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Green is new gold for Indian hotels

Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) has been ensuring that hotels meet environmental and social benchmarks. The council recently signed an MoU with the Hotel Association of India (HAI) with an aim to raise awareness and promote sustainability certification among member hotels.



CB Ramkumar
Vice Chairman, GSTC

Surbhi Sharma

CB Ramkumar, Vice Chairman, Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), has become a leading voice in advocating sustainable tourism practices worldwide. As one of the foremost trainers in both government and private sectors, Ramkumar highlights the importance of sustainability certification for hotels, the role of

governments in regulating sustainable practices, and the collaboration between GSTC and the Hotel Association of India (HAI) to facilitate the journey towards sustainability for member hotels in India.

Sustainability certification

Ramkumar says that sustainability certification is no longer a mere option but a necessity. "The world is increasingly mov-

ing towards verifiable claims," he said. Governments offer incentives, tax breaks, and subsidies to support the sustainability initiatives by hotels. Many hotels make unverified claims about their sustainability practices to avail the benefits. However, when consumers visit, many of their claims fall apart. Therefore, certification by an accredited third-party body is becoming vital, especially in

the hospitality sector. Ramkumar says, "Governments, Online Travel Agencies (OTAs), and aid organisations are now demanding transparency in the tourism sector. Certification ensures that sustainability claims are credible, allowing OTAs to verify and feature genuinely eco-friendly hotels."

He says this is not just an environmental concern for hotels; it is

a business opportunity. "When a hotel qualifies through an accredited certification, OTAs' algorithms prioritise it in search results, helping businesses stand out," he stresses.

MoU with HAI

One of the major initiatives in India's push towards sustainable tourism is the recent Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between GSTC and the Hotel Association

of India (HAI). Ramkumar reveals that 80 per cent of Indian hotels are HAI members, making this partnership pivotal in driving sustainability across the sector. ↘

Dynamics of hotel distribution

Hoteliers are using a mix of channels to sell inventory. The trick is to ensure it's the right mix that fits perfectly with changing consumer booking behaviours, optimising revenue and occupancy, say experts.



Ajay K Bakaya
MD, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts

“We are on a GDS system with Louvre Hotels and are arguably the only Indian company still using an Indian IDS PMS format. We have built a bridge to the OPERA framework in Paris, allowing our hotels to be distributed worldwide at reasonable costs. We have our own revenue management team and we deliver 25 per cent of the hotel business offline. Our relationships with OTAs are exceptionally strong, contributing a large portion of our business. In terms of business cycles, activity typically picks up from 15 October onwards, with November expected to be the best month of the year. December is

also a strong month, positioning us for a solid end to Q4.”

Contd. on page 18 ▶

Untapped workforce for tourism

The integration of defence personnel into tourism and hospitality is a strategic opportunity. By embracing this untapped workforce, the industry can cultivate a workforce culture grounded in discipline and excellence.

Janice Alyosius

The tourism and hospitality industry continues to struggle with the talent shortage. Amid this challenge lies a solution that remains largely unexplored - the integration of retired defence personnel into corporate roles. Military veterans bring a wealth of skills and attributes that align perfectly with the industry demands, making them a valuable resource. As highlighted by **Col Gursatinder Singh**, Director,



Subhash Goyal
Founder Chairman, STIC Travel

Army Welfare Placement Organisation (AWPO), the organisation maintains a robust database of



Retired Maj Dr Gulshan Sharma
Director General, Chamber for Service Industry

approximately 250,000 registered defence personnel, offering

Contd. on page 11 ▶



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India emerges as travel hub

A Booking.com report sheds light on the inbound travel sector's strong recovery in India, while uncovering evolving traveller preferences and motivations, its impact on the Indian economy and emerging trends.



Sustainability a necessity or choice?

Today, sustainability in hospitality has moved from being a buzzword to a non-negotiable necessity. This shift isn't just about saving the planet; it's a smart business move. Hotels that get certified not only strengthen their credibility but also benefit from increased visibility on platforms like OTAs. Moreover, governments are stepping in with incentives like tax breaks and subsidies for hotels that genuinely commit to sustainable practices. For the hospitality sector, this is an opportunity to tap into the growing demand for responsible tourism while improving their bottom line. Today, it's out in open — sustainability is no longer optional, but a competitive advantage that hotels can't afford to ignore. The future of hospitality is green, and those who adapt will thrive.

What goes into hotels' distribution cocktail?

In today's hospitality scenario, getting your distribution mix right is crucial for driving revenue. Most hoteliers are juggling direct channels—like their own websites and in-house systems—along with third-party options like OTAs, GDS platforms, and travel agents. The trick is figuring out how to balance these channels to match changing guest booking habits, while keeping an eye on market trends and revenue goals.

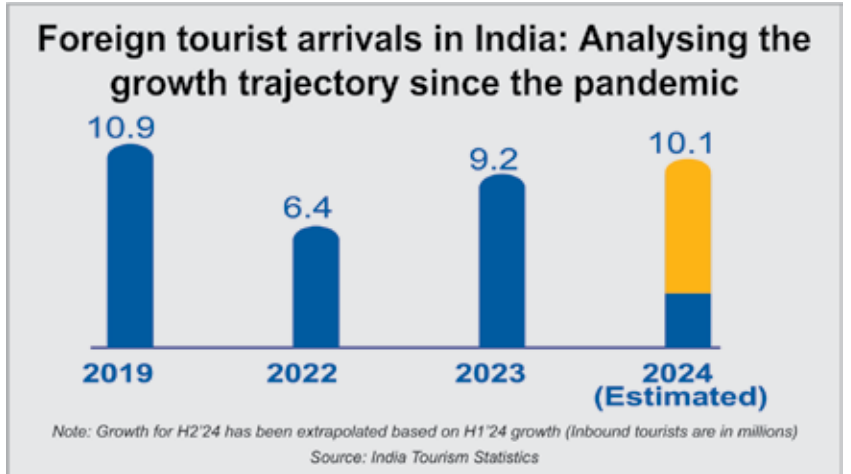
With the festive and wedding seasons around the corner, many hotels are gearing up for a surge in bookings. Yes, location and brand matter, but a smooth booking experience—powered by good tech—can really make the difference. The secret is to find that sweet spot between direct bookings and third-party channels. Add some smart, data-driven pricing strategies, and you're well on your way to success. Finally, it's about staying flexible to behaviour of guests.

More than half (52 per cent) of inbound travellers seek India as a standalone destination, while a third (22 per cent) intend to combine their visit with other Asian countries, highlights the second edition of Booking.com's annual report, prepared in collaboration with Accenture.

The report, titled 'How India Travels 2024 - The Inbound Edit', says that the trend highlights India's growing role as both a primary destination and stopover in regional travel plans.

India a global travel hub

The report highlights that with over 9 million foreign tourists visiting India in 2023, the country has transformed into a global travel hub. This is attributed to the country's rich cultural heritage and diverse landscapes, coupled with strong rankings in price competitiveness, air transport and infrastructure making it a top destination in South Asia. The surge in tourism has resulted in positive economic benefits. Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) from tourism have increased, reaching US \$15.3 bil-



Key insights and trends

The report unveils key trends shaping inbound tourism and the mindset of international travellers detailing their preferences, motivation and what they seek from their experiences in India. Here are a few key insights and trends.

- ❖ Shifting source markets are transforming the travel landscape: The US, United Kingdom, Germany and United Arab Emirates have emerged as top inbound source markets for India as compared to 2023, reflecting a shift from traditional frontrunners like China, Canada and Ban-

gladesh. Hong Kong, Australia, Italy and Netherlands were new entrants in the top 10 inbound source markets.

- ❖ Repeat visits driven by positive experiences: Nearly half (44 per cent) of inbound travellers have experienced India and want to visit it again. About 40 per cent are eager to explore India for the first time. Travellers aim to explore multiple destinations within India. About 41 per cent intend to visit 2-4 destinations, while 35 per cent plan to cover 5-10 locations, showcasing their desire for diverse experiences.

- ❖ The rise of digital traveller: India's inbound tourism has evolved rapidly since 2019. Travellers are now seeking more personalised and flexible experiences with online platforms playing a crucial role. A majority (52 per cent) of travellers prefer to book complete travel packages, while 40 per cent book individual components separately.

Navigating the road ahead

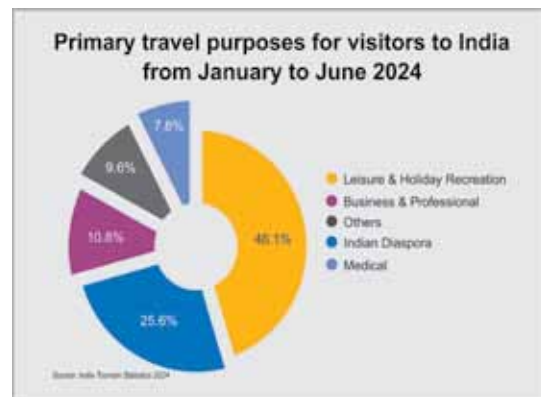
India continues to leave a lasting impression on the majority of returning travellers, with an overwhelming 95 per cent reporting that their experience either met or exceeded expectations. Nonetheless, there are a few hurdles that travellers face while planning and booking a trip to India. Survey re-

sponses indicate that limited customisation options (49 per cent), lack of bundled packages that combine flights, accommodation and activities into a seamless travel experience (51 per cent) and information overload (43 per cent) can hinder traveller experiences. Similarly, expanding direct international flights, simplifying visa processes, and continuing to promote India's diverse travel landscapes and experiences will aid the acceleration of tourist arrivals.

The influx of international visitors is catalysing the local economy, with a potential to generate 58 million jobs by 2033

Mugdha Sinha, Director General - Tourism, Government of India, said, "Vision 2047 for Tourism aims to elevate India's inbound tourism by 10-fold, positioning us as a premier global destination."

Santosh Kumar, Country Head, Indian subcontinent & Indonesia at Booking.com, said, "India's inbound tourism sector is experiencing unprecedented growth, fuelled by its rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes, and warm hospitality."



lion in the first half of 2024, a 17.6 per cent increase from 2023 and a 5.5 per cent jump from 2019. The influx of international visitors is catalysing the local economy, with a potential to generate 58 million jobs by 2033. With tourism projected to contribute approximately US \$512 billion to India's GDP by 2028, a substantial increase from 2023, the industry exhibits robust recovery and growth trajectory.

- ❖ Off-the-beaten path destinations rise in popularity: While major cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Jaipur and Chennai remain popular and have consistently ranked as the top five cities in terms of searches, less con-

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'Make inter-state bundled packages'

Commending the Southern states for their recent tourism initiatives, Venkatesan Dhattareyan, Regional Director (South), MOT, GoI, emphasises the need to boost inter-state tourism. 'It is time to introduce bundled travel packages spanning multiple states to ensure a balanced distribution of tourists across the region,' he suggests.



Amita Pandey

Venkatesan Dhattareyan, Regional Director (South), Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, feels the need for a balanced distribution of tourists across the region, as some destinations are overcrowded with tourists and putting pressure on the infrastructure, while a lot of others are yet to be fully explored. "It is high time that we should promote inter-state travel with bundled packages covering multiple states or at least two states. Overall, this will benefit the region. When we promote inter-state circuits, the plate becomes big with varied products, which means getting more tourists. So, I think collaboration is the key than competition. In fact, the typical itineraries that are coming up, especially for inbound tours is already spanning multiple states," he said, on the sidelines of 'Discover Mysuru' Bloggers Meet 2024.

Tourism initiatives of states

Dhattareyan praised the Southern states for their tourism initiatives. Citing that the South India has traditionally been "quite proactive and happening place" for tourism, he said, "The southern state governments, in a competition for tourists, unleash a barrage of efforts to entice visitors. The South is well-connected, with extensive rail networks, numerous airports, a vast road infrastructure, and a long coastline. Now, the Southern Union territories, including Lakshadweep and Puducherry, also see a surge in popularity among tourists."

Dwelling on growth targets for tourism in South India, Dhattareyan said, "The growth in domestic tourism, particularly Tamil Nadu and Kerala, has been remarkable post-COVID. Prioritising tourism, state governments in the South are advancing their efforts in the sector, as governments have realised



Venkatesan Dhattareyan being felicitated at the 'Discover Mysuru Bloggers Meet 2024'

that tourism has the potential to revitalise economies, create jobs, and empower communities."

Consequently, governments are shifting their focus towards more sustainable and responsible practices. "Today, tourism is about more than just sightseeing; it is about caring for the environment and supporting local communities," he added.

Dhattareyan said that cities like Mysuru and lesser-known destinations in South India need to be promoted among tourists. "Destinations, such as northern Karnataka, northern Kerala, and new states like Telangana, should diversify their tourism products, so that there is equitable distribution of tourists," he said. Emphasising on the Union government's collaboration with the states, Dhattareyan

pointed out the recent Southern State Tourism Ministers' Conference is a clear sign of the Centre's dedication to boosting tourism in the region. "It marks the fourth in a series of dialogues aimed at understanding state priorities—what destinations they are focused on, potential destinations, and how they are aligning marketing efforts with national campaigns," he said.

MICE

The MICE sector is gaining significant focus across multiple platforms in India. To attract global business events, the Union government has also launched various efforts, including the 'Meet in India' initiative. Highlighting MICE's status in the South, Dhattareyan, said, "In MICE, traditionally, the South has been a leader. Long ago, when MICE was in its ancient state, the HITEC City in Hyderabad came up with the world-class MICE convention centre. Following

that, the Government of India has been encouraging the southern states to build more facilities. Now, Kochi, for example, is shaping as a great MICE destination. Similarly, Bengaluru is charming with



When we promote inter-state circuits, the plate becomes big with varied products, which means getting more tourists

its exhibition centres, hotels, and connectivity. As a centre of multifarious professional associations, South India is poised to become a leading MICE destination." ↴



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Sustainable tourism to rise at 19.3% CAGR by 2032, eco-tourism to expand by 5.7% from 2019 to 2027

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Mumbai woos global cruise lines

The Mumbai International Cruise Terminal is in its final stage of completion. Rajiv Jalota, who recently retired as the Chairman of Mumbai Port Trust, gives a glimpse into the project's progress and future plans. The authorities are in discussion with a lot of international cruise lines to promote India as a cruise destination.

 Hazel Jain

Work on the Mumbai International Cruise Terminal should get over "soon" and it will then be ready for inauguration, shared **Rajiv Jalota**, who retired as the Chairman of Mumbai Port Trust recently. "It has a capacity to handle 5,000 passengers at a time and up to 10 lakh passengers in a year. It has a total built up space of more than 400,000 square feet, which will be one of the largest of its kind in the country," he said.



Rajiv Jalota
Former Chairman
Mumbai Port Trust

Jalota retired in September this year, handing over the responsibility to Sushil Kumar Singh, who assumed the additional charge as Chairperson of Mumbai Port Authority on 1 October 2024.

The port will have separate embarkation and disembarkation facilities. "We are trying to match

up to global standards in reducing the time taken for both embarkation as well as disembarkation. We will provide all facilities like baggage handling and passenger screening in a seamless manner. We have appointed a private concessionaire (JM Bakshi Group) because we have now given this terminal to a private operator and they will manage it for the next 30 years," Jalota shared.

Cruise Bharat Mission unveiled

Sarbananada Sonowal, Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, launched the 'Cruise Bharat Mission' on 30 September 2024 onboard cruise liner Empress. The three-phase programme targets 50 lakh passengers by 2047. Speaking on the occasion, Sonowal said, "The 'Cruise Bharat Mission' is a watershed moment in the revamp of the cruise sector of India." The mission will develop world-class infrastructure and enable growth of cruise tourism and maritime trade.



Sarbananada Sonowal
Union Minister of Ports
Shipping & Waterways


Phase 1, which started from 1 October 2024 and goes up to

30 September 2025, will focus on conducting studies, master planning, and forming cruise alliances with neighbouring countries. It will also modernise existing cruise terminals, marinas, and destinations to enhance the potential of cruise circuits.

The second phase (from 1 October 2025 to 31 March 2027) will concentrate on developing new cruise terminals, marinas, and destinations to activate high-potential cruise locations and circuits.

Along with the basic facilities related to cruise operations, there will be a commercial area, which will give a glimpse of the culture of India. It will also have other facilities like the ones at airports. "We have already start-

ed dialogue with a lot of cruise lines across the world. Besides Mumbai, we are promoting India as a cruise destination. We are asking them to home port cruise ships at Indian terminals, such as Puducherry, Andaman,

and Lakshadweep – all are in demand by various cruise lines. Everybody wants to have a taste of India, and we have to give them the best of infrastructure and the best of policy framework," Jalota added. 

Focus will be on members: TAAI Prez

Sunil Kumar, the newly elected President of Travel Agents Association of India, says that the association's priority will be to address the members' challenges and engage them comprehensively. 'The association's strength lies in its members and, therefore, their upliftment is key to making TAAI stronger,' he emphasises.

 Hazel Jain

The newly elected President of Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), Sunil Kumar has said that focus of the new team will be on the members. "TAAI's goodwill and its strength lies in its members. Members First is our mission. We aim to address their challenges, learning from their concerns, engaging them much more comprehensively in the overall design and administration of TAAI, through various means like member networking opportunities," he says.

Kumar adds, "We need to team up to make sure we can collectively work to take TAAI to the next level. Returning as President, I look at it as double responsibility, for I have to not only live up to expectations of the previous leadership but also surpass my previous best. That is a personal challenge I pose to myself. I trust that I will be able to deliver in a manner that takes care of both these benchmarks."



Newly elected office-bearers of the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI)

Kumar has previously served on the managing committee in all positions, moved up the ladder, and contributed immensely for the development of TAAI. He was also the president from 2015 to 2019. "We were able to get TAAI on a strong footing and we did some big conventions, organised several knowledge conclaves, ensured interactive region and chapter meetings. I also visited most of the chapters along with my office-bearers and MC members, which facilitated interaction with the members. I believe that

is the quintessence of TAAI; you can't be away from your members. You need to work with them, collaborate with them, find ways to enhance the value of TAAI for its members," he explains.

Key points in agenda

'Team Positive for Change: Members First' slogan reflects the clear focus on members. "Whatever TAAI is today, all its value adds, all its goodwill, and its strength lies in its members. The second point on our agenda is IATA and airline matters. This is something that has

been happening in TAAI for a long time. We meet airlines, we meet IATA as a delegation and involving the government. This includes the insurance, which must become a part of our financial security. Joint Bank Guarantee is also an important programme that TAAI launched for the benefit of its members. This needs to be handled carefully and with tremendous accountability," Kumar explains.

IATA had discontinued Joint Bank Guarantee in 2013-14. Leading TAAI at the time, Kumar had to

fight a battle, go to the PA conference in San Diego. And in front of all the airlines of the world, he insisted that this becomes a financial security, not just for India, but for the world, and received 100 per

cent support from all the airlines. Third point on the agenda for him is member education and updates, bringing back TAAI Knowledge Conclaves. Kumar adds, "In the PR and image building of TAAI lies the image of our members. TAAI Business Network is another dream, offering members the opportunity to be supported by technology and go online. We need people who can deliver. We need people who can commit themselves. We need people who can leave their businesses and go beyond their homes, go through a lot of challenges. This is not a time for experiment. We need to depend on people with experience. Our members need immediate attention."


TAAI Business Network is another dream, offering members the opportunity to be supported by tech and go online

The new team

President: Sunil Kumar
Vice President: Lokesh Bettaiah (Hyderabad)
Hon. Secretary General: Shreeram Patel (Gujarat)
Hon. Treasurer: Paras Lakhia (Gujarat)
Managing Committee Members: Manav Soni, Gopal Unadkat, Amish Desai, Lalith Kumar Jain, Hema Chander, Sameer Karnani and Rajan Sehgal

Indian families prefer Impiana hotels

Impiana Private Villa Seminyak, combining the natural beauty of 'Island of the Gods' with modern amenities, makes it the ultimate luxury getaway. The venue not just provides secluded retreat for individuals, but also provides ideal setting for intimate weddings.



Surbhi Sharma

Nestled within walking distance from Seminyak's beaches are the 48 exclusive villas of Impiana Private Villas Seminyak, perfect for individual travellers, couples, families, and groups seeking an idyllic destination in Bali. The tropical escapism of the luxurious set-up makes the property irresistible to pleasure seekers. With various types of exotic villas to choose from, blissful treatments at Prana Spa and dine under the stars with an array of authentic signature dishes, the property is best suited for guests looking for a private stay.

Impiana Private Villas Seminyak showcased its offerings at the roadshow organised by Balitrip Wisata in New Delhi recently. Talking to **TTB** at the event, **Tiara Ong**, Senior Sales Manager, Impiana Private Villas Seminyak, Bali, expressed her happiness over the feedback received the event and said that all the retail agents were satisfied with their products.



Tiara Ong
Senior Sales Manager
Impiana Private Villas Seminyak, Bali

Indian market

Claiming that India has become the number two source market for Bali in terms of tourism, Ong said, "The segments getting the highest traction from Indian visitors in Impiana are family groups and honeymooners. Our villa has three bedrooms with interconnecting door, making it combinable, as well as convenient for the family group. For the honeymooners, our 200 square metre one-bedroom villas with private

swimming pool and sunbathing area are the best."

Wedding market

Immersed in a luxurious experience like no other, Impiana Private Villa Seminyak offers a wedding package for intimate weddings starting from Rp 20,000 (approx. ₹107) to Rp 60,000 (approx. ₹322), which can go up to Rp 100,000 (approx. ₹536) for grand villa, making it a perfect destination for hosting a wedding, Ong said.

New offerings

With the festival of Diwali round the corner, Ong said, "We are offering a special package to visiting Indians which is for two nights and three nights with certain inclusions. For honeymoon couples, we have a floating breakfast inclusion in the pool and one-time meals. For families, we have afternoon tea floating in the pool. The property has an easy access to clinics, and grocery stores. Besides, we also give discount vouchers for Trans Studio Bali, Beach Club, Cafe Del Mar Beach Club to our customers."

Rewards for travel trade

Talking about their engagement with the travel trade industry, Ong said, "We give them reward for selling our product and offer them free stay in our villas. Besides, we also sometimes give them incentives. If they fulfil the specific room night targets, we give them a special rate or special campaign



The segments getting the highest traction from Indian visitors in Impiana are family groups and honeymooners

for the whole year." Ong informed that Impiana Private Villa Seminyak plans to upgrade the facilities in the coming year to further improve the guest experience. ↘

Taiwan reignites presence in India

The Taiwan Tourism Administration recently hosted a Fam trip for Indian leisure travel agents, followed by a roadshow in Mumbai, to strengthen its presence in the Indian market. More than 90 key travel partners attended the roadshow.



TT Bureau

The Taiwan Tourism Administration's roadshow, organised in collaboration with Air India and EVA Air at the Cullinan Banquet, Trident BKC, Mumbai, drew more than 90 key travel partners. The event underscored Taiwan's growing allure as a top leisure and incentive destination for India's discerning travellers. This event showcased in what ways Taiwan is a sought-after destination for Indian leisure and MICE travellers.

During the meticulously curated Fam trip, Indian travel agents were provided with an immersive, first-hand experience of Taiwan's multifaceted tourism offerings. Key highlights included visits to luxurious leisure hotels, a tea-picking activity and tea culture ceremony, and rejuvenating hot springs and fruit-picking experiences in Nantou County.

The trip also showcased scenic sites, such as Sun Moon Lake, a thrilling cable car ride at the Formo-



Participants pose for a group photograph at Taiwan Tourism Administration's roadshow in Mumbai

Indian travel partners were provided with an immersive, first-hand experience of Taiwan's multifaceted tourism offerings

san Aboriginal Culture Village, and cultural exploration at the Buddha Memorial Hall, which can make any Taiwan itinerary into a memorable experience. Shopping at EDA World, including a ride on its iconic Ferris wheel, and a visit to the architectural marvel Taipei 101, added to the joy. Including authentic Indian cuisine at local restaurants was a significant aspect of the tour, effectively dispelling long-held myths about the unavailability of Indian and vegetarian food in Taiwan.

In addition to the experiential itinerary, the trip facilitated productive B2B engagements between Indian travel agents and Taiwanese tourism stakeholders. These discussions enabled potential collaborations, fostered stronger relationships, and provided Indian participants with key operational insights into Taiwan's travel industry. The constructive interactions reinforced confidence among Indian agents to actively promote Taiwan as a prime destination for leisure travel. ↘



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Discover the New Singapore

Singapore Tourism Board recently organised a webinar for the travel agents to spotlight its diverse experiences for Indian travellers. During the webinar, it was highlighted that Indian travellers enjoy direct connectivity from 17 Indian cities to Singapore, with seven airlines making 288 weekly departures from India to the city.

TT Bureau

Singapore, a vibrant city with diverse attractions, holds a special place in Indian travellers' hearts. The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) spotlighted the destination for the travel trade community via a webinar where **Kean Bon Lim**, the Area Director based in New Delhi, underscored why the

city-state remains a top choice for both first-time and repeat travellers. "The destination is constantly evolving itself with refreshed and new experiences for overseas visitors," he emphasised.

Air connectivity from India and a leading cruise hub
Indian travellers enjoy direct connectivity from 17 Indian cities to



Kean Bon Lim
Area Director, India, South Asia & Africa, STB



Singapore, with seven airlines making 288 weekly departures from India to the city. Singapore's connectivity to multiple Indian cities makes it a convenient cruise hub for Indian tourists. Beyond popular favourites from Royal Caribbean and Resorts World Cruises, visitors can look forward to the sailing of Disney Cruise commencing in 2025.



New attractions, hotels, retail and dining experiences

Beyond old favourites like the Singapore Zoo and Night Safari, new attractions like Museum of Ice Cream and HyperDrive in Sentosa have entered post 2022 itineraries. The integrated resort Resorts World Sentosa will also introduce Harry Potter: Visions of Magic in its range of

offerings to provide an immersive experience for fans of this fantasy series.

STB also highlighted some new hospitality options like the Mondrian Singapore Duxton and award-winning Pan Pacific Orchard for visitors seeking unique accommodation experiences, and shared that the city now

has over 400 hotels. On shopping, STB called out unique retail experiences such as the Coach playhouse where a foreign fashion brand provides a localised "shop-house" experience for shoppers. On dining, STB shared that the team is updating the guide on vegetarian options to ease vegetarian Indian travellers' search for suitable restaurants.

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Open-jaw itineraries for UK

In order to promote travel beyond London, VisitBritain is highlighting open-jaw itineraries for Indian visitors so that they can fly into London and depart from any of the regional gateway cities, such as Manchester, Birmingham, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, thus enabling them to visit beautiful places like Bath, Bristol and the Cotswolds.



Hazel Jain

Shuja Bin Mehdi, Senior Manager, Industry Engagement – India, VisitBritain and winner of 'Best Tourism Board for Experiential Travel' at the India Travel Awards 2024, was recently in Mumbai to attend Mé-lange, the first edition of the B2B show organised by MTF. He met key agents from the region and informed them about the destination and its new attractions in London and beyond. "We are promoting travel beyond London. So, even with London, we are promoting places such as Bath, Bristol and the Cotswolds. Along with that, we are promoting regional gateway cities, such as Manchester, Birmingham, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, so that visitors can plan open-jaw itineraries where the entry could be into London, and the exit could be out of any of these regional gateways," he said.



Shuja Bin Mehdi
Senior Manager, Industry Engagement
– India, VisitBritain

Extended stays

Over the past five years, the VisitBritain team in India has seen the average length of stay in the UK going up substantially. "People are now spending more time and money during their UK visit, including on experiences that they are booking. We see that come through the travel trade and that is

a very good development. In fact, we are increasingly seeing that January to March – which used to be our lean period – get some very good numbers. This means

January to March – which used to be our lean period – is getting good numbers, which means more winter travel is happening from India

that more and more winter travel is happening from India, which is encouraging," he reveals. "We see an evolution of preferences that Indian visitors to UK demand in the itineraries that are being sold. The

Indians splurge on international travel

Visitors from India spent a record £764 million in the UK in 2022, exceeding 2019 levels by 2 per cent. This growth has continued into 2023. India is forecast to be a £1 billion inbound visitor market by the end of 2024, making it one of the UK's fastest growing major tourism markets. Airline seat capacity from India to the UK is also showing strong growth. In September 2023, seat capacity was up 53 per cent compared to the same month in 2019.



Vishal Bhatia
Country Manager
VisitBritain India

Vishal Bhatia, Country Manager, VisitBritain India, says, "India is one of our most important inbound visitor markets, also boasting strong airline connectivity, including to regional destinations, and we know there is pent up demand for travel. Working with the travel trade in India is crucial to ensuring we equip them to sell Britain, as well as broadening travel itineraries to encourage visitors to explore further and stay longer to high value visitors."

value of the packages has also gone up by at least 30-40 per cent as compared to pre-COVID. And the fact that Indians now want to do mono-Britain itineraries more rather than combining with rest of Europe. This is exactly what we aim for," Mehdi says.

Trade engagement

VisitBritain is also organising a regional roadshow in Bengaluru this November, which is for the entire Middle East and Asia region, called 'Destination Britain MEA'. This will see five markets converge in the city – the GCC, India, China, Japan

and Korea – who will meet about 35 suppliers from the UK. Around 75 buyers will be hosted in total, of which 20-25 will be from India, and a similar number from the GCC and China as well. The suppliers will be a mix of hotels, smaller tourism boards and DMCs. ↘

'Armed forces best suited for tourism'

▶ Contd. from page 5

more than 115 distinct skill sets. These individuals, having undergone extensive training during their military service, are ready to transition into corporate roles. "Our people are well-prepared to meet corporate requirements. We place about 15,000 personnel per year in corporate roles. Around 15,000 of our jawans, officers, and Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs) are entering the corporate sector annually, and they are performing exceptionally well with all the companies. We work with the top companies in the country," says Singh.

The structured nature of military training creates professionals who not only possess skills but also demonstrate exceptional work ethics. **Subhash Goyal**, Founder Chairman, STIC Travel, underscores this point, saying that military personnel are among the most well-trained individuals, not just in India but globally. "When there was a shortage of pilots, I suggested that we take pilots from the Indian Air Force and retrain them for commercial flying. These individuals are a great asset that the country is not fully utilising.



Col Gursatinder Singh
Director
AWPO

The tourism and hospitality industry is a service industry, and no one is better suited for it than the armed forces," says Goyal.

Retired Maj Dr Gulshan Sharma, Director General, Chamber for Service Industry, emphasises the untapped potential of defence personnel: "Armed forces personnel are stationed in the remotest parts of India, areas that most civilians do not typically visit. So, why not leverage that? When discussing adventure tourism, wildlife tourism, nature tourism, sports tourism, or youth tourism, I firmly believe that defence officers and their spouses can



Capt Swadesh Kumar
Founder
Shikhar Group of Companies

make significant contributions post-retirement."

Sharma also points out that the logistical and operational expertise gained in the military seamlessly translates into managing tourism ventures. He recalls a successful initiative in which 300 retiring officers were interviewed for HR Head positions within the hospitality industry. "Defence personnel can adapt to any field because they are relatively young, eager to contribute, and motivated to add value to the economy. I assert that no profession, business, or venture can deliver a greater economic multiplier for India than



Maj Gen Ajay Singh Chauhan
SC, SM (Retd)
Managing Director, AWPO

the tourism industry. The most polished, well-developed, and capable human resources can be found in the armed forces," says Sharma, adding that defence personnel are not only capable of adapting to the sector but are also eager to contribute to the economy post-retirement.

Capt Swadesh Kumar, Founder, Shikhar Group of Companies, shares similar views. "The advantage of having a large pool of retired Army and Defence Services personnel is significant. They bring crucial qualities, such as discipline, integrity, honesty, sincerity, and commitment—traits



Meena Bhatia
Vice President and General Manager
Le Meridien New Delhi

that are increasingly scarce. The value of one retired officer outweighs the contributions of multiple regular staff members. I would gladly hire one retired defence officer over 10 regular staff members because of these qualities. Training them in industry-specific skills is not a challenge; within a month, they can learn to write and manage itineraries effectively. Therefore, I believe we should encourage more defence personnel to join our industry," he opines.

Maj Gen Ajay Singh Chauhan, SC, SM (Retd), Managing Director, AWPO, refers to army veterans as a "national resource". He says,

"Army veterans are a national resource; they represent a comprehensive package of skills. Within the army, we have over 150 distinct skillsets, and the hospitality industry should leverage this talent effectively." Chauhan envisions a collaborative approach where both the hospitality sector and veterans benefit from a mutually advantageous partnership. "Together, I am confident we can create a win-win situation for everyone involved," he adds.

Meena Bhatia, Vice President and General Manager, Le Meridien New Delhi, sees clear synergy between the military's structured approach and the hotel industry's needs. "We often reach out to various schools and colleges and collaborate with different NGOs to attract more people to the workforce. However, we have a readymade resource in the armed forces. I think, we should actively mobilise this channel and explore it more than we have done so far."

Overall, there is a growing consensus that defence personnel, with their unparalleled discipline, integrity, and adaptability, offer a tremendous advantage to the tourism and hospitality industry. ↘

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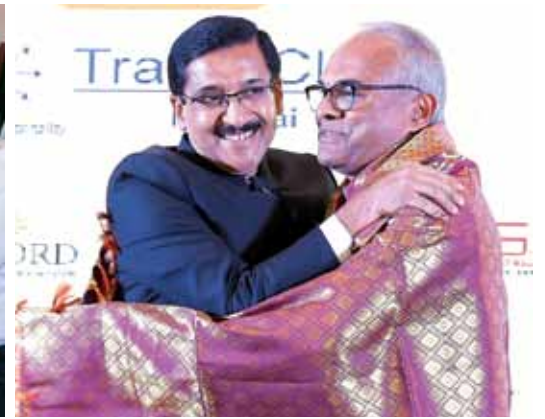
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TTE 2024 showcases Tamil Nadu's

Tamil Nadu Travel Expo (TTE) 2024, held recently in Madurai, saw a huge turnout from domestic and international buyers. The 3-day event saw key organisations like the South India Hotels and Restaurants Association (SIHRA), Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), and Travel Club Madurai joining hands to highlight state's rich religious and cultural heritage.



rich cultural heritage & offerings



35 exhibitors, 450 buyers @GPS Indore

Global Panorama Showcase (GPS), recently held at Indore Marriott Hotel, drew about 35 exhibitors and 450 buyers. The showcase, serving as a catalyst for growth within the travel industry, provided a great platform for the participants to interact, forge new partnerships, and capture a share of the fast-growing Indian outbound travel market.



Hong Kong returns with new offerings

Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) returns to the Indian market with its exclusive offerings, including 'Hong Kong Incentive Playbook: Up the Game for Your Team'. The idea is to enhance the visitor experience and consolidate Hong Kong's position as a unique and world-class destination in the world, says Puneet Kumar, Director, HKTB.

 Surbhi Sharma

In line with its commitment to enhancing Hong Kong's appeal to Indian travellers looking for leisure and MICE travel, the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) recently made a comeback in the Indian market with its annual Travel Mission to India by organising a three-city roadshow covering Mumbai, Chennai and Delhi.

During the roadshow, HKTB launched a new incentive initiative this year - Hong Kong Incentive Playbook: Up the Game for Your Team. "This programme introduces a wide array of (more than 100) innovative and authentic group experiences designed to inspire and energise corporate teams. The experiences are curated under five engaging themes: Arts & Culture, Wellness & Nature, Neighbourhoods, Nightlife & Parties, and Hong Kong Signatures. These themes aim to promote Hong Kong as the ultimate destination for incentive travel,



Puneet Kumar
Director, South Asia & Middle East,
Hong Kong Tourism Board

combining fun and creativity to boost team morale and productivity," Puneet Kumar, Director, South Asia & Middle East, Hong Kong Tourism Board, informed .

Popularity among Indians up Kumar said, "From January to June this year, Hong Kong welcomed 21 million visitors, including 181,000 from India alone—a remarkable 155 per cent year-on-year increase. Indian tourists predominantly fall within

the 26-35 age group (24 per cent) and 36-45 age group (29 per cent)."


Latest offerings

Kumar said, "At Hong Kong Tourism, we are dedicated to enhancing the travel experience for Indian tourists through a variety of engaging programmes and events. Our initiatives, such as 'Summer Chill Hong Kong', and 'Hong Kong Incentive Playbook', are designed to offer tailored experiences and vibrant opportunities throughout the year. Additionally, our year-round mega events, such as Hong Kong Wine and Dine Festival, Taste Around Town, Hong Kong Winterfest, and Hong Kong New Year Countdown, ensure that there is always something exciting in-town happenings that are different for our Indian guests."

He revealed that that the tourism board registered a robust improvement in average length of stay of 4.2 nights and average per capita spending of HK\$ 9,100 per person.

Key attractions

Sharing the visitor demographics, Kumar said that 31 per cent of Indian visitors travelled for vacation purposes, and over 15 per cent originated from tier II cities, while the rest were from the predominant tier I cities. "Among popular


At Hong Kong Tourism, we are dedicated to enhancing the travel experience for Indian tourists through a variety of programmes

attractions and points of interest, Hong Kong Disneyland, Temple Street/ Ladies' Market, Ocean Park, The Peak, and Tsim Sha Tsui emerged as the top five choices



for Indian tourists, followed closely by Ngong Ping 360 and Sky100 Hong Kong Observation Deck," he added.

Engagement with travel trade In terms of engagement with the travel trade industry, the National Tourism Board maintains that In-

dian travel intermediaries play a huge role in promoting and selling the destination. "Every year, HKTB participates in large trade shows like SATTE for a large trade outreach. We also have a network of strategic travel agents, especially who are focused on MICE. We work closely with them." 

McArthurGlen's Diwali joy for Indians

McArthurGlen Designer Outlets have kicked off Diwali celebrations with a special campaign to help shoppers find the perfect gifts for their loved ones. With exclusive offers, discounts, and exciting events across their premium outlets, it's the perfect time to shop and spread the joy this festive season.



TT Bureau

McArthurGlen Group, one of Europe's leading luxury retail giants, has successfully launched its Diwali campaign aimed at attracting global travellers to shop for their loved ones. With 24 premium outlets located across key destinations in Europe, McArthurGlen offers a unique blend of luxury, culture, and value that resonates with shoppers from all corners of the world.

As the Festival of Lights symbolises joy, love, and the exchange of gifts, McArthurGlen's outlets have become the perfect destination for travellers seeking both memorable experiences and high-end retail therapy. The campaign, running in conjunction with the Diwali festivities, captures the essence of this important cultural celebration and seamlessly integrates it with the unparalleled shopping



Sabina Piacenti
International Markets Manager
McArthurGlen Designer Outlets

experiences McArthurGlen is known for. The campaign has been meticulously designed to emphasise the importance of giving and celebrating with family and friends. By offering exclusive benefits, discounts, and special events across its many outlets, McArthurGlen encourages travellers to indulge in a one-of-a-

MCARTHURGLEN[®]

DESIGNER OUTLETS

kind shopping experience. From designer fashion and accessories to luxury goods, shoppers can find perfect gifts while enjoying a festive atmosphere that mirrors the traditions of Diwali.

McArthurGlen's Diwali campaign particularly strikes a chord with international shoppers from India, where Diwali holds a central place in cultural celebrations. The company's approach to creating personalised and festive shopping experiences helps attract these visitors to its premier outlets throughout Europe.

"We are delighted to be part of the vibrant Diwali celebrations with our personalised offerings across key

outlets. The unique blend of luxury shopping and cultural connection makes McArthurGlen Designer Outlets the perfect destination for travellers looking to enhance the joy of gift-giving during this festive

McArthurGlen's approach to creating personalised experiences helped attract visitors to its outlets in Europe

season," says **Sabina Piacenti**, International Markets Manager, McArthurGlen Designer Outlets.

McArthurGlen: A Unique Shopping Destination, McArthurGlen's reputation is built on offering luxury shopping in beautifully designed open-air villages with discounts of up to 70 per cent on high-end brands. Each of its 24 outlets is located in culturally significant regions, offering an unparalleled opportunity for travellers to combine shopping with tourism.

The Diwali campaign is a true reflection of McArthurGlen's USP—offering luxury at great value, but

with a local and cultural sensitivity that enhances the shopping experience for its international clientele. The company has been leveraging its sales teams based in Delhi and Mumbai since 2022 to strengthen partnerships with travel agencies and tour operators.



Delhi Skål felicitates new President

Skål International Delhi recently organised an event in the capital with a view to strengthening relationships among clubs across India, fostering business networking opportunities, and supporting the development of new memberships. SK Sanjeev Mehra, President, Skål International, was felicitated on the occasion.





OCTOBER 2024

Date	Event	Time
15	Conztruct 2024	4:00 pm
15-16	GPS-Kochi	10:00 am
16-18	FHRAI Convention	10:00 am
17-19	India Travel Mart 2024-Varanasi	9:00 am
22-23	Travel & Tourism Fair - Patna 2024	9:00 am
23-25	ITB Asia	10:00 am

NOVEMBER 2024

1-3	International Tourism & Travel Show 2024	11:00 am
1-4	Taipei International Travel Fair 2024	10:00 am
5-7	WTM London	9:30 am
6-8	Korea MICE Expo 2024	9:00 am
8-10	Holiday Expo-Visakhapatnam	9:00 am
8-10	India Travel Mart Bhopal	9:00 am
11	Arabian Cargo Awards	10:00 am
12	Arabian Travel Awards	10:00 am
18	JNTO Roadshow-Delhi	10:30 am
20	JNTO Roadshow-Bangalore	10:30 am
20-22	VisitBritain Roadshow-Bangalore	10:00 am
22	JNTO Roadshow-Mumbai	10:30 am
25-27	Qatar Travel Mart	10:00 am



wtm
LONDON

focus on inclusivity

This year's World Travel Market, planned on the 'From Commitment to Action' theme, will cover a wide range of topics, including mentorship programmes, intercultural marketing sensitivity, accessible nature-based tourism, and indigenous tourism.



TT Bureau

World Travel Market reaffirms its commitment to inclusivity by expanding its coverage on Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, Inclusion and Intersectionality (DEAI). The theme for this year is "From Commitment to Action", and the sessions lined up will concentrate on steps that travel and tourism stakeholders can take today to deliver on its promises to create a truly inclusive industry for travel businesses, their teams and their customers.

Sessions are being organised and moderated by WTM's newly appointed DEAI adviser, **Uwern Jong**. Uwern says, "I'm excited to be given this opportunity to shape the DEAI track at one of the most important travel events in the world. But I'm even more excited at being given the go-ahead to change the DEAI focus from mere discussions to action-oriented delivery. In tourism, we spend a lot of time talking around DEAI, which is a positive step for the industry, but it is time that we take affirmative action,



showcase and celebrate best practices in the industry and overcome the barriers that still exist."

Attendees will hear from a range of important speakers. One highlight is a fireside chat with **Andreas Fiorentinos**, Secretary-General, Greek National Tourism Office (GNTO), who will discuss how DEAI is shaping Greece's destination strategy. Additionally, **Alessandra Alonso**, Founder, Women in Travel CIC, is chairing a panel discussion based around implementing mentorship and al-



WTM has an opportunity to table topics that need to be talked about, and due to its scale, has the power to be heard by many

lignship programmes. Intercultural sensitivity in marketing and communications will be discussed by

Caroline Moultrie, EMEA President, MMGY Global. **Juliette Losardo**, Exhibition Director, WTM London, said: "We all have a role to play in making the world a more equitable and inclusive place. World Travel Market has an opportunity to table topics that need to be talked about and incite progress, and due to its scale, has the power to be heard by many. The launch of WTM's Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, Inclusion and Intersectionality Summit demonstrates our commitment to moving the dial from conversation to action."

Create a winning mix of channels

Contd. from page 5



Ajay Mehtani
Partner
TreeHouse Hotels & Resorts

"We use all distribution channels to promote our hotels and packages, i.e., own website, our OTA partners, B2B partners, tour operators and travel agents. All these channels are integrated online, and we prefer to provide our inventory and rates through the technology platform making it easier for our guests and our partners to book with us at any time. In terms of our forecast, the last quarter is the festive quarter."



Ashley James
General Manager
Angsana Oasis Spa & Resort

"Our distribution channels include the brand's official website, as well as major online travel agencies, such as MakeMyTrip (Goibibo), Agoda, Booking.com, and Expedia. These platforms provide widespread visibility and enable seamless booking options for both domestic and international travellers. Our budgeted revenue for the last quarter is ₹11 crore, and we are on track to meet this target based on our current forecasts."



Aparna Ajith
Director of Sales and Marketing, Sheraton
Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway

"Our distribution strategy is designed to ensure a seamless and wide-reaching booking experience for our customers. We utilise a variety of channels, each tailored to meet the diverse needs of our clients. The first is our own website, Marriott.com, then are the OTAs, which help us extend our reach. The hotel reservations channel is managed by our won team. Lastly, we leverage GDS platforms for extending international reach."



Amit Jain
General Manager
Hyatt Place Aurangabad Airport

"Our distribution channels include four elements—the Hyatt.com website, GPGS (Voice), hotel sales team, and the OTAs. Our revenue forecast for the last quarter is optimistic and strong, driven by several factors. With the festive season approaching, alongside an increase in tourist activities and auspicious dates for weddings, we expect a significant rise in bookings and demand for our services."



Dhavalakeerthi MK
Sr Vice President (Marketing),
Niraamaya Wellness Retreats

"Our distribution channels are diverse, enabling us to reach a broad spectrum of customers. We leverage direct bookings through our official website, partner with OTAs, such as Agoda, GO-MMT, Booking.com and Expedia, and maintain strong relationships with travel agents and tour operators, DMCs and foreign tour operators. Our central reservation office also plays a key role, contributing the maximum share of our bookings."



Bhavik Sheth
COO
Evoke Experiences

"Our key distribution channels include our website, direct reservations through online booking, and exclusive travel agencies that cater to an affluent clientele. Partnerships with travel influencers and travel agents play a crucial role in capturing our niche market. OTAs are also an important part of our distribution strategy. Direct marketing through personalised communication is central to our approach as well."

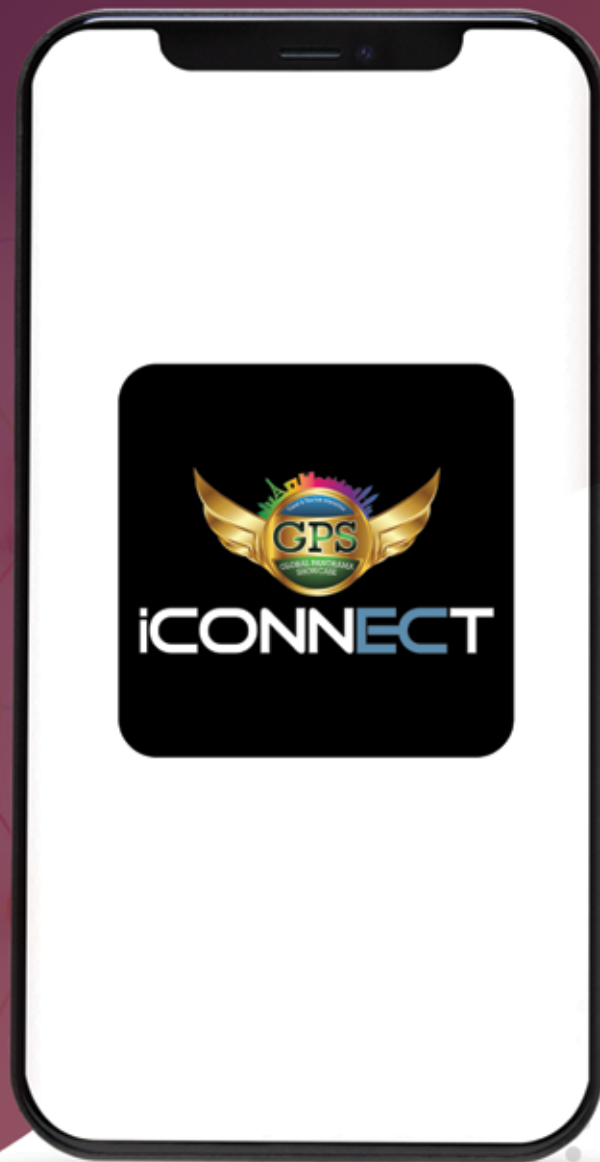
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MOVEMENTS

HYATT PLACE AURANGABAD AIRPORT

Aurangabad

Hyatt Place Aurangabad Airport has appointed **AMIT JAIN** as the General Manager. Jain brings more than 18 years of hospitality experience to his new role that will see him overseeing all hotel operations and driving revenue growth, while offering top-class service to guests. Over the years, he has accumulated a wealth of knowledge and expertise in budgeting, customer retention, forecasting, finance and management. Since his first professional stint with The Oberoi Group in Shimla as a Finance Executive, he has been associated with The Leela Palace Kempinski, Bangalore, The Leela Kempinski, Mumbai and the Marriott Group.



RENAISSANCE BENGALURU RACE COURSE HOTEL

Bengaluru

SITA LEKSHMI has been appointed as the General Manager at Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel. With a hospitality journey that spans across leading hotels in India, Lekshmi was previously the General Manager at Aloft Bengaluru Outer Ring Road. Having earned a BSc in Hospitality Administration from IHM Kovalam, complemented by an MBA in Human Resources Management and a PGDM in Guest Service Management from the Oberoi Centre of Learning & Development makes her a sought-after personality in the industry. She is a leader with business acumen and natural talent for elevating brand standards.



THE FERN HOTELS & RESORTS

Mumbai

The Fern Hotels & Resorts appoints **MANISH NARESH DEOLEKAR** as the General Manager - Operations (Maharashtra). In his new role, Deolekar will oversee the overall operations of eight properties of the company across Maharashtra in Bhiwandi-Pimplas, Ganpatipule, Igatpuri, Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Palghar. A seasoned professional in the hospitality industry, with over 20 years of experience, Deolekar has a Bachelor's Degree in Hospitality from the Pacific International Hotel Management School in New Zealand. He also holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration (BBA) from India.



PRIDE ELITE HARIDWAR

Haridwar

NEHA RAWAT has been appointed as the General Manager of Pride Elite Haridwar, marking her third tenure with Pride Hotel Group. In her new role, she will oversee the overall operations of the hotel, ensuring compliance with the brand's standards while driving guest satisfaction, profitability, and market growth. With over 15 years of extensive experience in the hospitality industry, she brings a proven track record in managing front office operations, strategic planning, team leadership, and customer relations. Her previous roles include leading operations at Modi Yoga Retreat in Rishikesh and Pride Hotel in Rishikesh.



TAMARA LEISURE EXPERIENCES

Bengaluru

Tamara Leisure Experiences appoints **LESLIE MORRISON** as the Vice President of Sales and Marketing. Morrison will be responsible for driving the company's sales and marketing strategies, enhancing guest experiences, and spearheading innovative initiatives across the brand's portfolio. With more than 25 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Morrison's career spans various roles in luxury and upper-scale hotels, including notable contributions to prestigious organisations. Leslie holds a degree in Travel Management from IMM Kolkata and a Bachelor of Commerce from St Xavier's College, University of Kolkata.



SOFITEL MUMBAI BKC

Mumbai

Sofitel Mumbai BKC welcomes **TARANA LALCHANDANI** to the role of Marketing & Communications Manager. In her last role, Lalchandani worked as the Marketing & Communications Manager at Courtyard by Marriott, Mumbai International Airport, where she devised comprehensive marketing strategies in alignment with hotel sales and revenue objectives, engaged in strategic influencer engagement to enhance awareness about the property, and directed the creation and implementation of a dynamic social media strategy. Prior to that, she worked as PR Executive at an agency.



MIRAH HOSPITALITY

Mumbai

Mirah Hospitality, the group behind acclaimed restaurant chains such as Bayroute, Hitchki, Rajdhani, has appointed **ABHEET SINGH BAGGA** as the Head of Brand and Marketing. In his new role, Bagga will lead the brand and marketing strategy for all of Mirah Hospitality's brands across India and Dubai, including Hitchki, Bayroute, The Mezze Company, Rajdhani, and Rajdhani Street. He is a dynamic and accomplished professional with a proven track record in the food and beverage industry. His expertise spans brand strategy, marketing, sales, operations, events, and owner relations.



THE LODHI

New Delhi

The Lodhi New Delhi has appointed **ANUJ NAINTA** as the Hotel Manager. He has an impressive career in the hospitality industry spanning over two decades. In his new role, he will be responsible for overseeing daily operations at the luxury hotel, managing a team of 380 highly skilled associates, and enhancing guest satisfaction while maintaining the establishment's world-class standards, optimising financial performance, and driving innovative initiatives. Nainta joins The Lodhi from Taj Mahal & Towers Hotel in Mumbai, where he served as the Director of Food & Beverage.



GRAND HYATT GURGAON

Gurgaon

NITIN TANWAR has been appointed as Director of Rooms at the Grand Hyatt Gurgaon. With more than 17 years of experience in leading hotel chains, Tanwar brings a wealth of knowledge and a proven track record of success to this pivotal role. His journey from Front Office Manager to Director of Rooms exemplifies his exceptional leadership and strategic planning skills. In his role, he will be responsible for the overall functioning of the rooms division and spearhead various functions like front office, housekeeping, reservations and guest service. He will pioneer efforts to maintain the hotel's quality and service excellence.



NHCC & HICC

Hyderabad

Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre (NHCC) & Hyderabad International Convention Centre (HICC) appoint **SHYAMA MAITY** as the Rooms Division Manager. She will be bringing her extensive hotel management experience, particularly in overseeing key departments, such as reception and reservations. Maity's strong leadership skills and proven track record in driving exceptional guest experiences make her a valuable addition to the team. Her career in hospitality spans over 18 years and in her last role, she worked as the Rooms Division Manager at Rydges Latimer Christchurch in New Zealand.



SKIL

Mumbai

SKIL elevates **RAMANPREET SINGH** to the position of Chief Growth Officer. The move reflects the company's commitment to nurturing exceptional talent and acknowledges the remarkable contributions Singh has made over the last 7 years. His tenure at SKIL has been marked by extraordinary achievements, particularly within the MICE & Events segment, where his visionary leadership and strategic acumen have driven unprecedented growth over the last 18 months. He has been instrumental in executing large-scale events with finesse, consistently delivering outstanding results and client delight.



DOOK TRAVELS

New Delhi

Dook Travels has appointed **DEBAJIT SENSARMA** as its Chief Financial Officer. With over 30 years of experience in corporate finance and business management, Sensharma brings a wealth of knowledge to lead the company's finances. He is a qualified Chartered Accountant, and out of his 30-year experience with several companies, such as Paras Healthcare, Symbiotec Pharamlab, Promed Exports, Ranbaxy Laboratories and Reckitt Benckiser, he has worked in the role of Chief Executive Officer for closed to 20 years. He brings a rich experience of fundraising, mergers-acquisitions and risk management.



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Swiss focus on longer stays

There has been a change in preferences among Indian tourists visiting Switzerland during the past one year, says Martin Nydegger, CEO, Switzerland Tourism. He was on a visit to India to talk about their new strategy for the source market.

 Hazel Jain

Switzerland Tourism, eyeing more travellers from India, has been focussing on a new strategy. "While travelling less is not possible, our strategy is to aim to 'Travel Better'. This is our strategy for long-haul markets like India. We aim to keep the market growing by steering the traction towards longer stays, extension of seasons, and sustainable travel," shared **Martin Nydegger**, Chief Executive Officer, Switzerland Tourism, during his recent visit to India.

With 602,000 generated overnight stays in 2023, India is Switzerland's top seven international source markets and is all set to grow to 907,587 overnights in the next five years, as more Indian travellers begin to explore



the beautiful Alpine country not just during the summer months but also during autumn and winter seasons.

Nydegger explained, "Over the past few years, there has been a change in preferences as well as the profile of the typical tourist, who is now travelling to Switzerland throughout the year. Moreover, a second peak is being seen in the autumn and early winter seasons. The profile of the Indian tourist has evolved, with couples, friends and solo travellers also growing besides the more typical family traveller. These travellers are now open to travelling to Switzerland in autumn to see the changing colours of Fall, and also during their winter holidays, to especially enjoy local Christmas markets and other winter experiences,

not necessarily skiing but sledging and snowshoeing also."

Switzerland Tourism has also introduced the 'Travel Better' campaign that emphasises on quality travel over quantity and encourages sustainable practices while travelling. These include extended stays that allow tourists

steering the traction towards longer stays, extension of seasons, promoting the Swiss Travel System, as well as encouraging individual travellers and small groups to visit the country," he says.

Melding cultures

Nydegger reminisces about his first job that started with the Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai. "It's really been engraved in my heart – this country – and I have come to love it so much. Even as a tourism organisation, we want to continuously provide an encounter between cultures. So, Indians can go and discover Switzerland and vice versa. We as tourism representatives must always think a little ahead: How can we make sure tourism is going to have a healthy growth and is contributing positively to the destination? How can we ensure a healthy and sustainable growth in numbers? Because travelling less is not an option. So, the answer lies in travelling better," he adds.


We aim to keep the India market growing by steering the traction towards longer stays, extension of seasons, and promoting the Swiss Travel System

to discover local culture and experience the country's unique offerings, using the efficient Swiss Travel System.

"The right people, in the right place, at the right time. 'Travel Better' – this is our strategy for the future for long-haul markets. India has always been an important market for us. We aim to keep the market growing by

Places of interest in Switzerland

Switzerland's top-most popular destinations among Indian travellers are Zurich, Interlaken, Lucerne and Engelberg.




Martin Nydegger
Chief Executive Officer, Switzerland Tourism

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