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TravelScapes

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VOL. 11, ISSUE. 6



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PUBLISHER'S NOTE



Varun Malhotra
Publisher & CEO

Dear Readers,

The echoes of resilience can be significantly heard by the ever-evolving hospitality industry so bringing to my readers TravelScapes' June issue dedicated to the thriving hospitality industry! We embark on a journey to explore the latest trends, innovations, and opportunities in the world of hospitality, catering specifically to the needs and interests of the travel trade fraternity and gathering thoughts and insights of the leading stalwarts from leading hotels such as in the cover story.

As we emerge from the challenges faced in recent times, we find ourselves witnessing a remarkable resurgence in the demand for travel and hospitality services. This special issue aims to serve as your compass, guiding you through the ever-evolving landscape of this dynamic industry.

Talking about the landscape, the tourism surge is also propelling which compelled us to feature two of the hottest beach destinations within India as well near India namely Goa and Sri Lanka. To kill the sunny weather, where to head than to dip your toes in the ocean.

Travel Agents Association of India(TAAI), led by Jyoti Mayal is once again moving beyond borders to the paradisaal land of Sri Lanka organising another convention from July 6-9, 2023 which marks a comeback for Sri Lanka. The convention will aid to recognise the invaluable role played by travel agents, tour operators, and other B2B partners in connecting travellers with the perfect hospitality offerings. We have tried to include exclusive features on collaboration opportunities, partnership strategies, and the evolving landscape of B2B relationships within the hospitality sector as we spoke to new emerging leaders in the B2B space, namely Cleartrip. We hope these insights will foster stronger synergies and open doors to new business avenues for all our readers.

As the world emerges into a new era of travel and hospitality, we must also address the ongoing challenges related to sustainability, inclusivity, and responsible tourism. Together, we can create a hospitality landscape that not only delights travellers but also contributes to the greater good of our planet and its people.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the contributors and readers whose unwavering support and enthusiasm for our magazine are deeply appreciated. Together, let us explore the boundless possibilities that lie ahead in the world of hospitality. We hope the updates ignite your passion, spark meaningful conversations, and ultimately lead to a brighter future for the industry we all hold dear.

Safe travels and happy reading!

Share with us your valuable feedback and suggestions at

varun@versatilemedia.in

Happy Reading!

Varun Malhotra

TravelScapes

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Goa is the perfect amalgamation of natural beauty, lively nightlife, and tropical environs. From the best tourist attractions to plush resorts, the city will make your trip fun and hassle-free. Goa is India's favourite party destination with a umteenth number of top-notch hotels. Even being the smallest state in India, it thrives tourist destinations both domestic and foreign tourists alike. Although it is a small state, it packs around 130 km of coastline with large stretches of (mostly pristine and clean) beaches. The state of Goa is divided into two districts North Goa and South Goa. Both these regions attract their fair share of tourists. Most tourists prefer North Goa as it offers more choices and activities in terms of hotels, restaurants and nightlife. South Goa attracts tourists who are mostly looking for a relaxed vacation



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Ranjit Sagar Dam to be developed as tourist hub: Punjab CM

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said the state government would make efforts for developing the area around the Ranjit Sagar Dam, especially the Dhar Kalan block, as an ideal tourist destination.

He said there is a huge potential for developing this area as a tourist destination for which concerted efforts will be made, adding that due to the negligence of the successive state governments, the area has been ignored in development.

Mann said the untapped potential of tourism in this area will be harnessed for attracting tourists to this land with immense natural beauty.

The Chief Minister asked the officers to prepare a detailed blueprint for the development of the entire region so that a major fillip can be given to the tourism sector in the state. He added, "This area is blessed with a bounty of natural resources which can attract tourists from across the globe."

He said there is a need for the promotion of economic activity in the region, thereby transforming the lives of people.

The Chief Minister said the government cleared adventure tourism policy for the promotion of water sports which can also be implemented.

Ramgarh Crater in Rajasthan emerges as a tourist destination

The **third** crater of the country and the first of Rajasthan is being developed as a tourist destination by the tourism department.

Situated at a distance of about 40 kilometres from the Baran district headquarters of the state, the Ramgarh Crater is a geo-heritage zone believed to be 600 million years old.

Director of the Tourism Department, Rashmi Sharma, said, "Ramgarh crater will emerge as the most favourite tourist destination of the country. The budget announcement was made by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot to develop this area as a Geo Heritage tourist destination. In compliance with the budget announcement, development works are being done here at a cost of Rs 57.22 crore, which include beautification of the lake, construction of infrastructure and other decorative works."

Director Rashmi Sharma, the tourism department is moving forward to promote geology tourism. In this series, abundant possibilities for tourism are being developed in Ramgarh Crater. According to Sharma, there is the harmony of geology, archaeology and history with natural beauty to attract tourists here which will naturally attract tourists.

Chamoli DM takes stock of reconstruction work at Badrinath

Chamoli District Magistrate Himanshu Khurana conducted an inspection of ongoing reconstruction works being carried out in Badrinath as part of the master plan which seeks to address issues such as unchecked and unplanned growth and construction activity, congested streets so on.

DM Khurana directed the officials to complete the construction works expeditiously with quality by employing an adequate number of machines and manpower.

He said that most of the riverfront development works should be completed in a

planned manner before the monsoon.

Taking information about the engineers, labourers, and machinery engaged in the reconstruction work, the District Magistrate also took stock of the travel arrangements in Badrinath.

Badrinath is one of the famous pilgrim towns of Uttarakhand. More than 8 lakh pilgrims visited the Kedarnath, Badrinath, Gangotri, and Yamunotri shrines since the Chardham Yatra began on April 22, according to the Uttarakhand Tourism Department.



Bhutan's Tourism Department certifies over 200 Non-Star Hotels

Bhutan's Department of Tourism certified more than 200 non-star hotels out of nearly 300 hotels assessed. The development comes after the Cabinet's recent approval, which allowed non-star hotels to offer services to tourists as long as they meet the minimum standards set by the department.

Since tourism resumed in Bhutan last September, the department notified that only certified hotels will be

allowed to cater to tourists. The decision was taken to ensure and enhance the overall tourist experience in Bhutan.

According to Bhutan's Tourism Department, there is a list of criteria that the hotels will be required to meet like hygiene, cleanliness, comfort, safety, amenities and services. After meeting the criteria, the hotels will qualify for Star I and Star II hotels. As per the sources, more than 500 registered non-star hotels are present in Bhutan.



TITLIS GLACIER MOUNTAIN

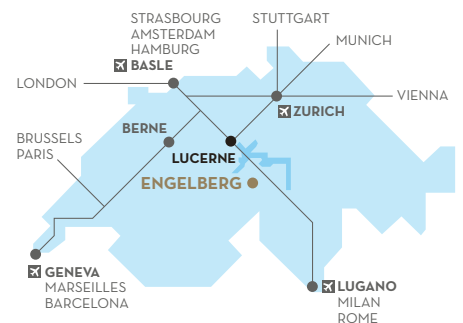
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TITLIS CLIFF WALK



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Northeast to get its first Vande Bharat Express train soon

Indian Railways has been expanding the Vande Bharat train network across the country and is now extending it to the northeastern states of India, also known as the Seven Sisters. The Railway Board ordered the Integral Coach Factory (ICF) of Chennai to speed up the manufacturing of coaches for the Vande Bharat train for this region. The Vande Bharat train has been launched on 15 different routes in the country, and the 16th route would be from Guwahati to New Jalpaiguri in Assam, which was flagged off

by PM Narendra Modi on May 14.

This train will have 16 coaches and will operate at a maximum speed of 110 kilometres per hour. The Northeast Frontier Railway is preparing for the inauguration of new train route.

It is anticipated that the Vande Bharat train will increase tourism and economic activity in the northeastern states. It will also save time for people and benefit Assam and other states. The complete route of the Vande Bharat train will soon be shared by the Northeast Frontier Railway.

Tripura Govt to refurbish old capital complex area to boost tourism

The Tripura government decided to refurbish the old capital complex area near Agartala to boost tourism.

The old capital complex, which includes a place, Chaturdasha Temple, a museum and other structures, in Puran Haveli area in Puratan Agartala, around 8 km from the state capital, would be renovated and the entire area beautified as part of the Rs 20-crore project.

King Krishna Manikya Debbarma had constructed the complex and the temple in 1760 after shifting his capital from Udaipur, around 60 km away. The Manikya kings shifted the capital from Puran Haveli to Agartala in 1838.

"The temple draws devotees from across Tripura and



neighbouring Assam and Bangladesh during the seven-day 'Kharchi Mela' held in the months of June and July. The state government will secure a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for the renovation of the historical site," state Tourism Minister Sushanta Chowdhury said.



Delhi Tourism introduces Evening Heritage Walks

Delhi Tourism introduced daily evening tours, aiming to enhance tourism and generate increased revenue during the summer season. Dubbed as "Delhi by Evening," this new initiative will showcase some of the city's renowned monuments and popular tourist attractions between 5 PM and 10 PM.

According to sources, the tour will commence at the National War Memorial, followed by a visit to India Gate. A leisurely stroll along the Kartavya Path will be the next highlight of the itinerary. The tour will then proceed to illuminate two magnificent structures, namely Qutub Minar and Safdarjung Tomb, which

will remain open until 8:30 PM. The final stop will be Dilli Haat, offering tourists an opportunity to indulge in shopping and savour a delectable dinner.

Notably, the tour will provide dedicated pick-up and drop-off points, ensuring convenient transportation for visitors. Additionally, a knowledgeable tour guide will be available to assist and enlighten tourists throughout the journey. This thoughtful arrangement is aimed at striking a harmonious balance between providing a traveller-friendly experience and delivering factual information about Delhi's cultural landmarks.

Kiratpur-Manali four-lane takes tourism to new heights, Shukla says

Himachal Pradesh Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla said the Kiratpur-Manali four-lane project will take the state's tourism to "new heights".

"The local people will be facilitated through the four-lane and the possibilities of employment at the local level will also increase due to the industrial areas built on the sides of the project," Shukla said.

During his visit to Bilaspur district, the Governor

inspected the progress of the 1.8 km long tunnel construction at Kiratpur and the new Bhanupalli-Bilaspur-Beri rail line in Bilaspur district.

Shukla said the construction of five tunnels on the Kiratpur-Manali four-lane is over and five more tunnels will be opened in the coming months. He directed the authorities to complete all the work under the project within the stipulated time.



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Govt buses free for women in Karnataka, says Reddy

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy pledged to fulfil the Congress's poll guarantee of free bus travel for all women. He said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah would make an announcement in that regard. The Congress government will have to spend around Rs 4,700 crore annually to make bus travel free for all women in Karnataka.

Government buses ferry 82.51 lakh people, 40 lacs of them women, every day in the state. Daily ridership will likely rise by up to 10 per cent if travel becomes free for the latter.

Addressing a crowded press conference at the KSRTC central office here, the eight-time MLA was at pains to dismiss suggestions that the newly elected government would struggle to fulfil the bus travel guarantee. He also disagreed that only women from BPL families would be covered.

Life jackets mandatory for shikaras in Kashmir

The Jammu and Kashmir administration made life jackets mandatory for shikaras or smaller boats in the Dal, Nigeen lakes and other water bodies of the region for the safety of tourists.

"In order to ensure the safety of tourists taking shikara rides in Dal and Nigeen lakes and other water bodies and to prevent any untoward incident in view of inclement weather conditions or any other reasons, it is hereby ordered that as provided in the J&K Tourism Policy guidelines, each shikara boat registered under J&K Tourist Trade Act, 1978 shall maintain the availability of a minimum of three life-saving Jackets of recommended quality and specifications in the boat, at all times," a government order said.

It said the registration of shikaras under the said Act would be cancelled if the direction was not abided by.

The move comes after the growing incidents of shikaras getting stuck in turbulent waters on the lakes due to freak weather in Kashmir, which sees sudden gusty winds.



Mahakumbh 2025: Digital Kumbh Museum on the anvil

The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh, is making enormous preparations for 'Mahakumbh 2025,' which would be hosted at Prayagraj's City of Sangam. The Tourism Department is working on improving tourism destinations and beautifying temples for the 'Mahakumbh 2025.'

The Tourism Department also proposes building the 'Digital Kumbh Museum' in this sequence. This museum, which will be erected at a cost of 60 crore, would draw worshippers to the area. It will not only showcase the culture of the country and state, but it will also provide insights into the mythical and historical significance of the Kumbh Mela.

According to the plan, authorities stated that the Digital Kumbh Museum will give visitors a modern Kumbh experience by providing amenities like Heating, Ventilation and Air-Conditioning (HVAC), along



with audio-video rooms. It will also have spiritual-themed galleries such as the Spiritual and Kumbh Mela Interpretation Gallery, Samudra Manthan Gallery and Akhada Gallery.

The museum will have a food plaza and a souvenir store, where visitors may buy Kumbh Mela-related books and merchandise. There will also be a Cultural Haat, a museum, a gallery, and theatre, and a guest house. The 'Sangam' river would be presented in the entry lobby via digital projection, according to the proposed concept of the Digital Kumbh Museum.

LG inaugurates Jambu Zoo at Nagrota, announces one-month free entry

Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Manoj Sinha inaugurated the Jambu Zoo at Nagrota in Jammu on May 29, 2023, while announcing one-month free entry for all.

The Lt Governor congratulated the people of Jammu Kashmir and all the stakeholder departments. He also acknowledged the hard work of

all the workers engaged in the construction of Jambu Zoo.

"This much awaited addition to the tourist destinations of J&K UT, spread over 70-hectare area in the phase-1, was taken up under Languishing Project and it shall attract both local residents and tourists visiting Union Territory," said the Lt Governor.

The scenic beauty around the first-of-its-kind full-fledged zoo in the UT will make it a unique tourist destination and has the potential to boost tourism in the region, he added.

At the inaugural event, the Lt Governor spoke on the developmental journey of J&K and highlighted the efforts to develop better facilities for the locals as well as for the visiting tourists and improving the quality of living for all.



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EMBRACING CHANGE, IGNITING PASSION

THE THUNDEROUS HOWL OF THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Who doesn't want to embark on a thrilling expedition through the fascinating trends and mesmerising innovations that define the modern face of the Hospitality Industry? The vibrant realm of the industry, where innovation and creativity intertwine to shape extraordinary travel experiences, stands ready with a wealth of trendy offerings to captivate the senses and redefine the art of hospitality for the millennial traveller. From cutting-edge technology and sustainable initiatives to immersive cultural encounters and personalised services, the web of hospitality is bustling with innovations that cater to the ever-evolving demands of the explorers. The travellers' undeniable desire to be whisked away into a realm where luxury meets authenticity, where digital advancements seamlessly blend with warm human connections, and where every aspect of a traveller's journey is meticulously crafted to leave an indelible mark on their minds is gradually coming true.

The hoteliers can be seen, quite literally weaving a story while expanding their footprints above and beyond, and while adding colours to their existing canvases, which is why TravelScapes is on the move to connect the hospitality industry with the potential guests by featuring insights of the leading captains of the hospitality industry in the upcoming issue. Trust us, they are leaving no stone unturned to providing the best of both worlds to their guests

By Aanchal Sachdeva





ABINASH MANGHANI
CEO, WELCOMHERITAGE HOTELS

Leveraging technology and online platforms to streamline hotel operations

WelcomHeritage has been at the forefront of leveraging technology and strategically utilising our online platforms to enhance the guest experience and streamline hotel operations. We seamlessly integrate with OTAs and hotel aggregators, simplifying the booking process for guests. Collaborating with FX Gem, to offer guests the convenience of completing procedures of Check-in and Check-out seamlessly on their mobile phones. Cutting-edge features like smart TVs, voice-controlled devices, and in-room tablets provide effortless access to hotel services. Partnering with Revinate, we actively encourage guests to share experiences and promptly address feedback for service improvement. Advanced analytics and CRM systems enable personalised experiences and enhance operational efficiency. IoT devices and sensors optimise resource allocation by monitoring energy consumption and managing maintenance needs. Secure and hassle-free payment systems offer convenience to guests.

Embracing industry trends and innovations

We actively engage with industry associations, attend conferences, and participate in travel marts, seminars and workshops. Our team conducts regular market research to understand first-hand, emerging trends and consumer behaviour. We collaborate with technology providers, consultants, and solution experts to explore innovative solutions. We monitor digital and social media platforms, benchmark against competitors, and engage with technology vendors to stay adaptable. Implementing eco-friendly practices, such as energy-efficient lighting and water conservation programs. We recently collaborated with SunFuel EV charger to install EV charging stations across our properties, creating EV road trip itineraries. Emphasizing guest well-being with fitness centres, yoga studios, spa facilities, and healthy dining options. Leveraging digital channels for personalized campaigns and chatbots to streamline guest interactions.

We monitor digital and social media platforms, benchmark against competitors, and engage with technology vendors to stay adaptable

WelcomHeritage Hotels- Guest relations and their satisfaction

We use Revinate, an ORM tool that provides a qualitative benchmark of consumer sentiment towards our hotels compared to competitors. It allows us to track social media success, and online customer satisfaction, and benchmark our performance against key rivals. In the age of user-generated content, maintaining a consistent brand image can be challenging. Review sites and social media platforms amplify individuals' experiences, impacting our brand perception. With Revinate, we monitor and ensure that ratings align with our operational expectations.



RISHI PURI
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT- OPERATIONS,
MAYFAIR HOTELS & RESORTS LTD.

Leveraging technology and online platforms to streamline hotel operations

Mayfair focuses on providing a seamless online booking experience through our official website, where guests can easily make reservations and access information about hotel amenities and services. The website is designed to be user-friendly and provides all the necessary details for a smooth booking process. It is persistent to mention that to further enhance the guest experience we are working on a new brand website which would offer an unparalleled experience while keeping ease of use as a maxim. We monitor guest reviews and feedback to address any concerns promptly and maintain a positive brand image. We have taken the services of an external agency to ensure that any review posted on channels like Google, Facebook and many more also immediately reaches us and once we have scrutinised the same we make sure that our esteemed guests get feedback.

Embracing industry trends and innovations

"Stay with Us, stay with Nature" is not merely a tagline at Mayfair Hotels and Resorts; it encapsulates our commitment to providing an immersive and eco-conscious experience.

At Mayfair, we prioritize responsible practices that minimize our ecological impact. We have replaced plastic bottles with eco-friendly glass alternatives and implemented RO units at each of our hotels to avoid the use of plastic. Additionally, for any incoming material, we have requested our supplier partners to make the switch from plastic bags to jute.

Water and energy conservation through technology has been our thought process behind designing each of our resorts. Natural ventilation and lighting are deeply embedded in our systems. When guests choose to stay with us, they not only indulge in exceptional hospitality but also actively contribute to the preservation of our natural heritage.

We embrace a holistic approach, combining traditional methods like personalized interactions with modern techniques such as online feedback platforms

Mayfair Hotels and Resorts- Guest relations and their satisfaction

At Mayfair Hotels and Resorts, guest satisfaction is a top priority. India traditionally has been a country where human relations and personal interactions take top priority over mechanised robots. Our dedicated team whom we are proud of engages in one-to-one interactions, attentively listening to feedback and preferences to personalize guest experiences. We also actively collect and analyze guest feedback through post-stay surveys, online reviews, and social media platforms. This valuable input allows us to identify areas for improvement and implement necessary changes. By consistently monitoring guest satisfaction, we ensure that our services continually exceed expectations. This commitment to guest satisfaction ensures that every stay at Mayfair Hotels and Resorts is exceptional and memorable. The TnA or Training Need Analysis is drawn by our COE (Center Of Excellence) basis the feedback received and all our training to the team is worked on keeping the guest feedback received.



ANJALI MEHRA
CHIEF BRAND OFFICER AND
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
MARKETING, THE LEELA
PALACES, HOTELS AND RESORTS

Leverage technology and online platforms to streamline hotel operations

At the Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts, the key is to balance hi-tech with high touch. With contactless check-in and check-out, full access to digital news and e-papers as well as e-menus across restaurants, guests can have both choice and flexibility at their fingertips.

We have made significant investments in technology. From a CRM platform that provides data insights and allows you to engage with the customer as well as drive incremental revenues through regular communication and promotional campaigns, to tools that give us insights into Brand Health and social and digital analytics, we are leveraging technology to harness the power of data. We have also introduced an associate intranet and automated HR systems to engage and empower our associates. We have introduced an immersive website and are increasing our social media presence and enhancing digital optimisation to amplify our outreach and connect with customers in new and more effective ways. We will soon have The Leela App that will seamlessly integrate the guest journey across functions.

Embracing Industry Trends and Innovations

We introduced 'Aujasya by The Leela' in-house water bottling plants at our hotels, replacing single-use plastic bottles. We are also in the process of replacing all single-use plastic in the hotel with sustainable alternatives. We inaugurated new environment-friendly boats at The Leela Palace Udaipur perched on the banks of the lake Pichola. Equipped with the latest green technologies. We also own and operate 5MWp Windmill plants in Shimoga district which provide for 86% of the energy consumed at The Leela Palace Bengaluru. Tishya by The Leela, the brand's signature fragrance was launched with an exclusive range of bath amenities which are 100% vegan, 100% paraben and SLS-free developed with natural extracts, and floral fragrances and come in 100% recyclable packaging. Through the association with Kailash Satyarthi, The Leela supports 11 Bal Mitra Grams or Child-friendly villages. To foster equal opportunity as a component of true Indian hospitality, we introduced Shefs at The Leela initiative to showcase the expertise and brilliance of women who are committed to making a difference and inspiring generations to come.

It is therefore of utmost importance that we delight every guest who crosses our threshold and provide them with magical and memorable experiences

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts- Guest relations and their satisfaction

We are guided by the principle of Atithi Devo Bhava – Guest is God and everything that we do is centred around our guests. We provide the guests with magical and memorable experiences who crosses our threshold. To ensure the delivery of this promise is consistent across our hotels and at every touch point, we are constantly listening to what our guests have to say to us. Their feedback is measured and evaluated through Guest Feedback Surveys and direct channels including websites, call centres and social media. We have also invested in other tools to conduct surveys at a larger scale to analyse how our brand and services are perceived by our guests including brand health surveys.



NIKHIL SHARMA
MARKET MANAGING DIRECTOR,
EURASIA, WYNDHAM HOTELS &
RESORTS

Leverage technology and online platforms to streamline hotel operations

In 2021, we became the first renowned hotel company to adopt and offer the next-gen Oracle Hospitality Cloud Property Management System (PMS) in our full-service hotels. This mobile-enabled platform empowers hotels to enhance customised experiences for guests, lower costs, and improve operational efficiencies. Owing to our long-standing partnership with OTA Insight, we offer a suite of revenue management tools for franchised and managed hotels in EMEA. Hoteliers can use forward-looking data and market intelligence to spot emerging trends via channels customers book. They can also access competitive business intelligence, rate strategy insights (such as seasonal events and key drivers influencing market rates) and get personalised room-type mapping. Wyndham Mobile App- Backed by three unique features, the app combines the benefit of convenience and easy navigation to enhance the overall user experience of a traveller. One can use the app to book any Wyndham hotel in a maximum of 3 taps with the 'Lightning Book' feature. Besides giving

a platform to earn Wyndham reward points on each booking, the app displays all the information regarding desired hotels and the user's distance from them.

Embracing Industry Trends and Innovations

We are always looking for innovative ways to streamline operations and enhance our guest experience. In a fast-paced world, the process of booking should be quick and offer information that's most relevant to travellers. Keeping this in mind, we constantly develop new features to make the Wyndham app more user-friendly. Last year, we introduced a road trip planner feature that helps customers create and customise their travel preferences and offers innovative experiences appealing to users' real-time needs.

Other technology trends that we are witnessing include the use of virtual reality, artificial intelligence, mobile check-in, contactless payments, voice, and face recognition technology. At Wyndham, we strive to achieve a balance between the use of technology and face-to-face interactions with our attentive team members who embrace our count on me ethos.

Every guest is different, and we pride ourselves on our training and recruitment of team members who go above and beyond for our guests

Wyndham Hotels & Resorts - Guest relations and their satisfaction

At Wyndham, we greatly value customer feedback and look at many metrics of guest satisfaction. Firstly, online reviews are a great way to measure guest satisfaction and we encourage our managed and franchised hotels to monitor and reply to reviews where possible. However, we prefer to speak to each of our guests during their stay to provide personalised experiences and address any concerns that they might have. Other metrics include the net promoter score (NPS) which is a rating of how likely guests are to recommend your hotel; speed of services from check-in to food and beverage and customer loyalty which is a great indication of guest satisfaction.



MEENA BHATIA
VICE PRESIDENT & GENERAL
MANAGER, LE MERIDIEN NEW DELHI

Leverage technology and online platforms to streamline hotel operations

The increasing transition and growth in online business has not only changed the way we do business but also how we do our business. Keeping up with the growing role of technology, online platforms make way for more flexibility and price elasticity, this also enables better control of inventory and rate management. The online platforms have a strong and wider reach, and the ability to build offers and packages that are relevant to growing & emerging target audiences, supported by their strong data capture and analytics. In a nutshell for a hotel OTA's offer dynamic rate and inventory management and opportunities for efficient marketing ROIs. From a customer's experience point of view, there is complete transparency of rates, ease of booking and communication and complete control.

Embracing Industry Trends and Innovations

A dampener for city hotels, of course, will be the growth of leisure travellers and the emerging remote leisure destinations. There is an increase in wellness and medical tourism, which again takes travellers away from City centre hotels. The advantage for legacy city hotels like ourselves will be the rise in Bleisure. We will have to reinvent our standard offerings, adopting smart technology to enable us to anticipate and personalize guest experiences and give guests memorable experiences. We also have to take our sustainability initiatives to the next level, to meet the future expectation of travellers for Net Zero Hotels.

We have recently launched our keyless Check-in, guests can check in on the Marriott Bonvoy mobile app and download the electronic room key. We also have the advantage of mobile chat, guests can chat with our associate before, during and after their stay from the mobile app.

A dampener for city hotels, of course, will be the growth of Leisure travellers and the emerging remote leisure destinations

LE MERIDIEN NEW DELHI - Guest relations and their satisfaction

Here, I have a bit of a concern with the overuse of technology, I think in some ways it is also disruptive to the Hospitality lessons we were taught and disruptive to our love to meet, greet, communicate and engage with our guests. However, another viewpoint is that THIS is relevant to the current needs and demands of Gen Z and new age travellers who would rather Chat online than talk to our teams, who seek more privacy and private time than spend a few moments to chat with share feedback. Guest feedback today is an open secret, we can know, learn, navigate, analyze and respond to the guest sentiments not only from our internal and Marriott Guest Voice reviews but also on the online reviews be it OTA's, Trip advisors, Goggle reviews or on from our Social media handles. However, the mobile Chat provides great real-time insights where customer concerns can be addressed on the spot.



VISHAL KAPOOR
GENERAL MANAGER, RADISSON
BLU RESORT AND SPA ALIBAUG

Leverage technology and online platforms to streamline hotel operations

At RHG we strongly believe in embedding the right ethics at work and focus on regular training right across all levels of the workforce. In today's fast-track environment having the right information at the right time, with the right technology & software helps to keep our business on track. We have digital platforms now with easy access to programs developed to operate with smartphones - for example, hotelkit@rhg. We have programs designed and easy access through smartphones and technology (i.e.; contactless Check /out experiences) enabling us to track & map guest journeys and enhance their stay experiences at our brands. Information technology platforms also benefit all our stakeholders as we are mobile today and able to track everything we do in business.

Embracing Industry Trends and Innovations

It is important to oversee operations across functions and keep us ahead of time. With a highly professional team's backup - we do excel and implement new strategies in operational areas like mapping guest experience journey from pre-arrival to post-departure. We keep reviewing our food and beverage offerings with new menus and prepare unique offerings for our guests, upscale staycation and dining experience for guests every quarter - indeed such creative initiative helps us to drive & grow incremental revenue. We also have a kids' experience zone with over 20 games which they can play, and our associates are trained to curate mind and engagement games for all ages, this keeps the parents free to experience our magnanimous 16 acres of oasis with the extravagance of coastal charm, and turf area with golf, football and cricket ground for the sports lovers.

We strive to create memorable experiences for our guests so that they remember those moments and would like to come back over and over again

Radisson Blu Resort and Spa Alibaug - Guest relations and their satisfaction

As a brand we believe in our brand service philosophy "Yes I Can!" which allows us to listen, empathize and follow up on our guest feedback on the spot. Most of them are to do with special requests and surprises which they want us to keep secret to give a wow experience for their loved ones. We offer golf cart free rides across for families and the elderly and our teams are more than eager to do a show around, ensuring all the high-impact guest areas are well informed.

We have some of our guests who come across on their private speed boats and RoRo boats every week either to stay over or even for a daycation with their families and friends. If not a claim to fame but we are ranked number 1 on trip advisor and have high experience rankings on all our online channels, this is only possible with our core philosophy of each one owning one guest throughout.



RAHUL DEB BANERJEE
VICE PRESIDENT EURASIA, THE CLARKS HOTELS & RESORTS

Leverage technology and online platforms to streamline hotel operations

We have invested in technology infrastructure and extensively use Artificial Intelligence and deep tech for reaching out to the right audience. We have developed the whole infrastructure keeping the millennial and upward mobile population in mind. Our re-designed corporate website provides a 3-click response for a reservation to be done, and we have seen a surge of over 15% clicks compared to the previous year. Also, the group ARR has remarkably improved by over 22%, concerning last year.

On the marketing front, we have improved our digital media presence by 28%. We strictly follow the same marketing and branding guidelines across all units, consistency in communication is seen in social media marketing, search engine optimisation, media releases, digital campaigns and lead generation activity. In addition, we have launched our verified WhatsApp API, to have a one-on-one

personalised interaction with the user.

Embracing Industry Trends and Innovations

Due to the hybrid mode, guests are aiming for long staycations and working from remote locations. Guests have started looking beyond the rooms, they prefer to select properties based on the amenities, cleanliness, and experiential that the brand has to offer. We are developing our F&B brands by adding new offerings and cuisines based on the destinations. We are hiring specialised chefs, one of our properties Raaj Bhavaan Clarks in Chennai, have chefs hired from across the state and especially from the Chettinad region, as we serve Tamil and Chettinad cuisine over there. As for Kurukshetra, we have started the Mahabharata trail, where all the important places associated with Mahabharata are showcased to travellers. The way ahead looks positive.

Experiential travel will be the mantra for the hospitality sector

The Clarks Hotels & Resorts - Guest relations and their satisfaction

We value our customers in all manners, enhancing their experiences, and taking care of their feedback & suggestions. We have implemented a grievance addressable mechanism, to ensure prompt and proper handling of concerns or queries, by the backend team. As part of our branding ambitions, we have uniform standards implemented, about SOPs, hotel photography, and installing the room amenities and uniforms as per the group policies. These initiatives have raised the brand equity of our hotels and have resulted in a better clientele. We are using GoAudit meticulously designed to empower auditors with a comprehensive suite of features that streamline the auditing process from start to finish. Key features of GoAudit include- Intelligent Automation, Customizable workflow, Data Analytics and Visualisation, Collaboration and Communication, and Enhanced Security.



ASHISH VOHRA
FOUNDER & CEO, JÜSTa HOTELS & RESORTS

Leveraging technology and online platforms to streamline hotel operations

AI is taking a front seat undoubtedly. Whether it's Chatgpt, Waze or Google updates, technology is fast-driven. From a user point of view, bots and chat boxes and so forth, are already becoming smarter. However, in India, people are used to human beings. If the customer is chatting with a bot, then the bot will be far more intelligent and can replace human beings and help you reduce cost and so on, or better the user experience because, at 12 in the night, a contact person might not be available. It might not be possible for everyone to have a contact centre especially small hotel owners. The evolution of 5G will have its effect whereas, the adoption of technology will happen faster than expected.

Embracing industry trends and innovations

Staying in touch with Media, and attending conferences, and events are the easiest ways to absorb things. One learns the best through the amalgamation of knowledge and experience.

Our Global Hospitality Conclave (GHC) learnings include having a website manager, and active social media channels. An Ex-Facebook employee inspired us on enhancing our digital presence as it can make people change destinations. Reducing an operational process to one key instead of following several steps.

I'll share a brief instance, when President Kennedy went to NASA, he asked the janitor asking about his role. Even though the janitor's role was an insignificant one but he was made to believe the importance of his position. The challenge is to make your staff think similarly.

The sooner you adopt and push yourself for technology, the better it is for you in the long run

jüSTa Hotels & Resorts- Guest relations and their satisfaction

Why do you want to measure the immeasurable? It's different for different people, for different hotels, for different locations. In my opinion, every experience is unique in itself to everyone, you know, your experience in the same room might be very different from mine. So we all have standard templates and grids for measuring guest satisfaction and we continue using them. Guest Satisfaction is a moving goalpost. Let's say a hotel can be number one on TripAdvisor, a five on five on Google, 9.9 on booking.com. You could have your internal guest feedback systems. But ultimately, according to me, the proof of the pudding is the occupancy, the best rate, and the demand level. Performance is the best parameter of measurement in terms of no businesses surviving without a top line and bottom line. And each one has to measure it on his terms and with unknown parameters.

Radisson BLU RESORT & SPA ALIBAUG



#1

ON TRIPADVISOR IN ALIBAUG



CLEARTRIP CLEARING THE PATH TO B2B SUCCESS

INSIGHTS FROM SUKESH SHETTY ON EXPANDING HORIZONS TO DRIVE B2B GROWTH FOR CLEARTRIP

Sukesh Shetty, B2B Head of Cleartrip and API Business, is a dynamic veteran with a deep understanding of the travel industry of over two decades. With his extensive experience and expertise, Shetty has played a pivotal role in driving Cleartrip's success in the B2B space. His passion for innovation and customer-centricity has propelled the company to new heights. In his previous stint, Sukesh was the Co-Founder of Tripsforbusiness, a B2B-focused travel tech platform involved in building a content-rich, metasearch and book travel product for B2B customers. Shetty's visionary approach has revolutionised the B2B travel landscape, introducing cutting-edge solutions that streamline operations and enhance profitability for travel partners. His ability to identify emerging trends and leverage technology has empowered Cleartrip to deliver unparalleled value to its B2B clients

By *Aanchal Sachdeva*

What sets Cleartrip apart as a preferred partner for B2B clients in the travel industry, and how do you communicate this value proposition to your clients?

There's a very interesting history of B2B in Cleartrip. Very few know that Cleartrip had B2B since 2009. Back then, we had launched a product for the B2B industry calling it agent box and Cleartrip for Business. And the reason for launching it goes back to our website garnering a lot of attention to figure out if other cohorts were available in the market, not only B2C customers, travel agents or the corporates who would want to do business with us. Besides, we wanted to give them an experience of a simple UI, a clean interface. To our surprise, they adopted that interface. It was so popular that travel agents would search on the Cleartrip agent box but book it outside. It was so easy to find things but inherently the earlier Cleartrip had a very B2C DNA, and the pandemic put everything on the back burner. To comprehend better, Flipkart since its inception is retail as well

as wholesale.

As we are aware that B2B essentially is like the retailers and wholesalers of the travel business. So the B2B seed was planted again. We rebuilt our team including former members of Cleartrip who used to manage in 2021. During the first year, our primary focus was on winning back some of our core customers with a few questions in mind. Can we start building a new product? Can we introduce ourselves in the market? That's exactly when Cleartrip was back with a bang to make a difference.

2022 was the breakout year for Cleartrip! 2023 marks the turning point! We are in 23 cities whereas we were in only four markets in four cities earlier when we had started. We are working on spreading our availability across markets. We have recently introduced a brand new tool. We want to be at par with what everybody else is offering and then we want to introduce the power of the brand, and how Flipkart and Cleartrip can be an enabler

“

We are trying to ensure that everybody knows that we are back in the business and make our presence felt

to your growth. The intention here is to have onboard a limited amount of agents, but you want to make sure that we invest in their growth and help them multiply it further.

Can you share examples of successful B2B travel partnerships or projects you have been involved in?

Let's just say, at least three of the largest aggregators in the country work with us. We have an engagement where we deliver supplies to them to enable them to distribute them to their regions. We would handle only about 5-10% of their business which has increased to 60% of their business, and that's quite a huge amount.

We have three or four operators in Punjab, Delhi and there are about 300 people.

In your opinion, what are some emerging trends in the B2B travel sector and how is Cleartrip adapting those to stay ahead of the curve?

On the agency front, our primary focus is to build a solid accounting ledger reconciliation system. In its initial state, we want to make sure that it suffices all the bookings done on our platform. But we are toying with an idea to give

event in Delhi with 300 travel agents from the northern region to join us for a rendezvous is one such attempt. The intent is to thank them for supporting us. I'm sure we must be bumbling a lot of things here and there but we are working our way through it. Second, the expansion from 4 to 23 cities is a clear indication. By the end of this year, we'll be in about 45 cities. Lastly, we've been doing some mailers, and some digital activity, we've not firmed it on but we want to do some amount in tier 2 and tier 3 cities.

Cleartrip emphasizes streamlined travel management. How would you ensure efficiency in B2B travel operations?

To begin with, we've just set up a state-of-the-art 150-seater Operations Unit specifically for B2B that went live two weeks ago. The way we're looking at it is the demands, the needs of a B2B customer will be significantly different than a B2C customer. A B2C customer needs to be enabled for travel. A B2B customer has requirements around their earnings on travel and both of those require a very different approach.

The second is we've always been a vanilla flight and hotel organisation whatever tools we are building or offerings we have. Moving

monitor compliance across all Flipkart group companies that a standard set of procedures from a security perspective. We have VAPT certification for our systems. And some of our B2B products also have server isolation outside of the B2C products, they have an additional layer of security also running. Security is extremely straightforward because Walmart Flipkart has anyway a set of compliances to follow. All of those are adopted universally, but for B2B, interestingly along with the platforms comes an additional layer of server isolation.

How would you approach building and nurturing long-term relationships with your B2B client as a Cleartrip representative?

In 2009, we launched one of our first customers to come on board with us Blue Star and the same customer is still riding with us. We had pretty much shut down the division, and we revived it back. In the corporate division, from our Enterprise Client List, we hardly lost 5% of our customers. That's how they stuck with us. The only thing that I can say is Cleartrip has a good retainer-ship for employees and the tenure of employees and Cleartrip has been abnormally long.

What we can draw out of this is it's more about human relationships that Cleartrip has formed over the years than just the relationship that Cleartrip has formed as a platform.

Collaboration and communication are key in the B2B space. Can you share an example of how you effectively worked with cross-functional teams to achieve a common goal?

A lot of things will be very new to us, including collaboration and partnerships. We are offering visa partnering with Cosmo and VFS and we are open about the trifecta of Cleartrip, Cosmo and VFS as we are in favour of giving a more comprehensive search.

As mentioned earlier, we are bringing DMCs on board. As travel agents, we know that they are never going to stick to one partner in a day. They will be on the run to hit four different people. But at least they will be familiar that the funnel from where the money is going is central, everything gets accommodated, and the credit line is central. So we are open to partnering with open banks to figure out if something like this is coming out. Similarly, in corporate PR travel, this example of an open bank means it rides in the FinTech space even though it may not be our expertise, at the same time, there's no harm in working with somebody. Similarly, in corporate, everything is now getting unified. So when somebody looks at corporate travel, or business travel, some expense, and business events are not bundled together. I would love to partner with an expert and build a platform that I bring into travel and travel expertise. And then the expensive spending part comes in, but you have the best of both worlds.

VISION BOARD

On the agency front, we are going to clock three times growth this year in comparison with last year. We have a set of 180 test customers for the new platform we will be introducing for corporate. We want to be amongst the Top 5 B2B organisations and eventually, we want to focus on market share

the liberty of booking and we can assist if they need help to consolidate for commissions which are for near future.

Supply availability on the platform is something that everybody does but the larger the player, they don't want to adapt to your platform rather they would be interested in the inventory. So we are working on multiple methods to not lock you into the platform however they will still have the opportunity to avail the supplies. The traditional ways are mirror PCC and availability of fuel, jumping into my GDS and making the bookings. We are trying to see if there's a middle way where we can give access to our supply perhaps via API, or some other way. We want to go for depth, productivity.

What strategies would you employ to identify and target potential B2B clients for Cleartrip?

We have been participating in trade shows such as OTM, ATM, and WTM just being there as a part of the crowd or host. Hosting an

ahead, we've just introduced packages to our B2B network. We have tied up with a lot of DMCs. You want to make sure that we introduced these people to you so why don't you build your package and see if these people can add benefit to you.

The aim is to give an entire suite of services. We want to solve the issues of trains, cabs and buses and make them available. We've also started testing our internal visa division. It's been live since December, but we are testing it internally. The unique advantage that we have is being a part of the Flipkart group, we have a very nice large training ground. And if you want to introduce a product, you can straightaway introduce it to 30,000 people and figure out if it works or not.

How do you think Cleartrip ensures data privacy and security for B2B clients using their platform?

We use GCP servers for hosting all of our data. We have central InfoSec teams, which



GOA

THE SUNNY SIDE OF LIFE

Goa is the perfect amalgamation of natural beauty, lively nightlife, and tropical environs. From the best tourist attractions to plush resorts, the city will make your trip fun and hassle-free. Goa is India's favourite party destination with a umpteenth number of top-notch hotels. Even being the smallest state in India, it thrives tourist destinations both domestic and foreign tourists alike. Although it is a small state, it packs around 130 km of coastline with large stretches of (mostly pristine and clean) beaches. The state of Goa is divided into two districts North Goa and South Goa. Both these regions attract their fair share of tourists. Most tourists prefer North Goa as it offers more choices and activities in terms of hotels, restaurants and nightlife. South Goa attracts tourists who are mostly looking for a relaxed vacation

By Chandni Chopra

BEACH PLEASE

Goa is a paradise for beach bums, no doubt there! You visit Goa, and the first thing you want to do is to march straight up the glistening blue waters and swim yonder! Of course, the party capital of the country offers a plethora of famous beaches that you might have visited already. However, while it does have fancy and fun beaches with frolicking teens and adults, there are a handful of secret beaches in Goa too that one wouldn't have probably heard of. The sparkling turquoise waters look even better when the beaches have fewer people with the thrill one can experience when visiting some of the lesser-known beaches in Goa. You would be amazed by the tranquillity of these offbeat beaches in Goa.



TIMELESS- FORTIFICATIONS

The coastal state is dotted with numerous forts that were built as protective guards against the attacking forces of the erstwhile rulers. These monuments that were built hundreds of years ago still stand tall and give us an amazing sneak peek into history. These forts also bear marks of historic events that changed Goa forever, although most of the Goan forts are in ruins they still haven't lost their charm and splendour. These ancient structures are quite picturesque and hence a lovely place for travel bloggers. Forts are always a great place for history buffs.



SOIRÉE-AFFAIR

India's party capital? You better believe it. Goa's infamous nightlife is thrilling, chaotic, colourful and downright incredible. Doesn't matter what gives you a kick, you'll find it in spades here. From swanky nightclubs to wild beach shacks via dive bars, snug pubs and all the rest. When the sun goes down, throwing shapes is the number one thing to do in Goa. There is more to this beautiful part of the world than chaotic parties, of course, but debauchery has always been a keen element of the total Goa experience. If you're going to let your hair down anywhere, this is the place to do it.

CHURCH- CHANTS

Beautiful beaches and bountiful greenery are the highlight of Goa but if you want to add some spiritual spin to your Goa rendezvous, the city is brimmed with churches. As a former colony, Goa is thronged with tropical trees and charming churches. In fact, some of the most famous churches in the country are nestled in the expanses of Goa. With that, you get to dive into some of the fancy churches in Goa with eclectic architecture. Out of the detailed list of churches, the Basilica of Bom Jesus and Se Cathedral are among the most popular ones.



CASIN-O-CLOCK

Casinos in Goa are on the other side of this paradise. Casinos can be found floating in the Mandovi River and coast in some hotels. People from all over India and foreign countries visit these gambling clubs to try their luck. Tourists can try their luck at games like Black Jack, Rummy, Stud Poker, Baccarat, and Flash Roulette. The casino culture is now being recognised as another tourist magnet because of the great inflow of foreign tourists in Goa; who like to spend their time in casinos and nightclubs. Each casino is different from one another. Casinos in Goa are a perfect place if you enjoy a pulsating night with a drink in one hand and a pack of cards in the other.



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IHCL and Chalet Hotels inks franchise agreement for new Taj property in Delhi

Chalet Airport Hotel Private Limited which owns, operates and manages hotels, signed a franchise agreement with The Indian Hotels Company Limited to operate its Taj brand at its upcoming hotel at the Terminal 3 of Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi. The hotel will be located close to Terminals 3 and 2 and is expected to have 400 rooms and is likely to be ready in the next two years.

Sanjay Sethi, Managing Director and CEO of Chalet Hotels, said,

"We are happy to partner with them for our upcoming hotel in New Delhi with the signing of this franchise agreement. It was a well-thought-out decision to choose the Taj brand for this marquee asset."

Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director and Chief Executive officer of IHCL said, "This signing is in line with our vision to expand its footprint in gateway cities. With this addition, this brand is now present in the country's largest airports - Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru."



Marjan welcomes Le Méridien Hotels & Resorts on Al Marjan Island

Marjan, the developer of freehold properties in Ras Al Khaimah, welcomed the signing of an agreement between Marriott International and Three Musketeers Hospitality (TMH), a UAE-based real estate developer, to bring Le Méridien Hotels & Resorts to Ras Al Khaimah. The new Le Méridien Al Marjan Island Resort & Spa will enhance the premium hospitality offerings on Marjan's flagship Al Marjan Island with the expected addition of 350 keys by 2026.

The resort will be developed by Three Musketeers Hospitality (TMH), a wholly owned subsidiary of UAE-based Plus Holding Limited (PHL) and founded by family members of the India-



based Universal Halwasiya Group, set up in the 1960s. The new Le Méridien Al Marjan Island Resort & Spa is located on a prime beachfront location and is the latest addition to Al Marjan Island's growing portfolio of hospitality destinations that are a key pillar in the northern Emirate's rising visitor numbers from around the world.

UNWTO hosts executive training on tourism for rural development in Middle East

Under the theme 'Tourism for Rural Development: A Practical Approach to Strategy and Product Development', the three-day session was held at the UNWTO Regional Office for the Middle East in Riyadh to address the underlying needs for continuous skills development for ensuring up to date learning, adaptation, and innovation.

Sultan AlMusallam, Deputy Minister for International Affairs, Saudi Ministry of Tourism said: "This training programme demonstrates how determined and keen

the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and UNWTO are to promote the role of the Regional Office for the Middle East, and to provide every support and assistance possible to the Member States of the Organization in the region."

Opening the programme, Zoritsa Urosevic, UNWTO Executive Director said, "In the post-pandemic world, the role of tourism in rural development is more relevant than ever. Rural tourism has a high potential to empower local communities, stimulate local economic growth and social change."

Iran, Russia sign MoU to expand tourism cooperation

Iran and Russia have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to expand tourism cooperation, according to sources.

The MoU was inked by Ali Asghar Shalbafian, Iranian Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism, and Dmitry Vakhrukov, the Deputy Minister of economic development of Russia, on the sidelines of the 14th International Economic Forum "Russia-Islamic world" held in Kazan, Russia.

Under the MoU, related Iranian and Russian

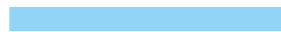
ministries will jointly push forward the implementation of a visa-free agreement signed in 2017 for granting visa waivers to tour groups from the two countries.

The MoU is also aimed at, among other things, enhancing bilateral tourism cooperation and boosting tourism exchange between the two sides, including the exchange of tourism experts, as well as experiences and information sharing.

Shalbafian said at the signing ceremony that Russia could become a high-priority tourism market for Iran.



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Cora Cora Maldives is a smart choice for travelers of all ages, offering a relaxed, fun and hassle-free stay. Cora Cora Maldives is located in Raa Atoll & surrounded by a calm 100-hectare lagoon, rich with vibrant corals, fish & lush vegetation.

The five-star contemporary resort has **100 villas**, and all have expansive views of the Indian Ocean. Some are overwater and some on the beach - each one has been expertly designed to reflect the spirit of Freedom “the resort’s motto” and is prevalent in all the nine accommodation categories.

With four restaurants, two bars, one of which is a café and ice cream stop - all included in your **Gourmet Meal Plan®**, the next drink or bite to eat is never far away.

200-plus team members all exude joy, energy, and a spirit of fun, which infuses the island with good-time vibes that guests feel everywhere, from the beaches to the bars.

Cora Cora Maldives is packed with bold experiences that guests will treasure for a lifetime. They are free to explore the heritage site, hit the water and zone out in the spa. Sound Healing classes, a peek into the past and heaps of **water sports** are all included!

it's freedom time

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OTOAI reaches out to MoCA seeking help in sorting the GoFirst chaos

The **Outbound** Tour Operators of India (OTOAI) has written to the honourable Minister of Civil Aviation Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia, seeking his help in sorting out the mayhem caused by GoFirst. GoFirst airline, earlier this month, suddenly declared bankruptcy and cancelled all flights in the peak season, leaving many travellers stranded and unable to reach their destinations. This has caused significant financial losses to customers all over the country who had made reservations for hotels and transport, which they are now unable to utilize due to the cancellation of their flights.

Expressing concern on same, Riaz Munshi, President, OTOAI says, "Our customers, whose tickets were cancelled last minute, had to buy very high-priced tickets with other airlines at the last moment, which has further added to their financial burden. This situation has caused immense distress to our customers and has harmed the tourism industry as a whole. Therefore, we request the intervention of the honourable Minister in this matter to ensure that our customers receive refunds for their cancelled flights and any additional expenses incurred due to the sudden cancellation."

"We would also urge the Ministry to look into the Cancellation Policy of the Airlines, which are not held accountable for making last-minute cancellations. Providing a refund is not a solution. Most of the time multiple bookings are involved in one trip which are all severely hampered if the flight is cancelled. Rather than a refund, the Airlines should be made responsible to make alternate travel arrangements for the customers and not just give a credit note or refund. We hope the Ministry will take swift action in this regard and assist us in restoring the trust of our customers in the tourism industry," added Munshi.

KAZIN DMC takes centre stage at Riyadh Travel Fair

Embarking on a new journey, KAZIN DMC took centre stage at the captivating Riyadh Travel Fair, enveloped in the Kazakh Tourism Board's embrace. From May 22 - May 26, the event unfolded with splendour. Rohit Shorey, the intrepid Founder & CEO of KAZIN DMC, unveiled their audacious plans to conquer the realms of Asia, Europe, and Africa, spreading their wings to new horizons. They set their sights on establishing a resplendent sales office in the city of Dublin, Ireland before the curtain falls in 2023.

Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and Belarus, the treasured gems in Kazin's crown, boast a wealth of experience accumulated over half a century, making KAZIN DMC's portfolio a beacon of strength and innovation that

eclipses its competitors.

Venturing into the radiant landscape of Saudi Arabia, KAZIN DMC sent forth its dynamic Sales team, a force to be reckoned with. Shekar Seshadri, the magnetic maestro of Sales for the captivating Middle East markets, was accompanied by the illustrious Shyray Bulekpayeva, the luminary of International Sales. Their agility left an indelible mark on the Saudi sands. KAZIN DMC's radiant aura extends to its key source markets, including the vibrant tapestry of India, the enchanting landscapes of Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, and the timeless Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



ICRISAT and Bihar Govt forge alliance propelling agriculture

The **International** Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) is on the move to collaborate with the Bihar Govt to provide scientific support for the implementation of Bihar's 4th Krishi (agricultural) Road Map. The plan aims to enhance the sustainability and profitability of crop production in the state, which encompasses diverse agro-climatic zones and which experiences floods and droughts.

Dr Mangala Rai, Agriculture Advisor to the Chief Minister of Bihar chaired a meeting in which representatives from ICRISAT, Bihar's Department of Agriculture, allied departments, and universities came together to develop an action plan for the



roadmap.

Deputy Director General of Research at ICRISAT, Dr Arvind Kumar said that the collaboration would encompass cutting-edge research in molecular biology, crop improvement, and millet research, bolstered by innovative technologies and other approaches.

"The partnership will also focus on

research related to value chains, seed systems, sustainable diversification, and water-budget integration in drought-prone regions of Bihar emphasizing the concept of One Health - encompassing feed and fodder research and breeding," said Dr Kumar.

Dr Jacqueline Hughes, Director General of ICRISAT, applauded the collaboration and said, "By joining forces, we are poised to unlock the full potential of Bihar's agricultural landscape, fostering resilience, productivity, and prosperity for the farming community, and nurturing a vibrant rural economy for enhanced food sovereignty, livelihoods, and social well-being."



TAAI announces Convention in Sri Lanka from July 6 – 9, 2023

Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) on the invitation from the Sri Lankan Tourism Promotion Board (SLTPB) will be 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).

TAAI, which was supposed to host its Convention in Sri Lanka last year, is sticking to its commitment and taking a good-size delegation to the Island Country, which is recovering well from the economic crisis experienced last year. The Convention will have post-tours, offering people an excellent chance to experience all that Sri Lanka has to offer.

Jyoti Mayal, President, of TAAI, says, "We have been waiting for almost a year to host our Convention in Sri Lanka and we are thrilled that this is finally happening. Sri Lanka is a beautiful country, and we are positive that our members will create

good synergy with the local tour operators in Sri Lanka and collectively we will be able to increase the tourist traffic between the two countries that are already bound by the Spiritual thread. SLTPB wants India Tourism Industry to be part of its growth story and witness the revival of the island country. Sri Lanka has already welcomed around 75,000 Indian visitors this year (up till April 30) making India its biggest source market. They are excited to roll out the red carpet for around 500 Indian delegates, including media, who would be attending the Convention. With the focus to formulate a Vision Plan for the future of TAAI, the Convention will witness meaningful discussions and debates that will help our members become stronger in their business area."

Amish Desai, Managing Committee Member, TAAI disclosed the theme of the Convention as 'Transcending Borders – Transforming Lives'.



Australia & Worldwide Travel appoints Global Destinations as Sales and Marketing representative in-market.

Australia and Worldwide Travel, an Inbound Tour Operator and Destination Management company in Australia, with an intent to set foot and leverage growth potential in India, assigns Global Destinations the mandate to build sales and develop brand awareness in-market.

The Australia and Worldwide Travel management team have years of experience and knowledge in inbound tourism. The company specialises in Australia & the South Pacific regions and was formed in April 2022 under the experienced Managing Partners, Leon Ellas and Ian D'Nazareth.



Australia and Worldwide Travel specialize in tailormade FIT itineraries, leisure groups, large groups series, incentive travel and have a dedicated team in Sydney. Their highly experienced team design and operate itineraries that are guaranteed to deliver unique and memorable travel experiences for all travellers.

Mumbai, a key source market for SOTC Travel

SOTC Travel inaugurated its new outlet in R Odeon Mall, Ghatkopar (East). The outlet was inaugurated by Daniel D'Souza, President & Country Head - Holidays, SOTC Travel Limited and Himanshu Sampat, Associate Vice President - Sales, SOTC Travel. This new addition further increases SOTC's network strength to ten stores in Mumbai (3 retail and 7 franchise), reiterating the Company's strategic focus to expand its footprint in the city.

SOTC Travel's customer insights from Mumbai and Maharashtra indicate brisk demand of over 30% vs. pre-pandemic. The

Company has been witnessing high demand for personalised holidays and group tours in the region and anticipates robust demand for experiential holidays, adventure holidays, domestic cruises, eclectic stays, safaris and biking trips. To cater to the preferences of travellers, SOTC Travel has expanded its portfolio and introduced 'Customised Holiday Experts' with destination expertise to help customers plan their memorable holidays as per their preferences, this is in addition to the Company's highly popular group escorted tours – international and domestic.





THE TALE OF ANANTA, SLUMBERING IN THE SANDS OF SUSTAINABLE TIME

TRACING THE THREADS, ANANTA HOTELS & RESORTS VENTURES INTO THE SUSTAINABLE HAVEN OF GREEN RETREATS

Gagan Katyal, Head of Sales & Marketing, Ananta Hotels & Resorts, a seasoned hotelier with an unwavering passion for the hospitality industry has climbed the ranks to become a respected leader in the industry. With over three decades of experience, he has emerged as a trailblazer in the field, consistently setting new standards of excellence. Gagan's expertise lies in crafting unforgettable guest experiences and driving operational efficiency. He possesses an innate ability to understand the ever-evolving needs of travellers and adapt his strategies accordingly.

Known for fostering a culture of professionalism, collaboration, and continuous improvement, let's delve into the conversation with the expert himself about how his extensive knowledge of revenue management, marketing, and customer service has proven instrumental in achieving remarkable business growth and guest satisfaction

By Aanchal Sachdeva

Ananta Hotels- Larger than-life experiences

Having worked with various brands before Ananta and I can say that Ananta undoubtedly allowed me to implement what I had learned with various other brands. Starting two years ago, we are now almost about 12 resorts. We specialise primarily in resorts and resorts don't necessarily have to be vast. I believe that they could be as small as 10 tents or as large as 250 keys.

We aim at promoting experiences. We are a believer in the "larger than life experiences" offered by our existing property in Udaipur and the upcoming property in Jaisalmer. Another segment which we promote is 'well-being' because that's the right path to leading a quality life and we prefer not associating it with 'wellness'.

Ananta Hotels- Selling Experiences

We have spread our tentacles in Goa, Pushkar, Ajabgarh and Bundi, Rajasthan which are family-centric. Guests are usually looking for relaxation and rejuvenation and delicious cuisines.

Catering to wildlife enthusiasts, we have hotels & resorts in Ranthambore, Rankapur, Gir and Jawai.

Sustaining to the spiritual side, Ananta has its property in Salasar and Tirupati. We today differentiate ourselves when we showcase our experiences that's where they are interested in our story. We can proudly say we sell an experience. But to categorise we are into three categories- Luxury, Premium, and the mid-scale segment. The properties are budgeted.

Ananta Hotels is a preferred choice for weddings, leisure, and MICE. Having our properties in popular and scenic locations, we are a preferred choice for film shoots, calendar shoots, and cover page shoots. The properties are aesthetically designed. Not restricted to a box hotel but these are spread-out resorts where privacy is primary. Additionally, we've got a property in Udaipur with a Presidential villa

and therefore have a private pool and a private lawn. A three bedrooms villa can offer your family a vacation of their own. Guests stay for longer durations as in residences, and that is "Ananta" in its truest form. The word is derived from "Hari Ananta" meaning limitless.

Delving into the journey

About 15 to 18 years ago, Mukund Goyal, Chairman of Ananta Hotels & Resorts was a government exporter however, he moved into the hospitality industry with a distinct vision. So, the first hotel was Radisson in Jaipur. We agreed to work with Radisson for the brand and the distribution giving birth to the first Ananta property. There's no stopping since its inception in Pushkar and Udaipur, and we've got a lot of properties in terms of management and franchise. So we work on three models- Owned, Managed and Franchise.

Streamlining varied segments

In Udaipur, Pushkar, Ajabgarh and Jaisalmer, these are properties we own and manage. The property is built like dunes. We aid clients with the expertise to manage their property professionally and grow their revenues. Today, Ananta Hotels & Resorts is a known name to reckon with, hence, for standalone products which need identity, we get into an agreement with them giving them our brand name with specifications because, at the end of the day, it's our reputation and dignity. We believe in following that eventually leading to our growth. A managed contract or a franchise gives you a lead to launch another property in a month or two enhancing the pace of growth.

Strategies deployed leading to growth

We pick up properties, which have 50 rooms, and 100 rooms and give them a façade as it suits us. Another strategy is acquiring a community which was a villa in an apartment

community, and consolidating it to build our resort. We are moving beyond Rajasthan, we are looking at hills and other locations. We are hoping to soon become a national player in a year. We are also looking at metro cities to bring in our business hotel brand.

Spreading tentacles in parts of India

We are planning on moving towards Mumbai, Delhi and Bangalore and we are hoping to have properties coming up in a year as part of management contracts. But the intent is very clear as these are large source markets for us. I believe it becomes easy to promote a brand once you're in a city and people recognise you. Our efforts are maximizing in the direction of marketing, advertising and growing distribution as of now.

Marketing strategies deployed to magnify the presence

We are primarily working on three pillars- Media, Roadshows and Exhibitions. We are extremely savvy on social media, always on the roll to redesigning the social media pages and bringing them out to fit to our client's requirements. The common message remains for the guests that originality sustains. A guest can be themselves, they don't have to force themselves to fit in as per the norms.

Responsible and Sustainable Vision

We are known for sustainability and we see ourselves growing in that domain. We make sure that nature is not harmed, a hill is not broken. We desire to be known as someone who's committed to giving you a sustainable haven. Our primary focus is not on the quantity of owning a hundred resorts but on providing quality. Ananta wants to give you memorable culinary experiences, and interaction with chefs. DIY is a trendy concept these days. Guests like to be in a home away from home.

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FROM THE COUCH TO BEING A CHAMPION

CORA CORA MALDIVES ON THE TOES TO PROVIDE A PERFECT BALANCE OF RELAXATION AND REJUVENATION



Cora Cora Maldives has been embracing all that the sea is washing ashore at the resort from sports to a plethora of recreational activities. Justin Swart, General Manager of Cora Cora Maldives is a sport for introducing new trends for adventure enthusiasts. Knowing how Maldives is doing rounds for its serenity and pristine beaches, he firmly believes in bringing about a sea of change to attract several travellers to their resort. Slightly shifting the lens of the camera to fitness, sports, yoga, meditation and wellness, Justin is on his toes offering exhilarating experiences which have time and again garnered acclaim from guests and industry experts alike

By Aanchal Sachdeva

Innovation in the hospitality sector has been blazing ahead rapidly, what new trends/initiatives related to sports and recreational activities can be witnessed adding value to your brand in Maldives?

In the dynamic hospitality sector, Cora Cora Maldives has embraced innovation to offer guests a remarkable experience. To enhance our brand value, the resort has introduced several new trends and initiatives in sports and recreational activities. Firstly, the inclusion of unique water sports such as Wing Foiling, Kite Foiling and Flyboarding has captivated adventure enthusiasts. Additionally, the resort has kept wellness-focused activities authentic, yoga and meditation in their purest form, providing a perfect balance of relaxation and rejuvenation. Furthermore, Cora Cora Maldives will be investing in sustainable initiatives such as eco-friendly snorkelling tours and coral reef restoration projects, aligning with the growing demand for responsible tourism. These innovative offerings elevate the brand and ensure an unforgettable stay for guests seeking novel experiences.

How do you incorporate the natural beauty of the Maldives into your fitness and sports offerings? What different and exquisite experiences are you providing to domestic and international tourists?

At Cora Cora Maldives, we leverage the mesmerising natural beauty of the Maldives to create unique fitness and sports offerings. Our guests can indulge in invigorating activities such as beachside yoga classes, paddle boarding amidst crystal-clear lagoons, and beach volleyball matches with breathtaking ocean views. We also organize guided snorkelling and diving expeditions, allowing visitors to explore the vibrant underwater world teeming with colourful marine life. Our dedicated team curates personalized itineraries for both domestic and international tourists, ensuring they have access to exclusive experiences like sunset kayaking, sunrise beach runs, and island-hopping adventures, immersing them in the unparalleled beauty of the Maldives.

How are you promoting adventure and fitness, now that this new trend is taking a front seat in the travel industry? What strategies have you deployed for the engagement of tourists?

Cora Cora Maldives is actively promoting adventure and fitness, recognising the growing trend in the travel industry. To engage tourists, we have implemented

strategic initiatives. To foster engagement, we encourage visitors to participate in social media challenges, allowing them to showcase their adventures while offering them the chance to win exciting prizes. Join us to embark on a journey of adventure and wellness in the stunning paradise of Cora Cora Maldives.

Are there any partnerships or collaborations with external fitness brands or experts that enhance the sports and fitness offerings at your resort?

Absolutely! At Cora Cora Maldives, we've teamed up with top-notch fitness brands and professionals to elevate our sports and fitness offerings. We've also collaborated with adventure sports brands to provide guests with state-of-the-art equipment and training for activities like (SUP) paddle boarding. These partnerships ensure that our guests have access to the best-in-class experiences and have a blast in our resort.

Do you offer any specialised programs or services for guests interested in specific sports, such as diving or snorkelling or other adventure activities?

For sure! At Cora Cora Maldives, we've got you covered if you're into specific sports or adventure activities. We offer specialized programs and services for guests interested in diving, snorkelling, and other thrilling adventures. Our dedicated team of experts will guide you through breathtaking underwater expeditions, providing top-notch gear and personalized instruction. Whether you're a seasoned diver or a newbie snorkeler, we'll make sure you have an unforgettable experience exploring the stunning marine wonders of the Maldives.

Anything that you would like to add (or any achievement) in accordance with the segment of recreational activities, and adventure?

Certainly! In the realm of recreational activities and adventure, Cora Cora Maldives has got you covered. But above all, we take immense pride in our achievement of being recognized as the "Best 5-star Premium All-Inclusive Resort" in the Maldives by the Versatile Excellence Travel Award VETA 2023. Our commitment to providing exhilarating experiences has garnered acclaim from guests and industry experts alike. We continually strive to push boundaries, offering innovative and thrilling adventures that make Cora Cora Maldives a go-to destination for those seeking a dose of adrenaline and unique experiences in paradise.

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Additionally, enjoy a 20% discount on food and soft beverages, a 10% discount on transportation services, and a 15% discount on spa services. We understand the importance of family time, so 2 kids up to 5 years can stay complimentary with the parents.

This offer is valid until 30th September. Kindly note, that taxes will be charged in addition to the mentioned above terms & conditions may apply.

We hope to have the pleasure of welcoming you soon at our resorts.

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Banyan Tree and Resorts becomes a leading player in the luxury resort and spa in Asia. With over a decade of experience in hospitality, **Khun Benjawan, Regional Director of Sales and Marketing, Banyan Tree Hotels, Thailand**, strives to create a greater awareness for the global multi-brand ecosystem of Banyan Tree Group in the Indian Market

By Chandni Chopra



We were the very first ones to introduce spas in our properties. We focus more on the word 'wellbeing' which means happiness and not wellness because wellness is a bit more towards medical and physicality

new concept.

Some out-of-the-box steps

We want that our guests that enjoy travelling with living in a sustainable environment. We were the very first ones to introduce spas in our properties. We focus more on the word 'wellbeing' which means happiness and not wellness because wellness is a bit more towards medical and physicality. This is because we see a lot of people who eat healthily and exercise well but still are not happy. We introduced our own brand Banyan Tree Veya last year which is wellbeing-centric property helping connect people to self and nature.

Sustainability initiatives

Our hotels don't use plastics entirely. Even the Banyan Tree toiletries products like shampoos and conditioners are kept in ceramic bottles in our villas and rooms instead of small plastic bottles, hence ensuring that there is no excess plastic waste per year. You know like we we don't really. Moreover, for water bottles, we use recycled plastic rather than using single-use plastic.

Offering tailor-made experiences

It is very important to provide tailor-made experiences to the guests. Because I believe every hotel has a beautiful and majestic structure but what stands out as a brand is to get the customer royalty. Creating a lifetime experience for the guests during their stay is crucial so that they remember and have something to share with their friends and family have a great stay, something that they can remember.

Crowd Puller Initiatives

We are a small boutique luxury brand and we have a few other projects in the pipeline. We manage a hotel that aligns with our philosophies and ethos. In terms of the customer, we have a lot of hotels worldwide. We cater to all the segments like leisure, and business travellers in Bangkok or even for the mice in Phuket. We also have expansive properties in the Maldives for Honeymooners that target more of the wellbeing segment because we know that after COVID people really want into the health focus.

And there is another brand that we actually launched in mid of last year named Banyan Tree Escape in June last year in Bali. The whole concept is actually connected to nature close to nature. This is a small hotel with 16 private pool villas in the middle of the forest in. And the concept of the villa is that you have no wall and no door. So it's a really

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

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QUENCH YOUR THIRST FOR TRAVEL AND SURPRISE

By Chandni Chopra

Spreading the tentacles across India, what are the latest innovations in the pipeline for travellers in the existing properties?

Neemrana Hotels is constantly innovating to keep our discerning travellers engaged. In addition to historical tours of the fort, and weekly dance performances at Neemrana Fort-Palace, we have just introduced personalised art classes and cooking classes of authentic Neemrana recipes for our guests on prior bookings. At The Glasshouse on the Ganges (above Rishikesh), Neemrana Fort-Palace (Delhi-Jaipur Highway), Tijara Fort-Palace (Tijara, Rajasthan), and Hill Fort-Kesroli (Alwar, Rajasthan) we will soon be launching various wellness programs, whereby guests will be able to detox and focus on their well-being by interacting with our wellness experts who will guide them with yoga, ayurvedic therapies, aromatherapy, and healthy, nutritious diets too.

What are the crowd-puller strategies taken by Neemrana's Three Waters for strengthening visibility in the competitive industry?

Neemrana Hotels has never adopted any marketing strategies to attract crowds. Our properties are usually located in destinations which are in the middle of nowhere and have a story to tell. Neemrana's Three Waters is a destination that will immerse the discerning traveller in a tropical oasis of tranquillity by a pristine beach accessible only to the fisherfolk – and themselves! The intimate property features seven, beautifully designed rooms – each offering its own views of the river, sea, tropical forest or the inviting pool set amidst a picturesque palm-filled courtyard.

With Eco-Tourism taking the lead in the hospitality industry, what initiatives have Three Waters taken in this direction?

Neemrana's Three Waters offers guests an opportunity to witness the fascinating blend of their senses in this 'museo-tel', where a treasure trove of 9000 rare shells, corals, and fossils creates an enchanting atmosphere as guests dine at the Sea Horse, an intimate restaurant overlooking the water.

Apart from the river, several water bodies

Perfectly embracing the location, Neemrana Three Waters is an ideal blend of serenity and bliss offering an oasis of modern amenities. New to the Neemrana family, Three Waters positions itself well in the hospitality industry. **Sonavi Kaicker, CEO of Neemrana Hotels** brings with her not only industry experience but also a fresh approach to bringing new horizons. In conversation with TravelScapes, she speaks volumes of the glorious heritage and rich culture in India. She elaborates on her newly launched property, Neemrana Three Waters nestled in the well-manicured greens



How important is it to provide a personalised guest experience, according to you? Please elucidate on a few experiences provided by you.

It is very important to organise personalised and authentic local experiences for guests as discerning travellers are looking to immerse themselves in unique and real experiences and not faked luxury.

Neemrana's Three Waters pays homage to Goa's extraordinary fishing community and rich marine biodiversity. Rarely does one have an immersive experience such as the Museotel, where guests live within the fishing community whose culture is also showcased through a rich repository of artefacts across the property.

Guests can literally sip their early morning tea and enjoy the views of the blue-green waters, surrounding hills dotted with palm trees, and fishermen casting their nets as they float their canoes.

While enjoying the ambience of the Seahorse restaurant and the spectacular marine collection of shells, corals and various artefacts from across the world, guests can feast on warm, freshly baked pao (a classic Goan bread dating to the 1550s), curries and fried, hay smoked, grilled and baked dishes made with a variety of the fresh catch of the day and cooked in traditional Goan style using organic spices, vegetables and cold pressed oils.

On prior request, guests can also enjoy the unique experience of experimenting with different kinds of food specially cooked on firewood by select women from the fishing community from across the Konkan and Western coast.

Our Chefs are happy to tailor-make dishes to suit any dietary preferences that guests may have. Depending on the weather, guests can choose breakfast or meals at different venues which include the Gazebo or one of the terraces overlooking the river or the palm-ringed swimming pool. Special picnic lunches, a relaxed barbecue or Chef's table specially set on a secluded beach are many of the personalised services that the Neemrana team is happy to offer.

traverse this village of about 60 colourful houses. As dusk settles, children and women gather to chat, play games and enjoy their community. It is a real opportunity to experience the traditional Goan way of living where most people are still employed in fishing or boating.

There are various activities that guests can indulge in, without leaving behind their carbon footprint. The hotel team organises cycling trips on winding roads that pass through the most scenic villages of South Goa for those who love cycling. The beaches and hills near Neemrana's Three Waters are graded as some of the best places to trek or cycle and observe mind-blowing panoramic views of the Arabian Sea and the coconut plantations around the place.

Guests can also visit the ancient spring "Maria da Fonte". This spring, with an inscription, Estação Balnear 1933 is one of the few sweet water springs in Goa that abuts saline waters and is just about 50 metres from Neemrana's Three Waters. Its medicinal waters, known to relax the body and mind are frequented in summer by people from across Goa and India.

The team of Neemrana's Three Waters primarily comprises of local people from the neighbouring villages. There are a range of eco-friendly materials that include biodegradable guest amenities, drinking water packaged in re-usable glass bottles, organic drinks, and stoneware crockery.

MP TOURISM IMPLEMENTS RESPONSIBLE TOURISM MISSION VENTURING INTO INCREDIBLE INDIA'S GREEN RETREATS



As the sun rays over the quaint landscapes of Madhya Pradesh, a symphony of nature's wonders greets you. The gentle whispers of the wind, the vibrant colours of flora, and the rhythmic melodies of wildlife create a harmonious environment like no other. On the joyous occasion of World Environment Day on 5th June 2023, you are welcome to embark on a transformative journey to the heart of India, where more than 50 eco-friendly rural homestays await, offering an authentic and sustainable experience.

Escape the concrete jungle and delve into the untouched beauty of rural Madhya Pradesh. The eco-friendly homestays embrace sustainability principles, celebrating the delicate balance between humans and the environment. Nestled amidst lush greenery,



these havens offer a serene retreat, allowing you to reconnect with nature and recharge your spirits. Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board is dedicated to minimising the state's carbon

footprint and making MP an eco-friendly state for tourists.

Each homestay is curated to minimise the ecological footprint while providing a comfortable and enriching experience. The structures are made using locally sourced materials and traditional techniques, these accommodations blend seamlessly into the landscape, creating a harmonious coexistence with nature. Every aspect reflects a commitment to preserving the region's cultural heritage- be it thatched roofs or mud walls. Come be a part of the cultural experiences of MP like the tribal dance forms, local art and crafts and cherish the local cuisines of the various tribes of the state.





COMPELLING COMPULSIONS TO VISIT
CORA CORA
MALDIVES 2023



Cora Cora Maldives, an enchanting paradise nestled within the untouched beauty of the Raa Atoll is an opulent five-star resort which is more than just a luxurious getaway. It's a celebration of the finest cultural and culinary treasures that will captivate the discerning hearts of worldly travellers. Each endeavour is thoughtfully designed to entice even the most sophisticated adventurers, leaving you spellbound by the wonders of the Maldives. Cora Cora Maldives not only stands as a remarkable resort but also serves as a gateway to unravel the rich tapestry of the Maldives—its vibrant culture, storied history, and breathtaking environment. Embark on a journey where luxury seamlessly merges with sustainability, where every indulgence is an opportunity to deepen your understanding of this remarkable destination. Cora Cora Maldives awaits, ready to unveil the secrets of the Maldives in an unforgettable experience that will leave an indelible mark on your soul





Paradise perfected

Cora Cora Maldives is a natural island with palm-fringed powder-white sands gently lapped by the azure Indian Ocean. The island's house reef is easily accessible from the beach and is the perfect place for an unforgettable snorkelling experience. Reached in mere metres, the house reef is home to 100s of colourful marine species that can be marvelled at by the whole family. To protect the rich vegetation on the island, Cora Cora Maldives do not use invasive alien species in their gardens and also minimises trimming to allow the native vegetation to flourish!

Food-o-magic

Take an hour-long cookery lesson in pizza and pasta-making or learn the arts of Indian cuisine - Cora Cora Maldives is a dining destination in itself! Acquapazza® is home to a pizza oven shipped from Rome, and the staff has been trained by a professional pizzaiola in creating authentic Napoli pies. Other dining destinations include Tazaa®, an all-day dining-style restaurant inspired by the spice route; Ginger Moon®, which has an all-female staff

minimum impact on the environment. Native vegetation is kept as undisturbed as possible and no captive wildlife, endangered species, or any form of unethical items are used, sold, or allowed on Cora Cora Maldives. Responsible waste management, treated wastewater for irrigation and gardening, reusable glass water bottles, and biodegradable chemicals for cleaning, laundry, and kitchens are all aspects of an elevated operation with sustainability at its heart, designed to take guests on the ongoing sustainability journey.

Crafting Creativity

From a two-half-hour lesson that teaches you the art of making music using guitars to Maldivian Dance classes available for guests to revel in the traditional Maldivian lifestyle gives you an expression of personal freedom. There is a painting class hosted by the fastest speed painter in the Maldives, where participants choose a canvas and recreate their favourite view to take home. Different scents and spices can be explored at the candle-making workshops at MOKSHA® Spa & Wellbeing Centre. Guests can participate in coffee

“
The journey of inspiration, freedom, and discovery can start with a wealth of books to delve into in all the rooms, then swiftly carry you on a canoe trip to a remote island

hydration and purify any problem areas.

Imagination Station for CoraKids®

Relax while your little ones have fun in our activity-filled club, open to children aged 3 to 12 and split into three age groups, where you can drop in for a session or let them hang out with their new friends all day. Gentle dancing, yoga, nail painting, hair styling, and relaxation sessions are perfect for kids who just want to chill out.



“
Living by its credo – It's Freedom Time – Cora Cora Maldives is renowned for giving guests the time and space to rediscover themselves

making dishes inspired by Asian street food; and Japanese restaurant Teien®, which is created around three Japanese styles of dining: Teppanyaki, Sushi, and Kushiyaki.

Cocktail Chronicles

At the iconic Acquapazza® Bar pick up the latest techniques in cocktail-making. Premium brands of spirits, beer, and liqueurs are available at Acquapazza® Beach Club and all other outlets. Unlimited cocktails & mocktails, signature drinks, various juices, soft drinks, mineral water, selection of tea & coffee are available from the Premium All-Inclusive Gourmet Meal Plan®.

Eco-Excellence

Cora Cora Maldives sources and obtains many local products including watermelons, papayas, Kurumba, bananas, and many others which have been grown organically. Freshly caught fish using the pole and line method is brought directly from the sea by local fishermen every day. The resort buys in bulk to reduce packaging wastes and prefers eco-friendly, bio-degradable, recycled materials with a

roasting sessions at MY COFFEE® Café-bar exploring exquisite flavour profiles.

Dive in, Dive deep!

Diving, waters sports, and cruising with the PADI-certified diving school, guests can discover Raa Atoll's incredible array of marine life. The surrounding waters are teeming with numerous species of fish, octopi, sharks, and dolphins. Sunset cruises also offer a chance to see dolphins performing their acrobatics around the boat, all accompanied by a cold glass of fizz and local hors d'oeuvres. Paddleboarding, jet skis, kayaks, and windsurfing can also be arranged.

Recharge, Rebalance, Rejuvenate!

Temptation beckons from the therapeutic haven of the MOKSHA® Spa & Wellbeing Centre, which offers a signature herbal compression massage in over-the-water treatment rooms, where a glass floor reveals the diverse and colourful sea life darting among the coral beneath your feet. Get hands-on help for an aching back and sore muscles with a range of aromatherapy massages and get your glow back with skin-based therapies to boost

Tracing Time: Exploring rich cultural tapestry

The Dutch Onion Museum/ Cora Cora Maldives® is a cultural heritage museum and on-site art gallery, that houses more than 400 artefacts that were unearthed there, including Chinese porcelain and Maldivian tools. There's even an HMV gramophone from the 1960s complete with a vinyl disc. A guided tour explores the foundations of a mosque, an Islamic graveyard, and two well-preserved ritual bathing pools. The Dutch Onion Museum/ Cora Cora Maldives® encourages visitors to learn about the country's nature, archaeology, and economy and illustrates Maldivian culture, art, and heritage. Cora Cora Maldives was the very first resort in the Maldives to have such a licensed art gallery and museum in the Outdoor Heritage Site.

Culinary Journey

At Tazaa® the Fisherman's Catch BBQ is a particular highlight. For a night all about seafood and fish, this lavish buffet is a fish lover's paradise and offers the very best the ocean has to offer. Every Thursday, Cora Cora Maldives holds a Maldivian-themed night where resort staff wear traditional clothes and perform Bodu-Beru (a Maldivian dance) for the guests. Not to mention delicious authentic Maldivian cuisine!

ENCALM ELEVATES THE ART OF HOSPITALITY

ENCALM HOSPITALITY HELPS IN HARNESSING THE HUSTLE OF THE HORIZON WITH THEIR EXTRAORDINARY SERVICES AT THE AIRPORTS

*In the bustling world of travel, where time is of the essence and relaxation is a luxury, Encalm hospitality has set itself apart by redefining travellers' experiences at the airport. With a vision to transform the way travellers unwind, connect, and indulge during their journey, this industry trailblazer has been revolutionising spas, lounges, and meet & greet services at airports worldwide to meet the unique needs of travellers seeking seamless transitions from arrival to departure. TravelScapes had the privilege of sitting down with the visionary, **Vikas Sharma, Chief Executive Officer, Encalm Hospitality Pvt. Ltd.** as he unlocks the secrets behind this exceptional hospitality venture that is reshaping the airport landscape one indulgent experience at a time. Through careful attention to detail and a commitment to exceptional customer service, their meet & greet offerings ensure a smooth and hassle-free journey, making every traveller feel like a VIP*

By Aanchal Sachdeva

Can you provide an overview of Encalm Hospitality and the services it offers?

We started as a company in October 2021. We started our first business on January 26, 2022. The company has an exclusive arrangement with a Turkish company, TAV İŞLETME HİZMETLERİ A.Ş. They give us the support and the experience required to attain any contract at the airports. For Example, if Delhi Airport sends out an RFP, and the criteria is that a company should have performed 3 years of operations. The manpower we had was experienced and skilled so TAV assisted us in setting up the operations for the first lounge. And once we were able to get the contract for the first lounge, the return continued. TAV helped in setting up our sales team, introducing us to airlines and further. Today, we are an Indian entity running around 8 lounges in Delhi, 2 lounges in Hyderabad and 1 lounge in Goa. Our prime core revenue-earning business is lounges. We offer meet-and-greet services and all three airports. We offer Spa services at both international and domestic airports in Delhi. We're doing baggage wrapping services. We wish to capture the domain of hospitality as a whole and not refrain from the lounges.

What sets you apart from the competitors in the industry?

Fortunately in India, we don't have too many competitors. We are not only lounge operators, we are trying to provide an end-to-end solution. So we have a Meet and Greet service by the name 'Atithya'. Someone will accompany you from the main gate through the spa, to shopping at the door of the aircraft and you can avail extra discounts at the stops. Our prime aim is to maintain exclusivity at one airport. We make sure our manpower comprises employees from hospitality backgrounds.

Looking ahead, what are Encalm's plans for further expansion?

We have our presence at 3 airports, in Delhi,



Hyderabad and Goa. We are eyeing about 5 more airports. There are also seven more airports which are coming under the hammer from India, we will be applying for that as well including Chandigarh. We have an aggressive plan of going international. We are keeping our ears and eyes open towards the Gulf countries and Eastern countries like Indonesia and Malaysia.

How do you ensure a seamless and personalised experience for travellers using your services at the airport?

Clear communication is the key. When a guest comes to the airport, the biggest challenge is to find them. If that becomes seamless, further ahead while we take them from one place to another, we kind of maintain a very good relationship with all the authorities, and they also understand that we have done all the checks for our customers before we ask for their help. So if you're able to communicate the expectations and then deliver up to them, I think the purpose is served.

What strategies or initiatives do you have in place to maintain high levels of customer satisfaction?

Our vision is very clear we want to create the world's most valuable hospitality company,

which creates value for our stakeholders. Our stakeholders are our guests as they need to create value in terms of service, our team members who see a long-term career when they are joining us, our owners whom we need to create value and our partners, our vendors who we need to be fair with them. The other part is our mission, which is about creating delightful experiences and retaining our guests.

How do you stay updated with the latest trends and technologies in the travel industry to enhance your services?

Media interactions play a pivotal role. Also, we travel a lot preferring rustic travel and make it a point to go to new places to get to the roots of trends. So for technology, if you look at our values, swiftness is not only about doing things faster but also to be ahead of change. We prefer not to be part of the chain but we want to start the industry. Technology can bring about a revolution. So, to have the strong basics, we are setting up a great ERP at the back office, wherein, you know, the integration of the guest's experience, and employee experience is kind of combined and we can map it together. Guests can communicate from email to WhatsApp to website, we are about to use our app. We are getting into AI to help us lessen the queue at the lounge. Surveillance cameras can be used to set an alarm in case of overcrowded queues. Two infrared cameras can be placed at the buffet counter indicating the temperature of the dish. We're also using facial recognition in the lounges. We introduced Temi, the robot catering to the customer's needs before anyone from the team approaches.

We get most of the bookings through travel agents. We created portals for everyone which are directly connected to our booking engine. A travel agent can add their name, open the portal and enter the details on their own which will seamlessly travel to us and the reservation will be confirmed eradicating the scope of human error.

SPECTACULAR SUMMER SPOTS IN GERMANY

2023 is the year for Sun and beach holidays for Indian travellers. Germany's nearly 1,200 kilometres of coastline and islands with their unspoilt natural beauty and long stretches of golden, sandy beaches are a few of the stunning landscapes. From the Wadden Sea National Park on the North Sea to Rugen Island with its magnificent white chalk cliffs on the Baltic Sea, Germany has a lot to offer. Travellers are spoilt for choice and do not need to venture far to escape the crowds and find some tranquillity.

Hidden beaches are often closer than one may think and can be found in the most unexpected places. Similarly, many beautiful lakes can be found all across the country such as the famous Lake Constance, the extensive Mecklenburg Lake District and the spectacular Lake Koenigssee nestled in the Bavarian Alps. The GNTO's global campaign Embrace German Nature showcases beautiful natural landscapes and sustainable holiday experiences in Germany. It encourages travellers to venture off the beaten tracks to discover the country's many beautiful outdoor highlights

Explore the hidden and peaceful gems in the beautiful natural landscapes of Germany-

Discovering Secrets of Usedom Island

The sunniest regions in Germany are located on the Baltic Sea coast. The very top performer is the little village of Zinnowitz on the island of Usedom. More than in any other region, an average of 1,917 hours of sunshine are recorded here per year. But that's not all that makes Usedom a paradise. A gentle breeze blows over the dunes, cries of seagulls fill the air and quaint bathing resorts invite you to enjoy a stroll.

Nature's brushstroke in the skies

Anyone looking for brilliant blue skies in Germany has two good options: they can either travel to the Baltic Sea in the north or head to the foothills of the Alps. In the latter case, deep in the south of the country, visitors can find places such as Traunstein in Bavaria, nestled in an idyllic setting between the Chiemsee and Königssee lakes. A sunny stroll through the historic old town is a must. The sunny weather is also a good excuse for a little breakfast in a café and some ice cream. The warm, dry



Romit Theophilus, Director of the German National Tourist Office in India, said, "Hiking, biking or simply taking in wonderful views. With so many different natural highlights, Germany has a surprise for Indian travellers around every corner. Destination Germany beckons for all kinds of bathing fun at the sea, lakes and rivers, from powder-soft sandy beaches to idyllic natural beaches for long walks."

autumn wind that keeps the clouds in check is responsible for the impressive sunshine record at the foot of the Alps in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg.

Immerse yourself in the serenity of Elbe's Edge

Sunny moments relaxing on a balcony are among life's most pleasurable experiences. And sun lovers can look forward to a real treat in Hamburg's Altona district, in the form of an extra-large balcony. Occupying an elevated position on the high bank of the River Elbe, the Altona Balcony offers impressive panoramic views over the bustling activity in the harbour and the striking curves of the Köhlbrand Bridge.

You can spread out your picnic blanket in a lush green setting and enjoy that summer feeling.

Soar high

You have to look up to the sun to find it – this sounds logical and it also turns out to be true. The Zugspitze, Germany's highest mountain, is a mainly sunny place. The warm, dry autumn wind keeps unpleasant clouds at bay. But you very soon realise that long periods of sunshine are not necessarily synonymous with high temperatures. Up there at 2,962 metres, it can get extremely icy. And if bitter winds start to blow, there's no chance of sunbathing – even if the sky is still a beautiful shade of blue.





WelcomHeritage Hotels win 17 accolades

WelcomHeritage Hotels celebrate 17 TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice 2023 awarded to 17 of the brand's boutique hotel collections. From the heart of history and nature in the south of India to the north and across; be it in the sublime plantations of Coorg, the locally inspired Houseboats of Srinagar to relaxing retreats in the hills of Manali, Kasauli, Nainital and Mussoorie, or its heritage properties in the spiritual lands of Prayagraj and Gujarat, finally the suave jungle lodges and resorts in the Central Indian forests and Rajasthan, travellers on the popular travel platform have chosen the brand's properties as their choice of hotel.

"WelcomHeritage represents the finest traditions of Indian hospitality. We consistently strive to offer services that go beyond Guests' satisfaction, while maintaining our ethos and principles of preserving the local cultural and natural heritage of the destination the property is situated in and continuing our pursuit of showcasing the lesser-known destination to the traveller. We're so pleased and encouraged that our efforts are achieving the desired results with our guests.", says Abinash Manghani, Chief Executive Officer of WelcomHeritage Hotels.

Radisson and PPHE Hotel Group collaborate for a premium lifestyle brand

Radisson Hotel Group expands its portfolio of bold, art and design-inspired hotels with the inclusion of art'otel in the Radisson Hotel Group's brand portfolio, growing to 10 distinct brands under one overarching umbrella. The Group offers inspiration through travel with authentic and engaging cultural experiences that allow travellers to feel part of each local art and design community.

First announced in May 2022, Radisson Hotel Group and PPHE Hotel Group are



looking to accelerate the global growth of the premium lifestyle art'otel brand, bringing together PPHE's owned premium lifestyle art'otel brand, with its iconic properties and attractive pipeline, and Radisson Hotel Group's powerful technology and distribution platforms, reward programmes, scale and growth aspirations.

IHG Hotels & Resorts announces InterContinental Chantilly - Château Mont Royal

IHG Hotels & Resorts announced the signing of InterContinental Chantilly - Château Mont Royal, the latest château property within its growing Luxury & Lifestyle portfolio in France.

The historic 107-key château, signed under a management agreement with Groupe BMF and Groupe PFH, will join the likes of InterContinental Paris Le Grand and InterContinental Lyon, Hotel Dieu alongside three other InterContinental properties in Paris, Bordeaux and Marseille as a flagship hotel for the brand in the country when it welcomes guests

following renovation in 2024. It will also become IHG's third luxury opening in France in the past five years, following InterContinental Lyon, Hotel Dieu in 2019, and Kimpton Paris St Honoré in 2021.

This addition of another outstanding luxury property in a premium leisure and MICE destination further strengthens IHG's Luxury & Lifestyle estate in Europe. It also provides even more choice for IHG One Rewards members to enjoy the many benefits of the company's refreshed loyalty programme in a truly regal setting.



Marriott Bonvoy expands India presence of its Extended Stay Brand

Marriott Executive Apartments, part of Marriott Bonvoy's portfolio of 30 leading brands, announced the launch of its apartment-style accommodations with Marriott Executive Apartments, Navi Mumbai. Curated for the ambitious and adventurous minded traveller, seeking a premium and trusted stay

experience, defined by tailored services and sophisticated style, Marriott Executive Apartments Navi Mumbai offers spacious and modern living, where travellers can combine work and leisure trips to connect with family and friends.

"We are pleased to announce the opening of our second Marriott Executive Apartments in Mumbai, catering to the new segment of 'bleisure' travellers looking to mix business and leisure travel by creating a 'home from home' feeling for their longer stays," said Ranju Alex - Area Vice President - South Asia, Marriott International.



Shangri-La launches “Find Your Shangri-La” Global Campaign

Shangri-La has launched its new "Find Your Shangri-La" global campaign, created to help guests find their personal moments of joy at the luxury hotel chain renowned for its delivery of Asian hospitality. The initial part of the campaign is centred around a whimsical brand film that celebrates Shangri-La's commitment to providing guests with unforgettable experiences, showcased through unexpected moments of personalised and authentic service. "At Shangri-La, we understand that each guest has a unique version of what it means to "Find Your Shangri-La",

says Shangri-La Chairman Hui Kuok. "We have a rich legacy of more than 50 years in delighting customers and wanted to take this opportunity to highlight something that has always been part of us bringing joyful moments to the people we host. The new brand film captures the unique way in which we delight our guests with special moments and treats through our warm, authentic hospitality. We are excited to debut our campaign with this film, alongside an array of immersive experiences that elevate our brand experience", he added.



Stotrak Hospitality expands sustainable hotel collection

Stotrak Hospitality already established its presence in Rajasthan with the Earth Resort & Spa in Ranthambore and Sam Dunes in Jaisalmer. The new property, the Takhat Villa Kumbhalgarh by Stotrak, consists of seven spacious rooms constructed using the local Kota stone, creating a harmonious blend with the surrounding countryside. Manish Goyal, Founder of Stotrak Hospitality, commented, "At Stotrak Hospitality, our endeavour has always been to capture the essence of the town's rich history as well as its vibrant culture. Our private

luxury villas embody traditional architecture, designed with local Kota stone and adorned with antique furnishings, creating a warm and cosy atmosphere. Furthermore, the prime location offers leisure travellers a modern and contemporary space to unwind and recharge." The villa also offers easy access to various nearby attractions. Kumbhalgarh Fort is located just 15 km away, offering a glimpse into the region's rich history. The city of Udaipur is situated 80 km from the villa, providing an opportunity to explore its beautiful lakes and palaces.



Araiya Hotels and Resorts announces Soul by Araiya, Dharamshala

Araiya Hotels and Resorts and Kamakhya Hospitality Services Private Limited have announced plans for a new urban resort Soul by Araiya, Dharamshala, a Kamakhya Hotel anticipated to open in Q4 2023. The town of Dharamshala is situated on the upper levels of the Kangra Valley in Himachal Pradesh, at approximately 1,475 meters above sea level.

Vijay Sharma, Director, of Kamakhya Hospitality Services Private Limited, said, "With a pre-eminent location in Kotwali Bazaar

within the Kangra district, Soul by Araiya Dharamshala, A Kamakhya Hotel will be a great addition to the popular winter capital of Himachal. Araiya is the ideal partner for this project, and together we are committed to developing a sustainably built, streamlined property that does justice to the grand vistas and offers an incredible value with its presence in such a dynamic location while offering guests the service and experiences they have grown to expect from this forward-looking brand.

Lemon Tree Hotels strengthening presence in Lucknow

The Lemon Tree property is expected to be operational by August 2026 and shall be managed by Carnation Hotels Private Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary and the management arm of Lemon Tree Hotels Limited.

It is dotted with high-end premium residential projects, malls, IT Parks, commercial property, SEZs, plots, universities, business centres, multiplexes, clubs, banks, food courts, entertainment centres and financial institutions.

The property will feature



82 well-appointed rooms, two restaurants, a bar, a swimming pool, meeting rooms, a fitness centre and other public areas. The Lucknow Airport is about 24 km from the property while the Railway Station is just 11 km away.



The Anam Mui Ne becomes the first in Vietnam to join Small Luxury Hotels portfolio

The Anam Mui Ne, a resort with a design inspired by the Indochine era, has joined an exclusive selection of the boutique independent luxury properties – the Small Luxury Hotels of the World (SLH) portfolio.

The resort, which opened in January this year on the Mui Ne beach, is the first Vietnamese property to join SLH, deemed the most desirable community of independently minded travellers and independently spirited hotels in the world.

Hotels must undergo a stringent vetting process

and conform to the highest standards of luxury and guest wellbeing before being accepted into the SLH's characterful collection of intimate spaces in unusual places.

Headquartered in London with offices worldwide, SLH represents 520 hotels in more than 90 countries that are anti-chain and anti-same and offer secluded, discrete options. Benefits for SLH's travelling members include discounts on bookings, early check-in and late check-out, complimentary breakfast, and room upgrades, and more.

Banyan Tree Group launches 'Stay for Good' Programme

Banyan Tree Group announced the launch of its 'Stay For Good' Programme, with the aim of providing travellers with authentic and immersive experiences that encourage a deeper connection with each destination while honouring the heritage and traditions and contributing to creating more opportunities for local communities.

This multi-brand initiative takes travellers on a journey to some of the most unique and lesser-known

destinations around the world. From the thousand-year-old traditions and crafts of Kyoto, Japan, to the colonial architecture and cultural traditions of Puebla, Mexico, the myriad of highlighted experiences will contain something for everyone.



Neemrana Hotels unveils another property in South Goa

Neemrana Hotels unveiled Neemrana's Three Waters, a heritage property in South Goa. With this property, Neemrana aims to offer poetry of the Sal river, the mystery and grandeur of the sea, as well as the rejuvenating cleansing of a healing spring - hence its name.

"The intimate property features seven beautifully designed rooms – each offering their own views of the river, sea, a tropical forest or the inviting pool set amidst a picturesque palm-filled courtyard," shared Sonavi Kaicker, CEO, Neemrana Hotels.

"Here the past and present meet," said Aman Nath,

Chairman, Neemrana Hotels. "Traverse traditional vibrant fishermen's homes and arrive at the 'last resort' in Betul village, a sanctuary where mechanized fishing is still prohibited. Cross the captivating 'Y' on the sea by boat, leading to one of Goa's most stunning sandy beaches," he added.

The property has seven rooms divided into three wings or villas, and they can be booked either individually or as entire villas. Apart from this, the property has Sea Horse, an intimate restaurant overlooking the water where guests can enjoy the local cuisines of fisherfolk.



Thompson Hotels to launch in Palm Springs, California

Hyatt Hotels Corporation announced plans for the 168-room Thompson Palm Springs, which will join the award-winning luxury lifestyle Thompson Hotels portfolio and mark the second Thompson Hotels property in California. Thompson Palm Springs is expected to open in late 2023 and will offer panoramic views of the San Jacinto Mountains and the city of Palm Springs. The development signals Hyatt's commitment to growing its luxury lifestyle portfolio in key growth markets that matter to guests and World of Hyatt members.

Developed by Dallas-based Hall Group and designed by interior design firm B2 Architecture



+ Design and architect SMS Architecture, Thompson Palm Springs will feature modern, groundbreaking design in the heart of the city. Unique guestroom bungalows will be surrounded by two outdoor pools, gardens, lounge areas and winding walking paths, immersing visitors in the natural landscape of Palm Springs.



AL HABTOOR CITY HOTEL COLLECTION'S SPECTACULAR SOIRÉE

Al Habtoor City Hotel Collection, Dubai, presented what comes into the making of 'The City of Dreams' to esteemed guests during a captivating Meet & Greet event in New Delhi. The event provided a remarkable opportunity for attendees to discover the exquisite offerings of Al Habtoor City Hotel, where bespoke hospitality, tantalizing flavours, and unparalleled amenities await the most discerning travellers.

Under the theme "The City of Dreams," the event highlighted the exciting opportunities available for incentive travel, MICE business, luxury travel, wedding destinations, and leisure travel at Al Habtoor City Hotel Collection, Dubai. Guests were treated to an immersive video presentation showcasing the destination and its three luxurious hotels, each designed to surprise and delight.

The event commenced with engaging presentations by Al Habtoor City's expert team, showcasing the exceptional facilities and services tailored for incentive travel and MICE business. Hilton Dubai Al Habtoor City and

V Hotel Dubai were the centre of attention, emphasizing their outstanding offerings and benefits for corporate travellers.

For those seeking the epitome of luxury, the spotlight shone on Habtoor Palace Dubai, the crown jewel of Al Habtoor City Hotel Collection. The audience was captivated by the exquisite accommodations and world-class amenities that define the ultimate in luxury travel. For guests that want to inject fun in their travel, V Hotel Dubai is the place to be, with the refurbished rooms and suites and the newly introduced V Hub, which consists of check in pods, where guests can sip on a tantalizing cocktail from V Lounge while checking in or relish in worldly cuisines at Level 7. Guests can also beat the summer heat at V Deck.

The event boasted a wide range of exciting activities and attractions available in Al Habtoor City. The awe-inspiring La Perle show, a spectacular water-themed extravaganza, left attendees in awe and eager to experience more.

During the event, we unveiled the exclusive Stay More Pay Less offer across all three hotels at Al Habtoor City Hotel Collection, allowing guests to pay for 3 nights and stay for 5 nights. This enticing offer provides an opportunity to immerse oneself in the unparalleled hospitality and luxury that Al Habtoor City Hotel Collection offers. As the evening progressed, guests were invited to enjoy a delightful cocktail and dinner experience, further immersing themselves in the world of Al Habtoor City.

"The Meet & Greet event was a tremendous success, and we are thrilled to have had the opportunity to showcase the exceptional offerings of Al Habtoor City Hotel Collection," said Farah Bootwala – Marketing and PR, Al Habtoor City Hotel Collection. "We are committed to providing our guests with unforgettable experiences, whether they are travelling for business, seeking a luxurious getaway, planning their dream wedding, or simply looking for a memorable leisure escape."



SRILANKA

WHERE SAND MEETS THE SEA

By Chandni Chopra



Colombo

Far more than a springboard to other sites, continually-overlooked Colombo has a lot to offer visitors if you can get to grips with its rather disjointed layout. The British were responsible for the railway tracks that cut the city off from much of its ocean shoreline but they also dotted the city with landmark buildings, particularly in the colonial-era Fort district. Explore beyond the noisy arterial roads running north-south through the centre, and you'll find centuries-old churches, colourful temples, manic markets and atmospheric drinking dens, including Traveller's Bar, with placating views over the Indian Ocean that'll make you think twice about rushing to head elsewhere.



Arugam Bay

Sri Lanka has a coastline of over 1600 km and is ideally suited for windsurfing, boating, and other water sports. Arugam Bay has azure skies and slanting coconut trees. If you want to surf in turquoise waters, Arugam Bay must be on your list of must-see tourist places in Sri Lanka. It is on the southeast coast around 320 km from Colombo. It is the ideal place to sip coconut water, take in jasmine's scent, and allow the southern sun to tan your skin. Besides Arugam bay, other beaches among best places to visit in Sri Lanka are Unawatuna in the South; and Tangalla again in the south around 195 km south of Colombo.

Bentota

Bentota is a Sri Lankan city the name of which is taken from a mythical demon 'Ben' who ruled the tota or the river banks. Heading southwards from Beruwela, you reach Bentota. It is situated approximately 62 km south of Colombo. This is an exotic beach located along the Colombo- Galle road. The lagoons here stretch along the beach adding a glimpse of serenity accredited to its archipelago rich in bird life and tropical greenery.

The beautiful city is adorned by a serene atmosphere and towering palm trees. Many tourists take the city as a combined excursion with Colombo and Beruwela. Locals from Colombo head to Bentota for an ideal weekend getaway. Here, the local population is predominantly composed of the Sinhalese Buddhists.



Yala National Park

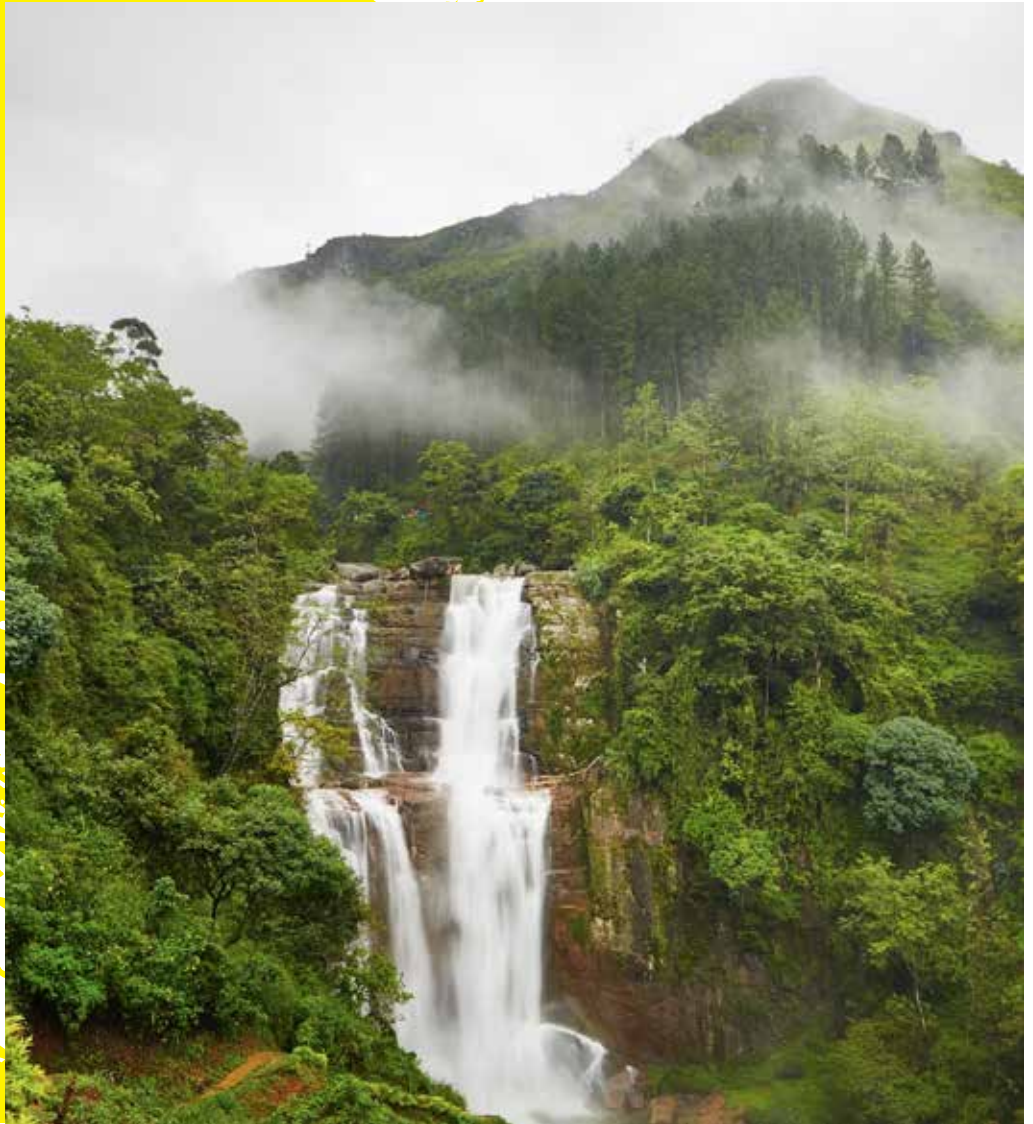
Missing Yala National Park while Sri Lanka sightseeing might bring regret to wildlife lovers. It is home to a host of wildlife and birds you are bound to run into a group of elephants bathing in streams, tossing their trunks wildly or leopards nestling lazily on tree branches. You could opt for the safari drives or a nature trail among the thick green foliage of the forest. Some tourists also camp at Yala and enjoy a barbecue under the stars. With so much to see and do here, Yala is indeed one of the best tourist places in Sri Lanka. Yala is the perfect place to try your hand at wildlife photography.



GLOBETROTTER

Nuwara Eliya

Nuwara Eliya is most famous for its tea gardens and scenery. It is a perfect place to visit for a romantic vacation or for someone who is looking for a relaxing trip. With misty clouds, lush green sloping hills and a train that looks like it has come out of the Harry Potter films, Nuwara Eliya is a hilly paradise and another great addition to Sri Lanka tourist attractions. The popular places to visit in Nuwara Eliya include Victoria Park, Bale Bazaar, Moon Plains, Ramboda Falls and St. Clair's Falls.



Temple of the Tooth Relic

Sri Lanka is the land of UNESCO world heritage sites and one of the most significant ones is the place where Gautam Buddha's tooth is kept. This makes it a very prominent Buddhist pilgrimage site and is visited by devotees from all over the world throughout the year. Situated in the thriving city of Kandy this temple is probably one of the most unique places of worship in the world.



Adam's Peak

This dramatic looking conical mountain which is situated in the central region of the island and well known for its attraction of sacred footprint and is one of the most important pilgrimages Centre for Buddhist pilgrimage. It is also important place of visit for Hindus, Muslims and Christians. The mountain peak is surrounded by surreal natural greenery with a tranquil river flowing through it. The 5,500 steps available here for the visitors are well built and doused in incredible and picturesque beauty.



STAR-STUDED SPECTACLE MARKS THE UNFORGETTABLE OPENING OF SEAWORLD® YAS ISLAND, ABU DHABI

SeaWorld® Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, the region's inaugural Marine Life Theme Park, has officially opened to the public, offering unforgettable experiences and immersive adventures for all ages. The grand opening ceremony, held on May 22, featured mesmerizing performances by Emirati superstar Hussain Al Jassmi, Scottish recording artist Red, and a 120-member orchestra. The event showcased captivating sound and light shows that dazzled the crowd, attended by numerous special guests and celebrities. Developed by Miral in partnership with SeaWorld® Parks & Entertainment, SeaWorld Abu Dhabi is the newest addition to Yas Island, renowned for its immersive destinations and world-class entertainment.

The opening ceremony commenced in the One Ocean realm, where guests were treated to an exclusive preview of SeaWorld Abu Dhabi's One Epic Ocean spectacle. This immersive show, featuring state-of-the-art spatial audio and multimedia, brought the wonders of the ocean to life on an extraordinary 360-degree screen. A group of young marine enthusiasts took the stage, activating a captivating sound and light display with a swirling vortex illuminating the One Ocean globe. Symbolizing the ocean's connection to humanity and marking the park's official opening, this moment was a highlight of the majestic event. Guests were then treated to performances by the orchestra and Red, culminating in a bespoke track dedicated to SeaWorld Abu Dhabi, sung by Hussain Al Jassmi. The stunning finale featured silver three-dimensional figures representing marine animals, inviting guests to explore the newly opened park.

Dignitaries including H.E. Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman of Miral,



SeaWorld Abu Dhabi boasts 10 up-close animal encounters and over 100 animal experiences

Scott Ross, Chairman of SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment, and Mohamed Abdalla Al Zaabi, Group CEO of Miral, welcomed esteemed guests, government officials, and ambassadors from various countries during the event. H.E. Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak expressed his excitement about SeaWorld Abu Dhabi's opening, highlighting its significance as an unparalleled landmark attraction in the region. The park represents the next generation of theme parks, further positioning Yas Island as a top global destination and contributing to Abu Dhabi's tourism vision. Al Mubarak emphasized the park's role in promoting environmental awareness and marine life protection, inspiring guests to care for these precious creatures. The partnership between Miral

and SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment aims to push the boundaries of science and conservation, upholding the highest standards of animal care and welfare.

Spanning five indoor levels across 183,000 sqm, SeaWorld Abu Dhabi takes guests on a captivating journey through eight immersive realms, seamlessly blending education and entertainment. Visitors of all ages can enjoy unique family-friendly experiences, such as up-close animal encounters and presentations. The park offers inspiring entertainment, thrilling rides and attractions, and exceptional dining and shopping experiences.

Scott Ross expressed his pride in the opening of SeaWorld Abu Dhabi, the first SeaWorld park outside the United States. The collaboration between SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment and Miral has resulted in a state-of-the-art Marine Life Theme Park that represents a next-generation experience. Combining SeaWorld's expertise in animal welfare and marine conservation with Miral's reputation as a leading developer, the park is truly unlike anything seen before. Ross is confident that guests will be amazed by what SeaWorld Abu Dhabi has to offer and hopes it will inspire their commitment to marine conservation.

Each realm within SeaWorld Abu Dhabi is uniquely themed and intricately designed, transporting guests to diverse marine environments found worldwide. The park's core is the One Ocean realm, sharing the story of the ocean through immersive media. Other realms include Abu Dhabi Ocean, Rocky Point, Tropical Ocean, MicroOcean, Endless Ocean, and Polar Ocean (Arctic and Antarctica), each offering its own unique experiences and educational opportunities.



Saudi introduces new tourist attractions for Indian travellers

Saudi Tourism Authority leveraged its partnership with the TATA Indian Premier League (IPL) to launch bespoke promotional packages with leading travel agencies like Akbar Travels, SOTC, Make My Trip, Cleartrip, and Ease My Trip; promoting Saudi as the leading leisure destination for Indian travellers.

Saudi has also announced the opening of multiple VFS Tasheer Visa offices by the end of May. These offices will serve as the authorised visa partners for

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, providing applicants with efficient and secure administrative visa services.

As part of Saudi's tourism strategy, India represents immense potential as it is expected to be Saudi's largest tourism source market by 2030. Recently, IndiGo Airlines announced a new airline route from Ahmedabad to Jeddah, with daily direct flights starting August 11, 2023, which should further boost tourism from India.

JNTO Delhi Office hold meeting with actor Aamir Khan

The Japan National Tourism Organisation (JNTO) Delhi Office met eminent actor Aamir Khan on May 24 at Le Meridien Hotel, New Delhi. The meeting facilitated an exchange of thoughts for future collaborations in the fields of Art and Cinema between India and Japan.

The meeting discussed how Indian Cinema are known for their elaborate song and dance sequences (referring to a Gujarati dance style), while Japanese films are renowned for their masterful storytelling and visual effects.

Yusuke Yamamoto, Executive Director, JNTO Delhi Office, expressed special gratitude towards Khan for his enlightening words and remarked that his courtesy is reminiscent of the Japanese.

Japan and India have a long



history of art exchange, with Japanese audiences being particularly fond of Indian cinema. Indian films such as "3 Idiots" and "Dangal" have been hugely successful in Japan. Yamamoto also said, "Mr. Khan is known for his socially conscious roles and thoughtful approach to film making, so it's no surprise that he has garnered worldwide respect."



Brand USA touts US As Top Travel Destination with its diversity

Brand USA opened IPW 2023 with an immersive press conference showcased the USA as an unrivalled travel destination, alongside, revealing the organisation's latest consumer marketing campaign, which provided international travel forecast, and consumer sentiment insights. IPW is the leading trade show for inbound travel to the United States, bringing more than 5,000 industry professionals from more than 60 countries to San Antonio, Texas for the first time. Brand USA is the premier sponsor of the annual event produced by the U.S. Travel Association, and taking place for the first time in San Antonio, Texas.

The press conference

featured iconic and lesser-known destinations and attractions, from the best places to taste local cuisine to stepping into the song lyrics or movie locations that first inspired a visit, being pampered in the lap of luxury, or experiencing the USA through the eyes of a sports enthusiast.

"There's no other destination like the United States," said Brand USA President and CEO, Chris Thompson to over 200 international journalists. "What sets the USA apart is the diversity of our geography, the diversity of our experiences, the diversity of our people, and our one-of-a-kind pop culture."

Maldives highlights attractions at Riyadh Travel Fair

Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC / Visit Maldives) participated in the Riyadh Travel Fair (RTF) to market the destination in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Alongside MMPRC, there were 26 participants representing 15 companies taking part in the fair held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. MMPRC's participation in this event was to strengthen its brand presence in the KSA market, achieve growth in arrivals, promote halal tourism, and target affluent travellers in the Middle East luxury segment.



RTF 2023 is considered a significant annual event in which leading travel and tourism companies gather with exhibitors representing tourist promotion authorities and tourist companies at the Arab and international levels.

Burj Al Arab features new observation lounge

Inside Burj Al Arab (IBAA) opened its brand-new Observation Lounge at the iconic hotel's Experience Suite on the 25th floor providing unobstructed views of the breath-taking Arabian Gulf and Dubai skyline. The guests will discover the untold stories of Burj Al Arab Jumeirah, and can also choose from several 24-Karat Gold Tour experiences, available exclusively at the hotel's brand-new Observation Lounge.

Priced at AED399 per person, each 24 Karat Gold Tour experience allows guests to step into the epitome of opulence at Dubai's original home of luxury, Burj Al Arab Jumeirah and indulge in an irresistible golden treat at

the end of each spectacular 60 to 90-minute tour. Nothing defines luxury better than a cup of rich cappuccino sprinkled with 24 Karat gold and now Inside Burj Al Arab tour guests can experience exactly that with the IBAA's brand-new Golden Cappuccino tour offering.

If a Golden Cappuccino is not your beverage of choice, Inside Burj Al Arab ticket holders can opt for either a Golden Espresso Martini or a Golden Colada, both of which are of course sprinkled with 24 Karat gold. For those looking for some bubbles to end the tour, then a Champagne Tour package is also available at the Observation Lounge, also priced at AED 399.



Disneyland Paris marks 30th year with new offerings

Disneyland Paris announced outstanding new offerings that guests will get to enjoy as part of the Grand Finale of its 30th Anniversary celebration, which can be enjoyed until September 30.

Jumbo Travel partnered with the Disneyland Paris delegation conducted a roadshow at The Four Seasons Kuwait hotel at Burj Alshaya for travel agents and media showcasing Disneyland Paris's Grand Finale. The celebration has been recognised with some of the most prestigious awards in the attractions industry, including an IAAPA Brass Ring Award and a

Park World Excellence Award. "We urge families to plan ahead and book now for the summer season to experience and enjoy Disneyland Paris's Grand Finale of its 30th Anniversary celebrations – once in a life time experience. The Resort celebration include new decors, new costumes, new shows, its aerial drone show and a fashion collaboration with Stella McCartney... transporting Guests into the new era of Disneyland Paris. Booking early helps avoid missing out due to massive demand," said Mansoor Pasha, Senior Business Development Manager at Jumbo Travel.

Ajman Tourism launches Holiday Homes Services

The Ajman Department of Tourism Development (ADTD) officially unveiled its Holiday Homes services, enabling property owners and hotel management companies to lease residential units for short durations.

The move represents a flexible and innovative alternative to conventional contracts. Moreover, ADTD offers meticulous inspection and classification services for registered units, distinguishing between touristic and luxury accommodations.

This stringent oversight guarantees that owners and operators adhere to the stipulated regulations and standards governing the operation of Holiday Homes. The overarching objective



is to expand the range of lodging choices available in Ajman, enriching the experience of visitors and improving the quality of life for residents and tourists alike.

The Holiday Homes services provide clear and proactive guidelines, exceeding customer expectations and fostering an environment that expedites service completion while maximising customer, societal, and visitor happiness.

Middle East to become global sporting hub by 2026

International sporting bodies have been urged to embrace the Middle East as the best place to host sporting events by Alexey Milovanov, a key expert involved in the 2022 Qatar World Cup.

This intervention comes amid new research from PwC revealing that the sports industry in the Middle East is expected to grow by 8.7% by 2026 compared to the global projection of only 3.3%.

Milovanov is a global executive expert best known for leading the delivery of seven new

stadiums for the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia and the overlay for official sites of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. Having advised and worked closely with numerous international sporting organisations, he has been at the forefront of the Middle East's rising prominence in global sport.

"While Europe has traditionally been the home of international sports tournaments, the tide is turning towards the Middle East," he said.



Spain slashes summer train, bus prices for youth

Spain's left-wing government said it was slashing the price of train and bus tickets for young people, including trans-Europe Interrail passes, to encourage them to travel this summer. The reductions, which will be valid for a three-month period starting on June 15, are aimed at "encouraging summer travel among young people and to help the recovery of the culture and tourism sector following the pandemic", sources said. The offer applies to anyone aged 18-30 who is a resident in Spain and includes discounts of

up to 90 per cent on state-run buses and short-to-medium distance trains. It also halves the price of high-speed AVE and Interrail tickets, which allow EU citizens to use trains across 33 countries, with the 50 per cent discount applied to tickets booked through state rail operator Renfe. The move to slash summer travel costs for young people comes as Spain gears up for local and regional polls on May 28 and a year-end general election tipped to be a tight race.



Musical Hamilton set for ME debut in Abu Dhabi in 2024

Critically acclaimed

Broadway musical Hamilton will make its Middle East premiere in Abu Dhabi next year, with a three-week run at Etihad Arena, Yas Island, from January 17 to February 4, 2024.

Pre-sale tickets will go on sale on May 19 with general on-sale tickets available on May 22.

The Tony, Grammy, Olivier and Pulitzer Prize winning production Hamilton produced by Jeffrey Seller and Michael Cassel premiered on Broadway in August 2015 to wide critical and audience acclaim and has

gone on to play seasons in London's West End, Australia, Germany and will soon embark on an international tour, premiering in New Zealand and the Philippines before it arrives to debut in Abu Dhabi.

Featuring a score that blends hip-hop, jazz, R&B and Broadway, Hamilton has taken the story of American founding father Alexander Hamilton and created a revolutionary moment in theatre – a musical that has had a profound impact on culture, politics and education.

H.E. J.S. Ndebele hosts members of Indian Govt and Global Dignitaries in New Delhi

Honouring the occasion of 29th South African Freedom Day, the High Commissioner of South Africa to India, Ndebele hosted a soirée in New Delhi. In observance of the first-ever democratically held elections in South Africa, the celebration witnessed the presence of Chief Guest, Meenakshi Lekhi, Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture of India where she shared her compliments to the High Commission on a well-organised evening of strengthening diplomatic ties between the two nations.

Under the theme of "Consolidating and Safeguarding Democratic Gains", the event encouraged the gathering between key stakeholders from across nations to participate in conversations surrounding the values of democracy and its merits for society. The event was graced by 500 guests, including members of the Government of India, diplomats from several nations,

Addressing the dignitaries, Joel Sibusiso Ndebele, High Commissioner of South Africa to India said "I would like to extend my gratitude and deepest appreciation to all the dignitaries for joining us in celebrating this significant occasion. This year marks the 29th anniversary of South Africa's first democratic elections as we observe National Freedom Day. Our democracy has played a crucial role in restoring the dignity of millions of South Africans and changing our lives for the better."

"This year we also commemorate the 27th anniversary of the enactment of the Constitution as the supreme law in our country as well as honour our military and defense personnel by celebrating National Armed Forces Day. Our celebrations offer South Africans the opportunity to reflect on the progress made in transforming South African society while acknowledging the great possibilities and enormous work still to be done for a bright future." he further added.

economic partners, and friends of South Africa. The occasion coincides with the 27th Anniversary of the enactment of the Constitution as the supreme law in South Africa.

In addition, to make the evening memorable, the South African High

Commission in partnership with South African Tourism organised performances by the Springdales School Choir. Guests were also introduced to the delectable dishes from South African Cuisines, prepared by former MasterChef Siphokazi Mdlankomo.

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Georgia to resume flights to Russia

Georgian Airways resumed direct flights to Russia from May 20, 2023, the country's civil aviation authority said, drawing criticism from Ukraine and the European Union. The move comes after Moscow lifted a flight ban in a significant warming of ties with Georgia, with which it has had no formal diplomatic relations since Russia defeated its southern neighbour in a short war in 2008.

"The world is isolating Russia to force it to stop the war, but Georgia is welcoming Russian airlines and sending its own to Moscow. All while 20% of Georgian territory remains occupied by Russia with impunity," Ukrainian foreign ministry spokesman Oleg Nikolenko said

Georgia has in recent months tried to balance rapprochement with its giant neighbour and its aspirations to join the EU. The country was rocked by protests in March after lawmakers moved to adopt a Russian-style bill requiring non-government organisations receiving more than 20% of their funding from abroad to register as "agents of foreign influence."

IndiGo strengthens connectivity from the City of Joy, Kolkata

IndiGo announced five new flights and additional frequencies to and from Kolkata. These new routes to Bangkok from June 3, 2023, and Surat, Hyderabad w.e.f. July 3, 2023, will further enhance international and connectivity. IndiGo will launch additional frequencies from Kolkata to Bengaluru and Goa from June 26, 2023. These flights will offer flexible options to customers looking to travel to and from Kolkata.

Vinay Malhotra, Head of Global Sales, IndiGo said, "At IndiGo, we remain dedicated to expanding domestic and international connectivity, and are pleased to further strengthen our network from Kolkata. Our new Bangkok-Kolkata route caters



to the growing demand from customers for more international connections to Southeast Asia. We are committed to providing our customers with a seamless travel experience through more flight options and hassle-free connectivity. We will continue exploring more opportunities to deliver on our promise of affordable, on-time services across our unparalleled network."

Qantas to add 1m seats to international network

Qantas will add around one million seats from late October to its international network over 12 months compared to its current schedule, offering customers more choices to popular destinations across Asia, the US and the Pacific.

The additional capacity will be made possible through a combination of more Qantas aircrafts returning to service, new aircrafts joining the fleet and an arrangement with oneworld partner Finnair to operate two

Airbus A330 aircrafts on two Qantas routes. The network changes will see the Group's international capacity grow to around 100 per cent of pre-Covid levels by March 2024, up from 44 per cent 12 months ago and 84 per cent. Most of the flying announced will be powered by the 2,400 pilots and cabin crew Qantas has recruited into the Group since borders reopened; further 300 people will be needed by the end of the year.



Emirates passengers to get free Wi-Fi on board

Dubai carrier Emirates announced that a recent enhancement to its inflight connectivity means that all passengers in every class of travel can enjoy some form of free connectivity once they sign up for Emirates Skywards.

The development has resulted in an additional 30,000 Economy Class passengers connecting to complimentary onboard Wi-Fi every week.

Emirates has constantly been at the forefront of inflight Wi-Fi developments and has till date invested more than \$300 million dollars into onboard connectivity.

All Emirates Skywards members in every class of travel can now enjoy some form of free connectivity. Skywards members, whether Blue, Silver, Gold, or Platinum tier, travelling in any class, whether Economy, Premium Economy, Business or First Class will enjoy free app messaging.



Additionally, First Class passengers will have unlimited free internet if they are Skywards members, enabling them to shop or work online while inflight, as will Silver, Gold and Platinum Skywards members travelling in Business Class. Platinum Skywards members have complimentary internet access in all classes.

Scindia urges domestic airlines for more international flights

Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia urged domestic airlines to help set up an international civil aviation hub in India and emphasised the need for having more wide-body planes to have point-to-point international services for passengers. India is one of the fastest-growing civil aviation markets in the world and Tata Group-owned Air India recently placed a historic order for 470 aircraft, including wide-body planes. As the government works on ways to boost the country's

high growth potential in the civil aviation market, the minister said that now the time has come to set up a civil aviation hub in India.

"Margins are slim, revenues are slim but airlines are comfortable competing on the domestic side because volatility is low. The minute you go to the international side, the revenues are high... But the volatility is much greater." "I plead to the airlines to take the risk, face volatility because India's flag has to fly in the international airspace," Scindia said.



Lufthansa signs deal for a minority stake in ITA Airways

Lufthansa signed a deal with the Italian govt for a 41-per cent minority share in the long-struggling ITA Airways, formerly Alitalia.

The deal calls for investments of 575 million euros in capital increases, 325 million euros from Lufthansa and the rest from the Italian Finance Ministry, providing capital for growth. Lufthansa will also have the option of buying the remaining shares at a later date.

Lufthansa's industrial plan for the Italian carrier calls for revenues of 2.5 billion euros (\$2.68 billion) this year, growing to 4.1 billion euros in 2027, the Italian Finance Ministry said in a statement. During that period, Lufthansa plans to expand the ITA fleet from 71 aircraft to 94 and bring the workforce to 5,500 employees, from the



current 4,000. ITA Airways and its Alitalia predecessor have long been searching for an industrial partner as the Italian airline lost out on domestic and European routes to low-cost carriers. A string of deals with potential and real partners had all fallen through over the last 15 years.

ITA officially launched in October 2021.

Singapore Airlines adding summer flights to Christchurch

Singapore Airlines announced that it will add 40 extra flights to its schedule to Christchurch, New Zealand, in the coming months. From November 19th, the carrier will add a three-times-a-week service every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for the summer months in the Southern Hemisphere.

The arrangement will be a part of a joint venture with Air New Zealand. Christchurch International Airport general manager of Aeronautical Development, Gordon Bevan, commented, "South Islanders love this service as a direct flight from Christchurch Airport to Singapore's Changi Airport, then on to dozens of cities in Asia and Europe ... The airline has been our valued

international partner for 37 years now. In recent years and through difficult times, the airline continued to fly here to support this city and island, so when passengers couldn't travel, our products still did."

The additional flights are in response to skyrocketing demand following the lifting of travel restrictions. Leisure travellers, as well as those visiting family and friends, are likely to make up a significant portion of those taking these flights. These extra flights into Christchurch will add a further 759 weekly seats to the South Island gateway and are expected to boost tourism and business connectivity.

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines introduces Premium Class on India routes

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines announced the launch of their new 'Premium Comfort Class' in India at an exclusive experiential showcase event for their key customers and trade partners. The actual Premium Comfort Class seats were showcased at the event to experience the elevated comfort.

The launch highlights the importance of India as a focus market for KLM. The new Premium Comfort class will be available on flights between Bengaluru, Delhi and Mumbai to Amsterdam and other destinations.

Claude Sarre, General Manager India sub-continent

Air France-KLM said, "With the introduction of KLM Premium Comfort Class in India, we are delighted to offer our customers a distinctive travel experience, more choices and elevated comfort. This development strengthens KLM's standing as a global network carrier offering an appealing and varied range of onboard products i.e. World Business Class, Premium Comfort and Economy Class. It also reaffirms our partnership with Delta Air Lines and Virgin Atlantic on North Atlantic routes, where we can now combine our products on all routes."

First flight from Goa to Dehradun flies with Goan woman as co-pilot



The first-ever flight connecting Goa to Dehradun turned into a memorable event for Shasha Saldanha, the co-pilot, who believes the historic journey would inspire more women to pursue a career in aviation. The IndiGo flight took Goa's tourism minister Rohan Khaunte to Dehradun on May 23 as part of an agreement between Uttarakhand and Goa to boost tourism in both the states.

Uttarakhand was connected to Goa through this maiden flight. The official said that Saldanha who lives at Parra village in North Goa, the hometown of former defence minister Manohar Parrikar, was specially requested to co-pilot the aircraft as a sign of

women empowerment.

Saldanha said that she felt honoured and grateful to be part of "the historic day in the Indian aviation".

She said that it was a moment of pride for her to "be able to fly our tourism minister Rohan Khaunte" along with a team of delegates to the scenic city of Dehradun.

"I hope my inaugural flight to Dehradun is one of many opportunities and experiences that are presented to the women in the field of aviation. I also hope that young women will find our stories motivating and be inspired to study and apply for ambitious roles in this sector," she added.



CIAL announces direct flights to Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City

Kerala to have direct connectivity to Vietnam, with Vietjet operating direct flights from Cochin International Airport four days a week from August 12.

Flights to Ho Chi Minh City will be operated on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. A release from the Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) put the development as a significant milestone for the airport and the country's tourism industry. Southeast Asian destinations with direct services from CIAL are Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, and Bangkok.

"We are very happy to announce a direct flight

service from Kochi airport to Ho Chi Minh City," said S. Suhas, Managing Director, CIAL. "We are confident that the launch of this new air route between Kerala and Vietnam will be a significant milestone in the tourism industry, providing travellers with a convenient and direct transportation option to meet their requirements," he said.

CIAL handled 89.82 lakh passengers in the last financial year. It anticipates surpassing the milestone of one crore passengers in the current financial year. The airport is currently ranked third in the country with the highest number of international passengers.

Air New Zealand to weigh passengers in the survey

Air New Zealand will ask more than 10,000 customers travelling on its international network to participate in a passenger weight survey this June. The survey is essential to the safe and efficient operation of the aircraft and is a Civil Aviation Authority requirement. Air New Zealand Load Control Improvement Specialist Alastair James explained that before each take-off the pilot needs to know the weight and balance of the loaded aircraft. "We weigh everything that goes on the aircraft – from the cargo to the meals onboard, to the luggage in the hold. We use average weights for customers, crew and cabin bags, which we get from doing this survey." Customers on Air New Zealand's domestic network were



weighed in 2021. Now that international travel is back up and running, it's time for international flyers to weigh in. There is nothing to fear for customers who are hesitant about jumping on those scales.

"We know stepping on the scales can be daunting. We want to reassure our customers there is no visible display anywhere. No one can see your weight – not even us! It's completely anonymous," said James.



ONE Above Kenya and Sarovar Group hosts an eventful Fam Trip showcasing Kenya's hidden gems

One Above Kenya, in collaboration with Sarovar Group, recently organized a familiarization trip for Indian travel agents in the month of May. The fam trip aimed to showcase the hidden gems of Kenya, a country renowned for its epic safaris and diverse wildlife. As a licensed office in Kenya, One Above Kenya took the opportunity to introduce the participants to breathtaking destinations that go beyond the traditional tourist hotspots. The itinerary featured a range of captivating experiences, from beautiful beaches to safari lodges, ensuring an unforgettable journey for the travel agents.

Sarovar Group, a trusted hospitality partner, played a pivotal role in providing exceptional accommodations and service throughout the trip. Participants had the privilege of experiencing the extraordinary hospitality and world-class amenities offered by Sarova Hotels and Resorts.

The fam trip included stays at renowned Sarova properties such as Sarova Stanley, Sarova Shaba, Sarova Lionhill, Sarova Mara, and Sarova Whitesands. Each property offered a unique and enchanting experience, tailored to showcase the best of Kenya's natural beauty and wildlife.

Sarova Stanley, located in Nairobi, seamlessly blends timeless elegance with modern comforts. Participants were captivated by this iconic hotel's refined ambience, culinary delights, and impeccable attention to detail.

In the heart of the Shaba Game Reserve,

Sarova Shaba immersed the travel agents in the wild beauty of Kenya's northern frontier. The resort provided breathtaking landscapes, encounters with diverse wildlife, and warm hospitality, making it a truly awe-inspiring retreat.

Situated near Lake Nakuru National Park, Sarova Lionhill offers a picturesque escape amidst nature's splendour. With stunning views of the lake and abundant wildlife, the resort provided a serene and unforgettable experience. Participants could immerse themselves in the tranquillity of the surroundings while enjoying world-class amenities.

Sarova Mara, located in the world-famous Maasai Mara Game Reserve, served as a gateway to an unforgettable safari adventure. Participants had the opportunity to witness the wonders of the Maasai Mara, including the Great Migration and a vast array of wildlife.

Lastly, Sarova Whitesands, situated along the beautiful Mombasa coastline, offered a tropical oasis like no other. The travel agents indulged in pristine beaches, crystal-clear waters, and a wide range of water sports and leisure activities. With its expansive grounds, excellent dining options, and luxurious amenities, Sarova Whitesands ensured a truly blissful stay.

The collaboration between the two organisations showcased their commitment to providing exceptional travel experiences and highlighting the best of Kenya's hospitality and natural wonders.



ON THE MOVE



SUMEET SURI

APPOINTED AT: The Westin, Garden City Mumbai
PROMOTED TO: General Manager
 The Westin Mumbai Garden City is proud to announce the appointment of Sumeet Suri as its New General Manager. Mr. Suri is a consummate hotelier with exceptional leadership skills, who brings over two decades of experience to the team. His high calibre and passion for hospitality add a new dimension to the leadership team.



VISHAL KAPOOR

APPOINTED AT: Radisson Blu Resort and Spa Alibaug
PROMOTED TO: General Manager
 Vishal Kapoor has a stellar track record in the hospitality industry. With three decades of experience, he has a reputation for delivering operational excellence and profitability through a revenue management, sales and marketing approach. He has been with RHG for 4 years as General Manager for Radisson Blu Mumbai International Airport, Radisson Blu Dwarka and Radisson Blu Udaipur. He will strategise to position Radisson Blu Alibaug as a leisure destination.



AHMED NAWEEM

APPOINTED AT: Fiyavalhu Resort Maldives
PROMOTED TO: Director of Sales & Marketing
 Fiyavalhu Resort Maldives announced the appointment of Ahmed Naweem as the Director of Sales & Marketing. He will be responsible to lead the commercial team and drive the sales strategy of Fiyavalhu Resort Maldives to greater heights. Naweem has over 20 years of experience in the hospitality industry especially in revenue, reservations, sales and marketing leading various positions at Heritage and Adaaran Resorts Maldives.



NEHA KAPOOR

APPOINTED AT: Hyatt Place Vadodara
PROMOTED TO: General Manager
 Hyatt Place Vadodara, Gujarat's first Hyatt Place property, has appointed Neha Kapoor as their new General Manager. Having started her career as part of the Front Office Team, she has risen through the ranks steadily and brings in over 19 years of versatile hospitality experience. Kapoor has spent over 13 years with Hyatt and has worked for various brands under the Hyatt India umbrella. Her first stint was at Grand Hyatt Mumbai's flagship property in 2004.



JOHN SURENDRANATH

APPOINTED AT: Grand Mercure, Mysore
PROMOTED TO: General Manager
 With more than 20 years of rich experience in hospitality across India and abroad, John started his journey with Accor in 2011 as Duty Manager at Novotel and ibis Novotel Bengaluru Outer Ring Road and then progressed to become Rooms Division Manager at Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre and Director of Operations at Novotel Chennai Sipcot. As the new General Manager of Grand Mercure Mysore, John will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of the hotel's operations



ABHISHEK CHANDRAN

APPOINTED AT: Hilton Goa Resort
PROMOTED TO: Cluster Director of Marketing and Communications
 Throughout his tenure, Abhishek has demonstrated his exceptional skills and knowledge of the hospitality industry and his ability to lead effective marketing and communication strategies for both the resorts – Hilton Goa Resort and DoubleTree by Hilton Goa at Arpora. His remarkable achievements in his previous role as Cluster Marketing & Communication Manager have been instrumental in driving the success of the Hilton Goa Resort and DoubleTree by Hilton Goa, Arpora – Baga.



SAHELI CHAUDHURI

APPOINTED AT: JW Marriott, Chandigarh
PROMOTED TO: Marketing and Communication Manager
 JW Marriott, Chandigarh is pleased to announce the appointment of Saheli Chaudhuri as the new Marketing and Communications Manager. With more than a decade of experience in the hospitality industry, she brings a wealth of expertise to her new role. Throughout her career, Chaudhuri has worked with renowned hospitality brands such as Marriott, Zuri Group Global, IHG and The Den Bengaluru. She has also collaborated with communication agencies specialising in the hospitality segment.



MANISH DAYYA

APPOINTED AT: Sofitel Mumbai, BKC
PROMOTED TO: General Manager
 Dayya brings with him over two decades of experience in the trade and hospitality industries. A hospitality professional to the core, he looks forward to spearheading operations at Sofitel Mumbai BKC, introducing further growth through innovative strategies, and managing an effective and enthusiastic team. Knowing that hospitality would be his path of choice, Manish completed his Diploma in Hotel Management from the Institute of Hotel Management Catering Technology & Applied Nutrition Goa, before kickstarting his career.



KIRAN MUNIRAJ

APPOINTED AT: Four Points by Sheraton Navi Mumbai, Vashi
PROMOTED TO: Director of Operations
 Four Points by Sheraton Navi Mumbai, Vashi announces the promotion of Kiran Muniraj to the position of Director of Operations. In this new capacity, Kiran will be responsible for driving strategic initiatives that will enhance the property's visibility and revenue generation. With over 17 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Kiran has worked with some of the top hotel groups, including Hilton Worldwide, Taj Hotels, Resorts and Palaces, and The Oberoi Hotels.

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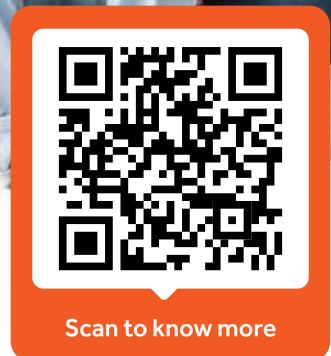
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