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# Editor's Letter

Words like 'vacation' and 'travelling' bring about an instant gush of joy and enthusiasm. Our industry is not only the most glamorous (as it's portrayed and rightly so), but it's also the industry of dream merchants, as you all assist in fulfilling bucket lists. Somehow, I always feel while penning down the editor's letter as I perceive that we are inching towards a better phase with each passing day. Slowly and steadily, visa concerns are being taken care of, new flight schedules have been announced and events... oh holy lord! Our team is under tremendous pressure to mastering the art of omnipresence, only to execute the requirement of being everywhere (no puns intended). But hey, I don't mind either.

Even with the incessant juggling and hustling, there's a sense of refreshment in all of this and trust me when I emphasise that I'm not the only person feeling this. I called an industry friend who was travelling non-stop for work and jokingly asked him to take a break, responding he laughingly said- I'm scared of breaks now, I only need escalators. So yes, we are all back in action like never before.

It's now more important than ever with industry maintaining its communication and strong partnerships with clients, who upsell their offerings and bring in high-profit sales. Precisely the reason behind Travel Turtle wanting to capitalise on its strong reach and venturing into the b2b travel events space with 'The Travel Marketplace' taking place in Raipur and Indore this month.

This edition finds us in hot pursuit of the latest and most distinctive properties and varied experiences that have opened their doors for business. These magnificent hospitality beacons, framed amongst some of the most dramatic settings in the world, are set to captivate travel connoisseurs. Thus we have the Palace Downtown in the heads in beds section. We witnessed the best of LA live and trust me you'll be hooked to the beauty and experiences of this jewel of the west. Mauritius and Cork are some other destinations that are waiting to be discovered, so we thought to bring them to you.

During the last month we also launched 'REDISCOVER RAJASTHAN' at RDTM Jaipur which garnered a great response from industry stalwarts and we're genuinely grateful for the amount of appreciation we have received.

Rounding up the August Issue with gratitude - I want to remind you to unplug, explore and enjoy all that the world has to offer.

Share your feedback and suggestions at [bharti@travelturtle.world](mailto:bharti@travelturtle.world)

Happy Reading!



**Bharti Sharma**  
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AUG 31-3 SEPT 2022	SEPT 26-29 2022	NOV 1-4 2022	DEC 12-15 2022	JAN 2023	FEB 2023



## **Chris Gayle to assist Jamaica Tourism Promotion in Asian Market**



Jamaica's Ministry of Tourism intends to capitalise on the popularity of explosive West Indies and Jamaican opening batsman-turned-reggae-artist Chris Gayle, in making inroads in the huge-but-untapped Asian market.

"Chris Gayle is certainly a huge asset to Jamaica and a central figure in the engagement of Asians, particularly Indians," Tourism Minister, Edmund Bartlett said. "When you call his name in India it is magic, so whatever important values he brings to this engagement, however, it can enhance Jamaica's presence in that market, that is something we are not about to pass on," he added.

Minister Bartlett prompted that Asia, including the Middle East, is one of the newer markets that the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) has been pursuing. The Asian market has been growing exponentially and has taken on renewed interest. The largest continent in the world, with a population of 4.5 billion people, Asia is diversely rich in people, culture, and resources. The technological boom, the decline in poverty, and the rise in income levels have made the Asian market attractive.

### **Azerbaijan Airlines (AZAL) to start flights to Baku from New Delhi in August**

Azerbaijan Airlines has started ticket sales for flights to Heydar Aliyev International Airport, Azerbaijan Baku from India. The first flight took place from New Delhi on August 10, 2022.

According to the schedule, the frequency of flights will be twice a week: flights from Baku will be operated on Tuesdays and Fridays, and from New Delhi - on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

It should be noted that AZAL performs the flight program en route Baku-New Delhi-Baku in partnership with Zeal Global Group.

Azerbaijan has emerged as a popular Silk Road tourist destination for the world. Baku, the stunning capital of Azerbaijan, is one of the best stops on a trip to Europe. With a beautiful 20 km (65,616 ft) long coastline, this unique city has so much to offer to travelers; from beaches and volcanoes to a cityscape where the ancient meets the new.

Flight tickets for these flights can be booked on the official website of the Airline ([www.azal.az](http://www.azal.az)), as well as at the air carrier's accredited agencies.



# IHG<sup>®</sup>

## HOTELS & RESORTS

### **IHG strengthens portfolio in Rajasthan with a Crowne Plaza Resort signing in Pushkar**

IHG<sup>®</sup> Hotels & Resorts, one of the world's leading hotel companies has signed a management agreement with SRDF Ventures Private Limited to develop a new Crowne Plaza Resort in the city of Pushkar – a key tourism destination in Rajasthan and a town known for its cultural fairs and religious festivities. Crowne Plaza Resort Pushkar will be a new-built property featuring 125 rooms and is expected to be operational by early 2026.

With currently two operating hotels and two under development in Rajasthan, Crowne Plaza Resort Pushkar will be the fifth hotel from IHG to open in the state, along the NH8 highway. With this signing, the company aims to further strengthen its premium offering for travellers visiting popular tourism destinations across Rajasthan.



### ***Qatar Tourism launches Qatar Specialist Programme to upskill global travel trade partners***

Qatar Tourism has launched a new, interactive online training course– Qatar Specialist Programme - designed to enhance its global travel trade partners' knowledge of Qatar's diverse product offering and provide a recognised qualification for its global travel trade partners.

The programme, which uses the latest technologies in digital learning, replaces the current Tawash programme and supports Qatar's mission to become a leader in Service Excellence. Available in 11 languages, Qatar Specialist Programme equips trade partners with the relevant knowledge and tools to promote and sell Qatar internationally more effectively.

Comprising several modules, each focusing on a particular aspect of Qatar's tourism offering, the programme allows participants flexibility, letting them complete each module at their own pace, supported by an intuitive, engaging educational tool. Features include interactive maps and knowledge check quizzes.



### ***TAAI to hold its 66th Cruising Convention in Singapore in August***

Office Bearers and Managing Committee Members at both National and Regional levels of TAAI informed and invited their members to the 66th Cruising Convention from 22nd - 25th August 2022.

Speaking about the event, Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI said that association's strength is in facilitating business-to-business and people-to-people contacts to support its members. And, therefore, we are inviting members to embark on a journey to rebuild the network and relationships post-pandemic.

A strong and committed travel trade professional for four decades; Mayal has been advocating the need for bilateral and multilateral tourism promotion even before taking over as the President in 2019. She shared that the close proximity of Singapore & the opportunity to promote regional tourism is the need of the hour to strengthen bi-lateral relations, develop trade, investments & tourism, to experience the serene beauty of destinations like Singapore and Penang, Malaysia.

Jay Bhatia, Vice President added that the TAAI's 66th Cruising Convention will be a lifetime experience. The Cruise-to-Cruise experience will begin and end in Singapore. We have roped in the Royal Caribbean International and shall be boarding the 'Spectrum of the Seas. The largest, best, and newest Cruise ship in the world, 'Spectrum of the Seas' offers great food, warm hospitality, and various other unique experience, apprised Bhatia.

### ***Bahrain International Airport welcomes the maiden IndiGo flight from Mumbai***

Bahrain Airport Company (BAC), the operator and managing body of Bahrain International Airport (BIA), welcomed the arrival of the inaugural IndiGo flight from Mumbai to Bahrain, following the commencement of a new direct service. The aircraft received a water cannon salute as it taxied to the terminal to mark the occasion.

A BAC delegation led by Chief Commercial Officer, Ayman Zainal; Director, Aeronautical Revenues, Shashi Panicker; and Manager, Airline Marketing & Routes Development, Nawal Al Majed, welcomed IndiGo's Director of Start-Up Operations, Gurpreet Grewal; Airport Manager, Rohan Ravindra Jagtap; Airport Security Officer, Reena Dias; and Mohit Goyal from the IT Department. Also in attendance were representatives from World Travel Service, the general sales agents for IndiGo in Bahrain, including CEO, Hisham El Saadi; General Manager, Haifa Oun; and Airport and Cargo Manager, Ebrahim A.Rasool Al Banna.

Mr. Sanjay Kumar, Chief Strategy and Revenue Officer, IndiGo said, "We are pleased to announce Bahrain as our 25th international and 99th overall destination in the 6E network. These new flights will enhance international connectivity and bolster trade, commerce and tourism between India and the Kingdom of Bahrain, which is known for its pearl diving and trading tradition. Bahrain will be the first post covid international addition to the 6E network. We will strive to stay true to our promise of affordable fares, on-time performance, courteous and hassle-free service across wide network, onboard our lean clean flying machines."







**25hours Hotel One Central has joined hands with IRIS Reps for Representation Sales and Marketing in India**

Overlooking the Museum of the Future and boasting 434 bedrooms and suites, 25hours Hotel One Central tells the region's story through its interiors, combining the ancient traditions of the Bedouins with a progressive, forward-thinking design and a nod to the future. Masterminded by Christoph Hoffman and renowned interior design firm, Woods Bagot, elements of tales where the traditional meets the modern are intricately woven and exhibited floor-by-floor, creating an entirely contemporary narrative, promising a truly one-of-a-kind experience featuring over 6000 pieces of art and objects throughout. "We are excited to have IRIS Reps support the ongoing success of 25hours Hotel One Central - the first hotel of its kind to open outside Europe and the largest in the company. The property has received significant publicity since opening in December 2021, challenging norms in Dubai and most recently recognised on the 2022 Conde Nast Traveller Global Hotlist. We look forward to working closely with the IRIS Reps team to develop great awareness for the property and brand," shares Aisling Jennings, Director of Sales.



**LINKIN Reps appointed as India Representative for Haritha Villas + Spa, Sri Lanka**

LINKIN Reps has been appointed the India sales, marketing and Public Relations representation office for Haritha Villas+ Spa, Sri Lanka. LINKIN Reps will be responsible for driving holistic sales, trade marketing and PR Strategies in India for Haritha Villas+ Spa, Sri Lanka.

"India has always been a very important market for us, not only as it is the number 1 inbound market to Sri Lanka, but also due to them being our closest regional neighbour. The long-standing friendship and support rendered to Sri Lanka by the people of India have been pivotal in supporting us in this very difficult time of unprecedented economic uncertainty as well as the global pandemic and other international shocks. Keeping this in mind, we are happy that LINKIN Reps will represent us, with their vast tourism experience and through their large network of travel agents in the country to promote our little island and Haritha Villas + Spa to the luxury travel segment in India", said Thanuja Weerasinghe, Sales & Marketing.





***Pulse Hotels & Resorts announces the opening of its newest addition to its portfolio, Nova Maldives***

Nova stands for a modern all-inclusive community concept, a laidback place with a soul that sparks joy and is designed for millennial travellers and real connections. A bright new star in the Maldives is born! Located in the heart of the Maldives' renowned South Ari Atoll, just 25 minutes away by seaplane from the Velana International Airport, Nova is an all-natural island with soul that sparks joy and is designed for real connection with a modern all-inclusive community concept. Nova believes in a greater calling than simply a lifestyle holiday destination, it's where people can live in the moment and immerse themselves into the spirit of the Maldives and the vibrant Nova community.



# Marriott

## INTERNATIONAL

***Marriott International signs agreement with Medallion Group to bring the Courtyard by Marriott brand to Mohali***

Marriott International has recently announced it has signed an agreement with Turnstone Realty LLP (Medallion Group) to bring Courtyard by Marriott to the city of Mohali in Punjab. Located in the heart of the commercial hub, the new 130-room Courtyard by Marriott Mohali is expected to offer business travellers a continually elevated experience that meets the generational shift in how our guests work and travel today.

"Northern India is evolving at a rapid pace, and we want to be a partner in this growth story, said Ranju Alex, Area Vice President, South Asia, Marriott International. We are thrilled to be expanding Courtyard by Marriott to new and convenient business hubs across India and in places such as Mohali, which has witnessed exponential growth as the premier commercial and IT centre of Punjab. We believe this new hotel, once opened, will meet the demands of the next generation global business travellers with its innovative technology combined with style and comfort."

Sharing his thoughts on the signing Mr. Gulzar Inder Singh – MD, Turnstone Realty LLP (Medallion Group) said "We at the Medallion Group are pleased to collaborate with Marriott International to bring the globally-renowned Courtyard by Marriott brand to Mohali. We are confident that this project will help position Mohali as a global business and entertainment hub in the recent times to come."

***Israel to allocate NIS 45 million to encourage Foreign Productions in the country***

An inter-ministerial initiative - high grants for foreign movies and TV productions filmed in Israel

In a joint statement issued by the Ministries of Culture and Sports, Economy and Industry, Finance, Foreign Affairs and Tourism, the State of Israel announces its entry in the field of international film and television productions.

The financial aid will be given by the governmental ministries to strengthen Israeli production companies operating in cooperation with foreign production companies in Israel. Over the next two years, the special collaboration will grant reimbursement for production expenses of up to 30% to foreign productions of movies and TV series that are filmed in Israel. The move aims to positively brand the State of Israel in the world as a centre for shooting international films and TV series, using natural resources and unique historical filming sites. In addition, the goal of the action is to encourage incoming tourism as well as increase employment in Israel following the high exposure to sites and places in Israel.

"Israel is a treasure trove for international film productions, in all formats. With existing facilities production services and infrastructure, a host of skilled professionals, and an available pool of graduates from the world's leading film schools, Israel should be on the list of every Indian film maker. In 2017, Dharma Productions chose to film the song 'Makhna' with Jacqueline Fernandes and Sushant Singh Rajput in Tel Aviv. This is the first step that was taken by the Israel Ministry of Tourism in India, which generated a lot of interest from the Indian film industry to shoot in the different parts of Israel. I hope this new initiative from the different ministries will pave the way for more opportunities to bring Indian productions to Israel," said Sammy Yahia, Director of Tourism to India and Philippines.





# Safari Tourism

## Enticing lion's share of tourists

Over the years, the basic concept of Safari has remained the same, which basically involves observing wildlife from four-wheel drive vehicles and tented accommodations. However, traditionally elephant-backs were used as means for observing wildlife and hunting, which has been replaced by vehicles for good and luxury tents and lodges have infiltrated the safari space. Also, new forms of safari have emerged, which include trekking, kayaking or camel safaris.

- Bharti Sharma





The inception of the term 'Safari' can be traced from Swahili, which means 'journey'. It became prevalent in the colonial times, used by English or German referring to hunting expeditions. In present times, the term Safari is synonymous with wildlife watching tourism and refers to the aspect of tourism being carried out primarily in protected regions, offering the opportunity to photograph and observe wildlife in its natural habitat. Currently the term safari is most often used as a synonym for wildlife watching tourism and refers to tourism taking place mainly in protected areas that offers the opportunity to observe and photograph wild animals in their natural habitats. Over the years, the basic concept of Safari has remained the same, which basically involves observing wildlife from four-wheel drive vehicles and tented accommodations. However, traditionally elephant-backs were used as means for observing wildlife and hunting, which has been replaced by vehicles for good and luxury tents and lodges have infiltrated the safari space. Also, new forms of safari have emerged, which include trekking, kayaking or camel safaris.

### **All monkeys cannot hang on the same branch**

Let us unearth some interesting facts before further exploring the niche. In a study conducted by the UNWTO with 145 participating tour operators, it was observed that 54-61 per cent of these tour operators offer wildlife watching

tourism products in Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa and Tanzania. The survey also established that safari tours are the main wildlife watching product, being offered by 55 per cent of the tour operators, which is followed by bird watching (offered by 31 per cent) in the second place by a huge margin and tours for observation of marine wildlife at a distant third place, currently offered by 16 per cent tour operators. In the present scenario, safari tourism in Africa is an experiential concoction of getting a taste of the local cultures of Africa, indulging in breath-taking sightseeing and partakes in adventure and outdoor activities.

### **When the baobab tree has fallen, the goats start climbing on it**

We're living in a numbers world, and it is practically impossible to establish the importance of any subject, without understanding the monetary side of it. Well, the global safari tourism market size was valued at a whopping USD 32.3 billion in 2021 and is anticipated to swell at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.3 per cent from 2022 to 2030. The urge to staying close to the nature, the increasing interest of bloggers and influencers in safari travel is the key factor fuelling the monumental growth of safari tourism. Travel blogging is becoming a major influencing factor in shaping up people's choice of traveling. There is a good number of travel bloggers and influencers on social

networking sites with large follower base. The increasing preference of people for unique as well as exotic holiday experiences, growth in middle and upper-middle-class spending capacity, and the growing impact of social media on the travel industry are the major factors that drive this phenomenal growth.

Out of all the regions, Asia Pacific is expected to grow at the fastest CAGR of 5.8 per cent during the forecast period. Sizeable number of national parks, safaris, and wildlife reserves, which are being opened for tourists is the prime pushing factor for the blooming wildlife safari tourism in the Asia Pacific region. In addition, the availability of rich and diverse flora and fauna is powering the demand for safari vacations in the Asia Pacific. The countries fuelling the largest growth in the market are India, Nepal, and Bhutan. Nepal has nearly 72 per cent of the area under rich forests, thus safari tourism is a major revenue-generating industry in Nepal. Nepal has emerged as a hotspot of tourist-oriented activities, with travellers thronging the place year-round to enjoy unadulterated nature and relax.







### **A ride that should not be missed**

Luxury travel is a thing of the present. The niche, due to a number of reasons is growing at a tremendous rate and wildlife is not untouched by the demand. The recent years have witnessed a growing trend of experiencing luxury safaris during safari tourism in Africa. The idea is to enjoy the ecstasy of the natural habitat of African wildlife and tribal life without compromising on the comfort quotient. A fusion of tribal and modern vacationing, with travellers experiencing the euphoria of the wild paired with

luxury amenities; that is Luxury Safari laid out plain.

### **In the jungle, the mighty jungle**

To a distant observer, an aspect of this might seem detrimental to the wild expanse of Africa, or a dilution to the tribal culture of the natives. On the contrary, Safari tourism plays a pivotal role in the preservation of Africa's wild habitats and creatures. Sans the funds generated through tourism and related activities, it would become impossible to carry out campaigns for the preservation of Africa's wild. However, safari

tourism needs to be moderated and managed. It should be carried out in a manner that benefits the local communities and does not adversely affect the environment. Challenges call for improvisations, which is precisely why many safari parks are coming up with the concept of ethno-tourism where travellers get an opportunity to spend a few days among the locals, live their lifestyles and in the process understand the importance of conservation and sustainability. Since we're talking about improvisations, there is another noticeable trend; transformation of safari into a holiday trip, which is aimed at promoting sightseeing and photographing wildlife. This trend paired with the concept of ethno-tourism in safari tourism is a positive news for conservation and sustainability. Moreover, the acceptance of ethno-tourism in safari tourism among many tourists especially the young and working class tourists for

experiencing local lifestyles, diverse cultures and natural habitats, is a leap in the right direction.

### **The leopard does not change his spots**

There is no dearth of options when it comes to safari tourism, both in terms of offerings and destinations offering them. Different categories of safari trips provide diverse options to explore the wilderness. The countries stretched across continents that are favourites for safari tourism are Thailand, India, Nepal, and China in Asia, South Africa, Kenya, Botswana, Tanzania in Africa, and the Brazil. While, the home to safari are mostly developing economies, it's the developed western economies like the U.K., Germany, and France that top the list of most vital European source nations for safari tourism in terms of market size, followed by Spain, Italy, and the Netherlands.





### **A lion doesn't concern itself with the opinion of sheep**

The emergence of the social media space has brought the world closer, diminished boundaries and opened up the portal to the unexplored. This exposure has also fuelled the growth of the safari tourism niche. Creating and posting content on various social media platforms to increase online engagement is a proven tool for nearly every sector. The surge in content creators and influencers, with their huge follower-base have surged the interest of people in safari tourism through their travel content. Not restricted to this, the growing storytelling on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Blogger, and numerous other similar platforms has instilled people's interest in safari tourism on a global level.

### **One cannot resist the lure of safari**

Data suggests that out of the categories of travellers, the couples segment has contributed the largest market share for safari tourism and accounted for a revenue share of over 40.0 per

cent in 2021. Safari tourism as a couple does not only double the fun, the comfort, and the experiences but also assists in halving the budget. The unadulterated beauty of jungles and large national parks makes a safari honeymoon flawless for couples looking to add the adventurous touch to their honeymoon. Safari tourism when undertaken by a couple aids in building up relationships as it allows couples to spend time in the wilderness and engage in exciting activities together. Service providers are an important aspect in any genre of business. But their role increases manifold when it comes to a niche like safari tourism. Prominent players in the industry are constantly striving and upgrading to provide their customers with the best facilities in safari tourism. These companies play a pivotal role in expanding business in this sector in every corner of the world. Market players are entering into

mergers and acquisitions and strategic partnerships to expand their geographical footprints. Adoption of new-fangled technologies such as virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and IoT is being carried-out by key operators to provide advanced features to attract customers. Such initiatives are anticipated to produce high prospects for market growth in the forecast years. For instance, focus is being laid upon virtual reality by adventure safari operators in their endeavour to offer a realistic visual experience of safari activities and natural surroundings to the clients.

In totality, there are more than 50 safari parks in Africa itself that attract tourists from across the world to explore the

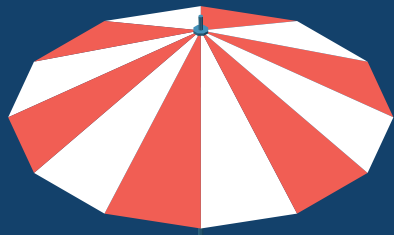
nature in its rawest form. The notable safari parks out of the lot include the Mala Mala Game Reserve, Serengeti National Park, Okavango Delta, Mana Pools National Park, Moremi Game Reserve, Sabi Sand Game Reserve, Phinda Game Reserve, Masai Mara National Reserve, Ruaha National Park, South Luangwa National Park, Ngorongoro Crater, Selous Game Reserve, Kidepo Valley National Park, Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, Chobe National Park, and Ol Pejeta Conservancy among others.



- The global safari tourism market size was estimated at USD 32.3 billion in 2021 and is expected to reach USD 33.37 billion in 2022.
- The global safari tourism market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 5.3% from 2022 to 2030 to reach USD 51.46 billion by 2030.
- Middle East and Africa dominated the safari tourism market with a share of 51.3% in 2021. This is attributed to the constantly growing popularity of African Safaris. Major countries such as South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Botswana, and Namibia are largely popular destinations for safari tours in Africa.



BIZ



# CORDELIA CRUISES

The perfect amalgamation of International travel experience with the Indian touch

Cordelia Cruises is offering its guests new themes and voyage lengths to meet the changing vacation patterns of today's travellers. In conversation with Travel Turtle, Oneel Verma, COO- Cordelia Cruises, shares how as an experience provider, they're making a difference while creating an unforgettable cruise experience for all our travellers.



- Bharti Sharma





First time ever in India, Cordelia Cruises introduces a cruising experience from Chennai and Vizag. How has it fared for you both in terms of business prospects and customer response?

After operating successfully in the west coast of India for the past 9 months, we realized that there is a lot of potential to explore the east coast of the country. With an extremely diverse culture on the east coast

Do you see these sailings being popular with first-time cruisers?

Absolutely!

The testimonials by our guests and the services we provide speak for themselves. Our guests come for a luxurious hospitality experience. Since its launch, we have witnessed a significant increase in customers. Other than just sailings, we've had bookings for weddings and corporate meetings as well with an overall increase across all sectors.



**Oneel Verma**  
COO- Cordelia Cruises

of our country we ventured to increase our presence there as well- the coast less explored but with a promising potential. The cruising experience from Chennai and Vizag is solely to provide our guests with an unforgettable experience of the southern eastern parts of our country.

We are very excited to have started our journey from Chennai and Vizag in June and are grateful for the heartwarming welcome we have had from the South with an overwhelming positive response in terms of business prospects. Customers have also given positive feedback and have had an enjoyable time aboard.

Cruising in itself is a whole new conversation for India and for the longest time it has been the less explored sector to experience hospitality or travel. The first time cruisers are usually curious and aspire to experience the stay on the sea rather than just watching it from the hotel windows or sea shore. The need to have something as magnificent as we have on land is what brings a lot of customers on board. The concept of a unique experience is something that makes people inquisitive and want to try it. It's a whole new experience of travel and hospitality that we unlock with cruising.





## What kind of growth have Cordelia witnessed ever since it started the operations?

Cordelia Cruises has successfully operated in the West Coast of India for the past 9 months with over 75,000 happy and satisfied guests. We take immense pride in being India's luxury cruise operator.



The overall demand for luxury travel and unique travel experiences has gone up by close to 40 per cent according to industry data. Customers wish to enjoy holidays that are far from the ordinary and have an element of curiosity and uniqueness to them. Families, couples, youngsters, single travellers etc. Everyone wants to be on the move, explore the world and do so in style. At Cordelia Cruises, especially, the first to sell out are our staterooms in premium and luxury categories. This is testimony to the fact that, today, travel is all about comfort, exclusivity and a novelty factor.





## How do you plan to assist and educate the tour operators and agents about the abundance offerings at Cordelia?

Post pandemic the whole travel and hospitality industry has changed a lot in terms of travel expectations and reality. While things are slowly going back to normal there are still many restrictions and new rules that have been actioned.

With respect to our tour operations and agents we mainly want to assist and encourage them and also educate them on how to reach out to the end consumers for the new cruising experience.

With international travel still being a challenge, Cordelia Cruises offers

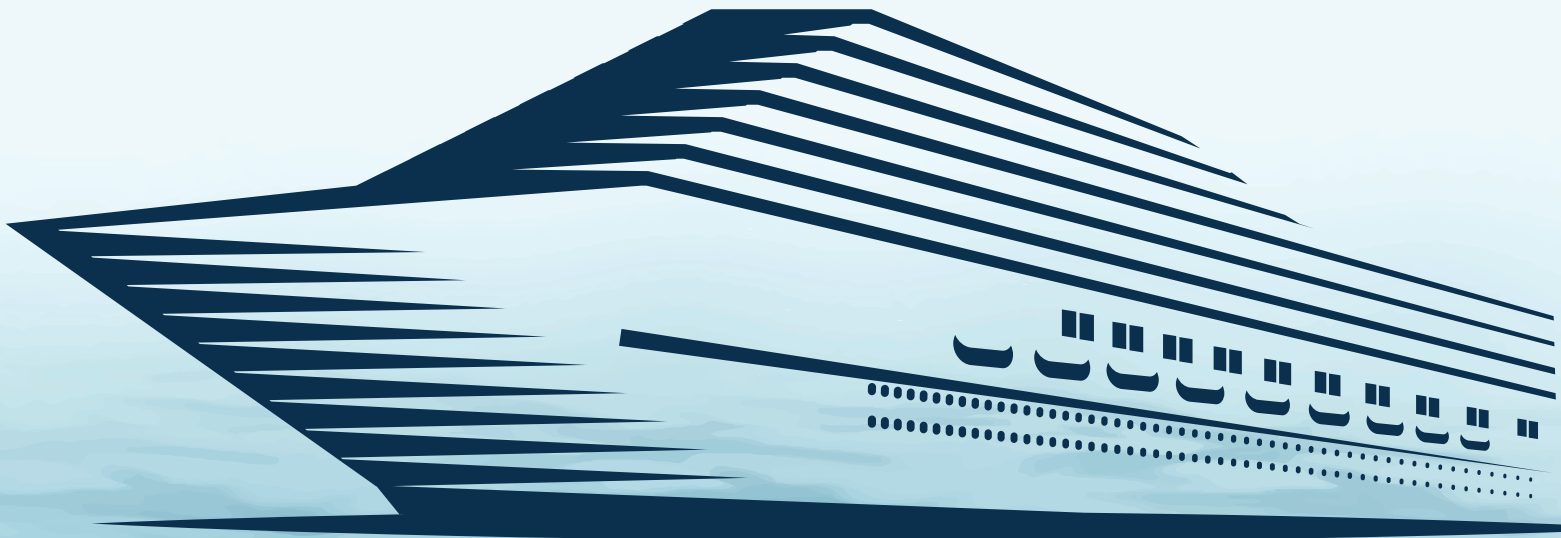
the perfect amalgamation of International level unique travel experience with the Indian touch. The focus is to let the operators and agents also know how to position the brand new experience for the Indian market. There are no passport issues, no visa issues, no International Flights, no difficult paperwork, only a great opportunity to get on the cruise and enjoy the experience.

We'd like to inform tour operators and agents through sales and marketing activities about our luxurious hospitality and other varied Indianized experiences on board- such as exquisite dining options and interesting extravagant shows.

Keeping the Glocal- Global yet local theme intact, Cordelia Cruises brings you dishes that are curated by the top chefs to suit the International standards

and Indianized dishes keeping in mind the tastes and preferences of the Indian traveler. From global grills, Indian street food to tandoor specialties, dining will definitely be one of the main highlights of your cruise holiday, Cordelia Cruises also offers Pan-Asian cuisines.

The entertainment offerings are curated in a way to have classic Indian melodies and also Bollywood Bash on board, they have the best of both worlds. Some of the shows that must be highlighted are- Broadway style performances like- Indian Cinemagic, Balle Balle, Magician's Cut, Burlesque- The Bollywood Way, Romance in Bollywood. With entertainment delights like DJ nights, live concerts with classy Indian music and movie nights planned on the cruise, the guests are in for some great fun.



# Enroute, HOLLYWOOD

One of the world's most dynamic and diverse destinations,  
LA is the cultural hub of the Pacific Rim.  
LA has 121 kilometers of shoreline, near perfect weather, more  
museums and entertainment than any other city in the United  
States, and an award winning culinary and gastronomy scene.  
Los Angeles represents endless possibilities for its visitors.  
Seema Kadam, Regional Director, India – Los Angeles Tourism &  
Convention Board shares more with Travel Turtle...

- Naina Nath







With Los Angeles Tourism launching its very first independent office in Mumbai in 2019 in collaboration with BrandUSA, LA Tourism has kept its marketing activities in full force even throughout the Covid pandemic by participating in virtual travel marts, educating the travel trade media about what's new and also conducting and taking part in online webinars. LA Tourism took part in SATTE 2022, being the first in person show in India, for the destination.

### **Diving in, hot and heavy with B2B**

In India, La Tourism is going slow on the B2C front, focusing currently on B2B activities with the trade. In collaboration with Travel Boutique Online (TBO) they have helped spread an understanding about their LA Insider program across India through conducting e-learning activities by continuing to spread awareness regarding Los Angeles and educating travel agents about the offerings of the destination. Of course, once visa regulations are streamlined, B2C activities will be the next point of focus for them.

### **Post pandemic trends on the rising**

Post-pandemic, Los Angeles has seen a number of Free



**Seema Kadam**  
Regional Director, India – Los Angeles  
Tourism & Convention Board

Independent Travelers (FIT) as more and more people are looking for offbeat experiences and destinations. The new age traveler wants to know, what else can be done? Besides the run of the mill. Group tours, though they have changed over the last couple of years, still continue to be part of the Indian Family travelers. Indians are traveling with a higher determination post pandemic as travel demand has been suppressed to such a great extent over the last couple of years and with countries opening their borders and welcoming tourists with open arms, travel is booming, and how!

### **Small facts lead to great knowing**

In 2021, 62,000 student visas were processed for the USA and in 2022 the number is even higher. The 5 big reputed universities that are in demand fall under the California region. In 2019, pre covid, 1,35,000 Indian tourists visited LA, despite not having any direct flight to the destination. To reach LA, visitors can travel to San Francisco, Seattle, and New York, and make their way to LA via a short flight or even by road. Airline carriers like the Atlantic, all European carriers, Middle Eastern carriers, Singapore Airlines, Cathay Pacific and Korean Air fly to LA via their respective hubs.





## OFFSHORE BINOCULARS



### Investing heavily in infrastructure

Los Angeles International Airport is California's largest airport, commonly referred to as LAX is undergoing massive modernization with over 14 Billion USD being spent on updating the infrastructure owing to the big ticket events that are to be held in LA in the future. LA is going to play host to some of the biggest events in the world like FIFA World Cup 2026, MLB All-Star Sports, the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2028 and so on. LA is also the host city for the Super Bowl Games every year with an average of 70,000 attendees each year.

### Welcoming tourists from around the world

The top 5 source markets for Los Angeles are the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, China and India. LA has opened independent offices

in all 5 of the above mentioned destinations in an effort to cater to its large population of international travelers. Speaking from an Indian perspective, Business Travel and Leisure Travel are the two main segments of travelers in the United States. LA has a number of MICE venues, and often business travel is viewed as an incentive as LA is a hub for IT. Leisure travel on the other hand consists of VFR travelers (visiting friends and relatives) as this is a major part of the Indian tourist's itinerary. The United States is now open to all and has welcomed over 5,80,770 visitors between January 2022 and June 2022, with 73 per cent of travelers being tourists, 17 per cent were students and 10 per cent were business travelers. LA has revoked the requirement for covid pre-testing and facial mask mandates. As long as you are double vaccinated, there are no other requirements.





**LA Insider revamped**

The LA Insider online training program is an online training tool for travel trade professionals around the world. It has been designed to help travel agents better sell the destination and stay up to date with its latest offerings. During the pandemic, the LA Insider program had a revamp, with 3 new international modules being introduced. The program can be completed seamlessly in a matter of 30 minutes with objective questions to be read and answered online. The completion of the program comes with many benefits, including an online certification and discounts on excursions and many other benefits for B2B travel agents including a personal itinerary for their next visit. In collaboration with TBO, LA Tourism conducted this program Pan India with over 250 travel agents participating, mainly those who deal with long haul destinations like Los Angeles.

**Accommodation at its best**

From 5 star oceanfront resorts to cozy Hollywood bungalows to contemporary downtown hotels, LA offers the perfect accommodation options to all its visitors. LA has over 1282 hotels with over 114,431 hotel rooms available currently. In the pipeline, are over 26 new hotel projects that are under construction as of now, which will add another 3926 rooms in LA by 2025. There was been a development boom in LA with global brands like Fairmont Century Plaza opening in September, Thompson Hollywood in August, Download LA Proper, Tommie Hollywood – JDV by Hyatt in December, Conrad LA and The Whiskey Hotel in 2022 itself.







## Top must-do experiences

### **Hike to the Hollywood sign-**

It's quite fitting that the Hollywood Sign, the worldwide symbol of the entertainment industry, was conceived as a temporary outdoor ad campaign in 1923 for a suburban housing development called "Hollywoodland". Today, they offer authorized hiking trails that meander through the rolling chaparral of the Santa Monica Mountains. These hiking trails are open from Sunrise to Sunset, 365 days a year and offer three routes namely the Mt. Hollywood Trail which is for beginners, the Brush Canyon Trail which is quite moderate and the Cahuenga Peak Trail which is the most difficult, and recommended for experienced hikers only. Once at the top, hikers can come in close contact, and absorb in the majestic views and take selfies by the famous Hollywood sign.

### **Take a renowned LA Food Tour-**

The Food Tours of LA offer to take you on a tasting adventure with delicious foods and drinks that have an international influence but are recreated with local style. As you walk and eat, you are entertained with stories of the city and its history. These tours can help you gain a better understanding of the local and diverse culture and cuisine. From bakeries to Texas style barbecues, The Downtown LA Food Tour has it all. The West Hollywood Food Tour takes you through authentic Mexican and Italian food options. The Venice Beach Food Tour would take you on the beach front and the Sidewalk Food Tour has something delicious for everyone. Besides that, LA has over 20+ Indian restaurants.

### **Soak in Art and Cinematic culture at The Academy Museum of Motion Pictures-**

The Academy Museum of Motion Pictures is the largest museum in the United States devoted to the arts, sciences and the artists of movie making. The Academy Museum offers exceptional exhibitions and programs that illuminate the world of cinema. The general admission ticket grants access to the art galleries. A separate ticket will be required to visit their popular exhibitions like Stories of Cinema, The Path to Cinema and so on. A special ticket needs to be bought to gain access to The Oscars® Experiences as for the other programs and movie screenings. The Academy Museum store and Fanny's restaurant and café are open to all.

### **Listen to Music at The Hollywood Bowl-**

Since its inception in 1922, the Hollywood Bowl has been the premier destination for live music in Southern California, hosting everyone from Billie Holiday to The Beatles. Here famous musicians perform under the iconic silhouette of its concentric-arched band shell. The Hollywood Bowl can seat over 80,000 guests and they have their very own Orchestra, which is an international mix of classically trained musicians who are among the best studio musicians in Los Angeles.

"Having a 10 year visa is a great advantage with the USA. If you have the visa, it gives you the opportunity to travel several times to the destination. Though we understand the overall challenges with visas, we foresee it opening up soon. We have had a record number of student visas in 2021 and I'm pretty sure we will close on a great note in 2022 as well!" Seema Kadam, Regional Director, India – Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board







The Amar Mahal, located at the centre of the city Udaipur, would showcase the beauty of the town, from mesmerising dawns to relieving sunsets. Profoundly well known as the city of lakes, Udaipur would never miss a chance to portray its royalty & luxury.

The Amar Mahal adds to the core of luxe stays and vivid amenities.

Udaipur is also known as Venice of the East and the City of Lakes. A beautiful destination for vacationers with heritage spots dotted throughout the town, The Amar Mahal brings an equivalently charismatic option for budget accommodation in Udaipur. Moreover, it provides a glance into the tradition of Rajasthan with its boutique rooms and suite in Udaipur, which are styled traditionally with beautiful wall frescos and headboards.

Accommodated with 9 Royal Suites, 42 Super Deluxe Rooms and 12 Executive rooms, this resort would be a perfect pick for your stay. Amenities like Multi Cuisine Restaurants, Bar, Swimming pool, Wifi, Conference Hall, Travel Desk, Spa, Indoor Games, Outdoor Games and Pet Friendly aura, The Amar Mahal would not skip a chance to make you feel at home.

A rooftop eatery overlooking the stirring skyline is the icing on the cake. World-class establishments and amenities make it one of the elegant hotels in Udaipur near the lake. The resort is best suited for business and leisure patrons looking for the best Lakeview hotels in Udaipur.



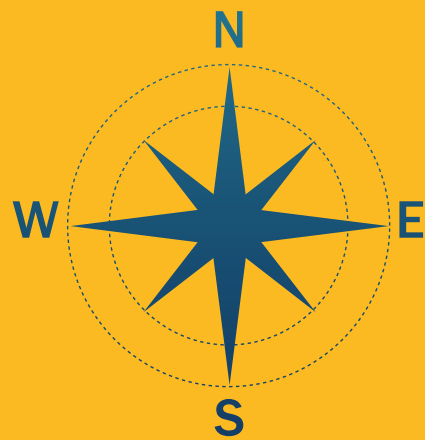
# TravStack: Travel technology's game changer

TravStack is a travel operating system that provides powerful SaaS tools to tour operators, travel agents & other travel businesses. The product suite includes smart Itinerary builder, DIY online travel store with No-code CMS, travel CRM with query management and social integrations. Mounika Pothineni, Co-Founder, TravStack tells how TravStack can revolutionize the small and medium sized businesses with its seamless features.

- Bharti Sharma







TravStack solutions assist travel professionals to jumpstart their digital transformation and branding, improve their operations and customer engagement by bringing productivity and automation into their daily operations. Compared to existing solutions TravStack is built keeping in mind the small and medium sized businesses so the usability factor is quite easy and intuitive compared to complex legacy systems that already exist in the market. They have a frictionless on-boarding process without any locking time or setup fee. Businesses can also avail trial access and experience the platform beforehand. All the tools are independent and can be integrated effectively into their existing sites/solutions.

### **Time saving multipurpose tool**

With a one-stop solution for all travel tech needs, TravStack is cost effective given its monthly subscription plans and agility in innovation as per changing industry requirements. TravStack aims to keep businesses two steps ahead of its digitally savvy customers. Sharing more insights, Mounika shares, "The GTM and affordability for businesses compared to build versus buy plays a huge role when it comes to our solution. They can use the tools from day 1 without any waiting time and witness ROI compared to investing their own money and managing projects in-house and getting them done."

### **Reaching wider audience**

TravStack is aiming to tap into at least 5,000 - 10,000 businesses within the next 1 year with their travel tech tools. Talking about marketing initiatives, she says, "Clearly, we are

focused on empowering all SMB and offline businesses with digitally transformative tech. We would like to closely work with travel associations, promote through expos, listen to their pain points/use cases and suggest the right product offerings. We would also reach wider audiences through digital collaborations like webinars etc., We are happy to have onboard an industry veteran like Ravi Gosain, MD, Erco Travels who could steer us in the right direction in terms of positioning our product to prospect clients. We would also appreciate his industry experience translating into product use cases and product market fit."

### **Right time for all travel businesses to go online**

TravStack is focused on human run businesses like tour operators and travel agents who play a huge role in making your holiday experience better with all their travel network and ad hoc adjustments if something doesn't go as per plan. "In the west, travel advisors have a lucrative career and is a well established industry. However, in India with digital savvy customers being the highest population of travellers it is the right time for all travel businesses to go online to serve them in a frictionless manner. Word of mouth plays a huge role in the travel segment and with proper digital presence anyone can comfortably share business credentials to their friends and family. Without a digital portfolio and rightful tools for sales and marketing, businesses wouldn't sustain or scale in the long term. With our tools we want to empower businesses to build their brand and streamline their workflow effectively," shares Mounika.

### **Building substantial supply chain through travel technology**

More than 90 per cent of the businesses are offline by nature at the moment including offbeat stays, experiences and tours provided locally. TravStack wants to build a sophisticated supply chain through travel technology in India. Mounika would like to digitally transform

BIZ



them first for better discoverability in their first network and later on project their discoverability across the nation and globe building a credible network of travel businesses. She adds, "There is always an innate demand for travel and currently India has huge potential for growth in the travel industry. The experiential travel has been growing at 20 per cent year-on-year and millennial, genZ travellers would play a massive role in boosting the travel industry. With their digital acumen it is an important step for businesses to step up their services in a more consumer friendly and engaging manner."

### **Boosting businesses identity and growth**

India has 100,000+ licensed and taxpaying travel businesses as per

the recent statistics. There are many more individually owned businesses and advisors in addition to the above figure. TravStack's solutions are white labeled that boosts business's identity and growth. Talking about its high relevance, Mounika mentions, "An operator/agent has to use at least 5-10 portals to perform backend bookings and communications. With our integrations they can pretty much communicate all the queries at one place, build packages comfortably and also book inventory like flights/hotels, all at one place. Our automated posters, PDFs will save their time and maintain consistency when shared to customers."





### **Great bridge for customers to businesses**

There are always new features getting added to the product pipeline. The product is going to significantly transform in every quarter, keeping pace with market trends and demand. As the businesses start using the tools they would see a remarkable improvement in their business efficiency. "As many people are restructuring their businesses from offline to online and recruiting new resources from the laid-off gaps our cloud solution is going to serve as a bridge between customers and businesses as well as a collaborative tool within the organisation also playing the role of a knowledge sharing platform. As I mentioned there will be significant transformations every quarter, the few Add-ons in our solutions from this quarter are flight, hotel supply built into the system, Buy now pay later, EMI options enabled for customer bookings and multiple social media integrations to handle all the queries at one place," she concludes.



### **Ravi Gosain Strategic Investor & Growth Consultant, TravStack**

Being a passionate tourism entrepreneur and a technology enthusiast, I have been closely following evolution of technology in this segment for last few years. I was eager to explore this segment through a validated innovative solution, which could support tourism players in promoting their business, focussing on sales rather being occupied in back office development and maintenance. Although, we already have a few successful tech StartUps in both travel and tourism segments but most of them cater directly to consumers and / or some B2B solutions where they are limited to CRM, marketing & sales leads etc.

TravStack is a unique Startup which is addressing major pain areas of travel & tourism sector like creating and developing a website, branding, designing, managing leads, sales, bookings, social media management, promotional mailers, creating posters etc., a solution in a few clicks from a simple dashboard. Importance of technology in travel is no more a mystery to any of us and traditional ways have gone for a toss post pandemic. I am sure most Travel agencies or Tour operators are hesitant to re-start their business with full-fledged investments and are instead looking for solutions which are cost effective, productive and easy to operate. TravStack has brought up a fantastic tool in this direction which will not only enable entrepreneur to enhance their efficiency but also increase their productivity with a complete digital makeover.





# *Vietjet announces 11 new direct routes connecting key Indian cities*

Vietjet, Vietnam's largest private carrier is offering its flyers the most comprehensive flight network ever; connecting India and Vietnam. Jay L Lingeswara, Commercial Director, Vietjet talks about exciting expansion plans.

- Bharti Sharma

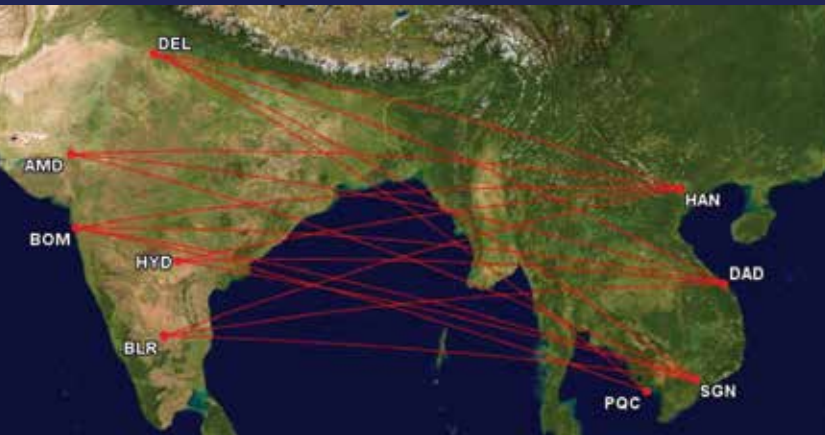




## AEROPHILE

After connecting Delhi and Mumbai to the country, Vietjet has announced new regional hubs at Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, and Bengaluru adding 11 new direct flights to key Vietnamese destinations, totaling its India-Vietnam flight network to 17 routes from September 2022 onwards.

The new routes include Vietnamese cities like Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, PhuQuoc islands and the famous coastal city Da Nang and commence operations in the fourth quarter of this year. These new direct flights will make it easier and more affordable for Indian travelers to visit not only Vietnam but also connect to other destinations like Bali, Bangkok, Malaysia, Singapore and soon, Australia.



Jay L Lingeswara





## *Off to new heights!*

The fleet for the Mumbai and New Delhi connections to Vietnam has recently been upgraded from Airbus A320 which has 180 seats to Airbus A321 which can hold up to 240 seats to meet the demand. To celebrate this milestone, the airline has launched special promotional offers of super low-fare tickets starting INR 9\* from July 19 to 21, 2022. The applicable travel period is from August 15, 2022, to March 26, 2023 and can be applied to all routes between the two countries.

Commenting on the expansion of the international flight network, Jay L Lingeswara said, "As the world reopens to travel and feedbacks on our current India-Vietnam routes are excellent, we now prioritize to expand and increase flight operations to India. Vietnam is poised to be an ideal destination for the Indian travelers recently considering the country's own tourist attractions while also being a bridge to South, East and North Asian destinations and truly the perfect package for all world travelers."

"With the expansion of Vietjet's flight network from all major cities in India to Vietnam and Southeast Asia, Vietjet is now offering more flexibility, seamless connectivity to help travelers realize their dream trips and experiences at the most affordable prices. Our efforts are aimed at enabling better connectivity for our Indian travelers in line with the consistent rise in demand for both leisure and business travel," he added.

## *Back to seamless travel*

Vietnam was one of the first few countries that opened its borders for the world post-pandemic. Today, they are proud to have lifted all Covid related arrival restrictions and travelers can enjoy their entry into the country in a complete pre-pandemic fashion. Indian travelers coming to PhuQuoc are eligible for a 30-day visa exemption to experience all the good stuff that the paradise island has to offer and for the rest of Vietnam, Indians can seamlessly apply for an e-visa online.





# Reallocating from transactional to personalised and more meaningful experiences

The enthusiasm with which new norms have been accepted and adopted has obliged, facilitated and empowered innovation. **Manish Pratik, Director, Eastbound** shares with us ways in which the pandemic has decidedly been a period of intensive change for all of us collectively and at individual levels.

- Bharti Sharma





Patterns indicate that inbound tourism, even under normal circumstances, has been cyclical. In his entire career, Manish has seen inbound peaking a few times in the mid-90s, around 2004 - 2008 and then again between 2018-20 before taking a hit by Covid. This cyclical pattern has been true not only to India but for several other destinations. Apart from external factors like geo-political situations, there are several dynamics at play that directly impact pricing, including marketing efforts put in by the destination alongwith the overall balance in global demand and supply.

### **Pent up inbound demand**

'Somethings come only with experience', and speaking from experience Manish believes that by the next year or so the demand for Asian countries including the Indian sub-continent will be back with a bang. He also expects logistics and perception issues to be more favourable in the Indian context. He adds, "Going by the trends we can expect India as a tourism destination to bounce back in a year or two. Even if we consider the current scenario in our major source markets, which are primarily Europe, the USA, Canada, Russia and CIS, most of the travellers post-Covid first started travelling domestic and soon thereafter moved to nearby countries. For example sake; most American clients this summer are preferring to travel to Europe which is mostly because developed countries are perceived to be safe and more hygienic."

### **Need to reorganize and integrate the tourism industry**

It is imperative that the government and public(private) sector synergize to boost tourism inflow in the country. Manish also believes that tourism needs to be a priority sector for Government not only in theory but practically too. Quoting some interesting facts to substantiate his viewpoint, he shares, "The tourism industry, which contributes nearly 9.2 per cent to the country's GDP and generates 8.1 per cent of total employment, certainly deserves

more attention from the centre. If we can only simplify our visa procedure by offering visas upon arrival and discounting visa fees for the next few years it would be very productive for the overall growth of the industry. Similarly subsidized costs for participation in trade shows in India pavillions and discounted air tickets for marketing efforts by DMCs could do wonders in our efforts to revive the inbound traffic."

### **Educating partners about new developments**

The post-pandemic travel scenario has posed several challenges for destinations. The biggest challenge with us for enticing inbound travellers is reinstating the confidence in partners that India is safe to travel to. The need of the hour is to educate them about new developments in our travel industry including new products, experiences, infrastructure development, safety measures being undertaken and ease of travel. Eastbound is contributing its bit to reinstate that confidence, he shares, "Our efforts are directed towards delivering innovative ideas to our partners as per the individual requirements of clients and simultaneously educating the sales staff of tour operators through webinars and training programs, fam trips etc. Since most operators off-lately have been keeping busy with the live business to summer destinations, we need to proactively keep reminding them about India and why it should be their preferred choice as a winter destination"

### **Time for some govt intervention**

Inbound tourism is a sector where you are offering a continued and all-encompassing experience for the entire duration your client is traveling within your country. This experience sets in motion from the moment a client starts planning to travel to India and could be a combination of various factors including visa processing, air connectivity, health & hygiene,

safety, innovative experiences, hospitable stay etc., Manish exclaims, "The private sector including hotels and DMCs in India by and large provides an experience unlike anywhere else in the world but there are other dimensions that have a scope for improvement. One of the few measures that I think could positively impact consumer mindset is better pricing of private charters between destinations that lack good connectivity. Modern travellers don't wish to waste too much time in travelling between destinations. With large number of airstrips coming up across the country, if flying by smaller chartered aircraft is made more affordable it could be a game changer. For measures such as this, the Civil Aviation ministry has to jump in and develop new innovative policies."

### **Going an extra mile**

As far as tourism avenues are concerned, every state in India is a trove of treasure, waiting to be identified and celebrated. Every city has a special feature and character that needs to be preserved and promoted. He further adds, "Additionally, India has a rich heritage of world-renowned monuments but most of them are without clean toilet facilities. Thanks to the improved network of road infrastructure and the growing number of domestic travellers, we now have decent highway pit stops with clean toilet facilities, which was not the case ten years ago. The last decade has been marked with significant improvement in road infrastructure in the country for which we must appreciate the work done by our government. However, there is a lot of room for improvement that needs the government's attention."

### **Who won the race?**

Every state wants its fair share of the pie in terms of both domestic and international tourists. However, superb marketing campaigns, superior

communication and other factors have pushed some states in the lead. Manish commends Kerala Tourism for working closely with the private sector in making the destination globally popular. He mentions, "Their campaigns have also won many accolades. Madhya Pradesh tourism and J&K Tourism have also been doing a spectacular job off-late. One of the most striking marketing campaigns in recent years that drew a lot of attention towards the destination has been the 'Ilha de Cama' campaign by Diu Tourism. The mysterious campaign that left people guessing the location of the place was actually an ad to promote Diu as a tourist destination, which generated a lot of interest in the destination. It was a fantastic effort by a lesser-known destination. In the past one of the most iconic products - Palace on Wheels, was Rajasthan Tourism's revolutionary move that propelled the destination's popularity across the globe. Sadly, there have not been any similar noticeable follow-up attempts afterwards. Similarly, the Incredible India campaign was a promising effort but there is an urgent need for a revised 'Version 2' of the campaign in order to re-establish recall."

The government needs to undertake proactive measures by putting policies in place that are favorable for inbound tourism. At the same time, inbound companies need to remain mindful of their pricing strategy. "With increased demand in domestic travel, the hotel industry needs to make a conscious effort to ensure we remain an affordable destination for inbound market. There are hotel-chains that have doubled up their prices from pre-Covid times, which may not be received well once inbound traffic bounces back. With global inflation, high airfares due to increased fuel prices and inflated hotel tariffs there is a risk of India becoming an overpriced destination, and in the course discourage the inbound market," concludes Manish.



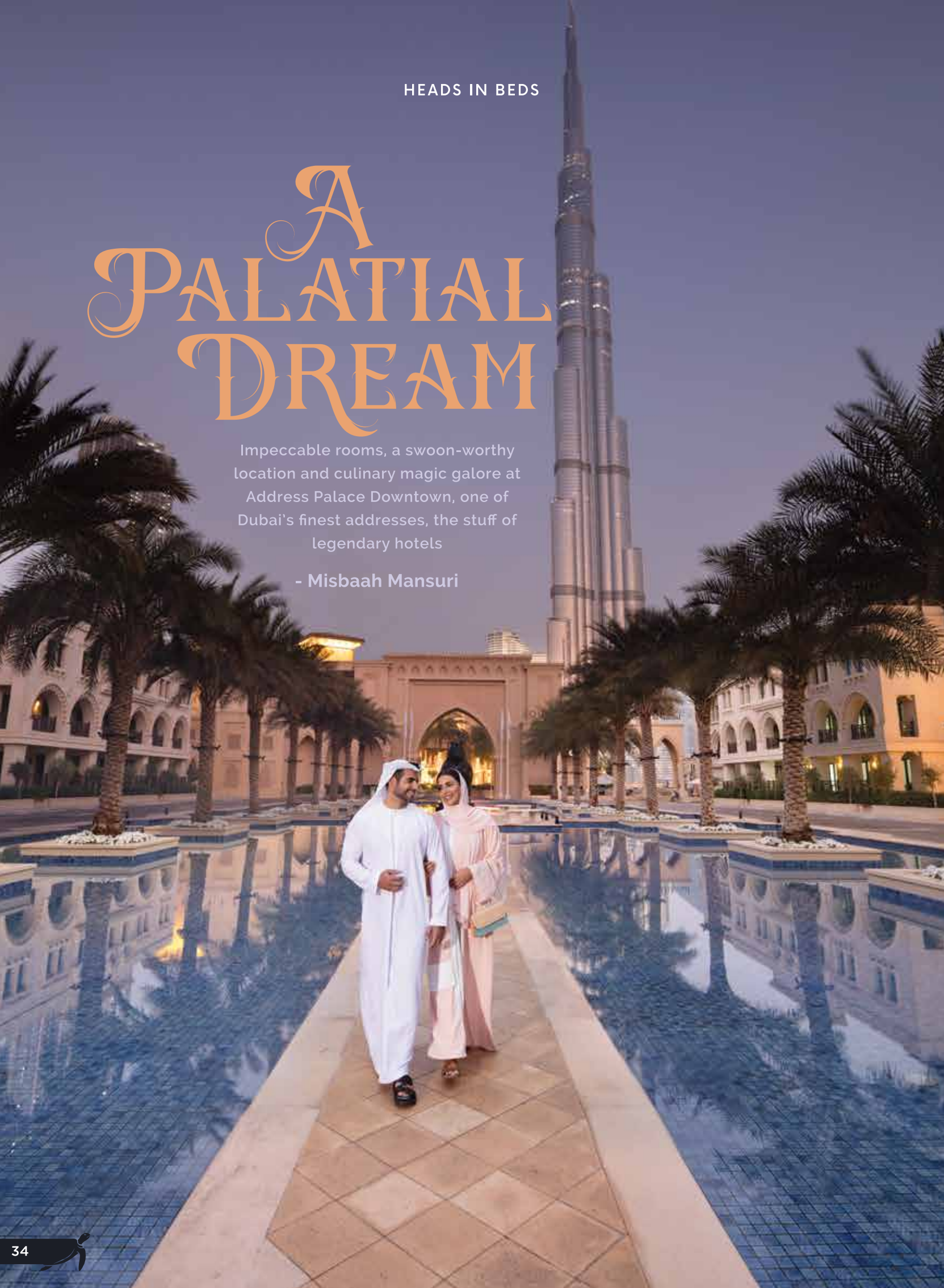


HEADS IN BEDS

# A PALATIAL DREAM

Impeccable rooms, a swoon-worthy location and culinary magic galore at Address Palace Downtown, one of Dubai's finest addresses, the stuff of legendary hotels

- Misbah Mansuri





## HEADS IN BEDS



Immersion down through the ages has represented renewal. We wash away what was, so that we can embrace what will be. The bigger that submersion, the bigger the renewal, or at least that's how it feels soaking in the magic of the dancing Dubai Fountain which can be viewed right from my room's terrace at Address Palace Downtown Dubai.

Crenelated stone walls conceal the six-storey Arabian palace within while pointed archways, first used in medieval Islamic architecture, frame the entrance and continue as a theme within. It seems like I'm in a reverie of sorts as rose petals float in the marble lobby's golden

fountain and gold-leaf plated macarons await us. Accompanying it all is the heavy scent of oud that fills in the air and seeps into the traditional geometric wooden lattice work garnishing walls.

At first impression, what I love about the property is its proximity to prime location: Dubai Opera is just across the lake. Next door, Dubai Mall is home to more than 1,200 stores and restaurants, an ice rink, a cinema, an aquarium, an Emirates A380 airline simulator, a haunted house experience that would put the Adamms Family on edge and Dino, a 155 million year old dinosaur skeleton.

As for the rooms, all rooms have balconies or terraces, with views of Dubai Fountain, Khalifa Lake or Old Town Island. I love how the design echoes the region in sandy shades of camel.

With engraved dark-wood furnishings with brass studs recall treasure chests and mashrabiya panels border patio doors, my Palace Suite spelt splendor.

Amenities included an in-room iPad, television, Nespresso machine and kettle, and the work desk that turns into a dressing table when the lid is lifted; there's a mirror on the underside and hairdryer hidden in the recess.



## HEADS IN BEDS



In keeping with local customs, there are separate male and female spas with hammams, steam rooms, whirlpools and monsoon showers. There's also an outdoor pool; like a giant gnomon on a sundial, once a day Burj Khalifa casts a welcome shadow over it as the white covers of surrounding cabanas flutter in the breeze.

The restaurants at the property pass the culinary test with flying test, something that we experienced during our dinner at the restaurant's Thai specialty restaurant, Thiptara which was not only replete with front-row views of Dubai Fountain, floral garnishes and romance in the air but some exquisite royal Thai cuisine flair and great hospitality. From the most succulent Pad Thai and some rave Massaman Curry, every bite was better than the last, thanks to the incredible culinary

craftsmanship that was on show with gracious hospitality, making it all even dreamier.

A breakfast banquet of beef, bacon and eggs, Indian rice cakes, Arabian bread pudding, Sri Lankan sambar and more is served at Ewaan, which also offers lunch and dinner buffers. For high tea head to Al Bayt lobby lounge, and for cocktails visit lakeside Fai (meaning fire, in reference to the blazing torches that adorn its perimeter). Argentinean Asado's roasted baby goat is remarkable, and Sundowners, shisha and high-end bar snacks, including a caviar tasting platter, can be found at poolside Buhayra Lounge. From the food, the majestic views to the swanky rooms, it's like every aspect of Address Palace Downtown was created specially to weave magic unlike any other...





## Udaan Hotels & Resorts

### The bliss of Himalayan hospitality

Find yourself in a calm and serene atmosphere surrounded by a splendid view, Udaan Hotels & Resorts offers an exquisite hospitality experience. Nishikant Agarwal, Managing Director of Udaan Hotels & Resorts shares more on what makes Udaan the most popular and fastest-growing chain of hotels in the North East.

- Sudipta Saha



Udaan Hotels & Resorts is a chain of hotels that offers a myriad of lavishly appointed accommodations to appease the sense of gratification amid the beguiling facets of the Himalayan threshold. The extensive properties of Udaan Hotels & Resorts are spread out across the picturesque hamlets of the Himalayan foothills boasting an abundance of popular tourist attractions across the region. "In the year 2012, Udaan was established as a travel company, the name defines the nature of the business but in 2016, we started our first hotel and since then it has been an ongoing business for us. Over the years, we have achieved enormous growth and our hotels are known for their amazing hospitality, and location," shares Nishikant Agarwal.

Today, the group is scaling at a remarkable pace and is on track to soon complete ten hotels under its wings. Currently, Udaan operates 7 hotels in Darjeeling and Sikkim with 3 hotels in Darjeeling, 2 hotels in Gangtok, 1 hotel in Pelling and 1 hotel in Siliguri. Adding further to it, he says, "We do plan to expand,

and we aim to acquire the entire North-East market. We aim at establishing around 25 hotels in the same region, we want to be a regional player rather than a national player. We had terrific growth, the business peaked up and the market has transformed. Udaan Group prides itself as a pure Vegetarian chain of hotels which we consider as one of our USPs."

The hotel mirrors a paradigm blend of ethnic tradition and modern amenities to conceive a comfortable and holistic stay for the guests. In the same line, Nishikant mentions, "Our main focus is of course domestic market. Nevertheless, we do aim at tapping the inbound market, our room quality and service are much superior to other hotel brands in the region. At Udaan, we are committed to demonstrating the best of hospitality services to our customers as we understand and acknowledge their needs to the fullest, whilst exploring through the belle of enchanting terrain. Udaan is trying to become a top-notch brand in the north-east region, we

indeed to establish ourselves as a most preferred hotel."

The group has now ventured into travel technology with the launch of AIRIQ, one of the fastest-growing online air ticketing portals for fixed departures, pre-purchased tickets and group fares. Speaking about AIRIQ, Nishikant Agarwal explicit, "The company was started with the vision to consolidate the air tickets business and today AIRIQ has expertise in the series & group fares business. AIRIQ is purely a B2B company with a network of more than 25000 agents and offers them the lowest airfares for most of the domestic airlines flying in India. Air IQ is supported by a strong technology infrastructure and has an online portal [www.airiq.in](http://www.airiq.in) to enable the registration of an agency, once activated agents can check all our series flights and special fares with the ability to instantly issue tickets with a PNR and receive immediate online payments updates. The technology of Airiq.in is very user friendly and it is the easiest online system and helpful to every agent."



# CORK

It's got this style many cities strive for. And it has made its mark on the country's canvass. Now the world wants to be part of it all.

- Inder Raj Ahluwalia





## TRAVEL THERAPY



Boasting one of the world's largest natural harbours, that has made it a major Irish seaport, Ireland's second largest city, Cork, is an amalgamation of the old and the new, and the traditional and the modern, which makes it a rather interesting place to visit.

The city offers an interesting mix. It was once fully walled, and several wall sections and gates remain today. Many local buildings are in the Georgian style. For good measure, the River Lee flows through it, giving it character.

Don't waste too much time before you start your sightseeing, the local highlight and attraction. Places of interest abound. Your local sightseeing tour could include several

landmarks. The imposing St. Finbarre's Cathedral that dominates the landscape! The Roman Catholic St. Mary's Cathedral (commonly called the North Cathedral). St. Patrick's Street, known for the architecture of the buildings along its pedestrian-friendly route. The adjacent tree-lined avenue called Grand Parade. And Cork City Hall that is illuminated at night, reflecting in the River Lee, which it fronts!

Other notable places include the Cork Opera House; Fitzgerald's Park; and the grounds of University College Cork, through which the River Lee flows. Amidst all this, the most famous local building is the church tower of Shandon, which dominates the North side of the city.



## TRAVEL THERAPY

An interesting city facet is its maritime sailing heritage that is maintained through its sailing clubs. The Royal Cork Yacht Club located in Crosshaven, is the world's oldest yacht club, and 'Cork Week' as it is known, is a notable sailing event.

Don't miss visiting The English Market, which provides a taste of rural Ireland in an urban setting. And the taste tends to stay fresh in the mouth.

Located in Princess Street, this is Cork's famed, landmark food shopping area that goes way back, tracing its origins back to England's King James 1 in 1610, hence its name. It's got no pretence or hype, it's just an everyday sort of place selling quality, fresh food that reflects the bounties of the land and the sea. The covered market is renowned for selling farm-fresh food from surrounding regions.

Shops overflow with pears, peaches, cherries, apples, lettuce, carrots, potatoes, onions, garlic and green pepper; an array of butchers sell traditional meats that include beef, pork, lamb, and poultry; fishmongers peddle fresh lobsters, crabs, salmon, tuna, squid, prawns, shrimp, and oysters; cheese-mongers sell Irish, Italian and French cheeses.

I met up with food historian, writer, broadcaster and cook, Regina Sexton in the Farmgate Café. Her exuberance and zest set the tone. With her life revolving around food, Regina exulted in explaining the finer points of Irish food. What it is, what it isn't, and what it all means to the Irish. She then placed things in context by highlighting the special attributes of food shopping at this unique, famous market.





## TRAVEL THERAPY

The right place with the right person with the right passion. I wasn't complaining.

Taxis, buses, and two tram networks provide local transportation and ensure easy commutes. Use them to experience the city's restaurants and shopping options.

If food excites you, eating out can be a wholesome experience. Assorted restaurants function daily. The city has many local traditions related to food and customs. Traditional Cork foods include Crubeens, Tripe and Drisheen.

Take time out for shopping. There is a mix of modern, state of the art shopping centres, and family -

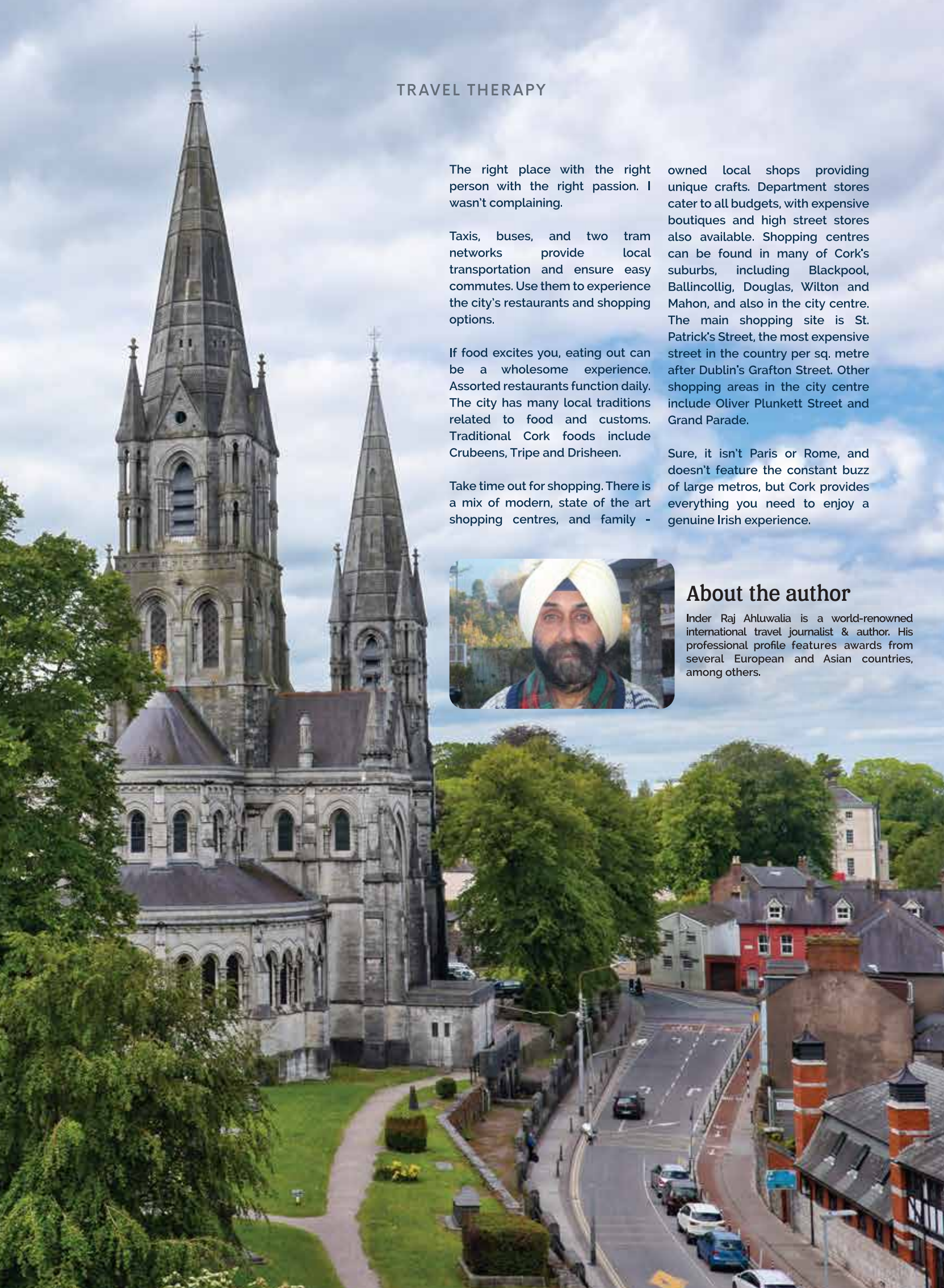
owned local shops providing unique crafts. Department stores cater to all budgets, with expensive boutiques and high street stores also available. Shopping centres can be found in many of Cork's suburbs, including Blackpool, Ballincollig, Douglas, Wilton and Mahon, and also in the city centre. The main shopping site is St. Patrick's Street, the most expensive street in the country per sq. metre after Dublin's Grafton Street. Other shopping areas in the city centre include Oliver Plunkett Street and Grand Parade.

Sure, it isn't Paris or Rome, and doesn't feature the constant buzz of large metros, but Cork provides everything you need to enjoy a genuine Irish experience.



### 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.





# Five major tourism developments opening in Qatar before the FIFA World Cup 2022

Before the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ kicks off in November a assortment of exceptional new tourism developments will open across the country. From a winter-sun wonderland to a water sports paradise, these developments each add something special to the peninsula's eclectic mix of attractions and activities to suit every type of traveller.

One year after Qatar re-opened its borders to the world on 12 July 2021, Qatar Tourism reveals the latest attractions that will build on the extensive tourism development strategy of the last few years. Qatar aims to capitalise on the influx of over one million visitors expected for the FIFA World Cup 2022™ and show the world its hidden treasures and unmissable holiday potential.

Chief Operating Officer of Qatar Tourism, Berthold Trenkel, said: "The countdown to the World Cup is well underway and there's lots of world-class attractions to come before the matches begin. Amongst the buzz around the tournament itself we hope people are wowed by Qatar's state-of-the-art new tourism developments, significantly boosting the country's appeal as a leading holiday destination. There are new beaches for those looking for sun, sea and sand, theme parks and water sports hotels for the adventurous, and lots of new resorts, spas and restaurants for visitors seeking a more relaxing getaway."

## Five major upcoming openings



### 1. Winter Wonderland

Pack your shades and sun cream for the Doha Winter Wonderland, set to be launched in Qatar later this year on a sandy island. Instead of the icy cold temperatures that greet visitors at the famous sister event in Hyde Park, London, travellers to Doha Winter Wonderland will be able to relax on the beach under delightful average temperatures in the mid 20°Cs.

Doha Winter Wonderland will feature seafront chalets, restaurants, festival games, 50 rides, and cafes, bringing the festive spirit to the Middle East.

Situated near Lusail City just north of Qatar's capital, the upcoming 200,000 square metre attraction will be operated by IMG (International Marketing Group), the same company that manages Winter Wonderland in Hyde Park each year.

### 2. Fuwairit Kite Beach (FKB)

FKB is an upcoming state-of-the-art kite beach resort in Fuwairit. Fuwairit is a coastal village an easy hour drive north of Doha with excellent kitesurfing conditions thanks to consistent winds, ideal ocean water and powder-soft sands.

The resort is designed around the kitesurfer's lifestyle with everything you need for the water and even more when you are out of it. There will be a yoga studio, fully equipped gym, restaurants, pool and much more.







### 3. The Outpost Al Barari

The Outpost will be the first of its kind in Qatar, integrating close-to-nature experiences, sustainability, and luxury hospitality into one beautiful resort in the globally unique Inland Sea nature reserve.

Surrounded by soaring sand dunes and desert wilderness, 21 luxury lodges with private pools will provide the perfect retreat from hectic city life. Stargazing, hot air ballooning, and immersive desert walks where you will learn about the local wildlife will be among the experiences on offer, alongside "Emerge in Nature" spa treatments and sensational culinary experiences.

### 4. Qetaifan Island North

Billed as the first "Entertainment Island" in Qatar, Qetaifan Island North will feature floating hotels, beach clubs and a water park with 36 rides – including "The Icon Tower" zone, featuring an 85-metre-high slide set to become the highest of its kind in the world.

Set over 1.3 million square metres, the island is close to the Lusail Stadium, where the final of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ will take place.



### 5. West Bay North Beach Project

West Bay North Beach is an extensive new tourism development being constructed, covering 40,000 square metres of a premium beachfront in the heart of Doha. The public and private beach areas will offer three distinct beach experiences with a wide variety of food and beverage offerings, to create a sought-after city beach experience for everyone to enjoy.

The wave of new resorts and attractions adds to a flurry of openings in Qatar over the last couple of years. In March 2022 the 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum launched as one of the world's most innovative sports museums. In 2021 one of the region's largest theme parks called Desert Falls Water & Adventure Park opened with 28 slides and rides. And last summer a theme park called Quest Doha was unveiled featuring the world's tallest indoor rollercoaster.

There will also be lots of exciting events in Qatar after the FIFA World Cup 2022™. The country will host a Qatar Formula 1 Grand Prix for at least a decade from 2023, along with the new Geneva International Motorshow Qatar.





TRAVEL THERAPY

# Kyrgyzstan

*From alpine sceneries  
to fascinating culture*

The epitome of beauty, the enthralling nomadic culture, hospitable people and the landscape which surprises you with changing structure and colour, Kyrgyzstan is a one-stop destination with myriad of experiences.

- Sudipta Saha





To discover and to experience can make your travel an unforgettable journey, the thrust of experiencing a new country which is turning up into a hot-spot tourist destination is an exquisite experience. Kyrgyzstan is a landlocked mountainous country in Central Asia known for its rich history, spectacular landscape, nomadic culture and vivid offerings.

### **Explore the best of Kyrgyz**

Kyrgyzstan has an interesting history; it is believed that the people are ethnic nomadic group who are believed to come from a region within Serbia in the 10th and 15 centuries. The country which once used to be part of Soviet Union acquired its independence in the year 1991. But, as you land in Bishkek, the city is westernised, filled with restaurants and bars where one can easily hang around and enjoy the local delicacies.

Kyrgyzstan has numerous off-beaten paths to explore and discover the country the way you like to. If you are lazy discover, you can roam around and experience the way you want to. For an adventure freak, there are ample of trekking routes in some of the rest mind-blowing mountains. The mountains here are absolutely mind-blowing and are compared to be accessible as compared to

others. The heritages of Kyrgyzstan are epic and are located at some of the impressive locations.

Another most action-packed experience is to watch the nomad games. The ancient nomad sports in Kyrgyzstan are simply jaw-dropping. The Ulak Tariysh reminded me of a famous Bollywood movie, the vibes of the game is very adventurous and enjoyable. The Ulak Tariysh is kind of a horse wrestling and polo, where the riders play the game with dead goat instead of a real ball. Kyrgyzstan is a land of horses and even today, if you visit the local areas, you can see that even today, horses are being uses as a preferred choice of transportation. This excited me to know more about this beautiful country, how they have held their culture and tradition till date.

If, you are fond of history and desires to explore the same, Kyrgyzstan has bunch of Silk Road Heritage sites. Another, most exciting of all was to experience the nomadic culture that Kyrgyzstan is famous for, sleeping in a yurt, as the temperature drops at night, yurt's remain warm and comfortable. Moving on from an experiential travel, to some adventure, don't forget to take a dip in Issyk Kul Lake, surrounded by stunning gorgeous mountain, it's a fantastic experience.







**Curious Culinary**

Whether you are foodie or a binger, Kyrgyzstan leaves a remarkable impression on your taste buds. The destination will surprise you with its authentic flavours and a mesmerising food experience. The traditional food of the country is dominated by rice, bread, meat and variety milk derived products. The quaint beautiful town, Bishkek is adorned with charismatic cafes, countless restaurants, the camaraderie atmosphere is finely adorable and the food is absolutely delicious. People who are fond of exploring new flavours and love a hearty meal, Bishkek is the place to be. I did discover the authentic culinary experience that Bishkek has to offer, the divine aroma of fresh cooked food, the special dry fruits and dairy products. The country offers mostly non-vegetarian food and but vegetarian food is some of the restaurants, if you craving for Indian flavours, Bishkek won't disappoint you, there are Indian restaurants that serves authentic Indian cuisine.





### *Shopping Spree*

I am sure, shopping is one of that experiences that one would never want to miss upon. The markets in Kyrgyzstan is packed with things that depicts the past, the bazaars are adorned with local arts and artefacts. The shopping at Bishkek is an amazing experience, the meticulously designed rugs, handmade pottery, jewellery are few of the items to be picked while in Bishkek. I was unfortunate to visit Osh Bazaar, the market known for selling pure quality dry fruits, vegetables, fruits, biscuits, oil, seeds, different types of meats, spices and clothes. The dry fruits sold here are fine in quality and superb in taste. This is one of the best markets to visit Bishkek, if you want to experience the local culture. Bishkek is adorned with many malls that sell high quality of shopping materials, local artefacts, rugs and souvenirs. Another most interesting thing that one could shop from Kyrgyzstan is gold; the price of the gold is cheaper than any other countries. The quality, the design and the price is so attractive that you can't resist in buying one. Kyrgyzstan is flooded with gold shops, and they are known for selling high quality gold, silver and diamond ornaments.



HOTELLIGENCE

# Sarova Hotels

A legacy of gracious Kenyan hospitality

The nature, unspoilt wilderness, adventure, beauty and warmth of the Kenyan people makes any visit to this nature's paradise a trip of a lifetime for most! The experience is unique and unparalleled in itself, but this journey is elevated to a whole new level when paired with the exquisite services of Sarova Hotels! Mita Vohra, Sarova Hotels talks about how all their properties are distinctly unique from one another and yet have the classic Kenyan hospitality in common.

- Bharti Sharma







How does it feel when a brand becomes synonymous with the destination? Well, Sarova Hotels has the best understanding of this emotion. Whether you're seeking leisure, MICE, romantic getaways, or just craving for a 'wild' vacation, if you've zeroed in on Kenya as your destination, then Sarova Hotels is the answer for all your hosting requirements. The properties include Sarova Mara Game Camp in Maasai Mara Game Reserve; Sarova Lion Hill Game Lodge in Lake Nakuru National Park; Sarova Whitesands Beach Resort & Spa on the beaches of the Indian Ocean in Mombasa; Sarova Panafric and The Sarova Stanley in Nairobi, Sarova Shaba Game Lodge situated in the Shaba Game Reserve with their new additions Sarova Salt Lick Game Lodge and Sarova Taita Hills Game Lodge in the Taita Hills Sanctuary, Tsavo region.

#### Long-standing commitment to the Indian market

The customer response from the Indian travellers at Sarova Hotels has been very positive as they look

forward to welcoming more guests from India to their residence of authentic Kenyan hospitality. "After years of a world in array, it has been so wonderful to come to India and reconnect with friends of the brand and also to meet so many new people. We have received an incredibly warm reception and our events have been extremely well attended, even amidst the monsoon rains. We are already seeing results and new levels of interest," shares Mita.

#### The blue-eyed property

Although each Sarova property maintains an individual distinction of style and character, all the units are bound together by their common commitment to meeting the demands of international business and leisure travellers. And of course, Indians have reserved Sarova as their favourite. On enquiring which is the most preferred Sarova Hotels property by Indian Market, she says, "I would say our Heritage Property; the Sarova Stanley Hotel in the Capital, Nairobi is a favourite, with its deep history and Victorian theme and Sarova Mara Game Camp set in the vast open Savannah of the Masai Mara is an absolute must."



Mita Vohra







**The Indo connect**

It is often believed that the older the relationship, the stronger are the ties. Three of the four founding families of Sarova are of Indian origin so there is an innate understanding of the preferences. Mita further adds, "We have a strong footprint of properties in amazing locations across the country and our variety of food offerings completely set us apart. Our Indian chefs ensure a plethora of flavourful options from vegetarian to Jain food and we encourage customers to share their preferences. We are continuously transforming our product line, creating

experiences that are customized to each individual locale. Our values since inception hold a strong sustainable ethos from our commitment to community, education, sourcing and the environment which provides us with so much natural wonder."

**MICE deliverables**

Packed with mesmerising panoramas and authentic hospitality, the brand offers world-class MICE facilities at stunning destinations across Kenya, which is well-equipped to cater to large business meetings, weddings, and other conference or banquet events.

Sarova is very well versed in the MICE space and is revered as the premiere brand for MICE in Kenya. Shedding light on MICE facilities at different properties, Mita tells, "We have tiers of room types and levels of luxury and we are very well geared with conferencing and banqueting to deliver out-of-the-ordinary events with spectacular impact and exceptional food."

**In search of newer avenues**

For everyone in hospitality, there have been major setbacks since the onset of the pandemic. However for many it has also

been a time of innovation and evolution. Sarova has utilised this challenging span in creating more outdoor spaces, expanding their organic garden projects in their lodges, refurbishing 30 of their standard rooms into deluxe rooms at Sarova Mara Game Camp and upgrading 94 of their 176 rooms and suites at the Panafric Hotel in Kenya's capital to modern, world-class standards. Talking about the next benchmark, Mita tells, "The next benchmark is to complete the Panafric Hotel Project and expand our portfolio of hotels as we grow from strength to strength."

Navigating successfully through the troubled tides forced upon by the pandemic, Sarova looks at the future with an optimistic viewpoint. With buoyancy as a virtue, the brand is also foraging into fresh verticals. "We have a cautious approach to health and customer safety has always and will always be a priority. All our teams are masked within the properties, safe dining distance is ensured across our restaurants, there are touch-free sanitising units at several points within our hotels and guest masks are available upon request. Sterilisation of all public areas and bedrooms continues," tells Mita.



Anjum Lokhandwala, Founder & Director, ARK Rep

At Sarova, we believe in offering our customers a product that represents good value, is convenient and feels like it's adding something relevant to their stay. Our marketing strategy is to emphasize Sarova's hospitality and services to achieve deeper market penetration and also educate the agents, highlighting the various activities and dining options one can enjoy during their stay at Sarova besides game drives.

We see a continuous existence of pent-up demand for travel. The stage is all set for a very successful travel season for the year ahead. We have recently concluded our four cities roadshow and received a phenomenal response from the trade. We plan to conduct more product presentations and destination training programmes in small batches across multiple cities in months to follow.



## Da Nang, Vietnam organises its first tourism road show

Recently, Da Nang Tourism road show was organised in New Delhi on August 4, 2022 by the Da Nang Tourism Department in cooperation with Vietjet Air. The road show showcased the destination and introduces new direct routes connecting Da Nang to major cities in India.

The event presented Da Nang, one of Asia's top trending destination, the city of exciting events and festivals to Indian tourism partners and was packed with all information of tourist products and services of Da Nang and Central Vietnam, especially leisure, MICE and weddings, with an aim to boost the tourism exchange between Da Nang and India.

"It's a golden time for us to enhance our mutual understanding and cooperation for tourism recovery and growth, considering the significant growth in trade and commerce exchange between Vietnam and India," said Nguyen Thi Hoai An, Director, Da Nang Tourism Promotion Center.

Further she adds, "Da Nang Tourism road show in India 2022 is a great opportunity for us to showcase our beautiful coastal city along with its diverse tourism products and services as well as promote our MICE and wedding destination to India." She believes that the event has opened a new chapter for tourism cooperation between New Delhi and Da Nang, Vietnam.

The event was attended by His Excellency Pham Sanh Chau, The Ambassador of Vietnam Republic Socialist to India, Rajiv Mehra, Chairman, Indian Association of Tour Operators, more than 90 guests comprising Indian travel companies, wedding planners.

His Excellency Pham Sanh Chau emphasised on the remarkable increase of outbound tourism from India due to the pen-up demand from the last two year. According to him the number of visas for Indians to enter Vietnam has surged after Covid-19, it has increased 24 times i.e, from 250 visas per-day, pre-COVID 19 to six thousand visas per day at the moment. In this, the Vietnamese Embassy has received many requests for weddings and conferences in Vietnam.

During the road show, Vietjet Air has announces its new routs plan with flights directly connecting major cities in India to Vietnam's top destinations, including Da Nang.





# Mauritius

*all set to welcome  
over 80,000 Indian travelers  
in 2022*

Mauritius has officially lifted all COVID-19 restrictions in order to boost tourism in the country.

This means, your vaccination status does not hinder your beach vacation, anymore! Arvind Bundhun, Director, Mauritius Tourism promotion Authority (MTPA) talks about the potential of India market.

- Naina Nath







### **A big welcome to all!**

The paradise island opened its borders in October 2021 but with this new ease of COVID-restrictions starting 1st July 2022 and the great connectivity that Air Mauritius offers to multiple cities across India (via codeshare with Vistara Airlines), Mauritius is all set to welcome over 80,000 Indian travelers in 2022 and a whopping 1,00,000 in 2023. The country has seen a 55 per cent recovery from the Indian market, post-pandemic.

Arvind said, "This reopening has been very successful for us especially when it comes to safety and security as Mauritius ticks all the right boxes. As of today 90 per cent of our population is vaccinated, as we are now vaccinating school children and teenagers too. But the real success of Mauritius comes from a close collaboration between the government and the private sector. Our reopening strategy was closely crafted along with our tour operators and airlines. We welcomed over 500,000 tourists

since opening our borders and our guests come to us for the gorgeous beaches, for our excellent service, for food and to explore like never before!"

### **Where else if not paradise?**

Aiming to position Mauritius as a destination beyond beaches, MTPA launched the 'Where else but Mauritius?' B2C campaign in India, earlier this year. With beaches being the main focus for tourists coming into Mauritius, MTPA wants to highlight safety and security being their USP. India and Mauritius have very close relations for over 75 years; and so our cultures are not so different. The campaign highlights the less-explored parts of the country, which includes land activities like adventure sports, gastronomy experiences, cultural and religious tourism, immersive tourism, generational tourism and of course, personalized and customized experiences for every demographic.



Arvind Bundhun, Director, Mauritius Tourism





## TRAVEL THERAPY

By 1st July 2022, MTPA welcomed half a million tourists, which was 1.4 million pre-pandemic. Their keymarkets have always been Eurocentric. Since opening their borders two months ago, France, UK, Germany and South Africa are their top source markets. The observation is that more and more millennials are visiting Mauritius and exceeding the previously noted length of stay. The length of stay has increased from previously being 8 to 9 nights to now going up to 12 to 14 nights for the European market. Mauritius has seen a 55 per cent recovery from India with length of stay increasing from previously being 5 days to now a week or longer, mainly for family holidays and MICE. There has been a 40per cent increase in tourist spends as more and more people adapt to working remotely, and what better location to work in than paradise itself?

### Tapping the B2B Market

MTPA is heavily tapping the B2B MICE market in India and are currently exploring the opportunity to host the TAAI conclave in Mauritius next year. They continue to do joint marketing campaigns

with tour operators as almost 80per cent of their business is generated by them. For Small Island Development States like Mauritius, accessibility is key and hence they are working closely with airlines which service the destination. A direct flight from India to the gorgeous Mauritius Island is only a mere 5 hours away.





## International Travel Turtle Awards launched at 62nd National Summit and Awards by Indian Achievers & Forum

Indian Achievers' Forum, as a social organisation, also takes pride in celebrating India's glorious 75 years of independence by honouring individuals/ organisations/ institutions who have achieved Atmanirbharta (self-reliance) and are contributing towards social development and nation-building by achieving the extraordinary. IAF felicitates them on a global platform and tells their stories that in turn, inspire individuals, businesses and communities alike. Indian Achievers' Forum organised a grand event on 21st of July, 2022 at Le Meridien Hotel, New Delhi on the theme "Atmanirbhar Bharat: Vision of New India". The event was attended by various

distinguished guests and organisations. The program commenced with the inaugural ceremony followed by few speeches by significant personalities. Shri Bandaru Dattatraya, Governor of Haryana congratulated all the participants and winners on the occasion. He stated, "This award should motivate all the winners to work towards making India, Atmanirbhar". Among the other eminent guests, Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, Hon'ble Minister of State for Food Processing Industries & Jal Shakti, congratulated all the participants of the summit and said, "I would like to thank all the participants present who are contributing to the development of the nation as a whole".

On this occasion, Dr. Kambhampati Hari Babu, Governor of Mizoram said, "As we celebrate Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav to mark 75 years of our Nation's Independence, let us all rededicate ourselves and do our best to achieve a more prosperous new India." IAF also organised a panel discussion on the topic "Atmanirbhar Bharat: Vision of New India" to inspire and promote businesses and communities to achieve self-reliance. The discussion laid emphasis on the importance of self-reliance as an individual, organisation and nation as a whole. In the second session, H.E. Shri Kambhampati Hari Babu, Hon'ble Governor of Mizoram said, "India is transforming to become a

'Vishwaguru.' Each of you has an important role to play. It would be best if you did not rest on your laurels. This award should energise all the winners to work towards making India, Atmanirbhar." Mr. Harish Chandra, President, Indian Achievers' Forum congratulated all the winners and participants of the summit and also thanked all the partners in the enormous success of the summit. He also announced that the next International Achiever's Summit will be held in USA in the month of September and in Dubai in the month of October. The event concluded on a positive note and also with the motivation to work collectively for the betterment of our nation.





## India emerges as the global leader in travel in 2022

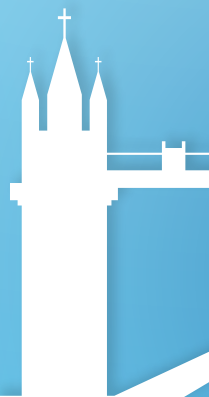
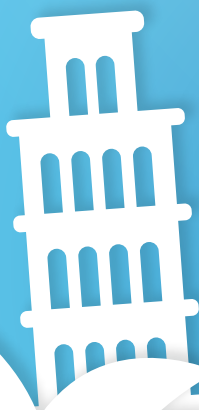
India leads Asia-Pacific in its intent to travel in the second half of 2022 with 50 per cent Indians expressing the desire to spend more money on booking a vacation in the world's largest survey of travel intentions from Travel Lifestyle Network (TLN) in a post-pandemic setting. While international travel still remains a point of contention among many, with only 15 per cent respondents willing to travel abroad, 29 per cent people are planning to vacation in India. India emerged as the global leader in domestic travel with 24 per cent people undertaking at least one vacation every month, for which the global average stands at 11 per cent. The country is also way-ahead of its global counterparts in business travel with almost 18 per cent Indians travelling for work within the country once a month.

With participation from 179,446 people across 28 countries, the survey, released this week, was conducted by a leading PR consultancy group Travel Lifestyle Network (TLN), and compiled by

Thrive and market intelligence firm AudienceNet. The survey provides insight into the state of travel across the 28 relevant markets including travel behaviour patterns.

In terms of leisure travel, over 36 per cent Indians are most likely to take road trips in 2022, followed by long weekends influencing 34 per cent of Indians to bite the travel bug. In terms of factors influencing travel behaviour, India is at par with the global average, as at least 26 per cent of Indians indicated that their destination choice would be based on value for money, while 22 per cent attributed it to a relaxing experience.

"Interestingly, after two very turbulent and passive years, the global dynamics of travel look completely different from before. As the survey indicates, there is an immense travel appetite among Indians who wish to explore places and destinations for unconventional reasons unlike earlier. With wellbeing and self-care gaining importance in a hybrid model of





living, the millennials are re-embracing travel more enthusiastically followed by Baby Boomers and Gen X. It is extremely encouraging to see this uptick in travel sentiment after a prolonged lull for a quicker sectoral recovery", said Archana Jain, Managing Director, PR Pundit - a member company of the Travel Lifestyle Network.

In the context of the evolving cost-of-living crisis, with inflation rates soaring in many countries, the travel industry needs to contend with consumer concerns relating to the price of travel. Affordability is likely to have a significant impact on travel-related purchasing in the second half of 2022 and into 2023 with over a quarter (26 per cent) of the global respondents rating value for money as the key factor that has the most impact on decisions about where to travel on vacation.

Virginie Le Norgant, President, Travel Lifestyle Network said, "Our report clearly shows how the rising cost of

living is influencing every travel decision made today. This global survey highlights how an increasing number of consumers are seeking value-for-money when booking their leisure trip. Price, not necessarily quality, is going to be a key differentiator to attract consumer spend in the remainder of 2022 and in early 2023."

Overall, the survey discovered that wanderlust abounds with a strong desire to seize the experiences that travel offers in the post-Covid climate. Asked if they were "someone who likes to explore the world", consumers were highly positive in all regions: Middle East and Africa (60 per cent); North America (51 per cent); Europe (49 per cent); Asia-Pacific (44 per cent); and Latin America (43 per cent). Survey respondents across US were asked what they had missed most during the pandemic and cited: exploring new places; a change of scenery; spending time with loved ones; relaxing or sunbathing; and eating different foods.





## RDTM: Rajasthan further strengthens its stature as domestic tourism hub

Delivering a strong message of rapid post-pandemic recovery, Rajasthan Domestic Travel Mart successfully culminated its two-day grand event on a thrilling note. The marquee event consciously focused on showcasing exotic flavours of splendour, creativity, harmony and aesthetic beauty of the state firsthand.

- Team Turtle

The iconic mart rose to the occasion by hosting 200+ exhibitors from across the state. BM Birla Convention Centre, Statue Circle, Jaipur once again played host to the leading travel trade mart in the country with much-anticipated fanfare and gaiety. With the grand success of the 2022 edition, both in terms of participation and footfalls, RDTM continues to reinforce its stance as the leading domestic travel mart in India. The event successfully brought together wide range of products encompassing heritage, adventure, wildlife, wellness, leisure, eco-rural, MICE, pilgrimage, golf, wedding and other auxiliary segments under one roof. Apurv Kumar, President, FHTR tells, "The RDTM is a collective initiative of the State and the association coming forward and to organise an event of this magnitude with more than 500 buyers and sellers in attendance at one place. RDTM gathered a lot of appreciation from the stakeholders, which ensured immediate commencement of business for hoteliers/resorts and travel fraternity, since thereafter the season starts. We brought in participation from some of the lesser known or yet to be explored destinations and newer properties coming up." He also said that apart from registered buyers, a larger number of non-registered buyers also attended the travel mart and engaged in fruitful networking. RDTM saw 200 exhibitors showcase their tourism products and 400 buyers pan-India and 150 buyers from Rajasthan attend the mega travel event. Spread over three floors of the spacious halls of Birla Auditorium, numerous tourism product owners were in attendance, staging their wide range of hotels, resorts, amusement parks, etc. Eminent speakers were a part of a wide range of 'Knowledge Sessions' organised for detailed discussions and exchanging valuable information. Some of these sessions were – Cultural Tourism in Western Rajasthan, Rural, Agro Tourism, Scope of Medical Tourism in Rajasthan, Medical Tourism and Ayurveda, etc.





## EVENT AFFAIR



A large number of VIPs attended the Rajasthan Domestic Travel Mart 2022 over the course of three days. These included – the Rajasthan Minister of Art & Culture, Dr B.D. Kalla; Rajasthan Minister of Industries, Ms Shakuntala Rawat; Chief Secretary, Government of Rajasthan, Ms Usha Sharma; Principal Secretary, Rajasthan Tourism, Ms Gayatri Rathore; Director of Tourism, Ms Rashmi Sharma; Chairman of Rajasthan Small Industries Corporation (RSIC), Mr Rajiv Arora; President Emeritus, Indian Heritage Hotels Association (IHHA), Mr Gaj Singh, and Chairman of RTDC, Mr Dharmendra Rathore.



Rajasthan Domestic Travel Mart witnessed engaging knowledge-sharing sessions on the various facets of Medical Tourism by several experts. The sessions commenced with a presentation on the scope of 'Medical Tourism in Rajasthan' by Lt. Gen Dr K.K. Singh who threw light on Rajasthan as a hub for treatment of paralysis through alternative medicine. He also highlighted that Rajasthan has immense potential for growth in the field of medical tourism due to cost-effectiveness, the Joint Commission (JCI)-accredited hospitals and the good air quality of the State.





## EVENT AFFAIR

This edition of the mart saw some of the biggest and the most popular names in wedding planners, event management, influencers, corporate meeting planners/organising companies that will be attending the event. Randhir Vikram Singh, Former President, FHTR, FHTR asserts that buyers were briefed about the developments that have taken place in the state from the tourist point of view during the past two to three years. He adds, "Despite of Covid, our hospitality industry was not dormant. It was planning for the future and much of the efforts are now showing results. All the members of the hotel industry and travel agents presented their best side and convinced all the distinguished buyers to invest their time, resources and attention to partner with Rajasthan to excel in the domain of tourism."





## **Tourism Authority of Thailand organises “Amazing New Chapters: Thailand Gastronomy experience Networking Lunch”**

Tourism Authority of Thailand along with co-hosts Thai Airways International Plc. Ltd and partners Khao Group and Hyatt Regency Sukhumvit Bangkok organised the Amazing New Chapters: Thailand Gastronomy experience Networking Lunch on 1st August 2022 in New Delhi.

A delegation for this event was led by Tanes Petsuwan Deputy Governor, International Market (Asia & South Pacific region), Tourism Authority of Thailand. Amongst the guests present were Vir Sanghvi & Seema Goswami, renowned Journalists, Sonny Walia of Gourmet Planet, Shivani Wazir Pasrich amongst others.

The event showcased authentic Thai cuisine by Michelin star restaurant -Market Café by Khao located at Hyatt Regency Sukhumvit Bangkok, with a four course meal, featuring some of the most popular Thai dishes.

The Objective of this networking event was to promote and showcase Thailand as an ideal destination for Gastronomy tourism that offers top quality global culinary experiences, as well as to celebrate authentic Thai cuisine and flavours. Thai cuisine is as rich and diverse as its culture. Uniquely crafted to appeal to all tastes, Thai food combines the best of flavours, textures colours and presentation.

Since 2017, TAT has teamed up with the renowned Michelin guidebooks, to produce Michelin Guides covering Bangkok, Phuket, Phang Nga and Chiang Mai. This has significantly boosted the quality and standards of Thai chefs and helped boost the kingdom's status as one of the world's leading gastro tourism destinations.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand aims to continue, strengthening Thailand's position as a World Class Gastronomy Destination.





## APPOINTMENTS



### **Tourism Authority of Thailand**

Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has appointed Mr. Isada Saovaros as the Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand Mumbai Office, effective August 1st, 2022, responsible for western and southern India as well as Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Prior to joining the India office, Mr. Saovros was the Director of Trat province. With over 23 years of experience Mr. Saovaros is well versed with the travel industry.

"I am looking forward to working closely with trade partners and media in this region to make sure Thailand remains one of the top overseas destinations in the Indian market," "We are aiming that the numbers will hit 500,000 by the end of the year" Mr. Isada Saovaros added.

According to the Thailand Tourism Ministry data, the country recorded over 300,000 Indian arrivals between January to July 2022, ranking India in top 5 tourism markets for Thailand.

### **Outbound Marketing**

Outbound Marketing has appointed Hussain Dalal as Associate Director, Sales, India for Sun International, Africa's leading gaming and hospitality group.

In his new capacity, Hussain will play a pivotal role in driving and overseeing all aspects of sales and marketing strategies of Sun International in pan India market.

Hussain comes with an experience of over 10 years in hotel Sales & Marketing industry handling Domestic & International profiles. He has previously worked with reputed brands such as Ramee Guestline Hotel, GRT Hotels, Fortune Hotels by ITC, Royal Orchid Hotels & SwissBel Hotels.

Apart from his expertise in his field, Hussain is a travel & adventure enthusiast and has a palate for different cuisines



### **Kairali Ayurvedic Group**

Anoop Vijayaraj has been appointed as General Manager for Kairali - The Ayurvedic Healing Village, Palakkad. A seasoned Hospitality professional Anoop Vijayaraj has over twenty (20) years of experience in the national and international hospitality industry.

From ensuring high guest satisfaction ratings to achieving sales targets, Anoop has always excelled in the field. He holds a Bachelor's in Hotel Management from Himalaya Educational Institute of Management & Technology as well as Diploma's Hotel Management and American Hospitality & Lodging Association from Oriental School of Hotel Management

Anoop will oversee operations at Kairali - The Ayurvedic Healing Village, Palakkad, a unique over 60 Acre wellness retreat with NABH certification.

### **Air France - KLM**

Air France - KLM has appointed Claude Sarre as the new General Manager for the Indian Sub - Continent effective 1st August 2022. Claude takes over from Jean - Noel Rault and will be responsible for the overall strategy, strengthening the presence of Air France - KLM in the Indian Sub-Continent including the codeshare partnership with IndiGo. Claude joined Air France in 1996 and has vast experience in the commercial and operational domain of business. Over 25 years of his career, Claude has held key Air France positions such as Manager Direct Sales & Service Centre, General Manager Martinique & South Caribbean, Joint Air France - KLM outstations manager Europe & North Africa, and Vice President International Stations where he was responsible for more than 200 Air France - KLM stations worldwide.

Prior to being appointed the General Manager; Indian Sub - Continent, Claude was posted in Guadeloupe as the General Manager for the region.







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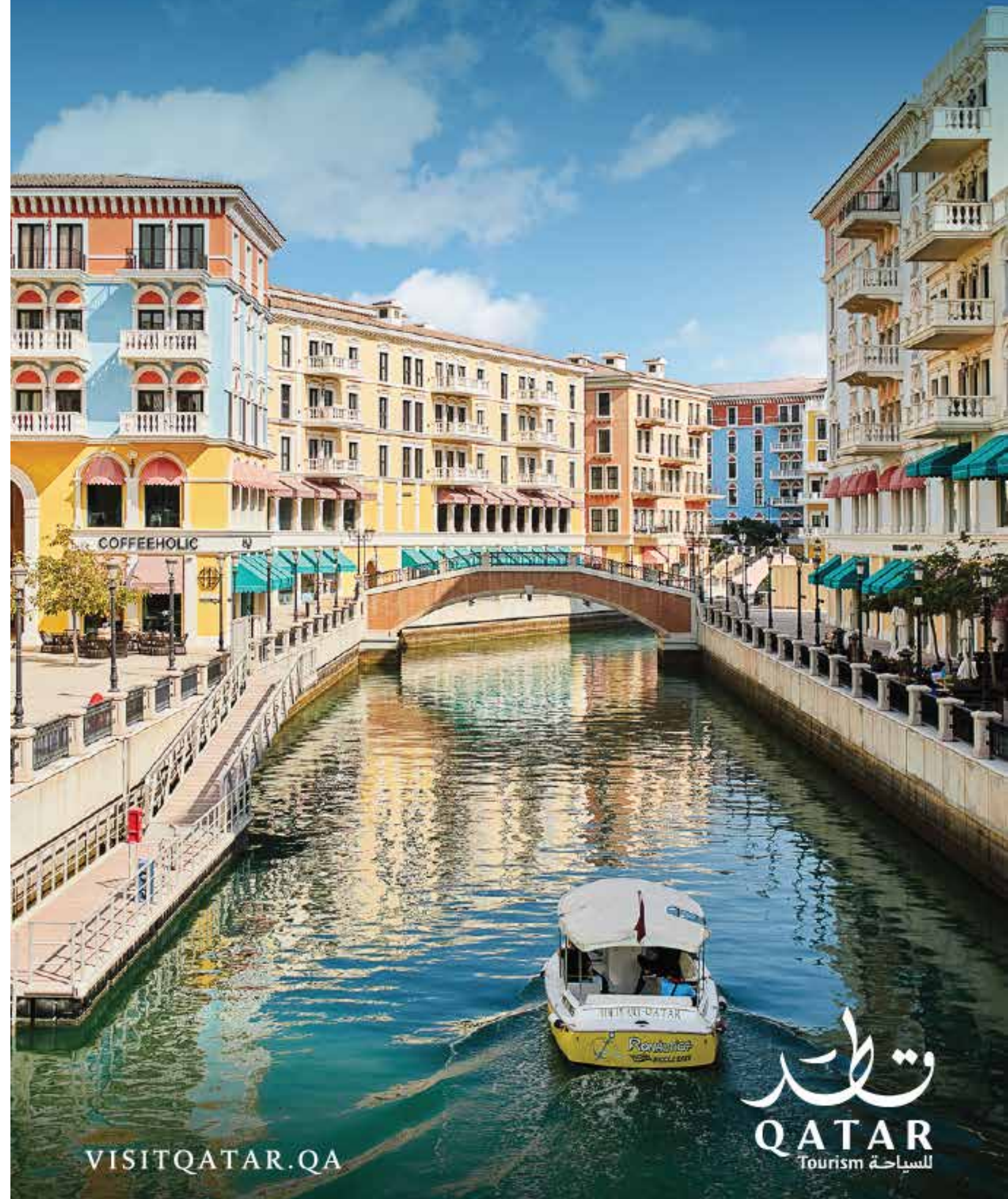
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