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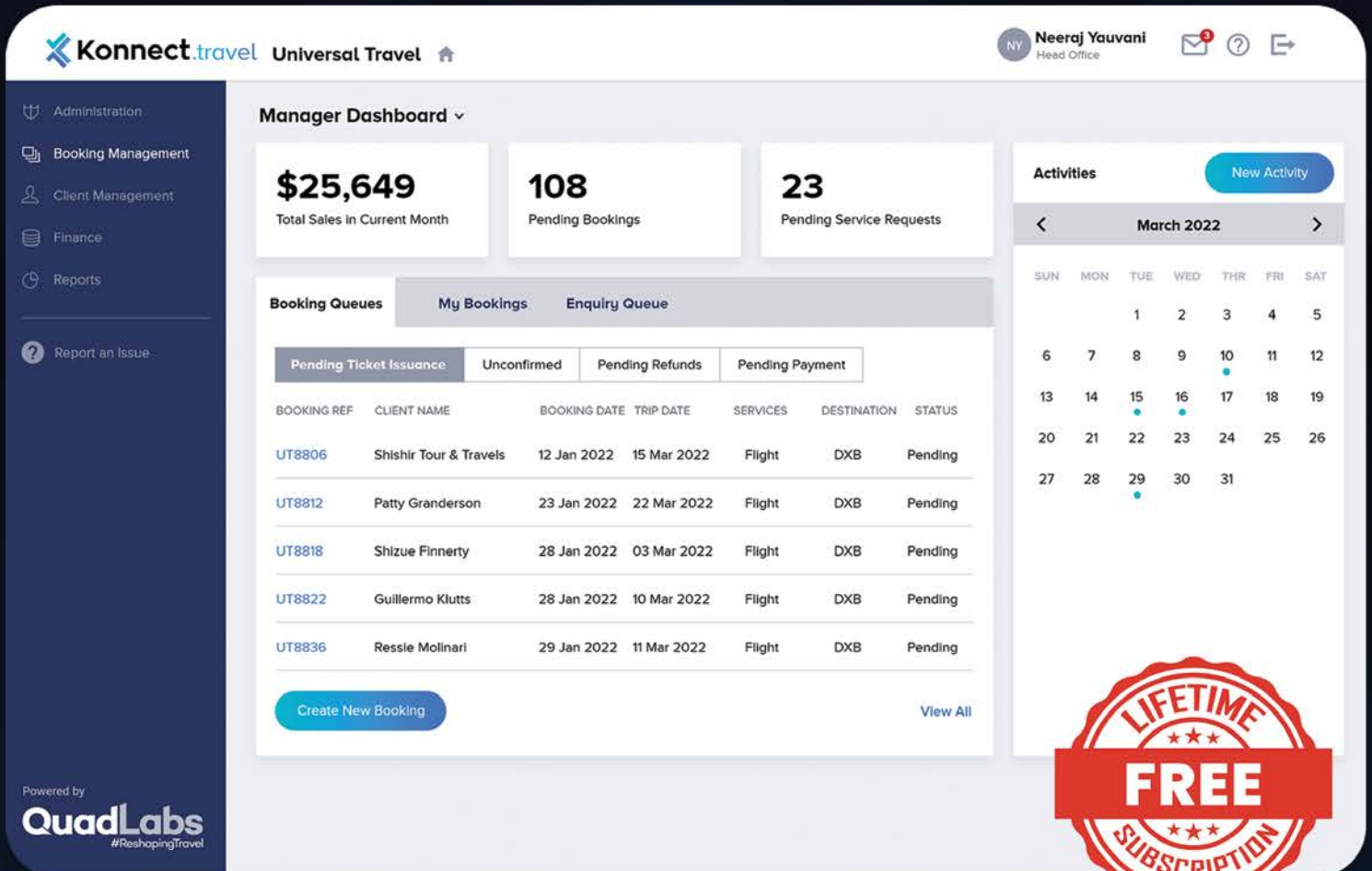
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**Activities** [New Activity](#)

**March 2022**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THR	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		

**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
UT8812	Patty Granderson	23 Jan 2022	22 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8818	Shizue Finnerty	28 Jan 2022	03 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8822	Guillermo Klutts	28 Jan 2022	10 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending
UT8836	Ressie Molinari	29 Jan 2022	11 Mar 2022	Flight	DXB	Pending

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From the

## *Editor's Desk*

Dear Readers,

It's Summertime and Holidays are in full-swing. The hotel occupancies, especially those in the mountains, is at an all-time high. Many hotels internationally are also experiencing high occupancies at exorbitant rates and as for airlines, most of them are running on full-capacity. The Business of Travel is Booming and we certainly hope that you too are riding on this high tourism tide and entertaining good business opportunities.

Riding on this optimistic, BOTT decided to touch base with the leading Cruise Companies handling the majority of Cruise bookings in India and understand from them how efficiently has the business of Cruise Tourism picked up. To our delight, all of them seemed to not only have crossed the 2019 figures but already doing good business.

Cruising has a long history, with the first transatlantic leisure cruise taking place in 1844. This was more than a century before international air travel became commonplace. In those days, long, languid journeys to exotic destinations were a privilege of the well-to-do class. Cruising hotspots included the islands of the Caribbean, the South Pacific, and the Mediterranean. Other popular destinations included central Europe, Japan, and Southeast Asia, and Alaska. These continue to be popular even today, as cruise ships expand their all-inclusive itineraries to ever more remote corners of the globe.

Cruising as a mode of travel has gained enormous popularity and a loyal customer base. They draw customers seeking the convenience of visiting different destinations without the hassle of changing hotels and suffering tedious airport transits. They see cruises as safe and predictable —like going to an amusement park. So go ahead and read what the leading Cruise Companies have to say about the latest trends in Cruise Tourism, their view of the India market – their strategy to up the numbers and the sustainability initiatives.

Happy Reading!

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**  
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## WelcomHeritage Hotels win 17 accolades

WelcomHeritage Hotels celebrate 17 TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice 2023 awarded to 17 of the brand's boutique hotel collection. From the heart of history and nature in the south of India to the north and across; be it in the sublime plantations of Coorg, the locally inspired Houseboats of Srinagar to relaxing retreats in the hills of Manali, Kasauli, Nainital, and Mussoorie, or its heritage properties in the spiritual lands of Prayagraj and Gujarat, finally the suave jungle lodges and resorts in the Central Indian forests and Rajasthan, travellers on the popular travel platform have chosen the brand's properties as their choice of hotel.



## Wyndham Hotels & Resorts announces Ajul Luxury Hotel & Spa Resort, Greece

Wyndham Hotels & Resorts have announced the opening of the Ajul Luxury Hotel & Spa Resort, its first Registry Collection Hotel in Europe. The 171-room, 5-star resort is located in Halkidiki, one of Greece's most sought-after destinations known for its pristine beaches, Mediterranean forests and unique views of the Aegean Sea and Mount Olympus.

## Rosakue Hospitality launches Rosa Vaydantaa in Mussoorie

Rosakue Hospitality has announced the launch of Rosa Vaydantaa Mussoorie, a delightful boutique property located in the popular hill station of Mussoorie adjoining the town of Landour at the foothills of the Garhwal Himalayan range. Furnished in a contemporary design with cosy interiors, the property offers 15 rooms with ensuite bathrooms, modern amenities, and breath-taking views of the mountains and the warmth of home.



## Taj Corbett Resort & Spa, Uttarakhand unveils luxury suites

Taj Corbett Resort & Spa, Uttarakhand has unveiled a collection of lavish suites that will redefine the standards of comfort and style in the country. Coupled with bespoke services and the unmatched hospitality that the Taj is known for, the 11 new suites have been designed to spark a #SenseofWonder in travellers. The resort spans over a spacious 11 acres featuring 75 rustic cottage-style rooms, 2 eclectic restaurants, an old-world style bar and multiple event spaces to cater to guests' every need.

## Sayaji Hotels expands presence in Maharashtra with Effotel Sarola

Sayaji Hotels unveil its newest addition in Pune, 'Effotel Sarola'. Centrally located on the Pune-Bangalore highway, the hotel is well-connected to prominent commercial and industrial zones including the Sarola, Shiwal, Khandala & Faltan MIDC and Pune IT Park. Mr. Ajit Dada Pawar, Former DCM & Opposition Leader of Maharashtra officially unveiled Effotel Sarola in the presence of prominent dignitaries. Effotel Sarola offers 54 well-appointed guest rooms comprising of 42 Premium Rooms, 10 Executive Rooms, and 2 Suites that blend contemporary design with unmatched comfort.



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## TBO unveils exciting bumper offer to energize the travel industry

TBO announces the launch of an electrifying bumper offer designed to create a buzz and uplift the travel industry. This strategic initiative showcases TBO's unwavering commitment to empowering travel partners and propelling their success. "TBO's bumper offer is here to ignite your passion for winning! With a focus on both non-air products (Hotels & packages, Cruise, DMC, Island Hopper, Rail Europe) and air sales, this golden opportunity allows travel partners to maximize their chances of claiming incredible prizes. It's time to unleash your potential and aim for extraordinary success," said Aarish Khan—Chief Commercial Officer, TBO India.



## TravStack unveils Next-Generation travel tech solution; transforming the industry

TravStack is redefining the landscape of travel technology with its ground-breaking platform. Unlike traditional travel tech distribution companies, TravStack functions as an operating system, offering a comprehensive suite of tools to manage self-inventory, integrate third-party APIs, and also build a white-labelled portfolio. With a product-driven approach, TravStack addresses the daily operational needs of travel businesses, providing a user-friendly solution that enhances customer relationship management (CRM) and expedites the customization of packages with polished proposals.

## Korea Tourism launches K-incentive scheme for Indian travel agents

Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) India office has launched a special K-incentive Scheme to boost sales of Korea travel packages in the market. The new initiative, which is aimed towards travel agencies across India, was introduced at an event in Mumbai that was held especially for the occasion and in collaboration with OTOAI. With the launch of the K-incentive Scheme, KTO India hopes to get travel agents in India in the spirit for this being a special year as 2023 commemorates the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Korea.

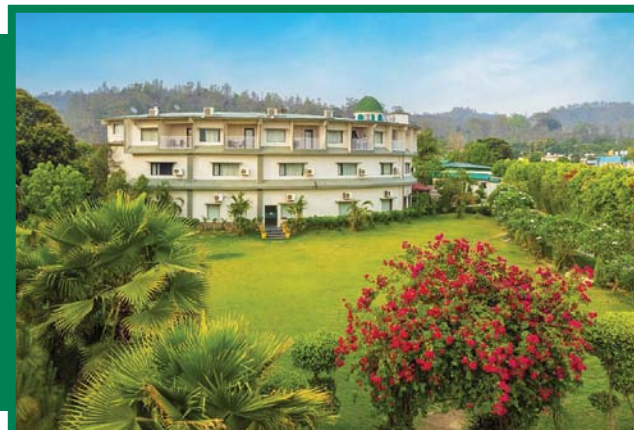


## Outletcity Metzingen hosted familiarization trip for Indian luxury travel agents

Outletcity Metzingen organized a familiarisation tour to Europe's largest outlet, located just 30 km south of Stuttgart, two hours' drive from Munich, Frankfurt, or Zurich for Indian luxury travel agents viz. Apxlore Travels, Travel Arena, Icon Planners, AT Seasons & Vacations and Tour 4 Us. A day trip was organised for a group of luxury travel agents attending IMEX 2023. The visit introduced the travel partners to every aspect of the stunning product and allowed greater insights into the buzzing, trendy and fashionable outlet.

## H&M Services appointed sales partner for The Tattwaa Resort in Corbett, Uttarakhand

Hospitality & Marketing Services (H&M Services) has been appointed as an exclusive Sales & Marketing Company to handle all the sales and marketing activity of "The Tattwaa Corbett spa and Re-sort", Corbett. Ms. Geeta Maheshwari, Owner, Hospitality & Marketing Services shared, "The addition of this property is part of our strategy to spread our wings in the current financial year. Uttarakhand has such abundance of cultural proper-ties and we are extremely lucky to find this Gem and add in our existing portfolio.



# Resorts Cruising At Sea



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# 3<sup>rd</sup> G20 Tourism Working Group Meeting held in Srinagar concludes successfully

*The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has successfully completed third G20 Tourism Working Group meeting, held from May 22 – 24, 2023 in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir. In addition to work talks and discussions, the delegates were also taken for sightseeing in Srinagar where they saw the old Mughal Gardens, the Pari Mahal, and the newly renovated Polo View Market under Smart city Mission. Cultural nights were also held for the delegates in collaboration with the state government. Besides government officials, many senior Office Bearers from various Trade Associations were also part of the meeting.*

BOTT Desk



Addressing the Press Briefing in New Delhi on two key deliverables of the 3rd G20 Tourism Working Group Meeting, Shri Arvind Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism said that all G20 members would submit their suggestions in writing by May 26, 2023 which will form part of the final draft of the roadmap prepared in consultation with UNWTO that will be presented at the 4th Tourism Working Group Meeting to be held in Goa in June followed by the tourism declaration at the Ministerial Meet.

The Secretary, talking about the 3rd Tourism Working Group Meeting, said that many successful side events were organised during the meeting which witnessed high quality discussions from national and international delegates and experts. The delegates were also shown local arts and handicrafts, and also had an interaction with the artisans. The delegates were also taken

for sightseeing in Srinagar where they saw the old Mughal Gardens, the Pari Mahal, and the newly renovated Polo View Market under Smart city Mission. Cultural nights were also held for the delegates in collaboration with the state government.

Under India's G20 Tourism Track, the Tourism Working Group is working on five inter-connected priority areas, which are Green Tourism, Digitalization, Skills, Tourism MSMEs and Destination. These priorities are key building blocks for accelerating the transition of the tourism sector and achieve the targets for 2030 SDGs. There are two key deliverables of the Tourism Working Group, which are GOA Roadmap for tourism as a vehicle for achieving sustainable development goals and G20 Tourism Ministers' Declaration.

The Ministry of Tourism has made positive progress on finalizing the two key deliverables of the Tourism Working Group. During this meeting, G20

member countries, invited countries, and international organizations gave valuable inputs and feedback on these two draft documents. After negotiations with G20 Member Countries on these drafts, final versions will be placed in the fourth Tourism Working Group meeting and Ministerial meeting.

A side event on 'Film Tourism for Economic Growth and Cultural Preservation' was organized on May 22, 2023, focusing on strategies to promote film tourism. The event was addressed



by Shri. Amitabh Kant, G20 Sherpa, Government of India. He emphasised that potential of Jammu and Kashmir to grow as tourism destination that will encourage employment generation in the UT. He remembered how the destination has served as a perfect landscape to create some of the memorable movies of India such as Kashmir ki Kali, Lakshya, Haider, and many more.

Dr. Jitendra Singh, Minister of State, Science and Technology, Government of India addressed the audience by taking them back to iconic movies shot in Srinagar. He highlighted that the movies used the natural beauty of Jammu and Kashmir to create many emotions in the movies of India.

Shri. G. Kishan Reddy, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Development of North Eastern Region, Government of

India, welcomed the G20 delegates and addressed the audience by highlighting diverse beauty and culture of India that makes it a perfect destination to create films. He mentioned that films create strong impact to drive tourism in the country. The potential of Jammu and Kashmir in creative industry has always been explored by filmmakers which attracted many tourists to the destination. ■



# Cordelia Cruises sets its maiden sail to Sri Lanka

*Cordelia Cruises, taking its cruise holiday options a notch higher, recently undertook its debut journey to Sri Lanka, delivering passengers a scintillating holiday by sea. The especially curated itineraries being offered are versatile with options that are spread over a number of days as well as room categories to meet everybody's needs and requirements. Here's more on new route of Cordelia.*

BOTT Desk



As India's only premium cruise line – Cordelia Cruises recently made its way to Sri Lanka for the first time ever. The first cruise sailed away in the presence of Chief Guest Sarbananda Sonowal, Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, along with guests of honour which included Tamil Nadu Tourism Minister – Thiru K. Ramachandran. In addition to this, Chennai Port Chairman – Shri Sunil Paliwal and Chennai Port Deputy Chairman – Shri S Viswanathan also came together with other dignitaries for the inaugural international sailing to Sri Lanka by India's Premium Cruise Line.

Elevating the cruising experience, Cordelia Cruises is committed to offer top notch experiences to its visitors. The new route marks a new chapter in India's maritime tourism industry. Talking about the new launch, Mr. Jurgen Bailom, President and CEO, Waterways Leisure, Cordelia Cruises, said, "Ever since our launch in the India market, we are committed to providing world-class amenities and unmatched hospitality, we aim to redefine the cruising experience for our esteemed guests. Cordelia Cruises served 84000 guests between June 2022-September 2022. In the year 2023, we hope to host over 50000 passengers for our Sri Lanka sailings alone between June 2023-September 2023. We are certain that our new route will be very well received. This initiative is a testament to the Government's commitment to promoting tourism and strengthening bilateral ties between India and Sri Lanka. We are grateful to Shri Sonowalji, Mr. Ramachandran, Mr. Paliwal and Mr. Vishwanath who have graced this milestone and memorable occasion to support us in our vision to make India, a globally renowned cruising destination."

With this first of its kind cruising experience, Cordelia will offer epitome of everything luxury, warm and great. Discovering Sri Lanka, the best of cuisines, scenic sights and an experience like no other – Cordelia Cruises will leave no stone unturned to make this sail a Once in a lifetime experience trip to Sri Lanka for all patrons on board.

Cruising in itself is a whole new experience and Cordelia offers a plethora of entertainment options, which have been curated to cater to all sorts of age groups on board. Some of the shows that must be highlighted are – Balle Balle, Magic Show – Magicians Cut, Burlesque – Burlesque The Bollywood Way, Romance in Bollywood. They also have DJ nights, live concerts and movie nights that are planned on the cruise. Guests can also enjoy the Rock-Climbing Activity amidst the beauty of the majestic ocean or relax at the pool and jacuzzi. ■

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# 'A-ROSA ships are very popular for family and corporate charters': Isha Goyal

*Boasting 50 years of noteworthy representation experience, STIC Travel has become a force to be reckoned with. Representing a broad spectrum of clients from the aviation, tourism, cruise, and car rental sectors exclusively in India, STIC is committed to bringing the best of the world to India's doorstep. Isha Goyal, CEO of STIC Travel, shares intriguing insights about the offerings of A-ROSA, one of the cruise ships they represent.*



Isha Goyal,  
CEO,  
STIC Travel

Priyanka Saxena Ray

## What, in your opinion, is the USP of your Cruise Line (owned or represented)?

While there are several river cruise products out there, the most unique thing about A-ROSA River Cruises is its combination of 'effortless luxury and seamless convenience'. With port stops in the heart of diverse European port cities, A-ROSA offers the most comfortable and stress-free way to see the continent with its premium all-inclusive package which includes meals throughout the day, high quality alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, 15% discount on spa treatments, free Wi-Fi and complimentary e-bike hire. What's even more alluring for Indian families is that children up to the age of 15, can

travel for free on deck 1 on most ships! A-ROSA ships all boast outside cabins and there is always something to see on both sides of the ship.

## How important is the Indian market for the Business of your Cruise Ship?

The Indian market is a very important and fast-growing market for A-ROSA River Cruises. We believe our cruises offer something special for every type of Indian travel segment, ranging from family, multi-generational and group travel, to romantic couple getaways or fun trips with friends. With varying ship size featuring between 63 to 140 cabins, A-ROSA is also a perfect fit for corporate offsites and small to medium-sized MICE events.

In fact, A-ROSA ships are very popular for family or corporate charters and do very well with customised menus, chefs on board and other personalized services.

Regular webinars are conducted by STIC Travel Group, as India GSA, to build greater awareness of A-ROSA in the Indian market. A-ROSA is offering early and super early booking discounts, special discounts for the travel fraternity,





the journey, our mobile app tells the guest exactly which excursions and spa treatments they can book.

## What percentage of the Cruise Tourism business that you handle comprises repeat clientele?

A-ROSA has significant number of repeat guests, as river cruises is such a convenient and easy way to see Europe. One of the biggest advantages of river cruising is that you get to see multiple destinations, but only need to unpack once! Plus of course, every day you see a new destination – it's the perfect combination. Guests also love that accommodation and meals are included throughout, the added advantage of free entertainment on board, plus the flexibility of being able to choose from a wide variety of optional excursions etc. When you add all this up, it offers such great value in comparison to doing a land tour and making all separate arrangements with multiple operators.

## What steps are being taken by your company to ensure the sustainability of cruise tourism in light of growing environmental concerns?

Sustainability is one of A-ROSA's core business objectives. A-ROSA prides itself on working closely with the destinations it visits to ensure each region is treated with the respect it deserves. River cruises take people right into the areas where people live and are subject to strict regulations.

At A-ROSA, the entire company have made focusing on sustainability our number one objective. We are focused on reducing emissions and protecting the environment and its people for future generations. Sustainability must come through in every strand of the business, everything that is touched, every decision considered and made. And companies must be accountable – hence our partnership with the Fraunhofer Institute of Systems and Innovation research (ISI) who will help us create a roadmap for the future, develop measurable KPIs and make us accountable at every step. ■

travel insurance packages etc. to increase its share in the Indian market.

## What strategies is your company implementing to drive growth in the cruise tourism sector?

With social media having such a strong influence on travel decisions today, travellers tend to be a lot more informed about their destinations even before they visit. At A-ROSA, therefore, we try to pre-empt our guests' expectations in every aspect of their cruising experience.

Our shore excursions, onboard experiences and staff recommendations are regularly updated and reviewed to ensure they align with the latest trends in local touring, dining preferences and technology enhancements.

We offer a contemporary and ever varied menu on board –serving a perfect blend of freshly prepared local and international cuisine.

Our Excursion Experts and Destination Scouts are carefully selected offering our guests the opportunity to truly immerse themselves in the places they visit, should they wish to. Options range from personalised cycling trips and walking tours with locals to more conventional guided bus/van tours. A-ROSA ships are famous for their relaxed sundown vibes and evening cocktail service.

## With a growing market of younger travellers interested in experiential and adventure tourism, how is your company handling this demographic?

River cruising, by design, offers a lot

of variety and flexibility to travellers. A-ROSA welcomes all ages and groups aboard – be it families, couples, friends or something else. Recent years have revealed a growing segment of younger travellers opting to combine the convenience of river cruising with the accessibility to the bustling cities and towns of Europe. A-ROSA continues to prioritise reinventing its dining, entertainment and excursion experiences to cater to the changing needs of younger travellers.

Dining – We are continuously introducing new, organic, international menus using fresh, locally sourced ingredients that catering to a variety of dietary preferences including several vegan, gluten free, plant-based options.

Tours and Experiences – At A-ROSA we understand that a lot of our younger guests would prefer flexibility and freedom in exploring the various cities and towns that our ships stop at. A great example of how we are adapting to the needs of this segment is our E-bikes which allow guests to be more active and immersive, seeing their destination from two-wheels.

## What innovative technological features or platforms is your company implementing to enhance customer experiences?

A-ROSA's new mobile App includes so many useful functions, all together in one place at the touch of a button, offering guests more flexibility and control over their individual cruise experience. Before the holiday begins, guests can log into the A-ROSA APP to find all the important information about their route, ports of call, the ship and cabin. Whether before or during

# 'The potential to get India on the world cruise tourism map is huge': Ratna Chadha

*TIRUN Travel Marketing along with Royal Caribbean Group, pioneered cruising in India 30 Years ago. As the exclusive India representatives of Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity Cruises, Silversea and Azamara Cruises, TIRUN offers you unforgettable vacations onboard the most innovative ships, to the most sought-after destinations around the world. Ratna Chadha, Co-Founder & Chairperson, TIRUN Travel Marketing, shares more.*



Ratna Chadha,  
Co-Founder & Chairperson,  
TIRUN Travel Marketing

Priyanka Saxena Ray

**What, in your opinion, is the USP of your Cruise Line (owned or represented)? How important is the Indian market for the Business of your Cruise Ship?**

The USP of the cruise line and the brands we represent is first, as TIRUN we are heavily invested if not most invested in the country for this segment and have been for the last 30 years. Secondly, we offer a host of 4 brands, from ultra luxury to contemporary, so we cover all segments. Thirdly the Royal Caribbean Cruise group is most profitable in the industry today. Lastly, the new builds, with each cruise ship being a revolution in the industry, are being deployed in newer destinations, thus enhancing the experience of both new to cruise and past cruisers.

The Indian market is very important for the cruising sector and that's evident from TIRUN's existence for the last 30 years in this market. Further, India is still a nascent market in this category with few international brands plying but none home porting here currently. Therefore, the potential to get India on the world cruise tourism map is huge and with new builds coming into the market, Asia is probably the next big cruise destination. From this point of view the Indian market

assumes immense importance.

**What strategies is your company implementing to drive growth in the Cruise Tourism sector and how are these strategies adapting to the changing**

## travel trends and customer preferences?

We have aligned distribution to play a larger and more strategic role to drive growth and we, are using technology to create a robust eco system with the distribution, our partners to get close to our audience, who are trending this change.

## Are the Cruise Tourism numbers back to what they were in 2019?

The cruise tourism numbers are dependent on many external factors, Visas being one of them and unless these external factors gear up to handle the new world, with revival tourism, outbound travel numbers will remain wanting and the idea is not to match 2019 figures but go beyond, after a 2 ½ year sabbatical!

## With a growing market of younger travellers interested in experiential and adventure tourism, how is your company tailoring its offerings to attract and satisfy this demographic?

By bringing out these icons in our offerings and more! The younger generation has realised that cruising is not just for 'newlyweds' and 'half-dead', and they have realised that the only perishable is TIME. So, they want value for their time spent with loved ones. They wish to explore unique and adventurous destinations some of which are challenged by land hence, the value quotient of a cruise vacation has become a primary consideration.

## As the world is increasingly embracing digitalisation, what innovative technological features or platforms is your company implementing to enhance customer experiences both pre-cruise and on-board?

Digitisation was a real phenomenon pre-covid and has become now more



so post-covid. Thus, it was inevitable as service providers like us to offer a complete all-encompassing vacation. We needed to be even more innovative. TIRUN has a robust system in place called, partner search and a customised API for the trade with booking and servicing facility, real time, authentic, efficient and time saving. We have also integrated WhatsApp chat on our website as a booking process as customers prefer to chat, as a mode of communication, in this day of speed! The cruise line has also developed an app that allows passengers to begin their experience in their comfort of the home, prior cruising by pre-planning their vacation with appropriate bookings.

## What significant trends do you foresee shaping the future of cruise tourism in the next 5 to 10 years?

Developments of new destinations, new builds and big brands plying in our waters, India on the cruise tourism map, enhancement from 'first to cruise', segments with different categories of cruise vacations on offer.

## What percentage of the Cruise Tourism business that you handle comprises repeat clientele?

As a brand 55% of our passengers are repeat.

## What steps are being taken

## by your company to ensure the sustainability of cruise tourism in light of growing environmental concerns?

Any service provider worth their salt today will and has to take care of the environment that gives it its livelihood, to survive. So, from new technology on the mechanical side, to new age engines and fuel consumption, renewable water supply, filtering and controlling water and food waste and preserving marine life to name a few.

## Is there any more information that you would like to share with us?

The one thing that will allow Indians to cruise the way the world does is to have international brands ply in our waters. This will also allow investments in the category, which is necessary to boost cruise tourism. It will generate jobs and have an overall multiplier effect on the economy, more so the local communities at various destinations. India is a unique destination unto itself with the 3rd largest coast line of 7600 Kms and offers multiple destinations within its waters and on land, unlike most other home port countries. Basically, we need to have the appropriate attitude to grow this segment and just like, "India is not a country but a mindset", we need to change our mindset to flourish and allow, our beautiful country to be among the top few cruise destinations of the world! ■

# India is a strategic source market for Princess Cruises

*Princess Cruises, a global cruise and tour company that annually takes over two million passengers to more than 330 worldwide destinations, is renowned for its consistent product delivery and quality. In a candid interaction with BOTT, Nishith Saxena, the Founder & Director of Cruise Professionals LLP - the representative for Princess Cruises in India - shares insights about the current state of international cruising and the Indian market.*



Nishith Saxena,  
Founder & Director,  
Cruise Professionals LLP

## BOTT Desk

**What, in your opinion, is the USP of Princess Cruise? How important is the Indian market for the Business of your Cruise Ship?**

Princess Cruises operates a fleet of 15 modern ships renowned for their innovative design and wide array of choices in dining, entertainment and amenities, all provided in an environment of exceptional customer service. While each ship may have some different & new features, the overall product remains same. Over the years, Princess guests have consistently enjoyed warm and gracious service in an atmosphere of comfortable elegance. This experience has been enhanced with the noted breakthrough in the vacation industry – Princess MedallionClass – offering a number of new features that leverage touchless technologies and significantly enhance and personalise the guest experience, as well as support new health protocols.

Princess is known as an industry innovator, having introduced many new features and programs through the years that were so well received they were later adopted by other lines, becoming standard throughout the industry. Among them are affordable balconies on many of the ships' outside cabins, 24-hour dining, and a choice of dining venues and flexible dining times. Princess ships also debuted features such as Movies Under the Stars poolside

theatres, The Sanctuary adults-only oasis and weddings at sea officiated by the cruise line's captains.

For Princess Cruises, India is a strategic source market with so much of diversity in the buying behaviour of consumers. Somehow, the onboard offerings, the promotions and the pricing of all popular destinations of Princess strikes a chord with sophisticated Indian travellers. Add to this the excellent relations we enjoy with the travel fraternity across the country – the result is a healthy business mix where everyone in the distribution cycle is happy.

**Which age groups & social strata is being focussed upon in India by the**

## Princess Cruises in Indian market?

Princess Cruises is considered one of the best cruise lines for multi-generational vacations. Our focus in India remains on friends & family groups travelling together. More often these guests belong to the HNI & super HNI strata who plan their vacations very meticulously as a result of which they get better value than the last-minute travellers. In India, such guests are not restricted to just main metros and mini-metros. We find them coming from all





## cruise tourism sector, and how are these strategies adapting to the changing travel trends and customer preferences?

We have an excellent distribution through travel agents across India which we have developed over last 14 years and we would continue to nurture and expand this by way of education, training and market support. We have also enhanced our social media presence which has helped a lot of young consumers to relate to the versatility of the cruise holidays. Needless to say, no strategy is good if it does not cover the entire 360 degrees of the marketing – we believe is consistency in relationships and service delivery – this has proved to be our biggest strength and we would never lose the sight of bigger goals which is the foundation of marketing strategy.

Broadly speaking, we work on an inclusive style of marketing strategy where we connect and include all the stake holder – the consumers, the distributors and the cruise lines. In this, we keep generating marketing material and tactical promotions with the help of the cruise line and keep sharing with the distribution at all times. Many agencies use the marketing material – posts, EDMs and promotional videos of Princess Cruises to further their own direct reach to the consumer –

therefore the end consumer gets a standardised and focus message from all sources which help them in making up their mind faster.

## Please share about the financial security offered to booked passengers by Princess At Ease program.

Popularly known as CFW (Cancellation Fee Waiver), this is a cruise cancellation penalty waiver program available for passengers cruising onboard Princess Cruises. The program offers a cancellation fee waiver as well as baggage protection in a single package, neither may be purchased separately. This non-refundable program is not trip interruption insurance and only covers cancellation fees and passenger's baggage while on the cruise, cruise tour or Cruise Plus and is available for purchase at the deposit stage.

The plan protects the booking against cancellation penalties up to 3 working days prior to the sailing but our office needs to be notified atleast 4 working days prior due to ships operating in different time zones. Princess Cruises instituted this unique program more than a decade ago and there is no other cruise line probably, which offer such a facility to passengers. This program provides a heightened sense of financial security which is why this is termed as At Ease. ■

over the country – at last count, we have guests booking on Princess Cruises from 45 different cities in India. This is also the outcome of extensive market coverage by our sales team during last 23 years since Princess established its presence in India.

## What strategies is your company implementing to drive growth in the

# 'We will continue to promote unique experiences': Naresh Rawal



*The demand for cruises from the India market has been very encouraging over the past year, contributing towards a positive recovery and growth, resulting in an increase in passenger numbers that match pre-Covid levels and also beyond for selected sailings. Mr. Naresh Rawal, Vice President – Sales & Marketing, Resorts World Cruises (India), shares more about the latest trends and their strategies to make the most of the India market.*

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

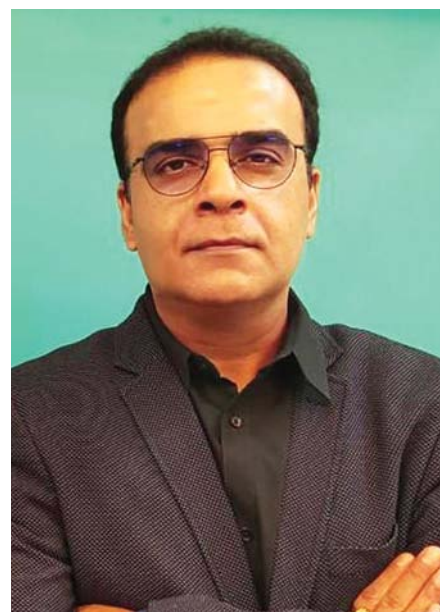
**What, in your opinion, is the USP of your Cruise Line (owned or represented)? How important is the Indian market for the Business of your Cruise Ship?**

Resorts World Cruises is a homegrown Asian cruise line and we have over 50 years of cumulative and affiliated experience in the hospitality and cruise industry. This is one of our strongest USPs that enables us to truly understand the Asian market and deliver best in-class-services. We are in a strategic position to innovate and provide itineraries with unique offerings that resonate with our target audience.

India is an important source market for our Fly-Cruise segment that contributes significantly to the overall business and operations.

**What strategies is your company implementing to drive growth in the cruise tourism sector, and how are these strategies adapting to the changing travel trends and customer preferences?**

Moving ahead, we will continue to drive and grow the Fly-Cruise segment. Reinforcing our B2B level will be essential as we continue to work closely with our travel partners. This include equipping them with updated and necessary 'tool'



**Naresh Rawal,**  
Vice President – Sales & Marketing,  
Resorts World Cruises (India)

and info, including regular familiarization cruises to better promote our brand and offerings. Our focus is also to build the highly potential MICE segment with our partners. With trends evolving, travellers are constantly looking for unique experiences. As such, we will continue to promote unique experiences such as our luxurious The Palace – 'A-Ship-Within-A-Ship' experience, together with exciting

thematic cruises.

### **Are the Cruise Tourism numbers back to what it was in 2019?**

The demand for cruises had been very encouraging over the past year, contributing towards a positive recovery and growth, resulting in an increase in passenger numbers that match pre-Covid levels and also beyond for selected sailings.

### **With a growing market of younger travellers interested in experiential and adventure tourism, how is your company tailoring its offerings to attract and satisfy this demographic?**

In terms of itineraries, popular destinations that appeal to younger travellers will be important, be it cities or island. Currently our destinations for the Genting Dream that include Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Singapore have a mass appeal, including younger demographics, including younger families. We also continue to enhance our onboard experiences catering to this group of audience. For example, demand for our onboard thematic cruises have been positive. Currently, the Genting Dream departing from Singapore is offering the 'Sugar Pop' thematic cruise – a carnival loaded with colours, sweet and fun activities for

guests of all ages. Among the highlights include Pop It Artwork and Slime Making workshops, Pop it Playgrounds and Carnival games, colourful Fondue bar and yummy dessert carnival and more!

### **As the world increasingly embraces digitalization, what innovative technological features or platforms is your company implementing to enhance customer experiences both pre-cruise and on-board?**

We are continuously enhancing out digitalizing initiatives to provide a seamless experience for our guests with our efforts concentrating on contactless experiences. These include contactless check out and payment for guests on ship, accessing the daily activity guide etc. We are exploring more digitalization options that is in the pipeline.

### **What significant trends do you foresee shaping the future of cruise tourism in the next 5 to 10 years?**

In the next decade or so and as connectivity becomes more frequent, the Fly-Cruise segment will become even more popular and in demand. We will definitely see a growing number of travellers covering a wider spectrum of age group, including younger travellers as cruising become more accessible and more awareness is generated on the benefits and value of cruising.

### **What percentage of the Cruise Tourism business that you handle comprises repeat clientele?**

The Cruise Tourism business has a healthy and growing number of repeat cruisers and we are optimistic it will continue to develop.

### **What steps are being taken by your company to ensure the sustainability of cruise tourism in light of growing environmental concerns?**

At Resorts World Cruises, we remain committed to sound environment practices in which a high standard of responsibility has been established to preserve the environment in which we operate. These include increasing energy efficiency, conservation of fuel and water, reducing solid waste generation, increasing recycling, protecting marine life and preventing oil pollution. For instance, the Genting Dream is equipped with Eniram trim optimization; and the exterior hull coating system incorporates the most advanced silicone-based paint to decrease drag in the water and increase fuel efficiency. Also, our ship uses Exhaust Gas Cleaning System (EGCS) to minimise emissions. In addition, we follow the highest marine industry standard and our Bio Waste Treatment system is equipped with dryers with the ability to incinerate or bag waste materials for offloading and disposal. ■





# 'The Indian traveller is evolving and wants more experiences': Arshdeep Anand



*Holiday Moods Adventures has been appointed distributor in India by Havila Voyages – Norway's Coastal Responsible Luxury Cruise Liner; Antarctica 21 – World's first Air Cruise Luxurious Expedition Cruise; Swan Hellenic – Remote Polar regions and off-the-beaten destinations of the World with sophistication & elegance and OceanWide Expeditions – Adventure Activities & Polar Expeditions combo. Arshdeep Anand, MD, Holiday Moods Adventures shares more.*



**Arshdeep Anand,**  
Managing Director,  
Holiday Moods Adventures

## BOTT Desk

**What, in your opinion, is the USP of the Cruise Lines that you represent? How important is the Indian market for the Business of your Cruise Ship?**

We are distributors in India for the following experiential cruise companies which specialise in their own respective various segments. India market is the latest on every destination's aspiration list. The Indian traveller is evolving and

wants more experiences along with remote beautiful places on this planet. And that is exactly what our cruise liners offers.

Our cruise liners and our mutual USP is that we only promote experience & sustainable products. We focus and offer unique immersive itineraries showcasing travel chronicles and inspiring journeys. Our routes and trips are led by our knowledgeable guides who are local experts on activities, food, history and the culture. Our philosophy revolves

around showcasing our destinations by stimulating your senses through exotic smells, delectable tastes and soulful sounds patronising slow travel which will retain amazing memories. From gentle rambles across quaint towns, discovering mesmerising natural wonders, from expeditions cruises to the arctic & polar regions wooing the traveller with experiences such as

Northern lights, Midnight Sun, Arctic Circle, North Cape, Wildlife Encounters & Explore Icebergs to sophistication & elegance ships across seas, we have a bounty of cruising itineraries on offer.

### **What strategies is your company implementing to drive growth in the cruise tourism sector, and how are these strategies adapting to the changing travel trends and customer preferences?**

For the past few years, our strategy has been on promoting the Polar regions. The polar regions being remote are best seen on a cruise. Hence, we have been focussing on polar cruise tourism. Post Covid, the customer preferences and bucket list travel are more trending towards sustainable & environment friendly tourism. And all the cruises being offered by our company are active and experiential journeys done in the luxury of a comfortable stay, delectable local gourmet food and highest level of safety. We have launched our B2B portal on 28th April, 2023 where all travel agents can register free on the specially curated portal, which will give access to their exclusive detailed itineraries, free download of unbranded flyers & brochures. Agents will have the ability to White Label with their branding and contact details which means that they can directly send the quotation to their clients. Since this is our B2B vertical, in order to educate our prospective partners & to create awareness about our unique offerings, along with increasing our digital presence, we are

participating in various roadshows & are holding small 'showcases' in various cities of our country, where we give them in depth knowledge on how to sell these extraordinary journeys.

### **With a growing market of younger travellers interested in experiential and adventure tourism, how is your company tailoring its offerings to attract and satisfy this demographic?**

Holiday Moods Adventures is 26 years young company focussing on adventure & experiential travel; hence all our offerings have always been to this segment of travellers. Post pandemic in this last year we have added on many new experiences to our portfolio, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, New Zealand & the latest being Antarctica Air Cruise. Keeping safety in mind, we have curated unique activities in every place for the bucket list travellers. This demographic is also responsible and eco conscious travellers hence the exact target group for our products.

The B2B portal offers experiential and adventure travel activities such as self-drive, activities in the Arctic Region such as chasing Northern lights while dog sledding, reindeer sledding, snowmobiling as well as Cruise sailings to Norway, Svalbard, Greenland, Iceland and Antarctica and also. Their offerings also include very exciting products such as Air Cruise Expedition to Antarctica where one avoids the 5 days journey time over the Drake's passage, World's first Arctic Train in Norway, MV Quest Arctic

Cruise Expedition which showcases polar bears, Whales and a lot of other winter activities, Luxury expedition cruise to Iceland & Greenland.

### **As the world is increasingly embracing digitalization, what innovative technological features or platforms is your company implementing to enhance customer experiences both pre-cruise and on-board?**

It's the need of the hour to embrace digitization and fast track one's knowledge. We have empowered ourselves with Artificial Intelligence - the future is this! For e.g gone are the days of live chat where 24x7 human interface was required. We have replaced it with a chatbot with well crafted scripts leading a customer to quickly filter and conclude a request enabling a prompt amazing reply back. Tracking customers' digital footprints and sending auto reminders leading them back is another example. Virtual Reality tours are the new marketing tools that are amazing travellers. We also conduct Destination Product learning webinars. We have built our presence on social platforms, marketing strategies, brand awareness, communities... the list goes on! We have embraced technology - The only way forward for growth! We have an ERP installed and invested into technology which has increased our productivity.

### **What steps are being taken by your company to ensure the sustainability of cruise tourism in light of growing environmental concerns?**

At Holiday Moods Adventures, our mission is to promote sustainable tourism with exceptional "Handcrafted Experiences, Stories & Adventures Across the Globe". Our values resonate with protecting the environment, respecting local cultures, benefiting local communities, conserving resources and minimising waste, promoting lesser trodden regions and facilitating life changing experiences for both hosts & the traveller. We strictly promote only sustainable business models. ■



# 'At NCL, we are constantly innovating to meet the changing demands': Manoj Singh



Manoj Singh,  
Country Head India,  
Norwegian Cruise Line

*Norwegian Cruise Line has been redefining Cruise Tourism over the last 56 years. With over 450 enchanting destinations to explore, they have carved a niche for themselves in the arena of Cruise Travel with their unsurpassable hospitality and immersive onboard experiences. They are undoubtedly the innovators in Cruise Travel and have been instrumental in curating experiences of a lifetime for every type of traveller. In an exclusive interview with BOTT, Manoj Singh, Country Head India, shares interesting insights.*

Shreya Shimpi



**How important is India to you as a market? What are the marketing strategies that you shall be implementing to increase your reach in the Indian market?**

India is a very important market for us. We see incredible potential for growth as more people discover the value of cruise and seek to make up for lost time. In fact, a recent survey conducted by Hansa Research on behalf of NCL found

that 8 in 10 urban Indian families who were planning to travel internationally were considering a cruise.

Our valued travel trade partners are a vital part of our strategy for growth in India. Our 'Partners First' philosophy is our commitment to the Travel Trade to maximise their selling potential. We've invested in dedicated platforms like Book-A-BDM, Norwegian Central Asia and our dedicated Partners First Facebook Group for our agents in the region, so that they have the tools and tactics for success.

Meanwhile, we continue to invest in our consumer marketing in India to

inspire travellers to plan their cruise holidays and connect with the right travel agents.

**Which are the most sought after NCL cruises by the Indian travellers? What is the average length of stay that they usually opt for?**

Some of the most popular itineraries for Indian travellers are in Europe, particularly itineraries as well as our soon-to-be-launched Norwegian Viva's Mediterranean voyages that showcase



cosmopolitan capital cities like Lisbon, Athens and Rome, as well as the lesser known gems such as Seville and Sicily.

Alaska remains a fan-favourite, with our ships designed to bring the outside in with plenty of natural light and sea breezes – as well as wildlife spotting opportunities. Indian guests are also demanding holiday experiences that provide more in-depth exploration, which means minimum sea days and late-night stays on land to immerse themselves in the destination and experience the local culture of each destination.

At NCL, we are constantly innovating to meet the changing demands of our guests. For example, in Europe, many of our 7-day itineraries are now 9, 10 and 11 days in length, and also include late night departures in destinations like Ibiza and Mykonos, which come alive in the evening.

### **Has there been a change in the travel trends if you were to compare it to the pre-Covid times?**

Yes, absolutely. People are looking at making up for the lost time by strengthening their bonds and connections with friends and families on experience-based holidays. The recent Hansa research found that 79% Indians

want to travel with their families and for 78% of the respondents, travelling to create memories was their vacation goal. Travellers are no longer talking bucket lists; those big-ticket trips are now on the to-do list. Cruising offers all of this and much more, so we are definitely in the right place at the right time.

### **How was business from the India market in 2022?**

Last year we celebrated our entire fleet of 18 ships back into the water and we are now back to doing what we do best – delivering exceptional holiday experiences at sea. Also in 2022, we launched our most anticipated ship till date, Norwegian Prima, the first of six vessels in our ground-breaking new Prima Class. Norwegian Prima notched up the single-best booking day and best initial booking week for any of our new-build sales in our 56-year history. Then in November, we broke all records when the Black Friday sale period saw our best ever booking day, week and month in our 56-year history.

### **Would you be adding any new itineraries / destinations to your existing ones?**

We're counting down to August

2023 when we celebrate the debut of Norwegian Viva – our second Prima Class ship. Based in the Mediterranean and departing from Lisbon, Athens (Piraeus), Rome (Civitavecchia) and Venice (Trieste), Norwegian Viva will mirror the upscale design and structure of her record-breaking sister ship Norwegian Prima.

Then in October, the newly revitalized Norwegian Jewel will sail into Tokyo, marking our grand return to Asia after more than three years. Norwegian Jewel's extensive six-month Asia season will offer 16 immersive, port-rich itineraries visiting 11 countries and will sail from nine different departure ports, including Tokyo and Yokohama in Japan; Taipei (Keelung), Taiwan; Bangkok (Laem Chabang), Thailand; Bali (Benoa), Indonesia and Kuala Lumpur (Port Klang), Malaysia.

We're also really excited about three brand-new 7-day Middle East itineraries aboard Norwegian Dawn launching December 2023, which will appeal to our Indian guests. Sailing between Doha, Qatar and Dubai, UAE, these voyages feature no sea days and plenty of time to explore destinations like Abu Dhabi (overnight), Sir Bani Yas and Fujairah, UAE; Muscat in Oman; Damman in Saudi Arabia and Al Bahrain in Bahrain. ■

# Aquasail & BOTT host a Sundowner Sail for Travel Trade Professionals in Mumbai

*On a day when the wind is perfect, the sail just needs to open and the world is full of beauty," goes a famous quote, and a recent sail on Aquasail embodied such a wonderful day. BOTT - Business of Travel Trade, in collaboration with Aquasail, hosted a Sundowner Sail on May 19, 2023, in Mumbai. This event was attended by members of the Mumbai Travel Trade fraternity.*

**Shreya Shimpi**

The experience of exploring the City of Dreams amidst the setting sun in an enchanting yacht sailing over the tranquil waters of the Arabian Sea was a memorable and exciting experience which was thoroughly enjoyed by the members of Travel Trade and Tourism Boards.

All the members were welcomed at the Aquasail lounge at Dhanraj Mahal which is well-equipped with all sailing essentials such as sunscreen lotion, sunglass retainers, anti-motion sickness medicines as well as safety lockers and

changing rooms. The highly-trained members briefed everyone about the safety instructions and handed over safety gear-helmet, jackets and gloves as we reached the harbour. Everyone was excited to see the yachts and were looking forward to the experience since a majority of them were sailing for the first time. The pre-monsoon winds added to the excitement of the journey as we sailed towards the iconic lighthouses against the backdrop of the majestic Gateway of India and The Taj Mahal Palace Hotel. The trainer gave us information about the yacht which



**Shakeel Kudrolli,**  
Managing Director,  
Aquasail

is a state-of-the-art, sturdy, safe boat and a part of eighty world-class boats across Mumbai, Mandwa (Alibaug) and Goa (inside Hotel Grand Hyatt, Goa).





## Sail and 'Sailebrate' with Aquasail

Aquasail was founded by Shakeel Kudrolli a world champion in sailing and Zia Hajeerbhoy, (a corporate professional turned entrepreneur). Their dream is to evangelize sailing in India by creating access to safe and responsible boating in the country. Aquasail since then has pioneered leisure and corporate sailing in India. They have a fleet of 80 world class boats located in Mumbai (Gateway of India), Mandwa (Alibaug) and Goa (inside the Grand Hyatt Goa). All Aquasail experiences are extremely high on engagement as people experience something truly unique in our world-class and diverse fleet delivered by a Team of Highly Qualified International Instructors.

Aquasail's speciality lies in providing delightful, powerful and unparalleled sailing experiences to FIT travellers as well as corporate clients. You can discover the joy of sailing, 'sailebrate' your special occasions such as birthdays and anniversaries as well as learn the unique sport of sailing with Aquasail Yachting Academy on their world class boats from certified world-class instructors.

Sailing adds a unique dimension to any get together, a meeting or conference and has the power to delight and to teach, to enthrall and to energise. Corporates across the industry spectrum including BFSI, FMCG, IT and services have been loyal repeat clients who been WOW by what Aquasail offers. They have hosted over 700 corporate programs for leading organisations in the country and have had close to 90000 people sail with them across their corporate and retail segments. They also work in partnership with travel companies and event companies.



We were encouraged to pull the sheets which are the ropes to control the sail as well as to manoeuvre the rudder. The wind, salty sea breeze and the sun setting over the horizon made this an experience of a lifetime. It is said that sometimes we have to disconnect to connect and this experience was indeed a refreshing one away from the hustle and bustle of the city. Aquasail offers a premium sailing experience for FIT travellers as well as doubles up as a great team-building exercise for corporate R&R and Engagement events and MICE. It is known for its responsible boating and sustainable

sailing equipment. You can make your special occasions such as birthdays and anniversaries even more memorable by sailing across the sea with your loved ones with Aquasail.

Zia Hajeerbhoy (Director) and Shakeel Kudrolli (Managing Director) have been running Aquasail successfully since the past 13 years. Shakeel Kudrolli who has a sailing experience of over three decades said, "Seeing the city from the sea is a very different experience for any traveller, and all travellers who have gone sailing have found the experience to be very positive. We are an eco-friendly company as we use non-motorised

equipment and harness the wind for moving the boat. We have a very good sailing centre inside the Grand Hyatt in Goa where tourists come to learn the sport and they also get a certificate. We cater to MICE and corporates and can take up to thousand people for sailing in a day." Speaking about the change in trend post-pandemic he added, "There has been a clear change in thinking about the outdoors and now everyone is appreciating the outdoors even more which has been a positive change. The number of people wanting to sail and learn this sport is much greater than the pre-pandemic numbers." ■

# Explore the fun side of cruising with Carnival Cruise Line

*Carnival Cruise Line is known as 'The World's Most Popular Cruise Line'. They are known for their fun vacations at sea and ashore with their fun-filled activities such as stage shows, casinos, musical nights, deck parties and a lot more. Carnival Cruises are known for their unsurpassed hospitality, comfortable staterooms and a variety of dining and entertainment options. Discover the World-India represents Carnival Cruise Line in India. Dipti V. Adhia, Director, Discover the World – India shared her insights in an exclusive interview with BOTT.*

**Shreya Shimpi**

## What, in your opinion, is the USP of your Cruise Line (owned or represented)?

Our unique selling proposition lies in its ability to deliver the “Fun Ship” experience like no other. With a wide array of exciting onboard activities, top-notch entertainment, and a festive atmosphere, we offer a vacation that is all about fun, relaxation and enjoyment for all the age group. From thrilling water slides, Bolt – the roller coaster, sky ride, trampoline zone, action-packed games to world-class shows and live music performances and much more we create an immersive and lively environment for its passengers. Additionally, we are committed to affordability and value ensures that passengers get the most out of their vacation budget. With our vibrant and energetic ambience, we are the ultimate choice for those seeking a fun-filled and unforgettable cruising experience.

In addition to our exceptional onboard entertainment, we offer a diverse range of itineraries and ports of call. With a variety of unique and

carefully curated routes, we ensure that our guests have the opportunity to explore fascinating destinations. From short 3-day getaways to extended 16-day+ voyages, there are options to suit every traveller's preference. We provide access to an extensive selection of picturesque and culturally rich locations.

## How important is the Indian market for the Business of your Cruise Ship?

We (Carnival Cruise Line) recognise the significance of the Indian market and go an extra mile to cater to the specific needs and preferences of Indian guests. For example, understanding the importance of cuisine, we provide a wide range of options including vegetarian, non-vegetarian, and Jain meals for breakfast lunch and dinner, ensuring that guests feel at home and their dietary requirements are met. We also organize lively events featuring Bollywood music to add a touch of familiarity and excitement for groups. Moreover, special shore excursions are curated for Indian groups based on their interests, allowing them to explore destinations in a way that aligns with their preferences.



**Dipti V. Adhia,**  
Director,  
Discover the World – India

## What strategies is your company implementing to drive growth in the cruise tourism sector?

Our period of rapid growth, welcoming three ships into the fleet over the past year and preparing to bring on two more over the next year, is yielding many fresh offerings across our operations. New deployment plans include several additions to our Carnival Journeys program, which continues



to grow in popularity as some guests choose to take longer and more varied cruises. We have just debuted all new experiences through our “Carnival Fun Italian Style” concept aboard Carnival Venezia on May 29, 2023.

Apart from that, we have some of the most awesome year-round short sailing options which are extremely popular among Indian travellers as well starting from 3 & 4 Days to Bahamas from Port Canaveral (Orlando) & Miami, to Mexico (Baja Mexico) from Long Beach, Los Angeles & to Caribbean from Miami. Additionally, 7 Days to Alaska from Seattle, 10 Days to Alaska from San Francisco and 07 Days Caribbean, Mexico & Bahamas are also equally popular.

### **With a growing market of younger travellers interested in experiential and adventure tourism, how is your company tailoring its offerings to attract and satisfy this demographic?**

We offer fun and adventure through partnerships in the destinations we visit, as well as on board our ships. We are the first cruise line in the world to put a roller coaster on a cruise ship. Mardi Gras debuted BOLT, the Ultimate SeaCoaster, as the first roller coaster at sea in 2021 and sister ship Carnival Celebration also features BOLT as will Carnival Jubilee when she joins the fleet in December. Our ships feature many other attractions across the fleet as well. We even have a partnership with NASA for our youth programs.

This season in Alaska, we introduced new shore excursions including the Khutzeymatten Grizzly Bear Expedition, where guests board a 72-foot catamaran designed for wildlife viewing for a full-day adventure through towering cliffs, dense forests and a thriving estuary ecosystem. They will gently glide through Canada's only grizzly bear sanctuary, which is home to more than 50 grizzly bears, for an excellent chance at sightings.

### **What innovative technological features or platforms is your company**



### **implementing to enhance customer experiences both pre-cruise and on-board?**

Our HUB App is one of the cruise industry's most popular apps. The newest section of the HUB App integrates casino features and functions for each ship and has already proven very popular with guests. Other recent updates include food and beverage ordering functionality, spa booking capabilities, virtual queuing for onboard venues, and important health and safety information. The HUB App helps guests discover all the fun available to them on board, with a full list of all activities, entertainment, food and beverage options. It also features a popular chat function and allows guests to easily access Sail and Sign accounts, Carnival's cashless credit program. On average, over 90% of staterooms have at least one guest using the Hub App. That represents an increase of more than 20% since 2020.

### **What steps are being taken**

### **by your company to ensure the sustainability of cruise tourism in light of growing environmental concerns?**

Our team does a number of things across every ship to reduce, reuse and recycle. Last year, our fleet processed 11 million pounds of recyclables. We've also recently noted a 35 percent reduction in food waste fleetwide, due in large part to our investment in bio-digesters, which we've installed across the fleet to break down food waste into liquid. Our efforts continue toward decarbonisation as well. Our third ship powered by Liquefied Natural Gas, Carnival Jubilee, arrives later this year and we'll soon have Carnival Luminosa plugging in to shore power at the Port of Seattle. We are also working with multiple homeports about bringing on shore power capabilities. These are important steps toward our part in Carnival Corporation's overall goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. ■

# Mayfair Cruises offering luxury experience to Indian Segment

*Mayfair Cruises, which are based in Egypt and are one the best cruises in the world, catering exclusively to the segment of luxury travellers, have now entered the India market. Maggie Petrova, Commercial Director, Mayfair Cruises, gives us an exclusive insight into the USP of the cruise line and their plans of growth in the India market.*

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

**What, in your opinion, is the USP of your Cruise Line (owned or represented)? How important is the Indian market for the Business of your Cruise Ship?**

Mayfair Cruises are based in Egypt and are one the best cruises in the world which cater exclusively to the segment of luxury travellers. They are one of the finest five-star deluxe Nile cruises in Egypt. They cruise across the majestic Nile River and offer you a chance to explore Egypt which is the cradle of life and known for its first great civilization. We have few USPs enlisted below –

- Our solid operational standards, impeccable hygiene+ delectable dining including wide variety of vegetarian and vegan options and

JAIN on request.

- Our unique interior designs and various embarkation options
- We offer the best value for money in the luxury category on the Nile

**Your thoughts on the India market?**

India market is a rising market factor in any tourism-oriented country's economy. It would be foolish to ignore it. Mayfair Cruises was the first company who evaluated correctly and approached the Indian market adequately. We sincerely hope this is just the start of the Indian clients turning their sight towards Egypt/Nile.

**What strategies is your company implementing to drive growth in the cruise tourism sector, and**



**Maggie Petrova,**  
Commercial Director,  
Mayfair Cruises

**how are these strategies adapting to the changing travel trends and customer preferences?**

We are undertaking the following steps to ensure continuous growth in the cruise market –

- Regular presence in big travel shows
- Participating into local sports events



as a sponsor- golf tournament

- Close to or Indian food

### Are the Cruise Tourism numbers back to what it was in 2019?

Not just there, the numbers are even better than 2019 numbers.

With a growing market of younger travellers interested in experiential and adventure tourism, how is your company tailoring its offerings to attract and satisfy this demographic?

- Mayfair Cruises operates on the Nile. It is a classic cultural trip
- Although we try in the destination the entertainment presentations are taken on board more as a support to the local community. It is based on folkloric or traditional dances typical for this part of the world
- However, we provide free wi-fi in cabins, not only in public areas as most cruises do

### As the world is increasingly embracing digitalisation, what innovative technological features or platforms is your company implementing to enhance customer experiences both pre-cruise and on-board?

For the moment not much. Strength is the speedy and accurate answers we provide to individual inquiries and B2B basis. We typically handle every inquiry within 24 hrs.

### What significant trends do you foresee shaping the future of cruise tourism in the next 5 to 10 years?

Operating in this part of the world, it is difficult to see long ahead. However, it does not stop us to dream and wish for the best. We sincerely hope that with the increasing numbers on The Nile, we will start seeing more ecology sustainable requirements implemented,

better infrastructure, communications provided and better logistics with neighbouring tourist destinations – Hurghada & Marsa Alam.

### What percentage of the Cruise Tourism business that you handle comprises repeat clientele?

While not a lot of our clients are repeat, they however, go about sharing their experience with their friends and family and so we get a lot of business that has been generated through good word of mouth publicity.

### What steps are being taken by your company to ensure the sustainability of cruise tourism in light of growing environmental concerns?

For the moment we are undertaking some basic steps, such as reducing the laundry frequency and garbage recycling. ■



# 'All our ships are designed and built locally in India': Raj Singh



*After having played a key role in the successful introduction of luxury train tourism to India, opening up Bhutan to the US market, he had a dream to share the intimate love of his country with the same euphoric joy he had experienced cruising the waters of a lake as a child. The rest, as they say, is history. Mr. Raj Singh, CEO & Founder Antara Boutique River Cruises, shares his thoughts on the River Cruising segment in India – the struggles and tales of success.*

Priyanka Saxena Ray

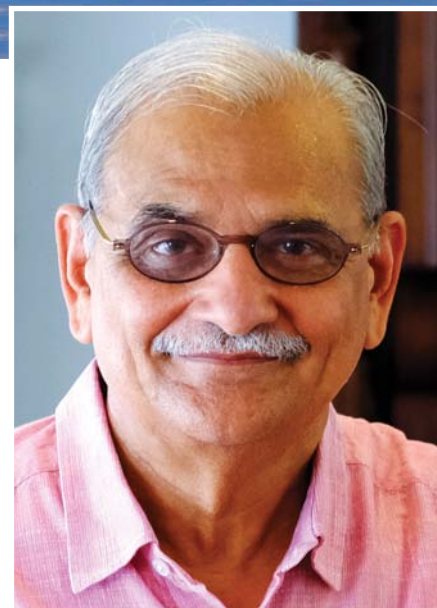
**River cruising is a relatively new concept in India, particularly on the Ganges. How do you see the future of river cruise tourism evolving in the country, and what role will Antara Boutique River Cruises play in shaping that future?**

As an Indigenous firm pioneering river cruises for 15 years, we are leading the way to regenerate our forgotten riparian communities and landscapes through contemporary river journeys along ancient rivers that change the perspective of our peoples and places. Each voyage is manifested through artisanally crafted vessels and immersive excursions that unlock inaccessible landscapes using local transport to offer a personal interface with riverscapes and traditions that change every 50 kms. We are developing India to be the world's capital of river cruising, there will be a cruise for everyone and

no Indian experience will be complete without a multi-night journey along our ancient waterways.

**What plans does Antara have to expand its river cruise offerings within India? Are there any specific rivers or regions that you are targeting for future development?**

We have surveyed major rivers and are cultivating innovative circuits across untouched landscapes that will introduce over the next 20 years with unmatched ships for unforgettable voyages of a lifetime. We have just launched the world's longest river cruise connecting Varanasi with Dibrugarh via Bangladesh for the first time in 100 years, and halting on shores that are rich in historical and cultural significance. Our guests touch Matuari where they watch brassware and carpets being hand created, they walk on the same grounds on archaeological sites that date to over 2500 years in Munger. We



**Raj Singh,**  
CEO & Founder  
Antara Boutique River Cruises

go to Vikramshila, one of the largest Buddhist universities alongside Nalanda and Bhagalpur for its centuries-old Tussar silk weaving traditions. Next, we are launching shorter 2–3-night Orissa sailings aboard our catamaran yachts that offer a unique glimpse into the incredible Bhitarkanika National Park known as the Amazon of the East.



**Sustainability is a crucial factor in today's travel industry. How is Antara Boutique River Cruises incorporating sustainable practices into its operations, and what are your goals for further improving sustainability in the future?**

All our ships are designed and built locally in India, manned with local crew, incorporate local textiles and artwork, international standard pollution prevention machinery, local gourmet gastronomy – we find great joy in offering our guests a taste of the local cuisine of the lands we touch as we sail on. The kitchen ingredients are also sourced from the local markets ensuring they are fresh and apt, packed with the right flavours for the local dishes. We are plastic free and use vegan amenities, and updated navigation systems and health and safety training. We represent and redefine India as

a world class river cruise destination on the global stage and amongst the best river cruise destinations in the world.

**In terms of growth, what strategies does Antara have in place to scale up its operations while still maintaining the boutique and personalised experience that it's known for?**

We've never had a corporate approach to business development and whilst all the crew are highly trained in their respective disciplines and we have appointed VPs to head each holistic activity, every one of our ships is a microcosm with autonomy to reflect the best of India with their unique ship, itinerary and voyage theme. We are organically cultivating new voyages across South Asia, for which we conduct surveys and design itineraries, envision and build the ships and introduce these unique corners of India

to the world with famed service ethos and indigenous quality.

**Can you share with us the key elements of Antara's marketing strategy? How do you plan to make river cruising more mainstream and appealing to both domestic and international tourists in India?**

For centuries wanderers have journeyed to India's famed river as pilgrims, traders and adventures, and returned to the tell of the vast riches but also the challenges of the great distances, access to culture and places to stay. Antara Cruises offers the unique opportunity to rediscover India by waterways as in days of old and directly unlock access to remote forgotten mythologies and monuments, aboard all-suite ships, with immersive excursions, serving gourmet gastronomy that showcases history and geography through the tastebuds. ■

# ARK Cruises: Curating memorable cruising experiences for travellers



Kishan Biyani,  
Managing Director,  
The ARK Travel Group

## What, in your opinion, is the USP of your Cruise Line (owned or represented)? How important is the Indian market for the Business of your Cruise Ship?

The USP for different ships for different itineraries is different. In Asia where Singapore is the biggest half, the size of the ship, the quality and most important for them is food since these are short cruises for two, three or four nights. For a short cruise, it is the port of call, undoubtedly the entertainment and food are important. Indians are the biggest fan-followers of how Indian food is available on the cruise because the segment which is travelling is still between the age group of 35 to 60 years where the food still plays an important role. When we talk about the Indian market in Cruising, it is one of the most upcoming markets in the world. We are not as big as the U.S. and the European markets but we are the upcoming market for the cruising industry.

*The ARK Travel Group Cruises have been instrumental in popularising the idea of cruise vacations and they are one of the leading names in the arena of Cruise Tourism. They have been creating memorable experiences for their guests over the last two decades and their in-depth knowledge about the cruise vacation business has helped them carve a niche for themselves. Kishan Biyani, Managing Director, The ARK Travel Group, shares more with BOTT.*

Shreya Shimpi

## What strategies is your company implementing to drive growth in the cruise tourism sector, and how are these strategies adapting to the changing travel trends and customer preferences?

Being a B2B player we are doing a lot of Roadshows, education on the Roadshows for our travel partners. The principal companies are doing marketing through social media to create awareness among travellers. We have seen a change that putting advertisements in print media has also helped to create a great marketing campaign for the European and American cruises. The numbers have gone high, particularly for the Norwegian Cruise Line campaign.

## Are the Cruise Tourism numbers back to what it was in 2019?

Yes, we are already at the 2019 levels if you look at the first six months of this year. We have touched on the 2019 numbers as far as the cruising industry is concerned.

## What innovative technological features or platforms is your company implementing to enhance customer experiences both pre-cruise and onboard?

Technology plays a big role and we

have already brought in DeckPro four years down the line to bring in most of our Cruise Liners into our system so that it becomes really easy for the travel agent to book online. Even if a customer is sitting in front of him, he can share the quotes within 2-3 minutes for any Cruise Liner in any part of the world which helps in growing this business. From a consumer's point of view, the new tech-savvy generation goes directly onto the Cruise Line's website and makes their booking through the principal site. The cruise lines also say that their online sales are getting higher every year.

## What percentage of the Cruise Tourism business that you handle comprises repeat clientele?

From a corporate point, we have a couple of corporates from the last eight years, every year we are getting one or the other cruise for those corporates but for the FIT segment there are no repeaters of the same cruise but if they have chosen Singapore once they would opt for a U.S. or a European cruise.

## Is there any more information that you would like to share with us?

The travel industry is still rocking as it was before 2019 and there is still a lot to go ahead. People would be worried about the TCS but if you explain properly to the customer, TCS is not a cost it is just an advance tax paid by the consumer. ■

# How to choose the right student travel assistance & insurance

*Aspiring applicants consider overseas study trips as one of the most pivotal future investments in term of their careers. Thus, it is very important for a travel agent to advise them on all the relevant information pertaining to their needs and help them choose a protection plan that suits them best. Dev Karvat, Founder & CEO, ASEGO shares his expert opinion on the same.*



Dev Karvat,  
Founder & CEO, ASEGO

## BOTT DESK

**T**he opportunity to pursue higher education abroad can truly be a life changing experience. However, the thought of being miles away from home and family in an unknown country can be equally unnerving for the family and the student, especially if they are travelling abroad for the first time. Hence, the right planning, guidance, and thorough preparation beforehand along with a comprehensive Student Travel Assistance and Insurance Plan can go a long way in easing those worries and boosting the student's confidence before they embark on this once in a lifetime journey!

Most foreign universities provide their students with an inbuilt University Insurance. However, it only covers basic medical related expenses. Hence, it is best to safeguard your customers with a comprehensive Student Travel Assistance and Insurance Plans, like the ones offered by Asego that not only covers medical expenses, but also facilitates, sponsor protection, compassionate visits etc. and protects other out of campus risks.

Here are some important global assistance and insurance coverages that should be a part your customers' Student Travel insurance plan so that they enjoy a hassle-free university term abroad.

● **Global Medical Assistance:** When your customers are sick or have met with an accident at or outside the university campus, Asego's global medical assistance comes to their rescue with services such as global medical assistance

and emergency evacuation.

● **Overseas Lifestyle Assistance:** During the student's university term abroad, they may want to explore enhanced lifestyle experience such as attending event and trying out local cuisines. Asego's overseas lifestyle assistance acts as a personal assistant at the other end of the phone for your customers.

● **University Excess Medical Benefit:** This exclusive benefit covers unexpected medical expenses of co-payment clause stated in the university's protection plan, therefore reducing financial burden on the students in case of unexpected medical emergencies.

● **Home Country Cover:** Most university insurances do not cover mishaps and accident if occurred outside the campus or in the student's home country. Ensure that you advise your customers to opt for an insurance plan with the home country cover, so that they are holistically protected throughout their study trip.

● **Compassionate Visit:** Compassionate visit cover helps students who are hospitalised abroad to bring a close family member to stay with them. This is a valuable service for students going through a serious illness or injury, as it can provide them with emotional support and help them to cope with the situation

● **University Insolvency Cover:** Even though it is not a common occurrence, the mere thought of their universities going bankrupt in itself can be traumatic for students. Choose Asego's University Insolvency cover and protect your customers educational investments

● **Sponsor Protection:** While choosing

student travel insurance for your customers', sponsor protection is an important option to consider as it can protect them against losses in case of death or disability of their sponsors

● **Study Interruption:** This exclusive cover will reimburse your customers' tuition fees if there is an interruption during their study period such as medical emergencies or death of a family member

● **Injuries during Inter-Collegiate Sports:** If your customers happen to have an inclination towards sport activities, do not fail to advise them about this exclusive cover as it protects their medical expenses in case of injuries during intercollegiate sports competitions.

● **Gadget Cover:** It goes without saying that students carry along numerous expensive gadgets such as smartphones, laptops, digital cameras etc. on their study trips. Protect their digital companions with Asego's exclusive Gadget protection.

Asego's Student Travel Protection Plan is definitely a life saver as it covers not only medical emergencies inside the campus, but also out-of-campus risks and other situations such as loss or baggage and gadgets, study interruption, university insolvency, compassionate visit by family members and much more. So, choose Asego's comprehensive student travel assistance and insurance for your customers and shield them with protection over and above the University Insurance plan. ■

# Jazeera Airways: Making summer cooler

*Jazeera Airways recently made news as it achieved a net profit of KD2.3 million for the first quarter (Q1) of 2023, compared to KD 3.8 million in the first quarter of 2022, when the strong demand post-pandemic was reflected in higher fares. Total revenue for the quarter reached KD48.3 million, up 35.2%, while operating profit was at KD3.62 million. Romana Parvi, Regional Manager South Asia, Jazeera Airways share more on the summer offerings by the airline.*



**Romana Parvi,**  
Regional Manager South Asia,  
Jazeera Airways

## BOTT DESK

### Jazeera has just announced some new summer destinations. Can you tell us more?

This summer season is going to be very exciting! We have two new European destinations –Belgrade in Serbia and Tirana in Albania. In addition, to this we are also restarting flights to Prague, Czech Republic and Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. We announced the launch of Tivat in Montenegro and Shiraz in Iran recently and have also started two flights a day to Riyadh to serve the growing demand.

In total we serve over 66 destinations with, Istanbul, Baku, Cairo, Tbilisi, Prague and, Larnaca continuing to be popular destinations for travellers from India.

### Are there any special packages /offers that the airline is introducing this summer season?

For this summer season, we have given our valued customers special offers on all flights from India to Kuwait and beyond. This offer can be availed on our website and with our online travel agents. Offer is valid till end of June end.

### What kind of value add do you provide passengers?

We are a low-cost airline, so our greatest value proposition is our low fares. Aside from that, Jazeera Airways operates its own airport terminal in Kuwait – Jazeera Terminal 5. This makes transiting in Kuwait quick and convenient.

Our travel extras also make your journey comfortable. This includes seat selection, baggage allowance, airport lounge access and pre-ordered meals among others.

### What fleet does Jazeera operate across its network of 66 destination?

Our fleet currently includes 19 aircraft operating across our network of over 66 destinations. In 2021, we had ordered 20 A320neos and 8 A321neos to support our expansion plans. Two of these were delivered earlier this year and four more are expected in the coming year. We aim to have a fleet of 35 by 2025.

### According to you, what's is the scenario for aviation traffic in India currently?

In India, LCCs have played a very crucial role in making air travel more affordable to the average Indian traveller. LCCs offer affordable fares, which have attracted a large number of the growing number of the middle-class population. This growing number of middle – income households has increased demand for air travel. The rise of international tourism has also been a significant driver of growth for the aviation industry in India.

At Jazeera Airways we have seen an increase number of young passengers travelling to our vacation destinations, beach resorts and nature-based destinations like Istanbul, Bodrum, Cairo, Baku to name just a few.

The Indian aviation industry is expected to grow in the coming years, and LCCs will play a crucial role in this growth. With our growing network, we at Jazeera Airways are happy to contribute to the Indian Air Travel Growth Story. ■



# Emerging travel technology trends that are gaining popularity around the world

*Back in the 90s, planning a trip meant calling up a travel agent and relying on him for everything. The process was long and gave little control to the end customer. Fast forward to 2023, thanks to technological advancement, everything can be carried out in a few clicks. From Googling about various destinations to checking ticket prices, looking for hotels and transportation, everything can be carried out from the comfort of your home. All thanks to travel technology, which can simply be described as the use of modern tech to plan a trip. Sandeep Dwivedi, Chief Operating Officer, InterGlobe Technology Quotient shares more.*



**Sandeep Dwivedi,**  
Chief Operating Officer,  
InterGlobe Technology Quotient

## BOTT Desk

**T**he use of travel technology has revolutionised the travel industry and has made things easier not just for the travellers, but for the people in the industry as well. Here are some emerging travel technology trends that are gaining popularity around the world:

### Virtual tours from the comfort of your homes

When it comes to selecting a hotel while on vacation, some travellers are very conscious of not just the rooms, but the entire surroundings of the place. To solve this problem, many hotels have started giving virtual tours of their properties to help their customers feel more secure about their choices. There are ample 360 VR videos available online that enable travellers to experience the surroundings of a place virtually.

### Augmented reality (AR)

Augmented reality (AR) is another trend that is slowly carving a niche for itself in the industry. Instead of entirely changing a person's surroundings (like in VR), AR focuses more on altering them by adding a layer of the necessary components. While you need an elaborate headset for the VR, Augmented Reality can be experienced through a smartphone or a tablet as well. As per reports, some apps are in development that will enable travellers to learn more about a particular tourism spot the

moment they point their smartphone or tablet at it. The required information will display on their screens, enabling them to learn more about a particular place.

### Controlling everything in a room from a single device

Imagine controlling everything in a room from a single device. This is possible through the Internet of Things (IoT), an emerging technology trend that is gaining more and more popularity as time passes. Under the IoT, various physical devices, connected through the internet, are capable of exchanging data and interacting with each other. This makes it possible for us to control them remotely. Another example of using IoT is the use of voice control devices to set up the lights' brightness in a room.

### Facial Recognition Technology

As can be inferred from its name, Facial Recognition technology tries to confirm a person's identity by classifying his/her face as per various characteristics such as gender, age, etc. The same technology is used in several smartphones as well when all you have to do is look at your phone and it unlocks. Several countries around the world use facial recognition technology at their airports to verify a passenger's details.

In August this year, Delhi and Bengaluru airports made headlines for deploying facial recognition to automate

passenger entry and verification at various touchpoints. A beta version of the app, known as DigiYatra, was rolled out for passengers to pave way for a quicker travel experience for people.

### AI Chatbots

At times, it is not possible to respond to a travellers' query instantly due to several factors. The AI Chatbots are super useful in these situations as they provide customers with quick resolutions 24/7. These bots are used best while answering questions that have a standard answer.

### Robotics

There is no doubt that robotics is a field that is constantly evolving and generates a lot of curiosity among travellers. There are several hotels that deploy robots to greet customers, handle luggage, provide information to tourists, and so on. Another remarkable innovation that has made headlines in the past is a suitcase that follows the travellers on its own thereby eliminating the hassles of carrying a suitcase around on your trips.

With so much happening around the world, we are living in fascinating times and it won't be wrong to say that the travel industry is on the brink of a technological revolution. ■

# SeaWorld Yas Island Abu Dhabi readies to welcome tourists this Summer

*SeaWorld Yas Island, Abu Dhabi the region's first Marine Life Theme Park, has officially opened its doors to the public, offering unforgettable experiences and immersive adventures for guests of all ages. The newest theme park on Yas Island, SeaWorld Abu Dhabi has been developed by Miral, the leading creator of immersive destinations and experiences, in partnership with SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment, a leading educational theme park and Entertainment Company as well as one of the world's foremost zoological organisations.*

**Gunjan Sabikhi**

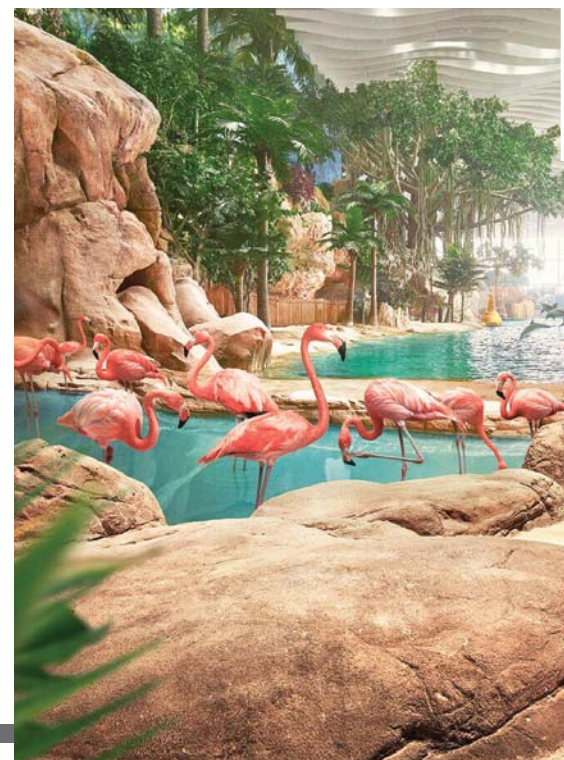
**T**he extraordinary SeaWorld Abu Dhabi Marine Life Theme Park was born through years of collaboration and innovation, combining SeaWorld's nearly 60 years of experience in animal welfare and commitment to marine conservation with Miral's unprecedented track record as a leading developer of world-class destinations.

A landmark attraction that is unparalleled in the region and the world on every level. SeaWorld Abu Dhabi represents the next generation of theme parks, joining the world-class experiences on Yas Island, further positioning it as a top global destination.

A state-of-the-art Marine Life Theme Park unlike anything the world

has seen to date, truly representing a next generation SeaWorld experience. Spanning five indoor levels over 183,000 sq. m., the park tells a captivating One Ocean story, taking guests on a journey of discovery seamlessly blending learning and fun across eight immersive realms – One Ocean, Abu Dhabi Ocean, Rocky Point, Micro Ocean, Tropical Ocean, Arctic, Antarctica, Endless Ocean.

Each realm at SeaWorld Abu Dhabi is uniquely themed and intricately designed, transporting guests to different marine environments found across the globe. The One Ocean realm acts as the core of the park sharing the One Ocean story through highly immersive media. The realm is also home to the Animal Care Centre and houses the portals to





the rest of the park, while the Abu Dhabi Ocean realm invites guests to discover the unique marine life of the Arabian Gulf. At Rocky Point, guests will see sea lions and harbour seals in a hidden cove inspired by the USA's Pacific Northwest. The Tropical Ocean realm features a vibrant and sunny rainforest and a stunning blue lagoon with dolphins, flamingos, fish and birds.

SeaWorld, is home to the world's largest multi-species marine life aquarium with more than 68,000 marine animals including sharks, fish, sea turtles, reptiles etc. in addition to hundreds of birds including puffins, murre,

flamingos etc.

It all seems surreal as you step into the various realms of SeaWorld. Once you step into this magical world, one gets lost in the jaw dropping scenery, grand scale of various themes and impressive unforgettable experiences. SeaWorld Abu Dhabi is a world class attraction where guests of all ages can enjoy unique family-friendly experiences including up-close animal encounters and animal presentations. The park is also home to inspiring entertainment, exciting rides and attractions as well as unmatched dining and shopping experiences. ■

# Thailand Travel Mart Plus 2023 highlights substantial regrowth

*The Thailand Travel Mart Plus (TTM+) 2023 which is Thailand's most significant annual B2B trade event took place from May 31 to June 2, 2023 at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre in Bangkok and focussed on highlighting Thai Tourism industry's efforts towards meaningful and sustainable tourism. Here's a report on the event, which was well attended by leading travel professionals and industry stakeholders.*

Shreya Shimpi

The opening day programme included a Thailand product update and TTM Talk, and the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) product update presented by Cambodia. The TTM Talk on the subject of 'Building A Sustainable Future for Tourism with Innovation Technology' was presented by Google Cloud Thailand. The TTM+ which was previously held in Chiang Mai, Pattaya,

and then Phuket was now hosted in Bangkok to highlight the infrastructure, business prospects and the various changes that have taken place in the sector of tourism after the pandemic to the overseas buyers and media. The theme for TTM+ 2023 is 'Visit Thailand Year 2023: Amazing New Chapters' as the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is taking substantial efforts towards meaningful, responsible and sustainable

tourism and is integrating the brand seamlessly into the slice of a tourist's life. TTM+ 2023, comprised 374 buyers from 50 countries, 435 booths of sellers from across Thailand and the Greater Mekong Sub-region, and 112 media from overseas and in Thailand. Keeping up with the times, rapid digital transformation and the use of technology will help tourists have a seamless travelling experience in Thailand.



This year 'Amazing Thailand Culinary City' was also hosted alongside the TTM+ 2023 with over 30 booths showcasing the various dining experiences, culinary schools as well as live food counters putting the spotlight on Gastronomy Tourism in Thailand. Thailand aims at promoting tourism through its five strong pillars- Food, Film, Festival, Fight and Fashion. This year from January 1-May 27, 2023, Thailand received over 10.37 million international tourists with Malaysia, China, Russia, South Korea and India being among the top five markets. The Tourism Authority of Thailand aims at achieving high value, sustainability and city marketing by projecting Thailand as an all-year-round destination. They also aim at targeting all segments such as sports tourism, families, medical and wellness tourism as well as digital nomads, remote working individuals and luxury tourism.

Presiding over the opening ceremony, H.E. Mr. Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn, Thailand's Minister of Tourism and Sports, said "The TTM Plus 2023 is a showcase of the Amazing New Chapters of Thailand's tourism towards sustainability and being a quality destination. While continuing to be an important platform for all participants to foster a long-lasting business relationship, the event is also envisioned to highlight the leveraging of sustainable standards, technology and Thai soft powers to transform Thailand's tourism sector."

Mr. Tanes Petsuwan, TAT Deputy Governor for International Marketing – Asia and the South Pacific, said, "The TTM Plus is one of Thailand's most significant B2B travel trade events and has gained its own a 'must-attend' on the annual travel trade calendar. This year's event marks the 20th time that it is being held and continues to maintain Thailand's market position, as well as help promote travel within the ASEAN region." The opening event concluded with a reception cocktail-dinner event for all the buyers, sellers and media with amazing food, drinks and a live music band.

**Sukanya Sirikanjanakul, Executive Director, ASEAN South Asia and South Pacific Region** addressed the journalists from India and Sri Lanka and shared her

insights about the growth of inbound tourism, change in travel patterns, efforts towards sustainability and much more.

"This year the TTM+ 2023 witnessed a positive growth in the number of buyers compared to last year. Last year there were 250 buyers but this year there are 374 buyers as well as more sellers. This year we have also added more events such as the culinary event as well as the domestic event in the same place. Last year, we had about 11 million tourists in the whole year but this year from Jan 1 to May 2023 we have already received over 10 million international tourists," she said.

Travel in Thailand is safe and hence the tourists have opted for Thailand after the pandemic. "The Indian market is important to us and we believe that we can reach our target this year. In 2019, before the pandemic, Thailand received almost 40 million tourists out of which 2 million were from India which is five per cent because of which it is one of the most significant markets for Thailand. This year we set up a target of 2 million but since we have some limitations of the air-seat capacity and with airfares still being high, we try our best to achieve the target despite these challenges," she added.

Speaking about their India-centric plans to achieve that target she said, "These two years will be the resumption period for us. This is just post-Covid and we have just opened the country last year and the number of Indian tourists is growing rapidly. From 1st Jan this year until yesterday, we received nearly 600,000 tourists."

The resumption is about 77 per cent compared to the pre-Covid 19 for the Indian market. Highlighting the wedding segment she said, "We have some promotions to encourage the wedding segment in Thailand. We just launched some benefit schemes. Our focus is on both, the wedding planners as well as the wedding groups as we have incentives for both of them. We have many hotels across various destinations and especially beach destinations. We have Indian chefs as well as our staff is well acquainted to handle Indian weddings. Villas have become popular among luxury travellers. We are also looking

forward at exploring the Cruise segment. Before Covid-19, tourism contributed to nearly 18-20% of the GDP of the country and so we need to speed up the resumption. After Covid-19, tourism will be a significant tool as before. We are lacking manpower in hotels and aviation just like the world but we are sure people will come back to the service industry soon and tourism will be a significant contributor to the economy. This year in 2023, we hope for a resumption rate of 80 per cent as compared to 2019. MICE tourism is doing well as we are giving good benefits. The average group size is 150-10,000. Recently we had a group of 10,000 people. Chiang Mai is one of the newly emerging destinations along with Ayutthaya. We also plan to incorporate some cultural routes and community-based tourism."

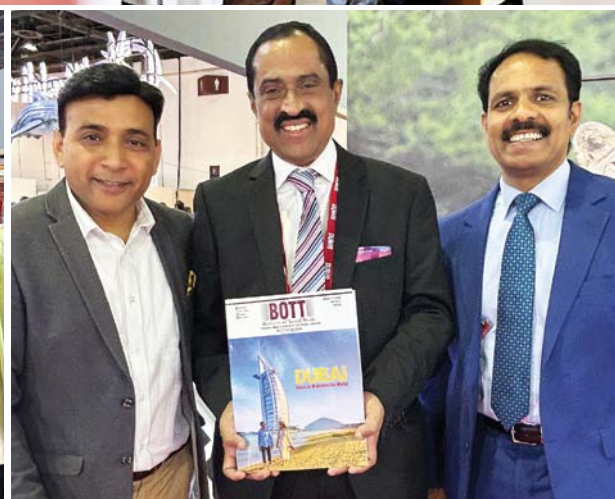
Throwing light on Sports Tourism she added, "Golf has been one of the significant segments for us since we have over 250 golf courses in Thailand. It is not just about playing golf here but the service after that is also equally important. Our unique point is that we have very professional and knowledgeable lady golf caddies."

Speaking about the change in the trends of travel after the pandemic she said, "There is more FIT and more of solo travellers who look for remote areas or new destinations which are not as crowded. Of course, the popular destinations continue to remain popular among the tourists but they are looking for newer destinations as well. The length of stay too has increased. In terms of weddings, the TAT-Tourism Authority of Thailand would like to focus on sustainability and that is why next year, the Executive Director wishes to focus on high value and sustainability. We have also come up with 'Celebrate with Care' which means the focus of the wedding group should be on sustainability. From our supply side, we wish to provide them with something which is more environmental-friendly and we shall recruit a hotel which can manage weddings in a much more environmentally-friendly way by creating live food stations and using food waste to make fertilizers in their properties." ■

# ATM IS BACK!

Registers 29% year-on-year growth in attendees

**M**ore than 40,000 people – including 30,000 visitors – attended the 30th edition of Arabian Travel Market (ATM), which concluded last week in Dubai, UAE. This not only represents a year-on-year increase of 29% in attendees compared to 2022, it also represents a 5% increase over 2019, establishing a new record for the show, demonstrating that the Middle East's travel and tourism sector is booming. In line with ATM 2023's theme, 'Working Towards Net Zero', more than 2,100 exhibitors and representatives from over 150 countries gathered at Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) to explore how the industry can ensure sustainable travel for future generations.





# 'Aamaghati will be No.1 choice for guests in Ranthambore': Abhishek Hissaria

*The year 2023 has been a great learning year for many in tourism, where business dynamics changed fast and how! Abhishek Hissaria, Owner and Managing Director, Aamaghati Resort feels that the biggest challenge for any hospitality vertical today is satisfying the customer's needs. In an endeavour to showcase his newly opened resort, a media and travel agents FAM was hosted in the premises.*

Pallavi Sharma

## Can you share with us the idea behind taking the FAM to Aamaghati Resort? Was the trip a success?

The main reason for this fam was to make the domestic travel fraternity familiar with the product and Ranthambore. Since Aamaghati is a unique resort in terms of design and service (here I must mention Aamaghati is the first wildlife-themed resort in Ranthambore and the name itself is dedicated to the valley where the queen of Ranthambore Forest & most photographed Tiger Ever "Machli" lived her last years) it is critical for the travel trade to understand our resort & its service elements. There are a lot of initiatives taken with regards to water conservation, ZERO plastic policy, and Less Carbon emission. Our Sri Sri Wellness Centre, which is the first of its kind in Rajasthan and overall service elements help us deliver a great guest experience at Aamaghati Wildlife Resort.

## In the post-pandemic scenario, what is the relevance of Domestic Travel still?

Post Pandemic domestic travel was the one which made all hotels survive the most difficult phase of life and opened new dynamics of business. I feel domestic travel and short breaks are here to stay for a longer period and I guess even our government is trying to promote the same, which eventually helps the economy so much.

## How has the year 2023 been so far for your company in terms of business?

2023 has been a great learning year, where business dynamics have changed so much and so fast. I think today's most challenging aspect is meeting the ever-growing and changing demand of the guests. Since ours is a new resort so



**Abhishek Hissaria,**  
Owner and Managing Director,  
Aamaghati Resort

difficult to say numbers and but yes, we are growing every hour and every day.

## Can you share with us some highlights of the Aamaghati Wildlife Resort?

Aamaghati Wildlife Resort is a guest satisfaction-oriented and wildlife-themed resort, where you will hardly hear "NO" to any request of guests. Our entire team does their best for guests' satisfaction and happiness & I guess that's what is making us grow every day.

## How important is the wedding / MICE market for you?

Wedding and MICE both these segments are huge today and I guess no resort or hotel can make the mistake of ignoring this segment. However, because of the quality of the resort, we look forward to do high-end intimate weddings and high-end conferences. In fact, we already have a few confirmed with us and will look forward to having more. Aamaghati Wildlife Resort will be the number one choice of guests visiting Ranthambore in times to come and that's what we are aiming to achieve in times to come. ■



# TAAI announces Convention in Colombo from July 6-9, 2023

New Delhi, May 25, 2022

**T**ravel Agents Association of India (TAAI) on the invitation from the Sri Lankan Tourism Promotion Board (SLTPB) will be holding its 67th Convention and Exhibition in Colombo, Sri Lanka from July 6 – 9, 2023 in Association with SLAITO.

TAAI, which was supposed to host its Convention in Sri Lanka last year, is sticking to its commitment and taking a good-size delegation to the Island Country, which is recovering well from its economic crisis experienced last year. The Convention, will have post tours, offering people a good chance to experience all that Sri Lanka has to offer.

Mrs. Jyoti Mayal, President, of TAAI, says, “We have been waiting for almost a year to host our Convention in Sri Lanka and we are really glad that this is finally happening. Sri Lanka is a beautiful country, and we are positive that our members will create good synergy with the local tour operators in Sri Lanka and collectively we will be able to increase the tourist traffic between the two countries that are already bound by the Spiritual thread. SLTPB wants India Tourism Industry to be part of its growth story and witness the revival of the island country. Sri Lanka has already welcomed around 75,000 Indian visitors this year (up till April 30) making India its biggest source market. They are excited to roll out the red carpet for around 500 Indian delegates, including media, who would be attending the Convention. With the focus to formulate a Vision Plan for the future of TAAI, the Convention will witness meaningful discussions and debates that will help our members become stronger in their business area.”

Mr. Amish Desai, MC Member, TAAI disclosed the theme of the Convention as – Transcending Borders – Transforming Lives.



Mr. Jay Bhatia, Vice President, TAAI shared the schedule of the Convention with the media. “As per the tentative schedule, delegates will arrive in Colombo on July 6 and there will be a media briefing between 3 – 5 pm for the local as well as Indian media. The opening ceremony will take place at 7 pm at BMICH. On July 7 and 8, there will be Business Sessions and Knowledge Discussions from 10am – 1pm. From 2 – 5pm, there will be B2B Meetings for around 200 delegates while the balance of delegates will go on city tour and sightseeing on both days. A theme Dinner is planned for July 7 at Temple Trees, the official residence of the PM of Sri Lanka and on July 8, a Gala evening is planned at the Heritance Negombo Hotel, which is a beautiful property, where delegates will be able to enjoy a fun evening on the beach. On July 9 the delegates can opt for day excursions from Colombo to Bentota / Kandy / Galle. They can also go for an overnight tour to the said places. 50 delegates per excursion/ post tours shall be accommodated on first-cum-fist basis. More details on Speakers and Sessions will be shared as and when will be decided,” he outlined.

Mr. Lokesh Bettaiah, Hon. Secretary General, TAAI sharing details of the Convention registration said that it is mandatory for all delegates to register online for this Convention. “We have

made the process extremely user-friendly with all details regarding hotels and airlines clearly listed on the website along with all payment gateways. The Online Registrations will start from May 28 (Sunday) and we encourage you all to register in good numbers,” he said.

Mr. Paras Lakhia, MC Member, TAAI will be handling the airline’s bookings and shared that they have negotiated the pricing with four partner airlines – Sri Lankan Airlines, Air India, IndiGo, and Air Vistara.

“There is no Convention Hotel as such this time. The Inauguration is at BMICH, Day 2 Sessions are at Cinnamon Grand and Day 3 Sessions are at Shangri – La, followed by the B2B sessions in the respective hotels. Sri Lankan Tourism Ministry along with TAAI has made a request to the Hon. President of Sri Lanka for Free Visa for all Convention delegates. & further going for all Indian Tourists. We are awaiting confirmation on the same,” said Mrs. Mayal, adding, that she has seen a heart-warming dedication and commitment by the young and dynamic Sri Lankan Tourism Minister Harin Fernando along with the very committed & hospitable team of SLAITO to host TAAI for a successful convention. “Meanwhile, let’s not disclose all details and let there be some surprise elements for the delegates also,” concluded Mrs. Mayal. ■

# Know what your stars say about June 2023



*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 the banner - Tathaastu. Here are her predictions for June 2023.*



**March 21 – April 20**

Efficient performance on the professional front is likely to enhance the career prospects. In addition to this, you are likely to take care of the domestic responsibilities willingly, which will make your loved ones happy. Travelling with family can be expected during this month.



**July 23 – August 21**

You may have an abundance of ideas that could keep you at the forefront in all sphere of life. Indulge in yoga and meditation and make it a part of your daily life. It's important to take break from your busy schedule and have fun with family and friends.



**November 23 – December 22**

On professional front you may find it difficult to achieve set goals on time. It is advised to work hard and if required seek some help. If you are planning to buy property you should not rush into anything. Your mood swings could affect your family.



**April 21 – May 21**

On the professional front, you are likely to contemplate how you can be more effective and efficient. Spending time together with your spouse may bring deeper mutual understanding. Invest wisely otherwise you may face loss in future. Take good care of your health.



**August 22 – September 23**

Clear thinking and logical reasoning may assist you in making prudent life decisions. Do not lose confidence in stressful situations. Plan to manage your finances. Follow a healthy routine.



**December 23 – January 20**

Search the job will be successful. Career success is possible by putting thoughts into action. Recovery from illness is expected. Do a research work before doing any kind of investment. Spend time with family.



**May 22 – June 21**

Freedom to learn from innovative activities would prove helpful in undertaking successful experiments on the professional front. It is important for you to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Spend some quality time with family.



**September 24 – October 23**

It would be best to keep looking at the bright side of things. You may have to take an additional responsibility on the professional front. Do not invest in risky ventures. Inculcate healthy habits in your daily routine.



**January 21 – February 19**

Change of career is possible for greater success. Open and honest communication is required for successful relationship. Take care of your health. You will indulge in spirituality this month.



**June 22 – July 22**

There is a good chance that all your effort will pay off in the coming weeks. You may soon get a taste of success. Your initiative on the social front is likely to make your family members happy. A family trip is also on the cards.



**October 24 – November 22**

To approach life with more confidence and maturity, you must let go of your worries, fears, and concerns. Restrain yourself from investing your money without proper knowledge. Initiatives taken on the health front will benefit you. Your relationship with your spouse will be strong.



**February 20 – March 20**

Harmony and balance will be there at your work front. Career growth is there in your card. Ideal time to getting into business partnership. Recovery from illness is imminent. Indulgence in spirituality will bring harmony. Likely meeting your prospective partner.

# YOUR STORY STARTS HERE

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## #First Opinion



"WelcomHeritage represents the finest traditions of Indian hospitality. We consistently strive to offer services that go beyond Guests' satisfaction, while maintaining our ethos and principles of preserving the local cultural and natural heritage of the destination the property is situated in and continuing our pursuit in showcasing the lesser-known destination to the traveller. The brand's boutique collection segment has been curated over years of careful partnerships, streamlining processes, and actively pursuing the evolving market needs has earned WelcomHeritage Hotels a reputation of being a dynamic, nimble, and innovative force in the hospitality industry."

**Abinash Manghani, Chief Executive Officer of WelcomHeritage Hotels**



"As we steadfastly execute our strategy 'Towards New Heights and Across New Frontiers', we are poised to establish unparalleled connections between people and places. The addition of these exciting new destinations, new direct flight routes, enhanced flight frequencies, and strategic codeshare partnerships, will help us expand our footprint across four continents with Africa and Central Asia being penetrated for the first time. With this expansion in our network, we will now be directly touching 32 international destinations (up from 26), next to our 78 domestic destinations."

**Pieter Elbers, CEO, IndiGo**



"We couldn't be happier to be expanding our offering in India, it's a destination our people and customers love to fly to. Known as India's Silicon Valley, the rapidly growing city of Bengaluru represents an incredibly exciting opportunity for us as we continue to expand our India offering, offering increased connectivity for customers not only between the city and the UK but to key tech hubs in the US including Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Whether travelling for business or leisure, we look forward to welcoming customers onboard offering them our signature personalised experience, delivered by our amazing people."

**Juha Jarvinen, Chief Commercial Officer, Virgin Atlantic**



"TBO is thrilled to announce the launch of an electrifying bumper offer designed to create a buzz and uplift the travel industry. With a focus on both non-air products (Hotels & packages, Cruise, DMC, Island Hopper, Rail Europe) and air sales, this golden opportunity allows travel partners to maximise their chances of claiming incredible prizes. It's time to unleash your potential and aim for extraordinary success. TBO is dedicated to rewarding and recognizing the hard work and dedication of its travel partners, and this bumper offer is a testament to that commitment. This strategic initiative showcases TBO's unwavering commitment to empowering travel partners and propelling their success."

**Aarish Khan – Chief Commercial Officer, TBO India**



"It is now a common trend to book flights and hotels early. We urge you to do the same for visas too. Most countries accept visa applications up to 90 days (3 months) before your date of travel and now Schengen countries accepts visa up to 6 months before your date of travel. Apply well in advance of your planned travel dates to avoid last-minute surprises and plan ahead the weekends, public holidays and respective countries embassy holidays and have few buffer days for unexpected delays and courier days. Also in my opinion, abstain from 'visa shopping', unfortunately a trend prevalent among Europe-bound travellers as tourists tend to applying for Schengen visas countries wherever appointments are available. We strongly discourage applicants from doing so."

**Rajan Dua – Co-Founder and Managing Director, Udaan India**



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