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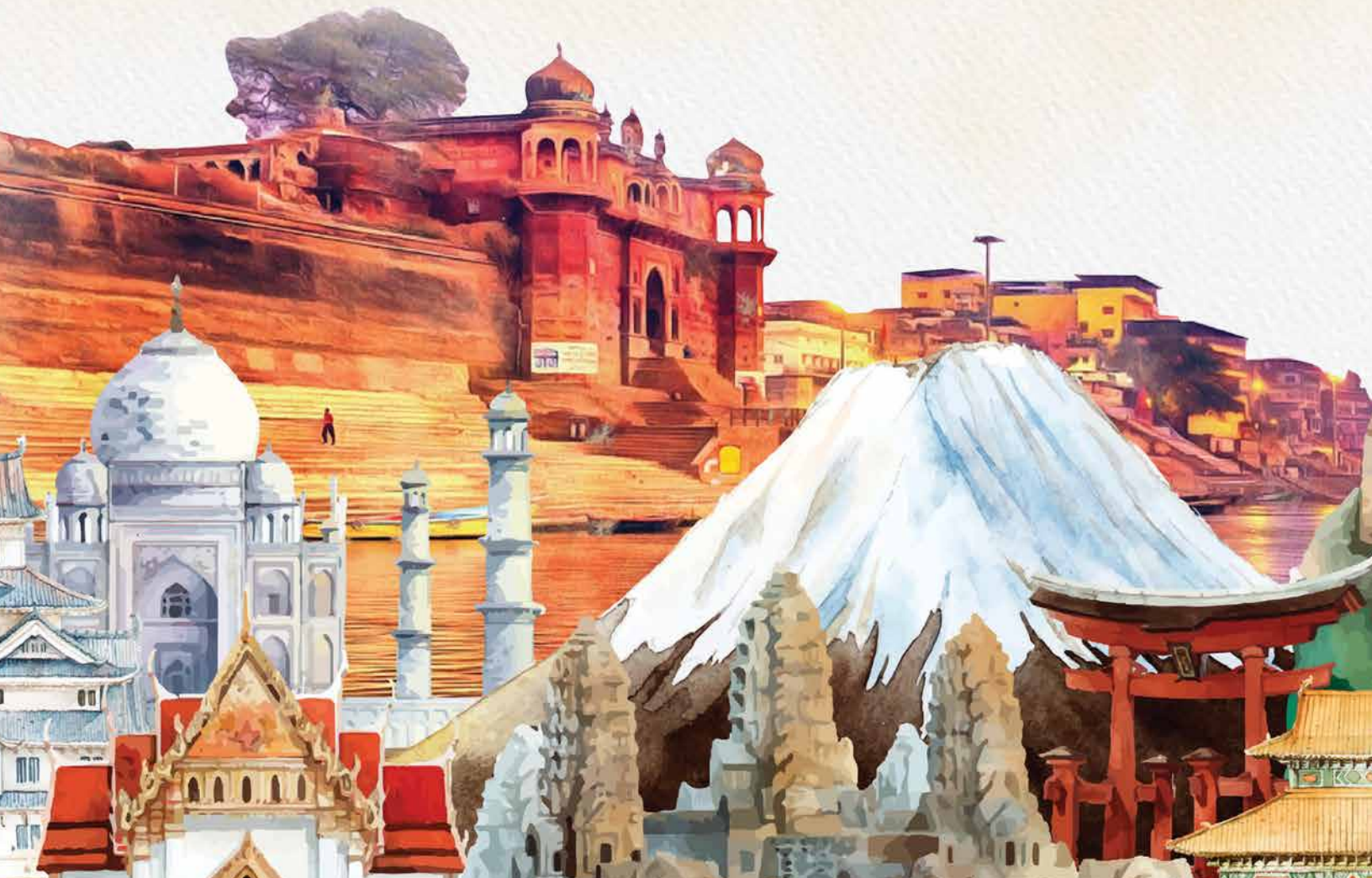
# Travel Scapes

MAY 2023, PAGES 60, ₹100

VOL. 11, ISSUE. 5

## Uttar Pradesh

*Way beyond spiritual ensemble*



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# PUBLISHER'S NOTE



**Varun Malhotra**  
Publisher & CEO

## Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that we present to you the latest edition of our travel magazine, dedicated to the ever-evolving realm of travel and tourism. As the world continues to open its doors to wanderlust, we find ourselves at the precipice of an extraordinary era, where exploration knows no bounds. Versatile Media organised yet another successful edition of the Versatile Excellence Travel Awards Middle East in Dubai on May 1, 2023, with the gracious presence of Bollywood celebrities Maniesh Paul, Farah Khan, Harpz Kaur and Waluscha De Souza. We hold immense pride in hosting the leading captains of the industry and rewarding them for their remarkable efforts.

The allure of travel has become a universal language, connecting cultures, forging new friendships, and fostering a deep appreciation for the diversity that paints our world. Surrounding this, TravelScapes spoke with the leading stalwarts for their groundbreaking revelations on the growth of the travel and tourism industry driven by a multitude of factors. Technological advancements have transformed the way we plan our journeys, providing us with limitless information and empowering us to curate personalized experiences. Moreover, the advent of social media has kindled a collective desire to share our remarkable encounters, inspiring others to embark on their own transformative escapades.

One particular segment that has witnessed a meteoric rise is the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) travel industry. With its unique blend of business and leisure, MICE travel has captured the attention of globetrotters and entrepreneurs alike presenting remarkable opportunities for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and fostering global connections. The Arabian Travel Market 2023 has been a massive success as evidenced by the quality of exhibitors and the traction drawn.

As custodians of this travel magazine, it is our mission to ignite your wanderlust, fuel your imagination, and equip you with the insights and recommendations needed to craft unforgettable journeys. We have strived to bring to you inspiring narratives from the Middle East, destination features on Abu Dhabi and the North Eastern states of India, and expert advice from seasoned travellers and industry professionals. Whether you seek the thrill of urban exploration, the serenity of pristine beaches, or the awe of untamed wilderness, we have curated an array of experiences that will cater to every adventurer's palette.

We extend our sincerest gratitude to our readers, whose unwavering support and insatiable curiosity drive us to excel. We invite you to embark on this voyage of discovery with us, as we unravel the mysteries, embrace the cultures, and revel in the joys of travel and tourism.

Bon voyage!

Share with us your valuable feedback and suggestions at  
[varun@versatilemedia.in](mailto:varun@versatilemedia.in)

Happy Reading!

Varun Malhotra

# TravelScapes

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# ATM

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## TRAVELSCAPES EXCLUSIVE

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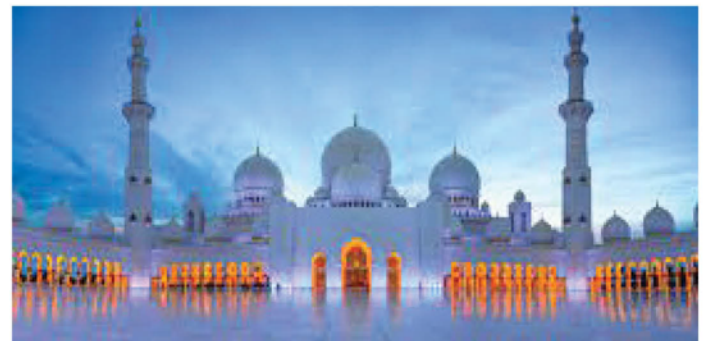
North-East India boasts of places of beauty where nature flourishes with all its essence. Nestled amidst the many hilltops and scenic valleys, the places in North East are a treat to the eyes. Its picturesque views make you want to share them with someone special, and it is best enjoyed that way. With the clouds floating right by your side, and the sun rising from amidst the valley, North East holds something special to experience. From the beauty of the tourist places here to the fun-filled activities, there are numerous experiences that you simply cannot afford to miss out



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Heaven Falls Here!



## Yogi govt will develop Prayagraj, Naimisharanya as major tourist destinations

**In addition** to Kashi, Ayodhya, and Mathura, the Yogi government will develop Prayagraj and Naimisharanya as significant tourist destinations. Under the Central Government's Swadesh Darshan Scheme II, both these places have been selected to be developed as international tourist destinations. The government plans to take a number of important steps to boost tourism in Prayagraj before the Mahakumbh of 2025. Along with this, several schemes are being implemented for the rejuvenation of Naimish Dham. A tripartite MoU has also been signed in this regard. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath intends to make Uttar Pradesh a trillion-dollar economy, in which the role of tourism is considered to be one of the most important. With this in mind, the government is realizing the full potential of Uttar Pradesh as a tourism destination.

In order to give Prayagraj a new identity as the centre of religious tourism, the Yogi government will invest more than Rs 2500 crore over 87 projects. The focus is on the permanent development of Prayagraj with the construction of three six-lane bridges, making Ganga pollution-free under the Nirmal Ganga campaign.

## Jharkhand CM urges Tata Group to invest in tourism sector

**Jharkhand Chief** Minister Hemant Soren attributed the new industrial policy of the state government as the reason for investments done by industrial houses including Tata Groups in Jharkhand. "The foundation stone has been laid for the expansion plans of The Tinsplate Company of India Limited. I hope that this work will be completed on time, due to which the people here will get direct and indirect employment. Employment will be created if industries are set up in the state. Policies should be made for this so that more and more industries are set up. After the formation of the government, the new industrial policy was made after Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren attributed the new industrial policy of the state government as the reason for investments done by industrial houses including Tata Groups in Jharkhand. "The foundation stone has been laid for the expansion plans of The Tinsplate Company of India Limited. I hope that this work will be completed on time, due to which the people here will get direct and indirect employment. Employment will be created if industries are set up in the state. Policies should be made for this so that more and more industries are set up.

## Haryana Govt to develop Chinkara Breeding Centre as a tourism hub

**Chief Minister** Manohar Lal Khattar on April 4, 2023, visited the Chinkara Breeding Centre located at Kairu village in Bhiwani district and inquired about the efforts being made at the centre for the conservation of Chinkara species. He also reviewed various facilities available at the centre and said that the Chinkara Breeding Centre will be developed as a tourism hub. Later, while addressing the people during the Jan Samvad programme in Kairu village, the Chief Minister said that the farmers need not panic as the state government is standing with them. "The government will

give compensation to the farmers for the crop loss caused by hailstorms, unseasonal rains and other natural calamities. The loss due to unseasonal rains is being assessed and compensation will be given in the coming month," he added. The Chief Minister said that it is the priority of the state government to provide good governance to the people in a transparent manner and to solve the grievances of the general public. "The online system has been implemented to give benefits of the schemes to the eligible and needy people in a swift and fair manner," he added.



## UP Tourism starts helicopter service for darshan of Ayodhya

**In order** to promote tourism in Ayodhya, the aerial view service was started on Ram Navami for 15 days. A fee of ₹3,000 per person has been fixed. UP Tourism recently started a service under which devotees can see Ayodhya city and the Saryu river from a helicopter. In order to promote tourism in Lord Ram's city Ayodhya, the aerial view service was started on the day of Ram Navami. Devotees who come from every corner of

darshan of Ayodhya city, according to an official statement. According to the statement, this flight has been started from the Saryu guest house in Ayodhya, in which tourists are given an aerial view of Ayodhya city and Saryu in a seven to eight minutes flight. Presently this service is for 15 days, which will be extended later and as the number of people increases, the number of helicopter rides



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## Assam plans to become Yoga Tourist Destination

Union Ayush Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said Assam has the potential to become a major Yoga tourism destination in the country. Assam successfully hosted two major Yoga Mahotsav in successive years (Sivsagar in 2022 and Dibrugarh in 2023) and this indicates that it has the necessary requisites to become a major centre of Spiritual Tourism, Sonowal said at a press conference held on the eve of the 75 day to International Day of Yoga Mahotsav to be held at the Dibrugarh University

Playground. "With the love and support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Ministry of Ayush has identified areas of tremendous potential in the state and Yoga is one of them. The success of events like the Yoga Mahotsav not only boosts Yoga as a practice but also opens up new vistas of opportunity for the region and tourism can be one", he said. Another major area of potential that the Ayush ministry has identified is the prospect of building up the Ayush system of healthcare in the region, Sonowal said.

## Ziro Valley becomes a big source to boost tourism in Arunachal Pradesh

Termining the tourism industry as the growth engine for the economic development of the state, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister (CM) Pema Khandu has said that Ziro Valley in Lower Subansiri district has huge potential in the tourism industry provided the god-gifted inherent natural charm of the valley is maintained in its pristine glory, reports The Sentinel. Stating that a road map for tourism in Ziro Valley was the need of the hour for holistic growth of the tourism industry, which would not only benefit the people of Ziro but also the entire state, the CM urged the people to maintain the pristine beauty of the valley. "The wet rice paddy field along



charm of Ziro Valley, which is unique and nowhere practised in other parts of the state. Tourists come to see this unique feature, and hence the people of Ziro should refrain from constructing dwelling houses and other commercial structures at the



## Ninth Edition of Himalayan Drive flags off in Siliguri

The ninth edition of Himalayan Drive supported by Experience Bengal, the Government of Sikkim and Gorkha Territorial Administration (GTA) was Union Minister of State for Minority Affairs, John Barla, Darjeeling Lok Sabha MP Raju Bista, the ambassadors of ten G20 nations, and senior officers of the Government of India (GoI) and the West Bengal Government were present at

the grand flag-off ceremony. This edition of Himalayan Drive will be an integral part of the prestigious G20 Tourism Working Group Global (TWG) Meet which is being held in North Bengal now. After the flag-off, the 28 rally vehicles displaying flags of the G20 Meet and G20 nations took a round of Siliguri city before heading to Khaprail and taking the dirt road towards Simulbari tea estate and onto a river bed.

## Festivals in Bhutan attract thousands of tourists, help maintain sustainable tourism

Festivals in Bhutan attract thousands of tourists every year maintaining a sustainable tourism model, according to The Bhutan Live. As per The Bhutan Live, the figures are expected to go up as Bhutan is welcoming tourists again after the lockdowns. Attending festivals is a great way to understand a country's culture and history. The Haa Summer Festival is a vibrant lively event with religious performances, unique Bhutanese local cuisine, local Bhutanese alcoholic drink Ara, and traditional sports.

It gives insight into the lives and traditions of Bhutan's nomadic herders. One can expect a glimpse of Bhutanese culture through its songs, folk dances, artefacts, and religious performances. They can also see alpine flowers, can enjoy the hospitality of the local people of Haa Valley. The Paro Tshechu Festival, according to The Bhutan Live, is probably one of the most prominent festivals of Bhutan. Monks wear masks which represent the deities, re-enact and replay the scenes from legendary tales and historical anecdotes.

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# ATM

## CONNECTING THE DOTS OF TRAVEL TRADE ACROSS THE GLOBE

With Arabian Travel Market 2023 becoming an important source of bringing business to travel trade across the globe, the top-notch exhibitors get a golden chance to showcase their core segments. This is a global platform for emerging and established travel companies to showcase their products and services to a wider audience, helping them to expand their reach and grow their businesses which contributes to the overall growth and development of the travel industry. The endemic has brought a sea of change in the travel industry with a landscape of opportunities for both inbound and outbound tourism. TravelScapes collated the ideas from the stalwarts of the industry and took insights on how this travel mart help in shaping the future keeping in mind the latest market trends for the evolution of the travel trade across the globe

By Chandni Chopra



## ARZAN KHAMBATTA

Global Head, Travel and  
Tourism Services

### Embracing innovation how does ATM help in shaping the future of travel trade across the globe?

The Arabian Travel Market (ATM) is one of the leading international travel and tourism events in the Middle East for over 3 decades. The event unites the travel community together unlocking various business potentials. It brings together industry leaders, innovators, and entrepreneurs from around the world to showcase and

With this focus on innovation, technology, and sustainability, the event will help to assist and shape the future of travel to drive growth and development across the industry around the globe.

### How do you plan to create a network web with the travel trade fraternity?

As the market representatives for Tourism Boards in both the Indian as well as Middle Eastern markets, our network

“expanded our network with the trade fraternity through attending as well as hosting online webinars, conferences and online forums

discuss the latest trends and developments in travel and tourism. After the pandemic, we all look forward to face-to-face meetings to rebuild the bonds and ATM offers the perfect platform. In a world that is rapidly changing in the way people travel, ATM is at the forefront of exploring how innovation and new trends will shape the future of travel trade across the globe. We have multiple tourism clients participating at the upcoming ATM and we are confident that it would be a great platform to rekindle old ties and form new ones to build a strong platform of sustainable tourism to our destinations from this market. Each year, ATM spotlights specific aspects of travel and this year, very rightly, the theme is 'Working Towards Net Zero' to explore how innovative sustainable travel trends will evolve.

and relationship with the travel trade fraternity is of key importance to us to gain new insights about the latest travel and industry trends as well as expand our business. We have leveraged VFS Global's strong relations and extensive network of people across the Middle East and India. We have connected and joined various trade associations and groups to further establish our presence as well as showcase our expertise in the field. In today's digital age, we have connected and expanded our network with the trade fraternity through attending as well as hosting online webinars, conferences, online forums, etc. As the world returns to physical events and connecting in person, we intend to further expand our network by attending industry events like trade shows, conferences, and exhibitions.



## IFTIKHAR HAMDANI

Area General Manager, Bahi  
Ajman Palace Hotel

### Embracing innovation how does ATM help in shaping the future of travel trade across the globe?

Arabian Travel Market is one of the largest travel and tourism events in the Middle East, sharing knowledge, and showcasing their products and services. ATM provides a forum for industry experts to share insights and trends in the travel and tourism sector. This helps professionals stay up-to-date with the latest developments and adapt to changing market conditions.

by providing a platform for networking, knowledge-sharing, and innovation.

### How do you plan to create a network web with the travel trade fraternity?

Creating a network web with the travel trade fraternity can be a great way to expand the business and connect with other professionals in the industry. Important is to know whom you want to connect with in the travel trade fraternity. This could include travel agents,

“Arabian Travel Market plays an important role in shaping the future of the travel trade industry by providing a platform for networking, knowledge-sharing, and innovation

The event provides a platform for businesses to connect with potential partners, suppliers, and customers. This can lead to new business opportunities and collaborations that can help shape the future of the industry. This can inspire new ideas and solutions that can help shape the future of the industry. Overall, Arabian Travel Market plays an important role in shaping the future of the travel trade industry

tour operators, hoteliers, airlines, and other travel-related businesses. On the other hand, we know what exactly we want to achieve through our network web. We focus on our content strategy that engages our target audience and provides value to them. We spread the word through social media, email marketing, and other channels. We encourage our contacts to join and invite others in the industry to participate.





## BAHRUZ ASGAROV

Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Azerbaijan Tourism Board

### Embracing innovation how does ATM help in shaping the future of travel trade across the globe?

ATM is playing a crucial role in shaping the future of the global travel trade industry by providing a platform for the exchange of ideas and innovations. The event brings together industry experts, thought leaders and stakeholders to discuss the latest developments and challenges in the travel and tourism sector, thus fostering collaboration and networking opportunities that



activities based on the specific destination. Our ultimate aim is to increase awareness and publicity about Azerbaijan.

For instance, in 2022 we

“ **ATB takes a tailored approach, planning and implementing different activities based on the specific destination**

can lead to new partnerships and business prospects. Furthermore, ATM serves as a global platform for emerging and established travel companies to showcase their products and services to a wider audience, helping them to expand their reach and grow their businesses. This, in turn, contributes to the overall growth and development of the travel industry. As the Azerbaijan Tourism Board, we are proud to participate in this esteemed event and this year we are representing our destination with 30 industry partners.

### How do you plan to create a network web with the travel trade fraternity?

When it comes to strengthening our collaborations with core markets and stakeholders, the team at ATB takes a tailored approach, planning and implementing different

participated in 18 international trade shows, organized up to 200 media and trade familiarization trips, and our total global media reach was 5.6 billion. Apart from this, the team is participating in roadshows, networking dinners, and conducting various presentations about Azerbaijan as a travel destination. These events are usually targeted towards specific segments of the industry, such as travel agents and tour operators.

Just in February 2023, the Azerbaijan Tourism Board (ATB) hosted a 4-city Travel Trade Roadshow in Riyadh, Doha, Muscat, and Dubai. This provided a fantastic opportunity for B2B meetings and networking with industry experts in the GCC region. We also continue to participate in global travel and tourism exhibitions in 2023 and attend events organized by industry associations.



## ANAND SRINIVASAN

CCO, 2Hub Travels

Embracing innovation how does ATM help in shaping the future of travel trade across the globe? Travel is one of the most technology- disrupted industries in the last two decades.

Technology has redefined how we discover and choose a destination, make reservations and enjoy the travel experience. Every aspect of travel is connected seamlessly connected and AI-powered to give us a hassle-free and immersive travel experience. Technology has also

products first hand and set the premise for a larger discussion to decide how these products can improve efficiency in business, reduce cost and help in distribution.

### How do you plan to create a network web with the travel trade fraternity?

2HUB is launching its B2B travel distribution platform in the GCC and what better platform than ATM? We are exhibiting at stall TT1065 in the

“ **Every aspect of travel is connected seamlessly connected and AI-powered to give us a hassle-free and immersive travel experience**

redefined how travel businesses operate and distribute their products. The industry, now, has multiple distribution channels to bring the products to global markets at a low cost, price dynamically and maximize revenues. While technology is growing rapidly, a platform like ATM brings innovators and consumers together. We get to meet the innovators and see the

travel technology area. We look forward to meeting other travel service providers, technology companies and potential clients from across GCC. ATM has always attracted top travel companies from across the globe and has high footfalls from visitors across GCC. We look forward to meeting them and are confident that this year would be a very successful ATM.





## NELISWA NKANI

Hub Head – MEISEA, South African Tourism

### Embracing innovation how does ATM help in shaping the future of travel trade across the globe?

Travel trade programs help contribute to the evolving tourism and hospitality industry – these platforms emphasize the benefits of connecting and help identify prospects to boost growth while reinforcing the existing dynamics. Such platforms and exhibitions also provide an opportunity for travel professionals, companies, and organizations to network



the world, with an aim to boost tourism in the country. We are also able to exchange feedback and convey important destination-focused updates. In addition, with our annual Roadshow, MICE networking programs, corporate chillers

**“ We aim to showcase our new and diverse offerings while actively engaging with the travel trade fraternity**

and collaborate with one another. As an international tourism board, we utilize these to extensively engage with travellers and showcase plenty of our exciting experiences and product offerings. By fostering collaboration and partnerships, these platforms help in driving innovation and creating new opportunities for the overall growth and development of the travel industry.

### How do you plan to create a network web with the travel trade fraternity?

We are grateful to the trade fraternity for their continuous support and conviction in South African Tourism. Through active participation in such travel trade platforms and networking events we continue to engage with our partners. and tour operators from across

and experiential consumer activations, we aim to showcase our new and diverse offerings while actively engaging with the travel trade fraternity. Events like the MICE hink tank enable us to directly communicate with the decision-makers responsible for their company's corporate travel purchasing to address their needs. Further, it elevates our network web and allows our trade partners to gain insights and identify synergies that will help them sell South Africa to consumers in the best way possible. We also collaborate with our stakeholders like the High Commission of South Africa along with the Consulate General to seek opportunities to establish partnerships with Indian corporates based in South Africa.



## MAMTA PALL

Founder and CEO, Footprints Worldwide

### Embracing innovation how does ATM help in shaping the future of travel trade across the globe?

ATM has always been one of the most popular Trade Shows, and this year is extremely special as it's the 30th year. In its milestone year, this edition is likely to witness a 30% rise in exhibitor participation. That in itself, speaks volumes regarding the quality of the show. Firstly, ATM sets the biggest example of smart ways to use technology in every situation. Further, it

long term

- Understanding current market trends to plan better for the future & exploring new possibilities

### How do you plan to create a network web with the travel trade fraternity?

On the basis of my own experience and journey through the years, I believe that the best way to create a network with the travel trade fraternity is through one-to-one meetings.

**“ Arabian Travel Market plays an important role in shaping the future of the travel trade industry by providing a platform for networking, knowledge-sharing, and innovation**

helps one to share significant innovations, knowledge and best practices with industry colleagues as well as clients and it's the perfect setting to explore new opportunities. In my opinion, the 3 key factors that assist in shaping the future of Travel Trade across the globe through ATM are:

- Developing & Improving Industry Presence
- Creating a network that boosts your business in the

Of course, due to everything that has happened during the last couple of years, web-based calls and video conferencing have become a part of our lives. However, I firmly believe that building and sustaining long-term associations & collaborations with the Travel Trade Fraternity purely depends upon one's engagement with them through one on one meetings.



# TRAVELSCAPES AMPLIFIES A MIRACULOUS MARK IN THE MIDDLE EAST

## GLITTERATI SAGA OF THE VERSATILE EXCELLENCE TRAVEL AWARDS MIDDLE EAST MAGNIFIED ITS PRESENCE IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN REGION

Admired as ever the IIFA of the travel and tourism industry, Versatile Excellence Travel Awards Middle East keeps travelling the map and the minds of the people in the industry. Like the yearly contributions that the travel and tourism industry has to the global economy, TravelScapes, after a long hiatus because of covid returned yet again to honour the exceptional businesses within the travel, tourism and hospitality niches and the enterprises

responsible for making your dream vacations come to life. Over 250 professionals and veterans from across the industry gathered at the glittering gala night of the VETA Middle East- Versatile Excellence Travel Awards. Frontrunners of the Middle East and others across the globe were felicitated at the glittering ceremony held on May 1, 2022, at Habtoor Palace Dubai, LXR Hotels & Resorts in Dubai.



**“CREATING A VISION AND MOVING OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE IS THE FIRST STEP TO GOING PLACES IN LIFE”**

**VARUN MALHOTRA**



**“HAVING A REALIZATION OF YOUR POSITON IS THE GREATEST POWER IN YOUR POSSESSION”**

**PRANAV KHULLAR**



# APPLAUSE FOR THE STALWARTS OF TRAVEL TRADE INDUSTRY



**QUADLABS**  
Leading Travel Tech Provider for Middle East



**OMNIYAT TOURS**  
Fastest Growing DMC in Jordan



**COCO BODU HITHI RESORT MALDIVES**  
Most Trending Maldivian Resort



**KAZIN DMC**  
Leading DMC for Kazakhstan



**X DUBAI LINE**  
Travellers' Choice for Adrenaline Experience in the Middle East



**SHINSHIVA AYURVEDASHRAM**  
Most Exceptional Ayurveda Treatments in India



**ONE WORLD DMC**  
Best Emerging DMC in the luxury segment



**RAMESH ARORA**  
Global Icon of the Hospitality Industry UK



**IFTIKHAR HAMDANI**  
Outstanding Hospitality Leader



**VFS GLOBAL**  
Best Visa Outsourcing and Technology Service Specialist 2023



**Kazakhstan**  
Most Trending Excursion Destination



**Jetsave India Tours**  
Best in Visa Facilitation 2023



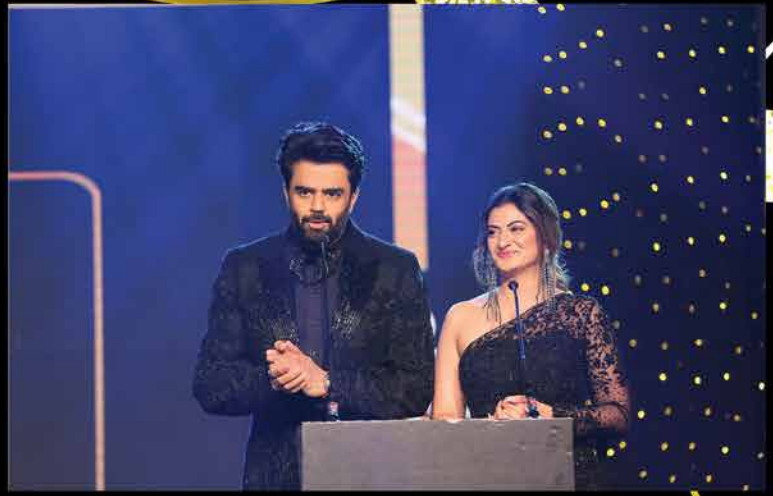
**CORA CORA MALDIVES**  
Best 5-star All-Inclusive Resort in Maldives



**ONE ABOVE**  
Leading and Most Trusted Global DMC

# VETA MIDDLE EAST 2023 CELEBRATES THE BEST IN GLOBAL EXPLORATION





# Impeccably Plush



A magical experience awaits you at Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel managed by HMH-Hospitality Management Holding. Set on a private beach, this alluring hideaway is a heritage retreat with a modern spirit. Offering captivating views of the Arabian Gulf, the resort is a destination unto itself. Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel is a picturesque sanctuary conveniently located 22 km from Dubai International Airport and 11 km from Sharjah International Airport. Blending world-class facilities with the legendary Arabian hospitality, it offers 254 beautiful rooms, suites and serviced residences, superb restaurants and lounges, an array of leisure options and personalized services in a tranquil atmosphere to make your stay memorable.

# The 12th Great Indian Travel Bazaar 2023

A concoction of culture and business in the pink city of Jaipur



**The time** is always right to head to the city of Palaces, Jaipur. Jaipur is ready to sweep you off, of your feet with its warm hospitality and rich culture on every visit. With the boost in domestic tourism, the Government of Rajasthan took the opportunity to host the 12th Great Indian Travel Bazaar in the heart of Rajasthan, Jaipur. Scheduled from April 23 to 25, 2023, the GITB 2023 aimed to bring in inbound traffic from across the globe generating revenue for the Indian economy. The travel bazaar observed the number of close to 300 foreign delegates from France, Germany, Spain, Australia and other parts of the world intending to be closely associated with the Indian travel and tourism sector mutually beneficial for the countries.

Inaugurated with gusto and gaiety by Usha Sharma, Chief Secretary of Rajasthan, Dr Jyotsana Suri, Past President of FICCI, Gayatri Rathore,

Principal Secretary at Department of Tourism, Rajasthan Government, Manisha Saxena, Director General of Ministry of Tourism, Dipak Deva, Chairperson of FICCI Tourism & Culture Committee; the ceremony took front-stage featuring the Rajasthani royal folk melodies and the traditional dances.

The Great Indian Travel Bazaar 2023 featured brought together the state of royalty and hospitality with high spirits. The prestigious platform unlocked great potential with exhibitors from DMCs, hotels, foreign tour operators, and State Tourism Boards collaborating to strengthen mutual relations. In addition, the Indian states that participated in making the event a grand affair were Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Odisha. All in all the event was a great success in adding volumes to the inbound tourism platform.



# Madhya Pradesh

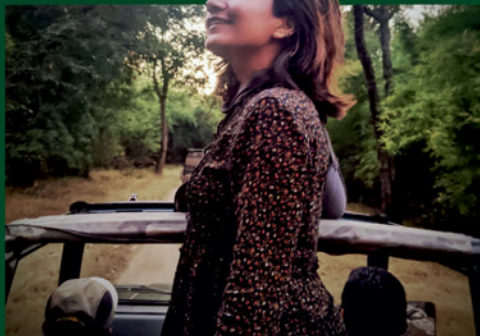
## A DESTINATION OF SAFE TOURISM EXPERIENCES



## THE HEART OF INCREDIBLE INDIA, ONE OF THE SAFEST TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN INDIA

The eclectic state of Madhya Pradesh, the region that lies in the centre of India has swiftly surfaced as one of the most sought-after destinations in India. MP offers a varied range of verticals that can quench the thirst of any traveller from wildlife to culture to heritage or be it pilgrimage. What makes Madhya Pradesh so unique is the fact that it is one of the biggest states of the country and still a major part of it left undiscovered. The very fact that the majority of the state is covered in forests provides a more 'closer to nature experience' for visitors and at the same time it opens the door for a question like, is it safe to travel in Madhya Pradesh?

Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, under the Responsible Tourism Mission (RTM) has been aggressively working on the safety of the tourists and especially solo women travellers. MP is a state that is dedicated towards the involvement of women in the tourism industry be it from Gypsy drivers and Forest guides from Shivpuri, Pachmarhi and Tamiya, Boatmen and Story tellers



from Jabalpur and Gwalior, Women Safety guards from pilgrimage places like Ujjain, Chitrakoot or Maihar and Segway Drivers to Hospitality professionals in Khajuraho. The government of Madhya Pradesh works closely with several other departments like Police, Women and Child Development, Urban Administration Department, Transport, Education and Skill Development to create a more accommodating atmosphere for the people of the state and the tourists visiting the state. MP Tourism conducts safety audits and infragap assessments at every tourist destination with the coordination of local bodies and district authorities which ensures the safety of women service providers and tourists.

The idea is to make safer tourist destinations for women where even a solo female traveller can feel at home. Tourism is one of the key drivers of socio-economic development and its integral for tourists to have a safe and secured environment. Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board has nominated several bodies to support in the conduction of baseline surveys and situation analysis under the "Safe Tourism Destinations for Women" project which is a part of Responsible Tourism Mission of Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board. It includes the following activities –

- Capacity building, orientation & training and sensitization
- Strengthening of safety mechanism
- Skill and Employment generation
- Safety audits and fulfilment of infrastructural gaps at the tourism



- Self-defence training
- Community participation and awareness
- Formation of legal bodies and federations
- Monitoring and evaluation

MP Tourism Board works in convergence with other departments including NGOs and CSRs to ensure women safety and in fact Madhya Pradesh is the pioneer state in India to take efforts for women safety and upliftment in the tourism industry. It also inspires local youth of the villages and suburbs to make a career in the hospitality industry and contribute to the development of their local region.

Enjoy your visit to Madhya Pradesh with a sense of freedom and security and embrace the state's unique wildlife, heritage, pilgrimage and culture. Blend in with local cultures and rejoice the uniqueness of the Heart of Incredible India.

# GO GOA! GET THE GLOBE!

## GOA RESTYLING THE LANDSCAPE OF WELLNESS TOURISM BY IDENTIFYING TARGET MARKETS AND CREATING INITIATIVES TO ATTRACT DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS

**Rohan Khaunte, Minister for Tourism, Govt of Goa**, is on the roll to formulate tourism policies and strategies to promote and develop tourism in Goa. In his best capacity, doing justice to his significant responsibility by developing marketing campaigns, participating in tourism fairs and exhibitions, and collaborating with travel agencies, tour operators and other stakeholders, he is leaving no stone unturned to showcase the attractions and unique offerings of Goa beyond pristine beaches and expansive landscapes. His focus on initiatives to generate employment opportunities by supporting skill development programs, training initiatives and promoting entrepreneurship to foster sustainable tourism growth is applaudable

By *Aanchal Sachdeva*

### **Goa, the enticing state and its tourism offerings**

Goa is performing marginally well on the medical tourism front. Goa has quite high potency as far as being a preferred destination for science and post-Covid we have been working on a whole perception change because a lot of people have been doing market studies. The studies show that a lot of people are looking at wellness, yoga, medicine and so many other facets of Goa. Travellers look for a better quality of life and work in a better place and so, somebody coming for medical will normally look at Kerala for instance. I'm of the opinion that we don't intend to be a model of competitiveness with other states but we need to have the add-ons of what we feel can be the right ingredients to offer a wholesome experience to tourists.

### **The many facets of Goa**

Travellers would come to Goa for a few days savouring the sunset and sea. That's where the tourists have to allow us to give them a perspective that Goa is also about hinterlands and ecotourism. The peripheries, the villages of Goa, are pleasant surroundings in which we are trying to build homestays. In an attempt to promote spirituality and wellness, we have connected tier 2 cities with the new airport. The tourists coming to Rishikesh, perhaps from Mexico and other countries haven't paid any heed to touch down in Goa earlier due to connectivity constraints. We are making efforts to have a movement within the state under the prime minister's vision of 'Dekho Apna Desh' where we are trying to work out an arrangement where the two states talk to each other. So we're trying to figure out how the flow can be done through the authorities, different people, and other stakeholders. As we are aware that tourists come for a more immersive, and experiential stay, hence, we realize the need to build a story around it.

### **Goa on the roll to promote workstation spaces and other tourism segments**

In fact, there was a time when workstation, before the concept of digital nomads rose subsequently



during and post-Covid. I can vouch for Goa to be an enticing place for work from home following the concept of Work-cation. Digital nomads have ever since been longing for an opportunity to be able to work from a place which is serene and comfy. This would make the tourists stay in Goa for longer and work from the comfort of their homes. The concept of digital nomads has long been existing in the system and Goa is taking the initiative to build something around their infrastructure. We're trying to build up the digital nomad visa with the centre. I strongly believe if we were able to stitch these things and 46 countries could do it, why not go along with the country being the one for digital nomads! We have a rough idea about foreign travellers and the exorbitant salaries they get from the corporate companies they work for. As per the studies, 35% of the value goes back to the economy. The foreign tourists once they visit Goa, stay for a tenure of not less than three, six and nine months. Hence, if we make the documentation procedures of visas easier for them, it will eventually be mutually beneficial for the state. As far as wellness MICE, adventure, hinterlands, and ecotourism is concerned, we are working around the whole ecosystem

because we are anticipating a sea of change as to how explorers perceive Goa.

### **Formulation of strategies to promote Goa on another level**

We are in touch with the stakeholders for sticking policies around. One aspect of it is to incentivise the policies, second is to recognise them and for them as partners in Goa tourism. We have been working on the new policies for the last eight months. The visibility will certainly be done in the next six months. As far as wellness MICE, adventure, hinterlands, and ecotourism is concerned, we are working around the whole ecosystem because we are anticipating a sea of change as to how explorers perceive Goa.

### **Adoption of new policies**

An array of policies such as Caravan policy, Adventure policy, Heritage policy, and Wellness policy are all considered in the month of May. Homestay policy and the Caravan policy is adopted recently and we're working towards promoting it massively. Goa has a lot to offer, inclusive of lovely forests. The challenge is to build the right infrastructure around it so the government is being a facilitator. Hence, we are on the roll to inviting businesses to invest and build another fruitful tourism experience out of it.

#### **Targeted segments visiting Goa**

We believe in quality more than quantity. We have been highly dependent on the UK and Russia. However, we are now targeting the Middle Eastern region. UAE, we believe is a huge market. Hence, realising the outcome of weather constraints there, Goa can prove to be a massive source of monsoons for the Emiratis. They can explore delightfully what they are devoid of. We also have Germany, Western Europe, and South Korea as target sources of tourism in line. I am a firm believer in the fact every challenge is an enlightening experience for all of us and every learning gives you a new thought. And together, I hope we can make Goa an all-rounder tourism performing state.



# EXPLORE

# JORDAN

The logo for Omniyat Hospitality Management features a stylized 'O' with a red arrow pointing clockwise, followed by the word 'OMNIYAT' in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'A' is red, and the 'T' is black.

OMNIYAT

Hospitality Management

**For further information, please contact:**

+91 98101 75385 | [mamta.pall@omniyathospitality.com](mailto:mamta.pall@omniyathospitality.com)

+962 7 9789 1665 | [sales.jo@omniyathospitality.com](mailto:sales.jo@omniyathospitality.com)

[www.omniyathospitality.com](http://www.omniyathospitality.com)



## Hepstar announces partnership with Ursafer

**Hepstar**, the API-based technology company that distributes travel products supplied by its global ancillary network announced its partnership with UrSafe on April 17, 2023. The UrSafe App is the first personal security app with hands-free voice-activated SOS, fully integrated with emergency and law enforcement services in more than 150 countries. The technology enables users to trigger an alarm by saying a code word. Its follow-me function lets the user's designated contacts follow them in real time, with live audio and video transmission in case of an emergency. UrSafe provides travellers with a global service that allows users to create a travel "team" so that loved ones back home can see the user's location in real-time and receive alerts in the event of an emergency. Users will have immediate access to the nearest police, fire, hospital and consulate. Designed as a complete safety app, travellers can continue using the service when they return home by subscribing accordingly. The app will have a new feature designed specifically for the LGBTQ+ community providing additional safety in cases of emergencies globally. Through this partnership, UrSafe will join Hepstar's global ancillary network and will be offered during the travel booking process to streamline travellers' sign-up to the app at the start of their journey.

## Gulf Air boosts ties with its partners in Saudi Arabia & Kuwait

**Aiming to** boost long-term relations with partners in its main markets, Gulf Air held its annual Ramadan Ghabga in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and the Kuwaiti capital. Gulf Air Chief Executive Officer Captain Waleed Al Alawi valued the annual opportunity to network with the airline's travel and tourism agents in its popular GCC destinations, as Gulf Air started flying to the region in the fifties and still sees strong passenger Aiming to boost long-term relations with partners in its main markets, Gulf Air held its annual Ramadan Ghabga in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and the Kuwaiti capital. Gulf Air Chief Executive Officer Captain Waleed Al Alawi valued the annual opportunity

to network with the airline's travel and tourism agents in its popular GCC destinations, as Gulf Air started flying to the region in the fifties and still sees strong passenger demand that translates to adding more daily frequencies in the future. Captain Al Alawi also highlighted the adaption of several ambitious initiatives aimed at digital transformation and the application of green principles that are environment-friendly, briefing the audience on the airline's expansion plans and the qualitative addi Bahrain and the city of Goa in the Republic of India.



## India's Akasa Air partners with WebEngage

WebEngage partnered with India's Akasa Air, in line with the airline's strategy to build a tech-first and customer-centric organisation. Akasa Air deployed WebEngage's marketing automation platform to enhance its customer engagement strategy. WebEngage will collaborate with Akasa Air to deliver unparalleled customer engagement across its web and mobile channels with relevant, personalized and contextual communication. Avlesh Singh, Co-founder & CEO, WebEngage, said, "Akasa Air has a unique approach towards its customers which stems from the brand's values and a customer-centric approach. WebEngage's retention platform will facilitate Akasa




Air to replicate its on-ground and inflight experience across all its digital touchpoints through our smart, data-driven and fully

automated retention platform. We believe that Akasa Air is here to transform the customer experience for the airline sector and we are delighted to be their partners in his journey." WebEngage is on a unique mission. It believes that no business should need to work too hard to engage and retain its customers. WebEngage is also assisting them to scale through a robust customer data and analytics platform, a personalisation engine, and an omnichannel campaign orchestration system. WebEngage has cemented its commitment and focus to the Enterprise ecosystem and its full-stack retention operating System is used and recommended by 800+ marketers across the globe.

# MAXIMIZE EFFICIENCY, SWITCH FROM EXCEL SHEETS TO MID-BACK-OFFICE CLOUD SOLUTION

- ✓ Booking consolidation
- ✓ Revenue Management
- ✓ Cross Sell and Upsell
- ✓ Tax Management
- ✓ Fulfillment and Ticketing
- ✓ Payables and Receivables
- ✓ Refunds and Amendments
- ✓ Bank and BSP Reco
- ✓ Client Management
- ✓ Financial Accounting
- ✓ Supplier Management
- ✓ Reports & Analytics


Universal Travel ↑

NY Neeraj Yauvani  
Head Office
📧 ? ↗

- 🏠 Administration
- 📅 Booking Management
- 👤 Client Management
- 💰 Finance
- 🕒 Reports
- 🔍 Report an Issue

### Manager Dashboard ▼

\$25,649

Total Sales in Current Month

108

Pending Bookings

23

Pending Service Requests

Booking Queues My Bookings Enquiry Queue

Pending Ticket Issuance	Unconfirmed	Pending Refunds	Pending Payment			
BOOKING REF	CLIENT NAME	BOOKING DATE	TRIP DATE	SERVICES	DESTINATION	STATUS
UT8806	Shishir Tour & Travels	12 Jan 2022	15 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8812	Patty Granderson	23 Jan 2022	22 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8818	Shizue Finnerty	28 Jan 2022	03 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8822	Guillermo Klutts	28 Jan 2022	10 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8836	Ressie Molinari	29 Jan 2022	11 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending


Create New Booking
View All

#### Activities New Activity


< **March 2022** >

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THR	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

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\*New Registrations till 31st May 2023



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# IATO's new executive team elected, Rajiv Mehra re-elected as President



On April 18, 2023, the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) announced its new team of Office Bearers and Executive Committee Members where Rajiv Mehra is re-elected as the President for the term 2023-25. The elections were held at The Ashok Hotel, New Delhi. The total number of votes casted were 278 out of 378. The office bearers were elected unopposed and the voting took place for the EC members.

The newly elected team of Office Bearers for the new term includes Rajnish Kaistha- Sr. Vice President; Ravi Gosain - Vice President; Sanjay Razdan- Hony. Secretary; Sunil Mishra- Hony. Treasurer; Viney Tyagi- Hony. Joint Treasurer; Proanab Sarkar- Immediate Past President. Besides this, 5 active and 3 allied posts for Executive Committee Members are also filled in.

## IATO writes to PM, appealing to restore incentives for the revival of tourism

**IATO President** Rajiv Mehra has written to the PM requesting him to restore SEIS (Service Export Incentive Scheme) or introduce an alternative scheme in the new Foreign Trade Policy, as the inbound tourism sector is still suffering and needs hand-holding by the government. Besides, it seeks to roll back TCS of 20 per cent to 5 per cent on Overseas Tour Packages announced in the Union Budget. These steps would place the tourism industry on par with foreign tour operators and help them compete with the neighbouring countries. Also during the current G-20 Presidency, where promoting tourism is one key objective, it would be pertinent that the Government extends a helping hand to the Tourism sector.

In the letter Mr. Mehra has mentioned that the inbound tourism industry of our country was the worst affected due to Covid-19 pandemic. Post revival of international flight operations and tourist visa, only 30-40 % of Inbound tourism to India has been revived, which the Govt accepts. So either SEIS should be restored or an alternative scheme benefiting the tourism sector should be announced in the Foreign Trade Policy 2023.

In the letter it has been stated that it took 9 years to increase foreign exchange earnings to 30.05 billion in 2019 from US\$ 14.49 billion in 2010. However, at present we have gone back



of foreign exchange earnings. This is indicative of the stress this sector is undergoing.

According to Mr Mehra, "We need to compete. But it becomes very difficult as the Govt. has withdrawn marketing and promotion support in foreign countries. Ended SEIS, not given any alternative benefit, GST is as high as 20-23 percent without any input tax credit, whereas neighbouring countries are charging 6-8 percent. To attract tourists we need to holistically look at all these issues.

would be made up more than 100 times as it has a positive multiplier impact on the overall economy".

Mr. Mehra also mentioned about the Increase in TCS rate from 5 % to 20 % w.e.f 1st July, 2023 is causing loss to outbound tour operators based in India. The traveler would simply bypass the Indian operator and book outside, it will be a lose-lose situation both for Govt. and tour operators. This needs to be brought back to 5 percent as was before or



With Truly India, you can plan a wedding that is both extraordinary and personalized. Our collection of fabulous palaces, elite resorts, and luxurious hotels provides you with an array of exceptional venues that reflect your preferences, whether you seek the splendour of royal palaces, the serenity of mountainous landscapes, or the tranquillity of nature. Let our destination wedding expert team guide you in creating a remarkable and groundbreaking celebration that reflects your unique style and vision



### SOME OF THE SERVICES



MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES



UNIQUE THEMES



SPLENDID DECOR



GLOBAL CUISINE

**KNOW MORE**

**OUR DESTINATION**

# TRAVELSCAPES IN AN ATTEMPT TO WEAVE A WEB OF CONNECTIONS IN THE WING OF TRAVEL AT ATM 2023, ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST TRAVEL MARKETS



# THE ROAD AHEAD IN VISA APPLICATIONS FOR VFS GLOBAL

With travel returning to pre-pandemic levels in 2023, the nation had exceptional demand for travel in the previous year, resulting in an extended peak outbound travel season with consistent volumes in December. Travel for vengeance or pleasure travel after being unable to travel is still an option. In August, September, and October, there is an extended peak season caused by a combination of events and student arrivals, especially from the United States and Europe. People increasingly traveled during extended seasons instead of the formerly limited peak season. Considering the current stats, **Prabuddha Sen, Chief Operating Officer - South Asia, VFS Global**, further emphasizes the upcoming strategies of VFS Global to keep up with the incoming footfall in Visa applications and the integration of AI technology to smoothen the process

By Mansi Yadav



## **How do you plan on addressing the bulk traveller issues coming your way while keeping in mind the expansion of VFS Global on a big platform?**

During peak season, visa processing can take longer than anticipated, and this is common across all geographies and all governments. VFS Global manages only the administrative and non-judgemental aspects of the visa application process. Decisions on visa applications, including the tenure of the visa, the availability of appointment slots and the timelines to process them, are at the sole discretion of the respective client governments and may vary from one mission to another. As a responsible service provider, VFS Global abides by the directives laid down by them and is committed and prepared to work with the client governments to increase capacity to cater to the ever-growing demand for outbound travel from India. We urge all applicants to apply for the correct visa category and country as per the norms.

## **What AI technology do you use as a part of consumer operations? What new are you planning to incorporate?**

Technology is at the core of everything we do at VFS Global. We have implemented machine learning solutions, which eliminate the need for data entry if the information is already available in supporting documents (e.g., passport or flight booking). In 2018, we launched ViVA ("Virtual Visa Assistant"), the first-ever visa services chatbot. The artificial intelligence-powered chatbot helps visa applicants with queries related to the visa application process, such as visa categories, rules and regulations, contact information and payment procedures. It can handle 10,000 inquiries per second 24/7, or 864 million in a day, significantly reducing the turnaround time of applicant queries. We have reduced the time required to complete an e-visa application by more than 50% using artificial intelligence.

## **Being the leading visa outsourcing company, which country in your perspective will see a surge in tourists this year, given the upliftment of many travel restrictions?**

Travel demand has remained high since the opening of international

*To cater to the rising travel demand, a few popular Schengen destinations like Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Slovenia have made appointments available from the very next day to within a week*

borders in 2021. Due to the exceptional demand, the traditional peak season was extended into the lean season of September to October. This tendency was first observed in 2021, just after International border started to open, and we saw it re-emerge again in 2022. In fact, visa application volume from India across categories touched around 80% of the 2019 pre-pandemic level last year. The outlook this year also looks extremely positive. To cater to the rising travel demand, a few of the popular Schengen destinations like Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Slovenia have made appointments available, ranging from the very next day to within a week. However, we constantly urge all applicants to apply for their visas well in advance to avoid peak season-related visa processing delays. Most countries accept visa applications up to 90 days in advance, with Schengen accepting documents up to six months prior to the date of travel.

## **Which new destinations are you planning to expand your footprint?**

VFS Global is the trusted partner of 67 client governments, operating a global network with more than 3,400 Application Centres in 145 countries, making us the world's largest outsourcing and technology services specialist for governments and diplomatic missions. Our capacity expansion is based on the directives of our client governments.

# THE ARABIAN TRAVEL MARKET 2023

## BEING A SEASONED HOST TO THE GLOBAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM SECTOR

THE FASTEST-GROWING TRAVEL MARKET IN THE WORLD IS ON THE ROLL TO SHARING INSIGHTS ON THE PIVOTAL INDUSTRY ISSUES AND THE LATEST INNOVATIONS ACCELERATING THE TOURISM INDUSTRY'S GROWTH



Since the withdrawal of restrictions on travel, MICE Industry has been increasingly mounting. Businesses are leaping with aid from the travel markets organised in every corner of the world. Countries can be seen welcoming tourists from across the borders enhancing their visibility as well as promoting their destinations. The Middle East has gained undivided preference in the past couple of months showcasing its unique offerings. With the successful execution of the Arabian Travel Market 2023, the Middle Eastern travel market has once again stood out in hosting a humungous number of tourists. **Danielle Curtis, Exhibitor Director of Middle East, the Arabian Travel Market** gave her insight on how the travel market is a great inception of networking and navigating connections

**The Arabian Travel Market in the previous years has been a great success and has drawn a great amount of traction. what's your outlook for the ATM in 2023?**

As the leading global event for the inbound and outbound travel industry in the Middle East, Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2023 will play host to over 2,000 exhibitors from around the world as a platform to showcase their destinations, products and services and network with other professionals within the industry.

We are expecting more than 34,000 attendees from over 150 destinations. Exhibitor participation will be 27% higher than last year, with growth across all show sectors. These include regional upticks for the Middle East (15.1% larger), Europe (30.9% larger), Asia (18.6% larger) and Africa (44.7% larger), as well as representation from Travel Tech and hotels.



“

*We have collaborated with the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA and the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) who will provide invaluable content aimed at the MICE and business travel segments*

which has expanded by 54.4% and 23.5%, respectively.

Last year, Arabian Travel Market (ATM) attracted strong attendance from India and indications pre-show suggest that the 30th edition of the show will see a further 20% year-on-year increase in participants from India.

With a wide array of must-attend events on the agenda and under our show theme, 'Working Towards Net Zero', the conversation will be focused on sharing insights, knowledge, best practice and the latest innovations accelerating the tourism industry's journey towards decarbonisation. In total, we have over 150 speakers, participating in 63 sessions, all of which will focus on industry-critical issues with the potential to influence the future trajectory of global travel.

Moreover, ATM will build on the success of last year's edition with a host of seminar



sessions focused on pivotal industry issues, cutting-edge innovations and solutions, as well as sessions dedicated to the latest sustainable travel trends and innovations. In total, we have over 150 speakers, participating in 63 sessions, all of which will focus on industry-critical issues with the potential to influence the future trajectory of global travel.

**MICE has taken a front seat with the fast-blazing travel industry post-pandemic, with the surrounding dynamic market scenario, what marketing strategies have been planned for Indian exhibitors since the inception of the new year?**

At ATM 2023, we will allow delegates, exhibitors and attendees to explore the Indian travel sector through various show features, including the India Summit, which will delve into this exciting outbound market. With a packed agenda, ATM 2023 will seek to provide the perfect platform for Indian exhibitors and attendees to meet, network and generate new business leads.

We have collaborated with the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) and the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) who will provide invaluable content aimed at the MICE and business travel segments. These valuable partnerships also provided the opportunity to promote to their association members.

ATM also provides speed networking opportunities which bring together exhibitors with senior buyers and facilitate new connections. Furthermore, we add value to increase business connections through Connect Me Meetings platform, which exhibitors have access to pre-event to pre-schedule their meetings. We also extend support for exhibitors with a host of promotional materials such as social post advice, PR support, and materials such as logos, email templates and banner designs to help them promote themselves in the lead-up to the show.

**What are your expectations for ATM this year? What kind of demand are you observing with the surge in the MICE Industry since the inception of the new year, especially with The Arabian Travel Market scheduled in May?**

Business travel in the Middle East and Africa (MEA) is recovering more rapidly than in any other region, according to the most recent Business Travel Index™ Outlook annual forecast and outlook (2022), from the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA), the World's largest business travel association. MEA business travel achieved 86% of its 2019 levels during 2022, outperforming the recovery in the Americas, Asia Pacific and Europe.

Being a key component of the Middle East's wider travel and tourism industry, it is encouraging to see that it has bounced back so strongly since the pandemic.

According to the GBTA forecast, business travel spending reached \$933 billion globally in 2022, 65% of the USD 1.4 trillion business pre-pandemic travel spend, with the MEA region accounting for \$23 billion or approximately 2.5% of overall spending within the sector. Spending on business travel globally is expected to recover to 80% of 2019 levels in 2023, up from 65% in 2022.

It will be very interesting to find out how business travel can continue to grow, particularly with the anticipated surge in outbound travellers from India, which is a very important source market for the ME.

**With the surge in travel since last year, what is your expectation for the footfall this year?**

As mentioned earlier, we are expecting more than 2,000 exhibitors as well as over 34,000 attendees from over 150 destinations. Compared with last year which saw over 1,500 exhibitors and more than 31,000 attendees, ATM 2023 will be 27% higher in terms of exhibitor participation, with a 10% increase in the overall number of attendees.

# RAS AL KHAIMAH

## AN EMIRATE BRIMMED WITH SUSTAINABILITY

With a mission to position itself as a leading destination for global travellers seeking unique, authentic, and sustainable experiences, Ras al Khaimah leads in the industry aiming to cater to the qualitative life of the travellers. The city proves to be an amazing host for travellers across the globe assuring them to provide excellent experiences and keeping sustainable tourism as an important key. In a conversation with TravelScapes, **Iyad Rasbey, Executive Director of Destination Tourism Development, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority** shares his valuable insights on the strategies and campaigns in the pipeline to attract tourists across the globe. He also throws light on RAK's plans to tighten the trade ties with the travel trade fraternity through the biggest travel mart, Arabian Travel Market

By Chandni Chopra

### With eco-tourism taking the front seat, what initiatives does Ras Al Khaimah take in this direction?

Sustainability is at the heart of everything we do in Ras Al Khaimah. Our aim is to become the regional leader in sustainable tourism by 2025 and ensure that our tourism industry is economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable, and supports the quality of life for citizens and our workforce. To achieve this, we have adopted a measured approach with a controlled pipeline of hotels and invested USD 136 million in developing attractions that enhance our natural environment. In line with this roadmap, we also have implemented a sustainability measurement and certification program with EarthCheck to co-create sustainable practices and benchmark performance. Our Destination Certification program with EarthCheck to co-create sustainable practices and benchmark performance. Our Destination Certification Program aims to obtain the internationally recognized "Sustainable Tourism Destination" certificate for Ras Al Khaimah in 2023. We prioritize protecting our unique natural environment and local communities and are committed to ensuring that there is no over-tourism in Ras Al Khaimah. This sustainable approach to development is the cornerstone of our ambition to attract 3 million visitors by 2030.

### What crowd-puller strategies does Ras Al Khaimah deploy to attract tourists globally?

We have made significant efforts to attract tourists from all around the world with the Emirate seeing a steady increase in visitor numbers as a result. 2022 alone saw a 40% increase, with key source markets including Kazakhstan, Russia, the United Kingdom, Germany and the Czech Republic. This was driven by a variety of different strategies, including a series of partnerships with airlines - our most recent one being Qatar Airways - and leading tour operators to target emerging and growing source markets, supported by 90+ events and roadshows in 24 markets worldwide. We have also heavily invested in its tourism infrastructure development, including opening new hotels and resorts, expanding airport facilities, and developing new tourist attractions. For example, Jebel Jais Flight, the world's longest zipline, and Jais Sledder, the region's longest toboggan - both of which have helped to boost Ras Al Khaimah's reputation as an Al Marjan Island. Anantara Mina Al Arab, Sofitel Al Hamra Beach Resort, and 300 additional rooms under the Millennium Brand, scheduled to take shape in 2025 as part of the Danah Bay Project on Al Marjan Island, are also in the pipeline. At Jebel Jais, the highest mountain in the UAE, we have Saij, A Mantis Collection Mountain Lodge, offering 70 luxury lodges that provide



a pure mountain retreat with guided treks, mindful pursuits, and creative experiences. Additionally, Cloud7 Camp Jebel Jais, the ultimate glamping experience, will offer 30 accommodation units built out of sustainable material, while The Basecamp Jais will provide affordable accommodation for outdoor enthusiasts and nature lovers. Jais Yard, an F&B village, will drive further visitation to Jebel Jais with its food trailers, kiosks, retail containers, vintage truck restaurants, open-air cinema, and children's play areas. Furthermore, Jais Wings, the region's first dedicated paragliding site in the GCC, will call out to adventure seekers to take off on a paragliding experience from the top of Jebel Jais with two options for landing pads.

### How do you plan to tighten trade ties across the globe in the upcoming greatest trade mart, ATM 2023?

The Arabian Travel Market is an opportunity to reconnect, re-engage and re-align with key industry players and trade stakeholders. It provides the perfect platform to create new relationships and discuss opportunities and challenges for the future of our industry, especially when it comes to sustainability and responsible tourism. This year at ATM, our goal is to further cement Ras Al Khaimah's position as a destination of the future - one that thinks like a community. We

will do this by showcasing the array of exciting new attractions and world-class hotels opening in the Emirate soon, and by highlighting how sustainable, balanced, and focused developments are at the heart of our strategies, with an ambition to nurture a tourism industry that is economically, environmentally, socially sustainable and supports liveability.

### **How do you see Ras Al Khaimah Tourism evolving in the next five years?**

Ras Al Khaimah is on a mission to position itself as a leading destination for global travellers seeking unique, authentic, and sustainable experiences. Over the next five years, we will continue to focus on diversifying our tourism offerings, investing in sustainable infrastructure, and promoting the Emirate as a must-visit destination for adventure seekers, nature enthusiasts, and cultural explorers. We are committed to supporting the growth of our local communities, developing sustainable tourism practices, and providing visitors with a high-quality, authentic experience that exceeds their expectations. We will also continue to collaborate with our industry partners, airlines, hotels, and attractions to create compelling packages that showcase our destination's offerings and drive demand. Our focus



**Ras Al Khaimah is on a mission to position itself as a leading destination for global travellers seeking unique, authentic, and sustainable experiences**

on sustainable tourism will also remain a key priority, and we will continue to develop initiatives to reduce our carbon footprint, protect our natural environment, and empower local communities. Overall, we are confident that Ras Al Khaimah will continue to evolve as a must-visit destination in the coming years, offering visitors a unique, authentic, and memorable experience. adventure tourism destination. We have also focused on promoting its stunning topography; Ras Al Khaimah is home to a diverse range of natural landscapes, including mountains, deserts, and beaches. We have promoted these natural attractions, such as Jebel Jais - the highest mountain in the UAE, and the Al Wadi Nature Reserve, to attract adventure and eco-tourists. Ras Al Khaimah is also known for its rich history and culture, dating back 7000 years to the Bronze Age, with ancient forts and archaeological sites, four of which were recognised by UNESCO, on its tentative list of Global Heritage Sites - this has been another drawcard for international visitors. We also host numerous sporting events and festivals throughout the year, such as the Ras Al Khaimah Half Marathon, the world's fastest and now in its 15th edition. These events help to attract visitors from around the world and showcase the emirate's unique culture and heritage. Overall, Ras Al Khaimah's efforts to attract global tourists have been hugely targeting successful, with the Emirate recognized as one of CNN Travel's best destinations to visit in 2023, and included in Time magazine as one of the World's Greatest Places of 2022.

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### **Are there any promotional campaigns in the pipeline, specifically targeting the Indian market?**

We have an array of promotional and marketing activities planned that target 28 cities to engage with receptive travellers and showcase Ras Al Khaimah's unique experiences. One of our main strategies is to focus on digital marketing, as it has become increasingly important in today's world. We have ensured that our website, social media channels, and marketing collaterals are all digital-first, making it easy for new-age travellers to discover our offerings. We recently launched our summer campaign which invites travellers to "get more" of whatever they want - from mountains to mangroves, deserts to destination resorts, and beaches to bucket-list thrills. The campaign aims to generate summer bookings and position Ras Al Khaimah as an attractive summer destination for domestic and international travellers. Additionally, we are planning to launch a dedicated social media page catering to the Indian market, allowing us to directly engage with Indian travel in co-marketing agreements with travel agents and tour operators, more cities in India, to reach a wider audience and showcase our destination's unique selling points. We will be participating in various trade shows, webinars, roadshows, and exhibitions to connect with the Indian travel trade, create awareness about Ras Al Khaimah, and network with key stakeholders and decision-makers in the Indian travel industry.

### **Elucidate some latest offerings and exquisite experiences for tourists?**

We are constantly striving to offer new and unique experiences to visitors. In line with this, we have several upcoming attractions that will provide exquisite experiences to tourists. In the beachfront and land areas, we are strengthening our hospitality infrastructure with 21 new projects and over 6,500 additional keys in the next few years. This is an 80% growth over the current capacity to meet the rising demand for accommodation options in the Emirate as part of our vision to attract 3 million visitors by 2030. We have upcoming hotels such as Wynn Resorts, a multi-billion-dollar integrated resort development on Al Marjan Island, featuring more than 1,000 rooms, shopping, meeting and convention facilities, a spa, more than 10 restaurants and lounges, extensive entertainment choices, a gaming area, and other amenities. Nobu Hotels will also feature 300 keys and a signature Nobu Restaurant.

Do you aim to expand your digital presence for promotions?

As we plan our digital marketing roadmap for 2023, we have taken stock of our previous successes and emerging digital marketing and social media trends. We have consulted with industry experts, such as Beautiful Destinations and its founder Jeremy Jauncey, who have highlighted the importance of digital identity for millennial and Gen Z consumers, with 90% of them booking travel based on what they see on social media. Additionally, we have noticed that short-form vertical video content has been successful in retaining audience interest, constituting 57% of all worldwide video plays last year. Our #RAKCalling campaign last year utilized this format and achieved tremendous success with 25.95M digital video views. We plan to continue utilizing this format and incorporating it into our upcoming strategies and campaigns.



# QATAR

## A CURATED COLLATION OF ARABIC CULTURE AND DRAWING CARDS

**Philip Dickinson, Vice President of International Markets, Qatar Tourism** gives his valuable insights on Qatar topping the list of popular destinations in the Middle East for travellers across the globe

By *Aanchal Sachdeva*

**As Indians are on the go exploring the unexplored marvels around the globe in the end-emic era, what are the drawing cards in the leisure segment that Qatar possesses?**

Qatar is an ideal destination for families, groups of friends, and solo travellers due to its strategic location and sun, sand, and sea offerings. The destination features breathtaking natural beauty, unrivalled tourism infrastructure, and the best of Middle Eastern hospitality. Kayaking at the Al Thakira Mangroves, visiting The Pearl, strolling around Katara Cultural Village, admiring the Doha skyline, or shopping to their hearts' content at Souq Waqif are all options for visitors. Qatar also has the Al Khor Desert, also known as the Inland Sea, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the few places in the world where the sea meets the desert.

Qatar Tourism, in collaboration with their on-the-ground partners, offers carefully curated travel itineraries to suit each individual's distinct travel personality. The destination offers a variety of attractions and activities, including museums, multi-cuisine dining options, shopping malls, wellness & spas, and much more. Travellers can make the most of their trip by booking custom-made packages that cater to their specific interests.

**With the growing trend of Women's Tourism globally, how is Qatar taking it forward with women tourists travelling to the destination in search of uniquely local experiences?**

When it comes to activities and attractions, Qatar has a lot to offer. Women travellers can learn about the culture and go on art excursions. They can choose to relax and rejuvenate in world-class wellness spas featuring the best of Arabic treatments, participate in an adventure sport of their choice, shop locally or from the most luxurious brands, indulge in local cuisines, or dine at one of Qatar's many fine-dine restaurants. The country has it all, and visitors of any age or interest will be spoiled for choice.

To add to that, the country is blessed to have pleasant weather around the year and its strategic location allows it to be a good stop-over destination too. Moreover, Qatar offers free visa-on-arrival for all Indians and has also ranked #1 on the Numbeo Safety Index five times in a row making it an easy choice for women travellers.

**What initiatives are you taking to promote Qatar as a popular destination on the MICE front?**

Qatar has emerged as a premium MICE destination with an outstanding and comprehensive selection of hotels, convention centres, excursions, and activities. Qatar has the perfect set-up to conduct meetings, host incentive groups, conferences, or events and combine business with

leisure. Since the country is equipped for capacity, the infrastructure is designed to accommodate business visitors and makes it easy to seamlessly carry out corporate events of every magnitude.

India has been and continues to be an important market to achieve our 2030 goal to welcome 6 million tourists per year. MICE contributes to 20% of this number and therefore plays a very important role. To facilitate this, our representation offices in each market actively support trade with queries and information. Qatar Tourism also has a very sound subvention support program which is offered to Corporates.

Additionally, the national carrier Qatar Airways offers the QMICE program under which that visiting can expect attractive fares for group movements to Qatar.

**What cities/states are tapped with Qatar in terms of air connectivity? What is your outlook on connecting other states/cities with the upcoming year?**

Qatar Airways operates in most Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities across India. We have 95 weekly flights operating from Qatar Airways from 12 gateway cities. 64 weekly flights run by Indigo Airlines, and 25 weekly departures by Air India.

Given the proximity of India and Qatar, the majority of these flights are short-haul. Owing to the frequency of flyers, Qatar Airways, the national carrier, is constantly working on introducing new flights from India.

**What strategies are you deploying to promote Qatar as a tourism destination?**

The 3 major interest areas for the Indian market are to establish Qatar as a family-friendly destination, a wedding destination, and the hub for wellness. The country has a range of offerings for every age, budget, and interest making it a perfect pick for a family holiday. More to that, Qatar is blessed with year-round sunshine and has the perfect setting in terms of weather, hospitality, and amenities to conduct pre-wedding shoots, host a wedding, and go on a luxurious honeymoon making it an ideal romantic getaway.

Additionally, the state-of-the-art spa retreats offer a combination of modern and ancient therapies. Wellness in Qatar is a serious affair, and the country is home to some of the grandest spas and wellness retreats in the Middle East.

To highlight these demand spaces, Qatar Tourism launched the 'Feel More in Qatar' campaign. The idea is to encourage visitors to experience the feeling of indulgence, love, wonder, thrill, and more in Qatar. The campaign was strategically planned and released aiming to deliver the message - there's so much that can be explored in Qatar.

# BAHI AJMAN PALACE HOTEL



## IN THE LAP OF AESTHETIC ARABIAN HOSPITALITY

There's no better experience of Arabian hospitality than at Ajman's most iconic hotel, the Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel. Proud to cater to almost all segments, business or leisure, the most exquisite property overlooks the Arabian Gulf welcoming guests with its warm hospitality. **Iftikhar Hamdani, Area General Manager at Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel & Coral Beach Resort Sharjah, United Arab Emirates** throws light on an array of strategies deployed to provide an exceptional stay to their guests. You name it, and they have it! From gaining popularity on the MICE front to hosting weddings of Indian guests, Mr Hamdani is not leaving any stone unturned in making Bahi Ajman Palace a renowned name on a global level

By *Aanchal Sachdeva*

**Considering how important it is to offer guests the most exclusive and memorable experiences. How is the Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel levelling up the accommodation standards in this direction?**

Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel provides its guests with 1st class services along with an exceptional culinary dining experience in addition to its luxurious leisure facilities that include a lifestyle club, SPA, and a pool & private beach. It is also equipped with venues that can hold corporate meetings and grand weddings. The hotel provides its guests with a heritage retreat with a contemporary spirit. Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel creates a memorable experience and at the same time champions sustainable tourism with the Green Key certification. A Green Key stands for the promise to its guests that by opting to stay with the Green Key hotel, they are helping to make a difference on an environmental level.

**With the surrounding dynamic market scenario, what marketing strategies are planned for Indian guests?**

We are planning to conduct an India roadshow along with our tourism boards, few FAM trips for the Indian travel agents are scheduled to show them the facility of our hotels. We have authentic Indian cuisine at both of our hotels as we hired professional Indian specialist chefs to cater for the Indian guests.

**What kind of demand are you observing with the surge in the MICE Industry since the inception of the new year, especially with The Arabian Travel Market scheduled in May?**

We have a big demand for MICE and

particularly for the destination wedding from India. Recently, we attended the Exotic Wedding Planning Conference at Ras Al Khaimah, UAE where we met many Indian wedding planners. We are targeting destination weddings from India at Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel as our banquet facility is the largest in Ajman.

**How are you leveraging digital platforms to promote your brand on a global level?**

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, digital platforms have become an essential tool for driving growth and success. We ensure to target the specific demographics and reach potential clients, interacting with them directly through social media and other online channels.

**Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel recently bagged the Green Key certification, can you list a few sustainable practices that you are implementing at the moment?**

Bahi Ajman Palace is a proud recipient of the prestigious environmental accolade Green Key certification year 2022, this was after following the list of environmental requirements and a comprehensive audit carried out by the Emirates Green Building Council. We are in the process of renewing the certification this year.

Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel is committed to continuing to be a great advocate for Hospitality Management Holding's (HMH) "Be Green, Go Green" initiative, which aims to protect our environment. In collaboration with DGrade's Simply Bottles recycling initiative, Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel's PET (polyethylene terephthalate) waste is converted into high-quality yarn for textile production. We are working closely with Emirates Environmental Group for other wastes like cans, cartons, newspapers, and used gadgets which are carefully collected for recycling.

During the closure of the hotel last year, our staff even in their home countries continued their advocacy by planting a total of 110 trees across the world, in Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Italy, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka, Syria, UAE, USA, and Uganda.

Other than that, we are actively participating in community initiatives as well, i.e., a Clean-up drive, food distribution during Ramadan and many others.



# LE ROYAL MÉRIDIEN DOHA

## RAPIDLY EVOLVING DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

**Gerrit Gräf, the General Manager of Le Royal Méridien Doha** highlights the Indian market demands and their travel trends to Qatar offering them the right product and exquisite experiences

By *Aanchal Sachdeva*

### **Considering how important it is to offer guests the most exclusive and memorable experiences. How is Le Royal Méridien Doha levelling up the standards for accommodation?**

At Le Royal Méridien Doha, we offer a diverse selection of rooms, suites, and apartments to cater to various types of guests, including business and leisure travellers, as well as groups and families. I believe in personalising our guests' experiences to exceed their expectations, from fulfilling simple room amenities requests to addressing their unique needs.

Furthermore, our hotel's convenient location connected to Place Vendôme Mall and the city's metro and tram network provides easy access to Qatar's top shopping and tourist destinations, business districts and exhibition centres and makes travelling between Doha and Lusail a breeze. This makes Le Royal Méridien Doha an ideal destination for anyone looking for a comfortable and well-connected stay.

### **With the surrounding dynamic market scenario, what marketing strategies are planned for Indian guests?**

When discussing the Indian market and their travel trends to Qatar, three key components come to mind: shopping, sporting events, and weddings. As such, I am confident that Le Royal Méridien Doha is an excellent choice for Indian travellers seeking a shopping destination. Our location is strategically connected to the Place Vendôme Mall. Sports enthusiasts will have no trouble attending matches as we are conveniently located near the city's metro and tram network, providing direct access to major sporting venues. Lastly, our hotel features a 665 square meter ballroom with a theatre-style open kitchen, ideal for weddings with up to 500 guests in a banquet setup. To cater to the majority of

Indian tourists to Qatar, who are Millennials and Gen Z, and considering the growing spending power of Indian travellers, it is essential to offer the right product, enticing deals, and unique experiences at a very competitive price.

### **What kind of demand are you observing with the surge in the MICE Industry since the inception of the new year, especially with The Arabian Travel Market scheduled in May directing footfall in the Middle East?**

Due to Qatar's successful hosting of the

*In today's world, luxury is defined by unique services and experiences, and while all hotels may offer tangible products, not all are capable of delivering compelling services and experiences for their guests*

recent World Cup and the impressive turnout of attendees, numerous sporting event organisations have expressed a keen interest in holding their events in the country. Among the confirmed upcoming sporting events are the AFC Asian Cup and the Qatar Grand Prix. As a result, there is a growing demand for related events in the market this year. These activities have a significant impact on the demand for MICE venues, as meticulous planning is required from start to finish to successfully host such events.

### **How are you leveraging digital platforms to promote your brand on a global level?**

In the rapidly evolving digital landscape, our hotel business must maximise Marriott's platforms, such as our website, to cater to potential bookings from around the world. Our room packages have been successful, so it is important to offer these online for guests to choose from. Additionally, we are focused on

enhancing the user experience on our Arabic website by providing accurate content for our Arabic-speaking guests, particularly those from neighbouring Saudi Arabia, one of the top feeder markets for Qatar.

Email marketing remains a powerful tool too, particularly for communicating with our loyal Marriott Bonvoy members and guests who have previously utilised our services. In recognition of this, we recently launched our email marketing community, allowing us to build our database and keep our valued customers up-to-date with any news and

happenings related to the hotel.

### **With the hospitality industry thriving at a rapid pace, what new trends are followed by Le Royal Méridien Doha stepping up for global recognition?**

At Le Royal Méridien Doha, our benchmarks are product innovation and personalised guest service. While there may be various hospitality trends and gimmicks out there, what truly matters is the quality of the products and the impact and significance of our services on our guests. We strive to ensure that our guests leave our property feeling fulfilled and satisfied with their experience, allowing them to share their positive experiences with others at their next destination. In today's world, luxury is defined by unique services and experiences, and while all hotels may offer tangible products, not all are capable of delivering compelling services and experiences for their guests.

# MILES TO GO FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

**Soufiane Elallam-Complex Commercial Director, Habtoor Palace Dubai, LXR Hotels & Resort**

seminently focuses on creating a culture that empowers and aids in creating new opportunities

By *Aanchal Sachdeva*



## **Habtoor Palace Dubai offers guests the most exclusive and memorable experiences**

Al Habtoor City's jewel of the crown, Habtoor Palace Dubai, LXR Hotels & Resorts, is a majestic and palatial property. Located in the heart of Dubai, on the banks of Dubai Water Canal. Step inside the majestic Habtoor Palace Dubai with 234 lavishly appointed guest rooms including 52 opulent suites (a custom-made Bentley Suite and signature Sir Winston Churchill Suite), homely butler service, seven well-defined restaurants and lounges and the exquisite Silk Spa. Many aspects make a stay memorable for the guests:

- **Interiors of the hotel** – As you enter Habtoor Palace Dubai, guests are welcomed through the grand doors to the Arabian palatial lobby, with dreamy décor, Arabian-style gilded staircases; Versailles manicured gardens, which reminisces of a Dubai-based palace with grand doors and an elegant chandelier hanging down from high ceilings.
- **Meeting high expectations** – Habtoor Palace Dubai is a destination within a destination and is similar to staying in the palace of a prominent Emirati businessperson, to be in the know and take residence in a destination that is a favourite for delegations from across the GCC and beyond. Habtoor Palace Dubai welcomes guests with Kava (Arabic coffee) and is escorted directly to the Emirati national talent at our check-in. Every suite comes with private butler service to take care of all the guest's needs.
- **Working areas** – At Habtoor Palace Dubai,

guests are more than welcome to use the 24-7 business centre where all the meeting rooms are named after legends – Carnegie, Morgan, Rockefeller, Vanderbilt and Salon Prive. This right here tells the story of Al Habtoor one of the only few Emirati industrial names who participated in the making of Dubai as it is globally known today.

## **Adopting marketing strategies planned for Indian guests**

Indian visitors come to Dubai for business and leisure with diverse expectations and needs at different price points. Al Habtoor City Hotel Collection is also very well known for big Indian weddings, as there are 3 ballrooms, 2 outdoor venues to choose from, and 1,600 rooms to have friends and family all under one roof. Few strategies we have implemented:

- **Indian cuisine** – Guests can dine at The Market, Hilton Dubai Al Habtoor City, which has a wide range of international cuisines including an Indian show kitchen, with live stations and fresh Indian breads.
- **Price and offers** – Indian guests can also avail of Al Habtoor City Hotel Collection's exceptional spring offer, where guests can book one room at the best available rate and receive a second room at 50% - The best part of this offer is that kids below 12 years eat complimentary at any managed outlets.
- **Family-friendly** – Hilton Dubai Al Habtoor City is the perfect hotel for their holiday. With a kids club on the seventh floor to keep the little ones busy while parents can explore Al Habtoor City.

## **The surge in demand with the surge in the MICE Industry**

As the hub of the Arab continent, Dubai will host more than 150 countries at the World Trade Center during the Arabian Travel Market 2023 to map out Working towards net zero - sustainability. During this time, the hike in the number of event spaces at the Al Habtoor City Hotel Collection has reached its peak. The global MICE market is expected to reach USD 1,245 Billion in 2023. The Indian market has re-emerged as the top 10-source market where most of the impact came from great success through MICE and corporate accounts. Therefore, ATM is a great platform to holistically assess the perception of Indian leisure demand as well. This is where Al Habtoor City may enjoy an edge over its competitors with a lot of business guests having enjoyed our City of

Dreams and already affirming plans to come and bring their families together to celebrate special moments, share experiences with friends about La Perle – Dubai's number 1 water-based theme show, our eclectic dining offers, beach escape and much more. We are aiming to grow the Indian market as the top three feeder markets.

## **Leveraging digital platforms to promote the brand on a global level There are several ways to leverage digital platforms, especially in today's day and age. Few to name:**

- **Celebrity endorsement** – We have hosted big names, such as Sachin Tendulkar, Syed Kirmani, and Baadshah, and looking forward to hosting, Farah Khan, Maniesh Paul and many more names that are respectable. Many corporate and leisure accounts are amplified through our agency based in India, Red Dot Representatives, their
- **Hotel website marketing** - The hotel's website is generally the most profitable for online booking.
- **Social media** - Influencer marketing is not the only way to engage with potential guests in the digital space. We do it directly through our own social media accounts - @vhoteldubai, @habtoorpalace @hiltondubaihc.
- **Video Marketing** - In 2022, we produced a few beautiful pieces of content for all three hotels. One video focusing on the rich heritage of Habtoor Palace Dubai. Second focusing on UAE National Day, which was a heart-touching and an emotional focus on UAE's cultural past and last but not least the festive cheer of 2022.

## **New trends followed by the Habtoor Palace Dubai stepping up for global recognition**

At Al Habtoor City Hotel Collection, we have taken steps to reduce emissions; single-use plastic has been reduced drastically, and we offer guests on property Tesla vehicle charging. Al Habtoor City is designed in a way, where guests do not need to drive around, they can walk, use electrical scooters or even cycle around the area.

- **Al Habtoor City Hotel Collection** uses UAE-grown fresh produce.
- **Culture of Responsibility** – As part of the hospitality industry, we are highly focused on creating a culture that serves our colleagues – from empowering them to creating new opportunities.

# North East India

## A GLIMPSE OF THE HEART OF NATURE

### *Arunachal Pradesh*

Arunachal Pradesh is the last frontier and easternmost state of India, sharing borders with Tibet, Bhutan and Myanmar. The state is characterised by an impressive mountainous region that rises to the Greater Himalayas. Tucked inside these snow-capped peaks between Bhutan and Tibet is the town of Tawang. This little-visited spot is home to the second-largest Buddhist monastery in the world, spectacularly set on the edge of a slope at 3000m elevation.





North-East India boasts of places of beauty where nature flourishes with all its essence. Nestled amidst the many hilltops and scenic valleys, the places in North East are a treat to the eyes. Its picturesque views make you want to share them with someone special, and it is best enjoyed that way. With the clouds floating right by your side, and the sun rising from amidst the valley, North East holds something special to experience. From the beauty of the tourist places here to the fun-filled activities, there are numerous experiences that you simply cannot afford to miss out

By Chandni Chopra



## Cherrapunjee

The wettest place in the world finds its home in Meghalaya. While Cherrapunji is famous for its living root bridges, formed due to incessant rain, it is also popular for being one of the best North east India destinations for a holiday. You can also set up a camp underneath these bridges and live close to nature like never before!



## Gangtok, Sikkim

Sikkim is a former mountain kingdom, bordered by Bhutan, Tibet and Nepal, and features some of India's most impressive mountain vistas and trekking opportunities. It's the least populated state in the country and one-third of its area is covered by the Kanchenjunga National Park to the north. And for all this natural splendour, it is Sikkim's urban charms that steals the show. The state's capital, Gangtok, is one of India's most laid-back cities and is a joy to explore.



## Niranang Falls

Also known as the Bong Bong falls, these are 100 meters in height. The serenity of this place is best enjoyed with someone by your side. So, if you're planning a romantic trip to the North East, make sure you add this place to your itinerary. The falls are renowned for giving a feeling of serendipity to any couple that heads there. So, don't miss out on one of the most charming places to visit in north east India for honeymoon!

## Nathu La Pass

The name of the pass translates to "listening ears". The trek on the Nathu La pass is one of the major highlights of the North East tourism as it gives an invigorating feeling to every traveler who experiences it. During the trek, you are treated to the views that remain ingrained in your memory for a lifetime, and you get to spot some beautiful lakes on the way. This is one of the most popular tourist places in north east India that you ought to include to your itinerary.



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# OMNIYAT

## Hospitality on my mind

OMNIYAT Hospitality Management is one of a kind Jordanian registered entity founded in 2018. **Ahmad Hashem, CEO/MD of Omiyat Hospitality Management** believes in adding value to investors and redefining business by establishing long-term business relationships. He is of the opinion that it is a good fit for any leisure and lifestyle investment portfolio's asset allocation

By *Aanchal Sachdeva*



### **What are the different dimensions under OMNIYAT Hospitality Management? What does the brand have to offer to the travellers?**

OMNIYAT Hospitality Management as a group focuses on service excellence, innovation and loyalty towards its customers, therefore our philosophy is based on delivering value in terms of valuable experiences more than anything else.

We are a Hospitality Management Company with 4 divisions focused on Hospitality Industry. OMNIYAT Hospitality Division is Hotels Management (We Manage and Operate Hotels), OMNIYAT Hospitality Partnership and a joint venture with Bookingwhizz Premium Hospitality Solutions – MENA region, stands as the MENA region Partnership and joint venture for, Winsar group/ Wincloud Hotels solution systems, for Middle East. Based in Jordan, OMNIYAT Tours handles all travel requirements, and we provide a wide range of travel-related services, we cater to fit as well as groups, and Events & MICE segments too.

We are focused on developing new products based on specific age groups, we curate unique itineraries for millennials, senior citizens, solo women trips and so on. We offer cinematic tours, adventure activities that give you an adrenalin rush plus filming tours and nature-friendly trips as well. Right from offering the most luxurious glamping in Wadi Rum, to wellness experiences in the Dead Sea and diving thrills in the Gulf of Aqaba, we can manage it all for the discerning travellers.

### **How is OMNIYAT Hospitality Management catering to different segments in the travel industry? How do you think, will it positively impact the quality of tourism?**

We cater to FIT as well as group segments, and Events & MICE sectors too. Further, Educational Tours, Medical Tours and Adventure are also segments we specialize in. We handle trips that include tours to Jordan's top beach holiday destinations, safaris and adventure excursions, golf packages, wellness programmes, cruises, weddings, sports tours, corporate travel and cultural packages.

We also do combinations of Jordan & Israel itineraries and Holy Tours. Furthermore, OMNIYAT Tours offers outbound tours with a variety of packages and ticketing services to various countries for luxurious and private tours (Egypt, Qatar, Turkey, Maldives, and Georgia) by providing luxury services and selective hotels and resorts as well as luxury activities. Jordan is rated among one of the safest countries to travel to, and this has a positive impact on the destination.

### **According to you, how have the dynamics and demands of travel changed since the inception of the New Year as Jordan has been selected as one of the best destinations for 2023 by Lonely Planet?**

From a Global Perspective, overall travel is expected to increase by 30% in 2023. Most travellers look at the sustainability aspect rather than typical hotels with sky-high buildings and structures. People want to plan a holiday to one country and explore every city of that particular country. Some clients may like to book hotels on their own as they use a lot of apps, and utilize our services for Sightseeing Tours and ground arrangements plus suggestions on restaurants and must-do activities. Some clients on the other hand, like to use our services as a one-stop shop, and book all arrangements & services through us. Further, findings show that younger generations of travellers are taking more trips, booking longer stays and looking for a larger number of functional features from their accommodation such as wellness facilities and co-working space. For example, 51 per cent of Millennials and Gen Z consumers say remote working facilities are important to them while choosing accommodation, compared to just 15 per cent of older generations.

### **What strategies (also digital strategies, if any) are you formulating in order to nurture your relationship with the travel and tourism industry?**

The main strategy for any professional organization in the Service Industry is to have the primary focus on personal interaction and meetings with trade partners and we focus on

nurturing our relationships. Digital strategies are an extremely important element of marketing. We ensure that we share creative content through different channels like LinkedIn & Instagram, to constantly engage with our clients. We also create meaningful videos, each video would have a particular activity featured in it, like hot air ballooning, cultural performances, some classic tours in Wadi Rum, excursions to archaeological sites in Petra.

We are thrilled to announce that we will soon be launching our new B2B and B2C travel platform, currently under the final tuning stage, designed to revolutionize the way your clients plan and book their travel arrangements. With access to a vast selection of flights, hotels, car rentals, and activities, it will offer unparalleled convenience and flexibility, allowing you to tailor-make itineraries to meet the unique needs and preferences of your esteemed clients. For our B2B partners, we offer a range of customizable solutions, including white labelling and API integration.

### **How important do you think it has become for travel entities to act more like marketers and not just sellers to meet the new age travel demands?**

In today's day and age, it has become absolutely essential for travel entities to not be "just sellers."

One needs to be more of a Travel Counselor, someone who can guide people to get maximum value out of their travel plans to enable them to have unique experiences to cherish.

In order to do this, I think one must establish a very open communication channel with clients. Advise them if one feels they have chosen a routing or itinerary which may not necessarily be the best one. Help them optimize their trips from the budget perspective too. Upsell and offer them meaningful activities to enhance the trip's experiential aspect.

Further, one needs to Invest in technology and system-driven procedures which make us more efficient while curating products. Saving time leads to increased efficiency and technology-driven techniques lead to better results in the long term.

# TRULYY INDIA HOTELS

## THE SAGA OF WEDLOCKS

Besides setting goals for providing customised guest experiences, Trully India sets a benchmark for providing exquisite destination wedding experiences keeping in mind sustainable initiatives for the customers. With the aim to streamline the idea of destination weddings, **Naresh Arora, Founder and CEO of Trully India Hotels** gives his valuable insights on how they stand out amongst its peers offering high-end amenities to the guests

By Chandni Chopra



stressed. To alleviate these concerns, we offer our clients a complete end-to-end package, leaving them with only the task of packing their

outfits. Additionally, we have an in-house sales team that specializes in destination weddings, ensuring seamless communication between the hotel and organizers for our guests.

### **How important is providing tailor-made guest experiences for you?**

Customizing guest experiences is crucial, particularly for weddings since each couple has their unique aspirations and preferences. To ensure this, Trully India has collaborated with numerous event planners, photographers, makeup artists, and other vendors who are on board to provide a comprehensive 360-degree service to our

### **What sustainable initiatives does Trully India takes for its customers?**

At Trully India, we're passionate about sustainability and believe that it should go hand in hand with luxury. That's why we've taken various steps to minimize our impact on the environment, without compromising our guests' experience. For instance, we've done away with plastic shampoo and body wash bottles and opted for stylish built-in dispensers instead. Our properties also feature innovative solutions like solar heating and heat pumps. To reduce our carbon footprint, we use eco-friendly cleaning products. Additionally, we take pride in sourcing local, seasonal produce, ensuring that we not only provide our guests with delicious food, but also support the community and reduce food waste.

### **What are the unique offerings for the guests for organising a destination wedding at Trully India?**

Our brand is recognized for offering guests a distinct and immersive stay that reflects the culture, history, and natural surroundings of the region. Each property is thoughtfully designed to showcase the local traditions and

“*With the aim to streamline the idea of destination wedding, we offer our clients a complete end to end package*”

heritage of its location, providing guests with a unique and authentic experience. Some of the popular destinations where Trully India has its hotels and resorts include Jaisalmer's The Desert Palace, Jaipur's The Jaibagh Palace, Kumbhalgarh's The Kumbha Bagh and Udaipur's Shakti Vilas and Amargarh among many others. All our properties provide multiple venues, large lawns, banquets, poolside views and large inventories.

### **With the growing trend of destination weddings, how do you stand out in the brand clutter?**

Our aim is to streamline the idea of destination weddings. With numerous venues and hotels, guests often feel perplexed and

clients.

### **What are the current marketing strategies that you adopt to attract customers?**

In the hotel industry, marketing has evolved from merely promoting rooms and meal plans to also encompassing experiences and adding value to the guest's stay. To keep up with this trend, we have adopted various strategies such as prioritizing digital marketing efforts, creating new experiences around our hotels and resorts (for examples: special dinner setups, seasonal food festivals, stargazing sessions, village safaris, and city tours), and utilizing methods like email marketing and post-stay communication to enhance guest engagement.



## Espire Hospitality Group marks a remarkable beginning of 2023

**Espire Hospitality** Group, one of India's fastest-growing hospitality companies has launched its first property in Himachal Pradesh, 'Country Inn Maple Resort, Chail'. The group also announced the opening of its first 'Country Inn Premier resort, 'Country Inn Premier - Pacific, Mussoorie'. This new brand has been designed to further elevate the Country Inn experience with a tasteful amalgamation of modern aesthetics and enriching experiences. The Country Inn Maple Resort is conveniently located on Kandaghat-Chail road, in one of the most scenic hill stations, known for its spectacular settings, sightseeing and adventure. The resort sits time lessly amidst snow-clad mountains and picturesque landscapes to become your perfect home in the hills. Nestled amidst picturesque hills, Country Inn Premier - Pacific, Mussoorie is an oasis for those on a constant quest for peace and calm. It is conveniently located at a walking distance from the heart of the town Mall Road and close to the attractions like Gun Hill and Kempty Falls, offering ease to explore the destination.

## Minor Hotels announces debut of Tivoli Brand in Oman

**Minor Hotels** announced the expansion of its Tivoli Hotels & Resorts brand in the Middle East region, with the upcoming addition of property in Oman. The 180-key Tivoli Muscat Hotel & Residences would begin development in the Omani capital later this year, with the property slated to launch in 2026. The new-build property will be located in LA VIE, Muscat Hills, a prominent established mixed-use community. The development would feature an 80-key hotel and 100



branded residences and will overlook the re-opened 18-hole golf course managed by Troon Golf. Minor Hotels currently operates three Tivoli properties in Qatar, with a further new-build property under development in Bahrain to launch in 2024.

## Lemon Tree Hotels signs new property in Whitefield, Bengaluru

**Lemon Tree** Hotels announced its expansion in Karnataka, named Peninsula Suites - operated by Lemon Tree Hotels, Bengaluru. The property is expected to be operational by October 2023 and shall be managed by Carnation Hotels Private Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary and the management arm of Lemon Tree Hotels Limited. The property is located at Whitefield, which turned from a quaint settlement to a major suburb post the IT boom in Bengaluru in the late 90s. The locality is now a major part of Greater Bengaluru and the city's first tech corridor to be connected by Namma Metro. Speaking on the occasion, Mahesh Aiyer, CEO, Carnation Hotels Private Limited,

commented, "We are delighted to expand our bouquet of hotels in Karnataka with a new property in Whitefield, Bengaluru with our valued partner, Peninsula Projects (Bangalore) Pvt. Ltd., a group company of the Vaswani Group. We already have 6 operational hotels in the state out of which 5 are in Bengaluru and 1 in Coorg. We have one more upcoming in Hubli and now another in Bengaluru itself. We want to offer diverse brands and operate hotels at different locations to fully tap into the immense potential that the city holds out. We plan to on signing and opening more hotels to enhance our offerings to our guests as well as owners and partners in tourism and hospitality."



## Banyan Tree Group doubled its global portfolio

**Banyan Tree** Group closed the 2022 fiscal year with a total of 63 properties across its global portfolio of 10 hospitality brands. The addition of eight newly built or converted hotels in 2022 put the Singapore-based group well on track to double its footprint by 2025, consolidating and expanding its presence in 23 countries. Among the five new brands launched last year, Garryais poised to overtake Banyan Tree as the Group's fastest-growing brand. "At the end of 2021, we stated an ambitious goal to double our global footprint, a target that we are well on track to achieving



favourable market conditions amid resurgent tourism and our strong portfolio of brands that match consumer trends in destinations as diverse as China and Spain," said Eddy See, President and Chief Executive Officer with Banyan Tree Group. "Our development pipeline to 2025 will deliver 50 new hotel openings or conversions, bringing the Group's global

## Dusit Hotels and Resorts makes its debut in Europe

**Dusit Hotels** and Resorts, under Dusit International, continued its global expansion with the opening of Dusit Suites Athens – the first Dusit-branded property in Europe – in Greece’s capital. Bringing Dusit’s brand of Thai-inspired hospitality to one of Europe’s popular tourist destinations, Dusit Suites Athens puts guests in the heart of Glyfada, a suburb in the Athens Riviera renowned for its sandy shores, shopping and dining scene, bars and cafes and location just 30 minutes by car from the city centre and

only 20 minutes from Athens International Airport. Set over four floors and offering views of the sea and mountains, the luxury low-rise property is designed for business and leisure travellers seeking short or extended stays. Decorated with artwork and featuring high-end fixtures and fittings, each suite has a private balcony, a king-size bedroom, a living room or seating area with a kitchenette and a marble bathroom with a walk-in rain shower. The larger suites also have a bathtub and sofa bed for guests with children.



## Thailand’s first Radisson Individuals hotel opens in Pattaya

**Radisson Hotel** Group announces the opening of Lewit Hotel Pattaya, a member of Radisson Individuals in the beach resort town of Pattaya, marking the Group’s seventh operating hotel in Thailand, following recent openings in Phuket and Hua Hin. Lewit Hotel Pattaya is located a walk from the beach in Jomtien and within reach of the city’s attractions and activities. Nestled on Thailand’s Eastern Seaboard just two hours drive from Bangkok, Pattaya is a tourism destination with attractions including water parks, shopping and cultural sites such as Pattaya Floating Market, Nong

the Sanctuary of Truth temple. Other nearby attractions include championship golf courses, vineyards and restaurants and bars. With three international airports – Suvarnabhumi, U-Tapao and Don Mueang – nearby, Pattaya is an accessible destination for domestic and international visitors alike. The hotel features 100 rooms with a restaurant for breakfast and lunch, a fitness centre and an outdoor glass-walled pool, equipped with water features, a water slide and a sundeck. For business travellers, two meeting rooms and a pre-function area are suited to small and medium-



## Marriott International launches new people brand 'Be'

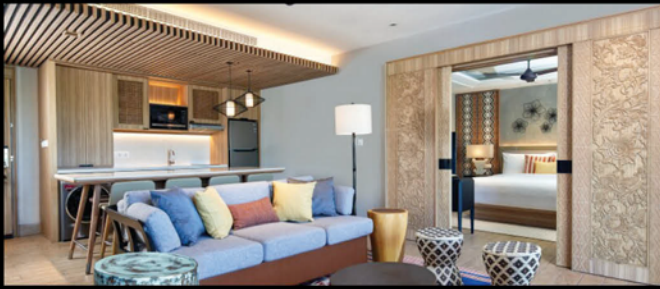
**Marriott International** Inc announced the launching of its new people brand, “Be,” as the company continues its focus on attracting and retaining top talent around the world. The brand is launching as Marriott is named one of the top 10 Fortune Media and Great Place To Work 100 Best Companies to Work For. “For over 95 years, Marriott hasople through the power of travel by empowering and supporting our associates.”

Marriott’s ‘Be’ brand will launch globally across Marriott’s portfolio of over 8,300 properties and 30 brands. It will focus on three distinct pillars: begin, belong, become. With the goal of attracting and retaining top talent, Be will aim to empower associates to fulfill their career goals, further Marriott’s commitment to creating a culture of inclusion and offer opportunities to grow professionally and personally.

## IHCL to introduce Taj-branded hotel in Chhattisgarh, India

**Hospitality firm** Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL) signed an agreement to open a Taj-branded hotel in the state of Chhattisgarh. The luxury hotel will feature 152 rooms, an all-day diner, a restaurant, a bar and a lobby lounge. It will have a banquet area covering more than 120m<sup>2</sup> (1,300ft<sup>2</sup>), a conference hall, two meeting rooms, breakout rooms and a business centre. The Taj Raipur hotel will be carried out as a brownfield project and have an auditorium, which will be the first in the city. The hotel will also introduce IHCL’s signature Jiva spa brand to

the city, including recreational facilities such as a swimming pool, gym, and salon. IHCL managing director and chief executive officer Puneet Chhatwal said: “This signing is in line with IHCL’s vision to be present in every state capital of the country. Chhattisgarh is one of the fastest-developing states in India. “Raipur is a major commercial hub for the state, as well as central India. We are delighted to partner with Krish (Raipur) Hotels, a part of Vyapak Group and bring the Taj brand to the city.” Taj Raipur will be Vyapak Group’s first luxury hotel venture.



## Marriott Vacations Worldwide introduces Vacation Ownership Portfolio

**Marriott Vacations** Worldwide Corporation introduced The Marriott Vacation Clubs™, the collection of more than 90 premium Marriott, Sheraton, and Westin Vacation Club branded resorts. The Marriott Vacation Clubs™ is part of Marriott Bonvoy's® portfolio of 30 extraordinary brands and offers Marriott Bonvoy members and guests more options for leisure travel with some of the most trusted brand names in travel. The introduction of The Marriott Vacation Clubs™

is being highlighted with a new marketing campaign called More Vacations to Love that tells the story of the future of vacation ownership and its evolution to accommodate the next generation of owners and travellers. "As timeshare ownership continues to grow, especially amongst a younger demographic, we are focused on delivering leisure travel experiences that meet the needs of today's traveller," says Lori Gustafson, EVP, Chief Brand and Digital Officer of Marriott Vacations Worldwide.

## Trident Residences announces 19 apartments in New Delhi

**Located in** the heart of New Delhi, Trident Residences will launch 19 apartments this summer. Designed to contemporary standards, Trident Residences has been envisioned as a secure, private, urban oasis - an exclusive community that has luxurious amenities and a la carte services. Situated in the heart of the metropolis and a stone's throw away from The Oberoi, New Delhi, Trident Residences will provide views over the national capital's skyline. In addition, the residence rooftop will provide a landscape garden incorporating a

contemporary water body and seating areas. As the services are provided by Trident Hotels, the residences guarantee high-end hospitality. Trident Residences have been designed by Architecture Discipline and principal architect Akshat Bhatt. Apartment sizes range from 3,600 sq ft to 9,300 sq ft and feature interiors that permit personalisation. The bedrooms, bathrooms, family lounge, kitchen and living room frame views of the neighbouring Jawaharlal Nehru stadium whilst ensuring maximum privacy for residents.

## Ayatana unveils their newest property in Ooty, Tamil Nadu

**Ayatana announced** the opening of their newest property in Ooty, Tamil Nadu. Ayatana aims to provide an authentic and culturally rich experience to its guests, with each property inspired by its surroundings. The latest addition to the Ayatana family, the Ooty property is a luxury colonial heritage. The Ayatana resort is located in Ooty, which is in the Nilgiris Hills and is

known for its tea plantations, colonial influence and being the old Madras Presidency summer capital. The property is marked by a red stone-cladding wall at the entrance, creating a sense of intrigue and mystery. The interiors incorporate contemporary colonial elements with grand welcoming lobbies and accent stone walls, providing a rustic countryside charm to the establishment.



## Sarovar Hotels & Resorts announces the opening of Golden Tulip brand in Tirupati

**Sarovar Hotels & Resorts** announced the opening of the international brand, Golden Tulip in the city of Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh. The launch of the Golden Tulip brand asserts Sarovar Group's growing presence in the region and its focus on strengthening the Golden Tulip footprint across leisure and business destinations pan India. Located at the foothills of Tirumala hills, the hotel is within 1 km from the bypass road

near Alipiri Toll Plaza, nearly 4 km from Tirupati Railway station and in proximity to the bus terminal, commercial and corporate hubs and hospitals. Contemporary in design and style with touches of traditional elements, the hotel features 88 rooms and suites facing the hills of Tirumala, an all-day dining restaurant Tulipe, vegetarian restaurant Adyar Ananda Bhavan, a fitness centre and over 5,000 sq ft of banqueting space.





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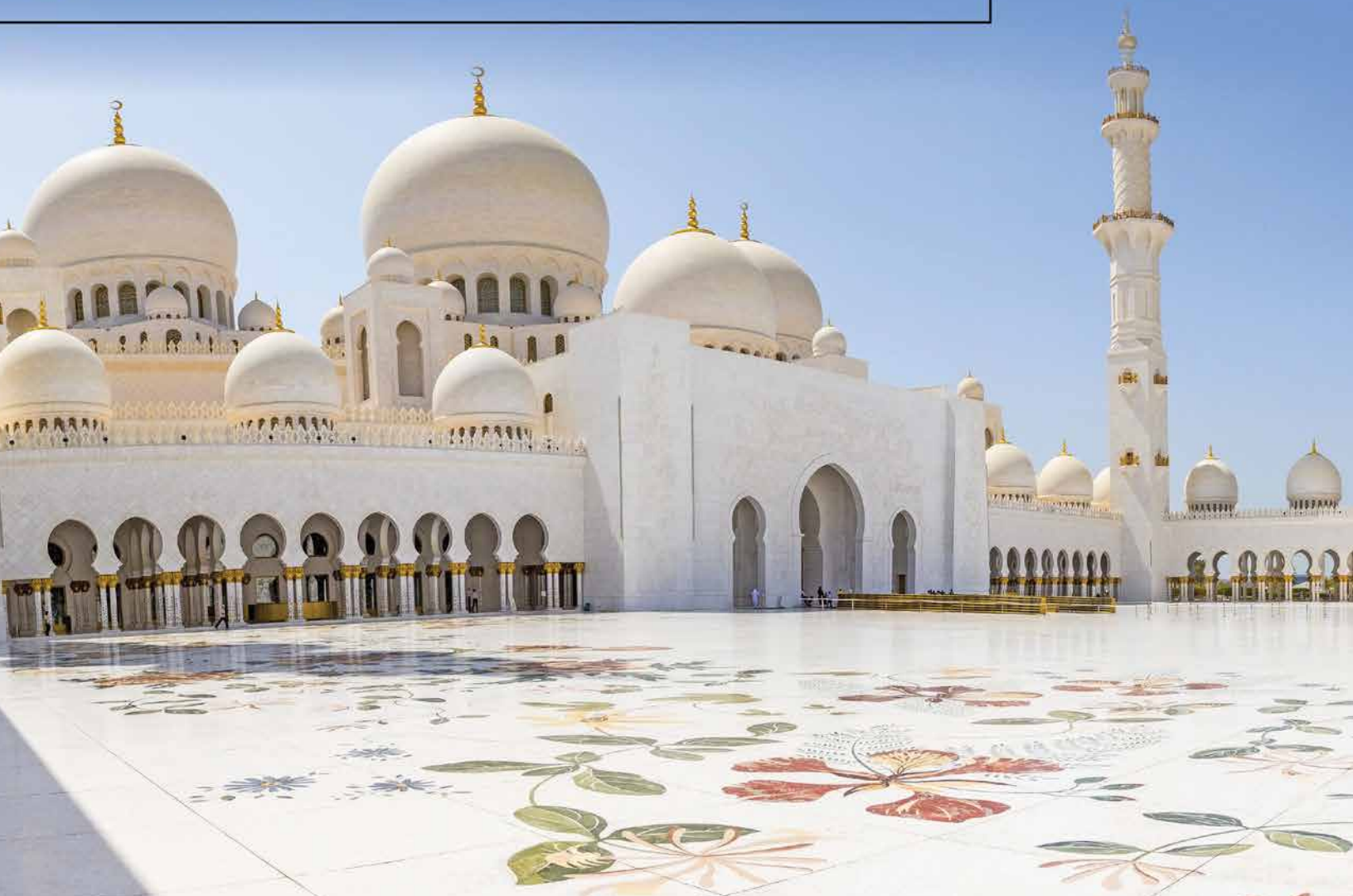
# ABU DHABI

## HEAVEN FALLS HERE!

By Chandni Chopra

### **The Grand Mosque**

Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque happens to be the most prominent place in the capital city of UAE for Friday gatherings, everyday worship and saying prayers. Clearly, visiting it remains one of the top things to do in Abu Dhabi. One of the largest mosques in the world, Sheikh Zayed Mosque can accommodate a maximum of 40,000 people. All the domes, columns, gold gilded chandeliers, and the world's largest hand-knotted carpets embellish the mosque. Certainly, the mosque is the finest piece of architecture you can marvel while in Abu Dhabi.





### **Desert Safari**

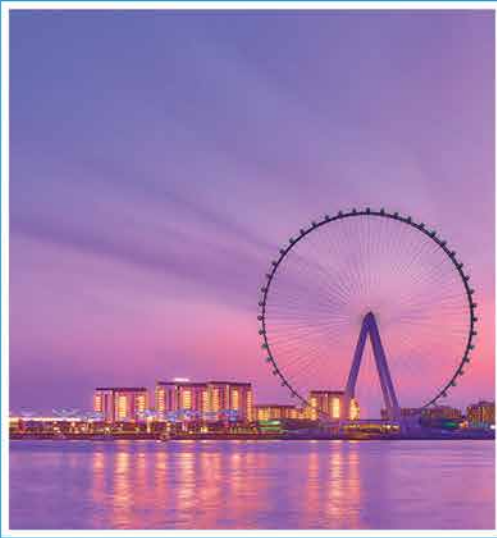
The desert can be one of the most adventurous places to visit in Abu Dhabi. Try the mesmerizing and enthralling Wadi bashing or Dune driving in a 4x4 wheel Drive for 20-30 minutes. If you are not satisfied with the desert safari and your heart craves more, plan an overnight stay in one of the desert camps. The experience is one of a kind. It also includes many entertainment activities that include camel riding, tanoura dance, henna painting, sheesha, live BBQ and dinner buffet.



### **Yas Island**

For all the admirers of affluence, Yas island is the place to be. Be it taking someone special on a romantic dinner, going for a soothing beach walk, or marvelling at the exceptional examples of modern architecture while taking a helicopter tour, Yas Island brings the ultimate comfort to every wanderlust soul. There are available boat tours, waterfronts, and the best of them all in the Ferrari world. The stunning views of Arabian Gulf from flying aces, and bird's eye view from swings are extraordinary in their own way. Yas Island can tend to all your wanderlust desires.





### Marina Eye

Witness panoramic views of Abu Dhabi while taking a ride on the delightful Marina Eye giant wheel, one of the best places to visit in Abu Dhabi. All that you need to do is sit inside a giant glass capsule of this 196-foot-tall rotating wheel and soon you'll be treated to the most stunning panoramic views of Abu Dhabi from its observation wheel high up in the air. This 5-minute ride is sure to bring a smile to the faces of your loved ones and makes for an awesome activity to indulge in at night when you can enjoy glittering views of the entire skyline of Abu Dhabi.



### Warner Bros World

One of the famous Abu Dhabi tourist attractions, Warner Bros World is the third theme park of its kind in the world. The indoor and fully conditioned different features of the park make it one of the most exciting places to visit in Abu Dhabi. It is home to exciting rides for both kids and adults. The park features characters from Warner Bros.'s franchises, such as Looney Tunes, DC Comics, Hanna-Barbera, and others.



### Corniche Beach

The Corniche Beach in Abu Dhabi is a tranquil and beautiful place with all the amenities and sanitary facilities available. It's also one of the cleanest Abu Dhabi beaches with has some kick-ass food options nearby. The lifeguards are always present here. Apart from relaxing here, you can also spot a few jellyfishes. It has an amazing walking area along the beach where you can have the best moments of leisure. No doubt, it is one of the top beaches in Abu Dhabi where you can rejuvenate yourself.



### Ferrari World

Ferrari World is undoubtedly one of the places to visit in Abu Dhabi city for thrill seekers and car lovers. Counted in the list of the top amusement parks of the world, Ferrari World Abu Dhabi designed in the Ferrari brand theme is spread over a massive area of 86,000 square meters and also features a huge range of rides, shows, and attractions for visitors belonging to all walks of life. Gear up for the ride of your life only here at Ferrari World Abu Dhabi if you love speed. Home to the world's fastest rollercoaster, and over 40 record-breaking attractions. Other than rides, Ferrari World is also known for hosting various events, having a number of top-notch eateries and restaurants, and a grand shopping space where visitors can buy a vast array of Ferrari products like clothes and accessories.

## World's first holographic theatre opens in Chicago

**Verse Immersive** opened in Chicago with a successful five-month run at Navy Pier. Verse Immersive transcends interactive entertainment utilising augmented reality to provide transformative and magical experiences for audiences of all ages. The highly anticipated opening follows the milestone of one million hours played across all locations, a testament to the appeal of the imaginative entertainment experience offered by Verse Immersive. Leveraging a unique blend of revolutionary technology and artistry, guests step into a world of augmented reality through captivating

multi-act narratives, fully realised characters, and pulsating soundscapes. The company will lead the Block 37 opening with its most popular experience, *The Unreal Garden*, featuring art by Android Jones. Somewhere between an interactive *Alice in Wonderland* and a stroll through the forests of *Avatar*, guests are guided by a butterfly, encouraged to interact with the environment, feed the animals, and collect crystals that will guide them home. Verse Immersive will introduce additional experiences later this spring and summer. All Verse stories last between thirty and sixty minutes.



## UNWTO, Aviareps support tourism growth in Europe

**Aviareps partnered** with the World Tourism Organization UNWTO for the development of the international tourism sector in selected European UNWTO member countries. This would be achieved through the award of a full-service destination marketing grant and four research grants. Aviareps, an Affiliate Member of the UNWTO, will provide a diverse 360-degree portfolio of destination marketing and research services free of charge to a total of five countries chosen by UNWTO. The UNWTO + Aviareps Destination Marketing Grant will include a suite of digital marketing services such as campaign websites, landing pages, webinars, online press conferences, e-learning programmes and virtual events provided via the Aviareps Ecosystem. The Digital Ecosystem is Aviareps' brand-new all-in-one marketing hub for the travel industry, which empowers everyone to market their destination and product to a global community online via a platform that combines several digital marketing services into one unified hub.



## Poland to highlight Warsaw and Krakow at ATM

**Poland showcases** its picturesque cities of Warsaw and Krakow in the 30th Edition of Arabian Travel Market 2023, taking place in Dubai on May 1-4, 2023 at the Dubai World Trade Centre. "The Land of Fields" will be showing off its wealth of nature and picturesque cities to thousands of travel and media professionals from around the world. From the towering Tatra Mountains to the wild Baltic Sea, Poland is filled with vibrant cities known for their precious heritage, stunning architecture, splendid landscapes and the

many attractions and landmarks that are sure to delight all kinds of visitors. It cannot be easier than embarking on one of the direct flights to Warsaw or Krakow to start the dreamt holidays. The two cities are a must-see on any journey through Poland. Both are the perfect choice for a cultural experience and are even a better hubs to discover other regions of the country. Old town city complexes of both Krakow and Warsaw; are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. But the stories behind the two cities are very different.

## Cruise Saudi seeks to expand its presence in the sector

**Cruise Saudi** and Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) held a discussion at the Seatrade Cruise Global 2023 aiming to expand Saudi Arabia's presence on the cruise industry map. As the world's largest cruise industry trade association, the CLIA is a leading authority of the global cruise community and is an instrumental partner for Cruise Saudi during its critical expansion phase. CLIA's president, and CEO Kelly Craighead Vice President of

government affairs, BrainBeall and Strategic Marketing and Commercial Consultant, Karyn Gruenberg met with Cruise Saudi executives Barbara Buczek, Chief Asset Management and Operations Officer; Mashoor Baeshen, Executive Director of Shore Excursion and Destination, Serafin Blazquez, Executive Director of Port Operations and Mohammed Abuzaid, Media and PR Manager.





## Panama's Copa Airlines to add 64 aircraft to its fleet by 2028

Panamanian airline Copa Airlines will add 64 new aircrafts to its fleet by 2028 as part of its expansion plans, its Chief Executive Pedro Heilbron said during an annual performance presentation. The firm will add 12 aircraft annually over the next three years for \$1.7 billion per year, Heilbron said, without giving details of the pace or future capital expenditure. This new aircraft is part of an order Copa Airlines signed with U.S. planemaker Boeing Co ( BA ) in 2015, according to a company statement. The deal, originally for 61 aircraft, was later expanded to 86 and 22 of these have been delivered. Heilbron said the aim is to speed up the company's growth. The airline plans to add two new routes in the United States and one in Ecuador this year, bringing it a total of 80 destinations across 33 countries in the Americas. The company plans to transport 16.1 million passengers by the end of 2023 through 328 daily flights, recovering past its pre-pandemic levels.

## Vietnam Scrutinises Flight Prices Amid Soaring Airfares

Vietnam's aviation authority has issued a directive mandating adherence to price regulations for local passenger transport services amid a hike in flight ticket prices, local media reported on Thursday. The Civil Aviation Authority of Vietnam (CAAV) ordered local airlines to publish and publicise selling prices following regulations on distribution channels and penalize agents who fail to comply with local fare rules. It also requested a strengthening

of ticket sales control to ensure that sales are made at the declared price outlined in an official document. Currently, the price range for economy-class passenger transportation services is calculated based on the route distance. For routes under 500 km, the maximum one-way fare ranges from 1.6-1.7 million Vietnamese dong (\$67.8-72) per ticket while it is 3.75 million Vietnamese dong (\$158 for routes of 1,280 km or more.



## Kolkata airport to pack in more flight movement

The Kolkata airport authorities planned expansion to accommodate more passengers and flights. As part of the expansion, officials said, the airport terminal will have space to handle 2 million more passengers every year. The runway capacity, too, is being increased from 35 flights an hour to 45 flights an hour. "Although the existing capacity is enough for the number of flights and passengers now, we have to

prepare for the near future when the numbers are bound to grow post Covid-pandemic," said C. Pattabhi, Director of the Kolkata airport. The authorities increased the terminal's capacity by using unutilised space and constructing a small extension of the building. An additional taxiway and three additional rapid exit taxiways are being built to allow faster take-off and to reduce the time taken by aircraft to vacate the runway after landing.



## Air Mauritius to resume Delhi-Mauritius direct flights

Air Mauritius resumes its direct operations to and from Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi from May 3, 2023, with biweekly flights using the Airbus A330 aircraft in a Business and Economy class configuration with a capacity of 254 seats. The duration of the flight is 7 hours and 30 minutes. Air Mauritius currently operates six weekly direct flights to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai. Krešimir Kučko, CEO of Air Mauritius, stated,

"We are excited to resume our operations in Delhi after three years of absence. India and Mauritius share a special relationship that is built on the foundation of people-to-people ties. Both India and Mauritius are united by culture, ancestry, language, and geography. This April, Air Mauritius is proudly commemorating its 50 years of presence in India. New avenues are being explored with Air India to offer seamless connectivity via Delhi as well as Mumbai to from several destinations in India."



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## Dubai Airports wins international safety awards

**Dubai Airports** and Dubai World Central (DWC), have been awarded two prestigious international safety awards. The operator was granted a 'Silver' Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, UK (RoSPA) award, as well as the International Safety Award 2023 with 'merit' status by the British Safety Council. The two honours were granted in recognition of Dubai Airport's commitment to health and safety excellence, as well as the effectiveness and robustness of its Health and

Safety management system in 2022. Majed Al Joker, Chief Operating Officer of Dubai Airports, said: "Providing our guests, employees, and stakeholders with a safe, secure, and efficient environment is our top priority. We are proud to have won these two prestigious awards as they highlight the significance we attach to these objectives and our commitment to them, and we will continue to strive for excellence in this area."



## Turkish Airlines to offer free messaging on board flights

**Turkish Airlines** offered passengers free and limitless messaging onboard its flights, thus taking the national flag carrier's concept of privileged travel to newer heights. With the latest innovations in terms of internet access on board, Turkish Airlines continues to offer its guests an enhanced in-flight internet experience as communication has become an essential facet of life. Flying to more countries than any other airline, Turkish Airlines will be offering free

and limitless messaging services to all passengers on international flights where internet access is available, with the motto 'Enjoy Limitless Messaging' through applications such as WhatsApp, Messenger or iMessage, along with others. On the new service, Turkish Airlines CEO Bilal Ekşi said "We are adding another innovative development to the countless improvements we made for Türkiye's aviation sector as the national flag carrier."



## flydubai announce special fares for Eid holidays

flydubai offered passengers from the UAE special fares for travel to a number of destinations around its network with the sectors available for booking until April 20. The special Eid return fares, started from AED 1,135 for travel between April 15 and 23 to more than 20 popular destinations including Istanbul, Krabi, Milan-Bergamo, Pattaya, Pisa, Salalah, Salzburg and Tbilisi. With more than 110

destinations on its network, passengers could enjoy a comfortable and enhanced travel experience whether they travel in business or economy class, said a company spokesman. flydubai's Business Class offering includes more space and comfort whether in a lie-flat or recliner seat, while Economy Class provides passengers with seats designed to optimise comfort, he stated.

## Emirates to launch daily flights to Toronto from April 20

**Emirates announced** plans to launch daily flights to Toronto from April 20 following the breakthrough expanded air transport agreement between the UAE and Canada. It will offer over 6,800 seats per week on this popular route. Emirates said it was stepping up its frequency with two additional flights per week between Dubai and Toronto in a bid to serve the huge demand for passenger services. The move comes as bilateral relations between the UAE and Canada have enhanced significantly, with both countries set to reap vast

economic benefits across a multitude of sectors and supply chains, it stated. Welcoming the strategic deal, Emirates' Chief Commercial Officer Adnan Kazim said: "Business ties between Canada and the UAE have grown significantly over the years and the expanded air services will help to further nurture business and trade." "The expansion of air services is also an affirmation of the growing importance of UAE to Canada's global connectivity, which we can support through our global network of more than 130 destinations," he stated.



# Cocktails and connections over a networking lunch with Liam Findlay, CEO of Miral Destinations

Miral Destinations started the year with the launch of Mission Ferrari at Ferrari World Abu Dhabi and are on the roll for the much-awaited opening of SeaWorld Abu Dhabi on May 23. As India is a key source market for Miral Destinations and a vital hub for our business. Their partners and extended offices in India have played an instrumental role in our overall success, with an exceptional performance witnessed in 2022 vis-a-vis 2019.





**BHARAT RAHEJA**

**APPOINTED AT:** Atmosphere Core  
**PROMOTED TO:** Senior Vice President Sales & Marketing South Asia  
Atmosphere Core appoints Bharat Raheja as South Asia's Senior Vice President, Sales & Marketing. The company is expanding its footprints, with carefully chosen hotels and resorts to open within three brands - The Ozen Collection, Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts, and Colours of Oblu. Bharat Raheja steps into his role with a mandate to develop new markets in India, Bhutan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. He will also contribute to commercial strategies and build performance-driven sales and marketing teams.



**TARUN SHARMA**

**APPOINTED AT:** Mayfair Hotels and Resorts  
**PROMOTED TO:** Resort Manager  
A passionate hotelier with strong operational expertise, Sharma brings with him more than two decades of experience. With industry exposure across leading hotel chains in India, Sharma has worked with Oberoi Hotels & Resorts, The Indian Hotel Company Limited, Zuri Hotels & Resorts, Raviz Hotels & Resorts and The Leela Palaces, Hotels & Resorts at various Luxury Destinations. He has been associated with hotel & resort operations and has accomplished operational excellence in all spheres.



**SHARAD DATTA**

**APPOINTED AT:** JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity  
**PROMOTED TO:** General Manager  
JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity is delighted to announce the appointment of Sharad Datta as its new General Manager. He has been a strong pillar and a key resource for Marriott hotels in India since his first stint in 2013. Prior to joining JW Marriott New Delhi, he served as the General Manager of Westin Mumbai Garden City where he played a pivotal role in the overall success of the hotel.



**RAHUL PANWAR**

**APPOINTED AT:** Novotel Pune  
**PROMOTED TO:** General Manager  
Novotel Pune is proud to announce the appointment of Rahul Panwar as its new General Manager. Panwar brings over 16 years of experience in the hospitality industry, and his diverse background includes working with some of the most prominent hotel chains in India, USA, China & Vietnam. Most recently, he served as General Manager at Grand Mercure Gandhinagar GIFT City, where he played a pivotal role in the successful reopening of the hotel and its establishment as a leading business destination in the region.



**ANISH RAJAN**

**APPOINTED AT:** Accor's Bheemili Resort  
**PROMOTED TO:** Operation Manager  
The Bheemili Resort managed by Accor, announces the appointment of Anish Rajan as its new Operations Manager, effective April 2023. Anish brings over 19 years of distinguished experience in the hospitality industry, having honed his expertise in renowned hotels such as Taj, Le Meridien, Radisson, Crowne Plaza Doha West Bay, Intercontinental Doha Hotel, and Le Méridien Abu Dhabi, where he delivered exceptional operational results and ensured guest satisfaction.



**ROHIT DASGUPTA**

**APPOINTED AT:** Renaissance Ahmedabad  
**PROMOTED TO:** General Manager  
Renaissance Ahmedabad Hotel is excited to announce the appointment of Rohit Dasgupta as the new General Manager. He brings with him over 25 years of qualitative experience and expertise in guest service excellence, revenue management, hotel pre-opening and new projects, hospitality training to a diverse workforce, and profit centre operations with luxury hotels in India. He has a proven track record of success, having served as the Hotel Manager with above 95% scores on the Guest Satisfaction Index.



**SRIKANT KODALI**

**APPOINTED AT:** Aloft Bengaluru, Outer Ring Road  
**PROMOTED TO:** Director of Sales and Marketing  
Aloft Bengaluru Outer Ring Road is delighted to announce the appointment of Srikant Kodali, as the Director of Sales and Marketing. Leading the sales and marketing vertical at the hotel, his core responsibilities will include planning and implementing of the hotel's sales and marketing strategy, maximizing the hotel's revenues & exploring business development opportunities.



**LAKSHMI SRIDHAR**

**APPOINTED AT:** Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach and The Bheemili Resort  
**PROMOTED TO:** General Manager  
Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach & The Bheemili Resort are thrilled to announce the appointment of Lakshmi Sridhar as the new General Manager, effective April 2023. Lakshmi brings an abundance of experience spanning 28 years and has been associated with Accor for over 11 years, serving as Operations Manager from June 2020 at the Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach. Her remarkable journey started with a position as secretary to General Manager, and with her unwavering dedication, and expertise.



**ABHIJEET GADGIL**

**APPOINTED AT:** Novotel Pune  
**PROMOTED TO:** Director of Sales and Marketing  
Novotel Pune announces the appointment of Abhijeet Gadgil as the Director of Sales & Marketing. With 12+ years of experience, Abhijeet is a performance-driven professional and has an outstanding record of achievements. With a rich experience in the industry, he will bring a combination of sales expertise together with a natural ability to motivate and nurture a dynamic team. In his new role as Director of Sales and Marketing at Novotel Pune, Abhijeet is committed to demonstrating his creative approach to lead the hotel in achieving its key revenue budgets.



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