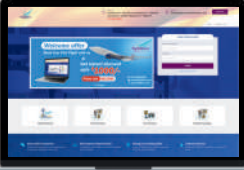


fly24hrs
One Step Ahead...

Superfast B2B Travel Portal



Register Now

GET BEST DEALS ON FLIGHTS

- One of the fastest growing travel company
- India's leading B2B travel portal

011-69122424 | sales@fly24hrs.com
www.fly24hrs.com

TTJ

Travel Trade Journal

Vol. 14 | Issue 10 | August 2024 | Pages 64 | ₹150

fly24hrs
One Step Ahead...

MAKE YOUR OWN BRAND
with fly24hrs API

Here are 3 reasons why!

- Single platform for your customer's travel needs with real time booking.
- Promote your own portal online to complete the search of travellers.
- Increase your customer base and serve best service to existing customers as well.

www.fly24hrs.com



Saudi | *Riya*
Welcome to Arabia | the travel expert!

AlUla

TrvlNxt The all-in-one travel solution for Saudi Arabia

Flights

5 Regional & 25+ International Airlines

Hotels

8000+ Accommodation options

Activities

200+ Sightseeing & Transfers

Packages

20+ Curated products

Top Seller Incentive

Top 10 Agencies win TrvlNxt voucher worth INR 20,000 each

Applicability:

On Hotel / Package Bookings

Travel window

01st July - 30th Sep' 24

Minimum Target*

30 Room Nights in Saudi Arabia

For queries, contact us:

*T&C apply

022-71200911 / 61200911 | TrvlNxt@riya.travel | www.trvlnext.com

20.04



MALLORCA, SPAIN

Joy, with those we love

jumeirah.com

JUMEIRAH

Team Sampan

Editor & Publisher	:	Ravi Sharma
Consulting Editor	:	Gurjit Singh
Director-Marketing	:	Sonika Bohra
Sr. Assistant Editor	:	Prashant Nayak
Assistant Editor	:	Prativa Vaidya Bhalla
Associate Editor	:	Sriparna Pal Bhattacharya
Sr. Correspondent	:	Vartik Sethi
Bureau Head (East)	:	Partha Chatterjee
GM-Strategic Partnerships	:	Debabrata Ray
Sr. Manager-PR & Marketing	:	Nehali Jain
Manger-Marketing Comm.	:	Yamini Sharma
Correspondent-Social Media	:	Khushi Bakshi
Manager PR	:	Ankit Dixit
Coordinator-Special Projects	:	Parth Sharma
Marketing Executive	:	Sahil Nadeem
Marketing Trainee	:	Bhumika Panchal
Art Director	:	Laxman Dass
Designer	:	Jatin Kumar
Web Developer	:	Abhishek Kapoor
Manager Administration	:	Kuldeep Singh
Assistant Admin	:	Isha Singh
Accountant	:	Amar Gupta

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,

With the monsoon sweeping across the country and the anticipation of the upcoming festival season, we are delighted to bring you another engaging edition of TTJ. This month's issue is brimming with an array of diverse insights and stories from the travel and tourism industry, promising to keep you informed and inspired.

In our August 2024 issue, we share key takeaways from Kiwi Link India 2024 and offer a critical analysis of the recent Indian Union Budget 2024-2025, which has sparked varied reactions within the travel sector. Additionally, we provide an in-depth look at India's rapidly growing MICE sector.

Our coverage also highlights the vibrancy of our popular TTJ TRAVMART, which recently took place in Chandigarh, as well as FICCI's 3rd Outbound Tourism Summit, which promoted multilateral tourism and fostered cultural cooperation among participating countries. We have also featured updates on international and domestic hotels and offer detailed reports on our recent trips, capturing the essence of these great experiences.

Dive into this edition to stay informed and inspired as we navigate these dynamic times in travel and tourism.

Happy Reading!

Ravi Sharma
ravisharma@sampanmedia.com

Coast to Coast

We are committed to delivering exceptional hospitality and creating unforgettable experiences for our guests. Each of our properties in Mandrem, Candolim, and Cavelossim reflects the diverse charm of Goa, offering a unique blend of luxury, culture, and natural beauty. Discover the magic of Goa with us and let us make your stay truly special.

Radisson Blu Resort Goa Cavelossim
CALL: +91 70300 28853
EMAIL: reservations@rdresortgoa.com

Radisson Goa Candolim
CALL: +91 7720094471
EMAIL: sales@rdgoa.com

Mandrem Beach Resort
CALL: +91 8766781561
EMAIL: reservations@mbhgoa.com

Indiva Marketing to represent La Mamounia, Marrakech in India

La Mamounia, the iconic resort in Marrakech, Morocco, is now exclusively represented by Indiva Marketing. This partnership expands Indiva's portfolio to include one of the world's most prestigious hospitality brands.

La Mamounia, known for its opulent architecture, lush gardens, and exceptional service, has been a symbol of Moroccan hospitality since 1923. The resort has consistently attracted discerning travellers, including celebrities, royalty, and dignitaries, for memorable vacations and lavish celebrations.

Pierre Jochem, General Manager, La Mamounia, expressed his enthusiasm stating, "India is a rapidly growing market with a strong appetite for luxury travel, exclusive hotels, fine food and wine. We are confident that Indiva Marketing's deep understanding and innovative approach will help us reach new heights in this vibrant region. We look forward to welcoming Indian guests to La Mamounia, to experience the magic of Marrakech like never before."

The partnership will focus on bespoke marketing strategies, enhancing brand awareness, and driving engagement through digital marketing, social media, and exclusive events. This representation is expected to open new avenues for Indian travellers to explore the rich cultural heritage, exquisite cuisine, and unmatched luxury of La Mamounia and its destination.



▲ Pierre Jochem, General Manager, La Mamounia

Sartha Global Marketing to represent the Louisiana Office of Tourism in India



The Louisiana Office of Tourism, the official travel authority for the state of Louisiana in the USA, has appointed Sartha Global Marketing LLP as its representative office in India. Sartha will develop and implement travel trade and public relations programs to attract Indian travellers, highlighting Louisiana's unique culture, festivals, and attractions.

Louisiana blends French, Spanish, and African influences in its music, cuisine, architecture, and festivals. From the iconic celebrations of New Orleans to the plantation homes along the Mississippi River, the tranquil swamps of the Atchafalaya Basin, and the Cajun way of life at Vermilionville in Lafayette, the state offers an array of experiences that celebrate its heritage and natural beauty.

With its renowned diversity and abundance of experiences, Louisiana is the perfect destination for Indian culture enthusiasts, gastronomes, nature lovers, festivalgoers, sports and adventure for family and individual segments. The state also offers a range of accommodation options, from luxurious casinos and full-service resorts to charming bed-and-breakfasts and scenic cabins. Additionally, Louisiana has excellent air connectivity via numerous airports, including the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport, facilitating easy access to visitors.

Big Bus Tours appoints Auxilia Networks as its India Representative

Auxilia Networks has been appointed as the exclusive India representative for the iconic global hop-on hop-off bus tour brand, Big Bus Tours Group. Auxilia will promote the Big Bus portfolio of open-top sightseeing bus tours in over 25 of the world's most popular cities across the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and Asia-



Pacific. They will also promote the company's other multi-national brands including leading UAE travel company Tour Dubai.

Paramjit Bawa, Founder and Principal, Auxilia Networks expressed his excitement about the new partnership, "We are absolutely thrilled that Big Bus Tours chose Auxilia as their partner in India. What an addition to our family of premium international partners they are – we're talking about the biggest operator of open-top sightseeing bus tours in the whole world, a truly iconic global brand – in over 25 cities across four continents. As an example of our ambition to partner with the best companies in their respective fields, Big Bus is pretty hard to beat. We will promote their sightseeing tours and other verticals under their global umbrella through a mix of B2B and B2C activities, PR and media engagement."

**STEP OUTSIDE OF THE EVERYDAY AND INTO A DREAM.
A PLACE WHERE REALITY AND THE OTHERWORLDLY COMBINE.**

And just like a dream, sometimes everything is quite real, sometimes truly magical.

Rottnest Island is only a short ferry ride or scenic flight from Perth, experience the magic of natural wonders, surreal landscapes, and rare wildlife encounters on this dreamlike island paradise.



Sarova Hotels and Resorts appoints AVIAREPS India to expand its presence in India



Sarova Hotels and Resorts, a renowned chain of luxurious heritage hotels in Kenya, has taken a significant step to enhance its presence in the Indian market by appointing AVIAREPS as its Sales and PR representative in India. With the expertise of AVIAREPS' dedicated team of tourism professionals, the focus will be on crafting and implementing innovative multi-channel promotional strategies aimed at increasing tourism from India. This strategic partnership marks an exciting new chapter in Sarova's expansion efforts.

Ellona Pereira, General Manager, AVIAREPS India, added, "Our strategic efforts will focus on redefining Sarova's presence in the Indian market. By leveraging our market expertise and extensive network, we will drive bookings through strategic sales efforts, craft targeted marketing campaigns, and enhance the brand through effective public relations. We look forward to amplifying Sarova Hotels' visibility and appeal in India."

Established in 1974, Sarova operates nine esteemed properties across Kenya, including Sarova Stanley and Sarova Whitesands Beach Resort and Spa. With a legacy of culinary excellence and unforgettable experiences, Sarova continues to set benchmarks in hospitality across the region.

Neptune Hotels partners with Ace Connect to expand presence in Indian market



Neptune Hotels, East Africa's family-owned and operated hospitality company, boasts a portfolio of safari-tented camps and lodges in the Masai Mara and Ngorongoro Conservation Area and the Central Serengeti (opening in 2025), alongside its stunning beach resorts in Zanzibar and Diani Beach in Mombasa, is set to captivate the Indian travel market. Known for offering immersive wildlife experiences, unforgettable beachfront stays, and a deep commitment to sustainability and local culture, Neptune Hotels is excited to bring its unique offerings to discerning Indian travellers.

Ace Connect will spearhead Neptune Hotels' marketing and sales campaigns in India. This partnership will leverage Ace Connect's market insights, strategic planning, and established relationships with travel agents, tour operators, and media outlets to effectively promote Neptune Hotels' diverse properties.

"We are honoured to collaborate with Neptune Hotels and support their entry into the Indian market," said Alpa Jani, CEO of Ace Connect. "East Africa offers a treasure trove of experiences that align perfectly with the aspirations of Indian travellers. Together, we aim to create a strong presence and build lasting connections with our target audience."

Kiwi Link returns to India after five years, strengthens New Zealand-India tourism ties

Kiwi Link, Tourism New Zealand's flagship trade event, made a triumphant return in India this year, reuniting New Zealand tourism businesses with Indian travel sellers. After a five-year hiatus, a 41-member delegation of New Zealand's industry representatives, including airlines, airports, experience curators/guides, hotels, and tour operators, converged to reconnect with 65 Indian buyers through 1,600 B2B meetings held from July 10 -12, 2024.



This intensive platform allowed New Zealand businesses to showcase their diverse offerings while Indian buyers gained valuable insights into crafting unforgettable New Zealand off-peak experiences. To further equip Indian travel agents with destination familiarity, a comprehensive frontline product training session was conducted on July 12 both in-person and via a live virtual session which garnered close to 300 participants.

The overwhelming success of Kiwi Link India underscores the vibrant demand for New Zealand Tourism in India and signifies a renewed commitment to fostering a thriving partnership between the two nations.



DISCOVER YOUR LOVE FOR GOLF IN ALMATY

You can carry Golf equipment free of charge as part of additional baggage on the Delhi-Almaty-Delhi route. Total weight should not exceed 15kg.

Contact us: +91 11 23711225, +91 11 41521425



Rezbook Global expands international presence with new licensed offices in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan

Rezbook Global is officially expanding into the international market with newly licensed offices in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. In addition to these exciting new locations, the company is also preparing to launch licensed offices in Georgia and Armenia very soon.

Nishant Gupta, Founder and CEO, expressed enthusiasm for the new teams and partnerships, stating, "Our teams in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Georgia, and Armenia are eager to collaborate and support our clients with the same dedication and excellence that defines Rezbook Global. We look forward to building strong partnerships and contributing to the vibrant business communities in these countries."

Rezbook Global stands as one of India's most rapidly expanding DMCs, catering to the travel needs of CIS countries.

The company facilitates travel to and from the CIS nations, including Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Georgia, Armenia, Tajikistan, Belarus, Russia, and Turkey. Their comprehensive suite of travel services includes efficient ticketing, tailored hotel reservations, convenient car hires, expert visa assistance, and knowledgeable English-speaking guides.



Rayna Tours successfully concludes its second 'UAE Leisure Roadshow' in India, unveils its 'Seacation' Cruise Division

Rayna Tours, a prominent UAE-based Destination Management Company (DMC), held its second 'UAE Leisure Roadshow' across three key cities in India from July 15–19, 2024, the programme successfully traversed Delhi, Kolkata, and Ahmedabad, showcasing the UAE's unparalleled year-round appeal to travel enthusiasts.

Building on the first roadshow's success, this edition highlighted diverse UAE offerings for all travel styles, featuring 14 partners from the UAE's hospitality and attractions sector. It emphasized family entertainment, luxurious experiences, budget-friendly summer escapes, and MICE opportunities.

During the roadshow, Rayna Tours unveiled 'Seacation', a new division specialising in cruise experiences. Additionally, Rayna Tours introduced Europe as a new destination, establishing an office in Switzerland to support this expansion. The multi-city roadshow drew a significant number of stakeholders from the thriving Indian travel industry.

The event underscored Rayna Tours' strong relationship with the travel agent community and provided a platform for showcasing individual projects. Senthil Velan, CEO of Rayna Tours, expressed excitement about the event's success and future plans to expand the roadshow to more Indian cities to elevate awareness of the UAE's iconic attractions and diverse experiences.



TripJack's Check-In Guarantee Program achieves 99.60 per cent check-in rate

TripJack, a B2B travel platform, has achieved a remarkable check-in rate of 99.60 per cent with its successful Check-In Guarantee program. This milestone underscores TripJack's commitment to providing seamless and reliable travel experiences.

The Check-In Guarantee program was designed to address and mitigate potential check-in issues that travellers might face. By closely collaborating with hotel



▲ Abdul Thingna

partners and suppliers, TripJack ensures that travel agents can offer their clients a hassle-free and enjoyable stay.

In the rare instances where check-in is denied, TripJack has developed a seamless resolution process. Travel agents can quickly address and resolve the issue, ensuring minimal inconvenience for travellers. Additionally, TripJack offers compensation to travellers if they experience any disruption due to check-in denial, reaffirming their dedication to customer satisfaction.

Speaking about the program's success, Abdul Thingna, Vice President, Hotels and Holidays at TripJack said, "Our primary objective is to ensure that every traveller enjoys a seamless experience. We work tirelessly and collaborate closely with our hotel partners and suppliers to ensure exceptional service, and our Check-In Guarantee program is a testament to this commitment."

With a focus on reliability, efficiency, and customer satisfaction, TripJack continues to set new standards in the travel industry.

 CATHAY PACIFIC
MOVE BEYOND

CONNECTING
TO THE **GREATER**
BAY AREA WITH
FLIGHT AND
FERRY

Travel seamlessly to the cities of Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Dongguan,
and more with Cathay Pacific's air-plus-ferry services.

Scan the QR code
to know more



Enhancing Zimbabwe-India Relations

In an exclusive interaction with TTJ, H.E. Ambassador Stella Nkomo, Republic of Zimbabwe, shared her aspirations and strategies for strengthening and enhancing Zimbabwe-India relations, emphasising tourism, trade, and investment.

Sonika Bohra

Ambassador Nkomo outlined her primary goals with a clear vision: to promote Zimbabwe's trade, tourism, and investment opportunities in India and enhance economic cooperation and development between the nations. She aims to increase Zimbabwe's visibility and reputation in India, foster sustainable relationships, and contribute to the growth and development of both countries.

She described the current relations as robust and friendly, noting historical cooperation in healthcare and education. However, she emphasised the significant potential for deepening ties, especially in the areas of tourism, trade, and investment. "My deployment focuses on economic diplomacy, with increased tourism development as a key driver of economic growth," she stated.

Experience Zimbabwe

Ambassador Nkomo passionately described Zimbabwe as a destination that resonates deeply with Indian culture due to its strong sense of community and respect for elders. She recommended exploring the Ancient City of Great Zimbabwe, renowned for its mysterious stone structures, and the rock art at Matobo Hills.

"The Eastern Highlands hold a special allure, with a mystical quality that beckons travellers to experience its enchanting beauty," she added, highlighting activities like hiking, trekking, and exploring the rugged terrain. Beyond wildlife, Zimbabwe offers vibrant cultural experiences, colourful markets, breathtaking sunsets, calming lakes, and thrilling adventures on the Zambezi River, including world-famous white water rafting and bungee jumping from the Victoria Falls bridge. "See the real Zimbabwe for yourself – *Aaiye aur Zimbabwe ka anubhav keejiye!*"

Accessibility

For Indian travellers, Zimbabwe offers a visa



▲ H.E. Ambassador Stella Nkomo

on arrival, with single-entry visas at \$30 and double-entry visas at \$45. "Fly in, pay up, and get ready to explore," she encouraged.

Current connectivity from India to Zimbabwe is available through semi-direct flights with Ethiopian Airlines, Kenya Airways, Emirates, and other airlines. Zimbabwe's accommodations range from luxury to standard, catering to all preferences. Indian travellers can enjoy a mix of Indian cuisine, traditional Zimbabwean dishes, and international flavours, with many restaurants offering halal-certified cuisine.

Ambassador Nkomo highlighted encouraging statistics, noting a consistent rise in Indian visitors to Zimbabwe. "In 2023, we welcomed over 17,000 Indian visitors, reflecting a positive upward trend in recent years," she revealed. She extended a heartfelt invitation to Indian travellers, saying, "Get bowled over by our stunning landscapes and vibrant culture. Visit Zimbabwe!"

Addressing Challenges

Acknowledging the challenges in promoting

Zimbabwe in the Indian market, such as limited destination awareness, absence of direct flights, and competition from other African destinations, Ambassador Nkomo shared her strategic solutions. "We are excited to host our annual travel showcase, Sanganai/Hlanganani World Tourism Expo, from Sep 12 - 14, 2024, and have extended a special invitation to the Indian travel trade for a familiarisation tour," she said.

Furthermore, strategic social media campaigns and influencer collaborations will spotlight Zimbabwe's unique attractions. "We are encouraging business investments in tourism infrastructure to ensure a smoother and more efficient travel experience for our visitors," she added. Participation in travel trade shows and product training workshops, along with collaboration with other African countries, will further enhance marketing efforts and promote multi-country tours.

Cultural Exchange and Initiatives

Ambassador Nkomo sees significant potential in cultural exchange programmes for tourism professionals and students. "India has a very established film industry, and we want to leverage that by promoting Zimbabwe as a filming location for Indian productions," she noted. Establishing direct flights between major cities in India and Zimbabwe is also a priority to boost tourism and trade.

Among the exciting cultural initiatives planned, Ambassador Nkomo mentioned introducing gastronomy exchange programmes and promoting Zimbabwean cuisine in India, and vice versa through food festivals. She also aims to showcase the historical trade links between Goa and Great Zimbabwe through heritage tours. "Our nations share a rich history with roots dating back to the ancient trade era," she remarked.

Vision

Looking ahead, Ambassador Nkomo envisions a bright future for Zimbabwe-India relations. "We envision Zimbabwe becoming the premier destination of choice for Indian travellers in Africa, with a focus on wildlife conservation, adventure tourism, and cultural heritage," she stated. Increased Indian investment in Zimbabwe's tourism infrastructure is crucial for unlocking the vast potential of bilateral relations and driving sustainable growth.





ECO-FRIENDLY TRAVEL IN SWITZERLAND

Sustainability in public transport

By public transport, guests enjoy carefree travel across Switzerland - and it is even climate- friendly. In addition to means of transportation that operate in an environmentally friendly way, there are many more examples of sustainable mobility. These help to turn travelling in and across Switzerland into a special experience.



Sustainable Travel Insights

Swiss Federal Railways:

The country's biggest transport company generates the electricity for its trains from hydropower, & this at the rate of 90%. Energy procurement for stations, offices as well as company & production buildings is already 100% CO2-neutral.

Rhaetian Railway - On Track with Hydropower:

Rhaetian Railway, the operators of the world famous Bernina Express, attach great importance to the origin of the energy they procure as well as further developments in the area of sustainability. Already since 2013, they have used 100% of hydropower for their locomotives and properties.

E-PostBus – Experiencing Interlaken Sustainably:

Experiencing Interlaken in no ordinary way: on the e-bus by PostBus, the holiday destination with its many mountains and lakes can be explored in comfort and in an environmentally friendly fashion to boot.

MS Diamant – Climate Neutral on Lake Lucerne:

The modern motor vessel is a landmark achievement in Swiss navigation when it comes to quality & innovation. This boat is unsurpassed when it comes to technological finesse & luxury. It sets new standards as Switzerland's first climate-neutral regular service boat.

Stoosbahn – Recuperated Energy Heats Hotel:

The Stoosbahn is known for being Europe's steepest funicular, and its state-of-the-art energy concept has made headlines, too. On top of the Stoos, mesmerizing views of Lake Lucerne await, which can also be enjoyed from the recently opened hotel.

Funi – A Marvel of the Art of Engineering:

The "Funi" (short for "funicular") is Switzerland's last existing water-powered funicular railway and only a few minutes' walk from the railway station Freiburg. This nostalgic railway has been operating since 1899 – completely without electricity or exhaust fumes. The funicular is not powered by a motor but uses filtered waste-water from a 3,000-litre tank and thus overcomes 56.4 metres in altitude.

Ottila International Pvt. Ltd.

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

Ahmedabad: +91 93 7612 0982

Bengaluru: +91 96 0648 4182

Chennai: +91 44 4555 8582

Coimbatore: + 91 99 5271 7750

Hyderabad: +91 88 8501 5970

Indore: +91 73 1491 1374

Kochi: +91 75 9386 3903

Kolkata: +91 98 3011 9561

New Delhi: +91 11 4141 4242

Nashik: +91 25 3231 0044

Pune: + 91 20 4002 6960



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

New Zealand targets NZD 5 billion tourism growth over four years with focus on off-peak season

TTJ recently had the opportunity to engage with René de Monchy, Chief Executive, Tourism New Zealand, at the Kiwi Link 2024 event in Mumbai. René shared key highlights from the flagship event, provided insights into the latest developments in New Zealand’s tourism sector, and emphasised the increasing significance of the Indian market.

Prashant Nayak

Kiwi Link, Tourism New Zealand’s premier trade event, successfully returned to India in July after a five-year hiatus. The event brought together a 41-member delegation of New Zealand tourism industry representatives, including airlines and airports, with 65 Indian buyers, revitalising connections and exploring new opportunities in the travel sector.

Kiwi Link 2024: The Reconnect

This year’s dynamic Kiwi Link platform allowed New Zealand businesses to showcase their diverse offerings while Indian buyers gained valuable insights into creating memorable off-peak experiences in New Zealand. To deepen Indian travel agents’ destination knowledge, a comprehensive frontline product training session was conducted both in-person and via a live virtual format, attracting nearly 300 participants.

Speaking about this edition of Kiwi Link, René said, “It is wonderful to be back, especially since this is our first event since 2019. The travel trade is crucial for us, with 85 per cent of bookings for New Zealand from India coming through travel agents. This event is a vital chance to explore future possibilities, understand what Indian visitors are seeking, and showcase New Zealand’s latest offerings and new connections.”

Emphasising Year-Round Appeal

The tourism industry in New Zealand has rebounded strongly, now ranking as the country’s second-largest export earner. René stated that their focus is on positioning New Zealand as a desirable year-round destination, especially for holidays. “Given our temperate climate, many of our activities are available throughout the year. This event highlighted diverse itinerary options



▲ René de Monchy

for trade partners, enabling them to offer travellers a variety of year-round experiences in New Zealand. May-June and October-November are key travel periods for Indian tourists, aligning well with New Zealand’s tourism calendar and enhancing opportunities for both visitors and our industry,” asserted René.

The ‘100% Pure New Zealand’ campaign, which has been a cornerstone for 25 years, will remain central to Tourism New Zealand’s messaging strategy. “We are also launching fresh content through our ‘If You Seek’ initiative to showcase the diverse year-round experiences available in New Zealand. Also, our New Zealand Specialist programme ensures that the travel trade is up-to-date,” René added.

Beyond Adventure

New Zealand is renowned as an adventure destination, attracting many visitors specifically for its thrilling experiences. However, René emphasised, “We aim to showcase more than just our adventure tourism. New Zealand has a diverse range of activities to explore. From whale watching and bike trails to Māori culture, wellness spas, and wine

tourism, there is something for everyone. Despite being a relatively small nation, New Zealand’s attractions are highly accessible and varied. Our goal is to build on our adventure reputation and highlight these additional experiences, offering travellers a richer view of what New Zealand has to offer.”

New Zealand has introduced several exciting new products recently. For example, Auckland now boasts the Britomart Hotel, the nation’s first five-star green-rated hotel. Additionally, a new wellness spa has opened in Rotorua, expanding the range of offerings. René remarked, “While we continue to innovate in adventure tourism and introduce new attractions and products, it is also crucial to update our trade partners. We are dedicated to ensuring they are well-informed about these new developments and itineraries. It is essential for them to effectively promote these offerings to travellers.”

India’s Rising Importance

India is now among the top 10 markets for New Zealand, with Australia, China, and the US continuing to lead. India is recognised as a market with substantial potential for future growth. René explained, “While Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru are our key markets in India, our research indicates that out of 1.4 billion Indians, 18 million are potential visitors considering New Zealand. Notably, nearly half of these—43 per cent—rank New Zealand as their top preferred destination. This represents a significant and promising audience for us in the future.”

On a final note, René mentioned, “Our focus over the next four years is to boost the overall tourism sector by 5 billion New Zealand dollars, with the goal of generating 70 per cent of this growth during the off-peak months from March to November. This period represents a key opportunity for New Zealand, and we see India as an integral part of this strategy.”

Apply for UK Visa from the comfort and convenience of a Taj hotel near you.

The Premium Application Centre includes:

- ✔ Biometric enrolment
- ✔ Document Scanning Assistance
- ✔ SMS alerts on the status of your visa application
- ✔ Courier return of your passport

Steps to apply:

STEP 1



Complete your visa application on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

STEP 2



Book an appointment for your preferred Taj Hotel location

STEP 3



Enroll your biometrics at the chosen location

STEP 4



Receive your processed passport at home

Available in Calicut and Mangalore



To know more, visit us at:
www.vfsglobal.com/uk/ind/taj



Air New Zealand to offer Indian travellers more choices and connections

On the sidelines of the Kiwi Link 2024 event in Mumbai, TTJ met with Imogen Thornton, Head of South and Southeast Asia at Air New Zealand. Imogen shared insights on Air New Zealand's plans to expand in the competitive aviation market, enhance passenger experience, and strengthen partnerships in India's travel market.

Nehali Jain

Known for its warm Kiwi hospitality, Air New Zealand has direct flights to major cities across Australia, Asia, the Pacific Islands, and the US. Together with Singapore Airlines, as alliance partners, the airlines operate up to 4 flights a day from Singapore to Auckland, and a daily flight from Singapore to Christchurch. By leveraging strong relationships with alliance partners, Air New Zealand offers customers more choices and convenience, enabling connections to hundreds of additional destinations.

Strengthening Indian Connections

Participating in the Kiwi Link, Tourism New Zealand's flagship trade event, was of utmost importance to Air New Zealand, as the event made a triumphant return in India this year after a five-year hiatus. "We love the opportunity to participate at Kiwi Link and meet many Indian agents. We truly value the chance to discuss with them how seamless the connection to New Zealand can be and are continually exploring various avenues for agents and the travel industry in India to experience all that New Zealand has to offer," conveys Imogen.

She also discussed the recent TRENZ conference in Wellington, New Zealand, which included participation from 23 Indian travel agencies. "Meeting the Indian agents at the conference was fantastic. I was impressed by their deep knowledge of New Zealand and their enthusiasm for discussing the country's various experiences. Many agents also joined pre- and post-FAM tours to explore more destinations, both in the North and South Island." Imogen noted. She highlighted how these experiences enhance the agents' understanding, allowing them to effectively promote New Zealand within the Indian market and



▲ Imogen Thornton

create mutual benefits.

In-Focus: South and Southeast Asia

While Air New Zealand has no new route announcements at this time, Imogen emphasises the significance of South and Southeast Asia. The airline is committed to deeply understanding its customers and tailoring its offerings to effectively cater to each market within the region. The Indian market, in particular, holds great importance for Air New Zealand, as evidenced by strong travel volumes and diverse purposes, ranging from visiting friends and relatives (VFR) to leisure and business travel.

Currently, Air New Zealand leverages its strong partnership with Singapore Airlines to efficiently connect travellers between New Zealand and India. "We are extremely proud of our partnership and the seamless flight

connections we offer through Singapore Airlines, which connects travellers from eight ports across India. As alliance partners, we have up to five flights a day from Singapore to New Zealand that Indian travellers can connect to; either to Auckland or Christchurch. Furthermore, Air New Zealand's extensive domestic network covers 20 destinations, ensuring a truly seamless travel experience to any part of the country," informs Imogen.

The focus also remains on enhancing existing routes, including increasing capacity on the Auckland-Singapore route. Imogen shares, "We are pleased to announce the expansion of our Auckland to Singapore service with additional capacity. From November through March next year, we will offer an extra 20,000 seats on this route. This expansion provides more options for travellers connecting from India. Notably, 11,000 of these seats will be in Premium Economy and Business Class, offering Indian travellers the opportunity to experience luxurious travel in style."

The Future with the Dreamliner

The Dreamliner has been instrumental in expanding Air New Zealand's network, being the ideal aircraft for ultra-long-haul travel. Looking ahead, Air New Zealand is continuing its investment in the Dreamliner, with upgrades to the current fleet and eight new Dreamliners on order. Imogen shares, "We're excited about the arrival of our first new 787 in 2025, designed for ultra-long-haul flights. It will likely debut on our Auckland-New York route, coinciding with the rollout of refreshed onboard products. We promise a new experience while maintaining our renowned service and showcasing New Zealand's exceptional food and wine."



Discover Saudi This Summer

Culture | Adventure | Entertainment



Aseer

For itineraries and more information,
log on to www.VisitSaudi.com

Strategic domination of Atlantis The Royal in the luxury hospitality segment

In the fiercely competitive realm of luxury hospitality, few establishments manage to carve out a niche as indelibly as Atlantis The Royal. Through astute marketing, robust partnerships, and a steadfast commitment to sustainability, Atlantis The Royal has distinguished itself as a vanguard in the luxury hospitality market.

Vartik Sethi

In a close interaction with Travel Trade Journal, Kyp Charalambous, Director of Sales, Atlantis The Royal, opens up about how Atlantis The Royal has not only cruised through the complexities of the global market but has also excelled in establishing a formidable presence. This article explores the key strategies that have propelled Atlantis The Royal to the forefront of luxury travel.

Primary Markets in India

Charalambous elucidated that their primary markets encompass major Indian metropolises such as Mumbai, Delhi NCR, and Ahmedabad, complemented by rapid growth in regions like Chandigarh, Ludhiana, Jaipur, and Pune. He attributed this expansive growth to the resort's impressive presence and brand visibility across a plethora of communication platforms and social media channels. "Our media and influencer outreach, coupled with continuous branding efforts, have been vital for our success," he asserted. Moreover, the facilitation of travel and the advent of new routes significantly enhanced travel decisions, strengthening accessibility.

The archetypal clientele at Atlantis The Royal comprises families with mature offspring and couples. The trend of multi-generational travel has gained considerable traction among Indian travellers, encompassing grandparents, parents, and grown-up children yearning for shared high-calibre experiences. The two properties – Atlantis The Palm and Atlantis The Royal, complement each other in offering a variety of experiences. Charalambous shared, "Families that previously visited Atlantis The Palm, where the children were younger and enjoyed the adventure-filled activities and attractions, may now choose Atlantis The Royal for a more indulgent and serene getaway."

Seasonal Fluctuations and Travel Composition

Atlantis The Royal experiences pronounced



▲ Kyp Charalambous

spikes during major Indian holidays such as Holi, Easter, Eid, and Diwali. During quieter shoulder seasons, they adeptly adjust pricing while upholding exceptional service to ensure continued customer satisfaction. Charalambous stated, "Understanding the seasonal fluctuations helps us manage our resources effectively and continue to provide top-notch service."

Atlantis The Royal predominantly caters to leisure travellers, including couples, friends, and families, who constitute approximately 95 per cent of its clientele. It also hosts social events, weddings, and corporate events, striking a harmonious balance to effectively serve all segments. Charalambous highlighted, "We accommodate weddings with up to 500 guests, ensuring each celebration receives the attention and facilities they require."

Partnerships and Collaborations

Collaboration with travel agents and tour operators is integral to Atlantis The Royal's strategy. Annually, they devise integrated marketing strategies with them. Charalambous underscored, "The Atlantis Resorts – Global

Booking Rewards Programme is designed to show gratitude to our trusted partners for their continued loyalty in choosing Atlantis as their preferred resort destination." The programme proffers substantial rewards, incentivising travel partners to enrol and optimise their benefits.

Prominent partnerships with illustrious brands such as Dolce & Gabbana, Louis Vuitton, Valentino, and Graff have significantly contributed to Atlantis The Royal's efforts in enhancing the guest experience. Collaborations with globally renowned culinary icons like Gastón Acurio, José Andrés, and Nobu Matsuhisa further add to their bouquet of luxury experiences. Charalambous remarked, "These successful brand partnerships have enhanced overall brand equity by creating positive associations and memorable experiences for our guests." The grand performance by the global icon Beyoncé in February 2023 underpinned their brand positioning and left a lasting impression on Atlantis The Royal's global audience.

Future Prospects and Developments

Atlantis The Royal envisions partnerships with several global luminaries, including the esteemed restaurant CARBONE, slated to debut in Q1 2025. Charalambous shared, "We continue to present our guests with the greatest collection of world-class restaurants and iconic dining experiences in one destination."

In the luxury travel market, emergent trends such as personalised experiences, sustainability initiatives, and seamless technological integration have become increasingly prevalent. Atlantis The Royal has strategically poised itself to embrace these transformations, ensuring their offerings remain both luxurious and environmentally responsible. Charalambous added, "By leveraging advanced technology, we aim to provide seamless and personalised guest interactions, further enhancing our reputation as a leader in luxury hospitality."

Explore Europe

the easy way with Eurostar

PRICE
STARTING @
€72pp*

*Whatever your city break desire or your dream destination, discover some of the best European city breaks with **Eurostar!***

Popular Routes:

• London <> Paris

• London <> Brussels

• London <> Amsterdam

• London <> Lille

For best train deals, please login to www.travelboutiqueonline.com

JORDAN TOURISM VISION 2025

Targeted at Increasing Jordan's Global Appeal

In a pivotal move to strengthen bilateral tourism ties, Dr. Abed Al Razzaq Arabiyat, Managing Director, Jordan Tourism Board (JTB), recently held a close-knit meeting with the travel trade. His visit showcases Jordan's renewed commitment to the Indian market, aiming to capitalise on the untapped potential and forge deeper cultural and economic connections between the two nations.

Vartik Sethi



▲ Dr. Abed Al Razzaq Arabiyat

In line with Jordan's Vision 2025, five strategic pillars were introduced: MICE tourism, destination weddings, luxury tourism, adventure tourism, and film tourism. Each pillar is designed to leverage Jordan's unique attractions and cater to the varied interests of global travellers. Highlighting the decade-long efforts in marketing Jordan in India, Dr.

Arabiyat noted that while these initiatives have laid a solid foundation, the time has come to advance with more serious and structured engagements. His visit included crucial meetings with Indian officials, setting the stage for enhanced tourism and cultural exchanges.

Jordan's Diverse Attractions

Jordan boasts a myriad of attractions, catering to a wide range of tourist preferences. From the lush greenery in the north, evocative of Scandinavian landscapes, to the historic and bustling metropolis of Amman, Jordan proffers a plethora of experiences.

A short journey from Amman brings visitors to the Dead Sea, the lowest point on Earth at 420 mt below sea level. Renowned for its therapeutic properties, the Dead Sea is a natural spa unmatched anywhere in the world. Nearby, the site of Jesus' baptism, acknowledged by the Vatican and multiple Christian denominations, draws countless pilgrims, enhancing Jordan's reputation as a pivotal destination for religious tourism. The nation is home to numerous sites mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments, further solidifying its appeal to Christian pilgrims.

Jordan, often likened to India in its diversity, albeit on a smaller scale, offers an array of attractions catering to varied tourist preferences. "Jordan is like India but a smaller country. We have it all! And the diversity of our products is amazing," Dr. Arabiyat remarked.

Petra and Beyond

To the south lies Petra, a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. Just as the Taj Mahal holds significant cultural and historical value for India, Petra symbolises Jordan's rich heritage. "Petra, an ancient city carved into red sandstone cliffs, stands as a testament to the ingenuity and artistry of the Nabateans. Recognised as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World, Petra is a must-visit for history enthusiasts and adventurers alike," he shared.

Umm al-Jimal was recently included as the seventh distinguished site in Jordan to be inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List, joining the ranks of Petra, Quseir 'Amra, Um er-Rasas, Wadi Rum, Al-Maghtas, As-Salt, and Umm Al-Jimal. Adjacent to Petra is Wadi Rum, a landscape so otherworldly that it has served as a backdrop for numerous Hollywood films, including *The Martian* and *Star Wars*. Wadi Rum's stargazing bubbles and adventure activities make it a magnet for thrill-seekers and nature enthusiasts alike.

Aqaba is another emerging destination for diving and snorkelling enthusiasts. "The crystal-clear waters teem with vibrant coral reefs and marine life, making it a haven for underwater enthusiasts," Dr. Arabiyat shared. He added, "Aqaba's warm climate and luxury resorts make it a perfect year-round destination for relaxation and recreation."



Dead Sea



Amman

Adventure tourism is another growing segment in Jordan. Dr. Arabiyat highlighted the Jordan Trail, recognised by Lonely Planet and National Geographic as one of the top 10 trails globally.

This 675 km route stretches from Um Qais in the north to Aqaba in the south. Over 40 days, hikers pass through 75 villages and towns, immersing themselves in Jordan's rich cultural heritage and stunning natural beauty.

Marketing Strategies

Understanding the importance of targeted marketing, the Jordan Tourism Board tailors its campaigns based on extensive research and feedback. "We design our marketing campaign according to the feedback and the research conducted by our office. So, we know exactly which audience we need to target," Dr. Arabiyat explained.

Innovative tools, including artificial intelligence, are being incorporated to enhance these marketing efforts. The upcoming launch of the "Jordan Gates" super app will integrate various applications and offer personalised itineraries and content to tourists. The AI-driven platform will engage tourists through voice chatbots and geofencing recommendations, enhancing their overall experience aimed at enriching and extending their stay in Jordan.

Jordan as a Wedding Destination

Jordan is positioning itself as a unique destination for Indian weddings. Dr. Arabiyat shared success stories of Indian weddings held at the Dead Sea, highlighting the appeal of such unique locations. "We had five Indian weddings in Jordan. The Dead Sea has now become a wedding destination for Indian

couples," he stated. The JTB has actively engaged with Indian wedding planners, resulting in several high-profile weddings at unique locations. Dr. Arabiyat personally oversees the facilitation of these events, ensuring smooth customs processes and providing a warm Jordanian welcome from the moment guests arrive.

Film Tourism

Film tourism has emerged as a significant segment for Jordan, thanks to its supportive infrastructure. One of the latest Bollywood movies, *Bade Miyan Chote Miyan*, as well as major Hollywood productions, including *Aladdin* and *Dune*, have been filmed in Jordan. Dr. Arabiyat highlighted the incentives provided by the Royal Film Commission, which include up to 25 per cent rebates for films. "The camera lens loves Jordan's weather because it doesn't fog up due to humidity or dust," he explained, underscoring the cost savings and convenience for filmmakers during post-production of a movie.

MICE and Connectivity

Jordan is making significant strides in enhancing its appeal for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE). The establishment of a convention bureau within the Jordan Tourism Board marks a strategic move to attract business events. The King Hussein Bin Talal Convention Centre, managed by Hilton, is situated on the eastern shores of the Dead Sea, and is capable of accommodating up to 4,000 guests, providing a robust infrastructure for large-scale events. "We have incentive schemes for bringing business and conferences to the country," Dr. Arabiyat noted. Additionally, the upcoming convention centre in Aqaba will further

enhance Jordan's capacity to host large-scale events.

Connectivity is another critical focus area. Dr. Arabiyat highlighted successful negotiations with airlines like Indigo and Royal Jordanian to establish direct flights between Amman and major Indian cities. "Next year, in 2025, Royal Jordanian will commence direct flights between Amman and Delhi," he announced.

Seamless Visitor Experience

The introduction of the Jordan Pass, which exempts visitors from visa fees and grants access to over 40 sites, simplifies the travel process. Dr. Arabiyat also emphasised the importance of understanding and catering to the culinary preferences of Indian tourists, highlighting the presence of several Indian restaurants in Jordan.

In response to concerns about regional stability, Dr. Arabiyat assured potential tourists of Jordan's safety and security. He highlighted Jordan's longstanding reputation as a peaceful and secure destination and emphasised the country's welcoming atmosphere.

Looking Ahead

With strategic initiatives, enhanced connectivity, and innovative marketing, Jordan is poised to attract more Indian tourists. Dr. Arabiyat concluded by reiterating the importance of the Indian market and the board's commitment to fostering strong bilateral relations. "We are looking forward to increasing tourism between the two countries and the level of bilateral visits," he affirmed.



King Hussein Bin Talal Convention Centre

Tatabye Tours marks 10 years of exceptional island escapes

Roshan Jain, Founder, Tatabye Tours, unveils the company's decade-long expertise in creating unforgettable travel experiences, with special emphasis on island destinations. In this interview, Roshan offers profound insights into the company's ethos and its forward-looking vision.

Prashant Nayak

Headquartered in Chennai, Tatabye Tours was founded in 2014 by Roshan Jain in the small town of Villupuram, near Puducherry. Driven by a passion for travel, Roshan established the company with a vision to facilitate exceptional travel experiences. In 2015, Tatabye Tours was officially registered as a private limited company, with Ashraf Abdul Ameer joining as a co-founder. This year also marked Tatabye's entry into the destination management sector with the Maldives, in partnership with Abdulla Latheef from the Maldives. Gradually, Tatabye expanded its operations to become the DMC for Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Mauritius. In 2019, Muralidharan Vijayaraghavan joined the team as Managing Director to further strengthen the company.



▲ Roshan Jain

A Decade of Excellence

Tatabye Tours specialises in exceptional destination management services for the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Mauritius. The company leverages local expertise, offers personalised services, forms exclusive partnerships, and promotes sustainable tourism practices. "This year, we celebrated a decade of success! Tatabye Tours has emerged as a top-producing partner for the four island destinations in the Indian and Middle Eastern markets. We have expanded our offices in all four island destinations and in India to include Chennai, Puducherry, and Villupuram, thanks to the invaluable support of our travel agent partners," says Roshan.

What sets Tatabye Tours apart from other DMCs in the region is their unwavering commitment to personalised service, sustainable tourism, and comprehensive offerings. Roshan states, "With our tagline 'You Name It, We Have It,' we provide a complete range of services, from accommodations and transportation to exclusive local experiences, making us a one-stop solution for travellers. Our robust network of travel agents further strengthens our position, driving our success as a top-producing partner in the region. Celebrating a decade of excellence,

we have earned a reputation for reliability, quality, sustainability, and outstanding service, thus setting us apart as industry leaders."

Pioneering Personalised Travel Solutions

Tatabye Tours' specialisation in four-island destinations is rooted in several key factors. Firstly, Roshan's deep love for beaches, inspired by his visits to Puducherry near his hometown, naturally led to a focus on island getaways. Additionally, the captivating natural beauty and tranquil environments of these islands make them highly appealing to travellers in search of unforgettable vacations. With direct contracts with 123 Maldives resorts and strong expertise in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Mauritius through robust ground handling offices and local partners, Tatabye Tours offers competitive pricing, exclusive deals, and seamless travel experiences.

Tatabye Tours is dedicated to ensuring each traveller's experience is uniquely tailored to their desires and needs. They provide a wide range of accommodation options, including thematic stays and exclusive deals through direct contracts. Their offerings also encompass a diverse array of activities and excursions, spanning

adventure and water sports, cultural and heritage tours, as well as wellness and relaxation experiences. With flexible travel services, customisable schedules, private tours, and the ability to accommodate last-minute changes, they offer expert guidance and support. Their local experts and 24/7 support, combined with comprehensive pre-travel consultations, guarantee a seamless and enjoyable journey.

Exceptional Portfolio

Tatabye Tours offers a well-curated portfolio across the four island destinations. Their Maldives portfolio, with direct contracts with 123 resorts, includes luxury brands such as Anantara, Soneva, and Cheval Blanc, along with a diverse range of boutique and budget options. In Sri Lanka, they feature premium resorts like Amanwella and Cape Weligama, heritage hotels, and eco-friendly lodges in Sigiriya and Ella. In Indonesia, their selection includes beachfront resorts in Bali like Four Seasons and Alila, unique stays in Java and Lombok, and eco-resorts in Ubud, supported by adventure and cultural tours. In Mauritius, they offer luxury properties such as One&Only, Four Seasons, and Shangri-La, along with family-friendly resorts, boutique hotels, and beach experiences. "Our extensive network ensures quality and personalised service, ensuring clients have access to the best accommodations and services," points out Roshan.

Expanding Horizons

Looking ahead, Tatabye Tours plans to enhance its offerings with a new online booking system, ensuring seamless reservations across resorts, excursions, and transportation for travel agents. This system aims to provide a one-stop solution for all their needs. They are also expanding into new international island destinations and introducing luxury hotels globally, broadening high-end accommodation options. Roshan concludes, "These strategic moves highlight Tatabye's commitment to innovation and growth, maintaining our leadership in delivering top-tier travel experiences."

Abu Dhabi

Stay 3 Nights with Breakfast & Get
Free Access To Three Theme Park

USD 985
(2 Adults + 2 Child)



Dubai Office No. 202, Rania Business Center, Al Barsha First, Dubai - UAE. Phone: +971 44452101
Website: www.magicalvacation.com | Email: info@magicalvacation.com

India Representative

PAUL MERCHANTS

Toll Free No. 1800-137-1444

DELHI | MUMBAI | CHANDIGARH | PUNJAB | HIMACHAL | KERALA | GUJARAT | HARYANA

Kempinski Hotels

Leading the Luxury Brigade

Amanda Elder, Chief Commercial Officer (CCO), Kempinski Hotels, shares her insights and experiences in expanding the brand's hallmark of quiet luxury on a global scale. She articulates the brand's vision and enduring value which have established Kempinski as a symbol of luxury for the past 127 years.

Prativa Vaidya Bhalla



▲ Amanda Elder

Brand USP

Over the decades, Kempinski has provided settings for significant events, from romantic dinners to historic meetings and family escapes, hosting film stars, world leaders, artists, and royalty. Beyond luxury accommodations and fine dining, it offers distinctive experiences and lasting memories. Elucidating the brand identity, Amanda says, “We stand for bringing European luxury and hospitality to pioneering destinations around the world where perhaps other luxury hotel groups have not ventured. We stand for craftsmanship and bespoke service for every guest.”

The Kempinski approach is designed to forge a genuine connection with guests while meticulously upholding their privacy. Amanda explains, “We pride ourselves on really getting to know the individual with our high repeat threshold of guests. We understand that you can be a different person depending on your reason for travel. As a corporate traveller, you want to be checked in quickly without any frills, but on vacation, you want to be pampered with the red carpet rolled out. Our job is to distinguish that persona and cater to requisite needs. We pride ourselves on being able to do just that.”

Strategies For Enhancing Global Presence

With the appointment of Barbara Muckermann as the new CEO, Brand

Kempinski anticipates a stronger emphasis on defining and communicating the brand's essence, thanks to her exceptional marketing background. Amanda notes, “Barbara's vision and strategy will bring a renewed focus on who we are, what we aim to offer our loyal guests, and how we articulate the essence of Kempinski. She is truly fabulous and the perfect fit for this role.”

Drawing on her own extensive sales experience, Amanda adeptly customises Kempinski's offerings to meet distinct cultural and regional preferences across areas such as the Middle East, Asia, and Europe. She highlights the importance of understanding local nuances and listening to each culture and says, “We operate with a regional structure, so everything is not controlled from Geneva. We have dedicated teams in different regions like the Middle East, Africa, China, North America, and others. This allows us to better understand and cater to each region's unique needs. We learn from one another, adopt best practices, and implement successful initiatives from various regions to enhance our offerings.”

Amanda points out the challenge of balancing the Kempinski brand's European essence with local cultural authenticity and mentions, “We aim to maintain our European identity through elements like food, dining settings, and tone of voice while deeply respecting and reflecting the local culture in each region. For instance, when visiting a Kempinski

From Berthold Kempinski's humble beginning as a Berlin wine merchant in 1897, Kempinski has grown into a global luxury hotel brand with spectacular hotels across several continents. It maintains its authenticity and heritage, crafting properties that reflect quality and individuality. Each hotel embodies style and elegance, whether a carefully renovated landmark or a modern architectural masterpiece.



hotel in Masai Mara, Africa, guests should truly experience Africa, not a reflection of, say, Germany. The key is to blend our European roots with regional nuances to honour and bring each local culture to life while preserving our brand's European essence."

Balancing Growth in Established and Emerging Markets

Outlining the strategic considerations for Kempinski's market expansion, Amanda responds, "We frequently debate whether to invest more in established markets where we already have strong recognition or to allocate resources to emerging markets with high potential. When uncertain about committing significant funds to an emerging market, despite believing in its potential, we often leverage our loyalty programme, the Global Hotel Alliance, and its associated brands to provide the bandwidth for exploration."

While Kempinski does not have a hotel in India, the brand strongly believes in the market's outbound potential. To capitalise on this, Kempinski partners with the Leela Group, part of the Global Hotel Alliance. This partnership allows mutual promotion on each other's websites, providing a creative and cost-effective way to reach new markets without stretching the budget too thin.

India Market

Addressing the potential for a Kempinski hotel in India, Amanda remains hopeful

but realistic by saying, "I love the idea, and I wish I could say it is happening soon. However, there is nothing concrete at the moment. It is a matter of finding the right owner with either an existing asset or a new project. We are proactive and open to opportunities, especially from those familiar with our brand. Let us see what the future holds. Unfortunately, there is nothing definitive right now, but in the meantime, we ensure our presence through partnerships."

For the India outbound market, Kempinski Hotels strategically positions itself with standout properties and tailored offerings that draw Indians to Kempinski properties all over the world. Ciragan Palace Kempinski in Istanbul is renowned for hosting grand Indian weddings, while St. Moritz is a sought-after location for high-profile, million-dollar weddings. Despite not having more direct sales efforts or hotels in India, Kempinski focuses on maintaining brand visibility and appeal through these key destinations. The aim is to ensure that the brand remains top of mind for Indian travellers, leveraging its exceptional global properties to attract this important market.

Upcoming Properties

With a series of new properties scheduled to debut, Amanda shares, "We have one opening in Saudi Arabia early next year and another in Havana, Cuba, which is an exciting destination. Additionally, we will launch two beautiful lodges in Tanzania late next year. We have also signed deals in Lombok and Ubud, Indonesia, with the

same owner as The Apurva Kempinski Bali property. While progress is being made, we are mindful of encouraging sustainable and responsible growth. Our focus remains on securing the right property with the right owner in the right location."

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Kempinski Hotels is committed to ongoing investment in database management and customer understanding, relentlessly striving for continuous improvement. Amanda summarises their focus by adding, "We firmly believe in our loyalty programme and are proud shareholders in the Global Hotel Alliance, taking our collaboration with other brands very seriously. We were the first loyalty programme to introduce Discovery Dollars, real currency added to the virtual wallet, unlike points used by most programmes. Members can earn experiences just as they can earn Discovery Dollars, which we highly value."

As a parting thought, Amanda addresses the growing luxury market in India and summarises, "Discover the Kempinski experience, where we take pride in understanding your needs and crafting personalised stays just for you. Whether you are in Riga, Latvia, or Dresden, Germany, each of our hotels offers a unique sense of place and unwavering commitment to exceptional care. Trust Kempinski to provide unparalleled comfort and attention, regardless of your journey."



Kempinski Palace Engelberg



Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten Kempinski Munich



Ciragan Palace Kempinski in Istanbul



Kempinski Hotel Muscat

Tamil Nadu Tourism bridging ancient heritage with modern sustainability

Tamil Nadu, renowned for its rich heritage and cultural diversity, offers a captivating journey through ancient history and natural splendour. C. Samayamoorthy, I.A.S., Commissioner of Tourism and Managing Director, Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC), highlights his affinity for tourism, the State's cultural richness, and his commitment to sustainable practices. The department's initiatives aim to showcase the State's unique charm and heritage while ensuring memorable and responsible experiences for travellers worldwide.

Sonika Bohra

Please provide an overview of your career path leading up to your current role at TTDC.

Two decades ago, I began my professional journey, undertaking diverse and enriching roles primarily in tourist destinations. I started as a Sub-collector in Gobichettipalayam, overseeing areas like the Bhavanisagar Dam. I then served as an Additional Collector in the Nilgiris and later as a Collector in Tiruppur and Tirunelveli, managing projects around dams such as Thirumoorthi, Amaravati, Papanasam, and Karayar.

As a travel enthusiast, photo hobbyist, and nature lover, I'm passionate about promoting tourism that enriches cultural exchanges. I believe that cultural interaction fosters understanding and appreciation between diverse communities, enriching both visitors and hosts through shared experiences. I strongly believe in sustainable practices, including efforts to reduce carbon footprints. This commitment has shaped many of our projects, ensuring that our tourism development goes hand-in-hand with environmental conservation. Furthermore, as agro-tourism has become integral to our strategy, I am pleased with its potential to enrich the overall tourism experience while bolstering local agriculture and communities.

Can you provide insights into the domestic and international tourist footfalls in Tamil Nadu in Q1 2024?

From January to April 2024, Tamil Nadu has experienced a significant influx of tourists, with 10,162,309 domestic tourists and 25,074,482 international tourists visiting the State.



▲ C. Samayamoorthy, I.A.S

Our statistics highlight the growing demand for cultural events in Tamil Nadu. The tourism department is strategically targeting high-value tourism rather than focusing on higher footfalls to minimise environmental impacts while sustaining the tourism economy and preserving heritage. The Group of Monuments at Mamallapuram remains the most visited heritage site among foreign tourists. Tamil Nadu also boasts six of the top 10 heritage sites for international travellers, including Fort Museum, Fort Vattakottai, Gingee Fort, Rock Cut Jain Temple, Gangaikonda Cholapuram, and Brihadeeshwara.

To boost tourism, TTDC has introduced unique tour packages, such as the Heritage Site Tour, birding tours, and cycling trails, showcasing Tamil Nadu's appeal as a top tourist destination.

Elucidate how the TTDC harnesses the state's rich heritage and cultural diversity to enhance tourism.

Tamil Nadu, rich in history, is one of the oldest living civilisations. Shaped by the legacies of the Cholas, Pandyas, Cheras, and Pallavas, it beckons travellers to journey through its diverse historical and natural landscapes.

To showcase the State's historical monuments and heritage towns, including six UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the department is dedicated to creating tourist products that reflect Tamil Nadu's rich history and culture. The department is actively organising heritage walks, workshops on handicraft products, photo walks, eco-friendly tours, and bicycle tours for students and visitors of all ages. The

Tourism Policy 2023 outlines a focus on various themes, including heritage tourism, by revitalising heritage



homes and repurposing government heritage properties to offer visitors unique heritage homestays and hotels.

Annual events like the Indian Dance Festival and Namma Ooru Thiruvizha are organised, showcasing a range of performance art forms from classical to folk. These events are complemented by numerous local and colourful events, including religious and cultural festivals, local sporting events, and food festivals, all promoting Tamil Nadu's traditional heritage. One notable festival is Pongal, a significant four-day harvest festival featuring the thrilling Jallikattu bull-taming sport, held on the third day. It is known as Mattu Pongal. The recent completion of a state-of-the-art 16-acre Jallikattu arena in Madurai exemplifies the sophisticated venues dedicated to this traditional sport.

TTDC has also developed specific tour packages to attract tourists, including temple tours, Ponnaiyan Selvan-themed tours, and heritage church trails. These packages provide curated experiences that delve into the State's rich cultural and historical narratives.

TTDC operates hotels in scenic hill locations and beach resorts at popular tourist destinations to cater to the requirements of visiting tourists. Additionally, it provides boathouse experiences in key areas to entertain visitors. TTDC is also considering partnerships with private companies to promote adventure tourism through public-private partnerships (PPP).

The essence of our campaigns, like 'The Land where Stories Begin' and 'The Stories Never End,' is found in every corner, infused with enchanting narratives that weave the tapestry of its heritage, from ancient legends to modern-day tales.

What are the shortfalls, or infrastructure gaps in Tamil Nadu that need to be addressed to improve tourism experiences?

To enhance tourism in Tamil Nadu, key areas such as modernising infrastructure, improving amenities, and developing human capital need to be addressed. The government has initiated infrastructure improvements, including roads, footpaths, shelters, drinking water, and washrooms for tourists. Additionally, the government is focusing on capacity building for various stakeholders.

Recognising the need for skilled resources, TTDC plans to consult experts and organisations to understand market requirements. Based on these insights, a comprehensive Skill Action Plan is being developed to cultivate a competent workforce. The Skill Action Plan will involve developing courses and syllabi based on the study's findings, with programmes tailored specifically for niche tourism sectors. These initiatives aim to close skill gaps and elevate the quality of tourism services in Tamil Nadu, fostering the overall growth and advancement of the industry.

The government's recent initiative for managing summer tourism in destinations like Ooty, Kodaikanal, and Yercaud includes the introduction of an E-pass system. This system gathers data on vehicles, tourist numbers, and stay durations to analyse carrying capacity and make necessary infrastructural adjustments.

Are there lesser-known destinations in Tamil Nadu that you believe have potential but require more promotion and development?

The Department of Tourism is actively working to develop and promote lesser-known destinations. This effort is part of the 'Tourism Destination Development Scheme,' which aims to ensure integrated and holistic development in these areas. The Tamil Nadu Tourism Policy 2023 has identified specific Focus Tourism Destinations and Corridors that will be prioritised for development, with incentives and subsidies available for projects in these regions.

By focusing on lesser-known destinations like Kolli Hills, Jawadhu Hills, and Muthupettai, the tourism department has succeeded in



Jawadhu

alleviating overcrowding at the most visited tourist spots. While popular destinations are often crowded, lesser-known locations offer a more private and personal experience. With fewer visitors, one can fully immerse in local customs, culture, or nature without feeling rushed or overwhelmed. For instance, the Muthupettai mangrove forest in Tiruvarur district is known for its rich biodiversity, providing an opportunity to explore the local ecosystem and wildlife. The Department of Tourism has recognised this potential and proposed the development of various facilities, including water sports, boat rides, walkways, and beachfront recreational activities. Similarly, Thoothukudi Beach provides a unique coastal experience, with opportunities for water sports and other beachfront activities.

What are your thoughts on over-tourism in popular spots, and does the tourism board assess its impact?

The department is mindful of the impact of over-tourism on popular destinations. It aims to alleviate pressure on crowded spots by developing and promoting lesser-known locations, ensuring sustainable tourism, and enhancing visitor experiences across Tamil Nadu.

What specific travel trade activities or initiatives have the TTDC planned for the remainder of this year?

Tamil Nadu Tourism participates in numerous travel marts to showcase the state's destinations and attract tour operators and travel agencies. These efforts focus on promoting tour packages and accommodation options. This year, the department plans to attend international events such as IFTM Top Resa in Paris, World Travel Market in London, Fitur, and ITB Berlin. Domestically, the department has participated in the Great Indian Travel Bazaar, TTF Kolkata, OTM, SATTE, and the Surajkund International Crafts Mela in Haryana. These forums provide valuable opportunities for networking, collaboration, and promoting Tamil Nadu's unique offerings to a global audience.

India among top three revenue-generating markets for SriLankan Airlines

The key to SriLankan Airlines' success is a deep understanding of market dynamics, with region-specific services and amenities, particularly evident in its rapid growth in the Indian market. Richard Nuttall, CEO, SriLankan Airlines, offers a fresh perspective on the airline's enduring legacy of service excellence, priority markets, initiatives, and future plans.

Prativa Vaidya Bhalla

Providing convenient connections to a vast global network, its direct route maps significant cities across Europe, Australia, the Middle East, the Indian Subcontinent, South East Asia, and the Far East. SriLankan Airlines has the state-of-the-art A330-300 and modern A320/321neo fleet. The airline network includes direct and codeshare flights to 114 destinations in 62 countries. It flies to nine cities in India and currently operates 21 aircraft, which it hopes to increase to 25 by the end of the year. The expansion will be aimed at increasing frequencies to existing destinations rather than expanding to new destinations, particularly in India and Southeast Asia.

India, a Priority Market

Highlighting the remarkable rise of the Indian market, Richard shares, "We have seen a threefold increase in visitors from India since last year. The free visa policy, targeted marketing campaigns, and increased flights have significantly affected this growth. A long-term policy of free visas will certainly have a positive impact on the number of incoming visitors from India, especially for short trips and weekend travel."

Historically, most European traffic to Sri Lanka is connected through West Asia, but there has been a noticeable shift towards connecting through India. Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru are emerging as key hubs for European connections. The increase in transit traffic from Europe via India to Colombo has tripled since the COVID-19 pandemic. Richard points out, "Revenues from the Indian Subcontinent, Asia, the Middle East, and Europe are evenly divided. Our biggest revenue-generating countries are India, the UK, and Australia."

The airline makes significant efforts to cater to the tastes and interests of Indian travellers. "We offer a vegetarian meal option in every sector, and our Indian customers can enjoy a selection of



▲ Richard Nuttall

inflight entertainment content, including movies in Hindi, Malayalam, and Tamil," Richard informed.

In the ever-evolving aviation landscape, Richard succinctly captures the pivotal challenge many airlines face today; the critical shortage of fleets and engines. He says, "Our biggest challenge at present, as for many airlines, is access to fleets and engines. If we had more capacity, we would fly more."

Cutting-Edge Initiatives

SriLankan Airlines is setting new standards in the region with the recent introduction of advanced self-service kiosks and a bag drop facility at Bandaranaike International Airport. To stay ahead in the fiercely competitive aviation market, the airline employs focused marketing strategies to maintain its relevance. Richard emphasised their unique approach, "We continue to differentiate ourselves with Sri Lankan hospitality, our food and beverages, and a consistent focus on the needs of our various customer segments." Alongside its gracious mid-air hospitality, SriLankan Airlines offers the Serendib Lounge, an exclusive airport space for premier

customers. With seating for 80 and dining for 20, the lounge provides an elegant and relaxed environment, catering to the needs of modern business travellers.

To enhance brand loyalty and keep frequent flyers engaged and coming back for more, Richard shares exciting news, "We have just upgraded the IT infrastructure for FlySmiLes, our frequent flyer programme that also has validity across the Oneworld Alliance, of which SriLankan is a member. This will allow us to introduce new features gradually."

Sustainability Programmes

SriLankan Airlines is committed to reducing its carbon footprint through industry-leading practices in fuel efficiency, carbon emission monitoring, and landfill waste reduction, which is highlighted by its Mathaka upcycling project. The airline also plays an active role in the restoration and preservation of Sri Lanka's mangrove forests and the conservation of seagrass habitats across the island.

The airline recently introduced new sustainable amenities in Business Class, like the new eco-friendly pillow covers and headrest covers (antimacassars) made from recycled PET plastic (rPET), proving it to be a sustainability-forward organisation while continuing to provide customers with the highest standards of quality.

Future Plans

Richard mentioned that their primary objective at present is to enhance the number of flights to the destinations they already serve. He adds, "We aim to expand frequencies to the number of cities served as quickly as we can increase our fleet. However, we do have new cities in our medium-term plans. We believe the Indian market is in a period of rapid growth, which we expect to continue for several years."

Special Fares & More Free Baggage Allowance

Delhi to Dhaka - Guangzhou - Rome

Happiness is brought to you by
Biman Bangladesh Airlines



Extra Free Baggage Allowance

35 kgs on Delhi-Dhaka-Guangzhou



Special Fares *(all inclusive)*

Delhi-Dhaka-Delhi

One way
INR 5329/-
Return
INR 14277/-

Delhi-Rome-Delhi

One way
INR 30739/-
Return
INR 55254/-

Rush your bookings: Limited seats available!

GSA: INDIA

Contact your travel agent or
Biman team to book your flights:

M-34, Outer Circle, Connaught Place,
New Delhi-110001

M: +91 9899775557/ +91 9810123765 E: bgsales@minar.group

Minar Group and CPaT Global LLC

Unlocking Distance Learning Opportunities for Pilots and Cabin Crew in India's Booming Market

The rapid evolution of the digital landscape has brought distance learning to the forefront globally. Among the leaders is CPaT Global LLC, founded in 1994 in Texas and known for its innovative aviation training solutions. As India undergoes digital transformation and experiences rising demand for skilled aviation professionals, CPaT Global, in partnership with Minar Group, is well-positioned to capitalise on this growing market.

Team TTJ

The Indian Market: A Snapshot

India, with its vast population and rapidly growing economy, is one of the world's most dynamic education markets. The government's push for digital initiatives and widespread smartphone and internet use has created fertile ground for e-learning platforms. The booming Indian aviation sector, with rising demand for pilots, cabin crew, and ground staff, presents a golden opportunity for CPaT Global to offer its specialised CBT programmes to a market eager for quality aviation training.



CPaT Global: A Pioneer in Aviation Training

CPaT Global has carved a niche with state-of-the-art aviation training solutions for airlines, training organisations, universities, and individuals worldwide. Their distance learning programmes offer flexibility, accessibility, and comprehensive training that meet international standards. With a robust portfolio, including Aircraft Systems Courses, General Subjects Courses, and Interactive Diagrams, CPaT Global ensures top-notch training for aviation professionals, regardless of location.

Key Advantages of CPaT Global's Invent Software Platform, enhanced with the following advanced features:

- Clients can modify CPaT's 40-plus Aviation Specialty Courses (general subjects).
- Clients can integrate CPaT's Interactive Diagrams into their CPaT Invent lessons.
- Clients can tailor CPaT's Aircraft Procedures Training Suites to their specific SOPs for all fleet types, including FMS Skills Trainers, 3D Cockpit Trainers, and 3D Walk Around Trainers.
- Clients can upload existing training materials to CPaT Invent using the PPT and Storyline Importer.
- Clients can automatically translate lesson narration into over 100 languages.

Addressing the Needs of the Indian Market

CPaT is contributing to the growing need for pilot

training in the Indian market through several key initiatives and offerings:

1. Comprehensive and Diverse Training Programmes

Aviation Specialty Courses: CPaT offers over 40 aviation specialty courses covering general aviation, technical training, and aircraft-specific procedures. **Aircraft Procedures Training Suites:** Their customisable Aircraft Procedures Training Suites align with the SOPs of Indian airlines, ensuring pilots receive locally tailored training.

2. Interactive and Immersive Learning Tools

Interactive Diagrams and 3D Cockpit Trainers: These tools offer hands-on learning, allowing students to interact with systems and procedures in a simulated environment, enhancing understanding and retention.

FMS Skills Trainers and 3D Walk Around Trainers: These tools offer detailed and realistic training scenarios, helping pilots gain the necessary skills and experience in a controlled setting.

3. Localisation and Accessibility

Regional Language Support: CPaT's training materials can be translated into over 100 languages, including regional Indian languages, ensuring content is accessible to a wider audience.

Context-Specific Scenarios: Training scenarios can be adapted to reflect local operational contexts and challenges, making the training more relevant and effective for Indian pilots.

4. Partnerships and Collaborations

Engagement with Local Institutions: By collaborating with Indian aviation academies and regulatory authorities, CPaT and its Indian partner ensure their training programmes meet national standards and industry best practices.

5. Technological Advancements

Cloud-Based Learning Platforms: CPaT offers cloud-based platforms that provide flexible and scalable training solutions. This allows students across India to access training materials and courses anytime, anywhere.

Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) Integration: Using VR and AR technologies enhances the realism of training simulations, providing a more immersive and engaging learning experience.

The Road Ahead

As India embraces digital transformation, the demand for innovative distance-learning solutions in aviation will grow. CPaT Global, with its proven track record and comprehensive training portfolio, is well-positioned to meet this demand. By addressing the unique needs of the Indian market and leveraging local opportunities through its partner Minar Group, CPaT Global can significantly impact aviation training in India. The Indian market's potential for growth offers a win-win scenario for both CPaT Global and the aviation sector, with the right blend of innovation, localisation, and collaboration unlocking new opportunities and fostering a skilled aviation workforce.

Through its partner Minar Group, CPaT collaborates with Indian aviation academies, airlines, universities, and government bodies to address the growing demand for pilot training in India, cultivating a new generation of skilled aviation professionals.

To know more, contact Pawan Dhariwal - GM Business Development | +91 9810378031 | CPaT@groupminar.com



Connecting MUMBAI-ENTEBBE to

HARARE ABUJA LUSAKA

4X WEEKLY

2X WEEKLY

4X WEEKLY

Greater Connection, New Opportunities

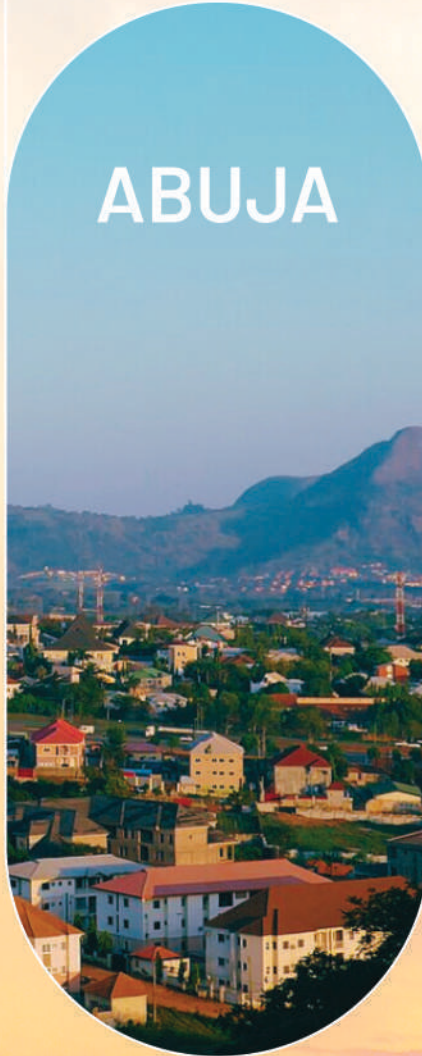
Starting 25th September, 2024

HARARE



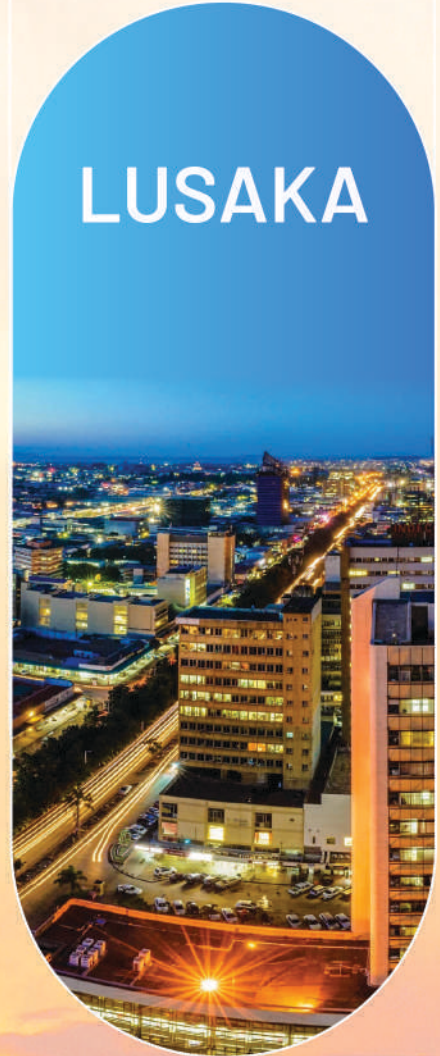
Starting 12th September, 2024

ABUJA



Starting 25th September, 2024

LUSAKA



Welcome aboard

- ENTEBBE • DUBAI • MUMBAI • LAGOS • MOMBASA • NAIROBI • ZANZIBAR • DAR ES SALAAM
- KILIMANJARO • KINSHASA • BUJUMBURA • JUBA • MOGADISHU • JOHANNESBURG



Türkiye Tourism – OTOAI FAM Tour deepens the understanding of Türkiye as a compelling destination with immersive experiences

Türkiye Tourism, in collaboration with the Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI), recently organised an enriching seven-day familiarisation trip across Türkiye.

Gurjit Singh Ahuja

The tour commenced on June 30 and concluded on July 6, 2024, bringing together 40 travel agents, OTOAI representatives, and six members of the travel media to explore Türkiye’s vibrant culture, historic sites, and luxurious hospitality. Delegates visited Antalya, Side, Izmir, Alacati, Pamukkale, Ephesus, Istanbul, and other attractions.

The group flew in two batches, one from Mumbai and the other from New Delhi, onboard Turkish Airlines, uniting in Istanbul before proceeding to Antalya. There, the group was hosted at some of the most luxurious and premier hotels, including Ali Bey Resort in Antalya, Swissotel-Izmir, Swissotel-The Bosphorus in Istanbul, and the Boutique Lycus River Thermal Hotel in Pamukkale. These hotels provided a royal welcome and ensured a comfortable stay for the group.

The group explored Greco-Roman ruins and historically important ancient cities like Side, Ephesus, and Hierapolis, marvelling at the monolithic remains and grandeur of these once-important cities in their era.

The snow-white calcium carbonate-clad, Terraced Travertines at Pamukkale were a sight to behold and a great place to soak your feet in the mineral-rich Thermal spring waters.

Hotel site inspections were organised at Bijal Resort, Mardan Palace, Land of Legends, Gloria Serenity, The Peninsula Istanbul, and Hagia Sophia Mansions Istanbul. Each hotel’s management pulled out all the plugs to showcase their grand properties and make the group feel welcome.

A speed networking business session took place on July 5 at the Swissotel-The Bosphorus. Aican Demir, Director of Country Marketing at Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency, delivered a detailed product presentation focusing on the India-Türkiye travel opportunity. Almost 50 hoteliers and 20 DMCs from across Türkiye interacted with OTOAI delegates during this session.

Special Indian dinners were hosted for the delegates at ‘Madhu’s,’ an in-house fine dining Indian restaurant at Swissotel-The Bosphorus, and onboard a specially

chartered yacht cruise on the Bosphorus river, with a menu curated by the ‘Dubb Indian Restaurant,’ in Istanbul.

The Istanbul sightseeing tour included visits to historic landmarks such as Hagia Sophia, the Blue Mosque, and the Basilica Cistern, leaving everyone spellbound. The shopping experience at Istanbul’s centuries-old Grand Bazaar was both enlightening and enjoyable, serving as a fitting end to the Türkiye tour.

This Türkiye experience for industry stakeholders from across India will not only enhance understanding and knowledge among trade partners but also significantly promote Türkiye as a destination for Indian outbound travellers.



#43/101

ABU DHABI DO's

Reconnect in real time Sandy games of tag

Spend the day by beautiful blue waters
at Jumeirah at Saadiyat Island Resort

experience
abu dhabi

visitabudhabi.ae



ONE
SUMMER
ISN'T
ENOUGH

4 DAYS ABU DHABI PACKAGES STARTING US \$355

Inclusions:

- 03 Nights stay in Abu Dhabi City Hotel
- Daily Breakfast
- Return Abu Dhabi International Airport Transfer on Private
- Abu Dhabi City Tour with Grand Mosque – Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque
- Visit on SIC
- Yas Island Any 2 Parks Tickets only

(Select from SeaWorld Abu Dhabi or Ferrari World Yas Island, Abu Dhabi or Warner Bros. World™ Abu Dhabi or Yas Water World Yas Island, Abu Dhabi)

*T&C Apply



Travstarz Global Group

A CTRIP® Invested Company

DMC || CONSOLIDATORS || VISAS || REPRESENTATIONS

+91-11-44790402 | bookings@travstarz.com
www.travstarz.com

416/2, 2nd Floor, Ghitorni, MG Road,
Opp. Metro Pillar No. 127,
New Delhi - 110030

Official Promotion Partner DCT Abu Dhabi

Your Trusted Exclusively B2B Company Since 2009
Member of





OZEN RESERVE

Bolifushi, Maldives

Tailors Luxury Travel with its Trademark Reserve Experience

Discover THE OZEN COLLECTION, a premier brand in the Atmosphere Core portfolio offering indulgent amenities, expansive spaces, and immersive experiences. Monica Coppetta, General Manager, OZEN Reserve Bolifushi, Maldives, discusses the resort’s exclusive RESERVE™ Experience, highlighting its unique appeal. He also elucidates the brand’s strategic trade relations, sustainability initiatives, and market policies that drive its success.

Prativa Vaidya Bhalla

Nestled in the tranquil South Malé Atoll, The OZEN Reserve Bolifushi epitomises exclusive luxury in the Maldives. The private island sanctuary features vast white-sand beaches set against turquoise waters, creating a dreamy, lavish retreat. Renowned for its bespoke services, gastronomy, premium spa facilities, diverse tropical adventures, and one of the region’s largest Kids’ Clubs, it stands out as an ideal destination for family vacations. The brand features two luxurious resorts in the Maldives; OZEN Life Madhoo and OZEN Reserve Bolifushi.

The RESERVE™ Experience

Exclusive to OZEN Reserve Bolifushi, this bespoke experience offers indulgent fine dining, premium beverages, and unique experiences seamlessly integrated into a luxurious stay designed to make the guest feel extremely special. It offers exceptional luxury, flexibility, and personalised service, enabling them to dine anywhere, anytime at the Bolifushi island under the RESERVE™ Experience. Guests can enjoy dedicated butler service, a private buggy, and in-villa dining options, ensuring privacy and convenience. “The RESERVE™ Experience reflects our commitment to tailored



▲ Monica Coppetta

dining, inspired by our vision of a personalised culinary journey,” shares Monica. The ‘Dine by Design’ initiative has been well-received, with guests commending its capacity to offer a wide range of gourmet cuisine in diverse, picturesque island locations, further reflecting the hotel’s dedication to cater to each guest’s unique preferences.

Culinary experiences are central to

guests’ holidays, with offerings tailored to an international clientele. The restaurant Vista del Mar presents vibrant world cuisine with Spanish flair, while Saffron features heritage Indian recipes. ORIGIN3 delivers a contemporary gastronomic experience, while Sangu Beach and Bar specialises in Levantine and Moroccan dishes and offers continuous access to refreshments until late at night. The recent addition of Soyi, a Pan-Asian restaurant, adds another feather to their cap.

Accommodations and Attractions

Monica shares, “Our accommodations are designed to elevate every aspect of the guest experience. We offer 90 exclusive villas and RESERVEs, including the renowned Royal RESERVE, across six distinct categories. Each villa, whether perched over the water or nestled on the beachfront, features a private pool and direct access to the beach or lagoon. The design emphasises spaciousness and sophistication, with high ceilings and panoramic views enhancing the ambience.”

The luxurious OZEN spa, with its elegant overwater and garden treatment rooms, provides holistic treatments and hairdressing, beauty salon, and spa boutique amenities.



Vista del Mar Restaurant



Earth Pool Villa



ORIGINE

Families enjoy the Kuda Koli Kids' Club, featuring engaging activities like island treasure hunts and water polo. The state-of-the-art overwater fitness centre and the outdoor yoga pavilion offer personalised and group training in aqua aerobics and aerial yoga.

Guests can explore the island on bicycles or enjoy a variety of water sports and diving expeditions. "For a unique underwater experience, semi-submarine rides reveal the Maldives' marine life. With such a diverse array of offerings, we ensure that every guest finds their ideal leisure activity, whether seeking relaxation, family fun, or active pursuits," shares Monica.

Source Markets and Clientele

Highlighting the importance of the India market, Monica says, "We recognise the importance of diverse global markets in sustaining our success. Our primary markets include India, Europe, China, and the Middle East, each playing a crucial role in our guest demographics. India holds a particularly significant position due to its proximity and the increasing interest in luxury travel. Indian guests currently constitute a substantial portion of our clientele, underscoring their importance to our operations."

The guests typically consist of travellers seeking exclusivity, tranquillity, and bespoke luxury. While families appreciate the comprehensive children's programmes and family-friendly activities, couples and honeymooners enjoy the romantic ambience and private dining options, while business travellers value the serene environment, ideal for relaxation and discreet meetings.

Travel Trade Partnerships

The brand partners with well-reputed online travel agencies (OTAs), luxury travel advisors, and

high-end tour operators to enhance visibility and offer exclusive experiences to its discerning global clientele.

Monica explains, "Our primary channel is direct bookings through our official website, which allows us to offer personalised service from inquiry to stay. We also prioritise strong partnerships to attract new guests and build long-term relationships based on a deep understanding of guest preferences and expectations. We support our partners through comprehensive training programmes and familiarisation (FAM) trips, ensuring they have first-hand knowledge of our accommodations, dining options, and unique amenities to promote their clients effectively. We offer competitive commission structures and exclusive promotional packages to incentivise bookings at our resort, enhancing our partners' profitability. Open communication and responsive support further strengthen our relationships, allowing us to address inquiries and special requests promptly."

Sustainability Initiatives

THE OZEN COLLECTION and its resorts are committed to implementing robust sustainability initiatives on food sourcing and waste management. The resort prioritises reducing plastic usage and managing waste effectively. "We have installed glass bottles and water plants across our resorts, significantly decreasing reliance on plastic bottles. In 2022 alone, these plants prevented 2.4 million plastic bottles from reaching landfills, marking a 44 per cent increase from 2021. Furthermore, our resorts have discontinued plastic straws, substituting them with biodegradable alternatives, which saves approximately 1.5 million plastic straws annually from turning to harmful waste," Monica declares with pride.

Seafood is sourced locally to minimise food waste and support local businesses. Fresh produce is sourced exclusively from farms in India, streamlining the supply chain and ensuring quality. By consolidating the sourcing of dry goods, the resort

reduces individual orders, environmental impact, and transportation emissions to ensure responsible supply chain management.

Local Community Development

The brand actively contributes to the local community and environment through various impactful initiatives, such as educational programmes, community development, and charitable collaborations managed by the Atmosphere Foundation. Monica outlines the resort's community initiatives, "The foundation enhances education through literacy programmes for nearly 5,000 students in 34 Maldivian schools, along with teacher training and parent workshops. We fund vocational training programmes to address local skills shortages and collaborate with Aged Care Maldives to focus on senior citizen outreach programmes, promoting healthy lifestyles, medical consultations, and family support."

The foundation's 'Bamboo for Climate Change Mitigation' project plants bamboo across nine islands, aiding the Maldives' goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2030 by leveraging bamboo's CO2 sequestration capabilities. Ongoing engagement in coral restoration, species monitoring, and eco-initiatives reflects dedication to environmental preservation.

Expansion Plans

With a series of exciting expansions on the horizon, the brand is poised to make a significant impact in the luxury travel sector. The OZEN PRIVÉ ATHIRI GILI will launch in the Maldives in (Q4) 2024. India will welcome three new resorts, OZEN MANSION KOLKATA in (Q2) 2024, OZEN PRIVADO GOA in (Q4) 2024, and OZEN NANDI HILLS BANGALORE in 2025. Additionally, OZEN SECLUDED TANGALLE will debut in Sri Lanka, further enhancing the brand's global footprint.





USA
Boston
Chicago
New York
San Francisco
Washington, D.C.

Africa
Nairobi
Casablanca

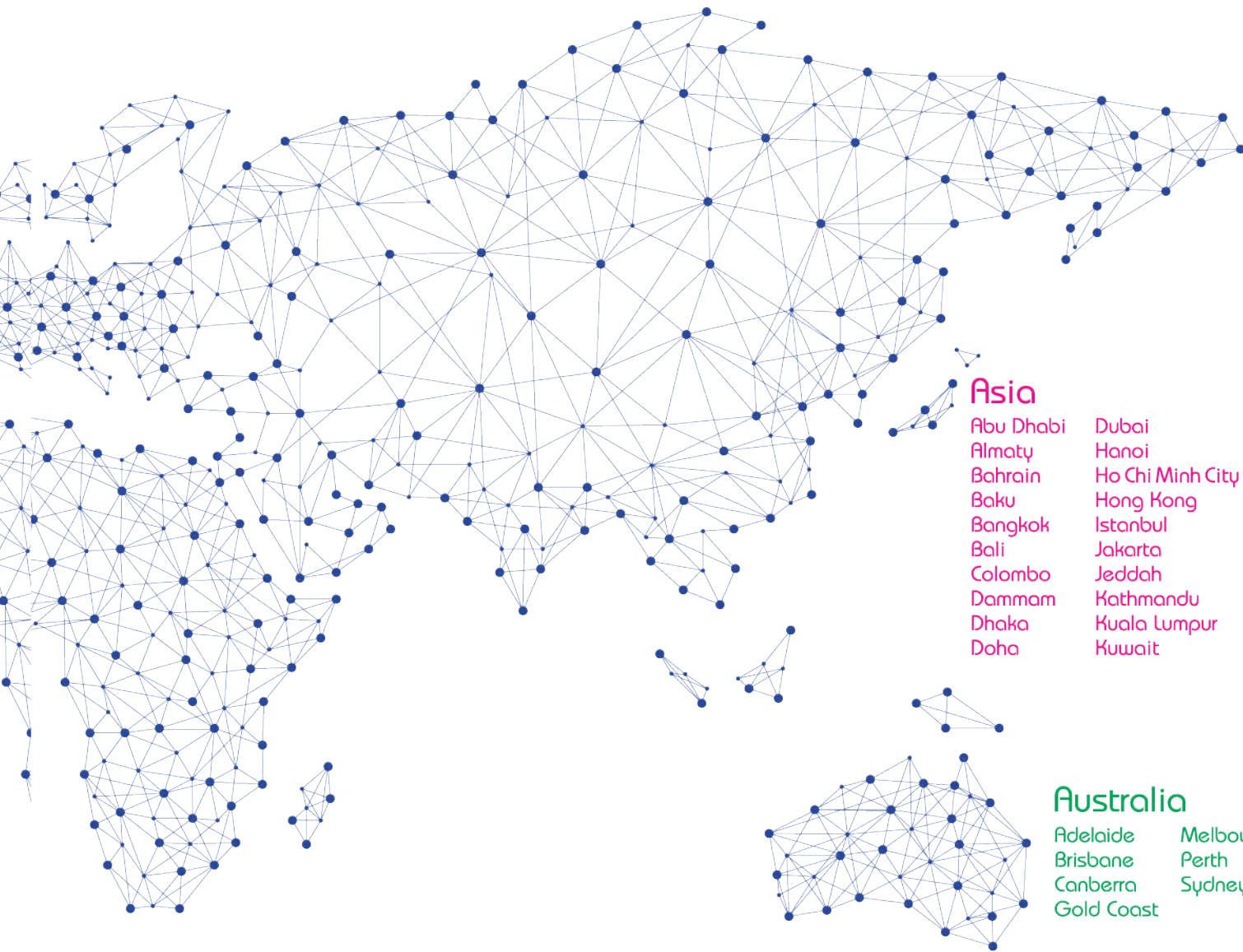
Connecting the world one dot at a time.

2000+ daily flights
100+ destinations
500mn+ passengers



Europe

Amsterdam	Brussels	Gatwick	Lyon	Nice	Rome	Valencia
Athens	Budapest	Geneva	Madrid	Oslo	Salzburg	Varna
Barcelona	Copenhagen	Heathrow	Malta	Paris	Sofia	Venice
Basel	Dublin	Helsinki	Manchester	Porto	Stockholm	Vienna
Birmingham	Edinburgh	Lisbon	Milan	Prague	Toulouse	Zurich



Asia

Abu Dhabi	Dubai	Male
Almaty	Hanoi	Muscat
Bahrain	Ho Chi Minh City	Phuket
Baku	Hong Kong	Ras Al-Khaimah
Bangkok	Istanbul	Riyadh
Bali	Jakarta	Sharjah
Colombo	Jeddah	Singapore
Dammam	Kathmandu	Tashkent
Dhaka	Kuala Lumpur	Tbilisi
Doha	Kuwait	

Australia

Adelaide	Melbourne
Brisbane	Perth
Canberra	Sydney
Gold Coast	

India

Agartala	Bengaluru	Dimapur	Imphal	Kadapa	Madurai	Pune	Surat
Agra	Bhopal	Diu	Indore	Khajuraho	Mangaluru	Raipur	Thiruvananthapuram
Agatti	Bhubaneswar	Durgapur	Itanagar	Kannur	Mumbai	Rajahmundry	Tiruchirappalli
Ahmedabad	Chandigarh	Gaya	Jabalpur	Kanpur	Mysuru	Rajkot	Tirupati
Aizawl	Chennai	Goa	Jagdalpur	Kochi	Nagpur	Ranchi	Tuticorin
Amritsar	Coimbatore	Gondia	Jaipur	Kolhapur	Nashik	Salem	Udaipur
Aurangabad	Darbhanga	Gorakhpur	Jaisalmer	Kolkata	New Delhi	Shillong	Vadodara
Ayodhya	Dehradun	Guwahati	Jammu	Kozhikode	North Goa	Shivamogga	Varanasi
Bagdogra	Deoghar	Gwalior	Jharsuguda	Kurnool	Patna	Shirdi	Vijayawada
Bareilly	Dharamshala	Hubli	Jodhpur	Leh	Port Blair	Silchar	Visakhapatnam
Belagavi	Dibrugarh	Hyderabad	Jorhat	Lucknow	Prayagraj	Srinagar	



NAVIGATING HORIZONS

Insights and Discussions from the 3rd Outbound Tourism Summit



The 3rd Outbound Tourism Summit, held on July 31, 2024, at the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) headquarters in New Delhi, brought together top industry leaders, senior national tourism representatives, prominent travel agencies and tour operators. The much-awaited event featured the release of the FICCI-Nangia knowledge paper, ‘Navigating Horizons: The Rise and Future of Indian Outbound Tourism,’ alongside enriching panel discussions with eminent travel industry experts.

Prativa Vaidya Bhalla

The summit provided the perfect platform for discussions on hot topics in the world of tourism, witnessing a record attendance of industry participants. It was a day of knowledge sharing, networking, and exchanging ideas. The inaugural address was made by Ankush Nijhawan, Chairman, FICCI Outbound Tourism Committee, Co-Founder, TBO.com, and Managing Director, Nijhawan Group. He highlighted the industry's growth potential, stating, "The global travel and tourism industry is expected to reach \$2.6 trillion by 2027, growing at a CAGR of 8.2 per cent. In outbound travel, India is going to be the fastest emerging economy."

Dr Jyotsna Suri, Past President, FICCI and CMD, The Lalit Suri Hospitality

Group, underscored the importance of a balanced tourism strategy. "I do believe that a country has to have a healthy inbound as well as outbound movement to actually achieve our tourism goals. We must be cognisant of sustainability while riding the spurt of tourism growth," she said.

Esteemed guests representing their respective countries included Amb Mary M Mutuku, Deputy High Commissioner of Kenya, Seitenov Darkhan, Deputy Ambassador, Embassy of Kazakhstan, and Geshan Dissanayake, Minister Commercial, High Commission of Sri Lanka. They spoke about strengthening bilateral relations, increasing investments, and India's burgeoning tourism potential as a major player in the market.

FICCI-Nangia Knowledge Paper

The release of the FICCI-Nangia knowledge paper set an optimistic tone for the gathering. The report revealed that India's outbound tourism market is expected to reach USD 18,817.72 million in 2024 and grow at a CAGR of 11.4 per cent over the next decade, reaching approximately USD 55,388.41 million by 2034. It also highlighted that India's online travel market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 10.5 per cent between 2024-29, from USD 17.24 billion to USD 28.40 billion. Emerging markets for Indian outbound tourism include various Southeast Asian, Middle Eastern, African, and Eastern European countries.

Panel Discussions: Insights and Future Directions

Outbound Tourism as a Key Driver of Growth

Moderated by Disha Shah, Director and COO, ICE Group India, the panel discussed how outbound tourism from India is contributing to the nation's economy and job creation. Sudhir Patil, Founder Chairperson, Veena World, shared his optimism, stating, "With over 50

National Tourism Boards and numerous international hotel chains establishing a presence in India, the market's potential is recognised. This synergy is driving financial and economic growth for both India and its international partners."

Guldeep Sahni, Managing Director, Weldon Tools and Travels, noted, "The outbound numbers in 2022 were close to about 20 million, and it should be at least more than 30 million by now. So, if 30 million people travel out of India, they become brand ambassadors promoting



India. This leads to growth in both outbound and inbound travel.”

Anup Taneja, Senior Director, Global Sales - India and Subcontinent, Marriott Hotels, emphasised the economic benefits of increased travel, saying, “This increase in travel generates revenue that supports infrastructure development. Without people travelling, there would be less investment in essential facilities like airports. Our current airports, some of the best globally, are a testament to the benefits of this infrastructure investment.”

AmitSudhakar, CFO, BLS International, added, “Outbound tourism is not only a testimony to the rising disposable income and aspirations of Indian citizens but also a critical factor in our national economic growth.”

Prasanna Subramaniam, Chief Technology Officer, Fly 91, summarised the panel by highlighting the potential of tier 2 and 3 cities. “Fly 91 aims to complement other airlines by coexisting with them. From an outbound tourism perspective, we aspire to be the ‘first-mile connector,’ bringing travellers from tier 2, tier 3, and even tier 4 cities to major metropolitan areas, fulfilling their travel aspirations,” he said.

Understanding What the Outbound Indian Traveller Wants

Vartik Sethi, Senior Journalist with Travel Trade Journal, led the second panel discussion on understanding the preferences of the Indian outbound traveller featuring esteemed representatives from various Country Tourism Boards, providing a high-level discourse on strategies and insights. Ahmed Johanif Mohd. Ali, Director, Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, shared, “Easing our visa application process has led to a significant surge in Indian tourists visiting Malaysia. In the first quarter, we observed an 80 per cent increase in arrivals compared to the previous year.”

KeanBonLim, Area Director - India, South Asia, and Africa, Singapore Tourism Board, revealed, “The infrastructure, safety, and connectivity that Singapore offers attract Indians, making it a well-loved destination.”

Tsiory Andriamparaniarivo Randrianarivony, Counselor, Embassy of Madagascar, highlighted Madagascar’s perfect climate for Indian visitors. “Since summers can be intensely hot in India, Madagascar provides an ideal escape with its winter months from May to October,” he said.

Ketavan Lagvilava, Head, Consular Section, Embassy of Georgia, emphasised Georgia’s liberal visa policy. “Travellers with a Schengen visa, a visa from European countries, a U.S. visa, or a residence permit from those countries can enter Georgia without a visa, needing only their passports,” she noted.

Gaurav Chauhan, Wedding Planner and Owner, GC Events stressed the growing demand for Indian weddings in exotic international locations. “Highlighting the economic impact of these grand weddings, we encourage international destinations to offer better incentives and simplify visa processes to attract more Indian wedding businesses,” he said.

Emerging Trends in Outbound Tourism from India

Gurjit Singh Ahuja, Consulting Editor, Travel Trade Journal, moderated a lively discussion on how rising disposable incomes and digital advancements are reshaping consumer preferences, driving a surge in outbound travel. Saurabh Bhargava, Associate Vice President - National Sales for North India, IHCL ‘Taj Hotels,’ noted that travel is no longer aspirational but a mainstream activity. “Experiential travel has gained momentum, and ticking a sightseeing list is no longer the goal,” he said.

Srijit Nair, General Manager - India, Middle East and Africa, Rail Europe, observed, “There is a growing charm of longer relaxed stays, rather than the rushed holidays of the past. Travellers want detailed experiences, and they want to travel for themselves, not to show others.”

Sandeep Dwivedi, Managing Director -



India and Subcontinent (Travel Seller), Amadeus, observed that younger travellers, particularly Gen Z, prioritise travel over traditional investments like homes or cars.

Pran Sathiadasan, Vice President - Commercial Operations (Indian subcontinent), flydubai, remarked, “India is poised to be the next major growth story, with aviation as the cornerstone of this development. With Indian carriers expanding rapidly, it is vital not to restrict international airlines but to open up our skies to boost economic opportunities in both outbound and inbound tourism.”

Birendra Singh, Area Manager, Indian Sub-Continent, Booking.com, predicted that with steady GDP and per capita income growth, outbound travel is set to boom. “The ease of booking travel online through platforms like Booking.com, coupled with affordable accommodations, social media-driven inspiration, and visa-free access to emerging destinations, will further accelerate India’s outbound travel,” he said.

Saurav Chakraborty, Founder and CEO, Travel Buddy, illustrated the trend with a simple example: “This morning, inquiries for Goa on the Travel Buddy app numbered 10, while inquiries for Vietnam, Bali, and Thailand were 10 times that. Hence, I like to say - international is the new domestic!”

Strategic Interventions for a Bright Future

The strategic interventions outlined in the FICCI-Nangia report—such as enhancing bilateral engagement, improving connectivity, supporting travel industry stakeholders, fostering MSME development, marketing international destinations, advancing digital transformation, crafting curated travel packages, and building robust hospitality partnerships—aim to ensure a seamless and enriching travel experience. These measures are poised to position India as a global powerhouse in outbound tourism.



FICCI-NANGIA REPORT





India's rising importance in ONYX Hospitality Group's international strategy

In a recent press conference, Bharath Satyavolu, Vice President – Commercial, ONYX Hospitality Group, provided a comprehensive overview of the company's remarkable growth in the Indian market and its strategic plans for the future. The event highlighted the group's impressive financial performance, key market strategies, brand portfolio, and commitment to sustainability, all of which have contributed to its growing popularity among Indian travellers.

Vartik Sethi

Exceptional Growth Metrics

ONYX Hospitality Group has recorded extraordinary revenue growth from the Indian market over the past few years. Furthermore, for the first half of 2024, ONYX reported a staggering 70 per cent growth compared to the same period the previous year. "Pre-COVID, India ranked among our top five source markets. By 2023, it positioned itself in the top four. Now, in the first half of this year, it has ascended to the top three," noted Satyavolu, highlighting the increasing strategic importance of India in ONYX's global portfolio.

Key Markets and Popular Properties

Indian travellers have shown a strong preference for ONYX's properties across various Thai destinations. Bangkok and Phuket are the top two destinations, with Amari Bangkok and Amari Phuket leading in popularity. "The top destination for Indian travellers is Bangkok, and the



▲ Bharath Satyavolu

favourite property among Indian travellers is our flagship property, Amari Bangkok," Satyavolu explained.

Beyond Bangkok and Phuket, Pattaya and Samui also attract significant Indian

visitors. In Pattaya, both Amari Pattaya and OZO North Pattaya are quite popular, while in Samui, Amari Koh Samui is a favoured choice. This diverse portfolio caters to different segments of Indian travellers, from leisure seekers to business travellers, highlighting ONYX's ability to meet varied customer preferences.

Strategic Expansion Plans

Looking forward, ONYX Hospitality Group aims to maintain a double-digit growth trajectory, projecting a 10-12 per cent year-over-year growth. Satyavolu emphasised the strategic focus on tier-one cities such as Delhi and Mumbai, currently the strongest markets. "Primarily, the demand is from tier-one cities, more specifically Delhi and Mumbai. We have a strong foothold; our brands are quite popular among travellers from these two cities," he said. However, the company also plans to expand its reach to tier-two and tier-three cities as demand grows.

Satyavolu mentioned that while the

current focus is on capturing existing demand in major cities, there is potential for future expansion into smaller markets.

Diverse Brand Portfolio

ONYX's brand portfolio is designed to cater to a broad spectrum of market segments. The Amari brand, known for its upper-upscale offerings, is particularly popular among Indian leisure travellers and the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) segment. "Amari products are categorised into three types: city mice, urban resort, and resort," Satyavolu explained.

Shama, a serviced apartment brand, attracts corporate and long-stay guests. "Shama is a serviced apartment brand catering to corporate and long-stay guests, targeting mid-level executives to C-suite executives and global expatriates," he said.

OZO, with its upper-middle scale, vibrant properties, appeals to younger travellers seeking value for money. "OZO targets travellers seeking value for money, characterised by its colourful, playful, and chic design," Satyavolu noted.

Oriental Residences serves the luxury segment. The company currently has a single property in Bangkok but plans to expand further. "Oriental Residences is our luxury brand targeting high-end travellers looking for exclusive services, bigger room types, and luxury amenities like butler service," he explained. The company plans to expand this brand to other destinations within Thailand in the near future.

Commitment to Sustainability and Experiential Travel

A significant factor in ONYX's success is its commitment to sustainability and creating memorable experiences for guests. "We have initiatives like responsible waste, energy conservation, reducing carbon emissions, and farm-to-kitchen programmes," Satyavolu shared. Social responsibility efforts include sourcing

from local farmers and businesses, which supports local economies.

Community engagement is another cornerstone of ONYX Hospitality Group's sustainability strategy. "We are the first hospitality management firm in the Asia Pacific region to declare our commitment to work with UNESCO on cultural sustainability," Satyavolu added.

Indian travellers are increasingly tech-savvy and seek experiential travel. ONYX Hospitality Group has adapted by offering packages that include cultural tours and local experiences. "Pre-COVID, 20 per cent of bookings were online, and now, it has risen to 40 per cent," Satyavolu mentioned, highlighting the shift towards online interactions and bookings. To cater to this change in traveller expectations, ONYX has incorporated local cultural immersion into its offerings, ensuring that guests experience the local culture alongside modern comforts.

Marketing Strategies

ONYX Hospitality Group employs a multi-faceted marketing approach, combining traditional offline methods with robust online engagement. The company values face-to-face interactions with partners, as demonstrated by their recent roadshow in India, covering cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Bangalore. "We are here with our sales team, meeting with our partners, connecting and engaging with them, and fostering partnerships," Satyavolu said.

Online, ONYX Hospitality Group focuses on direct engagement through its website and loyalty programmes, alongside partnerships with online travel agents. "There is a huge increase in guests wanting to engage with us online. We have our website, loyalty programme, and partnerships with online travel agents," he noted. The dual approach ensures a broad reach, catering to both traditional and modern travellers.

Future Growth and New Markets

While Southeast Asia remains ONYX Hospitality Group's primary focus, with seven new hotels in the pipeline across Thailand, Malaysia, Laos, Colombo, and Japan, the company remains open to opportunities in the Indian market that align with its brand values and strategy.

"Currently, our focus is on Southeast Asia. However, we remain open to opportunities in India that align with our brand values and strategy," Satyavolu stated.

The seven new hotels in the pipeline are part of ONYX Hospitality Group's ambitious growth plan, aiming to reach 50 hotels by the end of next year and 70 by the end of 2028. "We operate 40 hotels in six countries: Thailand, Malaysia, Hong Kong, China, Laos, and Bangladesh. Our aim is to get to 50 hotels by the end of next year and 70 by the end of 2028," he shared.





Namaste Dwaar

Where inclusive hospitality creates a perfect retreat for all

Located in Mansurpur, Uttar Pradesh, Namaste Dwaar offers an idyllic retreat just a 2-hour drive from the bustling capital of Delhi. The eco-friendly resort masterfully blends the serene charm of a rural landscape with the comforts and elegance of luxurious living, creating a haven that feels worlds away from the everyday. In an exclusive interview, Erika Rathi, Director, Namaste Dwaar Resort, discusses how the resort has set new standards to cater to a diverse range of guests, including families, corporate groups, wellness retreats, and weddings.

Sonika Bohra

How has the demand for pet-friendly accommodations evolved? What unique amenities does Namaste Dwaar offer guests travelling with pets?

Today travelling with pets has become increasingly popular, thanks to the growing number of hotels and resorts adopting pet-friendly policies. Namaste Dwaar takes pride in offering personalised and inclusive travel experiences for both our guests and their furry companions.

We provide convenience and peace of mind for pet parents, ensuring their pets are cared for during the holiday. From cosy dog beds and feeding bowls to tasty treats, we have everything to make the stay of pets as comfortable and enjoyable as yours. What sets us apart from other pet-friendly resorts is that we are the only luxury property offering a gated lawn where dogs can roam freely and enjoy themselves.

Kindly elaborate on the services you provide for MICE events. How do you ensure a seamless experience for corporate clients?

Namaste Dwaar is an ideal destination for corporate off-sites. Our state-of-the-art meeting rooms, versatile event spaces, and exemplary services ensure a productive and comfortable



▲ Erika Rathi

meeting experience. Our boardroom boasts high-quality projectors and sound systems. The resort's outdoor gardens and lawns can also be utilised for MICE events.

We provide a wide range of team-building activities, such as guided nature walks, yoga sessions, various sports, and engaging games. Namaste Dwaar also provides exclusive wellness treatments for corporate guests at our spa for a rejuvenating experience. Our event planners handle all logistics and create customised team programmes for corporate groups that can meet their specific needs, including accommodation, meals, and recreation.

What sets Namaste Dwaar apart as a wedding destination, and how do you personalise the experience for each couple?

The resort, with its manicured gardens and panoramic view, creates a perfect environment for outdoor wedding ceremonies and photo opportunities. Namaste Dwaar's prime location, at the exact midpoint between Delhi and Haridwar, ensures ease of access for guests travelling from different parts of the country and overseas.

What makes Namaste Dwaar stand out for weddings is our

multiple lawns on different levels, creating a unique environment for weddings. The resort features a private four-bedroom villa and terrace suites with a connecting lawn, ideal for accommodating close family members. We also offer personalised wellness and beauty services tailored specifically for the bride, groom, and their close family to ensure everyone looks and feels their best.

Wellness tourism is growing rapidly. What wellness programmes and facilities does Namaste Dwaar offer, and how do you integrate local communities into these experiences?

Namaste Dwaar offers a comprehensive range of wellness programmes and facilities designed to rejuvenate guests. Our wellness offerings include yoga and meditation sessions led by experienced instructors, personalised spa treatments that combine traditional healing practices with modern techniques, and Ayurvedic therapies rooted in ancient traditions. Each guest at Namaste Dwaar gets a complimentary consultation with our Ayurveda doctor to create a plan tailored to their specific needs.

We encourage guests to partake in enjoyable activities, especially those with nature, which enhance positive feelings and allow the body to heal. Namaste Dwaar provides an authentic rural immersion, allowing guests to connect deeply with local communities and traditions. We offer guided tours through the fields that reveal the history of sugarcane cultivation, helping guests appreciate the integral role these fields play in the region's identity.

How do you balance catering to diverse segments like pet owners, corporate clients, wedding parties, and wellness tourists while maintaining a cohesive brand identity?

Namaste Dwaar can be seamlessly tailored to meet the specific needs of different segments of travellers. With distinct areas catering to various amenities and interests, we ensure every guest finds something special to enjoy around the resort. Families find a perfect getaway with our array of activities that cater to all ages, from game zones and play areas to tractor rides. We offer



Premium Floor



Conference Room



Gher Villa

spacious and connecting accommodations ideal for gatherings alongside tailored group activities and excursions.

Our Gher villa has a private gated lawn perfect for pets to play freely and safely. For wellness seekers, the resort's spa, nestled within the herbal garden, provides a serene and exclusive environment for ultimate relaxation. We maintain consistency in our brand identity by focusing on excellent service, attentive staff, and luxurious accommodations while letting everyone enjoy our open spaces.

What sustainable practices have you implemented at Namaste Dwaar, and how do they enhance the guest experience?

We are committed to incorporating sustainable practices into our operations, promoting responsible tourism, and minimising our environmental impact. We limit our plastic usage and focus on recycling, upcycling, composting, conserving electricity, and managing our water consumption through STP (Sewage Treatment Plants). In addition to planting flowers and trees in the surrounding areas, we have developed a farm to grow produce with proper respect for the land. This initiative allows our guests to learn how to farm, enhancing their connection to the environment.

Unlike other hotels, we have pioneered meaningful community engagement through partnerships with local artisans and nearby villages. This commitment not only fosters cultural exchange but also supports local economies, adding a layer of authenticity and elevating the experiences of our guests.

Any plans to further enhance your offerings to better serve your target markets?

We are developing 'Namaste Wellness Village'. Currently, our inventory of 45 rooms (with herbal gardens and a farm) is spread across 14 acres of land. In the new initiative, we will add another six acres committed exclusively to wellness. The new Wellness Village will have 16 exclusive rooms and will cater to group retreats, countryside lodging for long durations, and yoga programmes.



Gher Villa



Ayurvedic Treatment Room



Yog Shala

www



INDIA DRIVING THE FUTURE OF MICE

India’s MICE sector is flourishing, driven by premier hospitality destinations and expert operators who are pivotal to its success. As the industry evolves, these stakeholders lead the way in innovation and excellence. This comprehensive overview highlights some standout MICE hotel destinations across India and offers valuable insights from seasoned MICE operators.

Prashant Nayak

The MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) sector in India is experiencing a remarkable surge, and India is becoming a pivotal player in the global event landscape. With an impressive array of world-class hotels, state-of-the-art convention centres, and versatile event venues, India has established itself as a premier destination for MICE activities. The diverse cultural landscape and growing infrastructure further enhance India’s appeal, making it a top choice for domestic and global business events.

A Fusion of Business Efficiency and Leisure

The Leela Ambience Gurugram stands out as a premier MICE destination, offering a blend of convenience and versatility. Its strategic location near the airport, coupled with 412 well-appointed rooms, caters to both domestic and international events. The hotel’s diverse banquet venues on a single floor facilitate effortless breakout sessions, while nearby attractions like Ambience Mall and golf facilities provide ideal downtime options for delegates. This amalgamation of business efficiency and leisure amenities makes The Leela Ambience Gurugram a perfect choice for any MICE event.

To streamline the planning process, The Leela Ambience Gurugram has partnered with Cvent and Wedding Wire, enhancing accessibility and simplifying inquiries. Additionally, their collaboration with Spalba introduces intuitive tools that personalise the guest experience. “These technological initiatives reflect our commitment to enhancing accessibility and personalisation, ensuring that The Leela Ambience Gurugram remains at the forefront of hospitality innovation from first click to final check-out,” assures Deepak.

The Leela Ambience Gurugram is undergoing a strategic makeover, blending aesthetic upgrades with cutting-edge technology. From new carpets to enhanced IT infrastructure, they are crafting an unmatched guest experience. Deepak remarks, “This renovation isn’t just about refreshing our look—it’s about redefining luxury hospitality for the digital age, positioning us as the ultimate one-stop destination for discerning patrons.”



▲ Deepak Verma

While MICE events often demand extensive breakout spaces and large team-building areas, The Leela Ambience Gurugram rises to the challenge. **Deepak Verma, Director, Sales and Marketing, The Leela Ambience Gurugram**, highlights the hotel’s creative approach to overcoming space limitations. “We extend our reach beyond hotel walls, utilising nearby Ambience Island venues like Ambience Greens. This creative approach allows us to host expansive workshops and activities, transforming potential limitations into unique, memorable experiences for our MICE clients. Also, our diverse indoor and outdoor venues cater to every wedding whim. We offer an ultimate blend of space, tradition, and luxury, from intimate ceremonies to grand receptions.”





▲ Indu Khatri

Majestic Settings and Customised Experiences

Fairmont Jaipur distinguishes itself with its blend of majestic architecture, advanced technology, and impeccable service. The hotel's extensive convention space spans 90,000 sq feet, with eight versatile venues designed to accommodate a range of events, from conferences to weddings. Each venue, whether a sophisticated ballroom or an intimate space, ensures a tailored experience.

Indu Khatri, Cluster Director, Sales and Marketing, Fairmont Jaipur, emphasises their commitment to excellence. She says, "Our unwavering commitment to excellence is exemplified by our dedicated event planning teams. They meticulously oversee every detail, from venue setup to personalised menus, employing state-of-the-art audiovisual equipment to guarantee a flawless event experience."

Fairmont Jaipur is ideally suited for weddings, blending majestic settings with personalised service. They understand and respect the cultural nuances of Indian weddings, offering a customised stay that includes bespoke decor, traditional ceremonies, and culinary delights curated to honour regional preferences. Indu notes, "We provide special touches to elevate the royal feeling, such as a grand



Saheliyon Ki Bari, Fairmont Jaipur

elephant procession, a five-sensory arrival experience, a vintage car entry for the bride and groom, and private dinners on the Imperial Terrace overlooking the Aravalli Hills."

At Fairmont Jaipur, they are continuously innovating by integrating digital solutions that enhance guest engagement and streamline event management processes, ensuring a productive and immersive experience for attendees. Indu mentions, "We are exploring opportunities to expand our venue offerings. By continually refining our services and infrastructure, we aim to exceed the evolving expectations of our discerning clientele and uphold our legacy of excellence in hospitality."

Luxurious Accommodations and Versatile Spaces

In the southern part of India, The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore, stands out for its unparalleled features and bespoke services tailored to MICE events. The property boasts the largest rooms in the city centre, each generously sized at 514 square feet. Their banqueting facilities include a magnificent, pillarless ballroom spanning 6,000 sq ft, ideal for grand events. With 164 king-size beds and 77 twin beds in their base-category rooms, they ensure luxurious accommodations that cater to diverse guest preferences.

Aparna Bhaskar Rai, Director, Sales and Marketing, The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore, highlights their versatile offerings. "Our banqueting facilities include

a magnificent, pillarless ballroom spanning 6,000 sq ft, providing an expansive and versatile space for grand events. For enhanced productivity, we offer breakout rooms ideal for smaller meetings within larger conferences, facilitating focused discussions and brainstorming sessions. Moreover, our unique poolside meeting space, MUGA, provides a serene yet sophisticated setting for memorable events amidst tranquil surroundings. While our property does not have extensive open spaces, we utilise our lawn by the Jaipur corridor when needed for meetings and corporate events, enhancing the options available to our guests. Additionally, our dedicated check-in points exclusively for MICE groups streamline the arrival process, prioritising efficiency and convenience."

Despite the hotel's modern architectural design, The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore, specialises in hosting Indian weddings and events of diverse traditions. "Our commitment to delivering exceptional service, in line with The Ritz-Carlton standards, ensures that each event is managed with genuine care and attention, reflecting our dedication to creating memorable experiences.

As per the ongoing trends, the MICE business currently operating in the market is large-format events with multiple tracks. Focusing on that, there are plans to create additional banquet spaces at The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore, by Quarter 4. In addition to this, Aparna notes, "We plan to provide a one-stop shop for MICE planners, ensuring all solutions are available under one roof."



▲ Aparna Bhaskar Rai



Ballroom, The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore.



Classroom Seating, The Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Centre



▲ Varun Mehrotra

Tailored Experiences for Diverse Guests

The Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Centre is well-regarded for its ability to cater to the distinct needs of business guests, convention attendees, and wedding parties. The hotel's facilities are designed to offer a seamless and personalised experience, with dedicated spaces for meetings and conferences, state-of-the-art convention facilities, and comprehensive wedding planning services.

As the service expectations of a business guest, convention attendee, and wedding guest vary significantly from each other, **Varun Mehrotra, Director, Sales and Marketing, Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Centre**, explains how the hotel adapts its services to meet varying expectations. He mentions, "Our hotel has tailored its services to cater to business guests, convention attendees, and wedding guests. For business guests, we provide dedicated facilities for meetings and conferences, ensuring a professional environment that supports digital connectivity and presentation conduction. Convention attendees benefit

from state-of-the-art facilities and expert event planning services. Wedding guests enjoy personalised planning services, from décor and catering to venue management and guest accommodation, making their special day truly memorable. This tailored approach ensures that each guest segment receives attention and services aligned with their expectations."

With 360 rooms, including spacious deluxe rooms and suites, the Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield is strategically equipped to excel in the dynamic MICE market. The hotel's commitment to offering a diverse range of room configurations, state-of-the-art convention facilities, and collaboration with highly experienced event planners ensures that it can effectively meet the evolving demands of clients.

Adding Sustainable Practices and Local Experiences

In Maharashtra, Courtyard by Marriott Pune Chakan is a prominent choice for MICE events, thanks to its exceptional meeting facilities. Strategically located near an industrial and business hub with easy accessibility, it also offers curated

sustainable and local experiences, making it the ideal venue for successful and memorable MICE gatherings.

Jitendra Thakur, Director, F&B, Courtyard by Marriott, Pune Chakan, mentions the hotel's capabilities, "Hosting large MICE events involves logistical challenges, ensuring robust technology, catering to diverse needs, managing accommodations, and maintaining security, in which we are all equipped. Our property is also well equipped for weddings, offering dedicated event spaces, experienced planners, specialised catering, and cultural accommodations, ensuring seamless execution of Indian weddings and related events."

The property leverages advanced event management software, high-speed Wi-Fi, cutting-edge AV equipment, and virtual event platforms to enhance the MICE experience. Further, Jitendra informs, "We plan to expand our MICE facilities with larger, state-of-the-art venues, integrate advanced technology, and enhance our sustainable practices, aiming to offer unparalleled services and become the premier MICE destination in our region and beyond."



Meeting Room, Courtyard by Marriott Pune Chakan



▲ Jitendra Thakur

Insights from MICE Operators

Understanding the MICE sector also involves exploring the perspectives of operators, who play a crucial role in orchestrating large-scale events and conferences.

Mastering MICE and Weddings

iCEGroup India excels in MICE and wedding planning through a team of seasoned professionals known for their meticulous attention to detail and extensive expertise. By leveraging a global network, they secure exclusive venues, negotiate competitive rates, and manage logistics seamlessly. Staying ahead of industry trends, iCEGroup incorporates innovative solutions and cutting-edge technology to craft engaging and memorable events.



▲ Disha Shah

Disha Shah, Director and COO, iCEGroup India, highlights their proactive approach, “Our focus on sustainability and eco-friendly practices, combined with 24/7 support, ensures a stress-free experience. We design strategic meetings, source unique venues, and deliver data-driven insights to enhance event outcomes and ROI.”

Planning and executing MICE and wedding events often comes with challenges such as budget constraints, last-minute changes, communication breakdowns, and logistical complexities. Additional issues, like unforeseen weather conditions, venue problems, and international coordination, further complicate matters. To address these challenges, iCEGroup develops detailed, flexible plans with contingency strategies

and maintains transparent communication with clients and vendors. Disha explains, “We conduct thorough risk assessments, build strong vendor relationships, and stay updated on best practices. Our team prioritises client needs, uses technology and event management tools, and remains calm and proactive in high-pressure situations.”

In dealing with last-minute changes, the iCEGroup team focuses on solutions, promptly communicates with stakeholders, and documents changes for post-event review. “Our approach ensures we navigate challenges effectively and deliver successful events,” states Disha.

Elevating Event Management

Nik N Ami Travels is a prominent tour operator in India and Dubai that offers comprehensive services for corporate and individual events. Its expertise spans itinerary planning, accommodation bookings, transportation arrangements, logistics coordination, and 24/7 support, ensuring seamless event management.

Nikita Thadani, Founder and Managing Director, Nik N Ami Travels, emphasises their transformative approach, “We specialise in creating unforgettable experiences through personalised planning, global connections, and advanced technology. Our end-to-end services cover everything from site selection and logistics to on-site management and post-event analysis. We handle comprehensive travel coordination, including flights, accommodations, and transportation, and offer expert conference organisation, themed events, entertainment management, team-building programmes, and customised itineraries that highlight local culture.”

Amit Thadani, Director, adds, “To meet and exceed client expectations, we start by understanding their objectives and aligning the venue with the event’s theme. We meticulously select venues, balancing style,

accessibility, and budget, and maintain clear communication throughout. Our process includes detailed proposals, site visits, vendor coordination, and virtual tours when necessary.”

Nikita also notes the importance of reconnaissance visits and last-minute changes, “At times, organising reconnaissance visits (recce) is particularly important as it allows for a comprehensive evaluation of the venue's suitability, logistical considerations, and identification of any potential issues that need addressing. During events, we handle last-minute changes by using our magic wand, like staying prepared with backup plans, keeping communication open, adapting swiftly, and approaching challenges with a calm and methodical approach. Positive guest reviews highlight our relentless dedication and effort, proving the quality of our service.”

Nikita and Amit are committed to delivering exceptional results for every event by ensuring cutting-edge solutions and maintaining the highest service standards.



▲ Nikita Thadani & Amit Thadani

ITDC aligns rebranding and market visibility strategies to drive growth in Weddings and MICE

In this interaction, TTJ speaks with M. R. Synrem, IAS, Managing Director, India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), to explore how ITDC hotels have risen to prominence as top choices for MICE events and weddings. Synrem discusses ITDC's distinctive offerings, strategic developments, unwavering dedication, and steadfast commitment to providing exceptional experiences and service excellence in the hospitality sector.

Prashant Nayak

India's promising economic growth has driven an increase in business activities, resulting in higher demand for conferences, seminars, and exhibitions. To meet this demand, ITDC offers comprehensive packages with event spaces, accommodation, food and beverage services, event management, and travel support.

Perfect for MICE and Weddings

ITDC provides state-of-the-art MICE facilities at Hotel The Ashok, New Delhi, blending opulence with functionality. These facilities offer an unparalleled experience for diverse gatherings, creating a unique setting for impactful MICE events. M.R. Synrem elaborates, "We take pride in being a premier destination for luxury weddings. The Ashok offers multiple elegant banquet halls, with the largest accommodating up to 1,500 guests in a floating setup. Situated in the heart of the city within the Diplomatic Enclave, The Ashok provides ample parking for over 400 vehicles. For outdoor celebrations, both The Ashok and Hotel Samrat feature several well-manicured lawns. The front lawn of The Ashok can host up to 2,500 guests, ensuring a memorable event."

ITDC has a dedicated in-house events team, Ashok Events, which comprises experienced, skilled professionals and their travel arm, Ashok Travels and Tours, which is professionally equipped to provide full services to this segment in areas of air ticketing and transport.

Ensuring Exceptional Service

ITDC places the utmost importance on ensuring that every customer experience is unforgettable. Providing exceptional and memorable experiences for their customers is the top priority for ITDC. They comply with international hospitality norms and guidelines, regularly updating their practices to align with global benchmarks. ITDC continuously invests in upgrading its infrastructure to keep pace with international trends while preserving the traditional culture and essence of the hotels. Synrem



▲ M. R. Synrem

further adds, "Our staff undergoes training to stay connected with industry practices and customer service requirements. We recognise that each client is unique, and our dedicated teams work closely with them to understand their specific preferences and needs, offering personalised solutions for MICE events and weddings. Additionally, we have a robust feedback system to gather insights from our clients."

Increasing Market Share and Presence

ITDC's recent rebranding initiative, which introduced the new mascot "Adyant" and the tagline "सबसे श्रेष्ठ आतिथ्य की ओर," was conceived to reinforce ITDC as a premier brand that exemplifies superior and holistic hospitality. "The rebranding initiatives underscore our commitment to expanding regional capabilities and exploring new opportunities, reinforcing our role as a leading player in the hospitality and tourism sectors," explains Synrem.

To leverage the 'India Says I Do' campaign and align with the Prime Minister's vision, ITDC is strategically targeting the expansive wedding market. They aim to increase their market share and presence by offering a comprehensive event and hospitality

experience to their guests. Synrem says, "Building on our strong FY23 performance, we intend to position ourselves not merely as a hotel chain but as the premier provider of full-service wedding and event venues. By capitalising on our iconic properties, including The Ashok, we plan to attract high-profile weddings. Our strategy involves leveraging digital marketing to enhance brand visibility, drive engagement, and foster customer relationships."

USP of The Ashok: Premier Wedding Venue

The Ashok distinguishes itself as an exceptional wedding destination through its unique blend of heritage and modern luxury, being one of New Delhi's landmark hotels. It features extensive landscaped gardens ideal for outdoor ceremonies and photography, along with a variety of versatile event spaces. With its large accommodation capacity, The Ashok can comfortably host numerous out-of-town guests. The venue offers top-tier catering with a diverse range of Indian and international cuisines and boasts a prime location with ample parking. Additionally, it combines historic charm with contemporary amenities and provides customised wedding packages and on-site spa and wellness facilities for pre-wedding relaxation.

Promoting ITDC Hotels

To position The Ashok and other ITDC properties as premier wedding venues requires a comprehensive strategy. Synrem mentions, "This includes creating user-friendly, visually appealing websites and using social media to highlight stunning content, wedding setups, and client testimonials. Using SEO and SEM ensures high search rankings while collaborating with wedding influencers increases reach and credibility. Strategic partnerships with wedding planners, corporations, and vendors broaden service offerings. Participating in wedding fairs, and expos, and hosting open house events allows for direct client interaction. Loyalty programmes encourage long-term relationships, resulting in repeat business and positive word-of-mouth promotion."



TRAVMART



2024

OCT
19 SURAT

OCT
25-26 SITM
SOUTH INDIA TRAVMART (CHENNAI)

NOV
20-22 EITM
EAST INDIA TRAVMART (KOLKATA)

DEC
21 INDORE

2025

JAN
17-18 WITM
WEST INDIA TRAVMART (PUNE)

MAR
15 RAIPUR

BOOK YOUR SPACE

☎ 9560264446

✉ ravisharma@sampanmedia.com

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





UNION BUDGET



FALLS SHORT FOR INDIA'S DISAPPOINTED TOURISM SECTOR

While there is optimism among some leaders about the Union Budget 2024-25 and its potential to enhance India's tourism sector, there remains significant criticism from key figures within the industry.

Prashant Nayak

Finance Minister Niramala Sitharaman announced the Union Budget 2024 on July 23, 2024, for the fiscal year 2024–25. Employment generation and skilling were the central themes in this year's budget. In her speech, Sitharaman said, "Tourism has always been a part of our civilisation. Our efforts in positioning India as a global tourist destination will also create jobs, stimulate investments, and unlock economic opportunities for other sectors."

Salient Features of Budget 2024–25

In FY24–25, significant developments in tourism included the government's focus on enhancing religious tourism in Bihar and extending support to Odisha. Sitharaman announced the development of the Vishnupad Temple at Gaya and the Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya in Bihar will be modelled on the successful Kashi Vishwanath Temple Corridor. This initiative aims to transform these sites into world-class pilgrimage and tourist destinations.

The government has also proposed a comprehensive development initiative for Rajgir in Bihar. Sitharaman emphasised, "Rajgir holds immense religious significance for Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains. The 20th Tirthankara Munisuvrata temple in the Jain Temple complex is ancient. The Saptharishi, or the seven hot springs, form a warm water Brahmakund that is sacred."

The government will also support the development of Nalanda as a tourist centre, besides reviving Nalanda

University to its glorious stature. The government will provide assistance for the development of Odisha's scenic beauty, temples, monuments, craftsmanship, wildlife sanctuaries, natural landscapes, and beaches.

When it comes to connectivity, the government has announced its support for several key road projects in eastern India, totalling Rs 26,000 crore. These include the development of the Patna-Purnea Expressway, the Buxar-Bhagalpur Expressway, and an additional two-lane bridge over the Ganga at Buxar. Furthermore, the plan encompasses the construction of spurs connecting Bodhgaya, Rajgir, Vaishali, and Darbhanga.

To boost the domestic cruise industry, the finance minister announced tax incentives. The government will implement a presumptive taxation regime for cruise ship operations by non-residents. Additionally, it has proposed an exemption for income earned by foreign companies from lease rentals of cruise ships received from related companies operating such ships in India.

Tourism Budget Allocation 2024–25

The tourism sector has received a marginal 3.3 per cent increase in capital expenditure allocation for the financial year 2024–25, totalling Rs 2,479.62 crore, up from Rs 2,400 crore allocated in the Union Budget 2023–24. The revised budget outlay for tourism stood at Rs 1,692.10 crore. In FY2024–25, out of the total allocation for the tourism sector, Rs 33 crore is earmarked for overseas promotion and publicity, a decrease

from the revised allocation of Rs 100 crore. Meanwhile, for domestic promotion, publicity, and market development assistance, the budget has been increased from Rs 95 crore in the revised allocation of 2023–2024 to Rs 176.97 crore.

Mixed Reactions

Many industry leaders have expressed that the Union Budget 2024–25 signifies a major step forward for India's travel and tourism sector, with its focus on infrastructure, spiritual tourism, and sustainability. There was a positive response to initiatives promoting spiritual tourism in Bihar and the development of Odisha, as well as efforts to simplify taxation for cruise ship operations in India. However, the majority of India's tourism industry has expressed disappointment over the budget's lack of specific incentives for their sector. They argue that while the government acknowledges the sector's economic potential, the omission of comprehensive tourism infrastructure support represents a missed opportunity. Such investments could have significantly boosted tourism and employment opportunities.

Given the emphasis on employment generation and skill development, hoteliers particularly highlight the importance of granting industry status to the sector. Hoteliers underscore the critical need for granting industry status to their sector, especially in light of the current emphasis on employment generation and skill development. They believe this recognition

would significantly boost efforts to create jobs, enhance skills, and stimulate consumption, aligning with current economic policies within the hospitality industry.

Tourism associations like FAITH, IATO, TAAI, and TAFI have voiced their profound disappointment over the government's repeated neglect of the travel trade sector in India. Despite repeated pleas and requests to the Ministry of Tourism and other government stakeholders, especially crucial in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, their demands have not been addressed. Tourism bodies emphasised many unmet requests in the budget, like insufficient funds allocated for crucial inbound tourism promotion, no reduction in Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) for lower airfares, and increased travel. The GST rate rationalisation was also ignored, hindering industry growth. Also, concerns over TCS outbound travel remain unaddressed, impacting ease of business and global competition.

The industry's call for sector-specific reforms and addressing operational hurdles underscores the challenges that still remain to be addressed to fully unlock the sector's potential. It is disheartening for industry insiders that the government has continued to overlook this issue over the past years. Given the severe impact of the pandemic on the industry, especially with inbound travel not yet returning to pre-pandemic levels, the government's ongoing neglect is even more concerning and disappointing for those involved in the sector.

Industry Reactions

K.B. Kachru, Chairman Emeritus and Principal Advisor, Radisson Hotel Group South Asia, and President, HAI

In this budget we see that there is continued focus on infrastructural development, fiscal prudence, and consolidation. Tourism continues to be accepted as an engine of growth for the economy. While there is emphasis on spiritual tourism, however, there are no policy changes to expedite growth. Tourism and hospitality play a crucial role in the growth of the Indian economy. The continued focus on government spending on infrastructure development augurs well for the sector. The development of the eastern region, temple corridors in Gaya and Bodhgaya, and the identification of Nalanda as a key tourism site continue to demonstrate the government's intent to utilise the potential of tourism. Regrettably, however, there has been no policy announcement to facilitate the development of hotels and the promotion of inbound tourism. The focus on skilling and incentivising employers to create jobs are other positives that will benefit all sectors. Although not directly linked to this budget, the industry would continue its request for the granting of infrastructure status for the hospitality sector and industry-related benefits by all state governments.

Subhash Goyal, Chairman, STIC Travel Group

I am deeply disgruntled with the budget. While it emphasises domestic tourism and monument development, this approach merely reallocates funds domestically from one pocket to another. We need a focus on inbound tourism as well. Firstly, the marketing development assistance allocation of Rs 33 crore is insufficient. It should be increased to at least Rs 300 crores to effectively support and incentivise tour operators. Secondly, the SEIS scheme, which incentivised

foreign exchange earnings, needs to be reinstated. With our overseas tourism offices closed, appointing marketing agents abroad is crucial. Additionally, opening our skies to more airlines is essential since travel costs have risen since 2019. Increasing the number of airlines would not only lower costs but also promote India as a viable destination for new routes. Inbound tourism can indeed be a saviour. Overall, tourism is a labour-intensive sector that has the potential to create more than a trillion-dollar economy and can forge the path forward to our 2047 Viksit Bharat goals.

Rajiv Mehra, President, IATO

We had high expectations from this year's budget, but unfortunately, it has not addressed our needs. The budget's allocation of only Rs 33 crores for overseas promotion is insufficient and does not support the growth of inbound tourism. We are still operating at just 70 per cent of our 2020 levels. Without substantial government support, promoting our country effectively will be challenging. While neighbouring countries have made significant progress, we have yet to recover to our pre-2020 standards. We hope that our concerns are heard and that we receive the necessary support to boost our tourism sector.

SP Jain, Chairman and Founder, Pride Hotels Group

We warmly welcome the budget announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The government's focus on the tourism industry, especially the development initiatives for Jharkhand, Odisha, and the North East, is commendable. The budget's commitment to enhancing spiritual tourism, particularly through the development of significant sites like Bodh Gaya and the Vishnupada Temple, is a strategic move that promises substantial economic benefits for the regions involved. However, we had hoped that the honourable minister

would grant infrastructure status to the hospitality industry. As a highly capital-intensive sector, our industry requires significant investments, and the initial three to four years often yield no profits due to high-interest loans from banks. Granting infrastructure status would enable us to access loans at lower interest rates, facilitating the development of more hotels and improving the quality of facilities offered.

Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI)

We are completely stunned by the Government of India's total lack of response to our pre-budget requests to the Finance Minister. Despite being one of the key drivers of economic growth and employment, the sector has been notably underfunded and overlooked in the latest budget. Our requests for a reduction in Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) were not considered. Requests for rationalisation of GST rates for inbound, outbound, and domestic travel do not seem to be of importance to the government. The primary concern raised by TAAI regarding the abolishment of TCS on outbound travel has also been overlooked. Furthermore, our request to promote e-commerce for travel agents and tour operators with simplified and reduced TDS rates has also gone unnoticed in the budget. In conclusion, the financial budget presented has substantial gaps that could impede the growth and recovery of the travel and tourism sectors.

Anil Parashar, Chair – Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI

We commend the government's visionary approach to recognising the immense potential of India's tourism sector. The development plans for the Vishnupath and Mahabodhi temples, as well as Rajgir and Nalanda, will not only enhance the spiritual and historical significance of these sites but also drive economic growth and create employment opportunities. This budget is a significant step towards making India a top global tourist destination.

Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chair – Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI

The focus on advancing tourism in Odisha and other culturally rich states is highly commendable. By improving tourism infrastructure and promoting our diverse natural and historical attractions, we are poised to attract global tourists, thereby boosting local economies and fostering sustainable development. A simpler tax regime for foreign cruise companies for operating domestic cruise vessels in India will promote cruise tourism.

Riaz Munshi, President, OTOAI

We have reviewed the Finance Minister's budget speech concerning the tourism sector. While we appreciate the initiatives outlined for the promotion of domestic tourism, we are disappointed to note that there were no provisions addressing the needs of the outbound tourism sector. Our industry had hoped for a reduction in GST and TCS to make international travel more affordable and competitive, which would have significantly benefited our members and the broader industry. Regrettably, these critical aspects were not addressed, leaving our concerns unresolved. We urge the government to consider the importance of the outbound tourism sector, as it significantly contributes to the growth of the Indian economy and foreign exchange earnings.

Ravi Gosain, Vice President, IATO

Regarding the marketing budget for overseas promotion, it is worth noting that before COVID-19, the ministry had a robust

policy supported by a budget of around Rs 300 crore. This funding was crucial for participating in numerous exhibitions, both large and small, and for organising programmes for FTOs and tour operators to promote India. It also supported FAM trips and extensive media and offline promotions. With the current allocation of just Rs 33 crores, it is difficult to envision how we can achieve effective promotion. For example, a major exhibition alone can cost between Rs 10 and 15 crores. The drastic decrease in funding raises substantial concerns about how the ministry plans to manage these activities and what its underlying strategy is. This situation undeniably poses a major uncertainty.

Prateek Hira, Chairman, IATO-UP Chapter

It does not look like a union budget. The budget seems disproportionately focused on just three states, neglecting the rest of India. The reduction from RS 100 crore to Rs 33 crore in tourism allocation represents a significant setback, suggesting that inbound tourism will continue to face challenges. While the allocation for the cruise industry is a positive development that could boost cruise tourism in India, overall, this budget appears to have sidelined the tourism sector.

Pankaj Nagpal, Managing Director, Travstarz Global Group- A CTrip.Com Invested Company

I am extremely disappointed with the budget as it addresses no issues of grave concern like GST and TCS. There is no clear focus on promoting India as a tourism hub for all kinds of travellers. Developing temples and some specified corridors, which anyway lack basic infrastructure, will not help India realise its true potential. As I have said in the past, all governments have only paid lip service to the tourism potential of India without actually devising a plan, let alone implementing anything. This budget is more about keeping the political flock happy, which suits the current dispensation.

Amaresh Tiwari, Vice Chairman, ICPB

The budget aligned with my expectations, delivering minimal or no support for the tourism sector, as I had anticipated. Tourism is a state subject, and states are responsible for its promotion, while the central government has other priorities. Although the budget includes provisions for infrastructure and skill development, the drastic reduction in the marketing budget for overseas promotion from Rs 100 crores to Rs 33 crores clearly signals that tourism is not a priority of the central government.

Rikant Pittie, Co-Founder, EaseMyTrip

The government's attempt to position India as a global tourist destination is evident in the Union Budget 2024–25, demonstrating efforts to promote religious tourism and domestic tourism infrastructure. With a special focus on Bihar, Nalanda, and Odisha, the government plans to develop the iconic religious sites to support its infrastructure and transform them into world-class pilgrimage and tourist destinations. We are optimistic that this will enhance the overall experience of the tourists visiting these religious sites and will uplift state tourism. Additionally, the government has also shown interest in simplifying taxation in the cruise business by proposing presumptive taxation for cruise ship operations in India. This initiative aims to encourage foreign cruise owners to operate in India, thereby providing a significant boost to cruise tourism in the country.



The heart of
Incredible India

INDIA'S FIRST INTRA-STATE AIR SERVICE IN MADHYA PRADESH **PM SHRI PARYATAN VAYU SEVA** UNVEIL ENCHANTING DESTINATIONS OF STATE



Madhya Pradesh boasts scenic landscapes, magnificent history, UNESCO World Heritage Sites, spiritual destinations, thrilling adventures, diverse cultures, and archaeological marvels. Each captivating destination whispers its unique story, promising an unforgettable experience. The state's multifaceted beauty has enthralled travellers. In 2023, the state witnessed a phenomenal surge in tourist arrivals—a staggering threefold increase compared to 2022! From 34.1 million in 2022, the number skyrocketed to a remarkable 112.1 million in 2023.

ENHANCING CONNECTIVITY FOR SEAMLESS EXPLORATION

Committed to enriching your Madhya Pradesh experience, the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board takes another pioneering step, "PM Shri Paryatan Vayu Seva," India's first intra-state air service! This ground-breaking initiative marks a milestone in the tourism sector. This initiative will not only benefit tourism but also foster trade, healthcare, education, and cultural exchange.

YOUR GATEWAY TO AN UNFORGETTABLE JOURNEY

"PM Shri Paryatan Vayu Seva" reflects the state's commitment to providing a convenient and seamless travel experience. The Vayu seva connects eight cities: Bhopal, Ujjain, Khajuraho, Rewa, Indore, Gwalior, Jabalpur, and Singrauli. Booking your air journey is a breeze as dedicated counters are set up at Indore, Bhopal, and Jabalpur airports. Additionally, you can access

schedules and fares and book tickets online at www.flyola.in.

"PM Shri Paryatan Vayu Seva" is a must-not-miss opportunity to explore and experience more. Pocket-friendly fares ensure that exploring Madhya Pradesh through intra-state flights is an accessible and enjoyable experience.

Embark on a captivating journey through Madhya Pradesh with air service. Rewa beckons you to witness the awe-inspiring waterfalls, explore the majestic Rewa Fort and Govindgarh Palace, and delve into history at the ASI-protected Deur Kothar. Immerse in the spiritual aura of Ujjain, famed for the revered Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga Temple and the Mahakal Lok Corridor. Explore historical sites like Ram Ghat, Mangalnath Temple, Jantar Mantar, Harsiddhhi Temple, and Sandipani Ashram. Ascend the ramparts of the impregnable Gwalior Fort, a testament to bygone eras. Marvel at the architectural brilliance of Gujari Mahal, Jai Vilas Palace, and the tombs of Tansen and Ghaus Mohammed. Explore the Bateshwar Group of Temples, Padavli, and Mitaoli. Be captivated by the grandeur of the Rajwada, a royal palace. Stroll through the vibrant Lalbagh Place, seek blessings at Bada Ganpati Mandir, shop for treasures at Sarafa Bazaar, and savour delectable treats at Chappan Dukaan in Indore. Witness the architectural marvel of Madan Mahal Fort in Jabalpur and pay homage to the Rani Durgavati Memorial and Museum. Explore the natural wonders of Bhedaghat, a UNESCO tentative list site, and delve into mysticism at

the Chaunsath Yogini Temple. Be mesmerised by the world-famous Khajuraho Temples, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and marvel at India's unique artistic heritage. Explore the Adivart Museum, witness the diverse wildlife of Panna National Park, pay respects at the Tomb of Maharaj Chhatrashal, and be awestruck by the cascading Raneh Falls and the Bhimkund natural wonder.



A DESTINATION FOR EVERY TRAVELLER

Madhya Pradesh caters to all kinds of travellers. "PM Shri Paryatan Vayu Seva" simplifies exploring the entire state, allowing you to effortlessly craft your dream itinerary. Operated on a public-private partnership (PPP) basis, "PM Shri Paryatan Vayu Seva" unlocks a world of possibilities for exploring Madhya Pradesh.

So, what are you waiting for? Book your tickets today and embark on an unforgettable adventure in the captivating heart of India!



Monsoon Bliss on the Konkan Coast

An Escape to Westbay Resort and Spa

Embarking on a family road trip this monsoon from Mumbai to Westbay Resort and Spa in Ganpatipule near Ratnagiri was an exceptional experience steeped in nostalgia and awe. This memorable getaway seamlessly combines scenic drives, delightful stays, delectable cuisine, and impeccable hospitality, making it an unforgettable escape into nature's grandeur and tranquillity.

Prashant Nayak

Westbay Resort and Spa and Ganpatipule together await discovery, offering a perfect blend of relaxation, adventure, and exploration. The destinations are ideal for travellers seeking a trio of leisure, peace, and enrichment.

Rekindling Memories: Mumbai-Goa Highway

Covering a distance of approximately 350 km, our journey was not just a drive but a delightful expedition, a nostalgic reconnection with the Mumbai-Goa highway—a route I hadn't travelled in nearly 25 years. The Mumbai-Bangalore highway had been our preferred path, making the Mumbai-Goa route a less frequented option for us. The ongoing transformation of this highway into a four-lane road promises to enhance travel efficiency, making future



Sawatsada Waterfall Chiplun

journeys smoother and faster.

One of the most compelling aspects of this trip was experiencing the Mumbai-Goa highway during the monsoon season. The heavy rains have transformed the landscape into a lush, green paradise, with verdant hills and refreshing foliage flanking the road. This created a picturesque canvas that was nothing short of invigorating. The route led us through dense forests, across rivers, rustic villages and over stunning ghat sections, revealing nature's hidden gems of the Sahyadri mountain range. Among these were the breathtaking waterfalls cascading down the hillsides, adding to the journey's charm. The relatively solitary drive allowed us uninterrupted moments to appreciate the beauty of the Western Ghats, setting a tranquil tone for our memorable escape from city life.

The Serene Coastal Gem of Maharashtra

Ganpatipule, nestled in the Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra, is renowned for its natural beauty, cultural significance, and serene environment. This coastal gem is celebrated for its pristine white sand beaches and clear blue waters. Unlike more commercialised coastal destinations, Ganpatipule offers a calm atmosphere. While the beach supports a range of water sports, including parasailing, the monsoon season necessitates a suspension of these activities, and swimming is best avoided due to rough sea conditions.

A major attraction in Ganpatipule is the Swayambhu Ganesh Mandir. This temple is one of the most revered Ashtavinayak temples in Maharashtra and holds significant religious importance. During festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi, the town is vibrant, with large crowds of devotees and tourists. Ganpatipule retains its traditional charm, with local festivals, cuisine, fairs, and customs reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the Konkan region.



Kashedi Ghat



Ganpatipule beach and temple



Entrance



Sea Facing Room View



Infinity Swimming Pool

A Splendid Seaside Escape

Westbay Resort and Spa, formerly Abhishek Beach Resort and Spa, is a distinguished four-star resort celebrated for its exceptional location. Nestled just a five-minute stroll from the pristine white sands of the Arabian Sea, this resort offers guests a perfect blend of luxury and natural beauty. Perched on a hilltop and spread across eight acres of lush greenery, the resort offers stunning panoramic views of the sea from every corner of the property. The rebranding from Abhishek Hotel to Westbay Resort and Spa reflects a significant shift towards a more sophisticated image, aligning with the resort's enhanced focus on luxury and wellness.

With 50 thoughtfully designed rooms, including opulent villas, the resort caters to an array of guest preferences and needs. The in-house restaurant, open deck, and bar offer a variety of dining and relaxation options, ensuring every moment is delightful. Guests can indulge in a plethora of facilities, from the serene infinity pool and the rejuvenating Bliss Spa to the lively games room, well-equipped gym, and dedicated kids' play area, making for an enjoyable and memorable vacation experience. Additionally, the resort provides ample space for events and functions, making it a suitable choice for memorable gatherings and celebrations.

Exceptional Indoor Experience

Our stay at Westbay Resort and Spa was highlighted by the impressive sea-facing rooms we were assigned for two days. Each day, we found ourselves drawn to the balcony to enjoy the breathtaking,

ever-changing views of the Arabian Sea from dawn to dusk. The endless expanse of the sea and horizon added a layer of enchantment to our stay, making every moment magical.

The service at the resort was equally remarkable. The staff was exceptionally friendly and attentive, greatly enhancing our overall experience. Out of the 120 staff members, approximately 80 were local, demonstrating the hotel's commitment to supporting and engaging with the local community.

The dining experience at the resort was truly noteworthy. The in-room menu featured a diverse range of cocktails and mocktails, adding a touch of sophistication to our stay. Alongside the regular offerings, the menu included a selection of continental dishes such as Alfredo pasta, beer-battered squid, burgers, pizzas, and fish and chips. The Konkani and Maharashtrian cuisine menus, though somewhat limited, showcased authentic flavours with specialties like Kombdi Wade and Bharleli Vangi. The Waterfront Cafe's breakfast buffet was particularly impressive, offering tempting options, including South Indian delicacies, ensuring a delightful start to each day. Despite the monsoon season's persistent rains, the resort thrived with high occupancy levels, a true testament to its allure and the exceptional quality of its offerings.

Around and Within the Resort

One of the standout features of Westbay Resort and Spa is the infinity pool, which offers an unparalleled view of the lush green hills behind and the expansive sea in front. The pool area provides a perfect

spot to relax and take in the stunning landscape. The resort's landscaping is extraordinary, with meticulous attention to detail enhancing the natural beauty of the surroundings.

We were also excited to discover the new rifle shooting and archery zone featuring high-tech equipment. This addition provided an exhilarating touch to our stay, making it one of the highlights of our visit. The resort also offers convenient private beach access just down the road. Half way down, although the beach was picturesque to watch, the rough monsoon waves and the intimidating roar of the sea evoked fear.

The frequent rain often encouraged us to cozy up in our rooms, yet we managed to explore the stunning coastline, including charming villages, the sacred Ganesh temple, and the relatively undiscovered Aare-Ware Beach. Beholding its beauty in person was truly awe-inspiring. Needless to say, there exist many more attractions beyond these waiting to be explored.

An Overview

Exploring Westbay Resort and Spa during the monsoon was an absolute delight. Each leg of the journey was memorable, as even our knowledgeable driver guided us about landmarks on the road and local restaurants where we savoured authentic Konkani flavours like Fish Ambotiks and Jaggery Kharvas. On the way, we also marvelled at the expansive farms of the renowned Alphonso mangoes and cashew plantations, impressed by the annual harvest these fertile regions in Ratnagiri produce. Overall, this monsoon road trip to the resort was among our best, blending stunning landscapes, delectable local cuisine, and exceptional hospitality into a truly memorable adventure.



Resort Property



Executive room



Rifle shooting



The Travel Nexus

A formidable networking force in the travel industry

The Travel Nexus organised its second annual Travel Meet at The Ananta Udaipur on June 28 – 29, 2024, bringing together over 400 trade partners from across the country. The 2024 event marked a significant milestone in promoting collaboration and unity within the industry. TTJ spoke with Kuldip Nair, Founder of The Travel Nexus, for insights into the association's mission and future direction.

Ravi Sharma

The Travel Nexus is a dynamic, collaborative network that fosters camaraderie, ethical practices, and an annual celebratory meet. Passion drives members at Nexus, where bringing people and opportunities together defines their commitment to honest and ethical trade practices.

Transforming Travel Networking

The Travel Nexus started as a WhatsApp group in 2019 with BNI travel agents from all over India. "Initially, the purpose was just to network and get to know each other without any business intentions. However, members soon began posting their queries, and it became apparent that vendors from other regions were offering much better rates than our traditional suppliers. After proper verification, members started conducting business with one another. Today, the group boasts nearly 1,000 members from 23 states, with business transactions within the group totalling around 8,000 crores. This number could be even higher, but many DMCs are reluctant to disclose their business dealings due to concerns about travel agents discovering other DMCs and eventually turning to them for business tie-ups," apprises Kuldip.

The association stands out among



▲ Kuldip Nair

other networking groups in the travel industry by fostering deep emotional connections and a strong sense of camaraderie among its members. Kuldip shares, "Unlike typical networks, we prioritise personal relationships and mutual support. Members willingly refer business to each other, even when rates are slightly higher. Members have gone that extra mile, such as standing in line for COVID vaccinations for fellow members. Countless success stories highlight our commitment, including members personally receiving clients from other

agents. Beyond business, it is all about genuine care and mutual upliftment among our members."

Pioneering Travel Collaboration

Today, The Travel Nexus boasts a membership of 990 individuals, including approximately 30 members exclusively engaged in B2B operations under renowned names like Classic Holidays, Global Odyssey, Garg Holidays, Auslen Holidays, and Intersight. Additionally, 300 members specialise in B2B transactions for specific products while concurrently engaging in B2C activities for other destinations. For instance, one member might handle B2B cab services in Chennai but purchase services for Gujarat from other agents within the group. There are also cases where two to three members have teamed up to create successful businesses together.

Upholding Integrity and Excellence

The mission of The Travel Nexus is to make itself the strongest travel group globally. Unlike administrators of other large groups who avoid accountability, Travel Nexus has a dedicated core team that maintains transparency and integrity in all dealings among members. If issues arise, this team conducts arbitrations, and



L-R: Smita Sinha, Owner, Travel Urze; Juby Mathew, Founder, Auslen Holidays; Irfan Jaipury, Director, World of Atara; Mustafa Moti, Owner, Discovery Travel and Tours

members agree to abide by the final verdict and provide appropriate compensation. "We operate with strict discipline at The Travel Nexus, adhering to specific guidelines: we refrain from exchanging festival greetings, maintain fixed group timings, avoid referencing non-members, and strictly prohibit reselling within our network. Importantly, we enforce a zero-tolerance policy against any attempt to poach clients from fellow travel agents or DMCs, with offenders facing a lifetime ban from our community," informs Kuldip.

At The Travel Nexus, the administration upholds stringent standards with zero tolerance, led by an example of adherence to rules. The administrator maintains impartiality by ensuring that even their staff remains outside the group. Communication ethics are strictly observed, with no messages sent before 7 am or after 11 pm, ensuring consistency in rules applied uniformly to all Nexus members. Kuldip also shares, "Every member of The Travel Nexus also belongs to BNI, which offers a mobile application for tracking business transactions. When a member gives business to another, they log a referral, and the recipient logs a thank-you slip for the amount received. This system measures everything, from a Rs 120 train ticket to a 1 crore 65 lakh group booking for Australia."

Prospective members must verify their BNI Connect before joining. After verification, they fill out details on the website to be added to the group. They receive proper mentoring, and for their first few transactions, they must obtain admin consent before making any payments. Any problematic booking must be reported to the admin and core group members. Repeat offenders are removed from the group.

Impactful Annual Meets

Annual meetings are crucial for fostering collaborations, as Kuldip believes that no

matter how much you promote yourself through WhatsApp messages and broadcasts, true trust is built when you meet and converse in person. Kuldip explains, "People have earned thousands and lakhs of rupees after attending our members' meetings." He cites a recent example of Grishma Patel, a B2C agent from Ahmedabad, who attended the Nexus meet in Surat in February and made an additional Rs 4 lakh within four months by doing business with Nexus members. "Many Nexus agents renew their BNI membership just to stay in the group. At our recent meet, over 400 travel agents from 72 cities in India participated, spending between Rs 25,000 to Rs 40,000 for the three-day event. Not a single person left the resort or missed any event, demonstrating the group's commitment," he adds.

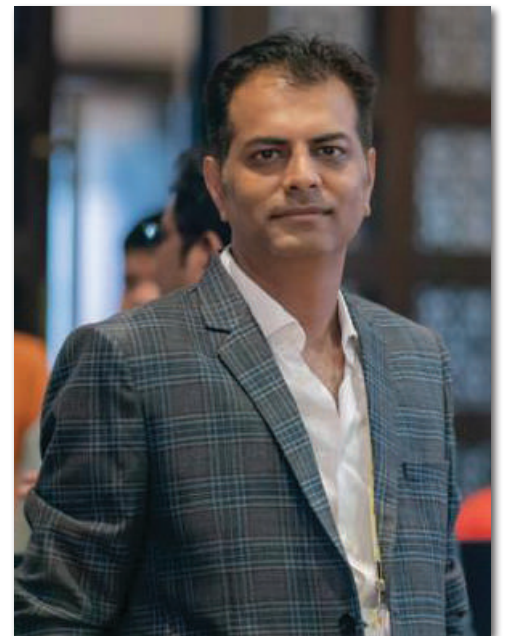
The event partners for Travel Nexus 2.0 edition at Ananta Udaipur were Travel Urze, Auslen Holidays, World of Atara and Discovery Travel and Tours.

Clear and Bold Future Ambitions

The Travel Nexus has ambitious goals and milestones set for the coming years. "We would love to keep growing because our tagline is 'Let's Grow.' We plan to introduce and aim to develop various travel educational programmes where experienced members can train others on selling destinations that they have yet to master. Our aspiration is to have all major players in the Indian travel industry join our group while seeking to include the highest quality B2C agents to create a powerful, robust, and cohesive network," says Kuldip.

Overall, with a strong emphasis on personal relationships, mutual support, and a commitment to excellence, The Travel Nexus ensures a trustworthy networking environment where members thrive and excel.

Sumit Saluja, Owner, Sai World Travels International, and Committee Head, Travel Nexus, expressed his excitement, saying, "We are thrilled to have successfully completed our 2.0 Edition this year, and it would not have been possible without our dedicated members. We are proudly over 1,000 members strong. This year has certainly been a step up, and the enthusiasm from our members has been phenomenal."



▲ Sumit Saluja

He continued, "The term 'Nexus' signifies a connection or link between entities. The platform we have with Nexus to connect with people from across the country is simply incredible, and we know this team will continue to grow stronger each year. The support we provide to each other in this fraternity is unmatched and truly trustworthy."

Sumit concluded, "The Travel Nexus within BNI India has achieved remarkable success, and we are confident we will excel in all our endeavors. We look forward to an amazing meeting next year, filled with surprises. See you all at Nexus 3.0."



TTJ
Travel Trade Journal

TRAVMART

**Connecting Travel Partners
With New Opportunities**



Chandigarh
27 JULY 2024

📍 The LaLiT Chandigarh
RAJIV GANDHI IT PARK, CHANDIGARH



TTJ TRAVMART triumphs once again in Chandigarh

The TTJ TRAVMART Chandigarh concluded successfully on July 27, 2024, at The Lalit Chandigarh. The event featured 35 sellers, including hotels, cruise lines, hotel consolidators, destination specialists, and travel technology providers, showcasing their products and services.

Over 120 local agents from Chandigarh, Mohali, Zirakpur, and Panchkula were joined by 52 fully hosted agents from Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Karnal, Ambala, Solan, Amritsar, Bhatinda, Moga, Rohtak, and Shimla. More than 2,400 buyer-seller business meetings were conducted.

The event received strong support from all major associations and was attended by local chapter office bearers of TAAI, IATO, TACT, ADTOI, TUC, SKAL, and GAEHP.

Dr R.K. Suman, Regional Director - North, India Tourism, was the Chief Guest. In his address, Dr Suman highlighted the multiplying effect of tourism and the various activities being undertaken by the Ministry and his office to support growth and innovation.



Siddharth Sonkar
Asst. VP, One Above

This is a great opportunity for us to connect with all the partners from Chandigarh. TTJ TRAVMART is an excellent platform to connect with potential travel partners. I am confident this event will help us gain a higher market share in Punjab.





Raj Kumar

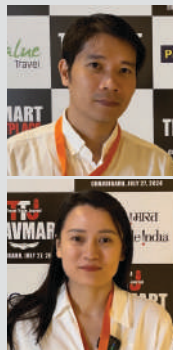
Branch Head, Asego



Attending TTJ TRAVMART Chandigarh was a fantastic experience! We had the opportunity to connect with industry professionals, explore the latest trends and innovations in travel, and gain valuable insights into emerging markets. The networking was incredibly valuable, and we were able to establish some promising contacts. Overall, it was a great chance to expand our knowledge, build relationships, and get inspired for future projects.

Jenny and Louis

Directors, Rustic Asia Vietnam DMC, Paul Merchants



We are delighted to participate in TTJ TRAVMART for the first time. This remarkable event serves as an outstanding platform that unites numerous enterprises and travel agents, facilitating connections for both outbound and inbound travel. Our time in India has been profoundly enriching, and we are excited about the business prospects this event has opened up. The experience has exceeded our expectations, and we are immensely appreciative of this opportunity to connect, collaborate, and envision future growth.

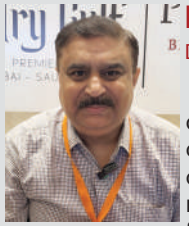




Nikhil Karanwal

Regional Sales Manager – North, RezLive.com

On behalf of RezLive, I extend my heartfelt thanks to Team TTJ for this platform. The business meetings were highly productive, providing us with valuable connections and opportunities to collaborate. The event was well-organised, and we appreciate the effort put into facilitating these interactions.



Rajiv Verma

Dubai Specialist, Try Gulf

TTJ TRAVMART is the platform where I get all the major and minor buyers, wholesalers, and sub-partners under one roof. Their coverage is exceptional compared to others, which I truly appreciate. The people here are remarkable, making TTJ TRAVMART the best platform for social networking and interactions.



Nirmalya Chaudhuri

Director, Chocolate Hotels

This is the third consecutive year we have participated in TTJ TRAVMART Chandigarh, and our group's market penetration has increased phenomenally. We have also participated in other destinations, such as Lucknow, Bhubaneshwar, and Raipur, and the responses have always been extremely good. My heartiest congratulations to the entire TTJ team.



Faheem Qureshi

Director & Founder, Stay Pattern Hospitality Services

This is the second time I have attended an event like this, having also participated in Lucknow. The experience has been amazing. I have met many potential clients, which has been very beneficial.

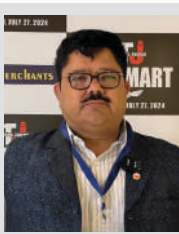


Harraj Singh Sidhu

Chairman – TAAI Chandigarh Chapter

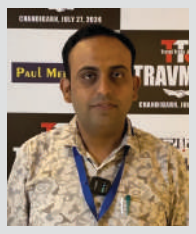
Over the past few years, I have seen TTJ consistently return to Chandigarh, and their growth has been impressive. Each event introduces new suppliers, which greatly benefits local travel companies. The strong turnout and enthusiasm from attendees highlight the value of these exhibitions. We extend our best wishes for continued success and look forward to their future visits. Thank you.





Raminder Bawa
 Owner, Sai Worldwide Travel Services and Sai Vacations

I am from Solan and have been attending the TTJ TRAVMART event for many years. Last year, I also attended the event in Kolkata, which was an excellent experience. This platform offers the invaluable benefit of reconnecting with our contacts and meeting a wide range of suppliers and DMCs. I am particularly grateful to Gurjit Ji and Ravi Sharma Ji for their efforts in organising these travel marts. Their dedication allows us to network effectively and significantly grow our business. Thank you.



Gagan Deep
 Geet and Company (TTJ Club Member)

As a privileged member of the TTJ Club, it is a pleasure to be here and connect with all of you. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to Ravi Ji for facilitating my connection with TTJ. Meeting participants like Indigo, along with other hotel suppliers and buyers, has been a truly rewarding experience. I am deeply appreciative of Ravi Ji's efforts in organising everything so seamlessly.



IATO kicks off preparations for the 39th Annual Convention with a curtain-raiser event in New Delhi

The curtain raiser for the 39th IATO Annual Convention marked an auspicious start to what promises to be a significant gathering for the tourism industry, scheduled from August 30 to September 2, 2024, in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. Held at The Lalit New Delhi on July 23, 2024, the event unveiled the convention's theme, 'Resurgent India Inbound,' and has set the stage for an engaging and impactful series of activities to come at the convention.

Gurjit Singh Ahuja

The Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) curtain raiser event featured the entire leadership team, led by Rajiv Mehra, President, IATO. The event was graced by esteemed guests from Madhya Pradesh, the host state for the upcoming convention. Among them were Sheo Shekhar Shukla, Principal Secretary, Tourism and Culture, Government of Madhya Pradesh; Dr Ilyaraja, Managing Director, MPTDC; and Bidisha Mukherjee, Additional Managing Director, Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board. They were welcomed by Rajiv Mehra.

With a turnout of over 100 IATO members and travel media representatives, the theme of the convention, 'Resurgent India Inbound,' was unveiled. Ravi Gosain, Vice President, IATO and the Convention Chairman, highlighted the significance of this theme. He was joined by Sunil Mishra, Honorary Treasurer, and Mahendra Pratap Singh, Chairman, IATO Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh Chapter, who serve as Co-Chairmen of the Convention.

The Taj Lakefront in Bhopal will host the convention, including registration, the inaugural ceremony, business sessions, and evening programmes over three days. The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh will inaugurate the event on August 30, 2024. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, along with numerous state tourism departments, is anticipated to participate, with approximately 15 states already confirmed.

Sanjay Razdan, Honorary Secretary, IATO, welcomed the attendees and provided updates on the association's efforts and activities. Rajiv Mehra announced that the convention is expected to attract 1,000 delegates from across the country, including senior officials from the Ministry of Tourism, state governments, industry leaders, tourism and hospitality professionals, and travel trade media.

Speaking to Travel Trade Journal (TTJ), Sheo Shekhar Shukla elaborated on Madhya Pradesh's goals for the convention, stating, "Through the IATO Convention, we aim to engage and host the travel community, showcasing the cultural and tourism offerings of Madhya Pradesh. We want IATO members to reach out to discerning tourists from international markets and invite them to explore the hidden wonders of Madhya Pradesh."

Ravi Gosain shared that they have already received 300 registrations, and the 10 post-convention FAM tours, organised across various sectors to showcase Madhya Pradesh, are fully booked. Mahendra Pratap Singh emphasised the potential of Madhya Pradesh as a travel destination, saying, "As a destination,



Madhya Pradesh is vastly unexplored and still undersold by the travel industry, especially to foreign tourists. This convention will help us give IATO members a better insight into the diverse and rich product portfolio that our state offers."

Sunil Mishra, Honorary Treasurer, IATO, delivered the vote of thanks and expressed hope that member participation would make the convention a grand success.

Hilton Abu Dhabi Yas Island announced Celebrity Host Hotel for IIFA Utsavam 2024

As IIFA Utsavam kicks off its global tour on Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, this September 2024, Hilton Abu Dhabi Yas Island has been selected as the Celebrity Host Hotel and Official Hospitality Partner for the event celebrating South Indian cinema. Under the patronage of His Excellency Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, the IIFA Utsavam 2024 is in partnership with the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi, and Miral.



The five-star Hilton Abu Dhabi Yas Island will host South Indian cinema stars during the two-day event on September 6 and 7, 2024. Stars like Chiranjeevi, Nagarjuna Akkineni, Allu Arjun, Samantha Ruth Prabhu, and others will attend. Nader Halim, Cluster General Manager of Hilton Abu Dhabi Yas Island, expressed pride in being the Official Hospitality Partner and hosting the cinema titans.

Andre Timmins, Founder and Director of IIFA Utsavam, praised Hilton Abu Dhabi Yas Island as the ideal hospitality partner. The hotel, located on Yas Bay's waterfront, offers world-class dining and unparalleled experiences, ensuring an unforgettable stay for the stars and guests.

IIFA Utsavam unites the Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Kannada film industries, celebrating their achievements and talents. The first day will focus on Tamil and Malayalam awards and performances, while the second day will highlight Telugu and Kannada cinema. The event promises to captivate audiences with performances, awards, and cinematic experiences.

Chocolate Hotels hosts Thanksgiving celebration for top Rajasthan partners

Chocolate Hotels hosted a special Thanksgiving event on July 24-25, 2024, at Park Prime Jaipur. The event was organised to honour and appreciate over 100 top travel agents and corporate partners from the Rajasthan market.

Key figures at the event included Nirmalya Chaudhuri, General Manager - Sales and Marketing, Chocolate Hotels, and Subhasish Ghosh, Assistant General Manager, Park Prime Jaipur. Both expressed their heartfelt thanks to the attendees for their continued confidence and faith in their hotel products.

Chocolate Hotels is a prominent hotel management company that operates three distinct brands. Park Prime Hotels has a presence in Jaipur, Kolkata, Goa, Ranchi, and Durgapur. Suncity Resort is a premium resort located in Mandarmoni, and Orbit Hotels caters to budget-conscious travellers with properties in Midnapore, Silchar, and North Lakhimpur.



IATO Uttar Pradesh Chapter conducts successful meetings in Varanasi and Agra

The IATO Uttar Pradesh Chapter held two significant chapter meetings, one in Varanasi on July 21 and another in Agra on July 26, 2024. Both events saw the participation of approximately 40 members each. The state has become an important hub for IATO, adding 35 new members in the last financial year alone.

Prateek Hira, Chapter Chair, Uttar Pradesh, conducted the meetings. In Varanasi, Rajendra Rawat, Deputy Director, UP Tourism, was the guest of honour. Deepti Vatsa, Regional Tourist Officer, and Harish Kumar from the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, participated in the Agra meeting.

Additionally, the Regional Chapter Chair, Sunil C. Gupta, presided over the Agra meeting with Prateek Hira, while Prateek Hira chaired the Varanasi meeting.

At the events, Prateek Hira elaborated on various government schemes, providing detailed information on how members could benefit from them by registering with the state government. He emphasised the potential advantages these schemes offer and reassured the attendees that IATO is committed to addressing their concerns. Sunil C. Gupta highlighted IATO's achievements and encouraged members to register for the upcoming IATO Convention in Bhopal, underscoring the benefits of the knowledge sessions and familiarisation tours planned for the event.

Prateek Hira emphasised IATO's role in influencing policy changes and reaching optimal benefits for its members. Sunil C. Gupta urged members to encourage local travel trade to join IATO, highlighting the networking and learning opportunities it provides.





Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport

Ashwni Kumar Goela has been promoted to Vice President, Operations at Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport, and Area General Manager, Delhi NCR. With over 24 years in the hospitality industry, Goela has shown exemplary leadership and dedication in his previous role as General Manager. His visionary approach has significantly improved guest experiences, top-line revenue, and profitability over the past six years. In his new role, Goela will continue to drive operations, fostering growth and excellence across the hotel.



Jumeirah Olhahali Island

Jumeirah Olhahali Island has appointed **Joseph Alexander El-Masri** as the new Director, Sales and Marketing. A British national, El-Masri is a veteran member of Jumeirah, having held significant leadership positions within the brand since 2019. In his new role, he will enhance the profile of the contemporary 67-villa resort, leading a dedicated sales and marketing team to further promote the destination, renowned for its premier beach and overwater accommodations.



The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore

Reuben Kataria has been appointed as the new General Manager, The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore. With extensive experience in luxury hospitality, Kataria aims to lead the hotel with a focus on exceptional guest experiences and service excellence. His career includes roles at The Oberoi, JW Marriott, and, most recently, Four Seasons Hotel in Bengaluru. Kataria's philosophy aligns seamlessly with The Ritz-Carlton's legendary service standards, focusing on nurturing a sense of community among both guests and staff.



Cinnamon Bentota Beach

Cinnamon Hotels and Resorts has appointed **Sriyangani Dhanapala** as the first female Resort Manager, Cinnamon Bentota Beach. In her new role, she will oversee all operations at Cinnamon Bentota Beach, ensuring the highest standards of service, enhancing guest satisfaction, and driving the resort's growth and innovation. Her leadership is expected to elevate the resort's reputation as a premier destination in Sri Lanka. With over a decade in the hospitality industry, Sriyangani began her career in Brand Marketing for Cinnamon Hotels and Resorts.



Novotel Pune

Novotel Pune has appointed **Anant Leekha** as the new General Manager. With over 20 years of experience, Anant brings a strong track record in sales and operations with his natural ability to motivate and develop dynamic teams. As General Manager, Anant will lead initiatives to drive business growth and enhance guest experiences through strategic and technological advancements. This appointment marks his return to Pune, where he first served as General Manager in 2016.



Tourism Australia

Tourism Australia has appointed **Edward Kwek** as Senior Business Events Manager for South and Southeast Asia, reporting to Regional Business Events Director Edea Lu. Based in Singapore, Edward will support business events distribution strategies and partnerships in the region's MICE segment. With 17 years of experience, he previously served as Trade Manager, Business Events, Tourism New Zealand, overseeing business events strategy development and implementation for Southeast Asia.



THRS

Travel and Hospitality Representation Services (THRS), a representation company for luxury hospitality and tourism brands, has appointed **Gaurav Sindhwani** as Vice President, Business Transformation. With extensive experience in business transformation and strategic growth, Sindhwani will lead initiatives to optimise operational efficiencies and drive innovative solutions supporting THRS's expansion plans. His expertise in strategic planning and development will be crucial in steering the company towards its growth objectives.



Dex Group

With over 25 years in the aviation and travel industries, **Varun Mohiindra** has made significant contributions to prominent airlines and travel service providers. His expertise in Business Development, Sales, Commercial Planning, Pricing, Revenue Management, and Strategic Partnerships, along with his deep understanding of both Indian and international markets, will enhance DEX's global reach and operational efficiency, driving significant value and innovation for the company.



IIFA UTSAVAM IS COMING TO ABU DHABI

ON SEPTEMBER 6TH & 7TH, 2024



PRABHU DEVA



RAASHI KHANNA



RANA DAGGUBATI



SREELEELA



RAKUL PREET SINGH



SHANE NIGAM

BOOK TICKETS ON
ETIHADARENA.AE
PLATINUMLIST.NET

6th & 7th SEP, 2024



جزيرة ياس
YAS ISLAND
ABU DHABI

experience
abu dhabi

For further details please contact
sonika@sampanmedia.com, contact number +91 9711586033

DESTINATION PARTNER



PROMOTIONS PARTNER



MEDIA PARTNERS



OFFICIAL HOSPITALITY PARTNER



TICKETING PARTNERS



COAST ALONG GLACIERS TODAY, THEN CONQUER ONE TOMORROW

5 SPECTACULAR SHIPS | SAILINGS AVAILABLE THROUGH TO 2026 | YOUNGEST FLEET TO SAIL ALASKA

UP TO
US \$1,500
OFF
CRUISES*

CRUISE FARE VARIES PER SAILING

+

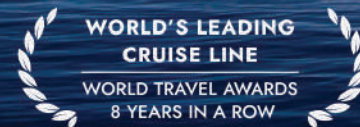
FREE OPEN BAR+
FREE SPECIALTY DINING+
FREE EXCURSIONS+
FREE WIFI+
FREE EXTRA GUESTS+



SCAN FOR
MORE INFO



NORWEGIAN
CRUISE LINE®



WORLD'S LEADING
CRUISE LINE

WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS
8 YEARS IN A ROW

7-DAY ALASKA:

DAWES GLACIER, JUNEAU & KETCHIKAN
ROUND-TRIP SEATTLE

NORWEGIAN BLISS

AUG — SEP 2024, APR — SEP 2025



7-DAY ALASKA:

GLACIER BAY, SKAGWAY & JUNEAU
ROUND-TRIP SEATTLE

NORWEGIAN ENCORE

AUG — OCT 2024, APR — OCT 2025 & MAY — OCT 2026



7-DAY ALASKA:

HUBBARD GLACIER, SKAGWAY & JUNEAU
FROM WHITTIER TO VANCOUVER

NORWEGIAN JADE

APR — SEP 2025



CONTACT YOUR TRAVEL AGENT

CALL +91 22 7127 9333 | BOOK TODAY AT NCL.COM

*Up to US\$1,500 Off Cruises: Discount valid on all open for sale sailings including Sailaway categories. +Free Open Bar & More: Free Open Bar is based on Premium Beverage Package. Free Specialty Dining and Free Wifi Packages are dependent on cruise length booked. Free Shore Excursions are US\$50 credit per excursion, and applicable to 1st guest in the stateroom. Free Extra Guests is applicable to the 3rd and 4th guest in a stateroom and is valid on select dates. Any taxes & gratuities are additional. Sailaway categories are not applicable for the Free at Sea offer. Sailaway categories receive US\$50 shore excursion credit offer only. Offers are valid until 5 September 2024 unless extended. Offers are non-transferable, have no monetary value and are valid for new bookings only. Offers are subject to change or withdrawal at any time and combinability with other promotional offers is subject to change. Other restrictions may apply. For full terms and conditions visit ncl.com. All rights reserved. ©2024 NCL Corporation Ltd. Ships' Registry: Bahamas and USA. 1800233 07/2024