritised. We will create an entirely new ecosystem so that we can see the animals within the park," he said.

A tourist hub known for its beaches and nightlife, Goa has six wildlife sanctuaries and a national park, most of which are situated in the north-eastern or southern part of the state.



J&K to remove all shortcomings to boost tourism in the state

Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor, UT of Jammu & Kashmir said, "Kashmir is enchanting destination in terms of scenic beauty, environment and nature. I assure you that we will be able to very soon meet most of the shortcomings in terms of infrastructure, accommodation, transport, etc. Almost one lakh crore has been invested to develop road infrastructure in J&K and airports will

be equipped with night parking facilities which will ease travelling by air." He was addressing the seminar 'FICCI Golf Tourism Summit and Golf Tournament', organised by FICCI J&K State Council, jointly with the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; Jammu & Kashmir Tourism (Host UT), Chhattisgarh Tourism (Partner State) and IGTA (Partner Association) from May 27 to 29 in Srinagar and Pahalgam.

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A NOTEWORTHY NIGHT OF GLITZ, GAIETY & GLORIOUS RECOGNITIONS

Like the yearly contributions that the travel and tourism industry has to the global economy, TravelScapes, after two years, returned yet again to honour the exceptional businesses within the travel, tourism and hospitality niches and the enterprises responsible for making your dream vacations come to life. Over 250 professionals and veterans from across the industry gathered at the glittering gala night of VETA- Versatile Excellence Travel Awards. Total 25 frontrunners were felicitated at this glittering ceremony held on May 17, 2022, at The Imperial New Delhi.

Now in its 4th year of celebration and considered the hottest ticket, the coolest gala-night, or literally, the “IIFA of the travel and tourism industry calendar”, VETA has set exceptional benchmarks. From making a memorable debut in India in 2018 to taking the award show all the way to the Middle East, VETA garnered so much love and appreciation and with each passing year, we persistently kept upping the game. This year was a special one too! VETA 2022 made a show-stopping re-launch after overcoming the grappling chaos of the pandemic. The award night not just recognised the best in the industry but also celebrated their resilience and zeal to stand back strong after a two-year hiatus. To applaud their “never backing out” spirit, Team TravelScapes prepared a special video dedicated to VETA 2022 audience. The night got more desirable and even better with the presence of very versatile hosts, the amazing TV Anchors and Bollywood actors- Maniesh Paul and Sophie Choudry. While Paul entertained the audience with his rib-tickling punch lines and gags, the beautiful diva Choudry added a tinge of extra glitz and glam to the show. And how can any of our VETA editions be complete without



the celeb friends? This year, VETA welcomed Zayed Khan, Rohit Bose Roy and Elli AvrRam as the special celebrity guests. Also, Jazeera Airways and TripJack came on board as the premium sponsors for the event while Amritara Hotels & Resorts tempted the guests with their exclusive lounge at the venue.

The remarkable award night began with Germany being recognised as “Most Preferred Destination for Business & Leisure- 2022” followed by TripJack winning the title - “Most Innovative & Promising B2B Travel Portal- 2022” and Finland bagging “Top Emerging Tourism Destination in Europe”. Next in Line was Kazin DMC being conferred as “Leading Destination Management Company for Kazakhstan”; Jazeera Airways - “Leading Low-Cost Airline In The Middle East” and TBO Group as “Leading B2B Travel Service Platform- 2022”. “India’s Fastest Growing Experiential Luxury Hotel Chain” was conferred to Amritara Hotels & Resorts; “Best 5* Premium All-Inclusive Resort in the Maldives” to Cora Cora Maldives and “Top Bucket List Destination For Honeymooners- 2022” title was bagged by Japan. Southern Travels secured the recognition of “India’s Top-Rated Domestic Tour Operator” followed by Fortune Hotels which was recognised as the “Best Upscale Brand in India”. Next and the most prestigious award in the first set of awards was “Lifetime Achievement in Hospitality” which was felicitated to the most dynamic hotel industry veteran whose tactful leadership and decades of experience brought instrumental changes to the ITC brand- Nakul Anand, Executive Director at ITC Limited.

“Most Exceptional All-Inclusive International Hotel Brand” was conferred to RIU Hotels & Resorts whereas the “Most Promising





Mid-Scale Hospitality Chain” was secured by Summit Hotels and Resorts. “Middle East’s Leading Airline for Customer Experiences” was bagged by Oman Air; “Most Exceptional Heritage Project In India” was presented to Heritage Transport Museum; “Most Trusted DMC for South Africa Luxury Travel” was given to Southern Africa 360 Luxury Holidays; “Leading Global Assistance & Insurance Provider” was presented to Asego; “Leading Lady in the Tourism Industry” was secured by Priyanka Nijhawan- Director- Representations, Nijhawan Group; “Most Trusted Global DMC” was given to One Above Destination Management Services; “Leading Travel Tech Provider-2022” was presented to Quadlabs and “Outstanding Retreat for Recreational Activities in Maldives” was felicitated to Hideaway Beach Resort and Spa Maldives. Fiji secured the much-deserving title of “South Pacific’s Leading Island Destination” followed by Flyremit.com bagging the award for “India’s First Digital Travel Remittance Platform – 2022” and Jetsave India Tours for “Best In Visa Facilitation-2022”.

Year on year, after delivering outstanding shows, VETA, this year, proved its worth again! A night of networking, socialising

and recognition – with some of the amazingly energetic dance performances concluding the show with all the gusto and cheer! Seemed like a fitting end to a truly memorable night!

“The Versatile Excellence Travel Awards has seen the extremely high standard of entries once again, even amidst the fears of COVID infection disrupting the industries again. This has been a difficult time for the tourism industry and we’re really proud and grateful to be able to celebrate in person with the very best in our travel, aviation and hospitality sectors once more. We look forward to a brighter edition of VETA in 2023”, the CEO & Publisher Varun Malhotra said.

Pranav Khullar, Director, TravelScapes expressed his happiness by saying that he is proud of the number and quality of entries to VETA 2022, particularly in light of the significant challenges of the past two years and thanked all those who made it possible. “We have bigger plans for 2022 and VETA was just a magnificent trailer to what is in store for the year ahead. With this, we look forward to seeing a greater turnout for the 2023 award show,” he revealed.



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MR NAKUL ANAND, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT ITC LIMITED

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN HOSPITALITY

Nijhawan Group to represent ONYX Hospitality Group in India

Nijhawan Group has been appointed the India Sales, Marketing & Public Relations agency for ONYX Hospitality Group. Nijhawan Group would be responsible for strategising and executing ONYX Hospitality Group's in-market trade engagements, joint marketing cooperation, product advocacy, brand collaborations and building trade and media relations. With decades of experience of promoting some of the most successful hospitality brands and emboldened by the experience of a team that spans across the country, Nijhawan Group is one of the leading travel conglomerates with diversified entities within the Indian travel industry.

On this occasion, Priyanka Nijhawan, Director-Representations, Nijhawan Group said, "We take pride in announcing that ONYX Hospitality Group is the newest addition to our brand portfolio. We are prepared to magnify and pave the path

for extensive trade and media outreach for one of the top hospitality brands in the world."

"India has been a key source market for us, and with a new representation in the country, we are optimistic of this growing opportunity. With our diverse portfolio catering to the many needs of our guests we are confident of strengthening our presence amongst Indian travellers," said Hazel Chua, Senior Director of Commercial Operations."



Priyanka Nijhawan



Lily Hotels hosts product update and networking lunch in Chandigarh

Lily Hotels Pvt. Ltd. in association with LINKIN Reps. Pvt. Ltd., hosted an exclusive lunch for the travel trade partners in Chandigarh. The resorts operated by Lily Hotels in the Maldives are the pioneering leading All-Inclusive Resort, located in central Maldives - Lily Beach Resort & Spa at Huvahendhoo, a large island hideaway resort located in northern Maldives with privacy at its core – Hideaway Beach Resort & Spa, and its collection of elevated and curated luxury beach villas with dedicated butler service as a 'resort in a resort concept' – The Signature Collection by Hideaway.

The networking event was followed by the product presentation, by Komal Seth, Founder & Director, LINKIN Reps. Pvt. Ltd. The presentation highlighted the key features of the luxurious properties. The response of the session was extremely encouraging and it was heart-warming to witness the enthusiasm for Lily Hotels' products among the Chandigarh trade partners.



Highlighting the importance of the north India's travel market to Maldives, Desislav Gospodinov, Group Director of Sales & Marketing said, "I would like to thank all our travel trade partners in Chandigarh for their continuous support towards promoting the luxurious resorts under Lily Hotels. Chandigarh is one of our most important markets and we eagerly look forward to welcoming travellers from the region."



TravClan establishes its footprint across major Indian cities

TravClan, recently organised a series of events for travel agents across leading Indian cities including Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore and Ahmedabad. The aim was to introduce TravClan's path-breaking services to leading travel agents in these cities.

The events aimed to provide networking opportunities and educational sessions for travel agents to upskill themselves for the new normal, and get insights on latest developments in the travel industry. For instance, the Kolkata event witnessed over 100 agents attend the gathering. It was sponsored by two resorts in Maldives. Similar outreach was witnessed in the events held at the other major cities.

With the Indian travel and hospitality sector gaining momentum and global flight movements resuming, the time has come for Indian travel agents to reorient themselves with the global trends, needs and traveller preferences. Accordingly, there is a need to adopt a digital-first approach and integrate travel operations with requisite technology that would help the agents in running operations smoothly, and generating greater revenues. As a global B2B travel services provider, TravClan has been taking initiatives to empower the travel agent community and create avenues of mutual growth for all.

Chirag Agarwal, Co-founder, TravClan, said, "Smaller and offline travel agents contribute more than \$500 billion to the travel sector economy globally. The pandemic made operations more challenging for them and necessitated a digital transformation. TravClan has built a robust platform that has already enabled thousands of travel companies to recover from the pandemic impact and grow their business faster than ever. We have adopted a tech-driven approach to resolve all major challenges faced by the travel agents. The events served as excellent engagement opportunities between the platform and the travel agents from different cities across India."

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STIC GSA Pvt. Ltd. appointed exclusive sales representative for Azerbaijan Airlines in India

Azerbaijan Airlines have announced the appointment of STIC GSA Services Pvt. Ltd. as its Exclusive Sales Representative for India. Based in Baku, the carrier operates flights to 40 destinations in 25 countries across Asia, the CIS, Europe and the USA with a fleet of 23 airplanes. The STIC Travel Group is one of the largest travel companies in India with offices in all major cities across the country. It represents more than 20 travel, aviation, tourism, cruise and hotel brands exclusively in India. The company also provides management, sales, marketing and operational services to some of the world's leading airlines as their exclusive General Sales Agent in India.

Thomas Cook India expands presence in Gujarat to tap the strong and growing travel market

Thomas Cook (India) Ltd inaugurated a new Gold Circle Partner (franchise) outlet in Vadodara to capitalise on the strong and growing travel opportunity from the region. This expansion augments Thomas Cook India's distribution and reach in Gujarat, including Vadodara, to 10 consumer access centres: 5 owned branches and 5 Gold Circle Partner (franchise) outlets. In addition to serving Vadodara, the outlet will also serve as a hub for nearby business and residential areas of Anand, Ankleshwar, Bharuch, Godhra, Rajpipla, Dabhoi, Karamsad and Borsad. In the new age of travel, customers are understandably seeking the guidance and reassurance of holiday experts and Thomas Cook India's internal survey reiterates the same, with a significant 77% of respondents stating that they require guidance from a holiday expert.

Resorts World Cruises' Genting Dream arrives at Marina Bay cruise centre

The Genting Dream arrived at the Marina Bay Cruise Centre Singapore (MBCCS), in preparations for its first commercial sailing on June 15, 2022.

As the first resort cruise ship to homeport in Singapore, the Genting Dream will provide vacationers with a personalised cruising lifestyle experience, filled with diverse international offerings. Resorts World Cruises will deliver the ultimate cruise adventure aboard the Genting Dream, the first ship of a planned fleet that are "Resorts Cruising on High Seas", expanding the Resorts Brand from land experiences – 46 properties, 8 countries, 4 continents and 80 million visitors a year – to the seas of



the world.

The Genting Dream offers 35 food and beverage facilities, comprising on inclusive and speciality restaurants, bars, as well certified Halal and vegetarian dining offerings. Enjoy international performances and blockbuster movies at the Zodiac theatre with an impressive 1,000 seat

capacity; a theme park at sea with pools and waterslides, ziplines, a rock-climbing wall, a wide sundeck, state-of-art Virtual Reality and popular arcade games; bowling alleys, amazing duty-free shopping, spas and many more attractions – perfect for vacationers or for corporate retreats and team-building.



Norwegian Cruise Line celebrates full re-launch of 17-ship fleet

Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) celebrated the completion of its Great Cruise Comeback with the sailing of Norwegian Spirit, the 17th and final ship in its fleet to return to service.

NCL's return to service after a 500-day pause began with Norwegian Jade's July 25, 2021 sailing from Athens (Piraeus), Greece. Since then, the Brand has systematically re-launched its ships around the world, welcoming guests and crew members aboard its award-

winning vessels.

"This is an incredibly important day in our history and a defining moment for our future," said Harry Sommer, President and CEO of Norwegian Cruise Line. "We are moving full speed ahead, having already welcomed more than half a million guests for an exceptional vacation at sea." Norwegian Spirit, which is sporting an extensive bow-to-stern, over \$100 million revitalisation, will be sailing through the deep blue South

Pacific, visiting eight ports in 12 days, with departures from the beautiful Island of Tahiti. Itinerary highlights include a journey to Bora Bora, where guests can enjoy snorkeling and discover why the elegantly calm waters are world-famous. They also can venture to Raiatea, which is considered the most sacred island in the South Pacific, where visitors can spend the afternoon exploring lush rainforests and the extinct volcano, Mount Temehani.

InterGlobe Enterprises and UPS launch MOVIN to transform Indian B2B Logistics

InterGlobe Enterprises, one of the trusted travel and hospitality conglomerates and UPS, a global leader in logistics announced a joint venture to launch MOVIN which is a new logistics brand aimed at serving the needs and demands of the fast-paced Indian market. The name MOVIN, as revealed by **JB Singh, Director InterGlobe Enterprises**, is a combination of Movement and India (MOVEMENT+INDIA).

MOVIN will offer a range of extensive express and premium service coverage across India with a strong portfolio of B2B domestic services including a day-definite, as well as express, time-definite solutions, which will give businesses better predictability and greater competitiveness to swiftly integrate into the global value chain. India's rapidly developing economy and the demand of the business community for robust logistics solutions presents a significant opportunity and MOVIN is well positioned to provide efficiencies, stronger distribution channels, advanced technology, and apply global best practices.

Talking about the aims and agenda of this venture, Singh said, "India's growth towards a \$5 trillion economy will be largely supported by the growth of local businesses and logistics which are key contributors to India's economy. I am confident that InterGlobe's deep understanding of the Indian market, combined with UPS's 114 years of logistics expertise will make this venture a success." He added, "We are certain that our foray into logistics with MOVIN will contribute significantly to the rapid development and growth of businesses in India. We look forward to enabling and facilitating trade, commerce and employment



through this venture."

Leveraging UPS's global logistics expertise combined with InterGlobe's deep understanding of the Indian market, MOVIN will build technology-backed solutions that will link companies across the country to international businesses with speed, reliability and enhanced digital customer experience. Creating corridors of opportunity, innovation and excellence, MOVIN will offer seamless integration across air and ground networks, to B2B customers, enabling an uninterrupted flow of goods that is backed by consistent, predictable and responsive operations.

"UPS is excited to launch this new venture with InterGlobe Enterprises. Together we



will empower local businesses to grow and connect them to trade opportunities around the world," said Utku Akaltan, UPS President Indian subcontinent, Middle East and Africa. "With a strategy of customer first, people led, innovation driven, UPS further expands its global network, including healthcare solutions, through a unique partnership that creates a suite of services to serve B2B customers' need to grow."

Headquartered in Gurugram, MOVIN officially launched its operations from May 26 in a phased manner and will ramp up in July of 2022 starting with Mumbai, Delhi NCR and Bengaluru - with more expansions to other metros and cities across the nation to follow.

VFS Global links leadership performance appraisals to sustainability goals

VFS Global said that the performances of senior management for 2022 will be linked to sustainability targets set for that period. This comes as a defining move as part of the organisation's long-term sustainability strategy with a focus on Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) key performance indicators (KPIs) rolled out in 2021.

According to the strategy, the company has identified five pillars - Contributing to Sustainable Economic Growth, Delivering Good Governance, Nurturing our

Colleagues, Protecting our Environment and Supporting our Communities. Each of these pillars are carefully selected and aligned to the organisation's business strategy, the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals, as well as national priorities. They also include a considerable focus on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Employee Empowerment and Reduction of GHG Emissions, which are a part of the Management by Objective (MBOs) for the company's senior executives.

ITB Berlin 2023 to take place live again next March in Berlin

Messe Berlin is planning a number of important changes next year to mark the first in-person edition of ITB Berlin since the pandemic began. ITB Berlin 2023 will take place on three successive days, from March 7 to 9. The demands placed on global trade fairs have changed considerably in recent years, which is why in future and in terms of customers, is concentrating its efforts to focus on exhibiting companies as well as exclusively on trade visitors, buyers and the media. As in previous years, the internationally renowned ITB Berlin Convention will take place live parallel with the exhibition

on the Berlin Exhibition Grounds.

"By positioning ITB Berlin exclusively as a B2B product we want to make the format future-proof and further significantly enhance the brand as a global catalyst of the tourism industry, said David Ruetz, head of ITB Berlin. "At the same time we are making sure to give our image a necessary boost and improve our existing ties and ability to attract new customers. In the past we have repeatedly observed that the majority of our exhibitors place a clear emphasis on addressing B2B audiences. In future, this move will make it possible to further concentrate their efforts."

Saudi setting the stage to go big in the India market

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has undergone momentous changes from the time it opened its doors to tourists in 2019, keeping in line with its deeply ambitious Vision 2030. Now that this promising country is all set to become a big player on the international tourism stage, pivoting away from its rich oil sector and towards a more sustainable economy, the country is aiming high to showcase itself in the key tourism source markets- India being one of them. TravelScapes discovers a lot more about the destination's promotion strategy in India, the USPs and possibilities of increasing air connectivity in an exclusive chat with **Alhasan Ali Aldabbagh, Chief Markets Officer- Asia Pacific, Saudi Tourism Authority**

By *Gagneet Kaur*

Saudi has gone through an amazing transformation and tourism indeed has been an important driver of growth for its future. It is one of the key pillars at the heart of their Vision 2030's plan where the aim is to diversify the economy as well as welcome around 100 million visitors. Most recently, Saudi Arabia also moved ten places up to the 33rd position in the latest World Economic Forum's (WEF) Travel and Tourism Development Index. Moving in line with this promising success, its vision and plan to present itself as a thrilling, new destination to the key source markets, Saudi Arabia has rolled out a set of strategies which includes the destination promotion plans in various key markets including India.

Raising the right kind of awareness among Indian travellers:

Taking into account that the travelling appetite of Indians is very encouraging, Saudi Arabia has embarked on ambitious marketing drives to boost inbound tourism to the Kingdom. Coming on the heels of Saudi's successful showcase during SATTE 2022 followed by several key MoUs signed with Indian travel companies, Saudi Arabia Tourism Authority seeks to raise the right kind of awareness about Saudi amongst Indian travellers. "India is one of the top and the most important source markets for Saudi Arabia. Therefore, we are planning to invest a lot not only in the trade engagements with the country but also in a few other key areas, destination marketing being one of them. This is crucial for us since we want to raise the right level of awareness about Saudi as an ideal tourism destination," Alhasan highlights.

Asked about how is Saudi readying itself to receive the Indian tourists, Alhasan informs, "We are consistently working on gaining confidence from the Indian travellers about Saudi and are making sure that every touch point that Indian traveller goes through, from landing-in to leaving Saudi Arabia, is truly delightful. Indians' appetite to travel is very promising and they are always on the lookout to explore more. Keeping that in mind, we are promoting Saudi's distinctive offerings that include various regions and cities, each of which has different topography, weather, culture and cuisines. We are also learning to understand what Indian travellers seek and are also working



very closely with the key stakeholders and the travel trade associations who understand the Indian market well. They are guiding us on how we should plan the journeys in Saudi or how we should build experience-rich packages for the Indian travellers." He adds, "All of this, not just requires investment but also the effort in prioritizing ideas we build on going forward,"

Saudi's potential to attract significant traveller segments:

The experts always believed that this promising country holds the potential to become a significant player in tourism as it aims to lure the travellers from every segment of the market. Apart from their bestsellers, Saudi now plans to turn the tables and welcome the fast-emerging segments.

"Before COVID, there were about 27 million outbound travellers that explored Saudi Arabia a lot of which were groups, families, solo travellers seeking the beach activities and even those who are attracted by the culture and heritage. For the year ahead, we are targeting families, the growing middle class, students who are going back to universities and are stopping over in Saudi Arabia. Given the fact that Indians are well-acquainted with the Middle East, we are also aiming to loop in those travellers who are doing combination trips including visits to other Middle Eastern countries while visiting Saudi. We will also be working tactically to collaborate with Bollywood, bring in some crowd-pulling

events like cricket matches, host high-profile weddings as we are fortunate to have the naturally-blessed landscapes and destinations that can be ideal for both the Indian weddings and film shootings," Alhasan elaborates.

Talking about the bestselling attractions, he puts a spotlight on Saudi's top favourite destination- AlUla and shares other unmissable experiences including Hegra Mountains and Jabal Al-Qarah Mountains. "There are a lot more gems that are yet to be discovered and we are steadily unpacking these gems and are all set to showcase them to our Indian tourists coming in," Alhasan states.

Saudi: The shepherd to sustainable tourism

Just like the other Middle Eastern giants, Saudi Arabia is stepping up its efforts to become the forerunner in developing a sustainable model of tourism. This includes a huge investment of over USD 800 billion in the next 8 years that including the massive projects in the pipeline. Alhasan says, "Sustainability is at the core of our vision in 2030 and we have always strongly believed that we cannot be competitive on the global stage without having a sustainable strategy. Therefore, we are now planning to invest over USD 800 billion in the next 8 years in the tourism eco-system which includes infrastructure projects such as the Red Sea Project aimed at counterbalancing any negative environmental impacts, Neom- a new city, Amaala - a tourism destination to be centered on wellness and culture. Further, AlUla is also planning to be carbon neutral by 2030 and other mega projects are in the offing. Each of these is unique in terms of value proposition and sustainability kept on the top of our mind."

Air connectivity: another growth frontier

Alhasan elaborates that to date, Saudi has had a bilateral agreement of 56000 seats between India and Saudi out of which 28000 have been utilised with airlines like Saudia, flynas, Air India and IndiGo. Adding to that, he expectantly shares, "We are also working with other airlines to increase the number of slots and also look at adding the number of Indian cities into our portfolio of flight frequencies to Saudi Arabia. We are expecting a lot more this year in terms of augmented air connectivity as we are keen on developing more routes from India and growing them in coming years."

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We plan to expand our presence by opening around 50 franchises in coming one year in India and in Asian countries by 2023”

In an insightful conversation with **A.K. Mohan, Managing Director, Southern Travels Pvt. Ltd.**, TravelScapes learns how and why this 51 year-old tour company holds great eminence and excellence in Indian domestic tourism segment. Read on to find out more about the company, its future expansion plans, the key achievements and core values that set them apart...

By *Gagneet Kaur*



Please give us an overview about Southern Travels, its key services and products/ markets.

Southern Travels is a five decades old company having an incredible network of branches in India. It is undoubtedly, one of the top players in domestic market. The services include domestic and international tour packages, hotel bookings, car and coach rentals, cruises, MICE, passport, visa and Insurance. Southern Travels also owns hotels in New Delhi, Jaipur and Vijayawada with over 200 keys. As a part of expansion strategy, the group plans to start a vertical in managing hotels across India with its brand by 2023.

Till date, how has the growth been for Southern Travels ?

Southern Travels is a professionally run company with a continuous year on year revenue growth and evident increase in client base of the company. This growth can be credited to our quality services and the marketing strategies; the reason why Southern caters to over 1.5 lakhs customers per year.

Can you shed some light on the key achievements of the company?

The company is well established and has a strong presence among B2C. The company always believed in delivering very high level of services and is known for its honesty and transparency with its clients.

Southern Travels is also a proud winner of National Tourism Award felicitated by the Ministry of Tourism for 8 times in a row and many other awards from various State Governments as

well as from association and trade bodies.

Recently, the company was awarded the most prestigious VETA Award for “India’s Top Rated Domestic Tour Operator” at Versatile Excellence Travel Awards 2022 hosted by TravelScapes.

In general, what scope do you see for domestic tourism in India post COVID? How has the response been so far this year, in terms of bookings for Southern Travels?

Tourism post COVID has witnessed a boom in the domestic sector. People were almost locked inside during the last two and half years and fear of COVID overpowered the minds. Indian government took appropriate steps by vaccinating the people with double dose, which in turn created confidence in travellers. This year came as a ray of hope as there is a tsunami of rush to many destinations like Kashmir, Uttarakhand (for Char Dham), Himachal, North East, Goa, Andaman and many more.

Talking particularly of our company, Southern Travels has recorded a very good business this year and has good numbers of closure for coming months too. We also see a tremendous growth of enquiries as compared to last years.

There are never ending debates and discussions to get “tourism” recognised as an “industry”. According to you, what kind of support can government extend to the tour operator fraternity?

Tourism in India has significant potential with rich culture and historical heritage, variety of ecology and places of natural beauty spread across from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. Tourism is very important for the country’s economic growth. This sector generates direct and indirect employment opportunities for millions of job-seekers. Pre-COVID, it was contributing around 6.9% share in India’s GDP.

Given the fact that it has tremendous potential, it is definitely a high time that Government of India should recognise Tourism as an Industry. In fact, some of the state governments recently declared and claimed tourism as a top industry. If the Govt. of India works on this, there would be an exponential growth which will help in strengthening our economy.

The government can support the tourism industry in India by (1) injecting liquidity into tourism sector, (2) giving priority loans and (3) creating vacation subsidy program for domestic tourists and more.

SOUTHERN TRAVELS: A SNEAK PEEK

- Southern Travels is a 51 year-old brand
- One of the top players in domestic market
- Also owns hotels in New Delhi, Jaipur and Vijayawada with over 200 keys
- Southern Travels has 12 branches in India with fleet of its own vehicles
- The company has a strong presence among B2C
- Has been awarded with National Tourism Award by the Ministry of Tourism for 8 times in a row
- Recently, the company was bestowed with the title “India’s Top Rated Domestic Tour Operator” at VETA 2022 hosted by TravelScapes
- Expansion plans include opening around 50 Franchises in coming one year in India and to Asian countries by 2023
- Also plans on expanding presence in GCC countries by 2024 and to USA, South Africa and UK by 2025

Southern Travels is a recognised brand in India; thanks to your efforts and zeal to grow with the team. What has been your mantra for success?

Southern Travels is a 51 years old brand that has served to millions of tourists until now. It is a well-known name that has made its mark in the domestic tourism segment of India.

The mantra for success of Southern Travels has always been its belief in quality services, transparency, in technology as well as on researching on the client requirements and giving the quality products at affordable costs and of course, our great and strong team.

What are your future plans for Southern Travels?

Southern Travels has 12 branches in India with fleet of its own vehicles. The company is into major restructuring of its business and operations. It has appointed a CEO and senior management teams who have over three decades of experience in tourism business. We plan to expand our presence by opening around 50 Franchises in coming one year in India and to Asian countries by 2023, GCC countries by 2024 and to USA, South Africa and UK by 2025. The company is also investing in technology divisions which are allowing us to achieve success milestones more easily.



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ARK Travel Group reveals a remarkable new identity and growth frontiers for 2022

One of the well-known and trusted players in the leisure travel and luxury tourism segments, ARK Travel Group now wears a brand new look. In a candid conversation with the cruise connoisseur **Kishan Biyani, Managing Director of ATG (ARK Travel Group)**, TravelScapes learn all and more about ARK's new brand-identity reveal as well as the expansion plans and new developments aimed at enhancing its bouquet of travel services post-COVID

By Gagneet Kaur

Ahead of unveiling the fresh brand identity, what new does ARK Travel Group has in store this year?

The first and foremost thing in our mind is to uphold our new logo, the new brand identity while continuing the legacy of ARK. The new logo reveals much brighter and more vibrant colours and each unit of the logo represents the various business verticals as well as the sentiments that the brand would like its clients to associate with. This lively colour



"I feel delighted to share that under ARKRep, we have already acquired a lot of accounts and are expecting another 4 to 6 brands to come on board"

spectrum also depicts our curiosity, diversity as well as a limitless range of services that complement well with our expansion goals. However, our dynamic vision and core values of commitment stay the same as they were before the rebranding. With this, we also plan on going global very soon and have ambitious expansion plans regarding the same. We do have some other new and exciting things coming up in immediate future.

Further, the Resort World Cruises which was not operating earlier has announced its global debut in Singapore. It is indeed big news for ARK as the market of cruising is what we excel in. Also, during the peak pandemic time, we acquired Outbound Konnections which will now be called ARKRep, the company's representation and marketing arm. I feel delighted to share that under ARKRep, we have already acquired a lot of accounts and are expecting another 4 to 6 brands to come on board. For our other signature product ARKTech, we have got the DECK PRO which is the unique proprietary online system by ARK allowing travel agents to register for free and

check everything from the availability of cabins to information on vessels while sitting in their offices. Going forward, we are now revealing the new ChatBot feature for the Norwegian Cruise Line for the travel agents. We are soon going to add a feature of adding their Facebook handles on the Bot so that the consumers can directly get their replies through the same. If the chat bot feature comes out to be successful, we will be bringing it out for all the cruise lines we represent in order to grow big in the market. Also, for the next six months, our key focus would be to establish the Resorts World Cruises brand and create its strong presence and demand in the market.

What other ways you are implementing for pulling in more Indian travel agents?

Through DECK PRO that I mentioned previously, we are trying to educate a lot of agents about this digitally driven booking engine, the products uploaded on the same for selling and empowering them to access almost everything on the DECK PRO. We have also always been in one-to-one touch with all the travel agents.

ARK Travel Group has about 18 satellite offices operating where we retained all the staff during the pandemic as well who communicate with the travel agents on daily basis. With this kind of commitment, we see the number of satellite offices in India going up to 30 in the next three months and we have already started the process by appointing people in every city. This is eventually helping us enhance our network of travel agents and interact with them recurrently.

Talking of how digital tools, especially social media, have become an important trend in post COVID era, how is ARK leveraging them to their utmost benefit?

It goes without a doubt that a lack of social media presence somehow affects the brand's popularity. So to benefit from this trend and be relevant in the market, we have hired a completely new marketing team. I am happy to share that my daughter Sakshi Biyani is also a part of the marketing team and is responsible for managing the company's branding. No one could have handled it better than her because I think the new generation probably has better opinions and more creative ideas when it comes to using social media platforms to their utmost advantage.

Your entrepreneurial journey in ARK has been incredible. What is your mantra to sustain a good business?

It has always been- to be a "travel agent's person". It is quite easy to handhold the agents in their opportune time but when they are stuck and need the utmost help during the mess, one should come forward for the support. And this, I believe, is the best way to stay connected with them as well as develop your business. If you are helping one agent of a city, he will further talk about you with another 10 people that will eventually grow both your network and the business.



IATO discusses the revival strategies and current challenges with members

Announces its 37th convention in Bangalore, Karnataka scheduled in September during the Interactive Luncheon in Delhi

Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) held an interactive luncheon for its members and media partners at the Le Meridien, New Delhi last month. The event aimed at discussing the current concerns of the industry to revive of Inbound Tourism. IATO has been constantly in touch with the Central Government to help the tour operators recover their respective businesses with the help of Ministry of Tourism and

has often written to the PMO several times. During his speech, Rajiv Mehra, President- IATO shared the list of concerns that IATO had submitted to Tourism Minister in the recent meeting with G. Kishan Reddy including the concerns like marketing and promotions of India, re-instating of the MDA Scheme, airfares reduction by reducing taxes on ATF, rationalisation of GST on Tourism, restoration of tourist visa for the international travellers



and more. He also announced that the 37th Convention of IATO is scheduled to take place in Bangalore, Karnataka tentatively in the month of September this year. The other official details are yet to be disclosed.

Besides the above concerns that were widely discussed during the luncheon, the association members were updated about the issues that have been taken up to the Ministry asking for much-needed attention and addressal. Rajnish Kaistha Hony. Secretary highlighted that IATO had not

just requested for restoration of e-tourist visa but also to resume scheduled international flight operations to bring down the air fares which were very high on air bubble flights. "We will continue all our efforts till we achieve our goals," Kaistha concluded on a positive note. Ravi Gosain, Vice President- IATO thanked the members & media partners while S.C. Kamra, Advocate and Taxation Consultant was invited to speak about the queries revolving around TCS and e-invoicing.



Radisson Resort launches its first international resort in Pondicherry

Radisson Resort Pondicherry Bay recently launched its first international resort in Pondicherry. The boutique luxury resort has been launched in April 2022 at Pondicherry just in time to catch the post pandemic holiday rush. The Franco-Tamil architecture resort is a beachfront property nestled in the picturesque area of Veerampattinam against a rustic backdrop and flanked by scenic back waters of the Ariyankuppam lagoon and the Internationally Blue Flag certified Eden Beach (Touted as the top 10 blue flag beaches in the country). The resort also offers other luxury facilities including the award-winning Bodhi Spa by GRT Hotels, a supervised Kid's zone and a sunset lounge to catch sunsets every evening enjoying the locally curated brews and gourmet eats. The resort has curated unique experiences for the guests to take back memories from their holidays. There are morning Zumba lessons on the pool deck, stand up paddling, Trampoline fun and even a local boat ride in the back waters. Radisson Resort Pondicherry Bay is the first pet friendly resort and welcomes pet dogs and pet cats with uniquely designed facilities. Vikram Cotah, CEO of GRT Hotels, said "We are happy to launch the 18th hotel owned by GRT Hotels and franchised to the internationally renowned hotel brand-Radisson Hotels Group."



Lemon Tree Hotels signs a new hotel in Chirang, Assam

Lemon Tree Hotels announced its latest signing – Keys Select by Lemon Tree Hotels – in Chirang, Assam. The property, owned by Bharati Brahma, shall be managed by Carnation Hotels Private Limited, a subsidiary and management arm of Lemon Tree Hotels Limited. This Greenfield project is expected to open in June 2026.

Chirang, a new district in Assam, is home to Manas National Park, a UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site. Located in the Himalayan foothills, it is known for its rare and endangered endemic wildlife, such as the Assam roofed turtle, hispid hare, golden langur and pygmy hog. Borjhar Airport in Guwahati is the closest air connectivity link and the district has several railway junctions in the vicinity.

Located in Kajalgaon Town, Chapaguri II, this property will feature 40 well-appointed rooms, complemented by a multi-cuisine restaurant and a bar. It will also have a conference room and a fitness center for recreation.

Vikramjit Singh, President – Lemon Tree Hotels Limited commented, "We are delighted to expand our reach in Assam with our valued partner Bharati Brahma. The state holds immense business and tourism potential as it is a preferred destination for both business and leisure travellers."

Fairfield by Marriott expands footprints in Vadodara, Gujarat

Fairfield by Marriott announced the opening of Fairfield by Marriott Vadodara. Situated in the heart of the city with proximity to the Civil Airport Harni and the central business district, the 96-room hotel is designed with modern amenities for today's business traveller, creating an environment that focuses on the warmth and simplicity of delivering a seamless hospitality experience. "We are thrilled to introduce our first Fairfield by Marriott in Vadodara. This opening marks the 22nd Fairfield by Marriott to join our growing portfolio of 16 brands operating across the country", said Ranju Alex- Area Vice President – South Asia, Marriott International. Located in Alkapuri, the commercial abode of the city Fairfield by Marriott Vadodara is within close proximity to upscale fashion boutiques, lifestyle stores and popular, local attractions like the Laxmi Vilas Palace, Sur Sagar Lake and Sayaji Baug. The hotel offers 96 spacious rooms and suites that sport modern design elements and contemporary essentials.

Pride Group of hotels signs 'Pride Suites' Gurugram

Pride Group of Hotels has now forayed into the premium service apartment space with the launch of its new brand 'Pride Suites'. The company has now signed an agreement to launch its first property in Gurugram under the brand 'Pride Suites'. This will be the first extended-stay hotel from Pride Group with 2 Bay & 3 Bay rooms with a kitchenette, rooftop Bar, Grill & Restaurant and Swimming Pool. The new property will be in close proximity to various corporate hubs, shopping malls, commercial establishments and other places of interest.

Atul Upadhyay, Vice President, Pride Group of Hotels says, "The market for luxury homestay has been growing exponentially over the years. We are delighted to venture into this lucrative market by signing our first property in Gurugram under the brand 'Pride Suites'. Gurugram which houses some of the leading corporate and multinationals has seen steady growth in the inflow of business travellers."



WelcomHeritage announces "Buy now, pay later"

In a gamechanger for holiday-goers, WelcomHeritage announces a tie-up with Simpl for installment-based holidays. A first-of-its-kind in the Indian hospitality industry, this system integration allows guests to book any hotel of their choosing from the WelcomHeritage website to avail of the offer. Opting for the "Buy now, pay later" at checkout, guests receive a confirmed booking on the website by paying only one-third of the overall purchase amount while paying the other two-thirds in a series of interest-free installments over subsequent months.

Speaking on the collaboration

with Simpl, Abinash Manghani, CEO of WelcomHeritage says, "Easing the burden off our guests was the main intention behind this initiative. Everybody deserves a stress-free holiday - to be able to take a break, disconnect from the mundane to reconnect with nature and themselves, spend quality time with families, explore the world around them, immerse in luxuries and feel pampered and experience life 'outside the frame' of otherwise hectic, monotonous schedules. With interest-free installment payments, we are looking to make these precious holidays more convenient and accessible for all."

StayWell announces the signing of Park Regis by Prince Brand

StayWell Holdings has signed the first hotel under the evolved brand banner of Park Regis - Park Regis by Prince Deira Islands (Dubai). The addition of this new property to the StayWell stable complements the existing portfolio of hotels in the UAE region and officially launches the new brand.

An upscale and premium brand, Park Regis by Prince is a significant evolution of the reputable Park Regis hotel brand, which first launched in 2006. With the positioning statement "The World's Most Thoughtful Hotels", Park Regis by Prince is the latest offering in the company's impressive line-up of brands. Designed to be exceptional yet accessible, guests travelling for business and



leisure can enjoy the tradition and luxury of a beautifully curated classic hotel experience, blended seamlessly with modern technology. Each property will embody a fusion of the company's Australian and Japanese heritage whilst seeking to highlight and celebrate the local influences and culture that make each location special.

The announcement of the group's new brand is punctuated with the signing of its first hotel in Deira (UAE).



Lords Hotels & Resorts bags 19 accolades at Tourism Awards 2022 in Gujarat

It was a downpour of awards for Lords Hotels and Resorts at the 5th edition of the prestigious Tourism Award ceremony 2022 that took place at City Center, Ahmedabad, on May 2, 2022.

The award ceremony was organised to recognise the Tourism community and also to recognise the hard work of the individuals.

Lords Hotels and Resort have been a part of this prestigious event since its very inception. They have been actively contributing to the growth of tourism and culture; and to the prosperity of Gujarat state.

This year too Lords Hotels and Resorts were applauded and appreciated for their outstanding service and hospitality extended to guests by their team and has won awards in 19 categories. Sangita Bansal, Director, Lords Hotels and Resorts was recognised as "Best Female Entrepreneur in Tourism - Lords Inn Hotel & Developers Pvt Ltd". Commenting on this achievement, she said, "We just need to motivate and challenge our instincts and work hard towards our goals. That's what I need and I am passionate about the hospitality space and winning this award encapsules my perseverance towards being the best in this field."

The other categories were as follows:

- Best Chain Hotel in Gujarat - Lords Inn Hotel & Developers Pvt Ltd
- Best business hotel in Jamnagar - Lords Eco Inn Jamnagar
- Best Restaurant in Surat -

Blue Coriander Restaurant Surat

- Best MICE Venue in other city - Vishal Lords Inn Gir Forest.
- Best Theme base hotel in Rajkot - Aarya Lords Club and Resorts.
- Best Budget Hotel in Surat -Lords Plaza Surat
- Best 3 Star Hotel in Gujarat - Lords Plaza Surat
- Best MICE Venue in Surat - Lords Plaza Surat
- Best 3-star hotel in Gujarat - Lords Plaza Surat
- Best Business Hotel in Surat - Lords Plaza Surat
- Best Multicuisine Restaurant in Surat - Blue Coriander Restaurant Surat
- Best Multicuisine Restaurant in Gujarat - Blue Coriander Restaurant
- Best Institute in Gujarat - Lords Institute.
- Best Budget Hotel in Rajkot - Aarya Lords Club and Resort
- Best 3 Star Hotel in Rajkot - Aarya Lords Club and Resort
- Best Wedding Venue in Rajkot - Aarya Lords Club and Resort
- Best 4-star hotel in Jamnagar - Lords Inn Jamnagar

Pushpendra Bansal, COO, Lords Hotels and Resorts passionately expressed his feelings about the big wins saying, "Awards are wonderful. Lords have been nominated many times and won many awards, but we have always been grounded. Gujarat Tourism Awards are very credible and the awards we won will help us position Lords Hotels and Resorts to the next level; and take us even further across India and abroad."

Choice Hotels strengthens footprints in Rishikesh

With scenic views and contemporary facilities, Comfort Inn Rishikesh is an ideal option for a getaway.

Choice Hotels India has added yet another property to its fast-growing portfolio in the city of Rishikesh. Comfort Inn Rishikesh is a newly built hotel located near Dhyaan Mandir. This is the second property of the brand in the divine city also known as the Yoga capital of India.

Rishikesh offers a unique blend of spirituality and adventure. The city has been attracting diverse tourists from around the world for years. The hotel is located at a close distance from major tourist attractions like Triveni Ghats, Janki Sethu, Laxman Jhula, Ram Jhula and Neer Waterfalls.

On the launch of Comfort Inn Rishikesh, Vilas Pawar, CEO of Choice Hotels India said, Rishikesh is a buzz with tourists



Vilas Pawar

from across the world visiting to meditate, learn yoga and try various adventure activities. We are elated to strengthen our footprints in Rishikesh with the second property offering a completely different vibe of the city. The quaint location is perfect for those looking for a calm stay amidst the beautiful Himalayas.



Welcomhotel opens new horizons for weddings, MICE in Katra

Located in the heart of the divine city Katra, Welcomhotel by ITC Hotels Katra has 83 well-appointed rooms overlooking the Trikuta Hills home to Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine. Just 45 kilometres away from the Jammu airport, the hotel is an idyllic destination nestled in the lush green valleys with panoramic views. Amidst the pine trees, breathtakingly beautiful landscape, the hotel stands tall like a crown jewel of Katra city.

Welcomhotel Katra has opened new horizons for weddings and

MICE in this holy city of India. The hotel offers an ideal indoor and outdoor space for events, weddings and celebrations with a seamless pillar-less banquet hall of 225 sq mt that can accommodate up to 250 guests opening into a dedicated pre function area and outdoor gardens. The picturesque and scenic backdrop, complimented with the culinary strengths of ITC Hotels, is an ideal combination to curate memorable experiences during weddings.



Rester Resorts forays in Jim Corbett

Rester Hotels group announced the opening of Rester Corbett View Resort in a forested wild life sanctuary and picturesque heartland of Uttarakhand, Jim Corbett. Rester Corbett View welcomes business, adventure and leisure travellers for a serene stay in the midst of nature. Situated away from the concrete chaos it is surrounded by farms and river streams. Rakshit Sharma,

CEO commented, “This eco-friendly resort is spread over acres of lush green grassland where elephants, deers, leopards, red foxes, sloth bears and the regions’ most famous resident, the Royal Bengal Tiger can be spotted. It boasts of luxury cottages, well-appointed rooms, multi-cuisine restaurant, swimming pool, conference hall, indoor & outdoor activities, sightseeing custom tours and more.”

Sayaji Hotels expands its presence in MP with signing of six new properties

Sayaji Hotels Limited will expand its presence in the state of Madhya Pradesh with the opening of six new properties by the end of 2023. The group currently operates four properties with 500 keys under the brands Sayaji Hotels, Effotel by Sayaji and Enrise by Sayaji. The upcoming properties include Sayaji Gwalior, Effotel Bhopal, Enise Hoshangabad, Enrise Rewa, Enrise Harda and Enrise Indore. Collectively these new properties will add 400 keys to Sayaji Group’s portfolio in Madhya Pradesh.

Jameel Sayed, Director – Business Development, Sayaji Hotels Ltd. said, “Madhya Pradesh has transformed itself into a major industrial hub, besides being in the forefront of culture and tourism. The region has witnessed a steady



Jameel Sayed

inflow of leisure and business travellers from across the globe. However, there has been an acute shortage of hotel rooms to meet the needs of discerning travellers. We are pleased to bridge this gap by adding six new properties in the State which will be operational next year. Sayaji Hotels, with its strategic location, luxurious rooms, a host of banqueting and F&B facilities will appeal to travelers in this region.”



Azerbaijan prepares to keep its flame ablaze with new experiences in the offing

The destination's tourism board bets big on the Indian market

In a tete-a-tete with **Bahruz Asgarov, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Azerbaijan Tourism Board (ATB)**, we discover why Azerbaijan is becoming the next hot favourite destination for the Indian travellers, what all campaigns and developments are planned to attract new visitations and ATB's focus to reconnect with the Indian travel trade to keep the country in the spotlight for this year and beyond

By *Gagneet Kaur*

Considering India is one of the important source markets globally, what are the major crowd pullers for the Indian tourists that Azerbaijan possesses?

Azerbaijan launched the destination brand during SATTE 2019 and within a year of exhibiting, we hit a record number of visitors to Azerbaijan. On the global scale, we received a total number of 3.2 million visitors and India stood as one of the top source markets with 65 thousand arrivals – this meant substantial growth of 66.8% compared to 2018. Unfortunately, during the pandemic, we couldn't get any visitors from India but this year, starting from February 2022, we have the border restrictions lifted and with this, we are hopeful to welcome the Indian tourists back in full swing. All you need is the visa which is very easy to get, your passport and the travel dates uploaded in the system and you get your visa within three hours. Additionally, you need your vaccination certificate or a certificate of recovery and you are all set to explore Azerbaijan. It's only been a month since the re-opening of the borders but we are extremely confident that this year will be very successful in terms of tourism in Azerbaijan.

Another important thing to highlight here is that this year starting from June, we are launching direct flights between Baku and Delhi which will start from two flights per week. We are further analyzing the potential and looking into more opportunities to increase the capacity and the frequency of the flights.

On the air connectivity front, what all cities/states apart from Delhi do you look at tapping?

As a tourism board, we do believe that the more the flight connections, the better would be the exposure of the destination to India, especially in the hubs such as Mumbai, Delhi and other metro cities. However, the sole decision is to be taken by the airlines and Azerbaijan Tourism Board is happy to support them with whatever we can. Presently, Azerbaijan is open to 87 countries by air travel.

What segments are strong points of attraction in Azerbaijan? Where do you see most of the growth from?

Before the pandemic chaos, we had observed a great interest from the leisure segment and the family groups. Moving ahead for 2022, we want to revive that demand and welcome more leisure travellers, FITs, family groups, women groups, corporate celebrations, wedding groups and filmmakers back to Azerbaijan.

We are currently getting a lot of MICE segment queries from India, especially for incentive travel. I must tell you that Azerbaijan is quite well-suited to MICE groups and business conferences as it boasts an array of luxury accommodation options, international and local hotel chains, boutique hotels, modern buildings and whatnot. Glad to share that Ritz-Carlton and Hotel Indigo will soon be added to the list of recently opened luxury hotels, which again will increase the possibilities of leisure and business travel in Azerbaijan.

Another segment that we see as the most potential one is families as the country offers a lot of families and kid-friendly activities such as safari tours, infinity swings, a newly reconstructed zoo and more. Azerbaijan is also seen as an emerging wedding and filming destination since it abounds with spectacular landscapes, adventurous activities, mind-soothing experiences, exciting venues to shoot for film or celebrate your big day and so much more.

How are you planning to collaborate/ work with the travel trade fraternity in India? Are there any kinds of incentives or any promotional campaigns that you are planning to do for them?

Even during and post-pandemic, we have been closely working with our Indian partners and travel trade fraternity in India. We recently announced the launch of Azerbaijan 101 which is an e-learning platform aimed at training, educating the travel agents and representatives across the global tourism industry and also keeping them posted about destination updates and key products. We have

issued the highest number of certificates to the Indian tour operators to date and this year, we plan on continuing those efforts again. ATB has also undertaken various other initiatives that include joint marketing campaigns and different sets of programs aiming at promoting our world-class tourism destination to the agents and their clients.

What new and sustainable tourism initiatives is ATB planning to promote this year?

Over these last two years, we have worked tirelessly to make sure our new and returning travellers from India and worldwide feel comfortable and safe while enjoying our exotically beautiful destination. We have been quite active in our approach towards promoting sustainable and nature-based tourism, covering from the remote villages that have never been explored before, to the very unique places that are never seen before. Also, we are now building the first-ever Mud Volcanoes Tourism Complex in Azerbaijan. This complex is expected to increase the tourist importance of the area with its amazing collection of mud volcanoes in Azerbaijan and promote a combination of unmissable experiences from quad biking and zip-lining to workshops and more. We have also been working on creating new food-related experiences for gastronomes and therefore, are coming up with a 'Slow Food Travel' concept developed within a European Union funded project which aims at preserving local gastronomy and cultural heritage by offering the visitors sustainable locally produced food and thereby, helping the rural communities to regenerate revenue for their living and well-being. Additionally, there are plenty of new hiking, camping and glamping routes and birdwatching experiences that add to the interest in the destination.

Azerbaijan will also host the 6th Formula 1 Azerbaijan Grand Prix from June 10 to 12. Unlike 2021, this year people are welcome to enjoy one of the adrenaline-rushing races and the tickets for the same are out and available since February.



The last two years have been rough for the travel and hospitality sectors. What have been the key learnings at Lily Hotels over the past few months? How have the resorts revamped their strategies?

The key learnings in the last two years rather than just the last two months is a significant treasure trove of lessons. The main lesson we have learned is to be able to make very quick decisions and being able to pivot in any situation in the sales & marketing and the operations side of things as events develop during the pandemic, such as market closings, market openings, new rules, COVID outbreaks, PCR testing and more.

who with their loyalty to our resorts, supported us online and by staying at our resorts as soon as it's possible to do as their country's borders opened.

What sort of strategies are planned to attract Indian guests?

One of the key pillars of our resorts is food and Indian is one key type of cuisine that we excel at. With local Indian chefs at our resorts, we try to provide authentic taste and flavours including Veg and Non-Veg cuisine to the most discerning of palates so that our resorts are truly home away from home. Not to mention, we have offered some great offers to our contracted Indian parties as well to get good

“Diversification of the market mix played a major role to sustain our status quo”

Being relevant and unique in the carefree playground of experiences like the Maldives is not a cakewalk, however, Lily Hotels, the Maldivian owner-operator of resorts managed to prove its innovation in the ‘value-for-money luxury holidays’ concept and has made great strides towards success ever since its inception in 1993. To make sure these strategies are complemented well with its goals, Lily has branched out into an array of growth frontiers including enhanced presence on the online portals, improvising F&B offerings as well as diversifying the market mix. TravelScapes catches up with **Desislav Gospodinov, Lily Hotel’s Group Director of Sales & Marketing** to find out about the new, exciting developments in the pipeline for the resorts and how Lily has given a face-lift to its strategies to attract new and repeat guests

By *Gagneet Kaur*

“There are some exciting new developments happening at Hideaway

With that versatility in mind, we also ventured into clustering a lot of roles and finding ways to better improve the relationship and communication between sales and marketing as teams as well. Diversification of the market mix played a major role to sustain our status quo and create enough opportunities to compensate for the unforeseen lockdowns. Moreover, steering the business mix and particularly online channels have helped us reach new markets to our portfolio and generate traction, thus able to instantly switch on and off whenever circumstances required it.

We all know how important guest loyalty is – and this year more so than ever. How are both the Lily Beach Resort & Spa and Hideaway Beach Resort & Spa leveling up the accommodation standards in this direction?

Guest loyalty is one of the most important factors to keep business running smoothly especially in dire times as during the pandemic. In both the resorts, we have a robust repeater programme and we always try our best to take good care of our repeat guests,

business from this market.

Are there any new announcements/developments in the pipeline?

There are some exciting new developments happening at Hideaway such as The Signature Collection by Hideaway, offering 4-bedroom and 3-bedroom and 1-bedroom massive villas a higher level of luxury, the new Golf Simulator complex and putting green already under operation and some new sports and recreation features coming soon to the resort.

What role do you think social media plays in hotel marketing? How are you leveraging this platform?

It plays a critical role in both informing and convincing guests to come to our resorts. We are on almost all key platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram and we do push out regular updates via stories and reels as well. Together with the organic reach, we get with great content that we create by our in-house and outsourced content creators, we do utilise some level of social media ads in our marketing budget as well for all our resorts.



“ LET US CAPITALISE AND USHER IN DOABLE POLICY MEASURES AND TAKE INCREDIBLE INDIA TO A NEW HIGH

E M Najeeb, Senior Vice President – IATO & Chairman - ATE Group of Companies sheds light on why India needs a promotional push, a change in its brand perception, new policies, connectivity and skill enhancement which can help the country drop its guards completely, even in the peak pandemic time. He also shares up-front opinions on how government can play a pivotal role

We are leaving the pandemic behind; a resurgent tourism has taken hold on all the stakeholders and the facets are not far to seek.

- Reposition India as a safe, healthy, secure, hygiene conscious destination with all SOPs in place and the stakeholders well versed in its implementation. With over 193 Crs Vaccinated and the most successful vaccination programme in the world, India is Tourism ready in a big way.. Incredible India 3 should come up with Regional Destination Branding. Any marketing initiative event should be focused on regions and that should be specifically highlighting the niche tourism product that exists in that specific part of the country.
- While traditional markets need to be catered to, one must cultivate the emerging markets especially those with a good repute of tackling the pandemic. Destinations that look at India for Wellness, Ayurveda, Yoga, Meditation need to be approached with suitable winning packages.
- Sustainable & Responsible Tourism will be the watch word. It will promote both the culture and the products of the local area. It will raise awareness about the needs and issues in our environment. It will make efficient use of our natural resources.
- Digitization will be the way forward. Digital Marketing will gain prominence with a greater reach, frequency and impact. Social media, Search Engine Optimization, Website Compatibility in different languages, CRM, Destinations will get digitalized, E payment, Digitization of all data & sharing it with stakeholders will gain prominence.
- Domestic tourism will tell the world that if Indians can travel within India so can global tourists. It will pave the way for Inbound.
- India to be promoted as a 365 days' destination. At the outset, let us remove the words Season/ Offseason from our

dictionary and should promote India as a 365 days destination like Buddhist Circuit: Wellness and Monsoon Tourism, Leisure / Heritage: Himalaya Circuits, Pilgrimage Destinations, Adventure tourism round the year.

- Skill development: Inclusive growth not only means economic growth that creates employment opportunities and helps in reducing poverty. It also includes providing equality of opportunity, empowering people through education and skill development. Skill development will be important as post Covid a different skill set would be required at all tourist points.
- New Products need to be brought to the fore. The Statue of Unity at Kevadia, Border and Astro Tourism at Gujarat, Rajasthan and Ladakh.
- Connectivity: Last mile connectivity is critical; the recent announcement by our Hon'ble Minister of Civil Aviation of deploying small aircrafts and helicopters for connectivity to destinations is a welcome step.

For these to reckon with, facilitations need to be planned and introduced by the Government to generate that require push:

- Infrastructure Status for the tourism industry to be accorded so that one can avail section 35 AD of income tax act that entails a 100% deduction towards capital investment. This will attract big investors and State Governments to lay down plans to solicit investment in tourism infrastructure.
- In the arena of Marketing & Promotion International Road Shows at all source markets and emerging markets, FAM Trips of FTOs, International Media, Bloggers, Influencers and travel writers and strategic participation at International Tourism Exhibitions is a must for the armoury. Electronic and print media campaigns for

promotion of tourism in all sources and new markets should be re-started by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

- We have requested that the Ministry of Tourism Website to be translated into 7 foreign languages and also to translate Dekho Apna Desh into important foreign languages.
- Tour Operators utilise SEIS funds for measures to attract foreign tourists to India and increase India's share of business. Extension of Service Exports from India Scheme (SEIS) for the tourism industry for the next 5 years in the upcoming Foreign Trade Policy, 2022-27 is a needed Policy initiative SEIS to be continued in the same manner or with revised name but tourism sector needs an incentive booster of at least 10% for revival.
- Airfares in India have gone very high due to high taxes on Air Turbine Fuel by the centre and the state governments. For bringing down the air fares, there is need to bring down the ATF prices and this can only be done if taxes on ATF are reduced by the centre and the state governments by bringing it under the ambit of GST
- ASI Monuments play a key role in sightseeing for foreign tourists as it showcases our Heritage and Culture. The entrance fee for foreigners should not be increased for the next 5 years.
- With so much at stake for tourism, the fact that it finds a place as one of the 3 'Ts' in the views of our Hon'ble Prime Minister, it is time for 'Tourism' to be recognised as an 'Industry'.

To conclude, the time is opportune; the world is opening up, the policy makers and the stakeholders of tourism in India are upbeat with a renewed drive so let us capitalise and usher in doable policy measures and take Incredible India to a new high.

“Big-ticket conferences, incentive travel and corporate offsite trips are picking up pace”

As we head towards a restart of global travel, the events, conferences and exhibitions have started to make a comeback in full swing. But is the MICE industry all set to leave the pandemic behind and move forward with the trending new normals? **Manpreet Bindra, Vice President & Head- India, FCM Travel Solutions** shares his opinion on the current challenges, segments and trends that are likely to drive demand for MICE in 2022 and the routes to revival for this burgeoning segment



Since the advent of pandemic, the face of MICE industry across the globe has been swiftly changing. For the last two to three months, MICE businesses have been witnessing a steady but notable growth. We can proudly say that we are getting back on track and have been seeing green shoots. Big-ticket conferences, incentive travel and corporate offsite trips are picking up pace as companies across industries warm up to in-person engagements amid declining Covid-19 cases and easing of restrictions.

The pace is substantially higher over the past two months and March onwards has been fairly robust for us. Banking and Financial, manufacturing, cement, FMCG and information technology and IT-enabled services industries are currently leading the trend.

There are also a few challenges along the way such as lower availability of airlines inventory, higher air fares which are up by 30-35% especially for long haul destinations. Rush at embassies is also resulting in longer time to secure group appointments.

As for the corporate businesses, off sites are happening at resorts and companies have started hosting meetings and conferences, Incentive travel, R&R programs. Now that lockdowns and stay-at-home orders have

started to perish globally, new establishments and collaborations have begun to open doors for travelling to or outside India. The MICE industry has learned to survive and thrive despite the challenges faced during pandemic.

- **Large group enquiries are picking up** and as per observations, the countries in demand are Dubai, Turkey, Bali, Thailand, and Western Europe
- As for domestic, **requests for Goa, Kashmir and Gangtok** have been creating quite the buzz
- **Sporting events are also driving travel intent.** We are seeing query pipeline for the FIFA World Cup in Qatar and T20 World Cup in Australia for MICE travel
- **The MICE sector is also adjusting to a new evolving playbook.** We are also seeing an increased focus on contingency planning and crisis management plans
- Due to the anticipation of the return of in-person events, some event venues already have limited or non-existent availability for any additional line-ups in 2022. **Event venues, event staff and various other vital services will likely be in high demand** and may have limited supply

- **Safety is of utmost concern for travellers right now.** Organisations are seeking more confidence with respect to duty of care and risk assessment is now a core component of event planning. Event safety is no longer an expectation, but a necessity on top of their usual requirements for high value experiences and networking opportunities
- We are also **working very closely with various tourism boards** who are assisting in numerous aspects of planning

In speaking with our customers, we are confident that demand will get stronger than ever due to the overriding desire to meet face to face again. As we put the pandemic behind us, we look forward to exploring new opportunities that come along the way.

With high vaccination rates, booster shots, borders opening and reduced quarantine requirements, the industry is banking on what could be a record year and the number of in-person gatherings will continue to increase throughout 2022—stateside and worldwide. We are suggesting to all our clients that early planning and booking will ensure they secure the venue they want- a perfectly suitable location and rates that are within policy and budget.

“We are confident that demand will get stronger than ever due to the overriding desire to meet face to face again”



Cora Cora Maldives

riding on the high Maldivian tide

Ever seen a perfect amalgamation of serene living spaces, Maldivian culture and culinary experiences packed into one? If not, Cora Cora Maldives is the answer to your mind screaming and asking for an idyllic holiday! This five-star luxury Maldivian resort opened its doors to the guests on October 1, 2021, and is today renowned as an all-inclusive refuge of pure relaxation as well as a local cultural experience like no other. Eager to showcase its strengths to the potential Indian market and leverage the favourable opportunities of the Maldives opening borders to the travellers throughout and beyond the COVID, Cora Cora Maldives is riding high on the high Maldivian tide, thereby, gaining popularity month by month. **Vishen Mootoo, Director of Sales & Marketing, Cora Cora Maldives** shares more about the USPs of the resort, the prominence of Indian market and more

By Gagneet Kaur



"Due to its geolocation, we believe India will remain in the top five in 2022 and 2023 as well"

to pronounce and remember. Cora is shortened from 'coral' and the name also reflects the iconic crystal waters and beautiful formation of landscapes that conjure visions of a pristine oceanfront.

Cora Cora Maldives is believed to be the epitome of celebrating the culture and heritage of the destination. What are the key resort features that depict the same?

Cora Cora Maldives is the first resort in the country to have a licensed Museum showcasing artefacts that were found on the island itself and neighboring islands in the Atoll and beyond. It is a one-of-a-kind museum with over 400 local artefacts in the collection. The Dutch Onion Museum at Cora Cora Maldives tells the story of travel and transformation. Guests can explore

the museum and outdoor heritage site and experience the rich history of the Maldives.

All our guests will be able to take some culture with them in their suitcase back home and spread the stories to their friends and family.

How important is the Indian market for the brand? What number of Indian guests do you usually receive from India?

India is in one of the top five nationalities visiting the destination. Since our opening, we have positioned Cora Cora Maldives as a Premium All-Inclusive Resort in the market which was welcomed openheartedly by all our partners and guests who have stayed with us. We know this formula works well. Due to its geolocation, we believe India will remain in the top five in 2022 and 2023 as well. To



tap into the potential of this key market, Cora Cora Maldives has a dedicated GSA based in Mumbai. The (GSA) representation company Black Turtle, led by Karishma Kazi, ensures that the brand 'Cora Cora Maldives' reaches out to the Indian travel fraternity through its well-thought-out marketing and business strategies. This further shows our commitment towards this burgeoning market and additionally to understand the requirements of the guests, so to make sure that it is fulfilled while holidaying with us.

Which segments do you see most of the growth from? Any new segments that you are looking at attracting this year?

We have noticed that the family segment is on the rise and even post-pandemic, Maldives has proven itself as a safe destination to travel to by receiving the 'Safe Travels' label by the World Travel Tourism Council, hence, giving plenty of confidence to the families. For instance, Two-Bedroom villa categories are in high demand today than ever before. This is a key segment that we are all set to welcome and have special benefits extended to them.

Any promotional initiatives planned for the year ahead?

Having only opened in October 2021, we did not have to extend any promotions as such. The Maldives was in full demand and we opened in the right period in 2021 and we plan to take leverage from this already high demand.

What has been the response for Cora Cora Maldives since its launch in 2021? Can you share the idea behind choosing the name "Cora Cora"?

Since the opening in October 2021, the response from all the markets has been positive, especially with the concept of our Premium All-Inclusive – Gourmet Meal Plan® giving the freedom to our guests to dine in at any of the four restaurants available. The concept of My Coffee® (Café/Bar) that brews its own coffee, served by our experienced Barista's is quite famous and while here, you can also relax with a glass of Prosecco or wine. What also set us apart is the variety of vegetarian and vegan options we offer our guests in each Restaurant, taking into consideration there is a growing community of vegans in the world now.

The idea of choosing the name was to make it easy for everyone

GRNconnect.com

expanding the horizons to stay ahead in the business



Pioneer in the B2B segment, innovative in its approach towards technology and fast-expanding, GRNconnect.com, under the umbrella of its parent arm- Aman Travels Limited, is quite a successful leader today and is renowned as the world's leading online B2B Bedbank. Being the flagship product and one of the largest aggregators in the B2B space, GRNconnect.com has over 35k registered agents across the globe, access to some 400k hotels and 200k apartments, a wide distribution channel worldwide that continues to grow with time and a technology-driven system that is user-friendly. To understand how the company is banking on these core competencies, we spoke with the very dynamic industry veteran and the man behind the success of the company - **Deepak Narula, Managing Director, GRNconnect.com** who has over 35 years of experience and expertise. Narula shares how despite the rough sailing in the last two years, the company is managing to grow and create a niche for itself while investing rigorously in technology as well as its global distribution system

By Gagneet Kaur

What was the idea behind the inception of GRNConnect? How has the growth graph been since then?

The key idea behind the inception of GRNconnect.com was to equip travel agents with a tool to book worldwide hotels, apartments, transfers and sightseeing with the best possible rates in a single window. We have seen good growth from the travel trade since the inception and even post COVID, the response has been overwhelming.

Any key collaborations in the recent past and the new ones that we should look forward to?

In the recent past, we had opened our office in the US, started distributing GRNconnect.com in the US. We launched a US DMC, Egypt DMC and India DMC and now GRN is available on Amadeus too. More on the distribution front, we have a global sales team operating out of different global cities and on the supply side, we have done key tie-ups with some of the biggest names in the industry, thereby, improving our inventory and rates. This year as well, we have some exciting products to be released.

How was the year 2021 in terms of business for GRNconnect.com? What new strategies did the company put in place to stand out, post COVID?

Last year was tough for the entire travel and tourism industry, but we utilized the year 2021 to improve our technology aspects, the product and distribution network which helped us

sail through the rough year, even better than our expectations. Post-COVID, we continued to invest in our distribution worldwide and as a positive result today we are selling in more than 65 countries.

What amount of surge/ decline have you witnessed in the hotel bookings in Q1 of 2022?

Fortunately, we have seen some amazing never-seen-before numbers in Q1 of 2021 and we will continue to maintain the momentum and create a niche in the segment we operate in.

How are you making the utmost use of technology and digital platforms to grow your brand?

We are a technology-driven company and we believe in using the latest in technology to make our system user-friendly for our customers. GRNconnect.com has an in-house technology team that is dedicated to creating tools to make hotel booking simpler for the B2B accommodation booking segment. We are constantly evolving to stay ahead in this business and are also quite active on social media to ensure a better brand recall.

What 'new normal' trends do you see trending in the next two years?

Moving forward, I see small and medium travel agents embracing technologies, be it just a white-label or a full-fledged portal. And this trend is here to stay for good.

Post-COVID, we continued to invest in our distribution worldwide and as a result today we are selling in more than 65 countries

SunZee Holidays

Riding the momentum

Acing in the DMC space of Mauritius today, SunZee Holidays made its debut in 2012 and ever since, the company has been weaving holiday memories for those wanting to explore Mauritian marvels. Chugging forward incessantly even during the COVID crisis, the DMC has seen no bump in the growth and the reason to believe is the young entrepreneurial mind behind the same. **Zaynah Kanowah, Co-founder & CEO of Sunzee Holidays**, in conversation with TravelScapes, speaks about the company's foundation, her inspiration and the strategies put to action for catering to the new age traveller demands

By Gagneet Kaur

Could you tell us how you came up with the idea for SunZee Holidays? What are your key products and services?

I have always been impressed with the tourism and hospitality industry and my father has been my first inspiration as he has been in this industry for more than three long decades. SunZee was started in Oct 2012 with my father as a co-founder. This was when I decided to be an independent entrepreneur and wanted to start a venture of my own that stands out in the market. However, at the time of its inception, it was only a logistics company. January 2020 was a turnaround time when we had the company rebranded to a full-fledged destination management company and today, we are quite well positioned in the market and are delighted to be the esteemed partner of most of the hotels in Mauritius. Our services include hotel accommodations including the booking of private villas and butler service, transfers, excursions, private guided tours, helicopter transfers and more. All these are tailor-made and pocket-friendly for all our guests.

With the obvious restrictions due to COVID, the tourism and travel industries are suffering. How is Sunzee managing?

The last two years have been difficult for the entire industry however; we have been optimistic. This was one reason that helped us ride the tide as we strongly believed that the bad phase doesn't last forever. We have great and skillful team members, the partners who

kept supporting us during this pandemic and we eventually ventured into other markets and destinations to keep the survival mode on and keep the momentum.

How strong is your online presence?

We do have a presence on Facebook and Instagram and it is one of the channels to keep our partners updated on our services and general information/ updates about the destination.

Any new innovative approaches that the company has come forward with to bring a new experience for its clients?

For more than a decade, Mauritius was being sold through standard packages including accommodation in one hotel, return airport transfers and three full-day basic tours on a seat in coach basis. Post-COVID, we have come up with different packages and itineraries which are definitely aimed at enhancing the customer's trip. For instance, instead of staying for 6 nights in a hotel, we propose 3 nights stay in but in two hotels in different areas and we also try to inculcate more experiential excursions which are a 'must-see' instead of proposing the regular tours and destinations only. We are also pushing clients to opt for private basis tours where they have their comfort and are not restricted to following the time-bound itineraries. It is of a minimal charge and is also quite safe and convenient.

South Korea Travel re-opens for Indian travellers

As leisure travel is re-opening across the globe, South Korea is all set to welcome outbound travellers from India post two years of COVID-19 Pandemic hitting the world. Indian travellers can now apply for a short term (C-3) visa



Y.G. Choi

which allows foreigners to stay up to 90 days for marketing research, travel, visiting relatives, meetings or similar reasons. The visa can be applied physically at the VFS Global centres.

Effective from June 1, 2022, the VFS Global South Korea Visa application Center, New Delhi and Kolkata would accept all the visa categories including express visa applications. Applicants would need to take prior appointment to submit the application in New Delhi, however, for Kolkata applicant can walk in without appointment to submit the application. Online appointment link would be available soon on website. All travelers must provide a Negative COVID-19 PCR Test Result Certificate from a PCR test taken within 48 hours prior to departure date irrespective of their vaccination status. Fully vaccinated individuals (WHO approved emergency COVID-19 vaccine) are exempt from quarantine. These individuals must have been fully vaccinated for at least 14 days, but within 180 days, or have received a booster shot (third dosage). Non-vaccinated or individuals who have not completed three doses have to undergo a mandatory quarantine of 7 days.

The global campaign 'Travel to Korea' has begun again and targets world over travellers with a showcase of new recommended attractions like K-Drama filming sites, food, culture and unexplored regions to visit in Korea and more. Additionally, there is another 'Let's Go Korea' campaign that targets PAN India outbound travellers, with a customer centric approach.

Pleased about the reopening of Korea, Y.G. Choi, Director Korea Tourism Organization said "We are very excited to welcome the Indian travellers to South Korea after a long pause. We have just switched on the reset button for South Korea travel. Our offerings will be focused on new market segments like luxury and entertainment for generation Z. There is variety of assets S. Korea has in terms of luxury experiences and entertainment inspired from the world of K-pop and K-Drama shoot locations. We will also be focusing on co-working with multiple travel trade partners and make the best price options available for the Indian travellers to visit Korea."

Wyndham Dubai Deira: A hidden gem in the midst of Dubai's cultural legacy

An interview with Satish Jaidev - Cluster Director of Sales & Marketing



Dubai, one of the world's top tourist destinations went through one of its testing times during the global pandemic since 2020. Fast forward to 2022 and there is no doubt that the hospitality industry in Dubai is back on its feet as proven by the recently held Arabian Travel Market.

Turning 180 degrees from the past display of lucrative vacations, the post-pandemic transition shows that travelers now are gearing towards culturally centric experiences on top of the need for a more safe, sustainable and economically efficient hotel stays. Wyndham Dubai Deira's Cluster Director of Sales & Marketing, Satish Jaidev, expounds on the increasing demand for cultural discovery and authentic local experiences in travel.

Where does the success story of Wyndham Dubai Deira begin?

It all started with the perfect marriage of Wyndham Hotels & Resorts and Investment Corporation of Dubai. Paved in tradition that dates back to fishing, pearl diving and souqs being the highlights of trade, Deira is now home to one of the largest waterfront developments in the region - Deira Enrichment Project, which is fully owned by Investment Corporation of Dubai. Now comes, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts bringing forth a strong brand portfolio onto the table being the world's largest hotel management and

franchising company with approximately 9,000 hotels across 96 countries, resulting in the birth of a transformative evolution in hospitality. With sophisticated infrastructure and distinguished guest offering woven seamlessly in the destination's Arabian heritage, the Wyndham Dubai Deira cluster of hotels is the pioneer group that modernizes hotel stays and dining experiences to keep up with the digital savvy business travellers, experience-seeking explorers and foodie city dwellers.

Opening at the end of 2020, right in the middle of the pandemic, what are the key factors in standing strong against the challenges?

In spite of the difficulties we faced including flight interruption, border closure and erratic changes in travel restrictions across the globe, our hotels have proven its resiliency by having concrete goals, hiring the right people and maximizing its unique features.

The hotels were clear in positioning each of its 3 hotels. The strategy was based purely on the merits and USPs of the hotels catering to the specific needs of our travelers. I am delighted to say that within a short span of 6 months to one year all 3 hotels have made its niche within its competitive set.

The management has built a team of seasoned hotel professionals led by our distinguished General Manager Mr. Thierry Perrot.

Having the right set of people who share the same values and working towards the common goal makes all the difference! This is where team work, passion and the drive come from; these were the essentials of a fortress that the company has built to face the challenges.

Work smartly with what you have. The piece of the market pie has shrunk and the only way for the hotels to have its share is to showcase what the hotels uniquely offer. We need to answer, what makes us different and significant. As the travel trends changed from the pre-pandemic phase, we have witnessed an increase in tourism that require exposure

to new cultures and the experience of being a local. This has become our most unbeatable competitive edge. Wyndham Dubai Deira hotels provide the authentic experience of the cultural Dubai while providing value for money stays, transport connectivity and complete amenities for the modern-day traveler. We unceasingly communicate these facts and the success of the hotel continued.

How has the hotel performed since the opening? What is the outlook for 2022?

Since the hotel's opening in December 2020, all 3 hotels have had an impressive occupancy level.

Demand from Dubai Expo 2020 certainly boosted the occupancies. Further, the rebound of leisure traveler and groups business has positively contributed to the overall revenues.

Post Dubai Expo the city and our hotels continue to have a strong occupancy driven by both leisure and corporate traveler. We are optimistic of our summer season due to our attractive promotions that has been well received by the market.

FIFA World Cup in Q4 2022 will definitely be the year-end highlight and so we are confident that we will be closing the year on high note.

In addition to strong business performance, Wyndham Dubai Deira has received awards for its consistency in delivering superb guest services.

Trip.com 2021 Group Award
Most Popular Hotel in the UAE

Tripadvisor Travelers' Choice Awards 2022
Traveler's Choice for Hotel

Dubai Vibes Magazine's Eminent Awards 2022
Hotel of the Year



What makes each hotel unique given its proximity to each other?

Although the hotels are all centrally located between Dubai's cultural hub and the business districts, surrounded by iconic tourist destinations – Gold Souk, Shindhaga Historical District, Spice Market, Dubai Creek – each creates ripples of unique travel experiences to its guests.

Wyndham Dubai Deira

Fresh look at comfortable stays

Intricately designed with the serene Arabian sea as inspiration, the hotel features an inviting lobby with 290 spacious rooms & suites with floor to ceiling windows highlighting the magnificent views of the sea. Its speciality restaurants will take you to a crossroad between the aromatic flavours of the Spice Route or the classic laidback ambiance and signature bites & sips of a sports lounge.



Days Hotel by Wyndham Dubai Deira

Your destination is just a station away

The hotel is designed for travellers who value mobility and convenience. Touted as the first hotel to sit on top of the Dubai Metro Station with direct link to the Gold Souq Metro Line, the hotel provides quick accessibility to business and leisure travellers making their destinations a station away. This 131 rooms surprises you with tantalizing rooftop Mediterranean bistro and lounge complemented with an Italian dining and pizzeria.



Super 8 by Wyndham Dubai Deira

Where authentic experiences cost less

Every penny is worth the stay in this chic 2-star hotel while providing modern-day amenities. This 94-room hotel with 42-inch TV, complimentary Wi-Fi in each room is the perfect pod that pampers a guest or two in contemporary-designed rooms infused with traditional Arabian décor. You are just a stroll away to the Gold Souq and Spice Market to make your city exploration a breeze.



Uniquely as it sounds, what types of guests frequent the hotels? Where are they coming from?

As Wyndham Dubai Deira leads the way in the transformation of hospitality in the old Dubai with its innovative structural design and standards of guest servicing, discerning leisure guests and tour organizers constantly prefers the Wyndham hotels as it provides holistic approach to travelling. From being in the middle of cultural Arabian experiences of traditional shopping, dining, dhow cruises to *only in Dubai* destination such as the Burj Khalifa, Dubai Fountains, Dubai Frame, the hotels pride itself for its easy access to all popular tourist attractions.

We are also a top choice for corporate guests who value connectivity and accessibility. The hotels are conveniently located 15 minutes from the Dubai International Airport and 15-20 minutes from the business districts.

It provides complimentary Wi-Fi connection wherever you are in the hotel and features business centers for your office needs. When it comes to transportation, nothing is more convenient than having your hotel on top of the Metro station.

Pursuing the Wyndham's goal of making travel possible for all, the Wyndham Dubai Deira cluster of hotels unwaveringly caters to different markets. It has notably become popular with travelers from the Indian Subcontinent, Africa, Levant, Europe and the Middle East. We have also had a fair share from emerging markets like Israel and Latin America.

For the latest information on packages and deals at Wyndham Dubai Deira, Days Hotel and Super 8, contact the hotel through the information below.

GOLD SOUQ



SPICE MARKET



AL SHINDAGHA MUSEUM



Email : reservations@wyndhamdubaideira.com

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Finland

Happy and Hearty escape to Northern Europe

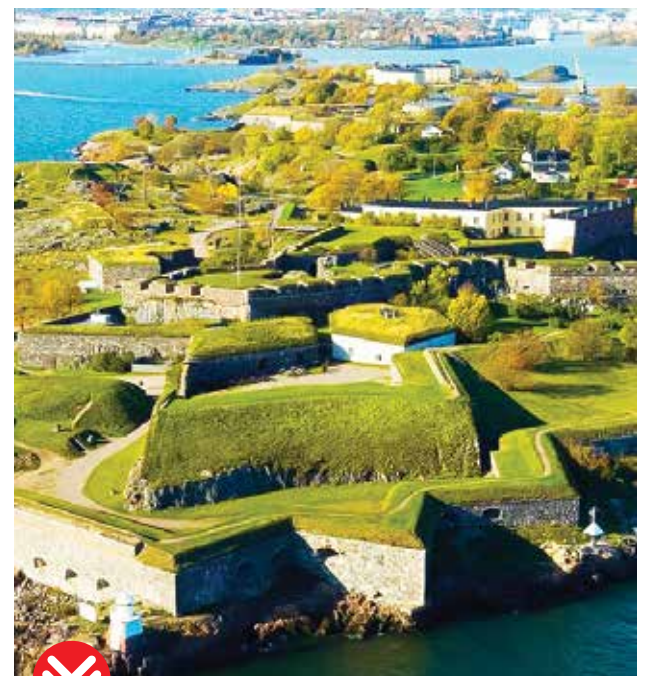
A lot of people may know that Finland is considered as the happiest country in the world, but very few know that it has so much to offer its vacationers. The pure blend of wild beauty, contemporary design, and culinary excellence in Finland is enticing. With winter magic and sparkling summers, there is something irresistible about Finnish air. Globetrotting here is an unforgettable experience for anyone, with towering forests speckled with picture perfect lakes, staying in a beautiful igloo, fizzing across behind a team of yapping huskies in Lapland, shopping for the best in Scandinavian design, or a serene boat trip to Helsinki, the country has it all. Let us take you to the happy heart of Europe and begin your journey right away!

By Richa Pundir



Get hooked to the Northern Lights

The Aurora Borealis, nature's most spectacular light show, can be seen from glass huts and igloo houses in Finland. Gazing at the blazing colours in the night sky is once in a lifetime experience for everyone visiting the Finnish Lapland. The district near or north of the Arctic Circle is the ideal place to watch the Northern Lights at their best. It takes place between September and March under a clear and starry sky. The appearance and disappearance of these lights are unpredictable, occurring at any moment after sunset and before dawn but indeed one spectacle you cannot miss in your lifetime.



Meet the Santa Clause at Finnish Lapland

Finnish Lapland, Finland's northernmost region, is enchanted by something otherworldly that fills it with wonder. What is special here? The midnight sun, the Sami people, the aurora borealis (northern lights), roving reindeer, and, of course, Santa Claus, who lives here through all seasons. The vast wilderness covers a large portion of Lapland and can be explored on skis, sledges, or an icy walk. This is a popular family destination, especially for children who enjoy and love talking with Santa Claus and riding on a Husky or reindeer sledge. Whether you visit during the holidays, a leisure trip or even a brief business visit, you will always be surrounded by festive vibes.

Delve into history at Suomenlinna in Helsinki

Suomenlinna, the 'fortress of Finland' was built by the Swedes in 1847, is a UNESCO World Heritage site for its impressive fortification. The islands here are car-free and are connected by bridges. The 18th-century fort on Suomenlinna, roughly 4 km southeast of Helsinki's city centre, is one of the world's largest sea fortresses. For those interested to learn about history and see the artefacts from the past, this fortress is the best place to explore. Take a stroll around the gorgeous island or sign up for a guided tour to learn more about the fort and the spectacular sights.



Staying in a Snow Castle at Kemi

Have you ever come across a snow castle? What does it appear to be? If you haven't been there or seen one, Finland has one for you. This snow castle, located in the northern region of Finnish Lapland, was built in 1996 and is regularly reconstructed with new designs. The entire snow castle is divided into verticals, each with its own SnowHotel, SnowChapel, and SnowRestaurant. The temperature inside is quite cold and everyone who comes is advised to be dressed in warm clothes. Nonetheless, there are sufficient facilities to keep everyone warm, comfortable and happy.

Porvoo and Fiskars: the two hidden gems of Finland

Porvoo and Fiskars are two offbeat towns in Helsinki that make for a great day trip to see Finnish art and culture while enjoying traditional food. These two locations are a historical haven of art, design and attractive architecture, surrounded by nothing but tranquil nature and abundance of aromatic regional cuisine. Over 200 artists live in Fiskars village, which feels like a distinct universe where only art and craft flourish. Porvoo is known for its tiny lanes with historic beauty and culinary delights. It is Finland's second-oldest city, famed for its charming cafes, beautiful stores and the red-painted riverbank residences. These two are a fantastic combination of serenity and creativity and are definitely the "not-to-miss" experiences.





Lounging under the glistening sky in a Glass Igloo

What better way to spend a night in Finland than sleeping beneath a star-studded sky in a glass igloo? That feeling of the chill in your veins as you sleep in an igloo during the bitterly cold winter is unbeatable. It comes as no surprise that it will be the most chilling experience of your life. On a clear night, you might be able to see the Northern Lights. These glass igloos are designed to provide a comfortable stay complete with all of the necessities



Reconnect with nature at Lakeland

Well, if you like the random rendezvous with the nature, do pay a visit to Lakeland. Being one of Europe's largest lake districts, it offers mesmerising views out across sapphire waters, forested islands and skerries. The region has activities for visitors all year long, including cruises, fishing, paddle boarding, ice swimming and skating. Lake Saimaa (Finland's largest lake) offers pleasant routes for cyclists and motorists while Lake Pielinen offers unique culture and awe-inspiring landscapes. And how can one forget to mention Lake Paijanne (Finland's second largest lake) that offers stunning views to nature lovers and Lake Kallavesi, best visited for cruising adventure in summers and ice-skating in winters.



Sunbathe at the Åland Archipelago

The Åland Archipelago, located off Finland's southwest coast in the piercing blue Baltic Sea, is a summertime Finnish fantasy. It is a culturally, politically, and geographically unique part of Finland, which is home to about 29,000 inhabitants and is situated in the Baltic Sea between Finland and Sweden. During the summer, visitors flock to the wide white beaches and enjoy riding bicycles on beautiful bike lanes. Also, the Jan Karlsgarden open-air museum is worth visiting, where you can enjoy watching how an island looked back in 1890. However, the flawless nature and marvellous landscapes of the island remain unparalleled and unforgettable.

Edited By Kritika

Enterprising Travel Agents Association (ETAA) North India organizes Networking Dinner with Saudi Arabia Tourism

Led by Sangeeta Manocha-Chairperson, Punit Bhasin-VP, Saurabh Tuteja-Joint Sec., Praveen Ghai-Joint Sec, Dinesh Kumar-Treasurer, Gaurav Arora- Head (Events) and Deepika Khanna Membership Head, ETAA North India Chapter yet again organised a Networking Dinner with Saudi Arabia Tourism along with its Members at a premium Lounge in Connaught Place on May 6, 2022.

Offering some of the most unique and unusual travel experiences in the region and a gateway for upcoming FIFA, Saudi Arabia Tourism represented by Anuj Bhasin – Market Manager presented to the Travel Fraternity a Destination with great scope for the Indian travellers. ETAA Committee then honoured the Media personnel as a token of their contribution to the association. The event saw

the travel fraternity in huge numbers and was attended by many stalwarts of aviation and hospitality Sector. Cherry on the cake were the exciting prizes during the lucky draws some of which included Free Stays in Premium Resorts and Cruises. The networking event saw great bonding, laughter and many great connects amongst all members and associated partners.





India set to drive demand for aircrafts

Airlines will need 1,960 new single-aisle airplanes over the next 20 years, says report

With fast receding Covid 19, the Airlines industry is expected to gain traction and grow at a fast pace. Going forward, Asian carriers are likely to gain share globally led by carriers in China, South Asia and Southeast Asia. In India, single-aisle airplanes such as the 737 family will continue to drive growth in domestic and regional markets, e.g., short-haul flights from India to Middle East and Asia-Pacific regions. Indian operators will need 1,960 new single-aisle airplanes over the next 20 years. These are some of the findings of a report on the aviation. These are some major findings of a report titled Airlines Industry: Prospects and Challenges released by Infomercials Valuation and Rating Pvt Ltd., the well-known SEBI-registered and RBI-accredited financial services credit rating company.

Airlines Industry: Highlights
Mounting and volatile crude oil prices are seen in Jet Fuel price rising from ₹ 76062/KL on Jan'22 to ₹ 112924/KL on April 1, 2022. In March 2022, Crude oil price were (Indian Basket) \$112.87/barrel (\$/bbl) as against \$94.07/barrel (\$/bbl) in Feb, 2022.

At present, the Central Basic

Excise Duty (BED) on ATF is 11 per cent, basic Custom Duty (BCD) is five per cent and Additional Custom Duty (ACD) is 11 per cent.

Leading players have modified business plans to reduce costs, enhance liquidity, customer preference, explore new revenue models and optimise networks...

[Under the list of Non-GST goods]. Overall, ATF constitutes 45 per cent of the operating cost. Further, there are various state taxes and VAT. However, Union and some states are acting on taxation and 12 additional states and UTs are in the process of bringing VAT and ATF rates to one to five per cent.

Airlines hit because of delayed fund infusion, stoppage and go-slow of flights and post pandemic effects with rising outstanding across vendors and suppliers. There are also issues of legal battles, motivating employees and cargo business.

Leading players have modified business plans to reduce costs, enhance liquidity, customer preference, explore new revenue models, optimise networks. Going forward, this would strengthen their financial position over the

medium-term and shore up the bottom-line of the Airlines.

However, air travel is rising in terms of domestic and

international passengers handled by Mumbai and Delhi Airport, industry-wide revenue passenger-kilometers (RPKs), aircraft movements of passengers and freight, etc. With fast receding Covid 19, the Airlines industry is expected to gain traction and grow at a fast pace.

Factors aiding growth of air travel in future:

With steady economic growth in India, the burgeoning middle class, the thrust on mobility and connectivity, the opening of new airports and the up-gradation of the existing Airports, the pent-up desire for air travel and synchronised institutional support, including at the level of the Government of India, the Airlines industry is likely to do well over the medium-term.

Should there be a tax reduction in the case of ATF, this would provide a further impetus to the growth of the Airlines industry.

Drones to see high growth:

Drones may see an investment of over INR 5,000 crore in next three years. Moreover, the annual sales turnover of drone manufacturing may zoom from INR 60 crore in 2020-21 to over INR 900 crore in FY 24; generating more than 10,000 direct jobs over three years. India has banned imported drones (barring foreign imported drone components) to promote Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme and security concerns; except for R&D and defence purposes.

Under "Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan" scheme, India is increasing its competence to indigenously design, develop and manufacture advanced cutting edge technologies and systems in the Defence Sector. The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) approved the procurement of 15 Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) for Rs 3,887 crore, or about Rs 260 crore each. The CCS also approved the creation of infrastructure worth Rs 377 crore.

Japan to open borders from June 10 to aid tourism industry

Japan's easing of a two-year ban on foreign tourists seeks to balance the enormous economic importance of tourism with concerns that travellers would trigger a Covid outbreak, insiders say.

The decision means Japan will allow in a limited number of foreign tourists on package tours starting June 10. Last week a few "test tours", mainly of overseas travel agents, started to arrive.

Relaxing some of the world's strictest pandemic border measures required months of pressure from travel and tourism executives, three insiders told Reuters, describing both the government's fears of public backlash if infections spiked and the industry's concerns of an economic wipeout.

"There were worries that foreign tourists would include a lot of people with bad manners - people



who don't wear masks or don't use hand sanitiser and that infections could spread again," said one tourism company executive, who like the others spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue.

The industry pressed Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and its junior partner as well as government ministries, he said, but initially found them unresponsive.

Myanmar resumes e-visa service for tourists

Myanmar has resumed accepting tourist e-visa applications; more than two years after the country suspended the service. Arrivals must be fully vaccinated and present proof of having received a second COVID19 vaccine at least 14 days prior to arrival.

They must also provide evidence of a negative COVID19 PCR test result from no more than 72 hours prior to departure and purchase a travel insurance policy covering COVID19 through Myanmar Insurance.

On arrival, all visitors must take a COVID19 rapid antigen test costing around 15,000 ks

(USD 8). If negative, the traveller can continue their trip, but if positive they must be isolated in a designated government hospital or hotel which is covered by the health insurance purchased.

Visitors also need proof of a return ticket from Myanmar and the hotel booking must be attached to the online visa application.

Myanmar's tourism industry has been battered by the pandemic and politics. Reopening the e-visa service for tourists is a small, yet very welcome step in reviving the extremely important tourism sector.



Singapore Tourism leading the change in tourism recovery

As revival of international tourism is underway, Singapore Tourism Board (STB) concluded a panel discussion on the topic 'Singapore Tourism on the pathway tourism recovery' at the 29th edition of SATTE (South Asia's Travel & Tourism Exchange) held at the India Expo Mart, Greater Noida, Delhi-NCR on May 18, 2022. The discussion was part of Singapore's larger narrative of SingapoReimagine recovery initiative to chart pathways for tourism recovery with collective efforts. Key topics discussed included trends emerging in post-pandemic, initiatives taken by the STB to encourage the Indian travellers and Singapore's focus on technology, ingenuities and sustainability to carve a niche in the future of tourism, among others.

The discussion featured prominent industry experts and thought leaders - Keith Tan, Chief Executive, Singapore Tourism Board, Thien Kwee Eng, CEO, Sentosa Development Corporation, Jean Choi, Chief Sales & Marketing Officer, Mandai Wild Group and Peh Ke Wei, Vice President, Market Development, Changi Airport Group (CAG).

Singapore has taken progressive steps towards reimagining a new standard of travel through renewed experiences and elevated standards in technology, sustainability and safety, resulting from the collective efforts of tourism partners.

Dubai records 3.97m overnight travellers, 3.7 lacs from India

Dubai welcomed 3.97 million international overnight visitors between January and March 2022, including 3,76,000 from India, placing the city firmly on track for a momentous year, Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism said. Around 1.27 million international visitors, including 3,20,000 Indians, had visited the city during the same period of the previous year, according to data released by the Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) of Dubai.

India is ranked number two among the top source markets after Oman, while Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) ranks number three followed by the UK and Russia.

"Dubai's ability to surpass other major global cities in key tourism indicators demonstrates the success of the far-reaching vision of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE and Ruler of Dubai, to create a hub for business, investment, entrepreneurship and tourism that rivals the world's best," said Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of The Executive Council of Dubai.



HKTB announces revival plan with new perspectives

The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) held its annual Tourism Update event online and announced a revival plan that highlights Hong Kong's vibrant developments and new experiences, aiming to generate a positive ambience and make the city top-of-mind destination for worldwide travellers when travel resumes.

With the theme "Together Towards New Horizons", Tourism Update 2022 attracted 3,200 trade representatives from travel agencies, attractions, hotels, airlines, retailers, restaurants and meeting and exhibition organisers from Hong Kong, Mainland China and overseas markets. The HKTB shared insights into the latest tourism trends and its work plan for the coming year.

HKTB Chairman Dr Y K Pang highlighted Hong Kong's return to normality. "The fifth wave of the pandemic is subsiding," he said. "Hong Kong's daily life and economic activities are now gradually returning to normal, allowing us to stage large-scale events and prepare to welcome back visitors."

South Africa witnesses a surge in Indian Traveller demand for visas

South African Tourism concluded yet another highly successful association with South Asia's leading travel show, SATTE 2022. The tourism board showcased destination South Africa and addressed members of the press at the 29th edition of the trade show, held at India Expo Mart, Greater Noida in Delhi NCR from May 18 to 20, 2022.

South African Tourism, along with 32 prominent South African exhibitors, introduced novel and upgraded destination offerings. The delegation included two key South African provinces namely Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency, Gauteng Tourism Authority, unique accommodation options, luxury experiences, offbeat activities, SMMEs, advanced MICE infrastructure providers, as well as adventure, wildlife and culinary capabilities.

Desaru Coast announces its largest incentives to the tune of INR12 million

One of TIME Magazine's World's Greatest Places of 2021 and Malaysia's newest and largest integrated destination, Desaru Coast Destination Resort (Desaru Coast) has announced its largest incentives package ringing in at total of INR12 million to entice Indian travellers, event planners and organisations to its pristine, idyllic coastal resort.

India is a key and coveted source market in all categories for Desaru Coast. Returning to SATTE for the fourth time, the destination is offering

the following incentives to cover key Indian market segments such as (1) for the leisure market, Desaru Coast is introducing its popular luxury stay packages at affordable prices starting at approximately INR 6,600 per person. Packages include hotel stays and selected Desaru Coast experiences as a special value-add, (2) for the MICE segment, under its signature MICE Reinvented, the destination will be offering incentives valued up to INR2.1 million for events and groups.



Czech Tourism along with the Czech Embassy hosted first webinar of 2022

We are all looking forward to better days where we can pack our bags and go back to planning vacations and exploring the world a little more. With international flights resuming to their pre-pandemic schedules the want for travel has also increased. In light of these developments, on May 12, 2022 the CzechTourism India team along with the Embassy of the Czech Republic organised and hosted their first zoom webinar of 2022 titled 'It's time to Czech into Czech again!' to update the Indian travel trade fraternity about the re-opening of Czech Republic for tourism from India and the process for applying for a visa to the country. With over a

250+ participants from across India, the webinar was surely a hit!

The webinar started with a welcome note from Roman Masarik, Charge d'affaires, Embassy of the Czech Republic, New Delhi who spoke about the importance of tourism in Czech Republic as well as the strong and cherished ties between the people of India and Czech Republic. Nicole Machova, Head of Consular Section, Embassy of the Czech Republic in New Delhi addressed the trade and updated them on the latest developments and the procedure for applying for a Czech Republic visa.



Malaysia offers VOA for Indian travellers

Good news for all those who have been planning a trip to Malaysia. Reportedly, Malaysia has announced Visa on Arrival (VOA) for Indian travellers arriving in the country through selected entry points, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia or Brunei, with a valid visa from either country. This updated rule will be put into effect from June 1, 2022.

Elaborating more on this, the Immigration Department of Malaysia (Mumbai Attaché), the VOA fee will be MYR 200 (USD 46) and travellers will be required to show proof that they have at least USD 500 cash/

debit card/credit card/travellers cheque or any electronic money, which is certified by the Central Bank of Malaysia (Bank Negara Malaysia). Travellers will be able to stay up to 15 days with a confirmed return air ticket.

As reported earlier, Malaysia opened its doors for fully-vaccinated and quarantine-free travel from May 1, 2022. As such, fully-vaccinated inbound travellers are no longer required to undergo pre-departure and on-arrival Covid-19 tests, including children aged 17 years and below.



Kenya launches strategy to guide tourism recovery

Kenya has launched a strategy to guide the growth and recovery of the tourism sector in the next five years, a senior official said.

Najib Balala, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, said that the strategy outlines an actionable plan that is designed around the four pillars that will assist to transform Kenya into a top tourist destination in Africa.

“The strategy calls for repositioning of Kenya’s brand, developing new and existing markets, developing new tourism products and experiences as well as developing enablers to further strengthen the industry,” Balala said.

Government data indicates that international tourist arrivals hit 870,465 in 2021, earning the country 146 billion shillings (about \$1.25 billion).

Balala said that the plan also provides a roadmap to guide the marketing of experiences and tourism products in Kenya.

He noted that the East African nation will focus on promoting nature and wildlife, adventure and sports, cultural communities as the coastal and cities to foreign and domestic tourists.

He revealed that the strategy was an important part of the ministry of tourism’s mission to accelerate economic transformation of communities through providing solutions and opening up new opportunities for growth in the sector.



International travel set to maintain growth in 2022

International departures will reach 68% of the pre-COVID-19 levels globally in 2022 and are expected to improve to 82% in 2023 and 97% in 2024, before making a full recovery by 2025 at 101% of 2019 levels, with a projected 1.5 billion international departures. However, the trajectory for the recovery in international departures is not linear across regions or countries.

Hannah Free, Travel and Tourism Analyst at GlobalData, comments, “International travel from North America had shown improvement in 2021 as international departures grew by 15% year-on-year. The US rose to become the world’s largest outbound

travel market in 2021. In 2022, outbound departures from North America are projected to reach 69% of 2019 levels, before making a full recovery by 2024, at 102% of 2019 levels, ahead of other regions.”

“International departures from European countries are expected to reach 69% of 2019 figures in 2022. As travel confidence rebuilds, the intra-European market is expected to benefit, driven by preferences for short-haul travel.”

“However, travel recovery must contend with inflation, rising costs of living and the war in Ukraine. By 2025, international departures are projected to be 98% of 2019 levels.

Turkey witnesses surge in foreign arrivals in April

Foreign arrivals in Turkey surged by 225.6 per cent year-on-year to 2.57 million in April, as the country is trying to recover from the impact of Covid-19, according to figures from the Culture and Tourism Ministry. The number of foreign visitors hosted in the January-April period this year increased by 172.51 per cent to 7.47 million compared to the same period last year. In April, the highest number of foreign visitors was from Germany, with 3,95,372, followed by Bulgaria and the UK, with 2,70,997 and 2,25,296 travellers, respectively. Istanbul, Turkey’s most populous city and a major tourist destination, attracted 37.9 per cent of all international visitors, while 25.7 per cent of them visited the Southern Antalya



province. Turkey is rebounding in its crucial tourism sector as arrivals continue to gain pace, but the figures still fall behind the pre-pandemic level of April 2019, when it attracted 3.3 million foreign tourists, according to the official data. Turkey’s tourism revenue shrank by 70 per cent in 2020 after garnering a record high of USD 34.5 billion in revenue the previous year.

IndiGo appoints Pieter Elbers Chief Executive Officer

The Board of Directors of InterGlobe Aviation Limited (IndiGo) appoints Pieter Elbers as Chief Executive Officer, subject to regulatory approvals. He will join IndiGo on or before October 01, 2022. He succeeds Ronojoy Dutta who has decided to retire on September 30, 2022, after guiding IndiGo through the turbulent Covid period. Rahul Bhatia, Managing Director of IndiGo said, "The Board of Directors and I would like to thank Rono for effectively leading our business for almost four years with a steady hand through what has been the most turbulent period in the airline's history and aviation globally."

Since 2014, Elbers has served as the President and Chief Executive Officer of KLM Royal Dutch Airlines. He is also a member of the Executive Committee of the Air France – KLM Group.



Pieter Elbers

He started his career at KLM in 1992 at their Schiphol hub and over time, held several managerial positions in both The Netherlands and overseas in Japan, Greece and Italy. After he returned to The Netherlands, he was appointed as the Senior Vice President of Network & Alliances, before he was promoted in 2011 as the Chief Operating Officer.

Vietjet's re-launched flights between Delhi, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh took off

Vietjet has officially reopened its flight from New Delhi to Ho Chi Minh City and Ha Noi. The Ho Chi Minh City – New Delhi flight departed from Tan Son Nhat International Airport on April 29 and the Hanoi – New Delhi service took off on April 30, marking the airline's return to the country for the first-time post pandemic. The first passengers boarding the re-launched flights from Vietnam to India were greeted and presented with flowers and welcoming gifts at Noi Bai International Airport by the leaders of Vietnam Civil Aviation Administration and Vietjet. The two services from New Delhi to Ho Chi Minh City

and Hanoi are now operated with thrice-weekly flights and will steadily increase to daily flights starting from June. Dinh Viet Phuong, Vietjet Managing Director said, "Our re-launch of direct routes from India to Vietnam, shortly after the pandemic and other international services to South Korea, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Indonesia among others reaffirm Vietjet's efforts and commitments to offer flying opportunities for everyone, working as a bridge for cultural, economic and social exchanges among the countries while leading the wave of strong post-pandemic recovery."



Ethiopian marks 50 years of uninterrupted service to Mumbai

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Ethiopian Airlines, Africa's largest airline group's non-stop operations in Mumbai, the airline organised a press conference and hosted cocktails and dinner on April 28, 2022, at ITC Maratha, Andheri. The events were graced by Lemma Yadecha Gudeta, Chief Commercial Officer (CCO), Ethiopian Airlines, Tigist Eshetu – Regional Director India Sub-Continent, Ethiopian Airlines, Ambassador Doctor Tizita Mulugeta and Subhash Goyal, Owner & Chairman of STIC Group. It was announced that the airline will soon connect Chennai to

Addis Ababa and thereafter to 127 other international destinations starting July 2, 2022, with three weekly flights. On this joyous occasion for the airline, its Group CEO, Mesfin Tasew said, "We are thrilled to have celebrated this big milestone-50 year of uninterrupted service to Mumbai thereby connecting the people of India to the vast Ethiopian global network. Mumbai is the commercial capital of India and one of the key destinations in Asia; we will maintain our commitment to serve Mumbai, thereby providing it access to our 127 destinations with our latest aircraft."



Jazeera Airways announces KD3.8 million in net profit in first quarter 2022

Jazeera Airways has announced a net profit of KD3.8 million for the first quarter (Q1) of 2022, compared to a net loss of KD5.2 million in the first quarter of 2021. Total revenue for the quarter reached KD35.7 million, up 339.2%, while operating profit stood at KD5.3 million, up 199.3%. These record earnings were supported by close to sixfold increase in number of passengers with restrictions at Kuwait International Airport being eased and travel capacity gradually increased to levels near to the pre-pandemic

period. Similarly, load factor reached 75.2%, an increase of 28.7%. Commenting on the results, Jazeera Airways Chairman, Marwan Boodai said, "The gradual return of travel capacity at Kuwait International Airport since the second half of last year as well as the lifting of travel restrictions worldwide has shown that there is indeed a latent and strong appetite for travel. Jazeera has focused in the first quarter on expanding its services and capacity in preparation of the launch of new tourist and high demand destinations during the year."

Campbell Wilson appointed as the CEO and MD of Air India

Tata Sons announced Campbell Wilson's appointment as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director (MD) of Air India. The Air India board approved the appointment of Wilson subject to requisite regulatory approvals. Wilson has 26 years of aviation industry expertise across both full service and low-cost airlines. He is the CEO of Scoot, the wholly-owned low-cost subsidiary of Singapore Airlines (SIA). N Chandrasekaran, Chairman, Air India said, "I am delighted to welcome Campbell to Air India. He is an industry veteran having worked in key global markets cutting across multiple functions. Further, Air India would benefit from his added experience of having built an airline brand in Asia. I look forward to working with him in building a world-class airline."



Campbell Wilson

Wilson started off as a Management Trainee with SIA in New Zealand in 1996. He then worked for SIA in Canada, Hong Kong and Japan before returning to Singapore in 2011 as the founding CEO of Scoot, which he led until 2016.

Goa's new Mopa airport to be a domestic tourism driver, revenue creator

Goa is banking on a new airport at Mopa to soar tourism even higher and make it the backbone of the state's economy. With eight million domestic and international tourists visiting Goa annually, the state government hopes that the number will increase, as efforts are made to attract them with new innovative concepts, helping the exchequer.

Apart from support to state exchequer, nearly 1,500 locals are engaged in various departments on this new airport and are undergoing training outside the state.

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and the state's Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte have so far held a series of

meetings with concerned officials for quality tourism demanding upscaling infrastructure and skilling manpower to match global standards.

Goa's only existing airport in Dabolim witnesses airside congestion as it is also shared by the Indian Navy. As Mopa will solely handle the civilian traffic, the state will be in a better position to enhance connectivity for which Rs. 2,615 crore has been spent on this project.

According to Khaunte, increased footfalls from the second airport at Mopa will offer a plethora of employment and tourism opportunities for Goa which needs to be tapped by the stakeholders.



United flies to Denver, resumes Houston flights

United Airlines (UA) continues to expand its range of flights from Munich to the US. Effective immediately, schedules include two extra routes to the United States. For the first time in the history of Munich Airport, United is flying from Munich to Denver. The state capital of Colorado is not only the gateway to the Rocky Mountains, but also an important transfer airport for the American airline. The new link to Denver, United Airlines is now also offering regular flights from Munich to Houston, Texas, again. These had been suspended since March 13, 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This means that United Airlines is now offering six flights from Munich to the US per day – more than before the pandemic. In addition to Denver and Houston, the airline also serves the US destinations of Chicago, Washington, DC, Newark and San Francisco.

Air Arabia Abu Dhabi starts new route to Mumbai, Ahmedabad

Air Arabia Abu Dhabi has announced the introduction of a new service to Mumbai and Ahmedabad, starting from May 12 and May 13, 2022. The airline will fly an Airbus A320 to and from Mumbai three days a week- Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. On the other end, it will fly to and from Ahmedabad twice a week on the new route. Mumbai is the sixth and Ahmedabad is the seventh city in India that Air Arabia Abu Dhabi flies to after Calicut, Chennai, Jaipur, Kochi and Trivandrum. The new services also represent the 21st route for Air Arabia Abu Dhabi since the launch of the carrier's service from Abu Dhabi International Airport in July 2020.

Jet Airways receives Air Operator Certificate

Jet Airways received its revalidated Air Operator Certificate (AOC) from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India.

With the receipt of AOC, the Jalan Kalrock Consortium has fulfilled all the conditions precedent under their NCLT approved Resolution Plan. The revalidation of AOC enables Jet Airways to resume its scheduled commercial operations in India. This significant milestone also paves way for the comeback of the iconic airline in a new avatar with fresh funding, changed ownership, and new management.

The grant of the AOC was the final step in a comprehensive regulatory and compliance process involving several procedural checks for the airline's operational readiness. The process concluded with the airline having successfully conducted a number of proving flights between May 15 and 17, 2022, with key DGCA officials on board. The grant of the AOC revalidates the confidence



of the DGCA in the operational preparedness of Jet Airways.

Murari Lal Jalan, Lead Member of Jalan-Kalrock Consortium, said, "Today marks a new dawn for not just Jet Airways, but also for the Indian aviation industry. We are now at the brink of creating history by bringing India's most-loved airline back to the skies. We will not only live up to the great expectations from brand Jet Airways, but also exceed them in many ways for today's discerning flyers."

Nok Air appoints Dex Group as its GSA in India

Nok Air will launch non-stop services between Thailand and India from Winter 2022. Nok Air, will connect India to Thailand, via its hub at Don Mueang International Airport (DMK) in Bangkok. The new routes will be operated by state-of-the-art Airbus 737-800 with 189 seats.

The new route launch will provide the most convenient connections from various Indian gateways to Bangkok, and beyond to over 20 destinations in Thailand including Phuket, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and more.

"Welcoming incredible India to Amazing New Chapters of Thailand, with the current COVID situation improving daily, it is time that we look forward to expanding our markets towards the west, especially India. There are many areas there we have not yet tapped



into to gain more revenue. As the airlines are slowly gaining their strength, it would be wiser for us if we are the first to take advantage of the situation and gain a foothold through this door. Indian market is booming and it would benefit us greatly if we are one of the few airlines that the Indian people choose to travel to Thailand with", said Wutthiphum Jurangkool CEO.



Vistara launches service to Coimbatore

Vistara has inaugurated direct daily flights between Delhi and Coimbatore. The airline will also start daily direct service on the Mumbai-Coimbatore route starting May 27, 2022, and double daily flights on the Bengaluru-Coimbatore route starting June 3, 2022.

Vinod Kannan, Chief Executive Officer, Vistara, said, "The launch of daily direct flights to Coimbatore from three metro cities, at very convenient

departure and arrival timings, is an important step towards offering more connections to our customers and densifying our domestic network. With Coimbatore emerging as a key hub for trade and commerce besides being a preferred tourist destination, it's a city that the discerning travellers are increasingly flying to, giving us the opportunity to offer them our award-winning services on these routes too."

Go First plans IPO in July as air travel rebounds

Go First is planning to raise \$36 billion rupees (\$641.3 million) through an initial public offering (IPO) in July as air travel recovers from the pandemic. Go First's share sale comes as air travel is rebounding in the South Asian nation, driven by pent-up demand as people emerge from one of the world's worst coronavirus outbreaks. India, the world's fastest-growing major aviation market before the pandemic, expects local traffic to exceed pre-pandemic levels of 415,000 daily fliers within a year. Indian airlines are also adding capacity to capture a revival as international flights resume.

The IPO will be crucial for debt-laden Go First, which is losing money and is planning to rely on proceeds from the share sale to repay debt and dues to creditors including Indian



Oil Corp. Go First, previously known as GoAir, had obligations of about 81.6 billion rupees as at April last year, according to its draft preliminary prospectus.

Go First, which ranks second after Indigo, expects to lose the No 2 spot when Tata Sons merges its airlines — Vistara, Air India and AirAsia India — the source said. Go First is expecting to turn profitable this quarter, boosted by a surge in demand for leisure travel, the source added.



DR. VENKATARAMANI SUMANTRAN

PROMOTED AT: InterGlobe Aviation Limited (IndiGo)
TO: Independent Non-Executive Director
 The Board of Directors (Board) of InterGlobe Aviation Limited (IndiGo) has announced the appointment of Dr. Venkataramani Sumantran, an Independent Non-Executive Director of the Board since May 28, 2020, as its Chairman. Dr. Sumantran is a business leader, technocrat and academic, having worked in the USA, Europe and Asia through a career spanning over 37 years.



JATIN KHANNA

PROMOTED AT: Sarovar Hotels & Resort
TO: Chief Executive Officer
 Sarovar Hotels has announced the appointment of Jatin Khanna as the new Chief Executive Officer for the brand. Before becoming part of Sarovar Hotels, he was with Marriott, handling 32 hotels as Vice President-North India, Bhutan and Nepal. Jatin earlier served as VP Operations for Hilton Hotels India. Jatin is a graduate from Delhi University and holds a BA Hons. in Hospitality Management from the University of West London.



VIKRAM BERRY

PROMOTED AT: Radisson Hotel Group
TO: Director Commercial, South Asia
 Radisson Hotel Group has announced the appointment of Vikram Berry, Director Commercial, South Asia. Vikram will lead the implementation of commercial initiatives across our portfolio in South Asia and focus on revenue optimisation for our hotels in the region. With over two decades of experience in the hospitality industry, Vikram is an expert in formulating business strategies, leading high-performance teams and driving sales revenue.



RAHUL SHARMA

PROMOTED AT: Le Meridien Jaipur
TO: General Manager
 Rahul Sharma has been appointed as the new General Manager of Le Meridien Jaipur Resort & Spa. Sharma comes with two decades of experience in the hospitality industry and prior to this role, he was the Hotel Manager for Marriott Amritsar since 2019. Sharma has spearheaded various initiatives that have resulted in enhanced guest and associate experiences, along with financial profitability during and after the launch of the hotel.



AMIR BADR

PROMOTED AT: Hideaway Beach Resort & Spa
TO: Resident Manager
 Lily Hotels is delighted to announce the appointment of Amir Badr as the Resident Manager of Hideaway Beach Resort & Spa and its new elevated luxury collection, The Signature Collection by Hideaway in the Maldives. Amir comes with a diverse background within the hospitality industry with a career in the industry in locations such as Malaysia, Australia, Oman and Thailand. He joins the operations team at the resort with over 12 years of experience in hotel management.



DHARMENDRA RANA

PROMOTED AT: Enrise by Sayaji Aurangabad
TO: Director of Operations
 Enrise by Sayaji Aurangabad has announced the appointment of Dharmendra Rana as Director of Operations. In his illustrious career spanning 15 years, he has worked with reputed brands like The Oberoi New Delhi, Trident Agra, Taj Lake Palace Udaipur and Ananta Spa & Resort Udaipur. Prior to this, he was associated with Hotel Avadh Utopia, Surat as Food & Beverage Manager.



SNEH JHA

PROMOTED AT: Accor
TO: Director of Marketing & Communications
 Accor has been announced the appointment of Sneh Jha as Director of Marketing & Communications, India & South Asia. Sneh is bringing over 14 years of versatile experience in handling brand marketing, corporate communications and strategy functions for brands across the hospitality, advertising and technology industries. Sneh will be responsible for leading the development and execution of Accor's communications strategy, planning and implementation of new marketing initiatives.



BRIJESH SINGH

PROMOTED AT: Lords Plaza, Jaipur
TO: General Manager
 Brijesh Singh has been appointed as General Manager at Lords Plaza, Jaipur. A seasoned Hospitality professional with 23 +years of experience, Brijesh Singh has been given the responsibility as "General Manager" of "Lords Plaza, Jaipur". Brijesh is well educated and holds a Bachelor's degree in Commerce & Diploma in Front Office and Hotel Accounts. Brijesh then successfully moved to Nataraj Sarovar Portico, Jhansi as General Manager and then to Morpho Kakarmatta as General Manager.



AMIT MAHAJAN

PROMOTED AT: Cygnett Hotels & Resorts
TO: Chief Growth Officer
 Cygnett Hotels & Resorts has been appointed Amit Mahajan as Chief Growth Officer. He will be bringing over 23 years of progressive work experience, which has been primarily focused on hotel development, hotel real estate acquisitions, investment analysis and growth strategy. Before joining Cygnett, Amit had an entrepreneurial stint in the leisure accommodation space.

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