



TRAVMART

Connecting travel partners
with new opportunities



OCT 14 **INDORE**

NOV 03 **AHMEDABAD**



Travel Trade Journal

Vol. 13 | Issue 11 | September 2023 | Pages 64 | ₹150



AROSA
Cruising differently

NEW PREMIUM ALL INCLUSIVE

CHANGING EUROPEAN RIVER CRUISES
The Next Generation: Sustainable, Flexible, Designed for All Ages

DOURO – SEINE – DANUBE
RHINE/MAIN/MOSELLE – RHÔNE/SAÔNE



Celebrating

50

stic

1973-2023

Years of Excellence in Travel



The flight got bumpy at times
but we managed to touch great heights.



The obstacles were many
but we managed to cruise around them.



The path was unknown
but we always kept our foot on the accelerator.

Small it may be
but we did play a part in taking India to the world.

Thanking our business partners for their years of support
As we proudly celebrate our 50th.



2nd floor, Tower C, Cyber Freens, DLF Phase III, Gurugram - 122002. Haryana. Tel: +91-124-4595300 | Email: info@sticgroup.com | www.stictravel.com
Branch Offices: Ahemedabad | Bangalore | Chennai | Delhi | Gurugram | Hyderabad | Jalandhar | Kolkatta | Mumbai | Pune



TGV Lyria

Rail Europe

Discover the beauty of France & Switzerland with TGV Lyria



BUSINESS 1ÈRE

is a tailor-made, high-end journey,
for those looking for a personalised experience.

ON BOARD SERVICES

- A dedicated quiet coach, perfect for relaxing or working in peace.
- The comfort of a first-class seat with plenty of leg room.
- A hot meal service, with service on plate at your seat.
- Access to the SNCF Grand Voyageur lounge at Paris Gare de Lyon.
- Free Wi-Fi on board.

TRAVEL ROUTES :

Paris - Geneva : € 205* pp

Paris - Basel : € 205* pp

Paris - Lausanne: € 205* pp

Paris - Zurich : € 229* pp

Remarks: Above rates are based on per person per way & are subject to change without prior notice.
*T&C Apply

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

Pune: +91 20 4002 6960

Nasik: +91 253 231 0044



For Enquiries & Bookings, please contact any of our offices | **Website:** www.ottila.com | **B2B Portal:** www.ottila.net

Team Sampan

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Editor & Publisher | : | Ravi Sharma |
| Consulting Editor | : | Gurjit Singh |
| Assistant Editor | : | Prashant Nayak |
| Associate Editor | : | Prativa Vaidya Bhalla |
| Associate Editor | : | Sriparna Pal Bhattacharya |
| Contributing Editor | : | Sonia Dutt |
| Sr. Correspondent | : | Vartik Sethi |
| Bureau Head (East) | : | Partha Chatterjee |
| Correspondent (East) | : | Swaati Chaudhary |
| Director-Marketing | : | Sonika Bohra |
| Head-Special Projects | : | Jyoti Rathod |
| Sr. Manager-PR & Marketing | : | Nehali Jain |
| Manager-CRM | : | Rajat Jain |
| Manager PR | : | Ankit Dixit |
| Coordinator-Special Projects | : | Parth Sharma |
| Art Director | : | Jitendra Rawat |
| Designer | : | Jatin Kumar |
| Manager Administration | : | Kuldeep Singh |
| Asst. Admin | : | Satish Kumar |
| Accountant | : | Amar Gupta |
| Circulation Manager | : | Sahil Nadeem |
| Marketing Executive | : | Eklavya Ujainwal |

Email: info@sampanmedia.com

Editorial and Marketing Office :
Sampan Media Pvt. Ltd. B-20, First Floor, Nangal Dewat, 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,

September ushers in the spirit of festivity in India. The world of tourism is all set to be abuzz with activity and reach its peak this festive season as travellers await eagerly to throng new destinations. Higher flight prices and an increase in travel budgets are no deterrents for Indian travellers from deciding on that holiday.

Speaking of holidays, it is an interesting time for cruising in India, as with growing interest in new travel experiences, cruise vacations have surfaced as a viable and new choice for Indian travellers. Along with other interesting features in our TTJ September 2023 issue, we have extensive pages dedicated to the latest cruise trends and offerings.

At TTJ, we look forward to two events this September. We are debuting our very own East India TRAVMART (EITM) on September 15 - 17, 2023, in Kolkata. The other is the 38th IATO Annual Convention in Sambhaji Nagar (Aurangabad), which starts on September 29. We hope to catch up with you at both of these events.

Happy Reading!



Ravi Sharma

Ravi Sharma
ravisharma@sampanmedia.com

Editor's Desk



Norway's NORTHERN LIGHTS CRUISE

Fixed Departures packages 2023-24

EXPERIENCES

Northern Lights

Midnight Sun

Arctic Circle

North Cape

HIGHLIGHTS

Dog Sledding

Reindeer Sledding

King Crab Fishing

Snowhotel Kirkenes

Snow Mobiling

North Cape Plateau ATV

DEPARTURE DATES 2023-24

| | |
|----------------|---|
| September-2023 | 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, 19, 22, 25, 28, 30 |
| October -2023 | 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 17, 20, 22, 25, 28, 31 |
| November -2023 | 2, 5, 8, 11, 13, 16, 19, 22, 24, 27, 30 |
| December -2023 | 3, 5, 8, 11, 14, 16, 19, 22, 25, 27, 30 |
| January -2024 | 2, 5, 7, 10, 13, 16, 18, 21, 24, 27, 29 |
| February -2024 | 1, 4, 7, 9, 12, 15, 18, 20, 23, 26, 29 |
| March -2024 | 2, 5, 8, 11, 13, 19, 22, 24, 27, 30 |

DISTRIBUTOR IN INDIA



BOOKING

+91 9667 269 336, +91 7011 257 590

b2bdmc@holidaymoods.in

northpolar@holidaymoods.net

https://b2bdmc.holidaymoods.in



Bhutan halves daily tourist fee in drive to attract more global visitors

The Royal Government of Bhutan has introduced additional incentives and policy measures to boost the tourism sector. This is in view of the important role of the tourism sector in generating employment, earning foreign exchange, realising the potential for spillover benefits for ancillary industries, and in boosting overall economic growth.

The incentives and measures shall consist of the following and remain effective till August 31, 2027

A 50 per cent discount shall be granted on the prevailing SDF of USD 200 for US Dollar paying tourists visiting Bhutan. The effective SDF with the discount shall be USD 100 per person per day for US Dollar paying tourists.

In addition, 50 per cent discount on the SDF shall be granted on the rates applied to children aged between 6 to 12 years for US Dollar paying children visiting as tourists.

The 24 hours SDF waiver for tourists staying in the border towns shall continue.



Antarctica21 partners with BRANDit to introduce Antarctica fly-cruise experiences in India

Antarctica21, an innovative Chilean Cruise Company and pioneer of the fly-cruise expeditions to Antarctica has partnered with BRANDit, one of the leading tourism marketing representation companies, to build awareness for the destination as well as the brand's exclusive small ship experiences in the Indian market and to build lasting trade relations in the country.

The synergy between Antarctica21 and BRANDit extends beyond market entry – it encompasses the creation of innovative strategies to cater to the ever-evolving preferences of the Indian outbound travel segment. The agency will also facilitate various training sessions, seminars, workshops, events, webinars, and virtual meetings for tour operators across key markets, nurturing a deeper understanding of Antarctica21's offerings.

With two ships in their fleet M/V Ocean Nova and M/V Magellan Explorer, Antarctica21 has been offering extraordinary voyages to Antarctica and beyond, for over two decades. Each of the ships has a capacity of not more than 70 travellers, which allows cruisers to enjoy value time in the land of rugged beauty, millennia-old icebergs and fascinating wildlife, all of this, in an exclusive and adventurous atmosphere.



Yas Island Abu Dhabi extends epic summer thrills

A visit to Yas Island Abu Dhabi is a must for endless family-friendly fun. As one waves goodbye to the final summer days, in September kids are in for a treat as they meet their favourite online personalities at the largest and sliciest family event of the year, the Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards, to be held at Etihad Arena. Guests can also avail Yas Island's Kids Go Free offer before September 30 by booking a stay at one of the island's participating hotels.

In October, guests will witness a phenomenal performance of 'Disney on Ice' as they celebrate a century of wonders this October 11–15 at Etihad Arena again. At Ferrari World Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, 'Race into Summer' continues to delight adventure-seekers and little ones with a wide array of Ferrari-themed experiences and a captivating drone show. Guests and families can also enjoy splash-tastic adventures at Yas Waterworld Yas Island and the fun-tastic wonders of the sea at the recently added SeaWorld® Yas Island, Abu Dhabi.



SWISS TRAVEL PASS

Book on www.ottila.net

- ✓ Swiss Travel Pass - the all-in-one ticket
- ✓ Swiss Travel Pass Flex: Without Limits

Features

- ✓ 1st class & 2nd class
- ✓ Consecutive: 3, 4, 6, 8, 15 Days
- ✓ Flexible: any 3, 4, 6, 8 or 15 days within a 1-month period
- ✓ Swiss Travel Pass Youth for traveller up to 25 with a 30% discount
- ✓ Available as Print at Home
- ✓ Free Swiss Family Card: Children aged 6 to 16 accompanied by a parent or legal guardian; travel free with the Swiss Family Card.
- ✓ Free admission to more than 500 museums.
- ✓ Mountain excursions included: Klewenalp, Rigi, Stanserhorn and Stoos

Inclusions: Accommodation with Breakfast, Swiss Travel Pass, Excursions.

Tops of Switzerland

Interlaken - Lucerne



05 Days From € 1199* pp

Highlights: Jungfrauoch – Top of Europe, Mt. Pilatus

Swiss Delight

Lucerne - Interlaken



06 Days From € 1499* pp

Highlights: Swiss Museum of Transport & Chocolate Adventure, Mt. Titlis, Panoramic Yacht Cruise, Mt. Pilatus, Scenic Jetboat ride, Schilthorn Piz Gloria

Glimpses of Switzerland

Lucerne - Interlaken - Zermatt - Zurich



08 Days From € 1799* pp

Highlights: Jungfrauoch - Top of Europe, Mt Titlis, Jet Boat Ride on Lake Brienz, Panoramic Yacht Cruise, Matterhorn Glacier Paradise

*T&C Apply



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

Pune: + 91 20 4002 6960

Nasik: +91 253 231 0044

For Enquiries & Bookings, please contact any of our offices | **Website:** www.ottila.com | **B2B Portal:** www.ottila.net

In association with



Switzerland.
by train, bus and boat.



Malaysia Airlines expands connectivity in India with three new routes

Malaysia Airlines is set to expand its footprint to India with the commencement of three new services between Kuala Lumpur (KUL) to Amritsar (ATQ), Thiruvananthapuram (TRV) and Ahmedabad (AMD) effective November 8, November 9 and December 1, 2023, respectively.

The expansion will bring Malaysia Airlines' point-to-point connectivity from Kuala Lumpur to India to nine (9) key hubs, thereby providing passengers with enhanced options and flexibility for travel between the two countries. The airline currently operates

direct flights to New Delhi, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad and Kochi. The new routes will be operated by the Boeing 737-800NG aircraft, equipped with 160 seats, comprising 16 seats in Business Class and 144 seats in Economy Class.

In addition to the new routes and increased frequencies, the airline has also launched its new product offerings MHsports and MHcruise to further enhance the overall traveller experience while further enhancing a suite of their existing commercial products.

Vistara to commence direct daily flights between Delhi and Maldives from October 1

Vistara will be expanding its presence in Malé with direct, daily flights to and from Delhi starting October 01, 2023. Vistara will operate its A320neo aircraft featuring a three-class configuration on the route as it enhances connectivity between India and the Republic of Maldives. Bookings for the flights are being progressively opened on all channels, including Vistara's website, mobile app, and through travel agents.

Vinod Kannan, Chief Executive Officer, Vistara, said, "We are thrilled to introduce direct connectivity between Delhi and Malé – our second route to the exquisite beach destination, in addition to Mumbai-Malé. This new route will enable us to provide our customers with enhanced access to one of the world's most popular holiday destinations while also imparting further momentum to the existing bilateral cooperation between India and the Republic of Maldives."

IndiGo to recommence daily direct flights between Delhi and Hong Kong from October 5

IndiGo has announced the recommencement of operations between Delhi and Hong Kong, enhancing direct connectivity. This route not only strengthens the ties between the two dynamic cities but also underscores Hong Kong's significance as a vital business and travel hub in the Asia-Pacific region. Starting October 05, 2023, these flights are tailored to cater to the escalating travel and trade demands between India and Hong Kong, providing customers with an extended range of flight options to enhance accessibility and facilitate seamless travel.

Air India partners with AccesRail to provide seamless intermodal travel to 100+ cities in Europe

Air India has entered into an intermodal interline agreement with AccesRail to boost connectivity options for Air India guests across Europe, including smaller cities without airports.

The agreement enables Air India guests to travel on a single intermodal ticket and take seamless, on-ground train and bus connections to more than 100 cities and towns in Austria, Belgium, Germany, The Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, and the United Kingdom via its European gateways of Amsterdam, Birmingham, London Heathrow, London Gatwick, Milan, and Vienna. It also allows Air India guests to enjoy the benefit of the same baggage allowance on these rail or bus operator services as offered

by Air India on its own flights. AccesRail is an IATA travel partner with its own designator code (9B), thus making intermodal journeys on a single ticket possible.

AccesRail's extensive network of rail and bus operators for Air India include Avanti West Coast (UK), Great Western Railways (UK), London North Eastern Railways (UK), National Express (UK), Trenitalia (Italy), ÖBB Austrian Railways (Austria), SNCB Belgian Railways, and Thalys (Netherlands/Belgium).

Currently, intermodal tickets with Air India are available for booking through travel agents globally. The airline also plans to extend the facility to its own sales channels progressively.



YAS ISLAND
ABU DHABI



SEAWORLD® YAS ISLAND, ABU DHABI NOW OPEN

**Plan the perfect family vacation with the
Kids Go Free offer on Yas Island Abu Dhabi**

EXCLUSIVELY ON [YASISLAND.COM](https://www.yasisland.com)



Connecting Continents

EgyptAir launches Cairo-Delhi route



▲ Amr Ali

In an exclusive interview with TTJ, Amr Ali, Country Manager-North and Eastern India, EgyptAir, highlights the airline's ambitious upcoming expansion and bringing its global connectivity to India.

Prativa V Bhalla

EgyptAir, the national carrier of Egypt, an esteemed IATA pioneer and Star Alliance member since 2008, connects 70 destinations globally across Africa, Europe, the Middle East, the Far East, and North America. EgyptAir's network expansion, including the launch of new routes, aligns seamlessly with The Egyptian Ministry of Civil Aviation's mandate to connect the Arab Republic of Egypt with the world via the Cairo Hub. Introduction of routes to Dhaka, New Jersey, Manchester, and India, elevates travel experiences, providing effortless links to Egypt's top destinations like Luxor, Aswan, Sharm El-Sheikh, and Hurghada, catering to both leisure and business travellers.

Amr Ali stated, "India is one of the biggest markets in the world, which is why EgyptAir is keen on enhancing its presence here. Connecting Cairo to New Delhi and facilitating further seamless travel experience between the two countries is a significant development in line with the growing warm relationship between Egypt and India."

On August 4, 2023, EgyptAir achieved a significant milestone by launching flights on the Delhi-Cairo route. This strategic move reflects their strong commitment to meticulous network expansion and modernisation. The Cairo-Delhi route, with four weekly flights, is operated by the state-of-the-art A320 neo aircraft, with its dual cabin services, providing 16 business class and 126 economy class seats. Equipped with individual screens and onboard Wi-Fi service, it highlights the airline's unwavering pursuit of excellence in global connectivity and customer satisfaction.

EgyptAir MS973 will depart Cairo on Fridays and Sundays at 11:40 (Cairo time) and arrive in Delhi at 20:45 (Delhi time); EgyptAir MS975 will depart from Cairo on Thursdays and Saturdays at 23:50 (Cairo time) and arrive in Delhi at 08:55 the next day (Delhi time). These thoughtfully scheduled flights promise to

redefine travel between these two dynamic cities, offering unmatched convenience and connectivity.

"Moreover, EgyptAir operates daily flights from Mumbai to Cairo onboard our B737-800; this aircraft type accommodates 154 seats, 16 of which are business class and 138 are economy class," he added.

Leveraging its codeshare agreements, EgyptAir extends its offerings to over 67 destinations, including seven prominent Indian cities: Delhi, Kochi, Hyderabad, Goa, Bengaluru, Chennai, and Ahmedabad. This comprehensive network reflects EgyptAir's unwavering commitment to enhancing global travel convenience and connectivity.

Cairo-Delhi flights open up new travel options, spark growth in tourism & travel-related businesses & foster stronger bilateral relations between Egypt & India

The airline is dedicated to tailoring services for contemporary travellers. Amr Ali highlights, "EgyptAir is always working on developing its services to fit today's traveller needs. Our Frequent Flyer Program EgyptAir Plus offers members many travel benefits. They can earn and redeem miles on EgyptAir flights and Star Alliance member airlines, access over 1000 lounges worldwide, priority airport check-in, baggage handling, boarding, and more depending on the tier level."

Its Frequent Flyer Program, EgyptAir Plus, offers members benefits like mileage

redemption across its network and Star Alliance airlines, lounge access, priority services, and more based on tier. With connections to 70-plus global destinations and over 1,200 through Star Alliance, EgyptAir continually expands its network to meet present and future needs. Special promotions inspire exploration, shared via official channels and EgyptAirplus.com.

EgyptAir places a strong emphasis on technological innovation in enhancing the passenger travel experience. Currently, the airline provides online booking and check-in services while also working to develop a range of ancillary services. Additionally, EgyptAir is in the process of introducing Wi-Fi and mobile connectivity onboard selected aircraft, further contributing to a seamless and convenient journey for passengers. The airline's ongoing efforts reflect its commitment to leveraging technology for the benefit of travellers.

In pursuit of global expansion, Amr Ali said, "Our broad network connects our frequent flyers to more than 70 destinations worldwide and more than 1,200 destinations globally through our Star Alliance network. We always work on developing our routes network to accommodate current demands and anticipate future demand to best serve our travellers worldwide."

The airline's upcoming fleet modernisation plan includes 73 aircraft, featuring wide-body models like the Boeing 777-300ER and Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner, as well as narrow-body variants like the B737-800 and Airbus A321neo. Further growth includes the addition of Airbus A321neo aircraft by 2024. EgyptAir is actively exploring new routes and service enhancements to fuel its future development.

Demonstrating a strong modern commitment to sustainability, EgyptAir led the B787-9's longest flight on biofuel from Seattle to Cairo. A comprehensive fleet modernisation strategy curbs carbon footprint, while a shift to eco-friendly alternatives onboard underlines their responsible ethos.

tbo.com
TRAVEL SIMPLIFIED

ALL ABOUT CRUISING!



NCL
NORWEGIAN
CRUISE LINE®

Royal Caribbean
INTERNATIONAL

Carnival
CHOOSE FUN®

Costa

UNIWORLD
BOUTIQUE RIVER CRUISES

CORDELIA
CRUISES

Celebrity **X** **Cruises®**

Holland America Line®
SAVOR THE JOURNEY

AVALON
WATERWAYS®
Legendary river cruises. Inspired design.™

MSC
CRUISES

Contact us at cruises@tbo.com

Belavia expands its horizons with flights to India

Embark on a journey with Belavia, the Belarusian Airline, exploring its growth trajectory, resilience, and significant strides toward India.

Prativa V Bhalla



▲ Igor Tcherginets, Uladzimir Barkun

In the ever-evolving world of aviation, few stories resonate as powerfully as that of Belavia. Since its inception in 1996, the airline has been Belarus's national carrier and also the largest airline within its borders. Rooted in history and driven by an unyielding commitment to connecting individuals and nations worldwide, Belavia's resilient approach has enabled it to surmount challenges, expand its operations, and reinforce its global position.

Embarking on a new trajectory, Belavia has unveiled its India-bound aspirations, with Delhi as its inaugural destination. Meticulous preparations have paved the way for this significant venture by adhering to stringent Indian regulatory frameworks, and Belavia commenced its weekly flights on August 11, 2023, connecting the capital cities of Belarus and India. B2 757 will depart on Fridays at 20.25 (local time), with arrival in Delhi at 05.35. B2 758 will depart from Delhi on Saturdays at 06.55 and arrive in Minsk at 11.40. Igor Tcherginets, Director General, Belavia, stated, "With great preparation and cooperation from the government of India, we have been able to launch our flights between the two nations."

Belavia's aspirations in the Indian market are furthered by plans to augment flight frequencies and amplify its network. Tcherginets highlighted, "We have started with a single frequency per week, but from September 20, 2023, we will add a second flight on Wednesdays, and I am very sure we will receive great financial results and increase frequencies to many more. Currently, over 1,000 Indian students are studying in Belarus, and with the launch of this flight, I hope to witness an increase in this number."

On December 24, 2019, Belavia carried its four millionth passenger in a year for the first time in its history. Uladzimir Barkun, Deputy of Director General Marketing and International Affairs, CCO, Belavia, said, "Unfortunately, the onset of

the pandemic saw a precipitous drop in passenger volume, a narrative shared by numerous airlines. Despite this turbulence, Belavia persevered in ensuring continued operations to maintain crucial connections."

Post-pandemic, Belavia was presented with new and complex challenges. Geopolitical shifts led to sanctions that directly impacted the airline's operations, prompting the decision to voluntarily return a significant portion of its fleet based on appeals from collaborative partners. This strategic re-evaluation streamlined the fleet to 13 aircraft, all of which are now under the ownership of the airline. This transformation reflects Belavia's skilful adaptability in navigating operational challenges.

From Minsk, Belavia further connects Indian travellers to Russian destinations, offering efficient transit

With its historical ties to Russia, Belavia has established a stronghold in this core market, complemented by an expansive international network spanning Turkey, the UAE, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Armenia and Turkmenistan. Now, a new gateway to Delhi unveils profound potential for the airline.

With India reigning as the world's most populous nation with boundless travel potential, this connection heralds transformative possibilities. The allure of Belarus to the Indian traveller is mirrored by the magnetic appeal of India to Belarusian citizens, made attractive by the advent of direct flights. Further plans to enhance flight frequency between the two countries stand to invigorate tourism and strengthen bilateral relations, highlighting a promising landscape of potential growth for both nations.

From Minsk, Belavia further connects Indian travellers to Russian destinations,

offering efficient transit with its compact airport. While exploring attractive domestic locations within India, Barkun informed, "On-going codeshare agreements with Indian carriers will expand travel options across Eastern Europe and also within India."

The Boeing 737-8, chosen to service the India route, spotlights Belavia's dedication to passenger comfort and operational efficacy. This contemporary aircraft, with its advanced design and fuel efficiency, is tailor-made for the discerning demands of the Indian market. The airline will extend a hospitable welcome to Indian travellers, offering in-flight hot vegetarian meals while exploring further culinary preferences of Indian clients.

For group travel enthusiasts, Belavia's alliance with tour operators materialises through block seat provisions and tailored travel packages to curate indelible travel experiences.

As Belavia's General Sales Agent (GSA) in India, Cyan Aviation embodies a seamless partnership marked by professionalism and a steadfast commitment to client satisfaction. "Working with Cyan during the preparation of the flight was exceedingly positive and pleasurable. The client-oriented, professional approach of the team is remarkable, and we are happy to be associated with such a good partner in India," Barkun stated.

The Belavia narrative epitomises resilience, adaptability, and an unwavering commitment to fostering international bonds while creating the best possible travel experience for its passengers. As the airline propels itself towards new horizons, it extends an earnest invitation to explore the enchanting terrain of Belarus, a realm brimming with unparalleled allure awaiting exploration.

DO YOU BELIEVE IT?

دوبئی



Ultimate Family Break

06 Days From **US\$579*** pp

Highlights: Half Day City Tour, Desert Safari with BBQ Dinner, At the Top Burj Khalifa (Non-Peak hours), Museum of the Future, Dubai Parks 1 Day/ 2 Parks, The Green Planet Tour.

Remarks: Rates are based on DBL/TWN sharing basis. Rates and Offers are subject to change without prior notice. Tourism Dirham Fees is not included. Valid till 31st October'2023. *T&C Apply.

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

Pune: +91 20 4002 6960

Chennai: +91 44 4555 8582

Kochi: +91 75938 63903

Nasik: +91 253 231 0044

Coimbatore: +91 99527 17750

Kolkata: +91 98301 19561

For Enquiries & Bookings, please contact any of our offices | **Website:** www.ottila.com | **B2B Portal:** www.ottila.net



Air Astana unveils strong growth strategy and customer-centric focus

The airline’s unwavering commitment to inflight excellence and its ambitious plans for substantial fleet expansion aligns perfectly with Kazakhstan’s tourism surge.

Prativa V Bhalla

An insightful dialogue with Serik Rys-Uly, Senior Regional Manager - Indian Subcontinent and Gulf Region, unveiled a strategic approach to managing the burgeoning travel boom to Kazakhstan, especially to Almaty City.

He commenced by highlighting their key strengths in delivering exceptional inflight services, including punctuality, top-notch service, and, notably, a strong track record of baggage handling and seamless connections. He also reiterated their impressive on-time performance, standing strong at a robust 89 per cent year-to-date.

In addressing the needs of the rapidly expanding and profit-driven Indian market, he underlined their resolute commitment to outshine competitors by offering unparalleled value for money. “We are actively progressing with plans, and I am sincerely hopeful that we will introduce a Mumbai route by next year,” affirmed Serik.

Leveraging its unique advantage of being the exclusive carrier offering direct daily flights to Almaty, the airline is poised to amplify its



▲ Serik Rys-Uly

operations, transitioning to increased flights for the winter schedule effective October 31, 2023. This strategic move will result in a substantial total of 11 weekly flights from the Delhi - Almaty route, effectively capitalizing on the surging tourism demand.

Additionally, Air Astana is expanding its winter schedule with the resumption of flights to and from London, Beijing, and Urumqi, significantly broadening flight options for passengers during the busy holiday season.

Amid the cessation of Russia and Ukraine flights, the airline is rapidly expanding its network to include new destinations like Tel Aviv and Jeddah by the year-end. In the upcoming year, international operations will expand to include Tokyo and Singapore routes, alongside the active pursuit of establishing destination opportunities in Hong Kong and Paris.

Furthermore, Serik shed light on Air Astana’s ambitious expansion strategies, detailing intentions to augment its fleet size and elevate standards by transitioning from Boeing 767 to cutting-edge 787 Dreamliner aircraft. This progressive approach extends even to their domestic low-cost airline operations, Fly Astana.

“Our main strategy is to keep the fleet young, modern, efficient, and effective by offering the best value of a great product,” he concluded.

RESTAURANTS

WEDDING LAWNS

BANQUET HALLS

ROOMS

SWIMMING POOL

Elegance and Luxury at Sayaji Raipur

GE Road, Behind Magneto Mall, Jivan Vihar, Raipur, Purena, Chhattisgarh 492012 | Call: 91091 60026

BUSINESS + LEISURE

BLEISURE KOREA TRAVEL



BUSINESS TRIP TO KOREA

VISIT
KOREA
YEAR
2023-2024
RIDE THE KOREAN WAVE



KOREA
TOURISM
ORGANIZATION
한국관광공사

DYNASTY HOLIDAYS
LUXURY TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

+91-98111-90137 / 98119-00137
korea@dynastyholidays.com
www.dynastykorea.com



STIC Travel A HALF CENTURY OF NAVIGATING DREAMS

STIC Travel emerges as one of the rare names that summon a feeling of enduring transformation and unyielding resilience. With its 50th year on the horizon, this significant milestone stands as an irrefutable proof of the supremacy of adaptability, innovation, and an unwavering pursuit of progress.

Vartik Sethi

In an exclusive interview with Travel Trade Journal, Dr. Subhash Goyal, Chairman, STIC Travel, shares profound insights into the company's journey, the challenges it encountered, and the strategies that propelled it to thrive in the ever-changing travel market.

Founded in 1973, STIC Travel has not only become a pioneer in the Indian travel and tourism industry but has also become a model of success for other players in the field. As the travel industry continues to transform, the lessons gleaned from STIC Travel's odyssey serve as a guiding light for businesses seeking to navigate change, pioneer innovation, and emerge victorious against all odds. Acknowledging the perpetual narrative of an enduring legacy and organisation, Subash Goyal stated, "Business, any business, is like cycling. The moment you stop paddling, you fall, right?" The 50-year mark in STIC Travel's journey signifies not just the passage of time but a legacy of agility, grace, and unswerving triumph.

An Unstoppable Force

A trailblazer in every sense, Dr. Subhash Goyal's journey from a student leader to the helm of STIC Travel is a testament to his determination, innovation, and commitment to the industry.



During his university years, Dr. Goyal's innate entrepreneurial spirit became evident when he managed to organise a delegation of 15 students

to an international conference in Japan, securing a free ticket for himself and earning a substantial commission.

Recognising the potential of the travel business, Dr. Goyal's journey in the industry began.

His initial forays



involved organising trips to international destinations and, over time, he gained valuable insights into the travel market. In 1973, he was instrumental in launching Student Travel Information Center, a venture that would later be remodelled into what we call today, STIC GSA Services Pvt. Ltd. The fledgling travel information centre initially operated out of a modest

space in New Delhi's India Coffee House, catering primarily to the young and adventurous, has embarked on a 50-year journey to become one of the most successful travel corporations in India.

However, the company's journey faced numerous challenges, including the tumultuous period of the Emergency in the late 1970s, which led to the sudden demolition of the building and along with that, their office. Reflecting on the challenging period, Dr. Goyal reminisced, "We were flourishing, and then suddenly, in '77 or '78, an emergency was declared." Undeterred by adversity, Dr. Goyal's resourcefulness led to a defining moment when he initiated student travel services from inside an ambassador car. This move resonated with the youth and tourists alike, sparking a new phase of growth for STIC Travel.

It was as if Dr. Goyal had waged a war against all adversities to emerge as an unstoppable force destined to carve his name

into the Hall of Fame among the stalwarts of the travel industry. Highlighting his relentless zeal to keep rising against all odds, he exclaimed, "If you are not flexible, you will not survive. And you have to keep innovating. Innovation is the name of the game."

Behind every successful enterprise lies the unwavering determination and focused efforts of its leaders. Dr. Goyal's journey from humble beginnings to steering STIC Travel to its current position is a reflection of the power of determination and tireless work ethic. Dr. Goyal underlines that success is not a coincidence; it is the result of meticulous planning, dedicated execution, and the constant pursuit of excellence. His commitment to nurturing the company from its infancy, often performing tasks as humble as cleaning his own office and serving tea to his clients, exemplifies his hands-on approach to leadership.



The Birth of STIC Travel

The transformation from Student Travel Information Center to STIC GSA Services Pvt. Ltd. was indicative of the shift from being a primarily retail-focused entity to a formidable B2B player. The distinction came with strategic intentions to align with the aspirations of the travel agent community and establish a foundation built on professionalism, ethics, and trust.

Over the years, STIC Travel's portfolio expanded to encompass an array of esteemed international brands, as the company's relentless pursuit of excellence resonated with airline companies such as Sri Lankan Airlines, Ethiopian Airlines, Air China, United Airlines, and many more. Notably, STIC Travel's close collaboration with Sri Lankan Airlines has spanned 47 years, nearly five decades from Air Ceylon to Air Lanka and now Sri Lankan Airlines, solidifying its reputation as one of the airline's most steadfast partners.

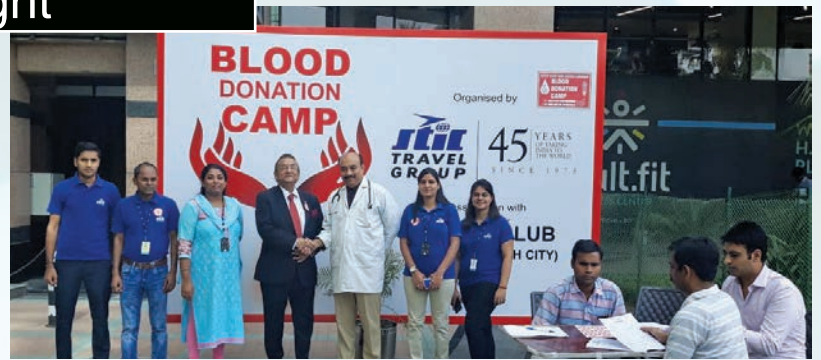
Today, STIC Travel waltzes in the role of a GSA, providing its services to a splendid ensemble of 12 international airlines, a quartet of cruise companies, a trinity of rent-a-car organisations, and the grand opulence of Indian Railways' Luxury Trains.

Ethical Values and Innovation

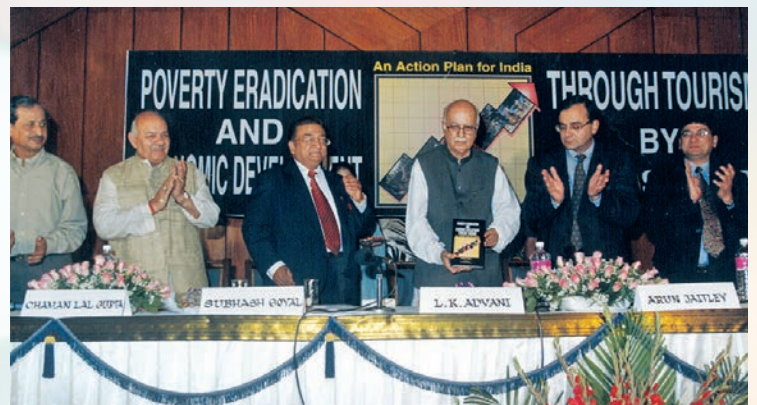
STIC Travel's remarkable success attributes to its steadfast dedication to ethical business practices and a relentless pursuit of innovation. The company's decision to exclusively serve the B2B market stemmed from a strategic move to prioritise travel agents and operators, ensuring their success remained at the forefront. A steadfast believer in the adage that there is no substitute for hard work, Dr. Goyal always possessed a go-getter attitude. He stated, "You have to deliver what your principles want! For example, if an airline appoints you as a general sales agent, you have to fill up the plane!"

“Goodwill cannot be made overnight. Rome was not built in a day. So is the reputation. It has to be built brick by brick.”

– Dr. Subhash Goyal



The company's journey was punctuated by strategic alliances, innovative marketing campaigns, and a strong focus on delivering exceptional customer service. For instance, STIC Travel's 'Visit Colombo Free on Your Way to Singapore & South East Asia' campaign highlighted the allure of Sri Lanka, capitalising on the trend of travellers transiting through the region. While these benefits were never passed on to their customers by contemporary travel companies, STIC Travel broke the trend by passing on the benefits and keeping their customers first.



Weathering the Storms of Change

Over five decades, the travel industry has transmuted into a complex ecosystem buffeted by myriad factors, from technological revolutions to geopolitical shifts. Dr. Goyal reflects on the enduring journey of STIC Travel, highlighting the company's ability to embrace change. Drawing parallels with Darwinian principles,

he emphasises that entities capable of adaptation endure, while those that resist face extinction. He vividly narrates STIC Travel's evolution from a niche focus on student travel to the establishment of STIC Travels, marking the first of many transformative steps taken in response to the ever-evolving market landscape.

Surviving and excelling in the dynamic travel industry demands strategic focus. Dr. Goyal underlines the pivotal shift from retail to B2B operations, a strategic maneuver undertaken to address the transformation in the airline sector characterised by zero commissions. This strategic pivot marked a turning point in STIC Travel's journey, reinforcing the importance of recognising market trends and adjusting business strategies accordingly. The emphasis on specialisation, exemplified by the diversification into non-air products such as cruises, air charters, and rental cars, reinforces the significance of targeted offerings to cater to specific segments.



Throughout its five-decade journey, innovation has been the cornerstone of STIC Travel's success. The company's resilience through challenges such as the aftermath of 9/11 on travel businesses, cash flow constraints, and the recent COVID-19 pandemic speaks volumes about its knack for creative problem-solving. STIC Travel highlights the value of proactive exploration of new revenue streams and judicious diversification decisions as testaments to staying agile in an ever-changing landscape.

A United Family

STIC Travel's unwavering dedication to its workforce stands as a shining example in the business world. By placing the utmost importance on the welfare of its employees, STIC Travel has crafted a narrative of resilience and unity.

The company always tries to go beyond conventional norms to ensure its employees' satisfaction and work-life balance. This strategic approach has not only boosted employee morale but has also reinforced the sense of a closely-knit family within the organisation. Even in the face of challenges that would have otherwise seemed insurmountable, STIC Travel's employees have displayed an unmatched level of collective strength, upholding the company's values and driving it forward.

In times of adversity, such as the global COVID-19 pandemic, STIC Travel has shown its commitment to its employees in even more impactful ways. By providing vital support, the company has proven that its dedication extends far beyond the business realm. This tangible support during tough times undoubtedly created a sense of security and loyalty among the workforce, fostering an environment of trust and reciprocation.

The Genesis of Reputation

A recurring theme in Dr. Goyal's narrative of STIC Travel's success is the importance of reputation and trust. Drawing a parallel between the gradual construction of Rome and the establishment of a company's reputation. STIC Travel's philosophy, rooted in customer-centricity, was built on providing valuable advice, unparalleled service, and a deep understanding of the travellers'

needs. This approach not only cultivated a loyal customer base but also solidified the company's status as a trusted and reliable player in the industry.

Guiding Principles for the Future

Peering ahead, STIC Travel envisions leading the way through innovation and adaptability. As the industry shifts, the company acknowledges the resurgence of domestic travel and the new frontier of MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions), along with luxury train tourism. Dr. Goyal's insights reinforced the company's commitment to foresight and seizing uncharted opportunities.

As STIC Travel marks its 50th year, Dr. Goyal's reflections on the past naturally extend to the future. He recognises the

role of the succeeding generation, led by his daughter Isha Goyal, CEO, STIC Travel. Dr. Goyal's vision for the future involves passing the torch to capable hands while continuing to contribute to society and the nation. He expresses confidence in the company's growth under the guidance of a capable leader, highlighting Isha's professionalism, strategic acumen, and dedication to maintaining STIC Travel's legacy.





Let's take a Real Vacation

with the world's most popular cruise line.





The Growing Appetite FOR CRUISING

Cruising has voyaged from being just a mode of sea passage or an exclusive domain of the rich and famous with their caviar dreams and champagne wishes to a thriving industry today. Indian trained professionals were introduced to the concept of cruise vacations and its potential to bloom as a standalone vertical in the gamut of travel products almost three decades ago. The cruise footprint has been growing ever since.

Gurjit Singh Ahuja

Three decades ago, when the Indian leisure traveller was introduced to the concept of cruise vacations, there were many questions, apprehensions, and concerns! The cruise companies then had an uphill task of educating the travel industry about the cruise product, hand hold to reassure and instil product confidence.

When the Hollywood blockbuster, Titanic, hit the Indian movie theatres, the cruise industry was on tenterhooks about the adverse effects of the movie and the fallout it could have on the global cruise industry, but what eventually transpired was a pleasant surprise.

The weave of romance, its characters, and picturisation prevailed and had impressed positively on public minds. Overnight cruises shot into fame. Not only was the movie a top Hollywood money-grosser, but also increased the charisma and aspiration of taking a cruise vacation a hundredfold, earning it a place on the

traveller's bucket list. The Titanic effect, as one may call it, was also a turning point for the cruise business from India.

Those days there were no cruises originating from Indian ports of call except a few cruise vessels that touched Indian ports on their longer round-the-world itineraries. The closest cruise options available then were primarily on the East and West coasts of The United States of America, Europe, and transatlantic voyages. Cruises were still confined to the holiday list of the more seasoned Indian global traveller.

With South East Asia sailing out its first cruise liner, cruises were available closer to home. This meant shorter flights, cheaper airfares, and easier to obtain visas. This was a feather in the cap for the cruise opportunity out of India.

Today Indian cruise market is a living testament to the rapid growth and strides it has made over the years. Almost all major cruise brands have their presence in India may it be Princess, Cunard, NCL,

MSC, Holland America, Crystal Cruises, Seabourn, Resorts World, P&O, Carnival Cruises, Disney, Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity, Silversea, Costa or Azamara, when it comes to mainstream cruises.

Expeditionary cruises to Antarctica and the Arctic Circle are in demand lately due to the great experiential value they offer. Specialty cruise lines like, Hurtigruten Expeditions, Aurora Expeditions, Havila Cruises, and Antarctica 21 are ready with their cruise options to fill this need to experience the exotic and raw pristine nature.

India's own homegrown cruise line, Cordelia Cruises, with its cruise liner, Empress, has achieved groundbreaking work by opening up the world of cruising to Indians from Indian homeports dispensing the need for any international air travel or travel documentation to the experience of sailing in Indian waters. This, indeed, is a great way to open up the world of cruising and baptising first-

time cruisers to the fascinating world of cruises.

River Cruises is another trend fast catching up, giving an opportunity to experience the hinterlands as one cruises on river waterways, passing cities, villages, historic towns, and picturesque countryside. Europe offers some great river cruise options, and brands like Uniworld, Avalon Waterways, and AMA Waterways offer great river cruise options.

Our own great Indian rivers, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, which have been traditionally used as inland waterways, have opened up to river cruising. Today we have MV Mahabaahu cruising the mighty Brahmaputra, Assam Bengal Navigation has luxury riverboats plying both the Brahmaputra and the Ganges. Ganga Vilas, from Antara Cruises, is the latest entrant with its brand new Ganga Vilas sailing seasonal itineraries from Varanasi to Dibrugarh via Dhaka.

Today in India, besides travel agents and tour operators selling cruises, we have seen the advent of super specialty cruise boutiques that today offer up to 1,500 different cruise itineraries on 35 different cruise lines to choose from. These cruise boutiques also give travellers the flexibility to research their cruise options online and then bank on the expert advice of trained cruise consultants to help them in choosing the right itinerary from the cruise line and the ship that best meets their preferences and budget.

The design and architecture of cruise ships has also evolved over the years, and today we have mega cruise liners accommodating thousands of guest on a voyage. Indians prefer state-of-the-art facilities on board the ship, and bigger, newer vessels, especially if the demographics are those of young and happening traveller. Clients today ask and compare details of onboard facilities

and amenities, which was not the case a few years ago.

Today cruise lines want to attract Indian cruise clients by catering to their specific needs and sensibilities. Indian vegetarian and Jain cuisine is available or catered to. Also, cruise lines are designing and creating exciting thematic cruises like the Independence Day celebration on board, the World Cup match screening, and Special Garba nights during Navratri and Diwali celebrations on board.

As the size of cruise liners grows to accommodate thousands of cruise passengers per voyage, it has been observed that the one-size-fits-all approach need not necessarily work for all. So was born the “ship within a ship” concept.

This offers a premium cruise experience, offering the intimacy of a smaller vessel without foregoing the variety of activities and amenities enjoyed on mega-ships. Guests can experience and enjoy unparalleled personal service, butler and concierge services, as well as their own exclusive restaurants, dining areas, swimming pools, and bars. NCL has The Haven, Resorts World Cruises has The Palace, Celebrity Cruises has the Retreat, and MSC Cruises has the Yacht Club.

Till the outbreak of COVID-19, all cruise lines were on an upswing with great projections with many new vessels on the order books. The pandemic jolted many plans, and the cruise industry was one of the worst hit and the last to revive. However, things now are looking on the

upswing, and numbers are fast returning.

Exceptionally long visa processing times by the USA, Canada, and European countries resulted in a sharp downfall in cruise demand from India for cruises originating from these countries. This hopefully will change starting with the fourth quarter of 2023 as these countries



return to VISA normalcy post-COVID. Europe and America's loss was a gain for cruise lines operating from India and Southeast Asia.

Weddings-at-sea and MICE are other very important segments for cruises as they add a high volume of business. Wedding planners and corporations are looking at offering a varied experience, and what is better than an all-inclusive, hassle-free wedding or incentive onboard a cruise ship with the flexibility of multiple venues, facilities, attractions, gourmet, entertainment, meetings, and nightlife, all at one single location.

Indian cruise passengers of today are an evolved lot, now looking at off-beat itineraries, exotic ports of call, top-quality accommodation, inclusions and facilities onboard, and longer itineraries.



NCL investing to help travel partners maximise their selling potential

Through the years, Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) has pioneered several offerings that have transformed cruising today. Manoj Singh, Country Head India, Norwegian Cruise Line, speaks of their innovative approach in global cruise travel for over five decades, how they remained poised ahead in the race, and the current Indian market, which holds boundless potential for growth.

Prashant Nayak

The past decade has witnessed considerable evolution of cruise tourism in India, thus leading India to burgeon both as an incredibly important source market as well as a destination for NCL. That cruise holidays have gained popularity amongst Indians is substantiated by the fact that Norwegian Cruise Line's 'Norwegian Dawn' ship, for the very first time, departed from Mumbai port in January this year on a 12-night cruise via Goa and Mangalore to Doha.

"Higher disposable income and globalisation have led travel plans of Indian holiday seekers today to evolve into pursuing adventures and experimenting with wider and facile options. International cruises are on the bucket list of many urban Indian families. These travellers are well-informed, environmentally conscious, and constantly on the lookout for unique experiences with minimum ado," remarks Manoj. It is exciting to observe that a significant number of Indian travellers are desirous to take a cruise vacation. Cruise holidays top the minds of Indians, for here, they find a way to travel together, reconnect, and bond with their families on a vacation.

Norwegian Cruise Line has been breaking the boundaries of traditional cruising for 56 years. Most notably, the cruise line revolutionised the industry by offering guests the freedom and flexibility to design their ideal vacation on their preferred schedule. Mentioning some USPs of their cruises that give them an edge over their competitors, Manoj shares, "The most significant of these is our ground-breaking 'Freestyle Cruising', a unique

concept that gives guests the freedom to choose dining options anytime and in any part of the ship. Aboard our ships, guests do not have to adhere to a dress code and are at liberty to dress at will. They are entitled to choose their entertainment and spend time as they desire, which, ideally, a relaxing vacation is all about. Our port-rich itineraries offer guests seeking immersive travel experiences with minimal sea days and more time to explore each destination. We have late-night stays at ports, where guests can soak in local culture, be it food, shopping, or entertainment."

NCL offers a range of unique onboard leisure activities as well. They have the world's only

Breaking the boundaries of traditional cruising for 56 years, NCL revolutionised the industry by offering guests the freedom and flexibility to design their ideal vacation on their preferred schedule

racetrack at sea, open-air laser tag arenas, and drop rides. The Galaxy Pavilion, a dedicated virtual reality and gaming complex, offers an immersive virtual experience for guests. Guests can choose from a host of accommodation options depending on how big their travel groups are. They have family mini-suites, two-bedroom suites with ocean views, and interconnecting staterooms as well.

Adding to the list, Manoj further shares, "For a premium cruise experience, NCL has 'The Haven,' which offers the intimacy of a smaller vessel without foregoing the variety of activities and



▲ Manoj Singh

amenities enjoyed on larger ships. Guests of this ship-within-a-ship can indulge in the unparalleled personal service of a certified 24-hour butler and a concierge, as well as their own restaurant. Across our ships, we have multiple specialty restaurants and bars that serve some of the most diverse world cuisines and drinks. We offer some of the most diverse and unique entertainment options for guests, including award-winning Broadway musicals, comedy clubs, and sail-away parties on deck.”

NCL recently unveiled its brand new magnificent vessel, Norwegian Viva, offering guests the opportunity to explore Europe and beyond. The ground-breaking Prima class ship offers upscale and spacious design, elevated experiences, expansive culinary offerings, and signature Norwegian Cruise Line hospitality provided by the most attentive crew in the industry. Norwegian Viva mirrors the design of its award-winning sistership, Norwegian Prima, offering standout onboard experiences, including the Viva Speedway—the three-level racetrack; Indulge Food Hall, an upscale food market exhibiting 11 unique eateries; and the fastest slides at sea, to name a few. “We look forward to enthralling all our guests with these offerings that will only get better with every new launch—four more Prima class ships to come,” informs Manoj.

NCL offers the ultimate way for families to reconnect and recharge, with port-rich itineraries that allow them to immerse themselves in each destination and a fleet of innovative ships that offer an incredibly vast array of choices to suit families large and small, from an onboard racetrack to Broadway entertainment, fine dining, and casual fare, as well as multiple accommodation options and unique event spaces that are ideal for milestone moments amongst larger, multi-generational families.

A cruise getaway is an ideal choice not just for families and friends but also for MICE and corporate trips, agrees Manoj. He elucidates, “The MICE segment has great potential for cruise ships and vice versa, and we are actively concentrating on this segment of the market. Hosting corporate events on a cruise ship can be a very convenient and smooth experience for organisers, as everything is available on board to help them navigate and manage large teams of people from different locations across the world. Be it our diverse range of accommodation options and conference rooms, our multi-cuisine dining offerings, or the myriad of entertainment and gambol on board and offshore, a cruise ship allows corporate guests the perfect balance between work and fun.”

As stated before, India is incredibly important for NCL both as a source market

and a destination, but there remain certain challenges. “We perceive incredible potential for growth as more people discover the value of cruising with us. The challenge for us is to reach out to as many travellers as we can in India and inform them of our offerings. We continue to invest in our consumer marketing in India to help inspire and enable travellers to get in touch with their travel agents and plan their dream cruise holidays with us,” mentions Manoj.

The challenge for us is to reach out to as many travellers as we can in India and inform them of our offerings

As part of NCL’s ‘Partners First’ philosophy, they are doubling down on their investment in the travel trade, developing tools and resources that will help travel partners maximise their selling potential. They currently have two platforms for trade partners: Book-A-BDM and Norwegian Central Asia, along with a dedicated Partners First Facebook group for their agents in the region. They have been constantly promoting the range of destinations and itineraries offered by their 19 ships, including their game-changing brand-new Prima Class, including the just-launched Norwegian Viva.

Travellers today are increasingly conscious of their carbon footprint, and its impact on the planet, and NCL fully appreciates the growing importance of environmental responsibility and sustainability in the cruise industry. As a result, the corporation has taken major steps to incorporate sustainability and environment-friendly practices into its operations. NCL has made significant expenditures on cutting-edge technology to reduce its environmental impact.

The company has launched an ambitious climate action strategy with clear targets to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This strategy emphasises efficiency, innovation, and collaboration, aiming at net-zero emissions by 2050. NCL is actively working towards a 10 per cent reduction in GHG intensity by 2026 and a 25 per cent reduction by 2030, measured against a 2019 baseline on a per capacity day basis.

NCL’s commitment to decarbonisation is underscored by its adoption of green methanol as an alternative fuel source. The company has modified its upcoming Prima Class ships, slated for delivery in 2027 and 2028, to be methanol-ready. While further adjustments are necessary to enable the use of methanol alongside traditional marine fuel, this decision exemplifies NCL’s determination to embrace sustainable fuel solutions.

On the domestic front, with the rise of high-seas and river cruising in India, the country is on the verge of creating a deep footprint on the global cruise tourism map by offering a world-class experience through its rivers and coastline. The Indian government has recognised the potential and importance of cruise tourism in driving economic growth, job creation, and cultural preservation in the country, which indeed is a positive sign for the future of the cruise sector. Agreeing once again, Manoj reiterates, “India harnesses colossal viability to grow its domestic cruising market by tapping the potential that is spread over its 7,500-km coastline as well as numerous rivers. With ports like Mumbai, Kochi, and Chennai, India has the potential to attract cruise travellers from across the world and establish itself as a world-class cruise destination. We look forward to seeing how the cruise industry in India unravels to develop and how we can accommodate ourselves in the more happening future.”



Resorts World Cruises observes steady rebound for the fly-cruise market from India

Resorts World Cruises observes, with soaring optimism, the ongoing strong and positive development of the cruise tourism industry in India, especially in the Fly-Cruise sector. Market penetration in India is still minimal, with much room to grow as there remains enormous potential, says Naresh Rawal, Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Resorts World Cruises (India).

Prashant Nayak

India's cruise tourism industry, prior to the pandemic, witnessed an upward trend, especially for the Fly-Cruise segment. Post-pandemic, the cruise industry has exhibited much resilience, and Resorts World Cruises (RWC) has been observing a steady and positive rebound in India for the Fly-Cruise segment on the Genting Dream, which is homeported in Singapore. They are optimistic about this continued positive growth projection in the coming years.

Resorts World Cruises is a relatively new homegrown Asian cruise brand with over 50 years of affiliated and cumulative experience in the cruise, entertainment, and hospitality industries. "This is one of our strongest USPs that enables us to truly understand the Asian market and deliver best-in-class services that cater specifically to each region in Asia, including India," says Naresh.

RWC is also in a strategic position to innovate and provide unique offerings that resonate with its target audience. For instance, Genting Dream offers certified vegetarian and Jain cuisine onboard while introducing exciting thematic cruises such as their upcoming Musicon, a Bollywood Music Festival, and more. Adding on, Naresh graciously proclaims, "We pride in our thematic cruises and have constantly received positive feedback and demand for them. Our guests look forward to these unique and entertaining thematic cruises that enhance their experiences, which are further complemented by our onboard offerings, facilities, cuisine, Asian hospitality, and popular destinations."

In the coming months, guests on RWC can look forward to more exclusive thematic cruises, including the Halloween-themed cruise, Tea at Sea, Christmas Wonderland, a Bollywood Music Festival (on Genting Dream), and more. Besides that, Resorts World One, which is homeported in Hong Kong, will come forth with more exciting island destinations, starting with Sanya in



▲ Naresh Rawal

China in late September, as well as Naha and Miyakojima in Okinawa, Japan, from October 1, 2023, onwards.

Cruising has been gaining positive traction among groups of friends travelling together, families, multi-generational families, and MICE groups. On the advantage of MICE travel when it comes to cruising, Naresh elucidates, "With MICE, a cruise ship offers a one-stop easy solution for many MICE organisers, from securing accommodations to onboard tailored activities, cuisine requirements, and more, while travelling to new destinations."

Speaking of current challenges in the cruise industry, Naresh opines, "There is strong demand for travel post-pandemic, and with travel restrictions lifted, individuals have many options to consider, resulting in steep competition between the travel industries. Also, with airfares still on the high side and having yet to normalise, this will further weigh on demand for Fly-Cruise packages. However, we have been working hard together with our travel partners and various stakeholders to continue to educate vacationers on the value and convenience of opting for a Fly-

Cruise vacation. Despite higher airfares, vacationers are opening up their minds and realising the value of complementing their overseas vacation with a cruise holiday."

For Resorts World Cruises, maintaining a close rapport with travel partners via regular training and updates is important to promote cruising efficiently, as well as penetrate and cater to the growing segments. In addition, MICE at sea is another growing trend that will continue to be their priority for the Fly-Cruise segment.

The world today, and the cruise industry in particular, has embarked on a sustainability revolution, pursuing innovations including renewable resources, regenerative travel, tech-informed energy solutions, wildlife and marine conservation, and more. On this aspect, Naresh shares, "At Resorts World Cruises, we remain committed to sound environmental practices. An achievable high standard of responsibility has been established to preserve the environment in which we operate. These include increasing energy efficiency,

“Despite higher airfares, vacationers are opening up their minds and realising the value of complementing their overseas vacation with a cruise holiday.”

conserving fuel and water, reducing solid waste generation, increasing recycling, protecting marine life, and preventing oil pollution. We also actively strive to contribute to the communities we call upon. We ensure that our shore excursions support local businesses, be it towards the art and craft trade or offering eco-friendly activities with low carbon emissions such as jungle tracking, cycling, walk tours, etc."

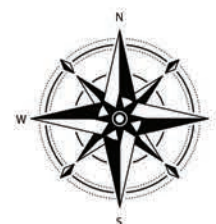


IT'S
TIME TO
RELAX

LET'S GO
CRUISING!

WITH PALOMINO

GET EXCLUSIVE & LOWEST B2B DEALS
FOR CRUISES!!



*just what
I needed)*

Palomino Hospitality has been appointed as the India Preferred Sales Agent (PSA) for Crystal Cruises, renowned for its luxury cruises and exceptional travel experiences. Crystal Cruises is a world-renowned luxury cruise line known for its unrivaled service, innovative itineraries, and exceptional onboard experiences. This collaboration offers us an exciting opportunity to utilize our knowledge, connections, and expertise to promote Crystal Cruises as a unique MICE venue in the Indian market.

CONNECT: CRYSTALCRUISES@PALOMINOHOSPITALITY.COM | +91 85272 28466

WWW.PALOMINOHOSPITALITY.COM



India presents boundless choice for the wave of growing cruising segment

In an exclusive interaction with TTJ, Nishith Saxena, Founder and Director, Cruise Professionals, navigates the evolvement of cruise tourism in India and elaborates on the new offerings onboard their cruises.

Prashant Nayak

Please elucidate on the evolvement of cruise tourism in India.

I look at the life cycle of all products through the eyes of the end consumer and having served the interests of the cruise line for nearly three decades, I can safely and confidently state that cruises are here to stay, and the appetite of the Indian consumer is just beginning to whet. While the total number of cruisers currently is nowhere close to the actual potential cruisers that India could generate, it is still heartwarming to see guests approach us with focused queries with respect to the duration of the cruise, destination, type of cabin, and the onboard experience they are seeking. In my view, the evolution of cruise tourism should not be looked at just by the number of cruise passengers that are sourced from India but by the extent of information possessed by a cruise passenger, and based on that, I would say that Indian cruise passenger has come of age and cruise tourism is slated to grow at a faster pace than any other travel vertical in India.

What USPs of your cruises give you an edge over your competitors?

In all of the six unique cruise brands we represent, the common USP that we can boast of is the customer-centric approach. To specifically highlight the USPs for Princess Cruises, I would like to single out the Cancellation Fee Programme, which is unique to the industry and assures 100 per cent money back in case of cancellations



▲ Nishith Saxena

up to three working days prior to departure. Similarly, the Antarctica voyage offerings by the Hurtigruten Expedition on purpose-built hybrid ships remains the most sought-after and unique in the polar cruising circuit in India.

For over 180 years, Cunard has set the bar and then raised it, continually refining the definitive experience of ocean travel. The Cunard ships, Queen Mary 2, Queen Elizabeth, and Queen Victoria, can easily be singled out to offer the most sophisticated cruising experience, like in older times, but the new-age Queen Anne shall redefine the level of sophistication.

P&O Cruises is breaking all barriers of innovation, which is evident from the new designs of the latest ships and the onboard experiences onboard IONA and ARVIA, the icons of modern British hospitality. The ships of Aurora Expeditions, with the revolutionary ULSTEIN X-BOW® to cross oceans more comfortably and unsurpassed environmental credentials, offer the perfect base camp for adventures at the outer limits of human exploration, may it be Antarctica or the Arctic.

The most luxurious all-suite ships of Seabourn leave nothing more to desire once you have spent a couple of days experiencing the rich, all-inclusive onboard hospitality. The new Seabourn Expedition vessels- Venture and Pursuit, are equipped with state-of-the-art submarines that can take you closer to the ocean floor and make you witness the magical, ever-changing underwater scenery.

Elaborate on the new introductions on your cruises.

We are aiming to give our trade associates and customers the ability to look and book using our online portal, which would enable them to start living their cruising experience from the very first step. Being in control of one's cruise vacation is something each of our customers is seeking, and this would benefit them immensely. Whether it is booking a cabin of your choice, fixing a beauty treatment in the spa, or arranging a renewal of vows ceremony at sea, everything



can be done in advance from your desktop or laptop. The ease of managing your own cruise vacation is very gratifying, and this reflects the transparency offered by cruise lines to their patrons.

Is cruise getaway an ideal choice both for families and friends as well as for MICE and corporates?

Over the years, the mainstay of a successful MICE or corporate getaway has been the level of engagement, variety of entertainment, and quality of food served to the attendees. A cruise surpasses all these elements in delivery: there are numerous onboard activities and shore-based excursions; there are enthralling musicals, shows, and entertainment all across the ship from morning till late night, not to mention discos and nightclubs; and there are exotic meals available throughout the ship, which could be customised to some degree to suit the palate of the guest. On top of this, on most cruise ships, the organisers could request space to conduct their meetings, award shows, and product launches. All this is achieved at a lower overall cost since the cruise fare is all-inclusive and offers value for money. The actual fun of going on a cruise with friends, family, or a corporate group is when you enjoy the all-inclusive facilities being offered on the ship.

How have your cruises incorporated sustainability and green practice?

Cruise lines are leading the way towards a more sustainable future by investing in innovative technologies aboard our global fleet of cruise ships. The industry has realised the benefits of LNG now as a transitional fuel—which has virtually zero sulphur emissions, a 95 per cent to 100 per cent reduction in particulate emissions, an 85

per cent reduction in NOx emissions, and up to a 20 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions—and is increasing the number of ships that are able to utilise LNG for primary propulsion. More than 15 per cent of the new vessels to be launched in the next five years will be equipped to incorporate fuel cells or batteries as part of a hybrid approach towards lowering the carbon footprint of each voyage. In my opinion, the cruise industry is at the forefront of exploring sustainable marine fuels; therefore, it would be correct to say that sustainability and environmentally friendly practices have been adopted in the cruise industry much ahead of other travel businesses.

Your perceived challenges for cruising from and to India?

When we look at developing India as a major source market for domestic (river and coastal), inbound, and outbound cruises, we need to first be clear that the requirements for each one of these have to be clearly spelled out—this would mean the guidelines and SOPs required to be observed by the cruise lines, the authorities, and intermediate service providers. We need to understand that the concept of “consumption” of the product being offered must be well understood at both ends of the spectrum. If the policies, services, and pricing are not consumer-centric and the big picture is not properly painted for all stakeholders to understand, we then will keep chasing our own tail.

Making a new airport to increase connectivity or building a new motorway to connect two cities is very different from creating a cruise eco-system in India, which could support multiple businesses and create millions of jobs. I still do not see a

proper vision on these lines; therefore, it is difficult to comment on the challenges.

Where do you see India, with its extensive coastline and rivers, navigating on the global tourism map?

We are a very late entrant in the world of cruising, and to be able to create a larger footprint on a global cruise tourism map, we need to grow the number of ships operating on India's coast and rivers. We do not need to offer world-class service, but an Indian experience and hospitality, which are done beautifully by several hospitality chains. We need to define if we are running the cruise ships for Indian guests or for overseas guests; this would also define the onboard offering. We must find our niche and develop our product offerings accordingly.

How do you look at this growing cruise segment five years hence in India?

Realism would play a very important role, as the goals we set for growth in India's cruise market must not be based on redundant assumptions. We need to get actual figures regarding how many passengers have sailed on Indian coastal cruises in comparison to the actual capacity; the same goes for river cruises. This would then determine the actual appetite of Indian consumers and the potential for growth for the next 5 to 10 years. Eventually, the revenue figures must speak for the profitability of the cruise lines, ports, and ancillary service providers. Only once these businesses would generate profits could we think of scaling up and growing the markets substantially, which would bring down the operational costs. The cruise market is sure to grow, but at what pace and in which direction, we need to see as time unfolds.

MSC Cruises to focus on sustainable and environmentally responsible cruising

With 22 ships in their fleet, sailing across 40-plus countries, and more than 140 embarkation and disembarkation ports, MSC Cruises offers a unique way to explore the world. Rashmi Ahuja, Divisional Manager, India, MSC Cruises, delves into cruising options with MSC Cruises.

Prashant Nayak

MSC Cruises prides in possessing the youngest fleet in the world, with the introduction of a new ship or two almost every year. The latest, MSC World Europa (November 2022) and MSC Euribia (June 2023) are completely new prototypes with cutting-edge technology and, most importantly, fully LNG-powered vessels, a step forward towards cruise tourism sustainability.

A cruise holiday is the most wholesome experience an operator can offer to families, honeymooners, and MICE groups. With MICE, wedding events, and spiritual group movements showing an upward trend in India, cruises have been a popular choice, considering they are an “affordable luxury” and offer an array of inclusions at an attractive price.

“Cruise tourism is gaining currency among Indians, albeit incrementally. This changing trend has seen people of all ages and income groups preferring cruises as a mode of travel and relaxation.”

“A well-organised cruise, working in unison with the trade partners to support and enhance the relationship between corporate and their dealers, culminates in a successful and well-managed event. At MSC for MICE events, we provide the support of a specialist team with industry-leading awareness. Our dedication and knowledge in marketing, branding, planning, and logistics ensure that every aspect of the incentive movement surfaces as a resounding success, delighting the guests and expressing corporate brand values, thereby supporting our strategic objectives,” proclaims Rashmi.

Elaborating on the MICE venues onboard the ships, Rashmi adds, “MSC Cruises’ conference facilities make a special impression, the attribute mainly



▲ Rashmi Ahuja

goes to the creative interiors for which our fleet is renowned. Fully equipped with advanced meeting, presentation, and IT equipments, along with varied options of venues to choose from, backed by MSC IT technical support, our conference facilities are overwhelmingly impressive. Be it a strategic meeting, gala night, religious discourse, rewards and recognition event, or a Garba night onboard, MSC Cruises has skilfully organised it all!”

Indians are increasingly planning their cruise vacations in advance. While routes offered towards the Gulf and/or Southeast Asia by cruise operators are easily navigable, an Indian traveller maintains a certain level of preparedness for travel to Europe, the USA, etc. “They now are ensuring that the required visas are secured in a timely manner, and that they also stand to benefit from attractive airfares and bookings on cruises at advance purchase promotional prices,” implies Rashmi.

On the marketing front, cruise operators today invest a lot of time and effort in creating awareness amongst their trade partners, who in turn support them in prompting the end guests to book in advance, creating a mutualistic situation

for all. “Our advance purchase promotions and last-minute deals always create a larger appeal,” states Rashmi. She further adds, “Impact of social media has widened audience reach today, and at MSC, we actively use it to our advantage by not just showing off our products or ongoing promotions but also creating live feeds of our ship launches so that it generates excitement and evokes a feeling of earnestness to travel, for the potential traveller.”

MSC Cruises abides by the rules of cruise tourism sustainability. With their cruise sustainability programme, they are introducing cleaner fuels across their cruise ships, promoting responsible travel through their shore excursions, reusing and recycling waste on all their ships, and producing their own freshwater on board directly from the sea. “Our journey towards sustainable cruises is organised around four key pillars: planet, people, place, and procurement. This translates into a drive to continuously improve our fleet’s environmental performance; caring for all employees and promoting diversity and inclusion; working to ensure that our impact on the coastal communities that we reach remains positive; and responsibly sourcing the products and services that we purchase.”

Cruise tourism has gradually evolved in India over the years. The country has always been a popular choice of destination globally. As sea routes are opened up, the world is definitely watching! “Cruise tourism is gaining currency among Indians, albeit incrementally. This changing trend has seen people of all ages and income groups preferring cruises as a mode of travel and relaxation; they are no longer considered an unaffordable luxury. With the concept of blue economy being in vogue, cruise liner operators are looking for islands as their destinations. This makes India, which has more than 1300 islands and islets, a potential cruise hub. With the advent of domestic cruises along with international options, the Indian traveller is spoilt for choice,” signs off Rashmi.



SET SAIL FOR SUCCESS!

Boost your travel business with
cruise bookings on TripJack.

Travel Agent Benefits

- ✓ Amazing Deals & Incentives
- ✓ Domestic & International Cruises
- ✓ Popular Itineraries
- ✓ Sail Dates on Holidays
- ✓ Online Booking

T&C Apply



Contact : 022 62506250 & Press 4 | cruise.ops@tripjack.com

THE SWEET SPOT IN RIVER CRUISING CLEARLY POINTING TOWARDS AVALON WATERWAYS®

Avalon Waterways® weaves resplendent dreams for the unsatiated minds seeking wanderlust with its giant story of achievement, powered by the success of its fleet of small cruise ships.

Cruising has increasingly gained popularity in the travel sector over the recent few years. However, in recent times of 'doing the different,' Avalon®'s river cruising has broken the archetype to prove that when it comes to bodies of water and ships, the bigger, the better is a myth. The sit-down meals, hassle-free excursions, proximity to the land, very high crew-to-guest ratio, sailing through the picturesque countryside of Europe, and covering the great cities and the legendary rivers have been the breaking point of a success story, reveals Varesch Chopra, Managing Director, Avalon Waterways®. "I feel that there is simply no going back, as people realised what a great way to see the world this was! We can never thank our agency partners enough for recommending this exceptional experience to their discerning

travellers," mentions Varesch Chopra.

The company that reinvented river cruise ships has now redefined the entire river cruise experience. There is only one point of view on an Avalon Waterways® river cruise - The Suite View. The entire fleet in Europe and Southeast Asia is completely comprised of Suite Ships®, each featuring their Panorama Suites™, with the widest opening windows, the industry's only Open-Air Balcony®, and an inviting bed facing the ever-changing scenery. They are unveiling for travellers an unforgettable fusion of distinctive sights, colourful cultures, and enduring traditions while sailing aboard innovative and award-winning Suite Ships.

"Fastidious Indian travellers are aware and are increasingly looking forward to cruising without a crowd, exploring new cultures with ease, and sailing in intimate settings," said Chopra. "Aboard our spacious, state-of-the-art Suite Ships, travellers enjoy the company of an expert cruise director, appealing crew-to-passenger ratios, the personalised attention they deserve, and seamless dock-and-go

sightseeing with insider tips and experiences only the locals can provide. This style of our 'all-inclusive cruising' is the inimitable way to see and explore the world."

Avalon Waterways® lays out eight reasons this travel style has excelled as a preferred mode to see, experience, and explore the world for Indian travellers.

Size matters

River cruise vessels are built to slowly ply the world's weaving and meandering rivers to port in storybook settings. To sail under centuries-old bridges and squeeze between 12-meter-wide locks evokes feelings of sheer romance. Avalon Waterways® floating "Luxury Boatique" hotels hold an average of 150 guests; some are even smaller.

Meanwhile, Avalon®'s onboard crew ratio is high, with the average guest-to-crew ratio being 3:1. This means travellers are privy to copious amounts of attention to detail, with crew members happily catering to guests' needs every moment of the day.





With Avalon Waterways®, every river and landscape is an experience to behold

On an Avalon® cruise, travellers glide along the picturesque vistas and engage in the authentic local ways of life. It is easy to step off the board and mingle with the locals and immerse in their everyday experiences. Avalon® cruises wind and bend through the heart of fascinating countries, portraying a panoramic view and charm of the old world. Always within a few feet of shore, travellers pass clifftop castles, hillside vineyards, ancient villages, and capital cities. Every day and night travellers have quick and easy access to ports of call. The beautiful unending panoramas are a feast to the eyes from the private viewing gallery of the bed facing the outdoors.

Cruising focused on “to-dos,” not crowds and queues

Avalon® itineraries are destination-focused, with local guides who help travellers experience and connect with the world around them. Most itineraries also sail off the beaten path, visiting small fairytale villages, quaint village squares, and family-owned wineries, bakeries, and restaurants all along the way.

Excursions typically accommodate no more than 30 guests at a time, providing every traveller with an immersive and authentic experience. All excursions are always conducted in the signature style and professional hands of Avalon®’s 95-year-old sister brand Globus® and its expertise.

Fresh air and perspectives

On board Avalon®’s innovative and award-winning Suite Ships, guests on two full decks are welcomed with 200-square-foot Panorama Suites, each featuring a wall of floor-to-ceiling windows that open seven feet wide (the widest-opening windows in river cruising). This converts into an open-air balcony. No Avalon Waterways® ship has interior-only cabins. Instead, every Deluxe Stateroom and Panorama Suite offers guests natural light, and most feature beds face the views which their cruising is famous for.

Public spaces also provide guests room to move and views galore. And Avalon®’s Suite Ship Sky Decks run the length and width of each vessel with wide-open spaces, fresh air, and lounge chairs aplenty.

An all-inclusive culinary experience in every way

Avalon® shares the flavours of the world with the most fresh local ingredients prepared by talented chefs and served around a choice of venues on board. Avalon FlexDining® approach to onboard dining experiences has tossed out the idea of restrictive seating times in limited settings. Cruisers get to choose from options like a breezy al fresco lunch at the Sky Grill, an elegant four-course dinner in the glass-walled Panorama Dining Room, or a more casual culinary setting in the Panorama Bistro. On an Avalon® cruise, inclusive dining is part of the journey.

Warm “welcome” along the way

Avalon® works tirelessly to engage with communities visited by hiring local drivers, guides, and operators for land activities. This extends to the purchase of local produce, wine, beer, and even bread, further connecting guests to people, places, and culture. Thus, Avalon Waterways® has been actively pursued by new towns along the world’s rivers, always promising passengers an authentic experience.

Cruising “Your Way”

Beyond the wall-to-wall, floor-to-ceiling windows is a world waiting to be explored – “Your Way”. Whether enjoying a guided walking tour of one of Europe’s great cities, joining a cooking class, or paddling a canoe, Avalon Choice® selections of Classic, Discovery, and Active excursions offer an extensive range of possibilities. The new Adventure Center and AvalonGO mobile app are equipped to help a traveller with all the necessary recommendations and gear for undertaking solo travel.

Avalon Waterways® also offers an energising collection of Active DiscoverySM river cruises. Along the Danube, Rhine, and Rhône rivers, one can hike, bike, and engage in the surroundings in unimaginable ways. From action-packed experiences to interactive discoveries, these exciting cruises offer something for all interests, allowing one to tailor a vacation to suit personal taste and pace.

Awards and More

While Avalon® is busy delivering first-rate service to guests, they find it humbling to share kudos that they have received from some of the industry’s most respected experts in river cruising, including readers and editors of Cruise Critic, USA Today, Conde Nast Traveller, and TravelAge West. They’ve struck the right note with their award-winning Panorama Suites, Open-Air Balconies, Panorama Windows, exceptional shore excursions, and flexible dining options. However, they feel that their biggest reward is making their cruise guests contented and enraptured from the first throw of the bowlines to the last drop of the anchor.

It remains the unmatched Avalon® difference!



Carnival Cruises Line popularising cruise vacation as an affordable and fun travel option

Discover the World India represents Carnival Cruise Line in India. Dipti Adhia, Director, Discover the World India, bestows profound confidence on Indian travellers acknowledging cruising to transform into a coveted vacation choice globally.

Prashant Nayak

International cruising has established a triumphant return, notably flourishing in Asia-Pacific, Middle Eastern, and European waters. Whilst cruising in the USA and Canada maintains strong demand, visa complexities have ushered passengers to explore alternative destinations. To evade challenges like visa issuance and expensive airfares, Dipti advises travellers to plan and book a cruise early. Presently, Asian and Middle Eastern itineraries are preferred owing to their visa flexibility.

Carnival Cruise Line's USP lies in its ability to deliver the "Fun Ship" experience like no other. From thrilling water slides to Bolt, the roller coaster, the sky ride, the trampoline zone, action-packed games, world-class shows, live music performances, and much more, they create an immersive and lively environment for passengers of all ages. "We are committed to affordability and value, which ensures that passengers get the most out of their vacation budget. With our vibrant and energetic ambiance, we are the ultimate choice for those seeking a fun-filled and unforgettable cruising experience. We deliver tremendous value, with 25 to 50 per cent savings over comparable land-based alternatives at every price point," informs Dipti.

Carnival offers ginormous options to enhance the traveller's preferences, ranging from short 3-day getaways to extended 16-day plus voyages. They provide access to an extensive selection of picturesque and culturally rich locations. Be it the sunny beaches of the Bahamas - Caribbean, Mexico, Bermuda, Hawaii, the historic cities of Europe, or the breathtaking landscapes of Alaska, they proffer unforgettable journeys that combine rollicking experiences onboard with captivating destinations ashore.

Over the years, Indian cruise travellers have transformed significantly. "From seeking local experiences to embracing



▲ Dipti Adhia

global adventures, their preferences have evolved. Some have transitioned into cruise connoisseurs, venturing into expedition and small-ship cruising, while many now decidedly incorporate cruising into their vacation plans. Also, the inclination towards cruising over land options or combining both placards the changing dynamics of an Indian cruise traveller, shaping the future of cruising experiences. India is indubitably emerging as a promising market for international cruising, brimming with untapped potential," says Dipti.

Special shore excursions are curated for Indian groups based on their interests, allowing them to explore destinations in a way that aligns with their preferences

When it comes to attracting Indian travellers to their cruise itineraries, Dipti says, "At Carnival Cruises, we recognise the significance of the Indian market and tread an extra mile to cater to the specific needs and preferences of Indian guests. For example, understanding the importance of cuisine, we provide

a wide range of options, including vegetarian, non-vegetarian, and Jain meals, for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, ensuring that guests feel at home and their dietary requirements are fulfilled. We also organise lively events featuring Bollywood music to add a touch of familiarity and excitement for groups. Special shore excursions are curated for Indian groups based on their interests, allowing them to explore destinations in a way that aligns with their preferences. Carnival's dedicated MICE, corporate, and charter teams have a long history of helping guests create cruise experiences for groups of all sizes. With a commitment to flexibility and creating unforgettable experiences, we ensure that all our guests, including Indians, have a truly memorable time sailing with us."

Carnival Cruises has been adding more capacity with more ships in their most popular homeports, such as Miami and Port Canaveral in Florida, Galveston in Texas, and Los Angeles. They are already the biggest operator on the West Coast and will continue to build on that. They recently expanded their offerings from Alaska, adding an extra ship there during the summer.

Carnival's third ship powered by LNG, Carnival Jubilee, arrives later this year. They also have Carnival Luminosa plugging into shore power at the Port of Seattle, along with their other ships deployed for this Alaska season: Carnival Spirit and Carnival Miracle. These ships are all essential steps towards Carnival Corporation's overall goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. "Sustainability reigns supreme in our minds, and an environmentally friendly future is everyone's responsibility. We have many proactive initiatives to manage the environmental impact of our fleet and preserve important natural resources, and have been actively inviting our guests to join us in our journey towards a more responsible and sustainable future," explains Dipti.



Bodoland

Discover A Land Untouched



Director cum CHD Office
Department of Tourism
Depot Road. W/No.-5
Kokrajhar. BTC. Assam. 783370

Contact
M: +919435132396
E: bodolandtourism@yahoo.com

Havila Cruises weaves enchantment in the land of Santa Claus

Holiday Moods Adventures, the distributor in India of Havila Kystruten Operations AS (Norway) for its Havila Cruise bookings, has launched its Northern Lights Cruise Fixed Departure packages for 2023–24 for the Indian travel trade.

Team TTJ

Holiday Moods Adventures is a 26-year-old, certified experiential and adventure company, top-rated by National Geographic Adventure, fully licensed, and with multiple awards to its name since 1997. Earlier, they had been appointed as distributors in India by Havila Kystruten Operations AS (Norway) for its Havila Cruise bookings and have recently launched the Northern Lights Cruise Fixed Departures packages for 2023–24 for the travel trade. All packages are commissionable to the travel trade.

Explaining more about the launch, Tejbir Singh Anand, Managing Director, Holiday Moods Adventures, says, “It is a scintillating moment as the fixed departure packages for ‘Aurora Borealis’ are being launched for the first time in India. The Northern Lights have enticed every traveller with hypnotic excitement, and we are delighted to package and offer it to the Indian travel trade market as a B2B product. It calls for great honour and proud privilege to be associated with the Havila group, and the journey ahead is indeed exciting to distribute Havila cruise inventory in India. The season for the Northern Lights will start from September midway until April 1st week of 2024.”

Briefing on the packages, Arshdeep Anand, Director, Holiday Moods Adventures, said, “The packages being offered have three variants starting from five to seven nights, and they can be further customised and curated. More than the cruise experience, the experience of activities in the Arctic region is stirring. All packages will include a one-night stay at the Snow Hotel 365 in Kirkenes as a standard routine. The packages can start from Bergen, Tromso, and also Kirkenes.”



▲ Arshdeep Anand

Havila Cruises will offer four new identical ships, loaded with the world’s largest battery pack, which will sail noiselessly without emissions through the endangered and vulnerable fjords for four hours, cherishing nature and topping up the visitors’ experience. Havila vessels are small, identical ships with a capacity of 179 cabins for 640 passengers. They are light-footed and smooth enough to sail through interconnected fjords within touching distance of the islands. At the Nor-Shipping event in Oslo in April, Havila Capella was awarded the Next Generation Ship Award as the world’s most environmentally friendly coastal ship with groundbreaking technology, allowing her to sail with zero emissions.

More than the cruise experience, the experience of activities in the Arctic region is more exciting

A trip with Havila Voyages gives one a taste of Norway, reflecting its bold, cold, and clean natural environment. About the new experiences, Tejbir Singh Anand stated, “Every dawn breaks into a new scenic cruising day seeped in the breathtaking beauty of the picturesque coastline of Norway. Tiny fishing communities are towered by snow-capped mountains, and the scenery is dynamic and



▲ Tejbir Singh Anand

everchanging. The highlight of the journey will be the Arctic Circle, North Cape, the Tundra region, incredible fjords, wildlife encounters, whale watching, dog sledding, reindeer sledding, RIB safaris, e-biking in the valleys, king crab fishing, and exploring glaciers and icebergs.”

To deliver their guests the very best, they have developed a unique food concept based on sustainability, where pure and simple dishes are served with sublime flavours. Arshdeep Anand shares more, “Havila Food Stories aims for sustainability as its most important ingredient. There are no buffets, and the guests will enjoy Norwegian culinary experiences aimed at reducing a maximum of 75 gms of daily food waste per guest. To promote sustainability, only handpicked ingredients from local suppliers and producers will be sourced. This concept will hopefully cut food waste by almost 15 tonnes per ship each year, along with a waste energy recovery system that will make use of the 65 per cent of fuel energy that is normally lost through the exhaust and cooling water systems.

The Northern Lights hold a scientific fascination for some. Others simply surrender to the beauty of the colourful fireworks in the middle of the dark night. There are few places in the world better for seeing the Northern Lights than Norway.





EAST INDIA TRAVMART

KOLKATA, SEPTEMBER 15-17, 2023

NATIONWIDE NETWORKING



**THANK YOU TRAVEL TRADE
for your overwhelming support!**

GOLD SPONSORS



पर्यटन मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
TOURISM



SILVER SPONSORS



FAM PARTNER

HOTEL PARTNER

KNOWLEDGE PARTNER



Cordelia Cruises offers captivating experience of cruising the Indian way

Cordelia Cruises is committed to playing a pivotal role in whittling India's dominant presence on the stage of global tourism. Jurgen Bailom, President and CEO, Waterways Leisure, Cordelia Cruises, expresses fervour about copious possibilities in the journey ahead for Indian cruise tourism.

Prashant Nayak

The cruise industry has evolved from being relatively niche to gaining widespread recognition as a sought-after travel experience. At Cordelia Cruises, they take pride in leading from the front in this evolution, contributing significantly to the growth of premium cruise offerings in the country. "We have traversed miles from where we laid the foundation and have firmly established cruising as an option for holidaying. Today cruising has transcended the boundaries of the elite and permeated the consciousness of every holidaymaker seeking exuberance to satiate the insipid mind harnessing innate desire in pursuit of wanderlust. The future of cruise tourism in India presents monumental potential, and with 400,000 passengers on board thus far, we are committed to leading the way in shaping its towering growth and scripting a success story," reveals Jurgen.

With relentless efforts powering improvement and ameliorating performances for guests at Cordelia, they are exceedingly proud to be at the crest of a journey that defines luxury, hospitality, and exploration for Indian travellers. Their buttress and backbone have always been the people they work with and work for—the Indians.

"We are consistently reaching out to multigenerational travellers with offerings of family-friendly amenities, activities, and services and focusing on creating inclusive experiences that cater to the needs and preferences of age groups across. We have curated itineraries that include off-the-beaten-path destinations and adventure-focused ports of call on our Sri Lanka sailing. These itineraries cater to the desire for immersive experiences and allow younger travellers to explore new and exciting destinations. A rock-climbing wall on the top deck of our cruise provides the thrill and adrenaline to young adventurous guests on board," notifies Jurgen.

The cruise liner is focused on adding more unexplored and captivating destinations to their itineraries. Anticipating the copious



▲ Jurgen Bailom

and diverse interests of passengers, they are planning a series of themed cruises and special events. These curated experiences will include the Independence Day celebration on board, the World Cup match screening, Asia's biggest cruise festival, and special Garba nights during Navratri and Diwali celebrations on board. Cordelia also offers stunning and unconventional settings for business meetings, conferences, seminars, and corporate events.

The next five years hold the potential for an array of diverse cruise itineraries that showcase India's cultural richness and geographical beauty

Alongside significant opportunities, the industry presents its own share of challenges. Jurgen explains, "Our major challenge has always been less awareness about cruising among potential tourists in the Indian market. Also, addressing misconceptions and showcasing the value of a cruise vacation have been integral to our marketing efforts. We consistently try to reach a maximum number of Indians and introduce them to this captivating experience

of cruising the Indian way."

Pledged to sustainability, Cordelia Cruises is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and complies with international and local maritime organisations by using very low-sulphur fuel oils. They prioritise energy efficiency by optimising ship routes based on weather and currents, thus minimising power consumption. "Overall, Cordelia Cruises goes above and beyond to promote conscientious tourism, waste reduction, responsible chemical and water management, and support for local economies while meeting or surpassing international standards and regulations," states Jurgen.

Diverse rivers, breathtaking and awe-inspiring coastline of India unfurl an untapped treasure trove of potential for providing a world-class cruising experience. This trend signifies a remarkable shift in the country's cruise tourism landscape and holds multifarious promises for positioning India as a significant player on the global cruise tourism map. The acknowledgment of cruise tourism's multifaceted benefits is indeed a strong indicator of a promising future for the cruising industry in India.

"Five years hence, we envision a thriving and dynamic cruise segment in India evolving into a cornerstone of the nation's tourism landscape. The next five years hold the potential for an array of diverse cruise itineraries that showcase India's cultural richness and geographical beauty. Cordelia Cruises is committed to contributing actively to this envisioned future. We will continue to innovate, elevate the cruising experience, and collaborate with industry stakeholders to make this positive outlook a reality," says Jurgen.

Cordelia Cruises is planning on adding more international destinations to its itineraries. They are sailing to Sri Lanka and planning their voyage to the Middle East next monsoon. In addition to the spectacular new destinations, they have plans to add new vessels in the upcoming months.



india
assist

India Uninterrupted

"Changing the way world Travels with India Assist"

Presence in over 100 cities across India.



The following distress situations are addressed



Medical Emergencies



Police Support



Lost & Found



Emergency
Lodging & boarding



Emergency Transit




24x7 Help Desk




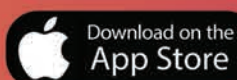
- Recognised as the Travel Startup of the Year 2023
- World's First Patented Real Time Assistance Services for Travellers within India and abroad
- Recognized as Showcase Start-up of Government of India
- Winner of 'Concept of the Year Award'
- Presence in over 100 Cities across India

 www.indiaassist.com

 India Assist Insights Pvt. Ltd. Asset One, G-1, Hyatt Andaz Residences, Aerocity, New Delhi - 110037

 travelalliances@indiaassist.com

 +91-9811664898



Ark Travel Group- Pioneers in the art of selling cruises

Kishan Biyani, Managing Director, ARK Travel Group (ATG), has been instrumental in ATG attaining the pinnacle of glory and achieving the position of the largest cruise distributor in the country today.

Prashant Nayak

Whilst pioneering promotion of cruises has been a colossal achievement of the Ark Travel Group, it has simultaneously voyaged to popularise the concept of cruise vacations in the India market. Today, ATG is one of India's leading B2B cruise and luxury resort consolidators today. The company has now anchored its position in India as ARK Cruises. Their cumulative experience that spans over two decades has endowed them with a unique and in-depth insight into the industry of cruising.

Kishan Biyani is renowned in the industry for his passion for cruises and is admired for his selling skills and excellent interpersonal relationships. His passion percolates down to the people working at ATG at all levels. It is this passion, know-how, and understanding that makes the company more of a travel partner than a booking agent. Their cruise portfolio is extensive, and they present a multitude of befitting offers of cruise options to fit every budget type, holiday type, and geography.

"As we grow and soar, we have expanded our portfolio of cruise products as well. We are currently marketing Resort World Cruises, NCL, MSC, Holland America, Cordelia, Oceania, Regent Seven Seas, Silver Seas, Disney World Cruises, Crystal Cruises, Uniworld River Cruises, and Croisi River Cruises, to name a few prominent ones," shares Kishan.

Kishan says that over the years of selling cruise business, it has been significantly interesting to observe the maturity of the traveller over the last few years. From shorter cruises to longer ones, from Southeast Asia to Europe and Alaska, and from leisure to adventure, the scope for growth has been illimitable. He points out, "We are a growing market for outbound tourism, where sky is the limit."



▲ Kishan Biyani

With a variety of cruising options, Indians take an interest in every kind of cruise action. Oceans, rivers, and expeditions all offer equal charm and promises. Kishan says, "It all depends on one's personal bent of mind, as options available to the seeker are in plenty today. Preferences of Indians tilt towards state-of-the-art facilities on board the ship and bigger, newer vessels, especially if the demographics are those of young and happening travellers. Clients today are asking for facilities and amenities on board, which was not the case till a few years back. We have seen an upward trend for expedition cruises."

Visa is a pre-requisite for any travel plans. The demand for US and Alaska cruises saw a steep decline as no visa slots were available.

For ATG, the major challenge while booking cruises for the Indian market is currently visa issuance. Visa is a pre-requisite for any travel plans. The demand for US and Alaska cruises saw a steep decline as no visa slots were

available. Schengen visas, too, are seeing a much longer waiting period. "I wish VFS could iron out these issues so that the overall business can grow in a constructive manner," opines Kishan.

MICE on cruises is one stronghold of ATG. Well before the pandemic, they had introduced a concept of all-inclusive entertainment titled 'BIG BANG NAUTICAL FIESTA', targeting the larger Indian corporate houses. The cruising events on ships like Genting Dream were planned to educate the travel agents by giving them first-hand experience of the ship. The events were to highlight how different experiences like neon parties, live band performances, and gala nights could be created to attract different segments of travellers like FITs, MICE, and wedding groups.

"MICE is a very important segment for cruises, as this adds to the total volume of business for any liner. Corporates today are on the lookout for a varied experience, and what is better than an inclusive, carefree, yet comprehensive incentive on a cruise liner? Every bit is taken care of, be it food, entertainment, meetings, or nightlife—all in one single venue," mentions Kishan. ATG believes that technology plays an important role in the travel industry. For that, they have Deckpro by Arktech, a B2B cruise booking platform that has brought most of the cruise lines into their booking system so that it is easy for the travel agent to book online.

The travel industry is now as rocking as it was before the pandemic, but there still remains a lot to forge ahead. "We are here to grow as the economy is ameliorating, and from what we fathom, there are aspirations to travel and explore the world. I can only see an upward trend for all segments, including cruises," concludes Kishan.



YOUR TRUSTED DMC FOR UAE TRAVEL

The Ultimate UAE Experience, with **Eagle Crest Tourism LLC!**

? Why Choose Us?

Excursions

Staycations

Hotels

Transfers

Visa Services

Tailor Made Packages

Group Tours

24/7 Support



POWERED BY



Eagle Crest Tourism LLC!

1406-1407, Sobha Sapphire Business Bay
Dubai - United Arab Emirates.

www.eaglecrestdmc.com
dubaisales@eaglecrestdmc.com



UAE 24/7 Support line : **+971 569259296**

INDIA 24/7 Support line : **+91 9136373242**

'Expedition cruising is gaining traction among young Indian travellers'

For more than two decades, Guideline Travels has been turning tour and cruise vacations into truly enchanting experiences that offer lifetime memories for their guests. As an innovator in tour concepts, Pradeep Saboo, Director, Guideline Travels Holidays India, is dedicated to handcrafting new experiences, giving their clients more to look forward to!

Prashant Nayak

Guideline Travels excels in both B2C and B2B circuits and boasts an extensive product portfolio, including international group tours, bespoke FIT ventures, fixed departures, and MICE movements. Its major business is cruises. They sell a variety of high-end cruise packages that are meticulously crafted to cater to the traveller's needs and ensure that the guests are pampered to the fullest. Guideline Travels has also been a well-known name for its series of group tour products, with "Pure Veg and Jain Food" being one of the USPs.

"We at Guideline Travels have been selling cruises in the B2B market for more than two decades. We are PSAs of major cruise brands like Resorts World Cruises, Norwegian Cruise Line, and Uniworld Cruises and wholesalers for cruise brands like Royal Caribbean, MSC Cruises, Costa Cruises, Cordelia Cruises, etc.," informs Pradeep.

The reason behind the growth of MICE on cruise ships is the ease of handling groups onboard, as it offers an all-inclusive destination

Guideline Travels is now under the umbrella of EaseMyTrip, one of India's largest online travel tech platforms. Pradeep says, "For us at Guideline, these are exciting times ahead as we are now a part of the EaseMyTrip. com, one of India's largest online travel agencies. This move further enhances our purchasing power with the plethora of vendors now available to us, and in turn helps both companies further grow together with synergies."

When it comes to cruising Indians prefer freestyle and all-inclusive cruise



▲ Pradeep Saboo

packages with a clear demarcation of costs. Based on his personal experience, Pradeep shares, "India is a very price-sensitive market. Having said that, an Indian vacationer looks at the total value a product is offering and will be willing to spend a lot on luxury. This is one of the many contributing factors as to why a lot of Indian guests are happy to choose cruising and always look forward to buying higher category cabins like balconies or suites."

While ocean cruises offer just the kind of experience that many Indians seek, in recent years, river cruising has become an increasingly popular form of leisure travel. The expedition segment continues to be one of the most discussed elements of the cruise industry, and it is now poised for dramatic growth in the coming years. On this aspect, Pradeep says, "For an Indian guest, the always-go-to favourite is ocean cruising. However, many seasoned travellers are now also choosing to travel on long-haul river cruises on the Nile or Danube. Expedition cruising is currently a very niche segment and is slowly gaining traction among young Indian travellers

who wish to explore the distant parts of the world onboard cruises."

For Pradeep, selling a cruise vacation has never been a challenge. He says, "A cruise vacation sells itself. However, being in the B2B market, we need to undertake various activities to keep the travel partners engaged with us and also to create awareness of the new products on offer. We are successfully able to manage this through our sales force, roadshows, door-to-door sales visits, and our participation in various trade shows across India."

The reason behind the growth of MICE on cruise ships is the ease of handling groups onboard, as it offers an all-inclusive destination. It unites work and leisure activities on the cruise ship. Everything is available here, from meeting venues and award ceremonies in the ship theatre to leisure activities in the various lounges, pool decks, and bars on the cruise. "MICE on Cruise is a great option for corporates, and it is growing exponentially. More and more corporates or wedding planners are willing to explore this, as it gives each of their guests a wholesome and enriching experience. Cruising is a splendid option for large groups and is also commercially viable," asserts Pradeep.


Sharing his opinion about the Indian cruise market, which he has witnessed over the years, Pradeep mentions, "An Indian guest always looks forward to exploring and planning something different every time they plan a holiday. India is now one of the top-producing markets for major cruise brands worldwide in terms of numbers. With so many cruise options around the world offering varied experiences and available at all price points, cruising will keep enticing travellers and will always be a lucrative option for our India market in times to come."



WHERE BUSINESS MEETS COMFORT!

Since 1987, Pride Hotels Group has seamlessly provided exceptional hospitality seamlessly and is now present across 50+ locations. Our city center hotels offer easy accessibility for our guests. Choose Pride Hotels Group for your meetings and conferences to access versatile venues and exceptional amenities. Our dedicated team is fully committed to ensuring flawless execution, guaranteeing a smooth experience for all your important meetings.



- 
Versatile Venues
- 
Unmatched Amenities
- 
Exquisite Catering
- 
Personalized Service



For more information, mail us at centralreservations@pridehotel.com or call us at 18002091400



Our network:
Ahmedabad | Kolkata | New Delhi | Goa | Jaipur | Puri | Gangtok | Bharatpur | Mussoorie | Bengaluru | Chennai | Nagpur
Pune | Indore | Udaipur | Anand | Bhopal | Somnath | Sasan Gir | Vadodara: Alkapuri, Manjusar | Haldwani | Ranakpur |
Digha | Rishikesh | Rudraprayag | Bengaluru (Whitefield)

Upcoming Properties:
Daman | Bhavnagar | Dwaraka | Nainital | Jim Corbett | Bharuch | Halol | Jabalpur | Agra | Haldwani |
Surendranagar | Rajkot | Neemrana | Chandigarh | Dehradun | Mysore | Aurangabad | Gurugram | Bhopal |
Yavatmal | Lucknow | Varanasi | Kanpur | Greater Noida | Motera, Ahmedabad | Lonavala | Ambaji | Veraval | Amritsar

TBO.com targeting a four-fold increase in its cruise business

TBO sails the high seas of partnership in the cruise industry with leading cruise brands anchoring the success firmly – TTJ's exclusive conversation with Aarish Khan, Chief Commercial Officer, India Business, TBO.com.

Gurjit Singh Ahuja

As the largest B2B platform in the country, TBO exhibits a very strong portfolio of airlines, hotels, holiday packages, Rail Europe, DMCs, Marine and Cruises, etc., that are available at substantial value and service to thousands of travel agents across the country who transact online on the platform every day. Cruises today are a well-demanded travel product, and TBO is all set with its offerings.

As the traveller's needs continue to evolve and mount, the variety and novelty of the travel product play an important role. Cruises today are comprehensibly an important vertical in the gamut of leisure travel offerings. "Cruises hold a substantial place in our overall business with their benefaction extending beyond mere percentages. In fact, cruises constitute an integral part of our non-air components, signifying pronounced importance within our diverse travel portfolio," says Aarish.

TBO has established partnerships with a diverse range of cruise brands, catering to various preferences and destinations. Norwegian Cruise Line, Royal Caribbean, Celebrity, MSC, Costa, Carnival, Holland America, and Resorts World Cruises are its international partners. On the international river cruising front, their partners include Uniworld River Cruises and Avalon Waterways. On the domestic cruise front, they have a strong partnership with Cordelia. Aarish adds, "These collaborations enable us to offer our clients an extensive selection of cruise options, ensuring memorable and tailored experiences across the globe."

Every travel product comes forth with its inherent unique features, propositions, and challenges, and although today cruises are an established vertical, rapid changes do present their own challenges. Aarish explains, "As a major B2B platform, besides distribution, we place a lot of importance on delivery. Product knowledge among partner agents is a challenge that we continuously address through



▲ Aarish Khan

training and interactive sessions with our agents. He further adds, "Apprehensions and unspoken queries are addressed by providing first-hand cruise experience; this is an ongoing exercise and builds confidence in the product.

"We observe a significant demand for FIT (free independent traveller) bookings, reflecting the preference for personalised and individualised cruise experiences."

Talking about the post-COVID sequence of events, Aarish elaborates, "Post-COVID, the cruise market has experienced an impressive resurgence, marked by exponential growth. Notably, the year 2019 was a landmark with record-breaking sales globally, within the cruise industry. Looking at the current scenario, it is noteworthy, that we have not only surpassed those benchmarks but also embarked on a trajectory of augmented growth. This sets a promising foundation for the future, and we are eagerly anticipating continued success in the years ahead."

Talking about the business mix between cruises sailing from Indian shores and

sailing from overseas destinations, Aarish shares, "The landscape of our business, particularly concerning domestic and international cruises from Indian ports, reveals intriguing dynamics; presently, our cruise business is divided into two significant segments. Domestic cruises represent a significant portion, with international cruises forming the majority of our cruise offerings.

He further elucidates, "Notably, domestic cruising has emerged as a preferred choice for new travellers. It serves as an inviting initiation into the world of cruising, offering a memorable first-time experience, whereas international cruising caters to a more experienced demographic. International cruise travellers tend to be more seasoned and well-acquainted with the nuances of cruise experiences. This intriguing blend of domestic and international cruise offerings allows us to cater to a diverse range of travellers, each seeking an experience that aligns with their preferences and travel aspirations."

Explaining the cruise demand pattern from their B2B partners, Aarish explains, "Our agents showcase a diversified approach when it comes to cruise sales. We observe a significant demand for FIT (free independent traveller) bookings, reflecting the preference for personalised and individualised cruise experiences. Additionally, we continue to witness a strong appeal for weddings, MICE, and group bookings. These segments often drive a significant chunk of cruise sales as they cater to special occasions and collective experiences."

If things progress as they are, the cruise industry is all set for a bright future with enhanced demand and newer destinations and ships coming into play. Aarish reiterates, "The cruise market is experiencing notable growth, reflecting a positive trajectory in the industry. With the current momentum and our strategic initiatives, we are poised to achieve a fourfold increase in our business over the next three years."



معرض قطر الدولي للسياحة والسفر
Qatar International Exhibition for Travel & Tourism

DISCOVER PLACES, PEOPLE & CULTURES

20 - 22 NOV 2023
DECC - DOHA, QATAR



SCAN THE QR CODE
OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE
WWW.QTMQATAR.COM

BOOK YOUR STAND TODAY!

FEATURING DEDICATED SECTORS



CULTURE



LEISURE



BUSINESS



LUXURY



SPORTS



MEDICAL



HALAL

| STRATEGIC PARTNER | FOUNDING PARTNER | SUPPORTED BY | OFFICIAL AIRLINE | OFFICIAL TRANSPORT |
|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | | | | |
| HOSPITALITY PARTNER | PLATINUM SPONSOR | ASSOCIATION PARTNER | ASSOCIATION PARTNER | ASSOCIATION PARTNER |
| | | | | |

TripJack addresses need to educate domestic travellers to enhance cruise business

As a leading B2B travel platform, TripJack has a strong presence across India and offers unique travel experiences, including cruises. Abdul Thingna, Vice President, Hotels, TripJack, elaborates on the company's achievements in the cruise business and the current cruise products on offer.

Prashant Nayak

TripJack is committed to and consistently works towards providing a plethora of travel experiences that cater to the B2B market. With their extensive network, cutting-edge technology, and excellent customer service, they are a natural fit to partner with the most recognisable cruise lines in the world.

"We have focused on bringing both domestic and international cruise experiences to our travel partners. We have partnered with Cordelia Cruises in the domestic market and are the PSA for Resorts World Cruises in India. We recently tied up with Costa Cruises for the November and December 2023 India Sailings as well," says Abdul. All these collaborations align with TripJack's mission of providing unique and remarkable cruise experiences.

Resorts World Cruises is a well-established Asian luxury and dynamic lifestyle cruise brand rich in Asian heritage, offering a personalised cruising lifestyle with diverse international experiences. From November 2023 to January 2024, Costa Serena will offer a total of 23 sailings and a dual homeport of Mumbai and Cochin. For the first time, Costa Serena will sail to Mumbai, Cochin, Goa, and the beautiful islands of Lakshadweep with 2, 3, and 5-night itineraries. Cordelia Cruises recently started sailings to Sri Lanka from India for the first time this year, operating on the Chennai-Hambantota-Trincomalee-Chennai sector.

Indians weigh and choose many factors with utmost consideration before embarking on a cruise vacation. Abdul shares, "When planning a cruise holiday, people in India prioritise elements like itinerary locations, number of nights cruising, price, food (like the availability of vegetarian food), activities, and family friendliness. Before confirming their cruise plans, they frequently consider these factors to make an informed decision."



▲ Abdul Thingna

Of late, with a variety of cruising options, like ocean, river, expeditions, etc., Indian travellers have portrayed immense interest in domestic cruising, be it on the eastern coast or the western coast, notes Abdul. International cruising is also most sought after by Indians, and the growing interest, especially for Genting Dream by Resorts World Cruises, which sails between Singapore and Malaysia, deserves a special mention.

“As a technology-first online platform, we have made available cruise packages for different cruise lines on our portal”

The primary challenge with Indian travellers that cruise companies face is educating the customers about the cruising experience. Further, it is also important to educate travel agents to reach the right audience with the right conversations. "We believe that India is still a relatively new cruise market. Hence, it is essential to reach out to both young travellers as well as ones travelling with families to educate them as

to what makes a cruise holiday exciting and perfect. As a technology-first online platform, we have made available cruise packages for different cruise lines on our portal. We also promote using our online channels of marketing and our network of sales teams to create awareness and engage with our travel partners," assures Abdul. However, more and more Indian travellers are allured by the grandeur of cruise vacations. Many cruise lines count Indians among their growing clientele, of which many are first-timers, singles, couples, senior citizens, multigenerational families, and Indians with a higher disposable income. Perceptions of cruising among Indian travellers are indeed fast-changing.

The growing trend of MICE on cruise ships is a welcoming and positive swing for cruise liners, as corporates in India are interested in exploring various locations to host meetings and conferences whilst etching a pleasurable and memorable experience. Cruise liners are promoting ships as venues for different purposes like MICE, weddings, celebrations, holidays, and other such likes. "Our travel partners do receive a lot of group and MICE queries for cruises. With the plethora of activities, comfortable accommodation, amazing food, and more, we believe it is a great way for any group to connect, bond, engage, and come together for a meaningful getaway," says Abdul.

The Indian government is aware of the potential of cruise tourism and is working hard to establish India as a major cruise hub with cutting-edge river and ocean cruise infrastructure. Global players have expressed a significant interest in boosting cruise tourism in India. "The potential for cruises is huge. As a country with a vast coastline and beautiful beaches, we are geographically impeccably located. With higher cruise education, in due time, the adoption of cruise lines as one of the preferred holiday activities will definitely grow," remarks Abdul.

Secluded bliss with redefined
elegance and nature's glory



HARI MAHAL PALACE

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

Chandra Raj Mahal Bikaner

Luxury 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

dotndash.com

India's cruise market all set for double-digit growth

CruiseBay came to be launched at a period when awareness about cruising was minimal, and they offered travellers a marketplace of 1,500 plus cruises from 35 cruise lines to choose from on their website. With TTJ, Nikhil Thakurdas, Director, CruiseBay, shares some interesting aspects about India's cruise growth and sentiments.

Prashant Nayak

Back in 2008, when CruiseBay was launched, the company's objective was to give travellers a valuable source where they could research their cruise options online and bank on the expert advice of trained cruise consultants to help them choose the right itinerary from the cruise line and the ship that best met their preferences, including their budget.

"As we turn 15 this December, we have come a long way and are encouraged to see that cruising in India has reached an inflection point for take-off with so many cruise options now available to Indians without needing to travel overseas. With the knowledge and experience that we have gained over the past 15 years, it puts us on a strong footing and propels us to grow with the expanding market," mentions Nikhil. CruiseBay's portfolio continues to grow, and they offer the entire spectrum of cruise holidays, from ocean and river cruises to expedition voyages. Today, they also work closely with the cruise lines to create awareness and boost the cruise market in India.

With their extensive knowledge and expertise, Nikhil asserts that ocean cruising tops the chart, followed by river cruising and then expedition cruises. The trending destination still remains Singapore (owing to the lower costs), followed by the Mediterranean, Scandinavia, and then Alaska. "Cruising to Europe and Alaska will dramatically increase once the Schengen and USA visa backlog clears and the visas can be processed in pre-COVID timeframes. The Middle East is an upcoming region, with the tourism boards of Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia aggressively marketing their destinations and a couple of cruise lines putting their best ships in the region during the winter months. Due to the ease of flight accessibility in the Middle East, this region will continue to grow, and more and more Indians will look at cruise holidays here," states Nikhil.



▲ Nikhil Thakurdas

Nikhil also points out that there are several factors that Indians consider before they confirm their cruise, which include:

- Type of cruise line (family-oriented, adults-only, age genre)
- Brand of cruise line
- The ship—the size, the newness, the facilities, and the amenities
- Cruise itinerary, which includes the ports covered and the overall duration
- Cabin type: More Indians are opting for balcony cabins and cabins located on a higher deck
- Total cruise cost and if there are any offers
- Visa processing timelines to decide on the travel dates
- Flight connectivity to the embarkation and disembarkation points
- Insurance facility, if any, offered by the cruise for trip cancellation

Since cruising is a growing market, more and more people inquire about the experience onboard a ship, the most frequent queries are about seasickness, whether there is not much to do on the ship, and so on. Many inquire about the difference between a ferry ride and

a cruise experience. "It takes time to address their concerns and portray a clear picture about cruising. After explaining the concept and benefits of cruising, the next roadblock is the cost, which also takes time to explain and justify the value. However, with cruising arriving on Indian shores and more and more people experiencing the joys of cruising, the initial hurdles and misconceptions will dwindle with time," explains Nikhil.

MICE on cruise ships is an important segment and has been growing at a rapid pace. Indian corporates are always looking for unique locations and destinations for their conferences and incentives. Nikhil shares, "Cruises from Singapore have always been a favourite for Indians, but the Middle East is expected to grab a share of MICE, and not to forget that the cruise ships

Due to the ease of flight accessibility in the Middle East, this region will continue to grow, and more and more Indians will look at cruise holidays here

that are operating in India are already strong in MICE. While our primary focus has been on the B2C and small family group travel space, we do handle MICE requests for corporates who inquire with us."

As the Indian cruise market surges forward with robust strides, it is expected to enjoy double-digit growth in the years to follow. "In domestic cruising, Cordelia and Costa Cruises have opened the doors for other cruise lines to enter Indian waters in the near future. River cruising on the Ganges and Brahmaputra already has established players in Antara and Assam Bengal Navigation, and the competition will increase as there is definitely a growing market for experiential travel and exploring India differently," concludes Nikhil.



TRAVMART

Connecting Travel Partners
With New Opportunities



2023

OCT
14

INDORE

NOV
03

AHMEDABAD

DEC
16

NAGPUR



2024

JAN
15

HYDERABAD

JAN
17

BENGALURU

JAN
20

CHENNAI

MAR
29

PUNE

BOOK YOUR SPACE

☎ 9560264446 ✉ ravisharma@sampanmedia.com

Sampan Media Pvt. Ltd.
Email: info@sampanmedia.com
Website: www.traveltradejournal.com

Empowered women stir winds of change in Saudi

TBO.com hosted a first-of-its-kind symposium that brought together women from the travel and media industries to showcase the transformative tourism landscape of Saudi. A stunning tapestry of culture and adventure was unveiled to highlight Saudi's evolution in tourism from sand dunes to skyscrapers.

Prativa V Bhalla

TBO.com, in association with the Saudi Tourism Authority (STA), organised a symposium showcasing the empowering essence of travel, particularly for women embarking on solo journeys, a trend gaining greater recognition and acceptance by the day. The gathering was charged with positive energy as women from the travel industry participated alongside the media. These women skilfully navigate their work, home, and social responsibilities, achieving a harmonious, often elusive, work-life balance while nurturing a strong curiosity for travel. The event aimed to shine the spotlight on Saudi's commitment to Vision 2030, revealing its transformation into a nation that not only welcomes tourism but also prioritises women-focused travel experiences.

Rise of Solo Female Travel

Over the past few years, there has been a notable rise in women venturing on solo travel journeys, particularly to less frequented locations. This trend has prompted countries and travel providers to embrace and accommodate this burgeoning

demand for diverse travel experiences. The surge in solo female travel can be attributed to factors such as the empowerment it brings, the acknowledgement of women's accomplishments, and the inspiration drawn from influential voices on social media. In response, travel companies are adapting rapidly by curating journeys designed specifically for solo female travellers, underlining the vitality of this flourishing market.

Tourism Renaissance

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a land of captivating contrasts, is undergoing a remarkable transformation that echoes its ancient heritage while embracing a modern future guided by its revolutionary initiative, Vision 2030. From the sweeping deserts of the Empty Quarter to the stunning coral reefs of the Red Sea, Saudi's diverse landscapes beckon travellers to explore its natural wonders. With a blend of tradition and innovation, the country is not only opening up to the world but also redefining itself as a destination that offers rich cultural experiences, vibrant cities, and a warm hospitality that is uniquely Saudi. As a

nation in rapid evolution, the country is undergoing transformative changes, particularly impacting women across various domains, including business, education, and leadership. This progression harmonises with the country's modernisation efforts, propelled by the visionary Vision 2030.

Transformative Tourism and its Impact on Women

This strategic roadmap seeks to diversify the economy while fostering a more balanced interpretation of Islamic law, promoting a society of greater moderation. Notably, women's traditional attire, such as the abaya, has seen adjustments and is no longer mandatory to be worn in public. Women are driving, living alone, opening their own businesses, shattering ample glass ceilings at work, a half and half in the parliament, and even hiking and mountain biking in the mountains of Saudi. Gradually unveiling a new sense of liberation, Saudi presents a range of enriching opportunities, especially for women. These include tailored academic scholarships for women studying abroad, with provisions for guardians if needed. The offerings extend to exclusive private beach days, shared hiking adventures, designated ladies' nights, camping escapades, and family beach outings. Saudi women embrace life with zeal, participating in adventure activities such as hiking, yoga retreats, off-roading, mountain biking, and even memorable mother-daughter hiking excursions.

Travel restrictions for women, whether domestic or international, are minimal. The only limitation pertains to those under 21, who are deemed underage to travel alone and must be accompanied by a guardian. This restriction is primarily based on considerations of maturity rather than gender. The obligatory abaya and head coverings are no longer mandatory for Saudi women. Everyday attire now mirrors casual dressing norms found in various countries, reminiscent of styles seen in



Travel agents and media at a symposium organised by TBO.com and STA



was not traditionally integrated into the Hajj pilgrimage. Encouraging the inclusion of leisure in Umrah trips allows visitors an experience of harmonious blend of spirituality and leisure.

Streamlined Visa Process

Saudi recently introduced new instant e-visa options, catering to UK, US, and Schengen visa holders, as well as permanent residents of these countries. The process is streamlined through www.mofa.gov.sa, further easing access for tourists. This initiative is aligned with Saudi's aim to achieve 100 million annual



visits by 2030. In 2022, the Nusuk platform was launched in collaboration with the Pilgrim Experience Program, providing pilgrims and visitors with an integrated digital planning tool for their journeys to Makkah, Madinah, and more. Additionally, a free Stopover Visa was introduced, accessible to passengers of SAUDIA and flynas, allowing extended stays of up to 96 hours and expanding travel options for visitors.

As Saudi Arabia sets forth on its transformative path under the Vision 2030 initiative, it welcomes visitors to witness its unfolding story and explore the uncharted narratives that define this dynamic nation. We await with bated breath to see the diaspora of women empowerment transform with the promise of a better future for women and the nation as a whole.

India. Dressing is now attuned to daily activities rather than being dictated by a particular setting. While certain remote local Saudi regions might still necessitate head coverings, tourists face no such restrictions, aligning with practices observed in diverse parts of the world.

STA Initiatives

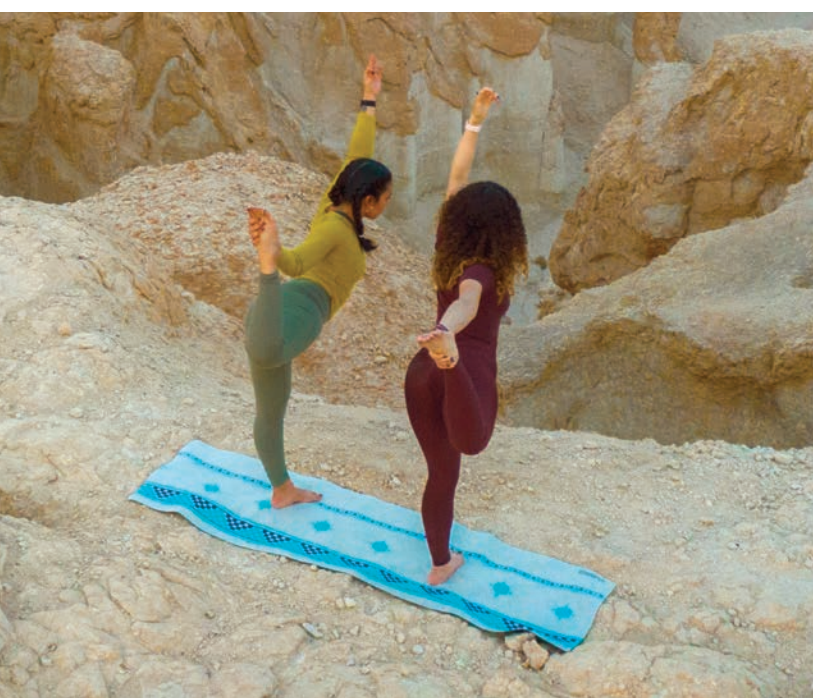
The women in the Saudi Tourism Authority and expatriates residing in Saudi Arabia, shared their experiences of exploring the destination, enlightening the audience about the country's vast tourism opportunities. Serving as a gateway to the ancient Arab world, Saudi has embraced modernisation while offering all the amenities for a luxurious and contemporary lifestyle, increasing its potential. The women not only exhibit strong confidence in promoting travel to the region, but they also take immense pride in the ongoing transformation. They see themselves as active contributors to the positive changes unfolding in their part of the world.

Perfect Arabian Adventure

The country's efforts to diversify its economy and showcase its rich cultural heritage are yielding remarkable results as travellers are venturing to explore its landscapes, historical sites, and modern attractions.

Saudi offers a captivating blend of attractions for travellers. Immerse yourself in the rich cultural heritage showcased in historical sites like AlUla and Madain Saleh. Discover the stunning natural beauty of the Red Sea coastline, perfect for diving and snorkelling, or explore the adventure-packed Asir Mountains and the unique Empty Quarter desert. Experience modern marvels in cities like Riyadh and Jeddah, with skyscrapers, luxurious malls, and architectural wonders. Indulge in Saudi cuisine's Middle Eastern flavours and be part of cultural festivals like Janadriyah. Engage in religious tourism in Mecca and Medina or venture into adventure sports like sandboarding and hiking. From opulent luxury to sustainable practices, Saudi offers a dynamic range of experiences, making it an evolving and enticing travel destination.

Saudi is taking proactive steps towards sustainable tourism, promoting eco-conscious practices, and safeguarding its natural treasures for future generations. As the nation widens its doors to global travellers, it presents a unique chance to encounter a land of striking contrasts and immerse oneself in the renowned 'hafawah' – the warm hospitality of its people. While the country once centred on spiritual tourism, focusing on Hajj and Umrah journeys, it has now embraced leisure tourism on a significant scale. Typically, leisure tourism



Korea's Rising Appeal

An Exclusive Interview with KTO's Lee Younggeun

The Korea Festival 2023, celebrates cultural ties and five decades of diplomacy between Korea and India, featuring stakeholders like Jeollanam-do Tourism Organization, Gwangju City, and others. Lee Younggeun, Executive Director of KTO's International Marketing Department, discussed India's increasing presence in Korea's tourism.

Vartik Sethi

The Korea Culture and Tourism Festival 2023 commenced with grandeur, commemorating the bilateral cultural ties and offering vibrant experiences. This festive occasion not only deepened cultural connections but also symbolised five decades of harmonious diplomacy between Korea and India.

Featuring stakeholders such as JeollaNamdo Tourism Organization, Gwangju City, nine destination management companies, Korean Air, Asiana Airlines, Bioface, and Amorepacific, the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) has curated an inclusive platform to delve into the diverse realms of Korean travel and lifestyle.

Speaking to Travel Trade Journal for an exclusive interaction, the discussion explored pivotal aspects of the partnership between KTO and India. With an impressive background in public policy and administration, Lee Younggeun, Executive Director, International Marketing Department, KTO, brings a unique blend of strategic thinking and practical expertise to his role in promoting Korea's rich cultural heritage, stunning landscapes, and modern appeal.

Delving into tourism trends between India and Korea, Lee shared insights into the increasing number of Indian travellers visiting Korea over the past couple of years. While China and Japan occupy the top spots in Korea's source markets, India's growing



▲ Lee Younggeun

presence is indicative of the country's potential to climb the ranks.

In 2019, before the pandemic disrupted travel, Korea welcomed 140,000 Indian tourists. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the number recovered impressively, with 64,000 Indian tourists visiting Korea in the subsequent year. For 2023, KTO anticipates a total of 120,000 Indian tourists, marking a significant recovery.

To attract more Indian travellers, Lee highlighted the importance of tailoring tourism offerings to suit their preferences and interests. Korea's diverse culture,

condensed geography, and the ability to offer maximum experiences within a short time frame make it an attractive destination.

KTO's taglines, "To Korea, where K-culture begins" and "Deeper into Korea," align perfectly with the organization's grand initiative of Visit Korea Year 2023-24. This initiative focuses on luxury and premium tourism experiences that cater to the evolving aspirations of Indian travellers. Drawing attention to the rising popularity of K-beauty, Lee shared, "We obviously have an abundance of luxurious resorts, hotels, and more. But aside from that, K-beauty is very well-known, especially considering we also offer a program that specialises in skincare routines. This can be another option in the realm of wellness."

Lee emphasised that KTO aims to go beyond traditional tourism by fostering cultural and educational exchanges between India and Korea. This includes organising business seminars, workshops, and networking events to strengthen ties between the two countries' tourism industries, ultimately paving the way for enhanced business collaborations. MICE is not just an important segment for Korea, but the destination is well equipped to cater to the large corporate houses. "Korea boasts convention centers nationwide, and each region is well-equipped to host large-scale international conferences. In terms of incentive travel, numerous Indian groups are choosing Korea. Our new Delhi branch is

set to launch active marketing efforts in this area due to the presence of major Indian and Korean companies in India,” said Lee.

The appointment of Anushka Sen as the Honorary Ambassador of Korea Tourism, Lee explained that influencer and TV actor’s existing interest in Korea and her willingness to promote Korean tourism were key factors behind her selection. Her influence on social media, particularly among youngsters, is expected to create a positive synergy for Korea’s tourism promotion.

Moving beyond tourism, Lee shed light on the significant influx of foreign students to Korea, even during the pandemic, emphasising the unique phenomenon of attracting non-English-speaking international

While China and Japan occupy the top spots in Korea’s source markets, India’s growing presence is indicative of the country’s potential to climb the ranks

students. Korea has emerged as an appealing destination for short-term language courses, undergraduate, and postgraduate studies. Additionally, Korea boasts numerous convention centers, attracting international events and incentive tours, with India playing a substantial role in this segment.

Addressing a significant concern, the

increase in airfare from India to Korea was attributed to the pandemic’s impact on flight availability. While the situation is on the path to normalisation, it may take time for airfare to return to pre-pandemic levels. “This increase is primarily attributed to COVID-19. While flights have started to return, the situation has not fully normalised to pre-pandemic levels and will take some time to do so,” added Lee.

As the interview concluded, it became evident that KTO, under the leadership of Lee Younggeun, is strategically poised to tap into India’s growing interest in Korea. It is set to become an increasingly attractive destination for Indian travellers, embodying the essence of “K-culture” and inviting them to go “Deeper into Korea.”

Tailored Korea Experiences by Dynasty Holidays

Dynasty Holidays has carved a niche for itself in the Korean travel market, particularly as the go-to DMC for Indian travel trade venturing into South Korea.

Vartik Sethi

In the ever-evolving world of travel, finding the right Destination Management Company (DMC) can make all the difference in creating an exceptional experience for tourists. One company that has been setting the bar high in this regard is Dynasty Holidays. Specialising in crafting remarkable travel experiences within Korea, with a robust presence in both Korea and India, Dynasty Holidays’ competitive edge lies in its ability to manage costs efficiently. This operational duality ensures that they can offer travellers an unparalleled range of services and experiences tailored to meet diverse preferences.

Santosh Gupta, Founder and Director, DynastyHolidays, brings a wealth of experience to the table, making the company a standout choice in the competitive DMC landscape. His vision and dedication to delivering top-notch services have been instrumental in elevating Dynasty Holidays above its competitors.

Catering to Indian Travellers’ Unique Preferences

One of the hallmarks of Dynasty Holidays’ success is its specialisation in curating experiences tailored to Indian travellers’ unique preferences and interests. “We craft itineraries that highlight cultural attractions, diverse cuisine, and experiences aligned with the interests of Indian travellers” shared Gupta. The company meticulously designs itineraries that showcase the rich cultural tapestry of Korea, including visits to historical sites, immersive K-pop experiences, and opportunities for retail



▲ Santosh Gupta

therapy. This holistic showcase of Korea’s richness ensures that every journey Dynasty Holidays crafts leaves the Indian travellers with not just an exceptional experience in Korea but also gain a deeper understanding of its culture.

Adapting to the Post-Pandemic Landscape

The travel landscape underwent a seismic shift in the wake of the pandemic. Dynasty Holidays was quick to adapt by implementing innovative strategies to regain traveller confidence and accommodate changing travel trends, particularly for the Indian market. This adaptation includes stringent hygiene measures, flexible booking options,

and personalised experiences. By tailoring offerings to align with emerging Indian travel preferences, Dynasty Holidays is rekindling the joy and safety of travel.

Embracing Technology

In an era where technology reigns supreme, Dynasty Holidays doesn’t shy away from incorporating digital solutions to enhance the booking, communication, and overall travel experience. Their user-friendly online platform facilitates seamless booking and real-time communication. “Our DMC utilises a user-friendly online platform for seamless booking and real-time communication,” Gupta pointed out. “Additionally, we offer virtual tours and interactive guides that enhance the travel experience, catering to the preferences of Indian partners and customers.”

Collaborating with Indian Travel Agencies

Dynasty Holidays collaborates closely with Indian travel agencies to design custom and need-specific itineraries that align precisely with their clients’ interests and requirements. This partnership-driven approach ensures that travellers receive tailored experiences that leave a lasting impression. Gupta highlighted the importance of such collaborations, saying, “Successful partnerships typically involve joint marketing efforts and the creation of customised tour itineraries that provide Indian tourists with culturally enriching journeys. The result is a well-rounded and culturally enriching journey that resonates deeply with Indian travellers.”



Germany's Strides in Tourism A Path of Growth and Sustainability

In a recent media discussion, Romit Theophilus, Director, GNTO (India), and Georg Enzweiler, Deputy Head of Mission, German Embassy, signal tourism rebound. Trends show growth in balanced business-leisure trips, online bookings, and diverse trip types. Efforts address visa issues. Strong post-pandemic reputation, affordability, and sustainable initiatives noted.

Vartik Sethi

Global Reach

At the outset, Theophilus highlighted the extensive global network of the German National Tourist Office, which boasts 25 agencies covering more than 41 countries, facilitating and enhancing their tourism efforts. In India, the office is located in Delhi, with Theophilus and his team at the helm. The media interaction proudly revealed that the German National Tourist Board achieved the esteemed Green Globe certification for the 2022-2023 period, symbolising its commitment to sustainability. This achievement was particularly notable as they secured the highest standard, positioning them as a platinum member within the Green Globe community. The optimism resonating in the industry was palpable, with Theophilus expressing excitement for the upcoming year after the substantial progress made in 2022.

Tourism Rebound

The travel volume to Germany is on a remarkable rebound, almost reaching pre-pandemic levels. The occupancy rates in hotels have surged, and the ambiance in Germany is a reflection of hope, gratitude, and joy. The media interaction provided insights into the significant increase in overnight stays, highlighting that although the figure for 2022 was 65 per cent of the 2019 level, the trajectory in 2023 appears promising, with projections ranging from 70 per cent to 80 per cent compared to 2019.

Diversified Travel Trends

The travel landscape has evolved, with a shift from predominantly business trips to a balanced mix of business and leisure travel. Theophilus noted that 52 per cent of travellers are now embarking on holiday trips, while the significance of visiting friends and relatives (VFR) has grown to 9 per cent. The types of trips have also diversified, with 39 per cent being city trips and 17 per cent round trips. Notably, the booking behavior trends have

shown 87 per cent of travellers booking online, while 43 per cent prefer the guidance of travel advisors, tour operators, or travel agents, and 29 per cent opt for direct bookings.

Addressing Visa Rejections

The discussion also delved into the issue of visa rejections and the impact they can have on travellers. Georg Enzweiler, Deputy Head of Mission, German Embassy,

Germany's overnight stays rose from 500,000 (2012) to almost a million (2019), set to double by 2030, reflecting impressive growth

acknowledged that the popularity of Germany as a destination has led to an increase in visa applications, which, in turn, has contributed to a higher volume of rejections. He affirmed the embassy's commitment to ensuring deserving applicants receive their visas, aiming to prevent unfortunate cases where travellers invest time and money into bookings only to face visa denials.

The issue of Schengen visa rejections, especially among luxury travellers, was addressed, acknowledging the negative implications such rejections can have on the perception of both Germany and the Schengen area as a whole. Enzweiler acknowledged visa processing improvements, affirming, "We hope to get better... we are optimistic that we will be able to do so." Together, their endeavors aim to establish Germany as an accessible and sustainable destination, offering enriched travel experiences for Indian tourists.

Enzweiler highlighted efforts to expedite visa processing times. Through measures such as a considerable staff increase in Mumbai, waiting periods were notably reduced. The waiting time had reached around eight weeks, showcasing substantial progress. He further



Georg Enzweiler, Romit Theophilus

conveyed optimism about achieving further improvements in the embassy's pursuit of enhanced efficiency.

Germany's Global Perception

Germany's reputation as a destination has remained strong during and after the pandemic. The nation brand index ranks Germany number one for the sixth consecutive time, emphasising its excellence in categories spanning culture, healthcare, tourism, governance, and more. The media interaction underscored the exceptional value and affordability of Germany as a destination. A comparison of average room prices in Germany with other European destinations highlighted the affordability factor, with Germany ranking significantly lower than its counterparts.

Sustainable and Accessibility Oriented Initiatives

One of the media interaction's key focuses was Germany's commitment to sustainable travel. Initiatives like barrier-free travel and accessibility were highlighted, showcasing Germany's efforts to accommodate travellers with disabilities and ensure their enjoyable experience. The 'Embrace Germany Nature' campaign spotlighted the nation's natural treasures, including national parks, biosphere reserves, and hiking trails, underscoring Germany's commitment to preserving and sharing its biodiversity. Another campaign showcased the wealth of UNESCO World Heritage sites in Germany, encompassing historical and modern landmarks.

India emerges as Finland's fastest-recovering Asian post-pandemic travel market

Visit Finland successfully hosted its annual workshop across Mumbai, Ahmedabad, and New Delhi, aimed at promoting outbound Finnish tourism from India to Finland. This year's event showcased a remarkable delegation of 17 Finnish tourism partners, fostering bilateral collaborations.

Prativa V Bhalla

India's status as a rapidly evolving Asian market emerged, marked by its considerably high potential. Dr Tito Gronow, Minister, Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Finland, New Delhi, exclaimed, "The political and commercial relations between India and Finland are well established and profound and Indians have grown this year to become the largest group of visa applicants followed by Russia and China. Finland's collaboration with Indian tourism will show the power of travel in fostering understanding, appreciation, and friendship across borders."

Visit Finland and its travel partners regard India as an exceptionally crucial market with substantial potential, as the pronounced interest in their offerings has exhibited consistent growth. Paivi Hobbs, Area Manager, Visit Finland, Asia, stated, "Our partners who have travelled with us expressed strong and steadily growing interest in their products."

Finland's allure lies in its Nordic charm, unspoiled landscapes, and the captivating Northern Lights. Surrounded by lush forests and clear lakes, it is a perfect destination for outdoor enthusiasts for skiing and hiking. Lapland weaves a magical winter experience, with unique accommodations like glass igloos, while the Santa Claus Village remains a family favourite. Finnish saunas offer wellness, and the archipelago bestows tranquillity. Finland's culture blends stunning traditional arts and spectacular modern design. Northern summers offer extended daylight.

Visit Finland is now working in earnest towards broadening the image of Finland as a year-round destination. The resplendent beauty of the enchanting Northern Lights, the snow activities, and Santa Clause festivities have thus far limited portrayal of Finland to be commonly acknowledged as a winter destination. Paivi explains, "While these aspects are enticing, a key strategy for the Indian market involves highlighting Finland's lesser-known summer season. Emphasising the country's beautiful summer climate is paramount." With cooler temperatures than those in India, there is a growing interest even from southern European regions looking for relief from intense heat."

Sustainability remains a top priority across all markets, guiding all future endeavours. The Sustainable Travel Finland Program calls attention to the country's commitment to the global cause. Paivi elaborated, "This programme has been crafted by Visit Finland and endorsed by most Finnish Travel stakeholders. They either possess the sustainable travel label or are actively pursuing it. This commitment to sustainability and spotlighting the captivating summer experience decidedly stands as our key strategies for progression."

European source markets dominate, led by Germany. The US has shown growth, aided by more Finnair flights. While in Asia, India has been the fastest-recovering market

Launched last year, the new e-learning platform 'Finland Travel Pro' received a positive response. Paivi added, "The platform is designed for travel professionals, providing free online access. Users can explore various Finnish destinations, spanning four to eight locations, and access essential information about seasons, attractions, and experiences. This comprehensive, flexible, and cost-free platform aims to equip travel professionals with top-notch resources for effective destination promotion."

Streamlined visa processing improves the country's accessibility for tourists. Since January 2023, the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs has been investing in visa services. Indian visa applications are now managed in Finland after applicants submit them to their

external partner organisation, VFS. This setup enables the handling of a significantly larger volume of visa applications in the future.

Talking about connectivity between the two nations, Anupam Vig, Regional Manager, India Finnair shared, "Daily flights from Delhi to Helsinki are already operational. Earlier, we operated three flights from Mumbai, which we have discontinued for this season, but hopefully, we will resume flights between Mumbai and Helsinki from April 2024."

European source markets dominate, led by Germany, and followed by strong post-pandemic recovered nations like the UK, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and France. The US has shown growth, aided by more Finnair flights. Proximity benefits Central European travellers, but the Russia-Ukraine conflict has impacted in scaling down of Russian visitors. While in Asia, India has been the fastest-recovering market.

Sara Sodhi Juneja, Country Head, India and Gulf for Visit Finland averred, "The Indo-Finnish partnership holds immense potential to create memorable journeys and generate excellent business opportunities." She ended by describing, "The magic of Finland is related to happiness. According to an international survey, Finland is the happiest nation in the world for the sixth time in a row, and I am personally convinced that an increased number of Indian tourists in Finland will make us even happier."

As the partnership between Finland and India continues to flourish, the stage is set for a dynamic and enduring relationship that promises memorable experiences for Indian tourists and a mutually beneficial collaboration for years to come.



Thailand expects 1.6 million Indian visitors in 2023, sets eyes on two million for 2024

During the recent Amazing Thailand Luxury Roadshow in New Delhi, TTJ interacted with Siriges-a-nong Trirattanasongpol, Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) New Delhi, to know how the destination has fared so far in 2023, initiatives, and future projections and developments.

Gurjit Singh Ahuja

The Tourism Authority of Thailand, New Delhi office organised the Amazing Thailand Luxury Roadshow in New Delhi on August 22, 2023, at the Leela Palace Hotel to showcase its luxury travel ranges. The event commenced with a B2B session where about 60 buyers from luxury travel companies based in Delhi-NCR were presented with the opportunity to meet and network with 13 sellers of luxury products and services from Thailand. This was followed by a destination presentation that focused on new properties in Thailand that are perfectly suited for high-end Indian travellers.

In her opening remarks at the roadshow, Pattarat Hongtong, Ambassador of Thailand to India, highlighted the importance of Indian visitors to the tourism and economic recovery of Thailand post-COVID-19.

The years 2022, 2023 and 2024 are being looked at as resumption years for tourism inflow into Thailand post-pandemic period. 2022 saw almost one million Indian visitors flock to Thailand. Come 2023, almost 9,60,000 Indians have already visited the country till August 17, 2023. All projections indicate that the year will close at 1.6 million visitors, which is almost a 60 per cent growth over 2022. All eyes are now set on 2024, with a target of two million Indian arrivals into Thailand.

Siriges-a-nong Trirattanasongpol expressed her desire to further promote new luxury products and offerings in Thailand as well as focus on high-end and niche travel segments like wellness, golf, and celebrations. As Thailand is a popular luxury wedding destination, TAT and Thai hotels will be introducing a special campaign called "Celebrations with Care," focusing on sustainable and eco-friendly activities like zero food waste, converting food into manure, and feeding the underprivileged local people. She said, "From the luxury hotel brands to world-class spa resorts, from high-end shopping



▲ Siriges-a-nong Trirattanasongpol

to Michelin restaurants, Thailand has a lot to offer for the discerning travellers looking to pamper themselves with only the best and most exclusive holiday experiences."

Thailand's 'Amazing New Chapters' showcases the kingdom's five F soft-power foundations: food, film, festival, fight, and fashion. It features popular Thai dishes and desserts from Thai restaurants in India and Thailand, charming Thai locations where famous Bollywood films were shot, cultural parades and folk dances showcasing unique Thai festivals, Thai martial art performances, and Thai fashion shows.

Young Indians are lately opting for active holidays in Thailand, and destinations like Koh Tao are gaining popularity for scuba diving and Muay Thai

Emphasising the same, Siriges-a-nong shares, "We are focusing on the five Fs as the key ingredients of Thai tourism product mix for the Indian market. We understand that the availability of good Indian food

is key to a great holiday experience for Indians travelling overseas, and Thailand today boasts great restaurants serving Indian food besides world-class restaurants catering to the taste and needs of the highly evolved global Indian traveller and serving almost every genre of world cuisine."

Many Indian movies have been filmed in Thailand, and the destination continues to be favoured by Indian filmmakers. The emphasis now is also on developing a tourism circuit that follows these film locations and encourages Indian visitors to visit these locales and make their personal films where they themselves star as heroes!

"Thailand is known for its year-round colourful festivals. This year, TAT has partnered with Bangkok Metropolitan to celebrate Diwali in Bangkok. Phahurat, a.k.a. Thailand's own Little India, will be the venue for this year's Diwali celebrations in Bangkok," reminds Siriges-a-nong.

Adding more, Siriges-a-nong says, "Bharat Choice is an initiative of TAT in association with the Embassy of India in Thailand and an agency to certify restaurants, attractions, shopping, and fashion outlets that are quality-oriented, offer value for money, and cater to Indian tastes and sensibilities with the Bharat Choice seal of approval."

Young Indians are lately opting for active holidays in Thailand, and destinations like Koh Tao are gaining popularity for scuba diving. Muay Thai, the Thai art of kickboxing, has a great fan following in India, and many are thronging to Thailand to learn and master the art.

Overall, warm Thai hospitality fortified with a top level of service and plenty of attractions and tourism initiatives make Thailand an ideal holiday destination for the Indian outbound market, with more and more visitors and family groups opting for longer stays in "The Land of Smiles."

ETAA organises destination training workshop on Qatar's tourism potential

ETAA reaffirms its commitment to educating travel consultants and fostering partnerships to enhance inbound traffic, especially for leisure, MICE, and wedding tourism in Qatar.

Vartik Sethi

The Enterprising Travel Agents Association (ETAA), North India Chapter, in association with Qatar Tourism, organised a destination training workshop for its members, aimed to shed light on the burgeoning potential of Qatar as an Indian travel destination. Saurabh Tuteja, Chairman, ETAA North India Chapter, emphasised the strategic advantages of Qatar's proximity, excellent flight connectivity, and visa-on-arrival for Indians, making it an enticing choice for MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) and wedding tourism.

Deepika Khanna, General Secretary, ETAA North India Chapter, reaffirmed the association's unwavering dedication to prioritising knowledge, underscoring its pivotal role in empowering travel consultants. This commitment is aimed at ensuring that

end clients derive substantial benefits by accessing accurate product knowledge encompassing airlines, visa channels, hoteliers, and various other relevant domains.

"At ETAA, we consistently seek meaningful collaborations and are thrilled to announce our recent initiative – conducting product presentations in conjunction with esteemed partners, including tourism bodies and airlines, focusing on the vibrant destination of Qatar. We believe that this endeavour will significantly enhance inbound traffic, catering to diverse segments such as leisure travellers, MICE events, and weddings," said Khanna.

Highlighting Qatar's potential for the Indian trade, Tuteja said, "Qatar's newness to the Indian market holds immense potential due to its proximity, excellent

flight connectivity (including Indigo), and the crucial visa-on-arrival option for Indians."

ETAA's destination workshop stands as a testament to their dedication to educating travel professionals and fostering the growth of the Indian outbound travel industry, poised for a promising future.



DOUBLE DAILY FLIGHTS FROM DELHI AND MUMBAI



- * Free Stop over if transit time is more than 8 hours.
- * 1 piece additional free baggage allowance on ET 689 Ex DEL and ET 641 Ex BOM.
- * Attractive special fares on Selected destinations on ET 689 and ET 641.
- * offers are subject to change

Book | Pay | Check-In Online

Get it on  Google play  Available on the App Store

www.ethiopianairlines.com

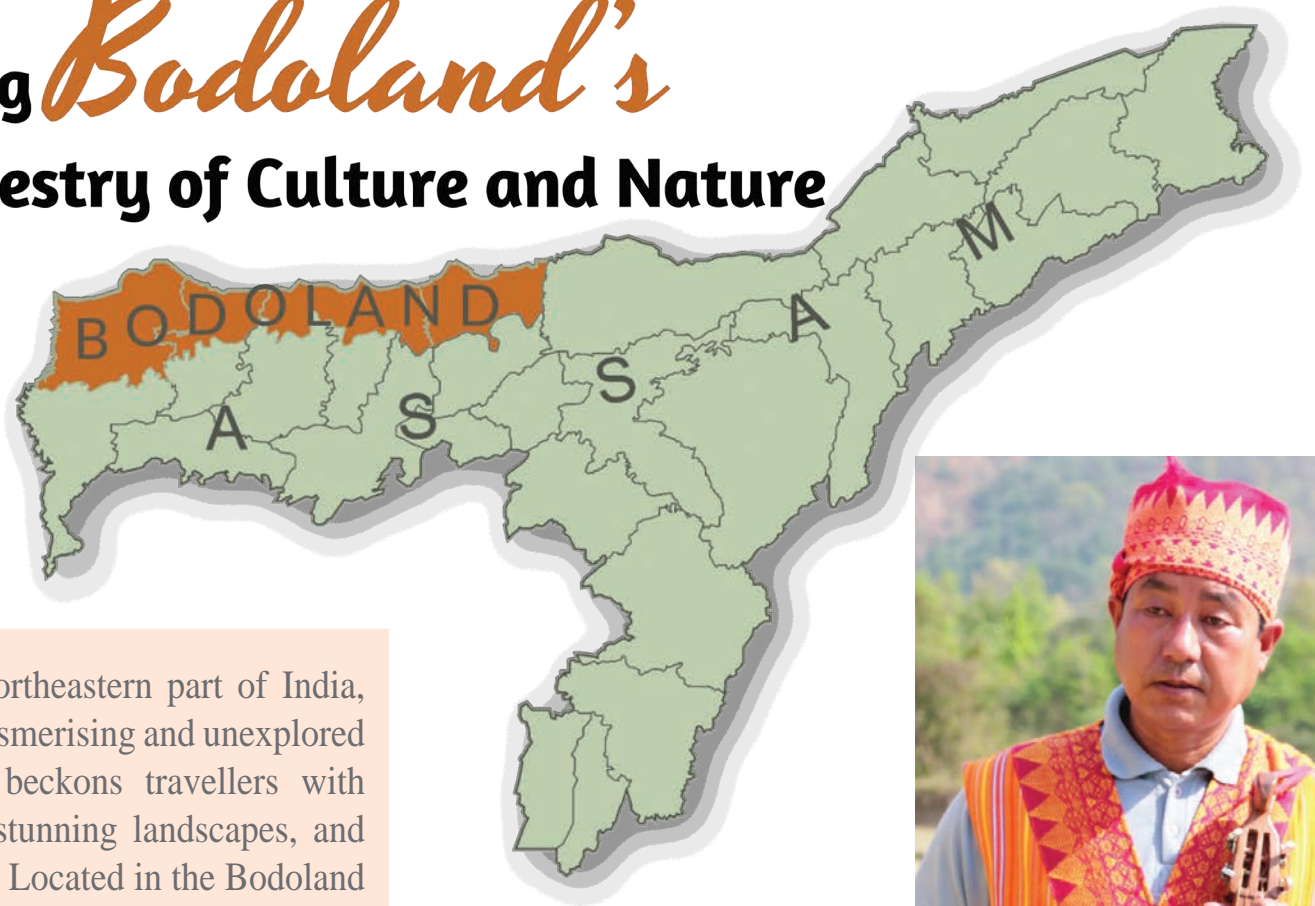


Best Airline in Africa
for 6 Years in a Row

Ethiopian
የኢትዮጵያ
THE NEW SPIRIT OF AFRICA

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

Exploring *Bodoland's* Rich Tapestry of Culture and Nature



Nestled in the northeastern part of India, Bodoland is a mesmerising and unexplored destination that beckons travellers with its rich culture, stunning landscapes, and warm hospitality. Located in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), this autonomous region is home to the indigenous Bodo people, home to ethnolinguistic Bodo and other indigenous communities, who take pride in their vibrant traditions, lush green hills, and unique way of life.

Partha Chatterjee

A Glimpse into Paradise

Bodoland is a captivating haven of lush greenery, inhabited by friendly locals eager to share the bounty of their stunning homeland. In this age of commercialised tourism, it is not easy to discover a place that remains unspoiled by commercial interests, offering tranquillity and unforgettable moments. It extends a warm invitation to adventurous travellers who seek to immerse themselves in its natural beauty, celebrate its vibrant culture, and uncover a legacy of rich historical heritage.

BTR stretches across Assam's Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, and Udalguri districts. While the Bodo community forms the heart of Bodoland, this area thrives as a mosaic of cultures, warmly welcoming Bengali Muslims, adivasis, and various indigenous groups into its vibrant tapestry.

Dive into Nature's Playground

Bodoland's diverse terrain, including lush hills and captivating trekking trails in places like Manas National Park, Chakrasila Wildlife

Sanctuary, and Barnadi wildlife sanctuary, is a paradise for nature enthusiasts and adventurers. These trails offer opportunities to immerse in the region's rich flora and fauna. Manas National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, beckons with thrilling wildlife safaris, allowing encounters with tigers, elephants, rhinoceros, and numerous bird species on jeep and elephant safaris. Bodoland's rivers, like the adventurous Manas River, offer exciting river rafting with class II and III rapids.

Journey Through Bodoland's Cultural Kaleidoscope

The Bodo culture is a vibrant tapestry of rich traditions, music, and dance. The indigenous inhabitants take immense pride in their cultural identity, preserving it through ethnic dance forms performed on various occasions in colourful traditional attire. Bagurumba is an elegant celebration dance by the ladies, while Bardwi Sihka Mwnsanai marks the new year with women donning colourful costumes to symbolise Mother Earth's



rejuvenation. Haba Janai is a joyful marriage dance, and Rwnswndri is a fascinating traditional warrior dance.

Bodoland's musical heritage is brought to life by a medley of traditional instruments. Haunting melodies are skilfully played on instruments like the siphung, an exquisitely crafted bamboo mouth organ, while the serja is a traditional four-string violin played with a bamboo bow strung with horse's tail hair. The binju, a stringed instrument reminiscent of the Indian veena, and many other intricate musical instruments add depth and complexity to the region's musical repertoire.

Rich Vibrant Bodo Handicrafts and Handlooms

Bodoland's cultural craftsmanship celebrates tradition as an art form. The rich Bodo heritage of bamboo, wood, and



cane handicrafts showcases their deep connection with nature. These handcrafted items are used in everyday life, such as the conical bamboo fishing tool jekhai is used by Bodo women for catching fish, khobai is a fish-holding pot, and gisib is a bamboo hand fan for providing cooling relief during scorching summers. The Sandri, a net-like tool, efficiently separates rice from pounded paddy. These artistic creations showcase stellar craftsmanship while seamlessly blending tradition with practicality.

Bodo women, with their exceptional weaving skills, create vibrant cotton textiles and exquisite silk fabrics for clothing, furnishings, and more. The traditional dokhona is a beautiful wrap-around dress, while aronai mufflers with floral patterns are often offered as a gesture of respect and welcome to guests, and fali fabric pieces further complement the clothing repertoire. Men don the gamsa, suitable for both daily and formal wear, including religious ceremonies. These masterful creations come in cheerful colours with traditional intricate motifs, celebrating the deep connection with nature and celebrations.

Eri Silk Culture

Eri silk, known as “ahimsa silk” or the “fabric of peace” among the Bodos, is derived without harm to silkworms, aligning with principles of non-violence. This silk originates from the Samia Cynthia Ricini, the Ailanthus silkworm in Northeast India, and is skilfully reared, hand-spun, and woven by Bodo women. Eri silk is prized for its softness, durability, moisture absorption, and natural qualities, making it ideal for crafting scarves, shawls,

mufflers, and dokhonas.

Discover authentic handloom treasures at stores like Indi Luo, a hub for Eri silk in Dimalgaon, promoting Eri culture and offering garments, some exported to countries like Bhutan and Japan. AAGOR is a trust where over 100 Bodo women weavers create nature-inspired motifs for high-quality Bodo attire, sold at renowned handloom stores such as Fabindia. Aronai emporiums, under BRAWFED (Bodoland Regional and Apex Weavers & Artisans Cooperative Federation Ltd), have preserved Bodoland’s handloom and handicraft heritage since 2008, supporting artisans and craftsmen through government aid, expertise, and accessible outlets in Kokrajhar, Gossaigaon, Mushalpur, Barama, and Guwahati.

Explore the Bodo Culinary Odyssey

Bodo cuisine is a diverse culinary journey, highlighting medicinal greens and unique flavours. Their dishes, anchored by rice and cherished pork delicacies, often feature locally grown herbs, rice powder, and lentils. From the savoury oma bedor served smoked or with leafy greens to the aromatic oma-narzi served with dry jute leaves, the cuisine showcases vibrant flavours. Onla-kharwi, a rice powder bamboo shoot gravy with homemade kharwi soda derived from dried banana stems, adds a zesty twist. Dao-fudungnai, a soothing soup with cold and fever-relieving properties, comforts the soul. Nafam is a unique fermented fish dish aged in a sealed bamboo cylinder. An array of delectable snacks, like pitha laodum, mwidar khwma, and kharai bhaja, are specially crafted for the post-harvest Domasi Festival in January.

Vibrant Festivals

The Bodo community, devout followers of Bathouism, commemorates festivals deeply intertwined with their agricultural way of life. Among these, the Kharai festival holds particular significance, featuring enchanting dances like Bagurumba and Bardwisikhla. In contrast, the Garja festival is celebrated to



Dr. Dharma Narayan Das
Executive Member Tourism BTC

Bodoland Territorial Region has witnessed significant growth in the footfall of tourists, both domestic and foreign, especially to Manas National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and Raimona National Park in Kokrajhar district, which was added in 2021. The department has rendered financial assistance to develop homestays at remote destinations and organised hospitality training for homestay owners for the deliverance of hospitable services. With the declaration of tourism as an industry by the Govt. of Assam, the tourism department is keen on developing Bodoland as one of the most sought-after tourist destinations of the North East.

safeguard the people and their village from potential calamities. Bwisagu, a week-long celebration, joyfully welcomes the monsoon season with music and dance. DOMASI (Magh Bihu), celebrated in January, marks a post-harvest festival celebrating the fruits of their labour. Kati Gasa (Kati Bihu) is a sombre occasion where blessings are sought for a prosperous harvest. Lastly, the Baokhungri festival spans three days, preserving the sacred tradition of Baokhungri hill climbing and featuring indigenous games and diverse cultural performances by the region’s resident communities and ethnic tribes of BTR.

Explore Bodoland, where lush nature merges with vibrant culture in a serene, unspoiled sanctuary. This enchanting destination welcomes one with warm hospitality, preserving its pristine charm in diverse landscapes, from rolling hills to dense forests, while the region’s rich cultural heritage shines through its colourful traditions. In Bodoland, unforgettable moments await, nestled in a harmonious blend of nature and culture away from the cacophony of commercialised tourism.

Sumi Yashshree Hotels inculcates philanthropy whilst etching a soaring growth chart

After successfully operating a real estate brand, Sadip Lama established Sumi Yashshree Hotels and Resorts in April 2019. Within a short span of time, the hotel chain looks up to a bright and progressive future in the Eastern Himalayas, as they are actively expanding their presence across India with the best of hospitality experiences.

Prashant Nayak

After establishing a cogent foothold in the real estate, construction, and supply business, Sadip Lama, Director, Sumi Yashshree Hotels and Resorts, who hails from Bijanbari, Darjeeling, ventured into Tin-Tin, a small boutique resort, his first milestone in the hotel industry. Today, Sumi Yashshree is a luxury hotel chain nestled amidst the Eastern Himalayas, with privately owned properties in Darjeeling, Sikkim, and Mussoorie and with more than ten operational properties.

Sumi Yashshree Hotels and Resorts operates with the utmost priority to bring core competency to the hospitality industry by offering excellent service to customers. Though its roots lie deep in its region and culture, Sumi Yashshree has gone ahead with business into other parts of India after successfully extending itself to many eastern parts of the country. The hotel group now plans to transcend its limited regional inns, expand its horizons to every corner of India, and have an international presence in Bhutan and Pokhara, Nepal. In India, the group is planning to venture into many regions, exclusively in Udaipur, Goa, Karnataka, Shimla, Kashmir, Meghalaya, Kerala, and different parts of West Bengal and Sikkim.

“Through captivating anecdotes and visuals, we have evolved over the years, maintaining our commitment to luxury, sustainability, and guest satisfaction”

“Tracing our humble beginnings to a tranquil retreat, our growth and expansion signifies not only the evolution of a destination but also the continuation of a legacy built on excellence, luxury, and harmony with nature. With a motive to serve



▲ Sadip Lama

the best for our customers, we carefully plan our location, packages, and cuisine, which grants us the privilege to say we serve the best location with the best room view and amenities,” shares Sadip.

Accessibility and seamless travel options today facilitate cultural exchange and connect people from diverse backgrounds. Opening minds to this strategic understanding, the hotel group is continuously improving and innovating to provide the best experience to meet the ever-rising expectations. This involves a combination of innovation, personalisation, and attention to detail. Sadip mentions, “Through captivating anecdotes and visuals, we have evolved over the years, maintaining our commitment to luxury, sustainability, and guest satisfaction. We tailor the individual guest experience and leverage their data analytically to anticipate their needs and desires. Remembering the fact that creating exceptional guest experiences is an ongoing process that requires adaptation, creativity, and a commitment to delivering quality at every touch point, we are in a constant pursuit to excel and provide the best for our guests.”

Sumi Yashshree's marketing strategies also play a crucial role in promoting and expanding its properties and aims at leveraging globally via social media handles with visually appealing and high-quality content videos, using OTA portals and Google ads, and organising FAM trips. To expand their visibility and accessibility to a wider audience, they have been participating in national travel fairs like SATTE, TTF, OTM, and BTM every year and have been actively engaging in road shows as well. “With careful evaluation and by adapting to the ever-flowing market trends and guest appearances, we are also planning to move forward in a wider extension and join in international trade fairs like ITB Berlin, WTM London, and many more,” informs Sadip.

Sadip's vibrant personality is reflected in every sphere of his establishment. He strongly believes in giving back positively to the community and is very active in assisting and providing for the needs of upliftment via his non-profit organisation, the Yashshree Foundation, Darjeeling. He is currently working on establishing the Grandeur Old Age Home and Orphanage Hostel at Bijanbari, and needless to say, all philanthropic activities have largely helped in shaping Sumi Yashshree's work identity and atmosphere. The hotel group strongly upholds its policy of donating 100 per cent of revenue from its property bars and 10 per cent from all the properties for a justified cause.

With the promising future of the hospitality industry, the Sumi Yashshree group of hotels will continue to be characterised by a blend of technology, sustainability, personalised experiences, and adaptability to changing global dynamics. On a final note, Sadip reiterates, “We at Sumi Yashshree believe that a business is successful if we can effectively anticipate and respond to these evolving trends while keeping guest satisfaction and well-being at the forefront.”

Tourism India Alliance to connect five lakh travel agents across 300 cities in India

The Tourism India Alliance (TIA), a newly formed travel association was recently launched with the objective of bringing a substantial number of Indian travel agents from the unorganised sector into the 'alliance'.

Team TTJ

The Tourism India Alliance was launched at a gathering of industry stalwarts and stakeholders at the Park Hotel in Delhi. The association is a group initiative of well-experienced and established industry professionals congregated to bring on board travel agencies and operators from all walks of the industry across the country and unlock new horizons in tourism and its potential growth in India.

The TIA vision, commitment, and promise are to connect approximately three to five lakh travel agents in 300 smaller towns in India under one umbrella. TIA strives to provide education and share knowledge that empowers and builds a network that supports and passionately advocates the overall growth of the travel Industry. The TIA managing team consists

of Jagdeep Bhagat, Hitesh Joshi, Mukesh Jain, Mamta Pall, Kamal Gandhi, Jaspreet Bhatia, Prashant Kothary, Alok Maharana, Kanika Kapoor and Puneet Saxena.

Reinforcing the ethos behind the formation of TIA, Jagdeep Bhagat, one of the founder members, stated, "Associations must be run not merely in the interests of their founders and office bearers, but equally in those of their members, stakeholders of their industry,



the industry itself, and finally, the country as a whole."

In its collaborative endeavour, TIA invites industry stakeholders to be a part of something truly significant and special so that every corner of the country is represented. TIA is a unique association where knowledge is a driving force, connections flourish, and every member's voice is heard.



Global Travel DMC
UK & Europe
Travel Beyond Expectations

DMC
UK & EUROPE

COACH NEW
DEPARTURES 2024

SERVICES

★ Van Tours

★ Transfers

★ Local Guides

★ Restaurants

★ Visa Assistance

★ FIT - Customization

★ Coaches

★ Sightseeing

★ Excursions

★ Ad-hoc Groups

★ Rail Passes

★ City Tours

★ Multi - City Tour

★ Accommodation

★ MICE

★ Entrance Tickets





+91 9999515160

+91 9868411684

+91 7532001335

+34 613 95 84 41

Spain Associate office: c/o Sant tomas 8po 2 1 2 lioret de mar girona 17310 Spain.

Sales office: New Delhi, 17/106 Gate NO.12, Vikram Vihar, Lower Ground Floor, Lajpat Nagar Part- IV, New Delhi-110024. Tel: +91-11-43048181

info@globaltdmc.com

www.globaltdmc.com

The Network of Indian MICE Agents (NIMA) holds its convention at sea

The NIMA Convention 2023 provided members with firsthand experience of MICE possibilities onboard Resorts World Cruise, the Genting Dream, followed by a two-day showcase of Singapore.

Team TTJ

The NIMA Convention 2023 was organised on board the luxurious cruise liner Genting Dream from August 6 to 9, 2023. The convention was supported by Resorts World Cruises, the Singapore Tourism Board, Singapore Airlines, IHG Hotels, the Penang Convention and Exhibition Bureau (PCEB), and Yorker Holidays. 60 NIMA delegates participated in the convention.

The tagline for the convention this year was 'Beyond Boundaries: Bringing MICE to Cruises'. The convention was inaugurated by Captain Jukka Pentti Silvennoinen along with Gajesh Girdhar, National Coordinator, NIMA; Naresh Rawal, VP Sales and Marketing, Resorts World Cruises; Kean Bon Lim, Area Director-Designate, India, South Asia, and Africa, Singapore Tourism Board; and Rakesh Arora, Convention Chairman, NIMA.

At the convention, knowledge sessions



were organised, and presentations were delivered by Resorts World Cruises and the Singapore Tourism Board. A panel discussion was organised on "MICE on Cruise", where detailed presentations were made by domain experts on the current and future trends shaping the MICE industry and the use of digital technology in the MICE industry.

An offshore excursion trip scheduled by the Penang Convention and Excursion Bureau was mirthful and convivial. The

delegates were taken to the Setia Convention Centre for a networking lunch hosted by PCEB. The event was followed by a spirited, insouciant, and pleasurable rickshaw tour of the Georgetown area. The Singapore Tourism Board showcased new attractions like the

Whisky Museum to the NIMA delegates. Visit to the Garden by the Bay, the SEA Aquarium, and Sentosa Island remained a sprightly and merry event for the delegates.

The Network of Indian MICE Agents (NIMA) is a conglomeration of MICE operators from various parts of the country who work together towards the growth and betterment of the industry.



JNTO appoints Ryo Bunno as new Executive Director, Delhi Office

Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), Delhi has appointed Ryo Bunno as its new Executive Director. With a rich background in Journalism, Communications, Digital Marketing, and Public Relations, Ryo Bunno brings a wealth of experience and a global perspective to his new role.

In 2018, Ryo Bunno joined the Japan National Tourism Organization, Tokyo embarking on a fulfilling career journey. During his tenure, he made significant contributions to the Digital Marketing and PR section. He was assigned to JNTO Manila Office in July 2022, where he continued to elevate the organization's presence in the international tourism landscape.

In this new role, Ryo Bunno will play a pivotal role in leading the JNTO, Delhi Office into its next phase of growth and innovation. His extensive experience, and dedication to excellence, combined with his global perspective and passion for travel, make him an invaluable asset to the organization. Under his leadership, JNTO, Delhi Office is poised to continue its mission of promoting Japan as a must-visit destination for Indian travellers.



Fortune Hotels forays into Jim Corbett

Fortune Hotels, a member of ITC's hotel group has signed its newest resort property in Jim Corbett, Uttarakhand, thereby expanding its portfolio footprint into its 50th location in India. This is the upscale hotel chain's 60th alliance in the country.

Set to be branded as Fortune Jungle Resort and Spa, the widespread property offering panoramic views of the surrounding forests has stylish rooms, studios and suites along with multifarious dining options, recreation facilities and a restful spa. Guests can look forward to personalised attention, delectable cuisine and a variety of curated experiences that celebrate the beauty of the surrounding landscape.

Designed by renowned architect John Hay, this African-themed resort created on a virgin hill is hand-crafted in timber. Set amidst untouched pristine forests and undisturbed views of the Bohrakot Wildlife Reserve, it is sure to captivate guests with its unique Swiss-style lodgings adorned with thatched roofs, and meticulously crafted décor accentuated by skilled artisans from around the world.

This strategic expansion aligns with the brand's vision of becoming the preferred choice for discerning travellers in the leisure segment. The property will be Fortune Hotels' first jungle resort and is estimated to open over the next few months.



Think Strawberries to represent three more attractions by Dubai Holding Entertainment in India

Dubai Holding Entertainment (DHE) has announced the representation of three more attractions in the Indian market, including Global Village, Wild Wadi Waterpark™ and Inside Burj Al Arab Tour. Think Strawberries has been successfully representing DHE's other popular attractions Dubai Parks and Resorts™ and Green Planet in India.

Global Village is one of the longest-established tourist attractions in Dubai having opened its doors in 1997. It offers world-class cultural and family entertainment, featuring 26 international pavilions and millions of visitors every season.

Wild Wadi Waterpark™ has been an iconic attraction and an integral part of Dubai's entertainment scene captivating locals and tourists. Offering thrilling rides for adrenaline junkies, one of the largest wave pools in the Middle East, a 360-metre-long lazy river, along with new food options, the waterpark promises many unforgettable experiences.

The Inside Burj Al Arab Tour provides visitors an opportunity to discover the untold stories of Dubai's most iconic hotel and the original home of luxury.



MTPA conducts three-city roadshow in India to enhance destination presence

The Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA) organised a three-city road show in Mumbai, Chennai, and Ahmedabad. Arvind Bundhun, Director, MPTA, led a delegation comprising 24 operators from Mauritius to meet, bond, and conduct business with the Indian travel trade. The roadshow was organised to propel Mauritius' presence in the Indian market as a destination for all segments: couples, families, MICE, and weddings.

About the roadshow, Arvind Bundhun said, "The strong mutual partnership that has been forged between the Indian travel trade and that of Mauritian travel partners for years is clearly visible. We are giving lots of impetus to the Indian market, which is our top priority. Our future objectives will require 'permanent bonds' between both partners, and we will ensure that Mauritius as a high-end destination meets the aspirational demand of Indian travellers. With excellent airlift from both Air Mauritius and Vistara, Mumbai, Delhi, and other key cities within India are more accessible than ever. India is a great source market for Mauritius, and we are very optimistic for the future."

AllKnown Marketers has been recently appointed by MPTA as their India Representative.



Marriott International to bring W Hotels to Al Marjan Island in Ras Al Khaimah

Marjan, the master developer of freehold properties in Ras Al Khaimah, recently announced the launch of the W Hotel on Al Marjan Island on the back of a collaboration between Marriott International, Inc., and Dalands Holding. Slated for a grand opening early in 2027, W Al Marjan Island will bring the brand's bold design, outstanding service, and always-on programming to the northern emirate.

Destined to be located on Marjan's flagship archipelago island, set against the picturesque backdrop of the Arabian Peninsula and enclosed by the Yanas and Jais Mountains, W Al Marjan Island will further elevate the appeal of this thriving leisure destination to globetrotters.

Featuring an inventory of 300 hotel rooms and suites with sweeping sea views, this magnificent property is also anticipated to include signature spaces such as the Living Room, WET deck, W Lounge, AWAY Spa, and FIT fitness centre, along with three restaurants and retail spaces.

While Ras Al Khaimah is fast emerging as the tourism hub in the region, the forthcoming inauguration of the first W Hotel represents a remarkable stride towards cementing its stance as a global investment and hospitality destination of choice.

Endowed with white sandy beaches stretching over 7.8 km and a 23 km waterfront, an array of activities, and water sports, Al Marjan Island is reimagining luxurious waterfront living in Ras Al Khaimah. It currently houses 3,000 hotel rooms, offering unique lifestyle experiences to global and local travellers.



MEA introduces significant changes in the delivery of passports, visas, and consular services

In its move to mitigate predatory pricing, India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has tightened rules for the selection of partner visas and consular services to the Indian diaspora and foreign visitors. Further, to make the service more robust, seamless, and reliable, the MEA is committed to serving Indians migrating and foreigners visiting India with an overarching vision to strengthen India's image and reputation.

The Indian Missions of the MEA are the first touch points for any international traveller coming into India, including Indian citizens or persons of Indian origin (PIO) and foreigners (travelling to India) residing overseas. By making the visa services more robust, seamless and reliable, the MEA has shown its commitment to serve Indians living abroad and foreigners visiting the country with an overarching vision to strengthen India's image and reputation.

Singapore Tourism Board appoints Lim Kean Bon as Area Director, India, South Asia, and Africa

Lim Kean Bon will succeed Raymond Lim as the India market lead based in New Delhi, leading Singapore Tourism Board’s promotion, and travel trade engagement activities in Northern and Eastern India to sustain and grow affinity for Singapore from leisure travellers. In addition, Kean Bon will be responsible for business development efforts to secure visitorship across India to Singapore in the Cruise and Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) segments. He will also lead his team in engaging consumers in other regional markets like Bangladesh and South Africa.

Kean Bon started his career in the Singapore public service as an urban planner in Singapore’s city planning authority. He joined the STB infrastructure planning and management division in 2015 to drive the planning of MICE infrastructure, and subsequently moved on to the SECB team in 2017, where he managed destination bids and account servicing activities for large-scale business meetings and conventions organised by global associations.

Prior to taking on the STB New Delhi leadership role, Kean Bon led STB’s Lifestyle Precinct Development team from 2020 to 2023, where he set direction for various projects to sustain the appeal of Orchard Road, Singapore’s leading lifestyle precinct.



RezLive.com launches new user experience

RezLive.com, one of the leading global travel wholesalers, has launched its new and enhanced version, designed to provide travel agents with a more refreshing and convenient platform for their business needs.

The latest upgrades leverage cutting-edge technology to revolutionise the travel industry’s B2B segment, ensuring travel agents have access to the most advanced tools and a seamless user experience. One of the key enhancements of the new B2B version is its refreshing and intuitive interface. The platform has undergone a complete redesign, featuring a modern and sleek look that captivates users from the moment they log in. The clean and user-friendly layout allows travel agents to navigate effortlessly and access a comprehensive range of travel services and products.

Furthermore, RezLive.com’s new version offers a highly convenient booking process that saves time and simplifies operations for travel agents. With the introduction of a simplified search and booking system, agents can quickly find the best deals tailored to their clients’ needs. The upgraded interface is optimised for speed and responsiveness, ensuring efficient browsing and enabling agents to complete bookings with ease.



JW Marriott Maldives Resort and Spa welcomes Srijith Ravindranath as DOSM

JW Marriott Maldives Resort and Spa has appointed Srijith Ravindranath as the new Director of Sales and Marketing. Srijith brings a wealth of experience and expertise to this pivotal role with an impressive 15-year career in hotel sales and marketing, primarily focused on the Indian market.

Srijith commenced his career with Ginger Hotels and has since held significant roles at IHHR Hospitality, Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts, and the St. Regis Goa Resort. His achievements extend beyond personal growth, demonstrating a consistent track record of surpassing expectations and achieving 130 per cent of budgets. He has also successfully orchestrated the transition of a resort from the Leela brand to the prestigious St. Regis Brand of Marriott International, showcasing his ability to navigate the complex challenges of a rebranding process while maintaining operational excellence.

In his new role, Srijith has outlined a series of objectives that are characterised by innovation and a guest-centric approach, including but not

limited to, driving revenue growth, reinforcing the JW Marriott brand image through innovative campaigns, expanding market reach through strategic partnerships, delivering exceptional guest experiences through personalised services, and team development to foster professional growth and collective success.



TAFI Elections: Ajay Prakash re-elected as President for 2023-25 term

The Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) held its 29th Annual General Meeting (AGM) and its national elections for the new term, 2023–25, on September 2, 2023, at the Peninsula Grand Hotel, Mumbai. The TAFI Managing Committee was elected unopposed.

While Ajay Prakash was re-elected as the TAFI President, Anil Kalsi is now the Vice President after taking over from Kamal R. Jadhvani. Both Abbas Moiz and Hitank Shah have retained their positions as National General Secretary and Treasurer. The other committee members elected for the 2023–25 term were Seeraj Sabharwal, Rai Achal Krishna, Anandaveloo M, Sampat Damani, and Jitul Mehta.

Four more members were co-opted as per the bye-laws of TAFI at the first Managing Committee meeting held on the same day: S. Somaskandan, Sunil Uttam, Anil Punjabi, and Paulose Mathew. Pradip Lulla will continue as the Immediate Past President.



The Lalit Suri Hospitality appoints Rajan Kalra as Head of Sales (MICE) for Mumbai region

The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group has appointed Rajan Kalra as the Head of Sales (MICE) for the Mumbai region. With an impressive career spanning over 17 years, Rajan will assume responsibility for the development and execution of comprehensive sales strategies aimed at enhancing revenue, increasing visibility, and elevating the overall perception of the esteemed Lalit Hotels brand.

In his new role, Rajan will spearhead sales initiatives within the Mumbai region, driving substantial revenue growth across The Lalit Hotels portfolio. His extensive background in Sales and Marketing is underscored by a distinguished track record of consistently surpassing targets and forging robust client and partner relationships.



India Tourism Varanasi organises Yuva Tourism Seminar

India Tourism, North Regional Office, under the aegis of Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, along with the Institute of Hotel Management Lucknow, recently organised a seminar on Yuva Tourism Clubs.

Present at the occasion were M R Synrem, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India; R K Suman, Regional Director, North, Ministry of Tourism; M K Dash, Principal, IHM-Lucknow; Kalyan Singh, Deputy Director, U. P. Tourism; Prateek Heera, IATO chapter chairman, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand; and Anupama Srivastav, coordinator, ITS and YTC Lucknow University.

The vision behind the formation of Yuva Tourism Clubs is to foster and cultivate young ambassadors of Indian tourism, instilling in them an appreciation for our country's rich cultural heritage and igniting a

passion for exploring the vast tourism possibilities within India. These young ambassadors will play a pivotal role in promoting tourism across the nation, acting as catalysts for the growth of the tourism industry.


The programme was attended by Yuva Tourism Club coordinators and teachers from 43 schools and colleges, as well as the teachers and students of IHM, Lucknow.




EXPERIENCE OMANI HOSPITALITY

With unparalleled natural beauty, rich heritage and legendary warm hospitality, Oman is an all-round extraordinary destination. Whether you want to discover Oman or venture beyond, your memorable travel experience starts with Oman Air.

Book now at omanair.com

 omanair.com

 Oman Air Sales office or your local travel agent

RAJASTHAN

Incredibly tranquil!

