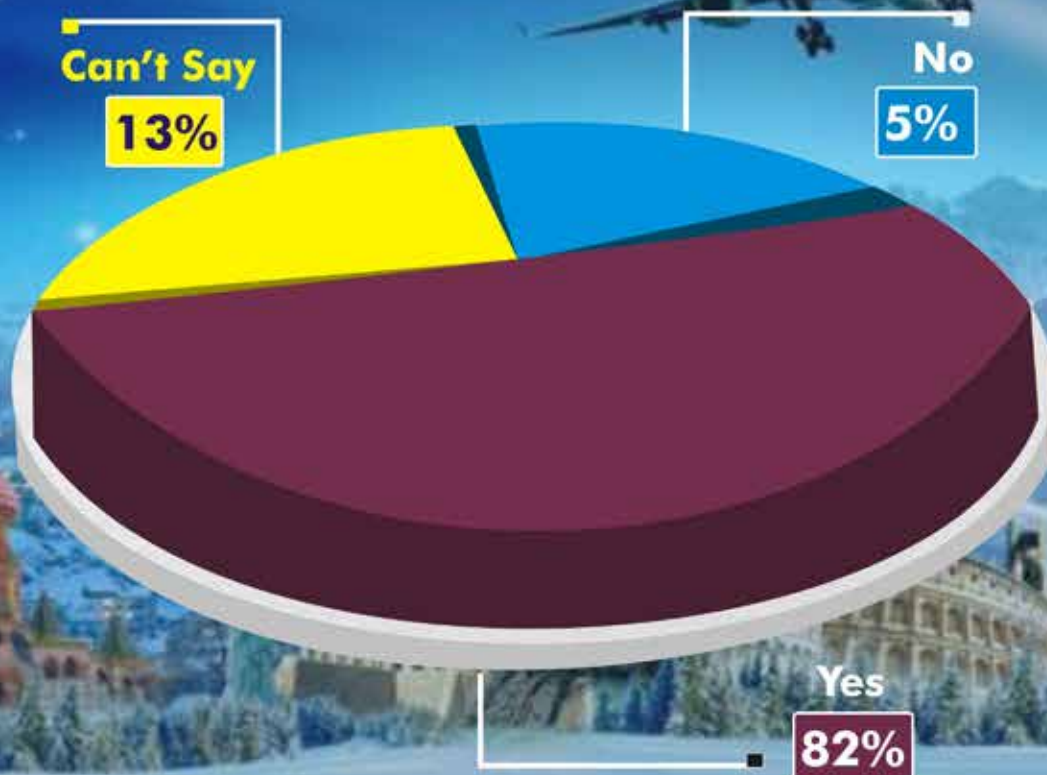


82%

Millennial Travellers are planning to take a family holiday this year

With Covid-19 reaching the endemic stage, 56% Indian Millennial Travellers are keen to take an international holiday this year while 44% of them are looking forward to take a domestic holiday





HAVE AN INTEGRATED PLATFORM TO COLLABORATE BETWEEN YOUR TEAMS

The screenshot shows the Konnect.travel Manager Dashboard for Universal Travel. The dashboard includes a sidebar with navigation links: Administration, Booking Management, Client Management, Finance, Reports, and Support in Hindi. The main content area displays key metrics: Total Sales in Current Month (\$25,649), Pending Bookings (108), and Pending Service Requests (23). Below these are tabs for Booking Queues, My Bookings, and Enquiry Queue. The My Bookings tab is active, showing a table of bookings with columns: Booking Ref, Client Name, Booking Date, Trip Date, Services, Destination, and Status. The table lists five bookings, all with a status of 'Pending'. A 'Create New Booking' button is at the bottom left, and a 'View All' link is at the bottom right. On the right side of the dashboard, there is an 'Activities' section with a 'New Activity' button and a calendar for March 2022.

Booking Ref	Client Name	Booking Date	Trip Date	Services	Destination	Status
UT8806	Shashir Tour & Travels	12 Jan 2022	15 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8807	Patty Granderson	23 Jan 2022	22 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8818	Shirue Finnerty	28 Jan 2022	03 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8822	Guillermo Klutts	28 Jan 2022	10 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8838	Bessie Molinari	29 Jan 2022	11 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending



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- Fort Kochi • Coorg • Goa • Pachmarhi • Ahmedabad • Kota • Ranthambore • Mount Abu • Bera (Pali)
- Ranakpur • Jodhpur • Mohangarh • Jaisalmer • Jaipur • Pragpur

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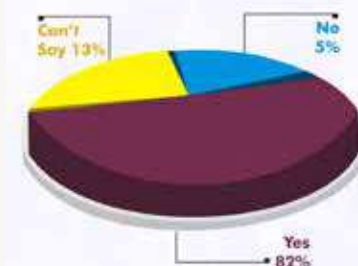
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COVER STORY

Bott Travel Sentiment Tracker predicts 82% of the millennial travellers are keen to undertake a holiday this year.

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Q. With Covid ebbing away, are you planning to take a Family Holiday this year?



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Goa becomes a 'cool hub' for destination weddings in India

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From The Editor's *Desk*

Dear Readers,

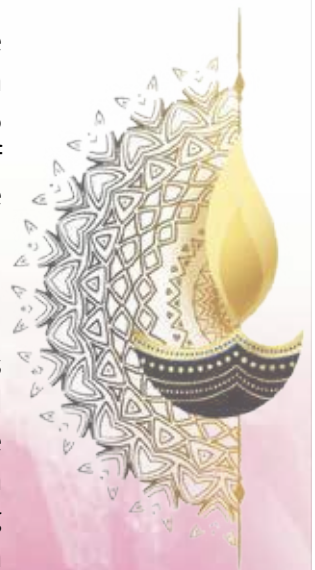
There's festivity in the air – an air of euphoria, of celebrations, of merry making and of cheerfulness. The markets are buzzing and streets packed with traffic jams. Yes! Life is back to normal – as normal as it can get. The shopping vendors, the Durga Pujo that just concluded and the anticipation for Diwali. With celebrations on in full swing, how can travel plans be far behind?

In a recent Travel Sentiment Tracker conducted by BOTT, it was discovered that a whopping 82% of the Indian population (12000+ verified BOTT readers and subscribers) are keen on undertaking a holiday this year. With Covid-19 reaching the endemic stage, millennial travellers are quite enthusiastic about their vacation plans as 56% of them are planning to go for an international holiday while 44% of them are looking forward to taking a domestic holiday according to the report by BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker. It also found that 42% of millennials are open to spending anywhere between INR 2 lakhs to 5 lakhs for their holidays followed by 33% who would spend between INR 5 to 10 lakhs, 15% for less than INR 2 lakhs and 10% of millennials would spend more than INR 11 lakhs. With such encouraging findings, one can only be hopeful for a brighter, bigger and better future for the travel and tourism fraternity.

Incidentally, the month gone by was also a buzzing one in terms of trade events, launches and press conferences. Almost anyone and everyone in the outbound decided to hold a physical event, which is why you will get to read a wide variety of interviews in the October issue of our magazine. I am also glad to share that BOTT has opened an office in Mumbai and we are now actively covering events in two cities of India. With encouraging news pouring from all corners, I warmly wish you all a very Happy Diwali brimming with good health and happiness. Let us together lit the tourism industry and take travel to new heights....

Happy Reading!

Priyanka Saxena Ray
priyanka@bottindia.com



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Brand USA is an organization dedicated to marketing the United States as a premier travel destination. It works in close partnership with the travel industry to maximize the economic and social benefits of travel. Brand USA supports numerous trade activities, including trade shows, sales missions, training initiatives and Fam Trips. Brand USA offers a variety of tools and platforms for the travel trade and media to help them understand and market the product better –



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Brand USA India Travel Trade

website (www.traveltrade.gousa.in) is the official resource for USA travel planning. Here you will find itineraries, images, videos, DMC info, themed inspiration and information to help you book more travel to the USA! Travel trade officials get to watch fun and exciting travel videos and find out how to embed them in their own collateral. Also, they can browse robust regional and themed itineraries, beginning in key gateway cities and exploring beyond them to discover both iconic landmarks and hidden gems.




USA Discovery Program



The free e-learning program by Brand USA is called USA Discovery Program and can be accessed at www.usadiscoveryprogram.in. The USA Discovery Program is Brand USA's official online agent training program. Here, travel professionals get to learn about all the six U.S. regions and experiences available in the USA to get inspired to sell USA holidays.



The e-learning platform aims to help you sell the USA like never before. Covering the diverse destinations and experiences available in the USA the site can be used as both a handy online reference for when you're chatting with customers and need to know more, as well as the official training program of Brand USA.



By taking the training you can become a USA Specialist and receive official badges as a recognized qualification of expertise. It's completely free and completely flexible! You can learn in your own time, at your own pace.

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GoUSA TV is a FREE global, multi-channel travel entertainment network, powered by Brand USA where you can watch documentaries, series and movies. It covers all of the USA's must-see places, great outdoors, foodie hot spots, sports experiences and amazing road trips. It is available on Apple TV, Amazon Fire, iOS, Android, and Samsung TV Plus. For more information and interesting videos, you can visit: www.gousa.in/gousa-tv

Air India unveils new domestic in-flight menu

Air India has unveiled a specially curated menu for its domestic passengers with effect from October 1 to coincide with the onset of festive season. The new Air India in-flight menu, featuring an assortment of gourmet meals, trendy appetizers and decadent desserts, showcases India's locally sourced culinary influence. The menu also incorporates exquisite renditions of regional specialties from the kitchens and streets all around the world to satiate the global palate. At the same time, utmost attention will be paid to ensure that the array of delicacies are healthy and stay hygienic, right from the kitchen to the tray-table. Customers of Air India can select their preferred meal choice at the time of booking on www.airindia.in.



AZAL to operate direct flights from Mumbai to Baku from November



Azerbaijan Airlines, the flag carrier of Azerbaijan intends to commence its direct flights between Baku and Mumbai – the commercial hub of India from November onwards. The airline will operate twice-a-week flights between Mumbai and Baku. Azerbaijan Airlines has started ticket sales for flights. Zeal Global Group- the exclusive partner of the airline in India, has confirmed this expansion of Azerbaijan Airlines. The airline has already been operating flights from Delhi to Baku twice-a-week since August and is now delighted to start direct flights from Mumbai too. Mumbai travellers can now reach Baku in just four hours to witness the picturesque beauty of Azerbaijan.

VietJet inaugurates more flights to India

Vietnam's low-cost carrier VietJet recently started two more flights to India, connecting Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City with Ahmedabad in the Indian state of Gujarat. The airline has aggressively expanded into India this year and the latest routes provide more options for passengers from West India looking to fly to Vietnam. On September 29, 2022 VietJet started two direct flights to Ahmedabad (AMD), connecting the city with Hanoi (HAN) and Ho Chi Minh City (SGN). This is the first time that Vietnam has been linked with Gujarat by a direct commercial flight.



THAI expands flights into India

Thai Airways International recently hosted a networking conference and presented its Winter Traffic Programme 2022-2023 featuring more flights on routes to India during the 75th anniversary year of Thai – Indian diplomatic relations. Flights on the Bangkok – Hyderabad route will resume on October 30, 2022 and to Kolkata on 1 January 2023. In addition, the network will gain more flights later this month. New Delhi will have 22 flights and Mumbai 11 flights. Daily flights will be reintroduced to Chennai, Bengaluru, Kolkata and Hyderabad. The airline will offer 61 weekly flights from Bangkok to six destinations in India.



IRCTC now offers online medical services



IRCTC has partnered with a medico-technical online services company on a pilot basis which will provide the entire back-end services to the customers availing various medical and wellness packages and IRCTC with this aim of providing a holistic experience of medical value, travel coupled with various other elements such as travel and accommodation arrangements, road transfers and optional wellness packages after the treatment. IRCTC is offering medical treatment and wellness packages to its customers at highly competitive prices with a substantial network of hospitals, nursing homes and diagnostic centres empanelled with its technical partner.

Record turnout at Atout France India's 2022 B2B Showcase "Explore France"

France Tourism Development Agency's recently concluded B2B showcase (25-29 September) in Udaipur witnessed a record participation of 42 tourism companies from France and more than 80 travel professionals pan-India. This first offline workshop since 2019 witnessed over 2000 meetings taking place over 2 days of productive one-to-one meetings between buyers and suppliers. In addition to meetings between French and Indian tourism stakeholders, this year's edition had two thematic panels on weddings and cinema – two segments that have seen a strong rebound in terms of travel to France – for interested French partners. These panels saw a lively interaction between experts of these domains and our French suppliers.



FIRST OPINION

"PATA Gold Award comes as a high honour for Kerala Tourism, which has stepped up efforts to market the state as a major global destination. Our sustained marketing campaign has already started yielding results as the state has been witnessing a high footfall of both the domestic and international visitors since the turn of this year. The award is a huge affirmation of the brilliance of our marketing campaigns at a time when Kerala Tourism is poised to scale greater heights."

-K S Srinivas,

Principal Secretary, Kerala Tourism, Government of India



"Sarovar Hotels proudly announces the historic milestone of opening its 100th hotel in India with the opening of Lagoon Sarovar Premiere, Pondicherry. 2022 is a milestone year for us as we open our 100th hotel. This hotel holds a special place in our portfolio of hotels. Our vision 27 years ago was to make hospitality accessible in every part of the country. Our future vision is to strengthen our strong presence in tier 2 and tier 3 cities."

-Anil Madhok,

Executive Chairman, Sarovar Hotels



"Jazeera Airways has been actively participating at various tradeshow in Indore, Raipur, Jaipur, Chandigarh, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Chennai and the Wedding Travel Show in Dehradun. The response has been positive as we're seeing healthy load factor for forward bookings. We are continuously reviewing the opportunities in the India market and will work upon it to meet these demands."

-Romana Parvi,

Regional Manager – South Asia, Jazeera Airways



"We are delighted to connect Thailand with one of the largest cities of India - Ahmedabad, India's first World Heritage City, providing Thai people more opportunities and flexible choices to travel to India, as well as welcoming Indian tourists to Thailand. Since tourism is on its track to returning to the pre-pandemic level, we strongly believe that the service between the two destinations would help facilitate the region's growing travel demand and stimulate the trade recovery of both countries, particularly, the international tourism industry and aviation business,"

-Woranate Laprabang,

Chief Executive Officer, Thai Vietjet



"The new domestic in-flight menu has been carefully selected by top chefs to blend rich and flavourful Indian cuisine with contemporary international meal options. The new menu choices have been curated to ensure that the flyers enjoy a gourmet meal with emphasis on health and well-being. With several festivals approaching, the new menu offers choices that bring together culinary excellence from different parts of the world. We are excited to roll out this new menu on domestic routes, and are hard at work preparing a revamp of the international menu as well."

-Sandeep Verma,

Head of Inflight Services, Air India





Events and *More*



For details contact: gunjan@perfectalliances.in

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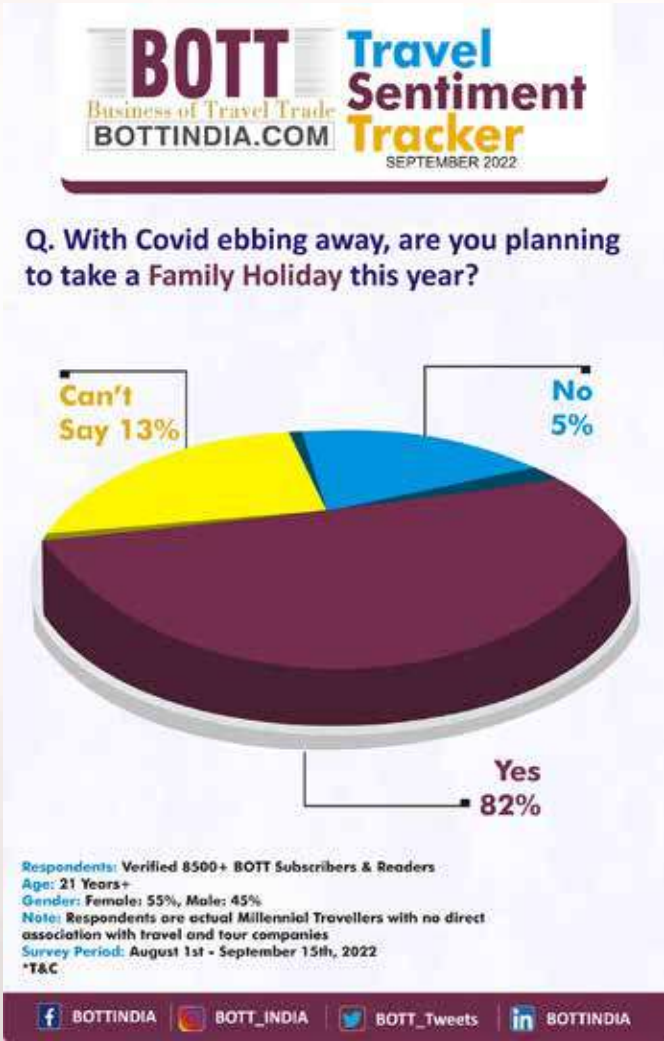


REPORT

82% Millennial Travellers are planning to take a family holiday this year

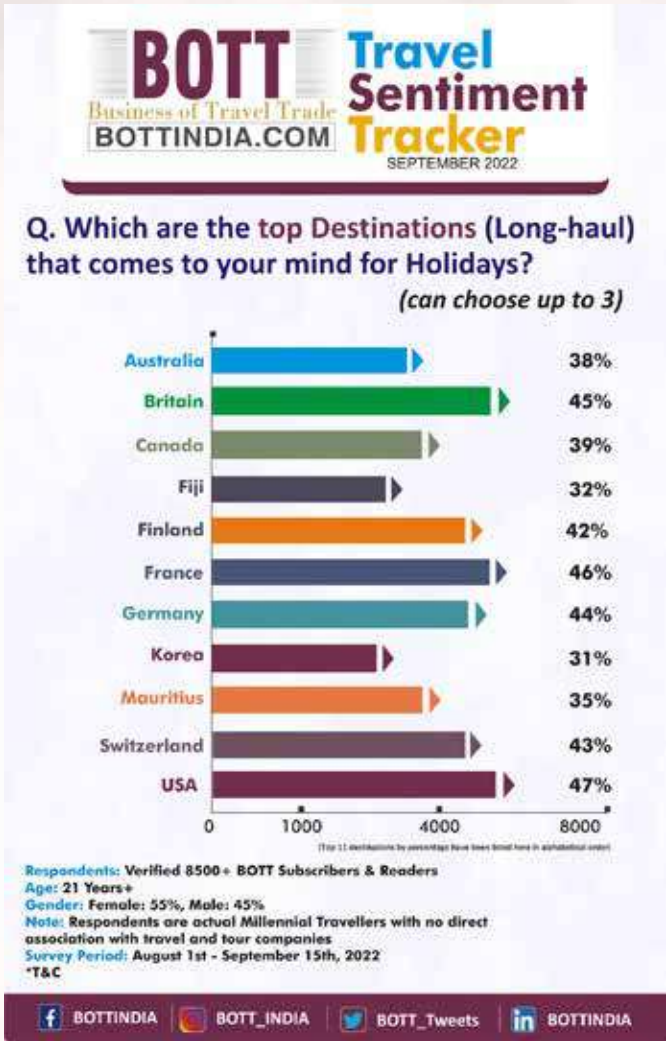
With Covid-19 reaching the endemic stage, 56% Indian Millennial Travellers are outlining to take an international holiday this year while 44% of them are looking forward to take a domestic holiday according to BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker

•About 82% Millennial Travellers are planning to take a family holiday this year.

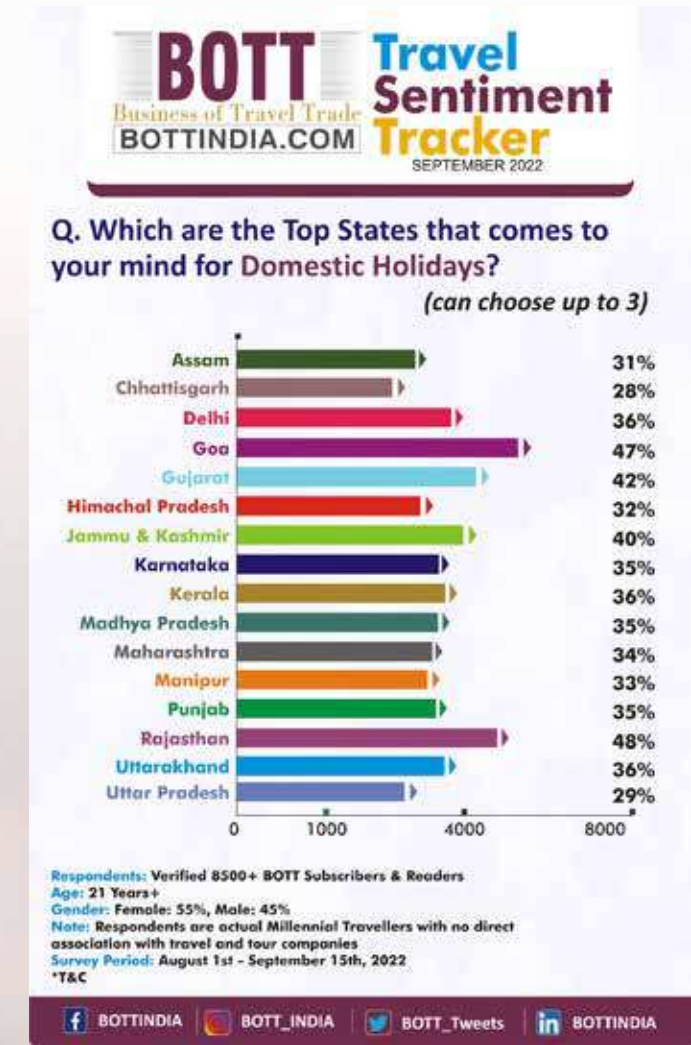


•56% Indian Millennial Travellers are going for an international holiday while 44% of them are looking forward to taking a domestic holiday.

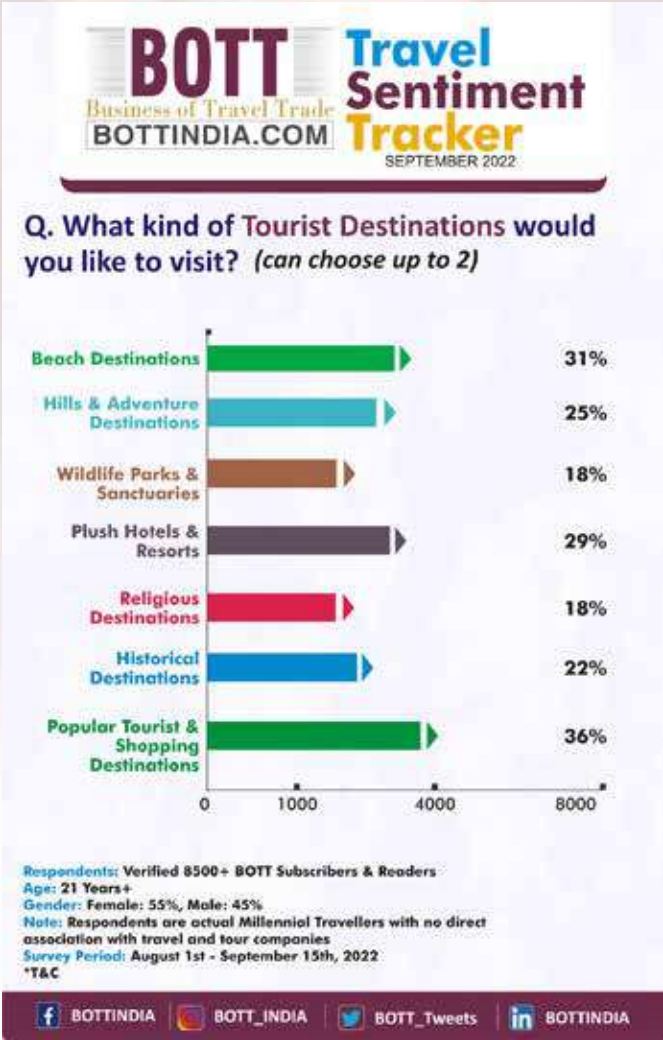
• **Thailand (62%)**, Singapore (55%), UAE (52%), Maldives (43%), Vietnam (36%), Saudi Arabia (34%), Qatar (30%), Philippines (29%), Turkey (28%), Seychelles (25%), Indonesia (25%) and Bhutan (22%) are the top short-haul destinations preferred by Millennials in the coming holiday season.



• **USA (47%)**, France (46%), Britain (45%), Germany (44%), Switzerland (43%), Finland (42%), Canada (39%), Australia (38%), Mauritius (35%), Fiji (32%), Korea (31%) are the top long-haul destinations preferred by millennials this holiday season.



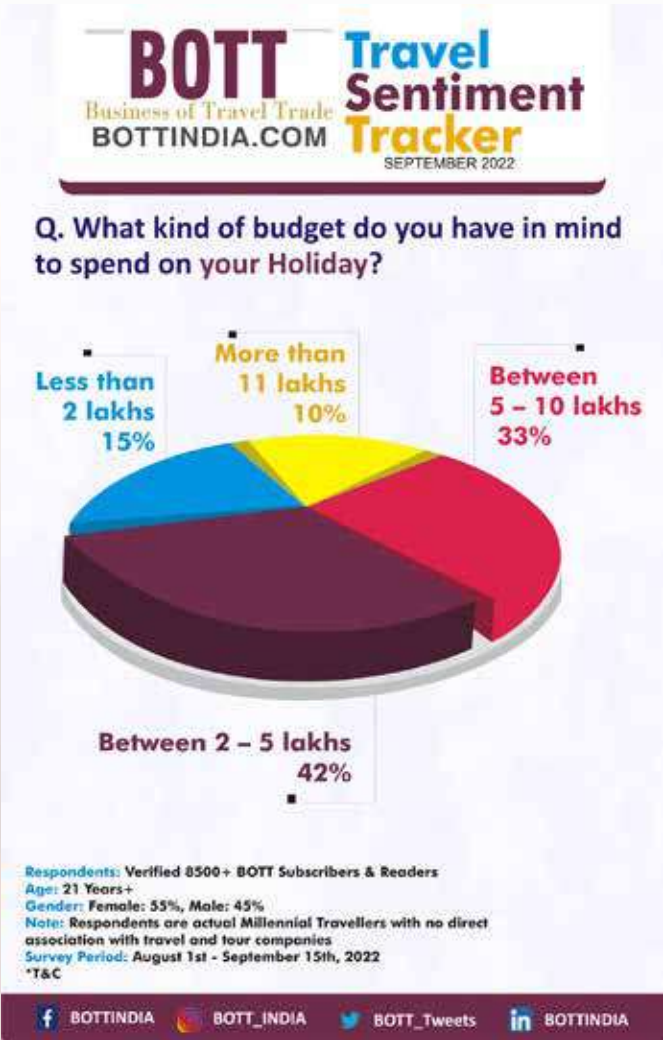
• **Rajasthan (48%)**, Goa (47%), Gujarat (42%), J&K (40%), Kerala (36%), Uttarakhand (36%), Delhi (36%), Madhya Pradesh (35%), Karnataka (35%), Punjab (35%), Maharashtra (34%), Manipur (33%), Himachal Pradesh (32%), Assam (31%), Uttar Pradesh (29%) and Chhattisgarh (28%) are the top Indian states preferred by millennials for domestic holidays.



•36% Millennial Travellers choose for Popular Tourist and Shopping Destinations followed by Beach Destinations (31%), Plush Hotels & Resorts (29%), Hills & Adventure Destinations (25%), Historical Destinations (22%), Religious Destinations (18%) and Wildlife Parks & Sanctuaries (18%).



•About 35% of millennials would like to take a 5-7 nights long vacation followed by 31% of millennials who would opt for 7-9 nights packages, 23% for 3-5 nights packages and 11% for more than 10+ nights.



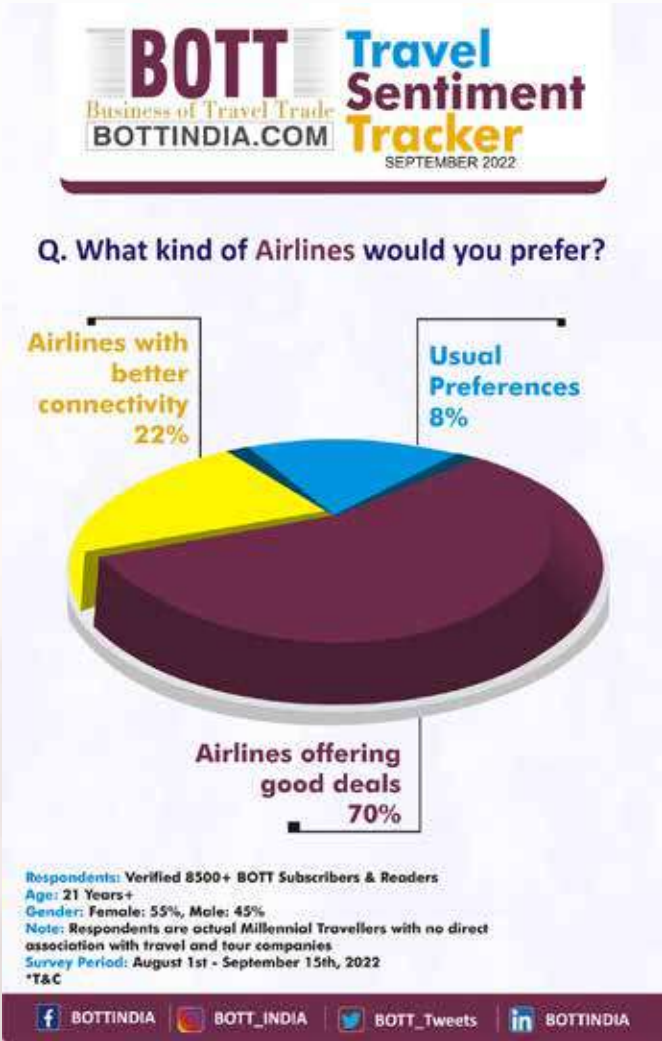
• 42% of millennials are open to spending anywhere between INR 2 lakhs to 5 lakhs for their holidays followed by 33% who would spend between INR 5 to 10 lakhs, 15% for less than INR 2 lakhs and 10% of millennials would spend more than INR 11 lakhs.



REPORT



•Around 31% millennials would like to book Luxury Hotels while 27% would go for Budget properties followed by 26% for Boutique properties.



• 70% millennials are keen to book Airlines that will offer good deals followed by Airlines with better connectivity to the destinations

BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker

Business of Travel Trade
BOTTINDIA.COM

REPORT

Travel is back and how as 82% Indian millennial travellers, which forms the largest chunk of the travelling population, are planning to take a family holiday this year. With Covid-19 reaching the endemic stage, millennial travellers are quite enthusiastic about their vacation plans as 56% of them are planning to go for an international holiday while 44% of them are looking forward to taking a domestic holiday according to the report by BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker.



"The fact that more than 82% of the millennials in India are keen to undertake a holiday in the coming holiday season is extremely encouraging news for the travel and tourism industry. The findings are motivating and will certainly generate more confidence in an industry which got severely impacted by the pandemic.

However, inbound and outbound are two verticals of travel that go hand in hand and growth of one pushes the growth of the other sector too. I hope the industry, governments, airlines and every stakeholder will work towards making the experiences of the travellers as smooth as possible," said **Ankush Nijhawan, Co-Founder, TBO Group**

The BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker was done online with over 8500+ millennial travellers across the country over a period of 45 days (Aug 1st to Sept 2022) has revealed that 62% millennials would prefer Thailand, followed by Singapore (55%), UAE (52%), Maldives (43%), Vietnam (36%), Saudi Arabia (34%) and Qatar (30%) in the short-haul category of international destinations.

The top-ranked international destinations for the long-haul category includes USA (47%), France (46%), Britain (45%), Germany (44%), Switzerland (43%), Finland (42%), Canada (39%), Australia (38%), Mauritius (35%), Fiji (32%), and Korea (31%) which are preferred by millennials in this holiday season.

In the domestic segment, Rajasthan (48%), Goa (47%), Gujarat (42%), J&K (40%), Kerala (36%), Uttarakhand (36%), Delhi (36%), Madhya Pradesh (35%), Karnataka (35%), Punjab (35%), Maharashtra (34%),

Manipur (33%), Himachal Pradesh (32%), Assam (31%), Uttar Pradesh (29%) and Chhattisgarh (28%) are the top Indian states preferred by millennials for domestic holidays.

"The findings reflect the pent up travel demand among the Indian millennial travellers. It is heartening to see that travellers are back and are open to new destinations, and determined to make the most



of the opportunities that have opened up. Many of our members are planning trips for this year and 2023 because they know demand will be high for popular destinations eventually. This is a pivotal time for the industry. People are finally booking trips. They have higher expectations, including for seamless travel experiences throughout

their journey. They are ready to spend more money and time on travel than they would have in the past. And the resurgent demand we see is just the beginning. It is imperative that airlines should plan and increase their capacity to meet the surging demand as this should not act as a deterrent for the travellers," said **Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) and Vice Chairperson, FAITH.**

According to the survey, 42% of millennials are open to spending anywhere between INR 2 lakhs to 5 lakhs for their holidays while 33% millennials would spend between INR 5 to 10 lakhs. Around 31% millennials would like to book luxury hotels while 27% would go for Budget properties followed by 26% for Boutique properties.

The survey also touched upon new travel trends like rise of responsible and conscious travellers, greater flexibility around when travel happens, options for personalized experiences and longer stays that blend travel and living.

For More Information log on to <https://www.bottindia.com/82-millennial-travellers-are-planning-to-take-a-family-holiday-this-year/>



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Congratulations to all

National Tourism Award Winners 2018 – 19

S.no	Award Category	Winner
1	Best State / Union Territory	Uttarakhand
2	Comprehensive Development of Tourism (Rest of India)	Kozhikode
3	Best District Tourism Promotional Council	
4	Best Maintained and Differently Abled Friendly Monument	
5	Shiv Temple, Bhojpur, Madhya Pradesh	Kolkata
6	Best Tourist Friendly Airport in Class X Cities	Secunderabad
7	Best Tourist-friendly Railway Station	Indore
8	Best Tourist-friendly Airport in other cities	Ahmedabad
9	Best Heritage City	Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board
10	Best State for Adventure Tourism	Trail Blazer Tours India Pt Ltd
11	Best Inbound Tour Operators / Travel Agent (Category 1)	Minar Travels India Pvt Ltd
12	Best Inbound Tour Operator / Travel Agent (Category 2)	Earthen Experiences LLP
13	Best Inbound Tour Operator / Travel Agent (Category 3)	International Pilgrimage Revolution Pt Ltd.
14	Best Inbound Tour Operator / Travel Agent (Category 4)	Tour Masters (India) Pvt. Ltd.
15	Best Inbound Tour Operator / Travel Agent (Category 5)	Route Makers
16	Best Inbound Tour Operator / Travel Agent (Category 6)	KTC (India) Pvt. Ltd.
17	Tourist Transport Operator (Category 1)	Geetee Travels Pvt. Ltd.
18	Tourist Transport Operator (Category 2)	Bakshi Transport Service (P) Ltd.
19	Tourist Transport Operator (Category 3)	
20	Best Domestic Tour Operator: Promoting and Selling Tourism Products of the Rest of India (Category 1)	Make My Trip (India) Pvt. Limited
21	Best Domestic Tour Operator: Promoting and Selling Tourism Products of the Rest of India (Category 2)	Colors of India Tours Pvt. Ltd.
22	Best Domestic Tour Operator: Promoting and Selling Tourism Products of the Rest of India (Category 3)	Clubside Tours & Travels Pvt. Ltd.
23	Best Domestic Tour Operator: Promoting and Selling Tourism Products of the Rest of India (Category 4)	Emperor Traveline
24	Best Domestic Tour Operator Promoting and Selling Tourism Products of North East Region including Sikkim	Clubside Tours & Travels Pvt. Ltd.
25	Best Domestic Tour Operator Promoting and Selling Tourism Products of Jammu & Kashmir	Nirmala Travels
26	Best Adventure Tour Operator - Inbound	Snow Leopard Adventure Pvt. Ltd.
27	Best Adventure Tour Operator - Domestic	Clubside Tours & Travels Pvt. Ltd.
28	Best MICE Operator	Creative Travel Pvt. Ltd.
29	Best Hotel - 5 Star Deluxe Category	Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai
30	Best Hotel - 5 Star	The Gateway Hotel, Vijayawada
31	Best Hotel - 4 Star	Taj Kumarakom, Kottayam
32	Best Heritage Hotel - Grand Category	Shiv Niwas Palace, Udaipur
33	Best Heritage Hotel - Classic Category	Neemrana Fort Palace, Rajasthan
34	Best Heritage Hotel - Basic Category	Shikaradi Hotel, Udaipur
35	Best Eco-Friendly Hotel	ITC Rajputana, Jaipur (Rajasthan)
36	Best Stand-alone Restaurant	Mandap Thali - Express Hotels Pvt. Ltd., Vadodara
37	Hotel Providing Best Facilities for the Differently Abled Guests	The Ashok, New Delhi
38	Best Hotel Based Meeting Venue	ITC Grand Chola, Chennai
39	Best Stand-alone Convention Centre	India Exposition Mart Limited, Greater Noida
40	Best Wellness Centre (Southern Region)	Manaltheeram Ayurvedic Hospital & Research Centre Pvt. Ltd, Kerala

Kerala Tourism bags PATA Gold Award & gets 'Hall of Fame' status



BOTT DESK

Kerala Tourism has bagged the prestigious Gold Award of Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) for 2022 in Printed Marketing Campaign category, in a huge recognition of the government's sustained efforts to position the state as a major global destination in the post-pandemic world.

Kerala Tourism Director Shri P B Nooh received the award from Ms. Liz Ortiguera, CEO, PATA and Ms. Maria Helena de Senna Fernandez, Director, Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) in a virtual ceremony.

"PATA Gold Award comes as a high honour for Kerala Tourism, which has stepped up efforts to market the state as a major global destination. It is also significant to note that this award comes shortly after Time magazine cited Kerala as one of the 50 extraordinary destinations to explore in 2022," said Tourism Minister Shri PA Mohammed Riyas.

"Our sustained marketing campaign has already started yielding results as the state has been witnessing a high footfall of both the domestic and international visitors since the turn of this year," Shri Riyas added.

"PATA Grand Award is a huge affirmation of the brilliance of our marketing campaigns at a time when Kerala Tourism is poised to scale greater heights," said Shri K S Srinivas, Principal Secretary, Tourism.

PATA Gold Awards, now in its 38th year, recognize the best in marketing, creativity and innovation tailored for the Asia Pacific region and beyond. Staying current with industry trends and innovation, PATA updated its PATA Gold Awards programme by introducing two new categories, Tourism Destination Resilience (Global) and Tourism Destination Resilience (Asia Pacific).

In all, 25 individual awards for specific themes were awarded. All award recipients were honoured at the virtual PATA Gold Awards Ceremony on Friday, October 7, 2022.



Kerala has been featured prominently in national and international channels, newspapers, magazines, portals and airport displays, helping the state to regain its reputation as a must-visit destination after the pandemic-triggered crisis. Meanwhile, earlier in the month, in a huge endorsement of its sustainable tourism practices, Kerala was accorded the prestigious "Hall of Fame" status for being the Best State/UT in the category of 'Comprehensive Development of Tourism' for the fourth consecutive year at the National Tourism Awards 2018-19.

Kozhikode's District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC) was adjudged the best in the category. The awards were presented by Vice-President Shri Jagdeep Dhankar at an impressive function at Vigyan Bhavan in Delhi. Tourism and Culture Minister Shri G Kishan Reddy presided over the function. Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC) Managing Director Smt. V Vigneshwari received the awards on behalf of Kerala Tourism.

The Hall of Fame status is given to a state/Union Territory or an organisation, which has won the National Tourism Award in a particular category for the last three consecutive years and also wins it for the fourth time in the same category. However, the winner of this status is not eligible to apply for the same category for the next three years.

From heritage to food to history – Punjab has it all!

Punjab is one of the most vibrant, colourful and prosperous states of India. It offers a great culinary repertoire, folk arts and tourist attractions. Above all, it is known for its people who are full of life. We spoke with **Honourable Cabinet Minister of Punjab – Culture, tourism, Labour Department and Invest Punjab – Anmol Gagan Maan** in a BOTT exclusive interview.

Shreya Shimpi

How was tourism affected by the pandemic?

Not just Punjab, tourism all over the world was badly affected by the pandemic. In Punjab, the major footfall received is in Amritsar which was adversely affected for almost two years as people were not venturing out as much.

How is Punjab faring as a tourist destination after the pandemic?

Everything has opened up and there are no travel restrictions in Punjab. All our tourist attractions are open to tourists and we are slowly inching towards normalcy.

Why should tourists choose Punjab as their travel destination?

At present, Amritsar is the country's most visited city. Aam Aadmi Party has now taken over in Punjab and our intention is to showcase the rich royal heritage, vibrant culture, formidable forts of our Maharajas such as the Gobindgarh Fort of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Summer Palace and Sikh History of our state to the world. We take pride in the history of our brave warriors and there is uniqueness to our regional history. The government is striving hard to showcase all these places in the form of a tourism package. There are so many interesting and insightful stories related to our forts. The Meenakari work adorning the walls of the fort is a splendid piece of art. Structures built years ago still stand the test of time

What are the marketing strategies to attract more tourists to Punjab?

It is our endeavour to advertise and promote all these destinations in the best way possible. Punjab is famous for its lush-green farms. We are now coming up with five-star farmhouses in which you can stay for a week as a vacation spot. We are promoting organic farming. Tourists can see the process of farming, how food is cooked by traditional methods using a 'chulha'. They can catch a glimpse of farmers busy at work as well as the villagers in the interiors as well as stay there. We are promoting 'farm tourism'.

What about the speciality dishes from Punjab?

Punjab is widely known for its food. The delectable cuisine complements the vibrant culture. Our 'sarson ka saag' and 'makki ki roti' are famous all over the world. There is no dearth of fresh milk, cured, buttermilk. Most of the houses in the villages have their own cows and buffaloes and milk is directly procured from there because of which it is so fresh. One can experience the authentic taste and village life in Punjab.

What would be your message to our readers?

Visit Punjab and experience the richness of our culture and heritage. Punjab is known to attract tourists all over the world not only for its tourist attractions, but also for its folk dance which is Bhangra and



folk music. The style of singing old folk songs, musical instruments such as tumbi and algoza are the original folk instruments which are a reflection of our age-old culture. There is lot to explore in Punjab which is infused with a rich history. Amazing and wholesome food, majestic forts, folk arts etc. make Punjab a complete and perfect travel destination. It is also famous for its 'Indus Valley and Harappan Civilisations'. We would like to welcome the tourism industry to Pathankot, Mohali, New Chandigarh sites to start something in terms of recreational tourism. In Pathankot, we have an island which not many know about. We are planning to start a five-star hotel chain and recreational tourism activities there. We would like tourism industry from all over India as well as globally to come to take interest in Punjab. The Government shall extend its support and cooperation and it would be hassle free since we have a single-window system. I would also like to invite investors to invest in Punjab and I assure you that all the support shall be provided from our end.

Above all, the people here are extremely loving and kind. They treat their guests like God. Come to Punjab, a state filled with colours and full of life and give us a chance to serve you.

'We want to project Goa as a 365-day destination': **Dhiraj R. Vagle**

The perfect amalgamation of sun-kissed beaches, delectable food, vibrant culture and dancing waves makes Goa a traveller's delight. **Dhiraj R. Vagle, Deputy Director Tourism, Department of Tourism, Government of Goa** spoke to BOTT in an exclusive chat about the recent travel trends and initiatives taken by the Goa Tourism Department.

Shreya Shimpi

How was tourism affected by the pandemic?

The hotel and travel trade industry was badly affected. However, we are slowly bouncing back to pre-pandemic levels. In December 2021, thirty lakh Indian tourists visited Goa. We also received 20,000 foreign tourists. There has been a 'Revenge travel' trend that has been going on since the decline of cases and the nearest and best weekend destination for most was Goa. Hence, the influx of tourists has been great.

What were the initiatives taken by the Goa Department of Tourism?

We introduced a host of initiatives to give a boost to the hotel and travel trade industry. We have the Government shacks in Goa which are nowhere else in India. We reduced the fees to fifty per cent and also extended the timeline for the shack owners to pay these fees. We also introduced a scheme for charter flights where they could get a waiver of one lakh rupees by submitting the necessary documents. We have the Tourist Trade Intervention Scheme in which a loan of twenty-five lakh rupees can be availed by the hotel industry and they could get an intervention of up to 5 per cent on the interest. The Goa Tourism Board was formed last November under the Chairmanship of the Honourable Chief Minister of Goa. The Board will be responsible for the implementation of policymaking and strategizing of all the



initiatives and new programs. It will be done in a very professional way. The Board is going to direct us on how to promote and market Goa in a big way.

How do you plan to attract international tourists to Goa?

Everyone knows about the beaches of Goa, but we have good forts and good archaeological sites as well as ancient temples. We are trying to project to these to the tourists, so that they can explore that side of Goa as well. The Department of Tourism has introduced a host of new adventure tourism activities in Goa. We have introduced River Rafting in North Goa and Hot Air Balloon in South Goa. We started Bungy Jumping on Mayem Lake in 2018. We are going to introduce new adventure tourism activities in the future also.

What would be your message to our readers?

We want to project Goa as a 365-day destination. Tourists can explore the scenic beauty of Goa in the monsoons. We are trying to project Goa as a hinterland tourism destination also for which we have introduced electric bicycle tours. Tourists can take these bicycles and explore the hinterlands where they can experience the actual cuisine of Goa. Goa is famous for its bread which was introduced by the Portuguese and tourists can see in the interiors how they are made. Goa is also famous for the 'Urrak' and 'Cashew Feni' and the tourists can see the process of how it is made and distilled. Heritage walks have been introduced.

What about Goa as a destination for weddings and MICE?

In terms of MICE, there are two new Convention Centres which are going to come up in North Goa out of which one has a capacity of 1000 and the other can accommodate 5000 people. This will be a big attraction for MICE Tourism. Goa is already famous as a beach-wedding destination. All five-star hotels have the necessary arrangements. We are going to introduce the ease of doing business by reducing the documentation process to make it easier.

This year the internationally known 'Ironman' event is happening in November and 'Sunburn' is in December. In monsoons, we host off-roading events as well. RFC took place in August. For all such events, we are trying to introduce a single-window system and ease of doing events so that we get more such events in the state.

Madhya Pradesh offers beautiful varied landscapes and a rich heritage

Located centrally, Madhya Pradesh is a treasure trove for nature as well as food lovers.

Mesmerising landscapes, wildlife sanctuaries, tiger reserves, three UNESCO World Heritage Sites and so much more make it a part of every traveller's bucket list. **Rahul Choudhary, Manager (Events and Marketing) Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board**, shares his thoughts in an exclusive interview with BOTT.

Shreya Shimpi

What makes Madhya Pradesh so special?

Madhya Pradesh offers beautiful varied landscapes, hill stations, jungles, religious places and a lot more. Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga and Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga are two out of the twelve revered Jyotirlinga shrines of Lord Shiva. It is well connected to Indore. By flight, both these temples can be covered in one day. Mandu is an ancient fort city known for its rich heritage which has over 61 monuments. There are 12 National Parks such as the famous Bandhavgarh National Park, 24 Wildlife Sanctuaries and 6 Tiger Reserves such as Kanha Tiger Reserve which gives you the experience of the true spirit of the jungle. Thirty per cent of the land is covered in the jungle. For nature lovers there are places such as Panchmarhi, a serene hill station, Bhedaghat Dhuandhar Waterfalls which are one of the largest in India and resemble Niagara Falls. Madhya Pradesh offers a great culinary experience to its travellers as well.

Indore has set a record of consecutively winning the 'The Cleanest City in India' title since 2017. Except for snow and sea, Madhya Pradesh offers you everything.

On the occasion of the birthday of our Honourable Prime Minister, eight cheetahs have been transferred from Namibia to Kuno National Park of MP. The tourists can now enjoy a unique cheetah safari from October.

What are the famous dishes and places to eat?

Madhya Pradesh is a paradise for food lovers as it offers a lot of mouth-watering options. The 'Poha' and Jalebi from Indore are quite famous. One can also try 'Bhuttey ke kees', 'Garadu', 'Khopra patties' etc. 'Chhappan Dukan' and 'Gurukripa' are famous places to check out. 'Dal baati churma' is worth trying in Indore. The Sarafa Bazaar is a night street food court located in central Indore. It is a jewellery market during the daytime and converts into a street food market at night. From budget-friendly to fine dining, there are a lot of options which are worth exploring in Indore.

What is famous in terms of shopping?

The 'Batik' print sarees and dresses are famous. It is also known for the embroidery art known as 'Zari zardozi'. The Chanderi and Maheshwari sarees are very famous.

What are the initiatives taken by the Tourism Board to promote tourism?

We are actively promoting tourism by attending exhibitions and



conventions. The Jal Mahotsav is a destination promotion event where adventure sports are held. The Mandu Festival is being hosted at the end of this year. Cycle safari is being planned as a three-day event which will start from Bhopal, go to the Tawa Backwater and then head towards Panchmarhi. We are planning to do MPTM (Madhya Pradesh Travel Mart) to promote tourism.

How is Madhya Pradesh faring as a tourist destination after the pandemic?

Now people want to travel and venture out and are opting to travel by road mostly. We receive tourists from all over India who mostly visit Indore, Mandu, Mahakaleshwar temple etc.

What is your message to our readers?

Madhya Pradesh offers a rich diversity in terms of heritage, nature, religious places as well as wildlife tourism. It is home to three UNESCO World Heritage sites: Sanchi, Khajuraho which is almost a 1000-year-old group of temples and the Bhimbetka rock shelters which attracted tourists from all across the globe. The Khajuraho temples were built from 885 AD to 1000 AD. There are 25 temples spread over six kilometres. The Bhimbetka rock shelter has one of the oldest-known rock art in India.

Outbound Travel Industry will have to come together to make travel seamless & smooth

Finally, we are beginning to see the light at the end of the long dark tunnel in which we were travelling since March 2020.... After a long wait of more than 24 months we are seeing a tremendous upswing trend and demand for Outbound Travel....

Mahendra Vakharia

This summer season starting April onwards and continuing till present date has been good and super busy with work due to the outburst of Outbound Travel. Ease of covid protocols worldwide, pent up demand of the last 2 years, opening of skies by the Government of India allowing scheduled flights to resume have all helped in boosting the outbound travel. These last few months the office has appeared nothing less than a warzone – full of activity, excitement and of course pressure to complete the work in the stipulated time before departure of the passenger.

In spite the Visa Challenges being posed with most of the countries, especially the popular destinations, the demand for outbound travel is robust and increasing on a daily basis. If only the Consulates of European countries, Canada, USA and UK had pre-empted the mad rush and made appropriate arrangements regarding manpower to take care of the demand, the outbound story would have been a blockbuster instead of a super hit. However, I would like to sincerely thank the French Consulate and the Swiss Consulate for their proactive approach in the early months by giving appointment dates and most importantly processing the applications in a week's time.

In the post pandemic era, in an endeavour to move forward together, all the stakeholders connected to the Outbound Travel Industry will have to be on the same page to ensure that outbound travel becomes a seamless and smooth process. This will surely lead to a win-win situation for all concerned, and we would surely be singing our way to La La Land. It is a known fact that the Indian visitor is a high spender when on a holiday and a country not capitalising on this (due to delayed visa process) is losing out on helping its tourism stakeholders to earn some serious big bucks from the Indian Outbound Traveller. There is a huge uptake and demand for high end luxury resorts in the destination of travel, also we see there is a big sense of urgency to enjoy and go on a holiday when the opportunity is there and not wait for another day or another time. Who knows when again the traveller will be stuck at home or loose a loved one etc... and the clients are ok and also keen to take back-to-back holidays or frequent holidays.

If this trend of multiple and urgent outbound travel continues and if



more and more consulates open up fully to accommodate the surging demand, Outbound Travel from India will hit the pre covid levels soon. In the last 24 months lot of things have changed and are continuing to change. There is manpower shortage in the tourism industry worldwide, hotels are not fully operational, lot of establishments and transporters who were servicing the tourism industry earlier are not fully operational or have shifted to alternate business. All this is leading to challenge in operation and completion of the service effectively and efficiently.

However the way I look at the present time and my take is very simple – it is a fresh start for all of us and instead of talking about pre-covid days, let us talk of how we can build up from here on, start progressing and galloping to the finish line! As we say in our Travel Industry, it is the journey that is important and not the destination. It is not WHERE you travel, but with WHOM you travel that makes all the difference! Any country in the world that knows the potential of Tourism Money but is not focussing on India is playing a losing game! Love it or hate it, but one cannot ignore the Indian Outbound Travel Juggernaut. However, if you do so it will be solely at your own risk!

(Mahendra Vakharia is a seasoned travel professional and owns and runs a company in Ahmedabad by the name Pathfinders Holidays Pvt. Ltd.)



Qatar decks up with new offerings and attractions for **FIFA World Cup 2022**



Picturesque, vibrant, futuristic and dynamic are a few of the adjectives that describe Qatar and its constantly evolving landscape. It is the world's largest exporter of Liquefied Natural Gas and one of the few magical wonderlands where the desert meets the sea. A beautiful blend of ultra-modern infrastructure and traditional family values and culture, Qatar leaves you mesmerized. It now shines prominently on the global sporting arena as it is all set to host the much-awaited **FIFA World Cup 2022**. The enthusiasm can be felt in the air.

With eight new outstanding stadiums being constructed along with a plethora of other infrastructural activities being developed, Qatar is going to be a spectacle to behold. It has been ranked as the 'Safest country in the world'. Hamad International Airport was voted the 'Best International Airport in the World' of 2022. Qatar should be on every traveller's bucket list. We take you through some of the interesting places we visited. BOTT brings to you an insider's view of all that there is to do and see in Doha.

Shreya Shimpi

National Museum of Qatar: An architectural gem designed by the world-renowned French Architect Jean Nouvel, the museum design is inspired by the desert rose. It chronicles the story of Qatar from almost 700 million years ago to the present day. It showcases three chapters spread across eleven step-less galleries. The way they have used technology to show the history of pearl-diving, oil pumps etc. is outstanding. Do check out the spellbinding installation of lights situated right towards the end of the museum for some fascinating pictures!

Jiwan: An exciting destination on Doha's culinary map, Jiwan offers an exquisite dining experience. They have a contemporary Qatari menu which gives an immersive gastronomic experience which explores the rich heritage and culture of Qatar. 'Beetroot smoked cheese-ginger, Fatayer tomato-marjoram, Raspberry-rose mahalabia' are some of their specialities. The enchanting interiors and gourmet food with earthly flavours make this place a must-visit on your trip to Qatar.

Sunset Dhow Cruise: After some *bonne bouche*, you can enjoy panoramic vistas of the city in a traditional dhow, which gives you a glimpse of the Bedouin heritage as the sun sets. The Corniche skyline springs to life as the architectural masterpieces are lit, giving you some memorable clicks. The cruise offers you a great vantage point of the city and you can also have your dinner on board.

Souq Waqif: One of the oldest and iconic traditional markets in Qatar



reflecting Qatari culture in many ways. It is forever bustling with activity. There are shops selling spices, dry fruits, honey, handicrafts, Arabic oud, pets and so much more. Falconry is prevalent in Qatar and there is an entire section dedicated to falcons. Qatar is the only country in the world to have a hospital for falcons.

Majlis al Dama: This is an interesting place in Souq Waqif popular for its 'Qahwa hawl'. It is a place where Qatari men socialize and play the traditional game of Dama. We were happy to meet the owner of the place who was happy to tell us about the history of the place and also offered us the refreshing Qahwa.



Parisa: Situated inside Souq Waqif, you can get your cameras ready as this is an absolutely 'instagrammable' restaurant. A luxe Persian restaurant with intricate mirror work, majestic chandeliers, hand-painted artwork, mosaics and delectable food. A feast for the eyes as well as the tummy, the vibe of this place transports you into another world.

Education City: A 12 sq. km campus home to various educational and research institutes. We visited a few places on the campus which are listed below.

Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies: A large white cavernous structure with Quranic verses embossed artistically into the ceiling. It can accommodate 1800 people inside the prayer hall. The two minarets rising 90m high into the air point symbolically towards the direction of Mecca.

Qatar National Library: The external design resembles a folded book and its equally magnificent interiors can leave readers as well as non-readers spellbound. There are over 800,000 volumes of national and international books. There are independent self-check-in and check-out kiosks and an automated book-return system. A 6-metre-deep excavated section is reserved for valuable texts from Arab-Islamic civilisation. There is also a music studio, 3D printing station, a conference venue and a café.

Education City Golf Club: It is spread over 120 hectares of land with a stunning backdrop of the Education City Stadium. The perfectly manicured green areas are designed in line with the USGA standards. The state-of-the-art teaching centre showcases the history of golf and is a centre of excellence in teaching.

Sel and Miel, French Brasserie at The Ritz Carlton serves traditional French main courses and desserts.

Boho Social: Stunning interiors exude a bohemian vibe, you can enjoy an amazing meal with some refreshing cocktails and desserts as you enjoy the magnificent sea views.

Katara Cultural Village: A premier attraction which houses a 5000-seating capacity amphitheatre, The Force of Nature II statue, Katara Masjid as well as some great outdoor luxury retail outlets and restaurants overlooking the Katara beach.

Lusail City: A futuristic city reflective of the urban transformation with over 22 hotels, golf courses and an amusement park. Catch a glimpse of the splendid Katara Towers, Lusail Stadium and Downtown Lusail as you marvel at the architectural gems this place has to offer.

Khor Al Adaid (Inland Sea): Get ready to experience a rush of adrenaline as you enjoy an exhilarating Dune-bashing experience in your Desert Safari in an air-conditioned 4x4. Enjoy a rare magical sight where the desert meets the sea which was also declared a natural reserve in 2007.

Mshreib Downtown Doha: The world's first sustainable downtown regeneration project which is set to give the old commercial district a modern uplift. Though modern, the architecture reflects the rich Qatari culture and heritage. The Msheireb Museums: Bin Jelmood House, Company House, Mohammed Bin Jassim House and Radwani House are worth checking out as they walk you through ancient Qatari history.

3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum: One of the largest, most innovative and technologically advanced sports museums in the world showcasing the legacy and history of the Olympics and World Sports.

Qalamkarri: Contemporary Indian Haute cuisine inspired by the art of Kalamkari. This place is a must-visit for its majestic décor, scrumptious food, piquant flavours and unparalleled hospitality.

Benjarong: Enjoy a lazy Saturday brunch at the Benjarong, Dusit as they offer you a specially curated Authentic Thai culinary experience. Great food, ambience and service make it worth a visit.

Shopping: Enjoy local shopping at the traditional souqs. You can also find luxury brands at the malls such as City Center Doha mall or Doha Festival city.

Qatar has something in store for everyone. It is a great travel destination if you are travelling with family or even friends. Amazing food, picturesque landscapes, state-of-the-art infrastructure and great shopping options make Qatar a complete vacation spot. Visit Qatar and enjoy as you make memories for a lifetime.

India is one of the biggest markets in the world that's why EGYPTAIR is planning to increase the number of flights starting November 1, 2022; we will be operating 5 flights per week in addition to our codeshare agreements to reach more points in India as part of our network expansion plan.

We contribute in various travel trade conventions such as the OTM; we are also working with the ETA (Egyptian Tourism Authority) to promote Egypt in the Indian market.

What would be your message to our readers?

We encourage travellers in India to fly Egyptair to feel the Egyptian hospitality. We also encourage them to join our Frequent Flyer loyalty program through egyptairplus.com to be one of our members to get more travel benefits.

Yas Island witnessed 150% growth from India this Summer; hopeful for brighter future

Yas Island, Abu Dhabi's premier leisure and entertainment hub is home to a huge variety of recreational, fun, sports and leisure activities. From shopaholics to fun fanatics, sports enthusiasts and thrill seekers – there is something for everyone in Yas Island. The recent advertising campaign featuring Ranveer Singh – the famous Bollywood celeb has all but taken the frenzy to a new high. **Liam Findlay, CEO, Experience Hub, Yas Island**, who was recently in India for a multi-city roadshow, shares more in an exclusive chat with BOTT.

Priyanka Saxena Ray

Yas Island is one of the world's fastest growing leisure and entertainment destinations, located on the golden shores of Abu Dhabi - just 20 minutes from downtown Abu Dhabi and 50 minutes from Dubai. Yas Island offers holidaymakers a diverse mix of award-winning leisure and entertainment experiences, from one-of-a-kind theme parks, world-class shopping and superb dining, to a golf course, exciting water and motor sports, and spectacular musical, entertainment and family events, all within the 25 sq. km Island. Today, Yas Island is home to the award-winning theme parks Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, Yas Waterworld, Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi, the record-breaking CLYMB Abu Dhabi. It also houses Yas Marina Circuit (home to the FORMULA 1 ETIHAD AIRWAYS ABU DHABI GRAND PRIX), Yas Marina, the award-winning Yas Links golf course, as well as Abu Dhabi's largest mall, Yas Mall, Yas Bay Waterfront - Abu Dhabi's vibrant day to night destination featuring Pier71, a three-kilometre Boardwalk, and a variety of world-class dining, leisure and entertainment brands.

“The Ranveer Singh campaign has been a major hit as we have successfully been able to convey what we wanted, especially to the Indian public. The idea behind having him on board was to really find an ambassador that suits the brand of Yas Island and reflects the energy and passion that the destination has to offer. Ranveer is full of energy and brings a lot of vibrancy with him. Yas island is a young destination. We've been in existence for about over 10 years but in the last couple of years, it's really nurtured to a full destination. We are like the Orlando of the Middle East. A lot of attractions and activities have been added in the last couple of years. We have the Warner Brothers, which is the largest indoor theme park in the world. we've got Ferrari World, which is one of the world's most famous brands and the first and largest Ferrari indoor theme park,” says Liam Findlay.

The Ranveer Singh Campaign was launched in April this year and the response following it has been great. Infact, the Summer of 2022 saw a huge influx in tourists from India to Yas Island. “Ranveer Singh represents the energy that Yas Island offers and I think people connected with it as our metrics rated the campaign to be a great success. This Summer, we have seen nearly 100% recovery versus the



2019 numbers. The first quarter of 2022 was still enveloped with some restrictions but April onwards, things have been on an upward swing. The summer months have registered a 150% recovery in the India market. We've actually seen quicker rebound from India than any other part of the world, not just with leisure and holidaymakers but also with MICE gatherings. We have not just reached the 2019 figures but also smashed it! All this has happened because of our great teamwork and our 360-degree marketing approach. We have expanded our presence in India in four cities and all our regional teams have put in the right kind of efforts to get these results," he added.

Concluding the interview, he shared, “The traveller today has evolved. He no longer wants to follow a set itinerary set by the travel agent but wishes to explore all aspects of a destination. They do their research online and come prepared on what to expect, what to visit, where to go, what to eat, etc. Thus, the experiences too have to be enhanced to match customer’s expectations. In the past, we’ve had some great success with Indian weddings, but now we’re putting dedicated resources and efforts into making sure that we drive that market further. For me, India will always be an important market to us. We will continue to invest heavily into this. Keeping India’s long history with UAE in mind, the tourist traffic between the two countries, the proximity, connection and other factors in mind, I think we’re really setting up Yas Island for the future with Indian market.”



Palladium Hotel Group keen to get a larger piece of Indian Outbound pie

A popular name in Indian travel and hospitality circle, Palladium Hotel Group, the internationally renowned Spanish hotel chain represented by Global Destinations in India recently hosted a luncheon for the trade media and apprised them about the upcoming properties under the umbrella. **Sandra Polo Canudas, Asia & ME Commercial Director, Palladium Hotel Group** along with the team of Global Destinations played the perfect host over some delicious Chinese cuisine.

Priyanka Saxena Ray

The last two years have been extremely tough for the global tourism and hospitality industry as all verticals related to it took a major hit. However, with travel resuming now in full fervour, it is heartening to see people travelling like never before. Their preferences have changed, their choices have evolved and the travel and hospitality providers are working hard to keep with the pace. The Palladium Hotel Group is no different. After a gap of 2 years, the hospitality chain is now geared to open new properties and welcome tourists back to its existing one.

Operating under the umbrella of 'Grupo Empresas Matutes,' today, the Palladium Hotel Group is present in six countries with 41 hotels located in Spain, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Italy, and Brazil. Recently in India for a luncheon meeting with Delhi trade media, Ms. Sandra Polo shared details of the future plans of the hospitality chain. Sandra elaborates, "The Palladium Hotels and Resorts are great vacation hotels for adults as well as honeymooners. For Indians visiting Spain, they are usually the first choice. These 4-star Palladium properties offers breath-taking views on the Mediterranean Sea and delectable cuisine."

Having positioned Ibiza as the party capital of the world in the India market, Sandra is happy with the growth trajectory of the hospitality chain. "We were a company that originated in Ibiza with a huge inventory of rooms, and thus all our efforts were focussed towards positioning Ibiza in India. There is no doubt that Ibiza is the party capital with some astounding beaches, views and food and we turned all these factors into the USP of our hotels," she adds.

The Palladium group today has a portfolio of 10 hotels in the premium and luxury segment spread across the island of Ibiza. The Hard Rock Hotel Ibiza along with Ushuaia Ibiza Beach Hotel are some of the most popular hotels for music as well as party lovers. where they should be.

Meanwhile, the TRS Hotels located in the most exotic destinations in the Caribbean and now also on the island of Ibiza are the group's most exclusive adults-only hotels. Agroturismo Sa Talaia offers intimate and relaxing accommodation making it ideal for honeymooners. The Fiesta Hotels and Resorts is a unique 4-star establishment while the Ushuaia Ibiza Beach Hotel offers the best

music and entertainment for adults only. BLESS Collection Hotels promises and delivers a unique holiday experience for those whom quality is a priority. The hotel company would be adding two new hotels to its portfolio – ITR Ibiza in the Balearic Islands and Hard Rock Hotel Marabella.

"We are not looking for big groups as we are not built in that way. Our



USP is our unique offering, which is classy, exclusive and tailor made. The destination where we build our hotel turn into holiday spots, thus offering guests plenty of options to party, relax, unwind, savour and simply enjoy. I am positive that now, post Covid, we will find more holiday makers than before as traveller's choice has evolved and he is now on a lookout for niche and experiential properties," Sandra concluded.

Jumeirah Hotels and Resorts plans global expansion; considers India an important market

Priyanka Saxena Ray



Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts, the global luxury hospitality company and member of Dubai Holding, is continuing to foster and build new relationships in key source markets, including India. A key strategic partner to the UAE, India is a key source markets for Jumeirah Hotels and Resorts, especially across Dubai, London and Asia Pacific. A high-profile delegation from the hospitality group, comprising **Alexander Lee, Chief Commercial Officer, Jumeirah Group**, Mr. Ashraf Mohammad, General Manager, Jumeirah Maldives Olhahali Islands and Kirti Anchan, General Manager, Jumeirah Emirates Towers was recently in India to interact with its B2B clientele and media. Here's a look at what they had to say –

With India accounting for 12 per cent of visitor arrivals to Dubai in H1 2022 (858,000) – an increase of over 109% YoY – Jumeirah Hotels and Resorts recently hosted events in Mumbai and Delhi to share key updates on its ongoing investment in guest experience and product enhancements at its Dubai properties, as well as key new resorts opened in popular new markets with Indian audiences, including the Maldives and Bali.

Key enhancements at Jumeirah properties in Dubai include the current renovation of the beachfront at Jumeirah Beach Hotel, designed to deliver a unique lifestyle destination in Dubai with access to the very best leisure, health, and wellness facilities, and the full refurbishment of its ultra-exclusive Malakiya Villas at Jumeirah Dar Al Masyaf to impress the most discerning guests.

Jumeirah Hotels and Resorts also shared information about the upcoming Jumeirah Marsa Al Arab, Dubai, due to open in late 2023. This new property will lead a new generation of Jumeirah Group's ultra-luxury portfolio. The new property designed as a futuristic superyacht will complete Jumeirah's oceanic trilogy, which includes the wave-shaped Jumeirah Beach Hotel and sailboat-inspired Burj Al Arab Jumeirah.

"We have 12 hotels in Dubai and India is the top inbound source market for Dubai as a destination so naturally India is an important market for us – it is one of the top 10 source markers for us. However, one of the reasons we are here in India is to expand the awareness of our brand among the Indians with regards to other locations as well. Last 3 years we have expanded globally to a number of new international locations – a great example of which is the beautiful Capri in Italy. We have an iconic hotel called Capri Palace, which is a Jumeirah Hotel added about 18 months ago to the portfolio, which has been visited by celebrities for many years and that is something not many Indian travellers would know," said Alexander Lee.

"Jumeirah brand in all the locations that we operate in is positioned as a luxury brand. We have a vision to be recognised as the top 5 luxury brands on a global scale, very similar to our positioning in our hotels in Dubai," he said, adding, "In all the markets that we operate in, we are either back at the same level as 2019 or doing better. Now our last focus is to work on our properties in the China market, which has been the slowest to recover. As a luxury brand, we recognise the importance of B2B and B2C markets and have a very balanced strategy to work with both. We spend quality time with our B2B partners and run workshops etc. for them so that they understand the brand and the market well.

Concluding the interview, he said, "Hospitality as an industry is centuries old and very people centric. Technology has introduced additional enablers that has helped customers who perhaps have had language barriers and can now use technology to communicate better with the staff at the properties. I am also glad to share that business travel has come back very quickly this year, especially in Dubai and London and an interesting trend that has been observed is that the people who come for business are now usually extending their holiday and combining it with leisure too. Or just simply staying with us longer as remote working is still very much in."

Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau (PCEB) announces latest business plans

The Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau (PCEB) recently hosted a press conference in Mumbai as a part of their promotional trip to India to reconnect and revive the tourism and business events industry in Penang and India. **YB Yeoh Soon Hin, the State Executive Councillor for Tourism & Creative Economy** spoke to BOTT in an exclusive interview.



Shreya Shimpi

The ultimate aim of the Roadshow is to open direct connectivity to ease travel. Some of the local Indian airlines have expressed their interest in expanding into Penang after attending last year's Roadshow. The PCEB team along with YB Yeoh Soon Hin, the State Executive Councillor for Tourism and Creative Economy had a meeting with a few of the airlines to discuss the direct flight connectivity options between Penang and the key cities in India.. Travel restrictions too have been lifted and at present, a double vaccination certificate is required. There is no need for an RT-PCR Test or quarantine. They are also providing Visa on arrival.

Here is what YB Yeoh Soon Hin, the State Executive Councillor for Tourism & Creative Economy had to say –

What was the survival strategy during the pandemic and what steps are being taken to achieve the pre-pandemic numbers?

During the pandemic, we had come up with a 'zero-interest' loan as a support for the businesses to ease their cash flow. We have given monetary assistance to vulnerable groups like the hawkers, F&B etc. We have also waived off the licensing fees and business rents to those operating their business on the state-owned property. We have helped these businesses sustain themselves during the pandemic. After the pandemic, we have come up with a marketing plan to promote and provide incentives to encourage travellers to come to Penang in the form of vouchers, and coupons to avail discounts which is a good strategy to boost the business. The results have shown that Penang has ranked number one in terms of domestic tourists coming from Malaysia. Since the opening of international borders, we have had a good number of tourists coming from Thailand, Singapore etc. But our dream is to get tourists from beyond South-east Asia too. India is a potential market for us and we are continuing our efforts to get more Indian tourists.

How important is India to you as a market?

I have noticed that Indians like staying for one week in one particular



destination, so their spending power is that. It is a good strategy for us to entice Indian tourists to Penang. The distance from India to Penang is not too long. Also, the costs are comparatively lesser as compared to Europe. We would like to be the preferred destination for Indian tourists.

With India ranking among the top five countries in terms of tourists visiting Penang, Ashwin Gunasekaran, the Chief Executive Officer of Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau stated that India is a significant market for business and leisure trips and that they are strategizing a series of plans to reach the milestone set before the pandemic. "PCEB's dedication has not wavered, and our team is dedicated to fostering mutually beneficial relationships and working closely with the Indian community. The establishment of a direct flight between India and Penang is one of the primary topics of conversation at the moment. We are already in discussion with airlines both in India and in Malaysia about the possibility of establishing additional direct flight routes between Penang and key cities in India." He also added, "Penang has a complete range of Indian cuisine options which include Jain as well as vegetarian restaurants so that food is not a challenge for Indian travellers."

India is an important source market for tourism for **Indonesia**

Indonesia has been ranked first among the most beautiful countries in the world, according to the Natural Beauty Report from *money.co.uk*. With tourism returning to normalcy, Bali is again becoming one of the most sought-after travel destinations for Indian travellers. Indonesia offers a myriad of options such as natural destinations, temples, UNESCO Heritage Sites as well as the Labuan Bajo which is amongst the top-five super priority destinations. **Agus Saptono, Consul General of the Republic of Indonesia** spoke exclusively to BOTT.

Shreya Shimpi

How was tourism affected by the pandemic?

The pandemic had brought the world to a standstill and everything was happening on zoom or online. People were unable to travel due to the closing of borders. However, we are bouncing back with new strategies in place and Indian tourists are dominating Indonesia's South Asia market demand as per the first half of 2022.

How has Indonesia fared as a tourist destination post-pandemic?

Since the first half, internationally we have reached 124% of our target and 67% of target arrivals have been registered. India has also had a 155% year-on-year growth in the first quarter of 2022. Though we were all badly affected, the economy is gradually bouncing back to what it was pre-pandemic.

What steps have been taken after the pandemic to regain tourism?

The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy introduced Indonesia Care, a symbol of support for Indonesia's strong effort in implementing health, safety and cleanliness protocols across the tourism sector as mandatory precautions. We have also implemented CHSE, which is a set of protocols certified by the Indonesian and Bali governments.

Are there any travel restrictions at present?

We have eased the international arrivals regulations and the re-enactment of the visa on arrival (VoA). There is no requirement for an RT-PCR test either. We only need the necessary arrival documents along with a second vaccination certificate and the Indian travellers can then enjoy their vacation in Indonesia. There is the usual Covid-19 symptom check at the airport which includes checking the body temperature. In case it is above 37.5 degrees you will have to undergo an RT-PCR test. Also, we have temporarily suspended the requirement to show proof of ownership of health insurance.

How important is India as a market for tourism?

We see great potential in India as a market and we have seen that Indonesia has been opted by many Indian travellers as a tourist destination both before and after the pandemic. In 2019, we have had 650,000 tourists from India which was before the pandemic. For 2020, we had aimed at having 800,000 tourists which could not be achieved due to the Covid. In 2022 India has already ranked second in terms of the countries from where we get the maximum travellers into Bali. Apart from travel, Indonesia is also being explored as a wedding and honeymoon destination by Indian travellers. We have some great offerings in the MICE categories as well.

Why should Indians opt for Indonesia as a travel destination?

In many ways, we bear a close resemblance to India be it culturally,



historically or religiously too. There is a strong influence of Hinduism which is seen through the temples, statues, monuments etc. We have a majority Muslim population who live peacefully with the other religions, including the Hindu-majority Balinese. In Java and Bali, you will come across statues of Lord Ganesha, Goddess Saraswati and Lord Vishnu etc. which gives a close cultural connection to the Indian travellers. These cultural and historical resemblances keep making Indian travellers come to Indonesia and especially Bali again and again. The Borobudur Temple is the largest Buddhist temple in the world while the Prambanan Temple compound is the second largest Hindu temple site in the world, both recognized as UNESCO Heritage Sites. The Ramayana dance is performed in these temples as well.

What are the events happening this year?

We are holding the G20 Presidency this year, and we have chosen the theme 'Recover Together, Recover Stronger' since December 2021, with events held in various cities plus the summit meeting to be held in November 2022. Indonesia also successfully hosted two major sports events this year: MotoGP and Formula E races in March and June, respectively.

Finally, what would be your message to our readers?

Indonesia is the closest to India in terms of religious, historical, cultural and so many other factors. Indians are bound to connect closely to Indonesia when they explore it. We welcome you to Wonderful Indonesia to experience its beauty and heritage.

Bahrain Tourism & Exhibitions Authority hold multi-city roadshows

Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority successfully conducted its first four-city roadshow in India. The event was conducted in the cities of Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore and Delhi on September 12th, 13th 15th and 16th respectively. The roadshows were a huge progress as industry professionals turned up in large numbers in all cities.



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The four-city roadshow witnessed the participation from hospitality, travel, and tourism companies from Bahrain in order to reconnect and build new connections with the Indian travel agents. The event was attended by 400 plus agents across the four cities, which aimed to connect Indian travel agents with destination management companies, hotels, and attractions in Bahrain.

Maryam Toorani, Director, Marketing and Promotion, Bahrain Tourism & Exhibitions Authority said, "The purpose of the roadshow is to strengthen travel trade relationships in order to increase visitor arrivals from India to our beautiful Kingdom of Bahrain. India is one of the most important source markets for Bahrain and as such the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority is confident that this initiative will further enable and enhance an expansion in the Indian Market."

The prime focus has been placed on achieving a notable number of visitors in the coming few years from varied segments such as leisure, MICE, and weddings.

The event began with the trade having one on one B2B meetings with the stakeholders. Following that the travel trade community

was educated through a presentation on Bahrain as a destination for Indian travelers. The presentation highlighted that the country has something to offer to every type of traveler from millennials to young couples, from honeymooners to business travelers. The roadshow gave a chance to highlight that Bahrain is the perfect holiday destination for Indian travelers with the convenient e-Visa process and the multiple direct flights which take you to Bahrain in less than 4 hours. Bahrain as a destination has a variety of offerings for its travelers from beautiful beaches, adventure activities, luxurious accommodation options, pearl diving, heritage, culture, and food. The destination is also home to the world-famous Formula one race.

At this event, the #friendsofBahrain concept was introduced to the audience present. The concept behind this hashtag is that anyone who is associated with the destination, promotes it is a friend of Bahrain or as the Bahrain's brand evangelists. The #friendsofBahrain hashtag will be used by the tourism board in all future communications, encouraging travelers, trade and influencers to use it to promote ours and yours one and only Bahrain!

Be it a fun-filled family getaway, active holidays, one-of-a-kind cultural experiences, opulent resorts, theme park, exotic islands, or world-class shopping excursions, Bahrain has something for everyone. Bahrain is a destination where travelers will feel like home and have a memorable vacation.

IATO writes to Hon'ble Prime Minister requesting his intervention to restore **e-Tourist Visa**

The Indian Association of Tour Operators, which is the biggest Association safeguarding the interests of the Inbound Tour Operators in India, has been working relentlessly in the last couple of years to help its members sustain during the challenging Covid times. The Association leaders, have been in regular touch with Government and representatives at senior places, ensuring its woes are heard. In a recent such endeavour, IATO has once again written to the Hon'ble Prime Minister requesting his intervention to restore e-Tourist Visa for UK, Canada and other important countries.



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Pandemic broke the back of the entire hospitality sector but the worst hit has been the inbound tourism industry with the arrival of foreign tourists going down to trickle. Now the pandemic seems to be over, with the Hospitality sector rebounding but similar rebound seems to be eluding the inbound industry. There are multiple reasons for it like high airfares, restriction on travel and above all difficulty in procuring the visas. In this regard IATO has made numerous representations and sent letters to the Tourism Home Affairs and External Affairs Ministry requesting them for restoration of E-Visa for UK, Canada and other source markets as maximum foreign tourists travel to India from these countries. "Having failed to evoke any response from these ministries, we have written to the PM, hoping for a quick resolution," says **Rajiv Mehra, President, IATO**.

It is well known that tourists decide well in advance about the destinations they will be travelling to and given the delay and difficulty in procuring Indian visas from source countries, the sector may not see the revival that was expected and quite probable that they may travel to neighbouring countries as it is easier to procure their visas.

According to Mr. Mehra, "IATO is in receipt of a number of requests from our members/foreign counterparts expressing their concern on the delay the intending tourists in UK are facing in getting Normal Visa for India as there is NO e-Tourist Visa at present. Appointments are not available to intending foreign tourists at the VFS Global offices in the UK. It is taking 6 to 8 weeks' time in the UK to get a Normal Indian Visa and even for that also appointments by the VFS Global offices are not being given. Handling of Normal paper Visa for India by the Embassy in the UK/VFS Global is very discouraging and harassing for the tourists planning to come to India as it is taking 2 to 3 months to get a Normal Tourist Visa and that too after a lot of efforts."

IATO is getting feedback that if the situation does not improve, foreign tour operators will stop selling India tour packages. Due to Non-availability of E-Tourist Visa for UK, Canada and other source markets, we as a country are losing huge business as tourists from these countries are opting for alternative destinations. If this situation continues it will be a big loss for the Inbound tourism business and the entire season may be lost, causing further loss of foreign exchange earnings and loss of employment as one foreign tourist coming to India creates 9 jobs directly or indirectly.

ATOAI gets a new team; Ajeet Bajaj to lead as President & Tejbir Singh as Senior VP

Adventure Tour Operators Association of India held its Annual General Meeting Annual General Meeting 21-22 & Elections 22-24 on September 21, 2022 at The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa. **Ajeet Bajaj**, along with his Executive Team was elected unopposed. The Annual General Meeting was welcomed by the ATOAI Officiating **President Vaibhav Kala**.

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The Adventure Tour Operators Association of India are the recognised nodal body for promoting adventure tourism in India. The association works with Central and State governments to drive policy and set standards for safe and sustainable adventure travel in India. We also work with domestic and international travel associations to promote adventure travel and the natural heritage of India. Conceptualized in 1994 for the adventure travel industry, ATOAI evolved from a strong support group that led to establishing adventure tourism as one of the main tourism attractions to India, its mountains, rivers, lakes, hills, forests, deserts, beaches and its wildlife. ATOAI today is a body of over 500+ adventure travel professionals who are not only passionate adventurers themselves, but also promote adventure tourism with the same passion.

At the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India Annual General at The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, ATOAI Honorary Secretary Mr. Vinayak Koul presented the annual report of the ATOAI flow of activities for the financial year 2021-22.

Some of the key highlights of the AGM involved passing of the confirmation of Minutes of the Annual General meeting held on December 10, 2022. The meeting also passed the accounts for financial year 2021-22 presented by ATOAI Honorary Treasurer Mr. Pradeep Murthy. It passed the appointment of SRBP & Associates, Mr. Sagar Regmi as the auditor for the Financial Year 2022-23. The Annual General Meeting concluded with a vote of thanks by Mr. Vaibhav Kala.

For the Elections 22-24, Mr. Rajiv Kohli, the returning officer announced the ATOAI new team of Office Bearers & Executive Committee of the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) who were elected unopposed and will hold office for the next two years.

OFFICE BEARERS:

- **PRESIDENT** - Mr. Ajeet Bajaj, Padmashri Awardee, Managing Director - M/s Snow Leopard Adventures Pvt. Ltd.
- **SR. VICE PRESIDENT** - Mr. Tejbir Singh Anand, Managing Director - M/s Holiday Moods Adventures Pvt. Ltd.
- **VICE PRESIDENT** - Mr. Vaibhav Kala, Managing Director - M/s Aquaterra Adventures India Pvt. Ltd
- **HON. SECRETARY** - Mr. Ronny Gulati, Managing Director - M/s Youreka Campouts Services Pvt. Ltd
- **HON. TREASURER** - Mr. Nirat Bhatt - M/s Nidus Enterprises Private Ltd

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

- Mr. Vishwas Makhija, Managing Director - M/s India Insight Tours Pvt. Ltd, Immediate Past President.



- Mr. Pradeep Murthy, Partner - Muddy Boots Vacations India LLP
- Mr. Tundup Dorjay, Director - Overland Escape
- Mr. Ravi Kumar, Program Manager - National Outdoor Leadership School,
- Mr. Rahul Sharma, Managing Director - R Ventures Holidays
- Mr. Amit Perival, Chief Executive Officer - Clubside Tours and Travels Pvt. Ltd.
- Mr. Sanjay Basu, Managing Director - Far Horizon Tours Pvt. Ltd.

The new ATOAI team will continue to work diligently for the sustainable growth of adventure travel in India by taking forward the association's aims and shaping government policy for this sector.

With the formation of the National Board for Adventure Tourism by the Ministry of Tourism and ATOAI as one of the core members of the board, we have spelled out all of our concerns, areas of focus, attention to our international rankings, and bringing global standards with a strong emphasis on safety, risk mitigation, sustainability and improving India's reputation in the global adventure travel market.

Garish Oberoi elected as new HRANI President



Hotel and Restaurant Association of Northern India (HRANI) concluded its 71st Annual General Meeting on September 30, 2022 at Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport, New Delhi. In addition to adopting and approving the financial results for the year 2021-2022 and appointing auditors, the AGM's agenda included elections of the Association's Managing Committee for the term 2022-24 where in **Garish Oberoi** was elected as the new President of the Association.

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The HRANI 71st AGM was followed by the meeting of the Managing Committee to elect the office bearers for the term 2022-24. During the meeting, Mr. Garish Oberoi has been elected as President of HRANI.

Mr. Garish Oberoi, Partner, Hotel Oberoi Anand, Oberoi Anand & Associates and Amber Restaurant, Bareilly has been in the Hospitality Industry for more than three decades. He has actively represented and lobbied on behalf of the industry for multiple causes and achieved winning outcomes for the Hospitality sector across board.

Mr. Oberoi is the Hony Secretary of Uttar Pradesh Hotel & Restaurant Association (UPHRA) and Treasurer of Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH). He has been the Past President of HRANI and FHRAI.

The elected Office-bearers are as under:-

Vice President

Mr. Rakesh Roy, Director, EL Chico Hotels & Restaurant (P) Ltd, Allahabad.

Mr. Vinod Gulati, Managing Director, Managing Director, Gulati Restaurant, New Delhi

Honorary Secretary

Mr. Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, Managing Director, Deep Group of Hotels, Lucknow

Treasurer

Mr. Amarvir Singh, Partner, Hotel Natraj, Ludhiana.

Hony. Jt. Secretary

Mr. Ankit Gupta, Managing Director, Hotel Himani's, Chandigarh.

Mr. Rattandeep Singh Anand, Managing Director, Asia Group of Hotels, Jammu.

Other members who have recently joined the Managing Committee includes Mr. Ajay Bakaya, Managing Director, Sarovar Hotels Pvt. Ltd; Mr. Kamal Nayan Tripathi, Managing Director, Aahana – The Corbett Wilderness, Ram Nagar; Mr. Virendra Teotia, Managing Director, The Umrao, New Delhi; Mr. Kunal Singh Chawra, General Manager - Sales, The Aodhi, Kumbhalgarh; Mr. Yash Malhotra, Hotel Landmark, Kanpur; Mr. Vikas Kapoor, V.P Operations, Radisson, Shimla and Ms Meena Bhatia, Vice President & General Manager, Le Meridien; Mr Gulam Mustafa, The Grand Dragon, Ladakh. Other prominent personalities continuing the Committee includes Mr. Luv Malhotra (The Suryaa, New Delhi); Mr. S. M. Shervani (Shervani Hospitalities Ltd); Maharaj Kumar Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar (Historic Resorts Hotels Ltd.); Mr. Arun Dang (Grand Hotel, Agra); Mr Nikhil Sharma, Corporate Area Director, Eurasia Region, Wyndham Hotels and Resorts; Mr. Pradeep Narayan Singh (Hotel Pradeep, Varanasi); Mr. Vidup Agrahari (Hotel Kanha Shyam, Allahabad); Mr. Paramjit Singh (Hotel Plaza Bar & Restt, Jalandar); Mr. Deepak Parihar (Kalinga Hotel, Jodhpur); Mr. Ajay Agarwal (LMB, Jaipur) and Mr. Pawan Aggarwal (A.P Residency, Ambala); Mr. Vineet Taing, President, Vatika Hotels Pvt Ltd; Mr. Amit Jain, Managing Director, Radisson Blu Kaushambi Delhi NCR; Mr. Amarjeet Singh, Partner, Hotel Greens, Ludhiana; Mr. Pranay Aneja, Managing Director, Hotel La New Delhi; Mr. Manan Chawla, Maquina Restaurant, New Delhi and Mr. Ashwani Goela, General Manager, Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport.

Jyoti Mayal & Team creates history; continues to represent trade in 2022 – 2024 unopposed

For the first time in the history of TAAI, National Office Bearers and proposed Managing Committee members have been chosen unopposed for the years 2022 – 2024 as there were no nominations filed to contest elections, challenging the current Office Bearers or nominations of MC members. This decision by the trade to allow the current team to take them into future is a testament of their belief in the abilities of the leaders at TAAI and a big accolade for the hard work put in by the team during the extremely challenging Covid times. Spearheading the association – Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI is already aggressively working on a way forward to boost tourism.



Priyanka Saxena Ray

TAAI – the oldest and largest travel tourism association in India had invited nominations from its members for the post of President, Vice President, Hon. Secretary-General, Hon. Treasurer, and 7 Managing Committee members for the 2022-2024 term. The last date to file the nominations was the 15th of September, and withdrawal of nominations was 23rd of September. For the first time in the history of TAAI, National Office Bearers and proposed Managing Committee members have been chosen unopposed for the years 2022 – 2024 as there were no nominations filed to contest elections, challenging the current Office Bearers or nominations of MC members. The elections were scheduled for September 29, 2022 in Mumbai where the team has once again taken over their positions.

Sharing views on the election process, Jyoti Mayal, who was once again unanimously elected as President said, “We have done our best for the fraternity. We left no stone unturned and represented the travel trade on every front. Our hard work won us many accolades because TAAI’s relentless support to the travel trade and tourism industry has been appreciated at both national and international levels. Our presence at UFTAA, with Global Tourism Boards, with FAITH and state tourism boards as well as IATA shall certainly be more aggressive and interactive.”

Standing with her throughout and supporting and aiding every decision undertaken by TAAI, Jay Bhatia, who will once again continue as the Vice President said, “The team worked day and night despite the challenges faced due to the unprecedented event like covid, which

halted our industry. However, we ensured that our voice be heard by the highest echelons and that adequate support must be extended to our trade. I am thankful to all who have been there with us during the tough times, encouraging and supporting us. This term of 2022-2024 shall definitely see more endeavours from this committee especially with more interactions with the government and the airlines along with other stakeholder partners which shall benefit our members.”

Close behind, Bettaiah Lokesh, who too will continue as the Hon. Secretary-General said, “Against all challenges, we worked for the benefit of the members. Members were paying their annual subscriptions and our responsibility was to ensure that all statutory and regulatory compliances must be adhered to as per the law and meetings are conducted. Indeed, it was tough but we burnt the midnight oil and made the association strong and faced all such challenges and delivered our best.”

Managing finances was a tough call, a job that was supremely done by Shreeram Patel, who will be continuing as the Hon. Treasurer. “We managed to run the offices smoothly. The secretariat, both at Mumbai and Delhi offices, kept the channel of communication open with members with limited resources. The efforts put in by our team at the secretariat resulted in continuous membership subscriptions coming in post covid,” he said.

Along with the Office Bearers, the following 7 Managing Committee will play a crucial role in running the association smoothly. Anoop B Kanuga, Devesh Kumar Agarwal, Dr P Murugesan, Paras Lakhia, R Venkatachalam, Sameer Karnani, and Amish Desai who too were elected unopposed by the members of the Premier Association.

"We wish to attract more visitors to India from all over the world": Robert Obolgogiani

BOTT spoke with **Robert Obolgogiani, AVIAREPS, Executive Vice President, CIS & South Asia** in an exclusive chat at the OTM held in Mumbai. He shares his thoughts on the emerging trends, upcoming strategies and a lot more. Here are a few excerpts from the interview.

Shreya Shimpi

What are the emerging trends in terms of global tourism?

The current situation with the pandemic suddenly stepping back has been as unexpected as the whole COVID-19 story. Still, in 2021 and early 2022, we were expecting travel re-activation to happen through a very slow and careful path. However, luckily the virus stepped back and countries started reopening their borders one by one relaxing the entry formalities. It appears now that the unexpectedly steep increase in the travel demand has been much stronger than the available capacity and resources. A substantial reduction of airline fleets as well as the freezing of a huge number of hotels caused the respective significant staff termination and their shift to other industries. As a result, nowadays, all travel industry members are facing opposite challenges with a lack of staff and expertise, especially when we talk about airline pilots, traffic controllers, reservation personnel and airport handling agents. This situation has created another set of challenges for end consumers such as an increase in the airline ticket price and the cost of the trip respectively. However, these are good "problems" to handle and we should not forget the challenges we were facing just about 2 years ago.

In your opinion, which countries have been recovering faster?

As it looks, Europe has been the fastest in opening its borders with Middle East following right after, along with selected Asian countries. The slowest one to recover is China, which is quite understandable. India is opening up quickly as well, and I expect a complete relaxation on any restrictions by the year-end 2022. It is the right time for destinations to think about a new start – making a full evaluation of their strategies with regards to the inbound travel, short-and long-term objectives as well as refreshing partnership relations. Some countries are striving to reach the pre-pandemic levels whereas; some of them are using this moment to draw a new post-pandemic road map considering new potential and fresh opportunities. This, I believe is a smart approach.

What are your views on the Indian tourism industry?

I believe that India in particular, is going to be one of the world leaders in inbound tourism development in future. Look at the changes in the local airline industry, new investments are being done. I think this is very much related to the world macro economy and India's role in it. Both inbound and outbound tourism carry enormous opportunities. In 2019 there were only around 30 Mio International trips done by Indians, which versus the population represents just a drop in the ocean. Inbound can and should also develop in the way of repositioning India in a new and fresh way as well. Indian tourism authorities should take this seriously as a unique chance now. India is one of the most diverse countries in the world and this diversity can be introduced in a new innovative way. India is like a diamond, which needs to be polished letting its cuts shine better.



When do you expect the industry to come back to its pre-pandemic numbers?

In 2020, the World Travel Organization informed that tourism will return to the 2019 level only in 7-8 years. But I think, the key now is not just to re-instate the pre-pandemic levels, but more about opening a new horizon, activating new market segments and bringing new value – both to the visitors and the local people. Industry members should re-evaluate their opportunities in a new environment, possibly reposition themselves and try to develop new refreshed tourism traffic. This is a good exercise which can be done, as the future traveller is going to be different from the one which used to be in pre-pandemic times.

What are your upcoming strategies in terms of marketing?

The strategy of our company is to become a serious player in the Indian market in the sense of partnering with industry members such as hotels, tourism boards, airlines and other parties. We would like to help Indian companies achieve success in international markets as well and enhance inbound travel supporting the Indian economy. We would love to guide and help our Indian partners and clients re-establish their businesses in this new environment. Our wish is also to assist the Indian Government in shaping this beautiful diamond to attract visitors to India from all over the world to see it better, deeper and wider.

A reformed and transformed **Sri Lanka** awaits Indians to come and visit it



In an endeavour to bolster its relations, a high-profile delegation from Sri Lanka being led by the **Hon. Harin Fernando, Minister of Tourism** and accompanied by **Chalaka Gajabahu, Chairman Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau** and **Thisum Jayasuriya, Chairman, Sri Lanka Conventions Bureau** along with over 50 local Travel Agencies and Hotels recently visited India for a multi-city roadshow.

Priyanka Saxena Ray

Sri Lanka Tourism continues to expand its Bilateral and Cultural ties with its Indian counterparts by venturing into a series of Road Shows in key Indian cities from September 26 – 30, 2022. The first road show was held at the Taj Palace Hotel in New Delhi followed by one at St. Regis Hotel in Mumbai and closing with the Hyderabad Roadshow at Taj Krishna Hotel. The main purpose of hosting these roadshows was to promote Sri Lanka as an attractive tourism destination across India, as it is one of Sri Lanka's key source markets and has been extremely supportive in Sri Lanka regaining lost momentum both post pandemic and the recent economic downturn.

After the economic meltdown, things have started to get back on track with Sri Lanka and the country is now witnessing a considerable increase in tourist arrivals with India leading the way and securing the number one position. "Sri Lanka in the last few months has garnered a lot of negative news, much of which was blown out of proportion. However, we are here to assure that things are back on track in our country – the fuel supply is back, services have resumed and the country is now waiting for its tourists to come back. We are a very small economy but we have everything that a tourist wants – casinos, shopping, food, adventure and more. Going forward, we would be typing with many principles of tourism providers and form partnerships to promote our country to the world. We are participating in the WTM London and are planning roadshows there too. We will float special packages in collaboration with IndiGo and are also trying to promote Sri Lanka during the time of FIFA. Come December, we will have a very different Sri Lanka waiting for you," shared Hon. Harin Fernando in an exclusive chat with media.

The event was also focussed on promoting a myriad of tourism



experiences while focusing on converting potential travellers to make booking and highlight the positive message that Sri Lanka is open for Leisure, Business and MICE tourism. The target audience at these roadshows included Tour Operators, Media, Key Influencers, Corporates and Trade Associations and key Tourism Industry stakeholders in India, who have the ability to take the message that Sri Lanka is not only one of the most beautiful countries but is also safe and secure; adhering to all the necessary health and safety guidelines.

Each roadshow also included B2B Sessions facilitating numerous discussions followed by an Evening Networking event which was aimed at showcasing the cultural side of Sri Lanka and also improve business partnerships. A touch of glamour was added to these events with the participation of celebrities such as Sanath Jayasuriya and Yohani De Silva.

India has generated over 80,000 tourist arrivals to the country so far and it is expected to double these numbers by 2023. Thus, these roadshows definitely added more value to create a positive mindset regarding Sri Lanka and its diversity of attractions, cultural value and travel opportunities, enabling Indian tourist arrivals to the destination.

“The future of Hotel Management Institutes & students is very bright”: **Jitendra Mohanty**

Established in 1981, Swosti Group currently operates four hotels, viz Swosti Grand and Swosti Premium at Bhubaneswar, Gopalpur Palm Resort at Gopalpur-on-Sea, Ganjam and Swosti Chilika Resort at the banks of the Chilika Lake, Ganjam District and the latest upcoming project scheduled to open in the year 2024 is 'Swosti Premium Beach Resorts' at Puri. **Jitendra Kumar Mohanty, MHCIMA, Chairman and Managing Director, Swosti Group** spoke to BOTT in an exclusive chat and shared his insights.

Shreya Shimpi

What kind of occupancy levels are you experiencing at the hotel these days?

Around 70 per cent occupancy in our hotels in Bhubaneswar, 90 per cent in the resort in Chilika Lake and 95 per cent plus in our resorts in Gopalpur.

What has been the situation before and after the pandemic?

Post-pandemic we are doing much better than what we are doing pre-pandemic. Our financial turnovers are almost 40 per cent higher than what they were pre-pandemic. There was a trend of staycation during the pandemic and we got a lot of business through it, especially at our property Swosti Chilika Resort and it is still trending. At present, the core business we get is from weddings. We are sold out till February 2023 for weddings happening at our properties.

What measures do you undertake to be sustainable?

As far as possible, we have tried to avoid the use of plastics in our hotels. Saving water is a prime job of the staff. It is also written in all the rooms 'Save a drop of water. Save a life'.

How do you contribute to the local community?

The suppliers of our products are the local people. Most of the local people are employed in the hotels. We have employed around 1200 people across our four properties. Our Chilika Lake hotel is situated in the village of Odia Alapur. Seventy per cent of the staff is from the village. The milk, vegetables etc. used at the hotel is purchased from the villagers. Chilika Lake, which is the largest lake in Asia in the Northern Hemisphere and is 1100 sq. km, is known for its seafood. The local fishermen catch fresh lobsters, prawns and fish and sell them directly to the hotel. They are also benefitted as they need not go to the market to sell their products. Our guests too enjoy the fresh seafood.

How strong is your F&B business?

Chilika is known for seafood, which is also the USP of all our hotels. Swosti Premium and Swosti Grand are known for their multi-cuisine speciality.

Any upcoming properties of the Swosti Group?

Our latest upcoming project "Swosti Premium Beach Resorts" is a five-star deluxe property in Puri and the expected date of opening is



January 27, 2024. Swosti Group has also diversified into hospitality education by the name "Swosti Institute of Management and Social Studies". Our staff is employed in most of the star hotels across the country as well as in Dubai and many Middle-Eastern countries. My message to all the Hotel Management Institutes is that the future of these students is very bright. After the pandemic, students were not taking admission for Hotel Management. The hotel industry in India is now booming and a lot of new hotels are coming up as well.

What are your views on Odisha Tourism?

Odisha tourism is very aggressive now in terms of eco-tourism. We have the 'Odisha Travel Bazaar' in the last week of October which will host B2B meetings. Over a hundred agents will be attending this event. They are promoting tourism through road shows across the states and the Government is more active now than before as far as promotions are concerned. Another big step taken is the beautification of the Jagannath Temple, and beaches in Puri. Puri will soon have an International Airport and the Government plans to make it a world-class destination.



Trulyy India Hotels believes in servicing 'Dil se' to all its clients

Trulyy India is a group of hotels managing a chain of hotels and boutique resorts set across mesmerising backdrops across various states in India. Known for their hospitality, resort venues and luxurious accommodations, they are a leading name across the country. **Naresh Arora, Founder and CEO, Trulyy India** spoke to BOTT in an exclusive chat.

Shreya Shimpi

Tell us something about your properties.

We are a hotel chain company. Presently, we have 15 hotels in Rajasthan and one in Gujarat. We have covered almost all major tourist attractions in Jaipur, Jaisalmer, Ranthambore, Kumbalgarh, Udaipur, Jodhpur and Sasangir in Gujarat etc. We have four-star luxury properties with around 50 to 100 rooms across all over hotels. We cater to all wedding and MICE requirements. In a year, we do almost 100 weddings across all our hotels. We are very strong in the domestic market. We are based out of Ahmedabad (hub of domestic tourism) and have our sales offices in Mumbai, Delhi, Jaipur and Udaipur. Before the pandemic, we were doing almost 40 per cent inbound business. We are dealing with major foreign tour operators in India and abroad. The best time to visit Rajasthan is from October to March. But some of our properties like the ones in Udaipur and Kumbalgarh have occupancies throughout the year. April to June is a good time to visit Ranthambore and other wildlife parks as the sighting of animals becomes a lot easy due to dry forests. Most of our properties are located on the outskirts of the cities which are spacious and luxurious with a great ambience which gives it a rustic feel.

Which according to you is one of your best properties?

That is difficult to answer since all our properties are built in heritage style. However, The Jaibagh Palace in Jaipur, The Desert Palace in Jaisalmer and Gir lion Safari camp in Sasangir, Gujarat are one of our most exquisite properties.

How is the business picking up after the pandemic?

After the Pandemic, the domestic market has been picking up since July. The Average Room Revenue which was earlier 3500 has now increased to 5500. We have seen a change in the occupancy levels too. Earlier it was more of leisure travel but now even the corporate and educational segment is booming. We have had almost 5000 to 6000 student travellers. We feel that we shall bounce back to pre-pandemic levels by August 2023. The staycation trend which started after the pandemic is still on but has declined. People have been working remotely from our properties but it has now reduced since offices have opened.

What is the USP of your hotel chain?

We provide service with a personal touch like I say DIL SE. You will never hear our staff say no. Meals are provided at odd hours as well. All our properties are built in open areas. We provide a homely feeling to our guests and unparalleled hospitality. Since we have fifty to 100 rooms, it becomes lot easier to manage.

What initiatives are being taken in terms of sustainability?

We are adopting an eco-friendly approach. We have discontinued the use of plastic. We aim at generating employment opportunities for the local people and artisans. We endeavour to support and sustain the local economy.



How strong is your F&B business?

We lay a great emphasis on natural foods. Meals are cooked in a traditional and homely style with authentic taste and flavours. You will experience authentic taste, especially at our properties in Udaipur and Jaisalmer. You will find the best 'Ker Sangri' at our hotel in Jaisalmer. Along with great service and hospitality, our aim is to provide the best culinary experiences to our guests.

Any new properties coming up?

We are starting a new resort in Jawai in Diwali this year.

Fly Egyptair to experience and feel the Egyptian hospitality

The flag carrier of Egypt – EGYPTAIR provides high quality services, wide network, added values while ensuring the best benefits to its loyal customers using modern fleet. With travel restrictions being lifted globally, they too have some promising plans for the future, **Rasha Abdel Mounem, Country Manager India and Sri Lanka – EGYPTAIR Airlines** spoke to BOTT in an exclusive interview.

Shreya Shimpi

How did Egyptair respond after the pandemic?

EGYPTAIR has taken many procedures to adapt amid the pandemic since March 2020 through applying increased health procedures whether at airports or onboard. With the decline of the effects of the pandemic on the international aviation traffic, EGYPTAIR has been implementing its plan to re-operate the routes that have been affected by the decreased number of travellers and countries' entry regulations. However, the levels are picking up now since the restrictions have been lifted and we soon plan to achieve similar pre-pandemic numbers now.

Can you share something about the flights flying from Cairo to Mumbai?

Since May 2022, we have been operating four flights between Cairo and Mumbai weekly and starting from 1st of November 2022, there will be five flights a week between Mumbai and Cairo operated by our A330-300 connecting our travellers to more than 70 destinations worldwide and over 50 more destinations through codeshare agreements and reaching more than 1300 destinations globally thanks to our membership in Star Alliance since 2008.

In addition to this, EGYPTAIR operates multiple daily flights to Egypt's top leisure destinations connected to its international network with seamless connections to Luxor, Aswan, Sharm El- Sheikh, Taba and Hurghada with a number of daily frequencies to meet the needs of leisure travellers.

The Airbus 330-300 accommodates 301 seats, of which 36 Flat Bed seats in business class and 265 seats in economy class, the aircraft is equipped with electricity plugs that enables passengers to charge their devices, personal screens in both Business and Economy classes with a wide selection of entertainment options on our IFE system.

How does Egyptair sets itself apart from its competitors?

The airline is implementing its fleet modernisation plan utilising a young fleet of 66 aircraft including 17 wide body aircraft; Boeing 777-300ER, Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner, Airbus A330-300, Airbus A330-200 in addition to 49 Medium and narrow body aircraft; B737-800, Airbus A320 Neo and Airbus A220-300. Further, the airline will deliver 2 Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner and 7 Airbus 321 till 2024.

Looking forward to the future, the airline has set a number of development plans that aim at offering the best services and facilities to its customers.

We strive to set ourselves apart in various ways. We offer vegetarian



meals and 'Hindu' meals onboard. Passengers can also pre-book their preferred meal options and we would be glad to serve them onboard. We are also providing some great in-flight entertainment onboard.

What are your marketing strategies to regain the pre-pandemic numbers?

One of the airline's strategies is to develop its technological and digital services making the passenger's travel journey more convenient and seamless, that's why we are keen to provide various digital services like online booking, baggage tracking, online and self-check-in etc... in addition to offering new ancillary services and developing current services such as onboard Wi-Fi service and mobile connectivity on some aircraft types.

EGYPTAIR has taken steps towards implementing its expansion and fleet modernisation plan to complement its network through Cairo hub.

Since 2021, EGYPTAIR has added Dusseldorf – Germany, Kinshasa – Democratic Congo, Ben Ghazi – Libya and Dublin – Ireland to its network besides re-operating non-stop flights to Mumbai – India this is in addition to increasing frequencies to a number of EGYPTAIR destinations.

How important is India to you as a tourism market?

India is one of the biggest markets in the world that's why EGYPTAIR is planning to increase the number of flights starting November 1, 2022; we will be operating 5 flights per week in addition to our codeshare agreements to reach more points in India as part of our network expansion plan.

We contribute in various travel trade conventions such as the OTM; we are also working with the ETA (Egyptian Tourism Authority) to promote Egypt in the Indian market.

What would be your message to our readers?

We encourage travellers in India to fly Egyptair to feel the Egyptian hospitality. We also encourage them to join our Frequent Flyer loyalty program through egyptairplus.com to be one of our members to get more travel benefits.

Virgin Atlantic updates its gender identity policy; removes requirement to wear gendered uniforms

Virgin Atlantic has launched its updated gender identity policy, giving its crew, pilots, and ground team the option to choose which of the iconic uniforms, designed by Vivienne Westwood, best represents them – no matter their gender, gender identity, or gender expression. The announcement is part of an on-going drive to champion the individuality of its people and customers and is complemented by the roll out of optional pronoun badges for all its people and those travelling with the airline.

BOTT DESK

Reflecting the diversity of the workforce and in a move that cements its position as the most inclusive airline in the skies, Virgin Atlantic will offer its people a fluid approach to its red and burgundy uniforms, meaning LGBTQ+ colleagues will be able to choose either the red or the burgundy uniform, depending on which best reflects themselves.

The announcement is part of an on-going drive to champion the individuality of its people and customers and is complemented by the roll out of optional pronoun badges for all its people and those travelling with the airline. This move enables everyone to clearly communicate and be addressed by their pronouns. The badges will be available to teams and customers from today and customers simply need to ask for their preferred badge at the check in desk or in the Virgin Atlantic Clubhouse.

Virgin Atlantic has also updated its ticketing systems to allow for those who hold passports with gender neutral gender markers to select 'U' or 'X' gender codes on their booking as well as the gender-neutral title, 'Mx'. Currently citizens from a small number of countries including the USA, India and Pakistan, are able to hold these passports and travellers must travel on the codes that match their passport. In lieu of passports with gender neutral gender markers being available for all, Virgin Atlantic is implementing a longer-term plan to amend communication preferences to ensure customers are addressed by their preferred pronouns across all touchpoints.

Mandatory inclusivity training will also be rolled out for its people at all levels across Virgin Atlantic and Virgin Atlantic Holidays as well as a series of inclusivity learning initiatives for tourism partners and hotels within destinations such as the Caribbean to ensure all our customers feel welcome despite barriers to LGBTQ+ equality.

Launched as part of its 'Be Yourself' agenda, the airline has already unveiled a series of industry-leading inclusivity initiatives for its people to ensure they can truly be themselves at work and feel comfortable in their roles. This latest addition follows a decision in 2019 to offer cabin crew the choice whether to wear make-up as well as the option to wear trousers and flat shoes. More recently the airline lifted restrictions around allowing visible tattoos for crew members and its front line people.

Jamie Forsstroem, Cabin Crew at Virgin Atlantic commented: "The updated gender identity policy is so important to me. As a non-binary person, it allows me to be myself at work and have the choice in what uniform I wear."



Michelle Visage, Tanya Compas, Talulah-Eve and Tyreece Nye have teamed up with Virgin Atlantic to showcase the new policy in a stylised fashion shoot that has been released today.

Michelle Visage commented: "As the mother of a non-binary child, and as an ally to the LGBTQ+ community, these efforts by Virgin Atlantic to further inclusivity for its people are extremely important and personal to me. People feel empowered when they are wearing what best represents them, and this gender identity policy allows people to embrace who they are and bring their full selves to work."

The announcement comes as research finds that enabling employees to express their true selves at work boosts happiness (65%), increases mental wellbeing (49%), creates a more positive workplace culture (36%) and provides a better experience for customers (24%). Employees also reported feeling more accepted and comfortable when able to be their true selves at work (26%) and an increased sense of loyalty to their employer (21%).

Despite these positive benefits, 25% of Brits have felt pressure to hide their true selves at work, with 13% feeling uncomfortable making requests that enable them to express who they really are. Brits have dressed differently (30%) or in clothing they aren't comfortable in (15%), changed the way they style their hair or makeup (22%) and covered up parts of their personality (38%) all in an attempt to fit in.

The airline's initiatives also include an update of its existing trans inclusion policies, which already allows time off for medical treatments related to gender transition, personal choice of changing & shower facilities that align with the gender a person identifies as and co-creation of a personalised transitioning plan.

Thai Vietjet to launch Ahmedabad – Bangkok service starting October 21, 2022

Further pioneering regional connectivity, Thai Vietjet, a Thai registered low-cost airline has recently announced its new international services from Ahmedabad to Bangkok (Suvarnabhumi), starting from 21 October 2022. In a virtual press conference held recently, the members from the airline and Thai Tourism Board interacted with the trade media to talk about the unique aspects of this new flight.

BOTT DESK

“We are delighted to connect Thailand with one of the largest cities of India - Ahmedabad, India's first World Heritage City, providing Thai people more opportunities and flexible choices to travel to India, as well as welcoming Indian tourists to Thailand. Since tourism is on its track to returning to the pre-pandemic level, we strongly believe that the service between the two destinations would help facilitate the region's growing travel demand and stimulate the trade recovery of both countries, particularly, the international tourism industry and aviation business,” said Woranate Laprabang, Chief Executive Officer of Thai Vietjet.

At the start, the new international service from Ahmedabad to Bangkok will operate 3 flights a week, with an approximate flight duration of 3 hours 55 minutes.

To celebrate the launch of the new international service, the airline is also launching a special promotion – Let's go to Bangkok – Shock Sale! - offering special fares starting from INR 0 (exclusive of taxes, fees, and surcharges) for traveling on Thai Vietjet's new international service Ahmedabad - Bangkok (Suvarnabhumi). The special promotion is available for booking until September 30, 2022, with a travel period from October 21, 2022 – March 25, 2023 at th.vietjetair.com (terms and conditions applied).

Khun Auttapon Thawesuntorn, Deputy Director of TAT Mumbai added, “I am pleased to announce the new international services introduced by Thai Vietjet. Thailand has always been a destination for last-minute travel plans because of its proximity and ease of travel. Direct flights from Ahmedabad to Bangkok only make it even more convenient for travellers from Gujarat specifically. With the take-off of

this route, I am very hopeful to see the arrival numbers into Thailand increasing at a steady space.”

Currently, Thai Vietjet is operating double daily flight services from Bangkok to Phnom Penh and Singapore, while operating the direct flight from Bangkok to Fukuoka with the frequency of 4 flights per week and to be increased to 5 flights per week in October. The airline also operates the direct flight from Bangkok to Taipei (Taoyuan) with a frequency of one flight a week every Thursday, and to be increased to 2 flights per week in October.

In addition, Thai Vietjet, in cooperation with Vietjet Group has remained stable flight services between Thailand and Vietnam: from Bangkok to Ho Chi Minh City with a frequency of up to 5 flights daily, and since March 2022, has resumed direct service between Bangkok and Da Nang, with the frequency of two flights per day. The airline will also commence the direct service from Bangkok to Phu Quoc, starting from October 2022, with a frequency of four flights per week.

Currently, fully vaccinated passengers entering Thailand are no longer required to possess a certificate of COVID-19 test prior to entering the country nor undertake quarantine upon arrival. Passengers are also not required to apply for Thailand Pass before departure.

As the Fastest Growing Low-cost Carrier of the Year 2020 (awarded by Global Business Outlook Magazine, London), Thai Vietjet has continuously expanded its flight network, both domestic and international. The airline has recently been awarded the 'New Airline Award' of the Changi Airline Award 2022 for commencing flight services to Changi Airport despite COVID-19, highlighting the airline's contributions toward maintaining the resilience of the Singapore air hub during the pandemic.

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Fairy Tale
Weddings

Picture by Ptaufiqphotography

Goa becomes a 'cool hub' for destination weddings in India

If you have always dreamt about exchanging your wedding vows with the mystic ocean as a romantic backdrop, the pleasing sound of waves singing their song, the azure sky as your ceiling and white sand beneath your feet, Goa is your place to be! If you and your significant other are beach aficionados, Goa will provide the perfect idyllic setting for your fairy-tale wedding. Situated between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea it is rightfully known as the 'Pearl of the Orient'.

Sapna Vaid

The Big Fat Indian Weddings is an age old saying that just seems to be getting stronger with time. A staggering 1 crore weddings take place in India every year and the wedding industry is growing at 25 – 30% annually. People across the world dream of attending one, and people in the country go to extreme ends to have one! As per reports and analysis, India has 50 crore unmarried people with annual seekers of over 6 crore. Even if 20 percent of it materializes per year, that gives a sustainable market of 1.1-1.3 crore weddings in the country per year. The wedding industry is estimated to grow from its current US\$100 billion to probably become a US\$ 0.5 trillion sector in the next 10 years or so.

But keeping these facts and figures aside, Indian Weddings are all about rituals, traditions, dazzling dresses, mesmerising jewellery, breath-taking décor and scrumptious food... From starry Sangeet Nights to Colourful Haldi mornings, the Weddings Shenanigans are designed to keep the family on foot, while ensuring that they enjoy every minute of it. But planning a wedding is no easy task – and one of the key ingredients required to make this dish a success is the Perfect Venue.

With the craze of Destination Weddings fast catching up, from big lavish 5-stars to small boutique properties – all are finding its takers.



Some today are even opting for small Cruise trips to say 'I-Do' and then there are some, who would transport the entire Band Baaja Baraat overseas and have their nuptials in the serene foreign locales. With the growing Bollywood craze and large disposable incomes, the trend of Destination Weddings is indeed a new rage and among the many popular wedding destinations in India, Goa certainly tops the chart for its beautiful locales – mesmerising beaches, classy hotels, ethnic yet modern setting and so much more...

What Goa offers?

Despite being one of the smallest states in India, Goa is blessed with sun-kissed, palm-fringed beaches, lush green landscapes, majestic forts, ancient temples and cathedrals, mouth-watering food, felicitous weather, postcard-perfect roads, impressive infrastructure and happy folk. It has a prismatic blend of Hindu, Catholic and Portugal influences which reflects through its culture, history, cuisine and unparalleled hospitality. With great connectivity by air, road and rail Goa has gained popularity as being one of the most sought-after wedding destinations. It doubles up as a vacation for you and your guests and offers an unforgettable experience. If you wish to have an intimate wedding or a big fat one, Goa has something in store for everyone.

Wedding venues

If you wish to host a wedding in Goa, there are a plethora of options to choose from. There are many moderately-priced venues and exotic

luxurious properties which you may choose as per your budget and preference. Here is a list of a few such wedding venues in Goa.

- Longuinhos Beach Resort, South Goa: amazing beachfront, sprawling lawns, magnificent halls with sea-views. It would be a great experience to hear the sea waves as the couple takes the pheras.
- Alila Diwa, Majorda: Offers a great ambience, accommodation and hospitality. It offers three outdoor and two indoor venues customisable as per your requirements.
- Cidade de Goa: Panoramic view of the Vianguinum Beach with seven magnificent venues for various ceremonies that can accommodate 40 to 470 guests.

Additionally, Royal Courtyard (Corlim), Golden Orchid (Mapusa), River Beach Resort (Pernem) etc. are also some great venues which are worth checking out.

Five-Star properties

If you wish to get hitched in grandeur and make the rendezvous unforgettable, Goa has some magnificent five-star properties.

- The Leela, Cavelossim: When it comes to hospitality, The Leela is a name to reckon with. Top-class facilities, luxurious accommodation, and scrumptious food make this property a popular choice for weddings. The architecture is inspired by the Vijayanagar Palace and exudes a marvellous aesthetic appeal.
- The Lalit Golf and Spa Resort, Palolem: A sprawling property with beautifully landscaped lawns designed by a famous French landscape artist which shall make for an excellent and romantic backdrop for your pre-wedding shoots as well as the other ceremonies
- Taj Vivanta, Candolim: When it comes to Taj, the hospitality, food, ambience and accommodation is unparalleled. Hosting a wedding here will be indeed memorable for you and your guests.
- Grand Hyatt Resort: Known for its splendid architecture, they have a variety of indoor and outdoor venues for you to choose from for your festivities.
- Kenilworth Resort and Spa: A stunning property just 12 minutes away from Dabolim International Airport, which offers the perfect combination of mesmerizing beach views, water sports and a great variety of other activities. A great venue to get hitched in an opulent style.
- Zuri White Sands, Varca: Another great venue for a fairy-tale wedding which you have always dreamt about. This place has a gorgeous beachfront, well-manicured lawn and a great vibe. It can accommodate nearly 200 to 1000 guests.
- Novotel Goa Shrem Hotel, Candolim: A luxurious hotel which provides good accommodation, great cuisines and wonderful hospitality.
- Royal Courtyard Goa, Corlim: If you have a big list of guests to be invited, this can be your wedding venue for sure! They have magnificent gazebos and terrace gardens and can accommodate nearly 1200 to 1800 guests.

In addition to these, The Westin, Goa Marriott Resort and Spa, Taj Exotica Resort and Spa, Novotel Goa Dona Sylvia Resort, Radisson Blu Resort, Le Meridien, Holiday Inn Resort and Taj Holiday Village Resort and Spa are a few more splendid five-star properties which you can check out for your big day.

Local Cuisine

Good food sets the mood for a great event and we cannot agree more. This paradise of South Asia is indeed an utopia for food-lovers. Goa has an interesting culinary repertoire as it has been influenced by various cultures. Goa is predominantly known for its delectable seafood. Rice and fish curry are the staple food here. Pomfret, mackerel, sardines, crabs, prawns, and lobsters (in the biggest possible size that you could imagine) cooked in a coconut and aromatic spices are a delight for foodies. Your guests will surely enjoy the local Goan cuisine as well.



Celebrity weddings

Cricketer Yuvraj Singh tied the knot to Hazel Keech at Hotel Teso Waterfront at Siolem. Former Miss Universe Lara Dutta got hitched to ace tennis player Mahesh Bhupati at Sunset Point, Candolim. Other celebrities who chose Goa for their wedding festivities includes comedian Bharti Singh, Mouni Roy and Sanya Irani.

How is Goa a great destination for weddings in India?

Just mentioning Goa as your wedding destination will have your guests equally excited as you. Besides, guests will find ways of engaging themselves by strolling by the beach, sightseeing and playing water sports so you need not worry about that factor too. Also, in terms of accessibility and infrastructure, Goa is an excellent option. Goa is indeed special and will give you tons of happy memories as you embark on your journey of love, happiness and a happily ever after.

ASTRO SPEAK

Tarot Card Reading is the art and science which helps understand the present status and the future course. It helps to apply course correction, if required. Tarot card can be used for shaping Career, Health, Finance, Business, Relationship, marriage, match-making etc. **Richa Srivastava**, a **renowned Tarot Card reader** conducts exclusive Tarot reading under her banner – Tathaastu. Here are her predictions for October 2022.



Know what your stars say about OCT-NOV 2022



ARIES (March 21 – April 20)

Taking stress will adversely affect your health. Take rest from your busy schedule. Incorporate meditation as a part of daily routine. Re-evaluate your actions at work place and make necessary changes as required. Challenging, busy and hectic schedules are waiting for you. Keep calm and hold back yourself in your relationship.



Taurus (April 21 – May 21)

Remove anxiety from your mind and try and be positive and look on the brighter side of things / situations. Conflicts at career front will be resolved through honest conversations. Make plans to manage your finances. Goal will be achieved and bond will be stronger with partner.



Gemini (May 22 – June 21)

Your hard work will pay dividends. If looking for job change or own venture, this is the right time to do so. Your investment decision will be good. During this period, you may offer support to the needy. Take care of yourself and spend quality time with family.



Cancer (June 22 – July 22)

Be careful on the health front and take cautious decision on the professional front. Avoid any risky investment. Avoid any conflict with anyone. Take time off for spending it wisely with family. Include Yoga and meditation in your daily routine.



Leo (July 23 – August 21)

This is a professionally satisfying time. It is also a good time to invest. Support from senior or fellow colleagues will come your way. Follow a healthy routine. Include Yoga and walk in your regime. Relationship with partner will strengthen further.



Virgo (August 22 – September 23)

Search for job will prove to be successful. Success in career is possible by putting thoughts into action. Recovery from illness is expected. Do a research work before doing any kind of investment. Spend some quality time with family.



Libra (September 24 – October 23)

Take precautions while travelling this week. Do not undertake dangerous assignments. Avoid dwelling on any negative thoughts. Do not rush to decisions with regards to partnerships and business. Chances of promotion are eminent. You will need to change behaviour to maintain happiness and prosperity in personal relationships. Have to be extra careful in matters related to finance.



Scorpio (October 24 – November 22)

Consistent perseverance will help you in coming out of adverse situations. Keep making persistent efforts as success is guaranteed. Take out time for exercise and meditation. Don't neglect your health. Avoid using harsh words in relationship.



Sagittarius (November 23 – December 22)

You will be busy this week. Spend your money wisely. Respond intelligently to the questions asked by people. Be optimistic in this phase. Take a break and do your research, as you have to work hard to make things happen. Mind and heart are at conflict. Learn to control the emotions. Spend some time with your spouse.



Capricorn (December 23 – January 20)

To hold the position in your career you need to take a stand. Make smart investments. Make an extra effort to take care of your health. Don't allow a third person to spoil your relationship



Aquarius (January 21 – February 19)

Follow a healthy routine. Include Yoga and walk in your regime. Travel for work is expected. New venture is imminent but be cautious and avoid risky investments. Think positively and identify the right opportunity for yourself. Appreciate and give time to your partner.



Pisces (February 20 – March 20)

Your wish will come true, soon. This is a good time to start a new venture. Put your ideas into action now. In case you have had health issues, it's time to focus on healing. Enjoy life with family and friends.

ADTOI conducts successful elections; selects Sr. VP and VP for its new term

In the recent election conducted by the association, ADTOI received 246 total votes (out-station + Delhi NCR) for the post of Senior Vice President. Mr. Rajat Sawhney received a total of 162 Votes and won by 78 Votes to be elected as Senior VP. The association received a total of 245 Votes for the post of Vice President and Mr. Ashish Sehgal received 138 Votes winning by 29 Votes.

Priyanka Saxena Ray

After a long gap, the Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India conducted its Annual Elections on October 14, 2022 at The Metropolitan Hotel and Spa New Delhi. ADTOI received a total of 246 votes (out station and Delhi NCR combined) for the post of Senior Vice President. Rajat Sawhney and Rajeev Sobti were the contenders for the post. Rajat Sawhney received a total of 162 Votes and won the elections by a huge margin of 78 Votes. Rajeev Sobti meanwhile received 84 Votes.

For the post of Vice President ADTOI received a total of 245 votes (out station and Delhi NCR combined). Ashish Sehgal and Rajesh Arya were the contenders for the post. Ashish Sehgal received a total of 138 votes and won by a margin of 29 votes. Rajesh Arya received 109 votes.

Meanwhile, P.P. Khanna has been elected President unopposed and is on a hat-trick! Spearheading the third term as President ADTOI, he is joined by Mr. Dalip Gupta as Secretary; Mr. Ved Khanna as

Treasurer and Mr. Manoj Varshney as Jt. Secretary, all of whom have been elected unopposed.

Six elected Council Members of ADTOI includes Ekta Watts, Neetish Gupta, D.R. Chauhan, K. Vijay Mohan, Vinay Ahuja and Ashish Chanchlani.

While the pandemic taught various lessons to different people, it taught a large chunk of population the importance of domestic travel. When the world decided to close doors, picking up a car and travelling seemed the safest option – waking up the consumers as well as providers of travel to sit up and take notice of the potential of domestic tourism. Riding on the success of the same, the ADTOI – Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India emerged as a strong travel conglomerate and is striving hard for the development of domestic tourism in India.

“I am happy that the elections took place and that we now have two new dynamic members in our team and together we can take Domestic Tourism in our country to new heights. The potential and scope for growth of domestic tourism in India is huge and government too realises this now. With the new team in place, we will soon come out with a detailed action plan to meet our set targets,” says Mr. Khanna.



RAMADA
PLAZA
BY WYNDHAM
CHANDIGARH ZIRAKPUR

Curating The Perfect



WEDDING
Story



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- Hybrid and technology-driven environment
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- Room inventory of 619 keys and highest number of twin rooms in city currently

