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Dear Friends,

There is a certain energy in the air, and as we connect at conventions and reunite at trade marts, one thing is clear, the industry is alive with momentum!

In this August edition of TTJ, as we prepare for the festive season, we explore how wedding planners, destinations, and hotels across the globe are courting Indian weddings with luxe bespoke offerings, cultural sensitivity, and a flair for the extraordinary.

We bring you updates from the upcoming 40th IATO Convention in Puri, with insights from Office Bearers and Chapter Chairmen as they gear up for this landmark gathering.

Also featured are the 6th OTOAI Convention in Moscow, a recap of our successful TTJ TRAVMART in Chandigarh, and a preview of MICE MART Delhi this October, designed to connect and inspire.

We also extend heartfelt congratulations to Oman Air on completing three decades of seamless Mumbai - Muscat service.

Happy Reading!

Ravi Sharma

Ravi Sharma
ravisharma@sampanmedia.com

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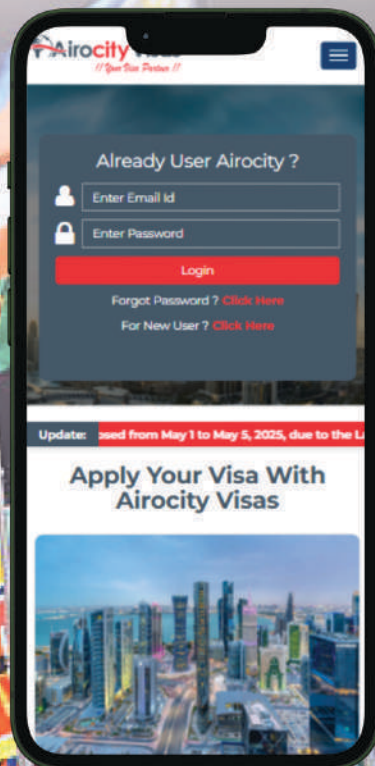
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Tourism Australia hosts 19th edition of Australia Marketplace India in Jaipur



Tourism Australia hosted the 19th edition of its flagship trade initiative, Australia Marketplace India (AMI), at Fairmont Jaipur from August 3–6, 2025, reinforcing strong ties between Indian travel businesses and Australian tourism representatives.

This annual B2B event brought together more than 100 Indian agents, and 82 Australian tourism operators to showcase their tourism offerings, further highlighting growing Indian interest in

Australian holidays.

With the rising interest from High Yielding Indian travellers in exploring Australia, this year’s Marketplace event saw a strong response from the Indian travel and trade sector. Growth in participation from Indian companies emphasised the industry’s intent to deepen destination knowledge and strengthen consumer appeal. This strong response was met with the rise in Australian seller representation from across the range of businesses including lodging and tour operators, attractions, experiences, inbound tour operators, along with state and regional tourism organisations.

Commenting on the event, Jennifer Doig, Regional General Manager for South & Southeast Asia, Tourism Australia, said, “With India being one of the leading markets

for Australia, the marketplace plays a pivotal role in connecting leading Australian tourism experts with key players in the Indian travel trade. This initiative is central to increasing tourism spending and future visitor numbers from one of our most promising inbound markets. Our travel partners remain our strongest advocates, helping position Australia as a preferred destination for India’s high-value holidaymakers.”

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China Southern Airlines appoints Group Concorde as GSA – Passenger Sales in India

Group Concorde has been appointed as the General Sales Agent (GSA) for China Southern Airlines’ passenger sales across India, effective August 1, 2025.

The partnership marks a significant step in strengthening the airline’s footprint in the Indian market. China Southern Airlines, one of Asia’s largest and most prominent carriers, has entrusted Group Concorde to manage and expand its passenger sales, marketing, and reservation support throughout the country.

Commenting on the development, Prithviraj Singh Chug, CEO of Group Concorde, said, “We are honoured to be chosen as the GSA for China Southern’s passenger division in India. This partnership reflects our shared commitment to service excellence, innovation, and growing meaningful connectivity between India and China. We look forward to delivering strong results and supporting the airline’s expansion in this region.”

With an extensive global network, modern fleet, and award-winning service, China Southern Airlines offers seamless travel options to passengers across the world. Group Concorde will be responsible for all passenger sales, marketing, and reservation support functions in India, aiming to further enhance the visibility and accessibility of China Southern’s services for Indian travellers.



Prithviraj Singh Chug

IndiGo announces daily London Heathrow flights starting October 2025



IndiGo has marked 19 years of operations with the announcement of key international expansions, including daily direct flights from India to London Heathrow starting October 26, 2025, subject to regulatory approvals. The route, to be operated by Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner aircraft under a damp-lease agreement with Norse Atlantic Airways, represents a major milestone in the airline’s long-haul growth strategy. The addition of five more Dreamliners this financial year will allow the airline to further strengthen its global footprint. Bookings for the London route will open soon. In response to strong passenger demand, IndiGo has also announced increased frequencies on its recently launched long-haul routes from Mumbai to Amsterdam and Manchester. Effective September 20, 2025, flights to Amsterdam will increase to six times a week, before becoming a daily service from October 13. Meanwhile, flights to Manchester will operate four times a week starting September 22.

Seabourn announces first-ever ‘Pole to Pole: Grand Expedition’ voyage for 2027

Seabourn has announced its first expedition Grand Voyage, the 94-day Pole to Pole: Grand Expedition aboard the purpose-built Seabourn Venture, sailing from August 17 to November 19, 2027. Covering over 20,500 nautical miles from the High Arctic to Antarctica, the voyage offers 60 days of expedition experiences across 14 countries, including rare stops in the Northwest Passage, South Georgia, Falkland Islands, and Ellesmere Island.

Guests will enjoy immersive wildlife encounters, cultural insights, and luxury experiences including guided Zodiac tours, hikes, enrichment programming, and Seabourn’s signature “Caviar on Ice.” The vessel features state-of-the-art expedition tech, private verandas, premium dining, Starlink Wi-Fi, and more.

Led by a 23-member expert team, the voyage includes rare access to polar landscapes and wildlife such as polar bears, whales, penguins, and seals. Guests also benefit from exclusive amenities like \$10,000 shipboard credit, business class air, and curated adventure gear. Public bookings open August 13, 2025.



For added flexibility, Seabourn will also offer a shorter 82-day Grand Expedition option, from August 29 to November 19, 2027.

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Kempinski Scales Up Global Presence, Balancing Legacy with Innovation

Kempinski Hotels recently held its annual two-city roadshow in India, celebrating a year of remarkable growth while reaffirming its deepening commitment to the Indian luxury travel landscape. In this exclusive feature, Sebastian Riewe, Vice President Global Sales, Kempinski Hotels, shares with TTJ how the brand is reshaping its global sales strategy, responding to shifting guest expectations, and navigating the future of hospitality with a blend of authenticity, adaptability, and ambition.

Prativa Vaidya Bhalla

As one of the world’s oldest luxury hotel brands, Kempinski Hotels stands at a unique intersection where legacy meets reinvention. With a portfolio spanning 78 properties across 33 countries and 38 more in the pipeline, the brand’s evolution reflects the changing face of global luxury travel. Deepening its footprint in the Asia-Pacific, Kempinski is expanding into new markets, wellness-driven experiences, and digital innovation, all while remaining true to the refined elegance that defines its identity.

Iconic Legacy of Luxury

As Europe’s oldest luxury hotel group, Kempinski draws strength from its 128-year legacy, yet its vision is anything but static. While it honours its iconic heritage, the brand is steadily adapting to shifting travel trends and the expectations of today’s global traveller. Sebastian says, “With over 128 years of history and a legacy of innovation, we have a strong foundation to build on. We have a collection of individual, iconic properties that lead the way for the brand. However, we cannot dwell on the past; rather, the past should inform the present. We must continue to adapt and evolve to suit the guests’ needs of today and tomorrow.”

This philosophy emphasises Kempinski’s approach to luxury, an idea no longer defined by uniformity or excess, but by meaning, relevance, and personal resonance. He points out, “What was luxury 10 - 15 years ago is not necessarily what luxury is today. Luxury also means different things to different people, so we personalise each guest’s stay based on what is important to them.”

Expansion in APAC

As the group accelerates its global footprint, a significant part of its growth strategy is centred on the dynamic Asia-Pacific region. Outlining the brand’s evolving global sales approach, Sebastian points to a combination of flexibility and long-term vision; “We are looking at all developments, including new builds, conversions, and partnerships. We have a strategic partnership in place



▲ Sebastian Riewe

with BTG, which will facilitate significant development in China over the next 10 years. Expansion is not just about numbers, but also about aligning with the brand’s identity and standards. Pioneering has always been part of our DNA. Kempinski is very good proof that we do not let go of a project just because it is complicated; if it honours our brand, we will work on it.”

This mindset is crucial as Kempinski navigates Asia’s diverse hospitality landscape. Balancing emerging markets like Vietnam with established ones like Bangkok and Bali requires carefully tailored offerings that reflect local nuances while preserving the brand’s core identity.

Sebastian explains this evolving approach through the lens of rising demand for experiential and wellness-driven travel. He notes, “While we have overarching brand strategies, each hotel curates its own experiences and wellness offerings based on what makes sense locally. For example, wellness in Bali will naturally differ from wellness in Berlin, and it must reflect a true sense of place. At the corporate level, we have established a dedicated Product and Experience vertical and recently appointed a Chief Product Officer, Vice President of Wellness, and Vice President of Experience, reflecting our strong focus in this area moving forward.”

Digitalisation and Sustainability

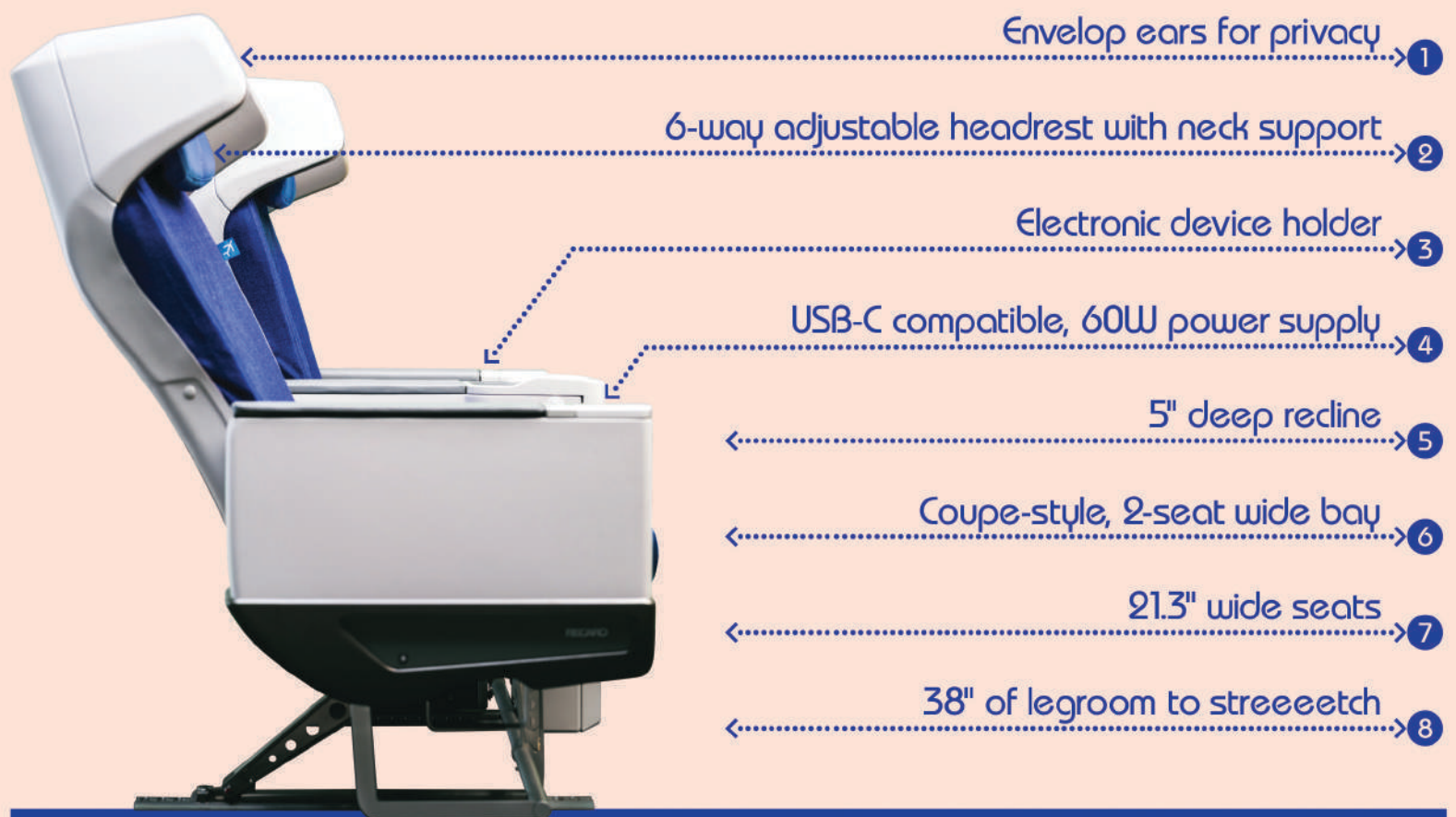
Given the popularity of the KEMPINSKI DISCOVERY loyalty programme, digitalisation is key to strengthening guest engagement. Sebastian shares, “We are continuously expanding the features of the App, allowing members to manage their accounts, track DISCOVERY Dollars, book experiences, and access their digital membership card.”

Kempinski’s commitment to sustainability is reflected in its ESG report, highlighting concrete steps toward energy reduction and responsible operations. Sebastian stresses that the ESG report has become indispensable, and showing responsibility is a must. As the industry evolves, Kempinski’s proactive approach signals its intent to lead with both purpose and accountability.




Kempinski representatives at the Delhi Soirée

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Aeroprime soars ahead with future-ready GSA model rooted in local expertise

In this latest interaction, Abhishek Goyal, CEO and Executive Director, Aeroprime Group, shares how the company is redefining airline representation through a next-generation GSA model powered by technology, data intelligence, and regional customisation.

Prashant Nayak

Representing leading global carriers, Aeroprime offers end-to-end solutions, enabling airlines to navigate competitive and complex markets with agility, boost revenue, and align with evolving traveller expectations and sustainability goals.

Tech-First GSA Model

In a rapidly evolving aviation landscape, Aeroprime Group is transforming the conventional GSA framework with a forward-looking, tech-enabled approach. Representing a growing portfolio of global carriers, the company offers end-to-end solutions that help airlines navigate competitive markets, drive revenue, and meet evolving traveller expectations and sustainability imperatives.

“Through the integration of advanced technology, data-backed strategy, focused brand-building, and a full-spectrum service approach, we are setting new industry benchmarks. Our model is built around real-time intelligence, automation, and seamless brand integration across every customer touchpoint,” noted Abhishek.

From marketing and distribution to customer engagement and cargo services, Aeroprime delivers comprehensive capabilities. Its proprietary platforms and performance marketing tools enhance airline visibility and sales, ensuring measurable outcomes at every stage.

Positioning in Diverse Markets

Aeroprime currently represents leading international carriers including Thai Airways, Vietnam Airlines, Air Cambodia, Air Cairo, SalamAir, Avianca, and others. By tailoring market strategies to regional dynamics across India and Southeast Asia, the company ensures each partner brand connects meaningfully with its target audience.

Abhishek explained, “We customise positioning around what matters most: connectivity, value, and cultural affinity. Our regionally embedded teams use advanced tools, including digital distribution platforms, real-time analytics, and unified retailing, to enhance visibility and performance. At the same time, we build strong alliances with trade partners, OTAs, and local influencers to amplify reach and relevance. Achieving



▲ Abhishek Goyal

the right balance between global brand consistency and local market resonance is central to Aeroprime’s approach. While our regional teams understand local travel behaviours and cultural nuances, our central marketing team ensures every campaign reflects the airline’s global voice.”

Airline Distribution

At the heart of Aeroprime’s value proposition lies a robust data analytics framework. The company leverages a suite of advanced tools that provide its teams with real-time insights into booking patterns, fare competitiveness, and route performance. These insights drive smarter decisions in areas such as pricing, inventory optimisation, and capacity planning.

Their distribution strategy, both B2B and B2C, is being revolutionised by a combination of human expertise and technological innovation, particularly through Glid, their flagship platform. “Glid is a next-generation airline retailing solution that connects OTAs, TMCs, consolidators, and aggregators with airline content via a single API. It supports both traditional and NDC-enabled distribution, streamlining bookings and accelerating go-to-market for new routes and offerings,” shared Abhishek.

On the B2C side, Aeroprime equips travel agents with digital tools, real-time inventory, and sales support to boost efficiency and customer service. The company also engages

proactively with the MICE segment, offering tailored solutions that meet the unique needs of corporate and group travel.

Responsible Air Travel

With sustainability becoming a core concern in global aviation, Aeroprime is helping airlines align with environmental goals while enhancing brand equity.

Abhishek pointed out, “Our role includes providing strategic advisory on sustainability, building green partnerships, and offering data-driven insights that help airlines reduce their environmental footprint. Whether it is fuel-efficient operations, carbon offset programmes, or purposeful storytelling around sustainability, we ensure these efforts resonate with today’s conscious travellers. In a landscape where responsible travel increasingly influences consumer choices, integrating sustainability into our GSA model is not only the right move, it is a smart, future-ready strategy.”

Global Growth Blueprint

Aeroprime’s expansion strategy is founded on service consistency, backed by deep local expertise. “We build regionally empowered teams with strong on-ground knowledge, ensuring a nuanced understanding of each market’s regulatory and commercial environment,” remarked Abhishek.


Before entering a new geography, the company conducts a comprehensive, data-driven market evaluation, factoring in demand forecasts, regulatory frameworks, competitive landscape, and the strength of the local travel ecosystem, including OTAs, consolidators, and influencers. Abhishek added, “We also prioritise hiring local talent and running pilot campaigns to test receptivity. This enables us to fine-tune our strategies and reduce risk.”

By combining structured market entry with agility and regional insight, Aeroprime enables its airline partners to scale with confidence and long-term traction. “Our strategic approach gives partner airlines the clarity, consistency, and localisation they need to succeed in new markets. It is about expanding with confidence and sustaining that growth with precision,” affirmed Abhishek.

The Only Thing More Iconic Than the Monuments? The Menus.



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INDIA'S WEDDING INDUSTRY ATTRACTS GLOBAL SUITORS

Once seen as a domestic extravaganza, the Indian wedding is now a key driver of outbound tourism with couples tying the knot everywhere from European castles and Middle Eastern deserts, to South East Asian beaches! Sensing the opportunity, international tourism boards and global hospitality brands are racing to adapt, upgrading infrastructure, easing regulations, and crafting bespoke experiences tailored to Indian traditions. In this TTJ report, representatives from leading international tourism boards share how India is becoming a pivotal market in their global strategies playbook.

Prativa Vaidya Bhalla



As India's wedding industry hurtles toward a projected value of USD 132.92 billion by 2031, according to Blueweave Consulting, global destinations are rolling out the red carpet for the big fat Indian wedding. With over 10 million weddings each year, rising disposable incomes,

and a social media-fuelled appetite for grandeur, Indian couples are looking far beyond traditional venues. From palaces in Portugal to deserts in AIUla and vineyards in France, the Indian wedding has become a prized export that combines scale, culture, and unmatched production value.

Thailand

Indian weddings and milestone celebrations have played a significant role in boosting tourism from India to Thailand. Pre-COVID, Thailand hosted nearly 300 to 400 Indian weddings annually, and since 2024, that momentum has returned in full force. Each celebration typically brings 150 to 500 guests, with an average of 200 to 400, depending on the scale. Reported wedding budgets range from 5 to 10 million baht, rising higher in luxury tiers at 10 to 30 million Baht. Beyond weddings, Thailand's beach destinations are a top choice for birthdays, anniversaries, reunions, and pre-wedding getaways.

Reasons for Its Popularity



When it comes to hosting a grand Indian wedding, few places deliver like Thailand. From vibrant rituals to lavish décor, the country seamlessly caters to every cultural and ceremonial detail; be it vegetarian or Jain cuisine, celebrity entertainers, floral installations, ice sculptures, horses, elephants, henna artists, makeup teams, or even the family *punditji*. **Siriges-a-nong Trirattanasongpol, Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) New Delhi Office,** says, "Proximity to

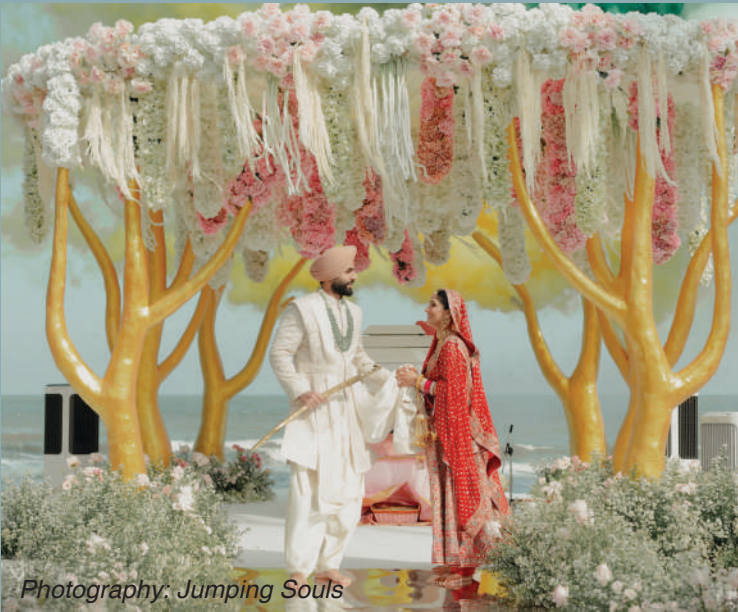
India, visa exemption, stunning locales, flexible pricing, the signature warmth of Thai hospitality, and the famously accommodating 'can-do' attitude, make Thailand an ideal destination for unforgettable events." The guests can further extend their stay to explore the country's many attractions, turning a wedding into a full-fledged vacation.

Industry Engagement

Siriges-a-nong affirms, "We at TAT New Delhi are consistently engaging with wedding planners and event organisers by organising FAM trips

and networking meets with Thai suppliers, and also collaborating for wedding shows. We have incentives for organising Indian weddings and celebrations, which include a ticket to Thailand for the wedding planner, a cash incentive based on the number of guests, and ten spa vouchers for the wedding party." Alongside selected hotels, TAT has launched the 'Celebrations with Care' campaign, promoting eco-friendly activities like zero food wastage, composting, and feeding the underprivileged.

As the demand for Indian destination weddings continues to surge, TAT is pivoting its strategy to strengthen on-ground partnerships rather than direct promotional campaigns. Siriges-a-nong shares, "We are always keen to connect the wedding planners and organisers to the right people in the airlines, hotels, and venues that are looking forward to welcoming the wedding segment. Looking ahead, TAT is now focused on spotlighting lesser-known but equally enchanting destinations such as Koh Samui, Chiang Mai, and Rayong. These locations are still under the radar for Indian weddings, but have a wide variety of venues, luxury hotels, and experiences to offer."



Photography: Jumping Souls

Ras Al Khaimah



Destination weddings are fast becoming a cornerstone of Ras Al Khaimah's tourism growth, with Indian celebrations leading the charge. In recent years, the Emirate has seen a significant rise in Indian arrivals, driven by its appeal as a wedding destination offering beachside luxury, desert grandeur, scenic mountain backdrops, and world-class hotel infrastructure. With well-connected direct flights from key Indian cities and just 45 minutes from Dubai International Airport, Ras Al Khaimah offers

both accessibility and seclusion, ideal for the typical multi-day Indian wedding festivities. Its high-end resorts and event-ready venues have hosted an increasing number of high-end, large-scale Indian weddings

that generate substantial business for local vendors, planners, and hospitality partners across the Emirate.

Iyad Rasbey, Vice President, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA), observes, "We have recorded over 40 per cent surge in confirmed Indian weddings in the first half of 2025, with continued momentum expected as more families discover the Emirate's potential for immersive, high-impact celebrations."

Crafting Indian Celebrations with Authenticity

Ras Al Khaimah has the infrastructure and a wide network of service providers required to support Indian wedding celebrations that typically include multiple ceremonies and detailed cultural requirements. The Emirate offers a range of beach resorts and desert properties, of international hotel brands, with spaces suitable for hosting multi-day events and pre-wedding functions of every scale. Acknowledging the importance of catering as a core component of Indian weddings, Iyad points out that hotels and venues in Ras Al Khaimah often work closely with Indian chefs to deliver menus that include traditional Indian sweets, North and South Indian cuisine, with vegetarian options as well.

Services such as *mandap* setup, floral design, and baraat logistics are arranged with cultural accuracy and operational efficiency.

Deepening Ties with the India Market

India remains a top source market for Ras Al Khaimah, and the Emirate is actively building strong ties with Indian wedding planners, influencers, and MICE agencies. In both 2023 and 2025, Ras Al Khaimah hosted the Exotic Wedding Planning Conference, giving top Indian planners firsthand exposure to its scenic venues, world-class hospitality, and diverse landscapes. In July 2025, it also conducted a four-city India roadshow in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Hyderabad, engaging over 300 travel trade professionals, including event planners.

Iyad shares, “We have recorded 36 per cent growth in MICE in the first half of 2025, and weddings are a big component of this growth. To accelerate this momentum, we have launched a tailored incentive programme with the Ras Al Khaimah International Airport and our hotel partners, offering perks such as complimentary site visits, expedited approvals, and custom group packages. Our Wedding Planner Certification Program, featuring an intuitive e-learning platform, enables certified planners to expedite civil approvals and secure access to exclusive signature venues, thereby reinforcing the Emirate’s reputation as not just ‘wedding-friendly’, but ‘wedding-extraordinary’.

Despite seasonal and global travel shifts, Ras Al Khaimah remains a year-round wedding destination with over 8,200 rooms, more than half in five-star hotels, and 7,500 more keys expected by 2027, including marquee brands like TAJ, Wynn, and Four Seasons. Modern couples are increasingly drawn to culturally rich venues like Al Jazeera Al Hamra, Dhayah Fort, and the Jebel Jais Viewing Deck. As the Emirate expands its offerings, it remains committed to preserving the authenticity that sets it apart.



Wedding at Jebel Jais Mountain Peak

Spain



Spain has seen growing interest from Indian families over the past five years for destination weddings, pre-wedding bachelortrips, and honeymoons, particularly among high-net-worth travellers. In 2023, Indian arrivals peaked at nearly 250,000, the highest in recent years. While wedding-related travel remains a niche segment, its high-value, multi-day nature and off-season timing bring year-round economic benefits to local communities. **Elena**

Orland, Director, Tourism Office of Spain in India, says, “Wedding-related tourism presents an excellent opportunity to bring sustainability to life, and I feel this trend will only grow in the following years.”

Courting High-Value Indian Celebrations

Spain offers an extraordinary variety of wedding venues, from Moorish palaces and Mediterranean resorts to historic Paradores in castles and monasteries, blending old-world charm with modern luxury. Elena says, “Our venues can accommodate everything from intimate traditional rituals to lavish multi-day Indian celebrations, with in-house makeup artists, hairstylists, and personal assistants. Popular destinations like Seville, Marbella, Málaga, and Barcelona are well-equipped with experienced professionals and entertainment options, while the Canary Islands offer stunning landscapes and a welcoming Indian community, making logistics seamless. With its beauty, infrastructure, and openness to tradition, Spain is perfectly positioned for unforgettable Indian weddings.”

Spanish venues and organisers have grown adept at hosting multi-day Indian weddings, seamlessly incorporating rituals like *mehendi*, *haldi*, sangeet, and large baraat processions, often on horseback or in vintage cars. From coordinating logistics with local authorities to offering customised décor, Indian menus, and even flamenco performances, event teams ensure each celebration blends tradition with local flair.

Future Vision

Elena shares, “We are committed to sustainable tourism, and positioning Spain as a year-round wedding destination for Indian travellers is a key focus. Spain is capable of meeting the highest demands with quality and efficiency. Beyond popular cities, we aim to spotlight lesser-known regions like Andalucía, Cataluña, Castilla y León, and Extremadura.”

Spain envisions becoming a premier destination for Indian weddings by blending the grandeur of Indian traditions with the warmth, hospitality, and natural diversity that define Spanish culture. Increasingly, venues are embracing sustainability through local sourcing, renewable energy, reusable décor, and reduced travel impact without compromising on experience or emotion. What makes Spain truly special, however, goes beyond logistics or landscapes. Elena sums up with a perfect thought, “Spaniards, like Indians, deeply value family, celebration, and tradition. It is common for locals to join in the joy of an Indian wedding as if it were their own.”



Photography: Naman Verma

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Discover the Untouched Canvas of Modern Indian Love Stories in Oman

In the ever-evolving world of photography for destination weddings and pre-wedding shoots, Indian couples are moving beyond the traditional. They are trading overexposed skylines and well-trodden trails for something fresh, soulful, and extraordinary. And at the heart of this new wave lies a gem waiting to be discovered - Oman.

Yaash Jain

As someone who has travelled extensively, capturing love stories from Rajasthan's royal palaces to Vietnam's lantern-lit streets, I can confidently say Oman is unlike any other place. It is not just a backdrop; it is a feeling, a narrative enhancer, a place where every frame feels personal and profound.

A Dreamland of Contrasts

Oman is nature's masterclass in diversity. Imagine starting your day in a golden desert that glows like molten honey at sunrise, and by afternoon, shooting beside turquoise waters crashing against dramatic cliffs! The same country offers you untouched wadis that look like hidden jungles, palm-fringed oases that seem almost surreal, and old-world villages that lend depth and heritage to your love story.

As a photographer, the natural lighting, colours, and textures are a dream. For couples, it is the joy of having multiple locations packed into one destination without the stress of constant travel.

The Allure of Easy Elegance

One of the biggest concerns for any couple planning a shoot abroad is logistics. Oman clears that hurdle effortlessly. With short flight durations from major Indian cities and a simplified e-visa system, the journey begins on a smooth note. What is even more surprising is how luxury does not come with a jaw-dropping price tag here.

Whether you are looking for a private beachfront villa, a resort perched on a cliff, or a historic fort for that regal moment, Oman gives you five-star experiences at a fraction of what you would pay in Europe. For couples seeking a glamorous look without breaking the bank, this is the perfect sweet spot.

A Breath of Fresh Aesthetic

Let us face it, destinations like Bali or Santorini have all had their moments in the spotlight. While still beautiful, these locations now feel saturated. Couples today are craving uniqueness. They want a location that feels theirs, where their story does not blend into a sea of Instagram déjà vu.

Oman is that breath of fresh air. It offers raw, untouched beauty and an authentic cultural identity. From intricately designed mosques to bustling souks and silent sand dunes, there is a sense of poetry in every corner.

Weather That Works for You

Time and comfort are crucial when planning an outdoor shoot. Oman's climate, particularly from October to March, is incredibly cooperative. It is pleasantly warm without being overbearing, and the skies remain gloriously clear, ideal for those golden-hour portraits.

Whether you are twirling in the dunes or whispering sweet nothings by the sea, there is no rush to escape into air-conditioned rooms. The natural setting becomes a companion, not a challenge.

A Country That Welcomes Love

Behind the scenes of any great shoot is local support, and Oman excels at it. From understanding hoteliers to experienced local fixers and guides, we have found an environment that is not just welcoming but encourages creativity. The tourism infrastructure is well-developed but not overwhelming. This means personalised experiences, easy permits, and most importantly, safety and ease for the couple and crew.

Why Oman Is Our Lens' New Muse

I believe love stories deserve more than cookie-cutter visuals. They deserve meaning, adventure, texture, and individuality. Oman gives us all of that and more. It does not just offer locations; it gives you moods and a sense of being part of something timeless.

So, if you are looking to craft memories that feel cinematic yet grounded, majestic yet intimate, Oman is waiting. It is not just a destination; it is your story waiting to be told.

About the Author: Yaash Jain is the founder of Click Click by Yaash Jain.



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THE NEW AGE OF Wedding Hospitality

At the heart of every destination wedding is the venue. The right hotel does not just host a wedding, it gathers your people close, holds space for joy and emotion, and gently brings your cherished dream to life. It becomes part of the love story, woven into every photograph, every step, and every tear of joy. It is more than just a setting; it is a keeper of moments, where vows take shape, laughter dances through hallways, and lifelong bonds are sealed in celebration.

Prativa Vaidya Bhalla

To uncover the vision, craftsmanship, and cultural finesse behind extraordinary destination weddings, TTJ goes behind the scenes with the hoteliers who orchestrate every detail. These industry experts work tirelessly to transform lifelong dreams into reality and fleeting moments into lasting memories.

Raffles The Palm, Dubai, UAE



Raffles The Palm Dubai offers a one-of-a-kind regal setting as Dubai's only beachfront palace, presenting breathtaking venues for every wedding moment, from beachside *varmala* ceremonies and lively *baraats* to spectacular ballroom receptions. **Vandana Dawar, Director of Sales, Raffles The Palm Dubai**, notes, "What truly sets it apart is its cultural sensitivity, especially for Indian weddings, with dedicated

bridal butlers, bespoke Indian menus, and even full resort buyouts." Combined with expert wedding planners, picturesque backdrops, and an award-winning spa, it transforms dream weddings into unforgettable memories.

Targeting Indian Nuptials

The brand is strategically positioning itself as a premier Indian wedding destination through a multi-pronged, relationship-driven approach with top planners, travel designers, and DMCs. The resort showcases its palatial venues, bespoke bridal services, and tailored Indian catering via high-impact wedding shows, roadshows, and curated events across India. Vandana shares, "A key highlight of our PR efforts was an exclusive Wedding Sutra gathering in Mumbai, offering 20 leading planners a first-hand look at the resort's opulent offerings and cultural alignment."

Indian weddings are multi-day celebrations rich in rituals, large guest lists, and diverse culinary needs. Coordinating back-to-back events across various venues with distinct décor, flow, and customs can be complex. Sharing her strategy, Vandana says, "From religious traditions to regional cuisine, authenticity is everything. With our dedicated bridal butlers, Indian chefs, experienced planners, and trusted vendors, we ensure every



moment is seamlessly coordinated, meaningful, and true to the couple's vision."

Formula for Flawless Execution

Close collaboration with wedding planners and travel agents is key to crafting flawless destination weddings. Vandana highlights, "The in-house team aligns on every detail from venue flow to cultural nuances while supporting external planners. To strengthen industry ties, Raffles also offers tailored incentives for partners."

Well-equipped for large Indian wedding groups, Raffles provides the option to privatise the entire resort, creating an intimate, luxurious, multi-day celebration across suites, villas, and venues. "Every moment, from welcome to farewell, is designed to feel seamless, luxurious, and unforgettable," she adds.

Vandana shares a great story from a recent wedding, when a bride's heirloom ring went missing just hours before the ceremony. Emotions were running high, but the bridal butler located it discreetly and arranged an impromptu pre-ceremony moment where the bride's parents placed the ring on her finger, echoing their own wedding decades earlier. What began as a crisis turned into a deeply emotional family reunion, a testament to Raffles' signature blend of intuition, cultural sensitivity, and exceptional service.

Hôtel du Cap-Eden-Roc, France



A timeless legend perched on the sun-kissed tip of Cap d'Antibes, Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc is more than a French Riviera icon; it is a living legend holding French palace status that has played host to royalty, artists, and the world's most discerning guests for over 150 years. Today, it extends its timeless elegance to Indian weddings, where multi-day celebrations meet cinematic backdrops and impeccable hospitality.

Valerie Muller, Regional

Head of Communications, Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc reveals, "It is the emotional resonance of the location that crafts sensational wedding celebrations. We specialise in turning life's most precious moments into unforgettable memories."

Courting the Indian Wedding Market

At Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc, Indian weddings are welcomed with grandeur and sensitivity. The legendary Riviera property offers couples the rare chance to privatise the entire estate or host a more intimate celebration by the Mediterranean. Valerie believes that Indian families choose the property because they embrace the concept of openness to co-create. "We gladly collaborate with a chef personally chosen by the couple, who works alongside our Executive Chef Sébastien Broda to craft a bespoke menu, be it authentically Indian or a refined Indo-Mediterranean fusion. During the celebration, both culinary teams share the kitchen, combining their expertise to bring the envisioned menu to life," she highlights.

The hotel also actively showcases its venues through esteemed Indian wedding planners and specialised media outlets dedicated



to luxury and destination weddings. Valerie asserts, "We believe in close collaboration and require full involvement and consistent communication from event concept to production. It is, above all, a team effort." They also offer planner incentives and are happy to recommend trusted partners who understand their property and standards.

Designing for Scale and Splendour

Their vast experience with a diverse international clientele makes them well-versed in accommodating a wide range of cultural traditions and specific requests. One of the key challenges in hosting Indian weddings is managing consistently high guest numbers across multiple events, often spread over several days. This requires a thoughtful rotation of venues, each spacious enough to host large gatherings without repetition. "At Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc, we understand the importance of variety and scale. We offer multiple distinct settings from the garden's Grande Allée to our pool deck and signature restaurants, each with its unique mood and character." Their newest addition, The GlassHouse, is a crystal marquee nestled among pine trees that adds an elegant, versatile space ideal for multi-day celebrations.

Mandapa, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, Ubud, Bali



Mandapa, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, offers a serene sanctuary in the heart of Ubud, Bali, where rainforest, rice paddies, majestic temple-like architecture, and the gently flowing Ayung River create a naturally elegant setting.

Ariek Mahardika, Director Sales and Marketing Mandapa, Bali, says, "The blend of Balinese heritage and Ritz-Carlton service offers a rare mix of intimacy, elegance, and culture. From

riverside altars to private villas, the resort draws both Indian and international couples seeking meaningful, intimate, unforgettable, luxurious celebrations."

Deepening Ties with the Indian Wedding Market

Mandapa is actively strengthening its presence in the Indian wedding segment through strategic collaborations with top planners, luxury influencers, and curated bridal events. "Our engagement with the Indian market has been intentional. Participation in premium bridal



events like the Wedding Show and curated FAM trips has allowed us to showcase Mandapa as a unique and culturally sensitive destination. We also tailor our offerings to celebrate Indian wedding rituals and cuisine, which is a critical element for Indian families who wish to celebrate tradition in an international setting," shares Ariek.

Mandapa partners with luxury DMCs to manage every detail of guest travel from group bookings and transfers to curated leisure experiences like yoga, spa treatments, and temple tours. With 60 suites and villas, the Reserve offers privacy and exclusivity, often

hosting full buyouts for truly immersive destination weddings.

Ariek shares his belief that successful destination weddings are the result of strong collaboration and clear communication. He notes, “Our in-house event specialists collaborate closely with wedding planners and travel partners from start to finish, offering site inspections, planning support, and on-ground coordination while offering exclusive packages as partner acknowledgement.”

Honouring Sacred Traditions

Indian weddings are vibrant, multi-layered celebrations that span multiple days and demand precision in logistics, sensitivity to rituals, and strong coordination across departments. Accommodating

diverse diets, sourcing traditional décor or ceremonial items, and aligning with auspicious timings can be challenging, but with our skilled team and trusted vendor network, Mandapa ensures every celebration feels effortless, no matter how elaborate.

Ariek recalls one of Mandapa’s most unforgettable Indian weddings that blended Indian tradition with Bali’s sacred energy in a spiritually rich celebration. He shares, “The highlight was the homa yajna, a Vedic fire blessing with the ringing of the Balinese bell and the chanting of the Sanskrit mantras in the background.” Set amidst nature, the ceremony invited guests to release old patterns and set new intentions, offering a soul-stirring experience that left an unforgettable impression on all who attended.

Phulay Bay, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, Krabi, Thailand



Set against the dramatic coastal beauty of Krabi, Phulay Bay, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, offers an exclusive and culturally rich wedding experience. With 54 villas and the options for a full resort buyout, it becomes an exclusive, luxurious haven for both intimate and grand multi-day celebrations. **Vidya Sagar, General Manager, Phulay Bay Hotel Krabi**, says, “From Thai monk blessings and beachfront vows to Thai pavilion ceremonies and lively after parties, every detail is thoughtfully curated

by our in-house dedicated wedding team.” Recognised with three MICHELIN Keys, the resort offers elegance, privacy, and unforgettable moments for discerning Indian and international couples.

India is a Key Market

The property has successfully hosted several Indian weddings with full resort buyouts, demonstrating not only the rising interest from Indian guests but also their proven capability to deliver seamless, large-scale celebrations. Vidya says, “India continues to be one of our most important source markets. We are committed to strengthening our presence in the Indian market through participation in wedding exhibitions, strategic collaborations with Indian trade media, and immersive experiences tailored to this audience. We hosted a group of Indian MICE and wedding planners at the resort, further deepening relationships.”

Round-trip transfers from Krabi International Airport ensure a smooth arrival, while curated touches like traditional Thai massages, island-hopping adventures, and signature dining experiences transform every wedding into a deeply immersive and luxurious celebration.



Expertly Orchestrated Indian Weddings

Indian weddings are vibrant, multi-day celebrations with pre-wedding functions. With Phulay Bay’s two-night, three-day resort buyout, all events can take place on-site, streamlining logistics. Vidya notes, “We understand the intricacies of multi-day Indian celebrations and work hand-in-hand with planners to ensure every element is cohesive, seamless, and unforgettable.” Working in collaboration with wedding planners and travel agents ensures every detail from transport and accommodations to ceremonies and dining is flawlessly executed. The resort offers tailored support through site visits, pre-wedding planning, and cultural customisation, particularly for complex Indian weddings.

Highlighting their unique selling point, Vidya sums up, “The resort’s team collaborates closely with planners to honour traditions from floral decor and symbolic blessings to custom vegetarian menus. Flexible dining options, including Thai, Mediterranean, and bespoke menus, ensure every guest’s needs are thoughtfully catered to.”

Cinnamon Bentota Beach, Sri Lanka

Cinnamon crafts experiences that are both distinctive and rooted in authenticity. Cinnamon Bentota Beach is particularly well-positioned in this regard as the setting is unique, located between the Indian Ocean and Bentota River, offering exclusivity and visual drama. “Architecturally, it is one of Geoffrey Bawa’s most iconic works, and the layout allows for a natural progression of events across lawns, beachfront, riverside, and ballroom,” shares **Johan Aschan - Area Vice President, Sri Lanka Resorts, Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts, and General Manager, Cinnamon Bentota Beach, Signature Selection**.

The Spectacular Indian Wedding

Johan says, “We understand the requirements of Indian destination weddings and the property has been mapped to accommodate functions ranging from the sangeet and mehndi to the pheras and reception. With 159 keys, a buy-out allows complete customisation and privacy. Cinnamon Bentota Beach becomes an intuitive choice for couples seeking a setting that feels both exclusive and versatile to accommodate their vision.”

The Cinnamon approach is intentionally selective and is positioned as an exclusive venue, with the majority of wedding clients preferring



full property buy-outs to ensure complete privacy and control. “We engage with the Indian market through curated wedding exhibitions and long-standing relationships with planners and industry partners. Much of our traction comes through referrals, a reflection of the experience we offer. We are deliberate in securing weddings that align with the character of the property and the expectations of our guests,” he adds.

Designing the Extraordinary

Cinnamon follows industry best practices, partnering with local and international planners who manage logistics and events, while the in-house team ensures seamless coordination. Precise planning, contingency options, and flexibility in adapting resort spaces to suit each celebration’s unique requirements with minimal disruption to the overall experience allow for flawless execution of complex celebrations.

Logistical challenges are minimised by confirming events only during periods that allow them to deliver flawlessly without compromising guest experience, requiring careful calendar access to ensure a seamless hosting of large groups. Johan adds, “The



more nuanced considerations tend to be cultural, particularly around cuisine. Cinnamon’s Indian chefs bring expertise across regions, and guest chefs are welcomed to co-curate menus, ensuring authenticity with impeccable service.

Recalling some of his most memorable wedding experiences, Johan shares, “One that truly stands out was when we transformed the pond into a mandap. Although it is not a space typically used for ceremonies, the experienced planner executed it beautifully. Since then, it has become one of our most requested spots! Another favourite was a vibrant carnival-themed evening in the garden, complete with food trucks and a variety of cuisines. We had a rain contingency in place; a separate marquee for 400 guests, carefully constructed without disturbing the trees, preserving the natural charm of the setting.”

Mövenpick Resort Al Marjan Island, Ras Al Khaimah, UAE



Mövenpick Resort Al Marjan Island in Ras Al Khaimah has established itself as a sought-after wedding destination for Indian and international couples alike. **Fabien Chesnais, General Manager, Mövenpick Resort Al Marjan Island, Ras Al Khaimah,** points out, “With over 20 Indian weddings hosted in the past two years, our resort offers the best combination of the serenity of the Arabian Gulf, a pristine white-sand beachfront, and versatile venues from barefoot

beach vows to grand ballroom receptions.” Whether families opt for a full buyout or a more intimate celebration, the resort’s experienced team ensures every detail is effortlessly executed.

Gateway to Celebrations of Scale and Style

Just 45 minutes from Dubai International Airport and a short 15-minute drive from Ras Al Khaimah International Airport, Mövenpick Resort Al Marjan Island offers unmatched accessibility for Indian wedding groups. The resort enhances the guest experience with airport transfers, group visa assistance through the UAE’s streamlined e-visa system, and pre-arrival concierge services.

Mövenpick’s commitment to the Indian wedding market goes beyond infrastructure. The resort has cultivated strong partnerships with wedding planners, event organisers, and travel agents, offering comprehensive planning-to-execution support. From venue walkthroughs to vendor coordination, the resort’s dedicated wedding concierge manages all operational logistics, including permits and AV support for choreographer rehearsals. Perks for large groups



include upgrades, F&B discounts, and green rooms. Indian agents benefit from DMC tie-ups, marketing kits, and co-branded assets to promote the resort.

Indian Weddings – Ras Al Khaimah Style

With experience in large-scale celebrations and an eye for detail, the resort offers a seamless setting where every ritual is honoured and every moment elevated. “Indian weddings are a vibrant symphony of traditions, each with its own charm and significance. From beachfront haldi ceremonies and garden mehndis to high-energy sangeet, we manage each event with precision, cultural sensitivity, and flair. We understand the importance of Indian culinary traditions and offer fully vegetarian or Jain menus and open-air spaces for fire rituals. Our Indian chefs cater to every detail, from live chaat stations to South Indian breakfasts and North Indian feasts,” says Fabien. With 418 rooms, including 28 beachfront suites with private pools, the resort easily accommodates large entourages. Room clustering keeps families close, while amenities like Neo Sky Bar, kids’ clubs, and teen zones ensure guests remain entertained.

Al Habtoor City Hotel Collection, Dubai, UAE



The hotels have emerged as a preferred choice for Indian and international couples, offering a refined blend of luxury and cultural understanding. Whether hosting an intimate ceremony or a grand celebration, the properties provide stunning venues, advanced facilities, and dedicated wedding specialists who work closely with couples to bring their vision to life. **Stefan Radstrom, Complex General Manager, Al Habtoor City Hotel Collection, Dubai**, highlights, “The location provides easy access for international guests to explore Dubai, and a seamless blend of tradition and modernity makes it the ideal wedding destination.”

Strategic Outreach to the Indian Wedding Market

Sharing their marketing strategy, Stefan notes, “We actively target the Indian market through digital campaigns on popular social media platforms, collaboration with leading wedding magazines, and participation in major wedding exhibitions. We also work closely with Indian wedding planners and influencers to showcase our venues and services. Additionally, we host pre-wedding tastings, fam trips for planners, and customised events to build strong relationships. Our marketing emphasises our cultural understanding, flexible wedding packages, and our ability to deliver authentic Indian wedding experiences in Dubai.”

They partner proactively with wedding planners and travel agents, establishing dedicated teams to facilitate efficient planning and execution. “Our collaboration involves customised planning sessions,



real-time communication, and comprehensive support to ensure logistical smoothness and guest satisfaction. We also provide attractive and exclusive wedding packages to strengthen these partnerships,” he adds.

Expertise in Managing Large-Scale Indian Weddings

Hosting large-scale Indian weddings is a multifaceted endeavour, from managing multiple venues and guest logistics to honouring cultural and religious traditions with authenticity. At Al Habtoor City Hotel Collection, years of experience, strong vendor partnerships, and meticulous planning ensure each celebration unfolds flawlessly. “Our strength lies in understanding the nuances of Indian weddings and delivering every element from fire-compliant venues to regional menus and guest logistics with absolute precision,” shares Stefan.

Dedicated guest relations and events teams handle everything from airport transfers and tailored room packages to last-minute requests. Multilingual staff, including Hindi speakers, enhance communication, while flexible check-in/out and trusted transport partnerships ensure a smooth experience. The result: stress-free, memorable weddings where every detail is thoughtfully managed.

Centara Grand Mirage Beach Resort, Pattaya, Thailand



Centara Grand Mirage Beach Resort Pattaya is fast becoming a favourite for Indian destination weddings where sun, sea, and celebration come together in perfect harmony. **Moumita Paul, Director of Sales and Marketing, Centara Hotels and Resorts**, says, “Thanks to its multiple versatile venues, including a private beach ideal for ceremonies by the sea, the resort is gaining in popularity. The in-house waterpark also adds to the charm, giving families and guests a chance to unwind and enjoy wedding festivities in a fun, relaxed setting.”

Pioneers of Hosting Indian Weddings

Sharing Centara’s vast experience in hosting opulent weddings, Moumita notes, “Centara Grand Mirage Pattaya has been a pioneer in hosting Indian weddings. We have had the privilege of celebrating diverse cultural traditions, and I can proudly say that we have mastered the art of it.” With an experienced team that understands Indian customs and the scale of weddings, Centara Grand Mirage offers more than just a venue; it delivers an experience that is warm, joyous, and truly unforgettable.

“We are in touch with various wedding planners and event companies, and we offer a range of wedding packages that specifically promote Indian weddings. We do offer incentives to wedding planners and event management companies, and we are currently working on introducing



additional incentives for next year,” notes Moumita. Centara participates in multiple wedding events throughout the year to maintain strong visibility in the Indian wedding market, foster lasting relationships with industry professionals, and stay aligned with evolving trends and expectations of modern couples.

From Lavish Weddings to Landmark Events

In the space of hosting large wedding gatherings, Centara is also well known as a brand with top-notch MICE facilities, especially in Bangkok, Pattaya, and Phuket. We have one of the largest convention centres attached to our properties, along with our own ballrooms.

Moumita goes on to share, “We have had the privilege of hosting the Maruti Suzuki group with us for several years, which has been one of the most successful case studies from our MICE segment at Centara. We were also honoured to welcome Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a prestigious event held at our flagship property, Centara Grand at CentralWorld, Bangkok.”

THE PLACE TO BE

The world is yours to explore. Across Thailand, Laos, the Maldives, Vietnam, the UAE, Oman, Qatar or Japan, you can find a place you want to be. This is the essence of Centara Hotels & Resorts. Whether your clients are planning a family beach holiday, an immersive cultural experience or an exciting urban getaway, Centara's signature hospitality, warm Thai family values and world-class service will be at the heart of their stay anywhere in the world.



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Big Fat Indian Weddings GO PLACES

Indian weddings were once intimate gatherings, planned by elders, hosted at home, and steeped in tradition. Today, they have exploded into grand, multi-day spectacles with hundreds of guests, dazzling themes, and are meticulously planned with military-grade precision. Behind the splendour and spectacle lies the relentless hard work of wedding planners who juggle logistics, emotions, and expectations to craft seamless, once-in-a-lifetime celebrations.

Prativa Vaidya Bhalla



Devanshi Patel



Neha Seth Arora



Pratik Hemdev and Jueta Hemdev



Prateek Tandon



Kanika Arora Bablani



TJ takes you inside the world of Indian weddings to meet the masterminds and logistics wizards, who have turned destination weddings into a global phenomenon that the world cannot get enough of.

The Destination Wedding Boom

As celebration, travel, and experience increasingly intertwine in crafting destination weddings, **Devanshi Patel, Founder & Creative Director, Shreem Events**, observes that today’s affluent couples are not just planning weddings, they are weaving a once-in-a-lifetime story, shared with their closest circle. “Clients want to escape the noisy city life to embrace a setting that reflects their personality, like a beachside union in Goa, a snow-capped celebration in the North, a spiritual retreat in Rishikesh, or a regal affair at a European château. It is about creating something that feels intimate, intentional, and inspiring,” she shares. Even hometown weddings are being reimagined in meaningful spaces like childhood farms or ancestral homes for a boutique feel.

Neha Seth Arora, Founder, Saffron String, sees destination weddings as deeply personal experiences, seeped in emotion and atmosphere, not just a ceremony. She shares, “A destination gives couples the chance to create something intentional and uniquely theirs. No cookie-cutter banquet halls or last-minute compromises. Instead, they get cinematic sunsets, dinners that flow into dance floors, and a setting that truly mirrors who they are. There is also this growing idea of a wedding doubling as a vacation and shared escape for the couple and their guests.” It finally comes down to access, aesthetics, cost, and above all, vision. For NRIs, it is often easier to unite loved ones at a central location than to manage multiple time zones.

Jueta and Pratik Hemdev, the sibling duo behind YOLO Entertainment & Weddings, have spent over 12 years crafting luxury destination weddings defined by emotion, detail, and design.



Wedding Planner: Saffron String

“For us, it is about turning a couple’s vision into reality through thoughtful storytelling,” says Jueta. Their design house, Atelier Jueta Hemdev, brings this to life with immersive décor and striking visual narratives. Destination weddings, she believes, offer more than just ceremonies. They offer quality time in a celebratory, vacation-like setting, creating a sense of adventure and togetherness difficult to create at home.

Prateek Tandon, Co-Founder and Director, Copper Events, believes destination weddings are more than celebrations. They are immersive, magical experiences that blend travel, culture, and deep connection. He points out, “Couples today want more than rituals; they want unforgettable memories in unique settings, surrounded by their closest people. Whether it is a Rajasthani palace or an Italian vineyard, the setting becomes a character in their love story.” With intimate guest lists and multiple days of quality bonding, these weddings feel more like shared adventures.

Kanika Arora Bablani, Director, Touchwood Entertainment, with her two decades of industry expertise in India’s first NSE-listed event management company, observes how weddings have evolved far beyond traditional ceremonies. She notes, “Today, families are seeking fresh, memorable experiences for their guests, with an element of travel that brings in excitement and anticipation.”

Love is in the Details

Outlining the key ingredients that go into destination wedding planning, it ultimately comes down to one thing: the details. Logistics are at the heart of Neha’s planning process; the venue must have soul, and the right local crew. Even though every couple is different, some want five grand events, some just one perfect night, the goal remains the same: to craft an experience that is profoundly personal and effortlessly beautiful.

At the heart of every wedding lies a story, and for Jueta, the planning begins by immersing in it. “We start with a deep dive into the couple’s world, their cultural roots, aesthetic preferences, family dynamics, and aspirations,” she shares. For destination weddings, her team evaluates everything from weather and travel logistics to venue adaptability and local laws. But the real magic lies in designing emotional and interactive touchpoints, moments that resonate, surprise, and stay with guests long after the last dance, like fragrance-infused welcomes or sunset performances in ancient courtyards that leave lasting impressions. The goal, she asserts, is for every guest to feel they are part of a journey that reflects the couple’s heart and soul.

Prateek believes that truly understanding the couple, their story, their dreams, cultural nuances, guest dynamics, and emotional resonance is the foundation of an unforgettable celebration. “Once the vision is clear, every destination is assessed for seasonality, accessibility, vendor strength, smooth logistics, and contingency planning. At the heart of it all is hospitality. Every detail, from airport welcomes to personalised notes, is crafted to make guests feel cherished.”

Conceptualising a wedding begins with understanding what truly matters to the couple, their vision, preferences, priorities, and budget. Kanika notes, “At Touchwood, we focus on making the



Wedding Planner: Touchwood Entertainment | Photographer: CineLove

experience seamless and heartfelt, placing comfort, hospitality, and customisation at the core of every celebration we bring to life. Today, it is not just about grandeur, but about creating meaningful, memorable moments that feel personal and thoughtful.”

Devanshi believes the foundation of a successful destination wedding lies in experience and alignment. Transparency is equally critical, especially when it comes to budgeting expectations. She believes it is this blend of structure, insight, and trust that sets seasoned planners apart.

Crafting Dreams in Uncharted Destinations

In today’s wedding landscape, adaptability is a non-negotiable skill, and it is one that Jueta and her crew have mastered with flair. She observes, “Adaptability is everything. Couples today come with global references, unconventional ideas, and bold aspirations that we fully embrace. From designing an entire Shiv-Parvati-inspired wedding to creating a Greco-Egyptian-themed sangeet at the Pyramids, we have brought unique visions to life in the most unexpected locations.” Their process blends in-depth research, repeated site visits, cultural alignment, thoughtful contingency planning, strong local partnerships, and crystal-clear communication with the couple to ensure the celebration flows seamlessly, no matter what unfolds.

Flexibility and foresight are vital to navigating destination weddings for Copper Events. Prateek explains, “Every couple is different; some seek tradition, others bold innovation. Remote locations choices demand detailed research, multiple recce visits, and building strong local vendor relationships to align expectations and minimise surprises.” Their comprehensive checklist covers everything, from rituals, timelines, guest logistics, and production nuances for complete clarity. F&B planning, especially when Indian chefs collaborate with local teams, requires deep coordination for crafting menus, sourcing ingredients, and selecting crockery. Thoughtful contingencies are always in place to ensure that the celebration flows seamlessly, no matter the curveballs.

As a wedding planner, adaptability is everything for Kanika. Each client brings a unique vision to the table, and her role is to align their dreams with what is realistically achievable on the ground.

Whether it is a cliff-side villa in Bali or a hidden island in Thailand, Shreem Events ensures seamlessness in logistics, storytelling in decor, and emotional resonance through music, food, rituals, and even gifting. With an ever-growing checklist of noise permissions, curfew laws, F&B feasibility, baraat routes, and more, the team is always prepared. Most importantly, they help venues understand that Indian weddings are not just events; they are festivals with all five senses activated at once!

Saffron String takes their research and recce seriously, going deep into past recommendations and vetting new ones. Neha reveals, “We never arrive as outsiders. Long before the flowers are flown in, we are already on the ground, walking the land, speaking

with locals, tasting the salt in the air, and ensuring the weather is suitable for the event. That early immersion is non-negotiable to build trust and ensure even the most unfamiliar setting feels intuitive and in rhythm with the client’s vision.” They study everything from local laws and permits to seasonal nuances, what blooms when, what closes on Fridays, how long a sound permit takes, or whether fireworks are allowed. There is simply no room for guesswork.

Are Destinations Adapting to Indian Weddings?

Our experts unanimously agree that destinations are no longer just accommodating Indian weddings, but actively tailoring their infrastructure, services, and staff to cater to them.

Prateek affirms that destinations worldwide are no longer just ‘hosting Indian weddings’, they are ‘specialising’ in them, recognising their scale, intricacy, and cultural depth. He says, “Properties are actively training their staff to understand Indian customs, like setting up traditional pheras, accommodating vegetarian Jain meals, even allowing décor setups and welcome artists in lobbies.” Properties in Italy and Turkey partner with Indian chefs to ensure authenticity, Thailand venues come equipped with baraat-friendly entrances, while Dubai and Abu Dhabi offer comprehensive Indian wedding packages.

In recent years, Kanika has seen both global and domestic destinations adapt swiftly to the demands of Indian weddings. With 300 to 400 staff often involved, success hinges on openness to outside vendors and logistical flexibility. Kanika points out, “Bahrain has thoughtfully curated a network of vendors who understand the intricacies of Indian weddings. From F&B, decor, hospitality, and hotel services, every element is handled with cultural sensitivity and precision. The teams are well-versed in Indian traditions, making the entire experience seamless and truly memorable.”

Devanshi further highlights how Indian weddings are reshaping global hospitality, with International venues now allowing extended hours with soundproof ballrooms, bringing in Indian chefs, permitting chaat and haldi setups, training in-house staff for Indian rituals and logistics, and even letting Indian wedding planners lead vendor teams onsite. She goes on to say, “In Cannes, the mayor’s office helped us secure Palais des Festivals for a sangeet. Shangri-La Colombo hosted 600 guests with a full buyout, right down to sourcing coconuts. Resorts in Tuscany and Portugal now offer Indian menus, wine tastings, and carriage processions.”

Adding to the narrative, Neha believes that the most successful destinations are not just adapting, they are evolving. They are learning the pulse of Indian celebrations and building around it. “Italy and France have been catching on quickly. City mayors extend curfews so the sangeet can go on a little longer, and chefs happily learn the difference between Jain and vegan cuisines. It is no longer only about pasta and Prosecco; it is about plating chaat

with elegance and serving kulfi with flair. Eastern Europe, Vienna, Qatar, are also stepping into this space with their luxury infrastructure, now with the added cultural fluency,” she observes.

Jueta finds it deeply encouraging to see destinations embracing the Indian wedding market. From the GCC to Georgia, Jordan, and across Europe, hotels and tourism boards are investing in training their teams, in understanding rituals, serving parathas at sunrise, and setting up elaborate mandaps with cultural sensitivity. “It is heartening to see destinations are not just adapting, they are celebrating, whether it involves arranging dhol-led baraats or learning the rhythm of a five-day celebration,” she shares.



Your Favourite Wedding Destination

When it comes to favourite destinations, our experts have no shortage of stories, each a heady blend of dream locations, high stakes, and unforgettable magic.

Neha recalls her favourite memory from an iconic wedding in Doha, held at the magnificent Hilton Salwa, a property originally built by Qatar’s royal family. Amidst this grand palatial architecture, a sudden sandstorm hit, and within minutes, everything had to move indoors. But instead of chaos, the night became a masterclass in quick thinking and flawless execution. The team reimaged the entire setup on the fly, guests hardly noticed, and the celebration soared even higher!

Jueta considers it her privilege to have curated many unforgettable weddings, each one unique in its own way. A breathtaking celebration at the Umaid Bhawan Palace, an intimate yet regal affair at the Park Hyatt in Abu Dhabi, and a spectacular wedding at the Çırağan Palace Kempinski in Turkey have collectively enriched the journey at YOLO.

Prateek admits it is hard to pick favourites, but Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, and Marrakesh stand out. Bahrain’s unique blend of modernity and heritage, Abu Dhabi’s grandeur combined with flawless infrastructure for large-scale celebrations, and Marrakesh’s vibrant colours and timeless architecture create pure magic.

Udaipur holds a special place in Kanika’s heart as an all-time favourite wedding destination, with breathtaking views of the Aravalli Hills and the shimmering Lake Pichola, it offers a regal setting like no other.

For Devanshi, Cannes in the South of France tops the list as a place where cinematic charm meets seamless planning. Grand hotels, beachfront sangeets, and yacht parties under the stars make it a setting straight out of a movie.

Kanika firmly believes in Lakshadweep’s potential as a wedding destination, especially after being spotlighted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as an emerging hotspot. For Prateek, cities like Budapest, Helsinki, Zagreb, and Tbilisi are emerging as fresh and extraordinary destinations in 2025–26.

Devanshi recommends Sri Lanka, Mexico, Bali, Portugal, and the unexplored Thai islands. In comparison, Neha’s top pics include Portugal, Georgia, Barcelona, quieter Greek isles, AIUla, Riyadh, Doha, and the French Riviera. Neha is headed next to Thailand, quietly reframing it as a luxe canvas of private villas, jungle mandaps, and oceanfront vows. Jueta points to Jordan, Georgia, and Europe as the favourites, while India remains an unparalleled canvas for love.



Wedding Planner: Touchwood Entertainment | Photographer: CineLove



Inside JOURNEYLABEL'S

Personalised World of

Luxury Travel

Yasmin Ikrami and Sufail Husain, co-founders of JourneyLabel, have reimagined luxury travel as a deeply personal journey that goes beyond opulence and five-star comfort. Their approach is defined by authenticity, curated experiences, and meaningful connections. With a sharp eye for detail, a passion for immersive travel, and an unwavering focus on exclusivity, the duo shares their path with TTJ toward building a distinctive name in the high-end travel segment.

Prativa Vaidya Bhalla

JourneyLabel has quietly carved a niche in the high-end travel space, defined not just by luxury but by deep thoughtfulness and emotional resonance. The founders' journey began at the age of 16 as friends, a bond that blossomed into marriage and later evolved into a thriving travel venture built on trust, a shared vision, and a deep passion for meaningful exploration.

From curating trips for corporate leaders to celebrities, their focus remains the same: delivering rare, personalised moments beyond the checklist. Their tagline, 'You Are Special,' is a belief that starts with valuing their team and extends to every traveller they serve.

Passionate travellers themselves, their eyes light up as they share their story from humble beginnings to designing bespoke travel itineraries for corporate bigwigs and celebrities. They clearly love what they do, and their repeat guests share their penchant for deeply personal travel. Today, JourneyLabel elevates travel with thoughtful, emotion-led touches, be it a birthday in Bali or an anniversary in the Alps. As guests return, the relationship deepens. "We know their habits, preferences, even their room choices," Yasmin shares with a smile.

HIGH-NET-WORTH CLIENTELE

"True luxury is not just five-star accommodation. It is defined by how a place makes you feel in that particular moment. It is about forming a deeper connection with the destination and being fully present, enjoying each moment to its fullest, all while surrounded by comfort, privacy, and exclusivity," says Yasmin.



At JourneyLabel, luxury is a seamless blend of immersion with easy access to the most unique, often hidden experiences a destination has to offer, curated with meticulous attention to detail.

Their clientele reflects this passionate ethos. Discerning, well-travelled, and curious, they are not chasing the next big trend; they are seeking meaningful experiences that suit them. And that is exactly what JourneyLabel aims to deliver. Sufail interprets their client base to say, "Our primary clientele comprises high-net-worth individuals or HNIs. Over the past seven years, we have built a trusted pool of affluent travellers who enjoy the exclusive experiences and curated service we offer. Among these are celebrities, but they form just one segment of our HNW client base, not the core focus. Our ideal client is a discerning luxury traveller who values curated, high-touch travel experiences."

JourneyLabel's clientele spans affluent millennials, senior executives, and even under-17 travellers, accompanied by dedicated staff to ensure their safety.

The more experienced the traveller, the greater the challenge and the reward in curating something exceptional.

NO OFF-THE-SHELF ITINERARIES

At JourneyLabel, no two itineraries are ever the same. The company operates on a deeply personalised model, curating each journey around an individual's preferences, passions, and even personality. Whether it is a millennial executive eager for immersive cultural experiences or a senior citizen ready to finally check off a long-postponed bucket list, the approach remains the same. The idea is to begin with what the client already enjoys and then elevate the flavours.

There is no such thing as an off-the-shelf package here. Every journey is an extension of how the guest wants to live in that moment. It goes far beyond money; it becomes about delivering an experience that resonates deeply.

THE VISION

The founders' vision has always been to build a luxury travel company rooted in trust, discretion, and hyper-personalised experiences. What started as a modest, self-funded venture with a handful of clients has grown into a respected name in luxury travel.

"It took time to break even," recalls Sufail. "Every step was hard-earned. But the journey has been worth it." Today, referrals consistently flow in, a testament to the service that turns one-time travellers into lifelong patrons.

Over the years, JourneyLabel has forged significant partnerships not only with high-net-worth individuals but also with global governments, banks, and private institutions. "Some of the most impactful work we have done has come from these collaborations. They have helped us grow not just in scale, but in capability," he adds.

And perhaps that is where JourneyLabel truly excels, in its ability to understand the unspoken. The emotional intelligence behind the scenes is what transforms a good trip into an unforgettable one. "We really pamper our guests. We learn their rhythms, their habits, their unexpressed needs. And when they realise how well they are understood, that is when it becomes truly special," Yasmin says with quiet pride.

BEYOND TRENDS

JourneyLabel's foundation is rooted in the core philosophy of luxury travel, not in regional trends. This deliberate universality is a reflection of the company's broader mindset that is not interested in following the next big destination wave. Yasmin shares, "JourneyLabel builds every itinerary from scratch, using a client's travel history and personal preferences as the foundation.

In most cases, it is the team, not the traveller, that ends up choosing the destination as our clients trust us implicitly. They are not looking for tourist traps or crowded landmarks. They seek solitude, authenticity, and experiences that feel untouched."

Whether that means guiding a guest to a secluded mountain village or uncovering a hidden waterfall known only to locals, the focus is always on depth, not popularity. "Trends are fleeting, but meaningful journeys are what endures," she adds.

STORIES THAT STAY

For JourneyLabel, luxury is defined by the lengths they go to create meaningful memories for their guests. One such moment, as the founders share, came during a high-stakes situation abroad, when a guest lost her passport, and the team flew a staff member to personally assist the guest while they resolved the issue.

A celebrity client once planned a surprise trip for 50 family members, ages five to 67, after a memorable private journey. Touched by the experience, he wished to gift the same holiday to the JourneyLabel team that planned it. "That moment was not just validation, it reminded us why we do this," says Yasmin.

It is a fitting way to describe the very essence of JourneyLabel: a brand that was built, and continues to grow, through stories. They believe that the best journeys are not just itineraries; they are stories, and stories stay. To ensure their own stories remain rich and relevant, the JourneyLabel team does not wait for travel fads or influencer buzz. They often send their people on their own research expeditions to new, less-travelled destinations. "We invest heavily in this. Our guests are seasoned travellers. We cannot and will not recommend what we have not experienced ourselves," affirms Sufail.

GRACE UNDER PRESSURE

Even the most seamless journeys can face turbulence. Moments have gone off-script, the founders are quick to admit. Sufail asserts candidly, "For us, no request is ever too big. Whether it is assigning a dedicated team member to discreetly assist a celebrity guest or rerouting a client stranded mid-journey."

On global uncertainties in the light of recent geopolitical upheavals, the team remains clear-eyed. "Ultimately, it is not just about planning the perfect holiday. It is about holding space for people when things don't go to plan," he reflects.

"This same sense of care extends within the company. When your people are happy, the energy flows," Yasmin adds. From ensuring their team feels valued to staying composed during global uncertainties, their leadership is grounded in empathy and presence.

THE FUTURE AHEAD

JourneyLabel's future ambitions are expansive but rooted, as always, in originality and thoughtful curation. The founders have mapped out a long-term vision centred on scaling their distinctive offerings. "We have developed several unique and even patentable products not in the market yet, but with the right blend of technology and strategic investment, we see the potential to take them global," Sufail reveals.

The company has already begun planting its international roots, starting with the launch of a branch office in Wyoming, USA. It is a small but intentional step toward expanding their global footprint. Sufail adds, "We are exploring options to bring capital on board not just to grow, but to amplify the kind of aspirational, experience-first travel that defines us."

Their aspiration is clear: to become a global leader in the aspirational luxury travel space.

AVIAREPS Sharpens India Focus with Bold New Frontiers and Global Synergies

In this exclusive interaction with TTJ, Thomas Drechsler, COO Tourism, AVIAREPS, shares how the company is deepening its footprint in India and globally through innovation, diversification, and strategic expansion. From representing top US destinations to tapping into cruise tourism and leveraging digital platforms, AVIAREPS is aligning its global network to meet the evolving demands of source markets like India with agility and vision.

Sonika Bohra

As India emerges as one of the world’s fastest-growing outbound markets, AVIAREPS is sharpening its focus on building deeper trade ties, creating tailored campaigns, and identifying niche opportunities. The company’s India office is now playing a pivotal role in translating global strategies into local success stories.

Strengthening the India Connect

AVIAREPS has long maintained a strong presence in India, recognising it as a key growth market. Over the years, the company has steadily expanded its role, from representing airlines, destinations, luxury hotel brands, attractions, shopping outlets, and car rentals to evolving into a full-service sales, marketing, and PR hub. Today, the AVIAREPS India office bridges global clients with Indian trade and travellers through a robust, multi-channel strategy.

The team leads integrated campaigns that combine influencer marketing, FIT, and MICE outreach, targeted sales initiatives, media engagement, and digital storytelling. As an extension of its destination clients, AVIAREPS India executes localised branding strategies tailored to India’s fast-growing outbound market, which is projected to become the world’s fifth-largest by 2027.

“We are very proud of the success our India office achieves year after year, not just in terms of growing our client portfolio, but also through diversification and expansion into new business verticals,” said Drechsler.

Setting the Stage for New Tourism Collaborations

At AVIAREPS India, the team has consistently strengthened its presence in the US travel segment through longstanding representation of the Utah Office of Tourism and an ongoing collaboration with the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau. Beyond



▲ Thomas Drechsler

these anchor partnerships, the India team is actively engaged in projects with other US states that have shown growing interest in the Indian outbound market.

When asked about upcoming partnerships or destination representations in the pipeline, Drechsler shared, “While no additional US destination mandates have been officially disclosed yet, our ongoing engagement in trade shows, roadshows, B2B missions, influencer collaborations, and consumer activations reflects a clear intent to expand our US destination portfolio in India. With AVIAREPS’ global footprint, including representation of Brand USA, New York City Tourism & Conventions, Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority, and multiple state tourism boards, AVIAREPS India is ideally positioned to identify and capitalise on emerging US destination partnerships, ensuring that we continue to bring new opportunities and experiences to Indian travel trade and consumers.”

Scaling Global Presence

AVIAREPS currently operates 76 of its own offices across 71 countries, with an

ambitious goal of surpassing 100 offices globally by 2030. The company has long maintained a strong footprint with US clients, representing major names such as Avis Budget Car Rental, Marriott Hotels, and Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, and leading US destinations like Brand USA, Visit California, Visit Florida, Visit Orlando, New York City Tourism + Conventions, and the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority.

Many of these clients are represented across multiple markets. For example, AVIAREPS holds a global mandate for Visit Orlando, representing the destination across LATAM and Europe, and is currently supporting its expansion into new source markets in the Asia-Pacific region.

“When I started developing the tourism vertical at AVIAREPS, I had the pleasure of travelling across Europe with Fred Dixon, now President and CEO of Brand USA, and supporting him and NYC & Company (today New York City Tourism + Conventions) in establishing their first international representation offices. We are most proud when we grow alongside our clients, and our global network of

owned offices is our key differentiator in making that growth possible,” informed Drechsler.

Cruising Ahead into India's Untapped Cruise Market

AVIAREPS has recently expanded its global service portfolio with a strategic focus on the cruise segment, including the appointment of a dedicated Global Head of Cruise. This move reflects the company's broader vision to support every sector of the travel ecosystem, from aviation and destination marketing to hospitality and now, more actively than ever, cruise tourism.

“The expansion of our cruise division is a natural extension of AVIAREPS' broader tourism strategy. Appointing a Global Head of Cruise allows us to bring more focus, structure, and a global approach to this segment,” said Drechsler.

As cruise tourism enters a new phase of global growth, AVIAREPS sees significant potential in emerging markets, such as India. With more ships entering service and itineraries becoming increasingly diverse, India's growing outbound travel market,

especially among younger, experience-seeking travellers and multi-generational families, presents a promising opportunity for cruise operators.

The company also sees potential for regional cruise development closer to home, offering Indian travellers both international and domestic cruising options. “With our strong local presence in India and global cruise expertise, we are well-positioned to connect cruise lines with the Indian market in a strategic and targeted way. Our experience in trade education, marketing, media partnerships, and trade fair representation further reinforces our commitment to helping our tourism partners grow globally,” added Drechsler.

Reinforcing Commitment to India

As COO of AVIAREPS' global tourism business, Drechsler emphasises the company's long-standing commitment to India and its dynamic outbound market. With over 15 years of presence in the country, AVIAREPS was the first tourism representation company to establish offices across the BRIC nations. Today,

the India operation alone employs more than 50 professionals, contributing to a global workforce of nearly 1,000.

“India is a growing success story for us, and I cannot thank our General Manager, Ellona Pereira, enough for her outstanding leadership in scaling our India operations year after year,” mentioned Drechsler.

AVIAREPS is expanding not just in size but also through innovation. A key strategic asset is the company's proprietary AVIAREPS Ecosystem, a digital benchmarking and engagement platform that enables clients to connect with the global travel trade at any time, utilising a suite of efficient and data-driven tools. This platform has become especially useful for long-haul destinations like the US and Europe, looking to ‘test the waters’ and access India in a scalable, cost-effective manner.

As AVIAREPS continues to diversify its portfolio by tapping into high-potential verticals such as cruise tourism, food and beverage, and mobility, the company sees significant long-term opportunity in India across these segments and is positioning itself as a strategic growth enabler.

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Celebrating 30 Years of Successful Flights to Mumbai



Oman Air Marks 30 Years of Seamless Mumbai–Muscat Service

This year, Oman Air marked a proud milestone, celebrating 30 years of seamless connectivity between Mumbai and Muscat. The airline commemorated the milestone with a heartfelt gathering in Mumbai, honouring trade partners, associates, and team members who have been integral to its journey of growth and success.

Prashant Nayak

Oman Air, on July 24, 2025, celebrated a remarkable milestone, 30 years of operations between Mumbai and Muscat, with a special event at the iconic Taj President, Cuffe Parade. The celebration was graced by esteemed dignitaries, including H E Mahboob Issa Juma Al Raisi, Consul General, Sultanate of Oman in Mumbai; H E Khalid Al Mughaizwi, Deputy Consul General; Sunil V A, Regional Vice President, Indian Subcontinent, Oman Air; Ahmed Al Mahrouqi, Vice President, Global Sales, Oman Air; and Sid Sharma, President and CEO, InterGlobe Air Transport.

Marking the Milestone with Felicitations and Warm Memories

It was an afternoon of recognition and appreciation, as travel trade partners, cargo associates, and long-serving Oman Air team members, some of whom have been part of the journey since day one, were felicitated. Expressing his gratitude, Sunil V A said, “It has been an honour to host our top trade partners from across India who have been the patrons of Oman Air since we commenced operations in the country. We express our heartfelt gratitude and thank them for their unwavering support, which has been instrumental in reinforcing our confidence and strength to grow over the years. Each invitee has significantly contributed to our success, and we continue to engage with them in multiple areas of business that they have ventured into.”

A heartwarming highlight of the afternoon was the unique cake-cutting ceremony, where dignitaries cut cakes at each table alongside partners, adding a personal and memorable touch. The event concluded with a curated sit-down gourmet lunch, marking a fitting end to a day of gratitude, nostalgia, and pride.

Expanding Horizons, Strengthening Connections, Driving Tourism

Mumbai was Oman Air’s second route to India in 1995, following its debut in Trivandrum in 1993. Over the years, the airline has expanded its operations in India, and today it operates 168 flights per week between Muscat and 10 cities: Mumbai, Delhi, Lucknow, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, Calicut, and Goa.

“Oman Air’s Mumbai operations have played a critical role in boosting

tourism, business, and bilateral relations between the two countries while maintaining high standards of service and reliability. Mumbai, as one of India’s key travel markets, has enabled Oman Air to carry guests for leisure, MICE, VFR, and destination weddings in Oman with the support of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Sultanate of Oman,” asserted Sunil.

Highlighting the airline’s evolution and innovation, Sunil said, “Our products and offerings have grown over the years, and our recent success in NDC adoption across India is a testament to the reciprocal relationship and commitment from our trade partners. The entry of Oman Air into the oneworld Alliance in July 2025 will be a game-changer, offering our guests greater global connectivity, streamlined travel benefits, and enhanced service across a network of over 900 destinations worldwide.”

Oman Air remains committed to expanding its footprint and aligning with Oman Vision 2040, which focuses on economic diversification and global engagement. “As we continue to evolve as a premium global carrier and a proud oneworld member, we remain committed to strengthening our relationship with India and offering exceptional, world-class travel experiences to our guests,” said Sunil.



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Wander Tamil Nadu's Roads Less Travelled for Deeper Discoveries

The true magic of Tamil Nadu extends beyond its towering temples and bustling cities; it lives in its forgotten coastlines, mist-draped hill roads, and the gentle cadence of its cultural trails. Scattered across the State are lesser-known gems now drawing in curious travellers, road-trippers, bikers, and nature seekers, each offering a deeper, more soulful connection to the land.

While millions flock to Chennai, Mamallapuram, Madurai, Ooty, Kodaikanal, Rameswaram, and Kanyakumari, a quiet movement brews on the fringes, where forgotten fishing towns, hill hamlets, and centuries-old mansions await rediscovery.

New Hill Top Wonderlands

Tamil Nadu's highlands are drawing new-age travellers seeking newer misty roads, forest silence, and authentic mountain life. With limited tourist pressure, these destinations promise soulful routes into Tamil Nadu's hill country, perfect for slow travellers and weekend wanderers alike.

Near Kodaikanal, in Meghamalai, the 'High Wavy Mountains' offer pristine tea estates, wildlife sightings, and cloud-draped viewpoints. Further west, Valparai lures road trippers with its 40-hairpin bends from Azhiyar Dam, leading to tranquil plantations and elephant corridors within the Anamalai Hills. Kolli Hills in Namakkal thrill bikers with 70 dramatic turns opening

into herbal forests and tribal legends surrounding Agaya Gangai Falls. In the Eastern Ghats, the Kalrayan Hills remain a quiet plateau of farms, waterfalls, and untapped trekking trails.

Close to the Nilgiris, Kotagiri is a charming, less-touristed alternative to Ooty, ideal for long walks, plantation stays, and a dose of colonial nostalgia. Pollachi, although not a hill station, is a scenic base for exploring nearby wildlife sanctuaries and highland roads.

Coastal Secrets and Sacred Shores

Tamil Nadu's lesser-known coastline is a treasure trove of heritage, spirituality, and natural wonder. This seaside sidesteps, far from commercial circuits, reveal a quieter, more soulful side of Tamil Nadu's shoreline, where culture, history, and nature blend in quiet splendour.

Ariyaman Beach, just a short drive from Rameswaram, offers families a peaceful seaside escape away from the bustling temple town. Nearby, the hauntingly

beautiful Dhanushkodi, destroyed in the 1964 cyclone, now enchants travellers with its windswept shores, skeletal ruins, and mythic significance. Further south, Manapad and Uvari dot the coastline with their historic churches, sacred shrines, and surf-friendly waves, making them serene spots for spiritual reflection or gazing out at the sea.

On the Coromandel Coast, Tranquebar (Tharangambadi) whispers tales of Danish colonists, where crumbling forts, restored bungalows, and quiet beaches come together in timeless harmony. Closer to Chennai, Pulicat Lake draws birders and photographers during flamingo season, offering tranquil boat rides through its

Meghamalai



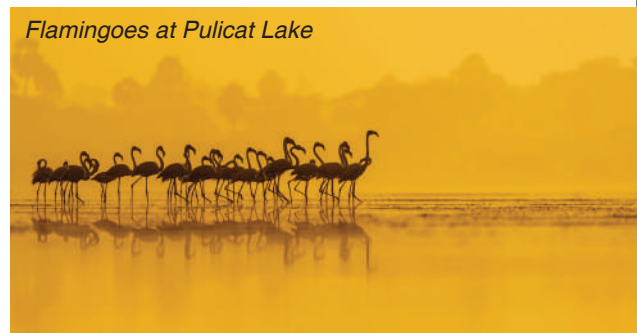
Valparai Hairpin Bends



Arichal Munai, Dhanushkodi



Flamingoes at Pulicat Lake



shallow backwaters. Just south of Chidambaram, the Pichavaram Mangrove Forest, one of the world's largest, invites adventure-seekers to kayak through narrow green tunnels and mangrove thickets.

Culture Trails and Living Heritage

Beyond its grand temples, Tamil Nadu's soul is stitched into its lesser-known cultural hubs, towns where history, architecture, and tradition quietly thrive. These cultural lanes invite visitors to move beyond sightseeing into story-listening and to savour the living traditions of Tamil Nadu- one tile, spice, and alley at a time.

The region of Chettinad, once the stronghold of affluent merchant families, offers a rare glimpse into Tamil Nadu's opulent past. Its palatial mansions, hand-crafted Athangudi tiles, and expansive courtyards reflect a rich trading legacy that spanned from Burma to Sri Lanka. Did you know? The world-famous Chettinad cuisine, renowned for its bold spices and fiery flavours, originated in these very kitchens to impress visiting traders and diplomats.

Westward lies Theni, a bustling agricultural town nestled in the foothills of the Western Ghats. While still a key trading hub for garlic, cardamom, and grapes, Theni is now drawing visitors to its scenic estates, forest drives, and lively marketplaces. On the Coromandel coast, the Tamil quarter of Yanam holds echoes of French colonialism, where centuries-old churches, pastel facades, and a relaxed coastal vibe offer travellers a quiet blend of Tamil and European aesthetics.

Offbeat Adventures and Nature Escapes

For travellers craving more than sightseeing, Tamil Nadu's emerging adventure and nature destinations offer raw beauty and immersive experiences. These out-of-the-way routes, far from the tourist buzz, invite



Pichavaram



Shore Temple Mamallapuram



Kumbakonam

visitors to disconnect, breathe deep, and let nature lead the way.

In the Dharmapuri district, Vathalmalai is quietly transforming into an adventure hotspot, with new trekking routes, birdwatching zones, and eco-camping circuits being developed amid misty forests and high-altitude meadows. Not far from Vellore, the winding roads to Yelagiri, a lesser-known hill retreat, make for a perfect weekend drive. With gentle trails, paragliding options, and panoramic viewpoints, Yelagiri combines adrenaline with serenity.

Further south, nestled in the Western Ghats, Courtallam is renowned as the 'Spa of South India' for its rejuvenating waterfalls, which locals believe have medicinal properties. Popular falls like Main Falls and Five Falls are surrounded by herbal groves and Ayurvedic spas, offering natural therapies amidst lush surroundings.

Scenic Road Trips Through Tamil Nadu's Hidden Routes

Beyond the well-worn Chennai-Mamallapuram or Ooty-Coonoor drives, Tamil Nadu's lesser-known road trips offer rich rewards. Each of these backroads leads to more than just a destination; they are scenic chapters in Tamil Nadu's storybook of culture, nature, and soul.

Try the misty Kodaikanal-Munnar route, where every bend reveals tea estates, cloud valleys, and wildlife crossings. The climb from Salem to Yercaud is dotted with 20 sharp hairpin bends and lush coffee plantations, perfect for a short hill getaway. Further south, the Kanyakumari-Nagercoil coastal stretch blends spiritual calm with paddy fields and palm-fringed backroads. Culture enthusiasts will appreciate the Thanjavur-Kumbakonam trail, which is lined with heritage temples, bronze workshops, and sacred tanks.

For deeper detours, drive from Pollachi to Valparai, cutting through thick forests and elephant zones, or from Namakkal to Kolli Hills, a biker's dream. The Theni-Meghamalai route and Vellore-Yelagiri drive offer forest silence and sky-high views.

A Journey to Feel

Sacred, scenic, and endlessly surprising, the roads less travelled in Tamil Nadu offer more than just diversions; they reveal the state's deeper spirit. Here, each bend unfolds a new story. For those willing to stray from the well-worn path, Tamil Nadu offers not just destinations to visit but soulful journeys to experience, each one shaped by a quiet turn off the highway, where the true spirit of the state begins to speak.



A Chettinad House



Karaikudi Chettinad Dishes



Courtallam

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IATO's 40th Convention in Odisha Sets Visionary Agenda to Grow India's Inbound Tourism by 2030

As the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) prepares to host its landmark 40th Annual Convention in Puri, Odisha, Ravi Gosain, President, IATO, shares key insights into the event's theme, structure, and strategic focus. From policy advocacy and stakeholder collaboration to showcasing Odisha's tourism potential, the convention aims to chart a clear roadmap for revitalising India's inbound tourism in the run-up to 2030.

Prashant Nayak

In its milestone 40th edition, IATO's landmark gathering is poised to shape inbound tourism priorities, foster high-impact partnerships, and catalyse transformational change across the industry.

Rejuvenating Inbound Tourism

As IATO celebrates its 40th Annual Convention, the milestone is marked with a future-focused theme: Rejuvenate Inbound @2030. More than a celebration, the 40th edition signals IATO's intent to reshape the future of inbound tourism with clarity, cohesion, and commitment.

"The theme 'Rejuvenate Inbound @2030' reflects a realistic five-year vision. It allows us to address diverse tourism segments, core concerns of our members, emerging state-level policies, and vital partnerships, with hotels, airlines, and transport providers, all of whom shape the inbound experience. Despite global recovery, India's inbound tourism still lags behind. Through this convention, we aim to spotlight challenges such as aggressive international marketing, safety perceptions, competition from Southeast Asia, visa facilitation, and the need for better infrastructure and service quality. These are critical for rebuilding our global competitiveness," said Gosain.

Building Strategic Collaborations

All IATO conventions serve as a dynamic platform for forging meaningful partnerships across the tourism value chain. These collaborations aim to create a more integrated and competitive inbound tourism ecosystem.

As in previous years, state tourism boards will play an active role by showcasing emerging destinations and unveiling new initiatives designed to attract and engage tour operators. The host state, Odisha, will highlight its rich tourism offerings with a strong focus on cultural and natural experiences.

Private sector collaboration is equally integral. The convention facilitates B2B networking with hotels, airlines, and transport providers, helping address operational challenges such as competitive



▲ Ravi Gosain

hotel rates, itinerary feasibility, and last-mile connectivity. It also encourages the co-creation of innovative travel products to enrich India's inbound offerings.

While not in the convention agenda, IATO continues to pursue strategic international linkages. "We actively engage with global tourism boards and associations through MoUs focused on knowledge exchange, joint marketing, and two-way tourism growth. These alliances are essential for strengthening India's global appeal," informed Gosain.

Addressing Policy and Infrastructure Gaps

With foreign tourist arrivals yet to rebound to pre-pandemic levels, this year's key discussions will centre around the need for unified governance by advocating Rs 1,000 crore India Tourism Board, alongside a revitalised Incredible India campaign to reposition the country globally. There is also a strong push for fast-tracking visa-on-arrival facilities to ease access for high-potential source markets, as well as enhancing regional air and rail connectivity to improve traveller mobility. Public-private partnerships are being encouraged to develop globally benchmarked convention centres and tourism infrastructure across states.

Driving Action Through Knowledge Sharing

This year's convention places strong emphasis on knowledge sessions designed to equip tour operators and stakeholders with practical, forward-looking insights. From digital transformation to global market re-engagement and sustainability, the sessions aim to translate industry trends into actionable strategies and are expected to shape a more agile, informed, and competitive inbound tourism ecosystem.

"Tour operators can expect guidance on product innovation, cross-border collaborations, compliance updates, and leveraging AI for marketing. Stakeholders will benefit from policy dialogues fostering ease of doing business and improved destination readiness," said Gosain.

Showcasing Odisha to the World

Like every year, IATO uses its convention to spotlight a host state. This year, Odisha takes centre stage as the 40th IATO Convention offers a strategic platform to showcase the state's tourism potential on both national and global fronts. With specially curated business sessions and a dedicated focus on Odisha Tourism, the event fosters direct engagement with inbound tour operators around the state's diverse offerings.

"The format of the convention enables meaningful dialogue and exposure. With fertile minds deliberating on key segments and a special focus on Odisha, it positions the state as a serious player in the global tourism landscape," affirmed Gosain.

To ensure momentum continues beyond the convention, eight post-event tours have been designed to showcase Odisha's rich heritage, natural beauty, and experiential travel products. These tours function as effective, on-the-ground marketing tools, allowing operators to experience the destinations firsthand and promote them with authenticity. Together, these efforts mark a strong step forward in making Odisha a must-visit destination for global travellers.



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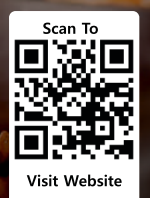
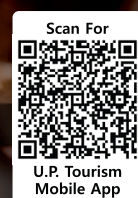
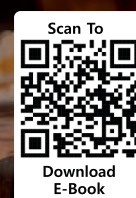


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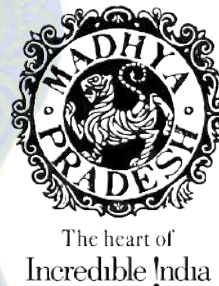
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CLOUDS, CULTURE, AND CELEBRATION IN THE HEART OF INDIA!

Madhya Pradesh in August means verdant landscapes and flowing rivers, combining with Raksha Bandhan and Janmashtami to usher in joyous celebrations. As we travel across this land of rich diversity, each of its regions – Chambal, Bundelkhand, Baghelkhand, Mahakaushal, Nimar, and Malwa, adds its own unique blend of local flavours and colours to the season.



BOISTEROUS BUNDELKHAND

In a region known for heroism, herald the monsoon, hearing ballads of the legendary warriors Alha-Udal. Relive themes of love and courage with Raai, performed by men of the Bediya community in swirling dresses as dancers and drummers. Watch the Betwa gush at Orchha, and try a Bundeli thali at Ladpura Khas's rural homestays. The poori-halwa with ghewar, bafauri, and ras kheer are must-tries.

Married women in Tikamgarh and Chhatarpur adorn themselves with fine jewellery and mehendi during Kajari Teej, praying to Shiva and Parvati. Marvel at Sanjhi art created on walls. Join a bhajan at Chitrakoot's Ramghat or be amazed by the spectacular Pandav and Raneh Falls. Make the most of sparse crowds to capture Khajuraho's iconic temples in your lens!

CHARISMATIC CHAMBAL

Discover the architectural legacy of Gwalior, Mitaoli, Bateswar, Padawali, and Narwar, where monsoon mists swirl around ancient forts and temples. In Gwalior, begin your morning with bedai pooris and kesaria doodh near Lohiya Bazaar or Naya Bazaar, followed by the indulgent paneer jalebi in the lively lanes of Mayur Nagar and Daulat Ganj.

Soak in the drama of monsoon clouds over the Chambal ravines, join Jhulan Yatras during Janmashtami at temples in Gwalior and Datia, and explore the vibrant Sandhi Fair in Bhind, famed for tribal Hansuli jewellery, symbols of the region's cultural pride.



NATURAL NIMAR

Dominated by the sacred Narmada, this region is a confluence of Maratha, Malwa, and tribal influences. In Shravan, join Kanwar Yatris during the Narmada Aarti at Omkareshwar, one of the 12 revered Jyotirlingas, nestled on an Om-shaped island, making it a spiritual and geographic marvel.

Visit the Hariyali Amavasya Mela to pick up Nimar's exquisite Jiroti paintings. Savour malpua and kheer at riverside fairs. The songs of the Bhil community, Fag melodies and the rhythm of dhol and mandaals, fill the monsoon air with life.

The Satpura hills stand misty and cool, ideal for enjoying jowar ki roti with amadi ki bhaji. And no visit to Burhanpur is complete without its decadent sweets, such as mawa-bati and daraba, followed by sharbat-e-mohabbat or lavang lata.



MARVELLOUS MALWA

A land steeped in history, Malwa continues to uphold its ancient and medieval traditions with grace. The monsoon festival of Teej in Neemuch and Mandsaur sees swings on banyan trees, women singing Sawan songs, and trays of ghewar passed around with joy.

At the spiritual heart of Malwa lies Mahakaleshwar Temple in Ujjain, where the Bhasma Aarti, performed at dawn with sacred ash, is a mesmerising sight of devotion and discipline. During the holy month of Shravan, pilgrims flock here in large numbers, making the monsoon a time of profound spiritual renewal.

Mandu's rain-drenched pavilions and Sanchi's tranquil stupas add depth to Malwa's scenic monsoon trail. Enjoy folk performances like the Matki dance, and savour bhutte ki khees and Maratha-style gosht korma. Indore's famed food lanes, Chhappan Dukan and Sarafa Bazaar, promise a culinary adventure.



BLISSFUL BAGHELKHAND

Rajput and tribal traditions mix in this region of dense forests, hidden heritage, and cascading waterfalls. Visit Rewa Fort and the hilltop Sharda Devi Temple in Maihar. View the Chachai Falls drop 130 mt. While exploring Bandhavgarh National Park, do not miss its famed tiger sightings, especially in the buffer zones, where the spirit of "Buffer mein Safar" comes alive amidst misty hills and blooming wildflowers.

Tribal communities plant a sacred tree and dance overnight to honour nature's bounty and ancestors in the monsoon festival of Karma. Try a chana samosa or millet roti served with local pulses and forest greens. Dabble in Baghelkhand's rich artisanal spirit at Art Ichol, a serene creative retreat located just eight km from Maihar, along the Khajuraho-Bandhavgarh Highway, where artists, sculptors, and craftspersons come together to create, collaborate, and be inspired amidst nature.

MYSTERIOUS MAHAKAUSHAL

Witness tribal traditions at their uninhibited best, with forest deities, nature spirits, and ancestors worshipped in Mandla and Dindori. Sacred groves see dancers perform wearing animal masks. Watch Gond create forest paintings and Baigas indulge in body tattoo art that traces their myths and ecology.

See the monsoon fest of Hareli, where farmers worship their tools, children swing from neem trees, and tribals perform Gedi dances on stilts. Enjoy tribal cuisine prepared from forest produce like mahua. Do not miss bamboo shoot curry or Rugra mushrooms in Seoni, a monsoon delicacy. Be humbled by Raksha Bandhan rituals at Amarkantak's Narmada Temple, and relive the tale of Rani Durgawati atop Jabalpur's Madan Mahal Fort.





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40th IATO Convention to Shape a Confident Future for Inbound Tourism

In the lead-up to the 40th IATO Annual Convention, the association’s leadership shared exclusive insights with TTJ on preparations, opportunities, and their vision for India’s inbound tourism. They outlined the event’s significance, strategic focus on Odisha, key policy priorities, and the initiatives aimed at enhancing the delegate experience.

Prashant Nayak

The upcoming IATO Convention is set to become a landmark in India’s inbound tourism calendar. This edition is not just a celebration of longevity; it is a statement of resilience, innovation, and collective ambition.

Rajiv Mehra: Resilience and a Renewed Vision



Having witnessed the evolution of IATO conventions, Rajiv Mehra, immediate past President, IATO, reflected, “The 40th IATO Convention marks a milestone in India’s tourism journey, symbolising resilience, reinvention, and renewed global focus. Convened post-COVID and amid shifting global travel trends, it serves as a strategic platform to drive inbound revival, foster partnerships, and spotlight India’s diverse offerings. Its timing and setting

in Puri amplify its cultural and industry significance.”

The decision to host the convention in Puri, Odisha, aligns perfectly with its theme. Mehra elaborated that Puri underscores the convention’s emphasis on cultural, spiritual, and sustainable tourism, resonating with this year’s theme, Rejuvenate Inbound @2030, rooted in resilience, innovation, and sustainable growth. Together, Puri’s spiritual resonance, local government engagement, and tourism potential make it a compelling thematic fit.

Mehra also highlighted the policy priorities necessary for India to remain globally competitive in the inbound market. He emphasised the need to streamline e-visa processes, rationalise GST for tour operators, and introduce single-window clearances for tourism projects. Additionally, public-private partnerships, enhanced global marketing budgets, and improved last-mile connectivity remain critical to success. “A unified national tourism policy with measurable goals and incentives can drive investment, innovation, and sustained global competitiveness in India’s inbound tourism sector,” observed Mehra.

Sanjay Razdan: Seamless Experiences and Member Growth



Preparations for the 40th IATO Annual Convention are in full swing, with a dual focus on business networking and showcasing Odisha’s tourism potential. Sanjay Razdan, Vice President, IATO, emphasised the scale and support behind the event. He mentioned, “The event is supported by the Government of Odisha, the Ministry of Tourism, and multiple state governments, highlighting its national significance.

Ensuring seamless logistics, access to the Lord Jagannath Temple, and improved hospitality are central to this year’s objectives, reaffirming IATO’s commitment to resilience, collaboration, and growing inbound tourism. IATO Run

for Responsible Tourism, evening cultural events, and awards will add a joyful spirit to our gathering, showcasing the best of Indian hospitality.”

When it comes to inbound tourism, visa reforms remain a core priority for the association. Razdan stated that they have been lobbying for simplified and faster e-visa approvals, easy-to-use customer-friendly visa forms, expanded visa-on-arrival facilities, longer duration and multiple-entry options, and e-visa acceptance at land borders. The process has become easier recently, but it needs to be simplified further.

Looking to the future, Razdan highlighted the association’s efforts to engage young entrepreneurs and travel startups as a key driver of growth. IATO is encouraging youth participation through technology-driven initiatives, promoting authentic, sustainable, and experience-rich tourism products that resonate with Gen Z and Millennial travellers, fostering collaboration with emerging travel-tech companies, and developing innovative marketing and promotional tools tailored to the preferences of new-age travellers.

Member support remains a central focus. Razdan said, “IATO places great emphasis on member education, support, and skill development. The association organises regular training sessions, workshops, and advisory services covering compliance with GST and other government schemes. Our Task Force manages training from time to time, and we plan to launch a pan-India training programme.”

Sunil Mishra: Enhancing the Delegate Experience



The enthusiasm among members for this milestone edition is unmistakable. Sunil Mishra, Honorary Secretary, IATO, noted, “Members from across the country have shown great enthusiasm, and early registrations are a clear reflection of their eagerness to participate. There is a palpable sense of excitement within the industry, especially as this year’s convention aims to address some of the core challenges and opportunities

in inbound tourism.”

From an administrative perspective, the IATO Secretariat has implemented multiple enhancements to improve communication and support for members. These include frequent digital updates, dedicated WhatsApp groups, a structured helpdesk, and a streamlined online registration system.

Mishra further explained how feedback from past conventions has been integrated into the planning process: “We have created a formal system to gather structured feedback from delegates after each convention. This input is carefully reviewed by the organising committee and used to plan improvements year after year. Whether it is better transportation, smoother hotel check-ins, or more interactive business sessions, we have ensured that past learnings translate into a better delegate experience every time.”

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IATO Chapters are ready for a transformative convention

With the 40th IATO Annual Convention in Puri on the horizon, TTJ connected with some IATO Chapter Chairmen to capture their excitement, plans, and perspectives. From the host state Odisha to key chapters in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Karnataka, leaders highlighted their preparations, participation strategies, and expectations from the convention as it aims to strengthen networking and knowledge exchange and unlock India’s inbound tourism potential into tangible business opportunities.

Prashant Nayak

Gagan Sarangi, Chairman, IATO Odisha Chapter



Odisha, being the host state for the 40th IATO Annual Convention, is gearing up with great enthusiasm and pride. Our Odisha Chapter members are fully committed and actively involved in ensuring a warm and memorable welcome to all delegates. From the meticulous planning of transport logistics to the careful curation of post-convention FAM trips showcasing Odisha’s diverse tourism offerings, every aspect is being finely tuned. We are expecting a strong turnout from

the region, as our members are not only participating but also playing a key role in organising and coordinating various elements of the convention. We are expecting about 900-1000 delegates for this year’s IATO Convention in Odisha.

As we host the IATO Convention in Odisha for the third time, our expectations are high for a truly impactful and result-oriented event. The Odisha Chapter is committed to ensuring that our members derive maximum value from the event, and they are looking forward to meaningful B2B networking opportunities and productive knowledge-sharing sessions that can help boost tourism to Odisha. We are strongly advocating for panel discussions that specifically focus on Odisha’s tourism potential, featuring subject matter experts and industry leaders who can provide valuable insights and actionable ideas.

To further promote Odisha, we have organised eight exclusive post-convention FAM trips for the IATO delegates with the support of local

stakeholders, highlighting the state’s diverse offerings, spanning culture, nature, spiritual heritage, beaches, wildlife, and ecotourism. These trips are carefully curated to showcase the best of Odisha. This initiative is aimed at promoting Odisha as a diverse and rewarding travel destination for all IATO delegates.

Odisha has always been one of the most tourism-friendly states in India, known for its rich heritage, warm hospitality, and growing infrastructure. Over the years, we have successfully hosted several national and international events, but unfortunately, the outcomes have not translated into substantial business growth for our members, largely due to a lack of sustained planning and post-event strategies. Despite substantial investment in tourism marketing, event organisation, and FAM trips for both international and domestic buyers, Odisha has yet to witness a significant rise in foreign tourist arrivals. In several cases, major events have served the interests of event management firms more than yielding tangible benefits for the local tourism stakeholders.

However, with the 40th IATO Annual Convention being hosted in Odisha, we see a unique and timely opportunity for course correction and are confident that this convention will energise and motivate IATO members across India to promote Odisha in their tour programmes aggressively. It will also help in forging a stronger and more meaningful partnership between IATO and the Odisha Tourism Department, ensuring better coordination and long-term gains for inbound tourism in the region.

In the meantime, there is a sincere appeal from the Odisha Chapter to consider at least a 50 per cent waiver in registration fees for local members to encourage greater participation. We urge IATO members to include Odisha prominently in their brochures and websites and to market the destination actively in both domestic and international circuits. With IATO’s robust network, we believe it is possible to increase the footfall of tourists to Odisha significantly.

Sunil Gupta, Chairman, IATO Northern Region



The IATO Convention is an excellent platform for dialogue, learning, and connecting with tourism stakeholders from across the country. Many of our Northern Region members are actively preparing to participate, including showcasing their holiday products and unique travel experiences at the Tourism Mart. We anticipate a strong turnout, with over 300 delegates expected from our region.

The convention always offers high-quality sessions on pressing

issues in tourism, led by distinguished speakers from various domains. This year is no exception. With over 1,100 delegates expected, it provides an unparalleled opportunity for networking. The presence of both buyers and sellers makes it a valuable event for fostering business growth and partnerships.

We have widely circulated information encouraging our members to attend in large numbers and take full advantage of the event. Our chapter has also conveyed key feedback and concerns from members to the organising committee to ensure they are addressed in relevant sessions. This will help make the discussions more meaningful and inclusive.

The Northern Region, home to India’s most iconic destinations, will have strong representation. Several state tourism boards and member organisations from our region will be setting up booths to promote their destinations. Additionally, many states will make presentations to showcase their tourism potential during the convention.

Reviving inbound tourism to pre-COVID levels remains a key challenge. The Northern Region, which includes Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir, Chandigarh, and Haryana, faces a range of issues, from

infrastructure and connectivity gaps to limited international marketing. IATO continues to play a crucial role by actively engaging with government bodies and stakeholders to advocate for policy changes and facilitate members' concerns.

Prateek Hira, Chairman, IATO Uttar Pradesh Chapter



Uttar Pradesh consistently has the highest representation at IATO Conventions, second only to Delhi and the host state. This year, we anticipate an even larger delegation due to the growth in IATO's membership from Uttar Pradesh. Members are excited to meet and greet the new president, whose vision has resonated well. Additionally, both Uttar Pradesh and Odisha share a rich spiritual and cultural heritage, which is another reason operators from our state are keen

to visit Odisha, understand the destination better, and build stronger business connections between the two states.

The IATO convention is invaluable not only for networking within the travel fraternity but also as a significant learning platform. It allows members to stay updated on the latest trends, plan their businesses effectively, and maximise gains. For many, the primary takeaway from IATO conventions is the knowledge gained from well-curated sessions, a diverse array of speakers, and peer-to-peer networking. Our members from Uttar Pradesh have been major contributors to Odisha's tourist traffic, and attending the convention in Odisha will be a fantastic opportunity for them to experience firsthand what they have been selling for so long.

As Chapter Chairman, I strongly encourage IATO members to attend each convention, as everyone brings unique perspectives. Once there, I advise them to participate in all sessions, as each is designed to benefit

the members. We are actively sending out individual mailers and directly contacting members to encourage them to register in large numbers from Uttar Pradesh, ensuring this IATO Convention is as successful as previous ones. Each member will undoubtedly gain valuable knowledge essential for enhancing their businesses and staying updated with industry trends. Networking and collaboration are key to today's business, and the IATO Convention consistently delivers these in abundance.

Inbound tourism is a crucial aspect of our tourism sector, not just for foreign exchange and balance of payments, but also as a tool to assert our soft power globally. Unfortunately, despite having iconic attractions like the Taj Mahal and the cultural richness of destinations like Varanasi and Lucknow, inbound tourism has not performed as well as it could. This is not just a problem for Uttar Pradesh but a national issue.

The Government of Uttar Pradesh takes tourism seriously and recognises IATO's importance in destination promotion. The state government is actively working to revive inbound tourism by consistently participating in international travel marts, organising roadshows abroad, and involving the travel trade to highlight the state's diversity and richness. Uttar Pradesh is empowering its travel and hospitality trade like no other state. However, we still face challenges with timely planning for participation and effective follow-ups after promotional efforts. The state is addressing all the issues flagged by IATO, and many of these have already been resolved.

This year, Uttar Pradesh is also proud to be a Platinum Partner at the IATO Convention and will have a stand at the IATO Mart. We aim to disseminate destination knowledge and showcase our new products to expand the tourist market. Members from across India will benefit from interacting with officers from Uttar Pradesh Tourism and our state presentation, gaining valuable product knowledge about Uttar Pradesh.

Mahendra Pratap Singh, Chairman, IATO Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh Chapter



Our chapter is gearing up with great enthusiasm for the 40th IATO Convention in Puri. Members are highly motivated to attend, especially after the success of the previous conventions. We are expecting a delegation of around 35–40 active tour operators and stakeholders from Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. There is a strong sense of anticipation, not only for networking but also to contribute meaningfully to discussions around regional tourism development.

We are looking forward to three primary outcomes: knowledge-sharing, meaningful networking, and business collaborations. Knowledge-sharing will come through expert panels that focus on inbound recovery, new source markets, and digital marketing. Networking with national and international tour operators will be crucial, especially with those who are yet to explore central India as a key destination. And finally, we aim to showcase our wildlife, cultural, and spiritual tourism offerings and convert

discussions into partnerships that drive inbound traffic.

We are conducting pre-convention orientation and information-sharing sessions within the chapter to ensure every delegate is aligned with what to expect. Members have been encouraged to come prepared with brochures, itineraries, and clear networking goals. We are also coordinating with IATO HQ to secure B2B slots for key members. We intend to ensure our regional voices are present in panel discussions relevant to our states' strengths, such as wildlife tourism, tribal circuits, and Buddhist heritage trails.

In collaboration with the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board and local artisans, we are presenting a cultural showcase that highlights tribal art and folk music unique to central India. We also plan to distribute destination kits and local souvenirs, particularly from Khajuraho, Mandla, and Bastar. A few of our senior members will also participate in industry panels, particularly on experiential travel and sustainable tourism.

When it comes to inbound tourism, our biggest challenges remain international air connectivity, perception gaps, and limited global marketing. IATO has been a strong pillar of support in pushing for better connectivity through national platforms. At the chapter level, we are actively working with state tourism boards to host FAM tours, roadshows, and digital campaigns. IATO is also facilitating connections with overseas tour operators to bring attention to unexplored treasures like Amarkantak, Sirpur, Orchha, and our rich tiger reserves. However, with continuous support, we are optimistic about placing central India prominently on the global travel map.

Manas Mukherjee, Chairman, IATO Jharkhand Chapter



As we know, Jharkhand was born in the year 2000, and since then, the growth story has been very slow. In the last few years, the government has taken initiatives to improve the tourism sector and reduce the gap with other developed and developing states. The present minister and his team are very enthusiastic and are putting in substantial efforts to promote Jharkhand Tourism, participating in different promotional platforms to increase our visibility.

We currently have very minimal IATO membership from Jharkhand, but over the last two years, our efforts have led to a significant increase, reaching double-digit numbers. I am continuing my efforts to bring in more members to the state. We also have certain demands, which I will discuss during the closed-door meeting, and I am optimistic about achieving our goals.

Several long-pending developments in Jharkhand are now moving forward:

- Recognition of travel agents:** Earlier, no travel agent was recognised by Jharkhand Tourism. Now that the process has started, a good number of agents have applied, and a few have already received registration.
 - Tourist helpline for safety and security:** We requested the development of a dedicated helpline number. The process is in progress and is expected to be activated soon, which will help tourists seek assistance easily.
 - Entry of renowned hotel chains:** Many reputed hotel brands have entered the Jharkhand market, and others are exploring opportunities. This will create a positive vibe and attract more tourists.
 - New location identification and facelift:** Work is underway to identify new destinations and improve existing sites.
 - Investment promotion:** The Tourism Department has invited interested investors in the hospitality segment and is developing a land pool for the same. Recently, a Kolkata roadshow was organised, and there is more in the pipeline.
- At this juncture, we require the assistance of members from other states to promote Jharkhand from their end. We have already proposed a FAM trip to Jharkhand Tourism to familiarise members with major destinations. Once they experience our state firsthand, we are confident they will actively promote Jharkhand in their itineraries.

Debjit Dutta, Chairman, IATO West Bengal Chapter



The IATO Annual Convention makes its much-awaited return to Eastern India after a five-year interval, with Odisha poised to host the prestigious event, following the memorable success of the event in Kolkata back in 2019. The proximity, legacy, and sense of regional pride have created tremendous enthusiasm, especially among our West Bengal members. We anticipate the highest delegate participation from the state in the past five years, reaffirming our commitment to engage and reinforce our position within the larger and evolving national tourism discourse.

The overarching objective from our side is to place East and Northeast India firmly on the national inbound map. With industry leaders, innovators,

- and decision-makers under one roof, we anticipate productive dialogue that can translate into long-term collaboration and traffic generation for the region. The learning and networking formats will serve as crucial tools in aligning with market trends and sharpening our regional positioning.
- While the convention does not follow a traditional B2B format, it remains one of the most powerful networking platforms for the Indian tourism industry. Our chapter is proactively mentoring members to engage with key stakeholders during the event. The convention offers an unparalleled opportunity to connect with industry influencers and thought leaders, creating fertile ground for forging relationships that could evolve into business in the future.
- When it comes to inbound tourism, our biggest challenge is visibility - branding and positioning Eastern India in global tourism circuits. For the first time since the pandemic, this convention gives us a national platform to change that narrative. Odisha, with its unique cultural depth, is ideally placed to lead regional storytelling. It can anchor cross-country thematic circuits in partnership with neighbouring states and nations, paving the way for a more connected and cohesive tourism offering from Eastern India.

S. Mahalingaiah, Chairman, IATO Karnataka Chapter



The IATO Karnataka Chapter is eagerly looking forward to the 40th IATO Annual Convention in Puri, with 8-10 members expected to participate. Our members are excited to attend all the seminars and knowledge sessions to enrich themselves and gain insights from expert speakers. The chapter is also hopeful that, like previous conventions, more hotels will join the initiative by offering

- special discounts and static rates to IATO members.
- The chapter has actively encouraged members to register in large numbers, recognising the convention as a prime platform for networking and developing contacts across India. Supporting the event as requested by the IATO President, the Karnataka Chapter also emphasises the need for aggressive overseas marketing, particularly in key feeder markets. We request that IATO continue working closely with the Ministry of Tourism to ensure stronger international promotions, which will directly support our inbound growth.





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Swosti Premium Beach Resorts, Puri

MICE-Ready in a Spiritually Rich Destination

As the host hotel for the 40th IATO Convention, TTJ interacts with S Santosh Kumar Patra, General Manager, Swosti Premium Beach Resorts, Puri, to understand how the property is gearing up for this prestigious event. He shares key insights on preparations, cultural integration, and Swosti Premium’s role in positioning Puri as a leading MICE and tourism destination.

Prashant Nayak

Swosti Premium Beach Resorts, Puri, is Odisha’s first luxury resort-cum-convention hotel, seamlessly blending tradition, elegance, and modernity. Located near the sacred Shree Jagannath Dham and the golden beaches of Puri, it offers stunning views of the Bay of Bengal. Key USPs include expansive banquet and convention facilities, heritage-inspired architecture, modern amenities, and a strong focus on Odia hospitality. Sustainability, local cuisine, and high service standards further set it apart in the region.

Ready to Welcome IATO Delegates

Swosti Premium Beach Resorts is meticulously preparing to welcome IATO delegates, industry leaders, and dignitaries from across the country for this landmark event. Santosh shared, “Our team is working tirelessly to ensure each guest enjoys a warm and truly memorable experience. Preparations include personalised check-in services, enhanced housekeeping, multilingual guest relations, and dedicated convention support teams. We have conducted extensive training sessions to boost service readiness and have mobilised additional resources to efficiently manage logistics, hospitality desks, and real-time assistance throughout the event.”

Swosti Premium Beach Resorts Puri, has extended special consideration for the convention, offering complimentary accommodation and an exclusive discount on the Gala Dinner. Santosh added, “To further enhance the experience, delegates can enjoy live cooking counters, themed gala nights, and wellness offerings designed to help guests unwind, connect, and experience the warmth of our hospitality.”

Purpose-Built for Large-Scale Events



▲ S Santosh Kumar Patra

Swosti Premium Beach Resorts, Puri, is purpose-built for large-scale events and offers one of Eastern India’s largest pillarless ballrooms, ideal for conventions like IATO. Equipped with advanced audio-visual technology, high-speed internet, and multiple breakout halls, the venue ensures seamless logistics and professional coordination. The property features over 125 well-appointed sea-view rooms and suites, ample parking, and a serene beachside location that perfectly blends business with leisure.

Santosh elaborated, “When it comes to MICE, the luxury beach front resort is fully equipped to host mid to large scale conventions, destination weddings, and grand social celebrations. The grand ballroom accommodates over 1,000 guests for floating crowds, 500 in a theatre setup, and 300 in a cluster arrangement. Multiple meeting rooms and conference halls, modern AV systems, a beachfront lawn, and open-air spaces support diverse event formats. In-house décor, catering, and planning teams ensure every

detail, from lighting to guest experience, is executed flawlessly, creating truly memorable occasions.”

Celebrating Odisha’s Culture and Heritage

Swosti Premium Beach Resorts, Puri, celebrates the spirit of Puri by weaving local culture into every aspect of the guest journey. From architectural elements inspired by Odisha’s temple art to handcrafted decor and local artwork throughout the hotel, guests feel a deep connection to the place. The cuisine features authentic Odia dishes like dalma, pakhal bhata, and chhena poda, often served during special meals and buffets. The resort also organises local temple tours, guided heritage walks, and cultural evenings to enrich the guest experience.

A Landmark Moment for Puri and Odisha

The 40th IATO Convention is a landmark opportunity to showcase Puri and Odisha on the national and international tourism map. Santosh reflected, “We anticipate enhanced visibility for Swosti Premium, Puri, and the region’s hospitality sector. The convention will foster dialogue among key tourism stakeholders and potentially unlock new partnerships, travel circuits, and business leads. Above all, we hope this platform will position Puri not just as a spiritual hub, but as a vibrant destination for MICE, leisure, and cultural tourism.”

A Warm Invitation to Discover Odisha

To conclude, Santosh expressed, “To all the IATO delegates, we extend a heartfelt welcome to Swosti Premium Beach Resorts, Puri. Your stay here will be an experience steeped in culture, comfort, and care. From serene beachside mornings to rich culinary journeys and engaging cultural showcases, every moment is designed to delight. We invite you to explore Puri’s divine heritage, artistic legacy, and scenic beauty, and let Swosti Premium Beach Resorts, Puri be your home as you discover the soul of Odisha.”





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Team TTJ



▲ Dev Karvat

According to a recent Global Airline Performance Report, over 25 million bags were mishandled globally, and more than 35 per cent of flights faced delays exceeding 60 minutes. Travellers are now encountering longer wait times, more lost luggage, and higher levels of uncertainty at every step.

This is where the gap between travellers’ actual insurance coverage and travel reality becomes evident. Traditional policies may reimburse financial loss after an incident, but they do not appear when a bag goes missing, a connection is missed, or a traveller is stranded at a foreign airport without assistance. Karvat notes that what travellers truly need today is not just reimbursement, they need real-time help and reliable assistance.

Recognising this shift, ASEGO has launched ASEGO BOLT, a powerful new standalone assistance bundle that combines two of its most effective services: TrackMate and WaitMate.

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Karvat adds, “With ASEGO BOLT, travel agents are now empowered to move beyond simply selling destinations and start delivering dependable journeys.” Whether it is a family vacation, a corporate itinerary, or a solo international trip, this level of assistance can transform travel stress into lasting customer trust.



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PURI THE SACRED SHORELINE OF ODISHA

Rath Yatra

Puri in Odisha is more than just a destination; it is an experience that nourishes both the spirit and the senses. From the resonance of temple bells to the whispers of the Bay of Bengal, the city promises a journey of faith, culture, and relaxation. With its timeless charm and enhanced infrastructure, Puri remains a jewel of Odisha's tourism circuit and a must-visit for every traveller.

Prashant Nayak

A Coastal Gem on Odisha's Map

Nestled on the eastern coastline of Odisha, about 60 km from the state capital Bhubaneswar, Puri enjoys a unique location along the Bay of Bengal. Its tropical coastal charm blends perfectly with its spiritual aura, offering travellers the best of both worlds, tranquil beaches, and divine experiences. Puri also forms an integral part of Odisha's famed Golden Triangle tourism circuit, along with Bhubaneswar and Konark, making it an ideal base for exploring the state's heritage and natural beauty.

A Sacred City of Eternal Faith

Puri holds an exalted place on India's spiritual map as one of the revered Char Dham pilgrimage sites, alongside Badrinath, Dwarka, and Rameswaram. At the heart of the city stands the iconic Jagannath Temple,

an architectural marvel and a living centre of Vaishnavite tradition. Dedicated to Lord Jagannath, an incarnation of Vishnu, the temple draws millions of devotees every year. The temple's towering spire, visible from various corners of the city, serves both as a navigational beacon and a symbol of Puri's enduring spiritual energy. The highlight is the world-famous Rath Yatra, when the deities of Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra are taken out in giant, colourfully decorated chariots through the streets, creating a spectacle of faith and unity that captivates the world.

Beyond Faith: Culture, Craft, and Heritage

While Puri is synonymous with devotion, it is also a living museum of Odisha's culture and traditions. The city is a thriving hub for

Pattachitra painting, stone and wood carving, and the famous sand art showcased along the beaches. Internationally acclaimed artist Sudarsan Patnaik has elevated Puri's sand art to global fame, drawing art lovers and curious tourists to the shorelines. Historically, Puri also boasts a rich maritime past; centuries ago, it served as a significant port linking Odisha to Southeast Asian trade routes, an echo of which still lingers in its coastal character.

The Rhythms of Tourism in Puri

Puri is a destination that thrives on a harmonious blend of pilgrimage, leisure, and cultural tourism. Its golden coastline invites visitors to start their mornings with serene sunrise walks, as fishing boats dot the horizon and waves lap gently against the shore. The Marine Drive stretch from Puri to Konark is





Puri Beach

a particular favourite for evening drives and cycling tours. This palm-lined coastal road, dotted with beach shacks, luxury resorts, and scenic viewpoints, offers a tranquil escape from the bustling temple streets.

The Golden Beach, now Blue Flag-certified, reflects Puri's efforts to combine natural beauty with sustainable tourism. For leisure travellers, the relaxed coastal vibe is perfectly complemented by local experiences, be it watching sand artists at work, attending folk performances, or enjoying a horse cart or camel ride along the shoreline. Meanwhile, cultural enthusiasts dive into heritage explorations, handicraft shopping, and temple architecture tours.

Accommodation in Puri ranges from luxurious beachfront resorts to budget lodges, catering to every type of traveller. This mix of spiritual, cultural, and leisure tourism ensures that Puri has something unique to offer all year round.

Flavours of the Coast and Temple Town

A journey to Puri is incomplete without indulging in its vibrant culinary offerings. At the Jagannath Temple, the daily ritual of preparing Mahaprasad in the temple kitchen, using age-old methods in earthen pots stacked over firewood, is a divine experience in itself. This sacred food, served at the Ananda Bazaar within the temple complex, is believed to carry the blessings of the deity and is savoured by devotees and tourists alike.

Beyond temple offerings, Puri's coastal cuisine delights seafood lovers with fresh prawns, crabs, and fish curries cooked in traditional Odia style. Street food enthusiasts can relish gupchup (pani puri), malpua, and

local delicacies like dahibara aloo dum, rasabali, and the caramelised cheese dessert chhena poda.

Beyond the City Excursions

Puri's charm extends far beyond its city limits, with several day trips and excursions offering enriching experiences. About 35 km away stands the Konark Sun Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of India's most celebrated architectural masterpieces. Shaped like a colossal chariot dedicated to the Sun God, this 13th-century marvel continues to leave visitors in awe. The drive from Puri to Konark along the scenic Marine Drive is a highlight in itself, lined with casuarina groves and views of the sparkling sea.

For nature lovers and birdwatchers, Chilika Lake is an unmissable attraction. Less than two hours from Puri, Asia's largest brackish water lagoon is a haven for migratory birds. The Mangalajodi wetlands at its northern edge offer a spectacular eco-tourism experience, with flamingos, water and shore birds, and numerous other species creating a living kaleidoscope of colours during the migratory season. A boat ride here is a serene and unforgettable encounter with Odisha's biodiversity.

Travellers seeking a cultural immersion can also explore Raghurajpur Heritage Village, where the tradition of Pattachitra painting thrives. This charming village is also the cradle of Gotipua dance, the precursor to classical Odissi, allowing travellers to witness Odisha's cultural legacy in its most authentic form. For those looking for peaceful detours, the Alarnath Temple and Baliharachandi Beach offer tranquillity away from the tourist rush.



Pattachitra Paintings

Connectivity and Emerging Infrastructure

Puri's accessibility has played a crucial role in its tourism growth. The city is well-connected by road and rail, with Puri Railway Station linking it to major Indian cities. The nearest airport is Bhubaneswar's Biju Patnaik International Airport, which provides domestic and limited international connectivity. Within the city, auto-rickshaws, cycle rickshaws, and taxis offer easy local mobility for visitors.

The Odisha government has invested heavily in enhancing tourism infrastructure. The Shree Jagannath Heritage Corridor has streamlined pilgrim movement and improved the temple experience. Coastal safety measures and beach amenities have been upgraded to meet global standards. The scenic Marine Drive to Konark has been further developed to attract leisure travellers, while eco-tourism initiatives, particularly around Mangalajodi, are positioning Puri as a year-round destination for nature enthusiasts.

With enhanced infrastructure, eco-tourism attractions, and its ever-enduring spiritual pull, Puri is truly the heart of Odisha's tourism map, a city where every wave and every temple bell seems to echo an invitation: come, experience, and return enriched.



Mangalajodi Wetlands



Konark Sun Temple



OTOAI'S MOSCOW CONVENTION

MARKS BOLD LEAP IN INDO-RUSSIAN TOURISM TIES, FUELS OUTBOUND MOMENTUM

The recent sixth Annual Convention of the Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) in Moscow spotlighted innovation, strategic collaboration, and Russia's emergence as a promising outbound destination for Indian travellers. With high-impact sessions, focused B2B meetings, and immersive cultural experiences, the convention marked a pivotal step in strengthening Indo-Russian tourism ties and unlocking new opportunities for bilateral travel growth.

Khushi Bakshi

OTOAI successfully hosted its sixth Annual Convention in the vibrant Russian capital of Moscow, marking a strategic milestone in strengthening India–Russia collaboration in outbound tourism. Held from July 10 to 13, 2025, at the iconic The Carlton, Moscow, the four-day convention witnessed participation of over 200 Indian travel professionals, including leading tour operators, agents, and media representatives, reaffirming the growing interest in Russia as a potential market for Indian outbound travellers.

Themed “Fast Forward Future – The Intelligent Travel”, the convention aimed to explore innovative strategies and emerging trends in global travel, with a sharp focus on digital transformation, safety, speed, and scalability in tourism.

The Opening Address

The inaugural session featured prominent voices from both nations, setting a constructive tone for bilateral tourism cooperation.

Welcoming attendees, Himanshu Patil, President, OTOAI, expressed his appreciation for the collaboration and outlined the association's long-standing vision. He said, “At OTOAI, we have always believed in going beyond the conventional. After hosting successful conventions

in the Philippines, Bali, Ras Al Khaimah, South Africa, and Kenya, we are proud to bring this edition to Moscow, a city that offers not just culture and heritage, but tremendous potential for Indian outbound tourism.”

He also highlighted the strategic decision to select Moscow, citing Russia's recent efforts to simplify visa procedures for Indian nationals, stating, “Russia has demonstrated its commitment to strengthening tourism ties with India. What we are seeing is more than support; it is a decisive leap toward deeper collaboration. Our goal is to facilitate long-term growth and welcome over half a million Indian tourists to Russia annually by 2030.”

Evgeny Kozlov, First Deputy Head of the Office of the Mayor of Moscow and Chairman, Moscow City Tourism Committee, welcomed the Indian delegation with a warm and candid address. He said, “Because we do not just work hard to attract you, dear partners, we live this life trying to attract more people. Because we do not work in tourism, we live for tourism. All of us who work for the Moscow government do not just work; we live to make our city better. Our mayor has a great vision: to build and make the best city in the world. And we know, please believe us, that for residents, it is already the best city in the world.”



He emphasised that hosting the convention in Moscow would help reshape perceptions among Indian tour operators and the media, particularly around safety and accessibility.

Theme: Fast Forward Future – The Intelligent Travel

Shravan Bhalla, Vice President of OTOAI and Convention Chairman, delved into the convention's theme, 'Fast Forward Future: The Intelligent Travel,' calling it timely and relevant in today's rapidly changing travel landscape. He emphasised, "We are witnessing a transformative phase in global travel, driven by intelligent technologies and shifting consumer mindsets. FAST reflects the speed at which change is unfolding, from new booking behaviours to regulatory shifts and increased digital adoption. FORWARD urges us to adopt a progressive, innovation-led approach instead of relying on past practices. And FUTURE, because the future of travel is no longer far off. It is already upon us, reshaping how we plan, sell, and experience travel."

He added that regional travel, a rising middle class, and a growing preference for immersive, sustainable, and personalised experiences will fuel future outbound tourism growth.

In closing, Bhalla shared that the convention features specially curated business sessions designed to equip delegates with the tools and insights necessary to navigate the evolving global travel ecosystem. "We have invited thought leaders and experts who will share valuable perspectives. These sessions are designed not just to inform but to inspire action as we embrace this new era of intelligent travel," he said.

Knowledge Sharing and High-Impact Partnerships

The event featured a dynamic panel discussion on 'Connected Travel: Building Speed, Safety and Scale for the Intelligent Traveller,' moderated by SanJeet, with esteemed panellists including Ankush Nijhawan, Anastasia Popova, Dev Karvat, Irshad Dadan, Sharad Gowani, and Rahim Aslam. Insightful presentations were delivered by the Moscow City Tourism Committee, VFS Global, Asego, and DMC Bazaar, offering a comprehensive view of the evolving travel landscape. The event also included keynote addresses by Dr. Prashant Pansare and Deven Parulekar, who shared visionary perspectives on travel innovation and future growth.

The convention facilitated over 1,750 B2B meetings and led to the establishment of multiple partnerships between Indian and Russian stakeholders, along with the announcement of new tour packages tailored for Indian travellers.

In a major development, OTOAI signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with VFS Global, enabling its members to offer VFS Global services and earn through a referral model. This strategic collaboration enhances the value proposition for OTOAI members. The referral programme will benefit travel agents, tour operators, and visa applicants alike. This marks the first step in a broader collaboration aimed at strengthening Indo-global tourism facilitation.

Immersive Experiences in Moscow and St. Petersburg

The convention provided delegates with an immersive series of destination familiarisation experiences that



showcased Moscow's charm, history, and vibrant culture. Participants visited iconic landmarks such as Red Square, the GUM department store, VDNKh exhibition centre, and Zaryadye Park, gaining both visual splendour and cultural insight into the city's dynamic mix of tradition and modernity.

Cultural highlights included a traditional horse show that reflected Russia's heritage, panoramic views from the Sun of Moscow Ferris Wheel, scenic river cruises, and walking tours through the city's architectural treasures. Delegates also explored the city's ornate metro stations, often called 'palaces on rails,' and enjoyed tastings of authentic Russian cuisine. A standout moment was the Festival of India – Bharat Utsav at Manezhnaya Square, celebrating Indo-Russian cultural exchange with vibrant performances and cuisine.

After the Moscow convention, over 200 delegates continued on a three-night post-tour to St. Petersburg, blending cultural discovery with leisure. Highlights included a guided tour of Palace Square, a river and canal cruise showcasing the 'Venice of the North,' and early access to The Hermitage Palace, offering a serene exploration of its renowned art collections.

Evenings featured networking cocktails and cultural shows, allowing delegates to connect while experiencing the local arts and culture. The tour offered deep immersion into St. Petersburg's elegance and history, leaving lasting memories of Russia's rich cultural tapestry.



Farewell Reflections

Himanshu Patil, President, OTOAI

“The enthusiastic response and valuable partnerships formed over the past few days affirm our belief that Moscow is the next big frontier for Indian outbound tourism. Its warm hospitality, cultural richness, and world-class infrastructure offer tremendous opportunities for the Indian market.

From Moscow’s architectural marvels to St. Petersburg’s White Nights, our delegates now have the firsthand knowledge to create authentic travel experiences. We also covered crucial topics like technology and AI, and I am confident many of our members are now better equipped to embrace digital tools and strategies. This convention will not only enhance their technological capabilities but also strengthen their ability to effectively promote and sell Russia as a destination in the Indian market.

Anastasia Popova, Head – Business Tourism Development Department, Moscow City Tourism Committee

“OTOAI’s sixth Convention has surpassed all expectations, showcasing the remarkable interest Indian travel stakeholders have in exploring Moscow as a destination. The quality of engagement and meaningful business discussions has validated our strategy to position Russia prominently in the Indian outbound market. We are already working closely with Indian tour operators on customised packages that blend Moscow’s rich cultural heritage with modern amenities that resonate with Indian travellers’ preferences. The current Moscow–India direct air connectivity, provided by Aeroflot, has further enhanced accessibility for Indian tourists.

Shravan Bhalla, Vice President, OTOAI

“The convention achieved exactly what we aimed for: a clear roadmap to unlock Moscow’s potential for Indian outbound tourism. A key takeaway was the strong collaboration from our Russian counterparts in addressing key operational and market-specific needs. The sessions highlighted major industry shifts, including AI-driven intelligent travel, the demand for experiential tourism, and the growing importance of travel insurance and safety. Topics such as digital visas, multi-country itineraries, and sustainable practices drew strong interest, demonstrating the Indian trade’s eagerness to evolve.

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Most importantly, perceptions around safety have changed, with delegates experiencing Moscow firsthand and finding it safe, vibrant, and welcoming. The post-fam to St. Petersburg further enriched the experience. Delegates enjoyed the White Nights and productive B2B sessions, with several DMCs already reporting leads. This was one of our largest delegations, and we are confident our members will now actively promote Russia as a top destination.

Sidharth Khanna, General Secretary, OTOAI

“We at OTOAI are thrilled with the overwhelming success of the convention in Moscow. The event saw the enthusiastic participation of over 200 Indian delegates from across the country, including many from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities. With more than 50 esteemed Russian suppliers in attendance, the convention offered a highly productive platform for focused one-on-one B2B meetings.

Our decision to host the convention in Russia was a deliberate effort to address and overcome common concerns around safety and security among Indian travellers. We are deeply grateful to the Moscow City Tourism Committee for their unwavering support and flawless execution. Delegates experienced Russia’s renowned hospitality and the warm, welcoming spirit of both Moscow and St. Petersburg firsthand. Russia has clearly demonstrated itself to be a safe, dynamic, and culturally enriching destination. We strongly encourage our members to actively promote it in their future travel offerings to Indian clients.

Monia Kapoor, Joint Secretary, OTOAI

“I am extremely pleased with how the convention turned out; it has truly been a great success. We chose Moscow with the perspective of introducing a new and relatively unknown destination to the Indian market. There were initial concerns and questions, especially around safety, but this convention has helped to break those barriers. It was wonderful to see over 200 members attend and experience Moscow in an entirely new light. They witnessed firsthand that Russia is not only safe but also offers a unique and enriching travel experience. Throughout the convention, our members explored venues that were previously unfamiliar or not accessible online. The B2B sessions proved especially valuable, enabling our partners to connect directly and making it easier for them to begin promoting Moscow and Russia as viable destinations for their clients.

Irshad Dadan, Director, OneAbove

“It was great to be part of the OTOAI convention, just as I was back in 2023 during the Kenya convention, which left a lasting impression on me. This time, too, I felt compelled to contribute in some way and be a part of its success. That is why I have stayed connected, and I would love to continue my association with OTOAI each year to help make this convention even bigger and better.

Dev Karvat, Founder and CEO, Asego

“The convention was a truly enriching experience, and I extend my sincere appreciation to the organising committee for putting together such a well-structured and insightful event. It served as an excellent platform for meaningful dialogue, networking, and collaboration within the travel and tourism community. The sessions were thoughtfully curated, addressing both the opportunities and challenges facing the

Indian travel fraternity today. I especially valued the exchange of innovative ideas and the opportunity to engage with industry leaders who share a passion for driving positive change. At Asego, we firmly believe in the power of collective growth, and events like these play a vital role in uniting the industry. We remain committed to supporting initiatives that foster learning, innovation, and community building.





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from only **US\$113** PP/N

Dubai (UAE) | Sir Bani Yas Island (UAE) | Abu Dhabi (UAE) | Khalifa Bin Salman (Bahrain) | Doha (Qatar) | Dubai (UAE)

Dep. dates 2025: Dec 08, 15, 22, 29

Dep. dates 2026: Jan 05, 12, 19, 26 | Feb 02, 09, 16, 23 | Mar 02, 09



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Dep. dates 2025: Dec 12, 19, 26

Dep. dates 2026: Jan 02, 09, 16, 23, 30 | Feb 06, 13, 20, 27



4 Night Iconic Arabia

from only **US\$122** PP/N

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Dep. dates 2025: Dec 15, 22, 29

Dep. dates 2026: Jan 05, 12, 19, 26 | Feb 02, 09, 16, 23 | Mar 02



3 Night Iconic Arabia

from only **US\$126** PP/N

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TBO unveils LuxeConnect Vision and Charts Path to Tech-Powered B2B Travel Future

TBO Group officially unveiled its LuxeConnect platform, envisioned as a forward-looking forum for the future of luxury travel distribution. The event also showcased the company’s focus on intelligent automation, real-time insights, and agent-driven personalisation to digitalise the world of B2B for optimal results.

Prativa Vaidya Bhalla

The elegant LuxeConnect evening, hosted by the TBO, brought together top-tier global and Indian luxury partners for strategic networking, warm camaraderie, and a glimpse into TBO’s next phase of growth.

“LuxeConnect was always envisioned as a space solely for high-end travel sellers and hotels, and the 2026 edition will be much bigger in scope and scale,” said Ankush Nijhawan, Co-Founder, TBO Tek Ltd. The LuxeConnect platform currently hosts 33 premium global partners and aims to convene over 80 luxury sellers and hoteliers, and cruise lines from around the world by the coming year. The next edition will take place on September 18, 2026.

Taking centre stage at the event, Ankush delivered a visionary keynote, reflecting on TBO’s transformation from a successful travel marketplace into one of the world’s most dynamic, tech-led B2B travel ecosystems. Now ranked as the fourth-largest B2B travel hotel seller globally, TBO, the popular platform, is moving swiftly toward becoming a full-service operating system for travel businesses that integrates intelligent automation, personalised agent tools, seamless post-booking journeys, and real-time data-driven decision-making.

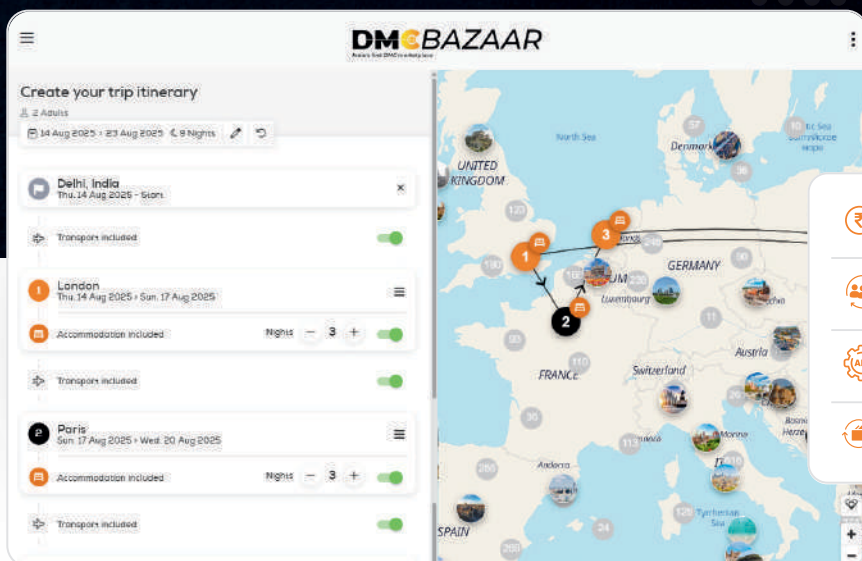
With India as its innovation hub and rapidly expanding global positioning, TBO is deploying next-generation digital tools and advanced analytics to empower agents and suppliers alike, ensuring the best booking experience for its B2B partners, driven by shared growth, human-centric design, and long-term collaboration.

Ankush expressed heartfelt gratitude to the TBO team for their unwavering support and encouraged partners to fully leverage the gamut of TBO tools available to them to drive growth, scale, and efficiency.



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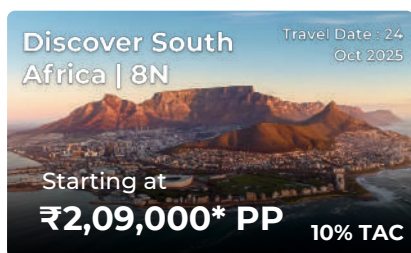
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- TTJ MICE Awards 2025



TTJ MICE MART – where business relationships are built, and the future of MICE takes shape

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Chander Mansharamani, Vice Chairman, India Convention Promotion Bureau

As the Premier MICE body for the country ICPB has a prime focus to enhance the India opportunity . Our members are committed professionals bringing quality services and ethics to the MICE industry. We congratulate TTJ on their initiative to organise the TTJ-MICE Mart, in October 2025 at New Delhi. We wish TTJ a great success.

Gajesh Girdhar, Chairman Governing, Network of Indian Mice Agents

We are happy to note that the TTJ will be organising an exclusive TTJ MICE Mart in the month of October 2025. We appreciate TTJ's thought and initiative taken to promote MICE business in India. We being an exclusive MICE association extend our full support to the event. Once again we congratulate Team TTJ for MICE Mart 2025.



Sanjeev Joshi, President – Site India Chapter

Site India is dedicated to unlocking and advancing the immense potential of India as a global MICE destination. Our esteemed members are committed professionals who uphold the highest standards of service excellence and ethical practices within the industry. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to TTJ for their commendable initiative in organizing the TTJ-MICE Mart, scheduled for October 2025 in New Delhi. We wish TTJ every success and look forward to a highly impactful and enriching event that contributes to the growth of the Indian MICE.

Souvagya Mohapatra, Managing Director, Atmosphere Core

I would like to congratulate Mr. Ravi Sharma and the entire TTJ team for creating such a remarkable platform through a renowned tourism and travel publication that has long supported the growth of the Tourism and Hospitality industry in India. Their efforts to promote the MICE and Wedding segments are especially commendable, as they address the current need to position India as a leading hub. Recognizing the contributions of MICE Professionals and honoring them will undoubtedly inspire further excellence and benefit the industry at large. I wish the entire TTJ team every success and extend my personal and Atmosphere Core's support to ensure this event achieves great heights.



Barun Gupta, Founding Member of Indian Wedding Industry Association & General Manager, Expolnn Suites and Convention (India Exposition Mart Limited)

Heartiest congratulations to TTJ on completing a remarkable 15-year journey of shaping conversations and connections in the travel industry. The launch of the TTJ MICE Awards 2025 is a timely celebration of vision, resilience, and excellence. I am privileged to be part of this initiative that acknowledges the champions of MICE and travel and look forward to witnessing this grand convergence of industry leaders and game-changers. Wishing the entire TTJ team continued success and impact.

Naveen Rizvi, Executive Director, ICE- Incentive Conference & Event Management Pvt Ltd.

As an industry professional closely involved in curating and delivering impactful business events, I see the TTJ MICE Mart & Awards 2025 as a timely and strategic initiative for the Indian MICE landscape. This platform not only celebrates excellence but also facilitates genuine business opportunities, peer learning, and high-value networking for MICE organisers and stakeholders. My compliments to Team TTJ for this commendable initiative, and I look forward to witnessing a dynamic and insightful gathering in New Delhi this October.



Rajesh Arya, President, Global Association of Events and Hospitality Professionals

Our founding vision at GAEHP has been to create an association of like-minded professionals catering specifically to Events and Hospitality industry. The endeavour being to enhance and promote knowledge sharing, best practices and professionalism among our members. We congratulate TTJ on their initiative to organise the MICE MART at New Delhi and will be attending the show in full force with our members.

Amit Aggarwal, Founder and Business Owner, AMS Conferences and Vacations

Heartiest congratulations to TTJ on completing a remarkable 15 years journey of excellence. TTJ has been a pivotal force in shaping conversations, showcasing innovations, and bringing key stakeholders together across Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions. It is truly an honour to be associated with a platform that continues to elevate and empower the MICE ecosystem in India and beyond. Wishing the entire TTJ team continued success, greater impact, and many more milestones in the years to come.





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TTJ TRAVMART Chandigarh 2025 sets new record with largest-ever B2B travel networking event in the region

The eighth edition of TTJ TRAVMART Chandigarh, held on July 9, 2025, at The Lalit Chandigarh, achieved record-breaking success, setting a new benchmark in terms of both exhibitor participation and B2B buyer engagement.

The event featured an impressive lineup of 55 travel service providers, spanning airlines, cruise lines, tourism boards, hotel chains, individual hotels, destination management companies (DMCs), car rental firms, visa facilitation agencies, and travel technology companies. This diverse mix created a comprehensive platform for business networking and opportunity exploration within the travel trade community.

TTJ TRAVMART 2025 attracted nearly 200 travel trade buyers, including 40 hosted buyers from key neighbouring cities such as Amritsar, Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Moga, Ambala, Karnal, Rohtak, and Solan. The event commenced with a traditional lamp-lighting ceremony, accompanied by the energetic beats of

the Punjabi dhol, adding a vibrant cultural touch to the proceedings.

The event was strongly supported by all major travel associations, whose senior office bearers were honoured during the inauguration ceremony. A bustling B2B networking session followed, allowing exhibitors and buyers to engage in high-value business discussions.

Post networking, a knowledge session was held, where select exhibitors presented their latest products and offerings to the audience. The day concluded on a high note with lucky draws and giveaways, with exciting prizes sponsored by Travel Deals B2B, Rezbook, One Above, Mondy Visa Services, and Hotel Hot Spring Tattapani.

Widely applauded by participants, TTJ TRAVMART Chandigarh 2025 was hailed as the largest B2B travel networking event ever held in the region, reinforcing its reputation as a vital platform for travel trade engagement and industry growth.







Lalit Rajput
Director, B2B Sales, Airocity Visas

This was our debut at TTJ TRAVMART Chandigarh, and it was an enriching and truly memorable experience. The event significantly boosted our brand recognition through direct exposure to a targeted audience. We have built a strong pipeline of qualified leads and established meaningful connections with potential clients and trade partners. One of the best parts of the show was the opportunity for direct engagement with attendees, which allowed us to gather real-time feedback on our products and services. We look forward to participating in future TTJ shows and are committed to building a strong collaboration between Airocity Visas and the TTJ team.





Pradeep Agrawal
General Manager, Worldwide DMC

Please accept my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude for your exceptional efforts in organising the recent TTJ TRAVMART, Chandigarh. It was a tremendous success, and I truly appreciate the time and dedication you invested in making it happen. The event was excellently planned, and your attention to detail ensured everything ran seamlessly. Your team's enthusiasm and commitment were evident throughout, and it was a pleasure to be part of it. I want to extend my sincere thanks to your entire team for their hard work and dedication. I am grateful for the opportunity to have been involved and look forward to future collaborations.



Aryan Choudhary
MD & CEO, World Inside Tourism

We were pleased to participate in TTJ TRAVMART Chandigarh, which provided an excellent platform to connect with key industry professionals and showcase our services. As World Inside Tourism (DMC – Dubai and Sri Lanka), we appreciated the privilege of introducing our offerings to a broader audience and building meaningful relationships. The event was well-organised, and the response from agents and partners was very encouraging. We look forward to more such opportunities with TTJ in the future.



Guneet Pal Singh
Manager Sales, North, STIC Travel Group

It was an honour to be a part of TTJ as an exhibitor representing Ethiopian Airlines. The roadshow was superbly curated, providing an excellent platform for fruitful meetings with trade colleagues from across Haryana, Chandigarh, Punjab, and Himachal Pradesh. I extend my best wishes for continued success to the entire TTJ team. We look forward to seeing the event grow even stronger in the future.



Meenu Bagai
General Manager, North India, Global Destinations

This was the second time Global Destinations participated in TTJ TRAVMART in Chandigarh, and once again, it proved to be a great success. Building on the momentum of our previous participation, this year's event offered another valuable opportunity to engage with the travel trade from across the region. We had productive conversations with potential agents eager to explore our diverse portfolio. The event was well-organised, featuring focused, high-quality interactions, relevant attendees, and an energetic atmosphere throughout the day. Chandigarh continues to be a promising & evolving market, and our presence at TTJ TRAVMART reaffirms our commitment to nurturing partnerships across Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities in India.



Anurag Nagpal
AVP, Sales (Punjab Region), Asego

TTJ TRAVMART Chandigarh 2025 was an excellent platform for us to connect with quality buyers and strengthen relationships with existing partners. The event was well-organised, with seamless coordination and a vibrant atmosphere that made every interaction meaningful and productive. Kudos to the TTJ team for creating such a focused and impactful networking opportunity—we truly valued being a part of it.



Akoya Hotel and Spa, Reunion Island, appoints Global Destinations to drive India market expansion



Akoya Hotel and Spa, a luxurious and award-winning 5-star property nestled on the pristine shores of Réunion Island, has appointed Global Destinations as its official sales and marketing representative in India.

This partnership represents a major milestone in Akoya’s global expansion strategy, with a strong emphasis on the rapidly growing Indian outbound travel market. Leveraging their extensive industry expertise and well-established network within the Indian travel trade, Global Destinations will lead efforts to position Akoya Hotel and Spa as a top choice for Indian luxury travellers, honeymooners, families, and bespoke MICE groups.

Nestled in the heart of the Indian Ocean, Akoya Hotel and Spa seamlessly blends French sophistication with the serene charm of island life. The property features 104 elegantly designed rooms and suites, each offering private balconies or terraces with sweeping views of the ocean or lush tropical gardens. Guests are invited to indulge in a luxurious yet intimate experience, from sunrise breakfasts by the pool to romantic dinners under the stars, every moment at Akoya is thoughtfully curated to inspire relaxation and refined indulgence.

Wyndham surpasses 700 hotels across EMEA as growth accelerates



Wyndham Hotels and Resorts has marked significant growth in its EMEA footprint, with more than 720 hotels now operating across Europe, the Middle East, Eurasia, and Africa. In the first half of 2025 alone, the company added over 4,700 rooms through more than 60 new hotel openings, driving year-over-year organic system growth of 5 per cent in EMEA, alongside 27 new deal signings in the region, reinforcing its focus on high-growth markets and expanding access to quality, branded accommodations to travellers across the region.

Standout additions include the Dolce by Wyndham Siracusa, Monasteri Golf and Spa in Sicily and the Signature Cave Cappadocia, Trademark Collection by Wyndham in Türkiye; offering distinctive stays in one of the region’s most captivating destinations. Wyndham also opened new destinations across Eastern Europe and Central Asia, with launches in Georgia, Romania, and Kazakhstan, and accelerated its momentum in Eurasia with 21 new openings in the first half of the year, expanding the regional portfolio to over 90 hotels, primarily located in India, one of the world’s most dynamic and fastest-growing hospitality markets.

Malaysia Airlines increases frequencies to Trivandrum from September 2025

Following encouraging load factors and sustained demand on its Trivandrum – Kuala Lumpur route, Malaysia Airlines is set to further expand its presence in South India by increasing frequencies to the city. Starting September 12, 2025, the airline will operate five weekly flights, with daily service commencing from December 01, 2025. This follows strong demand and positive load factors since the route’s launch in November 2023, which began with twice-weekly flights and grew to four weekly by April 2024.

The increased frequency offers travellers greater convenience and connectivity between India and Malaysia, with access to onward destinations via Kuala Lumpur. With this addition, Malaysia Airlines will operate 77 weekly flights across ten Indian cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kochi, Ahmedabad, Amritsar, and Trivandrum.

Travellers can also benefit from the airline’s Bonus Side Trip (BST) programme, which offers a complimentary side trip to one of seven domestic destinations in Malaysia. This initiative allows international passengers to explore more of Malaysia’s rich culture and natural beauty within the same itinerary, enhancing the overall travel experience.





RAJ PACHAR

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TAFI launches Punjab Chapter to strengthen state's travel trade ecosystem



The Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI), a travel trade association with over 1,700 members across 12 chapters nationwide, marked a significant milestone with the official launch of its Punjab Chapter. The inauguration underscores TAFI's commitment to expanding its presence and addressing region-specific challenges within India's dynamic travel industry.

The launch event was graced by Chief Guest Vaneet Dhir, Hon'ble Mayor of Jalandhar, who lit the lamp and unveiled the curtain, symbolising the beginning of a new chapter for the travel industry in Punjab. In his address, Dhir assured every possible support to flourish the travel sector in Punjab and congratulated the office bearers of the newly constituted Punjab Chapter.

On this occasion, Rajeshwar Kumar Dang (Xpert Travels) was announced as Chairman, Mohit Jethi (Jethi Travels) as Secretary, and Andeep Arora (RAB Tour & Travels) as Treasurer of the TAFI Punjab Chapter.

The TAFI Punjab Chapter aims to address travel trade challenges and strengthen the travel industry in Punjab. The event concluded with a networking dinner, providing an opportunity for industry professionals to connect and explore new opportunities.

GAEHP launches Rajasthan Chapter, appoints Hem Singh as Chapter Chairman



The Global Association of Events and Hospitality Professionals (GAEHP) marked a new milestone with the official launch of its Rajasthan Chapter in Jaipur on July 12, 2025.

Hem Singh, Founder of The Rajasthan Holidays, has been appointed as the Chapter Chairman, while Mahender Singh of K.K. Holidays will serve as the State Advisor. The launch ceremony witnessed the presence of key national leaders from GAEHP, including Rajesh Arya – President, Shishta Sharma – Vice President, Pranav Bansal – General Secretary, Harjinder Singh – Director of Outreach and Strategy, and P.P. Khanna – National Advisor.

Rajesh Arya, President of GAEHP, said, "Rajasthan holds a special place in India's tourism and events industry. With this new chapter, we aim to bring our members in the region closer to national-level opportunities, resources, and recognition." Pranav Bansal, General Secretary, added, "We are building a movement, a pan-India network where professionals come together to learn, engage, assess, and promote. Rajasthan's addition to our fold is another strong step in that direction."

As part of the launch event, membership certificates were awarded to 30 new members of the Rajasthan Chapter.

TAAI Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh Chapter hosts educational trip amidst nature

Around 25 members participated in this nature-based educational trip from July 12 to 14, 2025, where they not only spent time surrounded by natural beauty but also engaged deeply in yoga and spiritual activities.

The destination was the scenic Vanya Vilas Resort and Spa in Tadoba, renowned for its natural beauty and rich biodiversity. The group was warmly welcomed by Charanjit Singh, Regional Sales Head of the resort, who offered a comprehensive overview of the property and its offerings.

During the visit, members took part in several important activities, including a jungle safari at one of the reserves with the highest tiger sighting records. A meeting was also conducted for internal discussions and knowledge sharing among members. Additionally, everyone enjoyed yoga sessions in the lap of nature, which helped them achieve mental and physical balance.

Hemendra Singh Jadon, Chairman, TAAI Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh Chapter, said, "We regularly organise such activities for our members to give them new and enriching experiences."





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Air New Zealand

Air New Zealand has named **Nikhil Ravishankar** as its next CEO, effective October 20, 2025, succeeding Greg Foran. Currently Chief Digital Officer, Nikhil has played a pivotal role in transforming the airline’s technology infrastructure, enhancing its loyalty programme, and strengthening its customer proposition. His deep familiarity with the airline and broader aviation sector positions him well to lead Air New Zealand into its next chapter.

Prior to joining Air New Zealand, Nikhil served as Chief Digital Officer at Vector and Managing Director of Accenture.



Accor

Accor has appointed **Raki Phillips** as Regional President for its Premium, Midscale & Economy division across the Middle East, Africa, and Türkiye, effective November 2025. Succeeding Paul Stevens, Phillips will lead operations across more than 250 hotels in 27 countries and oversee over 85 upcoming openings. Formerly CEO of Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA), he brings over 20 years

of global experience and is recognised as a key tourism leader in the Middle East.



Raffles Udaipur

Raffles Udaipur has appointed **Guneeta Duggal** as its new Director of Sales and Marketing. With over two decades of strategic leadership and a proven track record in the luxury hospitality industry, Guneeta joins Raffles Udaipur following a distinguished tenure as Director of Sales and Marketing at JW Marriott Mussoorie Walnut Grove Resort & Spa. At Raffles Udaipur, Guneeta will spearhead sales and marketing

strategy, brand positioning, and guest engagement as the hotel continues to redefine luxury and personalised service.



Visit Florida

DT Minich, President and CEO of Experience Kissimmee, has been appointed to the Visit Florida Board of Directors. With more than 30 years in the tourism industry, Minich brings deep expertise from serving at the helm of three Florida destination marketing organisations (DMOs). Now, as the first leader from Experience Kissimmee to serve on Visit Florida’s board, he will help shape

the state’s tourism marketing strategies alongside fellow industry experts from across Florida.



Think Strawberries

Think Strawberries has appointed **Shikha Mishra** as Senior Advisor in the Founder’s Office. A seasoned communications professional with over two decades of experience, she will work closely with the leadership to plan and execute key messaging strategies, strengthen media relations, and oversee special initiatives. Shikha was one of the founding members of Think Strawberries and has since held

leadership roles across PR, marketing, business development, and corporate communications.



Fortune Ranjit Vihar, Amritsar

Fortune Hotels has appointed **Anurag Bharadwaj** as General Manager of Fortune Ranjit Vihar, Amritsar. An accomplished hospitality professional with over 15 years of experience, Anurag is widely regarded for his strategic vision, operational expertise, and commitment to service excellence. In his new role, he will oversee the hotel’s operations, focusing on

delivering exceptional guest experiences, enhancing team performance, and driving the property’s growth and overall business performance.



BESydney

Business Events Sydney (BESydney) has appointed **Devanshi Parikh** as Business Development Manager – India, reinforcing its commitment to the market. With over 20 years of experience in travel and tourism sales and marketing, she will be based at the Destination NSW (DNSW) Mumbai office. She will initially focus on MICE partnerships and later expand her role to support both leisure travel and business

events strategies, reflecting the synergy between the two sectors.



Amilla Maldives

Amilla Maldives has appointed **Gaurav Makhijani** as Director of Sales, bringing over 14 years of experience in luxury hospitality. His previous roles at leading Maldivian resorts, including Kuda Villingili, The OZEN Collection, and Jumeirah Maldives, have honed his strategic and relationship-driven sales approach. In his new role, Gaurav will oversee the resort’s sales initiatives, working closely

with partners to drive business growth and brand visibility.

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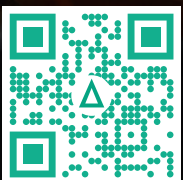
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