

VOLUME 2 | ISSUE 9
OCTOBER 2022
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Editor's Letter

W

hen your passion and travel meet, they push boundaries to unlock new worlds. It's an extension of your journey in life. I'm back after almost 3 weeks of travel! Do you know the best part about travelling? Exploring the unexplored! From the lands of cats; Kuching (which I explored once again during the TAFI convention) to the coastal paradise of Kenya; Diani Beach and Mombasa. Taking 11 flights in 3 weeks and yet no sign of fatigue, instead I'm brimming with experience.

Be it spending time with the tribes in Kenya, exploring a city on a 14km cycle tour or a tweetup with orang-utans in Sarawak, every activity was an immersive experience.

This month witnessed so many grand events, from TAFI to the IHHA convention and the National Conference of State Tourism Ministers. Between covering the events and on-and-off travelling, team turtle always managed to make it happen! Experiencing travel diaries first-hand is always a cherished memory and nobody, absolutely nobody, can take that away from you.

The takeaway here is that nothing comes easy in life, not even experiences! Hard work and dedication always pay off. When you love what you do and do what you love, you will always be rewarded. Remember, you need to take those steps, you need to catch those 11 flights, and you need to keep going no matter what happens. Travelling transforms you and it's always for the good. Take that step. Make that move. Have the zest to travel.

We sincerely trust that you will have as much pleasure reading this edition of Travel Turtle as much as we enjoyed compiling this for you, our dear readers. Do share your feedback at bharti@travelturtle.world.

Happy Reading!

Bharti Sharma

Bharti Sharma
Editor

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Printed and Published by: Harish Chandra on behalf of Trouville Media & Communications Private Limited; Printed at Shree Ram Print O Pac, D 10/5 (Basement) Okhla Industrial Area Phase II, New Delhi 110020 ; Published at Plot No.1, 311, Vardhman Sunrise Plaza, Vasundhara Enclave, Delhi 110096.
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33 1 PASS for
Countries



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16-18
GOA
EVERYONE'S
PARADISE

28-29
INDULGE IN THE
WORLD OF
JUMEIRAH

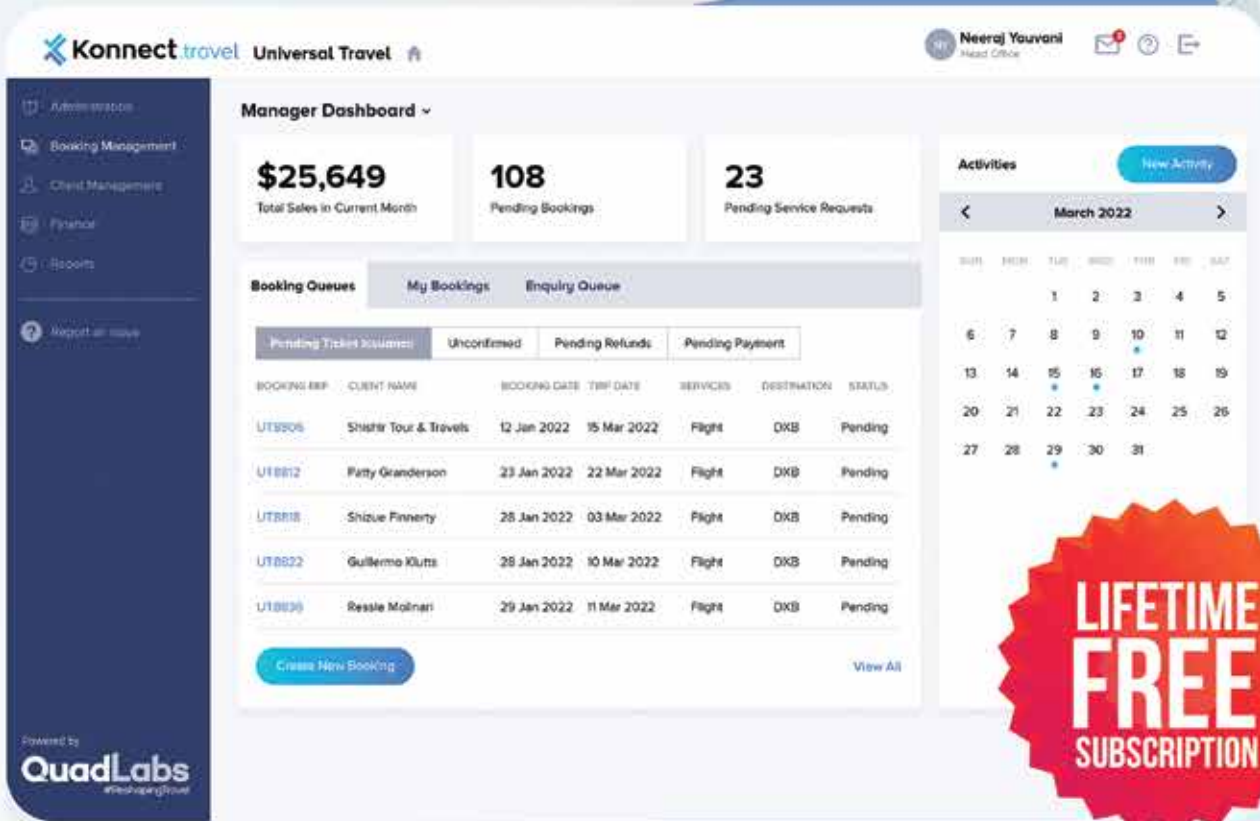
34-37
**ALILA
HINU BAY**
OMANI
OPULENCE

38-41
BERLIN
A TALE OF
ONE CITY

42-45
QATAR
OLD WORLD
CHARM &
OPULENCE



CONSOLIDATE CUSTOMER, BOOKINGS & ACCOUNTS



The screenshot shows the 'Manager Dashboard' for 'Universal Travel'. It features a sidebar with navigation options: Administration, Booking Management, Client Management, Finance, Reports, and a 'Report an issue' button. The main dashboard includes three summary cards: '\$25,649 Total Sales in Current Month', '108 Pending Bookings', and '23 Pending Service Requests'. Below these are tabs for 'Booking Queues', 'My Bookings', and 'Enquiry Queue'. A table lists pending ticket issuances with columns for Booking Ref, Client Name, Booking Date, Trip Date, Services, Destination, and Status. A 'Calendar' view for March 2022 is also visible, showing a grid of dates with activity markers. A red starburst graphic in the bottom right corner of the dashboard area reads 'LIFETIME FREE SUBSCRIPTION'. The footer of the dashboard mentions 'Powered by QuadLabs'.

Booking Ref	Client Name	Booking Date	Trip Date	Services	Destination	Status
UT3506	Shishir Tour & Travels	12 Jan 2022	15 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8812	Patty Granderson	23 Jan 2022	22 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8818	Shizue Finney	26 Jan 2022	03 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8822	Guillermo Klutts	28 Jan 2022	10 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8836	Ressie Molinari	29 Jan 2022	11 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending

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IATO writes to PMO requesting intervention in restoring e-Tourist Visa for UK, Canada and other

Pandemic broke the back of the entire Hospitality sector but the worst hit has been the inbound tourism industry with the arrival of foreign tourists going down to trickle. Now the pandemic seems to be over, with the Hospitality sector rebounding but similar rebound seems to be eluding the inbound industry. There are multiple reasons for it like high airfares, restriction on travel and above all difficulty in procuring the visas. In this regard IATO has made numerous representations and sent letters to the Tourism Home Affairs and External Affairs Ministry requesting them for restoration of E-Visa for UK, Canada and other source markets as maximum foreign tourists travel to India from these countries. "Having failed to evoke any response from these ministries, we have written to the PM, hoping for a quick resolution" says IATO President Rajiv Mehra.

It is well known that tourists decide well in advance about the destinations they will be travelling to and given the delay and difficulty in procuring Indian visas from source countries, the sector may not see the revival that was expected and quite probable that they may travel to neighbouring countries as it is easier to procure their visas.



Cordelia Cruises as The Empress disembarks in Mumbai

After having successfully completed sailings along the East Coast of India, Cordelia Cruises returns to its homeport of Mumbai on September 29, 2022. Cordelia Cruises, which is India's premium cruise liner, has several exciting itineraries to suit a wide variety of schedules and requirements. Whether it is a quick weekend getaway or a long haul on the sea, Cordelia has something for everyone. All their itineraries are carefully curated to suit all age groups. With interesting on-board activities, world class entertainment, delectable food and fascinating shore excursions, Cordelia cruises are fast becoming India's favorite choice when it comes to cruise holidays.

Cordelia Cruises announced earlier this year that beginning January 2023, they will offer a 4-night cruise between Mumbai and Lakshadweep and a 3-night cruise between Mumbai and Goa. The Empress now sails along the West coast, bringing thousands of passengers to Mumbai, Goa, Kochi, and Lakshadweep on a limited series of 2-night, 3-night, 4-night, and 5-night cruises.

AZAL to operate direct flights from Mumbai to Baku from November

Azerbaijan Airlines, the flag carrier of Azerbaijan intends to commence its direct flights between Baku and Mumbai – the commercial hub of India from November onwards.

The airline will operate twice-a-week flights between Mumbai and Baku. Azerbaijan Airlines has started ticket sales for flights. Zeal Global Group- the exclusive partner of the airline in India, has confirmed this expansion of Azerbaijan Airlines.

The airline has already been operating flights from Delhi to Baku twice-a-week since August and is now delighted to start direct flights from Mumbai too. Mumbai travellers can now reach Baku in just four hours to witness the picturesque beauty of Azerbaijan.



Sarovar Hotels opens its 100th Hotel

Sarovar Hotels has announced the historic milestone of opening its 100th hotel in India with the opening of Lagoon Sarovar Premiere, Pondicherry. A pioneer in Mid- Market segment with more than 27 years in operation, Sarovar Hotels is a leading hospitality chain in the country with presence in more than 67 destinations across India and Africa from Business to Leisure; Hills to Backwaters; Pilgrim to Heritage and Mountains to Beaches.

Lagoon Sarovar Premiere Resort is spread across 33-acres of land nestled on the banks of Chunnambar Backwaters. Pondicherry's beautiful French colonial architecture is reflected through our resort's rooms. Each has a private sit-out area overlooking an infinity pool and tranquil backwaters. Paradise Island, a unique icon of Pondicherry is adjacent to Lagoon Sarovar Premiere resort. Lagoon Sarovar Premiere Resort is conveniently located 20 minutes away from Pondicherry airport, 3 hours drive from Chennai international airport. It's well connected with Pondicherry's train and bus stations.



Jazeera Airways enhances presence in the India market

Jazeera Airways, based in Kuwait and a leading low-cost carrier (LCC) in the Middle East, continues to support an expanding network of routes. Jazeera Airways currently flies to over 50 destinations operating a reliable fleet of Airbus A320neo and A320ceo aircraft.

With the return of international travel during 2022, the airline is going forward with its expansion plans offering affordable travel across the Middle East, Central & South Asia, North Africa and Europe.

Jazeera has been established in the Indian market for five years and now has a strong pan-India presence with six destinations: Mumbai, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Kochi and Chennai. Later this year two additional routes will be added to Thiruvananthapuram and Bangalore. Jazeera Airways is responding strongly also to the 2030 Vision that is driving growth in travel to Saudi Arabia. Jazeera is working closely with the Saudi Tourism Authority to support the marketing of eight routes they currently operate into the Kingdom.

The growth plan constitutes of Romana Parvi, Regional Manager – South Asia engaging in showcasing knowledge about product & its offerings and exchanging business ideas by participating at various travel trade marts like TTF Ahmedabad, BLTM Delhi and OTM Mumbai.





TAAI's current national Office Bearers to continue to represent trade in 2022 - 2024

TAAI – the oldest and largest travel tourism association in India had invited nominations from its members for the post of President, Vice President, Hon. Secretary-General, Hon. Treasurer, and 7 Managing Committee members for the 2022-2024 term. The last date to file the nominations was the 15th of September, and withdrawal of nominations was 23rd of September. And, for the first time in the history of TAAI, National Office Bearers and proposed Managing Committee members have been chosen unopposed for the years 2022 – 2024 as there were no nominations filed to contest elections, challenging the current Office Bearers or nominations of MC members. The elections were scheduled for today i.e., 29th of September in Mumbai where the team has once again taken over their positions.

Sharing views on the election process, Jyoti Mayal, has been appointed as the President said that we have done our best for the fraternity. We left no stone unturned and represented the travel trade on every front. Our hard work won us many accolades because TAAI's relentless support to the travel trade and tourism industry has been appreciated at both national and international levels. Our presence at UFTAA, with Global Tourism Boards, with FAITH and state tourism boards as well as IATA shall certainly be more aggressive and interactive.

ITC Hotels add 5 more properties as Brand Storii expands

ITC Hotel's growth story continues to rise with group signing 5 boutique properties under the new brand, Storii by ITC Hotels.

Popular leisure destinations Goa, Dharamshala, Solan, Sirmour and Kufri are the frontliner destinations for Storii with Storii Goa and Storii Dharmashala already opening doors to guests. With the recent openings at Goa and Dharamshala, the ITC HOTELS Group now has its 5th property in Goa and its 12th hotel in Himachal Pradesh. With the Storii brand, ITC Hotels brings bespoke

experiences at immersive locations through atypical hotels and resorts that are unique by character, design or heritage and strive to co-exist with the environment and the community. Every hotel under this brand will tell its own unique 'story' which could stem from its architecture, location, heritage, theme or even its facilities and offerings. This parameter is key for a property to qualify under the Storii by ITC Hotels brand even as there may be a lot more flexibility offered in terms of design approach, property size and a few other parameters.



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Ski Tourism

the freezing sector

A multi-billion-dollar international market attracting between 300 and 350 million annual visitors, ski tourism is a global industry, with 67 countries worldwide offering outdoor ski areas.

- Bharti Sharma



A little background

The inception of commercial ski tourism can be dated back to early twentieth-century mountaineering. The initial years bear witness to non or low-commercial cross-country (Nordic) skiing as the antecedent to the commercial down-hill (Alpine) ski tourism as we know today. With the emergence of international mass tourism in the 1960s and 1970s, the contemporary ski tourism industry came to the fore with several new ski avenues constructed and existing smaller avenues enlarged. There were several factors that worked in the favour for this niche sector back in the early years. Comparatively lower entry barriers was one of the major facet encouraging players to venture into the industry. Technological requirement for constructing a ski area was majorly ski lifts which were both simple and cheap. The government plays a pivotal role in making a business lucrative or discouraging, in this case it was the former. Mountain regions were largely deprived of economic prosperity back then, and ski tourism opened the Pandora's box as a labour-intensive economic strategy in the economically insignificant

mountainous regions.

This was the era of significant economic growth and increased leisure time, which facilitated the swelling demand. Conducive market situation and availability of supply can do wonders for any business, and this was exactly the case with ski tourism development. The favourable market condition paired with abundance of snow-capped mountain ranges across the prominent markets of Western Europe and North America stimulated the expansion of new ski avenues in these areas. However, this run was shunted in the 1980s and 1990s largely due to the plummeting numbers of ski areas and maturing markets which resulted in slowing skier visits.

The rise of ski resorts

For most part of the last century, the ski tourism industry was dominated by Europe and North America housing the world's best known ski resorts. It was only in the late 1990s, the 1998 Winter Olympics in Japan if put precisely, that solidified Japan's position on the ski map and later the Andes gained prominence amongst Ski enthusiasts owing to their

year-long snow peak resorts. Over the years, ski resorts have matured beyond ski activities and skiers. These resorts are nestled amidst breath-taking mountainous landscapes and loaded with unadulterated fresh air and fruits. Pair these strong basics with outdoor activities like – hiking, horse-riding, mountain biking, rock climbing, aerial sports, canyoning and similar adventure activities and you have a perfect recipe for a leisure vacation on the mountains. These ski resorts have successfully managed to put this recipe to plate in order to get their share of tourists apart from the traditional winter sports season and adding depth to their list of activities in the process.

Growing infrastructure

It has been rightly put by Heraclitus, 'The only constant in life is change'. Competition, changing demands and preferences, expectations, all these are cursors pushing for change. In order to mete out intensifying competition and changing consumer needs and expectations, ski resorts were arm-twisted into enhancing the comfort aspects of the ski areas. Replacing the traditional surface

lifts with high speed lift and chair lifts for comfort and convenience, to improving the reliability, quality and increasing season length of the snow product incurred huge capital investments and increased operating costs to the ski resorts, which in turn altered the market and kicked many small ski areas out of business. Let us see some figures for a better illustration of the situation: There was a decline in the number of ski areas in the US from 622 in 1987-1988 to 481 in 2007-2008. Furthering the increase in investment angle, snow-deficient winters in the 1980s and 1990s advanced the diffusion of snowmaking and ski areas were left with no choice but to diversify into four-season destinations to increase revenues and support expanded accommodations and vacation real estate. Currently, the traditional markets of ski tourism have all matured, with only stable demand in US, Canada and France and declining demand in Switzerland, Japan and other countries. But, an interesting contrast to the discouraging facts above, the altering economic situation in emerging markets like China and Eastern Europe have resulted in new markets with high growth rates.

Skier's bucket list

Ski enthusiasts throng to various ski resorts around the globe for the adrenaline rush but let us mark the best places in the world to go skiing for our readers. There are over 2000 ski resorts spread across the globe, but the Alps has the highest concentration housing over a third of these ski resorts. However, the magnificent Portes du Soleil ski area in France and the Dolomites ski area in Italy, stand tallest amongst the most incredible ski areas in the world. Not just visitors and skiers, the industry has a pivotal role to play when it comes to generating employment. Whether you're a seasonaire or a ski resort stalwart, employment options for roles of instructors, sales personnel, technicians, chalet hosts, chefs, photographers, and others are on the board at resorts. Skiing is more than a hobby, ski tourism is a massive source of revenue generation fostering economies through resorts, hotels, equipments, supermarkets, bars, petrol pumps and other businesses in the ecosystem.

Let's go through some figures to gain a clearer perspective of the footprint of ski tourism on economies. In the UK alone, 31,982 skis were sold to shops, rental operations and other organisations in 2016-2017. United States the second popular ski destination has an average of 57.7 million skiers visit per season since 2003 and bought in \$5.8 billion direct spending in ski resorts in 2012.

Sustainability Factors

The serious global environmental issues are detrimental for this niche tourism segment as well. Global warming leading to increased temperatures and deficiency of snow pose a grave threat to ski tourism. Various studies have defined elaborately the the impacts of climate change on ski tourism, however the exact vulnerability of winter tourism towards internal climate variability



and climate change is uncertain. The ecosystems housing ski resorts are rich and diverse, but at the same time fragile and prone to dangers of excessive and unchecked tourism activities. The ski resort developers, especially the smaller ones have low or no adherence to environmental policies and nature conservation norms of the land. Flouting norms while developing resorts results in fragmentation and destruction of natural habitats of flora and fauna, sometimes to the verge of their extinction. Taking the alpine region as example, wildlife of the region is forced to alter movements, compete for limited food resources leading to human interaction and life threatening conflicts. Many countries have received tremendous economic mileage, all thanks to ski tourism but the growing competition, ever-growing customer demands and staying profitable have forced ski resort developers to adopt strategies that neglect norms and adversely affect the environment, the ecosystem and the locals. It is the need of the hour for tourism businesses to adopt operations that are sustainable in nature.

The scale and influence of the ski tourism industry has been significant for long. The ski tourism industry has gone beyond skiing and formed the prototype of a multifaceted ski tourism industry cluster including skiing entertainment, skiing technology, and skiing culture, which has resulted in attracting employment, stimulating related industries, revitalizing the regional economy, and optimizing the pattern of the respective regional sports industry. However, at present, the ski tourism market, as an emerging industry, still has looming issues in the form of resource integration and rational operation of the market. As a result, the industrial layout and structure of ski tourism are unreasonable, the development of various regions is unbalanced, and there is a large gap in operation and income.



INDIAN SAGA

Traverse the new Everyone's Paradise

Goa

The most charming and versatile state of India – Goa is beyond being just the land of sand, sun and beaches. A slice of heaven for everyone – adventure seekers, nature-buffs, history lovers, ones seeking solitude and peace, hikers and music lovers. Goa, the gorgeous scenic place it is, paints a perfect picture for all kinds of tourists. Shri Rohan Khaunte, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism, Goa speaks about his new plans for the destination.

- Shivangi Tomar





people have started talking about Goa differently. Monsoons are quite vibrating, eco-tourism – the hinterlands are pure beauty and the waterfalls are great. There are ample unexplored areas which is what the youth; the millennials want to explore. That gives us the opportunity to showcase Goa in a different manner. Achieving this through various platforms, whether it is digital, press or electronic is the main focus.

“Experience Goa – the rest will automatically follow”

– A message by Shri Rohan Khaunte, for the ones who haven't explored the paradise yet.

What is the outlook for the year ahead? What numbers are expected when it comes to Goa, now that inbound tourism has started flowing in?

As of now, Goa is just coming out of the post-covid phase. Pre-covid, we made a footfall of about 81 lakh tourists, out of which 72 lakhs were domestic and about 9 lakhs foreign tourists. This year in 2022, we witnessed a footfall of 2.9 million – 30 thousand were foreign tourists and 2.6 were domestic. Overall, the experience of travel is changing. The type of tourism people want is also evolving. Tourists are looking at places to be travelled differently, which is why changing simultaneously with the changing times is very important. This year, there are a few challenges in terms of e-visas. The United Kingdom and Russia dominate as far as the contribution of foreign tourists to Goa is concerned. Leaving that aside, domestic tourists are always

coming in. It is extremely important with the new airport coming in, the tourist flow is increasing too – the state needs to be ready with the infrastructure which is required in terms of hotel rooms. Attending The National Conference of State Tourism Ministers in Dharmshala has given an insight into how can things be put across– homestays, and paying guests will start playing a significant role in creating the backbone for new opportunities coming into Goa after the opening of Mopa Airport.

Speaking of visas, what is the significance of e-visas?

E-visas to 150 countries already exist. The UK is not part of the list which allows the process to be very cumbersome. For a visa it takes almost about 2 months, to and fro, cost and all similar aspects go up. If the e-visa comes in, the flow of high-spending tourists will definitely increase. The Minister of External Affairs or the concerned ministry has to pitch in and see if this issue can get resolved as quickly as possible.

What are the marketing plans for Goa? Since the ministry has announced that special attention should be paid to social media, promotions and marketing of a particular destination to boost tourism, what steps will be taken for the same?

Goa has always been on the advanced stage as far as events are concerned. Firstly, participating in all road shows whether they are international or domestic. Secondly, use of the digital platform on a large scale, in terms of getting more influencers, bloggers and vloggers to talk about Goa as a different state. When one talks about Goa, one talks about a place for foodies, a place for homestays, and a place for conventions and weddings. Other than the sun, sand and sea,



What is the new culture of #WorkationGoa all set to be promoted by the government?

During covid time, the work-from-home culture emerged, wherein a lot of people shifted to Goa and are continuing to work from Goa as there is a lot of creative space. We look forward to making Goa - The Tourism Capital and also The Creative Capital of India. While doing this, a lot of things need to be trending which is why a culture is

being developed, known as #WorkationGoa.

This will speak a lot about getting the volume of high-spending tourists - also called digital nomads, who are basically using co-working spaces or are able to explore it here; people who will spend a long time in the state and work from the place. To support and promote this culture actively, the government plans to set up co-working spaces on the beach, which will be one of a kind, where you can come, chill and be creative at the same time.



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driven platform
with pre-fix
meetings

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The island nation of Sri Lanka is nothing short of magnificent. Boasting fantastic landscapes, romantic sandy beaches, Melancholy Mountain hills, lush green wildlife game parks, enormous tea gardens, and beautiful historic temples,

Ayubowan,

Sri Lanka!

Sri Lanka has no shortage of beauty. In an exclusive interaction with Travel Turtle, Hon. Harin Fernando, Sri Lanka's Tourism & Land Minister talks about the how the nation is rising like a phoenix.

- Naina Nath



OFFSHORE BINOCULARS



Formally known as Ceylon and is today popularly referred to as The Pearl of the Indian Ocean owing to its breathtaking natural beauty, extraordinary biodiversity, and abundance of precious gemstones. Floating in the tropical waters off the southern tip of India, Sri Lanka is defined by its Buddhist culture, excessively friendly people, and laid-back way of life, despite its troubled recent history.

In September 2022, Sri Lanka Tourism successfully conducted a B2B Networking Roadshow in New Delhi, Mumbai, and Hyderabad. The aim of the event was to highlight the culture and cuisines and showcase the destination attractions. The 50-member team of Sri Lankan Tour Operators and Hoteliers was led by the Hon. Harin Fernando, Ministry of Tourism who was accompanied by Mr. Chalaka Gajabahu, Chairman of Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, Mr. Thisum Jayasuriya, Chairman of Sri Lanka Conventions Bureau, and legend cricketer Sanath Jayasurya, brand ambassador for tourism for India, Pakistan, Maldives and Bangladesh.

The 3-city roadshow focused on promoting a myriad of tourism experiences while also focusing on converting potential travelers to make bookings and highlighting the positive message that Sri Lanka is now open for Leisure, Business, and MICE travel.

An update on the island nation

One of the key sectors of the Sri Lankan economy is tourism. 60 per

cent of our revenue is generated through Sports and Tourism. Currently, we are looking up to India and want to thank Indian government officials, especially Prime Minister Mr. Modi for supporting Sri Lanka during such difficult times. We have gone thru a political and financial crisis but things are settling down and we are here to say that we are ready to accept Indian tourists into the country.

India is one of our most important markets we decided our campaign should start from India and I am sure that most Indians have heard a lot of negatives but Sri Lanka is absolutely stable now and all the issues have been dealt with.

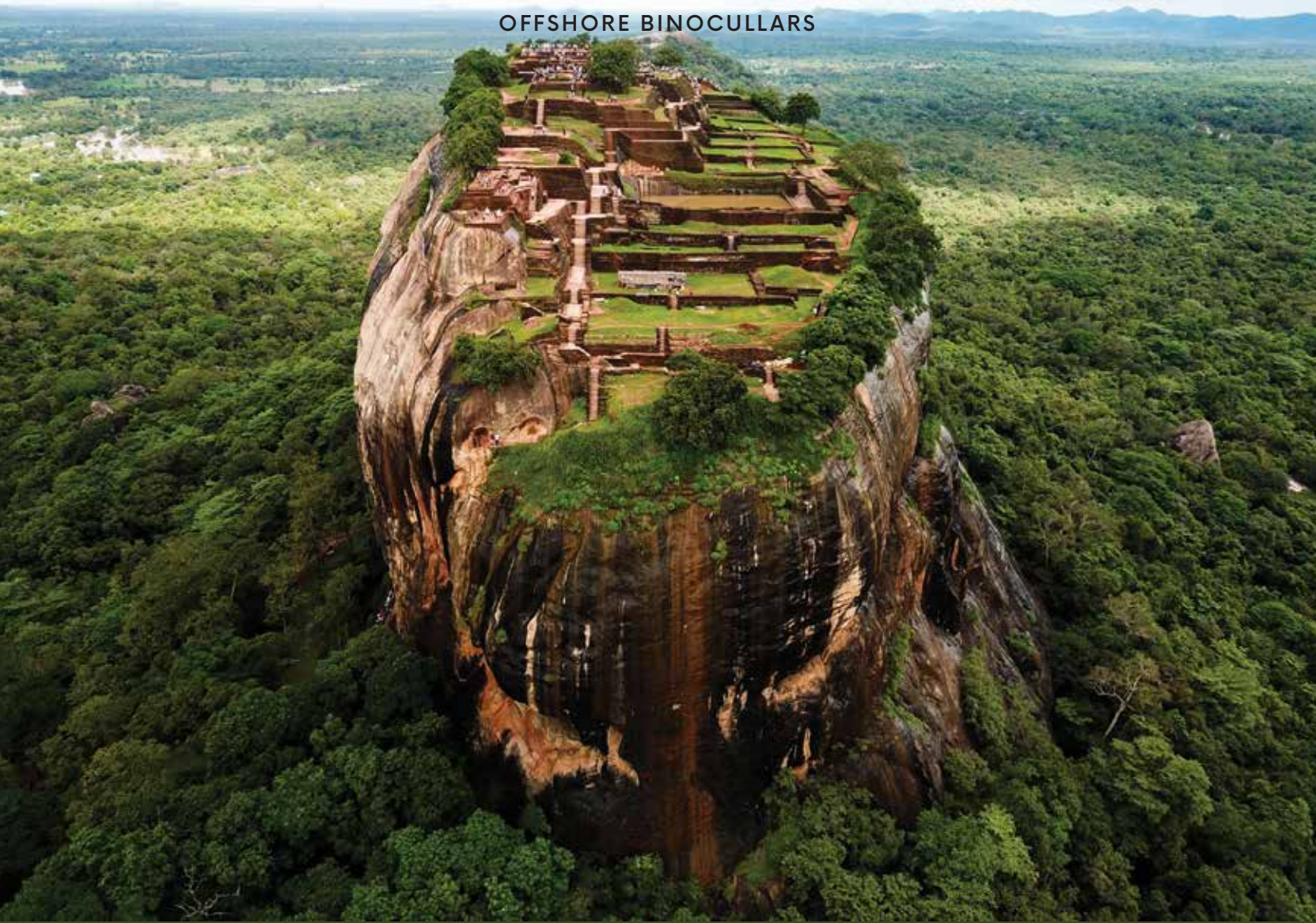
Sri Lanka plans to restart their economy in full force. We have gone through a series of trouble and having said that the power of Sri Lanka is such that if we ever fall down, we always immerge stronger and better!

We aim to regain ourselves in the next 2 years. We are open doors for investment, for example - We met with club Mahindra to find them a different location within Sri Lanka to host their properties. We also met with aviation industry leaders like Indigo Airlines and Alliance Air. We are also exploring the opportunity to launch a MakeMyTrip Sri Lanka edition.

As of today, 1 Indian Rupee is equal to 5 Sri Lankan Rupees and hence this is the most ideal time for Indians to buy and invest in Sri Lanka., the land of opportunities.



OFFSHORE BINOCULARS



Besides New Delhi, Mumbai, and Hyderabad, what other locations in India are in your focus?

We realized that Gujarat has a lot of money and they travel a lot. Gujarat is one of the most traveled states of India. Even though we don't have a direct flight from Ahmedabad to Colombo, Indigo flies very often out of the capital and has over 275 aircrafts and hence the potential with Indigo is immense.

We want to build back the confidence in Sri Lanka and as seeing is believing, we want to invite journalists to visit Sri Lanka and see for themselves. Even today, travel agents and tour operators are very big in India. As important as social media influencers are in today's world, the state media houses are also equally important.

We are also tapping the South Indian market as it has so much of potential. In Kerala, we met with Santhigiri Ashram and are in the process of finding them a location for a branch

office in Sri Lanka. We also have ferry services starting from Puducherry to Sri Lanka.

We are not just a beach destination or just a pilgrimage destination. We are also launching the Ramaya trail in a big way which is starting from Hyderabad. At the Mumbai leg of the Sri Lankan Roadshow we are introducing special promotional packages where the Tourism Minister of Maharashtra will be giving a keynote speech and embracing the occasion.

What are some of the new initiatives to make tourism better?

We have a new visa scheme for tourists. Initially, we used to provide a 1 month (30 days) visa for 35\$ but now for the same price (35\$) we are planning to give our visitors a 6-month visa. This initiative has been approved by the cabinet. We are also providing a long-stay visa for 250\$. This visa will be for the duration of 5 years multiple entries with each stay being up to 90

days. Sri Lanka has an ETA (online visa system) which is very fast and effective.

We as a nation have learned our lessons from the past and hence for the confidence and security of our tourists, we are launching a fuel pass. There will never be a problem with fuel for our visitors following the new scheme. All tour operators and tourists can buy their pass at the airport upon arrival and be rest assured that they will never run out of gas and fuel.

What are some of the key takeaways from the roadshow?

All tour operators know and love Sri Lanka. The world is worried that Sri Lanka is wiped out but I need to express that by December we will showcase our unveil ourselves like never before. We will showcase the highest level of hospitality, and our country will have a very different and festive look. This will ensure we build confidence in the rest of the world.



OFFSHORE BINOCULARS

Can you elaborate on the Airline connectivity?

Sri Lankan Airlines alone flies to India over 100 times a week and is our no.1 airline. Indigo too will increase their frequency to 4 flights in a day, Air India has 2 flights a day but we are in talks to increase that as well. Sri Lanka also sees a lot of charter planes from India especially Gujarat. We welcome many casino travelers in such charters. We want to prepare cautiously and re-launch ourselves. In November, we are attending WTM in London. This is the right time for us and 2023 is going to be our best year yet!

What is the currency status?

The Central Bank and Government had made a strict decision to stop importing certain items. Only the essential items were being imported. Russia is one of our biggest source markets. We have 11 flights coming in from Russia alone and they have always been at full capacity. The Russian Ruble and Indian Rupee are to be accepted in the country just the same way that the USD has been accepted across the world. The Central Bank and the PM are very keen and supportive of this initiative.

Please inform us about the Covid-19-related situation in the country.

Our forces handled the pandemic situation brilliantly and did an exceptional job. Everyone in the country has had their 3rd vaccination and is in line to get their 4th. For the



Indian traveler, a vaccination certificate or a negative RT-PCR test is not required.

"We need support from the media to showcase the positive side of Sri Lanka. We are open to one and all."
- Hon. Harin Fernando

"Culturally and historically our two nations are very close and we hope for India to become the pillar that we need to build back, better!" - Sanath Jayasuriya

"We are a 7-day all-in-one capsule, a small land with many enjoyable categories. You can enjoy the sun and the sea and at the same time you can jump into a waterfall. The next day, you can go surfing at Arugam Bay, and also go leopard watching at the Kumana National Park. You can also watch the world's biggest bird migration which happens in Bundala National Park. We are ready to welcome you with a warm heart!" - Chalaka Gajabahu

"Sri Lanka has become a competitive and economically friendly market for Indians so please start your negotiations with us and the conventions bureau will ensure that you get full value for your money."
- Thisum Jayasuriya



Aggrandizing India as an emotion worldwide

Home to the warmest people on earth, India is a mosaic of diverse cultural experiences. It is not just a country but also an emotion. An emotion which we want every person to feel on this planet. The topmost officials from the tourism industry talk to Travel Turtle about the significance of marketing to boost tourism in India and showcase India as the number one tourist destination.

- Shivangi Tomar

Tourism marketing is entirely associated with marketing strategies in the field of tourism. Today, there are several countries in the world, where tourism plays a major role in enhancing the GDP. In such a scenario, tourism marketing becomes an important aspect to be covered. The tourism sector has emerged as an important sector of the Indian economy. It is the need of the hour to analyze and identify the key areas where India is lagging behind.

The Swadesh Darshan Scheme aims to encourage theme-based tourism to promote, grow, and capitalize on India's tourist potential. As of March 2022, under the SDS scheme, the Ministry of Tourism has invested Rs. 5,500 crores and sanctioned approximately 76 projects in 31 states and union territories. A similar budget should be formulated to concentrate and focus specifically on the marketing of the states in the country. Now tourism marketing is all about applying various marketing techniques and strategies to boost the tourism industry of every state.

Effective strategic marketing plan to boost tourism

For successful tourism marketing to take place, one thing which is required the most is that the state should speak for itself in such a way that its voices can be heard in the targeted markets. This way they will be able to generate tourists successfully. Also, they need to be extremely careful and attentive in providing touristic services to the people flowing in. This is because if the tourists are happy with the services and the overall outlook of the place, chances are that they will spread

the word and this will definitely bring in more people, in turn boosting the tourism sector of the country. In the case of tourism marketing, it is easier to find and draw the attention of the targeted audience towards the destination by providing encouraging content. Therefore, strategic planning and branding are key to effective tourism marketing.



Promoting Incredible India in G-20 worldwide

India has a rich culture and extremely royal heritage. But if we don't showcase it to the world, what's the whole point? Shri Arvind Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism – Government of India speaks about the importance of grabbing the opportunity to showcase India as an outstanding destination for tourists from all across the globe. "G-20 is a group of remarkable countries and hence it's our prime focus along with the state tourism ministers to provide a truly Indian experience to all the delegates who will come to India", says Shri Arvind Singh. He also adds, "In the past, we have frequently spent a significant amount of dollars on global marketing. We are working on restarting a more effective marketing campaign soon, with more preference being given to the digital form of media." He talks about how global pundits have predicted that the tourism industry will grow faster than the global economy, all owing to

marketing. "The rich experience and warmth a tourist will get; they will not get all that in a single country in the world, the range of experiences you can get in India; one will have to travel a continent to get that satisfaction. The warmth and hospitality of the Indian people are well-known", is what Shri Arvind Singh has to say to every foreign tourist who hasn't been to India yet. He focuses on promoting the same message through different forms of media and spreading the word worldwide.



Touching the raw nerve of India's Tourism Marketing

Shri Kanwar Pal, Tourism Minister of Haryana, quotes an incident where he visited Europe and realized that India was much better in terms of tourist spots, history, culture, monuments and tourist activities. He said, "People from all around the world visit Europe in bulk and Europe is considered to be a number one tourist destination, that is because their marketing strategy is always at its peak. It's because the destination promotes itself as a strong brand and that is what India should do. India needs to work harder on its marketing." He speaks about how important it is for the central government and the state government to sit together and formulate an effective marketing plan for boosting India as the most loved tourist destination. "Our country should focus on religious tourism as India is popular for the same. People are fascinated with the diverse religions in India and that is what should be our prime highlight while marketing a destination." He emphasizes the homestay policy which has been

recently brought into action in Haryana. Haryana is focusing highly on farm and adventure tourism and as soon as these policies start showing results, tourists are going to be attracted to the destination automatically with the help of active promotions and prime marketing.



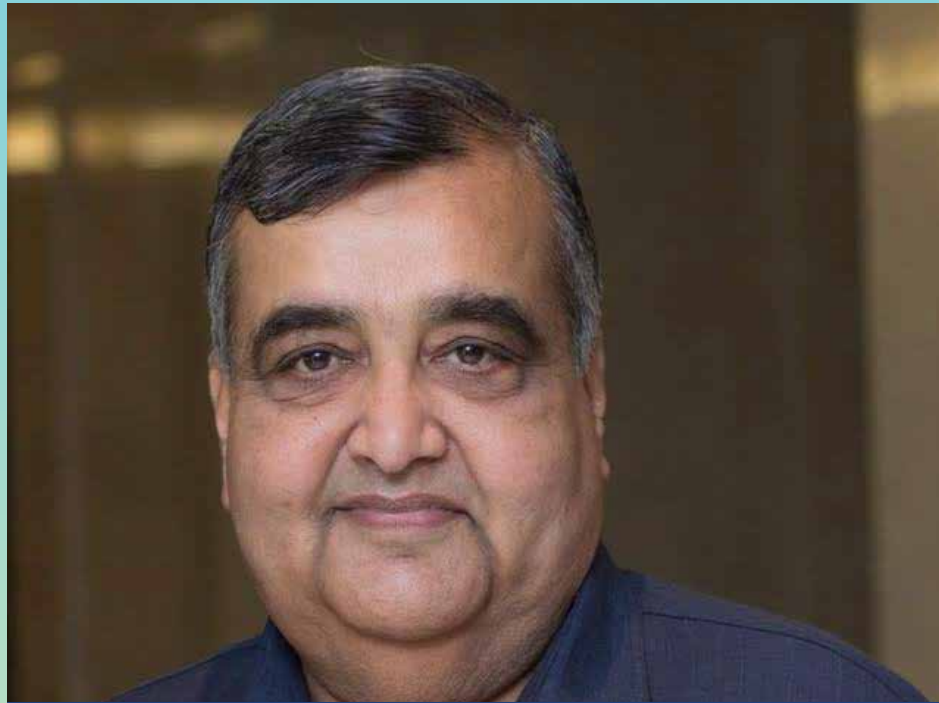
Shri Kanwar Pal, Minister of Tourism, Government of Haryana



Overseas Promotion- An aspect not to be overlooked

The visibility of a particular product is very important if one plans to boost their marketing strategy and get the maximum results out of it. A plan without execution is futile. Mr Rajiv Mehra, IATO President talks to us about focusing on promoting Incredible India worldwide in order for tourism to flourish in the country. "We have been requesting the ministry to support us and start overseas promotion. Until and unless, promotions don't begin, it will remain ineffectual. We require India to be visible, which is why there needs to be some kind of a strong word in the market which allures the tourists to our country," says Rajiv Mehra. He strongly believes that it is the responsibility of the government to squander money for showcasing India as the top tourist destination. He adds, "In order to achieve the vision we want till 2028, the marketing game has to be made strong." India is an experiential destination with a kaleidoscope of ancient heritage and culture. Tourism Marketing in developing countries as a growth sector resides in its potential to facilitate growth in GDP; create employment; increase foreign exchange earnings, and attract capital investment. Developing countries

have recognised its importance and introduced tourism as a major part of their national development strategies. India is a beautiful country which needs to be marketed and promoted beautifully in a similar way. Whenever a traveller contemplates his travel plans, the first option that pops into his mind is our country and the emotion is - 'Namaste India'.



Mr Rajiv Mehra, President, IATO



Indulge in the world of *Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts*

With captivating properties, iconic experiences and spectacular settings, Jumeirah Group is a distinguished name in the hospitality industry. Alex Lee, Chief Commercial Officer, Jumeirah Group shares on what makes the brand exceptional and extraordinary.

- Sudipta Saha



Alex Lee has been with the Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts for 12 years, and over the years he has seen the group on the rise. While interacting with him, one can feel his attachment to the brand, and he describes every aspect of Jumeirah very aptly. A positive personality and passionate hotelier with a thrust to expand Jumeirah's presence in the Indian market, he is keen to spread charisma and offer an extra-lavish hospitality to Indian travellers. He is a man who is inspired by the creativity of the people he works with and the way they interact with the customer on a day-to-day basis. Being a hotelier, he adulates interacting with different people, travelling the world and talking about the Jumeirah brand. Apart from this, he also likes to see his colleagues grow and expand their experience with the brand. Now, let's hear from him on how the group is planning to expand and how they consider India as a market.

India—a global market

With the rise in outbound travel from India, it is now considered one of the most eminent and significant markets. India has turned up into a global market, adding to it, Alex Lee says, "Indian market has been essential for Jumeirah brand for a long because of its base in Dubai. The high amount of travel between India and Dubai and a considerable number of Indian customers know about hotels based in Dubai. However, over the last two years, we have been expanding to new locations around the world and would like to introduce those properties in these new locations to Indian customers.

He adds, "India is one of the most important markets for Dubai, and we see the potential of having equilibrium bonds. It's really about the combination of both luxury leisure travel, and also when it comes to meetings, conferences, events and destination weddings,

we have diversified properties to meet multiple requirements for Indian travellers."

Crafting exceptional experiences

Jumeirah is known for its emblematic architecture and luxury services, and the most significant of all is the incomparable dining experience. Speaking on the same line, Alex Lee mentions, "The two key real experiences that Jumeirah is known for its architectural design, when we started 25 years ago, we started with the iconic Jumeirah Beach Hotel with its familiar well-known wave shape building after that we opened Burj-Al Arab Jumeirah which is the world's most addressed hotel with its pillaring cells. From the very beginning, architectural design has played an important role for the Jumeirah brand, and as we add more hotels to the portfolio, we continue to focus on impressive, striking architectural interior designs. The second element is around dining; we believe that the dining experience is one of the utmost important aspects of any hotel. So, we are majorly focused on expanding the dining experience for our customers."

Evolving with time

It's been 25 years since the inception of Jumeirah, and there have been considerable elements of change. When asked about customer evolution or what transformation Jumeirah has noticed over the years, Alex Lee explains, "What has changed for Jumeirah brand is that customers now know what to expect from Jumeirah brand, they have become familiar with the brand. They appreciate direct interaction with us for bookings, and many of our customers have chosen to join our loyalty programme, particular for the destination they are familiar with and, hence they now prefer booking directly. Technology has

started playing a major role earlier; the guests staying in the hotel preferred one-to-one interaction with our service team, but post-Covid, they moved to interact digitally, so we have developed an electronic app that allows customers to chat instantly with our service team."

The ultimate Indian clientele

For Jumeirah Group, the stronger segment is the luxury leisure traveller, and in this area, they want to introduce their new properties in new locations to those familiar with their Dubai property. "Corporate travellers are coming back, and for some of our properties, we have a specific focus on destination weddings and celebrations. We have recently opened in Muscat and have received three confirmed destination weddings. We expect the same for our upcoming property in Bahrain," adds Alex Lee.

Be ready for an indulgent stay

Jumeirah Group is in an expansion mode, and they are opening in new locations such as Bali, Muscat, Maldives, and Bahrain. "We are opening a new property in Bahrain that is a beach property, perfect for travellers looking for a leisurely break and is also potential for a destination wedding because of its perfect outdoor set-up for conferences and celebrations. Outside of this, we are coming up with two properties in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," shares Alex Lee. He further states, "We have recently grown our sales presence and are initiating to educate travel professionals around the brand and differentiation of hotels we have. We would also like to expand the offices in the market and make sure that when we come into the market, we don't want to talk about Jumeirah; instead, we want to hear from our travel trade partners about the expectations of their customers."

UNFORGETTABLE *New Zealand*

A destination worth
all the hype



In a world transforming every minute, New Zealand abounds itself in tourist attractions and fun activities for those who are able to discover what the country has to offer. New Zealand is a land of great contrasts and pure diversity. Gregg Wafelbakker, General Manager of Asia for Tourism New Zealand talks to Travel Turtle about the various segments it has been targeting and its presence in the Indian tourism market.

- **Bharti Sharma**



The active volcanoes, magnificent caves, deep glacier lakes, beautiful valleys, sandy beaches, and the spectacular snow-capped peaks of the Southern Alps—all contribute to New Zealand's scenic beauty. The beauty of this country can leave you mesmerized and coming back, wanting for more.

New Zealand attracting value travellers

Gregg Wafelbakker, General Manager of Asia for Tourism, New Zealand is responsible for Tourism marketing activities across China, Japan, Korea, and South and South East Asia talks to Travel Turtle. Gregg states, "India has been the fastest-growing market for us before the onset of the pandemic. Indian travellers traditionally have engaged in more activities than other markets. However, as sustainability has become critical as we look to rebuild tourism, we want Indian travellers to contribute both economically and socially."

New Zealand borders reopened in August. With this, Tourism New Zealand is eyeing to attract 'value' travellers in India who are looking for unique experiences with a strong connection to people, culture and nature.

Natural charisma of the island country

New Zealand is globally renowned for wine tourism. The country's rich pinot noir and sauvignon blanc offerings are bound to interest the seasoned crowd. Get a taste of wineries and vineyards on both of New Zealand's islands with incredible excursions. New Zealand is also a destination for a thrilling adventure. Travellers who wish to combine their love of the outdoors with their adventurous and thrilling spirit can do it in the home of adventure tourism which is New Zealand. There are adventure activities to suit all levels of confidence. From heliskiing and skydiving, up to off-roading, horse riding and water rafting. This destination has all the adventures and activities to fulfil your hunger for an adrenaline rush and excitement.

Spot on destination marketing



Tourism New Zealand released a new campaign, 'If You Seek'. Through the campaign, the brand aims to convert demands for New Zealand and boost the post-Covid recovery. The campaign launched in India through key trade partners like Thomas Cook, MakeMyTrip and Kulin Kumar Holidays. It should be noted that Tourism New Zealand is responsible for marketing the destination of New Zealand as an international and domestic visiting destination. Through this campaign, Aotearoa New Zealand welcomes Indian visitors and attracts them to see the unseen, explore the unexplored and cherish their travel experience. Gregg Wafelbakker says the campaign claims to be an amalgamation of sensory and spiritual senses showcasing New Zealand's people and places. 'If You Seek' is a unique campaign targeting high-quality visitors to New Zealand and will create curiosity among travellers to explore the destination. "We are encouraged with the forward bookings for New Zealand from the Indian market. We understand that recovery for the tourism sector will happen gradually and we are encouraged by what we are hearing from our trade partners," said Wafelbakker.

A traveller's delight

New Zealand is considered one of the most peaceful, safe and clean countries in the world to travel to. It is also one of the favourite immigration destinations for Indians. People from all parts of India move in thousands every year to live, work, study and tourism purposes in New Zealand. New Zealand is one of the most gorgeous countries on the earth, and even with its modest size, it happens to pack a lot of history, culture, and attractions for tourists from all over the world to experience. The island country is ranked among the second most beautiful country in the world and now we know exactly why.

Lindt Home of Chocolate

Dive into the world of chocolate

Chocolate is that happiness which you can relish forever. If you are someone with a sweet tooth, be ready to immerse into the fascinating world of chocolate. The Lindt Home of Chocolate in Kilchberg, Switzerland brings you an opportunity to experience an interactive world of chocolate.

- Sudipta Saha

Switzerland has always been positioned as a centre of excellence for chocolate making over the long term, to offer a first-hand experience to guests from cultivation to production Lindt Home of Chocolate is indeed chocolate heaven. The museum takes you on an interactive journey that will take you back to the history of chocolate along with you can follow the chocolate manufacturing process in today's modern test facilities.

With the grand opening of the Lindt Home of Chocolate in September 2020, this milestone in Swiss

chocolate history became a reality. The home of chocolates also offers an opportunity to meet the Swiss chocolate pioneers who made our lives sweeter with their inventions. The plans for the building were drawn up by the renowned Basel-based architects-Christ & Gantenbein. The impressive building of the museum is multi-functional with three floors that include a research facility and the show production, the Lindt Home of Chocolate also includes an interactive multimedia exhibition and it also contains the world's largest Lindt Chocolate Shop, the first Lindt Café in Switzerland as well

as a Chocolateria for chocolate-making courses. One of the most spectacular highlights is the chocolate fountain in the entrance hall with over nine meters and approximately 500 kilograms of chocolates floating in the fountain.

The museum not just takes you on a chocolaty voyage but also houses an auditorium that showcases movies in Switzerland and on Lindt as well. On the premise you will come across Lindt Chocolate Shop, spread over more than 500 m², where you will find the best chocolates, pralines and a whole range of other delicious treats.

Lindt Home of Chocolate is now aiming to strengthen and increase visibility in India to welcome guests for an immersive experience in the magical world of Swiss chocolate. Daniel Huggenberger, PR Manager, Lindt Home of Chocolate said, "It been two years since the museum has opened and we welcome around 2000 visitors a day. The museum serves as an interactive information platform for the general public and focuses on all aspects related to chocolate. It gives an immense opportunity to guests to understand how chocolate is produced and created followed by a chocolate tasting."



Explore Jaisalmer

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Trulyy INDIA

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- All meals included for the stay
- 1 Night stay at *"The Desert Oasis"*
or *"Dunes safari camp"*
- Rajasthani cultural programme
- Full day sightseeing with a guide
- Camel safari
- Jeep safari
- Complimentary Hi-tea
- All transfers at discounted prices
- Pickup and drop-off from railway station
at a discounted price

Exploration/Activities to do in Jaisalmer

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- Gadisar Lake
- Bada bagh
- Desert national park
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HEADS IN BEDS

Alila Hinu Bay

Omani Opulence

Surrounded by mist-shrouded mountains and marked by a swish and serene ambience with swanky rooms, great staff and incredible epicurean adventures, Alila Hinu Bay in Salalah, Oman is the perfect backdrop for unforgettable sun and sea as well as monsoon adventures

- Misbah Mansuri



HEADS IN BEDS



Even as someone who has travelled to most bucket-list destinations from Maldives to Bali, I was still in search of a timeless travel destination. Little did I know that my search would end in Salalah, Oman. The first hint of the scenic drama in store had come as we marveled at the luscious wadis. I was stoked to spend the next three days here.

To be sure, Oman is the antithesis of its glitzy Gulf State neighbours. And for good reason. Dhofar's main city, Salalah is hypnotic to say the least, especially during the khareef, when monsoon clouds from the Indian Ocean blanket the region in a constant rolling mist. The gentle rain comes every day, and in the low mountains surrounding Salalah, shiny emerald-coloured grass sprouts up from the ground. The alluringly rustic-chic Alila Hinu Bay only makes enjoying this backdrop even more delightful.

The property comprises 12 hotel rooms and suites, as well as restaurants, swimming pools, children's areas and leisure centres, carefully articulated for the best guest experience, offering a distinctive destination of tranquillity and luxury. One can also pick from the 46 Ridge Retreats and 90 Pool Villas decorated in clean, contemporary styles.

We loved the bewitching arcade ahead of the lobby displaying the Omani architecture. Some refreshing towels and the delectable welcome drink, a karkade samba iced tea: an infusion of exotic tropical fruits, hibiscus, rosehip peel, apple bits, orange peel and flower petals served elegantly marked the perfect start to our stay.



HEADS IN BEDS

Three days of sun, sea and splendour followed. From a timeless frankincense spa therapy where our muscles were kneaded to mush followed by the showstopping frankincense tea to captivating tea rituals, our days were marked with several standout moments.

Our favourites were the meals at Sea Salt, the restaurant overlooking one of two swimming pools at the property. The airy indoor space has half a dozen ceiling fans, well-spaced-out solid wood tables, an open kitchen and beach-inspired decor, including curtains artfully created from shells.

We would opt for the terrace table, and were rewarded with views of the sparkling bay flanked by mountains.

We highly recommend the tender, falling-off-the-bone lamb shank — marinated in ground whole spices and served with potatoes alongside roti canai, the flaky flatbread, popular in South-East Asia. Other great appetisers included the Vietnamese banh bao, steamed and fried dim sum, and chicken and lamb satay. Take it from us, the flavour profiles are finger-licking good.

Another favourite from the stay was the picnic set up by Alila Hinu Bay, at Wadi Darbat, a valley in Oman's south-western Dhofar region. The khareef, or monsoon season, transforms this part of the country between July and September. We munch on some scrumptious sandwiches as we get caught in the vista that surrounds us— seemingly endless kilometres of rolling hills, carpeted by gentle green grass and windswept trees. It is such special moments crafted by Alila that give it an edge above the rest. And of course, its gracious staff who will go above and beyond to ensure every moment is unforgettable. On our last night, we sprawled like sultans beneath a canopy of stars. The ocean sighed and somewhere out in the darkness amidst the majestic landscape, we found a destination, we were actually blown away by.



How has the year been for Alila Hinu Bay in Salalah?

It's been a great year. When you're starting a project such as this you can't help but get excited. We're very lucky to have a team with good energy. Throughout the year everyone has had the opportunity to get creative and express their thoughts and insights on how we could make Alila Hinu Bay stand out. We've spent a lot of time and effort refining the product, discovering the secrets the area has to offer, and crafting experiences. I must say it has been an exciting journey for all of us here and continues to be so.

As a GM, what is your approach, strategy and leadership style for the property?

As a GM of such a singular property such as this, you truly have to push the boundaries of what can be done. To do that, I take a very collaborative approach and encourage the team from all levels to share their thoughts and ideas and also experiment so that we are ensuring that we achieve our vision of positioning Alila Hinu Bay as the ideal launchpad for discovering the treasures of the Dhofar region both on land and at sea.

Oman is inundated with hotels, what gives Alila Hinu Bay and Salalah as a region an edge over the rest?

We appeal to those who yearn for something different. Those who have a curiosity for new destinations, and seek the road less travelled. Those who come are rewarded with pristine and unspoiled land and seascapes. They are cared for by an incredibly warm and genuine team, and they have the opportunity to experience something new.

What was your approach to business during the pandemic and reopening period?

The property opened during the pandemic which admittedly wasn't the ideal scenario. Since then we have spent the time introducing the property to the market and encouraging guests to come experience the property by offering very attractive rates. Now that Oman has lifted all restriction, the country is in a better position than most to capitalize on pent up demand for travel.

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

Arrive in the afternoon and have a sundowner at Seasalt. Continue with a private dinner under the star with a menu customized for you by our chefs. Have a restful night's sleep, and try to catch the sunrise from the Western side of the property where you'll see the amazing colors of the landscape change as the sun rises. I would then go on a guided mountain bike ride towards the East side of the rest with scenic trails that hugs the coast. Follow that with breakfast at The Orchard. For the rest of the day, I would either spend time at the beach or go on an excursion either on land or at sea.

What are your plans and focus areas for the rest of 2022?

We plan to maintain our effort of introducing the property to a wider audience now that travel is back in swing. All the while we will continue to refine the offerings push ourselves to always be coming up with something new.



Juan Paolo Alfonso, General Manager, Alila Hinu Bay, Salalah

BERLIN

A tale of one city

How much history can a city take? Depends, really! Ask Berlin! History has been remade in a city that could never stay away from history...

- Inder Raj Ahluwalia



TRAVEL THERAPY



When Walter Mopper, then Mayor of West Berlin, had said "Berlin rejoice" at the opening of the Brandenburg Gate in 1989, signaling Germany's reunification, the excitement was palpable on both sides of the wall. And the celebrations reverberated across Germany. One Germany!

Two countries had become one once again, and as before, Berlin was the epicenter, regaining its rightful place among the world's great cities.

I find today's Berlin as enigmatic and interesting as a large city can be. They've described it as the 'city that never sleeps', but it has several other attributes. It is a reputed European urban centre, throbbing with commercial and entertainment activity, pulsating in its nightlife, graceful in bearing its wounds and wonders.

Among Europe's youngest capitals, post-wall Berlin is a city on the move.

Bedding down in Maritim proArte Hotel Berlin, gave me

perfect positioning to discover the city. Located on one of Berlin's main arteries, the famous shopping mile Friedrichstraße, the hotel immerses you right in the middle of sights and shopping opportunities. The Brandenburg Gate, the Reichstag, the Galleries Lafayette and the Gendarmenmarkt are all nearby.

Essentially a city of water and stone, Berlin packs a wallop when it comes to historical sights and diverse attractions. Whether inside the old Hamburger Bahnhof, or in the old German Ballhaus, or on the steps of the pleasure ground, or canoe-sailing on the Tegeler lake, the city charms with its history and ambience.

Local icons abound. Grand historical buildings like the Charlottenburg Palace with its fabulous art treasures; the stately gleaming white Humboldt Palace in Tegel with its splendid two-centuries-old avenue of 'Linden'; and Klein-Glienicke Palace; all mirror

past royalty. The Gendarme Market is the most charming square with a historical flavour.

Emerging from the shadow of history are famous buildings of modern Berlin. Like the sleek Radio Tower, the imposing International Congress Centre, or the office blocks that gleam with fresh paint and polished glass! And offering spectacular city views from its dome, through over 30,000 square feet of glass, the renovated Reichstag retains all its grandeur.

The latest addition is the Humboldt Forum, a new building on a historic site. Princes and politicians have built, redesigned, demolished and

re-planned on this site. A 27 metre-wide video installation provides a stunning overview of the site's history, as do 35 flashbacks offering a glimpse of the site's past. 'Baret' restaurant on the rooftop provides panoramic city views.

Events are omnipresent. Berlin's now gone into an overdrive. The International Film Festival; the International Tourism Exchange; and the International Audio and Video Fair are just some symbols that showcase the world locally. Cultural highlights include the famous 'Jazz Festival'; the 'Free Berlin Art Exhibition'; the 'Theatre Meeting'; and the 'Berlin Midsummer Night's Dream' to name just a few in a packed calendar.



TRAVEL THERAPY

A delight awaits museum buffs. Brush up on local history at the Berlin Museum. Admire 19th Century paintings and sculptures at the National Gallery. Or Nefertiti's famous bust at the Egyptian Museum.

And there's this rather fortuitous 'cultural crowding', thanks to competing theatres and courageous, experimental 'free theatre' ensembles and collections that seem to exist and perform with no fixed place of abode. Combining to ensure that art is in season all year round, are The Oper (the city's auditoria); the Philharmonic; the Chamber Music Hall; and the stylish Theatre das Westins. And there's also The Schaubuhne, among Europe's finest and most architecturally artistic theatres.

Like art and culture, nature also seems to be in season throughout the year, with a third of the city comprised of lakes, rivers, forests, fields and meadows. Beckoning ramblers are 225 km of riverbank and gleaming, sandy beaches for swimming and fishing, and some sixty parks including the grounds of the Federal Horticultural Show and the Botanical Gardens. You can also cast off on a pleasure-boat cruise on the Spree or the Havel.

The city is serious eating turf. 'Good Morning' and 'Gotten Appetit' are one and the same thing, and just how seriously the Berliner takes his cuisine is reflected by some amazing statistics. Five thousand restaurants, buffets, and snack bars serve everything from French nouvelle cuisine to Italian, Spanish, Asian, and 'Bohemian food.' Breakfast cafes with menus featuring anything from 'wurst' to caviar, and from yogurt to plain cream cakes, provide a pleasant start to the day and stretch it right into the afternoon. Then the evening joints take over. And then the late night establishments join the act. And late night means late.

The Berlin meatball and stuffed cabbage, Havel Zander that melts



in the mouth like butter, pickled pork knuckle, and the unique curry wurst are just some of the local specialties. For the less adventurous, KaDeWe's celebrated food hall serves everything from champagne to Strasbourg liver pate, to oysters.

Shop till you drop! Mitte District; Prenzlauerberg; Kreuzberg and Charlottenburg all boast top-end boutiques, and Quartier 205-207 FriedrichstraBe; Kranzler Ech;and Stilwerk are all big shopping centres. With some 1, 100 shops, boutiques, restaurants, galleries, and antique shop and designer boutique-lined side streets, the Kurfurstendamm is among Europe's finest boulevards. From KaDeWe to the contrasting flea-markets, from smart shops to humble outlets, a shop awaits your leisure.

'Berlin never sleeps' an old saying has it. City nightlife is a gleaming rainbow of colour, cosy, crazy, loud, entertaining, or titillating, bordering on 'very hectic', 'very wild', or 'highly refined', depending on where you go, with who, and who you end up meeting. When traditional fun-loving Berliners refer to a 'kneipe', they mean anything from the corner pub to the latest place in which to be seen. Entertainment is particularly vibrant in the Kurfurstendamm area where dozens of cafes, restaurants, and cabarets make you toss and roll like there's no tomorrow. The corner bars and local pints may be as integral as Schrippen (rolls), and Buletten (risols), but the real-life scenarios never fade. The same holds true at the 'kneipe' and discos at Charlottenburg, Steglitz, and Nollendorfplatz.

Sunrise sees the Tegel Lake bathed in gold. Sunset sees the neons flash their commercial messages at the Europe-Center. And during all this time, one of the world's great metros lives up to its formidable reputation.





Maritim proArte Hotel Berlin

Located on one of Berlin's main arteries, the famous shopping mile Friedrichstraße, the Maritim proArte Hotel Berlin is a fashionable local address.

According to General Manager, Dirk Moser, the hotel has several USPs. Its excellent location right in the heart of Berlin immerses you in the middle of tourist sites, congress centres and shopping opportunities. The Brandenburg Gate, the Reichstag, the Galeries Lafayette or the Gendarmenmarkt are all nearby.

403 attractive rooms, quality restaurants serving diverse cuisine, such as the Galerie and Checkpoint Bar, the swimming pool and wellness area, and customised conference facilities take guests well in hand.



Romit Theophilus, Director German National Tourist Office, feels Berlin is a complete tourist city, and a 'pivotal driver' of tourism in Germany. Apart from offering everything a tourist desires, the city ensures comfort for all budgets. There is something for everyone.

The fact that the city keeps innovating and expanding its tourist offerings means one can revisit any time and see and experience something new.

Travel Facts

Getting There: Berlin is connected by air with the whole world, and by rail and road with most of Europe.

Getting Around: You have a choice of taxis, buses, trams and trains like S-Bahn (suburban railway), U-Bahn (underground railway), Regional-Express, and RegionalBahn.

Sightseeing: The Berlin Sightseeing Tour includes many tourist spots like Europa Center, New National Gallery, Potsdamer Platz, the Reichstag, Deutsche Oper etc. There are also Theme Walks with a choice of subjects like Historical Berlin, Architecture in Berlin etc. And there are coach and boat tours.



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.



QATAR

Steeped in old world charm & opulence

Drawing its traditions from a nomadic past as well as practices that are centuries old—from handwoven products to falconry, daily life in Qatar is thoroughly modern. A mesmerizing country both in beauty and size, it perfectly blends its proud past and bright future.

- Sudipta Saha



What makes Qatar so unique and vibrant? Is it similar to other Gulf countries? Well, I know many such questions hit our thought. But, let me tell you, Qatar is beyond our imaginations. This man-made country is inspired by its rich culture and tradition, and not to forget its year-old history. Qatar is incredibly stunning, and Doha, its capital is a centre of modernisation.

As you are on the verge of landing at the Hamad International Airport, the sparkling skyline will greet you. You can also catch the glimpse of this magnificent city and feel that excitement to explore and experience the innumerable offerings which make the visitors fall in love with the soothing vibes of this traditionally rich city.

Time Travel through History

Qatar has witnessed massive economic, social and cultural development over the years. In the early 18th century, pearl diving flourished in the country and was considered to be extremely profitable. Qatar's modern history begins conventionally in 1766 and most Qataris have nomadic Bedouin origin. The history of Qatar's fortune changed after the discovery of oil and natural gas. Today, we see a new Qatar with modern infrastructure, services, and industries.

Because Qatar has it all!

Doha has turned into becoming a favourable holiday spot in the Middle East, the fascinating landscape, striking architecture and impressive use of technology set it apart from other neighbouring countries. The way Doha holds

on to its traditions, arts and culture and the way it is showcasing the same to the travellers is commendable. Doha has ample unique experiences to offer and enjoy, the city is known to offer modern amenities at same time it is preserving its past.

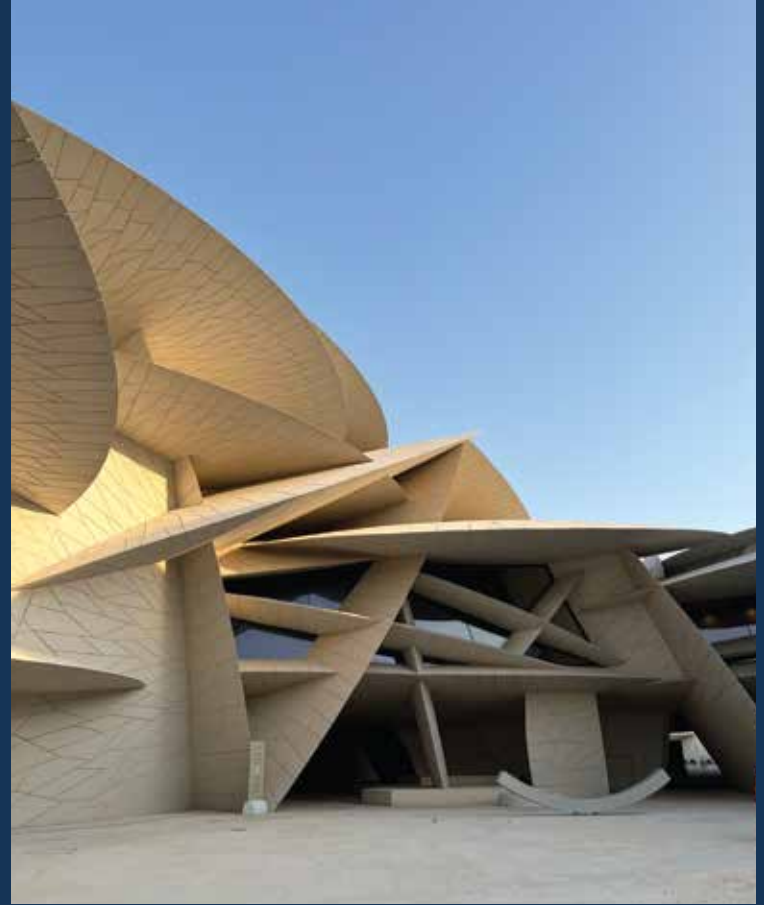
The National Museum of Qatar

is one of the significant landmarks; it narrates the history of Qatar and its people. The museum is segregated or may call it the three chapters-Beginning, Life in Qatar and Building the Nation. Well, the most fascinating of all was the stunning use of technology which keeps you engaged; the 11 galleries will take you on a voyage. The interlocking disc of this 40,000 sq m building is inspired by the desert rose.

3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum

is one of the most fascinating places for sports enthusiasts, a space designed for families, and kids. Dedicated to sports, 3-2-1 Museum is the world's most innovative and technologically advanced museum spread across 19,000 sq m. The museum takes you on an interactive journey through the history of sports and mainly the Olympic game. Being one of the largest, the museum houses a kid's zone which is adorned with activities to indulge in.

There were many more things waiting on the list to amaze me, the astounding architecture and the modern approach to creating a space for travellers are laudable and this is why Qatar is attracting travellers from all around the world. Another unique place is **The Education**



City spread across 12 sq kilometres houses multiple universities and a National Library. It is an apt place for book lovers, this public library houses more than 80,000 books, 500,000 ebooks, periodicals and newspapers, a separate space for music curators, a theatre and much more. The way they have collected and preserved their history, and made it available to the general public will surely keep you stunned.

The gleaming building of the Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies includes a research centre, teaching areas and an astonishing mosque. This dazzling white structure is an architectural marvel, the verses of the Quran are embossed on its ceiling and it rests on five pillars with verses engraved on them. The major attractions are the two slim minarets rising in the air towards the direction of Mecca.

As you travel around the city, you will keep surprising yourself. The visit to **Msheireb Downtown** Doha is yet another experience in itself. The narrow alleyways developed as houses, the contemporary architecture, the mosques and the museums make it another must-visit spot in Doha. The Msheireb Museum demonstrates the traditions and showcases the transformation of Msheireb over time. The Mohammed Bin Jassim House is built by Sheikh Mohammed Bin Jassim Al-Thani, son of the founder of modern Qatar, and displays the past, present and sustainable aspects.



Immerse in Enriching Arabian Hospitality

We know how Qatar has preserved its tradition and they have proudly made it a part of the cosmopolitan Qatar. To understand and experience, it's highly recommended to visit the Souq Waqif, a cultural hotspot. Get lost in the lively atmosphere and have a glimpse of the old trading system. This traditional market is a perfect place to spend some in the evening, enjoy a meal in any of the restaurants and socialise with the locals to understand Qatar more minutely. While you are exploring the 250 years old Souq Waqif, make sure that you visit the Falcon Souq, the most interesting of all is that Qatar is the only country to have a Falcon hospital.

If you are an adventure seeker, wait, Qatar has something for you. Gear up to discover the dunes and the inland sea. Take a ride to the dramatic landscape and discover the remarkable spot where the sea meets the desert.

On the waterfront along Lusail Street is the Katara village that features art, music, theatre, photography and much more. The masterpiece is the amphitheatre designed on classical Greek theatre and Islamic features. With a seating arrangement for 5000 spectators, it is an apt place for open-air concerts and film screenings. The 1.5 km of Katara Beach is a perfect place to take a walk and enjoy the relaxing vibe of the place.



Indulge in a Culinary Journey

Your trip is incomplete without hunting down the restaurants and tasting the flavoursome traditional food. Well, one can find traditional cuisines to diversified international cuisine in Doha. The classic restaurants located in Doha not only serve authentic flavours but is perfect for family dining as well. The souq is flooded with traditional restaurants and serves a scrumptious meal and refreshing atmosphere. Indians travelling to Qatar will find numerous Indian restaurants that serve an array of Indian cuisine. From fine dining experiences to local restaurants, Qatar serves exotic delicacies.

Discover the perfect shopping experience

Shopping in Doha is fun. From local souq to high-end shopping malls, shopping in Doha is altogether an experience. The souqs in Doha are known to sell authentic traditional Qatari products, from clothing to spices to antiques, pearls and perfumes. The multi-storied malls are the best place to shop for your favourite brands. The architecture of the malls is not just spectacular, but you get a vast choice of global as well as regional products.

TAFI Convention to rebuild the industry in a more responsible and sustainable manner

TAFI's convention took place in Malaysia and around 500 members of the association participated in the event. The theme of the convention was 'Build Back Better'. The motive focused on strengthening the tourism industry and moving towards a resilient economic recovery. Sustainability, advanced greening efforts, conservation and responsible tourism were the main highlights of the sessions.

- Bharti Sharma



The Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) Convention 2022 collaborated with Tourism Malaysia and Sarawak Tourism Board (STB) to organise a travel mart and B2B meetings in Kuching, Malaysia for the first time. On September 22nd, Indian buyers conducted networking meetings with Malaysian sellers. Approximately 108 stakeholders from all over Malaysia participated to woo the potential new clientele among more than 450 buyers from India representing a lot more than 240 companies.

TAFI convention in Kuching, Malaysia began at The Borneo Convention Centre with a grand inauguration ceremony followed by meetings and sessions. 'Build Back Better' was the emphasis of the convention primarily focusing on reorienting business strategies. The three-day TAFI event witnessed the presence of close to 500 delegates members of the association, industry stakeholders and Malaysian counterparts. Emphasising the Indian Market, Mr Ajay Prakash, President, TAFI, shared with everyone that the Malaysia Tourism Board is coming up with a new online training program named 'Malaysia Masters' for travel agents and tour operators in India. The specialist program will provide a fillip to attract more tourists from India.





During the inauguration ceremony, Mr Ajay Prakash expressed positivity that the TAFI convention in Malaysia will be a game changer for Kuching, Sarawak Tourism and Indian Travel Trade. "This will be a landmark convention for both TAFI and Sarawak Tourism. The Malaysian state currently receives close to 4.46 million tourists and we hope that the visitor number will grow exponentially after the convention. Indian travel agents are ready to promote new destinations like Kuching and I am sure with our resolve to build back the industry for the better, we can contribute to the growth of sustainable and responsible tourism," says Ajay Prakash.



Mr BN Reddy, High Commissioner of India to Malaysia said, "Responsible tourism and responsive tourists will be very important for the tourism industry and Sarawak. The connection between India and Malaysia has been very strong with an existing strategic partnership. There are several aspects to collaborating with Sarawak authorities and improving relationships and trade partnerships with India." He pointed out that Kuching's lack of direct connectivity with India is a major issue but he also anticipated that direct flights may definitely help the cause to promote tourism. Mr BN Reddy appreciated TAFI's efforts and applauded the theme of the convention.



Top-notch speakers shared insights and quoted experiences during the convention on topics related to steering into the new world of post-pandemic. Like the rest of the world, the Indian market is also growing at a good and steady pace, consistently looking for newer destinations, products and experiences. "Malaysia has everything for everyone, be it an outdoor adventure, a luxurious retreat, or a shopping spree of our finest arts and crafts. We also share a lot of similarities with India in terms of culture, tradition, and cuisine, which is why Malaysia is among the favourite destinations for Indian tourists," says Dato' Sri Hajah Nancy Shukri, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia.



Experience

Jal Mahotsav

Give yourself an adrenaline rush in MP



One of the largest water carnivals in India 'JalMahotsav' is all set to host you to experience adventure activities and beautiful tent city of Hanuwantiya in Madhya Pradesh

If you are planning an adventure-packed vacation with full of fun then Hanuwantiya Island in Khandwa District of Madhya Pradesh is the place that you should add in your bucket list this time. One of India's longest Water cation presented by Madhya Pradesh Tourism, 'JalMahotsav' is a combination of food, art, nature, culture and adventure where you can experience clear skies, sparkling blue water and the thrill of scuba diving, bumper boats and much more.

This picturesque destination awaits your presence for 'Jal Mahotsav', the festival which will commence in the last week of November 2022 and will go on till the last week of January 2023. A water cation to Jal Mahotsav has all the elements to give a boost to your body, mind, and spirit.

It offers an array of adventure activities organised at nature's paradise Hanu-wantiya. Located on the banks of Indira Sagar Dam (India's largest reservoir), this is a perfect holiday destination for spending an exciting vacation with your loved ones.

At 'JalMahotsav', you can start your day with the golden rays of the rising sun lighting up the tent city, followed by a delicious breakfast and beautiful Mediterranean blue water views to admire.

What to see and do

At 'JalMahotsav', visitors can enjoy adventure activities based on land, air, or water.



Air and water activities-The major attraction of this festival are air and water activities which include wind surfing, water parasailing, water zorbing, jet-skiing, speed boats ride, cruise boats ride, paramotoring, banana boat ride, hot air balloon ride, zip line and more.

Land-based activities: Yoga camp, wellness and spa, cycling, volleyball, archery, tug of war, climbing, kite flying, bull carting and other activities in adventure zone. One can also go for nature walks, cycle around the island, and visit the local villages. Food zone, craft bazaar, stargazing, island camping and experiencing melody of folk, classical and pop music and dance will keep you going throughout the festival.

Other Attractions

Apart from these amazing activities, Khandwa District has several other tourist attractions as well that include Nagchun dam, Ghantaghar, Omkare-shwar Jyotirlinga, Tulija Bhavani temple, Indira Sagar Dam and Sailani Island.

Also, it is a must-visit place for nature enthusiasts as they can indulge in bird watching, trekking, and night camping.



Way to Hanuwantiya

If you are already making plans and wondering how to get here, the nearest airport is Indore, around 3 hours away from the Madhya Dweep islands where Hanuwantiya is located. If you are travelling by rail, you need to get off at Khandwa, 50 km away. And if you prefer the road, then Hanuwantiya is well connected to Indore, Bhopal and Khandwa.

For booking visit: www.jalmahotsav.com





Uncovering the natural beauty beyond Bali

The Balinese Paradise is well-known and explored by tourists from all over the world. The Ministry of Tourism of Indonesia wants travelers to experience the lesser-known destinations within Indonesia, beyond Bali, and away from the hustle and the bustle. Travel Turtle in conversation with Consul General, Agus P. Saptono.

- Naina Nath



This enchanting nation of over 17,500 islands is home to a huge diversity of adventures and escapades to choose from. It's hard to beat Indonesia for the sheer range of experiences they offer. Indonesia is a land gifted with pristine beaches, clear blue waters, serene islands, exotic tribes, and vibrant culture. The Indonesian landscapes are surreal. They have islands, beaches, and lakes for water lovers, national parks and forests for wildlife enthusiasts, active volcano sites for adventure buffs, and amazing shopping and lifestyle options for the urban crowd. They have it all!

What are some of the marketing activities that Indonesia is conducting in India?

We have started with our participation in trade events like SATTE and OTM. Through them, we find it to be one of the best ways to showcase Indonesia to the travel trade and inform the industry that we are open and waiting eagerly to welcome Indian tourists. The first half of 2022 saw a great surge of tourists entering Indonesia. We are proud to report that we reached 124% of our target volume and 67% of our target arrivals globally in the first 6 months. India has shown immense YoY positive numbers with the 1st quarter of 2022 seeing 115% growth. As of today, India comes 4th on the list of the largest foreign arrivals into Indonesia and 2nd on the list of tourist arrivals into Bali.

What are your top source markets?

Australia to Bali is our number 1 source market. Besides Australia, we welcome a large number of tourists from Singapore, Malaysia, and India.

The average length of stay is a minimum of 5 days to a week for Bali alone and if tourists want to see destinations beyond Bali, then they will need 10 days to 2 weeks.

What are the Covid-19-related updates in the country?

Indonesia, like most countries around the world was quite badly affected by the pandemic.

Gradually, with the increasing vaccination rate and the reopening of international borders, the economy in the country has recovered well, including the tourism sector. The pandemic definitely left us feeling insecure for quite some time, and even today, the very first thing that comes to mind before stepping outside is safety and comfort.

The Ministry of Tourism of Indonesia has announced a campaign for the care of Indonesia. This campaign is a symbol of support for Indonesia. It supports the strong effort we are taking to implement Cleanliness, Health, Safety, and Environmental Sustainability (CHSE).

The CHSE protocol is carried out across the tourism industry as mandatory regulations. For the last 2 years, we have actively encouraged the implementation of an end-to-end CHSE certification program in all airports, hotels, restaurants, tourist attractions, transportation services, and other public facilities.

What are the requirements for a tourist to enter Indonesia?

Foreign nationals entering The Republic of Indonesia are required to have the following An obligatory certificate can be

downloaded online using the PeduliLindungi App.

Certificate of 2nd dose of vaccination written in English (taken at least 14 days prior to departure)

A negative RT-PCR test result is not required during entry however all travelers must undergo a symptom check at the airport upon arrival.

Visa on Arrival – We provide India with VoA for 1 month. Travelers can procure their visa from the visa kiosk upon arrival by paying 30\$. This visa can be extended during your stay.

This VoA applies to over 75 countries around the world.

Could you comment on the Air connectivity between India and Indonesia?

Garuda Indonesia, the official airline of the country has temporarily stopped its operations, and hence there are no direct flights currently between India and Indonesia.

Currently, Indians can fly to Indonesia via Singapore, Malaysia, or Thailand.

What segment of Indian tourists visits Indonesia?

Indonesia receives almost all segments from India. Our biggest segment are the family and honeymooners. We also see a lot of religious and cultural tourism. Indonesia is a great choice for wedding packages and destination weddings, which we all know is a huge market in India. We are also noticing the MICE segment is growing rapidly.

Are any new hotels and properties coming up in the destination?

During the lockdown, we saw many new hotels open in the country. There was a development boom, so to say. The Komodo Island, which is one of the "Beyond-Bali"

destinations that we are currently promoting, has seen a number of new hotels opening, with a new airport, and new resorts coming up.

What are the destinations under the "Beyond-Bali" campaign?

Bali is a well-known destination but our repeat visitors want something more. And we say, why not? We have so much to offer! Under our "Beyond-Bali" campaign, we have other locations in the country like Mandalika, The Komodo Island, and The capital city Jakarta, which is the center of the economy, culture, and politics. Java is home to the world's largest Buddhism temple, Borobudur and the charming Lake Toba which is in Northern Sumatra.

A message to the Indian Travel Trade - "Please come again.

You have visited Bali but the entire destination of Indonesia is open to you! We are following all protocols necessary for your health and safety and we vow to give our visitors especially from India a comfortable and fun-filled trip!"





Palladium Group

A star for an incredible vacation

Palladium Group of Hotels is known to offer an exclusive luxury environment blended with modern-day comfort. This Spanish chain of hotels is characterised by its philosophy of attention to its team and to offering its clients high-quality products and services. Sandra Polo Canudas – Asia & MEA Commercial Director, Palladium Hotel Group speaks on the brand's portfolio and the array of experiences they offer.

- Sudipta Saha



Founded in the late 1960s in Ibiza, today, Palladium Group of Hotels owns 41 hotels and over 13,500 rooms, distributed amongst six countries: Spain, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Italy and Brazil, and manages nine brands. The fabulous location and fantastic services have made Palladium a renowned hotel brand and a preferred choice for travellers. They do not just offer exclusive experiences, but they ensure that their guests enjoy every moment of theirs.

Strengthening India market

India has always been an emerging market, and with the robust boost in outbound travellers, it has strengthened its position as a potential source market. "India is an

important market for us, and it continues to be one of our focus markets. We look forward to continuing to increase our footprint in India and further our brand presence. With Indians now travelling abroad, we intend to spoil our Indian visitors with an array of experiences, fantastic cuisine, and stunning vistas. The niche market we are targeting is FITs, honeymooners, families, and groups of friends, we have different products for a different group of travellers. We are working from premium to luxury brands and properties for discerned travellers and have been receiving the same from Indian markets," adds Sandra Polo Canudas.

Myriad of experiences

Palladium Group of Hotels is all

about superlative experiences, the world of Palladium is all about exclusivity and extravagance comfort. Sandra Polo Canudas further says, "We have received a good response from the Indian markets and our products are adored by them. Indian markets like entertainment, our Ibiza property is enjoyed by Indian travellers. The design, services, performances, and gastronomy that we offer are an experience. Palladium Hotel Group is a segmented experience from one brand to another it's a different experience which varies according to the destination. The Ushuaia Beach Hotel is the ideal choice for those who come to Ibiza for the best beach & pool parties, with live performances of the top DJs in the

world, Hard Rock Hotel Ibiza is all about rock, TRS is one of our new property opening Spain which for adults only and will be known for its luxury settings, Palladium Hotel Palmyra is an adults-only hotel and is ideal for groups of friends and couples looking for a premium all-inclusive vacation."

On expansion spree

The group plans to expand its portfolio and intends to offer them a unique environment where they can enjoy their holiday. "Palladium Hotel Group accompanies this global sensation in 2022 with brand new openings that will be in the spotlight. The European summer will have two new headliners: Hard Rock Hotel Marbella and TRS Ibiza," she concludes.



THE THREE-DAY NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE TOURISM MINISTERS IN DHARAMSHALA, HIMACHAL PRADESH

The three-day National Conference of State Tourism Ministers at Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh began with a press conference chaired by Shri G Kishan Reddy. The National Conference of State Tourism Ministers brought in diverse viewpoints and perspectives from all the States and Union Territories of India on tourism development and growth created a direct dialogue with the States on schemes, policies and steps being taken at a national level for overall tourism improvement in India. The National Conference also proved to be a platform for sharing of best practices, successful projects, and tourism product opportunities. During the press conference MoS Tourism Shri Ajay Bhatt and MoS Tourism Shri Shripad Naik, Chairman FAITH Shri Nakul Anand, DG Tourism Shri G Kamala Vardhana Rao were also present. During the Press Conference, Shri G. Kishan Reddy, Union Minister of Tourism, Culture and DONER stated that in the past 75 years, India has become synonymous with tourism, spirituality, transformation, culture, and diversity. It is a matter of great pride to celebrate the record-breaking expansion, that led India to become 5th largest economy in the world. As such, establishing the tourism sector as a primary concern, the Ministry of Tourism has undertaken various initiatives and taken a four-fold development strategy that focuses on improving connectivity via air, rail, and roads, enhancing the tourism infrastructure and dependent services, streamlining branding and promotion and showcasing the culture and heritage. Highlighting the slogan of 'Vikas Bhi Virasat Bhi' given by the Prime Minister, Sh Kishan Reddy that after a vast process of consultations and deliberations, the National Tourism Policy will be brought out before the Budget session. He also informed that various tourist

circuits are being promoted and a new 'Ambedkar Circuit' shall soon be launched. The Himalayan Circuit will also be promoted under the action plan for the development of tourist circuits, Sh G Kishan Reddy elaborated.

The Union Tourism Minister further added that the National Conference of State Tourism Ministers is also important in the current context of India's G20 presidency. G-20 will be used as a platform to showcase India's tourism potential to the world, he disclosed.

Emphasising the importance of air connectivity Sh G Kishan Reddy said that the number of airports in the country has increased from 74 in 2014 to 140 now, and it is further proposed to increase the number of airports to 220 by 2025.

He also said that the Prime Minister's vision of associating the Indian diaspora and NRIs for promoting tourism will be encouraged. The financial assistance to the tourism sector, which is the biggest sufferer due to Covid 19, continues to be extended up to 31st of March, 2023 he said.

The Tourism sector generated INR 16.91 lakh crore (USD 240 billion) or 9.2% of India's GDP in 2018 and has supported around 42.67 million jobs or 8.1% of total employment.

The Conference was divided into thematic sessions on the Development of Tourism Infrastructure, Cultural, Spiritual & Heritage tourism, Tourism in the Himalayan states, Responsible and sustainable tourism, the Role of digital technology in the marketing and promotion of tourism destinations, Emerging importance of homestays in the Indian hospitality sector, Ayurveda, Wellness, and Medical Value travel, and lastly on Forest and wildlife tourism.

The Ministry has sanctioned Rs 7000 crores for the development of tourism infrastructure throughout the country.

The National Conference also build

a common vision for tourism and its growth as we move towards India in 2047. Shri Ajay Bhatt, Hon'ble Minister of State for Tourism and Defense and Shri Shripad Naik, Hon'ble Minister of State for Tourism and Ports, Shipping, and Waterways along with Sh. Rakesh Kumar Verma, Additional Secretary (Tourism) and other senior dignitaries were also present at the

event. After the Press Conference, the event was also attended by Sh. Jai Ram Thakur, Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh.

G-20 will provide a platform to showcase the country's Tourism potential to the world, said Sh G Kishan Reddy. The Dharamshala Declaration was formulated and given to everyone as minutes of the three-day conference.





Chhattisgarh empowers its travel sector on World Tourism Day

In consonance with this year's theme of World Tourism Day, 'Rethinking Tourism', MetaCommz organised a one-day Tourism Conclave on September 27, at Hotel Babylon International, Raipur in support of the Chhattisgarh Tourism Board.

- Sudipta Saha

The rich culture and tradition, year world heritage and architecture make India a land of myriad opportunities. India is a land of varied landscapes and its beautiful states of India has their charm; one among them is Chhattisgarh a treasure trove of natural and cultural beauty. To discuss the tourism opportunities of the state, Tourism Conclave was organised in Raipur on the occasion of World Tourism Day by MetaCommz.

Chhattisgarh Tourism Board being the key sponsor, several sessions were organised to discuss the different facets of tourism in the state, the latest developments and how travellers can be encouraged to visit the destination. The conclave was graced with the presence of Shri Bhupesh Baghel, Honourable Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh, Shri Tamradhwaj Sahu, Minister of Tourism, Chhattisgarh and other dignitaries along with key decision makers from the travel trade industry.

While addressing Anil Kumar Sahu, Managing Director, Chhattisgarh Tourism Board said, "On the occasion of World Tourism Day, our prime objective

should be how to take tourism to all the corners of the society. Chhattisgarh is adorned with ample touristic sites which are unexplored and thus we aim at educating the travellers and inviting them to our state to explore and experience. Numerous initiatives are being taken by the government and Chhattisgarh Tourism Board to develop tourism sites, we have already started the renovation of temples and other sites. We are inviting the tribal icons to be associated with our tourism and also we are joining hands with IRCTC to get tourists in our state." As per UNWTO need for travellers have changed, the way tourism has shaped up is all about immersive experiences. During the conclave, the importance of niche tourism was also discussed and it was highlighted that art forms can be developed as tourism products and the people and resources available can be utilised. Further to it, Shri Tamradhwaj Sahu, Minister of Tourism, Chhattisgarh, mentioned that the tourism board have been developing circuits, already they have designed two circuits-north

and south. Adding to it, he highlighted, "There are around 13-14 tribal circuits in Chhattisgarh, and we are working to develop destinations such as Chitrakoot, Jagdalpur, Mainpat. Under the PRASAD scheme, we are developing a 48-crore project in Donagarh, after this, we have planned a project worth 66 crores in Sirpur. Apart from this, we are focusing on cruise tourism, adventure, water and wildlife tourism." During the conclave, the sessions discussed the ways to rethink tourism, accessibility and how to change the impression of the state. The importance of medical tourism and MICE was also highlighted. The role of youth in tourism and how we can connect with local people to create new dimensions were also discussed during one of the sessions. The major stakeholders today are youth and bringing youth on board will add a new dimension to the sector. Besides this, the culture and heritage of the state play an important role, thus nature and culture need to be preserved and conserved.

Shri Bhupesh Baghel, Honourable

Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh further stated, "The need of the hour is to attract travellers and to do so the central and state government are putting in enormous efforts. Chhattisgarh has always been known for Bastar and minerals, but the state is beyond all these. Tourism was always ignored in the state, major focus was laid on the industries. After the state was formed, people started talking about the Naxals and matters related to it. But, no one ever focused on the tourism potential of the state; Chhattisgarh is blessed with many tourist spots. We understand the major challenge is infrastructure and the government is working vigorously to develop the infrastructure and tourist sites. There are numerous religious sites around the state, but the challenge is the hotel accommodation, and therefore, we need to focus on that particular segment. Many projects and sectors are being developed; many new circuits are coming up which will surely enhance the tourism potential of the state."

Explore Jaisalmer with *Trulyy India*

Jaisalmer, the Golden City is known for its vibrant folk dance and music, massive forts, palaces, spicy food, colourful turbans, vast golden sand desert, camels, and rich handicrafts. As a result, it is an incredible place to visit in India for an unforgettable vacation. Jaisalmer is ideal for history enthusiasts, cultural connoisseurs, adventure seekers, wildlife enthusiasts and more.

Jaisalmer have been luring travellers from all around the world, because of its effervescent landscape. On the one side, one can experience the gigantic forts, temples, charismatic culture and on the other side is its offbeat desert safari experience. Exploring Jaisalmer with Trulyy India is an incredible experience as it offers a great experience.

With Trulyy India, The Desert Palace is one such magnificent illustration of royal hospitality. The place has vast gardens surrounding a golden mansion that radiates tranquilly, grandeur, and beauty.

The Desert Palace is a magnificent resort known to offer tradition hospitality that is tucked away in a charming setting. The resort offers a mesmerizing view of the Thar Desert, the location of the resort makes it an apt place to enjoy your vacation. With its vastly enormous vibrant

interiors, elaborate decor, and historic charm, this hotel in Jaisalmer tells the stories of bygone eras. They offer the most sumptuous banquet hall in Jaisalmer where couples who are planning a destination wedding can book a space, have ceremonies, record pre-wedding moments, and host an authentic candlelight dinner for their loved ones while soaking in the surrounding city, mountains, and lake views.

This Diwali, our heart-filling luxurious package includes a fabulous three nights stay inclusive of all the meals. Of which two nights at the grand Desert Palace and one night stay at The Desert Oasis or Dunes Safari camp for thrilling experiences. Followed by enjoying Rajasthani cultural programs, camel safari, jeep safari, parasailing, para-motoring and Quad biking is something that you won't choose to miss out on. Offering pick up and drop along with all the transfers at discounted prices.

Other exploration Activities to do in Jaisalmer are taking a walk through the mesmerising Jaisalmer Fort. Visiting well-known tourist spots like Gadisar Lake, Bada bagh and Desert National park.



9th Annual Convention of IHHA enunciates 'Reincarnation of Indian Heritage'

The 9th Annual Indian Heritage Hotels Association Convention was held at the majestic Alila Fort, Bishangarh on the 22nd & 23rd of September, 2022. The convention was organised to discuss on the importance of Indian heritage and the ways to conserve it and offer it to the tourists who intends to experience the traditional royal culture.

- Team Turtle

Just like every year, the Indian Heritage Hotel Associations of India organised their 9th Annual Convention at Alila Fort Bishangarh in a more grandeur way. The convention was well attended by IHHA members and eminent personalities who have been working hard to conserve the Indian heritage and offer it to travellers looking for royal experiences.

The convention discussed about preserving and actively promoting the art and culture around Heritage Hotels. The inaugural session of the convention was addressed by Honourable Shri Kalraj Mishra, The Governor of Rajasthan. He said, "The pandemic has been a challenging time for every sector but out of all, the tourism and hospitality industry took the worst hit. Folk art and artistry faced immense losses during the Covid-19 pandemic. Now, when the heritage hotels are recovering as significant tourist destinations across the globe, they should highly promote and at the same time preserve the local culture and art around them," he said. The Governor also added. "The lifestyle of local communities, handicrafts, mode of livelihood, the kind of farming they perform, their organic and traditional way of entertainment and leisure should be the main focus as a part of experiences the heritage hotels offer to their tourists."

He further emphasised on efforts required for the development of tourism and the preservation of heritage in the state. He further added that with the innumerable forts, castles and palaces, Rajasthan has immense possibilities for tourism. The

former deputy speaker and also the owner of Alila Fort, Bishangarh, Rao Rajendra Singh said, "According to the report of the World Travel and Tourism Council in 2019, the hotel and tourism sector's contribution to the economy of the country was worth 15 trillion. During the pandemic, there was a 40 per cent downfall owing to which the numbers dropped to 9 trillion. At present, in 2022, the industry surpassed pre-covid levels and stands at a respective number of 15.9 trillion."



EVENT AFFAIR



Shri Randhir Vikram Singh Mandawa, President, IHHA spoke about the significance of restoring and preserving the heritage to attract tourism to the country. He emphasized the ample employment opportunities which this industry provides.

Shri Rao Rajendra Singh highlighted the importance of employment which the sector provides every year. He further spoke about this sector being gender-neutral and providing jobs to many women. Maharaja Gaj Singh of Jodhpur, The President of Honour, IHHA during the convention highlighted how heritage plays an important role in the remembrance of the social value of the ancestors. He added that every state has its own unique heritage which should be protected at all costs. The Conference Chairman and Vice President, IHHA, Steve Borgia, introduced the theme of the convention - 'Reincarnation of IHHA to Conserve and Protect Indian Heritage'. He further mentioned, "The world is eagerly looking forward to a different India and there is a dire need to think and do things differently to strengthen our destinations and simultaneously focus on the resurrection of all the monuments, palaces and forts."

The convention witnessed several presentations and productive conversations throughout the day, followed by a royal dinner and get-together in the evening. IHHA, once again showed how it has been constantly making efforts to promote heritage hotels towards contributing to the tourism sector, for years now.



Festival of Good over Evil receives recognition from UNESCO

Colourful props, finger-licking food, traditional dancing, ethnic clothing and thousands on the roads – that's Durga Puja for you. The carnival-like atmosphere on the streets celebrates Unesco's recognition of the city's biggest festival as an Intangible Cultural Heritage, making the intangible, much more tangible. Nothing can dampen the City of Joy's thunderous beats of the dhak and proud chants of 'Durgo Maa ki Jai'.

- Shivangi Tomar



The annual festival of Durga Puja got pitchforked onto the global stage and every Indian is on cloud nine. It's a proud feeling and so is the emotion of the festival. "Festival is now on the world stage", says Mamata Banerjee, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Bengal.

Hearts filled with gratitude

A rally started at Jorasanko and peaked into a joyful programme on Red Road, Kolkata, where folk artists shared the stage with leading celebrities from Tollywood. Some of the biggest names from Tollywood – Mimi Chakraborty, Lovely Maitra, Aditi Munshi and June Malia were also present at the event rally. Together they performed to Bengali Music. Actors like Subhasree Ganguly and Sayantika Banerjee also danced to a song whose main theme and composition were credited to the Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee and sung by Indranil Sen, Aditi Munshi and CM herself.

The lively spirit of the carnival left Unesco representatives pleasantly surprised and awestruck. Eric Falt, who serves as the director and Unesco representative for the Unesco New Delhi Cluster Office, was highly impressed. He talked about why Durga Puja is the perfect example of a traditional festival which deserved to be recognized by UNESCO. Tim Curtis, secretary of Unesco's Intangible Cultural Heritage, said that Durga Puja has helped transform the lives of the marginalized groups of society, making it the strongest contender for the list. The state of West Bengal felicitated the UNESCO officials and handed them items which carry the pure soul and essence of Bengal, along with books written by the very well-known Rabindranath Tagore and Mamata Banerjee. The Forum for Durgotsav also presented them with a dokra Durga idol.

A proud feeling for every Indian

Mamata Banerjee said that it was the state's honour to be recognized and included in the list for the grand festival of Durga Puja. She expressed a vote of thanks to everyone who was present to

support and show the spirit of unity and humanity. She talked about how humanity and unity are the strength of the people of Bengal. She saluted the UNESCO officials for giving them such a huge opportunity. This support will boost their courage and keep them going in the endeavour. The entire state stood in solidarity to thank and showcase the Indian culture.

India received the honour of Kolkata's Durga Puja being inscribed on the coveted list at the committee's 16th session held in Paris. No doubt the festival was commended by the committee for its initiatives to involve marginalised groups, individuals and even women in their participation in safeguarding the element.

Durga Puja is not just a festival of Bengal but a festival celebrated with full enthusiasm and joy all throughout the globe. It's a feeling which can't be described in words – a festival filled with emotions, love, worship and belief. The celebration symbolizes the victory of good over evil and that is why India is known as the most heart-warming country on the map. Beyond just rituals and traditions, an emotion – Durga Puja.



The Ministry of Tourism of Indonesia organises Indonesia Sales Mission in Chennai and Bengaluru

In the spirit to boost international tourists' visits, Wonderful Indonesia proudly presents the most highlighted destinations and new experiences at the Indonesia Sales Mission which was held in Chennai and Bengaluru from 16th to 19th September 2022. The event brought together Indonesian sellers i.e. Indonesian Hoteliers, Restaurateurs, Indonesian Tour Operators, and Indian buyers i.e. tour operators, MICE agents, Wedding planners under one roof. The roadshows were held to further strengthen the ties with the Indian travel-trade fraternity and to introduce some of the hidden gems of Indonesia. The roadshow offered a platform for the Indonesian stakeholders to establish direct contact with the Indian travel trade. It is also an opportunity for the Indian travel trade to receive the latest updates of Indonesia as well as directly meet the representatives from some of the archipelago's most popular hotels and resorts and travel agents who are participating at the Roadshow.

An overwhelming response was received from the Indian travel trade for the roadshow, indicating their level of interest in the destination. The attendees in each city included tour wholesalers, travel agents and media. Raffle draws were held in each city with hotel stay vouchers and many other goodies being won by the attendees.



Ajman Department of Tourism Development (ADTD) conducted its first three-city workshop in India

Ajman Department of Tourism Development executed its first ever trade activation through a tri-city workshop that was held in Ahmedabad, Delhi and Bangalore on 20th, 21st and 22nd September respectively, which witnessed a constructive and educative session of select agents in each city who are keen on promoting the multiple facets of destination Ajman.

The workshop was designed to expose the Indian private sector to Ajman's seamless connectivity from Dubai and Sharjah, latest tourism products and the plethora of leisure hotels that guests and travellers can experience in the most emerging Emirate of UAE. It also highlighted the region's potential for being an aspirational destination for couples planning a wedding outside the country owing to its stellar beach side properties and cultural benevolence. The workshop's key purpose was to establish Ajman as a destination which can serve as a gateway to experience the different side of UAE.

Speaking on ADTD's first-ever initiative in the India market, Ms. Khadija Turki, Acting Director General, Ajman Department of Tourism Development, commented, "The outbound travel market in India has been showing positive signs of recovery and we recognize its potential to outperform in the upcoming months. Capitalizing on these developments, ADTD is excited to introduce its products and experiences to the Indian private sector and entice more Indian travellers to visit Ajman. Through the workshops across the three key cities in India, we aim to spread more awareness amongst travel agents and enable them to position Ajman as an exciting destination for travellers visiting UAE and seeking unique experiences. We are certain that the participants of the workshop will act as catalysts and ensure increase in Indian footfalls in Ajman."





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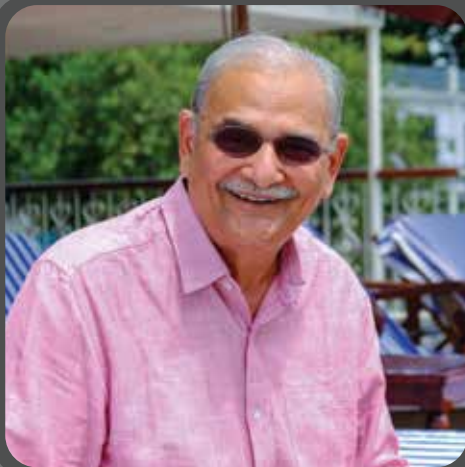
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APPOINTMENTS



West Bengal River Tourism sub-committee

Raj Singh to lead River Tourism Sub-Committee as the latter takes a prime space in the landscape of West Bengal Tourism. Taking a future-forward step towards the evolving tourism landscape in the country, the Government of West Bengal has declared River Tourism as one of the prime sectors of Tourism in the State and Raj Singh, the founder chairman of Antara River Cruises, as the Chairman of the West Bengal River Tourism Sub-Committee.

Recently, the State Government had constituted a State Tourism Task Force to unlock and augment tourism potential in West Bengal. Under its aegis and advise, it was found imperative to form a separate sub-committee on each of the prime sectors under tourism for a focused and planned approach. One amongst the six prime sectors that were categorised by the Task Force is River Tourism – a much needed encouragement for the popularly growing travel segment. Further, the Task Force has announced Raj Singh as the Chairman of the sector.

One Rep Global

A seasoned professional with over two decades of comprehensive experience in the tourism sector, Lata K Rastogi is appointed Director of Sales at One Rep Global – India's leading representation company for luxury and ultra-luxury hospitality and tourism brands.

With her well rounded experience across travel, hospitality and the aviation sector, Lata is a highly competent industry professional. She has a proven track record of driving commercial success for brands including Disney Hotels, Sands Resorts, Visit Florida, Monaco Tourism, New York City Tourism, Peru Tourism (Promperu), Air Berlin, and more. Amongst her many notable achievements is her contribution towards an aggressive 800 per cent sales growth from the India market for Disneyland Paris in the past years.



Cygnett Hotels & Resorts

Cygnett Hotels & Resorts has announced the promotion and appointment of Sandeep Basu as their Associate Director – Development & Operations. He will play a key role in meeting Cygnett's aggressive growth goals. Sandeep brings with him an incredible track record of over two decades of experience in the hospitality sector, having essayed roles in various renowned companies like Hyatt, ITC Hotels, The Park Hotels and Sheraton.

He is an articulate and passionate hotel professional with a strong business acumen. His expertise lies in the planning and product definition process for the Hospitality Project portfolio. Lead, influence and mentor teams, internal and external, to execute this strategy by establishing commercially viable development options, securing multiple stakeholders buy-in, preparation of board papers and managing the complete development process for a portfolio of green field, brown field and conversion hotel projects.

Cleartrip

One of India's fastest-growing online travel companies Cleartrip has announced the appointment of Priyaah Sundaraam as Vice President - Head of Customer Experience and Fulfilment. In her new role, Priyaah will spearhead the customer experience charter with a focus on building propositions that put customers at the forefront and drive brand equity - in line with Cleartrip's motto to always keep the customer at the 'centre of the brand's DNA'.

With cross-functional experience in Aviation and Hospitality, Priyaah's vast experience in handling planning & strategy-focused initiatives will aid Cleartrip in elevating its consumer experience across platforms and setting industry benchmarks in terms of delivery.



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