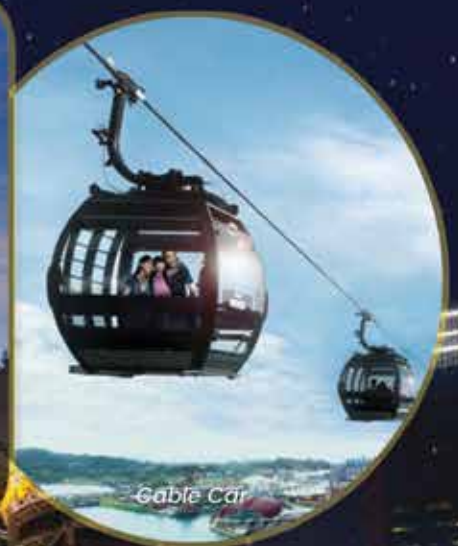


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PUBLISHER'S NOTE



Varun Malhotra
Publisher & CEO

Dear Readers,

From cosmopolitan cities to serene retreats, India is brimming with a plethora of unique venues and experiences that will transform any MICE event into an unforgettable adventure. We have attempted to uncover the hidden gems, unparalleled hospitality, and cultural wonders that MICE tourism has to offer in our upcoming issue which is MICENTRIC. We have delved deep into the heart of the industry, exploring exclusive interviews with esteemed hotels, influential Destination Management Companies (DMCs) renowned for hosting large MICE groups, and representatives from tourism boards and National Tourism Organisations (NTOs).

August's Cover Story "MICE is the new spice" emphasises on transition in MICE tourism over these years, especially post-pandemic, the positive effects MICE tourism has on local businesses, employment, and infrastructure development, and how it acts as an important catalyst of economic growth. We received participation from some of the leading stalwarts BA Rahim-One Above, A Krishna Mohan- Southern Travels, S D Nandakumar- SOTC Travel, Amit Vyas-DreamSetGo, Dev Karvat- Asego, Zelum Amit Chaubal- Kesari Tours Pvt Ltd & Kesari Mice, Thisum Jayasuriya- Chairman, Sri Lanka Convention Bureau, who showered innovative insights on strategic promotions of MICE and its growth. With TripJack opening new doors, to Domestic Tourism and taking the road to diversity, India is brimming with a variety of booming inbound tourism in states such as Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Meghalaya, Maharashtra, Kerala and Himachal Pradesh.

Maharashtra being the city of artistry and imagination, captivated our hearts and so, we wanted our readers to have a taste of its symphony. As the sun sets on bustling metropolises and rises over serene retreats, it reveals the alluring blend of modernity and cultural allure that the destination offers. Each locale becomes a stage for extraordinary MICE experiences, where creativity knows no bounds, and connections are forged like never before. Hence, we are excited and looking forward to the IATO's 38th Convention in Aurangabad scheduled in September. Yet another enlightening event by the IATO (Indian Association of Tour Operators) to awaken the explorer within you, embrace the allure of travel, and embrace the power of MICE tourism to transform lives. So, immerse yourself in the grand symphony of stories, inspiration, and insights that shape the future of travel at the most expected convention of the year.

Talking about sunsets, the spotlight is also on the TAAI's 67th Convention scheduled in Sri Lanka in July, India has proven to be the perfect sport aiding in promoting Sri Lanka as a preferred MICE destination. Also, promotes itself as a great host to numerous MICE events.

Amidst this whirlwind of discovery, our journey takes an extraordinary turn as we share the wisdom and visions of Amaresh Tiwari, Vice Chairman of the Indian Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB). Traverse the corridors of insight as we unravel the strategies shaping India's ascent as a premier MICE destination, where business and inspiration unite on a profound level.

I hope we were able to unlock the potential of MICE tourism and how it enriches the travel industry. Let each page be a portal to new beginnings and unforgettable adventures, where every encounter becomes a brushstroke on the canvas of your travel dreams.

Share with us your valuable feedback and suggestions at varun@versatilemedia.in

Happy Reading!

Varun Malhotra

TravelScapes

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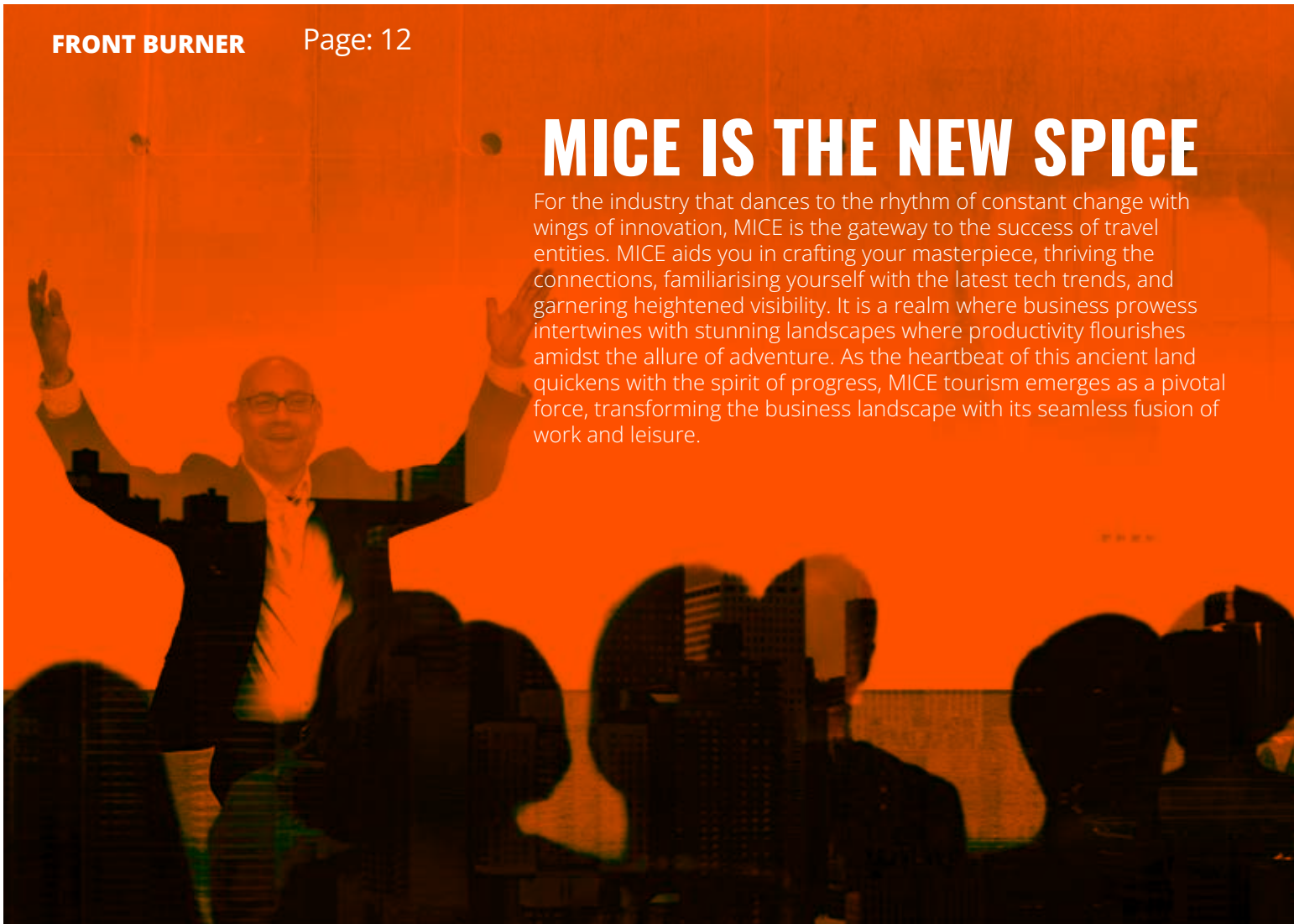
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MICE IS THE NEW SPICE

For the industry that dances to the rhythm of constant change with wings of innovation, MICE is the gateway to the success of travel entities. MICE aids you in crafting your masterpiece, thriving the connections, familiarising yourself with the latest tech trends, and garnering heightened visibility. It is a realm where business prowess intertwines with stunning landscapes where productivity flourishes amidst the allure of adventure. As the heartbeat of this ancient land quickens with the spirit of progress, MICE tourism emerges as a pivotal force, transforming the business landscape with its seamless fusion of work and leisure.



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Latest Addition





Sun Tourism: A flourishing trend in Rajasthan

Sun Tourism is thriving in Rajasthan, drawing tourists to witness stunning sunrises and sunsets. While Mount Abu remains a primary sunset viewing spot, forts and hilltops across the state also contribute to the appeal. The movie "Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani" featuring a sunset scene at Chittorgarh Fort boosted domestic interest in Sun Tourism, particularly among the younger generation idolising film stars. The state's majestic forts and havelis hold historical significance for sun worship, making them attractive sunset and sunrise spots. Additionally, unique experiences like horse safaris amidst sand dunes enhance the allure of Sun Tourism. The Rajasthan Tourism Department actively seeks new locations to attract global and local visitors.



UP Government introduces Waterways for Public Transport

The Uttar Pradesh government is devising a strategic initiative to harness the potential of eight rivers by transforming them into efficient inland waterways. This ambitious plan aims to enhance connectivity and facilitate the transportation of various goods, with a particular focus on bulk cargo like food grains and fertilisers. According to senior state government officials, a comprehensive scheme is underway to utilise several rivers, including Yamuna, Gomti, Assi, Ghaghra, Rapti, Betwa, Chambal, and Varuna, as waterways for the seamless transportation of goods and passengers. This initiative aligns with the BJP-led Centre's Maritime India Vision 2030, which envisions a significant boost in the share of inland water transport to five per cent by the year 2030. The proposed waterways authority will comprise officials from the transport, irrigation, and tourism departments, working collectively to oversee its operations.

Kashmir introduces trekking expeditions to boost Adventure Tourism

Raja Yaqoob Farooq, the Director of Tourism in Kashmir, took a significant step to boost adventure tourism in the region. He initiated a series of exhilarating trekking expeditions, featuring popular alpine trails like the renowned Kashmir Great Lakes Trek, Gurez, and Boadpathri. These expeditions were carefully designed to provide adventurers with an unparalleled experience amidst the stunning landscapes of

Kashmir, where every step promises a new thrill, as per the Tourism Department. The launch event witnessed an enthusiastic gathering of diverse professionals and tourists from various parts of India, united in their quest for adventure and exploration. Emphasising the importance of preserving the natural environment, the participants were urged to follow strict safety and cleanliness protocols throughout their journey.



Ancient Tripura archaeological site to be developed

The state government of Tripura is taking initiatives to develop Pilak, an ancient archaeological site, into a historical tourism circuit along with two other places. With around 200 visitors daily, the tourism circuit starts from Agartala and connects Pilak with Udaipur, a temple town housing Tripureswar Kali, one of

the 51 shakti piths. The circuit also includes Chhabimura, known for its impressive rock carvings on the steep mountain wall along the Gomti River. The late researcher Ratna Das, who authored a book on Pilak, suggests that the site gained prominence as a significant Hindu-Buddhist site in the eighteenth century.



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Assam Minister reports 573% rise in tourism

Assam's Tourism Minister, Jayanta Malla Baruah, chaired a crucial meeting with prominent stakeholders in the tourism industry to discuss strategies for promoting the state as a top tourist destination. The meeting was centred around the idea of creating alluring and comprehensive packages to showcase Assam in a grand manner. During the meeting, Minister Baruah highlighted the astounding growth in tourist footfalls, which recorded an

impressive increase of 573 per cent. This remarkable surge in tourism can be attributed to several key factors. First and foremost, the significant improvement in the law and order situation in the state played a pivotal role. The absence of protests and bandhs has provided a safe and secure environment for travellers, encouraging them to explore Assam's natural beauty and cultural heritage with confidence.

Gujarat's NHMC to be transformed into international tourist spot

In a groundbreaking initiative for India, an unprecedented center is being established to exhibit the nation's abundant and varied maritime heritage. The visionary project, known as the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC), received its ceremonial foundation stone from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and approval for the master plan was granted in March 2019. The NMHC aims to be a pioneering institution that celebrates and preserves India's rich maritime legacy. In its second phase, the project will encompass an array of captivating elements, featuring state pavilions, the enchanting Lothal city, a Maritime Institute



complete with a hostel, eco resorts, a mesmerizing maritime and naval theme park, an engaging climate change theme park, a monument theme park, as well as an adventurous and thrilling amusement park.



Bihar government establishes new Advisory Board for Bodh Gaya

Bihar Government forms Advisory Board for Bodh Gaya Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Prominent Buddhist Pilgrimage Destination. The Bihar government has taken a significant step towards preserving and promoting the historical and spiritual significance of the Bodh Gaya temple, also known as the Mahabodhi Temple, by establishing a dedicated advisory board. As one of the most revered sites for

Buddhists around the world, the temple holds immense cultural and religious importance. The newly constituted advisory board comprises distinguished representatives from various Buddhist countries. This inclusion of delegates from different nations with strong Buddhist connections reflects a commitment to international cooperation and collaboration in safeguarding and enriching the heritage of Bodh Gaya.

Meghalaya CM launches Prime Tourism Vehicle Scheme

Conrad K Sangma, the Chief Minister of Meghalaya, introduced the Prime Tourism Vehicle Scheme. This initiative is designed to offer top-notch mobility solutions to both tour operators and individuals, with the ultimate goal of enhancing the tourism experience in the state, making it seamless and delightful for all. As part of

the scheme, a fleet of 16 Innova Crysta vehicles has been introduced, providing tourists with luxurious and comfortable transportation while they explore the breathtaking landscapes of Meghalaya. This addition is anticipated to enhance the overall tourism experience and make a significant contribution to the sector's growth.



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Mumbai welcomes The Fern Residency, Mira Road

Located on Mira Road, Mumbai The Fern Hotels & Resorts announced the signing of The Fern Residency. Situated in the rapidly expanding neighborhood of Mira Road in the Greater Mumbai region, it has emerged as a sought-after investment hub for the manufacturing industry. With its prime location in the heart of Mira Road, The Fern Residency is set to become the perfect choice for both business and leisure travellers seeking an ideal destination to stay. Located in the vibrant Greater Mumbai region, Mira Road is experiencing rapid growth and has transformed into a highly appealing investment hub, especially for the manufacturing industry. It is within this dynamic neighbourhood that The Fern Residency will find its home, nestled in the very heart of Mira Road. Offering a perfect blend of comfort and style, the hotel's 70 well-appointed rooms will exude elegance, sophistication, and modern design, ensuring a delightful stay for both business and leisure travellers.

Greenfield International Airport Inaugurated in Rajkot

Rajkot marked a momentous occasion as it proudly celebrated the inauguration of the state-of-the-art Rajkot International Airport. This much-awaited event fulfilled a longstanding aspiration of the region to establish air connectivity. The airport's launch symbolises a new era of growth and development for the city, opening doors to greater opportunities for trade, tourism, and economic progress. With its modern facilities and advanced infrastructure, Rajkot International Airport is poised to become a key hub, connecting

the city to various domestic and international destinations. This remarkable achievement is a testament to the city's vision and determination to enhance its global presence and contribute to India's aviation landscape. As Rajkot takes flight, it strengthens its position as a vibrant and dynamic city, ready to embrace the future with renewed enthusiasm and vitality. The airport was inaugurated by the Prime Minister, who emphasised its crucial role in elevating Rajkot's position as a thriving economic center.



Himachal Pradesh initiates to enhance tourism through Artificial Lakes

The Himachal Pradesh government is considering the creation of artificial reservoirs with diverse recreational opportunities, such as water sports, fishing, bird watching, and eco-tourism, to attract tourists, says Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Suku. The hill state boasts a wealth of lakes and reservoirs primarily sourced from glaciers, enhancing its natural beauty and ecological significance. The state government is actively considering strategies to boost lake tourism and empower local communities through various initiatives. One of the key plans involves promoting home stays, street food corners, restaurants, and resorts in the vicinity of these artificial water bodies.

"Additionally 5.75 hectares of land has been identified in Nagtora for



setting up a wellness centre and an artificial lake with world-class fountains. The government has allocated INR 70 crore for promoting adventure tourism activities in Pong Dam in Kangra district which will attract adventure sports lovers to the state", he remarked.

The state plans to enhance tourist arrivals, aiming to attract 5 crore visitors in the coming months/years.

Kerala Government requests extension for land transfer to AAI

The Kerala government has requested an extension to finalise the land transfer to the Airports Authority of India (AAI) for creating a runway end safety area at Calicut Airport. The airport had experienced a tragic crash in 2020. This development follows a letter from Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, warning that if the land transfer is not completed, the ministry will take action to reduce the aircraft length. Kerala's Chief Minister has communicated to the minister about the need for more time to complete the transfer process.





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MICE

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For the industry that dances to the rhythm of constant change with wings of innovation, MICE is the gateway to the success of travel entities. MICE aids you in crafting your masterpiece, thriving the connections, familiarising yourself with the latest tech trends, and garnering heightened visibility. It is a realm where business prowess intertwines with stunning landscapes where productivity flourishes amidst the allure of adventure. As the heartbeat of this ancient land quickens with the spirit of progress, MICE tourism emerges as a pivotal force, transforming the business landscape with its seamless fusion of work and leisure. From the bustling metropolises to the serene hinterlands, India stands ready to embrace corporate travellers with open arms and unforgettable experiences. India has also been attempting to come out of a nutshell with the MICE Industry reaching unprecedented heights of success worldwide. Being the backbone of diversity, the Indian travel network is vast enough to wrap around an array of business opportunities. Buckling up as the trailblazers' journey through the growth milestones, uncovering the strategic partnerships, technological innovations, and government initiatives that have catapulted India to the forefront of the global MICE arena. And so, they are to ride along TravelScapes for the MICE Revolution we are igniting in our cover story

By *Aanchal Sachdeva*

“One Above is PRESENT at the destination and not REPRESENT”

BA RAHIM – FOUNDER, ONE ABOVE DMC

Preferences within the MICE industry for large groups

The MICE industry is witnessing notable trends and emerging preferences, especially concerning large groups. One Above is witnessing huge demands for destinations like the United Arab Emirates, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, and Singapore. Also, we conducted MICE movements to destinations like Kenya, South Africa, Georgia, and the Philippines with our ground handling expertise leading to smooth operations. Attributes like a diverse range of attractions, including beaches, shopping opportunities, and enriching cultural experiences and they have streamlined the visa on arrival process making the above destinations more desirable. The destinations are offering alluring incentive payments to trade partners which One Above as a DMC partner has been educating the trade through their sales channel, social media posts or webinars. We have supported destinations like Azerbaijan and Bahrain during their GRAND PRIX events. Similarly, we are looking at opportunities to promote Music Festivals or Wellness

Programmes which can be a new trend for corporates.

Positive effects MICE tourism has on local businesses, employment, and infrastructure development

As the influx for any destination increases it has a direct and positive on local businesses generating more employment and better infrastructure development.

The government leverages its potential for the destinations to achieve substantial economic growth, create employment opportunities, and build a more robust and sustainable tourism landscape for the future.

Future of hosting large MICE groups adapting to dynamic industry

One Above DMC focuses on the future of hosting large MICE groups with an emphasis on technology, sustainability, personalisation, and well-being. We offer flexibility, inclusivity, and hybrid/virtual options for successful events. The industry is becoming more optimistic, tech-savvy, and environmentally



conscious, with increased demand for technological innovations in attractions and theme parks, including AR experiences. We are excited about the growing trend of technology-driven sports experiences, with brands like Puttshack, TOCA Football, and Topgolf leading the way. Yas Island is pioneering the metaverse project, recreating the entire destination in immersive 3D platforms. Dubai's Museum of the Future has hired Ameca, the world's most advanced humanoid robot with a human-like face and a robotic body powered by AI. Our presence in over 90 destinations enables us to provide top-notch services, understanding the needs of Indian travellers and tailoring programs to cater to their preferences.

“Personalised experiences in MICE tourism aim to elevate the overall journey for each participant, making it more meaningful, memorable, and impactful”

A KRISHNA MOHAN – MD, SOUTHERN TRAVELS

Preferences within the MICE industry for large groups

Besides established MICE destinations like Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, and Chennai, new cities such as Agra, Varanasi, Udaipur, and Ahmedabad are emerging as attractive MICE destinations alongside Dubai, Cairo, Vienna, Barcelona, Abu Dhabi, Singapore, and Thailand internationally. With AR, attendees can access real-time information and interactive features during events, while VR enables virtual participation and immersive experiences, making it easier for remote attendees to engage with the event. MICE events are increasingly adopting sustainable practices, including eco-friendly venues, waste reduction, and promoting responsible travel, aligning with the global trend towards eco-consciousness. Personalised experiences in MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) tourism aim to elevate the overall journey for each participant, making it more meaningful, memorable, and impactful through tailored itineraries, personalised communication, bespoke hospitality, and local cultural immersion.

Positive effects MICE tourism has on local businesses, employment, and infrastructure development

MICE tourism brings numerous positive impacts to local communities. As conferences, exhibitions, and meetings attract delegates and attendees, local businesses like hotels, restaurants, and retail outlets experience heightened demand, leading to increased revenue and growth prospects. This surge in tourism also generates employment opportunities across various sectors, benefiting the local workforce. Moreover, to cater to the influx of visitors, there's often a push for infrastructure development, including better transportation links, upgraded venues, and improved facilities, leaving a lasting positive impression on the region's overall development and appeal as a destination.

Future of hosting large MICE groups adapting to dynamic industry

The future of hosting large MICE groups will be shaped by key trends like incorporating



technology and virtual elements, emphasising sustainability, and providing personalised experiences. Hybrid events will become more common, facilitating global participation and reducing environmental impacts. Also, clients and attendees will increasingly expect sustainability practices, such as minimising single-use plastics and promoting responsible travel. To fulfil this need, Southern Travels will soon initiate to introduce a new sector for MICE tourism which will offer innovative and specialised offerings catering to the evolving demands of corporate clients. Southern's upcoming exclusive packages for MICE and corporate segments will include destinations like Baku - Azerbaijan, Almaty - Kazakhstan, Dubai, Thailand, Spain, and Singapore.

“ We introduced a first of its kind new age MICE customer self-service app with a user-friendly interface

S D NANDAKUMAR – PRESIDENT & COUNTRY HEAD-CORPORATE TOURS, SOTC TRAVEL

Preferences within the MICE industry for large groups

To enhance sales and productivity, despite increased costs including airfares and rate of exchange due to inflation, more corporates have been encouraging incentive trips for their key growth contributors this year, i.e. employees, distributors, and more are willing to increase their budgets by up to 30-40%. Demand for MICE travel is at an all-time high and this year, we have already managed multiple mega groups of over 1000 – 5000 customers each across sectors inclusive of BFSI, Insurance, Banking, FMEG, FMCG, Cement, Paints, Lifestyle, Construction, Pharma, Agriculture, Automobile and more.

We are witnessing a change in consumer preferences, and corporates are now choosing to merge the various elements of MICE into one - this is popularly known as the 'Meetings Industry'. Corporates are preferring

destinations with good connectivity and easy visa regimes, hence Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Kenya and Azerbaijan are emerging strongly on the radar.

We have managed significant MICE movements in Hungary, Spain, Italy, Portugal, France, Netherlands, Scandinavia, the Czech Republic, Australia and New Zealand.

Positive effects MICE tourism has on local businesses, employment, and infrastructure development

Incentive travel helps boost the economy by benefiting local suppliers/operators, engaging infrastructure, generating employment and supporting not only direct but also indirect local businesses in the destination.

Future of hosting large MICE groups adapting to dynamic industry

Digitisation is the future of incentive



travel, and we have scaled up our tech initiatives to empower our customers with seamless, scalable, secure solutions. We introduced a first of its kind new age MICE customer self-service app with a user-friendly interface. The intent is to simplify the travel preparation process and save the customer's time and effort. The SOTC Connect app empowers customers to conveniently share their preferences and input necessary data like visa documentation, the app then updates real-time information and proactive updates thus, ensuring that customers have all necessary details at their fingertips.

“ Our robust forward pipeline reflects a strong appetite for MICE travel in 2023 and we expect the bookings to go up by 3 times this year

MEERA CHARNALIA – EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND HEAD – MICE, THOMAS COOK (INDIA) LTD.

Achievement of remarkable feat by surpassing pre-pandemic levels

We surpassed our pre-pandemic levels for our volume driver MICE sector with the delivery of over 200 physical groups of between 100-2500 delegates per group last financial year. Due to unspent corporate budgets, corporates spent over Rs 3-4 lakh per person for premium groups.

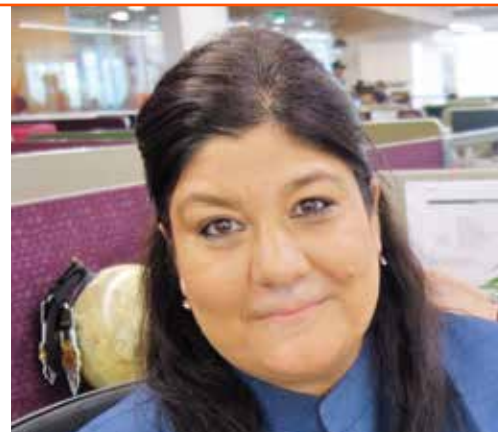
Thomas Cook India curated unique experiences for corporates, such as thrilling Harley-Davidson biking and helicopter rides with 360° panoramic views; an exclusive and exciting flash mob in the middle of Trafalgar Square and an air show in the UK. Gastronomic experiences such as cocktails-dinner at the hallowed MCG stadium with an Australian cricket legend; a unique sundown dining tour in Paris and London – with scenic views via a glass-topped roof; also winery festivals.

With corporates seeking luxury experiences, we successfully managed premium groups for global CXOs with stays at uber-luxury hotels. Premium experiences included: dining at a Michelin star restaurant and vintage plane rides; also private sundowner-dinner sailings with curated local elements and flavours.

Cruises represent an attractive value proposition for the MICE sector and Thomas Cook India has delivered a cruise trip for over 600 delegates in Italy; also for groups of 30-300 delegates for India sailings.

The MICE event industry is evolving from standard agendas and information delivery mechanisms, towards more immersive experiences through interactive and enhanced levels of engagement.

India's significant and diverse MICE potential is yet to be fully leveraged. MICE helps in boosting local economies by



benefiting local suppliers/operators.

Future of hosting large MICE groups adapting to dynamic industry

There is much scope for local MICE operators and local businesses - to showcase the country's rich culture, natural beauty and cultural diversity and more importantly, India's rapidly growing MICE infrastructure and prowess.

MICE is gaining momentum for both international and domestic destinations. Our robust forward pipeline reflects a strong appetite for MICE travel in 2023 and we expect the bookings to go up by 3 times this year.



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“*Travellers are on the lookout for different and out-of-the-box experiences rather than the regular travel offerings and that's exactly what we want to deliver our clients with - experiential travel with a sporting twist*”

AMIT VYAS— HEAD - MICE & SPORTS TRAVEL, DREAMSETGO

Preferences within the MICE industry for large groups

As a sports travel experiences platform, our vision is to offer unique experiences by moving away from traditional MICE to an approach of 'MISE' which denotes Meetings, Incentives, 'Sports' and Experiences. Speaking of trends, in recent years, we've witnessed high demand for curated luxury experiences for CXOs, and business leaders. For instance, DreamSetGo organises board & team meetings at sporting destinations for company executives. Some of these experiences include visiting a historic cricket or football stadium, meeting and greeting with athletes on a yacht, wine-tasting/lunches at Yarra Valley and High-Tea with Sourav Ganguly at Lord's, London. We've also seen a noticeable increase in demand for 'MISE' (MICE & sports travel experiences) during March and April 2023 - predominantly, a corporate gifting season. Our recent offering, the Olympic Games Paris 2024 saw an uptick in enquiries as corporates aim to secure unique experiences at the best prices.

Positive effects MICE tourism has on local businesses, employment, and infrastructure development

According to a report published by Allied Market Research, the global MICE industry is growing at a CAGR of 15.2% from 2022 to 2031.

MICE travel significantly contributes to long-term infrastructure development in local regions - specifically accelerating new SMBs and local businesses. Domestic and international exposure attracts new business opportunities and investors, leading to job creation for local communities and economic growth. Increased footfall directly benefits the local tourism industry, including hotels, restaurants, transportation, and entertainment sectors.

Besides MICE, cricket tourism positively impacted local communities in Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Dharamshala, Chennai, and Kolkata, among others.

Future of hosting large MICE groups adapting to dynamic industry

Today's discerning travellers are looking



for hassle-free and convenient travel packages. Everything should be taken care of right from the pre-booking to the post-booking stage. Keeping in line with this evolving trend, we will focus on building the premium segment with end-to-end services, including travel management, event planning, and once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

Given that DreamSetGo targets the top 10-15 percentile of traveller profiles, we work towards delivering 'money-can't-buy' MICE + sports travel experiences. We offer the best premium hospitality access, athlete meets and greets, and private charters with sports legends, among others.

“*MICE raises a particular destination's profile considerably by attracting new businesses and creating a sense of community through enhanced cultural exchange*”

DEV KARVAT – FOUNDER & CEO, ASEGO

Economic impact of MICE events on a destination

With a growth rate of nearly 20 per cent per annum and a steady inflow of investments from prominent tourism agencies and global brands, the impact of MICE events on a country's economy cannot be undermined.

Such large-scale events add significant value to a destination by generating new job opportunities in the local tourism spear which encapsulates travel, accommodations, food and entertainment which in turn boosts the local economy. MICE events also improve a particular destination's tax revenue which can be used to fund important services such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure.

The best way to gauge the success of a particular MICE event can be measured by tourist footfalls post the event, including friends and family of delegates who attended the event. Moreover, you can also determine the momentum an event has created on social media by tracking online reviews, mentions and articles written about the event.

Ensuring sustainability and minimise the environmental impact

Strategies can be employed to ensure sustainability and minimise the environmental impact are including Reducing waste by using reusable plates, cups, composting food waste and recycling, minimising energy consumption by using energy-efficient lighting and appliances at the venue, using digital media for branding and promotional activities, encouraging attendees to use sustainable modes of transport such as electronic vehicles and group transfers to reduce carbon footprints and using outdoor venues in case of conducive weather conditions and suitable convention themes.

Travel assistance for large-scale conferences to ensure a seamless experience

Travel assistance and insurance is crucial as there are tremendous financial investments and risks involved in organising such events. We at Asego, curate exclusive travel assistance and insurance products after careful consideration of all the above factors to ensure financial security of not just the attendees, but also the organisers.



Our protection plans for large scale events consist of specially curated benefits that protects travel investments, even before the departure such as trip cancellations, missed connections, change in airfares, medical emergencies, supplier insolvencies, event cancellations due to natural calamities, terrorist activities and other travel inconveniences.

In addition, Asego also facilitates emergency medical evacuation and provides protection against loss of valuables like passport and baggage along with relevant assistance services including doctor-on-call, medical services providers referral and much more ensuring a seamless travel experience for attendees.

“MICE bring the change in economy faster than leisure as the scale is different so the impact is great on the local economy”

ZELAM AMIT CHAUBAL- DIRECTOR, KESARI TOURS PVT LTD & KESARI MICE

Preferences within the MICE industry for large groups

MICE event trends are increasingly prioritising sustainable practices, from eco-friendly venues to minimising waste and promoting responsible travel. Creating immersive experiences that engage all senses and leave lasting impressions on attendees is a top priority for MICE event planners. Events are becoming more tailored to individual preferences, with organisers using data-driven insights to customise content and experiences. Encouraging attendees to unplug from technology and focus on personal connections and mindfulness. The most important change along with the above traits is the ease of visa and availability of airline, which has become more challenging than before and these two factors are deciding the destination of travel and many times corporate has to change the destination.

Positive effects MICE tourism has on local businesses, employment, and infrastructure development

After the pandemic domestic mice were the survival of the industry and it had helped domestic hotels as well as local people. Kashmir has emerged as MICE destination. Slowly international mice opened up and last year was great for MICE business apart from a few visa and airline availability challenges. The MICE market is further expected to grow at a CAGR of 6.80% tween 2023 and 2028, to reach a value of USD 1081.8 billion by 2028 and corporate are looking for more and more local interaction be it food or culture. They do not want to confine the participants with specific event space they want people to enjoy local food be part of few games and cultural activities. It is said that expenditure made by MICE Traveller is double than Leisure Traveller so there is huge scope for Local business. MICE bring the change in economy faster than leisure as the scale is different so the impact is great on the local economy.



Future of hosting large MICE groups adapting to dynamic industry

The expectations of corporate are ever-rising as now the whole world is open for MICE and newer destinations are emerging. The visa and availability of the airline is going to be an important deciding factor at the same time corporate may have to plan way in advance to get the price and budget they want or else arranging large mice 11th hour would unnecessarily cost more. Innovation in terms of experiences for travellers will play a big role in future MICE. The travel agent has to be ahead of the curve to plan and achieve 100% satisfaction for the mice travellers.

“We intend to make Sri Lanka the best destination on the MICE front globally”

THISUM JAYASURIYA- CHAIRMAN, SRI LANKA CONVENTION BUREAU

Economic impact of MICE events on a destination

Sri Lanka is a year-round destination but unfortunately, it's categorised as a Winter destination. So, considering the weather conditions favourable for conducting events, Sri Lanka makes for a suitable MICE destination year-round. There's a perennial scope of organising events in the island nation. In recent times, MICE is recognised on a much wider scale globally as compared to earlier. The value of MICE is more than a thousand Billion dollars, and it is expected to go up to two thousand billion dollars by 2030. The biggest MICE markets in Asia are Japan, China and India. Sharing close proximity with India, Sri Lanka sees it as an opportunity to work closely with India on the MICE front. Eventually, leading to economic growth in the country and creating employment opportunities for plenty. With the 67th TAAI Convention scheduled in Sri Lanka, it has already aided in portraying its stronghold on the MICE front.

Ensuring sustainability and minimise the environmental impact alongside other strategies

We are focusing on sustainability as an important factor to preserve and retain our resources. Also, since we have identified our source markets, which happen to be India, China and Japan primarily, we are planning to work on enhancing our digital presence as well as physical presence in these countries. We are planning on organising roadshows and launching new campaigns, because the sooner the potential of MICE is realised, the better it will be for the country. This pretty much sums up our short-term and mid-term strategy. Once we reach this milestone, we are eyeing to target the European market, Middle Eastern market, and South African market in the long run. But considering the present tourism market scenario, the low-hanging fruit for us is India and we are leaving no stone unturned in building a strong relationship with the neighbouring nation.



Future of hosting large MICE groups adapting to dynamic industry

We are on the roll to organise MICE events, cultural shows, entertainment acts involving bands, and financial support for organising luncheon meetings, hence, we are no less than any other destination such as Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and more. Incentives, immigration, and a plethora of other assistance required are offered by the Sri Lanka Promotion Bureau for the successful execution of MICE events. The only hurdle Sri Lanka is facing in the present scenario is the paucity of awareness. Sri Lanka is out there, bouncing back like never before, the word has to be spread.



TRANSFORMING TRAVEL: A REMARKABLE EXPERIENCE AT THE 67TH TAAI CONVENTION IN SRI LANKA

By Aanchal Sachdeva & Ananya Trivedi





The Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) recently held its much-anticipated 67th convention in the picturesque island nation of Sri Lanka. This year's event, themed "Transcending Borders Transforming Lives", brought together industry experts, travel enthusiasts, and technology innovators for an immersive four-day experience at the heart of Colombo.

TAAI provides a platform for its members to network, collaborate, and share knowledge, helping them stay updated with the latest trends and developments in the travel industry. The association also organises events, conferences, and workshops to foster professional development among its members.

The convention scheduled from July 6-9, 2023 showcased the latest trends and advancements in the travel industry while providing a platform for meaningful discussions, networking opportunities, and knowledge sharing. The chosen venue offered a perfect blend of luxury, convenience, and natural beauty, ensuring that attendees could fully immerse themselves in the convention's activities. Sri Lanka's reputation as a top-notch tourist destination was on full display, as delegates experienced its scenic beaches, lush forests, and ancient cultural sites.

The organising committee left no stone unturned in making the event unforgettable. From meticulously planned accommodation and transportation to delectable culinary offerings, every aspect was designed to ensure a seamless experience for all participants. Sri Lanka's charm and warm hospitality embraced everyone, fostering an atmosphere of camaraderie and networking among attendees. The 67th TAAI convention in association with SLAITO was graced by many esteemed guests including the **President of Sri Lanka, Ranil Wickremesinghe** who spoke at great lengths about how the

Our future vision with this convention is to focus on how growth can happen and not live in our past. We need to transcend minds to transform lives

JYOTI MAYAL, President of TAAI



game of tourism can totally be changed. The convention was graced by the who's who of the industry including TAAI's President Jyoti Mayal, President of SLAITO Nishad Wijetunga, H. Chalaka D. Gajabahu, Chairman, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB) and Lands Harin Fernando to name a few.

The TAAI Convention focused on various crucial matters that are vital for the future of the thriving travel industry. These themes centered on enhancing the operations of the travel sector, which has experienced an unprecedented surge in recent times. The remarkable growth can be attributed largely to the Covid-19 pandemic, which had brought the world to a standstill. However, in the two years following the pandemic, the travel industry has witnessed an unexpected boom. The main areas of discussion involved, Sustainable Tourism. With the growing awareness and preference for environmentally friendly options among travellers, sustainable tourism took centre stage as a significant topic of discussion during the TAAI Convention. Panel discussions delved into various approaches to encourage responsible travel, safeguard precious natural resources, and preserve cultural heritage. The speakers at the convention engaged in constructive dialogues about practical strategies for integrating green initiatives within travel agencies. They explored measures aimed at minimising the industry's environmental impact, with a focus on reducing carbon emissions, conserving energy, and promoting eco-friendly practices throughout the travel sector.

The Covid-19 pandemic also was a part of the talk, TAAI Convention dedicated significant attention to the far-reaching effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the travel industry.

Throughout the convention, attendees learned from real-life case studies and success stories, showcasing how some travel businesses thrived despite the challenging circumstances. The emphasis was on the importance of swift and strategic decision-making, as well as the implementation of flexible strategies that allowed travel companies to pivot and adjust to rapidly

We are also equally delighted that the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau headed by the Honourable Minister, the Ministry and our Chairman agreed and to host this convention

H E Ranil Wickremesinghe
President of Sri Lanka



changing conditions.

Talking at the convention the **President of SLAITO, Nishad Wijetunga** highlighted, "This is not the first time TAAI decided to hold their convention at Sri Lanka, it happened once before in 2005 and we are indeed delighted that they have agreed to come back this year." "We are also equally delighted that the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau headed by the Honourable Minister, the Ministry and our Chairman agreed and to host this convention in Sri Lanka because all of you know very well

the negative publicity that we had in the last year. It hasn't been easy; it has been rather very challenging and, we wanted to basically change the perception of what is thought about destination Sri Lanka. India being one of our most important markets. Actually, right now they are the number 1 market to Sri Lanka and we felt that it was extremely important that we change this perception. So, when we invited TAAI to come here so that all of you or all of the delegates who are all travel agents from India and of course the esteemed press can come here and see first-hand the actual situation on the ground" stated Wijetunga. He also highlighted the importance of this convention happening in Sri Lanka as India has always been their biggest market and hence showcasing what all Sri Lanka has to offer was their biggest priority, so that the delegates could witness it first hand.

Whilst addressing the gathering, the President of TAAI, Jyoti Mayal, shed light on the scope that tourism as an industry has. She mentioned how many streams tourism has, is something one cannot even dream about. She talked at lengths about Sri Lanka as a nation and the scope that it can provide when it comes to tourism.

"We are in Sri Lanka today because we believe in the potential of this beautiful island nation. We believe in the strength of our historical and cultural ties and we are here to further strengthen our tourism ties. We are here to support Sri Lanka to ensure that it revives quickly from the setbacks it has faced. We are here to bring positivity, to bring prosperity and to bring peace. Our future vision with this convention is to focus on how growth can happen and not live in our past. We need to transcend minds to transform lives. Only when we become the front runners, we can take the society with us. Let us forget about the past and let us focus on the future which is exactly what we are aiming to do at our convention. We are here to explore new adventures and fresh destinations, we are here to evolve, to transcend our thoughts and to break the glass ceiling. We are here to forge ahead in the manner that brings in solid



We are an all in one capsule, whether it's adventure, romance, culture, religion, shopping, nightlife, you name it. We have everything from 8th wonder of the world to the beaches, the sun and sea surfing

H. Chalaka D. Gajabahu

Chairman, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB)

partnerships, not only here but globally and regionally" expressed **Jyoti Mayal**.

She even stated that the theme of the convention was "Transcending Borders Transforming Lives" is what is needed for people to believe in. To cross borders physically as well as the borders that we create in our minds, in order for tourism to progress. Towards the end she thanked Sri Lankan Tourism for hosting all 600 members in such an organised way.

The President shared this beautiful message at the convention, which described how Sri Lanka and India have always gone a long way in terms of having a relationship with each other as nations. The bond between Sri Lanka and India remains steadfast. Sri Lankans wholeheartedly embrace the vibrant tunes of Bollywood, with countless individuals glued to their phones and TVs,

eager to catch glimpses of their beloved artists. Traversing the entire country within a mere 3 to 4 hours is a breeze for travellers in Sri Lanka, and the most enchanting way to relish the stunning landscapes is through train journeys. However, what truly captivates Indian travellers is the genuine warmth and hospitality of the Sri Lankan people, who wholeheartedly embrace their Indian neighbours. With their sincere smiles and welcoming demeanour, the locals have a special knack for making any Indian traveller feel right at home. Indian travellers will always find open arms and a heartfelt welcome, strengthening the enduring bond of friendship between the two countries.

H. Chalaka D. Gajabahu- Chairman, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB), too expressed his views about the TAAI convention happening at Sri Lanka, "Yes, India has

most of those facilities and you can enjoy it as well. But Sri Lanka is an island. That island which has everything minus the snow. We are an all in one capsule. Whether it's adventure, romance, culture, religion, shopping, nightlife, you name it. We have everything from 8th wonder of the world to the beaches, the sun and sea surfing. Any category that you want, You can enjoy in Sri Lanka, I must say." remarked Gajabahu.

H E Ranil Wickremesinghe also addressed the gathering. He stated out various plans that were being executed in order to attract more and more tourist to Sri Lanka.

"Another 900 acres, which will be another forest reserve in which you can have five star luxury accommodations. Yachting will start here with Mana as one of the headquarters, and throughout the Jaffna neighbourhood down to Pinkamali and further down. We'll explore the railway in different ways that have gone up to many more. We want to handle a large number of plantation bungalows for boutique hotels. So there's going to be more and more items that we'll adopt", exclaimed His Excellency.

The TAAI convention proved to be much more than a mere gathering; it was a spectacular event filled with excitement and awe. From thrilling fire shows that illuminated the evenings with mesmerising displays of light and artistry, to amazing tours arranged for the delegates to explore the beauty and culture of the host country, the convention was an unforgettable experience. The enthusiasm and positive feedback from attendees have left everyone eagerly anticipating next year's edition, with high hopes for even more memorable moments and enriching encounters. The TAAI convention has truly set a new standard for industry events, leaving a lasting impression on all the delegates who attended the successfully concluded TAAI's 67th Convention in Colombo, Sri Lanka.



BOUNDLESS HORIZONS: THE SKY IS JUST THE BEGINNING!



IndiGo plans to capitalize on the country's market size and strategic advantages to foster further growth in the aviation sector

A DIVE INTO THE AVIATION INDUSTRY BY VINAY MALHOTRA, HEAD OF GLOBAL SALES, INDIGO

By Ananya Trivedi

IndiGo: Fastest-growing in the Aviation Industry

Addressing the 67th TAAI Convention in Sri Lanka, Vinay Malhotra- Head of Global Sales, IndiGo, spoke at great lengths about the growth and the scope of the Aviation Industry in India. He mentioned that the aviation industry in India is poised for growth due to its strategic location and a large population within 7-8 hours of flying time. IndiGo believes that the sky is not the limit, and the country's market, aircrafts, airports, and passports and visas contribute to its potential for expansion.

He spoke about the growth stating IndiGo operates in India, the country with a population of 1.4 billion, out of which 65 per cent of the population is below the age of 35, hence the runway for air travel in India is a long, seemingly never ending one. He stated that CAPA India predicts there will be 60 million workers in the domestic aviation industry this year, compared to 13.6 million last year. He also mentioned that by 2029, the cost of the filter is expected to triple, reaching USD35 million.

Constantly evolving and dynamic Aviation Industry

Using data, he said that China had over 4000 aircrafts, the United States had 13,000, and Boeing predicted that the 700 aircrafts would increase to 2500 in 20 years. By the end of a decade, it is predicted that the airline industry would double in size.

In the past, India had less than 100 million passports, with about 96 million passport holders recorded as of December last year. Each 1% increase in this number meant an addition of 14 million eligible international travellers.

This presented a significant opportunity for growth in the international travel sector. Despite being the third-largest domestic aviation market, trailing behind only the USA and China, India ranked much lower, around 17th or 18th position, in the international travel market.

IndiGo's dominant position in the Indian Aviation Market

The potential for 14 million more Indians to explore international destinations was seen as a promising prospect that could

boost India's presence and influence in the global aviation industry. The increase in international travellers from India can lead to various economic and cultural benefits, fostering stronger connections between India and the rest of the world.

With a sense of pride, he confidently said "Now, all the 78 cities are connected directly and nonstop to an international destination in New York. But people from Amritsar, Chandigarh, Lucknow, Aurangabad who aspire to go to the Indiana pastures in the western world, they can easily go with us because we cover India like nobody does. And our partners, like Turkish Airlines, are extremely well networked in Europe."

Innovations to ahead of the curve

He later indicates IndiGo's willingness to adopt different hybrid models, such as the Global Distribution System (GDS) and New Distribution Capability (NDC), based on the specific needs of their operations when it comes to NDC.

To end, he demonstrated India's aviation industry has the potential to exceed existing projections.



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UNRAVELLING RAJASTHAN'S REGAL SECRETS



MICE TOURISM REIGNS WITH UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

With palaces as venues and history as a backdrop, Rajasthan invites businesses and adventurers alike to script their tales of success and discovery amidst the regal charm of the desert kingdom. According to **Dr Rashmi Sharma, Director of the Tourism Department, Rajasthan**, MICE tourism is an important component of the tourism sector and has immense potential in Rajasthan

By *Aanchal Sachdeva*

MICE tourism rapidly expanding in Rajasthan, Honourable Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Ashok Gehlot's introduction of the budget for 2023-24

MICE (Meeting Incentives, Conference, Exhibition) tourism offers numerous opportunities in the tourism industry. He announced the development of MICE centres for international-level conventions and exhibitions in the popular wedding hotspots of Jaipur, Udaipur, and Ajmer. This announcement shows the importance of MICE tourism. The process of putting these announcements into action has also begun. Each of these MICE centres will cost Rs 100 crore to establish. These facilities will prove to be yet another turning point for Rajasthan's tourism industry.

Additionally, Ashok Gehlot pledged during this budget speech to develop tourism facilities in the state, increase employment opportunities for locals in the industry, and draw in more and more domestic and international tourists as part of his commitment to establishing Rajasthan as a leader in the tourism sector. The Tourism Development Fund's allocated budget for this has been enhanced from Rs 1000 crore to Rs 1500 crore.

12th Great Indian Travel Bazaar receives nationwide participation

In April this year, the state hosted the 12th Great Indian Travel Bazaar, in which 283 tour operators from 56 different nations participated. A similar event, the Rajasthan Domestic Travel Mart (RDTM), was held this month, with participation from 200 sellers and an equal number of buyers. These two major events held in Jaipur in the last three months indicate that Rajasthan is prepared to become a leader in the MICE tourism sector as well.

As a result of the Rajasthan Tourism Department setting up the required MICE tourism infrastructure, Ajmer, Pushkar, Bharatpur, Alwar, Jaisalmer, and Bikaner are some of the important locations in the MICE tourism, as well as the Shekhavati regions of Kota, Bundi, Mount Abu, Chittorgarh Sawai Madhopur, and Dhaulpur.

Rajasthan has all the ingredients for a flourishing tourism sector

MICE tourism in Rajasthan offers a comprehensive tour package for national and international travel as the state has a plethora of tourism possibilities. Rajasthan has all the ingredients for a flourishing tourism sector, including well-known tourist attractions and historical sites, distinctive heritage villages and Shilpgrams, experiential tourism, desert tourism, adventure tourism, wildlife and ecotourism, tribal tourism, cultural tourism, craft and cuisine tourism, weekend getaway tourism, religious tourism, wedding tourism, wellness tourism (medical tourism), rural tourism, and film tourism, among others. Because of all these essential tourism elements, Rajasthan is the top destination for MICE tourism.

The state is particularly well-known for its great hospitality as it is home to 75% of the country's heritage hotels which make a substantial contribution to the growth of MICE tourism in the state. In addition, the state provides extra tourism amenities. MICE centres are easily accessible via rail, road, and air transportation. These centres have tour guides along with interpreters for Hindi, English, and other languages.

Rajasthan is becoming the first choice for MICE tourism investors and tour and travel operators

HOTSPOTS OF MICE TOURISM IN RAJASTHAN

Jaipur - Newly built Rajasthan International Centre, Birla Auditorium, Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Center (JECC), Hotel Rambagh Palace, Hotel Jaimahal Palace, Rajvilas Palace, ITC Rajputana, Hotel Raj Palace, Jaipur Marriott, Radisson Blu, The Trident, Royal Orchid, Hotel Country Inn, Mansingh Palace, Hotel The Lalit, Hotel Jaipur Ashok, Hotel Arya Niwas, Diggi Palace, SMS Convention Centre, Hotel Clarks Amer, Crowne Plaza, Hotel Shiv Vilas, Hotel Le Meridien and Fairmont.

Jodhpur - Umaid Bhawan Palace, Karni Bhawan Palace, Ajit Bhawan Palace, Balsamand Lake Palace, Ranbanka Palace, Fort Chanwa, Hotel Park Plaza, Shriram International, The Gateway Hotel, Chandra Inn, Indiana Palace, Vivanta by Taj Hari Mahal Palace.

Udaipur - The Lalit Laxmi Vilas, Hotel Indra Residency, Ramada Udaipur Resort & Spa, The Oberoi Udaivilas, Fatah Prakash Palace, Hotel Lake Palace, Devigarh Fort.

Ajmer and Pushkar - Hotel Man Singh, Hotel Merwada Palace, Ananta Spa & Resort, Arambagh Palace, The Pushkar Bagh, Bhanwarsingh Palace, Gateway Resort, Welcome Heritage Khinvsar Fort Nagaur.

Bharatpur and Alwar - Hotel Udai Vilas, Hotel The Bagh, Hotel Laxmi Vilas Palace, Hotel Kadambakunj, Dadhikar Fort and The Sariska Palace.

Jaisalmer - Fort Rajwada, Suryagarh. Gorband Palace, Bryce Fort and Desert Tulip Hotel & Restaurant.

Shekhawati and Bikaner - The Desert Resort, Hotel Castle Mandawa, Alsisar Mahal, Hotel Lalgarh Palace, Hotel Laxmi Niwas Palace and Hotel Basant Vihar Palace.

Kota and Bundi - The Grand Chandiram, Hotel Minal Residency, Umaid Bhawan of ITC Group, Hadauti Palace.

Mount Abu and Chittorgarh - Hotel Bikaner Palace, Hotel Palanpur Palace, Hotel Hillock, Hotel Hilton, Hotel Aranya Hill Resort, Hotel Shikhar RTDC, Hotel Padmini.

Sawaimadhopur and Dhaulpur - Ranthambore Forest Resort, Hotel Raj Palace, Nahargarh Ranthambore and Rajniwas Palace.

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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

Activities: March 2022

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TUTC'S ENCHANTED GLAMPING CHARMS UNRAVELS ACROSS INDIA'S MYSTICAL VISTAS

By Aanchal Sachdeva

TUTC expands its portfolio

TUTC, the renowned hospitality brand, expands its captivating portfolio to enchanting destinations nestled amidst the hills of Shimla, the untamed jungles of Central India and Rajasthan, and the tranquil outskirts of Chandigarh. One cannot resist but step into the world of glamping like never before, as TUTC pioneers the art of blending opulence and adventure in their nomadic tents.

TUTC has already secured its place as the vanguard of glamorous camping in the country, earning accolades from luxury travellers seeking unique and immersive experiences. Their exquisite offerings in remote and distinct locations like Ladakh, Nagaland, and Prayagraj have captured the hearts of wanderers yearning for authenticity.

Other regions include the breathtaking Chamba Camp Thiksey and Chamba Camp Diskit in the mesmerising landscapes of Ladakh. Feel the cultural vibrancy come alive at the Kohima Camp in Nagaland, exclusively open during the revered Hornbill Festival. And for a spiritual experience like no other, the Sangam Nivas Camp in Prayagraj awaits you during the world-famous Kumbh Melas, held every six years.

TUTC will be launching their upcoming Mohali property in September- The FHR Wilderness Lodge by TUTC. Sited carefully next to the Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary on the outskirts of Chandigarh, it is set within a 1000-acre nature and golf estate.

TUTC brings sophisticated canvas-top safari experiences of the ancient forests of Bandhavgarh and its National Park to travellers with The Untamed Bandhavgarh by TUTC. Featuring 10 elegantly styled tents with private decks and panoramic nature views, an unimitable team including expert naturalists, The Untamed Bandhavgarh promises thrilling activities in the tiger homeland from October to June every year.

Carefully crafted camps

With meticulous precision, we scouted the globe, searching for those hidden gems that embody the essence of TUTC - the epitome of luxurious and immersive living. Each destination was chosen with the utmost care, we were determined to unveil the road less travelled, offering our guests unparalleled experiences.

TUTC is synonymous with venturing into the wild, exploring nature's wonders while basking

Over the past few years, the seeds of expansion have been sown, nurtured with care, and now stand ready to bloom into reality



Currently we are a team of about 120 people and plan to go more than 400

in the lap of indulgence. Alongside, we sought to create super-stylish escapes that bring tranquillity and rejuvenation within easy reach from bustling cities.

Unique offerings and saving the green code

Our expertise is in 100% canvas accommodation, which means that we leave a minimal carbon footprint when we wrap up at the end of the season. We go for a lot of local involvement which puts us very high on sustainability factor as well.

So local involvement is not about only involvement as far as the generation of employment for them, but also buying their local produce and engaging them in various social activities. It's like giving back to the society. Every experience or itinerary that we curate, they are well thought of and very unique. The experiences that we do are unique and not many people are doing it. We have been receiving positive feedback from our customers when compared to similar lamps and camps they have visited in Africa giving more weightage to the ones here in India. We aim at creating employment as well as the involvement of the local authorities.

The management and their vision

Equally vital in this endeavour were our esteemed partners, whose offerings align seamlessly with our vision. Handpicked for their excellence, they share our passion for curating remarkable journeys and showcasing the very best that the world has to offer.

Rajnish Rai, the Chief Operating Officer and a pioneering member of Ultra Resorts and Hotels Pvt Ltd, shares his unwavering dedication to redefining the boundaries of luxury, unique and exquisite travel alongside the other two members of the management, LT. Gen Deepak Raj, Managing Director and Col. LP Singh, Director. Together, they are poised to embark on an extraordinary journey, where each step leads closer to making dreams a reality.



We want to create a mix of everything which makes commercial sense, also, be able to give back to the society and creating a niche for ourselves. We are not typical businessman archers and this is something that we are doing not only for commercial but out of passion", says Rajnish Rai. "In the coming five years, we'll be present in at least more than 25 diversified locations", he adds.

They intend to create employment opportunities with new ventures and expansion, and give 50% back to the local community despite any complexities.

Rai says, "We are going to strike a balance between commercial activity as well as CSR activity. We plan to hire a pool of professionals from local communities, educate them, train them and improve their skill set."

TUTC will soon extend its unrivalled hospitality offerings with glamping experiences in Kanha and Ranthambore, Madhya Pradesh, offering three different habitats for tiger spotting. The brand is also crafting luxury cottages in Naldhera, in the hills of Shimla, that will operate through all seasons. Ghana is going to be operational in January. So by mid-2024, we'll have all these locations up and running.

He further adds, "By the end of 2024, TUTC hospitality will be offered in 9 destinations across India - this is more than double the 4 we are currently operating."



VFS, Lucknow to avail Austria and Netherlands Visa

The Austrian and Dutch visas, are available in Lucknow for the benefit of citizens from Uttar Pradesh, established by VFS Global, the world's leading supplier of outsourcing and technology services to governments and diplomatic missions. To submit their applications quickly and easily, Austria and Netherlands visa applicants from all over the state can now do so by making an appointment on the VFS Global website. These centres are located on the first floor of the Interstate Bus Terminal, Alambagh in Lucknow, and are open from Monday through Friday, 9 AM to 4 PM. The facilities also offer services like

the Premium Lounge, which allows candidates to submit their applications without having to stand in a queue, for a select group of applicants looking for superior submission experience services. Prabuddha Sen, Chief Operating Officer - South Asia, VFS Global, said, "We are delighted to bring Austria and Netherlands visa services to Lucknow, a move which will benefit the citizens of Uttar Pradesh who till now had to travel to other cities like New Delhi to submit their visa applications. We are confident that these newly opened Visa Application Centres will offer applicants a convenient and seamless visa application process."

Varanasi hosted International Temples Convention and Expo 2023

The oldest city of the world, Varanasi, hosted the International Temples Convention and Expo (ITCX) from July 22 to July 24, 2023. It was the world's first event entirely devoted to the management of temples

worldwide, and to fostering and empowering the management, operations, and administration of temple ecosystems. Dr Mohan Bhagwat (Sarsanghchalak of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) inaugurated the convention. Giresh Kulkarni, the founder of Temple Connect and ITCX mentioned, "At the International Temples Convention & Expo, we aim to gather on-ground temple soldiers on one stage to open knowledge portals to get inspired and organically elevate and set the standard operating system in a temple."



Rail Europe welcomes new B2B inventory- Eurail Greek Islands Pass

The Eurail Greek Islands Pass is now a part of Rail Europe's B2B inventory and is accessible via its B2B website and API. Rail Europe is the top supplier of train tickets and passes in Europe. Björn Bender, CEO & President, of Rail Europe said, "With the launch of the Eurail Greek Islands Pass, we are proud to present an unparalleled opportunity for our B2B partners to enhance their customer's travel experiences. The Eurail Greek Islands Pass serves as a gateway to a myriad of experiences across Greece's captivating islands, from the alluring glamour of Mykonos to the inspiring landscapes of Santorini, and the

pristine serenity of Crete, three top destinations in Europe. We are thrilled to foster further collaboration with our partners as we jointly promote this unique pass and showcase the captivating islands it encompasses.", The Eurail Greek Islands Pass enables tourists to tour the Greek islands using domestic ferry services for 4 days, including Superfast Ferries, Minoan Lines, Grimaldi Lines, and Blue Star Ferries. For travellers interested in visiting popular destinations like Athens, Thessaloniki, and Olympia, as well as the entire European continent, it's a the perfect addition to the Eurail Greece Pass.

ATOAI conducted Seminar & Adventure Tourism Roadshow in Mumbai

Seminar & Adventure Tourism Roadshow was proudly presented by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI). Adventure lovers, travel experts, and other industry players from all across the nation will had the opportunity to network at this highly anticipated event, share expertise, and create lasting relationships within the adventure tourism business. Ajeet Bajaj, President of ATOAI, expressed his enthusiasm for the event, saying, "This event aims to promote best practices, provide valuable insights, and facilitate networking opportunities



within the adventure tourism community." The upcoming events are scheduled on August 11 in Hyderabad, September 10 in New Delhi, and January 14 Siliguri and in Pasighat on February 12, 2024.



TripJack and Costa Cruise collaborates to grow the Cruise Business

The renowned Italian cruise company Costa Cruise and TripJack, a leading B2B travel technology platform in India, are thrilled to announce their collaboration, providing Indian tourists with an exceptional cruising experience throughout the peak travel season. The Costa Serena would have a dual homeport of Mumbai and Cochin and offer a total of 23 sailings from November 2023 to January 2024. With itineraries lasting 2, 3, and 5 nights, it will cruise to Mumbai, Cochin, Goa, and—for the first time—the stunning Lakshadweep islands. Indian visitors can take advantage of warm Italian hospitality while on vacation abroad; the gastronomy and entertainment will be carefully crafted to suit the sophisticated Indian palate. Abdul Thingna, Vice President, Hotels & Holidays at TripJack said, "We are excited to partner with Costa Cruise, a renowned name in the global cruise industry. This collaboration aligns with our mission of providing unique and remarkable travel experiences. The cruise dates in November and December 2023 offer an incredible opportunity for Indian travelers to experience international cruising, and we are confident that our partnership will deliver exceptional value and unforgettable memories."



INDIA INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY EXPO
INDIA EXPO CENTRE & MART

6th edition of the IHE 2023 held in Greater Noida

The sixth edition of the India International Hospitality Expo 2023 was held in Greater Noida, August 2 to August 5, 2023. The Chief Guest was Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, the Honourable Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, and the Guest of Honour was Raghubir Singh Bali, the Chairman of HP Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. The event also featured Chief Secretary of the Government of Himachal Pradesh, Prabodh Saxena, IAS. At IHE 2023, Himachal Pradesh was the focus state with the "Craft, Culture, Cuisine" theme. The renowned Chef Shree Nand Lal from Himachal Pradesh led classes on HP's traditional cuisine, "DHAAM," a lavish feast. The goal of this program was to offer a venue for showcasing the most recent developments in the hospitality sector.

Norwegian Cruise Line to elevate onboard guest experience

Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL), revealed that Norwegian Joy will undergo improvements in January 2024 to enhance guest experience with well-liked amenities, such as a new Thermal Suite in the Mandara Spa and Salon, expanded Vibe Beach Club, 24 new staterooms, and redesigned three-bedroom The Haven Premier Owner's Suites. The brand-new Thermal Suite on Norwegian Joy soon be the largest of the Breakaway-Plus class ships will provide guests with an elevated onboard spa experience when she emerges from the three-week dry dock taking place from

January 22, 2024, to February 12, 2024. "Delivering exceptional experiences across our fleet is what we strive to do," said David J. Herrera, President of Norwegian Cruise Line. "We have listened to our guests and have taken action. With this revitalisation, we are adding some of the most beloved spaces and offerings across our ships to enhance the guest experience aboard Norwegian Joy. Guests will have a greater variety of staterooms to choose from and a world class, full-service spa to spend their days at sea fully immersed in relaxation."



GNTO and OTOAI collaborate to promote Germany

OTOAI held a destination update and a members meet on July 12 in the Hyatt Regency, Lucknow, in collaboration with the German National Tourist Office. The evening began with a welcome note by Monia Kapoor, OTOAI Joint Secretary. She said, "OTOAI was committed to reaching out to its members and updating them with accurate destination knowledge and expertise." Shравan Bhalla, Vice President of OTOAI, called for a minute of silence in the memory of M Shueb Qureshi

(Heena Tours). He welcomed all the members and GNTO team and said, "The event is a great opportunity for our members to network and interact with the representatives from the German tourism industry."





One Above & BTEA collaborates to promote Bahrain

One Above and the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA) successfully wrapped up an event in Jaipur. A networking session was held throughout the event which brought together MICE planners, corporate clients, wholesalers, and trade partners in the travel industry. The event's primary objectives were to

strengthen relationships with guests and promote Bahrain. Bahrain also known as the Pearl of the Middle East is an exceptional location for leisure and MICE activities. The delegates learned in-depth information about Bahrain's tourist development, tourism products, the most recent deals and itineraries on offer during the session.

Thomas Cook, SOTC and Sentosa Development Corporation signed MOU

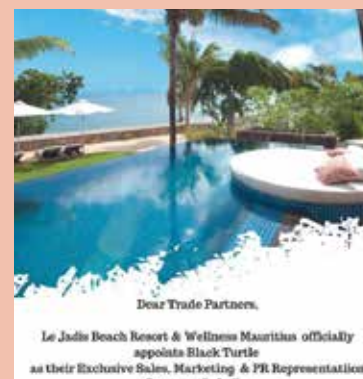
According to consumer statistics from Thomas Cook (India) Limited, the country's top omnichannel travel agency, and SOTC Travel, a member of its group, there is a substantial and growing Indian demand for several mini-cations, which is 82%, thus closer-to-home countries with simple visa requirements are seeing a rise. Mr. Abraham Alapatt, President & Group Head - Marketing, Service Quality, Value Added Services & Innovation, Thomas Cook (India) Limited said, "Our MoU with Sentosa Development Corporation hence aims to showcase the premier island getaway's engaging and enriching



experiences – to India's families/multigenerational families, Young India's Millennials/Gen Z, couples, ad-hoc groups of friends/colleagues and our power driver corporate MICE segment. Our strategic partnership with Sentosa will focus on extensive product curation, consumer engagement and promotions to drive visitations."

Black Turtle appointed as Sales, Marketing & PR Representative for Le Jadis Beach Resort & Wellness Mauritius

Black Turtle is officially appointed by Le Jadis Beach Resort & Wellness Mauritius as their Exclusive Sales, Marketing & PR Representation Company in India. Over 75% of Fortune 500 organisations in the financial services, consulting, consumer goods, e-commerce, and technology/IT sectors are served by Black Turtle, a top executive search agency. Black Turtle's market intelligence helps the company stay on top of trends and gives clients a significant competitive advantage. Black Turtle is a boutique-sized luxury travel representation company Known for focused sales,



marketing & PR activities. We are committed to bringing our clients tailor made solutions & tangible results, that exceed expectations, everytime.

MP Tourism Board and the IATO MP jointly organised workshop in Bhopal

On July 26, 2023, in Bhopal, the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board and the IATO Madhya Pradesh jointly organised a workshop and panel discussion. About 125 tourism experts from the Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh region were present in addition to senior representatives from the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation, and the Indian Association of Tour Operators. The main goal of holding this workshop in Bhopal was to determine strategies to boost the number of international visitors to Madhya Pradesh, explore new locations and routes, work with airlines and hotels with the support of IATO and its members, and expand IATO membership in the state. He claimed that in addition to other aspects of tourism, such as wild life, Madhya Pradesh should be marketed for culture



tourism. He also claimed that based on input from foreign tour operators, the North East and Madhya Pradesh are in high demand. Sheo Shekhar Shukla, Principal Secretary Tourism and Managing Director of Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board was the Chief Guest who inaugurated the workshop. In his remarks, Rajiv Mehra, the president of the Indian Association of Tour Operators, informed the audience that Mahendra Pratap Singh had been appointed as the Chairman of IATO Madhya Pradesh.



IATO TO HIGHLIGHT

"INBOUND TOURISM AND EMERGING SUSTAINABLE TRENDS" AT 38TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

Rajiv Mehra, President of the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) announced the 38th IATO Annual Convention scheduled in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar Aurangabad, Maharashtra, from September 29 to October 2, 2023, with the theme of "Inbound Tourism and Emerging Sustainable Trends". He further disclosed that Rajnish Kaistha- Senior Vice President, Sanjay Razdan- Secretary, and Jitendra Kejriwal- Chairman, IATO Maharashtra Chapter, will serve as the Convention's Co-Chairmen. The convention coordinator will be Jaswant Singh, an IATO member from Aurangabad. WelcomHotel by ITC Hotels Rama International will host the event on all three days, including convention registration, the opening ceremony, business sessions, and evening programming.

Ravi Gosain- Vice President, IATO stated that 900-1000 delegates are anticipated from all around the



Rajiv Mehra, President of the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO)



Ravi Gosain, Vice President of the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO)

nation, including senior officials from the Ministry of Tourism, the Government of India and States, Business Titans, experts in tourism and hospitality, and representatives from the travel trade media. Five post-convention trips are being planned for diverse industries. Last year, the convention noted participation from 18 states. This year the convention is expecting larger participation from the State Government as every state

is keen to re-instate inbound tourism to their respective states. He further added that there will be discussions on pressing issues during the three-day convention's business sessions, and the experts from various sectors will be present. Members have been urged to reserve these dates for the IATO Convention and book their flights at the best price. Details regarding registration will soon be provided.



TRIPJACK TRIPPING TOWARDS TOMORROW

OPENING DOORS TO A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES WITH THE OPENING OF ANOTHER OFFICE IN NEW DELHI, IN A CONVERSATION WITH HASAN PATEL-DIRECTOR, TRIPJACK

By Aanchal Sachdeva & Nandini Mahajan

What's your vision for the opening of TripJack's new office in Delhi?

Delhi has proven to be a good market for us. The opening marks TripJack's third office in New Delhi with less awareness among people. The growth has been tremendous. The idea is to invest in the future, build better technology, and build better products for our travel partners. So we can resonate with the investment in New Delhi by building a much larger setup in the approaching time. We are also a firm believer in providing the right kind of infrastructure and a healthy and cordial environment to our team so we can build a family together in the long run.

With the rise of hybrid and virtual events, how has TripJack adapted its portal to cater to the changing needs of MICE clients?

MICE as a segment was a little suppressed during Covid. But since the start of December 22, we have seen a good shift in the MICE movement. We have a separate set-up for that as well, where we help travel agencies arrange for their MICE stores. What we are attempting to do is a bit of amalgamation of technology and in-person arrangements to intertwine and build the MICE experiences which are momentous.

What role does technology play in enhancing the MICE travel experience, and how does TripJack integrate technology/ Artificial Intelligence into its services?

When we initially started, we invested a lot in building travel agents. What we have always believed is that if technology can be used to enhance user experience, it should not be used only to enhance B2C experiences. And we have observed that B2B as a segment was largely scarce in technology investments. Our next phase of technology investments will be in helping the travel agencies work better with their clients, working around bringing in some more technologies like CRM or building buying journey intertwined with the agency and the traveller as more and more people are becoming digitally active. I think travel agencies as a segment of people should understand the value they bring into the buying journey. It's not online versus offline. The two when brought together can prove to be a great combination. We have plans of adding more products in the coming times alongside our existing products such as strong flight products, fast-growing hotel products, e-visas, insurance as a segment, and a recent collaboration with Costa Cruise. There's more scope in the hotel, insurance, and visa space and we are focusing on it.

AI is at a national stage right now, primarily in the backend operations involved in the optimisation of the search, ranking algorithms, and caching where usage of ML is prominent. Consumer-facing products are in the pipeline.

How do you maintain strong relationships with clients and cultivate repeat business?

We keep the engagement intact with clients. We have various touchpoints across the platform also where we try and educate clients on what they can sell better. For the last two months, we have been doing road shows across the country where we are taking the initiative to reach them by reaching their hometown and fostering strong relationships. So we have done more than ten road shows now and we have ongoing roadshows this week as we speak, we have six roadshows scheduled parallel in multiple cities.

How does TripJack stand out from the competitors in the industry?

What sets us apart is our approach which is client-focused and product focused. Even though we have had a lot of love and support from the industry and all of the travel fraternity. I think the day we start believing we are the best, it will lead to bigger challenges. I think in today's world, one needs to continue investing and innovating to stay ahead of the curve. I can say with immense pride that our people are our best resources. And if you take good care of them, I think they feel more like a family directing to the success of the company eventually.

In today's world, one needs to continue investing and innovating to stay ahead of the curve



POWER, PURPOSE AND PLAY: MICE MAGIC MAKING ITS WAY



MICE GENERATES 3.1% HIGHER REVENUE AS COMPARED TO THE LEISURE MARKET, SAYS AMARESH TIWARI- VICE CHAIRMAN, ICPB & MANAGING DIRECTOR, A T & SEASONS VACATIONS TRAVEL PVT. LTD

Amaresh Tiwari- Vice Chairman, India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB), redefines leadership at a global stage. He stands as the embodiment of strategic innovation. His astute direction has propelled ICPB to the forefront of the industry, fostering partnerships that span continents and cultivating an environment of boundless opportunities. From insights on sustainable event practices to the strategic intricacies of orchestrating monumental conferences, it's his wisdom that fuels ICPB's mission and the country's indomitable spirit to grow on the MICE front

By *Aanchal Sachdeva*

ICPB stays ahead to position India as a leading destination for international conventions

MICE Industry is a highly organised sector, especially in the tourism scenario. In 1988, the government of India had the vision to have MICE in an organised sector and they started the India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB) under the PPP module where the government also joined the board.

So, traditionally the Joint Secretary of Tourism is the chairman of ICPB and the industry is led by Vice Chairman. Under this association are the hotels, airlines, central government, the state government, Professional Conference Organiser (PCO), Professional Exhibition Organiser, venues, and all the support systems, the entire ecosystem is an integral part. ICPB is promoting India as a MICE destination. So it's not an association, it's a marketing arm where we promote India as a marketing destination, and generate the business lead which goes to the members who participate in international events as a bureau helping and facilitating international

planners to bring their events to India.

Simultaneously, we also work with state government bodies that set up the convention centre to market and promote the events. As per the sources, MICE generates 3.1% higher revenue as compared to the leisure market.

ICPB works with local authorities and governments to streamline regulations and facilitate necessary permissions

MICE is an extremely complex process. The events are planned 2-3 years ahead of their execution with proper research & timelines following the bidding for the same. PCO or the conference planners work with the association closely helping them facilitate required resources. ICPB organises site inspections, and familiarisation trips and aids with the approvals from the Ministry of Nodal Agency, Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs. ICPB assists them with the licensing process making sure events are successfully executed. We participate in the IMEX Frankfurt, IMEX Las Vegas, IBTM Barcelona, Melbourne and other major events. We also organise international roadshows giving a platform to corporate buyers and our PCO, and PEO planners to explore business opportunities.

ICPB strategises to leverage unique attributes across different regions to attract different types of events and conventions

We can say, Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, and Hyderabad are mature markets. Also, states like Kolkata and West Bengal are reaching there, as they have Biswa Bangla Convention Centre which is a world-class fabulous centre. When approached by them, ICPB supported them by organising the Conventions India Conclave in Kolkata, having the government, the Principal Secretary, the Chief Secretary, and the Chief Minister on board. After showcasing the facility and what it had to offer, it saw a remarkable shift in the potential buyers and sellers interested in participating with a 20% growth rate and making it one of the major convention centres.

Kerala has Grand Hyatt Kochi Bolgatty Convention Centre promoted by ICPB.

ICPB is on the toes to promoting other states such as Bangalore, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha as they have shown keen interest in being promoted on the MICE front. Northeast is in the pipeline as it has a lot of potential with the cultural offerings as its added advantage. Alongside, we also organise small-scale events or roadshows with limited top buyers, hosting a fam tour showcasing the MICE facilities for the travel entities to explore opportunities in the MICE segment. Jammu & Kashmir has untapped potential. It has Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre which successfully conducted events but there's little to no activity in the last seven years, their focus is more towards the leisure arena. I see potential in a couple of other states namely Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and a few others which need to come out of the shell.



Legacy is the positive impact we are leaving on the local community and how it benefits them

Odisha needs to be a bit more regressive on the MICE front. Other states like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh are doing well with small talks but they need to come out of the nutshell and tap into the potential of MICE. Besides the leisure market, there's a need for a systematic approach to MICE as it is a highly specialised sector with a large clientele.

ICPB leverages challenge as opportunities

MICE is a niche division. We are today almost contributing 10% of the total GDP as a country and 12% of total employment. This is the only industry with gender equality.

Fortunately, in 2014 with the election of the Prime Minister, the navigation of business through the tourism sector was understood better as he was coming from a business-focused state. The greatest example is G20 where India included about 56 cities and organised 255 events as part of MICE. Hence, the economic stability coming with the MICE sector could be easily fathomed.

ICPB promotes sustainable practices and eco-friendly initiatives

The United Nations came up with 17 SDGs and about five are directly related to the tourism industry as it's a business of large gatherings. Waste management, food management, fabrication fixation, budget, and water usage of plastic are used, plastic that needs to be contained become crucial when organised massively huge events with gathering in thousands and more.

We came up with a plethora of innovative ideas to minimise the impact on the local

environment. The reduction of activities which harm nature is one important point. The organisers and attendees have been more conscious of food and waste management. There has been a significant shift from single-use plastic, and green energy is taking a front seat. The MICE industry has come up with the idea of green conferences.

ICPB parameters of success and impact on the country's economy

It has different parameters for every entity. Somebody measures success in terms of profit, some focus on the successful conduction of the event, and some on the number of participants. Everyone has a different phenomenon to measure, but ideally, success is measured in the three parameters.

One, Return on Objective, which is very important as to the reason and objective of the event. The second is the Return on Investment for the stakeholders. And the third is the Legacy. Legacy is the positive impact we are leaving on the local community and how it benefits them.

The main goal is to see India in the top ten destinations for MICE. Delhi is amongst the top hundred cities in the MICE segment whereas, at least ten cities from India make it to the list of the top hundred.

The recently inaugurated Convention Centre in Delhi "Bharat Mandalam" is amongst the top ten convention centres in the world with a capacity of 7000 people. The convention centre certainly stands as a symbol of power for the country. I believe the entire MICE industry should work together to make India's dream to become an upper world come true.

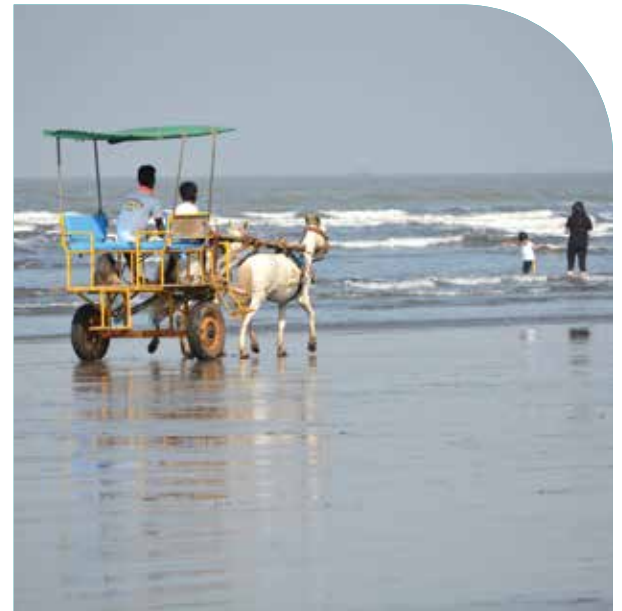
MAHARASHTRA

**FROM THE CONCHES OF CHHATRAPATI TO
THE CHANTS OF GANPATI**



Located in the western region of India, the Sahaydri and Satdupa mountain ranges naturally fortify Maharashtra. Depending on elevation, the climate ranges from subtropical to tropical and is mostly monsoonal however there may be regional differences. From the city that never sleeps Mumbai, to providing a deep spiritual experience in Shirdi and Nashik the state has a lot to offer. Connecting you to nature in the Tadoba Tiger Reserve to give you a fully urbanized experience, there is so much more you wouldn't want to miss whilst planning your itinerary. UNESCO World Heritage sites, to most unique flora and fauna, the third largest populous state is a hard one to miss for all the travel buffs

By *Ananya Trivedi*



Mini Goa Getaway: Alibaug

Known for its beaches, Alibaug makes the perfect weekend getaway from Mumbai. A must-visit for all the thrill seekers with a plethora of adventure sports to choose from like parasailing, jet ski and banana boat are a few favourites. To escape the hustle of the city, Alibaug makes itself a perfect destination to relax. With clean beaches, unpolluted air, and many forts, Alibaug ensures that despite being a tiny town, there's a lot to do. The Kulaba Fort formerly served as the backbone of the Maratha Empire, and most of the structure still stands today.



City of Dreams: Mumbai

One cannot talk about Maharashtra and miss out on Mumbai. India's financial capital and the city that never sleeps don't let one down at any given point. From the stars in the sky to the stars on the red carpet, Mumbai provides you with all kinds of experiences. The city has managed to preserve in colonial history. South Mumbai, which is the slower-paced part of Mumbai, slows you down with architectural wonders like the Gateway of India, from which you can go by boat within fifteen minutes to the Elephanta Caves, where Lord Shiva's cave temples are impossible to miss.

Hills to Heritage: Panchgani

Surrounded by five eminent hills, Panchgani also makes it a desirable place to add to your travel list. Kaas Plateau- a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Encompassing grasslands, and a valley of flowers during August, this place makes it a perfect postcard picture and a treat for sore eyes. The Mapro Garden in Panchgani adds a cherry on top with delicious fruit-based treats to cherish. Along with hosting Lord Karthikeya Temple, the Rajpuri Caves are most known for hypnotizing pilgrims. If you believe in religion, the numerous kunds around the Rajpuri Caves can help you recover from evil ideas.

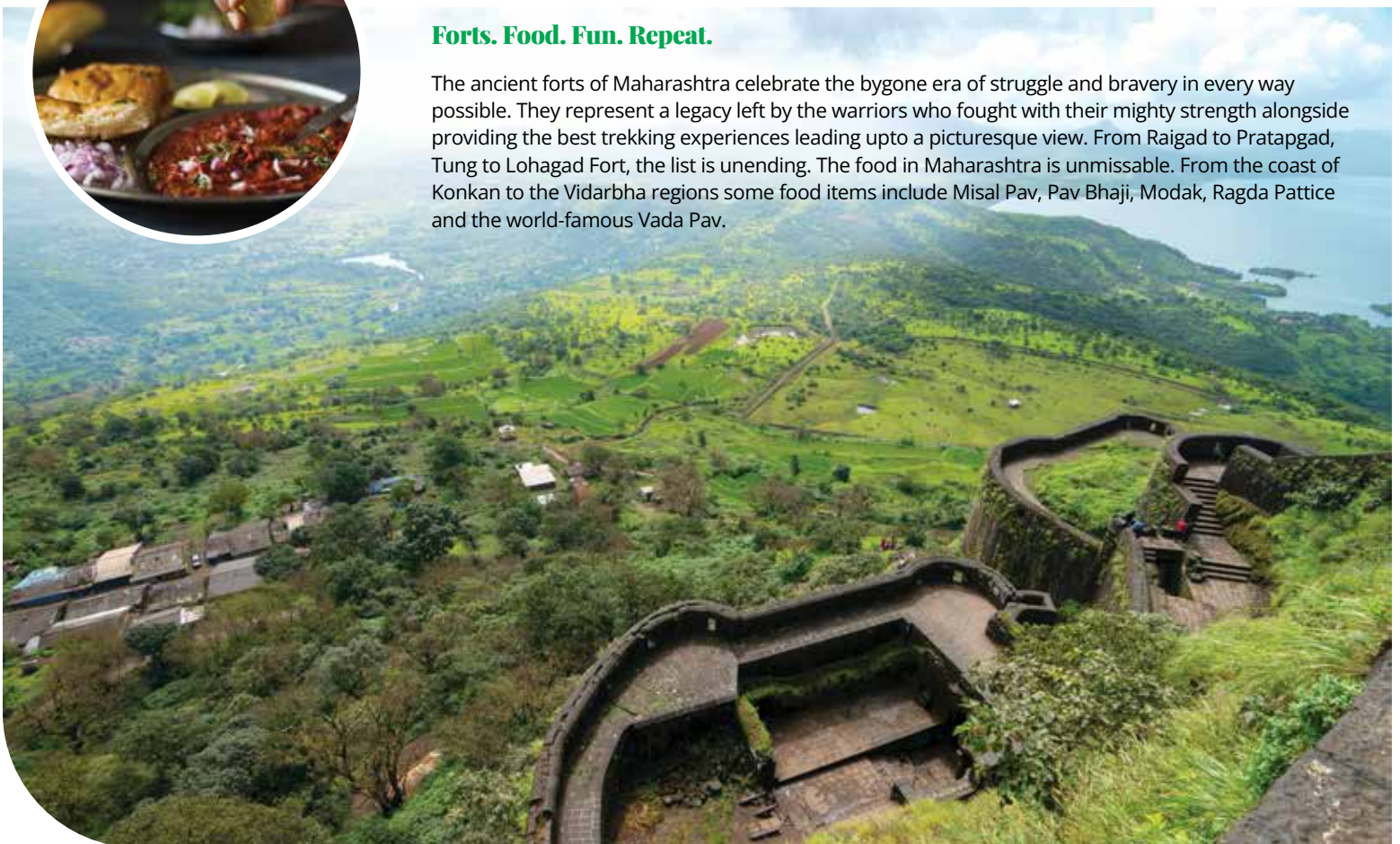
From Fine Dine to Fine Wine: Nashik

This city in Maharashtra has Lord Ram in its roots. Famously known as the 'Wine Capital of India', Nashik will make you want to come back. The lush vineyards provide the best wine-tasting experiences. From wine to fine dining, Nashik also has the best lip-smacking food with cuisines from all over the globe. Apart from the food, the Sahaydri ranges make up the best scenic spots. Nashik is a great example of the 'Best of Both Worlds' as it has the roots of the country intact and the growing wine yards are a step towards modernisation.



Forts. Food. Fun. Repeat.

The ancient forts of Maharashtra celebrate the bygone era of struggle and bravery in every way possible. They represent a legacy left by the warriors who fought with their mighty strength alongside providing the best trekking experiences leading upto a picturesque view. From Raigad to Pratapgad, Tung to Lohagad Fort, the list is unending. The food in Maharashtra is unmissable. From the coast of Konkan to the Vidarbha regions some food items include Misal Pav, Pav Bhaji, Modak, Ragda Pattice and the world-famous Vada Pav.



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Fortune Hotels announces new hotel in Amritsar

Fortune Hotels, a part of the ITC hotel group, is excited to announce the debut of Fortune Ranjit Vihar Amritsar, its newest building. This is the second hotel in the upmarket hotel brand to open in Amritsar, and it is well-placed in the busy city. Fortune Ranjit Vihar Amritsar offers seamless connection to famous monuments and significant business locations, blending modernity and contemporary decor with friendly, enthusiastic hospitality and exceptional services to ensure a delightful stay for both business and leisure visitors. Commenting on Fortune Hotels' growing footprint across India, Samir MC, Managing Director, Fortune Hotels said, "Launching every new hotel is a thrilling experience for us but this one is even more special as it is our second property in Amritsar. We inaugurated Fortune Inn Heritage Walk Amritsar, our first hotel in the city just a month ago. With the opening of Fortune Ranjit Vihar, we now have a 200+ room inventory in Punjab itself. The city's heritage, bustling markets, and iconic landmarks offer fruitful ground for our expansion plans.

Signum Hotels debuts in Dubai

Signum Hotels, an Indian hotel management firm that is expanding quickly, announces the launch of "360 Stays by Signum" in the exciting city of Dubai. This is a big step for the business as it enters the Middle East market and brings its management skills for luxury flats to the prestigious La Mer Dubai. Speaking on the

development, Mehul Sharma, Founder & CEO - Signum Hotels & Resorts said, "We are elated and excited to enter the Middle Eastern market. This will further strengthen Signum's vision of expanding in key global markets. Beyond Dubai, we are already exploring various destinations in Saudi Arabia, Doha, Qatar, Oman, and beyond."



NH collection debuts in Maldives with 120 Luxury villas

Minor Hotels, an owner, operator, and investor with a network of more than 530 hotels and resorts across 56 countries, introduces the NH Collection brand to the Maldives. The resort will be the NH Collection brand's first property outside of an urban setting when it joins the portfolio in August of this year. Delicious dining options include an all-day restaurant with world cuisine, a beachside grill, pizzas by the pool, and a cocktail lounge serving small plates. NH Collection Maldives Havodda Resort is an ideal island for visitors looking

for authentic tropical leisure and a once-in-a-lifetime experience in the most sought-after resort in the world with its position in Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll. Dillip Rajakarier, Group CEO of Minor International and CEO of Minor Hotels, commented, "We are pleased to grow our NH Collection brand and bring it to the Maldives for the first time. The continued expansion of Minor Hotels and particularly NH Collection into strategic tourism hotspots across Asia and the Middle East is positioning the brand as a key global player."



Banyan Tree Group launches 70th property in Japan

With the announced Angsana Ho Tram and Dhawa Ho Tram in Vietnam, as well as Folio Sakura Shinsaibashi Osaka and Homm Stay Yumiha Okinawa in Japan, all launched in mid-2023 - Banyan Tree Group, a renowned multi-branded hospitality leader, proudly celebrates its 70th property milestone. With these latest additions, Banyan Tree Group underlines its dedication

to providing guests with great experiences wherever they travel "This is an exhilarating chapter for Banyan Tree Group as we proudly unveil our 70th property in Japan this summer, alongside an array of promising conversion and new development deals that will enrich our ever-expanding portfolio," expressed Eddy See, President and Chief Executive Officer of Banyan Tree Group.



KAIA by Chrome Hospitality welcomes new property in Goa

KAIA, co-owned by Chrome Hospitality and actress Bhumi Pednekar, is set among the pure white sands of Ashwem Beach, offering a unique approach to hospitality and transporting guests back to Goa's roots before commercialization. It is recently opened boutique stay with quiet beachside haven that celebrates slow lifestyle and the authentic spirit of Goa. KAIA feels like a home away from home with a ten-room boutique hotel, a four-bedroom villa, an all-day eating bar and a one-of-a-kind spa overlooking the ocean. Guests can bond with nature, delight

in authentic activities, and find harmony amidst lush foliage. KAIA is a wonderful blend of luxury, culture, and authenticity. "We are thrilled to enter the realm of Hotels, creating extraordinary experiences for guests to explore. Entering the hotel space is like stepping into a world where hospitality becomes an art, and every guest is a canvas waiting to be painted with exceptional experiences. Along with this, we are excited to partner with Bhumi Pednekar, who shares our philosophy on slow living" - Chrome Asia Hospitality Founders.



Danang Marriott Resort sets the stage for memorable events

The Danang Marriott Resort & Spa is the ideal location for special events as it is tucked away on a gorgeous stretch of sand beach, just steps from the water while still being in the heart of the bustling city. The verdant scenery that surrounds Danang can serve as the backdrop for creative group activities. "With its blend of beachfront style and urban infrastructure, Danang has everything meeting planners could ask for. Danang Marriott Resort & Spa works hand-in-hand with our clients to ensure that their important occasion runs smoothly, inspires their

delegates and ensures maximum productivity. And being just 20 minutes from Danang International Airport, every guest can come and go with ease," said Piotr Madej, General Manager, Danang Marriott Resort Spa.



Superstar Rajinikanth calls Kuda Villingili Resort, Maldives a Paradise

The renowned Thalaiva Sir Rajinikanth had a well-earned 12-day holiday at the opulent Kuda Villingili Resort in the lovely Maldives. Thalaiva Sir Rajinikanth, renowned for his magnetic screen presence and unmatched acting talent, took peace in the tranquil surroundings and azure seas of Kuda Villingili Resort. The resort, known for its dedication to perfection, provided him with a personal haven where lived in absolute luxury. With employees trained to provide discreet hospitality, Kuda Villingili Resort ensured the highest secrecy and security for its high-profile guests, ensuring a tranquil and private experience. International jetsetters and celebrities from all over the world continue to be drawn to the archipelago by its natural beauty and



the friendly hospitality. Commenting on his stay, Thalaiva Sir Rajinikanth said, "It was a superb experience to stay at the Kuda Villingili Resort - it is paradise. Now it has become my home." He savored the resort's relaxing, private, and peaceful ambiance, relishing a variety of delectable cuisines, including the Lucknowi Biryani, Malabari Chicken Curry, Fresh Fish Chettinad, and healthier options meticulously prepared by the resort's skilled chefs.

Jumeirah Bali promotes wellbeing and cultural involvement

A number of on- and off-property experiences have been launched by Jumeirah Bali, a magnificent water palace hugging a cliff in Uluwatu, with the goal of fostering a deep and immediate connection among visitors and the island. Visitors will discover a lovingly curated mix of daily-changing

activities that promote wellbeing and cultural involvement, including crafting traditional Gebogan and Canang Sari ceremonial offerings and learning basic phrases in Bahasa Indonesia. Jumeirah Bali is also providing a variety of holistic activities for the body, mind, and spirit in keeping with its wellness approach. The guests can select from morning and evening yoga, a workshop using natural wax and aromatherapy for a calming, meditative experience and a lot more.





Experience Wild Swimming at Anantara The Marker Dublin Hotel

The newly established Anantara The Marker Dublin Hotel invites visitors to embrace swimming as a form of discovery and rehabilitation in honour of the stunning Irish surroundings. The hotel's Wild Swimming Guru is leading a brand-new 'Wild Swimming' experience that encourages saltwater lovers of all skill levels to take refreshing chilly dives in the Sea while discovering undiscovered beaches and scenic locales. Anantara The Marker has created a customisable package for vacationers and business

travellers who are keen to delve into this exhilarating world and to highlight the many advantages of this reviving and energising pastime. Bodina Quereshi, Spa and Wellness Director at Anantara The Marker Dublin Hotel says, "The new Wild Swimming package helps guests embrace a healthy lifestyle while travelling and I look forward to enhancing our current offering combining technology, science and holistic experiences to drive the vision and meet fast-evolving consumer expectations."

Ultima Collection introduces New Wellness Retreats

Ultima Collection responds to the surging demand for wellness travel by launching curated wellness retreats at each of its properties. From "Soul Revival" in Ultima Corfu for improved sleep to "Detox Experience" in Ultima Crans-Montana, offering body and digital detox, and "Be Your Fittest Self" in Megève, a fitness retreat with alpine sports and Green Exercise benefits. Ultima Gstaad presents "Recharge to The Full" with a DNA test to personalize the experience. Managing

Partner Michala Chatel highlights the retreats' value in revitalizing and enhancing clients' wellbeing. Their award-winning spas prioritize wellness and offer expert treatments, ensuring exceptional experiences in privacy. Ultima Collection's commitment to wellbeing makes them a sought-after choice for wellness seekers.



India to have Best Western Priemer Brand soon

In 2025, BWHSM Hotels will introduce its upscale Best Western Premier® brand in India. In order to welcome the Best Western Premier Airport Road Amritsar as the country's first Best Western Premier, the firm has struck an agreement with Kiwi Hospitality. The Best Western Premier in Amritsar, which is scheduled to open in Q3 2025, is ideally situated close to Sri Guru Ram Das Ji International Airport, a great site inside the cultural city. In this freshly constructed district, there are elegant hotels, apartment buildings, hip pubs

and restaurants, retail stores and a shopping mall. Atul Jain, Chief Operating Officer, BWH Hotels – India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka says, "We are delighted with this new addition to our growing portfolio in India. The Best Western Premier Airport Road Amritsar is the ideal hotel to launch our upscale Best Western Premier brand in the country and will serve as our flagship hotel in Amritsar. Together with Kiwi Hospitality, we are excited to significantly boost BWH Hotel's profile in Amritsar, a destination that holds great tourism potential."



Lemon Tree expands footprints in Lucknow

Lemon Tree Hotels announced the signing of Lemon Tree Hotel in Gomti Nagar, Lucknow. Managed by Carnation Hotels Private Limited, a subsidiary of Lemon Tree Hotels, the property is set to have 72 well-appointed rooms, banquet and meeting rooms, restaurant, bar, fitness center, and other public areas. Lucknow, known for its cultural heritage and graceful charm,

attracts a diverse range of travellers, including history enthusiasts, art lovers, food connoisseurs, and business travellers due to its commercial significance. Conveniently located 11 km from the Railway Station and 24 km from Chaudhary Charan Singh Airport, the property offers easy accessibility via public and private transport from major cities in India.



UNVEIL THE WORLD OF WYNDHAM

MARVELLING AT MICE AND INCORPORATING ECO-FRIENDLY PRACTICES, WYNDHAM HOTELS & RESORTS ADOPTS INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO FOSTER GREATER ATTENDANCE

As the world evolved, so did Wyndham's commitment to staying at the forefront of the industry. Embracing the changing needs of the corporate world, Wyndham Hotels carved its path towards mastering MICE – Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions. In a world where collaboration and networking are paramount, Wyndham Hotels recognised the importance of providing impeccable venues that inspire productivity and foster meaningful connections. As the sun rises and sets on the horizon of the hospitality industry, **Nikhil Sharma's**, **Market Managing Director, Eurasia, Wyndham Hotels & Resort**, unwavering passion for marketing brilliance paints the sky with hues of success. Whether it's fostering connections, driving business growth, or inspiring creativity, Wyndham Hotels continues to pioneer the future of MICE, redefining the very essence of how people come together to shape a better world

By *Aanchal Sachdeva*



In line with our commitment to empowering businesses with cutting-edge solutions, we'll soon launch the Meetings Collection as part of the Wyndham Business Program

MICE's potential as a crucial profit segment

The global shift towards remote and hybrid work models has significantly impacted the MICE industry. In light of this evolving trend, we developed a novel hybrid meeting concept that addresses the emerging demand for a more flexible and dynamic meeting solution. This innovative approach fosters greater attendance and engagement by seamlessly integrating live-streaming and in-person participation. In line with our commitment to empowering businesses with cutting-edge solutions, we'll soon launch the Meetings Collection as part of the Wyndham Business program. This exceptional offering will be made available across the EMEA region, enabling meeting planners to access a range of lucrative incentives in desired markets.

Sustainability and environmental awareness take centre stage

Event organisers should minimise single-use items by opting for reusable or compostable alternatives, such as biodegradable plates and cutlery. By offering sustainable transport options (like public transit, EVs or carpooling incentives), they can reduce the event's carbon footprint. Choosing sustainable venues that have eco-

friendly features, such as energy-efficient lighting and water-saving facilities, is another important step. Moreover, event organisers should establish clear sustainability goals and measure their progress. Setting targets for waste diversion, energy consumption, and carbon footprint reduction can demonstrate their commitment to environmental responsibility.

Virtual and Hybrid events, a preferred choice for large-scale events

Virtual and Hybrid events have experienced remarkable global popularity due to their flexible format and cost-effectiveness. The pandemic accelerated their adoption and showcased their potential to engage participants effectively. Despite the rise of such events, MICE has been staging a strong comeback with the gradual return of physical events starting in 2022. As the pandemic recedes and restrictions ease, the MICE industry is poised to return to its pre-COVID levels of operation by 2023. The resurgence of physical events signifies the value that in-person interactions bring to business relationships, networking opportunities, and immersive experiences, complementing the continuing popularity of virtual and hybrid formats.

MICE Tourism as a tremendous opportunity for growth and innovation

As the world embraces remote and hybrid work models, the MICE industry has undergone a profound transformation, presenting a tremendous opportunity for growth and innovation. Recognising this paradigm shift, we introduced an innovative hybrid meeting concept to meet the growing demand for more flexible and dynamic meeting solutions. This approach aims to enhance attendance and engagement by seamlessly integrating live-streaming and in-person participation. To further support businesses with cutting-edge solutions, we are slated to launch Meetings Collection, a part of the Wyndham Business program. This exclusive offering will be available across the EMEA region, offering meeting planners access to a variety of attractive incentives in their desired markets. Additionally, we will streamline multi-year bookings to ensure a

smooth and efficient planning process.

MICE tourism industry poised for significant growth and transformation

Advancements in technology will play a crucial role in facilitating seamless virtual and hybrid events, making them more accessible and engaging for participants worldwide. Personalised experiences (incorporating AI-driven recommendations) will enhance attendee satisfaction and boost event success. Sustainability will also take centre stage, with a focus on eco-friendly practices and responsible event management, aligning with global efforts to combat climate change. Additionally, governments and industry stakeholders collaborating to streamline visa procedures and improve infrastructure will further encourage international participation, fostering a diverse and thriving MICE tourism landscape for the better.

DISCOVER THE EPICENTER OF UNCONVENTIONAL EXPERIENCES AT NOVOTEL HYDERABAD CONVENTION CENTRE & HICC

In the realm of travel and exploration, there exists a beacon of innovation that goes far beyond the ordinary – HICC, the Hub for International Conferences and Conventions. The exceptional convention centre not only redefines the concept of event spaces but also serves as a gateway to immersive, unforgettable journeys for both delegates and travellers alike. *Rubin Cherian, General Manager – Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre & Hyderabad International Convention Centre*, from orchestrating seamless events that leave lasting impressions on guests to navigating the ever-changing landscape of the hospitality sector shares invaluable insights that have made HICC a beacon of inspiration worldwide

By *Aanchal Sachdeva*



With a strong emphasis on sustainability, HICC sets itself apart as a socially and environmentally responsible choice for hosting memorable and impactful events



Hyderabad International Convention Centre: Setting New Standards for Sustainable and Memorable MICE Events

Hyderabad International Convention Centre (HICC) stands as a beacon of excellence in the MICE industry, drawing international clients to its world-class facilities and exceptional services. Here's an insight into HICC's strategies, success metrics, and its commitment to sustainability that sets it apart from competitors.

Identifying and Attracting International Clients

HICC employs a comprehensive approach to identify and target potential international clients. Meticulous market research guides its focus, ensuring that offerings align with the preferences and needs of the global MICE community. The dedicated sales and marketing team actively engages with renowned event organisers and industry associations worldwide, fostering valuable connections. The convention centre also attends key MICE exhibitions and trade shows, seizing every opportunity to showcase its allure as a vibrant MICE destination. Leveraging digital marketing through targeted campaigns on social media and email platforms, HICC accentuates its world-class facilities and services, inviting international clients to explore the unmatched opportunities Hyderabad has to offer.

Measuring Success and Economic Impact

The success of MICE events at HICC is measured through attendee satisfaction and feedback, providing valuable insights for continuous improvement. The growth of clientele and repeat bookings serve as key performance indicators, indicating the convention centre's reputation and trust within the industry. Beyond its own success, HICC assesses the economic impact of events on the city by analysing total spending by attendees in the local economy, highlighting its contribution to Hyderabad's growth and community welfare.

Embracing Virtual and Hybrid Events

Acknowledging the growing popularity of virtual and hybrid events, HICC has wholeheartedly embraced this trend. The convention centre has invested in cutting-edge technology and state-of-the-art infrastructure to curate interactive features, networking opportunities, and virtual exhibition spaces. This ensures that attendees experience the same level of engagement and productivity as they would in a physical event setting. HICC foresees continued demand for virtual and hybrid events due to their convenience, cost-effectiveness, and global accessibility, and remains committed to providing innovative solutions that cater to evolving needs.

Unique Selling Points

HICC distinguishes itself from competitors through its meticulous design and world-class facilities that accommodate events of all scales and requirements. The convention centre's commitment to outstanding customer service and personalised event solutions further elevates its standing in the industry. Understanding the unique requirements of each event and tailoring services accordingly ensures successful and memorable experiences for clients.

Sustainability Initiatives and Communication

As responsible custodians of the environment, sustainability is ingrained in HICC's operations. The convention centre has implemented various eco-friendly practices, including the use of O by Aria Life Water, the first hotel in India to use the water generated from air-remineralsed atmospheric water in glass bottles. Additionally, HICC has installed India's first and only dual solar power and water heater system, significantly reducing electricity consumption. Waste management is also prioritised through a strategic tie-up with Orbisk technology to reduce food wastage and optimise consumption.

HICC effectively communicates its commitment to sustainability through its official website and promotional materials, highlighting eco-friendly initiatives. During event orientations, attendees are encouraged to play a role in hosting sustainable MICE events, shaping a greener future for the industry.

RADISSON BLU PALACE RESORT, UDAIPUR'S ULTIMATE MICE MAGNET

SOMESH AGARWAL, MANAGING DIRECTOR
ASSERTS THE PROMISING LANDSCAPE OF THE MICE
TOURISM INDUSTRY AND HOW IT'S A PROFITABLE BET

Through a perfect blend of world-class facilities, warm hospitality, and unforgettable experiences, Radisson Blu Palace Resort Udaipur successfully carves a niche for itself as a premier MICE destination, attracting both national and international clients seeking excellence in their events. The resort's stunning location, nestled amidst the Aravalli Hills and overlooking the serene Fateh Sagar Lake, provides an awe-inspiring backdrop that leaves a lasting impression on attendees

By Aanchal Sachdeva



MICE as a multi-faceted segment

With the Covid restrictions easing out, the MICE industry has made a strong comeback this year. The current trends in the segment revolve around sustainability, increased tech integration, and personalisation and customisation of services. Engaging activities and experiential elements have become integral for the MICE events; hence, planners now focus on entertainment and wellness aspects as well. Quoting an example to explain it better- at Radisson Blu Palace Resort & Spa, Udaipur, we have this theme of hosting a conceptual Rajasthani dinner in a darbar at the property. This is a traditional meal complete with activities like folk dances, cultural performances, pottery making, and more. Small elements and innovations like these go a long way in making the MICE events highly personalised, experiential and engaging.

Sustainability forms the core foundation of our operations

Aligned with this approach, we have established a water plant at the property, wherein cleaning, filtering and packaging of drinking water happens within the in-house plant. We also take pride in the fact that we do not use single-use plastic in any product or amenity we offer at the palace. Even if we have to, recyclable plastic is used. We also strive to avoid food wastage; hence, we have developed a composting plant at the property itself. Additionally, a sewage treatment plant is also present within the premises to clean the waste in-house and reduce environmental burden.

What's noteworthy is that the hotel is already functioning on solar energy with the help of a plant built near Bikaner. This is not only cost-efficient but also effective in energy consumption optimisation. We emphasise natural daylight; hence, our meeting rooms and public areas are well-illuminated naturally. Even the personalised notes by the GM welcoming our guests are handcrafted on paper made from eco-friendly materials.

Virtual and hybrid events on matching pace and popularity levels as physical events

I am of the opinion virtual and hybrid events can never match the same pace and popularity levels as physical events. People now understand the importance of participating physically, having a first-hand experience and engaging deeper and better in-person over virtual and hybrid events attended via devices. But, it's true that hybrid and virtual formats provide opportunities for people to be a part of the event, even if they are thousands of miles apart. For example, they are beneficial, especially for executive and senior-level professionals, who are often tied up with their travel plans and can now make their welcome speeches by joining virtually.

MICE as a profitable bet

Ever since the property's establishment, our constant endeavour has been to invest in modernising and upgrading our infrastructure and upscaling our event venues and customer experiences. We offer all it takes to plan, organise and manage MICE events seamlessly. We have an in-house dedicated events team

comprising highly talented and experienced professionals. We have all the arrangements for upgrading a physical event into a hybrid one and facilitating live streaming, virtual interactions, and more. Understanding that innovation is the key to better customer servicing, we offer facilities beyond the usual formal event, including value-added services like fitness centres, rejuvenating spas, team building activities as a part of our specially curated MICE events packages. We have an array of spacious venue spaces at the property, both indoor and outdoor, including two ballrooms, meeting rooms and outdoor spaces.

Promising landscape of the MICE tourism industry

With new-age technologies like AI, VR, AR, and metaverse gaining popularity, events will enhance all the more with the use of technology and will revolve around engagement and experiences. With technological advancements happening rapidly and the advent of 5G technology, event venues will offer even faster and more reliable internet connectivity and facilitate real-time interactions. The event planners will look at innovative ways to incorporate unique and immersive experiences in the MICE events. The sustainability trend will continue to sustain and become all the more prominent in the MICE industry in the times to come. The MICE industry will witness increased collaboration with local communities and businesses in the future fostering a sense of authenticity, support local economies, and allow attendees to experience the destinations, cultural diversity and traditions.

ADVERTORIAL

CALM IT OUT WITH CORA CORA

Immersed in untouched beauty, Cora Cora Maldives offers a captivating experience that will leave worldly travellers spellbound. The resort not only stands as a remarkable destination for indulgence but also serves as a gateway to unravel the rich tapestry of the Maldives - its vibrant culture, storied history, and breathtaking environment. This opulent getaway goes beyond just lavish accommodations; it is a celebration of the finest cultural and culinary treasures, curated to entice even the most discerning adventurers. With a focus on sustainability, Cora Cora Maldives seamlessly blends luxury with responsible practices, allowing every indulgence to be an opportunity to deepen guests' understanding of this remarkable destination. From exploring the vibrant local culture to discovering the awe-inspiring natural wonders, guests embark on a journey that leaves an indelible mark on their souls

Nestled in the untouched beauty of the Raa Atoll, Cora Cora Maldives is an exquisite five-star resort that provides a captivating paradise for travellers in search of luxury and cultural immersion. More than just luxurious accommodations, this opulent getaway is designed to be a celebration of the finest cultural and culinary treasures, alluring even the most discerning adventurers. Cora Cora Maldives boasts an easily accessible house reef right from the beach, providing an unforgettable snorkeling experience for all. Just a few meters away, this vibrant house reef is teeming with hundreds of colorful marine species, offering a mesmerizing sight for the whole family to marvel at.

In harmony with the island's commitment to preserving its natural beauty, Cora Cora Maldives takes environmentally conscious steps. They refrain from using invasive alien species in their gardens and minimize trimming to allow the native vegetation to thrive and flourish freely. By embracing sustainable practices, the resort ensures the rich vegetation on the island remains protected for generations to come. Indulgence awaits at the MOKSHA® Spa & Wellbeing Centre, where temptation calls from the moment you step in. This therapeutic haven presents a unique experience with its signature herbal compression massage, set in over-the-water treatment rooms. Through the glass floor beneath your feet, you can witness the diverse and colorful sea life darting among the coral, creating a mesmerizing ambiance during your session.



CoRa Kids®

Open to children aged 3 to 12 and divided into three age groups, it provides a safe and engaging space for kids to have fun throughout the day. Whether you prefer to drop in for a session or let them spend the day with their newfound friends, they have it all covered. The club offers a variety of enjoyable activities tailored to suit kids' preferences. From gentle dancing and yoga to nail painting, hair styling, and relaxation sessions, there's something for every child to enjoy. It's the perfect place for kids to chill out and make unforgettable memories during their stay in this enchanting paradise. With the little ones entertained and happy, you can relax and make the most of your time at Cora Cora Maldives. A visit to Cora Cora is incomplete without savoring the most delectable cuisine it has to offer. The resort's culinary delights are an essential and unforgettable part of the experience. Cora Cora Maldives offers a delightful culinary journey, where guests can partake in hour-long cookery lessons in pizza and pasta-making or explore the arts of Indian cuisine. The resort is a dining destination in itself, boasting a variety of exceptional restaurants.



BALANCING LUXURY & LANDSCAPE ONE DAY AT A TIME

**WITH VISHEN MOOTOO, DIRECTOR OF SALES AND
MARKETING CORA CORA MALDIVES**



During the discussion about Raa Atoll's Cora Cora Maldives, Vishen enthusiastically delves into the resort's admirable dedication to sustainability and conservation with Travelscapes. He sheds light on the multifaceted measures taken by the resort to achieve this balance. From utilising renewable energy sources and implementing efficient waste management systems to preserving the delicate marine ecosystem and supporting local communities, Cora Cora has seamlessly integrated eco-friendly practices into their opulent offerings. Prior to joining Cora Cora Maldives, Vishen worked with Sun Siyam Resorts, VARU by Atmosphere, Tour East Holdings by JTB, The Small Maldives Island Co (Amilla Fushi & Finolhu) and Centara Hotels and Resorts, among others. He has a wealth of pre-opening experience, helping ensure swift commercial success for new properties

By Ananya Trivedi

Steps taken by Cora Cora to support sustainable goals

Cora Cora Maldives is the first hotel in the Raa Atoll to be Green Globe certified. Cora Cora Maldives understands its responsibility towards the magnificent environment and is honoured that their efforts have been recognised by the prestigious organisation.

Cora Cora Maldives' comprehensive

hope that not only will they protect the environment for future generations, but also set a standard for other resorts in the destination to follow.

Cora Cora: Redefining Paradise

Our offerings set us apart, our Premium All Inclusive – Gourmet Meal Plan® gives our guests the freedom to explore the culinary offerings within 4 restaurants – dine

We are fully committed to implementing sustainable and ecological practices that benefit both the environment as well as the resort. We hope our efforts can drive real change so that they become tomorrow's standard

Environment Policy targets seven main issues: Energy, Water, Waste, Green Procurement, Destination Protection, Conservation of Marine Life and Reefs, and Biodiversity and Protection of Wildlife. Each of the conservation strategies has been carefully designed to achieve the resort's sustainability targets, reduce the long-term environmental impacts, protect the destination's rich culture, and increase the welfare of employees, guests, and the environment. From limiting single-use plastics to implementing sustainable operations across every department within the resort, Cora Cora Maldives is doing invaluable work today to ensure a greener future for the next generation.

Green Globe is the world's leading certification when it comes to sustainable operation and management within the Travel & Tourism Industry worldwide. Founded 29 years ago, Green Globe recognises and celebrates hotels, resorts, conference centres, and attractions that have implemented effective and efficient sustainable solutions to protect the environment and wildlife. We hope our efforts can drive real change so that they become tomorrow's standard. The five-star resort has implemented several conservation strategies in the

around options available. Each Restaurant provides our Moksha Spa Menu, dedicated for Vegetarian & Vegan. Cora Cora Maldives strive to remain the Leading Premium All Inclusive Resort in the Maldives, we will keep innovating our Food & Beverages to cater our varied international guests.

Enchanting Indian travellers

Our Premium All Inclusive inclusion is an attractive element for our Indian clientele. From couples to families or friends reunion, providing the dine around options is a must as Food & Beverage is very important for Indian, with premium options included. Understanding the requirement as essential and the accommodation options ranging up to two bedroom family villas.

Attraction & Marketing Initiatives: Enticing more tourists

Our strategies to make Cora Cora Maldives attractive to a larger audience is to make sure we maintain Food & Beverage at the highest level, we continue to promote and educate our guests on sustainability and our journey to Zero Carbon emission, spreading the word for Maldivian Culture and Heritage via our Museum Dutch Onion, bringing international artists from different disciplines to promote their art and we live by our motto "Its Freedom Time"



*A world of its own,
the world to explore*

Dive into the sea of religion and culture

Thailand is rich in its culture and dedicated towards the religion of Buddhism which is practiced by almost 90% of the population. Buddhism has greatly influenced society and its beliefs are deeply ingrained within the locals who are majorly calm-minded, kind and compassionate leading Thailand to be called the 'Land of Smiles'. The majority of Thailand's architecture is dedicated towards Buddha's sculptures - Wat Po resides a statue of a reclining Buddha, Wat Maharta is known as a temple of relics and many more.

THAILAND

Relaxing on a deckchair with a drink, watching the blazing sun meeting the tranquil sea with entire laze around, that's a quintessential Thailand evening. The serene sandy beaches, profound vibrant culture, pretty countryside, electrifying parties and divine delicacy make it a heart-throbbing destination for travellers across the globe. From tallest skyscrapers to marine invasions in the ocean, Thailand has it all. If ready to soak yourself with life and energy into an amalgamation of thrilling parties and refined culture, pack your bags and board a flight to the Land of the Free

By Nandini Mahajan



Start your itinerary riding a Tuk-tuk

Rich authentic culture to the wild party outburst, Khao San is an influx to all. Its budget-savvy living makes Khao San the world's largest 'Backpacker Ghettos.' The Vintage shops, neon-lighted tuk-tuk and local street cuisine discloses the wilderness and authentic side of the country. The Grand Palace and Democracy Monument are the symbols of Thailand's spectacular architecture and liberty respectively. Khao San is not designed to be the aesthetically soothing part but an image of a duty-free zone for hippy trail travellers.



The Queen of 3 am

Bangkok is a buzzing city that lights up at night with flashing street markets and culturally rich landmarks. Avoid daytime heat and crowd, rent a bike at evening and pedal your way to explore luminous Chinatown, Bangkok's famous flower market alongside Chao Phraya River. If you are here with your lover, start your romantic night at the Chao Phraya Princess Cruise, floating on a river with an awe-inspiring view of traditional and modern Bangkok. Romantic live music of the '80s and '90s will let you cherish your love.

Walk your way through Sky

Skywalk at King Power Mahanakhon is Thailand's largest skyscraper with 78 floors offering 360 degrees pleasing panoramic view. Watching the sunset from 310 m above the earth will wrack your nerve and soothe your eyes at the same time. Save your experience of a lifetime by standing on the glass-floored tray with your favourite drink from the highest rooftop open-air bar. Complete your expedition by experiencing a walk on a premium and luxurious skyscraper located at the heart of Bangkok.



The Gulf of Thailand

Other than its mountainous wilderness and soothing plain Thailand holds an altogether different world below its land. From party sinker to adventure junkie the three K's of the Gulf of Thailand cover all the sizzling adventurous experiences. Ko Samui, is a vibe for the extravagant fancy experience of beach resorts and wellness retreats. Ko Pha Ngan is the epicenter of the famous full moon party scene and free-flowing booze. If tired of human interactions, dive in the marine environment, Ko-Tao offers scuba diving and snorkeling.



Diversity of Thailand on a plate

Want to excite your taste buds? Well, Thai cuisine is known for its contrasting aromatic flavours with a blend of regional traditions with overseas recipes. Taste the authenticity of the country by having its "National dish" Pad thai, the fusion of seafood and classic flat rice noodles with bright-coloured vegetables which together bestow sweet, sour and tangy flavours. Tom Khao Soi (Thai Coconut Curry Noodle Soup) and Khao Pad (Thai Fried Rice) are the go-to favourite appetizers which you can enjoy at any hygienic local city stalls.



Massage Mania

After a backbreaking day exploring beaches and temples, a Thai massage can be heavenly relaxing. Thai massage aims to revive the mind and body with ancient healing techniques and natural organic products. The blend of aromatherapy oil and optimum pressure on muscles increases blood flow, relaxes all the muscles and soothes one's mind. Either at street-side local parlours or at expensive chic spas, Thai spas can be easily accessible at all places. Reserve your last day to alleviate your body from the city chaos.

QATAR- UNLEASH YOUR MICE ADVENTURE

Qatar, a contemporary metropolis with rich cultural heritage, has emerged as a thriving MICE destination. Boasting cutting-edge facilities, impressive venues, and captivating museums, it offers an ideal setting for business events. Moreover, the presence of top-notch hotels and a diverse array of experiences further elevate its status as a standout choice for business travellers. Qatar's advantageous geographical location, with an average flight distance of 3-5 hours from any global destination, and its provision of visa-on-arrival for citizens of over 95+ countries, including India, make it an easily accessible choice for travellers.

Qatar Tourism has taken a proactive step in promoting destination tourism by introducing the Qatar Specialist Programme. This comprehensive initiative is designed to educate commercial partners about various facets of Qatar's tourism, encompassing its rich history, cultural heritage, captivating attractions, and diverse experiences. Significant and remarkable changes have also been done keeping Qatar's infrastructure, sustainable and multimodal transportation system in mind

These reasons make Qatar a MICE friendly destination:

Safety is Utmost Concern

For the fifth consecutive time, Qatar maintains its position as the world's safest country, as per the Numbeo Crime Index 2023. Numbeo Index, the largest cost of living database globally, compiles crowd-sourced data on various aspects such as quality of life, housing, crime rates, healthcare quality, transportation facilities, and similar statistics. Out of the 142 countries surveyed, Qatar secured the top rank.

Airport of Exceptional Quality

Qatar's Hamad International Airport (DOH) has been recognized as the second-best airport globally, achieving consecutive wins for 'World's Best Airport Shopping' and 'Best Airport in the Middle East' for an impressive ninth time at the prestigious Skytrax World Airport Awards 2023. To cater to MICE travellers from around the globe, Qatar Airways, the country's national airline, plays a vital role by providing convenient and numerous flight connections, making it easy to access Qatar.

Modern Pinnacle of Venues

Qatar stands out as an ideal destination for business endeavours, thanks to purpose-built establishments like Doha Exhibition and Convention Center (DECC) and Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC). These advanced venues boast state-of-the-art facilities and

impressive architectural designs, making them perfect setups for business activities.

Varieties and Qui Vive

Qatar provides a diverse selection of top-notch hotels that cater to all corporate needs and preferences, as well as offering various excursions and attractions. The presence of leading global hotel chains ensures that business travellers have access to upgraded and well-equipped accommodations, featuring the latest professional technology advancements. Moreover, with numerous exhibition centres and expansive ballrooms and conference spaces within the hotels, Qatar offers a perfect environment to meet all business and professional requirements.

Amazing tourist attractions

Qatar boasts impressive indoor venues and remarkable landmarks, including the renowned National Museum of Qatar, the Museum of



Islamic Arts, and the 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum, which appeals to sports enthusiasts. Moreover, visitors can explore the cultural charm of Katara Cultural Village and Souq Waqif. For those seeking excitement, there are adventurous desert safaris and engaging water sports, while others can enjoy the serene beauty of traditional dhow excursions along the picturesque coastline. Additionally, Qatar's rich heritage and captivating natural wonders, along with its diverse wildlife, offer a well-rounded experience for business travellers.

Hassle free booking experience

In Qatar, there are several destination managements companies (DMCs) that offer top-notch services and support to ensure a smooth and personalized experience for business bookings. These DMCs provide comprehensive packages, taking care of all the details to deliver high-quality assistance throughout the entire process.





Dubai witnesses 23% increase in Indian travellers

During the first half of 2023, the Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) made significant efforts to establish Dubai as the premier choice for Indian tourists. Their comprehensive strategy included conducting various B2B travel trade engagements across India, encompassing trade workshops, mega familiarisation trips, exhibitions, and roadshows in metro cities, tier II, and III markets. This targeted outreach yielded remarkable results, with an impressive 23% increase

in overnight visitor numbers compared to 2019, surpassing 1 million visitors in just the first five months of the year. Bader Ali Habib, the Head of South Asia at Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism, emphasized the pivotal role of the Indian market, solidifying it as a top priority for Dubai. Their proactive approach with multi-city initiatives and active participation in key exhibitions further reinforced Dubai's position as the leading outbound destination from India.

Russia introduces e-Visa for Indian Passports

Russia is set to launch an electronic visa system on August 1, 2023, granting Indian nationals the opportunity to apply for visas with ease and efficiency. This move is expected to significantly boost tourism and enhance accessibility for Indian travellers wishing to explore the diverse offerings of the Russian Federation. The new e-Visa system will simplify the visa application process, making it quick and hassle-free for Indian citizens planning various types of visits, including guest visits, business trips, and tourism purposes. Moreover, the e-Visa will also facilitate participation in events hosted within the country. Under the new system, single-entry visas will be issued within a remarkable four-day time-



frame, further streamlining travel preparations for Indian visitors. The e-Visa will be valid for a duration of 60 days, allowing travellers to stay in Russia for up to 16 days. Prashant Chaudhary MD Salvia Promoters Pvt. Ltd and Representative of Russian Union Travel Industry in India stated, "Now, with E-Visa and direct Delhi-Moscow flights operated by Aeroflot airlines, Russia is more accessible than ever."



New Characters join Ferrari World Abu Dhabi

Ferrari World Abu Dhabi is set to elevate the excitement of its summer festivities until September 3 with the introduction of three captivating new characters: Bella, Jack, and GIO. These delightful additions to the park's are charming guests with their infectious enthusiasm for all things Ferrari. Bella and Jack, the spirited 10-year-old Ferrari enthusiasts, are joined by GIO, an aspirational superhero in the form of a genie engine-robot. United in their love for the legendary marque, the trio wholeheartedly welcomes families and visitors, making their experience at the world's

leading theme park truly unforgettable. Their engaging presence and Ferrari-inspired adventures add a magical touch to the already thrilling atmosphere of Ferrari World Abu Dhabi. Whether it's the heart-pounding speed of Formula Rossa or the immersive experience of Flying Aces, the park promises an unparalleled adventure for visitors of all ages. With Bella, Jack, and GIO leading the charge, Ferrari World Abu Dhabi continues to be a captivating destination, enticing both devoted Ferrari fans and thrill-seekers to share in the excitement of this unique and dynamic theme park.

Jamaica expects an upsurge in Indian tourists

Jamaica emerged as a highly sought-after destination for Indian tourists, appealing to families, honeymooners, leisure travellers, and thrill-seekers alike. The Minister of Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett, disclosed that Indian market initiatives are now in progress, with engagements planned for later in the year. Jamaica foresees substantial growth from the Indian market, driven by factors like weddings, cricket events, a rising middle and upper middle class, enhanced flight connectivity, and a vibrant Indian community in the



country. Notably, Jamaica's global standing as a top destination was reinforced by hosting over 3.3 million travellers in 2022, reflecting an astounding increase from the previous year.

JNTO revives Japan's tourism with progressive strategy

Japan National Tourism Organisation (JNTO) unveiled a comprehensive three-year marketing plan spanning from FY2023 to FY2025, with a primary goal of boosting inbound travel and achieving the government's ambitious targets. The targets include reaching 5 trillion JPY in revenue, attaining a consumption unit price of 200,000 JPY per person, attracting foreign visitors to rural regions, and ensuring a swift recovery of international arrivals, all within the framework of the 'Tourism Promotion Basic Plan'. Japan, renowned for its captivating culture and breathtaking landscapes, is eager to welcome visitors once again. The cross-market strategy aims to



promote networking among domestic stakeholders, collect service details, and strengthen sales to attract high-value-added travel. JNTO's new strategy is characterised by a strong emphasis on sustainable tourism, with a focus on ensuring the long-term viability and preservation of Japan's natural and cultural resources. The government will meticulously promote Japan's allure to the world, seeking to showcase the country's offerings to increase tourism.



Singapore holds the World's Strongest Passport

As per the Hensley Passport Index report, which evaluates passports based on the number of visa-free travel destinations they offer declared Singapore's passport as the strongest in the world. Surpassing the long-standing leader, Japan, Singapore provides its holders with access to an impressive 192 out of 227 destinations without the need for a visa. For the past five years, Japan's passport had been leading the rankings, but it has now been overtaken, slipping to the third position.

Germany, Italy, and Spain have stepped up and share the second spot in the latest rankings. The United Kingdom, after experiencing a six-year decline, has finally shown improvement, moving up by two places in the index. Singapore's remarkable achievement in topping the list demonstrates its citizens' high level of global mobility and accessibility to a wide array of international destinations without the bureaucratic hurdles of visa applications.

TAT's 2024 Strategy: High Tourism Value & Sustainability

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) unveiled its 2024 strategic direction, focusing on elevating sustainable and high-value tourism in the country. The plan aims to reduce dependence on tourist numbers and prioritise increasing tourist spending, attracting quality travellers, and fair income distribution to local communities. TAT intends to enhance tourism security through supply chain strengthening, tourism infrastructure development, digital transformation,

and effective external risk management. The initiative also emphasizes creating meaningful experiences for travellers through subculture movements and partnerships with stakeholders. For international markets, TAT will enhance Thailand's sustainability image, targeting emerging markets, seeking global partnerships, and utilising digital content for marketing. Domestically, TAT aims to stimulate Thai travel within Thailand while promoting regional strengths.



The Michelin Guide 2023 features California six eateries

Six California eateries were awarded one MICHELIN Star for the first time at the MICHELIN Guide Revelation on July 18. The fifth edition of the MICHELIN Guide California featured a total of 614 restaurants, including 15 Green Stars for sustainability practices with California holding 15 out of the 17 Green Stars in North America. The guide covers various cities across the state, recognising new one-star

restaurants and 10 new Bib Gourmand recipients for great value. Additionally, four new Green Star recipients received recognition, and special awards were presented to outstanding individuals in the culinary industry. California's President & CEO, Caroline Beteta, applauded the restaurants and chefs for showcasing the state's vibrant dining scene and diverse culinary culture.



California Credit - sonsanddaughterssf (Instagram)

Kevin Costner, crew join forces with Southern Utah Tribe

Kevin Costner's Production "Horizon: An American Saga 2" prioritises protecting Native American land in Southern Utah. Filmed in Greater Zion, the crew worked with the Shivwits Band of Paiutes, respecting their 28,000-acre reservation. The production team took care to safeguard plants and areas, while also improving the land by widening

roads and clearing brush. The film's first part was shot in Moab after Utah's State Film Production Amendments bill was passed. "Horizon: An American Saga 2" is expected to bring USD 90 million to Washington County's economy. Produced by Costner's Territory Pictures, it will be distributed by Warner Bros. Pictures as part of a three-part series.



Qatar sets world record of longest LED Slackline Walk

Estonian athlete Jaan Roose, a Red Bull athlete and three-time Slackline World Champion, achieved the world's longest LED-lit, single-building slackline walk in Qatar. Titled "Sparkline," he successfully crossed the Iconic Towers in Lusail City, owned by Katara Hospitality and home to Raffles and Fairmont Doha. Covering over 150m at an elevation of 185m on a 2.5cm-wide line, it marked his highest

urban walk to date. Roose faced challenges from heat and wind, but he completed the feat with determination. The event showcased the Iconic Towers' architectural marvels and Qatar's commitment to promoting tourism and sports. With numerous sporting events planned for 2023, Qatar continues to be a global destination for extraordinary experiences.

Yas & Saadiyat Island record 90% hotel occupancy during Eid Al-Adha

Yas Island Abu Dhabi and Saadiyat Island Abu Dhabi witnessed a booming Eid Al Adha with top-notch attractions for families. Yas Island, a premier leisure destination, saw a 100% increase in domestic and international visitors, with one-third exploring the newly unveiled SeaWorld® Yas Island. Saadiyat Island recorded over 80% hotel occupancy, attracting guests with luxurious resorts, fine dining, and beautiful beaches.

Mohamed Abdalla Al Zaabi, Group CEO of Miral said, "These numbers are a reflection of our commitment to positioning Yas Island as a global destination for entertainment and leisure, and Saadiyat Island as a leading beach, nature and cultural destination, as well as contributing to Abu Dhabi's overall economic growth. We look forward to continuing to exceed our guests' expectations and creating unforgettable memories that last a lifetime on both islands."



LA Tourism India appoints Lakshmi Hariharan as PR Manager

Lakshmi Hariharan appointed as the Manager for Public Relations and Communications for the India Office of the Los Angeles Tourism Board and Convention Board. Los Angeles stands uniquely among U.S. destinations as the sole one to establish a Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO) office in India. This dedicated India office is part of LA Tourism's global network,

comprising six international offices strategically placed around the world. The decision to open the India office in 2019 marked a significant milestone, creating a tangible travel trade presence for Los Angeles in this promising market. Recognising the immense potential that India holds for the city of Los Angeles, the time has come to further strengthen and deepen their engagement.

KAZAKHSTAN

WHERE CULTURE MEETS ADVENTURE AND MICE TAKES FLIGHT

Nestled between the Caspian Sea and the Altai Mountains lies an enchanting land of mesmerising beauty and cultural wonders – Kazakhstan. Beyond its awe-inspiring attractions, it offers a hidden treasure for business travellers – Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) offerings like no other. **Daniyel Serzhanuly, Managing Director, Kazakh Tourism** aids us discover, where culture meets adventure and business meets boundless possibilities – only in the enchanting land of Kazakhstan

By *Aanchal Sachdeva*

Kazakhstan as a preferred destination for international events and incentive travel

Kazakhstan stands out from other popular MICE destinations in Central Asia with its remarkable MICE infrastructure and a strong professional business community. It has successfully hosted numerous high-profile events, including the OSCE Summit, Asian Winter Games, World Winter Universiade, World EXPO, PATA Travel Mart, Routes Silk Road, and many others. This track record demonstrates its ability to handle diverse and large-scale events. The country allows citizens of over 80 countries to visit without a visa for business or leisure purposes, including major regions like North America, the European Union, Gulf countries, South-East Asia, India, and China. Additionally, Kazakhstan's major international airports offer direct connections to more than 30 destinations in Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. Major cities house international hotel brands and landmark buildings equipped with state-of-the-art venues and on-site restaurants, offering sweeping city views. The cultural richness contributes to a vibrant atmosphere and presents opportunities for cross-cultural exchange during MICE events. From being the birthplace of horse breeding and equestrian culture to having the world-famous "Golden Man" and the Baikonur spaceport, Kazakhstan has an array of captivating stories to share. With 13 national parks and 10 natural reserves, including those in the UNESCO International Network of Biosphere Reserves, Kazakhstan offers endless possibilities for sustainable MICE experiences.

"Meet in Kazakhstan" support program

In our efforts to develop and promote niche MICE segments, we have established MICE support and ambassador programs. Our "Meet in Kazakhstan" support program plays a pivotal role in facilitating events in the country. The

program includes bidding and hosting support, as well as a subvention program. Through this initiative, we offer international events local administrative assistance, logistical support, and sometimes even venue arrangements and official dinners.

Collaborations for commitment to promoting MICE tourism in Kazakhstan

Focusing on travel-related conferences and exhibitions, we have strategically collaborated with key travel organisations and businesses in targeted markets across Asia, GCC, Europe, and the Americas. Becoming members of prestigious associations like the Pacific Asia Travel Association, International Congress and Convention Association, and World Travel Alliance has enabled us to strengthen our network and foster valuable partnerships internationally. We successfully collaborated with the Travel Agents Association of India and hosted the TAAI Convention in Almaty. Additionally, TravelScapes recognised Kazakhstan as a trending destination in India and the UAE, further boosting our presence in these markets.

Economic impact of MICE events on local businesses, tourism, and employment

Our approach to measuring the economic impact of MICE events on local businesses, tourism, and employment revolves around a focus on return on investment (RoI). As a governmental company, we aim to invest or support only a portion of the total event costs, typically not exceeding 20%. This ensures that our investments are economically sound and provide meaningful returns. Over the past five years, our efforts in MICE development have yielded significant results. On average, every \$1 invested by Kazakhstan Tourism returns \$5 to the state economy. This impressive RoI speaks to

“
With its excellent infrastructure, cultural diversity, unique travel experiences, and strategic collaborations, the country offers event exhibitors and visitors a compelling value proposition”

the positive impact of MICE events on the local economy, with the returns well surpassing the initial investment costs. For instance, the PATA Travel Mart 2019 held in Astana exemplifies the success of our RoI strategy. The event generated between \$3 to \$4 for every \$1 invested by the Kazakhstan Government and contributed to the creation or sustenance of around 225 full-time equivalent jobs.

Shaping the landscape of MICE tourism for better

Building on our success in hosting high-profile international events, we aspire to continue attracting a diverse range of MICE activities. This includes placing increased emphasis on sustainability-focused meetings, technology-driven events, and travel-related conferences and exhibitions. By fostering innovation and sustainability in our MICE offerings, we aim to cater to the evolving needs and preferences of event exhibitors and visitors. Additionally, we will continue to expand our partnerships and collaborations with domestic and international MICE organisations and associations. Strengthening these alliances will enable us to tap into new markets, increase our global reach, and create mutually beneficial opportunities for the MICE industry.

FINNAIR FLYING INTO THE FUTURE WITH FLAIR AND FINESSE

Completing a century, acting as a pivotal bridge between Europe and Asia and offering efficient and convenient connections for travellers across the continents, Finnair's dedication to excellence is more about connecting cultures, people, and experiences. **Sakari Romu – General Manager (India), Finnair**, shares his insights into the future of travel, sustainability initiatives and the seamless blend of Finnish hospitality with cutting edge technology that sets Finnair apart

By Aanchal Sachdeva

Finnair creating a place for itself amongst other international carriers

Finnair is one of the oldest operating airlines in the world, celebrating its centenary in 2023. Our customers have chosen us as the Best Airline in Northern Europe in the Skytrax Awards for 13 times in a row. This is a true testament of our unwavering commitment to customer satisfaction which is rooted in providing tailored experiences that cater to individual preferences. Service excellence is deeply engrained in our DNA, and we keep our customers at the heart of everything we do. We understand the needs of a modern traveller and are always evolving, in our offering and in our ways of working.

This commitment is reflected in our continuous investment in renewing of our product and services. A recent example of this is the infusion of 200 million euros into the renewal of our long-haul cabins including the New Delhi-Helsinki route. This renewal includes a completely new business class featuring an award-winning new AirLounge seat; a new travel class Premium Economy with its own cabin; and a refreshed economy class. This cabin upgrade is our attempt to offer premium offerings and enable connections between India to over 70 key destinations in Finland, Europe, and the USA via-transfer based Helsinki hub. The ongoing digital investments are also aimed at enhancing customer experience and offering more convenience for our customers in 2023.

Fleet optimisation and sustainable business operations are integral components

Finnair is a network airline, specialising in connecting passenger and cargo traffic between Asia, North America, and Europe. With nearly 70 destinations in Europe and more, we offer seamless global connectivity. We fly to main airports that are close to city centres of our destinations. We offer convenient timetables and short transfer times through our modern, recently renewed Helsinki hub.

Determining a new route or destination involves thorough monitoring of the demand. In the process of determining new routes and expanding our network, we collaborate with our in-house team and partners to conduct an in-depth market evaluation. We also develop



new hub and schedule structures, laying out detailed plans for our route network and capacity with a vision spanning 5-10 years.

Finnair offers wider network for customers

Finnair is already a member of the oneworld alliance as well as Atlantic and Siberian joint businesses that help us extend our reach and enhance our distribution power. We also have a strategic partnership with Qatar Airways on our flights between Helsinki, Stockholm and Copenhagen and Doha. Beside these partnerships, Finnair is actively doing co-operation with numerous airlines for instance on special pro rate agreement level, including also Indian carriers.

Leveraging technological advancements/ innovations to enhance the operations and services

Businesses that understand an intrinsic link between customers and seamless interface and experience are well-positioned to foster growth. Finnair, a brand rooted in Nordic heritage, takes pride in its alignment with contemporary travellers who prioritise comfort and personalised travel options.

Central to this approach is the intelligent

integration of advanced technology into our daily operations. Whether it entails the adoption of sustainable aviation fuels, investments in new aircraft technology, or the utilisation of our cutting-edge mobile application, our goal is to enhance both customer satisfaction and productivity through these innovative digital solutions. Over the last two years, we have significantly strengthened our unit revenues through enhanced digital offering, competitive products, and increased customer choice.

Understanding of cultural nuances and languages is of prime importance

Understanding of cultural nuances and languages holds immense significance in airlines operation both from safety and service perspective. Therefore, having local personnel including cabin crew and on-ground staff is pertinent. Keeping this in mind, we have local cabin crew members on Finnair flights, for example our crew on our India flights is local. On the same time also all our operation in India, sales, customer service, ground operations and more are run by local people. I'm very pleased and proud to work with these great people.

SKY HIGH ASPIRATIONS

NAMED EUROPE'S MOST PUNCTUAL CARRIER, LOT POLISH AIRLINES IS A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER HOLDING A STRONG POSITION IN EUROPE

In the boundless skies of aviation, Lot Polish Airlines soars with its impeccable service and unwavering commitment to excellence. At the heart of this aviation triumph stands a visionary leader, **Amit Ray, Director India, DACH markets and Italy, and Head of Global Corporate and Strategic Sales at LOT Polish Airlines** whose passion for flying knows no bounds. Exploring the innovative strategies and bold visions that are propelling Lot Polish Airlines to new heights to navigate through turbulent times and embrace opportunities to create a truly extraordinary and unforgettable travel experience. One fasten your seatbelts and prepare for an exhilarating ride, as we dive into the exhilarating world of aviation, guided by the astute mind at the helm of Lot Polish Airlines

By *Aanchal Sachdeva*

LOT Polish Airlines has a very solid position in the international air traffic circuit

The carrier was established 95 years ago and gained an excellent reputation as an independent, innovative and reliable company. For April 2023 for example, LOT Polish Airlines was named Europe's most punctual carrier with 89.25% of flights arriving on time, as per Cirium's on-time-performance report. Customer satisfaction is key to success. For this reason, we listen carefully to what customers on board, as well as trade partners, value to create a smooth travel and booking experience. One example: All LOT Polish Airlines long-haul flights are exclusively operated by modern B787 Dream-liners, offering our passengers a very comfortable travel experience so that they reach their destination relaxed and rested.

Network and route strategy of LOT Polish Airlines

Star Alliance member LOT Polish Airlines has a strong position in Europe with a wide network and operates to key business and leisure destinations across North America, the Middle East, Central Asia and the Far East based on our successful hub and spoke strategy. This means that the vast majority of LOT Polish Airlines flights are operated via our global hub at Warsaw's Chopin Airport. This one-terminal airport is known for its fast and seamless connectivity. And in combination with our coordinated onward flight schedule, passengers can for example travel with us from India via Warsaw to Chicago with only a short stopover. Of course, we always look for new opportunities, based on traffic potential and overall market analysis. For example, we just announced to add Tashkent to our network effective February



We listen carefully to what customers on board as well as trade partners value to create a smooth travel and booking experience

2024 (with 3 weekly flights) and will also add daily operations to Rome effective Winter 2023 schedule season

Forging new partnerships and alliances with other international carriers benefiting travellers

We already have an excellent network with our airline partners. Since 2003, we are a member of Star Alliance and have codeshare partnerships with leading airlines which share our understanding of customer service and guest

experience such as Lufthansa, SAS, and Air India among others. For the benefit of our customers, we also offer interline connectivity with Vistara and are always open to new partnerships.

Technology and digitalisation are key elements

When innovations can support us in becoming better in any field from operations and sustainability to aircraft or in further enhancing the service for our customers, we have always been open to looking into it. The above-mentioned B787 Dream-liners, for example, do not only offer great comfort. These planes are also very fuel-efficient and produce remarkably less noise. Furthermore, each year, brands and businesses push the boundaries of innovation in customer experience using Adobe Experience Cloud solutions. For the EMEA region, LOT Polish Airlines under the leadership of A. Gawryluk, Director of Digital Distribution and Loyalty, received the "Experience Maker of the Year" award in June 2023. The award recognises LOT's digital transformation."

LOT Polish Airlines address the cultural diversity and language barriers

We have strong roots in Poland and are an international company with a global outreach. Transferring the Polish spirit of openness, friendliness and hospitality to all our valued guests is part of LOT Polish Airlines' DNA. Look at our flights from/to Delhi and Mumbai. We understand that Indian passengers may appreciate particular food preferences. Therefore, we serve Indian food catered by well-known Taj Sats ex-India and by premium airline catering provider Do & Co ex-Poland. In addition, we feature Indian movies and music as part of our inflight entertainment.



Vietjet launches new direct route from Kochi to Vietnam

Vietjet announced a direct flight beginning on August 12 between Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, and Kochi, India. Vietjet will be running a total of 32 flights a week between India and Vietnam when the service begins on August 12, 2023. The first-ever direct route from Kerala to Vietnam marks an important milestone for the development of Kochi airport and the tourism industry of the two countries. It is anticipated to advance bilateral ties between Vietnam and India as well as tourist, commercial and trade cooperation. Speaking at the event, Jay L Lingeswara – Vietjet Vice President of Commerce said, “With this new route, Vietjet will fundamentally increase connectivity between Vietnam and India. We expect that Vietjet will make significant contributions to the tourism growth of Kerala, India and Vietnam via its wide range of products and services accompanied by competitive and reasonable fares.”



Saudia expands international flights by 15%

By offering more than 7.4 million seats on domestic and international flights in July and August, a 10% increase from the corresponding months in 2022, Saudi Arabian Airlines (SAUDIA) is continuing to carry out its operating plan for the summer of 2023. With a 4% increase, the airline will run more than 32,400 flights. In addition to ensuring smooth operations, effective reservations for both scheduled and

seasonal destinations, and streamlined procedures at airports, these initiatives seek to fulfil high demand during peak seasons. SAUDIA is offering more than 4.2 million seats on overseas flights, a 16% increase. The airline is also adding approximately 14,800 flights, which represents a 15% increase. Over 3.2 million seats on domestic routes would be made available on 17,600 flights.

Delhi Airport’s 4th runway operational

The first airline to use the newly built fourth runway 11L-29R at the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), New Delhi, was IndiGo. Both IndiGo and Delhi Airport celebrated a key milestone with the flight. With the opening of this runway, Delhi Airport will have 4 operational runways, making it a first in the nation. The Hon'ble Minister for Civil Aviation, Jyotiraditya Scindia, who also dedicated the new, twin elevated Eastern Cross Taxiways at Delhi Airport, will formally open the runway. Capt. Ashim Mitra, Senior Vice President Flight Operations, IndiGo, said,

"We are really excited with the inauguration of the new runway at Delhi Airport. The 4th runway will add additional capacity for the country's busiest airport. The development also highlights the Government of India's encouragement and support for the aviation sector. We look forward to taking forward our strong partnership with GMR-DIAL and working together for the growth of the civil aviation sector in the country." IndiGo operates from Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, with over 14000 scheduled flights movements each month.



ITA Airways launches nonstop flight from San Francisco to Rome

ITA Airways launched its nonstop service between San Francisco and Rome starting July 1, 2023. The inaugural flight, AZ 641 was operated with an Airbus A350, ITA Airways' flagship aircraft. With direct flights from Milan Malpensa to New York and Rome Fiumicino to Boston, Washington, Miami, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, ITA Airways hopes to establish

itself as the go-to airline between North America and Italy and, via Rome, the rest of Europe and the Mediterranean. In addition, the airline will run 122 weekly nonstop flights between North America and Italy throughout the height of the summer season thanks to the new cities that Rome Fiumicino will serve this summer, including Washington and San Francisco.



IndiGo announced Shivamogga as its 79th domestic destination

IndiGo listed Shivamogga as its 109th overall destination and 79th domestic destination on the 6E network. Beginning on August 31, 2023, the airline will run nonstop flights every day between Shivamogga and Bengaluru. Through Bengaluru, this direct route will connect Shivamogga to important domestic and international destinations while improving intrastate connectivity. Vinay Malhotra, Head of Global Sales

IndiGo, stated, "By introducing air connectivity to Shivamogga, we also aim to provide easy access to neighboring areas while contributing to economic activity and employment opportunities. Direct connectivity to and from Shivamogga will also serve as a gateway to the Malenadu region, renowned for its lush greenery and scenic landscapes, further strengthening the city's tourist appeal."



19% flash sale on AirAsia domestic flights

AIX Connect (operating as AirAsia India), announced the launch of a flash sale with 19% off on domestic flights. The offer was applicable on bookings made till August 7, 2023 on its unified website with Air India Express. The sale coincides with the airline's yearly commemoration of "The Pioneer's" birth anniversary, which is celebrated by a number of ground-level, in-flight, and online events remembering the founder of Indian civil aviation. At airports and during flights, themed postcards will be given out by Air India Express and

AirAsia India. In honour of the airmail carried by JRD Tata on his historic inaugural trip from Karachi to Mumbai in 1932, travellers are urged to write messages to their loved ones on postcards, and the airline promised to deliver these on their behalf. The postcards' layout honours JRD Tata's love for writing, as he has penned over 40,000 letters in his lifetime. The postcard displays the bespoke font "Jeh," which was inspired by JRD Tata's handwriting, and an image from the Tata Central Archives of him sitting at his desk.



SITA secured a deal with AAI to adopt new age tech solutions

Providing technology to 43 of India's largest airports, SITA, the travel and transportation sector's technology provider, signed a historic agreement with Airports Authority of India to assist one of the world's fastest growing markets. India's Civil Aviation is one of the aviation markets with the fastest growth rates in the world and will be a significant growth driver for India's economy to reach USD 5 trillion by 2024. Improvements will be made at 2,700 passenger touchpoints as a result of the agreement, paving the path for the adoption of cutting-edge technology to satisfy the demands of contemporary

travellers. Sumesh Patel, President, Asia Pacific, SITA, said, "We're excited to partner with AAI on this large-scale deployment of leading passenger processing solutions. The number of airports in India is expected to increase from 148 today to 220 by 2025. The new airports will bring closer together India's almost 50 cities with populations exceeding one million people, creating substantial economic value in the long term. Ensuring efficient and fluid operations and a seamless passenger experience at these airports will be critical to delivering on India's air transport industry opportunity."



CSMIA achieves remarkable 107% recovery in June 2023

In June 2023, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) saw exceptional passenger traffic. Driven by its first-rate connections and top-notch facilities, the airport had a 107% increase in passenger volume in June, 2023 compared to June, 2019. Additionally, a notable increase in Air Traffic Movements (ATMs) has been seen by CSMIA. With 499,916 passengers, Delhi was the

most popular domestic travel destination. Bangalore and Chennai soon followed, enhancing Mumbai Airport's undeniable standing as a top gateway that offers smooth, nonstop connections to major cities all throughout the nation. The significant increase in both domestic and international passenger traffic, CSMIA is able to maintain its unchallenged status as a leader in aviation excellence.



Singapore Airlines increases seating by 22% during Durga Puja

From October 17–20, 2023, and on October 26–27, 2023, Singapore Airlines (SIA) announces a temporary up gauge of its Boeing 737-8 services to Airbus A350-900 services. This switch from a narrow-body to a wide-body aircraft for the Durga Puja period, subject to regulatory approvals, will aid in meeting the spike in demand for travel during the festival. Singapore Airlines presently operates daily flights from Kolkata using its 303-seater A350-900 on Monday, Saturday, and Sunday and its 154-seater B737-8 on Tuesdays and Fridays. The airline will increase SIA's overall capacity from Kolkata by 22% during the Durga Puja season. Sy Yen Chen, General Manager India for Singapore Airlines, said, "We are delighted to announce this temporary capacity increase from Kolkata over the Durga Puja period, when demand for travel usually exceeds availability of seats. We are fully committed to the West Bengal market, and we want our customers to enjoy their holidays with seamless connections to their preferred destinations on their favourite Airline."

Jazeera initiates direct flight from Kuwait to Tehran

Jazeera Airways offers direct flights twice weekly from Kuwait to Tehran. The flight will operate on Friday and Sunday from Kuwait and Tehran on flight number J9 155 and from Tehran to Kuwait on same days on flight number J9 156. The fact that these Jazeera flights connect via Kuwait will be very helpful for travelers from Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai, and Kochi. Jazeera Airways flies to the lovely Iranian cities of Mashhad and Shiraz. Jazeera offers additional convenient connections through Kuwait and has a network of 66 destinations around the Middle



East, Europe, Central & South Asia, and Africa. This includes popular tourist locations including Sharm El Sheikh, Cairo, Bodrum, and Istanbul.

Air France expands North America connectivity

Air France further expands North American network by adding new non-stop service between Paris-Charles de Gaulle and Raleigh-Durham (North Carolina) and, 3 times a week on Boeing 787-9 effective October 30, 2023. The airline will fly 5 times per week on a Boeing 787-9 with 279 seats (30 in Business, 21 in Premium Economy, and 228 in Economy), departing on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. For winter 2023-

2024, the airline plans to operate up to 212 weekly flights to 21 destinations in the US, Canada and Mexico. Air France also intends to operate more flights from/to Canada in the far north. It is the busiest airline in Europe when it comes to capacity between Europe and Canada. The recently started nonstop service between Paris-Charles de Gaulle and Ottawa, which began on June 27, will continue during the winter. The only airline that provides nonstop service between Ottawa and Europe is Air France. As well as adding flights, Montreal and Vancouver will receive up to 21 and 5 weekly flights, respectively, up from 17 and 3 last winter. On December 2, 2023, Air France will start operating two weekly flights on Tuesdays and Saturdays between Pointe-à-Pitre (Guadeloupe) and Montreal.



ENCALM introduces ENCALM PRIVÉ at Delhi Airport

For upscale business travellers, Encalm Hospitality Pvt. Ltd. known for offering pleasant airport experiences opened the ENCALM PRIVÉ lounge. Privé, which was introduced by Encalm at Terminal 3 of Delhi International Airport, is altering the way lounges are perceived in India. This flagship product from Encalm represents a significant advancement for airport lounges. The launch of Privé has given rise to an entirely new category targeted at travellers seeking luxury and better airport service in general. Vikas Sharma, CEO of

Encalm Hospitality while talking about the Privé positioning said, "We've always strived towards providing delightful experiences that become memories for our customers and Privé is another step towards that direction. It is our flagship lounge and travellers who rely on our quality and amenities are in for a treat, as we look forward to set the bars for premium hospitality and luxury airport experiences, a notch higher. The Privé is the beginning and a grand one that'll change the way India perceives lounges."





FICCI'S 2ND OUTBOUND TOURISM SUMMIT SOARED TO RESOUNDING SUCCESS

The 2nd Outbound Tourism Summit was held on the July 21, 2023 at the FICCI, New Delhi with the following people gracing the event with their presence Ankush Nijhawan, Chairman, FICCI Outbound Tourism Committee & Co-Founder, TBO.com & MD, Nijhawan Group Chairman; Dipak Deva, Chairman, FICCI Tourism & Culture Committee & Managing Director, SITa, TCI & Distant Frontier; Guldeep Sahni, Managing Director -Weldon Tours and Travels & Co Chairman FICCI Outbound Tourism Committee; Luis Cabello, Trade and Tourism -Counselor of Peru in India; Himanshu Patil, Director- Kesari Tours Pvt Ltd.; Romil Pant, Executive Vice President & Head of Holidays - Thomas Cook India Ltd.; Vinay Malhotra – Head of Global Sales, IndiGo (InterGlobe Aviation Ltd) ; Puneet Pant- Chief Commercial Officer – The Oberoi Group highlighting the growth of the Indian outbound tourism industry.

"India poised to achieve a milestone as World's Top Seller of MICE by 2026" said Ankush Nijhawan. He further added that the Indian outbound tourism industry will achieve a growth of USD 44,799 million by 2032 from 15,163 million in 2022. The report presented at the summit also highlighted the recommendations for the prognosis of Indian tourism to foreign countries including tax rebates, simplification of visa process, and much more. He further went on to say that India also has the potential to become a major cruise centre, and every year, more people are travelling outside of the country.

It is also projected that the Indian outbound tourism market is set to expand at a rate of 11.4 percent CAGR between now and 2032. The main reason behind this trend is the inherent longing of millennials to explore the world before reaching the age of 60. Among



the top choices for travel destinations, the USA, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and Australia are favoured for various reasons such as education, leisure, and business opportunities. Additionally, Thailand and the USA are highly sought after for luxurious high-end vacations and their captivating scenic spots.

The Indonesian Ambassador HE Ina H Krisnamurthi proposed a joint tourism plan between India and Indonesia called 'RICH.' This initiative aimed to boost tourism by highlighting religious, cultural, and historical themes that both countries share.

Speaking at the '2nd FICCI Outbound

Tourism Summit,' Ambassador Krisnamurthi highlighted the immense potential for India and Indonesia to explore the beauty of various destinations. The Ambassador stressed on the importance of creating a sustainable and consistent direct air traffic connection between the two nations. "There is a need to establish constant, continuous, sustainable direct air traffic between both nations. India and Indonesia should work on establishing 'RICH' – Religious, Cultural and Social & History theme apart from other theme-based tourism plans including thematic tourism of Ramayana and Mahabharat, health, education and more." she emphasised.

FICCI and Nangia Andersen recently published a knowledge paper titled 'Unlock the Potential: A Look into India's Outbound Tourism.' Poonam Kuara, Partner- Government & Public Sector Advisory- Nangia Andersen LLP, highlighted that post the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of international travellers from India has reached unprecedented levels. This surge is attributed to the growing YOLO (You Only Live Once) mindset among Indians, inspiring them to explore and experience more adventures abroad.

ON THE MOVE



RAJAT GERA

APPOINTED AT: Six Senses Fort Barwara
PROMOTED TO: Commercial Director

Rajat Gera's deep understanding of luxury hospitality and unwavering commitment to guest satisfaction have been crucial in driving the continuous success and growth of Six Senses Fort Barwara. As the new Commercial Director, Rajat will bring his enthusiasm, innovative vision, and extensive expertise to lead and elevate the business initiatives of the property.



SIDHARTH SHAH

APPOINTED AT: Fortune Hotels
PROMOTED TO: Head of Finance

Sidharth Shah, a seasoned chartered accountant with over 17 years of diverse finance experience, joins Fortune Hotels. With a strong financial management background, he has led successful IT career at ITC Infotech India Limited, a subsidiary of ITC Limited. As the new head, he will oversee all financial aspects of the brands.



MONICA EDARA

APPOINTED AT: Novotel Hyderabad Convention Center & HICC
PROMOTED TO: Director of Marketing

Monica, an accomplished marketing professional with 20+ years in hospitality, boasts awards and a proven track record. As Director of Marketing at NHCC & HICC, she leads strategy, budgeting, and planning, while overseeing marketing and communication efforts for the property, driven by her passion for excellence.



PRITHVI PAL SINGH

APPOINTED AT: Novotel Hyderabad Convention Center & HICC
PROMOTED TO: Director of Sales and Marketing

Prithvi is a hospitality trailblazer with a remarkable 17-year career. He has worked with prestigious brands like Taj, Accor, ITC, Bharat, and Trident and Oberoi Group. With exceptional leadership and dedication, he aims to revolutionise Sales and Marketing at Novotel Hyderabad and HICC.



ANUJ SOIN

APPOINTED AT: Radisson Hotel Sector 29 Gurugram
PROMOTED TO: General Manager

Anuj Sooin is an experienced and promising General Manager, whose skills have been finely tuned through years of practice, adopting a systematic and efficient approach. His hospitality journey also entails exposure to other hotel companies like The Taj Group, Marriott Hotels, and Leela Hotels.



KYM BARTER

APPOINTED AT: Atlantis The Palm, Dubai
PROMOTED TO: General Manager & Senior Vice President of Operations

Barter, with 30+ years of luxury hospitality and F&B experience, has been appointed after a successful 2-year term as VP, Food & Beverage at Atlantis. In his new role, Barter will lead Atlantis, The Palm, taking charge of all operational aspects of the renowned resort.



IAN DI TULLIO

APPOINTED AT: Minor Hotels
PROMOTED TO: Chief Commercial Officer

Ian Di Tullio, PhD, has been appointed as Minor Hotels' new Chief Commercial Officer, starting in June 2023. In addition to his successful track record in achieving commercial success, Di Tullio brings extensive expertise in loyalty programs, analytics, customer engagement, and digital strategies. He has led groundbreaking innovations in these areas during his tenure at Accor, Qatar Airways, and Air Canada.



VINOD SAH

APPOINTED AT: Absolute Hotel Services
PROMOTED TO: Director of Revenue and Distribution-India

Vinod Sah has been appointed as the Director of Revenue and Distribution - India at Absolute Hotel Services (AHS) India's corporate office. With more than 13 years of experience in the hospitality industry, he joins the leadership team to strengthen their expertise. Vinod has received numerous accolades and honors for his remarkable accomplishments in the hospitality industry.



JEAN FRANCOIS RICHARD

APPOINTED AT: Seaside Finolhu Baa Atoll Maldives
PROMOTED TO: Director of Sales and Marketing

Jean Francois Richard has been appointed as the new Director of Sales and Marketing at Seaside Finolhu Baa Atoll. With close to two decades of extensive experience in various roles within the international hospitality and travel industry, he aims to enhance all aspects of sales and marketing.

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