



TRAVMART

Connecting travel partners
with new opportunities



MARCH 15 AHMEDABAD

MARCH 17 PUNE

APRIL 21 LUCKNOW



Travel Trade Journal

Vol. 13 | Issue 03 | January 2023 | Pages 72 | ₹150



**STAY
UPDATED**

Authentic Travel News
Enterprising Industry Views

www.traveltradejournal.com



ASEGŌ

Global Assistance • Travel Insurance

*Wishes the dynamic travel fraternity a
Happy & Prosperous New Year!*

PROUD TO BE SERVICING

18K+

Travel Trade Partners
across India.



**Multiple insurance
companies**



**Customisable
travel insurance**



**24x7 medical assistance
& fast track claims**



**Industry-leading
technology platform**

For partnership and more details, contact: +91 22 6787 2037

Insurance is a subject matter of solicitation. Content expressed in this poster does not accept any liability of any sort unless confirmed by an authorized representative of Asego. All Insurance policies are sold under the Corporate Agency of Asego Insurance LLP. bearing IRDAI registration no. CA0776, with insurance underwritten by IRDAI authorised Insurer.
24x7 helpline: +91 22 6787 2037 | customercare@asego.in | claims@asego.in



Scan the QR code
to socialise



Romantic Escape

05 Days

Inclusions:

- ✓ 04 Nights stay in Abu Dhabi City Hotel
- ✓ Daily Breakfast
- ✓ Return Airport Transfers from Abu Dhabi International Airport on Private
- ✓ Royal Dinner Cruise Yas with Transfers on SIC
- ✓ Abu Dhabi City Tour with Grand Mosque & Royal Palace Visit with Transfers on SIC
- ✓ Lunch at The Emirates Palace Hotel with Transfers on SIC (Half Day)
- ✓ Yas Island 1 Day 2 Parks Ticket Only
(Select from Ferrari World or Warner Bros. World or Yas Water World)

Remarks: Rates are based on Per Person in DBL/TWN sharing basis. Rates and Offers are subject to change without prior notice & are subject to availability. Tourism Dirham Fees & Room Municipality fee are not included. Valid till 31st March' 2023. Applicable for India Market. *T&C Apply.

From
US\$ 599*
per person



Ottila International Pvt. Ltd.

Mumbai (Registered Office & Corporate Headquarters): 022 6720 5000

Ahmedabad: +91 93761 20982	Hyderabad: +91 40 4020 0301	New Delhi: +91 11 4151 5885
Bengaluru: +91 80 4165 6324	Indore: +91 731 4911 374	Nasik: +91 253 231 0044
Chennai: +91 44 4555 8582	Kochi: +91 75938 63903	Pune: + 91 20 4002 6960
Coimbatore: + 91 99527 17750	Kolkata: +91 98301 19561	

For Enquiries & Bookings, please contact any of our offices.



Team Sampan

Editor & Publisher	:	Ravi Sharma
Consulting Editor	:	Gurjit Singh
Assistant Editor	:	Prashant Nayak
Contributing Editor	:	Sonia Dutt
Sr. Correspondent	:	Vartik Sethi
Bureau Head (East)	:	Partha Chatterjee
Correspondent (East)	:	Swaati Chaudhary
GM-Marketing	:	Sonika Bohra
Head-Special Projects	:	Jyoti Rathod
Marketing Manager	:	Bharti Kalia
Manager PR	:	Ankit Dixit
Coordinator-Special Projects	:	Parth Sharma
Trainee Designer	:	Jatin Kumar
Manager Administration	:	Kuldeep Singh
Asst. Admin	:	Satish Kumar
Accountant	:	Amar Gupta
Circulation Manager	:	Sahil Nadeem

Email: info@sampanmedia.com

Editorial and Marketing Office :
Sampan Media Pvt. Ltd. B-20, First Floor, Nangal Devat, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi, 110070
Ph: 9560264443, ravisharma@sampanmedia.com

All information in Travel Trade Journal (TTJ) is derived from sources we consider reliable. It is passed on to our readers without any responsibility on our part. Opinions / views expressed by third parties in abstract or in interviews are not necessarily shared by us. Material appearing in the magazine cannot be reproduced in whole or in part(s) without prior permission. The publisher assumes no responsibility for material lost or damaged in transit. The publisher reserves the right to refuse, withdraw or otherwise deal with all advertisements without explanation. All advertisements must comply with the Indian Advertisements Code. The publisher will not be liable for any loss caused by any delay in publication, error or failure of advertisement to appear.

Owned and published by: Ravi Sharma, Editor & Publisher, A-100, Upper Ground Floor, Nangal Dewat, New Delhi - 110070 and printed on his behalf at Modest Print Pack Pvt. Ltd., Okhla Industrial Area, New Delhi - 110020.



Dear Friends,
Happy New Year!

The global travel and tourism industry has high expectations from 2023, as all travel sectors are projected to return to pre-pandemic levels. However, the needs of travellers are moving in a lot of different directions to adapt to changing times and thus the traveller's well-being and sustainability make the role of the travel and hospitality players more daunting and challenging than ever. From what we learn and absorb is that in 2023, focusing on the experience and sustainability are key to boosting appeal.

TTJ's January 2023 issue is our 12th annual edition and with its theme, 'Looking Back, Looking Ahead,' the issue gives a deep insight into how 2022 has been and the expectations and things to look forward to in 2023. In this issue, in varied sections, many travel-hospitality leaders and stakeholders have shared their experiences, which makes up for an interesting read.

Before you start reading, I want to remind you that as you plan to capitalise on the new year, it is also time to unplug, explore and enjoy all that the world has to offer.

Happy Reading!

Ravi Sharma

Ravi Sharma
ravisharma@sampanmedia.com

Editor's Desk

TRAVEL WITH EASE

Agents who confirm 3 bookings per month will win a gift hamper from Budget Car Rental.
For queries contact **Khushbu Vora** at budget.in@aviareps.com

Avenir Research Marketing to represent Atua Enkop Africa in India

Atua Enkop Africa has teamed up with Avenir Research Marketing to promote its portfolio of luxury camps in the India market. Atua Enkop Africa has been catering to guests from the world over, including India, for the past 16 years and has provided them with everlasting memories of the quintessential African Safari experience.

“We believe that in Avenir Research Marketing, we have a partner who is passionate about not only marketing our product offering but is also committed to providing a great link between the Indian tour operator and us as hospitality providers. We see them as a great link in the B2B sector,” Atua Enkop Africa said in a statement.

It further added, “Avenir’s in-depth knowledge of the India market will be a great boost in providing additional awareness of our Kenya Safari Camps and assist us in establishing a stronger foothold. We look forward to working closely with all outbound tour operators, supported by Avenir Research Marketing, in creating safari stays of excellence in Kenya for your esteemed guests.”



St. Moritz appoints BRANDit to lead its sales and marketing portfolio in India

St. Moritz has appointed BRANDit as its integrated marketing agency in India. BRANDit will be responsible for defining and executing St. Moritz’s trade engagement, marketing and PR strategies while overseeing initiatives to promote the destination’s attractions and events.

The appointment sought a strong partner to spearhead a strategic approach that will elevate the positioning of St. Moritz in India and increase appreciation for its modern Alpine characteristics and valuable assets.

St. Moritz has always been a trailblazer, and this pioneering spirit is still a vital part of the resort’s nature. This is where the concept of winter tourism was born, the first polo match was played on a frozen lake, and the first electric light in Switzerland was turned on. Today, St. Moritz continues to provide a stage for artists and trendsetters.

With its countless boutiques, distinguished delicatessens and jewellery shops, and renowned furniture stores, the urban mountain village is also a veritable paradise for shopping. Contemporary and historical architecture both have their place here, alongside numerous museums, libraries and landmarks. Tradition and modernity mix in a way that is unique to St. Moritz.

St. Moritz is exceptionally well-connected and can be easily reached by car, train, bus or private plane. You can fly directly to the local airport from the international airports in Zurich, Geneva, Basel, Milan and Munich.



Desert Adventures signs partnership agreement with Global Destinations

In a planned initiative to provide stimulus to their current business and supplement their growth in the high-potential Indian outbound travel market, Desert Adventures the preferred DMC partner of tour operators and travel agents worldwide for UAE, Oman and Jordan recently signed a partnership agreement with Global Destinations. The collaboration will focus on building further awareness, expansion of their sales channels and boosting productivity for their travel products in India.

Desert Adventures Tourism brings with them a depth of local expertise, vast reach, strong relationships with key players of the global travel industry – including government and tourism authorities – and innovative B2B systems to facilitate the offering of a wide range of high-quality products and services as well as seamless operational compatibilities with partners.

Peter Payet, CEO, Desert Adventures Tourism commented

on the partnership, “We are excited to join hands with Global Destinations as our presence in the India market has now grown exponentially. India has always been one of our biggest source markets, having built and refined some of the best destination experiences that cater directly to the Indian visitor; however, the potential for growth is far greater. With Global Destinations we are able to maximise our reach across India, allowing travel trade companies of all sizes in all regional markets to access our ever-expanding portfolio of products and services.”

Pranav Kapadia, Founder, Global Destinations commented, “Our partnership is sure to be an enticing opportunity that leverages the strengths of both Desert Adventures with their robust product base and Global Destinations strong presence in India. With their clear intent to capitalise on the strong and ever-growing opportunity presented by the Indian market, we are pleased to collaborate with Desert Adventures to promote their products to our travel trade in India.”



वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्
ONE EARTH • ONE FAMILY • ONE FUTURE



Ministry of Tourism
Government of India

Incredible India

**19,500 LANGUAGES.
705+ TRIBES AND ETHNICITIES.
365 DAYS OF COLOURFUL
FESTIVALS.**

Indiatourism Mumbai

www.utsav.gov.in

The Biltmore Mayfair signs Think Strawberries as its representation partner in India and GCC

The Biltmore Mayfair is located in Grosvenor Square, among London's most affluent and fashionable neighbourhoods typically reminiscent of Britain's rich history and culture. In a league of its own, the ultra-luxury hotel combines elegant social spaces, luxuriously appointed guest rooms and suites, and exquisite VIP services which are personalised to leave a lasting impression on every guest.

Think Strawberries has been awarded the mandate to expand awareness for The Biltmore Mayfair and enhance its equity in India and GCC where it will be driving its in-market sales.

Commenting on the development, Vella Ramasawmy, General Manager, The Biltmore Mayfair said, "India and GCC luxury travel markets hold undeniable value for tourism businesses worldwide. Both are key markets for The Biltmore Mayfair and we are geared to establish a stronghold with the luxury traveller segments in the region. We are confident that our strategic partnership with Think Strawberries will enable us to achieve this objective by tapping the potential of their vast expertise of expanding the footprint of several global tourism brands."



Offering scenic views of the city, bespoke décor, and luxurious amenities from a choice of 250 contemporary rooms, 49 suites and 8 lavishly appointed signature suites; The Biltmore Mayfair embodies sophistication and elegance and warmly wraps you in a regal experience fit for royalty. The 5-star luxury hotel also offers the ultimate canvas to create the perfect gathering. From gala dinners to intimate weddings and occasions for 300+ guests, the hotel is well-equipped to customise a unique event that promises an unforgettable memory for every guest.

Yorker Holidays now in the holy city of Varanasi

Yorker Holidays, a DMC headquartered out of New Delhi, added another feather to its cap by establishing its presence in the holy city of Varanasi. Yorker UP DMC has been set up to exclusively promote and service the cultural and religious triangle of Ayodhya, Prayagraj and Varanasi located in the state of Uttar Pradesh to both the domestic and international markets.

Vineet Srivastava, Managing Director, Sanjeev Gosain, Associate Director, Jaideep Sharma- Head India Sales of Yorker Holidays were present at the opening. Divyam Chaurasia will head the Yorker UP DMC, Varanasi office.



Visit Finland and Finnair bring Santa Claus to Mumbai

Visit Finland and Finnair jointly hosted a Christmas get-together at The St. Regis Mumbai on Friday, December 16, 2022.

It was an exciting event as for the first time, Santa Claus came in person all the way from his hometown in Rovaniemi, Finland, to Mumbai. He arrived on Finnair,

his official airline, to spread some holiday cheer.

Santa Claus was on a world tour before Christmas. He reached Mumbai on December 15 and was busy spreading happiness for the next two days. Visit Finland and Finnair jointly organised all his engagements in Mumbai.



Come be a part of



International Yoga Festival

1st - 7th March, 2023

Venue: Ganga Resort (GMVN) & Yog Bharat Ghat, Rishikesh.

Activities

Proficient teaching of Yoga, Meditation, Pranayama, Wellness, Healing, and Arogya along with spectacular Ganga Aarti and cultural events on the banks of the Holy river Ganga.



Tour operators/travel trade operators can take benefits of the incentive scheme.
Incentive Upto 5 Lacs
per tour operator

For more details i.e. details of incentive, registration & submission of mandatory required documents, please visit our website: www.uttarakhandtourism.gov.in

Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board

Precautions: Always Wear Mask, Always Maintain Social Distancing & Regularly Sanitize Your Hands | [f /UttarakhandTourismOfficialPage](https://www.facebook.com/UttarakhandTourismOfficialPage) [t /UTDBOfficial](https://twitter.com/UTDBOfficial) [i /uttarakhand_tourismofficial](https://www.instagram.com/uttarakhand_tourismofficial)

TRAVEL INSURANCE

An indispensable element for hassle-free travel

With the blooming tourism sector, 2023 will witness the metamorphosis of travel assistance and insurance from a prerequisite to a trip essential. “Stay protected, so that you can be rest assured and do what you’re meant to do on a trip - Explore the world with peace of mind!”

Dev Karvat



realised that they have now grown highly product sensitive. They now seek more value 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 a huge revenue-generating variable and offered as a very lucrative travel ancillary service option by many of our prominent travel partners.

Well, 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.

To further kindle this growth, we are also reintroducing the ‘Travel Agent’s Engagement Programme,’ one of the biggest initiatives 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 enable them to upsell.

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.

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, and 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 advise every traveller first to understand and identify their travel requirements and then opt for a travel protection plan that checks all their boxes so that they can rest assured and do what they’re meant to do on a trip. Again, I say, ‘Explore the world with peace of mind!’

The travel trade witnessed a massive upsurge in travel volumes compared to 2021. Thanks to the enhanced mode of transportation and regulatory changes introduced by the Indian government to boost tourism. 2023 will only amplify this emergence with recent 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 per cent of Indians who travelled to Dubai, Thailand, and Maldives last year purchased Travel Insurance, which was not the case earlier. Not just that, on analysing customers’ recent buying patterns, we

About the Author: Dev Karvat is the Founder and CEO of Asego.

SEOUL EXPERIENCE 5 DAYS

INR 159000

Package Includes

Return Airfare | Hotel | Meals | Entrance Fee | Vehicle | Guide

Fixed Departure Every Monday

SEOUL & JEJU 8 DAYS

INR 199000

Package Includes

Return Airfare | Hotel | Meals | Entrance Fee | Vehicle | Guide | Domestic Air

KOREA DMC :  +91-9811900137  korea@dynastyholidays.com

Address : 212-A Crown Heights, Sector 10 Rohini Delhi - 110085

THE TWO-FOLD STORY OF MONO COUNTY AND MAMMOTH LAKES

In a press event that showcased fantastic destinations across Mono County, Michael Vanderhurst, Director, Sales and International Marketing, Mammoth Lakes Tourism and Jeff Simpson, Director, Economic Development, Mono County, took everyone through the wonders of the destination. They shared their two-fold summer and winter story of Mono County and Mammoth Lakes, which makes the destination suitable for an all-year-round visit. Introduced by Sheema Vohra, Managing Director, Sartha Global Marketing, Michael and Jeff truly encapsulated the audience with their presentation.

Vartik Sethi

Michael Vanderhurst, in his enthusiastic introduction, outlined the highlights of California - San Francisco, the Golden Gate Bridge, Los Angeles, Hollywood, Disneyland, Universal Studios, the beaches and surfing. He briefly explained the two stories - winter and summer, of the region. "We normally get anywhere between 8 to 12 m of snow. Three years ago, we had almost 19 m of snow, which gave us the most snow of any on the planet. The summer story is going to be built around outdoor adventure - road trips, hiking, fishing, horseback riding, bicycle riding, and mountain biking," shared Michael.

Mammoth Lakes is located on the Eastern side of California, about five hours from Las Vegas by car. One could drive directly through Death Valley National Park. Mammoth Lakes is 5 hours by car from Los Angeles too! Depending on the time of year in the summer, one could drive for over 4-6 hrs from San Francisco through Yosemite National Park. Summers in Mammoth Lakes are bliss. There's no crowd, no 'choking on air pollution', as Michael says! Visitors can enjoy waterfalls, go hiking or simply watch the mesmerising night sky full of stars.

Sharing the idea behind the destination's name, Michael shared, "It's called Mammoth Lakes because, inside the town boundaries, we have seven lakes that are all interconnected. So one lake has a waterfall that feeds the next lake, and so it's a network of lakes within the town. Spread over 50 km around the town of Mammoth Lakes, one can choose from over 100 lakes to explore."

At Mammoth Lakes, they've got a little over 4,000 rooms for nightly rental. The fares range from very economical, all the way up to a four-star luxury experience. In addition, there are about 65 restaurants that serve everything, from elegant to casual, something for everybody.

Mammoth Lakes is a great place to learn how to ski in winters - one of the biggest ski trails in the United States. This is the essence of the winter story. They do have some very mature markets on the international side, also hoping that Indian visitors really get the bug and start to enjoy winter in California. Exploring most parts of Mammoth Lakes comes at no cost, with travellers paying only for food and drinks. Besides, the festivals, such as the Mammoth Festival of Beers and Bluesapalooza, multiple wine festivals, and margarita festivals, attract visitors from far and wide.

Jeff Simpson was the next one to speak. "The other major destination in Mono County is Bodie State Park," said Simpson, "also the Official Gold Town of California, used to be one of the biggest houses in California." The place is also spooky, completely abandoned, and also called the Ghost Town. These buildings still stand, one can walk through and see how people left everything they had - beds, furniture, desks, and schoolhouses. The Church still has souls, it is said. Simpson shared that Yosemite

National Park used to have a mandatory reservation system. With increasing visitors, the systems have also changed significantly.

Mono County also differs in some ways from Mammoth Lakes, outlined Jeff. However, both destinations are buzzing all year round, with various activities to offer to the visitors. The ideal course is to begin with Mammoth Lakes, all the way to Yosemite National Park and then Mono County. Michael, in a humorous way, said that they don't have Indian restaurants yet, but they do have outlets that offer a varied culinary experience. "Of course, not as good as the food in Delhi," said Michael jokingly.

In the pre-pandemic years, Jeff shared that Indian visitors were one of the top five markets for inbound travel. Most of the Indian visitors tend to come from June through October. The destinations also have traditionally been a huge hotspot for the wedding business - both domestic and international. Along with weddings, the destinations are hotspots for business conferences, leisure and adventure travel.



WORLD Of WONDERS

Travel Pvt. Ltd.



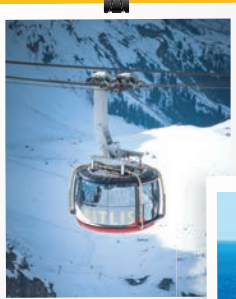
DESTINATION MANAGEMENT SPECIALISTS



Grand Wonders of Europe
14 Nights / 15 Days
EURO 2250*



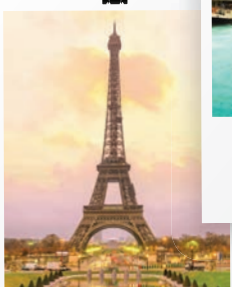
Exclusive Europe
10 Nights / 11Days
EURO 1590*



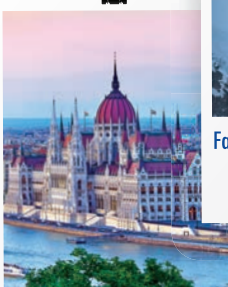
Fascinating Paris & Swiss
07 Nights / 08 Days
EURO 1245*



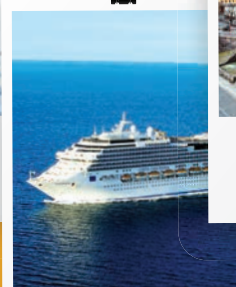
Scandinavian Delights
08 Nights / 09 Days
EURO 1995*



Best of Europe
12 Nights / 13 Days
EURO 1890*



Jewels of East Europe
09 Nights / 10 Days
EURO 1365*



Serene Europe with
Scenic Costa Cruise
12 Nights / 13 Days
EURO 1650*

LIMITED
PERIOD
OFFER

ALL INCLUSIVE B2B LAND
PACKAGES - 2023

INDIA'S NO 1 RELIABLE
DMC FOR EUROPE

CARRY ZERO MONEY
ON ALL TOURS*



TOURS AVAILABLE WITH AIRFARE AND INSURANCE!!



Scan QR code to
download itineraries

GRAND WONDERS OF EUROPE - 14N / 15D

Date	Ex - Mumbai	Ex - Delhi	Ex - Bangalore
05 th May	₹65,700 + €2250*	₹67,500 + €2250*	SOLD OUT
09 th June	₹67,500 + €2250*	₹65,700 + €2250*	₹66,300 + €2250*

BEST OF EUROPE - 12N / 13D

14 th May	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	₹60,900 + €1890*
21 st May	₹65,700 + €1890*	₹65,700 + €1890*	SOLD OUT
28 th May	₹65,700 + €1890*	₹65,700 + €1890*	₹62,700 + €1890*
11 th June	₹64,800 + €1890*	₹67,500 + €1890*	SOLD OUT
18 th June	SOLD OUT	₹66,300 + €1890*	SOLD OUT
25 th June	SOLD OUT	₹65,700 + €1890*	SOLD OUT

+91 93245 64304

+91 22 6109 0909

europa@wowholidays.in

www.wowholidays.in

Address: 101, Vishwamitra, S. V. Road, Khar West, Mumbai - 400052, India

*Price per person on Twin / Double Sharing Basis *Terms & Conditions Apply, GST & TCS as applicable, *Airfare included for select departures, *Excludes Visa and Personal expenses.

Teardrop Hotels fuse luxury and sustainability to offer a unique experience

In a conversation with Travel Trade Journal, Henry Fitch, CEO, Teardrop Hotel, engaged in a one-on-one interaction and shared a snapshot of the luxury boutique hotel collection. The collection of seven properties (and expanding) is one of the premier boutique hotel chains in Sri Lanka. Each property has an exquisite story behind its curation, restoration and functioning. Read on to know more...

Vartik Sethi

Teardrop Hotels has been in the limelight for advocating the category of luxury boutique hotels for several years. The chain is currently maintaining five prime properties along with adding two new ones. These seven properties span across the country and promise, as Henry says, a 'genuine Srilankan' experience. "We're a small boutique hotel collection with seven hotels around the island, where each location promises a tailor-made experience for its visitors. We're very much into genuine Srilankan hospitality and hold our co-values high," shared Henry Fitch.

Fitch lays great emphasis on the co-values of restoration and transformation and walks us through the deeply entrenched spirit of the chain to be as sustainable as they can, and give back to the community as much as they can. The chain has restored and maintained the architecture of the properties that come from centuries of grandeur and was put in place by stalwarts like Geoffrey Bawa. "The first co-value, 'restoration' is the most sustainable value of ours," says Fitch. They regularly engage with the local community and sponsor various projects that cater to uplifting the needy in the society.

They also support orphanages, where children aged between 18-24 years are given quality education and skill-based



▲ Henry Fitch

education to sustain a livelihood, as well as old-age homes. They have always opened their gardens to distribute the produce among the locals. During COVID, they applied for the coveted Travelife Sustainability Certification, a remarkable step towards ensuring and promoting sustainability in the travel and tourism sector. Fitch proudly shares that all seven properties are Travelife certified, with parameters on electricity usage, forms of power, increasing female workforce and

providing employment, ensuring child protection, putting guidelines in place, and so on. The audit is carried out every two years and the properties have done an excellent job in not only promoting but also practicing sustainability.

Sharing a snapshot of the properties, Fitch highlighted the features of each property. Wallawwa is a 200-year-old property, often cited for its fantastic food, clean, simple bedrooms and suites. Camellia Hills, launched in 2017, a newly built bungalow on a hilltop with five bedrooms, is one of the highest luxury hotels in Sri Lanka. Goatfell and other properties are famous for their traditional architecture and modern, lifestyle inclination. Nine Skies is famous for the activities offered and the adrenaline rush that follows. Visitors often go for ziplines or biking near Nine Skies. On the other hand, properties like Fort Bazaar, Lunuganga (literally meaning salt river), and Kumu Beach are known for their artistic yet luxurious offerings, including great food, great spas and beautiful aesthetics. Each property is carefully maintained and promises an interesting corner to the traveller's eye.

Answering the trending question on bouncing back from the pandemic, Fitch shared that the bounce back is, in fact, quite good. Bookings had started coming in immediately after the bans were lifted. The internal political turmoil did upset the industry but things have fallen into place, all thanks to the spirit of the country. The chain did redo their budgets and plans but is quite positive to meet the targets by December 2023, with three projects lined up in the kitty.

Their expansion strategy now puts greater focus on the India market and will soon become their prime market. Fitch shared that they have lined up new strategies for this market, including investing in digital marketing, visiting Indian cities and inviting folks to live the Srilankan life! "It's perfect," exclaimed Fitch.



Nine Skies, Ella

GoldenPass Express

Route: Interlaken – Montreux

Now travel onboard the new panoramic GoldenPass Express and take part in an exceptional 3h15mn journey (without change) from Interlaken to Montreux.

Seat Reservation
Charge from
CHF 25*
per person

Travel Class:

- **Prestige Class:** The new class of travel on the GoldenPass Express with 18 seats is characterized by very comfortable heated seats. The 18 seats in the Prestige Class can also be swivelled to enjoy the view to the fullest from the Bernese Alps to the Montreux riviera.
- **1st Class or 2nd Class Coach:** Enjoy your journey in either 1st or 2nd class

*Seat reservations are mandatory in the Prestige class & highly recommended in 1st & 2nd class. Swiss Travel Pass, Half-Fare travel cards & day tickets are valid; seat reservation not included.

*Rates are subject to change without prior notice & subject to availability.

*T&C apply.

In association with



RAIL EUROPE

Switzerland.
by train, bus and boat.



Ottila International Pvt. Ltd.

Mumbai (Registered Office & Corporate Headquarters) : 022 6720 5000

Ahmedabad: +91 93761 20982

Bengaluru: +91 80 4165 6324

Chennai: +91 44 4555 8582

Coimbatore: +91 99527 17750

Hyderabad: +91 40 4020 0301

Indore: +91 731 4911 374

Kochi: +91 75938 63903

Kolkata: +91 98301 19561

New Delhi: +91 11 4151 5885

Nasik: +91 253 231 0044

Pune: +91 20 4002 6960

For Enquiries & Bookings, please contact any of our offices.





It's time to CRUISE AHEAD!

For an industry that was full of optimism and excitement, expanding at an exponential pace, thanks to overwhelming demand for what it offered the customer. The COVID-19 pandemic was a stake right through its heart, leading to an all anchors down situation. Something the industry had never expected, nor experienced. A lot was at stake and the industry was under extreme pressure with some cruise lines closing down and almost 35 cruise liners being scrapped during the last three years. However, 2022 did come with a ray of hope. With the rise of 2023, all are now hoping for the sun to shine brighter. TTJ interacted with some of the leading cruise industry stakeholders as they shared their optimism for 2023.

Gurjit Singh Ahuja

A multi-billion-dollar industry vertical that has elements of transportation, hotels, fine dining, and entertainment all bundled together on one platform which the cruise industry manifests through its cruise liners. It is like juggling many hats simultaneously,

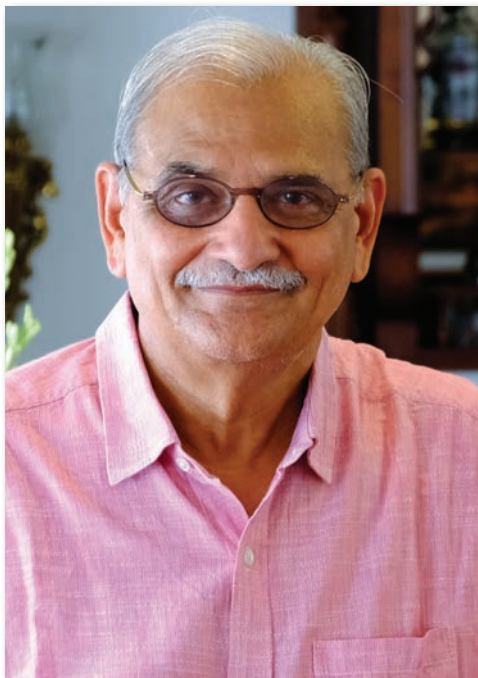
even though individually these segments revived and recouped much faster. The cruise industry was put under the lens and was among the last to receive the green flag.

Nevertheless, an industry known for managing all elements like clockwork to

provide a memorable experience was not one to be bogged down. It was time for some serious introspection, restructuring, and repositioning. The cruise lines are now All Ahoy! Closer-to-home River cruises are again happening and India's own homegrown cruise brand is talking about fleet expansion.



▲ Manoj Singh



▲ Raj Singh



▲ Oneel Verma

The year 2022 and learnings from the pandemic

Manoj Singh, Country Head-India, Norwegian Cruise Line: It's been very encouraging to see travel pick up after the pandemic. All our ships got back to sailing and we're back to doing what we do best - delivering exceptional holidays at sea! Through the pandemic, we didn't sit back to wait for the tide to change. Instead, we looked at the pause as an opportunity to reinvent our operations and reassess our offerings with an aim to enhance guest experiences. We were busy making our products better and safer, through our comprehensive Sail Safe health and safety protocols, our ongoing fleet enhancement program, and our global deployment planning for all 18 of our ships.

More specifically, in 2022, we launched our most anticipated ship to date, Norwegian Prima, the first of six vessels in our ground-breaking new Prima Class. Norwegian Prima notched up the single-best booking day and best initial booking week for any of our new-build sales in our 56-year history! Norwegian Prima also features multiple first-at-sea innovations, including a three-story transformational nightclub, 'The Prima Theatre and Club'. We are very excited to elevate the overall cruising experience with this new generation of ships.

Raj Singh, Founder Chairman-Group, Antara Luxury River Cruises: 2022 has been a good year for us as we resumed full operations after a hiatus of at least two years. It was very reassuring and motivating to see travellers show trust and enthusiasm for responsible post-pandemic travel. Our guests have been kinder, nicer, and enthusiastic, and serving them has been a great rush for our teams. Furthermore, we launched a new ship - Ganga Vilas, which has embarked on its maiden voyage to Varanasi to get onto the longest river cruise in the world, setting sail on a 51-day itinerary from Varanasi to Dibrugarh. I think what we learned from the pandemic was to be self-reliant and self-sustainable in our own microcosms.

Oneel Verma, Chief Operating Officer, Cordelia Cruises: 2022 was definitely a year of success and learnings, as we know we embarked on this journey amidst the pandemic and sailing through it all to become India's favourite cruise destination was definitely a benchmark that we have set for the Indian domestic cruising industry. What we have learned is that customer comes first and understanding the audience and aiming for their absolute satisfaction is a way to go in the hospitality industry. We are happy to have served more than 1 lakh guests since the time we established ourselves, and we are nothing but excited to see where this journey takes us.

Nishith Saxena, Founder and Director, Cruise Professionals:

The year 2022 has been a year of many uncertainties. While there was enough evidence that pointed towards a recovery in the cruise business, we took a stance of cautious optimism and waded through the choppy waters gradually. We were pleasantly surprised when the COVID-19-related restrictions were removed earlier than anticipated and the business recovery took place beyond our expectations. In the last 36 months, what we have learned is not to be extravagant and use resources wisely. We learned to work with a smaller but very focused team and take good care of our distribution in terms of service and efficiency of responses.

Dipti V. Adhia, Director-Discover the World: In May 2022, Carnival Cruise Line became the first major cruise line in the U.S. to achieve the milestone of restarting its entire fleet. Currently, we have 24 ships sailing from 14 different U.S. homeports and two homeports in Australia. 2022 was also the year of our 50th birthday, and we completed an incredible year of special celebrations on board our ships, and on land. The arrival of our newest Excel class ship, Carnival Celebration, and the vastly remodelled new Terminal F at Port Miami.

Carnival Luminosa joined our fleet, and she became the first Carnival ship to homeport in Brisbane. Carnival now has two ships sailing in Australia – Carnival Splendor from Sydney year-round and Carnival Luminosa seasonally from Brisbane.

Strategies employed to stay afloat in 2022 and generate business

Manoj Singh: Other than working extensively on upgrading our consumer offerings, we have also been working very closely with our trade partners who are an integral part of the NCL family to help accelerate our sales. As a part of our 'Partners First' philosophy, we launched two new platforms for trade partners — Book-A-BDM and Norwegian Central Asia. Book-A-BDM enables travel agents and tour operators to seamlessly communicate with NCL's regional Business Development Managers (BDMs). Norwegian Central Asia is a brand-new knowledge hub to help travel partners in Asia and India learn about and market NCL holidays by logging in to Norwegian Central, partners gain direct single log-in access to NCL's travel agent training platform, NCL University (NCLU). We also stayed connected and engaged with our valued partners through our dedicated Partners First Facebook Group.

Raj Singh: I think in 2022, we just put our heads down and worked



▲ Nishith Saxena



▲ Dipti Adhia

towards achieving small targets that took us steps closer to our eventual goal. Our teams have worked hard on being all the more self-reliant, working together and being responsible towards the lands we traverse. Through this year, our focus was to re-evaluate ourselves and our brand; and to re-oil our systems to provide our guests a smoother sail going forward.

Oneel Verma: Adding the local Indian touch and flavour to our product offering has worked to our advantage. Providing services and amenities that are in line with international standards but are also through and through Indian. At Cordelia Cruises, we have employed the theme of 'Glocal'- Global yet local, wherein we provide global-level infrastructures, services, and amenities coupled with the best entertainment, and delicious cuisine with the Indian culture lying at the core of it all. This is something that has really worked out for us.

Nishith Saxena: The simplest and most effective strategy which we follow is "Not to get distracted" and "Focus on what we deliver best". With the cruise business getting severely affected, it was highly probable for us to drift into other businesses but our belief in the cruise industry and the business potential inspired us to remain positive. Therefore, when the queries started to flow in, we achieved a near 100 per cent conversion and have many more happy customers who have returned from their 2022 cruises. Further, there are a whole bunch of new travel agencies which are added to our distribution – all because of the neutral way in which we pursue our dealings.

Dipti Adhia: Carnival Cruise Line's restart operations began in July 2021. We led the industry, becoming the first major cruise line to return its full fleet to operations in May 2022. Beyond returning to normal operations, we're in the midst of an exciting period of growth, with Carnival Celebration and Carnival Luminosa, which began guest operations in November, and three additional ships joining the fleet by 2024.

Exciting Itineraries for 2023

Manoj Singh: In August 2023, we are launching Norwegian Viva, the second Prima Class ship that will offer select round trip seven-day Greek Isles voyages from Athens (Piraeus), Greece, as well as 9-11-day open-jaw sailings between Haifa, Israel; Athens (Piraeus), Greece; and Istanbul, Turkey from May through November 2025. The voyages will call to highly rated ports such as Santorini, Mykonos, Rhodes, and Iraklion, Greece; offer 15-hour long port stays in Jerusalem (Ashdod), Israel, and call to Alexandria

and Port Said, Egypt, allowing plenty of time for guests to visit the pyramids. We sail to nearly 400 destinations worldwide, so cruisers have a wide range of itineraries to choose from as per their tastes.

Raj Singh: Well, 2023 has a lot lined up for all our guests. Not only would Ganga Vilas embark on its 51-day long cruise, but we would also be traversing the mighty Brahmaputra, a whole experience in itself. We have also got a presence coming up in the national parks of Odisha.

Oneel Verma: Our itineraries range from 2 nights, 3 nights, 4 nights, and 5 nights sailings to suit different schedules and requirements, and these are all available for the coming year of 2023. Looking at the demand and to cater to the needs of our guests, we have introduced new routes to Sri Lanka for our upcoming 2023 sailings as well.

Nishith Saxena: In 2023, the focus would continue to remain on itineraries where we

have an exciting deployment of ships. We have always maintained that the destination is the key and the onboard experience on any cruise ship should complement the journey to these exciting destinations. Considering the 6 premium and diverse cruise brands we represent in India, we're very excited with the line-up of over 10 ships in Alaska, 8 ships in Europe, 5 ships in Australia, and 7 ships specifically deployed in Coastal Norway. We would be making a strong pitch for Polar cruising covering both Antarctica and Arctic region as these are emerging destinations and there is a very strong demand for the same going forward.

New developments and innovations

Manoj Singh: To begin with, 2023 will mark the debut of Norwegian Viva -the second ship in our Prima Class. She will sail through breath-taking Mediterranean itineraries covering Lisbon, Athens, Rome and Venice and will mirror the upscale design and structure of her record-breaking sister ship Norwegian Prima. We will also continue our investment in travel trade in India next year, developing tools and resources that will help travel partners maximise their selling potential.

Raj Singh: Our ships are getting more and more design focused, thus enhancing our guests' onboard experience. We are constantly evolving our food and beverage to give our guests a more fun dining experience. Guests can now expect more hyper-local menus, more curated regional farm-to-fork meals, and twisted cocktails. 2023 gets a more reliant, more fun, and more active Antara Luxury River Cruises.

Oneel Verma: We are already looking at exploring major ports of the country and beyond. With great demand and customer satisfaction. The coming years definitely look great and we are planning to launch more ships in the coming years.

Dipti Adhia: At Carnival, one of our big themes this year is to "Choose Fun Together." Our new flagship, Carnival Celebration, introduced some great new youth programming options for families that have been very well received, and now we are implementing many of them fleet-wide. This includes a new Turtles Program for Carnival's youngest cruisers – under the age of two – and several new activities for Camp Ocean and our teen programs. Carnival Cruise line will also have three ships with roller coasters in 2023 – Mardi Gras sailing from Port Canaveral, Carnival Celebration sailing from Port of Miami, and Carnival Jubilee in December sailing from Galveston.



WELCOME THE
BRISK CHILL OF
MOUNTAINSIDES

FORTUNE
WINTER
Escapades

Book Direct With Us
and unlock benefits



Complimentary
buffet breakfast



Complimentary
dinner**



Complimentary
Wi-Fi



20% savings on
food & soft beverages



10% savings
on spa*

Opening Soon

Amritsar | Kalimpong | Hoshiarpur | Tiruppur | Aligarh | Siliguri

Unlock Exclusive Offers and Benefits

Book Direct on itshotels.com/fortunehotels or call 24x7 Toll Free 1800-102-2333, 1800-419-6444

#HillsOfFortune

*Subject to availability **At all day dining

Reshaping the cruise industry in Asia post COVID

As economies gradually recover from the post-ripple effect of the global pandemic, the cruise tourism industry is also making a comeback, especially in Asia, reinventing itself to adapt to a highly fluid landscape, giving life to new brands that are more resilient and innovative. As a new homegrown Asian brand launched in mid-2022, Resorts World Cruises aims to carve itself a place in the new cruise world order.

Naresh Rawal

We are truly living in unique times as companies adapt to find their foothold in the grand scheme of things. Though deeply impacted by the global pandemic, the cruise industry is also finding its place, emerging as a leading tourism sector with promising potential growth. The global pandemic had indeed put a temporary halt to the growth of the cruise industry. Still, on the flip side, it had enabled cruise lines to regroup and reset their operations at unprecedented speed to enhance their overall operations. Most importantly, it has created new opportunities, breathing life into new companies with promising potential, such as the launch of Resorts World Cruises in Asia.

Headquartered in Singapore, Resorts World Cruises is a new dynamic lifestyle cruise brand with a deep-rooted Asian heritage; and over 50 years of valuable affiliated experience in the global cruise, hospitality, and entertainment industry, which had emerged out of an opportunity to fill an important void in the Asian cruise sector. The inception of Resorts World Cruises is timely and necessary in reshaping and rebuilding the blocks of the cruising sector in a post-COVID era. As a new cruise line, Resorts World Cruises has taken affirmative steps and initiatives to grow its brand and boost the cruise industry across the different countries in Asia.

Resorts World Cruises started its deployment with the Genting Dream in Singapore in mid-June 2022. Soon enough, a month after, it added Kuala Lumpur (via Port Klang) in Malaysia as part of the only dual homeport in the region. By doing so, Resorts World Cruises paved the way in reshaping and reigniting the cruise sector at an accelerated rate, which boosted the



▲ Naresh Rawal

cruise industry's development across wider market segments. As a new and lean cruise line, Resorts World Cruises was able to focus with precision on what is needed to position itself as a leading cruise line in the region, despite being a new player.

Focussing on domestic markets is important but will not suffice if the cruise sector is to thrive in the region. As such, the Fly-Cruise segment is crucial to supporting the continued growth of the cruise tourism industry. For instance, in the region, India, Malaysia, and Indonesia remain the key source markets for the Fly-Cruise segment in Singapore, and the dual homeports are now widening the reach of the Fly-Cruise markets for more neighbouring countries. And this is where Resorts World Cruises continue to redefine and excel in tailoring its offerings to support the development of these markets.

Creating new opportunities

convenient to different segments is crucial in ensuring that cruising remains an attractive vacation option, especially with more travel options now available post-COVID. For example, Resorts World Cruises is the only OIC/SMIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation/ Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries) standard Halal-friendly cruise ship which offers Halal and authentic Jain Vegetarian certified cuisines in dedicated venues.

At Resorts World Cruises, we remain optimistic about the cruise industry in 2023 as we continue to adopt a holistic and realistic approach to our operations based on the evolving global situation. However, 2023 will still be a relatively transition year with a higher pace of growth. As travel options gradually increase and return to the norm, vacationers will have more options. As such, one of the biggest challenges for the cruise industry is enticing consumers to opt for cruising as a choice vacation. In addition, cruising in the region will also become more competitive in 2023 as new players enter the Southeast Asian market.

In terms of cruise itineraries, there will be more demand for additional new destinations. As such, the launch of Resorts World Cruises' Phuket destination through a series of special 5 Night cruises that started in November 2022 and the upcoming 3 Night cruises from May 2023 onwards will further fuel demand. In addition, noticeable trends that we foresee will continue in 2023 will include more young travellers joining us for a cruise, which includes millennials, couples, young families, groups of friends, and families and multi-generation families. We also hope to see greater growth from the ongoing potential segments, including the Fly-Cruise and the MICE sector.

About the Author: Naresh Rawal is the Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Resorts World Cruises (India)



The Most Advanced
E-LEARNING PLATFORM
for **TRAVEL AGENTS**

Learn everything you need to reach
the **Next Level** of Success in your **Business**

TBO Academy Offers Free Certification Courses for

Travel
Destinations



Business
Skills



Travel
Experiences



Cruise
Lines



85K+
Active Users

350+
Courses Live

151+
Webinars
Conducted

28K+
Agents Trained
Virtually

Learn More! Sell More! Earn More!

SIGN UP

Hospitality Industry

A Flashback and Fast Forward in Trends

Consumers today expect a hassle-free, efficient, and convenient experience, and with their ever-changing expectations, creating exceptional customer service is an area where all brands can innovate. So, the hospitality industry is well on its way to revolutionising the way it operates and caters to customers with its innovative approach.

KB Kachru

Many aspects of the hospitality industry have changed in the past decade and, more so in the last two years to accommodate new technology and shifting consumer behavior. The development of technology and internet access has also increased travellers' expectations, which are now as advanced as the new-age portable smartphone itself. Before deciding which hotel they want to stay at, customers can easily compare hotel prices, read reviews, access images, and conduct full research on all their alternatives. Moreover, consumers have higher expectations for the goods and services they wish to use—and are ready to pay the price for high-end safety and hygiene services during their stay.

There has been a huge shift from the pre-pandemic hospitality era and the developments taking place as the world is shifting back to normalcy. The social distancing norms paved the way for a more digitised way of carrying out operations in the hospitality industry. Tracking the developments in the industry so far, it will not be wrong to predict that the upcoming change in trends will focus more on resonating with the expectations of the new-age traveller. A few decades from now, the hospitality sector will be an amalgamation of improved technology, a globalised scale of business, and newer and optimum marketing strategies. Therefore, it's important to remember that key trends like sustainability and personalised experiences backed with technological advancement will play an even more important role in the times to come.

With eco-tourism garnering a huge scale of attention, travellers are becoming more cognizant of the natural environment around them, giving rise to trends that are here to stay for longer



▲ KB Kachru

than we anticipate.

SUSTAINABILITY

The preservation of the natural and cultural features that draw tourists to a location is becoming essential to the success of hospitality enterprises. Travellers, diners, hotel guests, and retailers today give sustainability a lot of thought. They want to be sure that they use ethical business practices in terms of the environment, society, and culture. This trend is likely to be amplified in the future. Practices like minimised usage of plastic, and ensuring a livelihood for the local artists by sourcing their craft into the hotel interior, including features like eco-bubbles, and organic harvest from the local farms, to name a few, will carve out a pathway for the same.

PET-FRIENDLY ACCOMMODATION

Another simmering trend that the pandemic brought to a boil appears to be the increase in pet-related travel facilities.

Many hotels are evolving to provide safe and the most comfortable pet-friendly accommodations within their property. With the trend initially catching pay in the form of making pet snacks, beds, bowls, and toys available, holidaying with pets is a trend that has huge growth potential in the years to come.

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT

With AI ruling the globe, an increased inclination toward technology has been on the priority list of hotels. Technological advancements, including contactless payments, chatbots, mobile check-ins, and virtual hotel tours have simplified pricing, payment processing, and feedback mechanisms. So far, technology has helped in cost-cutting, improving overall efficiency, and a better customer experience in the hotel industry but in the coming years, this might see a tremendous rise. In the present times, hotels adopting the use of robots for welcoming guests and providing basic services like cleaning might not be a common sight, but this will certainly be a norm in the future.

EXPENSE OPTIMISATION

Utilities are indisputably an expensive endeavor in the hospitality space. Higher spending and unsustainable practices deplete profit margins and jeopardise the property's financial health and long-term viability. With technological implementations such as smart equipment and smart sensors, the hospitality industry is quickly streamlining operations, optimising costs through real-time tracking, and timely interventions in case of any challenges. From machines to food trays, the use of innovative technology can assist in managing assets and inventories in real-time, all of which improve the visitor experience.

About the Author: KB Kachru is the Chairman Emeritus and Principal Advisor - South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group

An ode to the grandeur of Gujarat



ITC NARMADA

AHMEDABAD

A LUXURY COLLECTION HOTEL



GUJARAT'S FIRST **LEED® PLATINUM-CERTIFIED*** HOTEL



KNOW MORE

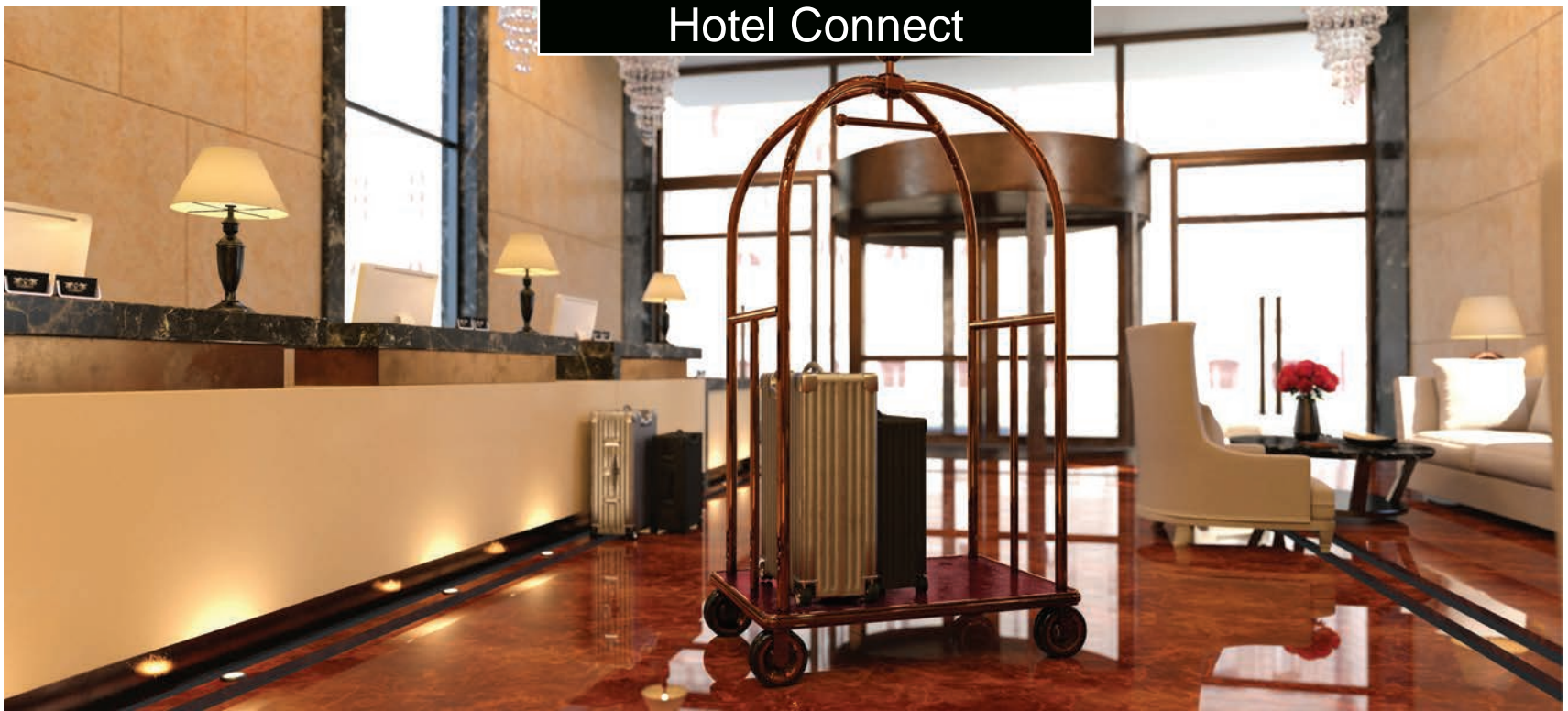
291 ROOMS & SUITES | 5 SIGNATURE FOOD & BEVERAGE OUTLETS
VERSATILE BANQUETING & MEETING SPACES | SPA, FITNESS CENTRE & SALON

1800-419-6444 | 079-6966 4000 | reservations@itchotels.in | www.itchotels.com
JUDGES BUNGALOW RD., VASTRAPUR, AHMEDABAD, GUJARAT - 380015

CLUB  ITC



*LEED® (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) Platinum certified by U.S. Green Building Council.



A SIGNIFICANT UPTICK FOR THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN 2022

'Ready for a promising 2023'

For the hospitality industry, 2023 is more than simply watching customer volumes increase and occupancy rates pick up as visitors return to cities, tourist spots, and beaches. In 2022, the industry faced pandemic-related challenges and heightened responsibility to ensure the safety of travellers and workers. Nevertheless, travel's green shoots appeared, along with opportunities to encourage growth, which flows well into 2023. TTJ interacted with some hospitality experts to know how their properties fared in 2022 and their expectations in 2023. Here's a look...

Prashant Nayak



Abinash Manghani

Chief Executive Officer, WelcomHeritage Hotels

The year 2022:

Achieving double-digit growth this year, we can safely say that the Hospitality industry has meaningfully rebounded and surpassed pre-pandemic numbers. With our mindfully curated

collection of boutique hotels, WelcomHeritage is firmly committed to showcasing the myriad of authentic cultural and nature-based experiences, indigenous and local to the region we are in, with the best Indian hospitality on offer.

We used the pandemic years to accelerate ideas, projects, and initiatives, fast-tracking our goals towards providing in-class guest convenience and services as well as strengthening our trade collaborations. Some examples are technology integration for ease of guests and trade bookings, embedding new systems to generate guests' feedback, and integrating them with operations for smooth action. We're making significant strides toward energy efficiency; we will soon announce a first-of-its-kind initiative. We've adopted responsible tourism as one of our primary objectives for the coming years. With large-scale and corporate events still under much caution, the Leisure segment was our mainstay in 2022.

Inspiring trends seen and to look forward to: It is clear now that the lockdown fatigue seems to have turned into a new love for travelling within the country. People are discovering new interests in exploring culture, heritage, and nature and enriching possibilities of travel experiences. The growth of nature and wildlife segments was the key growth driver for the last two years, along with

the growth of domestic travel, which is a welcome sign. Similarly, drivable holidays, workcations, staycations, exploring the unexplored, and short-haul travel were the trends that saw the limelight in the last year. Adventure and ‘healing holidays’ are also taking centre stage. MICE and destination weddings are making a comeback. Strong domestic demand and economic growth, competitive price offerings, infrastructure development, and the emergence of new destinations and niche tourism products will continue to drive the industry’s growth in the coming year.

Preparedness and expectations for 2023: With the beginning of Inbound tourism, Heritage Tourism is bound to get a fillip. The Indian Tourism and Hospitality industry will mature and metamorphose in a balanced manner. Tourism needs both International and Domestic tourism as against a skew towards Inbound in key markets earlier.

Currently, the outlook is that Inbound Tourism will begin

with a moderate flow by January 2023 onwards. Inbound influx is also subject to airline capacity and visas, which are now being restored! Domestic tourism remains the key to growth in the medium term. Keeping in mind the strong domestic market, we’re looking at scaling our portfolio of hotels to weave in experiential and unique destinations. Towards this, we plan to continue the brand’s expansion within the country with four planned openings in 2023, including WelcomHeritage Azora by Ayatana, Fort Kochi, WelcomHeritage Ayatana, Ooty, WelcomHeritage Santa Roza, Kasauli, and WelcomHeritage Akashganga Heritage Hills Resort and Spa, Dungarpur. With these additions, the WelcomHeritage collection will comprise 46 boutique hotels with 1300+ keys across 40 impressive Indian destinations. While the focus on domestic travellers remains undeterred, our prime revenue generator pre-COVID, the inbound market, already shows a promising comeback in 2023!



Souvagya Mohapatra

Managing Director, Atmosphere Hotels and Resorts, India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka

The year 2022:

The period after COVID-19 in 2022 was fairly good for us regarding business in our Maldives properties. Most of our resorts in The Maldives experienced high occupancy with leisure segment clientele from

tourism as a major segment to boost the economy. The initiatives that the local tourism boards and the government take to promote a particular destination are encouraging. The business fraternity is looking into investing in tourism and hospitality ventures because of the government’s lucrative offers and business-friendly tourism policy. Infrastructure creation, such as air connectivity, good roads, and the upgradation of monuments and heritage sites, will play a key role in developing a particular destination. Marketing and awareness must also be prioritised so that a particular destination gets its much-needed exposure. Travel marts, road shows, FAM tours, etc., must be undertaken frequently by the tourism stakeholders for a win-win situation.

all over the world. It is encouraging to notice that the confidence and enthusiasm amongst the travellers for their journey has begun. COVID-19 has taught us a new way of guest services, mainly on the digital front. This is the quickest way to serve the guests and take care of detailing and no errors. Innovativeness, value-added services, anticipating guest needs, and exceeding guests’ expectations are some of the key features that we adopt. Our Learning and Development team constantly strive to impart regular training on this. Our Business Development Team back in India and Southeast Asia has already identified several upcoming projects, and soon we shall announce our presence in these regions.

Inspiring trends seen and to look forward to: It is heartening to notice that the entire world has recognised

Preparedness and expectations for 2023: The year 2023 is going to be an important year for us as we are going to announce our presence in South East Asia, including India. Atmosphere Hotels and Resorts with its three sub-brands e.g., OZEN, By Atmosphere, and OBLU are all set to make their mark in South East Asia in a big way. Recently during ILTM France, we announced our upcoming property at Kolkata – “OZEN Mansion Kolkata.” Close to 300 keys and approximately one lakh square feet of banqueting space will make this luxury 5-star deluxe property one of the best in Kolkata and eastern India. Important tourism destinations and cities across India such as Jaipur, Goa, Kausali, Nagpur, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, etc. will soon have the presence of Atmosphere Hotels and Resorts.





SP Jain

Chairman and Managing Director, Pride Hotels

The year 2022: The Pride Hotels Group has serviced more than 53 global nationality citizens since 1987 and still counting. We do not compromise on quality, which is why we have witnessed

more than 1.3 million repeat guests. We have a presence in around 51 great locations with 5,075 rooms, 102 restaurants, 134 banquets, lawns, and conference halls. The ADR and occupancy have gone from 65 to 80 per cent for the current season, 2022-2023. We expect to clock a turnover of ₹250 crores this fiscal year. Pride Hotels Group is a homegrown brand that resonates with true Indian hospitality. We have seen an uptick in tourism arrivals from family groups, senior citizens, and women professionals. To exclusively cater to this growing demand of solo women travellers, Pride Group of Hotels has introduced various women-centric facilities at its properties nationally.

Inspiring trends seen and to look forward to: Contactless experiences have become more popular in 2022 as businesses look to reduce the

spread of germs and ensure a safe environment for both customers and employees. Social media and digital marketing will also remain a key trend in 2023. Hotels and resorts try to leverage the power of online platforms to reach new guests and build loyalty. This includes leveraging influencers, creating content to engage guests, and using targeted ads to reach the right audiences which have impressed us in 2022 and will also be a trend in 2023. Smart hotel technologies such as Internet of Things (IoT) devices, facial recognition, and contactless payment systems will continue to gain ground in 2023. These solutions can help hotels reduce costs, automate processes, and improve the overall guest experience.

Preparedness and expectations for 2023: The hospitality industry is continuing to evolve and adapt to new realities in order to make the most of trends. Analytics and understanding of guest data will be prioritised to drive more direct and profitable business. ADR growth is still strong, while domestic travel has been strong. Work-from-anywhere and hybrid working options have altered business travel and increased leisure travellers. The hospitality industry will need to meet travellers' needs and exceed expectations to keep demand growing. Furthermore, our Group looks to expand its domestic presence by opening new properties in key locations. This growth helps us to capture a larger share of the domestic market. Additionally, we will be investing in customer service to provide an exceptional experience to our guests.



Akash Garg

CMD, Asia Resorts, (Moksha Himalaya Spa Resort and Timbertrail)

The year 2022: The year had been positive for the hospitality sector. With a much-improved pandemic situation, domestic demand saw overwhelming growth. The wellness

segment has been witnessing an increase in demand, and properties like ours, which are situated in beautiful natural landscapes, benefitted from the trend. Wellness is a significant contributor to our overall revenues, and its contribution has further grown post-pandemic.

Inspiring trends seen and to look forward to: The demand for domestic tourism indeed grew

significantly in 2022. The new year is going to be the same. In the absence of strong inbound demand, hospitality players across the country are going to target the domestic tourism market in 2023. Wellness is a segment that we expect to gain further popularity in the New Year. At Moksha, our spa, located at an altitude of 1500 meters (5000 feet), provides an abundance of attractions for wellness tourists. Demand for our preventative and corrective wellness programs has been expanding consistently, and we expect 2023 to be no different.

Preparedness and expectations for 2023: We are extremely excited about our prospects in 2023. Firstly, as a property located in the Himalayan range and offers varied spa experiences, we expect the demand to grow manifolds for us in the New Year. Our proximity to New Delhi and Chandigarh makes us an ideal destination for weekend travel too. Wedding is another segment that will generate a lot of interest and demand for us in 2023.



Asif Fazlani
Managing Director, Fazlani Natures Nest

The year 2022:

We learned during the pandemic that the new world we operate in requires a different approach, one that considers greater uncertainty.

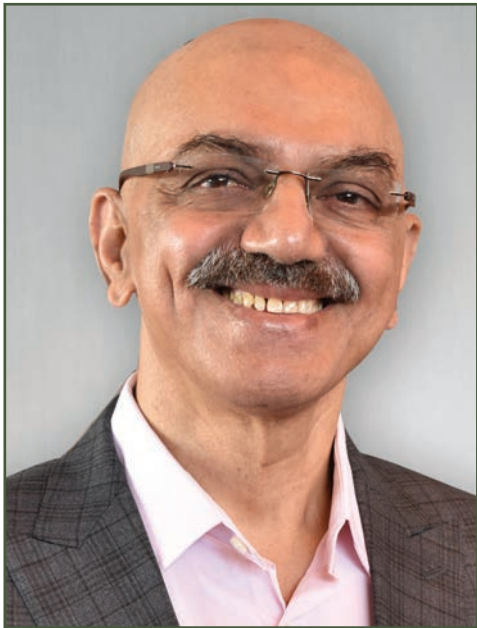
An approach that gives the confidence to

enjoy yourself but not at the cost of your health. The year 2022 has been a very rewarding one for Fazlani Natures Nest. We did good occupancy throughout the year and were sold out during all weekends and long holidays. Located in the vicinity of Lonavala and close to the economically important cities of Pune and Mumbai, we noticed a strong demand from corporate clients. The demand from the leisure segment was also overwhelming, considering our property gives complete exposure to a natural haven.

Inspiring trends seen and to look forward to: Wellness

was a strong reason for people to travel in 2022. The balance of mind and body has never been so focused like this before. "Health is Wealth" is now people's mantra. Guests appreciated our Farm-to-Fork approach. We ensure that the freshest, healthiest, and balanced meals are offered to the guest's table, as wellness cuisine plays a significant role in assisting guests in achieving their intended goals. Wellness tourism will further gain popularity in the New Year. Treatments like Ayurveda and Naturopathy will be sought after in 2023. Travellers are eager to spend their wellness holidays at resorts with beautiful natural settings like ours. Connecting with nature reduces stress and calms your nerves; hence, nature walks will be more popular in 2023.

Preparedness and expectations for 2023: One of the biggest challenges in presenting health and self-care trends is structuring in a clear and workable way, and our simple natural therapies like walking barefoot on green grass, sitting under the shade of trees, touching horses, bird therapies, fishing, etc., increase the level of patience and calmness. We are ready to welcome domestic and international tourists in 2023. The demand from domestic markets has been buoyant in 2022. If the pandemic situation remains under control in the New Year, I expect our resort to gain popularity in international markets like Europe and the Middle East in 2023.



Raooof Dhanani
Managing Director, Sayaji Hotels

The year 2022:

As we bid an energetic farewell to an eventful year, we revere 2022 for kick-starting the revival of the tourism industry. The demand for hotel rooms, banquets, and restaurants has exceeded pre-pandemic

standards. In 2022, we were and still are implementing cost control, adopting technology and automation, focusing on staff training, floating special offers, exhibiting at trade shows, creating hotel audio tours, and striving to maintain our quality of hospitality.

Preparedness and expectations for 2023: This year looks brighter for the tourism industry. As demand continues to increase, the tourism industry is experiencing phenomenal growth. We plan to expand our footprints nationally, with properties opening soon in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Rajasthan, to mention a few. We expect the government to support the tourism sector by developing high-quality transportation systems and immense airports and providing tax incentives.



2022 was reimagining hospitality, 2023 about getting back on track

A new dawn of post-COVID tourism is imminent, and the hospitality sector is upping its game to stay afloat. Staycations, rejuvenation, responsible dining, safety, and hygiene are the dominating trends in the hospitality industry. Those hotels that took this time to innovate were on the right track as higher consumer expectations have pushed the industry forward. In this piece, a few pan-India hospitality professionals reflect on the past year as they look forward to exciting developments in the new year.

Prashant Nayak/Swaati Chaudhury



Sanjeeb K Pattnaik

AVP - Operations, Mayfair Lagoon

Looking back: The pandemic has taught us to survive and tide over the crisis. It allowed us to manage our operations by optimising the workforce through multi-tasking and process-based operations. There has been a complete transformation to a technology-oriented approach in our regular work.

Strategies for growth and survival: Consolidating on digital marketing platforms, public relations, guest management, and close monitoring of our reputation management through various Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools are some of the strategies developed that made us stay afloat in trying times. We have stressed a lot about food and beverage, curated new menus, encouraged food promotions, and added specialty food outlets.

Spurred on by a mission- Stay with us- Stay with Nature, all our luxury properties are tourist destinations in itself that boast of lush greenery, water bodies, jogging tracks, a collection of artworks, vintage cars, and rejuvenating spa that cast a magical spell to lure domestic and inbound travellers. Our hospitality group has catered to large MICE and social gatherings and can pull on multiple indoor and outdoor venues. With revenge tourism becoming a trend, leisure tourist traffic has contributed a big revenue margin.

We have made an effort to make the most of revenge tourism and automation in the hospitality business to streamline our operations. We have capitalised the maximum share in MICE, weddings, and free individual travellers. Armed with a decade of experience in the hospitality sector and a Pan-India presence, we are always open to new trends. We have come up with flying colours, thus setting an example for other hospitality players to emulate.

Moving ahead with fresh New Year perspectives: Our target is to achieve a 5 to 7 per cent increase in average room rate with 90 per cent occupancy and a full guest satisfaction index. Our new-age mantra would be to provide personalised service with new products and the best guest experience.



Samir Ghose

General Manager, Welcomhotel by ITC Hotels, Bhubaneswar

Looking Back: The business models of the hospitality industry have undergone a sea change with the decline of the first wave of the pandemic. Determined to assuring the health and safety of their valued guests and employees, ITC Hotels have also rolled out a brand-new initiative-

"WeAssure"- that comprises a holistic programme addressing all facets of hotel operations. This includes reformed hygiene and sanitation protocols at the receiving stores of the hotel, back offices, and laundries to upgraded sanitation measures in public areas and utilities, including guest luggage, elevators, and room service.

At Welcomhotel, we had confidently pushed for new menus and delivery options for those guests searching for quality food within the confines of their homes. With changing environment, diners

have highly preferred our takeaway menus serving the best from the kitchens of ITC Hotels. The specially curated menus are crafted with a lot of care and utmost hygiene and use fresh seasonal and local ingredients to provide out-of-the-box experiences to gourmet lovers.

Strategies for growth, survival, and enticing domestic tourists: Travel had halted owing to the pandemic. With the vaccination drive, travel opened up once again. The emerging trends for today's traveller in the post-pandemic world are preferences for safe staycations, destinations that are at driving distance, tranquil locations, pod travel, properties that adhere to safety protocols, regenerative getaways, and love for curated local experiences in the vertical of cuisine, décor, art, and culture.

Domestic travellers are vying for safe city staycations. City residents are taking a short break and checking into hotels that meet the highest safety and hygiene standards. ITC Hotels' staycations are highly popular, and the demand for safe staycations has increased. Our property has gained from domestic MICE movement in the city and the region. The major sectors are pharma, cement, agriculture, and weddings, being the most significant segment we could cash

on. Weddings form the most vital part of the MICE segment that has greatly contributed to the overall business revenue. The concept of sustainability is catching on in post-pandemic times, and travellers are making choices based on personalisation and sustainable solutions. Corporate travel surged along with the leisure business.

The key trends, including safety, staycation, rejuvenation, and connecting to locals, will drive the growth of the hospitality sector in the coming times. "Growing local" and "buying local" are the two

vital concepts that are the in-thing during these unprecedented times.

Moving ahead with fresh New Year perspectives: The onset of the wedding season and rise in leisure and corporate travel will offer an impetus to occupancy and average room rates. Our primary emphasis includes hygiene, health, and safety. Besides, the wellness dining market will surely surge, and responsible dining will become a distinctive feature of the food and beverage industry.



Rohit Arora

Area General Manager, The Park, New Delhi

Looking back: The year 2022 brought a lot of hope to our industry. After almost two years of COVID impact, the year, especially from April 2022, greatly relieved the Hospitality segment. We went back to comparing our numbers from the pre-COVID time of 2019 as the 2021-22 number made no relevance to the business

volumes that hotels had started to gain. It was back to the business year for the hotel, with an average increase in business of rooms ranging from 10 to 20 per cent from 2019. There has been a growth in domestic leisure travel this year, and people have wanted to cover India itself like never before.

On the other hand, corporate travel has been saving all the travel during the pandemic, outflowing into 2022, and will continue in 2023. The Government of India's initiatives and efforts also paid off, with many events being organised on a very large scale. The year has taught hotels not just to keep their dependence on international travel, which filled most of the valley dates and winter months. The confidence to stay afloat and do better even with the domestic business, including leisure and corporate, has increased.

Strategies for growth and survival: 2020-2021 brought in many new concepts in the hotel industry, Bleisure travel, topmost hygiene, staycations, and unique experiences. We brought these concepts into 2022 along with a better understanding of the evolving market and guests' requirements. We introduced packages online for all major events in the city. We did many online promotions targeting the domestic market, as 90 per cent of the business came from there. Making the hotel offers more attractive for families, and young business travellers remained our focus.

Being a city centre hotel, we benefit from a very healthy business mix. We saw an upbeat movement in the corporate MICE segment with regular residential conferences at the hotel. Weddings have also been a big hit, with our beautiful poolside venues and upgraded banquet space on offer.

Moving ahead with fresh New Year perspectives: Well, 2023 brings with it even more hope and confidence that we will be able to get over the COVID losses our industry has faced. These losses were not only monetary but also in terms of good talent. We hope that in 2023 we can gain back in both aspects. This year is also very powerful for India, as we have the G20 Presidency. The Government has planned over 250 meetings across India and is promoting some of the most off-beat locations. We are prepared to ride on the business volume we will see in 2023. Still keeping in mind sustainability, hygiene, and digitalisation being our centre, we keep our hands strong on personalisation and unique guest experiences.



Prasad Rao

Director, Operations, Sayaji Hotel Indore

Looking back: The year 2022 has emerged as one of the best years in the annals of the hospitality industry. The period witnessed a growth in the flow of domestic tourists, or growth may have doubled compared to pre-COVID times. Overall, it was a great period for all hospitality segments, including food

and beverage, banquets, MICE, outdoor catering, and rooms. The hospitality sector has evolved and would be better off in the current year.

Strategies for growth, survival, and enticing domestic tourists: Being flexible, our game is into making the most of social media and engaging in effectively controlling traffic in terms of bookings, selecting customised market demand, and keeping up-to-date with technology. In the past year, we have capitalised the most in MICE and Wedding segments since people were cooped up in their homes during the

pandemic and celebrations were put on hold. Once the pandemic was over, people were back in their celebrations, and adding to these; weddings have churned out business in a big way. There has been an uptick in MICE in the post-COVID era since several pharma companies, information technology groups, and automobile players are hosting their annual conclaves, AGMs that emerged as a boon for the hospitality sector.

Business travel, leisure travel, and remote work cultures are here to stay. This has proved to be a blessing in disguise for the hospitality industry, and travel will sustain itself in the long run. Another concept that has become a hit is staycation, which gained momentum last year. The concept of staycation and quick getaways will be trending this year. Technology has forayed into our regular life, and if this trend goes on, hotels with world-class technology will have a boom period.

Moving ahead with fresh New Year perspectives: We will witness a surge in corporate and leisure travel along with the concept of staycation in the New Year. With India gaining the G20 presidency, many conclaves will be held across the country, and tourism and hospitality will be in focus. The demand for hotel rooms, banquets, and restaurants has crossed the pre-pandemic figures, and the current year looks more promising regarding demand and business.



Mahema Bhutia
Head of Sales and Marketing, Aramness Gir

Looking back: The year has definitely been very busy and exciting as Aramness turned one year old. After delivering a meaningful year of operations, we celebrate India's diversity, wildlife, and culture through perfectly crafted moments and experiential luxury at our safari lodge, Aramness.

Strategies for growth

and survival: As the brand is at its nascent stage and so is the destination (Gir), which has yet to be explored by domestic as well as international travellers, we have received an abundant amount of engagements for our distinctive offerings like the walk with the Maldhari tribe, sightseeing the rare Asiatic lions and just for the stay experience amidst the jungle. Travellers' high demand on seeking off-beat experiences is working great in our favour because of our product, and we foresee this trend going upward in 2023 as well.

Moving ahead with fresh New Year perspectives: Well, more inbound business for us as we look at business opportunities with our destination management partners, who now can recommend a new luxury product to their exclusive itineraries.



Shiv Bose
General Manager, DoubleTree by Hilton Goa - Panaji

Looking back: The year can certainly be eclectic due to unprecedented variations. From the recovery of the pandemic scourge to the uncanny world events that slowed tourism to the resurgence of domestic travel to replicate the void left by inbound. This year has truly been a roller coaster ride of the highest magnitude.

per cent higher than in past years.

Apart from offers, we have greatly worked on the resort experience to ensure travellers have a story they can recall. Our recreational activities have been greatly enhanced. We now have a toy train experience, an open aquarium, a pet house, and an outdoor sports arena. This reincarnation has greatly helped us stay ahead of the curve and ensure market dominance.

The resurgence of MICE has been a telling story and has greatly benefitted us to outperform our goals this year. With certain aberrations due to world developments that may see a dip in numbers next year, this segment is largely buoyant and resurfaces faster than any other segment. As a resort, we have invested in a new banquet hall and have grossly improved our service offerings to benefit from this segment.

Moving ahead with fresh New Year perspectives: We are optimistically cautious as we enter the New Year. While we have taken over a 20 per cent increase in budget estimations from the current year's performance, we remain hopeful that detractors will be less and few. Apart from the traditional revenue generators like rooms and dining, we are developing other revenue streams like spa, transportation, and outdoor catering to benefit overall revenue aggregation.

The silver lining in the clouds has been the business recovery story across all verticals and the improved spending towards luxury by domestic tourists. MICE has picked up the pace and is well supported by social events to drive volumes in the resort. We are doing the highest revenue ever recorded since the resort's inception.

Strategies for growth and survival: We have floated numerous offers targeted at the retail market, including value-based inclusions like airport transfers, minibar, and hi-tea experience. We have incorporated dynamic pricing discounts for corporate and social events that have improved our average rates this year and are 20



Neeraj Maharshi
General Manager, DoubleTree by Hilton Jaipur Amer

Looking back: 2022 has been a blessing as the hotel revenue witnessed a steady recovery with numbers similar to pre-COVID days in 2019. The second half of the year brought the much-need push for hospitality, and for us, it was all about hosting multiple group events, staycations, and weddings during the year-end.

Strategies for growth and survival: Personalisation was definitely the reason behind the various satisfied customers at our hotel. Our events team was quick enough to curate a personalised itinerary of places to visit in Jaipur, which delighted the guests, backed by the robust hospitality experience offered at our hotel.

Moving ahead with fresh New Year perspectives: The domestic destination wedding trend impressed us in 2022, with Jaipur topping the charts most often. Unplanned weekend getaways and cultural visits are some of the trends to gain momentum in 2023. Since the hotel's inception, we have abided by the 'hospitality from the heart' concept and will continue to do so for years to come. For 2023, we aim to enhance the holistic travel experience at our hotel, along with a constant focus on weddings, MICE, and personalised events.



Vikas Mittal

Director of Sales, Courtyard by Marriott Pune Chakan

Looking back: The Indian hospitality sector recovered steadily in FY22 after a challenging FY21, thanks to effective vaccination efforts and decreased COVID cases. Despite the Omicron wave, the industry witnessed significant growth in FY22 due to leisure and business travel demand. Also, higher

wedding reservations and a major increase in MICE have bolstered this growth.

Strategies for growth and survival: As the industry comes roaring back, the evolutions the industry has made will continue in many ways, especially as travellers are looking for reassurance that their experience will be safe and comfortable. The marketing that takes advantage of these learned lessons will be set up for success. Some key strategies have been impossible to ignore, and we have implemented them at our property, like the safety of

our guests, personalised experiences for our guests', contactless payment options, flexible booking, and creating relatable, engaging, and creative content across channels to capture our audience and making the hotel a staycation destination.

Moving ahead with fresh New Year perspectives: It is acceptable to presume that we have passed through the most difficult phase. Nobody can deny how difficult it was in every way, including occupancy, daily average pricing, and income per available room.

We want to implement a few strategies in the new year, and one of them is monitoring demand for better marketing. Monitoring demand for improved marketing is an unquestionably efficient business strategy for the hospitality industry. Hotels must begin tracking traveller behaviour and preferences. As we all know, travel behaviour is evolving, and hotel marketers must capitalise on every new demand. Another strategy is to conduct a market positioning analysis. Hotels must assess their property and determine where it stands in the market. Here is when positioning analysis comes into play. It should also be in line with the demand of the target market. In terms of both traveller demand and hotel operations, the following year will undoubtedly be different. We are developing our business plan and roadmap for a successful 2023.



Vishal Lonkar

General Manager, Business Development, Renest Hotels and Resorts

Looking back: After being trapped indoors for almost two years and surrounded by uncertainties, 2022 has been about revenge travel, where people were looking for ways to relax and unwind. People had a stronger desire to be outside than ever; thus, demand for destinations close to nature and spiritual

destinations rose dramatically. Renest Hotels and Resorts, present in different locations, namely Haridwar, Shirdi, Tirupati, Jaipur, Gandhidham, and Manali, saw tremendous growth in almost all locations. As for the occupancies and ARR's, the industry was able to touch the pre-pandemic levels, and considering the wedding and the festive season, the business undeniably did exceedingly well.

Strategies for growth and survival: 2022 had been a year of

domestic tourism, and people were constantly looking for ways to rejoice and relax simultaneously. It became imperative for the industry to capture the domestic and inbound market, and our strategies included capturing the potential guests' at various touch points. OOH advertising was an important part of our strategy. We relied heavily on digital media to reach our target audience. We even organise various regional and international food festivals from time to time to capture the local market.

Moving ahead with fresh New Year perspectives: Ever since the pandemic began in March 2020, the hotel industry needed help managing its statutory and capital expenditure obligations. While the reports suggest that the business will fully recover by 2023, it is reasonable to state that the hotel industry till now has made significant progress. 2022 has been a great year in terms of business recovery. We are certain that the coming year will bring prosperity, and the businesses will continue to flourish. With great learnings from the past years, we at Renest Hotels and Resorts are ready to take on the world and strongly believe that '2023' will be OUR time to rise and shine.



Ajay Kanojia

General Manager, Sayaji Pune

Looking back: Without question, the epidemic has had a severe impact on the hotel business. We quickly recovered our position as individuals began to travel and offices began to hold meetings. There was also a spike in the wedding season. Overall, 2022 was the finest reward for our perseverance and hard

work throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic. The epidemic has prompted hotels to reconsider in various ways, and one of the most significant outcomes has been an industry-wide recognition that technology can be a big help. With a single click, technology can link individuals all across the world. People could still connect with us without limitation.

Moving ahead with fresh New Year perspectives: In 2023, there will be an increase in all categories, including leisure, MICE, inbound, and domestic, because people have begun to return to their pre-COVID lives. As a result, people will arrange holidays, and offices will have conferences and meetings. We look forward to an exciting 2023.

'THE PLACE TO BE'

Centara Hotels and Resorts—crafting unforgettable memories

With their wings spread wide, Centara Hotels and Resorts, Thailand's leading hotel operator, boasts of properties that are a perfect amalgamation of luxury and comfort. Moumita Paul, Director of Sales and Marketing – India, Centara Hotels and Resorts has been with the brand for almost eight years. She has seen the brand grow and excel over the years. In a conversation with TTJ, she shares the brand's growth plans, marketing strategies and much more...

Rachita Sehgal

Centara Hotels and Resorts are perfect value-for-money hotels. The hotels are luxurious escapes located in iconic destinations around the world. Sharing more about their brand portfolio, Moumita says, "We swear by our brand tagline as we have a range of products that suit every kind of traveller be it someone looking for an extravagant holiday or someone who wants to explore on a budget." A market leader in Thailand, Centara has a diversified portfolio in almost all key destinations like Maldives where they have two different brands catering to different guest segments for markets like Dubai that are big on family vacations, they have properties with huge waterparks that suit every age bracket be it kids or adults. "We have a property in Sri Lanka, in Bentota to be specific – the property is a Place to Be for all budgets and all market segments. Everybody knows about our Centara Grand Krabi and how popular it is," adds Moumita.

Bleisure travellers in today's era have a strong sense of community and want to stay in properties that have a local flavour to them. Hotels are going all out to revamp and expand their bleisure offerings as the trend grows in popularity. The business traveller takes advantage of everything from extended spa hours



▲ Moumita Paul

and more extensive spa menus to family-friendly activities, breakfasts with numerous healthy options, and personalised city experiences. The fact that more and more individuals are opting for short holidays every couple of months over lengthier annual vacations is at the heart of this trend of bleisure. Moumita further shares, "Bleisure is an important segment of our overall growth and business diversity, we have products

which cater very efficiently to MICE and Bleisure segments – Centara Grand in Central Plaza and Central World are classic examples, followed by our star product Centara Grand Mirage Pattaya, a well-known name in Pattaya for weddings and MICE."

Centara Hotels and Resorts are known for their distinguished destination hotels that offer a lifetime experience to their patrons. Talking about their expansion plans, Moumita explains, "We have had our expansion and new property openings even during the pandemic, we flourished our wings in markets like Dubai, Vietnam and Thailand. Centara Grand in Osaka is our new pride opening hotel, followed by new openings in Thailand. We recently launched a new property in Phra-Nakon Bangkok, and Chiang Mai and I am excited for many more new launches to come."

Centara Hotels and Resorts is dedicated to providing locally relevant experiences in each of its global destinations. On this continuous journey of expansion, their traditional values will remain at the heart of everything they do across all their brand portfolios. With a unique passion for innovation, the brand is committed to delivering meaningful hospitality while preserving the environment through sustainable operations.



Centara Mirage Resort Mui Ne



Centara Grand Hotel Osaka



ananta
Hotels & Resorts

ANANTA LEISURE EXPERIENCE



The Ananta, Udaipur

ENCHANTINGLY UDAIPUR

Set against the breathtaking Aravalli Hills, Ananta Udaipur creates a fairytale experience for guests with the finest 5-star luxuries available. Our Udaipur resort spans 90 acres of lush greenery and features 239 opulent villas, four eclectic dining options, and two banquet halls. Our resort serves as a unique escape in the beautiful City of Lakes, with an outdoor swimming pool, a rejuvenating spa, a well-equipped gym, and a special kids activity area.



Ananta Spa & Resort, Pushkar

DEVOTEDLY PUSHKAR

Ananta Spa & Resort Pushkar is a blissful getaway in Pushkar, surrounded on all sides by the magnificent Aravalli Hills and lush greenery. For our guests, we have 52 contemporary cottages, 24 sprawling rooms, 12 tents, 3 tent suites, and Ananta Villa spread across 11 acres. We have three sophisticated and magnificent dining options and a banquet hall set in picturesque settings. Ananta Spa & Resorts pampers you with premium amenities such as a well-equipped recreational room, an activity area for children, an outdoor swimming pool, a world-class spa, and a cutting-edge fitness centre, making it one of the best resorts in Pushkar.



The Baagh Ananta Elite, Ranthambore

ROYALLY RANTHAMBORE

The Baagh Ananta Elite is one of Ranthambore's luxury resorts, located on the periphery of the Ranthambore National Park. Visit our resort to experience nature at its purest, with architecture inspired by the rugged wilderness of the place. We have luxurious rooms and cottages, two distinct dining experiences, a luxury pool, a gym, grand gardens, and a banquet hall. The Baagh Ananta Elite, a perfect blend of nature, luxury, and comfort, is the ideal place to explore Ranthambore's exotic wildlife.



Jagira Ananta Elite, Gir

GRACIOUSLY GIR

Our Gir luxury resort, Jagira Ananta Elite, is located on the outskirts of Gir Forest National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary. Our resort, surrounded by lush greenery, offers an exhilarating getaway with contemporary architecture, classic interiors, and modern furnishing. We have 52 opulent accommodations with a plethora of amenities and services. Our in-house multi-cuisine restaurant with a patio setting is set in a picturesque setting and provides a memorable dining experience. Jagira Ananta Elite promises nothing but premium services, with a small outdoor lawn, a swimming pool, and a slew of other amenities, making it the best resort in Sasan Gir.



Sultan-E-Jawai Ananta Inn, Pali

RUSTICALLY JAWAI

Sultan E Jawai Ananta Inn provides the most exciting stay close to the Jawai Bandh Leopard Conservation Reserve. Our resort also holds historical importance. The Sultan E Jawai Ananta Inn was established by the son of Thakur Sultan Singhji of Thikana Padampura in the erstwhile Jaipur State, who also manages the property. Guests at the inn can sense the royalty of our premium services and our deep ties to the royal family. Our resort, unlike any other in the state, allows our guests to enjoy the luxury of living in decadent tents in the middle of the jungle. These tents are decked with modern amenities so that you are not completely alienated from the modern world.

ANANTA HOTELS & RESORTS

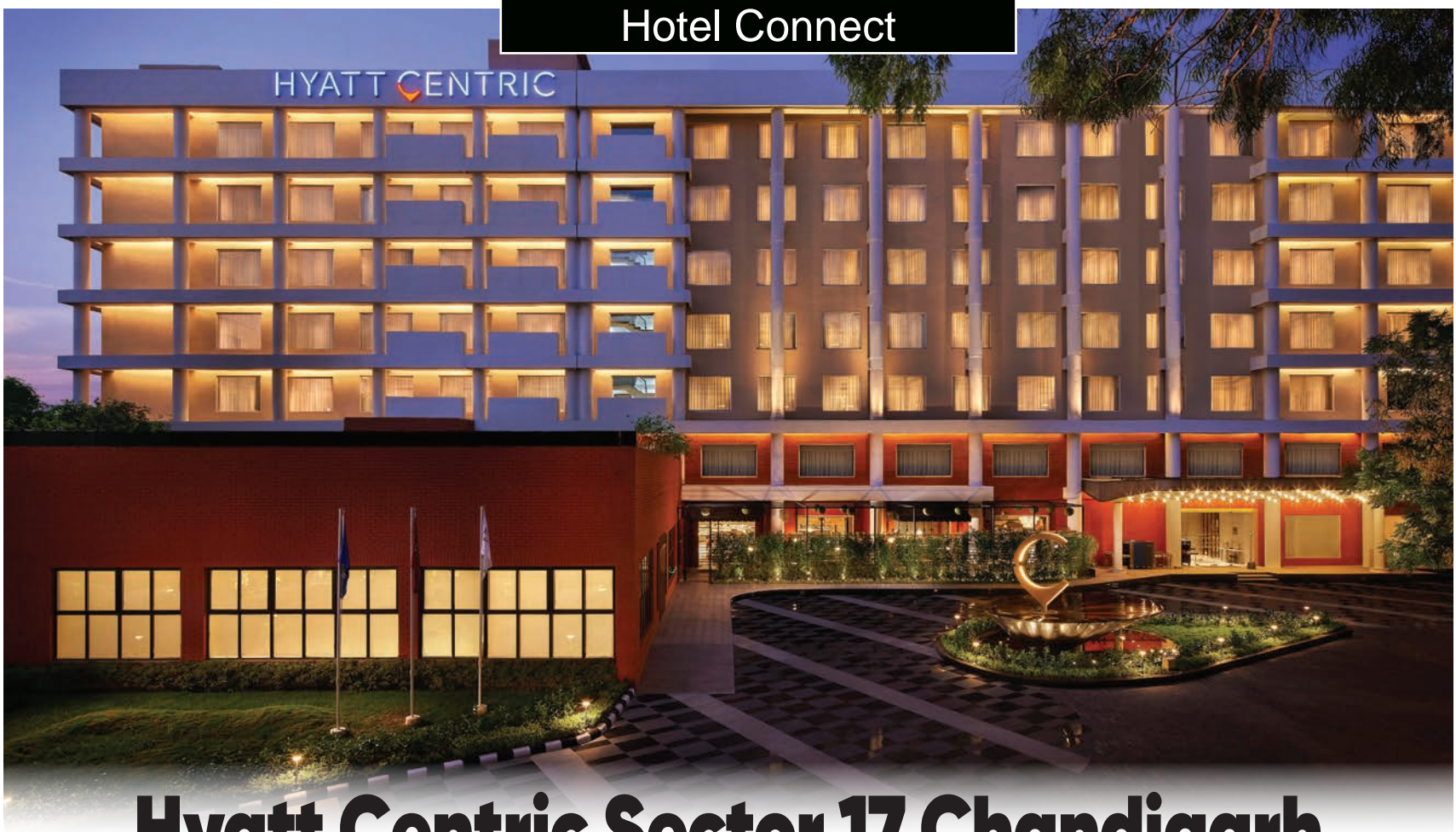
Corp Office: 24, Goyal House Ajmer Road, Jaipur 302006

+91-7823 000 222

crs@anantahotels.com

www.anantahotels.com

Udaipur | Pushkar | Ranthambore | Gir | Jaipur | Jawai



Hyatt Centric Sector 17 Chandigarh to pave the way for community living, the luxurious way

A luxurious experience placed in the calm and nature-sque city of Chandigarh, Hyatt Centric Sector 17 Chandigarh provides its guests with an experience that they would surely cherish. An eclectic mix of modern, pop, natural, and quirky elements - the property looks to serve guests from all age groups. In a heartfelt conversation with Travel Trade Journal, Maulina Gupta shared the joys of leading the newly launched Hyatt Centric Sector 17 Chandigarh (as its General Manager); and took us through a spectacular journey of what the Hyatt Centric is all about. Read on to know more.

Sonika Bohra

Maulina Gupta brings over two decades of experience in the hospitality and service industry having worked with renowned brands in diverse leadership roles. Recognised as a dynamic catalyst when it comes to driving sales, leading marketing functions and running efficient operations with a focus on profitability, she always maintains a strong and optimistic outlook with a penchant for learning and leading by example. "When we started the Hyatt Centric Chandigarh project, we began by identifying what it is that our travellers and diners want and working towards creating offerings and experiences tailored to that. It's important to know what people truly like and enjoy and aligning ourselves to cater to that," says Maulina Gupta, General Manager of the newly launched Hyatt Centric Sector 17 Chandigarh. With a vibrant spirit and a lively persona, Gupta initiated the conversation by sharing what she truly values - creating a warm, friendly and welcoming environment for guests and associates. Building a strong career in hospitality was an imminent choice after her Post Graduate Diploma in Hotel

Administration & Development with the Taj Group of Hotels which she did after completing her graduation in Science. Owing to her father's successful career in the Indian Navy, she grew up learning about diverse cultures and traditions as she moved around the country and abroad with her family. This opportunity instilled a sense of adventure and adaptability in her, which drives her passion for people and places even now.

The brand Hyatt Centric stands apart from the rest of its own hotel brands. This particular segment of hotels aims to serve the younger generation (millennials), Hyatt Centric lures their attention through a combination of vibrant design aesthetics with the usage of mirrors, concrete, terrazzo, social spaces, wood - all fused together to create a unique experience for its guests and personalised experiences.



▲ Maulina Gupta



Hyatt Centric alone is an experience of its own, moreover, the Chandigarh property goes a step ahead by drawing inspiration from the city itself in its design language to communicate the story of Chandigarh's own history. Sharing an extremely creative aspect of how the property was designed, Gupta says, "The wall mural that you see is representative of the Shivalik, the red petals are representative of the rose garden, the maze is representative of the mustard fields, the trees in the lobby are all about the experience of sitting in the shade of a farm land." This creative conjunction of natural elements meeting a luxurious property not only highlights the attention to detail that went into building the hospitality experience but it also makes Hyatt Centric Chandigarh an experience you just cannot get elsewhere.

Speaking of additional experiences that guests can look forward to at Hyatt Centric Chandigarh, Gupta shared, "Chandigarh is a destination in itself. It has its own tourist attractions like the Rose Garden, the Rock Garden, Sukhana Lake, to name a few. We have curated 17 experiences (a tribute to Sector 17) that will cover the aspects of the Chandigarh life." These experiences can be pre-booked, and range from a visit to tourist destinations, a picnic at Rose Garden, a visit to an organic food farm, all the way to pottery workshops, folk bhangra experiences, horse riding, archery, cycling, running, and so on. The mantra "Feel, fuel, function" holds a significant value in the vibe of the Centric.



The hotel is a hub to both business and leisure travellers. Maulina is extremely optimistic that the hotel will pick up a stronger pace in no time based on the positive response from the city in the first 3 months of opening. With 144 rooms, 3 indoor and 3 outdoor spaces, and separate entry and exits, the hotel is also comfortably placed to host intimate weddings, mid-size celebrations, and conferences.

According to Maulina, marketing is fundamentally driven by curating a community experience and living up to the vibe of a lifestyle hotel. Hyatt Centric, she says, should be synonymous with warmth, laughter, and positivity. She believes it to be a place for dining events, intimate weddings and get-togethers, healthy and collaborating partnerships, or just for folks to come and have a vibrant experience. Drawing her experience from the pandemic, Maulina shared with TTJ that "There is no standard way of doing things anymore and the pandemic gave us the courage (though forcefully), to look at things differently."



Talking about some of the new hospitality trends noticed in 2022, she reiterates that personalisation and customisation, shorter trips, bespoke itineraries, leisure, staycations and vacations, have increasingly become the new normal. The traveller is now more aware, and rightly so. Sharing her positive outlook on the future of the Indian hospitality sector, she underscored the industry's exponential growth in the coming years!

SAUDI ARABIA Witness Miracle at the Red Sea

Nujuma

Working towards establishing itself as a major tourism player by 2030, Saudi Arabia has a series of projects in various advanced stages of development. One such major path-breaking development that is underway and scheduled for opening in 2023 is the innovative, sustainable, responsible and regenerative developments at the Red Sea spearheaded by Red Sea Global (RSG). TTJ interacted with Loredana Pettinati, Senior Travel Trade Director, Red Sea Global, to know more about the project and the positioning of the product for the Indian traveller.

Gurjit Singh Ahuja

RSG is the developer behind The Red Sea and Amaala mega projects. Please share the scale and scope of these megaprojects and the vision behind them.

Red Sea Global (RSG) is a global multi-project developer, seeking to lead the world towards a more sustainable future, showing how responsible and regenerative development can uplift communities, drive economies, and enhance the environment. The protection of natural capital is central to all development decisions, as the organisation seeks to create a better future for all.

RSG is the visionary company behind some of the world's most ambitious development ventures, including luxury regenerative tourism destinations such as The Red Sea, one of the world's last true hidden treasures, The Red Sea is surrounded by the world's fourth-largest barrier reef system and spans over 28,000-square-kilometers with an archipelago of more than 90 untouched islands, pristine beaches, dormant volcanos, sweeping desert dunes, mountain canyons and historical cultural sites.

AMAALA is an exquisite, luxury tourism destination that sets our guests on



▲ Loredana Pettinati

transformative personal wellness journeys. Spanning over 4,000 square km of unique heritage, landscape, pristine ecosystems, and world-class yachting opportunities.

RSG's vision is to become the world's most

responsible developer by trailblazing new global standards which see built environments become enablers for social and ecological transformation. Its mission is to act as agents of change, by partnering with the world's greatest minds to spearhead new innovations that reimagine the boundaries of our sector and create a better world for people and the planet.

These destinations are being highlighted as luxury, regenerative, sustainable tourism destinations. Please throw some light on the major initiatives.

Red Sea Global is at the forefront of the global transition towards regenerative tourism going beyond sustainability to have a regenerative impact on not only the environment but also on society and the economy. This vision is being delivered through innovation and careful management of natural capital.

In line with this, we have planned to leave 75 per cent of The Red Sea islands undeveloped and therefore less than 1 per cent of the destination's total 28,000 km² will be developed. Once the destination is fully operational, our subsequent aim is to entirely ban single-use plastics to be carbon neutral.

Along with sustainable construction, waste management and the use of 100 per cent clean energy from renewable sources, The Red Sea is also committed to offering emission-free electric and hydrogen transport across the entire destination. Apart from these measures, we will also be capping the yearly number of visitors to The Red Sea at one million based on the environmental carrying capacity of the destination.

What are the launch plans for the initial opening in 2023?

The Red Sea is set to welcome its first guest in 2023 as our first three resorts open, St Regis Red Sea Resort, Six Senses Southern Dunes, The Red Sea, and Nujuma, A Ritz-Carlton Reserve as well as a terminal at Red Sea International Airport (RSI) that will receive travellers from Riyadh.

The first phase of The Red Sea is currently fully underway and will offer an impressive lineup of 16 resorts with 3,000 keys and 400 residential properties. The destination will also feature an exclusive international airport, an 18-hole championship golf course, a luxury marina, sprawling athletic and beach clubs, indulgent entertainment and leisure facilities comprising exquisite F&B outlets and luxury boutiques with prominent brands along with provisions to host weddings and events.

The Red Sea is a pioneering regenerative tourism destination offering both resorts operated by globally celebrated brands and branded residentials. By 2030, The Red Sea will be home to 50 resorts with 8,000 keys and 1,000 residential properties.

How many global visitors are you expecting in the year 2023 and what are your expectations from India market?

While we anticipate 300,000 annual arrivals at the completion of phase one, we expect to welcome one million tourists annually once the destination is fully operational, capped in line with its sustainability ambitions.

How do Indian travellers fare in your plans till 2030?

India is a key source market for us. The country's luxury travel market is indicating steady growth and travellers are seeking experiences that are not only luxurious but also

soon feature on the top of many a travel bucket lists.

What are the promotion and marketing plans for India market?

With an aim to inform and educate the key stakeholders about The Red Sea's unique and diverse offerings, our comprehensive



St Regis Red Sea Resort

When completed in 2030, there will be 50 resorts and attractions. Are plans for these frozen? Please share details.

Planning for phase two has already commenced with the entire destination set to be complete by 2030. Upon completion, it will feature 50 resorts with 8,000 keys, over 1,000 residential properties spread across 22 islands and six inland sites.

Are these developments purely leisure and vacation oriented or residential and business developments also being planned?



Six Senses Southern Dunes

immersive and memorable. Additionally, as environmental concerns escalate, a growing number of studies suggest a mounting inclination of travellers towards sustainable and eco-friendly travel. The Red Sea is being developed considering all these factors and with acute detailing to exceed the needs of the discerning global traveller. It presents the promise of enjoying world-class luxurious travel experiences while making a positive environmental impact and without compromising on factors such as convenience and comfort.

With easy accessibility from India, excellent weather, a range of exclusive stay options, unique activities and immersive experiences, we are confident that the destination will

marketing strategy includes several activities such as strategic collaborations and trade partnerships, exciting campaigns, participation in important trade shows, wide-scale visibility via multiple media outlets, among other things. Simultaneously, we are continually assisting our trade partners by enriching their knowledge about the destination through personalised and one-to-one meetings. As we move into 2023 and closer to the launch of the destination, we are eagerly looking forward to exploring creative collaborations and meaningful associations and with other potential partners.



Red Sea International Airport



National Tourist Offices

Positive on their Outlook for India

The year 2022 ended on a high note for many International Tourism Boards and National Tourist Offices in India. Factors like pent-up outbound travel demand, wider air connectivity, and targeted marketing campaigns have boosted their business. In fact, Outbound travel from India is still witnessing tremendous growth despite the rupee depreciation and increase in airfares due to the Russia-Ukraine war. To know more about their performance in 2022 and their expectation from the India market in 2023, TTJ spoke to some of the heads and representatives of tourism boards. With India, an upcoming top source market for several countries, they are undoubtedly redoubling their efforts to entice Indian travellers to their destination.

Prashant Nayak



Tourism New Zealand

Gregg Wafelbakker

General Manager, Asia, Tourism New Zealand

The year 2022: With the gradual re-opening of New Zealand borders this year, we are continuing efforts to build desire for destination New Zealand, to support and grow travel intent as we move towards recovery by driving arrivals into New Zealand. We have strengthened our

portfolio approach to ensure we can navigate any future global shocks and disruptions. This means investing in core markets that have the most impact on New Zealand, which includes the domestic market, business events, core international markets, and growing emerging markets like India.

Even before the international borders fully re-opened in August 2022, Tourism New Zealand continued to engage with our Indian consumers through digital campaigns that helped keep the 100% Pure New Zealand brand alive. We also engaged with our travel partners and provided them with opportunities to upskill through online training, social community engagements, and events. Our target audience in India predominantly consists of independent professionals who are not just aware of New Zealand but are seriously considering New Zealand for leisure and MICE travel. These people already have New Zealand

on their top five-holiday destinations list. These high-quality visitors will contribute positively to our culture, environment, economy, and communities while they visit.

New Developments: We have new sustainable stays like the Falcon Brae, a hotel that is committed to environmental sustainability by not being connected to the national power grid, or Voco Auckland City, a hotel that is targeting a Level 3/Level 4 Green Engage certificate by implementing several sustainable initiatives. Quite a few of our tourism operators such as Raglan Rock (Raglan), Eden Park (Auckland), Dive Tatapouri (Gisborne), and Mārahau tourism operators (Nelson Tasman) are providing trailblazing transformative, regenerative travel experiences throughout New Zealand through their eco-conscious offerings and giving back to their local regions. The industry is undertaking various initiatives such as commitment to carbon zero, sustainable experiences, and the development of carbon-neutral travel itineraries.

Preparedness and expectations from India market in 2023: India is one of the priority emerging markets for Tourism New Zealand and is an important growth market. Our marketing strategy in India is to grow travel intent for New Zealand among our audience and support conversions through partnerships. We will continue building desire for New Zealand by showcasing our warm and friendly people, stunning wildlife, delicious food, and wine offerings, among the many other jewels this country has.



Spain Tourism

Elisa Robles-Fraga

Director, Tourism Office of Spain - Mumbai

The year 2022: The year has certainly brought us a lot of hope. We can now see the light at the end of the tunnel. Spain had already opened its borders to Indian travellers in 2021, and 2022 went one step ahead with the Indian Government restarting commercial flight operations.

Even during various phases of the pandemic, there was always a

genuine interest in travel to Spain. And that has surely resulted in the increasing numbers of Indian arrivals in Spain as the year progressed.

Since we could still see some possibilities of virus outbreaks at the beginning of 2022, we continued a cautious approach that was applied in 2021. We continued our digital promotional activities through webinars and online marketing campaigns and organised and participated in physical events. This has helped us to reach out to media, travel trade, and consumers in every possible way. We were already seeing increasing interest from the FIT and small group segments, but as the year progressed, even the larger groups and MICE segments showed good signs of recovery.

New Developments: Spain was and continues to be a safe tourist destination. Besides, recently the Spanish Government has also approved investments in many sustainable tourism projects, ranging from digitising museums to improving tourism infrastructure, among others. For 2023, we indeed have some interesting projects coming up. We are also celebrating 2023 as Picasso Year to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the passing away of the legendary Spanish-born artist Pablo Picasso through various activities like exhibitions, seminars, and Picasso-themed itineraries, among others.

Preparedness and expectations from India market in 2023: We are quite excited about 2023. Multiple activities like roadshows in collaboration with Spanish companies, participation in ITB India 2023, participation in the International Kolkata Book Fair with Spain as the theme country, as well as Spanish gastronomy-oriented events celebrating World Tapas Day and World Paella Day, among others, are already in the pipeline. Besides, due to the various tax incentives offered by the Spanish Government, there is a lot of interest in Spain as a shooting destination for film/TV series.



Bahrain Tourism

Maryam Toorani

Director of Marketing and Promotion, Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA)

The year 2022: In 2022, the tourism industry in Bahrain started to recover, with almost 82 per cent footfalls compared to the previous year's numbers. Travellers today seek holidays filled with authentic local experiences while still being environmentally mindful. Considering this factor, Bahrain

has been aggressively implementing eco-tourism and sustainable tourist projects throughout the nation. As a travel destination, Bahrain has also used this time to develop new infrastructure projects to increase tourism.

Bahrain is investing in and generating more tourism-related content, whether in the form of infrastructure or events, to draw in the MICE, leisure, and wedding segments from India to visit Bahrain. Keeping this in mind, in 2022 we have conducted a variety of B2B and B2C activities in the market, such as joint promotion campaigns with trade agents across India, Bahrain destination training, familiarisation trips for both travel agents and our media partner, Influencer campaigns, multi-city roadshow, etc. MICE is one of the very important segments we have been concentrating on, which is reflected in the recent opening of the new Exhibition World Bahrain, the largest in the Middle East.

New Developments: Many new architectural and infrastructural projects have opened or are opening in Bahrain. The newest attraction in the region is Exhibition World Bahrain, which offers exceptional versatility in design with a variety of space configurations that are perfect for special events, gala events, banquets, corporate launches, concerts, and exhibitions. This center is one of a kind and is the largest, with 95,000 sq. ft in the Middle East. Bahrain's hospitality sector continues to see development growth with numerous new hotels like Jumeirah Gulf of Bahrain Resort and Spa, The Address Hotel-Marassi Al Bahrain, DoubleTree by Hilton, and Raffles Al Areen Palace and Spa. Qalali waterfront, Al Ghous waterfront, and Mantis Hotel are some of the upcoming beachfront projects in Bahrain.

Preparedness and expectations from India market in 2023: One of the most significant and spectacular events is Formula 1. The opening race of the 2023 season has officially been announced, and it will be held from March 3-5, 2023, at the Bahrain International Circuit. This circuit has had the honour of being the opening race of the season five times before 2023. There are many international artists like Imagine Dragons that will be hosting concerts and performing next year in Bahrain. Apart from these, the destination is preparing many more interesting festivals and events in 2023, like the annual jewellery and perfume expo called Jewellery Arabia. We also have an extravagant food festival with over 100 local and international cuisines to taste, the biggest shopping festival- the Autumn Fair, and many more such events.



Tourism Authority of Thailand

Isada Saovaros

Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand, Mumbai

The year 2022: When Thailand decided to open its borders, it was strategically planned by the authorities to ensure the safety of tourists and locals. Travelling responsibly is highly important for Indian travellers, so we needed to ensure that all our strategies sync with the post-pandemic trends. Our aim

was to maintain top-of-mind recall for Thailand.

We were and will be focusing on our 5 Fs- Films, Fashion, Fight (Muay Thai), and Festivals. We were in touch with trade partners and travel associations by organising the Amazing New Chapters of Amazing Thailand product presentation from February to March 2022. We organised Amazing Thailand: The Wedding Series for wedding planners in September-October 2021. For Media, we connected with them by using Thai Food in the theme of Amazing Thailand: The Kitchen Series. We organised FAM trips for travel agents, bloggers, media, and wedding planners. Weddings and MICE have been a very important segment for Thailand. While we continued to grab the attention of

travellers across these buckets, we also promoted solo travelling. Our idea was to leave no stone unturned to attract more and more Indians to Thailand.

New Developments: Over the past few months, some new attractions, properties, and Michelin Star restaurants have opened up. The purpose is to enhance traveller's experience in Thailand further. The latest additions to the Michelin Guide consist of five in One Michelin Star (4 newcomers – Baan Tapa, Hao ma, Maison Dunand, and Potong, and one promotion – Signature, previously a recommended entry), and 59 in the Bib Gourmand list (53 newcomers, and six promotions), together with preparedness and expectation from India market in 2023.

I believe 2023 will be a game-changer. We have been closely observing the trends and travellers' preferences. We aim to showcase Thailand as a destination that is not only apt for individual traveller's but also adventure seekers, honeymooners, and families. In the first quarter of 2023, we will primarily focus on showcasing the range of water sports available in Koh Tao, Khao Sok – Surat Thani, Phuket Krabi, etc. At the same time, we will continue to target families, honeymooners, MICE, Weddings, and Individual segments. We have scheduled several activities to enhance our relationship with the trade and media partners. We are all ready to attract more and more Indians to Thailand.



Sharjah Tourism

HE Khalid Jasim Al Midfa

Chairman, Sharjah Commerce, and Tourism and Development Authority (SCTDA)

The year 2022: As SCTDA, we have approached the past year with resilience and determination. The pandemic has presented unique challenges, but we have remained focused on our priorities and have learned to be more adaptable in the face of

change. As an Authority, we have worked to remain flexible and adaptable, and we are pleased to see the travel industry slowly getting back on its feet. At SCTDA, we have continued to strengthen our presence in India with an overarching strategy, working towards establishing Sharjah as the most-preferred destination for all categories of visitors in both the business and leisure sectors.

As part of our efforts to attract more visitors from India, we implemented a comprehensive plan, including participation in key trade shows and strategic trade partnerships backed by robust PR and marketing campaigns. To educate our valuable trade partners about the diverse offerings and attractions of the emirate, we conducted a range of activities, including 15 pan-India sales missions, ten webinars, and four roadshows in key cities - Mumbai, New Delhi, Hyderabad, and Chennai. We were overwhelmed by the response we received regarding the number of agents who participated in these sessions.

In 2022, Sharjah maintained its reputation as a top family tourism destination and attracted a significant number of visitors

from the subcontinent in the VFR (visiting friends and relatives) category. A large community of Indian ex-pats in the emirate is a major factor in this popularity. Overall, our marketing efforts and diverse offerings have helped to position Sharjah as a top choice for travellers from India.

New attractions at the destination: The new attractions include House of Wisdom, the awe-inspiring library of the future; Sharjah Safari, the largest safari outside of Africa, home to more than 120 species of animals, which live in Africa and up to 50,000 animals, ranging from birds, reptiles and mammals; such as lions, elephants, giraffes, and rhinoceros. Sharjah's new adventure tourism project in the breathtaking eastern region of Khorfakkan shines new light on the emirate's vast potential for adventure tourism. It is being developed on a picturesque site overlooking the serene Luluyah beach. Upon completion in Q4 in 2023, the development will be a haven for adrenaline seekers with its offerings of a zipline, a giant swing, a dry-slide track, hiking tracks, mountain bike tracks, and more.

Preparedness and expectations from the India market in 2023: We will continue working closely with the industry's B2B and B2C segments to promote the diverse range of attractions, hospitality options, and cultural activities our emirate offers. These offerings suit all types of travellers, including singles, groups, independent travellers, and those seeking all-inclusive experiences. In 2023, we also have many exciting engagements like strategic trade partnerships, bespoke integrated marketing campaigns, sales missions, roadshows, and familiarisation trips. Our focus is on ensuring that potential visitors are fully informed of the many options available and can easily plan their trip to our emirate.



Visit Portugal

Claudia Matias

Director, Visit Portugal

The year 2022: The past year was indeed an indicator of how India is interested in Portugal, an all-year-long tourism destination. It showed us how resilient the tourism sector is and how the work we have been developing since we opened our tourism delegation in

India in 2020, just before the pandemic. The destination started showing a very positive demand as soon as tourism from India to Portugal resumed in 2022, reflecting the vast potential for MICE. 2022 also showed us the potential of the Indian market with niche products like wine tourism and gastronomy in Portugal and as a new wedding destination for Indian couples.

Our activities in India are still very focused on building brand awareness of Portugal as a tourism destination and B2B activities to help trade partners understand the country better. Visit Portugal in 2022 introduced a comprehensive e-learning course, "Portugal Expert E-learning Program." The training program also covers the specifics and advantages of MICE and weddings in Portugal. 2022 was a learning curve and I think it showed us that the Indian traveller has vast travelling interests, and is looking for new destinations and great quality experiences. Portugal,

a contrasting country, has product offers for all segments and we were able to capitalise in 2022 from leisure to MICE with confirmed incentives for 2023. The first major Indian wedding took place in Porto and the North region in 2022.

New Developments: With tourists giving the best experience possible to our locals and citizens, they understand the value of tourism; most of them know that tourism could be a career for life. Our network of twelve Turismo de Portugal tourism schools plays a vital role in having a 90 per cent graduate employment rate. We offer English courses from Culinary Arts and Food and Beverage Management to Hospitality Operations Management, and we invite Indian students to enroll since Portugal is also a great destination to study.

Preparedness and expectations from India market in 2023: As "Europe's Leading Tourism Destination", in the European edition of the 2022 World Travel Awards, Portugal is already one of the most approached destinations by international travellers. Its seven regions of Madeira, Azores, Alentejo, Algarve, Lisbon region Porto, and the North are within easy reach. We are a country of contrasts with such heritage, diversity and inclusiveness, warm hospitality, and mild weather. We invite more Indian travellers to discover Portugal as we have witnessed good footfalls from the Indian market. We are closely working with our industry partners to develop visitations for the destination, and it will be a priority in 2023.



Tourism Australia

Nishant Kashikar

Country Manager- India and Gulf, Tourism Australia

The year 2022: Australia saw an immense surge in tourism visitations from India, with visa lodgements reaching over 30 per cent of 2019 levels. As of October 2022, visitations reached 98 per cent of pre-COVID levels, supplemented by

visits for the ICC T20 World Cup.

From a connectivity point of view, we tripled the direction aviation capacity on the India-Australia route by commencing direct, non-stop flights with Qantas and Air India. The Department of Home Affairs had also digitised the visa application process entirely, expediting the visa processing time and enabling Indians seamless travel to Australia. Regarding our marketing strategies, we constantly adapted and continue to customise our approach to ensure Australia remains a key contender in travellers' consideration set through continuous monitoring and analysis of current sentiments and trends governing how Indians travel and their travel choices.

In October 2022, we launched a new global campaign, Come and Say G'day, to invite and welcome the world to explore all Australia has to offer after the travel restrictions we have had to navigate our way through for the last two years. We were also the host country for marquee events

like the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, which provided us with a great contextual PR and media opportunity to leverage the attention and interest garnered for the tournament to generate destination awareness and appeal.

New Developments: We have several new accommodations, experiences, and events lined up for the New Year, which will allow tourists to experience the diversity of Australia. In the first half of the year, we have The Ritz- Carlton opening in March 2023 in the heart of Melbourne; and CABN Cape St Albans opening in May 2023, offering sustainable luxury. W Sydney is scheduled to open in Sydney's magnificent Darling Harbour in October 2023. Marquee events and festivals like Sydney World Pride, FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand, and SXSW Sydney are touting to be major attractions for travellers in the upcoming year, in line with travellers seeking more sustainable and indigenous experiences.

Preparedness and expectations from India market in 2023: India has been one of Australia's most important markets in recent years and is currently the third largest source market for Australia. Arrivals out of India for April to October 2022 were at 87 per cent of 2019 levels. By June 2023, we expect the visitation numbers to reach the pre-covid levels of 400,000; on the back of increased air connectivity and facilitation of tourist visa processing, among other factors. Our overarching long-term goal is to attract one million tourists from India alone by 2030.



Tourism Fiji

Kathy Koyamaibole

Regional Director Asia and Pacific, Tourism Fiji

The year 2022: It has been a fantastic year for Fiji, post re-opening of the border on December 01, 2022. Fiji has reached 92.1 per cent of visitor arrival levels in November 2022 compared to November 2019 with

having welcomed 560,550 visitors to our shores from January to November. We, along with our stakeholders, are constantly engaging to enhance further experiences which will help Fiji gain more value for its tourism industry over time.

Our team in India has been very active in keeping the destination alive in the mindset of Indian agents and travellers. We started with our participation at OTM India,

announcing our re-opening and sharing information about the ease of travel to Fiji and new travel requirements. With borders open we had an aggressive action plan in place with a line-up of several Trade initiatives like the launch of our new E-learning programme, the new MATAI specialist course for agents, and Consumer Campaigns, including our brand awareness campaign with Tripoto. We also hosted an influencer fam to build confidence in the destination and provide a first-hand experience of the health and safety protocols in place and exposure for our products. All in all, we were able to further our brand visibility and expand our reach in India.

Preparedness and expectations from India market in 2023: Our key focus segments from India continued to be those of honeymooners and couple travellers for 2022. However, this year we are also focusing a lot more on the family segment, high-end consumer groups, and niche segments of diving, golfing, and weddings.



MARCH 15
AHMEDABAD

MARCH 17
PUNE

APRIL 21
LUCKNOW

BOOK YOUR SPACE

☎ 9560264443

✉ parth@sampanmedia.com



South African Tourism

Neliswa Nkani

Hub Head – MEISEA, South African Tourism

The year 2022: We started this year by outlining a strategic roadmap that helped us successfully garner a 64 per cent YoY increase in Indian visitors to South Africa. Our efforts to showcase the diversity and value proposition of destination South Africa have helped us surpass our

annual target of attracting 33,910 Indian arrivals to South Africa. Our media, trade, and marketing efforts have helped us stay top-of-mind and excite Indian audiences. Interest and inquiries for destination South Africa, especially from Indian businesses and leisure travellers have multiplied since the start of our recovery campaign, More & More, which rolled out in the first quarter of 2022. In July, we announced the launch of an exclusive India airfare campaign in partnership with Air

Seychelles to support our value-for-money proposition.

Preparedness and expectations from India market in 2023: As we gear up for the new year, South African Tourism will continue to proactively and meaningfully engage with its travel trade partners and tour operators to boost tourism and Indian visitor arrivals to South Africa. We will constantly communicate with key travel agents and tour operators through interactive knowledge exchange webinars while 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 anticipate many footfalls from India as our travel trade partners already see an upswing in inquiries for destination South Africa. In collaboration with our province partners, we are making conscious efforts towards promoting sustainable and rural tourism to give back to the local communities and economy. With highly customised and personalised itineraries, we are looking at mobilising niche communities like biking groups, runners, and golfers.



Utah Office of Tourism

Zach Fyne

Global Markets Specialist, Utah Office of Tourism

The year 2022: While overall visitation to our Mighty 5® national parks was not as high as during the pandemic, we've seen visitation rise anywhere from 13 to 35 per cent increases over the same period in 2019 at each of our parks, including Arches National Park who debuted their new timed-entry

permit system in 2022. And our partners at Ski Utah reported record-breaking visitation numbers (5.8 million visits) at our 15 ski resorts last winter season. The delays in visa processing for many countries, including India, have been a significant obstacle in our international tourism recovery. However, we're excited that the brand new rebuild of our Salt Lake City International Airport in 2020 has translated into new international routes opening in Toronto and Frankfurt this year.

We launched our first official efforts in the Indian market by partnering with AVIAREPS India to manage our account activities starting in mid-2021. The past year was a continued education for our office on how best to showcase Utah's prime assets to a growing and more affluent traveller

market in India. Our team based in Mumbai has spent 2022 traveling across the country and beyond to get the brand awareness and word out about our destination. Partnering with several affluent consumer media mediums and maintaining a presence on our India targeted Facebook page and Instagram have been top efforts to reach the consumer market.

New Developments: Our state has worked extensively with the International Dark-Sky Association to certify as many areas of our state as optimal areas to take in the night sky, and we now have 24 areas and towns on their register, including all five of our national parks. Utah has been developing into the glamping capitol of the world and the pandemic helped to accelerate that trend. There have been new properties coming online throughout the year for visitors to stay in tipis, glass domes, Conestoga wagons, RVs, safari tents and more unique lodging options across our diverse landscapes.

Preparedness and expectations from India market in 2023: With the continued travel restrictions in the China market, our office has really leaned heavily on the India market to make up for that expected dip in the Asia Pacific market that we're predicting for 2023. We're expecting to make additional strides in recovering our international traveller volume in 2023, and projections have shown a more complete recovery by 2024.



Israel Tourism

Sammy Yahia

Consul, Tourism Affairs, Israel Ministry of Tourism, India and Philippines

The year 2022: 2022 was an amazing year for us. More than 30,000 Indians travelled to Israel, i.e., more than 60 per cent of the outbound pre-pandemic (2019). Tourism to Israel began only in April 2022.

The travel vacuum itself played a major role in our promotion for us. We tried to stay afloat by conducting

various digital activities during the pandemic. The segments that we are focusing on are Leisure and MICE. I believe, Ecotourism and Wedding travel were extremely impressive during and post the pandemic. Both these segments will gain traction in the coming few years.

Preparedness and expectations from the India market in 2023: We are prepared to promote the designation with the same vigour. We plan to invest around 2 million USD in the digital platform. Apart from this, we will be signing marketing agreements with Travel companies. Also, we will continue to conduct ground activities, roadshows, seminars, PR activities, etc.

For the experiences that are
etched in your hearts forever



Hari Mahal Palace Jaipur
Heritage Hotel

Aaram Baagh Pushkar
Relive the bygone era

Aaram Baagh Agra
Relive the royal era

Aaram Baagh Udaipur
Resort in the lap of nature

Aaram Mahal Udaipur
Hotel with musical essence

Castle Pachar Shekhawati
Heritage Hotel

Aaram Baagh Sanchi
Heritage Hotel

Aaram Baagh Maheshwar
Relive the buddha era

Aaram Mahal Bikaner
Heritage Hotel

PACHAR GROUP OF HOTELS

F-6, Tirth Raj, Civil Lines, Jacob Road, Jaipur-302006 (Raj.),

Mobile : +91- 9166531111, +91-9799696962, Ph.: +91-141-2221399, 4004920

E-mail : info@pachargrouphotels.com, Website : www.pachargrouphotels.com



Will the Indian aviation sector capitalise on its momentum in 2023?

It has been a jolty ride for the global aviation industry through the last couple of years with only the second half of 2022 making it seem like an onset of a comeback. The Indian aviation industry is on a high-growth trajectory and is witnessing a solid revival after pandemic-related turbulence. With more flyers, more airlines, and more airports, India is set for an aviation boom. Also, with many developments in civil aviation in the country, things are certainly looking up for the sector.

Vartik Sethi

The global aviation industry in 2022 fared a mixed bag of experiences with the second half of the year being more responsive than the first. While the industry has seen an unprecedented comeback from COVID-19, the industry is still far from profitability. Just when it looked like COVID-19 was starting to wear off, the Russo-Ukrainian war pummeled another blow to the aviation industry, causing power shortages, inflation, industrial unrest, and raised fuel prices.

The economic and geopolitical environment presents several risks to the outlook for 2023 in the global airline industry. While there may be a potential easing of aggressive interest rate hikes in early 2023, there is still a risk of some economies falling into recession, which could impact demand for both passenger and cargo services. However, a potential recession could be partially mitigated by lower oil prices. The outlook for 2023 anticipates a gradual reopening of China to international traffic and an easing of domestic COVID-19 restrictions, but a prolongation of China's zero COVID policies would have negative effects. Additionally, proposals for increased infrastructure charges or taxes to support sustainability efforts could potentially impact profitability in 2023.

India's domestic passenger traffic experiences 52 per cent increase from January to November 2022

After experiencing a dip in passenger volume due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the aviation industry in India saw an increase in travellers in 2021 and 2022. According to data from the Directorate General of

Civil Aviation (DGCA), the industry saw 1441.71 lakh domestic travellers in 2019. However, the pandemic led to a decrease in travel, resulting in passenger volume dropping to 630.11 lakh in 2020. While the numbers improved slightly to 838.14 and 1105.1 lakh in 2021 and 2022, respectively, they still remain lower compared to pre-pandemic levels. In 2022, there was a gradual increase in the number of domestic passengers in the aviation industry in India.

Domestic aviation operations soaring high, sets new records in December 2022

The aviation industry in India saw a high volume of domestic travellers in November, with 116.7 lakh flyers, the most in any month of the year. The lowest volume occurred in January, with only 64.08 lakh travellers. In December 2022, the monthly domestic air passenger traffic reached 1.29 crore, surpassing the pre-pandemic level of 1.26 crore in December 2019. Jyotiraditya Scindia, Civil Aviation Minister, India, described this trend as “healthy” and a positive sign for the industry. Scindia recently shared on Twitter that December 2022 set a new record for air passenger movement, with the traffic reaching 1.29 crore. The minister stated that there is a “healthy trend” in the domestic passenger movement recently, which is a “good sign” for the aviation sector. The monthly domestic passenger numbers in December 2022 exceeded the pre-COVID high.

Is 2023 a beacon of hope or an illusion of progress?

As per CAPA's Advisory Research and Analysis, Indian airlines are expected to report a loss of approximately USD 3B (after adjustments) for FY 2022. While there was a great inflow of air passengers in the second half of the year, the momentum is bound to flow in 2023.

The comeback in 2023 will come with a caveat. While the demand for air travel is steadily increasing, the global bigwigs project every take-off as a death blow to global sustainability plans. If the industry steps forward strategically, 2023 is the year that can finally help the industry fly through the clouds to see some sunshine.

As per the Ministry of Civil Aviation's report, the number of operational airports has nearly doubled, from 74 in 2014 to 141 at present. The government wishes to continue building more airports and expects to have 220 operational airports by 2027. This 60 per cent growth in the number of airports is set to place India alongside China, which already has 248 operational airports. CAPA, in its report, also mentioned China being replaced by other emerging countries in the Asia-Pacific region like India, Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines.

The airline industry is expected to become profitable in 2023, with global net profits projected at \$4.7 billion on \$779 billion in revenues (0.6 per cent net margin). This expected improvement comes despite economic uncertainty and slowing global GDP growth (1.3 per cent in 2023 compared to 2.9 per cent in 2022). Factors such as lower oil price inflation and continued pent-up demand may help to keep costs under control, but thin margins make it important for the industry to be vigilant and flexible in the face of potential shifts in variables. In a recent statement, Willie Walsh, the

Director General of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), advised, “vigilance and flexibility will be key.”

The civil aviation industry in India has emerged as one of the fastest-growing industries in the country during the last three years. According to a report, India has become the third-largest domestic aviation market in the world. The major events shaping up the future of the Indian aviation industry are:

Air India returns to the Tata Group

Air India, the national flag carrier of India, has returned to the Tata Group following a two-year privatisation process. The airline, which was founded by JRD Tata in 1932, has undergone rapid changes since its privatisation in January 2022, including the appointment of a permanent CEO, Campbell Wilson, and improvements to the passenger experience. Air India has announced plans to add 42 planes in 2023, including 11 Boeing 777s and 31 Airbus A320neos, as part of its expansion efforts to become a central competitor in the Indian market and achieve a 30 per cent domestic market share. The airline aims to triple its fleet and improve the passenger experience as part of its five-year “Vihaan. ai” vision.

National flag carrier Air India, returned to the Tata Group after a nearly 69-year absence. Since the takeover, the new management has been working to address various legacy issues in order to restore the airline to its former glory. The Tata Group has plans for expansion and has made some significant decisions, including gaining approval from the Competition Commission of India for the merger of AirAsia India with Air India and signing an agreement with Singapore Airlines to merge Vistara with Air India, keeping Singapore Airlines as an equity partner in the resulting entity.

In a recent press release, the airline unveiled its transformation plan, banking its hopes on the success of Vihaan.AI. Air India has established a thorough roadmap with distinct milestones that is focused on dramatically expanding both its network and fleet, creating a completely redesigned customer proposition, enhancing dependability and on-time performance, and assuming a leadership role in technology, sustainability, and innovation while making aggressive investments in the best available talent.

In the next five years, Air India plans to considerably expand its international routes while attempting to improve its domestic market share to at least 30 per cent. The strategy aims to place Air India on a path to consistent development, financial success, and market dominance.



Commenting on Vihaan.AI, Campbell Wilson, MD, and CEO, Air India, said, "This is the beginning of a historic transformation for Air India and the dawn of a new era. We are laying the foundation for a brave new Air India, with a renewed sense of purpose and incredible momentum. Vihaan.AI is our transformation plan to make Air India the world-class airline it once was, and it deserves to be again. We are focused on being recognised as a world-class airline serving global customers, with a proudly Indian heart."

Vistara expanding its network and fleet going forward in 2023



▲ Deepak Rajawat

Vistara has been on an expansion spree for the past couple of years and has grown its operations to 31 domestic and 12 international destinations.

This relentless expansion is not limited to the destinations. They also look to add a whole new lot of aircraft to their extensively vast fleet. Speaking to Travel Trade Journal about their expansion plans, Deepak Rajawat, Chief Commercial Officer, Vistara,

shared with us, "Currently, Vistara has a fleet of 54 aircraft that comprises 41 Airbus A320neo, 5 Boeing 737-800NG, 5 Airbus A321neo and 3 Boeing B787-9 Dreamliner, and we aim to reach a fleet size of 70 by the end of 2023. With new aircraft joining our fleet progressively, we have been steadily densifying our domestic as well as international network."

Speaking of the plans for 2023 and the extensive network of destinations Vistara flies to, Rajawat added, "This year, we added Jeddah, Abu Dhabi, and Muscat to our international network, and also started flights to/from Coimbatore and Jaipur. We are continuously monitoring opportunities to expand our network and several factors such as demand on the route, bilateral relations, availability of slots, etc., come into play when entering new markets. We will continue to steadily expand and build our footprint across the globe to ensure uninterrupted connectivity to our customers."

The COVID-19 wave has birthed a lot of new characteristics in the aviation industry. With newly introduced hygiene protocols and contactless check-ins to entire airports being built with the pandemic restrictions in mind. Vistara too seems to have made efforts to take this paradigm shift into account for their strategy in 2023. Revealing the trends Vistara predicts for 2023, Rajawat shared, "There has been rapid adoption of touchless and paperless technologies, and the industry has effectively accelerated its digital transformation process. Today, people are increasingly opting for online, self-service tools for end-to-end transactions, including the booking of ancillary services, etc. There has also been a noticeable increase in preference for non-stop flights to avoid any transit points, especially on

long-haul routes. Most of these trends that have emerged in the past few years, especially during the pandemic, have gained immense prominence and will continue to remain so."

The changes induced by unparalleled circumstances, coupled with some traditional marketing strategies, make up a whole of Vistara's marketing strategy for 2023. While they are catering to the new normal passengers on their flights, they also look to reward their frequent flyers with their loyalty programs. Rajawat shared, "Club Vistara, our exclusive loyalty program, has recently launched Club Vistara Escapades, a perennial program designed to offer CV members, across all tiers, exclusively curated getaways and immersive experiences. The all-expense paid getaways can be won through Instagram contests or raffle draws on our social media channels. We are continuously exploring partnerships with various other travel and lifestyle entities under Club Vistara to offer an exclusive range of benefits to our frequent flyers."

Indigo Airlines reflects on past accomplishments and announces new goals

One of India's most esteemed airlines, Indigo, took some noteworthy actions this year despite the ongoing pandemic. Indigo was the only airline to generate profits as well as a surplus of cash. This year, it also initiated operations to seven domestic and international destinations and its cargo operations.

There have been evident signs of recovery in the aviation industry as the demand for air travel has significantly increased. On one side of the coin, there is a lot of potency in the aviation industry recovery claims. On the other hand, the undercurrent of a lingering pandemic, geopolitical issues, rising fuel prices, and supply issues cannot be discounted and might still have the airline investors toss and turn in their sleep.

While signaling strong numbers, Indigo in their year-end statement shared, "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." Along with expanding its network and connectivity, Indigo looks to improve its operational efficiency. Indigo also looks to introduce a host of technology-powered initiatives going forward in 2023.

Introducing Akasa Air: India's latest airline

India recently welcomed its newest airline, Akasa Air, as the aviation industry began to recover from a difficult period. Founded by former Jet Airways CEO Vinay Dube



and supported by renowned investor Rakesh Jhunjhunwala (who unfortunately passed away shortly after the inaugural flight), Akasa aims to utilise an ultra-low-cost strategy and benefit from the increasing air traffic in the country.

In a recent development, India's newest airline introduced its in-flight safety manual in Braille for individuals with visual impairments. In line with the company's value of empathy and providing a consistent experience for all customers, the Braille manual provides safety instructions in English and Hindi.

In November 2021, Akasa made a significant impact with its order for 72 Boeing 737 MAX aircraft, 11 of which are already in the fleet. As the second MAX operator in India and the only one currently receiving deliveries, Akasa hopes to emulate the success of market leader IndiGo, which employed a similar approach with the Airbus A320 in 2005.

Since its debut in August, Akasa has expanded to serve 13 destinations in India and plans to go international in 2023 with the delivery of 20 more aircraft. The carrier intends to grow by linking smaller cities to major hubs and gradually expanding across busier routes. The airline will begin offering daily flights between Hyderabad and Bengaluru, as well as between Hyderabad and Goa, starting on January 25, 2023.

With a seemingly bright future ahead of Akasa, the new entrant plans to expand its presence throughout India by adding more cities to its network, with a focus on connecting metro areas to tier 2 and tier 3 cities. The airline plans to increase its fleet size by adding one new aircraft every 15 days. By the end of March 2023, the fleet will consist of 18 aircraft, and over the next four years, an additional 54 aircraft will be added, bringing the total fleet size to 72 aircraft.

Jet Airways aiming to re-enter Indian skies

Once India's biggest private carrier, Jet stopped flying in April 2019 after running out of cash and was taken to a bankruptcy court. A consortium of London-based Kalrock Capital and UAE businessman Murari Lal Jalan planned to infuse close to ₹1,000 crore in the defunct Jet Airways and also be willing to give collateral. However, currently, the creditors of Jet Airways and the company's new owners are

deadlocked over a resolution plan to pull the airline out of bankruptcy, putting the carrier's future in limbo.

Indian airspace garnering attention

The world over, as airlines are turning profitable, repaying their loans, and looking at adding capacity and network if 2022 was action-packed, 2023 may be even more so. With promising developments in the aviation sector of the country, foreign and domestic aviation companies are fighting for a pie of the Indian sky.

India-Italy connection strengthened with launch of nonstop flights from New Delhi to Rome

ITA Airways has entered into an agreement with the Indo-Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IICCI) to offer discounted fares for employees of IICCI member companies travelling between India and Italy.

The direct flight will allow passengers from India to easily access not only Italy but also other destinations in Europe, the Mediterranean, South and North America through connections at ITA Airways' Rome Fiumicino hub.

The partnership aims to improve relations between the two countries and increase trade and investment. This will be supported by the launch of a direct flight from New Delhi to Rome, which began operations three times a week, starting on December 4, 2022. The flight will depart from New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport at 3:50 am and arrive in Rome at 8:10 am, with the return flight departing from Rome at 2:10 pm and arriving in New Delhi the following day at 2:00 am local time.

ITA Airways entered India market for the first time and will be the only airline to offer a direct flight between Rome Fiumicino and New Delhi. On December 30, 2022, ITA Airways announced that it has added an additional weekly frequency to its direct flights from Rome to New Delhi, and vice versa. This means that there will now be four flights per week, instead of three, available for travel in March, April, and May 2023. The additional flight will operate on Sundays from Rome and on Mondays from New Delhi.



Virgin Atlantic introduces A330neo to contribute to sustainable travel



▲ Alex McEwan

Terming 2022, as the ‘year of recovery,’ Alex McEwan, Country Manager – South Asia, Virgin Atlantic shared, “In India, 2022 was our biggest year ever, with three direct daily services from India to the UK (two from Delhi and one from Mumbai) as well as the launch of our codeshare partnership with India’s largest airline, IndiGo.”

Owing to India’s rapid economic growth, McEwan expects 2023

to continue the growth hinted at by the second half of 2022. He said, “We have had a strong summer with relatively few travel restrictions, but that one summer alone is not enough to recapture all the demand that was lost during two years of restrictions, so we can expect continued high demand. This will be particularly true for India, which seems to be bucking the global trend with strong economic growth forecasts.”

If the pandemic and a subsequent war were not enough to diminish the aviation industry’s sales, the sustainability issues concerning the industry’s carbon emissions prove to be the third nail in the coffin. To tackle this Virgin Atlantic recently introduced A330neos to their fleet, McEwan further added to this by saying, “We will induct 16 of these next-generation aircraft across the next five years. The A330neo will be a huge contributor towards our ambitious target of net zero emissions by 2050. Through

multi-billion-dollar fleet investments in recent years, we now have one of the greenest and youngest fleets in the sky, with an average of just six years. This compares favorably to many of our peers. Not only is this better for the environment, but it also means customers can feel confident that when they fly Virgin Atlantic, they will experience the very best aircraft technology and inflight service on offer.”

Virgin seeks a lot of support from its travel partners, agencies, and co-airlines to spread its message of their plans on spreading awareness around Indigo and Virgin’s codeshare in the year 2023, “The customers can connect from 15 points in India onto our flights from Delhi and Mumbai to London. Travellers have so many options when connecting between IndiGo and Virgin Atlantic, and can also take advantage of our seamless connections at Heathrow onto more than 200 destinations in the USA alongside our partner Delta Airlines,” McEwan added.

While 2023 seems like a year filled with opportunities, the situation seems not as easy as it looks on the surface. Like every other airline, Virgin Atlantic has to deal with the weakening euro and sky-high jet fuel prices.

VietJet’s notable expansion in India

During the first nine months of 2022, there was a significant increase in the number of flights and passengers compared to the previous year. Specifically, there was a 150 per cent increase in the number of flights and a 225 per cent increase in the number of passengers. In total, there were 87.7 thousand flights and 15.4 million passengers.

There was an increase of 31 per cent in the number of Indian tourists compared to the previous month, and a more than 50 per cent increase compared to the same period in the previous year. A total of 109,000 Indians visited Vietnam in the first 11 months of 2022, making India one of the top 10 markets for inbound tourists to Vietnam.

In a recent development, VietJet has added a new route connecting Ahmedabad, India to Da Nang, Vietnam and will operate flights on this route on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. This expansion of VietJet’s flight network between India and Vietnam will provide Indian travellers with more convenient and affordable travel options.





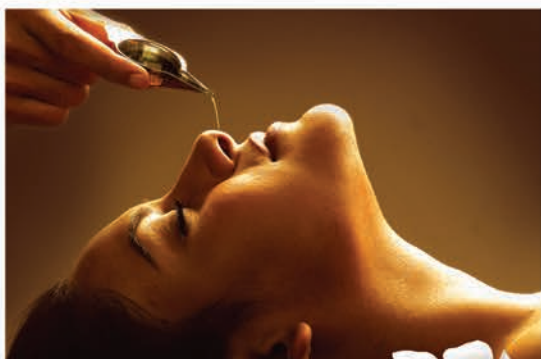
WALK IN NATURE AND FEEL THE HEALING POWER OF THE TREES



Vedic Wellness

Ayurveda & Naturopathy

**AT THE AWARD WINNING WELLNESS RESORT
IN EASTERN INDIA**



For details please call : 9830025900 / 9830820427 / 98308204480 / 3366229900



The era of **REVENGE TRAVEL** in 2022 and what **TRAVEL ENTAILS** in 2023

As we move into 2023, there will be an increase in the number of people travelling either for business purposes, leisure or workations. Like in 2022, there is a sizeable number of people expected to travel in 2023.

Prabuddha Sen

Over the past few years, the pandemic forced many of us to stay closer to home, but it also sparked a long-suppressed desire to travel again. Post-pandemic, the year 2022, witnessed positive steps in travel normalcy, wherein the industry saw an increasing demand for offbeat locations and international travel. The year also saw a surge in revenge travel from India and countries around the world. This was majorly due to geographies reopening and the resumption of regular international flights. According to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, international tourist arrivals nearly tripled (+172 per cent) from January to July 2022, compared to the same period in 2021. Similarly, VFS Global, the world's largest outsourcing and technology services specialist for governments and diplomatic missions worldwide, witnessed visa application volumes double over the last year, indicating a faster-than-expected recovery to reach the pre-pandemic levels.

Looking back at 2022, we noticed some distinguished trends emerge. The unprecedented demand for travel resulted in extending the conventional peak season up to the conventional lean period of September-October. This trend was first noticed in 2021 soon after international borders began to open, and we see it repeating this year as well. Until last year the industry expected a slow but resilient recovery, perhaps underestimating the



▲ Prabuddha Sen

strong travel demand waiting to explode. By the time the peak summer travel season arrived in India, the international borders of most countries attracting Indian travellers had opened, travel restrictions had eased, and most essentially, regular international flight operations had resumed.

Shift in seasonality

Even as the pandemic remained volatile in some parts of the world, embassies started getting inundated with visa applications

from tourists, business travellers and students, among others. However, agility and adaptability in VFS Global operations ensured that we were well equipped to deal with this wave of 'revenge travel'. In 2022, revenge travel was a great way to relieve stress for travellers, and it has also boosted the travel industry multi-fold. Throughout the peak summer season in India, we managed visa applications averaging more than 20,000 a day without any impact on our turn-around timelines. However, visa applicants did face some issues with the demand far exceeding supply. This resulted in limited visa appointment availability and stretched timelines on visa decisions. But it was a phase of new learnings for all stakeholders. While embassies and consulates can use the experience to enhance capacity planning, visa customers could apply early. Most countries accept visa applications up to 90 days (3 months) before one's date of travel. According to the revised Schengen Visa Code, effective February 02, 2020, you can apply for a Schengen visa up to six months before your date of travel.

Seamless visa solutions

While traditionally popular destinations from India such as the UK, Canada, Europe, the Middle East, and Thailand for instance, are continuing to attract various categories of travellers such as tourists, students, and business travellers, countries offering seamless visa solutions are witnessing high demand. For instance, Indonesia recently

launched a fast-track Visa on Arrival service for 86 nationalities, including India. Similarly, VFS Global offers an e-visa solution for travellers to Azerbaijan that ensures a seamless travel experience. Our e-visa on arrival service for travellers bound to Thailand is equally popular given its benefits of quick and hassle-free immigration clearance and exit from the airport upon arrival. The pent-up demand and improving traveller confidence are expected to further narrow the difference in visa applications this year as compared to the pre-pandemic levels.

The latest offering in the basket is the digital e-extension platform that enables visitors a seamless option to extend their stay in Thailand. Developed by VFS Global as per the directives of the Immigration Bureau of Thailand, key benefits of the platform include simplified online application submission and payment options, no submission of a passport needed, and timesaving with a quicker extension approval process. Moreover, no physical copies of documents or local cash are needed while visiting the Immigration office.

Technology the key differentiator

Technology has continued to be a key differentiator as an increasing number of

travellers are embracing digital solutions in the new normal. Being early in initiating our digital journey, we could transform our processes in line with changing market needs. We introduced services such as Digital Document Check (DDC) that enable customers to get visa documents verified before visiting a visa application centre, thereby making the experience less time-consuming and stress-free. Similarly, our Visa At Your Doorstep (VAYD) service, which provides an end-to-end visa submission facility to customers at a location of their choice, caters to growing demands for a contactless experience and enables our customers to prioritise safe travel.

The growing demand for DIY (do it yourself) technologies led to us introducing the electronic mode of visa or e-visa services. Thus, our optional value-added services and the look, feel and format of VACs have evolved to meet the demands of the self-informed and discerning customer of today. For the Embassies/Consulates, we added additional process efficiencies, primarily from improvements enabled through digital tools like IVR (interactive voice response) for our helplines and Chatbot help desks, which will support employees in completing critical application tasks more quickly, thus

improving turnaround times and reducing errors.

Outlook 2023

Even as new COVID variants remain volatile, the unprecedented demand witnessed in 2022 indicates the remarkable recovery in travellers' confidence which is expected to grow stronger in 2023, albeit with significant health and safety considerations that have become a key determining factor in new normal travel. In terms of market sentiment, India has always been a strong source for outbound travel and the volumes witnessed even during the recovery phase have been outstanding. Given its growing middle class and young population, the country has all the ingredients to remain a major player in the outbound tourism market.

Stakeholders in this sector will have to come together and work towards the common cause of stimulation of travel. Two aspects will be vital to driving demand - constant communication with customers and ensuring their health and safety. We may be entering a scenario where 'touch-less' or 'contactless' service is highly valued, and in this, technology can become the biggest enabler for companies to ensure an enhanced customer experience.

About the Author: Prabuddha Sen is the COO (South Asia) at VFS Global.

Biden administration proposes massive hike in immigration fees including H-1B visas

The application fees for employment-based visas, such as H1-B and L, are set to increase under a proposed US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) rule.

Team TTJ

As per reports, the Biden administration has proposed a massive hike in immigration fees, including the much sought-after H-1B visas for high-skilled foreign workers, which is very popular among Indian tech professionals.

Under the proposed rule, published by the USCIS, the application for the H-1B visa increases from \$460 to \$780, and L-1 from \$460 to \$1,385. The application fee for O-1 visas has been proposed to increase from \$460 to \$1,055. The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

In its federal notification, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

said that USCIS is primarily funded by fees charged to applicants and petitioners for immigration and naturalisation benefit requests. These fee collections fund the cost of fairly and efficiently adjudicating immigration benefit requests, including those provided without charge to refugees, asylum, and certain other applicants or petitioners, it argued.

The proposed rule went on a 60-day public opposition period, following which it is expected to be enforced. Under the proposed rule, the fee for the H-2B petitions (for seasonal, non-agricultural workers) is proposed to increase from \$460 to \$1,080.

The USCIS said the new fees would allow the immigration agency to more fully recover its operating costs, re-establish and maintain timely case processing, and prevent the accumulation of future case backlogs. The agency receives

approximately 96 per cent of its funding from filing fees, not from congressional appropriations.

The proposed fee rule is the result of a comprehensive fee review at the USCIS. That review determined that the agency's current fees, which have remained unchanged since 2016, fall far short of recovering the full cost of agency operations.

"This proposed rule allows the USCIS to more fully recover operating costs for the first time in six years and will support the administration's effort to rebuild the legal immigration system. In addition to improving customer service operations and managing the incoming workload, the USCIS must continue to fulfil our growing humanitarian mission, upholding fairness, integrity, and respect for all we serve," said Ur M. Jaddou, Director, USCIS.

Travel sector looks for brighter times ahead

Things have really changed in the tourism industry since the pandemic. After emerging from a turbulent past that provided a sound learning opportunity, the well-known travel players have set their priorities and formed robust strategies for growth and to sustain their business in the long run.

Swaati Chaudhury

At the onset of the New Year, it's time to assess the year gone by and take a look at the strategies adopted by the prominent travel groups based in India in order to survive the challenging times and have a peek into their New Year expectations. For all travel companies, focusing on the revival of the tourism sector was the topmost priority in the year that was.

For STIC Travel Group, the year 2022 marked a comeback for the entire travel industry. Isha Goyal, Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer of the Group explained, "There were initial setbacks in the year brought about by Omicron variant, war and various logistical challenges like delay in receiving visas and global airport infrastructure. The post-pandemic era has made us learn to be dependable and invest in manpower since the right team can make a lot of difference. Adaptability forms the mantra for survival. We have adopted an aggressive sales strategy, consistently following up and prioritising the cost factor. We were able to capitalise on students, leisure travellers, MICE and corporate groups."

While it's true that the pricing offered by airlines is high but there are reasons behind the price hike. Goyal said, "The airline industry is quite open to tie-ups and cooperation. There is greater confidence in the marketing team across airlines and hospitality players. The price rise factor is not something uncommon in the country and does not deter travellers from flying down to other destinations. Hence, supply and demand will continue to re-adjust."

Going by the travel trends that will emerge into prominence, Goyal further said, "Cruise is one such segment that



▲ Isha Goyal

is waiting for a comeback in a major way. MICE activities on cruises and regional cruises have gained ground. We are looking ahead to witness a major surge in outbound cruise in the leisure segment with the easing of visa norms and European travel logistics in the current year. The year 2023 also marks the 50th anniversary of our travel group and we look forward to expanding our business with a greater number of products."

Aaryan Leisure and Holidays is one of the leading tours and travel companies based out of Eastern India. Regarding the past year, Sanjeev Mehra, Director, Aaryan Leisure and Holidays, commented, "The outbreak of the pandemic brought unprecedented circumstances that had a huge impact on the fragile travel and hospitality industry. The survival of the travel and hospitality sector was at stake, and it was indeed a tough period for all of us. Having said this, it was a learning phase through webinars and knowledge



▲ Sanjeev Mehra

sharing. Technology ruled the roost during pandemic times by providing novel tools. The year 2022 was an added advantage since it was the time to implement new technologies. The biggest challenge for us was to reach out to our valued customers and bring back their confidence in the post-pandemic world. Our customers became more price-conscious since the pandemic made them understand the value of money. We changed our strategies and marketing policies and provided our customers info on safety norms and regular travel updates. It was an overall sound year since the travel and hospitality industry could recover from an unpredictable crisis. Once again, travellers began touring both domestic and global turf. The pandemic gave us an opportunity to review our industry and analyse our strategies that were never thought of. The airline sector also posed a challenge for us with soaring airfares owing to limited flights. We are looking for better times in 2023."

With changes in business perceptions, new strategies were formed and old ones were scrapped. The trend was on pocket-friendly travel. Mehra informed, "Rebuilding customer confidence, selecting safe travel destinations, keeping with travel safety norms, providing value for money travel, ensuring that our travellers get full-fledged support on travel procedures to a particular destination, keeping our employees updated and imparting training to them and forming new partnerships with service providers in the quest to provide better customer service are some of our new-found strategies to entice the domestic travel sector."

In the context of high airfares offered by the airlines, Mehra said, "Leisure travellers holidaying with their families aspire to make the best use of their holidays and the corporate sector intends to motivate their employees through incentive tours. If around 60 per cent of the tour budget is spent on airfares and luxury hotels, then travellers enjoy their vacation with the remaining 40 per cent of their budget. Airlines and hospitality form the core pillars of the tourism industry and when airfares are high with limited service, the balance is tilted towards these industries and it becomes difficult for the travel industry to sustain. It's time that the airlines and hospitality sector need to re-look at their pricing factor and services in order to create the right balance for the travel industry." He also averred that the frequency of a number of flights was curtailed during the pandemic that needs to be revived. "We are trying to unveil a host of new destinations for our travellers with an effort to create unforgettable memories in 2023."

In this constantly evolving world, things have become highly unpredictable these days and one should be strong enough to embrace tough times. Kaushik Ghosh, Chief Operating Officer, Globe All India Services, said, "A flexible, agile and ready-to-adopt approach is the mantra for survival and growth. In other words, an out-of-the-box approach to life is a win-win strategy. The past year was quite a tough and testing time for us. We were once a corporate travel entity, with MICE as the second entity during pre-pandemic days. With time, we have learned to develop new expertise and have multiple windows that are highly essential. We are in the process of building capabilities



▲ Kaushik Ghosh

in order to tap the current outbound and inbound tourism potential on the domestic front."

The airlines and hospitality industry were hard hit by the outbreak of the pandemic. Ghosh feels that these sectors have no other options but to redefine their approach and hike their prices. "Both airlines and hospitality sector are going hand-in-hand and are having a uniform approach. It is essential to have strategies in place in an attempt to recover from the losses and move ahead. Similarly, as travel consultants, we have to set our priorities and build strategies in order to manage the survival and growth of our business. In current times, airlines have emerged firm and clear in their approach," further said Ghosh.

As far as expectations from 2023 are concerned, "It will be quite exciting for the tourism industry. Both government and media need to deal with the current COVID scenario caused by new sub-variant BF7 in a mature way since all of us have been vaxxed. There is a plethora of medicines and protocols to provide support for those getting infected or else all recovery activities will prove to be futile," signed off Ghosh.

Take the case of Ahmedabad-based Pathfinders Holidays which is best described as a travel curator and lives up to the reputation of the one-liner- Curating Holidays and Creating Memories. Mahendra Vakharia, Managing Director of Pathfinders Holidays, explained, "Travel has bounced back in the past year and has recorded steady growth in terms of tourist count and revenue. The year



▲ Mahendra Vakharia

that has just passed by flickered as the light at the end of the dark tunnel. We have learnt to accept each day at a time and strive to deliver our best with an aim to build a long-lasting relationship not only with our partners but also with our global network partners."

The travel group makes use of a simple strategy in a bid to stay connected with its customers. Vakharia said, "We keep on providing travel updates to our customers relating to changing rules and new hotels. Our referral customers are quite supportive in the sphere of business and have also referred us to new customers, and this has enabled us to march ahead. We adhere to our business policy and do not offer credit for the sale of any of the services and this has bolstered our financial position in challenging times."

In post-pandemic times, the sharp rise in airfare and hotel cost is making fliers fume. Vakharia further said, "There is no such current solution to solve the issue of high airfare. The airlines and hotel groups should work to develop a strong rapport with the travel agents. Based on the travel patterns and demand that we have experienced last year, 2023 will be great. Our group has geared up well to encounter any kind of challenges and deal with new business. The mindset of travellers has undergone a change and they are in quest of new destinations, have become environmentally conscious and are interested in communing with nature with a view to create joyful memories through travel."

'Mass Tourism must be replaced by responsible tourism now'

Tejbir Singh Anand, Founder and Managing Director of Holiday Moods Adventures, has been at the forefront of adventure tourism in India. He has been climbing, trekking, and exploring the world for over 30 years and during his prime. Helping to strategise travel, grow, scale, and respond to travel disruption ignites his passion. With TTJ, Tejbir Singh enthusiastically shares about the past year, some pointers to take ahead for a successful 2023, and interesting trends developing in the travel industry.

Prashant Nayak

Holiday Moods Adventures is an ISO 9001:2015 certified company, top-rated by NATGEO Adventure and bestowed with multiple tourism awards. The company promotes sustainable "Handcrafted Experiences, Stories and Adventures" for the responsible traveller. Their philosophy is to promote immersive and engaging native experiences. Holiday Moods are also India's premier fully licensed company promoting global Adventure Travel on seven continents.

Tejbir Singh is an expert consultant in helping develop 'mountain and adventure tourism' that is economically sustainable. Tejbir is also a Founding Member and Board of Director at FAITH and Senior Vice President Adventure Tour Operators Association of India. With learnings from over three decades, his happiness lies in being able to assist new companies. Tejbir believes that travel technology is essential to all in tourism. Thus, his specialisation is advising and helping implement digital strategies and build communities.

Looking back at 2022, Tejbir says, "We woke up to 2022 energised and brimming with new ideas. 2022 has been very good for us, and we have been very busy throughout the year. However, the biggest learning of this pandemic is that Mass Tourism must be replaced by responsible tourism now. Hopefully, all conscious travellers, especially institutions and organisations would ask for certified and licensed travel agencies and hotels following greener initiatives. New SOPs/guidelines will make travelling a whole new experience. It



▲ Tejbir Singh

will make complete business sense for companies who talk about and practise new SOPs aligned with social distancing and safety rules that will be preferred by customers. This will be the face of the new traveller."

And as we go into 2023, Tejbir shares some pointers that can give direction to a successful enterprise post-COVID-19.

- Avoid price wars and mindless dilution of your revenue through newfound strategies, not just based on watering down revenue models.
- Rather than discounting and offering deals, offer value add-ons and attenuate the client.
- Attract the travellers by offering them unique native experiences that could create engaging stories for their social media content.
- Showcase the natural heritage around you and promote the joy of new know-how.

- Make a traveller's stay unique with immersive experiences available around you.
- Offer activities that the clients will love to flaunt on their digital platforms.

In 2022, there were game changers for Holiday Moods Adventures, which uplifted their brand image and indirectly attracted business for building a long-term sustainable global strategy. They started positioning their business and branding accordingly, setting them apart from the immediate competition. They started building different communities of their travellers according to their product segments. The Loyalty Program was one of the good initiatives to make a strong bond with clients. They started talking about beliefs, values, and principles; hence, they started getting like-minded customers. They launched Go Green initiatives to protect the environment. They started respecting local cultures by nurturing arts, culture, and local talents. They made enterprising offers for their customers that boosted the local economy of the places visited.

The modern world loves to hear about conservation initiatives. Holiday Moods invented programs that convert into stories. They started sharing how they conserve resources, make a green impact, and reduce their carbon footprint. They talked about how they minimise waste with the world and potential customers and how they are making a difference. They flaunt high-quality management and systems, which attract more responsible customers.

Though Holiday Moods Adventures DNA has remained the same

throughout its journey of 25 years, it forayed into various verticals in 2022 but is still witnessing robust growth. But they could better capitalise on Adventure Travel, Outbound Experiential Travel, and Adventure Camps and Resorts.

Tejbir feels that due to the impact of COVID, the old travel agent/operator is almost dying and will face many issues and problems in the future. Post-COVID is a very fast-paced, tech-enabled world for both the traveller and the supplier. Learning is a never-ending process, and one must keep up-to-date with the latest developments. "At Holiday Moods, we learned to use digital tools. There is a plethora of free tools now which are the need of the hour to fast-track one's knowledge to collaborate with teams on the cloud. We empowered ourselves with Artificial Intelligence/Virtual Reality/Augmented Reality - the future is this! For e.g. gone are the days of live chat where a 24x7 human interface was required. We replaced our live chat with a chatbot with well-crafted scripts, leading a customer to quickly filter and conclude a request enabling a prompt amazing reply back. Another example is tracking customers' digital footprints and sending auto-reminders leading them back. Virtual Reality tours are the new marketing tools that are amazing travellers. There are hundreds of such amazing futuristic tools available to learn and implement. Embrace technology- is the only way forward for growth! If you don't have a CRM installed yet (sorry but this is unavoidable) invest in technology that can increase your productivity 10x," advised Tejbir.

Tejbir further shares 11 important recent trends and customer patterns that impressed him and are emerging in the world of tourism:

Adventure Tourism Market: The Adventure tourism market was valued at \$0.5 trillion in 2018 and is projected to reach around \$1.7 trillion by 2030. It is the fastest-growing segment of our industry, predicted to grow at a CAGR of 17.4 per cent. In India, the revenue generated from adventure package tours currently stands at INR 1,772 crores. Most companies are hesitant to offer soft adventure offerings to their clients and pass on the business. In contrast, the key is to collaborate with the best and safe partners with a solid reputation, adding more to your product portfolio, revenues and sales.

Outbound Travel to Meet Family: In pre-liberalisation days, with little disposable income and fewer options, holidays for most middle-class Indians were about visiting friends and families in India. And the trend continues but with a direction towards overseas travel. According to recent reports, a high 43 per cent of leisure travellers from India say visiting friends and relatives was the main reason behind their overseas travel.

Extended Adventure Weekends Abroad: Weekend holidays in nearby hill stations are passé. Now, with direct flights to several foreign tourist destinations, Indians would rather spend their extended weekends overseas. The adventure travel segment has gained traction; most clients want to experience activities.

Short-Haul Direct International Flights: Destinations within five hours of flight time are seeing the biggest growth. Some important emerging destinations, with some quick examples, are Vietnam, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Maldives, Thailand, Hong Kong, UAE, Singapore, etc.

Higher Holiday Frequency Within India and Abroad: It is also noticeable that Indians are now taking more frequent holidays, with the recurrence around once every three months.

Experiential and Active Travel: As Indian travellers are becoming wanderers and explorers, more and more Indians are turning experimental, looking for customised trips, opting for offbeat destinations and newer experiences in India and overseas.

Business Travellers Gender Spin: As more and more women in India are joining the workforce and the number of business travellers is likely to surge by 2030, it's time to focus on Women Travel and take the subject as seriously as never before. Women business travellers, today pegged at 25 per cent of the total statistics, are set to rise by 891 per cent by 2030.

Senior Citizens - The new golden customer: This aspect signals available disposable income and a shift in attitude to travel more frequently. Saving throughout life till the end has undergone a paradigm shift where senior citizens above 65 are emerging as an important

category of international travellers that will peak by 2030. Currently pegged at 1.3 million, senior travellers are set to rise to 7.3 million by 2030.

Social Media Fever Travel: The proportion of travellers who post updates, feedback, and pictures on their social media platforms while travelling is on the rise. India leads the way, followed by Indonesian and Chinese travellers. The company products need to be visible on social media platforms inspiring various hashtags and being a part of such community groups.

Smartphone Revolution: The world's two most populous nations, India and China, will drive the tourist numbers. They will also wield enormous clout with their money power, most of whom are young travellers using their smartphones to make travel bookings. The segment of 18 to 30-year-olds will lead and revolutionise the travel industry. So, one needs to check whether their website is mobile responsive, and offers a booking engine option.

Empowering business with Artificial Intelligence/Virtual Reality/ Augmented Reality: This is the future! Gone are the days of live chat with a dedicated 24x7 human interface. It's time to replace an automated chatbot with well-crafted scripts. Another example is tracking customers' digital footprints and sending auto-reminders, leading them back. Virtual Reality tours are the new marketing tools that are amazing travellers. There are hundreds of such amazing futuristic tools available now.

In 2023, Tejbir and his team at Holiday Moods Adventures are geared up with full of enthusiasm and new ideas. "This is our silver jubilee year as we complete 25 years of existence. As we move ahead, Holiday Moods Adventures has launched itself as a DMC for active and experiential destinations such as Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Finland and New Zealand. There are other destinations also coming up shortly, such as Australia. What makes us different is that our offerings and itineraries are completely based on activities. We will be offering many fixed departures. In addition, an online B2B travel agent login is also being launched shortly where agents can freely download detailed itineraries with real-time prices and request for instant bookings," concludes Tejbir.

CHHATTISGARH

The leading beacon of Tribal Tourism

A state which runs through the entire eastern periphery of Madhya Pradesh, also sharing its borders with Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. A state which boasts of a forest cover of almost 45 per cent and nearly 32 per cent of the tribal population. Chhattisgarh has positioned itself as a destination full of surprises with some of its amazing destinations, offering immense opportunities for Tribal, Adventure, Cultural, and Eco-tourism. TTJ spoke to Anil Kumar Sahu, Managing Director, Chhattisgarh Tourism Board, to know how the state's tourism industry fared in 2022 and what are its plans for the future.

Gurjit Singh Ahuja

Situated in the heart of the Indian sub-continent, Chhattisgarh is the ninth-largest state of India. Steeped in mythological tales and epics with ancient archaeological and heritage sites, its unique tribal heritage and culture, Chhattisgarh has carved for itself a niche as a tourism destination of religious, cultural, tribal, and historical importance. Chhattisgarh is blessed with picturesque vistas, natural formations, and historical sites like the Buddhist Stupa at Sirpur, Chitrakote falls, Mendri Ghoomar waterfall in Bastar, Tirathgarh Falls, and, the twin Ganesh Statues in Barsur. A lot is yet to be explored, so the scope and potential for the expansion of tourism activities are immense.

Sahu elaborates, "Tourism in Chhattisgarh was never really impacted by the COVID-19 surge, as domestic and intrastate tourism was always happening. There was a little lull for some time but now things are looking back on track to the pre-COVID levels. The third edition of the Tribal Dance Festival was a resounding success. We had dance troupes from nine countries and 28 Indian states with 1200 artists performing. All these artists had the opportunity to experience Chhattisgarh firsthand and we will now have 1200 brand ambassadors for Chhattisgarh across the globe."

"We will continue to focus on promoting and highlighting the tribal and cultural heritage of our state. Our endeavour is to promote the indigenous tribal culture, festivals, fairs, and art of the state. Chhattisgarh, has multiple tribes constituting one-third of the state's total population. All these tribes have distinct



▲ Anil Kumar Sahu

cultural identities, dialects, festivals, dances, religious practices, beliefs, and deities. We will pursue showcasing the cultural diversity of these tribes as part of our experiential tourism experience or rather promoting "Living the Experience," added Sahu.

Spiritual Tourism is also another area of strong focus under 'Ram Van Gaman Paryatan Paripath' nine sites in Chhattisgarh will be developed. The 'Van Gaman Path' was the route taken by Lord Ram on his way to the 14-year exile, as he had spent a major part of exile in Chhattisgarh. The first phase involving the development of the nine marked spots is underway, three sites have already been inaugurated, and work on the balance will be completed by June 2023.

The development of these tourism facilities is planned to make the infrastructure at these places at par with the world tourism standard. The project will restore and develop all the places linked to Lord Ram starting from Koriya district in North Chhattisgarh to Sukma district in South Chhattisgarh. These will include Sitamarhi Harchowka, Ramgarh, Shivrinarayan), Turturiya, Chandkhuri, Rajim, Sihawa Saptarishi Ashram Jagdalpur, and Ramaram.

The aim is to create a win-win through this scheme as not only places of cultural and religious importance will be revamped and beautified, but will attract lakhs of tourists which will help in boosting the local economy and create jobs for the youth of these areas.

"Chhattisgarh is very safe for tourism and tourists are very welcome all through the state and there should be no apprehension in minds of the visitors," adds Sahu.

The Bastar Dusshera is another of Chhattisgarh's major attractions and a grand festival celebrated in Jagdalpur. It is unique in the way it is celebrated, the festival lasts for 75 days. The festival is accompanied by several local tribal customs and is celebrated as a congregation of the native goddess of the tribals of Bastar, Devi Mavli, and her sisters.

"Our efforts continue to inform and educate the traveller and the travel service providers about the unique proposition that our state offers and attract tourists from within India and across the world to our state creating employment and making Chhattisgarh a tourism-friendly state," concludes Sahu.



Blend of dance, art and culture

MPTB has introduced activities like heritage walks, nature visits, e-cycle tours, and soft adventure sports by catering to the needs of all types of tourist

Located in the Chhatarpur district of Madhya Pradesh, the UNESCO site of 'Khajuraho Group of Monuments' is famous for its Nagara-style architecture and graceful sculptures of nayikas and deities.

The temples of Khajuraho are India's unique gift to the world, representing life in every form and mood that has been captured in stone, testifying not only to the craftsman's artistry but also to the extraordinary breadth of vision of the Chandela Rajputs under whose rule the temples were conceived and constructed. The Khajuraho temples were built in the short span of a hundred years, from 950 to 1050 AD in a truly inspired burst of creativity. Of

the 85 original temples, 22 have survived till today to constitute one of the world's great artistic wonders.

Every year in February, tourists witness Khajuraho Dance Festival in Khajuraho. This grand cultural extravaganza is a stunning blend of art and architecture. One gets to experience a wonderful symphony of mesmerising classical dance performances being performed by renowned artists coming from different cities and towns in India.

This mega festival is a spirited celebration of classical dance forms, art, and culture, wherein renowned exponents of Indian classical and folk dances are performed throughout the week. Apart from the graceful dance performances, there are other highlights that can be enjoyed simultaneously.

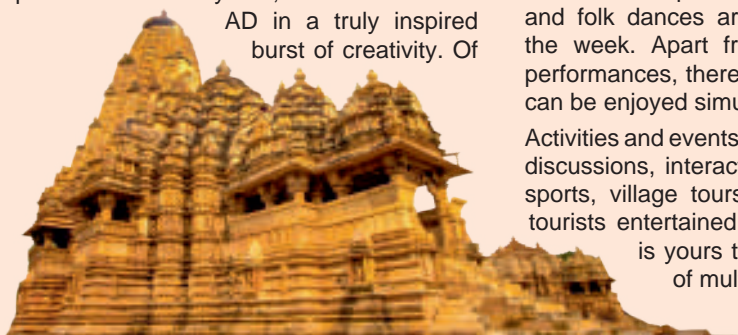
Activities and events like art exhibitions, panel discussions, interactive sessions, adventure sports, village tours and much more keep tourists entertained throughout. The choice is yours to opt from a wide range of multi-dimensional activities.

Khajuraho dance festival is not only a festival of dances; it has been transformed into a wholesome festival of dance, literature, fine arts and everything. The celebration of art has been all along linked with tourism in Madhya Pradesh. Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board (MPTB) has taken several initiatives to publicize and engage the tourists during the week of the festival.

At this festival, MPTB has introduced activities like heritage walks, nature visits, e-cycle tours, and soft adventure sports by catering to the needs of all types of tourists. Be it a dance enthusiast or an adventure lover.

Screening of movies, documentaries, along experimental cinema of famous artists are also displayed to help viewers understand the dynamics of arts, music, literature, vocals, dance instrumental music, and various art forms.

One can also indulge in mouth-watering Bundeli recipes. Enjoy the widespread dishes and feel the goodness of Bundeli food.



Tourists who visited Khajuraho and Panna during the dance festival can also explore these activities



Camping: Bear Valley Camp - Village Jhinna, District Panna: Luxury Tent (Swiss Tent also available for 15 persons), Alpine tent for 18 persons, Team Games, Stargazing Trek to the hill of Panna, Bonfire, Night Jungle Safari, Live Music, Boat Safari

Village Tour: Old Khajuraho Village Tour: Start from Jawari Temple and end in Brahama Temple, Demonstration of Old Panchayat System, Durga Mandir

E-Bike Tour: Visit of Khajuraho – Western group of Temples- Gol Market- Chaturbhuj Temple- Vaman Temple- Archaeological Museum

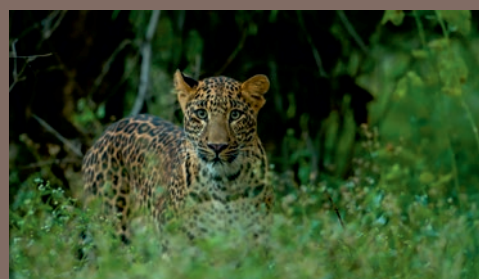
Segway Tour: Sunrise tour to Datla Pahad (2 hours), Sundet tour to Dalta Pahad (2 hours),

Khajuraho by night – A joy ride (1.5 hours), Farm tour (2 hours), Trail Joy Ride (15 mins)

Water Sports: Speed Boat, Banana Ride, Shikara Boat, Raft Boat in Kutni Water Body and rafting in Ken River

A visit to Panna

If you are mulling exploring Khajuraho, do not forget to visit Panna National Park, situated just 32 km away and a mere 30-minute drive from Khajuraho. The jungles harbour many species of wildlife. The tiger can be glimpsed here, with other rare species such as the leopard, wolf and gharial.



Things to do in Panna

Explore wellness tourism at Kairali Ayurgram, Jeep Safari in Panna National Park to explore wildlife in MP.

Places to visit in and around Khajuraho

Adivart Museum, Dhubela Museum, Kandariya Mahadeo temple, Chaunsath Yogini temple, Chitragupta Temple, Vishwanath Temple, Lakshmana Temple, Lakshmana Temple, Matangeswara Temple, Parsvanath Temple, Ghantai Temple, Adhinath Temple, Duladeo Temple, Chaturbhuj Temple, Sound & Light Show, State Museum of Tribal and Folk Arts, Adivart Tribal and Folk Art Museum, Dhubela Museum

Places to visit in and around Panna

Wildlife, Fort of Ajaygarh, Mahamati Prannathji Mandir, Pandav falls, National Museum, Panna Diamond Mines

Plan a trip to this picturesque destination in Madhya Pradesh and be a part of the Khajuraho Dance Festival where all these multi-dimensional segments are waiting for you to explore.

Travel Associations' initiatives to strengthen tourism in 2023

After the initial hiccup in the first quarter of 2022, tourism in India exhibited a much better performance than in 2021. While facing new challenges and uncertainties during the recovery phase in 2022, it was also important for the travel industry to rethink and rebuild. Travel associations in India were busy motivating their members and implementing actionable frameworks to instil confidence while aligning the organisations' practices and activities to the new changes caused by the pandemic. TTJ reached out to some of the leading travel trade associations across the country to know how they managed 2022 and their action plans for 2023.

Prashant Nayak



Jyoti Mayal

President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI)

On a mission to fast-forward tourism

2022 was an excellent year to reconnect and re-establish business relationships. After the COVID-19 devastation, the industry forged ties at levels. Collective efforts are what all of us in the tourism domain require. I am glad to share those positive vibes and overwhelming responses, be it for the meetings, training

programs, travel, or offline or online events that indeed worked for the betterment of us all.

2022 was also the year of creating history in TAAI, in which we saw unity in the entire membership to choose team 2022-24 unanimously. In 2022, I can proudly say that we became the first-ever association to organise a cruise convention. It has opened a window for expanding cruise businesses in India. The travel trade will benefit from this in the long run. Many cruise lines approached us after the Convention who would like to start their services in India.

TAAI also held its orientation meeting at Almaty with the entire team for 2022-2024. It was a new learning destination for 75 managing committee members and region /chapter office bearers. TAAI has been aggressively connecting with various stakeholders, airlines, IATA, embassies, and tourism bodies, both national and international. We are also investing in the skilling and upskilling of our members

and staff. Most importantly, we work on all policy matters with the Government at centre and state levels and individual ministries. In 2022, we missed out on organising our Convention in Sri Lanka for reasons known to the world. However, we will keep our promise to support our friend and neighbour and try our best to reschedule as soon as possible.

In 2023, we have lined up a few more important events and conclaves to showcase and educate the travel trade sector of India. We will also hold various events under the WITT (Women in TAAI and Tourism) banner to support and promote women in the industry. TAAI, as an association, has always been proactive in supporting its members through various initiatives. We plan to organise fruitful and meaningful meetings for our sector to grow, prosper, and be back on track at the earliest and prosper. We take our role as a leader association very seriously and will continue to invest as a private partner with the Government at all levels to fast-forward tourism.

Tourism is an evolving sector and will continue to have challenges. However, in the aftermath of a pandemic, the most important thing is to have the industry status as soon as possible. There are numerous benefits associated with the grant of the status, so I am pushing at every level to get it for the tourism industry. In addition, we need an aggressive marketing campaign for the tourism industry and tax benefits. A right approach, will, and adequate push given to the sector at this stage would do wonders for the country. From an aviation angle, we need an Indian regulator and a process to protect consumers and our member's money and also the high-handedness of some airlines.



Rajiv Mehra

President, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO)

Inbound travel expected to pick up pace in 2023

2022 has been a challenging year for us, and we have lived up to it successfully. We understood early that the key takeaways are 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 to catch the business. Indians travelling within India in large numbers have shown 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 inbound tourism. However, with the world opening up and outbound gathering pace, this

will ease over time.

In 2022, the policy of persuasion was kept alive by IATO, and the UK and Canadian e-visa is an outcome of our request and constant follow-up with the authorities. Besides doing away with the Air Suvidha Portal and other facilitating parameters. Our request to GST Council was well received, and so was the TCS issue. Our interaction with members and knowledge session by experts in taxation was of immense help to our valued members.

In 2022, a major development at IATO was redrafting the IATO MOA after incorporating all the inputs from our valued members and the Executive Committee. All welcomed this. As regards events, IATO members participated in the Namaste Vietnam 2022, the 4th Himalayan Hospitality, Tourism Awards and Recognition programme for the Tourism and Hospitality industry of Eastern Himalaya region in Siliguri and attended the 10th edition of ITM at Aizawl, Mizoram. The 37th IATO Convention at Lucknow was a fitting finale of our persuasion to promote Inbound and, once again, discuss the key issues with the policymakers.

For the mass revival of inbound tourism, our nodal Ministry's marketing and promotion activities are of paramount importance. International roadshows, participation in International Travel Marts, MDA assistance for ITB and FITUR, and FAM Trips for Foreign Tour Operators and Bloggers are imperative.

In 2023, inbound travel will pick up the pace, provided the situation remains conducive. If the policies and new initiatives resonate with the voice of the stakeholders, then by the end of 2023, we should reach the pre-COVID figures. That marketing and promotional angle, as mentioned before, is of prime significance.

Again, in 2023, we would like to highlight to the Government, the need for complimentary participation for stakeholders in major events and participation of the Ministry in FITUR and ITB 2023. The Ministry should make a decision well in advance for participation in the above marts so that many tour operators can participate and get the desired numbers of participants, whether paid or complimentary.

There is also the need to allow the Rouble as currency to pay the e-visa fee in Russia. Due to the war, many Russian tourists faced difficulties paying online visa fees in USD due to western sanctions in which their international credit cards in USD were suspended. This aspect was affecting the inbound tourism business from Russia to India.

We will also examine the e-visa issues where European applicants, especially those from Germany and Spain, faced problems. We also want the Govt. of Rajasthan to withdraw its revised policy for the bookings of Palace on Wheels. In 2023, we look forward to our 38th IATO Convention at Aurangabad, Maharashtra.



Ajay Prakash

President, Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI)

Opening up effective communicating channels for members

2022 was the year of recovery. With the resumption of flights in March and the sustained opening of borders, the industry heaved a sigh of relief. We knew it wouldn't be easy to pick up the pieces and resume from where we left off in 2020, but there was hope,

resolve, and resilience, and we have come through.

It's been a significant year for TAFI, too. We kept in touch with our members through regular Chapter meetings - physical and virtual. We added close to 100 new members during the year, launched a new Chapter -our 12th in Jammu and Kashmir, and held a memorable Convention in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia, on the theme "Build Back Better." An association derives its strength from the membership, and the members look to the Association for skills and support; the key is communication. TAFI did that effectively through many channels, including a fortnightly newsletter.

We have revamped our website, and our members can access over 100 free sector-specific and soft skills courses. We're also launching in-depth destination knowledge modules for our members to upgrade and enhance their selling skills for new and unusual destinations.

As we advance, 2023 promises to be a positive year. The Indian economy is projected to grow between 6 and 7 per cent, and traditionally, tourism has always outstripped GDP growth. Despite high airfares and visa woes, domestic and outbound tourism have shown positive trends. Hopefully,

the latest COVID scare emanating from China will only be a blip! Inbound numbers, though, have been disappointing. This could be due to a need for adequate and sustained marketing and publicity campaigns in key overseas markets over the last couple of years. It remains to be seen what impact the closure of India Tourism offices worldwide will have and whether the Indian missions overseas will fill the gap.

As we've seen, there is no point in expecting direct financial benefits for the industry. What we do look forward to, however, is an enabling environment that facilitates ease of business. The GST regime needs to be simplified, and the rate of taxation needs to be lowered to a more practical level, as 18 per cent makes our star hotels uncompetitive. The TDS on tour packages puts Indian companies at a disadvantage vis-à-vis overseas operators. Each state has different tax rates for tourist vehicles - which need to be streamlined and moved into the digital space. The Fastag can be the medium for tax collection at State borders. But above all, there has to be legislation for consumer protection. Aviation is the backbone of the travel and tourism industry, but there's no protection for travellers or travel agents in case of airline bankruptcy. The obvious solution is to put a small charge on every ticket as insurance against airline failure. We have raised these issues before the Government and will continue to do so.

TAFI champions the cause of safe, responsible, and sustainable tourism and urges all our partners to join hands to achieve this goal. In 2023, we are planning one domestic and one international convention. We are in talks with some Indian states and countries that have expressed an interest in hosting a TAFI Convention.



Ajeet Bajaj

President, Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI)

ATOAI to make 2023 a transformational year for adventure travel in India

Pre-pandemic, Adventure Travel was a US 683-billion-dollar industry globally, showing a 21 per cent Compound Annual Growth rate since 2012. In India, we have every conceivable geographical terrain. We are a biodiversity hotspot and have 73 per

cent of our country's culturally diverse Himalayan range. Given our huge potential vis-à-vis adventure and sustainable tourism, we can easily double our inbound figures, presently at 10 million tourists in the next five years through Adventure Tourism alone.

Boosting adventure tourism will also make India a year-round destination since the peak season for adventure travel is during the shoulder months of cultural tourism.

Setting up the National Board for Adventure Tourism by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India is a welcome step. We have already had two board meetings and are gaining momentum. This inter-ministerial board, with participation from state governments, will help resolve many issues about adventure tourism in India. We are also looking at implementing the ATOAI Safety and Sustainability Guidelines throughout the

country.

Our vision is to make India among the top ten adventure travel destinations in the world by 2030. ATOAI has ambitious plans for 2023. We are starting the year by organising a course in Disaster Management, First Aid, and CPR for our adventure guides by the National Disaster Response Force. This will be a force multiplier in case of natural disasters in our country and impart training in First Aid, rescue, and disaster management to our adventure professionals.

We are looking at organising national seminars on Responsible Adventure Tourism throughout the country, training our adventure guides, and giving a huge amount of value to our membership.

We will conduct the first Seminar on Responsible Adventure Tourism in February 2023 in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. ATOAI is keen to host events in India that showcase our immense potential for adventure travel to a global audience. We are in talks with the Adventure Travel Trade Association to host their Adventure Next event in 2023. We are also keen to host a Responsible Adventure Tourism event in India's Incredible North East. Given the post-pandemic cabin fever, plans are on the anvil to make 2023 a transformational year for adventure travel in India.



Riaz Munshi

President, Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI)

Gearing up for the pent-up demand

The year 2022 was much more interactive and encouraging for all members of the OTOAI. We all stayed in regular touch through webinars, physical meets, and conferences. We also conducted a few FAM trips for our members. As borders opened up and COVID norms eased,

many Indians made plans for international travel, and business picked up. We also had our elections last year, and the OTOAI members unanimously elected the new team.

As mentioned earlier, 2022 was a year for many more physical meets. OTOAI actively participated in important travel shows and made its presence felt. We conducted a few destination seminars to help our members know more about a particular place. We also shared destination travel updates and guidelines for Malaysia, the UK, Australia, and Germany, among others, with our members through e-mailers and social media. OTOAI supported physical events and roadshows of NTOs like Tourism South Africa, Ras Al Khaimah, Tourism Malaysia, Korea Tourism Organization, and others. A couple of Press Meets were also held to update the travel trade media regarding the activities of OTOAI. The smooth elections for a new team showed that our members had placed their trust in us, and we will ensure not to let them down.

In 2022, OTOAI wrote to many concerned ministries and

government officials to bring relief to the travel sector. We wrote to G. Kishan Reddy, Minister of Tourism, requesting them to bring the mandatory licensing system in India, especially for tour and travel operators. To get relief from GST, we wrote to Nirmala Sitharaman, Finance Minister, to bring some changes. OTOAI also wrote to Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister for Health, Government of India, urging the Minister to open up Booster Vaccine for all who have been double vaccinated. We requested to remove the 270 days (9 months) time for those who received their vaccine in April/May and were considered unfit to travel and unwelcome in many countries then. The association has also written to Jyotiraditya Scindia at the Aviation Ministry, requesting them to start commercial operations as the suspension of commercial flights was affecting Outbound Tourism on a large scale. The resumption of scheduled international flights was announced after much effort by OTOAI.

In 2022, OTOAI also wrote to all the European Schengen Embassies/Consulates to ease visa processes and guidelines and address the issues faced by our members of a long wait for visa appointments and 4-5 weeks of further wait to get the passports back. As a result, we had embassies in Delhi gearing up to ease visa delays, and the German Embassy introducing extra shifts to process more visas. OTOAI also wrote to Australia and Israel Tourism Board to take up the visa delays issues.

The year 2023 is going to be all about pent-up demand. The travel agents who had to let go of their staff during the COVID times must bring them back or hire and train new ones, and there will be an influx in demand for international travel. As I mentioned earlier, the traveller today is looking for new and

unique experiences; thus, the agents must come up with out-of-the-box ideas and plan holidays to offer their customers the best. In post-pandemic travel, the level of service and quality deliverance will distinguish one agent from the other.

In 2023, we would like to highlight to the Government an old issue that we have also been writing to them about. It is about removing the Pan Card requirement for an NRI / foreign

national booking a trip/holiday with an agent in India. Most of the time, an NRI does not have a Pan Card, which is a mandatory requirement for them to pay up for a trip, and thus this acts as a big deterrent, stopping them from doing business with travel agents in India. After a difficult period, this is our time to do business, and we must look into every possibility. In 2023, we are also planning to have our much-awaited annual Convention.



PP Khanna

President, Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI)

Domestic tourism is shaping India's economic growth

The year 2022 has been tourism friendly, especially for domestic tourism. The footfall of tourists at destinations has been phenomenal. Jammu and Kashmir are witnessing the unprecedented arrival of tourists, and the whole

industry is rejoicing. Similarly, other states also witnessed moderate to heavy tourist arrivals during the year. This was an exciting time for us and has boosted our member's confidence.

In 2022, to help our members to regain and recover and revive their business, we did activities like collaborating with major travel marts like SATTE 2022, ITB India, Rajasthan Domestic Tourism Mart, etc. This year, we also launched our ADTOI Uttar Pradesh Chapter.

Though COVID-19 is behind us, people are now willing

to travel, but impediments like government restrictions, visa delays, high airfares, and high hotel tariffs are still playing spoilsport to generate volumes. However, the Government has realised tourism's role in shaping the country's economy and is taking various steps to ease the situation that will be favourable in boosting tourism. FAITH, the nodal federation of all Travel, Tourism, and Hospitality associations, is also pursuing with concerned Ministries to look into the issues that are deterrents to tourism growth.

In 2023, our first and foremost priority is to seek the support of some state governments to organise roadshows and our Association's Annual Convention. We have approached the Assam, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh governments. In UP, the pilgrim tourists' footfalls have recently increased tremendously. In the new year, we will organise more B2B meets and get our members to participate in some of the major Travel Marts we will partner with. We will also be taking up pending issues like GST, OTA, relaxation in the Ministry of Tourism's MDA guidelines for members, and any other issues affecting the tourism growth on the pan-India level.



Dharmesh Advani

National General Secretary, Enterprising Travel Agent's Association (ETAA)

ETAA is keen to expand and strengthen its national presence

In 2022, as part of ETAA's endeavour to encourage and keep abreast of members on the latest travel developments, physical events were organised in the various chapters of ETAA. One example

was the recent event where upcoming destinations like Vietnam were showcased to members in a tie-up with Global Destinations.

Moving forward in the post-pandemic era with a strong intent to restructure, expand and strengthen its national presence, the ETAA Board Meeting was held on November 26, 2022, chaired by our Founder President and Chairman Emeritus Carl Dantas, who has decided to devote more time for ETAA in its Silver Jubilee year 2023-24. The Board Meeting called for some important appointments. They appointed two new chapter Chairman, Jeevan Hendre, for the Western region and Saurab Tuteja for the Northern regions, respectively.

Koushik Banerjee and Princy K D continue as Chairmen for Eastern and Southern regions. The board has also appointed Abhijeet Khadilkar, former National General Secretary, and Dipti Thakoor, former Joint National Secretary, as additional Directors.

In 2022, though there was a huge travel demand, government restrictions, visa delays, high airfares, and high hotel tariffs hampered the revival of travel significantly. Hence, planning in advance will be the best way forward. This will help in getting cheap airfare and hotel. Also, it will be easier to get dates for visas.

In 2023, we look forward to arranging more physical meetings to upraise members about upcoming destinations. We are also looking at one International and one domestic convention and will meet various stakeholders for the same. We will also plan to organise various knowledge sessions about upcoming destinations. We already have a few events in various Chapters in January, February, and March.

In the upcoming year, we would like to highlight to the Government the compliance with GST and TCS, which has been an issue with many members. The members have been getting notices from the Govt for GST. The same will be taken with the Government in 2023.

A challenging 2022 for ATTA but emerging victorious

For ATTA (Air Transport and Tourism Advisors), it was professionally a year of achievement, accomplishment, and appreciation. However, on a personal note, the company passed through an emotional phase as my father, the company's Founder and Chairman, Gurcharan Bhatura, suffered two brain strokes. His illness gave the company the unflinching thrust to keep his legacy going and proud. I have taken up the task with the same passion, grit, and moral values to carry on that legacy.

Sonia Dutt

The year 2022 ascended with hope and good days as things restored to normalcy. The year completed a full circle, from masks being compulsory to being optional and no-mask days. It also witnessed full restrictions of borders to opening and uplifting of the ban on international flights to welcome travellers again.

The aviation sector saw a shift in travel patterns from hesitant travellers and essential travellers to gradually moving to luxury and leisure travel. Soon the student traffic from India resumed back with higher than earlier momentum, immigrant applicants upsurged, and vacation traffic boomed. In fact, the demand amplified to the extent that most embassies faced huge pendency and difficulty in visa processing. Schengen visas and US visas noted the longest waiting time ever seen in the last two decades, or even more. The Airports, with a form of deserted look, soon were bustling with passengers. The commotion and congestion were back again. The smell of coffee, the humming sound of conveyor belts, and the non-stop take-off and landing were the affirmation that we were back in business. The hotels' experience was similar to the other segments of the ecosystem. The pickup initially was low, but soon MICE, weddings, conferences, fashion shows, and others had picked up.

Today, we close 2022 with the huge gratification of seeing all metro airports fully saturated, hotels running at full capacity, and the emergence of new birds in the skies.

It was a defining year of achievements for the Indian civil aviation sector. New airlines were granted permits to commence operations: Akasa Air, India One, Quickjet Cargo, Pradhan Air Express and bountiful NSOP Operators. The baton of a sizeable number of AAI-



▲ Sonia Dutt

owned airports was passed to the private entities resulting in upscaling of the service standards followed by the most talked about, the opening of a world-class airport terminal at Bangalore. New Greenfield airports at Goa (MOPA), Deoghar, Jeypore, and Hoolongi were granted Aerodrome licenses. Domestic air traffic spurred by 11 per cent (up till November 2022 figures). India DGCA shot up the ICAO score from 69.95 per cent to 85.49 and conducted 4378 surveillances. The icing on the cake was upon India being granted the highest-ever ranking by ICAO, taking India's global ranking from 102 to currently 48, leaving behind Turkey and China.

ATTA was established as a proprietorship consulting firm in February 2005 dedicated exclusively to the services of Indian Civil Aviation and tourism industry. ATTA specialises in servicing the air transport industry with innovative, knowledge-based advice from top aviation and tourism consultants. Our services cover



▲ Gurcharan Bhatura

Scheduled airlines, non-schedule operations; General Aviation industry both fixed-wing as well as Helicopter Operations. ATTA also specialises in designing, developing and managing small airports/heliports/helipads including elevated helipads. Our team of experts has worked in the Ministries of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Airports Authority of India, Delhi International Airport (P) Ltd. (DIAL-GMR), Directorate General of Civil Aviation, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security.

In 2022, we proudly assisted prestigious industry players with flight launching and expansion to other cities. The company is proud to see Qantas Airways returning to India routes with first flights to New Delhi and later to Bangalore. Fly Baghdad commenced operations in India, first to Mumbai and later to Hyderabad, and now Delhi is the most recent destination. LOT Polish Airways opened another destination in India, Mumbai (after Delhi), the most recent being ITA Airways, establishing

direct air connectivity between New Delhi and Rome. Post-COVID, due to the high demand for private charters, the company has been engaged by many prestigious business houses and industrial groups to establish non-scheduled operations. The company continues to serve many NSOP-reputed clients like Taj Air (Tata Group), L&T (Larsen and Toubro), VRL logistics, Khazana Jewellers, and many more. We have obtained CAR145 and FAMO approval for prestigious foreign MROs like Turkish Technik (Turkey), AMAC Aerospace (Turkey), William International (USA), and TAP Air Portugal (Portugal). Post-COVID, the demand for Cargo, has grown, and ATTA has been facilitating Hong Kong Air Cargo (Hongkong) and Astral Aviation (Africa), both cargo airlines, in obtaining landing and overflight permissions.

The coming year 2023 looks promising for ATTA. One of its clients, Fits Air from Sri Lanka, has all regulatory permits and is now ready to launch operations

at multiple destinations across India. We are currently working on four Thai carriers, two European airlines, two airlines from GCC, and one US carrier for flight launch/ further expansion in India. Our portfolio and client base continue multiplying under the “Flight Clearing Agency” granted by DGCA, India. There is a buzz that COVID is back, this time with a new variant. In our assessment, things will continue, and business has carried on with everyone being on guard and taking extra advisory precautions and disclaimers.

Availing of this opportunity to wish all TTJ readers, colleagues, and friends a brilliant New Year 2023. May a gentle breeze fill your sail, the sun warms your face, flowers fill your garden, friends keep you going, and family is with you in all the smooth and strenuous turfs. We send off the year 2022 with immense satisfaction, resplendence, and gratitude for throwing the toughest challenges and giving us the strength to emerge victorious each time.

About the Author: Sonia Dutt is the Managing Director at ATTA

KEY HIGHLIGHT OF ATTA FOR 2022	
Qantas Airways	Launch of Delhi – Melbourne route
Qantas Airways	Launch of Bangalore – Sydney/ Melbourne route
LOT Polish	Launch of Mumbai – Warsaw route
Fly Baghdad	Launch of Mumbai - Baghdad Route
Fly Baghdad	Launch of Hyderabad – Najah – Baghdad Route
Fly Baghdad	Launch of Delhi – Baghdad Route
ITA Airways	Launch of Delhi - Rome Route
Hong Kong Air Cargo	Cargo flights to Chennai, Mumbai and Delhi
Astral Aviation	Awarded “Recognition for Excellent Services” by Astral Aviation – Africa No. 1 Cargo airline
The veteran club	“Life time achievement award” conferred to Gurcharan Bhatura for his distinguished contribution to Civil Aviation sector
Hong Kong Air Cargo	“Best Strategic Partner Award” given by Hong Kong Air Cargo Carrier

Kerala Tourism promises new surprises

Kerala Tourism’s latest innovative project- Keravan Kerala, has been a big hit with new-age travellers. During the recent Kerala Tourism Partnership Meet in Kolkata on December 8, 2022, Prem Bhas, Tourist Information Officer, Kerala Tourism, shares information on the latest developments on Keravan Kerala and some other aspects of tourism in the state.

Swaati Chaudhury

With revenge travel becoming the flavor of the season, the demand for domestic travel has peaked. God’s Own Country is once again riding high with a slew of unexplored destinations for all segments of travellers. Aimed to entice winter holiday tourists into the state, Kerala Tourism has charted out a host of events and introduced novel products like Keravan Kerala, an initiative of caravan tourism.

The latest campaign of Kerala Tourism has been - “Make up for lost time, Pack up for Kerala.” According to Prem Bhas, “In an attempt to record a higher number of visitors in the state, we are hard-selling the unexplored destinations. We have set up a Caravan Park and we are concentrating on northern parts of the state like Wayanad. There is Idukki district and the hill resort of Paithalmala in the district of Kannur that are relatively unexplored. With the airport coming up at Kannur, the state has four airports, including Trivandrum, Cochin and Calicut. The state government has allocated

₹132 crore in the current year to identify unexplored destinations in each Panchayat.”

Prem Bhas further said, “Caravan tourism is a wholesome package providing high-end experiential tourism at a reasonable price. Tourists get to explore the land by travelling in luxury van. It is a one-of-a-kind experience and intends to provide safe, tailor-made and nature-based travel to tourists.”

The best time to visit the state is from October to March. Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC) has kicked off caravan tourism for the past one year. Bhas said, “The uptick in domestic tourist arrivals is due to the launch of innovative products like Keravan Kerala. Gujarat sends the greatest number of domestic travellers to the state, while West Bengal accounts for 15-20 per cent of domestic tourists in Kerala.



Kolkata is an emerging market for us and we are exploring new markets like Bhubaneswar. Nearly 1,33,80,000 domestic tourists made a round of the state in 2022. Our state is eyeing around 2 crore domestic tourists next year. The highest global tourist traffic comes from the United Kingdom, France, and Russia. We are expecting global tourist arrivals in the next fiscal.”

Maharashtra stepping up to revive tourism with a slew of new initiatives



Maharashtra is one of India's biggest tourist attractions with its wide and largest inventory of tourism products, with six UNESCO World Heritage Sites, over 900 caves, 350 forts, magnificent wildlife, and world-class beaches to adorn. Also, Maharashtra Tourism is constantly adding value by launching various activities and initiatives to boost the State's tourism. In this interaction with TTJ, B N Patil, Director, Directorate of Tourism, Government of Maharashtra, shares his view on the State's growing tourism initiatives.

Prashant Nayak

Maharashtra is a state that has some of the most historical and magnificent monuments, and tourists from across the world look forward to experiencing such places. This is the only State in India with six UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Ajanta Caves, Ellora Caves, the Western Ghats and Mumbai's Elephanta Caves, Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (CST), and Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Buildings. The Ajanta-Ellora caves have always remained the biggest tourist attraction in the State among foreigners and Indians. The State offers a wide range of tourism products like Deccan Odyssey (a world-class luxury travel experience on wheels due to restart next year), the Indian Institute of Scuba Diving and Aquatic Sports (IISDA), and an extravaganza of wildlife sanctuaries in central Maharashtra and pristine beaches in the Konkan region.

The Konkan region is known for its vivid topography and, clubbed with its flora and fauna, offers excellent trekking paths and trails. Along with beaches, art, and culture, as the popular Konkani and Malvani cuisine, the region is a delight to explore, making it an ideal destination for domestic and international visitors. Similarly, the state government has a recent caravan policy that promotes "caravan tourism" at beaches, forts, mountain ranges,



▲ B N Patil

hill stations, forests, and heritage sites. The government is working on the development of film cities, along with cruise tourism and tourist circuits in cities like Mumbai. The very new 'Bharat Ratna Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Tour Circuit' in Mumbai involves more than half a dozen places involving the life of the chief architect of the Constitution. More about the tourism initiatives in this interview below:

With the increase in domestic travel, how has Maharashtra tapped into the potential of emerging travel trends like 'revenge travel' and 'staycations'?

In 2020, approximately 3 crore, 92 lakh domestic and 12 lakh, 62 thousand foreign tourists in the State, whereas, in 2021, the domestic footfall increased to 4 crores, 35 lakhs; however, the foreign footfall decreased to 1 lakh, 85 thousand.

More than focusing on the number of tourists visiting Maharashtra in 2022, our focus was on extending the stay of tourists who are already visiting Maharashtra. We intend to increase the duration of their stay to explore the State. Presently, foreign and domestic tourists visit the State only for 2 to 3 days, after which they hop either to another state or back to their country. We'd like them to stay here for longer and explore Maharashtra's beauty, heritage, adventure, serenity, and more the State offers. This is why we have created circuits all over Maharashtra that can be covered in 7 to 10 days. These circuits will help them understand the culture of that particular region. E.g., instead of visiting only one or two spots in a particular city or region, tourists will be able to stroll around and spend more time visiting different spots/areas of interest. For this, we are connecting and tying up with tour operators with inbound

tour operators and travel agents who will help us promote these circuits.

What initiatives and new experiences has Maharashtra developed to leverage tourism?

We have over 350 forts in Maharashtra, a symbol of pride for us, and tourists and trekkers visit these forts for adventure activities. To make their experience pleasant and memorable, we are looking at providing basic amenities like restrooms, a cafeteria, parking, dustbins, sitting benches, a gazebo, an approach road (wherever required), pathways, signages, etc. This work will begin in a couple of months.



A similar initiative has been taken for religious destinations falling under the C category as we receive tourists and devotees for experiencing religious tourism in large numbers. A five-star property by Taj is coming up at Shiroda, Sindhudurg, to serve tourists and give them a luxury stay.

We are gearing up for 'Mahadurg Utsav (Fort festival)' to be scheduled in February 2023, a grand event we will organise for the first time. We are in the process of appointing an agency for the same. This Utsav is a celebration of our revered king and pride of Maharashtra, Shivaji Maharaj, along with sub-themes of Heritage and Traditions, Culture-related programs, and exhibitions. We expect to spread Maharaj's life story and contributions among Indian and foreign citizens, including youths. We will promote the rich culture and heritage of the State along with creating awareness about our forts which have stood tall even after several attacks by the invaders.

What are your thoughts on the current inbound tourism, and how is Maharashtra working to attract foreign tourists once inbound tourism rebounds?

Since the pandemic's onset, inbound tourism in India and other countries has significantly shrunk. However, with the relaxation of COVID travel regulations globally, tourism is trickling in slowly and will hopefully get back to the pre-pandemic State. Maharashtra has a lot to offer to its tourists at competitive prices. We are rich in natural, cultural, and monumental heritage, cuisine,

and art. Besides, as a State Tourism Board, we heavily promote Agro Tourism among the farmers. Maharashtra is leading in the number of Agro tourism centres across India, with approximately 600 registered units across Maharashtra, at affordable rates compared to European countries offering similar services. Hence, Maharashtra is a complete package for Inbound tourists wanting to explore the segments as mentioned above. Maharashtra Tourism is making the State safe for tourists wanting to experience adventure activities. We are doing this by registering adventure activities' entities and inspecting their equipment, skills, license, and other crucial points. Post scrutiny, we allot certificates to the qualified entities.

We promote Maharashtra by participating in various international travel and trade fairs like WTM, London, ITB, Dubai Expo, etc. We are also promoting digitally through social media, Google ads, publisher ads, and programmatic ads to target a specific audience from across the globe.

What are your marketing and communication strategies to be relevant with the travel trade partners while also updating them with new product offerings?

To increase tourist footfall in the State, we are aggressively expanding our social and digital media footprint. We will soon reach 2 million followers/ subscribers on our social media handles (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter). We have received the silver play button from YouTube for crossing 1 lakh followers. We are designing a robust 360-degree media plan to promote the tourism verticals of the State through different mediums, such as radio, newspapers/ magazines, TV channels, digital media, OTT platforms, etc. We will continue participating in international travel trade shows like WTM, ITB, Dubai Expo, and others. We will also conduct roadshows in different Indian states and abroad and organise FAMs for stakeholders.

We are focusing on creating awareness about unexplored/lesser-explored places in the State, especially for travellers seeking less crowded locations. We are collating data on stand-alone destinations that can be visited as weekend getaways and larger theme-based itineraries for longer-duration holidays.

How is Maharashtra working on responsible and sustainable tourism, which is now the focus of all tourism initiatives?

We have proposed a policy on sustainable tourism that includes the following aspects:



1) Making optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes, and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.

2) Respecting the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserving their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contributing to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.

3) Ensuring viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

Another proposed policy is a vacation rental home and homestay scheme, where vacant bungalows/apartments will be made available to tourists on weekends for holidays. Similarly, homes of the local tribal people located near water bodies or in the foothills will be made available to tourists under the homestay scheme. The homestay scheme will be implemented, especially for trekkers, bird watchers, photographers, and backpackers.

What is your vision for Maharashtra to be the numero uno State for tourism in India post the pandemic?

Maharashtra Tourism is working towards creating excitement about the State as a formidable tourist destination. Maharashtra is expected to see a major boost in tourism in the post-COVID era, with many projects, plans, and policies under implementation. The department is developing the whole of Maharashtra as a tourist destination, not just one or two districts. Besides Konkan and Mumbai, regions such as Sangli, Kolhapur, Satara, Nashik, Marathwada, Nagpur, etc., also have many tourism potentials and USPs. We are looking to position the State as a preferred choice for domestic and international tourists by using newer techniques and changing development methods.





TRAVMART Bhubaneswar

TTJ Travmart was held at Welcomhotel by ITC Hotels, Bhubaneswar on December 21, 2023. More than 100 buyers from Bhubaneswar, Kolkata, Cuttack, Puri, and Rourkela attended the event. A total of 16 exhibitors, including airlines, tourism boards, destination management companies, cruise lines, hotels, and travel management companies, showcased their products and services to the buyers and updated them on the services and offerings for the festive season.

This was the third Travmart in Bhubaneswar, and buyers recollected some wonderful memories from 2019. Tourism Authority of Thailand and Expedia TAAP supported the event as sponsors. Associations like EKTAA (Enterprising Knot of Travel and Tourism Associates) and TAAO (Travel Agents Association of Odisha) and IATO local chapters also supported the event. Leaders of these associations spoke very highly about the Mart and the strength of the suppliers. Further, they thanked TTJ for doing the show in Bhubaneswar post the pandemic. Later, they were

presented mementos by the Convener of TTJ Travmart, Ravi Sharma. Exhibitors and buyers shared their feedback and seemed happy and satisfied with the show's outcome. In conclusion, the event once again established its presence in the B2B networking space by connecting sellers with the right travel agents and tour operators in tier 2 and tier 3 cities of India. For TTJ, this was a happy ending to 2022 with a successful event in Bhubaneswar.

TTJ Travmart is a unique B2B travel networking concept. It creates cost-effective, hassle-free new business opportunities, connecting sellers with

buyers of a particular state/region. TTJ Travmart is an ideal platform for Tourism Boards, Airlines, DMCs, Hoteliers, and Travel Service Providers to showcase their products. Travmart sellers get an opportunity to do 40-50 business meetings with their prospective partners and network further over cocktails and dinner.



amazing
THAILAND

Expedia.
TAAP

summit
HOTELS & RESORTS

stic
GSA SERVICES
PRIVATE
LIMITED

Jetsave
India Tours Pvt Ltd.

tripjack

TRAVELS
FACTORY
—Your Trusted DMC for
UK, Ireland & Scandinavia

AirAsia
TRAVEL &
SERVICE
CENTRE
TRACK HOLIDAYS PVT. LTD.

CHOCOLATE
HOTELS PVT. LTD.

a resounding success





Sneha Murarka
Travelling Pants LLP

“ This event was very well thought out, planned, coordinated, and presented by Ravi Sharma and his team. It was a pleasure watching all the exhibitors and buyers with high confidence and motivational level after the pandemic.

The overall format of the exhibition is superb for both the buyers and sellers as complete buyer and seller lists are exchanged over mail. This platform really helps to connect both genuine buyers and sellers, especially in tier 2 cities.”



Naveen Nahar
Travels Factory

“ I am happy with the quality of the buyers. The format of the mart is good and productive. It was great interacting with buyers and fellow exhibitors post-pandemic.”



Debashish Mahapatra
K7 Holidays and Travels

“ It was delightful being a part of this event and must congratulate Ravi Sharma and his team for this initiative. TTJ TRAVMART was first organised here in 2017, and then in 2019. This year, TTJ TRAVMART came to Bhubaneswar post-pandemic, which is very relevant and we had fruitful meetings with all suppliers.”



Pinki Arora
Tourism Authority of Thailand

“ After we opened our country for tourism in 2022, we have had fantastic results from the India market and hopefully, by the end of 2022, we will have 1 million Indian tourists, which is one of the highest for Thailand. TTJ TRAVMART has been a great platform for us to meet and interact with so many agents in such a short time.”



Chandi Prasad Patnaik
Travel at Blue

“ I must congratulate team TTJ for this event. It was great to meet and interact with the exhibitors and so many other agents who attended the event. I was happy with the quality of sellers in this edition of TRAVMART.”

ONE STOP SOLUTION

TO MANAGE YOUR TRAVEL BUSINESS

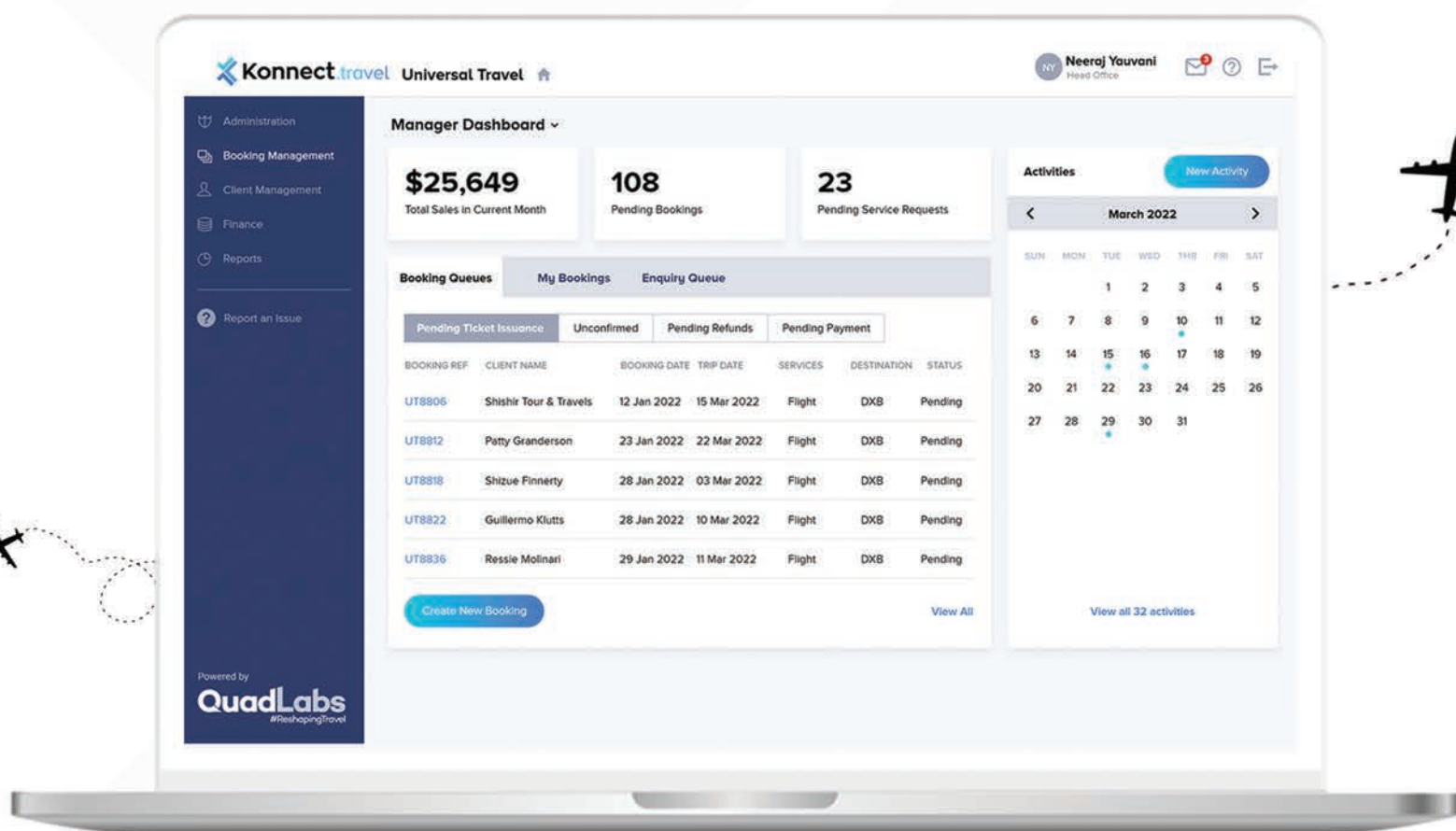
Client
Management

Reports
& MIS

Mid
Office

Smartpoint
Plugin

Robotics & Queue
Management



Setup Cost ~~₹34999/-~~
Offer Price **₹14999/-**

Cost Per Month ~~₹4999/-~~
Offer Price **₹2999/-**
(3 users included)

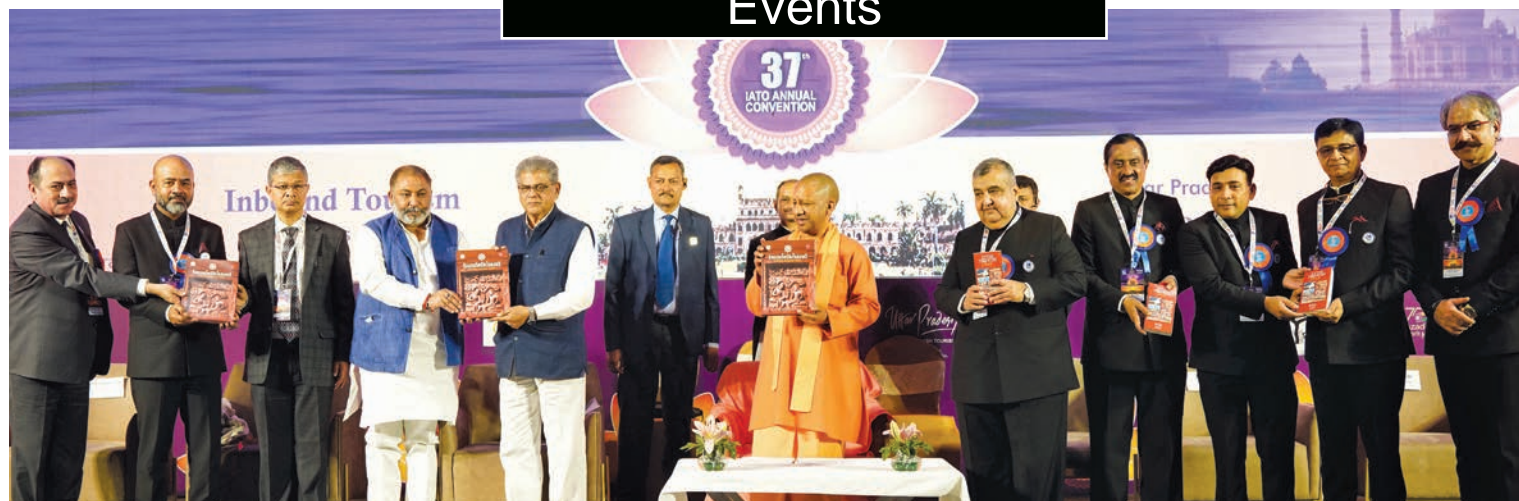
NEW YEAR OFFER

2023

*Offer Valid till 31st Jan 2023

Scan to Explore





Lucknow plays host to the 37th IATO Annual Convention

The IATO convention this year was well attended by over 1000 delegates from across the country. Hon'ble Yogi Adityanath, the Chief Minister of the Host State of Uttar Pradesh, was the Chief Guest of the Valedictory Session held on December 18, 2022.

Team TTJ

IATO (Indian Association of Tour Operators) held its 37th Annual Convention in Lucknow from December 16-19, 2022. The Convention was inaugurated on December 16, 2022, at The Centrum Hotel, Lucknow. The welcome address by the Convention Chairman, Ravi Gosain, set the pace, followed by addresses by other eminent dignitaries.

Speaking at the Inauguration, Rajiv Mehra, President of IATO, thanked the Uttar Pradesh Government under the Leadership of Yogi Adityanath for the total support given by his office and for enabling IATO to hold their 37th IATO Annual Convention in Lucknow. He also thanked Arvind Singh, Secretary Tourism, Government of India, and Mukesh Kumar Meshram, Principal Secretary and Director General Tourism, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh, for their support.

Mukesh Meshram explained the new tourism policy of the UP Government and the incentives being offered to the stakeholders. Arvind Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India, talked about G20 Presidency and thanked the UP Government for taking the lead and 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.

Sunil Gupta, Managing Director, Travel Bureau, and Late Badrinath Bajaj, Managing Director, Perfect Travels and Tours, were honoured with the "Hall of Fame" awards for their contribution to the tourism industry. Sunil Mishra, Treasurer, Co-Chairman, IATO Convention, presented a vote of thanks.

On December 17th and 18th, 2022, business sessions and deliberations were organised

on the subjects like Inbound Tourism- What Lies Ahead, building relationships between Hotels and Tour Operators, Tourism and opportunities in Uttar Pradesh, Spirituality, River Cruise, New Circuits, Need of The Hour -Tourism Marketing and Promotion, Last Mile Connectivity – Air, Rail, and Road, Explore the Unexplored - Rural, Agriculture, Responsible and Sustainable Tourism, Search for New Ideas! - What next?

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

Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, was also the Chief Guest during the Valedictory Session, where he addressed the over 1000 delegates present. He elaborated on the UP Government's plans for tourism development and incentives announced by his administration.

Yogi Adityanath emphasised the importance of the safety and security of tourists and assured that Uttar Pradesh today is the safest Indian state for tourists. At the venue, he also released a Coffee Table Book on Bundelkhand and the IATO Manual 2022-23.

Yogi Adityanath gave the Marketing Innovation Competition awards to the following states.

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

Dayashankar Singh, Hon'ble Minister for Transport, Government of Uttar Pradesh, Arun Kumar Saxena, Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh, and Mukesh Kumar Meshram were also present at the Valedictory Session. Shri Mangal Prabhat Lodha, Hon'ble 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. Prateek Hira then gave the vote of thanks.

The 37th IATO Annual Convention had 1000 delegates from all over the country. The Convention was supported by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, with Uttar Pradesh being the host state. Other states' tourism boards that participated in the Convention were namely Bihar Tourism, Chhattisgarh Tourism, Goa Tourism, Gujarat Tourism, Karnataka Tourism, Jammu and 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.

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

FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023

Bhubaneswar-Rourkela to burst into action soon

The State Government of Odisha will host the 15th edition of the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 from January 13-29, 2023, at two venues in the state. The Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium in Rourkela, alongside the iconic Kalinga Hockey Stadium in Bhubaneswar, will play host to the most awaited sports event of India, the Hockey World Cup 2023.

Partha Chatterjee

Over the past few years, Odisha, under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, has undertaken several ground-breaking sports initiatives to transform itself into a preferred global sports destination. From hosting marquee events to developing world-class infrastructure to strengthening sports grassroots programs, Odisha has been at the forefront of supporting all forms of sports. It is also the hub of High-Performance Centres. The state has contributed massively to the development of sports and is a prime example of sports tourism.

Hockey is deeply connected to Odisha's rich culture. It has produced champions like Dilip Tirkey, Pramod Tirkey, Lazarus Barla, Jyoti Sunita Kullu, Sunita Lakra, Amit Rohidas, Deep Grace Ekka, Namita Toppo, among others. Hon'ble Chief Minister himself was the goalkeeper for his school team, hence he has a deep emotional connection with the sport. Hockey is integral to the state and attracts an audience of thousands.

Odisha has been one of the pivotal reasons behind Indian Hockey's success in recent years. The Odisha State Government became an official partner of Hockey India in 2018, and since then, Indian Hockey teams have significantly improved. Over the years, Odisha has hosted various marquee tournaments such as Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup Bhubaneswar 2018, FIH Men's Series Finals 2019, Olympic Hockey Qualifiers 2019, FIH Odisha Hockey Men's Junior World Cup Bhubaneswar 2021, FIH Hockey Pro League 2020, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

The FIH Odisha Men's Hockey World Cup Bhubaneswar 2018 was hosted with grandeur at the state-of-art Kalinga Hockey Stadium, which was refurbished with two new galleries, increasing the capacity to 15,000 seats. It received an overwhelming response from hockey followers worldwide. It attracted massive tourists from India as well as around the world. The state received around 2.22 million domestic tourists and an average 15000



▲ R Vineel Krishna

foreign tourists during the 2018 World Cup phase.

Odisha and Hockey India are now set to host the Hockey World Cup for the second consecutive time. Officials of the Odisha government and Hockey India have left no stone unturned in the preparations for the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 Bhubaneswar – Rourkela. It promised to be bigger and more exciting as there will be two venues utilised in this edition. This 15th edition of the World Cup will also take place in the Sundergarh district- 'Cradle of Indian Hockey, where a brand-new Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium with a seating capacity of 20,000 has been built. The premises of the stadium has athletes' accommodation, Hockey Practice



▲ Dilip Tirkey

Centre, Gym, Swimming Pool, and provision for a fan-park and various other event-related activities.

Also, once again, the 2023 World Cup will bring in an international flavour, with fans travelling from all over the world to cheer for the teams. This is bound to add more enthusiasm among the local fans, who have been ever-present in large numbers at the previous events, including the Men's World Cup, Junior Men's World Cup, and the FIH Hockey Pro Leagues.



Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium Rourkela

Concord Exotic Voyages raises a toast for brighter days of Inbound travel

Concord Exotic Voyages hosted a memorable evening with a reception for their travel partners, industry stakeholders and travel media on December 09, 2022, at The Connaught - IHCL SeleQtions, New Delhi.

Present at the event were M. C. Mani, Chairman, Concord Exotic Voyages, James Kodianthara, Managing Director and Rohit Walter, Vice President-Sales and Operations, North India. This event was an opportunity to share with all present the strengths and portfolio of Concord Exotic Voyages, its journey over the last 20 years and expansion plans.

M. C. Mani is a well-known industry figure acknowledged for his commendable contribution to tourism in Dubai, UAE. He is a Member of the Stakeholder Committee of Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET), UAE.

Concord today has offices in Goa and Delhi apart from Kerala, making Concord Exotic Voyages a pan-India inbound tour company. Concord also handles tourists in Dubai, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka. Concord with overseas Representations in the US, Canada, Latin America, Israel, UK, Russia, Kazakhstan, West and East Europe, handles over 40,000 tourists a year into India which includes Charters, FITs, MICE, Adventure and Medical Tourism.



SITE India welcomes 2023 on an optimistic note

To usher in the New Year 2023, SITE India Chapter, organised a members' meet at the Leela Ambience Convention Centre on January 2, 2023. The meet was well attended by SITE India members and travel media.

Barun Gupta, President, SITE India Chapter, thanked all the members and media partners for joining the celebrations and also expressed his gratitude to the hospitality partner - Leela Ambience Convention Centre, for being great hosts. Also present at the event Nitin Sachdeva, Board Member - SITE International Board of Directors, advised the gathering that SITE was Celebrating its 50th anniversary this year and to celebrate the 50 years of Incentive Travel Excellence, SITE has announced its Global Conference in New York in February 2023.



TAAI Northern Region holds General House Meeting

TAAI Northern Region held its first General House Meeting for the term 2022-24, on the 21st of December at The Suryaa New Delhi.

The Office Bearers Neeraj Malhotra, Chairman - TAAI Northern Region, and Neeraj Kumar Sarna, Treasurer - TAAI Northern Region, had a fruitful interaction with the members and discussed various issues concerning the members including

taking inputs and suggestions.

Also present at the meeting was Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI. She interacted with the members present and shared her vision for 2023 and the future agenda for TAAI.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks. Neeraj Malhotra thanked all guests from the Airlines, GDS, VFS, BLS and friends from the media for being there. The event was followed by cocktails and dinner.





TRAVMART

Connecting Travel Partners
With New Opportunities



MARCH
15

AHMEDABAD

MARCH
17

PUNE

APRIL
21

LUCKNOW

BOOK YOUR SPACE

☎ 9560264443 ✉ parth@sampanmedia.com

Sampan Media Pvt. Ltd.

Email: info@sampanmedia.com

Website: www.traveltradejournal.com

FEEL FREE TO EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS WITH NCL

*Experience the best from ship to shore in Europe.
Choose from over 250 Europe sailings on board twelve award-winning ships.*

- FREE OPEN BAR⁺
- FREE SPECIALTY DINING⁺
- FREE EXCURSIONS⁺
- FREE WIFI⁺
- FREE EXTRA GUESTS⁺



SCAN FOR
MORE INFO

Norwegian Viva



9-DAY GREEK ISLES: SANTORINI, MYKONOS
& CROATIA FROM VENICE (TRIESTE)

NORWEGIAN VIVA

SEP – OCT 2023 & MAY, JUL – AUG, OCT 2024

9-DAY GREEK ISLES: SANTORINI, MYKONOS
& FLORENCE FROM ROME (CIVITAVECCHIA)

NORWEGIAN EPIC

APR 2024

11-DAY NORTHERN EUROPE: ICELAND, NORWAY
& BELGIUM FROM LONDON (SOUTHAMPTON)

NORWEGIAN PRIMA

JUN – AUG 2023 & MAY – SEP 2024

ITINERARY MAY DIFFER BETWEEN 2023 AND 2024 SEASON

BOOK TODAY AT **NCL.COM** | CALL **+91 22 7127 9333** | OR CONTACT **YOUR TRAVEL AGENT**

ENHANCED HEALTH & SAFETY PROTOCOLS EUROPE'S LEADING CRUISE LINE - WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS 15 YEARS IN A ROW

+Take All 5 Free: Free Open Bar is based on Premium Beverage Package. Free Specialty Dining and Free Wifi Packages are dependent on cruise length booked. Free Shore Excursions are US\$50 credit per excursion, per port and applicable to 1st guest in the stateroom. Free Extra Guests is applicable to the 3rd and 4th guest in a stateroom and is valid on select dates. Any taxes & gratuities are additional. Sailaway categories are not applicable for the Free at Sea offer. Sailaway categories receive US\$50 shore excursion credit offer only. Offers are valid until 31 January 2023 unless extended. Offers are non-transferrable, have no monetary value and are valid for new bookings only. Offers are subject to change or withdrawal at any time and combinability with other promotional offers is subject to change. Other restrictions may apply. For full terms and conditions visit ncl.com. All rights reserved. ©2022 NCL Corporation Ltd. Ships' Registry: Bahamas and USA.