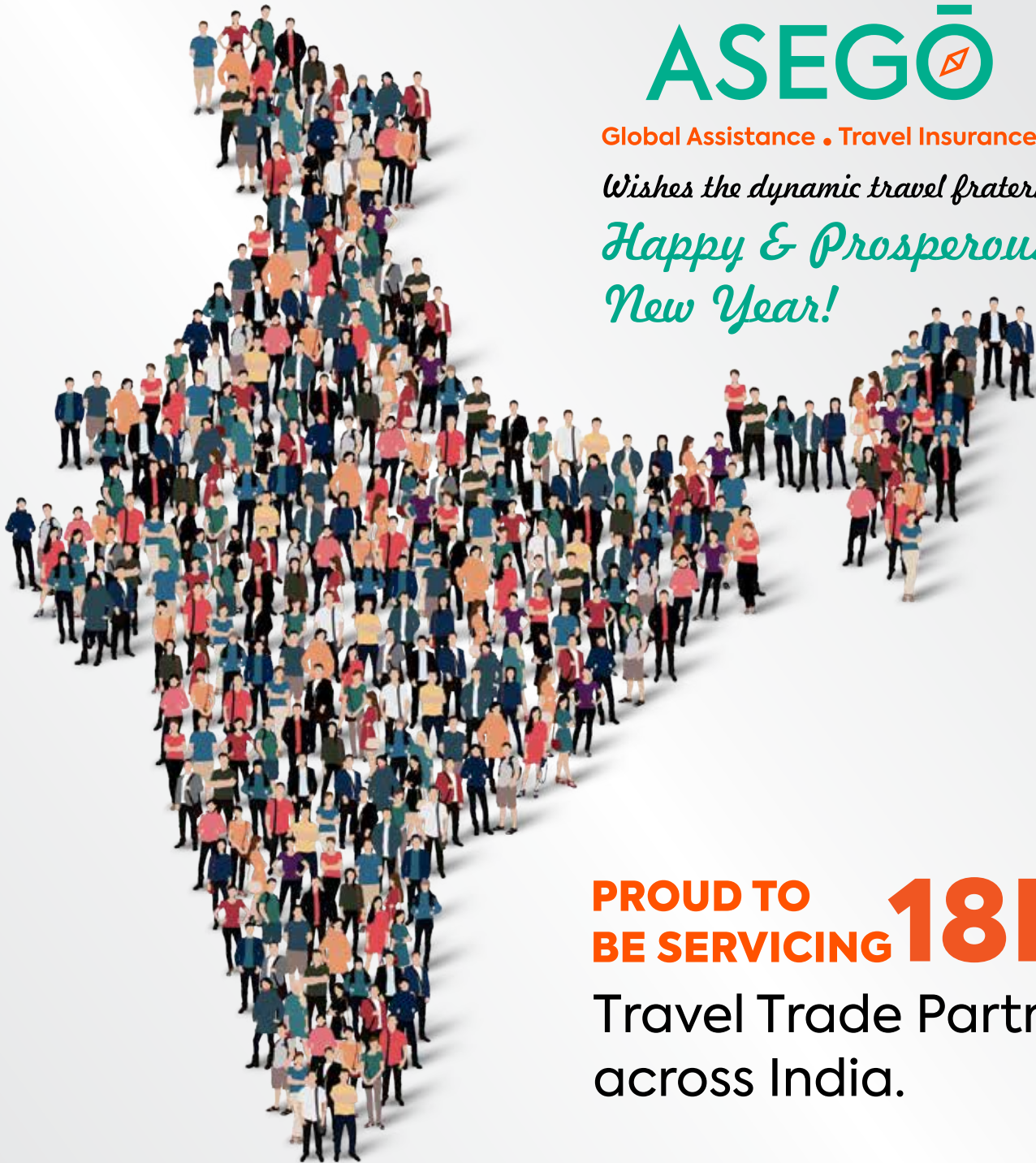


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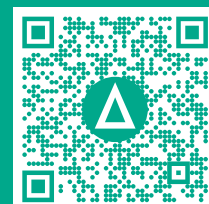
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# TravelScapes

JANUARY 2023, PAGES 72, ₹100

VOL. 11, ISSUE. 1

# 10<sup>th</sup>

## Anniversary

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# PUBLISHER'S NOTE



**Varun Malhotra**  
Publisher & CEO

*Dear Readers,*

## TravelScapes' Tin Anniversary

It's very wisely quoted, "New year, new beginnings!"

It's not just the beginning of a new year but the beginning of a new decade for TravelScapes. Expressing my gratitude for the industry, I wonder how a small venture completes a decade in the industry and has become a giant today. From initiating a regular magazine to expanding our footprints in the Middle East with 'TravelScapes Middle East', we have strived to be amongst the top travel trade publications. Coming across the fact that the world has a lot in store, we unveiled '101 Experiences by TravelScapes' in 2016. Following the success of 101 Experiences, we also ushered in 'MICE Insiders' in 2017 catering to the expansive MICE industry. Bringing glitz and glam to the forefront of the travel trade industry, VETA (Versatile Excellence Travel Awards) was brought out in 2018.

It is always an honour to recognise and collate insights surrounding the evolution of the industry. So, yet again TravelScapes brings you valuable insights on the transition in the travel industry from the leading captains Mukesh Kumar Meshram- Principal Secretary of Uttar Pradesh Tourism; Maryam Toorani of Bahrain Tourism, Neliswa Nkani of South Africa Tourism and Dev Karvat of Asego in the New Year. We are more humbled than thrilled to see our country progressing and flourishing on the tourism front. We have witnessed an array of tourism domains such as medical tourism, mountain tourism, winter tourism, pink tourism, women tourism, culinary tourism and many more elevating in various parts of the country. Domestic tourism has seen a prominent upsurge, surrounding which TravelScapes brings to you road routes all over India savouring the beauty of the multifaceted nation. We are taking you through the road that leads to the land of royals, Rajasthan bringing boutique hospitality to your doors with renowned brands like HRH Group of Hotels and Tree of Life Hotels and Resorts.

Moving beyond the land of mega diversity, Qatar is one such outbound destination coming up with millennial hotels. A few kilometres away is the beautiful island nation, Kingdom of Bahrain in the Persian Gulf introduced to you by TravelScapes. Jaw Resort & Spa in the Kingdom of Bahrain has also been featured in keeping intact the upswing of staycations across the globe.

As it's rightly said, the initial years of a venture involve more absorption, I can proudly say we soaked it all up pretty well only to become an exemplary reflection of innovation in the industry. We intend to keep our hands in the avant-garde travel trends always and forever!

Share with us your valuable feedback and suggestions at

varun@versatilemedia.in

Happy Reading!

Varun Malhotra

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**TRAVELSCAPES RAISES A TOAST FOR YET ANOTHER ACHIEVEMENT  
IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY**



## Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya hosts first light and sound show

**The first** episode of the Light and Sound show of the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya was launched on December 7, 2022, in New Delhi.

Union Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs & Culture Arjun Ram Meghwal, Union Minister Union Minister of State for External Affairs & Culture Meenakshi Lekhi, S. Somanath Secretary, Department of Space; Nripendra Misra, Chairman, Executive Council, NMML; Dr A Surya Prakash, Vice Chairman, Executive Council, NMML and Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma who is the first Indian citizen to enter into space were present on the occasion. Senior officers of the Ministry of Culture also attended the event.

The Show is an important addition to the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya complex. The first episode presented the remarkable journey of India's space programme since Independence. This show also depicts the ancient Indian knowledge about mathematics and astronomy which immensely contributed to the later development of these specialisations in various research locations of the world.

## Tourism Minister dedicates 4 Swadeshi Darshan projects in Puducherry

Union minister for tourism, culture, and development of the northeastern region, G Kishan Reddy dedicated four tourism projects under the Swadesh Darshan scheme to the nation in Puducherry on December 13, 2022.

Addressing the occasion, the minister said that Puducherry was a vibrant destination that attracts tourists worldwide. "India for thousands of years has always been known for its spiritual wealth, cultural heritage, and diversity. Over the last eight years, India is being known for world-class amenities, excellent infrastructure and facilities, and ease of living through technology and digitization. Now India is not just a place to see and visit but a destination to experience and be transformed for life."

Reddy added that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the tourism and hospitality industry has received constant support and guidance. "During our G-20 presidency, we have the opportunity to introduce the dignitaries and visitors of the G-20 countries to India's philosophy of "Athithi Devo Bhava" - where the guest is treated as divine".

## Tourism boosts in Ayodhya, with emergence of Ram Temple

**Chief Minister** Yogi Adityanath claimed that tourism will increase by 10 times after the Ram Temple in Ayodhya is constructed. He also stated that the state which is number one in terms of domestic tourism is the safest state in the country for travellers. "Uttar Pradesh is a state with infinite possibilities in terms of tourism. All the major centres of religious, spiritual, and eco-tourism are present here. Today Uttar Pradesh is number one in terms of domestic tourism. In 2024, when the Shri Ram temple will be ready in Ayodhya, tourism will increase 10 times," Yogi said

while addressing tour operators from all over the country at the 37th Annual Convention of the Indian Association of Tour Operators.

Yogi also claimed that at least one crore tourists visited Varanasi in the month of Sawan.

"We have Kashi (Varanasi) which is the oldest city in the world, and the cultural and spiritual capital of India. One year has passed since the inauguration of the Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham. Earlier, usually, one crore tourists used to visit Varanasi in a year but, this year, one crore tourists came to Varanasi in the month of Sawan alone," Adityanath said.



## Varanasi to get INR 100 cr for a heritage museum

**A grand** heritage museum will soon come up in Varanasi at a cost of Rs 100 crore in the year 2023.

This will be in addition to several museums that already exist in the city, officials said.

Priti Srivastava, Deputy Director, UP Tourism, said, "The heritage museum will not only give a chance to the people to peep into the history of Kashi but also showcase its rich tradition and culture."

She said, "If all goes well, the Rs 100 crore grand heritage museum would be ready by 2023. It would highlight Kashi's

rich traditions and culture and educate people about its history and glorious past."

Varanasi has several museums, including the Bharat Kala Bhawan at Ramnagar Fort Museum, another situated inside Ramnagar Fort on the banks of river Ganges that highlights artefacts from the period of Maharajas, Hastkala Sankul, a crafts museum that displays the history of Kashi's handicrafts, Virtual Experiential Museum, another museum located in Man Mahal is a unique one, exhibiting things in a new digital method.



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## Bodh Mahotsava to begin on January 27

**The annual** Bodh Mahotsava is to be held at Bodh Gaya from January 27 to 29. The goal is to promote tourism in the Buddhist circuit, which was started in 1998. Since then, the state tourism department and the Gaya district administration are jointly organising the event every year. However, due to Covid pandemic restrictions, the Mahotsav was not organised in 2020 and 2021. This year, artists from television reality shows, Bollywood or Bhojpuri film industry are likely to perform during the Mahotsav at Kalchakra ground, around 200

metres Northwest of the world heritage Mahabodhi Mahavihara.

The district administration invited requests for proposals (RFP) from firms, organisations, and contractors for providing sound and light systems during the event. According to the RFP posted on the official website of Gaya district, the bidder is required to provide concept and art design of the stage, state-of-the-art infrastructure and the technology to provide quality light and sound of international standards on the stage compatible with the music and vocal performance.



## Tourism elevates in Old Mysuru after two years

**The Old** Mysuru reached new heights for Christmas and year-end tourism after a lull for 2 years. All hotels, resorts and homestays recorded almost 100 per cent advanced bookings. Until New Year events were over, the demand for tourist vehicles remained high. The tourist destinations witnessed huge crowds. When the Christmas holidays began, tourist flow had started from December 24. Many service providers had increased the charges by several folds to cash in on the demand.

Managing Director, Jungle Lodges and Resorts Limited

stated that they were booked 100 per cent. According to BS Prashant, honorary president of Mysuru Travels' Association, tourist vehicles were also hardly available for Christmas and New Year due to the huge flow of tourists.

Ananthashayana stated that by November, advance bookings had reached a peak. Only those rooms which were cancelled were available. He added that in the previous two years, Christmas and New Year celebrations were affected by Covid-19 fear. He added that the tourists had been arriving for the celebrations without any fear.



## Karnataka Minister urges CM to develop Ramadevarabetta as Ayodhya of South India

**Dr CN** Ashwath Narayan, District in-charge Minister of Ramanagara urged Chief Minister Basavaraja Bommai to constitute a development committee to build a temple at Ramadevarabetta in the lines of Lord Ram Temple at Ayodhya. In a letter written to Chief Minister Basavaraja Bommai and Muzarai Minister Shashikala Jolle, he demanded that Ramadevarabetta should be developed as the Ayodhya of South India. Narayan said that Shri Ram Temple

should be built using 19 acres of space which belong to the Department of Muzarai at Ramadevarabetta. "There is a strong belief among the people of the region that Sugriva installed Ramadevarabetta. Considering the religious feelings of the people of the district Ramadevarabetta should be developed as a heritage and attractive tourist spot. This would enable us to portray our culture as well as nurture tourism," he stated.

## Sinthan Pass remained open to promote winter tourism

**Sinthan Pass**, connecting Kashmir to Chenab valley in Jammu region, had been kept open for tourists and locals on the first day of Chillai Kalan, which began on December 22, 2022, officials said. The road helps in maintaining connectivity of Jammu and Kashmir divisions when NH44 is blocked due to adverse weather, they said.

"The move is aimed at promoting winter tourism in Kokernag and providing motorable conditions to the people of far-off areas," Deputy Commissioner Anantnag Basharat Qayoom said.

He said that promotion

of winter tourism was a priority area and steps like these are aimed at inviting tourists to explore beautiful destinations at such times in the year when they are usually inaccessible.

Sinthan Top is a mountain pass, a popular tourist destination located between South Kashmir's Breng Valley in Anantnag district and Chatroo in Kishtwar district of Chenab Valley.

Qayoom said that winter tourism festivals are also planned in all three important tourist destinations of Pahalgam, Kokernag and Verinag and preparation for these are underway.



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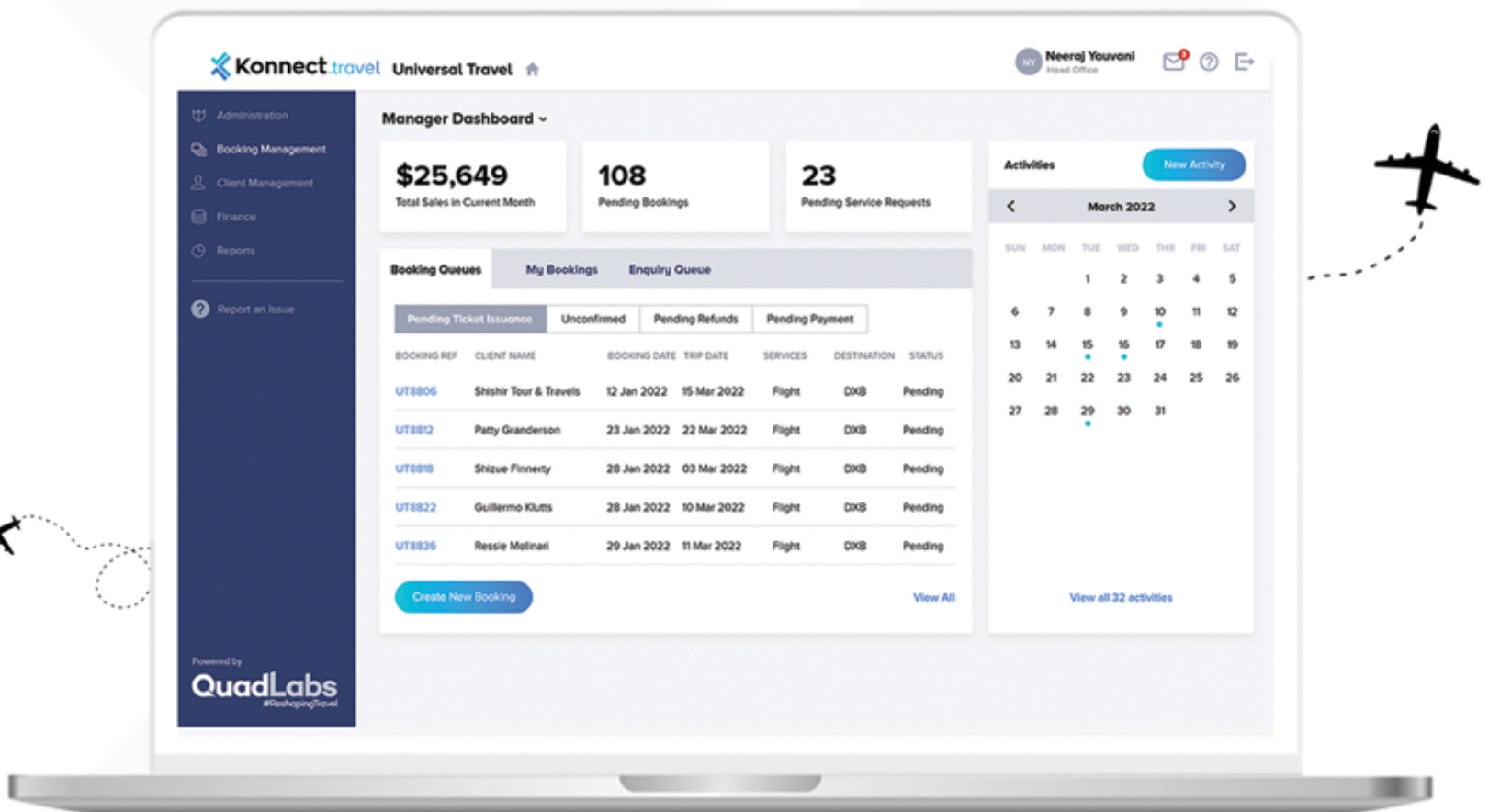
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## Explore the charm of Maharashtra in 'Postcards from Maharashtra'

**Maharashtra** is a land brimming with an array of great historic hotspots, colourful shrines, a phenomenal collection of caves and oodles of food offerings. With its immersive and authentic style of storytelling, National Geographic in India along with actor Sai Tamhankar took viewers on an experiential journey through a series 'Postcards from Maharashtra', having them experience the varied attractions along with the unique culture of the majestic Indian state.

Premiered on National Geographic starting December 29, 2022, the seven-part series follows Sai Tamhankar as she takes culinary detours, and explores and reconnects with her homeland. From scrumptious food offerings to historic places of worship, forts, and old monuments, the stories will also highlight destinations like the ancient caves of Elephanta, UNESCO heritage sites in Aurangabad to the divine temples of Pune and Nasik. Sai was also seen exploring the lip-smacking hearty food-servings and shopping destinations across cities.

"From unique ancient marvels to lush greenery, one can experience a bit of everything in the state of Maharashtra. We are happy to have associated with National Geographic who along with Sai Tamhankar have put together a series that has captured the true beauty of Maharashtra and bringing viewers closer to the unexplored gems of the state," said the Director, Directorate of Tourism, Govt. of Maharashtra.

## Master planning for Meghalaya's tourist routes promoting sustainable tourism

**Since Meghalaya** became an independent state, the Tourism Department has worked to cultivate favourable conditions that would entice visitors from all over the world to come and enjoy the unique culture of the region. There is a wealth of educated people and resources in Meghalaya that might help support the delivery systems becoming a significant contributor to the State's GDP. Foot traffic from tourists was 12.7 lakh in 2019, and it is anticipated that this number will exceed 15 lacs by the year 2024.

The federal and state governments are also making efforts to promote Meghalaya as a travel destination, with a focus on a variety of elements including adventure, culture, and sustainable and ethical tourism. Some recent examples can be seen in the Cherry Blossom Festival and the Shillong Literary Festival.

## Himachal's Tourism Industry optimistic of good footfall

**The tourism** industry of Himachal Pradesh was optimistic about high footfall during Christmas and New Year, in spite of the fresh Covid scare. With Christmas and New Year on weekends, hotel occupancy had been anticipated to be over 90 per cent.

Shimla Meteorological Centre Director Surender Paul stated that there were chances of light snowfall in the state's upper areas and Lahaul and Spiti on Christmas and Shimla, Manali, and the higher reaches on December 29 and 30.

Shimla Hotel and Restaurant Association Vice-President Prince Kukreja stated that weekend occupancy in Shimla had been expected at nearly 70 to 80 per cent, with Christmas and New Year both falling on weekends. Hotels had been receiving online bookings in massive digits, and the snowfall was an additional benefit, he had said.

According to data from the Tourism department, 1.39 crore tourists stayed in Himachal Pradesh till November 30, against 56.37 lacs in the year 2022.



## Jaipur Literature Festival 2023 to celebrate contemporary and indigenous art

**The iconic** Jaipur Literature Festival is all set to run from January 19 to 23 at Hotel Clarks Amer, Jaipur. Marking another year of 'the greatest literary show on Earth', the festival will recognise and celebrate visual art with exceptional indigenous artistic talent along with contemporary artists. The Ojas Art Award remains one of the highlights of the Festival, displaying artworks covered since 2015 at the Festival.

The 2023 edition of the Festival will host some iconic artworks representing Gond Art (Madhya Pradesh), Madhubani-Mithila Art (Bihar), Bhil Art (Madhya Pradesh), Pattachitra Art (Bengal), Warli Art (Maharashtra), and Pattachitra Art (Odisha). The Festival will also feature Padma Shri awardees and their incredible work, blending art and



culture through a collaborative effort.

Anubhav Nath, Director of Ojas Art, said, "This year, the Ojas Art Award celebrates excellence in the field of arts, with the confluence of indigenous and contemporary art at the sixteenth edition of the Jaipur Literature Festival. Viswaroop, a landmark work created by three artists: Bhajju Shyam, Manjunath Kamath and Santosh Kumar Das, will be presented at the Festival."



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# PROMISES

## FOR A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

One decade down, forever to go! TravelScapes completes 10 years and celebrates the success with the travel fraternity serving them with intricate details about the travel trade around the globe. On this note, we once again bring to you a plethora of views from smart minds playing a greater role in revolutionising the future outlook of travel and tourism in the year 2023. Let the new year dawn with a positive vibe ushering towards a better tomorrow. With updated tech trends, there will be a visible transformation in tourism, hence scaling up the businesses, surpassing the figures of the past times. Promotional Marketing will play a vital role in bringing forward tourism by organising roadshows and FAMs within India. Sustainable tourism still takes the front seat keeping in mind the hygiene and safety of tourists. India will be the most preferred tourism destination with more open and hierarchy-free dialogue between the stakeholders. The expansion of the travel sector has been facilitated by economic prosperity. Travel is evolving rapidly and 2023 seems to be an exciting year of growth for the industry. In addition to portraying different beliefs, these stalwarts pen down their best wishes for TravelScapes for completing ten years in the travel trade keeping the spark and motivation for future years alive

By Chandni Chopra





**JYOTI MAYAL, PRESIDENT, TRAVEL AGENTS ASSOCIATION OF INDIA (TAAI)**

### **Promising changes for the future outlook of the tourism industry in the upcoming year**

As President of the premier association TAAI, and Vice Chairman of FAITH, I believe that the tourism industry will enter a technological era in the coming year. Those in the industry who do not keep up with the latest trends and technology might not be able to manage or scale up their businesses. Yes, that is correct and I have come to such a conclusion, especially after closely observing the industry for the last two years.

Secondly, community participation after COVID has substantially increased. Travel will now be more culturally rich and community-supported. The best part for a country like ours is that it will create millions of employment opportunities and engage people in entrepreneurial endeavours.

Third, Leisure travel will be in the spotlight. People have realised that life is short and needs to be celebrated with family and friends. Travellers are willing to pay for the services as long as the deliverables meet international standards and the transformation is visible. Almost every global hospitality conglomerate is expanding, whether in India or elsewhere on the planet.

Lastly, Sustainability will be of utmost importance and travellers need to become more aware of the same, we need to be committed to sustainability in our own businesses and environment.

### **TravelScapes completes a decade in the industry with new innovations in the pipeline**

Heartiest congratulations to TravelScapes and the entire committed team on their 10th anniversary. Everything in the magazine regarding travel and tourism has always been detailed and very well captured. Indeed, the magazine provides a wide range of topics to read about. I still remember when I first started reading the magazine, I was awestruck.

I have seen the improvements that have come in and the efforts taken to produce

**“ I believe that the tourism industry will enter a technological era in the coming year**

quality work. The articles by the editors and others are worth reading. It is a huge accomplishment to have completed 10 years. I wish TravelScapes more success in the future and to achieve many more successful and relevant milestones. God Bless!



### **INDIGO**

The Indian aviation sector witnessed a record number of flyers in the second half of 2022, setting the tone for a positive 2023 for the industry. Having said that, the lingering effects of COVID-19, geopolitical issues, rising prices of crude and continuing supply chain challenges are likely to pose headwinds. Despite this, we are optimistic that the robust demand will continue powering the industry to new heights. We are seeing a strong recovery in both the international and domestic segments, buoyed by festive travel, tourism as well as the return of business travel. IndiGo has consolidated its leadership, with traffic surpassing pre-pandemic numbers. We are currently operating more than 1600 daily flights, our highest ever. In addition, we have been strengthening connectivity across the network with 76 domestic and 26 international destinations.

We have also introduced various technology-

**“ We are optimistic that the robust demand will continue powering the industry to new heights**

powered initiatives such as RFID tech and electronic documentation to improve operational efficiencies. We have expanded our global reach with codeshare agreements with leading airlines. Special attention has also been given to our processes, training and customer-centricity. All of these have helped us retain our position at the top of the charts, including on-time performance. Given the size and scale of our operations, this is indeed a special achievement.

Looking ahead to 2023, we will continue expanding our network both within India and overseas and strive to stay true to our promise of affordable fares, on-time performance, and hassle-free service across a wide network.



**RAJIV MEHRA, PRESIDENT, INDIAN ASSOCIATION OF TOUR OPERATORS (IATO)**

### **Promising changes for the future outlook of the tourism industry in the upcoming year**

The changes are dynamic. India was opening up, taking baby steps post covid. Business is trickling in for the stakeholders and still a long way to go to reach pre covid figures which we expect should be at the end of 2023 – provided things keep looking up as at present and policy initiatives resonate with the voice of the stakeholders by end of 2023, we should reach the pre-Covid figures.

The change is towards the need for hygiene, safety and security for tourists. Sustainable and Responsible tourism will be at the forefront and Experiential, Eco and Wellness tourism becoming the choice of tourists and stakeholders who practice these catch the business. Indians travelling within India in large numbers has shown to the world that India is safe and ready for Inbound. The skyrocketing hotel rates triggered by domestic tourist following the economics of Demand and Supply sets in a worry for the inbound, however with the world opening up and Outbound gathering pace this will ease over time.

The policy persuasion by IATO was alive and the UK and Canadian E Visa is an outcome of our request to the authorities besides doing

“Indians travelling within India in large numbers has shown to the world that India is safe and ready for inbound

away with the Air Suvidha Portal and other facilitating parameters. The GST Council took the suggestions of IATO favourably. The TCS hurdle was also resolved. IATO is grateful to the authorities for giving a patient hearing to the strategic issues faced by the stakeholders and addressing them to the best possible.

Our expectation is for Promotional Marketing by our nodal ministry. Roadshows abroad in target countries, FAMs by Foreign Tour Operators, Bloggers, Participation in International Fairs - in consultation with IATO.

#### Travel Scapes completes a decade in the industry with new innovations in the pipeline

A decade into taking tourism to the far corners of India and ushering the momentum for the policymakers, TravelScapes has echoed the viable voice of the tourism bodies in an opportune manner. I wish that TravelScapes keeps up the synergy and makes an even greater reach and impact.



**RAJEEV KOHLI**, JOINT MANAGING DIRECTOR, CREATIVE TRAVEL

#### Promising changes for the future outlook of the tourism industry in the upcoming year

To be brutally honest, I don't have any real expectations for our industry. There have been no real signals from either the government or any trade association on any significant moves that give one any excitement. Yes, the creation of a National Tourism Board is an interesting one but it's already way behind any reasonable schedule to be able to impact 2023. The closure of the overseas marketing offices is well-intentioned and I support it but appointing new marketing will take time and again have little impact on 2023. The Finance Ministry has little appetite to support one of the biggest employment generators in the nation, and the Commerce Ministry is shuffling papers to give

us a replacement for the export benefits we used to get. So, when all else is status quo, it gives the reason that the tourism industry will see no significant movement other than what they do on their own steam. I truly admire my fellow industry colleagues for the work they do to survive and propose against all odds. To see significant growth, we need significant policy change across all ministries in the government. We need significant mindset changes in our associations. Tourism needs to be a mission across all levels of government and not confined to one small ministry. So, if the question was to change what I wish for in the new year, I simply wish for a more open and hierarchy-free dialogue between the stakeholders on achieving the common goal - making India the most preferred tourism destination. We can do it. We just need to stop working in silos, leave egos outside the door, and roll up our sleeves to get in the trenches and rebuild. It can be as simple as that. Mindsets need to grow up.

#### Travel Scapes completes a decade in the industry with new innovations in the pipeline.

Wow, a decade is a tremendous milestone. I have always seen a spark in Varun and Pranav and their mission to be different. Here's to wishing you and the entire team all the very best to the next step on your journey. Congratulations Team Travelsapes.



**HUSSAIN PATEL**, DIRECTOR, TRIPJACK

#### Promising changes for the future outlook of the tourism industry in the upcoming year

Over the long term, the travel industry has been growing consistently, with the increased numbers of people travelling for leisure and business. The expansion of the travel sector has been facilitated by economic prosperity and the rise of the middle class. We believe this trend will continue in the coming year, although it is also important to keep an eye on and consider potential challenges and disruptions that may impact the industry.

Along with the industry expansion, we might also see better health and safety standards, the adoption of new technologies that aid travellers in finding the best offers and experiences, and slight changes in

“The expansion of the travel sector has been facilitated by economic prosperity and the rise of the middle class

consumer behaviour as people start looking for destinations that offer a variety of unique travel experiences which we have already started seeing.

#### Travel Scapes completes a decade in the industry with new innovations in the pipeline

One of the top travel trade publications, TravelScapes features up-to-date, distinctive, and relevant information. They have provided us with incredible travel content for ten years. Many congratulations to their entire team who have put in tremendous effort to bring us news and updates that are relevant. We look forward to the bigger and better things from TravelScapes.



**RIAZ MUNSHI**, PRESIDENT, OUTBOUND TOUR OPERATORS ASSOCIATION OF INDIA (OTOAI)

#### Promising changes for the future outlook of the tourism industry in the upcoming year

The year 2022 was an extremely encouraging year for the outbound industry. There is a pent-up demand in the market and people are really keen to take an international holiday. Outbound travel in 2023 looks extremely positive. Given the travel trends that ruled 2022 and the fact that many countries are now speeding up their visa processes, I am confident that in 2023. We will surpass the business figures of 2019. The hospitality industry is already doing well and will continue to do so in 2023 and with more and more flights being added on a daily basis, I am sure that the aviation sector too will find its high.

I also see 2023 to be the year of further



“I am confident that in 2023 we will surpass the business figures of 2019

embracing slow and sustainable travel. The focus would be on building itineraries that are impactful, purposeful and responsible with an added consideration towards the needs of the local communities and the environment. Travellers are in search of lesser-explored locations where they can immerse themselves in unspoilt landscapes, and the local culture and give back to the community. Travel is evolving rapidly and I foresee 2023 to be an exciting year of growth for the industry.

#### **TravelScapes completes a decade in the industry with new innovations in the pipeline**

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate TravelScapes on completing ten years. Keep up the good work and I wish you many more years of success and innovation.



**JURGEN BAILOM, PRESIDENT & CEO, WATERWAYS LEISURE TOURISM**

#### **Promising changes for the future outlook of the tourism industry in the upcoming year**

As travel and tourism become an integral part of the Indian economy and looking at the potential the country holds in terms of demand and resources, 2023 definitely looks like a promising year for the industry. The tourism and hospitality industry is ever-growing and it is here to flourish. The dynamics keep changing and it's ever exciting to keep what the future holds. For the cruising industry, all I can say is, it's here to stay. India has welcomed and loved the cruising culture and it is here to grow.

#### **TravelScapes completes a decade in the industry with new innovations in the pipeline**

Firstly, Congratulations on achieving this milestone, we from Cordelia Cruises, wish you all the best in all your future endeavours. 10 years in the industry is a very long time and Travelscapes has been holding its place gracefully through the years, bringing the best and most innovative top news to its audience. Sending best wishes for the future years!



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

#### **Promising changes for the future outlook of the tourism industry in the upcoming year**

Looking at the current trend of tourism growth in the country, especially after COVID where destinations in the country are experiencing unprecedented footfall of tourists, especially at J & K, we are on a great recovery. Stakeholders in Kashmir valley are really happy to witness the rush in tourist arrivals with a record number of flights operating from Srinagar Airport. Similarly, Ladakh is also an equally blessed destination. With MICE catching up corporates are back to their business visits to various places. The 2023 G20 Delhi summit is the upcoming eighteenth meeting of the Group of Twenty (G20), a summit scheduled to take place in Pragati Maidan, New Delhi in 2023 the year is going to have full of activities in preparation for the G20 summit.

Inbound is catching up with its momentum. With international flights operating normally and the visa restrictions being relaxed, we might get back the lost inbound tourist traffic by the next year's end.

The government is making all-out efforts to improve the connectivity which was a deterrent to the growth of domestic tourism. Existing airports are upgraded and a second airport in some of the cities is being added

“With MICE catching up, corporates are back to their business visits to various places

to ease the air traffic congestion. North East has been in the news of late to attract tourists to this region. Also, to provide amenities to tourists, the state and central governments with private entrepreneurs are taking various measures like providing proper infrastructure at destinations, improved road conditions along with safety security to tourists.

#### **TravelScapes completes a decade in the industry with new innovations in the pipeline**

We at ADTOI are very happy that TravelScapes would be completing its tenth anniversary in the industry. ADTOI is on the firm belief that Media plays an important role in the growth of tourism. ADTOI is proud to be associated with Travel Escapes all these years in their role in disseminating information about the association activities to the people at large and in the industry, in particular, which is remarkable. This has helped our growth in the industry as well. We look forward to working together for the benefit of the industry in the days to come.



**DEV KARVAT, FOUNDER & CEO, ASEG**

#### **Promising changes for the future outlook of the tourism industry in the upcoming year**

The Indian travel trade has recently witnessed the emergence of various new travel trends and innovations which will create a significant impact for years to come. We're confident that the travel and tourism sector will continue to emerge as a key growth driver in the service sector in India.

Talking about changes in the travel industry, the first thing that comes to mind is the advent of contactless travel, coupled with the adoption of AI and machine learning. These tech advancements will create a huge differentiator in the mindset of travellers.

Leisure tourism has always been a major revenue earner for the tourism industry with travellers opting for some of the most extravagant transport and accommodation experiences. However, considering millennials who are dominating the current tourism sphere with their changing travel preference, hotels and tour organisers are now offering indulgences with a twist. The year 2023 will see the rise of experiential travel itineraries that resonate on a deeper emotional level.

“The year 2023 will see the rise of experiential travel itineraries that resonate on a deeper emotional level

Further, travellers are now seeking escapades that are more personalized and attuned to local culture, inspiring them towards a path of self-discovery.

I also foresee a huge spike in travellers opting for extreme adventure sports such as deep-sea diving and other off-beat experiences such as eco-tourism which lets them connect and be one with nature.

Most importantly, travellers are now self-evaluating the risks and opting for the right travel assistance and insurance plans suitable for their trip.

#### TravelScapes completes a decade in the industry with new innovations in the pipeline

TravelScapes offers a fine blend of travel & tourism, educational and entertainment-related news and updates along with breathtaking images from around the world and I look forward to reading it every month. Congratulations on serving the travel fraternity with highly impactful and informative content for a decade now. My team and I wish you all the very best in your future endeavours.



**SONAVI KAICKER, CEO, NEEMRANA HOTELS**

#### Promising changes for the future outlook of the tourism industry in the upcoming year

In the year 2023, we expect the average room rates across the locations and industry to continue to increase gradually which will ensure a steady increase in overall revenue figures for hotels. Post Covid-19, there is a focus on experiential travel across all generations and age groups in the domestic market which will remain this year too.

We also anticipate a gradual increase in inbound tourist arrivals which will contribute to the growth of the tourism industry in India. With the government's renewed focus

on enhancing infrastructure and facilities across the country, we look forward to better accessibility in terms of road connectivity and airports, meeting venues, EV charging stations across the country, and enhanced safety for our travellers. Wholistically, we anticipate inbound tourism arrivals to increase in 2023 and the initiative of Visit India 2023 under the Ministry of Tourism will encourage people to visit India from across the world.

Neemrana Hotels has been one of the pioneers of experiential and heritage hospitality and we shall continue to preserve India's rich heritage and promote culture in the form of diverse music and dance events and workshops across the hotels. At Neemrana, we shall be focusing on enhancing the number of deserving women team members across the hotels to attain greater gender equality as well as simultaneously creating more magical destinations for our discerning travellers.

#### TravelScapes completes a decade in the industry with new innovations in the pipeline.

We are delighted to note that TravelScapes has completed a decade in the tourism industry. We wish the founders and the editorial team great success for the future as they have played a vital role in connecting people within the industry to each other as well as highlighting the major challenges and successes too as we go along with our daily tasks and in contributing to our country's tourism industry and overall development.



**PRIYANKA NIJHAWAN, DIRECTOR, NIJHAWAN GROUP**

#### Promising changes for the future outlook of the tourism industry in the upcoming year.

Despite international and domestic flight costs going up marginally, we foresee a huge appetite for outbound travel from India to international destinations. India has the largest, youngest population in the world and with increasing disposable incomes, these factors will continue to make it one of the key source markets for many destinations.

With travel now being counted as a necessity, Indian travellers are anticipated to opt for more premium and experiential holidays in

“We hope that more Indian cities are connected directly to popular and upcoming global locations to boost tourism

2023. Flexible travel, sustainability, wellness and vegan meal options are some of the newer trends that we would see in the coming year.

We do hope that more Indian cities are connected directly to popular and upcoming global locations to boost tourism. Moreover, allowing foreign cruise vessels to include Indian destinations as a stop would encourage outbound tourism.

#### TravelScapes completes a decade in the industry with new innovations in the pipeline.

Congratulations to TravelScapes on completing a decade in the industry and showcasing exemplary work for the Indian travel trade! Nijhawan Group wishes you a very successful 2023!



**ANIL PARASHAR, PRESIDENT & CEO, INTERGLOBE TECHNOLOGY QUOTIENT (ITQ)**

#### Promising changes for the future outlook of the tourism industry in the upcoming year.

The use of travel technology has revolutionised so the travel industry. Technology has made things easier not just for the travellers but for the people in the industry as well. However, keeping up with the pace not necessarily refers to following the trends but aligning your teams and the organisation to a common goal of making customers' lives better. What difference do you make in your customer's journey from acquisition to retention? Facilitating the industrial objective





to achieve higher growth for the entire travel eco-system, we should adapt to new realities, as the pandemic revealed to us. Some emerging travel technology trends that are gaining popularity around the world are:

#### **Virtual tours from the comfort of your homes**

When it comes to selecting a hotel while on vacation, some travellers are very conscious of not just the rooms, but also the entire surroundings of the place. To solve this problem, many hotels have started giving virtual tours of their properties through 360 VR videos to help their customers feel more secure about their choices.

Augmented reality (AR) is another trend that is slowly carving a niche for itself in the industry. Instead of entirely changing a person's surroundings (like in VR), AR focuses more on altering them by adding a layer of the necessary components. As per reports, some apps are in development that will enable travellers to learn more about a particular tourism spot the moment they point their smartphone or tablet at it. The required information will display on their screens, enabling them to learn more about a particular place.

#### **Controlling everything in a room from a single device**

Imagine controlling everything in a room from a single device. This is possible through the Internet of Things (IoT), an emerging technology trend that is gaining more and more popularity as time passes. Under the IoT, various physical devices, connected through the internet, are capable of exchanging data and interacting with each other. This makes it possible for us to control them remotely.

#### **Facial Recognition Technology**

As can be inferred from its name, Facial Recognition technology tries to confirm a person's identity by classifying his/her face as per various characteristics such as gender, age, etc. The same technology is used in several smartphones when you have to look at your phone and it unlocks. Several countries around the world use facial recognition technology at their airports to verify a passenger's details.

In August this year, Delhi and Bengaluru airports made headlines for deploying facial

“The use of travel technology has revolutionised, so the travel industry

recognition to automate passenger entry and verification at various touchpoints. A beta version of the app, known as DigiYatra, was rolled out for passengers to pave way for a quicker travel experience for people.

#### **AI Chatbots**

At times, it is not possible to respond to a travellers' query instantly due to several factors. The AI Chatbots are super useful in these situations as they provide customers with quick resolutions 24/7. These bots are used best while answering questions that have a standard answer.

#### **Robotics**

There is no doubt that robotics is a field that is constantly evolving and generates a lot of curiosity among travellers. There are several hotels that deploy robots to greet customers, handle luggage, provide information to tourists, and so on. Another remarkable innovation that has made headlines in the past is a suitcase that follows the travellers on its own thereby eliminating the hassles of carrying a suitcase around on your trips.

With so much happening around the world, we are living in fascinating times and it won't be wrong to say that the travel industry is on the brink of a technological revolution.

#### **TravelScapes completes a decade in the industry with new innovations in the pipeline.**

Congratulations on the successful completion of your 10 years in the travel industry! My heartfelt appreciation to the TravelScapes team and writers for the well-written and informative content you publish for your readers. Your articles help us remain updated with the latest information. Your continuous support and persistence during a pandemic and beyond, have been a source of motivation for us. Thank you for feeding us with useful periodicals.



**DHANANJAY SALIANKAR, HEAD- SALES & MARKETING, ITC HOTELS**

#### **Promising changes for the future outlook of the tourism industry in the upcoming year.**

All industries are disrupted by new trends and innovations and so is the tourism industry. Keeping pace with new destinations, new technologies, and means of transport have caused major shifts in the industry. The tourism industry has been through a tremendous journey of evolution in the past two years. Some trends that have emerged through these last couple of years will continue to be seen in the coming years. Some noteworthy ones are:

#### **Safety and hygiene**

Everyone has become cautious and very selective about the safety and health of their families and their own selves. Safety and hygiene now are of paramount concern for each traveller. Even with the decline in COVID-19 cases, travellers are still wary and concerned about safe sanitization and hygiene practices in airlines, cruises, hotels, restaurants or bars. Ensuring safe practices has now become a key part of tourism marketing and communication and at service levels.

#### **Digital First**

While safety is at table stake, new and innovative guest-friendly technological solutions have been setting exceptional tourism experiences for guests and will continue to do so in the future. Contactless payments, online reservations, use of social

media platforms in marketing, virtual tour of hotels, locations and customer feedback have not only enhanced guests' experience but also increased productivity and profitability for businesses. Digitization has brought in a huge shift in the consumer behaviour. Keeping up with the newest trends has become and will continue to remain crucial for any business to be successful.

#### Transition from international to local

With various restrictions still in place and a recent surge in covid cases globally, many people are reluctant to travel abroad therefore, the tourism sector has started focussing on local travellers. Thus, this requires a change in the marketing strategies as well.

The tourism sector is now focused on highlighting the kinds of facilities that appeals to domestic and local travellers like in house restaurants, hotel rooms, high speed Wi-Fi for remote work and more. The sector has started focusing on local tourists without giving up on international traveller.

#### Hyper Personalisation

Guests have higher expectations than ever before, and they seek out one-of-a-kind experiences whenever they travel. Bland and generic services are no more acceptable; consumers prefer brands that recognise, remember, and provide them with relevant offers and suggestions. Even the tiniest efforts, like as customised emails or remembering frequent visitors' culinary preferences, as well as incorporating local activities and add-on services into the stay, create a great impact.

#### New and adaptive approach to selling

The method of reaching out to different visitor segments has evolved. It has progressed beyond the previous offline methods, and technology has now taken control. Hotels are increasingly focusing on factors such as investing in SEOs to improve their visibility on search engines and drive traffic to their websites. Hoteliers are devoting significant resources and efforts to increasing direct reservations, which not only eliminates commissions for OTAs / Online Travel Agencies but also aids in the development of strong guest relationships by allowing the brand to be in direct contact with its potential customers. Another factor that has grown in prominence and is attracting more guests than ever before is social media marketing.

#### TravelScapes completes a decade in the industry with new innovations to the pipeline

I would like to congratulate the TravelScapes team for completing 10 years of a success journey dedicated to showcasing the travel and tourism sector. TravelScapes's commitment to providing its readers with engaging and informative industry content is commendable. With its firm grasp of industry

insights, the publication has established itself as a trusted source for readers across the country. As a reader myself, I look forward to many more years of such engaging content.



**ARZAN KHAMBATTA, GLOBAL HEAD OF TOURISM SERVICES, VFS GLOBAL**

#### Promising changes for the future outlook of the tourism industry in the upcoming year

The past two years of the pandemic were the toughest for the tourism industry. However, the worst of the pandemic is behind us now. The release of pent-up travel demand has led to a wave of revenge travel which indicates the tourism industry has bounced back strongly and is on its way to returning to its pre-pandemic glory in 2023.

The tourism industry has always been evolving and adapting itself to the changing times. Travellers are becoming more sensitive towards the importance of eco-tourism, and safety and sustainability are playing a significant role in their choice of destination. Travellers in 2023 are expected to prioritize unique and enriching experiences at their destinations. The avid Indian traveller has constantly been looking for new and exciting experiences which has led to many new trends that have gained popularity post the pandemic such as wellness getaways, cultural holidays, multi-generational travel, bleisure travel, family reunions, nostalgia trips, etc.

VFS Global Tourism Services represents multiple tourism boards globally and have adapted to the changing trends and

“The release of pent-up travel demand has led to a wave of revenge travel which indicates the tourism industry has bounced back strongly

developments in the travel industry to provide the most cutting-edge and creative solutions to our tourism clients.

#### TravelScapes completes a decade in the industry with new innovations to the pipeline

We have had the pleasure to work with Travelscapes to promote our destinations over the years. On the occasion of this esteemed publication completing their 10-year milestone in the industry, we would like to congratulate them on their success and achievements over these years. We wish them many more years of excellence and best wishes for all their future endeavours.



**BA RAHIM, FOUNDER, ONE ABOVE GLOBAL DMC**

#### Promising changes for the future outlook of the tourism industry in the upcoming year

Change is inevitable and that is what is exciting about travel industry. In 2023, travellers will be going one step further, it will all be about gaining unique experiences. People will go beyond regular requirements, pushing their limits in terms of the properties they book and places they want to experience. Business travel is back but with a difference. The newest trend of workers experiencing a more nomadic lifestyle is as more corporations formalize their “work from anywhere” policies.

#### TravelScapes completes a decade in the industry with new innovations to the pipeline

On behalf of the entire organization at One Above Global DMC, we extend our sincerest congratulations to your company for completing 10 glorious years of success. With your commitment to providing appealing content to your readers, you remain a bridge that allows companies such as ours to reveal relevant information to the Indian travel fraternity. We hope to continue our wonderful relationship for years to come.





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# 37th IATO Annual Convention, a runaway success following post-convention Tours of Uttar Pradesh

The 37th IATO Annual Convention held in Lucknow from December 16 to 19, 2022 was a milestone for IATO as the number of delegates crossed 1000 from all over the country. After the convention, five post-convention tours were organised and about 300 delegates and spouses joined the post-tour of their interest which concluded on December 22, 2022



The biggest attraction of the convention was Yogi Adityanath's presence as the Chief Guest during the Valedictory Session held on December 18, 2022, at the Centrum Hotel, Lucknow where he addressed over 1000 delegates present there who talked about the UP Government plans for the development of tourism and incentives that have been announced by the UP Govt. He gave more emphasis on the safety and security of tourists and assured that Uttar Pradesh is today the safest state in India the tourists. Dayashankar Singh, Minister for Transport, Government of Uttar Pradesh, Arun Kumar Saxena, Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh and Mukesh Kumar Meshram were also present at the Valedictory Session. Mangal Prabhat Lodha, Minister of Tourism, Govt. of Maharashtra

through his video message invited all to the 38th IATO Annual Convention scheduled to be held in Aurangabad in September 2023. Rajiv Mehra, President of IATO made a request to the Chief Minister to help the industry for a 2-minute halt of Vande Bharat at Tundla Junction which would help the tourism industry to promote pilgrimage tourism to Uttar Pradesh.

The inaugural function of the convention was held on December 16, 2022, with pomp and show at The Centrum Hotel, Lucknow Ravi Gosain, Vice President and Chairman of the Convention started with the welcome address. Rajiv Mehra, President of IATO in his presidential speech thanked Yogi Adityanath who could not join for the inaugural function, owing to his busy schedule, for the support being given by his office and giving IATO an opportunity

## Innovation Competition awards given by Yogi Adityanath

- Best booth – Uttar Pradesh Tourism
- Best Digital Marketing by State Government – Madhya Pradesh Tourism
- Best Poster by State Government – Manipur Tourism
- Best Brochure by State Government – Maharashtra Tourism
- Best Video CD – Ladakh Tourism

to hold the 37th IATO Annual Convention in Lucknow. He thanked Arvind Singh, Secretary (Tourism), Government of India for all the support and Mukesh Kumar Meshram, Principal Secretary & Director General Tourism, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh for all the support and guidance given by him and his team of UP Tourism. Mukesh Kumar Meshram talked about the New Tourism Policy of the UP Government and incentives being given to the stakeholders. Arvind Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India talked about G20 Presidency and thanked UP Government for

taking the lead. He also thanked Meshram for hosting the 37th IATO Annual Convention in Uttar Pradesh. Asim Arun, Minister for Social welfare, Government of Uttar Pradesh addressed the delegates and talked about the new infrastructure development being created in Uttar Pradesh. Ashwini Kumar Patra, Minister of Tourism, Govt. of Odisha talked about tourism infrastructure and development in Odisha. Hall of Fame of Awards was given to Sunil Gupta, Managing Director, Travel Bureau and Late Badri Bajaj, Managing Director, Perfect Travels & Tours Pvt. Ltd. and Adventure World (India) Pvt.





Ltd. for their contribution to the tourism industry. Sunil Mishra, Hony. Treasurer and Co-Chairman Convention presented a vote of thanks.

Rajiv Bansal, Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Rakesh Kumar Verma, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, S.P. Singh, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Govt. of India, Mukesh Kumar Meshram, Principal Secretary & DG Tourism, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh, Sheo Shekhar Shukla, Principal Secretary, Tourism, & MD, MP Tourism Board, Sachin R Jadhav, Director Tourism & MD - Odisha Tourism Development Corporation, Abhay Sinha, Director General, Service Export Promotion Council were the key

government speakers in the business sessions.

During the Valedictory Session on December 18, 2022, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath released the Coffee Table Book on Budelkhand and IATO Manual 2022-23.

This was followed by Awards to the Winners and Runners of the IATO Run for Responsible Tourism which was organised on December 18, 2022. Many door prizes were announced during the business sessions and during the award presentation ceremony. Prateek Hira gave the vote of thanks.

The 37th IATO Annual Convention was a huge success with over 1000 delegates from all over the country. The convention



#### Deliberations on following subjects during business sessions

- INBOUND TOURISM- What Lies Ahead!
- Building Relationships between Hotels and Tour Operators
- Special Session on Uttar Pradesh Tourism
- OPPORTUNITIES IN UTTAR PRADESH- Spirituality, River Cruise, New circuits, storytelling
- NEED OF THE HOUR- Tourism Marketing and Promotion
- LAST MILE CONNECTIVITY- Air, Rail & Road
- EXPLORE THE UNEXPLORED- Rural, Agriculture, Responsible & Sustainable Tourism
- SEARCH FOR NEW IDEAS- What next?

was supported by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and Uttar Pradesh was the host state. Besides the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India and Uttar Pradesh there were 17 other states who participated in the convention i.e. Bihar Tourism, Chhattisgarh Tourism, Goa Tourism, Gujarat Tourism, Karnataka Tourism, Jammu & Kashmir Tourism, Kerala Tourism, Ladakh Tourism, Madhya Pradesh Tourism, Maharashtra Tourism, Manipur Tourism, Odisha Tourism, Punjab Tourism, Rajasthan Tourism, Tamil Nadu Tourism, Tripura Tourism, Uttarakhand Tourism. Delegates enjoyed the evening

entertainment programme on all three days during dinner with Karaoke Singing Competition on December 17, 2022.

On December 19, 2022, about 300 delegates departed for post-convention tours to various cities which included Ayodhya, Varanasi, Dudhwa, Allahabad and Chitrakoot and Agra and Mathura.

All the arrangements made by The Centrum Hotel Lucknow and the quality of food were excellent and delegates enjoyed the hospitality.

The delegates were very happy and thanked IATO for organising such a magnificent annual convention.



#### Awards under Marketing Innovation Competition

- Best Digital Marketing by Tour Operator – Travel Bureau
- Best Brochure by Tour Operator – Tourism India Management Enterprises
- Best Digital Marketing by Hotel – ITC Hotels
- Best Brochure by Hotel – Taj Hotels (IHCL)



### Advancements and developments in the pipeline

I also believe, we have to grow rural tourism to offer natural sights, bolstering the growth of eco-tourism in the state. We have different kinds of forts and palaces in the Bundelkhand area which are unexplored and untapped so far giving a boost to heritage tourism. As far as natural tourism is concerned, we have plenty of reservoirs, dams and lakes. We also have new eco-tourism sites coming up, Amargarh Tiger Reserve is one of them. In the Bijnor district, the new Corbett National Park is coming up. Secondly, Rani Fort in the Chitrakoot Bundelkhand area.

### Infrastructural development bolstering tourism

Uttar Pradesh has developed a lot of infrastructure in the last six years. We have developed six major expressways, and many more expressways are coming up as now they are under construction. We have also developed a lot of airports. New airports are also in the pipeline including international airports. Lucknow, Varanasi, Kushinagar, Jewar and Ayodhya, all have international airports. More airports are under construction and they will be functional and operational very soon. We have several domestic airports. Some of them are under development, but soon they will also be functional. Heliports are also being developed through PPP (with private support).

### Ayodhya- The hen laying golden eggs

A lot of hotels are coming in saying more than 30 hotels have been already registered in Ayodhya. In 2025, we will be organising Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj after a gap of 144 years. We will certainly be needing at least 40,000 accommodation units. Throughout the Mahakumbh period, we are expecting 400 million people would visit and for them, we will need accommodation facilities, parking facilities,

# Uttar Pradesh uplifting the path to tourism

**Mukesh Kumar Meshram, Principal Secretary Tourism & Culture at Indian Administrative Service (IAS) - Government of Uttar Pradesh** gives his valuable insights on the future of Uttar Pradesh Tourism

By Aanchal Sachdeva

### Future outlook of inbound tourism of Uttar Pradesh

Now things have settled and people have started moving out to different tourist destinations. As per my observation, they are coming out of their houses in big numbers with family, friends, and with relatives. Recently I was in Dubai, where I observed that all the malls and tourist attractions were full of tourists. So, now the fear of Covid has already gone and people just want to experience different kinds of places. Hence, I would like to highlight that Uttar Pradesh has a treasure where we can showcase a different kinds of places where tourists can have different kinds of experiences. Uttar Pradesh can offer spiritual tourism destinations, natural sites, cultural sites, as well as various monuments, right from the Taj Mahal to Jhansi Fort. UP also has a variety of religious sites such as Kashi Vishwanath Temple, and Gorakhnath Temple. Additionally, related to Buddhism, there are 500 million Buddhist followers across the world, out of which we have succeeded in attracting just 0.5 million so far. And I see a lot of potentials to multiply it. If we succeed in multiplying it by 10 times, it would certainly be a success because every inbound tourist brings revenue as well as employment to the country. In this context, our honourable Prime Minister has rightly emphasised three Ts- Technology, Trade and Tourism as tourism can boost a lot many things. It also adds a certain value to our economy.

public amenities and seamless smooth travel. Ayodhya is open to tourists. It's only the temple construction going on in full swing. We are expecting it to be in its shape before 2024, other developments will simultaneously follow.

We have four-lane wide roads connecting Prayagraj to Ayodhya, further connecting Vindhyavasini and Varanasi. From Lucknow to Rai Bareilly to Prayagraj the wide roads are under construction.

### UP Tourism Policy 2022

Recently we have brought out UP Tourism Policy encompassing different kinds of units under one umbrella. Any kind of activity related to tourism will be covered, be it caravan tourism, light and sound show, museums, wellness tourism, hotels, tents, or cruising. What we are offering someone who wants to develop Metaverse or use artificial intelligence, or some kind of innovation digitally, we will support them financially.

We are in a way open to inviting people and supporting them financially to execute innovative digital advancements to promote tourism.

### Message to the travel trade industry for the new year

I believe, the whole world is a book containing lots of knowledge. It has a treasure of experiences and it's up to you, how you want to grab it. This is a lifetime opportunity, which you can gain and every destination is like a chapter of that book. So, the more you visit the sites more you learn and the more you go out, the more you gain experience. Further, you will be able to impart knowledge to your upcoming generation, friends and relatives about the places you have visited. That is why tourism is like learning the whole world. It de-stresses you. It makes you knowledgeable. It connects you with the culture. It connects you with the people. We say "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", the whole world is my own family. Tourism is the activity which is translated through it.



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# 70<sup>th</sup> *TravelScapes* Tin Anniversary Taking it one day at a time for a decade

We are overwhelmed as we look back and take a leap forward into the New Year this time. TravelScapes has achieved a significant milestone by completing a decade in the industry. Rock solid as steel, enduring through the rough patches, and standing tall in the face of the winds, we kept marching forward since the inception of a small venture which has now become a benchmark for several others.

Providing the best with the best has been our motto ever since the publication embarked on its journey in the industry. We are always on the roll to break new ground adding innovations in the pipeline all the way through. We have been the ones to come up with a plethora of "firsts" besides the regular publication in the industry.

- The first to introduce destination features in a travel trade publication.
- The first to introduce TravelScapes Middle East.
- The first to introduce MICEInsiders, the monthly publication focusing majorly on the MICE industry (outbound & inbound), its growth and potential, trends in the segment and future possibilities.
- The first to introduce 101 Experiences, one such magnifying glass aiding you to become familiar with destinations from

majestic and familiar to the ones still in a nutshell.

- The first to introduce VETA (Versatile Excellence Travel Awards) to acknowledge and reward the incredible work of the pioneers in the tourism industry.

Our consistent efforts of adding more feathers to the cap are proof of our resilience to stand out in the market.



## Varun Malhotra, CEO & Publisher

I stand by the saying, "Out with the old and in with the new." I'm deeply touched recalling the time of giving up my job and giving wings to my dream of building up my own venture. I cannot help but wonder how that meandering scenery has only progressed in these 10 years. TravelScapes, taking as its name, is a teleporting escape for travel trade enthusiasts. We have strived to put our best foot forward ever since its outset to make it bigger and better. I only hope we reach newer and greater heights of the venture we have been nourishing like a little one. Creativity knows no bounds and following the mantra, we have learned to never limit ourselves and will never do. Because I'm a firm believer in the saying, "Keep pushing your limits, for then only you will be able to know what you're capable of." With tears of joy, I raise a toast to many more innovative and successful years to come.



## Pranav Khullar, Director

As the director of our esteemed publication, all I feel is immense pride looking at how far we've come. A small venture has now magnified into a renowned brand offering an array of products in the market. These magazines, the travel guides have been reaching the masses pan-India and beyond and are serving the purpose of a pioneering initiative that began 10 years back. The magazine is the earned pride of our team. The diligence, and resilience with which they work, even when they are running on fumes is commendable. Encouraging my team to value their position, and be out and about exploring the new possibilities the industry has to offer, has become the key player in taking TravelScapes from an unnamed grass to a giant. I thank my team for choosing to stay with us and holding us to high standards. Our ultimate goal is to aid every TravelScapes employee to fulfill their own dreams.







## Oxford International partners with VFS Global

**Oxford International** Education Group (OIEG) partnered with VFS Global, the world's largest visa outsourcing and technology services specialist for governments and diplomatic missions, to offer its flagship English Language Learning Test (ELLT) from test centres hosted by VFS Global. Since November 21, 2022, VFS Global has started providing ELLT Global testing locations in Mumbai, Dhaka and Sylhet (Bangladesh). The partnership will eventually see ELLT Global delivered worldwide, allowing individuals to take their examination in an invigilated test centre nearest to them. According to immigration law, international students are required to provide reliable evidence of their English language proficiency. The partnership with VFS Global, a company that serves governments and diplomatic missions, provides an easy-to-use, reliable accessible way to achieve this. Further ELLT Global test centre locations will also be announced in the coming months. With over 3,400 application centres spanning 144 countries, VFS Global has an extensive network and significant expertise in operating test centres with an additional layer of security and assurance to increase the confidence of partners and students alike.

## Tripjack partners with Resorts World Cruises offering cruise experiences

**Resorts World Cruises** is an established Asian luxury and dynamic lifestyle cruise brand that is rich in Asian heritage, offering a personalised cruising lifestyle with diverse international experiences. The partnership aims to give a boost to the international cruise category in the B2B space by improving awareness and discovery, providing a seamless booking experience and personalised support. As a leading travel platform, Tripjack will tap its strong B2B presence across India and offer these unique travel experiences. Resorts World Cruises aims to redefine the cruising experience altogether by providing exciting and unique offerings, a variety of accommodations, including the world-class luxury accommodation, "The Palace" – a luxury ship-within-a ship private enclave with its own exclusive restaurant and private amenities, as well as European style butlers a theme park with multiple attractions, on board entertainment and international performances, retail outlets and luxury boutiques, popular and fine-dining and bars, MICE facilities and more.

## India Exposition Mart adds another feather to its cap

**India Exposition Mart Limited** (IEML) Greater Noida, one of India's largest integrated venues for exhibitions, conventions and conferences has added another feather to its cap.

The Expo Inn will greatly form a distinct market sub-segment to target the tech-savvy and sustainable business travellers increasingly seeking authentic, high quality yet affordable experiences. Spread across 58 acres of land in Greater Noida, IEML has been successfully operating for 16 years being awarded twice as the best convention centre for worldwide business-to-business exhibits, conferences, congresses, product launches, and promotional events, with technology-driven, world-class facilities and safety standards.

"Our location is our biggest advantage," says Rakesh Kumar, Chairman India Exposition Mart Ltd. "The IEML facilities come powered by the in-house uninterrupted power supply of 34 MW + 3 MW Solar Power facilitates seamless electricity



supply; Banking and Foreign Exchange Services; It also has three helipads; and Medical Facilities. Also, I must point out, we offer a large parking capacity which most exhibition grounds don't have," said Sudeep Sarcar, CEO, of India Exposition Mart Ltd. "This new facility will be a perfect destination to organise large-size MICE events, association conferences, award shows and product launches. The exhibition grounds are now integrated with the hotel to go even several notches higher for services."

## ITB Berlin Convention adopts 'Mastering Transformation'

In 2023, taking as its slogan 'Mastering Transformation', the leading convention for the travel industry is again gathering the main international tourism actors under one roof. From March 7 to 9, 2023 at the ITB Berlin Convention, leading speakers and industry experts will discuss the current challenges facing the global travel industry, which go far beyond COVID-19 and local skills shortages. They will share their knowledge on topics such as climate change, energy supply issues and a new global approach to safety, with their wide-ranging impact on the travel and tourism industry. The experts will provide orientation and clear ideas on how to shape the transformation towards



a sustainable and successful future.

The new Board of Experts is putting together themed tracks, under headings that include Travel Technology, Marketing & Sales, Future Travel, Hospitality, Sustainability and Social Responsibility. Taking place on their respective stages and featuring sessions on individual topics, the tracks will replace the themed days at previous events.



## ETAA partners with Global Destinations for Vietnam Destination Session

As part of its endeavour to encourage and abreast members on the latest travel developments and new destination opportunities, The Enterprising Travel Agents' Association (ETAA) organised a Destination Training Session on Vietnam in partnership with Global Destinations, representing Threeland Travel Vietnam.

They intend to restructure, expand and strengthen their national presence through the ETAA Board Meeting held on November 26, 2022, chaired by the Founder President and Chairman Emeritus who decided to devote more time to ETAA in its Silver Jubilee year 2023-24.

The Board Meeting called for some important appointments. They appointed two new chapter chairmen; Jeevan Hendre Western region and Saurab Tuteja Northern region respectively. Kaushik Banerjee and Princy K D continue as chairmen for Eastern and Southern regions. The board also appointed Abhijeet Khadilkar, former National General Secretary and Dipti Thakoor, former Joint National Secretary



as additional Directors to look after membership services and sponsorship and events in coordination with core teams from each Chapter covering East, West, North & West India respectively.

"We are re-grouping in the post-pandemic scenario and trying to take ETAA forward in our silver jubilee year," said Carl Dantas, Founder President & Chairman Emeritus, ETAA.

Jagat Mehta, President, ETAA, highlighted "This time around we have selected a training program for Vietnam as it is fast emerging and one of the leading destinations from India. Besides this, the country is tourist friendly and also offers value for money to travellers".

## IITM unveils 2023 Calendar of Indian Travel-Events

'Sphere Travelmedia & Exhibitions' announces the 2023 Calendar of 'India International Travel Mart' events to be conducted in nine major markets of India which are Kochi, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Bangalore, Chennai, Mumbai, Delhi, Pune, and Hyderabad.

With organisations and tourism boards from over 30 Indian states and over 40 countries, 'India International Travel Mart' will showcase a variety of destinations from different spheres such as international destinations, pilgrimages, adventures, culture & heritage,



beaches, hills and many more. The Exhibitor Profile includes participation from Travel agents & Tour Operators, DMC, Hotels & Resorts, National Tourist Offices, Online Travel Portals, Travel Technology, Adventure Tour Operators, Eco - Tourism activities and many more. travel."

## SOTC Travel augments its retail network in Navi Mumbai

SOTC Travel, an omnichannel Travel and Tourism Company inaugurated its newest franchise outlet in Sector 7, Kharghar. This expansion augments SOTC's second retail store in Navi Mumbai.

Navi Mumbai features a key source market for SOTC Travel. The company's internal consumer data indicates 83% of Navi Mumbaiers are keen to take a holiday and to cater to the strong pent-up demand from this high potential market, SOTC Travel introduced an array of special offers like Early Bird discounts, complimentary cruise experience on Europe Holidays, vegetarian tours, ready to book and customized air-inclusive holidays with Air Arabia, Emirates Holidays and



Vistara Getaways.

Long and mid-haul destinations driving demand from Navi Mumbai include Europe's Switzerland, France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Netherlands and Austria; United Kingdom, USA (for visa holding customers), Australia - New Zealand, Türkiye and Egypt; equally short haul favourites include South East Asia's Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia; equally Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Maldives, Mauritius, Bhutan and Nepal.

## Dubai hosts region's first Skift Global Forum

Dubai hosts the Skift Global Forum, the first-ever extension of the world's flagship travel conference held in the region, featuring the participation of global industry leaders from the travel and tourism sector. The event took place from December 13 to 15 at Madinat Jumeirah. The forum explored the Mena region's travel sector in a larger context and delved into the future of the industry.

Issam Kazim, CEO, Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing, said, "Dubai's selection to host the first edition of this

global forum in this region reflects the city's leading position at the heart of this vibrant sector in the Mena region.

"The city's unique experience spanning decades of excellence in the fields of tourism, hospitality and travel, as well as its exceptional hosting of major international events such as Expo 2020 Dubai, are all elements that have enhanced the trust of global stakeholders in Dubai's ability to serve as a vital partner in the development of the travel and tourism sector both regionally and internationally."

## Wyndham Hotels & Resorts Asia Pacific announces agreement with Sun Motor Group

Wyndham Hotels & Resorts Asia Pacific with over 1,600 hotels in approximately 20 markets and territories in Asia Pacific announced the signing of a Multi-Property License Development Agreement with prominent Indonesian hotel developer Sun Motor Group.

The multi-development signing was launched with the first two of multiple license agreements planned to be signed over the next 5 years, starting off with Super 8 Singosaren Solo, which introduces the Super 8 brand to the Indonesian market and Ramada by Wyndham Sleman Yogyakarta.

"Historically, the Indonesian market has been dominated by the major groups signing hotel management agreements (HMAs) with owners. Through Wyndham

Hotels and Resorts' flexible branding business model, owners have more control over the direction they want the hotel operation to take, yet still have the comfort of knowing their hotel is tapped into a powerful distribution engine, with the ability to access our world renown brands, industry-leading loyalty program, vast corporate accounts, preferred supplier relationships, significant marketing campaigns, and best in class training modules," said Matt Holmes, Vice President of Development, South East Asia & Pacific Rim, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts.

Wyndham's flexible branding offers a cost-efficient business model. It's a win-win for hotel owners and developers.

## Oman Air Holidays partners with Jordan Tourism Board

Oman Air Holidays announced a strategic partnership with the Jordan Tourism Board to undertake joint promotional activities in Oman and Jordan.

The partnership will include a series of co-branded tactical campaigns that aim to position Oman Air Holidays as a preferred provider of international travel packages and encourage those in Oman to visit Jordan during peak season.

Oman Air currently operates seven flights a week from Muscat to the Jordanian capital, Amman, which is popular amongst travellers for its spectacular

landscape and ancient treasures.

Mundher Al Shaikhani, Senior Manager Holidays and Loyalty Programme at Oman Air, said, "Oman and Jordan already enjoy a warm relationship and this partnership seeks to increase value creation for both countries and contribute to our respective tourism agendas. We look forward to working with the Jordan Tourism Board as we continue strengthening our presence across the region while creating amazing itineraries that offer something completely different to our guests."

## IATA, Travalyst team up on flight Co2 emission calculations

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) and Travalyst joined forces with the aim of providing consumers with a consistent, accurate and widely available calculation of their carbon footprint from air travel.

As all sectors of the aviation and travel industries come together in pursuit of net zero CO2 goals, it is hoped that this new collaboration will bring even greater transparency, accuracy and consistency to how a traveller's carbon footprint is calculated.

Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General, said, "Consumers want to understand the environmental impact of their travels. Both Travalyst and IATA are continuously working to improve their methodologies by incorporating emerging knowledge of climate impacts. So we are working together to provide the consumer with easy access to consistent calculations of the environmental cost of their travel."



Travalyst and IATA will focus on both data and standard methodology for route-based passenger CO2 emissions calculations for aviation at scale, including a shared position on how to account for sustainable aviation fuel.

Sally Davey, Travalyst CEO, said, "This is the first time that airlines and the travel technology sector have come together in this way. Today we are bringing some of the leading travel brands around the table with the world's leading airline association, with the aim of easily providing consumers with the most accurate carbon calculations."

## WTTC announces Rwandan as next Global Summit Host

During the closing session of the World Travel & Tourism Council's (WTTC) Global Summit in Riyadh, the Rwandan capital of Kigali, was announced as the host city for 2023, marking the first time the event will visit Africa. Rwanda, the home of the International Gorilla Conservation Programme, will showcase the power of sustainable tourism to protect biodiversity and create thriving communities.

The global tourism body's Global Summit saw speakers such as former UK Prime Minister Theresa May, former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, and actor, filmmaker, and Golden Globe winner, Edward Norton. The most influential Travel & Tourism event in the calendar, WTTC's record-breaking Global Summit,



was attended by more than 85 countries and over 50 ministers.

Addressing delegates during her closing speech, Julia Simpson, WTTC President & CEO said, "Saudi Arabia will be the next major destination for visitors as it invests \$800 billion in showcasing the Kingdom to the world. From the Red Sea to snow-capped mountains, Saudi is full of surprises. We are incredibly excited that Rwanda will host our next Global Summit in 2023."



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# ASEGO AT YOUR DISPOSAL

## Travel Insurance becomes the first thing to pack for hassle-free travel in the New Year

With the booming tourism sector, 2023 will certainly witness the metamorphosis of travel assistance and insurance from a prerequisite to a trip essential

By Aanchal Sachdeva



“India’s tourism and travel insurance industry is experiencing a strong period of growth, driven by the burgeoning overseas, domestic and inbound travel

says Dev Karvat, Founder & CEO, Asego

### Tremendous upswing in travel volumes

The travel trade witnessed a massive upsurge in travel volumes as compared to 2021 with the enhancement mode of transportation and regulatory changes introduced by the Indian government boosting tourism. I am confident that 2023 will only amplify the emergence of latest technological advancements shaping the new market dynamics in India.

Today, India’s tourism and travel insurance industry is experiencing a strong period of growth, driven by the burgeoning overseas, domestic and inbound travel. You will be surprised to know that over 75% of Indians who travelled to Dubai, Thailand and Maldives last year purchased Travel Insurance unlike previous years. Not just that, on analysing customers’ recent buying patterns, we realised that they have now grown highly product sensitive. They now seek more value, rather than just going for undervalued and inexpensive ones. They are willing to pay more for their products, provided the price of the product justifies the value they offer. And thus, travel insurance is now also being considered as a huge revenue-generating variable and offered as a very lucrative travel ancillary service option by many of our prominent travel partners.

### Travel agents act as a strong pillar in Indian travel insurance revolution

Well, having said that, I cannot thank our travel agent partners enough, as they are one of the most vital pillars of this great Indian travel insurance revolution. They want their customers to have a holistic experience and therefore provide a complete travel package including travel assistance and insurance to their customers. This change in the mindset

has enabled us to lead as experts in this domain, and it is now much easier for us to reach out and understand their customer needs, to design tailor-made benefits for them. Additionally, we are equipping our partners with personalised marketing support to increase consumer awareness, cutting-edge technology for increased operational efficiency and dedicated relationship managers to help them boost conversions.

### Reinstating ‘Travel Agent’s Engagement Programme’

To further kindle this growth, we are also reintroducing the ‘Travel Agent’s Engagement Programme’, one of the biggest initiatives that we commenced almost a decade ago with a vision to enrich pioneering minds in the industry. Today it is known to be a platform to enable our clients to tap various ancillary revenue generation opportunities that enables them to upsell.

### Asego- The torchbearer of travel assistance

Now, with the recent spurt of COVID-19 cases in China, Japan, the United States of America, the Republic of Korea and Brazil, travellers have become more cautious and are seeking relevant protection plans with higher sum insured and value-added services that cover unforeseen medical expenses and ensure them a hassle-free experience, throughout their trip. With ‘Duty of Care’ at the core of everything we do and as torchbearers of the travel assistance and insurance industry, we consider it our responsibility to enable it for each traveller.

Asego’s array of travel assistance and insurance solutions safeguard travellers against various medical contingencies such as

Covid-19, emergency hospitalisation, dental treatments, out-patient care etc. and other non-medical eventualities such as missed/ delayed flights and hotel/ flight cancellations while on a trip. With millennials reinforcing the global travel insurgence, we also offer special covers for travel risks such as loss and damage of gadgets, cyber security issues, identity theft, credit/debit card fraud, etc. along with specially curated protection plans for senior citizens, cruises, extreme adventure sports and other niche travel experiences. Additionally, our range of assistance services adds value and serves as a sigh of relief for every traveller, especially the ones who conclude their journeys without filing any claims.

### Extreme Adventure sports cover- A friend in an alien territory

We recently rescued a trekker struck by acute mountain sickness from the Everest base camp to the nearest medical facility through an air ambulance, where she could recover and recuperate from the unforeseen medical condition before returning home. We’re glad that the trekker had opted for our Extreme Adventure sports cover, which helped relay details of the incident to all concerned parties in no time and the emergency evacuation team could kick into action immediately. All said and done, even the most meticulously planned trips could fall prey to unforeseen hurdles and result in a great deal of financial, physical, and emotional burden. Hence, I genuinely advise every traveller to first understand and identify their travel requirements and then opt for a travel protection plan that checks all their boxes, so that they can be rest assured and do what they’re meant to do on a trip.



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# Bahrain

## The pearl in the Persian Gulf

One cannot help but immediately fall in love with the beautiful Bahrain offering bountiful attractions and activities. It's a perfect combination of rush and steady, both at appropriate times. In a conversation with **Maryam Toorani, Director of Marketing and Promotions at Bahrain Tourism & Exhibitions Authority,** TravelScapes triumphs in collating how Bahrain is strengthening itself on the tourism front

By Aanchal Sachdeva

**As Indians are on the go exploring the unexplored marvels around the globe in the end-emic era, what are the drawing cards in the leisure segment that Bahrain possesses?**

Bahrain means "Two Seas" in Arabic, is the only island destination in the Middle East. This makes Bahrain an exotic destination. When it comes to unique experiences Bahrain is brimming with experiences from heritage to adrenaline for travellers to experience.

Bahrain has been known for its pearl since 2000 BC, and one amazing experience everyone must do would be pearl diving. Dive down and explore the waters of the Arabian Gulf and try your luck to find a pearl. One can collect up to 60 oysters and we have something known as finder's keepers so if you find a pearl you can authenticate it and take it home with you.

For the adrenaline seekers out there, we have skydiving at Gravity which has the world's largest wind tunnel and then of course there is the Formula 1 opening season race from March 3 to 5, 2023 at the Bahrain International Circuit. At this circuit, one can also go-kart on the track and it is an activity open to even kids.

Some of the other places worth visiting when exploring this destination would be the forts like Bahrain Fort, Arad fort, Riffa fort etc. The Al Areen Wildlife Park and Reserve and Lost Paradise of Dilmun water park are places perfect for a family day out.

**What responsible/sustainable tourism initiatives is Bahrain Tourism taking since tourism has picked up momentum this year?**

Bahrain as a destination has been actively adapting to the trend of responsible and sustainable tourism. The pearl diving experience offered here is one example. Bahrain has a very long history of pearling dating back to the year 2000 B.C. To communicate this tale and depict Bahrain's rich pearling past, the wealthy merchants' pearling route houses in Bahrain have been converted into museums and other spaces.

In Bahrain, one can dive to collect up to 60 oysters from the waters of the Arabian Gulf to try one's luck at finding your very own Bahraini pearl we call it finder's keepers. If you don't want to dive and collect pearls another option is pearl shucking wherein you select oysters which have already been collected and open them to see if you get a pearl.

**What initiatives are you taking to promote Bahrain as a popular destination on the MICE front?**

Bahrain is an island destination with a tranquil atmosphere, world-class hotels with opulent offerings and state of the art facilities which make it the ideal location for Indians from a MICE viewpoint. The MICE travel segment is of key importance to our destination.

The largest exhibition and conference centre in the region, Exhibition World Bahrain, opened its doors on November 21st, 2022. With this facility, Bahrain will stand out and become the Middle East's premier location for corporate conventions and exhibits. It is 95,000 square metres in size and contains 10 grand halls with 400-4000 seats each. In addition, there are 25 cafes, 25 restaurants, 10



**“We are in conversation with various airlines to launch many more direct flights from several Indian cities**

exposition spaces, a restaurant with a capacity for 250 people, and 95 conference rooms.

Additionally, several luxurious and lavish hotels, including the Jumeirah Gulf of Bahrain Resort & Spa, The Address Hotel-Marassi Al Bahrain, DoubleTree by Hilton, and the Raffles Al Areen Palace and Spa, are scheduled to open in Bahrain.

Additionally, the destination has invested in a few waterfront development projects that will help promote the country as a beach vacation destination. Qalali waterfront, Al Ghous waterfront and Mantis hotel are some of the upcoming beach front projects in Bahrain.

**Bahrain being an island country, what cities/states are tapped with Bahrain in terms of air connectivity? What is your outlook on connecting other states/cities with the upcoming**

**year?**

There are many direct flights between India and Bahrain. The flight time between the two countries is less than 4 hours.

Gulf Air, the national airline of Bahrain, is well connected across 8 important cities of India including Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Calicut, Kochi, and Thiruvananthapuram. Air India offers direct flights between Bahrain and India from Delhi, Kochi, and Kozhikode and in August 2022, Indigo Airlines started direct flights to Bahrain from Mumbai.

We are in conversation with various airlines to launch many more direct flights from several Indian cities to our destination in the coming year. In March 2023, Gulf Air intends to begin operating a direct flight between Goa and Bahrain.



# Dubai Parks & Resorts hosts an evening in association with One Above DMC

**Dubai Parks & Resorts** represented by Think Strawberries hosted an evening in Nagpur on December 4, 2022 in association with One Above DMC. This exclusive trade event was well attended by high-end luxury operators,

Mice Operators and key travel trade partners in Nagpur. The floor was opened by Rahim Aslam, founder and director of One Above DMC thanking the Nagpur agents for their generous support. The event kicked off with

a presentation by Nitya Mehra from Think Strawberries and Anil Bavakutty from Dubai Parks with unmissable offers for all age groups.



# Tourism Australia hosts its Premier Aussie Specialists

**Tourism Australia**, in partnership with its State Tourism Organisations (STOs) viz; Visit Victoria, Destination New South Wales, Tourism & Events Queensland and South Australian Tourism Commission, organised an exclusive product development famil, to showcase new products and experiences to its twenty Premier Aussie Specialists from India.

The Premier Aussie Specialist Program seeks to recognise the invaluable advocacy that travel advisors, who have been selling Australian holidays for many years, deliver for the destination. Membership in the Premier Aussie Specialist category is an acknowledgement of the destination expertise, insider knowledge and strong ties with the Australian travel industry of Aussie Specialist agents with an established record of selling Australia.

Timed around the ICC T20 Men's World Cup, the Premier agents had the opportunity to explore the Southern Highlands Region in New South Wales; were apprised of all the latest tourism developments in Brisbane and the Gold Coast; they also had an opportunity of a lifetime to watch the ICC Men's T20 World Cup semi-finals and finals at the iconic Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) and Melbourne Cricket



Ground (MCG) respectively.

Nishant Kashikar, Country Manager (India & Gulf), Tourism Australia says, "India continues to be an important market for Australia and is well poised to be the first inbound market to recover to 2019 levels. During the pandemic, Australia inaugurated over 100 new hotels and over 70 new tourism experiences, thereby offering an opportunity to channel India's pent-up demand for travel into actual visitation."

Premier Aussie Specialists who participated in the famil included representatives from Thomas Cook India Ltd, SOTC Travel Limited, All Four Seasons Travel, Pristine Vacations, Odyssey Tours and Travels, Amazing Vacations, Beyond Experience, Ahura Travels, Kesari Tours, Baywatch Travels, Carnations Holidays, Hyperlink Solutions, Nagsri Creating Special Moments, Peekay Holidays, Travel Arena, Travellers Paradise, Flightshop Holidays, Sunday Holidays and Pick Your Trail.



# SOUTH AFRICA

## POSES AS A STRONG AND FAVOURITE OUTBOUND DESTINATION ENHANCING THE TOURISM POTENTIAL

From making to the list of favourite hosts for royal opulent Indian weddings to offering treats for adrenaline junkies' souls, TravelScapes triumphed in collating views from **Neliswa Nkani, Hub Head – MEISEA, South African Tourism** on South Africa enhancing its visibility on the tourism front

By *Aanchal Sachdeva*

### South Africa's strong drawing cards

Given that India is one of our largest international source markets, we accelerated recovery initiatives this year. In the first quarter of the year, we rolled out our 'More & More' campaign, which was specifically tailored for the evolved Indian traveller who seeks more out of every opportunity that a holiday presents. The campaign was crafted to speak to every type of traveller including millennials, families, solo explorers, active lifestyle seekers and couples.

In March, we had a major consumer activation in Mumbai, where we brought the sights, sounds and tastes of South Africa alive for Indian travellers. With performances by South African dance troupes, indigenous music and delectable food cooked by South African chefs at Phoenix Palladium in Mumbai, we were able to engage and delight audiences.

We announced the launch of an exclusive India airfare campaign in partnership with Air Seychelles.

We recently hosted Indian influencers in South Africa to create 'desi' content that is expected to have a greater impact and recall with consumers across the country. With women travellers and millennials being a key target group for the tourism board, the content will allow potential Indian travellers a glimpse of the undiscovered through a spectrum of visuals, adventures, tastebuds, ethnicity, soundscapes and emotions.

### South Africa, a favourite host for royal opulent Indian weddings

South African safaris and game lodge wedding venues are especially popular amongst Indians as they offer a range of artistically elegant to uber-luxurious options to choose from. Whether it is a sunset ceremony next to a

watering hole, a bush clearing with endless views of the African bushveld as a backdrop or a romantic spot under trees on the bank of a river, there is something magical about being serenaded by the sounds of the nature as couples take their vows under an African sky.

Given South Africa's deep connection with India, it is possible to find Indian spices and vegetarian options with ease – this gives the destination an edge when it comes to catering to weddings. We also pride ourselves on culinary ingenuity, using only the freshest and locally sourced organic ingredients. With good connectivity and quick visa turnaround time, it has never been easier to host large groups in South Africa.'

### South Africa, a home of adventures

With over 3000+ adventure activities across its 9 provinces, South Africa is undoubtedly the adventure capital of the world. The country has options across world-class climbing, surfing, diving, hiking, horseback safaris, mountain biking, river rafting supported by dedicated and authorised operators. Shark cage diving in KwaZulu-Natal, ride in a hot air balloon in Gauteng, Big Rush Big Swing in Durban, abseiling from the top of Table Mountain with an awe-inspiring view of the city, freefall from the world's highest Gorge Swing in KwaZulu-Natal, Bloukrans Bridge Bungee in Eastern Cape are among the adventure activities enjoyed by Indian travellers visiting South Africa. Besides these, Knysna ziplining in Western Cape, Karkloof Canopy Tours in KwaZulu-Natal, Helicopter ride in Western Cape and Lion's Head hike in Cape Town are also some activities that Indian travellers love to include in their adventure-focused travel itineraries.

### Air connectivity and footfall of tourists

From Indian cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai, South Africa enjoys great connectivity with extremely short layovers across most major international airlines including Emirates, Etihad, Qatar

Airways, Air Arabia, Ethiopian Airlines, Kenya Airways and Air Mauritius. Travellers from India to South Africa are not required to produce either a vaccination certificate or a negative PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test. While the e-visa link is temporarily closed, travellers can apply via VFS, where the visa processing time is extremely short, with visas available within 5-7 working days from the date of application.

While the cities of Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban are the most popular South African destinations among Indian travellers, reflecting demand for offbeat, non-touristy experiences. Travellers can use these anchor cities as a gateway to picturesque new regions, including the stunning and relatively unexplored Port Elizabeth, Robertson, West Coast, Drakensberg in KwaZulu-Natal, Panorama Route (Mpumalanga) and Garden Route.

### Engagement with travel delegation in the new year

We will be constantly communicating with key travel agents and tour operators directly through interactive knowledge exchange webinars, while also conveying timely and focused destination updates. We plan to keep upskilling and reskilling the travel trade fraternity to identify synergies that help them sell South Africa in the best way possible to the new-age Indian consumer.

We are elated to announce that in February 2023, South African Tourism will be participating in SATTE 2023 for the third year running. This will be followed by our biggest travel trade initiative in India, the annual roadshow across several Indian cities where we will showcase the destination's new and diverse offerings. Travelling to the Indian cities of Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Chennai, the tourism board will showcase their products and services while actively engaging and networking with Indian travel and trade associates.



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## Maldives

it's freedom time





# With a silhouette of responsibility and being adorned with privilege

## Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar constellating to create a legacy of his own

By Aanchal Sachdeva

**Being a millennial and carrying forward a legacy of hundreds of years, how do you find that balance of comprehending the requirements of contemporary travellers while preserving the rich culture and heritage of your ancestors?**

The legacy that I inherit is over 1500 years old. A discerning traveller is looking for experiences. Having identified this, we focus on the conservation of heritage and culture while offering industry-standard facilities. Our range is vast, we can, on one hand, organise an artesian fair to promote the local crafts and at the same time be well equipped to host the G20 Summit.

**The Shiv Niwas Palace and Palace Gajner - Bikaner bagged the National Tourism Award for the best heritage hotel in the 'Heritage Grand' category, what strategies have you deployed to maintain your heritage eminence in the hospitality sector in the upcoming year?**

The Shiv Niwas Palace and The Gajner Palace have been curated in a way that keeps them very close to being original. This has been and will always remain our philosophy. We plan to increase business through experiential travel and events.

**How has the surge in staycations increased post-pandemic? What different and exquisite experiences are you providing to India's internal and external markets with the motto of maintaining accommodation standards?**

Expensive international airfares and accommodation have discouraged a lot of Indians to travel abroad, this has been a blessing in disguise for us, as Udaipur has become the destination to travel to. We have seen the number of domestic tourists rise sharply post the pandemic. Our motto is to be consistent with our services to cultivate loyalty amongst domestic travellers.

**Which states do you see the most surge from? Which property of the HRH Hotels is most preferred by tourists?**

In terms of volume, the maximum amount of movement is from the bigger cities of India that are connected well by road and air with Udaipur.

**Can we see new destinations tapped in with the New Year? Any plan for new acquisitions in the upcoming year? What**

**is your growth plan for the HRH hotel brand in the upcoming year?**

Though the pandemic is considered over, still in China and some parts it is on the rise again. We are treading very cautiously into the future and will be looking at investments conservatively.

**There's a visible shift in changing façade of the cities and states as per the advancement in various sectors. How has Udaipur, the City of Lakes evolved to contribute to the growth of your brand?**

There is a bit of role reversal in this question. My grandfather, my father and I have always focused on the development of the destination, it could be better infrastructure or better hotel rooms. So, what seems like the organic development of Udaipur is not what it actually is. It has attained its present form because of our concentrated initiatives.

**Since you belong to an imperial background, what challenges do you have to face to hold fast to your identity as an exemplary reflection of perfection amongst other brands in the market?**

I would like to correct you here; my family never had an imperial approach. We follow the concept of custodianship where we function in trust. Being honest with this statement we invest a lot in our manpower. This is perhaps the only way forward. If your people are motivated and committed, they hardly come across any obstacles.

**HRH Hotels' official website asserts HRH Group of Hotels is preserving palaces and sanctuary - resorts." Can you shed some light in this direction?**

We have developed destinations not hotels for the travel trade to flourish. Celebrating local construction, local cuisine, local traditions and local culture has brought us to this level. This is our way of preservation and growth.

**Any message you would like to give to the travel industry in the New Year?**

The travel industry is very sensitive to global, national and local events and if the news is bad then the outcome is adverse, but our industry is run by a bunch of very resilient professionals and I would only like to tell them that they are doing an excellent job and to keep up the good work!



Deeply rooted in his own culture in a globalised world, **Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar, Executive Director of HRH Group of Hotels, Udaipur**, is a perfect example of a millennial pushing his limits every now and then attempting to create a difference in the world. Giving wings to his dream, with due diligence and vision, he moved to Australia to make a living out of his inherent legacy by pursuing Hotel Management. He was so naturally drawn towards the hospitality industry in such a way that he burned the candle at both ends for many months working day and night to sharpen his skills. Singh never looked down on the servile positions, he gave his blood, sweat and tears to the work that came his way sincerely. His consistent sedulous efforts have made him the successful self-preneur he has become today alongside embracing the learnings of his ancestry of hundreds of years



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Rooftop  
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# Bahrain

## *A pearlful island*



Pearl diving in crystal clear oceans, exploring ancient forts, relaxing on white sandy beaches or attending thrilling adventures; Bahrain is perfect island destination that has it all. Experience year-round sunshine, fascinating history, a melting pot of cultures and people and a wealth of activities. It is one of the most stunning places to visit in the Middle East that attracts people from all over the world. Nestled in the Persian Gulf, Bahrain comprises around 51 islands which adds to the natural beauty of this country. Apart from the natural islands, Bahrain is also brimmed with around 33 artificial islands

By Chandni Chopra



### *The unmissable World Trade Centre*

The Bahrain World Trade Centre stands as an icon of sustainable design and engineering. The building includes the first installation of large-scale wind turbines into a commercial building. With initial inspiration taken from traditional Arabian wind towers, the idea that buildings could harness the onshore breeze from the Gulf and if designed correctly, deliver a renewable source of energy for the project was developed. The sail profiles of the two towers funnel the onshore breeze between them as well as creating lift behind, thus further accelerating the wind velocity between the twin structures.



### *Soak up local culture*

Bahrain is a fusion of ancient history, modernity and has historically been a stopover for travellers travelling from East to West. This is reflected in the cuisines, cities, people and culture. The Kingdom is the perfect blend of old and new – visitors can delve into 5000 years of Bahraini history, discovering the UNESCO World Heritage Sites and authentic souqs. You can also experience modern twists such as the National Museum and Theatre, where you can enjoy globally recognised exhibitions and performances all year-round.



### *Experience eclectic cuisines*

The food scene in Bahrain is constantly evolving, especially as new restaurants opening up every day. From traditional Bahraini cuisine, fine-dining, to burger places. Bahrain's food scene will satisfy any foodie traveller. Block 338 is a must-visit to get a real flavour of modern life in Bahrain. It is located in the capital's trendy arts quarter, you can discover a wealth of rooftop restaurants, cafes, shops and al fresco dining. To experience a taste of true Bahraini hospitality, be sure to eat where the locals do. Favourites include Haji's Cafe, which offers traditional delicacies such as spiced biryanis, flatbreads, fresh fish and kebabs.

## *Uncover the history*

Did you know? Bahrain is a home to three UNESCO World Heritage sites and has a history dating back to the ancient Dilmun civilisation. Discover the history of Bahrain by visiting the Dilmun Burial Grounds, the Bahrain Pearling Trail or Qal'at al-Bahrain, known as The Bahrain Fort. It has a rich arabic culture which is reflected through its architecture and mosques. The impressive Al Fateh Grand Mosque is another popular spot for tourists that can host up to 7,000 worshippers at one time and welcomes travellers to explore its magnificent architecture.





### ***Pearl Diving in Bahrain***

This has to belong to the bucket list when in Bahrain! Historically known as the centre of the world's pearl trade, Bahraini pearls have long been considered the best in the world. Travellers can also try their hand at pearl diving, discovering the treasures in Bahrain's turquoise waters and marvelling at the beauty of the oyster beds – any pearls you do find are yours to keep forever!



### ***Saddle up for horse riding***

Enjoy horseback riding in Bahrain, have fun and learn to practice an amazing sport. There are several horse riding tours in Bahrain to choose from. You can enjoy this great activity around Bahrain Fort, witnessing the magnificence of the fort while you practice this elegant sport, or you can choose to enjoy horse riding along the beautiful beach as you get sprayed by the waves and breathe the fresh air. You can also take the country route and ride among lush green fields and flourishing farms. Whatever you choose, horse riding in Bahrain gives you a chance to enjoy the beauty of the Kingdom.



# Witnessing India as a prominent source market in WTM London

Jonathan Hull highlights how they work closely with not only National Tourism Organisations but also with the independent states

**TravelScapes got the opportunity to interact with Jonathan Hull, Portfolio Head of Sales - WTM and IBTM events, about his outlook on the world's second largest event WTM taking place in 2023 besides other huge events in the travel industry**

*By Aanchal Sachdeva*

## **Jonathan Hull's role in WTM**

I head up sales and operation. I have a team that's based mainly in the UK and we have got a team which is based in Dubai as well. So they work with the Middle East market, and we have one Arabian travel market. We think the Indian market is incredibly important to us hence we have got that extra dedicated head in India.

We also have a team in Latin America, that runs WTM in Latin America for us, and they have a dotted line to get to me as well. So I manage all the teams. Finally this team in Cape Town, they run WTM Africa. The only other dedicated person and we don't want to show is Rupali. Basically, we do because it's such an important market.

## **Footfall of tourists from India**

Well, India is one of the largest exhibitors that we have. And it's obviously a big area within our Asia region, in terms of size of the standards is probably the largest in terms of the number of sharing partners they bring along, as well. We do work really closely with the National Tourism Organisation but also with the independent states. So, we have a lot of exhibitors from the States like Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh. Usually, we have between 10 and 15 of the states exhibit independently with us as well.

## **Future outlook on travel**

We know that there is a lot of pent up demand for the travel industry, we are getting some facts and figures. So, the travel industry was huge pre pandemic. It was around 10% of global jobs we have looked at industry, we have seen it recover, but the recovery has been sporadic. It has not been every country in the world. Also, we have seen some countries recover slower. A lot of them moved across to domestic tourism during the pandemic, and did quite well out of it. So, I would say India is one of those countries. US is another country that did very well for domestic tourism. So we have seen their international focus coming

back now, they recognise that there is pent up demand all around the globe. We have got foreign tour operators, and we have got the inbound tour operators who are targeting international travellers rather than just domestic. We are hopeful to see a lot more growth there and that's really important, obviously, for us at WTM. The other thing that has changed a lot in the industry is we were moving to a point where people were buying direct, and that's happening, less people want the trust of a tour operator or travel agent. In order to be able to be fit, feel comfortable about looking. So speaking to some countries, we have seen them go from 50-56%. Being to operate a base business up to over 85-90%. Now, because people want that comfort of being able to go back to someone if there's

a problem. That's good for us as a business because we deal with those intermediaries.

## **Strategies deployed to cope up with pandemic**

We hope the pandemic doesn't occur again! For us, it is a face to face Events' business, it was incredibly busy. We needed to pivot really quickly. And we moved to virtual events, which were very successful in late 2020, and early 2021. But we went back to running face to face shows as soon as we could, because we recognise that that's what people want to do. That's how they do business which is face to face, we have taken all of the learnings from our virtual events, and we have moved some of that technology into our face to face events. Subsequently, we now have far more tools which people can utilise when they're coming







*“I look forward to working with both National Tourism Organisations and all the states and seeing most of the people I have met sharing on those stands coming with their own standards in the year 2023”*

to shows. We also have pre-show meetings. We now have to do a lot more in terms of pre-show work to make sure that our product is available in front of buyers and visitors before they come to the show. It's a lot of work that has come out.

#### **Benefits offered to exhibitors**

There's a number of packages we have developed as well in terms of the way people exhibited shows. If someone wants to do brand awareness and great visibility, we have got packages that we can use. If someone wants to drive traffic to their stand, we have got things we can do that is purely lead-generation doing your business. There's loads of strategies we can deploy with exhibitors now. If there is thought leadership that you're looking for, there's areas that we can look at there as well. So there are happy learning during the pandemic but really, we have just refined everything and we go back out to the market.

#### **Changed outlook of WTM 2023**

We have really changed the layout of the show. We have widened iOS, improved the navigation, invested a lot more in extra spaces, stages, so we can run a strong conference program, we have made the show a much better experience for both exhibitors and buyers alike. The WTM we ran in 2022, was incredibly successful. The feedback has been fantastic. And we have not got a new exhibition director who has done a lot of that comes with the events Minecraft.

#### **Outlook of WTM 2023**

Our next show is on November 6, 2023. Well, I think you will see a lot more exhibitors will be back to 2019. There will be exceeding 2019 levels in 2023.

Arabian Travel Market is also incredibly important to us, and also very important to India because this year it's just a few hours away. So you have a lot of people based in the Middle East and in India, so Arabian Travel Market has always been popular with the Indian market. So, we are looking forward to that. It will lead to big recovery.

#### **Sustainable practices followed fused with positive outlook of WTM 2023**

All our shows are net zero that sustainable peace that we are working on. We have won responsible tourism programs across the leisure portfolio for the last 20 years. We are expecting to see a lot more of that as well.

Now, actually something that we first flagged well over 20 years ago. I mean, WTM is 42 years old. And ATM is going to be 30 years old. So we have been around for quite a while. We are enhancing face to face experience for everybody. I think it's working the tools and providing the tools to make sure that people can make appointments before they come to the show. That's the key piece is that people want to meet face to face. But they want to make sure that they're really utilising their time well in the show. So, most buyers and visitors are arranging their partner's appointments a couple of weeks before they come to the show for several weeks. We just got to make sure that we are working with exhibitors getting all of their information up

into our systems so that those buyers of their products can come along into this. We are seeing a lot of focus on experiences within travel. Looking at all of those ecotourism subsets within that, we have had some fantastic discussions over the last few days around that as well. Ecotourism, rural tourism, festival festivals, religious and spiritual tourism; all of these years it's great to see that so many of the states have actually segmented their tourism strategy.

#### **Any message for the Indian travel industry**

We really look forward to seeing you at the Arabian Travel Market, Latin America, WTM Africa and WTM London in 2023. I look forward to working with both a National Tourism Organisation and all the states and seeing most of the people I have met sharing on those stands are coming with their own standards in the year 2023. I would like to thank them for supporting us for so many years as well. It has been a real pleasure working with the Indian market.

#### **About the author:**

Jonathan Hull is Portfolio Head of Sales for the WTM portfolio of events, including Arabian Travel Market and World Travel Market London. He has spent 20 years in the travel and tourism industry, and prior to joining the WTM portfolio he worked for Virgin Atlantic in a number of roles, including stints in the Caribbean heading up sales, in Kenya as Country Manager, and finally as Head of Corporate Sales at Virgin Atlantic's UK head office. Jonathan lives in Sussex, England, and as a keen sailor, has competed in numerous yacht and a trans-Atlantic races. Outside of travel much of his leisure time is now spent covering the walks of Southern England with his wife Jill.



## The Fern Hotels & Resorts expands its footprints in Lonavala

**The Fern** Hotels & Resorts, India's environmentally sensitive hotel chain opened its new lifestyle resort, Arova Woods Zinc Journey by The Fern in Lonavala, Maharashtra.

Speaking of the launch, Vaishali Momaya, General Manager-Operations, Concept Hospitality-The Fern Hotels & Resorts said, "Zinc Journey by The Fern is our lifestyle brand that provides guests with an innovative environment of style and a dose of the local culture. This boutique full-service resort showcases high-end interiors and comes with its set of experiences, to create a wow factor in the guest stay."

Vinod Cougnery, General Manager - Sales & Marketing (Maharashtra) shared, "We already operate 2 resorts in Lonavala under our Fern and Beacon hotel brands, and this new addition under our Zinc Journey brand that will provide exciting and varied experiences for our guests. The resort is in a layout of villas and row houses, with room options of DeluxZ rooms, Zuper DeluxZ rooms, Zuper Premium rooms and SuiteZ. The Zinc Journey team strives to do the unexpected and our guests will experience this in various aspects of their stays with us."

## Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts launches 'The Leela Palace Trail'

**The Leela** Palaces, Hotels and Resorts announced the launch of 'The Leela Palace Trail' - a thoughtfully curated itinerary that is a majestic celebration of India's palatial grandeur defined by its rich cultural heritage, immersive rituals and bespoke signature programming with the true graciousness of Indian hospitality.

It offers multi-day itineraries to six exquisite award-winning palaces and resorts in the country's most alluring destinations including New Delhi, Jaipur, Udaipur, Bengaluru, Chennai and Kovalam. The Trail is a thoughtfully crafted offering with two distinctive packages, The Leela Palace Trail and The Leela Palace Trail - Curated. While the former allows you to experience the opulence of India's finest palaces with the flexibility of weaving in your own destination experiences, while The Leela Palace Trail - Curated is a well thought out itinerary that anticipates your every need and offers a distinctive Leela lens on the destination from the time you arrive until your departure.

## Delta by Marriott opens its 100th property in DIP

**Marriott International** said that Delta Hotels by Marriott, opened its 100th property - Delta Hotels by Marriott, Dubai Investment Park (DIP). Situated in the district of Dubai Investment Park, close to many of the city's key attractions and business hubs, the hotel brings a clean and purposeful design aesthetic reflecting the industrial nature of the area, featuring raw materials through exposed craftsmanship, eclectic furniture, and accessories.

"From its beginnings in Canada to its current growing diverse portfolio around the world, this opening marks an exciting

milestone in the Delta Hotels by Marriott journey," said Manny Rappenecker, Vice President and Global Brand Leader, Delta Hotels by Marriott.

"A testament to our strategic growth, we've been able to strike a chord with our seasoned travellers by offering the seamless experience guests crave when on the road. Delta Hotels by Marriott, Dubai Investment Park is another exceptional example of our brand's distinction, demonstrating the bright future for Delta Hotels as we look forward to our next 100 properties", he added.



## Fortune Select Exotica Navi Mumbai introduces 'Zodiac'

**Fortune Select** Exotica Navi Mumbai launched its multicuisine restaurant Zodiac in a new avatar. Located in the Vashi hub of Navi Mumbai, just 25 kms from the Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport, the refreshed Zodiac is an all-day diner offering a warm, contemporary setting for guests seeking cuisines of the world at one place.

Fortune Hotels' unique specialties and signature dining experiences have earned a reputation of culinary excellence through the years and Zodiac is no exception. Designed by Star Chef of Fortune, the restaurant offers a consciously crafted and peppered menu that celebrates some of the best-loved dishes from India and around the world.

Speaking about the launch, Peter Pulliattu, General Manager,

Fortune Select Exotica, Navi Mumbai said, "At the Zodiac, we have decided to give our menu a twist. This menu is not just representative of cuisines from across the world i.e. Italian, Mexican, Mediterranean, Continental, Thai and Indian, but also how in popular psyche they represent the different sun signs. Needless to say, that the ambience heightens the mysticism around the food served. We hope to delight our city residents and other guests alike with our elaborate and authentic menu."

The Zodiac also includes a bespoke locavore selection for travelers who prefer to savour local, destination-based flavours. Guests with children can benefit from the newly crafted, special kids menu and choose their child's hot favourites.



## Radisson Hotel Group opens Rakkh Resort in HP

**Radisson Hotel** Group announced its first experiential resort under Radisson Individuals Retreats brand extension. Located in Palampur - Himachal Pradesh, Rakkh Resort, a member of Radisson Individuals Retreats is set against the pristine backdrop of the Dhauladhar snow-capped ranges. A mélange of traditional ambience and barefoot luxury, the ethos of the resort is built on sustainability and community engagement. Radisson Individuals Retreats is tailored for the Indian market and is a collection of boutique lifestyle retreats. The offering

enables independent properties to retain their distinct identity while benefiting from its global distribution network, cutting-edge technology, sales, marketing support, and professional training. It offers an immersive, authentic, and sustainable experience imbued with meaningful activities whilst ensuring high standards of quality. Perched on top of a hill, the five-acre resort houses beautiful rooms and suites that offer stunning views of the snow-peaked mountains with nature-inspired interiors offering guests a sense of peace and privacy.



## Marriott targets 35 new luxury hotels globally in 2023

**Marriott International** announced plans at the International Luxury Travel Market (ILTM) Cannes to introduce more than 35 luxury hotels in 2023, delivering the unique and meaningful experiences desired by current luxury travellers. Boasting a portfolio of luxury brands including The Ritz-Carlton, Ritz-Carlton Reserve, St. Regis, W Hotels, The Luxury Collection, EDITION, JW Marriott, and Bulgari Hotels & Resorts, Marriott International continues to push the boundaries, reimagining

travel with a globally inspired perspective that defines the future of luxury. With an unparalleled footprint of nearly 500 luxury hotels and resorts in 68 countries and territories today, Marriott International is poised to further its position as the global leader in luxury hospitality with more than 200 luxury properties in the development pipeline. From Kenya to Singapore and Japan to Mexico, more than 35 new hotels are slated to open next year in sought-after and emerging destinations around the world.

## Hyatt expands its footprints in Gulf

**Hyatt announced** continued global growth of its luxury brand portfolio with a robust pipeline of openings over the next three years across Europe, Africa and the Middle East (EAME), including four of them in the Gulf. Thirteen hotels are set to join the brand, including Park Hyatt, Andaz, Grand Hyatt, Thompson Hotels, Miraval Resorts & Spas, and The Unbound Collection by Hyatt will debut in some of the world's most sought-after destinations including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UK, Spain, South Africa, Austria, Finland and more. By 2026, these hotels expect to increase Hyatt's luxury brand footprint in EAME by over 30% in key growth markets. As leisure travel continues to drive recovery in many

parts of the world. Its luxury portfolio throughout EAME will feature key milestones such as the opening of four Park Hyatt branded hotels including the return of the Park Hyatt brand to London; the introduction of the first Hyatt-branded hotel in Helsinki with the debut of The Unbound Collection by Hyatt brand in Finland; the introduction of the Andaz brand to Lisbon; and the unveiling of the first Miraval luxury wellness resort outside of the US. Each new property is carefully selected to complement the elevated luxury brand portfolio, encapsulating its signature of unprecedented, immersive luxury experiences, inspired by the vibrant cultures and stories of their locations, the company said.

## Amadeus partners with Hilton on new API

**Hilton partnered** with Amadeus to implement their API within the tech company's distribution system on December 01. The Amadeus GDS is the first to directly integrate with the hotel group's API and is expected to "improve the overall customer experience and booking process" via the integration of credit card information, cancellation policies and meal plan details. The companies said previous connectivity through multiple APIs meant that changes to content could not be "as easily accommodated" and that the new partnership will allow the hotel group, which comprises 7,000 properties in 122 countries and territories, to "scale up more effectively" and roll out new features at a faster pace.

"This is a major milestone for both our industry and Hilton, as the new API looks to overcome the historical challenges of limited reach and connectivity," said Katja Bohnet, VP hospitality distribution, hospitality at Amadeus.

"We are adopting a 'one API, any channel' approach to hotel distribution through the GDS, to ensure that the quality of content available for distributors is the most reliable and advanced it has ever been," she added.

Also commenting on the partnership, Oral Muir, vice president, partnership development and global distribution at Hilton, said the new integration is an "important stride" in the company's effort to "create a more frictionless travel experience".

## Pride Hotels expands footprints in Ranakpur

**Pride Hotels** Group announced the signing of Pride Resort and Convention Centre, Ranakpur, its fourth property in Rajasthan. Significantly located on the main road of Nathdwara-Kumbalgarh Highway, this upscale resort has a lot to offer to its guests.

The property will comprise of 81 well-appointed rooms and suites, filled with high-end amenities, a lush green 83,000 sq ft lawn, four banquet halls serving up to 5,000 to 7,000 people, a multi cuisine restaurant to cater 150 people, another restaurant with 80 people capacity, an open-to-sky restaurant with bar and live kitchen, a swimming pool, a spa, a fitness centre and an in-house laundry seamlessly fitting into the traveller's scheme of

things. Announcing the signing, Atul Upadhyay, Senior Vice President, Pride Hotels Group said, "We are delighted to expand our presence in Rajasthan with the signing of Pride Resort and Convention Centre, Ranakpur. Since 1987, our group has served more than 53 country nationals globally and a destination like Rajasthan only calls for more. Rajasthan, with its vibrant culture enjoys pre-eminence in attracting large sections of leisure tourists from across the world. Our new property is a perfect blend of contemporary amenities rooted in customary elegance and excellent services will make every guest's stay a purely pride, pleasurable experience".

## IHCL debuts in Dharamshala with opening of Norbu The Montanna

**Indian Hotels** Company Limited announced the opening of Norbu The Montanna, an IHCL-SeleQtions hotel at Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh. It lies secluded amidst the Dhauladhar mountain range surrounded by the landscape of the Kangra Valley.

Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, IHCL said, "This opening will strengthen IHCL's extensive presence in key leisure destinations in India. We believe Dharamshala, that offers both adventure and

spirituality, has tremendous potential to attract domestic as well as international travellers. We are extremely delighted to launch Norbu The Montanna - IHCL SeleQtions."

Nestled within the serene Kangra Valley and at an easy driving distance from Kangra airport, Norbu the Montanna, spread over seven acres, offers picturesque views of the Dhauladhar range. The hotel design is inspired by regional architecture. The 31 rooms and suites have been conceptualised around local Tibetan motifs of animals.

## ITC Hotels Group attains Leed Zero Carbon Certification

**Paving the** way for the Global Hospitality Industry, in a one of its kind remarkable feat, 10 properties of the ITC Hotels Group have attained "Net Zero Carbon Status" by achieving coveted "LEED Zero Carbon Certification" by USGBC [United States Green Building Council]

This achievement reaffirms ITC Hotels' commitment to responsible luxury and sustainability. Already, ITC Hotels is the world's largest chain with the maximum number of LEED Platinum-certified properties as per USGBC.

Anil Chadha, Divisional Chief Executive, ITC Hotels said, "Responsible Luxury is our guiding ethos at ITC Hotels. We endeavour to create planet-positive experiences. The Net zero project aligns with India's vision of significantly

cutting emissions and is a critical driving force behind the transformation of buildings, cities and communities to continue to sustain future generations."

LEED Zero, developed by the U.S. Green Building Council, is a complement to LEED that verifies the achievements of net zero goals and signals market leadership.

LEED Zero Carbon Certification recognizes buildings operating with Net Zero Carbon emissions on annual basis. The certification provides a transparent accounting of the carbon balance.

At a time when the world is closely monitoring and benchmarking the carbon emissions by each and every sector, this achievement by the ITC Hotels group is a big global step towards sustainability.



## The Clarks Hotels & Resorts opens Clarks Exotica, Maldives

**Clarks Hotels & Resorts** strengthened its international footprint by opening Clarks Exotica Kamadhoo Maldives. Aiming to promote the country to the rising domestic luxury travellers, international travellers and MICE, the brand is aggressively looking for expansion. Adhering to the same, the Group also opened a luxury property in The Albatross Golf Resort, Kandy Sri Lanka.

The Kamadhoo Island where the property is located is under the UNESCO-protected biosphere of Baa Atoll. This tropical Island, overlooking the Indian Ocean, is famous as a yoga retreat

destination and is surrounded by a beautiful beach. The island is an aquatic wonderland home to no less than 250 species of vibrant coral and over 1,200 fish species. It is a favourite staying place for domestic as well as international tourists. Rising on the trend, the brand decided to open Clarks Exotica in this sought-after island.

This upscale property boasts of 18 luxurious sea view rooms and one penthouse with a terrace providing a 360-degree view of the crystal clear sea. This unique feature makes it a one-of-a-kind accommodation on Kamadhoo Island.



## Lemon tree expands its footprints in Mukteshwar

**Lemon Tree** Hotels Limited announced the opening of its latest hotel, Lemon Tree Hotel, Mukteshwar, in Uttarakhand.

The hotel features 41 well-appointed rooms and suites, complemented by a multi-cuisine restaurant and a bar. Nestled amidst the majestic hills and lush greenery, the property is scenically-located with fruit orchards, coniferous forests, lush green pathways, and narrow lanes that make it a nature lover's paradise. One side of the destination is covered by dense forests and the other side features a stunning view of the enchanting valleys. All this, coupled with a host of facilities, amenities and hospitable service,

makes the hotel a refreshing option for leisure travellers.

Lemon Tree Hotels, including Keys Hotels, are located across India, in metro regions including the NCR, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai, as well as numerous other tiers I and II cities such as Pune, Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, Jaipur, Indore, Aurangabad, Udaipur, Vishakhapatnam, Kochi, Ludhiana, Thiruvananthapuram and Vijayawada. The company expanded internationally with hotels opening in Dubai in December 2019 and in Bhutan in February 2020. New hotels are also set to open internationally in Bhutan and Nepal.



## Novotel Visakhapatnam bags "Best Contribution to Hospitality in South India" by SIHRA

**Novotel Visakhapatnam** Varun Beach located centrally facing the Bay of Bengal is a go-to destination for every traveller in the SouthEast region. With all Sea-facing rooms and a fitness centre, the property is for leisure holidays. The property overlooks the scenic view of the Bay of Bengal with all 225 rooms having a panoramic view of the ocean. With exquisite features like a rooftop pool & jogging track, a gym with a scintillating view of the ocean and 5 multi-cuisine restaurants, owing its beauty to the beach and the views, the property was awarded two prestigious awards this year as "Best Contribution to Hospitality in South India" by SIHRA.

The glittering ceremony of SIHRA was held under the presence of dignitaries such as Shri G. Kishan Reddy, Hon'ble Minister of Culture, Tourism, and Development of North East Region, Shri Anand Singh, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism, Govt of Karnataka, Dr Mathiventhan, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism, Govt of Tamil Nadu, Smt R K Roja, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism, Govt of Andhra Pradesh, Shri V Srinivas Goud, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism, Govt of Telangana, among others.

Novotel Visakhapatnam aims to continue serving its guests by providing expansive wellness services, and world-class amenities.



## Fortune Hotels arrives at Haldwani

**Fortune Hotels** announced the opening of Fortune Walkway Mall Haldwani pegged to be the first branded hotel of the city in the segment, and the upscale hotel chain's third hotel in the state of Uttarakhand.

Speaking about the launch, Samir MC, Managing Director, Fortune Hotels said, "Fortune Hotels have always travelled beyond the known vistas, into new markets to extend our branded offerings to the city residents and our old and new guests alike. With the

Haldwani addition we yet again become flag bearers of growth, entering a tertiary city of India that holds immense business potential. We are on track to achieve our expansion goals. Fortune Walkway Mall is a perfect place for business and leisure travellers and we look forward to delighting them with our warm hospitality and the impeccable Fortune experience."

With a capacity to host up to 250 guests, the hotel is a perfect destination for small weddings, company off-sites, and social events.

## Accor signs first Mercure property in Nepal

**Accor signs** its first Mercure property in Kathmandu, Nepal. Set to open in 2026, Mercure Kathmandu will bring 105 keys to Ring Road, offering great proximity and connectivity to the city's main attractions and centre.

Set in a valley, surrounded by the scenic Himalayas, the Mercure Kathmandu comes complete with dining facilities, including an all-day dining restaurant and bar, alongside a fitness centre, an indoor swimming pool and state-of-the-art meeting facilities.

On the signing, Mr Puneet Dhawan – Senior Vice President – Operations, Accor India and South Asia, "We are delighted to sign

the first Mercure hotel in Nepal and look forward to unveiling the one-of-a-kind hotel to our loyal fans. Mercure is one of the world's most iconic midscale brands and while each hotel is unique, they all share the same passion for high-quality services. We are sure that Mercure Kathmandu will immerse guests by bringing Nepal's culture and Mercure's incredible offerings into a beautiful amalgamation. We look forward to working with The Metropolitan Hotel Private Limited to craft an authentic personality for Mercure Kathmandu that our guests will love."





# Qatar promises a fresh façade for millennial-minded travellers

Qatar, a peninsula surrounded by the Arabian Gulf in the heart of the Middle East welcomes all travellers and guests from over 95 countries visa-free. From iconic museums to high-rise restaurants, from thrilling desert adventures to world-famous events including none other than the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™, there is something for all types of travellers and budgets.

With so many attractions waiting to be explored, there are more hotels and resorts which are open to accommodate guests from around the world

#### **Fuwairit Kite Beach**

Fuwairit Kite Beach is nestled along a natural lagoon an easy hour's drive north of Doha. With excellent kitesurfing conditions, the state-of-the-art resort has found a perfect home thanks to the consistent winds, ideal ocean conditions and powder-soft sands.

#### **The St. Regis Marsa Arabia Island**

This exclusive island getaway in the heart of Porto Arabia offers bespoke services and exquisite culinary offerings on a Mediterranean-styled island.

#### **Rixos Gulf Hotel Doha**

Rixos Gulf Hotel Doha has inherited a location with a prestigious history; since 1973 and until now, the site was home to the landmark Gulf Hotel. The building has undergone a grand refurbishment to accommodate this new all-inclusive venture by Rixos Hotels, in partnership with Accor and Katara Hospitality, which will consist of 350 rooms and suites and seven dining outlets.

#### **The Outpost Al Barari**

The first-of-its-kind accommodation in Qatar, The Outpost Al Barari is situated in the stunning Inland Sea nature reserve and is surrounded by soaring sand dunes and desert wilderness. The resort offers 21 luxury lodges with private pools that will integrate close-to-nature experiences, sustainability, and luxury hospitality. This unique desert experience opened on November 1, 2022.

#### **Rixos Qetaifan Island North Doha**

The resort surrounds the island's main attraction: a state-of-the-art waterpark. A traditional Turkish hammam and luxurious treatment rooms will also be on offer, alongside an exclusive sports club for active travellers and the Rixy Kids Club to keep every child entertained.

#### **Waldorf Astoria Doha West Bay**

Currently, in the final phases of construction, this hotel opens in the heart of the capital's Diplomatic Area. The 44-story tower will boast art-deco-





Raffles Doha



The St. Regis Marsa Arabia Island



Rixos Beach Resort, Qetaifan Island



Katara Hills LXR Hotels



Waldorf Astoria Doha West Bay

inspired rooms, a rooftop indoor pool and extensive culinary options created by Michelin-starred chefs.

#### **Waldorf Astoria Doha Lusail**

The sprawling resort is located in the heart of Lusail and boasts a pristine private sand beach. The hotel offers a selection of fun activities for both adults and children, from water slides to surfing, alongside 461 rooms, a fitness centre, a spa, and offices.

#### **The Ned Doha**

One of London and New York's most exclusive hotels and private members' clubs, The Ned is set inside the former Ministry of Interior building along the Doha Corniche. The Ned Doha will be home to 90 rooms and 12 suites, seven restaurants, a gym, a spa, and a 30-metre outdoor pool.

#### **The Chedi Katara Hotel & Resort**

Nestled in the heart of Katara Cultural Village and surrounded by lavish gardens, with luxury rooms and 32 regal villas – all designed with an elegant blend of Mughal and Ottoman aesthetics.

#### **Raffles Doha and Fairmont Doha**

Each of these luxury hotels faces one another in two grand towers, which combine to represent the two scimitar swords on Qatar's national seal. Fairmont Doha is inspired by mega-yacht design and a soaring lobby will house the world's tallest chandelier. In contrast, Raffles Doha is a suite-only property with a legendary butler service.

#### **Rosewood Doha**

Located in two stunning towers inspired by Qatar's coral reefs, Rosewood Doha and Rosewood Residences Doha consists of a luxury hotel, apartments, spa, and state-of-the-art fitness centre.

#### **Katara Hills LXR Hotels**

Inspired by Scandinavian architectural style and created with environment-friendly materials, 15 luxury villas offers a private and peaceful escape from the city in the green paradise of Katara Hills.

#### **DoubleTree by Hilton Doha Downtown**

Just 10 minutes from the city centre and near many of Qatar's most popular attractions, this hotel features over 250 spacious serviced apartments.



# Holding fast to an exemplary reflection of perfection

Tree of Life Resorts & Hotels accentuates the bandwagon of Eco-Tourism with an amalgamation of leisure

**Himmat Anand, the founder of The Tree of Life Resorts & Hotels** is a visionary who pursued his decades-old dream and expanded in the Indian market by giving life to a seed which has now become a renowned giant in itself. The Tree of Life Resorts & Hotels started back in 2010 and today operates in sixteen locations across the country. Additionally, being an inspiration for all dog lovers, he is the founder of 'A Dog's Story' which is a fascinating getaway for pet parents and pet lovers. Dive into the conversation to know the insights on running a successful venture

By Aanchal Sachdeva



## New trends to be observed in the upcoming year adding value to Tree of Life Resorts & Hotels

Come 2023, there is going to be a sea change in traveller preferences, some of which could already be felt in 2022. Holidays will be longer and more spaced out. People would not necessarily want to visit monuments - they will also look for local experiences and interactions instead. Hotels and establishments that do not show a visible and genuine incorporation of eco-friendly measures will not be preferred by many travellers. There will be a growing desire to share holidays spend with the needy and underprivileged. Travel with grandparents and pets will see an upswing, as will solo travel.

## Exquisite experiences provided to India's internal and external market to resonate with true Indian hospitality

Staycation in its true form was more of a pandemic period development, which is fast losing its significance as businesses come back to pre-Covid work formats. I would imagine that working from home would be more of a preferred and longer-lasting development than Staycations. At the same time, I firmly believe that service standards across most hotels have dropped to a large extent. This comes from a shortage of trained staff plaguing our industry and a large number of hotels cutting costs to cover up past losses. I do believe that these short-term measures will have a drastic long-term impact on these hotels.

## Tree of Life - Ecotainers. Resort in Agra is a one-of-a-kind experience

The idea to do a project like this stemmed from my belief that Agra has an overdose

of the Taj and everything that is Mughal. I wanted to do something which would not have any comparison. At the same time, the two years of Covid brought 'eco' to the fore-

*We at the Tree of Life Resorts & Hotels have held steady with the non-negotiables... offering space and privacy as the differentiator to our guests, and being pet friendly*

front and it was just the right time to launch something like the Tree of Life Ecotainers, where recycled shipping containers have been beautifully designed into 320 sqft accommodation with all the amenities that a traveller would expect. In addition, each Ecotainer comes with huge private lawns and sit-outs in very peaceful surroundings, just 20 minutes away from the Taj Mahal! Having said that, we still need to learn a bit more before venturing into other eco-products.

## Maintaining accommodation standards

Each brand, big or small, makes its mark and creates its positioning. We at the Tree of Life Resorts & Hotels have held steady with the non-negotiables we started with over a decade ago - being away from city centres; not having more than around 20 keys in each property; offering space and privacy as the differentiator to our guests; and being pet friendly. We have stayed away from all temptations that came our way but did not fit in with our philosophy. And we listen to our guests very carefully as we believe, they are our best teachers.

## The property most preferred by tourists

While this would vary for Inbound and Domestic travellers, in a generic way I would put Rajasthan, Kerala and Uttar Pradesh as the main draws for travellers. And then there are states like Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh which are more proactive than in the past. I also see Jammu & Kashmir along with Ladakh taking its market share in the years to come. Our Far East has amazing potential and with increased connectivity happening there, I see a surge in the coming five years. And then there are the religious places which will continue to draw huge domestic numbers, given also the thrust by the present Government. For us as Tree of Life Resorts, our flagship property in Jaipur is the most preferred. It is just 14 luxury villas set in 6 acres of land, each with its private spa and some with its private pools.

## New destinations being tapped in, in the upcoming year

The clear winner for me in the coming year will be Jammu and Kashmir.



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EXOTIC INDIA

# The Unmissable *Road trips across* India

By Chandni Chopra

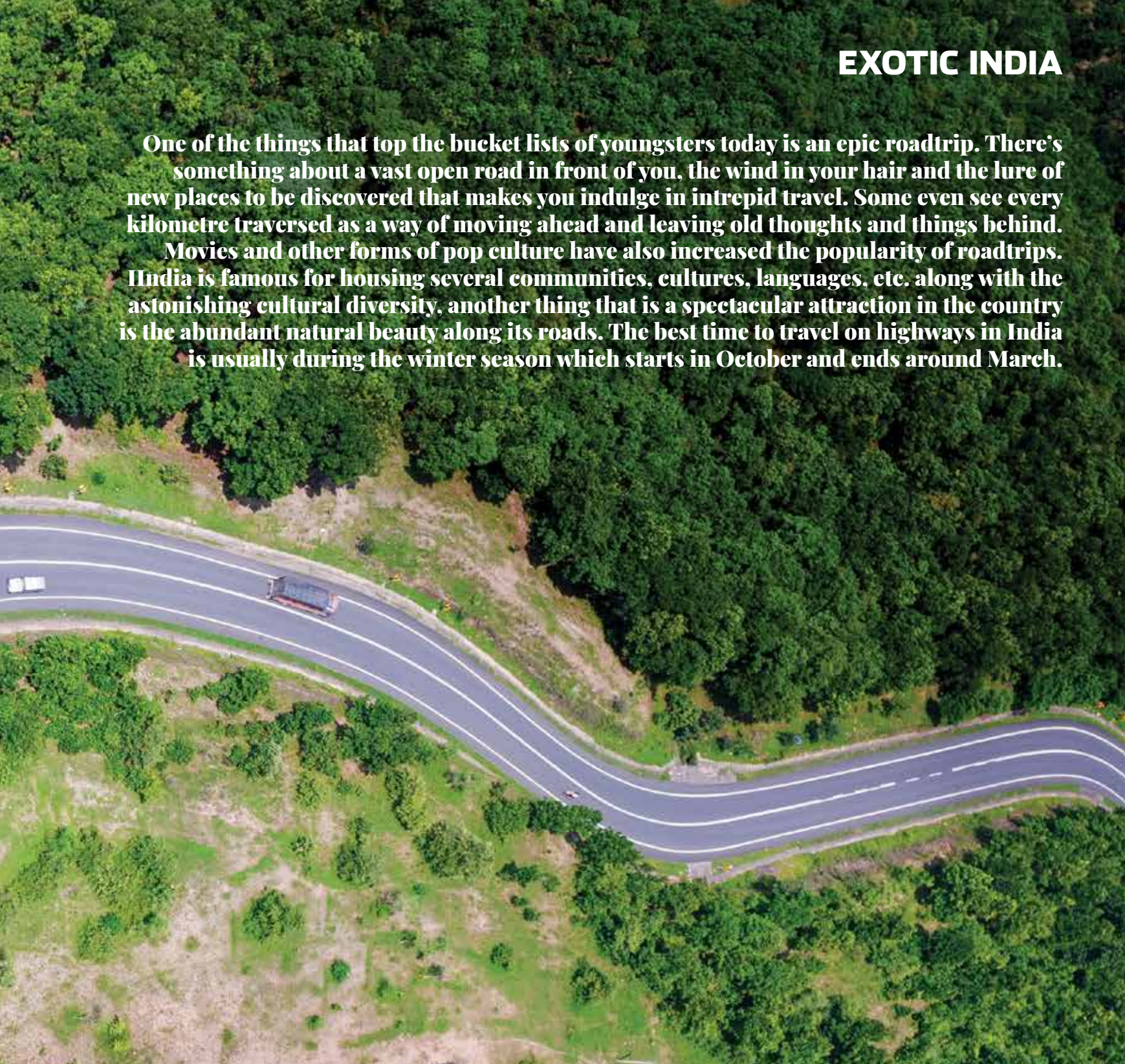
## Mumbai to Goa

One of the best road trips in India by car is definitely from Mumbai to Goa. The Asian Highway joins Panvel in Maharashtra with Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu. Thanks to Bollywood movies, the Mumbai-Goa highway has become the quintessential road trip for millennials. Everyone wants to drive down this road at least once in their lives. Stretched across 609 km, this route passes through the curvy bends of the Western Ghats, the plains of Ratnagiri and the seaside roads of the Goan countryside. The most important thing to remember is that the Mumbai-Goa highway has two versions – the old and the new. However, the older route would be the better option to experience the coastal charm of this route in the best possible way.



One of the things that top the bucket lists of youngsters today is an epic roadtrip. There's something about a vast open road in front of you, the wind in your hair and the lure of new places to be discovered that makes you indulge in intrepid travel. Some even see every kilometre traversed as a way of moving ahead and leaving old thoughts and things behind.

Movies and other forms of pop culture have also increased the popularity of roadtrips. India is famous for housing several communities, cultures, languages, etc. along with the astonishing cultural diversity, another thing that is a spectacular attraction in the country is the abundant natural beauty along its roads. The best time to travel on highways in India is usually during the winter season which starts in October and ends around March.



## Chennai to Pondicherry

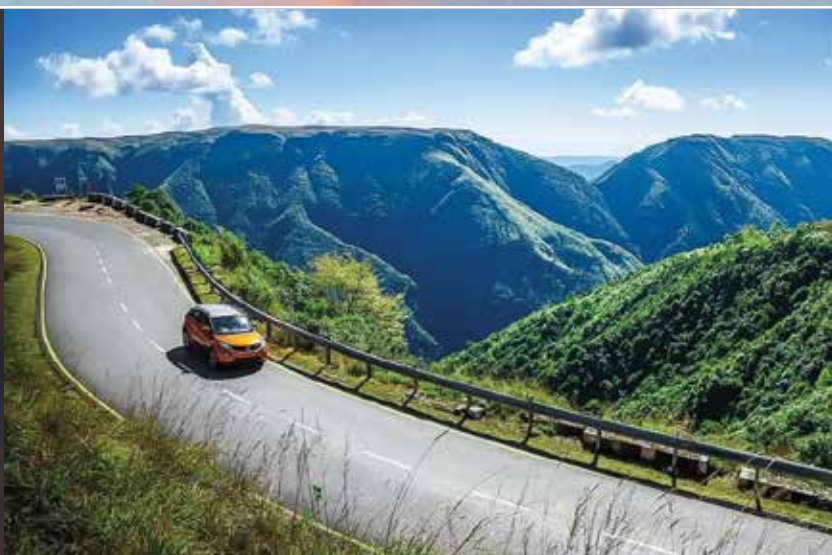
Chennai to Pondicherry Road is also known as the East Coast Road. As you travel through this road, you will see the Bay of Bengal accompanying you on one side. The road travels amidst the sea and pine trees making it a scenic route for the travellers. They say good things come in small packages. This phrase is especially true for the Chennai-Puducherry route which, although only 155 km long, doesn't lack gorgeous vistas. The East Coast Road runs parallel to the shorelines of the Bay of Bengal and is the perfect combination of shady green trees, the sounds of waves and the taste of light, salty winds.



# EXOTIC INDIA

## Shillong – Cherrapunji

From the Scotland of the East to one of the wettest places in India – this route's description sounds like a five-star report card. Just a 54-km ride or drive from Shillong are the moist forests of Cherrapunjee. Although this route is short, it promises to soak travellers not only in rain but also with exceptional experiences. On this road trip, there will be many times where you will feel as if the road beneath you has vanished and you're gliding through clouds. This is not uncommon as Meghalaya literally translates to, 'the abode of clouds'.







## Rameswaram Pamban

### Bridge

It is a man-made marvel that was inaugurated in 1988 and is the only way that connects Rameswaram Island with the Indian mainland. In major patches of this bridge, the sea on both sides is quite fascinating. This is one of the most spectacular highways that you can choose to travel through. This road is also called Madurai Rameswaram Road, and if you are looking for the best road infrastructure in India, you should hit this road.



## Manali - Leh Highway

This route is what legends are made of. If a book on Indian road trips were to be written, the Leh - Manali Highway would be featured in its first chapter. A favourite among bikers and spanning over 470km, it connects Ladakh's Leh with the Himachali hill station of Manali. The road passes through famous high-altitude passes like Rohtang La, Tanglang La and Baralacha La. Manali to Leh Highway is a road trip that you will always remember in life. The serenity of the road trip cannot be explained in words. It is as picky as it is beautiful. The highway lets adventurous travellers enjoy its sights only during the summer months. During the winters, it is shut due to abundant grace sent by the Snow Gods.



# The jaw-dropping JAW RESORT & SPA Kingdom of Bahrain

Indulge in pure luxury and seclusion as you discover a unique blend of style and relaxation. Jaw Resort & Spa offers guests complete privacy and a peaceful getaway. Located in Bahrain's Southern Governorate and overlooking the stunning turquoise sea, Jaw Resort & Spa features beach-front and Sea View Luxury Villas



Seafront Dinner



Seafront Cabanas



Three Bedroom Sunrise Villa with Private Pool

## Live life king size

Jaw Resort & Spa features One-Bedroom and Two-Bedroom Luxury Villas, Three Bedroom Premier Lagoon View Villas, and astonishing Three Bedroom Beach-front Sunrise Villas. All 41 Villas provide complete privacy, each with their Private Swimming Pool and a spacious Patio.

Built to blend in perfect harmony with the surrounding Sea & Sand, the list of indulgences that awaits you at Jaw Resort & Spa can only be matched by the captivating crystal blue waters along a 200-meter-long stretch of its Private White Sandy Beach and an unrivalled level of comfort and a personalised holiday experience.

## Detox inside out

Inspired by nature and tradition, Refresh Spa & Fitness at Jaw Resort & Spa offers a tranquil retreat with Signature Spa Treatments highlighting local ingredients and healing rituals, featuring a steam room and sauna.

Take a break and find your equilibrium at our Refresh Spa to de-stress like never before.

At Refresh Spa & Fitness, we help you reconnect with yourself, others and the world around you. Only when we reconnect with ourselves will our connections with others become truly meaningful.

We are committed to delivering integrated wellness experiences and providing guidance and inspiration to allow our guests to gain a new perspective and make positive lifestyle changes. These experiences are delivered in some of the most beautiful locations, inspired by our heritage but influenced by the local environment and culture. Our local sensibility is evident in the products we choose, the treatments we design and the sustainable practices we implement. This approach enables us to maintain a closer connection with nature and the surrounding world.

## Treat your taste buds

Choose from a mouthwatering variety of cuisines at Al Bareh Restaurant, the resort's Seafront All Day Dining Restaurant and the awe-inspiring My View Ocean Lounge with 360-degree

views of the sea. Voted as one of the best Romantic spots in the Kingdom of Bahrain, Jaw Resort & Spa offers a complete spectrum of comfort and seaside activities, making it the perfect getaway for you and your family. Enjoy the view sipping refreshing mocktails by the shore or perfecting your tan in one of our beach cabanas.

Al Bareh explores the global side of Middle Eastern cuisine with Asian and Western influences. Chill inside or outside the restaurant's beachside setting with panoramic ocean views, as you explore delicacies with a mouth-watering twist. Offering indoor as well as outdoor seating, the restaurant can accommodate about 80 persons at once.

## My View Lounge

Famous for its amazing view and location, this restaurant offers an extraordinary dining experience with a variety of international menus that will surely leave you speechless. Being isolated and surrounded by water, My View Lounge offers our guests a place to unwind and enjoy the fresh sea breeze and is the perfect venue for small gatherings and romantic dinners. It can accommodate up to 60 people at once.

## Spring Cafe

Situated on the centre aisle of the resort, the Spring Cafe is the perfect venue for private gatherings, and corporate or group dinners with its indoor and outdoor seating and has a flexible team that can tailor buffet or set menus as per guest liking. The cafe can accommodate about 80 persons within its indoor as well as outdoor seating.

## Desert Beach Tent

Create unforgettable moments, with a unique beach tent camping experience, under the moonlit sky.

An incredible journey inclusive of mouthwatering dinner, bonfire, BBQ and much more, all in the ambience of your beach tent.

## 360° Ocean Dome

Priceless moments, a timeless journey, and an ambience out of this world. A private transparent dome in the middle





Swing Cabana in the Sea



My View Ocean Lounge

Seafront Patio - Three Bedroom  
Sunrise Villa with Private Pool

Kayaking



Beachfront Event Tent - Khaimah AlBahr



Beach Movie Night

of the sea, with 360° views of calm waters, along with a three-course dinner, bonfire and Barbeque under a million glittering stars.

#### Satisfy your adrenaline soul

A wide variety of water sports has been rounded up such as Jet Skiing, Wake Boarding, Scuba Diving, Flyboard, Flow-boarding, Kayaking, Kneeboarding, and Paddle-boarding.

Water sports or activities are the perfect way to cool off, freshen up and have a lot of fun. If you are looking for the best water sports and activities for your summer inspiration. Whether you're in for an adrenaline kick with kitesurfing or flyboarding, or you prefer something more chill such as yachting or snorkelling, there's sure to be the perfect activity for everyone.

#### Splash Waterpark

Beat the summer heat and enjoy our newly

added waterpark attraction perfect for kids and adults alike.

#### Make shore to have a memorable wedding

"A beachfront setting like no other"

A unique gathering venue, where there is an event for everyone.

Jaw Resort & Spa offers one of the most memorable settings in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Enjoy a unique beachfront outdoor or indoor location with a glittering sky, our resort's stunning venues, world-class service and excellent catering will help make your wedding or event truly unforgettable.

We want your special day to be everything you have ever dreamt of, which is why we offer every couple the services of our experienced events team. With our help, your wedding will be a day to remember.

As a gourmet destination, we are incredibly proud of our food. Our talented catering team can help you with signature menus, as well

as catering for different cuisine and culinary requirements.

#### Venues:

The most stunning setting for a wedding or an event is the Open Beach Area which can accommodate accommodation of 600 people. Khaimah AlBahr, the Beachfront Tent with indoor and Outdoor seating can make room for about 1000 people. Another popular space for weddings and events within the premises is Al Barch Restaurant's indoor and outdoor area and Beach Front which can make room for 700 people.

My View Lounge and the Spring Café can accommodate around 140 people.

Menu prices vary depending on the venue and menu chosen by the guests.

Events reservation includes basic restaurant or banquet setup according to the number of guests. Packages, prices, and menus can be tailored as per guests' requirements.



## Thailand hits 10 million visitors in 2022

**Thailand marked** the arrival of its 10 millionth international visitor in 2022, as per the tourism authority as the travel sector recovered from the pandemic. Around 40 million tourists were welcomed by Thailand in 2019, however, the travel industry badly suffered due to the restrictions imposed during the pandemic. With relaxation in those restrictions worldwide, the travel numbers in Thailand have started a slow recovery and the government is aiming to generate tourism revenue of \$16 billion this year. The passengers de-boarding a Saudi Arabian Airlines flight were welcomed by traditional drummers and dancers at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi International Airport, as they clocked the 10 million milestone.

While speaking at the airport, Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha said, 'The sky is open'. We would like to build confidence that Thailand is still one of the (top) tourist destinations of people around the world."

Finance Minister Arkhom Termpitayapaisith added that they expect a growth in the number of visitors next year too. As per the government figures, Thailand is likely to welcome around 23 million tourists in 2023. However, according to a few analysts, the tourist numbers can see a full recovery in 2024.



## Bahrain's Autumn Fair returns at the new location

**The 33rd** edition of the Autumn Fair, Bahrain's largest shopping event welcomed exhibitors and newcomers including retailers from many countries from December 22 to 30, 2022 at the new Exhibition World Bahrain in Sakhir. The nine-day shopping and free-entry wonderland features over 650 stalls from 16 countries and welcomes more than 165,000 shoppers, reported Bahrain News Agency. The modern facility boasts contemporary halls, widened shopping aisles and a variety of food and beverage options. In order to fast-track free entry for all nine days, visitors over 15 years old at the Autumn Fair 2022 were required to register their attendance online. Registration was not required for children below 15 years old.

"Exhibition space is close to being fully booked, with final plans well underway to deliver the most comprehensive value-added edition in 33 years," Mohammed Ebrahim, Exhibition Director at Informa Markets, said.

"Every passing year has been an evolutionary milestone for Autumn Fair, and 2022 will be no different, with the new exhibition centre being a prime example of how we're constantly looking to innovate and offer an enhanced experience to our visitors", he added.



## Dubai Parks and Resorts seems 'magical' with festive events

**Dubai Parks and Resorts**, the Middle East's largest theme park, has turned into a magical destination with over 50 different activities across four theme parks, making it one of the largest festive destinations in Dubai this season. Festive events include fireworks, festive workshops, enchanting live shows and parades, alongside thrilling rides and rollercoasters.

Motiongate Dubai launches festive theatre shows including "Smurfmás" and "King Julien's Holiday Stomp", that have been

given a festive twist only for the season. Not only will kids and adults get to meet Santa in a special meet and greet. Families and friends can also take a walk through the Festive Market where they can enjoy the best of Clause's baking as she has prepared a spread out of Santa's favourite treats including cakes, cookies, pretzels and gingerbread men. Guests can look forward to unmatched Festive Bricktacular adventures at Legoland Dubai this season.

## RAK to ring in New Year with naturally magical fireworks

**Ras Al Khaimah**, already the holder of several Guinness World Records for its legendary fireworks performances, is once again aimed to create a mesmerising New Year's Eve spectacle, with the aim of securing two GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS™. Taking place along the stunning waterfront between Al Marjan Island and Al Hamra, the northernmost Emirate attempted to break the world record for the 'Most Remote Operated Multirotors/Drones Launching Fireworks Simultaneously', and set a new world record for the 'Largest Aerial Sentence Formed by Multirotors/Drones'.

Commenting on last year's fireworks, Raki Phillips, Chief Executive Officer at Ras Al

Khaimah Tourism Development Authority said: "We are thrilled to be attempting another two GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS™ for our #RAKNYE2023 celebrations. Known as the 'nature' Emirate, due to its unique topography, everything we do in Ras Al Khaimah is magical by nature and we look forward to welcoming visitors from across the world to experience this spectacular feat."

Last year's Ras Al Khaimah New Year's Eve celebration was even more, special and larger, with a family-oriented festival offering the perfect viewing platform for midnight. Welcoming revellers of all ages, the family-friendly event came alive at a dedicated viewing deck opposite Al Marjan Island, from 2pm to 2am.





## Singapore continues to welcome tourists

### Fully-vaccinated travellers

from India will continue to be able to enter Singapore with no quarantine and testing requirements under the Vaccinated Travel Framework (VTF) that came into effect on April 1, 2022.

The reassurance from STB comes after the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India announced on December 29, 2022, that it would require negative RT-PCR test reports from all travellers entering India from China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Thailand from January 1, 2023. Passengers returning to India will be required to show a negative RT-PCR test, taken within 72 hours of their departure and uploaded onto the Air Suvidha portal.

Fully vaccinated travellers arriving in Singapore from India can enter Singapore without quarantine or test requirements.

Reassuring travellers and travel trade partners in India, GB Sridhar, Regional Director, India, Middle East, South Asia and Africa said, "Our message during this time is clear: Singapore remains as open as before and continues to welcome all visitors from India. We, therefore, invite travellers from India young and old to continue enjoying Singapore's vibrant, reimagined destination experiences, through the festive season and into 2023."

The year-to-date number of inbound tourists to Singapore stood at 5.37 million visitor arrivals as of at the end of November.

## Visa on Arrival resumes to visit Qatar

**Starting from** December 23, 2022, Qatar's Visa on Arrival policies were reinstated, replacing Hayya card requirements. Visitors from more than 95 nationalities can enjoy Visa on Arrival and explore the burst of new attractions that have opened in the lead up to the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™.

With its distinctive combination of cool weather, pristine beaches and authentic warm Arabian hospitality, Qatar's visitors and residents can continue to experience the unique, family-friendly atmosphere that made this year's tournament so special and memorable.

From the exquisite cuisines and

culture on offer in Souq Waqif and Katara Cultural Village, to soaking up the sights of the Doha Port and Corniche, some of the tournament's most recognisable hotspots are still open and ready to welcome guests from around the world.

Commenting on the latest travel rules, Haya Al-Noami, Head of Promotions Sector at Qatar Tourism, said, "Looking back at the end of a truly remarkable month of celebrations, we are so proud to have hosted some of the year's most memorable moments. We are confident that Qatar's iconic attractions, warmth and openness, and infectious enthusiasm will continue to draw in visitors.

## Hike in Indian travellers with GNTO's path to sustainability

**Figures from** the German National Tourism Board revealed the number of travellers from India between January and September 2022 more than doubled when compared to the same period last year, suggesting the country's ongoing campaigns focusing on nature and sustainability are hitting the mark and driving the post-pandemic recovery.

The first eight months of 2022 saw an increase in overall foreign visitors to Germany rise 175 per cent compared to 2021, with India leading the way with an increase of 265 per cent until September 2022. While the reopening of international borders and relaxing of stringent travel restrictions clearly plays a part in the rise, the fact travellers are choosing Germany over a range of other countries is a testament to targeted campaigning by GNTB, who specifically created its 'Embrace German Nature and Feel Good' campaigns following in-depth research into what tourists want.

Both campaigns will continue into 2023 as Germany looks ahead to its



winter season, with popular resorts including Zugspitze, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Black Forest, Harz Region, Taunus, Ore Mountains, all set to attract visitors to the incredible skiing and snow sports for all ability levels on offer.

"With our theme campaigns, we create active agenda-setting for more sustainable tourism. Together with our partners said Romit Theophilus, Director, Sales & Marketing, India. We're also looking at the ever-popular winter and festive seasons, with the days being short and the evenings long, there is plenty of time for genuine cosiness, enjoyment, and wonderful traditions from all regions across Germany."



## Dubai installs interactive lights décor at City Walk

Dubai showcased 10 unique interactive light installations that create an immersive artistic journey combining lights and sounds at City Walk as part of the ongoing Dubai Shopping Festival

In partnership with Light Art Collection and Merex Investment, the outdoor exhibition titled "The Sparks Within" celebrates the power, resilience, and positivity of light and sound as a symbol of connection between people, places, and nature.

Visitors got to witness a musically-inspired installation titled Light Piano 2.0 by Arion de Munck and Mark Ridder, and a colourful artwork titled Nest by Vikas Patil and Santosh Gujar inspired by the symbolism of a nest.

Among the 10 is also an emotive artwork titled Run Beyond by Angelo Bonello



conveying the power of imagination and its ability to conquer fears and limitations, pop art inspired tulips titled Bunch of Tulips by Koros Design, Tornado by UxU Studio which mimics the majesty of the natural phenomena, Sphere 3D Spectrum by Clifton Mahangoe embodying the phrase 'opposites attract' and last but not least an installation of 1,500 lights intended to evoke the idea of passion titled DESIRE by Uxu Design.

Dubai Lights will be running until January 29, 2023.

## Japan retail sales increases led by tourism help

Japanese retail sales rose for the ninth straight month in November, as the lifting of COVID-19 border controls and the government's domestic travel subsidy helped consumer demand.

But from the previous month, sales fell from October, with price increases in daily necessities weighing on Japanese households as the nation's core consumer inflation rate hit a fresh 40-year high, indicating price hikes were broadening.

A recovery in private consumption, which makes up more than half of Japan's economy, is key to driving growth in the economy, which unexpectedly shrank

in the third quarter. Retail sales grew 2.6% from the year earlier but were short of a median forecast of 3.7%. The pace of annual growth in sales, a barometer of private consumption, slowed from 4.4% in October and 4.8% in September.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, retail sales slipped 1.1% in November from the previous month, down for the first time in five months.

Data showed last week that visitor arrivals to Japan jumped to nearly 1 million in November, the first full month after the country scrapped COVID-19 curbs that effectively halted tourism for more than two years.



## Festive celebrations at Yas Marina and Yas Bay Waterfront

Yas Marina and Yas Bay Waterfront brought festive cheer by the waterfront with 'Magic of Winter' – a collective journey to bring a piece of the North Pole to the neighbouring destinations on Yas Island. A simple hop, skip and reindeer jump away from each other, guests experienced variety at both locations until December 31.

Visitors were given the opportunity to savour their time with Santa and his elves in the grotto at Yas Marina until Christmas day. They were also allowed to whip out their camera phones for festive photo ops across the destination, like the toy window display located adjacent to Stars 'n' Bars, and

capture the picture-perfect moment under the snow globe, with the sparkling blue waters of the superyacht marina glistening in the background.

The festive parade at Yas Marina took place every weekend from Friday to Sunday. Tourists were delighted to receive a treat for eyes for stilt walkers, unicyclists, the gingerbread man, acrobatic performers, and jugglers. The parade made its way to Yas Bay Waterfront for a double dose of cheer.

Travellers followed the snowflake lane to make sure they didn't miss Santa's Post Office where his merry elves helped them to write their wintery wishes to the jolly old man.

## Qatar launches global dance and music programmes

Qatar Creates launched 'Festival in Motion', an international dance and music programme with more than 55 site-specific performances at some of Qatar's most significant architectural landmarks, from December 5 to December 20.

Festival in Motion was conceived by Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Museums, and co-curated by two internationally acclaimed artists; Benjamin Millepied and Nico Muhly.

The 13-day programme showcased more than a dozen exceptional artists from around the world. Audiences can view

the performances free of cost in exceptional locations across Qatar, including museums, public art installations and heritage sites.

Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani said, "We have made it our strategy to take our art to the neighbourhoods and cities of Qatar. From the airport to every part of the country, the landscape is open for people to experience arts and culture, complementing our landmark museums and collections. For the World Cup, we have invited Benjamin Millepied and Nico Muhly to curate modern dance performances.





## CURATE LIFELONG MEMORIES AT THE ANANTA UDAIPUR

The Ananta Udaipur is a 5-star resort magnificently cascading over 90 acres in the Aravalli Hills, with blossoming verdure, luxurious villas and a signature hospitality for a leisurely sojourn in the city of lakes.

Located in one of the most sought after wedding destinations in the world with two grand ballrooms, multiple sprawling lawns and an exclusive amphitheater Ananta Udaipur is an exquisite wedding resort.

Our management teams, technologically well-equipped boardrooms and luxurious banqueting facilities ensure flawless corporate functions, meetings and rejuvenating company off-sites.







## BLR Airport honours International Day of Persons with disabilities

In honor of the International Day of Disabled Persons, the Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru launched two cafes run by persons with disabilities to mark the International Day of Disabled Persons. The eateries are operated by the non-profit, Mitti Social Initiatives Foundation which runs 25 cafes across India by employing differently-abled people.

Located within the airport premises, the cafes are open 24/7 and have Braille instructions.

Alina Alam, CEO and Founder, Mitti Café, said, "To be able to run not one but two Cafes by adults with disabilities at the Kempegowda International Airport is a dream come true for us. We are thankful to the airport authorities, our sponsors, and other supporters who have made today a reality. The launch of our two Cafes in such a public space as an airport will help send a strong message of inclusion to the public at large and sensitise them to the lives of persons with disabilities. We are extremely excited too about the economic and social opportunities the two Cafes present to our staff, for many of whom this is their first job. It is befitting that we are launching our two airport cafes on December 3rd, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, a day that raises awareness and understanding of disability issues and mobilises support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities."

## flydubai launches daily flights to St Petersburg

**flydubai**, the Dubai-based airline announced the launch of daily flights to St Petersburg's Pulkovo International Airport (LED) from January 20, 2023. The carrier has grown its network to 114 destinations most of which were not previously served with direct airlinks to the United Arab Emirates.

Commenting on the announcement, Ghaith Al Ghaith, Chief Executive Officer at flydubai, said, "2022 has been a tremendous year for growth for flydubai. We have taken delivery of 18 new aircraft this year which has enabled us to continue to expand our network and add more capacity on some of our existing routes. We are confident this momentum will continue well into next year thanks to the hard work of everyone at flydubai and the encouraging economic environment Dubai has given us."

The carrier first started its operations to the Russian market in 2010 with direct flights to Samara and Yekaterinburg. With the launch of the new service, flydubai will serve nine destinations in the market.

## Jazeera Airways on a 5-year mark with its India operations

**Jazeera Airways**, Kuwait's low-cost airline, is operating regionally and internationally on a 5-year mark with its India operations and is anticipating stronger growth for the coming years. Having started its India operations with Hyderabad in October 2017, the airlines has quickly grown in the last five years, serving from 5 to 8 destinations in India and currently has 30 direct services to Kuwait and beyond, from India.

Romana Parvi, Regional Manager, South Asia, on behalf of Jazeera Airways, recently participated at the SATTE GENX Connect 2022, a hybrid initiative from South Asia's largest Travel and Tourism Exhibition held in Chennai and graciously spoke

at the conference about India Outbound: Developing Tamil Nadu as One of the Fastest Growing Source Markets.

Parvi mentions, "Despite the challenges faced by the business community, the airline was able to support their growth and the future looks bright."

Recently the airline started its service to Bangalore in India on November 3, 2022, flying to the Garden City of India two times a week on Thursdays and Saturdays. The management at Jazeera Airways also took the opportunity of successfully marking one year of operations to Chennai by thanking its trade partners for extending their support at an award show in the city on November 2, 2022.



## IndiGo announces 32 new connecting flights

In line with its vision to strengthen international connectivity, IndiGo announced 32 new connecting flights to Milan, Manchester, Birmingham, Rome, and Venice, effective December 7, 2022, through its codeshare partnership with Turkish Airlines. These new routes will offer more options and add capacity for customers travelling between India and Europe in the upcoming holiday season.

Speaking on the occasion, Vinay Malhotra, Head of Global Sales, IndiGo said, "We are extremely

pleased to add more capacity between India and Europe during this holiday season, given the high demand for international travel. These flights will cater to travellers exploring Italy and UK, with one stop connections to Milan, Manchester, Birmingham, Rome, and Venice via Istanbul. These new routes will not only strengthen international connectivity but also enhance affordability for travel to Europe. We will continue to strive to stay true to our promise of affordable fares, on-time performance, courteous and hassle-free service."



## Etihad Airways to reintroduce four of its A380s in 2023

**Etihad grounded** all ten of its famous double-decker planes more than two years ago at the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak. Its CEO often indicated that they would likely never fly again. However, the quick recovery in travel has pushed some airlines, notably Etihad, to pull their largest jets from the desert. The airline will restart operating four Airbus A380s between its Abu Dhabi base and London Heathrow beginning in the summer of 2023. The Jet is expected to operate on all four daily frequencies between the two cities by October 2023. According to Etihad's schedule,

the A380 will return on July 15, 2023. This is a long-awaited breakthrough for aviation enthusiasts with bucket lists since these large first-class seats are usually regarded as among the greatest in the world. There's also an ultra-exclusive "Residence" with a double bed and a personal butler. Along with Emirates First Class, Etihad's A380 is one of only two commercial planes with a shower aboard. However, with just four A380s returning to operation, there is no sign that these planes will resume service to additional destinations, including flights to and from New York.



## British Airways resumes 3rd daily London-Dubai flight

**British Airways** restarted a third daily flight from Dubai to London Heathrow, adding to its two-a-day schedule. It will provide even more travel options for customers who wish to travel to the UK, Europe and US. British Airways currently operates 14 flights a week from Dubai and with these additional flights the weekly total will go up to 21 flights.

Panagiotis Theodotou, British Airways' regional commercial

manager for Middle East said: "We are excited to add our third direct flight from Dubai to London providing ample choice to our customers who are always on the lookout for great travel experiences and better travel options. With these additional flights we will be offering a convenient choice of three flights a day from Dubai to London which connects on to our worldwide network."



## Air India close nearing deal of 50 Boeing 737 MAX planes for AI Express

**Tata Group-owned** Air India is nearing a deal with Boeing for 50 narrow-body Boeing 737 Max planes for its international budget arm Air India Express. According to sources familiar with the development, the deal is part of a large aircraft order that Air India has been discussing with Boeing Co and Airbus SE since the start of the fiscal year. They also said that loss-making Air India, which was acquired by the Tata group in January of this year, intends to triple its fleet over the next five years. The Tata group has announced the merger of its domestic budget arm AirAsia India, which operates the Airbus A320 fleet, with Air India Express as part of the consolidation of its airline business. Air India Express

currently operates 24 Boeing 737 planes.

According to sources, Air India has been discussing this deal with Boeing for quite some time and these planes were previously scheduled to be delivered to China. The airline anticipates receiving a significant discount for these planes, they added.

Air India Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Campbell Wilson said last month that the airline is in talks with Boeing, Airbus and engine manufacturers about a "historic" order of next-generation aircraft. According to media reports on December 11, 2022, Air India was close to placing an order for 500 planes with Boeing and Airbus.

## Vistara launches daily non-stop flights to Muscat from Mumbai

**Vistara launched** daily, non-stop flights from Mumbai to Muscat on December 12, 2022 to expand its footprint in the lucrative Middle East region. The inaugural flight departed from Mumbai at 2000 hours (IST) and arrived in Muscat at 2135 hours. Muscat is the fourth destination in the Gulf region for Vistara, which is a joint venture between Tatas and Singapore Airlines. The airline said there has been a consistent rise in passenger volumes and demand from the Gulf countries, paving way for the airline to bolster its presence in the region. Muscat is the third Gulf city that Vistara has added

to its network in the last four months. Vistara also operates daily flights from Dubai to/from Mumbai.

Vinod Kannan, Chief Executive Officer, of Vistara, said the launch of operations to Muscat is in line with the airline's goal to steadily enhance its footprint in the Middle East.

The firm bilateral relationship and robust cultural and economic ties between India and states in the Gulf region have given great impetus to our growth plans, and our successful business on the other Middle Eastern routes is a testament to that, he said.



## Goa receives first charter flight from Kyrgyzstan

**Goa receives** its first charter flight from Kyrgyzstan on December 29 and the service will continue for a month. The coastal state currently handles maximum charter flights from Russia and the UK.

"This will be the first-ever flight to arrive in Goa from Kyrgyzstan, with a plan to operate a weekly flight for the tourist season 2022-23," said Amar Dhumatker, president, of Caper Travel Company who will be handling

these flights.

The first charter flight from Kyrgyzstan by Aero Nomad Airlines with approximately 170 tourists arrived at Dabolim airport on December 29, it was stated. For now, one flight will be operated every eight days for approximately a month. If tourists from the central Asian country like Goa as a destination give positive feedback, then the service might continue till the end of March, Dhumatker said.

## Finnair to restart flights to Osaka

**Finnair announced** that it will restart its service between Helsinki and Osaka from March 2023 after suspending the route for more than a year following the closure of the Russian airspace. The carrier will offer three flights per week from 26 March, using an Airbus A350-900 aircraft.

As Finnair continues to rebuild its network in Japan, the carrier also announced an increase in frequency to Tokyo Narita from

twice a week to four times per week, in addition to its existing daily service to Tokyo Haneda.

"We are happy to be able to respond to the increasing travel demand between Europe and key Asian destinations. In summer 2023, we will be operating 14 weekly connections between Finland and Japan, and we have daily connections to Delhi and Hong Kong," says Ole Orver, Finnair's chief commercial officer.



## Akasa Air introduces Goa as 12th destination on its network

**Akasa Air** announced the addition of Goa, the 12th destination to join the airline's fast-growing network. Offering two daily flights from Goa to Bengaluru, increasing to three daily flights from February 1, 2023, and two daily flights from Goa to Mumbai, this enhanced connectivity between the commercial cities and one of the country's most popular tourism hubs, will help boost economic growth and also help increase the tourist footprint.

The airline has been progressively scaling up its operations and has taken delivery of 10 aircraft, carrying over 5 lakh revenue passengers in less than six months from the start of its operations. By end-December 2022, the airline expects to cross over 500 weekly flights.

Commenting on the new destination announcement, Praveen Iyer, Co-Founder, and Chief Commercial Officer, Akasa Air, said, "We are pleased to announce our 12th destination, Goa with flights from New Goa Manohar International Airport (Mopa), one of the newest airports that was inaugurated by our Honourable Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi-ji on December 11, 2022. We are really excited to connect Goa with two of our strong metro cities in the South and West, Bengaluru & Mumbai. We launch Goa with five daily departures connecting to Bengaluru and Mumbai. The city of beaches, Goa, has played a significant role in putting Indian tourism on the global map and is one of the most popular tourist destinations within India, all year round. It has also emerged as a manufacturing base for several leading companies, that constantly require greater connectivity to metro cities. The commencement of this route will enable us to enhance connectivity between these cities while offering our signature warm and efficient service to our passengers. Our operations from the city will cater to business and leisure travellers who are on the lookout for convenient and affordable flying options."



## Vietjet wins awards from the magazine World Business Outlook

**Vietjet won** two awards from the notable magazine World Business Outlook, namely the "Most Valued Airline of the Year in Asia 2022" and "Best Cabin Crew Service in Asia 2022". Vietjet, FPT, Vietcombank and Viettel are the only Vietnamese enterprises named in this year's awards among other international brands. The airline was honoured as the "Best Low-cost Airline in Vietnam" at the annual World Airline Awards 2022 by Skytrax, the world's leading international air transport rating

organisation. The awards are represented as the premier industry recognition worldwide. Singapore-based World Business Outlook is a print and online magazine providing comprehensive coverage and analysis of the financial industry, international business and the global economy.

Vietjet Vice President Nguyen Thanh Son, said: "These awards are the acknowledgement of our continuous perseverance to maintain trustful flight operation and highest customer satisfaction rate."



## Sri Lanka resumes international flights from Mattala Airport

**Sri Lanka** resumed international flight services from the Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport located in the southern district of Hambantota with nearly 400 Russian tourists arriving in the island nation still grappling with the financial crisis. Mattala apparently, the world's emptiest airport began its international services in 2013 but stopped in 2018 due to low demand. There have been no flights to Mattala in 2022.

The inaugural charter flight to operate twice weekly between Moscow and Mattala arrived at Mattala with 398 Russian tourists in

December end.

"This is a historic first flight from Russia to Mattala. We hope more flights will operate to have more Russian tourists," said Nimal Siripala de Silva, Minister of Aviation at the welcome ceremony. "This charter flight will operate twice weekly flights from Moscow to Mattala and back to Moscow. In the longer term, we hope that commercial airline services would arrive at Mattala." Sumith told. The service is expected to boost travel from South India having close cultural and religious ties with Northern Sri Lanka.

## Thai and Singapore airlines to forge new strategic partnership

**Thai Airways** International Public Company Limited and Singapore Airlines signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to form a new strategic partnership. This will result in the airlines progressively code sharing more extensively on each other's services and exploring wide-ranging commercial collaboration that provides their customers with more options and value, as well as greater benefits and an enhanced travel experience.

In the initial phase, THAI and SIA will codeshare on each other's flight services between Singapore and Bangkok. THAI will also

codeshare on SIA's flight services to Cape Town and Johannesburg in South Africa; Houston, Los Angeles, New York (John F. Kennedy International Airport and Newark Liberty International Airport), San Francisco, and Seattle in the United States of America; as well as Vancouver in Canada, by the first quarter of 2023, subject to regulatory approval.

Additional codeshare arrangements to points in both airlines' networks will be explored to support increased air connectivity to Thailand and Singapore, as well as points in Europe, India, and South West Pacific routes.



## IndiGo commences operations from the New Goa International Airport

**Establishing a** robust domestic network, IndiGo announced the commencement of operations from the New Goa International Airport (Mopa, North Goa). The operations commenced today with direct flight between Hyderabad and Goa making it the 76th domestic and 102nd overall destination in 6E network. IndiGo will operate 168 weekly flights between Mopa and 8 domestic destinations like Hyderabad, Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Pune, Jaipur, and Ahmedabad right from the start at the first day of operations.

The new network will cater to the increasing demand owing to the popularity of Goa as a preferred leisure travel destination and will provide more options to the customers, making travel more affordable and enhancing direct connectivity to North Goa. The present Goa Dabolim Airport, South Goa will remain active, and IndiGo continues its existing operations there.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Goa's second international airport at Mopa in North Goa on December 11, 2022.

# ITA Airways inaugurates New Delhi - Rome direct flight

**The Italian flagship airline is the only carrier to operate a direct connection between Delhi and Rome**

ITA Airways' first flight from New Delhi to Rome Fiumicino departed on December 4, 2022, at 03:50 am local time. The new connection marks a step forward in the expansion of the company's network towards the Asian market while confirming its commitment to attracting connecting customers.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony at New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport was attended by Pierfrancesco Carino, Vice President International Sales ITA Airways and Fabio Bigotti, Country Manager India ITA Airways.

"We are happy to inaugurate today the ITA Airways' Rome Fiumicino - New Delhi connections, the only direct flights between these two capitals", said Emiliana Limosani, Chief Commercial Officer ITA Airways and CEO Volare. "With the opening of this new route for the transport of passengers and cargo between Italy and India, ITA Airways is further contributing to the cultural integration and development of the economic relationship between the two countries, which have developed a solid political and commercial collaboration in recent years, with the presence of more than 600 Italian companies in India and a bilateral interchange that in 2021 reached a record value of more than 10 billion euros. In addition, thanks to the flight departing from New Delhi to Rome, our Indian customers will be able to visit not only Italy but all of Europe thanks to convenient connections offered from our Rome Fiumicino hub"; concluded the Chief Commercial Officer.

This is the first time ITA Airways operates in the Indian market and more importantly, the company is the only airline to operate a direct Rome Fiumicino - New Delhi flight.

The new route will be operated with an Airbus A330, three times a week, departing from New Delhi, every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday and landing in Rome Fiumicino. Return flights from Rome Fiumicino will depart every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday.

With the new intercontinental connection, ITA Airways is further expanding into the Asian market, while it continues to strengthen its ability to attract connecting customers, tapping into the flows between India and North America, Germany, Spain and France.

Through this new flight, Indian passengers will be able to discover the beauties of Italy's capital and the uniqueness of the 'Made



in Italy' and will also use this flight as a connecting one to start exploring other Italian cities, courtesy of 20 domestic connections offered by ITA Airways.

ITA Airways' Indian operations will be enhanced by flights operated in interline agreement with Vistara. Thanks to the collaboration with the Indian full-service airline, customers on ITA Airways' Rome - New Delhi flight will be able to fly on connecting domestic and international flights from Vistara's hub at Indira Gandhi International Airport. These include Mumbai, Amritsar, Kolkata, Bangalore, Kochi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Pune, Chandigarh and Dabolim in the Indian market and Bangkok, Kathmandu and Dhaka at international level.

To support the new intercontinental flight from New Delhi to Rome and to enhance local awareness of the new Italian flagship carrier, ITA Airways launched a multi-channel

advertising campaign in India, which highlights the New Delhi-Rome connection as well as the beauty of Italy and its most iconic destinations.

ITA Airways continues to expand its intercontinental network. In the winter season, the company will serve a total of 51 destinations, of which 9 are intercontinental, 22 are international and 20 are domestic and will focus primarily on its long-haul expansion project with several important new routes including, in addition to New-Delhi, they launched Tokyo-Haneda and the Maldives (Malé) which opened on December 17. All these new intercontinental routes are joining flights to New York, Los Angeles, Boston, Miami, Buenos Aires and São Paulo opened earlier in year 2022.

In addition, in 2023 the company is also expected to open additional new intercontinental destinations with direct flights.



# Taiwan Film Festival makes its post-covid return



**The annual** Taiwan Film Festival 2022 took place in New Delhi on December 15 after a gap of three years affected by the Corona virus pandemic. Organised by the Taipei Economic and Cultural Centre (TECC), India, the festival screen two renowned Taiwanese movies – Listen Before You Sing by Shine Yang, an inspirational movie for the students, and Long Time No Sea by Heather Tsui, which is based on a true story.

Ambassador Baushuan Ger., Representative of TECC in India, was the 'Guest of honour' at the premier. The annual festival seeks to strengthen the cultural ties between the two

countries and bring Taiwanese cinema, people and the destination itself, closer to the people of India. The festival films were screened at the plush INOX theatre located at Nehru Place, New Delhi.

The 113-minute 'Listen Before You Sing' is a story of trials and tribulations of a mountain tribe (Bunun) who are risking the closer and withdrawal of funding to their only school. The movie shows how some very simple people who lack in skill and experience can rise above overwhelming odds and initial setbacks to be resourceful and distinguish themselves.

Based on true events, Long Time No Sea, is

an emotional journey of hope and despair of Manawei, a Yami (Tao) boy, living on Orchid Island, yearning for his father and a pair of shoes and a young teacher who doesn't see his future on the remote island and wants transferred. All characters except the teacher are portrayed by non-professional actors from the Yami (Tao) ethnic group.

Bathed on the spirit of 'our culture, our pride', the film depicts an authentic, rarely seen side of Orchid Island, and engages issues of family relationships, love, abandonment, and grandparenting problems against the backdrop of the Yami (Tao) cultural fault line.



## ON THE MOVE



**MANISH DAYYA**

**APPOINTED AT:** Sofitel Mumbai BKC

**PROMOTED TO:** General Manager

Sofitel Mumbai BKC has appointed Manish Dayya as the new General Manager. Dayya brings with him over two decades of experience in the trade and hospitality industries. A hospitality professional to the core, he looks forward to spearheading operations at Sofitel Mumbai BKC, introducing further growth through innovative strategies and managing an effective and enthusiastic team.



**AMARDEEP SINGH**

**APPOINTED AT:** The Westin Rishikesh Resort & Spa

**PROMOTED TO:** General Manager

The Westin Rishikesh Resort & Spa has announced the appointment of Amardeep Singh as its General Manager. Amardeep will be responsible for spearheading the resort launch, managing finance performance, guest engagement & relationships. A seasoned hotelier with over two decades of extensive experience in the hospitality industry, Amardeep will be responsible for strategically building the hotel's vision of being the most preferred destination.



**SANJAY MISHRA**

**APPOINTED AT:** Empire Hotels

**PROMOTED TO:** Vice President

Sanjay Mishra has been promoted as the Vice President of Empires Hotels. From Kitchen to F&B, Banqueting to Sales & Marketing to the Entire Operation of a hotel, Mishra has a vast experience of 22 years in the hospitality industry. He worked as General Manager of Empires Paradeep since 2016 and as General Manager of Empires Bhubaneswar & Paradeep before his recent promotion to Vice President. He started his career at Holiday Inn, Surat (now Taj Gateway) as a Captain in 2000.



**NAMIT VIJH**

**APPOINTED AT:** Radisson Hotels

**PROMOTED TO:** Cluster General Manager

Radisson Hotels Group is pleased to announce the appointment of Namit Viji as Cluster General Manager for Rajasthan and Agra. As part of his new role, he will be responsible for a bigger portfolio comprising Radisson Blu Jaipur, Radisson Jodhpur, Radisson Nathdwara, Radisson Udaipur, Radisson Agra and Country Inn & Suites by Radisson Kota in addition to Radisson Gurugram Udyog Vihar. He has experience spanning more than 15 years with leading hotel brands such as The Oberoi Group.



**ANUJ MAJUMDAR**

**APPOINTED AT:** Hilton Garden Inn, Pune

**PROMOTED TO:** Assistant General Manager

Anuj Majumdar has been appointed as the Assistant General Manager of Hilton Garden Inn Pune Hinjawadi. With more than 25 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Anuj has an intrinsic understanding of hotel operations, fulfilling guest expectations, and great leadership skills. His expertise will play a vital role in elevating the property to new heights. He has worked with several esteemed hospitality brands such as The Leela Mumbai, Holiday Inn Pune, and Four Points by Sheraton.



**FARHAN HAMIDANI**

**APPOINTED AT:** The Westin Goa

**PROMOTED TO:** Director of Sales and Marketing

The Westin Goa has announce the recent appointment of Farhan Hamidani, as the Director of Sales and Marketing for the property. Farhan, a passionate and dynamic professional has more than 13 years of experience in the hospitality industry with a demonstrated track record in successful business and resource management. He will be taking on a further leadership role by leading a country-wide sales team.



**PRUDHVI RAJKUMAR**

**APPOINTED AT:** Hyatt Regency, Chennai

**PROMOTED TO:** Director of Sales

Hyatt Regency Chennai has elevated Prudhvi Rajkumar as the Director of Sales. In his new role, he will be responsible for sales, revenue management and business operations and will oversee all aspects of the sales department. With over 16 years of experience in the hospitality and aviation industry, he has been instrumental in initiating and organising many successful sales initiatives. He possesses strong business acumen and seeks to work towards implementing strategies to elevate the brand presence.



**BISWAJIT CHAKRABORTY**

**APPOINTED AT:** The Leela Kovalam, The Leela Ashtamudi

**PROMOTED TO:** Cluster General Manager

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts has announced the appointment of Biswajit Chakraborty as The Cluster General Manager of The Leela Kovalam, A Raviz Hotel and The Leela Ashtamudi, A Raviz Hotel in Kerala. Biswajit has over 35 years of experience across major Indian hotel brands like The Oberoi Hotels and Taj Hotels and has also worked for the Accor Hotel Group. He brings with him a wealth of experience and astute business acumen.



**NIHAL KURIAN**

**APPOINTED AT:** Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel

**PROMOTED TO:** Director of Sales & Marketing

Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel appoints Nihal Kurian as the Director of Sales & Marketing. His core responsibilities will include planning and implementing the hotel's sales and marketing strategy, maximizing the hotel's revenues, exploring business opportunities through events, setting annual budgets, forecasting, and analyzing revenue reports and strategy among others. He holds more than 13 years of experience in the Indian hospitality.





# A magical Waterscape for your magical love story

Fairytale romances need a magical setting. Step into KTDC Waterscapes for an absolutely romantic holiday beside the Vembanad Lake. Located inside the Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary, the resort is a haven for migratory birds and needless to say, love birds as well.

Kumarakom, Kottayam - 686563, Kerala  
Phone: +91-481-2525861, 2524258, 2527650  
E-mail: [waterscapes@ktdc.com](mailto:waterscapes@ktdc.com), [www.ktdc.com](http://www.ktdc.com)

KTDC  
*Water Scapes*  
KUMARAKOM



# A whole new world



Introducing a codeshare partnership between IndiGo and Turkish Airlines that connects passengers from India to the following destinations, via Istanbul.

Amsterdam  
Brussels  
Geneva  
Malta  
Paris  
Salzburg  
Vienna

Athens  
Budapest  
Lisbon  
Manchester  
Porto  
Tel Aviv  
Zurich

Basel  
Dublin  
London  
Milan  
Prague  
Toulouse

Birmingham  
Copenhagen  
Lyon  
Nice  
Rome  
Venice

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