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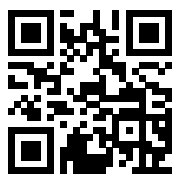
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Green tourism takes centre stage

Over 1,000 delegates attended the 46th edition of the PATA Travel Mart 2023 (PTM 2023), hosted by the Union Ministry of Tourism in New Delhi recently. The participants took the 'Travel for LiFE' pledge at the event, an initiative of the government which promoted sustainability and green tourism.



Nisha Verma

The three-day Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Travel Mart 2023 (PTM 2023), organised at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi recently, was attended by over 1,000 delegates from 46 global destinations, which included 159 sellers from 92 organisations

and 15 destinations, along with 196 buyers from 191 organisations and 38 source markets.

Addressing the gathering at the event, **V Vidyavathi**, Secretary, Tourism, Government of India (GoI), said that the event has proved to be a catalyst for tourism in the Asia-Pacific region. "Tourism

is one of greatest unifiers and PATA recognises that, and it is an opportunity to learn from each other. It's an honour for India to host PTM 2023 in the dynamic city of Delhi, especially since it also coincides with '#VisitIndiaYear2023'. India stands committed to the #TravelForLiFE initiative. Travel for LiFE is inspired by Mission LiFE and fo-

cuses on greener cleaner and harmonious development of all tourist destinations," she said.

"PTM 2023 is the first in-person mart after the pandemic. It could not have come at a more opportune moment, as it is the culmination of India's G20 Presidency. Through 'Travel for LiFE' MOT is

looking at promoting the concept of sustainable and green tourism," she said.

Rakesh Verma, Additional Secretary, Tourism, GoI, said, "The MOT had released the strategy for sustainable tourism in June 2022, which is now being elevated with the 'Travel for LiFE' framework that



V Vidyavathi
Secretary, Tourism, Government of India

we have incorporated, which covers both the demand side and supply side." 🐦

Cricket frenzy pushes airfare

One-way direct economy class flight from Delhi to Ahmedabad, which normally costs around ₹9,011, has gone up to ₹24,000. Mumbai to Ahmedabad airfare has also gone up considerably.



Suhani Sood

As per ixigo and MakeMyTrip, airfares to Ahmedabad have gone up drastically. One-way direct economy class flight from Delhi to Ahmedabad, which normally costs around ₹9,011, has gone up to ₹24,000, whereas from Mumbai to Ahmedabad, which costs around ₹10,517 on normal days, has shot up to ₹24,189.

Nishant Pitti, CEO & co-founder, EaseMyTrip, said, "There is a high



Guldeep Singh Sahni
Founder President, OTOAI

demand for flight tickets on EaseMyTrip. The majority of people

keen to attend the match have already booked hotels and flights in advance."

India-Pakistan cricket matches create great excitement among the fans. **Guldeep Singh Sahni**, Founder President, OTOAI, said, "Since, the number of spectators is humongous, airfares and hotel tariffs are bound to soar. After all, it is a world of demand and supply, where airlines and hotels wait for such events to generate good revenue

Contd. on page 12 ▶

46 nations attend PATA meet

Peter Semone, Chair, PATA, emphasises on sustainable tourism principles for India's growth in the global market and its incredible potential as a source market for inbound tourism.



Janice Alyosius

Peter Semone, Chair, PATA, praised the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, for the organisation of PATA Travel Mart 2023, which was held at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi recently.

"The India's MoT of the Government of India has been one of our most valuable members and active partners for more than 60 years. Based on their commitment and enthusiasm in organising PATA Travel Mart, we at PATA are excited



Peter Semone
Chair, PATA

to facilitate engagement between India and the rest of the world

through this event," he said. "After a three-year hiatus, PATA Travel Mart continues to provide unparalleled networking and contracting opportunities for our delegates from all over the world," he added.

Speaking at the event, Semone shared a set of guiding principles that PATA is committed to upholding in the Pacific Asia Region. These principles are encapsulated by the 5Ps of sustainable tourism development, which includes People, Planet, Prosperity,

Contd. on page 10 ▶

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Full house at IATO convention

The 38th IATO Annual Convention, organised recently in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (Aurangabad) on the 'Inbound Tourism and Emerging Sustainable Trends' theme, debated on the changing landscape of Indian tourism. The convention also brought into limelight the tourism of the host city.

Janice Alyosius

The 38th IATO Annual Convention, hosted recently in the vibrant city of Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (Aurangabad), brought together travel industry experts. The theme for this year's convention was 'Inbound Tourism and Emerging



Sustainable Trends,' which highlighted the evolving landscape of the tourism sector in India. The theme aligned with the global focus on responsible tourism, leading to inclusive growth. This year's convention was different, given that India's G20 Presidency has put the country in the global



Dignitaries at the 38th IATO Convention in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (Aurangabad) light the lamp at the inauguration ceremony

spotlight, creating a golden opportunity to leverage inbound tourism to its full potential.

Praising the association members for their efforts, **Rajiv Mehra**, President, IATO, said, "Our members put forth extraordinary efforts in ensuring the success of the convention. The attendees were equally diligent, actively participating in the sessions. It's crucial for all stakeholders to unite and move forward together to successfully drive the industry forward, as this is the path to stability. Sustain-

ability is achieved when we move collectively, and we are witnessing this collaboration now."

He also emphasised on the collaboration between hotels and travel agents, saying, "Hotels and travel agents should work hand in hand. Pride Hotels Group and the Royal Orchid Hotels have pledged to offer exclusive rates for IATO members, and I will personally oversee the follow-up on this initiative."

Rajnish Kaistha, Senior Vice President, IATO and the Conven-

tion Chairman, said, "After the convention, members will explore what Aurangabad has to offer during post-convention tours. Once they gain firsthand experience, they will incorporate these experiences into their itineraries and share them with clients."

Ravi Gosain, Vice President, IATO, said, "We are striving to host our conventions in remote locations. We are delighted to return to Maharashtra after a decade; this time to Aurangabad, now known as Chhatrapati

Sambhajnagar. Ajanta and Ellora, which are one of the first UNESCO declared sites in India, holds immense potential. It was once a regular part of itineraries for many tour operators, attracting numerous foreign tourists. Unfortunately, when the flight route from Udaipur to Aurangabad and then onwards to Mumbai was cancelled, we had no choice but to reluctantly remove it from our itineraries. However, we have been in discussions with several airlines to reinstate these flights after this convention."

About the next IATO meet, Gosain said, "We are actively working to select a venue for next year's convention. We are in discussions with Goa and Madhya Pradesh, and we are optimistic about a favourable outcome from Madhya Pradesh."

Hotels and travel agents should work hand in hand. Pride Hotels Group and the Royal Orchid Hotels have pledged to offer exclusive rates for IATO members

Sanjay Razdan, Honorary Secretary, IATO, and the Convention Co-Chairman, said, "If you look at our past conventions, traditionally and historically, wherever we have held them, it has significantly promoted the tourism of that state."

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New season kicks off, inbound in vogue

Inbound is in the air and as the new season kicks off, we saw some of the major inbound events happen in the country in the last two weeks—The IATO convention and the PATA Travel Mart.

Going to a tier II city for its convention was a bold move for IATO, a decision which certainly worked in many ways. Firstly, it was a testimony to the fact that India's smaller cities, when needed, can step up their game and play host to a big convention like this. Secondly, it underlined the importance of local authorities in pulling a big event. And lastly, it brought in people from across the country together at one platform away from the hustle and bustle of a big city. Whether it worked for everyone or not needs to be gauged. However, despite infrastructure issues, flaws in getting things done in a space that's not ordinarily used for big events, it was a step well taken.

On the other hand, PATA Travel Mart returned to India after 8 years, and this time in New Delhi at the swanky IECC at Pragati Maidan. The international event saw the Union Ministry of Tourism (MOT) at the forefront with the global PATA team. A well executed and planned mart, PTM saw the biggies of the inbound industry wooing the foreign tour operators to bring business to India. In terms of numbers, while the numbers weren't huge but the event was effective in creating the right buzz about India on an international platform.

With so much action on the inbound front and the WTM on the horizon, we are hopeful that the MOT gets into action internationally in a bigger way and we start getting inbound numbers we want to see. The 'Travel for LiFE' initiative is one initiative that sees promise for the future, both in terms of creating visibility and making sure that tourism benefits the industry. However, the execution for the same is what needs to be seen, both internally, as well as internationally, as a positive image would eventually boost the inbound in the country.

Air traffic recovery continues

Indian domestic RPKs rose 23.2 per cent compared to a year ago and have now exceeded the pre-pandemic levels for seven consecutive months. International traffic has increased by 50 per cent versus last year and ticket sales data show international bookings strengthening now.



The strong post-pandemic passenger traffic trend continued in August, says the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

The total traffic in August (measured in revenue passenger kilometers or RPKs) rose 28.4 per cent compared to the same month last year. Globally, the traffic is now at 95.7 per cent of the pre-COVID levels, stated IATA. Domestic traffic during the month rose 25.4 per cent against the same month last year. This is largely driven by Chinese domestic demand, it stated.

International traffic climbed 30.4 per cent compared to the same



Global passenger markets

Asia-Pacific airlines saw a 98.5 per cent increase in August 2023 traffic compared to August 2022, continuing to lead the regions. Capacity climbed 85.5 per cent and the load

factor climbed 3.0 percentage points to 83.1 per cent.

North American carriers had an 18.6 per cent traffic rise in August 2023 versus the 2022 period. Ca-

per cent traffic increase in August 2023 versus a year ago. August capacity was up 25.5 per cent and load factor rose 0.4 percentage points to 76.2 per cent.

Country-wise air passenger domestic market – August 2023

	World share	August 2023 (% year on year)			
		RPK	ASK	PLF (% Pt) ²	PLF (level) Pt ³
Domestic	41.9%	25.4%	21.1%	2.9%	83.5%
Australia	1.0%	6.6%	10.7%	-3.2%	82.3%
Brazil	1.5%	7.8%	5.4%	1.8%	83.1%
China	6.4%	93.6%	66.2%	11.2%	79.1%
India	2.0%	23.2%	15.6%	5.1%	83.9%
Japan	1.2%	8.7%	-7.0%	12.0%	82.5%
USA	19.2%	9.6%	11.2%	-1.2%	84.4%
¹ % of Industry RPKs in 2022		² Change in load factor		³ Load factor level	

month last year. All markets saw double-digit percentage gains year on year. International RPKs reached 88.5 per cent of August 2019 levels. "Demand for air travel performed well in August. For the year to date, international traffic has increased by 50 per cent versus last year and ticket sales data show international bookings strengthening for travel in the last part of the year," said **Willie Walsh**, Director General, IATA.

factor increased by 5.5 percentage points to 84.2 per cent.

European carriers' August traffic rose 13.6 per cent versus August 2022. Capacity increased 12.3 per cent, and load factor edged up 1.1 percentage points to 86.8 per cent.

Middle Eastern airlines posted a 27.3 per cent increase in August traffic compared to a year ago. Capacity rose 22.7 per cent and

capacity increased 17.5 per cent, and load factor improved 0.8 percentage points to 87.7 per cent, which was the highest among the regions for a third consecutive month.

Latin American airlines' traffic rose 26.4 per cent compared to the same month in 2022. August capacity climbed 23.8 per cent and load factor rose 1.7 percentage points to 86.1 per cent. African airlines saw a 26.1

Domestic passenger markets

Indian domestic RPKs rose 23.2 per cent compared to a year ago and have now exceeded the pre-pandemic levels for seven consecutive months.

Asia-Pacific airlines witnessed a 98.5 per cent increase in August 2023 traffic compared to August 2022, continuing to lead the regions

Japan's domestic market was impacted by Typhoon Khanun, which caused major air traffic disruptions in southern Japan. Domestic RPKs grew 8.7 per cent year over year, down on the 13.4 per cent growth recorded in the previous month.

Air passenger market in detail – August 2023

World share ¹		August 2023 (% year on year)				August 2023 (1% ch vs the same month in 2019)			
		RPK	ASK	PLF (1%-pt) ²	PLF (level) ³	RPK	ASK	PLF (1%-pt) ²	PLF (level) ³
Total Market	100%	28.4%	24.9%	2.3%	84.6%	-4.3%	-3.1%	-1.1%	84.6%
International	58.1%	30.4%	27.5%	1.9%	85.4%	-11.5%	-11.2%	-0.3%	85.4%
Domestic	41.9%	25.4%	21.1%	2.9%	83.5%	9.2%	12.1%	-2.2%	83.5%
¹ % of Industry RPKs in 2022		² Change in load factor				³ Load factor level			

Climbing above tourism plateau

Now that the travel business has levelled off and reached a plateau, countries are trying to cash in on the momentum for further growth by adding to the infrastructure and offerings. NTOs in India are attempting to push their numbers.

Inder Raj Ahluwalia

Christine Mukharji, Country Manager, Austrian National Tourist Office, feels tourism marketing today has to be adaptive. "COVID-19 led to Indians cycling for recreation, which has primed them to experience Austria's superb cycling infrastructure, including the famous Danube Bike Trail. Those not keen on strenuous exercise can hop on e-bikes and let the wheels work themselves. Also, in collaboration with Indian tour operators, Austria offers several new, specialised tours, laden with appealing aspects for Indians, including Indian food," Mukharji said.

Akmal Aziz, Acting Director, Tourism Malaysia, New Delhi, declared that they are aggressively promoting Malaysia in the Indian market. They are now focusing on



Majda Mohamed Al Balushi
Head-Specialised Tourism Unit, Oman
Ministry of Heritage and Tourism

as golfing, weddings, wellness and spas," Aziz said.

Yalçın Lokmanhekim, General Manager, Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA), said that Türkiye has seen a



Akmal Aziz
Acting Director
Tourism Malaysia, New Delhi

growing Indian market has been to position us as a premier destination for both weddings and holidays," Lokmanhekim said.

Majda Mohamed Al Balushi, Head-Specialised Tourism Unit,



Nerissa Jean B. Cruz
Market Specialist, Tourism Promotion
Board, Philippines Tourism

USPs that comprise everything from beaches, desert, culture and heritage, to crucial aspects like relaxation and safety. A significant thrust has been the focused promotion of wedding tourism from India, which is the number one source market for this segment," Al Balushi said.

Huzan Fraser, Representative India, Tourism Ireland, declared that Ireland, particularly its MICE segment, has recovered well post-pandemic, and they are striving to maintain this growth by highlighting their attractions. "A big boost has come in the form of the British Irish Visa Scheme, which is very useful since Indians on a single visa can travel to both the UK and Ireland. Going forward, we intend to further boost Ireland's appeal," Fraser said.

Nerissa Jean B. Cruz, Market Specialist, Tourism Promotion Board, Philippines Tourism, is upbeat about their new projects. "We have started new, very attractive nature-based circuits, such as Bicol region circuit and Bohol region circuit. By this year-end e-visas are starting for Indians," she said.



Christine Mukharji
Country Manager
Austrian National Tourist Office

ROI-based campaigns with travel agents, online travel agencies, and airlines in order to target the correct audience, and increase arrivals to Malaysia. "Apart from organising roadshows in metro, tier II and tier III cities, we are also focusing on niche segments such



Huzan Fraser
Representative India
Tourism Ireland

complete rebound with the highest ever arrival levels, and has revised its annual tourism targets upward. "We are focused on marketing and highlighting our strong points, such as convenient direct flights, and an abundance of cultural and natural treasures. Our thrust in the ever-



Yalçın Lokmanhekim
General Manager, Türkiye Tourism
Promotion and Development Agency

Oman Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, highlighted enhanced promotional activities. "Advertising has increased and there are campaigns galore. New activities such as trekking and hiking have been introduced. The idea is to highlight Oman's diverse attractions and



Creating magical memories for the Mumbai trade



Merlin Entertainments recently hosted more than 40 trade partners at an exclusive event in Mumbai to express gratitude and acknowledge their efforts in driving sales numbers and growth. Leading the event at Merlin were Shannon Bailey, Trade Sales Director, Asia Pacific region, Merlin Entertainments Group, and Gaurav Seth, Head of India Trade Sales, Outbound, Merlin Entertainments Group.

ITC's Hotel Group announces the signing of its first Storii property in Kolkata, WB

Aeroflot-Russian Airlines commences three weekly Goa-Moscow flights from 30 September 2023

Oman Air resumes Lucknow-Muscat daily flight with capacity of 162 seats

Union MoT identifies niche experiences in India, promotes pastoral tourism in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh

LOT's new strategy until 2028 includes new aircraft, more destinations

Shortage of skilled manpower in Nagpur and nearby tier II & III cities: Jagson Travels MD

Atmosphere Core plans to expand; to launch 3 brands and 25 properties in India by 2025

India's outbound market shows an impressive rise; to reach \$15.2 bn in 2023: Gajesh Girdhar, Chairman, NIMA

Hotels embrace green practices

More and more hotels, whether small, medium or large, are pro-actively integrating green and sustainable practices in their hotel operations – from micro improvements to reduce energy consumption, in-house laundry, to comprehensive solar installations.



Sandeep Talaulicar
Executive Committee Member
HRAWI

“Through sustainable green building practices, our hotel in Phaltan has achieved remarkable results. Our monthly electricity bill has decreased from ₹9 lakhs to just ₹1 lakh, showcasing significant cost savings. Despite operating in a water-scarce region, we no longer rely on borrowed water.”



Lokesh Sabharwal
Regional Vice President - Operations, India & South West Asia, Hyatt India Consultancy

“We, at Hyatt, support responsible travel and aim for our colleagues and our guests to form deeper connections with local communities and the environment. From setting up water bottling plants at our hotels to ensuring we use less plastic, to upselling linen to make bags to water harvesting across hotels.”



Suma Nair
Hotel Manager
Hotel Royal Orchid Bangalore

“Water conservation efforts, waste management programs, and eco-friendly amenities are gaining acceptance. Hotels are also embracing sustainable building designs and seeking green certifications. Engaging with local communities, and promoting employee training on sustainability are gaining traction.”



Devraj Halder
General Manager – Operations (North),
The Fern Hotels & Resorts

“Our hotels have embraced sustainable practices, such as energy-efficient lighting, water conservation measures, and waste reduction efforts. We prioritize sourcing organic produce for our restaurants. Implementing linen and towel reuse programs helps reduce water consumption and waste generation.”



Jose Ramapuram
Director of Marketing
Evolve Back Resorts

“Many hotels have started embracing eco-friendly technologies and resource management strategies into their everyday functions. For instance, at Evolve Back Resorts, we show our commitment to sustainable tourism through our extensively well-managed projects including rain-water harvesting.”

Capitalising on adventure travel

The Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI), in partnership with Indiatourism North, Ministry of Tourism, organised the 3rd Seminar & Adventure Tourism Roadshow in New Delhi recently. The event witnessed various panel discussions, followed by a buyer and seller meet.

Suhani Sood

The Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI), in collaboration with Indiatourism North, Ministry of Tourism, organised the 3rd Seminar & Adventure Tourism Roadshow at The Park, New Delhi, recently. The roadshow served as a catalyst for adventure tour operators and travel industry stalwarts, who shared insights and fostered connections with the trade. The event started with panel discussions on topics like border tourism, adventure tourism, responsible tourism, certificate courses, and Wilderness Responder Course.

The seminar was graced by the presence of **Manisha Saxena**, Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (GoI), as the Chief Guest; **Vibhava Tripathi**, Assistant Director General, Ministry of Tourism, GoI, **RK Suman**, Regional Director, North, Ministry of Tourism, GoI, and **Capt. Swadesh Kumar**, Founder President & Lifetime Honorary Patron, ATOAI.



Ajeet Bajaj
President
ATOAI

Our vision as an association is having India ranked among top 10 destination. We have been aggressively conducting roadshows in India



Tejbir Singh Anand
Senior Vice President
ATOAI

The upcoming (ATOAI) convention should be very exciting because Gujarat as a state is coming up very strongly in terms of tourism



Vaibhav Kala
Vice President
ATOAI

High accident rate is a concern. It is possible to make India top adventure hub, only if we as a country try to reduce accidents and risk mitigation

Addressing the gathering, Saxena said, “There is not one adventure activity that cannot be started in India, as the country comprises geographical features of all five continents. We already have the National Strategy for Adventure Tourism in place, which we are now going to implement on the ground level.”

Sharing his views on the best industry practices, **Ajeet Bajaj**, President, ATOAI, said, “Our vision as an association is having India ranked among top 10 destination for adventure travel. We have been aggressively conducting roadshows across India. With a resounding success, seminars for western, central, northern and southern regions have already concluded. In the coming few months, we will also conduct roadshows for northeast and eastern region.”

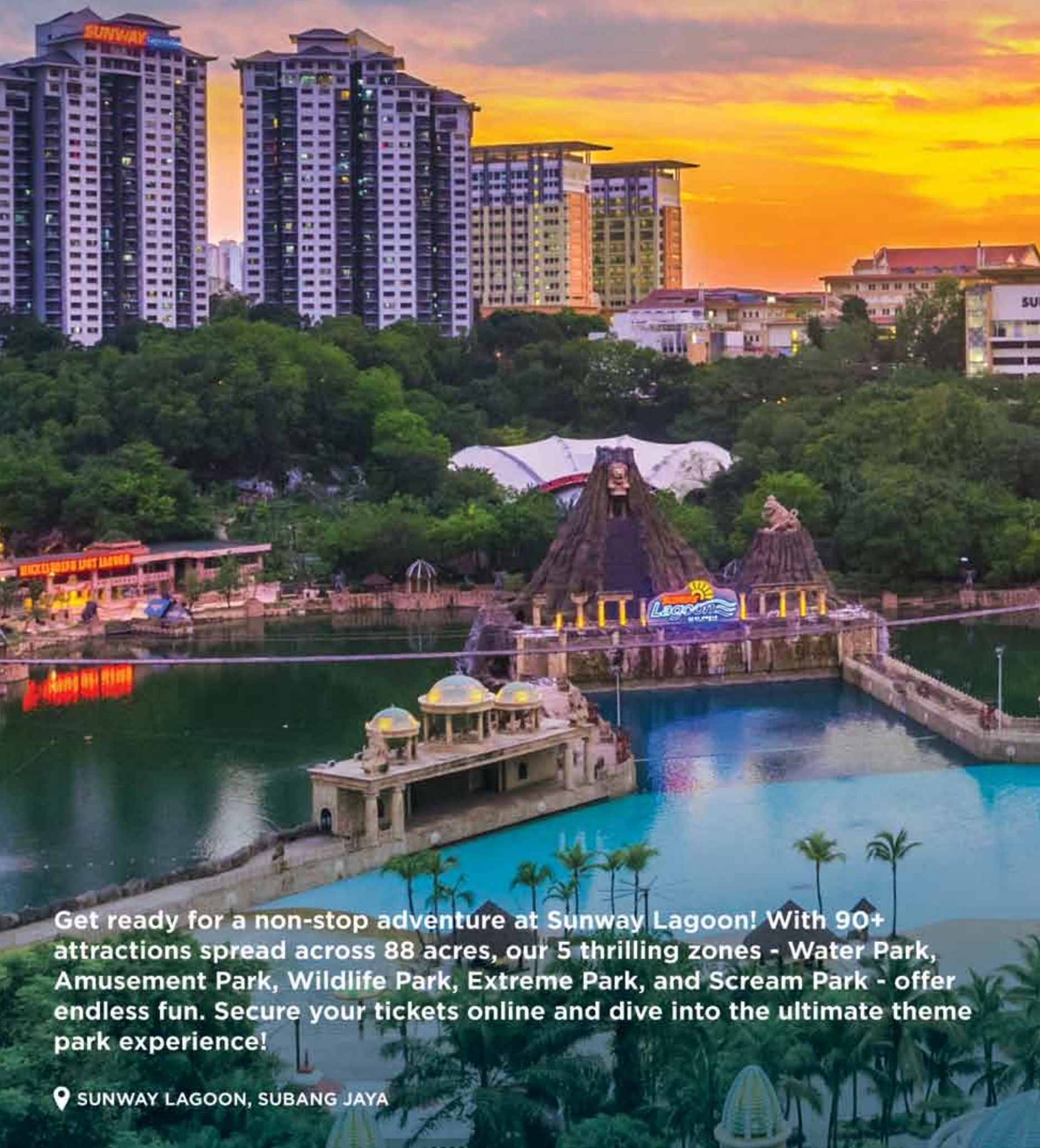
Resounding success
Vaibhav Kala, VP, ATOAI and Founder, Aquaterra Adventures India, said that the seminar was a resounding success. A lot of busi-

ness and adventure selling happened in the second half, he shared.

Concerned over the high rates of accidents in adventure tourism, Kala suggested for “proper guidelines and trained staff”. “It is possible to make India top adventure hub, only if we as a country try to reduce accidents and risk mitigation,” he said.



Save the date
When asked about the next convention, **Tejbir Singh Anand**, Senior VP, ATOAI and Founder & MD, Holiday Moods Adventures, said, “We will be having the convention in the state of Gujarat at Statue of Unity from 14-17 December,” he said. For choosing Gujarat as the convention venue, he said, “The upcoming convention should be very exciting because Gujarat as a state is coming up strongly.”



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5Ps for sustainable tourism

► Contd. from page 3

Partnership, and Peace. "As the travel and tourism industry is evolving at an unprecedented pace, PATA more than ever remains committed to creating a more efficient association that can better serve our members and industry colleagues, as we work towards the responsible and sustainable development of the industry," he said.

Elaborating on how the travel mart will help India's inbound numbers, Semone said, "We have almost 200 buyers from different parts of the world. Their experiences here in India will encourage them to go back and speak with their clients, and motivate more people to come to India. So, any investment by the Ministry of Tourism, by the people, and the industry, to bring overseas people to experience the product always ends up in a good result, as more people understand Indian culture and understand the uniqueness of the destination."

Semone also highlighted the challenges that India needs to work on to increase the inbound numbers. "The visa policy is a challenge faced by many countries, and there are valid reasons for it. India, like any other nation, must prioritise its national security. Indians are very friendly, so once the

travellers get here, they discover the warmth and friendliness of the people. India offers a wonderful experience. However, it's essential to recognise the immense size and diversity of India, it surpasses



even China in population. To encourage more tourists, unravelling the mystique of India may be beneficial. Given India's size, it might be helpful to break it down into smaller, more manageable pieces. This way, visitors can explore regions like Kerala or Delhi, each offering unique experiences. It's unrealistic to expect outsiders to grasp the full scope of India's vastness and decide where to go. Simplifying the understanding of the country into bite-sized portions could contribute to India's success in growing tourism."

Emphasising on India's tourism potential, Semone said, "India in terms of a source market and in terms of Indian visitors, is incredible. Unlike the Chinese market, which can be unpredictable in terms of travel patterns, the Indian market tends to be more reliable

with fewer fluctuations. It is essential to remember that India has a vast population, and only a small percentage can travel internationally and accommodating Indian dietary preferences can pose challenges for many destinations. Therefore, there is a lot of room for the Indian tourism industry to help guide other destinations on how to understand and satisfy

PATA more than ever remains committed to creating a more efficient association that can better serve our members and industry colleagues

the needs and the wants of Indian travellers. This calls for extensive cross-cultural and cross-industry education between the Indian tourism sector and other parts of the world. The goal is to share insights on how to prepare for Indian visitors and what considerations should be made to enhance their experience."

WTM to kick off on 6 Nov

WTM London, one of the most significant events in the global travel and tourism industry, brings together experts from around the world on 6 November.



WTM London 2023, being organised in association with UNWTO and WTTC, will kick off with a significant event, the Ministers' Summit on 6 November. In its 17th year, the summit has become a pivotal gathering, attracting dignitaries from across the globe to engage in discussions and ratify crucial tourism agreements. This year, the summit has been moved to day one of the WTM London event, underscoring its growing significance within the global travel and tourism industry.

Furthermore, on the same day, attendees can anticipate the unveiling of WTM's latest research initiative 'WTM Presents...A Global Travel Outlook'. This session promises to offer invaluable insights into the evolving landscape of travel, as delegates will be presented with the newly developed WTM Global Travel Report. Supported by esteemed researchers from Oxford Economics, the presentation will shed



light on the shifting preferences of travellers, emerging destinations, and evolving travel behaviours and trends that will shape the industry in 2024 and beyond.

On 7 November, a diverse range of engaging sessions will be organised. The Diversity & Inclusion Summit (D&I) takes centre stage, addressing the compelling reasons behind a travel business performing better with diverse workforces and emphasizing the critical role of inclusivity in shaping leisure travel strategies. One notable session within this summit will feature Darren Edwards,

a record-breaking disabled adventurer, who will delve into the issue of disability stigma and explore strategies for businesses to overcome subconscious biases. Simultaneously, the Technology Summit will offer a series of sessions. **Brooke Gilbertson**, International Conference Manager, WTM London, said, "We couldn't be more pleased with the great line-up of speakers and panellists headlining at this year's event. For those seeking a macro view of the travel industry and a deeper understanding of the forces shaping it, WTM London 2023 is a must-attend show."

An evening with Swiss Travel System

A select group of travel agents got a taste of Switzerland at the residence of Swiss Consul General in Mumbai. They met Fausto Zaina, Head of Markets, Swiss Travel System, who was visiting the country over a networking dinner reception. Also present at the event were representatives from Switzerland Tourism and Rail Europe.





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Sport events versus airfare

► Contd. from page 3

and people are willing to pay such amounts.”

On the surge in demand for hotel rooms, **Sanjay Arya**, Chief Executive Officer, KFT Holidays, said, “Given this influx of tourists, a surge in demand is foreseeable, presenting a significant prospect for hotels and airlines to capitalize.”

Arya added, “This influx of tourists holds the possibility to boost local economy by driving more hotel bookings, restaurant visits, transportation services, and other tourism-related activities. This also gives host city a tourist destination beyond the World Cup event encouraging travellers to explore the culture, attractions,



Nishant Pitti
CEO & Co-founder
EaseMyTrip



Sanjay Arya
Chief Executive Officer
KFT Holidays



Gaurav Khanna
General Manager – Products & Industry
Relations, FCM Travel India



Pradipta Biswas
Vice President Operations
Radisson Jaipur City Center



Manoj Saraf
Managing Director
Gainwell Travel & Leisure

and natural beauty of the destination.” On the other hand, **Gaurav Khanna**, General Manager – Products & Industry Relations, FCM

Travel India, was a bit apprehensive about the travel demand during Navratri holiday. “We are anticipating shift in travel patterns with do-

mestic travellers avoiding high airfare and hotel tariff during the World cup. Going by the past events of such scale, domestic travellers do

take alternative accommodations such as homestays,” he said.

Pradipta Biswas, Vice President Operations, Radisson Jaipur City Center, said, “It was time for hospitality sector to make money through cricket match.” He added, “People who have come to watch the match, they have the power to pay for the hotel rooms. Also, this is a signal and power of India shining and doing extremely well, economy is robust as well.”

Sports tourism on a boom
India is a much more experiential and activity focussed mar-

ket. People no longer choose a destination based on perception, but on the basis of offerings, events, activities.

Agreeing to the view, **Manoj Saraf**, Managing Director, Gainwell Travel & Leisure, said, “As much as we may hate to admit it, a big part of Indian travelling now (especially millennial) is about what looks more exciting than watching a big sports match live. Indians by nature have always been sports fans and a combination of these factors is set to make the sports travel market flourish in 2023 and the years ahead.”



Indonesia wows Mumbai trade

Wonderful Indonesia, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia, engaged the Indian travel trade through its recently concluded multi-city roadshow in India. The roadshow travelled from Hyderabad to Mumbai, and Ahmedabad. There were 37 stalls at the event, which promoted the destination's offerings.



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IATO brings tier II cities in focus

The 38th IATO Annual Convention, held in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar (Aurangabad), saw in attendance the who's who of the inbound travel industry, along with senior officials from state governments and the Union Ministry of Tourism. The delegates interacted, discussed pertinent issues and business opportunities over the three days.



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Travel trade meet in Lucknow

In order to promote tourism in the state, the Travel Trade Association of Uttar Pradesh (TTAUP) conducted a daylong buyer-seller meet in Lucknow. Around 30 exhibitors participated in the show, which was inaugurated by Jaiveer Singh, Minister of Tourism & Culture, Uttar Pradesh. The seller profile included airlines, DMCs, travel insurance companies, and B2B agencies.



FITUR: Ecuador joins as partner

FITUR 2024 Partner Country status of Ecuador allows the country to present its attractions and marvels to a worldwide audience at the International Tourism Trade Fair.



Ecuador presented an attractive proposal as a 'FITUR 2024 Partner Country' at the International Tourism Trade Fair, to be organised by IFEMA Madrid at the fairgrounds from 24 to 28 January. **Niels Olsen**, Minister of Tourism, Ecuador, said, "FITUR 2024 is a unique opportunity to show the world all the wonders that Ecuador has to offer."

Jose Vicente de los Mozos, Chairman, Executive Committee, IFEMA Madrid, highlighted the importance of the strategic alliance to promote, present and consolidate the destination of Ecuador. As the partner country, Ecuador significantly enhances its global tourism promotion and positioning. FITUR, a leading international tourism fair, boasts extensive participation and attendance by professionals from around the world. The partnership will further bolster Ecuador's thriving tourism industry with tourism activity sales surpassing US \$3.34 billion by July 2023, supporting over 600,000 families.

FITUR 2024 presents an exclusive opportunity to showcase the wonders of Ecuador to the world

— **Niels Olsen**
Minister of Tourism, Ecuador

The historical connection between Spain and Ecuador has resulted in a rich cultural exchange.

Unrivalled experience

Ecuador offers an unparalleled travel experience, from the high mountains of the Andes to the biodiversity of the Amazon, the sunny beaches of the Coast and the natural heritage of the Galapagos. The country attracts nearly 75,000 visitors annually, offering Four Unique Worlds for tourists to explore.

Mountains: Quito and Cuenca are UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the Andean region, showcasing contrasts and traditions from the mountains, including the impressive Avenue of the Volcanoes.

Amazonia: Beyond being the planet's lungs, the Ecuadorian Amazon is home to several na-



tional parks and comprises more than 43 per cent of the country's continental territory.

Coast: Ecuador's 1,600 km golden beaches, mangroves, and diverse cuisines offer a feast for

the senses, while the coast also offers adventure sports like surfing, kayaking, and paragliding.

Galapagos: The Galápagos is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which boasts of a 97 per cent protected territory and a diverse array of endemic species, showcasing the country's dedication to ecotourism and sustainability.



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24	Arabian Cargo Awards	7:00 pm
25	Arabian Travel Awards	7:00 pm
25-27	ITB Asia	6.30 am
27-28	GPS-Indore	10:00 am

NOVEMBER 2023

2-3	CAPA Asia Aviation Summit & Sustainability Awards- Kuala Lumpur	8:00 am
3-4	Holiday Expo-Visakhapatnam 2023	9:00 am
3-5	India Travel Mart Dehradun 2023	9:00 am
3-6	Taipei International Travel Fair 2023	10:00 am
6-8	WTM	9:30 am
7-9	Penang International Travel Exchange Show 2023	9:00 am
13	Belgium Travel Expo 2023	9:00 am
16-17	UNWTO International Conference on Accessible Tourism 2023	10:00 am
16-19	Peru Travel Mart 2023	10:00 am
19-21	VisitBritain Workshop - Delhi	10:00 am
24-27	OTOAI Convention	10:00 am

For more information, contact us at: talk@ddppl.com

Energy efficient hotels in vogue

Philip Logan, COO, Royal Orchid Hotels, explains how hotel groups are becoming increasingly concerned about their environmental impact and the measures they are taking in order to ensure they are doing their bit towards the same.



Hazel Jain

Nowadays, hotels are becoming more concerned about their environmental impact. Sustainability is a top priority while designing new high-quality hotels. **Philip Logan**, Chief Operating Officer (COO), Royal Orchid Hotels, says hotels can be run in a sustainable manner by following two distinct ways. "One is through the hotel's built environment and infrastructure. New hotels are built with energy efficiency in mind, aiming to save energy, prevent heat loss, and make the most of resources. They use technologies like heat pumps, advanced treated glass, and systems to reuse 'brown' wastewater and have waterless urinals," he says.

He adds that the material used for the construction of hotels often comes from sustainable sources. "For instance, they might use certified timber from forests that aren't old-growth, reusable plastic, waste-derived bricks, or



Philip Logan
COO
Royal Orchid Hotels

steel instead of excessive cement and lime. These hotels also incorporate features that save energy, such as solar panels on the rooftop, solar systems for heating water in resorts, and gardens on the roof and walls to reduce heat. In Dubai, there is even a hotel that uses wind energy for movement," he further adds.

Even older hotels are thinking about making changes to their

equipment and systems to use less energy. These hotels are also designed with LEED-rated systems, which means they are recognised for environmentally friendly practices. They also try to minimise how much land they use for their projects.

Another way hotels ensure sustainability is through their daily operations. Logan says, "This can be done through elimination of single-use plastics, such as bathroom amenities to pump refills. Hotels also eliminate long-haul

supply chain to replace with locally sourced products. Hotels are progressively positioning themselves as local hospitality service providers within the community, actively promoting their services. Some hotels recycle used soap by re-moulding the soap cakes and creating new bars, which they then distribute as part of an NGO initiative to support underprivileged communities. Bottled water should either be made recyclable or packaged in glass containers that can be crushed to minimise the amount of waste sent to landfills."

Measures that can save energy

- ❖ Reduction of pollutants in refrigeration.
- ❖ Use of energy saving devices, such as timers, motion sensors for lights, and low wattage LED.
- ❖ Energy audits to be conducted to look at air flow to reduce AHU and HVAC energy loss.
- ❖ In the F&B sector, the key focus is on the three Rs: Reducing, Reusing, and Recycling. This catchphrase emphasises the goals of waste reduction, maximising reuse opportunities, and recycling leftover materials.
- ❖ Cardboard balers, glass crushers and plastic recycle systems.
- ❖ Elimination of non-organic purchases.
- ❖ Gifts for guests are carefully selected from local communities.

Visit Cuba with MGM Muthu

MGM Muthu Hotels is all set to invite global guests to Experience Cuba at the Destinos Gaviota Tourism Fair, to be held from 18 to 22 October in Cayo Paredón, Cuba.



TT Bureau

Destinos Gaviota Tourism Trade Fair 2023, showcasing Cuba's flourishing tourism industry, is all set to be organised from 18 to 22 October in Cayo Paredón. The fair celebrates the country's rich cultural heritage, stunning landscapes, and warm hospitality. MGM Muthu Hotels will be welcoming guests from around the world to attend the prestigious event.

During the event, MGM Muthu Hotels, will be showcasing its offerings, highlighting itself as a beacon of unparalleled hospitality for attendees gathering in Cuba for the event.

MGM Muthu Hotels, in partnership with Mintur, Gaviota Group, Cubanacan and Gran Caribe Group, is organising an elaborate familiarisation trip for a sizeable contingent from India, Europe and the United Kingdom, including well known tour operators, owners and senior leadership teams of notable travel companies, media personnel and



MGM Muthu Hotels, in partnership with Mintur, Gaviota Group, Cubanacan and Gran Caribe Group, is organising an elaborate Fam trip for Indian group

YouTube Travel vloggers for this event. The contingent would be taken on a trip to Cuba for the event, following which the visiting members would be treated to the

rich culture, history and the fascinating beaches of the Caribbean Island for five days.

As a trusted name in the global hospitality sector, MGM Muthu Hotels is committed to enhancing this experience for all attendees with immaculate interiors, breathtaking locations ranging from beachfront properties to urban retreats, and exquisite dining experiences. With a portfolio of exceptional properties spread across the island, guests would have the opportunity to experience the unique charm of Cuba in the utmost style. MGM Muthu Hotels is soon going to add four new properties to its portfolio.

Staff crunch in tertiary cities

Harmandeep Singh Anand, MD, Jagsons Travels, says the reduced number of travel agents in Nagpur and surrounding cities post-COVID has led to a shortage of trained staff.



Hazel Jain

While the metro cities have been reeling under immense pressure for providing trained manpower not only to the travel industry, but also aviation, we see tertiary cities also going through a similar challenge. Sharing the insight, **Harmandeep Singh Anand**, MD, Jagsons Travels, says, "If we compare the amount of business which was there pre-COVID, we are doing at least 25 per cent higher than that today. One of the main reasons is that the number of agents has reduced post COVID, not just in Nagpur but also the surrounding tertiary cities because there has been a shortage of trained staff. A lot of them have exited the industry during COVID. It will take some time for people to get trained."

Jagsons Travels is doing its bit towards this. Anand says that the company has invested heavily in the business in order to start promoting products that can create a niche. This includes products like NextCellular and



Harmandeep Singh Anand
Managing Director
Jagsons Travels

Cordelia Cruises. "This way, our partners also benefit. We are also educating and empowering the travel industry through Global Panorama Showcase. We just concluded the Kochi show on October 10-11, followed by Indore on October 27-28. We now look forward to Kolkata on November 22-23 and maybe even Guwahati in December 2023," he says.

GPS recently also concluded Edwin in Ladakh and the next one is scheduled to be held in South Africa. "At GPS, we also conduct sessions on GST and TCS to educate the trade. This year, we will also focus on cyber forensics," he adds.

If we compare the amount of business which was there pre-pandemic, we are doing at least 25 per cent higher than that today

In the business for over 45 years, Jagsons Travels has carved a niche for itself, not just in Nagpur and Central India but across India. In the last few years, it started reaching out to other markets as well where it started doing B2B business on a larger scale.

STIC celebrates 50-year journey

STIC Travel Group celebrated its journey of 50 glorious years at ITC Maurya, New Delhi, on 14 September 2023. The golden jubilee celebrations witnessed the presence of Dr Karan Singh, Former Minister of Civil Aviation & Tourism, as the chief guest, along with members of the STIC Travel Group, and senior members of the travel and tourism industry.



MOVEMENTS

RADISSON BLU PALACE RESORT & SPA

Udaipur

Radisson Blu Palace Resort & Spa, Udaipur, has appointed **GAURAV REGE** as the General Manager. In his new role, Gaurav will focus on the sustained success of the brand through his strategic leadership and will strive for overall operational excellence. A seasoned professional, Rege brings with him over two decades of experience in the hospitality industry. Post his graduation from the Oberoi Centre of Learning and Development, New Delhi, he has worked with Oberoi Hotels & Resorts, Ananda in the Himalayas, Marriott Suites Pune (formerly Oakwood Worldwide), and The Leela Mumbai among others.



TRAVELBULLZ

India

TravelBullz has appointed **SARVAR HANS** as the Vice President - Sales, Indian Sub Continent. With 12 years of experience at Amritara Hotels, Leisure Inn, Bloomrooms, The Pilazio Hotel & Country Inn Suites, Hans has been a renowned personality for providing steady and inspired leadership to large teams. He is an expert in Corporate Sales, Leisure Sales, Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) and Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE). He is a valuable addition to the TravelBullz family. TravelBullz, a Destination Management Company (DMC), founded in 2010, offers state of the art modern and interactive technology, with over 150,000 hotels in more than 100 countries worldwide.



DHARANA AT SHILLIM

Maharashtra

Dharana at Shillim has appointed **TARUN SOBTI** as the Head of Sales and Marketing. During his career, spanning over three decades in the luxury hospitality sphere, Sobti has worked with prestigious brands like Taj Hotels & Resorts and Oberoi Group Hotels and Resorts. He brings with him a wealth of expertise and acumen, which will help in elevating Dharana to new heights with a vision to propagate traditional wellness practices at the international level. His role encompasses every aspect of brand marketing and strategy, including planning, positioning, distribution, alliances and partnerships.



PULLMAN & NOVOTEL NEW DELHI AEROCITY

New Delhi

Pullman & Novotel New Delhi Aerocity has appointed **HIMANSHU SHARMA** as the Director of Sales and Marketing. He will be heading the sales, marketing and brand communication mandate for the hotel and take charge of driving commercial objectives, as well as enhancing the brand positioning. He has more than 21 years of experience in monitoring market trends, performance metrics and competitive landscape. In his new role, Himanshu will take on the agenda of driving business for the two hotels by developing sales strategies across various market segments.



CYGNETT HOTELS & RESORTS

New Delhi

Cygnett Hotels & Resorts appoints **SUBHRO MUKHOPADHYAY** as the new Area General Manager for Rajasthan & Goa. In his new role, Mukhopadhyay will assume responsibility for the day-to-day operations of Cygnett Park BL, Jaipur, along with overseeing other hospitality brands within the company's portfolio in both Rajasthan and Goa. He comes with more than 21 years of experience in hospitality operations, having previously worked with renowned brands such as The Fern Hotels, Royal Orchid, IHG, The Zuri Hotels, The Chancery Hotels, and Hyatt. Apart from that, he has enjoyed successful tenures with notable aviation companies.



JW MARRIOTT

Kolkata

JW Marriott Kolkata has appointed **VEDAGIRI RAJARAM** as the new Director of Operations. An accomplished hotel industry veteran with more than 15 years of experience, Rajaram has a proven track record in overseeing bustling Food & Beverages operations, demonstrating formidable analytical acumen, consistently attaining exceptional guest satisfaction scores, and spearheading revenue generation and optimization initiatives. He possesses a diverse skill set that includes creating financial budgets by closely scrutinizing historical data and projecting future budgets. Rajaram started his career with Hotel Royal Orchid, Bangalore, as a Management Trainee.



THE FERN HABITAT, CANDOLIM

Goa

SANDEEP PAL takes over as Operations Manager of The Fern Habitat, Candolim, Goa. Pal has over two decades of experience in the industry, having worked with renowned hotel chains like Radisson, ITC, Novotel, Kenilworth Resorts and Spa, and Taj Hotel Mumbai. His expertise lies in Food & Beverages operations, with a strong track record in launching and managing successful restaurants and bars. As a dedicated and motivating leader, he prioritizes enhancing the guest experience and fostering a positive workplace environment. Known for his boundless energy and enthusiasm, he approaches all tasks with vigour.



GRAND MERCURE AGRA

Agra

Grand Mercure Agra has appointed **VIVEK MAHAJAN** as the General Manager. He has more than 20 years of experience in the luxury hospitality sector. In his new role, Mahajan envisions Grand Mercure Agra as not just a hotel but an epitome of premium hospitality, comfort, and exceptional service. His mission is to establish this new property as the foremost destination in Agra. His extensive journey in the hospitality industry has been characterized by exceptional leadership roles at renowned establishments. He has served at the Oberoi Group, Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces, Wyndham Hotel, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide.



BENGALURU MARRIOTT HOTEL WHITEFIELD

Bengaluru

Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield has appointed **GIRISH PAWAN KUMAR AGOOR** as the new Director of Engineering. He brings over 17 years of experience to the role. Previously, he led engineering teams at renowned hotel chains across India, such as the Park Hyatt Chennai, where he served as the Director of Engineering since September 2019. He has also made notable contributions as Chief Engineer at Leela Palace New Delhi and Udaipur, and showcased his adaptability and resilience while climbing ranks from Assistant Engineer to Senior Engineer at the iconic Taj Coromandel, Chennai.



TALKing People

DAMODAR GUMMADAPU, Co-founder & Chairman, Techwave, says, "When it comes to India, my heart belongs to Rajasthan, particularly the captivating city of Udaipur, and my serene home village Cherumadharam near Khammam. Internationally, Budapest and Dubai hold a special place in my travel-loving heart. But right now, I'm gearing up to embark on an adventure through the captivating Northeast, the Seven Sisters of India. This incredible journey will lead me through Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Tripura, Assam, Manipur & Mizoram."



MANISH RATHI, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Co-founder, IntrCity SmartBus, says, "My favourite pastime is to play with my pets. I love to end my day playing with them and it is completely a joyful stress buster activity. Destressing through interactions with pets is a wonderful way to relax and unwind. I also love travelling, as it not just rejuvenates but improves the overall personality. In India, I find myself repeatedly drawn to the serene mountains of north Uttarakhand, while internationally, my favoured destination tends to vary with each journey."



MANISH DAYYA, General Manager, Sofitel Mumbai BKC, de-stresses with karaoke. "Like many, I tried singing and honestly my rating is 8 on 10 on many occasions. Goa is always fun. Singapore and Dubai remain my favourites because my kids are small and still enjoy being at theme parks, safaris and shows, and these destinations know it all about how to pamper kids of their age as both are under 10 years. December 2022 was supposed to be a holiday to Australia with my family. But my move to Mumbai is more exciting and I am very happy that this opportunity came my way," he shares.



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‘India our top market this year’

Ahmad Luqman Mohd Azmi, CEO of Airlines from Malaysia Aviation Group, believes India is a highly lucrative market, even for overseas carriers, and the country has already emerged as its top international market this year.



Hazel Jain

How have you seen the aviation landscape in India evolve?

India’s outbound tourism is expected to reach \$44.7 billion by 2032, as per a report by Nangia Andersen. India is a highly lucrative market, even from the standpoint of overseas carriers like us. Airlines have always looked at India with optimism and for Malaysia Airlines, India has already emerged as our top international market this year.

How is India faring in terms of load factors vis-a-vis other countries in the region?

India tops our international market. We have seen an average load factor of 81 per cent in India this year. In response to the robust demand, we remain committed to expanding our network by introducing new routes and increasing flight frequencies. We have reinstated more than 90 per cent of our pre-pandemic operations and are currently operating 57 weekly flights to six destinations. Beginning November 2023, we will be launching three new routes - Amritsar, Ahmedabad and Thiruvananthapuram.

Travel demand has been encouraging, with Malaysia Airlines’ passenger traffic up 90 per cent year to date compared to the pre-COVID levels. The full recovery is expected in 2024. Most of the routes we operate on are recording a steady increase in load factor performance and strong forward booking. We are seeing a balanced increase in both domestic and international traffic flows. Malaysia Airlines’ network recovery continues to be led by the domestic market, particularly Kota Kinabalu and Kuching, with long-haul destinations like Australia also recording healthy load factor.

Are you looking at any change in fleet?

In terms of fleet, current flights to India are serviced by Boeing

737-800 NG and Airbus 330 aircraft – depending on the route. As part of our fleet modernisation programme, we embarked on the Boeing 737-800 NG refurbishment exercise, including an elegant cabin design and an enhanced in-flight experience through MHstudio, the airline’s wireless in-flight entertainment system.

What is your aim in 2024?

Despite prevailing macroeconomic challenges, as a group we have achieved an impressive 90 per cent of our pre-COVID capacity. The full recovery is expected in 2024, as the China demand starts to bounce back by the end of Q4 2023. Additionally, we will also inject more capacity to destinations that have experienced a surge in demand such as Australia and South Asia. We recently unveiled plans to expand our presence in India, launching three new routes from Kuala Lumpur to Amritsar, Thiru-

Beginning November 2023, we will be launching three new routes: Amritsar, Ahmedabad and Thiruvananthapuram

vananthapuram, and Ahmedabad. In a bid to strengthen our customer base in India, we have partnered with Acumen Overseas, one of the most reputed airline representation companies. The collaboration will help us enhance our services in the Indian market.

Is the airline releasing any campaigns this year?

As part of our efforts to cater to varying traveller preferences



and needs, we prioritise hyper-personalisation with curated programmes like MHexplorer (for students) and MHbiz Pro (for SMEs and corporates). Our Horizontal Family Fare (HFF) offers three flexible fare options (Lite, Basic, Flex) with unique baggage and seat benefits. Expanding our offerings, MHsports caters to sports enthusiasts, providing unbeatable perks for groups of five or more. MHCruise, specifically designed for cruise agents and companies, offers discounted fares.

Our Indian customers can enjoy the Bonus Side Trip programme, which allows them to stop over in Malaysia and experience the country’s cultural gems such as Alor Setar, Langkawi, Johor Bahru, Kota Bharu, Penang, and more at minimal costs. We also provide convenient transportation options, personalised itineraries and local guidance. For vacations centred around sporting events or cruise travel, we recommend our recently launched products – MHsports and MHCruise.

What are some of the key trends for 2023-24?

While 2022 was

marked by revenge travel, there has been a renewed interest in sustainable travel. More than ever before, consumers are interested in knowing about the impact of their trips on the environment. To tap into this, airlines are increasingly engaging travellers by launching carbon offset initiatives, while also adopting contactless hospitality experiences.



Ahmad Luqman Mohd Azmi
Chief Executive Officer of Airlines
Malaysia Aviation Group

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