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From the
*Editor's
Desk*

Dear Readers,

In this Special November Issue of BOTT Magazine, we are delighted to present the vivid travel and tourism experiences that continue to shape our world. As we participate in the esteemed assembly at the 2023 World Travel Mart (WTM) in London, we embark on an extraordinary journey through the perspectives of those shaping the future of travel.

This edition unveils exclusive interviews with senior officials from prominent state tourism boards, including Maharashtra, West Bengal, Punjab, and Bihar. Furthermore, we delve into the realm of hospitality with illuminating discussions with senior executives from renowned brands such as IHCL and Lemon Tree. These conversations provide insights into the ever-evolving landscape of the hospitality industry.

Our globe-trotting exploration takes us to the captivating UNWTO 25th General Assembly, hosted in the enchanting city of Samarkand, Uzbekistan, where BOTT Magazine had the distinct privilege of being a special media invitee. We offer you an exclusive insider's perspective on this remarkable event.

To satiate your wanderlust, we venture to international destinations like New Orleans and Bahrain, both extending warm invitations to Indian travellers. These travelogues provide a glimpse of the fascinating experiences awaiting you in these far-flung corners of the globe.

In addition to these highlights, anticipate the latest news, updates, and extensive coverage of industry roadshows and events. This edition features insights from two major industry gatherings, the IATO convention and TIES 2023, offering an inside view of these significant events in the world of travel and tourism.

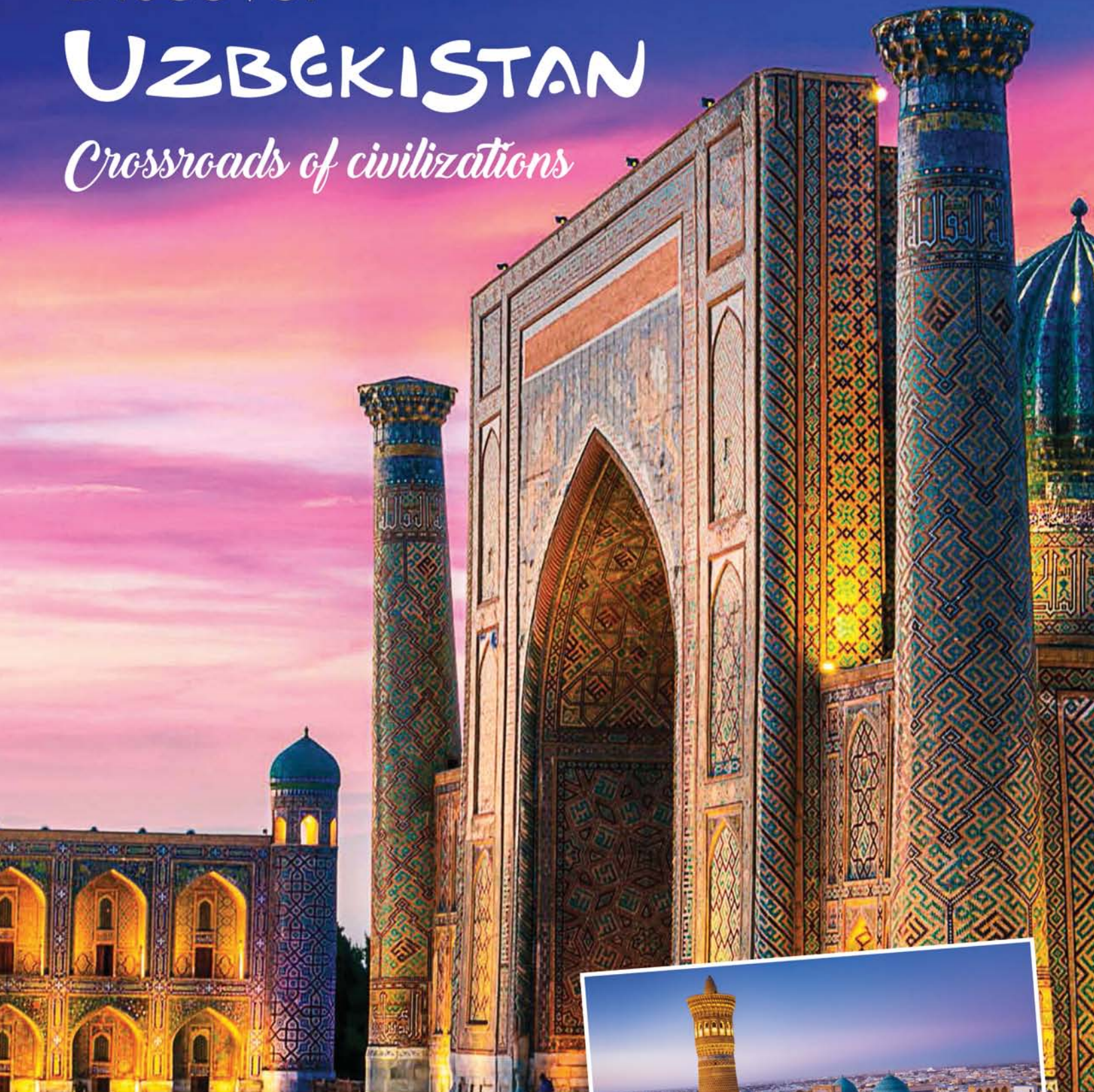
Join us on this extraordinary journey, one as diverse and dynamic as the ever-evolving world of travel.

Happy reading and happy travels!

Priyanka Saxena Ray
priyanka@bottindia.com

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General Atlantic to acquire a minority stake in TBO.com

General Atlantic (GA), a leading global investor, has entered into an agreement with entities held by Affirma Capital to acquire a minority stake in TBO Tek Ltd ('TBO' or 'Company'). Subsequent to this transaction, Affirma Capital will continue to remain invested in the Company.

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India Convention Promotion Bureau

Sponsored by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India

ICPB's 14th CIC scheduled from December 7-9 in Gujarat

India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB) announces its 14th Conventions India Conclave (CIC) from December 7-9, 2023 at Gandhinagar. Hosted buyers will be selected through a selection process. Qualified buyers will be eligible for reimbursement of air fare, accommodation of partner, hotels, hosted meals, as per the programme. There will be 24 fixed mandatory meetings with the exhibitors, invitation to social and networking function, option to participate in post tours and more.

ATOAI Convention to take place from December 16-19 in Gujarat

The Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) is set to organise its 15th Annual Convention at the Statue of Unity from December 16-19, 2023. The theme of the convention this year is – Indian Adventure Travel: Exploring New Frontiers. ATOAI explores emerging hot spots in the country to showcase their potential as an adventure tourism destination bringing in focus the newer and established adventure products and exposing it to the adventure travel fraternity at large and providing networking opportunities with the local stakeholders.



TAT and AIS 5G launch 'Welcome Back to Thailand' campaign

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) in partnership with AIS 5G has launched a 'Welcome Back to Thailand' campaign offering specially-branded 'Amazing Thailand SIM' card with a one-day trial of 8GB max speed internet and a range of travel privileges to mark the upcoming high tourist season. The campaign runs from October 17, 2023 to March 31, 2024. A total of one million Amazing Thailand SIM cards will be offered to tourists.



Atout France organises 5th edition of its B2B showcase in Kochi

Atout France-France Tourism Development Agency recently organised the 5th edition of its flagship B2B event, Explore France in Kochi from October 10 - 12, 2023. The event provided a perfect platform in building successful synergies between French tourism partners and the travel trade fraternity pan India. The French delegation comprised of partners who have maintained a steady presence on the market and new entrants interested to make a foray into the market.



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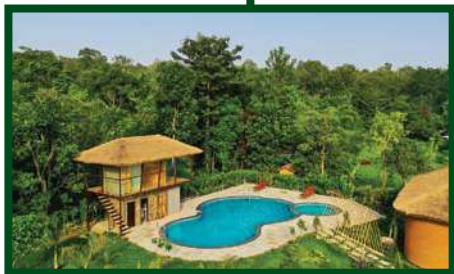
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Pride Resort Ambaji (Gujarat) opens to public

Pride Hotels announces the grand opening of Pride Resort Ambaji. Pride Resort Ambaji boasts meticulously designed rooms and villas, each offering the ultimate in comfort. Guests can indulge on a diverse culinary journey at its in-house restaurant. The resort also boasts a sparkling swimming pool and well-equipped banquet halls, making it an impeccable choice for special events and gatherings.



jüSTa Lazy Haven Corbett to opened in October 19

jüSTa Hotels & Resorts will open its first resort in Corbett on October 19, 2023. The hotel is located 200 meters away from a river stream. The resort has 24 rooms in two categories – Superior Room with Balcony and Deluxe Room with Balcony. It also has a swimming pool with a kids' pool, a multicuisine restaurant that can accommodate 48 people as well as a spa.

WelcomHeritage Santa Roza opens in Kasauli

WelcomHeritage Santa Roza has now opened its doors to guests and visitors. Featuring 12 well-appointed deluxe rooms as well as 20 suites and cozy cottages that comprise separate living rooms and balconies, WelcomHeritage Santa Roza is an ideal choice for solo travellers, couples, and friends.



Radisson Blu Hotel Pune Kharadi launches 'Wedding Memoir'

Radisson Blu Hotel Pune Kharadi has announced the launch of "Wedding Memoir," a one-of-a-kind, all-inclusive solution designed to transform wedding and pre-wedding events into enchanting realities. The launch event of 'Wedding Memoir' took place on October 13, 2023, at Radisson Blu Hotel Pune Kharadi, featuring a captivating cocktail dinner rendezvous. This remarkable initiative consolidates every element needed to bring your dream wedding to life.

Lemon Tree Hotels signs agreement for new hotel in Dehradun

Lemon Tree Hotels has signed a license agreement for a 55-room property in Uttarakhand's Dehradun. This property, operating under the company's brand 'Keys Prima by Lemon Tree Hotels' is slated to open by the financial year 2027. Keys Prima by Lemon Tree Hotels will include 55 furnished rooms, along with a restaurant, bar, banquet hall, meeting rooms, and various other public spaces, the company said.



Air India launches non-stop service between Bengaluru & Singapore

Air India has launched a non-stop service between Bengaluru and Singapore from October 22, 2023. AI392 will depart Bengaluru at 2230 hrs to reach Singapore at 0540 hrs the next morning. The return flight AI393 will take off from Singapore at 0640 hrs to land in Bengaluru at 0835 hrs (All Local Time). The flight, operated with an Airbus A321 aircraft, will have a two-class configuration of 170 Economy and 12 Business Class seats and operate four days a week on Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Sundays.

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It's time to unlock Maharashtra's immense tourism potential

*Maharashtra possesses significant untapped potential, showcasing its diverse strengths that set it apart. The state boasts pristine beaches, unparalleled sea forts, a rich wildlife ecosystem, picturesque hills, and invaluable heritage sites like Ajanta and Ellora. This plethora of attractions presents ample opportunities for growth and development. Maharashtra's proactive endeavours, such as launching the Deccan Odyssey luxury train, are poised to place the state prominently on the global tourism map, further unlocking its remarkable tourism potential. In an exclusive chat with **BOTT**, Smt. Radhika Rastogi, IAS, Principal Secretary (Tourism), Tourism and Culture Affairs Department, Government of Maharashtra shares details on new marketing plans, sustainability initiatives and more.*

Priyanka Saxena Ray



Radhika Rastogi, IAS,
Principal Secretary (Tourism), Tourism
and Culture Affairs Department,
Government of Maharashtra

Initiatives undertaken by Maharashtra Tourism

Maharashtra Tourism has taken a lot of initiatives this year, especially post

Covid, as we want to boost tourism and make tourists have a plethora of experiences. Our focus is to showcase the variety that Maharashtra has to offer. You can have experiences related to sea, inland waters, mountains, the villages, the forests, wildlife and more - its endless. If you want history, culture, heritage – Maharashtra has that too along with abundant nature made wonders also such as Lonar. Another thing that we are trying to promote now that has not been highlighted much is Stepwells. For example, one district in Maharashtra called Parbhani has 52

“Maharashtra Tourism has taken a lot of initiatives this year, especially post Covid, as we want to boost tourism and make tourists have a plethora of experiences. Our focus is to showcase the variety that Maharashtra has to offer. You can have experiences related to sea, inland waters, mountains, the villages, the forests, wildlife and more - its endless. If you want history, culture, heritage – Maharashtra has that too. Another thing that we are trying to promote now that has not been highlighted much is Stepwells.”

Stepwells or even more. Each Stepwell is a different design with great beauty but unfortunately not many people know about it. We want the tour operators to bring people there and make these places popular.

Tourist Numbers

I think we have already reached or maybe even crossed the pre pandemic number of tourists. Traditionally, Mumbai being the commercial capital, MICE related tourism has always been there in Mumbai, Pune, Thane, Nashik and in recent times, Nagpur has also emerged in a big way. With Samruddhi Mahamarg, the distances are being bridged, which is a huge boost for tourism. You can now go from Nagpur to Aurangabad in 4 hours. Since the time of travel has reduced, the tourists can

see more places in less time. Once the Mumbai Metro and Pune metro become fully functional, travel within the city will become extremely comfortable.

Sustainability Initiatives

As part of our sustainability



initiatives, we are focusing on eco-tourism, in addition to big hotels, we also want to address those tourists who are backpackers, middleclass, even upper middleclass. When we are travelling, we are not spending time in the room but rather seeing the place – so what we essentially need is a clean bed and a clean toilet. Keeping this in mind, we are promoting Homestays. Maharashtra did not have many but we are encouraging people too. We want to have Responsible Tourism but the challenge is how do you reach people? Thus, we have created more than 720 Yuva Tourism Clubs.

Yuva Tourism Clubs

In every school and college, at least

25 students come together to form the 'Yuva Tourism Club' and government can give them Rs. 25,000 if they can go within their district and also outside their district to promote tourism. Through them we want to reach out to the common people of Maharashtra and promote Responsible Tourism. We have the highest number of Yuva Tourism Clubs in the country. Following Responsible Tourism is a habit and engaging youth is the best way to do it – ask them, how clean do you want your monuments to be? Like they say, catch them early. Through them we want to send the message of not using single use plastic, or don't litter our monument sites, use dustbins – behavioural change

is very important.

Mumbai Festival

We are coming up with the Mumbai Festival, which will be an international festival, similar to the ones you have in London, New York etc. This festival used to be done earlier as a private initiative but did not pick very well. Now, every year, the third Saturday to fourth Sunday of January (9 days) this function will take place. The dates will remain same as international tourists plan their holidays much in advance. We want the tour operators to promote this festival as it is not only a government initiative but also many private players are involved. Every part of Mumbai will have something going on in these 9 days. ■

West Bengal

focused on attracting Inbound Tourists & following Sustainable practices

West Bengal has put in place comprehensive tourism policies, which aims at bolstering and promoting the state's tourism sector says Nandini Chakravorty IAS, Principal Secretary, Tourism Department, West Bengal. In an exclusive with BOTT, she shares more about the state's marketing policies and sustainability initiatives.

Priyanka Saxena Ray



Nandini Chakravorty IAS,
Principal Secretary, Tourism Department,
West Bengal

How has been this year for West Bengal tourism?

The year 2023 has been quite positive for tourism in West Bengal. We've observed promising numbers and, notably, domestic tourists have emerged as a significant segment. We've realised the importance of domestic tourism, which has been our primary focus during the pandemic. While inbound tourism remains essential, domestic traffic has

seen significant growth. With the festive season in full swing, we are hopeful of achieving good numbers.

Can you elaborate on West Bengal's current tourism policies?

West Bengal has put in place comprehensive tourism policies aimed at bolstering and promoting the state's tourism sector. Notably, the state's homestay policy has provided a significant boost to efforts to conserve the numerous heritage properties that grace our state. Globally, homestays have emerged as a compelling alternative to traditional hotel accommodations, as they afford guests the opportunity to immerse themselves in local culture and cuisine through interactions with host families. In the vibrant city of Kolkata, homestays can also offer tourists an authentic experience of our rich culture and heritage. Furthermore, during festivals like Durga Puja, homestays hold immense potential.

Under this new policy, the tourism department has established a meticulous 12-point evaluation system to assess compliance. These criteria include factors like location, exterior, building type, toilet facilities, common areas, food services, kitchen standards, cleanliness, hygiene, communication, and adherence to eco-friendly practices.

Could you provide more details regarding the primary target audience for this year's campaigns?

This year, our central focus lies on inbound tourists. We have tailored our campaigns and strategies to

primarily cater to this specific group. To this end, we have made a wealth of comprehensive information readily available online, encompassing a diverse range of attractions. These offerings extend to religious circuits, tourist circuits, and the stunningly beautiful and picturesque locations that grace West Bengal. Our aim is to entice and welcome visitors from around the world, drawing their attention to the rich cultural and natural wonders that our state has to offer. While we value and recognise the significance of domestic tourism, for the current season, our efforts are primarily geared towards engaging and captivating the inbound tourist demographic.

By when do you expect West Bengal's tourist numbers going back to 2019 figures?

We are optimistic about achieving the 2019 tourism figures, and we are aiming for this in the year 2024. Currently, in terms of inbound tourism, we are ranked as the third most visited state in the country, as published by the Ministry of Tourism.

How is West Bengal addressing sustainability in tourism?

Sustainability is of paramount importance, and West Bengal is actively promoting it through various initiatives. The Homestay movement and the cultural Heritage movement are both centred on sustainability. These initiatives involve local communities in adopting sustainable practices, such as energy preservation and conservation, which is crucial. ■

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Rangla Punjab

The state that brings colours to life



Rakhee Gupta Bhandari,
IAS, Principal Secretary-Department
of Tourism & Cultural Affairs,
Government of Punjab

Marketing strategies

We have only shown two colours from Punjab right now. One is green which stands for prosperity and red which signifies sacrifice. Punjab has now decided to show all its colours and we have technically called it 'Rangla Punjab' as that was our CM's vision which we have incorporated into our tourism sector as well. With this 'Rangla Punjab' our intent is to capture everything that Punjab has to offer right from films, media, entertainment, cuisine, heritage and everything else. We have tried to encapsulate that and put it all into one sector so that tourism grows and we can market tourism.

Sustainability

We all enjoy our rights but we also have our duties. In terms of sustainability,

*Punjab-The land of vibrancy, culture, arts, festivals, foods, films and so much more offers the most immersive experience to its travellers. This 'Land of the Rivers' which has the majestic Golden Temple, Phulkari weaves, Bhangra and most importantly the delectable dishes such as Butter Chicken, Chhole Bhature, Kulchas, Sarson ka Saag and Makai Roti leaves you with the most memorable experiences. Speaking to **BOTT** in an exclusive chat, Rakhee Gupta Bhandari, IAS, Principal Secretary-Department of Tourism & Cultural Affairs, Government of Punjab shares more.*

Shreya Shimpi



if I take the same paradigm, I say while enjoying ourselves as a traveller we also have some duties which we have to fulfil as a responsible traveller and that covers sustainability. Sustainability will be on our cards when we deal with tourism, we will automatically be factoring in that. With Ecological tourism, Farm tourism and homestays we are trying to capture everything as this is the buzzword and we realise for tourism to sustain itself will have to be eco-friendly.

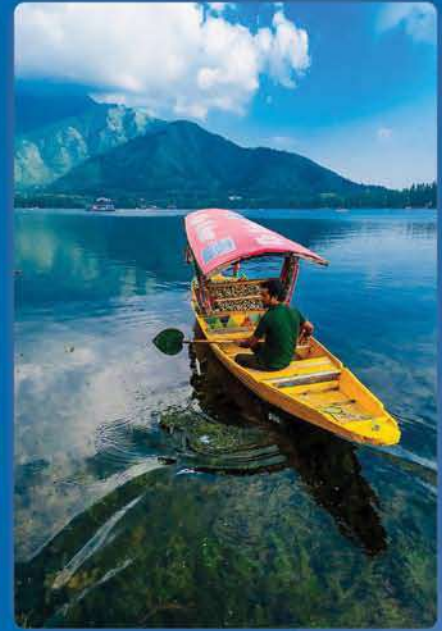
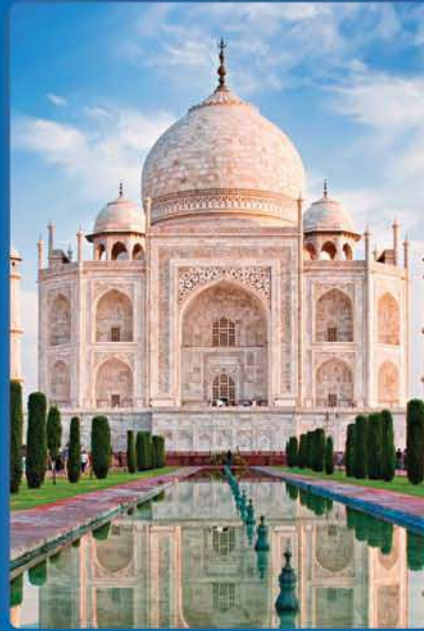
New Attractions

This year we launched our adventure and water policies for adventure tourism and water tourism. We are coming up with a Culture policy and a Wellness policy as well.

We are also having an Entertainment Policy being planned by another department. Punjab Tourism is going to come up in various formats now

and we suddenly decided to put all this together in one capsule and sell it under the name of tourism. We have a very big advantage in our NRI diaspora because they create awareness about Punjab through word of mouth and we have so many marketing managers all over the world. When a lot of people from abroad come here and indulge in the immersive experiences they will be very gratified. It's not only Amritsar that we are talking about. Amritsar of course tops the charts with 1.5 lakh tourists every day in the Golden Temple speaks volumes. We are discovering new places also. We have beautiful places in Pathankot. Punjab has seen all the sacrifices and all that we have given to India and the world is sacrifice. It is now time to also showcase other talents such as arts, cultures, weaves, Phulkaris and Bandhnis. Everything you notice about our culture is colourful. ■

Visit India Year 2023



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Bihar

A Blissful Blend of History, Culture, Heritage and Natural Beauty

Bihar is one of the most sacred places which attracts tourists from far and wide to visit the various pilgrimage sites. The state is a beautiful confluence of spirituality, knowledge and natural diversity. Shri Nand Kishor, I.F.S. Special Secretary-Cum-M.D., VEGFED, Dept. of Co-operative, M.D. Bihar State Tourism Development Corpn. Ltd, Dept. of Tourism, Govt. of Bihar in an exclusive chat with BOTT shares all about the new tourist attractions in the state, sustainability initiatives and more.

Shreya Shimpi



Nand Kishor,
I.F.S. Special Secretary-Cum-M.D., VEGFED,
Dept. of Co-operative, M.D. Bihar State
Tourism Development Corpn. Ltd,
Dept. of Tourism, Government of Bihar

Bihar Tourism in 2023

In 2023, we started a lot of activities in Bihar. We initiated water sports activity for the first time in Bihar. You will find different oxbow lakes in Bihar originating from different meandering rivers. We have started water sports on these lakes. We shall be starting six more water sports, one of which will

be in River Ganga also after monsoons. We have organised various 'Melas' successfully such as the 'Pitru Paksha Mela' which is very important for Hindus in which they can pay homage to their ancestors in Gaya and it is the right time and the right place to do it.

Visitors in 2023

Approximately 19 to 20 lakh visitors used to come. Before COVID-19, we were the fifth state to be most visited by foreign tourists because of the Bodhi Gaya Buddhist Circuit and the Jain Circuit. We have a sufficient number of tourists visiting Bihar but our biggest challenge is how to retain these tourists for longer periods. We are creating an infrastructure which will increase their duration of stay. We are about to reach the pre-pandemic figures now.

New campaigns

We are focusing hard on social media and organising FAM trips for RJs, YouTubers, bloggers etc. Recently, we have organised a FAM trip for Vietnam tourist operators in the first week of December. We are trying our best to increase the reach of Bihar Tourism to different parts of India as well as the other important countries related to Buddhism.

New tourist attractions:

Bihar has two very unique offerings which are not available in any other parts of India. One is the Bihar Museum

which is unique. Secondly, the Rajgir Glass Bridge which is the only glass bridge in India.

Sustainability

There are three pillars to achieve sustainability

- **Economic viability:** Minimum number of tourists with the right carrying capacity.
- **Ecological sensitivity:** Everyone must be ecologically sensitive to achieve sustainability.
- **Local acceptance:** We need to involve the local people for sustainable tourism.

We are trying to incorporate all these factors in the Bihar Tourism Policy which will help us develop a good sustainable policy.

Thoughts on G20 dinner with the backdrop of Nalanda University

G20 is very important. We will see a rise in our tourism activity because of it. G20 delegates visited two places in Bihar—Patna and Nalanda, Rajgir. The Nalanda Ruins and Bodhi Gaya Temple are both World Heritage sites.

It is famous for the Mahabodhi Temple where Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment, the magnificent Nalanda Mahavihara, a UNESCO World Heritage site and the most ancient university in the Indian subcontinent. ■



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Priyanka Saxena Ray



Parveen Chander Kumar,
Executive Vice President, Sales and
Marketing, IHCL

The year 2023

It's been a very good year on both business front as well as expansion. Currently, we have about 70 hotels in the pipeline and in the next two years, we would be opening almost 2 hotels a month. We are focusing on both Tier II, Tier III cities and also in the leisure destinations and city hotels. In terms of business, the last 18 months have been very good. This is also because of all the

events happening in India – G20, World Cup, demand and supply and boom in domestic tourism have collectively contributed to good business numbers.

Weddings @ IHCL

The good thing about hotel segment is that we deal in lot of verticals. The Corporate segment is back, MICE is doing very well and continues to grow, leisure – both domestic and international continues to be strong and as for the weddings market, we are seeing more or less the same level as 2019 so it hasn't really slowed down for us. So, for now all segments are doing well but our focus will be more on MICE and getting business from international events that puts India at the forefront.

Domestic Market

Domestic segment for our company used to contribute about 10% to our business in 2020 but currently, Domestic and Inbound is 50-50 and we see that continuing. More and more Indians are travelling, the road infrastructure is better, people are discovering their own country like never before so this surge will surely continue.

New Openings

We are expanding very quickly in the North East and have just announced our new hotel in Gangtok. We are opening a hotel in Tawang by the end of this year. We are also opening a hotel in Kolkata and we will continue to expand in destinations like Goa and we also opened one in Wayanad, Kerala last year. Overall, a very robust expansion

plan is in place.

Sustainability @ IHCL

At IHCL we have an initiative called 'Paathya' that encapsulates our initiatives to lead positive change with IHCL's core values of trust of all stakeholders, Awareness around the needs of our ecosystem and joy at heart. Taking ahead IHCL's over a century old legacy, Paathya forges a journey focused on Environmental Stewardship, Social Responsibility, Excellence in Governance, Preserving Heritage, Value Chain Transformation, and Sustainable Growth.

We are highly committed towards sustainability right from taking care of the environment to providing skills and livelihood to people to taking care of Heritage Sites through UNESCO to having local supplier management. We have set ourselves goals for 2030 and are running ahead of time in most of them, which speaks a lot about our seriousness towards sustainability.

Women Travellers

We launched 2 important IPs last year, one was – She Remains The Taj, where we focus on single women travellers and women in general. We also launched packages called 'Voyage', which focus on women travellers and single women solo travellers. We have also launched a very interesting concept called 'Carecations', which is towards voluntary tourism that provides you an opportunity to give back to the society when you go on a holiday with your family. ■

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Vikramjit Singh

‘The next five years are the ‘golden period’ for hotels’

Lemon Tree Hotels (LTH) is India's largest hotel chain in the mid-priced hotel sector and is known for its youthful and fresh vibe. The award-winning hotel chain has carved a niche for itself in the hospitality industry. They are known to operate in the upscale segment and the mid-market sector offering superior services, comfortable stay, new-age dining and wellness facilities which provide great value for money. BOTT spoke to Vikramjit Singh, President, Lemon Tree Hotels Limited to know more about the occupancy levels, upcoming ventures and more.

Shreya Shimpi



Vikramjit Singh,
President,
Lemon Tree Hotels Limited

Occupancy levels in 2023

Occupancies today have not only gotten back to pre-Covid levels but are slightly better. What is very interesting to note is that the average rates typically have gone up a minimum of twenty per cent from pre-Covid levels which is very heartening because today whatever you make extra in terms of rate goes

straight to the bottom line. That is a very profitable sign for hotels and this trend is here to follow. I feel this is just the beginning. The next five to six years are going to be the so-called ‘golden period’ for hotels. You will have very

Under this initiative, we look at people who have some kind of disability and also the people who are economically and socially marginalised people. This segment today is our big focus. We started as a small initiative back in the

“Our upcoming Mumbai Hotel under the ‘Aurika’ brand is India’s largest hotel with 669 rooms and is right outside the Mumbai International Airport.”

little supply coming. If you look at all the hospitality reports you will realise the supply is coming at four to five per cent. Demand will secularly continue to grow at maybe twice that number so the next five to six years are going to be the golden period. There will be an acute shortage of rooms in India and hotels will continue to do very well.

Staycation trend

It is not as much as the Covid levels as people were working from home back then. Today people have all got back to offices so it’s there but not in the same quantum.

Sustainability Initiatives

What I would like to specifically talk about is Lemon Tree’s initiative around the ODI-Opportunity Deprived Individuals. Lemon Tree is very strong in it. Almost fifteen per cent of our workforce comprises of this segment.

year 2007 and today it is very much a part of our mainstay and a part of the regular manning in the organisation. It is something that we are very proud of.

We just won two awards from ‘Great Place to Work -India’ for our inclusion initiatives-

- Best workplaces in inclusivity, diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging 2023
- Best workplaces for women 2023
- Best companies to work for Millennials 2023

Upcoming ventures

We would love to talk about our upcoming Mumbai Hotel under the ‘Aurika’ brand. It is India’s largest hotel with 669 rooms and is right outside the Mumbai International Airport. We are very excited about this opening and it is going to open this month itself. ■

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Exploring the vast and untapped potential of Cruise Tourism in India

Cruise Tourism is shaping well and fast gaining momentum in India as the travel sector is becoming mindful of the limitless opportunities that they can offer to their travellers. Exploring a destination from the sea can be an exhilarating experience indeed! It can help the tourist delve into the side of the place relatively unexplored. Various Cruise liners such as Cordelia Cruises are coming to India innovatively and looking creatively at making inbound tourism an interesting way of seeing India. Places which are difficult to explore by land can be seen from a different perspective from the sea. At the launch of the Sagarmala Project, our Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri. Narendra Modi said that from Gujarat to Orissa, you can see the most beautiful part of this world through a ship. The Government is taking several initiatives in developing various ocean and river ports, which will uncap the potential of the Cruise sector.

At the 38th IATO Convention held in Aurangabad, an insightful panel discussion on the topic of 'Cruise Tourism' offered interesting views on the future that Cruise Tourism beholds. Here are a few excerpts from the discussion –

Shreya Shimpi



Jurgen Bailom CEO, Cordelia Cruises

This year, in 2023, approximately 38 million cruise passengers cruised globally. The future for India looks very bright. Our goal together would be that within the next six to ten years, we should be the third largest cruise hub in the world with about three million passengers per year. I would like to commend the Government for its efforts in the last five to six years. We often keep getting questions about when are we going to get the next ship. Bringing

the ship is not difficult. We need destinations. We need infrastructure. This is not going to happen overnight. It takes a lot of commitment. But I think that the Government has shown very positive steps in the right direction in the last five to six years. The Hon'ble Prime Minister has Cruise Tourism in his vision for 2023. We have a huge impact on the local economy. We hired in the next five years approximately 3,50,000 Indians to work on cruise ships. Cruise Tourism impacts so many aspects such as taxes, local hotels, restaurants, small stores and the trade as well. This is a huge opportunity for you in the Travel

trade to participate and generate a really good income. Regardless of what we are doing, the future is going to look bright. We are going to do well in the next ten years.

Nalini Gupta Director, Lotus Aero Enterprises, GSA Costa Cruise India

I think that the opportunities are large. The market is large. Cruise liners want to come to India. However, they are scared of the ease of doing business. The Government can make it

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easy by having a clear Cruising policy. When it comes to India this is what I need to do regarding the customs duty and clearances needed. Everything is so ambiguous. The government could facilitate the whole process and make it easy for everyone. India is a big market. Let us get everybody to come here. The market can absorb a new business vertical so let's make it happen. My message to the travel community is to educate the consumers about the joys of cruising. It is your responsibility and a win-win for everybody.

Rajiv Duggal

Director, Travelart-Maestros

As a cruise professional and an inbound operator, I have a little outlook on both sides. For any product that needs to be incorporated, you must follow a 'could, would and should I rule'. I have learnt this because of the launch of a Cruise Liner in India that unless you don't understand the holiday of a cruise you will never understand the value of that. Today I feel that with all the cruise liners here, the market is developing beautifully. It is such an inclusive holiday with entertainment, food, and destination, it is a different experience. You will be surprised that most of the customers which we handle

except some of the U.S. and European countries have never been on a cruise. We never offer it to them because we don't think about the cruise. In our industry, there is no thought. The thought is on domestic transportation. We have never thought that we can show the French, German or Belgian clients Mumbai from the sea. It is more beautiful than Dubai from the sea. We have all seen Mumbai from the sea or a ship. I feel it is time for innovation to come in with us. We only understand the value of this once we become the population of 'I did it'. Once you have done a cruise you will understand how much value it brings. It could be a cruise from Mumbai to Goa that could change the perspective of a foreign client. It will show him the third dimension of a country which he has never seen before. If Cruise liners are reaching out to us inbound operators, there is a huge potential waiting to be discovered. As a tour operator, education is so important. The problem here is that there is not enough information. We are not well informed. The inbound has already pre-approved that I don't sell cruises. Cruise Liner agrees that this is not my target audience so I think somewhere that marriage has to happen again. We have to think differently.

Subhash Goyal

Chairman, STIC Group

This is a golden opportunity for you. Only those species survive who adapt themselves to change. We were only in the airline business representing forty different airlines. Why did we go on cruises? There is money to be made in this sector. If you study cruise products, it is the best holiday ever! In Holland America, one of the cruise liners we represent, we have ninety-six per cent repeat clients. Once you sell a cruise to a client, he will come back to you because there is no hassle of checking-in at the airport or missing the flight. Once you check in on a cruise, your hotel room travels at night and the next morning you are in a new destination. It is the safest way to travel with a doctor on board. There is a casino and entertainment on board. Everything is taken care of! If you want to make money you need to focus on selling cruises with the same infrastructure that you have. We need to make the process smooth so that ships will come. India is a great destination. People are only afraid of the hassles. If we make the entry and exit points of India hassle-free and smooth, I think India will become the greatest cruise terminal in the world. ■



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UNWTO 25th General Assembly

Uzbekistan hosts historic tourism event

Global tourism leaders have further advanced plans for a more ethical, diverse sector led by a growing UNWTO. The 25th session of the UNWTO General Assembly convened to examine, discuss and approve the Organization's work, with a focus on expanding its global presence, ethics and legal frameworks and the role of public-private partnerships.

Rai Umraopati Ray



Shavkat Mirziyoyev
President of Uzbekistan

Samarkand, Uzbekistan – The 25th General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) commenced in the historic city of Samarkand, Uzbekistan, with a welcoming address by the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev highlighting the significance of hosting the event in the ancient city. President underscored the importance of tourism



as a key driver of economic growth, emphasising the need to boost the industry, especially after the setbacks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

President Mirziyoyev warmly greeted the international delegates and underscored the deep symbolism of hosting the milestone event in Samarkand, an age-old city that has been a crossroads of cultures for centuries. Samarkand, often referred to as the “Pearl of the Earth,” has played a pivotal

role in bridging Eastern and Western civilisations and is now emerging as a prominent global tourist hub.

“We attach great significance to training specialists in the field of tourism. Thirty-five institutes of higher education in Uzbekistan train qualified specialists on the basis of international standards. Students from 19 countries study at the Samarkand “Silk Road” International University of Tourism and Cultural Heritage. The number of foreign

tourists traveling to Uzbekistan has doubled. Revenues from tourist exports have increased 4 times. For example, this year the number of tourists from Japan has increased 5 times, from India and Italy – 3.5 times, from the United States – 2 times. According to estimates, a total of 7 million tourists will visit our country by the end of this year. By 2030, we intend to increase this figure to 15 million and domestic tourist flow to 25 million”, informed President Mirziyoyev.

The President, in his address, noted that prior to the pandemic, the tourism sector accounted for approximately 10% of the world’s GDP and 7% of its exports, making it a crucial contributor to the global economy. He acknowledged that the pandemic had severely impacted the sector, causing a significant reduction in tourism export revenues and a loss of millions of jobs.

The President praised the resilience of the tourism industry, stating that, with collective efforts, the sector is showing signs of recovery, with almost one billion tourists traveling abroad last year, representing nearly 70% of pre-pandemic levels. This year, the numbers are expected to grow even further.

President Mirziyoyev highlighted the importance of the tourism sector in promoting common prosperity and sustainable development, as well as its role in fostering cultural exchanges and tolerance among nations. He commended the World Tourism Organization’s commitment to developing tourism globally and expanding its influence as a driver of economic growth.

New Regional and Thematic Offices

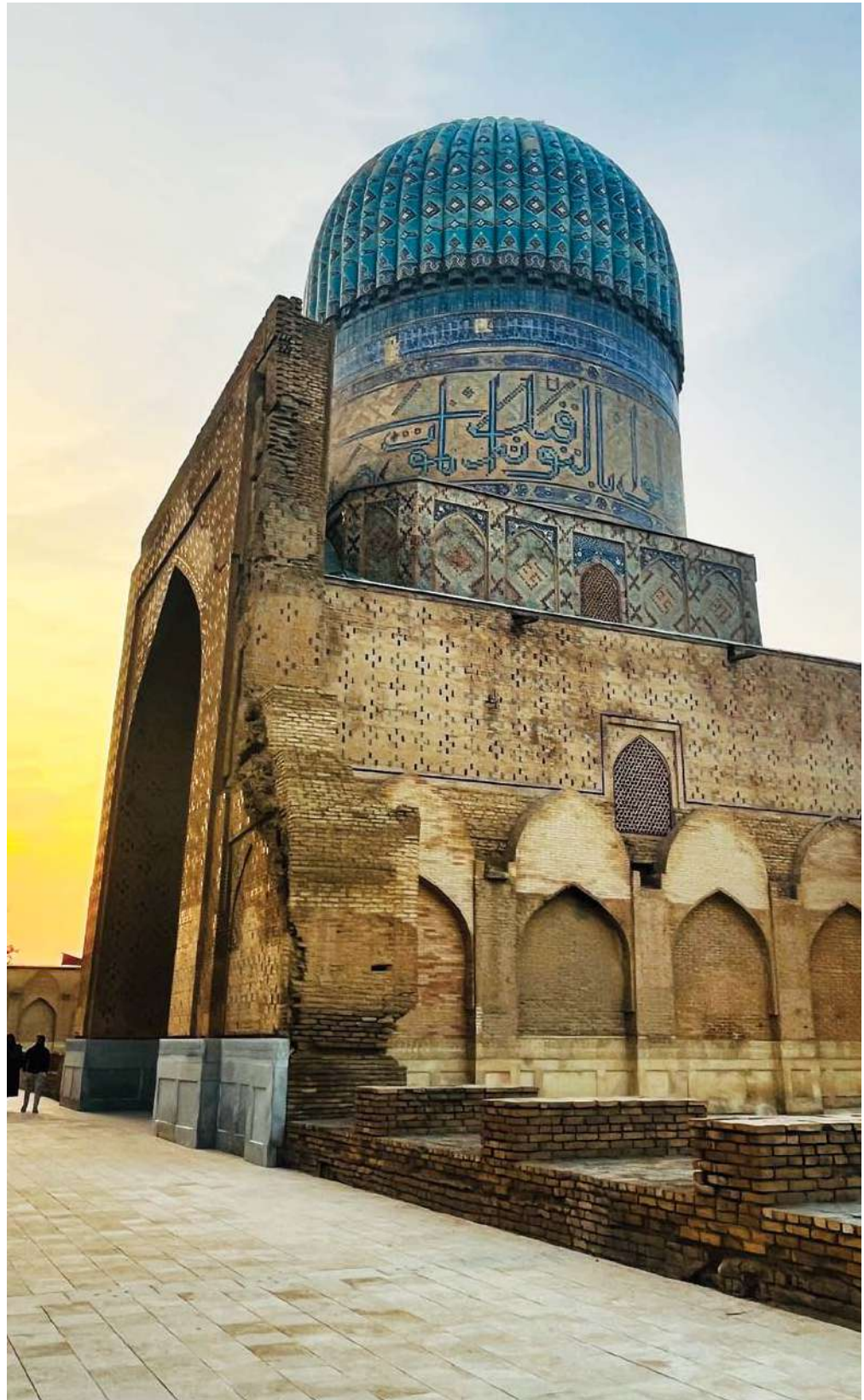
UNWTO’s commitment to moving closer to its Members and being on the ground in every region was further emphasised as the Assembly was given an update on work to establish new Regional and Thematic offices.

- The Regional Office for the Middle East, opened in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 2021, is an established hub for tourism education and tourism for rural development. From here, UNWTO has opened the Riyadh School for Hospitality and Tourism,

UNWTO names its Best Tourism Villages of 2023 edition; Dhordo, Gujarat among the list

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has announced its list of Best Tourism Villages 2023. The accolade recognises villages that are leading in nurturing rural areas and preserving landscapes, cultural diversity, local values, and culinary traditions.

In this third edition 54 villages from all regions were selected from almost 260 villages at the UNWTO General Assembly, today in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. Dhordo, a small village located in Kutch district, Gujarat, India is amongst the 54 Best Tourism Villages announced by UNWTO in its 2023 edition.





launched a first Education Toolkit for high schools, and also launched the Best Tourism Villages initiative.

- UNWTO signed an agreement with the Government of Brazil to establish a Regional Office in Rio de Janeiro, to be focused on investments.
- The planned Regional Office for

tourism. The Global Code of Ethics were the foundation for UNWTO becoming a UN agency. In Samarkand, the Assembly approved new members to serve on the World Committee of Tourism Ethics, with a clear commitment to diversity. Members also looked ahead to the International Conference on Accessible

General Pololikashvili highlighted the ongoing work to strengthen and modernise the Organization. Members of the Assembly agreed to Extend the mandate of the Task Force on Redesigning Tourism for the Future until the 26th session of the General Assembly. The General Assembly voted with 73% in favour of Secretary-General Pololikashvili being permitted to present his candidature for a third mandate.

“We attach great significance to training specialists in the field of tourism. Thirty-five institutes of higher education in Uzbekistan train qualified specialists on the basis of international standards. Students from 19 countries study at the Samarkand “Silk Road” International University of Tourism and Cultural Heritage.”

- President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev

Africa in Marrakesh, Morocco, will focus on the priorities of innovation and investments in tourism.

- The hosts of this Assembly, Uzbekistan, presented its proposal to establish a Thematic Office for Tourism on the Silk Road. The proposal was approved by the 119th session of the UNWTO Executive Council.

Ethics Committee

The General Assembly further built on UNWTO's leading work to create a more ethical and accessible sector, while also increasing confidence in travel and

Tourism, due to take place in San Marino in November.

During the Plenary Session, UNWTO formally welcomed those Members that have already agreed to adhere to the International Code for the Protection of Tourists. To date, Argentina, Brazil, Lebanon, Lithuania, Portugal, Senegal, Thailand, Uruguay and Venezuela have all agreed to adhere to the landmark legal instrument.

Strong, stable Organization

In his report to the General Assembly during the First Plenary, Secretary-

Affiliate Members

UNWTO's Affiliate Members represent the broad diversity of the sector, counting on representatives from business, academia and civil society. The Report of the Chair of the Board of Affiliate Members gave the Assembly an update on work done over the past two years, with a clear focus on growing the Affiliates' role in the mission of the Organization as a whole. Members welcomed the achievements of the Affiliate Members network, including in efforts to grow new areas of tourism to promote economic diversity and resilience.

Saudi Arabia to host the 26th General Assembly

To conclude, Members agreed that the 26th session of the UNWTO General Assembly will be held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. ■

The maiden TIES concludes amidst great participation & attendance

Taking the Travel Tourism and Hospitality Industry by storm by launching a Unique and one of its kind shows ever - the maiden edition of The Iconic Experiences Show (TIES) 2023 recently concluded. Held at The Hyatt Regency New Delhi, TIES 2023 was extremely well attended by Travel Tourism and Hospitality professionals, Aviation Experts, Tourism veterans, Wellness Gurus, Ambassadors from various countries, Government Officials and media representatives from trade as well as electronic media.

Priyanka Saxena Ray

Jyoti Mayal, President TAAI joined forces with Chander Mansharamani, MD, Alpcord and in association with the TV9 network, came together to launch this new and one of its kinds – The Iconic Experiences Show. The event was spread over a period of 2 days and followed a very different style and itinerary on both days, offering people a delightful mix of various topics and issues related to all segments of travel, aviation and hospitality.

Day one, i.e., October 16 was a day dedicated to discussions, deliberations, masterclasses, TED talks, powerful presentations and more. Some of the prominent speakers who marked their presence on this day included Acharya Pratishtha, Yog & Spiritual Guru, Former Diplomat HCI Mauritius Ministry of External Affairs & Director, Mokshayatan Yog Sansthan; Sadhvi Pragya Bharti, Spiritual Leader & Co-Founder - Sambhav International Foundation and Yudhisthir Govinda Das, Country Director of Communications & National Spokesperson, ISKCON India who talked about wellness and how it is not just a luxury but also a necessity. Aditya Ghosh, Co-Founder, Akasa Air and Kapil Kaul, CEO & Director, CAPA Advisory discussed the immense underlying aviation potential in India. Touching upon the most relevant sector in luxury today – Weddings, the panel





discussion witnessed deliberations from Chetan Vohra, Managing Director, Line Communications & Weddingline; Vandana Mohan, Founder, The Wedding Design Company; Dr. Sanjana Jon, Social Activist & Fashion Designer and Asmita Chakraborty, Miss Tourism India 2021. An invigorating perspective on how to make “experiences” better was delivered by Ashish Gupta, Consulting CEO, FAITH. Another Panel Discussion on Luxury in Leisure brought together hotelier’s perspective from veterans such as Zubin Saxena, MD and Senior Area VP, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group; Meshaal M. Qureshi, Trade Markets Director, Saudi Tourism Authority; Mr. Hadigalage Chalaka Dev Gajabahu, Chairman Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau; Noel Swain, COO, Evisa VAS & Tourism Services – VFS and Parveen Chander Kumar, EVP Sales and Marketing, Indian Hotels Company.

The day was dotted with knowledgeable Presentations made by the many Sponsors and Partners of TIES 2023, who presented their product in a unique style, keeping audience hooked and engaged throughout.

Adding an element of great knowledge and experience was the MasterClasses by Industry stalwart Nakul Anand, Executive Director, ITC Limited, who enlightened the gathering on the numerous sustainability initiatives that the company has taken while judiciously following the concept of ‘Responsible Luxury’.

The Knowledge Session on Vibrant Heritage India saw participation by Mukesh Kumar Meshram, Principal Secretary,





Tourism and Culture Department, Government of Uttar Pradesh & Director General, UP Tourism; M.D. Sinha, Principal Secretary, Haryana Tourism Department; Tarun Thakral, Founder & Managing Trustee - Heritage Transport Museum, Ashish Gupta, Founder: StrategyPLUTO & Consulting CEO: FAITH, Rakhee Gupta Bhandari, IAS, Secretary Tourism and cultural affairs, Punjab Tourism.

The discussion on MICE was carried out with inputs from Puneet Dhawan, Senior Vice President Operations, Accor India & South Asia; Raj Rishi Singh, Chief Marketing & Business Officer, MakeMyTrip; Rohit K Lamba, Vice President – Sales & Marketing & Head – Branding, Jindal Steel and Power, Rajiv Sharma, Head - Workplace Management, Nykka; Maniksha Bakshi, Manager (Film Shooting Promotion Cell), Tourism Department, Delhi.

The perfect icing on the cake was the last session of the day focussed on Women Powering Sustainability Goals and witnessed the viewpoints of Rupinder Brar, Commissioner of Income Tax, Govt. of India; Dr. Jyotsna Suri, Chairperson & Managing Director, Bharat Hotels Limited; Varija Bajaj, Fashion Designer, Founder, Varija Lifestyles, O&Y, Lela, Varija Home, Varija Life & THE CAREER and Shobha Rudra, Founder partner, RARE India and Jyoti Mayal, who shared her vision of not just empowering women but also giving back to the industry to empower her fellow colleagues and association members. From multi-tasking talented women to those who are outweighing men in performance numbers, the session was all about women empowerment. At the end of the evening, Chander Mansharamani summarised the events of the day while delivering his vote of thanks.

The Day 2 of the TIES 2023 took place in an Exhibition Format and saw many Industry Stakeholders take up booth space, showcasing their marvellous products and services to the discerning visitor and Travel / Tour Operator. A perfect conclusion to this unique and grand show was the Mock Wedding – a joint collaborated between Ties and Q Events, wherein, through some traditional Indian ceremonies, the rituals and process of an Indian wedding was explained beautifully. ■

38th IATO Convention Aurangabad highlights Sustainability & Synergies

The 38th IATO Convention recently took place from September 29 – October 1, 2023 at the WelcomHotel by ITC Hotels Rama in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (Aurangabad). The event witnessed good participation from the Travel Trade Hospitality and Aviation sectors, which was dotted with insightful Business Sessions, Networking opportunities and more. Here's a more detailed report of the event –

Priyanka Saxena Ray

The 38th IATO Convention was focused on the theme - Inbound Tourism and Emerging sustainable trends. The inauguration ceremony of the Convention was kick-started with the traditional cultural welcome performance and lighting of the lamp. Rajnish Kaistha, Senior Vice President – IATO & Chairman Convention opened the ceremony followed by Presidential Address by Shri Rajiv Mehra, President, IATO. Other dignitaries on the occasion included Smt. Radhika Rastogi, IAS, Principal Secretary (Tourism), Tourism and Culture Affairs Department, Government of Maharashtra; Shri Rakesh Kumar Verma, IAS – Additional Secretary (Tourism), Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; Shri Ambadas Eknathrao Danve, Leader of Opposition, Maharashtra Legislative Council; Shri Atul Moreshwar Save, Minister for Housing and Other Backward Classes Welfare, Govt. of Maharashtra; Shri Sandipnrao Bhumre, Hon'ble Minister for Employment, Guarantee Scheme and Horticulture, Government of Maharashtra & Guardian Minister, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar District, Shri Girish Mahajan, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism, Department of Tourism, Government of Maharashtra and Shri Raosaheb Patil Danve, Minister of State for Railways, Coal & Mines, Government of India.

The ceremony witnessed the felicitation of Young National Athletes of Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar and felicitation of ITC Hotels for their excellent services and contribution made for G20 Summit in India. The IATO Hall of Fame Awards 2023 were given to Shri Nakul Anand, Executive Director, ITC Limited for his





immense contribution to the industry and Shri Syed Salimuddin, Managing Director, Aurangabad Transport Syndicate.

Sanjay Razdan, Hony. Secretary – IATO and Co-Chairman Convention presented the Vote of Thanks. The IATO Convention Travel Mart was also inaugurated the same evening.

The Business Sessions during the Convention touched some relevant

topics that enabled guests to share insightful inputs and delve in meaningful discussions. Some of the topics included - Inbound Tourism – Sustainability, Strategy and Emerging Trends; Synergy between Hotels and Tour Operators – Need of the hour; State Tourism: Synergies for Success; The Changing Face of Technology for Tour Operators; New Era of Cruise Tourism, River Tourism and Coastal; Connectivity – New Dimensions,

Air, Rail, Road; Exploring Maharashtra - New Destinations and Opportunities and Way forward to further tourism opportunities in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (Aurangabad). In addition to this, there were State Presentations by Madhya Pradesh Tourism, Uttar Pradesh Tourism, West Bengal Tourism, Rajasthan Tourism, Punjab Tourism; Jharkhand Tourism; Meghalaya Tourism; J&K Tourism and Odisha Tourism.

ASSOCIATIONS IN ACTION



Each Business Session had an impressive line-up of Speakers, who were best in their field and had immense knowledge, insights and experiences to share with the audience. These included Rakesh Kumar Verma; Radhika Rastogi, Nandini Chakravorty, IAS – Principal Secretary Tourism, Government of West Bengal; Nand Kishor, IFS – Managing Director – Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation; Dr. B.N. Patil, IAS – Director, Department of Tourism, Govt. of Maharashtra; Parveen Chander Kumar, Executive Vice President – Sales & Marketing, The Indian Hotels

Company; S P Jain, Managing Director, Pride Hotels & Resorts; Madhav Sehgal, Area Vice President, South India, The Leela Hotels, Palaces and Resorts; Samir MC, Managing Director - Fortune Park Hotels; Chander Baljee, CMD – Royal Orchid Hotels; Ms. Rakhee Gupta Bhandari, IAS- Principal Secretary, Tourism & Culture. Affairs, Govt. of Punjab; Prakhar Mishra IFS, Director Tourism, Directorate of UP Tourism, Govt of Uttar Pradesh; Thakur Sher Singh, ACR, Jammu & Kashmir Tourism; R. Arjun, IAS - MD, West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation; Sai Santhosh,

Co-Founder – Travstack; Ratna Chadha, Co-Founder and Chairperson – Tirun Cruise; Raj Singh – Chairman, Antara Luxury River Cruises; Antara Phookan, Director- Business Development, Assam Bengal Navigation, Jurgen Bailom, CEO- Cordelia Cruises; Subhash Goyal, Chairman, STIC Group; Rajiv Bansal, IAS (Retd) – Former Secretary to the Government of India; Amrit Mann, President, Indian Tourist Transporters Association; Ashutosh Chitnis, Chief Revenue Officer, Fly 91; Santosh Kumar Sharma, CEO, Foresee Aviation; Aaditya Thackeray– Member of Legislative



BOTT wins Best Digital Travel Media Award



**BOTT wins
“Best Digital Travel Media” award
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38th IATO Annual Convention**

Assembly, Govt. of Maharashtra; Chandrakant Kulkarni, Marathi Film Director and Founder Jigisha Creations; Vikramjit Singh, President, Lemon Tree Hotels; Pandurang Taware, MD, Agri Tourism Development Corporation and few others.

All the Business Sessions were brilliantly Moderated by IATO Office Bearers and Members that included Ravi Gosain, VP, IATO; Rajnish Kaistha, Sr. VP; Sanjay Razdan, Hony. Secretary; Pronab Sarkar, Immediate Past President; Homa Mistry, CEO, Trail Blazer Tours; Aashish Gupta, Consulting CEO – FAITH; Madhav Oza, Director – Blue Star Air Travel Services; Sunit Kothari, Chairman – Civil Aviation & PR Committee, Aurangabad Tourism Development Foundation. (ATDF) and Rahul Chakravarty, COO – IATO.

Other highlights of the Convention included the usual IATO Run for Responsible Tourism and the gala evenings, which were made by delectable cuisine served by renowned ITC Chefs. Live Singers, Karaoke Competition and great networking opportunities made the Convention evening Special. ■



San Francisco Travel Association and San Francisco International Airport host India Sales Mission in style

*The San Francisco Travel Association and San Francisco International Airport (SFO) recently organised a Sales Mission to India from October 9 – 12, 2023. Positioning San Francisco as the premier gateway to the U.S. West Coast, San Francisco Travel and SFO were the first U.S. convention & visitors bureaus and airports to have representation in India. The two-city mission visited Mumbai and New Delhi and included a senior delegation led by Kevin Bumen, Chief Financial & Commercial Officer, SFO and Hubertus Funke, Executive Vice President & Chief Tourism Officer at San Francisco Travel. Here's a look at what they shared in an exclusive chat with **BOTT** –*

Priyanka Saxena Ray

The San Francisco Travel Association is the official destination marketing organization for the City and County of San Francisco. The city is one of the top tourism and meetings destinations in the U.S. and received 21.9 million visitors in 2022. Total tourism spending in 2022 exceeded \$7.7 billion. The tourism industry is the

largest generator of outside revenue into San Francisco's economy and supports over 53,000 jobs. In 2022, India ranked third among San Francisco's top overseas visitor markets with 158,000 visitors. This is expected to grow by 34% in 2023, with a projected spending increase of 63%, making India among the fastest-growing source markets for

the destination. While we are talking about the destination, one must not forget that the very first impression of the city is formed when a tourist lands at the airport. One's experience at the Airport forms one's opinion about the destination, even before they have stepped into the city and this is where San Francisco International Airport plays

a major role.

"We are very well suited as the gateway to Pacific from India. From the total carrier perspective, we are No. 3 in the USA for diversity of carriers and are No. 2 in the USA with regards to flights to India, which is 17 a week right now. We have gone beyond the pandemic numbers in terms of flights from India as we have seen continued increase. We get about 1100 passengers per day each way," said Bumen, adding, "The primary objective of our India mission is to reinforce our commitment to the market and build on our strong relationship with key stakeholders and airlines, including Air India, which has strong, increasing connectivity to SFO. Our goal is to craft a positive journey for visitors on these nonstop flights by offering them exceptional services and the unique offerings of our airport."

Talking about the expansion strategy, Bumen was extremely hopeful of firstly solidifying more flights from the existing markets and then adding new destinations from India to the flight list to San Francisco. "We would definitely like to see more people coming into San Francisco from India through the San Francisco International Airport. We would foresee a growth pattern of bringing Delhi up to 2 flights a day and building up Mumbai and Bengaluru to daily. There are also markets in Hyderabad and Chennai that are substantial so we see opportunity there too. When we look at the demand in India for air travel – its huge! India is going to have a lot of growth in the aviation sector in future, which San Francisco is very excited about because we see this as an opportunity for more connections into India," he added.

Talking about the highlights of the airport Bumen said, "A few notable features about the Airport includes the Grand Hyatt Hotel, which is located right at the Airport so for folks transiting or just as their initial place to stay – it's a beautiful property, just opened a couple of years ago and located within the Terminal. Another notable property is the SFO Museum, which is located throughout the Airport. It is the only fully-accredited museum in an airport



Kevin Bumen,
Chief Financial & Commercial
Officer, SFO

in the world. There is also the Aviation Museum, which is in the International Terminal Departures Level and is a replica of the 1920s Terminal and then there is artwork, throughout the airport, both permanent installations and rotating exhibits that are curated by our staff. Its super impressive and when you move across the airport, you do feel you are in a museum!"

Moving from the Airport to the Destination, Hubertus Funke made it abundantly clear that India is one of its most important markets currently and this sales mission is one significant step towards solidifying their relationships with the existing stakeholders in the country.

Talking about the India market Hubertus Funke shared, "SFO is the perfect arrival point for San Francisco and also the best way to get into Downtown San Francisco. India, similar to SFO, has been one of our success stories with regards to how many visitors we receive from India. Post pandemic, in terms of recovery, India is our top market on how quickly it has recovered and is our No. 3 overseas market in visitor volume size. We are expecting 211,000 visitors from India this year. Our objective with this sales mission was to come back to the market and talk about all the exciting new things that Indians look for as we know that Indians really connect with San Francisco. India market is very diverse as we have all these various segments – Friends and Families,



Hubertus Funke,
Executive Vice President & Chief Tourism
Officer at San Francisco Travel

Students, Business, Leisure and they can all blend together. The average length of stay of an Indian traveller in California is 18 nights so we know that crosses multiple segments."

"San Francisco will see five new hotels open this year following the nine that debuted in 2023, including standout properties like the LUMA Hotel, 1 Hotel San Francisco, The Line SF, and Beacon Grand. With its vibrant neighbourhoods, rich cultural scene, range of dining options and unbeatable natural surroundings, the city has much to offer Indian visitors." The 2023 MICHELIN Guide California awarded 27 San Francisco restaurants with Michelin stars. Of the 87 California restaurants awarded Michelin stars, 50 are in the San Francisco Bay Area, reinforcing Northern California's status as a leading culinary destination.

Another core focus for San Francisco is sustainability, with the city aiming for net-zero carbon emissions by 2040, across various industries. San Francisco operates the greenest public transportation fleet in North America, a leading LEED Platinum convention centre, and the first entirely LEED Platinum-certified airport globally. San Francisco also leads the autonomous vehicle revolution, with self-driving electric taxi services expanding 24/7, offering an exciting addition to the city's transportation options. These efforts have set new industry standards and positioned San Francisco as a national leader in sustainability. ■

Ajman Tourism

successfully organises networking evenings in 3 Indian cities

The aim of the networking events was to create awareness by promoting the various tourism opportunities that Ajman has to offer. The networking event in Mumbai was held on 13th October 2023 in Mumbai and was well attended by over eighty members from the travel fraternity and the media.

Shreya Shimpi



H.E. Mahmood Khaleel Alhashmi,
Director General of ADTD

The three-city networking evening series aimed at showcasing the various offerings that Ajman has in store for every type of traveller. A destination presentation highlighted the different avenues such as leisure, business, sports, cultural, eco-tourism as well as healthcare tourism that a tourist can explore. Known for its scenic beauty, pristine beaches, museums, plethora of sightseeing options, Ajman is a peaceful, serene and magnificent tourist destination. One can explore a variety of gastronomical experiences at local cafes as well as fine dining restaurants. There

are a variety of hotel options that Ajman has which range from luxury and high-end hotels to budget hotels.

The Director General of ADTD, Mr. H.E. Mahmood Khaleel Alhashmi was present at each event, showcasing his commitment to fostering strong relationships with key decision-makers in India's travel and tourism sector. His attendance further highlighted the importance placed on enhancing cooperation between both parties to encourage more Indian tourists to visit Ajman. These evening events brought together travel agents, tour operators, media partners, and industry partners to discuss the potential for tourism development in Ajman.

Mr. H.E. Mahmood Khaleel Alhashmi, Director General of ADTD said, "The potential of the Indian market is high. The reason of our visit is not just to promote Ajman as a tourist destination but also to meet a lot of Indian investment companies as well as individual people who are interested in investing in Ajman and the tourism sector. We have been having meetings with them in Bengaluru, Ahmedabad and Mumbai. The business people in India are real business people as they know how and what is to be done. We

need them to be there because they are smart people. We are open from our side to get them to do direct investment or to do some JV with the Government of Ajman or any other companies in the private sector in Ajman."

Speaking about the other source markets he said, "We have Russia, Germany, UK, GCC Countries and Egypt. Europe in general is the most important market in which we have which has Germany, UK and France. There is China as well."

Ms. Neeti Sharma, Director of Intrepid Marketing and Communications added, "We are delighted to showcase Ajman to the travel fraternity in Bengaluru, Ahmedabad and Mumbai through the three city networking evenings. It has been an absolute honour for us to have H.E Mahmood Khaleel Alhashmi grace the occasion and convey Ajman's readiness for the India market. Ajman is a host to luxury accommodations, experiences very close to nature and holidays that can be enjoyed at one's own pace. A perfect place to enjoy a short honeymoon, a family holiday or hosting an Indian wedding, Ajman caters to all. In the coming months we aim to successfully establish Ajman's footprint in India." ■



7 exciting things to do in Bahrain!

Bahrain, a small yet vibrant island nation in the Middle East, offers a delightful blend of history, culture, and modern attractions that make it an ideal destination for a family vacation. From exploring ancient ruins to enjoying modern theme parks, Bahrain has something for everyone. Here are seven exciting things to do in Bahrain with your family –

Go island hopping! Exploring Jarada's Serenity and Al Dar's Thrills!

Jarada Island's pristine natural beauty appeals to both nature enthusiasts and those in search of a serene getaway. Accessible exclusively by boat, this petite island emits an atmosphere of seclusion and tranquillity. For an added layer of excitement, consider engaging in a pearling activity with your family. Dive in to the pristine waters with professional divers, and gather oysters resting on the ocean bed.

Al Dar Island: For those craving a bit of adventure along with their relaxation, Al Dar Island presents the ideal blend. Enjoy thrilling jet ski ride, paddleboarding excursion, or even try your hand at deep-sea fishing. The waters surrounding Al Dar Island are teeming with marine life, making it a prime location for fishing enthusiasts.

Visit the Bahrain National Museum

Delve into Bahrain's rich history and culture at the Bahrain National Museum. This well-curated museum takes visitors on a journey through time, showcasing artifacts from the ancient Dilmun civilization, traditional crafts, and contemporary art. Interactive exhibits and engaging displays make it an educational and enjoyable experience for both kids and adults.

Attend exciting events at Al Dana Amphitheatre!

The Al Dana Amphitheatre is a captivating cultural hub that showcases the nation's artistic soul. With its stunning architecture and open-air design, the amphitheatre sets the stage for mesmerizing performances ranging from traditional music and dance to modern theatre. This renowned location has welcomed global performers such as Imagine Dragons and Bruno Mars, and even featured the well-known comedian Kevin Hart on its stage. Al Dana Amphitheatre is also gearing up for a series of upcoming events that

promise excitement. Notably, the widely celebrated Maroon 5 band is scheduled to perform on November 13, 2023. Equally noteworthy is the anticipated performance by the internationally acclaimed artist 50 Cent, marking his farewell tour and set to take place on November 23, 2023.

Wander through Al Areen Wildlife Park

Nature enthusiasts will appreciate a visit to Al Areen Wildlife Park, a conservation reserve that provides a home to various indigenous and exotic animals. From Arabian oryx to cheetahs and even birds of prey, the park offers a chance to see these magnificent creatures up close while learning about their natural habitats.

Shop at Manama Souq

Immerse your family in the vibrant local culture by exploring Manama Souq. This bustling market is a treasure trove of traditional handicrafts, spices, textiles, and jewellery. Allow your senses to be tantalized by the aromas of spices and the vibrant colours of the Souq.

You can also discover a world of wonder at the Gold Souk in Manama, Bahrain.

Family Fun at Bahrain International Circuit: A Perfect Day Out

Gather your loved ones and head to Bahrain International Circuit for a day filled with excitement and togetherness. Whether you're racing go-karts, enjoying the 4x4 experience, or simply enjoying a picnic on the picturesque grounds, there's no shortage of family-friendly activities to create cherished memories.

Discover Qal'at al-Bahrain (Bahrain Fort)

Step back in time as you explore Qal'at al-Bahrain, a UNESCO World Heritage site and an ancient archaeological site. The fort's history dates back to the Dilmun era, and its strategic location offers panoramic views of the surrounding landscape. Take a leisurely stroll around the fort's grounds and imagine the stories that unfold within its ancient walls. ■



PROMPERU

conducts Roadshow comprising 15 Peruvian companies in India

The Commission for the Promotion of Peruvian Exports and Tourism (PROMPERU), the official tourism promotion board of Peru, recently held its inaugural roadshow bringing 15 esteemed Peruvian companies to India. To bolster tourism promotion endeavours in the vibrant Indian market, PROMPERU organised a compelling roadshow in New Delhi and Mumbai.

Priyanka Saxena Ray



Luis Cabello,
Commercial Counsellor of PROMPERU

This exclusive roadshow marked a significant step forward in fostering business relations between Peru and India. The event took place in the presence of the Honorable H.E. Mr. Javier Paulinich Velarde, Ambassador of Peru to India.

With a focus on promoting cultural exchange, business collaborations, and tourism contracting, the event hosted 14 prominent Peruvian companies aiming to interact with a minimum of 50+ potential Indian Travel companies in each city – a goal that was well-achieved.

Attendees were happy to engage in workshops, foster meaningful



partnerships, enhance lead generation, facilitate the exchange of products and ideas, and enlighten Indian travellers about the incredible opportunities awaiting them in Peru.

Luis Cabello, Commercial Counsellor of PROMPERU in India, expressed excitement about this endeavour, stating, "We are delighted to bring the essence of Peru to India through this unique roadshow. Our goal is to create a platform where the Indian and Peruvian tourism sectors can thrive together. This event offers a structured format for fruitful discussions, exploring meaningful possibilities, and establish partnerships. We are committed to empowering Indian travellers with the knowledge they need to make Peru their next dream destination."

He further added, "The purpose of our roadshows is to celebrate Peru's rich cultural heritage and remind Indians to

make their travel plans to our country and tick off a visit to Machu Picchu from their bucket list. Before the pandemic, 10,000 Indians visited Peru and we are hopeful of achieving this number by the end of this year. For the next year, our target is to get a 50% increase to this number, for which we have planned a series of marketing activities including more roadshows, participation in International Trade Shows, maybe organise a FAM trip for the agents and more. We are a country that has something for everyone and Indians must visit Peru. We see India as a great market where the wonders of Peru can truly come alive, capturing the hearts of every traveller."

The framework of the roadshow was pre-fixed meetings format where each travel agent was given 15 minutes for one-on-one constructive contact for a transformative journey. ■

10 ways to have a family-Friendly Adventure in New Orleans

New Orleans is a city renowned for its lively spirit and cultural richness. Families are in for a delightful surprise due to the availability of multiple kid-friendly activities and attractions that cater to all ages. Explore this guide to discover ten family-friendly adventures in the lively city of New Orleans.

● French Quarter Magic

The soul of New Orleans, the French Quarter, provides a blend of history, dining, and entertainment suitable for the entire family. Kick off the day with the legendary beignets at Cafe du Monde or savor the authenticity of a po-boy at Johnny's Po-Boys.

● City Park Wonderland

After breakfast, explore the Botanical Gardens, Carousel Gardens Amusement Park, and the newly remodeled Louisiana Children's Museum. For an energetic day, head to City Park. Filled with miniature houses, life-sized animals, and story-book characters, this playground is perfect for children.

● Mardi Gras World

Go behind the scenes of the famous Mardi Gras celebration at Mardi Gras World. Tour the warehouse where floats are designed and decorated, immersing yourself in the history of this grand event.

● National World War II Museum

With hands-on exhibits and interactive displays, the National WWII Museum in the Arts/Warehouse District is an educational yet enjoyable outing for both kids and adults. After exploring, savor a family-friendly meal at The American Sector on the museum's campus.

● JAMNOLA

A colorful and Instagram-friendly attraction, JAMNOLA is a haven for children. Designed by local artists to represent the music, art, and culture of New Orleans, it features exhibits inspired by Mardi Gras Indians, jazz musicians, seafood, and alligators, with vibrant rooms for the perfect photographs.

● Audubon Adventure

Uptown and in the Garden District, a day of nature, shopping, and good food awaits. Take a ride on the St. Charles Streetcar, enjoy breakfast at Camellia Grill, and head to Audubon Zoo for a wild time with animals from around the world.



Masked girl by Chris Granger

● Vue Orleans

Located on the 33rd floor, this unique indoor-outdoor observatory promises unparalleled 360-degree panoramic views of the riverfront in New Orleans.

● Marigny/Bywater Exploration

Enjoy a meal at The Ruby Slipper Cafe, explore the vibrant StudioBE for a dose of Black history in art, and relax at Crescent Park along the Mississippi River. Grab a hotdog at Dat Dog and savor the sounds of local music on Frenchmen Street.

● Whitney Plantation

A visit to the Whitney Plantation, focusing on the lives of enslaved people, provides a unique historical perspective.

● Swamp Tour

Take a break from the city with a swamp tour. With transportation available, one can board an airboat and feed marshmallows to alligators.

No matter the kind of experience, New Orleans promises an unforgettable vacation for families. ■

For more information, visit us at NewOrleans.com

Korea Tourism Organization draws good crowd at MICE Roadshow

A MICE Roadshow was organised by the Korea Tourism Organization in Mumbai on October 11, 2023 showcasing the vibrant MICE opportunities for business travel and corporate events in Korea. The event brought together key players in the tourism and hospitality industry, featuring participation from 7 Destination Management Companies (DMCs), 2 Airlines, 1 Regional Tourism Organization (RTO), and 1 Shopping representative.

Shreya Shimpi

The roadshow aimed at highlighting the unique facilities that Korea has to offer for housing MICE events. The attendees interacted with the participants of the roadshow to gain insights about the country's capabilities to host MICE events. Korea has emerged as one of the premier and most sought-after destination for MICE events because of the modern state-of-the-art infrastructure, cultural richness, technological advancements and seamless connectivity. Korea is one of the safest and most convenient

destination for hosting memorable and successful business events." Addressing the gathering about the MICE opportunities and regional tourism he said, "Korea is a stunning and diverse country with something to offer everyone such as breath-taking natural sceneries cultural richness and history. In recent years we have seen a growing number of Indian visitors visiting Korea. In 2019, we welcomed 4,00,000 Indian visitors in Korea and this number is expected to continue to grow in the coming years. There are a



Young-og Kim,
Consul General-Consulate General of the
Republic of Korea in Mumbai

visit Korea in October as a part of their international training programme. For leisure tourism Korea has various things to offer such as beautiful beaches, palaces and museums."

Mr. Young-og Kim, Consul General-Consulate General of the Republic of



travel destinations in the world thanks to the safe streets, foreigner-friendly signs and convenient public transportation. During the event, there were presentations from two airlines highlighting the various connectivity options to and from Korea.

Mr. Myong Kil Yun, Regional Director India & SAARC Countries at the Korea Tourism Organisation, expressed his enthusiasm for the event, stating, "We are thrilled to have had the opportunity to bring Korea's MICE offerings to Mumbai. The roadshow allowed us to connect with key stakeholders and demonstrate why Korea is an ideal

number of factors driving this growth. Firstly, there is a growing awareness of Korea in India thanks to the popularity of K-pop culture and cuisine. The Korea Tourism Organisation has made a number of efforts to simplify tourism from India which includes simplifying the visa process of corporate groups, offering attractive incentives for MICE groups and launching the K-incentive scheme for various travel agents. Korea is a great destination for both MICE and leisure tourism. Korea also offers several unique MICE venues. I am delighted to share with you that a group of 3200 employees across India is scheduled to

Korea in Mumbai said "In 1973 our two countries established diplomatic ties. This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the diplomatic relationship between India and Korea. The comprehensive economic agreement between our two countries in 2009 played a huge role in capitalising on bilateral economic relationships. The trade is driving so much growth that I am confident that we are now truly very important partners of each other. I strongly believe that Korea and India will be closer friends and gain a much deeper understanding of each other through more cultural exchanges through travel and tourism." ■



CHEVAL MAISON
THE PALM
DUBAI



Experience Luxury at Cheval Maison - The Palm Dubai

WHAT TO EXPECT

A 11 storey high-rise building that will host 131 apartments with a selection of spacious one, two and three-bedroom apartments and a three-bedroom penthouse. Selected apartments come with a balcony or terrace offering spectacular city views or overlooking the palm. The ground floor of the residence will have a reception, lobby and lounge area. There will also be an all-day dining cafe serving hot breakfast daily and a selection of snacks, drinks and light bites during the day. On the 11th floor of the building is a fully-equipped gym available to use 24 hours a day. Resident guests will also have access to a roof-top swimming pool.

The combination of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments, plus a stunning 3-bedroom penthouse, provide all the facilities needed for an indulgent sunshine getaway, or a longer-term stay.

Each apartment is stylishly designed, with the attention to detail and quality you would expect from Cheval. Fully equipped kitchens can be found in all apartments, and most feature their own terrace or balcony, providing the perfect place to unwind in peace.

Cheval Collection has expanded its portfolio to the Middle East with a brand new Cheval Maison now open in Dubai, UAE. The Cheval Maison brand offers premium apartments in vibrant locations, offering guests an opportunity to live like a local without compromising on creature comforts.

APARTMENT OVERVIEW

One-Bedroom Apartments	100	84 - 97 sq.m
Two-Bedroom Apartments	20	142 - 153 sq.m
Three-Bedroom Apartments	10	158 sq.m
Three-Bedroom Penthouse	1	408 sq.m

KEY SERVICES

Fully equipped kitchens	24-hour service
All day dining café & lounge	Free Hi-speed Wi-Fi
Bar and lounge	Daily Housekeeping
Rooftop swimming pool	Dishwasher and washer/dryer
Fully-equipped gym	Pet-friendly apartments
Underground parking	Luxury Toiletries

ACCESS & ATTRACTIONS

Nakheel Mall	50 m
The Palm Monorail Station	140 m
Al Ittihad Park	700 m
The Pointe - Palm Jumeirah Fountain	2.5 km
Atlantis Aquaventure Waterpark	5 Km
Dubai Marina	7.5 km
Ski Dubai	10 Km

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Jumeirah Hotels and Resorts continues to build strong customer base in India

Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts, the global luxury hospitality company and member of Dubai Holding continues to build a strong customer base in India, announcing a 24% increase in room nights booked in 2023 YTD compared to the same period in 2022. A key strategic partner to the UAE, India is a top source market for Jumeirah Hotels and Resorts, with particularly strong visitor numbers in Dubai, London, and Asia Pacific. The growth in guest arrivals for the luxury operator follows a period of global expansion for the brand, including the opening of several new properties over the past 18 months. Mohamed Ashraf, General Manager, Jumeirah Maldives Olhahali Island, K. Olhahali, North Male' Atoll, Republic of Maldives talked about a shift in the travel trends post-pandemic, sustainability and more.

Shreya Shimpi



Mohamed Ashraf,
General Manager, Jumeirah Maldives
Olhahali Island



Business post-pandemic

Maldives made a bold decision to open its borders a couple of months after July 2020. We have had a fantastic two years for Maldives as a destination seeing great numbers coming into the destination. India has always remained the key source market for Maldives. At our property, we have seen an increase of twenty per cent year on year from India. We have put in more strategies to connect more with our Indian partners and we have to reach the right audience from all parts of India to increase the footfall on our property in the Maldives.

Maldives predominantly remains a luxury leisure destination. We have more honeymooners, family travellers, multi-generational travellers. We are also seeing groups of friends who

get together and enjoy the Maldives. Girlfriends get together who want to come for the three nights extended weekend holidays. This is the shift that we have seen over the course of the last few years. We have also seen a few large group requests not to the extent seen in Dubai because of the island size but we do receive requests for partial island buyouts. We have requests for twenty villas which would be for 50 to 60 guests travelling together.

Measures being taken towards sustainability

Maldives has such a fragile environment. We try to stay away from single-use plastics. We also have a project that is upcoming with solar power. With PLase-1 of this project, we may be reducing 15-20 per cent of carbon emissions. We also feel we should be responsible towards the environment by working with great partners to try and conserve the marine beauty and the environment. We have coral reef restoration projects that we

have initiated locally. We have created awareness with our tourists within our community through the resident marine biologist we have on our property. Whether it is building the coral reef and allowing the guest to experience the house reef and putting forth an educational approach regarding the fragile environment. How we can protect and preserve the environment for future generations to come.

Weddings and MICE

We are a destination for luxury and leisure travel. We don't have much of a MICE movement since the destination itself is not yet ready.

USP of your hotel

It is a boutique luxury resort with 67 villas. If someone has a great experience they share it within their close network. We then have more referrals which is one the reasons that service excellency is key. When they have an amazing experience they go and they share which is something we do exceptionally well at our properties. ■

Japan promoting hidden regional gems in India

Japan National Tourism Organization organised a roadshow across Bengaluru and Mumbai, with private stakeholders including hotels and DMCs from Japan which was a grand success. In an exclusive chat with BOTT, Ryo Bunno, Executive Director - Delhi Office, JNTO, who has been recently appointed (August 2023) shared details of the various strategic initiatives that are in the pipeline to promote Japan in India. He also talked about the importance of the Indian market and his vision for the upcoming year and more.

Shreya Shimpi



Ryo Bunno,
Executive Director - Delhi Office, Japan
National Tourism Organization (JNTO)

How important is India to you as a market?

India's economic growth has been increasing every year. All of Japan is focussing on the Indian market. Apart from this, India and Japan have a strong connection in terms of culture. This cultural connection makes us more familiar with each other. It is a combination of economic, cultural and political factors which bring us closer than before.

What marketing strategies are you planning to increase visitors from India?

India is a big country. Therefore, just one marketing strategy is not enough for the Indian market. We are seeking the Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru markets. These three cities are a higher priority for us because of the direct connectivity. Mumbai is the most important market for us as the leisure

market is quite big. Delhi and Bengaluru are also important to us given the high business demand.

What are the various categories of tourists coming to Japan from India?

Japan National Tourism Organization has three pillars – Adventure, Luxury and Sustainable Tourism, which the India office is following. We are focussing more on the luxury segment as most travellers coming from India belong to this segment. We also have unique venues for International Conferences, making it an ideal destination for Incentive tours.

What are the efforts being taken towards sustainability?

The bustling urban hubs - Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, and Hiroshima are undeniably attractive, drawing foreign visitors to revel in their astonishing allure. Nonetheless, beyond these renowned metropolises lies a treasure trove of natural splendour and authentic Japanese experiences, waiting to be discovered in the countryside. Embracing the essence of a "slow trip," these lesser-known regions offer a serene escape from the crowds, fostering an atmosphere of relaxation and genuine connection.

Prefectures of Tohoku and Hokkaido region are unique and have plenty to offer. To truly appreciate their captivating and enduring charm, a visit to Tohoku and Hokkaido is imperative. We encourage exploring these regional gems, we aim to not only promote "Sustainable Tourism" but also experience the rich natural diversity.

What is your vision for 2024?

Before the pandemic, we saw over 1,75,000 Indian visitors per year. To meet the 2019 milestone is our objective for 2023. So far, from January to June 2023, we have witnessed close to 79,500 visitors to Japan from India. We want to recover the numbers we witnessed before the pandemic. Indian market has huge potential in terms of visiting Japan, so JNTO Delhi has to make efforts much more than before.

Facilitating visits from Indian travellers to Japan and encouraging them to share their experiences through word of mouth or social media can significantly contribute to promoting Japan destination in India. Likewise, facilitating the flow of information from JNTO to Indian Travel Trade can enhance awareness and interest among Indian travellers. We extend a warm invitation to Travel Trade for reaching out to us without hesitation for any inquiries or assistance. Our door is always open, ready to assist and guide you on your journey to discovering the diverse wonders of Japan.

Japan - 'The Land of the Rising Sun' is emerging as one of the most sought-after travel destinations for travellers. It is known for its picturesque landscapes which include the spell-binding Mount Fuji, Buddhist shrines, temples, forests, efficient public transportation, food and a lot more. The Sakura (Cherry Blossom) bloom is a sight to behold attracting tourists from all over the world during the spring season. Japan has been captivating the interest of the Indian traveller. ■

Know what your stars say about November 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 November 2023.



March 21 — April 20

With Saturn's retrograde ending in your sector of healing and spirituality, you'll be in the mood to inject more laughter and lightheartedness into your life. Chiron's continued retrograde through your sign may lead you to believe you're not worthy of the good life, but you are.



July 23 — August 21

The Scorpio Sun is still highlighting your family sector, Leo, making the first three weeks of November especially serious and dramatic (due to Mars' presence in that sector of your chart as well). During Scorpio Season, family mysteries and secrets may be solved or revealed.



November 23 — December 22

The Scorpio Sun encourages you to do some personal digging and figure out what motivates you and what holds you back in life. Because your planetary ruler Jupiter is still retrograde, you don't have to make major life changes as a result of gaining clarity.



April 21 — May 21

Taurus, this month is all about integrating the downloads from the lunar eclipse that occurred at the end of October in your sign. Now it's time to emerge from your hermit world and interact with friends and family who have been patiently awaiting your return.



August 22 — September 23

This month, Virgo, you'll notice a shift in your communication patterns, especially on an internal level. You'll be able to hear yourself and your intuition more clearly, especially during the first ten days of the month, when Mercury is still in Scorpio, your planetary ruler.



December 23 — January 20

Capricorn, rejoice: Saturn, your planetary ruler, goes direct in Pisces this month for a seven-month journey. The end of Saturn's retrograde period allows you to take yourself and life less seriously, opening up new avenues of possibility in your subconscious mind.



May 22 — June 21

During the first three weeks of November, we're still in Scorpio Season, you'll either be in the mood to delegate tasks that absolutely bore you, or you'll be in the mood to take on more work if you feel professionally under-stimulated. Only you know what to do.



September 24 — October 23

Libra, you're one of the cosmic favourites this month, as your planetary ruler Venus enters your sign on November 8. Mercury, the Planet of Communication, enters Sag two days later, which corresponds to your airy nature. You've officially entered "speak your mind" season.



January 21 — February 19

Saturn, your planetary ruler, ending its retrograde in Pisces on November 4th, your financial sector will gradually improve as you devise creative yet soul-centered ways to increase your income while also tending to your personal self-esteem. Saturn's retrograde in Pisces.



June 22 — July 22

A part of you may feel unrecognizable, owing to the transformative nature of last month's eclipse season. Begin the month with a sense of wonder as the sun and Mars enter Scorpio, highlighting your sector of fun, fate, youth, and true love, encouraging you to believe in your own personal fairytale.



October 24 — November 22

Scorpio, your birthday season continues this month, and because Mars remains in your sign until November 24, you'll feel ready to take your life to the next level by not only dreaming about what you want to accomplish in 2024, but actually getting a head start on it this year. As a result, you may experience tunnel vision.



February 20 — March 20

Pisces, is that Saturn, the Planet of Responsibility, will complete its retrograde through your sign on November 4th, allowing you to see and love yourself more fully. You are still dealing with insecurities, especially since Neptune, the Planet of Illusion, is still retrograde in your sign this year.



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#First Opinion



"As a cricketing legend in that continent, Chris Gayle's influence continues to transcend borders and captivate audiences worldwide. We are seeing a jump in our numbers since we officially made him a Tourism Ambassador. Meanwhile, the Indian market initiatives are now fully on stream. We met with our partners and have started to see the engagements. There is a huge market for weddings, there is a confluence of cricket, a rapidly growing middle and upper middle class, over time better flight connectivity, and a very active Indian community in Jamaica itself will drive growth from this increasingly lucrative market."

Honourable Edmund Bartlett, Tourism Minister, Jamaica



"The current, Take Off phase in Air India's ongoing transformation and modernization programme is about laying the building blocks across commercial functions and operations to support future growth. The strengthening of our distribution network and renegotiation of GDS contracts is an important step in that direction, aimed at driving greater commercial efficiencies and success, as we rapidly build for the future. India is witnessing record growth in aviation, and we take great pride at our contributions to this boom. We find the right technology partners in Amadeus, Sabre, and Travelport, to capitalize on the tremendous opportunities that our transformation efforts and expansion presents."

Nipun Aggarwal, Chief Commercial & Transformation Officer, Air India



"India is the second-largest source of foreign tourists to Bali, and with hassle-free visa-on-arrival, Bali remains one of the preferred holiday destinations for Indians, besides being popular for MICE traffic. Additionally, as the second largest trading destination for India in the ASEAN region, Indonesia exhibits great potential for business travel as well. We are delighted to be the only airline offering direct connectivity between Dehi and Bali and are confident that customers will appreciate having the option to travel on India's finest full-service airline on the route."

Vinod Kannan, Chief Executive Officer, Vistara



"The Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA) is set to announce a series of ground-breaking initiatives aimed at solidifying Bahrain's position as a premier global tourist destination. The declaration follows Bahrain's remarkable achievement in Manama being chosen as the capital of Gulf tourism for the year 2024 during the 7th meeting of the ministers responsible for tourism in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The prestigious designation of "Manama" as the capital of Gulf tourism for 2024 is a testament to Bahrain's exceptional contributions to the growth of Gulf tourism sector. Bahrain's foresight in recognising tourism's potential as a vital sector capable of driving economic growth has played a pivotal role in securing this honour."

Dr. Nasser Ali Qaedi, CEO, Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA)



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Pankaj Saxena, General Manager, Radisson Blu Hotel Pune Kharadi



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