

1 IN CIRCULATION & READERSHIP

SOUTH ASIA'S LEADING TRAVEL TRADE FORTNIGHTLY

ddppl.com

TRAVTALK[®]

TravTalkIndia.com



Published from : ★ India ★ Middle East

Scan & Share

Welcome new memories with our exquisite

Fixed Departures 2023 (B2B only)

USA Europe Australia Scandinavia

DMC: USA, Canada, Australia, Europe & Scandinavia

Sales & marketing office in India
Ph: 022 2833605/566 Email: sales@redcarpettravel
For any additional information visit us on www.redcarpettravel

Red Carpet Travels

GRNconnect.com

Global Reservations Network

Your B2B hotel booking Genie

#ThinkHotelsThinkGRN

GRN DMC's

US DMC

India DMC

Egypt DMC

EBIX CASH

THE
RAIL JOURNEYS
A luxury initiative by Ebix

LUXURY ON WHEELS.

Experience India the royal way, as the The Heritage Palace on Wheels takes you on a luxurious journey through the Golden Triangle. Embark on a journey aboard one of the World's leading luxury trains, The Palace on Wheels. Follow in the footsteps of royalty on the Maharajas' Express. Get an exquisite glimpse of South India on the Golden Chariot, immerse yourself in the timeless traditions and glorious diversity of India on The Deccan Odyssey, a memorable experience.

The Rail Journeys, a part of the Ebix Group. See India like you've never seen her before.



Deccan Odyssey



Maharajas' Express



Palace on Wheels



The Golden Chariot

For attractive deals, call us at: +91 82877 95986, +91 98738 44455
Write to us at: rail@therailjourney.com
www.therailjourneys.com

1 IN CIRCULATION & READERSHIP

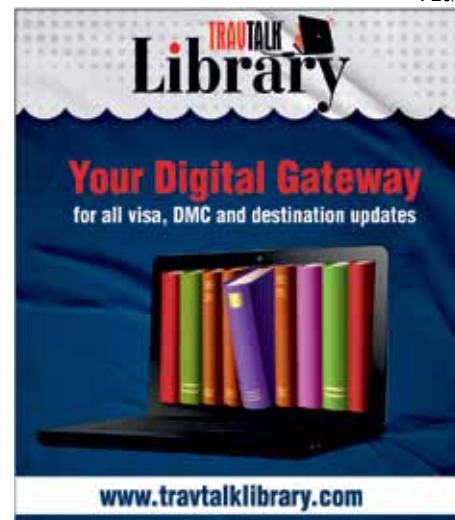
SOUTH ASIA'S LEADING TRAVEL TRADE FORTNIGHTLY

TRAVTALK[®]

ddppl.com

TravTalkIndia.com

Published from : ★ India ★ Middle East



Revenge buying propels wedding biz

Wedding Travel Show 2022 brought together the two driving forces of the wedding industry, planners and hoteliers, in the serene beauty of Dehradun, where the session on 'Confluence of Wedding & Hotel Industries' witnessed a frank and lively discussion with panellists on pertinent topics related to the industry, ranging from price parity to industry status.



Lipla Negi

Matchmaking in a wedding is not just restricted to pairing the bride and groom. For a successful wedding, or to say wedding celebration, matchmaking of a wedding planner and a hotel (venue) is also equally important. Coupling the two driving forces of the industry at the Wedding Travel Show 2022, the panel on 'Confluence of Wedding & Hotel Industries' saw a lively discussion with panellists **Arif Patel**, CCO, ITC Hotels and **Chetan Vohra**, MD, Weddingline, craftily moderated by **Rajeev Jain**, Founder & MD, Rashi Entertainment. Hosted at Hyatt Regency Dehradun, the show witnessed the presence of top wed-

ding planners, hotels, airlines and tourism boards of the country.

Describing the relationship between wedding service agencies and hotels, Jain quipped, "It's like – we cannot live with or without each other – a typical husband & wife relationship." He began the session by laying out the key matters that act as 'bone of contention' between wedding agencies and hotels. "Hotels complain about wedding agencies taking rates from 20 different hotels and then finally giving the business to none or one. On the other hand, agencies complain that hotels do not treat them as equal partners and make them pay for even the smallest things like tea & coffee for their staff," he revealed.



Arif Patel
CCO, ITC Hotels

Transparency in pricing

On being asked about transparency in prices and commission to the agencies, Patel said, "In the organised sectors, everybody understands 'price parity'. We also understand that commission is the cost of doing the



Rajeev Jain
Founder & MD, Rashi Entertainment

business. While airlines and many other sectors have stopped paying commissions, we (hotels) are still paying standard commission, considering it as your (wedding agencies') birthright." Highlighting some of the common practices followed by hotels to

ensure transparency & price parity, he informed that hotels nowadays ask for the names of bride & groom and wedding dates. On the question of hotels leaking the client leads that wedding planners share, Patel responded, "Once we get the names and dates, we maintain a complete price parity. For example, last week, a groom approached us via five different wedding planners. So we decided to leave it on the groom to choose his wedding agency. But we will maintain a price parity with all five planners. Commission, if there is any, is strictly a hotel and planner's business and the client has nothing to do with it," he revealed. Sharing his standpoint about price parity, Vohra said, "This is

something we have personally experienced in the past. We shared a query with a hotel and a few hours later got to know that another wedding agency, which was never in the picture, got in touch with the client directly, and negotiated the wedding planning offering them competitive prices. So, it is not just about price parity. Hotels should work towards protecting the details of the client."

The power of collaboration

Roping in **Harkaran Singh**, GM, Hyatt Regency Dehradun, the panellists collectively emphasized the power of collaboration. "Sometimes the agencies also do 'rate shopping' by giving fake names of bride & groom."

'360° approach to lift tourism'

National Conference on Tourist Police Scheme, held in New Delhi recently, puts in perspective the need for a dedicated strategy to address safety and security concerns of tourists and promote tourism.



TT Bureau

Ministry of Tourism, along with Ministry of Home Affairs and Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), recently organised the National Conference on Tourist Police Scheme. The event was presided by **G. Kishan Reddy**, Union Minister for Tourism, and **Shripad Yesso Naik**, MoS, Tourism, also graced the occasion. **Om Birla**, Speaker of Lok Sabha, also addressed the conference. Other dignitaries present were **Arvind Singh**, Secretary, Tourism, **Balaji Srivastava**, Director General (BPR&D, MHA), Joint Secretary (Foreigners division, MHA), State Tourism Secretaries of Rajasthan, Kerala, Goa



& Meghalaya, DGPs/ IGP of States/UTs and other senior officials of MHA, MoT, BPR&D.

The conference saw the report on 'Tourist Police Scheme' pre-

pared by BPR&D was deliberated upon and BPR&D also shared the finding and recommendations of the report. Reddy said that government has opted a

Contd on page 7 ▶

Homestays promising option

Gyan Bhushan, Economic Advisor, Ministry of Tourism, recently gave a presentation on homestays and how they are linked to skill development, cutting across different segments of tourism and hospitality.



Nisha Verma

Speaking at the National Conference of State Tourism Ministers, Gyan Bhushan, Economic Advisor, Ministry of Tourism said that about ₹2600 crore is the total value of output of homestays in India. "This is an aggregation and about ₹900 crore is the gross value added of the homestays, which we get if we deduct the input from the output. The other important aspect is the multiplier effect of homestays, which comes into play. In the overall tourism industry, the output multiplier is 1.83, which means that 1 unit of output in tourism creates 1.83 output overall in the economy.



Gyan Bhushan
Economic Advisor, Ministry of Tourism

This, in the case of homestays is 2.04, which means that one unit of output in homestays will create 2.04 unit of output in the overall economy. This is more pronounced if you go into the employment aspect. In tourism overall, the employment

multiplier is 2.29 for the overall tourism sector, but for homestays, it is 4.38. thus, one can imagine the kind of jobs that are created in homestays, which is one of our objectives to promote homestays," he said.

Outcome oriented segment

He insisted that the homestay segment is most outcome oriented in terms of providing the shortage of accommodations, especially at remote places and rural areas, which are now being preferred by the tourists after the pandemic and during the pandemic. "That space must be augmented in terms of both capacity and providing government support," he claimed.

Contd on page 18 ▶

Maharajas' Express – Worlds' Leading Luxury Train

Welcome aboard the Maharajas' Express, bestowed the "World's Leading Luxury Train" award at the World Travel Awards for seven consecutive years from 2012 to 2018. The Maharajas' Express has redefined the luxury travel experience by offering guests the opportunity to explore fabled destinations providing a glimpse of rich cultural heritage of Incredible India which will leave you with fond memories of this train journey to be cherished.



The Train offers four requisite journey options for season 2022-23:

Indian Splendour (6 Nights/7 Days)

starting in Delhi covering Agra, Ranthambore, Jaipur, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Udaipur and ending in Mumbai.

Heritage of India (6 Nights/7 Days)

starting in Mumbai covering Udaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Jaipur, Ranthambore, Fatehpur Sikri, Agra and ending in Delhi.

Indian Panorama (6 Nights/7 Days)

starting in Delhi covering Jaipur, Fatehpur Sikri, Ranthambore, Agra, Orcha, Khajuraho, Varanasi and ending in Delhi.

Treasures of India (3 Nights/4 Days)

starting in Delhi covering Agra, Ranthambore and Jaipur and ending in Delhi.

Website: <https://www.the-maharajas.com/> | Email: maharajas@irctc.com | Phone: +91-9717635915

Golden Chariot Luxury Train – Many Worlds, One voyage

Get onboard and experience the best of Karnataka on this sojourn. Immerse yourself in the rich cultural bounty in this southern state of India with evidence of civilization since pre-historic times.



The Train offers four carefully selected itineraries for season 2022-23:

Pride of Karnataka (6 Nights/7 Days)

Bengaluru and Bandipur – Mysore – Halebidu and Chikmangalur – Hampi – Pattadakal and Aihole – Goa – Bengaluru.

Jewels of South (6 Nights/7 Days)

Bengaluru and Mysore – Hampi – Mahabalipuram – Thanjavur and Chettinad – Cochin – Kumarakom – Bengaluru.

Majestic Karnataka (2 Nights/3 Days)

Bengaluru – Mysore – Hampi – Goa.

Sojourn of India (3 Nights/4 Days)

Goa-Hampi-Chikmangalur - Bangalore

Website: <https://www.goldenchariot.org/> | Email: goldenchariot@irctc.com | Phone no. +91-8595931021



'Gender equality a must in tourism'

Underlining how powerful the industry is, Ajay Prakash, President, Travel Agents Federation Of India (TAFI), talks about bringing gender equality in the field of tourism. The association is also doing its bit to accelerate gender equality in travel industry, alongwith VFS Global.



Janice Alyosius

“I am satisfied with the convention (in Sarawak), and it was the entire team of TAFI – not just the managing committee and the convention committee – but a number of other volunteers who came forward to help out,” says **Ajay Prakash**, President, Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI), adding, “We worked well as a team and the success of the convention is a testament to that. I am also happy that Zubin Karkaria (for VFS Global) attended the convention and delivered a keynote address, which was apt – he shared a global perspective from a Made in India global leader.”

Speaking about one of the key highlights of the convention, Prakash shares, “We also launched a pledge for gender equality, in association with VFS Global, led by **Dr. Elena Primikiri**, Head – ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance), VFS Global. The pledge is for accelerating



Ajay Prakash
President, TAFI

gender equality in the Indian tourism industry. About 50 per cent of the world's population is female, and the fact is that they have never got their rightful due. Many studies have shown that when you promote gender equality, you end up with a better bottom line. Therefore, it is important that we bring home this message to our members – to make a beginning here and now.”

This cause is also something Prakash is personally passionate about. “This topic is close to my

heart and I believe we have made a great beginning and we shall the results of this initiative in the next two years or so.”

Tourism needs to give back

The second highlight of the convention was TAFI's effort towards reducing waste in order to 'build back better'. Towards that, TAFI ensured that the delegate badges



Small things add up. There is a significant power of one, and if we all do our little bit, it will make a difference

were made of recycled paper and had seeds that can be planted after the event. “Small things add



up. There is a significant power of one, and if we all do our little bit, it will make a difference,” he says.

The other thing TAFI did was to support the programme called 'Books Build Legacy' started by **Amelia Roziman**, CEO, Business Events Sarawak, who established free youth libraries throughout Sarawak's interior areas for young people. She is trying to create libraries in the interiors of Sarawak. To donate towards this cause, TAFI members were requested to bring at least one book. “The idea is that tourism needs to contribute towards community. So, it is important that we give back to the environment, to the community, to the destination rather than merely take from it. Hopefully, we have sown some seeds in the minds of our members,” Prakash adds.

Knowledge creation

TAFI also brought in thought lead-


'Always stick to what you do best'

Speaking at his keynote address at the TAFI Convention, **Zubin Karkaria**, Founder & CEO, VFS Global, elaborated on exploring alternate revenues of income. He is of the opinion that one should always stick to what one does best. “People are looking for specialists. If you do everything for everyone, you will remain average. If you focus on one thing and do it well, that will work. Choose where you are the market leader and where your core competency lies and where you can add more value. It is difficult to let go of large operations, but if you have the courage to do, let go and find your niche. You will serve your customer and your business well. VFS Global is also focused on ESG (environmental, social, and governance) – especially in terms of women diversity. It has signed a pledge for higher women ratio – today it has over 58 per cent women in VFS Global.”



Zubin Karkaria
Founder & CEO, VFS Global

ers to talk about innovation, including a session by Vinay Gupta, Founder & CEO, Nexus DMC. “This seems like a far better, and more informative product that a travel agent can use today. Using this software, an agent can create a

professional itinerary including transfers, sightseeing, etc. We will definitely be taking this forward with our membership. The idea is that people now need to upskill and re-skill and discover new ways of doing things,” he says. 



unimoni
Travel & Holidays

LET'S GO TRAVEL

Unimoni Travel & Holidays, India's largest travel company is hiring travel professionals for various positions at our branches and offices located in India !

We are looking for talented & experienced travel & holidays professionals to fill the mentioned vacancies.

Business Development Managers for IATA Offices

Air Ticketing Consultants for IATA offices

Holiday Consultants for IATA Offices

Visa Consultants for IATA Offices

Customer Relationship Executives for branch offices

Our IATA Offices :

Delhi | Mumbai | Hyderabad | Chennai | Mangalore | Kochi | Calicut | Trivandrum | Trichy

25 Years of Expertise

300+ Branches | 10 IATA Locations | 2000+ Agent Partners | serving 1000+ corporates across India

Mob: 9847003486 | Email : ratheesh.vr@unimoniindia.com

A strong comeback

Yes, tourism is making a strong comeback! Revenge tourism is at its peak and our Indian tourists are leaving no opportunity to travel. We are living in an era where the travel fraternity is knee deep in work and enjoying every moment of it.

October was a busy month with travel planned around the holiday season and events galore. Most national tourism authorities are conducting events and trainings for the travel fraternity pan India. Familiarisation trips are back, and trade events are gaining momentum. Starting with ITB Asia and then PATA, the trade events are seeing a buzz again. Indian partners are confidently participating and showcasing evolved travel trends and buying habits.

This November, India's inbound tourism is all set to showcase their might at WTM. This is one of the first international exhibitions that India tourism is participating in and hopefully will showcase the different offerings that the country has to offer. We hope that now the international markets get a different flavour of India, different from what has been packaged over the years and different to showcase innovation during the pandemic. Let's hope the travel agents and DMCs are updated with a new India just like most international destinations have showcased completely different itineraries since the pandemic.

Forward Keys latest data shows that India looks set to fully recover in the beginning of 2023. This is a ray of hope for inbound travel and hopefully this optimistic outlook can be infectious, engulfing the trade. India's national tourism board is another welcome change for the private sector. High hopes and eager expectations are awaiting the functioning of this tourism authority. ROI driven marketing will be extremely helpful in international markets moving forward. Interestingly, India has also witnessed an increase in the usage of premium cabin class during flights and seen a 25 per cent increase in October 2022 vs October 2019. While these trends and indicators are extremely promising let's hope that the tourist arrivals show the same growth.

International research shows that the booking lead time is now at two months and long-haul demand is also strong. Both leisure and business travel are reactivated and making their comeback felt.

Tourism key forex earner for India

According to data reported in India Tourism Statistics 2022, brought out by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, in 2021, the top 15 countries from which foreign tourists arrived in India included the USA, the UK, Canada, Nepal, and Australia.



❖ Due to restriction related to COVID-19, The number of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India during 2021 decreased to 1.52 million as compared to 2.74 million in 2020, registering a negative growth of 44.5 per cent.

❖ While foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) experienced a negative growth rate in 2021, NRI and ITA arrivals experienced positive growth. Arrivals of NRIs have increased by 52.6 per cent from 2020 to 2021. In comparison to 2020, there was a 10.6 per cent increase in yearly international tourist arrivals in India in 2021.

❖ For FTAs, air travel is the most chosen mode of transportation. 87.5 per cent of the FTAs entered India via air routes, 11.8 per cent via land routes, and 0.7 per cent via sea routes. Around 53.6 per cent foreign tourists arrived in India through Delhi and Mumbai airports.

❖ In 2021, the top 15 source markets for FTAs in India were the United States, Bangladesh, the United Kingdom, Canada, Nepal, Afghanistan, Australia, Germany, Portugal, France, the Maldives,



8.797 billion as compared to US\$ 6.959 billion in 2020, registering a positive growth of 26.4 per cent.

❖ The publication provides information on global and regional tourism receipts as well as International tourist arrivals (ITA). In 2021, tourism grew steadily on a global scale despite the COVID-19 prohibition. According to UNWTO, the number of ITAs in world estimated to rise by 5.3 per cent to 427 million in 2021.

❖ 1.64 per cent of all tourists worldwide comes from India. The top 10 ITA source nations worldwide are France, Italy, Mexico, United States, Spain, Turkey, Austria, Germany, United Kingdom, and Poland. India rose from 25th

increase. The number of Indian citizens leaving after 2019 has dramatically dropped as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak. Nevertheless, the recovery made progress in 2021.

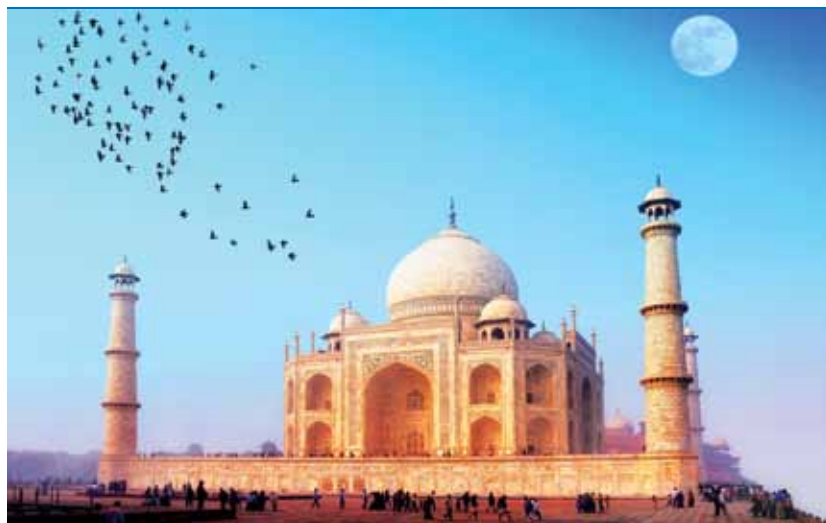
❖ INDs frequently travel by air, which is also the most common method. The majority of Indian National Departures (INDs) i.e. 98.4 per cent travelled by Air, with the remaining 0.8 per cent travelling by land and 0.8 per cent by sea. The majority of departures by Indian nationals roughly 41.23 per cent took place at Delhi and Mumbai airports.

❖ UAE was the top source nation for INDs in 2021, followed by the USA, Qatar, Oman, the

610.22 million in 2020. Due to worldwide pandemic limitations, fewer foreign visitors came. As a result, India received 1.05 million foreign tourist visitors in 2021 than that in 2020 (7.17 million), representing a negative 85.29 per cent growth rate.

❖ The two states with the most domestic tourists visiting are Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, with 140.65 million and 86.12 million, respectively. Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have the highest numbers of foreign tourist visits, with 1.26 million and 1.23 million, respectively.

Visitors from USA, UK, Canada, Nepal, and Australia accounted for 81% of the foreign tourist arrivals in India last year



Sri Lanka, the Russian Federation, Iraq, and the Netherlands. In 2021, the top 15 nations accounted for 80.9 per cent of total FTAs in India.

❖ Tourism continues to play an important role as a foreign exchange earner for the country. In 2021, foreign exchange earnings (FEE) from tourism were US \$

place in 2019 to 19th place in the world for tourism in 2020.

❖ In comparison to 2020, there was an increase in Indian Nationals' Departures (INDs) from India. In 2021, 8.55 million Indian Nationals' were departed from the country, up from 7.29 million in 2020, a 17.30 per cent

United Kingdom, the Maldives, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Bahrain, and Kuwait. In 2021, the Top 10 nations accounted for around 85.93 per cent of all Indian Nationals' Departures.

❖ India received 677.63 million domestic tourist visits in 2021, an increase of 11.05 per cent from

❖ Travel and Tourism created 79.86 million (direct+indirect) jobs and 15.34 per cent of jobs in the 2019-2020 year. In terms of GDP during 2019-2020, tourism contributed 5.19 per cent (direct+indirect).

❖ India's ranking in the global Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) is 54th in 2021.

Ministry of Tourism relied on various sources including UNWTO, States/ UTs Tourism Department, Bureau of Immigration and Archaeological Survey of India to compile the latest data for India Tourism Statistics 2022.

MOT addresses security concern

► Contd from page 3

360-degree approach to encourage the tourism sector. "Our focus is on safe, responsible and sustainable tourism, which are the thrust areas of the upcoming National Tourism Policy 2022. Unscrupulous elements are active mostly at hotels, at entry exit points of airports, railway stations and bus terminals," he said.

Condemning the incidents of theft and fraud at some of the tourist places, he asked the police administration to deal with them forcefully. "We should have a policy of zero tolerance for incidents threatening safety and security of tourists. Such incidents tarnish the image of our country. So, to ward off all these issues, there is an urgent need to put in place proper systems. Police should be trained to secure active participation of Civil Societies, NGOs in tourists places," he said.

"Now as the presidency of G20 shall also be with India from December 2022 for a period of one-year, it may be taken as a great opportunity for promotion of India tourism products. We can

showcase India to them and give them best experiences so that they may work as Ambassadors for the Indian Tourism products in their respective countries," he claimed.

Birla commented on increasing digitization in the tourism sector, and said, "In the information era, tourists ordinarily get every information related to their travel through mobile. Thus, mobile application should be developed, which provides all relevant information related to the tourists to their destinations in multiple languages. To ensure safe and comfortable travel, this app should provide updated and complete information about hotels, taxis, guides, etc., among other facilities, and facilitate police assistance whenever needed. There is a need for quick police action in cases of crimes against tourists. Such steps increase the confidence of tourists and create a good environment."

He welcomed the establishment of tourism police by several state governments from the point of view of tourism security and advised all the states and the



Shripad Yesso Naik
Minister of State
Tourism

Security issues around the globe impact and affect tourism industry on local as well as global level

central government to share best practices among themselves.

On giving better security to the tourists, Birla said, "It is necessary to give adequate training to the tourist police for effective security and these police



Arvind Singh
Secretary
Tourism

This conference is another step to take measures to improve the confidence of travellers

personnel should have knowledge of many languages and use of new technology."

Claiming that it would be an advantage for India when it hosts the upcoming G20 summit, he added, "The Heads of States,

leaders, and officials of the G20 countries will visit major tourist destinations of the country. This event will give us an opportunity to improve security and policing in popular tourist areas. The country where the law and order is better, tourist inflow improves. Therefore, it is necessary to train the police in this regard." He emphasised on the need for learning languages by tourist police. "Language is a medium to connect us with culture and country and therefore all tourist places should have multilingual tourist helpline facility, which can provide information to tourists in their language. Simultaneously, tourist guides, especially female guides, should be multilingual."

Shripad Yesso Naik pointed out safety and security is the first and foremost concern for any tourist. "Security related issues around the globe impact and affect tourism industry on local as well as global level. For any global tourist, India is not just a place to see or visit, but a destination to experience and get connected with people, culture, cuisine. For enriching the experience of the tourists visiting India, we need to

be more focused about the safety & security related aspects."

Arvind Singh, Secretary, Tourism concluded the event by saying that India's global tourism indices will go up by improving the safety and security aspects of tourism and would go a long way in making India one of the favourable destinations. "This conference is another step to take measures to improve the confidence of travellers and implementation of this kind of uniform Tourist Police Scheme in the states and UTs, will result in safer tourism," he said.

The objective of the National Conference on Tourist Police Scheme was to bring Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Home Affairs, Bureau of Police Research & Development and State Govts/UT Administration on the same platform, so that they may work together in close coordination with the State/UT Police department and sensitise them about the specific requirements of the foreign & domestic tourists for effective implementation of Uniform Tourist Police Scheme at pan-India level.

CENTRAL EUROPE EXPLORER

9 DAY JOURNEY THROUGH AUSTRIA, HUNGARY, GERMANY, SLOVAKIA & CZECH REPUBLIC

BOOK NOW

RETURN INTERNATIONAL AIRFARES INCLUDED

8 days per person twin share from just

₹169,999*

₹3,999 DEPOSIT OPTION AVAILABLE

9 DAY CENTRAL EUROPE EXPLORER

Charming! Enjoy guided city tours in Prague, Vienna and Salzburg, cruise the Danube River in Budapest and discover beautiful mountain scenery and quaint villages in the European Alps.

- 8 nights in centrally located, 3 and 4-star accommodation
- Fully escorted by expert tour director
- Breakfast daily, 1 dinner

DEPARTS JAN 2024 TO MAR 2024

— Coach
① No. nights

CZECH REPUBLIC: Prague (3 nights)
AUSTRIA: Salzburg (2 nights), Innsbruck (1 night), Kitzbuhel (1 night)
HUNGARY: Budapest (1 night)
SLOVAKIA: Bratislava (1 night)

UNBEATABLE VALUE FOR MONEY

- QUALITY ACCOMMODATION
- IN-DEPTH GUIDED SIGHTSEEING
- TRAVEL WITH THE EXPERTS
- COMFORTABLE TRANSPORT

RETURN AIRFARES INCLUDED

FIND OUT ABOUT OUR ATTRACTIVE COMMISSIONS AND REGISTER ONLINE AT

inspiringvacations.in

INSPIRING VACATIONS

*Offers available for a limited time or unless sold out. See our website for full terms and conditions.

CZE09001_26657

Union government's 'Heal in India' initiative aims to boost medical tourism in country

'Quality tourism guides our growth and transformation as future-forward destination', says GB Srithar

Travelport and Malaysia Airlines renew distribution agreement to expand partnership further

Kerala on course to become fully women-friendly tourism destination, says Minister

United Kingdom on track to get back on 15-day processing of Indian visa applications: Alex Ellis, British High Commissioner to India

FHRAI wins case, CCI imposes penalties of ₹223 crore and ₹168 crore on Go-MMT, Oyo

Cruise pax volume expected to recover and surpass 2019 levels by 2023 end: CLIA

TAFI to offer free of cost online skill development courses to its members

Wedding biz making strong comeback

After two tumultuous years of the pandemic related restrictions and subsided celebrations, the wedding business is poised to make a grander and richer comeback, says Rajeev Jain, Founder & MD, Rashi Entertainment.



Lipla Negi

Propelled by the 'revenge buying' trend, the weddings business is expected to set new benchmarks of growth and revenue generation this year, believes **Rajeev Jain**, Founder & MD, Rashi Entertainment. The deep desire for bigger and grander wedding celebrations has only been pronounced by the pandemic. "Post pandemic, the pent-up demand for wedding celebrations has pushed the "revenge buying" trend. People are eager to celebrate their weddings like they used to but, with bigger budgets and stronger fervour," says Jain.

A rising & shining industry

Speaking on the sidelines of the Wedding Travel Show 2022 in Dehradun, Jain stressed upon the need to make 'Wedding Tourism' – the way forward for the industry. While delivering a presentation on top wedding trends, he said, "The global wedding market size was valued at \$160.5

billion in 2020, and is projected to reach 414.2 billion by 2030." The Indian Wedding Industry is pegged at \$50 Billion (approx. ₹5



Rajeev Jain
Founder & MD, Rashi Entertainment

lakh crores), which is the second best in the United States. "We will soon take the Number 1 spot," he declared, as people are determined to make up for the lost time during the pandemic.

"Even in 2021, only 4 per cent of people chose small functions over large wedding celebrations. Furthermore, 42 per cent people

preferred to go with 200 plus guests for their wedding functions while 32 per cent picked intimate weddings with a 100 plus guest list," he added. As weddings are ingrained in Indian tradition and culture, the pandemic failed to shrink people's enthusiasm for wedding celebration, which now returns with a vengeance translating into big budgets.

Wedding cost goes up

Driven by pent-up demand, the wedding cost is also rising. Jain shared, "In 2021, more than 50 per cent vendors charged higher for wedding services such as venues, photography, decoration, makeup, etc." Even hotels have increased their prices by 30-40 per cent in 2022. "Buy-outs are not happening at anything below 75 lakhs or so. Having said this, the hotels also need to be more flexible with the wedding planners and treat wedding business as an equal partnership," he emphasized.

Explaining the 'revenge buying' trend, which is pushing the cost

of weddings, he said, "People have understood that there is no point keeping their money in their lockers. And Indians love to spend their money on celebrations." There has been no cut-

We need to participate in international shows and exhibitions to showcase culture and heritage of the country

back on celebration. As a matter of fact, the revenue share of social events beyond weddings has also increased. "46 per cent people are overspending on weddings," he confirms.

India – Wedding tourism hub
Making a strong call for an 'all

year-round industry', Jain said that as a progressive industry, "we should encourage people to get over the obsession for 'saaya dates', which are only 40 in a year." Along with Industry stakeholders, Jain designed and started a campaign called "Har Din Shubh Hai" last year, in order to shift the business from a 40-days chock-a-block affair to a 200-days strong module. "A lot of hotels also came forward to support this campaign, which we ran on a huge scale during covid period," he informs.

Wedding tourism generates huge revenue for international destinations as well. However, Jain makes a strong call for developing and projecting India as a top wedding tourism destination, attracting wedding revelers from around the globe. "We must approach the government bodies so that Wedding Tourism can see the light of the day. We need to take part in global shows and exhibitions to showcase our culture and heritage," he advised.

Always reinventing offerings: MP

Madhya Pradesh is making sure that it keeps offering new destinations and experiences for tourists, while making sure that private sector finds it easy to invest in tourism infrastructure in the state.



Nisha Verma

For post-COVID recovery of tourism in Madhya Pradesh, state's **Usha Thakur**, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Spirituality, claims that they are taking many new initiatives. "We are developing homestay, agri-stay and making smaller circuits like Omkar circuit and Buddhist circuit, so that people come out and see the attractions in MP," she added.

"Our focus is that tourism reaches new heights of success in MP, because it has a huge role to play in making Atma Nirbhar India. We are making sure that we take care of the safety, orderliness and cleanliness for the travellers. All our workers and staff have been trained to take care of that and we believe that tourism will reach new heights of success, because we have everything from nature to god," she said.

Wildlife tourism

Citing the example of getting Cheetah in Shivpuri, she said that



Usha Thakur
Minister of Tourism
Culture and Spirituality, Madhya Pradesh

it was the most suitable place for these wild animals according to the Prime Minister. Claiming that MP will leave no stone unturned to make sure that tourists have a great wildlife experience in the state. "We will chalk up every facility and offer them to the incoming tourists," he claimed.

Dharamshala conference

Speaking about the National Conference of State Tourism Ministers in Dharamshala, she said, "It was beneficial for every state representative as this one

meeting gave us a chance to see, understand and hear about all the important places in the country, which is not possible in one life if someone wants to see the entire India. This was the best thing about the conference. Apart from that, constant conversa-

These new participants come from all corners of the globe - there are now exhibitors from more than 100 countries confirmed

tions and discussions have led to many solutions. For example, we discussed with Chhattisgarh tourism to arrange for the buses playing between the two states to run without paying any tax."

A 'Wynn'ing proposition

Abdulla Abdooli, Chief Executive Officer, Marjan – the master developer of freehold properties in Ras Al Khaimah, shares updates on an exciting new project it is currently developing within Al Marjan Island.



Hazel Jain

Abdulla Abdooli, Chief Executive Officer of Marjan, was recently in India to explore opportunities with investors, developers and institutional funds who would be interested in participating in the real estate development in the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah. He shares, "Marjan would like investors to explore the success story of Al Marjan Island in Ras Al Khaimah, to build their own real estate model whether it is a hotel, resort, service apartments, residential apartment and other F&B products." Sharing how Ras Al Khaimah's hospitality sector has been growing, Al Abdooli says, "Ras Al Khaimah is a destination in itself. A lot of visitors come to enjoy the topography. We are proud to have Jebel Jais – the highest mountain in the UAE – as well as the famous sandy dunes and beautiful white-sand beaches.

Wynn Integrated Resort

Marjan, RAK Hospitality Hold-



Abdulla Abdooli
Chief Executive Officer, Marjan

ing and Wynn Resorts are working together to develop the first Wynn Resort in the Middle East. The multi-billion-dollar resort will be a product that will be a game-changer not just for Ras Al Khaimah but for the entire region.

The integrated resort will be developed with significant foreign direct investment by Wynn Resorts. As the largest project of its kind in the Emirate's growing hospitality sector, it will create substantial value for the local economy by accelerating tour-

ism, creating jobs, and energising the growth of related sectors.

The development is the first beach resort being developed by Wynn Resorts globally. The current scope includes more than 1,000 rooms, high-end shopping

We believe that India is one of the key markets, and we look forward to attracting more Indian investors and tourists to Ras Al Khaimah

mall, state-of-the-art meeting and convention facilities, a spa, more than 10 restaurants and lounges, a wide array of entertainment choices, a gaming area, and other amenities.

The best of the world *unlocked*. Tour *Differently*.



An award winning brand with 75 years of legacy.

Over 300 trips. 72 countries. 7 Continents

1

Planned to perfection

Each trip has been carefully crafted by seasoned experts who know where to go and when.

2

Stress-free travel

Explore without worry, hassle or planning. Trafalgar always looks out for your best interest, all sorted for you.

3

No driving, no maps, no arguments

We are expert navigators and get our guests to their next destination without any worry. Rest assured our guests are in the best hands.

Ease of selling | 97% guest satisfaction | High repeat guests ratio |
Massive choice | Attractive commissions | International Guest mix

Rewarding Incentives for bookings available until 15 Nov 2022

MOT recognises industry talent

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, organised the National Tourism Awards 2018-19 at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi recently. The awards coincided with the World Tourism Day. A total of 81 awards were given away this year highlighting the achievements of the industry in 2018-19.



Experience Colourful MP through events and fests

The heart of incredible India Madhya Pradesh is a state where people of various castes and religions are nestled and this is what makes it a state with multi-dimensional culture and tradition. The specialty of Madhya Pradesh is its different colourful tribes which is the add-on to the lively cultural collage of the state.

No matter, where and when you are travelling to the heart of the country, one will always witness a festival or event to have a kaleidoscopic glimpse of the cultural heritage of Madhya Pradesh. The musical and art ancestry of Madhya Pradesh is nurtured all over the state in the forms of classical, folk and tribal music, which depicts the way of living and culture of Madhya Pradesh. The vivacious colours, matchless attires, and harmonious music make it all eye-catching. Throughout the year, different events, festivals and fairs are celebrated in the state. Here are a few important events and festivals that attract tourists from across the world to witness the Indian culture in the heart of the country.

Khajuraho Dance Festival

Every year in February, tourists witness Khajuraho Dance Festival at UNESCO world heritage site Khajuraho. This grand cultural show is a stunning combination of art and architecture. One gets to experience a wonderful opus of enthralling classical dance performances by renowned artists coming from different cities and town in India. One can witness the magnificent display



Lokrang

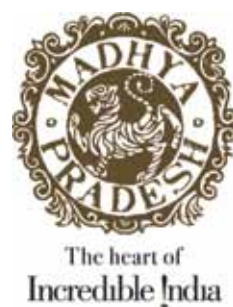
of many art forms like Kathak, Bharathanatyam, Odissi, Kuchipudi, Manipuri and Kathakali. Khajuraho dance festival is not only a festival of dances; it has been transformed into a wholesome festival of dance, literature, fine arts and everything. Tourists enjoy activities like heritage walk,

nature visits, e-cycle tour, soft adventure sports etc.

Place: Khajuraho
Month: February

Jal Mahotsav – Hanuwantiya

Situated on the banks of Indira Sagar Dam in Madhya Pradesh, Hanuwantiya Tapu (Hanuwantiya



Island) is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Khandwa district. A number of tourists enjoy an array of adventure activities during the Jal Mahotsav. A beautiful tent city is also developed during the festival where tourists spend their time and participate in different activities, along with enjoying delicious cuisines and beautiful art works. So

attractive monuments. Abound with historical tales, the city witnesses huge footfall during Man-

Khajuraho Dance Festival, held every year in February, a stunning combination of art and architecture

du Festival in December every year. The festival showcases live concerts and folk dance by local

This festival plays a massive role in remembering this legendary poet. Writers, poets and artists from across the globe come together in the seven-day long event for poetry recitation, story reading, and cultural performances.

Place: Ujjain
Month: January

Tansen Sangeet Samaroh

Tansen Musical Festival is a platform to enjoy soulful rhythms of classical and folk music. The event is a tribute to legendary musical maestro Tansen, who was one of the nine gems of Mughal Emperor Akbar's court and brought folk music to a new level by composing expressive ragas. Many musical dignitaries gather to perform under the Tomb of



Mandu Festival

many activities are conducted for tourists like yoga camp, bullock cart, volley ball, tug of war, cycling, kite flying, adventure zone, kids entertainment zone, camp fire, wind surfing, parasailing, water skiing, jet skiing, banana ride, water zorbing, motor boat, cruise boat, hot air ballooning, parasailing, para motoring, star gazing, bird watching, treasure hunt, trekking and night camping.

Place: Hanuwantiya Tapu
Month: November to January

Mandu Festival

Mandu, also known as the city of joy is a place with countless

artists. Tourists also experience yoga session, cycling tour, heritage walk, rural excursion, sound and light show and horse riding in the pristine village of Malipura.

Place: Mandu
Month: December

Akhil Bhartiya Kalidas Samaroh

Being organised in the name of the greatest poet of the country, Kalidas, who contributed profoundly to the Sanskrit literature, the Akhil Bhartiya Kalidas Samaroh is organised every year in Ujjain. Kalidasa has portrayed heart-warming and vivid poetries.

Tansen in the four-day long event in Gwalior.

Place: Tansen Nagar, Gwalior
Month: December

Lokrang Festival

Depicting various folk dances, music and ethnic dances, Lokrang is a cultural festival where artists match their steps on folk music. It is also a platform to witness several beautiful handicrafts made by tribal community of Madhya Pradesh. The event is organised by Adivasi Lok Kala Academy.

Place: Bhopal
Month: January



Jal Mahotsav

Record turnout at Atout France event

As many as 42 French tourist businesses and over 80 Indian travel industry professionals participated in the Atout France's 'Explore France', a two-day B2B event conducted in Rajasthan's Udaipur recently. More than 2,000 contracts were signed between buyers and suppliers at the event.



Bryan

Talking about the event, **Sheetal Munshaw** – Director, Atout France India, said, "The trade has provided excellent support ever since the borders opened. More than 80 influential members of the Indian tourism industry attended our workshop, Explore France, which further solidifies France's status as a top choice for savvy Indian tourists."



Sheetal Munshaw
Director
Atout France India

Change in behaviour

Patrick Allais, Senior Partnerships Business Development Manager, VR Services SNC, sees a paradigm shift in consumer behaviour. "All retailers—local and international—have had difficulties as a result of the pandemic. The trend has picked up again, we can now clearly see that revenge spending is a real thing," he said. "We put a strong emphasis on hospitality at La Vallée Village and throughout the Collection of Villages. Our dedicated services include transportation as well as in-Village perks like

access to our brand-new private lounge," he added.

Post-COVID innovations

Munshaw further explained about how France is continually innovating and reinventing itself. "There has been a noticeable rise in the number of venues, restaurants, installations, and re-openings of notable institutions throughout France in recent years. The Luma Arles is a modern-day factory for the visual arts that is situated in the historic Roman city of Arles in South France. 11,000 sq. mt.

of metal panels are installed on its spectacular 56-metre tower. The Luma Tower houses a library, a café-restaurant, exhibition areas for large events, archives, conference rooms, and a terrace with breathtaking views of this UNESCO World Heritage Site," she said.

Mehdi Bouyahyaoui, Director, Commercial Operations, Heli-pass, a helicopter and jet book-



More than 80 influential members of the Indian tourism industry attended our workshop

ing platform, claimed that they deliver items to more than 750 destinations worldwide.

Preference for Indian travellers Allais asserted that all visitor de-



mographics and new visitor tiers would be impacted by the rapid evolution of the Indian outbound tourism business and its consumer behaviours. "The ratio continues to favour travellers who choose hotel stays in either boutique hotels, starred hotels, or even hotels that are local, despite the fact that an increasing number of Indians prefer apartment stays. Most tourists who choose apartment accommodations are

those who want to remain in a city for a week or more," he said.

Bouyahyaoui feels the market is new to Heli-pass, thus they require an Indian agency to build the brand in India. "The demand in this sector is high, and we aim for an important activity for Indians," he said.

Upcoming events

From 2023 to 2024, France is prepared to host three important

athletic events. The marketing of these events will be the focus of communication initiatives, which, according to Munshaw, may also involve B2B partnerships. The Rugby World Cup, the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris in 2024, and the Courchevel Meribel Alpine World Ski Championship are the three biggest athletic events that France is prepared to host beginning in 2023 and continuing into 2024.

'Cloud keeps infrastructure updated'

The success of travel companies depends on delivering quick services to the rapidly evolving customer needs. Cloud keeps the infrastructure updated and always running during uncertain events. Mani Ganeshan, APAC Engineering Head & Centre Head, Amadeus Labs Bengaluru, explains how this works.



TT Bureau

Why do travel companies need to adopt cloud technology?

Today as customers increasingly use online sources to search, plan and book travel, cloud technology promises a more connected, frictionless, and sustainable experience for travel businesses and travelers. It enables seamless collaboration in the travel ecosystem, helping companies support their customers better, and more efficiently by providing the information they need, when and where they need it.

The success of travel companies depends on delivering quick services to the rapidly evolving customer needs. Cloud keeps the infrastructure updated and always running during uncertain events such as the pandemic or in times of rising unpredictable



Mani Ganeshan
APAC Engineering Head & Centre Head,
Amadeus Labs Bengaluru

traffic, resulting in faster innovation, delivery cycles, and quicker customer responses.

By cutting down operational costs, facilitating access to new markets, and market intelligence to target consumers more purposefully, cloud technology helps travel businesses of all sizes improve the scale and scope of their business. The future belongs to the new digital leaders, and the

cloud enables these travel leaders to thrive in the digital age.

How does cloud technology enhance customer loyalty and improve business processes for travel companies?

Cloud is redefining the underlying principles of strategy and changing the rules by which companies operate to succeed. From enabling seamless, secure access and providing a holistic view of rich travel information to allowing businesses to personalize services based on an in-depth understanding of each customer's needs, the cloud is positively impacting customer satisfaction worldwide.

How does the cloud unlock the value of data and improve the quality of travel?

Travel businesses are increasingly looking for ways to maximize value from data and scale new heights of innovation. Cloud technology tracks customers' be-

havior and preferences, enabling businesses to use the digitally derived data to customize services per travelers' needs. Artificial Intelligence provides a perfect data mesh based on customer behavior and searches where different business lines can access



Cloud-based platforms lead businesses to continuous disruption and enable efficient use of energy

each other's data to create innovative market experiences and maximize value. These actionable insights attract customers, improve customer relationships and

the quality of travel, and, more importantly, give the business a competitive edge in the industry.

How is Amadeus' cloud transformation journey bringing the next wave of innovation in the travel industry?

Amadeus embarked on its cloud journey 35 years ago. In 2021, we partnered with Microsoft to accelerate our cloud journey and initiated a jointly funded innovation program to deliver new cloud-based solutions to the industry. This partnership allows us to seamlessly distribute applications over several infrastructures, enabling customers to access data anytime, anywhere.

Additionally, we are implementing a new cloud-based cybersecurity defense system in line with 'Defense-in-Depth' technology principles which translates into more secure services for all customers. Moving to the public cloud

helps us support the high-speed digital demands of today's travel and break new ground in artificial intelligence, data analytics, and NDC. The benefits associated with the cloud transformation journey enable us to connect the entire travel ecosystem on the platform to deliver a seamless experience for more than 2 billion passengers worldwide.

What are some environmental benefits of cloud technology in the travel industry?

While cloud-based platforms lead businesses on a journey of continuous disruption, they also enable more efficient use of energy than running computers on-site via server rooms and local data centers. For instance, our partnership with Microsoft Azure helps our partners, like airlines, to decrease fuel consumption and have core components of their IT operations that are sustainable and carbon neutral.



Capture every moment when in **Qatar**

Things you didn't know about Qatar

- It is the safest country in the world
- Home to over 100 nationalities
- One of the only two places in the world where the desert meets the sea
- 1st Arab country to host @fifaworldcup
- A peninsula surrounded by 700km of coastline
- Citizens of over 95 countries are eligible for visa-free entry in Qatar including India



JTB INDIA PVT. LTD. 1st Floor Plot no. 6, Sector 44, Gurgaon, Haryana, India 122003.

Email: sales1.in@jtbap.com | www.jtb-india.com



Perfect moments, always

Evolving a future-ready destination

GB Srithar, Regional Director, India, Middle East, South Asia and Africa, Singapore Tourism Board, shares his perspective on Singapore's journey in reimagining the tourism experience it offers to visitors. Quality Tourism guides its continuous growth and transformation as a future-forward destination.

It is no insider secret that consumers across the world are rethinking what they spend their money on: research indicates that globally, disposable income is increasingly being invested in experiences, rather than just material goods. It is this very desire to be immersed in extraordinary experiences and live up the present moments fully that is driving the travel and tourism evolution. This had started even



Singapore. Today, travellers can experience the familiar-favourite Singapore that they've always known and loved – but with a brand-new side to what the city has to offer.

Adding new experiences

As a compact, island destination, Singapore makes well-considered decisions on adding new attractions and refreshing, expanding the tourism landscape. Some of our most iconic attractions have taken it upon themselves to introduce extraordinary experiential elements to their well-loved offerings. Take for example Gardens by the Bay: in conjunction with the upcoming launch of the



will host the world's only Avatar: The Experience. This exclusive experience, running until early next year, allow visitors to immerse themselves in the fantasy world in the film, and rediscover an otherwise familiar attraction in a whole new light.

Reimagining our iconic Singaporean attractions also extends to wellness experiences – another important phenomenon

onto our iconic city landscape to offer creative, accessible, and ultimately rejuvenating experiences for our visitors. No rolling mountains or alpine meadows? No problem! With our unique array of holistic wellness experiences right in the heart of the city, we offer our visitors a chance to fully leverage the restorative benefits of travel while visiting Singapore's famous sights and landmarks.

Sustainability Roadmap with the Singapore Hotel Association, which sets clear parameters and guidelines for the hotel and MICE industry to become fully net-carbon neutral by 2050.

All of this to say that Singapore constantly reinvents itself keeping a firm eye on the future - multi-faceted, people-centric and shaping responsible tourism experiences, to give visitors multiple reasons

before the Covid pandemic but has certainly accelerated rapidly as travel resumed in a Covid-endemic world.

Quality Tourism

Singapore is not new to pioneering innovation in the tourism space. Quality Tourism – a development model that emphasizes innovative and capable tourism enterprises, local engagement, and attracting visitors who enhance tourism's contributions to the economy and society – guides our continuous growth and transformation as a future-forward destination. Over the past two pandemic years, the country has made full use of the tourism downtime by radically reimagining what Indian travellers can enjoy when they visit

A refreshing and delightful experience that will enthrall consumers of all age groups, is the Museum of Ice Cream. Reimagining what a traditional museum can offer, it offers the visitor a highly-Instagrammable attraction with 14 different larger-than-life exhibits, all themed around the universally-loved dessert. Just imagine: a hallway covered in banana splits and a pool filled with rainbow sprinkles. In the one year since it opened, the attraction has already proved to be a must-visit amongst Indian travellers both young and old. When I visited, I spent about two hours there, posing among the colourful displays, jumping around like a child and indulging gleefully in the free-flow ice cream flavours throughout the attraction.



much-anticipated sequel to the hit 2009 sci-fi film Avatar, the popular Cloud Forest, with its misty peaks and winding paths,

that crystallised especially clearly during the pandemic, when erstwhile travellers realized just how important travel and tourism was to their holistic wellbeing. At Sunrise Yoga at the Sands, visitors get a chance to practise their asanas and start their day on the 56th floor of the Marina Bay Sands, with a guided yoga and meditation class at the breath-taking Sands Sky Park against the jaw-dropping backdrop of the sun rising over the glittering Singapore skyline. Run in partnership with popular fitness and wellness brand Virgin Active, the weekly experience is an example of how Singapore leverages our strength as an urban wellness haven, tapping

Staying ahead of the trends

Singapore has always prided itself on staying ahead of the latest travel trends shaping tomorrow's tourism landscape. Beyond wellness, the other big conversation that cannot be avoided is sustainability. As a small low-lying island with no natural resources, sustainability is not just a trendy buzzword for us, but an actual existential need for our survival. We have developed a destination sustainability strategy and roadmap for the tourism sector in line with the Singapore Green Plan 2030, with a focus on environmental sustainability and sustainable management. Among other efforts, we have created the Hotel

We will continue to meet the constantly-evolving needs of tomorrow's travellers with passion & purpose

to visit and revisit. The future of travel is dotted with still more seismic shifts, and we will continue to meet the constantly-evolving needs of tomorrow's travellers with passion, purpose, and – it must be said – playfulness! We are after all in the serious business of fun, and reimagining Singapore is always a journey.



GB Srithar
Regional Director, India, Middle East, South Asia and Africa, Singapore Tourism Board

(Views expressed are the author's own. The publication may or may not subscribe to them.)



ITQ to give ClearTrip tech boost

InterGlobe Technology Quotient, Travelport's official partner in India, initiates a contract with Cleartrip, one of the country's top online travel firms, to provide Travelport's cutting-edge travel technology solutions to the online travel company, share ITQ officials.



Bryan

Anil Parashar, Chief Executive Officer, ITQ, talking about his company, said, "It is evident that we are the top company in India Market, and while our market share will grow, we will become a dominant player in the OTA (Online Travel Aggregator) space where all OTAs will use our technology. That proves, our customer service and technologies are among the top when compared to other players. Since Cleartrip is among the OTAs in this market that we believe is expanding the fastest. Additionally, we believe that their consumer-focused strategy will be particularly beneficial to us."

Sandeep Dwivedi, Chief Operating Officer, ITQ, talking about the tie-up with Cleartrip, said, "As travel flourishes all around the world, this is an exciting moment to establish new relationships. We are happy to have partnered with Cleartrip, a well-known



Anil Parashar
Chief Executive Officer, ITQ



Sandeep Dwivedi
Chief Operating Officer, ITQ

We will become a dominant player in the OTA space where all OTAs will use our technology

company in the business." He expressed hope for a solid and profitable partnership with the online travel company.

As global travel flourishes, this is an exciting moment to establish new relationships

Dwivedi said, "In accordance with the multi-agreement ITQ has signed with ClearTrip, we are happy to inform you that we will

make GDS connection available on the platform of the travel company. This implies that everyone using ClearTrip to make a reservation will be assessing the content via Travelport."

Understanding VR3

Dwivedi said that ITQ's innovation team has created a combination of products called VR3 - which stands for void, reissue, refund, and cancellations. These products assist in automation, especially from the standpoint of the consumer since everything is in their hands and they can handle everything on the screen of an OTA app.

"Therefore, ITQ goods assist consumers understand the market's realities and that kind of confidence is very helpful to them," he added.

New Innovations

Parashar said that they have really made use of this unique situation to innovate and start thinking about what they can do for their



customers and how ITQ can assist their travel agents in becoming more technology savvy.

He had mentioned VR3 earlier and that was one of the products there. However, ITQ has significantly innovated in this field, particularly from the perspective of the consumer. But other than that, they concentrated a lot on ways to improve searches and user experiences. Consumers, according to Dwivedi, want flexible booking options and swift demand responses.

Top trends

There are many trends emerging as a result of the pandemic, including how consumers want to consider their booking flexibility and how they may adjust to the changes. If there are certain schedules, alterations must be made. For instance, they want to make a quick date

modification, reprint and respond. That demand really decreased really quickly, and ITQ created their own product.

Expansion plans

ITQ is currently functioning at around 60 per cent to 65 per cent of pre-COVID levels internationally, and has already surpassed pre-COVID levels domestically. Due in large part to the signing of new customers, Parashar believes that by the end of the year they will be able to function at 100 per cent pre-COVID levels globally as well.

The domestic market has nearly fully recovered, and there has been a big increase in demand, according to Parashar. With some of the countries, like China, remaining closed, visa issues and other travel-related challenges continue to be huge issues. Although domestic travel has nearly recovered to the pre-pandemic levels, this is having an impact on international travel, he said.

Beauty has an address: Oman

Oman Tourism India Office's sales mission in India recently aimed to educate key travel operators about the destination offerings of Oman for Indian travellers who are interested in travelling in the leisure and luxury segment. Six key trade members from Mumbai share their experiences and perspective on Oman.

"We largely deal with leisure and corporate clients and tend to service high-end travellers. Oman is a very interesting destination for travellers. It has a mix of Asian and the Middle East cultures by virtue of being an Arabian country located in southwestern Asia. This makes it a unique destination. We have sent a few clients to Oman in the past. They were all high-end clients who opted for all the luxury offerings in Oman. They did the wadis, the special tented camps, and particularly Oman's night sky. At the Oman roadshow, we met a lot of interesting DMCs some of whom I have already worked with in the past."



Abbas Moiz
Partner, Shoiz Travels



Jitul Mehta
Managing Director, VP Travels

"Oman as a destination has not been very well explored by Indian travellers, so it offers the travel trade huge scope to promote it to their clients. I have personally visited the destination many times as I have my brother living there. I keep travelling to Oman and every time I visit, I find something new and interesting. It is a beautiful country with lovely people. It has different climates, scuba diving, delicious food, and friendly people. They are always ready to help you. Even in terms of luxury, Oman has the best of resorts with amazing hospitality. We are looking at Oman as a future destination. They are coming up in a big way."

"Oman and India have had a long-standing relationship. A lot of Indian did migrate to the country much before it came into the limelight as a tourist destination. Traditionally, we have a bonding. Oman as a destination is fascinating to say the least. It offers a different experience to visitors - it's a mix of everything. But it is not for the general tourist; it works well for the mature and evolved traveller. After UAE, I believe Oman is the destination to look at. I am sure that over time Oman will become the most sought-after destination in the Middle East for Indian travellers. The tourism board is doing its best to make sure this happens soon."



Sampat Damani
Partner, Dhristi Travel



Snehal Nash Parikh
Director, Syrisa Travels

"Whatever I say about Oman is not enough. They rightly have their tagline as 'beauty has an address'. Believe me, I have visited Oman and stayed there for over a month, and it is indeed a very beautiful country. People may think it is in the Middle East and it is only desert but that is not true. It has a lot more to offer. I would really want the Indian market to go out there and explore to change their perception of Oman. It has the famous three Gs - the glorious landscapes, the golden sand and gorgeous beauty! So while they do have sand on one side, there is a tropical paradise called Salalah which is a must-do."

"I attended the Oman roadshow in Mumbai recently and I met all the sellers. I have already been working with a few of the Oman partners such as Zahara DMC and Khimjis House of Travel and sending clients to them. I was in Oman in December 2021 for five nights and my experience there was amazing. It is very different from other destinations. It has culture, it has desert, it has mountains, and an array of luxury hotels and resorts. It is more for an evolved, discerning traveller. And that is the kind of clients I have sent to Oman. I deal largely with premium and luxury travellers because they are ideal for Oman."



Meha Vashi
Director, Nivalink Holidays



Vinayakk Laud
Partner, Viraayak Holidays

"The tagline 'Beauty has an address' is apt for Oman. I have visited Oman way back in 2013 and it was one of my most fabulous trips. It has everything to offer to travellers bundled with famous resorts, beaches and Nizwa - one of the ancient cities of Oman. What is also a draw is its turtle hatcheries. The best-known beaches in which turtles go to lay eggs in Oman are Ras Al Hadd and Ras Al Jinz in the region of Al Sharqiyah, the Masirah Island, Ad Daymaniyat Islands, the shores of the Dhofar region. This is one of the best activities to indulge in while in Oman."

Compiled by Hazel Jain

Experience 'royalty' on the move

Travel in a luxury train has its own charm, and luxury trains operated by the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) in India offer you magnificent hospitality and a world overflowing in opulence, exuding an impression that takes you back to the days of Maharajas.



TT Bureau

Trains take you to places, but luxury trains take you to places in style. Offering a seamless blend of the romance of a bygone era with contemporary finesse, luxury rail journeys in India offer unparalleled opportunities to discover the true essence of Indian culture. IRCTC-run Golden Chariot and Maharajas' Express welcome travellers to embark on a beguiling journey to discover the rich heritage of India and experience luxury train travels in India, while also offering outstanding customer service and travel experience.

The Golden Chariot

The Golden Chariot Luxury train is owned by Karnataka Tourism and marketed and operated by the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited – the leading luxury tourist train operator of the country. The Golden Chariot Luxury Train operates in the South of India cover various states of the southern peninsula.

Destinations covered

The Golden Chariot is an attempt to connect some of the important dots which have shaped the history of South India through sever-

ture, culture and history of this region. The unique position of the southern peninsula, surrounded by Arabian Sea in West, the Indian Ocean in South and Bay of Bengal in the East saw several dynasties having trade and political linkages with both the West and East. These dynasties with their patronage of the arts and crafts have left an indelible mark



doubles. The guest cabins are a mix of 13 Double Bed Cabins, 30 Twin Bed Cabins and 1 Cabin for specially abled.

renovated rooms and bathrooms, crockery and cutlery of reputed international brands and an exquisite range of linen. For providing wholesome in-room entertainment, Smart TVs with variety of WIFI enabled subscription's including Netflix, Amazon, Hot star etc have been installed. CCTV Cameras and Fire Alarm System have been added for more safety.



on the terrain through intricately carved temple and other structures which tell a tale of the glorious past of these lands.

Facilities on board

The Guest carriages of the Golden Chariot train are named after the dynasties which ruled south

The two restaurants, Ruchi and Nalapaka, serve delectable meals from across the world with an array of Indian options. Madira, the bar serves choicest of wines, beers and spirits. Arogya the Spa cum Fitness Center combines traditional Ayurvedic Spa therapies with modern workout machines.

Experienced chefs have created menus presenting an eclectic mix of mouthwatering international as well as domestic fare. The Package now comes with selected house wines and beers included in the cost with a host of spirits on offer. The guests can continue to enjoy relaxing spa therapies at the onboard spa which has also been provided with modern work out machines for the fitness enthusiasts.

Maharajas' Express

The Maharajas' Express luxury train is owned and operated by Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited, a Government

Maharajas' Express

The train offers four exquisite journey options:

Indian Splendour (6 Nights/ 7 Days): Starting in Delhi covering Agra, Ranthambore, Jaipur, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Udaipur and ending in Mumbai.

Heritage of India (6 Nights/ 7 Days): Starting in Mumbai covering Udaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Jaipur, Ranthambore, Fatehpur Sikri, Agra and ending in Delhi.

Indian Panorama (6 Nights/ 7 Days): Starting in Delhi covering Jaipur, Fatehpur Sikri, Ranthambore, Agra, Orcha, Khajuraho, Varanasi and ending in Delhi.

Treasures of India (3 Nights/ 4 Days): Starting in Delhi covering Agra, Ranthambore and Jaipur and ending in Delhi.

for itself in the field of luxury tourism for its enriching journey experiences coupled with exquisite facilities onboard.

been given a Lotus Theme which is reflected in the hand painted ceilings, wall tiles of bathrooms, drapery and paintings.

Facilities on board

The 23 carriage long train houses four different types of accommodation viz. Deluxe Cabins, Junior Suite Cabins, Suites and Presidential Suite. All cabins come with ensuite bathrooms. The cabins are provided with adequate

The train has two restaurants having seating capacity of 42 each. One of the restaurants is called Rang Mahal literally meaning 'Palace of Colours'. This restaurant has a hand painted fresco ceiling showcasing the vibrant colours of India. The other restaurant



wardrobe space and luggage holds. The ensuite bathrooms have 24 hours running hot and cold-water supply. The Deluxe Cabins and Junior Suite Cabins have a WC and Shower Chamber. The Suites have a bathroom with a WC and Bathtub. The Presidential Suite has two bathrooms one with a WC and Shower Chamber and the other with a WC and Bathtub. Maharajas' Express boasts of providing the most spacious cabins among all luxury tourist trains.

is called Mayur Mahal which is themed after the National Bird of India, Peacock. Each restaurant serves the same menus and guests can choose to sit in either of the restaurants. In addition to the restaurants, there are 02 Bar cum Lounges in the train. The Rajah Club and Safari Bar which serves a mix of House Pours and other international brands. The House Pours are included in the Package and select international wines and spirits are on sale.

The train houses a full kitchen onboard which serves a mix of international and Indian cuisines. The menus change daily and guests can make special dietary requests before commencement of the journey. Owing to its exquisite services, the train has been the winner for two consecutive years (2015 & 2016) of Seven Stars for the category "Luxury Hospitality and Life style Awards".

Maharajas' Express commenced operation in 2010 and has been one of the most prestigious luxury trains in the world

of India Enterprise and also the professional hospitality and tourism arm of the Indian Railways.

Maharajas' Express commenced operation in 2010 and has been one of the most prestigious luxury trains in the world during the last 12 years of its operation. The train has carved a niche market



al centuries. Destinations on the Golden Chariot route have been chosen to showcase the archi-

India over several centuries. Each guest carriage has four Deluxe cabins with a mix of twins and

Changes post IRCTC took over

After being in operation for a decade between 2008 and 2018, the train was taken over by IRCTC under an agreement with Karnataka Tourism whereby IRCTC, the hospitality and tourism arm of Ministry of Railways, Government of India has taken over the responsibility of marketing and operations of the train.

The entire train has undergone a thorough refurbishment after been taken over by IRCTC. To add to the guest's comforts, the train now boasts of several new features including newly upholstered furniture, elegant drapery,

The Golden Chariot

The train offers three carefully selected itineraries:

Pride of Karnataka (6 Nights/ 7 Days): Bengaluru and Bandipur – Mysore – Halebidu and Chikmangalur – Hampi – Pattadakal and Aihole – Goa – Bengaluru.

Jewels of South (6 Nights/ 7 Days): Bengaluru and Mysore – Hampi – Mahabalipuram – Thanjavur and Chettinad – Cochin – Kumarakom – Bengaluru

Majestic Karnataka (2 Nights/ 3 Days): Bengaluru – Mysore – Hampi – Goa

Sojourn of India (3 Nights/ 4 Days): Goa – Hampi – Chikmangalur – Goa – Mysore – Bengaluru

WELCOME TO ANOTHER SIDE OF BRITAIN



VisitBritain E-Learning Programme

A training programme that puts England at your fingertips. We offer everything you need to become an expert in selling the destination and building your themed itineraries.

Sign Up Today!

<https://vbe-learn.travtalklibrary.com/>

For more information, contact:
Jaspreet +91 96501 96532, jaspreet.kaur@ddppl.com

Jumeirah gears up to attract Indians

Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts prepares for strong growth from India with ongoing enhancements across the world. Alexander Lee, Chief Commercial Officer, Jumeirah Group, talks about their expansion plan, including opening of new hotels to attract Indian tourists globally.



TT Bureau

Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts, a global luxury hospitality company and member of Dubai Holding, is continuing to build new relationships in key source markets, including India.

Talking about their expansion plans in India, **Alexander Lee**, Chief Commercial Officer, Jumeirah Group, said, "The Indian market has always been and will always be extremely important to us. We are fortunate with its proximity to Dubai, which is a popular market for Indian tourists. Overall, the Indian traveller is the number one inbound traveller coming into Dubai markets, and with us having 12 hotels in Dubai, we have a well-known brand awareness for the Indian market."

He added, "In terms of market growth, we are pleased to see that the number of tourists arriving at our hotels in the UAE from



Alexander Lee
Chief Commercial Officer
Jumeirah Group

The Indian market has always been and will always be extremely important to us

India is equal to or higher than in 2019 before the pandemic.

Our strategy now is that we have expanded our brand globally to introduce our newer hotels to Indian tourists. So, people know Jumeirah and we are synonymous with Dubai and the UAE and what we want to do is bring our awareness in Dubai to the same level as some of our international hotels."

Expansion plan

Lee said, "We are experiencing a period of unprecedented growth for the brand and in the recent months, we have either redeveloped or opened a number of new hotels starting with the refurbishment of the Carlton Tower Jumeirah in London. It is one of our luxury flagship hotels in Europe and we have invested extensively in that property to relaunch it as one of the most luxurious properties in London."

The brand has also acquired a new hotel in Italy, Maldives, Bali,

and Oman. Additionally, they plan to open another property in the Middle East in Bahrain.

Emerging trends

Lee said, "One of the things that we as a key trend as we navigated through the COVID pandemic is that travellers are choosing to stay longer when they choose to travel, and as things returning to normal, we are seeing a blend of business and leisure travel. We see that the length of stay is longer than before. The second trend we have seen during the pandemic, which I firmly believe is a trend here to stay, is the demand from tourists for villa products. This independent space where you really enjoy full hotel services and often brings families together where you have the opportunity to live in a villa environment, more shared living space with living, dining and sleeping in an independent villa. So, we have really capitalised on that trend with our more recent openings."

'India number one source market'

India is the number one source market for us in terms of visit to Dubai and I think the relationship between India and UAE is very cordial. There's a connection between India and UAE, especially in terms of food offering. We have a big brigade of Indian chefs within our team who can make sure that we meet all the dietary requirements from the Indian client. So, we have all the resources within our properties to make sure that Indian clients are well looked after when they're in Dubai that they feel home away from home kind of concept.



Kirti Anchan
General Manager
Jumeirah Emirates Towers



Ashraf Mohammad
General Manager, Jumeirah
Maldives Olhahali Islands

India is one of the top destinations for Maldives and it is a very important market for us as well. All our activities, and our experiences that we offer at property are more geared towards what the Indian customers or guest likes, whether it is a culinary experience or activities on the island. We have also enhanced our activity offerings on the island for families, children, honeymooners as well. We try and personalise this based on the requirements of our Indian guests.

Homestays to generate more jobs

Contd from page 3

He quoted various case studies and success stories of people making it big with homestays, especially in the last few years. He also shared that accommodation is an issue in remote places and new tourist destinations. "The millennials, who are travelling a lot now need authentic bespoke and real experiences, which they can call their own. They are not dependent on the earlier stories nowadays. With homestays in rural and remote areas, entire landscape will change in the accommodation space," he said.

MOT initiatives

He explained that the MOT, as part of rural tourism promotion, They have brought in common guidelines to be followed by the homestays. "This has been a guiding principle for all the state governments. It's a model kind of a document, which is there on MOT website too and the state governments have been giving subsidies and making the life easier for homestays, because they don't want complication of registration and issues like basic electricity, water connections,

commercial things, etc. Some state governments are very proactive, for example Goa.

Explaining further, he said, "In India, we have 4000 classified hotels (1400 by Government of India and rest by states governments). About 50,000 units are registered under the NIDHI portal and the homestays can step up these accommodations inorganically without much investment, which is the core of the entire homestay story. We now have big groups like Taj entering the homestay segment. Accommodations ranging from a modest cottage to luxury homestays are available today."

Gamechanger for tourism

Explaining further, he said, "For a tourist a few things are very important—ease of connectivity, ease of accommodation, and cleanliness. The homestays provide these at an affordable price. During the pandemic, many people started working from those homestays just because they need hygiene, hygienic environment and good internet connectivity. This helped them promote homestays. Not only would it



promote local food, home food, and the local culture, but even women get encouragement as there are many self-help groups involved in homestays."

Sustainability & employment

Bhushan reiterated that homestays are a low investment and high revenue segment. "They can empower local people and are great drivers for local economic activity. Homestays are great tools to take on the sustainability aspect because it doesn't put a lot of carbon footprint on the entire tourism landscape," he said.

In terms of employment, Bhushan added that homestays are economic multiplier. "We

have estimated 46 billion jobs need to be created by 2025. It requires a lot of trained and professional workforce and it would create livelihoods in the rural areas, which is very important. By sharing one or two rooms in their houses, rural population can come into economy in no time. Only thing is that they require a lot of skilling and a lot of coaching and mentoring in that space," he said.

Rural migration, he added, "is creating a lot of burden in the urban space and that also gets mitigated through these homestays. Cluster of homestays is better way of organising, so that there some infrastructure is created.

For marketing support, going on online platform will create some form of synergy and capacity. Also required is governance and institutional framework, which has been provided by state government, central government and local government. To emphasise on the importance of digital promotions, I want to highlight one survey, which says that there has been 90% reported increase in outreach because of digital intervention and 79% reported increase in revenue with 75 reported peak season occupancy which has gone up from 26% to 50%. There was 20% tariff increase in the range of 51-75%."

Ground issues

After getting feedback from the states, MOT identified some issues as well. Listing the same, Bhushan mentioned, "Tourism department and local administration is taking some cumbersome, opaque and complex registration requirements. However, I am glad that many of the state tourism ministers and secretaries are here. They are aware of these issues and they are trying to mitigate whatever is possible within the rules and making the

rules about it. Also, clearances from multiple government agencies is another issue for homestay owners. Since a homestay owner is not a businessman, he needs simple and hands on support, so that he can take all these approvals in one go at a permissible window. Another issue is that some of the state governments also must convert their homestay into commercial

Connectivity, accommodation, and hygiene key to tourists; homestays ensure these at an affordable price

establishments and give commercial rates. Apart from that, price fixing is also a very important issue. Thus, many state governments have come out with new policies where homestays have been specifically targeted to make it easy for them to do business."

Get post-reservation help with Turpal

Turpal is a post-reservation solution for travel professionals to manage their operation and increase per passenger profit, says Farshid Rahimkhani, CEO & Co-founder, Turpal. He shares how the technology will offer tour operators and customers ease in managing a trip after a person reaches the destination.



TT Bureau

Tour-activity-attraction is the third largest component of the tour industry, claims **Farshid Rahimkhani**, CEO & Co-Founder, Turpal. This is from where, the idea to develop Turpal platform came into being, he says. "Majorly 70-80 per cent of this segment is handled by local travel agencies and online operators. At the same time, travel professionals are also facing some challenges. Turpal is the post reservation solution for travel professionals to manage their operation and increase per passenger profit," he informs.

Know Turpal

Explaining how Turpal works, he says, "When a passenger books a service from a travel professional, they will provide a real time dynamic itinerary for the services that have been sold to the passenger. This is in the form of app or web app, which means that every communication with



Farshid Rahimkhani
CEO & Co-Founder, Turpal

the passengers, including pick up time, transfers, get updated to this platform. Thus, passenger receives, all the itineraries they purchased including hotel details, flight details and vouchers of any services through this platform from the service provider. Turpal has its combination of user interface of the app, which is the app or web app. It's an application that has all the itineraries of the passengers' purchase as well as some recommendations. That's why we call it Turpal because it's

a pal for the customer when they are travelling."

Rahimkhani also informs that to feed this smart application, Turpal has another component called Turpal Connect. "It is the channel manager of tour activity and attractions and any services that passenger might need in the destination. It is a part of the products that we have, to make sure we integrated all the services available and local service providers can also present their services. Thus, travel professionals can offer their own products, or can source it from their network," he adds.

Helping the trade

When asked the benefit for trade with Turpal, Rahimkhani elaborates, "Travel agencies majorly have two challenges every day—low sales conversion, which because of the rate competition is very hard with the services that they usually provide like hotel, flights, etc. Another challenge

is customer retention after they are buying services from them. Turpal helps them for these two concerns by providing them opportunity to increase that profit per passenger and by providing other services while the passengers are at the destination.

When a passenger books a service from a professional, they will provide a real time itinerary for the services

That's how they can overcome competition challenges as well. Also, Turpal connects them to the passengers during and after their trip and they can have customer feedback for every service that they are providing on the spot.

They can make sure to keep their customer satisfied and even run campaign for their next trip after getting feedback."

Customer benefit

He elucidated that for customers, having an expert pal during their trip, instead of a tour guide will be great. "They will have an online guide or application guide with them, which will offer them exactly what they desire. Turpal is a smart app and it tries to understand more customers and design a way that makes recommendations to the customers based on the itinerary they have purchased before. Being connected to the operators is another advantage for customers as they can receive all the notifications on pick up times or any changes on services that they want. They will also have access to online customer service, which is like a private concierge service. Thus, at any time they can ask questions and this way travel professionals can also remain connected to customers."

In Numbers

70-80%

of tour-activity-attraction segment is handled by local travel agencies and online operators

\$254

billion transactions of tour and activity in 2019

80%

SME players are in favour of modernising their user experience to boost online sales

Adventure's promising future for women

Guneet Puri, founding partner of Bohemian Adventures LLP, feels that being a woman in travel has comforted other women on their trips. She believes that in the next 5-10 years, there will be a significant increase in the number of women entrepreneurs and guides actively involved in the field of adventure tourism.



Janice Alyosius

Guneet Puri, Founding Partner of Bohemian Adventures LLP, enjoys working in travel industry and feels it is both a passion and a career for her. Her interest in this segment led her to start an adventure sports company called Bohemian Adventures, along with Anusha Subramanian and Shashi Bahuguna. The core competence of all three partners is mountaineering and therefore their business focus is on mountain adventure activities. The activities they do include trekking, climbing, camping, skiing, mountaineering and cycling, including hiking and expeditions.

"What makes us truly unique is our focus on the inclusion of persons across age and gender lines as well as welcoming persons with disability on our outdoor experiences. We have led inclusive treks and tandem cycling trips in



Guneet Puri
Founding Partner, Bohemian Adventures LLP

the Sahyadri range of the Western Ghats of Maharashtra and in 2018 we also led India's first inclusive climb to Mt Kilimanjaro. We have participated in inclusive

trail runs as well as an inclusive Ultra Cycling Marathon in Ladakh," shared Puri. In the era of male dominated travel industry, being a women adventure travel

guide was challenging in the beginning she said. "We had to go out of our way to convince clients, other guides as well as travel colleagues that we were quite as capable as men at handling and leading groups. However, as the years have gone by and people have seen our work capabilities first hand, we no longer face this issue," she added.

Puri feels being a woman in travel has comforted other women on their trips. "As much as we may deny it, we still live in a society where women are not permitted to travel alone let alone engage in adventure related activities. Women and their families take comfort in and find it easier to trek with us." She added, "Solo female travellers or female groups travel quite often. Over the past 9 years, since we started operations, we haven't had a single trekking or climbing group that didn't have women. This



number has been constantly and consistently been increasing over the past decade."

Puri shared that one of the things that makes them unique is their unflinching focus on safety in

We had to go out of our way to convince clients that we were quite as capable as men at handling and leading groups

the mountains and how their 3:1 client to guide ratio and small groups translate to client-centric

experiences in the mountains. They ensure that all their guides women and men are search and rescue trained, have a good working knowledge of first-aid as well as provide compulsory insurance for their clients and all their staff. "We further ensure safety by having pre-trek meetings with all our clients knowing well in advance their physical readiness for the level of the trek. We also inform our women clients about the specific medical issues they may face and carry with us manual bidets, toilet seat cover and seat sanitizers," she said.

As part of the ATOAI Women's Collective, Puri aims to empower women in adventure travel. She believes that in the next 5-10 years, they will see a significant increase in the number of women entrepreneurs and guides actively involved in the field of adventure tourism.

Playing a perfect matchmaker, the Wedding Travel Show 2022, held at the Hyatt Regency Dehradun, brought together the country's top wedding agencies, hotels and tourism boards together after a gap of two years. The landmark show clocked over 35 table-top meetings, building up the momentum for a successful wedding season for all the stakeholders.



...ushering in a wedding boom



Big celebration on Hahn Air Day

Hahn Air Day is celebrated every year on September 16, informs Bharat Kapoor, Regional Vice President India, Agency Distribution, Hahn Air Lines, adding that the day was celebrated this year also with aplomb. He shares details of the activities done for the same and plans ahead.



September 16 was carefully chosen by Hahn Air Lines as it mirrors the numbers of the HR-169 Hahn Air ticket. On this day, Hahn Air showcases its appreciation and gratefulness to its travel agent partners around the world. Sharing details, **Bharat Kapoor**, Regional Vice President India, Agency Distribution, Hahn Air Lines, said, "We created Hahn Air Day three years ago to say thank you and show our appreciation and gratefulness to our travel agent community. This year, our focus was all about sustainability to honour our partnership with veritree, a technology platform enabling and tracking global restoration projects. Through a recently formed partnership, Hahn Air committed to restoring coastal mangrove forests in Kenya and Madagascar by planting 150,000 trees. This Hahn Air Day, we visited travel agencies in 14 locations around



Bharat Kapoor
Regional Vice President India
Agency Distribution, Hahn Air Lines

the world, including Delhi, to bring office plants as a gift. We also had an online game for all travel agents. Winners received a tree sponsorship for 50 mangrove trees in our forest in Madagascar: hahnair.veritree.com/we-love-our-partners."

New Initiatives

Sharing the way forward, Kapoor added, "Hahn Air just recently announced the start of a series of environment-focused

initiatives, including a partnership with veritree. This involves reducing the carbon footprint of our own flights, of our business operations and our business travel activities. In this regard, it is important for us to work with a trustworthy partner who closely oversees and monitors the progress of our planting initiative. With

We created Hahn Air Day three years ago to show our appreciation and gratefulness to our travel agent community

veritree, we can be sure about every single tree being planted and nurtured to reach its full carbon absorbing capacity. We can also

trust that our contribution is not only benefitting the environment but also the local community. To contribute to a more sustainable air transport, we are also looking into solutions for our travel agency and airline partners. It is our clear goal to offer carbon compensation options for flights distributed through Hahn Air in the future."

Surviving the pandemic

Speaking on how the company survived the two years of pandemic, Kapoor said, "Of course, and like the entire airline and tourism industry, Hahn Air has felt the consequences of the global pandemic. As a strong partner of travel agencies and airlines, our business is affected when the business of our partners is not doing well. However, we are also in the fortunate position to have a strong standing with 20 years of experience, a worldwide set-up, a network of over 350 partner airlines and 100,000 travel agency



partners. We are here to assist our travel agency partners to recover their business results."

Green shoots

However, he said that in 2022, they have seen excellent growth and the business is picking up again. "Of course, the development depends very much on the travel restrictions that were or are still in place due to the global pandemic. But overall, we can report that travel is picking up. Especially in the months of May to July, we

have seen booking levels that were almost en par with 2019."

India market

Commenting on the India market, he added, "India is one of the strongest markets for us at Hahn Air. Over the years, we have added many airlines for our travel agency community and thereby provide additional ticketing opportunities. The agencies benefit by being able to serve their clients in a more efficient and profitable manner."

EVENT TALK		
Media Partners:		
NOVEMBER 2022		
Date	Event	Time
2	Atlys Webinar	03:00 pm
2-4	India International Travel Mart New Delhi	09:00 am
3-6	The Luxury Travel Fair	10:00 am
4	Cross Hotels Webinar	03:00 pm
4-6	Holiday Expo-Visakhapatnam	09:00 am
4-7	Taipei International Travel Fair	10:00 am
7-9	World Travel Market 2022	10:00 am
9-10	CAPA Asia Aviation & LCCs Summit	09:00 am
10	Oman Webinar	03:00 pm
10-11	GPS Visakhapatnam	10:00 am
11-13	India Travel Mart Dehradun	11:00 am
16-18	Tourism Fair Mumbai	11:00 am
17-18	GPS Indore	10:00 am
23	Qatar Webinar	03:00 pm
29	New Zealand Webinar	11:00 am
30	Spain Webinar	03:00 pm
For more information, contact us at: talk@ddppl.com		

Refreshingly Indian

Monsoon by Café Lota rediscovers Indian food beyond stereotype with a food menu that presents 'Indian food with a twist', says Vishwas Makhija, Co-founder Monsoon at Café Lota, Worldmark 1, R4, Aerocity, New Delhi.



Anyone who has been to India or has read about the country surely has a fair idea of how dynamic and diverse its food offerings are. Food is ingrained in the country's history, culture, topography and day-to-day life. And yet this image of India food, over the years, has got constricted to spicy curries. Monsoon by Café Lota rediscovers Indian food beyond this stereotype with a food menu that presents "Indian food with a twist," says **Vishwas Makhija**, Co-founder Monsoon at Café Lota, Worldmark 1, R4, Aerocity, New Delhi.

From the quaint beach towns of South India to the sun-glazed villages in the Himalayan region, the multi-regional & multi-cultural menu brings recipes that have been part of Indian kitchens for decades now. While all the ingredients are locally sourced, the spices are hand pounded to follow recipes that have been passed down from generations. "We have focussed on spe-



Vishwas Makhija
Co-founder Monsoon at Café Lota,
Worldmark 1, R4, Aerocity, New Delhi

cial delicacies that Indian households proudly reserve for their guests or reveal at only special occasions like big festivals," explains co-founder Rajesh Ojha. To suit the evolving palate of the global traveller, the upscale café has infused more nutritional ingredients to these age-old recipes. For instance, buckwheat pancakes, odd vegetable kebabs (made with seasonal veggies like beetroot, mushroom, pumpkin, etc) and chocolate torte on a crispy millet base.

Exuding the tranquillity and stillness of monsoon season, the dé-

cor charms with calming hues of the blue, old-school louvered windows, understated yellow stucco walls, warm wood seating, and hand-painted murals of scenes from a life close to nature. "We have travelled extensively around the globe but the beauty of India during monsoon is

We also curate special tasting menus for big groups – international as well as domestic travellers

uniquely refreshing and something that we had never seen anywhere else in the world. Our space is as much a visual break from the urban black and white, as it is mental," share Makhija.

A dining experience at Monsoon by Café Lota is singularly unique and

refreshing for two reasons – the hospitality and the research that has gone behind each dish till it reaches your plate. From vegetarian bestsellers such as Buckwheat Pancakes and assorted Beetroot, Pumpkin, and Kala Chana Kebabs, to non-vegetarian favourite's such as the Prawn Pepper Stir Fry and Sesame Chicken, there is a soul food for every diner here. "To add to any diner's delight, we also have a carefully curated cocktail menu with concoctions that you have probably never sipped on before," says Makhija.

Aerocity is the global business hub for domestic professionals and international business traveller, and over the years, this restaurant has become a popular stop-over for soul-soothing food and conversations. "We also curate special tasting menus for big groups – international as well as domestic travellers," states Makhija. Himalayan trout, sesame chicken, lemon ginger chicken and chocolate torte are some of the most popular dishes among travellers."

Visit Oman for authentic Arabian feel

With one of the most vibrant cultures, Oman exudes a unique and exotic vibe from the rest. As oldest independent state in the Arab World, the country has embraced modernisation and progress while retaining the core aspects of its culture and heritage – making it the perfect travel destination for those seeking an authentic Arabian experience.



Janice Alyosius

Wadi Bani Habib

Wadi Bani Habib is a picturesque abandoned village in Jebel Akhdar, Oman. The village of Wadi Bani Habib on the slopes of Jebel Akhdar is an example of Omani architectural style. Architectural patterns express the cultural details of the

nificance, socio-economic role and architecture. Originally built in the 9th century and later renovated by Sultan Al Yaribi in the 17th century, the fort's designs are based on cannon warfare. Probably the best place for anyone who wants to explore what Oman was like in the olden days, Nizwa Fort is an example of how life in the villages outside the

qiya Sands, is an ocean of sand dunes that stretch endlessly. Named after the Wahiba Bedouin nomadic tribes, this desert region is famous for its amber coloured sands and massive sand dunes, some of which are up to 100 metres high and cover more than 10,000 square kilometres. The most popular activities in the Wahiba Sands are dune bashing



country and its society. Omani lanes (Harat), built centuries ago, demonstrates their distinguished way of building. These avenues are built of mud, stones and plaster, and the designs of their doors and windows vary in bright colours that make them exceptionally aesthetic. According to official statistics, these structures are more than a thousand years old and found mainly in the administration of Nizwa and Al Hamra.

Nizwa Fort

Among the many attractions of Oman, Nizwa Fort and its souk are perhaps one of the most popular tourist attractions in Oman due to its historical sig-

Built in the 9th century and renovated in the 17th century, Nizwa Fort's designs are based on cannon warfare

capital still remains somewhat intact. Nizwa is about an hour from Muscat and can be done as a day trip to visit the Nizwa Souk.

Wahiba Sands

The mighty sands of Wahiba, also known as the Shar-

and camel safari. Camping in the Wahiba Sands is a heavenly experience and visitors to these camps can experience various activities. Light pollution doesn't dim the stars here, and stargazing is a popular activity after sunset. Just three hours from Muscat, an overnight stay here offers an easy way to experience the power of the desert from the comfort of a luxury camp.

Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve

One of the most popular eco-tourism activities in Oman is turtle watching and trekking. Ras Al Jinz Beach is famous for the endangered green turtle and is probably the most important nesting centre in the



Indian Ocean. It is the only official place where the public can watch the unique nesting process of these amazing sea giants, and therefore it has a great impact on Oman's tourism. Ras Al Jinz Center conducts guided tours every night to see the turtles and witness their nesting process. The best time to see the turtle hatching in Oman is during the summer months of May to September.

Wadi Bani Khalid

The Sultanate of Oman has a wadi which serves as a destination for tourists, called Wadi Bani

Wadi Bani Khalid, 203 km away from Muscat, is famous for its large pools of emerald water surrounded by tall palm trees

rocky canyon and cliffs of Hajar mountains make it breathtakingly beautiful and often referred to as a "desert paradise". Wadi Bani Khalid, located at the end of Bada

in the eastern province of Muscat, Sultanate of Oman. Bimmah Sinkhole is only 1.5 hours from Muscat and 55 minutes from Sur. Unlike other activities in Oman, Bimmah Sinkhole is extremely easy to reach as there is no hiking or long drives involved. It is next to the main street and easy to walk. It is a picturesque water-filled depression and an ideal day trip from the capital city of Muscat. Although the sinkhole was formed through years of rock erosion, local legends believe that the swimming hole replaced a cavern that was created when a meteorite hit the



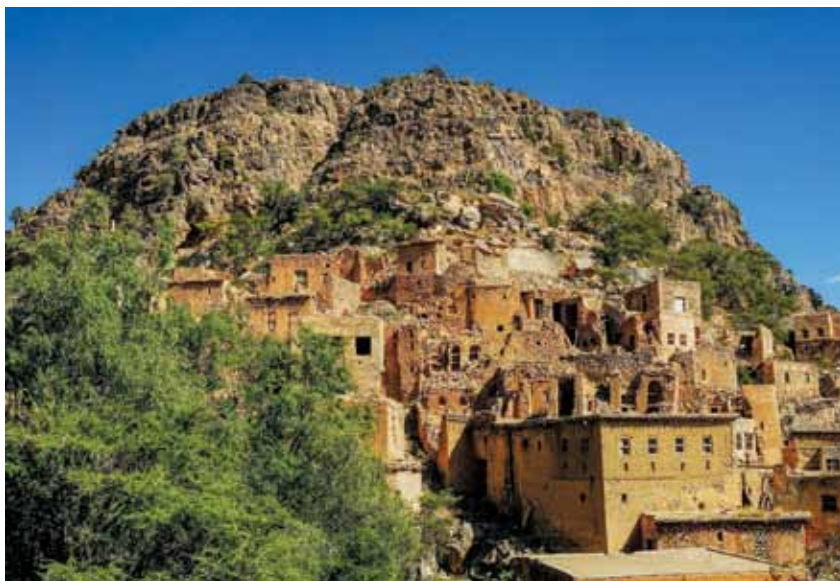
Khalid, which is located about 203 km from Muscat and 120 km from Sur. Wadi Bani Khalid is famous for its large pools of emerald water surrounded by tall palm trees. Unlike other wadis in Oman, which dry up during the summer months, Wadi Bani Khalid have a constant flow of water throughout the year. The

village, is one of the most popular holiday destinations in the Sultanate. It is both a magical canyon oasis and a family park.

Sinkhole

Hawiyat Najm known as Bimmah Sinkhole in English, is a water-filled depression that is structurally a well in limestone

spot. As a result, the Bimmah Sinkhole was named Hawiyat Najm, or The Falling Star, by the Omani locals. A large concrete staircase leads all the way from the rock precipice to the pool. Although most people travel to the Sinkhole just to admire its beauty, the swimming hole is perfect for a quick dip.



MOVEMENTS

JUMEIRAH GROUP DUBAI, UAE

Dubai Holding, a diversified global investment company with presence in over 13 countries, has appointed **KATERINA GIANNOUKA** as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Jumeirah Group.



A recognised professional in the international hospitality industry, Giannouka joins Jumeirah Group with 20 years of experience in business leadership, operations, hotel development, asset management and strategic advisory. Katerina joins Jumeirah Group from Radisson Hotel Group, where, as President Asia-Pacific since 2017, she led the execution of a comprehensive five-year strategic and operating plan, delivering unprecedented growth.

GOLDEN TULIP Lucknow

AMIT K SINGH has recently joined hotel Golden Tulip Lucknow as General Manager. He has more than 17 years of experience in the hospitality industry. Highly motivated and result driven, Singh has expertise in Operations & Revenue Management and Strategic Planning. He has an illustrious and ascending career graph with a rich experience of working with good hospitality brands. Before associating with Golden Tulip Lucknow, he was with Sarovar Hotels New Delhi as Cluster General Manager for The Muse Sarovar Portico New Delhi - Nehru Place & Kapashera. In the past, he has worked with many hospitality brands.



ST. REGIS Goa

The St. Regis Goa Resort has appointed **SATISH KUMAR** as the General Manager. A well-recognized leader with over two decades of outstanding experience in luxury hospitality, Satish will be leading the task of introducing the legendary outpost to the country starting October 2022. Satish has successfully launched more than eight luxury hotels across various geographies. With his strong leadership skills and forward-thinking approach, he has succeeded in building high performance teams that strive for the best and emerge as winners. In his new role, he will be responsible for the hotel operations.



ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES

Mumbai

BILEN AREFAINE has taken over as Ethiopian Airlines' Regional Director India Sub-Continent. She will be stationed in Mumbai. She joined Ethiopian on December 18, 2000 and served the airline in various positions in Human Resource Management, Marketing & Sales, and Area Manager Israel, the position she was currently holding. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management and Public Administration and a Master's Degree in Development Studies. Her rich, varied and long experience will be an opportunity towards elevating the airlines' operation in the Indian sub-continent. Ethiopian Airlines has witnessed rapid growth.



RADISSON GURUGRAM UDYOG VIHAR Gurugram

Radisson Gurugram Udyog Vihar has appointed **SAAHIL SHEOKAND** as the Director of Sales & Marketing. He will oversee Sales, Events, Revenue & Marketing for the hotel. Saahil brings with him a wealth of experience in the hospitality arena; he has been associated with some of the leading properties such as Hyatt Regency Delhi, Hyatt Regency Gurgaon, Hyatt Place Gurgaon, Dusit Hotels & Resorts and Corus Hotel Hyde Park, London (United Kingdom). In each of his previous roles, he contributed immensely towards creating milestone achievements for respective organisations. He was associated with Hyatt Regency Gurgaon as Director of Sales.



JW MARRIOTT BENGALURU PRESTIGE GOLFSHIRE RESORT & SPA Bengaluru

Global luxury hotel brand, JW Marriott has appointed **BHAVANA SHAH** as the Director of Marketing & Corporate Communications at the JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa. With her enriching experience of more than 16 years, Bhavana is proficient in formulating and implementing award-winning strategic communications, events, social-media, branding and marketing plans. In her new role, she will oversee Marketing & Communication strategies designed to promote the iconic property.



ONE REP GLOBAL Gurugram

A seasoned professional with over two decades of comprehensive experience in the tourism sector, **LATA K RASTOGI** has been appointed as the Director of Sales at One Rep Global.



With her well rounded experience across travel, hospitality and the aviation sector, Lata is a highly competent industry professional. She has a proven track record of driving commercial success for many brands such as Disney Hotels, Sands Resorts, Visit Florida, Monaco Tourism, New York City Tourism, Peru Tourism (Promperu) and Air Berlin. In her new role, Lata will spearhead the sales for One Rep Global's portfolio.

JW MARRIOTT Bengaluru

JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru has appointed **KIRAN KUMAR** as the new Chief Engineer. With over 18 years of experience, Kiran will be seen implementing policies, standards, and procedures pertaining to engineering and technical work across all departments. He is a leader with strong technical skills. He is well-known for being an expert in pre-opening, coordinating with project teams and maintaining documents for handing over. From supervising the hotel staff to maintaining a record of timely completion of maintenance requests, to ensuring local government guidelines, Kiran has a track record of managing all with a flourish.



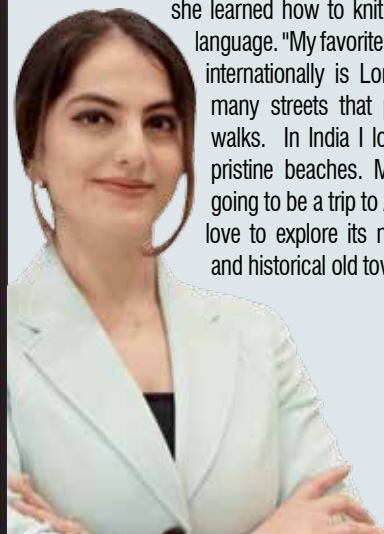
NOVOTEL HYDERABAD AIRPORT Hyderabad

Novotel Hyderabad Airport has appointed **KAZIM MEHDI** as F&B Director. He would be in charge of managing all aspects of the food and beverage responsibilities and ensuring that Novotel's food ideology is reflected across all its restaurants. Through his expertise, he will not only attempt to bolster an improved business environment by analyzing and suggesting trends in the hospitality industry, but also deliver positive results by improving guest satisfaction and profitability simultaneously. He is a seasoned, energetic, passionate, and highly motivated hospitality professional with over 17 years of experience in managing F&B operations.



TALKing People

SABA DHANANI, Director of Marketing & Communications, Sayaji Hotels, enjoys meditation, nature walk, reading books since it enhances relaxation. She says, "During lockdown she learned how to knit as well as a new language. "My favorite holiday destination internationally is London as there are many streets that provide interesting walks. In India I love Goa due to its pristine beaches. My next holiday is going to be a trip to Azerbaijan. I would love to explore its modern city center and historical old town Baku."



DEEPAK NANGLA, MD, Brightsun Travel, says, "All my favourite holidays are when I am with friends and family. Having been so fortunate to have travelled so extensively, I will not name a single destination, as I have had fun in so many, from Oman to the USA but would say that the best holidays have been where I have been with friends and family. In India, I would say that Goa is still one of my favourite places. It forces me to wind down and take it easy and Goa has still not lost its appeal with its numerous beaches and great array of properties. My desire always is to travel to new places."



AASHNA KHURANA, Creative and Marketing Director, Karma Lakelands Gurgaon, says, "I feel fortunate to be living amid the picturesque locales of Karma Lakelands surrounded by nature. So, whenever I feel low, I just step out for a walk and I am rejuvenated. I have travelled across continents, and Thailand continues to be my favourite place. I have planned a trip to Thailand with my husband and 8-month-old daughter during Diwali."



PREMIER
MEDIA PARTNER



PREMIER ELECTRONIC
MEDIA PARTNER



www.gps-india.com

Inviting All

Travel Professionals to the largest Travel Trade interaction of Tier II & III cities

Registrations open for Exhibitors / Hosted Buyers / Trade Buyers

Register on- www.bit.ly/gpsconnect



VISAKHAPATNAM
10-11 Nov 2022
Novotel Visakhapatnam
Varun Beach



INDORE
17-18 Nov 2022
Indore Marriott



PUNE
23-24 Jan 2023
TBA



NAGPUR
13-14 Feb 2023
Centre Point, Nagpur



BHUBANESWAR
TBA



CHANDIGARH
TBA



KOLKATA
TBA



LUCKNOW
TBA



AHMEDABAD
TBA



KOCHI
TBA

PROGRAM

Day 1	1130 to 1830 hrs	Registration, Inaugural, Product Presentation & Educational Seminars
Day 2	1030 to 1830 hrs	B2B Event for Trade and Corporate Buyers

Exhibitor enquiries:

call: +91 9225248070, +919820224272

email: harmandeep@gps-india.com, madhu@gps-india.com

Buyer enquiries:

call: +919890765617

email: mohit@gps-india.com



National Tourism Board becomes a reality

PATA India's 15th Update and Outlook Meeting saw Rakesh Verma, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, sharing details of the recently announced National Tourism Board of India (NTBI), which would be a game changer for India's promotional and marketing drive overseas.



Nisha Verma

Claiming that in the time of current challenges, there is a need to refresh India Tourism's current brand positioning and overall strategic plans, Rakesh Verma, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, said, "We have been constrained by two factors—one was about our overseas offices where there was a change in the policy and thinking, which needed to be crystallized. Second was our scheme for overseas promotion, which was held up because of certain procedural issues. Now we have cleared these two issues, we have clarity, and it is coming in the shape of National Tourism Board of India."

Current scenario

Sharing statistics, he said, "In 2019, our Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) were 10.93 million, and the remaining were NRIs. Within that, US and UK made up for about 34 per cent of FTAs. Thus, there are many things to be targeted and done to improve our position and reach. As part of our new policy, we are targeting two percent of global travellers."

Need for NTBI

Saying that the country's brand must be established by the government, he added, "The ministerial formations are good for policy making, strategy and oversight, but for operational reasons, dedicated organisation is needed. That's where this demand to set up NTBI was there for a long time. Now we seem to be reaching there," he said

Salient points

Verma explained that for practical reasons they incorporated the board as a not-for-profit company

under the Company's Act. "It will be treated as a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), unlike a commercial PSU, for overseas promotion. The SPV under the company format gives the advantage of having basic compliances in place. This makes sure that the functioning remains centred around professional requirements," he said.

"The overarching mandate is that NTBI will be the nodal agency of Government of India (GoI) for promotion and development of tourism sector under the aegis of MOT and we are starting with core mandate of marketing and

Reason to set up the board is to enhance the contribution of tourism and increase market share of tourism and MICE trade

promotion. In due course, other subjects can also be given to the board," he highlighted.

Objectives

The very reason and essence of setting up this board is to enhance the contribution of tourism, enhance market share, both in terms of usual tourism but also MICE and position our destinations in overseas markets, he claimed. "Thus, complete management of Incredible India brand will be with the board. Apart from the formation of the board, we have suggested an integrated marketing strategy, which will be

implemented through this board, focusing on India as a year-round world class tourist destination. This board will be engaging with Indian missions abroad, Indian diaspora and with market representation agencies," he said.

"Within the country, they will work with the state tourism boards and the private sector to jointly plan for marketing and promotion activities. The board will represent India in most events, including travel trade shows, roadshows or anything that we organise. They will also be building research and strategy wing, so that we are informed of proper data evidence for developing our policies. The board will also help in digitalisation," he added.

Organisational structure

He shared that at the organisational level, they will have board of directors, where four ministries and four industry professionals will be represented. "Four representatives from key ministries of—Culture, Civil Aviation, External Affairs and Commerce will be there on the board. Similarly, from the industry, four professionals from different verticals will be nominated. For the transition period, the Director General, MOT, will be the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, but within three years, we will get a private sector

professional to help the board in due course," he shared.

Funding

Funding of this board will be by MOT from its plan schemes. "The board will get about 10 per cent as management fee to look after the other administrative expenses. It will also be provided support for the core staff, and in due course with 10 per cent of management fee, they could develop their own corpus and run on their own. The initial setup cost will be borne by the government. We have also looked at the budget required for next two years."



Rakesh Verma
Additional Secretary, Ministry of Tourism

Anytime & Anywhere

YOUR DAILY

2

MINUTE

NEWS CAPSULE

www.travelTVindia.news

Fully automated process based on

Artificial Intelligence

that helps you apply for e-visa with a few clicks

In less than 30 seconds

For details contact: **Rakesh Banga** sales@atlys.com +91 9650399910



Come on a journey
you've never imagined



AlUla Oasis, AlUla
visitsaudi.com

Saudi
Welcome
to Arabia



VFS.GLOBAL

Your customers planning
Family vacations to Indonesia?

Pre-pay Visa On Arrival fees and **skip the immigration queue**

Your customers can pay visa fees
online before departure, for their
'Indonesia Visa on Arrival' and
access the exclusive Fast Track
lanes to breeze through
immigration on arrival.



An exclusive service
by VFS Global



**SPECIAL
OFFER**

Call us to
know more

Why Choose VFS Global?



**Manage group
applications**
with ease, saving time



**Minimal
documentation**



**Dedicated
Immigration
counters** with
fast-track access

For more information, or to avail of this service:

Email: b2bsales@vfsglobal.com

Visit: indonesiavao.vfsevisa.id

Scan the
QR code to
know more



66 CLIENT
GOVERNMENTS

144 COUNTRIES
OF OPERATION

OVER
248 MILLION
APPLICATIONS
PROCESSED

VFS.GLOBAL
Cares

**Your Safety
Our Priority**