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India shines at PTM 2023

The commencement of the PATA Travel Mart 2023 marks a pivotal moment in the growth trajectory of India's tourism industry. The success of the milestone event shows that India is poised to play a significant role in shaping the future of tourism in the Asia Pacific region and beyond.

Janice Alyosius

The 46th edition of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Travel Mart 2023 commenced at the International Exhibition-cum-Convention Centre (IECC), Pragati Maidan, in New Delhi on Wednesday. The event's inauguration ceremony and welcome reception, hosted by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, at the Ashoka hotel witnessed the convergence of global tourism stakeholders. While addressing the inauguration ceremony, **Peter Semone**,

Chairman, PATA, expressed his appreciation for the Indian government's proactive approach to tourism. "By 2046, India aims to welcome 20 billion domestic tourists, complemented by 100 million international visitors. Tourism for India is not just big; it's destined to become much bigger in the years to come," he said.

Semone highlighted the significance of the PATA Travel Mart 2023, emphasising its role in facilitating high-quality buyer-seller meetings and networking opportunities. "The attendees will be able



PATA Travel Mart 2023 Inauguration Ceremony begins with the traditional lighting of the lamp

to access decision makers, meet new clients, expand their network, establish new relationships, and

consolidate existing business partnerships," he said. Semone also informed about the PATA Youth

Symposium. "This symposium will focus on the challenges and issues faced by young professionals

in the tourism industry today. It will provide a unique opportunity for the youth to voice their concerns, represent their generation, and actively contribute to the responsible development of the tourism sector," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, **V Vidyavathi**, Secretary, Tourism, GoI, said, "Post-pandemic, this is an opportune moment for the Ministry of Tourism to host this mart, an acclaimed international trade event that catalyses the development of tourism in the Asia Pacific region."

Host nation gets CEO's applause

Noor Ahmad Hamid, CEO, PATA, highlights India's significant potential in the travel and tourism industry due to its population base and government's intent towards tourism development.

Janice Alyosius

Noor Ahmad Hamid, CEO, PATA emphasising the potential of India in travel and tourism industry said, "India is a very important source market for travel and tourism industry, not only because India has a huge population base, but more importantly, because of the recent announcement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi that a travel for "Travel for Life" concept of sustainability and caring for the earth that resonates well with what the whole global industry is talking about."

He further added, "India has diverse cultures and attractions



Noor Ahmad Hamid
CEO
PATA

that can attract the world and I think Incredible India marketing campaign that launched many years ago still resonates well. And I think people will love to

come to India because it is just an incredible destination."

In terms of customer experience, Hamid pointed out that India's diversity is one of its most remarkable features. "Travelling from one place to another within the country can feel like entering a completely different world. I believe that India has great appeal as a travel destination and the fact that PATA is here with our partner, travellers speak volumes about India being the upcoming destination of choice." He also stressed on India's recent achievement in space travel, suggesting that this will further enhance its global appeal as a travel destination.

Revamping M!CE, sustainably

Top voices of M!CE industry come together to brainstorm how to pave way for more sustainable business and M!CE events, on Day 1 at PTM 2023. They stress on slashing carbon emissions.

Lipla Negi

A session on 'Sustainability in M!CE Tourism' on Day 1 of PATA Travel Mart 2023 witnessed an engaging discussion between audience and speakers on how with little planet-friendly steps a big difference could be created in reducing carbon footprint during large movements during M!CE events.

Moderated by **Aashish Gupta**, Consulting CEO, FAITH, the session had a stellar showcase of speakers—**Supawan Teerarat**, SVP, MICE Capability and Innovation, Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), **Jyothi Verma**, Consultant for Travel relat-



Jyothi Verma
Consultant for
travel related services

ed service online & offline, **Noredah Othman**, CEO, Sabah Tourism Board, and **Amaresh Tiwari**, Vice Chairman, Indian Convention Promotion Bureau.

Underlining the planet-conscious shift in corporate behaviour, Verma said, "In India, we are unlearning to learn again. The focus is on venues that utilize solar energy, strategies for waste management, and use of EV cars for movements. They are putting all information out on a cloud instead of printing it on papers, having live stations, smaller plates for food, and using projectors instead of big posters. Corporates are taking conscious decisions today." For an impact, sustainability needs to be taken to the end-users—the suppliers and corporates, she said. Adding to it, Teerarat advocated for assessing M!CE destinations based on GDS index (Global Destination Sustainability Index).



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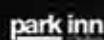
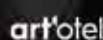
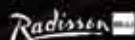


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Tourism opportunities galore

Travel and tourism professionals at PATA Travel Mart are exuberant about the opportunities offered by India. Many tourism professionals say the country is an important source market for them. Not only that, measures such as 'Travel for LiFE' taken by the government show its serious intent towards sustainable tourism.



Joseph Chang
Director, Taiwan Tourism Bureau, Taiwan
Visitors Association Singapore Office

“It is a very good opportunity to know and learn demands of Indian tourists through PATA Travel Mart. This will definitely improve visits to Taiwan. According to me, Indians did not think of Taiwan as a potential destination before the pandemic. This PATA mart will attempt to bridge that gap.

We also spoke with certain Indian tourism stakeholders to learn how to attract the market.”



Supawan Teerarat
Senior Vice President
Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau

“I am grateful to the PATA team for selecting India as the host country. We got an opportunity to network with Indian entrepreneurs, government agencies, and agents. Upgrading the destinations along with hosting the PTM to bring more value to the country is al-

ways a key. India is a powerful country as they have tour operators and MICE agents.”



Prof Monika Prakash
Nodal Officer, Central Nodal Agency for
Sustainable Tourism, MOT

“PATA Travel Mart is a platform that gives you knowledge about the contemporary trend. For me, it is knowledge taking and giving platform. Talking from the visibility point of view, such platforms definitely give India branding and visibility

in the international market. This is such an amazing mart.”

“I think PATA Travel Mart is a fabulous way of showcasing tourism opportunities. India makes it all the more good as it gives a chance for the country to demonstrate its potential and connect with PATA buyers. It also helps in elevating the success we had in G20. India is setting an example to the whole world for coming up with initiatives like Travel for LiFE.”



Aashish Gupta
Consulting CEO
FAITH

“Indian market is one of the biggest economies in the world. It is one of the potential partners for us to encourage more tourism post-pandemic. We used to work with Indian market before COVID, and we have not received many Indian tourists to Mongolia. That is why PATA Travel Mart is crucial for us, as it enables us to build more connections.”



Tereji Batbold
Chief Executive Officer
Selena Travels, Mongolia

“There were a lot of revelations in this mart. I never thought that wedding market in India is this huge if it were not for PATA. The variety of speakers present today makes a huge difference as well. Some important issues such as taxation system on overseas travel was addressed. We definitely need to stand up together in order to boost tourism.”



Sriram Gopalswamy
VP SRE &
MD, Sabre, Bengaluru



Arnab Nayek
Investment Manager
Bullseye

“In my experience of two years, whenever PATA organized any event, the organization never failed to hold wonderful events in order to attract strong tourism stalwarts. As a domestic buyer in the PATA Travel Mart, my expectations would be that the exhibi-

tors should become more mature of what they offer to us buyers.”



Bernard A Metzger
Founder & Chairman
Travelindex Group

“We are back to live interactions via this mart. More connections and interactions with all the exhibitors, buyers, PATA team. We are really happy and excited to be back and need not do zoom calls or Skype calls, among others. We have just been in India for a few hours, it is

difficult to comment as of now, but, all said and done, India has been a great host.”



Alexander Rayner
Director of Government and Destination
Relations, Amadeus

“India has captured more market share of the global tourist arrivals. It is moving from branding campaigns to more strategic and conversion campaigns, which will be an excellent point for India. My expectations from this mart is to meet many delegates, understand key

issues, and foster key relationship. PATA will help in establishing India as a destination hub.”

“I have been to India for the first time and I could not be more excited to attend PATA mart in India. We are getting an opportunity to interact with other stakeholders. It is a good decision to actually show up. As per my expectations, India is doing really well. I am sure that in the upcoming days, Vietnam will be an important market for India and vice-versa.”



Diep Nguyen
Deputy General Manager
Crystal Holidays, Vietnam

“I am attending PATA Travel Mart for the first time. As I entered the venue, I could see a lot of state tourism boards, DMCs, exhibitors, and sellers. I really appreciate the event as it is a good activity for boosting our inbound tourism. All the initiatives taken by Ministry of Tourism are creating hype among tourists to visit India.”



Rajiv Jain
Founder & Director
Rashmi Entertainment

“I would like to thank the Union Ministry of Tourism for hosting this mart in New Delhi. The newly inaugurated hall is impressive, it would be a lot of Indian exposure for the people who are willing to come to India. A lot of state tourism boards are present at the event and I believe they are active in promoting their respective states.”



'Mam' Puangthip Chotipantwanon
Director of Events
PATA

PTM unites travel professionals

PATA Travel Mart 2023 has commenced at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi. The three-day international event brings together exhibitors and attendees from diverse sectors, offering a unique platform for networking, learning and collaboration. Knowledge sessions on the opening day highlight the sustainability trends in tourism, besides providing stats on Indian wedding industry.





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G Kishan Reddy, Union Minister of Tourism, Culture and DoNER, says promoting the country's commitment to sustainability will have a significant impact on the environment. This apart, India is also leveraging tourism and hospitality through Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

GKishan Reddy, in his address at the UN Headquarters, said that India is creating a conducive environment for the tourism sector to contribute to economic growth, environmental protection and social well-being in a sustainable manner. "India is actively advancing Sustainable Development Goals through tourism, implementing various activities and strategies," he said.

sustainable tourism, and that there are seven key pillars under the strategy which focus on promoting environment, economic and socio-cultural sustainability, protecting biodiversity and creating awareness through skill development and entrepreneurship training. "MOT has launched the 'Travel for LiFE' to promote sustainable tourism, which is developed to bring large-scale behavioural change among tourists and tourism businesses, which will have a vital impact on environmental protection and climate action. The programme holds significance for



promoting India's G20 priority of Green Tourism under the Tourism Working Group," he said.

Also, he insisted that India is working towards enhancing linkage to important tourist destinations. "MOT is collaborating with the MoCA and other ministries as a 'whole-of-government approach'. Such initiatives have resulted in the operationalisation of

tourism routes, facilitating easier access to iconic sites and boosting tourism in those regions.”

Informing that under India's G20 Presidency, five interconnected priority areas in the tourism sector have been identified, he said that they are the key

SDGs is a global effort towards developing the tourism sector through the lens of SDGs," he claimed.

Reddy added, "A notable feature of the G20 Indian Presidency 2023 Goa Roadmap is its commitment to promoting collaboration and

engagement to leverage activities to position the tourism sector as a leader in collective progress towards the SDGs.”

Also, he said, in line with the digitisation drive, India is leveraging technology to empower the hospitality and tourism industry.

India is actively advancing Sustainable Development Goals through tourism, implementing various activities and strategies

building blocks for enhancing the tourism sector and achieving the targets for 2030 SDGs. "The Goa Roadmap for tourism as a vehicle for achieving the

On the road to progressing the SDGs, India's G20 Presidency has identified five priority areas for the Tourism Working Group (TWG) where the tourism sector can lead in making important contributions.

- ❖ **Green tourism:** Greening the tourism sector for a sustainable, responsible and resilient tourism sector
- ❖ **Digitalisation:** Harnessing the power of digitalisation to promote competitiveness, inclusion and sustainability in the tourism sector
- ❖ **Skills:** Empowering youth with skills for jobs and entrepreneurship in the tourism sector
- ❖ **Tourism micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs):** Nurturing tourism MSMEs, startups and private sector to unleash innovation in the tourism sector
- ❖ **Destination management:** Rethinking the strategic management of destinations towards a holistic approach that delivers on the SDGs

6  PATA DAILY 2023 — DAY 2



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'Govt addressing parking issue'

Ajay Bhatt, MoS for Tourism, says the tourists' rush at famous tourist destinations has necessitated the need for more parking facilities, and govt has already started work in this direction.

Poonam Akolia

Ajay Bhatt, Minister of State for Tourism, has highlighted the pressing need for additional parking spaces at popular tourist destinations. "The unprecedented number of tourists visiting these famous places has necessitated the development of more parking facilities in nearby areas. As a proactive measure, efforts have already begun to construct a parking area in Bhowali and Bhimtal near Nainital. The government is also considering plans to



Ajay Bhatt
Minister of State for Tourism
Government of India

further expand parking spaces at other tourist destinations to cater to the increasing influx of visitors," he said in an interaction with **PTV** recently.

The govt is also considering plans to further expand parking spaces at other tourist destinations to cater to the increasing influx of visitors

The MOT also recognizes the potential of developing border areas for tourism purposes. "To achieve this goal, the ministry is committed to developing all necessary facilities and infrastructure in these areas. This includes improving transport network, tourist attractions, and amenities," he said.



Taking tourism to rural areas

The Union Ministry of Tourism, under its Vibrant Villages Programme, discussed aspects of tourism in border villages of the country at an interactive session held recently in New Delhi.

Janice Alyosius

More than 300 Sarpanches and Gram Pradhans from border villages of the country participated in a session, organised by the Ministry of Tourism at Ashoka Hotel in New Delhi recently as part of the Vibrant Villages Programme. **V Vidyavathi**, Secretary, Tourism, Government of India (Gol), led the session, which focussed on different aspects of tourism, challenges faced by different villages, and potential solutions for tourism development. The participants discussed various topics, including infrastructure, community engagement, skill development, and environmental conservation.

Emphasising on the Vibrant Villages Programme, said, "The vibrant villages hold immense potential for adventure tourism. The Ministry of Tourism will soon arrange a meeting with the defence authorities to engage the youth from these villages in training them as adventure tourist guides." The secretary said that the expenses associated



V Vidyavathi
Secretary
Tourism, Government of India

with the training would be borne by the ministry. Informing about further plans, she said, "We have to celebrate the tourism festivals, and for that, you (participants) do not have to come to Delhi; we will reach your villages to celebrate the festival with you. Adventure tourism is an important segment for tourism ministry, and it has huge potential in vibrant villages."

Elaborating on the objective, **Rakesh Verma**, Additional

Secretary, Tourism, Gol, said, "Our primary objective is to understand how they look at the development of their villages, their uniqueness, what tourism attractions do they have. We also shared an overview of

The Ministry will soon arrange a meeting with the defence authorities to engage the youth from these villages in training them as adventure tourist guides

what tourism ministry is doing for the development of vibrant villages and how we can work jointly in development of these villages as vibrant villages, leverage their tourism potential, and create opportunities for local youth."



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Tier I & II cities key markets for MTPA

With India being one of their primary markets, the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA) is committed to strengthen the bond between Mauritius and India, says **Arvind Bundhun**, Director, MTPA. He emphasises on the significance of new product offerings and plans for engagement and growth in the coming year.



Hazel Jain

How important is the India market for you today?

Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA) is focusing on the Indian market; it continues to be one of our primary markets. We are delighted to report the road to recovery in 2023 has been gradual with increased connectivity from India. With Air Mauritius operating flights from Mumbai and New Delhi, along with increased seat inventory from Vistara originating in Mumbai, is likely to drive a robust upward trend in Indian arrivals to Mauritius. This reinforces our commitment to strengthen the bond between Mauritius and India.

What traveller segment has picked up for Mauritius?

Mauritius is currently enjoying a surge in leisure traffic, with an influx of small family and friends' groups. This trend shows the island's appeal as a destination for relaxation and intimate gatherings, is enhancing its reputation as a top



Arvind Bundhun
Director
MTPA

choice for memorable getaways.

What are some of the new products you are promoting in India?

Mauritius boasts a diverse array of offerings, ensuring that every visitor can find his or her perfect experience on the island. Whether you seek a tranquil and rejuvenating holiday or crave thrilling adrenaline-pumping adventures, Mauritius caters to all prefer-

ences. Our Feel the Island Energy campaign is designed to promote every facet of this destination, inviting travellers to embrace the tapestry of experiences awaiting them in Mauritius.

What trade engagements are you planning?

We have wrapped up a three-city roadshow in Mumbai, Chennai and Ahmedabad; the response was heartening, reaffirming the interest in our destination. We also have an exciting line-up of activities planned, including sales visits outside Mumbai and Delhi, product training workshops, engaging webinars, and participation in key trade exhibitions. These initiatives reflect our commitment to enhance our engagement with partners and stakeholders, elevating the appeal of Mauritius as a premier travel destination.

What are your expectations from 2023-24?

MTPA is conducting various B2C activities, which include an ag-

gressive digital activation plan along with multiple marketing and trade activities. We are currently executing a set of B2C initiatives,

Since the Indian travellers are digitally savvy, we are focussing on a full calendar of digital actions at B2B and B2C levels

encompassing a digital activation strategy alongside diverse range of marketing and trade activities. These efforts are poised to yield impressive results, and we anticipate a rise in arrivals as compared to last year. This demonstrates our commitment to adapting to the evolving travel landscape and



driving growth in Mauritius' appeal as a choice destination.

Which cities are a great source markets for you?

Our primary source markets are tier I and II cities. They serve as vital hubs for travellers who seek diverse global experiences. By targeting them, we can link with a range of Indian tourists, catering to their preferences and travel interests, fostering a robust outbound travel market.

Since Indian travellers are digitally savvy, we are focussing on a full cal-

endar of digital actions at B2B and B2C levels to keep the destination at the top-of-the-mind of the traveller. A full-fledged calendar of actions has already started with exciting competitions and upcoming travel trade incentives to keep us engaged with our audience.

In addition, we are focusing on key opinion leader marketing and a constant showcase of the destination through Bollywood and celebrities. FAM trips, press trips and destination trainings in tier II and III cities will continue throughout the year. 🐦

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Tourism set to boost India's economy

The Union Ministry of Tourism is at the forefront, as India hosts the 46th edition of the PATA Travel Mart at the IECC in Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. India is highlighting its cultural heritage, landscapes and tourism offerings to an international audience, marking a major milestone in regional tourism promotion.

Nisha Verma

Roshan Thomas, Director, Overseas Marketing, International Cooperation, IT Division, Ministry of Tourism (MOT), said participating in the PATA Travel Mart 2023 offers a platform for highlighting India's vast tourism potential and showcasing its range of tourism offerings. He said around 1,000 participants, including tour operators, media representatives and other key players in the tourism sector, would attend the event. This event presents an opportunity to exhibit India's tourism infrastructure and products and services to the audience.

He added, "We have plans to increase promotion of tourism products and services across Asia Pacific to attract more inbound tourism, aiming to impress buyers and support the region's growth."

Inbound tourism in India

Thomas noted the Incredible India campaign, launched in the past decade, had significantly increased for-



Roshan Thomas
Director, Overseas Marketing, International Cooperation, IT Division, MOT

eign tourist arrivals in India, playing a crucial role in global promotion. He remarked, "India has a chance during PTM 2023 to exhibit its tourism offerings to tour operators and other stakeholders, with the goal of boosting inbound tourism. In pursuit of inclusive growth, the MOT has set up an immersive experience kiosk at the pavilion. This kiosk spotlights lesser-known but vital tourism destinations, particularly in the Northeastern region. The aim is to position these

destinations in the global market to attract inbound tourism, creating more job opportunities."

Delegate benefits

India is emerging as a key player in the APAC region's tourism recovery,

India plans to showcase its tourism offerings at PTM, using an immersive kiosk to promote inclusive growth & employment

with a focus on sustainable and inclusive tourism. Thomas stressed, "Leveraging the momentum from the G20, India aims to showcase its diverse tourism offerings, culture and investment opportunities. Hosting PTM 2023 after a hiatus of

three years due to COVID is facilitating networking, client engagement and educational opportunities for local tourism students through the PATA Youth Symposium where it facilitates to engage local tourism students. This will benefit the future of tourism in India. They will learn from the experts and mentors from various organisations."

He added, "Instead of concentrating conventions and conferences in various cities, India offers diverse options based on regional climate, culture and locale. This move is expected to make India a preferred destination for meeting and event planners from around the world, expanding opportunities and driving economic growth."

PTM 2023

Characterising tourism as a cornerstone of India's thriving economy, Thomas shared, "It aims to redefine experiential travel within India by offering immersive cultural odysseys across 10 dynamically evolving passion points. These encompass



culinary experiences, MICE, entertainment, wellness, and many more. PTM comes at a crucial juncture, as India seeks to lure global and domestic travellers with compelling experiences that showcase the country's incredible diversity. The aim of organising PTM is to bridge the gap between sellers and buyers, expand their networks, establish new

relationships and consolidate existing business partnerships, which can help to boost inbound market from the Asia Pacific region. In addition, it will provide international and domestic delegates with unique, memorable destination experiences through a choice of technical tours that capture the essence of India's rich heritage and culture."



Dwi Nugraha, Pacto DMC World Product Manager:
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VIP Service Bali

VIP Services Bali has been established since November 1st 2019, under PT Dewi Samudera Perkasa. We have handled around 3800 files to date.

Our main market is Indian market. As time goes by we are also growing, our market has increased to Europe, the Middle East, America and Asia. VIP Services Bali has been collaborating with local DMC agents to facilitate guests' tours to Nusa Penida Islands.

VIP Services Bali will help our guests to create precious moments for our guests with our work motto "Amazing Journey". We aim to provide an unforgettable experience for our guests when visiting Nusa Penida Island with VIP Services Bali. We will take you to visit heavenly spots in Nusa Penida.

Understanding the culture and habits of each market is one way for VIP Services Bali to provide the best comfort and service to guests. We will always try to upgrade our services to complete the tour with incredible experiences.

VIP Services Bali also covers the safety of guests with insurance benefits on the boat shuttle and insurance when they do island tours for the comfort and safety of guests when doing tours.

Guest satisfaction is our top priority.



Elevating experiences with tech aid

India Assist has experienced rapid growth, expanding from 60 cities to 140. The company, with the help of technology, which plays a crucial role in their operations, aims to extend assistance to 240 tourist-friendly cities by 2024-25. Their services are priced affordably and accessible to both domestic and international travellers.



Janice Alyosius

COVID has ignited a desire in everyone to travel; this is known as pent-up demand among travellers worldwide. Travel has become an essential aspect of everyday life. COVID, however, taught us the most about safety and security. Travel assist is a reliable travel assistance that is a gamechanger service in the travel industry. Harish Khatri, Founder and CEO, India Assist, shares how the company has evolved to become a trusted companion for travellers across India.



Harish Khatri
Founder and CEO
India Assist

Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC). He said, "IRCTC has become a partner of India Assist, and through their platform, one can buy India Assist services. This partnership has made it easier for travellers to access the assistance they need."

Sharing an overview of their recent partnership, Khatri shared, "Recently, we formed a partnership with Moto GP, serving as the official assistance partner for the entire three-day Moto GP race event. Additionally, we are on the verge of finalising a significant collaboration with a

Khatri highlighted the remarkable growth of India Assist and stated, "The acceptance of the product, India Assist, is very much there. We have expanded our reach exponentially. We were in 60 cities; but now we are in 140 cities." With this rapid

expansion, India Assist has solidified its position as a leading player in the travel assistance industry.

Khatri further shared that one of the significant milestones for India Assist was its partnership with the

The acceptance of the product, India Assist, is very much there (in the market). We have expanded our reach exponentially

Tourism Board, where we will manage tourist information centres and oversee various related initiatives. Simultaneously, we have initiated a project, and we are in the process of launching Singapore Assist." These partnerships demonstrate the trust that various entities have placed in India Assist's ability to enhance the travel experience.

Khatri acknowledges that India Assist's growth trajectory has led to some strategic shifts. He said, "The track record of our service is 100 per cent, whosoever has reached out to



ing to widespread adoption by travel agents and hotels.

India Assist's expansion strategy is also geographical. Revealing their expansion plan, Khatri said, "We have mapped around 240 tourist-friendly cities in India, with 140 cities we are already covering. By 2024-2025, we aim to extend our assistance to all 240 cities."

tic travellers. Anyone who needs assistance should get assistance. So, the pricing for both domestic and international travellers are same," he said.

Highlighting the simple user interface, Khatri revealed that his mother was his inspiration for the mobile application's design, ensuring that it remains

user-friendly. "The application's simplicity allows travellers to connect with our call centre with just a single button press, facilitating quick and efficient assistance."

Despite the challenges posed by COVID, India Assist has continued to serve travellers diligently. Khatri shared, "We provided over 3,000 assistance services to stranded foreigners during COVID." Currently, India Assist's impact is reflected in its impressive app download numbers, with users benefiting from its services. "We are in discussions with three to four tourism boards, and these partnerships are in the process of being finalised. Additionally, we are in talks with one of India's largest airlines and the Ministry of Tourism (MoT). Furthermore, negotiations are ongoing with a prominent hotel chain," he added.

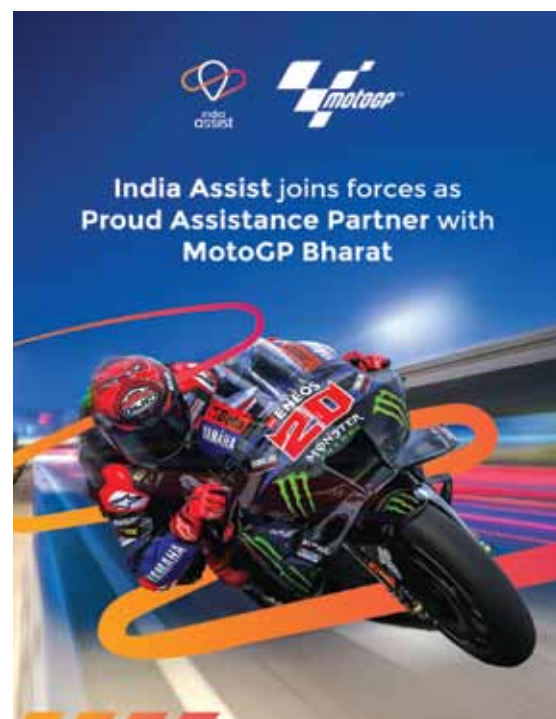
Khatri envisions a world where travellers everywhere feel supported and not alone. As a result, India Assist has received queries from around the globe about licensing their services. While the path to global expansion may be long, India Assist is patient and determined to make travel assistance accessible to all.

India Assist's remarkable journey, as recounted by Khatri, showcases the evolution of a service that has changed the way we approach travel assistance.

IRCTC has become a partner of India Assist, and through their platform, one can buy India Assist services. This has made life easier for travellers

Furthermore, emphasising the importance of technology in their operations, he said, "We use world-class tools. We have our app and have launched a website in September to provide travellers with up-to-date information about the destinations they plan to visit. It is a first website and there is a lot of possibility to improve it and we are working on that. So, hopefully in the time to come wherever people plan their travel, the first thing they would do is check the website first before going anywhere."

Speaking of pricing, Khatri informed that India Assist offers affordable assistance at approximately 200 rupees per day per person. This cost covers a wide range of services, including immediate reimbursements for certain expenses and access to medical support. "We do not differentiate between foreign and domes-



Leaders decide future of tourism



India's inbound potential in focus



Redefining mid-priced hospitality

Alliance Hotels & Resorts aims to provide exceptional hospitality experiences and superior customer service, with a focus on mid-priced range products. Despite competition, its mid-priced range products have good occupancy, and expansion plans in coming years include adding new properties in South India, Goa, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Nepal.



Suhani Sood

Alliance Hotels & Resorts is a professional hotel management franchise to deliver profitable returns on an annual basis to consumers at a rate faster than the industry average. By offering them good hospitality experiences and standard of customer service, it is taking care of its customers' ideal vacation or dream stay. The firm started for first time in India "A Marketing Frenchie's Co" in early 2000s. Today, it has become a benchmark for many professionals.



Zia Siddiqui
Director
Alliance Hotels & Resorts



Abdullah Yousuf
Director of Marketing
Alliance Hotels & Resorts



Zia Siddiqui, Director, Alliance Hotels & Resorts, said, "With 23 years of experience in providing luxury hospitality to travellers from across the world, our focus is to make the tourists' stay one of the best experiences."

No competition

On competition in the sector, he responded, "Our focus is the mid-priced range products, therefore, during COVID, all our associates have good occupancy rates. Even

our associate hotels have done good business. So, on local front there is no challenge, but mid-priced global chains are focusing on India as their future market. We are also upgrading all our hotels and resorts."

Expansion plans

We are adding 12 properties by end of this year in South India and Goa, and in early 2024, we will be opening four hotels in Bhutan (one

in Paro, two in Thimphu and one in Punakha), two in Bangladesh—in Dhaka and Cox's Bazar and one in Kathmandu. As per the plan by the end of 2024, we would be having total 50 plus hotels or resorts, 4,000 rooms and 45 locations.

Promotional activities

Besides traditional sales force, we have now established a complete digital marketing team taking care

of website optimisation, social media marketing, blogging, effective e-mail marketing through most advanced email marketing platform, among others.

Abdullah Yousuf has taken over as Director of Marketing. His responsibility is to leverage digital marketing tools to meet the future needs of the industry. "We are participating in PATA Travel Mart to create brand awareness globally and to update our associates," Siddiqui said. 🌸

Affordable luxury on a budget

The Alliance Hotels and Resorts offers fine dining restaurants, lounges, recreational facilities and that special class found only at the country's best hotel. Comfortable 3-star hotels offering modern facilities, large, well-appointed rooms, coffee shop with complete public facilities at affordable prices. The branding is based on such criteria as value, quality and client satisfaction. Alliance Hotels and Resorts offers a no extravaganza approach with a friendly and personal manner and caters to both business and leisure traveller. Alliance Econo "luxury budget" hotels offer excellent accommodation with limited facilities, at a true value for money price. Either having restaurant on the premises or can arrange breakfast in the room. Provide very limited service through its multi-skilled staff. Alliance Econo will be the most popular brand among the business traveller in the coming years.

G20: a boost to inbound tourism

G20 Presidency created new possibilities and opened avenues for the tourism sector of India. The G20 meetings played a transformative role and helped the inbound tourism of the country. IATO's regional heads from North, East, West, and South, share their insights on the strategies employed to harness the G20 potential for the benefit of the industry, and the nation.



Sunil Gupta
Chairman, IATO Northern Region & Managing Director, Travel Bureau

“The G20 meetings have proved to be a game-changer for India's inbound tourism, particularly in the aftermath of the devastating impact of COVID-19. The country required a significant boost in media coverage to signal that it was open for safe travel once again, and the G20 meetings provided just that. Holding these meetings at India's most iconic sites and cities has not only showcased the nation's cultural richness but also left an indelible mark on the delegates and media who attended. The memories of experiencing India's heritage and hospitality have been carried back.”



J K Mohanty
Chairman IATO Eastern Region & CMD, Swosti Group

“India's G20 Presidency can be a game-changer for the tourism industry. India hosted more than 200 meetings in 59 destinations across the country. These meetings will put a spotlight on several lesser-known tourism destinations and heritage sites in the country, bringing them to the forefront of the global tourism map. This increased visibility due to media coverage, which can create awareness and curiosity about India as a tourist destination, attracting potential tourists. It also provides an opportunity to expand inbound tourism with special focus on sustainable tourism.”

“The recently held G20 summit across India and the IATO convention have much in common. India's G20 Presidency will definitely benefit India and its tourism sector in particular. The event has given us good exposure to the rest of the world. Many people were not aware of all the things India has to offer and the G20 Summit held in various locations in India has put a spotlight to those places. Our Prime Minister Narendra Modi has really showcased India in a big way and the travel trade hopes to get more business – both domestic and inbound.”



NS Rathor
Chairman
IATO Western Region

“India's G20 is truly a great marketing event for inbound tourism. The event was a gallery that showcased India to the world. Every part of India was showcased. All states hosted the G20 event, and I am sure the event would be talked about for the longest time. Southern region has been active in promoting its different regions. The Fam tours done, along with Karnataka tourism, has been a big success. Delegation to Andaman made a good impact in promoting Andaman. The different travel marts like GTM brought many trade visitors to Kerala.”



Sejo Jose
Chairman
IATO Southern Region

Compiled by Janice Alyosius

Aviation sector on an upward trend

India's civil aviation sector is experiencing a surge, with airport expansion, airline proliferation and increased aircraft. Airlines are expanding flight operations to Central Asia, Southeast Asia and incorporating 8-10 aircraft monthly. MoCA is planning to establish six aviation hubs in major cities, aiming to regain lost business and tourism opportunities.

The civil aviation sector in India is experiencing a remarkable surge, characterised by the expansion of airports, the proliferation of airlines and the continuous addition of more aircraft. This expansion is improving connectivity, introducing fresh destinations to the domestic and international networks. Just in the previous month, Indian carriers extended their flight operations to Central Asia, including Tbilisi, Tashkent, Almaty and Baku, and Southeast Asia with destinations such as Jakarta, Bali and Nairobi. With Indian carriers incorporating 8-10 aircraft every month, this growth leads to increased flight frequencies on existing routes and the incorporation of new destinations into the network.

As we progress in this trajectory, it is anticipated that India will establish itself as a prominent global aviation hub. In collaboration with GMR, the MoCA has recently conducted an extensive study on



the 'Development of International Hubs'. This study emphasised the necessary actions to be undertaken by airlines, airport operators, and the government in the short, medium and long term to establish not just one but six aviation hubs in India's major metropolitan cities. As we move

forward, our aviation hubs should strive to regain the business and tourism opportunities that we may have lost to neighbouring aviation hubs in the past.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, we are witnessing the introduction of new aircraft in the

Indian aviation landscape. For instance, a 19-seater Twin Otter, manufactured by De Havilland

Canada, has recently initiated services connecting Hindon Airport in Uttar Pradesh to

Bathinda and Ludhiana in Punjab. Additionally, an air taxi operator has deployed a Tecnam P2010TDI, a 4-seater aircraft for operations on the Ahmedabad to Mundra route. The introduction of seaplanes is on the horizon, and one can expect to see them taking flight soon. Helicopters and non-scheduled operator charters are segments poised for substantial growth in the times ahead.



Rajiv Bansal
Former Secretary
Ministry of Civil Aviation

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



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G20 energises J&K adventure tourism

Business of hotels and tour operators in the Union Territory has increased after the G20 summit. Adventure tourism, which increased in recent years, would contribute to the overall growth of the tourism industry in Jammu and Kashmir. The recent experiences shared by the G20 delegates have also contributed to the growth of tourism.



Janice Alyosius

The G20 Summit was not only a platform for world leaders to discuss global issues, but also an opportunity for Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) to showcase its potential as a premier adventure tourism destination. Hotels and tour operators in the region anticipated hosting adventure activities ahead of the summit, which is positively impacting their business and contributing to the overall tourism sector in the Union Territory.

Arbaz Khurshid Shah, General Manager, Clarks Inn Srinagar, emphasised that Jammu and Kashmir is famous for its natural and serene beauty and hosting adventure activities is going to give a new dimension. "This push has led to increase in tourist footfall and a positive buzz is being created among the adventure tourists. Jammu and Kashmir is mostly equated with natural beauty, but this summit gave us an opportunity to showcase another aspect," he said.

Prateek Acharya, Director of Operations, Zone by The Park Jammu, acknowledging the government's efforts in promoting Jammu as an adventure destination, said, "This will definitely attract audiences from all areas, which will increase the business. Jammu and Kashmir already has religious tourism in place, and with adventure activities, the UT can be positioned as the next big adventure tourism destination."

Highlighting the change in travellers' demand, Acharya said, "Today, travellers are looking at experiences and want to explore newer places and adventure activities. If these activities are backed by marketing and media campaigns, hotels can attract tourists who look out for such experiences."

Emphasising on Jammu's immense tourism potential, Acharya further said, "The potential can be harped on strategically through



Arbaz Khurshid Shah
General Manager
Clarks Inn Srinagar

are an excellent source of ancillary revenue as well, and will therefore help in positively influencing the overall tourism of the UT."

The successful hosting of adventure activities during the G20 Summit would have a long-term positive impact on the overall tourism sector in Jammu and Kashmir. Shah highlighted, "Adventure activities give us an opportunity to cater to different sets of people in addition to leisure tourists who visit Jammu and Kashmir. So, holding these activities in connection to G20 is going to present J&K as a major global destination and increase the occupancy of both domestic and international tourists."



Prateek Acharya
Director of Operations
Zone by The Park Jammu

The UT is mostly equated with natural beauty, but this (G20) summit gave us an opportunity to showcase another aspect of J&K

G20 Summit spotlight. The media coverage will educate the travellers on the hidden treasures of the UT, which were overshadowed by the troubled past. It is a golden opportunity for us hoteliers, the government, the citizens, and the travellers to experience the state in a new light—with significance being attuned to MICE, developing sustainable tourism, adventure activities getting a new lease of life. The G20 Summit has placed Jammu & Kashmir on a global platform as a global tourist destination."

Sumeet Taneja, Area Director, IHCL and General Manager, Taj Chandigarh, highlighted that Jammu and Kashmir have been synonymous with various recreational activities and sports. "Amid the spectacular landscape of the state, these lend a unique immersive flavour to overall tourism experience. Besides, these

J&K already has religious tourism in place, and with adventure activities, the state can be positioned as the next big adventure tourism destination

Highlighting the G20 impact on bookings, Shah said, "Currently J&K is witnessing a very good tourist season and our property is fully booked. Holding of G20 in



Sumeet Taneja
Area Director, IHCL
and General Manager, Taj Chandigarh

Adventure activities lend a unique immersive flavour to tourism experience. Besides, these are an excellent source of ancillary revenue as well

J&K has given an impetus to the bookings. Overall, a good season has translated into substantially higher ARR. Also, the inflow of queries has increased substantially. This has resulted in more brand awareness and an increase in bookings."



Zahoor Qari
Managing Executive
Air Links Tours & Travels

Jammu & Kashmir tour operators believe that hosting adventure activities will benefit their business by attracting more customers

Tour operators envisioned several ways of hosting adventure activities that would contribute to the overall tourism industry in Jammu and Kashmir. **Zahoor Qari**, Managing Executive, Air Links Tours & Travels, expressed his belief about the positive impact of G20 Summit on J&K tourism. "Jammu and Kashmir tour operators believe that hosting adventure activities will benefit their business by attracting more customers," he said.

"Adventure tourism has gained popularity in recent years, and by capitalizing on this trend, tour



Sameer Ahmad Baktoo
Marketing and Operations Head
India Travel Connection

The J&K has a lot of places that are overcrowded now. We as stakeholders have requested the government to develop unknown destinations

place, the prime agenda of the UT government and stakeholders is that travel advisory should be lifted completely, as they will for themselves see how peaceful this place is. We can then anticipate at least a million foreign tourists visiting Kashmir next year."

Sameer Ahmad Baktoo, Marketing and Operations Head, India Travel Connection, shared his optimism about G20's potential impact on tourism. He also said that to make the most of the event, the development of lesser-known destinations with adventure activities is crucial. "This will increase the region's carrying capacity and preserving its natural beauty. I believe that the positive message conveyed by the summit would attract tourists. Kashmir has a lot of places that are already developed and overcrowded. We as stakeholders have requested the government to develop unknown destinations. If the government will help boost new destinations, then our carrying capacity would increase."

The successful hosting of adventure activities was expected to enhance Jammu and Kashmir's reputation as an adventure tourism destination nationally and internationally. Tour operators believe that the positive experiences shared by G20 attendees and other tourists would contribute significantly to establishing the region as a top adventure destination and attract adventure-seekers from around the globe.



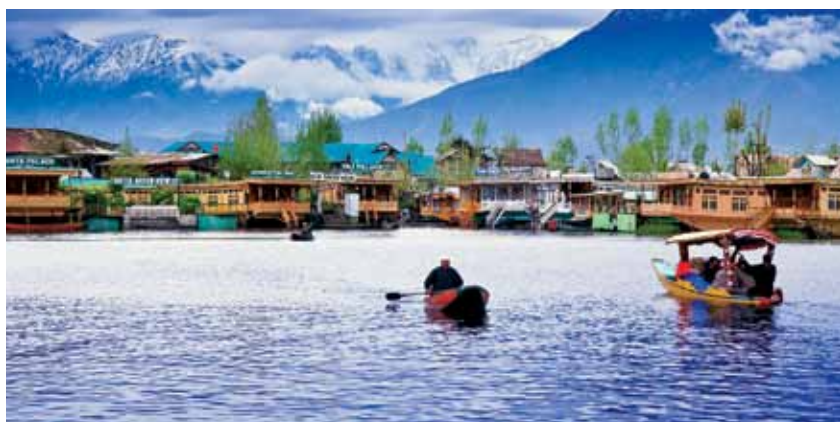
Nasir Shah
MD, Culture & Nature Expeditions
Tours & Travels

The J&K for past 100 years has been a paradise for adventure lovers. This has been the oldest adventure destination of our country

operators aim to position Jammu and Kashmir as appealing destinations for adventure enthusiasts, thereby increasing tourism numbers," he added.

Nasir Shah, Managing Director, Culture & Nature Expeditions Tours & Travels, recalled the golden era of adventure tourism in Kashmir before political unrest.

"Kashmir for past 100 years has been a paradise for adventure lovers. This has been the oldest adventure destination of our country. Pre-1990, we used to get thousands of adventure tourists from USA, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, France & Italy. Unfortunately, this activity got disrupted due to the political situation in Kashmir. With the G20 taking



Travel for LiFE vision unveiled

The PTM 2023, scheduled to take place in New Delhi from 4–6 October, is likely to highlight India's distinctive travel attractions, with 200 attendees promoting India's Travel for LiFE goal.

Sara Haque

Expectations run high for the PATA Travel Mart 2023, scheduled to be held in New Delhi from 4-6 October.

Poonam Rajput, Manager, PATA India, shares, "The PATA Travel Mart (PTM) was last held in India in 2015. Since it is also the first in-person PTM after the pandemic, it becomes even more special for us. It was an enriching and learning experience personally, as it presented an opportunity for me to work closely with the Ministry of Tourism and other tourism stakeholders in the country and abroad. This event is being organised at IECC at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi, showcasing world-class infrastructure developed for international exhibitions and conventions."

Following the impeccable conduct of the G20 events in India, the PATA delegates are expected to experience the Incredible India hospitality and the eclectic flavours that the country has to offer in its tourism sector. In-



Poonam Rajput
Manager
PATA India

ternational events like PTM are essential to showcasing the top



travel destinations that India has to offer.

"PTM welcomes over 200 buyers and more than 200 sellers from all across the world in engaging B2B sessions. The large contingent of sellers from India consists of hospitality providers, tour operators and state tourism bodies, among others. PTM will help showcase the unique offerings of Incredible India through its various platforms. All the other events that we have organized such as the sustainability session, Youth Symposium and PATA Forums will further help explore, ideate and progress the government's recently launched Travel for LiFE vision," she adds.

Kerala revamps district portals

State Tourism Minister recently launched the revamped websites of all the 14 District Tourism Promotion Councils (DTPCs) in Kerala, offering quick access to information on tourism attractions.

TT Bureau

P A Mohamed Riyas, Tourism Minister, Kerala, has launched the new DTPC website packed with information and images. He said that with the advent of social media, it is vital to draw on cutting-edge technologies while developing and updating online platforms providing tourism information.

The updated DTPC websites are stacked with a lot of information on diverse attractions awaiting the visitors across Kerala. These websites are designed in a highly attractive manner, enabling tourists to effortlessly navigate through them, for choosing the places they want to visit and make use of facilities available in each location, said the minister.

"In an age when the fast-paced growth of IT has a great influence on people, identifying its possibilities is vital to the growth of Kerala's Tourism sector. So, updating and upgrading technological platforms like websites using most modern



P A Mohamed Riyas
Tourism Minister
Kerala

technology is vital for promotion of tourism in the state," he added.

Kerala Tourism has revamped its websites after 20 years, showcasing the distinct features of each of the 14 districts to the world. Riyas added, "This also reflects the efforts of the State Tourism Department to adapt itself to the global transformations. DTPCs form an important branch of the Tourism Department. The revamped websites will enable

each district's tourism activities to be coordinated in a better way. Apart from providing details regarding each district's tourist locales, the website also makes navigation easier for the tourists."

The minister has also urged the secretaries of 14 DTPCs to add more details on websites regard-

In an age when the fast-paced growth of IT has a great influence on people, identifying its possibilities is vital to the growth of Kerala Tourism

ing events and places of cultural and historical significance, besides highlighting the Keralites' hospitality and communal harmony to attract more visitors.



Glorie Yuliani, Pacto DMC India and Middle East Product Manager: Luxury landed in the new frontier of Nusa Penida: Pramana Natura Nusa Penida.

Pramana Natura Nusa Penida

Pramana Natura, Bali is an elegant coastal getaway built up the lush sloping cliffs of Nusa Penida. As the panoramic scene of tropical islands, ancient volcanoes and deep blue ocean comes into focus, it is understandable that you will need to catch your breath as you're swept away by the beauty laid out before you. From sunrise to sunset, the colours of nature will wash over you as you experience a true island paradise.

Pramana Natura Nusa Penida prides itself on delivering genuine Balinese hospitality "Pramana Experience" that is warm and always personal. As you spend time experiencing this natural museum our staff will be on hand to assist you every step of the way. Our genuine Balinese hospitality stems from the traditional philosophy Tri Hita Kirana; which encourages harmony and care between fellow human beings. The physical and emotional connections you make during your stay with us are guaranteed to stick with you long after you leave. Our team provides 'service from the heart' who are very happy to accommodate the guest needs with a friendly smile to ensure all the guest are satisfied during their experience stay. Enjoy the down time on your private balcony and let the sights and sounds of the ocean wash your worries away.



U'khand unveils two destinations

Nestled along the border of Uttarakhand, Jadung Village offers an excellent chance for travellers to delve into the rich culture of the state. Apart from that, embarking on a white-water rafting adventure in the Harsil Valley along the Bhagirathi River promises to deliver an exhilarating and distinct experience.

 Sara Haque

The Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board (UTDB) has recently introduced two new tourism destinations in the state to bolster their tourism industry. The old border village in Uttarkashi district, Jadung, is situated near the Tibet border and holds historical significance as it was one of the five villages where locals were resettled after being displaced during the Indo-China War. **Satpal Maharaj**, Minister of Tourism, Irrigation, Culture & PWD, Government of Uttarakhand, inaugurated the inaugural FAM tour to Jadung. He emphasised, “We are pleased to unveil Jadung as the latest tourism hotspot in Uttarakhand. This presents a wonderful opportunity for travellers to immerse themselves in the distinctive culture and natural beauty of Uttarakhand. Our commitment to fostering responsible and sustainable tourism in the state is unwavering, and the introduction



of astro tourism is expected to not only benefit local communities but also enhance the state's tourism sector.”

The FAM tour consisted of 25 special invitees made up of tourism industry experts, astro tourism experts, media persons, officials from the Ministry of Tourism and the UTDB. The other tourist destinations apart from Jadung covered during the FAM tour included Har-

sil, Bagori, Mukhwa, Dharali, and Nelong Valley in Uttarkashi.

Located around 30 kilometres from Uttarkashi town, the UTDB also announced the opening of white-water rafting on the Bhagirathi River in Harsil Valley. As part of the Vibrant Village scheme, UTDB has identified three river rafting locations, that includes the stretch between the Jangla and Jhala bridges on the Bhagirathi River. **Colonel Ashwini Pundir**,

Additional CEO, UTDB, added, “The introduction of river rafting in Harshil Valley is a significant milestone for Uttarakhand's tourism industry, providing a new and unique experience for visitors and boosting the local economy. The conditions for river rafting between Jangla and Jhala bridges are perfect, with Harshil Valley's stunning natural beauty.”


Introduction of astro tourism is expected to not only benefit local communities but also enhance Uttarakhand's tourism sector


The UTDB has also made registration compulsory to ensure the safety of all participants in the rafting activities. For the rafting

companies and individuals to submit registration proposals, they would need to strictly meet the requirements such as the availability of knowledgeable guides, trainee guides, rescue kayaks and all essential rafting gear, among

together during one trip. **Sachin Kurve**, Secretary, UTDB added, “Uttarakhand has been famous for river rafting activities on the Ganga only. However, other rivers of the state too are endowed with immense potential in this matter.



others. Another safety prerequisite necessitates that there either be two rafts always plying together or one raft and one safety kayak

People from across the world will love to enjoy river rafting and white water rafting in the rivers of Uttarakhand.” 

Sustainability: A win-win strategy

G20 Presidency provides opportunity to leverage potential of sustainable tourism to drive economic growth, preserve cultural & environmental heritage and contribute to achieve SDGs. **Paul Pruangkarn**, Chief of Staff, PATA, believes by promoting eco-friendly accommodations, public transportation & renewable energy, India can lead in climate action.

India, a vibrant and culturally diverse country, is poised to play a significant role on the global stage as it assumes the G20 Presidency this year. With its rich heritage, breathtaking landscapes and diverse ecosystems, India has immense potential to harness the power of sustainable tourism to drive economic growth, preserving its natural and cultural treasures, and contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Goa Roadmap for Tourism further emphasises country's commitment to sustainable practices.

Economic growth
Sustainable tourism has the potential to become a key driver of economic growth for India. By investing in resilient and sustainable infrastructure, promoting local businesses and prioritising community involvement, India can pave the pathway towards a new normal for travellers, where sustainability meets authentic cultural



experiences and natural wonders. This influx of tourists can generate significant revenue, create employment opportunities and improve the livelihoods of local communities, especially in rural areas.

Preserving cultural heritage
From the Taj Mahal to the historic cave paintings of Ajanta and Ellora, India is home to several monuments that are global heritage sites. India can make sure that these priceless resources are preserved for next generations by implementing sustainable tourism

practices and learning from traditional Indian practices. Encouraging responsible tourism behaviours, optimising visitor numbers and implementing effective waste management strategies can help mitigate the negative impacts of tourism on fragile ecosystems and cultural sites. This will position India as a preferred sustainable tourism destination while keeping overtourism in check.

Environmental conservation
As the world grapples with the challenges of climate change, In-

dia could lead by example during its G20 Presidency. Sustainable tourism can contribute to climate action and environmental conservation by promoting eco-friendly accommodations, encouraging public transportation and electric vehicles and raising aware-


As India positions itself as a sustainable tourism leader, it can inspire other nations and create a positive ripple effect worldwide

ness about environmental issues among tourists. India's commitment to renewable energy can also be showcased through sustainable tourism initiatives such

as solar-powered resorts and eco-trekking tours.

Community empowerment
Sustainable tourism places a strong emphasis on community involvement and inclusive development. By engaging local communities in decision-making processes, supporting small-scale enterprises and preserving indigenous traditions, India can empower its citizens and ensure that tourism benefits are distributed equitably. Initiatives such as homestays and community-based tourism projects can provide direct economic benefits to remote communities and create a sense of pride and ownership.

Goa Roadmap & SDGs
The Goa Roadmap for Tourism highlights India's commitment to sustainable tourism practices. To accomplish the SDGs, the roadmap highlights the significance of striking a balance between economic growth and environmental and social concerns. By aligning its tour-

ism policies with the SDGs, India can address issues such as poverty alleviation, gender equality, clean energy and responsible resource consumption and production.

As India positions itself as a sustainable tourism leader, it has an opportunity to inspire other nations and create a positive ripple effect worldwide, shaping a more sustainable and inclusive future for the tourism industry.



Paul Pruangkarn
Chief of Staff
PATA

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

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Pvt investments spur Assam tourism

Assam recorded a staggering 575% growth in tourist arrivals in the last financial year. This finds reason in the grant of industry status to the state's tourism sector in the same year, which not only paved way for incentives to restaurants and wellness centres but also encouraged private investment into the tourism sector.



Hazel Jain

Assam witnessed a massive footfall of more than one crore domestic travellers in 2022-23 alone. This number was about 17 lakh during 2021-22, and 13.5 lakh in 2020-21, according to the state government. Effectively, the state recorded a staggering 575 per cent growth in tourist arrivals in the financial year 2022-2023, as per **Himanta Biswa Sarma**, Chief Minister, Assam. He recently inaugurated a 200-room resort developed by the Mayfair Group in Sonapur, near Guwahati, which will further boost tourism in the state.

With the grant of industry status to the tourism sector in 2022, restaurants and wellness centres among others are eligible for incentives. This further encouraged private investment into Assam for tourism.

The increase is not just in domestic tourists. **Jayanta Malla Baruah**, Tourism Minister, Assam, has said that there has been an increase of 783 per cent in foreign tourists this year. He attributed this to the improved law and order situation in last two years of the present state government, improved infrastructure and new branded hotels and resorts, including five-star hotels, being established in Guwahati, Kaziranga, Manas and other places.

"This decision will bring a paradigm shift to the tourism sector. Previously, only hotels and resorts above the three-star category and river cruises were included under thrust areas of Assam Industrial Policy. But now many new tourism units like heritage hotels, bungalows, camping sites, restaurants, amusement parks, ropeways, museums, tour operator service, adventure park, etc., will also be included," said Baruah. The policy aims for sus-



Jayanta Malla Baruah
Tourism Minister
Assam

Many new tourism units like heritage hotels, bungalows, camping sites, and amusement parks will be included under the Assam Industrial Policy

tainable investment and capital formation.

According to **E Banlumlang Blah**, President, North East India Tourism Confederation, "Assam now has good connectivity and infrastructure in terms of air and railways, which is an entry and exit point for most visitors to the Northeast India. Trains coming to the Northeast except Sikkim have to enter through Assam before reaching any other destination in the region. Taking this into consideration, plus other tourist attractions, has resulted in Assam receiving high tourist numbers. A decade after the start of the present century has opened up the eyes of tourists about the Northeast. Unexplored natural beauty with many unseen cultures also attracts many tourists, especially

domestic. Fortunately, together with the growth of tourism there is also a growth of infrastructure."

Many tour operators in the region believe that Assam is passing through an exciting phase in tourism. **Ranjeet Das**, Director, Landmark Tours & Travels, from Assam, says, "Interests in our destination have grown in the past few years and the number of visitors has also increased by many times. Thanks to the branding of 'Awesome Assam' and the electronic media for bringing stories of our region to the pan-India viewers. People have now realised that tourism in Assam



E Banlumlang Blah
President, Confederation
of Tourism Industries, Meghalaya

Assam now has good connectivity and infrastructure in terms of air and railways, which is an entry and exit point for most visitors to the Northeast India

is beyond our wildlife and the rhinos. We have rich culture, cuisine, sports, adventure, monsoon and many more. Further the energy



Ranjeet Das
Director
Landmark Tours & Travels

Interests in our destination (the state of Assam) have grown in the past few years and the number of visitors has also increased by many times

levels of the people now connected to tourism are amazing and there has been a perceptible difference in the situation. The situation earlier was one of despair. Now our youngsters have the confidence and can run enterprises. But most importantly, there is a political will. This complete turnaround and this hallmark transformation can be attributed to the simultaneous development of seamless connectivity, brisk infrastructure development, peace, stability and inclusiveness."

The Tourism Department, Government of Assam, was proactive in implementing measures to increase tourism before the pandemic struck. Various measures were taken, including infrastructure upgrades, effective marketing campaigns, including roadshows. The use of WhatsApp groups by the tourism department allowed for easy communication with registered tour operators of Assam, giving them an opportunity to showcase their offerings and give suggestions to the government. By working together, the tourism department and Assam tour operators were able to enhance tourism in the region, particularly from the domestic sector.

Arijit Purkayastha, Director, Koyeli Tours & Travels, also based in Assam, says that the series of webinars titled 'Dekho Apna Desh' organised by the Ministry of Tourism

post the pandemic played a vital role in facilitating interactions for the region, both within the country and beyond. "During Rupinder Brar's tenure as Additional Director General of the Ministry of Tourism, the webinars she organised played a vital role in fostering connections and interactions within the country and beyond, particularly for our region. These webinars significantly raised awareness about the tourism offerings in Assam and the North-east region of India. The Ministry of Tourism's commendable initiative provided valuable opportunities to stakeholders, and today we are reaping the benefits of these webinars. We express our gratitude to the Ministry of Tourism," he says.

During and after pandemic, these initiatives also kept increasing in the Department of Tourism, Government of Assam. A notable instance is the release of 'Aparup Assam,'



Arijit Purkayastha
Director
Koyeli Tours & Travels

The Ministry of Tourism's initiative provided valuable opportunities to stakeholders, and today we are reaping the benefits of these webinars

by Assam's Tourism Department, travel guides in two volumes featuring 'Lesser-known Destinations of Assam'. Purkayastha adds, "The tourism department deserves appreciation for their initiatives that showcased the products of Assam beyond Kaziranga. Hard work and dedication from both - the Tourism Department of Assam, along with the tour operators of Assam - have undoubtedly played a key role in the growth and success of tourism in Assam."



Vishakha Sethi Kotyan
Founder
Vima Holidays, Mumbai

Indian tourist is now more adventurous and likes to visit unexplored destinations. Assam has its own unique culture and is very beautiful

Tour operators in Mumbai are also promoting Assam to their clients. **Vishakha Sethi Kotyan**, Founder, Vima Holidays, says, "The Indian tourist is now more adventurous and likes to visit unexplored destinations. Assam has its own unique culture and is very beautiful. Most of the time the guests come to us pre-decided about the destination they wish to visit. At times when they ask our suggestions, we recommend the Northeastern India - Assam, Sikkim, and Meghalaya - simply because of its raw unique beauty and diverse culture. The clientele who is open to visit these destinations are usually the well-travelled adventurous ones, nature lovers, youngsters to middle age segment as travelling to this destination involves lot of road travel especially on hilly terrain."

Kotyan adds that the government is also working on improving the infrastructure in these regions, which make them easily accessible to the tourists.

"It's very unfortunate that the turmoil in Manipur has sadly affected the tourist travel to this state. Guests prefer to travel to other Northeastern states now like Sikkim, Assam, and Meghalaya. I was also planning to visit Manipur, but instead travelled to Darjeeling, Gangtok, Pelling and Kalimpong recently," she adds.

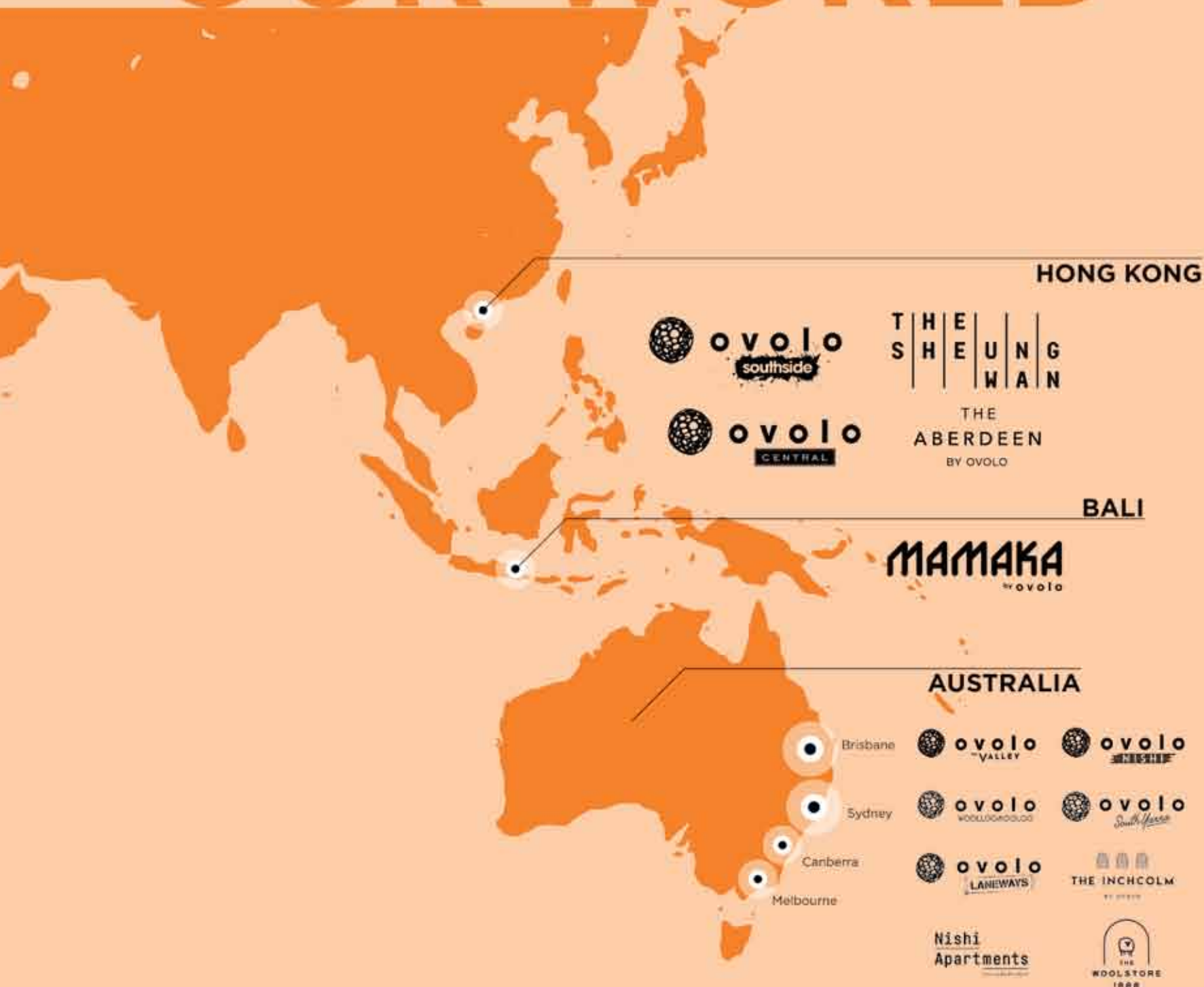




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TN focuses on offbeat destinations

Tamil Nadu witnessed a 17 per cent annual growth in domestic tourism, with over 115 million travellers. However, the state faces challenges such as overcrowding, environmental impact and infrastructure strain. The Tourism Department is focusing on offbeat destinations to overcome the challenges and promote sustainability.



Suhani Sood

In the 63rd edition of the Indian Tourism Statistics Report, it was highlighted that Tamil Nadu (TN) had experienced a noteworthy surge in tourist arrivals. The state had achieved a remarkable growth rate of 17.02 per cent in domestic tourism, with over 115 million travellers. It is, therefore, crucial to implement effective strategic planning and sustainable approaches to ensure an equitable distribution of tourist traffic.

The Tamil Nadu Tourism Department is confronted with numerous hurdles when it comes to managing the state's renowned and picturesque places. **Sandeep Nanduri**, Director, Tourism and MD, Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation, has cited statistics revealing that Nilgiris alone received a staggering 10 million tourists. This rapid surge in visitors has posed several challenges for the state. Undoubtedly, destinations such as Madurai,



Sandeep Nanduri
Director, Tourism and MD, Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation

Ooty, Kodaikanal and Courtallam, which are renowned for their natural beauty, face challenges such as overcrowding, environmental impact and infrastructure strain, among others.

Certain tourist spots experience a surge in visitors during specific festivals or particular seasons. Goa remains bustling all year round. Shimla, Manali and

Dharamshala witness their peak tourist seasons during the summer months. Festivals such as **Kumbh Mela in Varanasi** and Allahabad attract significant numbers of tourists due to their unique



TN is promoting economic, social & environmental sustainability by encouraging tourists to explore lesser-known destinations

attractions. However, this uneven distribution of tourists throughout the year poses a challenge and calls for special attention.

Stressing on the lack of awareness of the offbeat locations is another big challenge the TN tour-

ism department is facing. Nanduri highlighted, "There is a need for information and knowledge on alternative destinations."

Tourism Destination Development Scheme has been launched to facilitate the integrated and overall development of these offbeat places. Nanduri explained how TN tourism department is prioritising economic, social and environmental sustainability with the aim of encouraging tourists to visit offbeat destinations such as Kolli Hills, Jawadhu Hills, Mannavanur and Muthupettai, among others.

Stating an example of the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park, an offbeat attraction with a distinct coastal ecosystem, he says, "Various activities such as nature trails, boating, beach walks and extensive promotions are being done to encourage its visibility."

Nanduri emphasised on accelerating growth of various tourism segments such as adventure tour-



ism, caravan tourism and camping. "These forms of tourism have very less impact on nature while providing memorable experiences," he said.

Discussing the recent campaign 'Discover Tamil Nadu 2.0', he

explained that this influencer campaign aimed to showcase key locations. This effort has not only inspired prospective travellers to uncover Tamil Nadu's hidden treasures but also to view them as attractive travel choices for exploration. 🐦

New airport to improve inbound

Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated new Integrated Terminal Building of the Veer Savarkar International Airport. This has given a new lease of life to the destination, believes the travel industry, which is optimistic about getting more travellers in the coming months, owing to increased connectivity.



Suhani Sood

Constructed at a cost of around ₹7,100 million, the new Integrated Terminal Building of Veer Savarkar International Airport will handle five million passengers every year. Strategic location, double-insulated roofing system, parking space are some of the key features of the new shell-shaped terminal building, aiming to boost air traffic and enhance tourism in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Milestone for industry

Praising the airport authorities for their efforts, **Mohammad H Jadwet**, Chairman, IATO Andaman & Nicobar Chapter, said that the new airport is a milestone for tourism development of the islands. "Andaman & Nicobar Islands is 1,000-2,000 kilometre away from the mainland, the only way to reach there is by air, so the airport infrastructure is critical to the development of tourism," he said. "With this terminal building, the capacity to handle aircraft and passengers

has become five times more," he added.

International connectivity

Agreeing with Jadwet, **Sanat Kaul**, former Chief Secretary, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, said that the new terminal is 'really nice' and provides bigger capacity. However, he suggested to start international flights to and from the new airport. "Unless the authorities start international flights to these islands from nearby destinations like Phuket, Bangkok, and Singapore, it would not make much difference," he said.

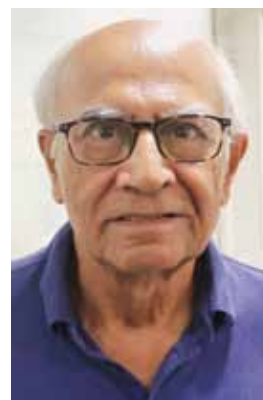
Jadwet said that Andaman & Nicobar is closer to places like Bangkok, Singapore, Phuket, and Malaysia than to mainland India. "International connectivity will go a long way in promoting inbound tourism, where A&N lacks a lot. On an average, of the half a million who visit the islands, hardly 25,000-30,000 are foreigners. So, this is a very big gap we need to fill and that it will bring valuable



Mohammad H Jadwet
Chairman
IATO Andaman & Nicobar Chapter



With this terminal building, the capacity to handle aircraft and passengers has become five times more



Sanat Kaul
Former Chief Secretary
Andaman and Nicobar Islands



Unless the authorities start international flights to these islands from nearby destinations, it would not make much difference



Subhash Goyal
Founder Chairman
Stic Travel Group



Unfortunately, from the tourism point of view, we have not exploited or marketed the destination well

foreign exchange to the country," he said.

Subhash Goyal, Founder Chairman, Stic Travel Group, said that by building an international airport and not allowing flights is like giving someone best automatic gun, but no ammunition. "Port Blair has some beautiful hotel accommodations like Taj, CGH group, ITC, and Sarovar. International travellers will have a really good experience staying here, provided we have direct flights from the islands, as taking halts and changing flights is a tiring task," he said.

Lack of marketing

However, the destination needs better marketing. "Unfortunately, from the tourism point of view, we have not exploited or marketed the destination well," Goyal said.

The PM expressed confidence that the development work being done in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands will further strengthen the entire region. 🐦

Grand welcome for industry leaders

The Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India hosted the welcome reception for PATA delegates, industry stakeholders and travel professionals from across the world at the Convention Hall, Ashok Hotel, New Delhi. The evening began with a traditional lighting of the lamp. The guests enjoyed the immersive experience of Indian culture and culinary prowess.



A taste of Indian hospitality



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Malaysia's strategy to woo Indian tourists

Tourism Malaysia has long regarded India as a crucial source market. Manoharan Periasamy, Senior Director of the International Promotion Division, Asia/Africa, Malaysia Tourism, shares insights into their strategies and future plans to enhance the Indian travel experience.

Janice Alyosius

India has long been a priority market for Tourism Malaysia, and they have been diligently working to attract Indian tourists to the diverse and enchanting destination of Malaysia. Manoharan Periasamy, Senior Director, International Promotion Division, Asia/Africa, Malaysia Tourism, shared insights into the strategies employed and plans to enhance the travel experience for Indian visitors.

He explains that Tourism Malaysia is not only focusing on leisure tourists but also on niche products. He said, "India has been our priority market for so long, even prior to the pandemic. Tourism Malaysia is not only focusing on leisure tourists coming from this country but also focusing on niche products like destination wedding, golfing, filming destination, medical and education tourism. We believe that India has checked all the boxes in these products that we have to offer. Besides promoting Malaysia to the major cities, we are also focusing on tier 2 and 3 cities in India."



Manoharan Periasamy
Senior Director
International Promotion Division,
Asia/Africa, Malaysia Tourism

Periasamy anticipates that a gradual return of Indian travellers to Malaysia post pandemic. He said, "Pre-pandemic, Indians would stay around seven days on average in Malaysia. We are aggressively promoting new destinations like Desaru Coast, Gembox Nilai (the biggest night market in Malaysia), Borneo side of Malaysia, homestays and kampungstays."

Travel trade is key

Emphasising on collaborating with the trade, Periasamy said, "Tourism Malaysia has always worked closely with the Indian trade fraternity, and we plan to continue to do so. We constantly have joint promotions, organising B2B programmes, and

participating in trade shows and seminars with Indian agents, TV stations and airlines, be it Indian-based or Malaysian."

Highlighting Tourism Malaysia's new attractions introduced to specifically capture the interest of Indian travellers, Periasamy revealed, "We have identified destination weddings and filming in Malaysia as key areas for growth, given India's vibrant film industry. They are also promoting homestays and kampungstays to provide Indian travellers with an authentic local experience." In terms of connectivity, as of September 2023, there are nearly 170 weekly flights connecting India to Malaysia, with about 32,000 seats. Airlines are continuously introducing new routes and resuming old ones. Prioritising traveller segments, Periasamy says, "All segments are equally important to us but other than the existing destinations, weddings, golfing, film shoots, medical and education tourism, homestays and kampungstays are the new niche segments we are focusing on. We are looking at the metros as well as tier cities as they have more spending power and the interest to travel."

Bolstering numbers from India
Sharing insights into their recent initiatives to bolster Indian arrivals, Periasamy said, "We

2023 as we saw the potential sales generated by our Malaysian sellers. It is a good sign for us to continue our promotions

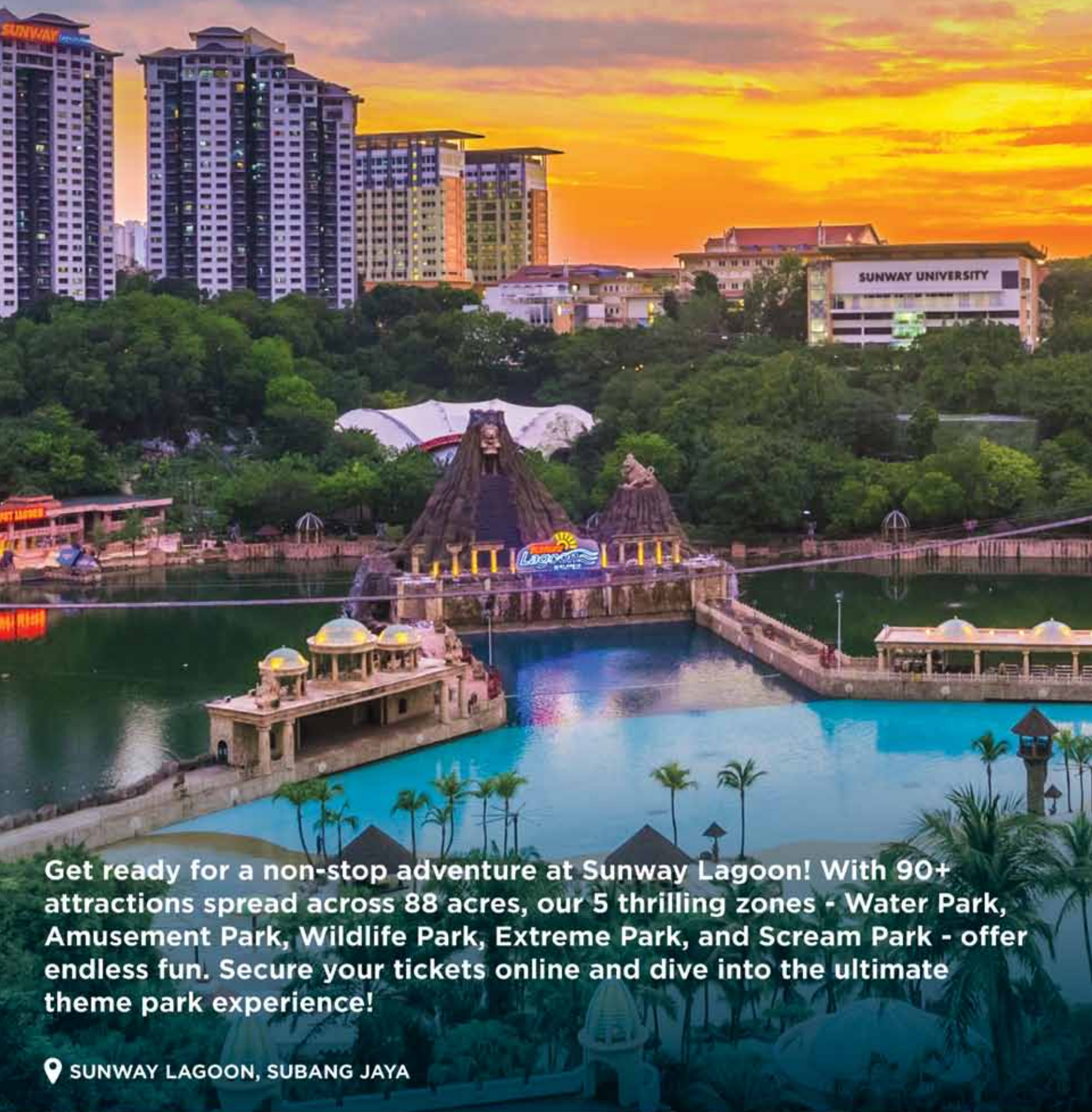
We are looking at the metros as well as we tier cities as they have more spending power and have the interest to travel

just concluded our second roadshow to six tier two and three cities in August 2023. It is the continuation of the first roadshow that was held in May

aggressively in India through our offices in New Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai. In the pre-pandemic, Malaysia has welcomed close to 750,000 Indian

tourists and of course, we want to beat the arrival numbers as soon as possible. As of 2022, we welcomed around 325,000 tourists and we believe, with all the campaigns that we have done so far, we are targeting to have around 426,000 arrivals in 2023. Yet, we are still optimistic that the final figure can reach north of 500,000 tourists."

Emphasising on events and activities in the pipeline, Periasamy shared, "Lots of other events will be rolled out as we gear towards the Visit Malaysia campaign. More special promotions will be aggressively done with all parties in Malaysia and India. We are also pushing all the destinations to be ready to receive Indian tourists."



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A panoply of experiences in LANGKAWI

Langkawi remains one of the most sought-after tropical destinations in Malaysia, boasting luxury resorts, natural surroundings, culinary delights and the best beaches, for not only honeymooners, but families and solo travellers as well.

As the world has begun to reopen and readjust after the pandemic, the eyes of tourists around the world turn their attention to places they have been clamouring to visit. Blessed with an amazing variety of natural beauty, wildlife, exciting activities and cultural heritage, the beautiful island of Langkawi is the place to see and be seen in.

The island has seen the arrival of big, branded hotels and re-

sorts in the past decade. The resorts in Langkawi offer well-appointed rooms with beautiful views, beyond exceptional service and fun activities for all ages. The perfect blend of gorgeous beaches, an array of fantastic resorts and easy exploration on your own ensure visitors a fabulous time while marvelling at the scenery.

In addition to the high-end resorts, Langkawi is also known for its world-class golf

courses. The island has several championship courses that offer stunning views of the surrounding landscape, including The Els Club Teluk Datal, designed by golf legend Ernie Els, and The Golf Club Datal Bay, set against the backdrop of a lush rainforest and the Andaman Sea. For those seeking a more exclusive experience, Langkawi also offers a range of yacht options, including luxury yachts and catamarans that can be chartered for private

tours of the island and its surrounding waters. These yachts offer a unique and intimate way to experience the beauty of Langkawi and its many islands, with options for fishing, snorkelling and diving.

It's not hard to see why honeymooners, couples, friends, families with children and even solivagants flock to this gem of an island. As an archipelago of 99 islands, tourists are never far from a relaxing spot to dip their toes in the Andaman Sea.

UNESCO Global Geopark is home to one of Southeast Asia's oldest mountain formations and certainly is a paradise worth exploring. The rich geological diversity has given rise to an equally abundant variety of flora and fauna for all to witness. The newly founded Langkawi Geopark Green package packs a real punch, offering spectacular ways to enjoy the variety of the islands most wonder-

and initiatives, the island is not only preserving its natural environment but also creating a more meaningful and authentic travel experience for visitors.

No must-visit list is complete without food. For an alternative experience, it's hard to beat the Instagram-friendliness of the chic and lovely cafes in Langkawi, where one click of a photo can inspire wanderlust. Despite its local specialties,



Be it water activities, hiking, cycling or even racing, Langkawi truly has the best of everything, homing a range of entertainment

ful landscapes. The package takes you on scenic journeys through the lush jungles, offering stunning views of the geological formations.

Besides the UNESCO Global Geopark, sustainability is also a key focus in Langkawi, with a growing number of hotels, resorts, and businesses adopting eco-friendly practices and initiatives to protect the island's natural environment. Visitors can participate in a range of sustainable activities, such as beach clean-ups, tree planting, and wildlife conservation projects. Overall, Langkawi's focus on sustainability is commendable and reflects a growing trend in the tourism industry towards more responsible and eco-friendly practices. By encouraging visitors to participate in sustainable activities

Langkawi can bring the world's flavours to the island. Chenang Beach is known to offer the most astonishing views during sunset and visitors can cherish these views while sipping on their favourite drinks and indulging in delicious meals at various eateries.

Langkawi is an oasis of peace, beauty, and serenity but there are plenty of things to do that can excite even the most seasoned explorers. Whether or not you are a nature lover, wildlife enthusiast or a thrill seeker, there are a host of activities people of all ages can take part in—Be it water activities, hiking, cycling or even racing, Langkawi truly has the best of everything, homing a range of entertainment suited to any type of individual from any part of the world. 🌺



Splendid Selangor, take me anywhere!



The diverse state of Selangor offers mysterious caves, theme parks, and exciting races. With shopping malls, exotic jungles and pristine beaches, the destination is a modern and eclectic destination. Its towns and cities contain ancient relics providing information on the region's fascinating history, while the countryside offers outdoor activities. Explore endless possibilities in Selangor.

Selangor is Malaysia's most developed state, featuring a plethora of tourism segments ranging from culture, heritage, ecotourism, and food tourism to extreme adventure sports. The state's accessibility is well known, with the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA), KLIA 2,

Subang Airport, and Port Klang cruise terminal all located in Selangor and multiple train routes passing through the state.

Spread across nine districts with 10 tourism segmentation, Selangor is home to a unique socio-cultural groups and diverse traditions, languages, his-

torical places, arts and gastronomy selection.

India has constantly been one of the top tourism markets and has made

enliven the tourism sector, through participation in a number of international travel and tourism trade shows, as well as sales missions, advertising and

digital campaigns, familiarisation tours and more.

With the mission to maintain Selangor's uniqueness, the state of Selangor, Malaysia will continue to urge its travel agencies to develop tourism goods and packages that are tailored to their interests. For instance, it has developed the concept of experiential tourism such as eco-adventure, golfing holidays,

family vacations, honeymoon destinations and shopping destinations that are tailored to the interests of our tourists from India.

Moving towards Tourism 4.0, access to the attractions in Selangor, Malaysia is just a one tap away with the convenience of sharing through its digital platforms, Selangor. Travel and the official social media pages of Tourism Selangor. 

The state of Selangor will continue to urge its travel agencies to develop tourism goods and packages that are tailored to their interests

substantial contributions to the tourists arrival in the state of Selangor, Malaysia with 20,165 of tourists arrival in the year 2022.

The state of Selangor has undertaken several initiatives in line, particularly the 'Splendid Selangor, Take me Anywhere!' campaign, which is actively being carried out on digital platforms. The core narrative of this campaign is to call out for more participation from international partners and industry players to





A majestic sky retreat in Malaysia

Discover tranquillity amidst misty mountains at the innovative ‘hotel in the sky’ – the Grand Ion Delemen Hotel. This majestic getaway offers relaxation and adventure, where guests can explore nature trails, indulge in adrenaline-pumping activities, and savour gastronomic delights.

Immerse yourself in the enchanting realm of the Grand Ion Delemen Hotel, where guests can bask in the tranquillity of the mountains and savour invigorating, crisp mountain air. The Grand Ion Delemen Hotel offers a truly exceptional experience with its innovative ‘hotel in the sky’ concept. Upon entering the room, your gaze is immediately drawn to the awe-inspiring view of mist-clad mountains and sprawling green valleys that seem to stretch endlessly. Located just an hour’s drive from Kuala Lumpur International Airport, it has become an essential destination for anyone exploring the wonders of Malaysia.

A majestic getaway
As you ascend the winding road to Genting Highlands, a

sense of anticipation builds. Perched atop a hill, the Grand Ion Delemen Hotel welcomes you with its cool, refreshing temperatures. While the allure of the cool climate may tempt you to simply relax and unwind, this hotel of-

The hotel is a premier destination for meetings and business events, and its centrepiece is its magnificent Grand Ballroom

fers a plethora of activities to keep you engaged. Explore the nearby nature trails, immersing yourself in the natural

splendour of the highlands. For those seeking adventure, there are activities such as ziplining and abseiling, allowing them to embrace the thrill of the mountains. After a day filled with excitement, treat yourself to a dip in the hotel’s pool.

A remarkable retreat
The Grand Ion Delemen Hotel offers a distinctive experience with its ‘hotel in the sky’ concept, combined with its proximity to the Genting SkyWorld

Theme Park. Whether you’re in search of a tranquil escape or an action-packed vacation, this hotel is the ideal choice. So, prepare to discover the best of Genting Highlands at this exceptional hotel.

Hotspot for MICE
Beyond its 800 units of accommodation, ranging from cozy rooms to spacious suites, each one of them is thoughtfully designed for comfort and elegance. The Grand Ion Delemen Hotel is also a premier destination for business events and meetings. The centrepiece of its corporate facilities is its magnificent Grand Ballroom. Adorned with elegant decor and capable of accommodating hundreds of guests, it epitomises grandeur and sophistication.



No business event is complete without exceptional culinary offerings, and the Grand Ion Delemen Hotel takes pride in its gastronomic delights. Catering to diverse tastes and market demands, the hotel offers various restaurants, including Kembali Kitchen, serving local and international cuisine under the guidance of Executive Chef Musa; Fairy Tales, a desert flower-themed cafe; an authentic northern Indian restaurant; an Asian-Western cafe; Mookata and Thai cuisine. The hotel’s skilled culinary team crafts a wide range of menus, featuring both local and international cuisines, to satisfy the discerning palates of event attendees. From carefully designed coffee

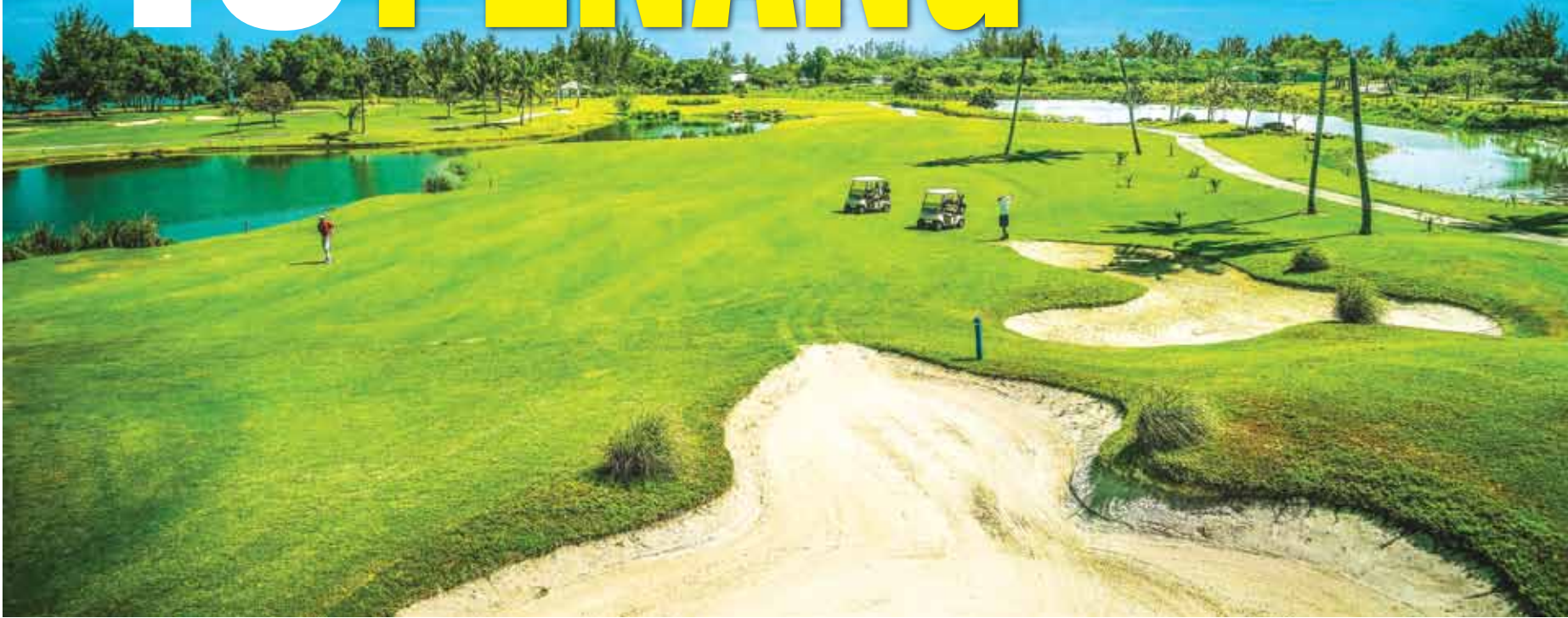
breaks to elaborate banquets, the hotel ensures that every meal is a delightful experience.

And a haven for leisure
The Grand Ion Delemen Hotel is a sanctuary for leisure seekers, providing a serene and rejuvenating environment amidst the refreshing mountain air. Offering a variety of luxurious accommodations, from well-appointed rooms to spacious suites, each offering breathtaking views of the surrounding mountains and valleys, this hotel is the ultimate destination for relaxation or adventure. So, pack your bags, prepare for a refreshing escape, and immerse yourself in the enchantment of this extraordinary ‘hotel in the sky’.



TOP 10 must-visit attractions in PENANG

Nestled on the northwest coast of Peninsular Malaysia, the vibrant island of Penang has earned a reputation as the 'Pearl of the Orient' thanks to its rich history, stunning landscapes, and diverse culture. This enchanting destination offers a blend of old-world charm and modern allure, making it a must-visit location. Here, we'll take you on a journey through the top 10 attractions in Penang, Malaysia.



1. George Town's Historic Center

Start your Penang adventure in the heart of George Town, a UNESCO World Heritage site renowned for its well-preserved colonial architecture, colourful street art, and bustling markets. Wander through narrow lanes, visit Clan Jetties, and admire the

explore the lush botanical gardens and temples on the hill.

3. Kek Lok Si Temple

Kek Lok Si Temple, also known as the Temple of Supreme Bliss, is one of Southeast Asia's largest and most impressive Buddhist temples. Marvel at the towering Pagoda of

orchids, ferns, and unique plant species. You can also encounter playful monkeys and colorful butterflies as you explore the garden's various trails.

5. Penang street food

Penang is renowned for its mouthwatering street food, which blends Chinese, Malay, Indian, and

long stretch of golden sand offers opportunities for swimming, water sports, and beachside relaxation. After a day at the beach, explore the lively night market for souvenirs and street food.

7. Penang National Park

Nature lovers should not miss Penang National Park, the smallest national park in Malaysia, which boasts diverse ecosystems, pristine beaches, and hiking trails. The Canopy Walkway offers a unique perspective of the rainforest, and you might spot various wildlife, including macaques and monitor lizards.

8. Penang Peranakan Mansion

Discover the rich cultural heritage of the Peranakan (Straits Chinese) community at the Penang Peranakan Mansion. This



beautifully restored 19th-century mansion showcases opulent living quarters, antique furniture, and intricate decorative arts that provide a glimpse into Penang's history.

9. Clan jetties

Explore the traditional wooden stilt houses of Clan Jetties, a unique cultural attraction where different Chinese clans have resided for generations. Each jetty has its distinct

charm, and visitors can learn about the lifestyle and customs of the residents.

10. Penang murals

Penang's streets are adorned with captivating murals that narrate the island's history and culture. Aside from Ernest Zacharevic's works, keep an eye out for pieces by local artists that adorn the city's walls, adding an artistic touch to its vibrant streets. 🏠



ornate Khoo Kongsi clan house. Don't forget to snap photos of the famous street murals by Lithuanian artist Ernest Zacharevic.

2. Penang Hill

Escape the heat and ascend Penang Hill via the funicular railway. At the summit, you'll be rewarded with breathtaking panoramic views of the island and the mainland. Enjoy the cool climate and

Rama VI, stroll through the temple grounds, and discover the intricacies of Chinese, Thai, and Burmese Buddhist architecture.

4. Penang Botanic Gardens

Nature enthusiasts will appreciate a visit to the Penang Botanic Gardens. Established in 1884, this lush oasis is home to a diverse collection of tropical flora, including exotic

Thai influences. Sample local specialties like Char Kway Teow (stir-fried flat rice noodles), Nasi Kandar (rice with various curries), and Assam Laksa (spicy noodle soup). Don't forget to try the famous Penang cendol for a sweet treat.

6. Batu Ferringhi Beach

For sun and sea enthusiasts, Batu Ferringhi Beach is a popular choice. The





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