

TRAVEL turtle

www.travelturtle.world

Atlantis, The Palm

An archipelago of haven

- + MORE THAN SUN, SAND AND SEA
- + THE 'UP'COMING AIRPORT IN NOIDA
- + KARMA GROUP, THE SENSATIONAL HOSPITALITY BLOCKBUSTER

MAKE WAY FOR
EXPERIENTIAL

MADHYA PRADESH





The Reassurance of 5-Star COVID-19 Safety, On the Ground or in the Air

Proudly awarded the Skytrax 5-Star COVID-19 Airline Safety Rating and Skytrax 5-Star COVID-19 Lounge Safety Rating to keep you safe throughout your journey with innovative, industry-leading health and safety measures.

Fly confidently, fly Oman Air



CONRAD
PUNE

BOOK DIRECT
FOR EXCLUSIVE ROOM PACKAGES!



GREAT SMALL BREAKS

Starting at **INR 12,500** + taxes


All meals | Airport transfers | Complimentary stay & meals for two kids (upto 12 yrs) | Kids amenities | Flexible check-in & check-out | 20% discount on food, soft beverages & laundry

CONRAD STAYCATION

Starting at **INR 10,500** + taxes

25% discount on food & soft beverages | 20% discount on connecting rooms | Flexible checkout

For more information, call ☎ **+91 7770017244**



Editor's Letter

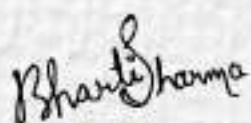
The recent graphical curves have brought as much visual relief this year as the one illustrating India's steep fall in Covid-19 cases. We shut down our worlds and retreated to the safety of home isolation, again! Longing to break free after the lockdown, people across India are heading to domestic tourism hotspots in their droves. Latest news and photos of tourists thronging Manali and other hill stations are going viral, coining the term 'revenge travelling'.

This has been an interesting month for the tourism sector as for the first time in 1.5 years, the sector got mentioned in the relief package by the Finance ministry, the industry expressed their distress saying, it's "too late and too little". Travel has restarted and with vaccination drive in full swing, vaccine passports will certainly help streamline travel by putting information within easy reach. July Issue of Travel Turtle will discuss the fundamentals and its exciting history. The magnificent travel destinations are set to captivate the travel connoisseurs; we sat in our off-roader and went on an experiential journey to Madhya Pradesh. The cuisines, architecture and laid-back lifestyle seem to have accompanied us to Seychelles.


As the experts have made legit statements of how inevitable the third wave is, the travel industry should prepare itself for a journey lined with 'lockdown rumbles.' There is still a long way for a smooth ride but yes, we've certainly set it in motion. With perceived chaos all around, calibrated travelling is more essential than ever.

We sincerely trust that you will have as much pleasure reading this edition of Travel Turtle as we enjoyed compiling this for you, our dear readers. Happy Reading!

Do share your thoughts and suggestions post-reading, please write to us at bharti@travelturtle.world.



Bharti Sharma
Editor

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

Travel Turtle Team

Publisher: **Harish Chandra Uniyal**

Editor: **Bharti Sharma**

Executive Director: **Sudipta Saha**

Feature Writer: **Tripti Jain**

Contributor Editor: **Saloni Bhatia**

Consulting Writer: **Shrinidhi Hande**

Art Director: **Pankti Anjaria**

Legal Consultant: **Aditya Singh**

Photographer: **Abhishek**

Group Publications:



All information in Travel Turtle is derived from sources we consider reliable. It is passed on to our readers without any responsibility on our part. Opinions/views expressed by third parties in abstract or in interviews are not necessarily shared by us. Material appearing in the magazine cannot be reproduced in whole or in part(s) without prior permission. The publisher assumes no responsibility for material lost or damaged in transit. The publisher reserves the right to refuse, withdraw, or otherwise deal with all advertisements without explanation. All advertisements must comply with the Indian Advertisements Code. The publisher will not be liable for any loss caused by any delay in publication, error or failure of advertisement to appear.

Printed and Published by Prachi Dwivedi on behalf of Trouvaille Media and Communications Private Limited. Printed at Printland Digital Pvt. Ltd., B-53, Okhla Phase 1, New Delhi-110020 and published from D-182, Khasra no. 33, Freedom Fighter Enclave, South Delhi, Delhi- 110074. Editor: Bharti Sharma



BAGLIONI
RESORT
MALDIVES

PARADISE WITH ITALIAN GRACE

**Maldives Indulgence Package Up to 40% off
+
Complimentary meal upgrade to Half Board.**

Contact us at reservations.maldives@baglionihotels.com or +960 9442108
or your preferred Tour operator of Maldives to know more.

Offer Subject to Terms & Conditions and can be changed anytime without prior notice



Seychelles

MORE THAN
SUN, SAND AND SEA

12-15 VACCINE PASSPORT

THE PANDEMIC'S
UNSOLICITED GIFT
TO TRAVELLERS

34-37 AMSTERDAM

ROAM, RAVE AND
LET LOOSE YOUR
INNER BAGPACKER!

38-40 NOIDA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

THE 'UP'COMING
AIRPORT

46-49 ATLANTIS, THE PALM

AN ARCHIPELAGO
OF HAVEN





LET US SURPRISE YOU ON YOUR WEDDING DAY!

CREATE BEAUTIFUL MEMORIES

WITH US

AS WE MANAGE EVERYTHING WITH
PASSION & LOVE FOR YOU

#SHAADI@HICHpanchkula
FOR ENQUIRIES: +91 8699086106

T&C APPLY



100 per cent of hotels in Qatar are now Qatar Clean certified

Qatar National Tourism Council (QNTC) marks a milestone in its Qatar Clean programme, with 100 per cent of QNTC-licensed hotels now 'Qatar Clean' certified. Launched in partnership with the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) in June 2020, QNTC's Qatar Clean programme ensures the highest standards in hygiene and cleanliness, with rigorous procedures in place to ensure the safety of customers. QNTC's Secretary General, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker as well as COO Berthold Trenkel marked the anniversary with a visit to the W Doha, which was the first hotel to be certified Qatar Clean. With 100 per cent hotels now fully certified, the programme is now being expanded to restaurants, and can be rolled out to other sectors including transport, retail and culture.

TBO Group acquires Gemini Tours & Travels a leading consolidator for Maldives in the Indian Market

With its first successful buy out in 2019; Island Hopper already has over 21 per cent share of Indian travel market to Maldives as a destination. Gemini Tours & Travels, headquartered out of Bangalore, shall merge with Island Hopper which will help Island Hopper expand its presences not only in the South India region but also consolidate its position as a market leader with no one in close hindsight. This move can be orchestrated as, the biggest consolidator, Island Hopper buying out the 2nd best in the market.

Ankush Nijhawan, Co-Founder, TBO Group, said "Gemini merger will help Island Hopper further expand its presence in South India Market and consolidate its numero uno position as an Island Specialist even further. This acquisition would also help in providing our customers more hotel options especially in the luxury segment in Maldives. Subbaram Mani and Raji Subbaram are one of the pioneers promoting Maldives as a destination. They also have a great respect amongst the hotel partners in Maldives,

which would further help Island Hopper deliver a better customer experience for its clients. Subbaram and Raji Subbaram will continue to work with Island Hopper heading its South India Business and operations for Island Hopper. Post a successful merger of Island Hopper with TBO Group, Island Hopper business has already grown more than 100 per cent year on year for Island Destinations despite troubled Covid times and have been top supplier for most resorts across Maldives."

Mr. Subbaram Mani, Founder Gemini Tours & Travels added, "Gemini and Maldives has always been our first love and to see where Gemini is today after 20 years of love, hard work and sweat is very comforting and gives a great level of satisfaction. TBO is one of the fastest-growing companies not only in India but worldwide. It gives us immense pleasure to be part of this 2 Billion USD multinational company and are looking forward to making our contribution towards the growth of TBO Group."



Ankush Nijhawan
Co-Founder, TBO Group





GNTB presents digital trends in tourism at Knowledge Days 2021

The German National Tourist Board (GNTB) is focusing its Knowledge Days 2021 on how digital transformation is shaping the present and future of international tourism. On June 23 and 24, high-profile guest speakers and GNTB experts will present current trends and technological innovations, future scenarios and the practical application of digital tools for its members and sponsors.

Petra Hedorfer, Chairwoman of the GNTB's Executive Board

says, "We see leadership in the digital transformation as an opportunity for future challenges. Together with our partners in German tourism, we want to discuss current trends during the Knowledge Days that we believe will shape incoming tourism in the post-corona phase. In this way, we provide practical support to our members and strengthen the position of Destination Germany in the increasingly fierce international competition among destinations."

Got your jab? With 6E, there is a discount for you to grab

In order to support the government-led mass vaccination programme, IndiGo, India's leading carrier, has launched a special discount on IndiGo flights for vaccinated customers from June 23, 2021. The customers who have been

administered either one or both the COVID-19 vaccine doses, can avail a discount of up to 10 per cent on the base fare while booking. IndiGo is the first airline to roll out this offer in India.

Mr. Sanjay Kumar, Chief Strategy & Revenue Officer, IndiGo said,

"Being the largest airline in the country, we feel it is our responsibility to contribute to the national vaccination drive, by encouraging more people towards this common goal. This offer will not only strengthen their resolve towards

vaccination, but also ensure that they can travel safely at affordable fares with IndiGo. We are committed to offer an on-time, hassle-free travel experience to our customers, on-board our lean, clean flying machine"



THIS IS WHERE PRAYERS ARE ANSWERED,
AND BLESSINGS SHOWERED

Full of bliss. Full of life.

Golden Temple, Amritsar

The holiest temple of the Sikh religion, Sri Harmandir Sahib Gurudwara, or the Golden Temple, is one of India's greatest attractions and spiritual hub. Devotees across the world come to take a dip in the holy Amrit sarovar, surrounding the magnificent Gurudwara Sahib, to purify their souls and feel the divinity around them.

Punjab is known for many sacred gurudwaras and other religious places. And for its culture, nature, traditions, food, festivals, faiths and above all warm, loving people full of life. Come visit Punjab to experience life like never before.

 Nearest Railway Station - Amritsar Junction (2.3 km)



Nearest Airport - Amritsar Airport - (13 km)



Distance from New Delhi by Road - 465 km



FOLLOW US AT:



[/tourismboardpunjab](https://www.facebook.com/tourismboardpunjab)



[@Tourism_Punjab](https://twitter.com/Tourism_Punjab)



[@Punjabtourismofficial](https://www.instagram.com/Punjabtourismofficial)



[/ThePunjabTourism](https://www.youtube.com/ThePunjabTourism)



THE PANDEMIC'S UNSOLICITED GIFT TO TRAVELLERS, VACCINE PASSPORT



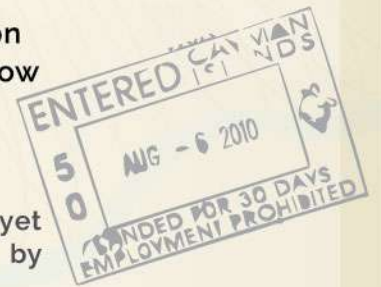
The pace of vaccination has helped in easing the freeze on passenger movement across international borders. But, how will a vaccine passport work? Let's find out!

- Bharti Sharma

The word 'Passport' has some level of exhilaration attached to it, predominantly because it's a mandatory travel document needed to travel to our favourite destinations. In biblical history, a passport-like document Nehemiah was used during the reign of King Artaxerxes, which set the foundation for its future utilisation. The concept of passport wasn't new-fangled but it kept evolving over time. A newly minted passport is an identity of an immigrant which tells their country of origin and keeps a track of their travel. Now, keeping aside the legit passports we're all used to, we are here to decode the newest passport variant in the spotlight at the moment; the

'Vaccine Passport' which is yet another giving to mankind by the COVID-19 virus.

The announcement of the vaccine was like luminescence at the end of a tunnel; a silver lining raising our hopes and expectations towards a post-covid world order. As the world geared up to fight the pandemic with the onset of the global vaccination drives, there's a hope that some aspects of life would return to normalcy. Looking at the unpredictable future, it is safer to say that though the journey is long and not without hurdles but with population getting vaccinated in large numbers, it's definitely a start towards achieving victory.



W/JOHN/DOE/JD1234567/W/JD0000000000

JD0000000000



Stamped!

We all had a vague idea of how travel is going to transform with the pandemic, a lot of travel experts spoke about the need for a vaccine passport and its significance. The need for a digital record indicating if you have been inoculated in order to enable safe travel fulfilling the rules being put into place by various nations. Vaccine passport is fast becoming a requirement for people who wish to start travelling again as this is now your armour against the virus.

life and for reducing anxiety for those you come into contact with on airplanes or in theatres, restaurants, or public stadiums. They are a small sacrifice for the greater good. I feel, if we have the right system and infrastructure in place to issue these vaccinated passports then it would help the industry overall," Cholada Siddhivarn, Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand- Mumbai office.

Customs and checkpoints

The industry which has been particularly hard-hit by the virus needs to get back on its feet and soon. A vaccine passport will be required to enable seamless border crossing and the synchronisation of varying national laws. It is evident that the pace of vaccination will help to ease passenger movement across international borders. Destinations reliant on tourism are also keen for vaccine passports to be introduced. Every country opening to tourism now has a guideline that only allows vaccinated travellers to enter the nation. "Given the current scenario, I feel vaccination passports are a minimal cost for returning to normal daily

**Berthold
Trenkel**

Flipping Pages

In 1897, when Waldemar Haffkine, developed a vaccine for plague, proof of vaccination was mandatory for a section of the working community to travel. Similarly, when the smallpox vaccine was developed, South Asians were not allowed to board ships to Aden or Great Britain, or Mecca for the Hajj, without government-issued smallpox vaccination certificates. Vaccine certification checks came under the International Sanitary Regulations adopted in 1951 by WHO member states, which was replaced by and renamed as the International Health Regulations in 1969.



W/JOHN/DOE/JD1234567/W/JD0000000000

J D 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Breaking Barriers and diluting frontiers

Covid immunisation health records is a need of the that we can begin welcoming
 certificates, Vaccine hour. "The idea of vaccination visitors back to our incredible
 Certificates, travel passes, etc. passports has been discussed destinations. In the meantime,
 are some other titles being by many Governments and Qatar Airways is heavily
 given to the vaccine passport industries across the world. It involved with IATA in the IATA
 as there are no global is a complex topic, which Travel Pass initiative, which is
 guidelines set as such. This involves the alignment of trying to address this topic.
 train of vaccine passport has many international governing And of course, QNTC is a
 already left the station, the bodies, but any steps that can member of UNWTO, which is
 population is getting give confidence to both also pushing for digital
 immunized and now preparing Governments and passengers solutions in this space."
 to travel. Thus, a certificate for will be helpful. We are Berthold Trenkel, Chief
 COVID-19 smart app linked to a hopeful that these entities can Operating Officer of Qatar
 central database or electronic reach an agreement soon so National Tourism Council.

Edward Jenner (1749-1823) performs his first vaccination against smallpox on James Phipps, a boy of eight.



On an itinerary of HOPE



Cholada Siddhivarn

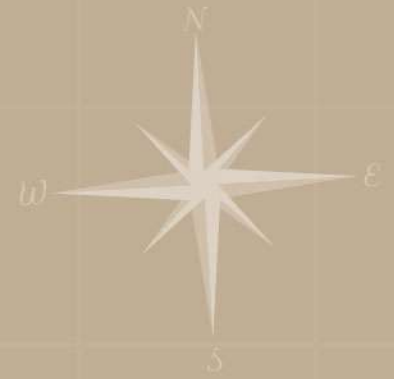
Berthold believes that the concept of digital vaccination certificates is a great idea but technology only works with standardization. "Luckily more and more countries are embracing technology and standards – like the recent move of the EU to agree on a digital green certificate; a welcome news for everyone as it facilitates smoother processes when crossing borders. A bit like biometric passports that are

machine-readable with NFC chips. Most of us have probably already forgotten about the high-end tech in our existing passports while enjoying the convenience of e-gates. With a bit more time – we'll enjoy the same convenience when it relates to PCR test results and vaccination records. We need the world to have confidence in travelling again so we're working closely with the relevant parties to agree on a

framework and guidelines as quickly as possible."

Qatar continues with its successful vaccination programme that has seen 70 per cent of the eligible population vaccinated with at least one inoculation – putting Qatar in the top 10 vaccinated countries with more than one million residents. And our Ministry of Interior together with the Ministry of Public Health is working on electronic records – both for vaccination certificates and for PCR test results.

"Pandemic has changed the way one would travel. Hygiene and Safety will be of top-most importance followed by experience. Countries now need to ensure that they communicate about all the protocol a destination follows to ensure fearless travel as that will be the main attraction once the borders open," mentions Cholada. If the world is to have confidence in travelling again, it's imperative that relevant parties work closely and agree on a framework and guidelines as quickly as possible.

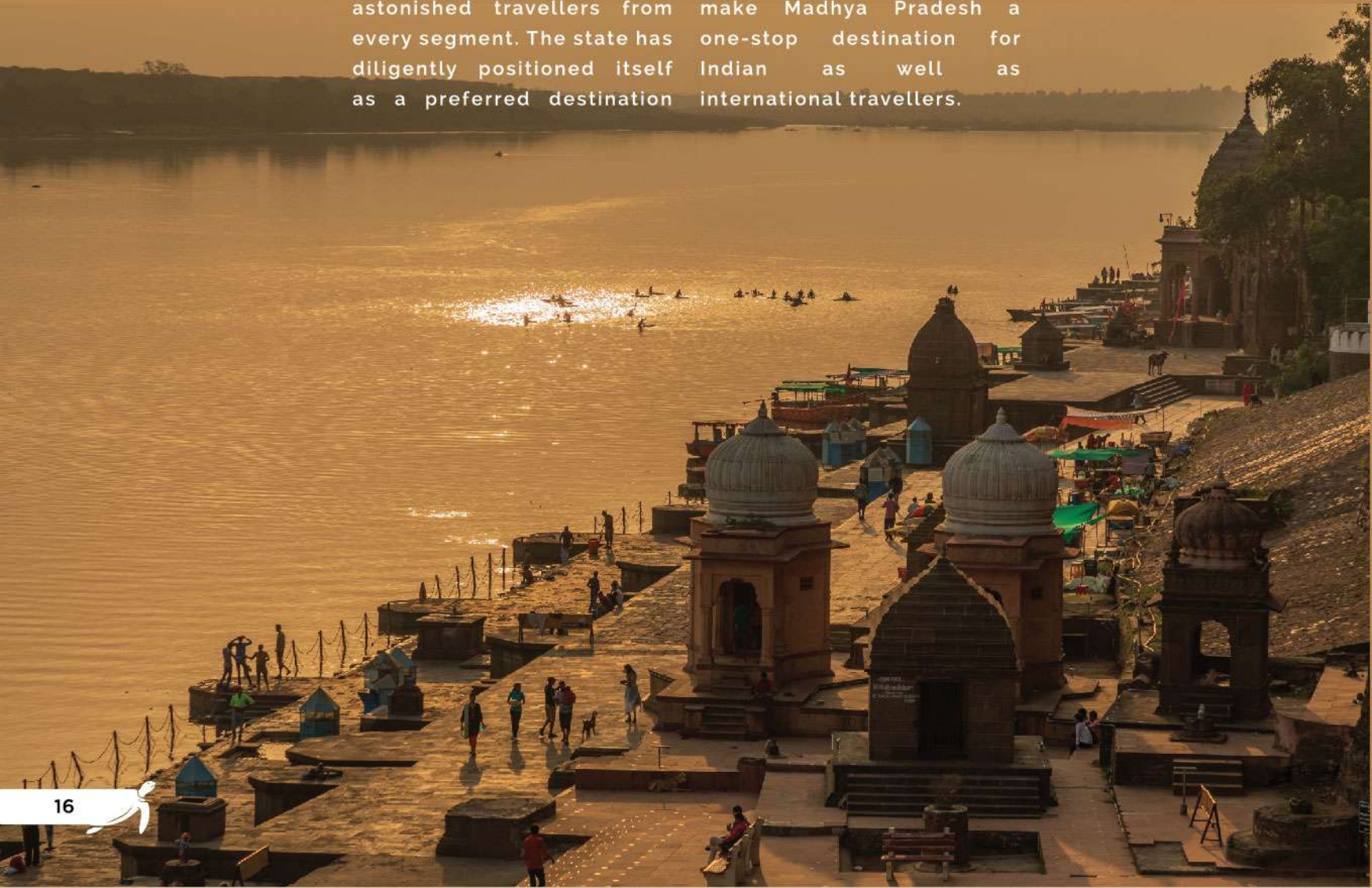


Make way for experiential Madhya Pradesh

The landscape engulfed with spectacular topography, opulent forts, invigorating wildlife, and century-old caves and temples, Madhya Pradesh has thousands hues to satiate travellers thrust looking for experiences.

- Sudipta Saha

If you have an appetite for experiences then Madhya Pradesh is the perfect treat to satisfy your quench. Madhya Pradesh has always positioned itself uniquely; the creative approach inherited by the state has astonished travellers from every segment. The state has diligently positioned itself as a preferred destination offering an array of experiences catching up with the latest travel trends. The magnificent heritage sites and their history, enlightening culture and its rich art forms along with the thrilling jungle experience make Madhya Pradesh a one-stop destination for Indian as well as international travellers.



Let the exploration begin.

Whether you are a travel enthusiast or someone who admires arts and architecture, or someone who wants to explore wildlife, Madhya Pradesh is the answer to your quest. A perfect blend of experiences, Madhya Pradesh is an amalgamation of thrill and serenity. Madhya Pradesh is home to six tiger reserves which makes it an apt destination for wildlife enthusiasts, go for an adventurous safari and enjoy animal sightings. From the mystic jungles to the free-flowing river, Madhya Pradesh entertains all segments of travellers. Adventure junkies can choose from the thrilling river rafting in Orchha, parasailing and paragliding in Panchmarhi, trekking in Kalakund Forest in Indore. The Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board has been aggressively promoting the hidden treasures of the state. Their innovative creative ideas have always put them at the forefront. Talking about such extraordinary experiences, Shri Sheo Shekhar Shukla, Principal Secretary, Tourism & Managing Director, Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, says, "Madhya Pradesh is rich of natural resources having forest, hills, rivers, and water bodies. It gives ample opportunities for adventure tourism, water tourism,

wildlife tourism for the tourist. Culturally whole State could be divided into six cultural zones i.e., Bundelkhand, Baghelkhand, Mahakaushal, Nimad, Chambal and Malwa. Each cultural zone is having its own culture, local foods, games which can provide different experiences to the visitors."



Shri Sheo Shekhar Shukla

Shri Sheo Shekhar further mentions, "To give different experiences to its visitors as well as to preserve and promote the local culture and natural resources the MPTB has started Madhya Pradesh Responsible Tourism Mission. The mission is comprising different projects i.e. Rural Tourism, Tribal Tourism, Responsible Souvenir development (Art & Craft), Agri-tourism, Astro Park, Accessibility Audit & awareness program to facilitate especially abled tourist etc."

Make yourself comfortable

The aura of Madhya Pradesh is different; apart from the tourist attractions

in the state, it houses some of the amazing hotels and resorts which is an experience in itself. The heritage properties such as Noor-Us-Sabah Palace, Ahilya Fort Heritage Hotel, Jehan Numa Palace Hotel, (to name a few) offer a royal stay in the land of Madhya Pradesh. Many luxury brands have also forayed into the market and are committed to offering a comfortable and luxurious stay. Gaurav Rege, General Manager, Jehan Numa Palace adds, "Reputed hotel brands opening up their units in MP will only boost the overall quality of services a guest receives. Each local hotel unit has its own uniqueness, which its owners are well aware of. Focussing on those strengths will only make such units better and preferred amongst travellers."



Gaurav Rege

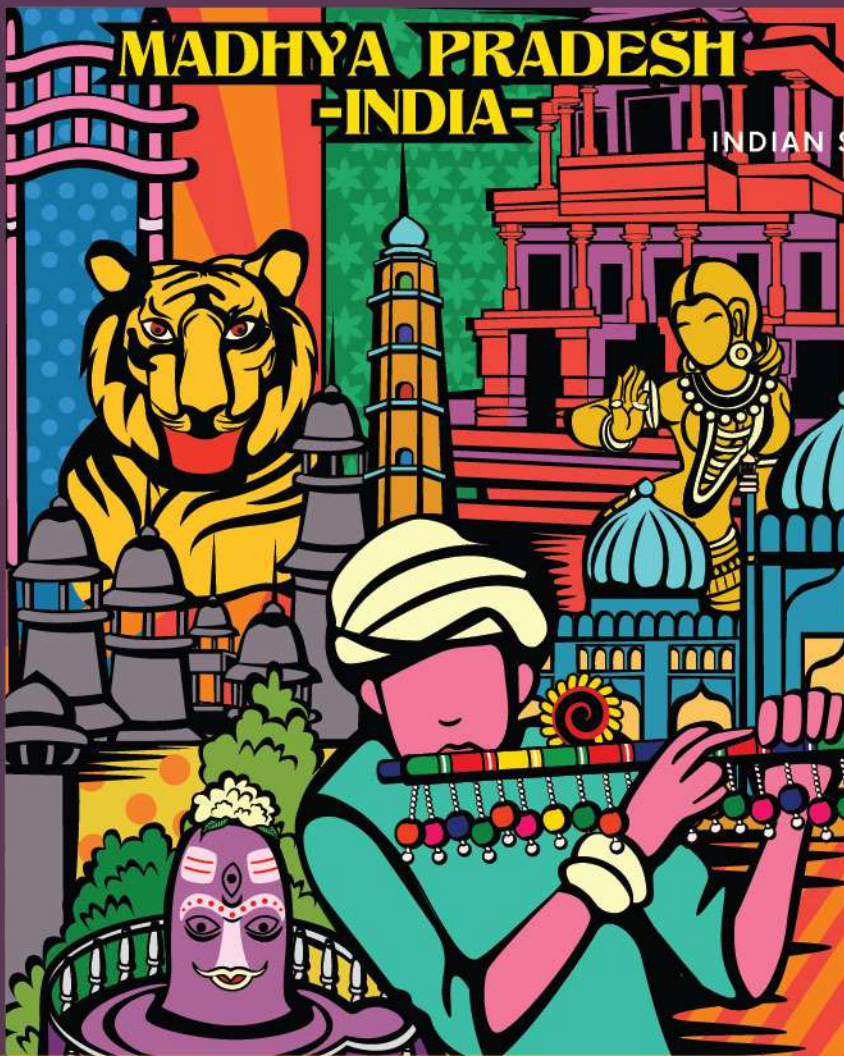
He further mentions, "Our entire clientele is in the luxury segment. As a hotel company, we operate in the 5- star segment and have not dropped our rates even when COVID struck. Five years ago, leisure travellers

were just 7 per cent of our business mix. This segment has seen steady growth over the years into double digits. Post covid, corporate travellers have dropped drastically and, the leisure segments are now accounting for almost 50 per cent of our bookings."

With so many properties opening up in the state, healthy competition can be felt in the market. Speaking on the same Gita Choudhary, Founder, Terra Tales Hotel Marketing, mentions, "It is bound to be competitive. The good thing is that the travellers and tourists will have a range of options to choose from and the establishments are bound to offer the best to attract them and retain them for a longer period. I wish to add one more point i.e. varied experiences have encouraged smaller players to enter the fray as well. This will act as a boon to budget travellers or tourists with a limited budget but willingness to explore something unusual and incredible."



Gita Choudhary



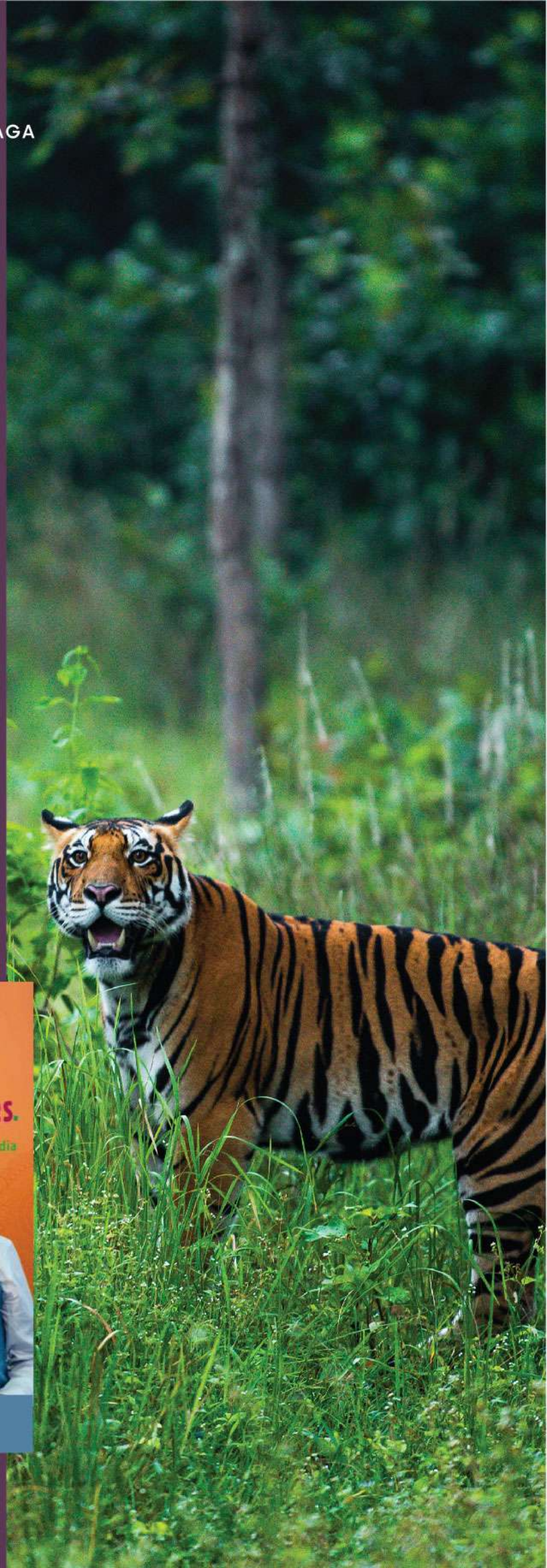
What sells the best?

Madhya Pradesh has an abundance of experiences making it a hotspot destination for Indian and international travellers. Anil Dwivedi, Managing Director, Quality India Tours, says, "While creating an itinerary for Madhya Pradesh we intend to offer utmost experiences to our guests. Madhya Pradesh has many aspects which are yet to be explored; it is one of the hidden jewels of India. Apart from adventure and history, MP has many offerings such as rural life, tribal culture, one can enjoy bicycle tours, and also MP is a perfect destination for

rejuvenation and relaxation. We create tailor-made itineraries and individual itineraries to suit individual needs and interests."



Anil Dwivedi



The upcoming experiential journeys


There is a plan to develop 100 Rural Tourism villages in the State over the period of three years.

"Currently implementation has been started in 60 villages of Madhya Pradesh. These villages will be able to provide the various rural experiences to the visitors. They will have stay facility at villages where owner-based services will be given. They can visit village, interact local community, experience local food, folk dance and songs, local excursion. They can also experience the local games being played by the community. They may also experience the local arts and can buy souvenir" says, Shri Yuvraj Padole, Dy. Director (Event & Marketing), Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board.

Another important project being implemented by the tourism department is 'Safe Tourism Destination for Women' in Madhya Pradesh. The project will help to maximise the security of women travellers (solo and group both) at the selected destinations of MP. The project will also focus to increase the number of working women at destinations by skilling them. It will enhance the number of tourists as well as their experiences in MP.



HOTELIGENCE



KARMA GROUP,

the sensational hospitality blockbuster
by JOHN SPENCE

John Spence, Chairman and Founder, Karma Group is a renowned name and an inspirational story in the hospitality sector and why not? He deserves it to the last word. Karma Group is no less than a hit album where each and every property curated by John is a massive success.

- Bharti Sharma



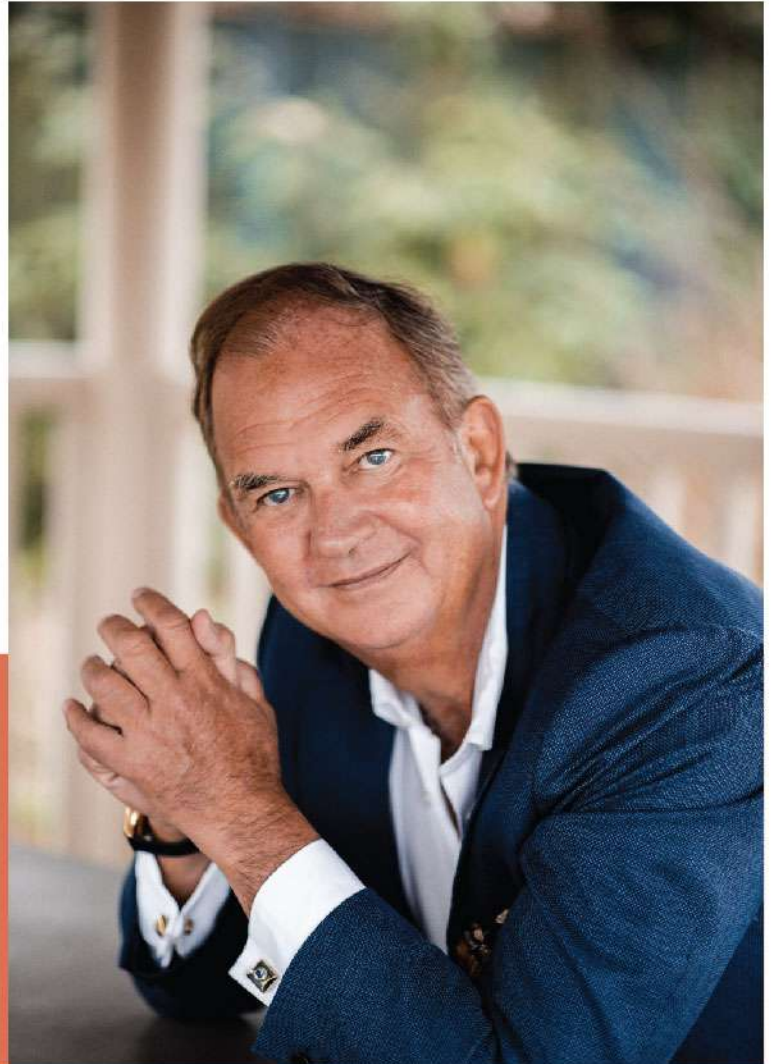
Your transition from a music agent to one of the most successful hoteliers is nothing short of a motivation story. It is certainly rare; we definitely want to know what drove you towards the hospitality sector? Was it your passion or the commercialised opportunity that you saw coming in 1993?

My early life was quite interesting; there was a time I thought I was the best guitarist in the world but it wasn't long before I realised that on the contrary I was the worst. And this was back in 1980 in London, when you had to be pretty bad to be deemed a bad guitarist. So, I drifted onto the business side and became a tour manager. A total twist of fate was waiting to unfold when I came to Goa in the 90's and fell in love with the place, almost instantly. I thought it was an amazing place with great beaches, lovely people and delicious culinary. There was a noticeable trend among the emerging Indian middle class to vacation in Goa in a western way. On the other hand, there was an increasing demand for Goa among the international tourists for its winter sun, which was a lot lighter on the pocket than going to Seychelles or the Caribbean for the Christmas break. This led me to my first gamble;

my first piece of land here. I tried persuading my employer to back my venture but that didn't work out. Their reaction was that I was crazy and that India was just too poor to be considered for a business prospect. With no option left I ended up selling my assets in London and managed to persuade a few colleagues to join me. Finally in 1993, we opened doors to our first property - a vastly underfunded resort on the beach of Goa.

Selling all your assets to start a venture in the sector you hardly had any experience of, to celebrating the 28th anniversary of Karma Group. Thinking of the old times, what do you feel in your gut about the life-changing decisions that you've made?

I believe in 'nothing ventured - nothing gained'. No matter what you do, you need to be passionate about it and give it your full attention and energy. There are no shortcuts really, it's just hard work combined with vision and of course good luck. The right proportions of these ingredients are absolutely essential for accomplishing your goals. My experience in the music and entertainment industry and the Karma Group has made me realize a very



John Spence,
Chairman and Founder, Karma Group

important lesson that people look for entertainment. Travelling, providing a good time, comfort, good food, a lifestyle, a great atmosphere are all forms of entertainment. We address all age groups while providing entertainment and ensure all our members enjoy our facilities. Getting back to the question, I think I have been very lucky. It has worked out really well, but not without ups and downs. Unexpected challenges and opportunities

go hand in hand and shape us as a company, the team and of course myself. There is much more to come in the future, with a long list of intriguing destinations, great places to develop and add to our portfolio. With a growing number of members, we as a group also need to provide more options and resorts. I love what I do and despite long working hours and extensive travelling, I consider myself really lucky that it doesn't take a toll on me.



HOTELIGENCE

How do you describe your connection with India since you started hospitality journey here?

It's been 27 years since I started my journey in Goa and it has never let us down. Goa has been an amazing location for us and we still see a huge potential here. We've recently acquired a new piece of land in South Goa that we'll be developing into a sixty-unit resort as soon as the pandemic storm passes. Goa combines a strong appeal to the Indian consumer while being equally appealing for the international consumers. The attracting force for domestic travelers is definitely the west-like free culture and European feel of Goan architecture while the flavor of Portuguese heritage and influence makes it a familiar option for European travelers. So Goa will continue to be a strong prospect for us but we're

also focusing on our developments outside Goa. Over the last few years, we've consistently opened resorts at other locations. During the pandemic alone, we developed in Nandi Hills near Bangalore, our newest resort in Udaipur; and we'll be soon leasing down in Coorg too. Combine these ventures with our resorts in Corbett, Dharamshala, Kerala and Jaipur and you'll be able to visualize our footprints across India in the near future. Our strategy is very clear; we want to open up in destinations which are attractive to the Indian market, but we also want to be in places which have an international appeal for catering to our international travelers. One of the great things about India is that it has a multitude of great locations and opportunities, so enough opportunities for us to materialize our aim of opening 4-5 new resorts per

year. Our goal is to have a minimum of 30 resorts in India and all over the subcontinent. Interestingly, we have a piece of real estate in the south of Sri Lanka, which we are very keen to develop while also keeping an eye out for sites near the Himalayas and around the region. In my opinion, Indians will travel a lot more in the coming years and also from an international perspective India is set to gain more popularity.

Tell us your personal favourite Karma property in or outside India?

The Karma Kandara is hard to look past. It's one of the most magnificent pieces of land in the southern part of Bali, near Uluwatu. I bought the land when everyone was against my opinion. Since then it has become a

billionaire's row with a number of hotel companies coming up. The property houses a plethora of facilities like the karma Beach club, the cliff-side spa with pool and infrared sonar option. The hotel has also been awarded 'The best resort in Asia' several times. The Preverger in the south of France is another of my favourite. It used to belong to Jeanne Moreau, the famous film actress in France and Laura Ashley, the famous interior designer. The property (Chateau) was renovated by none other than the famous Nicky Haslem. The 18 room property stands on 200 acres of land space lined with a thousand olive trees, and it's got a vineyard too. The property has been graced by the likes of Princess Diana, other members of the Royal family and celebrities.



What according to you are the identified factors that shape up your brand's appeal in terms of Indian market?

I think what people in general really enjoy about the Karma Group is our membership concept, which makes us different from a normal hotel chain. People buy short or long-term membership ranging from 1 to 15 or more, to experience Karma hospitality. Our members have options for ten resorts in India and a total of 33 resorts around the world. They happily return to a known and familiar level of comfort when they visit any of our property, they're even recognised by the Karma team from their previous stays. This creates an extra level of comfort and adds to the ease of discovering the world. Basically, the guests know that they will be well looked after. A member isn't a first-time guest at Karma so we know and cater to the preferences and requirements of our members, and their children who mostly become members in their own right and return with nostalgia to Karma Resorts with their partners and family.



TRAVELLING in the times of CORONA



When the world around is turning into a madman's corner, pleasant experiences are what keeps one sane in such uncertain times. And, we know that there is no better therapy than travelling that feeds the soul!

- Sonali Ahuja

Are the COVID-19 regulations putting a brake on your planned trips? Is the avid-traveller in you yearning for a vacation away from the blinding city lights and deafening noises? Or are you craving for a drive down the winding

mountain roads, sunkissed beaches, lush green forests, and gleaming shorefronts? Without a doubt, the answer to all these questions is a 'big' yes! Though resuming with the new normal is a bumpy ride, yet it offers

an altogether different experience. The key to hitting the roads, boarding flights, and conquering the world once again is following certain travel advisories and guidelines since they make your journeys safe and happy.





Go for Short Haul Getaways

Trips that cover multiple locations and are usually longer than 10 days are long-haul travels. Though the idea sounds interesting, yet it has its own share of challenges. You need to check for international and domestic flight connectivity as well as the time taken for visa processing.

Every destination has its own quarantine rules—'n' number of COVID tests involved, time required to process RT-PCR reports, timely results, etc. Adding to all these is the mother of all problems, general anxiety—frequent change in places with long-duration journeys can be a bit stressful.

Owing to the current pandemic situation, it is advised to plan short-haul

getaways/destinations, at least till August 2021. Maximum flying of 4-5 hours is an intelligent option to the long-haul flees. Take a direct flight to the destination you are planning to visit and avoid transits if possible.

Know the Quarantine Rules

In the wake of the pandemic, every country has issued its own travel and quarantine rules. They can also differ if you are found positive at the hotel v/s at the airport. Learning about them before booking allows you to be prepared beforehand. Above all, keep an eye on the number of cases of that particular location you wish to travel to.

Check if the hotel you have booked offers a flexible cancellation policy. A majority of high-end hotels

are accomodating with either credit notes or refunds until last minute if there are travel restrictions by government or traveller turns positive at the last moment.

After all, the world needs more of such responsible tourists to help in curbing the outspread of virus!

Choose Private Experiences

It is good to avoid crowded spaces such as cities and urban getaways as much as possible. Instead, you can go for countryside retreats, safaris, mountains, beaches, and other such places where human inhabitation is less. Private experiences over shared tours are here to stay for a long time as we resume with the 'new normal'. Besides, far away from the maddening crowd is where

can rewind, rejuvenate and relax!

Get Vaccinated

Going forward, a lot of countries are more likely to open up to only vaccinated travellers. So, if you are planning an international getaway, get vaccinated whenever possible. Also, getting appropriate COVID-19 insurance is not a bad idea. (None cover the stay component yet in India)





Keeping all these points in mind, what are the options to choose from?

You can be spoiled with choice since there are a plethora of locations to choose from including the USA (for those with a visa), Turkey, Russia, Central America (Belize, Mexico, Costa), and Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania). Not only this, but you can also select from Sri Lanka, Maldives, Switzerland, Seychelles, Phuket, and UAE (Dubai). Though the times are tough especially for the travel-hungry souls, however, if we all follow the health advisories issued by the government, the curve can be flattened!

Representing a wide range of uplifting cultural,
artistic and spiritual travel experiences



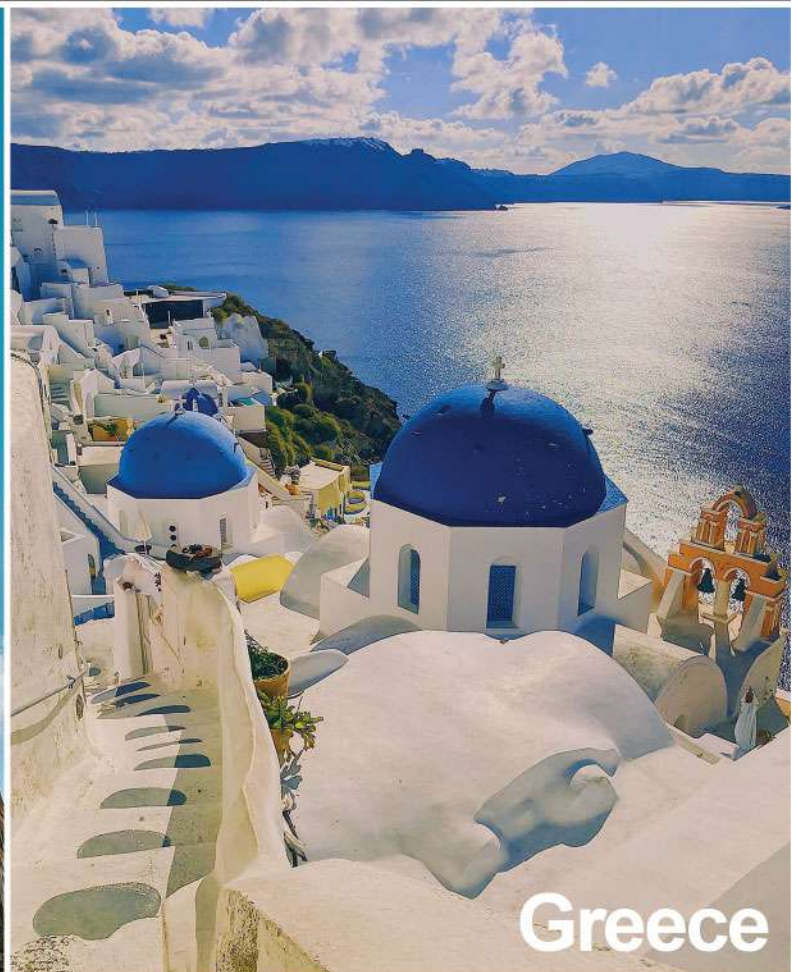
DMC PARTNER FOR EUROPE



The Netherlands



Poland



Greece

Address: Dordtselaan 144d, 3073 GL Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Email: Operations@saffronworld.travel



More than Sun, Sand and Sea

Into the Timeless Beauty of **Seychelles**

A living example of harmony, tranquility, and timeless beauty, Seychelles gateway is an escape like no other offering once in a lifetime experiences!

- Bharti Sharma

Take a break from the pricking city lights and deafening noises into the lap of nature. Immerse into the tranquil beaches of Seychelles and experience true colors of the nature—turquoise water, silver-white sand, and lush-green forests.

Far away from the maddening crowd, take a dive into the depths of sea and witness treasure that it

holds. Thinking of something adventurous or feeling laid back – take your pick from a plethora of activities including fishing, snorkeling, horse riding, mountain hiking, and much more to a relaxing tour into the abundance of nature.

Slowly becoming a honeymoon attraction, Seychelles creates the perfect back drop for romance. So, let that love

brew and get mushy with your better half. It is that romantic break you dreamt of!

Get Closer to
the nature

Though it resembles a tiny dot in the Indian Ocean on the world map, Seychelles is much more than just sand, the sun, and sea. It is an archipelagic land of 115 islands on the eastern edge

of the Somali Sea. These islands are largely divided into two groups—Mahe group consisting of 41 mountainous granitic, central islands; and second group of 71 flat, outer, coralline islands.

The Mahe group of islands have atypically narrow and rocky coastal strip coupled with a central range of hills as well as lush tropical vegetation. Treat your eyes



OFFSHORE BINOCULARS

with hanging gardens overlooking the clear lagoons and silverfish white beaches. Coralline islands, on the other hand, rise only a few feet above the sea-level and are largely waterless with very little population. These are mainly flat with coral reefs in different stages of formation.

A warm welcome

Being one of the world's last frontiers, the island nation is

the archipelago of harmony, timeless beauty, and tranquility. It is a treasure trove of mesmerizing natural beauty laden with pristine surroundings and promising adventures. Hence, this place is on every discerning travellers list!

It is a year around destination for beach lovers and sun worshippers. The weather remains warm and humid with sea generally calmed all 365 days. It does not reach extreme cold or extreme hot.

Transcend into the wilderness

Home to some of the rarest species of flora and fauna found on earth, it is a paradise for wildlife enthusiasts. Where else can one find unique magnificent Coco-de-mer (world's largest seed) Seychelles warbler, and Seychelles paradise flycatcher? Not to forget the jellyfish tree that has only eight surviving examples. You can get

glimpses of green sea turtles, giant tortoises, Seychelles bulbuls, cave-dwelling Seychelles swiftlets, Seychelles wolf snakes and house snakes; tiger chameleons... the list goes on.

From the heaviest land tortoise to the smallest frog as well as the only flightless bird of the Indian Ocean, the island nation houses exclusive endemic specimens. Seychelles also





fosters a diverse array of marine life within the surrounding of its exceptional natural beauty.

The cultural crossroads

The Seychellois are a colorful blend of people coming from different walks of races, cultures and religions. Credit of this colorful blend goes to history. Africans, Europeans, and Asians came to Seychelles in the era gone by, who brought with them their distinct traditions and customs. This contributed to the way of life in the Republic of Seychelles and to the vibrant Seychellois culture. These influences are reflected throughout the domains of local cuisine, art,

architecture, music, and dance.

Architecture of some of the grand old houses with steep roofs represents the style adapted for comfortable living. It draws influences from Seychelles' British and French colonial heritage. Besides, its modern architecture incorporates practical features blended with traditional styles to capture the island breezes.

Till date, local artists exhibit different styles that echo the multi-ethnic backdrop of the archipelago islands and bear the testament of the various influences. Creole dance and music are derived from the African, Malagasy and European cultures. Traditionally, simple drums

and string instruments accompany the rhythms. But in the contemporary era, recent imports such as the guitar and violin are also mixed.

Satiate your wanderlust

More than switching between hotel bed, brunch, beach and bar, the outdoors are nowhere greater than in the Seychelles. It offers a plethora of activities that can be strenuous or not, depending on your mood. You can be spoiled with choice of water sports such as wind surfing, paragliding, and water skiing. The combination of steady winds and calm waters make an idyllic time above, under, or on the ocean.

Dive deep into the depths of ocean to witness amazing coral reefs. In case you do not want to put on heavy tanks and belts, go for snorkeling since Seychelles provides plenty of underwater entertainment. If the idea of getting wet is not at all appealing but want to admire the underwater marine vistas, there's always an option to take the glass-bottom boat. The fun does not stop here – you can also go for fishing! But there is a strict catch-and-release policy in force, to ensure responsible tourism.

One can also experience the sheer exhilaration while galloping along the sand. While beginners are restricted to beaches and bushes, advanced riders can



go up to the mountains, where bathing under the thunderous waterfalls causes the adrenaline rush!

S for sustainability

Focusing on sustainability is the top agenda of every country and Seychelles is no exception. On the same note, the Republic of Seychelles limits about 50 per cent of its landmass to national parks and reserves.

It takes pride in being a living museum of natural history as well as a sanctuary. The island nation has far sighted conservation policies. Their success is noteworthy as the policies lead to a fortunate degree of protection for the multiple ecosystems and the environment that they support.

Taking the boarding pass

Seychelles has two major airports: Seychelles International Airport (SEZ) and Praslin island Airport. Located on the Mahe Island, SEZ is the busiest airport. While Delhi Airport is connected via connecting flights, Mumbai airport operates direct flight to Seychelles. International airlines including British Airways, Emirates, Austrian Airlines, Kenya Airways, and Turkish Airlines serve the SEZ airport.

Make yourself comfortable

Enjoy the grandiose of nature the way you want. Pick from a wide range of affordable, cozy spa hotels, inexpensive self-caterings, charming Creole guesthouses, fabulous island resorts, and much more. The warm greetings and services offered by Creole people make the stays worthwhile and memorable. Currently, 16 of Seychelles' 115 islands provide accommodation.

Interesting Facts

- Seychelles is home to two U.N.E.S.C.O World Heritage Sites: Praslin's Vallée de Mai, once believed to be the original site of the Garden of Eden, and Aldabra, the world's largest raised coral atoll.
- Seychelles is the only granite island in the world.
- World's largest seed Coco-de-mer weight was recorded at 42 kgs.



OFFSHORE BINOCULARS

1. What's great about Seychelles that makes it so worthwhile visiting?

Seychelles provides a holiday experience like none other owing to its dynamic set of offerings that appeal to varied traveller segments. Being an island nation, the experiences aren't only limited to beaches but include hikes, nature trails, eco-reserves, spotting of exotic birds and animals that are endemic to Seychelles in addition to its untouched beaches with unreal blue waters and exquisite beauty. Those seeking for a holiday closest to nature, this is the place to be. What makes a vacation to the Seychelles memorable are the heart-warming people and carnival-like spirit of the place that will certainly make you want to come back for more.

2. Which is the best time of year to visit and why?

Seychelles is blessed with tropical warm climate throughout the year making it an all-year-round destination for sun enthusiasts and beach lovers. The climate is always warm and does not peak extreme heat or cold as it rarely drops below 24°C or rises above 32°C. The best time to visit will depend on what activities best suit one's interests. May to September is perfect for sailing and windsurfing whereas diving is great all year round but April to May and October to November, the visibility is up to a staggering 30 metres.

3. Which is your preferred method of reaching Seychelles from India?

Air Seychelles flies direct from Mumbai to Mahe in addition to many other airlines that offer 1 stop layovers. In the current scenario, Air Seychelles resumed commercial passenger flights effective from April 8, 2021, following the air bubble agreement between both countries. The flights will operate twice weekly on Thursdays and Sundays departing from Mumbai while return from Seychelles has been scheduled on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

4. With pandemic adversely affecting the travel industry, what new initiatives and strategies are in place to boost Seychelles amongst the travel trade?

As Indians are looking for more destination choices to travel internationally, Seychelles opening up to India without any restrictions comes at a great time when people are ready to travel and plan trips abroad. The opportunity is massive with very few destinations in the playing field right now giving Seychelles the edge more so as it brings a new kind of holiday experience on the table. We are amidst planning some interesting digital campaigns with online platforms to generate real-time leads and conversions alongside

promotions with media, influencers and the travel trade fraternity to motivate Indians to experience the uniqueness of the islands. We have set small targets that are well-defined and effective in reaching our goals. In the current scenario, our immediate goal is to increase consumer awareness about the destination reopening while stimulating interest so as to ensure we fly full capacity on the commercial flights of Air Seychelles. We are working closely with the travel trade to drive bookings and are witnessing spiked interest for Seychelles. In line with this thought, our initial efforts will be to get the travel trade allies alongside the media to experience Seychelles first-hand while growing the destination from strength to strength.



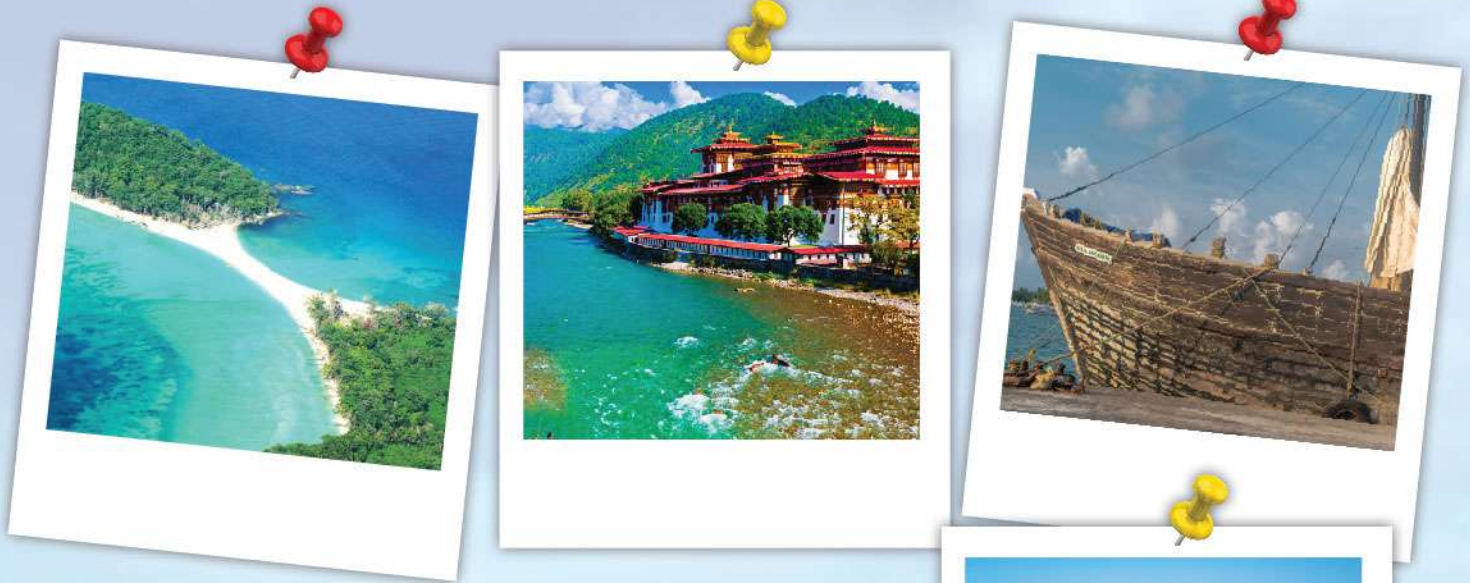
Lubaina Sheerazi,
India Representative, Seychelles Tourism Board



ABH TOURISM

A GLOBAL DESTINATION MANAGEMENT COMPANY

ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLAND | BHUTAN | LAKSHADWEEP | SRI LANKA



WE OFFER

- TRANSPORT
- SHIP TICKETS
- WATER SPORTS
- SCUBA DIVING
- HELICOPTER AND SEA PLANE TICKETS
- GUIDE SERVICES
- FISHING
- TRACKING
- HOTEL BOOKINGS
- HONEYMOON PACKAGES
- CYCLE TOURS

CORPORATE OFFICE:

ABH TOURISM

(A unit of Alliance Business House Pvt. Ltd.)
A-92, B-Wing, First Floor, Nambardar Estate,
Tamoor Nagar, New Friends Colony, New Delhi-110065
Contact : 9599298885, 9599298884
Email : info@abhtourism.in, md@abhtourism.in

Registered offices:

Colombo, Phuentsholing, Port Blair, & Minicoy Island

SALES OFFICES:

NEW DELHI, MUMBAI, AHMEDABAD, CHENNAI, BANGALORE & KOLKATA

www.abhtourism.in



Incredible India

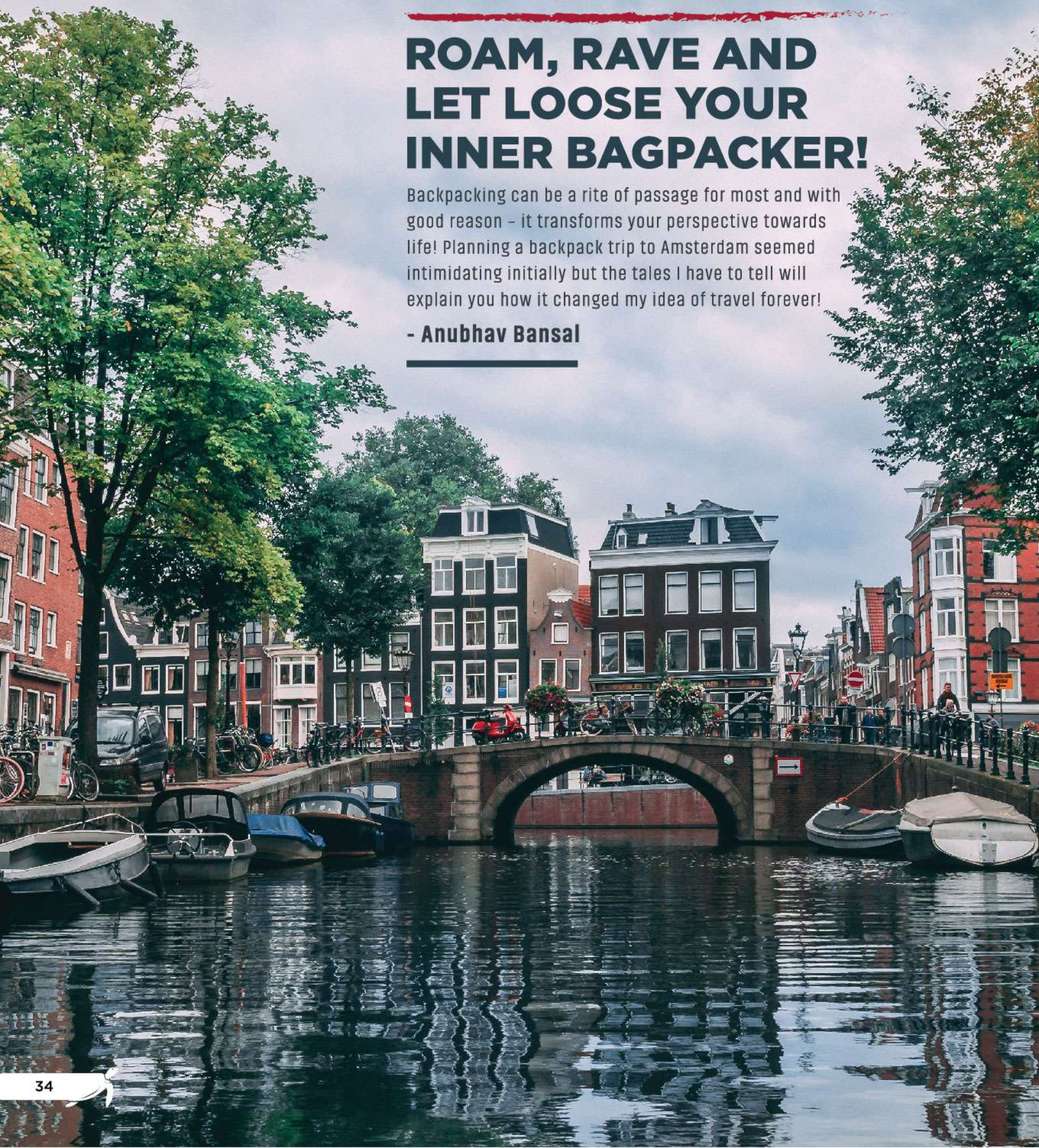


AMSTERDAM:

ROAM, RAVE AND LET LOOSE YOUR INNER BAGPACKER!

Backpacking can be a rite of passage for most and with good reason – it transforms your perspective towards life! Planning a backpack trip to Amsterdam seemed intimidating initially but the tales I have to tell will explain you how it changed my idea of travel forever!

- Anubhav Bansal



TRAVEL THERAPY

As a true gypsy soul, I wanted to explore the world out of my comfort zone and witness a destination in its rustic form. Exploring the nightlife, letting loose, and seeking freedom; well! What better place to create this experience than Amsterdam.

Here's an ode to the backpacking adventure of an IT professional turned farmer, who occasionally displays his vagabond-ish traits!

The moment you land in Amsterdam you can feel yourself transitioning into a

well-managed city. I would definitely recommend the use of public transport to get to the main city so you catch the rhythm. The cobble streets will entice you to walk as much as you

can with the picture-perfect canals setting the background. The streets lined with trees and gingerbread-shaped houses will take away any fatigue and soothe your soul.

Explore the windmills on a bicycle!

Amsterdam is not called the 'World Cycling' capital without a reason. Cycling is not just a mode of transportation in the city, it's a culture. Cyclist-friendly traffic regulation, separate lanes for cyclists, renting stations, parking spots across the city, not only makes it extremely convenient but it's also the optimum way to see the beauty of the city in

and out. Rent a bike for a day and go for a ride across the city and within 20 minutes you'll find yourself in the suburbs amongst the scenic windmills, which seem straight out of a movie set. Cycling in Amsterdam will let you absorb the true Dutch spirit and will make you wonder how futuristic the Dutch are about their sustainable society.



Munching, savouring and snacking the local way!

When it comes to trying local cuisines, 'Herring fish' is the first thing that must come to the mind of every traveller. This cuisine is easily available at food stalls on most of the streets. One must indulge in a fresh, hot, crispy, salty and topped with chili

sauce, mayo, BBQ sauce 'French fries' and sit by the canals to soak in the serene and picturesque scenery. Dutch cheese is a specialty that one must not miss! It is as cheesy as cheese should be and comes in a plethora of flavours that one can indulge in.



STEAK
HOUSE

FIRST & SECOND FLOOR
RESTAURANT
SINCE 1897. FAMOUS FOR STEAKS

GROUND FLOOR
CAFÉ - BAR
FOOD, DRINKS & CHILL

Grasshopper

OUDEBRUGSTEEG
(CENTRUM)

RESTAURANT

One for the beer lovers!

If the mention of the word beer makes you drooling, certainly a beer lover's paradise; take the 'Heineken Experience' is the experience of a lifetime for you. It's a fun, informative and engaging experience showcasing the processes involved behind the manufacturing of one of the finest beers in the world, the Heineken. It is certainly a beer lover's paradise; take the Heineken special canal cruise, experience the brewing of beer in 4D and participate in beer pouring competition with fellow group participants are some of the highlights that come with the package.

A walk to remember -Red District

Funny experiences can happen anytime and anywhere while in the Red light area. One can converse with the girls who would then try to entice you to their harems or one can visit the famous strip clubs which are at your disposal 24*7. Reminiscing one of my visits to a club, a performer took me by surprise when she dragged me on stage for a striptease. The sheer excitement of spontaneity made it fun and thrilling. One strict rule that all tourists must adhere to while in the red light area is that no photography is allowed, which must be respected at all times. In my opinion, one must take a guided tour first, instead of just strolling through the famed red-light district area meaninglessly. The guided tours will showcase the rich history of how organized, safe, and interesting the red light area is. In popular media, the red light area is overhyped, whereas it is a professionally run and managed place with a deeply rich history attached to it.

Find *ni ruana* at the Coffee Shop!

A must-have experience in Amsterdam is the unique 'Coffee shops'. Don't confuse between the 'Coffee shops' or 'Koffiehuis' as both of them are different. The coffee shops must not be confused with their American counterparts where only hot java and baked goods are served. In Amsterdam's coffee shops, one can try the 'Cannabis' which is blended locally. There are various etiquettes to adhere to while visiting a coffee shop. One of the coffee shops that must be on every traveller's list is the 'Bulldog Café', which pioneered the culture in Amsterdam. My recommendation is to try the 'Black widow' at the Bulldog Cafe. There is an abundance of Coffee shops in Amsterdam and each of them offers a customized experience, which makes it a must-do thing while in Amsterdam.

An incomplete trip without a boat/ferry ride in the beautiful canals!

The famous canals of Amsterdam are picturesque and one cannot expect to complete a trip to Amsterdam without cruising through its illustrious canals. Riding in a canal will give you a different perspective of the city and will leave you with the desire to explore the city via the beautiful passages of the canals. Some of the cruises/ferry rides are accompanied by guides who'll indulge in storytelling and unfurl folklores while cruising through the waters. Do behind the 'Kissing Bridge' while you pass the rest of your life!



CONNECTING DOTS

The 'UP'coming Airport in NOIDA

The Noida International Airport will be a thriving international airport serving the National Capital Region of Delhi and the fast-developing Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development area between Delhi and Agra. Mr Christoph Schnellmann, Chief Executive Officer, Yamuna International Airport Private Limited talks to Travel Turtle and unveils the ambitious development plan.

- **Bharti Sharma**





Noida
International Airport

What does the logo of Noida International Airport symbolize?

The brand logo is a symbol that shows a Sarus Crane - the state bird of UP - in flight. The symbol is created using thin uniform converging lines with a blue green colour gradient fill symbolizing technology and connectivity on one hand and eco-consciousness on the other. The upward movement denotes positivity and upliftment of experience. The logo

effectively combines technology with emotions while lending sophistication and elegance. The logo echoes Noida International Airport's vision to be India's leading airport in terms of quality, efficiency, technology and a role model for sustainable infrastructure and operations, delivering an exemplary experience to all customer segments.



Being the concessionaire of the airport project, what will be your plan of action in developing this airport? Since the project is under the PPP model what will be the designated areas under your umbrella?

With the investment in the agreement, Zurich Airport Noida International Airport International has been project, Zurich Airport International has committed to be a trusted partner for the Government of India and the Government of Uttar Pradesh by supporting the national agenda through infrastructure development and job creation. Zurich Airport International AG is the sole shareholder of YIAPL, which was incorporated as a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to develop the Greenfield Noida International Airport in Jewar. As per the concession

Zurich Airport International has been granted the license to design, build, and operate Noida International Airport for a period of forty years. YIAPL is committed to building a world-class airport in India which will play the role of a catalyst for the economic growth of India and Uttar Pradesh. NIA will be a digital greenfield airport, enabling seamless flows through the airport, a pleasant travel experience as well as tailored-made and efficient infrastructure for its logistics partners.



CONNECTING DOTS



It is believed that the airport will be operational within 36 months i.e., by 2024 with two runways. What is your comment on the timeline of the project?

The airport's first terminal is expected to be ready within 3 years of start of the construction and will generate a capacity of 12 Million annual passengers.

Can you elaborate on the main infrastructural developments planned at the Noida International Airport? What developments will we be seeing in the first phase of operations?

From the very beginning we had targeted the first 6 months for financial closures with next 36 months for completion of the terminal 1 of the airport. The project will be constructed with an initial investment of INR 5,730 crore for the first phase. The airport will open with a single runway and the capacity to handle at least 12m passengers per year. We will develop this Airport on 1334 Ha of land.

We're planning two parallel runways to serve over 70m passengers per year in the final phase, for which the government of UP has reserved an additional 5000 Ha of land.

The airport will have air cargo as well as logistics facilities, maintenance repair and overhaul (MRO) facilities for aircraft maintenance, hotel adjoining the airport, varied retail and dining options along with a connecting metro station.

What challenges did authorities face while setting up the project and also your anticipated opportunities in developing this?

The biggest challenge that we have faced so far is the sudden outbreak of the pandemic which has impacted the pace of the project. However, we are working closely with the government to start the development of the project at the earliest.

We believe that once initialized, the project will bring ample opportunities

such as, the infrastructural development will fuel the economy and jobs in NCR, Greater Noida, and the state of Uttar Pradesh. We also envisage generating 3000-5000 direct and indirect job opportunities in the initial years in the region.

What will be the passenger capacity the airport is expected to cater to per annum, after the first phase of construction?

The airport will open with a single runway and the capacity to handle at least 12m passengers per year.

“The work on the ambitious project was supposed to start by June this year, but it got delayed due to the Covid-19 restrictions,” an official statement said. When are we expecting this project to take off?

As mentioned above, the COVID-19 induced restrictions did impact the pace, but the development work is expected to start soon. We recently received the final credit sanction for

INR 3725 crore from the State Bank of India (SBI) for the development of Noida International Airport (NIA). The funding is a crucial milestone for the project as it validates the financial viability of the project while also outlining the next steps for the establishment of the Noida International Airport. With this, we are bullish that the project is very much on track and we will soon move ahead with other key milestones for the development of the airport.



Maldives

gears up to ensure

'safe' tourism



Maldives once again has taken the lead and reopens its border for the Indian travellers. After declaring itself as the 'safe' destination, the island has come up as the saviour for the outbound travel industry.

- Sudipta Saha

Where many countries have opted to restrict the entries of incoming travellers keeping the pandemic situation in consideration, Maldives has gradually raised itself on tiptoe and is ready to welcome the Indian travellers. We all know how badly the tourism sector has been affected by the pandemic and during this crucial phase, Maldives has come up as a blessing to the outbound travel sector. After the first phase of lockdown, Maldives equipped itself readily and was ready for tourism, and even after the second phase of lockdown Maldives is all set to open its border from July 15, 2021 for South Asian travellers.

This Indian Ocean archipelago of Maldives has always been

considered a most romantic destination and is on the list of every honeymooner. After three months of lockdown, Male has declared itself as a safe destination and thus is working progressively towards rebuilding tourism on the island. Well, when we talk about the Maldives, the first and foremost name that comes to our mind is the Youngistan Travellers, who has been selling the Maldives to Indian travellers since its inception.

The government and the stakeholders have worked hard to ensure the high safety of the travellers is the new normal. Gourav K Dubey, Managing Director, Youngistan Travellers, explicit that the market seems to be positive and the number

which we have witnessed in the second phase is expected to grow. People who were not able to travel will certainly plan. Though, we can sense the fear in the market but at the same time there is desperation in the travellers to travel. Before the second phase, approximately 90,000 people have travelled to the Maldives. There are 1.5 million marriages expected and if we think conservatively around 20 per cent of them will travel to the Maldives as there are hardly any options. The Maldives is a romantic honeymoon destination, and there lies a lot of opportunity for companies like us. The Maldives has gone easy on travel restrictions and, secondly, the hoteliers in the Maldives are very aggressive in

regards to the India market."

Many factors will encourage people to travel to Maldives. As per Gourav, "Before the second phase of lockdown, the luxurious property in the Maldives has slashed their room rates making a luxurious accommodation available at pocket-friendly rates. Also, many new properties are opening up, making the Maldives a budget destination. If I compare the Maldives with other destinations, it offers luxury, a range of activities, white sandy beaches and most importantly major of the hotels are coming up with all-inclusive packages which means that you don't have to shell out a fortune for it. All these factors will help us to gather incremental market share."



DRIL- ELEVATING THE TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE IN INDIA

Forerunner in the construction business since 1974, Damodar Ropeways & Infra Ltd (DRIL) specialises in building passenger ropeways, material ropeways, ski-lifts and chair lifts.

- Bharti Sharma

Being the leader in ropeways which projects that you have executed so far, and what are in the pipeline?

We are currently in Assam, Jammu, Sikkim, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh, among other states. We are in talks for many other projects and waiting for the clearances. Last year, we inaugurated a ropeway at Chitrakoot for the Hanuman Dhara temple and another ropeway was built across the Brahmaputra River in Guwahati for the Tourism Department of Assam. We are coming up with two ropeways, one in Odisha and the other in Rajasthan. Our steepest ropeway is in Trikut, Joshimath

ropeway in Auli is a ski lift and chair lift ropeway that provides breath-taking views, Gangtok ropeway gives astounding perspectives on Kanchenjunga snow tops and Gangtok Valley, and Vashno Devi Ropeway helps devotees complete the yatra without experiencing the pain of the steep climb.

The ropeway in Odisha will be at Nandankanan Zoological Park, in Udaipur (Rajasthan), it will start near SCERT Hostel, Fatehsagar Lake and end at Neemach Mata Temple at Hill Top. We are also building a ropeway for the Bihar government at Vanabar Hill in the Jehanabad district on a contract basis under the EPC (Engineering, Purchase, and Construction) model.



How is support from government to the ropeway industry?

The government has given us opportunities to own and operate the ropeway in mostly all the states. However, we would like the authorities to pay attention to the GST regime for the ropeway industry. We have made representations to the government to bring GST at par with other tourism industry; the GST in ropeway is 18 per cent while other tourism segments have only 5 per cent. The high GST increases the cost of the ticket for the customers. On the other hand, the government has been helpful in all other areas, including permits and clearances. Some states provide subsidies for ropeways, which should be replicated around the country to support the tourism industry. We've seen a rise in visitors in areas with ropeways and hence subsidy to this segment will be good for the growth of tourism.

What challenges are faced during construction of ropeways and how do you deal with them?

The challenges vary from difficult climate, windspeed, space availability for construction, availability of quality vendor, etc. At some places, the transportation of material is a challenge as roads are not wide enough to carry big equipment. In colder areas, working hours



**Aditya Chamaria,
Managing Director, DRIL**



reduce to 3-4 hours that offsets the schedule; the same disruption in work happens at high-temperature zones. Each Ropeway brings about its own unique challenges. DRIL is uniquely positioned to prep lab for these given our vast exposure and by virtue of running the highest number of Ropeways for the longest period of time. Our team is well experienced to overcome any challenge

What has been your favourite project?

All the projects are favourite where we connect people with the temples and help

pilgrims fulfil their religious duties.

How has COVID affected the industry?

COVID has affected the ropeway industry; the last six months have been tough; it is creating disappointment as nobody knows about the time it will take for everything to come back to normal. Tourism is getting affected as many of the historical places are shut till May 15. Revenue from ticket sales is down to 0 during not just the lockdowns but also the period preserving subsequent to lockdown as far lesser people have been travelling



AN EXTRAORDINARY CRUISING EXPERIENCE AWAITS

The shattered tourism sector is now gearing up with the opening of borders and ease of travel restrictions. The crash in the tourism sector due to pandemics has caused a major loss, but the resilient industry is ready to revive.

- Sudipta Saha



With the ongoing vaccination drive and ease in travel restrictions, the tourism industry seems optimistic and is all set to recover the losses that occurred due to the global pandemic. With every single declaration by the government on travel restrictions, the travel sector is catching its breath. Recently, in India, we have witnessed the upsurge of domestic tourism as lockdown 2.0 was lifted. "Post COVID, domestic tourism is on the surge. Destinations such as Manali, Leh and Ladakh were fully packed with tourists from different corners of India and even hotels were sold out. In case of international travel, no assumptions can be made until countries open up their borders," feels Neeraj Sharma, Director, Cruise Carrot.

Before the pandemic, cruise holidays have gained the limelight and, many Indian travellers were opting for cruise holidays. Cruise Carrot, a leading travel company



Neeraj Sharma

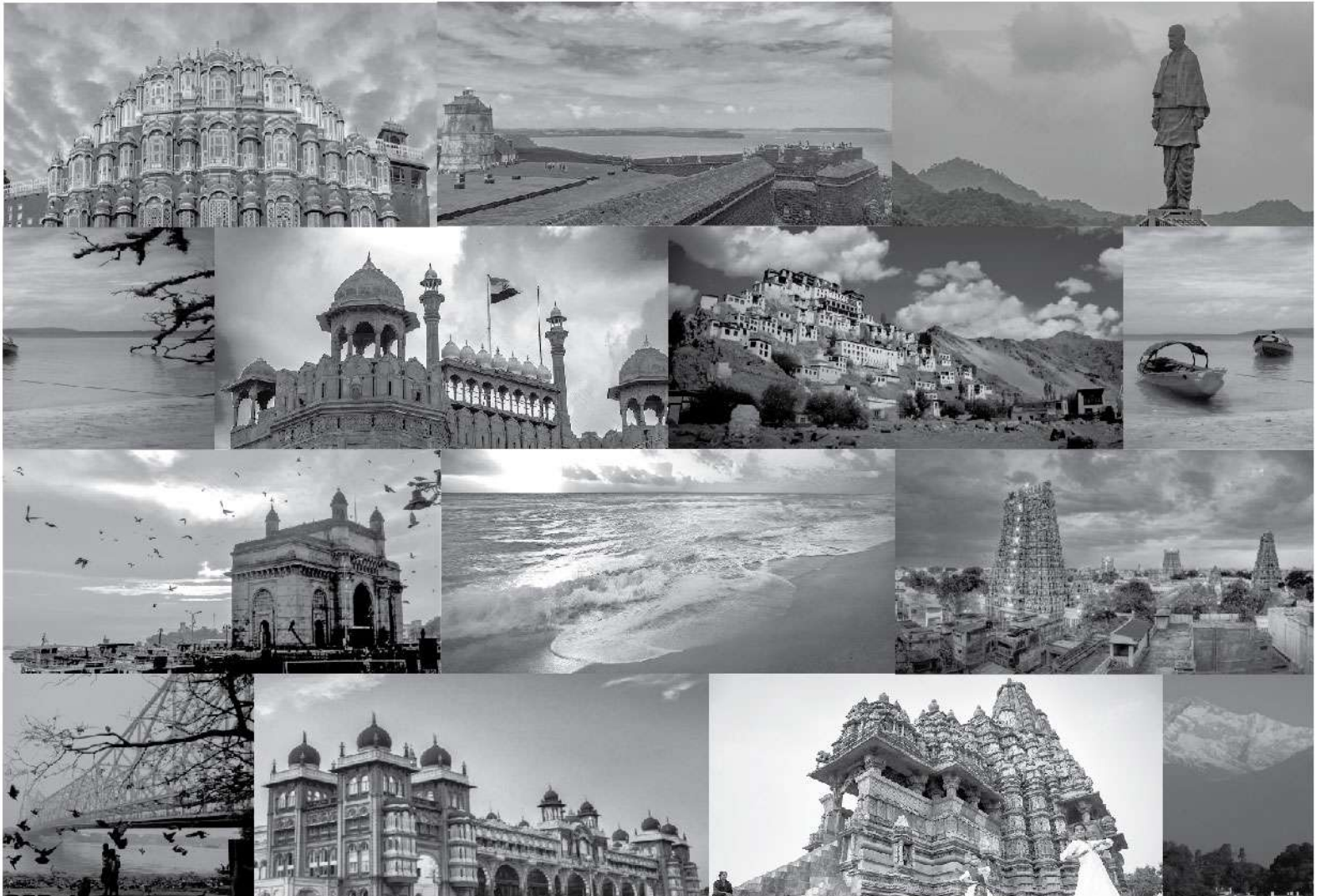
with over 10 years of knowledge and expertise in cruise has been selling over 50+ cruise lines in pan India. How Indian travellers will react to cruise holidays after a pandemic can be best answered by someone who has been selling cruises over the years. On sharing his feeling on the same, Neeraj Sharma says, "Indians are crazy about cruise holidays and, we are getting bookings for 2022. From this, you can assume that Indian

traveller enjoys cruise vacation. Also, in India, travel trends are expected to change and, people will book their cruise holiday well in advance. Pandemic might have paused the travel but, once the international border and water bodies open up, you will see travel picking up."

Many speculations are being made on post COVID travel and how the existing travel companies will function and promote themselves. Speaking on the same, Neeraj Sharma mentions, "We are going to conduct training programs and showcase our product pan India. We are developing our website making it a hassle-free online cruise portal. It will be seamless experience for our business partners to book a cruise online for their clients. In the coming time, we will educate our partners about new cruise vessels by doing roadshow, presentations in different parts of India."

CONNECT India

we are everywhere




 destination
management

Best technology driven
B2B business platform

 marketing
representation

Biggest sales network
across 18 states

 tourism
publication

Better destination and
industry insight

Connect India at every destination with 28 Branches across 18 states

www.connectintourism.com

Atlantis, The Palm

An archipelago of haven

With a world of activities and delights for thrill seekers—from the Aquaventure Waterpark to The Lost Chambers Aquarium, Atlantis: The Palm dishes out a culinary and rejuvenation heaven like none else.

- Misbah Mansuri

While the allure of unseen destinations and postcard induced fantasies drives us to travel, it is quite often that we check into a hotel, soak in its aura but then find ourselves seeking some thrilling activities to venture into, during

our stay. During my stay at Atlantis- The Palm in Dubai, I was lucky to submerge into a world full of activities, gastronomic delights and lots of preening. Does the destination manage to enthrall? Read on to know...



Of architectural delights and check-in indulgences

As I enter the Atlantis' tower-topped, red-brick façade, I can easily admit that it is the stuff of my Disney fairytale dreams. I walk by its iconic central arch, hinting at gateways to mythical kingdoms. Its wings extend to embrace gardens filled with butterflies, elaborate playgrounds, and a thundering waterfall- every corner a treat in itself.

The property with its architectural expertise, vistas of the azure-ocean and pearl-white beaches is such a stunner and a destination in itself. My check-in was at the Royal Majlis (read VIP) over dates and some refreshing Arabic coffee. I was explained the VIP privileges I was entitled to (read access to the VIP lounge, evening canapes and more). Now I just couldn't wait to get to my Imperial Club room which was the epitome of comfort. At 48.5 - 83 sqm, with a spacious bath and shower and a choice of either king or queen beds and interconnecting options, this spacious room is ideal for couples or families looking for extra space. It boasts magnificent views of

Haltang Bay's blue ocean, sparkling beach and Wuzhizhou Island.

The Lost Chambers Aquarium which is the first-of-its-kind in the

Aquaventure is now home to over 28 additional rides and attractions, bringing the total number to over 105 slides, rides and attractions across the 22.5-hectare park. With several record-breaking slides and firsts in the region thrill-seekers can enjoy Odyssey of Terror; the world's tallest waterslide with a Double Tornado Wave, Shockwave; the longest family rafting water coaster in the world, Medusa's Lair; the first dueling Pipeline Blast Water Coaster slide in the region and Immortal Falls; the first Cliff jumping in the region.



Thrill-seeking activities galore

For thousands of years, people have been searching for the lost city of Atlantis. Containing untold riches and treasures, the utopian paradise is believed to have been submerged under the ocean. Luckily, I had a chance to witness the magical city of Atlantis at The Lost Chambers Aquarium. I discovered the mysteries of the deep and learned fascinating facts about ocean life while watching 65,000 marine animals swim in the Ambassador Lagoon. Spying the ginormous grouper fish, vibrant clownfish and menacing moray eels- each of it was fascinating to watch, with its own story to tell. Another highlight is the morning Pilates session at

region. Set against the mesmerising tranquillity of the Ambassador Lagoon, surrounded by 65,000 sea creatures, I experienced underwater yoga which is the perfect way to kickstart our day.

Guests should not miss the world's biggest water parks-Atlantis Aquaventure. With the addition of the brand-new Trident Tower, Splashers Lagoon and Splashers Cove,

I also experienced Atlantis. The Palm's newest entertainment destination, Wavehouse where we indulged in a fun bowling session. Here guests can experience live music, gaming, bowling, great food and chilled drinks overlooking a state-of-the-art wave machine, all under one roof.





HEADS IN BEDS



Culinary indulgences

How could I not have a foodie blast? Atlantis, The Palm after all is home to 29 world-renowned restaurants including Bread Street Kitchen & Bar, Hakkasan, Nobu, Ronda Locatelli, Seafire Steakhouse & Bar and the award-winning underwater restaurant, Ossiano. I heartily recommend a meal at Gordon Ramsay's Bread Street Kitchen & Bar, heralded by celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay and helmed by Chef de Cuisine Cesar Bartolini. Here I devoured a selection of British classics and Gordon signatures including fish and chips in a craft beer batter, the legendary beef Wellington, and indulgent puddings that took us back to our childhood. Guests should also try the Bread Street Kitchen Ice Cream Counter, which serves homemade

scoops including Bread and Butter Pudding softie. Post my bowling session, I also put to test the Wavehouse restaurant where succulent burgers and shakes managed to win me over with its live tunes, swinging seats and a festival vibe is the perfect place to kick back and relax. Evenings were spent enjoying eclectic cocktail and canapés in the Imperial Club Lounge in the East Tower while breakfast in Kaleidoscope located in East Tower served up full continental and English delights-from fluffy eggs to sinful pancakes. For those looking at enjoying some culinary marvels by the pool, indulging in a Mexican fiesta at the Shore restaurant should be on your checklist. The meals here for sure are the stuff of gastronomic heaven!

TLC time

For those looking to opt for a spa-radise, the ShuiQi Spa has recently updated its menu, introducing new treatments in collaboration with Aromatherapy Associates and includes some lovely four full-body experiences to try- from bespoke facials, as well as unique treatments for expecting mothers.

With a promise to deliver premium, unique treatments and Instagrammable moments, I also had the chance to experience the property's nail spa-Nailology which is the newest addition to Atlantis. As the only nail bar in Dubai with in-salon mixologists, this one is as exciting as it can get. I was

pampered with the Gold Goddess treatment that included a decadent amber-infused mask, scrub and cream by Spaline, a golden patch for my eyes, a blissful 20-minute massage with an amber sphere and argan oil, golden soak, nail polish, mocktail/cocktail, Elim golden finishing spray.

With drop-dead gorgeous talons and preening at its core, days marked with unique oceanic adventures and thrills, food adventures that sure tantalized my tastebuds, I left Atlantis-The Palm with an oh-so-blissed out smile. From check-in to checkout, the property doesn't fail to delight you with the thrills it serves you and that is its biggest superpower!



HEADS IN BEDS

Dubai's buoyant hospitality sector has been gearing up to host more than 20 million visitors at World Expo and it is expected that 25% of it will be contributed by the Indian travelers. What will be your key focus to get the maximum out of this market?

With the 25 million visitors expected to come to Dubai in the six-month period building up to Expo 2020, we see it as an opportunity to show the best of our incredible city to the world and grow Dubai's already strong tourism sector. Atlantis, The Palm, is so much more than just a hotel; it is a world-renowned entertainment destination with the region's number one waterpark, an incredible portfolio of F&B offerings and amazing once-in-a-lifetime experiences. Expo 2020 will afford us the chance to give even more international visitors the opportunity to enjoy the amazing experiences and everlasting memories that Atlantis, The Palm is known across the world for. We are constantly evolving in to keep abreast with our ever-changing city. Aside from our recent renovation programme we also plans to open Atlantis, The Royal – which will entice guests by adding new level of luxury to The Palm.

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

Since the reopening of the city to tourists on 7th July, Atlantis, The Palm has worked closely with the Dubai Authorities to ensure the highest standards of



Kyp Charalambous
Vice President - Sales
Atlantis Resorts, Dubai

cleanliness and sanitisation across the resort. The resort is amongst the first 29 hotels and resorts in the world to become Sharecare Health Security VERIFIED® with Forbes Travel Guide, and Atlantis, The Palm's revolutionary approach to safety, hygiene and cleanliness has been internationally certified by the Bureau Veritas Safeguard Label.

Since Atlantis, the Palm is the first entertainment resort destination in the Middle East it has earned a level admiration from its guests. What's the idea behind the Atlantis Atlantis, The Royal, which is set to debut in next few months?

We also couldn't be more excited for the launch of Atlantis, The Royal. Formerly known as The Royal Atlantis Resort & Residences, Atlantis, The Royal has undergone a major re-brand in the past 12 months. The hero brand that everyone knows and loves, is Atlantis, and, with this thinking in mind we wanted to ensure

that our new grand resort is led by Atlantis, the world-renowned brand that drives millions of visitors to Dubai. 'The Royal' will be the new sub-brand that embodies the more luxurious arm of Atlantis while still retaining the key essence of bringing the extraordinary to every holiday and experience. Both Atlantis, The Palm and Atlantis, The Royal will now sit under one iconic destination Atlantis Dubai.

The vision for Atlantis, The Royal was to create an 'icon' within an icon,' leveraging our very unique location on the crescent of The Palm with an unapparelled resort: Atlantis, The Royal. Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates (KPF), the team behind the design, were tasked embodying – and enhancing – the architectural wonders of Dubai. This has resulted in a unique 'S' shaped curve to the property which affords guests and residents the feeling that they are floating in the air above the beautiful blue sea of the Arabian Gulf. In simple terms, Atlantis, The Royal will forever change the landscape of not

only The Palm, but of Dubai as a whole.

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

India and Atlantis, The Palm is a fantastic success story. We have worked closely with the market since pre-opening, both in terms of sales and marketing and media relations and built a tremendous brand among consumers and travel industry partners, in metros and tier II and III towns. Remember that Priyanka Chopra officially inaugurated Atlantis, The Palm as Goddess of Atlantis during our grand opening, a mega event attended by many Indian film industry celebrities including Shah Rukh Khan, Priyanka Chopra. Atlantis has also been frequented by famous personalities like Dia Mirza, Shilpa Shetty and Arpita Khan.

The customer response has only grown and been solidified based on a strong business relationship and mutual respect over the many years. We work very closely with the travel industry and cannot thank the trade enough for their incredible support and fun promoting Atlantis, The Palm. We hosted multiple trade events and trade familiarisation trips, individual travel trade partners. Atlantis launched 'Atlantis on Tour' when we visited many cities in India, we attended large roadshows, smaller client events and have worked very closely across market segments and geographies.

PHOTOGRAPHY TO PURSUE STORIES OF LIFE

Being constantly inspired by nature, Savad Monk wants to inspire others through the stories he tells with his images. Savad believes great content and storytelling are the keys to success.

- Team TT



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

I love to photograph difficult destinations where you need to carry a backpack, equipment, food etc for several days. This is the reason I wanted to hike the Everest Base Camp in Nepal. Capturing the sleeping beauty of Mount Everest, Nepal will be a dream come true.

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

I get to travel a lot due to my photography and but the coolest opportunity has been that I get to do this full-time and meet so many inspiring people along the way.

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

It's very important. Giving the places I shoot some sort of justice in relation to what I see and capturing those moments is the hard part. I want to deliver a feeling, a feeling of being there right in the moment with me as I take the photo, I try to focus more on photos that tell a story through the images themselves. The subject I choose to take photos of I want to capture as natural as possible and I spend most of my time planning and look for good conditions to photograph them.



APERTURE

Temples of South India are really mesmerizing, having well-crafted sculpture, art, and architecture. Visiting them will not only ensure that the person gets to know the long, rich and glorious historical past of the country, but also the kind of dedication and devotion that is held by the people here.



Azhimala, Kerala



Bruges, Belgium

To Bruges with Love!

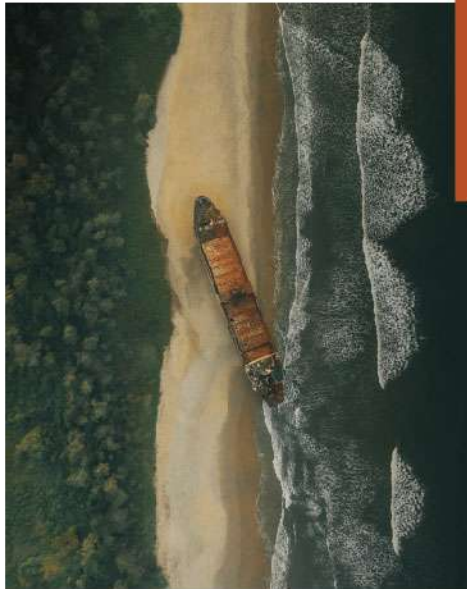
Germany

The longest walking bridge of Germany, stretching 360 meters from one end to the other. The views were incredible, and the bridge itself is a marvel.



Kannur, Kerala

Rusting in peace: This merchant vessel 'Ocean Ruler', weighing 500 tonnes ran ashore after breaking the tug following heavy torrential rain and strong wind that swept Kannur region in August 2019.



Kumarakom, Kerala



Malarikkal is a jewel that people in Kerala are only slowly awakening to themselves.

When the water lilies greet this terrain between September and October, a carpet of pleasant pink envelops the entire region in a breathtaking formation that is hard to explain with mere words

Saxony, Germany

Saxony is one of those places you could explore for months and still never feel like you have had enough.



Zaanse Schans, Holland

A memorable morning with windmills, wooden houses, green, and lots of memories. You'll always be remembered Windmill Country.

4 FUNDAMENTALS TO CHANNELISE BUSINESS IN CRISIS

Tourism is going through the biggest crisis in the history due to the impact of the COVID-19 and the damage caused by the pandemic is known to us, but the biggest question is what next? Post-pandemic there will be a massive transformation and that needs a better industry understanding to survive with the changing scenario in the days to come. Let's find out the four key factors for a basic understanding of how to restructure our existing travel business strategy.

- **Debjit Dutta, Director & CEO, Impression Tours & Services**



What comes after the crisis? You plan something new or review the existing resources. There is a big bottleneck; there has been less initiative taken in regards to the assessment of the damages caused because of the pandemic especially at the grass route level which is certainly more unorganized and challenging. The fact is without the assessment, we wouldn't be able to plan and restructure, and very less effort has been made by the

industry to take care of the damage. For a better understanding, I have categorised the opportunities into four basic categories:

Review

Crisis Management: This pandemic has offered us a viable period to review. Many are out of the business and, the most affected are the grass-roots stakeholders such as guides, naturalists, taxi drivers and other on

ground human resources who may have shifted their profession.

What we are going to be selling is based on two factors:

- i) Your existing resources
 - ii) A detail analysis of the change in market trends to assess the future demand.
- If the market trend changes, the demand will change and therefore, one has to analysis those demands and redo the infrastructure management and which demand they can cater to.

Reset

Be The Change: When you review your existing resources, you will understand the transformations that took place because of the impact of the COVID. Once you understand the transformation; you accordingly will reset your resources concerning the transformation.

Restructure

Product Discovery and up skilling: Once you understand the changing market trends and demand,

you will need to rearrange yourself. Looking at the demand, one needs to pay attention to what products will be selling, is there an adequate human resource to deliver the service at the ground level. The restructuring comes along with a lot of infrastructural changes, skill development initiatives, so that you ensure that the products you are planning to sell in the specific source market have the required infrastructure and skill human resources.

Revive

Visit 2025: We need a long-term vision. Since it is a new beginning, there should be a new strategy for five years to revive the business. Vision 2025 is important for the long-term recovery of the business.

The industry needs to follow these four steps, without which I believe we won't be able to revive in the right direction or sustain in the future. There are other factors as well which need a better understanding such as sustainability, understanding the changing scenario.





Qatar National Tourism Council (QNTC)

Qatar National Tourism Council (QNTC) has appointed Deveekaa Nijhawan to lead the International PR and Communications team. She will assist in marketing the destination in key markets as part of the country's strategy to become a world-leading tourism destination. Deveekaa's remit covers key markets including India, United Kingdom, Germany, Australia and United Arab Emirates with a focus on engaging and penetrating travel trade and consumer media.



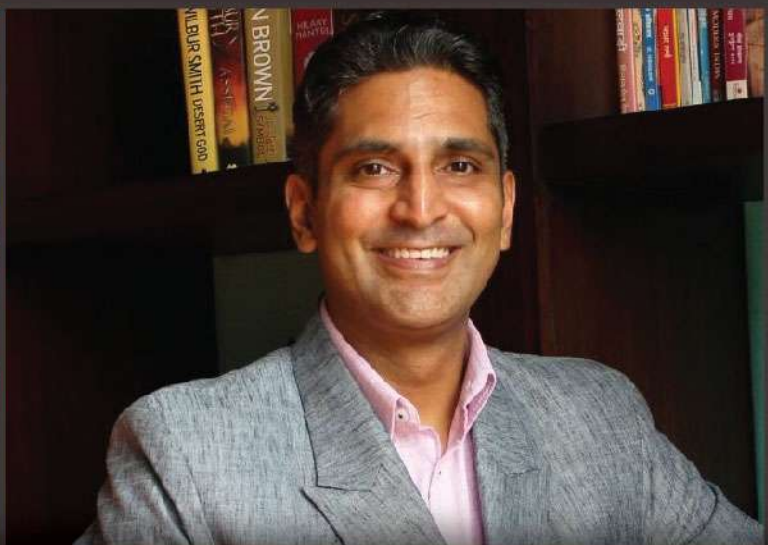
Atmosphere Group

Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts, a dynamic and fast-growing Indian Ocean hospitality group, announced the appointment of Souvagya Mohapatra as the Managing Director for India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan. This announcement signals significant growth plans, with a strong focus on the Indian Subcontinent. Souvagya Mohapatra's illustrious career began at The Oberoi Group, following which he spent most of his professional career with MAYFAIR Hotels & Resorts. He was instrumental in the MAYFAIR Group's growth to twelve renowned luxury properties.



Radisson Blue Resort Dharamshala

Siddharth Shanker Giri, a seasoned hospitality sales professional, is appointed Director of Sales at Radisson Blu Resort Dharamshala. With over two decades in hospitality, Siddharth has worked with leading hotel brands including Holiday Inn Resort Goa, Hilton Hotels, Pride Group of Hotels, Sarovar Hotels, Eros Hotel New Delhi and Cidade De Goa (now IHCL). He has held various positions across corporate and regional brand set-ups as well as at unit hotels. His last assignment was with The Suryaa New Delhi where he led a successful sales strategy towards the hotel's revenue objectives.



Raffles Udaipur

Raffles Udaipur, the brand's first upcoming hotel in India, appoints Abhishek Sharma as General Manager. Sharma is a well-recognised leader with over two decades of outstanding experience in luxury hospitality and has an exceptional network across the industry. In his new role, he will be leading the task of introducing the legendary Raffles brand to the country, and taking charge of operations for Raffles Udaipur.

FM announces support to tourism sector – ₹10 lakh loan to travel agencies

Finance Minister has announced financial support to more than 11,000 registered tourist guides, travel and tourism stakeholders. Tourism stakeholders to get a loan guarantee of up to ₹10,00,000 and tourist guides to get loan guarantees of up to ₹1,00,000. The scheme will cover 10,700 regional level tourist guides recognised by the Ministry of Tourism and tourist guides recognised by the state

govt. 904 travel and tourism stakeholders will also be covered.

"The first 5 lakh tourist visas to India will be free of cost, costing the government ₹100 crore," quotes Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sithrman.

FM has announced 8 economic relief measures to help tide over the economic slowdown aided by the second wave of

covid-19. Under these economic relief measures, the Finance Minister announced ₹1.1 lakh crore worth of loan guarantees for covid-affected sectors.

FICCI urges the govt to support the travel industry in resolving urgent liquidity crisis

FICCI has once again appealed to the government for the moratorium on all working capital, principal, interest payments, loans and overdrafts which ended in August 2020 to be extended by another 1 year i.e. August 2021. The RBI's resolution framework, which was prepared during the first wave of the pandemic, needs to be reviewed. With the continued impact of the second wave, it will take a minimum of 4-5 years for the hotel industry to see a return to some semblance of normalcy in its operations. In this situation, the

period of restructuring and the ratios needs to be reviewed. It is imperative that the period of restructuring for this sector be extended till March 2024 – 2025.

FICCI has also requested the government to increase the repayment tenure of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme ("ECLGS") to 8 years (4 years moratorium plus 4 years repayment). The tour operators, who are among the worst affected in this sector, are in dire need of the Service Exports from India Scheme (SEIS) scrips for the financial



Union Finance Minister
Nirmala Sithrman

year 2018-2019 which is still due to be paid to them. This will help them to somewhat stay afloat through the crisis.

The deferment of GST and advance tax payments at the Central Government level and removal of fees for any upcoming licenses, permits/ renewal and bailout packages to fund and support salaries of the employees will also provide some relief

RBI opens ₹15,000 cr liquidity window for hotels, aviation & tourism

In a bid to support the revival of sectors hit most by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Reserve Bank of India on Friday decided to open a separate liquidity window of ₹15,000 crore for certain contact-intensive sectors like hotels and restaurants, tourism and aviation ancillary services.

"In order to mitigate the adverse impact of the second wave of the pandemic on certain contact-intensive sectors, a separate liquidity window of ₹15,000 crore is being opened till March 31, 2022, with tenures of up to three years at the repo rate," RBI Governor

Shaktikanta Das said while announcing the bi-monthly monetary policy.

Under the scheme, banks can provide fresh lending support to hotels and restaurants; tourism – travel agents, tour operators and adventure/heritage facilities; aviation ancillary services – ground handling and supply chain; and other services that include private bus operators, car repair services, rent-a-car service providers, event/conference organisers, spa clinics, and beauty parlours/salons, he said.

Rajiv Mehra, President, IATO shares, "We welcome the announcement by the RBI offering loans to the tourism and Hospitality sector on easy terms and a lower rate of interest. Hope tour operators who have had almost zero income for past more than one year would get some succour out of it. Also, we would request the government to announce SEIS (Service Export Incentive Scheme) which is now pending for the financial year 2019-20. Besides we expect some grants for the revival of the battered tourism sector and rationalisation of GST."



Rajiv Mehra



EaseMyTrip, OYO, Yatra, and others launch a travel association called CHATT

Confederation of Hospitality, Technology and Tourism Industry (CHATT) is an industry body of travel and hospitality tech players such as Airbnb, EaseMyTrip, OYO and Yatra, who have come together to help smaller operators in the tourism sector, said the industry needs to be ready for all kinds of travellers and offer them varied choices. Culture and Tourism Minister Prahlad Patel lauded the efforts of the new-age technology, travel and hospitality companies that have come together to promote the interest of the smallest and often under-represented operators and work together with the

government on various fronts in this space.

The association comprises a startup founders and business leaders such as Ritesh Aggarwal, Founder & Group CEO, OYO, Amanpreet Bajaj, General Manager, Airbnb – India, Southeast Asia, Hong Kong and Taiwan, Nishant Pitti, Co-Founder & CEO – EaseMyTrip.com, Rohit Kapoor, CEO – OYO India & Southeast Asia; and Dhruv Shringi, Co-Founder and CEO – Yatra.com.

Less than 10 per cent of the actual stakeholders only shall benefit as per the FMs package: TAAI

Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), the premier, nodal and largest Travel and Tourism Association in India.

With the Union Finance Minister Smt Nirmala Sitharaman announcing the Relief package to boost Indian Economy in the fight against Covid-19 for Travel and Tourism Stakeholders on 28th June 2021, TAAI had expected that the Government undertakes their suggestions for more direct relief for its member stakeholders, so as to support and encourage overall stakeholders, rather than limiting to 904 Travel & Tourism Stakeholders (TTS) registered with MoT.

TAAI has been recommending to its members to register with MoT over the years but the process is tedious and requires a lot of documentation, which discourages ease of doing business.

Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI,

states, "We expected much more than what was announced. However, we believe the relief has focused more on domestic and inbound travel and only those registered with the Ministry of Tourism (904). It is pertinent to note that with over 3000 members of TAAI alone, only those registered with MoT shall benefit. Our members have applied for MoT recognition and due to the pandemic over 200 have still not been approved. Most of the members engaged in Domestic tourism are registered with State Tourisms, with specific concentration to their regions. The outreach of this relief is minuscule."



IF IT'S MONDAY IT MUST BE MADURAI:

A conducted Tour of India by Srinath Perur

- Saloni Bhatia

As we all patiently wait for our favourite destinations to open their borders, I thought there was no better way to travel than through the pages of a book. Therefore, after a short research, I decided to read a travelogue by Srinath Perur that takes you on a journey of ten conducted tours across India.

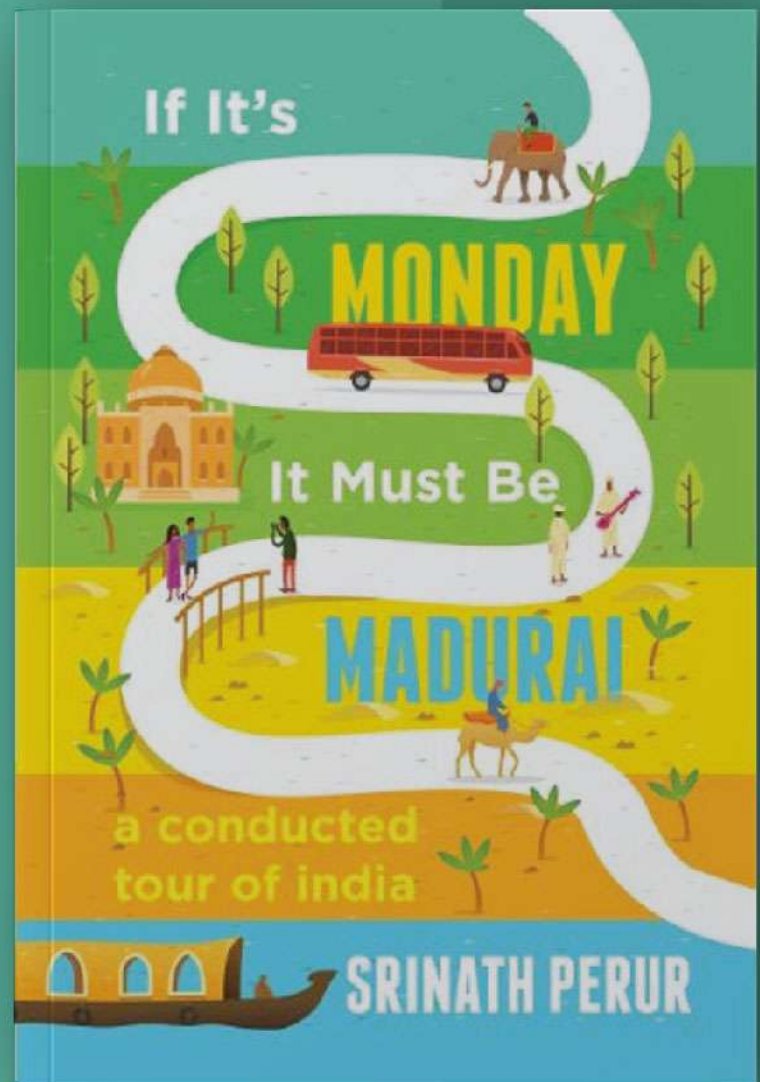
A first person narrative, the book is an easy read, where each chapter takes you on a tour to some unexplored places. Published in 2013 by Penguin Books India, the book is still entertaining, with its stories of hanging on to camels in the Thar and rediscovering music on the trail of Kabir. Perur, who writes on travel, science, cities and culture for various publications beautifully captures the plight of travelling on a conducted tour and meeting people from various regions.

Witty and humorous, his writing is a perfect reflection of his experiences while travelling with strangers in a country like India, briefly

taking you on his travel journeys across the world. Be it temple hopping in Tamil Nadu, racing through treasured sights in Europe or crossing root bridges in Cherrapunji, is enriching at the same time equally fun to read about.

Travelling in packed tours on a time bound itinerary has always been a thrilling adventure packed with emotions resulting in a deck full of memories. The book highlights this adventurous journey when a traveller finalizes on a tour and is all set with his checklist and camera to witness the beauty of a place. The essence of a place is often reflected through the people and the writer is able to capture it to the very core.

I was very keen on knowing the idea behind the title of the book and Perur didn't disappoint revealing it through one of the stories. For me the travelogue also became an interesting insight on how the travel economies have changed and reformed over the years. And yet travellers expectations, behaviour and goals revolve around



the same factors. Easily available in both digital and print medium, book yourself on a fun journey across the world through the pages of, "If its Monday, it must be Madurai."



Best Seat Comfort in the Middle East

**APEX
AWARD
2020**

Wonderful Indonesia



Shaping Up to Herald A New
Dawn in the Land of Fascinating
Diversities!

Know more
www.indonesia.travel

wonderful
indonesia 

The logo for Wonderful Indonesia, featuring a stylized white graphic element that resembles a flame or a bird in flight, positioned to the right of the text.