

# 1 IN CIRCULATION & READERSHIP

SOUTH ASIA'S LEADING TRAVEL TRADE FORTNIGHTLY


ddppl.com

TRAVTALK®

TravTalkIndia.com

Published from : ★ India ★ Middle East

 **Fiji Matai Specialist Programme**  
Register today! Learn and Win Exciting prizes!  
[www.specialist.fiji.travel](http://www.specialist.fiji.travel)



 **DMC**  
Destination Management Company

Red Carpet Travels

Explore your World with us



Sales & marketing office in India  
Ph.: 022 25336065/66. Email: [sales@redcarpet.travel](mailto:sales@redcarpet.travel)  
For any additional information visit us on [www.redcarpet.travel](http://www.redcarpet.travel)

  
EMIRATES PALACE  
MANDARIN ORIENTAL  
ABU DHABI

YOUR ULTIMATE  
summer  
getaway

YOUR SUMMER STORY  
BEGINS HERE

BOOK NOW

[mandarinoriental.com/abu-dhabi](http://mandarinoriental.com/abu-dhabi)

*Come fly with us*  
**TO OVER 150 DESTINATIONS**  
*in the USA*

*FLY BETTER*

**UNITED  
AIRLINES** 

Fly Emirates to the USA and enjoy smooth connections to over 150 cities with United. Explore more and travel on one ticket all the way. Enjoy our baggage allowance on every flight, checked in through to your destination, as well as rewarding loyalty benefits and shared lounge access.





There is a new  
place to pause  
in the mountains





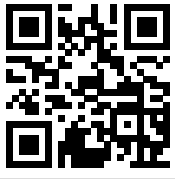
# 1 IN CIRCULATION &amp; READERSHIP

SOUTH ASIA'S LEADING TRAVEL TRADE FORTNIGHTLY

ddppl.com

SAY  
NO  
TO  
FAKE  
NEWS

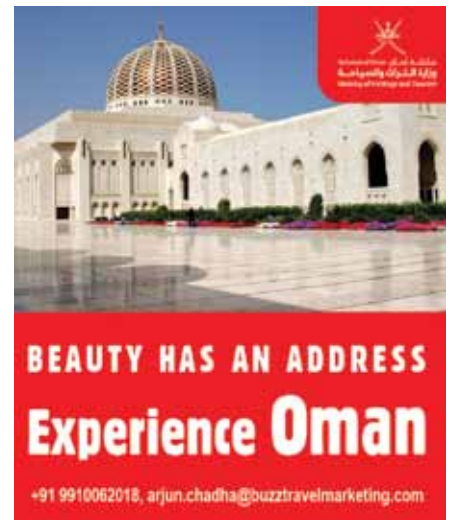
Scan &amp; Share



## TRAVTALK®

TravTalkIndia.com

Published from : ★ India ★ Middle East



# Aviation soars, but headwinds continue

Indian Aviation industry has been showing positive signs by recording the highest recovery figures post-COVID, not just domestically but internationally as well. However, Go First declaring bankruptcy and cancelling its flights in peak summer travel month, comes as a setback. The industry shares what is in store for India in this scenario:



Ajay Prakash  
President  
TAFI

“The Air India-Vistara interline agreement has already come through. Integration of the reservation systems and the staff particularly will take some time. We may see the complete merger by end of the year. Vistara is a strong brand and had developed well. It remains to be seen how the merged entity will perform. The last merger between AI and Indian Airlines was a disaster and we hope this is handled better. In terms of new airlines, we definitely need more capacity but it will be some time before that is added. Akasa is growing and we have another new airline called Fly91 founded by Manoj Chacko, which is waiting to take off. Aviation is a business fraught with uncertainties. Capacity being pulled out, with Go First, will impact high airfares. The RCS and UDAN adding new routes is a welcome development but for it to be viable, we also need to develop secondary airports with lower landing and parking fees.”



Riaz Munshi  
President  
OTOAI

“The bankruptcy of GoAir is unfortunate for the aviation industry, and there is a need for the Ministry to intervene and ensure that passengers receive their advance payments. There should be regulations in place where airlines are responsible for arranging travel for passengers in case of cancellations or bankruptcy. The current situation has caused inconvenience and higher fares for passengers. It is essential to establish guidelines for such eventualities to protect consumers and the aviation industry. Regarding the merger of Air India and Vistara, it is a positive development. Air India has struggled to compete in the aviation market for years, and the merger will make it one of the biggest airlines globally and a national carrier for India. Vistara's reputation for being one of the best airlines in the market will enhance Air India's product. As Tata has always produced the best, there is optimism that the merger will produce one of the best airlines in the world, made in India.”

Contd on page 12 ▶

# G20 to prop up tourism growth: Singh

Arvind Singh, Secretary, MOT, GoI, is optimistic about the growth of Indian tourism in the wake of G20. India will consolidate the gains from transportation and connectivity in infrastructure, growing economic power and marked improvement in the tourism framework in the country, he says.



Arvind Singh  
Secretary, MOT, Government of India

being up to the pre-COVID level. “That's a dampener for international  
Contd on page 26 ▶



Nisha Verma

Arvind Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism (MOT), Government of India (GoI), in his address at the seminar organized by Foundation for Aviation & Sustainable Tourism (FAST), said that inbound tourism and hospital-

ity sectors were the “worst hit” during the pandemic. “It wasn't considered a lucrative sector. However, people are getting back into the sector and gaining confidence because they are seeing the numbers, and especially the domestic sector has revived strongly,” he said.

## Infrastructure & tourism

Citing examples of how changing infrastructure is making destinations across the country tourist-friendly, he said, “In Varanasi, infrastructure development has resulted in 10 times increase in footfall compared to pre-COVID levels, according to statistics

shared by the UP (Uttar Pradesh) government. Jammu & Kashmir has seen the highest ever footfall in 75 years of independence.”

He added, “Similar stories of booked hotels, booked flights and choc-a-bloc highways are coming from all centres, which are 4-5 hours from

the metros. It's very difficult to find accommodation at weekends.”

## Inbound status

However, he said, international inbound travel has not revived much because of various reasons—the war in Europe, high international fares, and strength of flights not

cozmo travel

Get the best  
offer on your  
amazing holidays



+91 9136999696  
holidays@cozmotravelworld.com

DUBAI

Starting from  
489 USD

EGYPT

Starting from  
375 USD

OMAN

Starting from  
546 USD



# CONNECTING YOU TO THE WORLD

Enjoy an elevated travel experience to a growing range of destinations

Oman Air flies to over 40 destinations across Europe, the GCC, Middle East and Africa, Far East and Indian Subcontinent, as well as domestic flights to Salalah and Khasab. With frequent timings and convenient connections, our guests can enjoy award-winning service and signature Omani hospitality throughout every journey.

🌐 [omanair.com](http://omanair.com)    📞 +91 22 62729000    📍 Visit your local travel agent  
+91 11 49970000

✉ [res.del@omanair.com](mailto:res.del@omanair.com) | [res.bom@omanair.com](mailto:res.bom@omanair.com) | [res.hyd@omanair.com](mailto:res.hyd@omanair.com)  
[res.maa@omanair.com](mailto:res.maa@omanair.com) | [res.goi@omanair.com](mailto:res.goi@omanair.com)

الطيران العماني  
**OMAN AIR** 



# Tourism key growth driver: Kant

With its young population and diverse offerings, India's tourism sector presents a unique opportunity for economic expansion, job creation, and social equity in the country, says Amitabh Kant, G20 Sherpa for India.



Janice Alyosius

**A**mitabh Kant, G20 Sherpa for India, speaking at the ASSOCHAM's India Tourism Conference held recently, highlighted the challenges faced by the world in the post-COVID era. He emphasized that every challenge presents an opportunity for radical change and progress. India's hosting of the G20 presidency with the motto of "Vasudev Kutumbakam" reflects the country's commitment to unity and progress in the face of global challenges, he said.



Amitabh Kant  
G20 Sherpa for India

## Digital transformation: A key driver of growth

India, as the fifth-largest economy, has embraced digital transformation, leading to significant economic growth. With a digital identity for every citizen and millions of bank accounts opened, India has become a global leader in digital payments. "From 2015 to 2017, India opened 500 million bank accounts, accounting for 55 per cent of global bank account openings. Mobile devices have become virtu-

al banks for many Indians, leading to digital payments in India being 11 times higher than Europe and America, and 46 per cent of real-time digital payments worldwide. India believes that digital transformation will be a critical driver of growth in the future," shared Kant.

## India Tourism to redefine global travel patterns

India recognizes the transformative power of tourism in driving economic growth and job opportuni-

ties. As India strives to become the world's third-largest economy, it is essential to comprehend the evolving landscape of travel and tourism, he said.

Tourism serves as a crucial catalyst for India's progress, generating employment and fostering economic expansion, Kant said. "Despite India's pursuit of becoming the third-largest economy, it will continue to possess the world's youngest population, with an average age of around 30 even by 2047. Indian workers are projected to contribute nearly a quarter of the global workforce. The hospitality sector has undergone a transformation, witnessing Indian professionals assuming leadership positions in renowned hotels across the globe," he said.

## Rediscovering India: Building unique experiences

While Indians explore the world, it is equally important for them to rediscover India and its diverse offerings. "By promoting unique experiences across the country,

India can enhance the quality of its tourism infrastructure. This includes improving the standards of accommodations and leveraging platforms like Airbnb to provide exceptional experiences to travellers," he said.



**From 2015 to 2017,  
India opened  
500 million  
bank accounts,  
accounting for 55  
per cent of global  
bank account  
openings**

## Positioning India as a unique and sustainable destination

Kant said, "India's diverse heritage and cultures make it a unique destination with high-value offerings. India should position itself as an experiential and sustainable green destination to attract visitors. 🐦

# 'Our suggestion fell on deaf ears'

Ajay Prakash, President, TAFI, recalls his meeting with Ministry of Civil Aviation over the Jet Airways fiasco where he had suggested having an insurance cover for the travel agents to protect them against airline failure.



Hazel Jain

**A**fter the Jet Airways issue, the situation surfaces again, as Go First airlines goes for insolvency and the trade scampers to get its money back.

"It's an extremely unfortunate development," says **Ajay Prakash**, President, Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI).

"Domestic tourism was booming and to have this development suddenly dropped on us puts us back. In the immediate aftermath airfares will jump. You will see other airlines rushing to increase fares. as this is the peak holiday season. There are crores of rupees of our members stuck at the moment with Go First. The government directive notwithstanding, airlines are required to make refunds within clear timelines. If this money only goes back to the agent login, it's pointless. It has to come back to the agent as actual money and the airlines has not clarified this," he exclaims.



Ajay Prakash  
President, TAFI

Prakash has, therefore, written to Kaushik Khona, CEO, Go First, requesting that the refunds for cancelled flights be shown as direct credit to the agents' bank accounts, rather than a credit shell. He writes, "Hundreds of travel agents have placed substantial deposits with your airline in a credit shell to be used for immediate and future bookings, and which currently remain unutilised. Passengers whose flights have

been cancelled have already begun calling their agents and clamouring for refunds. You will appreciate that the agents have already paid you for such tickets and it is not possible for them to refund the money until it is received from your airline. It is, therefore, our earnest request that the refunds be effected as a direct credit to the agents' bank accounts, rather than being placed in a credit shell. Rest assured, if you do this, the entire travel agent fraternity will stand by you and completely support your airline as soon as it takes off again."

Prakash adds, "We understand that the government is trying to prop up the airline. But the immediate cash crunch, which is landing and parking charges, will have to be paid by the airline. It's a grim but fluid situation. We just hope there is no recurrence of the Jet Airways fiasco. We had had a meeting with the Civil Aviation Minister in

December 2021 where we had put forward a suggestion that the government consider making insurance against airline failure a mandatory requirement."



**Our earnest  
request to Go First  
is that refunds be  
effected as a direct  
credit to the agents'  
bank accounts  
rather than a  
credit shell**

TAFI had sent three reminders to the ministry, but that suggestion still has not found any traction. "This is a scenario, which will repeat itself. Airlines by their very nature are on shaky wicket. It's a risky business. Unlike the agents, who need to give a guarantee, airlines don't," he complains. 🐦

## Mountains

**BIGGEST HOTEL IN LACHEN**

## Now Open

### SUMMIT GANGCHEN HOTEL

LACHEN (NORTH SIKKIM)

## Jingles

## Beaches

## Riverside

**THE FIRST, LARGEST & THE MOST  
PREFERRED HIMALAYAN  
HOSPITALITY BRAND**

Darjeeling | Dooars | Deolo | Gangtok  
Gajaldoba | Goa | Kalimpong | Kaziranga  
Kurseong | Lachung | Lachen  
Lansdowne | Naldehra | Pelling  
Rishikesh | Shimla | Sundarbans

**Traveller**

**080695 77777**

[www.summithotels.in](http://www.summithotels.in)



## Turbulence in aviation again?

Just a month ago, Indian aviation was riding high on the huge 840 aircraft order that Air India has placed with Airbus and Boeing. The national carrier, which is now back under the TATA umbrella, had also announced the merger of Air India and Vistara, triggering waves of positivity in the aviation sector. Another feather in India's cap was MoCA launching UDAN 5.0, where several routes have been promised to ensure remote connectivity to over 50 tourism destinations. To cater to this demand, all domestic players have been increasing their fleet. In fact, new airlines like Akasa Air were also making sure that they get a piece of the pie as soon as possible.

However, in what looked like the perfect picture of Indian Aviation, the announcement of Go First (formerly GoAir) going bankrupt came as a huge setback. The news sent ripples across the domestic aviation sector leading to rising prices and triggering a rush among its competitors to grab the cash-strapped airline's market share. A failed fund-raising effort two years ago, added on with engine supply woes mounting, led the airline to file voluntary insolvency. With all Go First flights being cancelled till later this month, the travel trade is filled with anger and uncertainty on whether they will get their refunds or not. It looks like a replay of Jet Airways announcing its bankruptcy around the same time in 2019, just before summer travel season was about to start.

While the associations are making efforts to ensure that the members and customers do not lose money again like in the case of Jet Airways, the question remains how such occurrences can be avoided in future? What kind of laws need to be put in place? Or is it the policies, regulations and high airport and fuel charges that are leading to such fate of airlines?

These questions have been debated countless times and the talks will continue, but for aviation to become a sustainable and profitable business, stakeholders and government need to work together, else more will meet the fate of Kingfisher, Sahara, Jet Airways and now GoAir.

# Outbound travel up by 190%

India emerged as the leading source market for outbound travel last year, according to IPK International's World Travel Monitor report presented by ITB Berlin. Despite the travel restrictions, the country registered slightly better travel volume than in 2019.



TT Bureau

There is a solid progression in the outbound trips by Indians. Asia benefited the most from this ascending trend, as it is gaining popularity to spend holidays in a foreign destination among Indians.

IPK's World Travel Monitor recorded a 190 per cent year on year rise in Indian outbound travel in 2022. India is the largest source market in Asia, with around 10 million foreign trips. Thus, it was ranked fifth leaving behind China, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan. In a global context, in spite of India performing slightly below average (66 per cent of pre-pandemic levels), as compared to the other Asian markets, it performed well.

**India is the largest source market in Asia, with around 10 million foreign trips. Thus, it was ranked 5<sup>th</sup> leaving behind China, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan**

### Favourite destinations for Indians

When it comes to favourite destinations for Indians, Dubai was ranked first, followed by the USA, Thailand, Saudi Arabia and Singapore. Overall, approximately 70 per cent of Indians visited Asia, which, if compared to the preceding year's



figures, boosted by more than 250 per cent. Thailand, Abu Dhabi and Dubai were India's favoured destinations as stated by Destination Performance Index (DPI). Considering the same context, DPI took travel satisfaction, recommendation and the desire to revisit a destination into account for all Indian outbound travel around the world.

### Travel trends to book for international trips

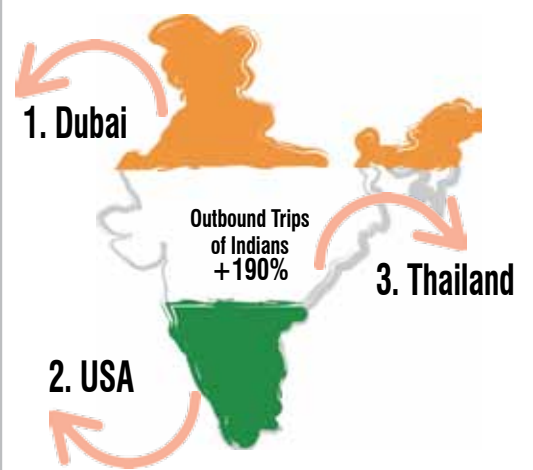
Over 90 per cent of the trips are booked in advance over the Internet via different booking sites or agencies. Travel agency bookings make up a large percentage. Their share is over 40 per cent, above the global average and did not reduce even during travel restrictions. Indians spent 235 euros per person, which covered all expenses. Even in 2019, there were barely any change and the expenses by Indians remained stable. Short trips covered 40 per cent of Indian outbound travel.

### MICE and holiday trips main drivers

The main driver of motivation for

## Outbound Travel Market India Top one on the Asian continent in 2022

### Top destinations in 2022



Indians was a holiday abroad in 2022. According to the report, Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) and holiday trips have a share of 70 per cent and 64 per cent of the total market share respectively, followed by round trips, which account for around 30 per cent. City breaks have a share of 26 per cent, while business and other private trips have a 10 per cent contribution.

- ❖ Holiday trips registered – 64 per cent of the market share
- ❖ Business Trips and other private trips – 10 per cent
- ❖ Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) – 70 per cent
- ❖ Round Trips (sun, beach holidays) – 30 per cent
- ❖ City Breaks – 26 per cent

Both the round trips and city breaks significantly boosted than the previous year resulting in its contribution to the growth of India's outbound travel.

Internationale Tourismus Börse (ITB) India will serve as a portal for travellers in India. The international players gain access to one of the leading and fastest-growing markets in Asia, India. The Indian edition of ITB has debuted from 26–28 April. It took place virtually for the last two years, and ITB India has celebrated its in-person debut.

As far as the trips to India are concerned, developments in 2022 were at 150 per cent, which resulted in India being the third most popular destination in Asia. The primary source market for India was the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and the United Arab Emirates.

The Indian market has DPI (70), which is the highest in Asia. It shows travelling abroad is extremely enjoyed by Indians. With people's eagerness to travel and discover, it will furthermore recover this year.

## Travel purpose of Indians in 2022

### Holiday trips

64%



### Business trips

25%



### VFR trips

11%



## Holiday types in 2022

### Touring

29%



### City trips

26%



### Sun & Beach holiday

21%



▲ Above average performance in 2022 compared with 2021  
▼ Below average performance in 2022 compared with 2021  
Source: World Travel Monitor, 2022 IPK International



# Minar Group hosted travel agents get-together in Mumbai



“We are excited to expand our B2B network in Mumbai and continue to provide exceptional service to our clients and partners,” said Mr. HS Duggal, Managing Director of Minar Group. With their extensive experience and commitment to excellence, Minar Group is poised to continue driving success for Air Peace airlines in the Indian market and beyond.

The event was well attended by the industry's who & who's and reinforced Minar Group's commitment to providing innovative and personalized solutions to airline and travel partners in India. With their strong partnership with Air Peace, Minar Group is well-positioned to capture the growing demand for travel between India and Nigeria.

During the event, Minar Group showcased their extensive network of Aviation, Travel and Tourism services. They also highlighted their 24/7 customer support for airline partners looking to expand their business. Guests also had the opportunity to interact with Air Peace representatives and learn more about the airline's services and routes.



Minar Group, a leading Aviation, Travel and Tourism company in India, recently organized a successful event in Mumbai to expand its B2B network and showcase Air Peace Airlines. The event was held at the prestigious Leela Mumbai and was well attended by Mumbai's top agents.

Minar Group has partnered with Air Peace as their exclusive General Sales Agent (GSA) in India. Air Peace operates direct flights from Mumbai to Lagos, with a wide body B-777 aircraft making it a comfortable travel choice for travellers in just 9 hours.



Our team with Awardees



Networking session





Nepal's tourism rebounds; 28% Indians among 3.2 lakh air tourist arrivals in country

With 235 million tourists in Q1 2023, global footfall reach 80% of pre-pandemic levels

84% Indian travellers interested to travel in next six months against 45% in 2019

Varanasi witnesses 10X increase in footfall compared to pre-COVID levels: Arvind Singh

With capacity being pulled out after Go First, we will see airfares rise: TAFI

Travel trade can guide clients to booking sustainable experiences in Switzerland

Sarovar Hotels & Resorts partners with Singapore Airlines Group

IHCL signs 160-key Vivanta Hotel in Gurugram

Brand Storii by ITC Hotels continues to grow as it signs three more properties pan-India

# IATO all set for next convention

The new IATO team discussed important issues, including the demand over SEIS, with its members at a luncheon meeting in New Delhi recently. It was announced that the 38<sup>th</sup> IATO Convention will be held from 29 September to 2 October at Sambhaji Nagar in Maharashtra.



Nisha Verma

The Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) recently held its luncheon meeting at The Park, New Delhi, where **Rajiv Mehra**, President, IATO, announced that their meeting with Union Minister Piyush Goyal on the issue of SEIS did not bear fruit. On this occasion, he also revealed the dates for upcoming convention of the association in Maharashtra.



Rajiv Mehra  
President, IATO

## Convention preps

Mehra announced that the 38<sup>th</sup> IATO Convention will take place from 29 September to 2 October at Sambhaji Nagar, Maharashtra. "On 29 September, there will be inauguration in the evening. There will be business sessions on 30 September and 1 October, and post-convention tours will begin from 2 October. While there are not many post tours that can be offered in that area, but we are creating interesting itineraries of what is there. We are almost close to finalising the hotels. Apart from that, Aurangabad or Sambhaji

Nagar, as it is known now, has two airports—Shirdi, which is 40 km away and Aurangabad, which is in the city. Those who let us know in advance of arriving in Shirdi, we will provide them transport from there, which we have decided in the executive committee," he said.

## What after SEIS?

Mehra informed that Goyal clearly said SEIS is finished and will never come back. "It is very disappoint-

ing for us because we were using that money for promotions. However, we have written to the Honourable Prime Minister that if you cannot reinstate SEIS, please give us the money in some other form, so that we can do our overseas promotions. With that, the country will get foreign exchange and employment. The government has admitted that inbound tourism has still not revived. Still, no one is willing to listen," he argued.

"We need to compete. But it becomes difficult as the government has withdrawn marketing and promotion support in foreign countries. Ended SEIS, not given any alternative benefit, GST is as high as 20-23 per cent without any input tax credit, whereas neighbouring countries are charging 6-8 per cent. To attract tourists, we need to holistically look at all these issues. As regards the argument of revenue loss, it would be made up more than 100 times, as it has a positive multiplier impact on the overall economy," he explained.

Mehra believes that the PM had once read his email earlier, and he will again do the same. "He is the only person who will understand us and revert," he claimed.

## MOT registration

Many members at the luncheon raised the issue of not being able to register easily on MOT's NIDHI por-



**We have written to the PM if you cannot reinstate SEIS, please give us the money in some other form, so that we can do our overseas promotions**

tal. Speaking on the same, he said, "Firstly when the NIDHI Portal was rolled in, there was some problem of filling up details and get registered. However, we spoke to MOT and

finally in February they agreed that we need to only send an email to the NIDHI Portal and those who are already registered and active members, their data will be automatically transferred to the NIDHI Portal. This has started and hence it's become easy for us. The members get the password and they can start using it. There are hardly any delays now, and in case of any delay members can contact IATO secretariat and we will help them out."

## Overseas promotions

Another issue at hand was international promotions after closing down of overseas tourism offices. Mehra said they are extending their help to embassies for the same. "IATO is now involved with the embassies, as more than 60 embassies are in touch with us already for information and details. We are providing them with all kinds of data as per their requirement. I and Vice President Ravi Gosain have been addressing various meeting being held with the tour operators in the embassies," he said. 🐦

# Odisha Tourism gets new wings

The recent launch of direct flights from Bhubaneswar to Bangkok and Singapore has ignited enthusiasm among local travel agents and hoteliers, as it presents a game-changing opportunity for them. The increased connectivity is expected to have a transformative impact on tourism, businesses, and the overall economy of the Indian state.



Janice Alyosius

Odisha is poised to become the next big outbound market in India. The recent introduction of direct flights from Bhubaneswar to Bangkok and Singapore has raised excitement among travel agents and hoteliers in the state. These new flight connections are expected to have a profound impact on tourism, businesses, and the overall economy of Odisha.

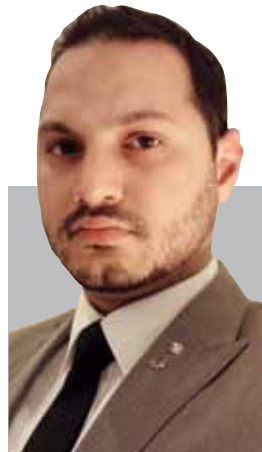
Emphasizing the importance of direct flights to Singapore and Bangkok from Odisha, **JK Mohanty**, CMD, Swosti Group and Chairman, Hotel & Restaurant Association of Odisha, said, "The enhanced connectivity will not only make it more convenient for Prabasi Odias (Non-Resident Odias) to visit their home state, but also attract foreign tourists and investors." He added, "The direct flights will give a much-needed boost to Odisha tourism, increase foreign tour-



JK Mohanty  
CMD, Swosti Group and Chairman, Hotel & Restaurant Association of Odisha



Debjit Dutta  
Director & CEO, Impression Tourism Services



Bjorn Noel DeNiese  
Managing Director, Mayfair Elixir Private Limited



Debasish Mahapatraa  
Managing Director, K7 Holidays & Travels

ist footfall, and contribute to the state's revenue through foreign exchange earnings." The availability of direct flights is a game-changer for the travel agents in Odisha. **Debjit Dutta**, Director & CEO, Impression Tourism Services, also expects a significant impact on incoming tourism to Odisha and the surrounding re-

gions. "With improved connectivity, the destination becomes more accessible to visitors from the Asia Pacific region, opening up new markets and business opportunities. Regional tour operators will benefit greatly from the increased tourism traffic and support provided by the direct flights," he shared. The flights

will also benefit hoteliers and accommodation providers in Odisha. **Bjorn Noel DeNiese**, Managing Director, Mayfair Elixir, said that their hotels already receive business from Singapore and Bangkok. "With the new flights, the religious destination of Puri is likely to experience an increase in footfall. Additionally, the Buddhist

circuit of Odisha will attract more visitors, further boosting the hospitality sector," he said.

Industry players have already started preparing for the future. Swosti Group is actively working on aggressive marketing plans and organizing roadshows in Singapore and Bangkok to

attract inbound tourism to Odisha. They have also developed specialized travel packages and itineraries targeting travellers from Bhubaneswar interested in visiting Bangkok, Singapore, and Dubai. DeNiese said that their company has plans to tap into the Southeast Asian markets by working closely with their partners in Bangkok and Singapore.

**Debasish Mahapatraa**, Managing Director, K7 Holidays & Travels, acknowledges the proactive efforts of the state and central governments in improving air connectivity. "Our company has already launched group tour packages for Dubai, Singapore, and Thailand. We are ready to handle groups and individuals in the inbound segment and are exploring opportunities for student group exposure visits," he said, adding that K7 Holidays & Travels is also showcasing new flagship products such as Experience Tourism and Rural Tourism. 🐦



# ‘India lucrative market for us’

India is looking like a lucrative market right now, specially for its luxury travellers. With China still being pretty much closed, which used to be one of the biggest luxury spenders internationally, today the focus is on India, says Edgar Lacker, Chief Executive Officer, Aviareps.



Hazel Jain

Look at the sheer size of the population in India, it having surpassed China recently, says **Edgar Lacker**, CEO, Aviareps. “Assuming that 10 per cent of that is currently travelling, the volume is simply massive. The potential of India as a source market for other destinations is enormous and will only grow in the next few years. India is looking like a very lucrative market right now, specially for its luxury travellers. With China still being pretty much closed, which used to be one of the biggest luxury spenders globally, today



**The potential of India as a source market for other destinations is enormous and will only grow in the next few years (due to population size)**

the focus is on India. You have so much wealth, and destinations do need to look for alternatives. I have seen Indian travellers in many countries, and they are looking for distinctive experiences and luxury,” he exclaims.

Lacker was in India recently to meet partners of Aviareps. “Now that all restrictions have been lifted, and slowly airline capacity is returning to pre-COVID levels, you see the capacity being added to and from India – because there is demand,” he adds.

#### Travel agents still vital

Travel agents play a significant role for the industry, he says. “I believe COVID did a lot in contributing to this by resurrecting them with many travellers experiencing hardships, and what it means to be lost while travelling. At times when flights got cancelled abruptly or more restrictions were put in place during the lockdowns, travel agents were still around to assist and support clients and recommend them what to do. There is a huge value that travel agents bring to the table even today, especially specialised travel agents focusing on luxury segment, focusing on niche destinations,” Lacker adds.

Then again, it depends on the segment and the destination. “For

instance, it comes to the upmarket segment, travel agents will always play a significant role here. If it's just, say for instance, a point-to-point trip, online business is definitely taking the lead. In fact, India is a role model market when it comes to point-to-point traffic. But travel agents and tour operators will always remain valuable,” Lacker says.

#### UNWTO partnership

UNWTO will work with its affiliate member Aviareps to offer grants for destination marketing and research services to five countries in Europe. “UNWTO puts destinations on the map which may not have the budget to attract visitors. It will only choose destinations that provide sustainable tourism. The first project will be for Bulgaria. Today,

you cannot market a destination without the sustainable tourism aspect,” Lacker says.

Under this partnership, Aviareps will provide UNWTO member states with destination marketing and research grants on a pro bono basis to boost tourism in selected countries. Recipients of this grant will be provided in-depth interna-

tional travel trade and consumer research spanning multiple key markets. The research will be coupled with deep-dive analysis into the destination's current positioning and perceptions in each market, along with opportunities and areas of focus to expand travel demand from each. UNWTO will choose the beneficiaries of the grants. ➔



**Edgar Lacker**  
CEO  
Aviareps



## Loved roomsXML? You'll love Stuba even more!



You may not think that you are familiar with the Stuba brand, but we are excited to tell you that we were formerly known as roomsXML.

Our website, [stuba.com](https://stuba.com) has all the great features you loved from roomsXML, and is even better! With 32 years' experience, we know hotels. It's no surprise that we have won numerous awards over the years.

Our curated hotels for travel agents are specifically designed to help you make a booking quickly and efficiently to boost your profits and your reputation with your customers. It may even make you an expert in destinations that you may not be overly familiar with.

**Stuba. Curated hotels for travel agents.**

**SCAN TO SIGN UP**



[in.sales@stuba.com](mailto:in.sales@stuba.com)

# 'Go First issue will impact tourism'



**Rajiv Mehra**  
President  
IATO

“Go First airline going bankrupt and cancelling its flights will have a very big impact on the tourism industry. Out of 54, 27 aircraft of Go First were already grounded and 27 more have been grounded. The fares have gone very high in all sectors. That will hit the industry, especially those who have already booked their tours, and will now have to book flights at a much higher fare. In the long run it will dampen the tourism industry. Go First is saying that we will refund the money from the source it had come. However, for tour operators, the source is their accounts with the airlines, especially with the LCCs. If the money is credited to that account, it will be of no use, unless it is credited to our bank accounts, which these people are not doing.”



**EM Najeeb**  
Chairman  
ATE Group of Companies

“The service factor will be positive and new routes will be explored. Air India has made one of the biggest aircraft orders in aviation history, purchasing 470 new planes from Boeing and Airbus. With Go Air bankruptcy pressure will be on the existing airlines for seats and this may see prices going northwards. RCS UDAN will enhance last mile connectivity to a sizeable extent. 59 new routes for tourism are envisaged under the UDAN scheme. Around 26 routes are awarded for Buddhist Circuit. There is immense potential for new airlines in the Indian market as domestic tourism has reached pre-COVID level and India has opened inbound tourism, gaining the lost ground. The industry is expected to finally reach profit in 2023 – the first time since COVID-19 pandemic.”



**PP Khanna**  
President  
ADTOI

“The RCS UDAN scheme was introduced to make air travel accessible to public. However, it has faced several challenges and has not been as successful as anticipated. One major drawback is the inadequate readiness of many airports, which hampers the scheme's effectiveness. The expected fares from local individuals are not economically feasible, posing another hurdle. Although air travel has become more affordable, the growing number of passengers has resulted in increased air traffic, leading to the natural entry of new airlines, which provide competition and choice. However, the surge in air traffic has also brought forth frequent reports of incidents during flights, posing a significant concern for passenger safety. Moreover, there are no fare caps in place.”



**J K Mohanty**  
Chairman – Hotel & Restaurant Association of Odisha and Chairman – IATO, Eastern Region

“India's aviation potential has been boosted by the UDAN scheme. It has opened regional travel to many parts of the country that were previously inaccessible due to the lack of airports. However, more infrastructure is required for the successful implementation of the scheme across the country. India has a huge aviation market with large untapped potential. There is a need for continuous support from the Central as well as State Government through appropriate policy interventions. This will benefit domestic economy, as well as enhance the global footprint of India's aviation sector. The potential for new airlines in India is high. India is a rapidly growing economy and is expected to become world's third-largest aviation market in the next few years.”



**Manoj Saraf**  
Managing Director  
Gainwell Travel & Leisure

“A country of the size of India with a population of 1.4 billion people requires a lot more connectivity and flights. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, aviation in India has grown at a pace of more than 10 per cent per annum and the number of airports has doubled from 70 to 140 in less than 9 years. There is definitely room for more regional and national airlines, provided they operate with a clear vision and sound management. The bankruptcy of Go First is a repeat of Jet Airways, Kingfisher Airways, Modiluft, East West Airlines, Sahara, Damania Airways, Archana Airways and several other airlines, which have folded up in the last two decades. India is seeing the emergence of two large camps Air India + Vistara + Air Asia on one side and IndiGo on the other side.”



**Manvi Hooda**  
Practice Lead – Consulting and Research, CAPA India

“Despite falling short of the target in 2022 and the likelihood of missing the 2027 goal, the potential for growth under RCS remains substantial. The UDAN scheme has encountered some challenges including low utilization of the awarded routes. However, as it approaches completion in 2026 and comes up for review, a critical assessment is needed to determine if it indeed achieved its set objective along with the challenges such as utilisation, airline's financial viability, etc, that still exist despite the scheme. In CAPA India's view, India has a unique regional air connectivity framework with two policies, RCS and RDG, aiming to serve the same objective of regional air connectivity. An integrated and robust policy framework is required to achieve the connectivity objectives.”



**Pradeep Shetty**  
President, Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI)

“The RCS UDAN scheme will help tourists travel to new destinations and explore different parts of the country. For instance, the first direct flight along the Shillong–Dibrugarh route was launched under this scheme. The travel market in India was worth \$75 billion in FY20 and is projected to cross \$125 billion by FY27. The RCS UDAN scheme paved the way for the new airlines in the budget segment in the Indian aviation market. Entry of new airline carriers including Akasa, has generated a lot of interest as it aims to differentiate itself by providing a superior customer experience. While it is still early to determine how the new-age carriers will fare, there is tremendous potential to succeed. The market is growing rapidly and the demand for air travel is expected to only increase.”



**K Pandian**  
Chairman – IATO Tamil Nadu, Andaman & Nicobar and Puducherry Chapter

“The UDAN scheme was excellent and many flights got introduced, especially for the south. It's working very well. I don't think any flight is operating less than 95 per cent in the last eight months and it's going to continue for this. They are also making good business. Some more routes have been requested. I have requested IndiGo to consider some new sectors like Cochin to Trichy, Trichy to Tirupati. When it comes to new airlines, I believe that they could sustain if they follow ethical business. Potential is growing. The Indian aviation industry, in the next 5 years, before Air 2030, should grow minimum 50 percent from wherever it is now. If any new airline comes, they can take a share of 5-10 per cent. However, those with good service will sustain.”



**Ravi Gosain**  
Vice President  
IATO

“The best thing that the Civil Aviation Ministry did was RCS UDAN because they have connected smaller cities into the network. It will benefit not only the domestic passengers, but tourists as well. In this scheme, half of the seats are guaranteed by the govt, so if they don't get the load, then the govt pays for their seat. I have recently seen that there will be 500 more sectors or flights under this scheme. It's a very good step from the govt. Indian aviation is one of the fastest growing sectors and with more airlines coming up as well as the merger of the biggest airline Air India & Vistara, it will give a lot of opportunities for many new airlines to come. Passenger load is increasing day-by-day. Hence, in future as well, it is going to be good for the industry.”



**Deepak Bhatnagar**  
Managing Director  
Aamantaran Travel Company

“RCS UDAN is a good scheme but until we open our skies it is going to benefit India. We still have a reciprocal kind of situation. I heard a senior airline professional saying that we should not allow international airlines, which is unfair. We are investing so much money in creating new airports, which must be utilised. Hence, we should have open sky policy and allow more airlines and encourage them to start operations into India. The Indian aviation market is domestically and internationally growing y-o-y. I think all of them have a very bright future. Obviously, they need to be more focused and they need to support the tourism trade segment, which will give them high results. I think any kind of new route they would like to introduce, we could support them with new itineraries.”



**Manoj Kumar Matta**  
Director  
Oriental Vacations & Journeys

“See, of course, the UDAN Scheme has been successful to a great extent. But all these airlines are commercial ventures. They need to look at revenue maximization and see how much they are getting back. Recently, IATO wrote Air India about Khajuraho and Aurangabad flights, but they denied that they cannot restart the flights because as they don't have yield. The way Air India, which is merging with Vistara, are expanding their fleet, it will help us. Akasa has been launched and are doing well. Vistara had a great career and now with Air India coming under TATA, Vistara and SAI and Air Asia in the same group, people will have more connectivity. This would allow people to book an entire sector with only one PNR, which was not covered earlier.”



**Valmiki Harikishan**  
Managing Director  
Valmiki Travel & Tourism Solutions

“UDAN Scheme has benefitted a diverse set of stakeholders. Passengers have got the benefits of air connectivity; airlines have received concessions for operating regional routes, and unserved regions have received the direct & indirect benefits of air connectivity for their economic development. Notheast has got more focus. The govt is targeting to operationalise 1000 routes and 50 additional airports, heliports, and water aerodromes soon under UDAN 5.0 launch. Akasa Air has come out with a very clear roadmap, fares not too high, and at the same time not too low maintaining moderate and filling the aircrafts. Post-COVID potential of travellers has increased just for example Post-COVID figures for 2022-23 is 97 per cent passenger traffic recovery at GMR Hyderabad Airport.”

Contd on page 23 ▶



# Helping agents sell right hotels

Stuba has been at the forefront of introducing new travel agent-friendly features that have become trendsetters and its new curated approach is about match-making the right set of hotels to the right set of agents, says Yusuf Diwan, Head of Sales, MiddleEast and Asia, Stuba.



TT Bureau

## How has Stuba innovated to bring in a new era in trade-only accommodation booking?

Recognising and responding to the changing needs and challenges of travel trade partners has always been our top priority and Stuba has always been at the

ger about the numbers game for bed banks. We can all boast how many thousands or million plus hotels there are in the inventory, but the reality is that puts an extra burden on the travel consultant to research, sift through and recommend to the end customer. For too long, we've acted as a hotel warehouse with too many properties to work your way through, taking up

precious time that could be used for the next booking.

Our new curated approach is about match-making the right set of hotels to the right set of agents. As with daily life, a 'one size fits all' route no longer works, particularly when selecting a hotel as customers' demands have become more discerning. Our state-of-the-art

technology uses clever predictive analytics and algorithms to curate a selection of hotels for travel agents.

## What is the importance of integrating new and cutting-edge technology to stay relevant and offer seamless service?

Today's travellers are very well-informed and challenge the travel consultant with information that

they have already researched. It's important that we empower travel agents so that they are confident in dealing with their customers.

## What kind of potential do you see in the Indian market?

We were well known in the Indian market as roomsXML, and we were popular with agents for their accommodation requirements.



Yusuf Diwan  
Head of Sales  
Middle East and Asia, Stuba

**It is imperative that travel agents embrace technology that will increase operational efficiency and improve productivity**

forefront of introducing new travel agent-friendly features that have become trendsetters. It's no lon-

## Uganda Airlines' Mumbai-Entebbe direct flights soon

Uganda Airlines the national carrier of the Republic of Uganda plans to launch direct flights connecting Mumbai to Entebbe. The airline has acquired the brand-new Airbus A330Neo aircrafts which will fly to Mumbai. Uganda Airlines connects the major airport in East and South Africa from



its hub in Entebbe. This will be a boon for Indian and African travelers giving them more options, better and smoother connectivity. Uganda Airlines has appointed Minar Group, as their GSA and have entrusted them to grow their business interest in India. Minar has an international presence in 32 countries, with inroads in the markets of Latin & North America, Europe and Asia. It is one of the biggest Aviation Services and DMCs in the country. It has 16 offices in India and nine offices overseas and is the GSA for eight airlines.



**There are bed banks,  
and then there's Stuba.  
The difference is curated.**



Ever thought your search listing has thrown up some irrelevant results. Not anymore – with Stuba, our clever tech will offer hotels based on your previous searches and lifestyle choices. The more you use them, the more meaningful the suggestions.

If you haven't heard, Stuba used to be roomsXML! With over 32 years' experience, we know hotels and our curated hotels will cut down on the amount of time you spend every week on hotel searches.

Now it's over to you.

**Stuba. Curated hotels for travel agents.**

**SCAN TO SIGN UP**



[in.sales@stuba.com](mailto:in.sales@stuba.com)




# Exclusive networking night in Desert

Rezlive.com, **TRAVTALK** & Turning Point hosted a unique Red Carpet Desert Networking Event on 2 May in Dubai on the sidelines of ATM at Camp - Al Awir. Attended by over 350 industry professionals from more than 20 countries, this spectacular event included an afternoon of dune bashing, followed by a sumptuous dinner while relishing stunning cultural performances.





# Experiences not limited to luxury

Alejandro De La Osa, CEO, Europamundo Vacations, shares with  the company's achievements in developing tours in Saudi Arabia and their strategy for the India market. Ensuring unique experiences to travellers and offering a full guarantee to partners is key to growth, he says.



Janice Alyosius

Leading travel company Europamundo Vacations has been chosen by Saudi Arabia to develop tours in the country. Proudly announcing this achievement, **Alejandro De La Osa**, CEO, Europamundo Vacations, reveals the company's strategy for the Indian market and how it plans to expand its offerings.

## Experiences are not just about luxury

When it comes to offering experiences, it is not just about luxury. Simple experiences can also be a highlight for travellers, Osa says. "When discussing travel experiences, it's important to avoid the mistake of assuming that they are solely related to luxury. For example, having a coffee at a traditional bar in a small village in the middle of Spain can be a memorable experience. We have included such experiences in many of our tours over the past two decades, and it's crucial not to overlook them," he adds.

## Expansion plans for India

Osa considers the India market as a strategic one for Europamundo Vacations. He says the company has been working with distributors and the brand

**Our distributors (in India) have been doing an outstanding job, and the Europamundo Vacations brand has gained a lot of visibility**

has been spreading rapidly. The plan for this year is to continue supporting the distributors and look for new ways to grow. The company has completed integration with MakeMyTrip, one of the biggest OTA in the market. "The Indian market is a crucial one for us. Our distributors have been doing an outstanding job, and the Europamundo Vacations brand has gained a lot of visibility. We have been witnessing excellent numbers in the previous season, and our focus this year is to continue supporting all our customers and finding new ways to expand further," he shares.

## Full guarantee to partners

Osa believes that providing a full guarantee to partners is the best incentive to offer them. "Our full guarantee to partners is the first tool we provide to tour operators and travel agents in India. This is an essential incentive that we offer them. It assures them that if they sell a single passenger of Europamundo, we will operate the tour.

This gives the partners a sense of security and confidence in selling the tours," he says. Additionally, the company offers good commission rates and incentives for the partners.


## Continuing the growth

Osa says, "As the new CEO of Europamundo, I may have a new role, but I'm not a stranger to the

company. It's important that we maintain the momentum and direction that we have been following for many years. By continuing on this path, we can ensure continued growth and success worldwide" he says.

## Post-COVID travel trends

Osa shared some insights into the post-COVID travel trends. He

said that he noticed that people are now eager to turn their travel dreams into reality as soon as possible. "The pandemic has changed people's mindset and made them want to travel to destinations they had only dreamt of before. Europamundo Vacations has seen a significant increase in demand for long-distance destinations," he shared. 



**Alejandro De La Osa**  
CEO  
Europamundo Vacations



## Anticipate the hotel that your customer is looking for. Quickly.



Designed to help you make a booking quickly and efficiently to boost your profits and your reputation with your customers. Welcome to curated hotels.

If you haven't heard, Stuba used to be roomsXML! With over 32 years' experience, we know hotels and our curated hotels will cut down on the amount of time you spend every week on hotel searches.

**Stuba. Curated hotels for travel agents.**

### SCAN TO SIGN UP

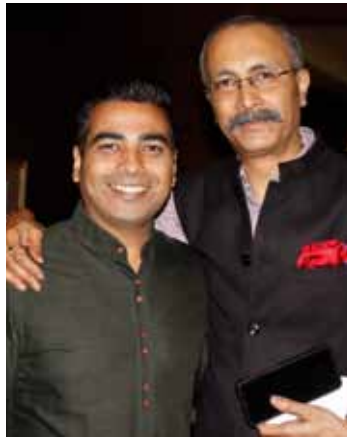


[in.sales@stuba.com](mailto:in.sales@stuba.com)



# Très ignites experiential tourism

Très 2023, a two-day international trade event organized recently at Andaz Delhi, aimed at boosting experiential tourism. The 5<sup>th</sup> edition of Très featured 60 of the region's most exceptional boutique hotels, retreats, lodges, and camps, and innovative travel concepts in the luxury and mindful tourism segment.





# A centre of sustainability & wellness

Grape County Eco-Resort, a boutique resort, offers guests a harmonious coexistence with nature and unforgettable holiday experiences in a sustainable setting. The resort's commitment to environmental conservation, sustainable tourism, and wellness practices is evident in its initiatives.



Janice Alyosius

**G**rape County Eco-Resort, established in December 2017, is a boutique resort located on 20 acres of land adjacent to a 200-acre biodiversity park and 2,000-acre of reserved forest land. This eco-resort is dedicated to providing a harmonious coexistence with nature and offers unforgettable holiday experiences in a vibrant and sustainable setting. **Tejas Chavan**, Director, Grape County Eco-Resort emphasized the resort's commitment to environmental conservation, sustainable tourism, and wellness practices.

## Commitment to sustainability

The resort stands at the forefront of environmental conservation and sustainability with a range of initiatives. The resort has created three man-made lakes, ponds, and wells, enabling the harvesting of rainwater with a capacity of nearly 21 crore litres. This water is utilized



**The resort has created three man-made lakes, ponds, and wells, enabling the harvesting of rainwater with a capacity of nearly 21 crore litres**

for watering the plants, improving groundwater levels, and benefiting the flourishing flora and fauna. The lakes have become havens for migrating birds and thriving ecosystems for various fish species. Additionally, the resort harnesses solar energy through the installation of tracker panels, generating significant savings in electricity bills. Vermicomposting, seedball plantation, and large-scale plantation drives further demonstrate the resort's commitment to sustainability and environmental preservation. The resort also implements various eco-friendly practices, such as serving filtered water in glass bottles, using electric golf carts for transportation, and utilizing herbal and natural products in reusable containers shared Chavan.

## Integrating wellness practices

The resort offers guests the opportunity to embrace wellness practices and connect with nature. Outdoor activities such as trekking,

fishing, kayaking, nature trails, and stargazing allow guests to immerse themselves in nature and find inner peace, shared Chavan. "The resort also features the Viveda Wellness Retreat, an independent wellness centre that promotes healthy living with ancient knowledge of wellness and health. The Earth Spa at the resort offers natural and organic treatments, using freshly made in-

gredients such as masks and face packs," he added.


## Eco-friendly design elements

As an environmentally conscious company, Grape County Eco-Resort prioritizes sustainable construction practices. The resort minimizes disturbance to natural contours during construction, opting for Pozzolana Portland Cement (PPC) instead of

Ordinary Portland Cement (OPC), which utilizes natural and industrial waste, Chavan said.

## Involving local community

The resort actively supports the rural community by providing employment opportunities and training. "The resort equips employees with essential skills and engages local farmers for the cul-

tivation of fruits and vegetables. With a significant proportion of the staff being locals, the resort strengthens the livelihood of nearby villages. Moreover, the resort sources essential items from local farmers and vendors within a 10 km periphery, supporting the growth of the local economy and reducing its carbon footprint," shared Chavan. 



**Tejas Chavan**  
Director  
Grape County Eco-Resort



## Finally, you've found the hotel your customer wanted on the 17th page. With Stuba it shows up first!



Ever thought about how much time you spend each week on accommodation searches? When faced with thousands of results, it can be time-consuming. Our new curated listings reduce your search time! Let Stuba do the hard work for you.

If you haven't heard, Stuba used to be roomsXML! With over 32 years' experience, we know hotels and our curated hotels will cut down on the amount of time you spend every week on hotel searches.

**Stuba. Curated hotels for travel agents.**

**SCAN TO SIGN UP**



[in.sales@stuba.com](mailto:in.sales@stuba.com)



# Paris showcases diverse attractions

Atout France and Visit Paris Region, in partnership with Easy-Van and Air France, organised a two-day familiarization tour for the Indian tour operators to Paris. The goal was to highlight Paris' diverse appeal and create a market for Indian associates to interact and create travel packages to promote the city's best products among Indian tourists.

Poonam Akolia

The world's top tourist destination, Paris, and the region are constantly innovating their touristic offering to cater to current visitor trends. A recent familiarization tour to Paris, part of Rendez vous en France, highlighted Paris and its recent attractions. The tour began with a memorable encounter at the Musée Grévin, home to more than 200 wax figures of world-famous celebrities, including Mahatma Gandhi.

A site inspection of Le Meridien, Etoile, a hospitality partner for the tour, was also in the itinerary. While describing the hotel's amenities for leisure and MICE travel, **Marianne Thioly**, Director, Sales & Marketing, Le Meridien Etoile, said, "We really want to develop the Indian market, especially the Incentive Indian market. Indeed, as we have a huge number of rooms (and twin rooms) and meeting facilities, and the possibility of organizing Indian catering in line with Indian expectations for this



**Marianne Thioly**  
Director, Sales & Marketing  
Le Meridien Etoile

kind of event. We can receive huge groups as we have handled MICE groups in the past, and can organize a nice experience for the guests with an Indian touch." The evening concluded with a show at the famous Parisian cabaret, Crazy Horse.

The second day began with an immersive visit of the Hotel de la Marine, a well-known landmark

on the Place de la Concorde, followed by a hearty lunch at the Grand Café Capucines, which included interesting interactions with Parisian suppliers.

A majority of tour operators had an exhilarating experience at Fly-View 360, and called it as their "most exciting" experience.

**Anoop Kanuga**, Director, Bathija



**Anoop Kanuga**  
Director  
Bathija Travels



**Honey Kapoor**  
Director  
My Travel Box

Travels, said, "Post-Fam, I was thoroughly impressed with the FlyView 360 product and it will definitely be on my must-do list."

**Honey Kapoor**, Director, My Travel Box, said, "Paris is a destination that you will never tire of visiting. There are a lot of historical monuments and vintage palaces, art museums, and stylish shopping hubs. However, FlyView Paris

was one of the experiences that I enjoyed the most with its unique bird's eye discovery of France."

The day ended with a refined dinner at the trendy Madame Brasserie restaurant located on the first floor of the Eiffel Tower. An exclusive behind the scenes visit of the Eiffel Tower was a lifetime experience for all the delegates.

**Farida**



**Farida Attarwala**  
Director  
Butterflyers Holidays



**Rajiv Naidu**  
General Manager  
South-Leisure Travel (outbound), SOTC

**Attarwala**, Director, Butterflyers Holidays, said, "The visit to Hotel La Marine with its exquisite display was new for me. The behind the scenes visit of the Eiffel Tower was a fascinating experience".

**Rajiv Naidu**, General Manager South-Leisure Travel (outbound), SOTC, said, "France is one of the most desired destinations among Indians in Europe."

## A FAST approach to tourism

Foundation for Aviation & Sustainable Tourism (FAST) recently organised a seminar on 'India's G-20 Presidency: A Golden Opportunity for India Tourism'. The chief guest, Shripad Yesso Naik, Minister of State for Tourism, addressed the seminar online, attended by several senior executives from tourism and hospitality industry. Arvind Singh, Secretary, Tourism, was the Guest of Honour.





# Offering a luxe touch to inbound

Très 2023, held recently at Andaz Delhi, showcased 60 outstanding boutique hotels, retreats, lodges, and camps. The two-day event drew more than 50 overseas travel operators from the UK, France, Australia, and the USA. **TRAVELTALK** spoke to travel agents to understand what their clients are looking for, and hotels to learn about their latest offerings.



Janice Alyosius

Très 2023, a B2B event held recently at Andaz Delhi, revealed that hotels are adapting to the changing needs of travellers by introducing new offerings and products. The event highlighted that luxury and high-end properties, personalized services, and unique experiences are in high demand.



**Dr. Claudia Behlert**  
African and Indian Wildlife, Culture and Conservation Specialist, Dakteri Travel GmbH

tion. Samachu is also a popular destination, with many travellers staying for five days," Wethmar said. She also mentioned that she wants to include in her portfolio a river cruise and a spa that she experienced in Rishikesh.

**Dr. Claudia Behlert**, African and Indian Wildlife, Culture and Conservation Specialist, Dakteri Travel GmbH, said, "International travellers planning a trip to India are looking for authentic experiences that allow them to explore the country's nature, history, and culture. The preferences of each

range of experiences, and it may take multiple trips to fully explore the country."

As a luxury holiday designer for all of India, **Joanna Lester George**, Founder and Director, Koko India Luxury Travels, shared her insights on what international travellers are looking for when planning their trip to India. "With the pandemic making people realize that they should fulfil their travel dreams sooner, India has become a popular bucket list destination. The country has much to offer in terms of wellness, from luxury retreats to peaceful countryside getaways. India's diverse geography, including rivers, lakes, deserts, and mountains, has something for everyone," George shared.

She added, "Rajasthan is always a popular destination as it represents the sensory overload and colourful culture of India, but every state has its own unique and magical experience to offer." George believes that



**Stanzin Jigmed Namgyal**  
Director  
Stok Palace Heritage Hotel

with exceptional and unforgettable experiences.

**Stanzin Jigmed Namgyal**, Director, Stok Palace Heritage Hotel, takes pride in offering a unique and memorable experience for their guests. As the only heritage property in Ladakh, they provide a one-of-a-kind stay that combines history, culture, and luxury. Currently, they offer five beautifully appointed rooms within the main property, and guests can enjoy a variety of experiences during their stay, such as traditional Ladakhi cooking classes and guided tours of nearby monasteries and cultural landmarks. In addition to their main property, they also offer their



**Jean Wethmar**  
Executive Director  
Glam Girls Lux Travels

**International travellers planning a trip to India are looking for authentic experiences that allow them to explore its nature, history, and culture**



**Joanna Lester George**  
Founder and Director  
Koko India Luxury Travels

**With COVID making people realize that they should fulfil their travel dreams sooner, India has become a popular bucket list destination**

traveller may vary, with some being interested in wildlife, rural experiences, heritage, or wellness. As a sustainable company, we prefer small owner-run hotels that offer an authentic experience of the country."

She added, "When it comes to popular Indian destinations among international travellers, Rajasthan and Kerala are the most well-known due to their rich culture and natural heritage. However, there are many other interesting states and cities to explore, such as Lucknow, Kolkata, and Ladakh. Travellers also consider exploring individual states, as they each offer a unique experience. India offers a diverse



**Aashima Bhalla**  
Brand Communication and Marketing Manager, Pugdundee Safaris

**New products and experiences demonstrate the dedication to provide guests with exceptional and unforgettable experience**

as time passes, more and more interesting places outside of the Golden Triangle will be discovered. George enjoys meeting new people and finding places that offer something different, visionary, and progressive. She appreciates India's history and the unprecedented experiences it

offers and is interested in seeing how the country is moving forward after COVID.

Despite the challenges resulting from the pandemic, Pugdundee Safaris has managed to strengthen their business and broaden their product offerings. **Aashima Bhalla**, Brand Communication and Marketing Manager, Pugdundee Safaris, said, "We recently opened a new lodge called Waghoba Eco Lodge in Tadoba, Maharashtra, which was previously an unexplored region for us, in order to expand our reach. While our main focus has been on Madhya Pradesh, we wanted to increase our presence."

In addition, Pugdundee Safaris has introduced new offerings for their Denwa Backwater Escape in Satpura, such as boat safaris, to provide guests with a personalized and exclusive safari experience on the water. They have also installed wildlife photography heights at their Pench Tree Lodge and Waghoba Eco Lodge in Tadoba. These heights give guests the opportunity to take eye-level shots of wildlife as they bathe and drink near water sources, providing a unique and unparalleled photography experience. Bhalla emphasized that these new products and experiences demonstrate the company's dedication to providing guests



**Anuja**  
Co-Managing Director  
Rainforest Resort, Kochi

**Kerala cuisine is a must-try for foreign customers looking to get a taste of local culture, which adds to the experience of the guests**

sister property, Chulli Bagh Villas, which provides a peaceful retreat for guests seeking a longer stay.

**Anuja**, Co-Managing Director, Rainforest Resort, Kochi, shared exciting new products and offerings that the resort has introduced, such as offering Kerala cuisine, which is a must-try for foreign customers looking to experience the local culture. The resort has also implemented sustainable practices by promoting and reviving the lost culture of the four tribes in the rainforest, adding to the cultural experience of the guests.

## MP govt supports Très again

Uttar Pradesh Tourism was the lead sponsor for Très 2023, while Madhya Pradesh Tourism and Rajasthan Tourism were the associate sponsors. Commenting over the event, **Sheo Shekhar Shukla**, Principal Secretary, Tourism and Culture, Government of Madhya Pradesh, said, "This is our third year supporting Très; at Madhya Pradesh Tourism, we have a clearcut vision to promote responsible, authentic circuits and we feel our aims align. Très brings the perfect audience for us to showcase the various wildlife and heritage products we want to promote to the domestic and international traveller." Deputy Director, Events and Marketing, Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, Yuvraj Padole added, "The panel session 'The Changing Narratives of Wildlife in Central India' powered by Madhya Pradesh Tourism gave a platform to all our lodges in Madhya Pradesh to lead and voice their expertise to a mix of international and domestic buyers."

**Sowmya R Vijaymohan**, Director, Très, said, "We deeply believe that the sub-continent is a global destination for leisure, luxury, and inspirational travel that offers a unique diversity and is magnificent and transformational in its offering. And Très is a resolutely focused translation of this confidence in travel offerings, one we share with the travel trade at large."



# Travel agents at centrestage of biz

Whether as extended sales support or as generators of business and creators of brand awareness, travel agents continue to play an important role for vendors across the spectrum, whether it be hotels, or B2B agents. **TRAVELTALK** speaks to three decision makers on why they continue to leverage this distribution channel.

 Hazel Jain

Travel agents play a crucial role as key partners in driving business to hotels. **Puneet Dhawan**, Sr Vice President of Operations - India & South Asia, Accor, says, "Through our B2B channels and travel agent partnerships, we are able to tap into their extensive business networks in cities where our presence may be limited, allowing us to expand our reach and visibility. The travel agents also serve as invaluable allies in bringing in inbound international business to our country."

Accor as a brand works closely with travel agent partners, conducting roadshows and promotional events across the country and international destinations to create visibility for Accor hotels and brands. "These efforts help us showcase our properties and services, highlight our offerings, and build relationships with potential customers," Dhawan adds.



**Puneet Dhawan**  
Sr Vice President of Operations  
- India & South Asia at Accor



**Louis D'Souza**  
Director  
Tamarind Global



**Daniel D'Souza**  
President & Country Head  
- Holidays SOTC

### Agents as influencers

Travel agents are also influential and can encourage and persuade the customers to make certain choices. Whether it is of choosing a specific premium or luxury hotel over another or selecting a package tour for longer travels, they have the ability and means to sway opinions of travellers. They leverage their extensive

networks and relationships with local partners, tour operators, and international contacts to promote our properties and services effectively. **Louis D'Souza**, Director, Tamarind Global, agrees. He says, "One of the key advantages of using B2B channels and travel agents is that they have a well-established network of clients and contacts, which allows B2B enter-


prises to reach a larger audience and extend their consumer base. These channels also give specialized knowledge and experience in their respective sectors, providing B2B enterprises with useful insights and assistance on numerous parts of their business."

create long-term connections by delivering personalised service and support. "As a result, consumer loyalty and repeat business may rise. They can save time and money by performing numerous duties and procedures on behalf of B2B enterprises, such as organising travel arrangements, coordinating logistics, and processing payments, allowing B2B companies to focus on their core competencies," Louis adds.

Overall, B2B channels and travel agents provide a variety of benefits to B2B enterprises, including improved reach, knowledge, relationship-building, time savings, and cost-effectiveness. As a result, it is critical for B2B organisations to continue to use these channels to promote company development and success.

**Daniel D'Souza**, President & Country Head - Holidays, SOTC Travel, is of the opinion that travel agents come with the strength of a strong customer base. "These are custom-

ers whom they have been liaising with for a long time – this makes our network agents/partners a very crucial part of our business. Our B2B agents contribute significantly

  
**B2B channels and travel agents help in tapping business networks in cities where the presence of hotels is limited and allow them to expand reach**

in rapidly scaling our business by helping us expand our reach into India's tier II, III and IV cities and taking our products and services to customers – old and new – in these cities. They understand the needs of the customer and accordingly suggest/ present them with our products," he said. 

# IATO addresses members' concerns

The new IATO team recently met with the organisation's members at the Park Hotel, New Delhi, where it put forward the plan for new session. Rajiv Mehra, President, IATO, informed the participants that he has written to the Prime Minister, after Piyush Goyal refused to continue with the Service Exports from India Scheme (SEIS).





**Celebrating**  
**SUCCESS**  
**Inspiring talent**



**INDIA**  
**TRAVEL**  
**AWARDS**  
**NORTH 2023**  
**July**

**NOMINATE NOW**

**For further details please contact**

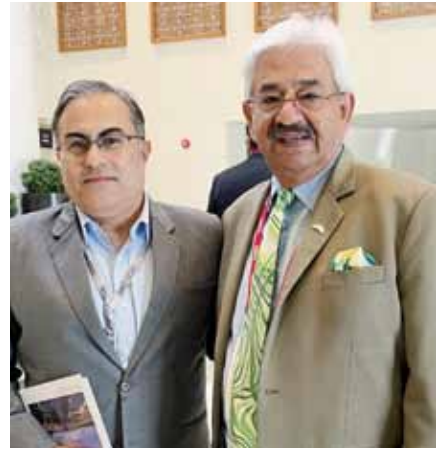
---

Shivalika Sharma  
shivalika.sharma@ddppl.com | 9650399934  
[www.indiatravelawards.in](http://www.indiatravelawards.in)



# Working Towards Net Zero @ATM

More than 2,000 exhibitors and representatives from over 150 nations attended the 30<sup>th</sup> edition of Arabian Travel Market (ATM), organised in Dubai from 1 to 4 May. About 34,000 people visited the event over four days. MOT, GoI, showcased 'Incredible India' and launched the 'Visit India Year 2023' campaign at the event themed on 'Working Towards Net Zero'.





# Goa eyes ME travellers

In order to expand its visitor base, Goa is actively looking to develop the Middle East market and has started dialogues with major airlines from the Gulf countries to increase air connectivity.



Hazel Jain

Goa's international tourism industry relies on air connectivity, and the Middle East airlines play a vital role in boosting tourism in the state. The Middle East airlines provide connectivity for tourists not just from the Middle East, but also for the tourists from Europe and other regions also. This creates a significant opportunity for the state's tourism industry to attract a vast number of visitors from these regions, contributing to the state's economy.

With this in mind, a delegation led by **Rohan Khaunte**, Minister for Tourism, Government of Goa, met with senior executive officials from Qatar Airways and Gulf Air recently in Dubai.

Qatar Airways operates daily flights from Goa to Doha, which connects Goa to several other international destinations, making it an attractive destination for tourists worldwide. Similarly, Gulf carriers such as Gulf Air provide seamless connectivity to Goa from other GCC countries such



**Rohan Khaunte**  
Minister for Tourism  
Government of Goa

as Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Moreover, the collaboration of Qatar Airways and Gulf

Airlines with the Goa Tourism Department can promote the state's tourism offering through various marketing campaigns such as attractive tour packages and discounted airfare. In essence, collaboration with these airlines and the Goa Tourism Department can further boost FTAs in the state and contribute to its economic growth. Sharing his perspective on this, **Nilesh Shah**, President, Travel & Tourism Association of Goa (TTAG), says, "There are direct flights to Goa from Dubai on Air India, from Sharjah on Air Arabia, from Doha on Qatar, Oman from Muscat and Gulf Air from Bahrain. In short, a lot of flights land directly into Goa from the Middle East and it is a great opportunity for us to attract tourist from this market."

## Goa on war footing

With its plan to attract private investment in its premium properties stuck even five years after signing of the agreements, Goa's tourism minister Rohan Khaunte said if the project proponents fail to kickstart the projects, then the government would revisit its decision. "There's no more waiting. If they fail to carry forward the projects in the next two to three months, we will have to revisit the 2016 agreements. People cannot be sitting idle with tourism properties," Khaunte said.

# UDAN can boost aviation



**Jitendra Kejriwal**  
Chairman-IATO  
Maharashtra Chapter

"The UDAN scheme has the potential to significantly boost the Indian aviation industry by increasing regional connectivity, promoting economic development, creating employment opportunities, and making air travel more affordable for the common people. Despite challenges, there have been some new entrants in the Indian aviation market in recent years. Air India-Vistara merger could leverage the strengths of both companies, including Air India's extensive international network and Vistara's strong domestic presence and reputation for quality service. A merged entity should potentially provide more seamless travel experiences for passengers, with better connectivity across India and international destinations. It could also lead to cost savings."



**Arun Iyer**  
Founder & MD  
My Golf Tours

"RCS is being implemented and many new regional routes and airports are opening. This is like opening the Pandora's Box for regional travel. This is growth without noise in the hinterland. Running an airline requires deep pockets and there is enough room for new airlines. We have seen airlines like East-west, Modiluft, NEPC, Damania, Jetairways, Kingfisher rule the sky. The latest ones have moved ahead, learning from the downfall of others and are here to stay. Cutting cost at the cost of customer comfort will not win in long run though. With proper route and travel pattern research, organic growth can be achieved, and growth scaled in a steady manner rather than a quick vertical jump. The AI-Vistara merger could be a source of worry for big airlines."



**Rajiv Narula**  
Founder, MD & COO  
The Comforts

"The development of smaller airports and integrating them with mainstream ones give a definite fillip to regional connectivity, affordable travel & composite development of the regions under proactive aviation policies & action plans. The schemes like RCS Udaan, giving licenses to new airlines (like Akasa) or strategic mergers (Air India-Vistara) are steps in positive light to address the pressing demands of various regions, our economy and composite national growth with optimal use of resources. The smaller aircraft, air charters & heli-services are definitely in bandwagon to serve the demands of rapidly growing Indian Aviation spectrum. I hope that these initiatives are implemented without delay and result in tourism revival to reunite the nation."

Inputs by TT Bureau



Planned Your Summer Escape  
Yet ???

Call to book  
**RADISSON BLU SUMMER STAYCATION**

For more details  
CALL: +91 832 672 6666  
Email: [reservations@rdresortgoa.com](mailto:reservations@rdresortgoa.com)

**Radisson BLU**  
RESORT  
GOA CAVELOSSIM BEACH



# Ready for varied events

Dinesh Rai, GM, Crowne Plaza Kochi, says that the property is the perfect venue to host a plethora of events, be it corporate, MICE or social. The hotel's unique offerings have it all.



TT Bureau

Crowne Plaza Kochi offers a combination of location, venue, services, and expertise that make the hotel a popular choice for destination weddings and social events.

## Perfect for events

Dinesh Rai, General Manager, Crowne Plaza Kochi, says, "Situated at a prime location, it provides easy access to major tourist attractions, shopping centres, and business districts. The hotel offers a variety of indoor and outdoor event spaces that are ideal for weddings and social events, including a grand ballroom, pool-side deck, and lush gardens. Boasting 269 well-appointed guest rooms and suites, it offers ample accommodation options for guests. The hotel's culinary team is renowned for their expertise in creating bespoke menus to suit all tastes and preferences."

## Dedicated services

To cater to such events, the property has a dedicated team to cater to every need of the client. "Leave



Dinesh Rai  
General Manager  
Crowne Plaza Kochi

the planning and execution of your dream wedding to us and choose to celebrate your new beginning with our signature service and hospitality. It is the perfect hub for corporate or social events. Our pillarless ballroom with high ceilings, can hold a group of up to 600 people in a theatre setting. Our 15,000 sq.ft. Backwater Pavilion can accommodate up to 2,000 guests," he said.

## Marketing tactics

To attract such events at the proper-

ty, there are event packages. "We leverage social media and digital marketing by running targeted ads on social media platforms, creating engaging content, and using email marketing campaigns to reach potential customers. We partner

**Situated at a prime location, Crowne Plaza provides easy access to major tourist attractions, shopping centers, and business districts**

with event planners and agencies to expand our reach and participate in trade shows and events," he added.

Rai believes that establishing a good relationship with MICE and wedding operators is the key. "Moreover, we participate in networking events and conferences to introduce the business."

# Eco-friendly luxury

Daman Deep Singh, General Manager, Karma Lakelands, says it is important for India to project itself as a sustainable destination, and they keep this in mind while serving guests.



TT Bureau

Sustainability has become a buzzword in hospitality. Tell us some of the key activities that your resort ensures to guests?

The term sustainability is synonymous with Karma Lakelands and the sole reason for this is that we religiously follow sustainable practices in every step we take. We treat and harvest water at a large scale to nourish our four lush forests and expansive golf course. Farming is close to our heart, so we ardently practice activities like organic farming, horticulture and bee farming. We have adopted a strict no-honk and plastic policy at our resort. Even the vegetables, fruits and herbs that are used in preparing the meals of our guests come directly from our farms.

## Why should India look at responsible tourism seriously now?

Being a country with a rich culture and diversity, the number of tourists that India attracts every year is huge. So, it is pertinent



Daman Deep Singh  
General Manager, Karma Lakelands

to mirror the image of India as a responsible country. Sustainability and environmentally friendly practices are followed all over the world. India being a developing nation comes under constant scrutiny for producing industrial waste and pollution, our responsibility as a nation is to ensure that tourists take back home a greener and cleaner image of India.

Can one do luxury travel while being a responsible traveller?

It is 100 per cent possible to take along luxury and responsible travelling together. We at Karma Lakelands offer a luxury experience to our guests without compromising on sustainability. Large solar panels

**We treat and harvest water at a large scale to nourish our four lush forests and expansive golf course. Farming is close to our heart**

supply power to our resort and water, a valuable resource, is recycled every day. In this way, the traveller is not carrying the guilt of wasting the resources of the planet. We also discourage them to use plastic bottles and offer glass bottles and cutlery instead.

# Carving a niche in Medical Tourism!

India has gained a reputation in delivering quality medical services. Owing to travel being on the backfoot during the pandemic, there was a huge reduction in incoming medical tourists to India. MP Bezbaruah, Secretary General, Hotel Association India (HAI), suggests how this sector can now be revived.

According to the Union Ministry of Tourism (MOT), India is ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the Medical Tourism Index (MTI) for 2020-21 among 46 countries. India attracts 1 per cent of international travellers annually, though the scope of expansion in medical tourism is immense. There is an increase in foreign visitors arriving for medical reasons from 1.83 lakh in 2021 to 3.05 lakh in 2022. Currently, the Indian medical value travel market is \$5-6 billion and is expected to reach \$13 billion by 2026. The rising expense of healthcare in foreign countries is a consequence of the Ukraine-Russia war. The escalated interest in medical tourism has called for various governmental initiatives like Heal in India, the creation of an e-Visa for Ayush, and accreditation of Ayush.

## Current status

While medical visas or M-visas facilitate Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in the country, the private hospital chains, branded as



hospital destinations, are attracting medical tourists by providing facilities, niche offerings, and customized luxury. Top hospitals have been certified by international accreditation schemes to attract patients looking for quality care at affordable costs. Cosmetic surgery, orthopaedic surgery, cardiac surgery, and dental operations are reportedly the most popular medical procedures among foreign visitors. According to a survey by the Confederation of Indian Industry

(CII), Chennai attracts 40 per cent of the country's medical tourists.

Shripad Yesso Naik, Union Minister of State for Tourism, highlighted that around 1.4 million tourists visited India for medical reasons. The country has formulated a National Strategy and Roadmap for Medical and Wellness Tourism to put India on the international map. However, for its rapid growth, attention needs to be given to appropriate government regulations for patient protection, in-

surance frameworks, travel and visa facilitation, and other factors that influence the patient's experience and treatment outcomes.

## The Edge

To attract medical tourists, maintaining global standards is a primary requisite. Thematic creatives on niche tourism products like medical tourism are being used in government campaigns to cater to diverse consumer interests. These include TV commercials on yoga,

wellness, medical facilities, and infrastructure. India can also leverage on its competitive position in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology sector, where it has established a name for itself in delivering low-cost drugs and vaccines. Huge potential exists in reimagining the sector.

The overall standard of service, state-of-the-art medical facilities, pool of skilled and reputed healthcare professionals, cost ef-

**Thematic creatives on niche tourism products like medical tourism are being used in govt campaigns to cater to diverse consumer interests**

fectiveness, blending of traditional healthcare and wellness practices, and diversity of tourism products and experience are several factors contributing towards attractiveness of India. According to MOT Report, majority of visitors are from the Asian and African countries. With easy availability of English-speaking service providers, and expert interpreters available at most multi-specialty private hospitals, foreign travellers feel at ease in India.



MP Bezbaruah  
Secretary General  
Hotel Association India

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



# Italian touch for Indian flyers

ITA Airways entered the Indian market in December 2022 with direct flights between Rome Hub and Delhi. Fabio Bigotti, Country Manager India, ITA Airways, shares how the airline is expanding its footprint in India market and is well-suited to cater to the needs of Indian passengers, providing onwards connections from Rome to various European destinations.



Nisha Verma

ITA Airways, with its entry in India in December 2022, is giving Indian consumers a broad choice of destinations throughout Italy, Europe, North and South America. The Italian flag carrier has started direct flights between Rome Hub and Delhi. **Fabio Bigotti**, Country Manager India, ITA Airways, says, "ITA Airways deploys an Airbus A330-200 aircraft on the Delhi route offering three classes of service (Economy Class, Premium Economy Class, Business Class). Currently, we are operating flights four times a week, with a capacity increase to five flights August onwards. ITA Airways will be adding new routes Rome-Washington (2 June onwards), Rome-San Francisco (1 July onwards), Rome-Rio de Janeiro (29 October onwards), which will provide more option with seamless connection to our Indian customers. Furthermore, thanks to AccesRail you can now purchase your plane and train journeys in a combined ticket and travel to a

larger number of cities, moving effortlessly from train to plane and back again."

## India market

Calling India the most interesting destinations in their network for the transport of passengers and cargo, Bigotti claims, "With the direct connection between India and Italy, ITA Airways is also further contributing to the cultural integration and development of the economic relationship between the two countries. Moreover, ITA Airways is pleased to provide India originating passengers a great network with convenient connections to Italy, Europe, South and North America. I believe that passengers originating from Delhi appreciate the fact that ITA Airways is the only carrier to directly connect Delhi with Rome, which also enables them to comfortably travel to Italy but also to all of Europe, the Mediterranean, South and North America, thanks to the convenient connections offered by ITA Airways' Rome Fiumicino hub."



**Fabio Bigotti**  
Country Manager India  
ITA Airways

## Expectations & plans

In fact, he shares that the Asia Pacific region in general has a great potential for them. "We want to strengthen our position in India. We are gradually increasing our frequencies and at the same time consider new destinations. We see significant potential for growth in India, being one of the most important international markets for

ITA Airways, and we remain committed to this market. We currently connect Rome to New Delhi with four weekly frequencies, and operations will progressively increase during the summer season, reaching 5 weekly frequencies in the month of August," he informs.

For boosting the business, they are reaching out to both consumer and the trade. "India is a growing market, and we are quite focused on both B2B and B2C segments in India. Being the flag carrier of Italy, where we have number of offers for our customers travelling for leisure, we also have best suited corporate programmes for our SME/Corporates. VOLARE, our loyalty program, is designed to meet customer's needs. The collected points can be spent to obtain advantages and benefits. Our ongoing marketing initiatives are helping in our brand awareness which will also help us to boost our business in India," he adds. He further says, "In India we have an interline agreement with Vistara, which helps us getting the

feeder traffic from major cities in India. We are also working to finalise some codeshare opportunities to collaborate with Indian carriers."

## Post-pandemic change

Bigotti says that they have seen a strong booking pattern and flow post-COVID from all segments of travellers. "The market has picked up well and people want to travel



**ITA Airways is also contributing to the cultural integration and development of the economic relationship between India and Italy**


now to Italy and our network destinations for leisure and business. We are seeing a very positive

growth in load factors from India market and the average price is increased compared to Pre-COVID period," he adds.

## Trade engagement

Claiming that they are working closely with the travel trade, Bigotti informs, "We are offering them all support to promote ITA Airways to their customers, thanks to the effective ITA Airways local team. We are regularly updating travel agents with ITA Airways new fares, procedures and product news. We provide our partners tactical initiatives and strategic offers for their customers. We also work closely with all travel trade association and partner with them in their initiatives."

## What's on board?

He informed that starting mid-April, the cabin crew on all ITA Airways flights and ground crew are wearing the new uniforms by Brunello Cucinelli. "The company has also opened the new Hangar Lounge at Rome Fiumicino airport, which will be the fourth lounge," he says. 

# Enhancing India's MICE appeal

SITE India chapter organised 'ACE Talk' at Hyatt Regency in Delhi on 5 May, focusing on optimization of India as a MICE destination. The event saw participation from MICE players and corporates. Barun Gupta, President, SITE India Chapter, said that ACE Talk will be an ongoing series and the upcoming event, to be held in Mumbai in August, will delve into attracting inbound MICE to India.





<div> <div># 1 IN CIRCULATION &amp; READERSHIP</div> <div>SOUTH ASIA'S LEADING TRAVEL TRADE FORTNIGHTLY</div> </div>		
EVENT TALK		
Published from : India • Middle East		
Media Partners:		
<div> <div>Travel</div> <div>WEDDING SHOW</div> </div>		
MAY 2023		
Date	Event	Time
18-20	Dhaka Travel Mart	10:00 am
18-21	Thailand Dive Expo	11:00 am
19-21	Guangzhou International Travel Fair	9:00 am
21	Snow Travel Expo Melbourne	9:00 am
22-24	4th Working Group Meeting- Jammu and Kashmir	9:00 am
22-24	Riyadh Travel Fair	3:30 pm
24	Oman Tourism Webinar	11:30 am
25-27	International Health Tourism & Services Expo Bangladesh	10:30 am
26-29	Taipei International Tourism Exposition	10:00 am
JUNE 2023		
1-3	Global Travel Marketplace	10:00 am
5-8	International Conference on Tourism	9:00 am
7	Abu Dhabi Tourism Webinar	3:00 pm
14	New Zealand Tourism Webinar	11:00 am
16-18	Tourism Fair - Kolkata	11:00 am
19-22	ILTM Asia Pacific 2023	9:00 am
24-25	8th Travel Wedding Show	10:00 am
For more information, contact us at: <a href="mailto:talk@ddppl.com">talk@ddppl.com</a>		

# Turning a new page in tourism

Anoop Bali, Whole Time Director, Tourism Finance Corporation of India (TFCI), informs how they are playing their part in creating tourism infrastructure across the country, both with the private sector as well as the government via PPP mode.



TT Bureau

In existence for 30 years, Tourism Finance Corporation of India (TFCI) aims to provide finance and advisory services to the tourism sector in India. Explaining further about how TFCI is supporting tourism infrastructure, **Anoop Bali**, Whole Time Director, Tourism Finance Corporation of India (TFCI), says, “We have been financing hotels and other tourism products across India. Till now, we have catalysed investment, which has led to development of around 55,000 star category hotels within the country. This is our core business, and we continue to fund hotels across India. We also do other types of projects which are into adventure tourism, religious tourism, travels and tour agents and other tourism places.”

### Recent projects

Shedding light on the new projects, Bali said, “Most of the projects we have done are medical tourism-oriented projects. We did some hotel projects, which were



**Anoop Bali**  
Whole Time Director, Tourism Finance Corporation of India (TFCI)

attached to hospitals, and we did one in Hyderabad and one in Gurgaon. We also introduced spa tourism in the country with funding of Ananda in the Himalayas. We also did Atmantan in Pune. These are special projects. We also funded Palace on Wheels and later Deccan Odyssey.”

### Working with MOT

When asked about working with Ministry of Tourism (MOT), he said that most of the projects

are being taken up by the private sector. “We are more attuned to funding the private sector and that is our core business. However, whatever government policies they are bringing in, we are supporting and moving into those regions and providing financial assistance,” he informed.

### PPP mode

Speaking on PPP mode, which is coming up, Bali shares, “I think we must see every project from a commercial point of view. We are doing PPP projects. However, there are certain amendments required. We want all PPP projects to have a substitution clause. Hence, if a project is not able to perform commercially well, then any lending institution should have a right to replace it with some other corporate entity to take that project on. If there were certain modifications, we are requesting the MOT and state ministries, as this is also a state subject.”

### 'Change govt policies'

While he pointed out that the

present government has taken a number of steps for creating tourism infrastructure, he said, “The road infrastructure is now much better than what it used to be, and because of this, a lot of travel destinations are

**Till now, we have catalysed investment, which has led to development of around 55,000 star category hotels within the country**

coming up because travelling through expressways has become easier. Hence, people are driving to destinations and this has led to many opportunities. Ultimately, tourism accommodation and other products have to be prioritized by the private sector and that is how it should happen.”

# ‘Rising footfall gives industry confidence’

► Contd from page 5

inbound, but I am sure with the numbers going up, industry booming, tailwinds to be provided by G20, and many steps being taken up, I am sure international inbound traffic will be back to pre-COVID numbers this year,” he said.

### G20 advantage

Singh mentioned that the Indian tourism sector has an unparalleled opportunity to share its success stories on a global stage with the G20 Presidency. “With 59 centres for 200 G20 meetings, India is the only country where many such locations are being used. This shows that we have the strength to host international conferences and conventions at these places. Already, 100 meetings out of 200 have taken place,” he explained.

### MOT’s G20 events

He informed, “During the Presidency, we at MOT have planned to organize several events, engaging not only government stakeholders but also the travel trade and hospitality sector. We have already organized two G20 TWG meetings—at Rann of Kutch and Siliguri. The next TWG (Tourism

Working Group) (TWG) meeting will be held in Srinagar in J&K. After that, we are hopeful that the G20 Tourism Ministers’ conference, which will be held in June, would focus on sustainable tourism to support the environment and create opportunities for local business. The two deliverables for the ministerial meeting would be the ministerial communique, which highlights the consensus of G20 nations about the future of recovery and revival of the tourism sector; and an additional mission – Travel for Life – in line with the Mission for Life that India started with the UN Secretary-General recently. Hence, we plan to promote green tourism, open 50 new tourism destinations and soon launch a publicity campaign in overseas markets during our presidency.”

### Kashmir TWG

The Kashmir TWG meeting will be held at Sher-e-Kashmir Convention Centre in Srinagar. Sharing details, he said, “We will do a side event on film tourism at Srinagar. Hence, we want to show India’s and Kashmir’s potential as film tourism destinations and we hope to get leading people from the



**Arvind Singh**  
Secretary, MOT  
Government of India

film industry, practitioners, state governments to highlight their best practices in film policies. We will also take them for a technical excursion to Gulmarg the next day to show them the facilities. It will be a compact visit. It is a major international event that will happen in Srinagar, Kashmir for the first time.”

### Numbers don’t lie

Singh shared that the travel and tourism sector in India generated 17.04 million jobs directly

and indirectly in 2021-22 despite being a difficult year. “Hopefully in the future, the numbers will go up. Within the Asia-Pacific region, India is one of the countries, which has shown the fastest rebound. As per the WTTC report, travel and tourism GDP is set to grow globally at an average of 5.8 per cent annually between 2022 and 2032, outpacing the growth of the overall economy by 2.7 per cent,” he said, adding that, “The global economy will grow at almost half the rate of travel and tourism in the next 10 years and despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, we received 6.19 million foreign travellers in 2022. This growth rate was over 300 per cent because we had received only 1.52 million tourists in the previous year.”

### Infrastructure is key

He said that infrastructure is driving tourism to a great extent. “We are aware that in the last few years, tourism development has been aided by the government’s incessant focus on enhancing rail, road and air connectivity to ensure that accessibility to tourism destinations is easy from all corners of the country. Connectivity to

remote areas of the country, hilly regions, J&K, and the Northeast is happening,” he shared. “We have recommended 59 tourism air routes to the Ministry of Civil Aviation, of which 51 have already been operationalized under UDAN.

**With 59 centres for 200 G20 meetings, India is the only country where many such locations are being used. This shows that we have the strength**

We launched the Visit India Year 2023, which kicked off on 31 January. More than one lakh G20 foreign delegates will visit the country and witness the diversity of India’s culture, its monuments, and festivals,” he added.

### GTIS 2023

Singh said that the Global Tour-

ism Investors’ Summit (GTIS) 2023, scheduled to be held in New Delhi, is going to attract not only global investment but also investment from the domestic sector.

### WTTC CEO Forum

He shared that MOT, in collaboration with the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), will organize the WTTC CEOs forum coinciding with the ministerial meeting in Goa on 21 June this year. “We expect about 100 Global CEOs to be there in Goa and discuss strategies with the G20 ministers to take tourism to the next level in all parts of the world, including India. Already, WTTC has confirmations from about 100 CEOs for attending the meeting,” he said.

### Post-budget webinar result

When asked about the outcomes of the discussions at the post-Budget webinar conducted by MOT, he said, “It will form part of the national tourism policy and other action points that we will take place in the coming year. For example, work on the 50 new destinations will flow in this year and results will follow.”



is your



# Hotel Classified?

are you a government approved



Out of **49,000** hotels in India only **3,500** are classified

To know more about **classification**, call us



+91 9871003279, [support@qualstar.co.in](mailto:support@qualstar.co.in), [subha.bhaskar@qualstar.co.in](mailto:subha.bhaskar@qualstar.co.in)



# MOVEMENTS

## INDIAN HOTELS' COMPANY LIMITED (IHCL)

Mumbai

**BEEJAL DESAI** has been promoted as Executive Vice President – Corporate Affairs & Company Secretary (Group) of Indian Hotels' Company Limited (IHCL). In his new role, Desai will join the Executive Committee (ExCom). He joined the company in 2011 as Vice President – Legal & Company Secretary and carries rich cross functional experience of 38 years across diversified sectors and renowned organizations. During his 12-year tenure with the organization, Desai has been the custodian of Legal, Secretarial, Corporate Governance, Corporate Affairs and Compliance. He has effectively guided the organization.



## SPICEJET

Gurugram

SpiceJet has appointed **ARUN KASHYAP** as its Chief Operating Officer. He will report to Ajay Singh, Chairman and Managing Director, SpiceJet. Kashyap is an accomplished industry veteran with 25 years of experience and joins SpiceJet from Air India where he was the Chief Technical Officer. This is his second stint at SpiceJet having served earlier as Chief Program & Transformation Officer at the airline. Arun has previously worked with flydubai, Jet Airways and Oman Air. Commenting on his appointment, Singh said, "I am delighted to welcome Arun back to the SpiceJet family. As COO, he will have a key role to play in the growth of the airline."



## BHEEMILI RESORT

Vishakhapatnam

Accor's Bheemili Resort has appointed **ANISH RAJAN** as its new Operations Manager. Rajan brings with him more than 19 years of hospitality industry experience, having worked with many renowned hotels such as Taj, Le Meridien, Radisson, Crowne Plaza Doha West Bay, Intercontinental Doha Hotel, and Le Méridien Abu Dhabi. His last assignment was with Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach as a F&B Manager. In his new role, Rajan will lead the Bheemili Resort's operations team, overseeing daily activities such as staff management, property maintenance, financial management, and resort promotion.



W

Goa

W Goa has appointed **SIDDHARTH JOSHI** as its new Director of Sales & Marketing. In his new role, Joshi will be responsible for developing and implementing sales and marketing strategies to drive the hotel's revenue growth, enhancing its brand positioning, and fostering strategic partnerships. He will work closely with the leadership team to create innovative campaigns, engage with customers, and ensure an exceptional guest experience. He has more than 20 years of rich experience in the hospitality industry, which includes stints with large national and international hospitality brands.



## CROWNE PLAZA CHENNAI ADYAR PARK

Chennai

**SANGEETH JANARDHENAN** has been elevated to the post of Food and Beverage Manager at Crowne Plaza Chennai Adyar Park. Having an experience of more than 15 years, Janardhenan had joined IHG Hotels and Resorts in September 2020. In his current role, he will continue to support the day-to-day Food & Beverage Operations and other relationship management. He would indulge in understanding business requirements, shaping strong restaurants & bars image gaining the brand equity, customer-value maximization and developing new revenue streams.



## NOVOTEL MUMBAI JUHU BEACH

Mumbai

**RAVI RAI** has been appointed as the General Manager of Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach. Joining the hotel with an extensive knowledge of the hospitality industry, Ravi gets on board to oversee day-to-day operations and provide strategic guidance. Having completed a diploma in Hotel Management from Dina Institute of Pune, Rai has 20 years of experience, out of which he has worked with Accor Hotels for more than 10 years. Apart from Accor Hotels, Ravi has worked with renowned properties such as Hilton, Taj and Holiday Inn. His recent assignment was as Cluster General Manager with the Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach, The Bheemili Resort Visakhapatnam.



## THE WESTIN

Kolkata Rajarhat

**MALLIKA SEHGAL** has been appointed as Marketing and Communications Manager at The Westin Kolkata Rajarhat. She is an experienced and passionate marketing strategist with more than 11 years of experience in the space of content creation and marketing. She has worked with some of the prominent brands like Spectra Hospitality, Senior World & Red FM. She has a postgraduate degree in Marketing Management. With her expertise in managing PR, Marketing, and Communication functions, she has a proven track record of utilizing offline marketing as well as digital and social media.



## JW MARRIOTT

Kolkata

JW Marriott Kolkata has appointed **JAIVEER SINGH RATHORE** as the Director of Human Resources. He comes with more than 16 years of corporate experience in HR, with a deep-rooted experience in HR strategies. In his new role, he will be responsible for driving strategic HR initiatives and enhancing employee engagement in the pursuit of organizational objectives. He has worked with many brands such as Vodafone, Randstad (Mafoi), Louvre Hotels, Peerless Hotels and Accor Hotels. In his earlier assignments, he was associated with Accor Group of Hotels for more than 9 years, including ibis Jaipur, Novotel Kolkata, Novotel Guwahati, ibis New Delhi Aerocity.



## HYATT REGENCY DANANG RESORT & SPA

Danang, Vietnam

Hyatt Regency Danang Resort & Spa appoints **PANKAJ BISHT** as its new Executive Assistant Manager - Food & Beverage, as it prepares to unveil a series of exciting new culinary concepts that will elevate the standard of gastronomy on Vietnam's central coast. Bisht will oversee the resort's diverse Food & Beverage offerings, including a series of exciting new concepts and reimaged venues. Pankaj has more than 23 years of hospitality experience. He joined Hyatt in 2006 initially at Park Hyatt Dubai and later at Park Hyatt Melbourne, before his career reached new heights in 2014 when he was appointed Executive Chef at Park Hyatt Maldives.



## TALKING People

**RAJAN KALRA**, a hospitality sales specialist, has launched his debut book 'Sales and More Sales'. It is a comprehensive guide that explores the internal and external factors that contribute to the sales mindset. It covers the fundamentals of the sales industry, the value of networking, and the steps from a sales pitch to cultivating loyalty. "I wrote this book for anyone who is active in sales, particularly those who are still in their early years. It's a short and simple guide to help you understand the fundamentals of selling and improve your sales skills," said Kalra.



**SOMESH AGARWAL**, Chairman and MD at Radisson Blu Palace Resort, Udaipur, loves to travel. "In India, my favourite holiday destination is Gulmarg. It is truly the crowning glory of Jammu & Kashmir and a paradise on earth that one must visit. I also loved my recent trip to Masai Mara in Kenya amidst the wild beauties, and ever since then, it has become my go-to international travel destination. Travelling is my passion and I often explore destinations to know more about their cultures, cuisine and traditions. I am planning my next holiday to Lapland in Finland," he says.



**ARPITA MUKHERJEE**, Learning & Development Manager, Novotel Kolkata Hotel & Residences, says, "Travelling is a necessary boon from the daily hustle and bustle. It's a great way to recharge my batteries with the changing atmosphere. A few destinations which ring a chord for me in India would be Auli, Kodaikanal and Vagamon. Whereas internationally, I am fond of Switzerland and Italy if I travel international, as they have rich heritage and art that I will really like to explore. Arunachal Pradesh is a place I have been planning to explore in the coming days."





# JOIN US AT PATA EVENTS 2023

Media Partner



**PATA**  
Pacific Asia Travel Association



## PATA ANNUAL SUMMIT & ADVENTURE MART 2023 Sustainability through Tourism

**MAY 30 - JUNE 2**

Pokhara Grande Hotel, Pokhara, Nepal



PATA Board Meeting  
& Annual General Meeting



Conference on Emerging  
Trends



Destination Experience



Adventure Travel Mart  
with Carefully Selected  
Buyers/Sellers

Learn more  
about PASM



**STB**  
SARAWAK TOURISM BOARD



RESPONSIBLE  
TOURISM

**Sarawak**  
More to Discover

## PATA DESTINATION EXPERIENCE FORUM & MART 2023 SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION

**JUNE 21 - 23**

Borneo Convention Centre Kuching (BCCCK)  
Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia



One-day Destination  
Experience



One-day Conference



Tabletop 1-1 Meeting



Networking Sessions

Learn more  
about PDFM



Incredible India  
www.incredibleindia.org

## PATA TRAVEL MART 2023

**OCTOBER 4 - 6**

New Delhi, India



One-day Conference



B2B Travel Mart with  
1,000+ Global Delegates



Networking Opportunities  
with High-growth Travel  
Markets

Learn more  
about PTM



Follow us: @PATA\_HQ @PATA\_HQ Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA)

www.PATA.org



# Being 'Swisstainable'

Switzerland Tourism is promoting a sustainable movement, 'Swisstainable', with an aim to connect with the tourism community. **Misha Gambetta**, Director India, Switzerland Tourism, shares why the movement is important for the country.



Hazel Jain

## Why is sustainable travel important for Switzerland?

Switzerland has always prioritised sustainability and responsible tourism, which is what differentiates it; it is what shapes us and defines us as a destination. With 'Swisstainable', Switzerland Tourism is promoting a sustainable movement with which Switzerland's entire tourism community can affiliate itself. Sustainability can only happen if we all work together, and it requires the support of the entire industry. All service providers, who are committed to sustainability, can use the 'Swisstainable' label. In addition to the Swisstainable program and Swisstainable campaigns, Switzerland Tourism also advocates for an even spread of visitor's numbers, year-round tourism and longer stays. 'Less often, for longer' is the new 'more often and shorter'.

## How is Switzerland offering options for sustainable travel?

Our Swisstainable program aims to provide visibility to sustainable products. We also inform our guests and provide them with valuable travel tips. Travelling sustainably means experiencing the country and its people and culture in an authentic way, whether through travelling by public transport or emphasising our locally made products.

Switzerland is packed with planet-friendly experiences. The country encourages travellers to enjoy



nature up, to experience the local culture in an authentic way, consume regional products and to stay longer and delve deeper, when they visit Switzerland. Two of the most

## Switzerland's E-Grand Tour is the world's first 100% electric road route, with some 300 charging stations along the way

important elements of Switzerland's sustainable travel program are accessibility and freedom of movement in the country. The Swiss Travel System is one of the densest, most efficient and environment-friendly public transport networks.

It connects the country with trains, boats, buses, cable cars, cycling and hiking routes, linked by Swiss Travel Pass.

The SBB (Swiss Federal Railways), is already 90 per cent powered by hydropower with a goal to reach 100 per cent by 2025. The Rhaetian Railway has been emission-free since 2013, and even Switzerland's luxurious ship, MS Diamant on Lake Lucerne, is climate neutral.

Switzerland's E-Grand Tour is the world's first 100 per cent electric road route, with some 300 charging stations along the way. In addition, countless means of public transportation, from catamarans to cable cars, PostBus services, funiculars and scenic railways, are powered by hydroelectric or solar energy. At the destination level, for example, the village of Zermatt is completely car-free.

## How can the travel trade help their clients have a green trip in Switzerland?

Agents can guide them towards booking sustainable experiences by informing them about the Swisstainable emblem they can find on hotels, restaurants and other tourism service providers. They

can also continue to encourage travellers to buy Swiss Travel Pass to explore the country via public transport over private cars. Only pedestrians and bicycles are more ecological than Swiss trains! The Swiss Travel Pass also comes with multiple benefits like unlimited travel by train, bus or boat to more than 90 cities and towns and free admission to more than 500 museums.



**Misha Gambetta**  
Director India  
Switzerland Tourism

Streamline your visa processing with

**atlys**

Accurate, Efficient, Exceptional



Countries we serve

UAE, Thailand, Malaysia, Egypt, and many more



Download Now

contact

Karan@atlys.com

+91 9650399924

## 100% recovery from India by 2024

- ❖ Switzerland Tourism saw sustained growth in the number of overnights till 2019
- ❖ There was a 9.6% increase in the overnights spent by Indians in Switzerland during 2017-2018
- ❖ Overnights in 2017 stood at 739,185, in 2018 this went up to 809,940
- ❖ In 2019, It saw 897,000 number of overnights by Indians
- ❖ After reopening in 2021, Switzerland witnessed double-digit growth with overnight numbers reaching 380,164 in 2022
- ❖ It hopes for a 100 % recovery to its 2019 numbers from India by 2024



معروض قاتر الدولي للسياحة والسفر  
Qatar International Exhibition for Travel & Tourism

20-22 November, 2023

10am-8pm

DECC-DOHA, QATAR

DISCOVER  
PLACES,  
PEOPLE  
AND  
CULTURES

FEATURING  
DEDICATED SECTORS



LUXURY



BUSINESS



MEDICAL



SPORTS



LEISURE



CULTURE



HALAL

Book your space  
NOW

Please contact:  
devika@ddppl.com  
ritul.maihotra@ddppl.com,  
+91 9810191852



AMAZING  
NEW  
CHAPTERS

# LOVE

— STARRING YOU —



JUST THE  
TWO OF US



LUXE AND  
LOCAL



PURSUIT  
MINDFULNESS



MAE HONG SON





Looking for comfort and convenience for your clients' visa application process?

Choose VFS Global's

# VISA AT YOUR DOORSTEP

service

With **Visa At Your Doorstep**, as an optional service, the VFS Global team will visit your clients' location to complete the entire visa application including the biometric process, as per their convenience and flexibility. Your clients' do not need to visit our Visa Application Centre, as VFS Global's team will visit their location.

**Available on weekdays, weekends, and public holidays**

## Service includes:

- ✓ Visa application submission process
- ✓ Biometric information (fingerprint & digital photograph)
- ✓ Passport collection & delivery

## The 'Visa At Your Doorstep' service is offered for 18 destination countries in India:

Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom (On Demand Mobile Visa).



Scan to know more

**Book 'Visa At Your Doorstep' for your clients' now**

Visit: [www.vfsglobal.com/visa-at-your-doorstep/](http://www.vfsglobal.com/visa-at-your-doorstep/)

**For exclusive deals and incentives, write to us on:**

[b2bsales@vfsglobal.com](mailto:b2bsales@vfsglobal.com)



**67** CLIENT GOVERNMENTS

**145** COUNTRIES OF OPERATION

OVER **259** MILLION APPLICATIONS PROCESSED

VFS.GLOBAL **Cares**