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**OUTRIGGER**  
RESORTS & HOTELS

## CONTENTS



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## Short News

Page-8 & 10



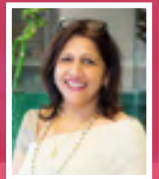
## Events and More

The Network of Indian MICE Agents (NIMA), organized the NIMA MICE FORUM-2023 on March 02, 2023, at the Radisson Blu-Amritsar, which was attended by over 150 delegates.  
**Page-12-14**



## BOTT SPOTLIGHT

On this particular International Women's Day, BOTT reached out to over 50 'Power Women' in the Tourism and Hospitality industry to seek their opinion on some interesting and important issues – Read on to know what they shared... **Page-16-44**



## Beyond Boundaries

Singapore Tourism Board announces its readiness to welcome Indian weddings  
**Page-48**



## Horoscope

**Page-60-61**

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# From The Editor's Desk

Dear Readers

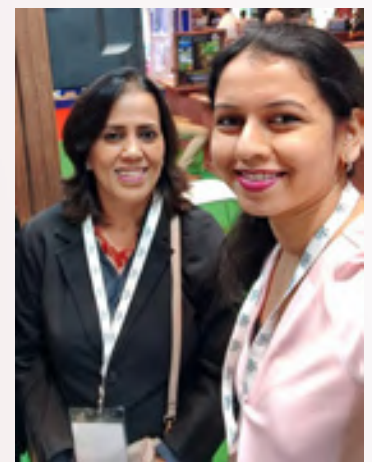
While every Issue of BOTT is close to my heart, this one gains an extra edge. I have never shied away from being a champion for Women in the Travel Trade and Hospitality sectors and have openly expressed my feelings about how women should support women to make great things come true. Taking this very belief forward, BOTT reached out to more than 50 women from the industry and the response that we received was truly overwhelming (our story inside with 54 replies says it all!). These amazing, powerful, experienced, young and dynamic women from various sectors of travel have shared their thoughts on their inspiration, their belief in life, their take on women today and how they can change one thing to make their workplace more women friendly... Reading their replies, one can almost feel their sincerity and compassion dripping... Such is the power of good editorial... supremacy of words... that just reading them brings you closer to a person...

It was truly endearing to read as women shared stories about their "inspiration". For many, it has been their mothers, for some an industry colleague, for few others renowned artists and businesswomen... All this inspirational talk made me think about what inspired me and I definitely could not settle on one answer. Coming from a majorly women dominated family (mothers, aunts and sisters), growing up – my mother and her brigade of women army inspired me, at one point – female journalists inspired me, post marriage – my mother-in-law inspired me and as I delved deeper into this industry, all these Power Women inspired me with their grit and guts. Inspiration is an ongoing process friends, and each day brings with it fresh inspiration that helps you get up and brave the world and its challenges.

So I, along with my strong Women Team at BOTT, wish you all Power Women a very Happy International Women's Day and I hope you are celebrated not just once but all year through.

Happy Reading!

Priyanka Saxena Ray





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The screenshot displays the 'Manager Dashboard' for 'Universal Travel'. The dashboard includes a sidebar with navigation links: Administration, Booking Management, Client Management, Finance, Reports, and Report an Issue. The main content area features three summary cards: 'Total Sales in Current Month' at \$25,649, 'Pending Bookings' at 108, and 'Pending Service Requests' at 23. Below these are tabs for 'Booking Queues', 'My Bookings', and 'Enquiry Queue'. The 'Booking Queues' tab is active, showing a table 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 of the table. To the right of the table is a calendar for March 2022, showing dates from Sunday to Saturday. The calendar has a 'New Activity' button and a 'View all 32 activities' link at the bottom.

**Manager Dashboard**

**\$25,649**  
Total Sales in Current Month

**108**  
Pending Bookings

**23**  
Pending Service Requests

**Booking Queues** | My Bookings | Enquiry Queue

**Pending Ticket Issuance** | Unconfirmed | Pending Refunds | Pending Payment

BOOKING REF	CLIENT NAME	BOOKING DATE	TRIP DATE	SERVICES	DESTINATION	STATUS
UT8806	Shishir Tour & Travels	12 Jan 2022	15 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8872	Petty Granderson	23 Jan 2022	22 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8878	Shiraz Finnerty	28 Jan 2022	03 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8822	Guillermo Kluffs	28 Jan 2022	10 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8836	Ressie Molinari	29 Jan 2022	11 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending

[Create New Booking](#) | [View All](#)

**Activities** | [New Activity](#)

**March 2022**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

[View all 32 activities](#)

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## Goa Tourism Minister launches a 360-degree video interactive website

Shri Rohan Khaunte, Hon'ble Minister for Tourism, IT & EC and Printing & Stationery, Govt. of Goa inaugurated the World's first 360-degree video interactive website integration at the Goa Pavilion's participation in the Bolsa Turismo Lisboa 2023 edition. The new interactive 360-degree video integration can be accessed through the existing goa-tourism.com website. Being the Hon'ble Minister for Information Technology and Tourism, Shri Rohan Khaunte has integrated his two key portfolios to create a new industry benchmark that gives visitors a world-class virtual experience making this project the World's first.



## Japanese hospitality company to open hotels in 30 cities of UP

The UP government has received 397 proposals in the tourism sector including in the top 20 sectors. There is a possibility of investment of Rs 98193 crore through this. This will provide more than 2.60 lakh jobs, while 437 proposals were received in the hospitality sector. With this, about one lakh youth in Paschimanchal, Purvanchal, Madhyanchal and Bundelkhand will get employment – as per details of an official letter released from the tourism department. "The representatives of Japan in GIS also praised the changed atmosphere of UP. Investors signed MoU for the investment of Rs 7200 crores. At the summit, the Japanese company Hotel Management International Company Limited (HMI Group) decided to open hotels in 30 cities including Agra, Ayodhya, and Varanasi."



## Utah Office of Tourism launches The Utah Specialist Academy

The Utah Office of Tourism has launched a new, interactive online training programme, Utah Specialist Academy, that is designed to enhance its global travel trade partners' knowledge of Utah's diverse product offerings and provide destination insights in a fun and unique way. The programme is meant to equip the partners with the relevant information and tools to promote and sell Utah more effectively. The Utah Specialist Academy focuses on various aspects of Utah's tourism including its attractions, experiences, landscapes and adventure. Instead of heavy texts and long form questions, the trade partners will absorb and learn Utah's offerings in a more engaging way through images and videos.



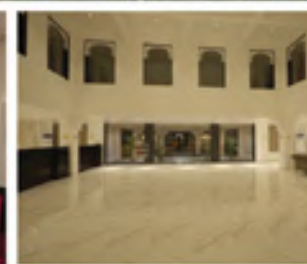
## Germany relaunches Embrace German Nature Campaign aiming Indians

German National Tourist Board (GNTB) continues to bolster its sustainable tourism offerings with the imminent relaunch of one of its most popular campaigns, Embrace German Nature. Germany is a country brimming with beautiful natural viewpoints, many of which can be accessed on foot or by cable car before the dawn breaks. Embrace German Nature is designed then to consider the heightened demand, align with market desires, and help Germany achieve its Sustainable Development Goals.



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## Singapore Tourism Board launches limited-time promotions for families

The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) and its industry partners have launched a series of exciting offers under the 'Family Times' banner. Under "Enjoy Your Picture-perfect Family Holiday in Singapore", audiences are invited to the city through limited-time promotions. These include airfares starting from as low as INR 6,000, 50% off airfares for children, and other exclusive discounts<sup>1</sup> on various experiences. The STB has joined forces with Singapore Airlines, Scoot, Sentosa Development Corporation, Mandai Wildlife Group (MWG) and travel experiences platform Pelago, to urge travellers to explore unique activities and experiences.



## 2nd Chapter of Eastbound Connect Series concludes



Eastbound Group successfully concluded the 2nd edition of its experiential industry engagement event series 'Eastbound Connect' on 24th February 2023 in New Delhi. Marking the 18th year of Eastbound Group, the event themed 'Realign and Reaccelerate' saw an enthusiastic turnout of over 250 of the most powerful names in the travel and hospitality industry, cementing its reputation as a place where icons and disruptors convene.

## Creative Travel wins its 8th SITE Crystal Award for Incentive Travel Excellence

Creative Travel recently won its 8th SITE Crystal Award for Incentive Travel Excellence. The award was presented in New York at the SITE Global Conference, celebrating 50 years of SITE. "This is Creative's 8th SITE Crystal, and one that's perhaps extra special as we delivered a program during the most challenging of times. Working with a client who was willing to move forward with their incentive program even during the pandemic truly tested the skills of the DMC and agency. Delivering in unusual times is what makes the difference between good and great. A client like Discovery works on complete trust with its partners. This is what makes for a dream project. We are all super proud of this achievement," said Rajeev Kohli, Joint Managing Director, Creative Travel India





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# NIMA MICE FORUM 2023 witnesses overwhelming participation from industry patrons and leaders



Affirming the return of tourism and MICE, the Network of Indian Mice Agents (NIMA), organized the NIMA MICE FORUM-2023 on March 02, 2023, at the Radisson Blu-Amritsar. **Mr. Gurjeet Singh Aujla, the Honourable Member of Parliament for Amritsar** in presence of industry luminaries and NIMA Office Bearers inaugurated the Forum, which was widely attended by 102 delegates, 32 exhibitors, and media representatives from across the country. Spread over a period of 3 days, the delegates were treated to some thought-provoking panel discussion and keynote addresses, insightful presentations, gala dinners and plenty of networking opportunities. Read on to know more...

Pallavi Sharma

The NIMA MICE FORUM-2023 was held at the Radisson Blu, Amritsar, from March 02-4, 2023. The delegates were welcomed to the hotel in traditional Punjabi fashion to the sound of the dhol.

The day one began with an 'Ice Breaking' session led by Punkesh Chawla and his team to help the delegates get to know one another. The Chhattisgarh Tourism Board gave an exhaustive and captivating presentation soon after the opening ceremony. The Earth Amritsar, a Wyndham Hotel trademark collection hosted dinner. All attendees were given a tour of this heritage property. The second day began with Vikas Khanduri, Advisor NIMA, sharing the NIMA vision. What followed this was a panel discussion with representatives from various



tourism boards sharing thoughts on "Challenges, Transformations, and Opportunities in the post covid MICE world." Another highlight of the day was the Keynote address by Navin Kundu, MD of Ebixcash India, the Middle East, and South East Asia on "Resurgence Rising India, Advantage India." This was then followed up by detailed and interesting presentations by Moscow Tourism, Singapore Tourism Board, Nepal tourism Board and GRN Connect. Up next, Swaytank Maheshwari discussed the importance of ethical and sustainable tourism and Harmandeep Singh Anand spoke about GST and MICE Event Compliance. After vote of thanks by NIMA members a B2B session was held. A networking Gala dinner was organized at Fort Gobingarh. On third day delegates visited the Golden Temple and "Sadda Pind," the Punjabi Culture Living Village Museum which is spread over 12

acres of land. It gives you the chance to encounter Punjab's real culture, colours, and flavours all in one location.

**Tushar Jain, Organising Chairman, NIMA MICE Forum-2023**

This is our third MICE Forum, but it is the first we have done since Covid. Our first MICE Forum was in Raipur Chhattisgarh while the second was in Jaipur. These MICE Forums are one of our flagship events and it happens once every year. Over the years, the MICE forums have seen a lot of improvement. This year too, I am glad to share that we were able to carry out whatever we had planned. I'm very happy by the number of exhibitors – we have more than 30 partners and exhibitors who have shown their trust in NIMA and have exhibited this time at this NIMA MICE Forum and we have more than 100 delegates from pan India who are attending this event. So, a total strength of 150 is a very good number in the MICE industry. We invited our leaders to speak

about the industry, to give us tips and ideas on how we should move ahead with the government, with the various tourism boards and with the corporate sector. We had a great session on GST and TCS, which are our big taxation issues, and how our agencies and our associations can work out solutions to these kinds of problems.

**Gajesh Girdhar Chairman Emeritus and Founder, NIMA**

The MICE Forum-2023 has been a grand success. The turnout is increasing every year. At the last MICE forum, we had just about 20 exhibitors and this time we have 32 exhibitors and a combined total of 150 delegates and exhibitors. In 2017, we had our first NIMA Convention in Catalonia and we have now announced our second convention onboard Resort World Cruises sailing on a 3-night cruise from Singapore from August 6 – 9, 2023 with a 2-night pre or post-land component at Singapore.



# Sarovar Hotels

*to build Golden Tulip portfolio into a really strong hospitality brand*

We would be marketing all the brands of Louvre Hotels in India, in addition to the Sarovar, parallelly, which means our growth is going to be that much faster, says

**Ajay Bakaya, Managing Director, Sarovar Hotels and Resorts**

Pallavi Sharma

**How were the occupancies across your properties in 2022? Have you been able to go beyond the 2019 figures?**

Certainly, we are considerably ahead of 2019. Occupancy across the board was somewhere close to 70 per cent in 2022. It's been a good year for us. It started slow with the Omicron in January and a part of February, then the occupancy picked up in mid February and March onwards. We had exceptionally good months of May and June, which are typically slow for the country, but there was a lot of revenge travel, there were a lot of revenge weddings and events that happened in the summer and then we ended superbly in November and December, 2022. So, it was a good year overall. And we're looking at double-digit growth in 2023 over 2022. Everything is looking healthy and buoyant.

**How many new properties have you opened recently? And what's the strategy behind it?**

The hotel chain currently manages over 100 operational hotels in 67 destinations in India and overseas, under Sarovar Premiere, Sarovar Portico, Homitel and Golden Tulip brands. We have opened 10 properties last year and we have just announced the opening of Shyama Sarovar Portico in the spiritual gateway city of Orai, Uttar Pradesh, making it the foremost branded and theme-based hotel in the region. And we have a minimum of ten new properties opening in calendar 2023 alone. See as a hotel chain and brand, we went to smaller towns and tier two, three and four cities some 10-15 years ago and we have a huge start over any other hotel company that's venturing into those areas now.

Now we are expanding our presence in the secondary tertiary markets, which have a lot of potential.

**What are your group's future plans?**

We are working towards making Golden Tulip brand, a part of the international portfolio of Louvre Hotels into a strong force in India. We have given ourselves a target of five years to build Golden Tulip portfolio having Royal Tulip, Golden Tulip and Tulip Inn into a really strong hospitality brand in this part of the world. We have selectively let go of some of the older hotels and we signed new ones. With about eight to ten hotels tentatively planned under the brand's umbrella, the next two years will be crucial in creating a strong presence of Golden Tulip in India.

What we want to bring out more and more is the association with Louvre Hotels that puts us on a larger platform. We would be marketing all their brands in India, in addition to the Sarovar brands, parallelly, which means our growth is going to be that much faster. We've invested a lot of money in the last three years in technology. So we now have a state-of-the-art central reservation system and a global distribution system which links us to the Louvre hotels. So it's seamless, it connects hotels to each other, it connects agents to different hotels as good as any airline system. And we are marketing all of our 100 hotels in a single basket now. So that's a big change.

**How important is the weddings / MICE market for you? What percentage of your revenue business comes from it?**

Extremely important. Weddings are the single largest money churner in India. It's going to be the same for the next many, many years.

# Dubai Tourism

## working on new campaigns & strategies to further increase Indian arrivals

Priyanka Saxena Ray

### The year 2022

2022 has been incredible for us. As per numbers, 14.6 million visitors and India retains its position as the number one market. Now the number of Indian arrivals in 2022 is 97% more than the previous year, which is almost twice as much, and an 86% increase compared to 2019. I think we have had the fastest recovery in the region. Our recovery has been far ahead with the global average as well. In terms of hotel occupancy, we are at 73%, which is the biggest and the largest in the world globally. A lot has been going in our favour, and the credit for this goes to our leadership. It is his vision – a lot of Dubai's blueprints is coming from his vision. He always asks us to be agile, resilient and make things happen. He wants to create a model city for the world where the legacy of Dubai would be such that few hundred years from now Dubai would be remembered as a city that always pushed the envelope.

What is amazing is how quickly and smoothly things happen in Dubai. As soon as there is an announcement regarding any kind of new policy / rule, it is seamlessly implemented all over. I think this is what worked for us in 2022.

### New Trends

An interesting trend that we have witnessed with regards to the India market is that the share of repeat visitors is now increasing. A lot of visitors who are coming to Dubai from India, in addition to the first timers, are the repeat travellers, who are on the lookout for different experiences in Dubai. They want to go beyond the Dhow Cruise and Desert Safari and do something new. This becomes a very interesting segment for us as with them we can now explore our niche segment – honeymooners, adventure seekers, weekenders, gastronomy – it opens a lot of doors for us to even reposition and repack the destination for them.

### Strategy for 2023

2023 is going to build up on the success of 2022. This year, specifically for India, we are going to build on Mega Fams. We just concluded mega-fam last month of 46 agents and will move to 100 pax for ATM. Our vision is to go for 200-250 next year. Actually, in the last two years, a lot of agents have changed, people have been laid off and a lot of new names have come in the market. Another focus would be stop-overs, which is a very important part of our strategy

for 2023. A lot of Indians cross Dubai and we would incentivise them to stay for a night or 2 in Dubai. If they get a taste of Dubai, I am sure that next time they would come for a longer duration of time with their family and friends. Average night stay of an Indian has increased to 6 nights.

Before the pandemic it was 3 – 4 nights. It has almost doubled. During the pandemic we have shifted our focus from segments to personas.

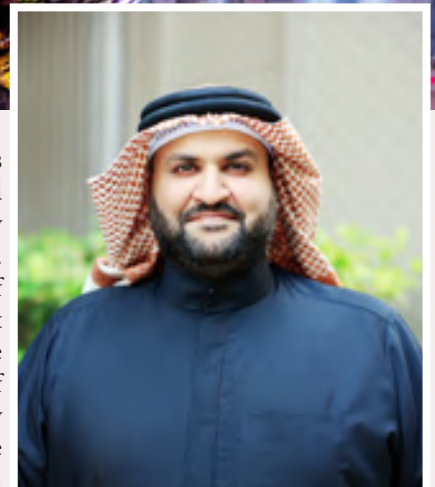
### New Marketing Campaigns

We have a very interesting line-up of campaigns, which are going to be very different from what we have done in the past. We will keep piloting projects that have never been done before and keep pushing our boundaries. We will go for smaller and diverse campaigns. Fundamentally, our positioning would be lifestyle – we will position ourselves as a lifestyle destination. Indians today have become more tasteful in their approach. Dubai today has a lot of new offerings and during the pandemic more than 1000 new rooms have come up.

### Weddings and more

Wedding is definitely an important market segment that we are targeting but we are also looking at photoshoots and shopping – these are the segments that our Vogue segment has addressed very well. In fact, we just recently hosted 70 wedding planners from India. Landmark celebrations – birthdays / anniversaries are another major segment. Dubai has one of the best infrastructure – from airlines to the best of luxury resorts. Beach resort desert resort, luxury resort – so many options and also from the gastronomy perspective, we have chefs that cater today too all communities and cuisines in India.

In conclusion I would just like to say that Indians have still not explored all that there is on offer in Dubai, especially keeping in mind that new attractions are being added frequently. So there is a scope for lot for growth of tourism traffic between the two countries.



# POWER WOMEN

## *Raising the bar of Women Empowerment in Tourism & Hospitality*

While Women certainly do not need a single day or an occasion to be celebrated but if a day is marked in their honour, then why must we let it go waste?! Women are the soul of our society, they are the loving thread that keeps a family together, they are the strength that help organisations to turn losses into profits and they are the storehouse of optimism, love, grit and patience. On this particular International Women's Day, BOTT reached out to around 50 'Power Women' in the Tourism and Hospitality industry to seek their opinion on 4 key interesting and important issues – their Inspiration in life; how they are making their workplace women-friendly; their views on women empowerment today and one change that we would want to implement to make their surroundings (workplace) more women friendly...

Here is what they had to say –

**Compiled by Priyanka Saxena Ray**

**JYOTI MAYAL | President, TAAI and Vice Chairman, FAITH**



*"I would like to encourage more women to join the travel industry because they are multi-taskers, and more committed. They think from their head and heart also. We need to work with more women."*

**MY INSPIRATION**, all my life, has been my mother and I follow her always. Growing up, I thought I had a pretty good idea of what being a woman meant. All the women around me or at least the women I looked up to had a lot in common – they had successful careers, they were married, they were mothers, and they were involved in their communities. My mother was a great example of the same and for me, she was an ideal woman. When it comes to the travel industry, I was inspired by my husband who was the President of TAAI in 2005. That's when I felt if he can do it, why not a woman? I am the second woman President of TAAI in 75 years.

**I BELIEVE** that today we are living in times where we're walking together with men at every step then why should we demand special treatment? If I can travel all across the world, why do I need someone to carry my bag? I apply the same thing to my workplace. More than it being a women-friendly place, I like to call it an equal opportunity place that feels safe and secure for both men and women. Only thing I am particular about is respect, which not only every woman but human being needs to get. At a larger level, we're working on including as many women as possible to our

workforce. The current initiative I am working on involves training women from different states and start skilling them. After becoming the President of TAAI, I started the women's stream, WITT (Women in TAAI and Tourism). We have done knowledge webinars; physical meetings discussing important aspects of tourism; development of skills and are now launching grass root skilling starting in Uttar Pradesh where we will be training 20 women in hospitality; in other aspects of the value chain of tourism and also get them jobs or empowering them with skills to become entrepreneurs. We're also going to run a series of webinars for women on different aspects – challenges for women, women at workplace, handling finances, legal rights, health etc.

**WOMEN TODAY** have Come a long way in making their importance and equality felt. From successful homemakers to established entrepreneurs to hard-working employees, women have proven, that they are masters of multitasking and managerial skills. However, I feel women need to respect themselves to get respect. More often than not, women don't know how to put their thoughts across. She's often scared of being snubbed, and refuted, especially those who've just come out of their homes.

**ONE CHANGE** that I would like to bring is to encourage more women to come in because they are multi-taskers, and more committed. They think from their head and heart also. We need to work with more women, there should be a work policy with 30 percent belonging to women, and some chairs even for the elections of the managing committee reserved for women. I am of the belief that women can bring a significant change in the tourism business by way of offering innovative and creative solutions within and outside the vertical, resulting in additional employment generation and earning livelihood for their families.



*"Even now I do see that women and even senior women are not taken seriously enough by the senior men of the hospitality industry. The only way this can change is for a 360-degree attitudinal change by the male colleagues."*

**MY INSPIRATION**, has been my mother and siblings. I believe the first step in any direction is always taken at home. My mother was academically very bright, learnt foreign languages even after she had 4 children and managed her home and was very vociferous about all her daughters having careers. She also was a freelancer correspondent. My elder sister is 11 years older and I saw her prepare frenetically for her IAS exams. She cleared and was a rank holder something between 5th and 10th rank. The second sister did her masters and journalism and went on to becoming a media person. Being the youngest it was natural for me to also have a profession and try to do my best. My mother continued to encourage us to do better and better and to never take accolades so seriously that it went to our heads. She would always tell us to sleep over our challenges to have a solution by the morning. It's always worked. Then, I met whilst in school, Ms. Thangam Philip, the doyen of the hospitality institutes of India and was so inspired by her life story that I immediately wanted to join the IHM in Mumbai where she was the principal. My parents were quite against the idea. I decided to go ahead with the admission and managed the process myself and then announced

to my family that I had joined the hotel school. Ms Philip was so ahead of her time. She saw that India would need trained hospitality personnel in 3 decades and set up the IHMs when even the government did not take her seriously. But she forged on and the rest is history as they say. Her discipline, passion for the hospitality industry and vision continue to inspire me even today.

**I BELIEVE** I am quite genderless at the workplace. It just so happens that I do have more women than men at Outbound Marketing. Having worked with International Hotel companies 90% of my corporate career, my mindset tends to be like that and therefore the culture at our workplace. I recall as early as 2005, we gave maternity leave and benefits to our women team members when they needed it. We also offered to the same person the flexibility to work from home for the next 3 or 6 months. This was much ahead of its time.

**WOMEN TODAY** have come a long way. I had encountered once early on in my career a male chauvinistic attitude when I was not hired because I was a mother to a young child. I think we have come a long way from those days. Yet, even now I do see that women and even very senior women are not taken seriously enough by the senior men of the hospitality industry. It tends to be a little like a "boys club". The only way this can change is for a 360-degree attitudinal change by the male colleagues. To want to have a family and career is not a big ask and that should not be reason enough to think the woman is not serious about her career.

**ONE CHANGE** is tough to say. I asked the women in my organisation this question just so that I don't give a biased reply. They thought hard and said that nothing needed to be changed. It was woman friendly enough.

MEENA BHATIA| Vice President & General Manager, Le Meridien New Delhi



*"I strongly believe in equality in the true sense and I think making an equal place for women in the workplace is more relevant than creating women exclusive facilities."*

**MY INSPIRATION**: I get inspired by the wonderful women that I have had the pleasure to work with or cross paths with in the industry, Women are the biggest inspiration for women, thank you to the lovely friends in the industry who never let your spirits down. What inspires me is their strength, power to influence and passion for life.

**I BELIEVE** strongly in equality in the true sense and I think making an equal place for women in the workplace is more relevant than creating women exclusive facilities. We support and encourage a culture where women are confident to stand alongside men and have an equal opportunity to perform and progress. However, a more critical issue is to work towards creating a balance in the number of men and women as well, it's a long road to tread but a few recent initiatives like our collaboration with WICCI-SATTHIYA skill development initiative we are trying to create more opportunities for women in our hotel. I urge young girls in schools, Hospitality schools and those in the early years of their career to stay committed to their passion and dreams of a successful career in the industry.

**WOMEN TODAY:** Once again, make your own place and earn your respect, no not always will there be a man or a woman, waiting to help, support and understand, but strong women know how to keep going, how to influence others with their power and resolve, how to make a place for themselves and for others to follow.

**ONE CHANGE:** Do not stereotype jobs, no job is only for men and no job needs only women. Let all jobs be gender neutral and may the best one survive and excel.

**PRIYANKA NIJHAWAN | Director, Representations, Nijhawan Group**



*"Women today are definitely being given their due recognition. Today, we are seeing women joining the travel industry more than ever, spearheading not only managerial roles but also heading key divisions."*

**MY INSPIRATION** is Indira Nooyi, the past CEO of PepsiCo, has been my inspiration as a woman leader, having one of the most successful corporate profiles, setting an ideal example for the rest of the woman community to encourage others to reach greater heights in their careers. With a visionary leadership like hers, her commitment to a healthy and cohesive workplace equality, as well as her strategic thinking and daring decision-making skills, have set a powerful inspiration for me. These are some of the qualities that I have tried to inculcate professionally.

**I BELIEVE** very strongly in girl-power. I feel that women can lead in all spheres of life, and can imbibe stronger personalities when it comes to spearheading teams, commitment and also possess better people-people skills. At Nijhawan Group, we have a healthy mix of women colleagues, who account for almost 60% of our workforce.

As an initiative to make the environment women friendly, we have introduced flexible policies like work-from-home on certain days and have also tweaked official timings for those travelling from afar. We also plan to introduce more policies for those of our young colleagues, looking at maternity benefits in future.

**WOMEN TODAY** are definitely being given their due recognition. Today, we are seeing women joining the travel industry more than ever, spearheading not only managerial roles but also heading key divisions.

**ONE CHANGE** is tough to say as being a woman myself, I am very sensitive to my fellow women colleagues' needs. However, with an ever-growing team like ours, I look at introducing more policies that make them feel comfortable – be it direct help lines or increased in-person interactions so as to promote equality and a healthy work-life balance.

**BEENA MENON | India Representative, Tourism Ireland**



*"There has never been a better time than now for women in the corporate world, especially the travel industry, with women holding top positions in so many companies. I hope that more women are encouraged and inspired to join this amazing industry."*

**MY INSPIRATION** is every woman that builds and nurtures her family, and is as successful at the workplace displaying that same productivity, confidence and dedication is an inspiration to me! Right from former PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi to Dr. Soumya Swaminathan – Chief Scientist of WHO, there are inspirations all around us!

**I BELIEVE** women are slowly getting there! Our team right now happens to be an all-women workforce making our workplace environment very friendly and conducive for each team member. Aside from being physically comfortable in their work space, our work environment also exudes an air of empathy and sisterhood. My business partner, Huzan Fraser Motivala and I are both working women with families. We understand it is very important for a woman to be able to maintain a perfect balance of both, a professional and personal life, and ensure that our work environment

enables this.

**WOMEN TODAY**, are certainly being given their due respect today. The travel and tourism industry is one of the best spaces for women to build their careers. The industry requires attention to detail, dazzling customer service, and just the right amount of creativity - all qualities that women are aces in. There has never been a better time than now for women in the corporate world, especially the travel industry, with women holding top positions in so many companies. I hope that more women are encouraged and inspired to join this amazing industry and become Girl Bosses!



*"This Women's Day, we have planned a few activities for our staff. In fact, we are also in discussion to initiate a women's program in India where a group of women can be skilled in one of Thailand's popular artwork,"*

Thailand has legally advanced women's rights and gender equality. As a country and as a tourist destination, we are known as a 'women-friendly' destination and we know how to welcome our women travellers and make their holidays special. At the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), we have a ratio of 70:30 of women to men employees, which again shows that we take good care of our employees, whether men or women. We encourage our workforce to participate in recreational activities from time to time. This Women's Day, we have planned a few activities for our staff. In fact, we are also in discussion to initiate a women's program in India where a group of women can be skilled in one of Thailand's popular artwork like flower-making or pottery designs etc.

NELISWA NKANI | Hub Head – MEISEA, South African Tourism

*"The travel industry has been defined by some of the most inspirational female personalities who have challenged conventional norms and decided to swim against the tide of challenges."*

**MY INSPIRATION**, is travel itself and has remained a big part of my journey throughout. It has not only introduced me to life changing and meaningful experiences but has also constantly challenged me in varying situations, allowing me to step outside my comfort zone and adapt to the changing life settings. I feel blessed that I had the privilege of turning my passion for travel into my profession.

In my current role, what inspires me the most is the beautiful bond shared between my birth nation, South Africa and my second home – India. It is my belief that more people should be aware of the rich history, hardships and similarities shared by both the countries. This ever-strengthening bond between the two countries encourages me to push myself each day. It fills me with great honour and joy that I get to play a part in strengthening this bond between the two nations through travel!

**I BELIEVE** and feel fortunate to have worked with some of the best individuals in the industry – who went past any gender biases and treated me like a professional. As someone who has been entrusted with the opportunity to have a seat at the table, it is my responsibility to make the most of it by building a more diverse and inclusive work culture. It is my constant endeavour to encourage more and more females to be a part of the tourism industry and share in the benefits that this industry brings. I feel extremely proud when I encounter women who are fearless in voicing their opinions and are building their own path to success. I continually seek to reflect the hands that raised me and the conscious of those that seek to follow my footsteps.

**WOMEN TODAY**, across industries, are increasingly raising the bar and setting new standards of innovation, achievements, and performance each day. The travel industry has been defined by some of the most inspirational female personalities who have challenged conventional norms and decided to swim against the tide of challenges. While women make up the majority of the travel and tourism workforce, when you move towards the top and look at C-suites, the ratio does not fit in yet. As an industry, we have fared well in last few years but there is still a long way to go until the full potential of women in the tourism industry is realized. I believe and am hopeful that this is only a matter of time and gradually we will achieve equal female representation in the boardrooms as well. I am confident that future holds great possibilities for women.

**ONE CHANGE** would be recognising and empowering women to assume leadership positions that will help create an environment for them to perform under equally competitive conditions. Every year, through our trade initiatives, South African Tourism encourages more and more SMMEs and women-led businesses to participate and take the centre stage. It is essential that gender equality strategies of the tourism sector are backed by institutional support. In South Africa, the Department of Tourism, helmed by the Hon. Minister of Tourism, Ms. Lindiwe Sisulu is doing commendable work in aiding women who own businesses and empowering those who aspire to own tourism businesses. It actively ensures that women are a part of the tourism value chain and supply chain. Personally, I am excited to see budding women entrepreneurs who are setting new precedents and reaching new heights with their work in the travel trade fraternity.





*"So many successful women in our industry demonstrate that women are recognized and respected for their professional contributions. I think respect has to be earned, not given, and a lot depends on the individual concerned."*

**MY INSPIRATION:** I have many mentors both in the industry and outside. I have been fortunate to work with some fantastic individuals and professionals in my working life. At the University of Nevada Las Vegas, I had some outstanding professors who taught me the importance of relationships, networking, creative thinking and discipline. In the beginning of my career, I worked for Marriott hotels in the US and had two unique women bosses from whom I learnt compassion, efficiency, commitment to excellence and attention to detail. During my professional journey in India, I had a few more wonderful mentors who encouraged me to think out of the box, never give up, believe in your dreams, be a woman of substance, think independently and show empathy towards others.

**I BELIEVE** our workplace is women friendly as we believe in equal opportunity and do not practice any discrimination in hiring, promotions, and individual growth paths. Everyone is equal and promotions depend on performance, not gender. We have separate facilities for women, we have included little things that matter, like a well-lit full-length mirror.

**WOMEN TODAY:** So many successful women in our industry demonstrate that women are recognized and respected for their professional contributions. I think respect has to be earned, not given, and a lot depends on the individual concerned. I also think we have to move ahead instead of constantly looking for gender bias. Women bring so much to their work environment - including the ability to multi-task, show empathy, creativity, critical thinking, and commitment.

**ONE CHANGE:** As a majority of our team members are women, our office is quite women friendly. However, maybe a women's changing room would be nice.



*"There is a growing awareness to promote gender equality at all levels and create more opportunities for women to succeed, both for the benefit of individuals and for the industry as a whole."*

**MY INSPIRATION:** My mother has been an inspiration for me because she taught me the importance of positive attitude, to always look on the bright side and to find joy in every big or small moment. She had the quality of demonstrating unwavering perseverance with grit and humour in the face of any obstacle. Her ability to overcome any stressful situation with grace and determination has taught me the value of resilience and persistence.

Her dedication to her family and her open-mindedness and willingness to learn and grow inspired me to approach life with an open heart and an open mind. Her willingness to listen, learn, and embrace new ideas has taught me the importance of being open to new perspectives and experiences that has shaped me the person I am today.

**I BELIEVE:** To make our workplace more women-friendly, we are open to flexible working arrangements including remote work. We encourage a culture that values everyone's contribution,

regardless of gender that helps to create a supportive and collaborative environment in all our business verticals.

**WOMEN TODAY:** Times have changed and it's time to change. There are so many women in our industry who have successfully navigated all challenges and have achieved success with their single-minded determination and hard work. Today they are well-represented in leadership positions and are important and valuable contributors to the tourism and hospitality industry. There is a growing awareness to promote gender equality at all levels and create more opportunities for women to succeed, both for the benefit of individuals and for the industry as a whole.

**ONE CHANGE:** To make workplaces more women-friendly can include creating policies that support gender equality, provide equal opportunities for career advancement, encourage open communication and feedback. We need to make conscious efforts to ensure that everyone feels valued, supported, and empowered to succeed in their respective workplace.

**PINKI ARORA | Marketing Representative North & East India, Bangladesh & Nepal, Tourism Authority of Thailand New Delhi**

*"Travel and tourism sector offers an incredible opportunity to a vast number of women who are looking for flexible and local work opportunities, be it in a city, town or village."*

Women are being acknowledged across the world for their immense contribution in every sphere of life. There is an encouraging trend in India where the women workforce is being valued and given due respect. Travel and tourism sector offers an incredible opportunity to a vast number of women who are looking for flexible and local work opportunities, be it in a city, town or village. This is precisely the reason that women account for 65% of the international tourism workforce. Therefore, it is imperative that the tourism sector should be given a lot of importance in India. It can provide women with more opportunities for workforce participation, leadership, entrepreneurship and empowerment than many other sectors, particularly in developing regions and as such it can have a tremendous effect on poverty reduction in rural communities.



**DEEPIKA CHOWDHRY | Founder CEO, Candid India**



*"Women today are making great strides in the travel tourism and hospitality sector, and they are beginning to receive the respect and importance they deserve. However, there is still a lot of progress to be made."*

**MY INSPIRATION**, in the travel, tourism, and hospitality sector is Anthony Bourdain. He was a chef, author, and TV host who had a true passion for food, culture, and travel. He believed that through food, we can learn about different cultures and explore the world in a unique and beautiful way. He taught us to appreciate different cuisines and also gave us a glimpse into the culture, people, and places he visited. His passion inspired me to explore the world and to appreciate the beauty and culture of different places.

**I BELIEVE** that women should be made comfortable at workplace and so I have taken several steps to make my workplace more women-friendly. I have advocated for flexible working hours to accommodate family needs and encourage my colleagues to do the same. I always believed in offering equal opportunities for women in the workplace and promote gender equality. I have

also organized workshops for women to help them enhance their skills and gain confidence in their abilities. Additionally, I have ensured that all the necessary facilities, such as private restrooms, are available and that the office environment is safe and secure for all.

**WOMEN TODAY** are making great strides in the travel tourism and hospitality sector, and they are beginning to receive the respect and importance they deserve. However, there is still a lot of progress to be made in terms of equal representation and opportunity in this field, as well as in many other industries. There are many initiatives being taken, such as diversity and inclusion programs, to ensure that women have the same chances and opportunities as men in the workplace. It is my hope that with continued effort, women will achieve the full respect and recognition they deserve in the travel tourism and hospitality sector.

**ONE CHANGE** that I would like to bring about at my work place would be to create a more flexible work policy that allows for a better work/life balance. This would include allowing more remote working opportunities, offering part-time or job-sharing options, and providing more family-friendly benefits. These changes would create a more supportive and inclusive environment for everyone, regardless of gender.

**TEKLA MAIRA | Regional Director of Sales –India,  
Banyan Tree Hotels & Resorts**

*"Women today, I feel, are being given their due respect and opportunity. I see so many women making successful careers in our industry and being great leaders."*



**MY INSPIRATION**, has been a number of women in my workplace from whom I have learnt and continue to do so. Nandini Verma my very first boss in Hyatt sales and marketing continues to be a role model - a perfectionist in every way I learnt how important it is to dot my I's and cross my T's- meeting deadlines and speaking your mind have been my most important learnings. Just when I thought I have evolved as a professional in the hospitality space I came across Meenaz Lilani who today heads Global sales in Accor – leading by example she was a tremendous inspiration – tough though she was I never grudged the demands she placed on the work front and pushed me to over perform. My success as an entrepreneur has lots to do with her leadership!

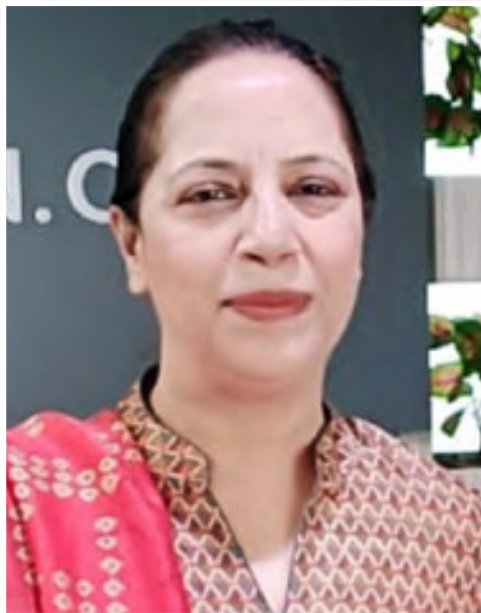
**I BELIEVE** and exercise flexibility in the work place and am mindful of colleagues' circumstances making it easier for them to pursue work life balance. A number of women are left with no choice but to take career breaks on account of family obligations. I am always happy to offer opportunities to such women and motivate them to restart their career. Age tends to be a barrier in our industry and I don't believe that retirement should be compulsory at a certain age. I would never create a bias while recruiting older women for jobs they feel they can still manage.

**WOMEN TODAY**, I feel, are being given their due respect and opportunity. I see so many women making successful careers in our industry and being great leaders. I believe their dedication and hard work has earned them this position.

**ONE CHANGE** I would bring about is to build in a childcare facility at the work place. A mother is so much more at peace knowing her kid(s) are in good care and she has the ability to go see them as and when required. The Mother - child bonding is indeed important for both during the growing years and we must facilitate this.



**SAMINA MUNSHI | Director, N. Chirag**



*"I don't agree with the term women empowerment because I don't think women are weak and have to be given power by someone else. Women must recognise that they are the real architects of the society."*

**MY INSPIRATION**, in life has been my mother and my aunt – one was good at handling the home front and other was dealing beautifully with the work life balance. They both taught me great deal about life and I shall always carry their lessons in my heart. I owe my faith, resilience and strong character to both these women in my life.

**I BELIEVE** that women today are empowered enough. I don't agree with the term women empowerment because I don't think women are weak and have to be given power by someone else. Women must recognise that they are the real architects of the society and derive power and value from within, not from external intervention. For me, empowerment is that force inside us to create change, express freely, and achieve limitlessly.

**WOMEN TODAY** have high self-esteem and confidence, which are the two key qualities that I relate to successful women. They believe that they have a right to dream and achieve their goals. They are not afraid; they believe in themselves and don't back down. They encourage and mentor other women to recognise their innate capacity and determine the power of their solidarity and genuine team spirit. Women themselves are Power and true empowerment is acknowledging that power within and believing that we are worthy, whole, and enough. Over the years, I have come to realize that women lead differently and two qualities we all women share is an enormous capacity to multi-task and care deeply about values. As entrepreneurs, we get to create a value system that drives the culture of our business.

**ONE CHANGE** is tough to say as at N. Chirag, more than 75% of the team is women and they are all leaders who have achieved the balance in their homes and workplace seamlessly. They are all confident, creative and innovative women who thrive off each other's energy and empower others to see more of world.

GITA CHAUDHRY | Founder, Terra Tales

*"Women today are being acknowledged for their work, but still have a long way to go. There are some who have emerged as established names and gained respect beyond doubt, but not without challenges."*



**MY INSPIRATION**, since my childhood has been my mother. Ever since I remember, I had one personality who influenced, inspired, and guided me at every juncture. Our huge heterogeneous family had professions from various walks of life but it was my mother who has been a teacher, an artist a gardener and a great inspiration to all of us. They had different perspectives and temperaments and the best part was that she knew how to maintain the balance with everyone and everything with a confident smile. I grew with her and learned this art with the passage of time, which enabled and empowered me to emerge as a professional with a higher Emotional Quotient (EQ). It helped me grow leaps and bounds on all fronts. I still look up to her as my role model.

**I BELIEVE** that the sales and marketing in the hospitality sector involves a great deal of travelling. Not many women professionals used to come forward and for many, the stint stayed short-lived. I encouraged many to join the brigade and I did handholding at every step. I helped them to maintain a work-life balance amidst challenges and deadlines. I travelled with them far and wide not only to turn them more confident and tactful but to ensure their well-wishers that they could handle their professional commitments in a magnificent manner.

**WOMEN TODAY**, while acknowledged for their work, still have a long way to go. There are some who have emerged as established names and gained respect beyond doubt, but those who are emerging have their share of challenges. They are still not taken seriously as desired as many feel that they may go on sabbatical or quit due to personal commitments. Some think that they cannot withstand immense pressures and taxing work hours, but the mindset is changing and women professionals in the travel tourism and hospitality sector, however, it is still a longer way to go.

**ONE CHANGE** I wish to see around me is to get gender-based apprehensions uprooted fully and wholly. Professionals shall be professionals. This paradigm shift may take years to reach the desired point. In the short run, I want the entities and the workforce to be sensible and sensitive toward women professionals which would certainly make them outperform themselves.

PUNAM SINGH | Chief Happiness Officer, Indian Hospitality Network – IHN

*"I believe that the most important single thing, beyond discipline and creativity is daring to dare... My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive, and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humour and some style."*



**MY INSPIRATION**, are so many women that I can't choose just one person. There are so many who are complete inspirations in their respective fields for varying reasons. First is Sudha Murthy (Philanthropist, Author & Chairperson Infosys Foundation) for her amazing journey as a runaway orphan, her guts to glory rise, her complete simplicity and humility throughout despite being one of the most powerful and monied ladies in the global milieu. In the sports field, it's Mary Kom for showing that circumstances, motherhood, marriage, family life, age are mere factors or stepping stones to success and achievement as long as the hunger to excel, perform and push your limits drives you. What a lady! But, if I lead from the heart, in the 50 plus age group, (to which I belong), I would, without hesitation, plumb for Vasudha Sondhi – for her consistent excellence in delivery / grace / support of her team & industry colleagues / her impeccable reputation and of course her fabulous saree collection; Tekla Maira - her knowledge / ability to incisively make presentations / her sense of humour / the ability to take a break at the right time / her sterling reputation & of course her jewellery collection; Shoba (Mohan) Rudhra for her outstanding ability to make ex tempore presentations for each & every one of the 110 properties she represents at RARE; Jyoti Mayal - for being the lady that rose not just to TAAI Presidentship on her own steam & efforts / who has created & is maintaining ICONIC, TIES & WITT! Meena Bhatia - who is quite a legend in the hospitality industry / an achiever in her field / an art aficionado & supporter / a champion for the causes of

women's skilling & placement a staunch friend to her circle! Next would be Chitra Bhatia - an icon in "her" days / someone who has worked with the leading travel brands & rubbed shoulders with the biggest names - yet remains so humble. Finally, to Dr. Kuku (Surinder) Kumar - for walking her path with courage, never giving up & building a hugely successful business / for pioneering aviation - travel - tourism skilling! Amongst the "younger" lot, I would like to mention Priyanka Nijhawan, Reema Sisodia, Lubaina Sheerazi, Neeti Sharma, Madhuri Verma, Pallavi Mehra, Priyanka Saxena, Shikha Khanna and Komal Seth; whom I have in different ways, being inspired by & learned from.

To end, I am completely inspired by Maya Angelou - her poems, grit, poetry & life story. I quote - "I believe that the most important single thing, beyond discipline and creativity is daring to dare ..... My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive, and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humour and some style."

**I BELIEVE** and have strived to make my workplace highly conducive for women. I have always focused on hygiene comfort, keeping medical kits with sanitary napkins & meds for "that time of the month", for ensuring safety & security for women working late / travelling alone, for some flexibility in time for working moms & continuously encouraging them to increase their knowledge base & to breach the glass ceiling - to perform on merit & stand shoulder to shoulder with their male colleagues. Very importantly, I have consistently discouraged backbiting, scheming & manipulation amongst women as that is how small minds work & I believe in thinking big & living large!

**WOMEN TODAY**, I think, are definitely getting the recognition they deserve. Increasingly this is the case across the board; but there is still a long way to go!

**ONE CHANGE** that I would like to bring to my work-place is that perhaps I may want not just the women but all encompassing, to refresh their minds with an occasional course correction to a healthier lifestyle and a work life balance!



**ARSHDEEP ANAND | Director, Holiday Moods Adventures**  
**Chairperson, ATOAI Women's Collective EC, OTOAI**



*"The fact that I am a woman endowed with power to create, nurture and transform is very fascinating to me. Just being a woman inspires me!"*

**MY INSPIRATION**, is not just one but many! Reading inspires me. I have always enjoyed reading & books influence me a lot. The first quote that inspired me and I imbibed it in my life 'Always reach for the stars! Even if you don't get them, you don't get your hands slung with mud either'. Being a trekker, I pick up inspirations from nature. "Go out in the woods, go out. If you don't go out in the woods nothing will ever happen and your life will never begin." The more I spend time in nature, the more I learn and absorb. So, Nature inspires me. I am a traveller. I go wherever life takes me & let it unfold. Let life happen & build more stories. These stories from our own lives, our actions & reactions to a particular episode help me to analyse myself & inspire me to become better. Travel inspires me. The fact that I am a woman endowed with power to create, nurture & transform is very fascinating to me. Just being a woman inspires me!

**I BELIEVE** that we are a very women friendly organisation and senior positions in our team are held by women. We prefer to hire women who are restarting their careers after a sabbatical. Undoubtedly, there is a difference in their productivity and loyalty as they are more mature after

having worked earlier & then taken a break, mostly to look after home & children, hence are more open to learning & suggestions. As such, we give full respect to their work- life balance & support them with whenever they need time off. We also find that there is more discipline & congeniality when you have women working on your team, which leads to a happy environment.

**WOMEN TODAY**, have come a long way. Interestingly, around 70% of workforce employed in tourism sector comprises women, yet hardly 5-8% are seen holding board positions. Mostly women are employed in the lower paying jobs and disproportionately work part time to handle their family responsibilities, which are mostly unpaid jobs. It is also observed that women perform lot of work in family – run tourism businesses which is not paid for. A lot needs to be done to recognise the inputs of women and give them their due.

**ONE CHANGE** is that we definitely need to have more women in the lead & organisations should wake up to this fact, acknowledge & give them their due. If we can appreciate their work & loyalty in lower paying jobs then we should be able to appreciate them as leaders as well. I also think that the wait for organic growth process has been too long and the few handful women holding leadership positions in the various fields of tourism sector should join hands and work collectively for the upliftment of fellow women in the industry. It's a tall order, but can be achieved by adopting a few simple changes like Integrating more women in the team, building their trust, facilitating work - life balance, encouraging their physical and psychological well-being & most of all valuing their contribution.

**ROMANA PARVI | Regional Manager – South Asia, Jazeera Airways**

*"For the travel and tourism hospitality sector, the impact of greater gender equality and women's empowerment would be highly beneficial, because diverse and gender equitable organizations perform better."*

**MY INSPIRATION,** I am inspired by Amelia Earhart, the American Aviator, who was the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. She was known for her adventurous and independent nature and encouraged women to reject the conservative social norms and pursue various opportunities in the field of aviation. In 1929 she helped found an organization of female pilots that later became known as the Ninety-Nines and served as its first president. In addition, she debuted a functional clothing line in 1933, which was designed "for the woman who lives actively."

**I BELIEVE** Whichever organization I have worked for, we have ensured that women have access to growth and opportunities. We encourage empowering women by giving her an opportunity to actively participate in all aspects of the business and its decision-making process. Gender equality and women empowerment are basic and fundamental to just and equitable working spaces. In fact, at Jazeera Airways India, the percentage of female staff equals the male staff.

**WOMEN TODAY,** We have definitely come a long way. Again, it's about gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace. For the travel and tourism hospitality sector, the impact of greater gender equality and women's empowerment would be highly beneficial, because diverse and gender equitable organizations perform better.

**ONE CHANGE** I would like to encourage work – life balance – If women feel safe and stable in their work environment, it will help in improving the quality of their family life and that of the societies and communities on the whole.



**SUCHETA NAGPAL | Director & CEO, Travstarz Global Group**

*"In the Tourism and Hospitality business we can see various examples where women have led from the front in creating big brands and have shaped their entrepreneurial journey. We can see this in the Tier 2 & Tier 3 cities as well."*

**MY INSPIRATION,** have been many women over the years. Not only the travel industry, but I feel women have achieved top positions in varied industries around the world whether it is beverages, technology, clothing and fashion, finance and banking etc and we have some great examples to prove the same. In the travel industry too, we have many women who have done commendable work and achieved great success with their sheer grit and determination. The last 10 to 15 years have been exceptionally good for our women entrepreneurs where time and again they have demonstrated their skills and leadership qualities creating successful ventures and have also given us some great women leaders too, the best example being Ms. Jyoti Mayal, the TAAI President who has inspired many others to rise further including myself. I can take many other names such as Ms. Vasudha Sondhi, Ms. Sheema Vohra, Lubaina Sheerazi etc. who have achieved success with their hard work over the years and strong leadership qualities.

**I BELIEVE** that being a woman in this fast paced industry has its own challenges as well as positives in this fast changing world. Women are always the backbone on any industry as they understand the ability to multitask on many levels be it career or home. Women in our organization have a safe environment which helps bring out the best in them. We do support work from home when required as well as timings to enable them to balance both aspects of their life. My doors are always open for them to discuss their problems and help them achieve solutions for the same.

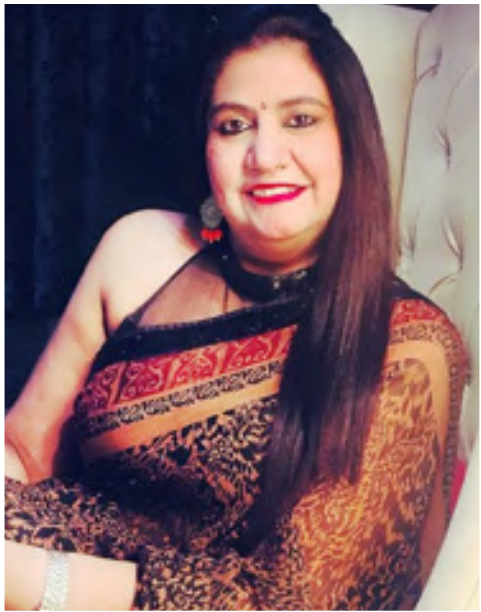
**WOMEN TODAY,** not only in the tourism and hospitality industry, but elsewhere too have been in the forefront in almost all the industries across the spectrum. Talking particularly about the tourism and hospitality business we can see various examples where women have led from the front in creating big brands and have shaped their entrepreneurial journey. We can see this in the Tier 2 & Tier 3 cities as well where we now have many top travel agents being women. However, I do feel there is some more scope as travel and tourism sector is still not considered a complete safe environment.

**ONE CHANGE** would be tough to say as I do not think we have to make any more changes in our work environment. As stated above we have already made the necessary changes to make our environment a more women friendly and safe environment.



URVASHI CHAWLA | Head of Sales, Amal Tamara

*"Women today are greatly respected in the tourism and hospitality industry. We travel equally and have great exposure to different destinations in the world – just like the men."*



**MY INSPIRATION**, has always been to be a better version of my own self. In my journey of wellness tourism there have been many challenges and victories. Personally, I always grow from learning from my past mistakes and aspire to overcome challenges.

**I BELIEVE** strongly that our organization is very women friendly and we have colleagues who are successfully balancing motherhood with their work and professional lives.

**WOMEN TODAY** are greatly respected in the tourism and hospitality industry. We travel equally and have great exposure to different destinations in the world - just like the men. Personally, there has always been gender equality and same opportunity for both.

**ONE CHANGE** is tough as there is nothing I would like to change about my work, wellness tourism or the travel industry. It is the space I have always aspired to work in and hope we grow from strength to strength. As women we all should support each other, rather than fragmenting the space. If there is one thing I could change – it would be the way other women think.



GEETA MAHESHWARI | Director, Hospitality & Marketing Services (H&M Services)



*"As feminism is about the equality of opportunities and cerebral capacities, it is pertinent that we focus on making space for women and supporting them in fighting gender inequality."*

**MY INSPIRATION**, is a woman that I often look up to – Mrs Sudha Murty. She challenged patriarchy in every step that she took. From becoming the first female engineer at TATA TELCO to being awarded Padma Shri for her social work, her individuality and finesse have always left me awestruck. Like her, I always aim for the skies while having my feet firm on the ground. My mantra, “The climb will be difficult, the path unknown but passion and goodwill for the betterment of our trade will lead us all to the desired goal” helps me to apply my experience to preserve the quality and diverse representation in hospitality, sales and marketing services. It is my goal to ensure that female entrepreneurs are able to stand tall like Mrs. Murty in this male-dominated world, who work hard and stop at nothing.

**I BELIEVE** that change begins at home. Having worked in the industry for so long, I have seen the hurdles that women go through in their business. Long-travels, taking care of the household

chores, late-evening events and responsibility towards their children are a few of many issues that modern-day women go through. To bridge the gap between men and women, I have a dominant women's team that I personally train to ensure that they do not feel uncomfortable in any given situation. It is of utmost importance to me that my office is a safe space for women where their opinions are heard and implemented. Additionally, I offer the team maternity and paternity leaves for the new parents so they do not have to worry about juggling between jobs and the well-being of their new-borns.

**WOMEN TODAY**, are being respected and given their due in our industry but because our business has never been considered inherently good for women, I feel that there is always scope for improvement. To begin with, we need a more equal men-to-women ratio in offices and be aware that it is important to listen to their opinions and needs. As feminism is about the equality of opportunities and cerebral capacities, it is pertinent that we focus on making space for women and supporting them in fighting gender inequality. I wholeheartedly believe that every entrepreneur should provide the women in the office with maternity leaves and equal access to resources.

**ONE CHANGE** would be equal treatment. Having been associated with various stalwarts of the travel fraternity for over two decades, I was given good treatment where I was treated at par with my counterparts and my thoughts were heard and respected. This enabled me to be the successful female entrepreneur that I am today. It is only if we continue this radiation that we will be able to empower more women in the Tourism and Travel Industry of India.

**REENA CHOPRA | Director, Magical Holidays**

*"As we are celebrating Womanhood I strongly believe as a woman we must stand up for ourselves and as a woman we must stand up for each other. When we speak about empowering women, it is always for a better tomorrow."*

**MY INSPIRATION** is Oprah Winfrey. Oprah is a successful entrepreneur with an established foothold in several types of media. She is also an actress and philanthropist. What inspires me is that when Oprah Winfrey started as a news reporter was fired when she was told she was "unfit" for television news. Despite this setback, Winfrey went on to have the most successful daytime talk show from 1986 to 2011. Also, a woman that has inspired me my whole life is my Mum. My mother always smiles, no matter what the circumstances are and that gives me the strength and inspiration to face all problems. To me and my daughters, she is the purest soul... our best critic yet our strongest supporter.



**I BELIEVE** Women today are taking more intensive roles that demand greater devotion and time. To make workplace more women friendly we have mother friendly environment for working mothers are not bound to do duties outside work hours and at times Flexible Work Schedule to work from home and also if they are leaving the workplace late at night sometimes provide them company transport and ensure that they reach home safely.

**WOMEN TODAY**, are working in big numbers in the hospitality industry, which would be quite incomplete without the charming smile of a woman at its outset. The feminine touch indeed lends grace and elegance to the hospitality industry. In fact, it would only be fair to say that the industry today holds more potential for women than ever before. Travel and tourism seems to be an important sector for women (46 % of the workforce in this sector are women employees) Travel and Tourism provides unique work opportunities for females. In India, women representing as a brand image of service sector due to their pleasing nature of working. The marketing of tourism, aviation and hospitality services, women are the 'Face and Brand' of the sector. The gender war of the yesteryears has finally come to an end with a firm acceptance that the women are a great work force in any segment of profession and with sheer hard work and true demonstration they have made the size of their berth bigger. We can easily say that the women work force in all its true sense is the icing on the cake!

We have seen more and more women joining the Travel Trade. All the Associations should encourage young women to become Tourism Entrepreneurs and work closely with Tourism institutes as they are going to be the Future of Tourism of India. Time will come when there will be equal number of females in every aspect.

**ONE CHANGE** would be to treat women as equals so much so that if a woman rises to the top of her field it should be a commonplace occurrence that draws nothing more than a raised eyebrow at the gender. This can only happen if there is a channelized route for the empowerment of women. Proper awareness for laws should be there that is law should not be restricted to papers only but the implementation of law should be there so that every woman can be familiar with her rights. Significant steps should be taken to implement all the laws which are amended to facilitate detention, prevention and punishment of crimes against women.

**RICHA SHARMA| Head – PR and Corporate Communications, ITC Hotels**

*"I believe in gender neutrality. I would not distinguish roles according to gender. What all jobs' men may perform at their workplace, women can too, maybe even better."*

**MY INSPIRATION:** I continue to get inspired everyday... every hour from a number of people. Foremost, my own PR & MarCom team at ITC Hotels. I mean when I say this. It is not easy to steer the roles they do along with their personal lives. I get a lot of strength from observing the ease with which they multi skill. I know you may be looking at a real big celebrity or star who has inspired me but believe me, my girls are Heroes and I learn so much every day from them. Courage, Commitment and Conviction are the top three qualities that get my vibe.

**WOMEN TODAY:** Take women out of the hospitality industry and you only stare at a shell! That should tell you what I feel about their contribution. Yes, we have come a long way and compared to a few decades back, women are definitely being seen much more for the value they bring to a role or position. As I mentioned earlier, multi-skilling is a huge asset for women. In an industry that relies on coordination at multiple levels, women are pure natural at simplifying operational 'chaos' and creating a warm and friendly environment. Having said so, the road ahead beckons. A lot more

ground needs to be covered. I am sure that will happen soon. Remember, your direction is more important than your speed.

**ONE CHANGE:** I believe in gender neutrality. I would not distinguish roles according to gender. What all jobs men may perform at their workplace, women can too, maybe even better.



ELLONA PEREIRA | Head, AVIAREPS

*"Women today are scaling new heights in various corporate leadership roles across the globe. However, the numbers are disproportionately low when compared to male counterparts and hopefully this situation improves in the near future."*

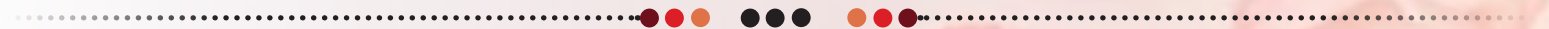
**MY INSPIRATION** is my mother. She has always been my pillar of strength, my friend and my guide. Not with any stick or instructions' book, but by just being by my side through thick and thin. Her top priorities were being compassionate, humble and respectful to all people and these values are what I take forward in my life. Being a working mother herself, her job at Air India demanded a lot of her time being spent in business travel however she always maintained a healthy work life balance. As the old adage goes, a daughter is a reflection of her mother, and so glad that I am part of this amazing travel industry which my mother dedicated more than 3 decades of her life. I would like to share that my mom would always say to me 'When the going gets tough, the tough gets going' and this has been always been my 'MANTRA'. She is definitely my inspiration! My passion, grit and determination is what I draw from her.



**I BELIEVE** strongly in women empowerment and I can proudly mention that AVIAREPS is all about gender diversity and inclusiveness. In fact, there are many women in leadership roles across our worldwide offices. Secondly, in India the majority of the workforce comprises of women and we have policies and practices in place that creates a professional and safe environment for us.

**WOMEN TODAY** are scaling new heights in various corporate leadership roles across the globe. However, in the same breath, the numbers are disproportionately low when compared to male counterparts and hopefully this situation improves in the near future. Today we have tour operators run by woman entrepreneurs who believe in a bright future with tourism for women. Nowadays, woman entrepreneur in tourism are trying to connect travellers to NGOs and provide support for local conservation and social initiatives. Many companies are focusing on ecotourism and sustainability. The travel sector today is seeing a sea of change with women taking on leadership roles. I believe women are genetically wired to be great host and planners with great vision.

**ONE CHANGE** is tough to point as I have top 3 in mind. First is to make the workplace a mother friendly workplace having day-care or crèche for new mother post the maternity level. Next professional development training or mentorship programmes for women to enhance their career path and last, campaigns about celebrating women employees.



KOMAL SETH | Director, LinkIn Reps



*"Don't wait for opportunities to knock on your door – create them. Do remember only YOU can be YOU. All we need to do is to celebrate one another in true spirit and hold hands when the need arises. Rest then will find its way to you."*

**MY INSPIRATION:** There are many things and people that inspire me. The person who has most greatly inspired me has been my parents. No matter how hard they worked, they always had a smile on their faces. It has been my parents who have walked with me through thick and thin. My parents taught me to see dreams and inspired me to strive for success. They always say nothing comes in your hand without hard work, believe in hard work, never lose hope in your life. Even though I can't repay what they have done for me, I can at least make them happy with my success.

**I BELIEVE** in women empowerment. 70% of my workforce has always been women. Any comments, remarks, or jokes that make women uncomfortable have no place in an organisation. Women in my organisation have always been the focus of my growth strategies. Some companies fail to utilize the skills and opinions of their women employees to their full potential. It works wonders when you provide them with equal opportunities and appreciate their efforts

**WOMEN TODAY:** People can disregard what you say because of your age. But that's part of the journey, you learn how to overcome it. People make assumptions about women very quickly. When you're a young girl, people might assume your word isn't worth anything. To overcome that, you must believe in yourself and what you're doing. When people start being judgemental it's all too easy to have it set you off course. My advice for women is to always back themselves up. Go into the room knowing you've done your research and knowing you're well informed. Anywhere

I've worked, one thing is common. When you have logic and what you say makes sense, you earn respect. When you come at something with logic, people will look past your age barrier or your gender.

**ONE CHANGE:** Organisations must promote and implement initiatives that enable women to actively engage and take on leadership roles at the grassroots level. There is a need to provide more chances and an encouraging environment for women to not just enter the workforce but also to succeed in their careers. These initiatives are already underway, and many companies are providing women with a healthy, flexible, and safe work environment.

**LUBAINA SHEERAZI | CEO & Co-founder, BRANDit**

*"I believe in evolving into a better version of myself. My family has always inspired me to have integrity and face challenges head-on. I believe it is important to lead your life with grit and be conscious of your core values to inspire yourself and others."*

**MY INSPIRATION** is tough to choose from the many women I have been inspired from. I have had the privilege of meeting many inspiring individuals in my professional and personal journey. As a lifelong learner, I believe in evolving into a better version of myself. My family has always inspired me to have integrity and face challenges head-on. I believe it is important to lead your life with grit and be conscious of your core values to inspire yourself and others.

**I BELIEVE** women are empowered. Most of my team members at BRANDit are women, and we work together towards writing our success story. I have always maintained an open-door policy and believed that a good leader should create a nurturing and respectful workspace for everyone regardless of their gender.

**WOMEN TODAY** have come a long way as far as female workforce representation in tourism and hospitality is concerned. It is a continuous endeavour to forge a path that is unique to each but boosts the entire industry at the same time. Women today have created a space for themselves and contributed significantly across sectors. It is important to have our opinions trusted and valued, even challenge the existing ones.

**ONE CHANGE** At BRANDit, our workspace, policy and structure give women the opportunity to thrive without having to compromise on their personal commitments. I have always welcomed discussions, even if they are around difficult issues or outside of work. There is so much we can learn from each other if the channel of communication is transparent.



**SARA SONDHI | Country Head – India and UAE, Finland Tourism**



*"Women employees in international MNC's these days are offered additional pay to take care of child day care expenses while some organizations even offer easy access to day cares in office complex itself. I think in our sector no one even thinks on these lines."*

**MY INSPIRATION:** A women's journey that has inspired me a lot is Lisa Ray. Her book "Close to the Bone" shares Ray's inspiring story of living her nomadic life to the fullest on her own terms, fighting her personal wars and emerging as a winner. A cancer survivor, 46 years old Lisa Ray become a mother to 2 beautiful girls. The actor had to go through some testing times, and her journey and resolution have been an inspiration. After battling multiple myeloma, a Lisa Ray managed to come out as a winner. She even took the help of the surrogacy method and was gifted with two daughters. Despite going through all this, she still managed to stay 'free and unfiltered' with her radiant beauty and inspired all her female fans about how they needed to know their worth as a woman.

**I BELIEVE** I am blessed to be a part of an International Organization like Business Finland. Women in Finnish Organizations enjoy a very "high degree of equality & respect". In 1906, the women of Finland became the first women in Europe to be granted the right to vote. Taking office at the age of 34, Sanna Marin is the youngest person to hold the office in Finnish history, as well as the world's fourth-youngest state leader. Finland has been awarded accolades such as the 3rd most gender-equal country in the world (The Global Gender Gap, 2017), 2nd best country in the world

to be a girl (Save the Children, Girl's Opportunity Index, 2016), Mother's wellbeing rated 2nd best in the world (Save the Children, 2016) which clearly highlights how well they take care of women. Naturally the same work culture flows in BF offices around the World wherein we are offered a lot of flexibility, respect and opportunities.

**WOMEN TODAY** in the Indian tourism and hospitality sector still have a long way to go. Over my years of experience with various organizations in this sector, I have realized that roles offered to women, opportunities have certainly improved but the flexibility as mothers, home careers, women is negligible. Women employees in international MNC's these days are offered additional pay to take care of child day care expenses, some organizations even offer easy access to day cares with special deals in the office compound itself. I think in our sector no one even thinks on these lines of how new mothers can be supported and encouraged to continue working. Very few women are in leadership positions and still the industry is quite dominated by men.

**TARANDEEP | Founder, Uplifto, Director, Happy Hotelier Club**

*"The flexibility norms for a lady on her family way and post-delivery reflects the sensitivity and humane approach followed by hospitality chains. With this support, one can see many women in leadership roles in hospitality sector today."*

**MY INSPIRATION**, in the hospitality industry has been Ms. Priya Paul, the chairperson of The Park Hotels, a collection of boutique hotels across India. She is a Padma Shri awardee and is the creative "powerhouse" behind the business, personally decorating the hotels with art from her 3,000-plus collection. A true visionary with a futuristic approach, she is completely a people's person Her dynamism and charismatic personality is a true inspiration. Her clarity and purpose makes her lead by an example. She was the first one to bring Boutique concept in hotels way back. A rare side of her people do not know is that she is a big advocate of recycling resources. Also, in my first job, I got a chance to report directly to her and hence, got a great opportunity to learn a lot. My personal inspiration has been Ms. Sudha Murthy and Ms. Indra Nooyi as well



**I BELIEVE** that my workplace is a safe place for women. Inspired by the good organizations I have worked in and learning from the best practices of organisations worldwide, I have and in the process of strengthening our Standard Operating Procedures for women employees. We, at both our companies (Uplifto – Branding company and Happy Hotelier Club Private Limited) have a clear recruiting policy of 75% women including retired women professionals as they will bring a lot of experience and maturity on the table. Another step taken is most of the young women employees are from humble families with average monthly income of not more than 25k. What we see in them is the drive to get THERE and the attitude to learn and move forward. Till date we have had 10 women employees whom we have coached and trained from basics to handling things independently and this mission is our purpose too which will continue.

**WOMEN TODAY**, are well taken care well in the hospitality sector. I started my career in the hospitality sector way back in 1998 with The Park, New Delhi. The kind of secured environment we were working in made us really comfortable to continue in the same industry. The respect towards women employees at all levels from the Security department to individual departments gives a secure environment to women employees in almost all the hospitality groups. The flexibility norms for a lady on her family way and post delivery also reflects the sensitivity and humane approach in most of the Hospitality chains. With this support, women are in leadership roles in this sector today.

**ONE CHANGE** would be to bring flexibility to work from home. The environment of empowerment, complete acceptance and care. Regular structured trainings to upskill the women force on a regular basis to unleash the potential in them.

**KANISHKA KHIMANI | Manager – Marketing & Communications, Tourism Fiji**

*"Women are increasingly occupying managerial and leadership positions along with taking firm strides towards successful careers and making their mark prominent with their instincts and talents."*

**MY INSPIRATION:** I have had the good fortune to work with women across business roles, ages, backgrounds, and even different countries. I draw inspiration from the little things they do to make the world just a tad bit better for everyone around them. From our industry in particular, I consider Tourism Fiji's APAC Regional Director, Ms. Kathy Koyamaibole, to be that one person I take tremendous inspiration from. She is a perfect example of a mentor who leads by example and gets the best out of me. Aside from the industry, the most impactful women in my life are the working mothers I've met. Mothers who have carved out a career for themselves while being perfectly imperfect with their partners and children There are so many such inspirational women around me, and I love watching and learning from each of them.

**I BELIEVE** the biggest thing we women tend to do is, be kind towards each other. I realise now, looking back, that most of my conversational interactions with my colleagues & industry peers had an underlying layer of understanding – understanding what they’re going through, understanding how we manage our responsibilities. I’d like to believe that I’ve also helped in the same way. Small things like voicing the need for flexi-hours all for working women in my workplace did surely help. I have also challenged myself to be the best version of a working mom, trying to break the stereotype advocating maternity to be a speed bump to a woman’s career progression.

**WOMEN TODAY** are stepping into the industry in good numbers and their contribution to the sector has increased remarkably in the recent years. Although the tourism sector is considered as an attractive industry that sees women workforce across levels, their involvement had been understated in management and leadership roles. However, this scenario is changing now as women in the travel industry are now taking up major roles. Women are increasingly occupying managerial and leadership positions along with taking firm strides towards successful careers and making their mark prominent with their instincts and talents.

**ONE CHANGE:** My work environment is comprised of 70% women, and I am blessed to have an environment where there’s gender parity. I would love to enable empowering all women in my workplace by finding ways to amalgamate personal passions & strengths with their role & career. I believe initiatives like this will provide opportunities to make a difference while enjoying what we do.



**PRACHI CHATURVEDI | Corporate Director – Marketing, Pride Hotels Group**



**MY INSPIRATION:** Maharani Gayatri Devi – she is an epitome of grace, beauty, intelligence and a path breaker. Also, humble popular politician and a visionary. She was not a “people’s princess and a queen of poise” for no reason. Her sense of fashion is a university and at the same time, one cannot negate the fact that she fought against odds to ensure new education facilities are offered in women’s education system. The awesome mix of flamboyance, style, grace and defiance is extremely inspiring.

**I BELIEVE:** We, as a team have taken a few steps by advocating for gender diversity. We also encouraged other women to participate in leadership roles and mentoring programs and created a safe work environment for all other employees.

**WOMEN TODAY:** Yes, women, today are being given their due respect and importance in the workplace. Women are increasingly being hired as executives and managers in various departments, and are playing a vital role in the success of the industry as a whole.

**NISHA SHRIVASTAVA | Founder, Sunrise Representations**

*"The work from home option has been given to women at my workplace which gives them an advantage of balancing their home and work life. The condition remains to complete the tasks on time with equal enthusiasm to achieve company's goals.."*

**MY INSPIRATION:** My senior co-workers in the industry have always been my inspiration. They have been actively participating in various industry events, on the go and in the forefront. They have done some commendable work to maintain their self-identity, staying worthy and relevant.

**I BELIEVE:** The work from home option has been given to women at my workplace which gives them an advantage of balancing their home and work life. The condition remains to complete the tasks on time with equal enthusiasm to achieve company's goals.

**WOMEN TODAY:** Many representation companies, travel agencies, wedding planners are owned / headed by women only. They are given equal respect in their work environment.

**ONE CHANGE:** Encourage women to come forward, be given equal salaries and if possible be given cab facilities.



**RASHMI PRADHAN | Engagement Manager, T&A Consulting**

*"It's time that we change the mindset and give due credit to Women. Acceptance is the key. Our so-called patriarchal society fails to accept that men and women are equal and, many a times women outperform men."*



**MY INSPIRATION:** With over one and a half decade of experience in the travel and tourism industry I feel every person I have met during this journey has inspired me. I have learnt something from every person I have come across and interacted with. At the end it's all about learning and unlearning things. I strongly believe that every person who comes in your life has something to teach you, it depends upon you how you perceive the person and learn from him or her. My inspiration, my role model, my ideal is my Father. What inspires me the most in him is his helpful nature. Whoever comes to him, he will help him or her selflessly. It doesn't matter to him whether the person seeking help is a friend or family. If a person has sought help from my father, rest assured he will do his best to help him/her. In fact, he does take initiative to help people and I have seen him going out of his way to help people. I have never seen a single soul leaving his door emptyhanded or sad. I strive to do the same in my personal and professional life. I always try to deliver more than I have promised.

**I BELIEVE:** I'm proud to be associated with T&A Consulting where the workplace is women friendly. There is no compromise on women safety and security. We have a POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) policy in place and an internal committee to address the complaint. Given that incidence of cervical and breast cancer is increasing, I would like to organize a health check-up for women employees every year so that problems can be detected early.

**WOMEN TODAY:** At T&A Consulting, 60% of the work force is woman and majority of the leadership positions are governed by women. The work culture has been such that efforts and hard work of women employees are acknowledged and rewarded. In the industry (travel and tourism) there are women who are decision-makers, women leading and spearheading the entire show. But there is no denying that there are organisations where women are not given equal respect although equal amount of work is being allocated to them as their male counterpart. Many a times male counterpart or male bosses conveniently ignore and do not acknowledge the efforts put in by female employees. Women had to put in double hard work and efforts to prove their worth as they juggle between office and home and it's disheartening to see that their efforts are not recognised. It's time that we change the mindset and give due credit to them. Acceptance is the key. Our so-called patriarchal society fails to accept that men and women are equal and, many a times women outperform men.

**ONE CHANGE:** If given an opportunity I would like to introduce a crèche facility in the office. Women employees who don't have any suitable arrangements for kids at home can get them to office and can work at ease. This will also help to increase productivity as they don't have to worry about the kids at home and rush back home to take care of them.



**SHUBHANGI CHITRE | Director, BTFL Travel**

*"It is time society understands that a career in tourism and hospitality is respectful and though the career may demand late working hours, it continues to remain important. This is the basic requirement and nature of the job."*



**MY INSPIRATION:** Well in life you come across many women who inspire you for different reasons and in different situations. Some for their leadership, some for their sense of planning and others for reflection a quality work life balance. However, no matter how cliched it may sound, my inspiration continues to be my mother. She is the one who taught me the importance of finance independence, which I firmly feel every girl should have knowledge off. Financial knowledge and financial independence is the key.

**I BELIEVE:** As a woman who heads a company, I ensure my team gets the respect they deserve and I am also sensitive to their needs when it is justified.

**WOMEN TODAY** are certainly getting there but we can do so much better. It is time society understands that a career in tourism and hospitality is respectful and though the career may demand late working hours it is the job requirement also the basic requirement and nature of the job. Organisations today have definitely evolved and are giving women the place they deserve. But this is just the beginning.

**ONE CHANGE** which is needed today is – equal pay for equal work.

*"Even during our busiest times of the year, we encourage the women who work with us to take time off to pursue their education and further their careers. Maintaining a secure environment is a top priority."*

**MY INSPIRATION:** "In order to be irreplaceable, one must always be different." -Coco Chanel... My mother has always been and will always be the most impressive and admirable women in my life. When we were young, she was the first in our family to venture out on her own to further her studies and specialise in interior design, and she immediately began working independently on projects in order to establish her own sense of worth. She spent time with us and took care of the house without letting anything slide, not even her job. This level of multitasking is great, but we only appreciate the efforts she made to prepare us for the future when it is too late. The traditional approach of getting daughters married off and expecting them to stay at home as housewives, which is also a lot of hard work that goes unrecognised, needs to be replaced by parents like her who encourage their daughters to pursue careers and succeed, knowing they have their parents' unconditional support. Mom paved the way for me, and now more than ever, women need the encouragement of their mothers, grandmothers, and other female relatives in order to continue gaining independence and strength. Education is more than a label; it's a means to unlocking your full potential and heading for the stars.



**I BELIEVE:** Some of the measures we've made to make our company more female-friendly and accommodating: Women who work for our company and care for children or elderly parents can choose their own schedules. On days when they need to tend to their homes, they can work remotely. They're involved in every aspect of running the resort, from management to frontline service. Even during our busiest times of the year, we encourage the women who work with us to take time off to pursue their education and further their careers. Maintaining a secure environment is a top priority.

**WOMEN TODAY** make up for the majority of the tourism industry's workforce, yet they are disproportionately represented in low-paying, low-status occupations despite the industry's prominence as one of the world's greatest employers. Salary equity and gender parity are still not top priorities in this sector. By elevating the hospitality sector to the status of an industry and providing women in the sector with resources like internships and funding for professional development, we can better encourage female entrepreneurs to enter the sector. Women in the north-east and central regions of India provide for their family by opening small MSMEs, souvenir, handicraft, and food businesses to cater to tourists. There needs to be recognition of their work.

**ONE CHANGE:** A company is truly gender-sensitive when it employs a significant number of women, promotes an environment at work that is welcoming to women, and helps women advance their careers without emulating a man's way of working. I firmly believe that creating a positive work environment motivates and engages employees leading to higher job satisfaction and employee retention. Considering this and using the COVID downtime, we as an organization decided to give all genders equal opportunities to get promotions, raises and help everyone in developing their leadership skills along with providing them the resources and support system they need to achieve success. This will not only enable women employees to perform better but be more inclined to share ideas for organisations and self-growth.



*"I think hospitality is incomplete without the touch of the woman. Most of the hospitality companies realise this and are thus keeping a benchmark of equal 50-50 strength of male vs female."*

**MY INSPIRATION:** I have a lot of people who inspired me at different times. There are a lot of ladies in the hospitality sector who inspire me every day. But somewhat the person who still keeps inspiring me is Sudha Murthy. Though she is not from the hospitality sector, she always inspires me on how to manage the professional life, family life, personal life, social life & keep your creativity alive. She came from a very modest background, worked and achieved the best the life can offer. I think she is the best mother who taught her kids the true values of life, stood with her husband through thick & thin to create the Infosys empire what it is today with a very humble beginning with ten thousand rupees. She is a great social worker, philanthropist, participated in rural development efforts, supported the movement to provide government schools with computer and library facilities, and established Murthy Classical Library of India at Harvard University. She started writing after the age of 50, and has written many inspiring books, such as The Mother I Never Knew, Three thousand stitches, How "I taught my GrandMother to read ". I think I am deeply inspired by her.



**I BELIEVE:** Numen Hospitality is truly a women centric company. Not to be biased, I was clear with my thought that a woman understands the hospitality sector best. I think they are more sincere towards their work, family, kids, time management and also towards the clients. Our new office in Bangalore is led by Manisha Misra, another eminent hospitality expert with over 20 years of experience. We are a female dominated organization that loves working together as a team. We understand that everything cannot be fixed instantly and thus should be done as per priority but never leave unattended – that’s our philosophy.

**WOMEN TODAY:** I think hospitality is incomplete without the touch of the woman. Most of the hospitality companies realise this and are thus keeping a benchmark of equal 50-50 strength of male vs female. Lot of Talent Managers have been given this as a part of their KRAs. I think this is a great step to woman empowerment, recognition and respect.

**ONE CHANGE:** As mentioned, we are a very flexible company, highly agile and adaptable. As everything has a scope of improvement and upgradation, I am already working to create a fitness centre in my office in order to make fitness a habit. I personally believe that health is more precious than wealth.

**TARUNA SONI | Marketing Head, InterGlobe Technology Quotient**

*"We as a society have learnt to accept that respecting women at work is essential for a thriving workplace. Their opinion contributes to the inclusive and nurtured environment which is vital for the better functioning of an organisation or industry."*



**MY INSPIRATION:** Great capabilities and good decision-making carves the best of leadership and the leader I look at is Mrs. Nirmala Sitharaman who is the epitome of knowledge and passion. She is a visionary and leading the nation towards new heights despite all challenges on her way. Dealing with controlled and focused mindset is an ability of a mindful and empowered leader. My inspiration from her is making decisions with conviction, and jab to it, as doubt is a killer in certainty.

**I BELIEVE:** We at ITQ, believe in the power of equality that suppresses the limit of acceptability for any gender differences. In order to disregard the barrier of gender discrimination, we provide equal opportunity to all employees irrespective of their gender, caste or persona. Besides, we have achieved 30% of women workforce and determined to strengthen it further by taking specific interventions of introducing special women hiring drives as well as learning and development programs for upskilling the existing workforce. Furthermore, as an organization we understand the responsibilities and health issues of a woman post pregnancy, thus, have extended special work from home options for new mothers to help them take care of their health and newly borns.

**WOMEN TODAY:** We as a society have learnt to accept that respecting women at work is essential for a thriving workplace. Their opinion contributes to the inclusive and nurtured environment which is vital for the better functioning of an organisation or industry. Considering safety concerns and eliminating any sorts of discomfort, we have set up a dedicated compliance committee for ASH (Anti-Sexual Harassment) to mitigate any behavioural or interpersonal trepidations, ensuring the workplace is environment friendly irrespective of the gender. In the travel and tourism industry, we have a great example of Mrs. Jyoti Mayal’s election as the TAAI President for the current term, voted by the industry male/female colleagues.

**ONE CHANGE:** The majority of tourism workforce worldwide is female, which is 54% of the total workforce and this norm is no exception at ITQ. We have been able to maintain a healthy diversity ratio for us at 30%, having women personnel across all levels and most of them are spear-heading a significant function in ITQ. In addition, we build awareness around gender equality as well as correct behaviour and work practice through our internal trainings for the employees.

**DEEPIKA KHANNA | Founder and CEO, Anchor Destiantion**

*"Women in today's world are playing multiple roles, managing work, travel, business, family and kids. We do not need tag of a Super Women. What is needed is infrastructure to make it more conducive."*

**MY INSPIRATION** is my mother Suman Mehra, who at an age of 55 years, where most people retire, has stepped out from being a homemaker into the shoes of a businesswomen. With a strong presence of mind, she has achieved most inspiring and upcoming lady entrepreneur award in a very short span of time.

**I BELIEVE:** We are a small team mainly of all women in our company and the environment is friendly and we have built strong values over the years making each women team feel integrated as a family in the company.

**WOMEN TODAY:** I truly think and believe that our travel industry has given women its due respect and importance. It's quite evident from the large portfolios be it airlines, hospitality, tourism body or running a tour operator or DMC women are running successfully and are leading the workforce behind them.

**ONE CHANGE:** Women in today's world are playing multiple roles, managing work, travel, business, family and kids. We do not need tag of a Super Women. What is needed is infrastructure to make it more conducive for odd hours job like shifts in airlines or hospitality, generosity in Maternity leaves pays which is lacking in travel industry, more flexibility in maintain work life balance.



**SHALINI KJ | Travel Curator**

*"As women, we are blessed to be able to multi-task and most of us manage that really well! Every woman is inspiring in their own wonderful way. Humility, integrity and compassion towards others inspire me the most."*

**MY INSPIRATION:** It would be unfair to name one woman, there are so many fabulous women donning multiple hats as wives, mothers, daughters, managing work, and being successful entrepreneurs juggling their duties beautifully. As women, we are blessed to be able to multi-task and most of us manage that really well! Every woman is inspiring in their own wonderful way. Humility, integrity and compassion towards others inspire me the most.

**I BELIEVE** in offering a highly conducive environment at our workplace and therefore, hybrid work module, maternity leave, menstrual leave policy and flexibility at the workplace are some of the options we provide for our team members. Giving them the comfort to manage their multiple roles in life and succeed in their careers simultaneously.

**WOMEN TODAY:** Thought processes are changing, we are all living in a progressive world, definitely I see women taking lead in all that they aspire to do and achieve immense success. Travel and hospitality used to be a male dominated arena long ago, but things have changed and now we have supremely successful leaders at the top who are women. We have some amazing entrepreneurs who are super successful with their companies.

**ONE CHANGE:** Having an equal number of men and women to work as a team and bond is something we aspire for.



**SHEETAL MUNSHAW | Director – India, Atout France**

**I BELIEVE:** In our team of 7, we are 6 women making for a formidable women driven workforce.

*"The travel and tourism industry has seen a predominant increase in the number of women at the workplace and also at the helm of things. I think that in our sector women are most definitely given respect, importance and opportunity."*

We are all largely attuned and in sync with each other from the emotional perspective. As women, we all tend to address our feelings and emotions and I am always available for my team whenever anyone has felt the need for a chat. I am compassionate to their situations – personal or professional – and I do adapt and adjust to my maximum possible should that be required.

**WOMEN TODAY:** The travel and tourism industry has seen a predominant increase in the number of women at the workplace and also at the helm of things. This phenomenon can be observed across all verticals including aviation, tourism boards, the hospitality industry and allied industries.



This phenomenon clearly breaks the stereotypical perception of gender-based roles and indicates that talent and efficiency is the mainstay in the selection process. Women are natural leaders with their keen eye for detail, their ability to personalize and their ability to empower their subordinates with responsibilities. I think that in our sector women are most definitely given respect, importance and opportunity based on their skill sets and ambition.

**ONE CHANGE:** At Atout France women have place of pride and we have a very strong ratio of women in the organisation. Stating with our CEO, our heads of Marketing, Human Resources, Corporate Communications are all women. We have women in leading roles across the globe. It is indeed a very conducive environment for women and am delighted to be part of an organisation that is very women friendly across the board.

**ALPA JANI | CEO & Founder, Ace Connect**

*"In recent years, the service-oriented industries have seen a significant increase in women's leadership roles in all aspects of travel. From aviation to hospitality, women are now taking charge and making a significant impact."*



**MY INSPIRATION:** In my career, I have been fortunate to work with many women bosses – Niloofer Patel at South African Airways, Suzanne Pereira at Thomas Cook and Hanneli Slabber at South African Tourism. One woman who stands out to me as a constant source of inspiration is Hanneli Slabber. I had the privilege of working with her for over 7 years, and I was always struck by her passion and commitment towards her job. She is someone who puts her heart and soul into everything she takes up, and her dedication to her work is truly inspiring. Another woman who has been a mentor to me since the beginning of my career is Suzanne Pereira. She has taught me the art of negotiating and how to interact with respect across all levels. Her encouragement and guidance have inspired me to aim high and strive for success. From Niloofer, I have learnt the art of balancing, which every woman strives to achieve. On the personal front, my greatest inspiration comes from my mother, who has always been a gentle but incredibly strong woman. She has shown me that with unwavering resolve and determination, anything is possible. As a female entrepreneur, I am passionate about creating a world where more women can find the kind of inspiration and support that I have found in these amazing women.

**I BELIEVE** in creating a workplace that is inclusive, supportive, and empowering for women. At Ace Connect, I have taken several steps to achieve this goal, including striving to create an all-women's team. I think that women are expected to excel in all aspects of their lives, including as mothers and wives, and I want to be the kind of entrepreneur who encourages them to find a balance between work and home. This is especially important in today's world, where the pandemic has made it easier to work from home and prioritize our personal lives. I do my best to live up to this quote, 'Real queens fix each other's crowns' especially in the competitive world that we live in. I strongly believe that women are more powerful when they work together and build each other up.

**WOMEN TODAY:** Travel, tourism and hospitality sectors are service-oriented industries that are heavily reliant on the skills that women bring to the table. From customer service to managing logistics, women have always played a crucial role in this industry. I think the contribution has always been recognized and valued, and it's heartening to see that. In recent years, the service-oriented industries have seen a significant increase in women's leadership roles in all aspects of travel. From aviation to hospitality, women are now taking charge and making a significant impact. This trend is not just limited to individual companies but is also visible in industry associations and the entire fraternity.

**ONE CHANGE:** As a working woman I strongly feel that menstrual leave is a crucial step towards creating a more women-friendly workplace. As I mentioned earlier, women are expected to juggle multiple roles in their personal and professional lives, and the added stress of menstruation can often take a toll on their physical and mental health. I feel, by introducing menstrual leave, companies can show their female employees that their well-being is valued. It's not just about providing a day off, but also about creating a culture of openness and inclusivity where women feel comfortable discussing their health concerns with their colleagues and managers. Some private companies in countries like India, France, and Australia already offer period leave, and I believe more companies should come forward and do it.

But I think industries and countries should go beyond recognising menstrual leave. I think it will make a huge difference if it's nationally recognised across workplace policies for women. Just recently, on 16 February, Spain became the first country in the EU to pass a law to introduce paid menstrual leave. Other countries in Asia like Japan, Indonesia, South Korea and Vietnam are already doing so. And, it goes without saying that Ace Connect is already in favour of giving menstrual leaves.

**ANJUM LOKHANDWALA | Director, Ark Reps**

*"Women today have touched new heights of success in every field with their capabilities. They are challenging the stereotypes and becoming financially independent. Today women are not only travellers but owners of tourism businesses."*

**MY INSPIRATION** is my mother. She inspires me in more ways than one. She taught me how important financial independence was for a woman. She knew I was flawed, "That's the fun of life" she said. You make mistakes, learn from them, you fall get up but never give up.

**I BELIEVE:** Family is given utmost priority in our office and our woman colleagues have the option of working from home along with fulfilling their family duties.

**WOMEN TODAY** have touched new heights of success in every field with their capabilities. They are challenging the stereotypes and becoming financially independent. Today women are not only travellers but owners of tourism businesses.



**EKTA WATTS | Director, Equator Tours**

*"The contribution of women in the tourism industry has increased significantly, owing to the increased recognition and appreciation given to their work. Women in power are empowering other women and helping them to take up different jobs to support themselves."*

**MY INSPIRATION:** In every sector of the country there are great women leaders who inspire me every day. Not only women leaders but every woman working at their homes or any office at different levels. The ability of a woman to balance their professional and personal lives is always inspiring the future generations. In the travel and tourism industry, efforts of women to revive the industry after a pandemic and make the trade a sustainable one is praiseworthy. Every woman is trying to pull the strings of trade and helping other women to gain the same respect and importance. It is the time where we all should come together and encourage women participation so that every sector, every person and every organisation recognises the efforts and handwork of a woman.



Women's participation in the workforce has been significantly increasing throughout recent years. Be it the company culture, policy, or facility, creating a women-friendly work environment goes beyond jargon and requires everyone's best intentions.

**I BELIEVE:** It is important to get everyone in your office to understand the importance of seeing women as equal to men when it comes to participation in work. Women are not just 'nice-to-have' in the office as they can give a 'woman's touch' to lessen conflict or make work more satisfying. Above all, women deserve equal treatment and opportunity. In order to make a women friendly environment, it is also important to give a secured and safe environment, so make sure that you have surveillance cameras and security staff in and team building activities around the workplace. It is necessary to appreciate your female staff in the office so that a sense of equality is spread. To create a more women friendly environment, I have given my women staff a leverage to work from home once a week. As a woman entrepreneur, I have tried to make a pan India women network to further empower the rural woman through pilot projects and training.

**WOMEN TODAY:** The contribution of women in the tourism industry has increased significantly, owing to the increased recognition and appreciation given to their work. Women in power are empowering other women and helping them to take up different jobs to support themselves. The tourism industry has the potential to incorporate women as it provides various entry points for women's employment and opportunities for creating self-employment in small and medium sized income generating activities. Looking at the tourism industry, majority of women are given due respect and importance, however there are still some women who require our support to uplift their status and gain the same respect. There is a need for all women to come together and stand up for the same motto to help and empower each other in every possible way.

**ONE CHANGE:** One needs to understand that to incorporate more and more women in the organisation and building women friendly workplaces requires us to bring a change in the work structure. Constructing hybrid workplaces is one such change that I would like to bring in my organisation. This will offer them an incredible chance to interact with other female professionals and entrepreneurs as well as offer a space to feel motivated, comfortable and productive. Hybrid workplaces will provide women with an opportunity to manage and balance both work and home.

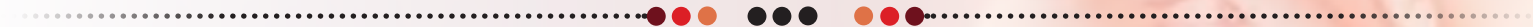
*"I am inspired by the many female travellers who go out into the world, explore new cultures and experiences, and share their stories. They are a reminder that anything is possible, and that the world is filled with endless possibilities."*

**MY INSPIRATION:** When I think of inspiring women in the travel, tourism, and hospitality industries, I think of all the female entrepreneurs I have come across who have taken their passion and used it to create successful businesses. These women have persevered through the challenges of starting a business and created something that provides employment and opportunity to many people, and that is truly inspiring. I also admire female leaders in the industry who have been able to break barriers and take on positions of power and influence. Their determination and success is something that inspires me and encourages me to continue striving for excellence in my own career. Finally, I am inspired by the many female travellers who go out into the world, explore new cultures and experiences, and share their stories. They are a reminder that anything is possible, and that the world is filled with endless possibilities.



**I BELIEVE:** As a woman entrepreneur, I have always felt the need and worked towards implementing more flexible policies around maternity leave, work-life balance, flexible working hours and work from home options for my all-women's team. This healthy work relationship has helped us retain talented and experienced women who add value to our organization.

**WOMEN TODAY** are being given their due respect and importance at the workplace, especially in the travel, tourism, and hospitality sector. However, there is always room for improvement, and more can be done to ensure that all genders are valued, treated equally and do believe that by continuing to push for equality and representation, we can definitely make a positive change in the industry.



*"It is a moment of both celebration and pride to see how far we have come as an industry. A lot of tourism boards, hospitality brands, media and travel agencies have women spearheading their organisations."*

**MY INSPIRATION:** It is quite difficult to choose just one from my list of role models but if I had to pick my personal favourite, it has to be Indra Nooyi, the former CEO and Chairperson of PepsiCo. She has been an inspiration to me for various reasons and especially for her vigour to be an industry leader in a male dominated industry. I have been closely following her work and have listened to most of her interviews, read her articles and authored pieces, which are a true reflection of the visionary that Ms. Nooyi is. She has undoubtedly created an impressionable legacy of learnings and experiences for those that dare to dream and challenge to lead.

**I BELIEVE:** As a woman, no matter how progressive your family is, there are unprecedented responsibilities that one has to shoulder as they balance their career and personal pursuits. I understand that we fulfil multiple roles besides a work designation and it is only fair that we support each other in both our professional and personal endeavours. Intrepid Marketing and Communications empowers its workforce by providing flexibility of time and location wherein they can operate remotely as per their personal requirements. We maintain and promote an inclusive culture across all designations which doesn't demand completion of minimum work hours or physically reporting to office daily. The liberty from a stringent corporate infrastructure has in turn proven to increase efficiency amongst female employees.

**WOMEN TODAY:** It is a moment of both celebration and pride to see how far we have come as an industry. A lot of tourism boards, hospitality brands, media and travel agencies have women spearheading their organisations and creating history with their disruptive work. Travel and tourism sector has seen a phenomenal hike in terms of women recruits across designations and I believe this is only the beginning.

**ONE CHANGE:** I think in India a lot of women discontinue their career after marriage or after bearing a child and sometimes, not willingly. As an industry, we can strive to create a more accommodating environment for women to take career breaks and encourage them to rejoin after few years as per their convenience. They can be easily retained and provided vocational trainings or programs to resume their work seamlessly without having to completely quit careers. This is not just a great step to empower women in the industry but also a sustainable recruitment technique for companies.

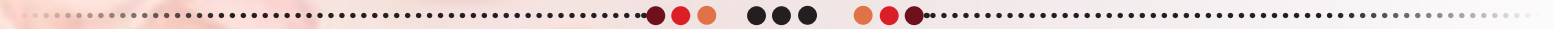
**BHAVI KARVAT | Co-founder & Head – People, Performance & Culture, Asego**

*"There is always scope for further improvement in terms of introducing policies that generate more opportunities for them. The consistent progress that women have been making in the travel and tourism sector is a clear reflection of the respect they command in the industry."*

**MY INSPIRATION:** The Indian Travel Trade and Hospitality sector has always admired and cherished numerous women leaders who have spearheaded their respective businesses with grit, determination, and passion for what they do. I particularly look up to Ms. Veena Patil for her fearless, dynamic and passionate attitude. She has been relentlessly working towards transforming the way people perceive travel for over three decades, which is truly inspiring. Outside the travel sector, our honourable President Draupadi Murmu's life journey and dedication towards strengthening the democratic values of our country has been nothing short of inspirational. **I BELIEVE:** We as an organisation inherently believe and practice workplace equality. I personally get involved in defining and deploying policies and practices related to people management focusing on approachability and the duty of care, especially for our women employees. We follow a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to harassment of any kind in our workplace, and my husband and I are very passionate about this. As a team, we actively promote a positive and comfortable work atmosphere for all our employees. I consider it as my responsibility to ensure that there are no disparities in providing equal benefits to all – be it maternity / paternity related benefits, workplace ethics or remuneration.

**WOMEN TODAY:** As is the case across industries, recent years have seen a steady growth in women's contribution to the travel and hospitality sector. Unlike earlier times when women were largely underrepresented in management and leadership roles, today women in the industry are defying gender prejudices and assuming leadership roles with elegance. This explains why the travel and tourism sector has seen a steady rise in the number of women working at top levels in the past decade. However, there is always scope for further improvement in terms of introducing policies that generate more opportunities for them. The consistent progress that women have been making in the travel and tourism sector is a clear reflection of the respect they command in the industry.

**ONE CHANGE:** As an organisation, we have always been conscious of maintaining a gender-inclusive work environment. Whether it is our pay structure or work policies, we are constantly striving to ensure that every employee's hard work and sincerity is equally rewarded, regardless of their gender. But, at the same time we are always on the look out to innovate by finding new ways to empower and support our women workforce.



**PARINITA SAMANTA | Director - Marketing & Communication  
Pullman and Novotel New Delhi Aerocity**

*"I think equality comes when we focus on creating the same opportunities for everyone, regardless of their gender, race or caste. So rather than making female friendly work structures, I think we should holistically formulate a working system which is flexible."*

**MY INSPIRATION:** My inspiration is no one other than my mother. As a young growing girl, I have learned so much from her and most of my managerial skills being a hospitality professional has come from her. The way my mother single-handedly completed multiple tasks during my childhood was a realisation point for me that you can be everything, all at once. For this very reason embedded in me since an early age, I think each lady has a unique voice and women in the hospitality industry are fiercely dedicated.

**I BELIEVE:** I have always endorsed women power and given any chance I take all efforts in training the younger generation of ladies in becoming better future leaders. Pullman New Delhi with its female staff of 100 women serves as a retreat workplace for the employees. We have recently done a campaign called "Own The Show - Everything all at Once" which aims to celebrate the incredible strength and resilience of each woman. By spreading the message of - Why be one, when you can be many things, the campaign highlights women as multitasking leaders in the society.

**WOMEN TODAY:** Hospitality industry is a forerunner in the growth for the service sector of the country and is a bedrock of all tour and travel activities. It generates huge employment opportunities and especially women are seen at some of the key roles in this business. Women in the hospitality industry are appreciated for their managerial skills and instincts to understand the wants and needs of different guests. So, I would



definitely say that the hospitality business welcomes women staff with open arms and gives them the opportunity to reach heights.

**ONE CHANGE:** I think equality comes when we focus on creating the same opportunities for everyone, regardless of their gender, race or caste. So rather than making female friendly work structures, I think we should holistically formulate a working system which is flexible and caters to the needs of each employee. The idea behind this is simply to create a society where women are not questioned on their abilities in comparison to men.



**AKANSHA VIJ | Marketing & PR Manager, WelcomHeritage Hotels**

*"The hospitality industry is playing an important part in attracting women into the workforce by providing equal opportunities in every department and within managerial positions which were earlier mostly dominated by men."*



**I BELIEVE** Women have already proven their equality with men at workplaces, breaking barriers and stereotypes and making significant and noteworthy progress. They have established that gender equality in workplaces depends upon opportunities that are influenced by several factors such as education, society and culture, as opposed to gender-capabilities. Recognising this, companies now-a-days are adopting a more women-friendly approach - many steps have been initiated to ensure that women in our society are encouraged to be a part of the expanding workforce. We at WelcomHeritage believe that these simple and yet crucial steps could be the pillars for a deep and meaningful change:

- We have focused on leadership gender balance, enabling us to reduce gender gap at management level, with 60% Women HODs in the organisation.
- We believe in paying for performance with clear reward policies and are committed to equal pay for equal work.
- We recruit women on all departmental levels for the equal contribution throughout the organisation.
- Strict policies against harassment have been established with a dedicated POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) committee.
- We have flexible working hours to make work-life balance a priority that benefits both men and women.

**ONE CHANGE:** Today, more and more companies, including our organization, are ensuring that initiatives and measures are in place to promote a women-friendly and gender-balanced work environment. With these effective measures being adopted by the hospitality industry as well, women have begun demonstrating their leadership abilities in the industry, with many now serving in executive and senior management roles. Besides playing a key role in advancing workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion, women have been instrumental in driving positive change in many organizations - their perspectives and approach can be quite different from their male counterparts as they are shaped by their experiences of society and culture, this has proven to be quite valuable to companies.



**RUBINA SHARMA | Director of Sales & Marketing, Eros Hotel New Delhi Nehru Place**

*"Internally we have ensured that the policies that are made need to be "dynamic" in the sense that they can be "adjusted based on the feedback that is frequently collected", and adaptable to the "emerging needs" of the workplace."*



**MY INSPIRATION:** I am a huge fan of Shirin Batliwala, VP Food and Beverage at Taj Hotels. She entered the hotel industry in 1971 when women were only hired in housekeeping. She climbed the corporate ladder with her sheer hard work and determination. Her trade secret - there is no substitute for dedication and hard work. As she says "Any job done well can be done better" Ultimately, it is aiming for perfection that makes all the difference. This is what inspires me the most in her.

**I BELIEVE:** Internally we have ensured that the policies that are made need to be "dynamic" in the sense that they can be "adjusted based on the feedback that is frequently collected", and adaptable to the "emerging needs" of the workplace.

**WOMEN TODAY:** I personally feel that women have touched the new heights of success in every sector by their capabilities even Govt. of India has made many efforts of women employment for improve their financial and social status by safe working in every sector as government and private. India is expected to be the second fastest growing nation in the world, with tourism industry being one of the major employers of women, offering various job opportunities. Since the travel and tourism industry is the fastest growing industry in India for foreign exchange earnings and generating

millions of jobs every year. In this context this industry is one of the major employers of women, offers various job opportunities for independent income generating activities.

**The certain Skills which are responsible for the growth of women in tourism industry are:**

- Social, sensitive and beautiful personality.
- Dressing sense and attractiveness.
- Adjustable and co-operative in nature
- Responsive and hardworking.
- Customer handling and caring.
- Strong communication skills etc.

**ONE CHANGE:** Having an imbalanced gender ratio is an issue that exists in many hotels, some of which are heavily and unfairly misrepresented due to the predetermined and sexist social norms of the past. Combatting this major issue is one of the ways to ensure that your workplace is genuinely gender inclusive.

I feel that a great way to deal with this is problem is by focusing on the skillsets that are required to complete jobs, rather than industry experience. There is a real opportunity to identify the transferable skills required for the roles and recruit for those rather than the specific experiences required.

**VANI WADHWA | Marcom Manager, Hilton Garden Inn Saket, New Delhi**

*"Being the Presiding Officer of the ICC committee in the hotel, I also counsel women of my hotel often. I educate and enlighten our team members on unconscious bias and prejudices in enabling of equality in workplaces."*

**MY INSPIRATION:** My father, Mr. Satish Kr. Beri, has been an inspiration for me since my childhood days. Growing up, I could always feel the warmth of a thorough professional of the hospitality industry. My father was a hotelier and I've seen him working passionately every single day and that's when I decided I wanted to pursue a career in this industry. As dramatic as it sounds but hospitality is in my blood. Being a General Manager in ITDC hotels in 1980's was not an easy task. He used to share with me the kind of challenges that he would face almost every day to expand the industry, preach the values of "Atithi Devo Bhavo" to the foreign guests back then. There were men ruling the industry and I was told to never back down because I was a girl. His commitment towards his work, hunger for learning, warmth and respect for every individual guest, finesse in dressing & while communicating with people, being a strong leader to his team, inspired me in true sense and I, kind of, inherited & adopted those traits & habits over a period of time. These traits have shaped up my personality and made me a people's person in true sense of the word. Here is where Hilton's Vision also resonates with me of spreading the light and warmth of hospitality.



**I BELIEVE:** At Hilton, we not only focus on gender parity but also create platforms and inductive environments to ensure our female team members Thrive@Hilton. Very recently, Hilton India launched its flexibility program "It's Ok" encouraging our team members to balance their personal lives as well. At Hilton, we not only care for the professional life of our team members but also care for their family commitments, personal time, personal ambitions and hobbies.

I have always tried to create a stable and safe (physically, financially and emotionally) working environment for my fellow employees. I am consciously working on enhancing the role of women in leadership and business strategy in the organisation with the help of my leadership team. I have always been transparent and vocal about benefits of diversity in the workplace & how it leads to greater innovation & boosts employee engagement. I have always mentored my fellow employees and prepared them to meaningfully contribute to their respective roles. Being the Presiding Officer of the ICC committee in the hotel, I also counsel women of my hotel often. I also educate and enlighten our team members on unconscious bias and prejudices in enabling of equality in workplaces.

**WOMEN TODAY:** Women are getting their due respect and becoming an integral part of management because of multiple reasons. Their bright hearted nature, ability to do multi-tasking coupled with a knack of handling people of varied nature and temperaments have made them become the face of many brands in our travel and hospitality sector.

**ONE CHANGE:** Honestly saying and this the first time I can say there is nothing I would like to change in my work place as Hilton is one of the best brands to work with as I have myself experienced that it does give meaningful opportunities to its team members. The General Manager, Mr. Joyjit Chakravorty and Director of sales Mr. Vibhor along with other leaders, demonstrates highest level of sensitivity while communicating with fellow colleagues. As an institution, Hilton Garden Inn/New Delhi, Saket provides me a great work life balance and provides special development programs including but not limited to Women in Leadership program. It is indeed a woman friendly organisation as I have experienced myself.



*"I think we still have a long road ahead, but the change is visible and in the positive direction particularly in the travel, tourism and hospitality sector which are industries heavily dominated by men."*

**MY INSPIRATION:** There are many, but two women I would like to mention are Mae Jemison, the first African-American woman in space and Ronda Rousey an American Professional Wrestler. I am sharing two of their quotes that inspire me.

"Never limit yourself because of others' limited imagination, never limit others because of your own limited imagination." – Mae Jemison

"You have to fight because you can't count on anyone else fighting for you. And you have to fight for people who can't fight for themselves. To get anything of real value, you have to fight for it."

– Ronda Rousey

**I BELIEVE:** Our workplace has a good balance of women team members, and it is an environment that is respectful, collaborative and one that encourages growth and progress both personally and professionally.

**WOMEN TODAY:** I think we still have a long road ahead, but the change is visible and in the positive direction particularly in the travel, tourism and hospitality sector which are industries heavily dominated by men

DRISHTI HATIMURIA | PR Manager, ITC Grand Central, Mumbai

*"Travel tourism and hospitality industry is diverse and is continuously evolving and there will be many more developments, and efficient approaches introduced such that women power only shines more with time."*



**MY INSPIRATION:** Honestly, there is not just one woman who has inspired me bright in my life, but there are many women and they all belong from various industries or are homemakers too. With degrees such as B. Tech in Civil engineering, from R.V college of engineering in Bengaluru plus M.B.A in Communication Management (Advertising) from Symbiosis International university; I come from a non-hotelier background.

One thing, which inspired me most from women are their amazing multi-tasking capabilities. I believe this is mainly because women are amazing planners and they understand the need of prioritising tasks.

Whilst I am currently holding the office as the Public Relations Manager, in ITC Grand Central, Mumbai; I often draw great motivation from our President of India Smt. Draupadi Murmu.

**I BELIEVE:** In my current workspace we enjoy equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities by both genders. I feel proud to share that I belong to a beautiful #Responsibleluxury brand, wherein every measure is in place for the ladies who work here.

But one message I would definitely like to share here for all women who are reading this piece - Whatever we are and Whatever will be , it all begins in our mind. And nothing is impossible as long as we take care of ourselves. So, investing in one's passion, health and holistic growth and development is essential on our own too.

I hold great passion for fitness, so every day dedicating 30 mins to my fitness rituals, makes me feel good and I feel not dependent on a work space to make me feel happy. Believe in staying independent.

**WOMEN TODAY:** Being a part of the responsible luxury brand and working for ITC Grand Central, Mumbai I can totally resonate with the way ever lady colleague is treated with immense respect, grace and equal importance. Travel tourism and hospitality industry is diverse and is continuously evolving and there will be many more developments, and efficient approaches introduced such that women power only shines more with time.

**ONE CHANGE:** In my current workspace, based on work policy, work structure and environment it is a gender equal space. And, I personally have witnessed amazing leaders and colleagues who are women and are great mentors. There is no such change that I would like to recommend.

*"There would be few changes I would like to see, which in my opinion should be flexible work arrangements, equal pay and opportunities, avoid gender-based pay gaps and discrimination."*

**MY INSPIRATION:** My inspiration in tourism industry is Ms. Taruna Seth Navigator In-chief Encompass, is an inspiring leader who has made significant contributions to the Luxury tourism industry. Her commitment to promoting sustainable tourism practices and advocating for women's leadership has set a high standard for others to follow. Through her work as Navigator in-Chief of Encompass a\she has shown that individuals can make a positive impact on the travel, tourism, and hospitality sector. Taruna Seth's dedication to sustainability, equality, and humanitarian causes serves as an inspiration to others in the tourism industry. Her work demonstrates the potential for individuals to make a positive impact and create a better future for all.



**I BELIEVE:** As a woman I have taken few initiatives to make my workplace more women friendly. We celebrate Women's day as a special and make sure that women in my organisation feel safe in office environment.

**WOMEN TODAY** are being given equal opportunities, especially in the tourism sector, but we still have some catching up to do in other sectors.

**ONE CHANGE:** There would be few changes I would like to see, which in my opinion should be flexible work arrangements, equal pay and opportunities, avoid gender-based pay gaps and discrimination. Support should be extended to maintain work life balance and mentorship and networking opportunities should be offered.



*"I would like to include a scheme which takes care of women 's health in mind. If possible, I would have a Lady Physician and Counsellor on board to make way for greater participation of happy women employees in the workforce."*

**MY INSPIRATION:** There isn't a single woman who inspires me but qualities from many women around me motivate me. These include Seniors, co-workers, Industry luminaries and many globe-trotting women from other fields whom I have known.

**I BELIEVE:** Yes I have incorporated a creche for children of employees in the workplace. Maternity leave and allowance are also part of our women friendly policy.

**WOMEN TODAY:** There are definite changes in the travel and tourism industry especially with more of women traveling in groups and Solo as well. These trends are encouraging and specific packages are being designed keeping women travellers and their needs in mind.

**ONE CHANGE:** I would like to include a scheme which takes care of women 's health in mind. If possible, I would have a Lady Physician and Counsellor on board to make way for greater participation of happy women employees in the workforce.



**AARUSHI ARORA | Business Development Manager,**  
**Trulyy India Hotels, Resorts, Camps and Safaris**

*"Hospitality industry and travel and tourism industry both have become the largest employer of women in the current date. It is undeniable that women have excelled in the hospitality sector not only in India, but all over the world."*



**MY INSPIRATION:** I have had many people from different walks of life who have inspired me and motivated me. I have grown up in seeing my father working and thriving in the travel and tourism industry and he's the reason that I started gaining interest and my passion and love towards travel and tourism and I have been blessed to have the most supportive parents. My mom always taught me to be decent and as a result I went for my first internship when I was only 19 and since then I have worked every single day of my life completing 3 degrees while I was still working and have extremely loved the journey. There are a lot of case studies I have read but someone whose story has brought that drive of ENTREPRENEURSHIP in me is ESTÉE LAUDER.

Estée Lauder, the founder of the company that bears her name, was a visionary and a role model. She was a challenger who proved that anything was possible — if you dared to dream it and had the guts and gumption to go for it. Ahead of her time in every way, she created and ran one of the world's most prestigious and innovative companies while serving as a wife, mother, and a loyal friend to many. And she did it all with charm, humour, and exquisite style. She loved beauty with a passion and believed wholeheartedly in its power.

"I never dreamed about success. I worked for it." — Estée Lauder

**I BELIEVE:** Women employees tend to bring a substantial amount of emotional intelligence to the organisation at all levels, as a result if you will find that 70% of my sales and Marketing team consist of women employees. There are a lot of initiatives that Trulyy India has taken to make workplace more women friendly: -

**Flexible work timings:** Flexible work timings are especially a boon for women who must share a greater burden of domestic responsibilities. Such arrangements allow them an atmosphere of freedom and respect.

**Supporting motherhood:** We can't achieve gender parity at workplace if we keep discriminating against motherhood. In most cases, when a woman professional turns the family way, her career plateaus or she is forced to change to an alternate work profile. But in our organisations, we support our women employees with paid maternity leaves also give them an option to work from home. It is important to underline here that maternity leave is an unquestionable right of every woman professional.

**Conversation and Training after a Maternity Leave:** When new mothers are finally ready to come back after their maternity leaves, we make sure to provide them with sufficient time to have a conversation with the team. It would help them understand all that has been going around and be sensitive about it.

**More Women Leaders:** At Trulyy India we aim at having women leaders that impart a sense of diversity from a top-down approach.

**Anonymous Feedbacks:** Sometimes, women don't feel comfortable discussing a situation or talking about something that is troubling them. We build a platform where women can share their views, highlight any issues, and suggest any ideas anonymously.

**Zero Tolerance Policy:** Any comments, remarks, or jokes that make women uncomfortable have no place in our organization. We provide zero-tolerance policy and give an environment where women feel no hesitation reporting any misconduct or harassment.

**WOMEN TODAY:** Hospitality industry and travel and tourism industry both have become the largest employer of women in the current date. It is undeniable that women have excelled in Hospitality sector not only in India, but all over the world. Hospitality business in India has traditionally hired women in various positions. As it's a core service sector, women are considered as the biggest asset in this people-oriented industry. Looking at the status an overwhelming majority of workers in the industry are women, various subjective cases throw the light on the fact that industries are also more inclined to fill a gender gap. Hotel companies value their female manpower and provide competitive starting salaries, regular incentives, recognition, and many other lucrative benefits. Despite the avenues offered by the industry and the major advancements women have shown as a workforce, they were still facing challenges in their professional path. Some of the reasons which drift women away from the job in the hospitality industry are the long inflexible working hours, career breaks because of motherhood, personal issues, stereotyping, lack of relevant training, lack of encouragement towards leadership and management programmes, overstress experienced with dependents' needs especially among the single or widowed mothers, lack of confidence and self-esteem, lack of motivation from employers and negligible relaxation on maternity leaves, etc. It becomes more challenging owing to demands which discourage women from taking up jobs in the industry. However, understanding the rising concerns of women, consideration is to be given on maintaining flexible working environment, developing training, and mentoring programs, standardising the procedures, giving transparency in recruitment, performance appraisal & promotion criteria, applicability of policies in terms of equal gender pay, rewarding women by giving recognition and awards. Encountering the potential of female representatives as they are moving an extra mile in the service sector these recommendations can somehow remove the practical obstacles of female participation in the hospitality workplace.

**ONE CHANGE:** Being head of Business Development department for my company there's a whole era of change that we have brought in our organisation, and we pledge on making Trulyy India more and more diverse in terms of our employees, work policy, work structure to make it more women friendly. One thing that we are committed to do in our organisation is equal pay and no gender bias for leadership roles.



jüSTa Rajputana, Udaipur



jüSTa Sajjangarh, Udaipur



jüSTa Lake Nahargarh Palace, Chittorgarh



jüSTa Ssatva, Udaipur



jüSTa Brij Bhoomi, Nathdwara

## UDAIPUR

jüSTa Sajjangarh

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# 'Our vision is to become the world's most responsible developer': Red Sea Global

Embracing adventure, culture, luxury, and nature; The Red Sea and Amaala are two of the world's most ambitious regenerative tourism destinations being developed on Saudi Arabia's west coast by Red Sea Global. Loredana Pettinati, Senior Travel Trade Director, Red Sea Global shares more in an exclusive chat with BOTT.

Priyanka Saxena Ray

## Can you please share with us some details about the Red Sea and Amaala.

The Red Sea consists of 28,000 sq. km of coastline, desert and mountainous landscape including an archipelago of 90 naturally formed islands, which frame the world's fourth largest barrier reef, dormant volcanoes and dunes, thereby offering multiple unique guest experiences. The destination is on track to welcome guests this year. Leading hotel brands due to open their doors in 2023 include Six Senses Southern Dunes, The Red Sea, St. Regis Red Sea Resort and Nujuma, A Ritz-Carlton Reserve.

Amaala is an ultra-luxury destination which will also offer immersive and world-leading wellness experiences due to open in 2024. Set in the Prince Mohammad bin Salman Natural Reserve along Saudi Arabia's north-western coast, Amaala will be the first global integrated family wellness destination to curate transformative personal journeys inspired by arts, wellness, and the purity of the Red Sea. Amaala will initially feature eight resorts, 200 residential units, a marina and yacht club within 4,155 sq. km. We are delighted to announce our partnership with Clinique La Prairie, a leading longevity clinic and wellness brand. The resort will have 13 branded residences and 66-ultra-luxury suites where guests can unwind, meditate and rejuvenate.

## How important is the India market for you? How is the response so far?

India is one of the key source markets for Red Sea Global's destinations. We recognise that luxury travel is essential for the growing demographic of affluent Indians and at both our destinations, these discerning travellers will be able to experience luxury, adventure, sports and relaxation delivered at the highest sustainable standards. Due to the experiences that will be available - which have never previously been explored before - and the brands that we have carefully chosen to partner with, along with a series of in-market activations, we have received a very positive response so far. Continuously choosing to engage with industry stakeholders reassures the market of Red Sea Global's active presence and has proven to be very effective in bridging our way into the market and creating relatability and brand familiarity.

## Would you be looking at more B2B or B2C channels for selling/promoting your product in the India market?

We have developed a comprehensive marketing strategy tailored specifically to attract India's travel segment, which includes educational roadshows, travel exhibitions, networking opportunities and extensive media visibility to facilitate two-way communication and build destination awareness. We look forward to continually growing and evolving our partnerships with experts in order to captivate this audience and entice their curiosity.



## Can you share with us details of the sustainable methods you are adopting at the site?

Across The Red Sea and Amaala, our goal is to achieve a 30% net conservation benefit by 2040 by expanding key habitats that support biodiversity and implementing the most environmentally-advanced technology into our destinations. One way we are achieving this is by opening the largest nursery in the region to landscape our two destinations with upwards of 25 million plants and trees, and more than 3 million are already growing within its walls.

We have partnered with ZeroAvia to investigate hydrogen-powered seaplanes, we are more than 85% progressed on the build of our solar farms and are constructing the world's largest battery storage facility to enable The Red Sea to be powered with 100% renewable energy, 24 hours a day.

Furthermore, we are only developing less than one percent of the total site area, with 75 per cent of the destination's islands being preserved for conservation and nine designated as special conservation zones.

In 2022, we also unveiled the design of The Red Sea Marine Life Institute located in Triple Bay, Amaala, which will function as a scientific research centre, central to our broader environmental ambitions for the Red Sea coastline, as well as a tourist destination.

## What is going to be the USP of RSG?

Our vision is to become the world's most responsible developer, by trailblazing new global standards in sustainable and regenerative tourism. Our mission is to act as agents of change, by employing and partnering with the world's greatest minds to spearhead new innovations that reimagine the boundaries of our sector and create a better world for people and planet.

## San Marino Outlet Experience offers the best in luxury shopping

A luxury outlet which offers a unique and exciting experience to its shoppers - San Marino Outlet Experience' is all this and more. If you are in the mood to indulge yourself with some retail therapy, then this is surely your go-to place. Veronica Foresti, Tourism & Community Manager, San Marino Outlet Experience shares more.

Shreya Shimpi

### Tell us something about the San Marino Outlet Experience.

I am representing San Marino Outlet Experience which is located in the Republic of San Marino. I know it can be an unusual destination for the Indian market but it is an amazing destination because it is a foreign country within Italy. It is an independent country. It is one of the smallest countries in the world and a tax-free destination. Therefore, shopping in San Marino is much more convenient as compared to the rest of Europe.

### How important is India to you as a market?

The Indian market is really important to us because we know that the Indian market is addicted to shopping. They do love shopping and that's why we have put a foot in the market through Global Destinations. We would like to improve the movement from the Indian market to San Marino.

### What is the speciality of the San Marino Outlet Experience?

At our outlet, we have more than forty-five Italian and premium luxury brands such as Prada, Dolce & Gabbana, Roberto Cavalli etc. all related to Italian fashion.

### What are your expectations from the current year?

Unfortunately, we have been a bit affected by the war in Russia because we are in a location where there are a lot of tourists coming from Russia. Therefore, we are also looking for new markets like we are working and promoting it a lot in India and through Chinese people living in Italy because these are the two main markets that love shopping.



## Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) and MCG Events Team hosts networking lunch

In a recent event hosted by Beautiful Planet Destination Marketing, a destination presentation and an exclusive sit-down networking lunch were held in Mumbai with the Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) and MCG Events team - **Joanna Garrie, Director Corporate Meetings and Incentives, Melbourne Convention Bureau; Troy Stasinowsky, Director - Sales and Marketing, MCG Events and Vanessa Syriopoulos, Client Relationship Manager - MCG Events** as a part of their market visit to India.

Shreya Shimpi

### Joanna Garrie

"India is a very important market and there is a lot of connection between India and Australia. Particularly with Melbourne and Victoria, we have the largest Indian population out of Australia. We have also had an increase in air services which makes it easier to connect the two countries. We have a shared history in terms of being a part of the Commonwealth. Also, with regard to cricket history, there is an interest in both countries. We see a big interest in terms of the population size which makes India a big market that we can tap into. We have started to proactively target the market just post-Covid. We have Beautiful Planet who works with us on a regular basis. We plan on doing more paid media and PR activities so that the Indian markets become aware of what they can do in Melbourne and how easy it is to do an Incentive event in Melbourne. We will continue our tenure with Beautiful Planet which represents Melbourne Convention Bureau in the market. We will also be doing paid activities, paid marketing, familiarisation programs and attending trade shows".

### Troy Stasinowsky

"The reason India is most important to us is that currently, it is the

largest international market which is coming into Melbourne. Due to a lot of effects of the pandemic, different markets opening at different times and changes in Visas we need to be embracing and making sure that we are accommodating the biggest growth market and at the moment that international market is India. We are trying to open up the lines of communication a lot more. The big objective of our coming to India and visiting multiple cities is for us to connect with people on the ground here. We are working very closely with convention bureaus and the state government of Victoria but also appointing and working with people like Beautiful Planet which is based here. It is a multi-channel strategy to get it across." When asked about the changes in travel patterns before and after the pandemic he said, "One of the biggest changes for us is that the people are looking for more than experience when they are travelling now. Because they haven't travelled for so long, they want something a lot more different and a lot more exciting. Someone always said that the pendulum had swung so far back during the pandemic that it had to swing the other way quickly.



# Singapore Tourism Board announces its readiness to welcome Indian weddings

An insightful panel discussion was recently organised by the Singapore Tourism Board with renowned names in the Indian wedding planning industry along with key Singapore stakeholders such as Sentosa Development Corporation, Gardens by the Bay and Singapore Airlines in Mumbai via a networking session conducted in partnership with Wedding Sutra. **G B Srithar-Regional Director India, Middle East & South Asia, Singapore Tourism Board** spoke to BOTT in an exclusive chat



Shreya Shimpi

## Why should Indians look forward to having a wedding in Singapore?

We are organising this event 'Singapore Reimagine: Wedding Destination Conversation' in Mumbai and in Delhi. The objective is to reintroduce Singapore as a wedding destination to the Indian audience. When I say re-introduce, it is to say that Indian weddings have already been happening in Singapore. Pre-Covid, we had a few weddings happening in Sentosa and on the mainland of Singapore. Post-Covid we got very busy with a lot of very urgent recovery efforts. So going after leisure travel, family travel, young Indians, bringing back the MICE business, meetings and incentives and cruise travel. In February 2023, we are starting to re-introduce Singapore as a wedding destination. The proposition is very simple. Singapore offers a very interesting and exciting array of wedding experiences. Today we have with us six Singapore stakeholders. We have Sentosa, Gardens by the Bay, Changi Airport Group and Singapore Airlines. Collectively, what we are signalling is that Singapore is ready to put together and piece together interesting proposals for the wedding planners and their clients.

## What is the USP that Singapore offers as a wedding destination?

Several factors make Singapore a compelling, top-of-mind choice destination for the general Indian consumer which is also applicable to the wedding space. Today for the wedding space, convenience, accessibility, hassle-free management and coordination and of course

memorable experiences are important factors. Firstly, the convenience of going to Singapore and the connectivity is very high. Today we have got 16 direct connections to Singapore from India. Very soon they will be 17 once Bhubaneswar is connected directly to Singapore. Air connectivity is no issue. Singapore is also a major aviation hub. Also, for Indian weddings, Indians are not only from India but come from a diaspora of Indians. Singapore has got a huge diaspora of Indians also. The convenience of coming to Singapore and the connectivity is a huge plus point. The hassle-free way of management in Singapore is the third point. Singapore is very well-known for its effectiveness in organising events and activities. We are Asia's biggest MICE destination so we have a lot of experience in holding events and organising. Finally, the memorable experience. We have also received this feedback from a lot of wedding planners as well that Singapore offers a very natural setting for weddings. We have got the convenience and excitement of a city, we are a modern metropolis, a first-world city but at the same time, we are a city in a garden. There are a lot of gardens, flora and a lot of greenery which makes everybody happy. Singapore is an island, so there are a lot of beaches everywhere and you see water everywhere. Singapore is a very instagrammable, photogenic place. One other element someone recently told me is that Singapore is a very lucky place to get married in. Looking at Singapore as a whole, there is this sense of energy, and positivity about the place. You are constantly evolving and moving. A lot of Singaporeans believe in Feng Shui and a lot of Indians believe in Vastu so as a happy marriage of Feng Shui and Vastu, Singapore is indeed a lucky place to be married.

## Are there any marketing strategies that you are planning to promote Singapore as a wedding destination?

We are going the engagement route so that people know. We are having conversations with wedding planners. We will have marketing outreach to let people know that Singapore is open to welcoming Indian weddings so that will come in the form of joint marketing promotions with leading brands, wedding fashion shoots in Singapore etc. We are trying to discuss and decide how Singapore tourism can facilitate an array of experiences with Singapore stakeholders. How can we help wedding planners organise weddings in a very seamless and hassle-free manner? Together with the Singapore stakeholders, we are trying to see what form of support we can give. It is a work in progress and we hope that at some point in time, we will be able to announce some form of support that will make Singapore even more competitively priced.

## Ajman Tourism *looking to attract more Indians to its shores*

Ajman, one of the smallest emirates in the United Arab Emirates is a quaint hub that is popular across the globe for all the right reasons. **Khadija Turki, Director, Tourism Development and Marketing, Ajman Department of Tourism** Development shares in an exclusive chat with BOTT.

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

**L**ocated just 30 minutes away from Dubai International Airport, 25 minutes from Sharjah International Airport and 45 minutes from Ras Al Khaimah Airport, the emirate of Ajman enjoys the best of what every emirate has to offer. The destination is now keen on tapping the India market –

Our focus currently is family entertainment. We are a wedding destination, especially for Indian market and we've been for a while until Covid hit us. Thus, we're reinstating ourselves again as a wedding destination. We are an ideal honeymoon destination as well. We're about lifestyle, we're about luxury because we have around six five-star hotels. Oberoi is one of the hotels in the destination. In total we have around 42 hotel establishments from five star all the way to one and furnished apartments.

### India as a source market

Last year we had more than 61,000 Indians throughout the year and in fact we had an increase of 15% from the international Indian market. This increase is the reason why we are here at SATTE and meeting up with the Indian travel trade. In fact, we're trying to do to be as aggressive

as possible with the Indian market and also trying to get the big names and investors from India to look into Ajman as much as a destination where they can invest in their businesses with MICE Corporate event. We're all about sustaining the tourism sector. Indian is the 2nd source market internationally for Ajman and it has always been in the top five destination.



### Promoting MICE

Going forward, we're looking at MICE and corporates to come and have events in Ajman. In fact, we're looking at opportunities to get the investors from India to look at Ajman for the different segments, including real estate, finance, technology and other segments. We believe India has an opportunity to tie up with Ajman, and we think we have the right product for them. Infact, I think it is a great advantage for us being so close to Dubai because people come to Dubai and then they want to go outside of Dubai and explore it.

## Hong Kong Tourism floats 'Hello Hong Kong' Campaign

India is an important market for Hong Kong Tourism. An 18-member delegation was recently in India for a twin-city roadshow and thereafter participated at SATTE interacting with the travel trade.

**Puneet Kumar, Director South Asia and Middle East, Hong Kong Tourism** shares more.

**Pallavi Sharma**

### What is the tourism scenario at present in Hong Kong?

I would say right now we are on top of the world. We are open. We are ready to welcome visitors from around the world, including India. Right now, our focus is to make 2023 tourist buzzing and then of course, we have launched the world's largest tourism invitation – Hello Hong Kong. Under this initiative we are giving away five lakh air tickets. You have heard about it and Hong Kong Tourism Board has also started distributing Hong Kong Goodies, which is our welcome gift to visitors coming into our city. Each goodie is about \$100. They can use it for attraction visit, Wining and dining, retail shopping and even local transportation. Well, this is our way of inviting visitors back to the city and we are really excited to introduce this to the India market. We came to India on a two-city roadshow in New Delhi and Mumbai and invited the local trade. We updated them on our destination and also organized business networking session. We had 18 Hong Kong

trade partners who have come from Hong Kong to sort of reengage reactivate the India market. We are here at SATTE in our efforts for larger outreach to India outbound travel agents and the response on the first two days have been phenomenal. The kind of love support from trade is really overwhelming and we are so happy to be back in India.



### How keen are you about tapping the mices and wedding market from India?

Pre-pandemic, India was among the top five MICE source markets. Thus, MICE as a segment is absolutely important for us and we have multiple programs to incentivize corporate for them to choose Hong Kong. Besides incentives in the last 3 years, there have been a lot of new developments, new experiences, new MICE venues, new infrastructure that would serve support MICE events that will be really gold standard and corporate will be very happy staging their events in Hong Kong.

### Are you targeting any age bracket?

Well, India is a very unique market for us. It is one source market where we get family and leisure segment, fly crew segment and more. Before the pandemic, the largest segment from India was mid-career affluent traveller which is between 24 to 45. And that's where people have time and money to travel and experience the city.

## Arabian Journeys believes in 'Making Unforgettable Holidays'

Arabian Journeys is a leading DMC that enhances the Dubai experience and takes it to another level. They offer comprehensive packages in Dubai which cover the leading attractions. At the OTM held in Mumbai, BOTT spoke to **Mustaq Y. Vakani, Country Head-Arabian Journeys**. Here is what he had to say –

Shreya Shimpi

### Tell us something about Arabian Journeys.

**A**rabian Journeys is a DMC based in Dubai. My headquarters are in Dubai. It is a part of the Akbar group but mainly it is a sister concern and we separately and individually work as a DMC. We cater to one of our biggest markets which is India. Apart from that, my business comes from Saudi, GCC countries and other countries like London and Rome where we have the Akbar office.

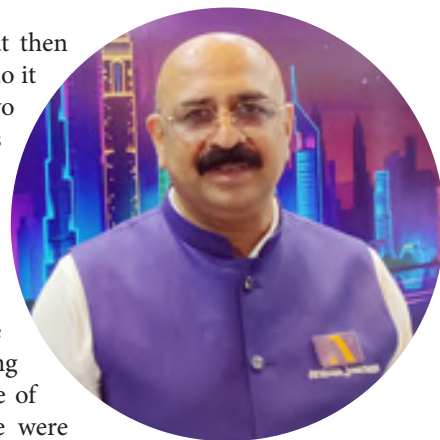
### Can you tell us something about MICE bookings at Arabian Journeys?

MICE season is after April, thus we see good MICE movement in April, May, June and July. This is the time when we have groups like 1800, 2300 and more. We recently did an event in Abu Dhabi. In terms of my infrastructure, we have our vehicles, we have our own contracts with hotels, we have our guides and we have our big team in Dubai. So majorly with this type of infrastructure, we can handle MICE very well. We are B2B and work well with agents. We are strong in the student's market too. We recently did 6000 passengers from a big college in Pune.

### How was the business affected by the pandemic?

We had a big MICE movement of 2300 pax which we put on hold the

first year of the pandemic, but then the second year, we agreed to do it in February. It was a series of two but we did it together. It was challenging but since it was Dubai, with precaution and all we did it. So, pandemic didn't take us down in business because, during the pandemic, Dubai was one country where in pandemic also we were doing very well. Apart from a couple of MICE events that we did, we were doing a lot of quarantine packages. During the pandemic, we worked double shifts because our work was more than what we do regularly.



### What does 2023 look like in terms of business?

It has great potential because Dubai every year they are coming up with new things. We have desert camps. The recent attraction Museum of the Future is booked completely so if you wish to book now for February it is not available. Museum of the Future is the hot cake selling for FIT, corporates etc. and it is a great new attraction.

## Experience heaven @ Adaaran luxury properties in Maldives

The Adaaran Maldives are luxury boutique resorts which offer a fabulous blend of wellness, relaxation, luxury and comfort with a touch of tradition. BOTT spoke to **Suresh Dissanayake, Assistant Vice President Sales & Marketing at Adaaran Maldives and Heritage Aarah** in an exclusive interview.

Shreya Shimpi

### Tell us something about your properties.

**W**e have two brands in the Maldives. One brand is Heritage Aarah which is an experiential five-star resort. We are the only resort in Maldives to win several medals in the Culinary Olympics and Culinary World Cup. That product is a premium all-inclusive concept. The premium dine-around concept has seven restaurants and five bars. It is the most generous all-inclusive in the Maldives. We have another brand Adaaran which is a home-grown brand. So even though we are a Sri Lankan company, when we entered the Maldives, we decided to make a home-grown brand and that is how Adaaran was born. Under Adaaran we have five properties – both 5-star and 4-star properties.

### What is your vision for the year 2023?

Compared to last year, we see a drop in the activities in the Maldives since the world opened. Just after the pandemic, Maldives was one of the few destinations so we were enjoying very good numbers. This year is going to be challenging in terms of the Indian market. We are looking at expanding our wings in India. We are looking at the market in tier-2

and tier-3 cities to get more tourists and to increase the visibility of our brands with the trade partners as well as consumers.

### Have you seen any change or evolution in tourism after the pandemic?

Maldives used to be a honeymoon market. With the pandemic, it became more popular among families. So Post-Covid, what we have noticed is that we still get the honeymoon segment but we are also getting the family segment.

Pre-pandemic the average length of stay was two to three nights but today what we see is that it has increased to four to five nights because people came to Maldives and stayed for a long time. Now they are okay to take a little longer holiday. We see that pre-pandemic it was only European travellers who did a split stay like twin centre destinations. But today we notice Indian travellers doing that. Some go to Sri Lanka and come to Maldives. Some go to Dubai and then come to the Maldives. This twin-centre experience has also started with Indian travellers.



## Walker Tours looking for good Indian tourist footfall to Sri Lanka

Walker Tours, a destination management company, has been in business for 54 years and witnessed the growth of boom and downfall of tourism in Sri Lanka first hand. Being one of the oldest DMCs, they acknowledge that India is one of the most important markets for the destination. **Prabath Harshakumar, VP – Walker Tours**, shares more with BOTT.

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

### India market

India is pretty much one of the largest segments when it comes to inbound arrivals to Sri Lanka. In the year 2018 – 19, we saw 454,000 Indian arrivals out of a total of 2.33 million tourists. So that was like the biggest year that we had before the pandemic. Sri Lanka, unfortunately, then went through a series of unfortunate incidents like the Easter attacks in April 2019, and just as we were recovering, the pandemic hit us. So, it's been a tough three years. Also, the media has really hyped this to an extent where sometimes I feel the damage is done to an extent where it will take a little longer than usual time to recover. But we see now things are recovering because people are now travelling. They see what the ground reality is. If you come to Colombo today and go out and see around, you wouldn't even feel that we are going through a financial crisis.

### Tourist footfall today

If you look at the calendar year, we ended the year 2022 with only 800,000 tourists, which is less than what we anticipated. But unfortunately,

things are a little tough in the middle of the year. But for the current year, we are looking at about 1.6 million, starting from January to December 2023. In all of this, India is pretty much on the top in the top segment.



### Attracting more tourists

Sri Lanka has many attractions – its biggest being the beach. As compared to travelling within India, travelling to Sri Lanka is easier with more attractive offerings. Considering the hotel offering we have; you get a much better product for lesser price and with easy access to the beach. It's not like you have to go to Goa or some place. Every package that an Indian buy, the beach is included. Sri Lanka is a family destination – very safe and so much to offer. If marketed right and no further incident happens, I feel this number can even go up to about 300 thousand plus.

## Sterling Holidays on an expansion spree, tapping new markets

Sterling Holiday Resorts Limited was founded with a dream of making holidays an active part of the Indian consumer's lifestyle and in 30 years of its existence, it has gone beyond it. Offering priceless experience across all its resorts, the company today is a name to reckon with. **M. Harinath, Vice President – Marketing, Sterling Holiday Resorts Limited** shares more.

**Pallavi Sharma**

### Good Occupancies

All our resorts and properties have a mixed bag of clientele and occupancy levels vary from region to region. Still, it would be right to say that business is back and we registered good numbers. In fact, we have seen a 40% increase in our revenue since pre pandemic and today.

### Overview of properties

We have about 39 properties around the country. Sterling has resorts at some of the best holiday destinations in India, located in Alleppey, Anaikatti, Corbett, Dabhosa, Darjeeling, Durshet, Gangtok, Gir, Goa, Godavari, Guruvayur, Kalimpong, Kanha, Karwar, Kodaikanal, Kufri, Kundalika, Lonavala, Madurai, Manali, Mount Abu, Munnar, Mussoorie, Nainital, Ooty, Pench, Puri, Rishikesh, Sajan, Sariska, Srinagar, Thekkady, Tiruvannamalai, Wayanad, Yelagiri and Yercaud. Recently we opened a property in Haridwar on February 1 and before that we launched Tiruvannamalai, which is a spiritual destination in Tamil Nadu. On March 15, we are coming up with a property in Ujjain and then in April we will be coming up with one in Dharamshala. In May, we are coming up with Gopalpur in south of Puri. What we are doing is that we are trying to create a circuit so that people, when they travel across the country, can get two, three different experiences.

### MICE, Weddings and more

We are working aggressively on attracting MICE, destination weddings, reunions, and get together business as these things keep happening all year round and will help us balance our low season. A typical MICE event will not come at a peak holiday time, they would like to come when season is slow and occupancy levels are low, thus giving us business. Weddings happen whenever they happen and we will be ready for them. We have also become pet friendly, thus capturing the market of travellers who want to travel with their pet ones.



### Sterling One

Sterling One is a very unique platform which we have created. It's an online platform where the travel agents can register themselves. Then they can come in, view real time inventory at the rates which we have contracted with them and make the bookings online. Its pretty unique for a hotel company to use such a platform.

## Wink Hotels wants to target the 'young and smart' clientele in India

Wink Hotels is a new Vietnamese hospitality brand emerging in Indochina that takes a bold approach to affordable luxury in the region. The brand caters to modern, aspirational travellers, offering high-quality experiences that are grounded in the local destination.

Pallavi Sharma

**W**ink Hotels is the first hotel product of Indochina-Kajima, a joint venture between Indochina Capital Corporation, an innovative leader in Vietnam's rapidly growing real estate, financial services and capital markets, and Kajima Corporation, one of the oldest and largest construction companies in Japan. Already 13 Wink Hotels are in construction with the first Wink Hotel that opened in March 2021 in Ho Chi Minh City, and the second, Wink Hotel Danang Centre that opened in November 2022.

Wink Hotels is a new hotel chain in Vietnam with the concept and the mission to reflect the local life and local touch. Wink is rooted in modern traditions. The goal of Indochina Kajima is to operate the best boutique hotel in Vietnam. Together, two innovators will redefine luxury at an affordable price in Vietnam and elsewhere. Wink is unique because of its modern ethos of stylish + imaginative design, sophisticated functionality, and traditional Vietnamese values. Genuine, informal customer service and an outstanding guest experience are the pillars of Wink.

Wink Hotel offers more than just lodging. It's a community centre built for comfort, convenience, and innovation. It's the ideal starting

point for exploration. "We have tried to incorporate some modern technology in every single part of the hotel. So, for example, there is technology for automatic check-in and automatic F&B order. Another unique element is the 24 hours stay in the hotel so the guests can customize their arrival time as per their convenience. Since opening our first property last year, we have achieved around 45% occupancy and we now want to expand to India with a mission to achieve some good results for the domestic market in here to Vietnam," said **Nguyen Quang Duc-Cluster, Director of Sales, Wink Hotels.**



Talking about the future plans he says, "There are major expansion plans in the pipeline. We are also focussing on digital marketing and online marketing. Our potential markets are Vietnam, Korea and India where we are targeting smart travellers – the young generation with disposable incomes."

## Thema Collection: Offering Luxury with Sustainability

Situated in various parts of Sri Lanka Island, each property in the Thema collection captures the unique character of its setting by incorporating elements of the area's history, customs, and cuisine. This provides welcoming hospitality and a memorable stay while revealing Sri Lanka's wonders. **Chandra Wickramasinghe, Chairman & Managing Director, Thema Collection,** shares more in an exclusive chat with BOTT.

Pallavi Sharma

### Thema Collection

**W**e have properties under theme resorts and we call it Thema Collection because the hotels are based on different themes and authentic experiences. When someone comes to Sri Lanka and stays in our hotels, they will get true authentic experience of what Sri Lanka is. Each of our properties is carefully chosen to highlight Sri Lanka's distinctive wildlife, culture, and biodiversity in order to give our visitors immersive and experiential getaways. Although each of the Thema hotels and resorts has a distinct concept and aesthetic, they all share the friendliness of the Sri Lankan people and provide excellent service. With so many attractions to discover on this island, we've chosen a few of the most well-known spots for our hotels, resorts, and retreats in Sri Lanka to make sure that visitors have an authentic experience while staying with us. Our travel themes, which include the sea, tea, nature, and wellness and offer insights into each location, are in line with our destinations.

### Sustainability

All our properties at Thema Collection are close to nature and we

ensure that we take care of nature and not tamper with it. People come to stay in Them Collection resorts because they want to experience nature – they are nature lovers. The Senanayake Samudraya and other bodies of water are surrounded by evergreen forests in this national park, which is situated in the southeast of the island. Visitors to this nature reserve enjoy bird watching, but the main draw is the chance to see the magnificent Gal Oya elephants. If you're lucky, you might even get to see them swimming through the Senanayake Samudraya as they move between islands. Sri Lanka is brimming with natural beauty and it is important that we must preserve it and not tamper with it. At Them Collection we not only take care of the natural abundance of Sri Lanka – plants and animals but also make sure our guests and staff also understand so.



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# Carnival Cruise Line networking event held in Mumbai

Discover the World-India, which represents Carnival Cruise Line in India, held a "Networking and Cocktail Evening" with their India and international team to share information about the evolving travel trends, plans for the upcoming year and to thank their travel trade partners for their unwavering support.

Shreya Shimpi

Meaningful conversations, eclectic drinks, delectable food and some fun activities made the networking event truly remarkable. Carnival Cruise Line has recently completed 50 years, which is a great achievement by itself. In a media interaction, Iain Baillie - Vice President - International Sales, Carnival Cruise Line (Based in the UK office), Luke Smith - Director, UK & International Sales - International Division, Carnival Cruise Line (Based in UK office) and Dipti Adhia - Director, Discover the World - India (Represents Carnival Cruise Line in India) (Based in India) shared their insights.

"We are very excited and passionate about the Indian market because we think that it is a very huge opportunity. We want more travel partners to begin getting involved through 'Discover the World' and their preferred partners to start selling more Indians onto our amazing holidays," said Luke Smith.

Have Indians started sailing on Carnival Cruise Line after the pandemic? Yes, they have. We are welcoming all nationalities. Across the whole of our fleet, our NPS scores are off the charts. If you look for our record-breaking year for NPS, it was 2019. It is early days; we are in February 2023 and we are already beating the same period in 2019. People are so excited to be back with no protocols. People enjoy their time sailing with us. A lot of Indians want to travel. It is just that the Visa was a challenge but existing Visa holders are already travelling. We had a group last year. We have a few groups lined up this year so there is immense potential I believe they would start cruising soon.

## What will be the strategies that you would be using for the B2B market and will you be engaging with the consumer directly?

We work very closely with 'Discover the World' in this space. We have had so many meetings with travel agents and travel trade partners over the last few days and some key things are going to form our strategy for this market going forward. We are trying to work in the group space and make sure there is much flexibility for the groups taking into account that these are the issues we face in this country. The main strategy is going to be engagement. We are really serious about the market. This is a very long-term project so we are making sure we are engaging with the right stakeholders from the B2B and B2C standpoint making sure they have got the support they need from 'Discover the World' and the incredible team there.

Direct to the consumer, we are relying on the travel trade in this market to give the B2C message out there and that is the same way we work in many of our international markets. We rely on the trade to be our champions.

## What is the average length of stay of an Indian on the Carnival Cruise Line?

They usually prefer 3-4 nights but when it comes to Alaska they would prefer a 7-nighter. When it comes to Europe, they are open for a longer



duration of sailing. Ideally for North America, 3-4 nights are what they generally look at.

## Have you seen any change in the pattern of travel?

"They are going up the ship in terms of accommodation and opting for balconies and suites, wraparounds and terraces. People are spending a lot more money onboard which is a fantastic 20 per cent more yield per guest per vacation. People are just excited to be back. They are enjoying excursions; they are in casinos and they are enjoying speciality dining that we have onboard. People are energised. We are seeing a lot of interest in our new flagships. We are filling the ship a lot quicker now. More and more people are getting into cruises which is fantastic. It is the fastest-growing sector of the travel industry," said Iain Baillie.

"I think 2023 looks quite promising especially for us, as we are predominantly focusing on the U.S. market. Right now, our focus is on the existing Visa holders so we can have them go once again to the U.S.A. I am sure the Visa situation is getting better now and we are getting Visa interview dates in quarter three and quarter four. We are hoping for a fantastic 2024 as well. We have already started working and we have been working on multiple sectors in terms of FIT, GIT, MICE and weddings. Carnival is focussing everywhere and Iain and Luke coming here from London specially to address and give their extended support that India is a very important market for us," said Dipti Adhia in an exclusive chat with BOTT.

## Cordelia Cruises

### geared to welcome record customers in 2023

For Cordelia Cruises, 2022 was a good year, just like the rest as everyone witnessed the return of travel. The cruise ship, in fact, served 2500 happy customers in the year gone by and are now all geared for an even better 2023. **Oneel Verma, Chief Operating Officer, Cordelia Cruises**, shares more.

Pallavi Sharma

#### Sri Lanka itinerary

In the last monsoon season when the cruises are on west coast, we moved to the east coast which is Chennai and the home base of Chennai. Now we are going international. We are going to Sri Lanka. We will go to three Ports of Sri Lanka and we have received very good response to this. In fact, the Sri Lankan government also is supporting us, which is a big plus. I am confident that this particular route is going to do very well.

#### USP of the Cruise

It is still a very new destination. If it's a wedding on the sea, in a cruise ship, it's a very unique and different concept. People want to experience that. And while they are on the cruise ship when the wedding is happening, there are also other attractions to enjoy – such as live shows, pubs, swimming pools, bars, Casinos and more.

#### MICE and Weddings?

You know today everyone wants a destination wedding and the latest catch in the market is a destination wedding on the Cruise. This is why we are doing good weddings business. A Cruise ship is the perfect destination for a wedding. You don't have to bring anything; everything is available on the ship. You just have to walk in. We have a fantastic food, décor, music. In fact, people can book separate ships.

#### Target segment

We are now focusing on MICE – the Corporates. There are a lot of corporates coming and doing their convention here at the Cruise. There are plenty of RNR meetings. People are tired of holding meetings and events in hotels and resorts and now want to do something different and this is where we come in. So going forward, we are focusing on parties, events, weddings, landmark celebrations and more.



#### Strategy ahead

We at Cordelia Cruises have something for people of all age groups. If you are a teenager, we have Pubs, music, Disk – if you are an elderly couple, you can simply lounge and take in the view or be a part of the many discussion shows that are happening. From romantic avenues to adventure zones – we offer it all. We are also working with plenty of tour operators and travel aggregators now to sell the cruise bookings and we have received tremendous response at both OTM and SATTE.

## Elevay: Unlocking new Boundaries

Post Covid, there is a new trend among people to go for second citizenship or residency in Europe as this will give them the option to move freely without waiting for a visa or making an application says **Ziad El Shurafa, Global Citizenship Advisor at Elevay**

Pallavi Sharma

#### Please tell me something about your organization.

We are an international organization that has 20+ years of experience in navigating the complex citizenship and residency by investment process. In India we work exclusively through and with Udaan India and along with whom we endeavour to create new landmarks. Our objective is to simplify the life of the client. For instance, a businessman who has to travel to different countries for work, will have to apply for visas every time but through our tailor-made solutions and programs, we can open up as many countries for him.

#### How was 2022 for your organisation?

It was a very good year. Post Covid, there is a new trend among people to go for second citizenship or residency in Europe as this will give them

the option to move freely without waiting for a visa or making an application. Similarly, if you have a residency in Europe, all 26 Schengen countries are open for you without the need of a visa.

#### What is the trend in India?

In India, most people are interested in taking residency in either Canada or the USA. But there is a market for other countries as well. Though Indians are not allowed to take dual citizenship but there is a good demand for residency for several countries.

#### Which are the new countries you are promoting here?

We have Portugal, Greece, and Malta. For Greece, all one needs to do is purchase a house or apartment of minimum 250,000 euros. However, this will increase to 500,000 euros from April, 2023 onwards. We have a couple of major programs in Portugal. One way is buying a property of minimum €280,000 and the residency requirement for this program is only seven days per year. After five years, one can sell his property and can apply for citizenship for Greece. There is also a language test for Portugal.



# Destination **Fiji** targeting to reach 2019 figures by 2024

Fiji, a world-class holiday destination certainly deserves to be on our bucket list if you wish to build some happy holiday memories. **Kathy Koyamaibole, Regional Director, Asia & Pacific, Fiji Tourism** shares her thoughts about the new brand campaign as well as the various things that Fiji has to offer to its tourists. Read on to know more.

Shreya Shimpi

## What does Fiji have in store for its tourists?

Fiji has over 333 islands. We are located right near Australia and New Zealand so if you want to add us on perfect because we have daily flights those two are our primary source markets. Otherwise, you can also fly via Singapore. We will be opening up our Hong Kong route and so a bit more access points out of Asia. With 333 islands there is a lot of space to move around in. Our population is only under one million. It is not the kind of destination where you expect a crowd. You come to Fiji to relax, disconnect and unwind. That is where our new brand 'Happiness comes naturally' comes in.

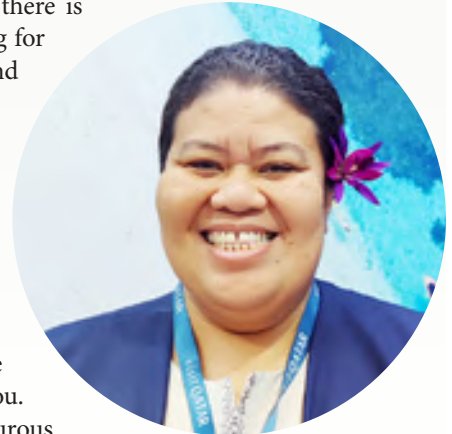
## How did the pandemic affect tourism in Fiji?

Pre-Covid we had strong steady growth from out of India especially but then the pandemic happened. We are in recovery mode now. As a destination, we targeted to reach our 2019 numbers in 2024. However, last year in 2022 we reached seventy per cent of our 2019 numbers. That is when Asia was not fully open. Our ports were not on. We have so much potential. Even this year, I am cautious to say and optimistic that we will hit it. The next year when we targeted it to surpass to meet it, we will surpass it.

## Has there been a change in the pattern of travel?

That is what contributed a lot to our new branding. We found consumer sentiment across the world in general. They are looking for more

exclusive getaways, not where there is more crowd. They were looking for more immersive experiences and so more. They don't just want to stay in the rooms but they want to do more activities. They want an authentic experience and we offered all of it. There are so many different accommodation options whether you want it by the ocean or up in the mountains, it is entirely up to you. Whether you want to be adventurous and go hiking or you just want to take a lazy river tube. When it comes to authenticity, you see what our people have to offer.



## What would be your message to our readers?

Everyone keeps referring to 'revenge travel'. I don't like the term 'revenge travel'. I like to call it YOLO travel- You Only Live Once travel. We are a Visa-free destination. You don't need a Visa. Just come, get a stamp on arrival and you are in. Currently, because of Covid, we need two of your vaccination certificates. The other thing that everyone kept saying was that they needed something new. Fiji is there. One thing to remember is that it is 333 islands and you cannot cover them all at once. You come once and we keep giving you a reason to come again and again and again.

## Cambodia planning to strengthen its foothold in India market

It is believed that the Cambodian people will always greet you with a smile and their unparalleled hospitality will make your stay a memorable one. After being affected by the pandemic, tourism in Cambodia is now gaining momentum. **Rajana K Y, Deputy Director Overseas Marketing and Promotion Department** shares his thoughts on the growing tourism.

Shreya Shimpi

## How has the year 2022 been in terms of business?

2022 was a bad year because of the rise in Covid cases. Tourists were finding it hard to travel and all the business was stuck. Some of the hotels and travel agencies had also closed down. However, now we are starting to recover step by step.

## Have you seen an evolution in the trends of travellers after the pandemic?

Yes. Earlier tourists would travel to Cambodia directly but now they are coming through group tours. However, most of them still prefer travelling on their own.

## How important is India to you as a market?

India is a big market for all Asian countries. Many people in Asia wish to receive tourists from India.



What are your marketing strategies to promote Cambodia as a tourist destination?

The government is doing various things to promote Cambodia after 2019. We run the 'Visit Cambodia' campaign and promote tourism through exhibitions. We also plan to promote it through social media.

What is the Visa policy?

For Visa, you can go to the embassy to get the Visa. Secondly, you can apply for an e-Visa. Thirdly and perhaps easier of all, you can get a Visa on Arrival.

# Sun International Hotels:

## *For memorable experiences,*

## superior service and genuine value

Expect to leave a part of yourself behind when you travel to South Africa and to Sun International hotels says **Sherene Allaman, Vice President International Sales & Marketing, Sun International, South Africa**

### Rai Umraopati Ray

Post Covid, what are the new key trends in the hospitality sector and how is Sun International catering to these?

Well-being and self-care are undoubtedly a trend which is growing, and our properties are transforming to cater to our guests needs. The Palace of the Lost City at Sun City has recently completed the refurbishment of 320 bedrooms, and pleased that we have included a Gym and The Royal Spa which is designed to create a natural and elegant healing sanctuary. Conscious and Sustainable travel is a key trend and we believe that doing business sustainably is a necessity with a commitment to the environment by improving electricity efficiency, responsible water usage, zero waste to landfill and reducing greenhouse emission, health and safety and Socio-Economic Development (SED) projects across the spectrum.

**How important is India as a market for Sun International and how would you like to position your brand amongst the Indian Millennial Travellers?**

India has always been a vitally important market for Sun International. With such importance placed on India, we have a dedicated team based in both Mumbai and New Delhi ensuring that our partners have immediate support. Indian Millennial Travellers are keen to travel, have high expectations and prefer a seamless experience. We are confident in being able to provide a complete personalized offering at any of our properties which includes adrenalin activities, safari and relaxation experience. I would position Sun International to have a competitive advantage being situated in prime locations and being able to provide memorable experiences, superior service and genuine value.

**How many group hotels are there in all? Do they cater to all kinds of travellers (luxury, budget, FIT, family etc) and what new can they expect?**

Sun International has 19 properties and 11 hotels are able to accommodate groups. Our properties cater for all travellers from budget to luxury and all segments being the individual traveller, multi generation family travel, Leisure groups and MICE.

Guests can expect to receive 5 star service in all hotel categories. Except conferencing with a difference and most certainly the warm South African welcome. We also cater for Jain groups allowing the group's personal chefs from India to utilize the kitchens at certain hotels within the group.

**The Palace of the Lost City and Table Bay Cape Town are on the bucket list of most Indian travellers, what should they expect in terms of entertainment, cuisines, activities etc?**

Sun City is situated in the heart of the Pilanesberg National Park, which



is malaria free. One can experience a safari via road or experience the safari in a hot air balloon. We have two world class golf courses designed by the legendary Gary Player, the Valley of Waves, a variety of restaurants, casinos as well as indoor and outdoor activities to keep all travellers entertained.

Table Bay Hotel is known to be at the best address in Cape Town and is a sophisticated 5 star luxury hotel which was in fact opened by our former president, Nelson Mandela. The hotel offers views of Table Mountain or the ocean and guests have access to the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront from the luxury of the hotel. We have recently partnered with a local celebrity chef and incorporated Siba The Restaurant within the hotel which serves unique dishes that encompasses world flavour with an African flair.

The Camelot Spa at Table Bay has undergone a fresh new look for the perfect bespoke spa experience which adds to moments of luxury that any traveller would want to experience.

**MICE, Conferences & Weddings at offbeat locations are gradually becoming a trend, how is Sun International prepared for this?**

Our hotels boast state-of-the-art facilities and technology that will delight and satisfy any business group and our chefs are happy to cater to any budget. Every love story deserves the perfect backdrop on the big day, and a destination wedding in South Africa is ideal especially at Sun City as we have a variety of charming and diverse venues for a truly unique experience. Our Indian wedding celebration takes place over several days and the resort can offer both indoor and outdoor venues with a range of picturesque settings. With the resort having 4 hotels on the same property, all guests can be accommodated encompassing entertainment and a lifetime experience.

# Kwantu Game Reserve: An Ideal Destination to see Big 5

Game drives are conducted using specially equipped game viewers with highly qualified game rangers, ensuring an enjoyable, educational and exciting experience says **Shakir Jeeva, Chief Executive, Kwantu Private Game Reserve**

**Rai Umraopati Ray**

The 5 star Kwantu Private Game Reserve is situated 85km from Port Elizabeth, near the famous Garden Route of South Africa. In addition to the Big Five free roaming along the lush landscape, Kwantu Private Game Reserve has many other facilities and offerings including for guests. These include a living village within the reserve, various accommodation types and on-site restaurants, swimming pools, a jungle gym, cricket field, tennis courts, entertainment area and much more. The various 5-star accommodation types on site were created to suit couples, families and larger groups alike. These range from the Luxury bush lodges and Pollards Inn Villas, to the Elephant Ridge and Lions View camps, of which each offer guests different "bush" and wildlife experiences. Dining experiences are of course an unforgettable one, with various common and private dining facilities available (kitchen access is available on request), with Kwantu being able to cater for vegetarian, Jain and non-vegetarian palettes. Therefore, for a true African experience, where one can experience more than just the Big Five in a family friendly environment, Kwantu is the ideal destination. Experience Africa, Experience Life, Experience Kwantu.

## What should a traveller expect from Kwantu Reserve specifically in terms of varied wildlife and sightings of Big 5?

Being a privately owned game reserve, Kwantu is fortunate to boast a high concentration of animals within the reserve. The animal population is varied with indigenous animals, as well as the big 5. Game drives are conducted using specially equipped game viewers with highly qualified game rangers, ensuring an enjoyable, educational and exciting experience. Therefore, guests will get a chance to see most, if not all of the various species with a 2-3 night stay at Kwantu.



Do you undertake wildlife conservation initiatives? Please shed some light on these activities as well as any new conservation initiatives post Covid.

Kwantu engages in a number of wildlife conservation initiatives such as our rehabilitation centre, where we rehabilitate and rewild a number of species, the repopulation of indigenous animals to the area which were previously wiped out due to farming and hunting, as well as a new initiative recently which focuses on the study of certain species such as buffalo and others for educational and research purposes.

## Please tell us about Kwantu Game Reserve's volunteer programme and how can Indian wildlife enthusiasts participate in this?

Kwantu offers a number of packages. These include the guest packages, but also other packages for those wanting to get more involved in wildlife and conservation. This is done under our volunteer packages. These packages include wildlife and conservation packages, recognised field guide courses, veterinary internship experiences as well as adventure and wildlife experiences. These packages include activities such as the removal of alien vegetation, wildlife monitoring, fence patrols, game counts, and a host of other activities. The packages are open to all types of travellers, and more information can be found on our website, which gives a breakdown of each package, with a booking platform.

## Post Covid, MICE and Conferences at offbeat locations are gradually becoming a trend, how is Kwantu prepared for this?

We are seeing an increase in demand for this, and apart from the large room capacity which Kwantu offers, Kwantu also has various conference venues which range in capacity from 10 guests to 2000 guests. Therefore, we are well set up and positioned for clients looking for a bush escape in luxury, while still being productive at the same time.



# IGLTA Foundation launches its first LGBTQ+ Travel Symposium in India

Senior leadership from the International LGBTQ+ Travel Association Foundation was recently in the capital and held its first symposium to discuss expanding LGBTQ+ tourism in India. Being led by **John Tanzella, President/CEO, IGLTA**, the symposium in India was a huge success and marked a crucial first step in the association establishing its first step in India. BOTT spoke to the President IGLTA to understand more about the vision and mission of the association and its road map for the future.

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

The International LGBTQ+ Travel Association is the global leader in advancing LGBTQ+ travel and a proud Affiliate Member of the United Nations World Tourism Organization. IGLTA's mission is to provide information and resources for LGBTQ+ travellers and expand LGBTQ+ tourism globally by demonstrating its significant social and economic impact. IGLTA global network includes 12,000 LGBTQ+ and LGBTQ+ welcoming accommodations, destinations, service providers, travel agents, tour operators, events, and travel media in 80 countries.

"IGLTA, which was formed 40 years ago in 1983, was very much an underground organization, and the tourism professionals that started it were basically trying to find safe and welcoming travel experiences for their gay clientele. Fast forwarding the years, we're still sort of doing the same thing today but on a much grander scale. From being Florida based, we are now doing business in about 80 countries and our membership includes travel agents and gay guest house owners, like it did in 1983, but also owners of all types of accommodations. We have tour operators, tourism boards, airlines, cruise lines, and universities that focus on tourism because we do a lot of research projects and then we also started our foundation, around seven years ago and it's become the catalyst to doing more educational symposiums like what we're doing here in Delhi," shared John, adding, "So we're connecting buyers and suppliers and media globally that are interested in LGBTQ travel so they can do business together. And then our website is a platform to promote our members to consumers. Although we're not a travel agent, we don't book travel. But as an association, we're connecting tourism professionals all over the world together."

As part of its ongoing efforts to support IGLTA's global travel community, the IGLTA Foundation is enhancing its outreach in strategic emerging destinations. In 2020, the Foundation formed a task force comprised of travel professionals in India and those who promote travel to its many cities and cultural sites, which led to this educational symposium.

"Through IGLTA Foundation efforts like our India Initiative, we can increase understanding of global LGBTQ+ tourism," said John, adding, "We are so excited to discuss the opportunities for LGBTQ+ travel



to and from India, given the huge projections for the country's tourism growth. It is essential that this growth values all travellers and makes them feel genuinely welcome."

Topics of the symposium included best practices for LGBTQ+ tourism and practical advice for creating more inclusive hospitality offerings. Among the speakers were IGLTA President/CEO John Tanzella and VP-Communications LoAnn Halden; Keshav Suri, Executive Director, The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group; Rudrani Chhetri, LGBTQIA+ Rights Activist and Founder, Mitr Trust; Don Heflin, Minister Counsellor for Consular Affairs, U.S. Embassy; Jonathan Heimer, Minister Counsellor for Commercial Affairs, U.S. Embassy; Tom Kiely, President/CEO, Visit West Hollywood; Elliott Ferguson, President/CEO, Destination DC; Fred Dixon, President/CEO, NYC & Company; as well as representatives from Lemon Tree Hotels, Serene Journeys, and The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group.



"We are delighted to partner with IGLTA for this first-ever symposium on expanding LGBTQ+ tourism. It is a great opportunity to engage and explore the potential of pink tourism. As per World Bank data, the inclusion of an able and talented workforce from the LGBTQIA+ community and the 'Power of Pink Money' can contribute up to 1.7% to the growth of Indian GDP," said Keshav Suri.

"The reason India was chosen by our board of directors is because it is an emerging destination for LGBTQ tourism. We have a lot of interest from our members, like tour operators wanting to sell travel to India. But they don't necessarily know what suppliers here, in India, can provide to offer the best welcoming experiences for LGBTQ people. So, we've taken upon ourselves to go ahead and start establishing relationships here in India so that the IGLTA members can experience the offerings in India," John concluded.

# 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. **Ms. Richa Srivastava, a renowned Tarot Card reader** conducts exclusive Tarot reading under her banner – Tathaastu. Here are her predictions for March 2023.



## Know what your stars say about March 2023



**ARIES : (March 21 – April 20)** Take rest from your busy schedule. Incorporate meditation as a part of your daily routine. Re-evaluate your actions at workplace and make the necessary changes as and when required. Keep patience and have faith. Spiritual indulgence will prove beneficial.



**Taurus : (April 21 – May 21)** You need to remove anxiety from your routine. Be positive and look on the brighter side of things. Conflicts at career front will be resolved through honest conversations. Plan ahead to manage your finances well. Goals will be achieved and bond will get stronger with partner.



**Gemini : (May 22 – June 22)** This is the time to be practical in your professional work and strive towards maintaining a work life balance. Be careful while investing your money. Make efforts to strengthen relationships. Start meditation.



**Cancer : (June 22 – July 22)** You need to be extra careful about your health this month. Take cautious decisions on the professional front. Avoid any risky investment and try not to get in any kind of conflict with anyone. Patience will be your key to success.



**Leo : (July 23 – August 21)** Harmony and balance will be there at your work front. There is good career growth in your card. This is the ideal time for getting into any business partnership. Recovery from illness is imminent. Indulgence in spirituality will bring harmony. The time is conducive for likely meeting with a prospective partner.



**Virgo : (August 22 – September 23)** 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.



**Libra : (September 24 – October 23)** A change of career is possible for greater success. Open and honest communication is required for successful relationship. You need to take extra care of your health. You will indulge in spirituality and it will help you heal.



**Scorpio : (October 24 – November 22)** To hold the position in your career you need to take a stand. Make smart investments. This is also the time make an extra effort to take care of your health. Don't allow a third person to spoil your relationship.



**Sagittarius : (November 23 – December 22)** Take care of health. Choose a career that satisfies you. A new venture will be fruitful. Be careful on the investment. You are likely to meet your future life partner.



**Capricorn : (December 23 – January 20)** Your search for the right kind of job will be successful. Success in career is possible by putting thoughts into action. Recovery from illness is expected. Do research work before putting down your money into any kind of investment. Spend time with family.



**Aquarius : (January 21 – February 19)** Be positive and take care of your health. You will receive support from a senior lady on the professional front. Avoid risky investments and have a control over your finances. Learn from the past and move forward with a positive approach.



**Pisces : (February 20 – March 20)** Don't be lethargic. Have a positive attitude towards. Take lessons from your past mistakes and take your stand. Success is very near. Communication is the key. Spend time with your partner.

# PM Modi addresses post-budget webinar on 'Developing Tourism in Mission Mode'

**Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi** recently addressed the post-budget webinar on "Developing Tourism in Mission Mode", organised by the Ministry of Tourism. This is a series of post-budget webinars being organized by the Government with an aim to brainstorm ideas for effective implementation of the initiatives announced in the Union Budget-2023.

## ► BOTT DESK

In his address, the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi said that tourism has always been a part of our social and cultural civilization. India's tourism comprises of multiple aspects and can be promoted as coastal tourism, wildlife tourism, adventure tourism, cultural tourism, beach, mangrove, Himalayan, spiritual tourism and others. This year's Budget prioritizes the development of tourist destination in a holistic manner and it aims to develop at least 50 tourism destinations which can then be promoted globally. He stated that with the development of tourist amenities at destinations, the tourism sector will definitely flourish. As an example, with the reconstruction of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple corridor, 7 crore tourists have visited the city. Kashi Vishwanath Dham and Kedarnath Dham are live models highlighting the fact that ease of travelling encourages increased tourist footfall. Further technological advances and digitalization with better infrastructure and cleanliness will help to boost tourism. Apps for tourists and digital connectivity can be modernized to make it accessible to all tourists. There has been an increase in the number of foreign tourists visiting India. With a proper strategy to promote India globally, the footfall is also bound to increase substantially. The Union Budget 2023-24 has allocated an amount of Rs 2400 crores to the Ministry of Tourism.

Prime Minister described Destination Weddings as an upcoming niche and emerging sector which had the potential for increasing tourism. The exchange of intercultural wedding rituals amongst the States can boost the sector further. Further events like global Conferences and sporting events have the potential to create stupendous level of infrastructure. He cited the example of the recent FIFA World Cup 2022, which benefitted Qatar's economy massively.

The Post Budget Webinar had 6 breakout sessions deliberating on Destination Centric Approach for Tourism Development, Convergence – The Power of Collaboration, Strengthening Public Private Participation in Tourism Sector, Driving Innovation and Digitalization in Tourism Sector, Impacting lives at grass root level through Tourism and Cultural Heritage for Promotion of Tourism. The sessions saw active participation from different panellists from State, Central Ministries as well as Industry associations, District administrations, local bodies, experts in the field of tourism and hospitality, Invest India etc. Speaking at the concluding session, Minister of Tourism, Shri G. Kishan Reddy thanked Prime Minister for showing the path for developing tourism sector in mission mode as well as all the panellists and speakers for their suggestion and ideas to overcome the challenges and move towards implementation of the budget announcements. He stated that the biggest employment generating sector could very well be the tourism sector after textiles industry.

Government of India, state governments, private stakeholders and civil society should closely work together to promote the tourism industry



of the country. This sector is one of the sectors to generate maximum employment with the least capital investment, he said.

Secretary Tourism, Shri Arvind Singh on the occasion said that this year's budget has given us new vision for tourism development and it focuses on promotion of tourism in mission mode, with active participation of states, convergence of government programmes and public-private partnerships. He also said that the budget proposes facilitation of tourism infrastructure and amenities in border villages under the Vibrant Village Programme and encourages setting up a Unity Mall in the state capital or most prominent tourism centre or the financial capital for promotion and sale of their own ODOPs (one district, one product), GI products and other handicraft products, and for providing space for such products of all other States.

Shri Arvind Singh highlighted the fact that this year's budget advocates a shift from department centric and scheme centric approach to a destination centric approach for planning, development and management of tourism. On the occasion Secretary Culture, Shri Govind Mohan said that the Ministry of Culture has the basic objective of preserving, disseminating and also promoting Indian Culture and Indian culture is a very rich repository of ideas, of places, of facets of our heritage, of performing arts, visual arts, monuments which are of immense interests to the tourists not only within India but also abroad.

He also informed that to begin with the Ministry of Culture will develop 5 big cultural spaces in India and going forward more spaces will be developed. These are the places where the tourists will be exposed to the best of Indian music, dance performances, book reading, painting competitions, quizzing competitions and other cultural activities in the integrated fashion. Secretary Culture also highlighted the importance of technology and said that using AI, VR and other digital techniques the monuments can be developed as more interesting places for the younger generation. He also said that PPPs have the potential creating value around these monuments and make them living example of wealth and beauty India offers.



# Resorts Cruising At Sea



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