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TravelScapes

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Portugal

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ropes in the future

The 'mindful renaissance' of
luxury travel

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE



Varun Malhotra
Publisher & CEO

Dear Readers,

More and more Indians are taking to the skies as travel curbs have eased and the country opens up international travel. Travellers are keen to travel more than ever but with different demands and dynamics in mind. Yet, with Covid-19 very much an alarming concern when it comes to travel, safety remains key. While some are looking for authentic local and immersive experiences putting sustainability at the core, others are seen spending extra bucks for private stays and experiential tours. As the pandemic reshapes the perspectives of how guests experience and desire luxury, TravelScapes collates the insights from experts on how this well-heeled segment is keeping safety and selectness in mind and making travellers familiarised with the concept of "Conscious Luxury".

Further, as we see, the Indian Government in the last two years has taken many initiatives to provide enough impetus to the tourism sector by launching "Dekho Apna Desh", doing a cleanliness drive, providing better air connectivity to several places, improving digital presence but the gaps still prevail. Why is India still seen as a "sleeping giant"? What is really needed to represent India in an international arena and not just domestic? Probably, moving beyond the idea of just promoting the Incredible India campaign and starting to do more than just promotions is currently crucial to go big in the tourism market. To gather an understanding on how rethinking "Incredible India" on literal grounds can really help India become more competitive in the international market as well as more lucrative in the domestic, we speak with the top industry stalwarts who have been born into the industry.

Talking about travelling within India, many of us usually prefer to either holiday on hills or hit the beaches while we usually tend to ignore those rare, un-spoilt gems that India has had ever since; Odisha being one of them. A beautiful state full of prehistoric temples, mesmerising beaches, ancient monuments, serpentine rivers, mighty waterfalls and oh-so-good food, Odisha is a safe-kept secret, waiting to spellbind your senses with uniqueness as well as its classic divine feel. Globetrotting to the far land of archaic castles, gilded beaches, idyllic villages and chromatic cities, Portugal pulls you in the very moment you step onto its exceptionally versatile land. Brace yourselves, grab your bucket list and jot down all the experiences in Portugal handpicked by TravelScapes. I am sure you'll thank us later!

Read all this and more and get updated about the post pandemic era in our industry as we spiritedly put our foot forward in the new normal.

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

Happy Reading!

Varun Malhotra

TravelScapes

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CONTENTS

AUGUST 2022

VOL. 10, ISSUE. 08

THE ‘MINDFUL RENAISSANCE’ OF LUXURY TRAVEL

Page: 10

Over the past two years, we have seen tourism getting the hardest hit by the pandemic and as the world changed, our perspectives on the way we travel changed too. Juggling long between the isolations and travel restrictions limiting the tours to any corner of the world, the travellers are now yearning to globetrot, more than ever before and that too responsibly. With this, the requirements of a traveller seeking luxury and experiences have now pivoted, too, with him prioritising privacy and safety, over huge costs. TravelScapes takes a closer look at how the pandemic is and will continue to actively reshape how travellers experience and desire luxury while seeking to create meaningful connections with the destinations. Experts from the travel, cruise and hotel industry share opinions on this travel renaissance that has made us unlearn traditional ways of experiencing luxury while travelling and employ the concept of ‘conscious luxury’. Here are the insights...



SPOTLIGHT

24 CONTINUING THE SAGA OF GROUND-BREAKING INNOVATIONS

Kerala Tourism framing progressive goals under the new and dynamic supervision of Director of Kerala Tourism Department, P.B. Nooh IAS

REGULAR UPDATES

6.....	Inbound
20.....	Trade
36.....	Hospitality
56.....	Outbound
60.....	Aviation
62.....	On the Move



GUEST COLUMN

28 PANDEMIC RESHAPING HOW GUESTS EXPERIENCE AND DESIRE LUXURY

Pandemic has planted the idea of travelling consciously in the minds of seekers and explorers. Broadening the horizon of luxury travel, Riaz Munshi, Founder and MD of N Chirag Travels and President of the Outbound Tour Operators Association of India, has reiterated that today, affluent travellers are leaning towards safe staycations blended with luxury.



IN CONVERSATION

32 THE STANDARD, HURUVALHI MALDIVES GROWING EXPERIENTIALLY

The Standard, Huruvalhi Maldives certainly breathes a new life into its visitors. Jesper Soerensen, General Manager of The Standard, Huruvalhi Maldives, in an exclusive chat with TravelScapes, reveals all and more about the resort's differential factors, traction from the India market and how post-pandemic times have helped them evolve faster



SPECIAL FOCUS OUTBOUND

34 BAHRAIN EYES TOURISM BOOM; UNVEILS PROSPERING BLUEPRINT OF PROMOTIONS IN INDIA

TravelScapes speaks with Maryam Toorani, Director of Marketing and Promotion, Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA) about the ambitious tourism strategies to attract 14 million visitors by 2026



OPINION FEATURE

46 RETHINKING "INCREDIBLE INDIA"

Speaking with the top industry captains here, TravelScapes gains a wider understanding of how India must take the right path at the right time and capitalise upon the potentials and opportunities in both domestic and international arenas and cultivate a tourist experience that is truly incredible in every sense

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Jharkhand to be known for its attractions

Hemant Soren, Chief Minister, Jharkhand, launched 'Jharkhand Tourism Policy 2021'. The policy aims to revive, renew, and revamp the tourism sector of the state, to provide a different dimension and perspective as to how the world views the state of Jharkhand. It targets to bring out the marvels of the state that has an enchanting mix of old-world charms and new-age excitements.

Addressing the launch of 'Jharkhand Tourism Policy 2021', organised by FICCI and the Jharkhand government, the Chief Minister said, "Tourism sector has had the hardest hit. We have tried to figure out the deterrents in the path of development and aim to do the best that we can for

the betterment of our state and its residents."

The policy aims to brand Jharkhand as a haven to 'Rest and Recuperate' by means of expanding tourist units under the ambit of wellness tourism.

Attractive provisions have been proposed for prospective investors including direct purchases of the land of tourism enterprises, road permits, subsidy limit of 20-25 per cent up to INR10 crores for new tourist units, and new tourism units shall be entitled to reimbursement of 75 per cent of net SGST paid for 5 years since the commencement of commercial operation, no holding tax to be charged to new tourism units and reimbursement of electricity duty for the first 5 years.

Outstanding performance by Maharashtra Tourism in MoT's Utsav portal

In 2021, when the COVID-19 virus was still prevalent in India, the Ministry of Tourism created and launched a website named utsav.gov.in and called for the content of various events and festivals as well as, live darshan details of temple deities from all the States/UTs. The state ranking list revealed by MoT declared Maharashtra as number 1 on the portal with 10 published live darshan listings and, among the top 10 states with 8 published events and festivals listings.

During the pandemic, when the devotees couldn't physically visit these holy places, the temple authorities initiated an online darshan. It became convenient not only for the management but also for the devotees who were

able to get a glimpse of the God/Goddess from the comfort of their homes.

Valsa Nair Singh, Principal Secretary, Tourism Department, Govt. of Maharashtra said, "I am glad that our department is keeping pace with the digital trend where tourists want to get all the information with a single click. Religious tourism is the oldest form of tourism followed in India and, where Maharashtra has unique religious circuits like Shirdi- Shegaon- Pandharpur, it plays a vital role for us to display them on the national platform. I would like to appreciate the efforts made by MoT for bringing information on festivals and religious tourism of all the Indian states under one roof."

MoT formulates National Strategy for adventure tourism

Ministry of Tourism has recognised Adventure Tourism as a Niche Tourism Product, which inter alia includes Water Sports activities, to promote India as a 365 days destination and attract tourists with a specific interest.



To position India as a preferred destination for adventure tourism globally, MoT has formulated a National Strategy for Adventure Tourism. Several strategic pillars have been identified in the strategy document for the development of adventure tourism such as State assessment, ranking and strategy; skills, capacity building and certification; strengthening adventure tourism safety management framework; and National and State-level rescue and communication grid.

A National Board for Adventure Tourism has been constituted under the Chairpersonship of Secretary (Tourism), comprising of representatives from identified Central Ministries/ organisations, State Governments/UT Administrations and Industry Stakeholders, with the objective of operationalisation and implementation of the strategy to promote and develop adventure tourism in the country.



Arunachal's Hollongi Greenfield Airport to be operational in Aug

The Hollongi Greenfield airport near Arunachal Pradesh capital Itanagar is all set to be operational from August 15, with the first flight test landing of B-350 (King Air) conducted by the Airports Authority of India, a minister said.

At present, there is no airport in the vicinity of the state capital, the closest one being Lilabari Airport in the Lakhimpur district at an 80 km of distance.

Developed by the AAI at an estimated cost of INR645

crores, the Hollongi airport can accommodate 200 passengers during peak hours. Once commissioned, the airport will be the first in the state with a runway of 2,300 meters, suitable for the landing and take-off of Boeing 747, one of the largest passenger aircrafts. With an area of 4,100 sqm, the airport would be equipped with all modern facilities for passengers. The terminal will be an energy-efficient building with a rainwater harvesting system and sustainable landscape.

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Need to develop new destinations for domestic tourism

G Kamala Vardhan Rao, Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India emphasized the need to develop and showcase newer tourist destinations to attract more travellers from both domestic and international countries.

He expressed that post-pandemic, with the increase in the number of convention centres opening in India;



investors should seize the opportunity in MICE tourism.

Usha Padhee, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Govt of India stated that the government is working to increase the number of airports in the country to 200 by 2024 from the current 140 airports, additionally connecting the north-eastern states with more international flights under the UDAN scheme.

Rajni Hasija, Chairperson and MD, IRCTC said that IRCTC has a plan to expand its hospitality business and develop various properties under the PPP model.

Jyotsna Suri, Past President, FICCI; Chairperson, FICCI Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Committee and CMD, The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group said that India needs to have a very robust domestic tourism and we can't entirely rely on international tourism.



Goa to provide co-working spaces to visitors on beaches

The Goa government is going to promote the "culture of #WorkationGoa" through co-working spaces

to be created on the beaches, state Tourism and Information and Technology Minister Rohan Khaunte said.

Benaulim beach in South Goa district and Morjim and Miramar beaches in North Goa district have been identified for setting up such co-working spaces.

"We want such people who would opt to work

from home to come here and work from these co-working spaces and also help us in the IT ecosystem," he said.

T-Hub is an innovation intermediary and business incubator based in Telangana. Based on the triple helix model of innovation, it is a partnership between the Government of Telangana, three academic institutes in Hyderabad and the private sector.

"We need spaces to develop Goa like the

T-Hub. We have already started advertising to seek spaces to create co-working spots," the minister said. The Goa government is going to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Telangana Academy for Skill and Knowledge (TASK) for the purpose. Khaunte also said the tourism department was planning to set up shacks, having modern facilities including Wi-Fi spread across North and South Goa districts.

Bundelkhand forts to be developed as new centres of tourism

Forts in the Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh would soon get a facelift with the state government planning to create them as new tourism centres. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday directed officials that forts in the region should be repaired.

The move comes after Prime Minister Narendra Modi had recently noted that Bundelkhand has many forts and urged Adityanath to develop a tourism circuit in the region to attract tourists from all over the world.

Chairing a meeting on maintenance of forts in Bundelkhand, Adityanath directed officials that besides light and sound shows, camping and trekking facilities at the Kalinjar Fort should be done with private partnership.

Water sports and adventure tourism should be started in Barua Sagar lake and the lake located in the Talbehat Fort, he said, adding that a coffee table book on the archaeological, cultural and historical importance of forts should be brought out.

Sachin Kurve is the new Secretary, Tourism and CEO of Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board

Sachin Kurve, a 2003 batch IAS officer of the Uttarakhand cadre, takes charge as Secretary of Tourism, Government of Uttarakhand, and CEO, Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board.

During his career of two decades, the prime positions he held included, the District Magistrate of Rudrapur, Tehri-Garhwal, Dehradun, and Haridwar and Director and Additional Secretary, Panchayati Raj Department and Additional Secretary to the Governor.

In 2015, he moved to Maharashtra on deputation wherein his positions included District Collector, Revenue and Forest Department in Nagpur and Mumbai Sub Urban. Prime positions held during his deputation include Secretary to the Chief



Sachin Kurve

Minister, Secretary to the Governor, and Investment Commissioner, Industries.

In the middle of September 2020, he shifted back to Uttarakhand as Secretary, Industries and Excise, positions he still holds along with food, civil supply and consumer affairs with his current role as secretary of Tourism and CEO of Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board.



The Standard

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THE 'MINDFUL RENAISSANCE' OF LUXURY TRAVEL

Over the past two years, we have seen tourism getting the hardest hit by the pandemic and as the world changed, our perspectives on the way we travel changed too. Juggling long between the isolations and travel restrictions limiting the tours to any corner of the world, the travellers are now yearning to globetrot, more than ever before and that too responsibly. With this, the requirements of a traveller seeking luxury and experiences have now pivoted, too, with him prioritising privacy and safety, over huge costs. TravelScapes takes a closer look at how the pandemic is and will continue to actively reshape how travellers experience and desire luxury while seeking to create meaningful connections with the destinations. Experts from the travel, cruise and hotel industry share opinions on this travel renaissance that has made us unlearn traditional ways of experiencing luxury while travelling and employ the concept of 'conscious luxury'. Here are the insights...

By Gagneet Kaur



MICHAEL GOH, President, Resorts World Cruises

Changing demographics and demands of luxury travel:

With the global pandemic, it's evident there is a shift in travellers' mindset with safety being a priority for many. As a result of this, demand for personal space and exclusivity has contributed towards the additional growth of luxury travel. At Resorts World Cruises for instance, we observed a higher percentage of travellers opting for The Palace – a luxury ship within-a-ship private enclave to not only enjoy its personalised offerings, but to have a peace of mind holiday experience with the available personal space and private amenities.

'Conscious Luxury'- the way forward:

Promoting sustainable tourism is a role that many companies continue to focus, including for us, with the aim of minimising the negative impacts and enhancing the positive outcomes. The post pandemic era has led to a change on how

many choose to travel with more searching for an alternative style of luxury. As such, conscious luxury has increasingly become desirable where it is possible to combine a luxury experience with respect for the environment and local communities. Having gone through the pandemic, more organisations and travellers have now a higher sensitivity level on tourism and its impact on the well-being of travellers and its surrounding environment. For example, less overcrowding is a common site for many destinations these days.



Resorts World Cruises: Customising luxury for travellers

At Resorts World Cruises, the safety and well-being of our guests and crew is our number one priority. With that as the bedrock foundation, we are then able to customise our luxury and exclusive offerings a round it to fit the needs of many new age luxury travellers. For instance, on the ship, the 'hardware' luxury offerings are complemented further with a series of well-being offerings from health-conscious menus, yoga at sea activities and more. Luxury 'hardware' is just but one element but creating that overall and memorable experience through a series of 'software' offerings is what true luxury travel is all about.

JURGEN BAILOM, CEO and President, Waterways Leisure Tourism Pvt Ltd.

Changing demographics and demands of luxury travel:

The overall demand for luxury travel and unique travel experiences has gone up by close to 40% according to industry data. Customers wish to enjoy holidays that are far from the ordinary and have an element of curiosity and uniqueness to them. Families, couples, youngsters, single travellers and the list goes on. Everyone wants to be on the move, explore the world and do so in style. At Cordelia Cruises, especially, the first to sell out are our staterooms in premium and luxury categories. This is testimony to the fact that, today, travel is all about comfort, exclusivity and that novelty factor.

'Conscious Luxury'- the way forward:

We work with and in the Oceans and are very sensitive as an organisation to conscious travel. From recycling water to optimising natural energy usage, our cruise functions with the greatest regard to natural resources. We also try to keep measures from our side for COVID in action, all our guests are double vaccinated.



Cordelia Cruises: Championing 'safety on the oceans'

At Cordelia Cruises, safety is paramount. I can safely state we are perhaps the safest travel destination there is. Our crew is completely vaccinated and has received their booster dose as well. The nature of our industry is such that the crew is on board for lengthy periods of time hence their contact with the outside world on shore is strictly limited. Other than this, we have a full-service medical facility in the cruise itself. We treat our guests and crew with lots of care and ensure the highest safety standards for all on board.

SUDEEP JAIN, MD, SWA, IHG Hotels & Resorts

Changing demographics and demands of luxury travel:

The many challenges presented by COVID-19 over the last couple of years have reaffirmed our conviction that the future of hospitality lays in sustainable, responsible travel. More and more, we are welcoming conscious travellers across our hotels, including our luxury portfolio, who are just as invested in learning about our environmental impact and local community support as they are about our world-class offering.

Six Senses which sits at the top of our luxury portfolio, fits very well with the concept of sustainability with environmental and social responsibility at the core of the brand. Last year, we opened our first Six Senses property in India - Six Senses Fort Barwara which has done exceptionally well and is quite popular with our luxury guests.

'Conscious Luxury'- the way forward:

The growing consciousness around sustainable travel is already redefining the industry – across segments, including luxury. Guests are paying more attention than ever before to how a hotel looks after

the world around it, with an increasing number deciding whether to book a stay based upon a property's carbon footprint, sustainable practices and how it supports the communities. A global study commissioned by IHG revealed that 83% of consumers noted the importance of choosing a hotel brand that operates responsibly, with guests willing to spend on average 31% more on accommodation that meets this need. Our Journey to Tomorrow responsible business plan is playing an important role in helping us meet this demand from our millions of guests through its series of far-reaching commitments to drive environmental and social change.



IHG- Pioneering unrivalled, customer-centric service

The pandemic made cleanliness a top priority for our leisure guests and business customers, and while the safety and wellbeing of those who stay with us has always been important, all our hotels now deliver an enhanced IHG Way of Clean programme. However, this has not impacted the way we offer unrivalled service and tailored experiences designed for our luxury guests. Whether it's cleanliness, F&B offering, hybrid meetings and events for guests or loyalty enhancements, we're working with a customer-centric mindset to ensure IHG and our brands stand out as a preferred choice in the market.

THOYYIB MOHAMED, Managing Director, Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC)

Changing demographics and demands of luxury travel:

One of the trends that we are seeing, across all segments including luxury travel, is an increase in the duration of stay and a deep interest towards experiential tourism. Travelling has been riddled with restrictions and limitations since the pandemic, and there are a lot more things for travellers to consider. The prevailing trend as of late is of visitors wanting to make their vacation 'count', and that's why we are seeing an increase in the duration of stay, along with renewed interest in sustainable and conscious travel. We all have had a lot of time at home, without being able to travel, to reflect upon our actions and our carbon footprint on the planet during these past 2 years. Upon reflecting, most travellers have reached the conclusion that their journeys must have a positive impact on the communities and the environment that they visit. We are seeing a profound interest in experiential tourism, local interactions and ecological conservation. Travellers want their journeys to be transformative.

'Conscious Luxury'- the way forward:

As we begin to shape 'conscious luxury', we must

first identify and address the challenges that stand in the way. We are setting out to change the paradigm of what luxury entails in the first place. The Maldives has long explored the concept of 'Minimalist Luxury', or simply, less is more. Conscious luxury will ground luxury in the blessings, abundance and joys found in the natural environment. When it comes to privacy, seclusion and convenience, Maldives maintains the top spot for sure. The scattered geographical nature of our archipelago, along with our unique one-island-one-resort concept of the Maldives allows us to offer a level of intermingled luxury and safety that is truly incomparable.



Maldives- a commendable concoction of safety and exclusivity

Indulgence and safety go hand-in-hand in the Maldives. As I mentioned before, our unique 'one-island-one-resort' concept positioned Maldives as one of the most luxurious, exclusive, and uniquely safe destinations in the world. Only in the Maldives can you find hundreds of luxury resorts situated on its own entire island. Our properties are naturally secluded, and we are able to maintain stringent safety measures and standards in these properties. I would say that the Maldives is at the forefront of nations that have managed to seamlessly merge indulgence with safety.

ARVIND BUNDHUN, Director, Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA)



Changing demographics and demands of luxury travel:

As people have started travelling, health, safety and sustainability remain on top of their mind. Safety is the new luxury and has become a priority when choosing a destination.

Post pandemic, the new-age luxury traveller is seeking for an authentic connection to local culture, heritage, food, people and places. The luxury travellers are more conscious about sustainability in terms of not using/minimum use of plastic and making sure that there is no littering on public places they visit. Strong concern is placed on the protection of endemic flora and fauna while they visit various places across the globe.

‘Conscious Luxury’- the way forward:

Conscious luxury travel has become desirable for people who are looking for memorable experiences which will also have a positive impact on the places they visit. The travellers want to understand more about the local culture and engage with the local community. This will make a meaningful experience for them but also

provide something for the destination and the local people. Conscious luxury travel will help the destination to earn revenue without disturbing the environment and maintain sustainability and thus making the long-term future of travel more viable. As such, Mauritius is a safe travel accredited by WTTC and ticks all the boxes in terms of conservation engagement, community-based recognition and sustainable practices.

Mauritius- offering just ‘authenticity’

Mauritius offers authentic connections to local culture, heritage, food, people and places to the new-age luxury traveller. It positions itself as a green tourism destination and has committed herself to develop sustainable activities and leisure laced experiences during the last few years. Activities are available to discover the island and its population, to explore villages and pristine landscapes, or visit its various localities and go deep into authentic Mauritius. Many hotels in Mauritius are focussing on destination-driven experiences which are offering their guests to connect with Mauritius and its people. Even the culinary experience here are curated with a strong emphasis on authenticity and freshness. Mauritius is also focussing on “Tourism for Inclusive Growth”, a commitment to ensure that nobody is left behind. On the long term follow up on sustainability, the destination is engaged in The SUS-ISLAND project led by Mauritius Tourism Authority which aims to contribute to the vision of developing a sustainable island and green destination with tourism innovation that can improve positive sustainability impacts (handprint.) and/or lower negative sustainability impacts (footprint).

SIRAJ ALI WASEEM, Group General Manager, Coco Collection



Changing demographics and demands of luxury travel:

In the immediate wake of the pandemic, travellers started to search for a destination that was safe in every aspect. If we look at Maldives over other luxury destinations around the world, I believe Maldives has got quite an advantage due to our “one island, one resort” concept. This made it a lot easier when it came to controlling the spread of Covid, especially due to the wide open, natural spaces of our resorts.

At Coco Collection, we strengthened our hygiene practices and created an environment that not only felt safe and comfortable for travellers but also one that provided a much-needed sense of peace and relaxation.

‘Conscious Luxury’- the way forward:

Sustainability has always been at the core of what we do at Coco Collection, and it is even more important than ever before especially when we witness the change in climate due to human action. Adopting all possible sustainability measures within

our operation is the key to creating long-lasting experiences for our guests, whether it’s by introducing organic food grown on our island to reduce our carbon footprint or bottling our own water in glass bottles to reduce single-use plastic consumption.

The pandemic has changed so much about the way people travel. More and more travellers are seeking experience-led holidays-- unique and authentic moments that cannot be replicated. The only way for us in the luxury travel industry to keep being able to craft these moments for our guests is by adopting a holistic, eco-friendly approach within the entire operation.

Coco Collection: Preserving the pristine for guests

For Coco Collection, high standards of sustainability practices have been at the heart of our brand from the very beginning. For us, it’s never been something new for us to adopt, but rather something to keep evolving with new data and new technology. Preserving the beautiful, natural state of our islands is something we work hard to achieve within our operations, while uncompromising on the comfort and enjoyment of our guests. With more travellers wanting to reconnect with nature, the values of our brand and our guests are very much aligned.

GAURAV THAKUR, General Manager, Hilton Maldives Amingiri Resort & Spa

Changing demographics and demands of luxury travel:

Luxury travel was impacted heavily during the pandemic. However, the Maldives maintained its tourism and demand for luxury experiences has rapidly risen since then. As per GlobalData's latest report (May '22), luxury travellers are seeking experiences that are more 'immersive and exceptional' than in previous years. Many tourists want to completely avoid places which are typically busy and crowded and rather settle for slower traveling.

'Conscious Luxury'- the way forward:

There is a growing demographic of socially conscious, high-net-worth consumers, for whom the definition of luxury has evolved into authentic and sustainable experiences, fulfilling purposeful travel while doing good for people and the planet.

At Hilton Maldives Amingiri Resort & Spa, we take a thoughtful approach to dining, ensuring we reduce food waste as much as possible. For

example, at our specialty restaurant Origin, our chefs source sustainably and utilise ageing techniques to present seafood at its best. Mindful of our community and the environment we operate in, our resort collaborates with local partners on a coral propagation program, as well as recycling efforts to reduce marine plastic pollution.



Hilton Maldives Amingiri Resort & Spa: Immersive & Intimate

On our private 9-hectare island in North Malé Atoll, travellers can take all the time they need to reconnect – whether with their loved ones or with themselves. Our commitment to guest safety is demonstrated through Hilton's industry-leading hygiene and cleanliness standards.

Hilton Maldives Amingiri Resort & Spa features an array of thoughtful amenities, especially curated for global travelers, whether they are coming on a multigenerational family getaway or celebrating a special occasion for two. Inspiring experiences await seasoned holidaymakers and junior explorers: best-in-class family amenities include one of the largest kids' clubs in the Maldives and a tranquil rooftop lounge exclusive to teenage guests. Amingiri Spa offers an extensive menu of rejuvenating spa treatments and purifying hammam rituals.

KATHY KOYAMAIBOLE, Regional Director, Asia and Pacific, Tourism Fiji

Changing demographics and demands of luxury travel:

There has been such a pent-up demand for luxury travel after the pandemic and more people are eager to embark on an exclusive journey. The monotony of the pandemic has set the tone for many travellers who, today, seek unique and differentiated experiences. There has been a shift in travel behaviour and an increase in interest to discover and explore some of the hidden gems or unexplored destinations. The emergence of experiential luxury travel is one of the outcomes of the pandemic, where Indian travellers look to engage in immersive, meaningful and sustainable travel. In the new travel outlook – privacy is the new luxury travel and safety the new top priority, while flexibility and sustainability will drive bookings among the strong pent-up demand for travel.

'Conscious Luxury'- the way forward:

Travellers today are focused and conscious on engaging in positive practices, including wellness activities,

giving back to communities, protecting the environment, and more. Brought about by the recent pandemic, travellers now lean towards more eco-friendly travel options. More and more consumers are asking for information on carbon emissions and how to offset them to make their trips more sustainable. As the travel industry continues to recover, it is an important opportunity to prioritise the environment and transform the travel industry for the better.



Fiji- preferred pick for new age travellers

Fiji is exactly the kind of destination the new age luxury travellers is looking for. We have many incredible luxury experiences with open spaces, uncrowded and amazing experiences around them, staffed by the friendliest people in the world. Investing in public safety protocols to keep all visitors as protected as possible through the Care Fiji Commitment – this has been the most critical element and will continue to be for us. Tourism Fiji launched the Care Fiji Commitment Programme last year as an operational COVID-safe framework for all tourism operators and service providers. Over 1000 businesses are registered under the Care Fiji Commitment Programme, which ensures these properties, operations and services uphold COVID-safety practices approved by WHO and recognised by the World Travel and Tourism Council.

SUVEER SODHI, General Manager, Alila Diwa Goa and The Diwa Club by Alila



Changing demographics and demands of luxury travel:

Post the pandemic, guests now seek more exclusive, personalised and immersive experiences. Guests are more cautious now and are opting for hotels that they can trust. They are willing to pay more for exclusive stays. It's not so much about flaunting money as much as it's about going back home with a sense of fulfilment. They are seeking to create more authentic and meaningful relationships, make conscious sustainable choices and connect intimately with the destination. This has also led to an industry-wide correction in the prices, which was long due leading to a healthy increase in the ADR across the industry. Traditionally, high-spending travellers would opt for international destinations. But now they are travelling more within the country itself and spending more. Call it revenge travelling but guests are willing to pay more for luxury and safe travelling.

'Conscious Luxury'- the way forward:

Respect for the environment and local communities is firmly entrenched in our vision and promoting sustainable tourism has always been our focus even before the pandemic. Hyatt's purpose is to care for people so they can be their best guides in every aspect of our business, including how we tackle important environmental and social issues.

Since the hotel's inception, we have adopted green initiatives to minimise our impact on the environment by using primarily local materials and working with the landscape to preserve indigenous ecosystems. The resort's aesthetic scheme reflects these efforts, blending effortlessly and gracefully into its natural setting. All materials used in building the hotel were sourced locally, and an abundance of the region's eco-friendly brick red laterite stone can be seen throughout the hotel. Championing our sustainability cause further, we are also proud to be the first hotel in Goa to install an automated water bottling plant at the property in 2022, in partnership with Doon (formerly called WaterCube). This being a 'Zero Mile Water' program, it helps us to eradicate over 350,000 single-use plastic bottles annually.

Alila Diwa Goa- 'Surprisingly different'

Luxury for Alila Diwa Goa has always been about personalisation and not about being flamboyant. The guests are also seeking and truly appreciating personalized service which has always been the Alila way of thinking. We endeavor to be 'surprisingly different' for all our guests and curate every experience keeping their preferences in mind, at different touch points. One such offering is The Diwa Club by Alila, which is an exclusive pet-friendly resort built within Alila Diwa Goa. Our guests truly feel at home and appreciate the personalised experience that we offer. At Spa Alila, we devise experiences that are holistic, and natural and provide the much needed-balance and immunity boost through our treatments.

ROMIT THEOPHILUS, Director-India, German National Tourist Office (GNTO)



Changing demographics and demands of luxury travel:

There is a growing demographic of socially conscious, high-net-worth consumers who are rejecting overt displays of wealth in favour of inconspicuous and responsible consumption. Their approach to luxury is driven by ethical living, artisanship, authenticity and sustainability. Experience is the new currency for these holidaymakers, who seek self-fulfilment through greener travel and eco holidays while wanting to 'do good' for people and the planet. Also, to be noted, high-end hotels, resorts, cruises and restaurants have been one of the most dynamic and fast-growing components of the luxury sector. Millennials opt more for experiences and "Instagrammable moments" rather than luxury items. Baby boomers, too, were moving in this direction, having already accumulated luxury products over the years. While we expect the positive momentum of experiential luxury to persist, it will slow down in the short term as consumers temporarily revert to buying goods over experiences.

'Conscious Luxury'- the way forward:

There has been a shift in society, partly due to

changing values after the acute phase of the pandemic. While in 2020 and 2021, the popularity of staycations, hygiene protocols and contactless technologies - all now firmly embedded in the daily activities of hospitality businesses - has risen sharply. An increased consumer awareness of all things sustainable, purposeful and health and well-being has set new benchmarks for hospitality enterprises. Travellers are preferring to spend wisely, purposefully and are wanting to make a positive impact on the world. Unique experiences that give back to local communities in meaningful ways are in demand, as are niche properties, adventurous holidays and relaxation retreats.

Germany- Authentic. Exceptional. Exciting

Indian travellers holidaying in Germany aspire to travel to various towns and cities and witness the local flavour of a destination. An authentic experience could be as simple as enjoying a traditional meal with locals. Therefore, while luxury may be an important component of their travel, authenticity never takes a back seat. Germany's two exciting campaigns, Embrace German Nature and German.Local.Culture, are aligned to Indian preferences after a regional study, the marketing and consumer consultancy identified natural attractions and cultural insights as the two top reasons holidaymakers from India look to travel. India is a hugely important market for travel to Germany, so taking notice of what they are searching for is key. From meandering lakes and breath-taking mountains to traditional craftsmanship and Bavarian fare – Germany is the ideal place for explorers searching for an easily accessible destination with plenty to see and do.

NISHANT KASHIKAR, Country Manager- India & Gulf, Tourism Australia



Changing demographics and demands of luxury travel:

Although, the industry witnessed an immediate recovery and revival from segments like visiting friends and family and international education, luxury travel has also seen an uptick in preference as travel intent further strengthens. We can witness this demand in the volume and surge of visa lodgements that have been recorded since the reopening, leading the post-pandemic traveller to pro-actively seek out bespoke experiences. After having to defer travel plans, travellers have shown a strong willingness to splurge and spend more on experiential travel.

‘Conscious Luxury’- the way forward:

Sustainable travel has been a growing trend for years but with the onset of the pandemic and the country wide lockdowns that followed, it has grown in relevancy as well. As travellers become more cognizant about contributing to the upliftment of local and indigenous communities and incorporating sustainability as part of their travel escapades, the industry at large will need to consistently recalibrate

their approach to reduce and offset their carbon footprint. Conscious luxury travel allows holidaymakers to indulge and enjoy themselves without compromising the ecosystem around them, which can be accomplished by opting for hotels and homestay accommodations that actively partake in water conservation efforts, reduce their dependency on single use plastics and support and bring value to the local businesses and communities around them.

Australia: The ‘safe’ and ‘spectacular’ haven

Being such a wide and expansive country, Australia can cater to an array of travellers and their varying interests, with untainted natural escapes and attractions located away from the bustling cities and usual tourist hotspots. This allows travellers to experience the inimitable culture of the country’s Central Business Districts (CBDs) and cities while also retreating away from the crowds to enjoy the best of the country’s nature and wildlife in seclusion.

Furthermore, travellers looking to indulge and experience purposeful luxury can explore the diversity and variety offered by the Luxury Lodges of Australia (LLOA). The LLOA is a portfolio of ultra-premium and sustainably designed properties located across some of Australia’s most breath-taking natural landscapes, that are not just luxe accommodations but all-encompassing experiences that keeps sustainability and conservation at the heart of its purpose. From stays at Emirates One&Only Wolgan Valley, the first carbonZero certified hotel in the world, to close interactions and guided visits with the Indigenous Anangu people at Longitude 131°, travellers will be spoiled for choice.

DEISLAV GOSPODINOV, Group Director for Sales & Marketing, Lily Hotels



Changing demographics and demands of luxury travel:

Most predictions point to luxury travel being at the forefront of post-pandemic travel trends. Specifically, if it offers an opportunity for much-needed interpersonal engagement for cooped-up travellers and experiences to better well-being, then luxury travel will be a popular choice because it compared to lower tiers, will meet high hygiene expectations as well as expectations of wellness experiences and also provide opportunities for the human-oriented factors that matter to travellers yearning to experience a time before the pandemic.

Once the pandemic subsides, which will likely only become clear in the future, travellers are likely to be more discerning and less willing to compromise on standards - which we are aware of and urging our operations teams to balance better cost management with still offering great service. The resorts that will be more popular will be ones that are more able to make travel experiences more meaningful, those that refrain from standardised or staged experiences.

‘Conscious Luxury’- the way forward:

With a lot of clarions calls in this post-pandemic stage to build back better, the Maldivian Luxury

Resort concept and the destination as a whole and its stakeholders all have a higher motivation to cement and further reinforce sustainable practices. These include efforts by the government to push top-down legislation reducing the use of single-use plastics, resorts utilising budgets to spend on more hybrid energy systems to provide energy for the self-sustaining resorts and resort operators finding more opportunities to support local suppliers of produce. Not only that, more and more resorts are also coming to an understanding of the draw conscious luxury by allowing guests to have a better understanding of the sensitive ecosystems surrounding the resorts.

Lily Hotels: ‘Safe’ Slices of Heaven

At Lily Hotels, we take great pride in maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness and hygiene in all our properties. In response to COVID-19, we have taken additional measures developed in consultation with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and local public health authorities and third-party accreditation services to make our cleaning and hygiene protocols are more rigorous and up to international standards. We have activated our operations response teams to provide around-the-clock assistance to our resorts who are prepared to act swiftly. When it comes to new age luxury travellers, we are keeping the pulse on wellness by recently hiring a Group Spa & Wellness Director to oversee our wellness experiences to further provide great experiences, for guests looking to hide away and heal before going back to their busy lives by coming down to our slices of heaven here in the Maldives.

BA RAHIM, Director, One Above Destination Management Services



Changing demographics and demands of luxury travel:

We all know that luxury travel is one of the most unique and profitable spectrums of the tourism industry which gives the opportunity to offer our clients their perfect holiday with personalised services but in lieu of the pandemic, many of the premium destinations and hotels that offered luxury services were not available, as a result of which our industry saw a decline in this line of travel. However, reopening of the Maldives and its premium boutique hotels sparked a surprising increase in luxury travel again. When our clients choose luxury travel as an option, they look for destinations that can offer them relaxation and customised services which can cater to their preferences.

There has been a steady increase in demands for stay at hotels and resorts that support sustainability as well as offer world class comfort and services. The pandemic literally brought a bright opportunity for us all to realise how important is the nature for us. This has made us responsive to the cause and we, as travellers, are now choosing hotels that support the environment and eco-friendly practices. This type of travel not just promotes exclusivity and luxury while holidaying but helps encouraging a good cause.

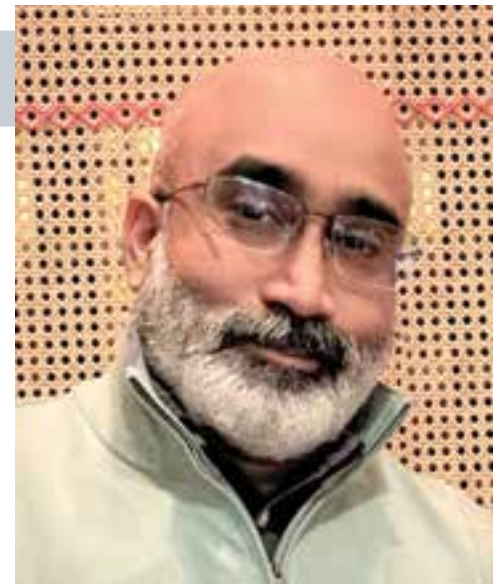
'Conscious Luxury'- the way forward:

With the increase in environmental consciousness, travellers are becoming more aware of terms 'eco-friendly' and 'sustainable' travel.

One Above going out and about to offer 'comfort to clients'

One Above believes in providing only the best for its clients as well as doing its part to contribute to the community as much as we can. We offer sustainable options for luxury travel, by offering our clients all-inclusive options of boutique and lavish hotels to choose from. When it comes to servicing our clients, safety and comfort are the key parts for what our company stands for.

ROHIT KOHLI, Joint Managing Director – Creative Travel Group



Changing demographics and demands of luxury travel:

Post pandemic, luxury is defined by new and refined thinking. Luxury travel has evolved even more in the past two years, in many ways. Our guests focus a lot more on really experiencing the destination, rather than just visiting. We, at Away&Co, specialise on offering life altering experiential trips, which is really what the post pandemic luxury traveller wants. These have been a challenging few months for the whole industry, because of visa and air availability issues. This has kind of forced many travellers to explore destinations they wouldn't have organically travelled to after 2+ years of no family holidays. The flip side has been that the Indian luxury traveller has now been exposed to destinations that truly offer the luxury of experiences.

travellers have to be aware of sustainability of the destination they're visiting, sustainability of the culture and the people they're interacting with and of course sustainability of the eco system. Unfortunately, as post pandemic travel resumed and destinations began to open, they focused on getting as many tourists to visit as possible. As we all know, this created chaos in so many destinations around the world. That is neither sustainable nor responsible. We take our limited role very seriously as a company and we are also proud members of the Responsible Tourism Society of India (RTSOI).

'Conscious Luxury'- the way forward:

I have always said 'sustainable tourism' is a very misinterpreted term. Most people construe this to be relevant just to the environment but being sustainable is about so much more. Every traveller, not just luxury

Away&Co: Excelling the experiential space

Our business has always been about being really immersed in the culture of the destinations our guests travel to. Safety has always been paramount, even before Covid – the concerns are just different now. Indulgence can mean many things, but Away&Co has never focused on mindlessly indulgent hotel properties or senseless extravagance. Our focus has always been to create amazing experiences in the destinations while really immersing in the local cultures, which includes experiential authentic stays. The real luxury traveller wants to experience, he doesn't want to just visit; all this has been done already.

Luxury travel market could see growth in 2022 as COVID-19 has spurred new consumer trends

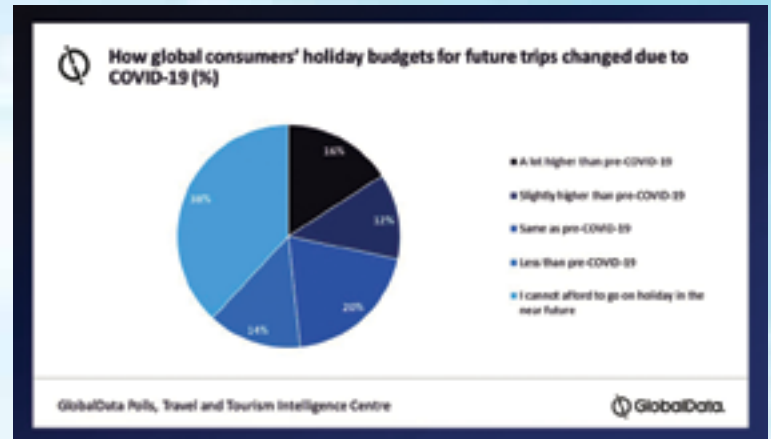
28% of Global consumers' holiday budgets for future budgets changed due to Covid-19

In the luxury travel market, there has been an influx of consumer travel trends as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes a boom in private aviation services at the high end of the market, remote working from overseas locations and demand for private buyouts of large villas or boutique hotels, finds GlobalData.

The leading data and analytics company's latest report, 'Luxury Travel Market Trend and Analysis of Traveler Types, Key Destinations, Challenges and Opportunities, 2022 Update' reveals that as luxury travelers resume traveling both domestically and abroad in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, they may begin to seek experiences that are more immersive and more exceptional than in previous years.

Hannah Free, Travel and Tourism Analyst at GlobalData, comments: "With travelers determined to make up for a lost time, 2022

could see an increase in holiday budgets for luxury travelers, with an uptick in demand for 'once in a lifetime' adventures. According to a GlobalData poll*, when respondents were asked if their holiday budgets had changed due to COVID-19, 16% reported that their budgets were a lot higher than pre-COVID-19', while 12% of respondents stated that their budgets were 'slightly higher than



pre-COVID-19'."

Despite the demand for luxury travel, there is a growing demographic of socially conscious, high-net-worth consumers who are rejecting overt displays of wealth in favor of inconspicuous and responsible consumption. Their approach to luxury is driven by ethical living, artisanship, authenticity and sustainability. Experience is the new currency for these holidaymakers, who seek self-fulfillment through greener travel and eco holidays while

wanting to 'do good' for people and the planet. If luxury travel brands ignore this trend, it could put them at tremendous risk of total disconnect from an audience that is looking for sustainable options.

"While COVID-19 has changed many aspects of luxury travel, there are still several defining features that set the sector apart from mass market tourism. This includes hyper-personalization, exclusivity, unique experiences, intuitive service and the ever-important 'human touch' element."

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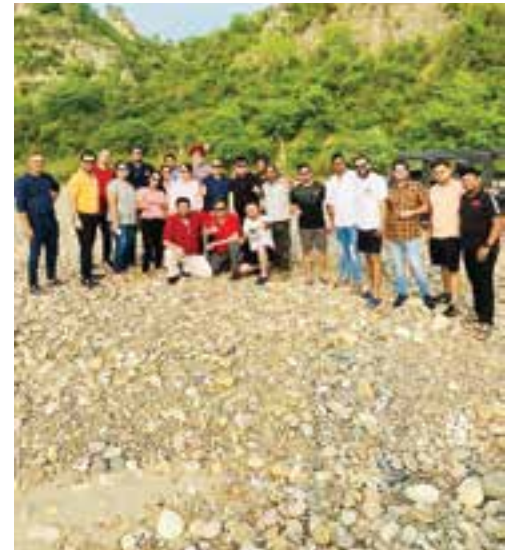
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ETAA hosts an exciting FAM trip for members to Gaj Retreat, Punjab

Enterprising Travel Agents Association (ETAA) organised a familiarisation trip to Gaj Retreat, Punjab from July 3 to 5, 2022. The trip started from Delhi in a cozy Volvo ride where members had a great time travelling together. ETAA family got an overwhelming welcome from Dinesh Vir Singh, Founder of Gaj Retreat where the members were surprisingly rewarded with a 3 day/ 2 night stay.

Gaurav Arora, Joint Secretary, North India Region welcomed the members and Punit



Bhasin, Vice Chairman, ETAA North India thanked the Gaj Retreat management for the amazing hospitality. Dinesh Vir Singh conducted an amazing knowledge session about the destination and the property which was a learning treat for all participants, followed by the rewards and recognition session spearheaded by Saurabh Tuteja, General Secretary, North India region and Dinesh Kumar, Treasurer North India region. Members were delighted to also participate

in a spiritual journey to Anandpur Sahib and Naina Devi Temple. Praveen Ghai, Joint Secretary and Deepika Khanna, Membership Head, North India Region thanked the members for taking out their time to travel to this wonderful resort.

Lauding the success of the FAM trip, Sangeeta Manocha -Chairperson North India Region & Director National Board of ETAA said, "Congratulations to all of you on the successful completion of our Gaj Retreat

journey. This trip indeed brought our beloved ETAA family together, who got the opportunity to know each other and accompanied us on this highly successful journey. We are all very fortunate to have such a wonderful team of enthusiastic members. It's everyone's efforts and dedication and I feel truly grateful to be a part of ETAA. The commitment that each of you has made is wonderful. With this, we promise to make each event more memorable."

IRIS Reps appointed as India Sales and Marketing representative for 25hours Hotel One Central, Dubai

Overlooking the Museum of the Future and boasting 434 bedrooms and suites, 25hours Hotel One Central tells the region's story through its interiors, combining the ancient traditions of the Bedouins with a progressive, forward-thinking design and a nod to the future. Masterminded by Christoph Hoffman and renowned interior design firm, Woods Bagot, elements of tales where the traditional meets the modern are intricately woven and exhibited floor-by-floor, creating an entirely contemporary narrative, promising a truly one-of-a-kind experience featuring over 6000 pieces of art and objects throughout.

Speaking about the association with IRIS, Aisling Jennings, Director of Sales said, "We are excited to have IRIS Reps support the ongoing success of 25hours Hotel One Central - the first hotel of its kind to open outside Europe and the largest in the company. The property has received significant publicity since opening in December 2021, challenging norms in Dubai and most recently recognised on the 2022 Conde Nast Traveller Global Hotlist. We look forward to working closely with the IRIS Reps team to develop great awareness for the property and brand."

"25hours Hotel One Central is conceived in

equal amounts of sophistication and fun, an oasis where business travellers to tourists will find their every need anticipated from informal meetings, entertaining colleagues and celebrating the day's achievements. It also caters to unapparelled gastronomy and eclectic lifestyle experiences. We are delighted to further this partnership as Indian Representative for the 25hours Hotel One Central and believe the strength of the brand, which is synonymous with fun and unique travel experiences, will allow us to take a strong leadership position," added Alefiya Singh, Director and Founder of IRIS Reps.

Vietnam visas to Indians up 24 times from pre pandemic levels

The variety of visas issued by Vietnam to Indians has grown 24 times in contrast to pre-pandemic levels, stated Pham Sanh Chau, Vietnam's envoy to India. The nation issued nearly 250 visas a day earlier than the coronavirus pandemic and immigration authorities at the moment are issuing 6,000 visas a day to Indians, making it the only largest in-bound market into Vietnam in the intervening time, he stated.

Addressing the Outbound Tourism Summit organised by FICCI, the ambassador stated the explanations behind the rise was proximity and the opening up of direct flights between the 2 nations. He stated there will likely be 17 direct flights between main cities of India and Vietnam.



Dr Stephan Hesselmann, Minister Counsellor, Deputy Head, Department for Economical & Global Affairs, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, New Delhi, who was additionally on the occasion, stated tourism can lead to enterprise alternatives as effectively. He additionally referred to the just lately launched free commerce negotiations between the EU and India. "We need to enhance our financial relations, and tourism is one important financial issue." Hesselmann also referred to the huge demand for visas at the moment as being impossible in the short term and urged people to apply early enough for travels.

Hotel companies are banking on greater inbound tourism. Dr Jyotsna Suri, past president FICCI, Chairperson, FICCI Travel, Tourism & Hospitality Committee & CMD of The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group added, "We survived this entire pandemic on domestic tourism. But that is not sufficient. We have to have a healthy inbound and outbound to be a complete tourism destination. There were almost 27 million Indians who travelled outside of India, which is double the tourists that came into India."

During the past few months, Indian travel operators have recorded an increase in business. Industry participants like Ankush Nijhawan, Chairman, FICCI Outbound Tourism Committee and MD of The Nijhawan Group, said there is a revival in tourism and that it was now seeing a major growth.

"Between FY16-19, there were more than 1.5 trillion outbound trips, and 135 destinations received more than a million arrivals. But many of us do not realise how large the market is. Tourists spent \$9 trillion in 2019, growing at about 5% from 2016. This will grow to \$11.5 trillion in FY24," stated Nijhawan.

Nijhawan added that the market has come back faster than what the experts thought with airport issues in places like Heathrow, London challenges with visa, it is because we never realised how quickly the market will recover.



Qatar Tourism conducts two-city India roadshow

Qatar Tourism successfully conducted its first roadshow in India since the pandemic. The events in Delhi and Mumbai were attended by notable participants from the Indian travel industry, including trade partners, associates, and travel affiliates. Around 120 travel industry companies from Delhi and Mumbai attended the event, which aimed to connect local travel agents with destination management companies, hotels, and attraction operators in Qatar.

The unique interactive platform with pre-scheduled meetings allowed Indian trade partners and travel agents to interact and learn more about the diverse product offerings and experiences that Qatar has to offer. The roadshow was well attended and received a positive response from both cities. The roadshow intended to fortify and strengthen travel trade relationships to increase visitor arrivals from India.

The roadshow saw the presence of some distinguished partners from Qatar showcasing their product and services to industry specialists in India at large – hotels such as Zula Wellness Resort by Chiva Som, The Ritz-Carlton Doha, Waldorf Astoria Lusail Doha, Mondrian Doha, Mandarin Oriental Doha, Hilton Salwa Beach Resort & Villas, Banana Island Resort Doha by Anantara, The Westin Doha Hotel & Spa, Four Seasons Doha and Sheraton Grand Doha Resort & Convention Hotel. DMCs such as Discover Qatar, Tawfeeq Holidays, Asfary, 365 Adventures by Peninsula Compass Tourism and Mannai Holidays.

Berthold Trenkel, Chief Operating Officer, Qatar Tourism, said, "India plays an integral role to achieve the sights Qatar Tourism has set for the 2030 strategy. India continues to be one of Qatar's top markets, and we effectively engage with the travel trade on a regular basis through our agency partner, who promote Qatar as a major travel destination, both as a hub and a final destination. Qatar Specialist Programme is a brand new and interactive online training module that we recently launched."

"We are eager to see the impact of the roadshow as well as the specialist programme, which will help bring to light the diverse facets of Qatar's offerings. Our aim is to encourage all types of travellers to travel to Qatar, to discover and enjoy the country," he added.

Since India is a key market, Qatar Tourism is confident the success of the roadshows will further enable an expansion through the Indian outbound travel market. The prime focus has been placed on achieving a notable number of visitors beyond the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ from varied segments such as leisure, MICE, and weddings.

Commenting on the roadshow, Lubaina Sheerazi, CEO & Co-founder BRANDit, Qatar Tourism's India Representative said, "Given that a large section of its population is eager to travel and explore new places around the world, India represents a significant and substantial market for Qatar. The roadshow gives us a chance to highlight Qatar's distinctiveness as a destination for Indian travellers across segments. Whether they are looking for a fun-filled family getaway, active holidays, one-of-a-kind cultural experiences, opulent resorts, theme parks, exotic locations, or world-class shopping excursions, Qatar has something for everyone. Especially families with kids or teenagers of all ages; will be feeling welcome and safe in Qatar."

TAFI announces its 2022 Convention from Sept 20 -23 at Kuching in Sarawak, Malaysia

The Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) announces its Convention at Kuching in Sarawak, Malaysia this September from 20 to 23, 2022. TAFI is organising this convention after a gap of four years. The theme of the convention is 'Build Back Better'.

Elaborating on the theme, Ajay Prakash, President, TAFI said, "As we seek recovery post-COVID, it is vital that the tourism industry does not forget the lessons of the Pandemic. As one of the biggest Global Industries, the power of Tourism to shape the world is phenomenal. It can be a powerful force for doing good, not only for the stake holders but for the entire world. Build Back Better encapsulates the resolve to rebuild Tourism in a more responsible and sustainable manner."

The Convention Committee is Chaired by Seeraj Sabharwal and Jigar Dudakiya is Deputy Chairman.

Commenting on the choice of Destination, the Convention Chairman Sabharwal said "TAFI has often organised conventions in unique and unusual locations to expand the portfolio of Travel Agents and Tour Operators of INDIA." The Convention package will be inclusive of a three nights Pre or Post Convention tours to beautiful places within Malaysia.

The TAFI Convention is supported by Tourism Malaysia, Sarwak Tourism Board, Business Events Sarawak, Malaysia Airlines, Malindo (now rechristened Batik) and Air Asia.

TAFI with a membership of more than 1400 tour operators and travel agents account for approximately 70% of all outbound travel from India.



37th IATO Annual Convention in Bangalore called off

In an unprecedented move, Rajiv Mehra, President, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) has announced that the 37th IATO Annual Convention of the association, which was scheduled to take place in Bangalore from September 15 to 18, 2022 has been called off.

The association has said that the event has been called off due to unavoidable circumstances arising out of the withdrawal of support by the Karnataka Tourism in spite of giving written confirmation for hosting the convention in the garden city.

Mehra informed that all

arrangements made for the convention in Bangalore have been cancelled due to this development which is beyond control. IATO had booked 400 rooms at Hotel Hilton and Hilton Garden Inn and the convention hall but had to release all bookings due to withdrawal of support from Karnataka Tourism in spite of announcing the same at the inaugural function of IATO 36th Annual Convention in Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat. The association cites this development as very unfortunate which it had never expected from Department of Tourism, Government of Karnataka.



Think Strawberries to represent Infinity Des Lumières in India

Infinity des Lumières, the largest immersive digital art centre in the GCC region located in Dubai, has appointed leading destination consulting and representation company Think Strawberries as its representative in India. The company has been awarded the mandate of a strategic partner and will be responsible for implementing sales in the India market. Offering immersive multi-sensory experiences, Infinity des Lumières establishes itself as a space for innovation. Spread over 2,700 sqm in The Dubai Mall, the venue brings iconic and contemporary art to life through immersive experiences.

Commenting on the development, Munnmun Marwah, COO, Think Strawberries, said, "The core strength of Think Strawberries is in offering cutting edge sales solutions and we are looking forward to driving this leading innovative cultural platform's unique selling propositions in India."



TAAI to organise 66th Cruising Convention in Singapore in August

TAAI invited their members to the 66th Cruising Convention from August 22 to August 25, 2022. Speaking about the event, Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI said that association's strength is in facilitating business-to-business and people-to-people contacts to support its members. Therefore, they had invited members to embark on a journey to rebuild the network and relationships post-pandemic.

Jay Bhatia, Vice President added that the TAAI's 66th Cruising Convention will be a lifetime experience. They had roped in the Royal Caribbean International and

shall be boarding the 'Spectrum of the Seas, apprised Bhatia.

Those looking forward to learning; networking; exploring; connecting to situations and people beyond their current, ones must immediately plan their participation and not miss out on exciting and momentous opportunities emphasized Bettiah Lokesh, Hon Secretary General.

This 66th Cruising Convention is designed to be numbers restricted, however, basis availability they will accommodate the maximum number of members, Patel assured.

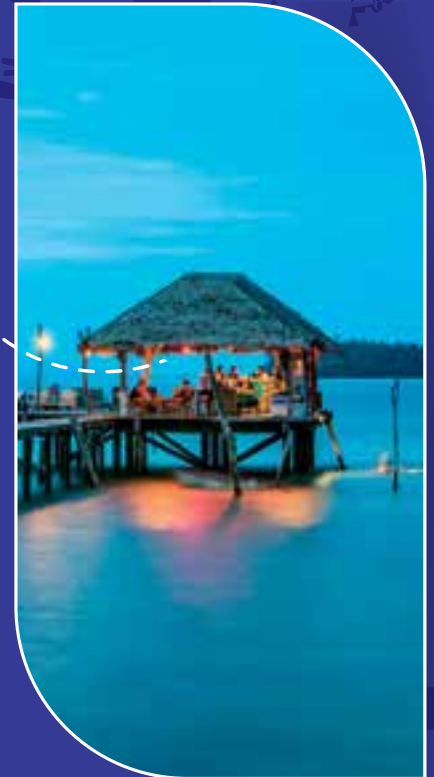
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CONTINUING THE SAGA OF GROUND-BREAKING INNOVATIONS

Kerala Tourism framing progressive goals under the new and dynamic supervision

The recently appointed Director of Kerala Tourism Department, P.B. Nooh IAS says he looks forward to a productive tenure in this important assignment and hopes to create strategic plans aimed at boosting the growth of tourism in the state. Nooh, a 2012 batch Indian Administrative Service, the former District Collector of Pathanamthitta and the current Chief Executive Officer of the Life Mission, has a clear idea of how the developments and a greater focus go hand-in-hand, and therefore, he has joined the current position at the tourism department with several goals in mind. TravelScapes was honoured and equally excited to discuss with Nooh about his new role and responsibilities, his ambitious plans to help the state regain its leadership position on India's tourism graph as well as how the state will harness more opportunities by continuously introducing, innovating and investing in near future. A detailed version of the interview can be read below...

By Gagneet Kaur

Congratulations on being appointed as the new Director. Can you share a little about your background and what brought you to Kerala Tourism?

Thank you! Born and brought up in Muvattupuzha, in Ernakulam District, I did my schooling at a public school before graduating from Kerala Agricultural University, Trichur and later did Masters in Genetics from the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bengaluru. My brother, Dr. PB Salim's success in 2001 in the Civil Services exam inspired me to strive for the same and I successfully cracked the Civil Services exam in 2012 and had AIR rank 43.

Prior to this posting, I had served as the District Collector in Pathanamthitta in 2018, when the floods swept the state and in 2020, when the first cases of Covid -19 were reported. Along with this charge as the Director of Tourism, I am also the Chief Executive Officer of the Life Mission, the Govt's flagship program for housing for the poor.

I look forward to a fruitful tenure in this important assignment and hope to continue the good work of my predecessors in taking Kerala Tourism to greater heights.

Kerala was recently acclaimed as an 'Eco Tourism Hotspot' by TIME magazine as one of the fifty extraordinary destinations to explore in the world in 2022, lavishing praises on the state as one of India's most beautiful places. It acclaimed Kerala as one of India's most beautiful states with spectacular beaches, lush backwaters, temples, and palaces. In particular, the magazine noted the pioneering initiative of motor-home or caravan tourism to inspire a new intimate relationship between the travellers and Kerala as an eco-tourism hotspot that offers places for exploration and accommodation.

Such international acclaims are proof of Kerala's standing as a leading tourism destination in the world and are also a recognition of Kerala Tourism's, as well as its stakeholders' exemplary work in promoting the state and in creating lasting experiences for its guests.

I hope to carry forward this good work during my tenure here with the support of all my colleagues in the department and the industry.

Going forward, what would be your plans for promoting Kerala's tourism, both on national and global level?

It will be my endeavour, under the dynamic leadership of our Minister, PA Mohamed Riyas, and with the able guidance and support of our Principal Secretary, KS Srinivas IAS, to help Kerala Tourism regain its leadership position quickly as India's most engaging and engrossing tourism destinations. The pandemic has hit us hard, as it has all facets of the economy, and hence our tasks are cut out.

With international travel and flights still to get back to normal, the domestic tourism market has been our focus hitherto. Kerala Tourism's pioneering Caravan Tourism initiative, Keravan Kerala, as also its other projects like the Destination Challenge have all been conceptualised with this in mind. Kerala attracted 3.8 million domestic tourists in the first quarter of 2022, registering a YoY growth of 72.48%.

Our Destination Challenge initiative is moored on the concept of 'explore the unexplored' and seeks to create micro-destinations in every corner of the state, down to the panchayat level. This ambitious plan seeks to roll out the entire state as an inter-connected tourism haven by

bringing scores of unknown or little-known spots across the state on the travel map. This will make a trip to Kerala a wholesome experience for visitors looking for all kinds of experiences, be it a stay in a houseboat or caravan, ecologically responsible adventure activities, visits to heritage and cultural centres and so forth.

Thinking upfront, Tourism Minister has already stated that the state will be promoting the idea of "Conscious Travel," to position Kerala as a long-stay global hub. This is an emerging global trend that ensures that critical factors such as ecology, community and culture of a region do not suffer while promoting tourism. Kerala has tremendous potential to emerge as a global leader by developing this model. This will make a visit to the state, particularly as a long-stay destination, a pleasant, enriching and learning experience.

Apart from pioneering in innovative segments/ products like Caravan Tourism, what new is Kerala coming up with in the upcoming months?

Introducing new destinations, conceptualising innovative tourism circuits, investing in infrastructure development and capacity building based on principles of sustainability of existing destinations and ensuring better connectivity will be our focus in the coming years.

To explore the scope of every unexplored spot and bring such places into the limelight is the broad objective that our Destination Challenge initiative is working towards. This would mean at least one destination in each panchayat. We have more than 1000 panchayats in the state. One may think of this as a too-ambitious-to-



P.B. Nooh

achieve target. But, in reality, Kerala's scope is such. So, our focus will no longer be confined to beaches, backwaters and hill stations. We want to transform the whole of Kerala into an interconnected tourist haven where visitors get plenty of choices and diverse experiences within the few days they spend in the state. Adventure, Wellness, MICE and Responsible Tourism, will all be taken forward with a greater sense of purpose.

In a world where people are travelling to experience the sights, as well as the real life of the place they choose to visit, we see tremendous scope for experiential tourism that is economically and ecologically sustainable. Our newest initiative, Caravan Tourism, is also essentially experiential. We are working on developing a Literary Circuit, as well as a Biodiversity Circuit. Both of which once launched will add to the bouquet of experiences that Kerala is.

Apart from this, Kerala Tourism will also focus its attention on the rich and varied heritage that we are bestowed with. As part of this, we are working towards realising the Travancore Heritage Project, Alleppey Heritage Project, Muziris Heritage Project and the Thalassery Heritage Projects. All these projects are aimed at protecting and sustaining the age-old heritage of these places most of which have a hoary past and are populated with old buildings that breathe the history of the times gone by.

Similarly, we will be working towards making the Spice Route, another of Kerala's attractions. The Spice Route project aims to connect Kerala with West Asia, the Mediterranean and the world beyond and the Far East, retracing the ancient journey of the spices that Kerala is famous for.

We will ensure that Kerala Tourism is ready to receive more tourists and give them a better experience while they are in Kerala. It will be a new Kerala Tourism built on the robust foundations of its picturesque locations and innovative products.

Are there any plans to use Kerala's strength in health tourism, especially during this post-pandemic era?

Over the years, Kerala has firmed up its position as a leading health tourism destination. Kerala has some of the most highly regarded and world-renowned Ayurvedic hospitals as well as leading Ayurveda and Wellness resorts. Kerala is also blessed with a climate that is congenial for Ayurvedic treatments, particularly during the monsoon. Kerala also boasts of several top-notch hospitals and modern medicine institutions, most of which are NABH and NABL accredited.

It will be our endeavour to consolidate our position as the leading wellness destination. At the same time, quality will remain our commitment and towards this end, Kerala Tourism has a classification procedure wherein Ayurvedic resorts are classified into Ayur Silver, Ayur Gold and Ayur Diamond categories based on the services they provide and the facilities that are available.

Kerala Tourism remains committed to providing its guests the very best in quality patient care and services. Our marketing campaigns will also continue to showcase its strengths in Wellness Tourism.

How is Kerala Tourism leveraging technological advancements? Tell us more about the newest initiative- the chatbot 'Maya'?

In a country first, Kerala Tourism launched its

24x7 WhatsApp chatbot 'Maya' in early April, to help tourists access all information and updates about the tourism ecosystem in the state by just sending a 'Hi' to WhatsApp no 7510512345, or by scanning a QR code to access the service. Since then, this service has logged in more than 60K users.

In June this year, we launched the Virtual Travel Guide for Fort Kochi – a QR code-aided digital tool that gives access to all information on tourism locations, such as distance to the nearest bus stand, railway station and airport, working hours of destinations and contact numbers and available tour packages and their bookings. This virtual travel guide will soon be available in all tourist destinations in the state. The e-brochure, along with short videos and high-resolution pictures with downloadable pages, will be set up across the state's tourism centres and important airports within and outside the country.

Harnessing the powers of the digital revolution, Kerala has always projected itself exceptionally well on social networking sites. How will your social media strategy differ from others in 2022?

As always, Kerala Tourism will strive to maintain its leadership position by harnessing all possible marketing communications avenues. Kerala Tourism will continue to explore and use new content formats, like micro videos and reels, while also deploying interesting new content that has been co-created with other similar premium brands.

While interesting content will remain a key focus for us, we will also explore how first-party data could be further harnessed to reach out to our audience while remaining compliant with existing data protection rules and respecting the privacy of individuals as well.

IATO requests reaping partial benefits; policymakers need to be more pro-active listeners, says Mehra



With over 45 years of laudable experience, **Rajiv Mehra - President of Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO)** is one such diligent leader that has not just earned an incomparable reputation in the Indian tourism industry but has also been appreciated well for his arduous efforts in strategising new roadmaps for country's tourism revival. Speaking to TravelScapes, Mehra summarised the requests currently accepted by the government and accentuated how the latter needs to be more pre-emptive while looking at the existing hindrances causing a sluggish recovery of inbound tourism to India. Also hopeful of yielding some positive results from Rajasthan Tourism, Mehra has now approached the state government to host their convention, shortly after the 37th edition in Bangalore was called off. Official confirmation and announcement to follow soon, said Mehra

By *Gagneet Kaur*

The Union Government accepted IATO's recommendations on removal of GST on services provided outside India as well as the GST for ferry services hired for transport of passengers. What are the other pending demands that you think need a quick addressal by the government?

a) Government has accepted our above requests. Earlier, services provided by a tour operator to a foreign tourist in respect of tour conducted wholly outside India was fully exempted from GST. However, in case the package included an India tour as well as tour to Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives and other countries, GST/IGST was payable on the entire package. IATO has been representing that the portion of the tour organised for the foreign tourist outside India should not suffer GST even if the package includes India tour. The GST Council finally agreed to our representation and clarified that service provided by Indian tour operator to a foreign resident and partially outside India would be subject to tax proportionate to the tour in India.

The Government has issued notification and according to the notification which has come into effect from July 18, 2022, the exempt portion of the package value is calculated proportionate to the number of days spent outside India vis-à-vis the total number of days involved in the package tour. Where the number of days spent by foreign tourists outside India is more than 50% of a total number of days of the tour. The exemption will be restricted to 50% of the total consideration value charged for the entire tour package.

b) With regard to GST on ferry service hired for transport of passengers, the service of transportation of passengers by public transport, in a vessel between places located in India is fully exempted from GST. However, in the same category, the Government has not allowed an exemption of transportation, predominantly for tourism purposes even in public transport. The expression "public transport" was neither defined nor clarified by the Government. The GST Council, on recommendations of IATO in the press release, clarified that "The expression 'public transport' used in the exemption entry

at SI No.17(d) of notification No.12/2017-CT(R), which exempts transport of passengers by public transport, in a vessel between places located in India, means that such transport should be open to the public for point-to-point transport.

Therefore, it is evident that there would be no GST for the ferry service hired for transport of passengers (including foreign tourists) used as public transport for point-to-point transport including in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. This is much-awaited relief for the tourism industry. However, the Government has not carried out a corresponding amendment in the exemption notification nor issued any circular to convey the recommendation of the GST Council. We will soon take up this matter.

c) Our other pending demand is that our government should get away with submission of self-declaration form on the online Air Suvidha Portal to encourage foreign travellers to visit our country.

Has DGCA responded favourably to your suggestion letters talking about the foreign travellers facing issues during check-ins in India and pending refunds of the travel agents?

IATO requested that directives should be issued to all the domestic airlines, not to make it compulsory for the travellers to do web check-in and instead, facility of issuing Boarding Pass should be available from the airline check-in counters at the airport for those who have not done web check-in. It is the responsibility of the airline to issue a boarding pass and baggage tag, hence there should not be any additional charges of Rs 200. THIS HAS BEEN ACCEPTED.

Regarding pending refunds of the Travel agents, IATO took up the case at the Supreme Court and our members got the refunds from Air India and other domestic airlines. However, refunds are pending from Jet Airways for which we have written to DGCA that before giving permission to Jet Airways to re-start its operation, they should settle the refunds of the travel agents. We have also requested that it should be made compulsory for all the airlines operating in India to give bank guarantee /

financial security to be kept with DGCA or an appropriate Statutory body to protect the interest of travel agents'/airline travellers in a situation when an airline goes bankrupt or ceases to operate like in the case of Jet Airways, Kingfisher and other airlines in the past.

On the domestic tourism front, the Ministry has been putting in a lot of promotional efforts but where do you think the effort lacks to market India on a global scale?

The government needs to start physical marketing and promotions, participation in major international travel marts/fairs and roadshows, we have requested that requisite funds may be allocated to the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India for this purpose. Overseas marketing and promotions through electronic and print media can be an add-on; reduction in airfares by reducing taxes on ATF; restoration of e-tourist visa for the international travellers from the UK, Canada, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain and validity of five lakh free tourist visas to be extended till March 2024.

How do you think a better handholding of ministry and the tourism associations can help aid the promotion of destinations, both in domestic and international spaces?

The policymakers need to listen more and be proactive to the justified requests by the associations. Time is opportune now; the world is opening up and we need to act promptly.

Now that the 37th annual convention of IATO previously scheduled in Bangalore has been called off, do you have any other tentative host states in mind? Do we expect any announcements soon?

We are in talks with Rajasthan Government to be the host state for the 37th IATO Annual Convention. Though principally our proposal has been accepted by Rajasthan Tourism, we are waiting for written confirmation from the state government and soon as we get the confirmation, it will be announced.

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PANDEMIC RESHAPING HOW GUESTS EXPERIENCE AND DESIRE LUXURY

Pandemic has planted the idea of travelling consciously in the minds of seekers and explorers. Broadening the horizon of luxury travel, **Riaz Munshi, Founder and MD of N Chirag Travels and President of the Outbound Tour Operators Association of India**, has reiterated that today, affluent travellers are leaning towards safe staycations blended with luxury. Travellers who were once forced to be closeted now want to explore and experience the untried side of the tourism industry. What was once out of their sight is now back in their minds with eclectic travel experiences. The trend shows they are inclining more towards innovative and safe stays worth archiving than visiting destinations. Giving his insights, Munshi emphasises how avid travellers are looking for reassurance in terms of safety measures being actively promoted by the luxury tourism industry



The pandemic has undoubtedly reshaped travellers' preferences as they are now much more cognisant of their travel choices, moving towards a fuller and immersive travel experience that allows them to connect, explore and unwind truly. As a result, the demand for luxury stays has increased multifold. We have seen a 25-30% increase in guests looking for more discerning experiences post the pandemic. This will only grow as even those beginning to travel aspire to more unique experiences.

Luxury travel is an emotion. It's about how you feel at a specific destination or stay. For some, luxury could mean something flashy, while for others, it could mean quaint and boutique. For some, it could mean a designer hotel, while for others, it could be setting up a Camp in an arctic region where nobody else can. But, at the core of it, travellers are looking for new experiences, unexplored areas, and longer, more relaxed trips.

With the pent-up demand for exclusive and

Travellers are also now inclined towards more local, authentic and cultural elements of the destination that contribute to giving back to the community

luxury experiences, safety remains key

There is no doubt that even with the pent-up demand for exclusive and luxury experiences, safety remains critical. The commitment to safety holds utmost importance now, and I feel that as an industry, we have to constantly evolve the elements of our operations to ensure safe travel for all at every touch point. For luxury and exclusive experiences, following vital cleanliness, health and safety protocols are crucial to upholding the standard of offering the highest level of premium and personalised service.

Incorporating impactful luxury itineraries

I now see more consideration into embracing

slow and sustainable travel, and there is a renewed focus on creating new itineraries that are impactful, purposeful and responsible. Travellers are also now inclined towards more local, authentic and cultural elements of the destination that contribute to giving back to the community.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Riaz Munshi is the Founder and Managing Director of N Chirag Travels and President of the Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI). Having spent around 30 years in the travel industry, Munshi started his business with ticketing and then moved to outbound tours. Today, his company, N. Chirag, curates personalised trips and unique luxury experiences worldwide.

PINNING SUMMIT HOTELS & RESORTS prominently on the Indian Hospitality map

The man with a vision and a mission, Sumit Mitruka, CEO & Founder at Summit Hotels & Resorts, is all geared up to take the brand at the “summit” of success. A young and dynamic entrepreneur, Mitruka has worked his way through with a strong belief of establishing the brand name “Summit Hotels and Resorts” across every foothill of Himalayas. Today, with 22 properties across India in 7 states, 15 cities and counting, Mitruka is certainly putting in some serious efforts to make “Summit Hotels and Resorts” a known name in the Indian hospitality space

Sumit Mitruka – An ambitious protagonist

In the hospitality world of Eastern Himalayas and North-East India, the name of Sumit Mitruka is not something people are unaware of. Such has been his contribution towards the industrious development of tourism infrastructure in terms of providing branded rooms with exceptional value and service that Summit Hotels and Resorts today stands recognized- with its name echoing across the valley of majestic Himalayas.

The spark

Mitruka is an alumnus of St. Paul’s School, Darjeeling; did his MBA from London Metropolitan University before joining Hilton Hotels and Resorts, London. Throughout his stay, Mitruka cultivated and nurtured a dream of starting a chain of hotels and resorts in his backyard to introduce people to Incredible Himalayan Hospitality.

When he returned home, he started making inroads to realise his dream. The first project conceived in Gangtok in 2009 was his first feat towards achieving something incredible. Today, his dream is shared by 22 properties across 7 states and 15 cities, spreading an essence of exceptional value and service throughout the foothills of the Indian Himalayan region.

Summit Hotels and Resorts: Off-beat & surreal

Summit Hotels and Resorts today stands as the largest hotel chain in the Eastern Himalaya; it is the most preferred Himalayan Hospitality



Sumit Mitruka

the traveller with options to choose from to spend their hard-earned vacations.

A man on a mission

To achieve the feat of having its presence across every Himalayan destination of India, Mitruka has recently added the property in Lansdowne amidst the beauty of nature and Oakden as a new majestic resort in ever enchanting Mall road, Darjeeling, adding more feathers to a colourful hat of Summit’s portfolio.

The induction of Singalila, the finest lifestyle club in Siliguri in the foothills of Himalaya is the latest addition to an outstanding versatility shown by Mitruka for over 12 years. But the process doesn’t end here; Mitruka is constantly

Mitruka dares to take his dream to next level by showing the presence of Summit Hotels and Resorts across every hill station of India by 2030

brand but behind all these surreal laurels, the vision and hard work of Mitruka are truly remarkable. It is because of his sincere dedication that Summit Hotels and Resorts is to date considered as the most heterogeneous brand with heritage hotels, boutique properties, farm stays, clubs, off-beat locations, prime locations and vernacular architecture to reward

considering the plan of bringing hotels and resorts into lease and management to extend its run towards reaching the ultimate goal of putting Summit Hotels and Resorts on the map of Indian Hospitality.

Man with a vision

The vision of Mitruka is to go to every peak of the country and conquer it. The outright prospect of providing exceptional value and exceptional service to the traveller is continuously in the loop. Besides that, Mitruka is reviewing all the options to give a seamless experience to guests coming to any of the Summit properties so that when the presence of Summit is established beyond the horizon, the traveller doesn’t hesitate to pick his bag to explore the comfort and luxury on offer by Summit. Mitruka dares to take his dream to next level by showing the presence of Summit Hotels and Resorts across every hill station of India by 2030 and so far, has been doing exceedingly well to accomplish the same.



TRAVSTARZ GLOBAL GROUP AND VANA NAVA WATER JUNGLE, HUA HIN HOST A NETWORKING GALA IN DELHI

Travstarz Global Group in association with Vana Nava Water Jungle, Hua Hin, Thailand hosted a Networking Dinner and Product Presentation in Delhi on July 7, 2022. The event was supported by the Tourism Authority of Thailand with the presence of Khun Vachirachai Sirisumpan, Director TAT, Aso, the Marketing Officer and Pinky Arora, Marketing Representative (North & East India, Bangladesh, & Nepal) for TAT.

Travstarz introduced the Vana Nava Water Jungle, Hua Hin, Thailand, Asia's First Water Jungle Park in India with this event which was represented by Khun Tip Arpa Kaewnoi (Fon), the Cluster Senior Sales Manager and Khun Mutjarin Namkhampa (Ning), the Cluster Director of Sales & Marketing. Khun Fon made the presentation on the Water Jungle Park which was followed by a Quiz session giving away free couple passes to the winners. Travstarz also announced the start of full-fledged operations of its various DMC locations especially in Thailand during the event and to mark the occasion, two lucky winners were given complimentary 2-night stay couple vouchers at 5-star resorts of Hua Hin. The vouchers were presented to the winners by Riaz Munshi, OTOAI President and Neeraj Malhotra, TAAI North India Chairman.

Speaking on the occasion, Sucheta Nagpal, Director & CEO, Travstarz Global Group said, "Travstarz has been a purely B2B company in India since 2009 and has always been a pioneer in introducing new products and destinations in the Indian Market. Vana Nava Water Jungle, Hua Hin is an amazing new product perfect in all respects for Family Leisure Groups, FITs, MICE and even Weddings with a host of activities and

Meeting Spaces designed for the same. We feel delighted and proud that they have chosen to partner with us for the Indian market based on our past credentials for over a decade now."

Khun Fon happily remarked, "We are pleased to meet so many quality travel agents at the event and introduce our park to them. The park has 20+ adventure and leisure activities including a Rope Course and Climbing Wall, Flow Rider, Abyss and Boomerango and boasts of the First Virtual Reality Slide in Asia. We also have great venues for MICE groups with fully equipped meeting rooms with provision of meals"

"We are happy to partner with Travstarz Global

Group, which has been the industry leader in the India B2B market for many years and has already worked with several tourism boards, hotels and other operators in the past. I am sure our partnership with them will go a long way and will help in bringing much-needed exposure to our parks. Both Sucheta and Pankaj have been very hands-on and have personally ensured the success of the event and we are very thankful to them for their support," Khun Ning added.

The well-attended event was much appreciated by all present; each of them thoroughly enjoyed the evening and welcomed the restart of Travstarz Global Group's operations.



Its raining Monsoon offers at Lords Hotels & Resorts

Monsoon is just on the anvil, a season that brings joy and lightens the souring spirits due to heat. It is that time of the year when everything looks cleansed and picturesque. The flora and fauna is at its best and invite people young to not so young to come and indulge in nature and vacations.

Lords Hotels and Resorts is celebrating the soothing season with an offer, which will take you and your family, and friends to exciting destinations.

A quick rain check with Lords Hotels and Resorts via its website will enlighten you, the patrons to its exhilarating offers of up to 30% discount on stay. And, on arrival, guests are offered with a refreshing welcome drink, along with a complimentary palette, that includes steamy tea and delicious and crunchy pakoras.

The offer is available Pan India and Nepal properties of Lords Hotels and Resorts, where guests can enjoy the rains. In Maharashtra, guests can take a detour to Lords Eco Inn in the hilly terrains of Panchgani or the Pushpam Lords Resort in Karjat, which is nestled in the Ulhas Valley and enjoy its splendid services amidst its natural surroundings. The enchanting beauty of the beach in the rains is another story all together, where one is sure to go head-over-heels with the monsoon season. Here, a trip down to the beach destination of Porbandar or Dwarka region where a staycation can be enjoyed at the beautiful property of Lords Inn/Lords Eco Inn is sure to maximize the fun of the rainy season. Guests will surely love it. And, if you need to be near Nature, there is no other place than Vishal Lords Inn Gir Forest, where a staycation can make you explore Nature at close quarters. Monsoon is also the best time to visit Jaipur, where



the rains starts in the month of July and ends around the month of September. Here, two of our well-designed properties, namely Lords Plaza Jaipur and Lords Inn Jaipur, Malviyanagar, offer luxurious comfort and services at affordable rates.

Coming back to the monsoon offer, Ashutosh Vaidya, General Manager, Sales explains that "People romanticize about the rains and love taking a sojourn long or short, just to connect with Mother Nature. The Monsoon Dhamaka offers more than just a discount on a stay at any of the Lord's properties. It also offers guests a chance to unwind and pamper themselves with wellness options that includes a swim in the swimming pool, tone themselves in the gym and experience a spa ritual, which comes at a 20% discount. The offer also includes unlimited Wi-Fi usage, room upgrade subject to availability, early check in and late check out +/- 3 Hrs., 2 Kids under 5 Years complimentary, and 15% discount on Laundry. So, make the most of the offer and enjoy the rains with your loved ones.

Romanticising Rajasthan – The Exotic Indian Wedding Destination!

Rajasthan, the land of beautiful colours is also a land of rich heritage, culture, safaris, sand dunes, lush forests and wildlife; making it a unique wedding destination.

In Rajasthan's rustic surroundings, Lords Hotels and Resorts has some charming jewels in the form of well-designed properties, which offer the best of facilities and are ideal settings to make one's dream wedding day a beautiful and memorable reality.

Leading the magnificent pack is the VALLABH VILAS LORDS PLAZA, NATHDWARA, a palatial property, located adjacent to the famous Shrinath Ji Temple. The place is like a magnet attracting people with its grandeur that offers easy and relaxed access to the temple along with a magnificent view of the town and the Aravalli Hills; and is spread across a sprawling 2 acres of land. The grand interiors are well designed with royal suites with the best of amenities on board. For weddings, the property is well-maintained with a spacious banquet hall that has a capacity to accommodate a gathering of 500 people in theatre style; including a lush lawn space, ideal setting for ring, haldi and mehndi ceremonies. The hotel offers 2 complimentary rooms for the bride and the bridegroom family. Guests can also look forward to a scrumptious pure vegetarian buffet spread, which is a gastronomic delight.

Lords Inn Malviyanagar, Jaipur is a newly launched boutique hotel that features 36

spacious and well-designed guestrooms and a lavish air-conditioned banquet hall that can accommodate a gathering of 300+ pax. There are also two roof top spaces, where wedding pheras can be conducted and receptions can be organized. The hotel offers 2 complimentary rooms for the bridal entourage. And, the buffet includes authentic local vegetarian cuisine made effortlessly by the in-house chefs. For the reception, one can also serve liquor with a 1-day special liquor license, which can be arranged by the hotel at extra cost.

Close to Malviyanagar is Lords Plaza, Jaipur, a gorgeous boutique property built with jharokas; and contemporary architecture and décor. Fashioned around the Rajasthani culture and utmost comfort, the hotel features banquet venues that are perfect settings for wedding anniversaries with a capacity to accommodate a gathering of 100+ people. The hotel offers a room on a complimentary basis and all other arrangements can be organized by the hotel with the assistance of an outside vendor.

Located just 372kms from Jaipur is Lords Inn in Jodhpur; a city of royal legacy and heritage. The hotel bears an essence of Royal Luxury and is an ideal destination for a sangeet function or an engagement party. Guests, who book the banquet for a sangeet function or an engagement party, are offered a complimentary room and free access to the gorgeous roof top swimming pool. There is also a 40% discount on



the spa facility and 15% discount on the party buffet.

Udaipur, the picturesque and elegant city of lakes is also an ideal backdrop for a wedding function. Lords Inn, Udaipur located in the heart of Udaipur at Govardhan Vilas and near to the famous Pichola Lake, City Palace, Jagdish Temple & Rope Way is another ideal place to conduct a big fat Indian wedding. This wedding destination of Lords Hotels and Resorts offers a spacious banquet space for a gathering of 200+ pax. The hotel offers a complimentary room on booking the venue as well as access to roof-top swimming pool during your stay.

Unfold your story of togetherness with a lavish wedding celebration at Lords.

THE STANDARD, HURUVALHI MALDIVES

Growing Experientially

An ultra-glamorous boutique resort nestled amidst a lush tropical island with a turquoise lagoon, expansive beaches and so much more, The Standard, Huruvalhi Maldives certainly breathes a new life into its visitors. **Jesper Soerensen, General Manager of The Standard, Huruvalhi Maldives**, in an exclusive chat with TravelScapes, reveals all and more about the resort's differential factors, traction from the India market and how post-pandemic times have helped them evolve faster, stay ahead and create new experiences to complement every guest's stay. While being truly optimistic about the resort's growth, Soerensen also shares his views on how the "human aspect and interaction" always stay at the centre of both his work ethics and the resort's values

By Gagneet Kaur

What would you say makes The Standard, Huruvalhi Maldives truly stand out amongst its peers?

The Standard, Maldives is set on a lush tropical island with a turquoise lagoon, expansive beaches, and a naturally protected house reef, providing our guests with the opportunity to enjoy a truly Maldivian island experience. Many of our guests speak highly of the dive and snorkeling experiences that allow them to discover marine life, while some appreciate the dining scene at one of our restaurants, featuring the finest ingredients and produce sourced both regionally and from our resort's island farm.

Our island oasis breathes new life into paradise, offering relaxation, social, and cultural experiences, including programming and activities for the young and the young-at-heart — there is just something for everyone here. Guests seeking a fun and interactive experience can gain a unique insight into the fine wines from across the globe with Beru Bar (18+)s 'Wine Down' (wine appreciate event) and the methodology behind world-class cocktails with Todis Bar's 'Mix It Up' (mixology masterclass) while enjoying the company of others and meeting new people. Holidaymakers who wish to dive deep into the Maldivian culture can expect to see a performance of traditional Bodu Beru music and dance at the resort or learn some Dhivehi (the Maldives' local language) and native arts and crafts at our Kids club called Lil' Shark.

However, I believe that it is 'our people' who make us really stand out from the competition. I am very proud to lead a team of dedicated team members from diverse cultural backgrounds who consistently go above and beyond to provide each guest a 'home away from home' feeling based on warm, friendly and attentive service.

How important is the India market for you?

In my working life of over 35 years, I have always loved the human aspect and interaction, whether it be guests, clients, or hosts — hospitality is about people, after all.

The Indian market is highly relevant to us, as we see a huge interest in Indian travellers entering the Maldives. In fact, India ranks within the top five and the year-on-year growth continues to increase. We welcome a good number of Indian guests to our resort and expect it to continue growing.

Are there any new promotional campaigns in the pipeline, specifically targeting the India market?

The Indian market travels year-round and we always have relevant promotions. Solo travellers and those traveling with their friends who want to stay longer in paradise will be rewarded with more vacation time with our 'Stowaway' extended stay offer, while couples may opt for a romantic retreat with our 'Eat, Play, Love' romance package. Furthermore, for us to cater to Indian travellers with specific dietary requirements, our talented team of culinary experts continues to expand our food and beverage offerings.

With latest innovations and guest demands taking the front seat post-COVID, how do you think The Standard has adapted moving forward to an extremely fluid travel industry?

We are constantly evolving, staying ahead, and creating new experiences to complement every guest's stay, with, of course, our usual irreverent

and playful approach. Right now, for instance, to better serve the rising guest demands aiming at having an immersive holiday, we have introduced our line-up of wellness residencies that will allow them to discover their spiritual and physical self, whilst relaxing on the pristine sandy beaches and indulging in a range of unique experiences. This has kept us relevant in the ever-evolving market.

How are you promoting the property on digital platforms?

Digital marketing indeed has become an integral part of our overall marketing strategy. Our resort can be found on social media, particularly on Facebook and Instagram, posting exciting updates and getting social with our present and future guests. Furthermore, we work closely with qualified social media influencers, key opinion leaders, media partners and top digital publications.

Talking on the personal front, what do you enjoy most about hospitality and your role and responsibilities here?

I always stay focused on the task at hand, which always remains people. In my working life of over 35 years, I have always loved the human aspect and interaction, whether it be guests, clients, or hosts — hospitality is about people, after all. Yes, we are in the business industry and run businesses, but they 100% center around people with whom I never want to lose touch or focus. This is translated to our hosts with the simple approach of seeing, listening, and responding. If you master these three, which I have done over the years, there is always a positive interaction, experience, and outcome. That essentially is my role and my responsibility. Everything else follows if you talk in business terms of retention, profit, and management. My vision of a leadership dimension is the understanding of people. It will always land there, and that is what I try to teach my future leaders.



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Bahrain eyes tourism boom; unveils prospering blueprint of promotions in India

Besides setting goals for the traditional GCC market, Bahrain has identified India as another source market to focus on post-pandemic. Intending to become the next travel muse for Indian travellers, Bahrain, through its extensive and intensive marketing, is planning to go big in the India market, with the hope to treble the traveller numbers. TravelScapes speaks with **Maryam Toorani, Director of Marketing and Promotion, Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA)** about the ambitious tourism strategies to attract 14 million visitors by 2026, prominence of India market as well as the new projects aimed at giving a major facelift to Bahrain and its burgeoning tourism space

By *Gagneet Kaur*

Doubling the size of the tourism sector

As the countries begin to ease travel restrictions and tourists return with even more enthusiasm to explore, Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA) too has harnessed the opportunity. Hoping high for 2022 and beyond to be the landmark years for the tourism boom, Bahrain has set some ambitious tourism goals ahead of ongoing and new developments. "Bahrain plans on doubling the size of its tourism sector in the next five years. We have been taking up strategic initiatives which will boost tourism numbers in our country. We're investing more than BHD 130 million directly in tourism infrastructure that includes several beachfront and waterfront projects with the key focus to attract 14 million visitors by 2026," highlights Toorani while adding that the upcoming Exhibition World Centre, scheduled to open later this year, will be a game changer for Bahrain.

Bahrain, the next most preferred choice for MICE

Behind every facade of magnificent Bahrain lies the layers of life- the layers that showcase both its cultural and modern aspects. With one foot in its deep-rooted history, Bahrain has another portion boasting the modern cosmopolitan lifestyle. Sitting in the centre of the Persian Gulf region, the beautiful Bahrain is surrounded by water on all sides, a relaxing atmosphere, friendly natives and world-class luxurious properties which eventually makes it the perfect choice for Indians looking for an international MICE destination in the Middle East. Hoping to take a huge chunk of the business tourism pie while adding prominence to its MICE landscape, Bahrain is opening the largest convention centre (Exhibition World Centre). The venue, said to be the Middle East's largest conference centre, boasts 95,000m² of exhibition space spread across 10 halls. There are also a 4,000-seat tiered auditorium, 95 meeting rooms and a 250-seat restaurant. It is expected to support more

events, festivals and conferences and will attract regional as well as international exhibitions to be held in Bahrain. Further, the hotels here are equipped with large banquet halls, roomy outdoor spaces, Indian chefs and picturesque locations that can accommodate events of all sizes, says Toorani.

"Bahrain's hospitality sector continues to see development growth. The opening of new grand hotels in Bahrain, such as the Jumeirah Gulf of Bahrain Resort & Spa, The Address Hotel-Marassi Al Bahrain, and DoubleTree by Hilton, Conrad Hotels & Resorts, with their top-notch amenities, will further improve the perception of the location as the ideal leisure and luxury destination for Indian travellers," she adds.

Asked about the other factors that will play an important role in positioning the destination as an ideal MICE location, she further informs that the easy visa formalities and direct flight connections from India to Bahrain will add to the tourism boom.

Having the eyes set on the India market

Bahrain, which already has its firm footing in the competitive Gulf holiday market, is now making its footprints prominent in the burgeoning Indian market. "Bahrain is the only island nation in the GCC region, with a very rich heritage and modern infrastructure as well as a yearlong calendar of existing events. When it comes specifically to the Indian market, Bahrain has a very long history with India. The Indian community in Bahrain constitutes 30% of the total population and is the largest expatriate community in Bahrain. Further, the Indian community's ties to Bahrain are highlighted through many events across the year and can also be seen in the diverse dining offerings available," informs Toorani.

She notices and states that India's outbound tourism market is set to surpass US\$40 billion by 2026 with an impressive double-digit growth rate during the forecast period 2021–2026. Therefore, betting big on this important market, Bahrain has started to roll out different plans and

strategies, including roadshows, special FAM tours and more to attract Indian tourists. This also includes their recent partnership with VFS Global to promote Bahrain in India. "Through our association with VFS Global Pvt. Ltd. with a comprehensive destination marketing and the promotion of Bahrain as a tourist destination in the Indian market, we aim to provide tourists with an unforgettable vacation experience in Bahrain as well as strive to highlight the area's abundance of attractions and range of services," Toorani exclaims.

"The destination will be promoted through various B2B and B2C activities like sales visits, training, multi-city roadshows, familiarisation trips, joint co-ops with various travel agents, a few exciting contests, celebrity/influencer engagements and a slew of other promotional activities. We hope to triple the number of visitors to Bahrain in the near future," she further informs.

Bahrain is well connected with India by their national carrier, Gulf Air, with direct flights from 8 key cities - Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru Chennai, Hyderabad, Calicut, Kochi & Thiruvananthapuram which further makes it an easy choice for Indian travellers. Air India also provides direct connectivity from India to Bahrain. Indian travellers are also eligible for e-visas to Bahrain for short-term visits.

Truly "Ours. Yours. Bahrain"

Aesthetic, hospitable and modern as well as offering an exotic experience like no other Middle Eastern destination, Bahrain is truly a place that you don't just visit; you feel it! Combining the aspects of warmth and welcome beautifully, the destination's brand concept "Ours. Yours. Bahrain" resonates and creates a feeling of connection. But there's more to what meets the eye! "In this multi-layered and multicultural destination, there is a lot one can do and explore. It is a stunning nation filled with enthralling history, vibrant culture and magnificent architecture," Toorani welcomes travellers while concluding on a positive note.



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Accor signs two new Novotel Properties in India

Accor, a hospitality group with over 420 hotels across India, the Middle East, Africa and Turkey, continues to expand its footprint in Madhya Pradesh by signing two Novotel properties in Bhopal and Indore. Accor signed a management agreement with Kwality Developers and Amar Krishna Leisure Pvt Ltd for the Novotel properties.

Aniruddh Kumar VP - Development, Accor India and South Asia said "We are delighted to expand our presence in Madhya Pradesh by adding more properties within the Novotel brand in Bhopal and Indore. We will continue the legacy of our existing properties by giving our visitors a unique and enriching experience."

Both properties boast landmark locations, with the Bhopal site being constructed in the Gulmohar Colony area, while the Indore site is being built on the bypass road. Novotel Bhopal and Novotel Indore will feature 105 rooms and 130 rooms respectively. Both properties offer restaurants, banquet facilities, a fitness centre, and a range of specially curated spas.

Kunal Agarwal Partner, Kwality Developers said - "As we venture into the branded segment of hospitality, we couldn't ask for a better partner than the Accor group as we bring the global chain to the heart of Madhya Pradesh."

With six properties in the pipeline set for the next two years, Accor is focused on providing guests with an unparalleled and diverse offering across India.

Mumbai's first Fairfield by Marriott opens in July

Strategically located near the Mumbai International Airport, Mumbai's first Fairfield by Marriott hotel is close to key business and commercial offices on the Andheri Kurla Road and SEEPZ. Flanked equidistantly between Bombay Exhibition Centre and the Jio Convention centre, it offers direct access to Western Express Highway and Powai.

The hotel offers 205 tastefully-done rooms which offer affordable luxury to the discerning business traveller. The rooms are full of amenities. The modern well-appointed bathrooms are equipped with premium bathing products adding up to the exuberating stay.

Unwind evenings with drinks and intimate music at Mado Mado and Bisou featuring local delicacies, global cuisines and interactive live stations. SORA is open to a sky-infinity pool located on the rooftop providing a breath-taking view of the runway.

Ajoy Balkrishna, VP-Hospitality, Balwa Group said, "We are excited for the opening of the first Fairfield by Marriott in Mumbai- the bustling Commercial Capital of the country. We and our team are looking forward to welcoming you all to come and experience the signature Marriott Hospitality and will leave no stone unturned to delight you all."

The Fern Residency, Turbhe launches in Navi Mumbai

The Fern Residency, Turbhe, is located close to key business centres in Turbhe, the International Airport, Turbhe Railway Station and Palm Beach Road. With 76 rooms and suites, Connexions, the multi-cuisine coffee shop and resto-bar and Celebrations, the main banquet hall, the hotel is ideally suited for business travellers, leisure guests and local Navi Mumbai residents, for all their accommodation, dining and banqueting requirements. Concept Hospitality Pvt. Ltd. has opened its seventh hotel in the Mumbai region with The Fern Residency, Turbhe, Navi Mumbai. The company now manages 20 hotels in Maharashtra



Suhail Kannampilly, CEO, Concept Hospitality - The Fern Hotels & Resorts said, "We have been steadily growing in the state of Maharashtra. And we look forward to opening a few more properties in the state in the near future."

Hyatt Regency Thrissur opens a large convention centre

Spread over 96,000 sq ft, Lulu International Convention Centre by Hyatt Regency Thrissur is the largest of its kind in the Tier 3 cities of India. It can accommodate a total capacity of over 5,000. The newly opened convention centre offers spaces for conferences, weddings and other events.

LICC features nine state-of-the-art meeting and convention spaces: Pearl- a grand ballroom, Regency - a palatial ballroom, Opal - a large ballroom, Regal - a pillarless ballroom and others. It also has an exclusive helipad and a 1,50,000 sq ft outdoor space.

"LICC by Hyatt Regency Thrissur is all set to become an iconic event destination in the cultural capital of the state of Kerala. The flexible and dynamic venues are equipped to host physical, virtual and hybrid events with prime audio-visual installations and high-speed internet access," says Anish Kuttan, General Manager at Hyatt Regency Thrissur.

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Radisson Resort Goa Baga opens doors in the vibrant beach city

Located in North Goa, Anjuna is known for its trance parties held from October to April, as well as the famous flea markets that come alive every Wednesday and Saturday. It is well-connected with air and railway as the Thivim Railway Station is 16 km away while the Goa International Airport is at a distance of 44 km. The area is known for the St. Michael's Church, Anjuna, founded in 1595.

Located in Anjuna, this property will feature 51 well-appointed

rooms, complemented by a restaurant, bar, spa, swimming pool and gym. It will also have a meeting room.

Mahesh Aiyer, CEO, Carnation Hotels Private Limited commented, "We are delighted to expand our reach in Goa with our valued partner, Amrinder Singh. This will be our fifth property in Goa, a state famous for its tourism potential, which is visited by large numbers of travellers, both domestic and international, every year."

LINKIN Reps appointed as India Representative of Haritha Villas + Spa, Sri Lanka

LINKIN Reps appointed the India Sales, marketing and Public Relations representation office for Haritha Villas+ Spa, Sri Lanka. LINKIN Reps will be responsible for driving holistic sales, trade marketing and PR Strategies in India for Haritha Villas+ Spa, Sri Lanka.

"We are happy that LINKIN Reps will represent us, with their vast tourism experience and through their large network of travel agents in the country to promote our little island and Haritha Villas + Spa to the luxury travel segment in India", said Thanuja Weerasinghe, Sales & Marketing.

Komal Seth, Founder & Director, LINKIN Reps said, "We take pride in announcing that Haritha Villas+ Spa is the newest addition to our brand portfolio. We are looking forward to working closely with Haritha Villas + Spa to position them as an attractive leisure Resort



for Indian travellers to Sri Lanka.

Umberto Piccolini, General Manager also expresses his feelings "Haritha Villas + Spa is very proud to enter into cooperation with LINKIN Reps with its very experienced visionary leadership team within the industry."

Haritha Villas + Spa is less than 1 km from Narigama beach and 1.2 km from Hikkaduwa beach, an exclusive contemporary resort with spa treatments, private luxury accommodation, and a world of experiences.



Lemon Tree Hotels signs a new hotel in Anjuna, Goa

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IHG strengthens presence in Rajasthan

IHG Hotels & Resorts has signed a management agreement with SRDF Ventures Private Limited to develop a new Crowne Plaza Resort in the city of Pushkar – a key tourism destination in Rajasthan and a town known for its cultural fairs and religious festivities. Crowne Plaza Resort Pushkar will be a new-built property featuring 125 rooms and is expected to

will be the fifth hotel from IHG to open in the state, along the NH8 highway. Set in a serene and peaceful locale, the hotel will be an ideal choice for leisure travel and destination weddings.

Along with rooms designed to offer premium guest experiences, the hotel will feature facilities including all-day dining, a speciality restaurant and bar, an outdoor pool, a gym and a spa. The hotel will feature meeting and banqueting facilities to accommodate large gatherings and cater to MICE requirements.

Sudeep Jain, Managing Director, South West Asia, IHG Hotels and Resorts said, "We are confident that on opening, Crowne Plaza Resort Pushkar will be a widely popular destination amongst travellers visiting Puskar from within India and international markets as well."



be operational by early 2026.

With currently two operating hotels and two under development in Rajasthan, Crowne Plaza Resort Pushkar

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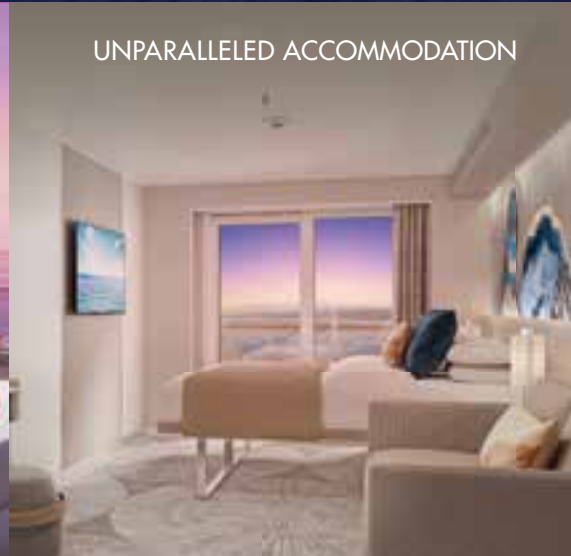
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W Hotels expands into Portugal

W Hotels Worldwide, part of Marriott Bonvoy's portfolio of 30 extraordinary hotel brands, announced the highly anticipated opening of W Algarve in Southern Portugal.

"W Algarve marks the first W Hotel to open in Portugal, bringing a unique, modern luxury experience that is focused on socialising, to the Algarve's hospitality scene," said Candice D' Cruz, Vice President – Luxury Brands, Europe, Middle East and Africa, Marriott International.

"From the hotel's design that is rooted in Portuguese history and culture, to the W brand's signature music programming to exciting new dining experiences, W Algarve is a destination where international jet setters and local tastemakers can discover an unexpected side of the

destination."

W Algarve welcomes visitors with 134 west-facing guest rooms and suites, alongside 83 W-branded Residences incorporating natural hues and tactile finishes. Guests can discover large, private balconies with stunning ocean views and unearth the local culture through curated artwork and custom-made furnishings.

Premium rooms include 10 WOW Suites, featuring a rooftop terrace, and the ultimate seaside retreat, the E WOW Suite.

General Manager Cajetan Araujo said, "It feels like the perfect moment to be opening our doors with summer 2022 set to be huge for travel to Portugal, and we can't wait for guests to discover a new W Escape in one of the most beautiful regions in the world."



Swiss-Belhotel Hotel returns to Thailand

Swiss-Belhotel International has announced its return to Thailand with The Scene Cliff View Villas - by Swiss-Belhotel and situated 5 minutes away from the picturesque Ao Nang Beach, a tropical wonderland with the majestic backdrop of Ao Nang Cliff, in Krabi. The beautiful boutique hotel is surrounded by lush rainforests and majestic hills. Set amidst an area of 4800 sqm, the tranquil one-of-a-kind sanctuary boasts 24 one- and two-bedroom villas with captivating views complemented by a wide array of thoughtful facilities and services including the giant

swimming pool in Ao Nang.

The Scene Cliff View Villas - by Swiss-Belhotel is equipped with superb amenities including free Wi-Fi, LCD TV, kitchenette, microwave, coffee/tea maker, mini bar, safe box, and ironing board. Enriching the guest experience are the resort's extensive facilities ranging from a 24-hour fitness centre to a swimming pool, kids pool, Vibe Café, a pool-side bar, BBQ facilities, beach club, kids' club, a garden, business centre, meeting facilities, shops, car rental, library, free parking, and laundry and dry-cleaning services.

Espire announces Country Inn Hall of Heritage Amritsar

Espire Hospitality Group announced the launch of a newly built hotel 'Country Inn Hall of Heritage, Amritsar'.

The 44-room hotel is located in the popular Hall Bazaar within the Hall Gate premises, just 800 meters away from the world-renowned sites Golden Temple and Jallianwala Bagh. The hotel features contemporary interiors, modern facilities, and a multi-cuisine restaurant. Proximity to the Airport, Railway Station, and key attractions such as Durgiana Mandir, Gobindgarh Fort, Partition Museum and Hall Bazaar market, makes the hotel an ideal place to stay.

Akhil Arora, Chief Operating Officer, Espire Hospitality



Group said, "We are pleased to announce our entry into one of the most revered pilgrimage centres of India – Amritsar."

Harmeet Singh, Owner Partner, Hall of Heritage, added, "We are certain that the operational acumen, service standards, and heartfelt hospitality that Country Inn Hotels & Resorts brand is known for, will add great value to the guests."



Hilton raises 2022 profit forecast on strong travel demand

Hotel operator Hilton Worldwide Holdings Inc raised its full-year profit forecast after reporting a better-than-expected quarterly profit behind a rebound in travel demand.

The hotel industry has benefited from people spending on travel and hotel stays, though rising interest rates and tight financial conditions are stoking fears of a recession. However, credit cards and other data indicate that travel demand will likely remain robust.

Shares of Hilton, which owns brands including the Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts, were

up 4.9 per cent at USD 126.1. The hotel operator expects a net income of USD 1.15 billion to USD 1.22 billion this year, compared to its previous guidance of USD 1 billion to USD 1.07 billion.

The Virginia-based company expects a full-year capital return between USD 1.5 billion and USD 1.9 billion, compared to its prior guidance of USD 1.4 billion to USD 1.8 billion. The company expects its full-year system-wide comparable RevPAR, or revenue per available room, to increase between 37 and 43 per cent compared to a year earlier.

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Portugal

The Europe where the past ropes in the future

By Aanchal Sachdeva

The landscape that holds the capacity to transform you through the archaic castles, gilded beaches, idyllic villages and chromatic cities welcomes you with open arms post-Covid lockdown. An amalgamation of lush and cool North; and flat and warm South, Portugal nestles between Spain and the Atlantic Ocean. This aloof, yet-to-be-discovered corner of Europe offers the experience of all of the many things including the country's diverse culture, finger-licking delicacies, and picturesque mise-en-scène. One of the oldest in the world, this Iberian nation is about 870 years in age. Its customs and language were shaped by Ancient Celtic, Roman and Islamic influences. Be it drinking, dancing and feasting your way through all-night's merrymaking or delving into the secret heaven's enchanting palaces dwelling amidst foggy forests, and cliff-top castles; Travelscapes introduces you to the list of best things to experience in Portugal...



Tilt. Taste. Savour. Repeat.

Who says one can only fancy French and Spanish wines? In order to fully know the wineries, and the vineyards and be familiar with the taste of wines, visit the regions yourself where they are produced, layover through the night, and explore the surrounding area discovering the landscapes, heritage and culture. Being home to the popularly known wine field of Alentejo which is famous for producing bold and hearty red wines along with the Douro known as the home of port, you can look for wineries and vineyards nearly across the country, enveloping the archipelagos of Azores and Madeira. Vinho Verde which means young wine in Minho is known for producing distinguished wine from indigenous grape varietals, making it a seasoned Portuguese wine of all. To taste these fresh, fruity, and floral red as well as white wines, you can hands down select Quinta da Aveleda as the best wineries.



A treat for adrenaline junkies' souls

As they say, Portugal is “reliable for waves”, surf enthusiasts can always find a plethora of spots for surfing on its 1860 km gigantic coastal stretch. Sports to enjoy the Atlantic waves are surfing, body boarding, windsurfing, kitesurfing, paddle surfing, and parasailing which raise the adrenalin levels unimaginably. North American surfer Garrett McNamara rose to fame after riding a 78feet wave, only to make surfing one of Nazare’s calling cards. The choice of spots include Figueira da Foz, Espinho and Viana do Castelo in the north, the Tejo coast and the Sagres area in the south, and even in the Azores and Madeira. Praia Grande, Sintra is a mecca in Portugal for body boarders. The variety will make you spoilt for choice but the breeze and the waves will be promising of a surge for those in the water and an extravagant display for those on the beach.



Algarve: Discover the undiscovered picturesque spots

Algarve with its undiscovered beaches is like the Southern part of Goa- consisting of magnificent places and deserted coves yet to be explored. It’s relatively warmer than the rest of Europe. Tourists say the story of Adam and Eve can be relived on Sagres Beach. Two of the most serene and tranquil secret spots in the region are the Barbelote Waterfall and Pego do Inferno Waterfall which is not known by many. It will never be enough to stay for as many days in Algarve, you’ll always need more. There is a wide range of Instagrammable spots in Algarve that shine during dusk and dawn. Take the plunge and you’ll be astonished to find the hidden gem of Portugal.

Retreat to nature: Time to be healthy and happy

Portugal has become the land of retreat. From finding shelter in the lap of nature to playing Golf in the perfectly scaped land, Portugal is a short pleasure of discovery. It is home to a variety of flora and fauna since the weather conditions are ideal for growing in the region evoking little delights within you. The country offers little chunks of almost everything, the mountains, vast plains, butterscotch sand beaches, with the waves on the coastline. Spend your time at a thermal spa, go for relaxation sessions through rejuvenating effects of wine, chocolate or hot stones which you will find at spas and resorts savoring the holiday in style while enjoying the therapeutic properties and mineral richness of the waters at the extensive coastline and the Atlantic waters for thalassotherapy.

Groove to the rhythm of Portuguese Musical Festivals

Not so mundane music, bright sun and golden sea are a great combination of the music festivals in Portugal. Programs effortlessly blend the calm richness of sound with the historical heritage offering complete relaxation and fun. Lisbon and Porto are acknowledged for vivacious evenings which are the natural continuation of the soulful party atmosphere. From the concerts on the coast to further inland festivals taking place in the heart of nature, friendly people and nights go on until dawn while they celebrate art and freedom taking a dip in the ocean alongside. A variety of melodies such as classical music, jazz or fado captivates the historic centers and monuments of the town such as churches, monasteries, and castles. This gives people a chance to immerse themselves in the local culture and traditions of Portuguese.



Enthralling experience through the Portuguese trails

While most people see Portugal as land surrounded by waters, it has 3.759 km of certified trails. Connecting major trans-euro routes through stunning landscapes lets you live endless stories to tell. From North to South, alongside Azores and Madeira, the variety of cycling trails offer a broad diversity of experiences for touring, road, or mountain bikes. Ditching the cliché surfing breaks, head to the country’s hiking heartland which is also the Iberian land’s only National Park Parque Nacional da Peneda-Gerês. There are illimitable natural parks hiding inland but what better way than to explore them on foot or on your bikes. Get away from the crowds of mainstream cities and towns, and go for unforgettable hiking experiences on Via Geira. The most stunning stretch begins at Portela de Homem, where the Roman milepost still stands.

Stargazing during the bright night

Portugal’s nightlife is far from the ordinary when you witness the monuments and resources well lit from dusk till dawn. Acknowledged with certification by Dark Sky, Alqueva, in the heart of Alentejo, serves as an enchanting destination in the world for sky watching. You can engage yourself in a variety of activities such as observation with the naked eye or through the telescope, night riding in a canoe, photographic excursions and a few more under the sky full of stars. Summer festivities also light up the night sky with fireworks and duels. Portugal, as only a few would know (only until now), Portugal is considered a “Country of Festivals”.



Baglioni Resort Maldives in association with One Above DMC presents its unique offerings to Indian travel trade

Baglioni Resort Maldives presented itself with One Above DMC to nearly 50 plus travel professionals and media fraternity, which proved to be an excellent platform for getting first-hand property knowledge and updates from Parag Kathuria, Director of Sales & Marketing, Baglioni Resort Maldives. The presentation highlighted stunning landscapes, Italian service and a wide variety of activities

for all age groups.

The evening was filled with joy, laughter and food. The response was extremely encouraging and the sponsors were elated by the feedback received from the agents for Baglioni Resort.

“We are seeing a steady increase in tourist arrivals from India which is mostly attributed to our Indian travel trade partners who understand the uniqueness of Baglioni Maldives and are

promoting the same to leisure travellers,” said Parag Kathuria, Director of Sales & Marketing.

Rahim Aslam, Director, One Above DMC added, “To maintain the Maldives as one of the most preferred destinations among Indians, we will be hosting more events with hospitality partners in the months to come and create a positive aspiration for all luxury resorts in Maldives.”



RETHINKING “Incredible India”



The fast-evolving times and several studies have proven that India is one country where we see rapid growth happening, a nation that has a remarkable balance between retaining its culture, heritage and the modernisation and a country that undoubtedly, has emerged as one of the economic powerhouses as well as a fast-evolving tourism market. But where are the gaps when it comes to its tourism marketing abroad? Is domestic tourism the only bread and butter that the Indian government is looking to rely on post-pandemic? Even though this year saw a lot of initiatives being taken to lure the local travellers, the question that still keeps a lot baffled is how to make it stand out in the international arena as well. With competition for tourists now increasing more than ever from countries across the region opening newer avenues for tourists while making tourism more sustainably sound, it may get harder to attract visitors to India. And with an economy that has started to show

some fair signs of recovery post-pandemic, India cannot afford to lose out on tourism anymore, be it domestic or international.

This is, therefore, an opportune time when we hit the restart button, literally; move our focus to more effective promotions; rethink the strategies to pull in the crowd from beyond the borders and shift the focus from how a tourist imagines India as a tourist destination in post COVID times. Moreover, it is required that the industry stakeholders, as well as the government, engage in building a nation branding as destination marketers while rethinking 'Incredible India 2.0', which attempts to connect India to India and the rest of the world. Speaking with the top industry captains here, TravelScapes gains a wider understanding of how India must take the right path at the right time and capitalise upon the potentials and opportunities in both domestic and international arenas and cultivate a tourist experience that is truly incredible in every sense

By Gagneet Kaur



Dr Subhash Goyal

**DR SUBHASH GOYAL, CHAIRMAN,
STIC TRAVEL GROUP**

Relooking at the credibility of “Incredible India”

The only way we can attract more tourists to India is by changing our traditional way of marketing India to improvised digital and social media marketing. We need to do joint

promotions with the industry and country's specific promotions by involving the Indian Embassy and the local Indian community in various countries.

We have to relook at our strategy and appoint prominent outbound operators in all the source markets as India Tourism Experts by having online training programmes and presenting them certificates after they are able to explain some basic tourism facts about India.

There has to be an involvement of the commercial department of Indian Embassies, the travel and tourism trade, the Chambers of Commerce and the Tourism Associations in all the major countries with which we have air connectivity to promote India.

Sustaining the domestic travel boom:

On the Domestic front, the “Dekho Apna Desh” initiative by the Ministry of Tourism has been a great success.

After Covid-19, it has resulted in giving a great boost to interstate and domestic tourism. Places like, Northeast, Kulu Manali, Kashmir,

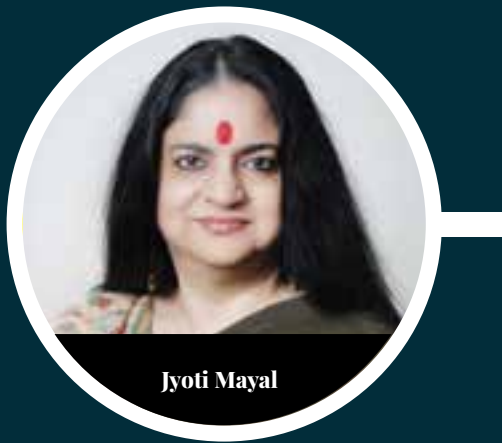
Goa, Kerala, and Rajasthan are booming. To sustain this boom, the State Tourism Boards need to firstly, create traveling experiences for tourists rather than just attractions. We need to invest time and efforts in building traveling experiences for people with tour guides, activities for the children, culinary tours, interactivity for the tourist with the culture of the place and more. Further concepts such as India in luxury, Royal India, Urban India, the Common Man's India, Historical India and many more would help people to look deeply into attractions.

Secondly, it is needless to mention that we absolutely lack the basic hygiene amenities, especially keeping kids and the disabled in mind. Further, that is disheartening to see the conditions of restrooms and changing rooms left in horrible conditions, which are enough to leave visitors puking. We need to learn a lot from the west in this case. Further, Disabled access is something that we still need to explore and fix. When it comes to traveling within the cities of India, public transport also

needs to be highlighted and informed so well that the travellers should not have any problem exploring.

Further, I don't think there is any other nation in this world that can hardly match up with the number of historical monuments that we have in India. But they also can't match up the kind of creativity and inscriptions that go into ruining those monuments! We seriously need to put punitive measures against anybody who does this. Therefore, our monuments also demand a lot of attention and restoration. Also, India has such plenty of festivals that merely one would not be able, to sum up, our diversity of culture and tradition. Let us make them more popular and tourist-friendly to offer the Indian experience to foreign travellers.

Last and foremost, it should be made compulsory for students of one state to visit the neighbouring state or any state of their choice and make a report on the tourism potential of the state that they visited and there should be marks allocated for that purpose.



Jyoti Mayal

JYOTI MAYAL, PRESIDENT, TRAVEL AGENTS ASSOCIATION OF INDIA (TAAI) & VICE CHAIRPERSON- FAITH

We need a more dedicated and collaborative approach and a roadmap to market India globally

I would like to begin by saying that India is already prominent on the tourism stage. I firmly believe that what India is offering to travellers, no other country in the world is! India is a plethora of diverse experiences in Leisure, Wellness, Adventure, Water, Desert and more; along with varied cultures and cuisines and India is also full of opportunities irrespective of the tourism vertical.

We are at a stage where the sky is the limit. Pandemic has made the travel trade fraternity so tough that it is now well prepared to handle any kind of eventuality, be it unprecedented or not. We have learned the art of doing business in the worst of situations. For instance, the entire tourism domain realised the value of working collectively to achieve new heights. Manpower engaged in the hospitality sector delivered exemplary services with minimum resources during the entire lockdown period.

In terms of new prospects, we need a more dedicated and collaborative approach.

The sector must handhold every vertical for their mutual growth. If I put it from the government's perspective and initiatives taken during and post-pandemic, at the policy front some really tough decisions were taken. A more sophisticated environment has been created which will go a long way in promoting Indian tourism, provided all such decisions, especially the ease of doing business rules and regulations, are implemented in time. We need quick decision-making and investment in effective communication and marketing. We need to have a road map to market India globally and actively participate in showcasing our country on every platform.

The private sector too worked hand in glove and will continue to do so. Reskilling, Reinvesting, Resilience, and many other similar significant points were deliberated upon keeping in view the businesses to be managed after a decade. The importance of safety, security, hygiene, and related aspects have been carefully and thoroughly studied and a more futuristic approach has been adopted by the sector in terms of adopting the latest technology to run the businesses. We need to open e-visas to all countries to make travel to India easier and need to use our government and private machinery to bring in quick reforms and not lose the opportunity once again to make India a strong hub of tourism.

Need to build the future of tourism by investing in evolved learnings

The domestic tourism market is sensitive in terms of price and safety, and therefore we the legitimate companies/ agents in business follow all protocols and take all measures to support travellers. In addition, most of us are approved by state tourism boards and ministry and work in tandem with the concerned department and officers, which I believe should be strictly implemented for all such companies in the business.

Although the government is doing their bit, however, we need immediate attention towards the development of infrastructure and taxation issues. We have seen and experienced that relatively smaller countries as compared to India take a major chunk of our business due to better infrastructure and more tourism-friendly taxation systems. We have been pushing the government at every front to consider our requests and to an extent, it was acknowledged too however, we still have a long way to go to reap the benefits of the outcome of deliberations.

Lately, we have seen a commendable job being done by tourism, aviation, railways and the finance ministry. We in the travel trade sincerely appreciate that. However, private sector participation in terms of investment is still low, especially in the travel trade. Unfair trade practices adopted by non-registered agents have been a big reason to worry for us. We the IATA-certified companies keep our documentation up to date and when forging ties with foreign-Indian boards/ companies,

keep our promises intact. However, certain fly-by-night companies bring negativity to the system and hamper the image of the country.

TAAI has been working in close proximity with the government and voicing our thoughts and suggestions loudly to support & promote domestic tourism and will continue to do so. All concerned government bodies need to come together on one effective strong platform/task force to drive more footfall with sustenance with inclusiveness. States need to work very closely and effectively with FAITH to structure tourism as a pivotal avenue of growth & bring a radical change to and for the industry. Most importantly, each state should bring tourism and every travel agent under the banner of Industry status.

In the end, as the Chairperson of THSC, I would also like to emphasize that post covid, the demographic of the traveller and the destination both has changed. Today, a traveller needs correct relevant information & also requires to be facilitated by skilled services & thus we as an industry need to focus on skilling, upskilling and bringing in effective multiskilling. We need to build the future of tourism by investing in evolved learnings.



Sudhir Patil

SUDHIR PATIL, FOUNDER & DIRECTOR, VEENA WORLD

Visa policies, GST waivers, developments, active promotions and participation to aid inbound traction to India

Although the pandemic did paint a grim picture for the tourism sector, we can still say that India survived the tough times, thanks to domestic tourism. Seeing the glass half full, we can say that the boom in the domestic sector has helped all tour operators try their hand at handling domestic inquiries and operating tours to all domestic sectors, an experience that some tour operators lacked earlier. Moreover, the government of India's 'Dekho Apna Desh' initiative complemented by their timely webinars helped tour operators and travel agents upgrade their knowledge and hone their skills in selling domestic sectors in a better way.

The Government of India and our honourable Prime Minister have tourism at the top of their agenda, which is quite assuring for our industry. The visa process has been eased out

more than before, which enables international tourists to make their India plans even at the eleventh hour, which earlier needed almost 4-6 months of planning on their part. Moreover, over the last few months, tourism in India has undergone, in a way, a reverse metamorphosis. Many destinations in India have experienced a great inflow of domestic tourists first, leading to better awareness among the local operators regarding the potential of those destinations, which we hope will also manifest in the development of the infrastructure and betterment of services.

With the central government's tourism policy of promoting tourism through all embassies, the future seems quite bright for tourism in India. However, implementation would remain the key to success. We further expect and hope the government and private tourism entities' more active participation in various international trade shows, along with marketing campaigns pushing our products and creating awareness. Also, a better synergy between international tour operators and DMCs with their Indian counterparts would help bring a positive change.

Waving off GST on all tourism services would help make tourism more affordable and accessible to everyone. The recent policy introducing the refund of the GST on shopping should be considered a very positive move by the government. Moreover, with hygiene, sanitization, and eco-friendliness being the travellers' priority henceforth, these things should be taken and implemented seriously by the hoteliers, transporters, and all other service providers too.

Handholding of private players and government to reap long-term benefits

India has certainly seen a boom in domestic tourism over the last few months. Having said that, let's agree with the fact that a country as diverse and rich as India holds a lot more potential in its domestic tourism space than has already been harnessed. One thing that seems to be lacking is the synergy between the various state tourism boards in India. In a country like ours, cultural exchange among its citizens indeed plays a vital role when it comes to the development of domestic tourism. A partnership of tour operators with local service providers can really help foster a sense of oneness.

Yet another challenge that the tourism sector on a whole seems to be facing in India is the lack of sufficient funds. State tourism boards need to incentivise all potential stakeholders, which would help foster a sense of confidence among them. We have seen some states in India taking great initiatives with respect to developing and promoting tourism big time. A few examples here would be Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Kerala. While these states must continue with their developmental

activities, it's also necessary for other states to draw some inspiration from them and follow in their footsteps.

It has also been observed that many state tourism boards, which earlier used to focus solely on promoting and selling their accommodation facilities, seem to have shifted their focus on their other offerings too, thus helping in the holistic development of tourism at that particular destination. Further, all the private players would also contribute big time to the overall development of tourism at a particular destination, and therefore, they need to be hand-held and encouraged by the government tourism bodies.

Moreover, MICE, despite holding tremendous potential, remains a neglected sector by many state tourism boards in India, which they should be taking quite seriously. Along with this, I think FAMs by various state tourism boards for the private players across the country would indeed go a long way towards creating awareness and educating each other on the tremendous domestic tourism potential of our country.



PP Khanna

PP KHANNA, PRESIDENT, ASSOCIATION OF DOMESTIC TOUR OPERATORS OF INDIA (ADTOI)

Inbound tourism to India to fully revive soon

Tourism is now on the road to recovery. Domestic tourism has already leaped forward and during summer vacation various destinations have witnessed a chock o block situation thereby managing the situation with the available infrastructure capacity. Stakeholders who had faced an unprecedented catastrophe in the industry due to COVID are feeling happy with the flow of business due to the revival of tourism. International tourism is also now picking up after the operation of international flights since the last week of March this year. As almost all countries have removed COVID restrictions on Indian visitors, Overseas Tourism boards are now engaged in tapping the Indian market and looking forward to the visit of Indian visitors to their lands. With this, I hope that inbound tourism will also see its revival soon especially when the season will set in by October or November this year.

Rise in domestic leisure travel demand shows signs of a strong revival

After struggling for more than two years because of COVID-19-induced restrictions, the travel and hospitality sector is now showing signs of a strong revival, fueled by increased demand for leisure, wedding, and business travel. According to online travel booking platforms, there has been an increase in bookings across India, and demand for the Indian hotel industry is expected to be healthy for the next eight to twelve months. "Domestic leisure travel demand continues to drive Goa to be the fastest recovering market in absolute terms," Kashmir and Leh are remarkably gaining tourists, rather all hill stations to beaches to backwater are on full swing to receive tourists. There have been record-breaking flights operating to and from Srinagar Airport and people in the valley are very happy to see the unprecedented rush of tourists. Northeast has improved infrastructure for easy access to destinations like good roads, connectivity and people like to travel to this region to see the scenic beauty and other attractions.

The tourism industry also saw some challenging times within the last two years- Tour operators lost their credibility among the clientele due to their inability to get the advance booking amount paid to airlines, hoteliers due to the pandemic and refund it to customers; OTAs became a great threat to traditional tour operators unless they adopted to the ethical practices while doing the business. From the time the domestic tourism revival started, people planned their holiday trips online directly with the suppliers. This, in my view, needs to be discouraged by having one-to-one contact with customers to get back their confidence and credibility. Additionally, hotels sometimes refuse rooms to agents on the pretext of a sold-out situation but actually they like to trade with customers directly to get more revenue and also to promote the bond with the hotel.

On the positive front, the Ministry of Tourism, unlike in the past has now familiarised the stakeholders with different destinations on fully hosted tours which is a good sign of tourism activism. Even some of the State Tourism Boards are having fully hosted programme for the stakeholders to showcase the destinations and disseminate tourist information. Further, with all travel marts like SATTE, OTM, BLTM, KTM going in physical form, good business is generated between sellers and buyers as well new products are introduced during the show for marketing among the tourists.

It is good to see how governments have become more proactive after realising the importance of tourism and its contribution to the growth of economy regionally as well as to the country.

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A notable networking night hosted by Baglioni Resort Maldives and Youngistan Travellers

Baglioni Resort Maldives in association with Youngistan Travellers hosted a networking dinner bringing together the travel trade industry under one roof in Delhi. The event took place on July 18, 2022 at BLAQ-A COQTAIL AFFAIR. Youngistan Travellers is one of India's leading DMCs for Maldives,

Mauritius & Sri Lanka while Baglioni Resort Maldives is a beautiful haven dreamily located on the island of Maagau in Dhaalu Atoll. What makes Baglioni Resort is its postcard perfect setting, awash with tropical natural beauty. Baglioni has won 3 recognitions at the 2021 World Luxury Hotel

Awards: the Exclusive 5 star resort won the title "Luxury Ocean View Resort"; the Baglioni Spa bagged the Regional Win for "Luxury Island Resort Spa" and the Italian Restaurant Gusto recognised for a Country Win under "Best Wine Selection" category.





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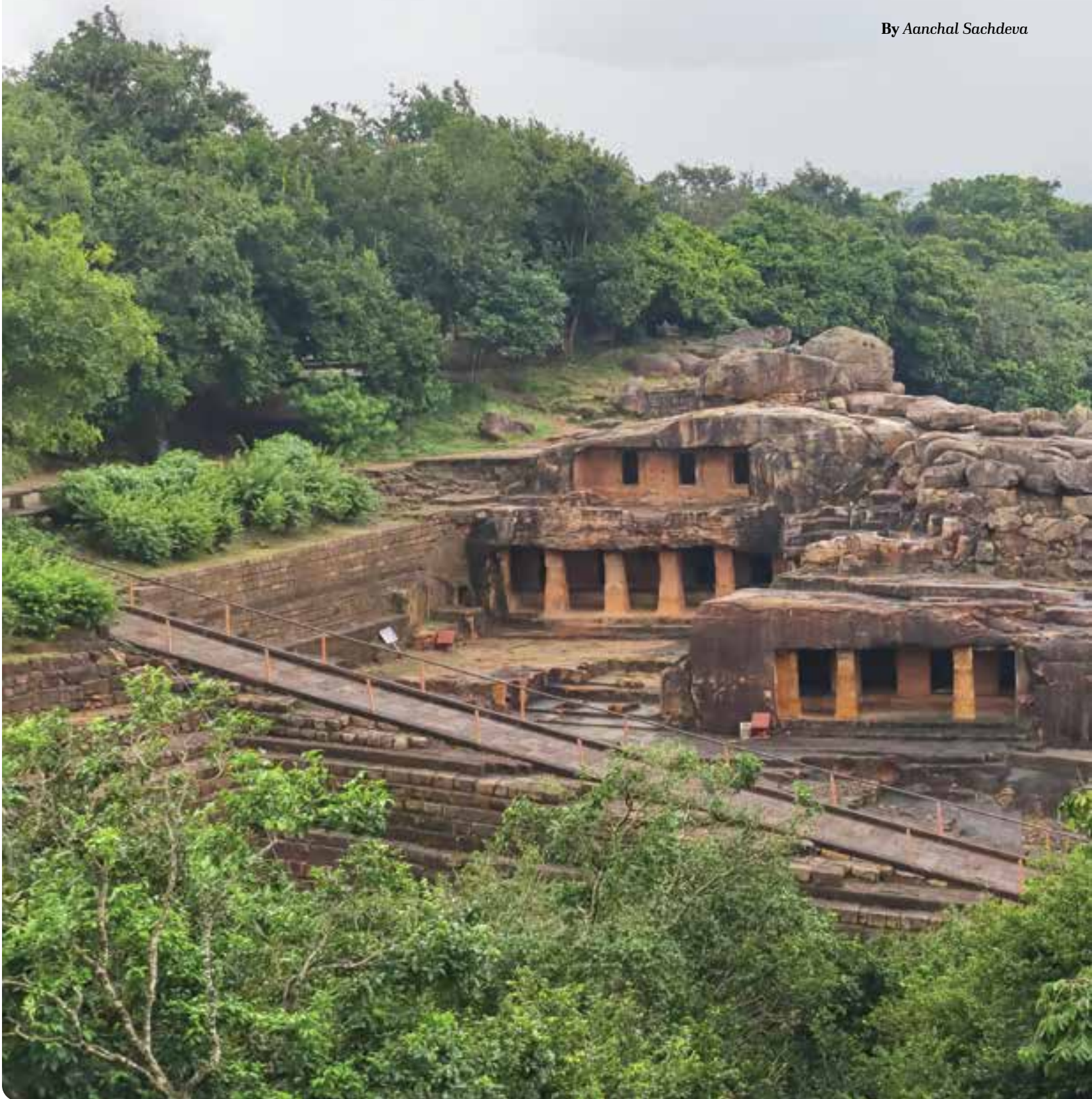


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ODISHA

Taking a look at an overlooked gem of India

By Aanchal Sachdeva



**“SOME
BEAUTIFUL
PATHS CAN’T
BE DISCOVERED
WITHOUT
GETTING
LOST.”**



Nestling in the eastern part of India, Odisha’s name has been derived from the Prakrit word “Odda Visaya”. A land of lush green valleys and history offering extraordinary traditions and vivid cultures for a curious traveler. The state gratifies your lookout for adventure, breath-taking landscapes, abundant wildlife and sublime ecosystem, magnificent historical wonders telling

timeless tales, serene beaches, sacred temples, cathartic spiritual experiences, baroque art and soul-filling delicacies to soothe your taste buds. Odisha unfolds a variety of stories for an avid traveler. To know about the state that offers much more beyond religion, dive into these unforgettable experiences and create travel tales of Odisha.



Road Trips through Odisha

Odisha is a state with about 450km long coastline that weaves its cities together following well-paved roads, and one can savor exquisite landscapes while driving along the coastline. Thrill seekers must explore the new Bhubaneswar- Puri highway that stretches for 68 km as it leads you to Jagannath Dham. Other road trips include Bhubaneswar to Daringbadi which is relatively a shorter road route but worth remembering with trees on either side of the road. One must take a detour to Vetnai as it’s a perfect blend of serenity and adventure. Roads from Bhubaneswar lead to more beautiful destinations such as Saptasajya, Satapada, Dhabaleswar, Kapilash, Banki and many more.

Let the spur of the moment decide your drive!



Soak in the beauty of blissful beaches

Odisha’s beaches give meaning to words like Serenity, Solitude and Tranquility. The most pristine beaches will cast a spell on you so much so you’ll find solace nowhere but amidst the crystal clear water of the sea and golden sands kissed by the sun. The beach where the oceanic beauty bows down to divinity are Puri Beach. One can indulge in jet skiing, surfing and boating while soaking in spirituality. Immerse in the magical beach, Chandipur known for its low tides offering the traveler’s a chance to take a stroll on the sea bed. Chandrabhaga Beach located at the dwelling of the Sun Temple in Konark, enhances the traveler’s visual expedition with the hustling of hues during the sunrise and the sunset.

Puri- A humble abode to shrines, ashrams and magnificent temples

Old and architecturally picturesque temples and ashrams make Odisha one of the four dhams of Hinduism. Pilgrimage tours are incomplete without sojourning at the Puri temple, the sacredness of which is highly acknowledged. Built-in the 11th and the 13th century, Sri Jagannath Temple and Markandeswara Temple are the major attractions of the city. Both the exquisite temples are embellished with unparalleled architectural splendor. The main highlight of the Puri Temple is the Rath Yatra which is hosted every year marking the journey of Lord Krishna from Gokul to Mathura. The Sun Temple located in a small district Konark in Puri is an extraordinary 13th-century temple included in the golden triangle of Odisha in addition to Sri Jagannath Temple, Puri and Lingaraj Temple, Bhubaneswar.



Tingle the taste buds

Regional food recipes are usually a treat for tastebuds. Because one is never enough, the must-try sweets which melt gods are Chennapoda, Korakhai, Chenna Jhili and Rasgulla popularly known as Kheera Mohana in Odisha. These sweets are essentially a part of Odisha's culture and heritage. Prepared by an exquisite group of confectioners, the sweets are offered to lords in temples and given to the masses evoking a sweet quotient amongst them. Other delicacies are prepared using traditional earthen pots and wooden coals. Just like folktales, these are folk recipes passed on from generations only to taste delicious. Other tasteful delicacies include Pakhala, a variety of Pitha such as Chakuli Pitha, Poda Pitha, Sijha Manda, Enduri Pitha, Kakara Pitha; and Dalma.



Wildlife Escapade: Call of the wilderness

Visitors see the beauty showcased on the surface of Odisha, enjoy mouth-watering delicacies, and take delight in incredible sights of ocean and nature but imagine expansive grasslands and meadows on the wavy hillsides with herds of deers, rare blackbucks sauntering around along with Dolphins and Flamingos merrily playing around. You wouldn't want to miss this gratifying sight of unequalled topography for the world. Creating a meandering scenery, Odisha is home to rich flora and fauna having their habitats in pine forests, water lands, waterfalls, far-flung lakes and oceans. The state offers a wide range of experiences with nineteen wildlife sanctuaries, two tiger reserves and one national park which are Chilika Lagoon, Debrigarh Sanctuary, Bhitarkanika National Park, Similipal Tiger Reserve and other variety of forest resorts.

International tourism on strong and steady recovery, says UNWTO

International tourism saw a strong rebound in the first five months of 2022, with almost 250 million arrivals recorded, which compares to 77 million arrivals from January to May 2021 and means that the sector has recovered almost half (46%) of pre-pandemic 2019 levels, according to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer.

“The recovery of tourism has gathered pace in many parts of the world, weathering the challenges standing in its way,” said UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili.

He also advised caution in view of the “economic headwinds and geopolitical challenges which could impact the sector in the remainder of 2022 and beyond”.

Europe and Americas lead recovery

Europe welcomed more than four times as many international arrivals as in the first five months of 2022 (+350%), boosted by strong intra-regional demand and the removal of all travel restrictions in a growing number of countries. The region saw particularly robust performance in April (+458%), reflecting a busy Easter period. In the Americas, arrivals more than doubled (+112%). However, the strong rebound is measured against weak results in 2021 and arrivals remain overall 36% and 40% below 2019 levels in both regions, respectively.

The same pattern is seen across other regions. The strong growth in the Middle East (+157%) and Africa (+156%) remained 54% and 50% below 2019 levels respectively, and Asia and the Pacific almost doubled arrivals (+94%), though numbers were 90% below 2019, as some borders remained closed to non-essential travel. Here, the recent easing of restrictions can be seen in improved results for April and May.

Looking at subregions, several have recovered between 70% and 80% of their pre-pandemic levels, led by the Caribbean and Central America, followed by Southern Mediterranean, Western and Northern Europe. It is noteworthy that some destinations surpassed 2019 levels, including US Virgin Islands, St. Maarten, the Republic of Moldova, Albania, Honduras and Puerto Rico.

Tourism spending also rising

Rising tourism spending out of the major source markets is consistent with the observed recovery. International expenditure by tourists from France, Germany, Italy and the US is now at 70% to 85% of pre-pandemic levels, while spending from India, Saudi Arabia and Qatar has already exceeded 2019 levels.

In terms of international tourism receipts earned in destinations, a growing number of countries - the Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Seychelles, Romania, North Macedonia, Saint Lucia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Albania, Pakistan, Sudan, Türkiye, Bangladesh, El Salvador, Mexico, Croatia and Portugal – have fully recovered their pre-pandemic levels.

Defying mounting challenges

Strong demand during the Northern Hemisphere summer season is expected to consolidate these positive results, particularly as more destinations ease or lift travel restrictions. As of 22 July, 62 destinations (of which 39 in Europe) had no Covid-19 related restrictions in place and



an increasing number of destinations in Asia have started to ease theirs.

According to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the overall reduction in international air capacity in 2022 will be limited to 20% to 25% of seats offered by airlines as compared to 2019. Such resilience is also reflected in hotel occupancy rates. Based on data from the industry benchmarking firm STR, global occupancy rates climbed to 66% in June 2022, from 43% in January.

However, stronger than expected demand has created significant operational and workforce challenges, while the war in Ukraine, rising inflation and interest rates, as well as fears of an economic slowdown continue to pose a risk to recovery. The International Monetary Fund points to a global economic slowdown from 6.1% in 2021 to 3.2% in 2022 and then to 2.9% in 2023. At the same time, UNWTO continues to work closely with the World Health Organisation (WHO) to monitor the pandemic as well as emerging public health emergencies and their potential impact on travel.

Regional scenarios for 2022

UNWTO's forward-looking scenarios published in May 2022 point to international arrivals reaching 55% to 70% of pre-pandemic levels in 2022. Results depend on evolving circumstances, mostly changing travel restrictions, ongoing inflation, including high energy prices, and overall economic conditions, the evolution of the war in Ukraine, as well as the health situation related to the pandemic. More recent challenges such as staff shortages, severe airport congestion and flight delays and cancellations could also impact international tourism numbers.

Scenarios by region show Europe and Americas recording the best tourism results in 2022, while Asia and the Pacific is expected to lag behind due to more restrictive travel policies. International tourist arrivals in Europe could climb to 65% or 80% of 2019 levels in 2022, depending on various conditions, while in the Americas they could reach 63% to 76% of those levels.

In Africa and the Middle East arrivals could reach about 50% to 70% of pre-pandemic levels, while in Asia and the Pacific they would remain at 30% of 2019 levels in the best-case scenario, due to stricter policies and restrictions

POST
COVID19

South Korea removes travel restrictions for Indians, announces special campaigns

In a big boost to push numbers from India, South Korea has removed all travel restrictions for tourists and announced a slew of initiatives in the luxury market, business leisure and learning experiences for the Indian market. Korea Tourism Organization India, the tourism arm of the Republic of Korea under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, announced the reopening of South Korea to Indian travellers.

However, arriving passengers will have to take a mandatory PCR test within one day of arrival. To provide hassle-free access to Covid-19 screening, test centres have been expanded to more airports across Korea. “We are elated to welcome travellers from India to South Korea again. In the past two years, we adopted a progressive approach toward re-opening



tourism. We have further elevated traveller experience with immersive experiential centres, re-imagined tourism offerings and look forward to hosting our Indian visitors,” said Young-Geul Choi, Director of Korea Tourism Organization India, along with representatives of VFS Global and key airlines – Korean Air and Asiana Airlines.

World Travel Awards to host the first ceremony in Jordan

World Travel Awards (WTA) will host its Middle East Gala Ceremony 2022 at The Ritz-Carlton, Amman, hosting leading travel industry figureheads in the capital of Jordan on September 18, 2022.



The Ritz-Carlton, Amman, provides a unique destination for both leisure and business travellers, as well as serving as a convenient gateway to explore Jordan’s historic sites of Petra, Wadi Rum and the Dead Sea.

Graham Cooke, Founder, WTA said, “WTA has maintained its

position as the industry leader for the past 29 years, consistently proving its value as the global benchmark for recognising excellence in travel and tourism. I look forward to joining the most senior travel industry figures from across the Middle East for what promises to be a fabulous evening, acknowledging those organisations leading our industry’s recovery.”

The General Manager of The Ritz-Carlton, Amman, Tareq Derbas, said: “We are delighted to welcome attendees of this year’s World Travel Awards, a milestone not only for our hotel – which officially opened its doors in May – but for Jordan as a whole. It is our great pleasure to welcome some of the world’s foremost travel industry leaders, and we look forward to showing them a level of hospitality and care that is both a hallmark of the Ritz-Carlton brand and a true reflection of the Kingdom and its people.



Dennis Omondi

Rajeev Nangia

TRAC appointed for Marketing & Sales of TrippyGO Tours & Travel

TRAC Representations (India) Pvt. Ltd. announces a tie-up with TrippyGO Tours & Travel, an operator in Kenya.

It has over a decade of experience in handling inbound and outbound incentive tours and conferences. TrippyGO Tours & Travel provides the best quality customized services to their highly valued clientele.

Dennis Omondi, Director, TrippyGO Tours & Travel, said: “We are extremely grateful to partner with TRAC Representations Pvt. Ltd. to offer negotiated rates and packages to the Indian market that showcases the rich cultural diversity of Kenyan tourism and East Africa in general.”

Rajeev Nangia, COO, TRAC Representations Pvt. Ltd. shared: “We are delighted to associate with TrippyGO Tours & Travel, to launch exclusive offers promoting a variety of travel packages to Africa. This tie-up reflects our commitment to provide the highest quality of products and services by TrippyGO, initially promoting Kenya, followed by other African destinations as we move ahead.”

Singapore to resume operations of Changi Airport terminal 4

Singapore’s Changi International Airport will resume operations at Terminal 4 on September 13, 2022, following a more than two-year hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The reopening of T4 will increase Changi Airport’s capacity to 16 million passengers per year, ensuring that the air hub can accommodate the rising demand for air travel and support airlines’ plans to operate more flights.

It received the Singapore President’s Design Award for its innovative redesign of the airport experience. The Fast And Seamless Travel (FAST) check-in process at T4 received the Techblazer Award for best technology adoption for a Smart Airport.

Sixteen airlines will gradually relocate their operations to the Terminal. T4’s high degree of automation throughout the airport journey from check-in to boarding will enable airlines to benefit from productivity gains. T4 also has sufficient narrow-body boarding gates to facilitate the operations of airlines with predominantly narrow-body planes in their fleet.





The world's oldest temple in Turkiye receives a record number of visitors

The world's oldest temple, Gobeklitepe, in Turkiye is an important site of the Neolithic Age. It is more than 11,000-year-old and contains at least 20 circular enclosures. The location is expected to break the record for the number of tourists visiting the temple. In 2021, the site welcomed 5,67,453 visitors, despite the covid-19 pandemic. Turkiye's 19 historical destinations have been added to UNESCO's World Heritage Site.

In 2022, the sites which resonate with cultural, historical and natural value in Turkiye have reached 84 on the Tentative List. In the Intangible Cultural Heritage Inventory, 297 assets across 35 categories have been registered.

An 8000-year-old archaeological mound, also known as Arslantepe Mount, has been added to Turkiye's travel destination. It is one of the most sought-after tourist destinations. It is also known as the 'cradle of civilisation.'

Portugal removes all COVID-19 entry rules for travellers

Portugal has finally removed all COVID-19 entry rules making it easier for travellers. From now on, travellers won't have to show a negative RT PCR test report or any other negative test report or proof of vaccination. On July 1, Portugal eased all its entry restrictions as mentioned on the official tourism website, Visit Portugal. With this, the nation has joined other European countries that have dropped pandemic-era entry restrictions in the last few months.

The website mentions, "As of July 1, 2022, passengers entering national territory (including Azores and Madeira) are no longer required to present proof of carrying out a test to screen for SARS-CoV-2 infection with a negative result or to present a COVID-EU digital certificate or vaccination or recovery certificate issued by third countries, accepted or recognized in Portugal."

Bhutan to reopen in September

Bhutan has finally revealed its reopening date, September 23, 2022, after remaining shut to outsiders for more than two years due to the pandemic. During the pandemic, the nation imposed strict COVID-19 rules, which didn't allow outsiders to enter the country.

However, travellers will now have to pay a hefty tax to enter and explore the country. In a recent update, Bhutan has increased its Sustainable Development Fee for tourists to \$200 (nearly INR 15,985) per person per day.

Bhutan is also known as the Last Shangri-La because of its pure natural beauty and sustainable development. The country has always believed in a High Value, Low Volume tourism policy.

Dr Tandi Dorji, Bhutan's foreign minister and chairman of the Tourism Council of Bhutan said, "Covid-19 has allowed us to reset, to rethink how the sector can be best structured and operated so that it not only benefits Bhutan economically but socially as well while keeping carbon footprints low."

For almost 30 years (since 1991), tourists were required to pay \$65 (nearly INR 5196), but the amount has been increased now and those who can afford it are welcome.

Tourism is a huge part of Bhutan's economy and makes up 6% of the nation's GDP. In 2019, Bhutan was visited by 315,599 tourists, which earned the tourism industry USD 225 million.



Saudi tourism to be fastest-growing in MENA region over next decade

Saudi Arabia's travel and tourism sector is expected to grow by an average of 11 per cent annually over the next decade, making it the fastest-growing in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC)'s latest Economic Impact Report (EIR), this annual growth will contribute significantly to the kingdom's economic recovery.

By 2032, the sector will contribute 635 billion riyals (approximately \$170 billion) to Saudi Arabia's GDP, representing 17.1 per cent of the total economy.

Travel and tourism employment could also double over the same period, the forecast stated, creating over 1.4 million jobs by 2032.

Before the pandemic, the sector contributed 9.7 per cent to the kingdom's GDP, falling to 6.6 per cent in 2020.

"Travel and tourism will become a driving force of the Saudi Arabian



economy and will surpass the goals set out in its Vision 2030 blueprint," said Julia Simpson, WTTC president and chief executive.

"I am delighted the kingdom is hosting our 22nd Global Summit, where we will be able to continue our efforts of showcasing the importance of the travel and tourism sector and look ahead to the future of travel," Simpson said.

It was reported that Saudi Arabia aimed to exceed 70 million tourist visits this year, having attracted 62 million last year.

Nepal announces measures to revive its tourism industry

The Nepal government has declared a slew of measures to recover the tourism industry impacted badly by the COVID-19 pandemic. It includes a plan to announce the years between 2023 and 2033 as Visit Nepal Decade.

Jeevan Ram Shrestha, the minister of culture, tourism and civil aviation in Nepal launched the Tourism Rehabilitation Action Plan. He said that the Nepal government is breaking the practice of declaring a particular year as 'Visit Nepal Decade' for running a constant drive to support tourism, which is a foremost foreign exchange

earner and job generator for Nepal.

The action plan says that the Visit Nepal Decade is projected to come out in the next three months.

The Nepal government is considering attracting 1 million tourists from abroad in the 2022-23 fiscal years which started in mid-July.

In the year 2019, Nepal witnessed 1.19 million foreign visitors and wanted to attract 2 million in 2020 when the campaign Visit Nepal 2020 was launched. However, COVID-19 forced the government to cancel the campaign.



New Zealand fully reopens borders, expects slow recovery in international tourism

New Zealand's borders fully reopened recently, but the return of international visitors and students is only expected to start with a trickle following the lifting of Covid-based travel restrictions.

New Zealand reported 52,538 cases of the Coronavirus in the past month yet is ready to restart welcoming back visitors. The final phase of its borders reopening began with the maritime border and all overseas visitors were allowed to submit visa applications.

"The return of international tourism is expected to take time as people across the globe gain travel confidence," he told AFP. "Tourism New Zealand is working hard to encourage visitation from key markets to boost the recovery of tourism and support the country's economy."

Tourism including visiting cruise liners, the first of which is expected to dock in Auckland around mid-August, and international students used to be big money makers for New Zealand's economy. Before Covid-19 struck, tourist spending generated NZD 40.9 billion (USD 25.7 million) for the country's coffers over the 12 months up until March 2020.



SAT deepens value proposition for Indian travellers in partnership with Air Seychelles

South African Tourism announced the launch of an exclusive India airfare campaign in partnership with Air Seychelles. It will run for a month from July 25 to August 25, 2022. Speaking about the partnership, Neliswa Nkani, Hub Head – Middle East, India and South East Asia, South African Tourism said, "It has been heartwarming to see the Indian travel fraternity respond positively to and welcome the unique adventures, immersive experiences and only-in-South-Africa activities that we showcased via the More & More campaign. We are excited to launch this deal-driven campaign in India and are confident that consumers and corporates will see immense value in these deals, as they continue

to curate their South African adventures. This ticket price of INR 38,148 establishes South Africa as an affordable long-haul destination for Indian travelers."

Charles Johnson, Chief Commercial Officer of Air Seychelles commented, "We are thrilled to be partnering with South African Tourism to once again bring affordable airfares and encourage tourism for Indians wishing to travel to South Africa. Strategically located directly between both countries, Air Seychelles offers the fastest link between India and South Africa." India is now the 6th largest international source market and is one of the top-3 focus markets for South African Tourism globally.

Dubai tops yet another travel index

According to data released by UK-based Premier Inn, Dubai has topped the list of the most popular city breaks around the world.

"According to the data, holidaymakers are wanting to travel to the UAE the most. 21 out of the 136 countries we analysed showed Dubai as their top searched-for city break destination, and visitors travel from all over the world to luxuriate in the glamour of Dubai's lifestyle," the report said.

The countries that want to take a city break in Dubai include India, Pakistan, the Maldives, Seychelles, Saudi Arabia, Eritrea, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Gambia,

Azerbaijan and Mauritius, the report said.

The report comes less than a week after Dubai ranked as the most popular destination according to popular social media platform TikTok, with 81.8 billion views of the hashtag #Dubai. The emirate was followed by New York City, London, Istanbul, Paris, Miami, Los Angeles, Chicago, Toronto and Madrid.

"Synonymous with wealth and luxury, Dubai has become one of the most sought-after destinations for holidaymakers who want to soak up the sun in style. This ultra-modern city is home to some of the world's most astounding architecture, such as the tallest building on Earth, the Burj Khalifa



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Virgin elevates customer experience revealing Avant Garde Airbus A330 NEO

Virgin Atlantic has revealed its hotly anticipated Airbus A330neo, designed to provide a premium, personalised experience. The airline's Upper-Class cabin boasts a brand new seat and the unveiling of The Retreat Suite, the most spacious suite in Virgin Atlantic's history. Those travelling in Premium and Upper Class can savour of game-changing in-seat wireless charging, whilst Comfort and connection are order of the day in the new Economy cabin. Customers in every cabin can enjoy a greater number of USB connections, Bluetooth-enabled entertainment systems and the airline's fastest ever Wi-Fi. The airline operates a fleet



with an average aircraft age of just under seven years and 68% next-generation aircraft. This means Virgin Atlantic's aircraft are equipped with the most efficient engines to save fuel and reduce emissions. The A330-900 neos are designed to be more fuel and carbon efficient than

the A330-300. Corneel Koster, Chief Customer and Operating Officer at Virgin Atlantic commented "We know the most impactful thing we can do as an airline is to fly the cleanest, greenest, youngest fleet possible and the A330neo is integral to achieving this goal."

GO FIRST inaugurates direct flight from Kochi to Abu Dhabi

GO FIRST achieves a milestone by introducing three direct flights weekly to and fro from Kochi and Abu Dhabi. The inaugural flight, G8 063 to Abu Dhabi, flags off from Kochi on July 12. Bookings are open at an attractive return fare. The flight was flagged off by Suhas (IAS), MD – CIAL in presence of Shabeer, Executive Director – CIAL; Dinesh Kumar, Head Of Operations – CIAL; Anoop Krishna, FRRO; Vijesh Kumar, Deputy Commissioner Of Customs;

Sumeet Sharma, Sr. Commandant (CISF); Chandran, Chief Of Immigration; Prasanna Kumar, JGM – Airports Authority of India. Kaushik Khona, CEO of GO FIRST said, "Abu Dhabi has always been a focus city for us. We are pleased to inaugurate new non-stop flights connecting Kerala with Abu Dhabi which will not only benefit the blue-collar workers, but also the travellers who are planning to visit UAE and Kerala during the summer holidays."



Qatar Airways to increase Melbourne flights in October

Qatar Airways will be increasing its Doha – Melbourne flights from the current once-daily schedule to double-daily flights from October 1. The airline and the Victorian Government signed a strategic agreement to increase connectivity to Melbourne to further boost trade and tourism. Melbourne Airport CEO Lorie Argus said, "There is a huge demand for international travel out of Melbourne and these extra services couldn't come at a better time with the soccer World Cup kicking off in November." The added daily schedule will be operated by Boeing 777-300ER, featuring its award-winning Q Suite Business Class. With the newest addition, the airline will operate to six destinations in Australia including Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Perth and Sydney.

No excise duty on ATF used in Indian carriers' international flights

The government exempts domestic airlines flying overseas from paying excise duty on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF), bringing them at parity with international carriers. Airlines will, however, continue to pay an 11 per cent excise duty on ATF used for flying aircraft domestically. In a notification, the finance ministry said the exemption from both basic excise duty and special additional excise duty would be applicable from July 1. Domestic carriers flying abroad previously didn't pay excise duty but this exemption was seen as being withdrawn. KPMG Tax Partner Abhishek Jain said, "This alignment to the taxability as existent pre-imposition of excise duty on exports is a much welcome move for the airline industry, specifically in the backdrop of increasing ATF costs."

LOT Polish Airlines resumes flights to Stuttgart/Germany

After a pandemic-related interruption, Star Alliance member LOT Polish Airlines adds flights to the German city of Stuttgart to its route network. Since July 1, the airline serves Stuttgart daily from its global Warsaw hub. LOT Polish Airlines' guests from India will benefit from hassle-free fast and seamless connectivity in Warsaw so that they reach Stuttgart on the same day of their departure from India with a short layover in the Polish capital where immigration into the Schengen area will take place.

Stuttgart, Mumbai's sister city, is located in the south of Germany. The city is both, an important commercial and industrial centre as well as an attractive destination for leisure travellers. Stuttgart, which is the capital of the federal state of Baden-Württemberg, and its surrounding area are home to globally renowned companies such as Robert Bosch, Carl Zeiss



optics and car manufacturers Mercedes Benz and Porsche. Amit Ray, Director India, DACH Markets and Italy at LOT Polish Airlines explains, "As there are a lot of ties between India and the Stuttgart area, it has been very important for us to bring this city back on the route map for our Indian guests."

Over the past weeks, the airline has already added Cairo/Egypt, Baku/Azerbaijan, Pristina/Kosovo and Sarajevo/Bosnia and Herzegovina to its network.

Director General- IATA hits out at new Heathrow airport restrictions

The head of a body representing global airlines hits out at new restrictions at London's Heathrow, saying the airport had underestimated the speed of the recovery and was focused on profits at the expense of airlines. Willie Walsh, Director General of the International Air Transport Association, and a former head of Heathrow's biggest operator British Airways, panned moves to tell airlines to restrict the number of seats they sell to try to limit summer disruption.

However, he recognised the measures would give airlines and passengers some opportunity to plan and avoid delays. "I am surprised Heathrow have not

been able to get their act together better than this. Airlines have been predicting stronger traffic than Heathrow has been predicting... they clearly got it completely wrong," Walsh said.

He calls it ridiculous for an airport to tell it to an airline after Heathrow said it would cap departing passengers at 100,000 a day this summer, and urged airlines to stop selling tickets for flights that could be curtailed.

"The cynic in me would say that, that was playing to their game of trying to fool the CAA when it came to economic regulation, playing down the number of passengers," Walsh adds.



AAI signs agreement with UP Govt. for O&M of five airports

Airports Authority of India signs an Operation & Management agreement for operationalization and management of five airports- Aligarh, Azamgarh, Chitrakoot, Muirpur and Shravasti owned by the Government of Uttar Pradesh for 30 years.

The agreement was signed by N V Subbarayudu, ED (SIU) on behalf of AAI and Kumar Harsh, Special Secretary, Civil Aviation Department, Government of Uttar Pradesh in presence of Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. The MoU was exchanged by Sanjeev Kumar, Chairman AAI and SP Goyal, Additional Chief Secretary, Uttar Pradesh. D S Mishra, Chief Secretary of UP, AK Pathak and Member Planning (AAI) were also present.

Communication Navigation Surveillance/Air Traffic Management services will also be provided by AAI, for which State Government will enter



into a separate agreement.

Further, Reserved Services will be provided by the respective GoI for which GoUP shall enter a separate MoU with the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

As per the agreement, the Government of UP will complete the initial capital works for making airports ready for commercial operation and hand over all moveable and immovable assets along with relevant approvals, and documents to AAI for Operation & Management.

IndiGo launches a new flight between Delhi- Deoghar

Continuing its effort to strengthen regional air connectivity, IndiGo announces a new flight between Delhi and Deoghar, effective from July 30, 2022. This flight is in addition to the Kolkata-Deoghar route being inaugurated by Honourable Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. IndiGo will be the first airline to operate from Deoghar, which will boost connectivity to Jharkhand and nearby regions. Bookings

for this new pair of flights opened on July 12, 2022. The IndiGo flights flying from Delhi will arrive in Deoghar in the afternoon and the flights from Deoghar to Delhi will be flying early in the evening. IndiGo remains committed to providing customers with an affordable, on-time, safe, on-board and hassle-free travel experience on board our lean clean flying machine.





RACHITA SOOD

PROMOTED AT: Sofitel Mumbai BKC
TO: Director of Operations
 Rachita Sood has recently been appointed as the new "Director of Operations" at the Sofitel Mumbai BKC. A passionate hotelier with an illustrious career trajectory spanning over 20 years believes that hard work and discipline are secret ingredients to success. She will play a key role in overlooking the operations of the iconic hotel across all functions and ensuring the highest level of guest satisfaction. Teamwork, talent, and performance are the three pillars of her personal philosophy.



BIJU MATHEW

PROMOTED AT: Arya Lords Club & Resorts, Rajkot
TO: Operation Manager
 A seasoned Hospitality professional with 19 years of experience, Biju Mathew is well-educated with a Bachelor's degree in Hotel Management from Indian institute of management Studies, Pattom, Trivandrum, Kerala. From a Room Attendant to a Bell Boy, Mathew's career graph has grown many a fold from his initial days spent at Hotel Gokulampark Inn, Cochin(65keys).



SALIL FADNIS

PROMOTED AT: Hotel Sahara Star
TO: General Manager
 Sahara Hospitality Ltd announces the promotion of Salil Fadnis as the General Manager of Hotel Sahara Star. Bringing in more than a decade of hospitality experience, he joined the group in 2007 as the Hotel's Executive Sous Chef. He continued his passion for food at the hotel opening nine Food and Beverage outlets and has been the force to reckon with in the food and beverage industry. He is also the President and founder member of Western India Culinary Association.



ADITYA ARORA

PROMOTED AT: VFS Global
TO: Chief Operating Officer
 VFS Global announced the appointment of Aditya Arora as its Chief Operating Officer. Aditya will be responsible for managing the company's global operations, focusing especially on developing greater efficiencies and synergies across all its services and products for applicants and client governments. He will play a role in the overall strategic direction of the company as a member of VFS Global's Executive Board.



RAJESH KUMAR ROY

PROMOTED AT: The Fern Seaside Luxurious Tent Resort, Diu
TO: General Manager
 Rajesh Kumar Roy has joined as General Manager of The Fern Seaside Luxurious Tent Resort, Diu. Rajesh has been associated with the hospitality industry for the last two decades. He has worked with many national and international well-known brands including Clarks Group Varanasi, Pride Hotels Ahmedabad, Sun N Sand Pune and ITC Fortune Hotels in India and Well Worth Group of Hotels and Kempinski Hotels in Tanzania & more.



MANISH DEOLEKAR

PROMOTED AT: Grand Victoria, The Fern Resort & Spa, Panchgani.
TO: General Manager
 Manish Deolekar has been appointed as the General Manager at Grand Victoria The Fern Resort & Spa, Panchgani. Manish has been a part of the group for the last decade and has helmed various leadership roles, the most recent being Executive Assistant Manager at The Fern Residency Mumbai. Manish is responsible for positioning the hotel as a defining benchmark in luxury hospitality in the region.



DEEPAK MENEZES

PROMOTED AT: ITC Windsor, Bengaluru.
TO: General Manager
 ITC Hotels has appointed Deepak Menezes as the new General Manager at ITC Windsor, Bengaluru. With over two decades of experience in hospitality, Deepak brings with him an astute sense of business and markets. Deepak is a highly dynamic, goal-driven and accomplished professional with luxury hospitality experience in customer service, hotel and resort management. He has been associated with ITC Grand Bharat, Gurgaon and ITC Royal Bengal, Kolkata respectively for about 7 years.



JATINDER PAUL SINGH

PROMOTED AT: Southern Travels Pvt. Limited
TO: Chief Executive Officer
 Southern Travels has appointed Jatinder Paul Singh as the company's Chief executive officer. He is a business leader with a progressive and innovative outlook with over 25 years of experience across international brands, highly valued for his expertise in interpreting corporate vision and translating it into objectives. His style of leadership emanates from his philosophy of "process with people" which has helped build high-performing teams over the decades in all disciplines of the hospitality business.



KHUSHBOO SHARMA

PROMOTED AT: Crowne Plaza, Greater Noida
TO: Marketing Manager
 Crowne Plaza Greater Noida is delighted to announce a new addition to its team, Khushboo Sharma as Marketing Manager. Khushboo will be in charge of the marketing department's operations, including strategic planning, content development, events, brand standards, and advertising. She will also be responsible for enhancing the brand's communication strategy and media management. She is a public relations and marketing professional with 8 years of experience working with different hotel brands.

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