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# Travel Scapes

JULY 2023, PAGES 64, ₹100

VOL. 11, ISSUE. 7



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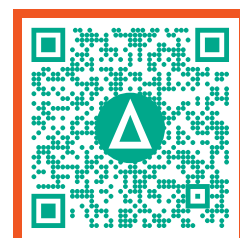


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# PUBLISHER'S NOTE



**Varun Malhotra**  
Publisher & CEO

## Dear Readers,

Embrace a world beyond borders and embark on transformative and immersive experiences." As the momentum of travel continues to soar, TAAI's 67th Convention, slated for July 6-9 in Sri Lanka this year with the theme of "Transcending Borders-Transforming Lives." TAAI has consistently delighted us with exceptional experiences, and in collaboration with the Sri Lankan Tourism Board, this year's convention is set to astonish guests with the unique offerings of the resplendent pearl of the Indian Ocean.

In an enlightening conversation with Jyoti Mayal, the President of TAAI, we explore the profound harmony that tourism fosters. It is through tourism that we rise above conflicts and differences, uniting people in shared experiences. With great delight, we engaged in meaningful discussions with visionaries of TAAI such as Jay Bhatia, the Vice President; Bettaiah Lokesh Hon. Secretary General; Manav Soni, Chairman of the Eastern Region; and Virendra Shah, Managing Partner and Chairman of the Gujarat Chapter. Together, we delved into topics often overlooked, discussing strategic investments for the association's cost-effective growth, the tourism department's efforts to restore the lost glory of Indian hospitality and tourism, and their plans for the future.

As we behold the enchanting beauty and vibrant life of Sri Lanka, we aspire to move beyond conflicts, embracing growth and prosperity for the future. Speaking of growth, the graph of National Tourism Organisations has experienced an upswing, driven by emerging trends and technological advancements. We had the privilege of conversing with aviation experts, alongside the captivating emirates of the Middle East such as Dubai, Ras Khaimah, and Qatar, as well as destinations worldwide like Seychelles, New Zealand, South Whales, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, and South Africa. Furthermore, we spoke with outbound players of the industry Trac, One Above DMC, QuadLabs, Travstarz, Aanchor Destinations, Away&co, Creative Travel, Rail Europe, TBO, VFS Global, and InterGlobe Technology Quotient, who are expanding their presence in the outbound market by staying abreast of the latest innovations and tailoring their offerings to meet the evolving needs of travellers.

In this era of exploration, travellers seek fresh and extraordinary experiences, leading to a surge in cruise tourism. We are privileged to share insights from industry leaders in the cruise sector, such as NCL, Carnival Cruises, Cordelia Cruises, Resorts World Cruises, MSC Cruises, and Princess Cruises. They diligently curate itineraries to create unforgettable journeys for lovers of the high seas.

While sailing on the azure waters, we present to you the awe-inspiring destination of Maweldives, where breathtaking views and vibrant local culture captivate your senses, making it difficult to resist the allure. With this, we urge travellers to break free from the shackles of monotony and explore the boundless offerings of the world today, as if there were no tomorrow.

Share with us your valuable feedback and suggestions at

varun@versatilemedia.in

Happy Reading!

Varun Malhotra

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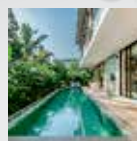
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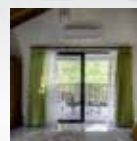
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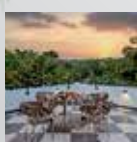
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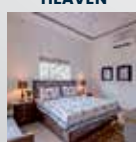
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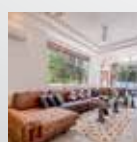
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# OUTBOUND ODYSSEY

## NAVIGATING NEW FRONTIERS OF TRAILBLAZING TRENDS

Travellers have been broadening their horizons to explore the unexplored, see the unseen, and discover the invisible. Brimming with wanderlust and a hunger for exploration, people are following an array of trends which are reshaping the way we venture beyond borders and connect with the wider world. The surge in tourism is not a mere blip on the radar, it is a transformative force that has swept through the industry like a gale of inspiration. Some seek respite from monotony, yearning for a temporary escape into a world of tranquillity and diversity whereas some are driven by an insatiable curiosity to uncover the hidden gems laying beyond their reach. So to say, as the travel landscape evolved, so did the travel trends. Sustainable practices are taking centre stage, with eco-conscious adventurers seeking to minimise the impact on the environment. From solo backpackers traversing unfamiliar territories to families embarking on multi-generational adventures, each journey has its unique tale to tell.

Navigating through the flourishing markets, embracing the newfound destinations, and exploring the innovative trends topped up with technological advancements, the story serves as a compass to take you through boundless horizons and embrace the evolving demands of a dynamic and ever-growing market. The uptick in tourism is not merely a statistic or trend, it is the embodiment of a collective longing for connection, understanding and the beauty that lies in the exploration of the vast and wondrous world.

Explore the upswing in sojourns through the insights and thoughts of the outbound tourism experts compelling you to grab your passports and embark on yet another interesting journey

By *Aanchal Sachdeva*





## ZACH FYNE, GLOBAL MARKETS SPECIALIST, UTAH OFFICE OF TOURISM

### Travel preferences that influence travellers' choices and behaviour

Our destination has seen a marked difference in the quantity of large bus tour groups over the past three years across our state. A lot of this has to do with the fact that many people got comfortable road-tripping in their private vehicles over the pandemic and wanted to seek more flexible itineraries in their travel. Across social media, we had so much travel inspiration being posted daily of outdoors and scenic destinations as opposed to cityscapes and shopping, which increased the awareness and desire to check out more national parks, wide open spaces, and new areas to discover. This combination of self-reliance with transportation, a new desire to travel to the outdoors rather than city holidays, and inspiration to travel to new places have been a big influence on travellers' choices and behaviours.



### Envision the outbound tourism industry

Global leisure travel is a relatively new concept for the majority of the world over the past few decades, and many people simply do not know how to have a transformative vacation. However, a combination of increased flight connectivity across the world as well as the fact that future generations will have more time to get better at

*“The combination of self-reliance with transportation, a new desire to travel to the outdoors rather than city holidays, and inspiration to travel to new places has been a big influence on travellers' choices and behaviours”*

travelling will lead to a dispersal of visitors around the world and more quality trips that involve more than checking off boxes to collect photos and see everything on one trip. With more travel experience for everybody, there's going to be a better appreciation for seeing what nobody else has seen rather than copying what they saw in a movie and longer stays in destinations that lead to less hectic vacations. Overall, the consumer is going to become better prepared and more responsible.

### INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO MEET EVOLVING DEMANDS OF MODERN-DAY TRAVELLERS

Today's travel agents have too much information at their disposal nowadays to truly be able to summarise and fully comprehend a destination without visiting that place. Our office recently launched the Utah Specialist Academy, a B2B e-learning platform, as a way to easily summarize each destination and region of our state to make it more digestible. We also designed each page with visually appealing photos and videos (to mimic the beauty of our state's landscapes) and also less-intensive descriptions to ensure agents can get through this as quickly as they need. Agents can register an account at [VisitUtahSpecialistAcademy.com](http://VisitUtahSpecialistAcademy.com).

## PHILIP DICKINSON, VICE PRESIDENT OF INTERNATIONAL MARKETS, QATAR TOURISM

### Travel preferences that influence travellers' choices and behaviour

Some noteworthy travel trends that have surfaced over the last few years include the personalisation of travel experiences based on personal preferences, behaviours, and past travel choices. Automated tech-backed booking systems assist tour and activity providers with effective resources curtailed to meet their customers' needs and wants with increasing effectiveness. B-leisure travel, has been an emerging trend for many destinations within the meetings and incentives travel space. Sustainability has become a key driver for many discerning travellers who want to experience the most while leaving the least trace of carbon footprint or impact. Qatar Tourism, in collaboration with on-the-ground partners, offer carefully curated travel itineraries, suited to the distinct travel personalities of various tourist segments. The destination offers a variety of attractions and activities, including art, architecture, cultural sights, multi-



cuisine dining options, recreation, wellness and spas, adventure options.

### Envision the outbound tourism industry

Improvement of air connections with different tourist destinations, combined with high internet penetration providing access to more information and easy bookings, the outbound potential for India is only growing. We've consistently been engaging with the Indian trade and travel

*“Qatar Tourism aims to welcome six million international visitors every year by 2030 making Qatar the fastest-growing Middle Eastern destination”*

community through our India representatives with various trade activities such as the Qatar Specialist Programme, destination webinars, and networking events. We aim to educate travel associates in the Indian market about Qatar's full spectrum of offerings across traveller segments. Qatar offers free visa-on-arrival for all Indians and the country is surveyed and ranked among 142 countries worldwide within the Numbeo Crime Index as one of the safest in the world.

### INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO MEET EVOLVING DEMANDS OF MODERN-DAY TRAVELLERS

Qatar has heavily invested in green public transportation and infrastructure projects. Ahead of the FIFA World Cup 2022™, Qatar worked on restoring its heritage properties and building new attractions. Hamad International Airport has been ranked as the second-best airport in the world, along with winning titles for 'World's Best Airport Shopping' and 'Best Airport in the Middle East', at the Skytrax World Airport Awards 2023. To support sustainability efforts, it developed the Doha Metro; a world-class public transport system including new enhanced bus routes and tram systems in Lusail and Education City to provide connectivity throughout the country. Qatar is home to purpose-built, state-of-the-art exhibition centres like the Doha Exhibition & Convention Centre and the Qatar National Convention Centre. Qatar Tourism has launched the new Qatar Specialist Programme which utilises the latest technologies in digital learning and is available in 11 languages.

## IYAD RASBEY, VICE PRESIDENT - DESTINATION TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OF RAS AL KHAIMAH TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

### Travel preferences that influence travellers' choices and behaviour

One of the biggest trends we're seeing now is the growing interest of the global traveller to explore off-the-beaten-track destinations. A survey by Booking.com revealed that travellers want experiences to have a more back-to-basic feel, with half of the respondents wanting to experience a complete culture shock in 2023, travelling somewhere with completely different cultural experiences or exploring lesser-known cities with hidden gems. Known as the Nature Emirate, Ras Al Khaimah is perfectly attuned to this shift with its stunning topography - sea, desert and mountain - and world-class resorts, from luxury to glamping. The Emirate also offers a variety of attractions and activities, including outdoor adventures such as hiking, mountain biking, and zip-lining, as well as cultural experiences like historical sites and the UAE's only



pearl farm - Suwaidi Pearls.

### Envision the outbound tourism industry

I believe that travel service providers and destinations will be forced to become more in tune with the people and the planet. With the impact of climate change, it will no longer be enough for travel and hospitality businesses to simply recycle or eliminate single-

*We continue to reimagine destination marketing, launching innovative campaigns that are informed by previous successes and mapped to emerging digital marketing and social media trends*

use practices. Here in RAK, we have set out a roadmap to becoming the regional leader in responsible tourism by 2025, placing all aspects of sustainability - environment, culture, conservation and liveability - at the centre of our growth and development. In practice, this includes everything from ensuring no over-tourism in Ras Al Khaimah by adopting a measured approach with a controlled pipeline of hotels to implementing a series of robust sustainability measurement and certification programmes.

### INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO MEET EVOLVING DEMANDS OF MODERN-DAY TRAVELLERS

We continue to reimagine destination marketing, launching innovative campaigns that are informed by previous successes and mapped to emerging digital marketing and social media trends. We have consulted with industry experts, such as Beautiful Destinations and its founder Jeremy Jauncey, who have highlighted the importance of digital identity for millennial and Gen Z consumers, with 90% of them booking travel based on what they see on social media. Our #RAKCalling campaign last year utilised this format and achieved tremendous success with 25.95M digital video views. Since its launch, 'Get More' Campaign has generated more than 336 million impressions and 1.2 million clicks.

## NELISWA NKANI, HUB HEAD – MEISEA, SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM

### Travel preferences that influence travellers' choices and behaviour

Sustainability has set a benchmark when it comes to making travel decisions. Apropos of these shifts we have enhanced efforts to make our itineraries, properties, and transport facilities more sustainable. We are also actively showcasing our product offerings and ecotourism experiences, like cycling tours, nature safaris, conservation projects and rural experiences to boost tourism. Travellers are looking for customised and personalised experiences that they can own, have control over and exclusively brag about. Currently, the rise of the digital era and increased flexibility in people's work routines has allowed them to work from anywhere across the globe. This has also resulted in new travel trends such as bleisure and 365-day travel. South Africa's pleasant weather conditions all year-round along with a wide variety of graded accommodation, various experiences across wildlife, adventure and breath-taking



views, and attractions for shopping including nightlife makes it an ideal destination for such travellers.

### Envision the outbound tourism industry

International travel is back on its growth trajectory with many nations reaching pre-pandemic arrival numbers. This rise has been partly credited to the phenomenon of revenge tourism as a result of the fatigue caused by the pandemic which led to lockdowns globally. Besides, individuals

*Travellers are looking for customised and personalised experiences that they can own, have control over and exclusively brag about*

have realised the importance of unpacking to new destinations, gaining fresh experiences and exploring varied cultures. These newly formed habits will continue to contribute towards the growth curve and keep international tourism elevated for the foreseeable future. India is amongst the largest source market for outbound travellers. One cannot overlook its potential in the tourism industry and without investing in the Indian market, tourism growth will be short-lived for any country. It is a market to reckon with and has the budget as well as the willingness to travel internationally.

### INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO MEET EVOLVING DEMANDS OF MODERN-DAY TRAVELLERS

South Africa is seeing a large influx of travellers from India and around the world. Therefore, it is our responsibility to enhance their experience and ensure quick resolutions when it comes to documentation for travelling internationally. Given digitisation, last year we announced the roll-out of e-visas for Indians under a pilot project. The response has been overwhelmingly positive and travellers availing of this facility were able to receive their visas within 5-7 working days with minimal documentation. We are excited to initiate the complete roll-out and believe this will be a game changer for South African tourism.



## RAJEEV NANGIA, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, TRAC REPRESENTATIONS (INDIA) PVT. LTD.

### Travel preferences that influence travellers' choices and behaviour

We have seen Indian outbound travellers travelling across the globe and to places one could have never imagined. Distances do not matter and neither the languages or food habits. It is the quest to experience different scenes, cultures, environments and habitats. Post-Covid, travel to overseas destinations has recovered fast from India, people are more quality-conscious and prefer to move at their own pace and mostly within their confined groups of family and friends. There is a large number of travellers now preferring luxury serviced apartments over hotel properties, as it provides them with complete privacy and comfort of home. The younger Indian generation is more inclined towards experiences, be it self-drive, adventure activities, or simply relaxation and rejuvenation. For them, their love and craze for travelling is to fulfil their desires and aspirations. The industry needs to take note of the rising influence of the online environment on the



business processes of travel and tourism. This is the time to take a new leap towards new business innovations that will create nouveau domains.

### Envision the outbound tourism industry

Outbound tourism from India has its own set of challenges, however, we are confident that our Industry is resilient and will stand up to all these challenges and will emerge stronger. The Indian outbound is driven by the growing aspirations of the younger generation and

*The Indian outbound is driven by the growing aspirations of the younger generation and India is going to be a market that the world cannot ignore*

India is going to be a market that the world cannot ignore. Indians like to flaunt and indulge, which makes us high spenders. Indian travellers are among the top spenders at various destinations. Another feather in the cap is that we generate business for all kinds of segments and in various price brackets. We will continue to attract various destinations, products, hospitality brands and attractions etc. to capture the Indian Outbound share.

### INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO MEET EVOLVING DEMANDS OF MODERN-DAY TRAVELLERS

Technology itself is a double-edged sword, which has its pros and cons. We are in that phase, where it is not possible to live without technological intervention. Online presence is a must and based on our functional environment, the industry has responded to the changing needs. Today travel is one of the most searched-for categories on various online platforms. Social media tools are being used extensively for the same, by the consumers of travel or the travel trade professionals. We as an organisation are also committed to adopting these changes and have taken necessary steps towards the same. All I can say is that looking at the future needs of consumers as well as our clients, it is not possible to sustain without embracing technological advancements. At TRAC we have always been frontrunners and in these ever-evolving circumstances also we have evolved fast. We have taken steps towards imbibing technological advancements in our bouquet of services.

## AKMAL AZIZ, ACTING DIRECTOR, TOURISM MALAYSIA NEW DELHI

### Travel preferences that influence travellers' choices and behaviour

Travellers are becoming more cautious in their travel decisions and are less ready to compromise on their vacations. Health and wellness tourism, as well as spiritual and religious tourism, are becoming increasingly popular as the new travel slogan. Indian outbound travellers to Malaysia are increasing day by day. Corporate travel in the shape of the MICE movement has grown in popularity. We have also seen an increase in the FIT movement. The number of solo and VFR travellers to Malaysia is increasing. The elimination of all entry restrictions has resulted in an increase in honeymoon, senior citizen, and religious group visitors. Furthermore, we are seeing a significant increase in return visitors.



### Envision the outbound tourism industry

Indians are prioritising personal wellness and spending more money on luxury experiences in their trip plans. The way we live, and work has changed because of the pandemic and the way we travel has changed as well. Sustainable and experienced

*By focusing on the best travel experiences, travellers are intending to go big with a new "no regrets" style of travel*

tourism is becoming increasingly popular. By focusing on the best travel experiences, travellers are intending to go big with a new "no regrets" style of travel. Travellers are eager to spend more money to immerse themselves in new and unexplored destinations, cultures, and experiences, and they are most thrilled about doing things they would never do otherwise.

### INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO MEET EVOLVING DEMANDS OF MODERN-DAY TRAVELLERS

Travel content is one of the most popular on social media. Every tourism board is doing its utmost to emphasise the highlights of its destinations. The interesting content, which includes stunning locations, a full itinerary, and a detailed guide, has proved beneficial to travellers all over the world. To engage millennial and GenZ travellers from India, we are also circulating our material in the form of articles, vlogs, reels, stories, and shorts about popular and unexplored Malaysian places. 20% of our funding is allocated to social and digital platforms.

## SAMAR CHOKSHI, COUNTRY MANAGER, INDIA FOR DESTINATION NEW SOUTH WALES (DNSW)

### Travel preferences that influence travellers' choices and behaviour

Despite the temporary halt on international travel because of covid, we noticed that the pandemic did not dampen people's enthusiasm for travel. People have demonstrated a resilient spirit and an eagerness to explore the world once again. Furthermore, we have observed a rise in young people with disposable income prioritising travel as a key aspect of their lifestyles. The younger generation values experiences, and they view travel as an opportunity for personal growth and cultural immersion.



has emerged as the fastest-recovering market for New South Wales. The data indicates that India has recovered to 85% of pre-pandemic numbers, and we expect to cross 100% by the month of March, which is a positive sign for the tourism industry.

### Envision the outbound tourism industry

The future of outbound tourism looks promising, and we envision a thriving travel season. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, India

*The younger generation values experiences, and they view travel as an opportunity for personal growth and cultural immersion*

### INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO MEET EVOLVING DEMANDS OF MODERN-DAY TRAVELLERS

With the rapid advancement of technology, contactless services have emerged as a powerful solution that has revolutionised every facet of the travel ecosystem. One of the areas where contactless services have made a significant impact is in the realm of digital visa procedures. Traditionally, obtaining a visa required lengthy paperwork visits to embassies or consulates, and often considerable waiting times. However, with the advent of contactless services, many countries have digitised their visa procedures, travellers can now apply for visas online, submit their documents electronically, and receive e-visas without the need for physical contact. Furthermore, the benefits of contactless services extend beyond visa procedures. For example, while departing from Sydney international terminal, automated self-check-in has been in practice for a while now, reducing the time it takes at the counter. To further ease airport navigation, a cutting-edge system allows travellers to simply scan their passports and take an image of their faces to complete immigration. This contactless approach eliminates the need for queues or manual intervention, making the process smoother and more efficient.

## BERNADETTE WILLEMIN, DIRECTOR GENERAL - DESTINATION MARKETING, TOURISM SEYCHELLES

### Travel preferences that influence travellers' choices and behaviour

In the last ten years, we've seen how quickly trends change, especially with digitisation. For example, there is a greater emphasis on sustainability and sustainable environmental practices, as well as viewing travel as a force for good through supporting local communities. We are seeing the reinforcing of these travel behaviours and preferences now that outward travel is regaining traction. Since the epidemic, travellers have been becoming more interested in holiday experiences that allow them to immerse themselves in local culture while engaging with people and enjoying local cuisine. Travellers are increasingly looking for environmentally friendly solutions that do not substantially increase their carbon footprint. As a result, as more Indian travellers discovered their love for the natural world, the outdoors has become a vital element for them. They enjoy getting closer to nature through activities such as hiking



and cycling. Seychelles has long been known for its beaches, nature trails, and cycling routes, and we anticipate increased interest from Indian visitors in the coming years.

### Envision the outbound tourism industry

I reckon that the more humankind progresses, the more we need to know about ourselves and our environment. I believe that the future of outbound travel will be largely defined by two elements: experiential tourism

*I believe that the future of outbound travel will be largely defined by two elements: experiential tourism and ecotourism*

and ecotourism. This is why we are currently working on expanding our product offering, creating events and spaces where visitors

may experience or participate in the island craftsmen making jam, cassava cakes, music, and jewellery, among other things. At the community level, we are collaborating with our local partners to turn their activities into tourism attractions, and we are promoting small-scale activities such as traditional dance lessons, culinary workshops, farm tours, pottery classes, and so on. On the other hand, we must preserve the natural world for future generations since it is our responsibility. Therefore, we collaborate closely with our tourism partners to make concerted efforts to create a sustainable ecosystem.

### INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO MEET EVOLVING DEMANDS OF MODERN-DAY TRAVELLERS

We plan to improve our web presence to make ourselves more accessible to our target audiences. We are working with our local partners to improve their availability online for clients to purchase conveniently. However, as our focus shifts from traditional to digital media, we are also working to transition our traditional content creation to a more integrated marketing approach, in which the Tourism Seychelles is investing more resources in curating great, inspirational content for our potential visitors while highlighting incredible stories that showcase the Seychelles experience.





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## TALGAT AMANBAYEV, CHAIRMAN OF KAZAKH TOURISM NATIONAL COMPANY

### Travel preferences that influence travellers' choices and behaviour

The most critical trend that Kazakhstan has observed is sustainable ecotourism. Sustainable tourism relies on the development of local stakeholders, the usage of local products and ingredients, and sustainable accommodations, all of which are in sync with the policies promoted by the government of Kazakhstan. The demand for exotic and authentic travel is surging. In the experienced economy, travellers are willing to engage in the national culture and travel like locals, including tasting local cuisine and participating in cultural activities, immersing themselves in traditional sports and games, and living with a host family to gain more authentic experiences. Kazakh Tourism employs the 4E concept to promote Kazakhstani tourist products, which combines Eco and Ethno tourism, Events, and Entertainment. While events and entertainment are more traditional aspects of tourism, eco, and ethno-



tourism allow the promotion of an exotic product that will be in demand worldwide.

### Envision the outbound tourism industry

There is a movement towards more authentic and immersive travel experiences, where travellers can engage in local culture and support local economies. This includes supporting local communities, using eco-friendly accommodations and transportation, and promoting cultural exchange. Speaking of

*“Kazakh Tourism” NC  
JSC is committed to developing a national tourist product that is unique and exotic, offering a one-of-a-kind experience*

tourism in Kazakhstan, we need to highlight that the government is shifting its focus towards inbound and domestic travel, recognising the growth potential in this area. The number of Kazakhstanis travelling abroad as tourists has doubled in the past year. To increase the awareness of potential tourists about the opportunities of Kazakhstan for travel and recreation, as well as the recognition of Kazakhstan as an international tourist destination, “Kazakh Tourism” NC” JSC implements a set of online and offline events promoting tourism.

### INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO MEET EVOLVING DEMANDS OF MODERN-DAY TRAVELLERS

The implementation of “Kazakhstan.travel”, the National Tourism Portal provides tourists in 8 languages with necessary information about tourist attractions and other necessary information. eQonaq, the information System simplifies the registration procedures for foreigners and improves the quality of tourism services. ‘Tourism Online’, the online platform facilitates communication and knowledge exchange among tourism market representatives regarding domestic tourism including features such as interactive maps, forums, chatbots, and webinars. regions, specific areas, and types of tourism objects. Tourstat, an information system offers statistical data visualisation, charts, and informative reports on tourism.

## GREGG WAFELBAKKER, GENERAL MANAGER – ASIA, TOURISM NEW ZEALAND

### Travel preferences that influence travellers' choices and behaviour

A few key travel trends we have been noticing are centred around authenticity through local experiences, regenerative travel and a focus on wellness. It has been heartening to learn that travellers are looking to stay longer and connect with a destination on a more meaningful level through transformative travel experiences which we're hopeful is here to stay. We believe that this will not only enrich the holiday experience of visitors but also enrich the people and communities in New Zealand.



process, allowing travellers to explore destinations virtually and customise their itineraries based on personal preferences. Sustainable and responsible travel practices will become even more prevalent, with travellers prioritising destinations and accommodations that have a positive social and environmental impact. Governments, travel agencies, and tourism operators will need to work together to implement strong sustainability measures, such as promoting

*The New Zealand tourism industry as a whole is taking significant steps, including committing to carbon neutrality, offering sustainable experiences, and developing travel itineraries that are carbon neutral*

eco-friendly transportation options and supporting local communities. Additionally, personalised and immersive experiences will be at the forefront, with travellers seeking authentic cultural exchanges, off-beaten-path adventures, and opportunities to connect with local communities. Overall, the future of outbound tourism will create a more enriching and responsible travel landscape.

### INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO MEET EVOLVING DEMANDS OF MODERN-DAY TRAVELLERS

With sustainability and conscious travel taking the forefront, the government has introduced several initiatives to ensure visitation carefully considers its impact on the environment, the community, and its people. The New Zealand tourism industry as a whole is taking significant steps, including committing to carbon neutrality, offering sustainable experiences, and developing travel itineraries that are carbon neutral. As travellers are starting to become eco-conscious, we want to be able to showcase the sustainable and eco-conscious choices that are available when they visit New Zealand. There are various new eco-friendly hotels including Sudima Kaikoura and Movenpick Auckland, as well as The Rees Hotel in Queenstown, which is committed to becoming carbon neutral by implementing many eco-friendly initiatives into practice. Many of our tourism businesses, like Shotover Jet in Queenstown and Whaka e-bike trail in Rotorua, are paving the way for transformative, regenerative travel experiences around New Zealand.



## RIAZ MUNSHI, PRESIDENT, OUTBOUND TOUR OPERATORS ASSOCIATION OF INDIA (OTOAI)

### Travel preferences that influence travellers' choices and behaviour

In recent years, we've seen a shift towards experiential travel, with travellers seeking authentic, local experiences over traditional sightseeing. Eco-tourism and sustainable travel have grown in popularity as travellers are becoming more conscious of their environmental footprint. Wellness travel focusing on health and well-being is another significant trend. There has been a constant increase in domestic travel and road trips since the pandemic, as well as a rise in "workations", where people combine work and vacation.

### Envision the outbound tourism industry

I foresee the outbound tourism industry navigating several transformations by 2030. Firstly, customer empowerment will continue to grow, with travellers



demanding more choice and control, making quicker decisions and bookings. Secondly, increased connectivity between industry stakeholders will become the norm, allowing for easier discovery and booking of diverse experiences.

Personalisation is also expected to become more significant, with the use of data to create tailored

*The future of outbound tourism lies in the effective use of timely and relevant data, made accessible across various channels to provide delightful experiences to customers*

experiences, although challenges from changing privacy policies may affect this trend. This calls for innovative solutions such as Web 3.0, where each person could have a single profile across the internet, thereby enhancing personalised content delivery.

Furthermore, we can anticipate a convergence of online and offline channels, thanks to the advancement in AR and VR technologies. This trend could give rise to more immersive 'try before you buy' experiences, making travel planning more engaging and interactive.

### INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO MEET EVOLVING DEMANDS OF MODERN-DAY TRAVELLERS

We are embracing technology to enhance our customer service. AI-powered chatbots are increasingly used for 24/7 customer support, providing quick responses to queries. We are also implementing virtual reality (VR) tech, allowing clients to 'experience' destinations before booking. Blockchain technology could be another potential game-changer, that could perhaps be utilised for making transactions. By integrating these technologies, we aim to provide a seamless, tailored experience for our clients, addressing their evolving needs in this digital age.

## BA RAHIM, FOUNDER, ONE ABOVE DMC

One Above differentiates itself in the travel market through curated experiences, personalised services, exclusive partnerships, expert destination knowledge, seamless arrangements, exceptional customer support, and embracing technology. These strategies establish One Above as the most trusted option for all kinds of travellers seeking extraordinary experiences.

One Above has faced challenges with increased demand for foreign travel but has turned them into opportunities. They have innovated itineraries, expanded partnerships, and entered new markets like the Philippines, Bali, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Bahrain Baku and cruises such as Costa Cruise and Genting Dreams. These efforts enable One Above to provide exceptional travel experiences in response to evolving customer needs.



*One Above differentiates itself in the travel market through curated experiences, personalised services, exclusive partnerships, expert destination knowledge, seamless arrangements, exceptional customer support, and embracing technology*



## JAGVIJAI SINGH RAWAT (JAI), SALES DIRECTOR, QUADLABS

### QuadLabs' service differentiation in the outbound market

We are known for providing cutting-edge end-to-end travel technology solutions. Our offerings include Travel & Expense Management Solutions, Mid-office Systems, Travel CRM, Online Booking Engines, B2B and B2C Portals, Mobile apps, and more. Our products help our customers automate their business processes, optimise revenue stream and enhance their customer service experience. Our solutions support multilingual, multi-currency and can be configured as per local tax norms. This allows travel companies to operate in various geographies across the globe and serve diverse customers from around the world.

We aim to seamlessly integrate with various third-party systems, such as Global Distribution Systems (GDS), online payment gateways, airline reservation systems, hotel aggregators, and more. We often



incorporate the latest technologies, industry trends, and customer feedback into our solutions to provide up-to-date features and functionalities.

### Travel preferences that influence travellers' choices and behaviour

In May, we were at the Arabian Travel Market, Dubai and in June, we shall be present at Business Travel Show Europe in London. We at QuadLabs, invest in comprehensive industry

*“QuadLabs, invest in comprehensive industry research and market analysis to understand the latest trends, emerging destinations, and changing consumer preferences”*

research and market analysis to understand the latest trends, emerging destinations, and changing consumer preferences. We gather data from various sources such as market reports, industry publications, travel trade shows, and conferences to stay abreast with industry trends. We emphasise on continuous learning and professional development for our team members encouraging employees to attend industry conferences, participate in workshops, and pursue certifications.

### INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO MEET EVOLVING DEMANDS OF MODERN-DAY TRAVELLERS

We at QuadLabs leverage technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance our offerings. We recently launched AI-powered itinerary builder QuadGPT, through which users can create a customised travel itinerary that perfectly matches their interests, preferences, and budget – all in just a few clicks. Our Travel & Expense Management & Internet Booking Engine come with user-friendly mobile applications that offer seamless booking experiences, itinerary management, real-time updates, and personalised recommendations. It empowers travellers to access their travel plans on the go, enhancing their overall experience and convenience.

## SUCHETA NAGPAL, DIRECTOR & CEO, TRAVSTARZ GLOBAL GROUP

### Travstarz's service differentiation in the outbound market

Travstarz has been growing very rapidly and registering over 100% YOY growth consecutively. We have always been a dedicated B2B company and as such it is our constant endeavour to cater to our agent partners in the best possible way by providing them with lucrative deals with the assurance of top-quality services. Our complaint ratio has been below 1% for the past several years now. We constantly engage with our agents through e-marketing campaigns, webinars and regular networking events and roadshows across the country. On average we conduct 10 to 12 workshops every quarter and this keeps us in constant touch with our partners and helps us understand their needs and expectations and improve our offerings. Our vision is to be among the Top 3 B2B companies in India offering all travel products on a single platform. With a complete portfolio of travel products with us including



Flights, Hotels, Transfers, Tours, Cruises, Visas and Insurance, we plan to get even more aggressive in our marketing in 2023.

### Travel preferences that influence travellers' choices and behaviour

We have witnessed that there is a strong demand for Turkey, Egypt, Bali, Vietnam, and Mexico in addition to our regular destinations like Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Maldives, and Dubai. But we now expect the market to evolve with Oman,

*“In the given scenario, we are getting aggressive on newer destinations and creating different and niche products to offer to our agent partners”*

Qatar, Bahrain, Ajman, Sharjah, and Saudi Arabia. Tier 2 and Tier 3 have always been our strengths. These markets are now majorly driving growth and higher numbers for us from India. Additionally, many Tourism Board Partners are once again looking at partnering with us for promotions in the B2B segment. Visa delays and exorbitantly high fares are still a bit dampener but we expect better days ahead in the future.

### LEVERAGING CHALLENGES AS OPPORTUNITIES

The post-pandemic scenario has changed quite a bit for the travel industry with travellers now opting more for online bookings as many people have now got used to shopping online for most things. This will harm offline small and medium-sized travel agents in the short to medium term. Having said that the market will always remain robust for those who upgrade their knowledge and offer unique and niche products and destinations and not just run-of-the-mill packages. We at Travstarz have done some out-of-the-box thinking to win back the confidence of the travellers to offline booking agents which will also result in better products coming to the market for the travellers and will provide an opportunity for the agents to earn better margins due to specialisation. We understand that it is very important now for the industry players to keep rates competitive and as such we have renewed several of our contracts for the same in most of our DMC locations to offer the best pricing and services.



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## DEEPIKA KHANNA, FOUNDER AND CEO, ANCHOR DESTINATION

### Anchor Destination's service differentiation in the outbound market

Anchor Destination is an Offline B2B Company with expertise in the customisation of Itineraries and has carved a niche in various destinations and hotels for competitive rates and services. We have made our presence felt in the uber-luxury segment which is showing an upsurge trend.

### Travel preferences that influence travellers' choices and behaviour

Post the Pandemic there has been an upsurge in the demand



*“We have collaborated with various Hotel chains and conducted Fam Educ Tours for giving the first-hand experience and destination feel to our partners*

of outbound travellers for newer destinations, exotic locations, uber luxury resorts, and unique and experiential stays. We have upgraded our knowledge through various trainings primarily being the first level of communication with any client regarding any destination or stay. Learning is a continuous process and adds to an array of opportunities. We have collaborated with various Hotel chains and conducted Fam Educ Tours for giving the first-hand experience and destination feel to our partners. Our priority remains in client servicing.



### LEVERAGING CHALLENGES AS OPPORTUNITIES

Outbound travel always has been more challenging as compared to Inbound/ Domestic because the traveller segment and choices are huge. Post Pandemic mainly the last 2 years including this quarter has seen great movement in outbound travel. Visas to many European countries are still a challenge but we have been able to convert these travellers to our other strong destinations so far. However, our main challenge will Now Lie in the taxation of TCS of 20 % which is a huge and incriminating amount for any foreign traveller to pay and this could have major effects on the travel community.

## RUCHI KOHLI, CHIEF OF THE EXPERIENCE, AWAY&CO (CREATIVE TRAVEL FAMILY OF BRANDS)

### Away&Co's service differentiation in the outbound market

We believe competition is necessary for all businesses, more so in the space in which we operate. There is more than enough business for every company that focuses on quality. Away&Co doesn't offer "off-the-shelf" trips, everything we do is completely tailored to accomplish every individual travel dream. Away&Co focuses on a very high level of cultural immersion and insider access. Our amazing global relationships built over 46 years will ensure we have access to some of the finest experiences around the world. We will never be just a 'travel company' even though travel is what we sell, our guests will come to us when they seek life-altering experiences. Our service design is highly personalised, with a high degree of involvement in every aspect of the trip.

### Travel preferences that influence travellers' choices and behaviour



*“We will never be just a 'travel company' even though travel is what we sell, our guests will come to us when they seek life-altering experiences*

relationships around the world in our 4+ decade journey. It's been relatively easy for us to establish a pool of partnerships that will allow us to create some of the best journeys across the world. Our long-standing legacy has also helped us open many doors from which our guests will benefit a lot.

The Indian traveller has matured to a level of sophistication over the years. We see many parallels between the expectations of an evolved Indian traveller and one from the Western world. Most destinations on the planet are seeking out Indian travellers because of this level of maturity. Money is no longer the only decision driver for those who appreciate the nuances of luxury travel.

We are very fortunate in that we have fostered amazing

away & co

### LEVERAGING CHALLENGES AS OPPORTUNITIES

The increase in Airfares to the most popular destination along with difficulties in obtaining visas has been most challenging, however, this increase in demand has also been an opportunity for the industry to expand. To leverage the increase in demand for outbound travel as an opportunity, we have adopted several new strategies. Differentiation in the market is always important to attract a focused customer base.



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## VFS Global and Radisson Hotel Group collaborate to offer UK Visa Services

**VFS Global**, the provider of outsourcing and technology services for governments and diplomatic missions, has joined forces with the Radisson Hotel Group in India to enhance their service offerings. As part of this partnership, VFS Global has introduced UK Premium Application Centres at four prominent Radisson properties in the country: Radisson Blu Hotel Amritsar, Park Plaza Ludhiana, Radisson RED Chandigarh Mohali, and Radisson Noida. These premium centres provide a convenient platform for UK visa applicants to submit their applications and provide biometric data during

the summer season. With these additional locations in Punjab and Noida, customers now have more options beyond the existing visa application centres in Chandigarh, Jalandhar, and New Delhi. Prabuddha Sen, Chief Operating Officer-South Asia at VFS Global, emphasises the partnership's benefits in terms of convenience and accessibility. UK visa applicants can expect the same level of comfort, convenience, and excellent service at these premium centres as they would at VFS Global's Visa Application Centres, while also enjoying the warm hospitality provided by Radisson Hotel Group's properties.

## Chanchal Kumar appointed as new Civil Aviation Secretary

**IAS officer** Chanchal Kumar, currently the Managing Director of the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd, is appointed as the new Civil Aviation Secretary.

According to an order passed late on Tuesday, he will initially serve as the Officer on Special Duty in the Ministry of Civil Aviation, holding the rank and pay equivalent to the Secretary



to the government of India, starting from August 1.

Upon the retirement of incumbent Rajiv Bansal on August 31, Chanchal Kumar will take over as Secretary.

This appointment is among of 15 senior bureaucrats in various Central government departments.

Bansal, then CMD of Air India, had become Civil Aviation in 2021. He had been appointed as the Chairman and Managing Director of Air India for the second time in 2020.

His appointment closely followed the government's announcement of a complete stake sale of Air India, which was grappling with significant debt.

## Ministry of Tourism organised 4th G20 TWG meet in Goa

**The Ministry** of Tourism organised the fourth G20 Tourism Working Group meeting and Tourism Ministerial Meeting from June 19 to 22, 2023 in Goa. Briefing media in New Delhi, Secretary Tourism, V. Vidyavathi said that under India's G20 Tourism Track, the Tourism Working Group is working on five inter-connected priority areas, which are Green Tourism, Digitalisation, Skills, Tourism MSMEs, and Destination Management. Giving more details, the Secretary said that there are two key deliverables of the Tourism Working Group, which are the GOA

Roadmap for Tourism as a vehicle for achieving sustainable development goals and the G20 Tourism Ministers' Declaration both of which will be finalised shortly. During the meeting, G20 member countries invited countries, and international organisations will welcome and endorse both documents.

It was also said that the G20 Tourism Working Group meeting and Tourism Ministerial Meeting in Goa aim to strengthen economic growth, preserve cultural heritage, and promote tourism and sustainable development of the region.

## SriLankan Airlines partners with AVIAREPS to boost presence in India

**SriLankan Airlines**, the national carrier of Sri Lanka, has appointed AVIAREPS as its PR representative in India. The strategic move aims to enhance the airline's visibility among Indian travellers and promote outbound travel to Sri Lanka. Leveraging their expertise, AVIAREPS will work towards positioning SriLankan Airlines as the preferred choice for Indian travellers. Richard Nuttall, CEO of SriLankan Airlines, emphasises the significance of the Indian market and the importance of tailored communication strategies. Edgar Lacker, CEO of AVIAREPS, expresses pride in the appointment and confidence in effectively showcasing SriLankan Airlines' unique offerings to the Indian audience. With



80 weekly flights between Colombo and nine Indian cities, SriLankan Airlines is committed to providing a reliable and enjoyable travel experience. Boasting an all-Airbus fleet, the airline has earned a stellar reputation for its service, comfort, safety, and reliability. Notably, it has been recognised with esteemed accolades such as the 2023 APEX Passenger Choice Awards® for Best Food & Beverage and Best Seat Comfort in Central/Southern Asia.



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# CHARTING THE COURSE

## VOYAGE INTO THE WORLD OF CRUISE TOURISM

While on a cruise adventure, the possibilities are as vast as the ocean itself. One cannot avoid but picture oneself on the deck of a magnificent ship, the warm ocean breeze caressing your face as you embark on an extraordinary journey that will ignite your sense of wanderlust and leave you with cherished memories to last a lifetime. To say the least, the allure of cruise vacations has reached unprecedented heights, captivating the hearts and imaginations of travellers from all corners of the globe. The numbers speak for themselves, a staggering \$150 billion in annual revenue is a testament to the undeniable magnetism of this booming industry.

An experience on a cruise is no less than setting foot on a floating paradise, a vessel so grand and opulent that it rivals the most luxurious resorts on land. Indulging in sumptuous cuisine prepared by world-class chefs, you cannot help but immerse yourself in a world of culinary delights, with rejuvenating spa treatments that transport you to a realm of blissful serenity. But it is not only the extravagant amenities that make the world of cruise tourism so irresistible; it is the boundless sense of discovery that awaits at every port of call. Stepping

onto ancient cobblestone streets, surrounded by centuries of history and culture, exploring breathtaking destinations that span the globe, from the sun-kissed shores of the Caribbean to the awe-inspiring wonders of the Mediterranean, each stop is a doorway to a world of adventure awaiting your eager exploration.

Amidst this wondrous world of indulgence and discovery, the cruise industry has not forgotten its responsibility to the environment. With a resolute commitment to sustainability, cruise lines have implemented innovative technologies and practices to minimise their ecological footprint. From advanced waste management systems to the use of cleaner fuels, they are devoted to preserving the very destinations that inspire us to embark on these extraordinary journeys.

Aren't we all prepared to cast off the shackles of everyday life and embrace the adventure of a lifetime? Cruise Tourism awaits, beckoning you to discover the world in a way that is as extraordinary as the destinations themselves. As we set sail on a captivating narrative voyage through the enchanting world of cruise tourism, let's read insights of the Cruise Experts



By *Aanchal Sachdeva*



# CARNIVAL CRUISE LINE, CAREFULLY CRAFTS DREAMS INTO REALITY

With recent additions to the fleet, Carnival Celebration<sup>®</sup> and Carnival Luminosa<sup>™</sup> debuted last year alongside Carnival Venezia<sup>™</sup> this year, Carnival Cruise Line is all set to blow your minds with Carnival Jubilee<sup>™</sup> setting sail this November and the upcoming Carnival Firenze<sup>™</sup>

## Emerging trends/ developments in the cruise tourism industry

The cruise industry, much like the greater travel industry, is seeing great interest from guests. The advice we are giving guests is to plan and book early. We're looking at occupancy of 100% or higher and a return to historical levels this summer.

## Carnival Cruises' unique marketing strategies to stand out in the industry

Carnival's current campaign, Choose Fun Together, underscores Carnival's appeal across any age group by showcasing various ways guests can Choose Fun, and find something of interest to everyone, whether sailing with family or a group of friends. The ads highlight those special moments of fun that can only happen when people come together on a Carnival cruise – because we are our most fun selves when we choose fun, together. The campaign will continue to be seen across both Carnival-owned channels and advertising placements throughout 2023 – from social media posts on FB & Instagram

to commercial spots on national streaming and broadcast television to all other media placements like audio, outdoor, paid social and additional digital extensions.

## Contribution to local economies and communities in port destinations

Our guests take part in shore excursions, tours and other activities in the destinations we visit which brings commerce and economic activity to those communities and local businesses.

## Carefully curated "cruise itineraries" by Carnival Cruises to create unique experiences for passengers

Cruise itineraries are the schedules the ships follow from homeports to the destinations they visit. We offer a diverse portfolio of itineraries across our fleet, from our many homeports. These itineraries range from weekend cruises to longer Carnival Journeys sailings that range from about two weeks to a full month. As we continue to grow our fleet and our offerings, our team is taking every opportunity to create exceptional new experiences for our guests.

## Environmental challenges associated with cruise tourism

We have many proactive initiatives to manage the environmental impact of our fleet. Our teams carry out a number of practices across every ship to reduce, reuse and recycle. In fact, last year, our fleet processed 11 million pounds of recyclables. We've also recently noted a 35 per cent reduction in food waste fleetwide, due in large part to our investment in bio-digesters, which we've installed across the fleet to break down food waste. Our efforts continue toward decarbonization as well. Our third ship powered by Liquefied Natural Gas, Carnival Jubilee, arrives later this year. These are important steps toward our part in Carnival Corporation's overall goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.



**DIPTI V. ADHIA,**  
Director, Discover the World - India  
(Represents Carnival Cruise Line in India)

*Our teams carry out a number of practices across every ship to reduce, reuse and recycle*





# NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE, SETTING THE STAGE FOR UNFORGETTABLE JOURNEYS ON OPEN SEAS



**MANOJ SINGH**  
Country Head India, Norwegian  
Cruise Line

*Sailing to 400 destinations on all seven continents, we are the international contemporary cruise line of choice*

With a rich heritage spanning over half a century, Norwegian Cruise Line has redefined the art of cruising, offering boundless possibilities to intrepid voyagers. From its award-winning fleet of modern ships to its innovative onboard amenities and exhilarating itineraries, it continues to push boundaries

**Emerging trends/ developments in the cruise tourism industry**

We are seeing a growing trend of multi-generational family groups embarking on travel adventures together. A survey conducted by Hansa Research on behalf of Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) found that 8 out of 10 urban Indian families were contemplating a cruise holiday shortly. Cruise travellers are increasingly opting for longer, immersive voyages to fascinating destinations, with fewer sea days, more overnights and longer stays in port.

**Norwegian Cruise Line's unique marketing strategies to stand out in the industry**

Sailing to 400 destinations on all seven continents, we are the international contemporary cruise line of choice. Our inclusive fare options deliver real value for money for Indian travellers, for example, our Free at Sea option includes an open bar, speciality dining, a Wi-Fi package and shore excursion credit. We're known for Freestyle Cruising, which means our guests holiday their way – with no set dining times, tables or dress codes. Agents should keep an eye out for the launch of Norwegian Viva — our second showstopping Prima Class ship. Based in the Mediterranean and departing from Lisbon, Athens (Piraeus), Rome (Civitavecchia) and Venice (Trieste), Norwegian Viva will mirror the upscale design and structure of her record-breaking sister ship Norwegian Prima.

**Contribution to local economies and communities in port destinations**

We are committed to strengthening the local communities in which we live and work, the communities we visit and the local ecosystems through which we cruise. We believe it is our responsibility and privilege to give back to the communities around the world where we serve. Through partnerships with ports, governments and non-profit organizations, we seek to maximize social, economic and environmental benefits at the destinations we visit, while delivering exceptional vacation experiences to our guests. For example, we recently launched

a new shore excursion category called 'Go Local', offering authentic cultural experiences that connect guests to locals in a meaningful and memorable way while showcasing how the locals live, work, eat and play.

**Carefully curated "cruise itineraries" by Norwegian Cruise Line to create unique experiences for passengers**

We know Indian guests seek immersive travel experiences with minimal sea days, unique destinations and more time to explore. Our itineraries include longer stays in port – up to 13.5 hours in Europe – more overnights and fewer sea days, allowing guests to fully immerse themselves in the local culture and make the most of their time ashore. As part of our commitment to innovation, we continually evaluate and enhance our offerings to meet the evolving demands of our guests. For instance, in Europe, we have expanded the duration of our 7-day itineraries to 9, 10, and 11 days. This allows for a more comprehensive exploration of the region and includes late-night departures in vibrant destinations like Ibiza and Mykonos, which come alive in the evening.

**Environmental challenges associated with cruise tourism**

We have a long-term climate action strategy with a commitment to pursue net zero by 2050 across our operations and value chain.

Our climate action strategy is centred around three pillars: Efficiency, Innovation and Collaboration. Key drivers to reach this goal include testing alternative fuels – we recently announced that we've altered the design of the two final Prima Class ships to ensure they are methanol ready – actively testing biodiesel fuels as well as investing in shore power. We're targeting 70% of the wider NCLH fleet to have cold-ironing capability by 2025.

Some other examples of our sustainability practices in action include the 57 million plastic straws and 20 million single-use plastic water bottles we're proud to have avoided since eliminating them in 2020.



# CORDELIA CRUISES' CAPTIVATING CRUISE CHRONICLES

With a passion for the sea, unwavering commitment to exceptional service, and a fleet of state-of-the-art ships, Cordelia has swiftly made it to the list of Cruises providing exceptional experiences on the high seas



**JURGEN BAILOM**  
CEO and President, Waterways  
Leisure Pvt Ltd and Cordelia Cruises

*Cruising is becoming more of a lifestyle and it is also because of the - Everything under one roof- accessibility*

## **Emerging trends/ developments in the cruise tourism industry**

Cordelia Cruises diversifies its offerings to attract a broader range of passengers. Multigenerational Indian cruising, with activities and amenities tailored to families, groups of friends and corporates is gaining popularity. Additionally, there is a growing emphasis on wellness offerings, such as onboard fitness centres, spa facilities, and healthy dining options. Overall we tend to offer a wholesome travel experience to our guests on board wherein the hustle of finding a new hotel stay every time at a new location is cut down. Guests can party and enjoy their time onboard till late and be in their room safely in the least time possible. Cruising is becoming more of a lifestyle and it is also because of the - Everything under one roof- accessibility.

## **Cordelia Cruises' unique marketing strategies to stand out in the industry**

We executed our first Pan India 360-degree media campaign which utilised print, digital, OOH, radio, and transit media across 30+ major cities, metros and airports. We utilise various digital marketing channels, including social media platforms, to engage with our target audience.

We collaborate with travel bloggers, local tourism boards, and luxury lifestyle brands to create unique content, run joint promotions, and organise special events that showcase the value of choosing Cordelia Cruises.

One of our standout marketing strategies is to highlight our exceptional dining options, Indian + international entertainment, enriching activities, and immersive cultural experiences. We also value our loyal customers and actively engage with them through loyalty programs and incentives.

Overall our focus has always been on techniques and strategies that will aid the Indian cruise category to flourish. We take utmost pride in paving the way for the Indian cruise industry and to maintain the same, our efforts are focused on new and relevant strategies to keep connecting with our customers and partners.

## **Contribution to local economies and communities in port destinations**

Cordelia Cruises recognises the importance of supporting and positively impacting the local economies and communities in the port destinations we visit. We prioritise hiring local staff, from crew members to onboard service providers, thereby stimulating local job markets and supporting livelihoods.

Cordelia has made sure that the people of India do not have to move out of their home countries to experience the cruise work life. They can encounter international exposure here in India itself yet stay connected to their roots.

During our voyage to Lakshadweep every guest of ours on average spends a minimum of 50 dollars on the island, hence benefiting the local population.

## **Carefully curated "cruise itineraries" by Cordelia Cruises to create unique experiences for passengers**

At Cordelia Cruises, we understand that the itinerary plays a crucial role in creating unique and memorable experiences for our passengers. We aim to provide our passengers with a well-rounded itinerary that showcases the best each region has to offer.

For our Sri Lanka sailings too, we avoided docking at famous ports like Colombo, but we are exploring the most unexplored and appealing ports of Trincomalee, Hambantota and Jaffna.

Another example of an offbeat location is Lakshadweep, which gives one a chance to explore the cultures and traditions of the island not known to most.

## **Environmental challenges associated with cruise tourism**

Cruise tourism relies heavily on the natural beauty of coastal and marine destinations.

We have implemented various initiatives to minimise our ecological effects and promote a cleaner future. We at Cordelia Cruises conduct regular training programs to educate our crew members about sustainable practices, waste management, and environmental conservation.



# RESORTS WORLD CRUISES, EXPERIENCES BEYOND SEA



**NARESH RAWAL**  
Vice President – Sales & Marketing,  
Resorts World Cruises (India)

*Our teams carry out a number of practices across every ship to reduce, reuse and recycle*

A perfect blend of the experience on land and at sea, Resorts World Cruises offers you the best of South Asia while sailing in the waters. With the highest standards in the cruise experience, safety and precautionary measures, ‘The Palace’ is for connoisseurs of true Asian luxury, hospitality and exuberant living

**Emerging trends/ developments in the cruise tourism industry**

The Fly-Cruise segment continues to gain traction and is emerging as a strong popular trend for the cruise industry, especially for India with the Genting Dream departing from Singapore. More travellers covering a wider spectrum of demographics and ages group are seeking new and unique vacation experiences which has led to a healthy demand for cruising, which includes millennials, young working adults, families and multi-generation families and other groups.

**Resorts World Cruises’ unique marketing strategies to stand out in the industry**

Utilising the right messaging that resonates with potential consumers is vital, complemented by the right marketing tools. Communicating the value and convenience of cruising remains one of our key messages with cruise package benefits that include accommodations, dining, entertainment and recreational activities. In addition, guests can travel to various exotic destinations without the hassle of packing and unpacking at each destination. As we live in a digital age, our strategies with travel partners have moved towards the digital space and platforms to reach out to the targeted audiences.

**Contribution to local economies and communities in port destinations**

Our ships which include the Genting Dream and the Resorts World One currently call into various ports and destinations every week such as Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Phuket, Hong Kong, Kaohsiung, Penghu and more. With each arrival, we bring inbound and outbound cruise passengers to boost both the local tourism sector and communities through trade, arts and crafts and more. In addition, we further develop beyond the cruise sector with positive spill-over benefits to different sectors including flights,

hotels, transportation, retail, bunkering and provisioning.

**Carefully curated “cruise itineraries” by Resorts World Cruises to create unique experiences for passengers**

There are many variables to consider when designing cruise itineraries. The ultimate objective is to create unique and memorable vacation experiences that complement both the journey on the ship and the destinations. At Resorts World Cruises, we currently offer a series of itineraries to popular destinations as mentioned earlier. However, our ships itself are ‘A Resort Cruising at Sea’ and is a destination on its own, offering many unique experiences with water theme parks and slides, LIVE performances, duty-free shopping at sea, as well as various exclusive onboard thematic cruises such as our current Sugar Pop cruise on the Genting Dream.

**Environmental challenges associated with cruise tourism**

At Resorts World Cruises, we remain committed to sound environmental practices in which a high standard of responsibility has been established to preserve the environment in which we operate. These include increasing energy efficiency, conservation of fuel and water, reducing solid waste generation, increasing recycling, protecting marine life and preventing oil pollution.

For instance, the Genting Dream is equipped with Eniram trim optimisation; and the exterior hull coating system incorporates the most advanced silicone-based paint to decrease drag in the water and increase fuel efficiency. Also, our ship uses Exhaust Gas Cleaning System (EGCS) to minimize emissions. In addition, we follow the highest marine industry standard and our Bio Waste Treatment system is equipped with dryers with the ability to incinerate or bag waste materials for offloading and disposal.



# Resorts Cruising At Sea

We're bringing you an experience like no other, presenting you with a large range of extraordinary entertainment, gastronomic delights and luxurious accommodation onboard Genting Dream and Resorts World One. Join us and discover the true meaning of Asian Hospitality, as we bring you to some of Asia's top destinations.



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RESORTS WORLD ONE

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the moment you board.**



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35 F&B Concepts



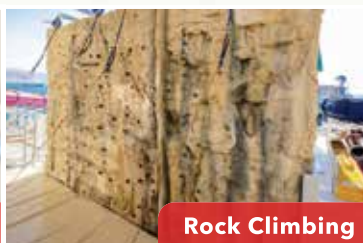
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The Palace

# MSC CRUISES- A SYMPHONY OF LUXURY & ADVENTURE ON THE HIGH SEAS



**RASHMI AHUJA**  
Divisional Manager India, MSC Cruises

*Our journey towards sustainable cruises is organised around four key pillars: Planet, People, Place and Procurement*

From the breathtaking Mediterranean to the exotic corners of the Caribbean, MSC Cruises is your gateway to a perfect harmony of relaxation and adventure. Calling the sea its home and having a maritime heritage for over 300 years, MSC is truly a place of wonder, discovery, and delight

**Emerging trends/ developments in the cruise tourism industry**

From a protected vantage point, cruising as a holiday concept has become an “emerging trend” today, as it offers a fantastic way to see the world. Most potential holidayers to the Far East, Europe and/or the USA are consciously opting for Cruises which are an affordable luxury. The cruise industry today already has new enhanced features and protocols in place with touchless embarkation and staggered arrivals, touchless payments, health questionnaires, health and safety drill protocols, and real-time visibility into the venue. Yet another focal point of the cruising industry this year is making the cruising experience more environmentally sustainable by placing more importance on responsible tourism.

**MSC Cruises’ unique marketing strategies to stand out in the industry**

Social media has become instrumental in reaching out to a wider audience today and we actively use this tool to our advantage by not just showcasing our products or ongoing promotions but also sometimes creating live feeds of our Ship launches so that it creates even more excitement for the potential traveller.

**Contribution to local economies and communities in port destinations**

Collaboration with local authorities, community groups and partners, such as the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), to share information and integrate policies and strategies helps support responsible tourism management. Together, we promote responsible travel and deliver greater social and economic outcomes for communities. We continue to invest millions of Euros in new sustainable terminal facilities, and work has progressed on Durban Cruise Terminal in South Africa, new Terminal in Miami, new Terminal in Barcelona. Our shore excursions team worked with tour operators to identify excursions founded on strong sustainability

principles. We transformed MSC Ocean Cay Marine Reserve from an abandoned industrial facility to a pristine destination, creating a remote, natural desert island. Despite the challenges, the benefits of our environmentally sensitive development became apparent, as the biodiversity increased in both the water, on land and in the air.

**Carefully curated “cruise itineraries” by MSC Cruises to create unique experiences for passengers**

At MSC Cruises, our love for the sea goes back many generations. With our cruises our guests can decide where to go and for how long! We offer a wide variety of itineraries that are mapped to reveal the sights, sounds and flavours of the world’s most intriguing cultures. Our ships sail year-round in the Mediterranean and the Caribbean (visiting also Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve, our private island in the Bahamas). Our seasonal itineraries include Northern Europe, South America, southern Africa, Asia, North America, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Qatar and Egypt, Red Sea & Saudi Arabia.

**Environmental challenges associated with cruise tourism**

With our cruise sustainability programme, we are introducing cleaner fuels across our cruise ships, promoting responsible travel through our shore excursions, reusing and recycling waste on all our ships and producing our freshwater on board directly from the sea. Our journey towards sustainable cruises is organised around four key pillars: Planet, People, Place and Procurement. This translates into a drive to continuously improve our fleet’s environmental performance; caring for all employees and promoting diversity and inclusion; working to ensure that our impact on the coastal communities that we reach remains positive; and responsibly sourcing the products and services that we purchase.



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# CROWNING MOMENTS AND ROYAL REFLECTIONS WITH PRINCESS CRUISES

Nishith Saxena who represents Princess Cruises in India, shares how deeply the local connection on both sides of the spectrum of the cruising world matters

**Emerging trends/ developments in the cruise tourism industry**

Princess Cruises had the foresight and have inducted newer & bigger ships to their fleet and have phased out older tonnage in the last 3 years. While large vessels bring the scale of economies in the cruise operations, the smaller ships provide a more cohesive onboard environment and could navigate through narrow fjords offering a little different experience – in any source market, you would find takers for both types of cruising experience. It is important to ensure that there is a wider choice of food options and also a variety of activities/shore excursions. Princess Cruises enjoys a very high percentage of repeat clients which demonstrates that the onboard offering suits a wider age group. A number of cruise lines are working with reputed insurance companies which provide protection against cancellation and also against any health emergency which may occur during cruise travel.

**Princess Cruises’ unique marketing strategies to stand out in the industry**

Princess Cruises has an excellent GSA distribution developed throughout the globe which facilitates sourcing from travel agents including India – the local distribution has been developed over the last 14 years by us. We have also enhanced our social media presence which has helped consumers to relate to the versatility of the cruise holidays. No strategy is good if it does not cover the entire 360 degrees of marketing – we believe in consistency in relationships and service delivery. We work on an inclusive style of marketing strategy where we connect & include all the stakeholders – the consumers, the distributors and the cruise lines. Many agencies use the marketing material – social media posts, EDMs and promotional videos of Princess Cruises to further their own direct reach to the consumer.

**Contribution to local economies and communities in port destinations**

As our ships and passengers explore the globe, we are reminded on a daily basis how interconnected we are with communities and people around the world. In addition to supporting a multitude of businesses at each port by bringing in thousands of guests and consumers every week and purchasing consumables locally. The Princess Cruises

Community Foundation, a nonprofit public benefit corporation, was established in 2008 to provide financial and in-kind support to non-profit organizations. The Foundation's mission is to touch the lives of the people in the places we travel, the places we are from and the places where we live through education, preservation of natural and historical global landmarks, responding to disaster relief and supporting global communities' local health and welfare efforts.

**Carefully curated "cruise itineraries" by Princess Cruises to create unique experiences for passengers**

Princess Cruises bring the world closer with voyages to over 330 cruise destinations across more than 100 countries, on all 7 continents. Explore tranquil beaches, visit historic temples, glimpse incredible wildlife and more with award-winning ships and shore excursions. We work with locals in each destination to bring you experiences that are authentic, exciting and enriching. The itineraries are conceptualised in a Non-Cookie-Cutter approach – knowing that no two individuals are the same and their experiential needs would be different, Princess organises multiple activities onboard in such a way that each of the 3000+ guests feels that the cruise itinerary is custom designed for them. The planning process for cruise itineraries could take several months as each itinerary is also designed considering the geo-political situations and multi-cultural & multi-nationalities onboard.

**Environmental challenges associated with cruise tourism**

Progress is being made with the usage of newer fuels like LNG, Hydrogen & Bio-Electric; Advance Water Treatment Systems; Advanced recycling systems and practices that allow some ships to recycle 100% of waste. Installation of tinted windows, higher efficiency appliances and HVAC systems and windows that capture and recycle heat. LED lighting which lasts 25 times longer and uses 80% less energy and an Advanced wastewater purification system are some very effective practices.

Introduced in 2019 "Princess Medallion Class Vacations" represent the best ever use of digital and AI technology for a personalised cruise vacation – starting from the pre-embarkation formalities, to smooth touch-less check-in, to pre-ordering special services.



**NISHITH SAXENA**  
 Founder & Director of Cruise Professionals LLP  
 (Represents Princess Cruises in India)

*As our ships and passengers explore the globe, we are reminded on a daily basis how interconnected we are with communities and people around the world*



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# EXPLORE THE ARTISTRY OF TRAVEL



CREATIVE TRAVEL  
DELVES INTO THE  
INNOVATIONS AND  
INSPIRATIONS  
CAREFULLY CURATING  
NEW BANDWAGONS  
WITH OPTIMISM

By Aanchal Sachdeva

*Focus, integrity and intelligent product planning are three aspects that have helped make us somewhat of a success*

#### **What sets Creative Travel apart from others in the industry?**

We work in a very competitive and crowded space. There are so many companies doing similar services across the region. So many companies that we respect greatly for the work they do. But one thing that Rohit (Kohli) and I picked up on early on in our careers was to bring focus to our actions. We never tried to copy what others were doing. We never jumped onto trending bandwagons blindly. Every step we have taken has been thought out and strategic. That sometimes slows things down and perhaps can make one a bit more risk-averse. Sometimes we failed; other times, we succeeded. But being focused did allow us to grow consistently. Our company does not have the luxury & advantage of being backed by deep pockets or global brands. Yet, we have still held out ground reasonably well. We have a strong desire to be different in how we approach our partners



With every footstep forward, **Rajeev Kohli, Joint Managing Director, Creative Travel** aims to bring something new for the travellers. His attribute to think out of the box has taken Creative Travel to new heights. The ethics of maintaining strong bonds and not relying solely on the transactional aspects of business is the mantra for long-term survival according to him. Let's hear from the expert himself in detail about how he collaborates with local communities and businesses to promote authentic, immersive travel experiences mitigating potential risks and challenges aiding to their growth in long-run

and travellers. We try to inculcate a language of professionalism and respect in our team. We work to be innovative in the way we deliver the destination. There are many moving parts in being successful and the formula changes every year. These are just a few things that make us stand out.

#### **How do you approach developing and maintaining strong relationships with partners in the travel industry?**

Being fair, honest and transparent. It can be as simple as that. My father always taught us that business is about building relationships, not just making money. Business these days can be quite transactional in nature, and if you want to develop long-term bonds, you can't think short-term. When we address our partners, be it our clients or our suppliers, it is always to be from a point of humility and equality. We only expect the same in return. This attitude has played a significant role in developing our brand and business. And all of this is, of course not good enough alone without being good in service delivery and meeting the needs of our business partners. It is the trust and love of our partners that have contributed to our success and growth.

#### **How does Creative Travel collaborate with local communities and businesses to promote authentic, immersive travel experiences?**

India is a relatively easy place to offer experiences compared to other countries. Every corner of our destination has local experts,

unique experiences and under-visited sites. The challenge is always finding these aspects and weaving their service into a customer's journey. We need to make an effort to find the local experts and storytellers that help us deliver the uniqueness we aim for. That is a lot of work. We encourage experienced service providers to come and speak to our team. We encourage a collaborative relationship with these experts. We also send our team out to see and learn. It's always an ongoing process.

#### **How do you manage and mitigate potential risks or challenges during the destination management process?**

I wish I had an answer to this question. Risk management is a full-time job, and done very hard for smaller companies, even for us. Some risks you can plan for, and some you cannot. Covid is an example of that. The reality is that you need to plan to face the unforeseen, because it will happen, and you hope your team is prepared enough to get through it. Have financial reserves. Have emergency plans. And have strong insurance policies (which most do not). Keep a watchful eye on what goes on

around you. Some things you may be able to pick up and see coming, so you can react. Some you won't. When something does happen, just stay calm, and don't have knee-jerk reactions. This is what advice I would give. It's some of what we do.

#### **Can you discuss any recent innovations or technological advancements you have implemented to enhance your operations/ clients' experience?**

As much as technology is an enabler, we are still a traditional brick & mortar-driven business. Technology won't replace all of what we do. We are driving our team to be more proficient in using our operations software. Also, we are looking at how the new artificial intelligence tools can help us in our business. The trending AI tools are interesting and have some utility to help us speed up some of our processes. We are also looking at options for how we can capture customer feedback faster and in real time. When it comes to the actual traveller experience, technology doesn't have so much of a space as we prefer to do it old school with a human touch. That is after all what we do for a living.

#### **How do you foster a culture of innovation and continuous improvement within Creative Travel's operations?**

Sharing is caring. We encourage our team to share any new ideas with the team. We have learning labs where all teams present what they are passionate about or good at. We ask

service providers to come in regularly to update and train our team. I firmly believe that you are never too old to learn and anyone who says they know it all, is at the end of their journey. Even I still take every opportunity to attend seminars, conferences and learning sessions whenever I can. The drive to continuously improve is critical to being the best. That is how we manage our people.

#### **How do you incorporate sustainability and responsible tourism practices into your operations?**

We truly believe in being a responsible business. We have to. If the planet is to survive, we must do our little bit. Every one of us. Every drop counts towards building the mighty oceans. As a company, we are working on a plan to get to no use of single-use plastic. In our office, we don't open water bottles. Still hard to do that on the road for travellers, but we are working on strategies. We have reduced the use of packaging in our gifting and client material. We do find that our travellers are more sensitized and aware of their obligations as well. So, the process is getting easier for everyone. I also like the fact that most of our hotel partners are also introducing best practices in this area.

#### **In your experience, what key factors contribute to your success in the highly competitive travel industry?**

A lot is in what I have said above. Focus, integrity and intelligent product planning are three aspects that have helped make us somewhat of a success. Prices can never be used as the only tool. There is a customer for every price point. We recognise we will never be the cheapest. That is not the aim. We just want to be the best at what we do and that is our drive.

But I also want to mention one thing that has probably contributed to our success the most – our people. The men and women who work for us today and have in the past, are truly the stars of all we do. The Kohli family plays a role indeed, but we could not be successful without the hard work of our team. They not only support us, but they also guide us in being better at the business. Many have been in the team for a long time and have seen our journey up close. We are truly indebted to them.

Can you describe any notable growth or expansion plans in the near future?

Shhh.. I can't tell you everything can I? What I can say is that we are optimistic and are pushing forward to achieve our goals in the next 12 to 18 months. India still has a long way to go on recovering as a destination for inbound travel. Each one of us is working in isolation from any industry-wide efforts and without any structural or institutional support from the government. So every time we take two steps forward, something happens to pull us back. Such is the life of the Indian DMC. Nevertheless, we are excited about what the future holds for us.

# RAIL EUROPE

A TRANSCONTINENTAL TAPESTRY OF TRAIN TRAVEL



Where the seamless harmony of rail travel and European enchantment converge to offer an extraordinary way of experiencing the continent, Rail Europe stands as the ultimate gateway to unlocking the reassures of Europe. Srijit Nair, General Manager for India, Middle East & Africa, Rail Europe propagates not only does Rail Europe provide efficient and convenient transportation but it also offers an array of ticketing options to suit every traveller's needs. He also emphasises how by choosing train travel over other modes of transportation, travellers contribute to minimising their carbon footprint, embracing eco-friendly practices preserving the pristine beauty for generations to come

By Aanchal Sachdeva

**How has Rail Europe evolved since its inception, and what are some of the major milestones or achievements covered?**

Rail Europe started in the year 1932 and began business in New York to promote the journey from Paris to Lyon. Since then, Rail Europe has always been evolving and growing. Headquartered in Paris, we opened multiple offices and now have an office in Mumbai, New York, Shanghai and Melbourne along with the remarkable presence which we established with our partners all across the globe. We kept developing our booking system and then added many products to our platform. Today, we are connected with around 100 rail operators in Europe thereby proving easy access to travel agents to book these trains through our B2B portal agent.raileurope.com. The major change is by revamping our platform and moving from paper tickets to e-tickets and now all the tickets and passes that you book through Rail Europe are e-tickets, e-passes or mobile passes. We haven't stopped at this and will continue to learn and develop our booking system ERA (Easy Rail Access). We always strive to add new products to our system and the recent development is that travel agents can now book seat reservations for their customers holding Eurail passes. They can quickly determine whether an additional seat reservation purchase is required for specific routes (such as TGV, Lyria, Eurostar, and Frecciarossa, among others), and if so, the associated cost. This new offer further enhances Rail Europe's commitment to providing the best possible travel experience and options for its trade partners.

**What are some of the key benefits and advantages for travel agents and industry professionals in partnering with Rail Europe?**

Rail Europe is the global reference brand for European train booking both for individual travellers and travel agents anywhere in the world. Rail Europe puts its expertise at the service of travel to make train booking a no-brainer. We provide technology to travel agents which enables them to learn about train travel, book European trains easily all at once and earn commissions. We have been the trusted partner of travel professionals and train operators for 90 years. Our rail expert teams provide technology service solutions to +15,000 travel professionals in 70 countries.

**What role does Rail Europe play in Sustainable travel across Europe?**

Train travel is sustainable travel and they both

We are an ambitious company, determined to offer a one-stop shop for all train travel in Europe and to develop innovations that allow travel agents to book their tickets at the best available price, according to their convenience and needs, on the platform

go hand in hand. High-speed trains travel faster and are more environmentally friendly. Travelling on high-speed trains also means emitting at least 20 times less CO2 than by car and at least 30 times less CO2 than by plane. Rail Europe as an organization is helping and supporting sustainable travel and other high-speed rail initiatives encouraging more and more people to travel by train.

**Can you highlight some of the popular rail routes or destinations that Rail Europe covers?**

We are connected with 100 railway operators in Europe and multiple routes are popular. One such train is the Eurostar which is very famous amongst Indian travellers. Eurostar connects the UK to France, Belgium and Netherlands and travels through the English Channel Tunnel. The most popular route for Eurostar is London to Paris. Travellers like taking the scenic trains in Switzerland like the Bernina Express and Glacier Express and we have also recently launched these on our B2B Portal agent.raileurope.com wherein travel agents can easily book these journeys. Popular countries amongst Indian travellers have always been France, Switzerland, Germany, Italy and Spain and the railway routes connecting these countries are quite famous like Paris to Geneva, Madrid to Barcelona, Milan to Paris, and Frankfurt to Paris.

**What kind of bookings are you seeing from the Indian market right now?**

There is a pent-up demand for travel to Europe and we see a lot of leisure and family travellers opting for customized holidays we see a turnaround in business travel too as most of the corporates prefer trains within Europe which are sustainable travel. Indians love travelling to Switzerland and France so there is a huge demand for Swiss passes along with French train TGV and Swiss France connecting trains - TGV Lyria. Train travel within the UK, Italy and Spain has seen a big jump which is promising.





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# INTRODUCING TBO ACADEMY'S GROUNDBREAKING APPROACH TO IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES

TBO Academy revolutionised the e-learning platform by creating a marketplace for travel partners, providing them with valuable travel resources. This innovative approach has empowered travel professionals to simplify their growth and expand their revenues. Today, TBO Academy stands as a global e-learning platform for travel partners, offering over 400 free travel courses online and serving a monthly user base of 35K+

According to Lamba, the visionary behind TBO Academy, the institution has not only set goals but also adapted to the changing market landscape. To meet the current needs of travellers, TBO Academy has introduced a groundbreaking avenue called "Interactions with Attractions." This unique initiative allows individuals to delve into unexplored facets of destinations, uncovering hidden cultural gems and connecting with local communities.

## Eyeing the unexplored marvels

Lamba emphasizes that attractions offer more than just physical experiences. Visitors seek tranquillity, adventure, and an adrenaline rush, which can be found beyond mere sights. Whether it's a dining experience, a museum visit, or a train journey, every interaction holds the potential for an exceptional experience. The essence of "Interactions with Attractions" lies in focusing on the individual experiences rather than the destination as a whole. To support this initiative, TBO Academy provides free marketing opportunities for attractions and distributes complimentary tickets to travel agents. The primary goal is to boost local revenue and educate travel agents about the transformative power of experiences.

Driven by their passion to captivate travellers, TBO Academy has meticulously crafted itineraries that showcase the hidden gems of each attraction. From the awe-inspiring "The View at the Palm" in Dubai, where architectural wonders meet breathtaking vistas, to the celestial sanctuary of the "Kennedy Space Centre" in the USA, where mankind's cosmic dreams come alive, and the enthralling wildlife encounters at "Gatorland," TBO Academy leaves no stone unturned in curating unrivalled experiences.

Lamba expresses the collective dedication to creating an unforgettable journey, tripling visitor numbers in cherished regions. Their focus is not only on offering remarkable experiences but also on showcasing the uniqueness of each attraction. The aim is to rethink travel and revolutionize attraction

marketing to elicit an extraordinary response.

TBO Academy believes in transcending boundaries, unveiling the essence of each attraction, and fostering a profound connection between travel agents and the attractions they represent. With meticulous attention to detail and a fresh perspective, TBO Academy ignites curiosity and wonder in the hearts of every visitor.

This visionary approach aims to elevate the travel experience, surpass expectations, and inspire a new wave of exploration. Prepare to be immersed in a tapestry of extraordinary encounters, creating cherished memories that will last a lifetime.

TBO Academy is an aesthetic, fresh, and modern innovation that offers a striking experience like no other. Through the seamless integration of enthralling history, vibrant culture, and magnificent architecture, they introduce the captivating marketing concept of "Interactions with Attractions," which redefines travel.

"In this multilayered world, join us as we redefine the boundaries of travel, inviting you to uncover the hidden treasures that lie within," concludes Lamba, extending a warm welcome to attractions and travel agents.







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# TRADE WINDS OF DUBAI NAVIGATING THE TOURISM LANDSCAPE

DUBAI POSITIONS ITSELF AS A PIONEER OF INTERNATIONAL TRENDS UNLEASHING THE POTENTIAL OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

By Aanchal Sachdeva



*Dubai aims to be a world leader harnessing the power of AI and other advanced technologies to provide public sector services*

*A thriving hub for travel and tourism, Dubai is renowned for its extravagant lifestyle, futuristic architecture, and luxurious offerings. Dubai has been investing heavily in becoming a leading destination for business and leisure, and has endeavoured to solidify as a dynamic and ever-evolving city. Bader Ali Habib, Head of Region - South Asia, Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism, in his invaluable initiative of speaking to TravelScapes, has tried to align the efforts made by the government and the tourism sector with the miracle the city exuberates on the forefront*

**The MICE industry is giving a boost to the travel and tourism sector. How is the footfall bolstered in Dubai with an upswing in MICE? What initiatives are you taking to promote Dubai as a popular destination on the MICE front?**

Dubai continues to attract businesses and talent worldwide, providing an effective connectivity platform to collaborate, accelerate innovation, and showcase next-generation products and services to far-reaching markets. The MICE sector has always been an integral pillar of the city's economy, as the business ecosystem stimulator for the wider region, reflecting the emirate's commitment to GDP diversification. In line with Dubai Economic Agenda D33's objective of solidifying the emirate's position as one of the top three global cities for business and travel, business tourism accelerated its role in fostering economic growth during 2022.

**What responsible/sustainable tourism initiatives is Dubai Tourism taking since tourism has picked up momentum this year?**

Environment-friendly and sustainable tourism could be profitable for businesses while reducing carbon emissions, say experts expressing their opinion at the session held in Dubai, keeping with its theme for this year, 'Working Towards Net Zero', ATM 2023. One of the unique initiatives launched by DET was to reduce single-use plastic consumption. Since its launch in February 2022 by Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of Dubai

Executive Council, the citywide sustainability movement has achieved great success.

The transformative programme empowers communities to reduce their reliance on single-use plastic bottles and embrace sustainable alternatives. To date, the partnership has yielded extraordinary results, with a reduction of over 10 million 500ml single-use plastic water bottles.

**With the growing trend of different tourism globally, which tourism is most preferred by tourists in search of uniquely local experiences in Dubai?**

Dubai has successfully positioned itself as a pioneer of international trends in the travel industry, from sustainability to gastronomy, wellness, culture and more. Under sustainable travel, travellers can enjoy eco-friendly accommodations, such as hotels with green certifications and energy-efficient features. Adventure enthusiasts can embark on desert safaris. Nature reserves and national parks provide a sanctuary for wildlife enthusiasts who can spot diverse species of birds, mammals, and marine life. From a wellness perspective, travellers can enjoy rejuvenating spa treatments to serene yoga retreats in magical locations. Dubai offers a sanctuary where visitors can unwind and restore balance to their lives. Art enthusiasts get to witness art festivals, and contemporary exhibitions, and embrace diverse cultural events that attract artists, collectors, and enthusiasts from around the world. Lastly, Dubai boasts an impressive range of culinary

experiences, with a diverse mix of international cuisines and local Emirati cuisine. Locally unique experiences such as walkthroughs at the Al Fahidi historical neighbourhood, Heritage Express, Etihad Museum, Coffee Museum and Emirati cuisines available at restaurants like Al Khayma Heritage Restaurant, Arabian Tea House, Karak House, and others are gaining popularity among local residents and global travellers alike.

**Dubai is the hub of advancement fused with a wide variety of attractions for tourists, how has Dubai Tourism incorporated machine intelligence to enhance its visibility in the market?**

To accelerate efforts and create exceptional Government services, Dubai has launched the 'Dubai Centre for Artificial Intelligence'. Dubai aims to be a world leader harnessing the power of AI and other advanced technologies to provide public sector services.

**What promotional strategies are deployed by Dubai Tourism to promote the destination on a global level?**

In order to bolster ongoing promotional strategies, Dubai Tourism has introduced incredible family-friendly deals for the summer like 'Kids Go Free', wherein families can experience world-class attractions and a variety of indoor and outdoor activities, including classic landmarks such as Dubai Fountain, At the Top Burj Khalifa, and LEGOLAND Dubai Park as well as newer experiences like the Museum of the Future, AYA Universe, and the Sky Views Observatory as well as complimentary stay for kids at select hotel chains.

Dubai Economy & Tourism launched its latest summer campaign 'Do you believe it?' inviting Indian travellers to experience the destination with their families to make their holiday experience unforgettable.



**ONE ABOVE**



## Treehouse Hotels debuts Treehouse Sunrise Resort & Caravan Park

**Treehouse Hotels** & Resorts announced the expansion of its portfolio by launching a very unique concept of Caravan Parks in India. This innovative concept brings alive the idea of luxury road travel in its true sense. It combines the allure of camping with the comfort and luxury of a world-class resort, offering guests an unparalleled experience amidst the breathtaking landscapes of Neemrana in Rajasthan.

Introducing a new concept to people who would like to experience a stay in a Caravan Park or who own Caravans but don't have a secure and safe place to park them; Treehouse Hotel opens its first Caravan Park in Neemrana. Located on the very well-connected Delhi Jaipur highway, spread over 10 acres of land, this is one of the best resorts in Neemrana suited both for business and leisure. The inspiration behind launching Caravan parks is the increase in drive cations amongst the urban population who are looking for a relaxed getaway along with some excitement and adventure. Caravan holidays are still a new concept in India due to a lack of infrastructure. Treehouse Group entered into this niche segment of creating an infrastructure for Caravan lovers and to be able to provide a safe, secure, and a hospitable experience in the confinement of the resort. With these Caravan parks introduced, people will have a safe place to enjoy the alternate accommodation of a Caravan or park their own caravans and take advantage of the facilities of the resort as well.

## Wyndham Hotels announces Ramada Encore

**Wyndham Hotels** & Resorts announced the opening of Ramada Encore by Wyndham Amagasaki. The 235-key hotel is the first Ramada Encore by Wyndham hotel in Japan, and the first international hotel brand within Amagasaki.

Ramada Encore by Wyndham Amagasaki is the 2nd hotel Wyndham manages with Wyndham Destinations Japan.

In April of this year, visitors to Japan rose to a post-pandemic high of almost 2 million, attributed to a relaxation of travel restrictions in China, according to the Japan National Tourism



Organisation. The number of foreign visitors climbed to 1.95 million last month from 1.82 million, signalling an opportune time for the opening of Ramada Encore by Wyndham Amagasaki.

One of 24 brands in Wyndham's brand portfolio, Ramada Encore by Wyndham is renowned for its vibrancy, energy, and approachability.

## Fortune Hotels opens a pristine property in Khajjiar

**Fortune Hotels** announced the opening of its newest hotel in the scenic town of Khajjiar. Nestled amidst the breathtaking landscapes of Himachal Pradesh, this addition to the Fortune Hotels portfolio promises an extraordinary experience for travellers.

Set in the heart of the 'Mini Switzerland' of India, Fortune Khajjiar blends warm hospitality and a mystical charm in its pristine surroundings. The property offers guests an enchanting retreat surrounded by towering pine trees, snow-capped mountains, and lush green meadows. The property's idyllic setting provides a perfect escape from bustling city life, allowing guests to immerse themselves in nature's splendour.

Situated just an hour's drive

from the tourist hot spot Dalhousie, the hotel offers easy access to numerous popular tourist attractions in the region, making it a perfect choice for leisure travellers looking to explore the natural beauty of Himachal Pradesh.

The well-appointed rooms and suites with magnificent views are a highlight; along with the all-day diner, a chic bar, a modern banquet hall, a swimming pool, a kids' play area, and soon-to-open gymnasium and a restful spa, making the hotel apt for families, couples, and solo travellers alike. Additionally, the town attracts adventure seekers as well, hosting multiple adventure sports like paragliding, horse riding, trekking, and zorbing which are constant attractions here.



## 119 Minor Hotels recognised for sustainability excellence

**More than** 100 properties operated by Minor Hotels are included in the new GHA Green Collection.

The Green Collection is a new initiative from GHA Discovery and brings together nearly 200 hotels globally that are demonstrating a strong commitment to protecting people and the planet.

A total of 119 properties

representing each of Minor Hotels' eight global hotel brands – Anantara, Avani, Elewana Collection, Oaks, NH Hotels, NH Collection, and Tivoli – across 21 countries have been included in the collection. The properties have been selected based on their commitment to sustainability, including energy efficiency, water conservation, waste reduction, and responsible sourcing.

Each hotel in the GHA Green Collection has earned at least one globally-recognised certification, including EarthCheck, Green Growth 2050, Green Key, Green Globe or Green Seal.





## Westin Hotels launches another property in Hyderabad

**Westin Hotels** and Resorts unveiled The Westin Hyderabad Hitec City, its second Westin property to launch in Hyderabad, with the distinctive identity of being an all-women-managed hotel, the first of its kind within the city. Located in Hitec City, a prominent technology township and within 32 km distance from the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, the 168 key hotel offers a holistic array of wellness experiences designed to empower guests to be the best version of themselves, regardless of the nature of travel. Playing its part towards building a more sustainable future, this hotel will operate solely on green

energy sourced from renewable resources.

"We are thrilled to expand the brand's footprint in Hyderabad with the opening of The Westin Hyderabad Hitec City," said Ranju Alex, Area Vice President, South Asia, Marriott International Inc. "This landmark opening marks the first all-women operated hotel within the city and heralds a paradigm shift for the hospitality industry, breaking from the conventional ways of operating. Paired with the Westin brand's signature programmes, adapted to the needs of the modern traveller, the hotel is set to deliver experiences designed to empower a better you".



## IHG Hotels & Resorts partners with Emirates Skywards

**IHG Hotels** and resorts partnered with Emirates Skywards to launch a limited-time offer allowing IHG One Rewards and Emirates Skywards members to earn triple Skywards Miles when booking a stay at any IHG Hotels & Resorts property worldwide\*.

This limited time offer allows guests to earn 2 Miles per \$1 USD or local currency equivalent paid on eligible charges at InterContinental® Hotels & Resorts, Kimpton® Hotels & Restaurants, Regent® Hotels & Resorts, Hualuxe™ Hotels and Resorts, Crowne

Plaza®, Hotel Indigo®, EVEN™ Hotels, voco™, Holiday Inn®, Holiday Inn Express®, Holiday Inn Club Vacations®, avid™ Hotels and Vignette™ Collection hotels.

Candlewood Suites®, Staybridge Suites®, Atwell Suites and The Venetian | The Palazzo Las Vegas will earn 1 mile per \$1 USD or local currency equivalent paid on eligible charges. The promotion was valid for registrations and hotel bookings made until June 30, 2023 for hotel stays through September 30, 2023 at any IHG Hotels and Resorts property worldwide\*.

## Luxeglamp opens India's first luxury 'bubble glamping' resort in Kerala

**Luxeglamp EcoResorts** launched India's first exquisite 'bubble glamping' resort in the picturesque hill station of Munnar, Kerala. Set amidst the breathtaking vistas of mountains, valleys and lakes, this new site embodies the perfect harmony between captivating views and environmental conservation.

Located at Poopara, Munnar in Kerala, Luxeglamp Munnar's six (6) bubble glamps are situated within the idyllic lush green landscape of the hill station and cardamom plantations offering a mesmerising experience that promises panoramic views and an unparalleled stargazing experience.

Antony Thomas, CEO & Founder of Luxeglamp

EcoResorts commented "Our aim is to bring new, innovative, sustainable, and eco-friendly glamping and hospitality experiences to our guests. With the Luxeglamp Kodaikanal resort, we were the first to provide a luxury glamping experience with geodesic Domes. Now we are bringing forth the first ever experience of Bubble Glamping in India, which has an enchanting experience for guests."

Glamping has become increasingly popular in India, with more people seeking unique and sustainable travel experiences. Luxeglamp is at the forefront of this trend, offering guests a chance to connect with nature without sacrificing comfort.

## Onora Hospitality debuts well-being with 'Bookmark Resorts'

**Onora Hospitality** Pvt Ltd announced its first well-being resort under its newly launched brand 'Bookmark Resorts'. The company presently operates 20 boutique hotels and resorts with over 500 rooms in 8 states under its brands 'jüSTa Hotels and Resorts' and 'NUO'.

The first Bookmark Resort is scheduled to open in Manali, Himachal Pradesh soon. It will have 39 rooms and suites with all modern facilities. The company plans to open 10 Bookmark Resorts across India over the next 3 years.

The company's Founder & CEO Ashish Vohra said, "Currently, well-being resorts in India are either at premium level and price



points or at a very basic level of service. Given how people are focusing on well-being, we wished to bring a luxury, target-oriented, holistic wellness offering to a larger audience. Through Bookmark Resorts, we will offer holistic journeys of healing and rejuvenation through practices like Yoga and Meditation..."

# UNLOCKING BOUNDLESS HORIZONS WITH **VFS GLOBAL**

TravelScapes in a conversation with **Atul Marwah, Chief Operating Officer – MENA, VFS Global**, unveils the game-changing insights on reshaping the future of global mobility absorbing the era of machine intelligence

By *Aanchal Sachdeva*



## Top travel trends taking the front seat

Apart from an increased focus on traveller data privacy, a key trend we can expect is the implementation of contactless traveller experiences at international borders. Artificial intelligence, machine learning, and data analytics will fundamentally change border management, enabling Smart Borders a few years from now. However, the adoption of these technologies is currently relatively limited. Health considerations continue to be a key determining factor in the new normal. This has fuelled the emergence and acceptance of contactless and Do it Yourself (DIY) technologies.

The recent rise in eco-conscious travellers who seek to travel sustainably is also changing how businesses and locations are operating now from their 'business as usual' attributes to looking to transform journeys by offering meaningful experiences.

## The surge of travellers' applications for visas

The year 2022 has been an exceptional year for travel, with the demand for international sojourns soaring well beyond the traditional peak seasons we see every year. Pent-up demand for travel across the globe is leading to an unprecedented rise in visa applications, with travel from the UAE to popular destinations expected to rise further. Taking the case of UAE, we recorded a 25% increase in application numbers in 2022 over 2019 from the UAE.

## Challenges faced in feeding the travellers as per their requirements/demands

During peak season visa processing can take longer than anticipated, hence we reiterate that would-be travellers must apply early as each application is unique and thus the processing time may differ for each case. As most countries accept visa applications up to 90 days in advance (with Schengen countries accepting documents up to 6 months before the date of travel), we constantly urge applicants to apply for their visas well in advance to avoid any delays. For those travelling to the UK with a stopover in EU member states, it is important to remember that airport transit visa requirements differ from country to country based on the traveller's nationality and purpose of visit. We urge all applicants to refer to the relevant Embassy/Consulate's website for details.

## Strategies deployed by VFS Global to cater to tourists' demands

To avoid delays in processing during the peak season, we continue to share advisories with citizens and residents to plan their travel itinerary and visa applications well in advance through our social media platforms, website and through key news portals in the region.

From form-filling assistance to courier return of passports, and even end-to-end guidance through the visa application submission process at the Premium Lounge, VFS Global offers a range of optional services for customers to choose from, available online or at the Visa Application Centers, for nominal fees. You can apply for your visa from the safety and comfort of your home or office. With VFS' Visa At Your Doorstep service, you can have a trained professional visit your location of choice to accept your documents and enrol biometrics. Please note that opting for any optional, value-added services (such as Prime Time Services or Form-filling, or any other service) does not guarantee a quicker or more positive decision by the concerned embassy/consulate.

## Expansion plans with new Visa Application Centres

We continue to monitor the visa demand from these locations and align our strategy to ensure convenience to applicants in submitting their visa applications at a location close by. This

includes opening new Centres or via Temporary Enrolment Centres which we operate in select locations where there are no permanent centres. One such example in the region is our tie-up with Chambers of Commerce in Riyadh, Makkah, Jazan, Al-Jouf, Najran, Al-Qassem, Madinah and Al-Kharj, to provide their members, employees, and residents end-to-end visa and passport services at the chambers' premises as part of our endeavour to provide service with ease to applicants across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Similarly, bringing passport and consular services closer to home for Filipino, Sri Lankan and Indian citizens in the Kingdom, we also operate passport renewal services in three major cities — Riyadh, Jeddah and Alkhobar — and Passport On Wheels services.

As part of our vision to expand our footprint in Tier 2 and 3 cities in countries like India, a recent launch is our Joint Visa Application Centre in the city of Lucknow which now ensures that residents of Uttar Pradesh apply for some Schengen and Saudi visas no longer have to travel to Delhi to do the same.

## VFS Global moving forward with travellers' demand for visa applications online

Digitisation of the tourism industry is not just limited to bookings or the use of the internet to search for locations and flights but to the entire experience itself, with every step being modified adding convenience for travellers.

The Electronic Visa (E-Visa) is emerging as a convenient and revolutionary service in the travel domain as it now offers applicants the unmatched convenience of applying for their visa from the location of their choice by leveraging the highly secure and smart solution developed by VFS Global. With an intuitive online application form-filling support that leverages artificial intelligence and quality checks to ensure all details submitted and documents uploaded are as per the requirement of the mission, our E-Visa solutions make it simpler and more convenient for governments to decide on the visa application in a secured (GDPR compliant format) to deliver an end-to-end seamless service.

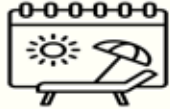
Overall, we processed over 200,000 eVOA/eVisa applications globally between January and November 2022.





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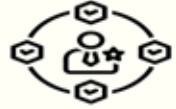
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# TAAI PROPOUNDS “TRANSCENDING BORDERS – TRANSFORMING LIVES”

Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) on the invitation from the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Board (SLTPB) is holding its 67th Convention and Exhibition in Colombo, Sri Lanka from July 6 – 9, 2023 in association with the Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO). The Convention has post-tours, offering people an excellent chance to experience all that Sri Lanka has to offer

By Aanchal Sachdeva



*TAAI today has emerged stronger than ever to connect with stakeholders, government, all miscellaneous government bodies, and federations not only in India but globally too*

## JYOTI MAYAL

President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI)

### Retaining the glorious legacy of the association since the presidency

As President of TAAI, I truly believe that TAAI has come a long way since 1951. TAAI is the largest premier association. In 1951 there was a futuristic vision and the reason to establish a non-profitable association of people, a vision that the current team has taken forward. TAAI represents small and large companies and supports each member to stand with dignity and respect for their services. TAAI today has emerged stronger than ever to connect with stakeholders, government, all miscellaneous government bodies, and federations not only in India but globally too. TAAI sits on various boards and shares its views effectively and is sincerely the voice of the industry. TAAI will continue to build a stronger relationship, a voice to be heard for the betterment of this sector holistically. I believe the government needs to draft policies and bring in ease of business in consultation with us and then believe in us as partners and support us to drive success and deliverables.

Once again, I reiterate as a leader of TAAI, an association which truly is an association of all aspects of tourism with the most knowledgeable, experienced service providers – inbound, outbound, domestic, adventure, M.I.C.E., cruise, films, weddings, wellness and more – the largest connect of the value chain, we will continue to become the strongest voice of the industry, for the industry. I am always open to all criticism and suggestions as that is a democratic way to grow. I strongly and truly believe in my association members and see tremendous growth in the entire Travel, Tourism and Hospitality sector. Sometimes I feel I should have a magic wand to correct all the wrongs for our members and industry. I believe working in synergy with commitment leads to nothing but success.

### The idea behind Convention's theme “Transcending Borders, Transforming Lives”

‘Transcending Borders Transforming Lives’ is what I as the President and the TAAI team believe in. Today our Honourable Prime Minister Modi is saying ‘One Earth One Family’ something which we feel very strongly too. When we talk about tourism, we truly need to believe in it ourselves, as tourism does not need borders or conflicts. Tourism is an avenue to bring in life experiences, peace, growth, prosperity, and sharing of knowledge, culture and history to make it sustainable with inclusiveness. Tourism truly transforms lives by creating employment, infrastructure, fiscal growth, women and rural development, and spreading awareness.

To achieve this, we need to transcend borders physically and in mind because even in life, you have to transcend all your thoughts and break the glass ceiling, and this is where tourism is going. Tourism is changing dramatically. People are not interested in the same type of travel. They are looking for new adventures and fresh destinations. The demographics towards life and experiences have changed. So just as you have evolved, your mind needs to evolve too, we need to focus on how growth can happen and not live in our past.

All of the above is what the 67th TAAI Convention will drive – open our minds to growth and prosperity for the future and learn to accept the changes and be prominent leaders in the same to achieve success.





*Differentiating between travel and the travellers' needs for today and tomorrow with a vision to 2047 shall be deliberate during the 67th TAAI Convention being held in Colombo from July 6-9, 2023*

## JAY BHATIA

Vice President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI)

### Key proposals during the convention to protect the interests of its members

Our Business Sessions during the convention shall be holding various discussions by Esteemed panellists from not only India but from across the globe. We shall be covering topics on the transformed landscape of experiences and connections, and the potential of Indian Aviation on how we connect, explore and do business today and in the future.

We shall be having debates and talks on how the evolved traveller shall expand his scope with the support and guidance of the travel agents in India.

TAAI shall be also connecting with the latest travel technology and giving support to its membership based on AI and the next-generation leads and completion of itineraries using AI.

Differentiating between travel and the travellers' needs for today and tomorrow with a vision to 2047 shall be deliberate during the 67th TAAI Convention being held in Colombo from July 6-9, 2023.

### TAAI, a strong representative association of India collaborating with Host Association Partner SLaito for the convention

On the invitation of SLTPB and SLAITO, TAAI has been invited to conduct its 67th Convention in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Our purpose is to connect all our delegates with over 200 Sri Lankan stakeholder partners, like hotels, DMCS, car rental companies, activity and sightseeing companies, tourism locations, airlines and other entities during the B2B sessions that shall be spread over 2 days. Leading stakeholder partners from Sri Lanka shall be showcasing their products and services to the delegation of over 500 participants from India.

### Sri Lankan Tourism bucking up to bring back the lost glory of hospitality and tourism

Sri Lanka always maintained its glory of being a fantastic tourism destination from India. Its heritage, culture and landscapes have always been welcoming to Indian tourists for decades. There have been political challenges that were faced last year as any country would, but they have recovered and India being one of their largest source markets they are seeking every Indian Travelling must visit Sri Lanka and explore the beauty and heritage and culture of the Island Destination. Members of SLAITO and TAAI shall be working closely to develop various itineraries and routes that shall benefit and bring comfort to the newly evolved traveller from India to Sri Lanka. TAAI members shall ensure a huge number of tourist footfalls to the island nation from Incredible India.



*TAAI has always been in a leadership role in promoting various destinations across the globe and has been acknowledged by various countries*

## BETTAIAH LOKESH

Hon. Secretary General, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI)

### TAAI's journey in the coming years

TAAI is recognised by the Ministry of Tourism. TAAI has twenty Regions/Chapters, right from Jammu and Kashmir in the North to Kerala in the South, Gujrat in the West to Bengal in the East. All these twenty Regions and Chapters have been actively involved in promoting Travel and Tourism related activities for decades. We have now taken up the responsibility of adding the North East, Orissa and other Indian states and union territories into our fold. We have given importance to Skill development to educate and empower men and women not just in urban areas but also in rural India in the field of Tourism. This will ensure that apart from the world-class Infrastructure provided by the Government, we will have world-class people who will be directly involved in the Promotion of Tourism in India.

### Department of Tourism bucking up to bring back the lost glory of Indian hospitality and tourism

We Congratulate the Department of Tourism for their excellent work in restoring the glory of Indian hospitality and Tourism. The Department of Tourism has to engage Travel Associations like TAAI, more holistically to fast-track Visit India Promotion Globally. We are preparing our membership to encourage our citizens to visit various parts of India.

### Strategic investments for the cost-effective growth of the association

TAAI is a Not for Profit Association, that is giving importance to Job Quality, Women's economic empowerment, Skills and leadership and climate change. We aim to boost economic growth, job creation and sustainability in Tourism to public and private capital resources.

### Future goals of TAAI for the upcoming years

TAAI has been and will be assisting those destinations who wish to promote outbound tourism from India, in conducting roadshows, and destination training programs for our Membership across India. Some of our Conventions abroad have yielded positive results in the growth of Tourism from India to their respective destinations.

### Working closely with travel agents

TAAI has always worked keeping in mind the fast-changing world to which our Membership has to adapt. We work closely with IATA, Airlines, MOCA, the Ministry of Tourism and all other stakeholders in the Travel and Tourism Industries in ensuring ease of doing business for our membership. We are also working tirelessly in aiding our Membership with a world-class technology platform to run their business and have access to products at the most competitive price.



*The Eastern Region has always lacked opportunities and not talent*



*We at our level trying to connect with more and more foreign tourism boards; showing our potential to grow in our region and simultaneously refer to Head quarter also for the benefit of other Chapters too*

**MANAV SONI**

Chairman, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) - Eastern Region

TAAI was formed towards the end of the year 1951 by a group of twelve leading travel agents, who felt the time had come to create an Association to regulate the travel industry in India along organized lines and by sound business principles. The primary purpose was to protect the interests of those engaged in the industry, to promote its orderly growth and development and to safeguard the travelling public from exploitation by unscrupulous and unreliable operators. In the following years, the Association's membership has swelled steadily from the original 12 to approximately 3000 members consisting of Active, Associate, Allied, Government and Non-Resident.

**The theme of 'Transcending Borders, Transforming Lives'**

With the captivating theme of 'Transcending Borders, Transforming Lives,' TAAI the nodal Association of India, is all geared to welcome close to 500 delegates in Colombo and has already received an overwhelming response for the same. We are excited to embark on an incredible journey of transformation together. This year TAAI celebrates the power of collaborations and its force to surpass borders. We have assembled a diverse range of individuals, organizations, and state governments who are passionate about promoting cross-sectoral regional cooperation in tourism. Together, we aim to foster connections, exchange ideas, and ignite innovative solutions that will shape the future of our industry.

**Strategic investments for the cost-effective growth of the association in the Eastern region**

In the TAAI Eastern Region, we have been trying to keep all our members updated and occupied with new as well as existing products. We have successfully conducted many knowledge-based sessions for our members. We have tried and would keep on working towards making TAAI Eastern Region the trusted voice with the Government bodies, Airlines, and Tourism Boards, in fact in the entire Tourism and Hospitality Industry.

**Working closely with travel agents in the Eastern region**

The most important challenge faced in our Region is despite being one of the major contributors to the Industry, we are counted in the TIER II region.

To such misconception, not all Airlines, Tourism Boards and other suppliers reach out to this region. TAAI is making sure that one by one Tourism Boards, International Airlines and suppliers find confidence in reaching out to the Eastern Region.

**VIRENDRA SHAH**

Managing Partner, Chairman-TAAI Gujarat Chapter

**TAAI's journey in the coming years**

The association has had a long glorious legacy of keeping the government and chamber of commerce in check, Shah foresees TAAI's journey in the coming years. TAAI will always remain the Supreme body in the Travel industry. It will surely influence various govt. and the decision related to the travel industry.

**Department of Tourism is bucking up to bring back the lost glory of Indian hospitality and tourism**

Yes, the department is doing very well to promote inbound tourism. But it has to look into the practical problems of the stakeholders to get more support from them and thereby increase more footfall of tourists within the country.

**Strategic investments to pitch for the cost-effective growth of the association in Gujarat**

We are planning to have more knowledge sessions on GST; Credit Cards; VFS; Hoteliers and more so that our members get updated with the latest development in the industry and thereby serve better to potential travellers.

**Future goals of Gujarat in association with TAAI for the upcoming years to promote outbound tourism**

We at our level trying to connect with more and more foreign tourism boards; showing our potential to grow in our region and simultaneously refer to Head quarter also for the benefit of other Chapters too.

**Working closely with travel agents in Gujarat**

Close interactions with members on various issues either through WhatsApp chatting or a personal discussion with members on any related issue is the speciality of our chapter. Members are helping each other by sharing details related to airlines; visas; VFS issues and more.





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# Maldives

*Move away from mundanity,  
come closer to serenity*

By Aanchal Sachdeva



## Malé City

Malé City, the captivating capital of the Maldives is nestled on the enchanting southern rim of the North Malé Atoll. This untouched gem is a veritable haven for those seeking the perfect honeymoon, couples in search of romance, and water sports enthusiasts yearning for adventure. Immerse yourself in the splendour of this natural paradise, where a luxuriant island canopy unfolds before you, painting idyllic scenes that delight both the eyes and the soul. Let this sanctuary whisk you away from the frenetic pace of everyday life, offering palm-fringed lagoons and an atmosphere of tranquility that soothes your very being.



## Maldives Glowing Beach

Dwelling on Mudhdhoo Island, Maldives Glowing Beach is a hidden gem also known as Vaadhoo Island in Raa Atoll. It stands as a beacon for avid travellers, luring them in with its awe-inspiring spectacle of luminous waves. Prepare to be captivated by nature's own light show as millions of bioluminescent marine microbes, known as phytoplankton, grace the water's surface. As night falls and darkness envelops the skies, these microscopic marvels emit a radiant blue glow, casting an otherworldly ambience over the waves that gently caress the shore. The beach is a true post-sunset paradise to find a dwelling in!





**Vaadhoo Island**

One of the most exceptional experiences you can have at Vaadhoo Island is swimming with bioluminescent plankton. As the sun sets and darkness blankets the ocean, a mystical phenomenon takes place. Dive into the gentle waters and witness as these microscopic organisms emit a mesmerising blue glow, transforming the surrounding sea into a dazzling celestial spectacle. With each stroke, your body becomes a canvas, adorned by the radiant trails of these enchanting creatures. Feel the ethereal magic as you become part of this luminescent symphony, a dance of light and water that stirs the soul. This rare encounter with nature's own living light show is an unforgettable journey into a world where dreams and reality merge, leaving you with memories that will forever illuminate your heart.



**Jungle Cinema at Gili Lankanfushi**

Prepare to embark on an extraordinary cinematic journey unlike any other, as you delve into the enchanting world of Jungle Cinema at Gili Lankanfushi. Sink into the plush comfort of bean bags and luxurious cushions amidst lush coconut and palm groves, while the starry sky above becomes your personal movie screen. Let the silver screen come alive as you indulge in classic films and captivating screenings, transported to a realm where dreams and reality merge seamlessly. And what's a movie night without delectable treats? Delight your taste buds with scrumptious popcorn and sip on exquisite cocktails, completing this sensory adventure for the ultimate indulgence.



**Island Bazar**

Every item in Island Bazaar tells a story. From exquisite bags and cushions to whimsical fridge magnets and delicate ornaments, each locally crafted masterpiece is a testament to the intricate designs that are said to be truly one-of-a-kind. Lose yourself in the allure of the scarves that effortlessly blend style and tradition, or adorn yourself with captivating jewellery that reflects the rich cultural heritage of the region. As you wander through the boutique's captivating aisles, you'll discover an array of treasures that awaken your senses. Marvel at the intricately designed vases that exude timeless elegance, or let your imagination set sail with the miniature boats that capture the spirit of the sea.



## GLOBETROTTER



### Spectacular Seaplane Soars

Another extraordinary experience in the Maldives is embarking on a seaplane adventure. Buckle up and take to the skies, where you'll be treated to breathtaking aerial views of the Maldivian archipelago. As you soar above the turquoise waters and vibrant coral reefs, marvel at the intricate patterns woven by nature below. The panoramic vistas of pristine islands, powdery white beaches, and crystalline lagoons will leave you in awe of the Maldives' natural beauty. From the comfort of your window seat, witness the ever-changing hues of the ocean and the scattered gems of secluded resorts dotting the landscape. The seaplane journey is not just a means of transportation; it's a thrilling experience that immerses you in the wonders of this tropical paradise, providing a unique perspective that will forever be etched in your memory.

### Fly Boarding

In the heart of the oceanic wonderland that is the Maldives, where endless waters embrace the shores, lies a haven for water sports enthusiasts. Brace yourself for an exhilarating adventure as you immerse yourself in the world of Fly Boarding. Prepare to unleash your inner superhero as you defy gravity and soar through the air, propelled by the sheer power of jet propulsion, harnessed from a watercraft. This extraordinary sport has surged in popularity, captivating thrill-seekers from all walks of life. Fear not, a team of expert instructors stand ready to guide you, whether you're a novice eager to take flight or a seasoned daredevil craving a new aerial escapade.





## Unleash the Power of the Cloud Secure CRM & Back Office with Konnect

The screenshot displays the Konnect.travel Manager Dashboard for Universal Travel. The user is Neeraj Yauvani, Head Office. Key metrics include Total Sales in Current Month of \$25,649, 108 Pending Bookings, and 23 Pending Service Requests. The dashboard features a sidebar with navigation options like Administration, Booking Management, Client Management, Finance, Reports, and Report an Issue. The main content area includes a 'Booking Queues' section with tabs for 'My Bookings' and 'Enquiry Queue', and a table listing pending bookings with columns for Booking Ref, Client Name, Booking Date, Trip Date, Services, Destination, and Status. A 'Calendar' view for March 2022 is also visible, showing activities on specific dates. A 'Create New Booking' button and a 'View All' link are present at the bottom of the booking table. A red seal with 'LIFETIME FREE SUBSCRIPTION' is overlaid on the bottom right of the dashboard.

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# ASEGO- YOUR GLOBAL GUARDIAN

## DEV KARVAT'S CUSTOMER-CENTRIC APPROACH AIDS ASEGO IN THE DIRECTION OF SECURING EVERY TRAVELLER WITH THE RIGHT ASSISTANCE AND INSURANCE PRODUCT

**With your noble initiative to provide travel assistance for the delegates of the TAAI Convention, what measures do you have in place to assist travellers in emergencies, such as medical emergencies or travel disruptions?**

Being TAAI's preferred Travel Assistance and Insurance partner for over a decade, Asego is glad to be offering complimentary global assistance with insurance to all delegates attending the upcoming convention in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

With our exclusively curated protection cover for the convention, all delegates can avail of benefits such as medical cover including COVID-19, emergency medical evacuation, trip cancellation, 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.

Enhancing traveller's experience is what we at Asego strive for. So, an opportunity to serve the esteemed delegates of the TAAI Convention is an honour for us.

**Asego has created a strong place for itself in the industry, how do you keep up with changing travel trends and adapt your insurance offerings accordingly?**

Apart from being a dedicated travel assistance and insurance company, I believe it is our customer-centric approach that drives us in this direction. Now, with travel gradually penetrating a wider section of the population, we realised that a one-size-fits-all approach is outdated. So, to address this, stepping into the traveller's shoes and analysing the various risks involved leads us to curate exclusive offerings that can successfully alleviate these risks. Apart from this, we also conduct extensive research to keep up with the latest buying and travelling patterns of the consumer to come up with the most suitable and relevant product offerings.

**How do you ensure that your policies provide adequate coverage for unexpected events during travel?**

Eventualities such as missed/delayed flights and hotel/ flight cancellations are at times inevitable when it comes to travel. However, we have recently witnessed a huge spike in newer travel risks such as loss and damage of gadgets, cyber security issues, identity theft, credit/debit card fraud, and others amongst travellers.

Asego has been working tirelessly to identify and mitigate these risks with comprehensive travel assistance and insurance solutions. Our bouquet of offerings not only takes



*“Our association with the travel fraternity and the right measures that we take together to create awareness among travellers will ensure that the landscape for travel assistance and insurance shifts considerably”*

care of medical emergencies and other travel-related inconveniences but also ensures that travellers are protected against the aforementioned travel risks. Further, our carefully curated standalone products offer travellers an opportunity to customise their protection plans as per their needs and preferences, rather than opting for a plain vanilla travel insurance product.

**How have you maintained strong relationships with travel agencies, tour operators, and other industry partners over the evolving years?**

The goodwill that has come our way from our business partners has been truly humbling. At our end, from the very beginning, our goal has been to be a strategic partner for our clients and not a mere service provider. And

Adventure awaits, but sometimes unexpected challenges arise along the way. That's where Asego steps in. Delving into the visionary mind, we discovered **Dev Karvat, Founder & CEO – Asego**, unleashing his power of support and redefining what it means to explore the world with confidence. From handling emergencies to providing essential guidance, Asego has become the ultimate guardian for globetrotters. With its everlong relationship with TAAI, Asego has carefully crafted protection plans for the delegates of the convention yet again ensuring every step of their journey is met with unrivalled support

*By Aanchal Sachdeva*

this approach has motivated us to consistently come up with relevant products and services. Our team stationed in PAN India ensures that they offer dedicated support to all our partners including training and operations, tech integration, marketing support and more. It is immensely pleasing to learn that this practice has shown encouraging results in improving their ancillary services revenue. Lastly, none of this would have been possible without the trust our industry partners have shown in us.

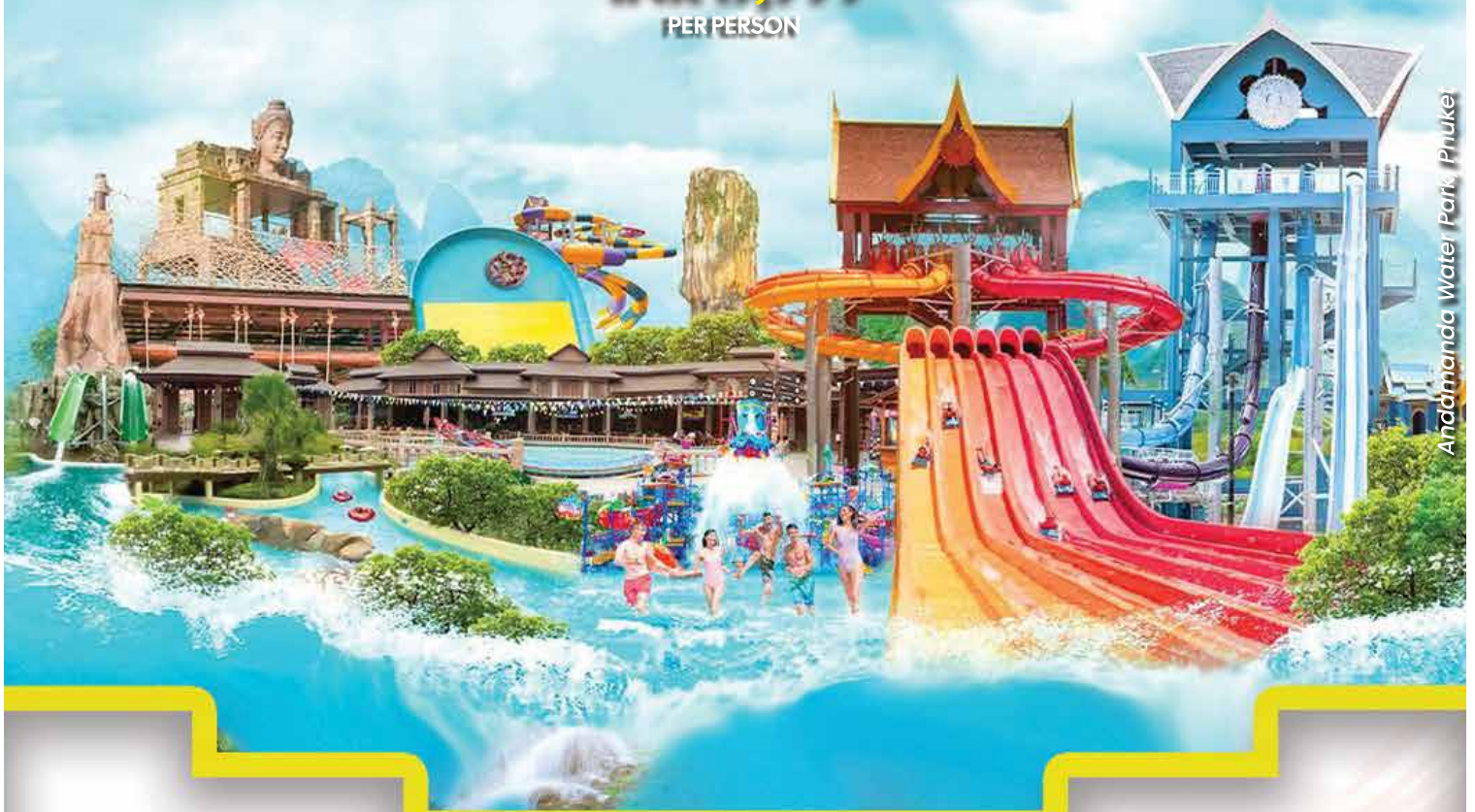
**What steps do you take to educate travellers about the importance of having travel assistance?**

We have constantly emphasised the importance of securing every traveller with the right assistance and insurance product through our client engagement programmes ensuring that their customers are sensitized about the importance of being adequately covered on a trip. We have been on a mission to elevate travel insurance and assistance to a 'must-have' instead of just another obligation to avail visa. We provide marketing communication support to our trade partners so that they in turn enlighten the travellers on the new products and trends suitable for their trip.



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- Phuket hotel to Phuket airport transfer - private

\* T & C apply

Package validity

31<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER 2023

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# HOLIDAY TRAVEL HACKS

## ENHANCE YOUR HOLIDAY GETAWAYS WITH TRAVEL TECHNOLOGY

Can holiday season travel be made hassle-free even before it begins? Read along to know how technology hacks can transform your journey into a seamless and memorable experience as crafted by **Sandeep Dwivedi, Chief Operating Officer, InterGlobe Technology Quotient**

### HOLIDAY SEASON CHALLENGES

The holiday season brings excitement and the opportunity to embark on memorable trips. Everyone has a bucket list for holiday getaways, from travelling to exotic destinations to indulging in the tastiest cuisines. This list becomes easy to tick mark when one gets assisted by the best travel technology partners to plan a hassle-free trip. This is where travel technology comes to the rescue, revolutionizing the way you plan, book, and experience your summer adventures.

In this article, we will delve into some essential holiday season travel hacks that leverage the power of travel technology to enhance your vacation and make it an unforgettable experience.

Read on to get an insight on the holiday season travel hacks for your upcoming vacation.

**Make Your Trip Budget-Friendly:** Enjoy a more satisfying holiday season by ensuring your trip aligns with your budget. Start by seeking assistance from a professional travel provider who can offer options that best suit your financial plan. With their expertise, you can curate a memorable vacation while keeping your wallet happy.

**Technology and Travel : A Winning Combination:** Merge technology with travel to craft a seamless and stress-free journey. To begin, choose a reliable travel provider or agent who can guide you through the planning process. Opting for less popular travel times, such as red-eye flights, can save you money and provide an extra day at your destination. Utilize technology to keep a keen eye on prices and swiftly book your trip when rates drop, maximizing your savings.

**Seek Out Deals :** Whenever you go shopping, don't you look for the best deals? Why not apply the same while planning your holiday getaway? If you opt for a trusted travel partner, don't hesitate to inquire about discounts and special offers to make your itinerary even more budget-friendly. Taking advantage of these deals can enhance your holiday experience without breaking the bank.

**Choose mid-week to steer clear of the weekend:** To escape crowded destinations, opt for mid-week travel instead of weekends. Mixing



and matching your flights can also lead to more affordable rates. Your travel partner might even suggest layovers, allowing you to make the most of the extra time by exploring new places before reaching your final destination.

### WONDERING HOW TO IMPLEMENT THESE TRAVEL HACKS EFFECTIVELY? HERE'S HOW TRAVELPORT'S MODERN TECHNOLOGY CAN SAVE THE DAY

**Simplified Trip Planning :** Travelport+ offers comprehensive tools to simplify your holiday season getaway. With a user-friendly platform, one can effortlessly search and compare destinations, flights, accommodations, and activities. Receive personalized recommendations based on your preferences through intelligent algorithms, streamlining the planning process.

**Seamless Booking Experience :** Gone are the days of juggling multiple websites and platforms. Travelport+ provides a seamless booking experience, allowing you to reserve flights,

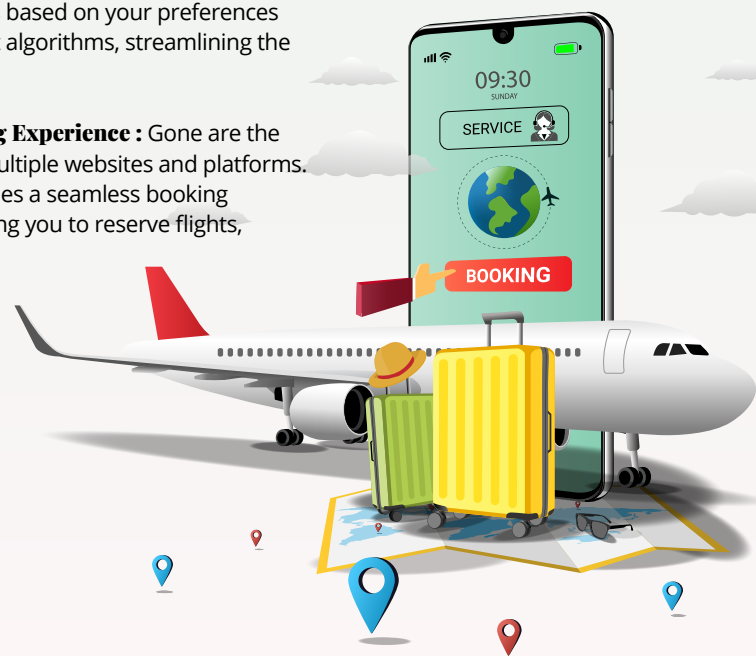
accommodations, and rental cars with just a few clicks. With an extensive network of partner airlines, hotels, and service providers, you gain access to a wide range of options at competitive prices.

**Real-Time Updates and Notifications :** Stay informed throughout your holiday travels with real-time updates and notifications from Travelport+. Receive alerts regarding changes to your flight schedules and gate information, ensuring you're always in the loop. This feature minimizes stress and maximizes your overall travel experience.

**Personalized Travel Itineraries:** Recognizing that every traveller is unique, Travelport+ empowers you to create personalized travel itineraries tailored to your specific needs and preferences. With a variety of flight combinations and fare-cutting options, one can choose pocket-friendly alternatives without compromising on quality.

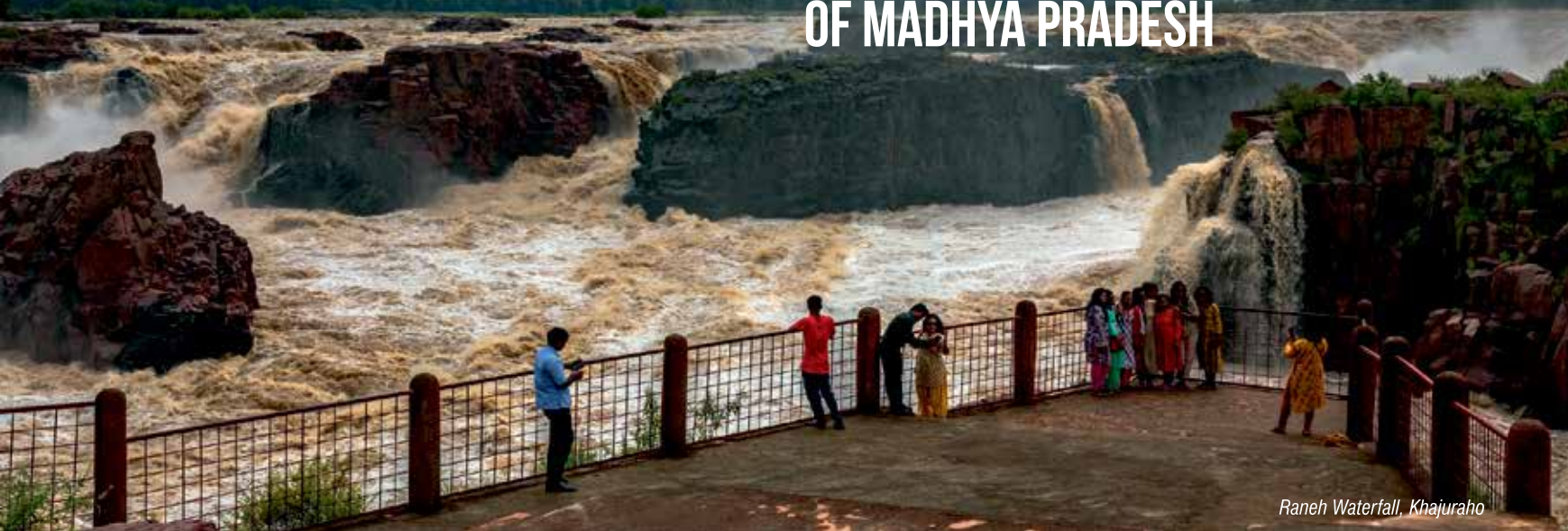
### EMBRACE THE TECHNOLOGY, EMBRACE THE HOLIDAYS

Make the most of your holiday season adventures by embracing the power of technology. Travelport's modern technology is designed to enhance every aspect of your getaways, from planning to booking and experiencing your dream vacation. So, embark on your adventures with confidence and let travel technology be your ultimate companion for an unforgettable journey.





# Explore ENCHANTING WATERFALLS OF MADHYA PRADESH



Raneh Waterfall, Khajuraho

Here are some waterfalls that can be included in your itinerary.



Bee Fall, Pachmarhi

### Raneh Waterfall, near Khajuraho

Raneh Waterfall is about 22 kilometers from the UNESCO World Heritage site Khajuraho on the Ken River. The main attraction here is a crystalline granite canyon that is 5 kilometers long and 100 feet deep. Situated in a salubrious environment, this is an ideal place to de-stress. Kutni Island Resort (27 kms), Jhankar (21 kms) and Payal Resorts (19kms) in Khajuraho are some accommodations near the falls that you can book to stay.

### Keoti and Bahuti Waterfalls near Rewa

Located near Rewa, Keoti (100 meters) and Bahuti (198 meters) are one of the highest falls in Madhya Pradesh. The waterfalls percolates a natural bliss for the travellers. Vindhya Retreat situated at a distance of 35 kms from Keoti falls and 68 kms from Bahuti falls is a good option to stay.



Keoti Waterfall, Rewa

### Kapildhara Waterfall, Amarkantak

Amarkantak lies at the meeting point of the three central India hill ranges- Vindhyas, Satpuras and Maikal and is popularly known as 'Teerthraj', or the King of pilgrimages. Situated near the source of Narmada, the two waterfalls - Dugdha Dhara and Kapil Dhara are surrounded by a dense forest and Towards south-west of Dugdha Dhara is the Kapil Dhara. The distance between both the waterfalls is not more than 1 km. Holiday Homes Amarkantak is an exclusive accommodation facility which is only 8kms from the Kapil Dhara falls.



Kapildhara, Amarkantak

### Dhuandhar Waterfall, Jabalpur

This waterfall is a must-see for tourists in Jabalpur. Magnificent 100-foot-tall marble cliffs rise on either side of the Narmada River. The river flows gently over these tall marble cliffs, and after a short

stretch, it tumbles down to form the Dhuandhar Falls. The waterfall gets its name from the smoke-like appearance of the water rushing down the cliffs. Motel Marbel Rocks, Bedhaghat is a luxury MP Tourism property for a comfortable stay near the waterfall.



Dhuandhar, Jabalpur

### More on the plate

Chachai and Purwa Falls in the Rewa, Pandava falls in the Panna district, Patalpani falls near Indore, Bee and Silver fall in Pachmarhi and Sankua falls in the Gwalior district are some other waterfalls that can rejuvenate you. What are you waiting for? Plan a trip with your loved ones and explore these amazing creations of nature.



Patalpani, Indore



# ABOVE THE CLOUDS, REDEFINING INNOVATIONS IN AVIATION

By Aanchal Sachdeva



**SAMINDA PERERA,**  
Head of Marketing- SriLankan Airlines

## **SRILANKAN AIRLINES SOARING TO SUCCESS IN THE SKIES**

With an unwavering commitment to excellence, a robust network of destinations, and a track record of industry recognition, SriLankan Airlines operates as a vital economic catalyst bolstering Sri Lanka's tourism industry. **Saminda Perera, Head of Marketing- SriLankan Airlines** has masterfully guided SriLankan Airlines through the intricacies of strategic marketing and global sales. With a career spanning over two decades in commercial aviation, Perera possesses an extraordinary prowess in establishing the brand in emerging markets and destinations while orchestrating groundbreaking marketing innovations and fostering a holistic communication approach

## **SriLankan Airlines creating a place for itself amongst other international carriers**

SriLankan Airlines has been in operation since 1979 and has been a prime connector of Sri Lanka, and the Indian subcontinent to the world. Currently, the Airline operates out of 9 cities in India with over 70 flights a week, seamlessly connecting discerning travellers to Australia's Melbourne and Sydney, 8 destinations in the Middle East, and London, Paris and Frankfurt in Europe via its Colombo hub. As a member of the prestigious Oneworld alliance, the Airline has been the first in the region to be a part of a global alliance. Apart from convenient and

seamless connectivity, the Airline has also been at the forefront of revealing to the leisure travellers in India, the range of experiences the destination Sri Lanka can offer them—from the most opulent to the most authentic and homespun—to suit the demands and wish-lists of any traveller. Complementing this is the trademark Sri Lankan warmth and hospitality that we generously extend onboard, and the first taste of Sri Lanka, through our onboard ambience, our food and beverages, and inflight entertainment, all the while including the best of contemporary air travel.

## **Network and route strategy of SriLankan Airlines alongside determination of destinations and frequency to serve**

Pre-pandemic, our prime focus markets used to be India, China and Australia where we intended to systematically expand over some time. One reason was, they were the top tourism-generating markets for Sri Lanka, and, as a promotor of our island home, we have consistently expanded our presence in these regions. Post-pandemic, along with the rest of the world, we observe that certain markets take longer to recover, and, accordingly, we allocate our resources where we see comparatively greater potential. This being said, we made some bold moves, whilst half the world was still out of bounds, by starting operations to a range of destinations, which are doing well today. Sydney, Kathmandu and Seoul are some of them. When it comes to India, which used to be our single largest market (which is to date), we used to operate over 100 flights a week compared to over 70 flights a week right now. With the impending improvements to our fleet, we are looking at restoring to pre-pandemic levels and aim to induct a couple more Indian cities to the route map in the coming years.

## **Forging new partnerships and alliances with other international carriers**

We currently have a list of prestigious airlines across the globe as codeshare partners, and wherever we see an opportunity to bridge the demand and offer convenient onward connectivity to our clientele, we always explore such collaborative opportunities.

## **Leveraging technological advancements/ innovations to enhance the operations and services of SriLankan Airlines**

We are immensely pleased that TAAI has chosen Sri Lanka as the host for this year's conference, and this signifies another vital aspect of Sri Lanka which is its standing as a MICE destination

The good thing about technology is that it keeps evolving. The challenge, however, is that whilst encouraging innovation, one needs to continually invest to be on top. As an international airline, which is also part of a global alliance, our use of technology has always been on par with global standards, which has kept the quality of our operational standards, in terms of safety, on-time performance and others.



When it comes to service and engagement through technologically advanced platforms, we do have a fully-fledged booking engine, mobile app, and self-check-in options at our home base, whilst we are looking at launching a total holidays solution, where a traveller will have the liberty of curating his journey, with the range of resources that we have on offer.

#### **TAAI Convention scheduled in Sri Lanka**

With the stature of our presence in India, needless to say, we may have worked with most of the members of TAAI, and for them, Sri Lanka is not an unknown place. We are immensely pleased that TAAI has chosen Sri Lanka as the host for this year's conference, and this signifies another vital aspect of Sri Lanka—which is its standing as a MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) destination. We are hopeful that, this will be a tour of assurance for most of them to experience first-hand the varied facets of Sri Lanka and to go back and advocate them confidently to their clientele.



**ALEX MCEWAN**

Country Manager - South Asia, Virgin Atlantic

#### **VIRGIN ATLANTIC, A BEACON OF EXCELLENCE IN AVIATION**

Carving out a distinguished and revered space, and solidifying its position as a true trailblazer in the industry, Alex McEwan, Country Manager - South Asia has left no stone unturned leaving an enduring mark on the industry. Beyond its exceptional service, Virgin Atlantic has also cultivated a reputation for championing sustainability, and social responsibility. As a global brand, it has fostered valuable partnerships and alliances, expanding its reach and connectivity to an extensive network of destinations

#### **Virgin Atlantic curating an indelible place amongst a constellation of international carriers**

We position ourselves as an airline that offers a premium, personalized experience for our customers at every step of the journey. This is central to our vision to become the most loved travel company and is what we've pioneered since day one. This is recognised by several awards, for example, Skytrax recognises Virgin Atlantic as a 5\* airline in their ratings and also awarded us as the World's Best Business Class Lounge and World's Best Premium Economy Class in 2022. Our customers have always loved flying with us and frequently comment on the quality of service and warmth from our crew. Hospitality is so prized in India and our customers are always made to feel at home by our teams on the ground and in the air. Our loyal customers are always looking for more ways to fly with us which is why we are so excited to grow our footprint in India and offer a fourth daily direct service next year, with our new flights from Bengaluru to London Heathrow. Launching in the Summer of 2024, the addition of this new route means we will offer 500,000 seats (total) each year between the UK and India.

#### **Network and route strategy of Virgin Atlantic**

We have seen particularly strong performance in India in recent years, which has driven our growth from one direct daily service in 2019 to four in 2024

#### **alongside determination of destinations and frequency to serve**

As all of our aircraft are widebody and have three cabins (Upper Class, Premium and Economy), we must operate to markets which are large and have a good mix of business and leisure travel. When deciding on new destinations, we conduct extensive market evaluations primarily to determine whether these flights will deliver a profitable return for the business. Our goal is to be sustainably profitable, and we have a laser focus on route performance. We have seen particularly strong performance in India in recent years, which has driven our growth from one direct daily service in 2019 to four in 2024. We also consider connection opportunities when launching destinations. We have a vast transatlantic network at Heathrow and Manchester which means our customers from India can connect seamlessly from India to hundreds of destinations in North America alongside our joint venture partners Delta.

#### **Forging new partnerships and alliances with other international carriers**

In March this year, we announced we will be the first and only UK airline to join the SkyTeam alliance of airlines. This offers us new partnership opportunities across every continent and offers members of our frequent flier programme, Flying Club, more opportunities to earn and redeem points across all member airlines across the globe. Our frequent fliers will also be able to access a network of 750 airport lounges. In India, we are proud to have a codeshare partnership with IndiGo, India's largest airline. The partnership is nearly a year old and already we have seen incredible demand from our customers who wish to connect IndiGo's vast domestic network in India to our flights to the UK and beyond. We are excited to grow this partnership further this year.

#### **Leveraging technological advancements/ innovations to enhance the operations and services of Virgin Atlantic**

As an airline, we are constantly leveraging technological advancements and innovations to enhance services and to be sustainably profitable. Over the last decade, we have invested billions of dollars in fleet transformation. We now operate one of the

youngest, cleanest fleets in the sky, with an average aircraft age of just under seven years and 70% of our aircraft being the 'next generation'. This increases to 100% next generation by the beginning of 2027, as we continue to welcome new aircraft such as the A330neo to our fleet. Whenever customers choose Virgin Atlantic, they can be confident they will be flying on the most modern aircraft technology available.

**Virgin Atlantic address the cultural diversity and language barriers arising with international destinations**

We know how important it is for our customers to feel comfortable flying with us and that it is the small touches that make the difference. That's why we customise our onboard service for all of our global destinations. In India, we always offer a choice of both British and Indian-themed food. We also have Hindi speakers on every flight to and from India, and many of our crew speak multiple Indian dialects. In India, we also offer 2 pieces of 23 kgs of baggage as standard in Economy, which goes beyond our global average. We offer Bollywood box office movies on our in-flight entertainment systems. These refinements make us a popular choice and have allowed us to compete effectively and become a preferred option for customers in India for the 23 years we have flown here.



**ROMANA PARVI**  
Regional Manager of South Asia at Jazeera Airways

**ELEVATING EXPERIENCE AND EMBRACING EXCELLENCE IN THE SKIES WITH JAZEERA AIRWAYS**

Since its inception in 2005, the Kuwait-based airline has consistently shattered expectations, delivering exceptional service, affordability, and a seamless travel experience to passengers across the globe. Romana Parvi, Regional Manager of South Asia at Jazeera Airways, delves into the innovative approach the airlines take in optimising their operations. Earning the prestigious accolade of "Best Low-Cost Airline in the Middle East" is a testament to offering a personalised experience to the travellers

**To address cultural diversity, we have a team of trained professionals who are experienced in dealing with passengers from different cultural backgrounds**

**Jazeera Airways carving out a revered and distinguished space**

At Jazeera Airways we strive to offer affordable, convenient and safe travel options for all our passengers. We work on ensuring a great passenger experience right from the time they book their flights till the end of their journey. Our modern fleet of well-maintained aircraft is equipped with comfortable seats and great in-flight entertainment.

With a network of 63 destinations, across the Middle East, Central and South Asia, Europe and Africa, we provide great choices for passengers with easy connectivity via Kuwait. Our Jazeera Terminal 5 in Kuwait is owned and managed by us allowing for comfortable layovers between flights.

Our experienced and professional cabin crew communicates in multiple languages and ensures that passengers are well-assisted throughout their journey.

With our service offerings, commitment to safety standards and focus on customers, we can confidently say that Jazeera Airways has created a place for itself among other international carriers when it comes to both customer service and passenger experience.

**Network and route strategy of Jazeera Airways alongside determination of destinations and frequency to serve**

For our network expansion, Jazeera Airways uses a data-driven approach to evaluate destinations including passenger demand. We conduct feasibility studies to determine viability and secure regulatory approvals and airport slots for viable routes. Our goal is to offer a wide range of destinations while maintaining a sustainable business model.

In terms of frequency, we aim to offer our passengers a range of options that meet their needs and preferences. We consider factors such as the time of day, day of the week, and seasonality when determining flight schedules. We also monitor passenger demand and adjust our schedules accordingly to ensure that we are offering the right number of flights to each destination.

**Forging new partnerships and alliances with other international carriers**

Jazeera Airways continues to explore opportunities for new partnerships and alliances with other airlines to enhance our offerings and provide more benefits to our passengers. We have a platform powered by Dohop called JazeeraGlobal - global.jazeeraairways.com through which we partner with other airlines to sell flights beyond our network.

We believe that partnerships and alliances can help us expand our reach and provide our passengers with more destinations, more flight options, and more seamless connections. We are committed to providing our passengers with the best possible travel experience, and we believe that partnerships and alliances can help us achieve this goal.

**Leveraging technological advancements/innovations to enhance the operations and services of Jazeera Airways**

At Jazeera Airways, we keep exploring ways to leverage technology to enhance our operations and services on an international scale. We believe that technology can help us provide our passengers with a more seamless and convenient travel experience, from booking their flights to arriving at their destination. One way we are using technology to enhance our operations is by investing in the latest aircraft and airport technologies.

We have a modern fleet of Airbus A320neo aircraft that are fuel efficient, reduce emissions, and enhance the passenger experience. We are also investing in digital technologies to make it easier for our passengers to book their flights, manage their bookings, and access information about their travel. Our Jazeera App is ranked the no. 1 travel app in Kuwait and our website provides a seamless booking experience. We also offer a range of digital services to help our passengers stay informed and connected throughout their journey.

At the end of 2022, we became the first airline in Kuwait to switch from paper pilot logbooks and move completely to electronic technical logs (ETLs) in the cockpits of all our Airbus A320s.

Overall, we are committed to leveraging technology to enhance our operations and services on an international scale, and we will continue to explore new ways to use technology to improve the travel experience for our passengers.

**Jazeera Airways addresses the cultural diversity and language barriers arising in international destinations**

Diversity and inclusion is an integral part of our culture. With over 60 nationalities forming a part of our family, we have multi-lingual staff on our flights and in our operations to ensure a welcoming and comfortable environment for our passengers from different countries.

Our website and mobile app are available in multiple languages, and we offer customer support in a range of languages to help our passengers with any questions or concerns they may have. We also provide in-flight entertainment in multiple languages as well as halal and vegetarian meal options to cater to the diverse needs of our passengers. We also train our staff on cultural sensitivity to ensure that they are equipped to handle any cultural differences that may arise during the travel experience.



# UNLEASHING BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES: BAHRAIN'S B2B NETWORKING EVENT IN AHMEDABAD

Embarking on a quest to forge valuable connections, Bahrain, The Pearl of the Middle East, teamed up with One Above to organise an exclusive Networking Session at the Courtyard by Marriott in Ahmedabad. This captivating event centred around a delightful Hi Tea gathering, aimed at strengthening ties with esteemed travel trade partners. The guest list comprised travel agents, wholesalers, corporate clients, tourism partners, and MICE organizers, all coming together with a common objective in mind.

The primary focus of the event was to cultivate deeper relationships with the attendees while providing them with insights into the exceptional features that make Bahrain an unrivalled leisure destination and a prime MICE hub. Participants were treated to an informative briefing, covering Bahrain's remarkable tourism development, a diverse array of tourism products, as well as the latest offers and meticulously crafted itineraries. This comprehensive overview served as a catalyst to ignite interest and pave the way for fruitful collaborations and business opportunities in the future.



## KUDA VILLINGLI RESORT MALDIVES MARKS ITS SPLENDID SECOND ANNIVERSARY WITH THE LUXE CONNECTIONS – EMBARKING ON A NETWORKING EXTRAVAGANZA IN DELHI AND MUMBAI

Kuda Villingli Resort Maldives, a luxurious 5-star retreat nestled in the tropical paradise of the Maldives, is thrilled to announce its second-anniversary celebration in collaboration with The Luxe Connections, the leading Luxury Hotel Consolidator for Maldives and Dubai. To commemorate this momentous occasion, the resort recently hosted an exclusive dinner and cocktail party in the bustling cities of New Delhi and Mumbai.



Situated just a short 25-minute speedboat ride from Male airport, Kuda Villingli Resort Maldives has become a sought-after sanctuary for travellers seeking an idyllic getaway. With its distinct Maldivian charm and international appeal, the resort stands as a testament to the harmonious fusion of local culture and global sophistication. Boasting state-of-the-art amenities, including the largest pool in the country, expansive water villa decks, and ultra-luxurious accommodations, Kuda Villingli Resort Maldives offers a truly unparalleled experience. Additionally, guests can indulge in the culinary delights of the Qureshis, renowned for their iconic Dum Pukht restaurant at ITC, as they oversee the Indian restaurant at the resort. To enhance the authentic Maldivian ambience, swing beds have been thoughtfully incorporated into all the Water Villas.

In celebration of the resort's second anniversary, Kuda Villingli Resort Maldives orchestrated a sophisticated and opulent event held at the stylish Opa Kipos in Mumbai and Swan in New Delhi. Distinguished guests from the travel trade industry, media, and influencers graced the occasion, including notable representatives from Kuda Villingli Resort Maldives such as Gaurav Makhijani, Director of Sales and Marketing, and Shikha Mishra, PR & Marketing Consultant. The esteemed gathering also included directors from The Luxe Connections, namely Kanav Aggarwal and Koonaal Jain.

Expressing her excitement, Shikha Mishra, PR & Marketing Consultant of Kuda Villingli Resort Maldives, stated, "We are delighted to celebrate our second anniversary in partnership with The Luxe Connections. This event not only commemorates a significant milestone for our resort but also exemplifies the exceptional collaboration between the Kuda Villingli team and The Luxe Connections. Our esteemed guests in both cities were treated to an evening of indulgence, creating memories that will endure."

The Luxe Connections, renowned for curating an extraordinary collection of luxury hotels and resorts, was honoured to join forces with Kuda Villingli Resort Maldives for this grand celebration. This collaboration further underscores their commitment to promoting exceptional hospitality experiences in the Maldives and Dubai, while nurturing valuable relationships within the industry.



## Yas Island launches an all-new summer campaign

**Yas Island** Abu Dhabi once again won hearts with an upbeat summer hit featuring Kuwaiti band 'Miami' and an all-new groovy twist to Arabic fan-favourite 'AlHamdullah w Chefnakom'. The cheerful remix takes viewers on a joy ride across Yas Island's world-class leisure and entertainment attractions and adds a special nuance to the original track to get everyone moving and grooving all summer long.

The collaboration between Miami Band and Yas Island Abu Dhabi builds on last year's success 'Yas Yas Baby' and delivers a new jingle for fans to enjoy. The new edit also

reminisces on the nostalgic tunes of the 90's, which continue to strike a chord in every generation across the Arab world.

Liam Findlay, CEO of Miral Destinations, said: "We are pleased to be joining hands with Miami Band to curate a memorable Arabic song that fans have grown to love. As a leading tourism destination in Abu Dhabi, we understand what resonates with our audience in the GCC market. Our complementary leisure and entertainment offerings provide a multitude of best-in-class experiences, and we are pleased to continuously meet guest expectations with every new addition."

## TAT – Mumbai organises Thai Food Festival

To elevate Thailand's status as a world-class gastronomy tourism destination and increase awareness about its culinary diversity, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Mumbai joined hands with Novotel Bengaluru Outer Ring Road to host the Thai Food Festival. Inaugurated on June 9 and set to conclude on June 18, 2023 at The Square, the event aligns with TAT's vision of "Visit Thailand Year 2023: Amazing New Chapters" which aims to encourage global travellers to find meaningful travel experiences in Thailand.

The Thai Food Festival was inaugurated by H.E. Nitirooge Phoneprasert - Consul General, Royal Thai Consulate, Chennai,

along with Supatra Sawaengsri - Executive Director & Consul (Commercial), Thai Trade Center, Mumbai and curated by Master Chef Patharawut Mungjit, Executive Chef, Novotel Chiang Mai Nimman Journeyhub, Thailand.

The event invited guests to indulge in an exceptional culinary journey and savour Thailand's rich and vibrant flavours.

"I am very excited to be visiting India and sharing my love of Thai cuisine with the people. I believe that food is a great way to bring people together, and I hope my food will help bridge the gap between our two cultures." Chef Patharawut Mungjit shared during the festival.

## Saudi Arabia and Egypt join UAE in the top 10 Mena destinations

**Saudi Arabia** and Egypt joined the UAE in the top 10 destinations this year, in seventh and eighth place, respectively, as Mena travellers explore destinations closer to home, according to new insights from the Mastercard Economics Institute.

Mena consumers are taking advantage of a more traditional travel ecosystem in 2023, prioritising leisure travel and pioneering new corridors around the world.

The global state of travel has punctuated by shifting economic landscapes, persistent consumer demands, and a reopening

mainland China.

In the face of economic headwinds, post-pandemic preferences for experiences over things, consistent demand for leisure travel shape the 2023 outlook. Initially lagging behind leisure travel, business travel found its footing in the latter half of 2022, especially in cultures prioritising a return to office. With an uncertain economy providing some cross-market turbulence, mainland China's reopening is expected to bolster growth globally.



## RAK unleashes Summer Brand Campaign with impressive results

**Ras Al Khaimah** Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA) has revealed its captivating summer brand campaign, titled 'Get More.' Launched in April and set to continue until September 2023, this digital-first campaign has already garnered remarkable success, particularly in key markets such as India, Kazakhstan, Germany, and KSA. Surpassing industry benchmarks, the summer campaign has generated an impressive 336 million impressions and received an outstanding response, with over 1.2 million



clicks recorded to date. Additionally, the campaign boasts a remarkable Video Completion Rate (VCR) of over 85% in KSA and Kuwait.

The primary objective of the multi-lingual 'Get More' campaign is to boost summer bookings.



# BLACK TURTLE AS THE SOLE AMBASSADOR FOR CORA CORA MALDIVES IN INDIA

By Aanchal Sachdeva

## Black Turtle's Inception and growth graph over the years

From the beginning, I have always wanted to do something that brings me joy but also makes others feel happy and excited and I thought what better than travel can do that? After years of experience in the field - starting black turtle felt natural and necessary. For me every resort we represent today and we have previously does not feel like just clients but like family to us, this makes our work way easier. Currently, "Black Turtle Reps" is representing the luxurious Cora Cora Maldives, Fiyavalhu Resort Maldives and Brennia Fottefaru Maldives in India.

## Establishing and maintaining relationships with the clients

Rep companies have to maintain relations with Agents and tour operators regularly with visits to their offices, meeting with top management, interaction with frontline staff, meeting on sales, and reports, addressing issues they may have, webinar on product info with outstation agents, phone sales, the flow of offers on agent WhatsApp groups, bi-annual roadshows play an important role in maintaining collaborations. We are committed to bringing our clients tailor-made solutions and tangible results that exceed expectations.

## Long-term vision with Black Turtle's portfolio and expansion strategies

The long-term perspective is to push the product regularly and keep the product's interest alive. There can be months with peak, average, and low sales, but one has to maintain an annual balance of growth. Growth is based on mutual understanding between the rep co and principal partner the hotelier and a joint effort to create promotions to fight the competitors.



## BULLETIN

Black Turtle has been appointed as India representative for Brennia Kottefaru Maldives. Karishma Kazi's brainchild Black Turtle conquers yet another mesmerising island paradise.

# Çırağan Palace Kempinski Istanbul commences a Brand-new Era blending historical traces

**Managed by** Kempinski, Europe's oldest luxury hotel group, Çırağan Palace Kempinski Istanbul underwent a poetic transformation, elevating its entire hotel building to an even more impressive state. The renowned Ottoman Art Expert Serdar Gülgün played a significant role in restoring the timeless identity of Çırağan Palace Kempinski Istanbul. The redesigned hotel sections, from the elegantly designed entrance bearing traces of palace gardens to the magnificent lobby adorned with Iznik ceramics and Murano chandeliers, exudes a classic yet innovative style, immersing guests in a world of history and luxury. The hotel rooms and suites capture the traditional magnificence of the Ottoman Empire with a modern twist.

The hotel's two new restaurants not only impress with their designs but also offer exceptional gastronomic experiences. Akdeniz



by Esra Muslu, a chef's restaurant, showcases Mediterranean cuisine with a touch of Turkish tradition. Esra Muslu, an accomplished chef with a successful career spanning continents, brings her unique taste and talent to the hotel. Gazebo, another restaurant within the hotel, combines Ottoman garden art with

contemporary design. With its symmetrical layout and a central ornamental fountain, Gazebo reflects the elegance of Ottoman flowers and offers a magnificent dining experience overlooking the Bosphorus.

Ralph Radtke, General Manager of Çırağan Palace Kempinski Istanbul, expresses excitement about the brand-new era, where a sophisticated style blends seamlessly with the historical inspiration of the Çırağan Palace. He emphasizes the hotel's commitment to providing guests with an authentic palace experience and the highest form of Turkish hospitality. The hotel has always been dedicated to destination marketing and promoting Istanbul and Turkish hospitality on a global scale. With this redesign, Çırağan Palace Kempinski Istanbul not only carries the traces of the past into the future but also offers a level of service that goes beyond luxury.



## IndiGo expands cultural connections introducing new flights to & from RAK

**IndiGo** is excited to announce the launch of direct international flights between Hyderabad and Ras Al Khaimah, effective from June 15, 2023. This addition to the summer schedule aims to enhance mobility, provide convenient access, and offer increased flight options for both leisure and business travellers.

Vinay Malhotra, Head of Global Sales at IndiGo, shared, "We have started new direct flights between Hyderabad-Ras Al Khaimah, in view of the increasing demand. With the introduction of these flights, IndiGo now operates 14 flights a week from 2 cities in India. We will continue to offer more flight options in line with our promise of on-time, affordable, courteous, and hassle-free travel experience across an unparalleled network."

Ras Al Khaimah becomes the 4th city in the Emirates, the 11th destination in the Middle East, and the 26th international and 100th overall location in the 6E network. Visitors can enjoy the natural beauty, authentic experiences, stunning beaches, and majestic Hajar mountains of Ras Al Khaimah. Ras Al Khaimah is a sought-after destination for leisure travellers, destination weddings, and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) events.

## Cathay Pacific India earns Great Place To Work® Certification™

**Cathay Pacific** is delighted to announce that it has been certified as a Great Place To Work® in India. This certification reflects the company's ongoing commitment to fostering a positive workplace culture that promotes employee well-being, engagement, and growth.

"We are incredibly proud to be recognized as a Great Place to Work®. This achievement underlines our ongoing dedication to creating a workplace where our employees can thrive and feel

proud to be part of our team. We believe that by investing in our people and providing a supportive environment, we can deliver exceptional service and experiences to our valued customers too. This recognition is the collective achievement of our people," said Abhijit Abhyankar, Regional Head of People – South Asia, Middle East & Africa at Cathay Pacific. Cathay Pacific places a high priority on employee well-being and facilitates their personal and professional development.

## ITA Airways introduces new Non-Stop Route: Washington Dulles - Rome Fiumicino

**ITA Airways** proudly takes on the role of Official Carrier for the project "Imagining the Future. Leonardo da Vinci: In the Mind of an Italian Genius," a monographic exhibition organised by "Confindustria," the Association of Italian Industry, to commemorate the opening of its new headquarters in Washington. In collaboration with Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana, this project was unveiled during an international press conference held at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library Auditorium in Washington D.C. The airline transported the delegation of Confindustria and a selection of 12 autograph pages from Leonardo's Codex Atlanticus, showcasing exceptional artistic and historical value, from Rome Fiumicino's Leonardo da Vinci airport to Washington Dulles.

"ITA Airways is honoured to serve as a worldwide



ambassador of Made in Italy. We are committed, since our birth, to representing and showcasing the best of Italian Excellence by helping to export the style and image of Italy, internationally recognized as the cradle of culture and art. In light of this natural inclination and mission of ours, we are proud to have been chosen by Confindustria as the Official Carrier of the event held to mark the opening of their new office in Washington.", said Emiliana Limosani, Chief Commercial Officer of ITA Airways.

## Jazeera Airways expands frequency from Bengaluru and Hyderabad

**Jazeera Airways**, Kuwait's leading low-cost airline increased the frequency of its direct flights from Bengaluru and Hyderabad. Starting from June, the airline will operate four flights per week from Bengaluru and six flights per week from Hyderabad, providing enhanced connectivity and convenience to passengers. Previously, the airline operated two and three flights a week to these popular destinations.

Since commencing operations in India with Hyderabad in October 2017, Jazeera Airways has experienced steady growth over the past five years, serving a total of six destinations in India. Currently, the airline operates 24 direct services connecting India to Kuwait and beyond.

For the summer season this



year, Jazeera Airways has introduced two new European destinations: Belgrade in Serbia and Tirana in Albania. Additionally, the airline will resume flights to Prague, Czech Republic, and Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. With a network of over 66 destinations, including Tbilisi, Istanbul, Baku, and Cairo, Jazeera Airways remains a popular choice for travellers from India.





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# ON THE MOVE



**SANDEEP NAIK**

**APPOINTED AT:** JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resorts & Spa  
**PROMOTED TO:** Director of Services  
 Sandeep Naik brings a wealth of expertise and a strong passion for providing unparalleled customer service. In his role, Sandeep will ensure the highest levels of guest satisfaction and elevating the service standards at our renowned resort. He has excelled in key leadership positions with Bengaluru Marriott Whitefield and Kochi Marriott Hotel.



**SAEID HEIDARI**

**APPOINTED AT:** Hilton Dubai Al Habtoor City  
**PROMOTED TO:** General Manager  
 Saeid brings over 30 years of experience in managing luxury hospitality. With a proven track record in providing top-notch quality assuring seamless guest satisfaction and delivering first-rate financial results and operations management, he led luxury properties such as Marriot International, Katara Hospitality, Anantara Hotel & Suites and many more.



**JERLYN DSILVA**

**APPOINTED AT:** Sheraton Grand Pune  
**PROMOTED TO:** Marketing and Communication Manager  
 Jerlyn Dsilva encompasses 7 years of experience in marketing, branding, brand development, public relations, and social media. As an Assistant Marketing Manager at Hyatt Regency Pune & Residences, she showcased an innate understanding of market trends, making significant contributions to brand development, growth, and presence.



**LUKE WOOLEY**

**APPOINTED AT:** V Hotel Dubai, Curio Collection by Hilton  
**PROMOTED TO:** General Manager and Director – F&B  
 Luke Wooley has 20 years of experience in the hospitality industry and a track record in managing immaculate F&B operations in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and South East Asia. Luke was part of the Al Habtoor Group since the early 2000s and he will be overseeing the operations at the 356-key luxury property.



**DIPTI RANJAN PATNAIK**

**APPOINTED AT:** Atmosphere Hospitality  
**PROMOTED TO:** Chairman  
 Dipti Ranjan Patnaik has been appointed as the chairman of Atmosphere Hospitality. Atmosphere Hospitality is an associate of Atmosphere Core that will bring the distinguished Atmosphere brands to India, namely THE OZEN COLLECTION, COLOURS OF OBLU, and Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts. The collaboration allows him to bring the company's powerful portfolio of brands to India.



**VARUN MEHROTRA**

**APPOINTED AT:** Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center  
**PROMOTED TO:** Director of Sales and Marketing  
 The luxury five-star property strengthens its leadership team, by including an industry veteran with more than 17 years of experience across renowned hospitality brands in India. Varun possesses a rich and extensive background in driving sales, marketing, and revenue growth by employing meticulous planning.



**GILES SELVES**

**APPOINTED AT:** Minor Hotels Europe  
**PROMOTED TO:** Senior Vice President of Luxury Hotels  
 Giles is responsible for driving the strategic and commercial direction of the luxury brands whilst enhancing guest experiences, and operational excellence and supporting the growth and development of Anantara Hotels, Resorts & Spas and Tivoli Hotels & Resorts across Europe as the group embarks on its continued expansion across the continent.



**ANANT CHAUHAN**

**APPOINTED AT:** Cygnett Hotels & Resorts  
**PROMOTED TO:** Corporate Human Resources Manager  
 Chauhan has been a part of the industry for more than a decade. Prior to joining Cygnett, he has been associated with Royal Orchid, Wyndham, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, and Sterling Holidays. In his new role, Chauhan will be responsible for managing employee development policies, with a focus on creating a work culture that will support their ambitious growth plans.



**SHERRY VARMA**

**APPOINTED AT:** Indiva Marketing  
**PROMOTED TO:** Director of PR & Media Marketing  
 Sherry is well known in the media and communication circles and joins Indiva with 16 years of experience spanning from banking to NTBs and other reputed PR companies. Sherry will oversee all media and marketing initiatives across Indiva's destination and hotel industry clients and work closely with the PR team to enhance positioning and branding.





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