


**fly24hrs**  
One Step Ahead...

**Superfast B2B Travel Portal**



**Register Now**

**GET BEST DEALS ON FLIGHTS**

- ✈ One of the fastest growing travel company
- ✈ India's leading B2B travel portal

☎ 011-69122424 ✉ sales@fly24hrs.com


[www.fly24hrs.com](http://www.fly24hrs.com)

# TTJ

# Travel Trade Journal

Vol. 14 | Issue 8 | June 2024 | Pages 60 | ₹150

**fly24hrs**  
One Step Ahead...



**OUR SERVICES**

- FLIGHTS
- HOTELS
- BUSES
- HOLIDAYS
- TRAVEL INSURANCE

**GROW YOUR BUSINESS WITH THE FASTEST GROWING COMPANY**

- AGENTS
- DISTRIBUTOR
- EXCLUSIVE OUTLETS
- API
- SUPPLIER

**CONNECT WITH US**

☎ 011-69122424 ✉ sales@fly24hrs.com



[www.fly24hrs.com](http://www.fly24hrs.com)

*Riya*  
the travel expert!

## Gem of the Gulf

Visit *Saudi*  
Welcome to Arabia



📍 Maraya, AlUla

**CUSTOMISED HOLIDAYS**

<p><b>2N/3D</b></p> <p>Abha Escape</p> <p>Starting from ₹ 30,990*</p> <p>(2N - Abha)</p>	<p><b>2N/3D</b></p> <p>Experience AlUla</p> <p>Starting from ₹ 50,990*</p> <p>(2N - Jeddah)</p>	<p><b>3N/4D</b></p> <p>Jeddah With Excursion To Taif</p> <p>Starting from ₹ 61,990*</p> <p>(3N - Jeddah)</p>
--	---	--

**FIXED DEPARTURES**

<p><b>3N/4D</b></p> <p>Riyadh</p> <p>Starting from ₹ 34,990*</p> <p>(3N - Riyadh)</p>	<p><b>6N/7D</b></p> <p>Highlights of Saudi Arabia</p> <p>Starting from ₹ 1,28,990*</p> <p>(2N - Riyadh - 2N AlUla - 2N - Jeddah)</p>
---	--

**INCLUSIONS:**

- 🛏 Accommodation
- 🍴 Meals
- 🚗 Sightseeing & transfers
- 🚗 Return airport transfers

For bookings, get in touch: \*T&C apply

✉ [rh.enquiry@riya.travel](mailto:rh.enquiry@riya.travel) ☎ 022 6659 4960 📞 +91 98338 33898



ELITE HAVENS



STAY FOR 7, | STAY FOR 4,  
PAY FOR 5 | PAY FOR 3

Book Indonesia and Thailand's best villas  
before June 30 and save up to 28%!

Partner with Asia's leading luxury villa brand, with 25 years  
of delivering extraordinary experiences across Bali, Phuket,  
Lombok, Koh Samui, Niseko, Goa and Maldives.

Find out more at [elitehavens.com](https://elitehavens.com). E-mail us at [bookingpartner@elitehavens.com](mailto:bookingpartner@elitehavens.com)

**Team Sampan**

Editor & Publisher	:	Ravi Sharma
Consulting Editor	:	Gurjit Singh
Sr. Assistant Editor	:	Prashant Nayak
Assistant Editor	:	Prativa Vaidya Bhalla
Associate Editor	:	Sriparna Pal Bhattacharya
Sr. Correspondent	:	Vartik Sethi
Bureau Head (East)	:	Partha Chatterjee
Correspondent (East)	:	Swaati Chaudhary
Director-Marketing	:	Sonika Bohra
GM-Strategic Partnerships	:	Debabrata Ray
Sr. Manager-PR & Marketing	:	Nehali Jain
Manager PR	:	Ankit Dixit
Coordinator-Special Projects	:	Parth Sharma
Marketing Executive	:	Sahil Nadeem
Art Director	:	Laxman Dass
Designer	:	Jatin Kumar
Web Developer	:	Abhishek Kapoor
Manager Administration	:	Kuldeep Singh
Accountant	:	Amar Gupta

Email: info@sampanmedia.com

Editorial and Marketing Office :  
Sampan Media Pvt. Ltd. B-20, First Floor, Nangal Dewat, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi, 110070  
Ph: 9560264443, ravisharma@sampanmedia.com

All information in Travel Trade Journal (TTJ) is derived from sources we consider reliable. It is passed on to our readers without any responsibility on our part. Opinions / views expressed by third parties in abstract or in interviews are not necessarily shared by us. Material appearing in the magazine cannot be reproduced in whole or in part(s) without prior permission. The publisher assumes no responsibility for material lost or damaged in transit. The publisher reserves the right to refuse, withdraw or otherwise deal with all advertisements without explanation. All advertisements must comply with the Indian Advertisements Code. The publisher will not be liable for any loss caused by any delay in publication, error or failure of advertisement to appear.

Owned and published by: Ravi Sharma, Editor & Publisher, A-100, Upper Ground Floor, Nangal Dewat, New Delhi - 110070 and printed on his behalf at Modest Print Pack Pvt. Ltd., Okhla Industrial Area, New Delhi - 110020.



Dear Friends,

In this edition, we delve deep into the heart of the hospitality industry, bringing you exclusive insights from key stakeholders on the latest developments at their hotels and their visionary outlook for the future. To broaden your horizons, we also feature a selection of international hotels, offering a window into global hospitality and captivating destinations.

As the hospitality landscape continues to evolve, our special focus on 'premiumisation' provides a fresh perspective on this burgeoning trend, highlighting its impact and significance within the industry.

Beyond hospitality, this issue features a variety of general-interest readings and other engaging content. We hope you enjoy exploring the pages of our June issue, which is primarily aimed at deepening your understanding of the ever-evolving hospitality landscape.

While you make the most of the holiday season,  
Happy Reading!

**Ravi Sharma**

ravisharma@sampanmedia.com

Editor's Desk



**MANDREM BEACH**  
RESORT

MEMBER OF  
**RADISSON**  
**Individuals.**  
RETREATS



## Sunset to Sunrise

### Bespoke Weddings

Imagine exchanging vows with the backdrop of a breath-taking sunset over the Arabian Sea, the golden hues reflecting off the tranquil waters, creating a magical atmosphere for your special day.

## Yas Island, Abu Dhabi to host IIFA UTSAVAM 2024 in September



Experience an unmatched celebration on September 6 and 7, 2024, at Etihad Arena, Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, as IIFA Utsavam 2024 unveils a spectacular array of hosts and performances, spotlighting the excellence of South Indian cinema.

Under the honourable patronage of His Excellency Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, IIFA Utsavam 2024 guarantees an exceptional two-day affair filled with fervour, talent, and cultural abundance. The highly-anticipated IIFA Utsavam 2024 is being held in partnership with The Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi, and Miral, the leading creator of immersive destinations and experiences in Abu Dhabi.

The first day will highlight Tamil and Malayalam cinema, with performances by Regina Cassandra, Prabhu Deva, and Jiiva. The second day will focus on Telugu and Kannada cinema, hosted by Rana Daggubati, Akul Balaji, and Vijay Raghavendra, with performances by DSP, Rakulpreet Singh, Sreeleela, and Raashii Khanna.

Honouring the accomplishments of South Indian cinema and highlighting the Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Kannada film sectors, the global tour of IIFA Utsavam serves as a unifying platform, uniting these four esteemed industries.

Featuring stellar performances by illustrious figures from the South Indian cinematic realm, accolade bestowals, and cultural exhibitions, this affair promises to be replete with opulence and fervour.

Grab your IIFA Utsavam 2024 tickets now! [etihadarena.ae/en/event-booking/iifa-utsavam](https://etihadarena.ae/en/event-booking/iifa-utsavam)  
**Travel Agents can contact [sonika@sampanmedia.com](mailto:sonika@sampanmedia.com) for offers and details.**

## Saudi Tourism Authority launches its summer program 'Saudi Summer is Next Door'

At an event held under the patronage of the Minister of Tourism and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Saudi Tourism Authority (STA), Ahmed Al-Khateeb, the Saudi Tourism Authority (STA) launched the 2024 summer program "Saudi Summer is Next Door." Running until the end of September, the program spans seven destinations: Aseer, Al Baha, Taif, the Red Sea, Jeddah, Riyadh, and AlUla. This year, the program will also see the return of the Jeddah Season and the launch of the Aseer Season, featuring numerous family activities and events.

The program includes more than 550 tourism products and 150 special offers designed in collaboration with STA's partners, which include attractive offers from hotels, airlines offering free tickets for children in partnership with major travel, tourism, and aviation companies, and exceptional products in the Aseer Season and Jeddah Season like tax-free shopping offers and many new and exciting experiences such as private beaches for tourists and ladies' beaches.



Saudi Arabia has a lineup of major events as part of the summer program, notably the Esports World Cup in Riyadh, being held for the first time, an annual eight-week competition featuring the world's most elite esports athletes, and multiple boxing tournaments in Riyadh and Jeddah.

STA CEO Fahd Hamidaddin highlighted the unique climate and diversity of Saudi destinations. He noted, "While temperatures in the region rise during summer, temperatures in the highlands of Saudi Arabia decrease significantly." The campaign slogan "Saudi Summer is Next Door" invites tourists to explore the magic of Saudi destinations, emphasising their uniqueness and affordability.

The campaign slogan "Saudi Summer is Next Door" embodies an open invitation to explore the magic of Saudi destinations and their diversity. This diversity is expressed with simple words that reflect the uniqueness of each destination, such as "Closer," "Cooler," "More Beautiful," and "More Affordable."

# Swiss Skyline

Eiger . Mönch . Jungfrau

**Schilthorn**  
Piz Gloria



**50% discount**  
with Swiss Travel Pass  
on the regular tariffs

Schilthorn Cableway Ltd.  
Represented by Kunal Kothari



[www.schilthorn.ch](http://www.schilthorn.ch)

**Skyline Thrill**  
Birg 2677 m . 8783 ft

## Indiva Marketing to represent Happy Valley Adventure Bureau, PA, USA

The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau (HVAB), the official destination marketing organisation for Centre County, Pennsylvania, USA, has appointed Indiva Marketing to drive leisure visitation, awareness and visibility in India.

Indiva Marketing will be responsible for sales and marketing activities, communications, and media relations, to position and develop business and media exposure for what is known as Happy Valley, Pennsylvania. This region, located in the middle of Pennsylvania, is home

to Penn State University's main campus. The population center of the county – the Centre Region – includes State College Borough and the townships of College, Harris, Patton, and Ferguson. Additional communities include historic Bellefonte and Boalsburg, and the charming towns of Millheim, Aaronsburg, Centre Hall and Philipsburg. Happy Valley's central location provides convenient access to major cities like New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C.



## Norwegian Cruise Line expands its presence across Asia Pacific with 24 new itineraries



Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) has launched 24 new port-intensive cruises across Asia, totalling 85 voyages from September 2024 through March 2026 on ships Norwegian Spirit, Sun, and Sky. NCL will deploy the most ships in Asia for an extended season, departing from 15 ports, including Auckland, Bali, Bangkok, Manila, Papeete, Seoul, Singapore, Taipei, Tokyo, Yokohama, Vancouver, Sydney, Melbourne, Cairns, and Lautoka.

This marks NCL's first Northern Hemisphere summer cruises in Asia, offering more choices to explore the region's diverse scenery, culture, and cuisine. According to the Mastercard Economics Institute, more Indians are travelling internationally, with NCL delivering immersive port-rich itineraries to top Asia-Pacific destinations like Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, and Indonesia.

These nine-to-19-day voyages offer an average of 10 hours in port to over 60 locations, including first-time calls to Albany, Busselton, Fremantle, Port Douglas, Townsville, Matsuyama, Niigata, Aitutaki, and Suva. The season will feature 36 overnight port stays, highlighting places like Osaka, Himeji, Tokushima, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Bali, and Lembar.

Norwegian Spirit made its debut in Asia on May 26, 2024, with a 10-day Japan cruise. Norwegian Sun will make her Australian debut in December 2024, sailing 12-to-15-day voyages between Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific. Norwegian Sky will debut in Asia in January 2025, offering select Japan and Southeast Asia cruises.

## Thailand to offer longer stays for visitors, students, and digital nomads



Thailand's government has approved new visa promotions to attract more tourists. These include visa-free and visa-on-arrival schemes, extended stays for students, and reduced health insurance for retirees.

Starting June 01, 2024, travellers from 93 countries can stay for up to 60 days, up from the current 57 nations. Visa-on-arrival will be available for 31 countries, up from 19.

A new five-year visa, called the Destination Thailand Visa (DTV), will allow stays of up to 180 days, with a fee of 10,000 baht, extendable for another 180 days for an additional 10,000 baht. This visa targets digital nomads, remote workers, and freelancers. Foreign students with a Non-Immigrant Visa (ED) can extend their stay for one year to seek employment or engage in other activities after graduation. About 40,000 such students are in Thailand. For visitors aged 50 or older, the health insurance requirement for long-stay visas has been reduced from 3 million baht to 440,000 baht. This change is effective from September to December.

The cabinet also approved expanding e-visa application services at Thai consulates and embassies from 47 to 94 locations, starting in September.

F I J I

Relax, you are  
in good hands

**Tourism Fiji**

T: + 91 22 4300 4500 | E: [tourismfiji@globaldestinations.in](mailto:tourismfiji@globaldestinations.in)

W: [www.fiji.travel](http://www.fiji.travel)

[fiji.com.fj](http://fiji.com.fj)



# TAT transitioning towards delivering high-value and eco-conscious travel experiences

The Thailand Tourism Authority (TAT) is leading a transformative approach to tourism, emphasising sustainability, authenticity, and inclusivity. Isada Saovaros, Director of TAT Mumbai, highlights Thailand’s strategic shift towards high-value experiences and eco-friendly practices. The Kingdom aims to attract Indian travellers by enriching their journeys with immersive cultural encounters and responsible tourism initiatives.

**Prashant Nayak**

In 2023, Thailand attracted over 28 million tourists to the kingdom and also welcomed 1.62 million Indian tourists, many of whom were millennials. This year, TAT is working towards targeting 35 million tourist footfalls, including 2 million visitors from India. Currently, India ranks as Thailand’s fifth largest source market and thus remains very important to the organisation.

## The Shift Towards Sustainable and High-Value Tourism

Thailand, renowned as a budget-friendly destination, also appeals to a diverse set of travellers with its excellent dive sites, local and eco-friendly experiences, and large-scale event venues for weddings and MICE. Now, Thailand is increasingly focusing on high-value and sustainable tourism.

To promote high-value and sustainable tourism in Thailand, TAT encourages local businesses to adopt environmentally friendly practices. They will also accelerate eco-tourism efforts that provide meaningful tourism experiences while preserving the ecosystem, inspiring tourists to actively partake in their initiatives. Furthermore, TAT aims to use strategic alliances and digital technology to make tourism activities more accessible and environmentally responsible. Isada says, “The growing inclination of Indian travellers for luxury holiday destinations has contributed to our goal of increasing high-value tourism in Thailand. TAT has reinvented its marketing strategy for 2024–2025 by focusing on segments with higher spending, a proclivity to stay longer, a desire to explore the local area, and a concern for the environment.”

Isada further highlights Thailand’s proactive approach to targeting emerging markets within India. He mentions, “In India, we are targeting untapped markets in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities with increasing tourist movements. Last year, TAT



▲ Isada Saovaros

saw a spike in footfall from Indian millennials. To capitalise on this demand, our marketing methods will include collaboration with travel brands, media, and influencers, as well as utilising social media to promote Thailand as one of the most adventurous and experiential destinations for the younger generation.”

## Always More to Discover in Thailand

TAT is making significant efforts to promote lesser-known destinations or experiences in Thailand that have the potential to entice repeat travellers. There are hidden gems like Hua Hin, a family-friendly luxury resort town known for its golf and wellness offerings, Kanchanaburi, a town known for its abundant natural and historical attractions, and Khao Yai, which has a national park, wineries, and sporting activities. Isada adds, “For travellers who wish to explore Thailand’s ethos, we recommend routes such as Chiang Mai, Lamphun, and Lampang, where the Lanna culture thrives, along with UNESCO

Heritage trails in Sukhothai, Kamphaeng Phet, and Nakhon Ratchasima. Likewise, the Paradise Islands of Trang and Satun and the Wonders of the Deep South—Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat—are excellent for frequent tourists who wish to witness new towns and coastlines. Finally, TAT is also promoting the Northern Thai provinces, including Mae Hong Son, Chiang Rai, Sukhothai, Phetchabun, and Udon Thani, which are known for their pristine landscape, wildlife, endemic tribes, unique culture, and distinguished cuisines.”

Indian tourists have plenty of opportunities to interact with local communities in Thailand. Festivals like Loy Krathong in November and Songkran in April offer a chance to mingle with Thai citizens and join in community activities. For a more rustic experience, travellers can visit Northern Provinces like Mae Hong Son, Chiang Mai, and Sukhothai to interact with indigenous tribes, learn about their cultures, and enjoy unique local cuisine. The Mae Hong Son Loop trail is perfect for exploring these provinces and experiencing the Thai countryside lifestyle.

## Advantages of Customised City Passes

The “Chiang Mai Pass” was the first-of-its-kind multi-attraction city pass for tourists visiting Chiang Mai. There are other innovative city passes in Thailand to further attract travellers. Isada shares more: “Apart from the Chiang Mai Pass, Indian travellers can avail of custom TAGTHAi city passes to Phuket, Pattaya, Ayutthaya, and Bangkok. All these passes are available in two tiers: standard and premium. Other TAGTHAi passes include the golf course, Elephant Lover, ONESIAM, Foodie, Laguna Marathon, Chao Phraya River, and the Massage pass, which Indians can book to gain exclusive access to their favourite activities.”





Discover the  
**Excellence of Travelling with Renfe**



**EUR 24\*** pp

Madrid Puerta de Atocha - Valencia

**EUR 33\*** pp

Madrid Puerta de Atocha - Seville Santa Justa

**EUR 35\*** pp

Madrid Puerta de Atocha - Barcelona Sants

**EUR 63\*** pp

Barcelona Sants - Granada

**On Board Services:**

- > Comfortable seats with adjustable settings
- > A selection of entertainment activities
- > Power sockets at every seat
- > Delightful snacks and beverages available on board

**Remarks:** Above rates are based on per person per way & are subject to change without prior notice.

\*T&C Apply.

**Ottila International Pvt. Ltd.**

Mumbai (Registered Office & Corporate Headquarters): 022 6720 5000

Ahmedabad: +91 93761 20982

Bengaluru: +91 96 0648 4182

Chennai: +91 44 4555 8582

Coimbatore: + 91 99527 17750

Hyderabad: +91 88 8501 5970

Indore: +91 731 4911 374

Kochi: +91 75938 63903

Kolkata: +91 98301 19561

New Delhi: +91 11 4141 4242

Pune: + 91 20 4002 6960

Nasik: +91 253 231 0044



# IHG driving remarkable returns on investment; poised for continued expansion and success

With a diverse portfolio of brands catering to evolving traveller preferences, InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) is well-positioned to capitalise on burgeoning domestic and international tourism trends and markets. Sudeep Jain, Managing Director, South West Asia (SWA), IHG Hotels and Resorts, unveils the company's strategic growth plan, highlighting a dedication to delivering exceptional guest experiences and creating value for stakeholders.

Prashant Nayak



▲ Sudeep Jain

IHG Hotels and Resorts has had a great growth momentum in India and has ambitious expansion plans to continue to grow their portfolio across all brand segments. With nearly 50 hotels in the pipeline, IHG aims to double its operating portfolio within the next five years. The development pipeline includes renowned brands such as InterContinental Hotels and Resorts, Crowne Plaza, voco, Holiday Inn, Holiday Inn Express, and Staybridge Suites, reflecting their strategic focus on meeting the increasing demand for branded accommodations across India and providing diverse hospitality experiences to travellers with varying needs. Beyond established destinations, IHG is also targeting high-growth secondary markets while reinvigorating

its footing in popular tourist destinations.

## Ambitious Growth and Expansion Strategy

In 2023, IHG embarked on a growth trajectory by introducing their global lifestyle brand voco to India and opening Six Senses Vana in Dehradun, Uttarakhand. Additionally, they have observed a notable surge in demand for premium hospitality experiences, and therefore, their owners are also readily partnering with them to bring premium brands to the Indian market. IHG has responded to this demand by opening the first voco hotel in Jim Corbett recently, along with four more signings in Gurugram, Amritsar, Mumbai, and Goa. The brand has received a phenomenal response and is getting a lot of interest from investors. Their strategy

to expand premium brands includes the signing of Crowne Plaza in Chandigarh Zirakpur and Dehradun. They are also expanding their Holiday Inn brand family with signings in Amritsar, Kasauli, Zirakpur, Chennai, Guwahati, and Karjat.

“With Holiday Inn and Holiday Inn Express comprising a significant portion of our pipeline, we aim to leverage their success in the domestic tourism market, offering our owners an attractive brand proposition with low development costs. Moreover, we are actively exploring opportunities to introduce new brands from our global portfolio to India. Discussions are underway to bring brands such as Regent Hotels and Resorts, Kimpton Hotels and Restaurants, and the recently launched Vignette Collection and Garner with the

right partner in the right location,” informs Sudeep.

## Confident Business Model and Robust Systems

IHG's success hinges on crafting beloved brands that resonate with both guests and owners, ensuring exceptional experiences and robust returns. Central to IHG's efforts in enhancing guest satisfaction and driving demand are its cutting-edge technology and the IHG One Rewards loyalty programme. These pillars elevate guest experience whilst fostering strong connections with the brand. Complementing these initiatives is their 'Guest How You Guest' master brand campaign, dynamically expanding its influence, heightening IHG and its brands' visibility, and refining perceptions among crucial demographics.

While new designs and service updates keep the brands feeling fresh, Sudeep says, “We are building a leading commercial engine with best-in-class platforms that give our brands, businesses, and owners a competitive edge. Following a record year of enrolments in 2023, our award-winning IHG One Rewards is providing owners with a higher-value customer at a lower cost, with more than 130 million members now responsible for over 55 per cent of room nights globally. Our industry-leading Guest Reservation System enables guests to seamlessly select add-ons to enhance their stays and owners to generate maximum value from their hotel's unique attributes. We are driving fresh revenue streams, delivering a more seamless and inspiring web and mobile experience, and securing stronger returns for owners through new data-driven revenue management capabilities.”

Sudeep further adds, “As we embark on our growth journey, it is crucial to prioritise responsible growth with a commitment to nurturing our people, supporting our communities, and

safeguarding the planet. At the core of our ethos lies our 'Journey to Tomorrow' initiative, where we're actively advancing towards an inclusive workplace that fosters growth for all. We are proud of our progress, including being recognised as one of the top companies to work for, our teams volunteering their time within their communities, and reducing our carbon emissions per occupied room. The stage is set for an exciting next chapter. We are confident in the power of our business model, brands, and enterprise platform to drive performance and continued growth for IHG and our owners."

### Adaptive Approach to Market Dynamics

India has always been an important market for IHG, and they have been on a growth curve in the country for the past several years. Currently, they have 49 hotels across SWA, out of which their India portfolio stands at 46 hotels across five core brands: InterContinental Hotels and Resorts, Crowne Plaza Hotels and Resorts, Holiday Inn Hotels and Resorts, Holiday Inn Express, and Six Senses. IHG's India portfolio has increased by over 200 per cent in

the last 10 years, from 15 hotels to 46 hotels now.

IHG is meaningfully expanding its presence across key markets in the country with new signings and openings. Sudeep shares, "With well-loved brands and a robust business model, our strategy for India has been to respond to market needs and focus on our mainstream brands as our key growth drivers. We follow an asset-light strategy, which enables us to grow our business while generating high returns on invested capital. Our mainstream brands, Holiday Inn and Holiday Inn Express, are a great fit for this segment and have done exceptionally well in the country. Moreover, the investment landscape in India has seen growth in secondary markets, driven by heightened business confidence among domestic and foreign investors."

Sudeep forecasts that the country's spiritual tourism and the emergence of Tier-II cities will significantly drive IHG's growth in the fiscal year 2025. They have been actively expanding their presence in primary and secondary cities in India, catering to the growing demand for quality, branded accommodations

across markets. "While domestic tourism remains a key driver of growth, IHG also recognises the importance of inbound travel. With a presence in over 100 countries, they benefit from international guests who recognise and trust our brands, along with the advantages of our rewarding loyalty programme," asserts Sudeep.

### Key Drivers of Growth in Indian Hospitality

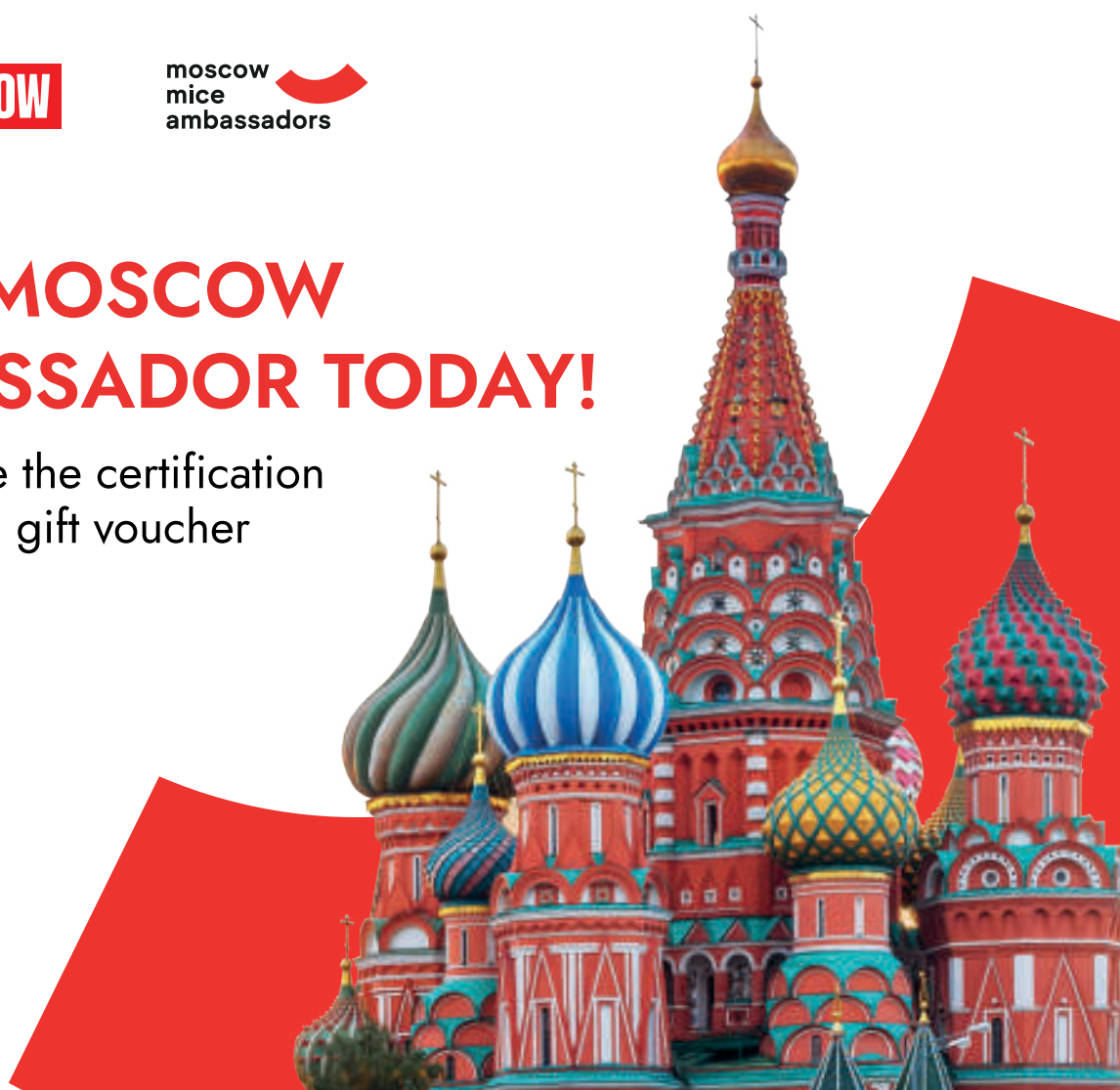
Sudeep highlights several key factors driving growth in the Indian hospitality industry amidst recent global events. He says, "The Indian hospitality industry is poised for robust growth driven by increasing domestic travel for both leisure and business purposes, an uptick in inbound travellers, and rising demand for MICE segments. The government's focus on infrastructure development and India's potential as a preferred MICE destination is expected to attract a larger share of global travellers. Also, the government's proactive focus on promoting tourism, spiritual, and leisure travel has further solidified the country's position as a leading global tourist destination."



## BECOME A MOSCOW MICE AMBASSADOR TODAY!

Be the first to complete the certification program and receive a gift voucher

Register now



# Minor Hotels renews its strategic entry into India with precision and foresight

With a keen eye for untapped potential and expansion in the Indian market, Bangkok-based Minor Hotels has big plans to introduce diverse brands tailored to cater to the evolving needs of Indian travellers. Amir Golbarg, Senior Vice President, India, Middle East, and Africa, Minor Hotels, foresees that the hotel group is set to redefine luxury and upscale hospitality, curating immersive experiences that seamlessly blend global sophistication with local allure.

**Prashant Nayak**

**M**inor Hotels is a global hospitality group operating over 540 hotels, resorts, and residences in 56 countries. As a hotel owner, operator, and investor, Minor Hotels fulfils the needs and desires of today's global travellers through its diverse portfolio of eight hotel brands—Anantara, Avani, The Elewana Collection, NH, NH Collection, nhow, Oaks, and Tivoli. Minor Hotels is rapidly accelerating its global growth ambitions, aiming to add more than 200 hotels by the end of 2026.

## Tapping India's Flourishing Hospitality Sector

In 2017, Minor Hotels embarked on its Indian venture with the opening of Oaks Bodhgaya. However, further expansion was halted due to the onset of the pandemic. Now that there is a rising demand for upscale and luxury segments in India, recognising this untapped potential, Minor Hotels is keen on expanding its footprint in the Indian market.

Minor Hotels also plans to add multiple new brands to their portfolio this year and next to fill unmet consumer demand, offering hotel owners a diverse range of options, thereby meeting the evolving needs of Indian travellers. Through their diverse brands, Minor Hotels will focus on bringing localised experiential hospitality that immerses guests in the locale. "Quality is as important as quantity for Minor Hotels in India and globally. We are humbled by the overwhelming interest in our brands from property owners in India, but we will be very selective in the hotels we add to our footprint. For us, partnerships, collaborating with owners who align with our values and vision and who want to create something special for guests—are more important than adding a property to our portfolio," states Amir.

## Creating Destinations

Elaborating on their strategy to establish 50 properties in India over the next 10 years, which are in various stages of discussions with partners across the country, Amir says, "Destination creation has been instrumental to Minor Hotels' global strategy and will be critical to our presence in India, which has huge destination creating potential. While having a presence in major metros matters, we will focus on emerging destinations with demand for upper-upscale and luxury hospitality with our Anantara, Avani, and NH Collection brands. There are many up-and-coming cities in urban locations, especially in southern India. There are also tier two and tier three cities that could benefit our upscale NH Hotels and Resorts brand. As lifestyle hospitality gains traction in India and worldwide, we have identified a gap in the 'fun and funky' segment. To address this, our upscale brand Avani delivers stylish rooms, vibrant social spaces, and relaxed dining, blending upbeat service with seamless privacy."

"We are not limiting ourselves to cities, either. Our Anantara brand is well-suited for luxury resorts and wilderness lodges in places like the southern hill towns and the northern Himalayas. As part of our 'asset right strategy', our expansion in India will be driven by a mix of owned and leased properties, HMAs, and franchise agreements," adds Amir.

## Anantara Jaipur: The Grand Addition

Anantara Jaipur Hotel, opening later this year, is designed to meet the demands of India's rapidly growing wedding market, offering a mix of indoor and outdoor venues that can accommodate up to 2,500 guests. The property will feature 150 guest rooms and suites, an assortment of dining options, and a full-service Anantara Spa. "There



▲ Amir Golbarg

are several similarities between Indian and Thai hospitality, where the Anantara journey began, with the responsibility to deliver unforgettable experiences to our guests. We aim to deliver heartfelt hospitality, inspired by our Thai roots, whenever and wherever guests stay at an Anantara," expresses Amir.

Travellers today place a greater emphasis on well-being, especially mindfulness, longevity, and self-improvement. As a result, Minor Hotels have seen an increased interest in yoga practices and Ayurveda treatments across their properties, including Anantara. Minor Hotels also has an incredible portfolio of safari experiences in Africa with the Elewana Collection and plans to open the first Anantara tented camp in Zambia next year.

# Dubai

DMC



Office No. 202, Rania Business Center, Al Barsha First, Dubai - UAE. Phone: +971 44452101  
Website: [www.magicalvacation.com](http://www.magicalvacation.com) | Email: [info@magicalvacation.com](mailto:info@magicalvacation.com)

India Representative

**PAUL MERCHANTS**

**Toll Free No. 1800-137-1444**

DELHI | MUMBAI | CHANDIGARH | PUNJAB | HIMACHAL | KERALA | GUJARAT | HARYANA

# Lemon Tree Hotels aims to lead across multiple segments by 2030

Harleen Mehta, Senior Vice President - Sales, Lemon Tree Hotels, shares her perspective on the hotel group's broad vision while providing insightful glimpses of its brand commitments and ambitious expansion plans.

Prativa Vaidya Bhalla

Lemon Tree Hotels is one of India's fastest-growing hotel chains and is a leader in tapping mid-scale demand. However, over the past two decades, the company has now diversified and caters to every segment, from economy to upscale.

## Exploring the Potential of Spiritual Tourism

One segment that has grown consistently and was impacted less by economic downturns than other segments during and after the pandemic is spiritual tourism. Harleen feels that spiritual tourism, particularly in a country like India, is a key segment for both Indian and international travellers. She conveys, "We already have operating hotels in key locations like Dwarka, Katra, Haridwar, Rishikesh, etc., and have signed hotels in Tirupati, Somnath, Badrinath, and more. With a relatively small number of branded hotels

in some of these locations, we see great potential for the growth of branded rooms and are actively discussing and pursuing potential



Harleen Mehta

partnerships to establish and expand our footprint in these destinations."

## Price Points and Brand Evolution

Lemon Tree Hotels' primary business comes from the domestic market. It could be the family visiting Srinagar, the entry-level executive looking for a clean and comfortable place to sleep in, or the globetrotter who is searching for something refreshingly different—all are their guests. On this, Harleen highlights, "The different price points and offerings across different brands that we have are our biggest plus points, and that enables us to cover a plethora of segments."

The evolution of Aurika Hotels and Resorts, the upscale brand from Lemon Tree Hotels, reflects the changing landscape of the hotel industry towards 'premiumisation.' "Many of our initial customers, who were looking to stay at midscale hotels, have now moved up in life and are looking at upscale experiential travel. And that is primarily what our resort properties—Aurika, Udaipur, and Coorg—offer," points out Harleen. Lemon Tree Hotels recently launched the magnificent Aurika, Mumbai Skycity, India's largest hotel by number of rooms, located close to Mumbai International Airport.

## Social and Environmental Responsibility

What sets Lemon Tree Hotels apart from competitors in the market is that while running hotels for the past 20 years, the company has also focused on offering opportunities to Indians with disabilities and people from the economically and socially weak segment. Presently, around 13 per cent of Lemon Tree employees are from this disadvantaged segment of the population. The other practice that makes Lemon Tree Hotels different is their pooch policy. In this, each of the units adopts a stray and looks after it. The K9s are not just given a name but even a designation and role in the system.

Lemon Tree Hotels proactively adapts to evolving trends like guest experiences,

staycations, digital nomads, tech upgrades, sustainability, CSR, wellness, and social media. Harleen mentions, "We have consistently kept track of all aspects at all times. At a host of properties that are within the city with facilities, we have adapted to the increasing trend of staycations, and at any given time, we have different attractive packages for guests opting for them. Lemon Tree believes that the brand should stand for more than 'just profit'. We have focused our efforts on creating a socially inclusive work environment that seeks to bring in people of different backgrounds, abilities, and ethnicities and offer them work as a unified team with a common goal."

Lemon Tree Hotels prioritises eco-friendly practices, ensuring energy and water conservation, responsible waste management, and pollution control. Committed to a healthy planet, Harleen shared, "Our existing and upcoming owned hotels are designed and constructed to qualify for the L.E.E.D Gold Standard, which is recognised globally for energy efficiency, water conservation, CO2 reduction, and enhanced environmental quality by the USGBC and IGBC."

## Brand Vision 2030

Lemon Tree Hotels aspires to establish itself as the foremost and most preferred Indian chain across various hotel categories, encompassing upscale, upper-midscale, midscale, and economy segments. Their vision 2030 extends towards ensuring a presence in every Tier II and III city, not merely limited to singular establishments but encompassing multiple options across their diverse portfolio of brands. Harleen concludes, "We are expanding nationwide across all segments, from Chirang, Assam, to Erode, Tamil Nadu, to Sankhwas Garh, Rajasthan. With three hotels opened this fiscal year, plans for at least 20 more are underway, demonstrating our commitment to extensive growth and presence. Moreover, in Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG), we are targeting 100 per cent green-owned hotels by 2026."

# SWISS TRAVEL PASS

Book on [www.ottila.net](http://www.ottila.net)



Swiss Travel System.



The Swiss Travel Pass gives you unlimited travel across Switzerland's public transport network of train, bus and boat.

## FEATURES

- ✓ 1st class & 2nd class
- ✓ Consecutive : 3, 4, 6, 8, 15 Days
- ✓ Flexible : any 3, 4, 6, 8 or 15 days within a 1-month period
- ✓ Swiss Travel Pass Youth for traveller up to 25 with a 30% discount
- ✓ Available as Print at Home
- ✓ Free Swiss Family Card: Children aged 6 to 16 accompanied by a parent or legal guardian; travel free with the Swiss Family Card.
- ✓ Free admission to more than 500 museums.
- ✓ Mountain excursions included: Klewenalp, Rigi, Stanserhorn and Stoos

### CONSECUTIVE DAYS PASS

DAYS	1 <sup>ST</sup> CLASS		2 <sup>ND</sup> CLASS	
	ADULT	YOUTH	ADULT	YOUTH
04 DAYS	469	330	295	209
06 DAYS	602	424	379	268
08 DAYS	665	469	419	297

RATES ARE IN CHF

### FLEX PASS (WITHIN 01 MONTH)

DAYS	1 <sup>ST</sup> CLASS		2 <sup>ND</sup> CLASS	
	ADULT	YOUTH	ADULT	YOUTH
04 DAYS	539	379	339	240
06 DAYS	644	454	405	287
08 DAYS	697	492	439	311

RATES ARE IN CHF

Rates are valid for 2024. \*T&C Apply.

## Ottila International Pvt. Ltd.

Mumbai (Registered Office & Corporate Headquarters): 022 6720 5000

Ahmedabad: +91 93 7612 0982

Bengaluru: +91 96 0648 4182

Chennai: +91 44 4555 8582

Coimbatore: + 91 99 5271 7750

Hyderabad: +91 88 8501 5970

Indore: +91 73 1491 1374

Kochi: +91 75 9386 3903

Kolkata: +91 98 3011 9561

New Delhi: +91 11 4141 4242

Nashik: +91 25 3231 0044

Pune: + 91 20 4002 6960

For Enquiries & Bookings, please contact any of our offices | Website: [www.ottila.com](http://www.ottila.com) | B2B Portal: [www.ottila.net](http://www.ottila.net)



# Sterling Holiday Resorts embraces new trends to maximise immersive experiences

With new hospitality trends favouring sustainable, wellness, experiential, adventure, and corporate travel, Sterling Holiday Resorts has been strategically embracing and aligning with the growing trends. Vikram Lalvani, Managing Director and CEO, Sterling Holiday Resorts, expresses enthusiasm for their role in the dynamic hospitality industry, adapting and innovating to continually meet the ever-evolving needs of their guests.

Prashant Nayak

**S**terling Holiday Resorts is one of the leading leisure hospitality brands in India. With 48 resorts in 45 destinations across the country, it has a wide range of options in hill stations, beaches, waterfront, wildlife, adventure, heritage, pilgrimage, and drive-to destinations.

## Plethora of Experiences

Over and above the widespread resorts and warm hospitality, Sterling is committed to providing its guests with exciting discoveries and unique experiences, both within the resort and at the destination. These include experiences that cover the culture, heritage, cuisine, geographical features, and adventure activities of the location. As part of providing unique experiences, Sterling advocates local cuisine in its resorts and has also been opening Resto-bars in several resorts called Sterling LOCAL, which features local beverages and finger foods in addition to global favourites.

“Our properties in the Himalayas offer trekking and adventure activities, while our resorts in Rishikesh and Kerala provide yoga and wellness retreats. This focus on experiential travel and sustainability has enabled us to attract a loyal customer base and maintain a competitive edge in the market. We also cater to meetings and conferences with MaxiMICE, our events service. Navarasa is our branded product that provides intimate destination weddings, where guests can take up the entire resort exclusively for their event. Also, we are one of the largest chains to have pet-friendly resorts in 16 destinations,” informs Lalvani.

Sterling Resorts has proactively adapted to evolving trends and changing guest expectations. In response to new travel trends post-COVID, Sterling Resorts introduced Sterling Picnics, an innovative offering that provides day access to resort facilities without the need for check-



▲ Vikram Lalvani

ins. Their ‘workcations’ allowed guests to combine work and leisure at nearby resorts with Wi-Fi and amenities. Sterling Circle targets Gen Z with cost-effective, multiple short breaks annually, including free vouchers to cover food, activities, and spa use during the holiday.

## Maximising Business Potential

In terms of leisure, Sterling’s majority of business is driven by domestic consumption. To target and maximise opportunities within the domestic market, in addition to the OTA’s, they have also grown their presence with offline travel agents, especially in Tier 2 and 3 towns, where the demand for leisure travel is growing rapidly. Sterling ONE is a digital platform for travel partners and corporates, enabling real-time inventory access and direct bookings at contracted rates and thus reducing their transaction times by 99 per cent.

Lalvani further adds, “In line with the Bharat Dekho initiative of the government, we are introducing several circuit packages that enable guests to cover a region across several Sterling resorts with increased

convenience and better value for money. We have also extended beyond leisure into quickly emerging Tier 2 towns, which have a mix of business and leisure. Our resorts in the temple towns of Madurai, Haridwar, etc., cater to both leisure travellers exploring the cultural heritage and business visitors attending to work commitments.”

While Sterling primarily serves domestic travellers, only specific resorts attract inbound traffic. For instance, their Kerala resorts appeal to visitors from the Middle East and the UK, Goa resorts to Europe and the US, and resorts at Tiruvannamalai and Rishikesh to European markets, particularly Germany, France, and the UK. “We have started to participate in global travel forums like WTM in London, ITB in Berlin, ATM in Dubai, etc., to re-connect with the travel partners and DMCs to revive this segment,” states Lalvani.

## Elevated Holiday Experiences

Sterling has been investing significantly in its resorts to upgrade accommodations and other facilities to elevate the holiday experience. In terms of F&B, they have started to open several specialty restaurants and resto-bars in several resorts. They have also relaunched Subuthi, their spa brand, with ayurvedic treatments and therapies.

Sterling will continue to expand rapidly in the coming months. Last fiscal year, it added seven resorts to its bouquet. Lalvani says, “Sterling has more than 24 resorts in its pipeline and plans to add at least 15 to 20 resorts in the next 15 months to take its portfolio to 4,000 keys. We are actively expanding into “bleisure” destinations in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities. Sterling is also actively considering expanding beyond India into markets that Indians prefer to holiday in. Our vision is to be one of the leading hospitality brands in India, offering branded experiential products and services across multiple customer segments.”



Saudi  
Welcome  
to Arabia

# Magic of Saudi Summer

Find Summer Activities &  
Vacation Ideas on [www.VisitSaudi.com](http://www.VisitSaudi.com)

Al Murabba Palace  
Riyadh



# Ananta Hotels and Resorts forging a legacy of authenticity and innovation

Ananta Hotels and Resorts is on an exciting journey of authenticity and expansion. By adapting to changing travel trends and understanding the growing importance of sustainability, Ananta remains at the forefront of innovation. Ashutosh Goyal, Director, Ananta Hotels and Resorts, is committed to providing exceptional hospitality experiences and leaving an indelible mark on the global hospitality scenario.

Prashant Nayak

Ananta Hotels and Resorts is on an exciting expansion journey, with plans to have hotels in 25 prestigious locations across India in the coming years. Guests can look forward to new properties in Ajabgarh, Jaisalmer, Kumbhalgarh, Tirupati, Shimla, Kasauli, Indore, Karjat, Dharoi Dam, and Shirdi. Each new location will reflect Ananta's commitment to luxury, authenticity, and immersive experiences, offering bespoke services and unique cultural encounters that Ananta is known for.

## Setting the Standard

Ananta Hotels and Resorts stands out by blending luxury with authenticity and sustainability. They create spaces that resonate with the natural environment, reflecting local culture and landscape for an authentic experience. Ashutosh says, "Our properties, like those in Ajabgarh, integrate natural elements for a holistic retreat. Our focus on wildlife and eco-tourism is a defining aspect. Properties like Baagh Ananta Elite in Ranthambore offer unique wildlife experiences, fostering a deep appreciation for biodiversity. We prioritise sustainable practices, using local materials, and minimising environmental impact. Our ability to innovate and adapt to trends, such as 'workcations,' and our strategic expansion position us as leaders in the hospitality industry, celebrating India's cultural and natural heritage."

## Adapting to Modern Trends

Sustainability and responsible tourism have also become critical, with guests preferring eco-friendly practices. Also, the trend of 'workcations' has grown, with travellers seeking destinations that support both. Ashutosh further reiterates, "Ananta Hotels and Resorts actively adapts to evolving trends by prioritising personalisation and embracing the needs of digital nomads. Our properties are designed to cater to remote work with high-speed internet, comfortable cottages, and open lawns for extended stays. This approach reflects our commitment to staying



▲ Ashutosh Goyal

aligned with shifting travel trends and providing a blend of work and leisure environments. We also focus on emotional connections with guests, creating bespoke experiences that foster loyalty and enhance overall satisfaction."

## Domestic Market Focus

The domestic market is highly significant for Ananta Hotels and Resorts, contributing substantially to its revenue generation and brand presence. "Our properties are spread across India, and we focus on understanding and catering to the preferences of domestic travellers. This involves offering tailored packages, regional cuisine, and experiences that resonate with local culture. Seasonal promotions, festive events, and themed packages are designed to attract families, couples, and solo travellers during peak travel periods, enhancing our appeal to the domestic audience," says Ashutosh.

To maximise opportunities in the domestic market, Ananta has developed loyalty programmes that reward repeat guests, fostering long-term relationships. Ashutosh adds, "We also actively target the MICE segment, offering

comprehensive corporate events and social gatherings packages. Collaborations with domestic travel agencies, online platforms, and strategic partnerships with airlines and railways expand our reach. Our digital marketing efforts, including SEO, PPC advertising, and social media promotions, ensure a strong online presence and engagement with potential guests."

## Engaging the Inbound Market

The inbound travel market is vital for Ananta Hotels and Resorts, significantly boosting their growth. India's prominence on the world map as a cultural hotspot attracts international travellers, and its properties are strategically located near these attractions. Like those in Ranthambore and Gir, their wildlife hotels offer unique experiences that appeal to nature enthusiasts worldwide. They have seen substantial growth in this segment, driven by their commitment to conservation and providing immersive wildlife encounters. "To capitalise on the inbound market, we promote India's rich heritage and natural beauty through strategic partnerships with international travel agencies and robust digital marketing campaigns. By highlighting the unique cultural and wildlife experiences we offer, we attract and engage global travellers, ensuring they choose Ananta for their Indian adventures," asserts Ashutosh.

## Global Expansion

By 2030, Ananta aims to be a global name, representing India's rich culture and heritage on the world stage. Their vision is to expand beyond national borders, creating properties that showcase India's diversity and hospitality to international travellers. Ananta is dedicated to providing exceptional experiences, sustainable practices, and personalised services that resonate with guests worldwide. "Our goal is to be synonymous with luxury and cultural authenticity, offering unforgettable stays that celebrate India's beauty and heritage across the globe," reveals Ashutosh.

# GLACIER EXPRESS – YOUR WINDOW TO THE SWISS ALPS

VEGETARIAN AND NON-VEGETARIAN  
INDIAN MEALS AVAILABLE ON BOARD

The eight-hour journey across the Swiss mountains takes you from Zermatt at the foot of the Matterhorn to the chic St. Moritz. Thanks to large panoramic windows, passengers on the "slowest express train in the world" have unobstructed views of idyllic mountain meadows, snow-capped peaks and deep blue mountain lakes.

More information or booking-advice via our sales representative Kunal Kothari:  
kunal.kothari@rhb.ch / +918097898809 or visit our website: [www.glacierexpress.ch](http://www.glacierexpress.ch)



# Pride Hotels targets 100-plus properties by 2030 with robust pipeline of new projects

As part of its ambitious roadmap, the Pride Hotels Group aspires to manage and own 100-plus hotels by 2030 from the current chain of around 60, including new signings. SP Jain, Chairman and Managing Director, Pride Hotels Group, envisions positioning the group as a premier upscale hospitality company. Emphasising distinctive Indian hospitality, the group aims to surpass guest expectations while nurturing talent and offering opportunities for growth and development to its associates.

Prashant Nayak

The hospitality industry has undergone significant transformations, particularly in response to recent global events. The Pride Hotels Group has embraced these changes and transformations by integrating technology and enhancing its sustainability initiatives. This proactive approach has ensured operational continuity and effectively positioned it to meet evolving guest demands.

## A Unique Approach to Hospitality

Pride Hotels Group stands out in the global hospitality industry with its unique blend of Indian ethos and contemporary luxury. Their commitment to delivering immersive guest experiences is what sets them apart from competitors through their 'Five Senses of Pride' philosophy. This holistic approach caters to diverse preferences, whether through their upscale Pride Hotels, boutique Pride Premier, or experiential Pride Plaza Hotels. "Our strategic locations across key business and leisure destinations further enhance accessibility and appeal. Moreover, our focus on sustainability, technology integration, and personalised service underscores our dedication to setting new standards in hospitality excellence," states SP Jain.

At Pride Hotels Group, they also proactively embrace evolving hospitality trends to stay ahead in a dynamic market. Recognising the growing importance of changing guest experiences, SP Jain mentions, "Our efforts in these directions are exemplified by our innovative offerings tailored for 'digital nomads' and 'staycationers.' Technology upgrades such as AI-driven guest services and smart room features enhance convenience and personalisation. Sustainability and CSR initiatives are integral to our operations, with initiatives like water conservation and community engagement programmes. Wellness offerings, including spa facilities



▲ SP Jain

and fitness amenities, cater to our health-conscious travellers. Meanwhile, social media plays a pivotal role in engaging with our audience, amplifying our brand story and guest experiences."

## Adaptable Market Approach

With a robust presence across India's major cities, leisure destinations, and religious places, Pride Hotels leverages local insights to tailor experiences that resonate with domestic travellers. Jain says, "Our strategies focus on offering competitive pricing, targeted marketing campaigns, and packages that highlight cultural and recreational attractions. Emphasising customer loyalty through membership programmes and personalised services further enhances our market penetration. As we continue to expand our footprint, particularly in emerging Tier II cities, we remain committed to maximising opportunities within the thriving domestic travel segment."

The inbound travel market also holds strategic importance for the hotel group, contributing to their international visibility and revenue diversification. They closely monitor global travel trends and consumer

preferences to tailor their offerings and marketing strategies accordingly. Jain further adds, "Leveraging partnerships with travel agencies, online travel platforms, and diplomatic channels enhances our reach to international travellers. "Recent initiatives include cultural exchange programmes, multilingual services, and curated itineraries that showcase India's rich heritage and diverse landscapes. Despite recent challenges, our resilient approach and adaptive strategies position us to capitalise on the gradual recovery and resurgence of the inbound travel market."

The concept of 'premiumisation' is evolving within the hotel industry, reflecting a shift towards quality and unique experiences over price sensitivity alone. "We cater to this trend by offering exclusive benefits such as upgraded accommodations, gourmet dining experiences, and bespoke concierge services. Our premium offerings differentiate us in a competitive market and foster long-term guest loyalty and advocacy," assures SP Jain.

## Expansion and Renovations

Pride Hotels Group is actively expanding by developing numerous new properties and projects alongside significant upgrades to their existing locations. SP Jain summarises, "At Pride Hotel Pune, renovations are underway for 44 rooms, the bar, banquet halls, and other amenities, with plans to rebrand to Pride Plaza upon completion. Meanwhile, our Goa resort is undergoing upgrades to transition to an upscale brand. In Jaipur, the property has already been renovated into a luxury resort under the Plaza brand, with the addition of a 22,000-square-foot convention hall. Additionally, our new projects in Jim Corbett, Haldwani, Nainital, and beyond are in development. In the next two years, we are launching 32 to 35 new hotels and resorts that have already been signed, and many upcoming projects are in the pipeline. With this robust pipeline of new projects, we aim to manage and own more than 100 hotels by 2030."



# Discover the Silk Road

Fly AeroNomad from Delhi to Bishkek!



## FLIGHT SCHEDULE

FLIGHT NO	DAY	SECTOR	TIMINGS
KA-578	MON, THU	DELHI - BISHKEK	10:30 - 14:00
KA-577	MON, THU	BISHKEK - DELHI	07:00 - 09:30

SCHEDULE VALID AS OF NOW • SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Contact our sales team for tickets and group bookings.



M-34, Outer Circle, Connaught Place, New Delhi - 110001

M: +91 9899775557 | 9810198497

E: aeronomad@minar.group

# Planning a Birthday Celebration in a Luxury Villa



Jivana Beach Villas

Are your clients looking for a unique way to celebrate a milestone birthday? Here's an idea – a birthday celebration in a luxury villa! It promises to be a party to remember, and they won't have to lift a finger!

That's what Daniel did. Based in Australia, Daniel was seeking inspiration to plan his 40th birthday. And then, a great idea struck – to bring his closest friends together for a fun, relaxed destination holiday.

*"A friend kept suggesting a private villa for my birthday party, because we'd have the place to ourselves and would be better value. I started looking into it, and the idea of our group being together in one place, with our own private pool and bar, instead of spread out across a resort, that's what convinced me. And it was actually cheaper than a hotel."*

Like Daniel, your clients can dream of a destination birthday celebration with friends or family. Imagine a glittering gathering against the backdrop of stunning rice fields or endless beaches. When they choose an 'Elite Haven' for their birthday or celebration, dreams turn into reality.

The best part? Elite Havens take care of the tedious planning.

From private chefs to an army of specialised event planners available, Elite Havens can organise a battalion of staff that is always delighted to help.



ELITE HAVENS

## Why Choose a Villa?

Discover why booking a villa for a birthday celebration is the perfect choice for creating unforgettable memories.

### 1. A Magical Setting

Imagine bringing in your birthday surrounded by friends and family against the backdrop of panoramic vistas of lush, rolling hills or extraordinary views of the beach. With Elite Havens, your clients can pick the destination and also pick the perfect villa to suit their needs. Because every special occasion deserves a magical setting.

### 2. Exclusivity and Privacy

Perfect for exclusive, small-group parties, Elite Havens' villas are a cocoon of luxury. Guests can spend unforgettable moments with friends and family, away from prying eyes. The facilities on offer can



Villa Bie



Villa Kalyani



Villa Mandalay



Villa Semarapura

only be used by in-villa guests and their companions, guaranteeing solitude for intimate gatherings.

### 3. Celebrate in the Lap of Luxury

Guests can savour the tranquillity and beauty of scenic landscapes, while soaking in the comforts of modern five-star living.

Dancing the night away in glittering party rooms, luxuriating on spectacular outdoor decks and catching up over drinks in sumptuous, air-conditioned spaces. Kids will have a gala time watching movies in exclusive home theatres and playing in well-equipped game rooms.

And if they're craving some quality me-time, they can unwind in the in-villa spa. Or, tuck in for a romantic couple's massage.

### 4. Impeccable Service

In choosing the perfect villa for Daniel's celebration, the Elite Concierge knew exactly what he wanted.

*"Elite Havens had quite a few of the villas but when I started talking to them they knew exactly what I wanted and shortlisted a few for me. It helped cut a lot of corners and ease some of the stress having someone kind of organising things for us."*

*"It was so seamless. I didn't appreciate it at the time because it was such a busy holiday but looking back, it was so well done. You know they've done this before."*

The Elite Concierge is available to take care of your guests' needs. From arranging babysitting, transport, VIP arrival services to stocking the fridge pre-arrival, they have it covered. The Elite Concierge can also arrange for tours that provide a fascinating glimpse into local life and tourist attractions.

If a guest with special needs is staying at an Elite Haven, the concierge team will set up the villa to make their stay most comfortable.

### 5. Private Chefs and Personalised Menus

No celebration is complete without food that leaves your guests raving. Whether a decadent birthday cake or a romantic anniversary date, the private in-villa chef will happily customise any dining experience, from vegetarian options for Indian festivities to halal meat for Eid celebrations.



Villa Solana

Elite Havens will share the menus of each villa with you before guests arrive. If they have any special meal requests, dietary restrictions or allergies, Elite Havens will make a strict note of them and convey them to the chef.

### 6. Five-star Facilities

From glistening private pools that are perfect to host magical high teas, to beautifully-manicured lawns for outdoor soirees. At an Elite Haven, guests have access to the most luxurious and state-of-the-art facilities.

For a truly memorable time, book a villa where guests can request a stage — complete with a DJ, music band and sparkling décor. Some even have a private club where everyone can dance the night away!

### 7. Premier Event Planners

Elite Havens work with seasoned event planners who fine-tune every little detail. From photographers that ace the Insta-game to bartenders whipping up heavenly cocktails, be assured of the best team that the island has to offer.

The Elite Concierge has a long-standing working relationship with accredited Event Organisers. They are well-versed with the properties and provide invaluable insights.

### Daniel's Advice?

*"Don't be afraid to outsource the work to the experts. It doesn't cost anything extra. In fact, it saved us money. Once you know you can trust the people you're working with, it's such a good feeling to let go!"*

Write to Elite Havens at [bookingpartner@elitehavens.com](mailto:bookingpartner@elitehavens.com) and talk to a villa specialist about your upcoming celebration.



Villa Solana Pool

# Jumeirah unveils new brand identity amid ambitious expansion plans



The new logo and branding were unveiled in the first week of May 2024, against the backdrop of the group's iconic Burj Al Arab hotel, aligning with Jumeirah's goal of doubling its portfolio size by 2030.

Team TTJ

**A** new era dawned for Jumeirah as it unveiled a stunning new visual identity, inspired by its Dubai origins and its forward-looking vision, on May 07, 2024. The iconic Burj Al Arab served as the breathtaking backdrop for this grand reveal, aligning perfectly with Jumeirah's ambitious goal of doubling its portfolio by 2030.

## A Spectacular Showcase at Burj Al Arab

To mark this momentous occasion, Jumeirah Burj Al Arab served as the striking backdrop for the unveiling of the brand's new visual identity. The billowing sail of this architectural masterpiece was aglow with a mesmerising projection for almost a week, narrating Jumeirah's origin story while casting a gaze toward its forthcoming chapter. The illumination concludes with the unveiling of the redesigned Jumeirah signature and reimagined symbol.

The new emblem combines traditional calligraphy inspired by the brand's heritage with a contemporary aesthetic to represent its future ambition. Displayed on this global icon of luxury hospitality, it is a sight for all to behold.

## Shaping New Perspectives and Perceptions

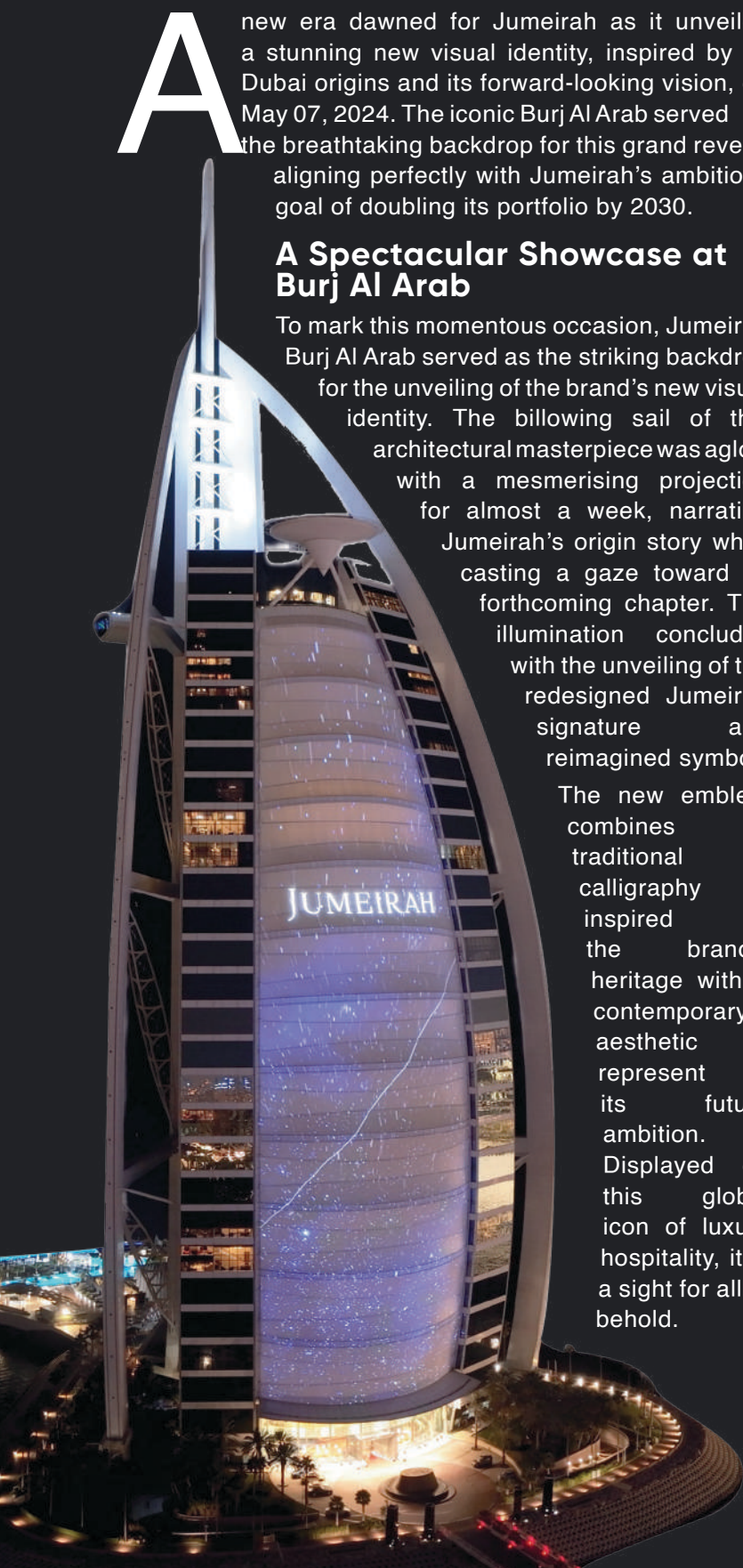
The introduction of the new brand identity is a significant milestone in Jumeirah's growth strategy, which aims to double its portfolio by 2030. This fresh visual identity is the first step in a broader brand evolution designed to redefine luxury for discerning travellers. Renowned for its unmatched hospitality, Jumeirah is set to reinforce its pioneering status in the industry. Through meticulously curated experiences, the brand intends to shape perceptions and set new trends in luxury hospitality.

Thomas Meier, Chief Operating Officer and Interim Chief Executive Officer of Jumeirah, remarked, "Twenty-five years ago, we opened the iconic Jumeirah Burj Al Arab with ambitions to redefine luxury hospitality, and over the years, we have built an exceptional portfolio of properties across three continents. Today, we look to the future of our brand and business with the same pioneering spirit and a robust strategy that will enable the next stage of sustainable growth for Jumeirah. Refining our visual identity and enhancing our guest experience is the first step on a journey of regional and international expansion that will captivate the most discerning traveller. We have strong foundations to build from and an exceptionally talented team that I am confident will see Jumeirah reaffirm its reputation as a leader in luxury hospitality."

## A Visionary Growth Strategy

Advancing with its growth strategy, Jumeirah has unveiled a lineup of new properties, encompassing the luxurious Jumeirah Red Sea in Saudi Arabia, the lavish Jumeirah Marsa Al Arab in the UAE, and the Jumeirah Le Richemond Geneva in Switzerland. Jumeirah's refreshed vision and investment strategy also spotlight boutique-style properties, featuring up to 150 keys, prioritising suite-category rooms, villas, and residences. The luxury hospitality brand is actively targeting owner and operator opportunities in gateway cities and resort destinations in Europe, the Americas, Africa, and Asia.

"Jumeirah's brand story is born from a rich heritage of hospitality, originating from a time when travellers to the region were offered shelter and the opportunity to share ideas, knowledge, and wisdom. That spirit of warm, generous hospitality and a strong sense of community shape the Jumeirah brand today. As we enter our next chapter, we want to continue sharing that legacy while enriching the experience to bring joy to our guests from around the world. By inspiring conversation and connection, we aim to build our reputation as a globally revered and influential hospitality brand," said Michael Grieve, Chief Brand Officer, Jumeirah.







# A LEGENDARY NIGHT AWAITS

IN ABU DHABI, YAS ISLAND

BOOK YOUR TICKETS NOW  
[ETIHADARENA.AE](http://ETIHADARENA.AE) | [PLATINUMLIST.NET](http://PLATINUMLIST.NET)

6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> SEP, 2024



DESTINATION PARTNER



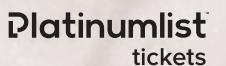
PROMOTIONS PARTNER



MEDIA PARTNERS



TICKETING PARTNERS





Bukhara



Amirsoy

# Discover the Magic of Central Asia

## UZBEKISTAN'S TREASURE TROVE

Tucked away in the heart of Central Asia, Uzbekistan invites intrepid travellers with its bustling markets, ancient marvels, and culinary extravaganza. Let us explore some of its most captivating destinations, each offering a unique blend of history, culture, and unforgettable experiences.

Team TTJ

### Samarkand: The Cultural Capital

Once a pivotal stop on the Silk Road, Samarkand entices with its rich history and vibrant culture. Explore majestic landmarks like Registan Square, Gur-Emir Mausoleum, and Ulugbek Observatory. Discover the city's past at Afrosiab and Ulugbek Observatory Museums. Stroll through lush parks and vibrant bazaars like Siab Bazaar, savouring traditional Uzbek cuisines such as plov and halva. Don't miss the city's theatres, featuring classical performances and enchanting puppet shows.

### Bukhara: The City of Traders

Another jewel of the Silk Road, Bukhara is renowned for its well-preserved medieval architecture. Explore the impressive Ark Fortress, the elegant Bolo Haouz Mosque, and the historic trading domes that bustle with activity. The city's vibrant markets and bazaars are perfect for finding unique handicrafts and souvenirs. Stroll through the Lyab-i Hauz complex, relax by the scenic pond, and savour Bukhara's culinary delights, such as shashlik and samsa, in charming local teahouses.

### Tashkent Nights: Vibrant Pulse of the City

Whether you seek authentic ambience, lively entertainment, or Victorian charm, Tashkent caters to every taste. Enjoy sophisticated settings with exquisite cuisine, or visit rooftop venues for breathtaking city views. For those seeking a night of dance and excitement, the city promises unforgettable experiences with live music, vibrant crowds, and energetic vibes.

### Amirsoy: The Ultimate Alpine Escape

Experience the thrill at Uzbekistan's international-standard mountain resort, Amirsoy. Nestled in the Tien Shan mountains, a scenic drive from Tashkent, it boasts ski trails, lifts, and fun activities for all ages. Stay in alpine-style chalets, dine at European and Uzbek restaurants, and soak in breathtaking views from the gondola. Enjoy hiking, quad biking, and serene chalet retreats in the summer. With ongoing expansions, expect many more adventure and relaxation options.

### Khiva: The Timeless City

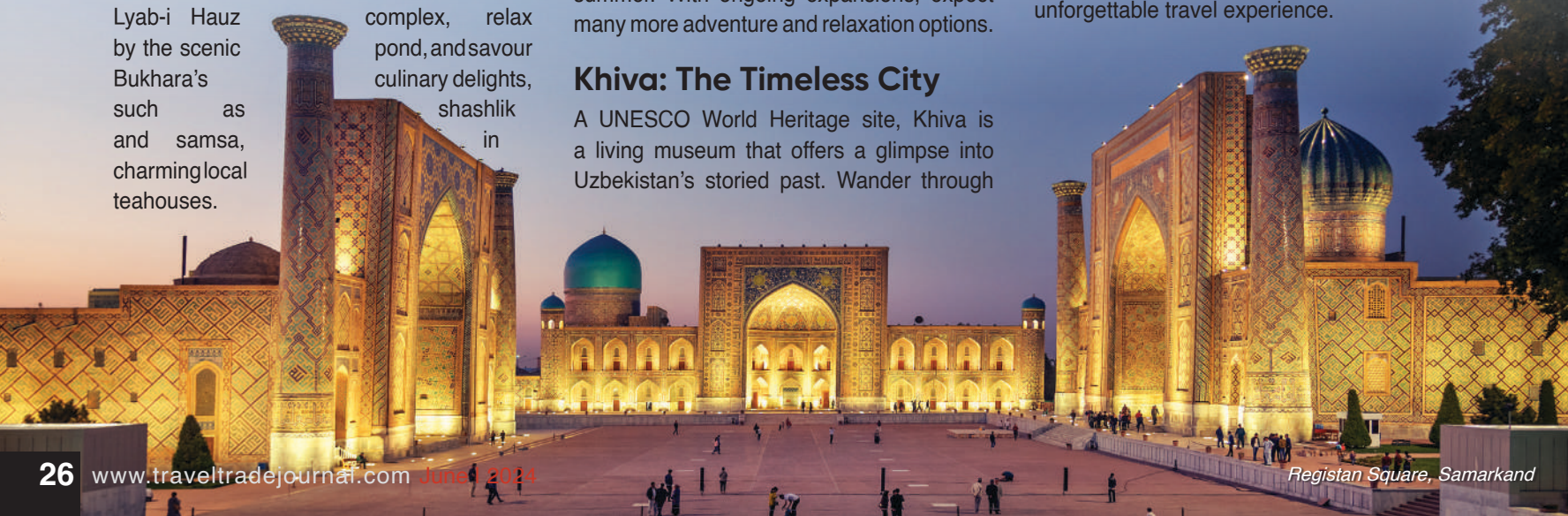
A UNESCO World Heritage site, Khiva is a living museum that offers a glimpse into Uzbekistan's storied past. Wander through

the ancient city walls of Itchan Kala, marvel at the intricate tilework of the Kalta Minor Minaret, and visit the historic Kuhna Ark fortress. Experience the local culture through traditional music and dance performances, and savour the unique flavours of Khiva's cuisine, including its famous green noodles.


### Andijan: The Birthplace of Babur

Known for its rich cultural heritage, Andijan is a vibrant city that played a crucial role in the history of the Fergana Valley. Visit the Babur Museum to learn about the founder of the Mughal Empire, who was born here. Stroll through the bustling bazaars, enjoy traditional music and dance performances, and engage with local craftsmanship, from pottery to silk weaving. Don't miss the region's unique culinary specialties, such as Andijan pilaf and tandir kebab.

Embark on a journey to Uzbekistan and discover a land where history, culture, and culinary delights come together to create an unforgettable travel experience.



Registan Square, Samarkand

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

**AIR INDIA** 

# YOUR SWISS ESCAPE



INTRODUCING

DELHI



ZURICH

4x WEEKLY

Starting June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**BOOK NOW**

on [airindia.com](https://airindia.com)  
or

contact your travel agent

84X NON-STOP WEEKLY FLIGHTS TO EUROPE & UK:  
Frankfurt, Vienna, Milan, Copenhagen, Amsterdam,  
Paris, London, and Birmingham.



# PREMIUM OVER STANDARD

## The Rise of Premiumisation in the Hospitality Sector

Years of stagnation in the hospitality industry have passed, and the concept of premiumisation has taken centre stage. Today, travellers are no longer content with basic accommodations; they seek personalised, high-end experiences that align with their lifestyle and values. This shift is not only due to the changing demands of travellers but also a reflection of the industry’s ability to innovate and adapt. Through interviews with industry leaders, we explore how premiumisation is shaping the hospitality sector and driving guest preferences.

Vartik Sethi



▲ Kadmbini Mittal



▲ Ashwni Kumar Goela



▲ Seema Taj



▲ Vinit Chhabra

Occupancy rates for premium hotels in India are projected to reach decade-high levels of 70-72 percent in FY2024 and FY2025, following a recovery to 68-70 per cent in FY2023, according to credit ratings agency ICRA. The sustained high occupancy rates indicate that travellers are increasingly prioritising personalised experiences over budget options, driven by a desire for enhanced comfort, premium services, and unique experiences.

Kadmbini Mittal, Regional Vice-President at Hyatt India Consultancy, highlighted a newfound focus on personalised experiences post-pandemic. “There is now a significant inclination towards exploring destinations within the country, considering

its diverse landscape and rich cultural heritage. Hotels are investing heavily in luxurious amenities, cutting-edge technology, and unique, culturally immersive activities,” she said. This shift is driven by a desire for experiences that go beyond traditional luxury, offering authenticity, exclusivity, and a strong sense of place.



▲ Nazir Rah



The Khyber Himalayan Resort &amp; Spa

According to Ashwini Kumar Goela, Area General Manager, Delhi - NCR, Radisson Hotel Group, the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic marked a pivotal point for premiumisation in hospitality. "Post-COVID, a growing number of people started to reflect on the purpose of earning money if they couldn't fully enjoy spending it. The culture has shifted to valuing experiences everywhere you go," he noted. The focus has moved beyond merely reaching a destination; it is now about how and where people stay. Standard rooms have given way to premium rooms that offer enhanced benefits and experiences. The domestic market, once inclined towards saving, is now more inclined towards spending on experiences and relationships. "This is just the start, and it's only going to go up from here," Goela added.

Similarly, Seema Taj, Director, Sales, Sheraton Grand Palace Indore, noted a significant evolution in guest expectations. "Guests today are not just seeking a place to stay; they are looking for memorable experiences that resonate with their lifestyle and values," she added.

Personalisation has become a cornerstone of premium hospitality. Vinit Chhabra, General Manager at The Khyber Himalayan Resort and Spa, Gulmarg, emphasised that modern travellers demand customisation that matches their lifestyles. "In recent years, players in the hospitality industry have upped their game by offering high-end amenities in the rooms, such as large TVs, Nespresso machines, or even pillow preferences, as well as unique experiences, whether they are curated activities or wellness options to pamper their guests," Chhabra explained.

The shift from focusing solely on premium products to delivering exclusive and personalised offerings is apparent, particularly among younger generations who seek to capture picture-worthy moments for social media and ultra-high-net-worth individuals looking for unique experiences.

The influence of social media cannot be overstated when it comes to the demand for premiumisation. Nazir Rah, Managing Director, Rah Hotels and Resorts, pointed out that social media amplifies the appeal of exclusive, shareable moments. "The rising use of social media that amplifies the product offering and exclusive shareable moments and experiences further influences demand for premiumisation," he explained. At Rah Bagh in Srinagar, their Royal Attic Suites and independent Garden Cottages have seen tremendous success, catering to the desire for unique, luxurious stays that are perfect for social media sharing.

## Economic Stability and Health Concerns

The pan-India premium hotel average room rates (ARRs) are expected to be ₹7,200-7,400 in FY2024 and rise further to ₹7,800-8,000 in FY2025. The spike in ARR in some hotels and specific pockets has been higher than the average levels, with a few outliers even crossing the FY2008 peak in FY2024. This indicates robust pricing power in the premium segment, allowing hotels to capitalise on the growing demand for luxury experiences.

Moreover, the Indian hotel industry will report revenue growth of 7-9 per cent in FY2025, building on the robust 14-16 per cent growth expected in FY2024, according to ICRA.

Several key factors are driving the sustained demand for premium hotel accommodations, including domestic leisure travel; MICE travel, which is expected to remain robust despite a temporary lull during election periods; a positive overall outlook for business travel, contributing to the premium segment's growth; and spiritual tourism and tier-II cities, which are also expected to contribute meaningfully to the hospitality sector's growth in FY2025.

Economic stability and health concerns are also pivotal in driving the demand for premium experiences. Kadmbini Mittal emphasised that wellness and well-being have become integral to premium experiences. "Many premium experiences offer wellness-related services such as spa treatments, fitness programmes, and healthy dining options, attracting guests who prioritise their physical and mental health," she said.

A report from HVS Global further supports this, indicating that the hospitality industry is on a recovery path with increased demand and higher average daily rates (ADR) in several markets. Leisure destinations have particularly benefited from the return of international travellers and strong domestic demand.

Chhabra highlighted that personalisation has become paramount in delivering premium hospitality services. "Well-heeled travellers are looking for customisation that matches their lifestyle," he said. In response to this demand, the industry has enhanced its offerings with high-end amenities such as large TVs, Nespresso machines, and personalised pillow preferences. Additionally, unique experiences, whether curated activities or wellness options are now integral to providing a premium stay.

Seema Taj further elaborated that growing disposable incomes and the impact of the pandemic have shifted guest priorities towards quality and exclusivity. She noted, "Guests today seek authenticity and personalised services that make their stay special and memorable. Moreover, the impact of the pandemic has shifted priorities, with a greater emphasis on health, wellness, and safety."

## Demographic Shifts and Experiential Travel

Digitalisation in the tourism sector will enhance travel experiences, with immersive experiences becoming more prevalent. Additionally, the push towards sustainability in hospitality is driven by consumer demand for eco-friendly practices, with many travellers now prioritising hotels that implement sustainable solutions (EHL Insights Hospitality Insider).

Nazir Rah observed a significant shift in guest preferences over the past decade, with an increasing number of travellers opting for premium rooms over standard ones. "The concept of standard rooms is now passé in the hospitality industry. High-quality rooms and experiences have been redefined," he stated.

The demographic landscape of premium travellers is also

changing. Vinit Chhabra observed that high-net-worth individuals (HNIs) in the age group of 35-65 are key drivers of this trend. Chhabra shared, “Our guests are generally HNIs who could be newlywed couples wanting to create memories, older couples celebrating togetherness, or cross-generational families looking to bond and celebrate milestones.”

Adding to this, Seema Taj shared that millennials and Gen Z travellers, as well as high-net-worth individuals, show a greater inclination towards premium experiences. “Millennials and Gen Z value experiences over material possessions and are willing to invest in unique and enriching stays that they can share on social media,” added Taj. It is safe to say that the demographic shift towards younger, tech-savvy travellers who give importance to experiences is shaping the way hotels approach premiumisation.

Kadmbini Mittal echoed the narrative by pointing out the profound shift among Gen Zs, who value authentic experiences over traditional investments. “Embracing a more enriching and holistic approach to travel, the new-age generation of tourists is at the forefront of this transformation,” she shared.

Ashwni Kumar Goela also highlighted the changing age demographics of premium travellers. “The age group of 25 to 40 are the people who are spending money now and are looking at experiences coming forward,” Goela noted.

### Balancing Premium Services with Competitive Pricing

40 per cent of guests at Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel, Delhi Airport, now opt for higher room categories. Goela shared, “People don’t mind spending money as long as they get good quality service.” To meet these expectations, Radisson focuses on continuous innovation and robust staff training to ensure high-quality service and guest satisfaction.

Seema Taj mentions that approximately two-thirds of guests at Sheraton Grand Palace Indore opt for premium rooms over standard ones. “To balance offering premium services while maintaining competitive pricing, we focus on delivering exceptional value. This includes offering exclusive packages, premium services, and unique amenities that enhance the overall guest experience,” she explained.

Balancing premium services with competitive pricing remains a challenge. Vinit Chhabra explained that at The Khyber, all guests are considered premium customers, with even the lowest-priced rooms offering picturesque views and bespoke services. “To remain competitive, we also deploy price management strategies to balance and maximise revenue,” he added.

Beyond luxurious accommodations, Rah Hotels and Resorts prioritises bespoke experiences that showcase the unique cultural fabric of their destinations. At Rah Bagh, guests have the opportunity to participate in immersive activities and interact with local communities. This approach enriches the guest experience and fosters a deeper connection to the destination.

### Future Trends and Adaptation

Looking forward, industry leaders anticipate a growing demand for premium experiences. Seema Taj predicts that the demand for premium experiences will continue to grow, driven by rising disposable incomes, a focus on health and wellness, and the influence of social media. “To meet these evolving needs, we plan to continuously innovate our offerings, integrating advanced technology, enhancing our wellness and sustainability initiatives, and curating more bespoke experiences that reflect the local culture and heritage,” she said.

Kadmbini Mittal emphasised the importance of wellness and spiritual tourism in the future of premium hospitality. “At

Hyatt, wellness is a big area of focus, and properties such as Andaz Delhi, Grand Hyatt Kochi, and Alila Diwa Goa offer comprehensive wellness experiences rooted in local culture,” she noted.

Ashwni Kumar Goela adds that innovation and creativity will be key to keeping guests engaged with premium services. “We need to be innovative and creative to keep our guests engaged with higher categories of rooms and services,” he added. By ensuring robust training plans and high-quality service, hotels can continue to attract and retain premium guests.

In conclusion, the trend towards personalisation in the hospitality sector is set to continue, driven by premiumisation, social media influence, economic stability, and a shift towards experiential travel. As guests increasingly seek unique, high-quality experiences, the industry must innovate and adapt to meet these evolving demands, ensuring a memorable and luxurious stay for all.

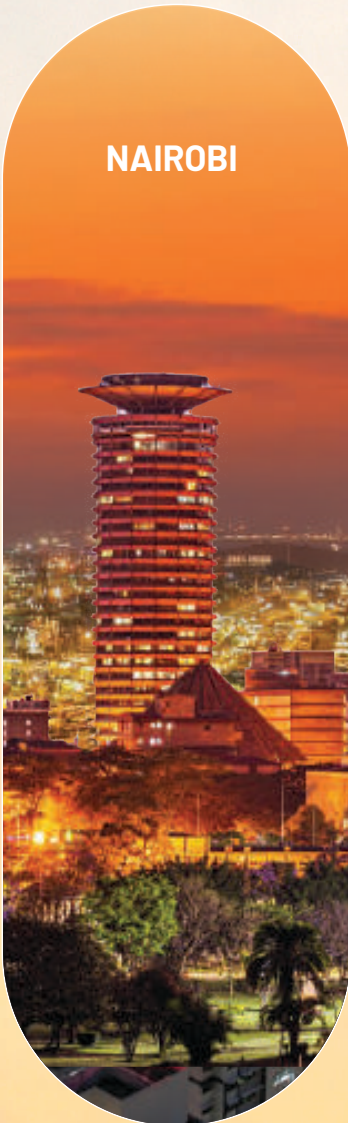


**Uganda Airlines**  
Fly the Crane to the Pearl of Africa

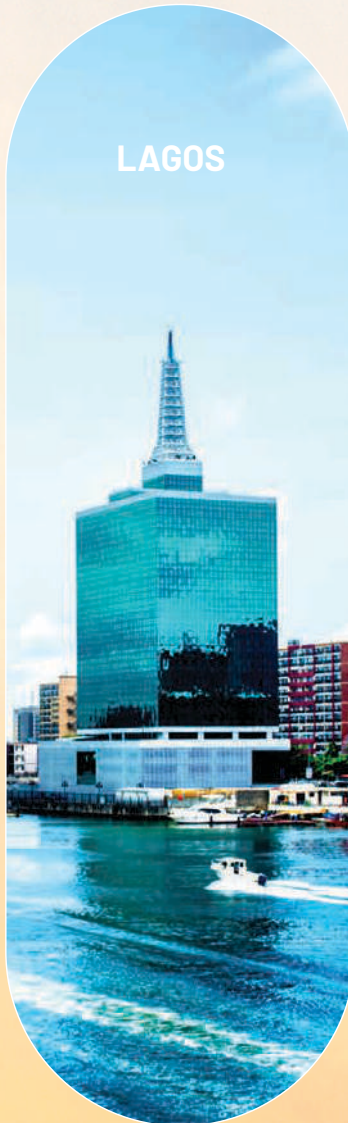


# Linking India to opportunities in East Africa and Beyond ✈️

**NAIROBI**



**LAGOS**



**JOHANNESBURG**



**KINSHASA**



## Welcome aboard

- ENTEBBE • DUBAI • MUMBAI • LAGOS • MOMBASA • NAIROBI • ZANZIBAR • DAR ES SALAAM
- KILIMANJARO • KINSHASA • BUJUMBURA • JUBA • MOGADISHU • JOHANNESBURG

# Unveiling Dubai's tourism landscape and its journey to ascendancy

On the sidelines of ATM 2024, with Bader Ali Habib, Regional Head of Proximity Markets, Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) we gain invaluable insights into Dubai's future as a global tourism powerhouse. With a strategic focus on enriching tourism offerings, cultivating key markets like India, and championing sustainability, Dubai is poised to solidify its status as one of the world's premier destinations for many years to come.

Sonika Bohra

**D**ubai welcomed 5.18 million international overnight visitors from January to March 2024, an 11 per cent rise over the 4.67 million tourist arrivals during the same period in 2023. The robust industry figures follow a successful first year of the D33 Agenda, which aims to further consolidate its position as a leading global city for business and leisure.

## A Global Magnet

Dubai's status as a global entertainment hub is bolstered by new attractions and a year-round calendar of business, leisure, and sporting events, attracting tourists worldwide. Its commitment to guest satisfaction ensures every visitor becomes an ambassador, spreading the city's reputation for prioritising happiness and comfort globally.

Dubai's allure as a top destination stems from several key factors. With an awe-inspiring skyline and constantly evolving landmarks, the city attracts global attention. Its hotels redefine luxury and hospitality, offering opulent accommodations and unparalleled service. Dubai also boasts some of the finest restaurants, providing a culinary journey that satisfies every palate. The city pulses with energy from numerous events and festivals, drawing visitors from across the globe. High-end shopping, adventure sports, and rich cultural



▲ Bader Ali Habib

explorations add to its appeal. From the serene desert to the bustling city streets and scintillating beachfront, a world of adventure awaits to be explored. In Dubai, the possibilities are endless.

## Strategic Insights into the Indian Market

For Indian travellers, Dubai is a comfortable short-haul leisure destination. It is connected to key metros and Tier 2 cities in India, which proves to be a game-changer for many aspiring Indians wanting to travel internationally. Due to close proximity, Dubai remains one of the top leisure and business destinations for

Indians. Yet DET constantly implements strategic initiatives to position Dubai as the ultimate choice for Indian travellers. Bader says, "India has been an incredible market for us; however, its ever-changing nature demands our constant attention. Being comfortable is not an option here. We have to always stay proactive and adaptable in this huge market."

DET thrives on a data-driven approach in India, capitalising on the ample consumer data available across various platforms. When it comes to the Indian market, they meticulously calculate their every move, and also believe in intuition, which adds the magic touch. "India serves as our playground for continuous experimentation and innovation," asserts Bader Ali Habib. DET also employs a highly tailored approach to different markets, like China, India, South Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia.

Highlighting Dubai's remarkable rise as a preferred destination for Indian travellers, Bader Ali Habib pointed out that India has consistently maintained its position as Dubai's primary tourism market in recent years. In Q1 this year, Dubai welcomed approximately 687,000 visitors from India, marking an impressive 12 per cent increase compared to the previous year. It is a second home for many Indians, and for some, it may even feel like a first home now, given the increasing number of people moving to Dubai permanently.





## Maximising Indian Stopovers and Summers

Dubai stopovers offer travellers a unique opportunity to explore the vibrant city while breaking up their journey. DET aims to position Dubai as a gateway where travellers can stop, shop, play, and have fun, even during their stopovers, before continuing their journey. Bader explains, “Stopovers are incredibly significant for us; we spare no effort in optimising this experience. Notably, a considerable portion of Indian travellers passing through the UAE is enroute to destinations like the US and UK, especially those with family connections in these regions. Our objective is to entice travellers to Dubai for stopovers as short as 24 hours, catering not only to families but also to couples and solo travellers from India, our new potential segments.”

Given Dubai’s bustling winter season, where every place is pretty much full, DET’s focus is also on enticing more travellers to visit during the summer months of June, July, and August. “To capitalise on the school break period in May and June, we have launched the Kids Go Free campaign, collaborating with additional stakeholders. Families with children under 12 can now enjoy complimentary accommodations, meals, and entertainment for up to two children, encouraging more families to choose Dubai for their summer getaway,” affirms Bader.

Dubai’s appeal as a repeat destination is further enhanced by its year-round popularity and budget-friendly packages, especially during the summer months. As a bucket list destination, it continues to attract first-time Indian visitors, bolstered by the annual issuance of 13 to 15 million new passports in India. Dubai has also simplified its e-visa regulations to draw more tourists from India.

Bader Ali Habib also emphasised on the importance of crafting campaigns that resonate deeply with the Indian audience, leveraging cultural elements such as Bollywood and cricket, and



optimising influencer partnerships. DET has focused on more impactful collaborations, resulting in a 10 - 15 per cent increase in returns. Several B2B travel trade engagements have been orchestrated, including roadshows, mega-familiarisation trips, and trade workshops.

## Towards Excellence and Innovation

Guided by the objectives of the D33 Agenda, Dubai is committed to further elevating standards across the Emirate and expanding its tourism offering with innovative and distinctive world-class infrastructure, experiences, and attractions. In addressing product development, Bader emphasised Dubai’s strategic multi-year collaboration with sports and pop culture to enrich its entertainment offerings. Dubai’s diverse offerings are constantly evolving, supported by world-class infrastructure, exceptional service at all touchpoints, and continuous collaboration between the government and private sectors. DET is creating new pathways to growth beyond traditional tourism, through investment, entrepreneurship, and attracting global talent to relocate to the city.

Dubai has a very healthy MICE sector, and the city has a substantial total of 96,484 hotel rooms across five-star and four-star establishments, representing a significant 64 per cent share of the overall hotel rooms in the city, with average room occupancy typically ranging from 81 to 84

per cent. The ongoing expansion of the cruise sector is also seeing significant benefits for Dubai. The city has been a significant player in the Cruise Arabia alliance, working closely with its partners to create interconnected and integrated regional cruise services. Overall, all efforts are instrumental in making Dubai the best city to visit, live, and work in.

## Commitment to Ecological Excellence

As the UAE’s ‘Year of Sustainability’ continues into 2024, Dubai remains committed to sustainable practices, aligning with global and national goals. Led by the tourism and hospitality sectors, Dubai showcases its eco-friendly approach through various initiatives, exemplifying its commitment to ecotourism. Among these efforts is the ‘Dubai Can’ initiative, which includes the ‘Refill for Life’ campaign promoting reusable bottles and refilling at 50 water fountains across the city. This initiative has already reduced the equivalent of over 18 million 500-ml single-use plastic water bottles in two years. Additionally, the ‘Dubai Reef’ project, part of the ‘Dubai Can’ initiative, is the world’s largest marine reef development, enhancing fish stocks and promoting marine biodiversity.

On the initiatives, Bader emphasises, “At DET, there’s collective accountability for implementing green practices, crucial for managing tourism volumes while safeguarding our natural heritage. We are committed to achieving our net zero goals by 2050.”



# AVIAREPS Enters the Hall of Fame, Celebrates 30 Years of Excellence



Michael Gaebler, Founder and Chairman of the Board, AVIAREPS, incepted the company over three long decades ago! He leads the representation company that, to this date, stands as a testament to qualities that only a handful of industry leaders possess. Having grown from a small start-up to a global leader in aviation and tourism representation, Gaebler shares the remarkable journey of AVIAREPS, its pivotal moments of growth, strategic partnerships, and vision for the future.

Vartik Sethi

**T**he story of AVIAREPS began in Germany in 1994 when Gaebler and some of his dedicated colleagues set out with a vision. Recognising the challenges faced by airlines in international markets, such as limited sales and marketing resources and brand recognition, Gaebler identified a chance to establish a company dedicated to amplifying the presence and efficacy of airlines and other travel entities on a global scale. He saw an opportunity to bridge these gaps. "In the beginning, our company was small and unknown. We had enough competition in our field, but we had a strong will to go after it," he reminisced. In its early days, AVIAREPS faced significant uncertainties and risks.

The entrepreneurial spirit was palpable as small tour operators would bring cash payments to the office, highlighting the high-risk, high-reward nature of the business. "There were no Euro currencies, and many tour operators couldn't finance their business properly. It was an era of high risk and high reward," Gaebler shared.

## Key Pivotal Moments

AVIAREPS' journey is marked by several pivotal moments that significantly contributed to its growth. One of the first major shifts was moving away from charter services, which initially constituted 80 per cent of the business, to focusing on airline representation. This transition was crucial for the company's

survival and future growth. Gaebler shared, "Within 24 months, 80 per cent of our business (charter services) dropped apart. We had to make a 180-degree change or perish." This critical juncture led AVIAREPS to invest heavily in winning airline representations as a general sales agent, a move that solidified its market position.

International expansion followed, driven initially by client demands. AVIAREPS began its foray into neighbouring European countries, leveraging the expertise of local managers. This strategy of local leadership proved essential as the company navigated various global crises, from the 9/11 attacks to the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Each challenge

reinforced the company's commitment to adaptability and innovation, ensuring its resilience and continued growth.

A significant milestone was the company's decision to diversify its services beyond airline representation. This strategic move allowed AVIAREPS to tap into new markets and client segments, including tourism boards, hotel chains, car rental companies, and cruise lines. This diversification strategy mitigated risks associated with relying on a single industry and opened up new revenue streams and growth opportunities.

## Strategic Partnerships and Acquisitions

The company has merged with and acquired about 30 companies, financing these ventures independently. One of the most valuable partnerships is with Marketing Garden in Asia, which has been pivotal in integrating Asia into AVIAREPS' global operations. Gaebler stated, "Our growth has been predominantly organic, but strategic partnerships and acquisitions have been integral to our expansion. We have merged with and acquired about 30 companies, financing these ventures ourselves."

These strategic moves have expanded the company's geographical reach and diversified its service offerings. Another instance that can be highlighted is the 2004 acquisition of the European market leader in tourism marketing and PR, which enhanced AVIAREPS' capabilities and market position significantly. By identifying and integrating companies with complementary strengths, AVIAREPS has not only brought in new expertise but also expanded its market access and enhanced its ability to serve its clients better.

## Catering to Diverse Markets

AVIAREPS has a unique approach to local markets. Combined with a global framework, this local approach allows AVIAREPS to offer tailored solutions that resonate with local audiences, balancing a global strategy with local execution.

Gaebler did a deep dive in explaining how he planned the local approach. He shared, "Every market is different in its behaviour, mentality, and needs. Our local leaders are familiar with these specialties, allowing us to have a local approach while maintaining a global mindset." In Europe, the focus might be on leveraging established travel networks and sophisticated marketing channels. In Asia, understanding cultural nuances and consumer behaviour is critical. Building infrastructure and creating awareness are

primary concerns in emerging markets like Africa. AVIAREPS' ability to navigate these varied landscapes has been a key tactic of its success.

## Impact on the Tourism Industry

Among several imprints that AVIAREPS has had on the tourism industry, enabling carriers, destinations, and travel companies to globalise their business efficiently and effectively has been revolutionary. "We have provided the tourism industry a gateway for global expansion at an unprecedented efficiency," Gaebler emphasised. AVIAREPS' innovative hybrid approach seamlessly integrates physical and digital realms, empowering clients to swiftly and economically access markets worldwide. An extensive database of travel professionals and media further amplifies this reach, providing a unique value proposition that few can match.

## Vision for the Future

Looking ahead, AVIAREPS' strategic roadmap focuses on further globalisation, particularly in untapped regions like Africa, and diversification into new areas such as the cruise business and cargo services. These sectors represent significant growth potential, and AVIAREPS is committed to leveraging its expertise to drive expansion. "We see huge potential and growth in the cruise business and believe that cargo will be a logical add-on for us," Gaebler stated.

Technology, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), will play a crucial role in enhancing the company's service offerings and operational efficiency. The future of travel is increasingly digital, and AVIAREPS is at the forefront of this transformation.

## Commitment to Sustainability

Sustainability is a core value for AVIAREPS. The company leads by example and is committed to helping its clients reduce their environmental impact while promoting sustainable travel practices. Internally, AVIAREPS promotes sustainability through various initiatives, from choosing eco-friendly office spaces

to encouraging employees to adopt greener commuting options. This holistic approach ensures that the company leads by example, setting a standard for the industry to follow. "Everyone who has an influence should become active, and we are," Gaebler affirmed.

## A Culture of Innovation and Collaboration

Gaebler's leadership style reflects a collaborative approach. He tends to value the input and energy of his team, recognising that their dedication and creativity are essential to the company's success. "I'm passionate about collaborating with individuals driven to make a difference, to shoulder responsibility, and to drive progress," Gaebler expressed. This vibrant atmosphere not only inspires team members but also cultivates an environment ripe for fresh ideas and groundbreaking innovations.

## Personal Motivation and Message to the Industry

Gaebler's passion for the industry and his commitment to excellence are evident in every aspect of AVIAREPS' operations. His love for travel and appreciation for the diversity of cultures, languages, and experiences fuel his drive to lead the company to new heights. Gaebler believes that travel is the most valuable lifestyle product, offering experiences that enrich lives and broaden perspectives. "The world, with its diversity in terms of languages, cultures, climate, history, and architecture, is the most valuable thing we can have as a lifestyle product. Every other lifestyle product is of material use that can disappear. The experiences from travelling the world are something you keep within yourself," Gaebler shared.

His message to industry partners is simple yet profound: Don't be afraid of challenges. Any goal can be achieved with determination, belief, and hard work. Embrace change, innovate, and always strive for excellence. "If you have the strong belief and willpower, you can reach any goal you would like to achieve in life," Gaebler encouraged.



# VITS Hotels and Resorts pioneering four-star hospitality

The VITS brand distinguishes itself by its steady focus on rooms and the food and beverage segment. Today, the VITS brand, launched in 2006 by Dr Vikram Kamat, CMD, The VITS Kamats Group, has forged a path of unparalleled hospitality and culinary excellence, setting new standards in the hospitality industry. Read more about the brand and its ventures...

Prashant Nayak

**V**ITS Hotels and Resorts is renowned for its luxury and quality in the hospitality sector and is designed to meet the varied needs of both business and leisure travellers. They currently operate around 20 hotels in Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Karnataka and plan to open 20 more hotels across India in the next five years.

VITS Hotels and Resorts is performing well amidst this rise in domestic tourism. "Currently, the industry is thriving as travel has resumed significantly. Positioned primarily in the four-star premium full-service segment, we offer excellent value options suitable for individual travellers, families, and groups alike. With a presence in both tier one and tier two cities, encompassing resorts, city hotels, and temple town destinations, we cater to diverse traveller preferences. The resurgence of domestic travel has been a key driver of our success in the overall market," shares Vikram.

## Unique Positioning

The VITS Hotels are in a very unique position because they are the only hotel chain that also focuses on F&B. They have brands and various restaurant ventures like Kamats Restaurants, Kamats Legacy, Wah Malvan, Urban Dhaba, and PepperFry by Kamats, to name a few. The F&B products they offer are not only cherished within their hotels but also at their standalone outlets. The outlets are recognised for their exceptional dining experiences, captivating live music, and delectable food and beverages. Similarly, Kamats has earned a premium market position for its authentic South Indian vegetarian delicacies, a culinary offering that is seldom found in other hotels or restaurants.

"This commitment to F&B and culinary excellence has been pivotal to our



▲ Dr Vikram Kamat

success. Authentic South Indian cuisine is highly sought after yet often difficult to find. Recognising this gap, we curated an unparalleled dining experience under the Kamat brand that stands out in India and globally. Our emphasis on food and beverage distinguishes us from many international chains. Embracing our rich heritage from Kamat, we have always been known as the food people. Our legacy is deeply rooted in culinary excellence, and food remains a central focus in everything we do," hints Vikram.

## Innovative Loyalty Programme

VITS Hotels recently unveiled its loyalty programme, VITS Passport. This initiative establishes a new standard as the inaugural loyalty programme introduced by the four-star hotel chain offers unparalleled benefits exclusively to its esteemed members. This avant-garde loyalty programme aims to fortify the connection between VITS Hotels and Resorts and its valued guests, recognising and rewarding their loyalty distinctively.

Giving an added dimension to the loyalty programme, Vikram mentions, "Our unique loyalty programme prioritises customer needs and preferences, setting us apart from traditional point-based systems. Instead of focusing on spending amounts, our programme rewards members based on the frequency of their visits to our hotels and standalone outlets. What sets our membership programme apart is its inclusivity of standalone restaurants, a feature not commonly found with other hotels due to the absence of similar setups. Ultimately, whether they spend more or less on a given day, our goal is to foster loyalty through frequent visits, ensuring they continue to enjoy the benefits of our programme."

## Building on Four-Star Excellence

VITS Hotels recently launched VITS Select Kharadi, Pune, which is their ninth hotel in the state of Maharashtra. The hotel group is set to expand its portfolio, with many other properties in the pipeline. Vikram shares, "So the majority of our market is Maharashtra and Gujarat, and at the moment, more than 80 per cent of our deals are in these states. Our focus continues to remain on tapping markets where we are not yet present and expanding to neighbouring states and cities like Rajasthan, Delhi, Bangalore, Karnataka, Hyderabad, and more."

When asked about his vision for his hotel group, Vikram says, "Everybody has a vision to be number one. I am very happy that we are focused on being number one, both in terms of revenue and profit, in the dedicated four-star space. We have no aspirations at this time to be five stars. We are fully focused on our market and our customers, and that is where we want to be the finest brand for four-star full-service."

# Giving wings to the nation\*



\*Source: IndiGo internal data.

# Expolnn Suites and Convention's path to integrating connectivity, sustainability, and luxury hospitality

Through its prime location, sustainable initiatives, and dedication to guest satisfaction, ExpoInn Suites and Convention offers unparalleled experiences for both domestic and international travellers. In this interaction with TTJ, Barun Gupta, General Manager, ExpoInn Suites and Convention, underscores the hotel's strategic focus on MICE and its commitment to becoming a premier hospitality brand across India by 2030.

Prashant Nayak

The MICE and wedding segments in India are currently experiencing a booming trend. Despite recent challenges, both segments are showcasing resilience and adaptability. With the gradual easing of restrictions, demand has significantly increased as businesses resume operations and individuals eagerly celebrate milestone events. Looking into the future, this segment is poised for robust growth, driven by pent-up demand, technological advancements facilitating hybrid events, and the emergence of innovative event formats.

## Empowering MICE and Weddings

Expolnn Suites and Convention is uniquely positioned at the junction of the Yamuna Expressway, Greater Noida, providing easy access to the upcoming Noida International Airport. This prime location ensures seamless connectivity for both business and leisure travellers. Barun says, "Our hotel stands out with its massive event spaces, perfect for hosting large conferences, weddings, exhibitions, and other significant gatherings. Coupled with state-of-the-art facilities, personalised service, and a commitment to sustainability, we offer an unparalleled experience. This combination of convenience, capacity, and exceptional service sets us apart in the competitive Indian hospitality market, including MICE."

Barun also mentions, "We cater to global corporates and big MICE events. Our strategies include partnering with leading corporations, hosting large-scale events, and offering tailored packages and memberships to corporate clients. This approach, combined with targeted marketing and personalised services, allows us to maximise opportunities within this lucrative market segment."

## Sustainability and Guest-Centric Focus

Delving into other aspects of hospitality, Expolnn Suites and Convention, in its relentless pursuit of pioneering hospitality



▲ Barun Gupta

trends, crafts bespoke guest experiences, enticing staycation bundles, and tailored perks for modern nomads. Leveraging cutting-edge tech, including mobile check-ins, digital keys, and advanced booking systems, they ensure seamless service. "Our unwavering commitment to sustainability shines through in every aspect of our operations. To enhance our eco-friendly initiatives, we have introduced cigarette butt disposal bins, repurposing waste into beautiful decorative items," asserts Barun.

Barun further adds, "Wellness lies at the heart of our ethos, with indulgent spa treatments at Spa Hibiscus, dynamic fitness programmes like Les Mills on the Screens, and a menu of nutritious dining options. Furthermore, we prioritise guest engagement through active social media interaction, enriching their experience and nurturing a strong sense of community. Our dedication to sustainability remains steadfast as we continue our journey towards a greener future."

## The Location Advantage

The domestic market is pivotal for Expolnn Suites and Convention's revenue, especially given their prime location near the Yamuna Expressway, which provides convenient

access to attractions like Vrindavan and Agra. They are also located close to the Eastern Peripheral Expressway, which gives easy connectivity to the Mumbai Expressway, and the upcoming Noida International Airport.

In addition to domestic travel, the hotel's revenue heavily relies on the inbound travel market, thanks to its strategic location near the Yamuna Expressway. Anticipating a significant increase in international visitors with the upcoming opening of the new Noida airport, the hotel is partnering with travel agencies and online platforms that cater to this demographic.

On inbound business, Barun further explains, "Our offerings include culturally diverse experiences, multilingual staff, and tailored services to meet varying needs. Targeted marketing campaigns and continuous facility enhancements ensure we meet global standards, providing seamless stays for inbound travellers. In addition to our focus on inbound travellers, we have recently begun hosting airline crew members at our hotel. This new segment adds another dimension to our clientele and further diversifies our revenue streams."

## Expansion and Vision

Guests can anticipate exciting developments from Expolnn Suites and Convention as they are expanding their portfolio with the introduction of two new hotels. By next year, they are set to unveil these additions, providing a total of 345 keys and eight F&B outlets. "Our Brand Vision 2030 is to establish ourselves as a premier hospitality brand in India, renowned for innovation, sustainability, and unparalleled guest experiences. We aim to strategically expand our presence in key locations nationwide while upholding our commitment to excellence in service and quality. Through a combination of strategic growth, innovative offerings, and a steadfast dedication to guest satisfaction, we aspire to set new benchmarks in luxury hospitality and create unforgettable moments for guests across the country," mentions Barun.

# Area 83 aims to broaden accessibility to its unique adventure experiences

Adventure tourism in India is on the rise, with travellers increasingly craving unique and exhilarating experiences that offer an escape from mundane life. Tariq Sheriff, Director, Area 83, is at the forefront of this trend, and his entrepreneurial spirit led him to establish Area 83, an acclaimed adventure resort in Bengaluru, capturing the essence of the region. With us, he shares more about the resort, curated under his visionary leadership.

Prashant Nayak

**B**engaluru, with its vibrant culture and diverse landscapes, offers a picturesque backdrop for various outdoor activities and is emerging as a hotspot for adventure enthusiasts. Adventure tourism plays a vital role in enriching the lives of Bengaluru's fast-paced young citizens by providing them with outlets for relaxation, fitness, socialisation, skill development, exploration, and entrepreneurial pursuits.

## Adventure Escapes in Busy Bengaluru

Founded in 2017, Area 83 offers an escape from urban life and caters to both corporate and family clientele, boasting thrilling outdoor activities. Luxurious accommodations, exquisite cuisine, and exceptional hospitality define the Area 83 experience, promising unforgettable moments in nature's embrace.

Area 83 was conceived after the founders experienced the thrill of bungee jumping in New Zealand and recognised a lack of similar high-adrenaline activities in Bengaluru and India. They aimed to create a space where clients could reconnect with nature, away from the corporate hustle and bustle of city life. Tariq, one of the founders, then obtained proper education and certification in outdoor recreation and leadership. This emphasis on training and safety was critical to providing thrilling yet secure experiences at the resort.

Tariq says, "Area 83 offers a unique luxury staycation experience, set amidst nature with an 18-acre lake and lush greenery. The resort distinguishes itself by providing immersive natural surroundings, diverse accommodation options ranging from rustic cabins to luxurious tents, exceptional dining experiences that cater to various palates, and highly personalised service. This combination ensures guests have a memorable and rejuvenating stay."

## Bridging Thrill and Teamwork

Area 83 offers a broad spectrum of activities



▲ Tariq Sheriff

designed to cater to different interests and thrill levels. Their high-adrenaline activities include Rocket Ejector, Superman, and Sky Swing, featuring exhilarating drops from heights of up to 80 feet. Adventure activities include kayaking, water cycling, dirt karting, and paintball, which provide engaging outdoor experiences. Group activities like human foosball and bubble soccer foster camaraderie and teamwork.

Designed for corporate clients, team-building activities such as pipeline, keypunch, and pyramid builder focus on enhancing teamwork and problem-solving skills.

After its inception and the pandemic, Area 83 is making significant strides, capturing the attention of adventure enthusiasts and corporate travellers. "Currently, Area 83 caters primarily to adventure resort markets within India. To attract new markets and meet evolving customer needs, the resort is incorporating additional high-thrill activities such as free fall and zip lining. These new features, combined with its existing array of activities, will enhance the resort's appeal and offer a continuously exciting experience for guests," informs Tariq.

## Redefining Corporate and Wedding Outdoors

Area 83 is best suited for corporate outings. Here, one can say farewell to mundane team-building exercises and embrace an unforgettable experience that draws teams closer, forging enduring memories. The activities are carefully curated to cater to introverted and extroverted personalities, ensuring everyone feels included and valued within the group dynamic. Area 83 has also opened Aura, its elegant lakeside wedding and event venue, which has exceptional spaces like Vista- The Glass House, Celeste- The Lakeside Floating Mandap, and Jade- The Lawns and Garden.

To drive growth and expansion, especially in the corporate events and wedding destination markets, Tariq conveys, "Area 83 plans to extend its offerings beyond the Bannerghatta location. This includes establishing new sites closer to large corporate entities, IT hubs, MNC offices, and tech parks. These strategic expansions aim to make the unique experiences of Area 83 more accessible to a broader audience."

## Dedicated Green Hospitality

Area 83 demonstrates its commitment to sustainability through several key initiatives, like environmental conservation, where the resort is built around existing trees and foliage near Bannerghatta National Park, thus minimising environmental impact during construction. The founders believe in giving back to the community through initiatives such as upliftment programmes, food drives, and ration distribution. Guests are also encouraged to participate in weekly food drives to foster community engagement. Maintaining the natural surroundings and promoting eco-friendly practices are integral to the resort's operations and green initiatives. These initiatives reflect Area 83's dedication to preserving the environment and supporting the local community, enhancing the overall guest experience through responsible and sustainable practices.



# Resorts World Cruises unveils Arabian Gulf Sailings at extravagant launch events in Mumbai and Delhi

Resorts World Cruises (RWC) recently hosted two extravagant launch events in Mumbai and Delhi to mark the grand occasion of their opulent cruise ship, Resorts World One, being homeported in Dubai, UAE, for six months. This deployment will span from October 18, 2024, to April 13, 2025, heralding a new era in RWC's operations and significantly boosting cruise tourism in the Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman.

The Mumbai launch took place at St Regis Mumbai on May 29, 2024, while the Delhi event unfolded at Shangri-La Eros New Delhi, on May 31, 2024. Both events drew a packed house, with over 200 partners from the travel trade and fraternity and the travel media participating in the Mumbai event, while the Delhi event witnessed vibrant participation by 150 plus partners and travel stakeholders.

During this six-month homeport deployment in Dubai, Resorts World One will offer 2- and 3-night cruises from Dubai and Doha to destinations including Sir Bani Yas Island, Doha in Qatar, and Khasab and Muscat in Oman. The ship is expected to make 75 calls in the region, hosting 150,000 passengers over the period, which will significantly contribute to the growth of cruise tourism in the Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman.

The Resort World Cruises team delivered presentations showcasing unparalleled luxury, premium offerings, world-class amenities, innovative sailings, and diverse entertainment that will define RWC's Arabian Gulf sailings. The team included Michael Goh, President, RWC; Naresh Rawal, Vice President, Sales and Marketing, RWC India; and Colin Kerr, Senior Vice President, Entertainment, RWC.

Michael Goh highlighted the great opportunity and value-added proposition this deployment presented for both the Indian and GCC markets, expressing confidence in the Indian market for Dubai sailings, particularly in the MICE segment. Naresh Rawal provided a detailed product presentation, discussing the ship, the itineraries, and the destinations. He emphasised the availability of halal-certified meals and a wide array of Indian cuisine options onboard, including Jain food. Colin Kerr, responsible for ensuring entertainment and satisfaction on all of Resorts World's cruise ships, briefed everyone about the multiple onboard options catering to the needs and wants of almost all segments and age groups.

Attendees were also introduced to the Senior Leadership of the Pan India PSA network of Resorts World Cruises, a crucial link in facilitating the final closure of transactions. The events also featured lucky draws, awarding 2- and 3-night cruise vacations to a few fortunate winners, with the crowning glory being a 3-night cruise in the

Palace Suite onboard Resorts World One.

These grand launch events marked the proud debut of RWC's Arabian Gulf sailings in both Mumbai and Delhi, setting the stage for an exciting new chapter in luxury cruise travel.





*grand*  
MADURAI  
BY GRT HOTELS

THE GRAND LEGACY OF DECADES-OLD HOSPITALITY.  
NOW AT THE GRAND MADURAI.

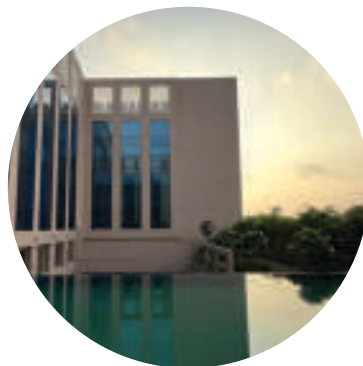


One of the most acclaimed hospitality chains of South India - GRT Hotels & Resorts brings its fabled legacy of lip-smacking gourmet cuisine, luxurious lodgings and service with attention to detail at the newly opened Grand Madurai - located conveniently within close proximity to the airport.



**BAZAAR**

Gourmet restaurant with street food from around the country



**POOL**

Enjoy some relaxing time-off by the pool-side



**STUDIO 79**

The first contemporary themed resto-bar in Madurai



**BODHI SPA**

Enjoy the world luxury award winning Bodhi spa

79 / 1A1, NEXT TO VELAMMAL HOSPITAL, MADURAI - TUTICORIN RING ROAD, CHINTHAMANI, MADURAI - 625009, TAMILNADU.

📞 Call for reservation: 080 622 10150 | 🌐 [www.grthotels.com/madurai](http://www.grthotels.com/madurai)

@grandbygrt

Facebook icon | GrandbyGRTHotels

📧 reservationsmdu@grtgrand.com



# Beyond Filmmaking

## Ramoji Film City Evolves into a versatile tourist destination

Ramoji Film City is where many aspiring filmmakers have walked in with a script and walked out with a film, a testament to its transformative power in turning dreams into cinematic reality. Today, in addition to being a renowned film destination, Ramoji Film City has evolved into a sought-after tourist and event destination. By seamlessly blending cinematic charm with thematic attractions, immersive experiences, and diverse activities, it has captured the imagination of visitors from around the world. As it continues to introduce new initiatives and projects, Vijayeswari Ch, Managing Director, Ramoji Film City, shares the destination's varied attractions and its commitment to delivering unforgettable experiences and maintaining its status as a premier destination for filmmakers and tourists alike.

Prashant Nayak



▲ Vijayeswari Ch

**Please sketch the journey of Ramoji Film City from a filmmaking facility to a prominent tourist destination.**

The sprawling 1,666-acre Ramoji Film City was created by Ramoji Rao in 1996 and has been certified by Guinness World Records as the world's largest film studio complex. The facility was conceived to provide filmmakers with comprehensive facilities encompassing everything from pre- to post-production. Over time, its tourism potential became apparent as the public expressed a keen interest in visiting the locations where their favourite films were shot.

Elaborate arrangements were made in consultation with international experts to create a thematic destination complete with dedicated amusement zones, themed attractions, shows, and rides. Today, the facility has become a multi-faceted tourist attraction, blending cine magic with fun

and leisure, contributing to a rich tourist experience.

**How does being recognised as the world's largest film city by Guinness World Records shape Ramoji Film City's reputation among filmmakers and tourists?**

Achieving the Guinness World Records title as the world's largest film city has significantly elevated the stature of Ramoji Film City. This prestigious recognition has enhanced our reputation within the entertainment sector, drawing increased interest from filmmakers, potential business partners, and tourists.

**What are the distinctive thematic attractions that distinguish it as a compelling destination?**

Besides being a pioneer of one-of-a-kind film-induced tourism, Ramoji Film



City offers a variety of distinctive tourism experiences, such as guided studio tours, live shows, eco-tours, dedicated children's attractions, seasonal celebrations, or carnivals, which make it a compelling tourist destination.

Divergent experiences are presented in immersive environments, such as the Dark Ride, Mythological Set, a Wild West-themed stunt show and Avenue, simulated space travel, themed caves, and a spine-chilling walkthrough. It is also home to Ramoji Adventure @ Sahas, Asia's finest adventure land.

#### **What incentives and support does your office provide to filmmakers or production companies using your sites?**

Upon contact with our production teams, we prioritise providing unparalleled facilitation and a commitment to exceptional service. We begin by showcasing a comprehensive catalogue of locations and arranging meticulous reconnaissance trips for the production crew. Additionally, we walk the extra mile by arranging comfortable hotel stays, managing logistics with precision, and offering delectable on-site catering, ensuring that every aspect of their production needs is meticulously taken care of.

The budget-friendly packages are presented as per the call sheet. We embrace the best practices with a competitive price structure for regional films.

#### **What are some of the most renowned films, locations, or landmarks within Ramoji Film City that have gained popularity over the years?**

From the iconic multi-purpose building where Rajinikanth's blockbuster 'Chandramukhi' film was shot to the historic Jug Fountain, later transformed into a monumental tribute to Hrithik Roshan's superhero saga 'Krrish 3', and finally, to the awe-inspiring dedicated set where the epic saga of 'Bahubali' unfolded across multiple languages over a span of 600 days, each location has attained a cherished stop on the tourist's journey, igniting imagination and fascination with the magic of cinema.

Some of the popular films shot here include Shahrukh's Chennai Express and Ra-One, Ranjith's Robot, Lingaa, and Sivaji: The Boss, Amitabh Bachchan's Sarkar Raj, Ajay Devgan's Himmatwala and Drishyam, Golmal, Manikarnika, RRR, Sooryavanshi, Magadheera, Pushpa, K.G.F.: Chapter 2, Salaar, to name a few.

#### **What prompted Ramoji Film City to infuse themes into the tourism experience, and what specific immersive attractions and experiences are now available to visitors?**

To enhance the tourism experience, Ramoji Film City combines unique elements and infuses themes into tourist attractions. I believe that inimitable and cohesive themes can attract visitors looking for something distinctive and memorable.

Here, some of the thematic experiences that create immersive environments include European streets with elevated structures, a mythological set, a Wild West-themed avenue and live show, space travel, caves with a Buddhist theme, etc.

#### **Apart from filmmaking, leisure, and tourism, what other activities and experiences is Ramoji Film City offering?**

Ramoji Film City is a multifaceted destination and offers a diverse range of experiences. Apart from leisure and tourism, it caters to experiential corporate events, grand weddings, excursions for educational institutions, and celebrations of ceremonies dipped in tradition and custom.

It is where one can immerse oneself in various entertainment, relaxation, and rejuvenation forms. Ramoji Adventure @ Sahas, touted as Asia's finest adventure land, adds an exciting dimension for thrill-seekers, while Sukhibhava Wellness offers integrated wellness programmes and promotes lifestyle modification, detoxification, and nutrition.

To experience Ramoji Film City better, tourists are encouraged to stay at Ramoji Film City in various hotels managed by the Dolphin Group of Hotels. Featuring wide-ranging options for stays that fit various budgets, including Sitara, a luxury hotel; Tara, a comfort hotel; Vasundhara Villa, a farmhouse accommodation in the midst of greenery; Shantiniketan, a budget stay; Greens Inn, a cosy accommodation; and Hotel Sahara, shared accommodation best suited for groups, Ramoji Film City has every guest covered.

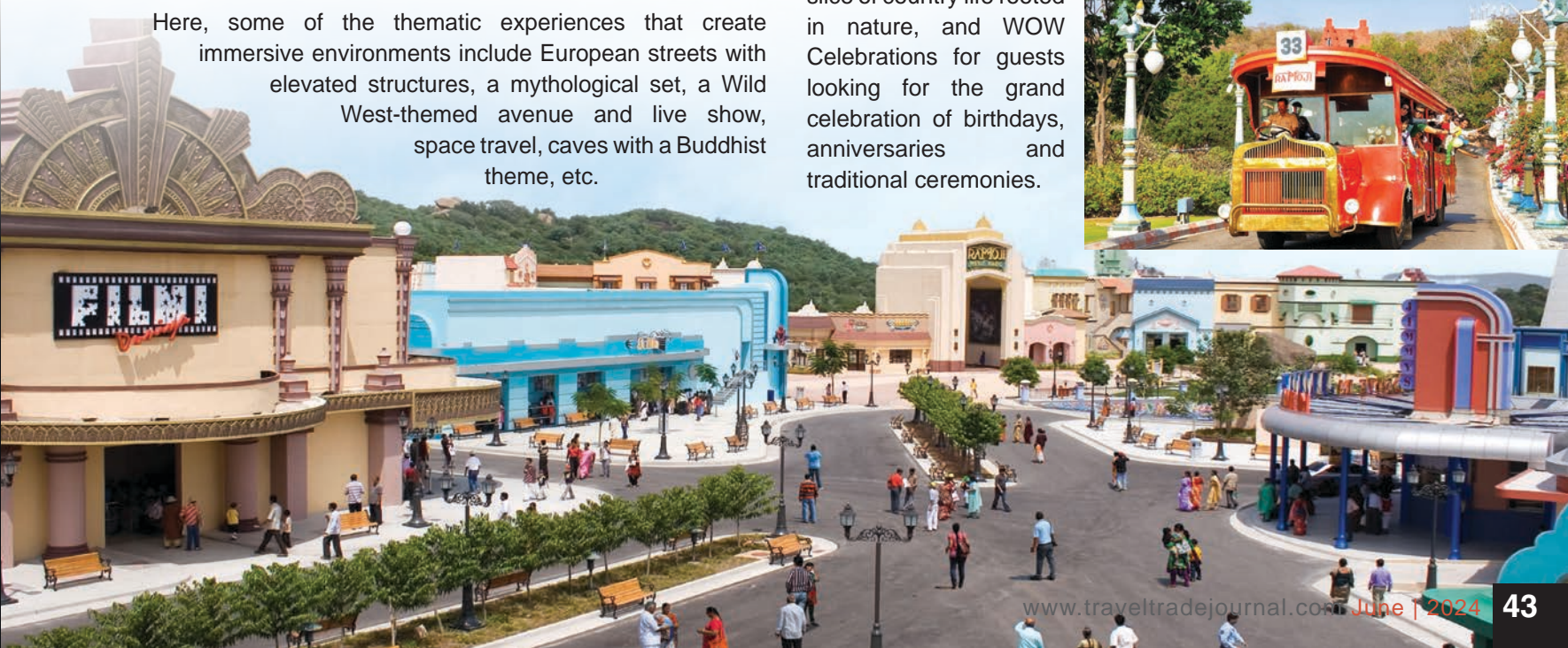
#### **How do you target and optimise opportunities to increase tourist traffic?**

We constantly innovate in the tourism experience, present specially designed packages, and adopt various market outreach activities and promotions. Strategies are also adopted to create buzz, increase the brand's visibility, and encourage active engagement from prospects.

#### **Any new projects at Ramoji Film City that aim to further elevate its status as a premier destination for filmmakers and tourists?**

The upcoming projects at Ramoji Film City include Motion Capture and Virtual Production Set, which use cutting-edge film technology that drives new-age cinema and will interest both filmmakers and tourists.

Other attractions in the pipeline include experiential conferences for corporations with more than 100 themes, a guided tour of Agro Park, which will expose guests to organic farming and a slice of country life rooted in nature, and WOW Celebrations for guests looking for the grand celebration of birthdays, anniversaries and traditional ceremonies.





Cinnamon Bentota Beach

# An Idyllic Sri Lankan Escape with Cinnamon Hotels and Resorts

As I step off my restful SriLankan Airlines flight from Delhi to Colombo, Sri Lanka, I eagerly look forward to my tropical adventure with Cinnamon Hotels and Resorts. With an array of attractive properties nestled in prime locales across Sri Lanka, the promise of a memorable journey calls out, which I simply cannot wait to experience.

**Prativa Vaidya Bhalla**

**S**ri Lanka feels like a home away from home, offering a comforting embrace that resonates deeply with Indian travellers. My stay, curated by Srilankan Holidays, with the Cinnamon Hotels and Resorts, exemplified this sentiment. With a diverse array of properties, Cinnamon Hotels and Resorts seamlessly anticipates and caters to every aspect of my journey. From MICE events and business stopovers to opulent weddings, luxury holidays, and multigenerational travels, Cinnamon Hotels and Resorts ensures that every need is not just met but exceeded.

My Island adventure begins in Colombo, where the majestic Cinnamon Grand Colombo awaits, promising a 'grand' introduction to the capital city.

## Cinnamon in the City

Upon arriving at Cinnamon Grand Colombo, I am immediately struck by the harmonious blend of old-world charm and contemporary elegance. Greeted with a gracious 'Ayubowan' ('hello' in Sinhala), I am introduced to the legendary Sri Lankan hospitality that will accompany me throughout my visit. The seamless check-in process, coupled with a well-appointed and

spacious room with a magnificent view, set the tone for a brilliant trip ahead.

A rejuvenating wellness session at the highly acclaimed Nija Spa further enhanced my sense of tranquillity. During my stay, I had the privilege of witnessing a grand Sri Lankan wedding ceremony held at the hotel's Atrium Lobby. Surrounded by towering walls and rooms overlooking the raised central area, it exudes an impressive sense of grandeur, perfect for hosting memorable events.

With 246 well-equipped rooms spanning diverse categories, thoughtfully designed conference and banquet halls featuring cutting-edge amenities, and impeccable service at every turn, the hotel exudes the assurance of a seasoned establishment. The tasteful in-house restaurants offer a delightful array of local and global cuisines, while the hotel's excellent location near business districts and shopping areas provides a comprehensive city experience.

The local excursion to Beddagana Wetland Park was unforgettable. It is a beautifully restored green oasis in the heart of Colombo, known for small wildlife spotting and birdwatching. Witnessing the park in its rain-soaked, early-morning splendour was truly remarkable, emphasising its essential role as the city's 'green lungs'.



Cinnamon Grand Colombo

## Lodging in the Wild

Cinnamon Lodge Habarana is a majestic, timeless five-star property spanning 27 acres of lush, forested land in Habarana, featuring 138 cottage rooms. The grand, tall, and white-columned colonial entrance greets me, promising a sublime experience of understated luxury and inviting me to bask in the freshness of nature. My cottage is equipped with all the modern amenities, yet earthy. I fall asleep to the sound of crickets and wake up to birdsong.

It is the perfect resting point for a wide array of local nearby excursions and curated guided tours available to the legendary Sigiriya Rock Fortress, the ancient capitals of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, and the Dambulla Cave Temple. The elephant safari at Eco Park, situated near the resort, provides a surreal glimpse into the lives of these majestic creatures, enhanced by insights shared by the knowledgeable in-house naturalists of Cinnamon Nature Trails. Completely spoiled with gracious service, enthralling cultural shows of traditional Sri Lankan fire dances, and delicious local cuisines, I look forward to the next leg of my exploration.



Romantic Dining at Cinnamon Lodge Habarana



Cottage at Cinnamon Lodge Habarana



Colonial Portico of the Cinnamon Lodge Habarana

## Luxury at its Finest

My final pit stop is a Geoffrey Bawa masterpiece - Cinnamon Bentota Beach, a breathtaking beachfront resort with 155 rooms that perfectly blends romance, relaxation, and adventure. This property is not only a hotel; it is an extraordinary experience that I hope to return to soon.

This is where the river meets the sea, and it has been the venue for various gala events, destination weddings, and celebrity guest spotting. I am simply amazed by the minimalist yet luxurious spaces and impeccable service. As I am traditionally welcomed through an old stone gateway, I walk up the polished wooden staircase to be greeted by sheer spatial elegance adorned with stunning installations and colourful Sri Lankan batik art. The minimalist interiors offer cosy seating areas, while expansive glass walls provide breathtaking views of the sea, instantly creating a calming and visually striking environment. The

sheer size of my appointed room, with palm trees swaying just outside the large balcony, is yet another pleasant surprise.

The outstanding cuisine featuring the best of Sri Lankan flavours and meticulously curated global dishes stuns with its level of attention to detail. The curated excursions to Galle Fort, the boat ride through the serene mangroves of Bentota, and the exhilarating water activities are delightful experiences. The highly trained and gracious Cinnamon team leaves no stone unturned in ensuring a memorable stay for every guest.

Bidding a fond goodbye with a gracious 'Stuthi' (*Thank you in Sinhala*), I know I have not had enough, and I shall be back. Sri Lanka has left an indelible place in my heart, and the memories will last a long time.



Geoffrey Bawa Suite



Sea view from the balcony, Cinnamon Bentota Beach

**SriLankan Airlines** offers seamless short-haul flights from India to Colombo, linking 115 destinations across 59 countries. With a modern Airbus fleet featuring A330-300 and A320/321 neo aircraft, the airline is celebrated for its exceptional service, safety, and reliability, earning numerous awards in global aviation.

**Srilankan Holidays** (SL Holidays), the leisure arm of SriLankan Airlines, promotes inbound and outbound tourism, leveraging its airline network and partnerships with leading hotels, tour operators, and other tourism-related players to curate customised itineraries.



# DUSIT THANI MALDIVES

## to spark re-engagement with Indian market

Amidst the enchanting turquoise waters, Dusit Thani Maldives beckons as a sanctuary of exclusive and multifaceted luxury. Rifaa Ath Saeed, Director, Sales and Marketing, Dusit Thani Maldives, delves into the preferences of Indian outbound travel and highlights the latest travel trends affecting the Maldives. With sharp insight, she provides a comprehensive view of the challenges, opportunities, and significant impact of Indian tourism on the Maldivian market.

Prativa Vaidya Bhalla



▲ Rifaa Ath Saeed

The potent combination of natural beauty, luxury, and exclusivity makes Maldives a highly attractive destination for Indian tourists seeking an indulgent holiday experience. The attraction of the Maldives has been driven by proximity, accessibility, improved connectivity with direct flights, and a growing middle class with disposable income for travel. While the Indian market has experienced a compelling dip in recent months, it remains a crucial segment for luxury resorts in the Maldives, promising long-term potential and growth.

### Thai Hospitality

Dusit Thani Maldives seamlessly combines Thai hospitality with the captivating attraction

of the Maldives, offering an unparalleled experience. Located on Mudhdhoo Island in Baa Atoll – Maldives’ first UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, Dusit Thani Maldives is just 35 minutes away by seaplane or domestic transfer. With 94 luxurious villas and residences, including beachfront and overwater options such as the exclusive Ocean Pavilion, it offers the ultimate Maldivian escape. Each villa features lavish amenities, private pools, and mesmerising ocean panoramas.

The culinary extravaganza includes tantalising seafood at the Sea Grill, authentic Thai delights at Benjarong, global flavours at The Market, and delightful cocktails at the relaxed Sand Bar. At Dusit Thani Maldives, guests can enjoy signature Devarana wellness treatments and explore turquoise lagoons and vibrant reefs, ideal for water activities. The resort also features the Baan Sanook Kids Club, which offers a range of activities for children, and a marine biology centre that provides insights into local marine life conservation.

Highlighting the resort’s unique features, Rifaa said, “Dusit Thani Maldives differentiates itself from other luxury resorts in the Maldives through its unique blend of Thai hospitality and Maldivian charm, offering guests a truly distinctive experience.” She further emphasises, “One of the key aspects that truly sets Dusit Thani Maldives apart is its emphasis on sustainability and environmental conservation. The resort is

committed to protecting the local marine ecosystem, and guests can participate in various conservation activities, such as coral planting and marine life monitoring, to contribute to these efforts.”

The resort being located just 10 minutes away from Hanifaru Bay provides a unique opportunity as it stands out as a truly extraordinary destination within the Maldives, celebrated for its unique natural beauty and biodiversity. Recognised as a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, this bay offers visitors a rare opportunity to witness the marvels of marine life in a pristine environment.

### Rekindling Indian Connection

Tourist arrivals from India to the Maldives has dangerously dropped by over 42 per cent in the initial four months of this year compared to the corresponding period last year. This alarming decline stems from strained diplomatic relations between the two nations.

Highlighting the importance of the Indian market, Rifaa said, “India is one of the key markets for the resorts and to attract it back to the destination, we have implemented several strategies to spark engagement. We have also been actively analysing travel trends to understand the underlying factors contributing to this decline.”

She further shared “We have launched targeted marketing campaigns that emphasise the unique experiences we offer to our guests. They highlight the cultural elements of India blended with the culture





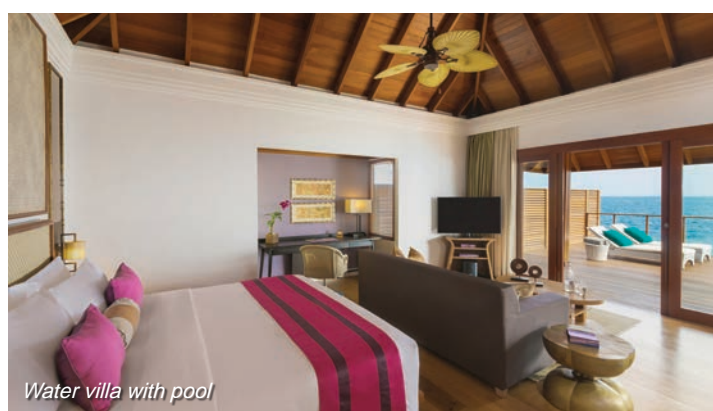
Sand Bar



Ocean villa with pool



Devarana Spa



Water villa with pool



Culinary Delights

of the brand Dusit, such as Indian cuisine, the brand's famous Thai cuisine, and special packages for families and honeymooners. Additionally, we continue to collaborate closely with our partners in the subcontinent with attractive offers to ensure better visibility. We have also increased our presence on digital platforms and social media to directly engage with potential travellers, showcasing the beauty and exclusivity of Dusit Thani Maldives. Through these efforts, we aim to re-establish Dusit Thani Maldives as a preferred destination for Indian travellers, offering them an unparalleled blend of luxury, culture, and personalised hospitality."

Dusit Thani Maldives offers a range of special offers, packages, and incentives for trade partners, including travel agencies, tour operators, and other industry partners. These may include attractive promotional offers, complimentary upgrades, special packages for leisure groups, and exclusive deals for repeaters.

## Understanding Indian Travellers

Rifaa provides valuable clarity into the distinct booking patterns and seasonal trends exhibited by Indian guests, significantly impacting a resort's operations and offerings in the Maldives. She articulates, "Indians often prefer all-inclusive packages that include meals, beverages and activities, allowing them to relax without worrying about additional costs. They are increasingly interested in wellness experiences, water sports, immersive excursions, and cultural experiences. They appreciate resorts that cater to their culinary preferences and offer customised cuisine options."

Indian travel to the Maldives typically coincides with school holidays and festive seasons. They often opt for shorter stays, and with large families travelling together, they prefer larger villas and family-friendly cultural experiences. Guests from the subcontinent

frequently have specific dietary preferences, so resorts that cater to these preferences can attract more guests from the subcontinent.

## Commitment to Sustainability

Dusit Thani Maldives places a high priority on sustainability in its operations. The resort has implemented several initiatives to reduce its environmental impact and is deeply committed to protecting the local ecosystem. The resort actively participates in coral planting, marine life monitoring, and other conservation efforts. The resort has implemented elaborate energy-efficient practices and water-saving measures to reduce its carbon footprint.

Embracing 'Sustainability' as one of the four key pillars of Dusit Graciousness. 'Tree of Life' is Dusit's new group-wide sustainability programme, specially created to ensure the timely delivery of the Dusit promise of positive impact.



Borderless Dining



# AN OASIS IN THE TIGER COUNTRY

## Bookmark Resorts, Jogi Mahal, Ranthambore

Wildlife lovers have a new luxurious address to launch their jungle escapades into the tiger lands of Ranthambore. Bookmark Resorts, Jogi Mahal, Ranthambore, now in its first season of operations, is all set to welcome guests seeking a wilderness experience blended with sophistication and comfort.

**Gurjit Singh Ahuja**

There is something inherently awe-inspiring about seeing a tiger in its natural habitat. It creates a sense of reverence combined with pulse-racing excitement. Whether you are with family, a partner, or solo, a chance to get away from the hustle and bustle of city life into the wilderness is a call not many can resist.

Ranthambore is an ideal wilderness getaway from Delhi-NCR, accessible easily by road via the brand new Delhi-Mumbai expressway. The 350 km drive to Sawai Madhopur from Delhi, where Ranthambore is located, is smooth and hassle-free. Further, a well-chosen accommodation can significantly enhance your wildlife experience in India, making it a pivotal aspect of your entire journey.

### Comfort Meets Tradition

Bookmark Resorts, Jogi Mahal, located in Kilchipur, is just five minutes from

Ranthambore National Park's main entrance and 8.5 km from Sawai Madhopur Railway Station. This latest gem in the Bookmark Resorts portfolio, takes its name from an iconic lakeside hunting lodge nestled within a national park renowned for its stunning scenery. The resort's facade reflects the local essence of Rajasthan and its Rajputana architecture.

Upon my arrival in the main lobby, I was greeted with a traditional welcome that instantly set the tone for my stay. The breathtaking ambience was highlighted by a sprawling fresco of the original Jogi Mahal, complete with depictions of the jungle, lake, and majestic tigers. This captivating jungle theme extends through the resort's corridors and hallways, where vibrant murals of key locations within Ranthambore National Park invite you to snap photos at every turn. The walls are adorned with paintings of tigers, leopards, and other local wildlife, all crafted in the distinctive Ranthambore

style, reflecting the commitment to involve, support, and promote local artisans and craftsmen.

### Accommodations

The resort is divided into two main sections: the main wing and the residential wing. The main wing housed the spacious reception area, a gift shop, an outdoor alfresco dining area, and a restaurant on its upper level. The lower level boasts a traditional Rajasthani stepwell-themed swimming pool, the luxurious Sansha Spa, and a grand banquet hall.

In the residential wing, guests can choose from 19 luxury rooms (650 sq ft), each equipped with a private, temperature-controlled plunge pool complete with a mini waterfall and outdoor shower. The cobalt blue tiled pools with water jets are irresistibly inviting, making them the perfect spot to unwind with a chilled beer or a refreshing gin and tonic after a day spent on safari.





Additionally, the resort offers 21 premium rooms (500 sq ft) with stunning views of the Aravalli hills.

### Personalised Experiences

Karan Bakshi, the General Manager with 24 years of experience, is a hands-on leader who runs a tight ship and is seemingly omnipresent throughout the resort. He personally greets every guest at check-in, emphasising the resort's commitment to personalised experiences. "The key to success for boutique resorts lies in tailoring each guest's stay to their unique needs and preferences, and that principle guides everything we do here," said Karan.

### The Culinary Delights

The resort offers 24-hour in-room dining service and a spacious, air-conditioned multi-cuisine restaurant, open from 7 am to 11 pm, serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner. It also offers multiple picturesque settings and outdoor dining options, catering to couples, families, and conference groups alike.

The service staff and kitchen team at the resort ensure you are always well-fed and well-cared for. Whether you are craving a curated five-course continental dinner, a Maharaja Rajasthani Thali for lunch complete with panchkuta, papad ki sabzi, daal-baati-choorma, Rajasthani kadhi, and laal maas, or a classic Eggs Benedict for breakfast, your requests are met with a smile and exceptional service.

### Serene Spa Escape

The Sansha Spa offers a serene escape with one couple therapy and two single therapy rooms, complemented by steam, a jacuzzi, and a variety of therapy and aroma oil options. I opted for an aromatic Balinese massage, which was incredibly relaxing after my morning safari. The experience was made even better by spending an hour in my private plunge pool, sipping on a gin and tonic.

### Enchanting Evenings Under the Stars

Spanning 15,000 sq ft, the resort's manicured lawns are at the heart of its layout. Here, an amphitheatre hosts folk dancers who enchant guests with their performances each evening under the starlit sky. The clear night skies of Ranthambore provide an ideal opportunity for stargazing, allowing guests to observe the craters of the moon, the rings of Saturn, Jupiter's moons, nebulas, and constellations.

The resort also features a 4200 sq ft pillarless hall equipped with an 8 x 16-ft high-resolution LED screen and an in-built sound system. This versatile space is perfect for screening wildlife films in the evenings, as well as hosting conferences, events, and banquets.

### Adventures Beyond the Oasis

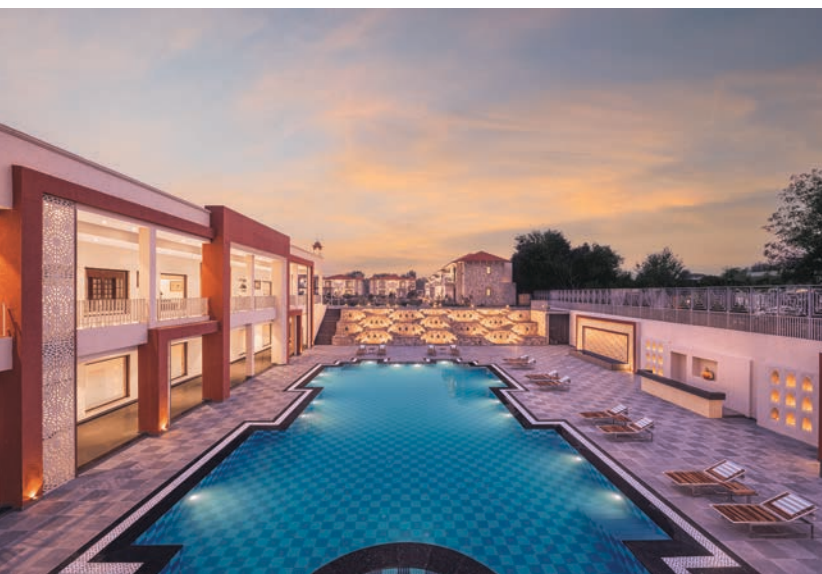
The Ranthambore National Park, the star attraction, offers tiger safaris year-round.

The forest of Ranthambore is divided into 10 different zones for safari. Out of the 10 zones in the National Park, 5 are closed every Tuesday and 5 are closed every Wednesday. During the monsoon months of July, August, and September, the park remains closed but some of the zones between zone 6 and 10 are open for tourists depending on weather conditions.

The resort arranged two incredibly rewarding Jeep safaris for us. The forest goddess blessed us with a grand chain of sightings. We were thrilled to witness the tigress 'Arrowhead' with her three playful cubs frolicking in the water, being groomed and pampered by their vigilant mother. We also spotted a sloth bear foraging for roots and termites and a mating tiger couple. What more could we have asked for?

We also visited the Ranthambore Fort, its ramparts steeped in history and a must-visit attraction of historic and religious significance. Climbing its stairs and crossing its fortifications and imposing gates takes you to a different time zone. From the top, the fort offers a bird's eye, a panoramic view of the national park below, and the opportunity to visit the ancient Trinetra Ganesha Temple.

The fort is a photographer's paradise, with its ancient palaces, temples, pavilions, water bodies, and ruins. Each corner is steeped in stories of valour and sacrifice, of battles fought and sieges laid. "The tigers roamed the jungles then, and the tigers roam the jungles now," connecting us to the grand legacy of the Ranthambore of yore.



# UPTravel Mart 2024

25th - 26th April  
Gorakhpur, UP, India

Supporting Organizations



## Uttar Pradesh Travel Mart 2024 exemplifies the state's commitment to revitalising its tourism sector

The Uttar Pradesh Travel Mart (UPTM 2024) served as a vibrant platform to unveil the state's tourism resurgence post-pandemic. Through engaging sessions, exhibitions, and cultural showcases, it demonstrated Uttar Pradesh's commitment to harnessing its rich heritage and infrastructure to attract both domestic and international tourists, propelling the state's journey towards becoming a premier tourism destination.

**Gurjit Singh Ahuja**

The Department of Tourism, Government of Uttar Pradesh, in collaboration with FICCI, organised the sixth edition of the "Uttar Pradesh Travel Mart" from April 25 to 27, 2024, at the Baba Gambheernath Auditorium in Gorakhpur. This edition marked the resurgence of the event after a hiatus of five years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath.

UPTM 2024 endeavoured to showcase the tourism potential of Uttar Pradesh. It served as a platform to share the latest developments in tourism facilities and infrastructure and highlight Uttar Pradesh's rich cultural heritage and ambition to attain the position of a top destination for tourism, both for foreign and domestic tourist arrivals.

The event facilitated interactions between over 120 hosted travel agents and tour operators from across India, as well as representatives from Canada, Latvia, Singapore, and Malaysia. These stakeholders engaged with senior officials from Uttar Pradesh Tourism and industry leaders from the state, fostering collaboration and exchange of ideas.

### Day 1: A Knowledge Packed Beginning

The UPTM 2024 was inaugurated by Awanish Kumar Awasthi, Principal Advisor to the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath. The inaugural session featured detailed presentations by Esha Priya (IAS), Special Secretary and Director of Uttar Pradesh Tourism, and Prakhar Misra (IFS), Director of

Tourism. They delved into the state's tourism offerings, circuits, and the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Policy 2022, elucidating investment opportunities, benefits, and subsidies.

More than 30 exhibitors, spanning from hoteliers and tour operators to wedding planners and transporters, presented their diverse offerings to an eager audience of the travel fraternity at an exhibition held alongside that presented insightful knowledge sessions. In the evening, delegates were taken on a lake cruise experience on the newly launched luxury cruise boat 'Lake Queen' at Ramgarh Taal. A gala dinner was organised at the Radisson Hotel, and the delegates witnessed an enthralling folk dance performed by artists from Mathura, Vrindavan.



## Day 2: Reflecting on UP's Tourism Triumphs

Speaking at the valedictory session, Chief Secretary, Government of Uttar Pradesh, D.S. Mishra, IAS, said, "Today, Uttar Pradesh is undergoing a rapid transformation at breakneck speed. Uttar Pradesh of today has shed its image of yesteryear and established itself as the 'Land of Opportunities'." He further added, "India is targeting to be a 5 trillion US\$ economy over the next three years, and "Uttar Pradesh targets a 20 per cent share of that pie and aims at being a 1 trillion US\$ economy by then."

Mishra explained that tourism has also been a major beneficiary of the growth story of Uttar Pradesh. He added, "According to the estimated figures for 2023, Uttar Pradesh received 48 crore domestic tourists in 2023. There also exists an immense potential to enhance foreign tourist arrivals from the current figure of six lakh to 16 lakh arrivals."

Also speaking at the occasion, the Principal Secretary of the Tourism and Culture, Government of Uttar Pradesh, Mukesh Kumar Meshram (IAS), said, "We have developed the "Golden Spiritual Triangle," covering the cities of Ayodhya, Prayagraj, and Varanasi. 12 major circuits have been identified and are being aggressively promoted across all channels; these cover spirituality, religion, culture, wildlife, ecotourism, and rural tourism."

Meshram further elaborated, "Uttar Pradesh is also home to some of the

holiest Buddhist pilgrimage sites like Shravasti, Kapilvastu, Kushinagar, Sarnath, Kaushambi, and Sankisa, and with a 50-crore Buddhist population spread across 39 plus countries, the scope for Buddhist tours to Uttar Pradesh was boundless."

Meshram also informed, "Maha-Kumbh was scheduled for 2025, and this auspicious gathering would attract a sea of humanity who would come to Prayagraj for the holy dip at the Sangam. Currently, the city is being revamped and prepared to handle this mega-event."

In his vote of thanks, Prateek Hira, Chairman, FICCI's Tourism Committee, Uttar Pradesh, said, "Today we can proudly say that Uttar Pradesh is not in the process of changing but has changed." He further elaborated, "Today there is

an enhanced sense of inclusiveness, empowerment, and involvement by the government towards the tourism sector. Single women travellers are safe, and the UP Government is actively promoting the destination and showcasing it in all major international forums, creating interest in the destination and opening new markets."

He also invited all delegates on behalf of the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath, to visit the Gorakhnath Temple for the evening aarti, sound and light show, and langar.

Familiarisation (FAM) trips were organised for international and Indian travel agents to explore destinations like Ayodhya, Varanasi, and Sarnath, enhancing their first-hand experience of Uttar Pradesh's tourism offerings.

# TryGulf stands out at ATM 2024

## Fruitful collaborations and unforgettable Arabian journeys

Stepping into the vibrant atmosphere of the Arabian Travel Market (ATM 2024), TryGulf's booth exuded an irresistible allure and radiated warmth and hospitality. It beckoned attendees to embark on a captivating journey through the treasures of the Arabian Peninsula.

### Team TTJ

The Arabian Travel Market (ATM), hosted by the vibrant city of Dubai between May 6-9, 2024, is not merely an event; it is an immersive experience, a doorway to the enchanting world of Arabian travel and tourism. Amidst the diverse array of exhibitors, one standout was TryGulf, a local DMC rooted in the vibrant culture of Dubai. Nested in the heart of Dubai, TryGulf has long been a beacon for travellers seeking authentic Arabian experiences.

### Forging Partnerships

TryGulf's presence at ATM 2024 underscored its commitment to fostering meaningful connections and partnerships within the industry. Through networking events and collaborative discussions, TryGulf sought to forge alliances that would not only elevate the region's tourism landscape but also create lasting socio-economic impact. TryGulf has been able to sign commercial agreements with prominent names during the four-day event. As the curtains closed on ATM 2024, TryGulf emerged as a DMC and a custodian of Arabian heritage and hospitality. Its presence was not measured in square footage or foot traffic but in the hearts and minds of those who dared to dream of Arabian adventures.

### Celebrating Arabian Travel and Heritage

Highlighting their active participation in celebrating and preserving the essence of Arabian travel, Nadhim Adam, Chairman, TryGulf, said, "In the rich tapestry of Arabian travel, the Arabian Travel Market 2024 was not just a thread but a vibrant palette that painted the success story of TryGulf. From the bustling halls of the Dubai World Trade Centre to the hearts of every visitor we welcomed, ATM was a testament to our unwavering dedication to showcasing the rich tapestry of Arabian hospitality and heritage. I am proud to say that ATM 2024 was not just a milestone; it was a symphony of success, a testament to the tireless efforts of our team and the enduring spirit of Arabian travel. Together,

we have woven dreams into realities, and as we chart our course forward, we do so with gratitude, humility, and an unyielding commitment to excellence."

### Exclusive Gathering

TryGulf, along with Oaks Ibn Battuta Gate Dubai, also hosted an exclusive dinner get-together. At the event, they had the opportunity to welcome Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India, TAAI; Anil Kalsi, Vice President, Travel Agents Federation of India, TAFI; Ranjana Sharma, Founding Member, Outbound Tour Operator Association of India, OTOAI; Isha Goyal and Anju Wariah of STIC Holidays; heads of travel media houses, and many more.

By positioning TryGulf at the forefront of this celebration, Sahil Thakur, Managing Partner, TryGulf, said, "Arabian Travel Market 2024 was more than just a gathering of industry players; it was a celebration of the essence of Arabian travel, and TryGulf was at the forefront of this celebration. I am thrilled to reflect on our resounding success at ATM 2024. It was a platform where we didn't just showcase our services; we shared our passion for Arabian hospitality



▲ Nadhim Adam



▲ Sahil Thakur

and curated experiences that left a lasting impression. ATM provided us with the opportunity to connect with fellow industry professionals, forge new partnerships, and reaffirm our commitment to delivering unparalleled travel experiences. As we look back on ATM 2024, I am filled with pride for what TryGulf has accomplished and am excited for the journey ahead."

With another successful edition of ATM in 2024, Rajiv Verma, Advisor, TryGulf, reflected, "ATM 2024 has exceeded the benchmark set by Dubai from previous years in terms of participation and delivery by the team of the Dubai Tourism Department. At TryGulf, we have successfully signed collaborations with the big players in the Indian market and expect the business to grow from here."





The heart of Incredible India



Bhil Tribe

# COME & EXPLORE MADHYA PRADESH

## A land where indigenous culture is a living masterpiece!

The Heart of Incredible India will take you on an enthralling journey to unveil the soul of India's indigenous heritage. Home to the largest concentration of indigenous communities in the country, Madhya Pradesh has 24 distinct tribes, each with its own vibrant language, traditional customs, and local social structures.

The skilled artisans breathe life into age-old crafts, their nimble fingers weaving tales into textiles, shaping wood into exquisite sculptures, and adorning themselves with fine jewellery. Each piece they create is a testament to their rich history, passed down through generations.



Baiga Tribe

Madhya Pradesh resonates with ancient traditions, where tribes like the Bhil, Gond, Baiga and Bhariya have thrived for centuries. Pack your bags for an indigenous trail to converse with the Bhil, India's largest tribe, known for their colourful Pithora paintings that narrate stories on walls.

Navigate the indigenous belt while crisscrossing through Mandla, Chhindwara, Balaghat, Shahdol, Dindori, Hoshangabad, Jabalpur, Betul, Damoh, Sagar, and parts of northern Madhya Pradesh where the Gond tribe dwells. These mountain dwellers are known for creating decorative fabrics with intricate geometric patterns and animal motifs with natural dyes and weaving techniques passed down through generations. Explore the Baiga tribe that resides primarily in the southern region of the state, particularly at Dindori, Mandla, Jabalpur, and Shahdol, revered for their knowledge of the forest and

their deep respect for nature's bounty.

Unravel the secrets of the Sahariya tribe in Madhya Pradesh that resides primarily in the north-western districts of Shivpuri, Guna, Gwalior, Morena, Bhind and Sheopur. Learn the herbal remedies from the Sahariya tribes and drown yourself

in Khambaswang, a dance drama of the Korku tribe from the Chhindwara, Narmadapuram, and Harda districts. Inhale the ancestral art of the Agaria tribe – transforming black sand and clay into iron using ancient bellows. This tribe particularly resides in Dindori, Balaghat, Mandla, and Sidhi.

Nestled in the mountains of Madhya Pradesh, Jhabua echoes with stories through their ancestral dolls. Crafted by the Bhil and Bhilala tribes, these dolls, known as Adivasi Gudiya Hastashilp, are more than just playthings. Each stitch and bead carries the weight of tradition, empowering the artisans and keeping their heritage alive. Adorned

with intricate cultural hues, these dolls have reflections of a land embellished with artistic flavours. Unveil the synergy of the Korku tribes with nature as they design pieces with brass, beads, and shells.

Walk around to acclimatise to their lives, homes, cultures, religion, and marriage traditions. Savour the rhythmic beats of drums and intricate patterns of indigenous art.

Madhya Pradesh awaits – come discover a land that resonates with myriad hues of culture and traditions.



Korku Tribe



## Air Canada significantly expands service to India for Winter 2024-25



**A**ir Canada has announced the strategic expansion of its international network to India, adding 40 per cent more seat capacity beginning late October for the Winter 2024-25 season.

The airline's new services include four weekly non-stop flights from Toronto to Mumbai from October 27 and improved service from Calgary to Delhi with the introduction of new seasonal daily flights over London Heathrow and daily flights from Montreal to Delhi. In total, Air Canada will operate 25 weekly flights to India, the most comprehensive offering of any carrier between Canada and India. Seats on all flights are available for purchase now at [aircanada.com](http://aircanada.com), via the Air Canada App and through travel agents.

Air Canada will operate 25 weekly flights representing 7,400 seats each week this winter from Canada to India, comprising up to 11 weekly flights from Toronto to Delhi and Mumbai, daily flights from Montreal to Delhi and daily flights to Delhi from Western Canada via London Heathrow.

## Malaysia Airlines increases flight frequency from Amritsar to seven times weekly



**D**ue to strong travel demand and positive load factor performance on the Amritsar-Kuala Lumpur route, Malaysia Airlines will increase its frequency from four to seven times weekly starting August 1, 2024. Previously, the airline doubled its frequency from two to four times weekly in January 2024, reflecting confidence in this market. This increase will bring the airline's total weekly flights in India to 71.

Launched in November 2023, Amritsar is one of three new India routes introduced in 2023 alongside Ahmedabad and Trivandrum. The airline also recently increased frequencies on the Trivandrum route to four times weekly starting April 3, 2024.

Malaysia Airlines' extensive India network includes flights from New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kochi, Ahmedabad, Amritsar, and Trivandrum, offering seamless connections to destinations in the Asia Pacific.

## Cambodia Angkor Air to commence direct flights on the Phnom Penh-New Delhi route from June 16

**C**ambodia Angkor Air, the national flag carrier of Cambodia, has announced the commencement of direct flights between Cambodia's vibrant capital, Phnom Penh, and the bustling metropolis of New Delhi, India. Set to take flight four times a week (Mon, Wed, Fri, and Sun) under the flight code K6760/K6761, this groundbreaking service marks the first-ever direct connection between these two nations, heralding a new era of seamless air travel.

Cambodia Angkor Air's historic launch of direct flights during the "Cambodia-India Cultural Tourism Year" of 2024 signifies a profound step towards enhancing economic, cultural, and tourist exchange between the two countries.

"It is my honour to deepen the traditional friendship between India and Cambodia through our historic direct service. We commit to warmly show 'Khmer Smile', providing safe and comfortable journeys, with plans to open new routes connecting Siem Reap to Delhi and Phnom Penh to other cities in India soon," says Dr David Yuhong Zhan, Director of Cambodia Tourism Board (CTB), Vice Chairman and CEO of Cambodia Angkor Air.



# TRAVMART



# 2024

JUL

**27**

**CHANDIGARH**

AUG

**16-18**

**SITM**

SOUTH INDIA TRAVMART (CHENNAI)

SEP

**20-22**

**EITM**

EAST INDIA TRAVMART (KOLKATA)

OCT

**19**

**SURAT**

DEC

**15**

**INDORE**

# 2025

JAN

**17/18**

**PUNE**

MAR

**15**

**RAIPUR**

## BOOK YOUR SPACE

☎ 9560264446

✉ [ravisharma@sampanmedia.com](mailto:ravisharma@sampanmedia.com)

Sampan Media Pvt. Ltd.  
Email: [info@sampanmedia.com](mailto:info@sampanmedia.com)  
Website: [www.ttjtravmart.com](http://www.ttjtravmart.com)



## Incredible India networking event in Dubai strengthens ties with GCC buyers



In a collaborative effort, supported by the Ministry of Tourism (MOT), Government of India, the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) and VFS Global hosted a successful B2B Incredible India Evening on May 8, 2024, at Taj Dubai. This exclusive event, themed “Fostering Partnerships and Connections,” aimed to drive visitors to India by bringing together key industry professionals.

Over 200 esteemed buyers from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region engaged with 40 Indian stakeholders, including state tourism boards, Destination Management Companies (DMCs), and airline partners. The event provided invaluable networking opportunities, fostering meaningful discussions and offering insights into India’s diverse travel offerings.

The event’s success underscores a vision to invest in the global travel and tourism industry with the right partners. Given the GCC region’s importance as a key source market, initiatives like this are crucial for strengthening business ties and encouraging long-term partnerships.

As India continues to position itself as a leading global travel destination, events like the B2B Incredible India Evening play a vital role in driving innovation, fostering partnerships, and enhancing the tourism experience for visitors worldwide.

## Saudi Tourism Authority hosts Perfumery Events in India



The Saudi Tourism Authority (STA) recently hosted “Essence of Saudi” perfumery workshops in Mumbai and Delhi. These immersive events showcased the rich olfactory heritage of Saudi Arabia, focusing on the renowned roses from Taif. Over 60 guests, including luxury travel partners, online travel agents, wholesalers, media, influencers, and travel bloggers, attended these first-of-its-kind workshops.

Participants, guided by expert perfumers, explored the cultural significance of fragrances and the art of perfume-making. They created bespoke fragrances inspired by Saudi’s lush landscapes and botanical heritage.

The events highlighted the significance of fragrance in Saudi culture, particularly the exquisite Taif roses. This initiative aimed to deepen appreciation for Saudi fragrances and bring Indian travellers closer to Saudi’s cultural offerings.

Taif, known as the ‘city of roses,’ boasts year-long cool weather and diverse produce. The coveted Taif roses are famed for their enchanting fragrance, with local perfumeries producing high-quality perfumes and rose water. The city can be reached via a scenic three-hour drive from Jeddah.

## Avalon Waterways hosts weeklong FAM on the River Danube

Avalon Waterways, in association with Ottila International, hosted a weeklong familiarisation (FAM) cruise on the River Danube. This cruise, from Vilshofen, Germany to Budapest, Hungary, aimed to showcase Avalon’s innovative Suite Ships® with Open-Air Balconies and immersive local experiences.

The select partners sailed on “Danube Dreams” which is a favorite program with many discerning cruisers. They were hosted aboard “Avalon Envision” from amongst the youngest fleet of ships on Europe’s waterways – and witnessed some of Europe’s most spectacular picture postcard views.

“Along with Ottila International, we got the privilege of introducing our esteemed partners to the magic of Avalon Waterways cruises and also enriching the knowledge of those already familiar with the brand. The feedback from the advisors has been truly overwhelming!” said Varesh Chopra, Managing Director, Avalon Waterways, South Asia and Middle East.

This initiative reflects the growing interest in river cruising, with Avalon Waterways at the forefront of the trend in India. For 2024, Avalon offers unbeatable deals, inviting travellers to explore Europe uniquely and luxuriously.





## EgyptAir plans expansion of Cairo-Delhi Service to daily flights

Egypt's national carrier, EgyptAir recently celebrated its 92 years of operations and awarded its top performing agents at a ceremony organised at the Le Meridien New Delhi. Present at the occasion were the Ambassador of Egypt to India and Amr Aly, Country Manager, EgyptAir, along with eminent members of the travel fraternity. On the occasion, the airline announced a Super Special airfare offer with discounts of up to 40 per cent on select classes across the Egypt Air network, valid for travel up to June 30, 2024.

In light of the growing Egyptian-Indian relations at all levels, EgyptAir, plans the expansion of its Cairo-New Delhi service to daily flights from the current four flights a week. The Cairo-Delhi route is operated by the state-of-the-art Airbus A320neo aircraft.

"Since the launch of the direct flight last year, we have witnessed a notable increase in travel, business, and cultural exchanges between Egypt and India. This move to daily flights is set to further augment these ties," said Amr Aly.



## NIMA celebrates its 10th Anniversary with landmark achievements and global expansion plans



Network of Indian MICE Agents (NIMA) celebrated its remarkable 10th anniversary on May 25, 2024, commemorating a decade of achievements and growth in the MICE industry. NIMA, a true representative of serious-minded MICE operators in India, has been a perfect example of an idea germinated and nurtured under the able leadership of its founding team of Gajesh Giridhar, Rakesh Arora, Vikas Khanduri (Advisor), and Gurmeet Singh Chhatwal.

NIMA's National Executive Committee comprises active MICE operators and SMEs from metropolitan cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata to tier 2 and tier 3 cities like Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Bhubaneswar and even smaller cities like Yamuna Nagar (Haryana) to Tirupati, thus having a pan India presence.

Over the past decade, NIMA has garnered numerous accolades and achieved significant milestones, establishing itself as a trailblazer among Indian travel associations. For the past 10 years, NIMA has consistently delivered on its commitments. So, what is next for NIMA? With its new international membership drive, the association is setting its sights on a global stage. By expanding its reach, NIMA aims to become the first Indian MICE Association to go global!

## ETAA, Eastern Region, empowers women entrepreneurs in tourism; launches ETAA Travel Divas



The Enterprising Travel Agents' Association (ETAA), Eastern Region, organised an event to felicitate 'Women Entrepreneurs in Tourism' and launched a dedicated wing, 'ETAA Travel Divas,' to help and handhold women entrepreneurs in the tourism business, along with a product presentation by Polo Group and Shree Holidays on May 3, 2024, at Polo Floatel, Kolkata.

The event highlighted opportunities for women as tourism entrepreneurs and facilitated 35 women entrepreneurs in tourism. A total of 72 tour operators and travel agencies participated in this event. ETAA East will organise workshops that will bring together women entrepreneurs, industry leaders, policymakers, and experts to explore how tourism can be a vehicle for women's economic empowerment.

"Tourism is uniquely positioned to promote women's empowerment by enabling entrepreneurship opportunities that can be locally owned and operated," said Koushik Banerjee, Chapter Chairman and Director of ETAA Eastern India. He added, "The event will motivate and connect women with resources and mentorship to transform their communities through tourism."



### Kempinski Hotels

Kempinski Hotels has appointed **Barbara Muckermann** as Chief Executive Officer. Muckermann previously was responsible for leading Silversea Cruises (part of Royal Caribbean Group), the world's largest ultra-luxury and expedition cruise line. She joins the iconic global luxury hospitality brand Kempinski at an exciting time. With 82 hotels across 36 countries, Kempinski is poised for impressive growth in new regions worldwide, with more spectacular properties on the horizon. Barbara will be the first woman in the company's 127 years of history to lead this iconic brand.



### MMPRC

The Privatization and Corporatization Board (PCB) of the Maldives has appointed Deputy Managing Director **Mohamed Bassam Adam** as interim head of the Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC) following the dismissal of Fathmath Thaufeeq (Kudy) as CEO and MD. Adam brings over 20 years of tourism industry experience, with expertise in ticketing, hotel bookings, and fostering sector growth. He has also served as a Board Member of the Maldives Association of Travel Agents and Tour Operators (MATATO), shaping industry policies.



### Tourism Finance Corporation of India

Tourism Finance Corp. of India (TFCI) has appointed **Anoop Bali** as its Managing Director. In addition to his new role, he will continue as the company's Chief Financial Officer. TFCI provides finance through term loans and investment in debentures to the tourism and hospitality sectors. It also provides advisory services in the tourism space. Bali brings over 34 years of experience in business development, credit management, NPA resolution, legal matters, risk management, accounts and finance, treasury, and corporate advisory.



### Minor Hotels

Minor Hotels has appointed **Puneet Dhawan** as Head of Asia, overseeing the performance of all properties in Asia starting in July. With a 30-year career in hospitality spanning Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, Dhawan will work closely with the Minor Hotels senior leadership team and report to CEO Dillip Rajakarier. Previously, as Senior VP of Operations – India and South Asia at Accor, Dhawan led business development, owner management, hotel operations, and the commercial team, driving the group's regional growth.



### The Leela Palaces, Hotels, and Resorts

The Leela Palaces, Hotels, and Resorts has appointed **Shweta Jain** as Chief Marketing and Sales Officer. Shweta brings extensive experience in driving South Asia's luxury lifestyle evolution across various industries, including spirits, consumer packaged goods, wellness, media, and communications. In her previous role as Chief Business Development Officer at Diageo India, she crafted strategies that drove long-term premiumisation growth. Her leadership and expertise in luxury brand management will drive The Leela's marketing and sales strategies, elevating the brand's positioning.



### Think Strawberries

Think Strawberries has appointed **Navneet Mendiratta** as the new Vice President of Public Relations and Media for India. In this leadership role, she will be responsible for handling PR and Media strategy for projects, designing media campaigns, and advancing the brand's corporate reputation. Navneet comes with a rich experience of over 27 years in the field of communications, having held leadership roles with some of the top media houses in the country. As a seasoned journalist and communications professional, Navneet has mastered the art of creating success in both PR and media.



### Tourism New Zealand

Tourism New Zealand has appointed **Ratul Ghosh** as the Trade Marketing Manager for India. With over a decade of diverse experience spanning E-commerce, debt syndication, trade and investment, and tourism, Ratul brings a wealth of expertise in customer-facing roles with sales, marketing, and strategy at the core of his career. His career highlights include fostering international relationships and promoting tourism initiatives, notably serving as the first India representative of Tourism Western Australia (TWA) in India.



### Crown and Champa Resorts

Crown and Champa Resorts (CCR) has promoted **Ahmed Shaheen** from Director of Sales and Marketing to Chief Commercial Leader. With over 27 years in hospitality, Shaheen's career began as a Billing Clerk at Rangali under Crown Company and advanced through various departments at Veligandu to his pivotal role as Director of Sales and Marketing at Crown and Champa Resorts. His new position at CCR will involve overseeing revenue, e-commerce, PR, marketing, communication, and sales, showcasing his dedication and expertise in the industry.

Looking for comfort and convenience for your visa submission process?

Choose VFS Global's

# PREMIUM LOUNGE SERVICE



Our state-of-the-art, plush **Premium Lounge** offers a seamless experience during visa application submission.

- ✔ Personalised attention at every step
- ✔ Refreshments and beverages
- ✔ Photocopy & Photobooth services

To avail the service visit: [www.vfsglobal.com](http://www.vfsglobal.com)

# DISCOVER THE TREASURES OF EUROPE

12 SHIPS | OVER 350 ITINERARIES | OVER 160 PORTS OF CALL

**35% OFF**  
CRUISES\*

NCL'S  
**FREE AT SEA**

**FREE** OPEN BAR  
**FREE** SPECIALTY DINING  
**FREE** EXCURSIONS  
**FREE** WIFI  
**FREE** EXTRA GUESTS



SCAN FOR  
MORE INFO

**NCL**  
**NORWEGIAN**  
CRUISE LINE

EUROPE'S LEADING  
CRUISE LINE  
WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS  
17 YEARS IN A ROW

**7-DAY GREEK ISLES:**  
SANTORINI, RHODES & MYKONOS  
ROUND-TRIP ATHENS (PIRAEUS)  
**NEW 2025** NORWEGIAN VIVA  
JUL – AUG 2025



**9-DAY MEDITERRANEAN:**  
ITALY, FRANCE & SPAIN  
ROUND-TRIP BARCELONA  
NORWEGIAN ESCAPE  
JUN – SEP & NOV 2024



**11-DAY NORTHERN EUROPE:**  
ICELAND, NORWAY & BELGIUM  
FROM LONDON (SOUTHAMPTON)  
NORWEGIAN PRIMA  
JUN – SEP 2024 & MAY – AUG 2025



**CONTACT YOUR TRAVEL AGENT | CALL +91 22 7127 9333**  
**BOOK TODAY AT NCL.COM**

\*35% Off Cruises: Discount valid on all open for sale sailings including Sailaway categories. \*Free At Sea: Free Open Bar is based on Premium Beverage Package. Free Specialty Dining and Free Wifi Packages are dependent on cruise length booked. Free Shore Excursions are US\$50 credit per excursion, per port and applicable to 1st guest in the stateroom. Free Extra Guests is applicable to the 3rd and 4th guest in a stateroom and is valid on select dates. Any taxes & gratuities are additional. Sailaway categories are not applicable for the Free at Sea offer. Sailaway categories receive US\$50 shore excursion credit offer only. Offers are valid until 30 June 2024 unless extended. Offers are non-transferrable, have no monetary value and are valid for new bookings only. Offers are subject to change or withdrawal at any time and combinability with other promotional offers is subject to change. Other restrictions may apply. For full terms and conditions visit ncl.com. All rights reserved. ©2024 NCL Corporation Ltd. Ships' Registry: Bahamas and USA. 1691900 05/2024