

TRAVEL turtle

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DARK TOURISM UNFOLDING THE RUINOUS EVENTS OF HUMAN HISTORY

- THE TWISTY TRAIL OF UTTARAKHAND
- PAINT IT RED AT LA TOMATINA FESTIVAL
- CAPTURING THE EXQUISITE SOLITARY BEAUTY OF

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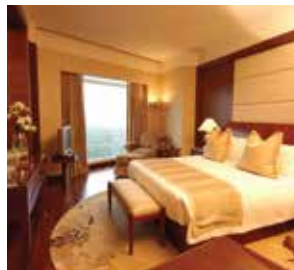


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Editor's Letter

Travel magazines have traditionally revolved around exploring, networking and discovering newer tangents the world has to offer. Fundamentally, the exact opposite of how our industry has functioned and adapted in the past 1.5 years. It's surreal and uneasy at times but fueled with learning and transformation, right?

Though our reporters are not swarmed with events and seminars, which was a regular affair in pre-covid days but nonetheless we've left no stone unturned to cover the expanse of destinations and pen ground-breaking stories. After the deadly second wave, with apprehensions of a third wave, we are spreading our proverbial wings and taking off spreading positivity and optimism. This month, we are celebrating 75 years of Independence and this generates fresh hope for the tourism industry as well, making it even more imperative for us to get the spirits of this day.

Some series such as the Chernobyl tragedy and tourists thronging to similar carastrophic sites have introduced the concept of dark tourism in the minds of many tourists around the world. But what exactly is dark tourism, its inception and how can you be a 'good' dark tourist? We've got all your doubts covered in this issue. Right from the cosmopolitan Qatar, the once-in-a-lifetime La Tomatina food clash experience, to untainted Jibhi in Himachal, our team has collated the best experiences and propositions for our readers.

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

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

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

Marketing: **Tejas Sharma**

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

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12-15 DARK TOURISM

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42-45 HIMACHAL PRADESH

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India gets 40th UNESCO World Heritage site

Featuring a fortified city and a cemetery, the ancient city of Dholavira in the Indian state of Gujarat was occupied between around 3000-1500 BC. It is one of the best preserved urban settlements from the period in Southeast Asia. Announcing the decision of the World Heritage Committee, UNESCO said Dholavira's water management system, multi-layered defensive mechanisms, extensive use of stone in construction and special burial structures set the ancient city apart from other cultural sites.

Shri G Kishan Reddy, Minister of Tourism and Culture called the latest inscription another feather in India's cap as the country entered the "Super-40 club" for World Heritage inscriptions. Reddy said India has added 10 new World Heritage sites, one-fourth of India's total sites on UNESCO's list.



TAFI elections 2021: Ajay Prakash is the new President

The members of TAFI have chosen a new team to power. Ajay Prakash from Nomad Travels has been elected as the new President of the Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI). The election was conducted today ie July 24, 2021, through e-voting.

The elected Office Bearers are:

- Ajay Prakash – President
- Kamal Ramchand – Vice President
- Abbas Moiz – National General Secretary
- Hitank Shah – Treasurer
- Anil Kalsi – Managing Committee
- Lalith Jain – Managing Committee
- Rani Bachani – Managing Committee
- Rai Achal Krishna – Managing Committee
- Seeraj Sabharwal – Managing Committee

SriLankan Airlines returns to Moscow with direct flights

SriLankan Airlines the National Carrier of Sri Lanka and a member of the oneworld alliance is delighted to announce the commencement of direct flights between Sri Lanka and Russia today. The inaugural flight was ceremonially greeted with a water salute at Domodedovo Airport (DME) in Moscow. The airline is resuming flights to the Russian capital after a break of 6 years, between Colombo's Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA) and Moscow's Domodedovo Airport (DME).

Accordingly, SriLankan would operate its flights to Russia every Friday using an Airbus A330 configured for 269 economy and 28 business class seats. The frequency of operation will be once a week, having a flight time of around 08 hours and 25 minutes.





Cordelia Cruises all set to resume sailing operations from September

With the coronavirus situation improving after the unprecedented second wave, Cordelia cruises are all set to resume sailing operations from September 2021. While their maiden cruise was cancelled by the deadly second wave, the team is upbeat and cautiously optimistic that they can travel freely again. "The second wave led to the cancellation of our initial sailing plans but we were equipped to handle such exigencies. Our team is

in touch with guests who have booked with us, and we are regularly checking on the status of their health and vaccination. Safety is the most crucial word in travel today" says Jurgen Bailom, CEO & President for Waterways Leisure Tourism Private Limited who also added that the response from the guests to the new itineraries has been overwhelming and extremely encouraging.

Civil Aviation gives approval for setting up of 21 Greenfield Airports across the country.

The Government has taken several measures for reforms in the Civil Aviation sector of the country by providing top-class infrastructure and facilities. The Government has also provided support to the aviation sector which includes various initiatives. AAI has taken up a development programme to spend around Rs. 25,000 crores in next 4-5 years for expansion and modification of existing terminals, new terminals, expansion or strengthening of existing runways, aprons, Airport Navigation Services (ANS), control towers, technical blocks etc. to meet the expected growth in the aviation sector. Government has accorded 'in-principle' approval for setting up 21 Greenfield Airports across the country. So far, six Greenfield airports namely, Shirdi in Maharashtra, Durgapur in West Bengal, Pakyong in Sikkim, Kannur in Kerala, Orvakal in Andhra Pradesh and Kalaburagi in Karnataka have been operationalized.



No hotel quarantine for vaccinated flyers as UK eases travel curbs, moves India from 'red' to 'amber' list

As the COVID-19 cases in India recede, the United Kingdom has decided to ease the restrictions imposed on the Indian flyers entering the UK. Now, fully vaccinated flyers from India will no longer be subjected to compulsory 10-day hotel quarantine as the UK moved the country from its 'red' to 'amber' list. Under Britain's traffic light system for international travel, returning from amber list countries means a 10-day quarantine at home. The change, announced by the Department for

Transport, comes into effect from 4 am local time on Sunday. "The UAE, Qatar, India and Bahrain will be moved from the red list to the amber list. All changes come into effect Sun 8th August at 4am. While its right we continue our cautious approach, its great news to open more destinations for people wanting to connect with families, friends and businesses across the globe, all thanks to our successful domestic vaccination programme," UK Transport Secretary tweeted.





Veteran Aditya Ghosh joins Rakesh Jhunjunwala's new airline business

As per the latest reports, Former Indigo President and aviation veteran and Aditya Ghosh will join Rakesh Jhunjunwala in his upcoming venture. Prime investor Jhunjunwala is said to be planning to launch an ultra-low-cost-airline named Akasa. This model is already successful and aggressive in the aviation business globally. As per the reports, Aditya will own around 10% of the airline and Jhunjunwala will invest \$35 million and would own 40 per

cent of the firm as he believes more people will travel through the air going forward.

Many aviation veterans are said to be joining the Akasa in notable positions. A few of them are Jet Airways Senior VP Praveen Iyer as the COO, Former GoAir Revenue Management VP Anand Srinivasan as CTO, and Former Jet flight operations VP Floyd Gracious in a similar role. Industry veteran Neelu Khatri is expected to be the Head of Corporate Affairs.

India's first Raffles hotel opens its doors on August 2

Raffles Udaipur, India's first Raffles hotel, opens on August 2, 2021, offering a fresh perspective on the city of Udaipur and the region of Rajasthan from a 21-acre private island set in the middle of the serene Uda Sagar lake. Away from the hustle and bustle of the city, the expansive

property is reminiscent of a magnificent country estate, with beautifully manicured, ornamental gardens and panoramic views of the surrounding hills, a tranquil lake and a 400-year-old temple. Arrival is via a scenic 20-minute drive from the airport, followed by a calming boat ride tailed by

migratory birds, as a natural spectacle unfolds before the eyes of visiting guests. The hotel itself is an architectural marvel of 101 luxurious rooms, suites and signature suites that elegantly interweaves western cultural references with Rajasthan's royal heritage and elements of Mughal

architecture. Guestrooms have uninterrupted lake views, private gardens, balconies, plunge pools and an east-west design aesthetic with murals, handcrafted furniture and other crafts by local artisans.





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DARK TOURISM UNFOLDING THE RUINOUS EVENTS OF HUMAN HISTORY

Tragedies, horror and massacres have always attracted human's interest and stirred up curiosity. This, to a level, illustrates the rising popularity of dark tourism in recent years.

- Bharti Sharma

For centuries, people have been drawn to death and tragedy. Right from the Roman Colosseum, where death was a spectator activity to Halloween's ancient birth in a Celtic festival of the dead, dark tourism may seem like a predominantly exasperating form of voyeurism, it's not that

uncomplicated to comprehend. It goes by more than one terminology, often termed as 'milking the macabre', the 'dark side of tourism' and 'tragedy tourism'. Dark Tourism is not straightforward, as there's a pool of human emotions attached to it and none of the emotions, practically define

to pleasure. Dark tourism is not a recent phenomena, it existed even before it got its official name in 1990 when few academicians coined the term while doing their research on assassination of JFK. In basic term, tourism that includes the sight-seeing of places that have encountered genocide,

assassinations, war or disaster — either natural or accidental is dark tourism. Many surveys have reflected that visiting sites that have witnessed destruction and annihilation gives us the opportunity to confront our fears and despair while still feeling some level of safety.

Dark view of Arquata del Tronto medieval village in the marche region destroyed by earthquake of Amatrice



THE DARK SITES

When it comes to vacations, there are people that head to places that have witnessed some of history's darkest hours to check out sites of atrocities, accidents, natural disasters or infamous deaths. The 9/11 memorial in New York, the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Cambodia, Bran Castle and Poienari Castle in Romania, Jack the Ripper exhibition, Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar and Chernobyl in Ukraine are some of the destinations that top the list in this unique genre of tourism. Somehow, cities that have undergone tragic nuclear disasters in the past such as Fukushima in Japan and Pripjat in Ukraine classify into

unexpected favourites in this category. Though all this might still seem strange to a lot of us, it's not really a newfound segment as people have been visiting such sights for a long time now. There are accounts where swathes of tourists visited the Battle of Gettysburg even before the bodies were cleared away.

Syria is probably the latest entrant in the club; starting to attract a segment of tourists who wish to encounter the survivors of war and their stories.

Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland, once used by Nazi Germany to oppress, imprison and murder millions of Jews is again one of the most-visited sights.

The Pripjat amusement park was set to open May 1, 1986, but the April 26 Chernobyl disaster prevented it from ever opening.





Visit to Auschwitz concentration camp during a sunny day in Poland

TWO SIDES OF A COIN

There is no doubt about the fact that any destination offering dark tourism echoes of the horrendous memories of suffering and death in the past. Given these circumstances, the coordination and organisation of tours in such areas play a significant role. The local communities have tragedies

attached to these sites so respecting their sentiments, emotions, thoughts and perceptions becomes highly imperative as regular visitations of tourists can irk them or act as a constant reminder of the disaster or incident they've been through. This can act as a deterrent in their psychological process of

moving on.

At the same time, one also needs to identify that the purpose of dark tourism is rather very affirmative. The tourists visit these dark sites and memorialize the victims. Along with that, they also educate themselves with the accounts of the events, which is an enlightening experience

in itself. This is the reason why we see a lot of these sites being named as memorials, remembrance for heritage and edification. Conflicting thoughts like this are a vital and inevitable attribute of dark tourism, as the stigma of death and tragedy may or may not be repugnant to the local residents.



UNDERSTANDING THE EXISTENCE

A right perspective is necessary to understand this subject as it can play a significant role in the process of recovery for the destination. Increasing tourism activities at such places, which would otherwise be linked with negative exposure, helps in reviving the destination in terms of economy and also helps the communities morally, economically and can further empower them. One also needs to differentiate between promoting these dark sites for their relevance

and economic stability and exploiting human misery for monetary gain. While some sites can be commercialized, some cannot; the dark tourism has two varieties of tourists namely 'schadenfreude' - garnering pleasure from seeing others' adversity, and 'thanatopsis' - fascinated with under covering the meaning of loss and consider such places sacred. So, apparently, 'schadenfreude' type should be avoided and ethics as a virtue should be given a priority while visiting such places.



Hiroshima's A-Bomb Dome is an enduring symbol of the post-1945 city



Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, Ukraine

WORD OF ADVICE

Nowadays, with the combination of digital revolution and mass tourism, there's much more awareness about this sensitive and fragile form of tourism. The hit US drama 'Chernobyl' brought a new generation of tourists to the nuclear disaster zone. It is believed that the number of

tourists increased by 30 to 40 percent.

Indisputably, it is an uphill task for tourism organizations and the communities to develop dark tourism at dark sites in the most organized manner. Also, it's apparent that not every tourist knows and would adhere to the requisite ethics

and behavior for dark tourism sites. So, there comes a need of admirable approach to rejuvenate this segment. It has come to knowledge that there are tour operators arranging trips to active war zones in order to give their travelers the real warzone experience, which is not just illegal but

inhuman in more than one ways and the worst example of voyeurism. Dark tourism might be the most unique thing tourism has to offer but as much as this category is exciting, it needs more caution and management as we're dealing with emotions and horrors of the highest order

THE TWISTY
TRAIL OF

Uttarakhand

The unmatched beauty, soothing romantic breeze, misty mountains, green meadows, enchanting clouds make Uttarakhand an impeccable paradise. Every terrain has many stories to narrate, to be explored and experienced. Let's unfold the various shades of this majestic land and discover the enthralling beauty.

- Sudipta Saha

As we drive down the twisty turns of this magnificent state, Uttarakhand, we can feel the vibes of spiritualism in the atmosphere. Referred as a 'Dev Bhoomi', Uttarakhand has remarkably positioned itself as a pilgrimage destination, and why not, in Hindu mythology, it is considered as the home of

Lord Shiva. Gradually, the destination has turned into a favourable adventure destination, offering an array of adventure sports such as rafting, trekking, camping, etc. Well, exploration is like a seven-course meal, it keeps coming on your platter, and Uttarakhand creates that appetite.



THE EXPLORATION BEGINS HERE

Uttarakhand will leave you spellbound, and its alluring landscape will leave you speechless. The destination has been the most preferred hub for spiritual enlightenment and divine experiences, "Inevitably, the pilgrimage and spirituality are still top on the list, but the adventure enthusiasts and solitude seekers have also started to explore the state for an adrenaline rush. The river rafting in Rishikesh, difficult trek of upper regions such as 'Kedarkantha', 'Valley of Flowers' or fairs and festivals like Magh Mela, Nanda Devi Mela, Purnagiri Mela, Phool Dei Festival, Harela, and Bhitauli Mela, Kumauni Holi, Mahasu Parv and other such events have been successful in attracting the tourists," adds Shri Dilip Jawalkar, Chief Executive Officer, Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board.



Shri Dilip Jawalkar

Over the years, travel trends have changed and travellers now intend to discover something which is untapped and unexplored. It's time to think beyond Mussoorie, Nainital, or even Rishikesh, there are ample of hidden gems such as Binsar,

Chaukori, Munsiyari, Mandal, Khati Village, Khirsu, Khurpatal, Mana Village, Binsar, Hemkund, Dharchula, Chakrata, Chopta, Harsil, Chamoli, etc. Adding further, Shri Dilip Jawalkar mentions, "When Uttarakhand was formed other than pilgrimage only a few of its hill stations such as Mussoorie, Nainital, or Ranikhet were popular among the tourists. However, over the years many of its hidden gems are getting immense attraction. Tourists are keen to explore the virgin landscapes of the state. They look for places with minimum footfall and search for a destination not earlier known or travelled in the past."

A BLEND OF EXPERIENCES

The diversified experiences of the state have attracted nearly three and a half crore tourists in the year 2018

including people from our country and foreign. Similarly, in 2019 the percentage increased and reached nearly four crores.

Uttarakhand has attracted all kinds of travellers from all around the country, but it has also attracted legends such as Swami Vivekananda or The Beatles. As per one of the studies, adventure tourism is the biggest draw for the state — 55 percent of domestic and 80 percent of foreign adventure seekers landed here in 2006. The next big crowd puller is pilgrim tourism. There has been a consistent rise in the number of pilgrims visiting the Char Dhams over the past few years with 2006 seeing an almost 20 percent raise over the figure of 2005. As many as 16,75,500 tourists visited the Char Dhams (Gangotri, Yamunotri, Badrinath, and

Kedarnath) in 2006 in comparison to 13,41,300 pilgrims, who undertook the pilgrimage in 2005. This gives us an idea of how Uttarakhand was being experienced and how it can be explored in today's time and time to come.



Ravi Gosain

On the same lines, Ravi Gosain, Managing Director, Erco Travels, shares that traditionally, Uttarakhand is known as a religious

INDIAN SAGA

destination or an acronym 'Dev Dhumi'. But, off lately, the state has come up as a preferred leisure destination and is promoting newer destinations that are yet to be explored. But the problem is the infrastructure while promoting other leisure destinations. There's a line of difference between the pilgrimage tourists and other travellers, pilgrims have a respective focus but leisure requires an improved and proper infrastructure. He further mentions, "Uttarakhand is an experiential destination, the state is an apt spot for all kinds of travellers, either it is an adventure seeker, or a nature lover, or someone looking for a spiritual delight. But, we at Erco have created a theme for Uttarakhand, a mix of spirituality, yoga, and rejuvenation. A getaway for health benefits and mental peace, it is an abode located in the lap of nature which makes it a nature paradise. Therefore, we promote Uttarakhand as an eco-tourist destination together with spiritualism, yoga and meditation, and rejuvenation."

THE HERITAGE WAY

As tourism has flourished in this Himalayan state, the infrastructure is gearing up to be able to provide a comfortable stay and a mesmerising ride to its travellers. Many hotels and resorts have come up in the years, and now all range of homestays are available but have you ever thought of enjoying the sunrise and sunset between the mountains from the vicinity of a royal mansion. Isn't that

alluring? Uttarakhand nestles mansions, palaces that offer the royal charm blended with nature.

Among the list of heritage properties, WelcomHeritage Kasmanda Palace Hotel is one of the oldest in the town of Mussoorie and offers a regal experience to the guests. This royal mansion has very gracefully merged an experience of the bygone era and classy hospitality together. Dinkar Pratap Singh, Owner, WH Kasmanda Palace adds, "We are a 19th-century Victorian abode, known to offer a vintage charm to our guests. Heritage Hotels is a very niche market and these hotels are the private residences that over the years have been converted into heritage hotels or for commercial purposes. Every heritage hotels are unique in itself; the charm, the architecture, the authenticity,

and the experience are different. Like our property, the Kasmanda Palace has a chronological story behind it, a distinctive culture attached, and an architecture that speaks a lot. Being the only estate in the city, we offer a lovely view, an open sitting lawn, and the flavour of local cuisine, all together with a different and unmatched experience." The pandemic has hit the travel industry, but as the states are easing the restrictions and ongoing vaccination has boosted domestic travel and the upsurge is phenomenal. The new norm at the moment is exploration and experiences, and people are exploring destinations such as Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Adding to it, Dinkar Pratap Singh shares, "Today, Indian tourists desire to explore and experience the authenticity for which

they bypass the cost factor. Domestic travel in India has encouraged people to travel through our own country. India is bestowed with numerous stunning spots, and there are ample of undiscovered sites, monuments, temples, etc. Uttarakhand is one such destination that has not been commercially exploited and has an abundance of hidden and unexplored destinations."



Dinkar Pratap Singh



INITIATIVES

Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board is aggressively working towards the development of touristic sites, their motto is to develop all destinations of the state sustainably and provide visibility to each so that tourists can explore and choose the location as per their preferences. Sharing more on the initiatives taken by Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board, Shri Dilip Jawalkar states, "We have launched the 'Deen Dayal Upadhyay Homestay Scheme' to boost rural tourism and create opportunities for locals to add new ways to generate livelihood. Under this scheme, we are providing Rs 60,000 to build a new homestay structure and an amount of Rs 25000 for the renovation of the existing

rooms for a homestay. The scheme has been successful in exploring new unknown places. Then another initiative is '13 districts 13 destinations' wherein we are endorsing one destination in each district of the state to cater for tourists."

To encourage experiential tourism UTDB is working in all dimensions. From better connectivity to roads, all are under place to give tourists comfort during their stays. The homestay schemes are working to develop the existing infrastructure of abandoned homes that have the potential to accommodate tourists. "Other than that, we are developing ropeways for ease in road congestion and better connectivity to reach the destination without hampering the environment of the state. We are also

connecting different destinations through tourism circuits so that tourists can visit places with more ease and comfort. For promoting adventure tourism in Uttarakhand, the government has recently launched Trekking Traction Centre Scheme. Under this, we are developing conventional centers for trekkers and adventure lovers visiting Uttarakhand. This will not only develop the surrounding and generate employment but will also provide necessary help to the old and budding trekkers," highlights Shri Dilip Jawalkar.

The tourism policy 2001 of the state was revived in the year 2018, based on a comprehensive analysis of the opportunities and challenges in the sector and factors in the trends and developments in the global tourism landscape. The policy accords industry status to tourism, opening up a plethora of incentives for investors. Small scale investments of up to Rs 10 crores are being incentivised under the MSME category, whereas large-scale investments up to Rs 75 crores, up to Rs 200 crores, and above Rs 200 crores are being provided benefit via Large, Mega, and Ultra mega categories respectively. Elaborating more on the investment opportunities, Smt Poonam Chand, Additional Director, Uttarakhand Tourism, says, "Entire process from registration of the business to claiming the incentives can be done online. The state's ease of doing ranking has improved tremendously from

23rd rank in 2015 to 11th rank in 2020. Complete information related to applying for all these incentives is available at the Uttarakhand tourism official web portal. The tourism department also has a dedicated investment promotion team to provide the investors with end-to-end facilitation and guidance at every stage," she further adds, "The Uttarakhand Tourism Policy - 2018 has also been integrated with State's Skill Development Mission (UKSDM). The provisions for joint skilling and capacity-building programs that create livelihood are being promoted, and the policy encourages investors to hire skilled manpower from local communities. UTDB reimburses 100 per cent course fee of incumbents/ trainees belonging to women, disadvantaged, underprivileged, and economically weaker sections of the society in tourism and allied domains."



Smt Poonam Chand

UNIQUE OFFERINGS

Uttarakhand is a complete package ranging from wildlife, nature, adventure, wellness; it has it all. The range of offerings and itineraries makes it a must-visit destination filled with beautiful experiences. "Our itineraries/packages are curated as per the requirements of our trade partner/guest. We try to avail our unique experience to introduce our guests to the beauty and Spiritual factor of Dev Bhoomi Uttarakhand. We also organise some spiritual tours to Char Dham, Panch Kedar along with cultural tours. In terms of adventure, we offer visits to famous national parks such as Corbett National Park, Rajaji National Park, and also offer some energetic and entertaining activities such as Rafting, Flying fox, Rock climbing, Bunging jumping, and many more. If the guests are looking for some peace, special Yoga and Meditation or Spa and rejuvenation activities are organised for them. We offer numerous packages related to specific destinations such as Kumaon Packages, Garhwal packages, Valley of Flower tour Package, Auli and Chopta Package, Yoga and Wellness Packages, and Food tours too," elaborates Anjeet Kumar, Founder & Director, Annanda holidays & Joint Secretary, Tour Operator Association Uttarakhand.



Anjeet Kumar

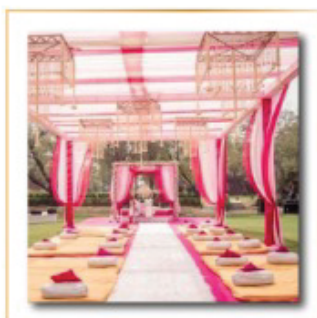




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‘Incredible India’ needs a topical and futuristic touch

The Indian travel and tourism sector is navigating through an unprecedented crisis, managing businesses in distress with a question mark on the future. Subhash Goyal, President - Confederation of Tourism Professionals and Chairman -STIC Travel & Air Charter Group talks to Travel Turtle.

- Bharti Sharma

India is uniquely placed when it comes to experiential tourism; this could be an attribute of the post-Covid era, given the country's rich cultural diversity and heritage. Describing the current crisis in the global tourism sector as distressing, Goyal predicts that it will bounce back with a vengeance and flourish owing to the human desire to explore. "There will be a great opportunity for

Incredible India because of the anticipated 'revenge travel' once the health crisis is controlled, which will help the sector in reviving," he asserts. However he also asserts the importance of timely announcement of tourist e-visa dates and scheduled international flights by the government, which in return would impact the industry's business and opportunities this year i.e. 2021. "It's high

time the government takes a precise bold approach and begins the process as any further delay might result in the progressive damage of the industry which can only be revived at a great cost." He added that tourism has to move towards digitalisation, which will be a driver and determinant of success for many of the stakeholders in the sector. Goyal laid emphasis on the importance of right projection of our

tourism campaign. He says, "There should be an aggressive marketing campaign jointly by the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Commerce with active involvement of all the Indian missions abroad for the campaign to deliver expected results. It should focus on electronic and social media marketing in those countries where maximum people have been





to all the tour operators so that they can begin the process of recouping their lost ground. Transporters and Tourist Guides, which are the hardest hit and lie at the bottom of the chain, need to be financially supported at the earliest. It is very unfortunate that about 21 million people have lost their jobs and thousands of tour operators and travel agents are on the verge of bankruptcy. The Government needs to intervene in order to save our industry and the country from an economic crisis."

Subhash Goyal

India is home to a rich culture, heritage, archaeology and nature, which puts the country in a unique spot as it can provide the people experiences that can help them rediscover themselves. The pandemic has also given us the opportunity to re-evaluate, think beyond the conventional, which would facilitate in establishing a framework that drives economic development in the country. Being optimistic about the future, Goyal tells, "If our borders are opened up and travel restrictions are removed then I see inbound tourism bouncing back. However, in order to reach the 2019 level it will still take us a year after the borders are opened."

vaccinated. They also need to jointly work with the industry in order to project across a safe ecosystem, that all tourist sites and hotels in India are maintaining the necessary health and safety protocols."

Since the rules are slippery and circumstances are impossible to predict, it's difficult to foresee the immediate future of the travel industry. Goyal points out that a lot of travel agencies and tourist

transporters are in a bad financial position, an interest-free one year moratorium is a must for them to stay afloat. He also added, "SEIS which has already been announced, should be immediately paid



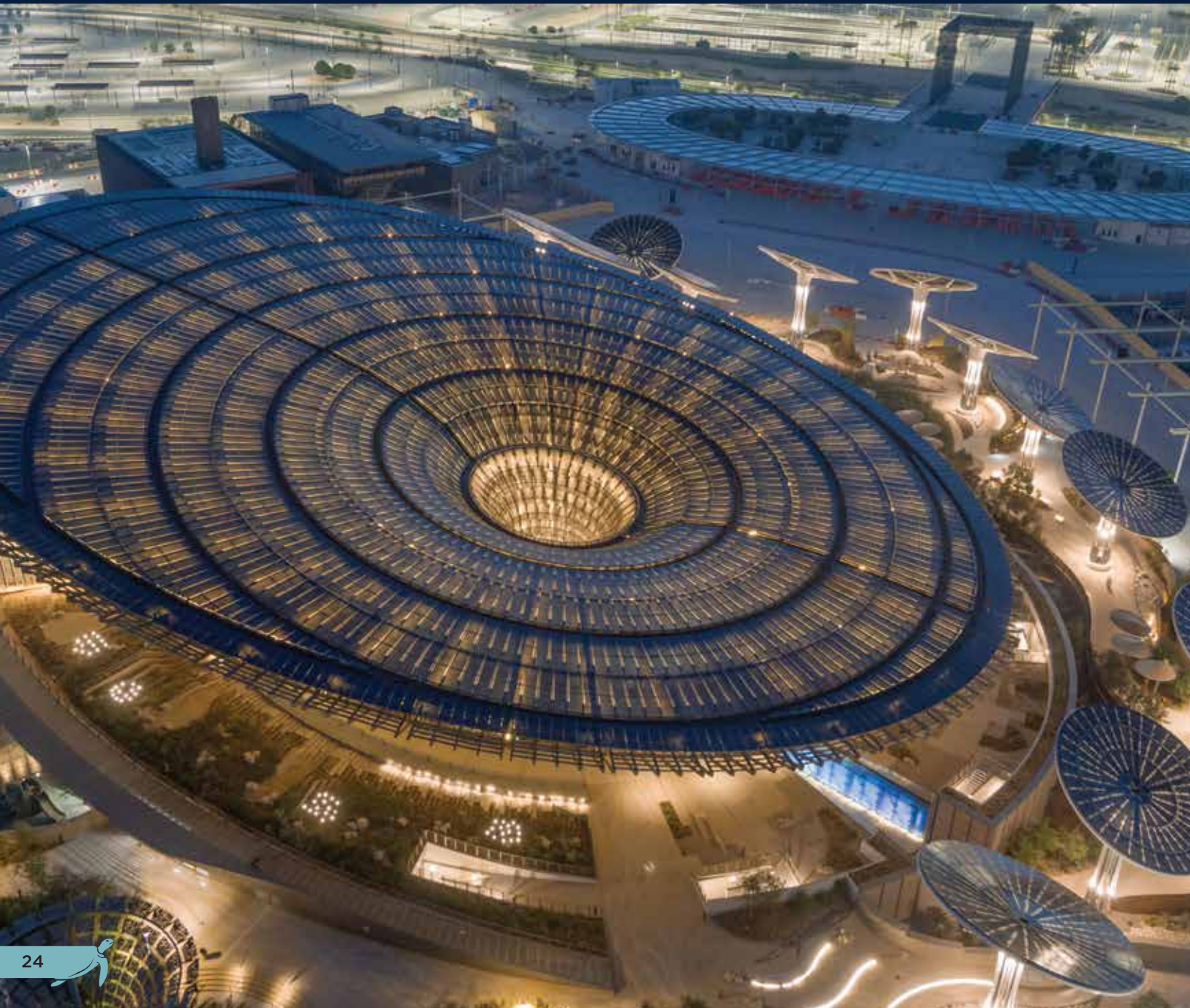
CONNECTING DOTS

Expo 2020:

Dive into the world of experiences

Expo 2020 Dubai has been relishing the limelight for an array of sparkling innovations, experiences and inspiring real-life solutions to real-world challenges. Sumathi Ramanathan, Vice President, Market Strategy & Sales, Expo 2020 Dubai shares enticing minutiae along with the theme and purpose of the Expo.

- Sudipta Saha



Its time for innovation & change

Expo 2020 Dubai is a global platform dedicated to bringing together people, communities and nations to build bridges enable action and inspire real-life solutions to real-world challenges. We will do so in the spirit of innovation and positive change for the future, representing the hope and belief in the power and impact of human innovation, imagination, and ingenuity. At Expo, our theme and purpose is 'Connecting Minds, Creating the Future', with the goal to promote innovation, research, and development – connecting the world's brightest minds and most brilliant ideas so we can jointly tackle shared global challenges, forge new partnerships and develop new business relationships that will drive our economies.

Expo 2020 Dubai will act as a platform for collaboration when needed most; a chance for humanity to convene in a spirit of hope and a shared purpose. Post-pandemic, the world will be looking for an optimistic vision of international corporation that improves lives. Expo 2020 Dubai is dedicated to enabling action, positioning Expo and Dubai/UAE as a global incubator for new ideas.

The UAE has built an open economy and society for a global community based on a remarkable model of

governance and partnership, as well as value of tolerance and inclusion, with a commitment to push limits and achieve things that others felt were impossible.

India Pavilion at Expo 2020

The India Pavilion represents its vision for the future under the theme 'Future is in India'. The programme will build on its culture, heritage and technologies. The pavilion is located in the Opportunity District and will reflect the 'New India', showcasing the strengths of its human resources and the aspirations of its youth.

The pavilion will be a platform that will define the country's potential to become a global power through the 'Five Ts' – talent, trade, tradition, tourism and technology. It will highlight the nation's strength in innovation and start-ups in tech industries, such as artificial intelligence and fintech, as well as tourism and hospitality, space, pharma, IT, renewable energy and telecoms.

On the entertainment front, India will have an exciting line-up of personalities representing the nation across Expo, including world-renowned composer AR Rahman, who is mentoring the all-women Firdaus Orchestra, making its debut at Expo 2020. Additionally, Indian film director, actor and producer Shekhar Kapur is an advisor to Expo 2020 and our stellar entertainment line-up includes Bollywood sensation Sonam Kapoor.





India - a key market

Given India's proximity and the large Indian diaspora in the UAE, India is undoubtedly a key market for Expo 2020, and visitors from around the world will be blown away by the striking India Pavilion, reflecting 'new India' and showcasing the strengths of the country's human resources and the aspirations of its youth.

Expo 2020 has identified and engaged more than 2,500 Authorised Ticket Resellers – including travel agents, online travel companies, airlines and hotels – from key source markets worldwide. India specific ones include Akbar Travels, Make My Trip, Yatra, Book My Show, Thomas Cook/SOTC, and Ease My Trip among others. Working closely with this global network, Expo 2020 not only

aims to make tickets more accessible to people everywhere, but also facilitate the creation of value-added travel packages for international visitors, enabling them to experience the best of Expo 2020 according to their budget and preferences.

Emirates and Emaar Hospitality, two of our official partners, are key players in the in the travel and hospitality industry and are working alongside us to ensure as many visitors from around the world experience our exceptional Expo.

Expo 2020 Dubai has become the Principal Sponsor for the Rajasthan Royals, for the 14th Indian Premier League (IPL) season, which began in India from 9 April 2021 and is scheduled to continue in the UAE later this year. As part of the association, Expo 2020

Dubai has appeared on the front of the Rajasthan Royals' jersey, helping to spread the Expo 2020 message to millions of cricket fans all over the world. We are also actively collaborating with several organisations in India to drive awareness of Expo 2020.

At Expo 2020 Dubai, visitors from every corner of the globe will be invited to explore new frontiers and embrace the opportunities of tomorrow in a six-month celebration of creativity, innovation, human progress and culture, hosted by one of the world's most future-focused nations. We are looking forward to welcome more than 200 participants, including 191 countries as well as multilateral organisations, businesses and educational establishments, for 182 visually striking and

emotionally inspiring days.

Going the sustainable way

From the very beginning, Expo 2020 Dubai has been committed to building a long-lasting and sustainable legacy, extending its impact and benefits beyond the UAE to the wider region and the rest of the world. It will usher in a new era of sustainable design and construction methods, generating new ideas and perspectives on key environmental challenges, and map a clear path forward for immediate action.

As one of Expo 2020 Dubai's three key subthemes, Sustainability is integrated across the entirety of the



CONNECTING DOTS

World Expo, taking the opportunity to create meaningful and measurable impact and empower the global community to embrace a universal sustainable future.

Striving to be one of the most sustainable World Expos in history, Expo 2020 Dubai embodies the principles of sustainable development, respecting and upholding ecological limits and natural resource constraints, encouraging prosperity and well-being, while creating the conditions for a better quality of life for all of us across the planet.

Expo 2020's Sustainability Policy engages the global community, participants and visitors to take collective action to address sustainability challenges from across the world. By focusing on its key

sustainability commitments, Expo 2020 Dubai's sustainability strategy will put forth real, tangible solutions with environmental, social and economic impact on a national, regional and global scale. The policy and strategy focuses on several areas, including sustainable design and construction, sustainable event operations, responsible procurement, accessibility and inclusion, sustainable materials through responsible production and consumption of resources, sustainable partnerships, sustainability certification and community volunteering.

By bringing people together from across the globe, Expo 2020 Dubai aims to deliver real, actionable solutions from the one of the most forward-thinking World Expos in history – inspiring

visitors to live their lives more sustainably and incorporate this spirit into their communities.

Legacy has been at the centre of planning for all aspects of Expo 2020 Dubai since the beginning. The infrastructure and buildings were designed to seamlessly transition from a global event venue to a sustainable, mixed-use community, known as District 2020 that will live on for decades after Expo 2020 closes its doors on March 31, 2022. District 2020 is the future of Expo that will repurpose more than 80 percent of the site's-built environment into a human-centric smart city. An innovation ecosystem and community with a mandate to support the UAE's journey towards an innovation-driven economy, District 2020 will bolster industry and

technology growth in the region.

District 2020 will retain many of Expo 2020 Dubai's iconic structures, including Al Wasl Plaza and Terra – The Sustainability Pavilion (the latter will become a Science Centre), Dubai Exhibition Centre (DEC), and the three Thematic Districts, in addition to cutting-edge digital and physical infrastructure.



Sumathi Ramanathan



*Where the history hues paint
the contemporary landscape:*

Qatar

Steeped in tradition, Qatar allows you to watch camels race across the desert, learn about the ancient pursuits of falconry, admire traditional dhows (wooden cargo boats) bobbing on the water, witness spectacular modern skyline, and watch the crimson sunset over sand dunes springing from a fairy tale!

- Sonali Ahuja

'Time; although momentary, continues to flow. It passes yet its shadow lingers.' This stands true for the emirate landscape, which is a beautiful amalgamation of deep-rooted history and the contemporary lifestyle. Drawing its traditions from a nomadic past as well as practices that are centuries old—from handwoven products to falconry, daily life in Qatar is thoroughly modern. A mesmerizing country both in beauty and size, it perfectly

blends its proud past and bright future.

With its wheelchair-friendly infrastructure, world-class public transport, and a bouquet of easy-to-access attractions, discovering Qatar is now easier than ever. The shimmering country has evolved like no other emirate on the Arabian Peninsula and offers you endless views of panoramic landscapes while the endless beauty of the vistas creates a sense of timelessness.



On the Map

The state of Qatar occupies a small desert peninsula that extends in the north from the large Arabian Peninsula. The region has been continuously but sparsely populated since the times known. It has one of the world's largest petroleum and natural gas reserves wherein a large number of foreign workers are employed in the production process. Qataris enjoy a high standard of living and a well-established system of social services owing to the country's oil wealth. The eastern coastal city of Doha (Al – Dawhah) is its capital. It also has an unparalleled wonder of nature—where the desert meets the sea.

From the Archives

The Ottoman Empire occupied the country in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Before the Al Thani (Thani dynasty) took over in the 19th century, the state of Qatar was ruled by several local and foreign dynasties. The Al Thani sought patronage from the British against competing for tribal groups as well as the Ottoman Empire. In exchange, the UK controlled the country's foreign policy until its independence in 1971

Experience to be nurtured

Whether you are looking for an array of exclusive shopping options or want a soothing freshwater getaway or need an adrenaline rush, Qatar has it all!

Freshwater Getaway

The Al Thakira Mangroves is a serene and tranquil haven to enjoy the lush greenery through Qatar's pristine waters. It is a treasured freshwater getaway where one can spot herons, flamingos, and fauna occasionally.

Shopping Boutiques

Qatar's malls are designed around unrivalled glimpses of global wander and universal experiences, taking you on unforgettable trips and unique journeys. These malls provide a host of exclusive shopping options with plenty of pleasurable ambiances.

Beachside Lounging

The Pearl-Qatar's Porto Arabia Marina offers breathtaking views of the bright blue sea, a distinctive beachfront, a hub for water sports enthusiasts, an extensive boardwalk, and a wide array of exclusive boutiques. You can soothe yourself by delving in the

breezy winds or by basking at the sun-soaked beach days in a pleasant neighbourhood. It is home to a lot of family-friendly beaches. The marina is an ideal weekend getaway for unforgettable night outs, high-end hotels, and Venetian-inspired architecture.

This magnificent island has numerous hidden gems yet to be explored!

Fishing

An altogether different side of Qatar can be experienced at the fishing village in Al Wakrah. It is one of the best-kept secrets of the emirate country that offers a mix of contemporary flavours and classic seafood, surrounded by fishing boats docked in the harbour.

Adventure Sports

Watching the astounding view of crimson sunset is an experience that cannot be expressed in words. Then there's nothing like charging

over dunes on 'your' quad bike—one of Qatar's adventurous activities over the captivating landscape, it offers a memorable thrill! Or else, setting off a jet ski on the gleaming beaches of West Bay gives you a whole new angle for sightseeing in a thrilling way.

Stargazing

Qatar has a special place for astrophotographers as well as stargazers to soak in the magic of ancients—the trail around Zekreet is home to some of the large escarpments with pillars and limestone formations.

MICE

From smart transportation systems to connected infrastructure and sustainability throughout, Msheireb Downtown Doha focuses on developing a community-centric city. It provides a glimpse into the future city wherein forward-thinking businesses offer a platform for young professionals to thrive in.



Running Into the Wild

Home to an incredible array of wildlife, The Arabian Oryx Sanctuary in Qatar takes pride in the magnificent habitats that allow the travellers to see indescribable creatures from up, close, and personal. The wildlife creatures can be found in every nook and corner of the country.

Indulge in a Culinary Journey

Now when you are done with shopping, fun, and adventures, you definitely need food! So, delve into a gastronomical journey of infinite flavours served with sensational views of the beautiful country. The state-of-Qatar brings in assorted culinary facets with authentic and fusion twists. While you satiate the tastebuds, you can also hear about the traditions as well as the cultural nuances of the locals.

Qatar is renowned for its exclusive Michelin-Star dining experience and thriving food scenes. Sate your appetite with real flavours when it comes to food and drinks. Or simply embark on a culinary journey flavoured by chef's travel across the globe and inspired by local cuisines, coupled with panoramic vistas of the city skyline and live entertainment.





Immerse in Enriching Arabian Hospitality

Dive deep into the relaxing hospitality spaces and revel in fine indulgence at the state-of-the-art spa experiences. What's the best part? You get to choose from the neoteric, novel, and award-winning contemporary settings. Guests can choose from the elite hospitality of the world's best-known brands including Mondrian, Mandarin Oriental, Marsa Malaz Kempinski, Four Seasons Hotel, and so on.

Fact check: As the country gears up to host the FIFA World Cup from November next year, the Qatar government has announced that it will add 105 new hotels and apartment hotels to its tourism portfolio.

Time Travel through History

Art influences an individual in ways that are beyond imagination. You can discover spaces filled with artefacts, ancient relics, and sculptures that take a cue from nature. Showcasing artistic prestige with vibrant cultural frames and majestic interiors is Souq Waqif Art Center. As an explorer, you time travel through the history of the country to understand its heritage, culture, and

tradition better. Its shaded walkways, wind towers, and textured facades are a landmark for traditional Islamic and Middle Eastern art fundamental embracing Qatari heritage with distinguished presentations in a nostalgic scheme. Get an authentic Arabian shopping experience through one of the many souqs to get your hands on a selection of Qatar-inspired keepsakes and souvenirs.

Plan your trip

Following proper COVID-19 guidelines, Qatar has made the citizens of over 87 countries eligible for visa-free entry. It is welcoming fully vaccinated travellers through air, land, and seaports without quarantine. The tourists must submit their negative test reports and vaccine certificate to Ehteraz Website. However, the allowable lengths of stay vary from country to country. Also, visitors are advised to check with an authorized entity for the terms and conditions that are applicable.

Getting here

Qatar is strategically located at the crossroads of East and West. The country is an average of 6-7 hours away from major international hubs. So, what are you waiting for? Pack your bags and set out on a trip towards the culturally rich and thoroughly modern country. Elevate your holiday plans and soak in an iconic skyline that never fails to leave you awestruck!

Interesting Facts

- Hamad International Airport situated in Qatar is the third best Airport in the world.
- Qataris pride themselves on their tolerance for the cultures and beliefs of others. The country has largest expatriate community which means that Qataris are at minority.
- The Arabian Oryx is Qatar's national animal. If you remember, an Oryx named Orry (very original) was the mascot for the 2006 Asian Games held in Doha.
- Khor Al Adaid or the Inland Sea is one of the only places where the sea meets the desert. Efforts are being made to get this area named as a UNESCO world heritage site.



OFFSHORE BINOCULARS

Qatar has been developing a lot of experience based activities for the travellers. Apart from museums and shopping, what other experiences are planned for the comprehensive growth of the tourism sector?

Our goal at Qatar Tourism is to establish the country as a world-leading destination and welcome more than six million visitors a year by 2030. To achieve this, we have lots of developments underway, including a wide variety of existing and brand-new unexpected experiences we think visitors will really enjoy. Now Qatar's borders are open to all Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) approved fully vaccinated travellers, those who visit us soon will be among the first to experience a host of new theme parks, hotels and hotel apartments, activities and restaurants.

New theme parks include the Desert Falls Water & Adventure Park, the largest waterpark in Qatar, with 28 exhilarating rides and slides at Hilton Salwa Beach Resort & Villas, and the Quest theme park, which opened in July this year and is home to the world's tallest indoor shot & drop tower and the world's tallest indoor rollercoaster.

And among the many new dining options are: COYA Doha, an award-winning contemporary Peruvian restaurant; Dante Cucina Italiana, which brings the best of Tuscan cuisine and MYLK, where visitors can take a guilt-free bite of the sweet life at the new vegan dessert destination.

Another interesting new opening among Qatar's thriving culinary scene is Meatsmith. Meatsmith is a new restaurant by Chef Dave Pynt, the winner of Asia's 50 Best Restaurants Chef's Choice Award 2017. The menu features a barbecue from all aspects, ideologies, cultures and flavours, resulting in mouth-watering wood-fired dishes.

With pandemic adversely affecting the travel industry, what new initiatives and strategies are in place to

boost Qatar amongst the travel trade?

In the short term we have been working on product development and agent-training initiatives to ensure Qatar is front of mind. We work closely with the travel trade and Qatar Airways to promote Qatar as a must-visit destination.

In the long term, as part of our new tourism strategy, we have

safeguard guests and ensure they have a seamless, safe and wonderful trip.

In what ways is Qatar Tourism gearing up for FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022? The authorities have announced ambitious plans to open 105 new hotels and serviced apartments in the country, how do you plan to capitalise the opportunity?



Berthold Trenkel, COO, QNTC

appointed an international team to cover 20 priority markets, including India to enhance our communication with visitors, tour operators and online travel agencies.

We have also undertaken a broad digital transformation programme and created a new immersive Visit Qatar website and personalised travel companion app. The app offers 360-degree and panoramic views of iconic sites and landmarks across the country, personalised recommendations of nearby attractions and points of interest.

It should also be noted that since the start of the pandemic, Qatar has been working non-stop ahead of borders re-opening to

We are undertaking an extensive development programme which has and will continue to see us invest in world-class infrastructure and major projects such as new hotels and hotel apartments. There are over 100 hotels and hotel apartments currently under construction, of which approximately 50 will be finished in time for the tournament.

Qatar has also been evolving its transport facilities including the Metro to make getting to and around the country easy, safe and convenient. Directly for the World Cup, Qatar has been building exceptional sports stadiums and facilities such as the Education City Stadium and Al Rayyan Stadium. The longest

distance between all the stadiums is just 75 km by road, meaning fans will be able to attend more than one match a day and stay in the same accommodation throughout their trip.

There will be large fan zones offering a wide variety of food and beverages. The zones will be situated in locations around the country, including a dedicated zone opening as part of the new West Bay North Beach project.

This project includes 13 new beaches, a multitude of exciting leisure and entertainment facilities, and a range of kiosks. Located in Qatar's business district of West Bay, the project will become one of Qatar's leading destinations for leisure, dining and entertainment.

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

We welcomed visitors from around the world in 2019 with the top five inbound tourism markets being India, UK, Germany, USA, and Central and Eastern Europe. As part of a broader tourism strategy, we are also enhancing our marketing and customer-centric experiences to other priority markets such as Russia, China, France, and Italy. With over 80 countries on our visa-free list, Qatar is one of the easiest destinations to visit.

There is something for every type of traveller in Qatar from our diverse culinary scene, range of museums and cultural sights, and outdoor adventure activities. We encourage and invite fully vaccinated travellers to experience our vibrant atmosphere while enjoying the best of Middle Eastern hospitality.



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Mega Cities

The future world of Less Mobile Persons (LMPs) will certainly give rise to the new world that will be accelerated through automation, digitization and robotic and will demand 'Green Cities' rather than 'Mega Cities'.

- Gurmukh Singh Bawa

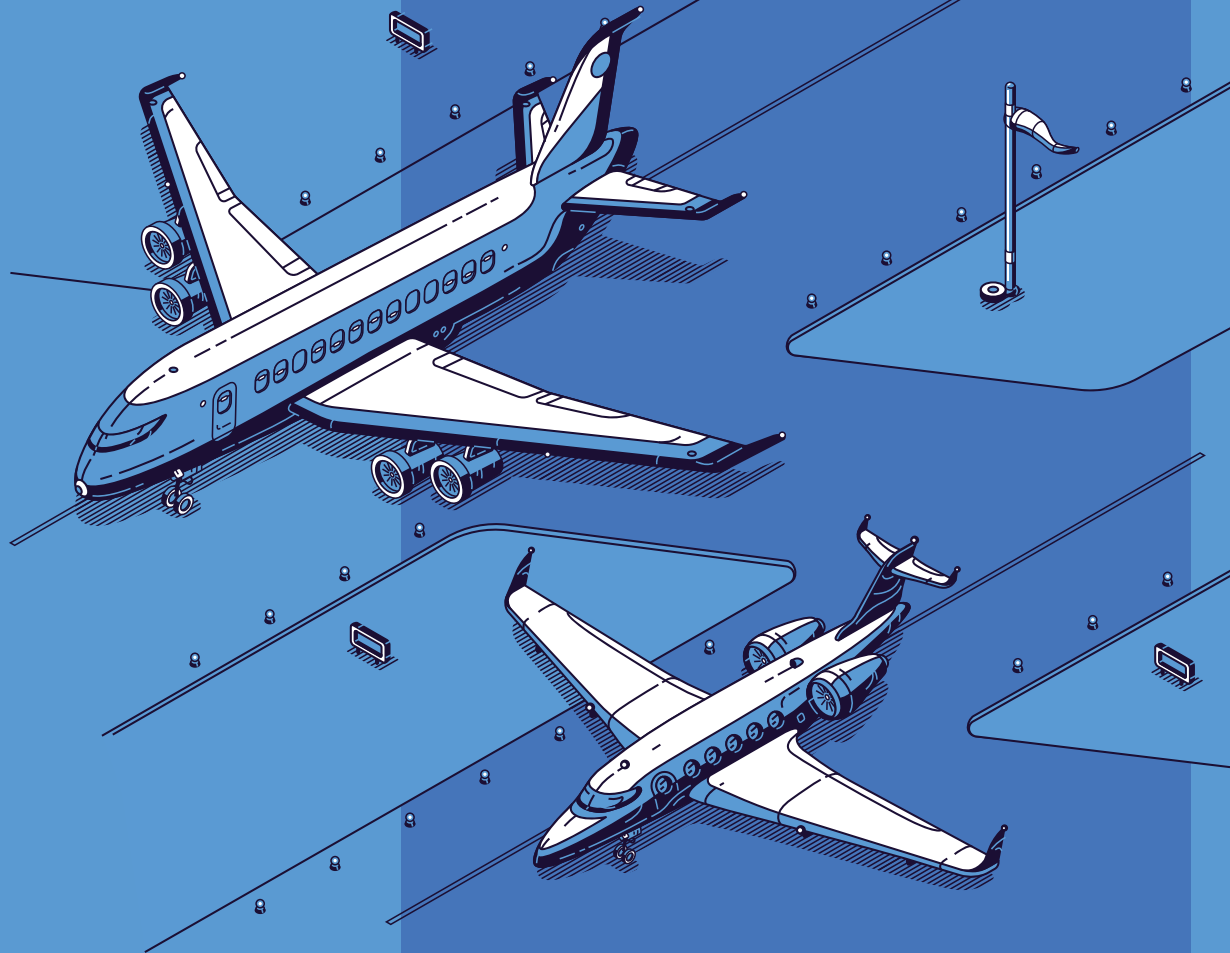


PUBLIC EYE

The Covid-19 pandemic has compelled us to think about many things; both on the personal front as well as on the front of trade, commerce, economy and survival of mankind. On the economic front, the benefits that come out of the direct foreign investment, global value chains, cheap rural labour force deployed at the factories and workplaces of megacities or say super metro cities are losing attraction as the inhabitants want to be less mobile and avoid crowded places. If the Internet had brought the world together then the Covid-19 pandemic impact points towards a world where the economies will be less integrated and more local; thereby disturbing the supply chains, labour migration, global investments etc. It is ready to shake the macro-economic world and will force us to go to the less integrated world in the future.

Before dwelling further on that let's look into the major beneficiaries of globalisation i.e., aviation and tourism. We know that there is a symbiotic relationship between the Tourism and Civil Aviation and the same is harnessed through VFR (Visit Friends & Relatives) and BT (Business Travel). LMPs will certainly dent the volumes of VFR and will push the economies towards LIW (less Integrated World). With the above scenario and

before looking into further details let's peep into the government's programs in the offing. For that, I have focused on the recent public debates and discussions over the webinars where key government officials, public entrepreneurs and end-user were present and participated in an interactive manner. The oozing positivity at those deliberations and announcements of programs such as UDAAN (Udey Desh Ka Aam Nagrik), RCS (Regional Connectivity Scheme), Dekho Apna Desh, etc. are clear indicators that we are working towards harnessing the local and domestic potential to its full.



In 1900, only 16 per cent of the world's population lived in urban areas, this increased to 30% in 1950 and is growing continuously; 55 per cent in 2018; i.e. nearly 4.2 bn people. As per UN Projection; Megacities (10mn and above) rose from 10 in 1990 to 33 in 2018 and expected to be 43 by 2030. While the numbers of large cities (5 to 10 million inhabitants) have just doubled since 1990. The concept of megacities came up to boost economic activity, hub centers for national income and higher productivity, thereby by providing higher per capita income than other parts of the country. This Covid-19 pandemic and the consequential lock-down has changed the public perception about megacities. Yes it is not easy to undertake large-scale de-urbanization; but the trend could shift towards smaller and less crowded cities.

Let's also briefly look into the global perspective on the post-covid-19 economy as this unprecedented disruption is likely to have a long-term impact on consumer behaviour, corporate decisions and government policies. Coming back to travel and tourism, we know that this makes about 10 per cent of global GDP; rather few developed economies have touched as high as 25 to 30 per cent too. Low-Cost Air Travel made globalisation not only easy rather favourite of people in developed and developing countries. Travel became so popular that people and economies started depending upon this to a great extent through encouraging tourism activities, foreign student education, labour migration etc. apart from business purposes. The lockdown, due to pandemic put a full stop to all those hopes and proved devastating for civil aviation and tourism across the globe. Optimism is good; but experts feel that the travel sector's recovery will be only partial, due to

commercial reasons and passenger's behaviour towards ease of travel. Large Countries, including India, has a great propensity to boost domestic transportation as they are not exclusively reliant on inward tourism. Further, the impact of migrant workers will also be serious; as per ILO, there are roughly 164 million workers which come to about 4.7 per cent of the total global workforce. Apart from just a part of the workforce, they carry jobs in high income economies and as such their economic contribution is much higher and valuable both for the host and home countries. There are different sets of challenges for different countries; Host country will have to deploy high tech automation and home country will have to provide jobs to all those who have lost it and home countries will also lose the remittance that they used to bring back.

All such concerns and issues have been well debated at various webinars and other public platforms. Industry partners and stakeholders

are ready to gear up under the protected new normal. For example, the fleet size and orders at hand with the airlines the airline seat capacity shall double itself, say about 1200 aircraft from present 700, over the period of time. On the airports front, taking airports, heliports water ports together country shall connect nearly 200 destinations. The country has already grown from 70 airports in 2014-15 to 135 airports today and the vision and mission of MOCA is to touch 200 soon. The mode of transport shall not be confined to aircraft rather it shall open doors for diverse types of flying machines including small and smaller aircraft as air-taxi operations, sea-planes have already been brought in, un-explored and hilly terrain destinations will be served through diverse flying machines such as helicopters and air taxis. The upswing in tourism is sustainable as the industry partners and stakeholders have taken it seriously. Effective Crowd Management (ECM) at destination sites is the key to

Sustainable Tourism. I was present at a recent webinar organized by FAST (The Foundation for Aviation and Sustainable Tourism) wherein Shri Deep Kalra, an entrepreneur, the Founder and Group Executive Chairman of India's leading online travel company MakeMy Trip dwelled upon the travel trade and hospitality sector. He boldly endorsed that aviation is the safest environment to travel, be it airports, airlines and hotels all are sensitized enough to follow the covid-19 protocol. There are four to five layers of safety that boost the confidence of travellers. Continuing further; Sh. Arvind Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, GoI while addressing at the webinar did mention that people at large are looking for safe, healthy and economical destinations to visit. He stressed that "Now our focus is on destinations. The tourism industry has to make efforts to create confidence among tourists that all the hotels, places and supporting staff are 'Safe and Healthy'.



PUBLIC EYE

“

Lessons Learnt: The hardship of lockdown did demonstrate the positive environmental changes and falls in emission levels and noise levels. Citizens experienced the healthiest air and saw the cleanest skies. This experience has come at a high cost to them; Airports were shut, Aircraft were grounded, Roads were deserted, People were disconnected but this demonstrated what is possible. People may not like all those services to be halted again but will certainly demand for the Green Policies, thereby putting pressure on government and regulators for enforcing eco-friendly plans and policies.

”

Summing up; Effective Crowd Management (ECM) at Tourist Destinations is Key to Sustainable Tourism. Civil Aviation Capacity is destined to Double by 2024 and Govt. is working on networking 200 airports, present 135 + 65 to be completed by 2021. All this mandates that entities and stakeholders shall gear up to harness the benefits of these efforts.

About the Author: Gurmukh Singh Bawa, former General Manager, Airports Authority of India and Head of PR Department. He has long stint of over three decades with civil aviation in the country and has international exposure and experience, a visiting faculty to academic institutions, corporates across the Globe. Worked on Airport Economic Planning, Aviation Data Mining and organization image building and has associated with ICAO, ACI, AERA and other national and international bodies.



HEADS IN BED

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From an incredible spa, a world of dining options to exciting activities like a castaway picnic and a sunset dolphin cruise, The Sun Siyam Iru Fushi caters for all and makes for a getaway of haven.

- Misbaah Mansuri





It's no surprise that an island destination like the Maldives is leading the recovery in the leisure market and has witnessed such a boom after the pandemic. After all, post a year in sweatpants spent at home, the powdery white beaches, azure blue waters and the exotic vibe of the destination is the escapism we're all craving for. With exactly that in mind, I set off to explore The Sun Siyam Iru Fushi in the Maldives- a popular choice for families and honeymooners alike.

First Impression

Set on the Northern Noonu Atoll, post a 45-minute seaplane flight from Malé, we reached the resort to be greeted by a warm welcome punctuated with friendly smiles and decadent welcome drinks. Our butler-Faisal had prepared an itinerary of treats and surprises in room-ranging from a beautiful bath set-up, a bottle of bubbly and some scrumptious welcome treats to make our welcome an amazing one.

The resort's 221 rooms are made up of 151 Beach Villas and 70 Water Villas, Water Villas (five with a separate bedroom) are built over the

lagoon and come with glass-panel floors. The two-storey Celebrity Retreat has its own spa, private beach and 24/7 butler. Inside our sprawling Infinity Pool villa, neutral décor and Maldivian-inspired cushions and throws lent a relaxing air, and bathrooms came with Thalgo goodies. There was an earthy, modern natural feel to the decor, with plenty of space and outdoor decks, open-air bathrooms and daybeds. Our villa also came with an oversized multi-level deck area, a cabana, outdoor dining area and private lava stone pool which had to be our favourite part about it. Needless to say, it offered us the opportunity to revel in

sublime aquatic views and savour the best sunsets ever, as time stood still.

Food factor

With over 14 restaurants and bars at the property, choices galore for guests, Iru Fushi's 14 restaurants, available à la carte and all-inclusive, cover everything from contemporary French and Italian cuisine to Asian, Middle Eastern and Japanese. We liked our Italian lunch at Trio that served good pizzas, pasta and managed to ace the tiramisu. Breakfast is served in the main Iru Restaurant, a domed food court with a sand floor and a separate family area. There's a huge choice at breakfast: tropical

fruit, cereals, eggs done a dozen different ways and sausages, Chinese and Indian curries, noodles, pastries and – most importantly – good strong coffee. Our favourite meal experience has to be Flavors- with its overwater restaurant setting, soft sophisticated music played along and impeccable food. We feasted on some classics like the ravishing French onion soup, unfailable ratatouille and exceptional Creme Brulee. The French-specialty restaurant definitely managed to tantalize our taste-buds. The gracious staff here is ever-attentive and happy to serve which takes the experience a notch up.





Spa-rtly

We spent a good amount of time in the sweet-smelling rooms of the sprawling 20-room Balinese-style spa set in a tropical 'forest'. Trained therapists here kneaded our muscles into mush, given their hands-on techniques. The 75-minute Jet-Lag therapy administered by my experienced therapist from

Bali elevated me to spa heaven. Another highlight, the 90-minute Shirodhara treatment had me lost in visions of tropical wellness. The final touch was the Maruhabaa and Bondithaan Kurun. The 2-hour long treatment took us through a fusion of two Maldivian treatments Coconut Scrub, Coconut Milk Bath, Herbal Poultice Massage in warm coconut oil. Through the spa treatments, I emerged not only spoiled to the core but ready to take on the world!

A world of activities

To keep guests regaled, the property organizes a world full of activities. The island itself has a dive centre, 24-hour gym and free weekly yoga sessions – you'd be hard pushed to get bored. There are two infinity pools – one 25 metres long and adults-only – a hair salon, free masks and flippers for snorkelling and a recreation room with pool tables, table tennis and a late check-out lounge with showers.

Evening entertainment consists of live music, DJs and traditional boduberu (dancing and drumming). Being the Maldives, you'll find yourself in watersports heaven, with activities catering to every level of skill and experience, whether it's sailing, windsurfing, kiteboarding or diving.

A complimentary guided nature tour of the 52-acre resort teaches guests about



the indigenous flora and fauna of the region, and there is the opportunity to jump aboard a dolphin-watching sunset cruise or even experience a castaway picnic prepared by the team for you to feast on in the tropical landscape.

Even after you leave the property, the Sun Siyam Seaplane lounge with its comfy recliners, refreshing juices and quick grubs manages to keep you regaled until you board your flight. Shoutout to Ashish from the seaplane lounge

managed to whip up some scrumptious Grilled Chicken and desserts before we could leave for our flight back to reality. What's lovely about Sun Siyam is how different ages and tastes are catered for on this beautiful island, with a smile.



HEADS IN BED

The Indian market for the Maldives has been growing exponentially despite some temporary closures. How is Sun Siyam strategically building on the same?

We work on relationships and we try to foster positive working relationships with our Indian partners, some that have lasted over 20 years. Having a very supportive bond with them has been a key factor that has helped us sustain as well as grow our business. Thanks to this, our Indian market share numbers are great.

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

The market has changed drastically over the years, from a market driven by price to one moved by experience oriented getaways with value added inclusions. Also, after being limited to routines for so long, now above all people want to try out new things. With younger Millennial travellers who are more social media savvy, are looking for the most trending hotspots that are fresh, contemporary and fun.

As the competition in the Maldives heats up, take us



Dennis Gordienko,
General Manager, Sun Siyam Iru Veli

through how the resort ensures that it stays on the top of its game?

With the pandemic a lot has changed in a short period, our priority remains the safety and wellbeing of our guests and team members. Sun Siyam Iru Veli is still a fairly new product but an innovative one. I would say it is hard to find such a fascinating island in the Maldives, with just 125 suites that all comes with fresh-water pools. Our Premium All-Inclusive plan offers more than just meals and drinks, with options for water sports, credits for spa or diving and a selection of excursions — this is truly value for money and a deeply experience-oriented resort. On top of that, markets are

ever-evolving, so we listen and quickly adapt to the changes in different markets, which has enabled us to attract the best businesses at the right time. At the moment, we have an amazing offer with free PCR testing, a complimentary floating breakfast and even reduced seaplane transfer rates for the Indian market.

What will be your major focus areas and visions ahead for Sun Siyam, as we go forward?

Our focus has always been to come out with new and fresh ideas, in lifestyle experiences and in technology. I think this focus is one of the reasons Sun Siyam Resorts stay ahead of the game and as a preferred choice with our

partners. Even now, keeping our responsibility to the local island communities and the planet in mind, we will soon be implementing the measures set out in our framework for sustainable practices, making sure the island stays true to its original form for guests to enjoy even in the future.



Rakesh Gupta
Account Director of Sales & Marketing - India

From the travel trade sector to travellers, everyone is excited about the reopening of Maldives. Maldives is considered as one of the safest destinations to travel during the pandemic. All our 5 private island resorts offer the world class atmosphere to the consumers along with the safety of each traveller. Our experience with the first 15 days of re-opening has been thrilling. The love for Sun Siyam is visible, we are a full house in almost all our resorts. We are now gearing up for a big day on 28th October which is the opening of Siyam World.



The enchantment of Jibhi, Himachal

Indulge into deep forest hikes,
trout-fishing and lakeside picnics!

- Anubhav Bansal

A weekend getaway to a very less known destination 'Jibhi' situated 40 km southwest of the town of Aut in the remote Banjar Valley of Himachal Pradesh of district Kullu, Himachal Pradesh is an open invitation for the adventure seekers and a perfect getaway from the mundane lifestyle for the weekend getaways and long term stays as well. The proximity to Manali is a bonus point.

Photograph: **Mrinal Yadav**



Background of Jibhi

The mountains surrounding Jibhi are lush with pine and cedar forests and it is also just one hour away from the Great Himalayan National Park. A short drive from picturesque Jalori Pass, Jibhi is a good base for hiking, birding, fishing, and enjoying the outdoors.

In recent times the popularity of Jibhi has seen a sharp increase but it was not the same around five years ago. Jibhi's charms were spread by word of mouth by a small group of devoted foreigners who began visiting every year and spread the vivid stories about Jibhi around the globe. Of late, domestic travellers seeking to experience a slice of mountain life without the frills of a conventional hill station have commenced to come here. Although, Jibhi is a low key tourist destination as of now, it brims with a plethora of possibilities.

I arrived at my home stay 'Ruhoots Cafe and Homestay' picturing a perfect weekend getaway with nothing on the agenda. All of my lazy intentions after a long drive went right away as soon as I peeked out of the window. The homestay where I stayed is run by Sara and her volunteer friend Mrinal who try to give a personal touch to every guest. It's a home away from home for the regulars as they provide an oasis for the hikers, bikers and every sort of tourist looking forward to explore. The home stay is built in the traditional Pahadi or

mountain style amid apple orchards. It's a magical place to stay once you hear the different animal sounds! The distinct sounds of the mowing cows will transport you back to the Jurassic era of the dinosaurs.

Rich Ancient Architecture

Banjars's architecture is a sight to behold and enchants everyone at the first sight! It is ancient and appealing at the same point of time. Wooden houses have a couple of storeys and are perched in elevated slopes which makes illusion effect of the houses floating in the air. The intricate carvings and cantilevered balconies blend seamlessly with the picturesque snow-clad mountains. The small settlement in Bahu where I stayed is blessedly quiet and isn't very well-known to travelers, but it has several camps and guest houses from which the many splendors of the area can be explored.

The homes have been developed by ancient construction methods of 'Kath-kuni' and 'Dhol maide' which emphasizes on the layering and interlocking of timber and stone layers and can withstand the harsh climatic conditions of the region.

A walkers delight

Jibhi is a true walker's delight and offers a plethora of trails that unwind through thick and lush pine and cedar forests, ranging from easy to intermediate and challenging for every sort of hiker. Jibhi is in proximity to

'Jalori pass'. The stunning drive from Jibhi to Jalori pass is steeply inclined, winding through treacherous twists and turns making it an adventure in it. Jalori Pass is the prelude to two popular hiking trails that branch off in different directions at the top of the pass. One of the trek goes towards the sacred and serene 'Seroyol Lake' and the other trek is towards the ancient ruins of the Raghupur Fort.

The trail to Seryol Lake is a five kilometer hike, with ridge overlooking the bare mountaintops rising in and out of the lower green rangers, and then the transition happens drastically as the thick enhancing oaks forests arrive. Shortly before reaching the lake, the forest floor shows to life with the wildflowers between the mossy oaks. After hiking for about five kilometers we reached the lake and settled on the rocky outcrop. With a thick bundle of clouds overshadowing above me, I took some refuge near the small temple on the shore.

The ruins of Raghupur Fort are just an excuse to hike up to a bird's-eye view of the Seraj Valley, from a verdant clearing at the top of a hill. The four-kilometre trail from Jalori Pass to the remaining fort walls gently descends through thick forest, before a steep

ascent and then a long but gradual walk through open meadows.

Chaini Kothi: The towering sentinel that withstood the tests of time!

A four-kilometre stroll to the village of Chaini (Chehni) is an adventure waiting to unfold amid a thick coat of deodar trees. The mountain slopes cover the small village where one enjoys the life changing experience. It seems like little has changed over the decades in the village.

Walking a trail of tall pine trees, I suddenly caught my first glimpse of its watchtower. The five-storey structure is supported by horizontal timber logs and dwarfs the surrounding village homes. The tower has a secret tunnel underneath which adds to the mystery part and makes it intriguing.

The crumbling remains of the Chaini Fort can be seen opposite the tower which has been converted into a Krishna temple. The other side of the tower has a storage house also known as 'Bhandar' in which the religious artefacts of 'Shringa rishi' are stored. The Shringa Rishi is the ruling deity of the Banjar valley and the temple dedicated has a marvellous wooden architecture. Content with these panoramas one can never get enough!



BY ROAD

The easiest way to travel to Jibhi is to board a bus from New Delhi to Manali and disembark at Aut. One can take help from the accommodation to collaborate for the taxi pickup. The taxi charges are usually ₹1500 for single way. Another option one can opt for is to board a bus upto Banjar which is 8kms before Jibhi and then get a taxi from there. Driving from Delhi is a long journey of 12 hrs provided that you commence the journey early. If breaks are needed then one can stay in Ambala or Chandigarh.

BY AIR

The easiest way to travel to The closest airport is in Bhuntar located 60kms away from Jibhi in Kullu district. Taxis charge around ₹3500 for one way trip from

Bhuntar. For a group the best economical option is to fly upto Chandigarh and take a taxi to Jibhi.

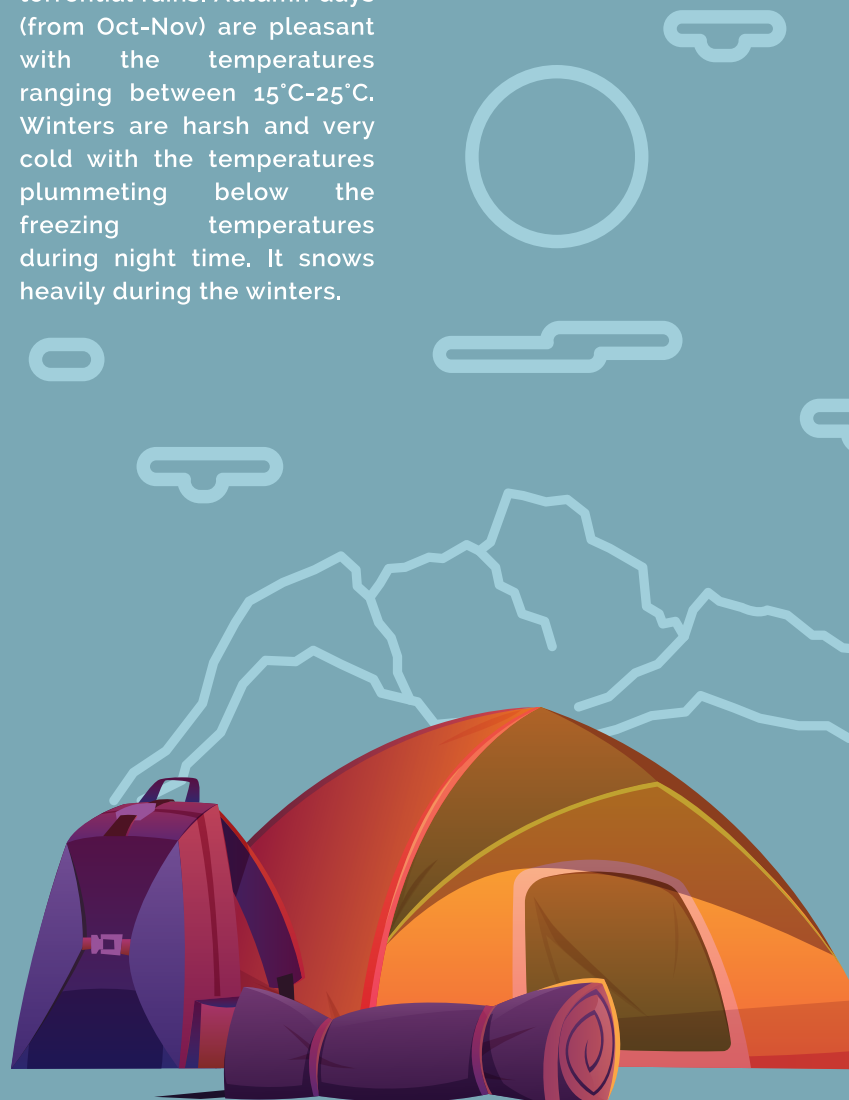
GETTING AROUND

Vehicles for transportation and sightseeing can be arranged from the nearest town of Banjar. A round trip to Jalori Pass, including waiting time, costs ₹1,500, and a drop-off or pickup between Aut and Jibhi costs about ₹1,000.

SEASONS

Summertime (March to May) is the most pleasant temperature in Jibhi and the temperature rarely goes above the 30°C mark. The forests in the monsoon season (June to September) are resplendent, but be prepared for the landslides, road blockages and

torrential rains. Autumn days (from Oct-Nov) are pleasant with the temperatures ranging between 15°C-25°C. Winters are harsh and very cold with the temperatures plummeting below the freezing temperatures during night time. It snows heavily during the winters.



STAY

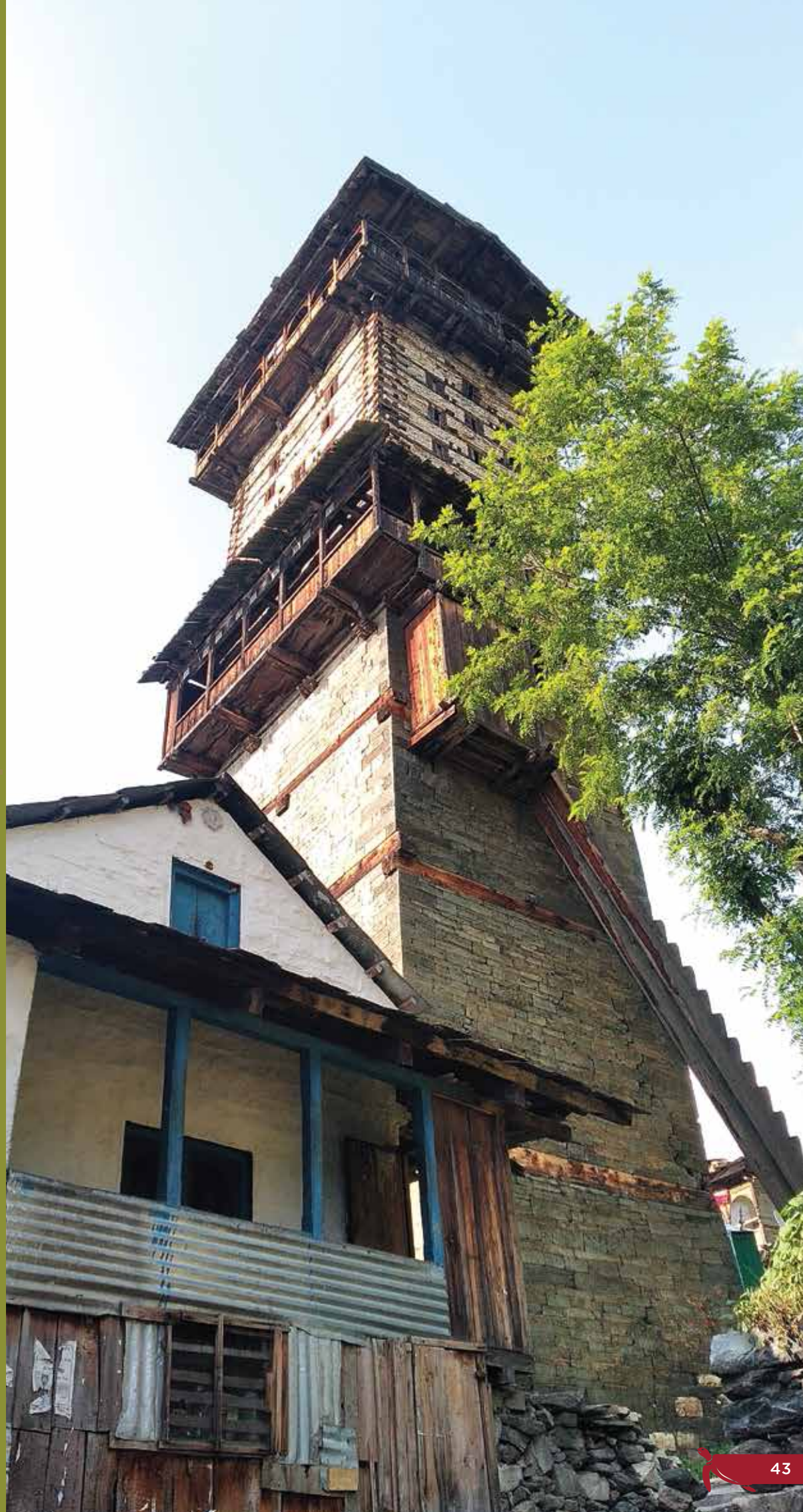
The biggest charm of staying in Jibhi or nearby villages is the lack of commercialization. The maximum number of accommodations is either tents or simple guest houses run by local residents.

GUIDES FOR HIKES AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Most of the hikes can be done independently as the trails are frequently visited and are well marked. One can take guidance from the guest houses.

FISHING PERMIT

Fishing permits can be obtained from the Fisheries Officer at Nagini village near Banjar for Rs100. The exception is from November to February, when angling is prohibited because of the mating season. The procured permit is valid for only the streams in the Banjar and Tirthan Valleys and a person can catch a maximum of six trouts in a day.



LA LA LAND

Instituto de Turismo de España – Turespaña

PAINT IT RED AT LA TOMATINA FESTIVAL

Ever wondered what a red river would look like? Well, it's not entirely an irrational thought as every year; the last Wednesday of August brings this unimaginable scenario to life transforming the streets of the erstwhile small Valencian town of Buñol into a river of tomatoes. Travelers from around the globe gather to witness and participate in the biggest sanctioned food clash, throwing tomatoes at each other. A sight to behold, isn't it? No wonder La Tomatina tops the weirdest festivals ever chart and featuring in millions' bucket lists.

- **Bharti Sharma**

A tempting hot tomato soup when I'm feeling sick? Great Idea! Pan of delicious pasta with juicy tomato sauce? Mama Mia! These are probably the immediate impression at the mention of tomatoes, but one thing that we've learnt from experiences hands down is that 'the world is a weird place'. And trust us, we're not complaining after all that's where all the fun lies, right?

When 'Zindagi Milegi Na Dobara' premiered years ago, it was an introduction to the La Tomatina for the India market, labeling it as a must in the bucket list of every Indian traveller. It was not just its visual appearance that appealed to us, but the level of sheer thrill and madness that we felt watching it. The Spanish town of Bunol with a population of 9000 is flooded by a whopping

20,000 tourists making their way from all corners of the world to participate in this crazy festival; to throw tomatoes at their friends, enemies, loved ones or complete strangers for all they care. Over one hundred and fifty metric tons of over-ripe tomatoes are thrown in the streets of Bunol in just about an hour; yes that's how long the clash lasts. But, over the years La

Tomatina has gone beyond the clash and is celebrated over a week charged with fireworks, parades, fun and food.



ROOTS

Honestly, there are more than one chronicles about how it all began, and the origin story is, at best, a myth. But still, the most accepted version of the story is that it originated in the 1940s following a small street brawl that involved the participants hurling tomatoes at each other, but somehow the fun quotient in this activity led to the locals gathering and recreating the incident every year on the last Wednesday of August. The festival is also said to have religious association; celebrated to honor Bunol's patron saint, San Luis Bertran. The festival has not been without controversies, as it was banned several times in the 1950's but the tradition somehow survived, it was declared an official festival and eventually became the centerpiece of the town's week-long celebration.

WHERE TO SETTLE THE BASE?

The small town of Bunol is around 45 minutes out of Valencia. Many visitors who come to attend the festival book their accommodations in Bunol itself. But, it makes much more sense to base yourself in Valencia and head to the town for the day. Valencia is one of the most beautiful and an experiential city in Spain and it has so much to offer in summers, which is during the festival time. So make sure to add a few extra days with the festival to roam around and experience the amazing Valencia.



WHAT ACTUALLY, HAPPENS ON D-DAY?

The food clash is officially flagged off at 11 in the morning but you will notice the street bustling with participants around 8 a.m. itself. The ceremony begins with a volunteer attempting to climb a two-storey greased pole to reach the ham at the top. The official food clash is supposed to begin once the ham is retrieved. Once the fun-filled, tomato-themed carnage begin, it's up to you how you utilize this time and how you can enjoy. But one thing is certain here - it will get messy, very messy.

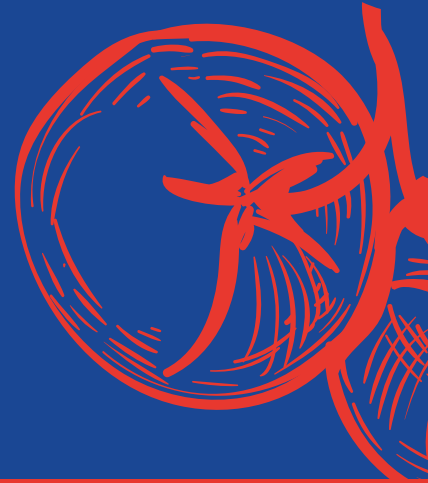
THE TOMATO RAMP WALK

Don't wear anything expensive or something that you hold dear because you'd be upset if your outfit is ruined, which is bound to happen. The tomato stain is difficult to wash off; it will stay on your outfit forever as a memory so take your chances accordingly. It is suggested you wear something white (an unsaid tradition) and it sets the tone for amazing pictures; the rest you go with the flow, gliding through a street filled with people hurling tomatoes at everything breathing. Be comfortable with shoes;

make sure to wear sandals with a grip and no heels, strictly. Crocs are any day the best option for staying afloat the river of tomatoes.

Attending the festival is truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience so make sure you have lots of fun. Bright red tomatoes' flying through the air for as far as you can see is completely out-of-the-world and a sight to behold. They will coat your hair, run down your shirt and obscure your eyes. You will slip, you will fall, you will land in a sea of red - but you'll get back up and start all over again

because this time is going to stay with you for the rest of your lives, bringing joy and excitement every time it crosses your mind.



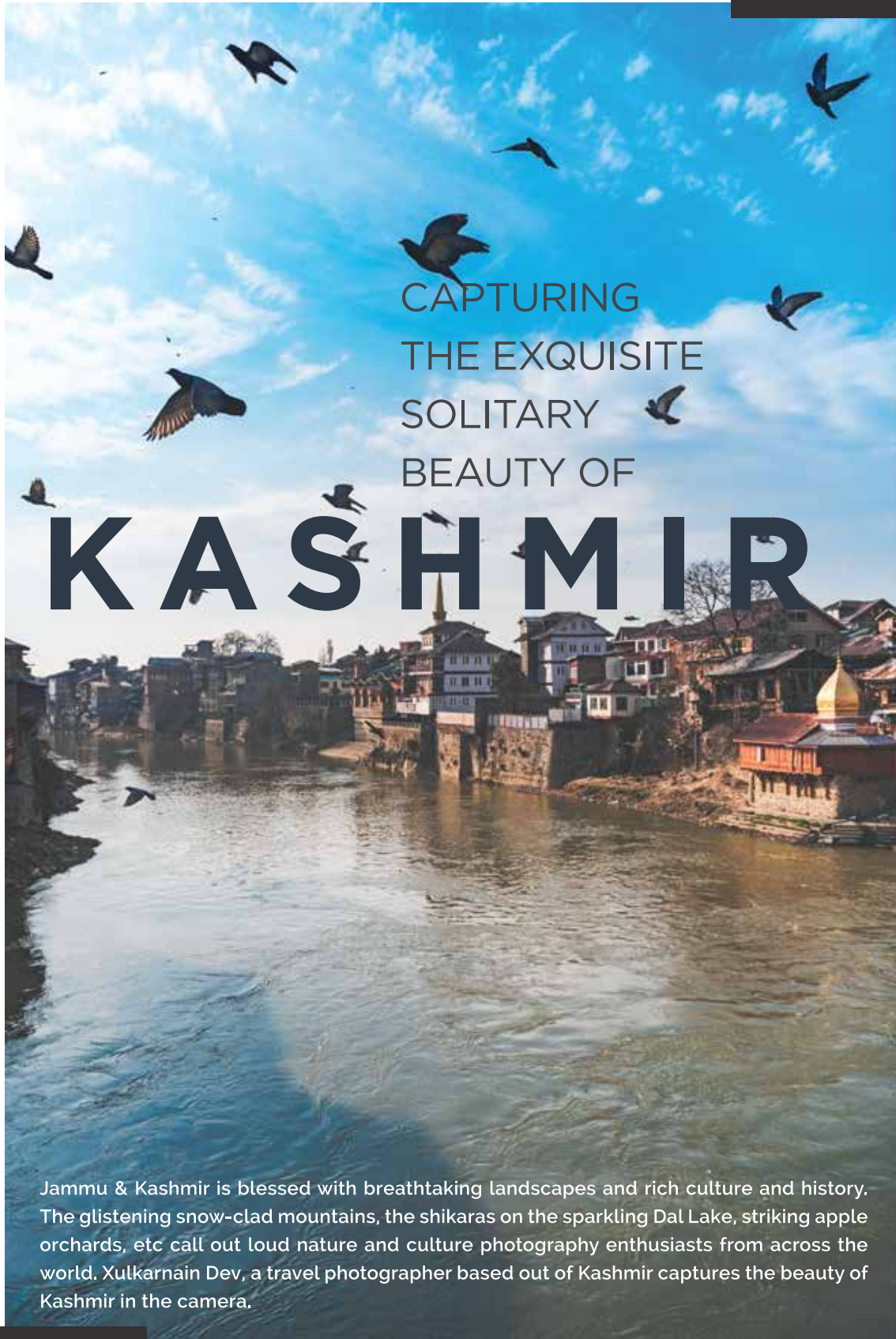


RULES OF LA TOMATINA

In spite of the mayhem there are actually a few rules and regulations that need to be adhered to during La Tomatina in order to ensure that travellers get the maximum enjoyment from the day.

- It is illegal to bring any kind of bottle or other objects that could cause an accident.
- You must not tear t-shirts.
- As soon as you hear the second banger you must stop throwing tomatoes.
- Selfie-stick are not allowed
- Tomatoes must be crushed before throwing so that they don't hurt anybody.
- You must be careful and cautious of the lorries which carry the tomatoes at all times.





Jammu & Kashmir is blessed with breathtaking landscapes and rich culture and history. The glistening snow-clad mountains, the shikaras on the sparkling Dal Lake, striking apple orchards, etc call out loud nature and culture photography enthusiasts from across the world. Xulkarnain Dev, a travel photographer based out of Kashmir captures the beauty of Kashmir in the camera.



YOU HAVE CAPTURED
KASHMIR'S BUCOLIC AND MOUNTAINOUS LANDSCAPES
MANY TIMES. WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE SPOT FOR
PHOTOGRAPHY IN KASHMIR AND WHY

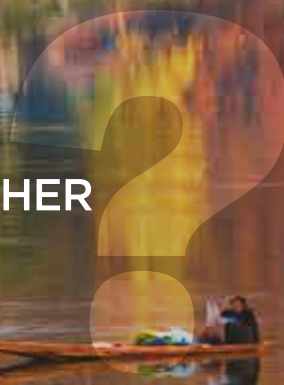


Kashmir is bestowed with a lot of natural, untamed beauty and I've been lucky enough to capture a lot of it. There is no one favourite spot but I do like the landscapes and topography of places like Sonmarg and Pahalgam.



WHAT WAS THE CATALYST THAT DREW YOU TO BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER

Ever since I was a kid, I always had a dream of becoming a professional photographer. What inspired me to be a full-time photographer was my undying passion and love for photography as well as constant support from my family and friends.



HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR A PHOTOGRAPHER TO 'CONNECT' WITH HIS SUBJECTS TO BRING OUT THEIR TRUE SELF



If photography was a movie, then the subject is the main cast. That's because the whole plot revolves around the subject. It's very important to feel that connection with the subject because if you don't feel that connection, the photograph doesn't speak volumes to the masses. The whole framing, composition is centered around the subject, so naturally it's very important for a photographer to feel that connect with the subject.



Exploration begins with 'trulyy India'

Known for its perfection and quality services, Trulyy India has emerged as a most trustworthy brand as they endeavour to raise the standards of hospitality with excellent service and assistance. Aarushi Arora, Business Development Manager, Trulyy India Hotels, Resorts, Camps, and Safaris, shares on the recent expansion plans and business strategies.

- Sudipta Saha

With expertise in boutique hotels projects, hotel management operations, and sales and marketing services for hotels, resorts, safari camps, lodges, etc. Trulyy India Hotels is committed to offer the world-class hospitality to its customers. The pandemic had a profound effect on the tourism and travel sector, and with the opening of state borders and ongoing vaccination drive, domestic tourism seems to be on an upsurge. Speaking on the same line, Aarushi states, "The response has been phenomenal majorly in Udaipur, Kumbhalgarh, and Sasan Gir. People are eager to travel and there's a significant rise in leisure travel. Apart from that we have witnessed an increase in destination weddings as well. The pandemic has made people very sensitive and attentive towards their safety, and have made them more aware, so they are not sacred to travel. We at our properties are following all

the safety measures and providing a safe and secure stay."

The revival of domestic travel is helping to dampen the blow by the pandemic. It has also partially compensated for the loss of inbound tourism. Sharing her thoughts on the challenges, Aarushi Arora says, "Today, travellers are more concerned about the safety standards, earlier people use to travel without any fear. It will be a challenge to get inbound clients even if the restrictions are lifted, and it will be a tough job convincing them to visit India. As far as domestic tourism goes, people are enthusiastic to travel and experiences taking the right precautions, so people are very motivated to travel within India, and lots of people are exploring the beauty of India."

Trulyy India has been working on expansion plans and has crafted strategies keeping the current scenario in concern. Recently, Trulyy

India has associated with the Bayan Group of Hotels in an innovative joint venture for their seven properties. Through this venture, Trulyy India aims to redefine travel experience and hospitality standards in the respective properties-The Jai Bagh Palace, The Kumbha Bagh, The Amargarh, The Udibagh, The Sawai Bagh, Hadi Rani, Bayaan Elegance. With 17 properties across Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Uttarakhand, Trulyy India plans to create itineraries that will not only include a stay in their properties but will also offer an overall experience of the place. Adding further, Aarushi Arora says, "We are planning to intensify our social media, and if Covid restrictions relax, we will participate in exhibitions and roadshows."





Raffles Udaipur

After an outstanding 20 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Vishrut Gupta joins as the Hotel Manager. He has been part of the Accor family for the past five years. Before joining Raffles, Vishrut was at Fairmont Jaipur on a brief mission. Prior to that he was with Pullman Novotel New Delhi Aerocity where he was leading teams in both strategic operations as well as food and beverage service. He was previously associated with renowned brands such as ITC, Leela.



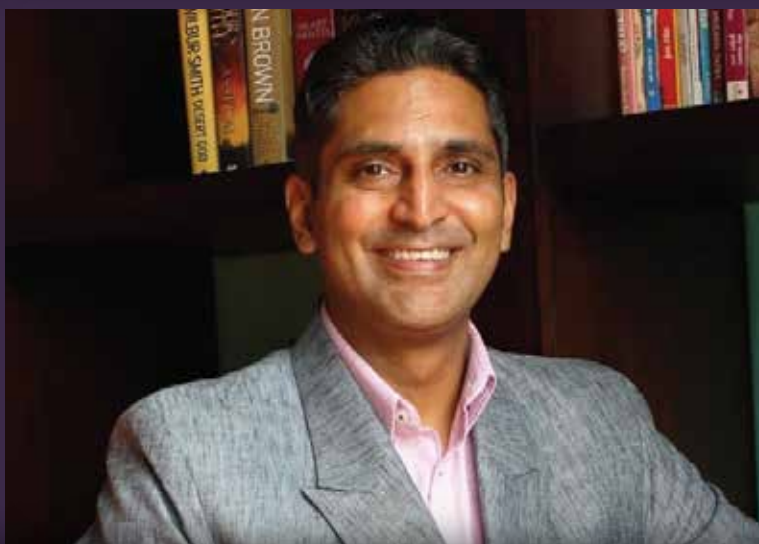
Tourism Fiji

Tourism Fiji has announced the appointment of experienced tourism marketing senior executive, Brent Hill as Chief Executive Officer. Hill, who most recently was the Executive Director of Marketing for the South Australian Tourism Commission, brings over 16 years of experience in tourism and digital marketing, advertising, branding, communications, campaign, and executive strategy to Fiji's National Tourism Office. He replaces former CEO Matt Stoeckel, whose tenure ended in December 2020.



Travelport

Travelport has appointed Tom Kershaw as its new Chief Product and Technology Officer. Kershaw is a seasoned product and technology executive, with more than two decades of experience leading innovation, technical strategy and execution within both emerging and mature organisations undergoing transformation. He most recently held the title of Chief Technology Officer at one of the largest independent advertising platforms in the world, Magnite, Inc.



The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace

The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace has announced the appointment of Deepak Verma as the Director of Sales and Marketing, spearheading the hotel's business development, brand reputation and planning strategies to strengthen the positioning of the hotel. Deepak comes with a rich experience, spanning over 13 years, where he excelled in hospitality business development, strategic management and knowledge of various market segments.



STB reimagines travel with an immersive Virtual FAM experience for Indian travel trade stakeholders

The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) took its Indian travel partners on an immersive virtual tour of Singapore that is filled with fun and diverse experiences, ranging from a wildlife tour up close with animals to a mixology masterclass. The SingapoReimagine Virtual Experiences Familiarisation Day aimed to create a

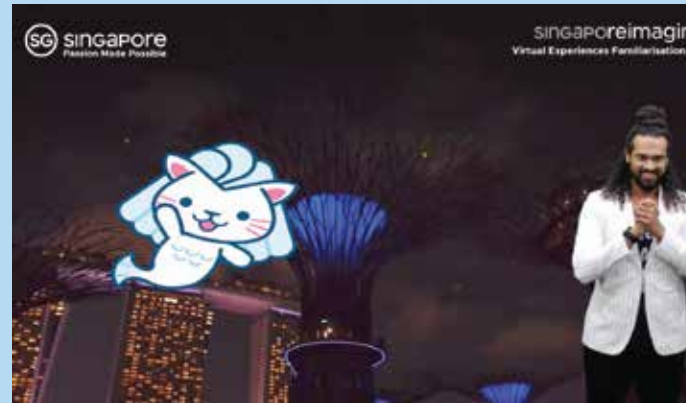
differentiated and immersive experience for the travel trade fraternity in India, and to reimagine and evolve their definition of travel. The event was held on the July 27 for travel agents from the South and West region and then on July 31 for travel agents from North and East India.



A reimagined experience of travel in the future

The tour kicked off with a virtual in-flight experience of landing in Singapore on Singapore Airlines, which was a much-welcomed throwback to the days of pre-pandemic travel. The agents went on to enjoy edutainment tours that were conducted by Wildlife Reserves Singapore, getting up close virtually with the animals at the Singapore Zoo, and a virtual stroll down by the Singapore River, one that was livened up by games, quizzes and nuggets of trivia by Monster Tours. The guests were treated to a curated

Singapore-themed lunch with a sumptuous spread delivered to their homes. They also toured the Brass Lion Distillery, a full-fledged working distillery known for its special Singapore dry gin. The highlight of this session was a cocktail making masterclass conducted by the Distillery's brand ambassador and mixologist, Kino Soh, complete with specially-curated cocktail hampers delivered to the agents so that they could try their hand at mixing the drinks during the session.



Consumers may have appetite for such experiences

A straw poll of all participants found that more than 80% of the agents would recommend such a session to their customers while physical travel is not possible. More than half of them would price such sessions to be between INR 500 to INR 1,000. These are good indications of how such virtual experiences may be positioned to interest consumers before travel reopens. Mr. GB Srithar, STB's Regional Director, India, Middle East and South Asia said: "STB continues to work with our partners to Chart our Pathways to Tourism

Recovery. SingapoReimagine Virtual Experiences Familiarisation Day was a great opportunity for us to connect with our Indian travel trade partners, and let them virtually experience Singapore and its offerings through a fresh lens, while we await the return of physical travel. We also see this as a platform to reimagine what travel could look like in the future. Lastly, as part of our #UnitedWeStand solidarity, STB acknowledges the adversity that our Indian travel trade partners

have faced. We hope that this event brought some relief, good cheer and laughter during this difficult time." The virtual agent familiarisation event is the latest initiative by STB to connect with travel trade partners. It demonstrated how an immersive virtual event with a full day program can be creatively and seamlessly delivered while keeping the audience fully engaged and entertained.





IATTE celebrates glorious one year, launches Josh

IATTE (Indian Association of Travel and Tourism Experts) was formed a year back with an objective to bring together like-minded people such as the stakeholders, tour operators, and hoteliers. As IATTE turns one, a virtual event was organised to celebrate the occasion and launch the several initiatives that the association is planning. In the beginning, when the association was being formed, they aimed at reaching out to at least 1000 members, but now that the expected number has crossed, the association aims to reach out to international travel professionals as well.

Naveen Manchanda, President, IATTE believes in uniting the travel professionals under one roof and address the common agenda. IATTE, as an association is working towards the betterment of industry and has been seen coming up with innovative ideas. One amongst them is the launch of 'Josh', adding it to, Naveen Manchanda says, "The concept Josh is very special and has no boundaries. When it comes to

something specific, Josh is not limited to the states. Josh is a team of new enthusiasts. Apart from Josh, IAATE is working towards women empowerment, address job issues, and is opening up international membership. We will keep doing virtual meetings in addition to that we are also organising virtual Travel Trade Show on November 17-18."

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.

ADTOI on a mission to empower women in the tourism sector

ADTOI recently organizes a virtual meet with the media and discusses their vision and recent activities of Lady Entrepreneur Officers. The session was introduced by Ekta Watts, Chairperson of Women Empowerment and CSR activities, ADTOI with a



brief about the vision and activities under the post of 'Lady Entrepreneur Officer (LEO)', which is a pioneering initiative of the Women Empowerment and CSR Wing of Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI). The position was conceived and created in 2019 with the support of other Governing Body Members of ADTOI. Few events have already been conducted for women were the Breast Cancer Awareness Camp held in Delhi for ADTOI ladies and also CSR activities like the Full day excursion for blind children of Anand Mahavidyalaya New Delhi.

The vision of Lady Entrepreneur Officer is to empower women and bring them forward in the field of tourism. Each LEO takes initiatives according to her vision, interest and expertise for women empowerment and CSR activities. The Lady Entrepreneur Officer is envisioned for each one of the 10 Chapters Association.

IATO UP Chapter organises hybrid meeting

Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) Uttar Pradesh Chapter organised its hybrid meeting on July 9, 2021 in Varanasi at Hotel Clarks under the chairmanship of Mr. Prateek Hira, Chairman UP Chapter and Mr. Vikram Singh, Co-Chair of the chapter.

This meeting was supported by the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India and was attended by about 50 members including IATO's Regional Chairman of North India, Mr. Sunil Gupta who spoke about all the efforts that IATO has made in the past few months to ease the pain of the industry. MOT's Regional Director - North, Mr. Anil Orao also joined the meeting and assured the members of Ministry's support for early revival of tourism in India.



MY NOT SO PERFECT LIFE

- Sophie Kinsella

If there is anything, that gen-z and millennials will agree on together, would be the yearning to travel the world while instagramming the postcard-pictures of the landscapes.

There is deep burning fire inside all of us, to hustle, to make it big for ourselves out there in the big mad world. We take all of it, and venture into that world with high hopes and absolutely zero understanding of the corporate mess.

- Sharmistha Sadhukhan

Corporate Politics, description for this would be like a lizard in your bedroom, you simply can't ignore it, because if you do you can't sleep. As weird that analogy may sound, it is literally the same feeling that I feel in both scenarios. The book, 'My Not So Perfect Life' by Sophie Kinsella is the elaborated version of the same feeling. Perfectly relatable story for all the young girls hustling hard to make it big!

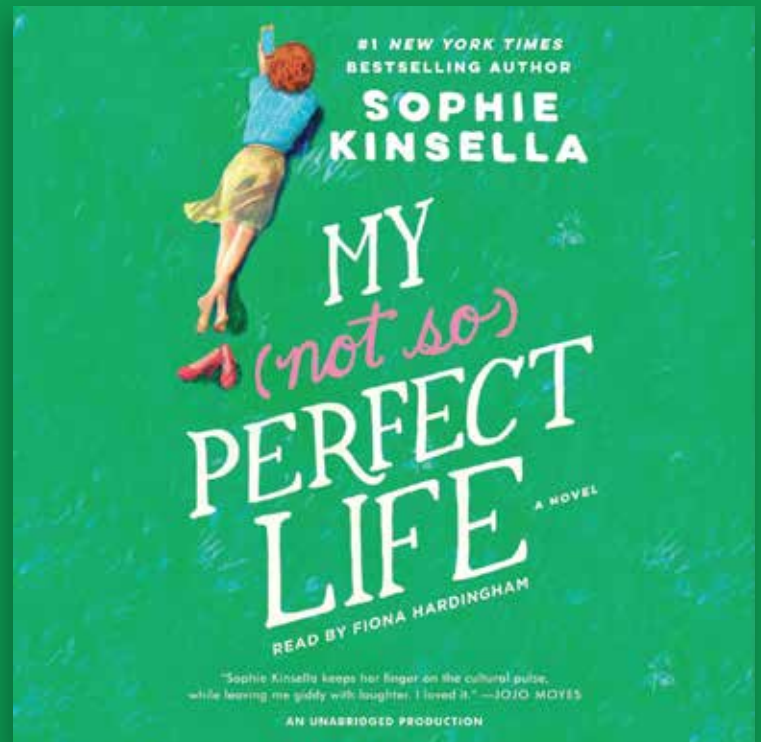
Part love story, part workplace drama, and a good travel scape to London and Somerset, this sharply observed novel is well critique of the idea of 'ideal' life that we aspire.

Everywhere Katie Brenner looks, someone else is living the life she longs for, particularly her boss, Demeter Farlowe. Demeter is brilliant and creative, lives with her perfect family in a townhouse, and wears the coolest clothes. Katie's life, meanwhile, is a struggle; from her dismal rental to the tense office politics, it is getting hard

for her to negotiate.

No wonder Katie takes refuge in not-quite-true Instagram posts from London, sounds like Emily in Paris. But life isn't as pretty as the Instagram filters. Kinsella beautifully takes you out for a ride in London, through Katie's struggles and run-of-the-mill life. From, doing roots re-touch for boss to not getting-due credits for her creativity, Katie survived all, until one day Demeter decided to fire her.

Fast-forward to restarting life in Somerset. A place we would call a traveler's paradise in 2021. London is beautiful, but the glamping in Somerset with Katie's parents is an experience we need in 2021. Somerset is a small county in England, where Katie's family has set up a vacation business. Far away from the posh-lifestyle of London, Somerset is a simple suburban on the coastal lines with flying seagulls around the city. It is also called the Land of summer people. It is an area of wetland between the Mendip and



Quantock Hills and locally produced cider is served in pubs and at festivals all across the county. Because of its tidal reach—the second highest in the world — many parts of Somerset's coast have a high biodiversity.

From, candle making to pottery to camping in beautiful tents and listening to seagulls, glamping at Katie's somerset is the perfect detox vacation for all travel -lovers. While the storyline moves ahead in Somerset, a Londoner finds herself in the Glamping Site of Katie's family. Katie knows her, and she is someone from her past, some one she aspired to be and now loathes her to the core: Demeter, her boss. As you enjoy the meticulous details about the places, you also enjoy the

characters so finely woven with the situations. You enjoy the guilt, and cherish the sweetness of Katie while she struggles to forgive her boss, as humanly as the emotion of anger and revenge is, Katie also empathises with Demeter who, too, turns out to be the victim of office politics. In conclusion, Katie does have a happy ending with boss, at her job and her potential lover from her London office. Sometimes, it is not about hustling, it is about aligning and continuing to do what we do best despite the odds.

Kinsella, the writer of 'Confessions of a Shopaholic' returns with all of her wit, warmth, and wisdom and spins this story about staging a perfect lifewhen reality is far fromthe truth.





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