

← SalamAir



Fly with SalamAir
to amazing destinations

Fly from
DELHI | MUMBAI | JAIPUR | LUCKNOW to

- Muscat
- Jeddah
- Riyadh
- Kuwait
- Istanbul
- Baghdad

And beyond...

For Bookings, Please Contact
Res.del@salamair.com

TTJ

Travel Trade Journal

Vol. 15 | Issue 1 | November 2024 | Pages 60 | ₹150

EAST INDIA
TRAVMART
KOLKATA
NOV 20-21, 2024



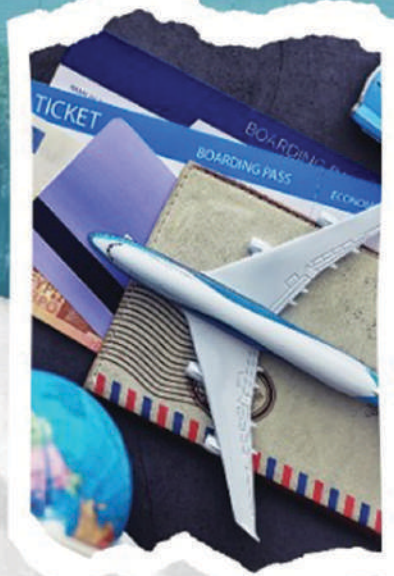
Register as Buyer | Register as Seller

isha@sampanmedia.com | parth@sampanmedia.com
+91 8826612446 | +91 9560264446



BEST B2B PORTAL FOR TRAVEL AGENTS

FLY24HRS



CONTACT US ➔

Leading B2B Portal for Travel Agents



More Information
www.fly24hrs.com

Contact Us
011 69122424






DISCOVER YOUR LOVE FOR SKIING IN ALMATY WITH AIR ASTANA

You can carry SKI equipment free of charge as part of additional baggage on the round trip from Delhi to Almaty. Total weight should not exceed 15 kg.

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

 **air astana**

Team Sampan

Editor & Publisher	:	Ravi Sharma
Consulting Editor	:	Gurjit Singh
Director-Marketing	:	Sonika Bohra
Director-Tech	:	Arvind Shukla
Sr. Assistant Editor	:	Prashant Nayak
Assistant Editor	:	Prativa Vaidya Bhalla
Associate Editor	:	Sripama Pal Bhattacharya
Sr. Correspondent	:	Vartik Sethi
Bureau Head (East)	:	Partha Chatterjee
GM-Strategic Partnerships	:	Debabrata Ray
Sr. Manager-PR & Marketing	:	Nehali Jain
Manager-Marketing Comm.	:	Yamini Sharma
Manager-Social Media	:	Khushi Bakshi
Manager PR	:	Ankit Dixit
Coordinator-Special Projects	:	Parth Sharma
Manager Administration	:	Kuldeep Singh
Art Director	:	Laxman Dass
Designer	:	Jatin Kumar
Circulation Manager	:	Sahil Nadeem
Trainee	:	Bhumika Panchal
Web Developer	:	Abhishek Kapoor
Assistant Admin	:	Isha Singh
Admin Marketplace	:	Satish Kumar
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 Polykam Offset, C-138, Industrial Area Phase I, Block C, Naraina Industrial Area Phase 1, Naraina, New Delhi - 110028.



Dear Friends,

As we welcome this radiant season, I extend my heartfelt wishes for a Diwali and New Year filled with joy, prosperity, and wellness. May the light of the festivities bring renewed happiness and abundance to each of you.

With immense excitement, we introduce our November edition of TTJ, a special issue dedicated to the flourishing landscape of inbound tourism in India. This edition captures the country's allure, from spiritual pilgrimages and wildlife wonders to exhilarating adventure escapades. We've woven together perspectives from leading tour operators, insights from industry experts, and the latest from state tourism boards, delivering a comprehensive view of these dynamic tourism segments. Our hope is that this issue inspires and enriches your journey to discover India's boundless travel diversity.

Aligned with our focus on inbound tourism, we are pleased to share that this issue will be showcased at WTM London, running from November 5-7, 2024. Alongside the India-centric content, you'll also find insightful international travel stories and destination highlights, offering something for every reader.

Wishing you a warm and joyful season, once again!

Happy Reading!

Ravi Sharma
ravisharma@sampanmedia.com



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

Radisson Goa Candolim
CALL: +91 (832) 6719800
EMAIL: reservations@rdgoa.com

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

SriLankan Airlines introduces new daytime flights between Bengaluru and Colombo



SriLankan Airlines has commenced a new daytime flight between Bengaluru and Colombo, bringing the total weekly operations between the two cities to 10 flights. The latest flight timings are ideal for both Indian holidaymakers and business event attendees travelling to Sri Lanka for short weekend escapes.

Flight UL 1174 departs from Bengaluru to Colombo at 09:40 AM every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, arriving in Colombo at 11:10 AM. The corresponding return flight, UL 1173, departs Colombo at 07:20 AM and reaches Bengaluru at 08:40 AM, also every Thursday through Saturday.

The schedule of the new service is designed to offer a more flexible travel experience for Bengalureans jetting out to Sri Lanka, whether for a vacation or a workation. It provides more daytime hours on the island while being conveniently scheduled closer to the weekend. Aside from the new additions, SriLankan Airlines will continue operating its daily service between Bengaluru and Colombo. India is the only country with nine of its cities featured in SriLankan Airlines' network, including Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kochi, Trivandrum, Chennai, Trichy, and Madurai, in addition to Bengaluru.

Indian travellers fuel Japan's tourism economy with a 120.7 per cent surge in spending



The Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) Delhi office reported significant growth in spending by Indian visitors, reaching 19.2 billion yen (approx. ₹10,768 million) from April-June 2024—a 120.7 per cent rise from 2019 and 63.1 per cent from 2023. Indian visitors contributed 0.9 per cent to total foreign visitor spending in Japan, mainly on accommodation (44.3 per cent), food (18.6 per cent), and shopping (17.5 per cent). Average spending per Indian visitor was 266,186 yen, 11.3 per cent higher than the average, marking a 61.4 per cent increase since 2019.

For leisure, Indian tourists spent an average of 299,950 yen, 25.8 per cent above the global average, with 71,923 Indian travellers visiting Japan—a 36.7 per cent rise from 2019. In May alone, Indian visitors surged by 61.7 per cent. JNTO's Executive Director Ryo Bunno emphasised India's growing affluence and interest in Japan's unique hospitality and cultural offerings.

JNTO continues to attract Indian tourists through initiatives like the recent Japan Travel Fair in Delhi and an upcoming three-city roadshow for Indian travel agents to provide custom travel packages and promote Japan's appeal to Indian visitors.

CGH Earth Saha unveils Mansao Curtorim in South Goa

CGH Earth Saha has added Mansao Curtorim to its villa and bungalow collection in Curtorim village, Goa. This 223-year-old heritage villa offers a serene escape to an authentic old Goan village 30 minutes from the beach. Set among lush landscapes and historic sites, Mansao Curtorim has been carefully restored, blending Indo-Portuguese architecture with modern comforts. Its red-hued façade, high wooden ceilings, and colonial Goan furniture evoke Goa's cultural heritage.

Mansao Curtorim boasts six elegantly furnished bedrooms, a spacious living room, an exquisite formal dining room, a more relaxed outdoor dining area framed by an enchanting courtyard, and balconies offering breathtaking views of sunrise and sunset. Interiors are furnished with restored colonial furniture and Portuguese-inspired textiles, celebrating Goa's architectural legacy. Dining at Mansao Curtorim showcases Goa's blend of Portuguese and Indian flavours with menus for all tastes.

Guests can explore South Goa's hidden gems, including birdwatching along the Zuari River, cycling trails, and picnics by the villa's private lake, making it ideal for reflective holidays or gatherings with loved ones.



Looking for comfort and convenience for your clients' visa submission process?

Choose VFS Global's

VISA AT YOUR DOORSTEP

service

With **Visa At Your Doorstep**, as an optional service, the VFS Global team will visit your clients' location to complete the entire visa submission including the biometric process, as per their convenience and flexibility. Your clients do not need to visit our Visa Application Centre, as VFS Global's team will visit their location.

Available on weekdays, weekends, and public holidays.

Service includes:

- ✔ Visa submission process
- ✔ Biometric information (fingerprint & digital photograph)
- ✔ Passport collection & delivery



The 'Visa At Your Doorstep' service is offered for 18 destination countries in India:

Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom (On Demand Mobile Visa).

Book 'Visa At Your Doorstep' for your clients now | **For exclusive deals and incentives, write to us on:**
 Visit: www.vfsglobal.com/visa-at-your-doorstep/ | b2bsales@vfsglobal.com

Hahnair celebrates 25th Anniversary, hosts exclusive event in Delhi



Hahnair marked its 25th anniversary celebration in New Delhi this October, honouring its partnership with Indian travel agencies. Kimberley Long, Hahnair's Vice President - Agency Distribution, and Bharat Kapoor, Regional Vice President, welcomed over 80 travel agent partners at the event.

As a token of appreciation and supporting reforestation efforts in Kenya and Madagascar, Hahnair sponsored the planting of 25 trees each for every guest present at its 25th anniversary celebration.

Kimberley Long said, "India remains one of our key markets globally, and we are incredibly grateful for the continued support, trust, and collaboration from our agency partners here." Expressing gratitude, Bharat Kapoor said, "With access to more than 350 partner airlines, the appreciation we receive from Indian travel professionals, for example, for our complementary Securix insolvency protection, is a testament to our shared values of trust and reliability."

The evening also served as an opportunity to share Hahnair's strategic plans for the future and reflect on the successes achieved through strong partnerships and a shared vision.

Air India to continue Vistara experience post-merger; aircraft to operate under code 'AI 2'



Post the merger of Air India and Vistara, the experience offered by Vistara will continue for customers. Vistara aircraft will be operated by Air India and will be identified by a special four-digit Air India code beginning with the digit '2'.

For instance, UK 955 will become AI 2955, helping customer identify them while booking on www.airindia.com after November 12, 2024.

The routes and schedule operated by Vistara aircraft will continue to be the same, alongside the Vistara in-flight experience that includes the product and service such as menu and cutlery on the Vistara aircraft. It will also be serviced by the same crew.

The airline, through a multi-media campaign, also pointed out that the unified Air India opens up limitless possibilities for passengers including unparalleled connection to over 90 domestic and international destinations and over 800 more destinations through codeshare and interline partners.

The existing members of Club Vistara will be seamlessly transferred to Air India's Flying Returns program. With this merger, Flying Returns will also evolve into an all-new avatar 'Maharaja Club'.

ATOAI to hold its 16th Annual Convention in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh, from December 3 - 8, 2024

The Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) will host its 16th annual Adventure Convention in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh, from December 3-8, 2024. This six-day event will bring together adventure tourism professionals to spotlight Arunachal's potential as India's next premier adventure destination.

The convention will feature sessions, panel discussions, and awards to recognise industry excellence. Leaders in adventure tourism will partner with local operators to foster sustainable tourism models. Exclusive familiarisation (FAM) trips will showcase Arunachal's unexplored terrains.

Ahead of the convention, a training program in Itanagar will help build local capacity in adventure tourism, while ATOAI's roadmap for Arunachal will outline future growth opportunities. The convention aims to be a net-zero event, promoting responsible tourism and Border Tourism, with visits to sites like Bumla Pass and the NIMAS facility in Dirang, which trains local youth in essential adventure skills.

The 16th ATOAI Adventure Convention promises to position Arunachal Pradesh and Northeast India at the forefront of India's adventure tourism.



Explore the Magical Swiss Winter with a Swiss Travel Pass



Swiss Travel System.



Enjoy unlimited travel by train, bus and boat across Switzerland's public transport network



RATES ARE IN CHF

CONSECUTIVE DAYS PASS

DAYS	1st CLASS		2nd CLASS	
	ADULT	YOUTH	ADULT	YOUTH
04 Days	469	330	295	209
06 Days	602	424	379	268
08 Days	665	469	419	297

FLEX PASS (WITHIN 01 MONTH)

DAYS	1st CLASS		2nd CLASS	
	ADULT	YOUTH	ADULT	YOUTH
04 Days	539	379	339	240
06 Days	644	454	405	287
08 Days	697	492	439	311

FEATURES

- ✓ Available for 3, 4, 6, 8 or 15 Days
- ✓ Unlimited travel by train, bus and boat across Switzerland
- ✓ Free travel for children from 6-16
- ✓ Up to 50% discount on mountain excursions
- ✓ Mountain excursions of Rigi, Stanserhorn & Stoos included
- ✓ Free admission to over 500 museums
- ✓ Available as an e-ticket

Book on www.ottila.net

Rates are valid for 2024. *T&C Apply.

Ottila International Pvt. Ltd.

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

Ahmedabad: +91 93 7612 0982

Hyderabad: +91 88 8501 5970

New Delhi: +91 11 4141 4242

Bengaluru: +91 96 0648 4185

Indore: +91 73 1491 1374

Nashik: +91 25 3231 0044

Chennai: +91 44 4555 8582

Kochi: +91 75 9386 3903

Pune: + 91 20 4002 6960

Coimbatore: + 91 99 5271 7750

Kolkata: +91 98 3011 9561



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

INDIA'S THRILL-SEEKING FUTURE

Bold Leap in Sustainable Adventure Tourism

The adventure tourism sector in India is on the cusp of a remarkable evolution. With a renewed interest in immersive travel experiences, the Indian landscape offers exciting opportunities. However, as we navigate this journey, we must focus on sustainable and responsible practices that align with our natural heritage and rich cultural offerings.

Ajeet Bajaj

Before the pandemic, the global adventure travel market was valued at \$683 billion, showing a 21 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) since 2012. As travel restrictions lifted, there was a surge in demand for immersive experiences that reconnect travellers with nature.

The Evolution of Adventure Tourism in India

Adventure tourism in India has witnessed significant growth, especially in recent years. In India, adventure tourism will likely grow exponentially over the next decade, supported by a shift towards sustainable tourism practices. Increasingly, travellers prioritise environmental consciousness and seek ways to minimise their footprint while engaging in adventure activities. This trend aligns perfectly with our country's abundant natural resources and diverse offerings.

ATOAI's Initiatives for Sustainable Adventure Tourism

We at Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) are deeply committed to promoting sustainable and responsible adventure tourism. The Ministry of Tourism has established the National Board of Adventure Tourism, where ATOAI plays a crucial role. This board focuses on sustainable growth strategies, risk mitigation, product development, marketing, and promoting responsible tourism practices.

ATOAI is collaborating with the government to launch two significant Mega Trekking Trails—the Ganga Nature and Heritage Trail and the Western Indian Himalayan Mega Trail. These initiatives promise to be game changers for adventure tourism in India. Additionally, ATOAI has launched several key initiatives, including safety guidelines for Indian Adventure Tourism. We conduct courses on responsible adventure tourism, train guides in first aid and sustainability principles, and

advocate for the use of certified equipment. Emphasising the 'Leave No Trace' ethos, we encourage operators and travellers to minimise their environmental impact.

Competing on the Global Adventure Tourism Stage

India is uniquely positioned to compete on the global adventure tourism stage. With its diverse geographical terrains—from the majestic Himalayas to stunning coral islands and vast coastlines—India ranks among the top 10 countries for natural heritage, according to the World Economic Forum. Our vision is to establish India as one of the top global destinations for adventure travel by 2034.

However, we face challenges, including the need for standardised safety regulations, infrastructural gaps, and carrying capacity issues. The opportunities lie in our ability to offer unique experiences while promoting local communities. We are working with the government to enhance air connectivity and promote adventure tourism in remote regions, further bolstering our position in the global market.

Safety Standards and Certifications

Safety is paramount in adventure tourism, and ATOAI has developed comprehensive safety guidelines covering 29 verticals of adventure activities. We recommend that all adventure operators adhere to these guidelines, which include using internationally certified equipment, employing trained personnel, and establishing robust standard operating procedures.

In collaboration with the Bureau of Indian Standards, we aim to set specific standards for adventure gear and certify adventure operators. Until national regulations are fully implemented, we urge state governments to adopt these standards to ensure that only licensed operators conduct adventure activities.

Impact of the Post-Pandemic Era

The post-pandemic era has significantly impacted adventure tourism, with many travellers seeking open-air, less crowded destinations. To restore traveller confidence, we are implementing rigorous safety protocols and promoting sustainable outdoor experiences.

ATOAI is actively engaging with the government to develop a national adventure tourism rescue system and encouraging tailored insurance policies for adventure activities. We are also emphasising responsible tourism practices that benefit local communities, aligning with travellers' desires to contribute positively to the places they visit.

Adventure tourism can indeed serve as a vehicle for achieving sustainable development goals. As Mahatma Gandhi wisely noted, our actions today shape the future. As we move forward, let us commit to preserving our natural heritage and ensuring that adventure tourism in India flourishes sustainably for generations to come. By focusing on responsible practices and embracing the unique experiences our country offers, we can position India as a premier destination in the global adventure tourism market.



About the Author: Ajeet Bajaj is the President of the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) and the Founder and Managing Director of Snow Leopard Adventures, a four-time National Tourism Award-winning organisation.



Standard Class starting from 49€

Booking Window: 4th-6th Nov

Travel Time: 12th Nov- 18th Dec

Visit the City of Lights, Lake Geneva, and the Swiss Riviera All in ONE. Travel is fast, comfortable, and convenient on Lyria's high-speed trains.

Paris » Geneva

Paris » Lausanne

Paris » Zurich

Paris » Basel

For bookings and more details, please contact us at raileurope@tbo.com

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

TGV Lyria

**Rail
Europe**



SNOW LEOPARD QUEST

A breathtaking adventure into remote Ladakh

Spotting the majestic snow leopard, also known as the ‘Ghost of the Mountains,’ is a once-in-a-lifetime experience to embark on in the Ladakh region of India. A snow leopard trip in Ladakh offers a rare chance to witness this animal in its natural habitat while exploring the breathtaking landscapes of the Himalayas at an altitude of over 11,500 feet.

Vinayak Koul

The snow leopard is one of the most elusive and endangered big cats in the world, found in rugged terrain of Central and South Asia, including the Indian Himalayas. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classifies snow leopards as vulnerable.

The first-ever survey concluded in January 2024 has estimated the snow leopard numbers to be 718 (10–15 per cent of the global population) in India, with the maximum numbers estimated to be in Ladakh (477), followed by other hill states—Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and Jammu and Kashmir.

Top Destinations for Snow Leopard Sightings

The Hemis National Park and Sham Valley are the two major hotspots of snow leopard spotting in Ladakh. The Hemis National Park, located just south of Leh, has the highest concentrations of snow leopards not only in India but also in the world.

The park has stunning landscapes, rocky mountains, deep gorges, valleys, and abundant wildlife, including snow leopards, Tibetan wolves, blue sheep (bharal), Eurasian lynx, and Himalayan marmots.

The best time to spot the snow leopard is during the winter, from December to February. During this season, the prey, such as bharal, descend to lower altitudes in search of food, and the snow leopards follow them. Although the harsh winter conditions make the journey more challenging, they also enhance the likelihood of spotting

these animals. Additionally, the snow-covered landscape adds a touch of magic to the experience.

Chasing the Ghost

The trips are usually organised as multi-day expeditions, giving travellers ample time to track the snow leopards and explore the region’s natural beauty. Experienced local guides, well-versed in the behaviour and habitats of snow leopards, significantly enhance the chances of encountering these elusive wild cats. Tours are often accompanied by local experts, wildlife photographers, and conservationists. While patience and perseverance are essential—sightings are never guaranteed—the adventure itself offers immense rewards.

Visitors can stay in homestays run by local communities in the villages around the Hemis National Park. The homestays contribute to community-based conservation efforts, as locals actively preserve the snow leopard’s habitat. Homestays also provide visitors with an interesting and exciting opportunity to interact with the local Ladakhi people and learn about their way of life in such a remote, high-altitude region. Another option to stay is at Rumbak Wildlife Lodge, which offers a blend of luxury and the beauty of the Ladakhi landscape with a commitment to ecological balance.

Preparing for the Unique Adventure

Being at a high altitude, acclimatising in Leh is crucial to avoid altitude sickness. So, it is absolutely essential to spend at least two days in Leh adjusting to the altitude

before heading out for the quest. The trip requires a good level of physical fitness to handle the cold, high-altitude conditions, along with weather-appropriate clothing. The environment in Ladakh is fragile, and it is crucial to leave no trace. Carry reusable water bottles and minimise waste during the trip. Responsible travel ensures that future generations will also have the chance to witness the beauty of snow leopards in the wild.

A snow leopard sighting trip to Ladakh is not just a wildlife expedition; it is a journey into one of the most remote and breathtaking corners of the world. The thrill of searching for one of the planet’s most elusive predators, combined with the majestic Himalayan landscapes and the rich culture of Ladakh, makes this adventure an unforgettable experience.



About the Author: Vinayak Koul is a Director at SnowLion Expeditions, a company with over three decades of experience in the travel industry. Specialising in organising trips throughout India, SnowLion Expeditions is a trailblazer in Ladakh tourism.

STAY AND PLAY

ON YAS ISLAND ABU DHABI



📍 SEAWORLD® YAS ISLAND, ABU DHABI



03 Days from
US\$ 265*
Per Person

Inclusions:

- ✓ 02 Nights Stay with Breakfast
- ✓ Return Abu Dhabi Intl. Airport Transfers by Private Vehicle
- ✓ Any 02 Theme Park Access - Ferrari World™ Yas Island, Abu Dhabi / Yas Waterworld Yas Island, Abu Dhabi / Warner Bros. World™ Yas Island, Abu Dhabi / SeaWorld® Yas Island, Abu Dhabi
- ✓ Taxes

Remarks: Rates are based on TWN/DBL Occupancy. Rates and offers are subject to change and subject to availability. Valid till 31Jan 2025 (except peak season) . *T&C apply.



Otila International Pvt. Ltd.

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

Ahmedabad: +91 93 7612 0982

Coimbatore: + 91 99 5271 7750

Kochi: +91 75 9386 3903

Nashik: +91 25 3231 0044

Bengaluru: +91 96 0648 4185

Hyderabad: +91 88 8501 5970

Kolkata: +91 98 3011 9561

Pune: + 91 20 4002 6960

Chennai: +91 44 4555 8582

Indore: +91 73 1491 1374

New Delhi: +91 11 4141 4242

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

India's Divine Destinations Chart the Future of Religious Tourism



"To other countries, I may go as a tourist, but to India, I come as a pilgrim." Martin Luther King Jr's famous words encapsulate India's magnetic attraction as a beacon of spiritual fulfilment. TTJ explores the emerging trends, challenges, and strategic initiatives driving the boom of religious tourism in India, drawing insights from prominent Indian tour operators and industry experts.

Prativa Vaidya Bhalla

As millions of travellers converge upon India to 'Eat, Love and Pray', history and pop culture continue to present India as the ground zero of spiritual and transformative travel. Buoyed by this popularity, the religious travel segment is experiencing an all-time high as it firmly establishes itself as a pivotal cornerstone of India's tourism bedrock. It plays a significant role in boosting economic growth and preserving our rich cultural heritage.

The Boom of Religious Travel

The religious tourism sector in India has demonstrated significant growth, with the Ministry of Tourism (MoT) reporting 1,439 million visitors in 2022 and generating an impressive revenue of Rs 1.34 lakh crore. Projections suggest that this revenue could rise to \$59 billion by 2028, alongside the potential creation of 140 million jobs by 2030. This highlights the critical importance of the sector in India's tourism landscape.

Home to over 450,000 religious and cultural heritage sites, India is a treasure trove of pilgrimage and sacred landmarks; some enjoy widespread recognition, while countless lesser-known hidden gems remain largely unexplored within local communities. Tourists are drawn to India's diverse experiences - from the

historic Catholic churches and temples of Tamil Nadu to Vipassana in Rishikesh, from the Golden Temple in Amritsar to the magnificent Ganga Aarti in Varanasi.

Spiritual Journeys Reimagined

The concept of religious tourism is evolving to meet the changing interests and values of modern travellers and now reflects a broader shift towards more meaningful, responsible, and transformative travel experiences, engineering its phenomenal growth.

India's Spiritual Odyssey

Identifying fast emerging trends, Krishna Mohan Alapati, Managing Director, Southern Travels, says, "While pilgrimages like the Char Dham Yatra and the Vaishno Devi trek remain evergreen, there is a growing demand for spiritual wellness retreats at holy sites. Travellers are choosing lesser-known sites like Ujjain, Sri Kamakhya Devi, and Tawang Monastery, and immersive experiences, such as participating in local rituals, exploring ancient temple architecture, and engaging with spiritual teachings, are in high demand. There is also a noticeable rise in youth and family groups undertaking religious travel, combining devotion with leisure and adventure."

Ashutosh Chandel, CEO, CareMyTrip

observes, "Travellers are seeking curated, multi-stop pilgrimage experiences, combining spiritual journeys with wellness retreats and attending grand festivals - Our Maha Kumbh Yatra offers an inviting blend of spirituality with immersive experiences like the Shahi Snan."

Punit Bhasin, Managing Partner at Indus Travel Company and Senior Vice Chairman of Enterprising Travel Agents Association (ETAA), North India Chapter, shares, "India is currently witnessing a massive surge in religious tourism fuelled by the general sentiment of Hindutva. The Ram Temple in Ayodhya has catalysed heightened interest in exploring religious sites and relics.

Saransh Gupta, Director of Business Development, Truly India Tours and Travels, mentions, "There is an increasing demand for organised pilgrimage tours combined with leisure activities. With traveller budgets on the rise, destinations like Dwarka, Katra, Nathdwara, and Rameshwaram are experiencing notable growth.

Top Sacred Circuits

Ashutosh observes a rising demand for customised pilgrimage tours, like the Ramayan and Awadh Darshan Yatra, the Chardham Yatra in Uttarakhand, Mata Vaishno Devi Yatra in Jammu, and Tirupati



Holi



Maha Kumbh



Ganga Aarti in Varanasi

Balaji Darshan in Andhra Pradesh. Interest in environmentally sustainable remote journeys, like the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra including Om Parvat and Adi Kailash, is also rising. Ayodhya’s increasing prominence as a key religious destination reflects the rising popularity of spiritual circuits connecting Ayodhya, Kashi, and Prayagraj.

Punit identifies destinations like Varanasi, Ayodhya, Katra, Vrindavan in UP, the Kedarnath temple in Uttarakhand, Meenakshi temple in Madurai, Shirdi near Pune, and the Golden Temple in Amritsar as the most in-demand pilgrimages.

Saransh names Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Amritsar, and Katra as the consistent top sellers in religious tourism with a notable upsurge in inquiries for Puri and Konark temples in Odisha, the Tamil Nadu Temple Trail, and the Buddhist Circuit.

Alapati notes that Northern India remains a consistent major hub with attractions like Varanasi, Rishikesh, Amritsar, and Haridwar, While Southern India features the popular destinations of Tirupati, Rameswaram, and

Guruvayur. Maharashtra’s Shirdi, Odisha temples, Ujjain’s sacred sites, and Assam’s Kamakhya Devi Temple are currently gaining popularity among devotional travellers.

Pilgrim Profiles

To effectively tap into emerging markets, staying in sight of evolving trends is crucial. Saransh shares, “Currently, 75 per cent of our religious visitors are international, reflecting a growing fascination with India’s rich spiritual heritage.”

For CareMyTrip, domestic visitors still dominate religious tourism, especially for popular pilgrimages like Mata Vaishno Devi and Tirupati Balaji Darshan.

Pointing out a noteworthy shift, Ashutosh notes, “International interest is surging for mega experiences like the Maha Kumbh Mela and Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, particularly from Southeast Asia and countries with deep-rooted spiritual connections to Hinduism and Buddhism.”

Alapati concurs to add, “While domestic travellers remain the backbone of religious



Padmanabhaswamy Temple, Kerala

tourism, there is a marked increase in visitors from regions with cultural ties to India, such as Southeast Asia and Japan, especially for Buddhist circuits.

Reflecting on a similar trend, Punit mentions, “There is a noticeable rise in inquiries for destinations like Rishikesh, Varanasi, Khajuraho, Ayodhya, and Bodhgaya.”



▲ Krishna Mohan Alapati



▲ Punit Bhasin



▲ Saransh Gupta



▲ Ashutosh Chandel

Festivals Take Centre Stage

For most of our trade experts, the Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 is a stand-out event that attracts tourists from all over the globe. Ashutosh asserts, “Its sheer scale and spiritual significance make it a one-of-a-kind experience. International tourists are particularly fascinated by the ancient rituals, the grand Shahi Snan, and the overall vibrant spiritual atmosphere. Similarly, the Ganga festivals like Ganga Dussehra and Kartik Purnima also appeal to international visitors.

Crediting social media, Punit states, “The vibrancy of the grand Maha Kumbh with pictures of naga sadhus on social media entices international tourists to attend such an authentic event.”

Saransh observes, “For us, Holi remains the most popular Indian festival among international tourists. However, we are pleasantly surprised by the increasing interest in festivals like Hola Mohalla in Punjab, Durga Puja in Kolkata, Theyyams in North Kerala, and Hemis in Ladakh. The absolute numbers at present may not be large, but the year-on-year growth is impressive. The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 is a big hit for both individual and group bookings. Many of our regular programmes have been adjusted to align with Kumbh Mela activities!”

Alapati asserts, “Events like the Kumbh Mela have global appeal due to their massive scale and the spiritual energy they represent. Diwali in Varanasi attracts international travellers due to its grandeur and cultural significance, while Holi draws tourists to Mathura and Vrindavan to celebrate religious fervour.”

Navigating Challenges

A key hurdle in religious tourism, according to Alapati, is the lack of comfortable accommodations near popular pilgrimage

sites, many of which still lack modern amenities. He says, “Connectivity remains an issue, especially for offbeat remote religious destinations that lack easy access, particularly during peak seasons or major festivals. We work closely with local administrations to help mitigate these issues by providing well-organised, all-inclusive travel solutions for our clients.”

Identifying similar challenges, Saransh states, “Our primary challenge is overcrowding during peak travel periods, with limited accommodation and transport options. There is a need for improved lodging and higher-quality transport in certain regions, but we remain optimistic and expect new properties to emerge soon.”

Highlighting the obstacles faced by travel operators, Ashutosh notes, “Challenging tours such as Kailash Mansarovar and Chardham Yatra, located in remote terrains, lack adequate infrastructure for the large numbers of pilgrims they attract. The lack of proper connectivity in the Himalayan region is challenging during peak seasons. Managing mega festivals like the Maha Kumbh presents its own challenges, as the influx of millions of pilgrims necessitates meticulous planning to ensure smooth operations for a positive visitor experience.

Punit points out, “The government has acknowledged the vast potential of religious tourism in India in recent years, focusing on improving connectivity, accommodation, and infrastructure. However, we still face significant challenges in catering to our high-end customers, as last-mile connectivity and quality accommodations remain inadequate in many areas, affecting our growth trajectory.”

New Offerings

Sharing CareMyTrip’s new initiatives, Ashutosh states, “We have expanded our portfolio with niche pilgrimage circuits, like

the Ramayan Yatra - a narrative-driven experience that retraces Lord Rama’s legendary journey. The Awadh Darshan Yatra explores the spiritual depth of the Awadh, covering Ayodhya and other key sites. Our Kailash Mansarovar Yatra package provides logistical support and guided treks for high-altitude spiritual treks.”

Punit at Indus Travels notes that spiritual tourism in India now offers seamlessly blended religious visits with wellness programmes like yoga and Ayurveda at sacred sites. He adds, “While cultural immersion tours feature local festivals, rituals, and community interactions, heritage trails connect religious sites like the Ramayana and Mahabharata circuits.”

Saransh points out, “At Truly India Tours and Travels, we take pride in curating unique experiences tailored to the needs of each guest. We leverage religious festivals to immerse guests in local traditions, tracking dates through 2025 to ensure they do not miss out.”

Southern Travels continues to expand its repertoire by adding new circuits and lesser-known shrines. Alapati shares, “With a focus on personalised and seamless experiences, we promote offbeat religious tourism, including destinations like Sri Kamakhya Devi Yatra in Assam and Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh.”

By utilising a gamut of global marketing strategies—digital campaigns, social media outreach, partnerships with international trade, participation in major travel fairs, influencer collaborations, and targeted on-ground promotions, our seasoned trade pundits have solidified their leadership in spiritual tourism in domestic and international markets. This well-thought-out, multifaceted approach is poised to elevate India’s spiritual tourism to greater heights as the world pays tribute to India’s sacred wisdom and spiritual heritage.

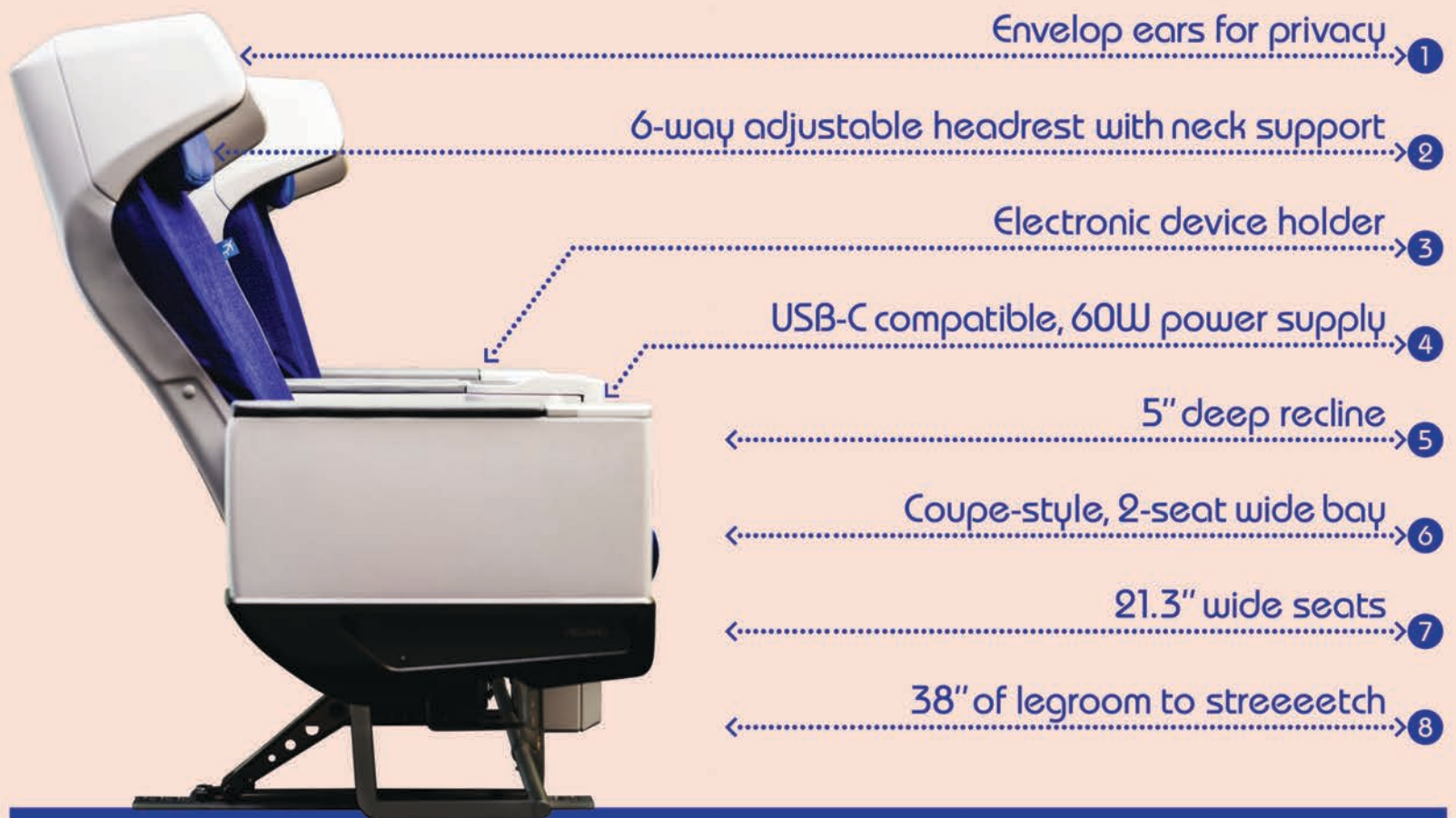


Om Parvat, Uttarakhand



Hemis Festival, Ladakh

Introducing IndiGo Stretch



IndiGoStretch your body,
mind and imagination.

Fares starting at ₹18,018*

Book now goIndiGo.in



T&C apply. W.E.F. 14th November, 2024.*Lowest all-inclusive one-way fare valid on limited seats.

Uttar Pradesh

Elevating the *Spiritual Experience* for Millions

In a detailed interaction, Mukesh Kumar Meshram (IAS), Principal Secretary, Tourism and Culture and Director General, Uttar Pradesh Tourism, Government of Uttar Pradesh, elaborates on the significant rise in religious tourism in the state. With TTJ, he highlights strategic infrastructure developments and innovative initiatives aimed at enhancing the pilgrimage experience, emphasising Uttar Pradesh's commitment to showcasing its rich spiritual heritage to both domestic and international visitors.

Prashant Nayak

How does the Ram Mandir align with the state's broader strategy to boost religious tourism in India?

Ram Mandir in Ayodhya symbolises immense spiritual significance to millions of Hindus. It is more than just a palatial temple; it represents faith, devotion, and cultural identity. Even during its construction, the Ram Mandir has drawn significant attention, with thousands of visitors flocking to Ayodhya to witness its progress.

The surge in visitors, especially since construction began, has been remarkable. Ayodhya has seen a sharp increase in pilgrims and tourists, including international visitors from countries like Nepal, Mauritius, Trinidad and Tobago, and Fiji, which have significant Hindu populations. As a result, Ayodhya has emerged as one of India's fastest-growing religious tourism hubs, appealing not only to those on spiritual journeys but also to those curious about the cultural and historical significance of the Ram Mandir. The city has witnessed record-breaking crowds on significant festivals like Ram Navami and Diwali, further enhancing its reputation as a spiritual centre.

Please elaborate on the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor project and its expected impact on religious tourism in Varanasi?

Varanasi, often referred to as the spiritual capital of India, is one of the most revered cities in the world. It is famous for the Kashi Vishwanath Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva and draws thousands of devotees daily. Pilgrims come to perform rituals on the banks of the Ganges, particularly at Dashashwamedh Ghat, where the

daily Ganga Aarti creates a mesmerising spiritual atmosphere.

The Kashi Vishwanath Corridor project in Varanasi is a transformative development aimed at enhancing the city's appeal as a central religious tourism hub. Completed by the government, this ambitious project connects the revered Kashi Vishwanath Temple directly to the banks of the Ganga River, vastly improving the flow of visitors between these two key spiritual landmarks. The corridor now offers wider roads, modern facilities, and upgraded infrastructure, which not only enhances accessibility but also provides a more comfortable and organised experience for both domestic and international tourists. The development around the iconic Ganga Ghats—an integral part of the Varanasi experience—adds to the city's allure, providing a serene yet vibrant backdrop for pilgrims performing rituals and tourists witnessing the famous Ganga Aarti.



▲ Mukesh Kumar Meshram, I.A.S.



What other top places, attractions, circuits, events, and festivals in Uttar Pradesh make it a renowned destination for religious tourism?

Near Varanasi lies Sarnath, where Gautama Buddha delivered his first sermon, making it a major Buddhist pilgrimage site, enhancing the city's multi-religious appeal. Mathura and Vrindavan further highlight Uttar Pradesh's spiritual significance, closely tied to Lord Krishna's life. The Krishna Janmabhoomi Temple in Mathura, believed to be his birthplace, draws millions. At the same time, Vrindavan's Banke Bihari Temple is a lively hub of Krishna worship, especially during the vibrant Holi festival.

Prayagraj, known for the Sangam—the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and mythical Saraswati rivers—is a crucial Hindu site, particularly during the Kumbh Mela, the world's largest religious gathering. With its Ramayana connections, Chitrakoot is another significant destination where Lord Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana spent part of their exile. Kushinagar, where Buddha attained Mahaparinirvana, attracts Buddhists worldwide.

The state also hosts key Shakti Peethas like Vindhyachal, revered during Navratri, and Devipatan in Balrampur, dedicated to the goddess Durga. For those interested in Hindu texts, Naimisharanya is a spiritual centre where sages performed penance. It houses the Chakra Tirth, believed to be the earth's centre according to ancient scriptures.

What essential infrastructure projects are being undertaken to accommodate the millions of pilgrims and tourists expected for Mahakumbh 2025?

The Mahakumbh, held every 12 years in Prayagraj, is the largest of its kind, drawing millions of Hindu devotees and international tourists. For Mahakumbh 2025, the Uttar Pradesh government is implementing extensive infrastructure projects to accommodate the influx of pilgrims and tourists. Key highways to Prayagraj are being widened, with new flyovers and bypasses to ease congestion. Special parking zones and shuttle hubs on the city's outskirts will help streamline visitor movement.

Indian Railways is enhancing travel options, and tent cities along the Ganges will offer various accommodations, including luxury tents. The Sangam ghats are being renovated for safer and more accessible pilgrim baths, with dedicated river-cleaning initiatives to maintain the Ganges' purity.

Real-time crowd monitoring and enhanced security measures are in place, with disaster management and medical services throughout the event area. Improved telecommunication and expanded facilities at Prayagraj Airport, along with additional

flights and services at nearby airports like Varanasi, will handle the increased air traffic. Temporary hospitals and medical camps will provide essential health and safety services across Prayagraj.

What initiatives are planned to highlight Uttar Pradesh's rich cultural heritage to foreign tourists attending the event?

Kumbh Mela is not just a religious event but has grown into a global phenomenon, attracting visitors from various cultures, nationalities, and backgrounds. Its significance as the largest peaceful gathering in the world has given the spiritual festival a unique international appeal, often featured in documentaries, travel shows, and global media, making it a bucket-list experience for many. The event offers a chance to witness the vibrant spirituality of India, with sadhus, saints, and devotees coming together for the sacred ritual of bathing in the holy rivers.

To cater to both domestic and international visitors, we are focusing on providing a blend of traditional experiences with modern comforts. One of the major highlights this year is the luxury tent city, which offers an exquisite stay experience for those seeking comfort amidst the bustling energy of Kumbh Mela. Additionally, we are introducing helicopter rides to offer a bird's eye view of the sprawling mela grounds and the rivers, providing a unique perspective of this massive gathering, something you cannot truly grasp from the ground alone. Moreover, yoga and meditation sessions are being organised throughout the Kumbh, inviting participants worldwide to practice wellness in the birthplace of ancient spiritual traditions.

How is technology being used to enhance pilgrims' experiences, such as mobile apps for navigation, bookings, accommodations, or information about religious sites in Uttar Pradesh?

Mobile Applications like the UP-Tourism app offer pilgrims user-friendly tools for planning their journeys. These include GPS maps, real-time navigation, and updates for navigating busy pilgrimage centres and remote sacred sites. These apps streamline practical aspects, allowing users to pre-book accommodations, transportation, and essential services, especially during peak seasons.

Additionally, audio guides, interactive content, and detailed site descriptions enrich pilgrims' understanding of rituals and traditions. For those unable to visit in person, live-streaming and virtual tours allow participation in ceremonies remotely. Digital services, including e-ticketing, online registration, free Wi-Fi, charging stations, and multi-language kiosks, enhance accessibility and crowd management, making pilgrimages more convenient and immersive for all.



Mahakumbh 2025

Where Spirituality Meets Tradition and Adventure



Uttar Pradesh

UTTAR PRADESH TOURISM



Since ancient times, saints across India have engaged in deep spiritual practices, or sadhana, striving to connect with the divine and praying for world peace. The tradition of collective prayer and unity runs deep in Indian heritage and continues today through vibrant festivals and spiritual gatherings. Of these, the Mahakumbh stands out as the pinnacle, a sacred event occurring every 12 years that is among the world's largest spiritual gatherings.

Millions of pilgrims from around the world gather at Prayagraj, the sacred confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers, known as the Triveni Sangam. This revered gathering is steeped in the symbolism of ancient Indian texts, which recount the cosmic battle between gods and demons for the elixir of immortality. Bathing in the waters of this confluence during Mahakumbh is believed to purify the soul, bringing devotees closer to salvation and liberation.

Mahakumbh is hosted in rotation between Haridwar, Ujjain, Nashik, and Prayagraj every 12 years, creating a powerful blend of spirituality and cultural diversity. This monumental event serves as a unique bridge to inner transformation and offers visitors a deep look into India's living traditions,

making it a pilgrimage unlike any other.

In January 2025, Prayagraj will once again welcome the Mahakumbh, with extensive preparations already underway. The Uttar Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation (UPSTDC) is establishing a "tent city" in key areas like Arail Ghat, Parade Ground, and Jhunsi, offering around 2,000 tents in categories from basic to luxurious, and ensuring that pilgrims can enjoy both comfort and spiritual retreat. Moreover, special accommodations are being made for the Akhadas representing different monastic orders; these spiritual organisations bring an added dimension to the Mahakumbh's sacred atmosphere.

One of the key rituals of Mahakumbh is the series of seven important snans, or ritual baths, each with its own deep significance. The first snan is scheduled for January 13th, known as Paush Purnima, a full-moon bath associated with the pursuit of moksha (liberation from rebirth). On January 14, the Makar Sankranti snan—the first Shahi snan, or royal bath—will occur, where spiritual leaders symbolically lead devotees in taking the holy dip to mark the sun's northward shift. Other major snans include Mauni Amavasya (January 29), Basant Panchami (February 3), Magh Purnima (February 12), and the

grand finale on Mahashivratri (February 26), each representing unique blessings and significance on the journey to spiritual awakening.

In addition to these ritual baths, Mahakumbh offers visitors a rich cultural experience. A wide array of indigenous and local cuisines will be available, giving visitors the chance to savor the authentic flavours of the region. Complementing this is a series of yoga sessions, offering pilgrims a rejuvenating opportunity to align their physical, mental, and spiritual selves. Yoga, renowned as an integral part of Indian culture, will play a significant role in providing inner peace to all who attend the Mahakumbh.

Another beautiful cultural component of Mahakumbh will be the bhajan sandhyas, or evening devotional music performances, where the uplifting sounds of traditional music fill the air with tranquility. For those seeking adventure, Mahakumbh 2025 will have something special to offer: helicopter joy rides will give visitors an exhilarating aerial view of the grand Kumbh Mela grounds and the holy Sangam, providing a unique perspective on the enormity of this sacred congregation and the captivating landscape of Prayagraj.

Adventure lovers can also engage in water sports along the banks of the rivers. The area surrounding Prayagraj boasts a number of revered temples, including the famous Hanuman Temple and Mankameshwar Temple, each adding to the city's spiritual depth. These sacred sites allow visitors to explore Prayagraj's rich cultural history and enhance their journey with moments of deep spiritual connection.

Together, these cultural and recreational elements transform the Mahakumbh from a traditional pilgrimage into a multifaceted celebration of India's cultural heritage. With activities and experiences for every type of visitor, Mahakumbh 2025 promises to be an enriching event that resonates with both domestic and international travellers, all converging on Prayagraj for a glimpse of India's unique spiritual heartbeat.





BATHING DATES:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Paush Purnima | - 13 th January, 2025 |
| 2. Makar Sankranti (1 st Shahi Snan) | - 14 th January, 2025 |
| 3. Mauni Amavasya (2 nd Shahi Snan) | - 29 th January, 2025 |
| 4. Basant Panchami (3 rd Shahi Snan) | - 03 rd February, 2025 |
| 5. Achala Saptami | - 04 th February, 2025 |
| 6. Magh Purnima | - 12 th February, 2025 |
| 7. Shri Mahashivratri | - 26 th February, 2025 |

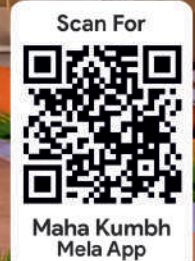
Experience Spiritual Grandeur in Unmatched Luxury

At the Mahakumbh 2025, tent cities are being set up at the banks of the Sangam and key areas like Parade Ground, Arail, and Jhunsi.

The tent city will offer sheer luxury with three categories of accommodation to choose from.

Villa, Maharaja, and Swiss Cottage-the three types of accommodation will offer unique amenities to suit various preferences of the travellers.

The site at Parade Ground will have 55 tents/Swiss cottages, while the site at Jhunsi will spread over 2.5 acres and accommodate 200 luxury cottages, while a larger tent city at Arail will feature 2000 cottages across 25 acres, with deluxe, super deluxe, and luxury options.





Tamil Nadu

A divine connect through temples and traditions

Tamil Nadu in India is renowned for its rich tapestry of temples and religious traditions that shape its cultural identity. With over 46,000 temples and vibrant festivals, it attracts millions of pilgrims and tourists annually. C. Samayamoorthy, I.A.S., Commissioner of Tourism and Managing Director, Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC), highlights that the department's initiatives to improve accessibility, promote sustainability, and utilise technology have significantly enhanced the religious tourism experience, positioning Tamil Nadu as a premier destination for spiritual exploration.



▲ C. Samayamoorthy, I.A.S.

Prashant Nayak

Tamil Nadu stands out in pilgrimage tourism with many renowned religious sites. How do temples influence daily life and contribute to the State's cultural identity?

Tamil Nadu, known as the land of temples, is a treasure trove of spiritual heritage that captivates millions of visitors annually. The State boasts numerous renowned religious destinations, including UNESCO World Heritage Sites like the majestic Brihadeeswara Temple and the serene Shore Temple of Mamallapuram. With 46,159 temples under the administrative control of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department, these sacred spaces are not only architectural masterpieces showcasing the region's rich artistic heritage but also serve as vital centres for pilgrimage tourism and cultural engagement.

Temples play an essential role in the daily lives of the people of Tamil Nadu, functioning as gathering places for rituals, celebrations, and community events. They are the heart of local festivals, such as the *Thaipusam*, *Chithirai Festival*, *Karthigai Deepam*, *Navaratri* celebrations, and much more. Similarly, churches and mosques play important roles, with celebrations and festivals drawing crowds to places of worship, uniting communities, and strengthening bonds. These festivals attract pilgrims and tourists, creating a lively atmosphere filled with music, dance, and traditional performances that highlight Tamil Nadu's rich cultural tapestry.

The intricate carvings, towering *gopurams* (temple towers), and stunning sculptures of these temples embody the craftsmanship

and aesthetic values of Tamil culture. Each temple tells unique stories of local deities and mythological events, resonating deeply with the community's identity and beliefs.

Tamil Nadu's temples significantly enhance the State's tourism landscape as symbols of spiritual importance and cultural identity. They attract visitors not only for their religious significance but also for the immersive cultural experiences they offer. Through their festivals and daily rituals, temples play a crucial role in shaping the cultural identity of Tamil Nadu, making them integral to both the lives of the local population and the experiences of tourists exploring this vibrant region.

What are the other top places, attractions, circuits, events, and festivals in Tamil Nadu that make it a renowned destination for religious tourism?

Tamil Nadu's religious festivals significantly impact tourism by attracting millions of visitors worldwide, reflecting the rich diversity of faiths that coexist within the State. Deeply rooted in tradition and devotion, these festivals enhance the spiritual experience for pilgrims and contribute to the State's economy by boosting tourism infrastructure, local businesses, and hospitality services.

Festivals such as *Meenakshi Thirukalyanam* celebrated at the Arulmigu Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple in Madurai draw vast numbers of both international and domestic devotees and tourists to witness the celestial wedding of Goddess Meenakshi and Lord Sundareswarar. Similarly, the *Chithirai Ther* at the Arulmigu



Gangaikonda Cholapuram



Meenakshi Amman Temple



Chithirai Festival

Ranganathaswamy Temple in Srirangam, one of the largest temple car festivals in the world, brings in thousands of pilgrims. Festivals like *Adi Kiruthigai* at the Arulmigu Subramaniya Swamy Temple in Tiruttani and *Karthigai Deepam* at the Arulmigu Arunachaleswarar Temple in Tiruvannamalai are integral to the spiritual and cultural identity of Tamil Nadu.

The Feast of Our Lady of Good Health in Velankanni, Nagapattinam, draws Christian pilgrims worldwide. The 10-day festival begins with hoisting a holy flag, marking the start of the celebrations. Similarly, the 14-day *Kandhuri Festival*, also known as the *Nagore Dargah Festival* in Nagapattinam, is a significant event for Muslim devotees, reflecting the religious diversity and harmony that defines Tamil Nadu's spiritual landscape.

Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC) plays a vital role in supporting religious tourism by offering curated pilgrim tours such as the Adi Amman Tour, Vishnu Temple Tour, Giri Valam, Arupadai Veedu, and Velankanni Tour, along with providing convenient accommodation facilities for pilgrims. The 'Aalayam' pilgrim accommodation, operated by TTDC, caters to visitors in temple towns like Rameswaram, Tiruvannamalai, and Kancheepuram, ensuring a comfortable and enriching pilgrimage experience. These festivals, along with *Vaikunda Ekadesi* at the Arulmigu Ranganathaswamy Temple in Srirangam and the *Dasara* festival in Kulasekarapattinam, position Tamil Nadu as a renowned destination for religious tourism, drawing visitors from diverse faiths and enhancing the State's cultural and spiritual significance.

What initiatives are being taken to improve accessibility to key religious sites in Tamil Nadu, particularly for elderly and differently-abled pilgrims?

The State has undertaken several initiatives to enhance accessibility to key religious sites, particularly for elderly and differently-abled pilgrims. Many temples now feature ramps and wheelchair-friendly pathways, improving accessibility within the premises. Additionally, the State is focused on enhancing last-mile connectivity to remote or hilltop religious destinations. For instance, battery-operated cars are available at several temple complexes, and rope cars are provided for devotees to make hilltop shrines easy to access.

Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC) also offers special senior citizen tours, often at discounted rates, with comfortable transportation and assistance to ensure a smooth pilgrimage experience. These collective efforts make religious tourism in Tamil Nadu more inclusive, ensuring that all visitors,

regardless of physical limitations, can fully participate in the State's spiritual and cultural heritage.

How is technology being utilised to enhance the experience of pilgrims, such as mobile apps for navigation, bookings, accommodations, or information about religious sites?

Tamil Nadu Tourism Department is developing a mobile application that provides real time information on accessibility features, temple timings, and nearby facilities. The app also offers an event calendar highlighting upcoming festivals, cultural events, and special tours across the State, allowing users to plan their visits around significant happenings. Additionally, it includes convenient booking services for accommodations and guided tours, streamlining travel arrangements. Information boards at heritage temples further enhance the visitor experience, offering insights into the temples' history, architecture, and cultural significance, thereby enriching the journey for pilgrims.

With the increasing number of tourists, how is Tamil Nadu Tourism ensuring sustainable practices in religious tourism to protect the sites and environment and involve local communities?

Tamil Nadu is actively promoting sustainable religious tourism by safeguarding sacred sites, protecting the environment, and fostering local community involvement. A key initiative is the 'Kalaingar Sacred Tree Sapling Planting Scheme,' under which one lakh sacred tree saplings have been planted in the premises of 2,597 temples. These trees are deeply connected to the religious and cultural significance of the temples, symbolising a commitment to environmental preservation.

Additionally, temple elephants, traditionally revered for their service, are being well cared for in a natural setting. Currently, 29 elephants across 27 temples are maintained with facilities such as splash pools, mud baths, and walking tracks. Their health is closely monitored with bi-monthly medical check-ups, and are provided organic food to ensure their well-being.

Furthermore, the 'Thingalldhorum Thooimaipan' scheme focuses on maintaining temple premises in a hygienic and eco-friendly manner. Cleaning efforts are regularly undertaken, and plastic and polythene bags in and around temples are strictly prohibited to prevent environmental damage. These efforts reflect Tamil Nadu's dedication to promoting sustainable religious tourism, balancing the influx of pilgrims with preserving sacred sites and nature.



Nagore Dargah



Velankanni Church

What marketing strategies are being employed to promote Tamil Nadu as a prime destination for religious tourism, especially to international audiences?

Tamil Nadu Tourism employs a multi-faceted marketing strategy to promote itself as a prime destination for religious tourism, especially to international audiences. One essential approach is its active participation in global travel marts and international tourism fairs like ITB Berlin, Top RESA-Paris, and WTM while organising roadshows. These events allow Tamil Nadu Tourism to showcase the State's rich spiritual heritage, sacred sites, and religious festivals,

engaging directly with travel agents, tour operators, and potential international tourists to offer curated pilgrimage packages and travel itineraries.

Major cultural and spiritual events in Tamil Nadu attract domestic and international visitors. These festivals are prominently featured in global marketing campaigns, positioning Tamil Nadu as a destination celebrated for its vibrant religious traditions.

Tamil Nadu Tourism

leverages social media on the digital front by hosting live events and virtual tours of key religious sites, allowing global audiences to experience the State's spiritual essence in real-time. Social media campaigns are crafted to engage international tourists, featuring rich content focused on Tamil Nadu's religious tourism offerings. These efforts are further amplified through influencer marketing and partnerships with travel bloggers, extending the State's reach to a broader global audience.

What upcoming initiatives or projects is Tamil Nadu Tourism planning to further develop and enhance religious tourism in the State?

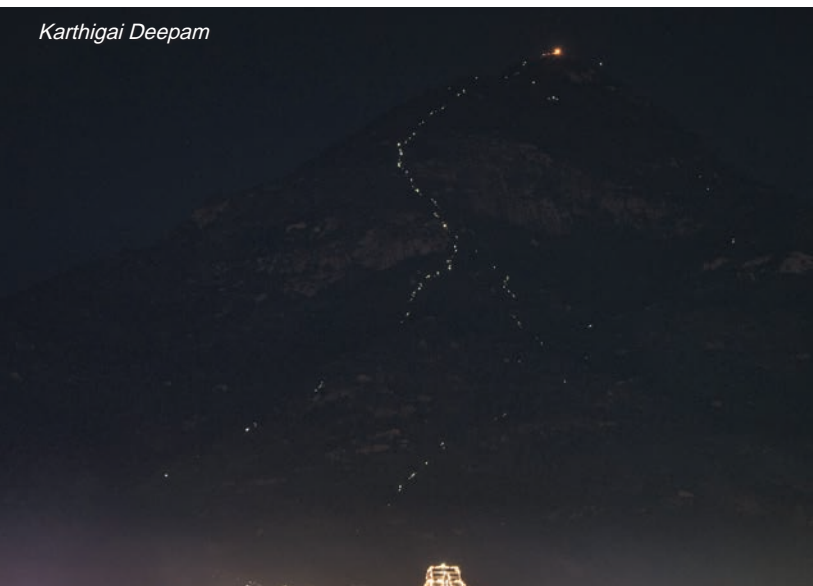
Looking ahead, Tamil Nadu Tourism is planning several initiatives to enhance religious tourism in the State further, focusing on developing Buddhist and Jain circuits. These projects aim to showcase the State's rich heritage connected to both religions.

Numerous caves, frescoes, stone beds, inscriptions, and sculptures linked to Jainism are being highlighted in sites like Chithannavasal and Arivar Koil in Pudukottai district, the Jain treasures in the Melur block of Madurai district, Vallimalai in Vellore district, and Kalugumalai hillock in Thoothukudi district. These sites offer a deep dive into Tamil Nadu's ancient Jain traditions.

Similarly, Tamil Nadu has a significant Buddhist legacy. Ancient Buddha statues have been discovered across nearly every district in the State. Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana Buddhism all flourished in Tamil Nadu, with Kanchi (Kancheepuram) serving as the largest Buddhist educational centre. Important Buddhist sites, such as Mangala Buddha Vihar in Villupuram District and locations in Ariyalur, Nagapattinam, and Poompuhar, are being developed to draw pilgrims and tourists interested in Tamil Nadu's Buddhist history.



Tiruvannamalai



Karthigai Deepam



Dussehra in Kulasekarapattinam

experience abu dhabi



Travstarz Global Group
A CTRIP® Invested Company

DMC II CONSOLIDATORS II VISAS II REPRESENTATIONS

visitabudhabi.ae

Abu Dhabi Diwali Special Offer Starting from US \$355 per person

Park Acces Free

Qasar Al Watan

Baps Abu Dhabi Temple

Minimum Stay 4 nights

Package Inclusions:

- 04 Nights stay in Abu Dhabi City Hotel
- Daily Breakfast
- Return Abu Dhabi International Airport Transfers 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

Phone No: 011 45515907 | bookings@travstarz.com
www.travstarz.com

Corporate office:
2/9, Sarvapriya Vihar, New Delhi 110016

Official Promotion Partner DCT Abu Dhabi

Your Trusted Exclusively B2B Company Since 2009

Member Of:



Shaping Religious Tourism in India

Uttar Pradesh Leads the Way

Uttar Pradesh is experiencing a renaissance in religious tourism, evolving from its traditional image as merely a Taj Mahal destination. With significant footfalls in cities like Varanasi, Ayodhya, Prayagraj, and Mathura-Vrindavan, the state is now promoting itself as a hub of spiritual and cultural exploration.

Prateek Hira

In India, the concept of tourism began with 'Teerthatan', where people travelled for religious and spiritual purposes. Indian domestic travel always relied on travel for religious purposes when people travelled for pilgrimages, which is somewhat of a mandatory exercise in Hinduism.

Shared Motivations of Spirituality and Exploration

A cursory analysis of the map of India will show that the entire length and breadth of the country, north to south and east to west, is dotted by important religious sites, encouraging people to cover the entire country. Virtually all religions besides Hinduism propagated travel for pilgrimages, including Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This kind of travel came so naturally that we seldom considered this form of travel an economic activity. Still, it has always supported economies as a natural benefit and is also the most sustainable and social form of tourism to date, at least in India.

India's diverse religious sites have catalysed a remarkable rise in spiritual

tourism, especially in the post-COVID era, accounting for nearly 60 per cent of domestic travel. According to the Ministry of Tourism's 2023 statistics, 1,433 million domestic tourists visited pilgrimage sites in 2022, accompanied by 6.64 million international tourists. These numbers show a significant rebound from the pandemic's lull, when domestic spiritual tourism recorded 677 million visitors in 2021 and only 1.05 million in 2020. Globally, religious tourism has also been on the rise—Mecca sees 15.4 million visitors annually, and Saint Peter's Basilica in the Vatican attracts 6.76 million.

As a welcome surprise, very recently, demographic profiles of travellers for spiritual travel have changed. Where this kind of travel was associated with the aging population, rural population, and most travellers came from not-so-economically well-off backgrounds, now it is the younger lot, urban population, and affluent class choosing to travel on religious tracks.

Growth of Religious Tourism in Uttar Pradesh

In Uttar Pradesh, there is an annual footfall of 540 million in the four religious cities of Varanasi, Ayodhya, Prayagraj, and Mathura-Vrindavan alone. India could see an additional 50 million to 100 million tourists a year on account of the inauguration of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. Add to this the footfall in Prayagraj during Kumbh, which falls once every six years. In 2017, it was 250 million within a limited period of less than two months. In 2025, Prayagraj will yet again be hosting

Maha-Kumbh beginning from January 13, 2025, and it is expecting 500 million visitors. Beyond Uttar Pradesh, Tirupati Balaji receives around 50 million tourists annually and is considered a temple with the greatest number of visitors.

Expanding Horizons through Spiritual Tourism

Uttar Pradesh, once primarily recognised for the Taj Mahal in Agra, had long relied heavily on this iconic monument for its tourism industry. This singular focus, however, overlooked the state's vast potential in other areas. Today, the tourism landscape of Uttar Pradesh has evolved significantly, with a broader emphasis on spiritual tourism destinations. This expansion has revealed the untapped opportunities that could have transformed the state's tourism profile much earlier.

The State of Uttar Pradesh has been working consistently to leverage the power of tourism by way of four-pronged strategies: identification, planning, time-bound implementation, and quantifiable monitoring. Also, mapping tourism circuits of religious importance in the state was a huge step in this direction. Be it Ramayana, Krishna, Buddha, Jain, or even the great Sufi saints, all were mapped strategically in Uttar Pradesh, with a primary objective to boost the state's economy through tourism in a time-bound manner.

In 2018 and later in 2022, the Uttar Pradesh government came up with a very futuristic tourism policy that has attracted huge investments in the state, and the state stands out as an example of planned tourism development for many other states of India to take clues from. The policy not only incentivises tourism projects but also pays huge attention to employment generation, participation of women in tourism, skilling youth for tourism, and more. The policy is quite holistic in nature and deals with rural, agricultural, ecological, urban, and adventure tourism in equal measure, confirming the guidelines of responsible tourism. As a result, tourism in Uttar Pradesh is emerging as an economic equaliser, spreading benefits in all regions of the state.



Promoting Spiritual Centres Beyond Religious Identity

With respect to tourism, it will not be justified to only project a destination as just a religious centre, as that only brackets interests and limits the destination's profile. The best projection of such destinations would be as a 'Spiritual Centre' and a 'Centre of Human Idealism', unbracketing these from the brackets of religion and resonating with the concept of spiritualism, which is secular in nature, much broader in meaning, and in tune with 'Sanatan dharma'.

Often, religious destinations in India thrive and focus all their efforts on one main temple or, at the most, a very few countable others. Such a profile of a destination only limits its economic capabilities and diminishes tourism potential. To counter this, it is essential to have early morning and evening activities. These may include some spirituality-related experiences, such as walking tours, story sessions, river entertainment, light and sound shows, live musical and theatrical performances, etc. Overemphasising a single temple visit can

diminish a city's broader appeal and limit the overall time tourists spend there. When a destination offers a variety of attractions and experiences, visitors are more likely to extend their stay beyond their primary reason for visiting, whether it be a shrine visit or a specific activity. This encourages more profound engagement with the destination.

It is also important that we explore, develop, and market the surrounding excursions. Taking an example of Ayodhya, India's newest destination, the important places around it are Chapiya (30-minutedrive), which is the birthplace of Swami Narayan, the deity of Akshardham; then there is Kodar, the birthplace of the father of Yoga, Maharishi Patanjali (40-minutedrive); similarly, only 2 hours away from Ayodhya is Maghar, where Saint Kabir's memorial stands.

Religious Tourism incarnated as Spiritual Tourism, with changed demographics and understanding is all set to leverage the power of tourism in India and the positive effects of the efforts in this direction are quite evident with the state of Uttar Pradesh leading the way.

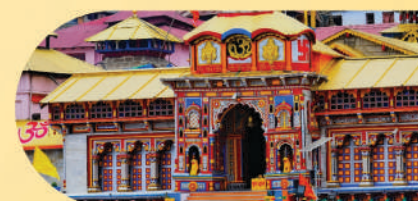
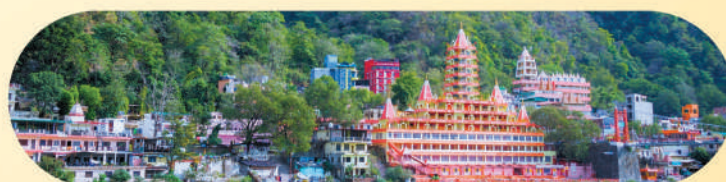


About the Author: Prateek Hira is the President and CEO of Tornos and heads multiple tour companies in India and internationally. He chairs tourism associations and FICCI's Tourism Committee in Uttar Pradesh. An accomplished tourism researcher and educator, Prateek sits on the boards of various universities and teaches tourism management at institutions across India and the world.



DISCOVER the beauty of Uttarakhand WITH DMC UTTARAKHAND

We specialize in providing **Hotels**
customized **Tours** and
thrilling **Trekking** experiences.



CONTACT DETAIL :

call us on: **+91-9897765888, 7668044099**

mail us on: **b2b@dmcuttarakhand.com**

AyurSoma Ayurveda Royal Retreat

The Beginning to Your Transformative Wellness Journey

For those seeking healing and rejuvenation, Somatheeram's AyurSoma Ayurveda Royal Retreat invites you to discover the transformative power of Ayurveda and yoga amidst the captivating beauty of Kerala.

Team TTJ

Nestled in the serene landscapes of Kerala, India, the Somatheeram Ayurveda Group is a leader in authentic Ayurvedic healing, yoga, and meditation. Founded in 1985 by Baby Mathew, it has become India's premier Ayurvedic hospital group, featuring three NABH-accredited hospitals in a resort-like setting. The group operates several retreats, including Somatheeram Ayurveda Village, Soma Manaltheeram Ayurveda Beach Village, Soma Palmshore Ayurveda Beach Resort, Soma Birds Lagoon Ayurveda River Retreat, Somatheeram International Institute of Yoga, and Somatheeram Ayurveda Academy, the latest addition being the AyurSoma Ayurveda Royal Retreat.

A Unique Retreat Experience

Setting a new standard in Ayurvedic healthcare, AyurSoma Ayurveda Royal Retreat invites guests to experience time-tested treatments, rejuvenating yoga, and meditation, all within a luxurious setting. Nestled between a lush hillock and the shimmering Chowara Beach, the retreat offers a tranquil escape with breathtaking views of the Arabian Sea, where guests can witness local fishermen and mesmerising sunsets. The architectural style reflects Kerala's rich heritage, drawing inspiration from ancient monuments and palace designs with craftsmanship that honours the region's golden history. Each room seamlessly blends traditional elegance with modern luxury, featuring ceramic-coated steel bathtubs for herbal soaks, ensuring a unique and relaxing experience for every guest.

Experience Exquisite Luxury Accommodations

At AyurSoma Ayurveda Royal Retreat, The Dhanwanthari Heritage Pool Villa boasts a sea view, private verandah, living room,



▲ Baby Mathew

private pool, open-air bathroom, and Ayurveda treatment room. The Dhanwanthari Heritage Deluxe Suite offers stunning sea views and a private balcony perfect for sunsets. The Maharaja Royal Suite features a private balcony with sea views, a spacious bedroom, and a living room. The Yuvaraja Royal Junior Suite combines bedroom and living area with luxurious touches. Choose between the Sea View Palace Deluxe Room and the Hill View Palace Deluxe Room, both featuring spacious interiors and private balconies for a serene escape.

Unmatched Amenities for Holistic Wellness

At AyurSoma, guests can indulge in an array of world-class amenities designed to enhance their wellness experience. The stunning infinity pool seamlessly merges with the Arabian Sea, providing breathtaking views of the sunset. A modern fitness centre equipped with state-of-the-art equipment caters to fitness enthusiasts.

The on-site beauty clinic offers rejuvenating Ayurvedic treatments that nurture both body and soul. Guests can also participate in renowned yoga and meditation programmes, guided by traditionally trained Indian gurus, in serene outdoor settings. Additionally, AyurSoma features two restaurants serving over 250 specially curated Ayurvedic dishes, expertly designed to balance the body's vatha, pitha, and kapha doshas for optimal health.

Why Choose Somatheeram Ayurveda Retreats?

Legacy of Excellence: With over four decades dedicated to authentic Ayurveda, Somatheeram integrates traditional wisdom, yoga, and meditation under the expert guidance of 42 specialised doctors and 280 therapists.

Award-Winning Facility: Recognised for its excellence, Somatheeram has received six national awards for being the best Ayurveda facility in India, including a prestigious "Hall of Fame" honour, alongside 11 state awards from the Government of Kerala.

Quality and Safety Accreditation: Guests can trust the quality and safety of care provided in NABH-accredited facilities, which uphold the highest healthcare standards. The group also holds notable certifications, including the Ayur Diamond from the Government of Kerala and Ayurveda SPA Europe certification.

Tranquil Environment: Set against the serene backdrop of Kerala's beaches, the retreats offer an ideal setting for healing.

Personalised Care: Each treatment is tailored to individual needs, ensuring maximum effectiveness. Guests embark on a transformative journey, experiencing Ayurvedic therapies, personalised diet plans, and herbal medicine crafted from a GMP-licensed manufacturing unit, all managed by a dedicated team of qualified professionals.

At Somatheeram Ayurveda Retreats, guests embark on a transformative wellness journey, benefiting from personalised ayurvedic treatments, a tranquil setting, and a dedicated team of experts. Discover the perfect blend of ancient healing traditions and modern comforts in beautiful Kerala.

For know more, visit www.somatheeram.net or write to mail@somatheeram.in



Kerala

DMC

PAUL MERCHANTS

Toll Free No. 1800-137-1444

Email: packages@paulmerchants.net

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

INDIA'S WILDLIFE TOURISM

Beyond the Ordinary



As wildlife tourism in India gains momentum and contributes substantially to the economy, it is impossible not to draw comparisons with Africa, the 'big daddy' of nature tourism. With its extensive wildlife repertoire and established infrastructure, where does India fit? TTI turns to a diverse panel of experts, including tour operators, conservationists, and industry experts, to assess how far we have come and what steps are necessary to elevate India's nature tourism to grand heights.

Prativa Vaidya Bhalla

India's wildlife tourism is experiencing major growth due to its rich natural heritage, conservation, government initiatives, and community efforts that attract global travellers. With business booming, India starts very strong with more than 400 species of mammals and 615 protected areas; it has 90 per cent forest land carpeted with 501 wildlife sanctuaries, 92 national parks, and 27 tiger reserves. The vast biodiversity inhabits an immeasurable variety of flora and fauna, drawing nature enthusiasts worldwide. Variations in ecology and biodiversity provide the most desirable natural habitats for India's vast and distinct variety of wildlife.

Africa Vs. India

Both countries offer distinctly different wildlife experiences, and each is unique in its own way. Making an astute point, Saurabh Thakekar, Director, Nature Explorers observes, "While Africa is grander in its scale of the vastness of habitat and density of animals, Indian wildlife

experiences offer more diversity and thrill. The x factor of wildlife tourism always lies in the thrill of tracking the animals and the sudden surprise sightings. The Sherlock Holmes game is better experienced in India than Africa because of denser forests and the elusive nature of key species."

Ravi Kalra, Managing Director, Travel Inn, reveals, "Places like the Serengeti or Masai Mara in Africa, showcasing vast open savannahs and the sheer abundance of large mammals, strike visitors with an overwhelming sense of space and scale, making the safaris feel more cinematic. In contrast, Indian wildlife experiences here are more intimate and adventurous. Whether tracking tigers in the dense forests of Central India or spotting leopards and elephants in the southern reserves, there is a certain thrill in the unpredictability. The jungle feels more mysterious, and safaris are often punctuated with visits to temples or villages, offering a deeper connection to the



▲ Saurabh Thakekar



▲ Ravi Kalra



▲ Dipankar Roy



▲ Kaustubh Upadhye

landscape. So, while Africa feels like a grand spectacle, India tends to leave people with a more layered, personal experience.”

Secret to Success

The rapid rise of India’s market has key factors that drive wild tourism in India. Dipankar Roy, Founder NorthEastTravels, points out, “International tourists are particularly drawn to the diversity of India’s wildlife. The opportunity to witness iconic species like the Bengal tiger, Asiatic elephant, and Indian rhinoceros in their natural habitats is a major attraction.”

Kaustubh Upadhye, Founder, Jungle Lore, shares, “For many, wildlife experiences in India are not just about viewing animals but also connecting with nature on a deeper level, like staying at eco-lodges in remote areas, participating in forest bathing, yoga, and meditation retreats. India’s forests are often linked to local myths, religious practices, and spirituality and truly add a mystical layer to the overall experience.”

Saurabh identifies the unmatched diversity of the ecosystem as a key attraction. He observes, “From deciduous forests to deserts, rainforests to snow-capped Himalayas, wetlands, grasslands, terai forests at the Himalayan foothills to Sundarbans, India weaves a true story of nature’s diversity.” Ravi insightfully states, “What often surprises international tourists is the genuine warmth of Indian hospitality and going above and beyond luxury, lodges offer personalised experiences, turning safaris into truly immersive journeys.”

Top Animal Encounters

The majestic Royal Bengal Tiger wins hands down as the undisputed star of wildlife attractions in India among our panellists! Popular parks for tiger sightings include Ranthambore, Bandhavgarh, Kanha, and Pench. For a unique experience, tracking tigers through the Sundarbans mangroves is lesser-known but truly unforgettable. Following close behind is the Asiatic lion, found exclusively in the Gir National Park in Gujarat, the one-horned rhinoceros in Kaziranga National Park in Assam, and the Asian elephant in Periyar and Bandipur National Parks. Others include the leopard in Bera, Rajasthan, and Satpura National Park, the black panther in Tadoba and Kabini and many more. Ladakh and Spiti Valley in Himachal Pradesh have become focal points for elusive snow leopard spotting.

Shift the Focus

Wildlife experts stress the need for innovative strategies fuelled with fresh, diverse wildlife experiences that go far beyond the popular tiger circuits. Saurav believes awareness is only 20 per cent about a select few wildlife, and the same tiger safari circuit tours have existed for the last two decades. He says, “We need a fresh, welcoming approach to launch and establish India’s new wildlife tourism products in the world market as well as good platforms for regional wildlife tour operators to connect with the established inbound tour operators in India and overseas.”

Ravi follows a similar line of thought, “Awareness of the big names like Ranthambore, Kanha, or Jim Corbett is evident, but beyond that, many are not fully aware of the sheer wildlife and eco-diversity India offers. It is only on arrival that visitors realise just how rich India’s varied wildlife experience truly is. To increase awareness, we need better storytelling to showcase the range of experiences beyond just tigers in India. Using social media to share real-time stories from the field could make an impact.”

Birdwatching – The next big thing!

Birdwatching holds significant potential in India’s wildlife tourism due to its remarkable biodiversity and range of habitats. Kaustubh explains, “India is home to over 1,300 bird species, including many endemic, rare, and migratory birds, including conic species like the Indian peafowl, Sarus crane, Great Indian bustard, flamingos, bar-headed geese, and Siberian cranes.”



© Swamand Deshpande



© Jenisha Aggarwal

Dipankar points out, “Birding hotspots rapidly gaining popularity are Bharatpur (Keoladeo National Park), the wetlands of Gujarat, and the Eastern Himalayas in Northeast India specially Sikkim, Darjeeling, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam even Himachal and Jammu Kashmir provide excellent opportunities.”

Saurabh observes, “India already receives thousands of international avian enthusiasts. However, most of the time, the tiger safari tourism overshadows the birdwatching agenda.”



Ravi summarises by adding, “India boasts an incredible bird diversity, with numerous species unique to the region, making it a birdwatcher’s paradise. Unlike traditional wildlife tourism, birdwatching offers a more intimate connection with nature, requiring patience and keen observation. This slower-paced, immersive experience is especially appreciated by international visitors. With effective promotion and a focus on showcasing India’s remarkable birdlife, birdwatching could easily emerge as a major attraction, offering a unique alternative to big-game tourism.”

Paving the Way Forward

India’s wildlife tourism stands at an exciting crossroads, poised to redefine its offerings and rival global destinations. Dipankar highlights the importance of infrastructure improvements and sustainable accommodations as India’s wildlife tourism sector grows. He says, “We can enhance our wildlife tourism by improving infrastructure and adding sustainable and eco-friendly accommodation options on international standards. We must create multi-destination wildlife tourism circuits, bundling popular parks with lesser-known wildlife reserves, to offer tourists more comprehensive experiences. Marketing India’s biodiversity beyond tigers, emphasising birdwatching, snow leopards, and cultural interactions with local communities will broaden the conservation approach.”

Ravi highlights the importance of accessibility in developing India as a top wildlife destination. “If we can package accessibility, diversity, expert guiding, and responsible tourism together, India can exceed international expectations and stand out as a premier wildlife destination,” he says. Ravi notes that while tigers remain a major draw, promoting other species like leopards, rhinos, and India’s remarkable birdlife can help broaden India’s wildlife tourism appeal. “Improving roads, transport, and connectivity between parks and reserves, especially in remote areas, is essential. Our ecosystems are incredibly diverse, from deserts to mangroves and the Himalayas. We need to showcase this better,” he adds.

Kaustubh advocates for a comprehensive approach to sustainability in wildlife tourism. “We need to build widespread sustainable tourism infrastructure, including eco-friendly accommodations, waste management, and clean energy solutions that meet international standards,” he suggests. National parks often close during the monsoon season, limiting wildlife tourism options. Kaustubh believes India can offer alternatives, such as birdwatching, rainforest treks, or wetland safaris, to create a year-round tourism model.

In Saurabh’s view, business is thriving, and the numbers are certainly encouraging. However, he adds, “There is a pressing need to enhance infrastructure and accessibility around lesser-known wildlife destinations.

Promoting emerging spots like Nagzira Sanctuary for wildlife safaris, Mangalajodi for bird photography, and Goa’s sanctuaries for birdwatching and microfauna would help diversify the tourism map. With better facilities and awareness, these hidden gems could attract more visitors and expand the appeal of wildlife tourism. India’s safari availability is limited, creating fierce competition as spots sell out quickly. With domestic wildlife tourism booming, it becomes increasingly harder to secure safari permits. We could set aside a dedicated quota for international tourists, with unclaimed spots later offered to locals at standard rates.”

Winning Hearts

India’s wildlife tourism does not just impress; it takes you on a wild adventure that hooks travellers with its vibrancy, hospitality, and a dash of cultural charm. Kaustubh shares, “Tourists often rave about the sheer range of wildlife in India and the biodiversity in its ecosystems. International visitors are impressed by the warm hospitality and friendliness of the staff, which adds a positive cultural dimension to their visit. Tourists also appreciate the affordability of wildlife safaris in India, which offer good value for money.”

Dipankar emphasises with pride, “Many guests praise the diversity of wildlife and the thrill of close encounters with iconic species. Tourists are often deeply moved by the beauty of India’s natural landscapes.” According to Saurabh, “Visitors appreciate the diversity of species, simplicity, and honesty of the locals, and cultural experiences coupled with wildlife tours.”

Perhaps one of the most unique aspects of India’s wildlife tourism is the sense of mystery and excitement that pervades each adventure. Ravi shares that international tourists frequently express awe at the unexpected richness of India’s wildlife beyond its famous tigers. “Many are surprised by the diversity of species they encounter. They weren’t expecting to see so many bird species, leopards, elephants, or rhinos in such unique landscapes. The cultural richness surrounding wildlife experiences, the local communities, and conservation efforts leave a lasting impression,” he adds.



India is well-positioned to continue captivating visitors from around the globe

India's tourism landscape is rapidly evolving, attracting international travellers with its rich cultural heritage, stunning landscapes, and diverse experiences. Prominent tour operators from different regions in India share their insights on the inbound tourism market. While each specialises in various travel areas, their feedback reflects the unique appeal of India, highlighting the country's dynamic and multifaceted tourism offerings.

Prashant Nayak

India's global image has evolved significantly, beyond stereotypes like 'snake charmers.' Today, it is viewed through the lens of politics, Bollywood, OTT, and the achievements of its diaspora. As countries compete for tourism, India stands out for its unique offerings, encapsulated in the tagline 'Incredible India.' Many travellers, often seasoned globetrotters, are drawn here for its spirituality, craft, culture, heritage, wellness, and wildlife. Improved infrastructure and connectivity further enhance India's appeal, transforming positive interest into actual travel experiences.

Nivalink Curates Unparalleled Experiential Journeys Across India



▲ Niraj Vashi

Nivalink is a boutique travel agency in Mumbai, established in 2001, dedicated to creating memorable experiences for all travellers. Niraj Vashi, Founder and Director, Nivalink, states, "Traditional inbound tourism has primarily attracted travellers from developed regions like Western Europe, the USA, Canada, and Australia, focusing on heritage sites, cultural experiences, and crafts. Rajasthan and Kerala have long been leaders in this area, followed by Tamil Nadu."

According to Niraj, new inbound destinations are emerging thanks to improved infrastructure and connectivity. Better roads, hotels, and air/rail links have made travel to the Northeast more accessible. For example, he says, "Vivanta by Taj has opened a hotel in Tawang, bringing international-standard accommodation to this remote area, thus boosting tourism." Likewise, Vijayapur (Bijapur) lacked quality hotels, which limited the promotion of Karnataka's

Heritage Triangle (Bijapur, Badami, and Hampi). Now, with several new hotels and an upcoming airport, tourism is set to increase. Additionally, Port Blair now offers a direct flight from Malaysia, enhancing regional tourism to the Andaman Islands."

Discussing emerging markets for Indian travel, Niraj notes, "We have guests from Kenya who love Kashmir, and Indian-origin South Africans are coming for spiritual tourism and pilgrimages. Wellness tourism is attracting visitors from countries like Turkey, which previously had few travellers to India for this purpose. Additionally, many birdwatchers are arriving from Southeast Asia. This influx from non-traditional markets is expanding the scope of inbound travel."

Niraj also mentions new trends and destinations in Indian tourism. The development of Ayodhya has attracted NRIs and the Indian diaspora from around the world, bringing them back in large numbers. The Rann of Kutch and its desert festival particularly appeal to Gujarati NRIs. Wildlife tourism is expanding beyond Central India's tiger reserves, with experienced photographers exploring leopards in Rajasthan, primates in Manas National Park, snow leopards in Spiti and Ladakh, and red pandas on the Indo-Nepal border. Tiger tourism is also evolving, with new parks being established. Social media and bird-watching apps have significantly boosted birding in India, as photographers target specific species in each region. The industry is still nascent but will continue to grow with the opening of more birding lodges.

A noteworthy trend is the rising number of international travellers coming to India for weddings, often using the opportunity to explore the country during their stay. While not entirely new, the volume of Indian weddings involving NRIs and international brides and

grooms has seen a significant surge. This growth has made the pre- and post-wedding travel segments highly lucrative for inbound travel operators.

Nivalink's traditional markets include the USA, France, the UK, Australia, and South Africa, with Singapore emerging as a robust regional market. Niraj explains, "Our strategy has always focused on extensive travel within India to explore and authenticate destinations, hotels, and experiences. We promote this expertise through our website and social media. Our areas of specialisation include luxury and experiential travel, wildlife, birdwatching, wellness, and pilgrimages. This targeted approach gives us a competitive edge in the crowded inbound travel market. Our company's mission centres on providing travellers with exceptional experiences in India, inspiring them to return or recommend us to others."

International travellers are often overwhelmed by the genuine warmth of Indians, particularly hotels and local guides, who embody the spirit of "Atithi Devo Bhava." However, this may not hold in tourist-heavy areas like Agra, Varanasi, and Delhi. Niraj reflects, "Once I asked an international traveller why he keeps returning to India, to which he said, "India, beyond its cities, retains its originality and authenticity. I come for its unique elements, delicious food, and warm hospitality."

Many travellers are pleasantly surprised by India's progress, particularly with easy UPI payments. Returning visitors observe some loss of authenticity due to modernisation but recognise that growing tourism makes it challenging to preserve every traditional element. There remains a need for better washroom facilities and enhanced hygiene standards at restaurants along travel routes.

Discover Madhya Pradesh's Rich Biodiversity with i4u Travel Services



▲ Souvik Banerjee

Madhya Pradesh is a multi-faceted destination for tourism, offering a variety of experiences, including wildlife, heritage, spirituality, and leisure. i4u Travel Services, based in Jabalpur, specialises in wildlife and also caters to all the heritage, spiritual, and leisure destinations of Madhya Pradesh.

Souvik Banerjee, Director, i4u Travel Services, says, "Since the last few years, India has witnessed a surge in international tourism driven by a growing fascination with its diverse cultural heritage, spiritual allure, and breathtaking natural beauty. Notable trends among international tourists in India include a strong desire for cultural immersion, as travellers seek authentic experiences that allow them to explore the country's rich cultural tapestry. This involves

visiting ancient temples, attending traditional festivals, learning local crafts, and engaging with local communities, particularly in places like Tamil Nadu and Varanasi. Additionally, India's reputation as a global hub for yoga and wellness has drawn many visitors to retreats in Haridwar, Rishikesh, and Uttarakhand, where they seek rejuvenation and inner peace. Wildlife tourism is also on the rise, with India's national parks attracting nature enthusiasts and adventure seekers for activities like tiger safaris and birdwatching tours, especially in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan."

India offers a diverse range of attractions for international tourists. According to Souvik, specific experiences that foreign visitors are most interested in, include iconic historical and cultural sites like the temples of Tamil Nadu, the Taj Mahal, the Golden Temple, and Hawa Mahal, as well as lesser-known destinations such as Bundi and Orchha. Wildlife enthusiasts are drawn to tiger safaris in national parks like Bandhavgarh, Kanha, and Pench. At the same time, the country's reputation as a global hub for yoga and wellness attracts many visitors to retreats. Goa's pristine beaches, vibrant nightlife, and emerging destinations like Varkala and Gokarna cater to beachgoers. For pilgrimages, spiritual seekers flock to sacred sites such as Varanasi, Rishikesh, and Haridwar. Additionally, travellers are increasingly exploring off-the-beaten-path regions like Ladakh, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh for unique cultural experiences, engaging in community-based tourism through homestays, participating in adventure activities in the Himalayas and Western Ghats, and discovering India's diverse culinary traditions through food tours and cooking classes.

i4u Travel Services is focusing on several

key segments of foreign tourists visiting India. Adventure enthusiasts are drawn to thrilling activities like trekking, rafting, and wildlife safaris. Cultural immersions attract those interested in India's rich heritage, including historical sites, temples, and traditional festivals. Spiritual seekers come for transformative experiences and pilgrimages to sacred sites. Wellness and yoga enthusiasts seek rejuvenating retreats and practices, while luxury travellers seek personalised experiences and high-end accommodations. By targeting these segments, i4u Travel Services aims to provide tailored experiences for a diverse range of travellers.

International tourists often share a mix of positive and negative feedback about their experiences in India, highlighting several common themes. According to Souvik, "Travellers are captivated by India's cultural richness, including its vibrant festivals, ancient traditions, and warm hospitality. They also appreciate the stunning natural beauty, from the Himalayas to Goa's beaches, and find deep spiritual growth at sacred sites and yoga retreats. Indian cuisine, with its rich flavours, is often a highlight, and many budget travellers enjoy the affordability of travelling in India."

Challenges do exist, however. Some travellers face infrastructure issues, such as crowded cities and heavy traffic. While cultural differences add to the intrigue of travel, they can also present obstacles, like language barriers. Souvik notes, "For some, safety concerns—particularly in crowded areas or late at night—are important considerations, while language barriers can create communication challenges in regions with limited English proficiency."

From Temples to Trekking, Trip Rega Encapsulates the Essence of Uttarakhand



▲ Alpesh Kumar

Uttarakhand is a northern Indian state home to part of the stunning Himalayas, often referred to as 'Devbhumi' or 'Land of the Gods.' Religious tourism is the largest segment in

the state, featuring numerous ancient Hindu temples that attract pilgrims from across the country. In addition to its spiritual offerings, Uttarakhand is a hub for adventure activities such as trekking, river rafting, and camping, making it a popular destination for both spiritual seekers and adventure enthusiasts.

Trip Rega is one of the leading DMCs for Uttarakhand. Alpesh Kumar, CEO, Trip Rega, says, "International tourists have increasingly shown interest in India due to its rich culture, heritage, yoga, and diverse experiences. The affordability of Indian tours compared to other international destinations is another significant factor. While COVID-19 and some international issues have impacted tourism recently, it is gradually returning to normal."

Cultural experiences are a significant attraction for foreign tourists, with India's diverse states offering distinct and memorable activities. Alpesh shares, "Yoga has greatly influenced tourism in recent years, with walking tours in Rishikesh and Haridwar drawing considerable interest from international visitors. The Indian

Himalayas are also popular for trekking tours to iconic sites like the Source of the Ganga, Kedarnath, and the Valley of Flowers. Additionally, village tourism is on the rise, as tourists seek authentic rural experiences in the Himalayan region."

Trip Rega's primary markets include the USA, Europe, the UK, Australia, Canada, and Israel. However, they are also focusing on Brazil, Mexico, Japan, and South Africa, recognising substantial growth potential in these regions. They utilise their network along with social media and internet marketing to reach potential customers.

Alpesh emphasises, "India needs stronger marketing to showcase its diversity beyond just five or six popular destinations. The government should collect feedback from tourists and tour operators to address existing issues. We must develop and promote more diverse experiences. Also, improvements in roads, traffic management, and cleanliness of public spaces are essential, as these are common concerns among international tourists."

Madhya Pradesh

An Adventure Destination in Incredible India



The heart of
Incredible India

Unlock Your Spirit of Adventure with Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board



Are you ready to break free from the ordinary? Step into the extraordinary with Madhya Pradesh's exciting array of adventure activities. As a premier offbeat destination, Madhya Pradesh is a treasure trove for adventure enthusiasts, offering everything from serene river rafting to thrilling tiger safaris. Discover ancient temples, trek through lush forests, and conquer majestic peaks!

MOWGLILAND CYCLE TOUR

Embark on a four-day journey through the enchanting wilderness of Pench, following in the footsteps of Mowgli. Experience the untamed beauty and diverse wildlife of this iconic Indian landscape on your bicycle adventure!

Embark on Unforgettable Adventures

ROCK CLIMBING FESTIVAL

Push your limits at the Jatashankar Hill in Pachmarhi! Join the inaugural 10-day Climbing Challenge this November, hosted by the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, and embrace winter in this picturesque offbeat destination.



PENCH MOWGLI TREK

Immerse yourself in the wildlife of Pench National Park, one of India's premier tiger reserves. This seven-day guided trek in September takes you through the lush buffer zone, rich in flora and fauna. Experience the thrill of exploring a protected tiger reserve on foot in collaboration with the forest department.

MOWGLILAND HALF MARATHON

Feel the adrenaline as you run through the heart of the jungle in this unique half marathon held in September. This special event hosted by the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board offers adventure enthusiasts an unforgettable running experience against the backdrop of stunning sights and resonating sounds of nature.

RIDERS IN THE WILD BIKING TOUR

Explore pristine tiger reserves and iconic destinations with Madhya Pradesh Tourism's unique biking event, which takes you through not one but four tiger reserves. Discover popular tourist spots like Khajuraho, Amarkantak, Panarpani, and Bhopal along the way!

QUEENS ON THE WHEEL WOMEN'S BIKING TOUR

Discover the rich heritage and beauty of the Heart of Incredible India on a seven-day, women-only biking adventure—"Queens on the Wheel"—along a historic trail this March.

KHAJURAHO MARATHON

Run through the historic Khajuraho Group of Temples in February, just before the mesmerising Khajuraho Dance Festival.

MP SKYDIVING FESTIVAL

Unleash your inner daredevil at the Skydiving Festival! Experience the unparalleled thrill of free-falling over stunning landscapes like Mahakal Lok, and Ujjain. An electrifying adventure awaits!

Madhya Pradesh offers a wealth of exciting adventures, from jungle safaris, camping experiences, trekking trails, off-road 4*4 TSD car rallies, marathons, water sports, heritage walks, and more. Whether you are a seasoned explorer or a curious newcomer, this state has something for everyone!

'Climbing World' Building Credibility in Adventure Travel

Nirat Bhatt, Director, Climbing World, highlights the critical importance of safety in adventure tourism, emphasising that rigorous safety standards build trust among participants and prioritise their well-being. By implementing comprehensive measures, including proper training, equipment maintenance, and environmental risk management, Climbing World ensures a secure and enjoyable experience for all adventurers exploring India's breathtaking landscapes.

Prashant Nayak

With its stunning array of terrains and landscapes, India is emerging as a premier adventure tourism destination for international travellers. It is uniquely positioned to offer unparalleled experiences while contributing to its journey toward becoming a developed nation.

Pioneering Adventure Sports

Climbing World, based in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, is India's premier adventure sports and tourism innovator. It offers a unique blend of thrilling activities, including mountaineering, trekking, water sports, paragliding, aerial adventure courses, and rock climbing.

Climbing World differentiates itself through a unique fusion of engineering innovation and adventure sports expertise. "We specialise in designing and developing eco-tourism destinations, integrating cutting-edge technology to create world-class adventure facilities. Unlike others, our expertise in ANSI/ACCT standards for aerial adventure parks and challenge courses ensures unmatched safety and performance. As a leader in sustainable and responsible travel, Climbing World's technological prowess sets new benchmarks, solidifying our position as a vital asset in India's adventure tourism landscape," explains Nirat.

Elevating Adventure Safety and Training

Through Nidus Enterprises, Climbing World imports and trades specialised equipment for mountaineering, rock climbing, sport climbing, mountain rescue, and access systems. They also design and develop need-based equipment in-house, addressing specific gaps in the Indian market. All their gear, whether imported or locally produced, meets and exceeds applicable safety standards, ensuring maximum protection for adventure travellers and rescue operations.

Climbing World provides specialised training and consultancy tailored to individuals and organisations in the adventure travel industry. Nirat shares, "Our extensive experience across diverse terrains allows us to offer comprehensive training programmes in rock and sport climbing, the operation and management of aerial adventure parks, and guide and rescue



▲ Nirat Bhatt

training. Our expertise extends to consulting on risk analysis, destination development, and sustainable practices. Additionally, we train armed and rescue forces in access, rescue, and evacuation techniques, alongside offering installation and maintenance training for adventure facilities."

Indian Safety Standards

Safety standards for adventure travel in India are meticulously developed around key principles that promote uniformity and excellence across the industry. These standards, created in collaboration with industry experts, represent minimum safety requirements to ensure participant well-being. Nirat conveys, "Current standards cover approximately 27 aspects related to mountaineering and skiing equipment, as well as 12 standards for operational and management guidelines for adventure activities. India's Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), as a founding member of ISO, contributes to developing both national and international standards, adapting global benchmarks to better suit local conditions. While international standards serve as a valuable reference, Indian standards are specifically designed for the country's unique adventure travel landscape."

Meanwhile, India continues to enhance its

safety framework with an additional eight critical standards in development. It is poised to align closely with global best practices, ensuring safety and quality for all adventure travellers.

The Crucial Role of Safety Standards

Safety standards play a transformative role in shaping the mindset of all stakeholders in the adventure tourism ecosystem—government bodies, suppliers, operators, guides, and participants. Nirat explains, "Adherence to safety standards in adventure tourism builds trust among participants, prioritising their well-being and fostering a culture of reliability. Secondly, clear protocols streamline operations for guides and operators, minimising risks and enhancing the overall experience. Also, the government's regulatory frameworks ensure compliance, prevent accidents, and strengthen the industry's structure. Over and above, informed travellers can make better choices, which boosts the reputation of responsible operators and encourages more people to explore. Ultimately, these safety standards reflect a commitment to environmental stewardship, aligning adventure activities with preserving natural resources."

Strengthening Safety Standards

To address safety concerns from international travellers engaging in adventure activities, Climbing World focuses on two key areas: environmental risks and human error. "Environmental challenges such as challenging terrain and variable weather conditions require thorough preparation, while human errors can be minimised through strict adherence to safety standards," asserts Nirat.

Climbing World also ensures timely access and communication to medical support and provides trained first-aid staff at all adventure locations. Additionally, they conduct regular inspections of equipment, offer detailed briefings on conditions, and provide continuous support from the point of entry to the adventure destination. Nirat adds, "Our commitment to accommodating diverse dietary preferences further enhances the comfort and safety of international travellers, ensuring a worry-free experience as they explore the incredible adventure opportunities India offers."

ANNOUNCING

TRAVMART **MARKETPLACE**

- COMPREHENSIVE, COHESIVE WEB PLATFORM FOR TRAVEL
- EXPAND YOUR TRAVEL BUSINESS
- REACH NEW MARKETS AND BUSINESS PARTNERS ONLINE
- STAY CONNECTED 24X7

CONNECT
COLLABORATE
CAPITALIZE



Register as Buyer

ISHA SINGH

✉ isha@ttjtravmart.com

☎ +91 8826612446

Register as Seller

YAMINI SHARMA

✉ yamini@ttjtravmart.com

☎ +91 7303979448

To know more, visit:
www.ttjtravmart.com



Golden Pagoda



Double Decker Root Bridge



Hornbill Festival

THE RISE OF TOURISM IN ENCHANTING NORTHEAST INDIA

Northeast India, a stunning mosaic of eight states, invites adventurers with its lush landscapes, unique wildlife, and rich cultural heritage. As it gains popularity among travellers, embracing its diverse attractions while promoting sustainable tourism is essential for preserving the region's natural beauty and vibrant traditions.

Sudarshan and Madhusmita Khound

Northeast India, with its eight states (Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim), known as seven sisters and one brother, is a region known for its diverse and rich wildlife, pristine landscape, ethnic tribal culture, and warm, hospitable people. The region, relatively lesser known until a few years ago, is now drawing travellers from around the world owing to its unspoiled natural beauty and being an ecological hotspot for wildlife.

Discover the Enchantment

The Northeast India landscape encompasses snow-capped peaks, lush green rainforests, green valleys, rice terraces, cascading waterfalls, and serene lakes. The UNESCO World Heritage national parks of Kaziranga and Manas, including other parks and wildlife sanctuaries here, are home to a wide variety of flora and fauna, including the one-horned rhinoceros, Royal Bengal tiger, hoolock gibbon, the only ape found in India, Sangai deer, mithun (Indian gaur), and the elusive red panda. This region also falls under the Important Birding Area (IBA) as it boasts a remarkable diversity of bird species, with many endemics to the region.

The northeastern part of India is also a cultural melting pot, with each state possessing unique traditions, languages, and festivals. This region is home to over 200 recognised tribes, each with a unique

culture. The vibrant festivals, colourful attire, and delectable cuisine offer a glimpse into the rich cultural heritage of the region. Adventure enthusiasts can experience the thrill of adventure activities such as trekking through the Himalayas, white-water rafting down turbulent rivers, paragliding, and exploring ancient caves and living root bridges. For those seeking spiritual retreats, the region is dotted with numerous monasteries, temples, and pilgrimage sites, offering a serene ambiance in breathtaking natural surroundings. A relaxing luxury river cruise on the mighty Brahmaputra River gives a glimpse of the lifestyle and culture of the locals. At the same time, a stay in a colonial tea estate bungalow in Assam reminisces about a bygone era and lifestyle.

In addition to its natural beauty and cultural diversity, the Northeast is known for its warm and hospitable people. The locals here are welcoming and friendly, making travellers feel at home. The region's unique blend of natural beauty, cultural richness, and warm hospitality makes it a special place.

Factors Fuelling the Tourism Boom

The surge in tourism to Northeast India in the recent past is a product of several factors, each contributing to the region's growing appeal.

- Connectivity to the region is one of the main factors contributing to a significant increase in the number of tourists visiting here. All the major cities in India are now connected by air to the state capitals of the region. Inter-regional flights also connect the smaller airports, making travelling faster and more convenient. Rail connectivity has also increased with new places and trains introduced to the rail network. Road connectivity has also greatly improved in recent years, opening up more remote areas and making road journeys more comfortable and faster.
- The region's infrastructure has seen significant enhancement, welcoming travellers with a range of new accommodations, including hotels, guest houses, and homestays in both towns and villages, allowing visitors to experience authentic local hospitality. Additionally, several five-star and boutique properties have recently opened, offering a variety of upscale options for travellers.
- This region also offers unique experiences for travellers, like visiting tribal villages and interacting with villagers, attending colourful and vibrant traditional festivals like the Hornbill festival of Nagaland, the Bihu festival of Assam, and modern festivals like the Ziro music festival in Arunachal Pradesh, the Cherry Blossom Festival in Meghalaya, etc.

*Moreover, the growing popularity of social media and online travel platforms has played a significant role in promoting Northeast India as a tourist destination. Stunning visuals and positive reviews from travellers have helped to create a buzz around the region, attracting more visitors.

A Rich Tapestry of Nature and Culture Awaits

For those unfamiliar with Northeast India, it wouldn't be fair not to mention a few attractions in each state. Northeast India is a region bursting with natural beauty and cultural richness, where each state offers its unique attractions.

In Assam, the journey begins in Guwahati, home to the sacred Kamakhya Temple and the expansive Brahmaputra River. Nature enthusiasts flock to Kaziranga National Park. Majuli, the world's largest river island, showcases vibrant Assamese traditions, while the lush tea gardens of Jorhat and Dibrugarh highlight the region's renowned tea production. Adventure seekers can explore Nameri National Park, which offers excellent trekking and rafting opportunities.

Moving on to Arunachal Pradesh, visitors are captivated by the stunning landscapes and rich cultural heritage. The capital, Itanagar, features the historic Ita Fort and the

tranquil Ganga Lake. Tawang enchants with its impressive monastery and breathtaking views, while Ziro Valley celebrates music and tribal culture through colourful festivals. Sela Pass provides panoramic mountain vistas, and Namdapha National Park is a biodiversity hotspot waiting to be explored. The Golden Pagoda at Namsai will leave you impressed by its Burmese architecture.

In Meghalaya, often referred to as the "Scotland of the East," the capital, Shillong, offers a blend of music and stunning scenery. Cherapunjee impresses as one of the wettest regions abound with waterfalls and remarkable living root bridges. Mawlynnong, Asia's cleanest village, exemplifies eco-friendly living, while the double-decker root bridge in Nongriat draws adventurous visitors. Umiam Lake serves as a picturesque backdrop for leisure activities.

Manipur is steeped in history, with Imphal showcasing the majestic Kangla Fort. The shimmering Loktak Lake, famous for its floating phumdis, captivates nature lovers. The Khongjom War Memorial honours local warriors, and Sangai National Park is home to the endangered Sangai deer. Kohima's War Cemetery in Nagaland pays tribute to World War II heroes. Dimapur features ancient ruins, while Mon reveals the rich traditions of the Konyak tribe. The breathtaking Dzukou Valley, with its seasonal flowers, enchants

nature enthusiasts. Tripura, steeped in history, boasts Agartala's Ujjayanta Palace and Neermahal Lake Palace, while Unakoti is famous for its ancient rock carvings.

Finally, Sikkim dazzles with its Himalayan landscapes. Gangtok, the capital, is known for its monasteries and stunning views of Kanchenjunga. Pelling offers spectacular scenery, while adventurous travellers can explore Nathula Pass and the serene Zuluk. This captivating journey through Northeast India leaves travellers with lasting memories and a deep appreciation for its diverse beauty.



About the Authors: Sudarshan and Madhusmita Khound are Partners at Avani Travel Services, an inbound tour company based in Assam.

DMC OF EUROPE & UK



Jumeirah Muscat Bay meets Indian wedding needs with luxury and cultural insight

Nestled between the majestic Al Hajar Mountains and the pristine waters of the Sea of Oman, Jumeirah Muscat Bay is a captivating addition to the hospitality scene, having welcomed its first guests in 2022. Zeki Ozal, General Manager, Jumeirah Muscat Bay, highlights how the resort's exquisite location, exceptional amenities, and diverse adventure offerings make it the perfect destination for Indian travellers seeking memorable celebrations, family gatherings, and adventure-filled retreats.

Prashant Nayak

Set in a serene valley between the majestic Al Hajar Mountains and the crystal-clear waters of the Sea of Oman, the Muscat Bay area offers a perfect escape from daily life, granting residents easy access to Omani-inspired luxury and breathtaking landscapes.

Luxury Amidst Nature

Jumeirah Muscat Bay is located in the secluded cove of Bandar Jissah, 15 minutes from Muscat, and seamlessly combines the serenity of its surroundings with proximity to the region's historic and natural attractions.

Jumeirah Muscat Bay's unique selling point lies in its status as part of Oman's only fully integrated resort village. This remarkable setting combines picturesque surroundings with landscaped gardens and parkland, all complemented by luxurious Omani hospitality and modern conveniences such as shops, restaurants, pools, and children's play areas. The resort, crafted in a refined 'modern Arabesque' style, offers 195 elegantly designed rooms, suites, and villas that harmoniously fuse contemporary aesthetics with rich Omani and Arabic cultural elements. Highlighting this integration, the interiors feature artwork by local artists. Among the accommodations, the 11 exclusive summerhouse villas stand out, each perched atop the cliffs with privileged, private access to a secluded beach.

Describing the resort's appeal, Zeki says, "Our resort offers a range of unique features, with each room, suite, restaurant, spa, and ballroom showcasing breathtaking beach and sea views. Guests are treated to panoramic ocean vistas from every corner. This exceptional setting



▲ Zeki Ozal

makes our accommodations especially popular, often fully booked during the festive season and winter months. We also offer the option to buy out our villas for honeymoons and celebrations, providing an exclusive experience for guests."

Meeting the Expectations of Indian Travellers

The growing interest from Indian travellers has been a promising trend for Jumeirah Muscat Bay. "We successfully hosted a few Indian weddings for prominent families when we started," Zeki shares. "Following this, we have welcomed many Indian incentive groups and excelled in meeting their customised needs. With a keen understanding of the diverse culinary preferences across India, our talented chefs and culinary team are dedicated to delivering truly authentic experiences. Our deep insight into

Indian culture and expectations distinguishes Jumeirah Muscat Bay as a preferred destination for our Indian guests."

Moreover, Zeki notes a unique dynamic among Indian families visiting from abroad. "Our property attracts many Indian families from the UK and Europe who appreciate our personalised service. Our hotel serves as a convenient gathering place for guests and their families from India, making it an ideal choice for family reunions and holidays. Oman's easy accessibility, paired with our exceptional amenities, provides the perfect setting for meaningful gatherings, offering comfort and connection for families."

The breathtaking beauty of Jumeirah Muscat Bay sets the perfect backdrop for an unforgettable wedding celebration. They offer two stunning venues, with conference and banqueting facilities that are as awe-inspiring as the surrounding landscape.

Luxury and Adventure

Guests are spoiled for choice across five exclusive dining destinations: the ocean-side multi-cuisine restaurant Peridot, the Tarini Lounge for afternoon tea, the poolside eatery Zuka, the intimate Anzo bar and terrace, and the signature restaurant Brezza. Guests can unwind at Talise Spa, which features 12 treatment rooms, and the Pedi: Mani: Cure Studio, ensuring a rejuvenating experience.

During their stay, guests can explore the stunning surroundings through various excursions, including hiking and biking in the Hajar Mountains, as well as scuba diving, sailing, and snorkelling from their PADI-certified diving and water sports centre. Guests can also enjoy yoga and meditation sessions or snorkel with turtles in the pristine waters.

Zeki adds, "We offer a wide range of activities, from excursions or individual sports to exciting mountain or sea adventures. There is something for everyone. During summer, particularly in July and August, guests can spot whale sharks, allowing for incredible underwater selfies. They can also enjoy dolphin watching, where pods of dolphins leap joyfully alongside the boat. These exceptional experiences are unique and not to be missed at Jumeirah Muscat Bay."



SDC and STIC Travel Group partner to launch unique immersive educational programmes

Sentosa Development Corporation (SDC) and STIC Travel Group have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to leverage Sentosa's unique environment, fostering environmental awareness and promoting sustainable practices among students.

Team TTJ

The collaboration between SDC and STIC signifies a joint effort to design immersive learning experiences that utilise Sentosa's unique environment as a living classroom to foster a deeper understanding of the importance of sustainability. These programmes will emphasise key concepts such as the United Nations's Sustainable Development Goals, carbon footprint reduction, and biodiversity conservation. This one-year partnership aims to develop innovative educational experiences focusing on sustainability and environmental awareness, catering to the Indian market.

This partnership builds upon STIC's broader efforts to boost educational tourism in Singapore by offering Indian students an opportunity to explore Singapore's heritage, sustainable development initiatives, and interactive learning experiences.

Central to this partnership is the launch of



the 'Uncharted Sentosa' tour, aimed at inspiring students to become advocates for environmental change in their communities. Slated for November 2024, the programme offers Indian students a hands-on exploration of sustainability through various engaging activities.

Among many activities, participants will enjoy intertidal explorations of the Southern Shores to learn about marine conservation and coastal

ecology, followed by guided nature walks along the Serapong and Imbiah Trails to discover native flora and fauna. The tour also includes an Amazing Race adventure on Sentosa and St. John's Island, designed to highlight the importance of responsible consumption.

The MoU is set to strengthen Sentosa's positioning as a sustainable leisure, business, and education destination. As the first island destination in Asia to be conferred the Global Sustainable Tourism Council—For Destinations certificate, Sentosa is committed to creating robust eco-conscious tourism experiences. SDC's comprehensive sustainability approach integrates eco-friendly practices across all visitor touchpoints: leisure activities, accommodation, transport, and dining, minimising environmental impact while engaging guests in sustainable initiatives throughout their Sentosa journey.

A Destination Management co.

UAE

MALAYSIA

SINGAPORE

AZERBAIJAN



**MELLOW
TOURS**

Your B2B Partner

+91 79691 26912
www.mellowtours.com

Email us for inquiries

book@mellowtours.com

VISIT HUNGARY

Strengthens trade partnerships to tap India's growing outbound market



Hévíz Aprilis Thermal Bath in the countryside

Ivan Ljubinkovic, Regional Head of Business Development-India at Visit Hungary, offers an in-depth perspective on the wide-ranging opportunities Hungary presents to Indian travellers, including leisure, MICE, celebrations, and destination weddings. He highlights the country's unique charm and boundless capacity to cater to the diverse growing demands of the Indian market.

Prativa Vaidya Bhalla

Visit Hungary, the international brand of the Hungarian National Tourism Authority, recently organised a successful networking evening in New Delhi for top Indian travel agents and tour operators. The event at the Embassy of Hungary aimed to strengthen ties with the Indian travel trade and welcomed 70 guests from across the luxury, leisure, and MICE sectors.

Budapest and Beyond

The Hungarian capital of Budapest is a story of two cities, Buda and Pest, wrapped in one vivid adventure, with the picturesque river Danube flowing right through its centre. The city showcases two contrasting worlds: the ancient charm of Buda on one side and the lively glamour of Pest on the other, unified by the iconic Chain Bridge, attracting visitors from across the globe.

Buda and Pest offer striking geographical contrasts; while Pest is flat and expansive, Buda is hilly, with a vast protected national park hidden behind its rugged hills. The Chain Bridge in Budapest had its moment of Bollywood fame in the hindi film 'Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam,' where it made a surprise appearance as part of Rome. Confused fans flocked to Rome, wondering why the famous bridge was missing. This endearing mix-up has only added to its charm as one of the city's most beloved landmarks.

Describing Budapest as a city full of surprises, Ivan stated, "The city's contrasting nuances of vibrant energy mixed with calm, laid-back moments, along with happy, friendly locals, makes Budapest truly special. Most visitors arrive expecting a few nights to be enough, only to find themselves wishing they had booked more! The city's unexpected richness, its moving blend of culture, history, and tranquillity, leaves travellers enchanted, eager to extend their stay or come back for more."

Budapest's proximity to scenic countryside offers visitors the perfect blend of urban and rural experiences. Just over an hour from the capital,



Balaton Sailing

Lake Balaton, Central Europe's largest lake, offers lush landscapes, national parks, and adventure activities like sailing, kayaking, and swimming. Ideal for both families and luxury travellers, the region offers boutique hotels, glamping options, and fine dining experiences. Tokaj, a renowned wine region just two hours from Budapest, has seen significant development in recent years. Visitors can enjoy five-star hotels, wine tastings, gourmet dinners, and the chance to meet local wine producers. Hungary's strategic location also allows for easy trips to the neighbouring countries of Austria, Slovenia, or Croatia.

Discover Hungary

Popular Hungarian attractions include its unique thermal baths, some housed in historic Ottoman-era buildings dating back 500 years. Historical landmarks and attractions are thoughtfully dispersed, making exploration a delight without overcrowding. Budapest offers boutique accommodations set in historical buildings that immerse guests in the timeless charm of Budapest.

Ivan noted, "Endless opportunities exist for FITs and adventure seekers as the city is highly walkable, allowing visitors to explore from one end to the other in a mere 20 minutes, with heart-stopping scenery throughout."

The city's diverse culinary offerings cater to every taste, from Michelin-star dining and sampling smooth Hungarian wines to exploring a variety of international cuisines, including some top-notch Indian restaurants. Hungarian cuisine also plays a pivotal role in appealing to Indian palates with its familiar rich flavours and spices - especially the ubiquitous paprika!

Priority Market Segments

Outlining the top markets, Ivan emphasised, "Our largest source



Kali Basin, Balaton Highlands



Christmas Fair at Vörösmarty Square, Budapest



Szechenyi Furdó - Budapest

markets are Germany, United Kingdom, and the neighbouring countries of Poland, Slovakia, Austria, and Romania. Now, Hungary is focusing on India due to its significant growth potential. Budapest is experiencing a boom in popularity as a prime destination for Indian celebrations, a relatively new trend for us. This growth is exciting, as stakeholders are increasingly eager to engage with the Indian market.” He further noted, “As visitors showcase Hungary on social media, it amplifies our promotional efforts and enhances visibility. This influx of discerning clients boosts our profile and provides valuable feedback to service providers, fostering business growth and improvement.”

In recent years, Budapest has seen a remarkable surge in its luxury segment owing to a revitalised hotel capacity catering to elite guests. This growth is proportional to the increasing demand for weddings and celebrations, making them key priorities for the Indian market. For MICE groups, Budapest offers stunning settings for conventions and unforgettable gala dinners. Many locations can even be privatised, providing a unique experience that makes clients feel special.

Navigating Challenges

While the hurdles related to visas are acknowledged, Visit Hungary collaborates closely with consulates to streamline the process, emphasising that rules must still be followed. Although there is good connectivity between India and Hungary, a direct flight is always welcome. However, currently, the focus is on optimising existing flights to help travellers thoroughly enjoy their time in Hungary.

Ivan astutely observed, “I do not perceive many challenges; rather, I see a highly demanding market with elevated expectations. But only by travelling to India have I understood why these expectations exist. There is an impeccable culture of service that Indian travellers offer their guests and, in turn, anticipate when travelling overseas. Instead of viewing it as a challenge, I see it as a positive aspect of the market that encourages service improvement and sets a benchmark. Similarly, as a tourism destination, our primary focus is to ensure that from the moment travellers board the plane, they have an enjoyable experience, feel well taken care of, and welcomed throughout their journey.”

Visit Hungary Support

At present, a low-key approach has been adopted to strengthen travel trade communication. The focus is on keeping travel agents well-informed about Hungary's diverse offerings, ensuring they have access to the right contacts while nurturing partnerships with local Hungarian businesses.

Ivan said, “We aim to train travel agents to work with local service providers, empowering them to recommend optimal itineraries. We are also active on social media, with platforms like YouTube offering valuable video content highlighting various attractions, making it a trusted resource for both travel agents and travellers.”

On a lighter note, Ivan shared his culinary favourites, naming Puri Bhaji and Butter Chicken as his top Indian favourites. For Hungarian cuisine, he recommends Krumpli Paprikás, a delightful paprika stew with potatoes for vegetarians, and Goulash for the quintessential dish for meat lovers. Whatever your preference, Hungary promises a delectable experience that caters to every palate!





From Temples to Beaches, Bintan, A Tropical Paradise, Where Nature Meets Spirituality and Adventure

A mere 60-minute ferry ride from Singapore’s vibrant, cosmopolitan cityscape, Bintan Island, nestled within Indonesia’s Riau Archipelago, presents a striking and captivating contrast to the urban vibrancy of its neighbouring city-state.

Sonika Bohra

Upon disembarking from the ferry, you are welcomed by a tranquil atmosphere, where the island’s lush greenery, pristine beaches, and relaxed vibe offer a refreshing escape from the city’s hustle and bustle. Renowned for its beautiful beaches, enchanting temples, luxurious resorts, and rich biodiversity, Bintan provides diverse experiences, making it an ideal destination for travellers seeking relaxation and adventure. Whether you are a culture enthusiast, nature lover, or thrill seeker, Bintan has something for everyone. Here are some must-visit attractions and activities to inspire your next trip to this enchanting island.

designed with unique facial expressions and characteristics. Their orderly arrangement, complete with engraved names, enhances the experience. Although the information is in Mandarin, the beauty of the statues invites quiet reflection.

The temple’s peaceful atmosphere is enhanced by its vibrant gardens, making it a perfect spot for meditation. Visitors can also explore the temple’s main hall, which houses revered deities, and the towering statue of Bodhisattva, a symbol of compassion. The temple’s calm surroundings and cultural significance make it a must-visit for anyone seeking to connect with Bintan’s spiritual heritage.

Marvel at the Majestic Guan Yin Temple

Another spiritual site worth visiting is the Guan Yin Temple (Maitri Graha Temple), also located in Tanjung Pinang. Known for its impressive 16.8-mt golden brass statue of Guanyin, the Chinese Goddess of Mercy, the temple offers a peaceful and reflective environment. The statue, coated in 22-carat gold, exudes a sense of tranquillity, inviting visitors to pause and appreciate the calmness of the surroundings.

As you stroll through the temple grounds, you will be captivated by the intricate details of Buddha sculptures and various deities, as well as the impressive dragon carvings

Discover Spiritual Serenity at the 500 Lohan Temple

Begin your cultural journey at the 500 Lohan Temple (Vihara Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva), a serene and majestic site about 10 km from Tanjung Pinang in Kijang. This hidden gem exudes majestic charm, with a towering Bodhisattva statue welcoming visitors. The temple is home to a stunning collection of 500 life-sized stone statues of Lohan, or Buddhist arhats, each intricately



500 Lohan Temple



Guan Yin Temple



Monitor Lizard

Mangrove Snake

Bintan Mangrove

and fierce stone lion guardians that flank the entrance. For a unique experience, explore the dragon-fruit plantation before the temple, where you may also witness the harvesting process.

Nature's Mangrove Wonderland

The Mangrove Discovery Tour along the Sebung River is a must-do eco-adventure in Bintan. This 60-minute journey through thick mangroves unveils a vibrant ecosystem teeming with wildlife. Glide through winding waterways with knowledgeable guides sharing insights about the diverse flora and fauna, deepening the understanding of this ecosystem and its conservation.

Keep an eye out for mangrove snakes and elusive monitor lizards. The Sebung River is home to a multitude of wildlife. One can witness agile leaps of macaques and silver leaf monkeys, glimpses of colourful kingfishers, and observe mud lobsters weaving homes in the mounds. The river not only harbours these fascinating creatures but

also supports local residents, who rely on its resources.

While regular tours are available throughout the day, an evening tour at 4:30 pm offers a magical experience as the day transitions into night. Towards the end of the tour, the landscape transforms as darkness slowly envelops the mangroves. If you are fortunate, you might see fireflies glowing amidst the stars, creating a mesmerising spectacle. The mangrove tours are perfect for wildlife enthusiasts eager to appreciate the vital role mangroves play in coastal protection and biodiversity.

Luxury and Adventure at Lagoi Bay Beach

For those looking to indulge in luxury while enjoying thrilling water activities, Lagoi Bay Beach is the place to be. Located in the northern part of Bintan, this pristine beach is home to luxurious resorts such as The Sanchaya, Grand Lagoi Hotel, and Pantai

Indah Lagoi Bintan, offering world-class accommodations for a relaxing stay.

Lagoi Bay Beach stretches for 3.5 km and offers a variety of water sports, including stand-up paddleboarding (SUP), kayaking, snorkelling, and the ever-popular banana boat rides. The crystal-clear waters and soft sandy shores make it an ideal destination for both adventure seekers and those looking to unwind by the sea. After a day of beach activities, head to the nearby Plaza Lagoi and Lagoi Bay Mall for dining and shopping, ensuring a well-rounded experience.

Adventure and Relaxation at Treasure Bay Bintan

Treasure Bay Bintan is an expansive waterfront resort city covering 338 hectares, offering an extraordinary blend of relaxation, adventure, and luxury. At its core lies the Crystal Lagoon, Southeast Asia's first and largest man-made seawater lagoon, where visitors can partake in water activities



The Sanchaya



Banana Boat Ride at Lagoi Bay



Chill Cove, Treasure Bay Bintan



ATV Ride at Chill Cove, Treasure Bay Bintan



Natra Bintan, a Tribute Portfolio Resort

such as kayaking and paddleboarding in safe, calm waters—perfect for seasoned adventurers as well as those seeking a leisurely experience.

For thrill-seekers, Chill Cove, a lively recreational hub within the lagoon, offers a variety of exciting activities. Visitors can rev up the excitement by driving ATVs through diverse terrains, zip down the exhilarating 7.5-mt Slip and Slide, or test their skills at archery. This destination ensures fun for all, with dedicated activities for children, making it ideal for families seeking adventure and relaxation.

For those looking to stay longer, the resort offers luxurious glamping options at Natra Bintan, a Tribute Portfolio Resort by Marriott, and Anmon Resort, where guests can enjoy an immersive nature experience without compromising comfort. These upscale accommodations provide the perfect balance of modern luxury and

the great outdoors, allowing you to unwind after a day of exploration. Whether you are seeking an active adventure or a peaceful retreat, Treasure Bay Bintan is the ultimate escape for all types of travellers.

Embracing Nature at Safari Lagoi and Eco Farm

Nestled near the Bintan Resorts area, Safari Lagoi and Eco Farm is a sanctuary dedicated to the care and rehabilitation of endangered animals rescued from captivity. With its mission focused on conservation, this haven offers visitors a rare opportunity to witness some of Indonesia's most majestic creatures up close, all while learning about sustainable farming practices. This sanctuary is home to diverse recuperating wildlife, including orangutans, sun bears, Komodo dragons, Sumatran tigers, crocodiles, and eagles. A guided tour of the sanctuary, often conducted via buggy,

allows visitors to explore the vast grounds and meet a wide array of wildlife species being rehabilitated. Visitors leave with a deeper understanding and appreciation for the sanctuary's efforts in giving these animals a second chance at life.

The Eco Farm, a lush 17-hectare haven, showcases tropical crops and sustainable farming practices. The farm features a small shop that provides snacks and food for visitors to feed the animals, enhancing the interactive experience. A highlight of any visit is the opportunity to savour traditional Indonesian delights, such as the refreshing fruit salad known as "Rojak", made with a mixture of tropical fruits drizzled in a tangy dressing. Guests can also enjoy the rich flavours of freshly harvested durian and pineapple, providing a true farm-to-table experience. This delightful combination of flavours introduces visitors to the region's rich agricultural traditions.

Safari Lagoi



Orangutan at Safari Lagoi



Feeding the animals at Safari Lagoi



Eco Farm



Classic Holidays expands reach and services, sets ambitious growth targets for the future

In an exclusive interview with TTJ, Suresh Doshi, Managing Director, Classic Holidays, reflects on the company's journey since 1997, the innovative launch of TripMax, and their strategic focus on luxury villa bookings, emphasising the company's commitment to growth and adapting to evolving market needs.

Prashant Nayak

Classic Holidays is a leading B2B travel consolidator established in 1997. Known for honest pricing and transparency, it offers world-class holidays in India and abroad. Based in Mumbai, Classic Holidays provides a variety of accommodation options and specialises in personalised holiday packages and travel services. Its forte lies in hospitality booking, making it a trusted partner for clients seeking accommodation options like beach resorts, city hotels, or villas.

Shaping a New Era in Travel and Hospitality

For years, Classic Holidays has crafted unforgettable experiences for thousands, combining stunning destinations and exquisite hotels to deliver the ultimate in luxury. "At Classic Holidays, we take care of every detail with care and precision, allowing clients to focus solely on enjoying their perfect getaway. We believe in providing stress-free travel and meeting our client's requirements as best as possible. The hotels and resorts we select are among the finest in their categories, ensuring comfort and value," mentions Doshi.

Doshi also reflects, "We started our company in 1997 with just one or two staff in a small office. Initially focused on Goa, due to its proximity to Maharashtra, we gradually expanded our bookings across all states in India. After 27 years, we have over 100 employees and are one of India's fastest-growing companies."

Doshi also notes the evolution of the hotel industry, mentioning that 25 years ago, there were only a handful of hotels and players with limited options. He says, "Today, the sector has significantly expanded, and the business is thriving. We are proud to be part of this growth." Doshi also emphasises that negotiating with Indian hotel brands is often easier, as their operational styles align more closely with his company's approach. Moreover, he asserts that Indian brands are at par with international ones, offering competitive quality and service.



▲ Suresh Doshi

TripMax: Empowering Travel Agents

TripMax was launched ten years ago, aiming to innovate and enhance the travel experience at Classic Holidays. It is a travel and holiday management platform that simplifies vacation planning. Its advanced reservation system ensures a speedy booking process, complete with comprehensive reports at their fingertips. TripMax promises unmatched service as a trusted partner for booking hotels worldwide.

Doshi says, "We focused on offline operations for years, but we decided to diversify into online business, recognising it as a rapidly growing segment. We have made significant investments to enhance our online presence. Our goal was also to empower the travel trade with the tools they need to create memorable trips for their customers without the hassle of extensive planning. Today, with a wide inventory of hotels at attractive rates, TripMax provides a world of options for your customers. From five-star luxury to budget accommodations, our contract rates are among the most competitive in the market. Currently, we have around 25,000 registered agents, and we aim to reach 100,000 agents in a few years."

Embracing Growth and New Opportunities

Reflecting on the post-pandemic landscape, Doshi says that the situation has significantly improved since 2019. The pandemic was a challenging phase marked by complete shutdowns, but it has ultimately led to a robust resurgence in the industry. There's been a notable boost in domestic travel, and businesses are seizing the opportunity to thrive. After enduring the pandemic, the focus now should be on enhancing business practices and delivering exceptional experiences to travellers.

Classic recently launched luxury villa bookings across India, recognising it as a rapidly growing sector. While they offer villa bookings globally, their primary focus is on the exquisite luxury villas available in India. The company is also well-represented across most segments of the travel industry, but it currently lacks a presence in the corporate and MICE sectors. Doshi states, "We plan to enter this segment soon and aim to establish a strong presence. Every challenge is an opportunity, and we approach them positively as we expand into this area."

As one of the largest consolidators for hotel bookings, Doshi outlines their approach, saying, "We have established a strong reputation in the market. Hoteliers, whether global brands or local favourites, often come to us. We sit together to negotiate, secure the best deals, and build relationships that benefit both parties."

Classic Holidays is a family-run business, and in the next five years, the company aims to build on its status as one of the best in the country and grow even further. "The travel sector is brimming with opportunities; despite the competition, there is ample business to go around. We are well-positioned and confident in securing our share. With the support of my two sons and other family members involved, our dedication and unwavering commitment, we are set to achieve our growth objectives," Doshi affirms.



SVALBARD

The Northernmost Inhabited Place in the World

Svalbard, the northernmost inhabited island on Earth, located at 78 degrees latitude, brings you as close to the North Pole as most can venture. This Arctic gem is a haven for nature lovers, offering a rare opportunity to experience the untamed beauty of extreme wilderness and a pristine environment that has remained largely untouched by human activity. Visitors to Svalbard are immersed in a unique landscape shaped by glaciers, polar ice, and wildlife, with the chance to witness phenomena like the northern lights and the midnight sun, making it a truly extraordinary destination for adventurers.

Chintan Shah

Inhabited by approximately 2,500 people, Svalbard is an archipelago known for its extreme polar climate, where the sun does not rise for about four months during the winter, making it one of the few places outside Antarctica where such phenomena occur. Due to the harsh conditions and ice, the island is largely cut off from the rest of the world during this period.

Accessible only from Norwegian airports, Svalbard is unique in being a visa-free land. However, travellers must pass through Norway, requiring a Norwegian visa. The island, primarily covered in permafrost, was historically a base for Arctic exploration but is now a popular destination for adventurous tourists.

Svalbard attracts nature enthusiasts eager to explore the polar ice, massive

glaciers, and icy treks and witness the northern lights. Visitors from places like India face a long journey involving flights to Oslo or Tromsø, Norway, followed by a connection to Longyearbyen, the main settlement on Svalbard.

Upon arrival, the first view of Longyearbyen is stunning. Towering glaciers, frozen oceans, and the jagged peaks of the Arctic create a surreal, almost otherworldly landscape. Longyearbyen's small airport adds to the remote atmosphere. However, walking outside the town is risky due to the presence of polar bears, one of the most dangerous predators in the Arctic.

Svalbard offers a range of activities for nature lovers, including hiking, trekking, kayaking, glacier walks, and snow climbs. Over the course of my four-day trip, several highlights stood out:

Svalbard Museum

The Svalbard Museum provides a deep dive into the island's history, from its role in Arctic exploration to its extreme environment and unique wildlife. Here, visitors can learn about the region's visa-free status and how Svalbard has become a symbol of international cooperation.

Exploring the town and visiting the only graveyard and church

In Svalbard, burials are prohibited due to the frozen ground's inability to allow natural decomposition, which poses a unique challenge: the preserved bodies could release a scent that attracts polar bears. The town's graveyard, originally established during World War II, no longer serves its original purpose, as the remains were moved to mitigate the risk. Today, bodies are routinely transported

Svalbard Museum



Polar Bear





Pyramiden



Pyramiden



Longyearbyen



Svalbard Global Seed Vault



Longyearbyen Airport

to the mainland for burial to ensure safety and environmental preservation.

Valley Hikes

The valleys around Longyearbyen offer hiking experiences unlike any other. From Arctic foxes and polar bears to the discovery of ancient fossils, these hikes provide a closer look at the rugged beauty of the Arctic. The glacial rivers and stark, barren valleys highlight the raw nature of Svalbard's untouched landscape.

Visiting the Global Seed Vault

Hidden beneath a mountain, Svalbard's Global Seed Vault preserves seeds from around the world in permafrost at -18°C , ensuring the survival of biodiversity. The vault is considered one of the safest places on Earth and has only been accessed by Syria and Ukraine, both of which retrieved seeds due to conflicts affecting their agriculture.

Arctic Challenge – Kayak and Hike

The Arctic Challenge involved kayaking through freezing Arctic waters and hiking up Hiortfjellet, the highest peak in the area. This strenuous 11-12-hour adventure rewarded us with stunning views of fjords, glaciers, and the Arctic landscape.

Cruise on the Arctic Ocean and Pyramiden Visit

On an Arctic Ocean cruise, we encountered beluga whales and spotted polar bears, seals, reindeer, and walrus. We also visited Pyramiden, an abandoned Russian mining town that now feels frozen in time, with its swimming pool, theatre, and other facilities eerily preserved.

With its unspoiled beauty, rich history, and wildlife, Svalbard remains a top destination for those seeking a true Arctic adventure.

SOME FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT SVALBARD

- The sun does not set for five months of the year.
- Svalbard experiences a four-month-long night during winter.
- Longyearbyen is only 814 miles from the North Pole.
- There are only 25 miles of roads on the entire archipelago.
- Svalbard is home to the Global Seed Vault.
- No visa or residency permit is needed to live and work there.
- You can't be buried in Svalbard.
- 60 per cent of Svalbard is covered in ice.
- No trees grow there.
- Abandoned buildings do not decay due to the Arctic climate.

About the Author: Chintan Shah is a finance professional with a love for travel and nature. A true adventure enthusiast, Chintan thrives on the thrill of trekking and seeks out offbeat destinations, turning each expedition into a captivating exploration of the unknown.



Disney Imagination Garden

A Magical Aura Onboard Disney Adventure to Wow Guests of All Ages

On October 16, 2024, an awe-inspiring ceremony unfolded at Marina Bay Sands in Singapore, where Disney Cruise Line unveiled the thrilling new spaces and experiences aboard the Disney Adventure. This highly anticipated ship is set to embark on its inaugural voyage from Singapore on December 15, 2025. TTJ was honoured to be invited to this exclusive grand reveal event, showcasing innovative features and enchanting attractions that promise to delight guests of all ages.

Gurjit Singh Ahuja

In a celebration uniquely styled by Disney, the grand reveal was attended by around 200 trade partners, 192 key opinion leaders, and media representatives from five countries: India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore. Many guests were dressed and encouraged to dress as their favourite Disney characters, creating an electric atmosphere filled with vibrant Disney princesses, Marvel heroes, and Jedi knights, all tapping to the music as Mickey, Minnie, Donald, Daisy, and Goofy danced on stage, setting an exciting tone for the Disney Adventure event.

The Grand Reveal

The spectacular event featured special walkthrough-themed areas and gigantic digital walls that provided a glimpse into the experiences awaiting guests aboard the ship. When the Disney Adventure sets sail in December next year, guests will embark on a magical cruise holiday celebrating Disney's rich storytelling legacy, bringing to life fantastical worlds and beloved characters from Disney, Pixar, and Marvel.

We were spellbound by the Disney Adventure showcase, with every corner brimming with awe and wonder. Continuing Disney Cruise Line's tradition of delivering enchanting vacations at sea, the Disney Adventure will introduce many firsts for the fleet, including experiences specifically designed for guests in Asia. The ship will feature

three all-new Disney attractions in an upper-deck adventure zone inspired by the Marvel Universe.

Disney Cruise Line guests can expect an exceptional experience anchored in world-class entertainment, themed dining, and artful accommodations. The magic will come alive onboard through seven uniquely themed areas: Disney Imagination Garden, Toy Story Place, San Fransokyo Street, Town Square, Wayfinder Bay, Disney Discovery Reef, and Marvel Landing.

Enthralling Entertainment and Activities

Disney Cruise Line's unique approach to ship design transforms every corner of the ship into a canvas for immersive storytelling, setting its fleet apart. On the Disney Adventure, guests are treated to larger-than-life entertainment experiences, including unforgettable character meet-and-greets, stunning Broadway-style shows, exclusive events, first-run movies, karaoke, game shows, and so much more.

At Marvel Landing, guests will experience Avengers-level adventures across three all-new attractions inspired by iconic Marvel

superheroes. The Iron Cycle Test Run is set to be the longest rollercoaster at sea—where guests can experience the thrill of testing Tony Stark's latest Ironcycle prototype. It promises an exhilarating ride on a 250-mt-long (820-foot) rollercoaster, where thrill-seekers will zoom through a high-speed circuit suspended up to 9 mt (30 feet) above the upper decks.

Guests can also enjoy Pym Quantum Racers, where they steer Pym Tech-modified mini-cars on an oversized toy set track, and Groot Galaxy Spin, which takes guests on an out-of-this-world ride onboard a Nova Corp Bass Jumper, complete with an upbeat music mix. On the upper decks, Toy Story Place will inspire families to explore, play, connect, and enjoy a whimsical water playland where the world of Pixar's "Toy Story" springs to life. This area will feature playful water attractions, including a large family pool, multiple whirlpools, towering water slides, and interactive splash pads.

In San Fransokyo Street, guests can dive into the Big Hero Arcade, an exciting family gaming lounge featuring the Hiro Training Zone. In this cutting-edge simulator, teams can challenge their skills on an interactive, high-tech gaming floor.

At the heart of the ship, Disney Imagination Garden will feature a state-of-the-art Garden Stage





San Fransokyo Street



Concierge Royal Suite

with three-deck-high LED screens, creating a wondrous setting for several shows starring favourite Disney and Marvel characters. This open-air amphitheatre-style venue will host vibrant celebrations perfect for Disney music lovers alongside the Baymax Super Exercise Expo, a musical exercise show inspired by “Big Hero 6.” The show-stopping Broadway-style entertainment will dazzle audiences in a brand-new musical spectacular, “Remember,” developed exclusively for the Disney Adventure.

A Dining Extravaganza: Best of Asian and International Flavours

Onboard the Disney Adventure, dinner transforms into an experience beyond just dining—it is an opportunity to step into beloved Disney stories through immersive themes and signature Disney entertainment. The Disney Adventure will offer rotational dining, Disney Cruise Line’s signature dining concept, in which guests will have three distinctly Disney dining experiences during their voyage, with a preset dining schedule included with each booking. Guests will also be accompanied by the same dedicated service team assigned to their dining party throughout the voyage, adding an elevated and personal touch to each meal.



Wayfinder Bay

Luxurious Accommodations

The accommodations on the Disney Adventure will blend modern comfort with the enchanting spirit of beloved Disney Animation, Pixar, and Marvel stories. Each stateroom will feature thoughtful amenities, family-friendly conveniences, and special Disney touches. Most main staterooms will feature Disney Cruise Line’s signature split-bathroom concept, with a sink and shower in one room and a sink and toilet in a separate room, allowing two people to get ready at once. Elevated bed frames will provide generous under-bed space to store suitcases and other bulky items essential to family travel. For every travelling group and size, there will be numerous luxurious and comfortable stateroom types for guests to retreat and unwind in.

Concierge Offerings

The concierge experience on the Disney Adventure will be elevated for those seeking the ultimate in luxury and personalised service. The main Concierge Family Staterooms will feature a primary living space, a secondary bedroom with an ensuite bathroom and private entrance, and many offer a spacious extended verandah. For ultimate comfort and luxury, the Concierge Suites will provide a modern, open-concept design and spacious one-bedroom layouts that accommodate at least five guests.

Get Ready to Book a Disney Adventure

Bookings for the Disney Adventure will open on December 10, 2024, with details on pricing and sailing dates set to be released on November 14, 2024. Excitement is building for the Disney Adventure, where every journey promises a destination filled with magic and unforgettable experiences.



Town Square

“When the Disney Adventure sets sail in December 2025, guests throughout Southeast Asia will have the opportunity to experience the magic of their favourite Disney, Pixar, and Marvel stories in their very own backyard. With our remarkable expansion of Disney Cruise Line, we’re dedicated to creating exceptional experiences that introduce our unique style of cruising and the magic of Disney storytelling to new guests around the world.

Sharon Siskie, Senior Vice President & General Manager, Disney Cruise Line

“Today, we unveil the spectacular new Disney Adventure to the world. Sailing on primarily three- and four-night voyages designed with only dedicated days at sea, the ship will include something for everyone. From lively, interactive spaces designed for kids to relaxing retreats where adults can unwind to engaging spots perfect for family fun, guests will discover endless adventures from bow to stern.

Sarah Fox, Vice President & Regional General Manager, Southeast Asia, Disney Cruise Line



Marvel Landing



Toy Story Place

Island Life Travel's Maldives Diwali Carnival brings luxury and light to Delhi

On October 25, 2024, Island Life Travel, the Destination Management Company for the Maldives, hosted the Maldives Diwali Carnival at Bel-la Monde Hotel NH8 in New Delhi. The event combined the festive spirit of Diwali with the luxury of the Maldives, drawing over 200 guests, including travel agents and media representatives, for a night of networking and celebration.

One of the highlights was the chance for attendees to meet representatives from 22 top resorts. These included Villa Hotels, Lux South Ari Atoll Maldives, Medhufushi Island Resort, The Cocoon Collection, Holiday Inn Kandooma, Centara Hotels and Resorts, The Standard Maldives, Sun Siyam Resorts, Furaveri Maldives, Emerald Collection, Radisson Blu Maldives, Adaaran Resorts, Heritance Aarah, Coco Collection, Cinnamon Hotels and Resorts, The Westin Maldives, Kuda Villingili, Atmosphere Core, Hard Rock Maldives, Saii Lagoon Maldives, OAGA Art Resort, and Dusit Thani. Each resort presented its unique offerings, providing a great opportunity for connections and collaboration.

The night also featured a captivating Sufi music performance by singer Aditi Sharma, which added a special touch to the festivities.

Thanking the attendees who made it to the occasion, Sanket Mishra, Associate Director, Island Life Travel, said, "This Diwali, we gathered for a vibrant celebration filled with fun, networking, and the spirit of the festival. Your participation made this event truly special. Your commitment and enthusiasm greatly contributed to the success of the event."

Puneet Gera, Associate Director, Island Life Travel, said, "The vision behind organising this event was to bring together travel agents and their families, as well as our hotel partners and their loved ones, to convey a powerful message: This festival is about family, community, and togetherness."



ELEVATE YOUR BUSINESS

EXPERIENCE HIGHER
CONVERSION RATES
WITH BALITRIP DMC'S

EXCLUSIVE
FLIGHT-INCLUSIVE
BALI & VIETNAM
PACKAGES!

Interest

Imagine offering your clients a seamless travel experience that includes round-trip flights from Ahmedabad and Mumbai to Bali, all at an unbeatable price. Our innovative fixed departure packages not only simplify the booking process but also enhance your sales potential. Travel agencies that partner with us have reported a remarkable 200% increase in their conversion rates, allowing them to sell thrice as many Bali packages compared to traditional offerings like taking flights & land packages separately.



Desire

Why settle for ordinary when you can provide extraordinary value? Our Flight Inclusive Packages are 40% more cheaper than purchasing flights and accommodations separately. This significant cost advantage not only attracts more customers but also secures higher margins for your agency. Imagine the satisfaction of closing more bookings and watching your business thrive with our exclusive offerings.



Action

Don't miss out on this opportunity to elevate your travel business! Partner with Balitrip Wisata today and start offering our innovative Flight Inclusive B2B Bali Packages. Contact us now to learn more about how you can enhance your portfolio and maximize your profits. Let's take your agency to new heights together!

Example:- Our six-night all-inclusive flight packages to Bali start at ₹55,555 per person. This price includes airfare, visits to major attractions, and accommodations in four-star hotels in two locations: Kuta and Ubud. All transfers are conducted in a private car. Please note that this is not a group booking or departure.

If you were to arrange this package separately by booking flights and hotels individually, the total cost would exceed ₹90,000 at this time. This demonstrates the value of purchasing our comprehensive packages.



Contact
WhatsApp Apl :



+91 8375005751

Email: opssupport@balitripwisata.com



SOUTH INDIA TRAVMART EMERGES AS A GAME CHANGER

The first South India TRAVMART (SITM), organised by TTJ from October 25 – 26, 2024, brought together key players from the travel, tourism, hospitality, and cruise industries. This inaugural event offered valuable networking opportunities, interactive sessions, and expert panels focused on sustainable tourism and industry innovation. By fostering collaboration and showcasing emerging trends, TRAVMART underscored TTJ's mission to advance South India's travel sector, setting the stage for future editions.





After the grand success of East India TRAVMART (EITM) in 2023, the idea to create a similar platform for South India was crystallised. The first edition of SITM was held at the ACCORD Metropolitan and witnessed a qualitative mix of 42 sellers representing airlines, tourism boards, cruise lines, luxury resorts, hotel chains, destination management companies, and travel technology.

Over 250 pre-qualified and registered buyers, including local Chennai agents and 100-plus hosted buyers from Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, had the opportunity to comfortably interact one-on-one with suppliers over a two-day networking schedule.

The event commenced with a ceremonial lamp lighting, accompanied by the traditional sounds of the Nadaswaram and Mridangam. Following this, a captivating Bharatanatyam performance of Ganesh Vandana by S. S. Vishwa Shree and Meghna Unnikrishnan mesmerised the audience, setting an inspiring tone for the proceedings.

Present at the occasion were the guests of honour: Venkatesan Dhattareyan, Regional Director - South India Tourism; Siraj Ansari, Director, Avion Holidays; Dr. Hari Kishan Valmiki, Managing Partner of Valmiki Travel and Tourism Solutions; and Ross Masood, Director, The Great India Tour Company.

Also present were Ravi Sharma and Gurjit Singh Ahuja, convener and co-convener of SITM.

The first evening witnessed detailed product presentations from Indigo, Ramoji Film City, Ren Tours and Treks Bhutan, and Booking Cabs. "Revival for Survival" was the topic of the panel discussion for day one, moderated by Siraj Ansari, with Dr Hari Kishan Valmiki and Venkatesan Dhattareyan as co-panellists.

Day two featured pre-lunch and post-lunch business sessions, followed by a knowledge session in the evening, which included presentations from Visit Jamaica, Cheval Collection, STIC Travel Group, and Sirru Fen Fushi Resort Maldives. A panel discussion on "Leveraging Technology for Travel Business" was moderated by Gurjit Singh Ahuja, Co-Convener, SITM, with Arvind Shukla, Director, Sampantech, and Neeraj Rustagi, Director, Booking Cabs, as co-panellists.

Lucky draws were conducted, offering multiple hotel room nights across various hotels and destinations within India, courtesy of Clarks Hotels and Chocolate Hotels, along with smartwatches from Sampantech.

The response received from both buyers and sellers was overwhelming, based on feedback regarding the quality of the sellers and the quality and business potential of the attending buyers.







SIRRU FEN FUSHI PRIVATE LAGOON RESORT



THE CLARKS HOTELS & RESORTS



Nok Air commences nonstop daily flights between Mumbai and Bangkok from October 28



Nok Air, the premium budget airline of Thailand, has begun its new nonstop daily flights between Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (BOM) and Bangkok's Don Muang Airport (DMK) from October 28, 2024.

This marks Nok Air's second Indian destination, following Hyderabad, which was introduced in February 2023. Nok Air will operate a daily schedule of 8 nonstop flights between Mumbai and Bangkok, utilizing the Boeing 737-800, accommodating 189 passengers.

To celebrate the launch, Nok Air hosted a pre-launch party on October 18 at Radisson Blu Mumbai, attended by Chief Commercial Officer Ranon Viputsiri, Thai Consulate General Donnawit Poolsawat, and delegates from the Thai Tourism Authority, along with key travel agents, tour operators, and online travel agencies.

"Our new service represents a pivotal milestone for Nok Air as we strengthen our international network as a premium budget airline. This enhanced connectivity between India and Bangkok will position

Bangkok as a key gateway to Thailand, providing travellers seamless access to renowned destinations like Phuket and Chiang Mai, as well as lesser-known gems such as Chiang Rai, Nan, Trang, and many more, ensuring a strong comprehensive travel experience," said Ranon Viputsiri, Chief Commercial Officer of Nok Air.

VFS Global to offer new Indonesia e-Visa on Arrival service to Indians from this December

The Directorate General of Immigration under the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, Indonesia, has appointed VFS Global, the world's largest outsourcing and technology services specialist for governments and diplomatic missions, as the exclusive private service provider for Electronic Visa on Arrival (e-VoA) to make the process seamless, promote inbound tourism, increase investments into Indonesia, and enhance the overall traveller experience.

VFS Global's new e-VoA platform, set to commence in the first half of December 2024, will be available for nationals of the 97 countries eligible for e-VoA, including India.

Travellers will soon be able to enjoy a quicker and smoother visa application journey through VFS Global by completing the entire process online before departure and receiving a pre-approved e-VoA. The e-VoA can be easily obtained by visiting the VFS Global website, submitting all the required documents, and paying the necessary fees online prior to travel. Once the application is submitted, travellers can receive their visas on their email before departure. With the payment having been made online, travellers can enjoy a smoother and faster entry experience through E-gates or immigration counters.



Yas Island Adventure invites travellers with exclusive Stay and Play offer

The Stay and Play package is designed to ensure a seamless and unforgettable holiday experience. This special offer allows guests to enjoy access to one of Yas Island's iconic theme parks for every night of their stay at one of the island's luxurious hotels, along with a complimentary breakfast



Guests can rev up their excitement at Ferrari World Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, dive into aquatic adventures at Yas Waterworld Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, step into the world of beloved characters at Warner Bros. World™ Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, or explore the magical realms at Seaworld® Yas Island, Abu Dhabi.

Guests can also extend their stay and enhance their experience with additional attractions like CLYMB, Karting at Yas Marina Circuit, and much more. After a day of excitement, they can unwind at Yas Bay, savour delectable dishes, or relax with stunning views at Yas Marina and Cyan Beach.

TBO Academy is promoting this exceptional offer, ensuring that travellers can seamlessly plan their ultimate Yas Island getaway. Book your Stay and Play package now.

SPECTACULAR DESTINATIONS
WITH
REMARKABLE
EXPERIENCES

Our Destinations:

Jaipur | Udaipur | Kumbhalgarh | Jaisalmer
Jodhpur | Ranthambore | Jawai | Sasan Gir | Velavadar

Call us:

+91 93280 16885/86/87 | +91 79 2397 7600 | www.trulyy.in





NYC Tourism + Conventions

The New York City Tourism + Conventions Board has appointed **Julie Coker** as its new President and CEO, starting December 9, 2024. Coker, currently President and CEO of the San Diego Tourism Authority, brings over three decades of leadership experience in the tourism and hospitality sectors. During her tenure in San Diego, the city achieved record visitor spending and occupancy rates. Coker has also held executive roles in Philadelphia and serves on multiple national tourism boards.



Tourism Australia

Tourism Australia has appointed **Jennifer Doig** as Regional General Manager for South and South East Asia, based in Singapore. With 20 years of Asia-based marketing experience, including her recent role as Director of Global Campaigns, Dubai Tourism, Doig will lead trade and consumer marketing efforts across key markets such as India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. Reporting to Andrew Hogg, Tourism Australia's Executive GM for Eastern Markets and Aviation, she aims to boost visitation and help rebuild tourism to pre-2019 levels.



Tamarind Global

Tamarind Global has appointed **Alisha Shirodkar** as Vice President, Strategy. Returning for a second tenure, Alisha will drive the company's growth strategy, focusing on business expansion and immersive marketing. With experience from Hindustan Unilever, her previous role in Tamarind's marketing and event planning, and co-founding The Belgian Waffle Co. and Hotchaa, Alisha brings valuable expertise. In her new role, she will strengthen Tamarind Global's brand presence, aiming to enhance its position as a leading luxury service provider in India.



TripJack

TripJack has appointed **Varun Mahajan** as Head of Business for its Flights portfolio. Working closely with founders Hussain and Hasan Patel, Varun will focus on expanding TripJack's largest division, enhancing processes, and driving capability development. With over 15 years of experience as an Associate Partner at McKinsey India's growth practice and nearly a decade at Godrej Consumer Products Limited, Varun brings expertise in scaling businesses and customer-focused strategies.



Minor Hotels

Minor Hotels has appointed **Rohit Chopra** as Area Commercial Director, India, aiming to expand its presence in the country. Chopra will lead commercial activities, focusing on revenue growth, client relationships, and customer loyalty, reporting to Vijay Krishnan and Richard Beh. With 26 years of experience, including roles at Marriott, Hyatt, and Accor, Chopra most recently served as Director of National Sales for Accor India and South Asia, where he drove strategic sales initiatives and achieved strong performance.



Four Seasons Hotel Bengaluru

Four Seasons Hotel Bengaluru has appointed **Biswajit Chakraborty (BC)** as General Manager. With over 30 years in luxury hospitality, including roles at Oberoi, Taj, The Leela, and Accor, BC is known for his strategic leadership. Previously managing director at Hotelivate, his career included notable roles as GM at Sofitel Mumbai BKC and The Oberoi Grand Kolkata. At Four Seasons, BC will enhance guest experiences and reinforce the hotel's status as a top luxury destination in Bengaluru.



Fairmont Jaipur

Fairmont Jaipur has appointed **Gagan Katyal** as Director of Sales. With over 20 years of experience, Gagan has held leadership roles at Ananta Hotels and Resorts, ITC Rajputana Jaipur, and Marriott International. His expertise includes sales strategy, revenue management, and business development. At Fairmont Jaipur, he will lead sales efforts, focusing on inbound and outbound strategies and building client relationships, positioning the hotel as a top choice for weddings, conferences, and events.



Mayfair Hotels and Resorts

Mayfair Elixir has appointed **Randhir Gupta** as Vice President of Commercial and Business Development, further strengthening its leadership team. With over 23 years of experience in hospitality and aviation, Randhir has held key roles at Accor India and South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group, and Sahara Airlines, managing sales operations across significant markets. He will lead commercial growth and drive business development initiatives for Mayfair Hotels in his new position.



EAST INDIA

TRAVMART

KOLKATA

NOV 20-21, 2024



- Fully Hosted Buyer Seller Meet
- Pre-fixed Meetings with Targeted Buyers
- 150-plus Hosted Buyers + Local Buyers

- Captive Audience
- 2 Days of Industry Networking
- Presentations/Educational Conclave

SUPPORTED BY



HOTEL PARTNER



Register as Buyer

Register as Seller

BHUMIKA PANCHAL

ISHA SINGH

PARTH SHARMA

YAMINI SHARMA

✉ bhumika@sampanmedia.com

✉ isha@sampanmedia.com

✉ parth@sampanmedia.com

✉ yamini@sampanmedia.com

☎ +91 8800726446

☎ +91 8826612446

☎ +91 9560264446

☎ +91 7303979448



INTRODUCING AIR INDIA'S NEW GROUP BOOKING MANAGER

Seamlessly manage group bookings for 10 or more PAX.

KEY BENEFITS



Quick
Response



End-to-End
Automation



Real Time
Updates



24x7
Availability



Convenient
Payment Options

For further details log onto
<https://www.airindia.com/in/en/book/group-ticket-booking.html>

More features coming soon!