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# Editor's Letter

If you're obsessed with travel like myself, which I tend to believe most certainly the readers of this magazine are, I would bet that a good share of your break would be devoted towards R&D, curating that perfect itinerary for whatever corner of the planet you set your sights and GPS upon next. And as the world continues to open up more, the ability to travel again in search of meaningful connections with people and places feels like one of the greatest gifts bestowed upon us. Every issue of Travel is special, every milestone we achieve is special, because of the constant inspiration derived from our readers and stakeholders.

It's that time again, the most exhilarating time of the year for the travel industry as we're all set to cover KTM, ATM & SATTE - that's right! The three upcoming mega events of the travel industry this May. Our correspondents/writers report back from far-flung corners of the globe on the exceptional experiences they've zeroed-in for this month. This issue is full of stories showcasing how, when people work together, it can result in building a better world. Since it's all about the mix, this month we've balanced the timely and the timeless in destinations and travel ideas, from a cutting-edge Emirate, Dubai to the backwaters of Kerala. Tourism might be new to some destinations but there are a few destinations that symbolise travel. Jammu & Kashmir certainly tops this list. It's an ancient tourist destination and why not..



'Agar firdaus bar roo-e zameen ast,  
Hameen ast-o hameen ast-o hameen ast.'

While compiling this issue of Travel Turtle, it made me ponder how much I was missing vacations. We sincerely trust that you will have as much pleasure reading this edition of Travel Turtle as we enjoyed compiling this for you, our dear readers. Do share your feedback at [Bharti@travelturtle.world](mailto:Bharti@travelturtle.world).

Happy Reading!



**Bharti Sharma**  
Editor

   : [travelturtlemag](https://www.instagram.com/travelturtlemag)

# Travel Turtle Team

Publisher: **Harish Chandra Uniyal**  
Editor: **Bharti Sharma**  
Executive Director: **Sudipta Saha**



Feature Writer: **Tripti Jain**  
Contributing Editors:  
**Saloni Bhatia**  
**Sharmistha Shadukhan**  
**Misbaah Mansuri**  
**Shrinidhi Hande**

Marketing: **Tejas Sharma**

Art Director: **Pankti Anjaria**  
Legal Consultant: **Aditya Singh**  
Photographer: **Abhishek**  
Circulation: **Pradeep Kumar**  
Accounts: **Dinesh Kumar**

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PRESENTS

# TIMELESS WEDDINGS

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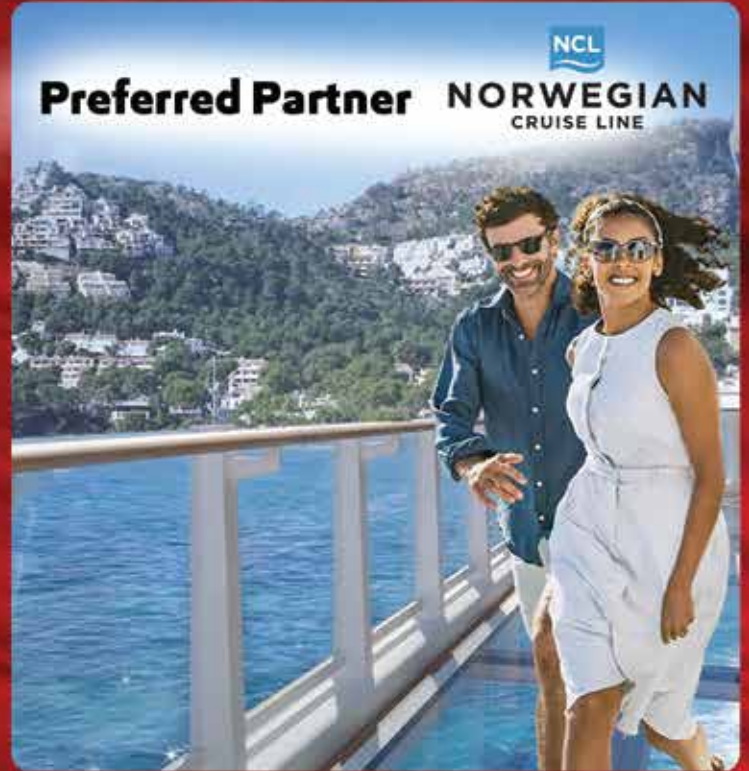
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### **EUROPE DMC**

[info@yorkerdmc.com](mailto:info@yorkerdmc.com)



### **SINGAPORE DMC**

[ops17@yorkerindia.com](mailto:ops17@yorkerindia.com)



### **MALAYSIA DMC**

[ops6@yorkerindia.com](mailto:ops6@yorkerindia.com)



### **THAILAND DMC**

[thai@yorkerindia.com](mailto:thai@yorkerindia.com)



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## ***La Vie Hotels & Resorts expands its presence in Sri Lanka with three key Radisson Hotel signings***



La Vie Hotels & Resorts, one of Asia Pacific's leading and fastest-growing independent hotel management companies, has signed a landmark deal with Radisson Hotel Group and Sino Lanka Group to operate three hotels in Sri Lanka. This major new agreement with Radisson Hotel Group will see the company launch an upper-upscale Radisson Blu resort on the shores of the Indian Ocean near Galle, and two upscale Radisson hotels in Colombo – one in the heart of the country's capital city and the other in Kandy, the cultural heart of the island. The three new properties will start to welcome guests following their rebrand to Radisson Blu and Radisson properties after a substantial refurbishment investment which will significantly uplift the properties to bring them in line with Radisson Hotel Group's high standards.

This latest announcement from La Vie Hotels & Resorts comes off the back of the group's successful launch of Quality Resort & Spa Patong Beach on 27 March 2022, following a multi-million dollar refurbishment and franchise agreement with Choice Hotels.

## ***GNTO organises GTM in Oberammergau and the Zugspitz Region for the first time after two years***

From May 1-3, 2022, top representatives of the international travel industry and media landscape from 34 countries will come to Oberammergau to learn about the latest trends, developments and tourism products in Germany and get to know the region at the Germany Travel Mart™ (GTM). The focus is on business deals for the coming year. The GTM is the most important sales event for incoming tourism in Germany and is organized annually by the German National Tourist Board (GNTB) in cooperation with changing partners as a Green Meeting.

At the heart of the GTM are two workshop days, where this year 164 companies from the German tourism industry will present the diversity and quality of their services in incoming tourism to over 200 buyers from the international travel industry and negotiate business deals. For the approx. 90 international media representatives an extensive information program is planned with emphasis on topics nature, culture, active, health as well as tradition and customs. The official opening of the GTM will take place at the Oberammergau Passion Theater shortly before the start of the 42nd Passion Play. The following day, GTM participants are invited to an evening event at the Festspielhaus below Neuschwanstein Castle.



## ***Outrigger is first hospitality company to Pursue Green Seal Certification in Mauritius, Fiji and Hawaii***

Outrigger Hospitality Group has recently announced that it is moving forward with the Green Seal certification process at its beach resorts in Mauritius and Fiji and at seven of its owned and/or managed properties in Hawaii.

With Mauritius and Fiji, Outrigger is the first hospitality brand to pursue the certification outside of the United States. It is currently the only hotel company in Hawaii committed to Green Seal certification. Outrigger anticipates the properties being Green Seal certified before the end of 2022.

The 100% Green Seal designation will further solidify Outrigger's allegiance to meeting the highest standards of protecting the health and environment for its guests and hosts. For more than 30 years, the global non-profit Green Seal has helped to accelerate the market adoption of safer, more sustainable products and services. Its certification is based on a rigorous, independent evaluation of hotel features, operations and processes.





## ***Jazeera Airways announces KD3.8 million in net profit in first quarter 2022***

Jazeera Airways has announced a net profit of KD3.8 million for the first quarter (Q1) of 2022, compared to a net loss of KD5.2 million in the first quarter of 2021. Total revenue for the quarter reached KD35.7 million, up 339.2%, while operating profit stood at KD5.3 million, up 199.3%. These record earnings were supported by close to sixfold increase in number of passengers with restrictions at Kuwait International Airport being eased and travel capacity gradually increased to levels near to the pre-pandemic period. Similarly, load factor reached 75.2%, an increase of 28.7%.

Commenting on the results, Jazeera Airways Chairman, Marwan Boodai said: "The gradual return of travel capacity at Kuwait International Airport since the second half of last year as well as the lifting of travel restrictions worldwide have shown that there is indeed a latent and strong appetite for travel. Jazeera has focused in the first quarter on expanding its services and capacity in preparation of the launch of new tourist and high demand destinations during the year, all supported with a strong financial position and a cautious strategy to mitigate the risks of recent geopolitical developments."



## ***IATO appeals to the Hon'ble Prime Minister to help the Tourism Industry for revival of inbound tourism to India***

Rajiv Mehra, President, Indian Association of Tour Operators has appealed to the Hon'ble Prime Minister in a letter sent to him yesterday to help the tourism industry for revival of inbound tourism to India.

In his letter written to the Hon'ble Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Mehra, President IATO has mentioned that with the restoration of Tourist Visa/e-Tourist Visa and resumption of scheduled international flight operation after a gap of over two years, we are trying our level best to revive inbound tourism to India but the situation does not seem to be very favourable as there is no promotional and marketing activities taking place in overseas markets by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. Promotion and marketing of Indian tourism is very important at this stage as we have to start from scratch. In comparison all other countries like Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Dubai are aggressively marketing tourism to revive tourism to their countries and are attracting foreign tourists by luring them with attractive packages.

Mr. Mehra has specifically mentioned that for revival of inbound tourism to India, we need to tell to the world that India is safe to travel and ready to welcome the foreign tourists. Also we need to highlight that India is the only country where highest number of citizens are double vaccinated. We need to project this at every platform and give a wide publicity.

## ***ATM returns to Dubai with 1,500 exhibitors, representatives from 112 destinations, and an anticipated 20,000 attendees***

Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2022 is ready to welcome the world to the UAE from Monday 9 to Thursday 12 May, playing host to 1,500 exhibitors, representatives from 112 global destinations, and an anticipated 20,000 attendees. The live show will be followed by ATM Virtual, which will run from Tuesday 17 to Wednesday 18 May.

Taking place at Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) in collaboration with Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism (DET), the 29th edition of ATM will form an essential part of the UAE's annual Arabian Travel Week. In keeping with this year's theme of 'The future of international travel and tourism', ATM 2022 will feature a huge selection of sessions and events, enabling industry professionals from around the world to discuss current trends and explore long-term opportunities within the fields of travel, transportation, tourism, hospitality, events, attractions and more.

Kerry Prince, Chief Growth Officer, RX said: "Business travel expenditure in the Middle East is forecast to rise by 32% this year, according to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) and these figures underscore the positive sentiment, that we've experienced throughout the region."



**Singapore invites Indian families to reimagine their summer holiday vacations with exclusive promotions**



With summer family vacation season commencing across India, the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) and Singapore Airlines along with their destination partners, have announced an exclusive campaign to welcome back Indian families to the popular island destination– “Enjoy Your Family Times Now in Singapore”. The destination, a perennial favourite amongst Indian travellers, presents a host of reimagined family experiences for the school holiday season. India has been a top source market for visitor arrivals into Singapore and family travel has featured highly as an audience segment. With the easing of travel restrictions to near pre-Covid situation, fully vaccinated travellers can enjoy quarantine -free travel to Singapore by presenting a negative pre -departure test upon arrival into the destination. The Covid safety protocols have also been relaxed significantly in the city. The ease of travel to and experience within Singapore has led to a surge in travel interest to Singapore during the summer. The ‘Family Times Now’ campaign has been curated keeping in mind the traditional travel peak during school holidays and will run from mid-April to June 30, 2022. Indian family travellers can enjoy Singapore’s reimagined experiences with an exclusive deal of 50 per cent off airfares, exclusively on Singapore Airlines, for children below 12 years of age. The promotion also includes award-winning Singapore attraction partners such as Sentosa Development Corporation, Resorts World Sentosa, Gardens by the Bay, Mandai Wildlife Group, Marina Bay Sands, Jewel Changi Airport and travel experiences platform Pelago, making this summer season a great time to visit Singapore with the family.

**Tourism Malaysia organises first roadshow in India after border reopens**

Malaysia has finally lifted sanctions on its border on 1st April 2022, marking the end of travelling restrictions into the country. Leveraging this new development, Tourism Malaysia has decided to embark on its first roadshow to six major cities in India from 18th until 30th April 2022, after more than two years of hiatus. The roadshow kicks off in the city of Delhi, followed by Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, and Chennai. The mission is headed by Mr. Manoharan Periasamy, Senior Director of the International Promotion Division (Asia & Africa) together with Malaysia’s tourism fraternity which consists of three (3) Malaysia-based airlines, 22 travel agents, four (4) hoteliers, and four (4) product owners.

India remains and has been one of the top market sources for Malaysia and has contributed 735,309 arrivals (+22 per cent) in 2019. Apart from its objective to instill confidence among Indians to feel safe to visit Malaysia once again, the roadshow aims to provide a platform for the industry community to bounce back and steer the tourism sector back to its former glory, if not better. “This is the right time to be back in India, and planning for this roadshow is very opportune. The resumption of scheduled international flights from India coincides with the reopening of Malaysia’s international borders,” said Mr. Manoharan.



**Thailand to scrap on-arrival COVID tests from May**

Thailand has removed the requirement for arrivals vaccinated against COVID-19 to undergo a test and brief quarantine on arrival. The latest measure is to revive its battered tourism industry. Visitors are encouraged to perform antigen self-tests during their stay, instead of the current ‘Test & Go’ scheme, where arrivals must isolate in a hotel while awaiting the result of a test on arrival. The new measure follows the removal last month of a pre-departure test requirement.

Still required for visitors, however, is online travel clearance for which proof of vaccination and insurance must be presented. The “Thailand Pass” has long been a source of frustration over the time taken to be granted approval. Other rules eased on Friday include reducing the required insurance coverage to \$10,000 and granting entry to unvaccinated visitors, providing they show a negative pre-departure polymerase chain reaction (PCR) result.



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# Voluntourism

## The most humanitarian form of tourism

It is estimated that every year, approximately 1.6 million people volunteer abroad globally. For some travellers, volunteering abroad is undertaken simply as a 'rite of passage' or a 'must-do experience' for their life-long bucket list and for others, well we're about to find out!

- **Bharti Sharma**





The arena is simple. Instead of two weeks sipping pina colodas in the comforts of an exotic location, there are a set of travellers who put their money to better use and volunteer labour to a Third World charity or an aid agency. The idea oozes with virtue. And when something sounds so good, we have to find out what real value these volunteer tourists offer their hosts.

## Understanding power dynamics

Quite literally, travel that integrates vacation and volunteering is voluntourism. But, let's not brand this experience boring or pure volunteer, these trips are generally short planned excursions involving volunteer work with adequate provisions of leisure time. They also typically focus more on the experience of participants, versus the actual impact they leave on the community in need. Imagine all the thrill of a vacation, now top that up with a humanitarian experience of volunteering with an organisation, or a cause, an issue by investing only a fraction of your time and energy, which would actually make a difference to communities around the world. I say, a perfect recipe of a memorable and unique vacation that no amount of money can buy. For a better understanding: a week-long trip assisting at a school for the underprivileged paired with a safari in the jungles of Ranthambore, this would count as voluntourism.

## Better yourself in the process

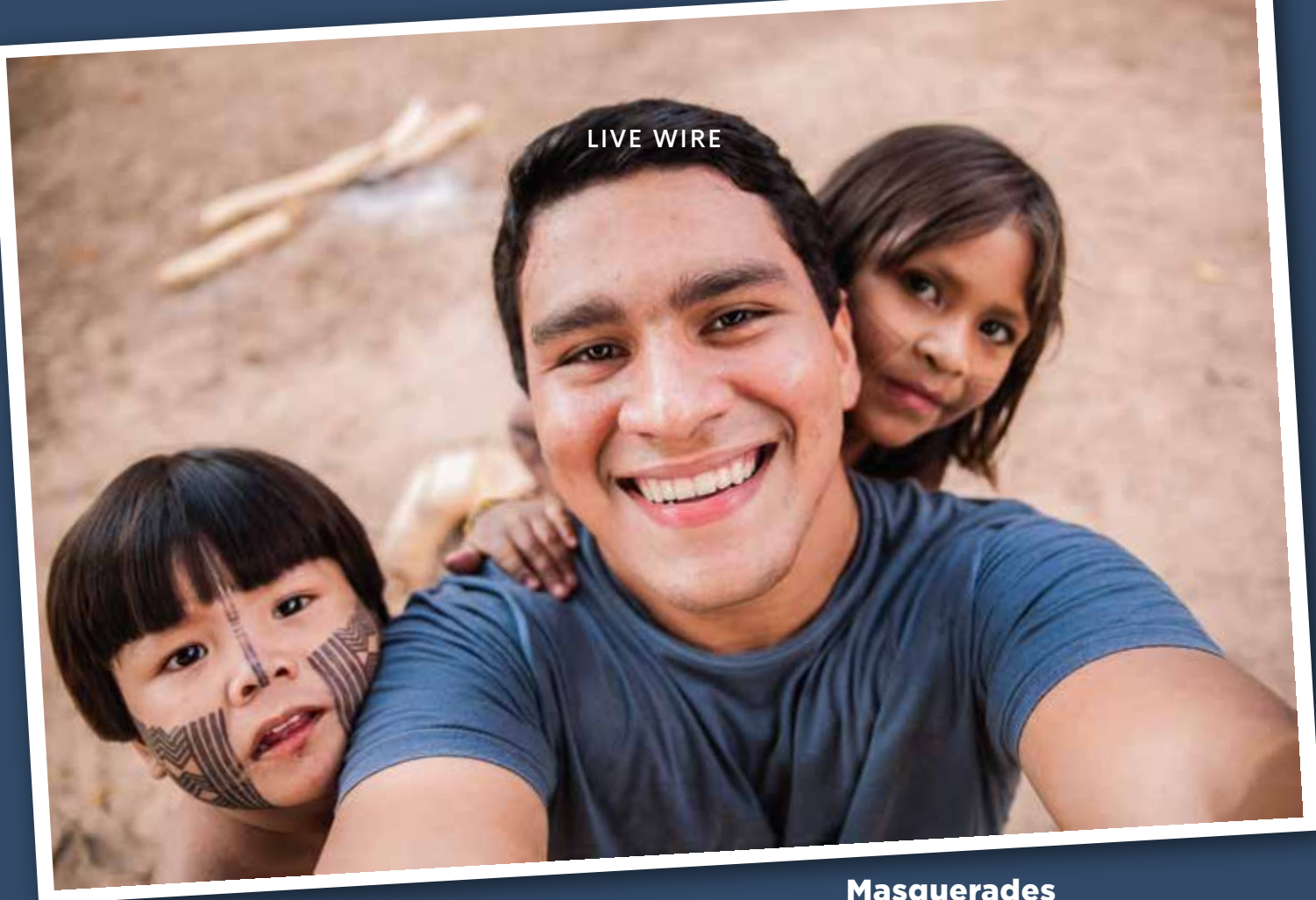
This branch of tourism is becoming increasingly popular around the world. Some would call it similar to 'eco-tourism', and they won't be entirely wrong in their argument. It does hold resemblance with eco-tourism in its ethos of improving lives but unlike eco-tourism, voluntourism is directed towards helping other people rather than helping the environment. An integral idea behind traveling abroad involves

discovering new places, experiencing a foreign culture, learning about people of different ethnic backgrounds and voluntourism gives tourists a chance to experience all of this as a byproduct of the role of volunteer work overseas. The feeling you experience on immersing yourself in another world, doing humanitarian work and helping out people who are in need, transforms the time spent in volunteer work into a stimulating holiday experience.

## Value Change and Changed Consciousness

Volunteering for work overseas is completely different from the stereotypical idea of a vacation in more ways than one. When tourists set on a vacation lined with relaxation and sightseeing activities, what do they exactly bring back with them? Of course, pictures and postcards but do they really engage with the people of that destination, form any bonds with them as human beings, get a glimpse of their culture and their lives during their time there? If the answer to all of the above questions is no, then that vacation is artificial in its basic essence. In a way, it would be like a long visit to a human gallery to see people and things, not actually living and being with people of a different country and creating bonds. Voluntourism eliminates this artificial element of a vacation and prompts you to actually understand the destination and its people and create memories and human bonds in the process that would last a lifetime. Not only that, volunteer travel is a more sustainable way of travel as it diverges from the conventional extravagant vacation. This makes your trip to another country worth much more than 'just a fun' vacation.





## Cultural Immersion

It is an established fact that voluntourism has proved to be a life-changing experience for many. It won't be wrong to say that once you experience this aspect of vacationing, traveling without a purpose would feel nothing but dull. Voluntourism opens up a new dimension of travel for you, an opportunity to immerse yourself in new cultures and aid projects that will directly benefit local communities. In the process, you will end up exploring a new side of yourself, assisting you to spark purpose and self-fulfilment. Culturally, it awakens a fresh perspective of the world beyond you, beyond your people, giving you an intimate view of the people of other communities, their culture, their traditions, their cuisine and their way of life. But, this comes with an advisory. This segment requires you to be cautious of your outlook towards other ethnicities, the rope must be trod upon

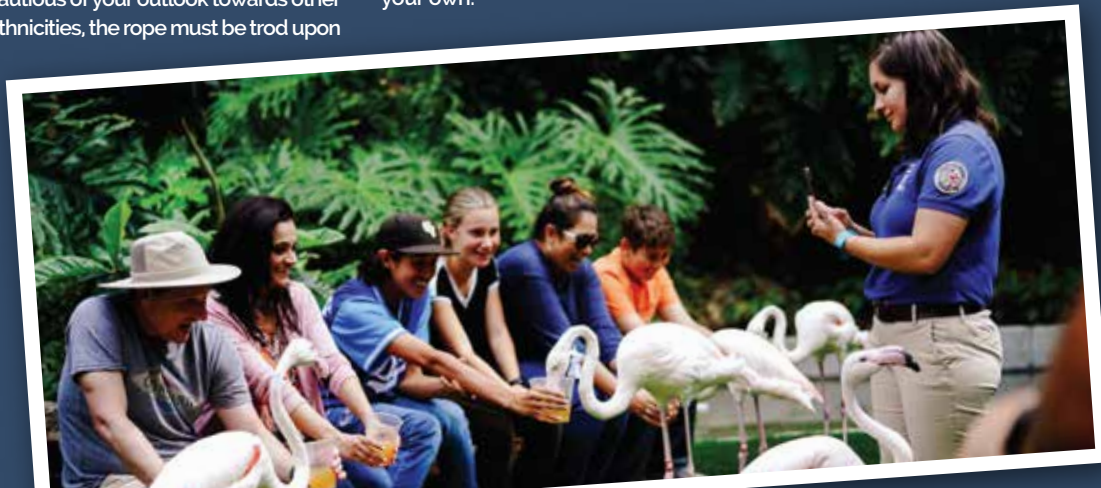
with an open mind to avoid looking down upon other cultures as 'inferior'.

## With Blurred Boundaries

The world has transformed into a global village, which signifies blurring of international boundaries in terms of trade and commerce. But in reality, these boundaries actually fade away when the people of different countries come together and help each other to make each other's lives better. Giving money and gifts to strangers on your trip abroad never actually helps anyone, no matter the affection and best intentions intended by the bearer. On the other hand, volunteering abroad is rewarding, and a worthwhile activity to indulge in. The efforts and dedication you put in to bring change in the world will eventually touch scores of lives - and in the process, your own.

## Masquerades

Voluntourism is an outgrowth of the ecotourism movement of the 1990s. According to Pippa Biddle, author of a forthcoming book on voluntourism, travellers rebelled against package trips and resorts and wanted a more authentic experience - and they were willing to pay for it. Many charities in developing countries run such programmes and collect fees from volunteers. It used to be if you wanted to volunteer abroad, you wrote letters to overseas contacts. Now you can buy a volunteer experience with a few clicks. The newest trend is corporations sending employees to volunteer. It's a team-building exercise and associates the brand with good work. The hope of Life, the Christian mission in Guatemala, has built an executive conference centre for just this purpose.





## Gaze from a distance

Like any other noble concept, there is a need for caution and introspection in this vertical too. There is no denying the fact that the concept of Voluntourism is charged by noble sentiments, however, it is not untouched by irrational economics. Organisations take advantage of the concept by offering volunteers the chance to dig wells, build schools and carry out other construction projects in poor villages. The perverse economics comes into play when you understand why it is done in this manner; The charity would require to hire locals for these unskilled chores on a paid basis, ending up exhausting money, but by using the volunteers they not only save the money which would erstwhile pay off the locals, but instead earn money from the volunteers who pay up for being there. But the last thing a poverty-stricken village needs is imported unskilled labour. People in these remote, undeveloped areas are desperate for jobs. Public works serve the community better and last longer when locals do them. Besides, long-term change happens when people learn to solve their own problems, rather than others solving it for them.

## The modern tourist is able to embody encounters

The above-mentioned scenario is an eye-opener but it is not incessantly practiced so far because most often, volunteers are not taking jobs from locals. They are in fact providing a service that would otherwise not be undertaken, as it would amount to financial burden. This is often the case when volunteers come to teach English. It facilitates the children to learn English without the financial burden of paying for a qualified teacher, which is otherwise unaffordable for the village school. However, the best scenario for supporting this model would be to compliment the volunteer's time with certain financial assistance, enabling the school to hire a permanent local English teacher. The ultimate goal of a volunteer program should be

to facilitate financial support for local projects ensuring the village schools have permanent staff, which can work with the volunteers rather than being replaced by them. This is how the ideal voluntourism model would function for betterment of the communities.

Voluntourism is not without flaws but it has its benefits and can make a real, positive impact on communities and projects when done right. Voluntourism is recast as 'transformational tourism', with visitors getting rewarded by attaining a better understanding of people's lives, and the way the economics of charity work. By all means, visit people who need help, touch their lives and make yours meaningful!





*Where soul  
meets nature-*  
*jammu*  
*&*  
*kashmir*

Nestled between snow-laden mountains and bewitching green pastures, Jammu and Kashmir is a mecca of natural beauty. The heavenly meadows with picturesque alpines create a canopy of nature.

- Bharti Sharma





The crown jewel of India, Jammu and Kashmir is a paradise on Earth. The most talked about and enchanting Union Territory of India is a home to mesmerising forests and culture which is still to be explored. Himalayan range overlooking frozen lakes and gardens blooming with colourful flowers. This is a common sight in this Union Territory, where the moment you step out of the airport, you will feel a warm hug of the scenic panoramas around you. The tourism department of Jammu and Kashmir makes sure to welcome tourists and travellers from across the world and indulge them in a reverie of the god gifted phenomenon of the destination.

Wandering what heaven must look like, visit Jammu and Kashmir. The winters may be challenging in Jammu and Kashmir but are mesmerising and dreamy at the same time. You will fall in love with the destination that remains covered under a blanket of snow all through the winter season. Each place in the state is known for its unique beauty.

### *Cruising through mountains*

Sitting like a crown in India, Jammu and Kashmir can be visited any time of the year. The tourism board has come up with the most convenient ways for travellers to visit the breath-taking state. Easy flights and connectivity have made it a cakewalk for travellers to pack up their bags and explore different cities and their authenticity. When travelling through Jammu and Kashmir you will find the route being full of Chinar, Pine trees, Deodars, Amaltas, and Kikar trees, with the majestic mountain ranges flanking around.

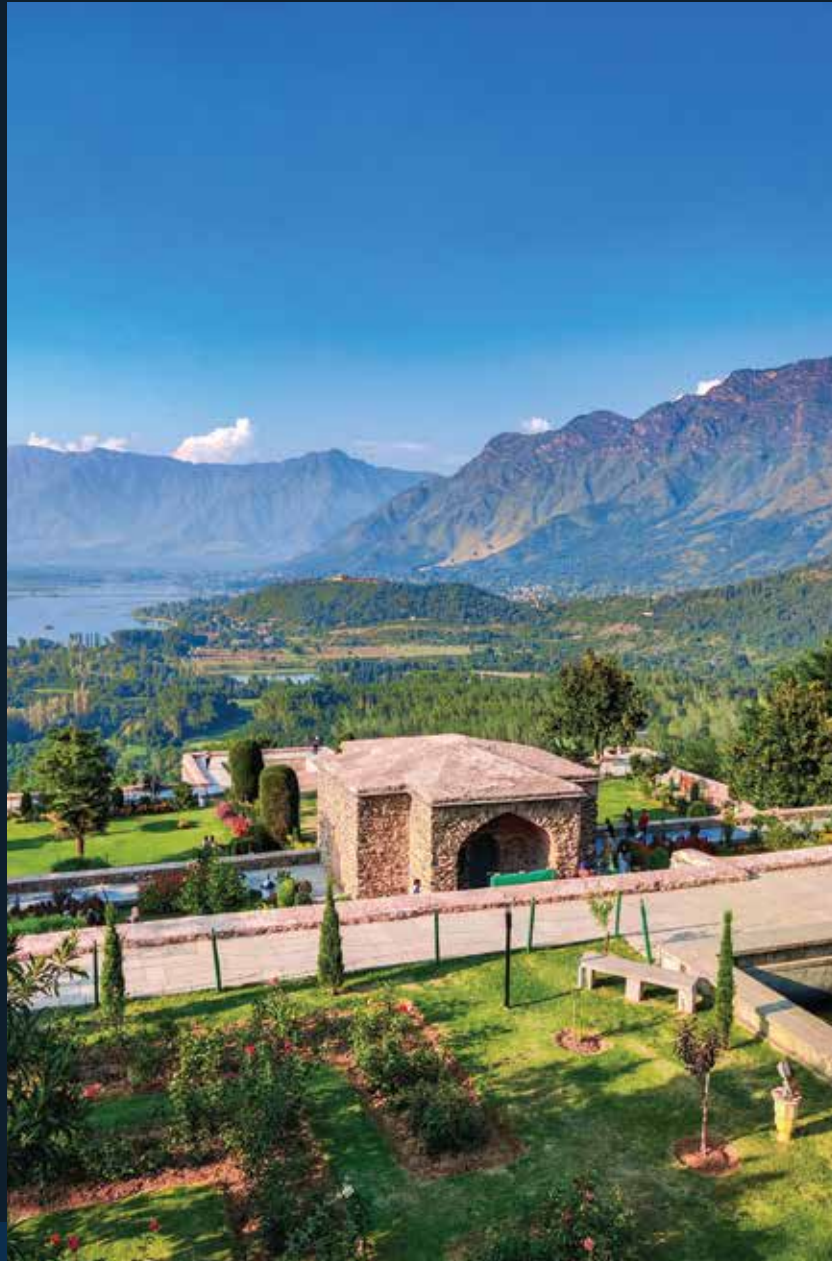
### *Cities that breathe life!*

When we think of Jammu and Kashmir, we think of dancing in the

snow clasped mountains of Gulmarg, visiting the famous tulip garden in the valley of Srinagar, the pilgrimage journey to Vaishno Devi and Amarnath. Not to forget a glimpse of the historical monuments like Amar Mahal Palace in Jammu or Pari Mahal of Srinagar. Jammu and Kashmir offer you a Rolodex of sightseeing and encountering nature like never before. While you are on a trip to Jammu and Kashmir, you can consider visiting Patnitop which is in the Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir. Famous for the Indo-French collaborated ropeway in mountain infrastructure, the Skyview Patnitop is India's highest ropeway. Located on the banks of the Liddar River, Pahalgam is a favourite destination for adventure lovers. Fishing, trekking, and hiking are some of the activities that you can give a try when visiting this gorgeous city.

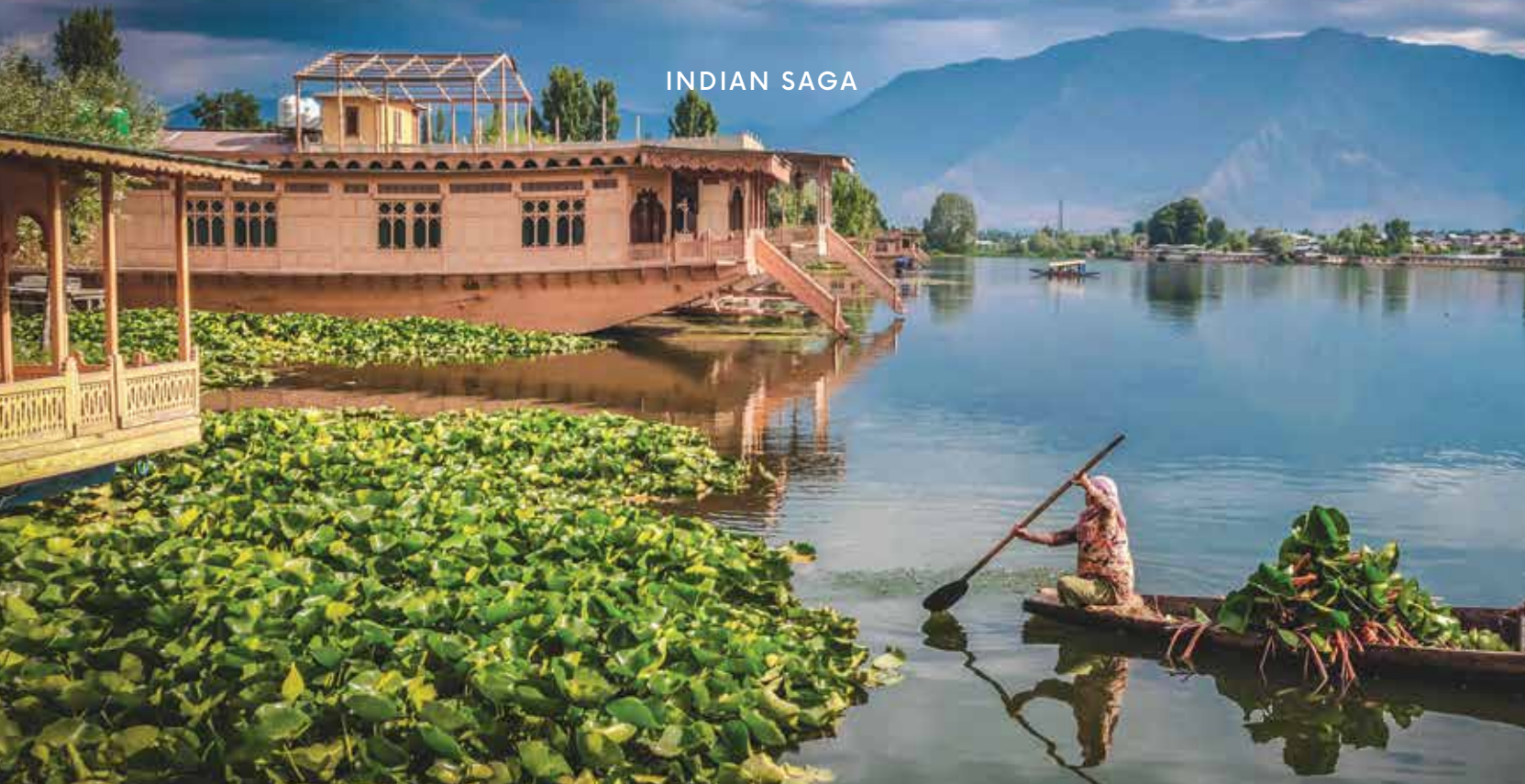
### *Indulge yourself in activities*

Apart from being a picturesque charmer, Kashmir has always been a favourite tourist spot in India for Golf Lovers. Kashmir, with the kind of weather and the scenic beauty, is a perfect location for a sport like Golf. The government of Kashmir has come up with a 'Golf Development Authority' to enhance the Golfing experience and promote Kashmir through the eyes of Golfers. Talking about the gorgeous green pastures, how we can forget the snow-laden mountains for skiing your hearts out, it has to be a must on the bucket list. Tumbling through ice and making a snowman during the winter season is like a treat for the tourists. The gondola ride in Gulmarg should be a must in the itinerary. Cruising through the dal lake's beautifully lit Shikaras is something you just cannot miss. If we have learned anything from movies, it is to capture this beautiful moment and frame it for life.



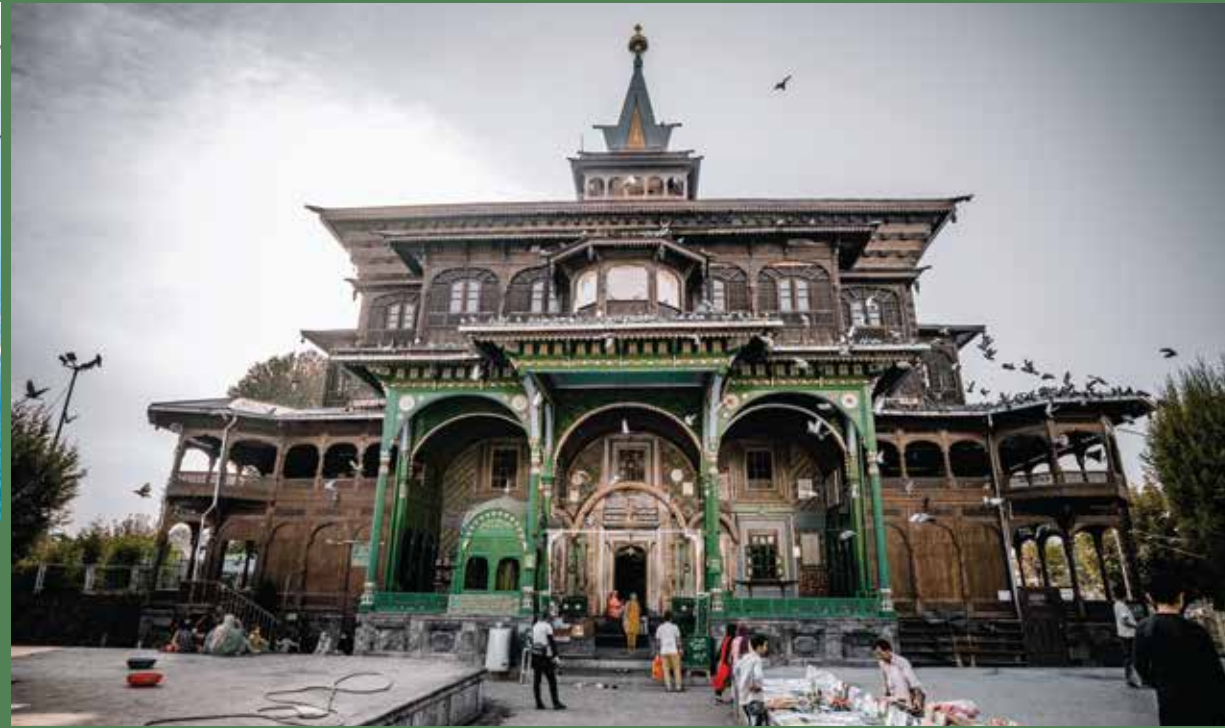


## INDIAN SAGA



### *The new wave of tourism*

When it comes to hospitality and creating an experience for the travellers the people of Jammu and Kashmir are the warmest. Post pandemic the tourism board is all set to invite tourists and explorers to experience the hidden treasures of Jammu and Kashmir. The state was already home to the honeymooners, but now it is rapidly becoming a destination for weddings with the dreamiest view ever. The government is focusing on rebranding the state as not only the most bewitching place on Earth but also a destination to be explored by travellers with hotels overlooking the lakes and mountains that offer class apart services. Also promoting the



destination for MICE, where people can indulge their nerves to some heart to heart with the nature. The place is not only suitable for scenic beauty lovers, but also trekkers and campers looking for a fun rendezvous with the mountains.

### *Yummy in my tummy*

Jammu and Kashmir is not just a paradise for scenic beauty but also the foodies. Kashmiri cuisine is an experience that you cannot miss, with some authentic dishes like Rogan Josh, Dum Olav, Modur

Pulao, Goshtaba, and Yakhni Lamb curry. These local delicacies will take you through a flavourful journey of a lifetime. You can find Mughal and Arab influences in the dishes. The influence of the Dogra culture can be spotted predominantly in the region of Jammu, where the people offer dogri dishes like Ambal, Khatta Meat, Khulthein di dal and speak the Dogri language. Kashmiri food is a delectable experience that will have you drooling over the variety of vegetarian and non-vegetarian selections of dishes.





## INDIAN SAGA

There is a preconceived notion amongst people, that Jammu and Kashmir are unsafe because of the political activities, but the moment you step into this heaven on Earth, you can see all the notions being washed away. Every village and town is like a dream for a traveller, opening them to blissful moments for creating memories for a lifetime.

*Make a note!*

- The longest railway tunnel in India is situated in Jammu and Kashmir.
- Jammu and Kashmir mostly have four seasons – spring, summer, autumn and winter.
- There is a place named Drass, which is the coldest inhabited place in India.
- Gulmarg Gondola is one of the largest ropeways in India.
- Jammu and Kashmir have two capitals. Srinagar is the summer capital of the state and Jammu is the winter capital of the state.





Dr G.N Itoo,  
Director,  
Tourism Kashmir

# Jammu & Kashmir witnesses record levels of tourism

The white expanse of snow-covered peaks, picturesque valleys, winding roads exuding magical and serene beauty, looks like an illustration of heaven, right? Well, not entirely wrong, touted as 'Heaven on Earth', this is a glimpse of Jammu & Kashmir for you. Dr G.N Itoo, Director, Tourism Kashmir is dedicated to maximizing travel and tourism opportunities throughout the UT, building economic prosperity and promoting its safe representation across the globe.

- Bharti Sharma

The enticing and encouraging tourism policy of the Jammu and Kashmir government and initiatives of the tourism board have been attracting investors from across India and abroad in volumes. They are now eyeing towards setting up new hotels, resorts, and other hospitality infrastructure across the region in the near future. J&K is a unique destination that has great tourism potential rooted in its culture, history, the spell-bounding geography, traditions and the warmth of the people of Jammu & Kashmir. It is undoubtedly one of the most anticipated tourist destinations in India that not only satiates your wanderlust but creates an urge to explore more of this paradise.

## Tourism spike in the valley

Since the onset of the pandemic, Jammu & Kashmir Tourism Department has been focused on supporting tourism businesses, with the ultimate goal of safely bringing the industry back on track, facilitating the significant number of jobs and economic impact it creates. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the tourist arrivals in Kashmir touched a ten-year high this year after more than 340,000 tourists visited the paradise since January. Understand the rush by the fact that Kashmir's Tulip Garden located at the foothills of the Zabarwan

range in Srinagar alone received 2 lakh visitors within just 10 days of opening for the season. "As the visitor numbers in 2022 have been growing at a very encouraging pace since January, we have rolled out campaigns in key visitor markets aimed at different segments of tourists. We also continue to engage the travel trade, meeting planners and media, to ensure Jammu & Kashmir tops the preference list of travellers and stakeholders. We plan to organize roadshows in different cities to educate the potential agents about the destination," shares Dr. Itoo.

## Transformative experiences with genuine cultural immersion

The government has vigilantly selected 75 new destinations in J&K and extreme measures are being taken to promote these destinations. Shedding more light on the initiative, Dr. Itoo shares, "All of these 75 destinations have well-established connectivity to reach several sought-after destinations such as Bangas, Doodhpatri, Doda, and many others where tourism has a strong footprint. In addition, the government is also in talks with cab aggregators to initiate their services throughout these destinations to provide the tourists with the facilities that they are accustomed to in their respective cities. Our main aim is to preserve the authentic spirit of these places and contribute to local small businesses and community development through tourism."

## Prioritising responsible, eco-friendly and socially conscious tourism

Keeping pace with the industry trends and dynamic requirements of the travellers seems to be catching the eye of the J&K tourism department. Alongside, responsible and eco-friendly tourism initiatives are also being undertaken to preserve the ethos of the destination, and at the same time appeal to the preferences of the travellers. Dr. Itoo elaborates, "Along with this, under the 'Mission Youth' initiative, we intend to bring 80 villages to the forefront of tourism. The soul of each village, unique on its own, will serve as the USP to promote tourism. The energetic and talented youth of the villages will not only get employment but also will project themselves as the native ambassadors of tourism. They will focus on ensuring the availability of good homestays and hotels for enhancing the overall tourist experience and making it more comfortable and memorable."

## Greater sustainability and inclusivity

J&K has been the most traditional and adored tourism destination in India for a while now, with its incredible biodiversity, magnificent landscapes and natural beauty, intriguing architecture, enticing activities and a wide variety of adventure experiences, it is loaded with tourism offerings and

experiences that are capable of attracting any tourist to the heaven on earth. Dr. Itoo says, "We strongly believe that our recent tourist arrivals are due to the unified vision we share with our stakeholders. While we aim to place J&K among the most successful tourism destinations in the country, it is now more important than ever to keep the economic and social advantages of tourism intact, while protecting our natural, historical, cultural and social environment in the process. Thus, we plan to increase the spectrum of activities for tourists and various destinations and give a push to the adventure tourism vertical in the UT."

## Safe, Healthy and Authentic Travel

The record-breaking tourist arrivals received by the UT during the winters, attracted by the blanket of snow in Gulmarg, Srinagar, Pahalgam, Patnitop, Natha Top, Sonmarg and Doodhpatri can be credited to the positive measures initiated by the department for the revival of the tourism sector. Apart from the established destinations in the circuit, along with the one quickly picking pace, Jammu & Kashmir has a lot more in store in the form of pilgrimage and adventure tourism, arrivals centered upon events and festivals, and regional locations for the famous Kashmiri art and craft.

The rush of tourists that is being witnessed currently is already buoying up the tourism economy of the paradise on earth. Rest assured, J&K will be on the circuit offering unforgettable experiences and opportunities to take another look at this breathtaking destination.





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## THE MAN-MADE CITY OF DREAMS

# DUBAI

The treasure trove of the United Arab Emirates, a city with skyrocketing architectural marvels infused with an authentic luxury experience.

- Tripti Jain





Situated on the Persian Gulf coast of the United Arab Emirates, Dubai is the city reaching for the stars. The city that was discovered in the 18th century soon started shaping into one of the most exquisite and exotic destinations for travelers. With a beautiful skyline and skyscrapers shooting for the stars, quite literally, Dubai flaunts architectural marvels that blow your mind. A little village turning into a cosmopolitan metropolis is the man-made city of dreams. Definitely, on every traveler's bucket list, the city offers luxury with hints of cultural flavors.

The United Arab Emirates' largest city is a distinct fusion of Bedouin heritage and an ultra-modern culture all its own. Apart from the glitz and glam, this multifaceted city is home to a rich culture and ancient traditions that will exceed all your expectations and bless you with an experience of a lifetime. With markets that offer specialties from all over the world along with authentic cuisine grabbing your attention every time you visit. This is the city that will call you back.

## Kingdom of Wealth

The dynamic city with a new wave of experience on every corner is the hub of discovery and architecture. Where innovation meets culture, Dubai is like a bag full of chocolates that never seem to end. Emerging as a national metropolis, the city is rapidly stepping up the ladder as a hub for business and travel. The emirate offers ATMs dispensing gold and malls that have aquariums. The city of skyscrapers and dunes will take you for a ride of a lifetime. Splendid hotels awaiting to calm your nerves down and restaurants are ready to burst with a concoction of different flavors. The city is a well-equipped home to almost

all kinds of activities. Whether you are looking for a beach to sit back and relax or a bumpy joyride between camels in the desert, you can find an amalgamation of cultures, activities, and cuisines under one roof.

## It's the right time for a trip!

One of the most important things to remember when planning your trip to Dubai is the city's climate which is a desert climate, hot and very arid. The best time to visit Dubai is during the winters, although Dubai's winters are not that long, you can have a marvelous experience cruising through the Persian Gulf and hopping amusement parks on a bright sunny day. The months from November to April are perfect to skim through the day over the desert on a camel and spend the nights overlooking the stars from the highest building in Dubai, The Burj Khalifa. Indulge yourself in some sightseeing and explore the hidden attractions without any hassle as the days are pleasant and the nights have a slight winter chill during these months.







## Fusion city galore

The city flaunts some of the greatest man-made constructions, not to forget the Burj Khalifa, with a total height of 828m and 163 floors. The 21st Century architecture should be on top of the list when visiting Dubai. The city is called a palace of luxury for a reason, with the first 7star hotel in the world, another iconic Dubai building, Burj Al Arab. The luxurious delight is shaped like a sail of a ship, with lavish interiors and magnificent rooms for emperors and the super-rich. Another must on the list has to be the Dubai fountain, which is one of the largest fountains in the world. Equipped with 6000 LED lights, the fountain amazes everyone with water music performances which are creative and lively. Next on the list must be the Palm Islands, the artificial Islands that have some of the richest properties and are shaped like a palm tree with 16 branches.

Apart from the luxury galore, Dubai is also known for its one-of-a-kind amusement parks, to name a few, Wild Wadi Waterpark which takes its theme from the Juha Legend, Atlantis Aquaventure Waterpark dropping towers and high-speed slides, IMG Worlds of Adventure, which is the largest indoor park in the world, etc. Dubai is a fusion of man-made marvels and natural treasure troves including the Bastakiya old town, Dubai Miracle Garden, Jumeriah Beach, Dubai Creek, and spice souk for the ones looking for a more authentic and traditional experience.

Now moving on to new attractions in the city which should directly go on a

mini must list in your itinerary, the Museum of the Future, one of the city's most famous landmarks explores how society could evolve in the coming few decades with immersive theatres and themed attractions. It is like a rocket to the future that provides you with information as well as discovers great ideas. Another record-breaking attraction is Ain Dubai, located on Bluewaters Island, it offers a 360-degree view of the Urban skyline during a 38-minute Journey. Not to forget The Dubai Frame, an architectural landmark in Zabeel Park, which holds the record for the largest frame in the world.

## Indulge your taste buds

Whether you travel to Dubai for business or pleasure, you'll need to recharge with some food. In a city of diverse flavors, ingredients, and spices, eating in Dubai is its reason to visit. The crown jewel of the Arab Emirates is home to multicuisine restaurants. Delicacies cooked by some world-famous chefs and with an amalgamation of authentic souk spices, Dubai has almost everything. Stuffed camel is one of the most daunting dishes, shawarmas almost in every corner of the city, Al Harees a dish made with love for hours. When visiting Dubai, you will find both street and luxurious restaurants depending upon your taste. Some of the most famous food markets with bustling crowds and fragrances can be felt from miles away. Dubai is the city of dreams for a traveller, with almost everything instore.







## Make a note before visiting

- Dubai is the largest city in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- You can find ATMs for gold in Dubai.
- Camel racing is a major sport in Dubai.
- The first seven-star hotel was started in Dubai.
- Arabic coffee is very popular in Dubai.



**In what ways has Dubai developed and advanced the tourism sector in the Emirates?**

Across 2021, and now in 2022, Dubai continues to reap the benefits of the series of measures that were put in place at the outset of the pandemic that saw the city become one of the first destinations in the world to close, then open and remain open, starting with the effective public health campaign to contain the pandemic. As one of the most vaccinated nations in the world with more than 94 per cent of the population vaccinated, we keep safe, open and accessible to all. Dubai has an incredible array of memorable experiences for every explorer. Supporting the city's commitment to always offer something new, unique and world-class to every global traveler, many new attractions including Deep Dive Dubai, Hatta Dome Park and The View at The Palm opened lately. From culture to cuisine, entertainment, and outdoor adventures to beach activities, family-oriented experiences to shopping as well as our iconic festivals like Dubai Shopping Festival and Dubai Fitness Challenge, Dubai offers a great portfolio for travellers. Dubai also continues to launch bold regulatory initiatives, establishing hassle-free entry procedures for business and leisure travellers, as well as long-term engagement with the city, such as the Golden Visa initiative targeting investors, entrepreneurs and specialised talents, and Virtual working and Retire in Dubai Programmes.

**Dubai has supported and established various landmark projects that reflect its cultural heritage and rich history. How do you plan to maintain the great diversity of Dubai's tourism sector?**

Dubai offers a vast variety of experiences from gastronomy and world-class attractions through to state-of-the-art architecture, sports and family adventure, as well culture and heritage, luxury stays and wellness. Innovation and a futuristic approach, along with a blend of rich cultural heritage and history, lies at the helm of Dubai's continuous efforts of diversifying its tourism sector. For instance, the Museum of the Future, one of the latest attractions in Dubai, is

a perfect example of culture blending in with a futuristic approach. The drive to make Dubai the city of the future will be largely through the Dubai 2040 Urban Master Plan, which aims to expand Dubai's offering and place a reimagined focus on enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors to the city, while further consolidating Dubai's reputation as a global destination for business, investment and tourism. In a city renowned for its relentless drive and commitment to breaking new ground, the 2040 Urban Master Plan, which was announced by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, represents one of the largest urban development strategies ever launched by a major global city. Under the plan, Dubai will be further be transformed into a green oasis, with parkland and recreational spaces accounting for 60 per cent of the city's total area by 2040, more than double the allocated space today. The strategy will also help consolidate Dubai's reputation as a leading business and tourism destination. In a move that will further enhance Dubai's status as one of the world's top beach holiday destinations, the Master Plan calls for the total length of public beaches to increase by as much as 400 percent in 2040.

**As Dubai offers innovative products and experiences for all categories of tourists, what are the key segments are you looking at when it comes to India market?**

India has retained its position as the number one source market for Dubai for consecutive years. With the rebound of commercial flights in India, key focuses for the upcoming season include family travellers, FIT and leisure travellers, honeymooners, MICE travel, as well as showcasing our great range of wedding venues for upcoming destination weddings. During the pandemic, Dubai witnessed a surge in luxury travel from India, leading us to further explore and engage with key niche segments, curating tailor-made itineraries offering exclusive experiences and world-class hospitality for the HNI Indians. Dubai was voted the world's no.1 destination for 'City Lovers' and No.



Mr. Bader Ali Habib, Head of Region- South Asia, DTCM

4 destination for 'Food Lovers' in Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice Awards 2022. Also, recently we are thrilled that Dubai has been added to the internationally renowned MICHELIN Guide. Already voted by global travellers as the world's most popular destination in the Tripadvisor Traveller's Choice Awards 2022, this accolade for Dubai is also recognition of our emergence as a global gastronomy hub, inspired by the goal of our visionary leadership to make Dubai the world's most sought-after destination.

**What new initiatives and strategies are in place to boost Dubai's amongst the travel trade in India?**

We have strengthened our outreach to key B2B partners through associating with regional chapters of TAFI, TAAI, and TAAP along with several other trade association entities. We boast an active in-market engagement plan for the Indian trade partners to stay connected and abreast with Dubai's latest offerings. In order to penetrate deeper into the regional markets, our team has been proactively reaching out to tier ii & tier III markets to target prospects for Dubai. Additionally, roadshows and trade dinners have been our key strengths, in addition to our exclusive dedicated helpline with focused WhatsApp Groups to stay connected with all our Indian trade partners.

**What are the top five inbound tourism markets for Dubai? Do you see the dynamics changing post the pandemic?**

Dubai welcomed 7.28 million international overnight visitors in 2021 representing 32 per cent YoY growth, establishing a momentous marker in the global tourism recovery, setting the city firmly on course to achieve sustainable growth on its way to becoming the world's most visited destination, with the top inbound markets for Dubai including India, the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia. The figure underlines the resilience and resurgence of the city's travel and tourism sector. The positive trend is expected to continue throughout 2022 and beyond, under the visionary leadership and guidance of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE and Ruler of Dubai, showing our ability and agility in achieving a remarkable turnaround amid continuing global challenges has cemented Dubai's position as the destination of choice for international travellers. Dubai has evidently become a popular first-choice as a safe tourism destination. As we move forward, we are confident that the momentum will significantly accelerate further to not only attract tourists, but also entrepreneurs, investors and innovators making Dubai a favorable destination for all.





The heart of  
Incredible India

# Relish your holidays with gypsy and tree camping in Madhya Pradesh

- If you are planning for a camping trip to utilise your summer holidays in the lap of nature, "The heart of incredible India"-Madhya Pradesh has something unique for you



Pitching a tent on the ground, sleeping under the stars, having fun with friends and enjoying bonfire with celestial stories, this is what you may have experienced in the past during your camping trip, but what if Madhya Pradesh invite you to experience all these activities in a unique way?

You just need to forget the old-style camping because there is something exciting and better for you in the jungles of Satpura Tiger Reserve (Satpura National Park). Madhya Pradesh Tourism has introduced the newest and most thrilling way to camp out - 'Tree Camping' and 'Gypsy Camping'.

You will also experience stargazing, bonfire, and dusk drive, swimming, riverside jungle trail with bird watching and tribal cuisine with barbeque in Satpura National Park.

One more thing that needs to be added is, with tree and gypsy camping, you should not be worried about the creepy crawlers that might intrude inside your tent at night.

## Take your trip to next level with tree camping

You do not have to find any clear and smooth ground to pitch the tent. All that is required is some big and stable trees and this is it. You can enjoy this camping sitting in your tent just above the water or on a steep terrain.

You just need to choose how far up from the ground you want to hang your tent. You will be able to explore a better view if you choose to set your camp on a height to witness the scenic beauty of Satpura all around.

## Gypsy camping – Night on wheels

Here you are going to experience night on wheels nestled deep in the forest of the Satpura National Park. Away from the hustle and bustle of the city, these camps offer a balanced blend of adventures and calmness. With delights of river side camping and stargazing, this trip would take you in a rollercoaster of so many experiences like campfire just beside a river, witnessing the twinkling sky and talking about the secrets of these dense forests.

## Experience a perfect morning

The locations for camps are thrilling and safe at the same time. This is your choice, whether you want to go for riverside or a valley view or want to fix a meeting with Satpura's tribal culture & jungle.

The highest point in the Satpura range, Dhoopgarh hilltop is a beautiful spot to see spectacular sunsets and sunrises.

Your morning in Satpura would be the best in your life as you will be able to witness the spectacular sunrise with a cup of tea and breakfast in your hands, listening to relaxing nature songs.

## What to carry?

Nothing... You will be given all the required camping gears and equipment along with the tents. So just pack your bag keeping the essential things and head towards Madhya Pradesh for experiencing tree and gypsy camping.

### Gypsy Camping

Pachmarhi - A riverside/ forest campsite in the buffer zone of Satpura tiger reserve.  
Madhai - A forest/ riverside campsite in the buffer zone of Satpura tiger reserve. (Near Denwa Backwater)

### Tree Camping

Pachmarhi - A riverside/ forest campsite in the buffer zone of Satpura tiger reserve (Near Dehariya & Panarpani)

## How to book

**Email:** thegypsycampspachmarhi@gmail.com

**Contact details:** 9205515652/ 8989421281

**Booking platform:** Call/ WhatsApp/Website/Email

**Experiences:** - Stargazing, bonfire, Dusk drive, swimming, riverside jungle trail with bird watching, tribal cuisine with barbeque.

## What is offered?

- Authentic customized jungle experience
- Accommodation in 'three-person' tree tents along with sleeping bags
- Bonfire and stargazing with celestial stories
- Authentic local BBQ/ dinner, breakfast
- Early morning guided trek with Bird watching

If you are all set to experience camping in Satpura Tiger Reserve, you should not forget to visit Pachmarhi, (also known as Queen of Satpura), one of the best places to spend summer and monsoon holidays in India. It is also an attractive destination for film shooting.

Here is the list of places you can explore in Pachmarhi

- 'Apsara Kund' , Priyadarshini -Forsyth Point, Mahadeo Temple, Chauragarh Temple, Rajat Pratap (Silver Fall), Jamuna Prapat (Bee Falls), Jalawataran, Ramaya Kund (Irene Pool), Handi Khoh, Pandavas Caves and Jata Shankar Cave, Herbal Garden, Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve and many other herbal parks .

Things to do in Pachmarhi:

- Jeep Safari, Horse Riding, ATV Ride, Land Parasailing, Zip lining, Waterfall Trekking & Hiking.

Warm and welcoming place to stay

There are 11 Madhya Pradesh Tourism's hotels in Pachmarhi, with 156 luxurious rooms, which suit your taste and budget.

Here is the list of hotels

1. MPT Amaltas, Pachmarhi
2. MPT Bison Resort, Madhai
3. MPT Champak Bungalow, Pachmarhi
4. MPT Club View, Pachmarhi
5. MPT Devdaru Bungalow, Pachmarhi
6. MPT Glen View, Pachmarhi
7. MPT Highlands, Pachmarhi
8. MPT Karnikar Bungalow, Pachmarhi
9. MPT Nilamber Cottages, Pachmarhi
10. MPT Rock End Manor, Pachmarhi
11. MPT Satpura Retreat, Pachmarhi



# Jazeera Airways

## expanding & thriving



Despite of the turbulence, Jazeera Airways managed to hold the brake and Rohit Ramachandran, CEO, Jazeera Airways has lead the airline through all the the disruptions. He had not just adapted the pandemic-related challenges but have seamlessly handled the complexities erupted from the pandemic.

- **Sudipta Saha**





### What was it like to lead an airline through the pandemic?

It was certainly the toughest most challenging experience I have had in the industry, as indeed it has been for all airline CEOs. Apart from the financial threat the pandemic posed to our business, what was most difficult was having to lay off and temporarily say goodbye to many of our staff who had given such excellent service, and through no fault of their own had to leave their jobs. For those that remained I found that the role of leadership was made easier by the massive team effort that went in to ensuring our airline survived and kept going for months of very low operations. We found hidden talents to develop new business from cargo, setting up medical facilities for Covid testing and flying to new airports at short notice to repatriate citizens.

### The global pandemic was a challenge for most of the airlines. What has been your growth plan and what strategy have you adopted to maximise profit?

At the outset in March 2020, we took swift action to reduce our cost base. We also secured additional lines of credit from our banks in case we would require it. Then our shareholders

declined to take their dividends to ease our finances further. Combined with a strong cash position before we entered the pandemic, these factors helped us survive the inevitable losses to the point we actually returned to profitability in 2021.

### Can you tell us more about your long-haul expansion and future plans?

We have added Vienna and Prague to our network in Europe for the summer. Together with Sarajevo already served by Jazeera we are able to offer greater choice to the Kuwaiti leisure traveller. Eastbound, we have extended into the former CIS markets– Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. These offer a mix of outbound leisure and inbound connecting religious traffic on to Saudi Arabia. These destinations have come into reach as we take on more A320neo aircraft in to our fleet. However, we are focused on destinations within 5 hours flying time instead of long-haul, which is in line with the LCC Business Model.

### Do you think traffic patterns and passenger segments have changed for Jazeera Airways?

Not really. We have seen a strong return to demand for our key leisure and VFR segments. Likewise religious traffic has come back. Business traffic has been slower to build but we have not been strong in that segment.

### What do you think the global aviation industry will look like in five years' time?

It will recover for sure against pre-pandemic levels. I think actual desire and demand for travel has not changed dramatically since before the pandemic, and when all restrictions are ended we will see a full recovery– certainly by early 2023. In the next five years, I can foresee that there will be a move towards more narrow body aircraft being utilised by airlines, as they are now offering much longer range and economic efficiencies. At Jazeera, we have benefitted from being solely a narrow body airline and our new order from Airbus for 20 A320neo and 8 A321neo aircraft reflects our confidence in that strategic platform to our business model.



Priyanka  
Nijhawan

# living without limits

Most of the people in our industry would recall Priyanka, Director- Representations of Nijhawan Group for her intellect, dapper persona or the portfolio of illustrious clients, but in addition to these, I used to read the poems she posted for her closed ones on their birthdays on her facebook wall. This always made me ponder that how can somebody be so perfect in literally everything she does. The writer in me admires her gesture and content and as an entrepreneur, I adore her commitment to work.

- Bharti Sharma





I'm sure most of you know Priyanka for the brilliant entrepreneur she is, and that gives her 100 per cent in everything she does, professionally! But, let me interrupt you there, ask you to take your seats and join me in this narration where we unfurl the other side of her, the side we're sure the industry will be all ears to. A topper in Mathematics and Science, she was exceptional in academics. With time, she developed interest in computer science and voila, she aced that too! The head girl of her batch in school and shouldering the responsibility of treasurer in college, without her knowing, she nurtured those leadership skills (Now we all know the source of her exemplary leadership qualities). But amidst all the academics and everything intellectual, how did travel happen to her? Well, let's begin!

### A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step

Nijhawan Representation nearly fell into Priyanka's lap as her knack for the travel industry was growing with time. Going down the memory lane, she reminisces, "The spark for the travel industry kind of got ignited at the Emaar roadshow. This was before I joined the representation vertical. I attended the road show and found this whole concept very interesting, coming from an academic background and the travel industry being the next best glamorous industry after Bollywood, it got to me. There was lots of networking happening along with serious business. This caught my interest. Around the same time, I visited Dubai with Ankush. I clearly remember sitting in the lobby of Address Downtown where he was having a meeting. The industry had gradually started getting under my skin and I was really excited about the whole set-up. This was the time Ankush was expanding the network and he wanted somebody to come in, which is when I was offered the role and there has been no looking back ever since."

### Turning hustles into an empire

She believes one's intuition is our greatest ally in business. When she entered the travel industry, taking care

of the sales side of it, Priyanka found it exhilarating. "When you come from an academic background, sales seem like a lot of fun. Meeting clients to discuss business, the business aspect lasts for only 20 mins. The rest of the meeting goes into tea and coffee, discussing international politics and that is counted as work; the relationship building side of it. That drove me to all those sales calls and I was very aggressive on sales calls. The passion to have my own identity and to do my own thing was deeply engraved which eventually helped in my work," tells Priyanka.

### Unlock the purpose, connect with intuition and live the highest path

The momentum that follows a passionate woman in pursuit of her dreams is unprecedented, and in Priyanka's case, the momentum transformed the start-up into the most successful representation company. The love, devotion, and commitment that Priyanka has poured into Nijhawan Representation resembles the nature of an adorning mother. She curated and cultivated a brand that she is proud of, and is able to create dream jobs for fellow talented women in the space. She adds, "I increasingly get this question thrown at me by some very senior people because of my persistence - why are you so passionate about this business, what's the need? The need doesn't have to be financial, of course finance is the fun part. The passion really comes from having my own identity and representation per se has been my baby. During the initial days, we didn't have any PR vertical, nor was there any marketing in place so largely it was all travel trade relationships. And having it grow from there, having the team grow, having the accounts grow and when the vertical is like your own baby it feels great to see it prosper."

### Innovative risks are encouraged to take

Inspiration is always lying around the corner waiting to be discovered, to unearth a new perspective. The key is to be open to possibilities. Priyanka

is constantly evolving, engaging with her team and discovering new ways to lead authentically and efficiently. Sharing some insights, she tells, "When we signed up Dubai Tourism it was a whole new ballgame. It was huge, the numbers were big, and the marketing teams were huge and similarly with Ocean Parks. These new challenges teach us a lot and I'm very open to learning. The team is always on their toes, we're constantly striving for what's next? Even during the lockdown, we were constantly figuring out ways to stay ahead of the curve. We never let the excitement fizzle down, and utilized our time even in the darkest of times. I always have this excitement, which I hope to percolate down to the team. My team is very supportive and we always come up with crazy ideas, and they get supported from within the team and within the head office. I remember when we did a house session with Dubai tourism during the pandemic since everybody was getting tired of the constant webinars. The whole team had it put together, prizes were distributed and in the end since it was a Friday evening we had a live singer from Dubai. We pulled it off with almost 900 people in attendance. So, crazy ideas like this get support and recognition."

### Unapologetically herself

Looking back at almost a decade when Priyanka was at the lobby of Address Downtown and a decade later when they're still representing Address in the India market. Retaining a client for 10 years in the representation business is something. Sharing the mantra, she reveals, "I think that's our biggest success matrix. Sometimes when we're talking to potential clients and they come up with requests for a test project, we simply turn it down. We're not a new company, in fact as a company we're literally 40 years old. When I came into the business, I was almost the fourth generation and that's a joke I always make because Ankush is a generation in himself. He is 10 years ahead of me in business so he is almost a generation in himself. For us values and integrity are virtues not to be tampered with, so I would not want to sign an account

knowing that they are not going to fare well in the market. Taking their business for 6 months and things not materialising is a non-negotiable for us. These are the practices we don't believe in."

### Midas touch producing illustrious portfolio

Priyanka remains authentic through every stage of entrepreneurship, inspiring audiences by sharing her struggles even in the presence of extreme success. She further shares, "Address is a very long-standing partner, so is Harbour Plaza. I'm sure the latter are going to come back to us as soon as the market opens up. Both these accounts are a decade plus old. Also, at the same time whoever has signed up is still with us, except a couple odd ones. Having said that, one of the KPI's for us is clients such as Aitken Spence. We initiated our relationship with the Aitken Spence hotels in Sri Lanka, then went on to represent their Hotels in Maldives, from there we went on to represent their DMC in Sri Lanka, which literally shows the confidence that they have in us. That's something even we strive for, for us to have long-standing ties with our clients. The headoffice or management haven't stayed the same, It's not like the management at Address hasn't changed in 10 years, but irrespective of the management, for the brand to have constant faith in us is really what is most valuable to us. The number of accounts we sign doesn't really matter, not saying it's not important but at the same time how long we retain an account reflects the consistency in our performance for them year on year is; this is what we strive for."

### The Wonder Woman

Nobody can understand a woman better than a woman, and if you have a woman like Priyanka by your side, it's like a constant support and reassurance. Priyanka is extremely passionate about helping women achieve their dreams. Whether it is through her company or in the community of women in general, she encourages her fellow business women to find a healthy work/life balance—balance is the



key to doing anything good in life. "I'm proud of any woman who is doing well, and fortunately, we have this whole generation of women coming up who are so appreciative of each other which is just amazing. I was talking to a friend yesterday who recently got featured in Economic Times and it felt so amazing how we're building a community of women who are there for each other and supporting each other," shares Priyanka.

For an outsider, it is hard to imagine Priyanka in her household role out of her business suit and the leadership mantle. But, she is an equally responsible and caring household figure as she is a businesswoman. During our interview she laughingly shares an incident, "I was helping my daughter with her homework and working on my excel when I found out an error in the file and hurriedly took the concerned person on call. The person on call was talking with utmost respect, mostly responding with 'yes ma'am, no ma'am' through the call. The second I got off the call my daughter, startled as she was said, 'Oh my god, people talk to you like that?' and I responded yes people talk to me like that. Besides being a businesswoman, I also have other household roles to play. You won't believe, my kids still won't eat an almond I haven't peeled or a mango I haven't cut for them. The friend I mentioned above told me in our conversation, 'When you're entering home, leave your crown outside. Whatever you're outside is for the outside world, but in your house you're a mother, you're a wife, and you have to play those roles with equal responsibility and vigour.' This kind of helped because so many times when you're excelling in your work outside, and by god's grace my career growth has been constantly going up, it kind of gets to your head and disrupts the work-life balance. So, I think that was one thing that has kept me grounded; whatever is happening there (work) can't have an effect here (home)."

### Stories that last a lifetime

With a true passion for helping those around her, she stays motivated by remembering her

ultimate goal: helping clients make the brand of their dreams. No challenge is too big for her as she'll go great lengths to achieve success for her clients, as well as Nijhawan Representation. The excerpt from the book 'outliers' by Malcolm Gladwell says "the tallest oak in the forest is the tallest not just because it grew from the hardiest acorn; it is the tallest also because no other tree blocked its sunlight, the soil around it was deep and rich, no rabbit chewed through its bark as a sapling, and no lumberjack cut it down before it matured. We all know that successful women come from hardy seeds. But do we know enough about the sunlight that warmed them, the soil in which they put down the roots, and the rabbits and lumberjacks they were lucky enough to avoid?" such is the life of women entrepreneurs.

Priyanka is amongst the formative members of IWN (CII Indian Women Network) Delhi chapter which is about 7 years old. She was also the chairperson of the association in 2018-2019. She further asserts, "I feel very strongly about women empowerment, every woman should be standing on their own feet and have their own identity. But, at the same time, I don't want to look down upon somebody who is not working. I remember at one point we labelled the network is largely for working women when we realized that if we brand ourselves as a network specifically for working women we're going to lose out on very good women who are smart and educated who want to do something productive with their time but they're not in the mainstream working."

"Eventually it is all about the purpose, and not necessarily about standing on your own feet and money. As long as you have a purpose, that is amazing. Co-incidentally, since we're talking on the subject, I'd like to mention that our team here now is at a 50-50 ratio, not consciously, but it's just that more women have made it to the team on merit basis," concludes Priyanka.







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# Asego

## Transforming and revolutionising the travel insurance sector

We're currently living in a swiftly changing world where everything is transforming at the blink of an eye. The same stands true for the travel insurance sector where digitalisation has led to more than one major alteration at the same time. With an iron grip on the sector and a digital-first approach to insurance, Dev Karvat, Founder & CEO, Asego shares his inspiring journey and progressive business model.

- Bharti Sharma

Dev Karvat



At the age of 16, Dev was waiting at an insurance company for five hours trying to assist a friend get travel insurance required to avail a visa for the next day. That was the time when it would take two whole days to get a policy from an insurance company, but owing to Dev's efforts his friend who happened to be a travel agent, was thrilled to get it that quick. Sometimes, a small incident is all it takes to shape up into something big and this was just the incident. He asked Dev if he could deliver insurance at the same speed more often and this eventually became his means of earning pocket money. That's when Dev decided to start a business that addresses every pain point of the industry he was extremely passionate about—Travel. While reminiscing his journey, he tells, "In addition, the support and guidance from my family played a vital role in making me realise my vision, and turning the dream and vision into a reality."

### Driven by passion and integrity

Dev truly believes that it has been a journey of discovery and learning for him. "Like any other business, we have had our fair share of highs and lows. The journey hasn't been without challenges, the same as any growing business has to face; right from perception of the customer towards buying insurance, to the current pandemic situation. When you are following your passion, you actually don't need a better motivating factor to keep you going and look beyond challenges."

Dev's ambitious vision towards the industry has helped him shape Asego's core values of outstanding service, a smooth process, and transparency while building his network.

### Change is the only constant

They have a simple vision as their guiding star - Being the best service

provider in a market where change is the only constant and catering to evolving needs of the customer. Dev feels that stepping into the customers' shoes and recognising their pain points is the need of the hour.

As Asego continues to bridge the gap between the static insurance company offerings and the traveller's true needs, he aims to create a seamless experience for travellers seeking tailored travel protection solutions and creating sustainable business opportunities for clients. Talking about the elite and prompt services offered by them, Dev tells, "We are one of India's leading global assistance and travel insurance providers. Asego's services are not just limited to facilitating claims processes, but also provide real-time assistance services to travellers. Our services include 24x7 global medical assistance, roadside assistance, family protection, concierge assistance and luggage tracking along with insurance. During these unprecedented Covid times, we also provide doctor on call services, support during baggage loss, missed flights, advice on Covid-19 protocols in different countries and other related services."

### Indian travellers now seek value

India is definitely a highly under-penetrated market, with less than 20 per cent of outbound travellers buying travel insurance compared to the rest of the world. However, COVID-19 has played a significant role in enhancing awareness about travel insurance and assistance services amongst Indian travellers. Sharing some insights, Dev reveals, "You will be surprised to know that over 75 per cent of Indians who travelled to Dubai and Maldives last year purchased travel insurance, which was not the case earlier. Not just that, on analysing customers' recent buying patterns, we realised that they have now grown highly product sensitive. They now seek more value, rather than just going for undervalued and inexpensive ones." At the same time, Dev also feels that it is extremely crucial to spread awareness further on purchasing the right travel protection since there are numerous challenges that crop up

during travel and the degree of uncertainties magnify while travelling with loved ones. He supplements, "Awareness will enable a traveller to customise their travel protection plan before they hit the road. They will be able to pose the right questions to their tour operator about the cover basis, the type of travel, coverage amount, service network, add-ons, the flexibility of the plan and most importantly, if assistance services are included."

### Penetrating relevant travel protection products

Travel-related uncertainties could extend into 2023, and even beyond,

thus creating a new demand. Asego helps travellers with orientation, planning and offers them more interactivity during the trip. Dev validates, "These are new expectations, a new complexity, and insurers have to collaborate more intensely with assistance service providers to meet such demands. Another challenge that we as an industry may face is maintaining online privacy. We are a country making rapid strides in technology development and adoption, with a huge scope for enhancement in our technology and cyber security infrastructure. I really feel that we need to have stringent laws that safeguard our privacy online and reinstate confidence in the minds of travellers."





Ravi Gosain

# EVOLUTION & INNOVATION ARE THE SYNTHESIS OF AN ENTREPRENEUR

Erco was founded on the pillars of hard work, passion, and innovation. Thus, while ensuring a clear vision, Ravi Gosain, Managing Director, Erco Travels & Tourism Enterprises shares his perspective and explains his approach to the travel business.

- Bharti Sharma





With an ultimate wish to explore, meet different people, indulge in cultures and sense the alluring creation of nature, Ravi ventured into the inbound travel sector in 1997. Right after graduating in Economics, he consciously chose tourism for his master's degree. With this specialisation, he started marching towards what he desired the most- travel. He describes himself as a thrilled, satisfied and fulfilled guy who embraced everything that came his way. Let's hear from the 'young-veteran' about his journey in the travel trade industry.

### Exploring new horizons and writing new chapters

Past is a weird thing, it leaves a smile on someone's face and afflicts pain and struggle for some. Whatever the outcome, a person's past plays a pivotal role in shaping their future. Going down the memory lane, Ravi reminisces, "As a child, we grow up with desires in our hearts and spark in our eyes to do what our heart tells us to do. But, with maturity the sayings of the heart take the backseat and rationale takes control. Only a handful succeeds in choosing a profession that makes their soul happy, and fortunately, I am one of the lucky few. I kicked off with the travel and tourism industry, cautiously selecting inbound tourism because it provided access to meet people from around the world and also the opportunity to have a sneak-peak into their culture. Throughout the 25 years of my journey as a tourism professional, I've never witnessed a sign of fatigue. Rather, I'm exploring new horizons and writing new chapters with time.

In the last two decades, we've diversified our business from inbound to outbound, representing international DMCs in India, selling experiential trips and also doing incentives."

### No technology can replace personalized human interference

In today's competitive business world, staying relevant is becoming more and more difficult. Given the short attention span of people, businesses around the world are feeling the heat, under pressure to draw their customer's attention. The marketing gimmicks are gradually changing. With these dynamics, how does Erco, a 23-year-old company continue its quest of serving the clients with the best? The answer; constant innovation and unmatched services. Sharing more details on the same, Ravi elaborates, "We've observed drastic transformation in the travel and tourism business over the years, which eventually forced us to think differently and adapt to the changing needs. Entry of OTAs in the tourism space, direct selling by airlines, hotels and other suppliers made the tourism industry fiercely competitive and disturbed the conventional business practices. Technology swiftly made inroads to the travel and tourism business, making operations smoother with accuracy. Most of the travel businesses adapted technology in one or another way which made things efficient and faster."

There is no denying the fact that technology plays an important role in streamlining the overall business but Ravi also believes that when it

comes to dealing with dream holiday experiences, human interference is non-negotiable. Validating the statement, he asserts, "We can achieve several things with the use of technology but in the end, skilled manpower is required to serve your customers with the best. There are recent studies which show travellers are returning to traditional travel agents and tour operators after chasing automated answering machines for hours. I suggest we should use technology to process our operations but when it comes to customer handling, do not only rely on technology."

### Delivering consistent excellence

At Erco, amidst aforesaid growing competition, the team remained focused on curating experiences, excelling in client services and creating value for their customers, which enabled them to prosper against all odds. Their efforts were duly recognised when they won the prestigious National Tourism Awards by the govt. of India twice, as leading foreign exchange earner in certain categories. "This was the time when I realised my passion for travel was fully engraved into my profession. For me, the highest accomplishment in our lives should not be earning money but making yourself proud of your work. That's why I am very watchful with my deeds when it comes to doing business or handling people," tells Ravi.

### We all are travellers in this world

Presently, Ravi is serving IATO as

the Vice President and has garnered appreciation for his readiness to support the members. Sharing his journey with the IATO, Ravi expresses, "I am blessed with the opportunity to serve the tourism fraternity through IATO. I was elected to the board of IATO in 2012 and since then, I am active in the leadership role and have also been an integral part of many decision-making processes to make India a prominent inbound tourism destination. I consider this a very significant turn in my professional life because it evolved me as a confident and responsible leader. On a lighter note, we all are travellers in this world and should thrive to make it meaningful."

### Best time ahead for inbound tourism

India has shown tremendous resilience and has come out stronger on the world map throughout the pandemic. We are getting recognised as a friendly nation, one that is supporting the world in times of need. All these developments are positioning India on top of the news and improving our image. These activities will definitely raise interest in people to visit India for tourism, business, medical treatment, yoga, ayurveda and hordes of other purposes. So, I think the positioning of 'Incredible India' will organically grow in the future, which will ultimately benefit the inbound tourism industry. I have no doubt, once international travel becomes easier, we will have the best period for inbound tourism and will see India growing on international arrivals."





# Fushifaru Maldives

**Palm-painted idyll that dazzles with its luxe**

It's hard to resist the charms of Fushifaru Maldives, with its rustic-chic yet cosmo style and eco-friendly ethos, its serene atmosphere and impeccable service. The island is lush with tropical vegetation, fringed with coral sands and lapped by a jade-blue lagoon. Priyanka Naresh Teli, Business Development- India, Fushifaru Maldives shares details about this gem.

**- Bharti Sharma**





The coral atolls of the Maldives are scattered like stepping stones across the Indian Ocean. If you're looking for a total sea-girt escape, Fushifaru Maldives is pretty much your proverbial paradise isle. The property will win you over with an intimate island atmosphere.

## The next successful name in India

Fushifaru Maldives creates highly customised experiences for the Indian clientele such as designing menus that suit the Indian palate, uplifting private experiences, evening entertainment, etc. At the same time, they're constantly emphasising upon uplifting the brand's personality and character. Unveiling some authentic experiences, Priyanka shares, "It becomes highly crucial amidst all the changes to meet the guest and market expectation, to be consistent and maintain the core values of the brand. We understand the guests from India most commonly desire varied options of food, vegetarian or Jain meals, private dining experiences, photography services but along with this the property also extends a taste of the rich Maldivian heritage by introducing the guests to Maldivian games, sharing the rich history, introducing the guests to Maldivian food, showcasing the exotic and energetic folk dance and so much more. This makes Fushifaru Maldives the next successful name in India."

## Customised experiences that suit the Indian clientele

Fushifaru Maldives has swiftly managed to grab the attention of the target segment in India, and while India remains in the top three nationalities for the Maldives destination, they're focused on having consistent and ongoing engagement activities and promotions in the market. Sharing details,

Priyanka tells, "The brand has also been found appealing to the NRI clientele living across Dubai and South East Asia. This includes offers which have gained great popularity- 'Maharaja Offer 2022', celebrity stays that have showcased the island to the Indian audience brilliantly and customised experiences that suit the Indian clientele. With so many options and opportunities for travellers every single day, it has become important to remain known and appealing."







## Tailor-made personal and engaging experiences

Imagine rustic, palm-thatched wooden villas floating against a backdrop of limpid sea, silky white-sand beaches and lush vegetation. She adds, "The brand 'Fushifaru' has a great approach to exclusive hospitality. With 63 villas, this multi-award-winning boutique property focuses on more personal and engaging experiences. We understand what the Indian household and audience require while selecting the right property for a much-awaited holiday. We also understand most travellers are planning holidays after two years of COVID-19, have friends or family that have previously been to the destination, and have specific elements that drive decision-making such as pool villas or a variety of vegetarian food options. That's exactly what the property extends, understanding the Indian travellers and trade requirements."

## Exciting inclusions and offers

At Fushifaru Maldives, we have a humble, hospitable and experienced management in place which sustain the brand character of this multi award-winning property and also have a personalised approach towards guest expectations. You will experience a rich heritage perfectly blended with luxury hospitality. Priyanka asserts, "What stands out for us is our traditional Maldivian cultured hospitality with exclusive limited villas- making each guest feel pampered and looked after. Along with that, there are exciting inclusions and benefits tailor-made for the Indian clientele."

## Emotional intelligence is the key

Priyanka feels that with more destinations opening doors and easing travel policies, the demand will scatter worldwide

this year. It will be a demanding and competitive time for the destination. She adds, "During the initial COVID-19 era, Maldives had the biggest advantage of being the only leisure destination to welcome guests with very limited restrictions. However, there is certain uniqueness, sense of luxury and geographic advantage to the Maldives destination in the travel business. Knowing there is always an underlying Maldives holiday dream for many travellers worldwide, the strategy for most properties must include emotional intelligence."

## Ahead in the competitive market

In the current scenario, word of mouth and social media are the biggest factors that drive the product and influence decision-making. "Being market smart and having packages or promotions are almost achieved by most properties in most destinations- the question remains, how does your property stand out? This year, marketing includes a lot more diving deep to connect with your audience, engage and create a loyal brand community. Remember anything and everything floats in the digital universe, therefore your experiences and activities must be relatable with your target market. Which in return, generates loyal brand audience and curiosity," concludes Priyanka.



Priyanka Naresh Teli





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# It's time to welcome back Malaysia, the truly Asia

Marking the end of travel restrictions in the country, Malaysia is geared up to take the stroke and offer its invincible treasures to travellers looking for a vacation. Manoharan Periasamy, Senior Director of the International Promotion Division (Asia & Africa) shares their objective to encourage confidence among Indians to feel safe to visit Malaysia once again.

- Sudipta Saha

Are you ready to explore the remarkable treasures of magnificent Malaysia? The country has eased COVID-19 restrictions from May 1, the length of quarantine for positive cases has also been reduced to four days if they test negative and if the traveller still tests positive, they'll be required to undergo quarantine for seven days.

### New value-driven and action-packed itineraries

India remains and has been one of the top market sources for Malaysia and has contributed 735,309 arrivals (+22%) in 2019. "We are thrilled and enthusiastic to welcome Indian travellers back on exciting, new value-driven and action-packed itineraries to witness the best and the latest of what Malaysia has to offer," adds Manoharan Periasamy.

### New thrilling attractions

There is so much to explore and experience in Malaysia; the country is back in business and is ready to sell and promote. Despite the regular attractions available in the country, Malaysia has adorned

itself with some thrilling new spellbound attractions. "The newly opened outdoor theme park, Genting SkyWorld, the refurbished Sunway Resort in Kuala Lumpur, the Merdeka 118, the world's second-tallest building are some of the magnificent new attractions. I am sure these new attractions along with our beautiful beaches, exhilarating mountains and jungles with a plethora of activities will make your trip a memorable one," Manoharan Periasamy mentions. Besides this, Malaysia Tourism is encouragingly promoting various other destinations such as Desaru down south of Malaysia an apt destination for a beach holiday. Apart from leisure travellers, Malaysia is also eyeing the Indian wedding market and intends to attract the wedding business from India coming winter.

### Power-packed promotional campaigns

Malaysia Tourism focuses on the specific task of promoting Malaysia as a preferred tourism destination. The tourism board has launched its strategic and marketing plan for 2022-2026, designed to boost the tourism

industry and encourage tourism in the country. The main emphasis has been laid on the recovery of tourism with greater emphasis on social media promotions. Speaking in the same line, Manoharan Periasamy says, "Today, consumers are more advanced and digitally friendly, therefore our focus will be on the social media promotions. Social media has an incredible reach and, considering the same, we will be coming up with several joint promotional campaigns with our local agencies."

### Super successful series of roadshows

Malaysia Tourism has recently organised a series of roadshows in various Indian cities- Delhi, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangaluru, and Chennai. The idea of the roadshow was to disseminate a message that Malaysia is ready to welcome travellers. Speaking on the same, Manoharan Periasamy shares, "The objective of the roadshow is to spread a message that the destination is ready and so are the tour operators. The roadshow is being organised to promote Malaysia and how can we work together to put Malaysia on the tourism map."







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# Hiking goals for this summer in Utah

It's that time of the year to gear up! If hiking is the sport for you, Utah offers a trail with resplendent views, towering climbs and expansive rivers. This summer discover new paths and experience adventures that will rejuvenate your mind and body.

- Team Turtle

Hiking is no longer just a form of recreation, Utah the hidden gem in America offers every person a unique experience, right from navigating new trajectories, discovering waterfalls, camping under a starlit sky and waking up to a magnificent sunrise at some of the most jaw dropping sceneries. It could very possibly be an ardent hiker's dream destination!

Mentioned below is Utah's curated list, specifically chalked out for passionate hikers

## The Narrows, Zion National Park

If there ever was a term for a perfect hike, Zion national park should be high up there in any climbers bucket list. The hikes range from family friendly, moderate to intense. Whether it's hiking, camping, canyoneering or simply driving there's plenty of scenic beauty encompassing some dramatic desert landscape to take in at Zion.

The best time to visit Zion National Park is between the months of April and November when the park's free shuttles are running and the weather is comfortable.

## Navajo Loop Trail, Bryce Canyon National Park

This rather short trail which offers a 1- to 2-hour loop from the rim at Sunset Point down to the floor of Bryce Canyon is perfectly carved out for a Marvel fan, displaying hoodoo formations such as Wall Street, Twin Bridges, and wait-for-it Thor's Hammer!

A place where fantasy and reality collide, the path offers some iconic rock formations featuring Gulliver's Castle, the Queen's Castle, and Queen Elizabeth herself, a fascinating structure that rises 50 feet west of the junction at the end of the trail.

**Best season: April–October**





**Lower Calf Creek Falls, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument**

Here's one for the laidback climbers, the photographers, hikers that wish to be one with the ecosystem, Calf Creek Streaming down more than 100 feet along mineral-stained sandstone is a sight to behold, the waterfalls appears to radiate in its clarity.

While the path can get slightly tedious, it's a perfect trail for families with enthusiastic children, the waterfall transforms into an absolutely awe-inspiring picnic spot for both adults & kids.

Buckskin Gulch Day Hike - Wire Pass Trailhead, Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness

Buckskin Gulch is renowned not only because of its continuous challenging narrows, but also because there is no other canyon like it in the world. Ideally considered a relatively easier hike, it's also pet friendly (however the dog needs to be on a leash).

For 12.5 miles the gulch is enveloped in a very narrow gorge 100 to 200 feet deep, flanked by vaulting convoluted walls of Navajo Sandstone. Now you can delve in its beauty with your pet by your side.

This trail is best enjoyed during April through early June and September through October and strictly avoided during rainfall.

**Mount Timpanogos, Wasatch Mountain Range**

Saving the best for the last is Mount Timpanogos, The word "Timpanogos" comes from the native Timpanogos tribe's words for "rock" and "water," Although the hike falls under a strenuous category, the climb offers you some gorgeous panoramic views, stunning caverns, emerald lakes and glacial waterfalls (Fun Fact: It may not look like a typical glacier at first glance; that's because this is a rock glacier. The ice itself is buried underneath a hard crust of dirt and rock).

This leaves Mt. Timpanogos on an absolute must visit list, the most popular time is around May to October.

Here we have it all, a hikers guide through Utah. Don't miss this opportunity to raise the bar this

summer with a trail through some of Utah's most infamous spots that have carved a path for both amateurs and professional hikers alike.

While Utah offers a multitude of hiking trails customized for your specific requirement, explore the offbeat tracks which may not be as popular as their counterparts but are known for its distinct characteristics:

- Hickman Bridge Trail,
- Capitol Reef National Park,
- Little Wild Horse Canyon,
- San Rafael Swell,
- Bell's Canyon,
- Little Cottonwood Canyon,
- Salt Lake City,
- Horseshoe Canyon to the Grand Gallery,
- North of Canyon lands National Park

Leave no stone unturned and no trail untouched. If America is your destination don't miss out on these glorious trails in Utah. The key is simple, stay hydrated, carry your equipment and let nature lead the way.







# Kerala's Enchanting Backwaters

More beautiful than the canals in Thailand, less crowded than those in Venice, the backwaters of Kerala are a natural phenomenon that offers an enchanting experience of fun and relaxation, and a chance to see authentic Malyali life.

- Inder Raj Ahluwalia





## TRAVEL THERAPY

Nature has been kind here. This is a world apart. A world of coconut trees, marshy groves, shallow lakes, deep canals, tiny shivering rivulets, and long boats. The backwater canal region is different from anything else in the Indian sub-continent. The picture that confronts the visitor is one of punted cargo boats carrying coconuts, gleaming shell, rice and pepper, and palms flanking the canals.

The region stretches for hundreds of square kilometres with a network of canals and estuaries. The canals are beautiful, their network is a marvel of nature, and the backwaters they've created is a different world altogether from the nearby coastline. Here, unlike places with hustle and bustle, time seems to stand still.

Amidst the general quiet, there is life. The canals are teeming with fish that can be seen jumping out of the water in a silvery arc. You steam slowly past boats laden with their assorted cargo. Intermittently, ducks surround the boats looking for food. One of the most enduring sights of the cruises is fishing nets thrust out from the banks, dipping into the water.

You can sail the backwaters in rented houseboats that are poled by local oarsmen and are simply furnished with a living room, a bedroom and bath, together with a raised central platform that creates a private sit-out for passengers.

You can also indulge in water sports like windsailing and water-skating and sample some fresh 'toddy', local wine and an assortment of delicious Malyali dishes.

So just chill out, sit back and enjoy the ride.

### Popular Backwater Circuits

Up in the north of Kerala, lie the cool, beautiful backwaters of Calicut (Kozhikode). North east of the city, Elathur offers an ideal jump-off base into the Canoly Canal, which links itself to the Kallai river. Further south lies Kadalundi with its bird sanctuary.

Cochin is amongst the world's finest natural harbours. You cruise around man-made islands, and can watch the Arab dhows in the foreground, and tree-shaded buildings of spice traders and merchants, behind.

Giant Chinese fishing nets that billow from massive teak and bamboo poles, dot the entrance to the harbour. Cochin is the oldest European settlement in India, and its environment contains impressions of Chinese, Arab, Jewish, British, French, and Portuguese presence.

On the shores of Vembanad lake, 14 km from Kottayam, lies Kumarakom. A boat ride into the countryside offers a close look into the engaging rustic life, with skiff-fishermen launching their cockleshell boats, ducks waddling down to the water, women neck-deep in water searching for fish with their feet, and white lotuses in bloom in the water.





## TRAVEL THERAPY

The **Alleppey-Kuttanad circuit** is another favourite. The sweeping network of canals honey-combing Alleppey has earned it the sobriquet 'Venice of the East'. Small, low-slung country boats are the taxis of this water land, and the sight of them carrying a motley assemblage of cycles, fisher-women, school children, toddy-tappers, and domestic animals, never fails to excite first-time visitors.

The ride to Kuttanad through shimmering water and green paddy fields is recommended. Alleppey becomes the centre of attraction in August-September each year when it hosts the celebrated Snake Boat races – a water regatta unique to Kerala.

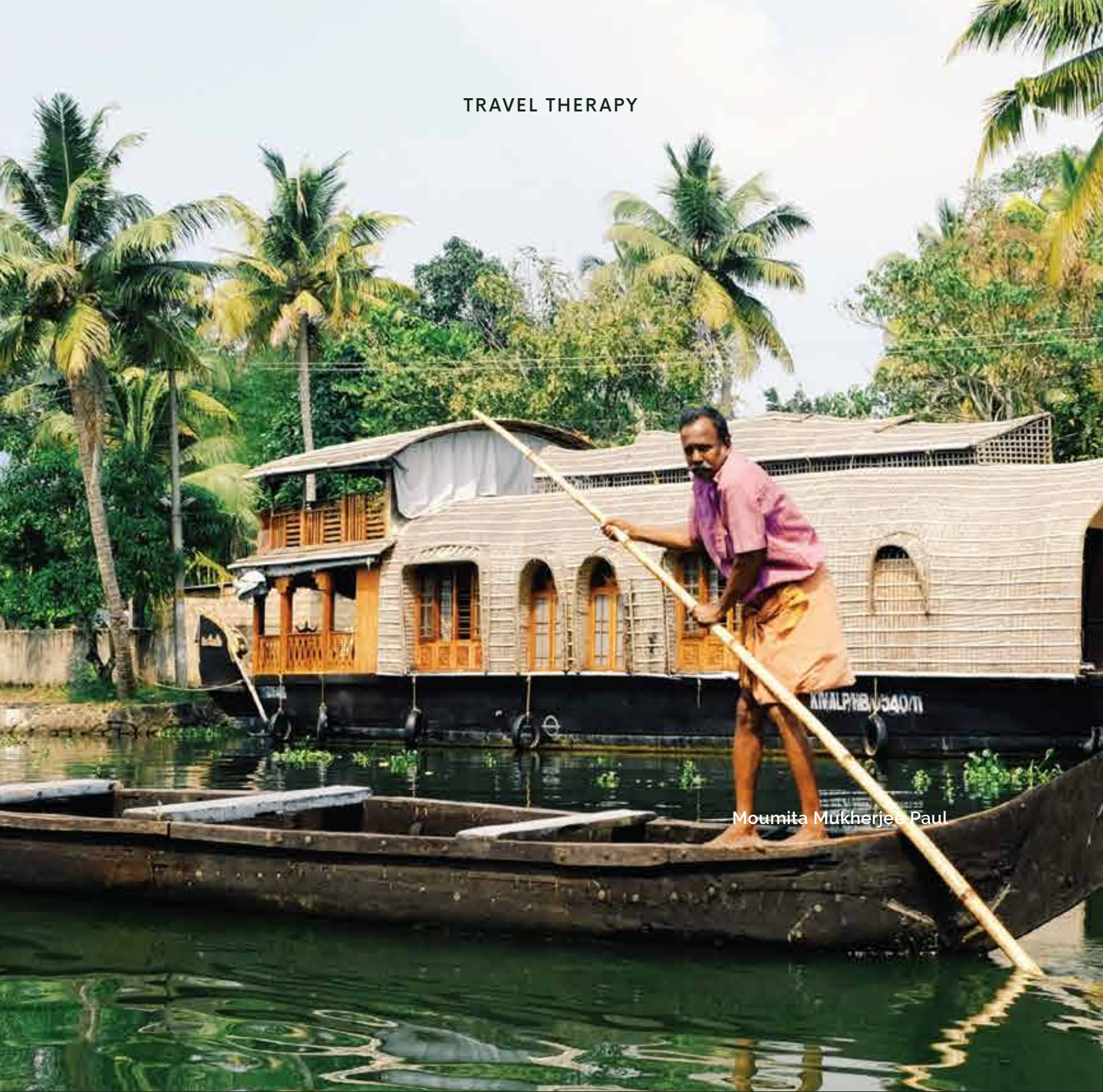
The charming old port city of Quilon (Kollam), on the banks of the picturesque Ashtamudi lake is another inviting gateway to the backwaters. Traces of trade with China are still seen in the form of Chinese fishing nets, Chinese water pots, blue and white porcelain, and sampan-type boats.

The regular ferry to Alleppey, a ride of over 8 hours, provides a superb backwater experience. There are also shorter cruise options in the comfort of houseboats, with idyllic villages like Alumkadavu as a launch base.

Close to Quilon lies quiet little Alumkadavu. This is the place for rides in huge barges that traditionally carried cargo across kingdoms. You pass little villages as you journey down river on these long barges.







Moumita Mukherjee Paul

Within hailing distance of Trivandrum is the Veli-Akkulam lagoon with a delightful waterfront park. Separated from the sea by a narrow sandbar, the lagoon offers rides in motor-driven safari launches, power boats, pedal boats and row boats.

The Great Boat Races- Once a year the backwaters come 'alive' with the grandest local spectacle on the waters. These are the Great Boat Races, which trace their roots to ancient naval warfare

The biggest attractions are the Snake Boats (Chundans), 50-metre long wooden craft with stand-up sterns resembling the hood of a cobra, powered by over a hundred oarsmen. Other boats are Vepu (food boats), Odi (small raiding craft), Churulan, and Iruttukuthy.

In a display of strength and rhythm, and cheered on by thousands of spectators, the races set the otherwise serene backwaters abuzz with activity.



## About the author

Inder Raj Ahluwalia is a world-renowned international travel journalist & author. His professional profile features awards from several European and Asian countries, among others.





HEADS IN BEDS



# Four Seasons Hotel Abu Dhabi A hedonistic heaven

Slick and stylish, Four Seasons Hotel Abu Dhabi at Al Maryah Island remains one of the glitziest hotels in the city and stands out and how!

- Misbaah Mansuri

As a Four Seasons junkie, I never met a Four Seasons property that I did not love. The unfaltering love for hospitality is evident in the personalization and the miles the staff go to ensure you have an unforgettable experience. Such was my reaction when there was a personalized welcome dessert amenity festooned with my pictures and some milestones from my journey waiting for me at my gorgeous room at Four Seasons

Hotel Abu Dhabi at Al Maryah Island. The staff do take crafting such awe-inspiring moments so seriously and really do their research before welcoming you aboard.

Filled with creamy tones and art deco accents, each room here feels like a sophisticated haven. With touches such as luxurious silk wallpaper, the signature ultra-soft Four Seasons Beds, marble soaking tub alongside floor-to-ceiling windows, the property is hard to compete with in terms of

superior accommodation options. Just a little while into the hotel, I soon realized that the Four Seasons' eateries and lounges are not just popular with hotel guests — they're city hot spots. We loved our Afternoon Tea at Al Meylas where truffle scented egg sandwiches, scrumptious chicken tikka, sinful eclairs, macarons, fluffy scones and the finest Saffron Ice Cream we've ever had—all of it showed us a thing or two of the property's ravishing culinary pedigree.

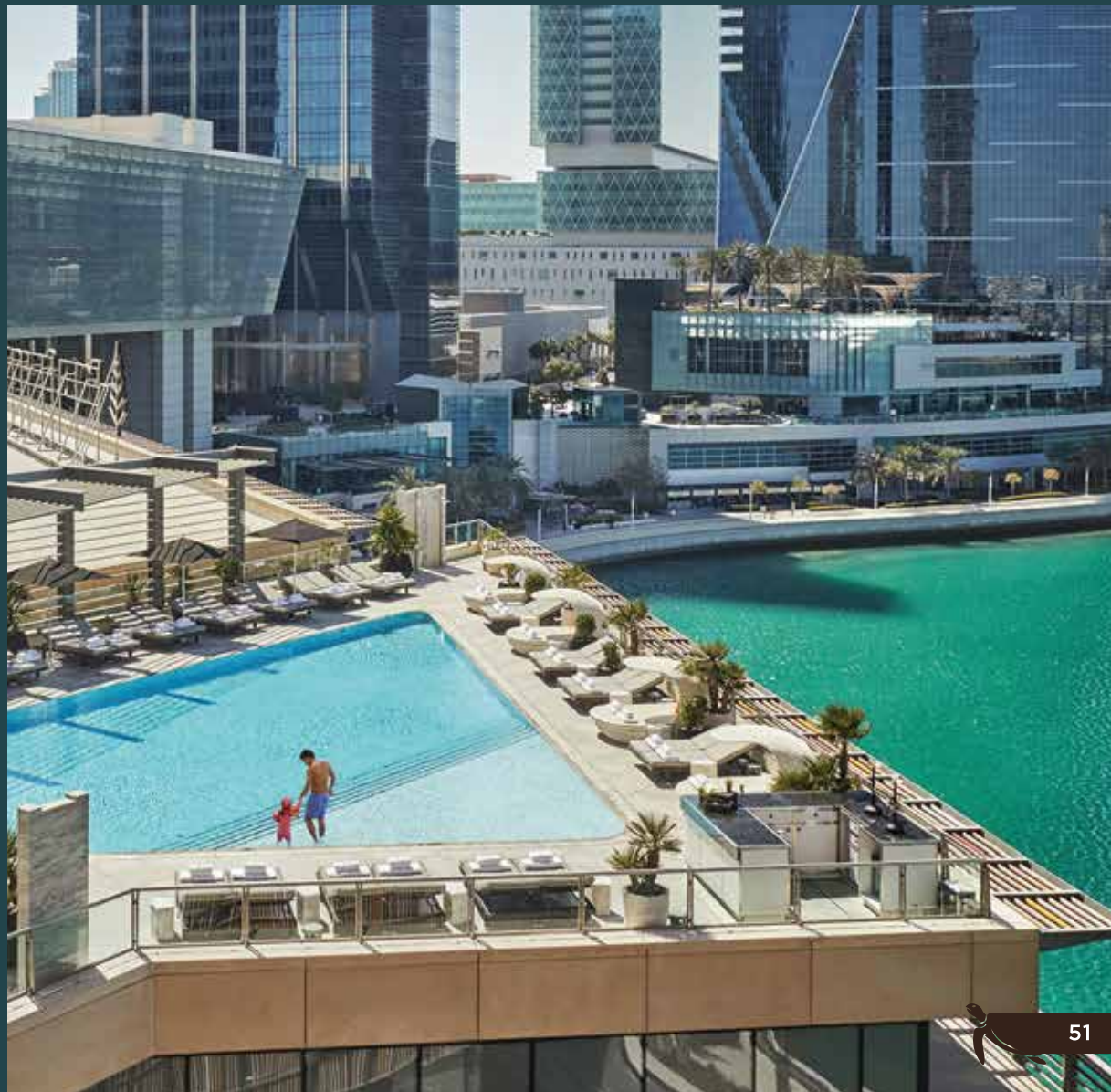




## HEADS IN BEDS

At Adam Tihany-designed Café Milano, an outpost of the D.C. restaurant, tiled floors, billowing white curtains and succulent octopus dishes transport us to the Mediterranean. Meanwhile Butcher & Still goes the distance with its 1920s Chicago steakhouse theme. The menu focuses on dishes — such as lobster Thermidor — that were popular at that time alongside some stunning steak that is sure to tantalizingly tease your tastebuds. Crust serves healthy breakfast, lunch and dinner fare, along with a Friday brunch starring Middle Eastern, Western and Asian dishes and flowing champagne. Much like the signature Four Seasons service, staff take so much effort to know your preferences and delight you with what you love.

The spa is exceptional. I tried the 90 minute Gold Quartz Healing Journey that turned out to be a completely transformative journey bringing to me vibrations of singing bowls to balance and restore a harmonious flow of energy and vitality. While I was cocooned in heated quartz sand, an invigorating herbal poultice massage eased my muscle pain, stimulated lymphatic drainage and detoxified the body. My gold and healing journey ended with reiki infused eye patches application and marma point face therapy, leaving me fully regenerated, rebalanced and radiant.





## HEADS IN BEDS



The hotel's exterior, inspired by fabrics in a souk, is aesthetically striking while reflecting 80 percent of the region's harsh sunlight. It showcases the property's dedication to eco-sustainability and another must-try is the swish pool where you can swim away your blues. However, having said that, the secret to the hotel's awesomeness isn't just the food or the room. It is the army of staff, by the pool or the restaurant, front-desk or housekeeping that surprises us with delectable dessert surprises by bed and thoughtful recommendations like they sense I'm not comfortable. It is the janitor who asks me and my

husband when we can come back next and bids a heartfelt goodbye. And many many others.

You recognise as you drive away from the hotel that you were able to immerse yourself in a brief moment out of everyday life, and thus leave renewed and ready to dive into what comes next.

As I leave, I have a sense of being lost in a delirious soup of cosmic consciousness. There is an incredible natural high that comes from being surrounded by the great spirit of the place. It is being polished, primed and opened up with reverence; so too are you.



## HEADS IN BEDS

### As a GM, what has been your approach, strategy and leadership style throughout the pandemic?

During the pandemic, I found it very important to communicate timely and extensively with my team and to ensure to keep a permanent connection with all employees at Four Seasons Hotel Abu Dhabi, regardless what their status was (on site, working from home, on quarantine or isolated). Those employees who have been affected personally by the Covid-19 pandemic went through an extreme level of anxiety and stress. Showing extra care towards them was my utmost priority during these unprecedented times. Other than taking care of our greatest asset: our employees, keeping hotel guests, residents and owners aware of numerous restrictions related to either travelling and/or hotel and restaurant operations, as mandated by AD Government (DCT) and by the enhanced health and safety program by Four Seasons Lead with Care was also among my key priorities. Thanks to the great support from our owners, Mubadala, we were able to guarantee the payment of full salaries and benefits to all of our employees during the entire pandemic. In addition, we were particularly generous with our employees and decided to cover their extra expenses related to being either isolated or quarantined (taxi, extra tests etc. Sadly, we had number of employees that left us in Q1 2020 as business suddenly stopped and they were still under probation. We made it a goal for our Hotel to hire them back and when business started to get better, towards Q2 and Q3 2021, we were able to hire back number of them.

### The capital is inundated with hotels, what gives Four Seasons Abu Dhabi an edge over the rest?

I would humbly say that our employees are happier than most. I believe that this is possible because of the way they are being treated. We put a particular emphasis on recruiting the right people, not so much from a skillset standpoint, but from the standpoint of having a positive



Olivier Thomas, General Manager, Four Seasons Hotel Abu Dhabi at Al Maryah Island

attitude towards others as we are confident that these individuals will flourish and give their very best within our organization, allowing them to provide our guests with the legendary Four Seasons experience. Then, we treat them with respect (Golden rule) and have a caring approach towards them, we train them, develop them and aim at reaching their full potential. The particular attention to growing people internally in our company is fairly unusual in our hospitality industry and is clearly a differentiator versus other companies. It does not only allow us to be better at retaining our talents, but given that we also promote transfers in between hotels, it allows our company to keep its culture well anchored while expanding rapidly, something that a number of our competitors are unable to achieve as effectively as us. We also maintain a pristine product.

With the great support of our owners, we reinvest permanently into our hotel asset and ensure that the look and feel of the hotel remains as fresh and crisp as on day one.

We put a lot of effort into training our employees to challenge themselves, to get out of their comfort zone, and to feel comfortable and empowered to take initiatives. We have a keen attention to details, we follow up and follow through every single guest-related situation in order to ensure that all our guests leave the hotel happy with memories that last a lifetime.

We also encourage our employees to be genuine and authentic in their connections with our guests, as well as to do their best to create personal and emotional connections with them.

### If you were a guest at the property, what would your 24 hour itinerary look like?

Well, I have done this a couple of

times in the past and I can tell I never get bored of it. A relaxing afternoon by the pool with a light meal at Eclipse is always rewarding. Whenever the sun becomes too hot in the afternoon, I would opt for a massage at The Pearl Spa & Wellness, either experience the unique Zero gravity feature of the Gold quartz treatment or enjoy a couple's treatment with my wife while the children dive into our formidable kids club. Afterward, I'd get a little "me moment" in my lavish room and check a few emails since a General Manager is never off! A nice cocktail at Zsa Zsa bar to start the evening is always a good idea. I'd then treat my family to a memorable dinner at Butcher & Still, and get entertained by one & only Chef Marshall and his great culinary team. After dinner, I'd be strolling through The Galleria Mall and do a bit of "lèche-vitrine" and perhaps visit the latest addition, the exclusive Apple store. Back to the room, our unbeatable FS mattress and its interchangeable mattress tops with a great book await. Early work-out at the Gym, overlooking the Arabian Gulf, is what you might need to kick start a prolific day followed by a family breakfast in Crust, with home-made croissants and pastries, as well as various ethnic specialties.

### What are your big plans and focus areas for 2022?

We definitely cannot wait to resume full training programs with particular emphasis on service-oriented courses, in order to reinforce further our personalized and caring approach towards hotel guests and residents. We will focus on enhancing our product by adding even more special touches in our guestrooms and suites (leather accessories, flowers, perfumes, arrival amenities etc. We are also working on elaborating on the possibility of adding a brand-new vehicle to our existing chauffeured-limousine fleet. Last but definitely not the least we work towards achieving our ESG goals such as among others the total elimination of single usage plastic items within the Hotel.



# SCTDA

## strengthening the foundations of the emirate's cultural offerings

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Over the years, the Emirate of Sharjah has successfully secured a position on the international cultural map. HE Khalid Jasim Al Midfa, Chairman of Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA) unveils the new and upcoming experiences in the emirates.

- Bharti Sharma





## OFFSHORE BINOCULARS

SCTDA strategises to further develop and promote the tourism industry in all its forms, highlighting and strengthening Sharjah's advantages with a range of tourism-marketing activities, harmonising information exchange, joint management of tourist assets, and provisions enabling tourists to comfortably enjoy a wide range of experiences and services in the emirate.

### Enhancing efficiencies in tourism through partnership and collaborations

SCTDA strives to position Sharjah as the most preferred destination for sustainable tourism, underpinned by its cultural heritage. HE Khalid emphasizes on the strategies to establish Sharjah as the most preferred tourist destination as he tells, "We work with our partners across the tourism sector to implement strategic pillars, which includes promoting Sharjah as an ideal family tourism destination by

offering distinct packages and offers specially designed for families. We have adopted an innovative tourism approach to improving the tourist experience through the provision of innovative solutions. SCTDA has enhanced efficiencies in the tourism sector through partnership and collaborative action to provide world-class tourism facilities and capabilities. We're promoting the cultural and heritage elements among families to build Sharjah as an international cultural hub."

Due to its continuing focus on preserving and celebrating its rich cultural heritage, Sharjah has garnered a series of recognitions, including UNESCO's 'Cultural Capital of the Arab World' in 1998, 'Capital of Islamic Culture' title in 2014, 'Capital of Arab Tourism' in 2015 as well as 'World Book Capital 2019' title.

### A family-friendly destination

Sharjah maintains its reputation as a global destination for families who

love to explore a plethora of activities offered by the emirate such as desert adventures, including trekking, stargazing, and camping. Sharjah's beaches, shopping centres, museums and unique cultural offerings, such as its popular Sharjah Light Festival make the emirate a popular tourist destination for families and millennials alike. Sharjah is also blessed with stunning, natural landscapes ideal for engaging activities as well as modern comfortable infrastructure. "In the aftermath of this pandemic, people are eager to see new sights in addition to building new connections and business ventures and Sharjah offers plenty of these options that appeal to both tourists and potential investors. Despite the disruption caused by the pandemic, the emirate has inaugurated several projects, many of which promote cultural and sustainable tourism, and position Sharjah as a family-friendly destination," asserts HE Khalid.







HE Khalid Jasim Al Midfa

### **New experiences on the block**

The emirate has developed many attractions on the east coast, such as hiking trails, Khorfakkan beach, Al Suhub Rest and WadiShees. Sharing more such wonderful experiences and activities, HE Khalid tells, "We have offerings for different types of visitors too with attractions such as the House of Wisdom, the awe-inspiring library of the future and our newest opening- the Sharjah Safari, the largest safari outside of Africa, home to more than 120 species of animals, which live in Africa and up to 50,000 animals, ranging from birds, reptiles and mammals; such as lions, elephants, giraffes and rhinoceros. In this way, we are continually building and developing our diverse offerings."

Additionally, as a consequence of the pandemic, Sharjah had to make

significant adjustments to its focus on expanding its meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) segment. "We are expecting the UAE's new 5-year visa scheme will be a boost for Sharjah's MICE sector as the global pandemic progressively recedes and restrictions come to an end. Visits from friends and family will also be greatly facilitated through the new visa," he adds.

### **Series of roadshows in India**

Sharjah continues to strengthen its presence in India with an overarching strategy. This involves several activities throughout the year with our Indian travel trade partners to help them create new, varied experiences for clients visiting the emirate. Shedding some light on the initiatives, HE Khalid mentions, "SCTDA regularly organises roadshows along with meetings and workshops inviting

leading travel and tour operators in each city that contribute to outbound travel from India. Presentations are held highlighting the attractions and detailing the airline connectivity from India to educate travel partners about Sharjah and its offerings. We recently concluded a multi-city sales mission covering Mumbai, New Delhi, Ahmedabad and Bengaluru. SCTDA will be also participating in the twenty-ninth edition of the Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2022, the leading global event for the travel and tourism industry, to be held from May 9-12, 2022 and are looking forward to a roadshow in India in the 3rd quarter of the year."

### **Restoring and exceeding numbers from the key markets**

Sharjah is consistently working to attract more travellers from all

around the world, as well as to set up the necessary infrastructure and regulations to accommodate them and ensure their health and safety while allowing them to enjoy a memorable trip to the emirate. While sharing the top inbound markets, HE Khalid asserts, "The key source markets for the Emirate of Sharjah have been Russia, Oman, Saudi Arabia, UAE, China and India, followed by Germany and the UK. Our plan for the period ahead is to restore and exceed the number of visitors from these key markets, we are strongly pursuing a return to pre-covid numbers with our existing markets presently, successfully with India and preparing for China re-opening while looking into new Asia and the Far-east markets. Connecting with the European market is furthermore of tantamount importance in our plans."





# Trulyy India

## Discover a world of exotic experiences

With a flamboyant and versatile attitude and a positive mindset, Aarushi Arora, Business Development Manager, Trulyy India Hotels, Resorts, Camps, and Safaris aims at expanding and diversify.

- Sudipta Saha

### Business post-pandemic

Post-pandemic, travel seems to be back on track. "The business has been phenomenal and a whopping rise in destination weddings, corporate events was also witnessed. Kumbhalgarh has come out as a gem of a destination for travel enthusiasts and every weekend ample number of tourist drive down in Kumbhalgarh. The rapid pickup of the market also enabled us to launch a few new properties such as The Swai Bagh in Ranthambore a 5-star luxury resort and we also plan an expansion in Rajasthan," tells Aarushi.

### Vision for Trulyy India

Expertise in boutique hotels projects, hotel management operations, and the group has a range of boutique luxury resorts in different locations in India and is committed to offering world-class hospitality. Sharing her vision, Aarushi asserts, "We aspire to emerge as a leading company in the hospitality industry offering awe-inspiring, pleasant, and premium accommodation services in boutique resorts and hotels. We are coming up with three new properties by the month of May in Jawai Rajasthan, Udaipur Rajasthan and Goa."

### Latest trends in India's inbound and domestic tourism

With the opening of state borders and ongoing vaccination drive, domestic tourism seems to be on an upsurge. Aarushi feels that



relaxed restrictions enables more people to travel across borders but still, they're are not even 1/4th close to what inbound was before. She adds, "If we talk about domestic travel then it's been overall amazing as people are now seeing the beautiful trusses that India holds within itself and exploring more domestically. In terms of trends, we see people getting accommodated to the concepts of staycation, workation, drivable destination and simply leisure travel and these trends have honestly worked in our favour as most of our hotels are in

drivable destination from various states also since people had no option to travel abroad so they choose to travel domestically."

### Long-term effects of pandemic on travel industry

Travel and tourism was harshly affected by the pandemic, it has altered the business model of the entire industry. The long-time effect of Covid-19 can witnessed and felt, sharing some insights, Aarushi says, "Before COVID-19, travel and tourism was one of the most important

sectors in the world economy, accounting for 10 per cent of global GDP and more than 320 million jobs worldwide. Beyond the tourism economy, the pandemic has triggered a global economic crisis, and many economies are falling into recession. Covid as a whole has affected our economic growth and as a result, basic commodities have skyrocketed in prices which further put a burden on us to facilitate all the hotel amenities at a lower price so that people can afford them also at the same time we can cover that costs result in the ARR has gone down."







# Azerbaijan

## Reinforcing the existing tourism assets

Azerbaijan is an exceptional amalgamation of antiquity and novelty where visitors can explore the rich cultural offerings, experience its ancient heritage and relish the modern art. Bahruz Asgarov, Deputy CEO, Azerbaijan Tourism Board in conversation with Travel Turtle talks about the sustainability technique adopted by the country.

### - Team Turtle

The country has been positioning itself as a destination of new travel experiences full of distinctive flavours, colours, monumental heritage, and natural beauties, providing a range of accommodation options. Approx 800,000 travellers visited the country in 2021 and it has witnessed a 66.8 per cent increase in tourism from India in 2019. Azerbaijan, however, is looking to broaden its appeal as it marches toward its potential hubs.

The country is investing heavily in sustainable tourism products and immersive experiences. "After the pandemic, we felt the need to focus more on the sustainable options. Azerbaijan is developing new experiences that are both environmentally friendly and suitable for the health and safety measures implemented because of the pandemic. At the same time, the idea is to hold the ancient culture and heritage, breath-taking landscapes, and delicacies which are sustainable. We have no intent to position Azerbaijan as a mass tourism destination. Thus, it will be

easier and safer for travellers to enjoy the country's sustainable and authentic tourism experiences when in Azerbaijan."

Azerbaijan is also experiencing a surge in luxury hotels, and several big hospitality chains are choosing the region in setting up a base. Bahruz adds, "Apart from our luxury home brands, Ritz Carlton, Hotel Indigo and many more are coming up this year. The focus is on further developing new tourism products and experiences, as well as perfecting the infrastructure to cater to all the needs of our visitors and satisfy every type of traveller." ATB has resumed its activities to attract travellers from India. Sharing details, Bahruz tells, "Even before the pandemic, India was one of the top six markets for us. There was a tremendous increase in the number of arrivals. The numbers are really picking up. India is a key market for us with immense potential due to its high number of international travellers. ATB conducted a lot of b2b activities in the India market throughout the pandemic. Currently, the strategy is to attract business, wedding,

leisure and bleisure travellers. The trend of solo travel has been seen here as well. We also target MICE travellers. In fact, we are presently hosting a large-scale MICE event in the region."

Travellers can discover stunning landscapes, including countryside and winter ski slopes and adventure trails like hiking, private jeep tours to the mountains, and cultural experiences such as vineyard tours, and art and music festivals. Talking about such enthralling experiences, Bahruz shares, "Another important development in sustainable experiences is that there are now 16 new hiking trails across the northern and north-western routes of Azerbaijan, passing through remote mountain villages, forests, lakes and waterfalls. We're developing a long-distance hiking trail through the Greater and Lesser Caucasus Mountains, and a 97-km hiking route through the lush, forested mountains of the Sheki and Zagatala regions.

The Mud Volcanoes Tourism Complex is under development in Azerbaijan. At the Mud Volcanoes

Tourism Complex, visitors enjoy multiple experiences such as quad biking, ziplining and workshops for children along with a trip to moon-like landscapes. Sharing details, he tells, "Azerbaijan has half of the active mud volcanoes in the world. This centre is expected to increase the already-high interest in the amazing collection of mud volcanoes in Azerbaijan. Family can plan their trips along with the kids and enjoy at the kids zone."

People are now seeking out authentic travel with experiential and transformative experiences that promise genuine cultural immersion. Azerbaijan has many inimitable opportunities for tourists looking for responsible travel experiences. "As a tourism destination, it's our responsibility to make sure that the local industry adapts to the new demands of travellers and provides the best travel experiences in the new normal," concludes Bahruz.





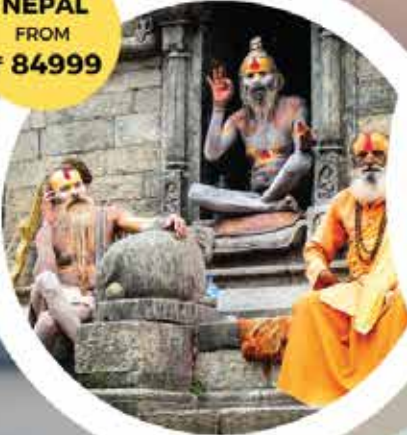


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## ***Lily Hotels hosts product update and networking lunch in Chandigarh***

Lily Hotels in association with LINKIN Reps, recently hosted an exclusive lunch for the travel trade partners in Chandigarh. The resorts operated by Lily Hotels in the Maldives are the pioneering leading All-Inclusive Resort, located in central Maldives - Lily Beach Resort & Spa at Huvahendhoo, a large island hideaway resort located in northern Maldives with privacy at its core - Hideaway Beach Resort & Spa, and its collection of elevated and curated luxury beach villas with dedicated butler service as a 'resort in a resort concept' - The Signature Collection by Hideaway.

The networking event was followed by the product presentation, by Komal Seth, Founder & Director, LINKIN Reps. The presentation highlighted the key features of the luxurious properties. The response of the session was extremely encouraging, and it was heart-warming to witness the enthusiasm for Lily Hotels' products among the Chandigarh trade partners.

Highlighting the importance of the north India's travel market to Maldives, Desislav Gospodinov, Group Director of Sales & Marketing said, "I would like to thank all our travel trade partners in Chandigarh for their continuous support towards promoting the luxurious resorts under Lily Hotels. Chandigarh is one of our most important markets and we eagerly look forward to welcoming travellers from the region."



## ***The Connaught, New Delhi - IHCL SeleQtions hosts second edition of Cooksmiths***

IHCL SeleQtions recently launched Cooksmiths in association with WestStyleClub, a one-day fun-filled activity aimed at inspiring young minds while allowing them to hone their skills under the guidance of able Chefs and mentors. While the first cook-off was held at President, Mumbai, the second edition was held at The Connaught, New Delhi on April 23 and the next edition is scheduled at Blue Diamond, Pune - IHCL SeleQtions Hotels. Celebrity Chef Harangad Singh and Creative Director, Food Enthusiast Sneha Arora, guided and announced the winner for Cooksmiths 2022 at The Connaught, New Delhi - IHCL SeleQtions.

Taljinder Singh, Senior Vice President SeleQtions & Mumbai, said, "In line with our commitment of creating unique experiences, Cooksmiths is an endeavour to engage young minds and fuel creativity. Cooksmiths offers them a unique platform to discover not just food but also harness imagination, empowerment and creativity. The first cook-off commenced at the foremost dining destination - President, Mumbai - IHCL SeleQtions, followed by another successful edition at the vibrant and new hospitality destination in the heart of the Capital - The Connaught, New Delhi and we are eagerly looking forward to the upcoming Cooksmiths at Blue Diamond, Pune."



## ***INTACH Delhi Chapter organises Heritage Award 2022 on April 25***

The central idea of the INTACH Delhi Chapter awards is to recognise, honour and encourage institutions and individuals for work done to increase awareness of heritage. The recognition is for work among the general public, or among public and private institutions, to directly or indirectly increase appreciation and awareness of the rich tangible and intangible heritage of Delhi. It is also to encourage and demonstrate that their efforts are recognised. The idea was to encourage and also appreciate the efforts made by the younger generation as well in saving the heritage.

Sohail Hashmi, the awardee is a man of profound scholarship in heritage, literary talent in English, Urdu and Hindi and is a well known writer - filmmaker on matters of culture. He is an educator and communicator in Built Heritage, culture and city history.

Samegh Batra from Friends of Heritage won an award at the occasion. Friends of Heritage is an institution headed by Samegh Batra. Two decades ago they began the restoration and Adaptive Reuse of the Kutub Sarai which triggered a culture movement around the Qutub Minar, where intelligent investments began to flow to create an extended environment that celebrated Heritage.

'Talent' is a unique organization that practices traditional Storytelling based on local narratives of the old city of Shahjahanabad. It's a collective of young and dynamic people working in areas of Heritage, Health, Environment, Education and Technology with Performing Arts. Their work has helped restore the pride people have in the Heritage of their own neighbourhoods, streets and general urban environment.







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## APPOINTMENTS



### **IndiGo (InterGlobe Aviation Ltd)**

IndiGo is expanding its global as well as domestic presence post-covid, by adding new routes and reinstating its older routes. Effective April 1, 2022, Vinay is heading Global Sales for IndiGo as the domestic & International travel is pegged to pick up sharply. In his last assignment, he was Regional Group Chief Operating Officer for South Asia, Middle East & North Africa, and Americas, and led business operations for VFS Global in these regions. He was responsible for driving strategy, new business development, and managing key client relationships besides operations delivery across these markets. Having joined VFS Global in 2013, he successfully managed multiple roles across the Globe and was appointed as a member of the VFS Global Executive Board in December 2018. His professional career spans 30 years in the travel industry. Prior to joining VFS Global in 2013, he worked with Emirates, Swissair & Galileo in key roles. Vinay has diversified aviation experience across managing passenger sales & ticketing, airport, as well as cargo operations.

### **Accor**

Accor, a world-leading augmented hospitality group with over 420 hotels across India, Middle East, Africa and Turkey, has appointed Laure Morvan as Chief Development Officer (CDO) to lead the development team driving the Group's strategic expansion while consolidating its leading position in the region.

Laure Morvan brings almost 20 years of experience and expertise in hotel development, marketing and project management in Europe, Middle East and Asia Pacific. She relocated to Singapore in 2012 to drive the development efforts across Asia Pacific in the luxury and premium segments, leading up to her latest role as Vice President Development Luxury Hotels Asia Pacific, which saw her driving the relationship on some notable and iconic projects including Fairmont Maldives Sirru Fen Fushi, Raffles at Galaxy Macau, Sofitel Ambassador Seoul Hotel & Serviced Residences, SO Kuala Lumpur Hotel & Residences and Sofitel Singapore City Center.



### **Cordelia Cruises**

Cordelia Cruises by Waterways Leisure Tourism Private Limited has announce the appointment of Oneel Verma as its Chief Operating Officer. Verma brings to the table a vast experience of over 30 years in sales, marketing, operations and general management across sectors like FMCG, Consumer Durables and Services including Telecom, Retail, Financial Services and Hospitality. In his new role, Verma will be spearheading the sales, marketing, customer services, human resources and IT functions. Prior to Cordelia Cruises he was working with Mahindra Holidays and Resorts India Limited as the Chief Customer Acquisition Officer. Verma has also worked with organizations like Carona Limited – Puma Division, Coca-Cola India, Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages, Cadbury Schweppes, Reliance Infocom, Tata Teleservices, Muthoot Fincorp and Sterling Holidays & Resorts (India) Limited (A Subsidiy of Thomas Cook India Limited) previously. "I am really looking forward to my stint with Cordelia and the timing could not have been better. With Covid behind us, the outlook is certainly promising and we have had tremendous business since the last eight months. Cordelia has made luxurious cruising affordable to the average Indian and this is certainly an exciting prospect" says Oneel Verma.

### **Fairmont Jaipur**

Fairmont Jaipur has announced the elevation of Indu Khatri as the luxury property's Director of Sales and Marketing. With a rich experience spanning over 15 years, Indu Khatri has proven to be a strong suit for Fairmont Jaipur. She joined Fairmont Jaipur last year as the Deputy Director of Sales and Marketing with a wealth of knowledge and an extensive background in the hospitality and trade industry.

Commenting on the announcement, Rajiv Kapoor, General Manager, Fairmont Jaipur said, "Indu is an adept resource to Fairmont Jaipur. Her exceptional experience in the hospitality industry makes her a master in her domain. We are delighted to have her in our team and are certain that with her expertise and diverse skill set, she will play a crucial role in helping us to translate our business objectives, as we continue to innovate and grow."







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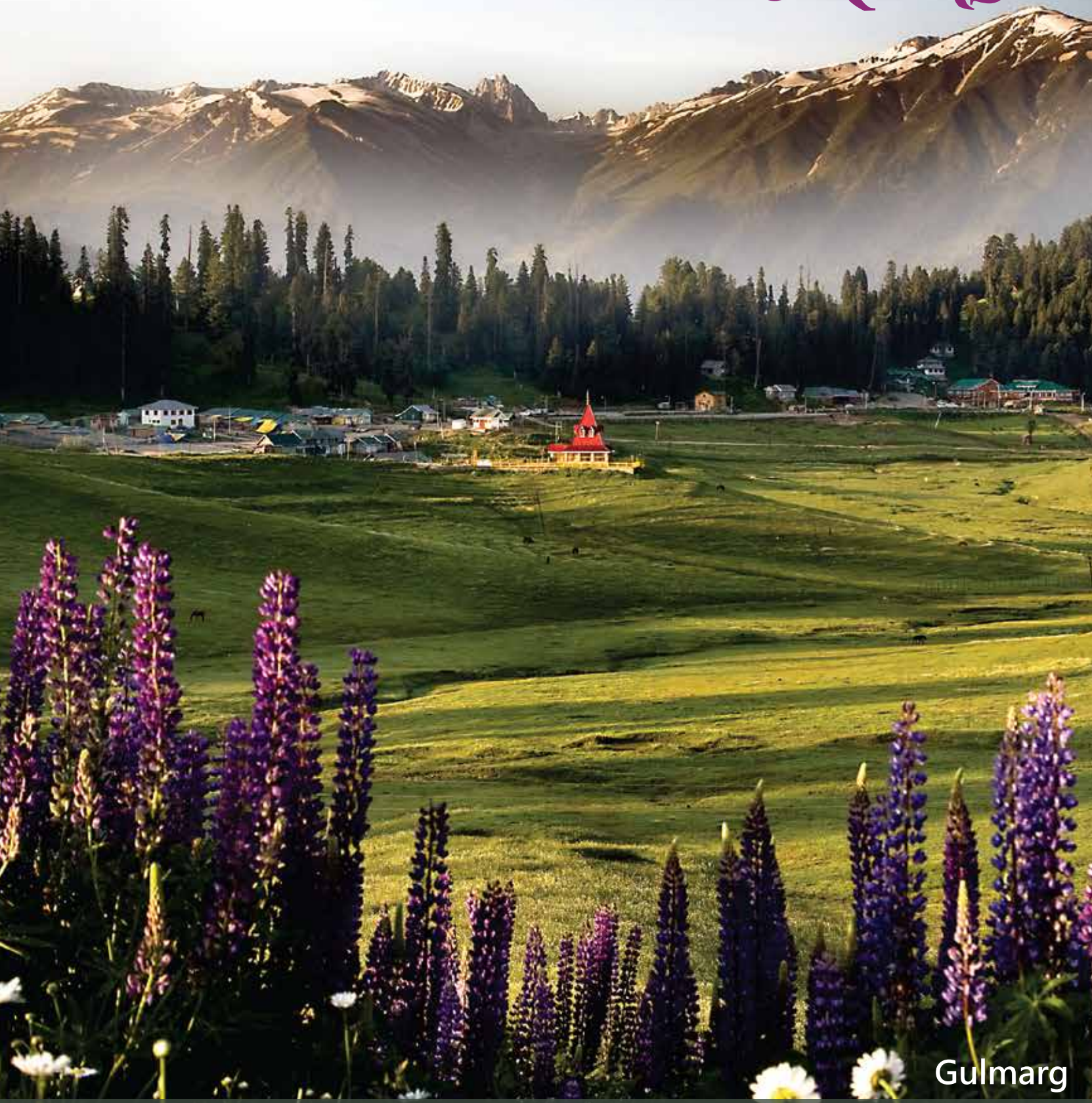






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# Paradise Beckons



Gulmarg

**Department of Tourism Jammu & Kashmir**