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FEBRUARY 2025
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Editor's Letter

A few days ago, while weaving through the streets of Mumbai in a cab, I found myself indulging in my favourite pastime i.e listening. Cab drivers in this city don't just drive; they narrate. Their stories come alive with Bollywood gossip, whispered legends, and directions that often begin with, "Wahan, jahan SRK ka Mannat hai."

And that's how, once again, the conversation drifted to my favourite- Shah Rukh Khan. My driver spoke of Mannat not as a house but as a temple of dreams, a place where millions pause, whispering their wishes into the Mumbai air, hoping the city will weave its magic for them too.

Mumbai is called the City of Dreams, but isn't that what travel is at its core? A manifestation of desires- of seeing the world, tasting the unknown, escaping into landscapes that exist beyond the realm of routine. And our industry? We are not just selling trips. We are granting wishes, turning maps into emotions, and making the impossible tangible.

With FITUR and OTM setting the stage for a magnificent year, we now turn to SATTE- bigger, grander, at an even better venue. Travel Turtle is arriving in full force, showcasing the finest- from the regal Raffles Paris to the ethereal Patina Maldives, from the untouched splendours of Sabah and Redang to the tea-infused serenity of Taiwan.

Each edition of Travel Turtle is more than a magazine; it's a bridge, bringing the world a little closer, one page at a time. Because after all, the world is not as vast as it seems- it's just a collection of stories waiting to be lived. We hope you enjoy this issue as much as we relished creating it.

Happy reading!

Bharti Sharma

Bharti Sharma
Editor

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Printed and Published by: Harish Chandra on behalf of Trouvaille Media & Communications Private Limited; Printed at Shree Ram Print O Pac, D 10/5 (Basement) Okhla Industrial Area Phase II, New Delhi 110020 ; Published at Plot No.1, 311, Vardhman Sunrise Plaza, Vasundhara Enclave, Delhi 110096.

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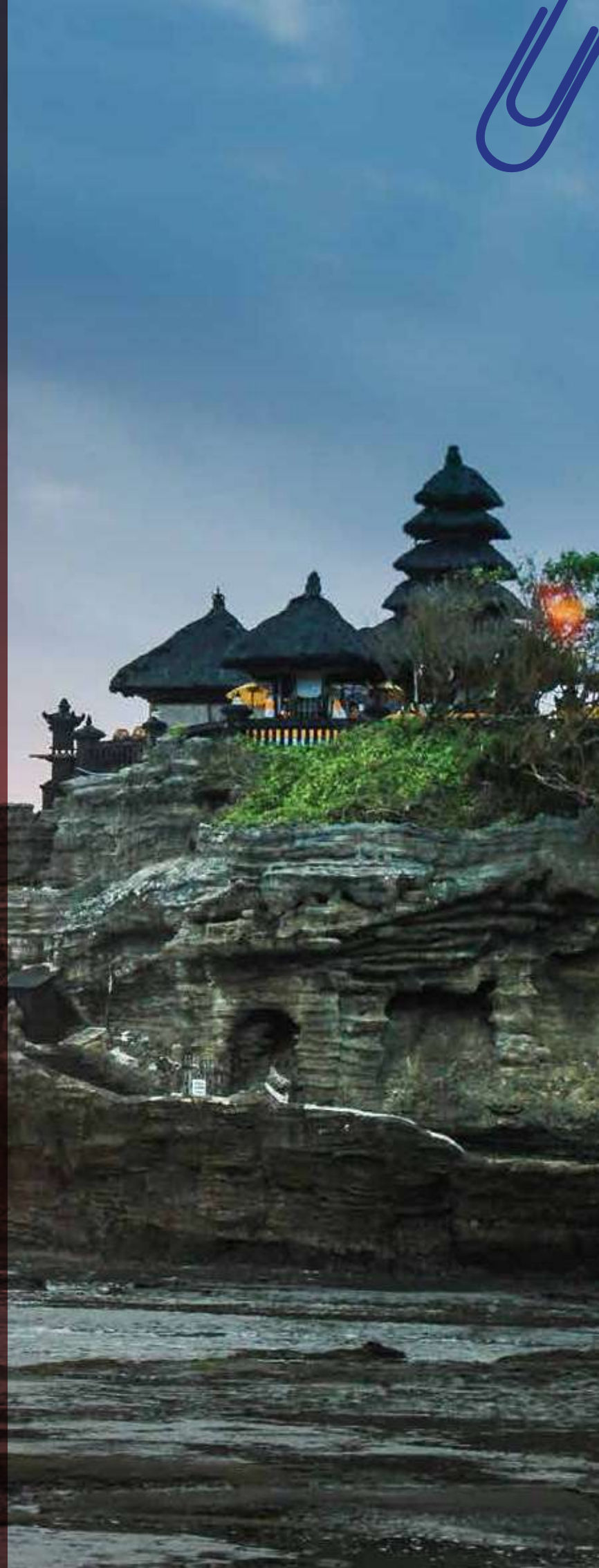
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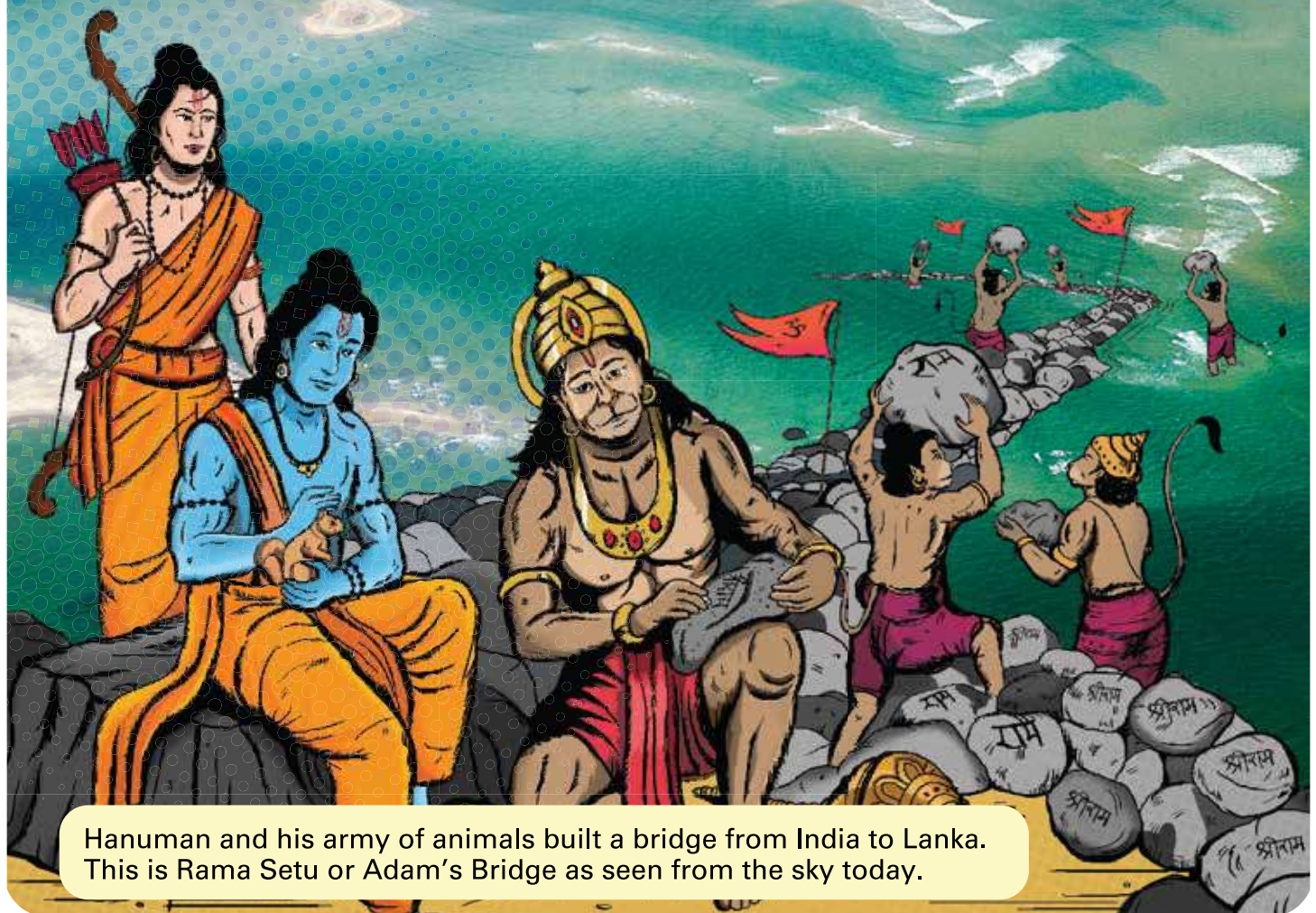
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Israel introduces revolutionary e-Visa system for Indian tourists

This innovative digital solution marks a new era in Israel-India tourism relations, making the visa application process more efficient and user-friendly than ever before. This new e-Visa system represents a significant step forward in Israel's ongoing efforts to enhance the tourist experience and streamline entry procedures for international visitors.



IATO appoints new Chapter Chairman in Punjab

In a recent development, the IATO Executive Committee has appointed Mr Gurinder Singh as the Chairman – IATO Punjab Chapter with effect from 6th January 2025. He is in tourism industry since 2004 and with his vast experience of 21 years, we expect his immense contribute to IATO and hope he will make IATO membership base stronger. With his close contacts with Punjab Tourism Government officials, IATO will closely work with the Punjab Government.

Centara launches The Centara Collection

Formerly known as the Centara Boutique Collection, the portfolio has been transformed and elevated to a new level of distinction. The Centara Collection is committed to 'Inspiring Individuality', and with a refreshed visual identity, a refined curation of member hotels, and an emphasis on the quality and uniqueness of every property, it is set to appeal greatly to travellers with a passion for exploration who seek bespoke experiences which are as unique as they are.



Cygnets Hotels & Resorts announces signing of new property under luxury brand Anamore Select

Cygnets Hotels & Resorts, announces the signing of its latest property, Anamore Select Resort & Wellness at Mopa, Goa. This high-end luxury resort, featuring 150 exquisitely designed villa rooms, is set to redefine high-end travel by combining opulence, sustainability and cultural immersion.



MATATO AGM 2024/25 concludes with Re-Election of key leaders

Abdulla Ghiyas Riyaz has been re-elected as the President of MATATO, continuing his dedicated service to the organisation. Supporting him in leadership are Mohamed Khaleel and Mohamed Shaz, who retained their roles as Vice Presidents. In addition to the presidency, several other executive positions were also reaffirmed through re-election. Abdulla Suood continues as the Secretary General, Ibrahim Didi as the Treasurer, with Ignaz Mansoor and Ibrahim Nizam serving as board members.





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Baltrip launches unveils revamped online B2B Portal with advanced features

The newly developed version of the online B2B portal, designed to revolutionise the way its preferred partners across India book travel services. This upgraded platform introduces a range of advanced features to provide greater convenience, flexibility, and efficiency for its users.



Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority appoints BRANDit as India PR agency

This strategic partnership aims to amplify Ras Al Khaimah's appeal as a leading travel destination, catering to the growing number of Indian travellers seeking unique experiences in the Middle East. BRANDit will lead the PR mandate to position Ras Al Khaimah as a must-visit destination, highlighting its diverse offerings, including pristine beaches, awe-inspiring mountains, luxurious resorts and rich cultural heritage.



IRIS Reps expands portfolio with two exciting new partnerships

IRIS Reps, announces the addition of two prestigious names to its portfolio: The Rickshaw Travel Group, East Africa, a renowned specialist in African safaris and cultural journeys, and Ninety-Six Hotel Collection, a distinguished group of city hotels in Mauritius.

The Luxe Connections and THRS organises a FAM trip to Kuda Villingili Maldives

The Luxe Connections, in partnership with THRS, kicked off 2025 with an exclusive FAM trip to the luxurious Kuda Villingili Maldives, offering travel professionals an immersive experience of this idyllic island destination. Renowned for its stunning villas, world-class amenities, and culinary excellence that caters to Indian taste buds, the resort promises unforgettable moments for travellers seeking a slice of paradise. This initiative reflects The Luxe Connections' commitment to curating exceptional Maldivian experiences and empowering agents with the best deals and insights to create magical vacations for their clients.



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WHISKEY TOURISM

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"Too much of anything is bad, but too much good whiskey is barely enough"

- Mark Twain.



They say travel and whiskey have a lot in common, both take time, both are best enjoyed in good company, and both have the power to reveal new depths of character. Whiskey tourism, an intoxicating blend of heritage, craft, and experience, has become a global phenomenon, luring connoisseurs and casual drinkers alike into a world where every sip is a lesson in history, geography, and passion.

- Bharti Sharma

Aged to Perfection

Once upon a dram, whiskey was just a spirit. Today, it's an experience. The rise of whiskey tourism is no mere accident; it's a well-matured evolution of global travel trends. As travellers seek more immersive and culturally rich experiences, distillery tours, tasting trails, and whiskey festivals have become the elixir of the modern explorer. From barrel-aging cellars to grain-to-glass storytelling, whiskey tourism isn't just about drinking—it's about understanding the craftsmanship behind every golden drop.

The Proof is in the Barrel

The clink of glasses is echoing across tourism boards worldwide, and for good reason. Whiskey tourism blends adventure with luxury, history with innovation. It taps into multiple traveller personas—history buffs intrigued by centuries-old distilleries, luxury seekers savouring top-shelf pours in lavish lounges, and adventure junkies keen on road-tripping through whiskey trails. Moreover, the economic benefits are undeniable. Scotland's whiskey industry alone contributes billions annually, with distilleries ranking among the country's top tourist attractions.





Neat, On the Rocks, or Straight from the Source?

If whiskey were a map, it would be dotted with some of the world's most iconic locations. Here's where the barrels beckon:

- Scotland – The Holy Grail: Home to the revered single malt, Scotland's whiskey trails (Speyside, Islay, Highlands) are a pilgrimage for enthusiasts.
- Ireland – The Land of the Water of Life: Dublin's Jameson Distillery and the rolling landscapes of Bushmills offer a smooth blend of history and craft.
- Kentucky, USA – The Bourbon Empire: The famed Bourbon Trail is an intoxicating drive through 40+ distilleries, each with a tale to tell.
- Japan – Where Tradition Meets Innovation: The meticulous

craftsmanship of Suntory and Nikka has put Japan firmly on the whiskey world map.

- India – A Dark Horse Emerging: From Goa's Paul John to Bangalore's Amrut, India is making waves in the premium whiskey segment.

Countries Raising a Toast to Tourism

While whiskey-making is an art, whiskey tourism is a science, and some countries have perfected the formula:

- Scotland: With its seamless marketing, well-planned trails, and immersive storytelling, Scotland remains unmatched in whiskey tourism.
- Ireland: The country has ramped up investments in whiskey tourism, capitalizing on its rich distilling history.

- USA: Kentucky's Bourbon Trail is a textbook case of how to blend whiskey with tourism, attracting over 2 million visitors annually.

• Japan: Known for precision and finesse, Japan's whiskey tourism thrives on curated experiences, from distillery visits to exclusive tasting sessions.

- Taiwan: A new contender, Taiwan's Kavalan distillery is drawing attention with its world-class single malts and premium visitor experiences.

Pour Decisions?

As whiskey evolves, so does its tourism potential. The future holds exciting possibilities - whiskey and food pairing retreats, AI-powered tasting experiences, sustainability-driven distilleries, and even whiskey wellness retreats (because a dram a day keeps

the doctor... well, amused). Emerging markets in Asia and South America are set to redefine the whiskey landscape, while digital innovations will bring whiskey storytelling closer to global audiences.

Sainte to the Spirit of Travel

They say whiskey gets better with age, and so does the love for it. Whether you're chasing a smoky Islay malt, a spicy Kentucky bourbon, or an elegant Japanese dram, whiskey tourism isn't just about savouring a drink- it's about embracing the culture, craftsmanship, and stories behind it. After all, as the saying goes, "Good whiskey and good company make the best travel companions." So, the next time you raise a glass, know that somewhere, a barrel is waiting for you to follow its trail.



A Dream Bollywood Film Destination: Sapporo City



Sapporo City is the capital and the largest gateway city of Hokkaido (the northmost of Japan's main islands). The hidden gem is waiting to add its charm to Bollywood's vibrant storytelling with its picturesque landscapes, cultural richness, and unique locations. It offers an unforgettable canvas for filmmakers seeking fresh, cinematic backdrops.

Enchanting Locations in Sapporo

1. Hill of Buddha:

A tranquil masterpiece blending spirituality and architectural brilliance, perfect for emotional or introspective sequences.

2. Sapporo Snow Festival:

The world-famous snow sculptures and illuminated winter wonderland are ideal for dreamlike song sequences.

3. Susukino:

The bustling nightlife hub, brimming with neon lights, sets the stage for high-energy scenes and dramatic encounters.

4. Mt Moiwa:

Ascend to the top of the mountain by cable car, and experience breathtaking night views of the city.

5. Tanukikoji Street:

A lively shopping arcade buzzing with local culture, perfect for colorful, vibrant shots.

Nearby Gems to Explore

• Otaru:

A charming port town with its scenic canal and glasswork artistry, perfect for serene, romantic interludes.

• Asahikawa:

Known for its breathtaking snow-covered landscapes and the iconic Asahiyama Zoo, offering a unique blend of nature and wonder.

• Noboribetsu:

A land of hot springs and volcanic activity, creating dramatic, otherworldly backdrops for adventurous or suspenseful scenes.

Whether it's a love story, a thrilling drama, or a cultural tale, Sapporo and its surroundings have it all. With seamless connectivity, warm hospitality, and stunning locations, this destination is ready to roll out the red carpet for Bollywood.

Know more about Sapporo City, join us for the webinar
scheduled on 12th February 2025.

KERALA



Shri Biju K

More than just backwaters!

With a well-structured calendar and a strong emphasis on sustainable tourism, Kerala is poised to reinforce its position as one of the world's most sought-after destinations. Shri Biju K (IAS), Secretary, Department of Tourism, Kerala, shares the ambitious plans and strategies that the state has set forth for 2025.

- *Sudipta Saha*



INDIAN SAGA

Strategic participation in Global Trade Shows

Kerala Tourism has meticulously planned its participation in key global trade shows to enhance its international outreach. "We are attending all the major trade fairs such as FITUR, ITB Berlin, and WTM London. Additionally, we are conducting roadshows across cities such as Paris, Barcelona, and Milan," mentions Shri Biju K. He further highlights that the calendar for the year has been carefully structured, ensuring Kerala Tourism's presence at crucial travel expos. "In March, we will be attending ITB Berlin, Moscow, and St. Petersburg. Our stakeholders have already been informed, and we are aggressively pursuing our calendar of events," he adds.

A balanced approach to tourism segments

While many states in India are shifting their focus primarily to domestic tourism, Kerala maintains a fine balance between domestic and international markets. "Our USP is unique. We



offer an eclectic mix of products, and while we don't prioritise one segment over another, experiential and responsible tourism are our key areas of focus," he explains. With sustainability taking center stage globally, Kerala Tourism is aligning its initiatives accordingly. He further emphasises, "People are seeking sustainable travel experiences. We focus on ecological, environmental, and cultural sustainability to ensure that visitors have an immersive and responsible tourism experience."

Major source markets and growth in medical tourism

Discussing Kerala's top source markets, Shri Biju K identified the US, UK, Oman, and Germany as the leading contributors. Additionally, he acknowledged the growing trend of medical tourism in the state. "Ayurveda and wellness tourism have always been an integral part of Kerala. European tourists, particularly from Germany, seek a combination of Ayurvedic treatments and beachside relaxation during the winter months," he states.



INDIAN SAGA

Domestic tourism & tier II city engagement

Kerala has witnessed a surge in domestic tourism. "We have seen a significant increase in domestic tourists, thanks to the diverse experiences we offer," he notes. Kerala Tourism has actively engaged with tier II cities, conducting roadshows in Kolkata, Delhi, Mumbai, and smaller cities such as Visakhapatnam and Surat. "Even in smaller cities, the response has been phenomenal. We are seeing growing interest in destination weddings and nature tourism," he observes.

Innovative marketing campaigns

Kerala Tourism continues to evolve its marketing strategies, ensuring a fresh and engaging approach. "Our campaigns are already live on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook," he mentions. While 'God's Own Country' remains the overarching brand identity, a seasonal tagline, 'It's a Wonderful World,' has been introduced to capture the spirit of the latest campaigns.

With a clear vision and strategic execution, Kerala Tourism is set to make 2025 a landmark year, solidifying its position as a global tourism leader while embracing sustainability and innovation.





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Discover FIJI



Brent Hill

Whether its island hopping, Indian weddings or luxury stays, Fiji welcomes Indian travellers with open arms and experiences that stay with you forever. Brent Hill, CEO, Tourism Fiji, shares why this island nation should be your next go-to holiday destination!

- *Naina Nath*



OFFSHORE BINOCULARS

With a significant Fijian-Indian population, seamless travel experiences, and a variety of activities beyond the beach, Fiji offers a unique mix of culture and adventure. From growing tourism numbers to exciting new developments, Fiji has positioned itself as a must-visit destination for Indian travellers.

A destination that feels like home

"The fact that there are so many Fijians of Indian descent makes it a very comfortable destination for Indian travellers," says Brent. "You'll hear familiar languages, enjoy delicious Indian cuisine, and experience cultural similarities, making Fiji an easy and welcoming place to visit." Whether exploring local markets or attending a traditional Fijian ceremony, Indian visitors will find a cultural connection that enhances their travel experience.

Easy and convenient travel

"Once you're in Fiji, everything is simple," says Brent. "The airport is close to hotels, and getting around is easy." With visa-free travel for Indian passport holders and

improving connectivity through Singapore, Australia, and New Zealand, reaching Fiji is now more accessible than ever. "We're also working with Fiji Airways to enhance connectivity, which will make visiting even smoother," he adds.

Beyond beaches

While Fiji's turquoise waters and stunning islands are a major draw, Hill emphasises the diverse activities available. "Unlike other island destinations, Fiji offers mountain trekking, river tubing, biking, and cultural performances," he says. "There's always something to do beyond the beach." From experiencing a Fijian dance show to swimming with manta rays, adventure seekers have plenty to explore.

Indian Travellers: Arriving in big numbers

Tourism from India to Fiji is on the rise. "Last year, we saw nearly double-digit growth, and this year, we aim for 10 per cent and above," Brent shares. "The groundwork is in place, and now it's about growing the market further." While the current focus is on major cities

such as Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad, future expansion into smaller markets is on the horizon.

A safe and welcoming destination

Brent shares, "Fiji over-indexes on female travellers because it's very safe and easy to navigate. The country is seeing a rise in female travellers, couples, and multi-generational families. Families love it here, with grandparents, parents, and kids all staying together in villas and resorts."

MICE and Weddings: Growing markets

Fiji is becoming a hotspot for weddings and business events. "Indian weddings are growing in popularity here," Brent says. "With a strong Fijian-Indian population, we already have the experience to host elaborate celebrations." On the business side, Fiji is seeing increasing MICE bookings. "Our sweet spot is groups of 30 to 300, and we have venues that can accommodate up to 2,000 guests," he adds.

Exciting new developments

Fiji's tourism infrastructure is expanding. "The new Crowne Plaza Resort with 324 rooms is fully opening this year, featuring beach clubs, pools, and top-tier restaurants," says Brent. "The Western Hotel, with 276 rooms, is launching mid-year, and for the first time, Fiji will offer glamping experiences right on the beach." These additions will further enhance Fiji's appeal to Indian travellers.

"Fiji promotes happiness, and that's what sets us apart," Brent shares. "When you come to Fiji, you're truly welcome. Unlike other destinations facing tourism challenges, Fiji remains a pure, authentic paradise. It's absolutely worth experiencing!" Fiji is more than a tropical escape — it's a destination where Indian travellers can find both adventure and a sense of home. With its welcoming culture, diverse experiences, and deep-rooted connections to India, Fiji promises a holiday that's as enriching as it is unforgettable.



Madhya Pradesh Tourism Vision 2025

A Transformational Journey

From infrastructure advancements to sustainable tourism practices, the state is committed to making tourism more immersive, accessible, and eco-friendly.

- *Sudipta Saha*



Smt. Bidisha Mukherjee



Madhya Pradesh, often referred to as the 'Heart of India,' is a land of immense cultural heritage, breath-taking landscapes, and vibrant traditions. As the state gears up for 2025, the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board is set to unveil a series of initiatives aimed at revolutionising the travel experience.

Redefining tourism in the 'Heart of India'

Madhya Pradesh, a land of lush natural beauty, historical marvels, and vibrant cultural heritage, is all set to establish itself as a multi-specialty offbeat tourism destination of choice in 2025. With a visionary approach that balances heritage conservation, adventure tourism, and modern infrastructure, the state is poised to welcome travellers with an array of new and immersive experiences. According to Smt. Bidisha Mukherjee, IAS, Additional Managing Director, Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, "Madhya Pradesh is gearing up for an exciting year ahead, focusing on innovative tourism initiatives, infrastructural advancements, and sustainability. We are committed to creating a world-class tourism ecosystem that enhances the experience of every visitor while preserving our rich heritage." One of the key highlights of 2025 is the launch of India's first inter-state cruise route, with a solar-powered terminal at Sakarja, promising a serene and eco-friendly journey. Enhanced air connectivity through PM Shri Paryatan Vayu Seva will improve accessibility between Satna, Bhopal, Khajuraho, and Jabalpur. Furthermore, 350 homestays will be operational across rural landscapes, while tourist facilitation centres will enhance convenience for travellers. Heritage preservation is a top

priority, with Orchha receiving a rupees 100 crore investment for sustainable development. The state is also pushing for UNESCO recognition for its cultural treasures. Additionally, initiatives such as the Clean Destination Project in Bandhavgarh and the expansion of Narmada tourism highlight Madhya Pradesh's commitment to eco-conscious travel. A rupees 100 crore international convention centre in Bhopal is also in the pipeline, reinforcing the state's ambition to become a global tourism and cultural hub.

New experiences awaiting Travellers in Madhya Pradesh

In 2025, travellers visiting Madhya Pradesh can expect a dynamic blend of cultural, adventure, and technological experiences. "We aim to provide travellers with an extraordinary range of experiences that blend tradition, adventure, and innovation," said Smt. Mukherjee. Following the success of the 'Moh Liya Re' campaign featuring Pankaj Tripathi, a new TVC starring international sitar virtuoso Anoushka Shankar will further elevate the state's global tourism appeal. Digital enhancements, including Destination Handbooks, 360-degree VR tours, audiobooks, and interactive digital platforms, will provide a new-age way to explore Madhya Pradesh's hidden gems. Adventure seekers can look forward to skydiving festivals in Ujjain and Gandhisagar, along with thrilling hot air ballooning and paramotoring experiences. Meanwhile, cultural connoisseurs can immerse themselves in events at year-round tent cities in Mandu, Orchha, and Tamia, where they can witness traditional art, music, and adventure spectacles.

Leveraging technology to enhance tourism

Madhya Pradesh is embracing

cutting-edge technology to revolutionise tourism experiences. "We are integrating Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality into tourism offerings to provide immersive engagement for visitors," highlights Smt. Mukherjee.

Tourists will be able to explore iconic sites such as Kanha National Park, Orchha, and Sanchi Stupa through 360-degree VR tours. AR-enabled maps and mobile apps will enhance real-time exploration, providing interactive guides, historical facts, and multimedia content. Additionally, AR experiences will bring cultural stories to life through re-enactments of historical events and virtual interactions with artefacts.

Developing the Maheshwar - Ahilya Fort tourism circuit

The Maheshwar-Ahilya Fort tourism circuit is set to become a major cultural and sustainable tourism attraction. "We are committed to developing this circuit by promoting local artisans, women empowerment, and eco-friendly tourism practices," says Smt. Mukherjee. The Handloom Café, launched in 2024, showcases Maheshwari sarees and provides economic opportunities for local women artisans. Additionally, women have been trained as boat operators, gypsy drivers, and security personnel to ensure a safe and inclusive tourism experience. The region's cinematic appeal, bolstered by films like Dabangg, continues to attract filmmakers, enhancing its potential as a film tourism destination.

Promoting eco-friendly tourism practices

Smt. Mukherjee emphasises the importance of sustainability, stating, "Madhya Pradesh is

committed to responsible tourism that balances economic growth with environmental conservation."

The state is implementing green initiatives, including waste reduction, sustainable energy usage, and the preservation of natural resources. International participation in trade shows will highlight Madhya Pradesh's commitment to eco-tourism and sustainable tourism models. Through global collaborations, the state aims to position itself as a leader in responsible tourism.

Social media's role in tourism promotion

Social media is set to play a pivotal role in Madhya Pradesh's tourism strategy for 2025. "Through curated digital storytelling and influencer collaborations, we aim to bring global attention to Madhya Pradesh's unique tourism offerings," says Smt. Mukherjee.

Seasonal influencer meets, OTT collaborations, and immersive digital campaigns will spotlight offbeat destinations such as Gandhisagar, Chanderi, and Kuno. The promotion of year-round tent cities in Mandu, Orchha, and Tamia will further boost the state's tourism profile. By leveraging digital platforms, Madhya Pradesh is poised to become a top destination for experiential and adventure travellers.

With a clear vision for 2025, Madhya Pradesh is set to redefine tourism in India. Through a strategic blend of heritage conservation, adventure tourism, and cutting-edge technology, the state is creating an unparalleled travel experience. With strong leadership and innovative initiatives, Madhya Pradesh is on the path to becoming a global tourism powerhouse, offering a perfect mix of tradition, adventure, and sustainability.

NEXUS DMC: REDEFINING TRAVEL TECH

The travel industry is a thrilling, ever-evolving space that demands agility, expertise, and innovation. Vinay Gupta, Founder & CEO, Nexus DMC shares insights about what they bring on the table.

- Tripti Jain

NAVIGATING THE COMPLEXITIES OF TRAVEL TECH

For years, travel agents have struggled with the complexities of working with multiple Destination Management Companies (DMCs). Fragmented booking systems, inconsistent service quality, and limited access to real-time data have made scaling a travel business an uphill battle. Traditional Global Distribution Systems (GDS) have dominated the industry for over 40 years, but their offerings remain limited to basic content management and minimal routing intelligence. Nexus DMC brings together the world's best leisure platform, extensive support with hundreds of professionals in global destinations, and a uniform, world-class, real-time global service delivery system. Nexus equips travel agents with everything needed to lead the tourism industry and thrive in an ever-evolving landscape.

THE VALUES THAT DEFINE NEXUS DMC

At the heart of Nexus DMC lies a value-driven foundation. These are not just words in a company handbook; they are the guiding principles behind every interaction and innovation. Vinay shares, "Integrity is everything. Trust is the foundation of the travel business, and we ensure transparency in every transaction."

Courage is another defining value of Nexus DMC, as they embrace technology and innovation, continuously improving their platform to stay ahead of the curve. "We are not afraid to challenge the status quo. Innovation is the only way forward," he emphasises. Loyalty is a crucial factor in the company's relationships with its partners. "Our success is deeply intertwined with our agents' success. We build partnerships that last. The more we help each other, the more we all grow," he adds.

A PLATFORM BUILT FOR EFFICIENCY

Nexus DMC's platform is more than just another travel booking system. It is an integrated travel tech ecosystem designed to simplify, streamline, and supercharge operations for travel professionals. Vinay says, "Time is the most valuable asset for any travel agent. That's why we built a system where everything—from flights to hotels to ground services—can be managed in one place."

Mobile accessibility is another key feature of the platform. He explains, "Business doesn't stop when you leave your desk. With our mobile app, agents can quote, book, and track sales from anywhere." Effective lead management is critical for converting prospects into clients, and Nexus DMC has integrated a robust CRM system. He adds, "Understanding your clients and maintaining relationships is the key to long-term success. Our platform makes that seamless."

PERSONALISATION FOR THE MODERN TRAVELLER

Customisation is at the core of today's travel industry, and Nexus DMC empowers agents to offer personalised experiences. Vinay explains, "No two travellers are the same. With our platform, agents can tailor itineraries in real time, ensuring every trip is unique and memorable."

Additionally, real-time access to data ensures that agents can make informed decisions. "Knowledge is power. Our reporting tools help agencies track sales, revenue, and top-performing agents, allowing them to scale effectively," he adds.

COMMITMENT TO CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Customer satisfaction is paramount, and Nexus DMC goes the extra mile with 24/7 passenger support. "We don't just facilitate bookings; we ensure travellers have support at



Vinay Gupta

every step," says Vinay. "Our concierge team is available round the clock to assist passengers wherever they are."

The company's commitment to seamless operations extends to payments as well. He adds, "We make transactions effortless. Our system allows agents to accept all payment methods smoothly, making life easier for both them and their clients."

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

With a presence in 28 offices across five continents and a 1,000+ strong

team, Nexus DMC is redefining what it means to be a travel tech partner. Whether you're a small agency or a large-scale operation, the company's comprehensive solutions ensure a stress-free, profitable, and future-ready business.

Vinay shares, "We are not here to make money. We are here so that you, the travel agent, have an opportunity to make money. This core belief fuels our mission, making us more than just a technology provider—it's a growth partner for travel professionals worldwide."



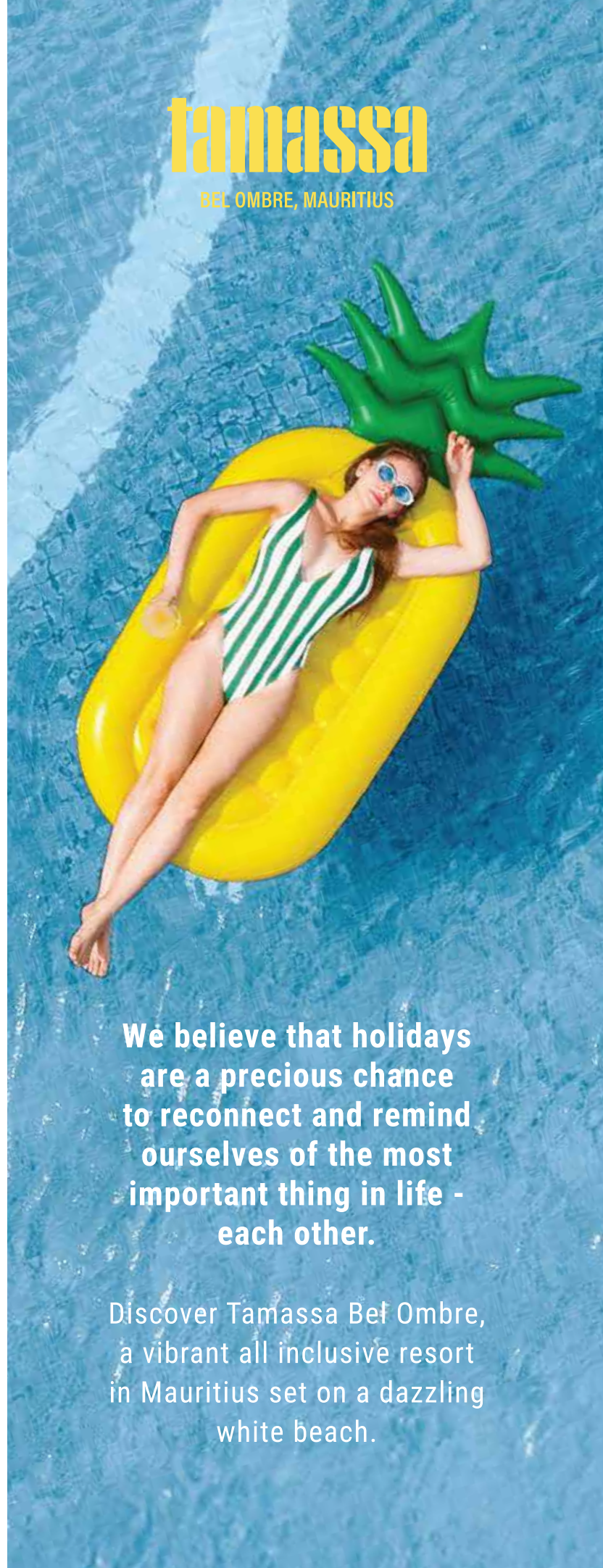
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Sabah

The untamed beauty!



Julinus Jeffery Jimit



From pristine rainforests to marine conservation, Sabah is redefining responsible tourism in an impactful way. Julinus Jeffery Jimit, CEO, Sabah Tourism Board shares insights on their plans for Indian market.

-Naina Nath

OFFSHORE BINOCULARS

Sabah Tourism Board is making strategic moves to position Sabah as a top destination for Indian travellers. With participation in exhibitions alongside three key partners, the board is focused on showcasing Sabah's diverse tourism offerings, from nature and adventure to its growing appeal for Indian weddings and film productions.

STRENGTHENING PRESENCE IN INDIA

Sabah's promotional efforts in India include digital marketing, B2B engagements, and consumer-driven campaigns. The board collaborates closely with Tourism Malaysia and key industry players such as Ketam, which has a strong footprint in India. "India is a priority market for us, and we are committed to increasing awareness and engagement through targeted promotions," says Julinus.

A significant development is the upcoming visit of ten Indian movie producers scouting locations in Sabah, reinforcing its potential as a filming destination. "Sabah offers breath-taking landscapes and unique cultural settings that are perfect for cinematic storytelling. We want to position Sabah as the next sought-after location for Indian film productions," he adds.

CONNECTIVITY AND GROWTH POTENTIAL

Though there are no direct flights from India to Sabah, accessibility is improving. Travellers can connect via Kuala Lumpur, which operates 442 domestic flights weekly, or through Brunei Airlines, offering a

Chennai-Brunei-Kota Kinabalu route. "We understand the importance of seamless connectivity, and we are actively working with airline partners to improve access for Indian travellers," says Julinus.

Indian arrivals to Sabah nearly doubled from 5,600 in 2022 to almost 10,000 in 2023, marking a 58 per cent increase. The 2024 target is set between 10,000 and 13,000 visitors. "We are optimistic about achieving these numbers, given the growing interest from Indian tourists," he states. "The rising trend in arrivals indicates the strong potential of this market, and we are determined to build on this momentum."

VISA-FREE TRAVEL & MICE GROWTH

With free visa entry for Indians until 2026, Sabah is enhancing its appeal. The state is also strengthening its MICE offerings, featuring a premier convention centre by the sea, accommodating up to 6,000 delegates. Julinus shares, "We see a huge opportunity in MICE tourism, and our infrastructure is well-equipped to host large-scale events. Indian corporations and associations seeking unique venues will find Sabah to be an excellent choice." Indian destination weddings are another focus area, with resorts such as Shangri-La Rasa Ria already hosting several events. "Sabah's stunning landscapes provide a magical setting for Indian weddings," he adds. "We are actively engaging with Indian wedding planners to showcase what Sabah has to offer."



OFFSHORE BINOCULARS

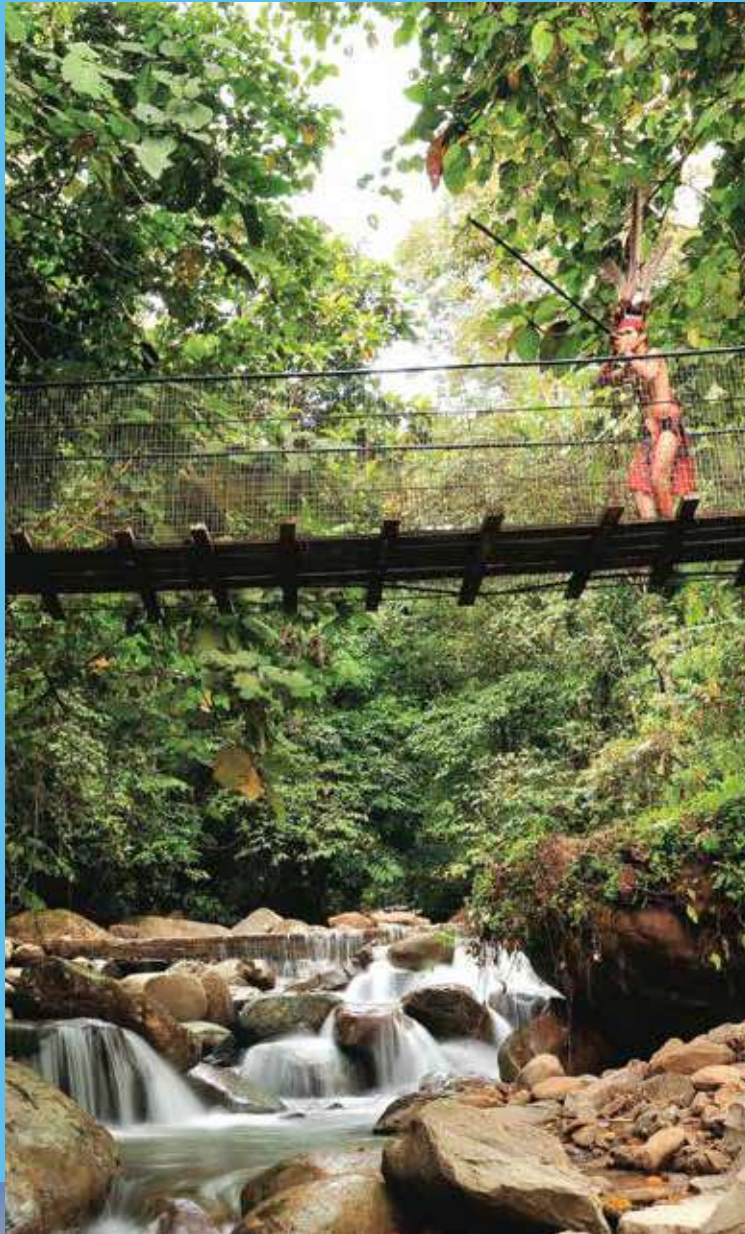
SUSTAINABILITY AT THE CORE

Sabah's conservation efforts date back to 1964, ensuring sustainable tourism remains a priority. The state is home to several GSTC-certified eco-tourism sites, reinforcing its commitment to responsible travel. Julinus explains, "Our sustainability initiatives are deeply rooted in preserving Sabah's natural heritage while supporting local communities. From pristine rainforests to marine conservation, Sabah is redefining responsible tourism in an impactful way."

LOOKING AHEAD

Awareness of Sabah in the Indian market is still growing, and the board is ramping up its marketing efforts. A key highlight for 2024 is the launch of Club Med in November, adding another world-class resort to Sabah's offerings. Julinus concludes, "With new developments and a strong promotional push, we are confident that more Indian travellers will discover the wonders of Sabah. Our goal is to make Sabah a household name in the Indian travel market."

Julinus shares, "If culture, adventure, and nature are your passion, Sabah is your destination. We welcome our Indian travel partners to explore the incredible opportunities Sabah has to offer." With increasing visibility and strategic initiatives, Sabah is on track to becoming a preferred choice for Indian travellers.



TOP EXPERIENCES FOR INDIAN TRAVELLERS

1. Cultural Heritage – Home to over 35 ethnic groups, offering deep cultural insights. "Sabah's diverse communities make it a truly enriching experience for visitors. Indian travellers looking for authentic cultural immersion will find much to explore here."
2. Adventure Tourism – From mountain climbing to thrilling outdoor activities. "Mount Kinabalu remains a major attraction for adventure seekers worldwide. It's a challenge worth taking, and the view from the top is unmatched."
3. Nature & Eco-Tourism – Featuring iconic sites such as the Borneo Rainforest and Imbak Canyon. "Our commitment to conservation ensures that future generations can continue to enjoy Sabah's natural beauty. Sustainable tourism is at the heart of our efforts."
4. Wildlife Encounters – Sabah is home to pygmy elephants, orangutans, and the world's only sun bear conservation centre. "These rare wildlife encounters make Sabah a dream destination for nature lovers. Conservation is our responsibility, and we encourage visitors to experience wildlife responsibly."
5. Diving & Birdwatching – Sipadan is ranked among the world's top five dive sites. "We take pride in being a global hotspot for marine biodiversity. Divers from across the world come here for an unforgettable experience."



E X P E R I E N C E



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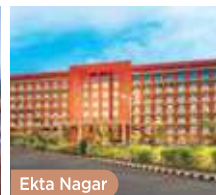
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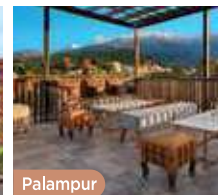
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RAIL EUROPE IN INDIA FASTER TRACKS, BIGGER HORIZONS!

With 23 per cent growth in India, Rail Europe strengthens its GSA network and expands beyond Tier I cities. Björn Bender, Executive Chairman & CEO, Rail Europe shares more about what they have in store for India.

-Naina Nath



Björn Bender



Rail Europe, one of the world's largest distributors of European train tickets, is setting its sights on India as a key growth market. With a 23 per cent increase in sales from India in 2024, the company is doubling down on expansion beyond Tier I cities, strengthening its GSA network, and simplifying train travel for Indian travellers. Björn shares, "Keeping up this growth rate is definitely our strategic approach. We're growing faster than the European rail industry, and India is a huge part of that success."

INDIA'S GROWING DEMAND FOR EURO RAIL TRAVEL

As more Indians explore Europe, Rail Europe is witnessing a significant rise in demand for train tickets and rail passes. "Over the last decade, most Indian travellers to Europe came from Tier I cities. Now, we are seeing a surge from Tier II and Tier III cities," says Björn. To tap into this potential, Rail Europe is conducting more webinars, sales visits, and training sessions across India. The trend is clear—first-time travellers from smaller cities are discovering Europe, while repeat visitors from metros are now exploring destinations beyond London, Paris, and Rome, such as Vienna, Budapest, and Copenhagen.

STRENGTHENING LOCAL PRESENCE

With a strong B2B presence in India, Rail Europe is making it easier for travel agents to sell European rail products. Björn shares, "We always say we run a global product with a much localised approach. Our Mumbai-based commercial team conducts regular webinars and training sessions, ensuring Indian

agents have the knowledge and tools to book train journeys effortlessly. We even offer certifications, which help agents build credibility and expertise."

NEW TRAIN ROUTES

Rail Europe is constantly expanding its offerings, and 2024 has brought exciting developments. Björn shares, "There are three new routes that are particularly relevant for the Indian market." The highly anticipated day train between Munich and Amsterdam now connects southern Germany with the Netherlands at high speed. The Paris-Berlin route, previously available only as a night train, now offers a daytime option—perfect for Indian travellers who prefer sightseeing along the way. Meanwhile, the Paris-Milan route has reopened after a long closure due to construction. "Indians love traveling between France and Italy, and this route's return is a big win," Björn says.

WHAT INDIANS ARE BOOKING

Indians' travel preferences are clear—rail passes remain the most popular choice. Björn states, "45 per cent of our Indian sales come from passes like the Eurail and Swiss Travel Pass." High-speed trains such as Eurostar, TGV, and ICE account for another 30 per cent, while scenic and regional trains make up the remaining 25 per cent. "Scenic trains like the Glacier Express and Bernina Express are particularly in demand because Indian travellers love breath-taking landscapes," he adds.

THE RISE OF NIGHT TRAINS

Sustainability is at the heart of Rail Europe's operations, and night trains

are emerging as a game-changer. "Night trains are gaining traction as an eco-friendly alternative to short-haul flights," Björn explains. Operators like ÖBB's Nightjet now connect major European cities with comfortable sleeper cabins, allowing travellers to save hotel costs, arrive directly in city centres, and reduce their carbon footprint. This shift aligns with the growing awareness among Indian travellers about sustainable tourism.

RAIL EUROPE'S TECH-DRIVEN APPROACH

Rail Europe's mission is simple: make European train travel seamless for Indian agents and travellers. "The complexity is super high because we're dealing with 230 different train providers across national railway systems," Björn explains. "Our job is to simplify it and create an easy front-end experience where you don't need to be an expert to book a train ticket." With one integrated platform, travel agents can book multiple train operators effortlessly—whether for leisure, business, or MICE travel.

THE FINAL WORD

As Rail Europe looks ahead to 2025, the company remains committed to strengthening its partnerships in India. Björn's message to Indian travel agents is clear: "Our value proposition is to make train travel easy. We take the complexity of European rail and translate it into a simple booking experience for agents across India. With growing demand and new routes, now is the time to embrace European train travel like never before."

BIZ

Balitrip Wisata

THE ULTIMATE BALI FIX!

Dheeraj Ranjan Kumar



Balitrip Wisata was born out of a bold vision to redefine the Indian outbound travel industry. Dheeraj Ranjan Kumar, Founder, Balitrip Wisata shares how he aimed to create an ecosystem of innovation, reliability, and transformative experiences.

-Tripti Jain



The birth of Balitrip Wisata

Founded as a travel company—it was born out of a bold vision to redefine the Indian outbound travel industry. Dheeraj wanted to build an enterprise that would go beyond offering travel solutions. He shares, "I didn't just want to create a company — I wanted to build a corporate entity that drives meaningful change and innovation. Travel is about more than just destinations; it's about experiences, connections, and memories. I wanted to provide travellers and businesses with solutions that truly resonate with their evolving needs."

The art of building unbreakable bonds

In an industry as dynamic as travel, partnerships are essential. Balitrip Wisata has been able to cultivate enduring relationships with its B2B partners through a unique blend of transparency, trust, and technology-driven insights. Dheeraj explains, "Our strategies are deeply rooted in innovation and a strong understanding of market dynamics. By leveraging data - driven insights, we continuously adapt to the changing landscape. We don't just follow trends—we anticipate them. That's how we stay ahead and ensure our partners gain the maximum value."

Storms to stepping stones

No success story is complete without its share of challenges. From navigating global market shifts to integrating new technologies, Balitrip Wisata has faced several hurdles along the way. But instead of being setbacks, these challenges became catalysts for growth. Dheeraj suggests, "Challenges have been our greatest teachers." Furthermore, he adds, "Every obstacle pushed us to think differently and evolve stronger. I attribute our success to the resilience of my team, whose commitment and adaptability turned challenges into opportunities for innovation and growth."

Keeping up with the traveller's dream

As the travel industry has transformed over the years, so has Balitrip Wisata. From personalised experiences to seamless digital integration, the company has continuously refined its offerings to stay ahead of industry expectations. "Innovation has been at the heart of our evolution. We've consistently fine-tuned our services, integrating cutting-edge technology and introducing customised solutions. Our goal is to align our offerings with the ever-changing needs of our partners and travellers, ensuring every journey are seamless and exceptional," he adds.

Milestones that matter

Looking back on the last decade, Balitrip Wisata has accomplished several milestones that define its success. These range from strategic expansions and breakthrough partnerships to receiving industry recognition for excellence in service.

"Our biggest achievement is the trust we've earned from our agency partners and customers," Dheeraj reflects. "This trust has given us the confidence to take calculated risks, innovate, and redefine our approach. Every milestone — whether an expansion, a successful partnership, or an industry accolade—has reinforced our vision of creating a company that leads with trust, creativity, and sustainability," he adds.

The power of synergy

A major driving force behind Balitrip Wisata's sustained success is its focus on collaboration. By forging meaningful alliances within the B2B travel ecosystem, the company has built a robust network of partners who share a vision of mutual growth. Dheeraj emphasises, "Collaboration is the cornerstone of our success. We see our partnerships as strategic relationships rather than just business transactions. Our approach ensures that we create value together, rather than in isolation. When our partners thrive, we thrive.

That's what has fuelled our growth over the years."

A bold leap into the future

As Balitrip Wisata steps into its next decade, its commitment to expansion, innovation, and sustainability remains stronger than ever. The company is set to integrate advanced technological tools, enhance customer experiences, and explore new markets to strengthen its leadership position in the B2B travel industry.

Dheeraj reveals, "We're committed to embracing technology and creating a sustainable business ecosystem. The future of travel lies in seamless digital experiences, personalised service, and responsible tourism. Our focus will be on aligning innovation with sustainability to redefine the industry."

Beyond business

As Balitrip Wisata continues its journey, its legacy is defined not just by business success, but by the trust and impact it has built within the travel community. The company remains dedicated to fostering relationships, adapting to industry changes, and continuing its mission of excellence.

Dheeraj concludes, "Our legacy lies in the trust we've built and the impact we've made in the travel industry." Furthermore, he adds, "As we move forward, we aim to uphold these values while continuing to innovate and inspire. By staying true to our core principles, we'll ensure our journey remains meaningful and impactful for decades to come."

Balitrip Wisata's journey over the past ten years is a testament to vision, perseverance, and the power of innovation. With a strong foundation built on trust, adaptability, and strategic collaboration, the company is well-positioned to lead the future of the outbound travel industry. As the next decade unfolds, one thing is certain—Balitrip Wisata will continue to set new benchmarks and redefine the way the world experiences travel.

Fly24hrs

Towards unstoppable expansion

Fly24hrs, a powerhouse in India's B2B travel sector, is charting an ambitious course towards nationwide dominance. Sahil Raj Chaudhary, CEO and Vaseem Parvez, CCO, Fly24hrs share their visionary goals for this year.

-Tripti Jain





Sahil Raj Chaudhary



Vaseem Parvez

With the recent launch of offices in Siliguri, Hyderabad and Jaipur, the company is making bold moves to establish itself as the go-to partner for travel professionals across the country. The next destinations on this expansion roadmap? Lucknow, Mumbai, and Bangalore amongst others.

Vaseem shares, "Our vision is to create a seamless network of offices that brings Fly24hrs closer to every travel partner in India. We are not just opening offices; we are establishing relationships and ensuring accessibility."

Sahil echoes this sentiment: "Fly24hrs is built on the belief that success comes from being present where our partners need us. These expansions are a testament to that philosophy."

New stops on the journey

The recent launch of Fly24hrs offices in Siliguri and Jaipur marks a significant milestone in the company's expansion journey. These cities were chosen strategically to serve distinct and growing travel markets.

"Siliguri is the gateway to the Northeast, a region brimming with untapped travel potential," explains Vaseem "Jaipur, on the other hand, is a hub of cultural and heritage tourism. Our presence here ensures that travel agents in these regions receive personalised and prompt support."

Sahil highlights the bigger picture: "Each new office is a step toward our larger goal of seamless service across India. This expansion is about creating a national network that travel agents can rely on, no matter

where they operate."

Next on the Radar

With momentum on its side, Fly24hrs is gearing up to launch in three major cities—Lucknow, Mumbai, and Bangalore. These metropolises are key players in India's travel industry, making them essential stops on Fly24hrs' growth map.

"Mumbai is the financial capital, Bangalore is the tech hub, and Lucknow is a rising star in tourism and business travel," says Vaseem. "Our presence in these cities will give our partners the support and resources they need to grow."

Sahil adds, "We don't just enter markets; we transform them. Our upcoming offices will bring innovation, efficiency, and a personal touch to travel agents who need a strong, reliable partner."

The crew behind the cockpit

A company is only as strong as its people, and Fly24hrs owes its rapid ascent to a dedicated, passionate team. From operations to sales, every member plays a crucial role in driving expansion and excellence.

"Our team is the backbone of our success," says Vaseem. "Their commitment and hard work ensure that every new office is not just a location but a centre of excellence." Sahil reinforces this and shares, "Building a brand like Fly24hrs requires vision, passion, and teamwork. Our people are the driving force behind our growth, and their relentless efforts are what set us apart."

Soaring with recognition

Fly24hrs' expansion and innovative approach have earned it the prestigious 'Fastest Growing Travel Company' award, further cementing its position as a market leader. Vaseem shares, "This award is a testament to our strategic growth and the trust our partners place in us. It's an acknowledgment of our relentless pursuit of excellence."

Sahil adds, "Every milestone we achieve is a reflection of our vision. This recognition fuels our determination to keep reaching new heights."

Beyond borders

With an aggressive expansion strategy and an unwavering commitment to service excellence, Fly24hrs is poised to revolutionise India's B2B travel industry. The company is not just opening offices; it's building a legacy of trust, efficiency, and innovation.

Vaseem explains, "This is just the beginning! We have set our sights on a future where Fly24hrs is present in every corner of India, ensuring that no travel agent is ever too far from the support they need." Sahil concludes, "Our promise to our partners is simple: we will be where you need us, when you need us. The journey ahead is thrilling, and we are ready for takeoff."

With its ambitious roadmap, Fly24hrs is set to redefine the travel industry landscape, proving that with the right vision and dedication, the sky is truly the limit.

Le Royal Monceau Raffles Paris

An ode to opulence

At Le Royal Monceau Raffles Paris, art, indulgence,
and avant-garde luxury converge

- Misbaah Mansuri



HEADS IN BEDS

It begins with a sensation, not a sight. The pulse of Paris hums beyond Avenue Hoche as I step out of the car, and the revolving doors of Le Royal Monceau Raffles glide open like the first page of an extravagant novel. The lobby—a curated canvas of art, light, and luxury—enfolds me in a welcome that is as much an embrace as it is an arrival. The grandeur of the 1930s Art Deco façade gives way to Philippe Starck's playful yet opulent vision inside. Here, reflections dance in mirrored corridors, art leans casually against walls rather than hanging, and design is not just an aesthetic but an experience.

The accommodation

My Junior Suite is a masterclass in artistic rebellion and refinement. Plush rugs soften my steps, while contemporary furniture handcrafted to Starck's exacting vision fills the space with curated eccentricity. A hidden television emerges from behind a mirror, seamlessly integrated yet never distracting from the suite's charm. Custom-made linens drape over the king-sized bed, and on a side table, an acoustic guitar—a signature touch in every suite—invites me to create my own rhythm within this perfectly orchestrated escape. The selection of books curated by the hotel's famed Art Concierge adds an intellectual flourish, while the refrigerated private bar, stocked with French delicacies, whispers indulgence at every turn.

The bathroom is a glamorous retreat unto itself. A free-standing bathtub gleams under soft lighting, while Clarins products line the counter like an apothecary of Parisian elegance. The walk-in shower feels more like an installation than a utility—every element deliberately designed, every detail a statement. Some suites even feature the Japanese Toto toilet, an unexpected yet delightful surprise in this temple of refinement.

What sets the Junior Suite apart is how effortlessly it blends comfort with avant-garde luxury. The space is designed to make every moment feel intentional, from the soft glow



of mood lighting to the carefully placed artwork that speaks of Paris's artistic soul. The room is not just a place to rest; it is an experience in itself, an immersive retreat where every detail has been orchestrated to create a lasting impression.

A culinary affair

Dining at Matsuhisa Paris is less of a meal and more of a meticulously orchestrated culinary performance. The energy is palpable—soft conversations, the glint of polished glassware, and the occasional laughter of a table enraptured by Nobu Matsuhisa's signature blend of Japanese precision and South American verve.

The yellowtail sashimi arrives first, shimmering like liquid gold beneath delicate slices of jalapeño and kissed with yuzu sauce—a perfect harmony of heat, acidity, and umami. Next, the rock shrimp tempura is placed before me, each morsel encased in a crisp golden shell, coated in a spicy sauce that tingles without overpowering. But it is the black cod saikyo yaki that lingers long after the last bite—its miso glaze caramelized to perfection, the buttery flesh melting in a way that only Nobu can master. A crisp glass of sake completes the experience, accentuating the depth and subtlety of each dish.

The restaurant's ambiance elevates the experience further. Dimly lit, with a sultry glow reflecting off sleek black surfaces, Matsuhisa Paris embodies the fusion of contemporary chic and timeless sophistication. The service is impeccable, with staff effortlessly guiding guests through a menu that blends Japanese tradition with a daring modern twist.

Beyond Matsuhisa, the hotel's culinary offerings extend to Il Carpaccio, the Michelin-starred Italian haven where fine dining meets heartfelt authenticity. Here, the truffle-laced pasta and slow-braised meats transport guests to the heart of Italy, while the exquisite pastry selection—crafted by Pierre Hermé—ensures that every meal ends on a note of pure indulgence.



HEADS IN BEDS

The Spa

In a city synonymous with luxury, the My Blend by Clarins Spa at Le Royal Monceau is a sanctuary of sublime tranquility. Stepping into this mirrored wonderland feels like stepping into a dream—surreal, weightless, and untouched by time. The 23-meter pool glows beneath a soft-lit ceiling, its turquoise expanse inviting me to shed the weight of the world with each lap.

My hour-long treatment begins with a skin analysis, a personal approach that is as clinical as it is indulgent. My therapist selects a blend of Clarins' finest serums, tailored to refresh, sculpt, and restore. The massage is an intricate dance of firm pressure and featherlight strokes, designed to rejuvenate not just the face but the spirit. As a silk cloth is draped over my eyes, the world narrows to nothing but touch, breath, and sensation. When I finally emerge, my skin glows as if lit from within—a quiet testimony to the power of this palace of wellness. Beyond traditional treatments, the spa offers immersive wellness experiences, from guided meditation sessions to customized detox programs. The state-of-the-art gym, equipped with the latest fitness technology, ensures that even the most disciplined routines remain uninterrupted. Complimentary juices and herbal teas are thoughtfully placed throughout the spa, reinforcing the ethos of holistic well-being.

Fusing art and wonder

Beyond the grandeur, beyond the indulgence, Le Royal Monceau is a dialogue between art and luxury. The hotel's dedicated art concierge ensures that every guest is immersed in creativity, offering access to the latest Parisian exhibitions and hidden cultural gems. The concept store, a labyrinth of curated treasures, tempts with rare finds and bespoke pieces that elevate souvenirs into collector's items.

The hotel's art program extends to its own gallery, where rotating exhibitions feature contemporary masterpieces and exclusive



collaborations. Guests are encouraged to explore, engage, and even take part in bespoke art workshops, ensuring that their stay is infused with cultural depth.

My last evening is spent in the hotel's private cinema, where champagne flows freely, and Pierre Hermé popcorn adds a decadent touch to the silver screen. It is here that I realize Le Royal Monceau isn't just a hotel—it's an ecosystem of indulgence, where every moment is crafted with precision, every detail designed to delight.



HEADS IN BEDS

Final thoughts

As I step out onto Avenue Hoche, Paris pulses around me once more, the city's energy folding back into its timeless rhythm. But something has shifted. Le Royal Monceau Raffles has imprinted itself upon me—not just as a place, but as a feeling. A memory draped in art, indulgence, and a touch of whimsy, waiting to be relived with each return.

The hotel does not merely offer luxury but rather reshapes it. It takes the familiar elements of a high-end stay—exceptional service, stunning accommodations, and world-class dining—and injects them with an artistic soul that lingers long after departure. It takes the essence of an opulent stay and elevates it into something deeply personal, where every space tells a story and every moment lingers long after departure. Here, artistry is not an accessory but a foundation, seamlessly woven into the fabric of hospitality. Paris may be a city of light, but within these walls, it glows with a different kind of brilliance—one that is felt, lived, and impossible to forget.



Patina Maldives

A perpetual journey of
Art, Luxury, and Transformation



Christeena Thiruvinkal

Patina Maldives is a symphony of light, space, and sensation woven into the heart of the Indian Ocean. Christeena Thiruvinkal, Director of Marketing & Communications, Patina Maldives takes us through the gorgeous perpetual journey.
-Tripti Jain



HOTELLIGENCE

Here, time slows, allowing the golden hues of sunrise to melt into the turquoise embrace of the sea, while the rhythmic whisper of the waves composes a lullaby of serenity. The island breathes with an effortless blend of nature and design—sleek, minimalist architecture softened by the gentle embrace of tropical foliage.

A canvas of infinite imprints

Stepping onto Patina Maldives is akin to stepping into a living, breathing piece of art. It is more than just a luxury resort; it is an emotion, an evolving experience, and a perpetual journey. "We are not just another Maldivian resort. We are a transformative luxury brand that creates curated moments," says Christeena.

Belonging to the prestigious Capella Group, Patina Maldives stands apart, not just in aesthetics but in the way it immerses its guests in a world where architecture, art, cuisine, and well-being blend seamlessly. She adds, "Our logo itself, a perpetual butterfly-like symbol, signifies an endless journey—an experience that guests continue to relive even after leaving the island."

The four P's of Patina

Every aspect of Patina Maldives is guided by its four pillars—Pace, Place, Perspective, and Patina. "We don't just offer a vacation; we craft a journey that transforms," says Christeena. The design by renowned Brazilian architect

Marcio Kogan is intentionally different from the typical white-linen luxury resorts. Instead, it feels like an extension of home—warm, inviting, and deeply personal.

Privacy is paramount, yet community flourishes. The 41-hectare island ensures seclusion, but the Fari Marina Village creates a vibrant communal space where culture, cuisine, and creativity thrive. "You see guests at breakfast, but the moment they disperse, it feels like they've disappeared into their own little universe. That's the beauty of Patina," she adds.

Nourishment beyond taste

Food at Patina isn't just sustenance; it's a multisensory experience. With 13 distinct dining concepts, guests embark on a culinary voyage, each meal a masterpiece. Christeena shares, "One of our most cherished experiences is the plant-based seven-course wine-pairing dinner, set within our Perpetual Garden under the stars. It's art on a plate, with every dish carefully curated to tell a story."

From the Japanese-Scandinavian elegance of Koen to the smoky flavours of Patagonian-style Brasa, dining at Patina is about savouring, not just eating. The resort's Fari Beach Club offers an eclectic mix of Asian cuisines, while food trucks serve everything from gourmet burgers to fresh gelato. She says, "Even a simple meal here turns into an unforgettable moment."

The art of transformation

Art is interwoven into the very fabric of Patina. The island is home to remarkable installations, including the awe-inspiring James Turrell light and space piece. Christeena explains, "It's calibrated with a satellite, shifting colours to match the celestial movements. Guests can meditate, practice yoga, or simply bask in its ethereal glow—it's an experience beyond words."

Another standout is the Monolith Synthesis, reminiscent of Stonehenge, where mirrored and stone elements create a surreal play of light and shadow. "Patina isn't about static art—it's about art that moves you, changes you," she adds.

A sanctuary of well-being

Patina's spa, aptly named The Flow, is a transformative journey in itself. Christeena shares, "We believe in well-being that transcends the ordinary. Our Watsu therapy, a Japanese water-based healing technique, is something you won't find anywhere else in the Maldives." Another highlight is the flotation tank, where saltwater allow guests to experience a weightless, meditative state. "It's not just about relaxation; it's about rediscovering oneself."

With visiting practitioners specialising in holistic wellness, the spa extends beyond traditional treatments. She adds, "It's about

reconnecting with your inner self while surrounded by the tranquil embrace of nature."

Sustainability and connection

Patina's commitment to sustainability is more than just a promise—it's an active practice. "Our ceramic workshop lets guests build homes for coral reefs, making them part of the island's conservation efforts," Christeena shares. From ocean preservation projects to fishnet bracelet workshops, sustainability isn't a buzzword at Patina—it's a way of life.

Even the music that fills the island is curated to complement the rhythms of nature, enhancing the immersive experience. "Every detail, down to the soundscapes, is thoughtfully chosen to enhance the Patina spirit."

A journey that never ends

Whether it's a multi-generational family planting their own coral reefs, a couple discovering new flavours under the stars, or an art enthusiast marvelling at a Turrell masterpiece, Patina leaves an imprint that lasts far beyond the duration of the stay. Christeena explains, "A British couple first came here for the James Turrell installation, and now, years later, they keep returning because every experience is new. As Patina expands beyond the Maldives to Osaka and beyond, one thing remains unchanged: its ethos of perpetual transformation."



A JOURNEY OF FAITH AND LUXURY

From sacred sites to exclusive journeys: Christian Tours leads the way. Luke Ranjan, Director, Christian Tours Ltd., shares insights into the company's journey.

- Naina Nath

Founded with a vision to combine faith-based travel with world-class luxury, Christian Tours Ltd. has carved a niche in the travel industry. Its unique offerings and its unwavering dedication to creating transformative travel experiences for its members.

FROM VISION TO REALITY

Christian Tours Ltd. began its journey in January 1982 under the leadership of Michael Ecker. His pioneering idea to combine pilgrimage with luxury travel reshaped how Christian tours were perceived. "Michael's dream was simple yet revolutionary—offering 'Pilgrimage by day, luxury by night,'" explains Luke. The company made waves by organising Christian pilgrimages to Israel and Jordan, even achieving the remarkable feat of bringing 300 groups into Israel in a single day.

In 2020, the torch was passed to Luke Ranjan, who acquired the UK brand and expanded its offerings. Despite the challenges faced by the travel industry in the last few years, the company ensured continuity by introducing innovative solutions like private aviation hours and live streamed visits to sacred sites.

BLENDING FAITH AND LUXURY

What sets Christian Tours apart is its distinctive approach: combining deeply spiritual experiences with world-class luxury. Luke highlights, "We provide a concierge service unlike any other—our guests have access to a luxury fleet, private aviation, and even expert teams of butlers, chefs, and media professionals." The company's expertise extends beyond pilgrimages. Christian Tours also offers VIP services for major sports events, from the Olympics to F1 races. "We aim to bring the same level of care and detail to every aspect of our services," says Luke.

BALANCING REFLECTION AND RECREATION

Christian Tours caters to a wide range of preferences, with destinations such as the Holy Land, the Vatican, Lourdes, and Fatima topping the list. Other unique offerings include tours to Japan and Latin America, reflecting the company's commitment to diversity. Luke shares, "Our members appreciate the depth and variety we bring to their journeys. We design itineraries that ensure both spiritual reflection and personal relaxation."

A MODERN TAKE ON FAITH-BASED TRAVEL

The company's approach to designing tours is both meticulous and personal. Luke explains, "Every itinerary begins with understanding our clients' preferences. This includes selecting off-the-beaten-path sacred sites, guided by local experts and church leaders. Extensive inspection trips ensure that each destination offers a truly transformative experience." Travellers now seek deeper connections, including opportunities for volunteering and retreats. Christian Tours is also focusing on sustainable travel, aligning with the growing demand for eco-conscious tourism. Christian Tours leverages technology to enhance its services, offering a custom mobile app for seamless travel experiences.

NAVIGATING CHALLENGES V/S BUILDING CONNECTIONS

Managing visits to religious sites comes with its own set of challenges. Balancing the sanctity of sacred spaces with the logistical needs of modern travel is no small feat. Luke acknowledges, "Respecting local regulations and ensuring guest safety while preserving the spiritual atmosphere is a constant focus. We believe in giving back to the



Luke Ranjan

regions we visit, whether through supporting local businesses or engaging in charitable initiatives."

VISIONARY TRAVEL FOR THE FAITHFUL

Christian Tours is expanding to destinations such as Albania, Tunisia, Bahrain, and Mexico. These locations will offer pilgrims the opportunity to connect with monasteries, cathedrals, and churches, enriching their spiritual journeys. Luke explains, "Our goal is to provide unique, meaningful experiences that resonate with our members. We aim to reach more remote, culturally rich destinations and provide exceptional, personalised experiences."

BUILDING TRUST, COMMUNITY, AND MEANINGFUL IMPACT

Christian Tours operates an exclusive membership model, requiring a proposer-secondor system and support from a Parish Priest. Luke shares, "This approach fosters trust and ensures that our members share our values of faith, community, and respect for diversity. Whether it's arranging last-minute travel for the Indian cricket team or seeing the personal transformation of our clients, every moment is meaningful." He adds, "We welcome Indian DMCs to collaborate with us and explore ways to grow together," Christian Tours invites clients to experience its bespoke, faith-cantered journeys across the UK, Europe, and Latin America.



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You might say it's a bit of paradise. You might declare it's a bit off the beaten track. And you'll certainly wax eloquent and vouch for its credentials. And this is just the first chapter in the story.

-Inder Raj Ahluwalia



TRAVEL THERAPY

From my vantage-point perch in Kayu Manis, the restaurant on the first floor, the view was about as good as it gets.

Picture this! Three islands stood as sentinels against the blue expanse of the sky and sea, framing everything in their own inimitable way. Blue, green, and turquoise, the water seemed as still as a millpond, delicately lapping the golden sand on the beach. No waves, no seagulls, no sound. Just a pretty stillness! Just a picture-postcard scene of the type that constantly lingers in your memory.

Strictly speaking, I shouldn't have been swayed off my feat. The fact is that in a way, I'd been forewarned about the seduction by none other than a former Malaysian Tourism Minister and Executive Chairman of Sazean Group, which operates several quality resorts in Malaysia. In his pleasing, charming manner, the gentleman had revealed the true strength of the Sari Pacifica brand.

So here I was, in one of the most idyllic settings in the world. Sari Pacifica Resort & Spa Redang Island is just the kind of place I'd recommend to those who've had it with the urban bustle, or those who need a total unwind and mental re-fix, or those who're in that dubious zone called love!

Exuding a high degree of charm, the 70-room property sprawls across one of the world's finest sea face areas—the long, golden stretch of beach is shared with other resorts—and seems to have been built brick by brick to offer total seduction, relaxation, and indulgence.

"I'm glad you like it" the resort's Operations Manager, said to me with the seriousness such a remark deserved. While I was trying to figure out how he'd assumed I liked it, he drove the point home by mentioning the myriad reasons for one to be charmed by what he termed 'island living'.

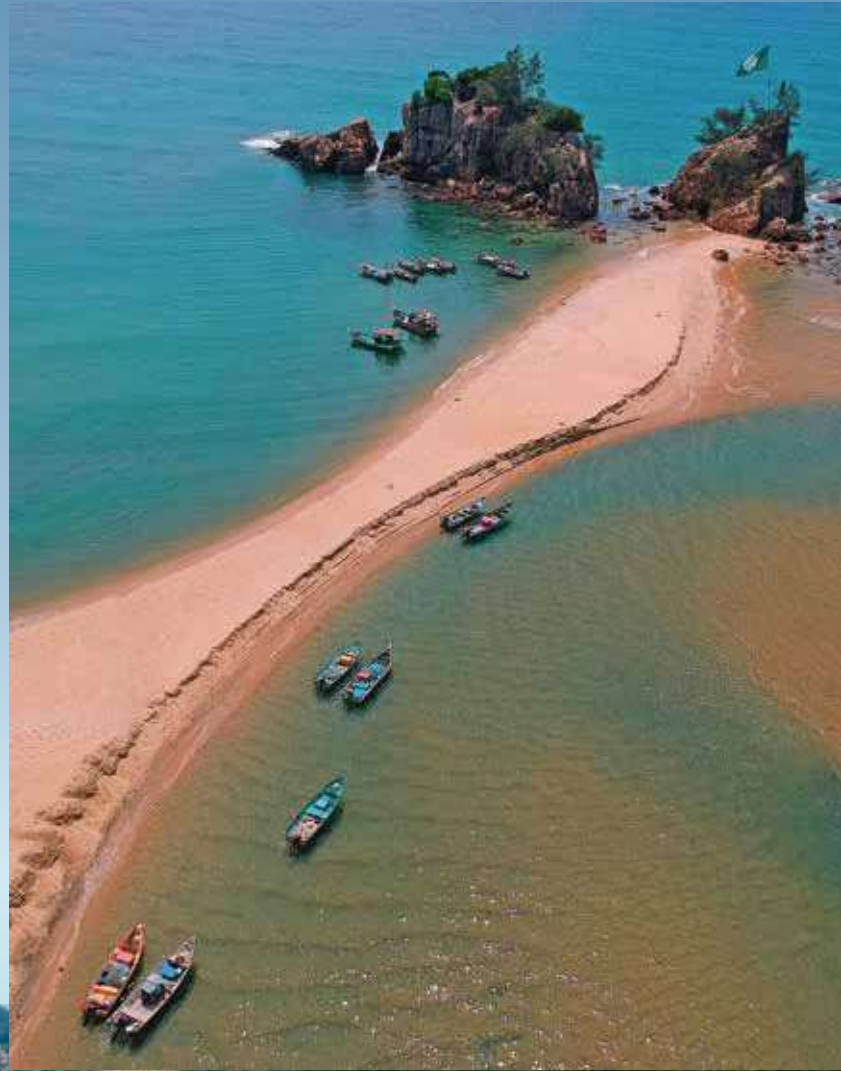
Myriad comments make the rounds about islanders' mentality as compared to others', with the result that over the years, 'island living' has come to be considered a wide term with several connotations. But it remains a story by itself as any world traveller will tell you.

With the management keen to bring

me up to speed with the resort, a conducted tour had been arranged for me, which turned out to be an exercise of joy. The guest rooms are in two lots, the ones on the beachfront offering expansive sea views, and the others clustered around a lily pond and sporting garden views. Kayu Manis, the restaurant, is spacious, airy and well lit, and features a fairly large menu. A walk in the sum brought me to the spa, which with its tranquil, soothing atmosphere, is conceived exactly the way spas should be.

What one does here, depends on one's energy levels. There's opportunity to scuba dive, deep-sea dive, snorkel, fish, swim, island-hop, watch turtles, or just laze around. The proverbial cocktails and mocktails in tall, frosted glasses are always around. Quite a tough regimen, you might say.

With the offerings of this exceptional resort duly seen, sampled, and enjoyed, it was time to sail out to discover the other gems of the island. And the word 'gem' is about the best way I can describe Sari Pacifica Resort & Spa Lang Tengah Island.



TRAVEL THERAPY

A 30-minute ferry ride from Redang Island—that threw up a plethora of visual delights—deposited us at Tengah Island. On offer were the myriad natural charms of the sea and sand.

The resort is a delight. 40-plus rooms, a spacious 100-covers restaurant also named Kayu Manis, spa, and a stunning sea-front with clear waters, makes this a paradise for honeymooners and those inclined to relax and take in the beauty of the sea.

For the second time in three days, I was escorted on a conducted tour by the resort's manager, who took me around the premises and filled me in on its salient features, and its pristine beauty and appeal and for those who appreciate the bounties of nature. For good measure, he also filled me in on details of the type of clientele they get, and on business in general.

The two islands constitute quite a package. And the best thing you can do here is inhale the fresh air, admire the sea's myriad colours, take in the salt spray, and appreciate the fact that you're fortunate to be at one of the world's most beautiful island clusters. It'll perk you up and recharge your batteries.

Indulge in the dining options that range from the resorts' restaurants to smaller eateries in the village and on the beachfront. My pick of cuisine revolves around fresh seafood comprised of an assortment of prawns, fish, crab, and lobster, served curried, grilled, fried, or sautéed.



TRAVEL FACTS

• REDANG ISLAND IS AN HOUR BY FERRY FROM KUALA TRENGGANU, THE STATE'S MAIN CITY, CONNECTED BY AIR WITH KUALA LUMPUR. DAILY FLIGHTS ALSO LINK THE ISLAND WITH KUALA LUMPUR.

• SEVERAL RESORTS ARE PERCHED ON SURROUNDING SMALLER ISLANDS, AND DOT THE ISLAND'S COASTLINE.



About the author

Inder Raj Ahluwalia is a world-renowned international travel journalist & author. His professional profile features awards from several European and Asian countries, among others.



Taking flight with Aeroprime Group

From sales to service – A comprehensive one-stop solution for airlines across the globe. Abhishek Goyal, Executive Director & CEO, Aeroprime Group shares how the company is redefining aviation services.

- Naina Nath

With over 40 years of industry expertise, Aeroprime Group has established itself as India's leading airline Management Company, offering a comprehensive suite of services that go beyond traditional GSA operations. Under the leadership of Abhishek, the company is redefining aviation services with innovative, tech-driven solutions across sales, distribution, cargo management, and regulatory approvals. With a growing presence in India, the UK, and the UAE, Aeroprime is shaping the future of the aviation industry by driving airline expansion and enhancing connectivity in key markets.

Aeroprime's global footprint

With a well-established presence in India, Aeroprime has steadily expanded its operations to key international markets, including the UK and UAE. This global reach allows the company to offer airlines localised expertise while integrating them into a broader international network. "Our expansion into London and the UAE is a strategic move," says Abhishek. "It positions us to support airlines with a truly global approach while maintaining the deep local insights that set us apart."

A new era of airline management

Aeroprime is not just a traditional GSA—it's redefining how airlines operate in India. By offering a comprehensive suite of services, from regulatory approvals to cargo and line maintenance, the company provides a fully integrated support system for airline partners. "We go beyond sales," Abhishek emphasises. "Our focus is on execution, efficiency, and revenue optimisation. Airlines trust us because we deliver tangible results, not just market presence."

India's aviation boom: The time is now

With international airlines increasingly prioritising India for expansion, Aeroprime is playing a crucial role in facilitating smooth market entry and sustainable operations. The shift in global aviation trends has placed India at the centre of future growth. "India is now the biggest opportunity for global airlines," says Abhishek. "The demand for international travel is rising, and carriers need reliable partners who understand the market. That's where we step in."

Strengthening airline partnerships

Currently working with over 15 global airlines—including Vietnam Airlines, Salam Air, Thai Airways, Air Cairo,

FlyAdeal, Uzbekistan Airways, and Turkmenistan Airlines—Aeroprime provides end-to-end support in both passenger and cargo segments. "Our role is to simplify airline operations," Abhishek explains. "From sales and customer service to regulatory compliance and logistics, we take care of it all. This allows our airline partners to focus on delivering the best travel experience."

Where innovation meets service

With digital transformation reshaping the airline industry, Aeroprime is integrating emerging technologies into its operations. The rise of direct distribution models, automation, and AI-driven customer support is changing the way airlines interact with their passengers. "The next phase of aviation will be driven

by technology," says Abhishek. "We are already adapting to direct distribution through NDC, APIs, and AI-powered solutions. Airlines that embrace these changes will be the ones leading the industry."

Unlocking new markets

While major metros continue to dominate travel trends, smaller cities are driving the next wave of growth. Aeroprime is actively working with travel agents in tier II and III markets to ensure airlines tap into this expanding customer base. "These markets are the real game-changers," Abhishek notes. "We're engaging with travel agents through roadshows, webinars, and training to not just sell flights, but to build demand for new destinations."

A transformational year for Aeroprime

With several new partnerships, route launches, and service expansions lined up, 2025 is set to be a major milestone for Aeroprime. The company's commitment to innovation and operational excellence remains at the core of its strategy. "We have some big announcements coming up," says Abhishek. "From new airline partners to expanded operations, 2025 will be a year of growth. Our goal is to keep raising the bar for airline management services."

To sum it up, for travel agents and tour operators, adapting to industry shifts and leveraging new opportunities is the key. Aeroprime is committed to supporting them in navigating these changes with training, market insights, and business development strategies. "Stay ahead of trends, focuses on new routes, and keeps evolving," advises Abhishek. "The aviation industry is changing fast, and those who adapt will thrive in the years ahead."



Abhishek Goyal

TAFI Convention 2025

Beyond just business

Against a backdrop of lush karst mountains, winding rivers, and ancient cultural sites, industry leaders and visionaries converged to discuss the future of sustainable tourism and to explore the untapped potential of this enchanting destination.

- Tripti Jain

Nestled in the heart of Northern Vietnam, Ninh Binh remains an uncharted gem, often overshadowed by the bustling streets of Hanoi or the world-famous Halong Bay. This serene province took center stage as the Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) hosted its highly anticipated annual convention here.

TOURISM FOR TOMORROW

The theme of the TAFI Convention 2025, 'Tourism for Tomorrow: Protecting the Planet,' highlighted a growing global imperative—to

harmonise travel with environmental responsibility. In his keynote address, Ajay Prakash, President, TAFI, articulated this vision, stating, "Our industry thrives on the natural beauty and diversity of the world, but we also have a duty to protect it. Sustainability is no longer just a catchphrase; it is the cornerstone of modern tourism practices." He emphasised the need for collective responsibility, urging travel professionals to educate their clients on responsible tourism practices. This, he noted, would create a ripple effect,

fostering a culture of conscious travel among tourists themselves.

NINH BINH: BEYOND THE BEATEN PATH

Vietnam has long captivated Indian travellers, yet destinations such as Ninh Binh remain relatively undiscovered. Ajay Prakash acknowledged this oversight and highlighted the region's allure: "Ninh Binh is a fascinating and stunning place, ideal for families and young couples. The ecotourism zone at Thung Nham, the boat tours through the caves at

Trang An, and the vibrant waterfront in the old town of Ninh Binh are all delightful experiences."

By selecting Ninh Binh as the convention venue, TAFI aimed to spotlight the region's hidden treasures and promote a tourism model that extends beyond traditional hotspots. This aligns with Vietnam's broader strategy of diversifying tourism and ensuring that economic benefits are distributed across lesser-visited regions, thereby reducing over-tourism in places such as Halong Bay and Hoi An.



EVENT AFFAIR

A CONFLUENCE OF MINDS

The convention drew over 350 delegates, including travel agents, tour operators, and industry stakeholders from India and Vietnam. These participants engaged in insightful discussions, exploring innovative strategies to tackle contemporary challenges in tourism.

One of the key highlights was the Business-to-Business (B2B) interactive session, where over 50 Vietnamese travel companies showcased their offerings to Indian tour operators. This session proved instrumental in fostering collaboration, with stakeholders forging new partnerships aimed at expanding Indian travel itineraries to include Ninh Binh. The dialogue also covered the pressing need for responsible tourism policies that protect local ecosystems while enhancing visitor experiences.

VOICES FROM THE VANGUARD

The convention's impact was amplified by the perspectives of seasoned industry professionals. Anil Kalsi, Vice President, TAFI, praised the immense local support: "The Provincial Government of Ninh Binh has been extremely supportive, and the Department of Tourism has laid out the red carpet for TAFI delegates." His words reflected the seamless coordination between the Vietnamese authorities and Indian tourism representatives.

Abbas Moiz, National General Secretary, TAFI, emphasised the unique value proposition of this year's convention: "TAFI is offering members a three-night convention at an incredible price, with opportunities for pre- and post-convention tours to explore Vietnam's diverse attractions." These extended tour options were meticulously curated to introduce Indian travellers to lesser-explored regions beyond Hanoi and Halong Bay, including the breath-taking landscapes of Sapa, the historical charm of Hue, and the bustling energy of Ho Chi Minh City.

CULTURAL IMMERSION

Recognising that tourism is as much about cultural exchange as it

is about business, the convention included immersive experiences that allowed delegates to engage deeply with local traditions. Participants explored ancient pagodas, attended performances showcasing traditional Vietnamese music and dance, and savoured local delicacies such as banh cuon (steamed rice rolls).

These interactions reinforced the need for cultural preservation amid the rapid globalization of the travel industry. By engaging first-hand with Ninh Binh's rich heritage, delegates gained a deeper appreciation of why sustainable tourism must balance economic growth with cultural integrity.



THE ROAD AHEAD

As the convention concluded, a collective commitment emerged to champion responsible tourism. Ajay Prakash encapsulated this vision: "We hope that after this convention, while the number of Indian tourists continues to grow, Ninh Binh will see a greater number of tourists because it is a perfect destination for Indians. However, this growth must be managed responsibly."

His sentiments were echoed in various discussions on best practices for sustainable tourism, including waste management strategies, conservation of natural sites, and community-driven tourism initiatives. The convention also featured a dedicated session on digital transformation in tourism, emphasising the role of technology in promoting eco-friendly travel solutions, from carbon footprint calculators to AI-driven itinerary optimisation tools that reduce unnecessary travel emissions.

STRENGTHENING INDO-VIETNAMESE TOURISM TIES

Beyond its focus on sustainability, the convention played a crucial role in strengthening ties between India and Vietnam in the realm of tourism. With Vietnam emerging as a favoured destination among Indian travellers—thanks to improved flight connectivity, visa facilitation, and competitive travel packages—this event marked a significant step toward deeper bilateral tourism cooperation.

Delegates from both nations discussed strategies to enhance promotional campaigns, increase direct flights between major Indian cities and Vietnamese destinations, and establish joint ventures in the hospitality and travel sectors. The Vietnamese tourism board also expressed keen interest in organising roadshows and familiarisation trips in India to further build awareness about Ninh Binh and other emerging destinations.

A PARADIGM SHIFT IN TRAVEL

The TAFI Convention 2025 in Ninh Binh was more than just an

industry gathering—it was a catalyst for change. By shifting the focus to a lesser-known destination and foregrounding sustainability, TAFI has set a new benchmark for future conventions. The event not only introduced Ninh Binh to Indian travellers but also reinforced the importance of responsible tourism in an era of climate consciousness.

As delegates return to their respective businesses, the insights and commitments forged in Ninh Binh are poised to inspire a new era of travel—one that celebrates exploration while honouring the planet. With TAFI leading the charge, the Indian travel industry is now better equipped to promote and implement sustainable tourism practices, ensuring that the beauty of destinations like Ninh Binh remains preserved for generations to come.



UNVEIL THE MYSTICAL CHARM OF ORCHHA

The Majestic Chronicles of Royal Legacy in Madhya Pradesh



Tucked away from the hustle and bustle of crowded cities, Orchha invites you to step into a world of timeless charm and tranquility. Exhibiting the culture and legends of the Bundela dynasty, this hidden gem seamlessly blends historical grandeur with serene landscapes. Whether you seek a picturesque wedding destination, a cinematic backdrop, or a peaceful retreat, Orchha has it all.



Weddings in Orchha: A Royal Affair

For the nature enthusiast, there is Kanha Tiger Reserve and Bandhavgarh, Pench, Panna, Satpura and much more. The 2023 campaign "Jo Aaya So Wapas Aaya, Yeh Hai MP Ki Maya" uses the animal imagery moving through different cities of MP and everything is depicted in Gond painting- Tiger banke Pench dekhein, langur banke Panna, Titli banke Bandhavgarh, Jatak Satpura, Mor banke Khajuraho, Maina Mandu etc.

A Cinematic Paradise for Filmmakers

Lights, Camera, Orchha! Orchha's historic charm and mystical vibe have made it a sought-after location for filmmakers. From Bhoor Bhulaiyaa 3 to Hollywood movie 'The Lovers', Orchha's stunning architecture and serene landscapes have been featured in numerous blockbusters. The magnificent palaces, forts, temples, and cenotaphs offer a mix of Rajput and Mughal styles, ideal for period films. The Betwa River and surrounding forests provide romantic and adventurous settings. Madhya Pradesh Tourism also actively promotes the region with incentives and logistical assistance.

Adventure and Nature

For thrill-seekers and nature lovers, Orchha is a paradise. Rafting, boating, and peaceful walks along Kanchana Ghat await you. Explore the countryside on a cycling expedition or delve into the region's wilderness, home to peacocks, deer, and migratory birds. Trek through serene landscapes, enjoy invigorating nature walks, or picnic amidst lush greenery.

Spiritual Destination: For Devotees

Orchha is a spiritual hub for devotees, with its ancient temples and peaceful riverside setting. The Ram Raja Temple is the only temple in India to worship Lord Ram as a king and not just as a deity. Other spiritual attractions include Lakshmi Narayan Temple and Chaturbhuj Temple each echoing stories of devotion and faith.



Orchha Heritage: A Journey through Time

The Orchha Fort Complex is an enchanting escape steeped in architectural heritage featuring, Raja Mahal Known for its beautiful murals depicting mythological themes and Bundeli life. The Jahangir Mahal is a stunning blend of Mughal and Bundela architecture, built to honor Emperor Jahangir's visit in 1605. Sheesh Mahal which was once a royal residence, is now a luxurious heritage hotel. The 14 iconic Cenotaphs on the Betwa River that stand as silent sentinels to history are now home to a colony of critically endangered vultures.

Folklore and Legends:

Orchha's folklore weaves a vivid tapestry of valor, devotion and royal heritage, deeply rooted in the legendary tales of Lord Ram and Raja Madhukar Shah. These stories come alive in the town's vibrant folk performances, offering a glimpse into Bundeli heritage. Also, immerse yourself in the mesmerizing Light and Sound Show at Orchha Fort, where the enchanting blend of storytelling and illumination unveils the grandeur of Orchha's rich history and royal legacy.

Homestays: Experience Bundeli Culture

Opt for a homestay to immerse yourself in Bundeli traditions, cuisine, and hospitality. Popular options include Ramabai Homestay, Sheetla Greens Homestay, Madhav Hill View Home-Stay, and many others. Book early, especially during peak tourist seasons (October to February).

Orchha's UNESCO Aspiration

In a significant milestone for India's cultural heritage, the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board has successfully submitted a dossier nominating Orchha as a historic group of monuments for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List. This recommendation for the year 2027-28 recognizes Orchha's unparalleled legacy of architectural and cultural brilliance.

Rediscover history, luxury, and nature – all in Orchha.

Saffron World

Exploring Europe, redefined!

Travel in Europe is evolving, and Saffron World B.V. is at the forefront of this transformation. Ravi Gosain, Managing Director, and Utkarsh Kumar, Sales Head, APAC, Saffron World B.V. share insights on expanding their reach.

-Tripti Jain



Ravi Gosain



Utkarsh Kumar

A new era of European travel

With over 25 years of expertise in curating exceptional travel experiences, the Rotterdam-based company is redefining how Indian travellers explore the Old Continent. Whether through immersive van tours or tailor-made family itineraries, Saffron World B.V. ensures that every journey is seamless, enriching, and unforgettable. "Our philosophy is simple—travel should be an experience, not just a checklist of destinations. We focus on creating itineraries that allow travellers to truly soak in the culture, history, and flavours of Europe," says Ravi Gosain.

Beyond the ordinary

Gone are the days of rushed sightseeing. Today's travellers crave depth and authenticity. Saffron World B.V. embraces this shift by offering bespoke itineraries that prioritise extended stays in select locations, ensuring a deeper connection with

the destination.

"Indian travellers want more than just a glance at the Eiffel Tower or a hurried visit to the Colosseum. We design experiences that let them live the essence of Europe, be it through a quaint vineyard tour in Tuscany or a scenic drive through the Swiss Alps," explains Utkarsh.

Seamless, safe & smart

Saffron World B.V. has embraced digital innovation to streamline travel logistics. Their robust technology infrastructure allows real-time updates, ensuring hassle-free coordination between travellers, local partners, and support teams.

"From visa updates to last-minute itinerary adjustments, our digital platforms empower travellers with real-time information, ensuring smooth and stress-free journeys," shares Ravi Gosain. Health and safety remain paramount, and the company's partnerships with trusted hoteliers,

transport providers, and local guides ensure a worry-free experience. "We are committed to providing sanitised accommodations, reliable transport, and travel insurance options, so our guests can focus on enjoying their trip rather than worrying about the logistics," adds Utkarsh.

Europe, like never before

Saffron World B.V. is more than just a service provider; it's a bridge connecting travellers with authentic European experiences. With established partnerships across the continent—including in France, Italy, Greece, Switzerland, and the Balkans—the company ensures that each journey is backed by expertise and local know-how.

"Our long-term relationships with local DMCs and hospitality partners mean that we can offer exclusive experiences, from private museum tours to curated culinary adventures," says Ravi Gosain.

"Cultural understanding is key. Our teams across Europe are trained to cater to Indian travellers' unique preferences, including dietary needs and language support, making them feel at home even miles away," highlights Utkarsh.

The future of European travel

As the travel industry continues to evolve, Saffron World B.V. remains dedicated to pushing boundaries and innovating new ways to enhance the travel experience. The company's mission is clear—to offer journeys that are more than just trips, but stories waiting to be lived and shared. "Europe is a treasure trove of experiences. Our goal is to make it as accessible, exciting, and immersive as possible for Indian travellers," concludes Utkarsh.

With a deep-rooted passion for excellence and an eye on the future, Saffron World B.V. are setting new benchmarks in European travel—one unforgettable journey at a time.





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Tourism India Alliance

A new dawn for Indian Tourism

The Tourism India Alliance (TIA) launched its maiden convention in grand style at the Westin Pushkar Resort & Spa, and what a spectacle it was! This inaugural event wasn't just another industry meet-up—it was a game changer.

- *Tripti Jain*

In an era where travel trends shift faster than a jet-setting influencer's itinerary, TIA stepped up to curate a transformative platform. The convention wasn't just about discussions—it was about action, collaboration, and redefining tourism's trajectory. Visionaries, industry pioneers, and thought leaders converged under one roof, shaping a roadmap for the future of Indian and global tourism. The air buzzed with energy, the networking was electric.

A spectacular kickoff

The convention kicked off in true TIA fashion—with a luxurious

check-in experience and a deep dive into cultural immersion. The welcome wasn't just warm; it was an exquisite blend of Rajasthan's timeless hospitality and modern experiential luxury. Delegates were treated to a high tea experience at Nurture Lawn, setting the stage for two power-packed days. A grand inaugural ceremony marked the official beginning, setting the tone for thought-provoking sessions, insightful presentations, and powerful industry connections.

Punjab's power play

One of the opening highlights was Alka Kapoor's captivating

presentation on Punjab's vibrant tourism potential. Her session wasn't just another promotional pitch—it was a masterclass in positioning Punjab as an undisputed rising star in Indian travel circuits. From the golden fields of Amritsar to the spirited streets of Patiala, Kapoor took attendees on a sensory journey through Punjab's rich cultural and experiential landscape. She emphasised how the state is transforming into a sought-after global destination for immersive travel experiences.

Ras Al Khaimah's bold tourism playbook

Adding to the global perspective,

the Middle East's emerging tourism powerhouse, Ras Al Khaimah, took centre stage with a compelling session. With luxury offerings, adrenaline-packed adventure experiences, and cultural heritage at its core, the emirate made a strong case for itself as an elite global travel hub. The presentation wasn't just informative—it was strategic, positioning Ras Al Khaimah as the ultimate destination for Indian travellers seeking premium experiences. The evening wrapped up on a high note with a lavish gala dinner under the starlit sky at the Central Lawns, seamlessly blending luxury with meaningful networking.



Beyond boardrooms

Day two started with an invigorating networking breakfast, allowing industry leaders to connect before diving into the day's sessions. From visa challenges to cutting-edge tech advancements, the line-up of speakers ensured every conversation was forward-thinking and solution-driven. Hemant Mediratta, CEO, One Rep Global, led the 'Show Me the Money' session, a dynamic talk dissecting how strategic partnerships can skyrocket profitability in travel businesses. Gaurav Sekhri and Manuj Ralhan tackled the Weddings & MICE boom, unveiling how destination weddings and corporate travel are reshaping industry dynamics. Gaurav Gupta's 'Tech Smart' session introduced attendees to cutting-edge innovations set to redefine tourism in the coming decade.

The intellectual melting pot

While the sessions were enlightening, what truly set this convention apart was the exchange of ideas and expertise. TIA didn't just host a convention—it curated an intellectual melting pot. Adding a strategic twist to the mix, Paritosh Pathak's 'Beyond Handshakes' session unravelled the art of turning introductions into long-lasting, profitable business relationships. With global partnerships, sustainability, and technological advancements taking centre stage, the convention seamlessly blended business with vision-driven impact.

A grand finale

No event of this scale could conclude without a celebratory flourish. As the final evening unfolded, delegates were treated to a Gala Networking Dinner, featuring an enchanting fusion of Sufi music. The atmosphere was charged with collaborative spirit and excitement for what's to come. The event culminated with a vote of thanks by Jagdeep Bhagat, President, TIA, recognising the transformational efforts that made TIA Convention 2025 a milestone in the tourism industry.



The beginning of a movement

TIA's first-ever convention wasn't just a gathering—it was the beginning of something much bigger. It was a statement. A bold move! A commitment to reshaping Indian tourism for the future! As attendees departed with renewed optimism, fresh strategies, and powerful connections, one thing was certain—TIA has arrived, and it's here to change the game. The convention set the stage for a new era of collaboration, vision, and action, proving that Indian tourism is not just evolving but leading the way forward.

The discussions that unfolded in Pushkar will serve as the foundation for on-going initiatives aimed at transforming the tourism landscape. From state governments to private enterprises, stakeholders left with a renewed sense of purpose, recognising the urgency of adopting sustainable practices, embracing technology, and fostering global collaborations.

TIA's unstoppable momentum

As industry leaders reflected on the past two days, the consensus was clear—this was not the last we would hear from TIA. The momentum gained in Pushkar would fuel further collaborations, initiatives, and policy changes that shape the industry for years to come. The success of this convention has set a high benchmark, and expectations are already mounting for what's next. The Tourism India Alliance has proven that with the right vision, dedication, and strategic partnerships, the future of Indian tourism is brighter than ever.

TIA Convention 2025 in Pushkar was more than just an event; it was the spark of a transformative journey. The alliances forged, the knowledge shared, and the vision set forth has ensured that Indian tourism is on an unstoppable trajectory. As the sun set on the grand lawns of the Westin Pushkar Resort & Spa, it marked not an end, but the dawn of a new era. The future of tourism in India and beyond had been reimagined, and with the Tourism India Alliance at the helm, the best is yet to come.



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Brewing Wishes

A Tea-Lover's journey through Taiwan

I never thought a simple cup of tea could change the way I saw an entire country- I found myself standing in a misty tea field in Taiwan, a basket in hand, my fingers grazing the tender leaves that would soon transform into liquid gold. The journey through Taiwan's tea culture is not just about tasting; it's about experiencing the essence of time, tradition, and tranquility infused into every sip.

-Bharti Sharma



Plucking and Packing Our Wishes

The morning mist wrapped around the rolling hills of Tan Jia Lang Tea Garden like a delicate silk scarf. The sun played hide and seek, casting a golden hue on the emerald-green fields. I was handed a small woven basket and guided into the heart of the tea plantation, where rows upon rows of tea bushes stood like disciplined soldiers. Plucking tea leaves isn't as effortless as it seems. There's an art to it- only the top two leaves and a bud should be picked, ensuring the perfect balance of flavour and aroma. I watched the tea masters' hands move with practiced precision, a fluid dance between nature and nurture. As I followed suit, I felt a sense of reverence, as if I was part of a centuries-old tradition that had been passed down through generations. But the most enchanting moment came afterward. We were given small flasks to store our freshly picked tea leaves. Alongside them, a small strip of paper where we wrote down our wishes- tiny messages sealed with the promise of time, much like tea itself. As I held my flask, I couldn't help but smile at the thought of brewing my own wishes into reality, one steep at a time.

The Science and Soul of Taiwanese Tea

Taiwan is often dubbed the 'Kingdom of Tea,' and rightfully so. The island's diverse climate, high-altitude mountains, and fertile soil create the perfect conditions for growing some of the finest teas in the world. The most famous among them? Oolong tea: a semi-fermented masterpiece that strikes a perfect balance between the freshness of green tea and the depth of black tea. Each variety tells a different story. High-mountain Oolong, with its floral notes and smooth finish, thrives in Taiwan's misty peaks, while Dong Ding Oolong carries a toasty, buttery flavour reminiscent of cozy evenings by a fire. And let's not forget the delicate Bai Hao (Oriental Beauty) Tea, with its honey-like sweetness, a product of an unusual yet fascinating phenomenon-tea leaves nibbled by tiny leafhoppers, triggering a natural oxidation process that enhances its flavour. It's fascinating how each step- from the altitude at which the tea is grown to the oxidation process-contributes to the final sip. But theory could only take me so far. It was time to taste the magic.

A Good Brew Takes Time

The Songboling Tea Culture Center welcomed us with the comforting warmth of steaming cups. Here, we learned that tea-making is more than just boiling water and dunking leaves- it's an intricate dance of time, temperature, and technique. The tea master moved with precision, rinsing the delicate ceramic pot, measuring the perfect amount of leaves, and pouring hot water at just the right temperature. "Tea is patience," he said, as he gently swirled the first brew before discarding it- a ritual known as 'awakening the leaves.' The second infusion, however, was our moment of truth. As I lifted the small porcelain cup to my lips, the aroma hit me first- floral, earthy, with a whisper of honey. The first sip was a revelation. It was delicate yet robust, smooth yet layered with complexity. It was as if I had bottled up the serenity of the tea fields and poured it into my cup. I sat there, sipping slowly, letting the

flavours unfold with each moment, and I understood why tea is considered a meditative practice. In that instant, nothing else mattered, only the warmth of the cup in my hands and the taste of centuries-old craftsmanship on my tongue.

More Than Skin Deep

Just when I thought my tea journey had reached its peak, I found myself experiencing something truly unexpected- a tea-infused face spa at Songboling. If drinking tea was rejuvenating, applying it directly to the skin was nothing short of magic. We were handed bowls of freshly brewed tea and instructed to gently pat the antioxidant-rich liquid onto our faces. The sensation was instantly cooling, the tannins tightening and refreshing my skin in a way no store-bought serum ever could. The subtle fragrance of tea leaves lingered, a gentle reminder that nature always has the best beauty secrets. And just when I thought it couldn't get any better, the finale arrived: a

soak in a tea-infused hot spring bath at the Sun Moon Lake Lili Wyndham Hot Spring Hotel. As I sank into the warm, aromatic water, I felt years of stress dissolve into the steam. It was a reminder that tea isn't just a drink, it's a healer, a ritual, a moment of self-care steeped in centuries of wisdom.

One Cup at a Time

As my journey through Taiwan's tea culture came to an end, I carried with me more than just a box of hand-picked Oolong. I carried a newfound appreciation for the patience and craftsmanship behind every brew. I carried the scent of misty hills and the memory of warm porcelain cups pressed against my lips. Taiwan had taught me that tea isn't just a drink, it's a bridge to mindfulness, a vessel of history, and a companion to moments of stillness. And as I sip my morning tea back home, I am transported once again to those sun-dappled hills, where time slows down, and serenity seeps into every cup.



Thailand Honeymoon Escapes

A romantic success story

Thailand, with its stunning beaches, rich cultural heritage, and renowned hospitality, has always been a top honeymoon destination for Indian couples. Siriges-a-nong Trirattanasongpol, Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) New Delhi Office and K D Singh, President, TravelBullz share insights about the ultimate honeymoon escape.

Over the past three months, the Thailand Honeymoon Escapes campaign, launched by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) New Delhi Office and TravelBullz, successfully showcased the country's diverse romantic offerings.

A love story fulfilled

Designed to provide unforgettable experiences, the campaign captured the essence of Thailand as more than just a destination—it became a journey of love and cherished memories. "Thailand has always been a place where love blossoms, and through this campaign, we ensured that honeymooners from India discovered its magic in the most enchanting way possible," shares Siriges.

The perfect blend of romance and adventure

Each honeymoon is unique, combining romance, thrill, and cultural discovery. Thailand delivered this perfect mix—offering everything from the sun-drenched shores of Phuket and Krabi to the bustling streets of Bangkok and the serene beauty of Chiang Mai. "Our vision at TravelBullz has always been to create exceptional experiences. This campaign allowed us to curate journeys that exceeded expectations, making Thailand an unmatched paradise for couples seeking both relaxation and adventure," says KD.

Unparalleled luxury experiences

During the campaign, honeymooners indulged in world-class luxury resorts and villas featuring



Siriges-a-nong Trirattanasongpol

breath-taking ocean views and private pool retreats. Thailand's renowned spa and wellness centers provided a haven for couples to unwind. "From secluded beachfront escapes to rejuvenating spa experiences, Thailand continues to offer premium luxury at incredible value," notes Siriges.

A culinary love affair

Food is an integral part of Thai culture, and couples embarked on a gastronomic adventure, enjoying everything from vibrant street food to fine dining experiences. Romantic candlelit dinners on the beaches of



K D Singh

Samui and authentic local flavours in Bangkok created lasting memories. "Thai cuisine is an immersive experience that brings people together. Every dish tells a love story, making it a perfect part of any honeymoon," says KD.

Tailored for every couple

With customised honeymoon packages, the campaign ensured that every couple found their perfect romantic escape—be it a dinner cruise on the Chao Phraya River, island-hopping excursions, or exploring the tranquil charm of Hua Hin. "Aligning with India's wedding

season, we tailored experiences that turned honeymoons into lifelong memories," adds Siriges.

Campaign highlights & achievements

- Campaign Period: December 2024 – February 2025
- Agent Incentive: INR 500 Amazon vouchers per booking (Minimum 5 bookings required)
- Featured Destinations: Bangkok, Pattaya, Phuket, Krabi, Samui, Chiang Mai, Hua Hin

"Through exclusive promotions and curated itineraries, TravelBullz positioned Thailand as the most desirable and accessible romantic getaway for Indian couples," concludes KD.

A honeymoon to remember

As the campaign draws to a close, Thailand remains an unmatched haven for honeymooners—where love flourishes, memories are made, and dreams become reality. "Thailand continues to welcome honeymooners with open arms, offering an unparalleled blend of romance, adventure, and bliss. Those who embarked on this journey left with hearts full of love and unforgettable experiences," shares Siriges.

For those who missed the campaign, Thailand remains ready to offer its timeless magic, ensuring every couple finds their perfect romantic escape in the Land of Smiles.

Trulyy India's Next Chapter



Trulyy India is charting a bold course into 2025 with strategic expansion, immersive guest experiences, and a deep commitment to sustainability. Naresh Arora, Founder & CEO,

-Tripti Jain

The brand is set to redefine boutique hospitality with ambitious plans that cater to leisure travellers, business professionals, and eco-conscious guests. "Hospitality is no longer just about a comfortable stay—it's about creating moments that guests cherish forever," says Naresh Arora. "Our mission is to elevate every stay into a meaningful experience through personalization, culture, and innovation."

From the Hills to the Shores

Trulyy India is expanding its footprint by acquiring new properties in sought-after destinations such as Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, and Goa—each offering a unique blend of scenic beauty and cultural richness. The brand is also consolidating its existing properties by increasing room capacities to meet the surging demand for experiential travel. Naresh Arora shares, "Our expansion into these prime locations aligns with

the growing desire for diverse and authentic travel experiences. Guests today seek more than just luxury; they crave connection—with nature, with culture, and with themselves."

Beyond leisure travel, the brand is set to launch a business-class boutique budget hotel chain, blending affordability with elegance to cater to business travellers and digital nomads. "With the rise of work-from-anywhere lifestyles, we see a tremendous opportunity to provide stylish, functional spaces where work and relaxation seamlessly coexist," he adds.

Beyond Check-Ins

Keeping up with evolving traveller expectations, Trulyy India is introducing cutting-edge innovations to enhance guest experiences. From AI-driven personalisation to immersive cultural programs, every stay will be tailored to individual preferences.

Naresh Arora emphasises, "We believe

in crafting experiences that resonate on a personal level. Whether it's a bespoke wellness retreat, an interactive local cooking session, or a tech-enhanced smart room, our goal is to make every guest feel seen and valued."

Additionally, Trulyy India is integrating co-working spaces within its properties, recognising the demand for productive, aesthetically pleasing environments for professionals on the move. He shares, "The modern traveller wants the best of both worlds—comfort and connectivity. We're ensuring that our hotels cater to this growing hybrid work culture."

Green is the New Gold

As part of its 2025 vision, Trulyy India is making sustainability a core pillar of its operations. Initiatives such as solar energy adoption, waste management programs, and eco-friendly amenities reflect the brand's commitment to responsible tourism.

He shares, "Sustainability isn't just a

trend—it's our responsibility. From sourcing local organic ingredients to eliminating single-use plastics, we are taking active steps to reduce our carbon footprint while enhancing the guest experience."

Crafting tomorrow's Hospitality, Today

With its dynamic expansion plans, guest-centric innovations, and steadfast dedication to sustainability, Trulyy India is set to leave an indelible mark on India's hospitality landscape in 2025. Naresh Arora concludes, "As we move forward, our focus remains on delivering exceptional experiences that align with the values and aspirations of modern travellers. Trulyy India isn't just about where you stay—it's about the memories you take with you."

With this visionary approach, Trulyy India is poised to set new benchmarks in hospitality, ensuring that every journey with them is not just a stay but a story worth telling.



FITUR 2025 concludes with global travel industry growth

FITUR 2025, concludes on a high note, bringing together industry leaders, tourism boards, and travel professionals from across the globe. This year's edition saw record-breaking participation, fostering strategic partnerships, business opportunities, and innovative discussions shaping the future of travel and tourism. With a strong focus on sustainability, technology, and market trends, FITUR 2025 reinforced its role as a pivotal platform for networking and driving industry growth.



OTM 2025 setting new benchmarks for the travel industry

OTM 2025, concludes on a high note in Mumbai, bringing together global travel professionals, industry leaders, and key stakeholders for three days of dynamic networking, business collaborations, and insightful discussions. With an impressive turnout of exhibitors and buyers from across the world, the event showcased the latest trends in tourism, technology, and sustainable travel.



Trekking through Tamil Nadu's Ecological Gems

Hike, explore, and awaken your senses as nature's playground beckons you to venture off the beaten path!



Chennai by Prasanna Ravichandra

Tamil Nadu holds within its heart a paradise—a plethora of untamed wilderness. With its sprawling landscapes, wildlife sanctuaries, and diverse ecosystems, this southern State offers an unmatched blend of adventure and conservation. For those who seek the thrill of exploration intertwined with the tranquillity of nature, eco-tourism in Tamil Nadu is an unforgettable journey.

Sanctuaries wrapped around endless stories

Tamil Nadu's wildlife sanctuaries are living museums of biodiversity, with 18 wildlife sanctuaries and 17

bird sanctuaries across the state. From the elephant corridors of Mudumalai to the dense greenery of Anamalai, each reserve tells a unique story. Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary, one of the oldest in India, offers spectacular bird watching opportunities, where you can spot painted storks, pelicans, and ibises in their natural habitat. These forests shelter an incredible array of species—majestic tigers, gorgeous leopards, vibrant hornbills, and rare orchids blooming in hidden corners. Whether you're a seasoned trekker or a curious nature lover, these protected areas offer experiences that go beyond sightseeing—they

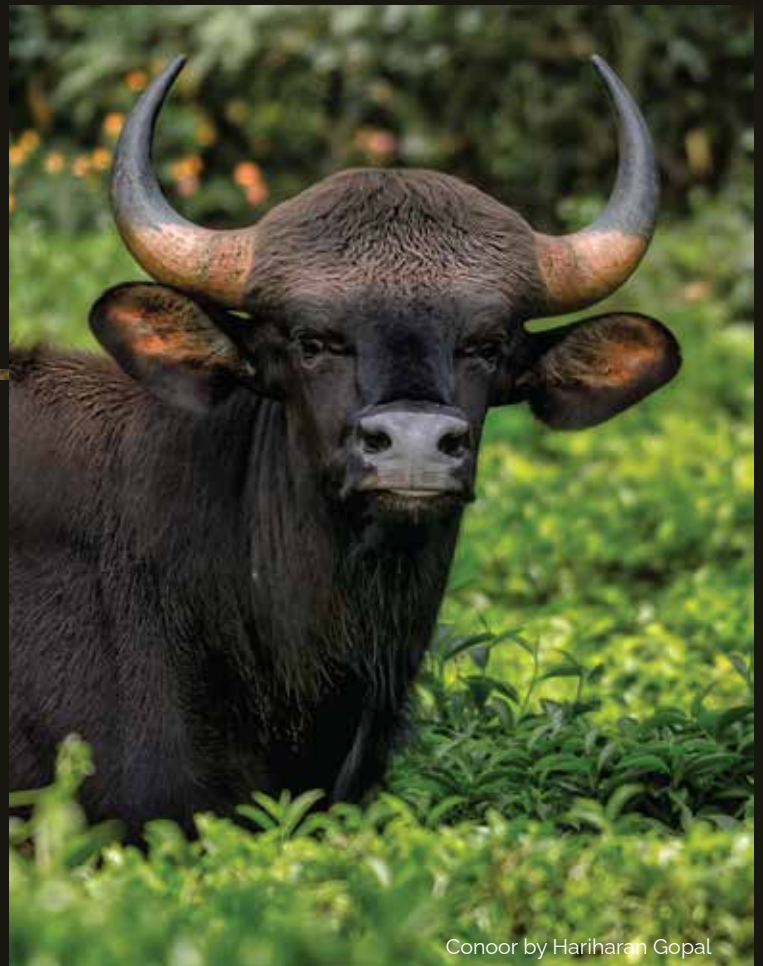
invite you to become a part of the wild.

The Swamimalai Trek in Yelagiri, the 5 km both ways and takes you to the region's highest peak, offering a mesmerising sunrise and a rewarding climb through lush landscapes. Meanwhile, the Cairn Hill Trek in Ooty, which is 3 km long, invites you to wander through misty pine forests, immersing yourself in the tranquil charm of the Nilgiris. Whether you seek the thrill of a rugged ascent or the serenity of a woodland escape, these trekking trails promise breath-taking views and a deep connection with nature.

For booking details: <https://trektamilnadu.com/trail/yelagiri-swamimalai> and <https://trektamilnadu.co/trail/cairn-hill-trekking-tamil-nadu>

Walking with the Forest

For those seeking immersive trekking, Trek Tamil Nadu unlocks the best trails in the State. As the only recognised authority for trekking in Tamil Nadu's forests, every hike is a step towards conservation. From gentle forest walks to rugged mountain trails, these treks foster a deep connection between humans and the land.



Conoor by Hariharan Gopal



Some of the best trekking sites also offer eco-stay options. Kolli Hills Eco Camp in the Eastern Ghats provides guided treks through misty hills and ancient groves, while Kodaikanal Eco-Resort is the perfect base for exploring Dolphin's Nose, Perumal Peak, and Pillar Rocks.

Into the Wild

In the heart of Nilgiris lies the Genepool Ecotourism Initiative, an experience unlike any other. Hop on a jeep safari for a wild encounter, trek through untouched landscapes with seasoned guides, and marvel at rare floral wonders in a vibrant orchidarium. Thrill-seekers can soar through the treetops on a zipline, while local tribal cuisine adds a cultural touch to the adventure.

Located within the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, the Gene Pool Pristine Nature Trail offers an 8 km trek through a thriving tropical forest ecosystem, renowned for its rich biodiversity and endemism. The air is thick with the scent of the wild, and if you're lucky, you might spot a herd of sambar deer, a wild elephant, or even the elusive wild dogs roaming freely in their natural habitat.

But the adventure doesn't stop there. The trail is surrounded by some of the most breathtaking spots, including Frog Hill Viewpoint, which offers panoramic vistas; the legendary Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, home to diverse wildlife; the sacred Santhana Malai Murugan Temple, nestled in the hills; and the mystical Moyar Valley, which takes on an almost dreamlike charm as night falls. Days here are filled with jeep safaris through untouched wilderness, treks guided by experts who bring the forest to life, and visits to a stunning orchidarium bursting with rare blooms. Thrill-seekers can take it up a notch with a zipline ride through the treetops, while food lovers can savour authentic tribal cuisine, adding a cultural touch to the adventure.

Beyond the Usual

If you thought Coimbatore was just an



Aanaimalai Wildlife Sanctuary



Yercaud by Thirumalai Vasan

industrial hub, think again. The region is home to Coimbatore Wilderness, a network of eco-tourism experiences that bring you face-to-face with Tamil Nadu's raw beauty.

Baralikadu (Day Trip) – A one-day eco-tour available on weekends and holidays, featuring a coracle ride, a refreshing dip in the Bhavani River, and a 15-item tribal feast. More Details coimbatorewilderness.com/tour-details/baralikaladu/

Baraliyar to Poochamarathur Trek (20 km Route) – Start at Baraliyar, where adventure begins with an exhilarating trekking trail. This route connects seamlessly to Poochamarathur, which offers an overnight stay amidst lush forests and peaceful surroundings. The best time to visit is post-monsoon (September to February) when the landscape is at its greenest. More Details coimbatorewilderness.com/poochamarathur-booking/

Kovai Kutralam – A land of cascading waterfalls and mist-covered landscapes. Imagine waking up in a treetop lodge, suspended in nature's embrace, with only the chirping of birds and the distant roar of waterfalls as your morning alarm. More Details coimbatorewilderness.com/tour-details/kovaikutram/

A Journey That Gives Back

Tamil Nadu's eco-tourism isn't just about adventure—it's about responsibility. Every trek, every stay, and every meal shared with local communities contributes to conservation and sustainable livelihoods. By choosing these experiences, you are not just exploring the wild; you are playing a role in its preservation. So pack your bags, leave behind the familiar, and step into the extraordinary landscapes of Tamil Nadu. Adventure awaits in every rustling leaf, every distant roar, and every whisper of the wind.



Yelagiri by Thirumalai vasan



Pollachi by Travel Pictures



Netarhat

The Queen of Chotanagpur Plateau

Jharkhand, a land known for its dense forests, majestic waterfalls, and rich tribal heritage, holds a well-kept secret—Netarhat.

Being one amongst the highest points of the Chotanagpur Plateau, this quaint hill station is a paradise for nature lovers and adventure seekers. With its breathtaking landscapes, mesmerising sunrise and sunset points, and deep-rooted history, Netarhat has rightfully earned the title of the 'Queen of Chotanagpur.'

A journey through the clouds

Reaching Netarhat is an experience in itself. Located about 156 kilometers from Ranchi, the state capital, the journey to this pristine

retreat is filled with winding roads, dense forests, and picturesque valleys. Whether you choose to drive or take public transport, the road leading to Netarhat offers an ever-changing view of the natural splendour. The closer you get, the more refreshing the air becomes, inviting you to leave behind the chaos of city life and embrace tranquillity.

Netarhat is best visited between October and March when the weather is cool and pleasant. During summer, the temperature rarely rises beyond 28°C, making it an excellent

alternative to crowded hill stations. Winter, on the other hand, paints the town in mist and fog, adding a mystical aura to its beauty.

The enchanting landscape of Netarhat

Netarhat is a painter's dream, with its rolling hills, thick forests, and vast meadows. The town sits at an altitude of about 1,071 meters above the sea level, making it the coolest place in Jharkhand. Summers here are pleasant, while winters bring misty mornings and a dreamy chill. The dense forests of Sal, Mahua, and

Bamboo add a green canopy to the region, making it a perfect escape for those who seek solace in nature's lap.

One of the most captivating sights in Netarhat is the sunrise at Magnolia Point. Perched atop a hill, this spot offers a breathtaking view of the sun slowly emerging from behind the valleys, painting the sky in hues of orange and pink. Equally enchanting is the sunset at Koel View Point, where the mighty Koel River meanders through the hills, reflecting the golden glow of the setting sun.





ADVERT

The mysterious echoes of Magnolia Point

Beyond its natural beauty, Netarhat carries with it an air of mystery. The famous Magnolia Point, apart from offering a spectacular sunset, is steeped in legend. It is said that a British girl named Magnolia, who fell in love with a tribal boy, met a tragic end here. Unable to unite due to societal barriers, she is believed to have leapt to her death from the cliff. Locals claim that on quiet evenings, the whispers of their love story still echo through the valley.

A scenic stay at Patratu

For those travelling to or from Netarhat, Patratu, located 47 kms from Ranchi, offers a stunning retreat with breath-taking landscapes and luxurious stays. Located near Ranchi, Patratu is famous for its picturesque Patratu Valley and dam, surrounded by rolling hills and lush greenery. Visitors can opt for comfortable resorts and guest houses with scenic views, offering a relaxing experience amidst nature. Boating in Patratu Dam during sunrise or sunset is a magical experience, while a drive through the winding Patratu Valley roads feels like a journey through paradise.

JTDC's Patratu Lake Resort and Paryatan Vihar, set against the pristine backdrop of Patratu Dam, captivate visitors with their stunning architecture and breathtaking surroundings. Enveloped in lush greenery and serene waters, this picturesque retreat is a haven for nature lovers. Whether enjoying a tranquil boat ride or admiring the scenic vistas, it offers a perfect escape into nature's embrace.

Whispering waterfalls and hidden treasures

Netarhat is home to several cascading waterfalls that add to its charm. The Upper Ghaghri and Lower Ghaghri waterfalls are among the most picturesque, hidden within dense forests. These falls, with their crystal-clear waters tumbling over rocks, provide the perfect setting for a tranquil retreat. Lodh Falls, the highest waterfall in Jharkhand, is another marvel that must not be missed, as it roars down the hills from a height of about 143 meters.

For those interested in tribal culture, Netarhat offers a glimpse into the lives of the indigenous people of Jharkhand. The local markets and villages provide an opportunity to interact with the tribes, understand their traditions, and witness their craftsmanship firsthand. Handcrafted items, traditional jewellery, and locally woven textiles make for excellent souvenirs.

An escape for the soul

Netarhat is not just a destination; it is an experience—one that soothes the soul and rejuvenates the spirit. Whether it's the thrill of trekking through unexplored trails, the joy of capturing stunning landscapes, or simply the peace that comes with being surrounded by nature, Netarhat has something for every traveller. With its scenic beauty, untouched landscapes, and a blend of adventure and history, Netarhat is a hidden treasure waiting to be explored. It is ideal for honeymooners, solo travellers, and even families looking for a peaceful retreat. Whether you stay for a weekend or a week, Netarhat promises a refreshing break from the monotony of urban life.

A call to explore the unexplored

Netarhat remains one of India's lesser-known hill stations, yet it holds the potential to be a traveller's paradise. Whether you visit for the breathtaking sunrises, the fascinating folklore, or the serene forests, this hidden gem of Jharkhand promises memories that will last a lifetime. So, pack your bags, set your soul free, and let Netarhat weave its magic on you.



The Spiritual Triangle

Uttar Pradesh

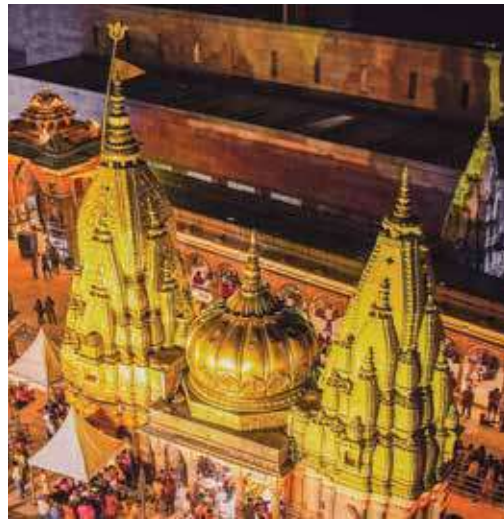
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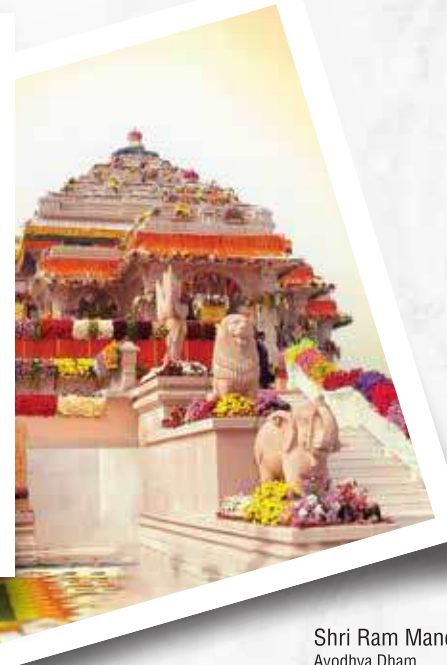
AYODHYA



Shri Shankar Viman Mandapam
Prayagraj



Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple
Varanasi



Shri Ram Mandir
Ayodhya Dham

A Journey Through Prayagraj, Varanasi, and Ayodhya

Uttar Pradesh stands as a lighthouse of spiritual richness and cultural grandeur, in the heart of northern India. Among its myriad of sacred sites, three cities form an unparalleled spiritual triangle: Prayagraj, Varanasi, and Ayodhya. These cities are not just geographical locations; they are a witness to India's ancient traditions, faith, and timeless heritage. Together, they weave a narrative that travelled beyond centuries, drawing millions of pilgrims, tourists, and spiritual seekers from across the globe. This sacred triangle showcases the pious spiritual aura of Uttar Pradesh, reflecting its deep-rooted cultural ethos and serving as a vibrant witness to the state's historical significance.

In recent years, these destinations have surged to the forefront of global tourism, captivating the hearts of international and domestic travelers alike. They offer more than just religious sanctity—each city narrates stories etched in time, reverberating with chants, rituals, and celebrations that have been preserved through generations. From the bustling ghats of Varanasi, where the Ganga mirrors the lights of evening aartis, to the sacred confluence in Prayagraj that hosts the world's largest religious gathering, and the serene grandeur of Ayodhya, the birthplace of Lord Rama, this triangle is a spiritual journey that encapsulates the very soul of India.

Prayagraj: The Confluence of Faith

Prayagraj is renowned for the Triveni Sangam, the sacred confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers. This site is the focal point of the Maha Kumbh Mela, held every twelve years, and is considered the largest religious gathering on earth. The 2025 Maha Kumbh Mela, spanning from January 13 to February 26, happens to be a rare cosmic event, on the verge of which the Maha Kumbh Mela is falling after 144 years; on the completion of 12 Kumbhs. This Mahakumbh is expected to draw more than 40 crore participants, establishing Prayagraj's spiritual significance and the inclination of people towards the Sanatan religion and its principles from all over the world. The city is also home to revered sites like the Bade Hanuman Mandir, Anand Bhavan, and the historic Allahabad Fort. Prayagraj serves as a spiritual confluence where religious traditions, scholarly pursuits, and ancient rituals continue to thrive in a timeless manner.

Varanasi: The Eternal City

Varanasi, also known as Kashi, is one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities. The city is said to be resting on the trident of Lord Shiva and it is believed that it will exist till the end of time, unaffected. Situated along the banks of River Ganga, it is a major center for Hindu devotion, attracting pilgrims who seek spiritual solace and purification, known for the Kashi Vishwanath temple dedicated to Lord Shiva. This city of 'ghats' has eighty six ghats in total, including famous ghats like Dashashwamedh ghat, Manikarnika ghat, Namo ghat and Assi ghat. These ghats are incessantly bustling with activities, ranging from spiritual rituals and religious ceremonies. At dawn, the ghats come alive with devotees performing Surya Namaskar, offering prayers, and taking holy dips in the sacred waters of the Ganga and at dusk the mesmerizing Ganga Aarti captivates every heart. The city's narrow lanes, bustling markets, and ancient temples resonate with timeless traditions, while the aroma of incense, the sound of temple bells, and the sight of saffron-clad sadhus create an aura of divine

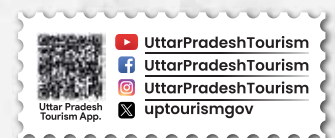
mysticism. Varanasi is not just a city; it is an experience that intertwines spirituality, history, and culture, leaving an indelible mark on every soul that visits.

Ayodhya: The Birthplace of Lord Rama

Ayodhya, revered as the birthplace of Lord Rama, holds immense spiritual and historical significance in Hinduism, the city is considered first among the seven Saptpuri's spread across India. This ancient city, situated on the banks of the Saryu River, is a focal point of devotion, especially with the newly built Shree Ram Janmbhoomi temple, attracting pilgrims from across the world. As per the official data available with the department of Tourism, Ayodhya saw over 16.44 crore visitors in 2024. The magnificence of the Shree Ram Janmbhoomi temple has become a major attraction for the pilgrims and as well the travellers from across the world. Ayodhya is mentioned in the Ramayana as the grand capital of the Ikshvaku dynasty. The city's serene ghats, temples, and the vibrant celebrations of festivals like Deepotsav make it a divine destination that symbolizes faith, devotion, and cultural heritage.

Tourism Statistics and Global Interest

In 2024, Uttar Pradesh recorded a total tourist footfall of 64.90 crore (649 million), marking an increase of over 17 crore (170 million) from the previous year. This surge is attributed to the state's rich cultural and spiritual sites, with Prayagraj, Varanasi, and Ayodhya at the forefront. These cities not only showcase the spiritual aura and heritage of Uttar Pradesh but also captivate tourists from around the globe, fostering a growing international interest in India's spiritual and cultural offerings. Collectively, the spiritual triangle of Prayagraj, Varanasi, and Ayodhya encapsulates the essence of Uttar Pradesh's cultural and spiritual heritage, offering visitors an immersive experience that resonates with the timeless traditions of India.



Sangam, Prayagraj



Dev Deepawali, Varanasi



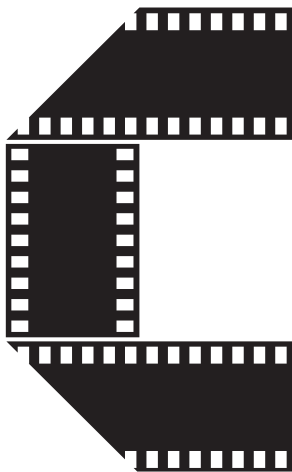
Deepotsav, Ayodhya Dham





LIGHTS, CAMERA, **CHHATTISGARH!** A CINEMATIC WONDERLAND

Rolling the red carpet: Chhattisgarh's grand entry into Film Tourism is here. In the heart of India, where ancient traditions meet untouched wilderness, a new cinematic revolution is unfolding.



Chhattisgarh, long celebrated for its rich tribal heritage and breath-taking landscapes, is now stepping into the limelight as a filmmaker's paradise. Imagine lush green forests stretching endlessly, cascading waterfalls shimmering under golden sunlight, and temples whispering tales of a bygone era—this is Chhattisgarh, a land teeming with visual poetry, waiting to be transformed into cinematic masterpieces. With the government's unwavering support, robust infrastructure, and an upcoming film city, the state is no longer just a hidden gem; it is now a dazzling beacon for storytellers across the world. As filmmakers and cinephiles turn their gaze toward this emerging destination, Chhattisgarh's star is undoubtedly on the rise.

A Dream in the Making

Understanding the potential of film tourism as a powerful economic and cultural driver, the Chhattisgarh government has taken a monumental step by launching a state-of-the-art Film City and Convention Centre. This ambitious project is more than just a filming hub—it is a comprehensive ecosystem designed to support the art of storytelling. Equipped with cutting-edge sound stages, post-production facilities, and world-class amenities, it aims to eliminate logistical hurdles for filmmakers. This initiative is set to revolutionise the industry, attracting not just local and national filmmakers, but also international productions eager to explore fresh cinematic landscapes.

Scripted for success

Chhattisgarh's film industry is not just about breath-taking locations; it is also about an inclusive and growth-oriented ecosystem. The Chhattisgarh Film Policy 2021 is a game-changer, offering filmmakers financial support, ease of permissions, and enticing tax benefits. The state provides a substantial production subsidy, covering up to 25 per cent of total film costs, depending on the budget. To encourage local employment, additional incentives are granted for hiring Chhattisgarh-based actors and technicians. Films that promote regional languages and cultural narratives receive even greater backing, ensuring that the unique voice of Chhattisgarh reaches audiences far and wide. Simplified approvals through a single-window clearance system further enhance the experience for filmmakers, allowing them to focus on their creative pursuits without bureaucratic delays.

Frames of glory

Over the years, filmmakers have begun to recognise Chhattisgarh's cinematic potential, and the results are nothing short of spectacular. Acclaimed films such as Newton (2017), which captured the political and environmental essence of Bastar's forests, have placed the state firmly in the industry's consciousness. Movies and Web Se-

ries such as Chaman Bahar, Bhulan, Humari Adhuri Kahani, Jehanabad, Aar Ya Paar found their perfect backdrops in Chhattisgarh's dramatic landscapes. The state has also played host to several independent and regional films, further proving its versatility as a shooting location. These films have not only utilised the visual splendour of Chhattisgarh but have also contributed to its rising prominence in the film industry.

Beyond the silver screen

Film tourism is more than just an industry—it is an experience that brings stories to life. Chhattisgarh is embracing this concept by developing dedicated film tourism circuits, allowing visitors to step into the scenes of their favourite



movies. From the mesmerising Chitrakote Waterfalls, often referred to as India's Niagara Falls, to the historic Sirpur archaeological site, these locations offer a cinematic journey for film enthusiasts. Travellers can explore guided tours that provide behind-the-scenes insights into the movies shot in the region. Through interactive exhibits, digital storytelling, and themed attractions, Chhattisgarh aims to transform into a must-visit destination for film lovers and adventure seekers.

The final cut

Chhattisgarh is on the cusp of becoming a powerhouse in India's film industry. With government-backed initiatives, an inviting film policy, and a stunningly diverse landscape, the state is ready to take centre stage. As more filmmakers turn their cameras toward this cinematic wonderland, Chhattisgarh is set to reap both economic and cultural rewards. The reel and real are blending seamlessly, painting a promising picture for the future of film tourism in this extraordinary land.

Dusit International organises roadshow in India

Dusit International, organises the India Roadshow 2025 as part of its India plan as a source market for its hotels and resorts. It was designed to present Dusit's ever-growing global portfolio of distinctive properties to the Indian travel trade fraternity.



Korea Tourism Organization sees 44 per cent surge in Indian



Korea Tourism Organization (KTO), in collaboration with the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), successfully hosted the Korea Tourism Roadshow in Delhi on 6th February 2025, strengthening its engagement with key travel trade partners and industry leaders. The event comes at a time when Indian tourism to South Korea has witnessed remarkable growth, with 176,668 Indian visitors recorded in 2024—a 44 per cent increase from 2023.



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Exclusive networking lunch showcases the enchanting Makunudu Island

Travel professionals and industry insiders gathered for an exclusive networking lunch hosted by IRIS Reps to showcase the breath-taking Makunudu Island in the Maldives. The event provided a platform for engaging discussions about the island's unique offerings, from its pristine beaches to luxurious overwater villas, positioning it as a must-visit tropical escape.



Ebix Travel Group & Vikas Group celebrate 50 glorious years

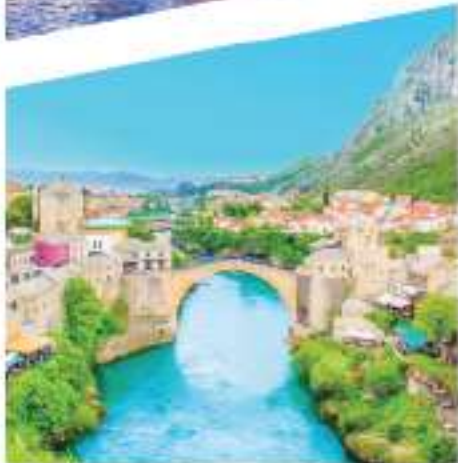
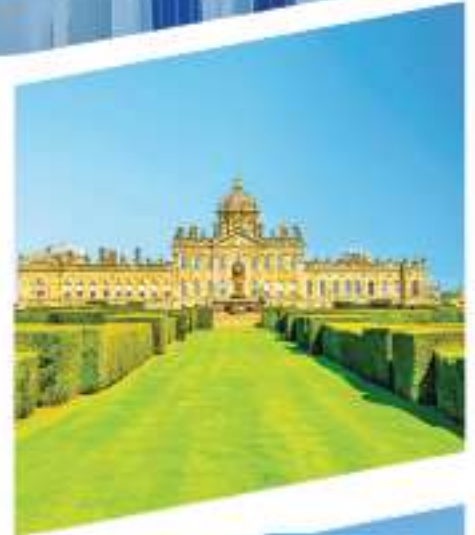


Ebix Travel Group, led by Mr Naveen Kundu, Managing Director, in collaboration with Vikas Group, hosted a grand celebration at Taj Palace, New Delhi, marking 50 glorious years of success and excellence. The evening was an unforgettable blend of entertainment and nostalgia, featuring a high-energy comedy act by Krushna & Sudesh, followed by mesmerizing live performances from Amit Kumar, son of the legendary Kishore Kumar, and Sudesh Bhosle.



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TAAI marks 75 years of existence in travel industry and unveil their new logo

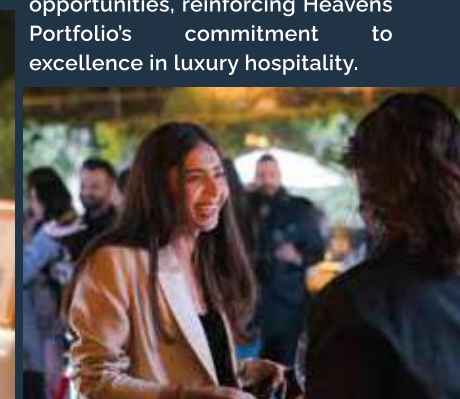
Founded in 1951, just four years after India's independence, the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) has been a driving force in the country's travel and tourism sector. As it nears its 75th anniversary, TAAI's managing committee is curating strategic engagements to honour its legacy and shape its future.



Heavens Portfolio concludes Roadshow with exclusive networking soirée



Heavens Portfolio brought an evening of elegance and unparalleled networking to the capital, wrapping up its prestigious roadshow with a grand celebration. The event seamlessly blended luxury and business, offering an exclusive platform where high-end clients engaged with Delhi's leading trade partners. Set against a backdrop of sophistication, the soiree fostered meaningful connections and new opportunities, reinforcing Heavens Portfolio's commitment to excellence in luxury hospitality.





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- Bagh Serai, Ranthambore
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The Maldives Mahautsav organised by Pickyourtrail was a resounding success

From exploring dreamy deals to diving into exclusive offers, this event brought the magic of Maldives to life. Travel Turtle loved covering the excitement, fun activities, and all the reasons why the Maldives is the ultimate travel paradise. From tropical vibes to unforgettable moments, the Mahautsav truly had it all! Until next time, keep dreaming, keep exploring, and let your journey begin with waves of adventure.



SO/ Maldives unveils star-studded dinner for elite Accor Partners & top travel designers in Mumbai

SO/ Maldives hosted an exclusive dinner at Hakkasan Mumbai, bringing together Accor Preferred Partners and top travel designers for an unforgettable evening of fine dining, networking, and an insightful presentation by the SO/ Maldives Sales Team.



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EVENT AFFAIR

Magical Maldives was a spectacular evening of connection and inspiration

Maldives Marketing & Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC) successfully hosts the Magical Maldives – A Sunny Story event, bringing together industry professionals and travel enthusiasts for an evening of meaningful conversations and insights into the breath-taking beauty of the Maldives. The event showcased the country's vibrant tourism offerings, highlighting the essence of the Sunny Side of Life.



**Mist-kissed hills and jungle deep,
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APPOINTMENTS



Norwegian Cruise Line

Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL), announces the promotion of Damian Borg to Senior Director of Sales Strategy & Operations for Asia Pacific following strong growth from the region and positioning for continued success in Asia, both as a significant source market and popular destination for its global clientele. As of 01 January 2025, Damian's expanded role will continue to support Ben Angell, Vice President and Managing Director NCL APAC across Asia, to focus on the fly/cruise market for NCL to key destinations including Europe, Alaska and Hawaii while also providing strategic guidance to the four country managers in the region, which he will be leading.

Angsana Velavaru Spa & Resort, Maldives

Angsana Velavaru Spa & Resort in the Maldives announces the appointment of Mrinal Shanker as their new GSA India – Director of Sales. With extensive experience in travel, hospitality, and business development, Mrinal brings a wealth of industry knowledge and a strong commitment to building lasting, emotionally driven relationships with partners.



Chalet Hotels

In his new role, Gaurav will be focusing on asset management, driving operational excellence, ensuring efficiency to strengthen the business and design scalable processes for Chalet Hotels. With a robust portfolio and an ambitious pipeline of additional rooms, Chalet is poised for significant growth, and Gaurav's leadership backed with 26 years of experience in hospitality will play a crucial role in steering this exciting journey.

The St. Regis Maldives Vommuli Resort

The St. Regis Maldives Vommuli Resort announces the appointment of Shumaes Rasheed as the new Director of Marketing Communications. With a wealth of experience in luxury hospitality and a deep understanding of the Maldivian tourism landscape, Shumaes is set to lead the resort's marketing initiatives, strengthening its global presence and enhancing guest experiences. His expertise in strategic brand positioning and digital marketing will play a key role in elevating The St. Regis Maldives Vommuli Resort as a premier luxury destination.



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The Lido

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Bar 360

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Silk Road

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The Palace

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From Istanbul to Barcelona:
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Norwegian Pearl®
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