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TRAVEL turtle



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EXPLORING THE WILDERNESS OF NAMIBIA

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Editor's Letter

When I think about what I've missed most about travelling all this while, I keep coming back to the chance encounters and conversations with different people. People that I never would have met otherwise; people whose worldviews are different than mine. Challenging our own beliefs and perspectives, which would otherwise be inherently nearsighted had I stayed in one place. Travel made us have a versatile outlook towards life.

Amidst this process of travelling and learning, we are constantly evolving and one such segment of tourism that has shaped our outlook towards sustainability is Community Based Tourism. In our cover story, we have touched the facets of CBT. Many of us have heard about the division but not many know its gracious impact on the society.

With borders closed, there was a lot of emphasis on 'Dekho Apna Desh' ever since the pandemic set foot, various campaigns were launched which were a huge success. We spoke to the people behind the campaign and found out the exclusivity of the campaign.

We travelled all the way to Mozart's birthplace, Salzburg which is undoubtedly the most beautiful city in Europe. With wanderlust becoming a thing and insta reels surging with content about the serenity and panorama of the majestic Ladakh, there's hardly a soul who would not be dying to see the beauty of Ladakh first hand.

India has always been proud of its rich heritage and diversity. A festival like none other - the Hornbill Festival is an event that takes place in the last month of the year and is a raging hit with people looking to explore the tribal history and all the folklore around it.

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



Bharti Sharma
Editor

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



Travel Turtle Team

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

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

Marketing: **Tejas Sharma**

Art Director: **Pankti Anjaria**
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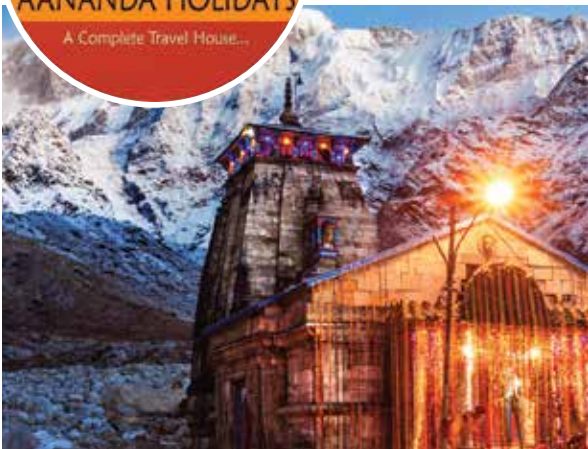
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Germany removes India from the list of high-risk areas

The German Government has lifted all travel restrictions for persons residing in India, effective Sunday, September 19, 2021. Travel to Germany for all purposes is permitted again from India. However, proof of vaccination, proof of recovery from COVID-19, or negative test result is still required for entry. All Indian travellers 12 years and older who are entering the Federal Republic of Germany must either show that they are fully vaccinated or fully recovered or have tested negative prior to departure. Travelers who received all the required doses of a COVID-19 vaccine cited on the website of the Paul Ehrlich Institute are considered fully vaccinated. A period of at least 14 days must have elapsed since receiving the last vaccine dose. Persons vaccinated with Covaxin or any other vaccine which is not recognised by the Paul Ehrlich Institute has to carry a negative PCR test report which is not older than 72 hours on entry in Germany.



The State of Qatar inaugurates Qatar Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai

Welcoming visitors from around the globe, His Excellency Sultan bin Rashid Al Khater, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, inaugurated the Qatar Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai on October 1st. The opening was attended by General Commissioners from GCC participating countries as well as a number of dignitaries, officials, and partners. Following the inauguration, His Excellency toured the Qatar Pavilion which highlights the country's achievements across various fields, showcases the most pioneering projects that are being developed in accordance with the National Vision 2030, and spotlights Qatar as the upcoming host of the 2022 FIFA World Cup. He also visited the pavilions of participating GCC countries, where each country's most prominent achievements were showcased.

Air Mauritius secures funding to meet growing demand as Mauritius re-opens international borders

Air Mauritius has exited voluntary administration and is increasing flight capacity to cater to travellers from all over the world who are planning to visit the Indian Ocean paradise island for work and pleasure. The government of the Republic of Mauritius is injecting Rs12 billion (US\$280million) into Air Mauritius via a loan to provide long-term stability for the company as international air travel and tourism rebuilds following the Covid-19 pandemic. Air Mauritius is a strategic national asset central to the government's tourism and investment strategy and provides Mauritius with its own passenger and cargo connectivity to meet market demands. The new loan arrangement was overwhelmingly supported by Air Mauritius' creditors. Ken Arian, CEO of Airports Holdings Limited, the parent company of Air Mauritius said, "This new financial arrangement provides Air Mauritius with the stability to rebuild and play a central role in the government's economic development and tourism plans. It is a vote of confidence in our staff and provides them and our tourism industry with reassurance for the future. Air Mauritius is an iconic global brand and will continue to provide short and long-haul passenger and cargo connectivity to some of our most important global markets."



Teardrop Hotels Sri Lanka appoints BRANDit as India Representative

Teardrop Hotels, a chain of luxury boutique hotels in Sri Lanka has recently appointed BRANDit, a specialist in tourism marketing, as its representation partner in India. BRANDit will be responsible for shaping the travel trade strategy, promoting sales, and executing PR campaigns. This marks a new chapter for Teardrop Hotels as it looks to invest and strengthen its presence in the Indian market.

Speaking of the appointment, Mr. Henry Fitch, CEO, Teardrop Hotels said, "We are pleased and excited to introduce our brand of unique hotels to the Indian market through BRANDit.

The hospitality sector has endured tremendous change in the recent past, impacting behaviours across the paradigm from travellers to hoteliers alike. The travel hiatus has resulted in a renewed enthusiasm, with visitors wishing to see the destination from a different perspective. With the sturdy track record that the BRANDit team has held over the years, we are confident of achieving greater visibility in India and will leverage this opportunity to elevate the Indian travellers' experience with the finest indulgences that we as a brand have to offer."



Raffles The Palm Dubai officially welcomes guests to discover UAE's majestic new luxury resort

Opening its doors at the beginning of Dubai's winter vacation season, the landmark property – Raffles' second in the city, and its first resort in the Middle East – is an opulent and eagerly awaited addition to the city's lifestyle, dining, and hotel scene. Representing the very best of the iconic Raffles brand, the destination resort will offer sophisticated accommodation, spectacular dining experiences and lavish amenities, including a stunning 500-meter private beach and the award-winning Parisian Cinq Mondes Spa, which features 23 treatment

rooms, two private spa suites and an indoor swimming pool. Ayman Gharib, Managing Director of Raffles The Palm Dubai, said: "It's with pride that we announce the official opening of Raffles The Palm Dubai, Raffles' newest luxury resort in the UAE. The five-star property invites guests to discover one of the world's most exciting destinations through the gracious lens of a Raffles resort. Raffles The Palm Dubai will ensure that every stay is exceptional with everyone arriving as a guest, leaving as a friend and returning as family."



Furaveri Maldives organises Indian agents FAM in association with Youngistan Travellers

Furaveri Maldives, a premium resort property spread over the tropical 23-hectare natural and un-reclaimed island situated in the exotic Raa Atoll in the Maldives, recently hosted a group of travel agents from the western India region. The FAM was done in association with Youngistan Travellers – a leading destination management company (DMC) for the Maldives. A total of 9 agents from Surat, Ahmedabad & Mumbai were hosted for the special FAM. Furthermore, the trip was aimed to promote the resort, highlight its salient features to the agents and

educate the travel agents about the destination, which will help them to make curated packages for the Indian audience.

"We are seeing a steady increase in tourist arrivals from India which is mostly attributed to our Indian travel trade partners who understand the uniqueness of Furaveri Maldives and are promoting the same to leisure travellers. We are elated by the feedback we received from the agents. Maldives is a hassle-free destination with visa on arrival and direct flights from many Indian cities. We look forward to hosting more trade partners in the months to come and create a positive aspiration for Furaveri Maldives" says Ali Shiyad, Senior Sales & Marketing Manager, Furaveri Resort, Maldives.





Another win for Think Strawberries as the iconic 'Ain Dubai' signs up for representation in India

Ain Dubai, the world's largest and tallest observation wheel located in Dubai has appointed leading destination consulting and representation company Think Strawberries as its partner in India. The appointment follows Ain Dubai's strategic plan to develop India's burgeoning outbound travel market for the landmark record-breaking attraction. Set to open to the public on

21st October, Ain Dubai stands at nearly twice the height of the London Eye and features 48 high-tech cabins with a total capacity to hold 1,750 people at once. It will take visitors up to a height of 250 meters from where they can enjoy spectacular panoramic views of Dubai's breathtaking skyline and a never-seen-before perspective of the buzzing city.

Embark on an unforgettable journey with Amritara Hotels and Resorts

Unveil the mystery of journey will cover the unexplored roads and unexplored paths to Leh Ladakh, we will be driving over 3000 kms via car with our travel partner HoneyGold who are not only our travel buddies in this CSR activity but also our mentor and guides. We are extremely excited to launch this travel series and look forward to discovering many such untouched and unexplored routes PAN India and spreading awareness on COVID and the importance of domestic tourism during these unprecedented times. My team and I are all geared up and excited to bring in the unforgettable experience with Amritara Hotels and Resorts and make it a huge success."



MoU signed between IRCTC and Ministry of Tourism

In order to promote tourism in the states of the North East, the Central Government organized a big program in Guwahati, the capital of Assam, in which all the tourism ministers of the North East were present along with the top Officials of IRCTC. The Central Government has organized a two-day conclave in Guwahati to promote tourism in the North-East. view of the development of tourism in the North East. On this occasion, she advised every state and related agency to form a task force. So that coordinated work can be done to increase and develop tourism in these areas. IRCTC has entered into MOU with Ministry of Tourism at the 'Tourism & Culture Ministers Conference of The North East event at Guwahati on 13.09.2021 in the presence of Hon'ble Union Minister for Tourism, Culture & Development of N.E.R and Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam.

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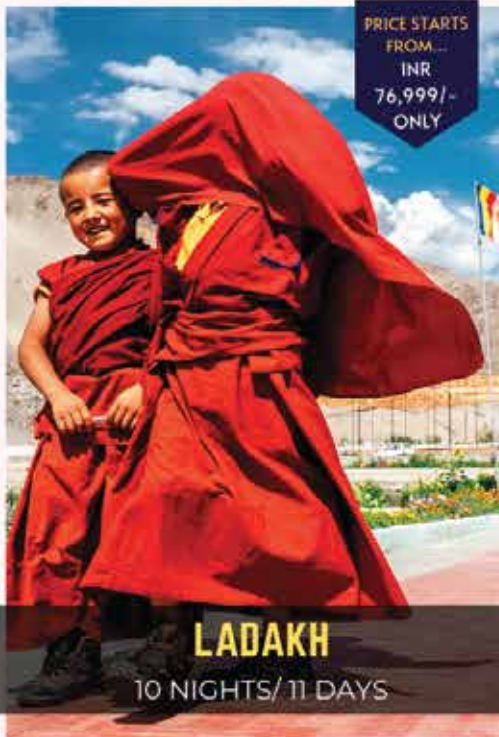
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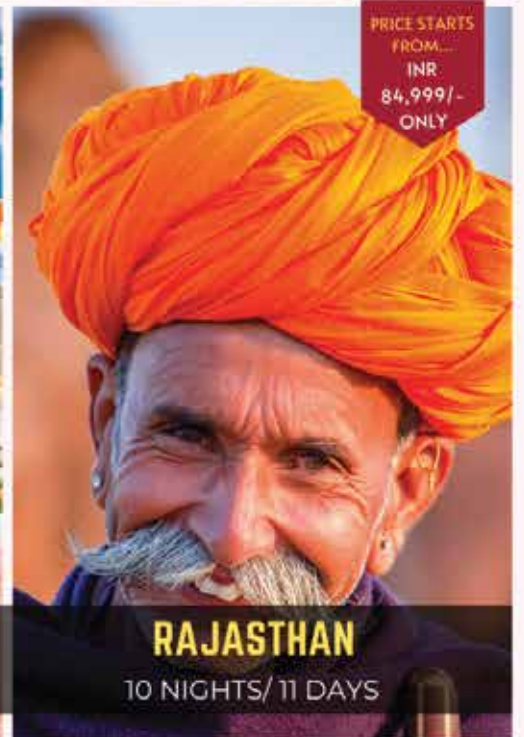
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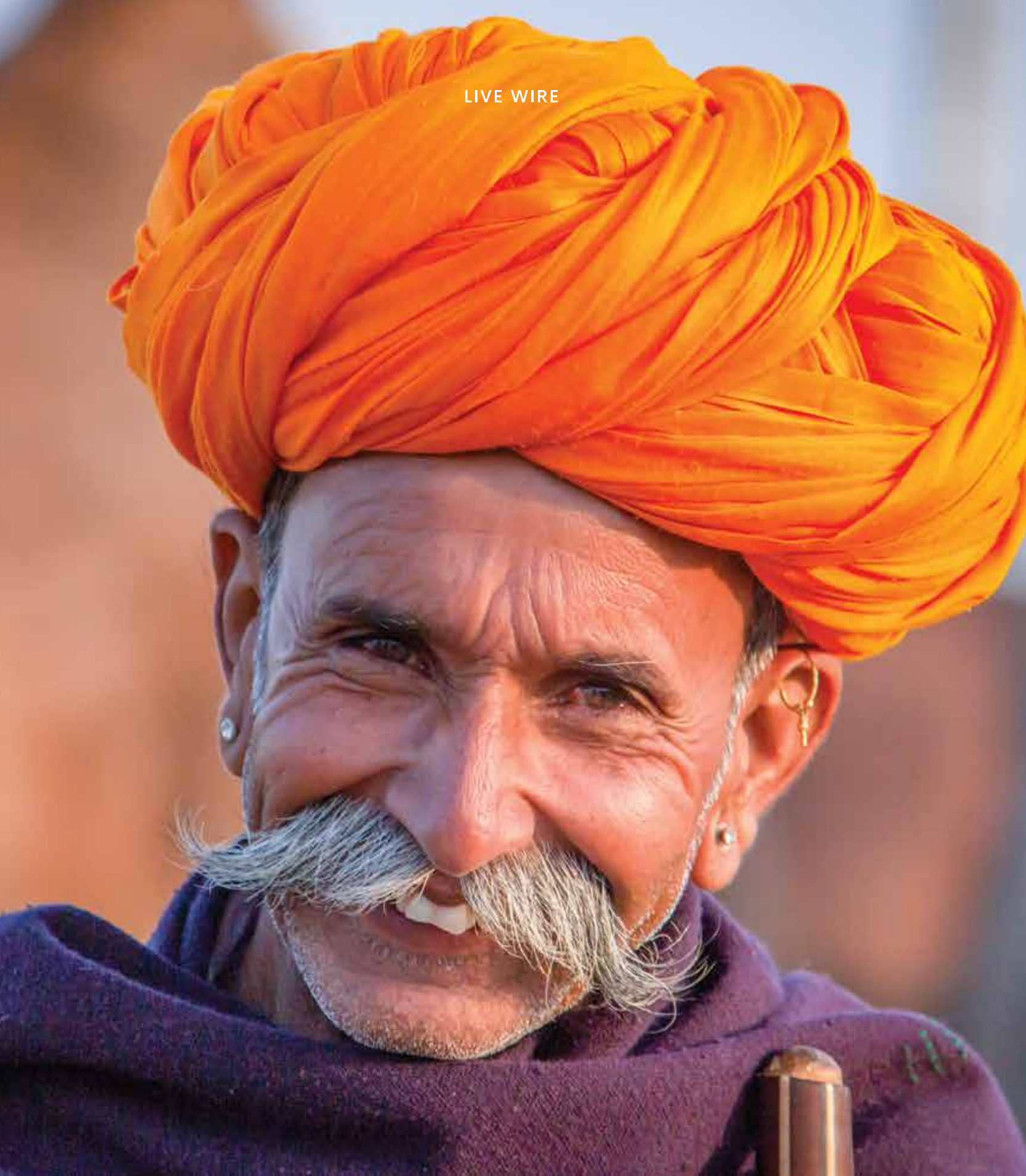
COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM

An authentic way to see the world

It's high time we realise the real essence of living, and the first step towards achieving this would be valuing people over financial figures; it's time to help sustain local communities for a better world.

- Bharti Sharma





Let us for instance forget the ongoing trend of how tourism is perceived and imagine a place being fuelled by locals inviting visitors not just into their lands but into their homes. Interesting and cherished anecdotes of

their lives are shared, meals are prepared, day to activities are being shared with the visitors, in-short for a period of time the locals share their lives with the visitors. This phenomenon can be termed as Community-based

tourism (CBT). It's not easy to uncover the nuances that make a culture so special — especially as a visitor and thus the travellers in the segment are generally ethical, informed, environmentally

conscious and experienced individuals. Community-based tourism empowers the locals to share their world, benefiting both the travellers and the destination they're visiting.





It's an industry, not an island

The most gratifying facet of CBT is the connection visitors make with their hosts and witness first-hand how this fair tourism is empowering them and their communities. It is our duty to give back to the society and one must not mistake this for charity but a social responsibility. It puts money back into the community in a responsible way, giving travellers an opportunity and satisfaction of directly supporting the economies of the places they visit. Eventually, the goal is to improve the standard of living while preserving the environment from the erstwhile reckless tourism. "The idea is not to commoditise the engagement but truly make them inclusive in the tourism project thereby creating a synergy and partnership between the community and the hospitality owner," Shoba Mohan Founder, RARE India.



Shoba Mohan

How travel companies can contribute their bit

The segment is guided by a set of principles classified as income deployment, transparency and capacity building. Understand the locals, same way you understand your travel products. Knowing the destination and their traditions, the way of approaching the local people and other cultural 'do's and don'ts' are an absolute must and will go a long way in promoting this practice. Every tourism activity should be planned in a way that doesn't destruct the local community's way of living and the natural balance of the destination. Local people should get a fair share of the benefits and profits and should have a say in how tourism inflow is managed.

Talking about the role of tour operators here, Shoba contributes, "Tour operators often highlight cultural experiences of the community in their narratives which on the other hand provides employment and inclusion of the community in the tourism activity."

A tool for sustainability

Community-based tourism is an extension of sustainable tourism. With a significant emphasis on economic and social characteristics, CBT

hopes to bring about a positive change. When it comes to the environment, it is a well-considered winner. Mostly unmapped yet one of the most promising segments, CBA actively contributes to local wellbeing with safety and sustainability. Steve Borgia, CMD, INDeco Hotels believes that India is the only country in the world that can promote emotional tourism, spiritual tourism, and other sides of sustainable tourism. He shares, "INDeco hotels practice sustainable and responsible tourism in remote rural regions and offers royal and experiential holidays with what the rural communities know, have and do. World over sustainable tourism is offering key solutions for development and this will be the future with a plethora of opportunities."

Cultural immersion

Experience the diversity and customs of different ethos and interact with the local community. Homely accommodation, village excursions, traditional gastronomy, ecotourism and cultural activities keep the tourists betrothed in locals' daily lives. Conversations with people are more edifying and amusing than even the best of tour guide's speech. An array of activities will create the foundation for increased awareness and knowledge of other art, literature, beliefs and society. It is a genuine and rich experience for travellers to have the opportunity to see unspoiled nature and ecosystems in their rawest form. They would like hands-on experiences which provides them a deeper connection with



people and places. Mentioning some of the cultural immersive experiences, Shoba says, "There are many elements in the experience of a destination that can be highlighted by the local community. Highlighted as intangible cultural heritage these may include local crafts, local cuisine, folk music, dance and other traditions like building techniques, floor and wall art – all of them contribute to the experience of the location and often a key differentiator."

Empowering Communities

When you're an owner-led agency it is a part of your personal will and interest that allows you to make community development a part of your strategy, while in large organisations it is mostly the trends that define the strategies. Shoba believes that in both the cases, will and commitment are crucial for a long-term and sustained effort to promote community-based tourism.



Steve Borgia

Steve Borgia, CMD, INDeco Hotels shares, "Whatever communities have, do and know, we document it and give it to the tourists. The farmer is invited to take tourists to his farm and teach them to climb a coconut tree, ride a bullock cart, pull a rickshaw, harvest paddy, etc for a few dollars. This way, tourism becomes inclusive and helps in alleviating rural poverty. Not only what is cooked in our hotels is produced by local villages, but all our project material is also produced by local communities. This way the world will see India with new eyes."





Dekho Apna Desh: A clarion call to discover India

India is a land of discoverers it's like a treasure box; it's incredible approach towards tourism is unconventional. A way to feel the country is to get yourself immersed in its deeply rooted culture and heritage and keep experiencing its length and breadth. 'Dekho Apna Desh', an initiative by the Ministry of Tourism brings us closer to our motherland and offers us a way to explore the array of diversity.

- Sudipta Saha

INDIAN SAGA

What makes India incredible? The implausible history, diversified art, and culture, varied topography, India's incredibility lies in its root. Whether one travels from north to south, or east to west, in every mile, India's vivid and authentic diversity will captivate your soul and mesmerise your mind. The length and breadth of the country of the abundance of a story to narrate and vivid and explore and experience. Discovering India is an nonstop journey, a journey that brings you closer to the implicit beauty of nature, and as you dig more into it, you come across a saga that makes India an incredible land.

When the entire world was shut down, and no travel was allowed, the Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India took a step forward and decided to virtually showcase India and its many hidden gems to the world and thus launched a webinar series 'Dekho Apna Desh'. The webinar promised to bring the various facets of India to its travellers and offer an opportunity to discover this gigantic country. Under 'Dekho Apna Desh' series of webinars, the purpose was to create a buzz about domestic tourist destinations and experiences.

When we talk about 'Dekho Apna Desh' webinars, we can't pass over that person whom we all have seen on screen during the sessions and have heard her speak on our incredible India. Her passion to showcase the real India to the world is so apparent from her extraordinary way of doing things. Smt Rupinder Brar, Additional DG, Ministry of Tourism had a very passionate approach for this campaign, and her zeal to explore India is very much evident from every word she speaks. Talking about the 'Dekho Apna Desh' webinar, she states, "When we started on April 14, 2020, the thought was to showcase India's diversity, as our Incredible India has so much to offer. The response received is brilliant and



Smt Rupinder Brar

that's the reason it is going strong and we are getting requests from tour companies to get the videos translated in other languages as well. They also suggested us to convert the one-hour-long videos into teasers. The response came from at least 60 countries where people joined us live at the oddest hour."

Every episode, topic, and speaker have been very wisely chosen, the title of the topic was extremely creative such as Stories on Wheels Rickshaw Tours, Experience Local by Locals, Weaving growth of rural India with SEWA & Airbnb India, Relevance of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in 21st Century, Charkhe pe Charcha, and many more. Talking about the idea behind this initiative, Smt Rupinder Brar says, "The idea was to step out of the more familiar places that we all have grown up with. For example, when we think Agra, we think Taj and therefore a session on UnTaj Agra was done which talked beyond Taj. Similarly, all webinar sessions have taken us to a very different labyrinth of incredible India. The idea was to showcase lesser-known places and experiences."

She further adds, "We have received massive number of

suggestions and requests, as we have been disseminating a message through this webinar that 'it is your India and you are going to tell us how you want to see your India'. It's your program, your platform, we are just a coordinator for the citizens to showcase their legends, myths, heritage folklores, and all whatever factors that make our country a beautiful country."

As the restrictions were being lifted, a simultaneous rise in domestic tourism was noticed. People started travelling to unexplored destinations and a plunge to explore more among the travellers was one of the major reasons behind the augment of domestic tourism in India. "Domestic tourism currently has shown galloping trends, the intervening period between the first phase of the Covid and second phase has seen a huge jump in domestic tourism and in the second phase the rise is phenomenal. People are travelling to lesser-known places, staying at home stays, the entire spectrum of hospitality is being covered from the most luxurious to the most basic units being used by the domestic tourists. We are very optimistic on the potential of domestic

tourism which will not only remain vibrant as of now but will remain so in the time to come," explains Smt Rupinder Brar.

Smt Rupinder Brar is very optimistic with the responses received, and she is not just passionate about India and its abundant beauty but she is also close to the initiative 'Dekho Apna Desh'. "Incredible India is so vast and unique, with the number of languages, cuisines, more than four hundred thousand tangible heritage (built heritage) and six hundred thousand villages and each village has a story say, we are also looking at the large topography-the mountains, the desert, forests, more than hundred national parks, it's going to be an unending journey," concludes Smt Rupinder Brar.

Taking it forward

Taking the initiative forward, social media was extensively used by the Ministry of Tourism and its field offices (22 in India and 8 overseas). The objective of Dekho Apna Desh is to create a buzz on the lesser-known/hidden treasures of India's tourist products and services. India Tourism North (located in Delhi, Jaipur, Agra, and Varanasi) joined the league and have organised hundreds of webinar on the Dekho Apna Desh. "Some of the highlights of the webinars were Kargil region, Leh, Chichak (Kaza) famous for Snow Leopard, white water adventures, wildlife, festivals, food of Kashmir and many others. The due focus was given to off-the-beaten tracks, hidden places of North India. Through the webinar students from various professional institute/technical/vocational colleges were targeted," says Anil Oraw, Regional Director, India Tourism North.

Dekho Apna Desh has ignited the interest of domestic travellers to come out of their shells and experience India like never before. Adding to it, Anil Oraw



Anil Oraw

says, "The little /lesser-known places received tremendous mileage and huge highlight through the Dekho Apna Desh webinars. Since pandemic had created a psychological barrier to avoid for the crowd, and look for isolated destinations that are serene, pollution-free, and near to nature. The upsurge of domestic tourism has benefitted the lesser know places had attracted large footfalls in places such as Sangla Valley, Kaza, Lahul and Spiti, Leh, Kargil, Alwar, Ramnagar, Pahalgam, Nubra valley and other palaces. People are looking for new places to travel and explore even with basic infrastructure available for tourists. Remarkable growth has also been noticed in regards to the occupancy in homestay/bed and breakfast in a remote area of any cites of North India increased much fold resulting economic benefit of the local community."



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THE PARADISE
ISLAND OF

Mauritius

There is no questioning the beauty of Mauritius' landscape, its sapphire-blue waters have long enticed visitors to the island. Yet beyond its picturesque aesthetics lies an island waiting to be discovered.

- **Bharti Sharma**



An aerial photograph of a tropical coastline. A road runs along the edge of a peninsula, separating a vibrant turquoise bay from a lush, green, hilly landscape. The hills are covered in dense vegetation, and a small settlement is visible on the right side. The water is crystal clear, showing the seabed. The overall scene is idyllic and scenic.

OFFSHORE BINOCULARS

Mauritius is the kind of place that rewards even the smallest attempt at exploration. Bustling markets, blooming gardens, feathery fields, verdant green mountains form a dense landscape that perches on the Indian Ocean. The Republic of Mauritius comprises the islands of Rodrigues, Agalega and St. Brandon. These tropical island set against a volcanic mountain in the backdrop is the place for discovery. The edifying confluence of cultures in Mauritius is apparent through its architecture lined with Indian temples, French colonial houses,

creole language and of course, delicious food options. Famed for its pristine offshore islands, the history adds to the charm of the destination.

Mauritius has abundant activities for a power-packed yet relaxing holiday. Exploring the beaches such as Blue Bay at Pointe D'esny, Flic En Flac, Le Morne, Mont Choisy and Ile Aux Cerfs are a must on your trip. World-class spas and flight golf courses make it hard to leave the hotel, but it has plenty to see and experience - from nature walks, quad biking to zip-lining and horse riding.



A melting pot of cultures

If you ever need to quote an example of 'diversity', Mauritius makes it to the top of the list. It was centuries ago when people from different countries such as the Dutch, British and French settled and ruled the island. The rulers brought workers from countries such as Asia and Africa to work on the grounds. Presently, you will find various cultures merged up and living in harmony as the descendants have made Mauritius a great and peaceful place to live in or to visit. The warmth of hospitality can be experienced from the moment you set foot in Mauritius. Mauritians speak creole but there are different accents spoken across the island, some might mix it with French or even with Indian languages.

Larger than life Lagoon

Most places in Mauritius have a protected lagoon with wonderful coral reefs which means you can surf or enjoy any water activities in the lagoon. Water activities in the tropical island are a must. The Island of Mauritius is small but packed with the most diverse marine life in the world. Activities such as kayak, snorkelling, boat trip, Dolphin watching, Catamaran and diving are some of the activities you can plan through your trip.

Divers, the luckiest

With 330 kilometres of coastline encircled with turquoise lagoons, Mauritius is one of the most recognised places on earth to dive underwater and witness its elaborate and colourful flora and fauna. There are approx 50 diving sites across Mauritius that vary in difficulty and depth. The entire coastline is home to a

plethora of fish species ranging in colours and sizes, corals from live to dead, giant and tiny sea turtles and many other rare species for you to explore. Located off Flic-en-Flac on the west coast of the island the Cathedral is the most popular dive in Mauritius. Gunner's Coin is another site to go for diving as you can see Whale Rock in deep waters, and if luck is on your side you're in for an experience of a lifetime to come face to face with a hammerhead shark. So depending upon the kind of marine experience you're looking for, you can choose your

dive sites accordingly. If opinions make a decision, the famous hairpin bend at Baie Du Cap is one of the best driving destinations on the planet. What makes diving in Mauritius unique is the proximity to the shore.

Doing nothing is doing everything at times

Just lazing around, appreciating nature, the sunsets, the clear sound of the waves clashing the shore or getting tanned at some mesmerising beach will bring

about calmness in you. Thanks to its beautiful landscapes that make every moment on the island so spectacular. Mont Choisis beach in the northern region of the island is the perfect place to watch the sunsets. With feet buried in the sand and gazing at the overwhelming orange burning sun reflecting on the ocean, sipping your coconut water, these priceless moments will be etched in your memories forever. (PS- Don't forget to take pictures as you might never watch sunsets like these again.)



Biodiversities

The Southern hemisphere's oldest botanical garden - Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical garden resides in Mauritius and is home to countless varieties of indigenous and exotic plant species. Mauritius' biggest and best national park, The Black River Gorges National Park is a wild expanse of rolling hills and thick forest covering roughly 2% of the island's surface. The La Vanille Nature Park boasts of the world's most extensive collection of captive-bred giant Aldabra tortoises. Their count stretches into thousands and visitors can pet them as well! One can also encounter imported African animals at Casela, the island's premier eco-adventure park. One of the world's rarest birds, the Pink Pigeon can be found in the lush green forests of Mauritius. We're certain you have seen pictures of colourful dunes and wondered if those were for real; yes, they're as real and natural as it can get and are one of Mauritius' most popular tourist destinations. The Seven-coloured Earth in Chamarel which consists of dunes of myriad colours owe their formation to the volcanic eruptions which have cooled off at different rates over centuries.

Gourmet Delights

Mauritian cuisines are rare and delicious. Spices play an essential role in enhancing the Mauritian flavour. Seafood including fish, crabs, lobsters, squid, prawns, shrimps and octopus are extremely popular throughout the island. There are plenty of options you can try when in Mauritius starting from dhollpourri, gato Pima and samosa to pizza, pasta and curries. Make sure you try local dishes such as daube, fish vindaye and chicken kalia. If you're a fan of street food, this island is a paradise for your gastronomic fantasies with food vans and vendors spread across the island serving some of the most lip-smacking snacks, drinks, and even have lunch and dinner options.



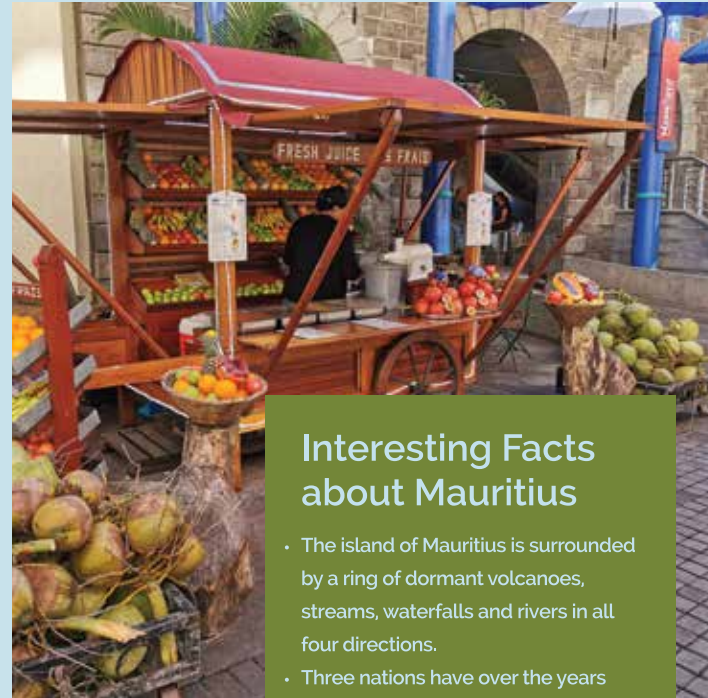
From a Bygone Era

Mauritius is home to two UNESCO World Heritage sites - the first is the Aapravasi Ghat where Indian labourers were brought over by the Britishers to work on sugarcane plantations. The name translates to immigration depot. The second World Heritage Site - Mont Le Morne Brabant was once a sanctuary for the slaves who escaped their master's oppressive rule in the 18th and early 19th centuries. This mountain is now a popular trekking destination, providing trekking enthusiasts with majestic natural views of the island. The Grand Bassin Lake also known as Ganga Talao is considered as Mauritius' most sacred pilgrimage site for Hindus. A towering statue of Lord Shiva resides beside the lake where Mauritian Hindus travel to each year during Maha Shivratri to pay their respects to the Almighty.

Being Touristy

The north around Grand Baie has the maximum concentration of hotels, beaches and entertainment. The east coast is renowned with some of the most celebrated hotels and stretches of undoubtedly the most stunning white-sand

beaches, while the flat, calm beaches of the west coast are favoured by families. The striking south is the island's wilder, but perhaps the most fascinating side. There are clutches of hotels in the southeast and more to be found squeezed onto calm stretches near pounding surf and cliff-top walks in the green southwest.



Interesting Facts about Mauritius

- The island of Mauritius is surrounded by a ring of dormant volcanoes, streams, waterfalls and rivers in all four directions.
- Three nations have over the years colonised Mauritius - the Netherlands (1638-1710), France (1715-1810) and Great Britain (1810-1968).
- Mauritius is the only African nation with Hinduism as the dominant religion.
- Ironically, the national football team of Mauritius is nicknamed as The Dodos - a bird commonly associated with slumber and lethargy.



1) What is great about Mauritius that makes it so worthwhile visiting?

Mauritius has a wide range of natural and man-made attractions, enjoys a tropical climate with clear warm sea waters, eye-catching beaches, tropical fauna and flora. This is complemented by a sophisticated and culturally endowed population that is friendly and welcomes everybody who steps on their land. Along with the enchanting nature, one will also be drawn towards the adventure activities on the island. Adding to all of that are the delectable cuisines and the spirit uplifting Mauritian rum- dark, light and spiced. In short, Mauritius beckons everyone with innumerable irresistible offerings. It is also worth mentioning that Mauritius has the second cleanest air in the world.

Mauritius is ranked as one of the top countries in the world for its response to the COVID-19 pandemic and has issued robust and comprehensive health and safety guidelines to provide our visitors with complete peace of mind.

2) Mauritius has been developing a lot of experience-based activities for travellers. What experiences are planned for the comprehensive growth of the tourism sector?

The world is moving towards responsible, sustainable, socially innovative tourism at a slower pace and greater personal interaction with the



Arvind Bundhun
Director, Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority

locals and their culture. In that context, Mauritius positions itself as a green tourism destination and has committed herself to develop sustainable activities and leisure laced experiences during the last few years. Activities are available to discover the island and its population, to explore ethnic villages and pristine landscapes, or visit its various localities and go deep into authentic Mauritius. To make sure that the green tourism approach is sustainable, hoteliers have also implemented several measures such as the ban of single-use plastic products, wastewater recycling, and even the decrease of buffets in favour of set menus to reduce food waste. Some have also implemented environmental projects such as the rehabilitation of mangroves, the protection of sea turtles, or the conservation of underwater areas near the resorts, and all this with the involvement of employees and guests. Mauritius is also focussing on 'Tourism for Inclusive Growth', a commitment to ensure that

nobody is left behind. It has opened the borders and is looking to the future, in a bid to build a more clean and safe destination for tourists. Mauritius is working closely with all stakeholders with the motto 'One Destination One Voice' and is strictly following the new value propositions built around safe and secure travel. It is proud to have one of the highest vaccination rates, with 83 per cent of all adults fully vaccinated by end of September, and inoculating the tourism staff was prioritised during the rollout. Mauritius continues working towards the comprehensive growth of not only the tourism sector but also the society at large.

3) With pandemic adversely affecting the travel industry, what new initiatives and strategies are in place to boost Mauritius amongst the travel trade?

To increase the level of engagement, MTPA is holding Mauritius branded virtual roadshows and workshops till such time when face to face interactions are again safely possible. As Mauritius has opened the border, it will also plan for familiarisation trips for media, tour operators, MICE agents, wedding planners, golfers, film and television production houses. There is also an advertising plan in place, which is on hold due to the pandemic. To elevate brand visibility our strategy is to reach and interact with our target audience as much as possible through digital platforms. Mauritius will continue with its initiatives to engage with its customers through social media like Facebook, Instagram, online media, content creation and email marketing.

4) What entry requirements are demanded on incoming tourists?

We're excited to welcome our beautiful island! Our world-leading health and sanitary services are ready to keep you, your family and the whole country safe. You can find the latest public health information and figures and the Mauritiusnow.com website will keep you updated with the latest entry requirements, where to stay and things to do during your holiday. Please visit mauritiusnow.com for detailed information.

5) What are the top five inbound tourism markets for MTPA?

Top five markets are France, UK, South Africa, Reunion and Germany.



WORLD TOURISM DAY

3 R'S TO DISCUSS THIS WORLD TOURISM DAY RELEVANCE • RESURRECTION • RESULTS

The session was moderated by Homa Mistry, CEO, TBI and was graced by a panel of eminent speakers including Rajiv Mehra, President- IATO, Jyoti Mayal, President-TAAI, PP Khanna, President- ADTOI, Riaz Munshi, President-OTOAI, Ankush Nijhawan, Chairperson- FICCI Outbound Tourism sub-committee, Ajay Prakash, President- TAFI and Amaresh Tiwari, Vice Chairman, ICPB.

In the introduction given by Bharti Sharma, Editor, Travel Turtle, she mentions, "World Tourism Day 2021 is an opportunity to look beyond tourism statistics and acknowledge that behind every number, there is a person. Tourism's applicability has never been more relevant. Now is the time to reflect the sector's impact upon other segments of the development agenda."

Emphasising on the need to evolve as the situation demands, Jyoti Mayal, President-TAAI shares, "We all have to struggle, survive and revive for our own tourism industry."

The pandemic has adversely affected the psyche of travellers and that poses to be one of the major challenges in reviving tourism. Understanding the importance of this factor, Ajay Prakash, President- TAFI shares, "We need to rebuild traveller's confidence as unfortunately, it's lacking. We have survived the 18 months so far but coordinated efforts are required. TAFI has been addressing issues faced by the members and has been helping them to sustain in these difficult times."

Resonating the belief but analysing the triggers to overcome the skepticism, Rajiv Mehra, President- IATO, asserts, "The primary drivers of confidence for the resurgence in travel depends on factors such as the drop in the number of cases, easing of regulatory restrictions and vaccination penetration."

Tourism is one of the strongest contributors of a country's growth trajectory. Ankush Nijhawan, Chairperson, FICCI Outbound Tourism sub-committee highlighted this perspective

TRAVEL turtle

ORGANISES NATIONAL E-SUMMIT ON WORLD TOURISM DAY

Travel Turtle, on the occasion of World Tourism Day, organised the National Tourism E-Summit. The idea was to celebrate tourism's unique ability to ensure togetherness; a virtue that enables everyone to be unified as the world begins to open up again, stepping out of the darkness towards a bright future.

- Team TT

adding, "The industry is now optimistic and has started to recover. Tourism has tremendous potential for being a driver of economic and inclusive growth and today's environment is very dynamic."

The oddity to adapt to ever-changing ecosystems is paramount for an industry's survival or recoup. Riaz Munshi, President-OTOAI not only comprehends the tourism industry's power of adaptability, but is also confident that domestic and outbound tourism will flourish.

PP Khanna, President- ADTOI stated that this is the time for domestic. He adds, "The restricted opportunities for international travel have contributed to the dominance of domestic demand. While international holiday-makers with higher flexible expenditure are rediscovering India, popular tourist destinations such as Goa and hospitality brands that traditionally depended on foreign tourists are also adapting to ensure that they are

geared to cater to the demand of domestic travelers."

The industry has reflected resilience when put under the worst-possible situation, and Amaresh Tiwari, Vice Chairman, ICPB, did not hesitate in acknowledging this when he mentions, "The MICE industry has been very resilient and adaptable. We have witnessed how the events have evolved in the pandemic with the help of technology."

All's well that ends well has forever been a phrase that induces confidence and narrates the resilience, confidence, strength that went into coming out of an ugly situation victorious. Concluding the session, Sudipta Saha, Executive Director, Travel Turtle says, "Leaving the past behind us is the first step towards recouping and as a result, we have now started to witness a movement in the travel domain which is no less than a 'Resurrection' of an industry which was hit the hardest and was on the ventilator for the longest time in history."



Waltzing through Salzburg



Panorama of Salzburg by Breitegger Günter

Known as 'the heart in the heart of Europe', Salzburg's had everything going its way for quite a while now. If being Mozart's birthplace and the locale for the filming of the smash-hit 'Sound of Music' has enhanced its cultural value, a superb scenic backdrop hasn't harmed its interests one bit.

- Inder Raj Ahluwalia



TRAVEL THERAPY

Bathed by the morning sunshine that gave it a golden coat, the Salzach river and the majestic period buildings that flank it seemed part of a portrait.

Courtesy the superb weather, it seemed the whole city was outdoors. Being something of a 'peoples' person' myself, this suited me just fine.

For local origins, go back to 696, when Bishop Rupert of Worms received the desolate Roman city 'Juvavum', as a gift from the Bavarian Duke Theodo. Lavished by revenues from the Reichenhall salt mines - courtesy the Bavarian Dukes - Salzburg owes not just its wealth

but also its name to the salt revenues. Buoyed by the wealth, the Prince Archbishops shaped the city after their dreams, and the rest, as they say, is history.

The city presents a picture-book type of scene. Hemmed in on three sides by wooded hills, Salzburg's houses aren't aligned in straight rows, but in fact, ramble along the Salzach River. Narrow lanes curve around stately sacred buildings, flow into spacious squares, and then squeeze again between century-old burgher mansions!

It's a formula designed for success, as the statistics show. Millions of visitors annually flock

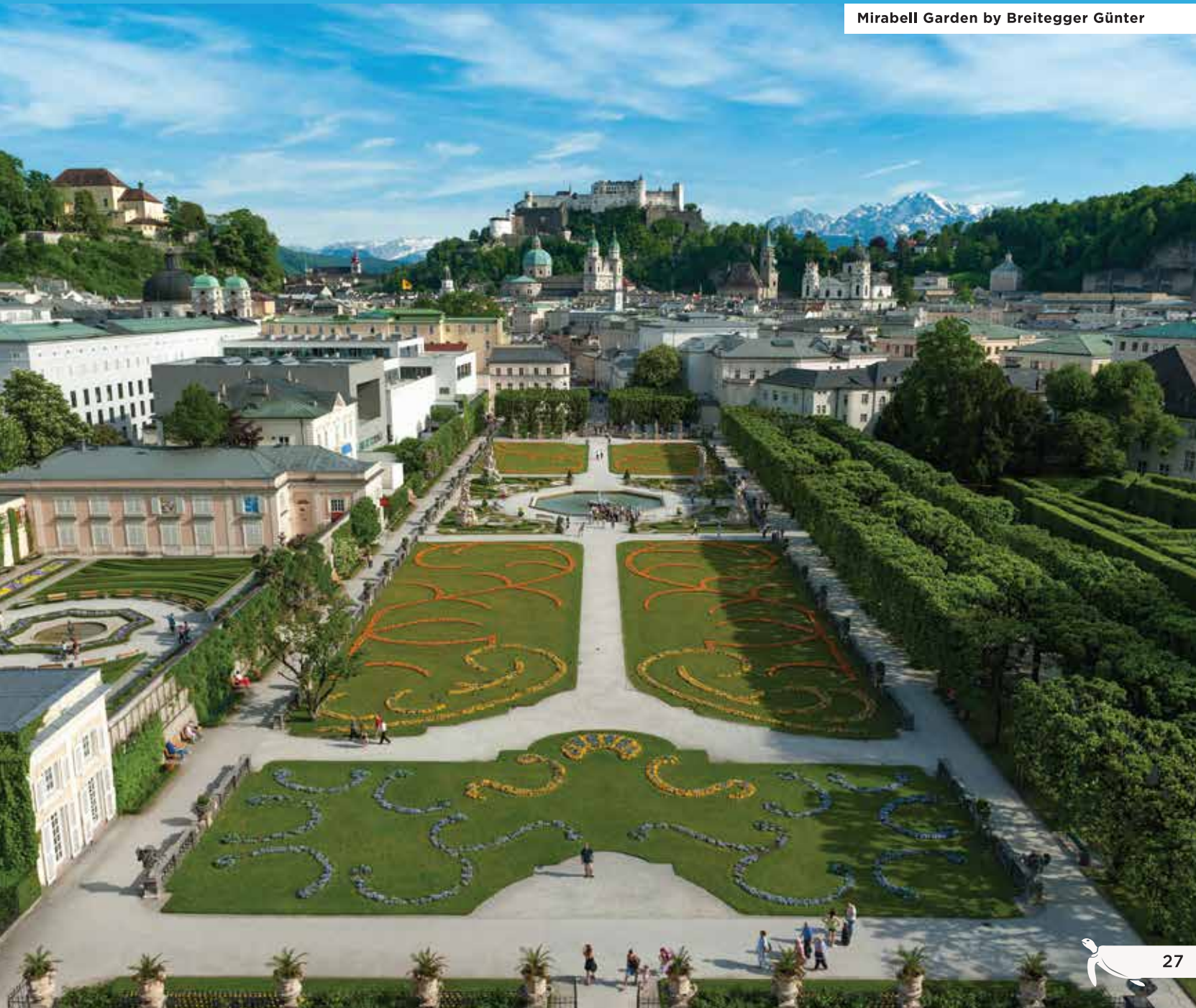
here to savour the scenery, climate, culture, and exceptional festive celebrations. The rich cultural event choice includes the Summer Festival, Salzburg Culture Days, Mozart Week, the Easter Festival, Advent Singing, Pentecost Concerts, the Palace Concerts, the famous Salzburg Festival that celebrates Mozart's works, and 'Szene', a fine example of the traditional and modern co-existing in harmony. A theatre-dance festival, the 'Szene' provides a dramatic counterpoint to the 'Salzburg Festival'.

Years ago, the Bee Gees and Herbert Gronemeyer turned the city into a natural backdrop for

their open-air concerts, and Tina Turner went a step further and used the whole city as a stage. But if Mozart's city was animated enough to start with, a huge publicity bonus came courtesy of the locally filmed, internationally famous Oscar-winning film, 'The Sound of Music'.

The spirit and essence of the film live on in the city. In the Mirabell Gardens, you see it all. A baroque museum, statue groups depicting Greek mythology, marble vases designed by Fischer von Erlach, a hedge theatre, and a baroque dwarf garden on the bastions. You see the fountains where Maria sang

Mirabell Garden by Breitegger Günter





Kapitelplatz in Salzburg by Breitegger Günter

'Confidence is me'. With its baroque monumental stairways with pictures by GR Donner, Mirabell Palace is a grand structure. The Marble Hall here is the mayor's home and also a popular concerts and weddings venue. Minutes away is the Hotel Bristol which Christopher Plummer made his home during the film's shooting.

A thousand years is a long time to nestle snugly in the shadow of a fortress, but that's exactly what Salzburg has done, and continues doing. With its Late Gothic Church of St. George, Castle Courtyard, and museum, the hill-perched Hohensalzburg Fortress - the largest completely preserved fortress in Central Europe - dominates the region's skyline. Just for the record, Maria stayed in its monastery.

Considered the most impressive baroque building north of the Alps, the Cathedral is another

prominent local landmark featuring two cathedral museums and a magnificent marble façade.

Duly impressed by all this romantic grandeur, I was in the right frame of mind to appreciate the myriad charms of the Old City that has been tempered over several centuries.

You jostle with thousands of tourists, walk narrow streets, stop at little cafes for steaming coffee, and talk to old-timers. Linger on in Getreidegasse, the most famous street, discover lovely inner courtyards and lanes, and admire wrought-iron and gilded shop and firm signs with medieval graphics. And then arrive at No 9, Mozart's birthplace and family residence, a typical old Salzburg burgher's house with an in-built museum stocked with the famous composer's letters, music and portraits.

Allow yourself a little

indulgence. Stop by at the glittering jeweller's shops and smart boutiques that stock traditional local costumes alongside eccentric creations from Europe's fashion capitals. If you're serious about shopping, succumb to the temptations of over 400 speciality shops on both sides of the Salzach, or play it casual and just pick up typical knick-knacks like scented nosegays of dried spices and flowers.

'Salzburger Nockerl', anyone? This fluffy soufflette omelette is but one of a celebrated list of local delicacies, others being the Wiener Schnitzel, palatschicken (sweet pancakes), and the ever-popular 'Bauerng Rostel'. Along with the 'melt-in-the-mouth' Salzburg Mozartkugel sweets, these are the city's pride and joy. Fittingly, one of the world's famous catering institutes has made the city its home.

Sift through the vast food and eatery choices and stop by at the local cuisine temple. The oldest restaurant in Europe, St. Peter's Stiftskeller, has been serving quality cuisine since 803. Owned and rented out by Benedict Monks, Stiftskeller was Mozart's favourite haunt and stages Mozart Dinner Concerts that bring culture right up to one's table, along with wine from their own vineyards.

Whatever your fancy and whichever way you look at it, Salzburg's got its act just right, offering visitors a bit of everything, throughout the year. The hills may not be alive with the 'sound of music', but things are abuzz all right.

Take it from me, it's easy to do it all and taste the charm.

All you need to bring is yourself!



THE FACTS

- SALZBURG IS ABOUT THREE HOURS BY TRAIN FROM VIENNA, AUSTRIA'S MAIN ENTRY POINT.
- DON'T FORGET TO GET YOUR VISA PRIOR TO ENTRY INTO THE COUNTRY.
- THE CITY HAS A HUGE ACCOMMODATION NETWORK THAT INCLUDES EVERYTHING FROM DELUXE HOTELS TO INNS AND FARMER'S HOMES.
- EATING OUT IS ADVENTUROUS AND FULSOME. A VARIETY OF INTERNATIONAL DISHES, INCLUDING VEGETARIAN, ARE SERVED ALONGSIDE TRADITIONAL CUISINE WITH SPECIAL SAUSAGES AND SALADS.
- THE SALZBURG CARD ALLOWS ACCESS TO ALL LOCAL CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS. AVAILABLE ARE LOCAL SIGHTSEEING TOURS LIKE THE 'ORIGINAL SOUND OF MUSIC TOUR', AND 'ALL-INCLUSIVE CITY TOURS'.



Biking In Salzburg by Reinhart Bryan



Salzburg Panorama at night by Breitegger Günter



HEADS IN BEDS



DoubleTree by Hilton Dubai-Jumeirah Beach: A swanky sojourn

From a great F&B to a rejuvenating spa and incredible hospitality, DoubleTree by Hilton Dubai-Jumeirah Beach manages to shine bright despite cut-throat competition in the Dubai hospitality arena.

- Misbah Mansuri



HEADS IN BEDS



Imagine being welcomed by the warm chocolate chip cookie on arrival, gooey, chocolaty goodness. It doesn't get better than this, right? This was our check-in indulgence at DoubleTree by Hilton Dubai-Jumeirah Beach-one of Dubai's coolest beachfront hotels with popular restaurants and bars.

Suite dreams

We were put up in a swish two-bedroom suite that boasted a breath-taking view of the city, two rooms with marshmallow soft beds, a dining area and sunken bathtub and several other facilities. The only-suite hotel is home to some of the best suites in Dubai that are just perfect for staycation and escapes. These are great for longer stays and holidays as well as they are equipped with a kitchenette and all the facilities required for a memorable, long stay.

The food factor

The centrally located hotel is also home to one of Dubai's most trendy dining and nightlife destinations that include The MAINE Oyster Bar & Grill and also Gastro Kitchen. A weekend brunch at Gastro Kitchen is highly recommended. We loved everything from the healthy, delectable salads, starters such as crispy shrimp, the delish Lamb Kofta, all tantalizingly teased our taste buds. Room service is prompt and amazing too. We loved the succulent, melt-in-the-mouth Philly Steak Sandwich, Chicken Tikka Pizza and the ravishing Tiramisu- a dessert lover's dream brought to life. Freshness played centre stage in every dish served to us which was a big plus. The hotel's culinary expertise is definitely highlighted in the meals served with culinary finesse and thoughtfully crafted.



HEADS IN BEDS

Facilities and hospitality, check

The hotel is within an easy walk of The Beach and all the restaurants and shops in the area. One can soak up the sun along the hotel's private stretch of sandy beach or take a dip in the 42-metre outdoor pool. If you have the little ones in tow, there's also a dedicated pool for the kiddies.

In need of some me-time? Check yourself into the Breakwater Wellness Centre which comes complete with a 24-hour fitness centre, steam room and sauna. We loved our Lavender Dreams Ultimate Spa Experience which was 90 mins of pure bliss as we inhaled the calming and balancing benefits of wild lavender in this completely balancing and rejuvenating Spa experience. To begin, earthy minerals were combined with lavender's healing properties in an invigorating full-body exfoliation. This was followed by a pampering back, neck and shoulder massage with Organic Lavender Oil and warm healing stones while a luxurious foot and pressure point scalp massage completed this head to toe service. It surely elevated us to spa nirvana as our muscles were kneaded into mush by the experienced spa therapist.

More than anything else, the impeccable hospitality of the resort shines through. From delectable dessert amenities to welcome us to surprise us with some great drinks and treats, the staff never failed to delight us. It is the property's gleaming hospitality that elevates this star from a plethora of other Dubai hotels.



1) The Indian market for the Dubai market has been growing exponentially despite some temporary closures. How is DoubleTree by Hilton Dubai Jumeirah Beach strategically building on the same?

India is an important market for the hotel and the region. Based on travel patterns seen across the market, an all-suite beach hotel located on popular Jumeirah Beach Road, our product and location are perfectly suited for families, where there is plenty to do for all. We have launched family offers that are best suited for this market and have a flexible cancellation policy too, which makes the booking experience hassle-free. Our F&B offering is dynamic and suits the international palate. At Gastro Kitchen, we serve a delicious buffet breakfast from 7am to 11am, where we have live stations catering to everyone's needs. From Egg stations to freshly baked items, to pancakes and waffles, we have it all, and for healthy guests, we have a selection of juices and vegan options too. Our chefs have daily specials every day which are very dynamic and at times include Indian Savory too. Lastly, with multicultural chefs on board, we prepare Indian Food on request.



Elif Yazoglu - General Manager
DoubleTree by Hilton Dubai-Jumeirah Beach

2) What are the factors you see really appealing to the Indian market?

The fact that we are an all-suite hotel with large and spacious suites which range from 1 bedroom suite to 3 bedroom suite and have an option of the fully functional kitchen which are best suited for families and extended stays and would be a major factor when you select your next family vacation. Following our convenient location is our USP which is within walking distance of the beautiful JBR promenade offering an array of boutique shops, al fresco dining venues and entertainment facilities for all ages. To add to it, the hotel has an infinity pool and private

beach which is overlooking the magnificent Ain Dubai.

3) As the competition in the Emirate heats up, take us through how the resort ensures that it stays on the top of its game also with the upcoming Expo?

Our team is our biggest strength, and we are very proud to have a diverse team that is dedicated to ensuring guests are our first priority. To keep up to the ongoing trend we constantly work our F&B offering which is also an important factor for decision

making, once of the recent initiative is "Growth of the UAE" celebrating the UAE's 50th anniversary, an exclusive farm-to-table menu that uses only the freshest home-grown ingredients to create deliciously wholesome cuisine. We also offer a unique family experience to guests who book their stay with us. Right from the time of booking, till they check out, we have a crafted package that will create a memorable experience, especially for the little ones. When families check-in, we offer DoubleTree Signature Cookie and we also place special kids amenities in rooms for families- right from a cuddle toy, to special kids toiletries and something special to eat so they end their evening on a sweet note. Expo 2020 is an attraction that caters to all ages with its offering right from the pavilions, events and F&B offering; the proximity to the Expo site is a benefit to all our resident guests, especially with options of public transportation being walk distance from the hotel.

4) What will be your major focus areas and visions ahead for the property, as we go forward?

Our focus has always been on creating memories for our guests and that is something that we will always continue. With the dynamic team, we have our focus is to keep up to be ahead of the trends be in with our rooms or our F&B offering.





Tripjack

THE RIGHT TOOL TO MANAGE AND SELL

With a passion to create the finest technology and sharp entrepreneurial focus, Hussain Patel, Director, Tripjack developed a portal that intends to deliver the potential solutions to its partners. It is his empathetic belief that systematic time management and prioritised goals lead to success which today makes Tripjack a foremost B2B travel portals.

-Sudipta Saha



Be relevant and productive

His entrepreneurial skills and determination to bring a technology that adds value to the business gave birth to Tripjack. Hussain reminisces, "Since my early days, my passion has been to keep the finest technology abreast for my travel partners to take optimum advantage of the evolving trade which I can foresee. Technology is something that has been evolving with time. We have seen a rapid growth in how things work at our fingertips and how advanced our lifestyles have become. We at Tripjack are always thriving to add the best possible user experience by constantly upgrading our software. Our goal is to give our travel partners relevant content and make working with us a fruitful experience for them. We also appreciate and welcome feedback from our customers and constantly motivate our team to upgrade our product. Our team is on a persistent lookout for new products which need distribution and we try to cater those products to the right audience."

Developing advanced tools

Tripjack since its inception have always aimed at offering the seamless technology to its partners and with that same mission and vision, they keep upgrading their system and offer a profitable platform. "Our research and development teams work closely with our data analytics department which helps them identify trends in the trade, our focus on product development is a constant process, with attention to detail we at Tripjack have always thrived to deliver the best possible solutions to help the trade grow. Some of the tools developed by us have not only helped our travel partners retain their customers but it has also helped them widen their reach," shares Hussain.

Adding value to business

Tripjack has evolved as a very user-friendly profitable b2b portal and is known to bring-forth multiple segments under one roof. Hussain asserts, "We have multiple products such as flights,

hotels, trains, visa services, cruises, insurance and packages to offer on a single platform and all products have a great user experience and exciting offers which creates opportunities for anyone wanting to start business with us. Post booking services such as cancellation, date changes, refunds etc can be managed through the platform itself or can be serviced from our 24x7 contact centre which has highly experienced travel industry experts to solve any query."

Meticulous customer support

A diligent hard working team and a rigorous support towards its customer have made Tripjack one of the reputed name in the industry. He says, "We at Tripjack have been at the forefront in thoroughly planning our customer support and are dependable in situations when our customers need us the most. One such example was at an early stage of the Covid-19 pandemic which started affecting our business in China market by mid of January 2020 which actually showed us an early sign of what we needed to do to prepare ourselves for the India market. We started training sessions for our teams, enabled everyone with study materials, self-learning kits, tools and equipment required to work from home and after a few weeks of mock trials we were prepared to start working from home which came into effect from the March 15, 2020 which was just nine days before the actual lockdown in India."

Even during lockdown, the team Tripjack has been working effortlessly in order to provide a hassle free assistance to their partners. "We had planned this situation so well in advance even on the first day of lockdown; our contact centre teams were working flawlessly and were available 24x7 when our travel partners needed us the most. Our refund policy in bank accounts also was extremely seamless and was appreciated by our partners since none of our competitors were doing this," adds Hussain.

Hybrid model through our robust technology

Tripjack have retained all their employees since the start of the pandemic and in fact, have added 30 per cent more team members since then to meet the demand that they have created to exceed the business compared to pre-pandemic levels. "Our primary business focus always has been the b2b segment where travel agents are more like consultants to their customers wanting to provide multiple products where we feel there is a need to give them the right tools to manage and sell those products seamlessly and make sure there is a constant touch point created for their customers to interact with them and make cross-selling possible to help our travel partners in increasing their revenues. India has more than 50 per cent of its population below the age of 25 and more than 65 per cent below the age of 35. The demands of these customers are changing very rapidly and we want our Travel partners to be able to cater to them for which we want to provide a Hybrid model through our robust technology solutions where we will empower them to be able to compete in the b2c space and give a very customised solution and offer to these customers with the ability to service them offline as well as online," mentions Hussain.

Stands out to be different

The company since its inception has always intended to offer a cost-effective and stress-free institution to its customer. He further tells, "Tripjack is a very transparent establishment that has stood by its customers even through the pandemic. In the initial stages of the pandemic when people were flustered, our company held the entire team together, made quick decisions and organised the company tier in a way that the company performed flawlessly. Our timely introduction of products during the pandemic has reaped great benefits for us and set us apart from the rest. The pandemic in fact brought out the best in us because we were the first ones to

introduce new features on the portal such as utilisation of credit shells issued by the airlines, quarantine rules and regulations at various destinations, automation in cancellations, etc. Our team spirit and bond has only helped us widen our scope and expand in various sectors of our trade."



Hussain Patel

Constantly investing in the technology

Created towards the benefits of its partners and users, Tripjack has been continuously investing towards upgrading its technology. "We feel we are positioned in a very unique way in India, in which we can contribute in a big way by providing our travel partners with the right content which they need to provide services to their customers. In the current situation, where customers are so apprehensive and unsure about travel regulations, we travel agents stand a great opportunity to guide them and to assure them about the importance of having a travel consultant. We feel the flexibility and ability to provide these solutions are very important and we are constantly investing in our technology to make it more robust and provide the correct information when needed. Hence, I am hopeful of creating some opportunities for us by solving some of the core problems that our customer's face. Also with the new regulations that have been introduced, some of them are here to stay. These will make the travelling experience secure and swifter for customers which will encourage them to travel more," concludes Hussain.



LADAKH

– A JOURNEY TO AWAKEN YOUR SENSES

With wanderlust becoming a thing and insta reels surging with content about the serenity and panorama of the majestic Ladakh, there's hardly a soul who would not be dying to see the beauty of Ladakh first hand.

- Sameer Singh



INDIAN SAGA



Coming out of the second wave, the travel bug had never bitten me this strong and my first trip happened to be to the one destination I was looking forward to for years. Thanks to Red Letter Holidays for organising this incredible familiarisation trip to the land of high passes – Ladakh.

Red Letter Holidays has recently come up with their Ladakh DMC and this happened to be their first-ever familiarisation trip. A major shift from their erstwhile business model with existing DMC's in Maldives, Seychelles and Philippines, a DMC for Ladakh seems to be a perfect entry point for venturing into the domestic market. Having done the required recce and sending clients to Ladakh, this fam trip had a mixed composition of potential b2c agents from various parts of the country, though a dominating number was from the Delhi – NCR apart from agents running agencies in Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Pune and Aurangabad. Sharing the idea behind organising this exclusive

fam trip Ujjawal Sharma, Director Red Letter Holidays says, "The idea behind our first ever fam was to familiarize the travel agents with the selling points of Ladakh so that they are better equipped with real-time information about the destination, making it easier for them to sell it to their clients."

It's been a while since I've stopped peeping out of the windows in a flight, but not this time. Almost halfway into our one-hour flight from Delhi to Leh, we were greeted by the majestic views of the snow-laden mountains and Ladakh already had me floored. Post checking-in at Hotel Niran Boutique our accommodation for the day we desire to explore the picturesque Leh city but we learnt it rather soon that the top tip for day 1 is to give your body time to acclimatize to the climatic conditions and have plenty of water for a good trip on days that follow. The evening was set for an introductory session of the 20 odd members in the group, setting the agenda

of the fam and the course for days ahead.

The first agenda for day two was checking into Hotel Zomday followed by property visits in Leh and attractions around the valley including the Hall of Fame; war memorial of our soldiers who have over the years laid down their lives in protecting the borders, and the 'Sangam Valley' – confluence of the rivers Indus and Zaskar which is a sight to behold. On the way to the Sangam, we passed the magnetic hill, which possesses magnetic properties. The mandatory halt though on this route was the Gurudwara Pathar Saheb, the calm vibe of this place along with the hot cup of tea and kada prasad served here rejuvenated our body from the weariness of the road and your mind alike. Not to forget the beauty of the Leh city, monasteries, monks, clear blue skies and the barren mountains will be a permanent sight of attraction throughout our day giving plenty of chances to focus our cameras and shoot endlessly.

Leaving early morning and passing several barren mountains, BRO's (Border Road Organization) creative signboards and villages we found ourselves into the snow-capped mountains and our first stop for the day, the Khardung La. It is the highest motorable road in the world at 17,582 ft and a gateway to the Shyok and Nubhra Valleys, the latter being our final destination for the day. The road to Nubhra valley was a completely different landscape from the ones we were getting used to till now. The barren rocky mountains had given way to sandy mountains and dunes, while the river Shyok accompanied us almost throughout the journey. On reaching Nubhra we were greeted by the cutest furry double-humped camels giving us a ride on their backs and an experience to cherish for life.

Day 4 was another early morning but without regrets, as we were headed to the majestic Pangong Tso. No pain no gain was probably made for this day; the



INDIAN SAGA

Journey was long and tiring but the first glimpse of the turquoise water body made us forget everything and left us in awe. Pangong Tso is a nature's marvel one needs to see in order to believe. There are four camping sites and our 'Wild Camp' was at site 2. The dusk gave way to a breezy freezing night and before we could think that we've seen the best, we looked up at the sky and boy was it real? I don't remember seeing a starry night like this; it was a paradise for stargazers with a bonfire and the calmness of the Pangong Tso.

Waking up to the Pangong Tso was a visual delight, a moment I would never forget. With a heavy heart, we bid adieu putting the clear turquoise waters of Pangongin the rearview. Heading back to our hotel in Leh, we stopped at the Thiksey Gompa (Gompa Tibetan style monastery). The magnificent complex of Thiksey stands atop a hill in all its grandeur overlooking the valley. The day along with the trip came to an end with the hope of visiting this nature's paradise again. Ladakh is not about an attraction, it's about the journey. The journey is lined with gorgeous valleys, mystical monks, barren lands, snow-capped mountains, curvy roads, blue skies, shiny turquoise lakes, century-old monasteries and 'calmness'.



Ujjawal Sharma, Director, Red Letter Holidays

Red Letter Holidays has been following a much-focused approach and plan to open offices in every state. The next destination for the establishment will be Goa and Meghalaya. In order to reach the right audience potential partners, Red Letter plans to participate at SATTE, OTM and ATM Dubai to showcase the Indian destinations worldwide.



Yorker Holidays: Conducting business ethically and with integrity

Yorker Holidays have earned an upright exclusivity in the travel industry with their bouquet of products offering to meet the towering demands. Vineet Srivastava, Managing Director, Yorker Holidays Services with his articulate planning and vision has set a new horizon and, every day it seems to be adding up a new portfolio resulting in the bigger results.

- Sudipta Saha



Vineet Srivastava

The Maldives, one & only

After the pandemic and due to the ongoing travel restrictions, we had only one destination to sale i.e., Maldives, and as we started selling the destination, the achievement was phenomenal. We never expected that the Maldives will be a turning point for us. Earlier, we were never dependent upon a particular

destination, but in the given situation, when only one destination is open, we were left with no other options and, thus we were determined to go for it. Before Covid, we achieved the particular numbers in terms of passengers but, after COVID, we have achieved striking numbers. We are positive at the moment, the way the Maldives has supported us in these challenging times, other such destinations will

thrive as well.

Feel the heat

There are 160 islands in the Maldives which means 160 properties to sell, but for an individual, every property might not be a revenue generator. The entire business is based on which property turns out to be a major revenue generator. In that case, we at Yorker have chalk-out seven-eight properties and have been doing vigorous business with them without any hassle. I don't feel any competition; in fact, we have started future blocking and have initiated a series of departures for the Maldives. At Yorker, we try to offer first-hand experience to our customers, and thus the properties we work with are very exclusive. We aim to curate a memorable experience for our guests and generate appreciable revenue for ourselves and our partners as well.

Plans on the card

Presently, Yorker has tie-ups with various

resorts located in the Maldives, but apart from this, we are now focusing on Dubai. As Dubai is back on welcoming tourists, we have tied up with Revier Dubai Hotel opposite Burj Khalifa, and we will be handling their India sales. Also, we will be a one-stop booking for a Nepal-based hotel, ie, Siddhartha Hotel, Nepalgunj. Soon, we will be announcing packages for Ukraine as the destination is now open to explore, and also we are planning to announce a package that will cover two countries such as Maldives-Dubai. At the moment, we are organising roadshows in tier II and III cities with our partners, and also from January onwards, we are planning few roadshows with our Maldives partners. These roadshows will be organised with an intention to educate the industry about the products we deal with, and also after the pandemic, this is going to be a preferable way to meet our partner and do business together.



HOTELLIGENCE

CYGNETT

THE HEART OF TRUE EXPERIENCES
& SPLENDID HOSPITALITY

Sarbendra Sarkar, Founder & Managing Director, Cygnett Hotel Group has a versatile approach towards his vision. He always dreamt to curate a hospitality brand that is known for its exuberant hospitality, profuse comfort, and hospitable service along with an abundance of enchanting experiences.

-Sudipta Saha



Sarbendra Sarkar, the man behind Cygnett Hotel Group has a remarkable journey to narrate, he is a person who breathes hospitality and is keen on experimenting with the situation. His passion and positive attitude have turned many challenging situations into a profitable gain. Well, during the COVID when the tourism and hospitality industry were amidst an exigent position, he stayed calm and has expended his time on analysing the market and accordingly adopt the changes that the market intended to demand.

Be ready for the change

The pandemic has actually flipped the market upside downside, sharing on the same, Sarbendra Sarkar says, "After the COVID, the world has completely changed, the customer behaviour, buying pattern everything has altered. If one is not able to adopt the changes and act accordingly, he might be out of the race of the business. In Cygnett, we have a lot of changes in terms of technology, contactless check-in and check-out, QR Code menu. Today, the hygiene standard is of utmost importance, the immunity booster menu, also the health of your employees is important. But what plays a major role is a change in the thought process and approach towards customer experience. Cygnett Group is defined as an aggrandized hospitality company, the hotel room is more than a stay, we not only serve food but we serve experience

along with warmth. Safety assurance is a must at the moment, and after the customer check-out, we at Cygnett stay in touch with them and try and keep a check on their health."

On an expansion mode

Cygnett has grown over the years, its commitment towards bringing the best to the travellers and avail them a plethora of services and outstanding hospitality. Recently, many developments are being taken at Cygnett, Sarbendra Sarkar's versatile approach towards doing business and his strategical approach is the reason behind the expansion of the group. He further mentions, "Many developments are taking place at Cygnett, numerous hotels are being developed and in the span of one year we aim at opening almost 1000 keys. We are opening up in Jaipur, Dehradun, Bewari, Tejpur, Guwahati Airport, VIP Road Kolkata, Dharmashala. We are focused on tier II and III markets, as per me certain tier-II cities have been doing extremely well as compared to metro cities. Cygnett hotel in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, Bongaigaon in Assam, Siliguri, Digha did pretty well during the pandemic after the lockdown was lifted. Metro cities picked up later but the tier II and III cities have been doing appreciable business. Domestic tourism in India has turned out to be a game-changer, and the

moment inbound travel starts, tourism in India will shoot up. Expanding internationally, we are opening up in Thailand, Vietnam, and also aiming to open in Africa."

Adding that extra zing

Sarbendra Sarkar understands the hospitality sector from its core and he also believes that today travellers are looking at experiences. Almost every property of Cygnett has incorporated the local experiences. He shares, "If you are opening a hotel in any leisure destination, you should add that pinch of local experience. In most of our properties, we intend to serve local food to our guests and thus we have incorporated 20 per cent of regional flavours in our menu. Designing of experience before the pandemic and after it, has absolutely changed, say it the service design, standard operating procedure everything has transformed. The traditional way of doing business no longer exists, today, customers are brand oriented even in the case of smaller hotels. It has to be packaged properly, the right product and the right service design with experience keeping the pandemic in concern."

Supporting communities and their experiences

With immense optimism and his ability of understanding consumer demand is impeccable. His personal involvement while choosing the services to be offered in any properties has made Cygnett stand out of the league. "Indian customers are spending on domestic travel and last three months have been good for the domestic market. Promote the destination first and then the hotel. The hotel should brand the experiences that are available in the locality and in the hotel itself. The hotel has to guide its guests on things to do and how could they enjoy the local experiences. The same goes with the business hotel, the Cygnett property in Kolkata doesn't have a Bengali restaurant and if the guest is willing to taste the local cuisine, we suggest them the best hotel in the vicinity and even book a table for them, offering them the best dining experience. In order to bring the best experience to our guests we have tie-up with several tour companies, such as in Assam we have collaborated with a cruise company in order to make their stay hassle-free and yet comfortable," says Sarkar.

“Many developments are taking place at Cygnett, numerous hotels are being developed and in the span of one year they aim at opening almost 1000 keys.”



GAME-CHANGING HOSPITALITY OF ROVE HOTELS

Rove is all geared up to welcome the Rovers (guests) at its two most special newly launched properties. Paul Bridger, Director of Operations, Rove Hotels talks about the Expo 2020 Dubai's only on-site hotel - Rove Expo 2020 and Rove City Walk which is within walking distance of the Coca-Cola Arena, having swung open its doors for the guests.

- Bharti Sharma

Rove is the only hotel at the Expo 2020 Dubai site. What exclusive 'Rove touch' and experiences can the guests expect from the property apart from the convenience of its proximity to Expo?

Rove Hotels properties are always quite distinctive and while they may be different from location to location, they always maintain the brand DNA that makes them recognizable.

What this means at Rove Expo 2020 is that the hotel retains its classic quirky design identity and fuss-free service standard to other Rove locations, in addition with unique facilities like a self-service Laundromat,

co-working spaces, game areas with Play stations, füsball tables and more.

However, this hotel does have a few facilities that can't be found at other Rove properties, adding to the wholesome experience of those visiting the Expo, such as a stunning rooftop pool overlooking Al Wasl dome and the District 2020 lounge that showcases the future of the Expo site post-event through an interactive exhibition. Additionally, the hotel is also home to MENASA, a contemporary Emirati design gallery and several F&B outlets which include a grab and go Rove Café and a bar.

Tell us about the ROVE Citywalk which is the newest addition to Rove's illustrious portfolio.

The newly opened Rove City Walk is our latest property at the heart of Dubai, bringing Rove Hotels' room count in the city to over 3,000. The hotel is located in the trendy City Walk district, just steps away from the Coca Cola Arena, the region's largest indoor entertainment venue, as well as lots of high-street retail shops, fashionable dining spots and more! Rovers are spoilt for choice here with a plethora of options to see and do within walking distance.

Furthermore, the hotel is very

well connected with the rest of the city, putting visitors just a few minutes away from Downtown Dubai, La Mer Beach and Dubai International Airport among other attractions. Rovers can also walk from the hotel to Dubai Metro, one of the most convenient and affordable ways to explore Dubai.

Adding to the distinctiveness of the Rove City Walk is our business model, which allows individual investors the possibility to purchase a room in the hotel and get a share of the overall revenue generated by it. This initiative has been a great success so far and at this stage, most of the hotel rooms' stand sold.



HOTELLIGENCE

Dubai's buoyant hospitality sector has been gearing up to host millions of visitors at World Expo and it is expected that 25% of it will be contributed by the Indian travellers. What will be your key focus to get the maximum out of this market?

India has been and continues to be a key market for the UAE and for Rove Hotels it has been among the top 5 markets across the brand. If the global travel situation allows for it, we would expect it to be among the top markets throughout the Expo period.

In order to reach the Indian audience, our focus has largely been on digital media and social platforms as well as targeted travel agents with a large presence in the Indian market. Historically that has worked out the best for our target audience as well as for the brand.

Additionally, given we are a home-grown brand, locally we have built a very strong brand

presence. Considering the high percentage of Indian residents in UAE, our local brand awareness and reputation helps us generate a lot of bookings from those who need to accommodate family or travellers who have heard from us via their local friends. During the Expo 2020 period, we are expecting a great influx of visitors from across the world and considering Rove Expo 2020 is the only on-site hotel inside Expo 2020, we are sure a lots of travellers will get to discover and experience the brand for the first time, which is great.

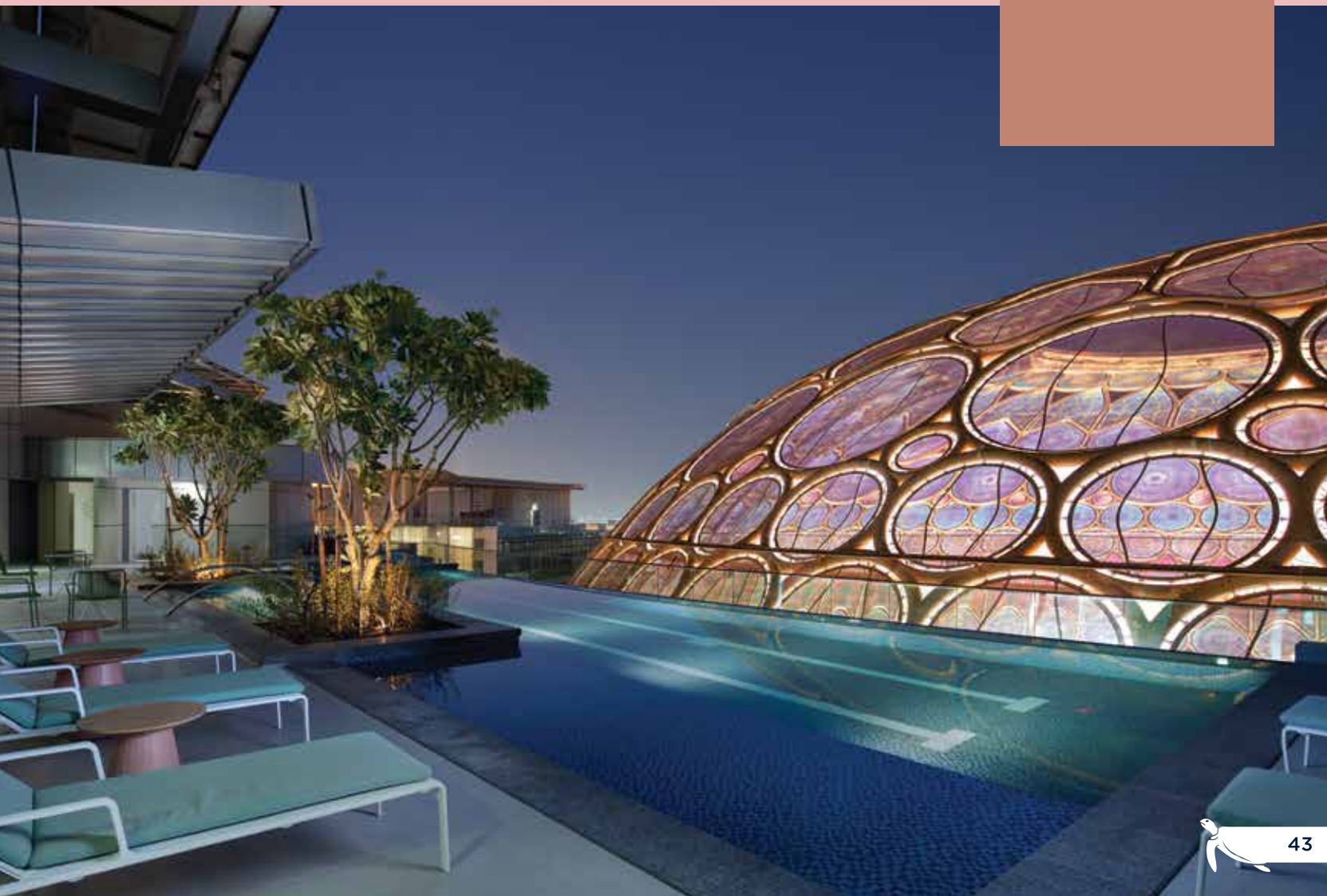
The pandemic has swiftly changed the dynamics of the hospitality sector. With health and safety being the utmost priority, how Rove is currently handling the situation while taking utmost care of the guests.

At Rove Hotels, we are always mindful of the situation by strictly following all the rules and regulations for Covid-19 in

accordance with Dubai Municipality and DTCM's guidelines. Measures include frequent sanitization, social distancing and usage of contactless payment methods among others. Additionally, we are actively communicating these measures to Rovers (guests) in order to ensure full compliance with these safety activities.

The government of Dubai and the UAE have done a great job keeping visitors and residents safe during the pandemic. Proof of that is that the UAE is among the top countries when it comes to vaccination rates and Dubai is also leading the way with the efficiency and frequency of, and ease of access to, Covid-19 testing throughout the Emirate.

All these measures to keep visitors and residents safe have helped reassuring many travellers that Dubai is a safe destination thus maintaining the city's appeal throughout the pandemic.



How do you identify factors that shape up your brand's appeal in terms of the Indian market? How it has fared for you both in terms of business prospects and customer response?

Rove Hotels has always had a wide appeal for the Indian audience across segments, thanks to the quality of offerings provided at a great value. Additionally, Rove's fuss-free approach to hospitality and our central locations in the city fit very well with what Indian travellers are looking for. Some of the Rove Hotels are in areas that are particularly popular with Indian visitors such as Rove Deira City Centre, Rove Healthcare City and Rove At The Park in Dubai Parks and Resorts.

What is the next benchmark you're looking at and in what time frame?

Our next objective is to continue expanding within the UAE and the region. We already have a few hotels announced in Ras Al Khaimah and Sharjah (within the UAE) as well as Saudi Arabia which is very exciting whilst actively looking for opportunities in nearby markets.

These new openings will take our room count to around 5,000 in the next 2-3 years.

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HOTELLIGENCE

IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE NEWEST ERA
OF TROPICAL STYLE AT

Radisson Blu Resort Maldives



Maldives was traditionally all about escapism but not anymore. It's grown into a destination with exceptional experiences. Priyanka Teli, Sales Manager, Radisson Blu Resort Maldives talks to Travel Turtle about the exquisite and esteemed hospitality offerings.

- Bharti Sharma





Priyanka Teli

Maldives has no dearth of resorts, thus to stand out of the lot the Radisson Blu Resort Maldives has come up with distinctive ideas and services that have worked in their favour exceptionally. The resort has crafted some intimate and memorable experiences for its guests that are both unique and bespoke to them. Bestowed with serenity, healthy and spectacular reef, the property provides its guests the most personalised, complete and unforgettable vacation in this island paradise.

The True Blu Hospitality

Radisson Blu, as a part of Radisson Hotel Group, has a strong brand presence in India and sits high on the preference table of the Indian audience. This definitely made the Indian market develop a profound trust and association with the brand name 'Radisson Blu Resort Maldives'. Priyanka expresses, "Although we are located in the

Maldives on a private island, the team here has developed services suitable as per our guest preferences from different countries and cultures that make their stay comfortable and memorable. We call this – the True Blu hospitality."

Enticing the India market

The brand presence has definitely helped them map the property amongst the audience regardless of the pandemic or the ever-increasing competition from new resort developments or existing brands in the destination. The distinguishing features and elements have given their audience factors to relate with the resort and choose the property for their holidays. Sharing such exclusive features, Priyanka tells, "The resort has been widely accepted and admired by our guests coming from India because of the distinctive features and services which include villas with pool, selective vegetarian and Jain

options for those with dietary requirements, etc. Starting room category at the property is an overwater villa with a private pool, which is the most booked villa category by Indian guests. Where in the pandemic world, luxury is refined as space and freedom, Radisson offers room categories starting from 220

sqm sizes. We are located in South Ari Atoll which is renowned for the abundant marine life, spinner dolphins, and presence of whale sharks throughout the year. Many such features and elements have given our audience factors to relate with the resort and develop their interest to book the holiday with us."



The Indo-Maldivian Connect

The Maldives and Indian culture are strongly connected for centuries; you will find traces of Indian culture and taste in the cuisine, local dress code and in many other avenues. "The country has its own charm and captivating cultural element which amuses our guests into exploring the depths of the Maldives culture. The Bodu Beru performances, fishing technique by the locals, island lifestyle on residential island, Divehi language and cooking techniques. We have seen our guests developing a sense of curiosity for the destination, people and culture of the Maldives." tells Priyanka.



Never-done-before experiences

At Radisson Blu Resort Maldives, the team extends great experiences and services to the guests so they engage with the community and leave with a memorable stay etched with regional encounters. She adds, "Every brand must adapt to the surroundings and situation. At the Radisson Blu Resort Maldives, we have understood what guests and smart travellers require today. Value for their money, infinite experiences included in their packages, spacious villas, multiple cuisines and food options, personalised service and most importantly-sincere hospitality. I believe most resorts in the Maldives are doing well, but why has Radisson Blu Maldives developed such popularity in just a year of commencing business? Because

we make sure you feel the difference- we make sure you feel the Maldives."

Maldives, the apple of a traveller's eye

Priyanka feels that travel will be one of the most booming industries contributing too many economies. She further tells, "Maldives will experience demand like never before and not only honeymooners but families, groups, MICE, solo travels, wellness and holistic holidays will throng the destination in huge numbers. You no longer need a reason or celebration to Travel- 2022 will be the year of travel and tourism!"



VTM2021 POWERING IDEAS TO REVIVE INDIA'S OUTBOUND TRAVEL INDUSTRY.



The just-concluded Virtual Travel Mart (VTM) by TravelGyaan witnessed a great number of business meets, buyer-sellers interactions, taking major strides in overcoming the apprehensions Covid-19-induced and bringing back the vitality of tourism in a post-pandemic situation.

The second edition of Virtual Travel Mart (VTM2021) was held on September 15-16. The mart witnessed a potential travel trade buyers and exhibitors. The organizer of the event Nikita Rawtani, Founder, TravelGyaan tells that and VTM2021 provided the perfect playground to stay connected and focused on building strong partnerships which ultimately results in friendships.

Sharing some exciting details, Nikita tells, "VTM2021 not only

provided an opportunity for the Buyers and Sellers to meet, reconnect and network with each other but it also gave an opportunity for the eligible attendees to learn and win prizes. There were 50 Prizes that were won and it was sponsored by TravelGyaan, Switzerland Tourism and Macao Tourism. The highlight was the Gold Coin sponsored by TravelGyaan and the winners were Sameer Shah, Ashmi Dharia and Vinay Aithal. Additionally, Gift Vouchers were given by TravelGyaan and Giveaways from Switzerland and Macao Tourism." Saudi Tourism Board, who was also the official Destination Sponsor at the event felt that Virtual Travel Mart was an opportunity to showcase Saudi to a wide range of tour operators looking for diversified products.

The spokesperson from the board shares, "As we continue to drive awareness of Saudi as a new, exciting leisure tourism destination, our stakeholders and partners were also given a platform to gain a deeper understanding from the travel trade on the requirements of the Indian traveller. VTM was a great opportunity to connect with travel agents and tour operators to explore ways to help more Indian travelers experience the timeless welcome of Saudi." Paramjit Bawa, Country Manager – India, Destination New South Wales asserts, "VTM 2021 has been a good experience for Destination NSW and we're happy with the participation. Nikita and her team have done a great job. It was a good experience, noted good attendance from trade in

terms of booth visits, appointments and presentation attendees."

Arzan Khambatta, – Head, Macao Government Tourism Office- India believes that VTM 2021 provided MGTO a platform to interact with over 200 travel members across India. Sharing further he comments, "It's always a pleasure to associate with Travel Gyaan. I was honoured to be a panelist and exchange ideas on the importance of 'destination weddings' segment, with other experts from the tourism industry."

The official spokesperson from Switzerland Tourism tells that during VTM, Switzerland Tourism along with Swiss Travel System and the Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau have highlighted the different products available for leisure and MICE travellers.

For Atlantis, The Palm, this was the first virtual trade fair, and they feel it was a successful event. Neil Shah, Account Director - Sales, Atlantis, The Palm shares, "We had a good set of pre-scheduled appointments, as also met with travel agents across India with good potential for business. In addition, we loved the fact that there were so many touch-points of engagement for the agents from the virtual photo booth or webinars in the auditorium or the resource library. Not forgetting that the whole platform was efficient and effective in conducting business meetings professionally.



EXPLORING THE WILDERNESS OF NAMIBIA WITH LUKE

Luke is a London based photographer and storyteller, specialising in travel and lifestyle photography and regularly shares his adventures from around the world on his Instagram - @withluke. He spends the majority of his time producing photographic and video content for leading brands across the globe.

- Team TT



What is one adventure you have on your bucket list that you haven't gotten around to doing yet? Where do you want to go?

I would love to visit Eastern Russia, especially the Kamchatka peninsula and the Kuril Islands. This is a region that not many westerners such as myself have visited, and therefore the images and experiences I would capture and see for myself would be quite rare and unique for my audience. The combination of volcanoes and snowy peaks would look amazing, especially using a drone. There is also a lighthouse on a peninsula called Aniva, which is famous for its archaic beauty. I cannot wait to go here one day!





What was the catalyst that drew you to becoming a full-time professional photographer?

I was mostly inspired by creators on Instagram who opened my eyes to the beauty of photography and the world around us. My main inspiration is actually from Konsta Punkka, a wildlife photographer and Mikko Lagerstadt, who shoots Astrophotography. Both of these guys are incredible at what they do, and it inspired me to buy a camera of my own in 2017. Since then it has become my passion to share the beauty of the world to people.



What's been the biggest highlight in your career so far?



Creating a commercial film shot in the Namibian desert. You can find this on my Youtube from mid-october – we spent three weeks in the desert shooting wildlife content, as well as climbing the towering dunes. Most of my favourite images have come from this trip this year, and I still have plenty more to look through and share. I feel very fortunate to be able to travel to this place for work! My second biggest highlight has been to star in a film for Adobe shot in Madeira, this was great to work with such a great company doing what I love and showing people how to edit!



How important is it for a photographer to 'connect' with his subjects to bring out their true self?



I think it's very important to have an understanding of your subject, essentially 'imagine yourself in their shoes' so that you can connect emotionally and then it is a lot easier to capture the essence of the subject. For landscapes, you must view it as a story, capture the moment and try to bring the atmosphere with you into the final image, whether this is through editing or captioning with thoughts and emotions from when you were there.

LA LA LAND

FOSTERING LEGENDS
AND TALES FROM
THE LAND OF TRIBES

The Hornbill Festival

The country of many cultures and faces holds many secret treasures and tales which are still unknown.

- Tripti Jain

- Tripti Jain





India has always been rich and proud of its heritage and diversity, be it the grand experience of the Rajasthan, or the street and coastal array of the southern tip. There are multiple folds to our little country and the people are more than welcome to share the Tales and Legends of the past with everyone. One of the places that immediately make you pack your bags and jump on the wagon is

Nagaland. It's a state which is not only rich in culture and heritage but also fosters some of the oldest tribal cultures on the land. What better than a full-blown festival to celebrate the magnanimity of the state. Nestled in the eastern hills of the country, Nagaland is a small state that is the perfect embodiment of unity in diversity. A celebration that marks the origin and survival of the tribal

culture and traditions. A festival of festivals – the Hornbill Festival is an event that takes place in the last month of the year and is a raging hit for the people who want to explore the tribal history and all the folklore around it.

The idea behind Hornbill Festival is to propagate and promote inter-tribal interaction and also celebrate the backgrounds of all the tribes and exchange roots of

different cultures. Nagaland is the home for some of the oldest tribes that exist with their unique significance and string of rituals and traditions. They celebrate their tribal heritage all year long in different little festivals. The first week of December every year is a whole new experience for the people visiting Nagaland, where all the tribes come together to acknowledge each other's presence and existence.



Delve into the past

The different tribes in Nagaland come together to promote their culture with the utmost respect and essentially feel the importance to grace the festival with their cultural presence. The Hornbill festival is being celebrated for almost 16 years now and every year marks a new beginning and tribute to the tribal culture that is still very much prevalent and is recognized with pride and gusto. What started as a mélange of a cultural exhibit in the year 2000, has now turned into a full-blown festival that unites and welcomes people from all over the world. The festival aims to protect and preserve the Naga culture and the Tribal heritage of the state, which is why the festival sticks close to its roots and brings the various tribes of Nagaland together.

Head to the Hills

The best way to experience the customs and heritage of the people of Nagaland is to visit the Hornbill Festival. Held at Naga Heritage Village, Kisama which is 12km from Kohima, the festival is a frolic and fervour of a ten-day parade of events. Men and women dressed in traditional tribal outfits take you back to the vintage days of cooking meals in the woods. People engaging in dances and exchanging tales of their ancestors over bonfires is something that adds to the wholesome experience of the festival.

The State Tourism and Art & Cultural Department ensures to keep the tourists entertained as well as deemed with all the important customs of the tribal regions. The Music festival is held at Dimapur which is another ride for the visitors. The festival is an extravaganza of cultures and people coming together to witness food, music, dance and traditions in the most wonderful way possible.



Experience the brim of Cultures

Named after the globally respected bird that is displayed in folklore in most of the states, Hornbill curates and caters to people from all walks of the earth. The festival relishes food, handicraft, music and dance at a level that surpasses your expectation levels and blesses you with an experience of a lifetime. The ten-day-long parade of events sports some of the most colourful and intricate dances from the heart of the tribal regions, where the men and women dance to traditional tunes engaging in a repartee of their own. Some games and ceremonies keep everyone engaged and a series of art in the form of paintings, wood carvings and sculptures that will leave you mesmerized. One of the highlights of the festival includes the Traditional Naga Morungs Exhibition, which is the one place where you can splurge on artefacts and souvenirs. You will also be able to spot Naga Wrestling

and Traditional archery at the festival, which makes you want to try hands on it. Apart from the dance routines, music that is never heard, Art stalls, herbal medicine stalls, beauty contests, the festival houses some of the scrumptious and lip-smacking dishes. Prepared with traditional recipes and the spices of the east, the food stalls at the festival are to die for and will make your taste buds come for more.

A day missed is an opportunity gone!

So, for all the historians and travellers looking for some tribal interaction and diversified traditions, don't even give it a thought and pack your bags now. The experience at Hornbill is of a lifetime experience, which compared to any other excursion is a boon. Nagaland being the land of the tribes, will give the perfect tour to the past, present and future of our existence and also take you on a journey that is so refreshing and joyful.



OTOAI hosts a physical Members Meet and virtual 9th AGM



The Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) recently hosted a physical Members Meet inviting its own members, stalwarts from the travel trade, NTOs, media and more for networking at the Shangri La, New Delhi. Hosting a physical event after a gap of 20 months, the association garnered a warm response as many people came forward to meet and greet during the event. Riaz Munshi, President, OTOAI, addressing the gathering said, "The worst, my friends, is over and I thank you all profusely for your support to OTOAI. Personally, I am quite bullish on Indian market as I see India as one of the leading outbound markets of the world. I am confident that our market will soon touch 100 million travellers and the main reason for that is the huge underlying demand for travel as people of all age groups, from seven to 75, are simply waiting to undertake a holiday soon. So, the game is about to begin and we must all prepare ourselves to put our best foot forward – be innovative and step ahead of your clients to tap this surge, as and when it will happen. There is a huge potential and big opportunity ahead for all of us to encash and year 2022 can be life changing for many in the business. Let us support each other and grow together."



Carrot Holidays organises a familiarisation trip to Ladakh

Carrot Holidays, the sister company of Cruise Carrot recently organised a familiarisation trip to Ladakh. The familiarisation trip was organised to educate the travel agents from pan India on the various tourism products available in the beautiful land. Travel agents and operators

from pan India were hosted by Carrot Holidays and the itinerary was exclusively designed which covered the enchanting beauty of Ladakh. Carrot Holidays is also venturing into Kathmandu and soon will be coming up with various tourism products.



India Tourism Delhi along with India Food Tourism ORG organises 'Old Delhi Food and Photo Walk - Explore the Unexplored'

India Tourism Delhi, Ministry of Tourism along with India Food Tourism ORG organised the 'Old Delhi Food and Photo Walk - Explore the Unexplored' on September 26, 2021. The walk was attended by Ministry of Tourism officials, senior members of the travel trade fraternity and friends from the media and importantly members of Tejas Jyotirmaya - the all ladies group travelling all across india to visit Holi Jyotirlingam. The Regional Director North, India Tourism Delhi, Ministry of Tourism said, "Old Delhi has a rich tradition of authentic Indian cuisine which is still unexplored. This walk is an effort to explore these lesser known food traditions. Besides these historical bylanes of Old Delhi are filled with architectural wonders and we encourage people to come and experience all that Old Delhi has to offer." The

walk has been curated by well known Chef, Rajeev Goyal through wonderful storytelling about Food and culture, Chef Goyal explained about India's rich food traditions and cuisines which have been with us through generations. He took the group through the mesmerizing lanes of Sita Ram Bazaar, Chawri Bazaar and other nearby places where the guests had the chance to taste the mouthwatering dishes from authentic Old Delhi eateries such as Jamun Kulfi, Halwa Nagori and Bedmi Aloo Sabji to name a few. The guests also had the opportunity to take photographs of the wonderful architecture of Old Delhi houses. The Incredible India to Edible India - Food Tour was joined by Hon'ble Shri Sunil B Mendhe, MP (Lok Sabha) & Member - Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism & Culture.



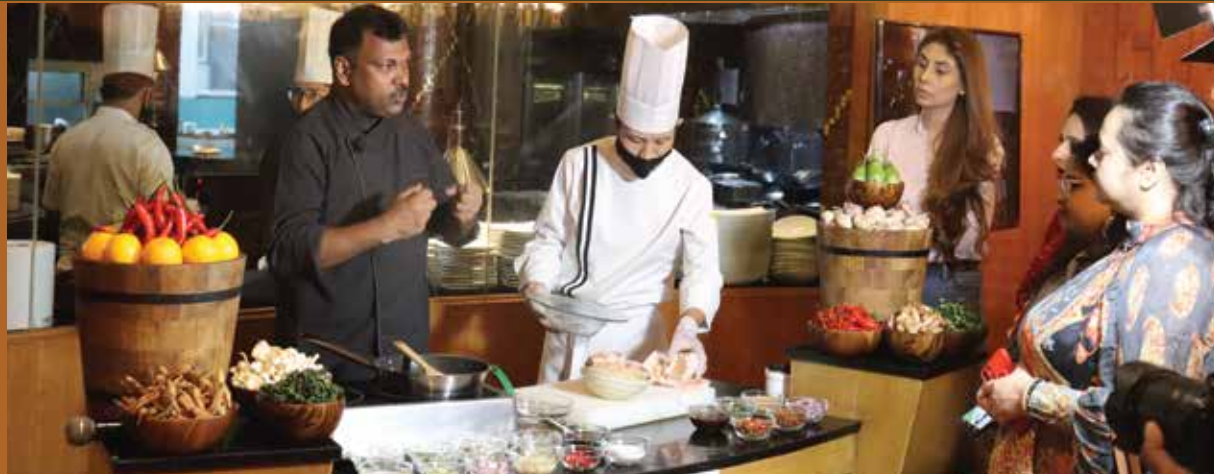
Yorker Holidays conducted a fam trip to Maldives

Yorker Holidays along with its partner Angsena Resort & Spa, Velavaru organise a familiarisation trip to Maldives. The agents from pan India were hosted with an intention to offer them the first-hand experience of Angsena Resort & Spa, Velavaru and make them familiar with the services the property has to offer. The trip also extended an opportunity to the agents and operators with destination knowledge.

TAT New Delhi hosts Amazing Thailand Media Networking Lunch in New Delhi

Thailand is considered a 'paradise' not only for its breathtaking beauty and inspiring culture but also for its culinary brilliance. Uniquely crafted to appeal to all tastes, Thai food combines the best of flavours, textures, colours, and presentation. Add this to the country's wealth of ancient cooking secrets and Thai hospitality that offers an enriching and memorable dining experience.

With this in mind and to reconnect with the media and update them on the tourism situation in Thailand, Tourism Authority of Thailand Delhi office organized The Amazing Thailand Media Networking Lunch on September 22, 2021 at Soy Neung Roi Thai restaurant at Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport hotel. The afternoon started with a Thai cookery theater & cooking class by Soy Neung Roi Executive Chef Mr Sreenivasan, followed by a delicious Thai food lunch.



UNWTO Secretary General inaugurates the IIHM Global Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Research

On the occasion of the World Tourism Day 2021, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) Secretary-General Mr Zurab Pololikashvili officially inaugurated the International Institute of Hotel Management (IIHM) Global Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Research. Mr Pololikashvili, who was the Chief Guest of the inauguration celebrations, commended the

efforts and initiatives of IIHM to connect the youth of India and the world through tourism and hospitality education. In his address to IIHM, the UNWTO Secretary-General said, "On World Tourism Day, UNWTO is proud to stand with IIHM and I am honoured to officially inaugurate the IIHM Global Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Research on this historic occasion." He further

added, "International Institute of Hotel Management has emerged as a true leader in the Tourism sector. IIHM connects India's talented youth to the wider sector and the world. Furthermore, the IIHM Global Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Research is a forum that will enhance this unique relationship between Hospitality education and employers."

In response to the Secretary-General's address, IIHM's Chairman and Chief Mentor Dr Suborno Bose said, "IIHM is deeply honoured and humbled by the recognition and affirmation of our role by the UNWTO. This will only strengthen our resolve and that of our partners to champion the cause of Hospitality and Tourism across the world."



TTF Ahmedabad witnesses full-house participation from 21 States

The signs are clear that the travel and tourism industry is reopening cautiously, yet confidently. The Central and State Governments are doubling up measures to endorse and further boost the strong pent-up domestic leisure travel demand.

TTF Ahmedabad, the largest show of the TTF series travel trade show in the country, is returning for its second edition in 2021 in the vibrant travel market of Gujarat. The event sees participation from a large number of States and good private participation from Pan India, confirming the resolve of the travel and tourism industry to make a comeback, with cautious confidence. The show brings together under one roof the best of the travel industry from all over India, for reviving and restarting tourism in India.

Shri Jenu Devan, Managing Director of Gujarat Tourism said at the inauguration of the show, "We are happy that travel and tourism is preparing for a cautious restart. TTF is a significant step in that direction." Gujarat is being showcased as the Host State, with one of the largest pavilions at the TTF.

More than 240 exhibitors and representatives from 21 states are participating at TTF Ahmedabad, from 23-25 September at The Forum Convention, Club O7.

"We are extremely happy to see such a large number of States and private companies gathering to revive travel together in the important travel market of Gujarat", said



Sanjiv Agarwal, Chairman & CEO, Fairfest Media, the organisers of TTF - the oldest and largest travel tradeshow network in India. "Reviving travel on which the livelihoods of a huge number of people squarely depend is an important step towards economic recovery. We are happy to have received wholehearted support from the entire industry for a show of this stature to take place again"; he added.

Gujarat is the Host State of the event and has as usual lent all the support for the event. Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh are the Partner States. Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Puducherry, Punjab and Tripura have joined the show as Feature States, alongside key private players from DMCS, hospitality sector, aviation and others. India Tourism will also

be present in a big way at the show.

Besides travel trade visitors from Ahmedabad and its neighbourhood, TTF is also expecting a significant number of travel stakeholders from important proximity markets such as Rajkot, Vadodara, Gandhinagar, Anand, Nadiad, Navsari, Bharuch, Valsad, Vapi, Daman, Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, Junagadh, Dwarka, Samanath, Morbi, Mehsana, Patan, Palanpur, Kadi, Kalol to attend and conduct business with the exhibitors.

TTF Ahmedabad is one of the biggest travel trade shows to be hosted physically in the financial year 2021-22. It was followed by TTF Mumbai on 29th, 30th September & 1st October. The shows mark the return of physical trade shows in India's top travel markets, signalling a strong sentiment of the tourism industry that has had such a rough patch, to

come back to some sense of normalcy in the near future.

The Government of India has given a fresh push to reviving domestic tourism under its Dekho Apna Desh initiative and TTF Ahmedabad promises to add to the country-wide efforts in reviving tourism. The Ministry has also revised its Market Development Assistance (MDA) scheme to incentivize and upskill the domestic travel trade fraternity. One of the biggest draws of the MDA happens to be the financial incentives chalked out for travel agents, tour operators as well as state tourism boards for participating in trade fairs.

TTF Ahmedabad has the active support of travel associations like OTOAI, TAAI, TAFI, ADTOI, IATO, SKAL, IAAI, NIMA, ETAA, SATA, TOSG, GTAA, TLC, TAG, SGTCA, TAAS, ATAA, VTAA, RAAG, ABTO, IATTE.



APPOINTMENTS



Novotel Chennai SIPCOT

Gopinath John Surendranath has been appointed as the Operations Manager at Novotel Chennai SIPCOT. A seasoned professional in the hospitality industry, John comes with over 18 years of experience across India and abroad. He has been with Accor for over ten years, and has grown up the ranks, starting as a Duty Manager at Novotel Ibis ORR Bengaluru. John will lead operations at Novotel Chennai SIPCOT and work towards strengthening its leadership positioning within the highly competitive bi-leisure market in Chennai.

John comes with vast experience in managing operations of multiple magnitudes. In his last assignment, he was heading the Rooms Division Operations for the Novotel Hyderabad Convention Center. He began his journey in the hospitality industry with Ansagna Oasis Resort in Bengaluru in 2005.

Ramada by Wyndham, Dehradun

Ramada by Wyndham, Dehradun announced the appointment of Ashish Saxena as General Manager. A graduate of IHM Bhopal, experience of more than 18 years in hospitality operations, Ashish has been associated with some of the leading brands including IHG Hotels & Resorts, Hyatt Hotels, Oberoi Hotels & Resorts, Radisson, Harrys International Pte Ltd Singapore, The Lalit. In his last role, he was heading Food & Beverage operations at Holiday Inn New Delhi Mayur Vihar and has contributed towards creating milestone achievements for all the organizations.

As a General Manager, Ashish will oversee the strategies, financial performance and overall operations of the property. He aims to live by the brand's positioning by offering memorable stays to travellers, great dining & guests experience and for sure keeping the hygiene measures as one of the top priority.



The Leela Palace Bengaluru

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts, announced the appointment of Madhav Sehgal as the General Manager of The Leela Palace Bengaluru. In his role, Madhav will lead the operations of The Leela Palace Bengaluru, and work towards strengthening its leadership positioning within this highly competitive luxury market.

Madhav is an accomplished hotelier and brings with him over two decades of diverse hospitality experience having worked across markets like India, UAE, and Canada. His multi-property operational experience, leadership skills and comprehensive understanding of the business are distinguishing facets of his career. With innovative and proactive strategic planning and strong interpersonal and people skills, he is focused on ensuring stellar standards of guest service which are synonymous with The Leela brand are benchmarked and maintained.

Eros Hotel New Delhi Nehru Place

Eros Hotel New Delhi Nehru Place has announced the appointment of Abhishek Prabhakar as Associate Director of Sales – Leisure. Abhishek will play a pivotal role in strategically aligning and leading the business development goals in Travel Trade.

Abhishek comes with a rich experience of 10 years in the hospitality industry. During his tenure, he has worked with brands like Taj Hotels & Resorts, Hilton Worldwide, Grand Hyatt Mumbai & Roseate Hotels & Resorts. He has also been a part of pre-opening assignments, regional sales and pan India sales.

In his new role, Abhishek will be responsible for uplifting the segment and generating new business opportunities in Tier 2 and 3 cities.





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