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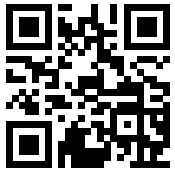
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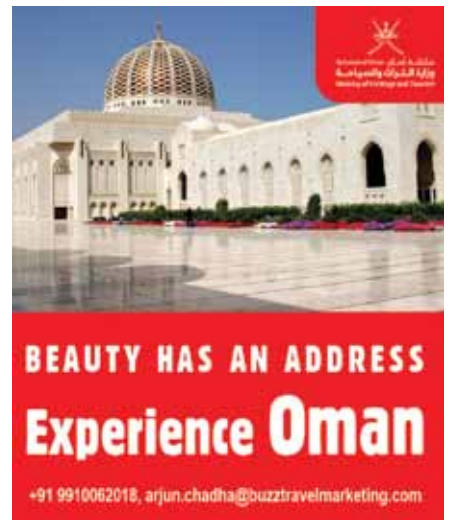
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National Policy by Tourism Day?

G Kishan Reddy, Union Minister of Tourism, Culture and DoNER, says India's tourism sector will greatly benefit from the G20 meetings organised across the country, and the much-awaited National Tourism Policy is likely to be released by World Tourism Day on 27 September 2023.



Nisha Verma

G Kishan Reddy, Union Minister of Tourism (MOT), Culture and DoNER, has claimed that the National Tourism Policy may see light of the day before the World Tourism Day on 27th September. When asked why it was not launched during the Monsoon Session of the Parliament, he shared that the policy was ready

and the ministry would take a decision on the launch soon.

G20 success for tourism

The G20 2023 saw successful meetings for both Tourism Working Groups (TWG), as well as Culture Working Groups (CWG) across India. Reddy said G20 will give a big boost to Indian tourism. "The delegates who attended these G20 meetings were not ordinary people,

but ministers of countries or HODs of ministerial departments, international organisation heads and stakeholders from around the world. Thus, from the point of view of G20, it is an opportunity for India and all meetings will impact tourism," he said.

Unanimous support at G20

The G20 Leaders' Summit in Delhi achieved a significant milestone—

the unanimous endorsement of tourism and culture's pivotal role in sustainable socio-economic development and prosperity. The 'G20 Leaders Declaration' adopted during the summit underlined the significance of the G20 Goa Roadmap. The Delhi Declaration provides a new direction for tourism sector with Goa roadmap outlining the challenges, objectives, opportunities and recommendations for tourism sector to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

SDG Dashboard

To create a legacy from India's G20 Presidency, MOT has set up the G20 Tourism and SDGs Dashboard in partnership with United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), which was also unveiled by Reddy virtually. He claimed that the dashboard is a



G Kishan Reddy
Union Minister of Tourism (MOT)
Culture and DoNER

testament to India's commitment to sustainable tourism. 🇮🇳

Finance key to green tourism

In line with UNWTO's 'Tourism and Green Investments' theme for this year's World Tourism Day, experts feel that it is the right time to make investments for the sustainable future of tourism globally.



Zurab Pololikashvili
Secretary General, UNWTO

“The power of tourism is enormous. But it is not a force that can be taken for granted. Instead, it must be supported, above all with investment. This World Tourism Day we recognise the theme of Tourism and Green Investments. The theme could not be timelier. July 2023 was the hottest year on record and extreme weather events like heat waves could become the new normal. Tourism needs to adapt. For this, we need to rethink how our sector is financed. We need to make it easier for investors of all kinds to support tourism projects with the potential to make a difference. Looking further ahead, we need investments that can empower tourism to build a better and fairer future for all.”

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IATO to mull sustainability trends

The 38th IATO Annual Convention, to be held in Aurangabad from 29 September to 2 October 2023, will discuss sustainability trends in tourism and look at the inbound growth in the country.



TT Bureau

Rajiv Mehra, President, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) said that the 38th IATO Annual Convention will be held at WelcomHotel by ITC Hotels Rama International in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Aurangabad, Maharashtra. Around 900-1000 delegates from across the country will attend the event. This year's theme is—Inbound Tourism and Emerging Sustainable Trends. The convention will



Rajiv Mehra
President, IATO

bring Aurangabad in focus. "Yes, we would amplify the awareness

with the presence of our strong band of tour operators and their on-site marketing of Aurangabad tourist sites," Mehra said. He added that the convention will have a bouquet of presentations and business sessions. **Rajnish Kaistha**, Senior VP, IATO, is the Chairman for the convention, which will have **Sanjay Razdan**, Honorary Secretary, and **Jitendra Kejriwal**, Chairman, IATO Maharashtra Chapter, as Co-Chairmen. Jaswant Singh, IATO member from Aurangabad, is the Convention Coordinator. 🇮🇳

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wants youth in key positions

The new TAFI team with Ajay Prakash at the helm wants to pick up from where it had left. On the agenda is creating a level playing field for airlines, starting new chapters that are not well represented, ironing out visa issues with consulates, and launching a B2C campaign to educate people about the importance of travel professionals.



Hazel Jain

Ajay Prakash has been re-elected as the TAFI President for the new term of two years in an online election held in Mumbai on 2 September 2023. While **Anil Kalsi** takes over from Kamal Jadhvani as Vice President, **Abbas Moiz** and **Hitank Shah** maintain their old position as Secretary and Treasurer, respectively. Committee members include: **Seeraj Sabharwal**, **Sampat Damani**, **Rai Achal Krishna**, **Jitul Mehta** and **Anandaveloo M.** The new team have also co-opted four members for an extended team, as per the TAFI bylaws at the first Managing Committee meeting held on the same day. They are: **S. Somaskandan**, **Sunil Uttam**, **Anil Punjabi** and **Paulose Mathew**. **Pradip Lulla** will continue as the Immediate Past President.

Prakash commented, "We took the initiative to conduct e-voting many years ago because this gives a larger membership base to exercise



their right to vote. It is important to have a full representation of members and who they choose to lead their association."

The e-voting opened on the election day and results were announced on the same day. "Many of the people in the team have been on the national team already for the past two years. Some of our members have gracefully stepped aside to make room for new members to come in on the

national managing committee. Every association needs new faces, needs new ideas, needs younger people for it to grow and sustain itself. It is extremely important that younger members come in and take the initiative. So, we have always encouraged and nurtured new leadership at TAFI," Prakash said.

Relationship with Ministries key
Prakash feels TAFI currently has an excellent new team which has rep-

resentation from across the country, which is very important. "One must have regional representation because there are issues which only the members in that region are fully conversive with. And these issues sometimes need to be escalated in order to be addressed. TAFI has also re-initiated dialogue with the Ministry of Tourism. Unfortunately, TAFI was not at the forefront where the Ministry was concerned. But with the G20 meetings held in

India that we were part of, we made a lot of headway with them. Going forward, TAFI will be communicating and be involved with the programmes of the MoT," he said.

TAFI has also successfully lobbied with the Ministry of Finance to delay the implementation of TCS. Prakash says, "However, it is only a delay right now. We have again approached the government to reconsider the parameters they are proposing to make it more con-

ducive for business to grow. We also have had a series of meetings with VFS Global regarding the visa challenges that our members have been facing. We are also hoping to have a meeting with some of the Consuls to resolve these issues. Also, by virtue of the membership TAFI has with the WTAAA, it also has a seat on the Passenger Agency Programme Global Joint Council where agents and airlines have the opportunity to sit face to face and discuss issues."

The term that was:

- ❖ Opened a new chapter in Jammu & Kashmir
- ❖ Added 132 new members to TAFI
- ❖ Expanded TAFI's joint bank guarantee to cover more members
- ❖ Rebuilt connections with Ministry of Tourism
- ❖ Successfully lobbied with the Ministry of Finance
- ❖ Signed MoU with HATTA (Hellenic Association of Travel and Tourist Agencies) as well as the FEDHATTA, the Federation of Hellenic Associations of Travel & Tourist Agencies
- ❖ Signed MoU with Kazakhstan Tourism Board to promote bilateral tourism
- ❖ Successful convention in Sarawak, Malaysia
- ❖ Liaising with VFS to iron out visa issues
- ❖ Revamped TAFI website
- ❖ Took TAFI membership application completely online



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Ready for sustainable investments?

In between talks of sustainability and green initiatives, UNWTO has identified investments as a key priority for the sector, and hence announced 'Tourism and Green Investments' as the theme for this year's World Tourism Day. The focus is on 'Investing in People, Planet and Prosperity', which will be a call to action to the international community, governments, multilateral financial institutions, development partners and private sector investors to unite around a new tourism investment strategy. UNWTO has underlined that there is a vital need to deliver investment for projects that work for People (by investing in education and skills), Planet (by investing in sustainable infrastructure and accelerating green transformation) and Prosperity.

With UNWTO laying out the strategy out in open for the world to follow, the execution is upon the countries at large. It starts from taking the first step to put sustainable priorities in their policies. The next step, of course, is planning projects to fuel these initiatives and earmarking dedicated funds for the same. In fact, in its mission, UNWTO has stated that the idea is to promote tourism through traditional and innovative investment services for the development of competitive and sustainable economic growth.

A glimpse of this approach was seen recently in the Goa Roadmap for Sustainable Tourism. India, in fact, is one of the first countries where UNWTO and IFC launched the pilot phase focusing on an Investment Readiness Diagnostic that will be the basis for IFC's proposed investment program. The program is a post-COVID medium-term credit line made available to hotels impacted by the downturn in tourism caused by the pandemic, coupled with provisions for retrofit greening, and will be disbursed in partnership with local financial institutions starting in 2021. With all these initiatives being taken into account, we see India moving towards a reality of sustainable future, provided the industry and the huge population become voluntary stakeholders towards this goal.

Airline industry set for growth

Keeping in view the aircraft orders and high load factors, the Indian airline industry is set for stellar growth. The journey of Indian air travel market from 200 mn to 500 mn passengers and a fleet size of 700 to 1,500 planes will set the broad contours for growth in the next decade.

TT Bureau

The Indian air market, including domestic and international, was estimated at ₹1,743 billion (\$21.8B) in FY23, surpassing the pre-pandemic levels of ₹1,502 billion (\$21.2B) in FY20. It is projected to rise to ₹2,824 billion (\$35.3B) by FY26, growing at a CAGR of 17.4 per cent during FY23-FY26, says VIDECON's India Air Travel Market Sizing & OTA Benchmarking Study, FY20-FY26, which gives an overview and analysis of Indian air travel market opportunity, along with the India based OTA landscape.

The VIDECON's report says that the Indian economy is characterized by rapid urbanisation, a burgeoning middle-class, and a young demography. The share of middle-class households is expected to rise from 31 per cent in FY21 to 47 per cent in FY31. More than one-third of the 1.4 billion population lives in urban centres, and around two-thirds is between 15 and 64 years old. All these factors add up to an optimal environment for growth of consumer aspirations that cultivates a high propensity to travel. Air is the only mode of transport that commands an aspirational value and is, therefore, set to be the biggest beneficiary of the India growth story. Air travel penetration in India, at 0.1 trips per capita (versus 0.5 trips per capita in China) still has

dia. Indian airlines are on a buying spree with an order book of about 1,500 aircraft, expected to be delivered over the next 10 years.

Indirect channel (OTAs) is the dominant online distribution channel for air with a market share of 81 per cent of online domestic air

The only air segment to surpass its pre-pandemic level is the international traffic on local carriers – they flew 24 million passengers in

India International OTA and Online Air Market (₹B), and as a Share of International Air Market (%), FY20-FY26



Findings of the study are:

The domestic air gross booking value (GBV) stood at ₹781 billion (\$9.8B) in FY23, up 30 per cent from ₹601 billion (\$8.5B) in FY20 and is expected to reach ₹1,156 billion (\$14.5B) by FY26, with a CAGR of 14 per cent during FY23-FY26.

The international air GBV was estimated at ₹963 billion (\$12B) in FY23, up from ₹901 billion (\$12.7B) in FY20. It will grow at 20 per cent CAGR for the next three fiscals, reaching ₹1,667 billion (\$20.8B) in FY26.

The online air market was estimated at ₹762 billion (\$9.5B) or

GBV and 66 per cent of online international air GBV in FY23.

The Indian OTA air market was valued at ₹583 billion (\$7.3B) in FY23 and is projected to grow at 20 per cent CAGR during FY23-FY26, rising to ₹984 billion (\$12.3B).

The OTA air category is led by the pioneer, MakeMyTrip Group with a market share of 57 per cent in OTA air GBV in FY23. Cleartrip came a distant second at 13.7 per cent share, EaseMyTrip neck-to-neck at 13.4 per cent share, followed by Yatra with 9.4 per cent share.

India's total flown passenger stood at 192 million in FY23, just shy of pre-pandemic levels in FY20. The domestic passenger traffic at 137 million in FY23 has recovered almost fully to FY20 levels, whereas international passenger traffic is trailing at 54 million, recording 90 per cent recovery.

The low-cost carriers (LCCs), led by Indigo, dominate the domestic skies, flying 113 million (82 per cent) of all domestic traffic in FY23. The aggressive pursuits by Tata Group could tilt the share in favour of full-service carriers (FSCs) to some degree. Together, Indigo and Tata Group airlines flew every four in five domestic passengers.

India's international airlift has long since been overshadowed by foreign carriers – they enjoyed a 56 per cent market share in all international airlift from India in FY23.

FY23, with a market share of 44 per cent (versus 38 per cent in FY20) in all international airlift from India.

India Online Air Market

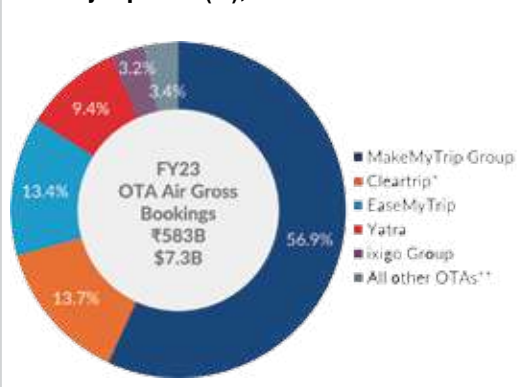
The online air market was estimated at ₹762 billion (\$9.5B) in FY23. It is projected to reach ₹1,263 billion (\$15.8B) by FY26, or 45 per cent of the total air GBV. The online penetration peaked at 49 per cent in FY21, because of a near-standstill in international demand.

The online travel agency (OTA) air category is led by the pioneer, MakeMyTrip Group with a market share of 57 per cent in OTA air GBV in FY23

India OTA Air Market

The Indian online travel agency (OTA) air GBV stood at ₹583 billion (\$7.3B) in FY23, beating the FY20 levels by more than 30 per cent. It is projected to grow at a robust CAGR of 19 per cent during FY23-FY26, reaching ₹984 billion (\$12.3B). OTAs remain the dominant online distribution channel for air. On the domestic segment, OTAs grossed ₹427 billion (\$5.3B), with a market share of 81 per cent of online domestic air GBV while OTA air GBV in international segment amounted to ₹156 billion (\$2.0B).

India OTA Air Gross Bookings (GBV), Share by Top OTAs (%), FY23



phenomenal room for growth. This indicates a long runway for expansion of the air travel market. As of March 2023, 17 scheduled local airlines were operating in India with a total fleet size of 718 aircraft. On international routes, 74 foreign carriers operate flights to/ from In-

44 per cent total air GBV in FY23. It is projected to reach ₹1,263 billion (\$15.8B) by FY26.

The domestic online market is highly penetrated at 67 per cent, in stark contrast with the international segment at 25 per cent in FY23.

Korea's allure grows stronger

Celebrating 50 years of diplomatic and cultural relations with India, Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) recently organised Korea Tourism Festival in Delhi, which aimed to invite Indians to explore the amazing offerings of Korea.

 Suhani Sood

Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) recently organised Korea Tourism Festival to mark the five decades of diplomatic and cultural relations with India. **Younggeun Lee**, Executive Director, International Marketing Department, KTO, **Myongkil Yun**, Regional Director, India & SAARC, KTO, and **Roshan M Thomas**, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, were among the dignitaries present in the event.



The KTO officials underlined the importance of cross-cultural collaboration between India and Korea. "As we look ahead, the Korea Tourism Festival serves as a testament to the enduring and everlasting cultural relationship between both the nations. This event symbolises the deep-rooted connections that bind India and Korea, and open door for cultural exchanges," Yun said. "As a part of the Visit Korea Year, we eagerly anticipate strengthening these connections and welcome travellers to explore amazing offerings of Korea," he added. "The festival's success re-affirms Korea's growing popularity as a favoured destination

among Indian tourists," he further added.

Sharing past data, Yun said that Indian visitors to Korea had surpassed 49,580 by June 2023, with the projections reaching impressive 120,000 by December 2023. "These figures solidify Korea's appeal to Indian travellers," he said.

Highlighting the importance of India market, Lee said, "For Korea, India is a big market having an immense potential. However, the potential has not been fully utilized and explored as of now. We are expecting many Indians to visit Korea and witness its rich culture and charming beauty through festivals

 **Indian visitors to Korea had surpassed 49,580 by June 2023, with the projections reaching impressive 120,000 by December 2023**

and programs like these. I can say clearly that Indians are actually coming to explore Korea, as K-pop, drama, and cosmetics really attract Indians."

KTO also organised a B2B travel mart on the same day, where featuring participants actively engaged to explore various aspects of Korean travel and airlines. Major participants were JeollaNamdo Tourism Organization, Gwangju City, and nine destination management companies, Korean Air, Asiana Airlines, Bioface, and Amorepacific. Anushka Sen, TV actress, model and influencer was named as the Honorary Ambassador of Korea Tourism from India. Lastly, Buddhist Nun and Grand Master Temple Food Guru Wookwan introduced the flavours of Korean temple cuisine to India for the first time. 







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Airline industry to generate US\$ 9.8 billion net profit, with 1.2 per cent profit margin: IATA

Indian cruise travellers shift from single-island getaways to multi-destination experiences

India becomes second most preferred destination for United Kingdom's outbound long-haul travellers

Accor expands portfolio across strategic markets with 7,600 rooms; signs 30 new properties

Tamil Nadu to develop Mullakadu beach as tourist spot with water sports facilities

Punjab seeks funds for tourism infra

Punjab Tourism recently organised a four-city roadshow in Jaipur, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Delhi to create awareness about the state's Tourism Summit and Travel Mart. The roadshow focused on attracting investments for creating tourism infrastructure in the state.

Suhani Sood

With a view to attract investments in the tourism sector, Punjab government culminated its four-city roadshow in Delhi recently. The roadshow, earlier held in Jaipur, Mumbai and Hyderabad, aimed to create awareness about the state's Tourism Summit and Travel Mart, which was held at Amity University in Mohali from 11-13 September. Through the four-city roadshow, Punjab showcased its rich culture and history and sought investments for developing adventure, water, MICE and eco-tourism in the state. The roadshow in Delhi was graced by the presence of **Anmol Gagan Maan**, Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Investment Promotion, Punjab and **Rakhee Gupta Bhandari**, IAS, Principal Secretary Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Punjab.

Mann, in her keynote address, said, "We are aggressively promot-



Anmol Gagan Maan
Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs
Investment Promotion, Punjab

ing tourism to increase domestic and international footfall, which will, in turn, provide employment opportunities." Elaborating upon the various fiscal incentives, she said that Punjab government has launched a couple of initiatives like Invest Punjab, Industrial Policy 2022, Wellness Policy, along with a revised Eco-tourism and Culture Policy. "We have received amazing

response from travel agents and tourism bodies during the four-city roadshow," she added.

Elaborating upon the Punjab Travel Mart, Mann said, "It will serve as a medium to entice forward-thinking tourism professionals from nation and the world. Domestic and foreign tour operators, DMCs, DMOs, travel trade media and hoteliers are invited to participate. With this dynamic collection of stakeholders, Punjab aspires to establish itself as a premier destination."

Punjab showcased its rich culture and history and sought investments for developing adventure, water, MICE and eco-tourism in the state



Anmol Gagan Maan, Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Investment Promotion, Punjab, interacting with other dignitaries on the dais

Diverse facets

Manmeet Singh, Chairman, IATO – Punjab Chapter, said that with diverse facets like culture, history, art, dance, food, and heritage, Punjab has a lot to offer to the visitors. "It is good, as well as bad, that Punjab's potential has not been discovered yet. The bad part is that we were not able to showcase Punjab's potential earlier. Coming to the positive part, we will actually be able to show Punjab in a new light through this tourism mart," he said.

Officials excited over tourism prospects

Expressing excitement over the tour-

ism summit, Bhandari said that Punjab has so far shown only red and green colours to the world, which represent sacrifice, fertility and green revolution. "However, now is the wakeup call to showcase other colours as well," she said. Bhandari emphasized on two key initiatives – wellness and women in tourism. "Punjab's aspiration to become a wellness hub aligns seamlessly with its cultural heritage. Additionally, empowering women in tourism promises socio-economic growth. By fostering women's participation and offering training and financial support, we aim to catalyse positive change," she said.

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TT Bureau

In the dynamic realm of sports travel, where every moment is a celebration of passion, victory, and unity, DreamSetGo has carved a niche for itself by offering unparalleled experiences that transcend the ordinary. As the curtain rises on the stage of excellence, DreamSetGo takes immense pride in narrating tales of enchanting encounters that etch themselves into the hearts and minds of cherished clients.

Founder & CEO of DreamSetGo, **Monish Shah**, states, "At DreamSetGo, the mission is to turn dreams into reality. The belief lies in the power of exclusive experiences that bind people with the magic of sports and travel."



Chandni Singh
Head of Experiences & Events
DreamSetGo

2022 was a spectacle that rekindled the magic of this historic contest. Aamir Sohail from Pakistan and Venkatesh Prasad from India graced the same stage,

ning with Michael Clarke on his private yacht sets the stage for a picturesque memory. Fine dining merges seamlessly with the breath-taking backdrop of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. This experience epitomizes DreamSetGo's commitment to crafting moments that are not just opulent but also emotionally resonant. Clients don't just witness beauty; they become part of it.

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DreamSetGo's commitment to crafting experiences that transcend boundaries is unwavering. DreamSetGo doesn't just facilitate travel;

ments that money can't buy - intimate encounters with legends, nostalgic reunions, and glimpses of the extraordinary. As DreamSetGo marches forward, they pledge to keep pushing the boundar-



A Reverie with Legends: High Tea with Sourav Ganguly at the Hallowed Lords Cricket Ground
Imagine sipping tea in the company of a cricketering legend, Sourav Ganguly, within the iconic writing room of the Lords cricket ground. DreamSetGo turns this surreal moment into reality for discerning clientele. The intimate rendezvous allows cricket aficionados to share anecdotes, insights, and laughter with one of the sport's most iconic figures. It's these extraordinary experiences that set DreamSetGo apart, creating memories that gleam forever in the tapestry of customers' lives.

Reliving History: A Gala Night of Nostalgia Ahead of India vs. Pakistan ICC Men's T20 World Cup Australia 2022, Clash

The rivalry between India and Pakistan in cricket is more than a game; it's an emotion that unites nations. DreamSetGo's gala night prior to the India vs. Pakistan clash during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Australia

conjuring memories of the 1996 World Cup quarter-final. The audience relived history as the

Clients indulge in private dinners where they engage in heartfelt conversations that unveil personal aspects of their sporting icons

legends shared their perspectives, turning back the clock to a defining cricketing moment.

Sailing into Elegance: An Intimate Evening with Michael Clarke amidst Sydney's Splendour

In the embrace of Sydney's glittering harbour, DreamSetGo orchestrates a symphony of luxury and elegance. An exclusive eve-

end Gary Pallister. These privileged clients indulge in private dinners, where they engage in heartfelt conversations that unveil the more personal aspects of these sporting icons. While the sporting arena buzzes with excitement, our clients craft their own tales of inspiration behind the scenes.

In a constant quest to offer exceptional sports travel experiences, DreamSetGo's innovative team remains at the forefront. Recent highlights include VIP Box Experiences with Gujarat Titans and upcoming plans include activations with our partners Manchester United, On Location & ICC Travel & Tours.

Chandni Singh, Head of Experiences & Events, DreamSetGo, and the maestro behind DreamSetGo's extraordinary experiences, shares her sentiments. She says, "It's really a proud feeling to be part of a team that delivers a difference a brand wants to create for

felt. DreamSetGo will continue to deliver Dream Experiences above and beyond."

they curate stories that clients carry with them as cherished memories. The canvas is painted with mo-

ies of sports travel, ensuring that each journey with them is an immersion into the world of dreams and excellence. 🏏



From green intent to impact

► Contd. from page 5

“The theme for 2023 - Tourism and Green Investments prioritises protection of the environment, well-being of local communities, responsible and sustainable travel. For a more sustainable future, it has now become vital for our industry to support investing in green initiatives that reduce the



Arijit Purkayastha
Director
Koyeli Tours & Travels

world's carbon footprint and promote eco-friendly operations. Eco-tourism is gaining rising significance in India.”

“Tourism, being the biggest employing industry in the world, can change a destination, or a state, or a region. So, tourism and green investment is basically to encourage the global community to invest in tourism in a sustainable investment, invest in people to upskill them, to take tourism as a



Debjit Dutta
State Chairman
IATO West Bengal

substitute for sustainable development, invest in destination, and invest in technology to empower the destination.”



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

“Holistic development and well-being for all is the key to ensure fulfilling life of individuals, prosperous nation, and peaceful world. Gradually, the world is realising it's not only the economic development, but Nature is more important. If the Nature would have some serious issues, then the most suffered would be human beings. UNWTO's theme investing in people, planet and prosperity is like G20 theme of India - One earth, One family, One world.”

“This year's World Tourism Day emphasises 'Tourism and Green Investments', an essential theme that can revolutionise the travel industry. India, with its rich cultural heritage and diverse landscapes, is uniquely positioned to adopt this approach. One way is to funnel investments into eco-friendly



Rajeev Kale
President & Country Head - Holidays
MICE, Visa, Thomas Cook (India)

lodgings and sustainable transport options. Steps like these could preserve our natural treasures for future generations.”



Zia Siddiqui
MD, Alliance Hotels & Resorts & ABH
Tourism and EC Member, IATO

“Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, is upbeat on the theme. Govt. of India has taken sustainable and responsible tourism, and inclusive growth as its thrust area. In the G20 TWGs these were deliberated at length. The travel industry and green drives are dynamically weaved as pioneers become more mindful of their biological impact. Various companies and associations in the movement business are embracing eco-obliging practices to propel sensibility.”

“It is the right time to think in the lines of sustainability and green investment to save planet for future generations. We are lucky to see lots of developments, but also sad to see some of these developments ruining the Nature. It is pivotal to incorporate the changes and adopt to green investments. We should be



Mahalingaiah S
Director
Skyway International Travels

proud of the fact that India is always in the forefront in these initiatives. After all, this is the only planet we have.”



Subhash Goyal
Chairman - STIC Travel &
Air Charter Group

“The theme of the World Tourism Day is the most appropriate because saving the green cover on this planet is the need of the hour. India has biological parks, zoological parks, tea plantations, wildlife sanctuaries, mighty mountains and lush green jungles all over the country. India has Nature's bounty and the best place to stay in the world. At places like the Himalayan region, Kerala, and the northeast India, you can enjoy the treasured wealth of the Mother Nature.”



Deepika Khanna
General Secretary
North India Chapter, ETAA

“Currently, there is a lot of upsurge in tourism. Nowadays, we see many travellers who are keen to go to such destinations, within Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Iceland. We sum up the entire saying that they do not want something cosmopolitan, they are looking at things that are more environment-friendly, which have experiences, which are closer to Nature, which are not man-made. On this World Tourism Day, even India is showing a lot of potential.”

“UNWTO has most aptly raised the issue of tourism and green investments. It's about time that all stakeholders in the tourism industry give back to Nature what it has plundered in the last 50 years for financial gains. India needs to work a lot on green investment and initiatives. Post-COVID, the sudden



Rajnish Kaistha
Sr Vice President
IATO

surge in domestic tourism has overburdened the mountains, beaches, cultural, and religious sites.”



Ravi Gosain
Vice President
IATO

“World Tourism Day is indeed a special day for all of us working in tourism. The 'Tourism and Green Investments' theme for this year's World Tourism Day goes well with the current trends and needs in tourism. Our livelihood depends on tourism, and we need to think about how we can keep tourism intact for future generations. MOT's initiative 'Travel for Life' is a perfect example of their seriousness on green tourism.”

“To create greater sustainability in tourism, we need to investigate the wide range of green investment opportunities available or even those not addressed so far. The theme chosen is perfect, as we are continuously suffering with environmental disasters. Both the public and private sectors are investing



Viney Tyagi
Honorary Joint Secretary
IATO

more to make tourism more sustainable, and the government needs to look into other sources of green financing.”



Shreya Barbara
COO
Landscape Safari

“We have seen tourism being redefined, and in this tourism surge, a quintessential aspect that emerged was the selection of a 'green' destination by the travellers. This brings to the fore two crucial directions the tourism industry need to forge towards, one being promotion of destinations endowed with natural beauty and cultural grandeur and the second being preservation of ecological balance in the destination.”

Compiled by Suhani Sood

Expansion path paved with acquisitions

Acquisitions are not just about combining companies for EaseMyTrip, but it's about crafting a new chapter of growth, innovation, merging cultures, and collective success. Rikant Pittie, COO & Co-Founder, EaseMyTrip, claims that strategic planning is the only way to make acquisitions successful.



Hazel Jain

With a vision to blaze a trail in the B2B space, EaseMyTrip.com recently acquired a 51 per cent stake in three travel companies: Guideline Travels Holidays India, Dook Travels and Tripshope Travel Technologies. This big development enables the company to look beyond its own capabilities and ensure benefits to its customers and partners, says **Rikant Pittie**, COO & Co-Founder, EaseMyTrip.

Sharing his key takeaways from the acquisition, Pittie says, "Having a mindset toward profitability is of paramount importance. Hence, assessing if the business is a debt-free, asset-light-cost-effective business model runs a long way and cannot be ruled out. Tech-based companies are the future, it is best to look out for such companies that have a solid tech foundation." He adds that businesses that are built on customer and em-



ployee-centricity always win. "An acquisition isn't just about combining companies; it's about crafting a new chapter of growth, innovation, merging cultures, and collective success. And strategic planning is the only way to make acquisitions successful," Pittie says, adding, "Companies that are in there for the long haul, are able to provide a definite solution, have a good value proposition that ensures scalability and sustainability of the business are a good catch."

Echoing similar sentiments on the bottom line, **Pradeep Saboo**, Chairman & Managing Director, Guideline Travels, says, "With their help, we will grow the company further. There will be no interference from them; it will be business as usual for us and our partners. We are huge consolidators for cruises for over two decades in India and we are going to grow this segment. We will also focus on our own group tour products, which we will roll out to all our B2B partners pan India. We

have created some unique products that touch each corner of the country." With a bigger platform, he will have a bigger team to service B2B partners.

"Such a huge acquisition in the travel industry has happened after a long time. Now is the right time for consolidation and synergising of the industry to meet a common goal. Since EMT is an online travel platform and pro-technology, we will also follow on these footsteps," Saboo adds.

Adil Sathu, Founder & CEO, Tripshope, one of the biggest consolidators in J&K with a huge network of travel agents in the region, says, "We have more than 4,000 travel agents from Kashmir in our network. We largely get domestic tourists from around the country, but some international tourists as well. With this acquisition, we can think of expanding to other parts of India and get more B2B partners into our fold. We also have a marketplace where agents can stock their inventory that can be bought by other agents."

Sharing his perspective about the acquisition, **Sandeep Kumar Gupta**, Director, Dook Travels, says, "We are big in the CIS countries, and we have now expanded our footprint



Tech-based companies are the future, it is best to look out for such companies that have a solid tech foundation

– Rikant Pittie

in the Middle East. We are expanding our source markets as well. Demand for countries like Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Kazakhstan has gone up because of good air connectivity and easy visa processing for Indians. We can grow faster with this acquisition." 

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Sentosa eyes Indian MICE, weddings

Chin Sak Hin, Assistant Chief Executive, Sentosa Development Corporation, was recently in Mumbai to promote the destination in India and strengthen ties with the Indian trade partners. He said that the visiting guests can spend even a week at the destination, which promises to offer a myriad of experiences for them.

Hazel Jain

Sentosa has been a favourite among Indian leisure travellers. But now Sentosa Development Corporation (SDC) is looking to tap newer segments from India – MICE and weddings.

Chin Sak Hin, Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Financial Officer, Sentosa Development Corporation (SDC), was recently in Mumbai to meet travel partners in this regard. He said, “We are seeing Indian tourists return to Sentosa. While we still claw back to pre-COVID numbers, the growth is certainly steady. Now, we want to strengthen our business for MICE and wedding segments from India. Sentosa is a wonderful place to conduct weddings. Even in leisure space, while we are very strong in the family space, we want to reach out to the growing adult audience.”

Sentosa recently also signed an MoU with Thomas Cook India and SOTC for leisure and corporate



Chin Sak Hin
Assistant Chief Executive
Sentosa Development Corporation

groups. “We have just started marketing weddings in Sentosa. We have seen Indian weddings take place in the past, but that happened organically. We have now appointed an Indian wedding planner in India. Hopefully, we will start to see more weddings take place at Sentosa. We, along with Singapore Tourism Board, recently

also participated in a wedding roadshow and have engaged with many wedding planners and organised FAM trips for some of them. We can curate and organise weddings using our hotels. We also have caterers that specialise in Indian food,” Hin said.

To sweeten the deal for Indian couples, SDC will offer incentives that could range from complimentary pyrotechnic displays or drone light shows, Hin added.

Sentosa will soon embark on a three-city India roadshow covering Jaipur, Pune and Coimbatore. “We want to reach out to those cities that have a good connection with Singapore – they become our natural markets. India is always in the top five markets for us – sometimes it is number one. The average length of stay right now is around one-and-a-half days to two days. But we think Indians can easily spend even a week at Sentosa,” he opined.

Currently, India accounts for nearly a third of overseas visitors to Sentosa Island for the first half of 2023. To leverage this growth potential, SDC has inked one-year strategic partnerships with Thomas Cook (India) and SOTC Travel. The partnership

Now, we want to strengthen our business for MICE and wedding segments from India. Sentosa is a wonderful place to conduct weddings

will see SDC working closely with them on activities such as product development, joint consumer promotions, as well as publicity to raise Sentosa’s profile in the India market, increase Sentosa’s capture rates of



(L-R); Abraham Alapatt, Chin Sak Hin, and Daniel D'souza

the India market, particularly in Tier II and III cities. Both Thomas Cook and SOTC will also curate exclusive packages that feature the latest offerings in Sentosa.

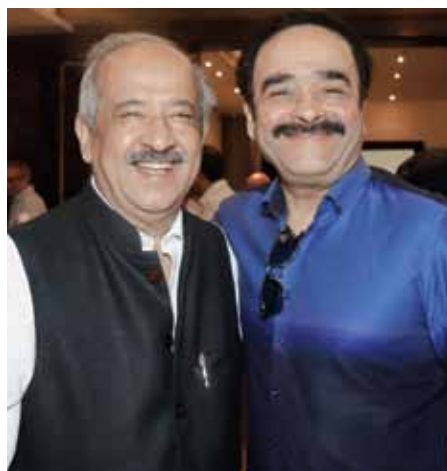
Ongoing island transformation

Sentosa has pushed ahead with developments even amid the pandemic, and new discoveries await

on the island, including attractions like the SkyHelix Sentosa, Scen-topia, and Central Beach Bazaar. Apart from the anticipated return of KidZania Singapore in 2024, the latest offering being unveiled is the Shangri-La Group’s first non-hotel, lifestyle and entertainment precinct, The Palawan@Sentosa. It is a day visit.

IATO creates buzz about convention

IATO hosted an interactive luncheon meeting on 2 September 2023 at Hotel Hyatt Regency, New Delhi. The purpose of the meeting was to invite the members and update them about the 38th IATO Annual Convention, to be held in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar (Aurangabad) from 29 September to 2 October 2023.



Ticket booking open for WTM London

Ticket booking opens in advance for World Travel Market (WTM) London, scheduled from 6-8 November 2023 at the ExCel London. The event is ready with a plethora of new offerings for the delegates.



TT Bureau

Ticket booking is open for the 43rd edition of World Travel Market London, scheduled from 6-8 November 2023. The organisers have planned several new and exciting changes.

After an in-depth customer research carried out late last year, WTM has announced a host of developments to improve attendee experience and ensure that every member of the travel community extracts as much value from the event as possible. This year, WTM London will open its doors earlier than usual and will be welcoming visitors from

This year, WTM London will open its doors earlier than usual and welcome visitors from 9:30am providing an additional hour to visitors & exhibitors

9:30am providing an additional hour for visitors and exhibitors to have impromptu meetings. Visitors are invited to make use of the new, open-for-all, Community Hubs right in the centre of the show, and attendees can also look forward to an 'everyone's welcome' Networking Party that will take place within Ex-Cel London from 5:30pm-7:30pm on 6 November.

There will be a new VIP badge to host senior industry leaders and a big-name, inspirational Closing Keynote on Wednesday 8 November. WTM Connect Me – the show's meeting booking platform – will be available to Buyers, VIPs and Media via the WTM App. The conference programme will cover eight themes over three different stages throughout the three-day event. The eight conference themes are Sustainability, Technology, Geo-Economics, Emerging Markets, Consumer Trends, Marketing, Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) and Experience and aim to help the global travel community succeed and thrive by informing, entertaining, and influencing their business decisions.

In other changes, the Ministers' Summit, where dignitaries from around the world gather to discuss and ratify key tourism agreements, will return for its 17th year, and will take place on 6 November.

WTM London 2023 is set to launch its first Diversity and Inclusion Summit on 7 November, supporting WTM's belief that the travel sector has the power to evoke positive change in the world. Tickets to the three-day show will be free up until 31 October, after which there will be a charge of £45 per person. Organisers are encouraging early booking to ensure visitors take time to plan and maximise their visit.



Juliette Losardo, Exhibition Director, WTM London, said, "We have been working behind the scenes to bring some exciting developments this year. As the travel and tourism sector grows and changes, it's essential that WTM evolves to guide and support this change; a place

for inspiration, for making plans and fixing issues, for diversifying thinking and hardening supply chains – it is our job to ensure the travel sector is equipped for the next chapter. Developments you will see at WTM this year are entirely reflective of what our attendees are asking for. We are bolstering the ways you can maximise value from your visit, with more networking, better business opportunities, a refreshed educa-



tion programme and a host of new partnerships. We are pleased to be opening ticket booking ahead of the

summer and are committed to ensuring travel professionals have the best three days possible."

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The Philippines revisits India market

After a hiatus of almost four years, the Department of Tourism and the Tourism Promotions Board, Philippines, made their way to the India market with a four-city roadshow in Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, and Mumbai. Indian travel trade assured Philippines Tourism officials of promoting The Philippines as a tourist destination, especially for its nature, culture and adventure activities.



Connects with partners in Chennai too



ETAA promotes Qatar offerings

ETAA, in association with Qatar Tourism, recently organised a workshop in New Delhi to educate and inform its members about the new offerings that Destination Qatar has in store for Indians.



Suhani Sood

The Enterprising Travel Agents Association (ETAA), in association with Qatar Tourism, recently held a knowledge session at The Claridges, New Delhi, to educate and inform its members about the new offerings in leisure, weddings, and MICE segments that Destination Qatar has for Indians.

The session, titled 'Explore Qatar', highlighted that the destination is a perfect amalgamation of tradition and modernity, and tourism is one of the five priority sectors pivotal for diversifying Qatar's economy.

Deepika Khanna, General Secretary, North India Chapter, ETAA and CEO & Founder, Anchor Destination, said, "ETAA has pulled out an event with Qatar Tourism, where a knowledge session and product presentation was conducted. ETAA members attended this 'Explore Qatar' workshop, which would allow them to pitch the destination to the right target audience and clients."



Deepika Khanna
General Secretary, North India Chapter, ETAA
and CEO & Founder, Anchor Destination

Saurabh Tuteja, Chairman, North India, ETAA and Director, Ujjwal Creations, said, "Qatar is a fairly new destination for Indian tourists, and it is time to start educating travel agents and tourists about the destination." He added, "Qatar is just six hours away via flight, and hence the air connectivity is excellent and India's proximity to Qatar is not an issue."

Talking about the visa process, he said, "It creates an excellent



Saurabh Tuteja
Chairman, North India
ETAA and Director, Ujjwal Creations

opportunity for Indians to explore Qatar as the destination is providing visa on arrivals."

India market

Khanna said, "Currently, Qatar has seen huge upsurge with respect to Indian arrivals. I think in the last three years, Qatar has become at least 3 to 5-night destination. It has top-notch hotels, luxurious amenities and infrastructure. I believe that this is the best time to explore Qatar."

Princess' wedding cruise in Dec

Princess Cruises will organise a dedicated bridal fashion cruise in December 2023, under which signature wedding packages will be developed to attract the wedding clients.



TT Bureau

Princess Cruises recently unveiled an exciting new line-up of wedding packages, 25 years after hosting the first modern wedding at sea. The company has also roped in TV host and bridal designer Randy Fenoli as Brand Ambassador for Love and Romance and will be hosting a bridal fashion themed cruise in December 2023 apart from developing a signature wedding package exclusive to The Love Boat.

"Twenty-five years ago, Princess set the standard for weddings at sea, and with the help of Randy Fenoli, the most trusted source in the bridal industry, we are doing it again with our new Princess Perfect Weddings packages, evolving our offerings to create unparalleled experiences for couples and their loved ones, all at tremendous value. These new packages let couples combine their dream wedding with an unforgettable voyage to picturesque destinations to celebrate their special day in the most extraordinary ways



Nishith Saxena
Founder & Director
Cruise Professionals

imaginable," said **John Padgett**, President, Princess Cruises.

The New Princess Perfect Weddings create unforgettable moments by offering packages tailored for couples seeking unique and romantic ways to say 'I do'.

Nishith Saxena, Founder & Director, Cruise Professionals, which has a long association with Princess Cruises, said, "With all Princess Perfect Weddings performed

at sea, ship captains serve as the ceremony officiant and all packages include a dedicated wedding specialist who works closely with couples, pre-cruise and on board, to tailor their wedding package according to their unique vision and requirements. From selecting the perfect venue to arranging decorations, flowers, and photography, every detail is handled to ensure an unforgettable event.

From selecting the perfect venue to arranging decorations, flowers, and photography, every detail is handled to ensure an unforgettable event

We have handled a few Renewal of Vows celebrations for Indian families and the experience has been great."

1 IN CIRCULATION & READERSHIP

SOUTH ASIA'S LEADING TRAVEL TRADE FORTNIGHTLY

EVENT TALK

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SEPTEMBER 2023

Date	Event	Time
20	Oman Tourism Webinar	11:30 AM
21	Costa Cruises Webinar	3:00 pm
21	ATOAI Seminar & Adventure Tourism Roadshow	9:00 am
21-23	Asian Tourism Fair 2023	10:00 am
26	Abu Dhabi Webinar	3:00 pm
27	World Tourism Day	10:00 am
28	Switzerland Webinar	3:00 pm
29-30	Business + Leisure Travel and MICE 2023	11:00 am
29-2 Oct	38 th IATO Annual Convention	10:00 am
30	Global Tourism Investors' Summit 2023	9:00 am

OCTOBER 2023

3-5	IFTM Top Resa	10:00 am
4	Spain Tourism Roadshow-New Delhi	10:00 am
4-6	PATA Travel Mart 2023- New Delhi	10:00 am
5	Spain Tourism Roadshow-Bengaluru	10:00 am
5	Switzerland Webinar	3:00 pm
6	Spain Tourism Roadshow-Mumbai	10:00 am
10-11	GPS-Kochi	10:00 am

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

Charter biz offers high profits

Private charters may sound like an expensive option, but it is not an unprofitable one. In fact, offering private charters to travellers is a more bankable option for tour operators and travel agents. Here's a quick guide on how to make this a profitable choice.

In a country like India, which is so diversified in its culture and heritage, anyone travelling in this part of the world couldn't feel anything short of extremely mesmerised. At the same time, due to shortage of time and poor infrastructure, most of the high-end travellers prefer to hire a private jet to experience the length and breadth of our country.

It is quite surprising that a large segment of travel agencies and tour operators shy away from offering private jet services to these travellers. They would be surprised that aircraft charter services have a high profit margin compared to any other service they offer to their clients.

Some of the strategies they can use to increase their business through charter flights are:

❖ **Identify target markets:** Determine customer segments who are most likely to be interested in charter flights. This could include luxury travellers, corporate groups, sports teams, and wedding groups.



❖ **Offer customised itineraries:** Create tailor-made packages that cater to the specific needs and preferences of your target segments. It is important to highlight benefits like flexibility and direct connectivity to their destinations, time efficiency, privacy and comfort, that charter flights offer compared to commercial flights.

❖ **Strategic collaboration with partners:** Get into a formal contract or partnership with hotels, resorts,

and other relevant businesses to create comprehensive travel packages that include both transportation and accommodations.

❖ **Social media and product marketing:** Use strategies like email marketing, social media campaign and online advertising to reach your target audience at a much faster pace.

❖ **Leverage customer testimonials:** Using customer testimonials is a huge weapon to convince other

potential flyers to use private charter services. Travel agencies and tour operators must investigate this strategy to grasp a large chunk of High Networth Individuals (HNIs) business through their foreign agents.

❖ **Competitive pricing:** It has been seen that high-end customers do not mind paying a premium price for flying private jet till the time they have been clearly communicated the added value they receive for the price. These guests expect a transparent transaction with their suppliers.



Santosh Sharma
Co-founder & CEO – Foresee Aviation and Founder, BookMyJet
(Views expressed are the author's own. The publication may or may not subscribe to them.)

EgyptAir celebrates Delhi-Cairo flight

EgyptAir, the national carrier of Egypt, has launched four weekly direct flights connecting New Delhi to Cairo. To commemorate the occasion, the airline hosted a launch party, which saw the who's who of travel industry in attendance. A senior delegation from EgyptAir interacted with the travel trade to share details and offers in store, as they networked over sumptuous food and cocktails.





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MON	UR430	20:25	06:05
WED	UR430	20:25	06:05
SAT	UR430	17:30	03:10

MUMBAI to ENTEBBE

DAYS FLT No. DEPART ARRIVE

TUE	UR431	0805	1245
THU	UR431	0805	1245
SUN	UR431	0510	0950



(*T & C Apply)

MOVEMENTS

SINGAPORE TOURISM BOARD

New Delhi

The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) appoints **LIM KEAN BON** as the Area Director, India, South Asia, and Africa. He will succeed Raymond Lim as the India market lead based in New Delhi, leading STB's promotion, and travel trade engagement activities in Northern and Eastern India to sustain and grow affinity for Singapore from leisure travellers. In addition, Kean Bon will be responsible for business development efforts to secure visitorship across India to Singapore in the Cruise and MICE segments. He will also lead his team in engaging consumers in other regional markets like Bangladesh and South Africa.



THE LALIT ASHOK BENGALURU

Bengaluru

The LaLiT Ashok Bengaluru appoints **PAVAN KUMAR MANIKONDA** as the General Manager. In his new role, he will be responsible for overseeing and enhancing the operational excellence of the property. His proven leadership skills, strategic vision, and extensive knowledge in various aspects of hospitality management will play a pivotal role in driving the hotel's growth, optimizing performance, and further cementing its reputation as a premier destination. With more than 18 years of experience in hotel operations, Manikonda is well-regarded as an industry veteran with a strong business acumen.



THE LALIT SURI HOSPITALITY GROUP

Mumbai

The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group appoints **RAJAN KALRA** as the Head of Sales (MICE) for the Mumbai region. With an impressive career spanning over 17 years, Rajan will assume responsibility for the development and execution of comprehensive sales strategies aimed at enhancing revenue, increasing visibility, and elevating the overall perception of the Lalit Hotels brand. In his new role, Rajan will spearhead sales initiatives within the Mumbai region, driving substantial revenue growth across The Lalit Hotels portfolio. His extensive background in Sales and Marketing is underscored by a distinguished track record of consistently surpassing targets.



SKIL CABS

Mumbai

SKIL Cabs has appointed **AMAN KHUPSARE** as the General Manager - Operations. Khupsare brings with him over two decades of diverse professional experience, having worked with multinational corporations and startups across industries, including pharma, telecom, insurance, media, fitness, and wellness. His expertise spans areas like Sales and Distribution, Business Development, and Account and Project Management. He is known for his exceptional cross-functional proficiency in both strategic and operational aspects of business. A self-starter, he possesses a notable ability to manage young and dynamic teams.



NHCC AND HICC

Hyderabad

PRABIN C.B. has been appointed as the Director of Revenue Management of Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre (NHCC) and Hyderabad International Convention Centre. Prabin has more than two decades of experience in the hospitality industry, particularly in Operations and Revenue Management. In his present role, Prabin will be responsible for determining the strategic vision for the property by establishing goals and guiding the hotel's commercial team in implementing tactical efforts to promote revenue growth. He will take an active role in analyzing real-time data and market reports to recommend revenue-generating strategies.



CROWNE PLAZA CHENNAI ADYAR PARK

Chennai

Crowne Plaza Chennai Adyar Park hotel elevates **JACOB PAUL** as the Director of Human Resource. Paul brings along with him an industry experience of 14 years. In his new role, he will be responsible for the recruitment of the team, managing payroll, ensuring ethical business practices, statutory compliances, associate well-being, learning and development and team engagement. He has a knack of bringing together professionals from various cultures to collaborate in harmony in order to achieve the ultimate purpose and vision of the company.



THE FERN HOTELS & RESORTS

Delhi

The Fern Hotels & Resorts has promoted **SURAJ NARAYAN** as Director of Sales at Fern's Regional Sales Office in Delhi. He will lead a dynamic team of sales professionals, fostering a collaborative and results-driven culture that aligns with The Fern Hotels' commitment to excellence. His leadership will focus on nurturing existing client relationships, cultivating new business opportunities and optimizing revenue streams across various market segments. He has 15 years of experience in the hospitality sector and worked with several hotels.



Noida

ATUL KUMAR has been promoted to Associate Director of Sales at the Fern's Regional Sales Office in Noida. Kumar has been an integral part of the organisation since 2019 when he joined the organisation to establish the new regional sales office in Noida. Throughout his tenure, he has displayed an exemplary leadership and a strong commitment to driving sales growth. In his new role, he will drive the core sales function in the Noida region for The Fern Residency, Noida, and all the other hotels in the brand pan-India. His earlier stints include the pre-opening team at Radisson Blue.



CHARANYA SATHYAMOORTHY has been elevated as a Financial Controller for Crowne Plaza Chennai Adyar Park. In her new role, Sathyamoorthy will continue to support entire finance and accounting functions. She is a hospitality professional with more than 14 years of experience across India and has been part of IHG for six years. She has been associated with renowned hospitality brands like Taj Hotels in various cities and played a key role in the successful assignments, including identification of profit potential, cost effectiveness and internal control mechanism. She has ensured to maintain all internal control processes in place.



TALKing People

JITUL MEHTA, Managing Director, VP Travels, is an avid reader and reads all kind of books, newspapers and magazines to de-stress. He even has a small library at home. "I also enjoy an evening with friends and family over drinks and dinner. During the lockdown, I even tried my hands on cooking a few times, but immediately understood that it's not my cup of tea. I also enjoy travelling and one of my favourite holiday destinations in India is Rajasthan, particularly Udaipur. I also enjoy visiting Zermatt in Switzerland and London. I have now decided to travel in India more," he says.



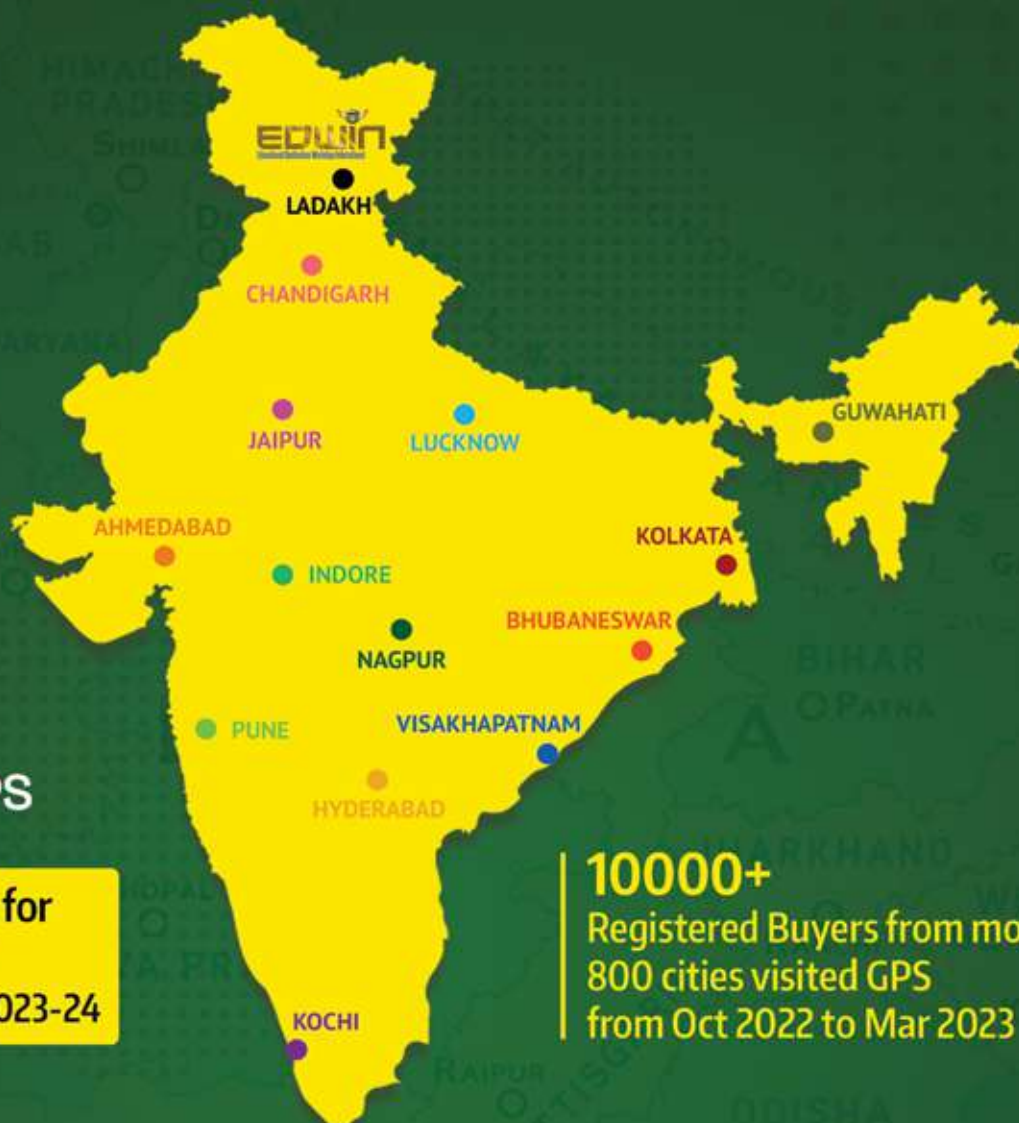
SHEEL JADEJA, Director of Sales at Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel, spends time with his family when not at work. "I also love running, cycling, and listening to music, which allows me to rejuvenate. I have always been passionate about food and used to love cooking once upon a time. During the lockdown, I picked up cooking again from where I had left and got back to this passion. I try to continue during weekends. My favourite holiday destinations are Udaipur in India and Bali in Indonesia. My next holiday will be to Jaipur and internationally, it will be Thailand," he says.



LALIT DADHEECH, Director of Engineering at The Ritz Carlton Pune, destresses by listening to soft music. He also believes in the power of meditation to calm the mind and relax. He utilised his time during lockdown productively and learned a new skill – playing the synthesizer. Dadheech also loves travelling whenever possible. One of his all-time favourite holiday destinations in India is a road trip to Leh in Ladakh. Internationally, he loves visiting Singapore. However, his next holiday will be to Kerala and he is also planning an international holiday to the USA.



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Thailand's mixed strategies pay off

Thailand has welcomed close to 900,000 Indian travellers in the first seven months this year and aims to cross the 1.6 million target by the year-end. The country now focuses on diverse tourism segments, including weddings, and families.

 Janice Alyosius

Indian tourist arrivals in Thailand reached nearly 2 million before the pandemic struck. This year, in the first seven months, the country has welcomed close to 900,000 Indian visitors and expect to touch the 1 million mark by the month-end. “Our goal for this year is to reach approximately 1.5 to 1.6 million, representing about 80 per cent of the 2019 numbers,” says **Siriges-A-Nong Trirattanasongpol**, Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) New Delhi.

Thailand has always been a synonymous with captivating landscapes, rich culture, and welcoming hospitality. One of the key segments, TAT authorities are eyeing is weddings. Trirattanasongpol says that weddings in Thailand are not only a high-value affair, but also offers opportunities for sustainability. “Weddings are of very high value for us, when they come to Thailand, they come in big groups and spend a lot. In 2024, we plan to promote sustainability in weddings, aligning with the growing global trend towards sustainable celebrations. In the past, we were promoting weddings by offering incentive schemes exclusively to wedding planners. However, in the coming year, we are taking our promotional efforts a step further. Not only will we continue to provide incentives to wedding planners, but also introduce a new scheme for the wedding couples. We plan to provide special gifts to welcome wedding couples,” she reveals.

Talking about the visa process, she says, “We may not be directly involved in visa process, but we plan to offer incentives to large groups. For instance, for a group of 100 visiting people, we will implement a promotional scheme tailored to their needs.” Sharing further plans, Trirattanasongpol says, “We would also like to focus



on families and FITs. Families travel in groups, typically comprising 4-5 families. The group size bigger than FITs, but FITs are also one of our main segments. We plan to collaborate with our partners, such as OTAs, to promote them.”

She shared that TAT also plans to woo active senior citizens and


 **In the past, travel to Thailand was male dominant, but nowadays Indian women are exploring Thailand more frequently**

women travellers in 2024. “Nowadays, senior citizens often form their own group of 10-15 members and travel together. Indians in their 60s are very active, are full of life and enjoy to the fullest just like the young generation. So, they can be our main target next year.”

Highlighting a shift in the travel trends, she says, “In the past, travel to Thailand was male dominant, but nowadays Indian

women are exploring Thailand more frequently. We have observed groups of female travellers coming to Thailand to have a great time with their other female friends. I think this is a new trend from India to Thailand.”

Trirattanasongpol also highlighted the 5Fs—Food, Fight (Muay Thai), Festival, Film, and Fashion — that are Thailand's unique offerings and focus area. “Food - it is not limited to Thai cuisine alone. When we talk about food, we are referring to a diverse range of international culinary delights that cater to all tastes and preferences. Fight - Muay Thai is a martial art very important for us. Festival - This is another significant aspect, where Thailand find cultural connections between the two countries. Holi in India is similar to Songkran festival of Thailand and Loi Krathong is similar to Diwali,” she stated.

On the travel connectivity issue, Trirattanasongpol says, “We want more airlines to popular destinations like Phuket, with potential extensions to other cities like Chiang Mai. Chiang Mai has become new popular destination for Indian tourists, especially the senior citizens or the FIT, as they have spas, many wellness centres and also, they can enjoy a night life there with shopping.” 



Siriges – A – Nong Trirattanasongpol
Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) New Delhi

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