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Monsoon Marvels

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MONSOON MARVELS

As the monsoon clouds gather and raindrops 18 – 26
delicately dance upon the earth, India undergoes a
transformation akin to magic. Across its diverse
landscapes, from the misty hills of the Western Ghats
to the sprawling plains of the North, cities awaken to a
lush green embrace. It is the season of rejuvenation,
where every corner becomes a canvas painted in
vivid hues of emerald and jade. Read on to know
more about the Monsoon Marvels in India.

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From the

*Editor's
Desk*

Dear Readers,

As the relentless heat of the past month gives way to the cooling embrace of the monsoon, we at BOTT are delighted to present our July issue, celebrating the magic of this much-awaited season. This month, we focus on the most enchanting monsoon destinations across India, from the misty hills of Darjeeling and Shillong to the lush landscapes of Coorg and Wayanad. Explore the scenic beaches of Goa, the serene beauty of the Andaman Islands, and the captivating charm of Lonavala and Mandu. Each location offers a unique experience, made even more special by the refreshing rains.

In addition to our monsoon travel highlights, we bring you the latest updates from the Indian tourism sector. With a new Tourism Minister taking charge, along with other Cabinet Ministers, we delve into the potential changes and developments this leadership could bring to the industry.

Our international focus this month shines on Turkey tourism, as we cover the OTOAI Mega Fam trip to Turkey, where nearly 40 travel trade members and media representatives experienced the country's rich culture and diverse attractions. Further enriching this issue, we have an in-depth destination article on Jamaica, offering insights into its stunning landscapes and vibrant culture. For the adventure seekers, our feature on a road trip to Sariska provides a detailed guide to this thrilling journey.

Join us as we embrace the monsoon and explore the best of travel, both near and far. We hope this issue inspires your next adventure, be it amidst the lush greenery of India or the cultural wonders of Turkey and Jamaica.

Happy Reading!

Priyanka Saxena Ray
priyanka@bottindia.com

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WTTC & VFS Global partner for report on tourism opportunities in LATAM

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), in collaboration with VFS Global, revealed that the Latin American (LATAM) Travel & Tourism sector could add nearly US\$260BN to the region's economy and create nearly eight million new jobs over the next 10 years. As per report this potential growth is dependent on three key policies to unlock annualised growth of 3.4%, reaching nearly US\$909.2BN.



Air India to set up South Asia's largest FTO at Amravati

Air India is setting up South Asia's largest Flying Training Organisation (FTO) at Amravati in Maharashtra as part of an initiative by the Maharashtra Airport Development Company (MADC). This FTO will strengthen the available pilot training capacity in India. The DGCA-licensed FTO at Amravati's Belora airport will be operational by Q1 FY26.

IndiGo announces direct flights between Mumbai and Vijayawada

IndiGo has unveiled a new direct flight route connecting Mumbai and Vijayawada. Set to commence from August 16, these daily flights aim to facilitate seamless travel between the capital of Maharashtra, Mumbai, and Andhra Pradesh's business capital, Vijayawada. IndiGo will now operate 130 weekly flights from Vijayawada to 8 cities in India.



SalamAir launches inaugural flight from Muscat to New Delhi

SalamAir has announced the launch of its newest route, connecting Muscat to the vibrant capital city of India, New Delhi. Starting July 2, SalamAir will operate twice-weekly flights to Delhi, with services on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This milestone signifies a new chapter in SalamAir's commitment to providing exceptional service.

Saudia wins the world's 'Most Improved Airline' Award

Saudia was named 'The World's Most Improved Airline' and ranked number one for the Best Economy Class Airline Catering at the 2024 Skytrax World Airline Awards. The event was hosted by Skytrax, the international air transport rating organization, known for its evaluation of the global airline industry.



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IHG Hotels & Resorts debuts in Kashmir with a voco hotel

IHG Hotels & Resorts has signed a management agreement with Geelan Residency for voco Srinagar - IHG's first hotel in Kashmir. Scheduled to open in October 2026, voco Srinagar will feature 95 well-appointed rooms, diverse dining options including an all-day dining and a pool deck and a fitness centre pool. The hotel will also cater to the demands of MICE.



ITC Hotels open Storii Devasom Resort & Spa, Kolkata

Storii by ITC Hotels enters West Bengal with Storii Devasom Resort & Spa, Kolkata. Spread across 3 acres, this resort is the perfect getaway for a relaxing staycation or a spa holiday. The resort features a nice mix of spacious rooms, suites and villas. The goodness of "K by Kayakalp" – ITC Hotels' in-house wellness brand is well integrated with the spa resort at Storii Kolkata.

Wyndham Hotels & Resorts announces 2nd hotel in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand

CSN Developers have announced their partnership with Wyndham Hotels & Resorts to open a world-class Wyndham Garden Hotel at Adityapur in Jamshedpur. Wyndham Garden Jamshedpur, Adityapur will have about 55 rooms along with all Day Dining & Bar Lounge, Meeting Rooms, Business Centre, Fitness Centre, Swimming Pool. The hotel is expected to open by February 2025.



Cygnett Hotels & Resorts launches innovative Leadership Program

Cygnett Hotels & Resorts has introduced Cygnett Leadership Development Program (CLDP). At the heart of CLDP lies an intense and comprehensive training module of nine months, divided into three phases. The program will provide a structured framework including people skills, leadership skills, digitalization, a strategic approach to key hotel departments, HR management, finance, marketing and more.

Riya Group partners with Air India Express to ease Visa Application for travellers

Riya Group's sub-vertical Riya Visa Services takes a significant step forward to simplify the often-arduous visa application process. This strategic collaboration with Air India Express integrates Riya's comprehensive visa services directly on the airline's website, enabling passengers to browse flights and apply for visas to any destination - all in one place.

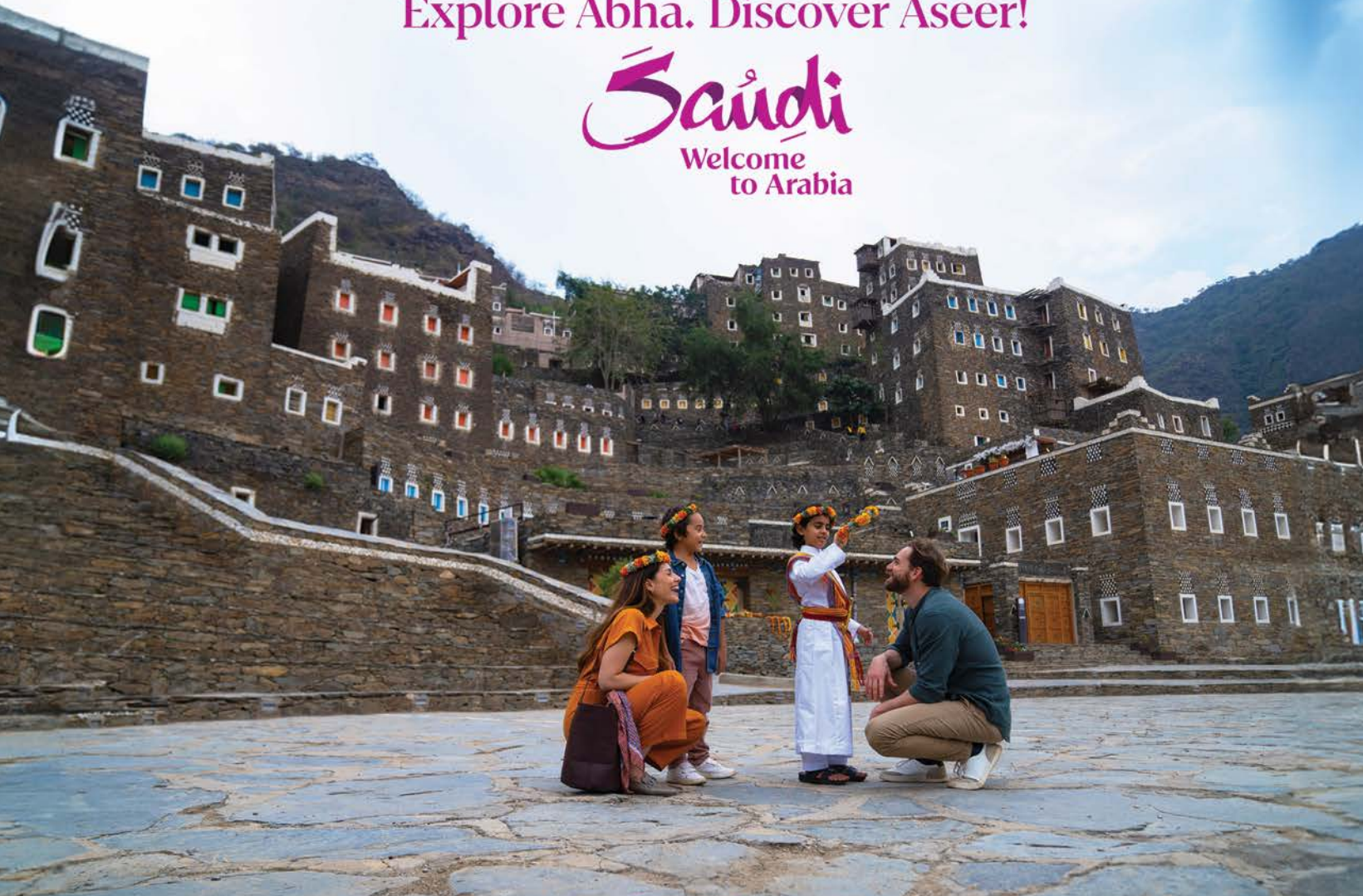


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New Tourism Minister keen on adopting holistic approach to Tourism



Shri Gajender Singh Shekhawat took over the charge of the Culture and Tourism Ministries on June 10, 2024, in Delhi. A consecutive two-time Member of Parliament from Jodhpur, Rajasthan, the honourable Minister has previously served as the Jal Shakti Minister in the Modi cabinet. Upon assuming his new role, the Minister emphasized his commitment to contributing to the vision of a Viksit Bharat.

BOTT DESK

underscored the importance of India's rich cultural diversity in attracting tourists. He stressed that while infrastructure development is crucial, creating an engaging ecosystem is equally essential to draw Buddhist tourists and other visitors. The minister highlighted

Heritage Committee will be held in India, presenting a unique opportunity for Rajasthan and other states to gain international recognition for their heritage sites.

Tourism's contribution to India's GDP stands at 6.2%, and Shekhawat outlined a vision to increase this to 10%. He pointed out that tourism is primarily a state subject and called upon the Rajasthan government to develop

Soon after taking charge, the Honourable Minister invited representatives from 26 Tourism Associations for a closed-door meeting held at The Ashok, New Delhi. In less than 30 days, he has made his intentions of taking tourism in India to new heights abundantly clear. He seems to be the man on a mission and we in the tourism sector couldn't be happier.

Meanwhile, Shri Shekhawat recently announced a groundbreaking development in India's cultural landscape: the transformation of the North and South Blocks of Delhi's Raisina Hill complex into the world's largest museum by 2025. This ambitious project aims to create a museum almost double the size of France's Louvre Museum, positioning India as a global cultural hub. This announcement was made during Shekhawat's visit to Jodhpur and the Bodhi Yatra event, an initiative designed to promote the Buddhist circuit in Uttar Pradesh and attract investments into the region.

During his speech, Shri Shekhawat

Shri Shekhawat recently announced a groundbreaking development in India's cultural landscape: the transformation of the North and South Blocks of Delhi's Raisina Hill complex into the world's largest museum by 2025.

the need for a holistic approach to tourism, one that integrates cultural heritage with modern amenities to provide a comprehensive and enriching experience for tourists.

Additionally, in a significant milestone, Shri Shekhawat revealed that India will chair the World Heritage Committee for the first time, leading a committee comprising 126 countries. This role will enhance India's standing on the global stage and provide a platform to showcase the nation's heritage. An upcoming conference of the World

a detailed tourism plan. The central government, he assured, would support these plans based on their priorities. This collaborative approach aims to boost tourism across the country, leveraging each state's unique offerings.

The minister also mentioned that a meeting with other states would soon be organised to gather information about their preparations and proposals for tourism development. This effort aims to create a cohesive national strategy that highlights India's multifaceted tourism potential. ■



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Shri Gajender Singh Shekhawat

Union Minister for Tourism and Culture, Government of India

A consecutive two-time Member of Parliament from Jodhpur, Rajasthan, Shekhawat celebrated another glorious victory in the 18th Lok Sabha elections. Previously, he has served as the Jal Shakti Minister in the Modi cabinet. Upon assuming his new role, Shekhawat emphasized his commitment to contributing to the vision of a Viksit Bharat.

Shri Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu

Union Minister, Civil Aviation, Government of India

This three-time TDP MP from Srikakulam Andhra Pradesh is the youngest minister in the Modi Cabinet who would now be handling Civil Aviation Ministry, replacing the BJP's Jyotiraditya Scindia.



Shri Ashwini Vaishaw

Union Minister for Railways, Information and Broadcasting, Electronics & IT, Government of India

Starting his second tenure as Railway Minister, this Member of Rajya Sabha from Odisha is a former IAS officer who has served the people of Sundergarh, Balasore, and Cuttack as District collector. While taking charge, he shared, "Prime Minister Modi has a special emotional connection with Railways, and he has entrusted me the responsibility to further his transformative vision to ensure that Indian Railways remains an affordable and a convenient mode of transport for the general public."



Shri Suresh Gopi

Minister of State for Tourism, Government of India

He is an actor turned politician who is also the first time Member of Parliament from Thrissur, Kerala.



Shri Murlidhar Mohol

Minister of State for Civil Aviation

Murlidhar Mohol is the first time MP from Pune and a former Pune Mayor. He has been sworn-in as the Minister of State in the Union Cabinet for two crucial portfolios of Civil Aviation and Cooperation.



Shri Ravneet Singh Bittu

Minister of State for Railways, Government of India

He has taken the charge of new Union Minister of State for Railways along with the additional charge as Minister of State in the Ministry of Food Processing Industries. Taking charge of the portfolio, he said, "Railways connect common people and plays a huge role in bringing them together. We shall work as a team to take it forward under the guidance of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Minister of Railways Shri Ashwini Vaishnav ji."



Shri V. Somanna

Minister of State for Railways, Government of India

The Lingayat leader, who started off as member BBMP in 1983-87, won the Tumkur Lok Sabha segment in the recent Lok Sabha polls and took charge as Minister of State for Railways.





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‘Our travel trade partners are key pillars to our growth story’

-Yummi Talwar

As a market leader in outsourced visa and consular services, we track trends and develop solutions based on the needs of our client governments and applicants. To support the global shift towards digitalization, they are also developing AI solutions in strict accordance with the needs and regulations of its Client Governments. In her first ever interview with a Travel Trade Media, Yummi Talwar, COO, South Asia, VFS Global shares more.

Priyanka Saxena Ray

How is VFS Global catering to this increased outbound demand, and what measures have you implemented to ensure a smooth and efficient visa application process for travellers?

The demand for outbound travel has increased among leisure travellers, corporates, and students. In 2023, our visa application volumes in India reached 93% of pre-pandemic levels (2019). When compared to 2022, it marked a 16% growth. To benefit visa applicants, we have taken several

measures: Increased capacity at our Visa Application Centres (VACs), augmented staff capacity and upgraded our IT systems for a seamless experience.

For large groups, we offer appointments in the early morning or late evening for convenience. Additionally, we have introduced significant measures to counter third-party “scalpers” or bots using automated software to block appointments. These changes are in strict alignment with the mandates and guidelines from our client governments, ensuring that only genuine applicants

can book appointments and reinforcing the legitimacy of our process.

How is in many governments do you currently serve for Indians traveling overseas, and what does VFS Global’s footprint look like in terms of global reach and service locations?

As the world’s leading outsourcing and technology service specialist, VFS Global serves 52 client governments through over 560 visa application centres located in 19 cities across India.

Globally, we are the trusted partner to 68 client governments across 151

countries, operating a network of over 3,400 Visa Application Centres. VFS Global has efficiently processed more

As the world's leading outsourcing and technology service specialist, VFS Global serves 52 client governments through over 560 visa application centres located in 19 cities across India. Globally, we are the trusted partner to 68 client governments across 151 countries, operating a network of over 3,400 Visa Application Centres.

than 290 million applications since 2001.

In 2023 we won seven global contracts from the governments of UK, Australia, Sweden, Norway, Latvia, Iceland and Austria.

With the evolving landscape of global travel, what future trends do you foresee in the travel and visa services industry, and how is VFS Global preparing to stay ahead of these trends?

As a market leader in outsourced visa and consular services, we track trends and develop solutions based on the needs of our client governments and applicants. To support the global shift towards digitalization, we have created an eVisa platform for 13 governments and developed over 16 unique digital products to make visa application and processing secure, seamless, and efficient.

Additionally, we have established a robust, world-class biometric capability that is available at all our centres to meet government requirements. These steps ensure we stay aligned with emerging consular and visa application trends.

Foraying into Artificial Intelligence (AI), we will develop our AI solutions in strict accordance with the needs and regulations of our Client Governments.

We have partnered with Responsible AI Institute (RAI Institute), a prestigious non-profit organisation based in the USA, that is dedicated to fostering responsible AI practices within organisations.

Through this partnership, VFS Global will leverage the RAI Institute's expertise in AI ethics and data privacy, ensuring the development of AI solutions that are secure, ethical, and aligned with the operational needs of visa processing.

How is VFS Global leveraging technology to meet the changing requirements of governments and applicants. Can you share some specific innovations or enhancements that have been implemented?

We have introduced digital and contactless services such as the Digital Document Check (DDC), allowing applicants to verify their documents before visiting an application centre. Filling out a visa application form and submitting the proper documents can be challenging. Our DDC platform enables applicants to upload all supporting documents and fill out application forms from the comfort of their homes. Our experts then quality-check these documents remotely. Applicants receive feedback on the completeness of their documentation and can update or add

We have partnered with Responsible AI Institute (RAI Institute), a prestigious non-profit organisation based in the USA, that is dedicated to fostering responsible AI practices within organisations. Through this partnership, VFS Global will leverage the RAI Institute's expertise in AI ethics and data privacy, ensuring the development of AI solutions.

documents as necessary. Once the review is complete, they can download the final reviewed set of documents for submission.

Another popular service, especially among those from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, is Visa At Your Doorstep (VAYD). This premium service enables applicants to complete the visa application process from their home, office, or preferred location. It is also popular among MICE groups.

What steps is VFS Global taking to enhance the customer experience for visa applicants, and how do you gather and implement feedback from your customers?

Our customer experience journey begins with a visit to our website. This digital gateway, designed to be intuitive and easily navigable, provides applicants with relevant information and chatbot services. The technology employed in our Visa Application Centres (VACs) ensures seamless and integrated front and back-office operations, a boon for applicants. Our spacious VACs, equipped with modern amenities, further enhance the customer experience.

We collect feedback at our VACs and through digital channels. In 2023, we achieved an overall customer satisfaction rate of 95%, a 3.3% increase from 2022. Weekly customer satisfaction performance and insights are shared with stakeholders.

VFS Global recently conducted a 12-city roadshow just before summer. What were the key learnings from the travel industry during this roadshow?

Our goal was to engage travel agents in our anti-fraud efforts and emphasize the importance of early

applications, especially before peak seasons. We also aimed to inform agents about any operational updates in the region. The travel agent community appreciated our efforts in reaching out to them. Our teams across the country continue to engage with them and are at hand to address any issues. The overall response from the travel agent community was positive and we met up with over 1,200 agents nationwide. ■

Monsoon Marvels

Exploring India's Enchanting Rain-Kissed Cities

As the monsoon clouds gather and raindrops delicately dance upon the earth, India undergoes a transformation akin to magic. Across its diverse landscapes, from the misty hills of the Western Ghats to the sprawling plains of the North, cities awaken to a lush green embrace. It is the season of rejuvenation, where every corner becomes a canvas painted in vivid hues of emerald and jade. Amidst this natural spectacle, certain destinations stand out as veritable havens, offering not just respite from the heat but a journey into the heart of India's monsoon magic. So go ahead and explore these must-visit destinations that capture the essence of India during this enchanting season.

Pallavi Sharma & Anjali Pokhriyal

Lonavala

Nestled in the Sahyadri mountain range, Lonavala becomes a green wonderland during the monsoon. The cascading waterfalls, mist-covered hills, and serene lakes create a picturesque landscape that is both rejuvenating and mesmerizing. The popular Bhushi Dam overflows with water, making it an ideal spot for a fun and refreshing dip. The monsoon also enhances the beauty of places like Tiger's Leap, Lion's Point, and Rajmachi Fort, making Lonavala a must-visit destination during the rainy season.



Attractions

- **Bhushi Dam:** A popular spot where tourists flock to enjoy the gushing water over the steps of the dam.
- **Tiger's Leap:** Offers a panoramic view of the valley and is a perfect spot for photography.
- **Karla and Bhaja Caves:** Ancient Buddhist rock-cut caves that date back to the 2nd century BC.

- **Lohagad Fort:** A historical fort that provides stunning views of the surrounding landscape, especially during the monsoon when the area is covered in lush greenery.

Activities in Lonavala

- **Trekking:** Explore the numerous trekking trails leading to forts and caves.
- **Waterfall Rappelling:** Experience the

thrill of rappelling down a waterfall.

- **Camping:** Set up camp amidst nature and enjoy the serene environment.
- **Chikki Tasting:** Don't miss tasting the famous Lonavala chikki, a traditional sweet.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands offer an exotic retreat with their pristine beaches, turquoise waters,



and vibrant marine life. The monsoon adds a refreshing charm to the islands, making it an ideal time to visit. The rain showers add a fresh, clean look to the beaches and forests, while also bringing about fewer crowds, allowing for a more peaceful and intimate exploration.

Attractions

- **Radhanagar Beach:** Known for its crystal-clear waters and white sandy shores.
- **Cellular Jail:** A historical monument that tells the tale of India's freedom struggle.
- **Ross Island:** Explore the ruins of colonial buildings amidst lush greenery.
- **Havelock Island:** Famous for its stunning beaches, diving spots, and vibrant coral reefs.

Activities in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

- **Scuba Diving:** Discover the colorful underwater world teeming with marine life.
- **Snorkeling:** Enjoy snorkeling in the shallow waters and observe the beautiful coral reefs.
- **Island Hopping:** Take a boat tour to

explore the various islands.

- **Sea Walking:** Experience the unique sea walk and get up close with marine creatures.

Darjeeling

Darjeeling in the monsoon is nothing short of a dream. The hills come alive with the sound of rain and the fragrance of tea leaves. The misty weather adds a mystical charm to the already breathtaking landscapes.

Monsoon in Darjeeling also means fewer tourists, allowing for a more personal experience.

Attractions

- **Tiger Hill:** Famous for its breathtaking sunrise views over the Kanchenjunga range.
- **Batasia Loop:** A spiral railway track offering panoramic views of Darjeeling.
- **Darjeeling Himalayan Railway:** A UNESCO World Heritage site known



for its toy train ride.

- **Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park:** Home to several endangered species including the red panda.

Activities in Darjeeling

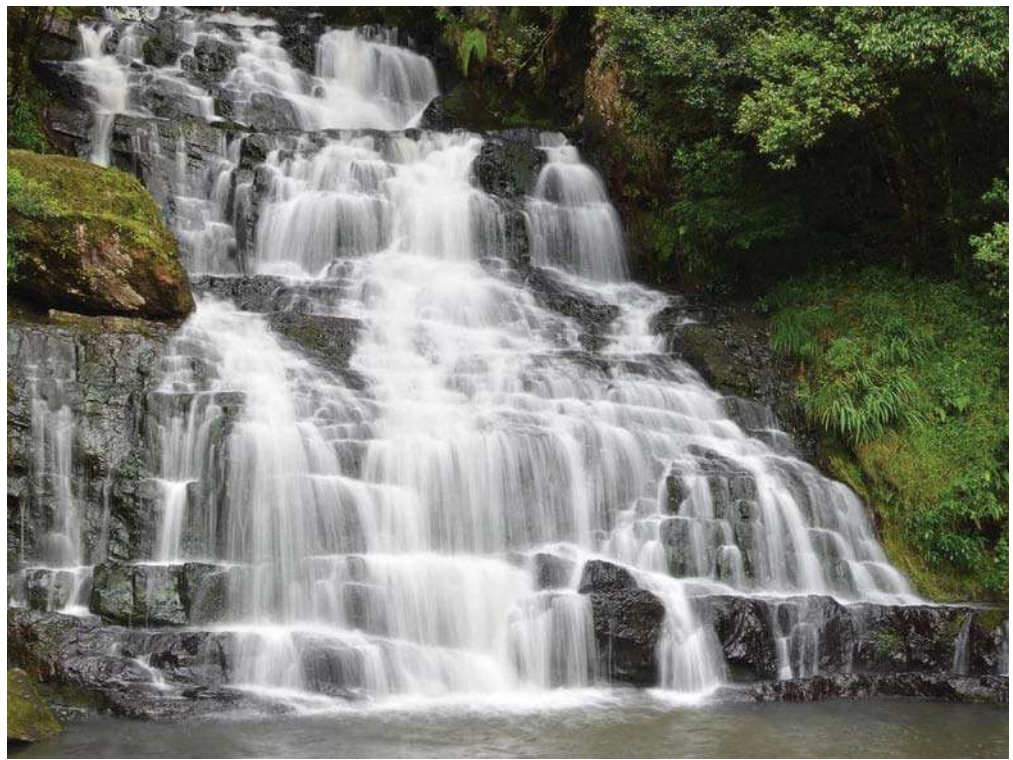
- **Tea Garden Tours:** Visit the tea estates and learn about the tea-making process.
- **Trekking:** Explore the scenic trekking routes such as the Sandakphu trek.
- **Monastery Visits:** Experience tranquillity at the various Buddhist monasteries.
- **Shopping:** Shop for local handicrafts and souvenirs at the bustling markets.

Shillong

Shillong, often referred to as the “Scotland of the East,” is another destination that blooms during the monsoon. The rains rejuvenate the landscape, making the hills, lakes, and waterfalls more beautiful than ever. Shillong’s Ward’s Lake, Elephant Falls, and the living root bridges in nearby Cherrapunjee and Mawlynnong become especially spectacular during this time. The monsoon also brings with it a plethora of cultural events and festivals, offering a unique glimpse into the vibrant traditions of Meghalaya.

Attractions

- **Elephant Falls:** A three-tiered waterfall surrounded by lush greenery.



- **Shillong Peak:** Offers a panoramic view of the entire city.
- **Ward’s Lake:** A man-made lake with beautiful gardens, perfect for a leisurely stroll.
- **Uiam Lake:** A sprawling reservoir with scenic surroundings, ideal for boating and picnics.

Activities in Shillong

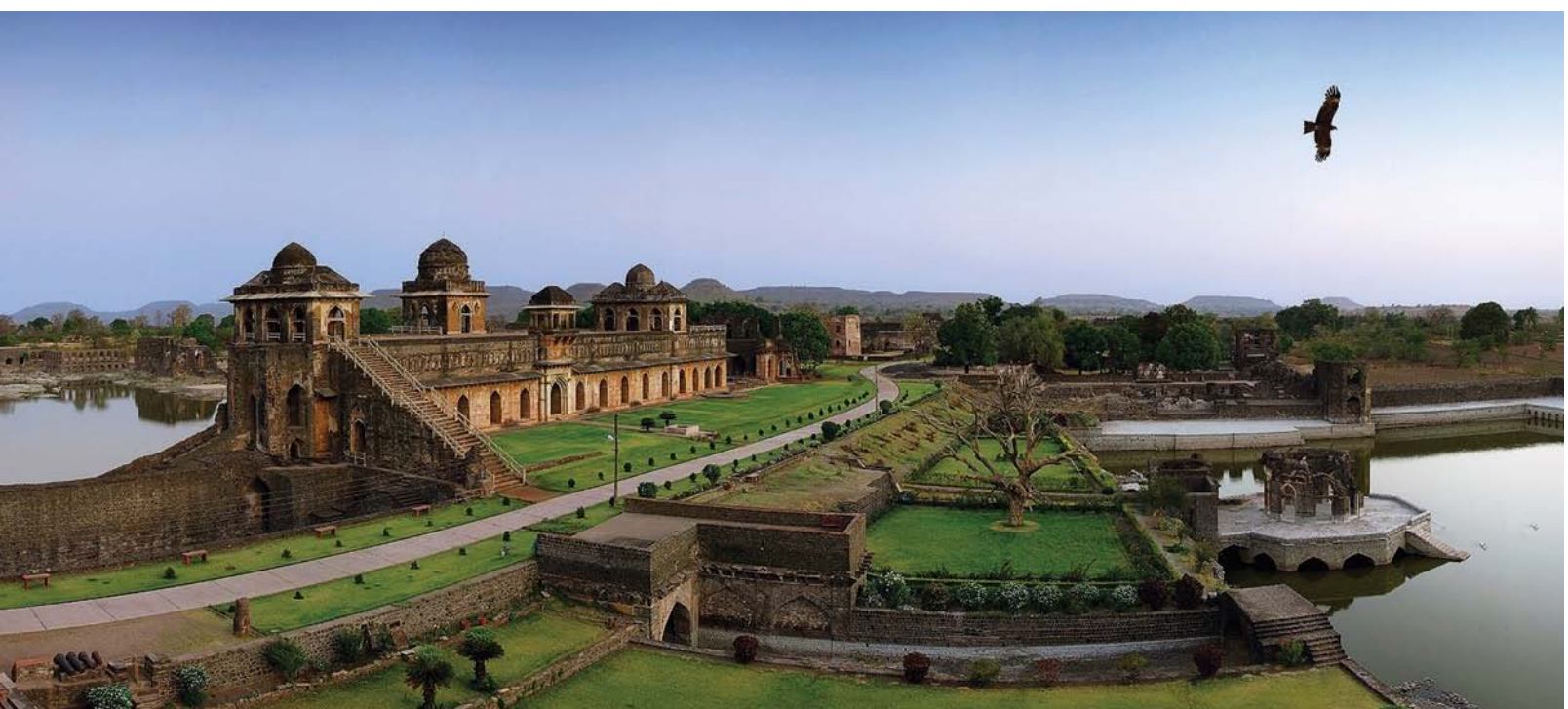
- **Boating:** Enjoy boating on the serene waters of Uiam Lake.
- **Nature Walks:** Take a walk through the picturesque landscapes and breathe in the fresh air.
- **Local Cuisine:** Savor the delicious local dishes like Jadoh, Dohneiiong,

and Pukhlein.

- **Music and Festivals:** Experience the vibrant music scene and cultural festivals.

Mandu

Mandu, a historical town in Madhya Pradesh, is transformed into a lush green haven during the monsoon. The ancient forts, palaces, and tombs surrounded by verdant landscapes create a surreal atmosphere. The Jahaz Mahal, Rani Roopmati Pavilion, and Baz Bahadur’s Palace look even more magnificent against the backdrop of monsoon skies. Mandu’s rich history coupled with its monsoon charm makes



it a perfect destination for history buffs and nature lovers alike.

Attractions

- **Kakrah Khoh Waterfall:** A stunning waterfall that is a sight to behold during the monsoon.
- **Jahaz Mahal:** Known for its ship-like appearance, this palace is surrounded by water bodies.
- **Rani Roopmati Pavilion:** Offers a striking view of the Narmada River.
- **Hindola Mahal:** A palace known for its unique sloping walls.

Activities in and around Mandu

- **Yoga Session:** Rejuvenate with yoga sessions amidst nature.
- **Cycling Tour:** Explore the ancient city on a cycling tour.
- **Heritage Walk:** Discover the historical tales on a guided heritage walk.



- **Rural Excursion:** Experience rural tourism by visiting Malipura village.

Coorg

Why visit Scotland? Come and visit Coorg, the most affluent hill station in Karnataka. It is well known

for its breathtakingly exotic scenery and lush greenery during monsoon. Adorned with patches of green tea plantations and aromatic spice plantations, Coorg is one of the most popular hill stations in South India to visit during rainy season. Coorg is famous for the surreal beauty of nature and the hills of the Western



Ghats covered by the mist of clouds and accompanied by the pleasant weather.

Attractions

- **Irupu Falls:** Also known as the Lakshmana Tirtha Falls, is a hidden treasure of Coorg which looks splendid during the monsoon season in Coorg.
- **Mandalpatti:** Mandalpatti is a spectacular and unique vantage point in Coorg. The spot is famous for the view it offers at sunrise and sunset.
- **Dubare Elephant Camp:** This camp offers a unique adventure to visitors by allowing them the experience of living in coexistence with the trained

elephants on-site.

- **Abbey Falls:** The water cascade coming down from the cliff from a height of 70 feet provides a spectacular scene to behold.

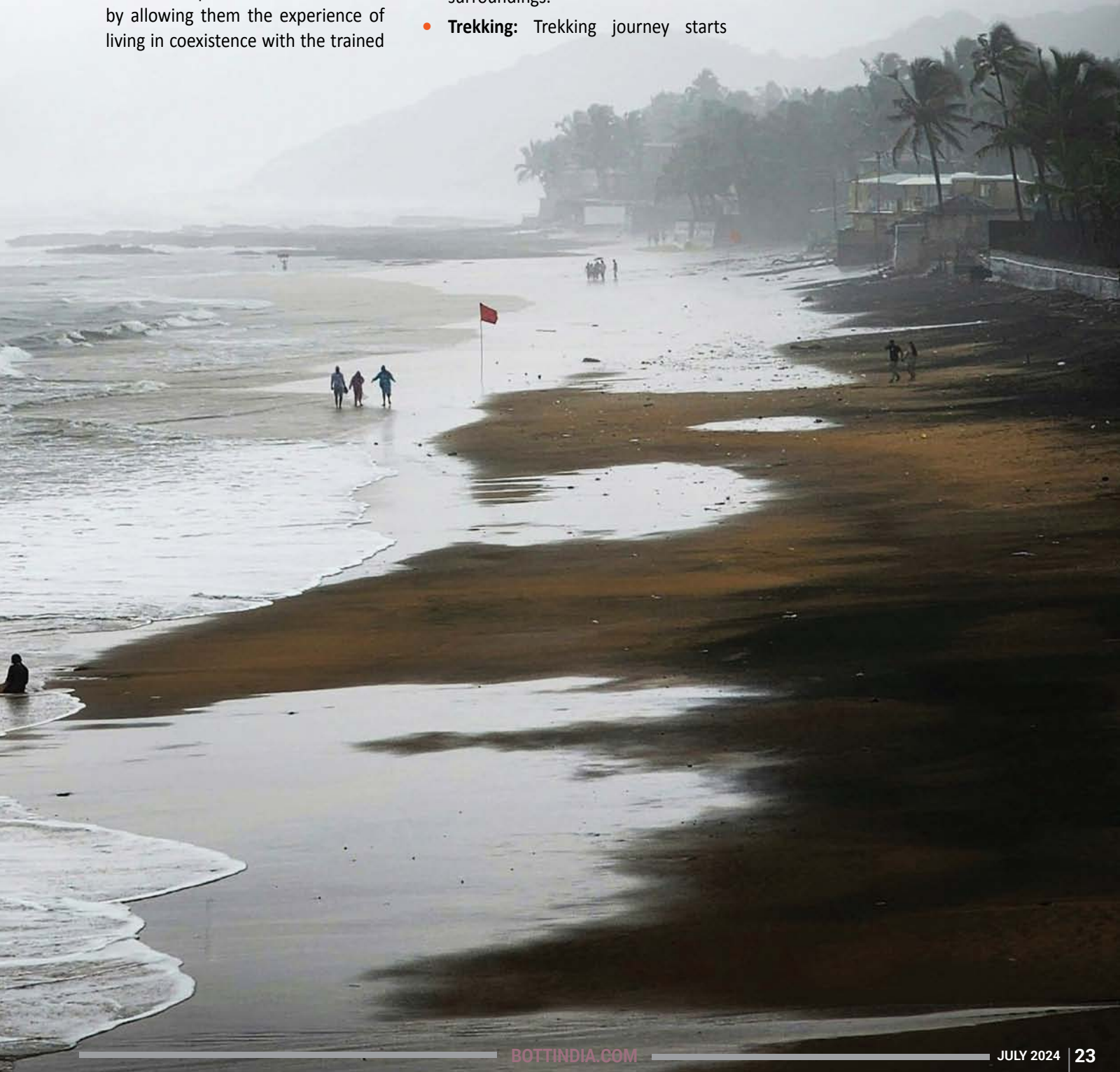
What Activities to do in Coorg during Monsoons?

- **Rafting:** Barapole is one of the most hyped places to experience white water rafting and capture some of the most adventurous pictures.
- **Bisle View Point:** this place gives a captivating view of the sunrise and undaunted beauty of the surroundings.
- **Trekking:** Trekking journey starts

from the Brahmagiri village and ends at the top of Brahmagiri Hill.

Goa

Goa seduces travellers from all around the globe with its boho beaches, ancient churches, majestic forts and unbeatable nightlife! Goa has much more to provide than just the beaches. This place is especially attractive during the monsoon season as this is during this time that nature flourishes here. The rain brings ultimate refreshment and romance in Goa, and you can taste a traditional flavour of this state.





Attractions

- **Spice Plantations:** You can explore the scented world of spices, such as cardamom, pepper, and cinnamon while walking through the rain-drenched plantations.
- **Fort Aguada:** Walk through this well-preserved 17th-century Portuguese fort as it offers panoramic views of the Arabian Sea.
- **Bondla Wildlife Sanctuary:** Perched in the foothills of the Western Ghats, this sanctuary comes to life with lush greenery and a variety of wildlife during the rains.
- **Dudhsagar Falls:** The falls, located in the Bhagwan Mahaveer Sanctuary and Mollem National Park, run down from a height of 310 meters, wrapped by dense forests.

Activities in Goa

- **Scuba Diving:** Get close and personal to tropical marine life while scuba diving in Goa.
- **Bungy Jumping:** Admire the gorgeous panoramic views over Mayem Lake while experiencing the rush of adventure.
- **Parasailing:** Enjoy various kinds of

adventurous rides and water sports such as, parasailing, jet ski, bumper ride, banana ride and boat ride.

- **Yoga:** While holidaying in Goa, this will be a unique and special experience to practice yoga on the beach side.

Wayanad

Wayanad is one of the most picturesque hill-stations in God's own country, Kerala. The place is the other name of sheer greenery and it will leave you spell-bound. It is said that Wayanad becomes even more magical after rain! Monsoon in Wayanad brings that extra beauty factor to the place that will amaze you in a different way altogether and compel you to visit it at that very moment. It is the perfect place to escape the hustle and bustle of city life!

Attractions

- **Pookode Lake:** The lake offers lush greenery and scenic views that will leave you mesmerized!
- **Meenmutty Falls:** The largest waterfall in Wayanad and offers picturesque views.
- **Edakkal Caves:** The caves showcase



engravings dating back to 5000 BC that will excite the history enthusiast in you!

- **Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary:** the sanctuary offers a beautiful view of different species of animals and birds. Some of the animals you will find here are elephants, leopards, tigers, deer and more.

Activities in Wayanad

- **Zipline:** One of the exciting activities

to indulge in Wayanad is ziplining through the nature and beauty of the place.

- **Mountain Hiking:** The trek to Chembra Peak is regarded as the best trek the entire state of Kerala has to offer, and the offer is undoubtedly a great one.
- **River Safari:** The boats and rafts rides are the best way to sail serenely through the river in between the islets underneath the

dense canopying trees.

- **Trekking at Meenmutty Falls:** It is also one of the most thrilling and beautiful natural attractions in Wayanad. Nestled away in the lap of a jungle trek, the cascading waterfall of Meenmutty makes up for a dazzling view.

Kodaikanal

The southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, Kodaikanal is a beautiful hill station that attracts visitors with its natural beauty and pleasant climate during monsoon. Surrounded by green forests, foggy hills, and shimmering lakes, Kodaikanal offers a serene atmosphere during rain. The town is known for its scenic landscapes, and the famous Kodaikanal Lake, where visitors can enjoy boating. With its refreshing weather and plenteous flora and wildlife, Kodaikanal is a popular destination for nature lovers and those seeking a peaceful retreat. The town also boasts scenic viewpoints, waterfalls, and opportunities for trekking, making it a delightful getaway for all.





Attractions

- **Kodaikanal Lake:** This star-shaped artificial lake is located at an elevation of 2285 meters above sea-level.
- **Kurinji Andavar Temple:** Dedicated to Lord Murugan, the Kurinji Andavar temple is a must visit place in Kodaikanal for pilgrims.
- **Guna Caves:** Named after a famed Kamal Hassan starrer Tamil movie Guna, the caves are a must visit place for nature lovers and adventure seekers.
- **Pillar Rocks:** The place derived its name from three rocks that stand almost vertical, looming high and almost piercing the sky at a height of 400 feet. Fog and mist often play hide and seek with the pillars, thus making the scene look almost ethereal.

Activities in and around Kodaikanal

- **Trek to Dolphin's Nose and Echo Rock:** Dolphin's Nose is a viewpoint which offers 360-degree panoramic views of the surrounding.

- **Enjoy camping** around Kodaikanal Wildlife Sanctuary.
- **Dolphin Point:** Dolphin Point offers a commanding view of the valley below and an unbelievable panorama of the Nilgiris.
- **Shopping:** Kodaikanal is the largest cocoa producer in India so make sure to stock up on cheese and chocolate.

Mount Abu

Mount Abu Being the only hill-station in the deserted land of Rajasthan, Mount Abu is like a privileged hill station of its parent state, which never disappoints. So, even when the rain pours, the town continues to offer the mesmerizing views of the mountains, lakes, and waterfalls around. And also offers experiences like boating, wildlife spotting, and more that are impeccable enough to make your getaway one-of-its-kind.

Things to do in Monsoons

- **Boating at Nakki Lake:** Nakki Lake is known for its scenic beauty and sanctity. So, boating on the lake

is one of the best things to do in Mount Abu in Monsoon.

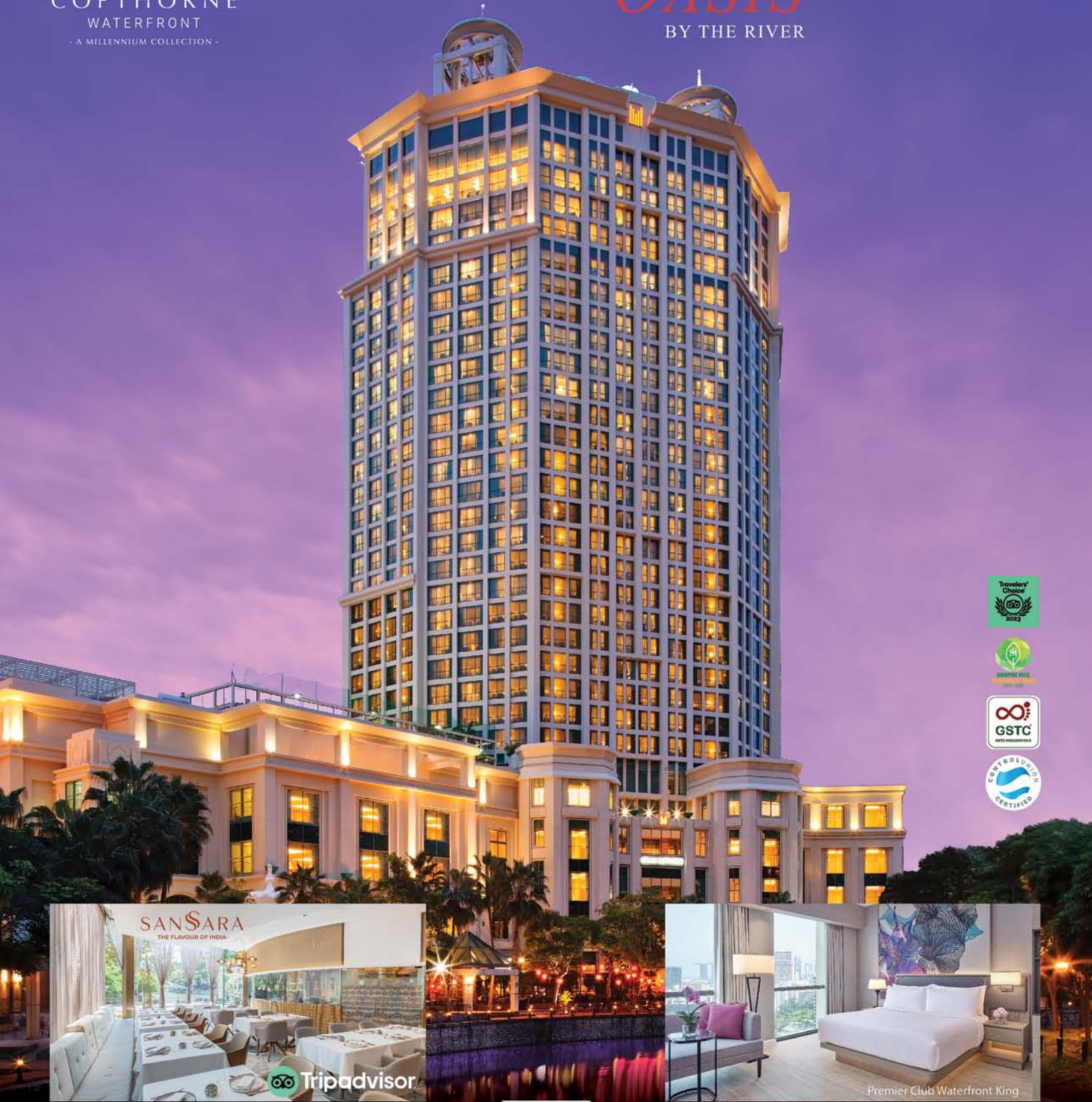
- **Trekking:** Trekking in Mount Abu at Aravalli Range is one of the most interesting things this place has to offer.
- **Shopping:** one can shop local handicrafts of Rajasthan and Gujarat, and other things like kota sarees, bangles, carpets, and more.

Attractions

- **Dilwara Temple:** The temple is known for its flawless architecture and the surrounding views. The temple follows Jainism and holds a strong history.
- **Mount Abu Wildlife Sanctuary:** The sanctuary is home to species like sambhar, common mongoose, wild boar, porcupine, jackal & more, it is also home to leopards and the unique Jungle Fowl bird.
- **Sunset Point:** the sunset point offers gorgeous sunset views.
- **Brahma Kumaris Peace Park:** The park is home to varied species of flowers and offers scenic views of the Aravalli Ranges. ■

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SriLankan Airlines Sky's the Limit

SriLankan Airlines, the National Carrier of Sri Lanka and a member of the oneworld alliance, is an award-winning airline known for their service, comfort, safety and reliability. Richard Nuttall, CEO, SriLankan Airlines speaks exclusively to BOTT about their comeback after the economic crisis and their plans for the future.

Shreya Shimpi



How has the year 2024 been for SriLankan Airlines? Are your frequencies back to the pre-Economic Crisis period?

We have re-established most routes and frequencies to reach levels comparable to those before the crisis. At the same time, there have been challenges in replacing aircraft that left the fleet and with engines on the new generation A320 fleet. This shortage of aircraft hindered our progress, and we had to introduce wet-leased aircraft from Air Belgium and Fits Aviation last winter to maintain schedules. The situation looks better moving into the summer as we take delivery of an additional A320, and a number of aircraft return to active service.

How important is the India market for SriLankan Airlines?

India is extremely important to SriLankan Airlines. We are right next door to what is not just the most populous country in the world, but is also a country with a strong, growing economy where air traffic is expected to double in the next five or six years. We currently fly to nine cities in India, and roughly a quarter of our revenues come from itineraries involving India. Twenty percent of tourism to Sri Lanka is from India, and we believe that there is potential for these numbers to double or triple in the next few years.

What are the strategies being implemented to increase your

outreach in the India market?

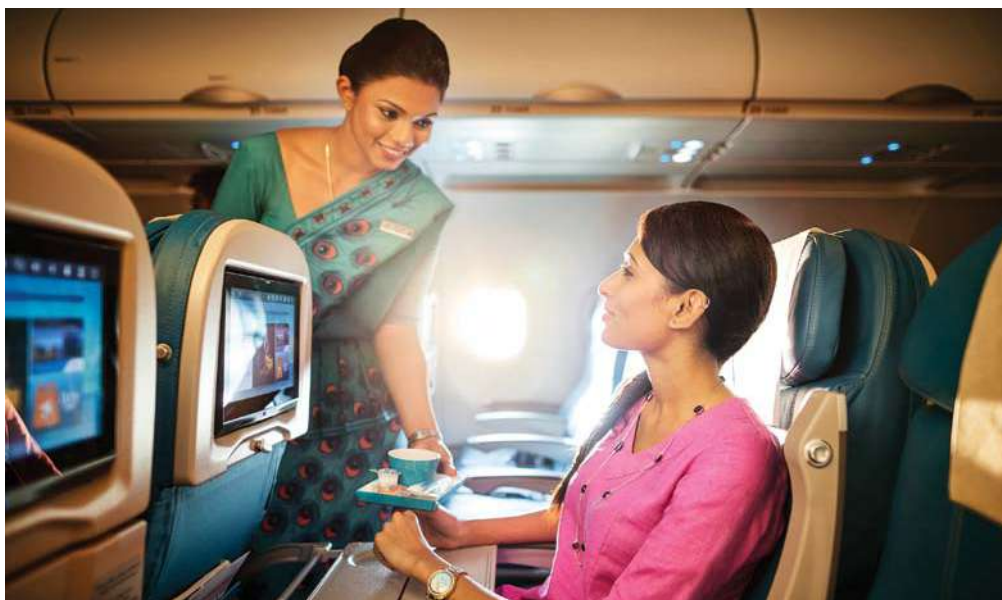
As our fleet returns, we will increase the number of flights to India, providing more convenient options for Indian travellers. We are also developing more products suited to different segments of the Indian market, such as pilgrim traffic, destination weddings and incentive movements.

How do you envision tourism in 2024?

Currently, Sri Lanka is welcoming about 40,000 tourists from India each month, roughly three times more than a year ago. As flights increase, providing more convenience and as some of our future marketing initiatives unfold, we expect to see this number grow rapidly in the coming months and years.

Are there any Sustainability initiatives being undertaken by the Airline?

The airline implements industry-leading processes to monitor, report and verify aircraft emissions, while continuously optimizing fuel use to reduce emissions. Internally, we launch initiatives regularly to promote sustainable practices among our employees. Additionally, the airline is actively involved in restoring and preserving Sri Lanka's mangrove forests and supporting the conservation of seagrass habitats. ■



Asego and Ancileo announce strategic collaboration

Asego, one of India's leading dedicated providers of global assistance and travel insurance and Ancileo, provider of end-to-end tech solutions for Travel Insurance ecosystems are pleased to announce that they have entered into a strategic alliance. Through this collaboration, both companies aim to reshape the landscape of travel insurance, presenting an innovative value proposition, not just to travellers but also to global distributors, and insurers alike.

BOTT DESK

Dev Karvat, Founder & CEO, Asego, expressed his excitement, stating, "This breakthrough collaboration will enable us to leverage Ancileo's advanced technology and international insurer network to offer Asego's innovative travel insurance products and services on a global scale."

Olivier Michel, CEO, Ancileo, shared his enthusiasm, highlighting the mutual benefits of the collaboration, "This collaboration with Asego marks a significant milestone in Ancileo's mission to empower travel assistance and insurance ecosystems with advanced technology solutions. By combining our strengths, we are poised to provide our partners with a flexible and battle-tested insurance solution in India and abroad."

Why This Partnership?

- It's an amalgamation of Asego's global assistance and travel insurance capabilities with Ancileo technological expertise to enhance market penetration in the rapidly growing global travel insurance segment.
- Provide Ancileo with a strong local partner in India, and enable Asego to expand its presence into the global market.
- Offer enhanced customer experience through streamlined processes, innovative products, and comprehensive support before, during & after their travel.

Asego, headquartered in Mumbai, India, is a leading dedicated provider of global assistance travel insurance solutions. With a deep understanding of the unique needs of Indian travellers. Asego caters to 18,000+ travel trade partners across retail, e-commerce, and corporate verticals. Protecting 3Mn+ travellers each year with comprehensive coverage and peace of mind while travelling domestically and internationally.

Ancileo is a software-as-a-service platform for the insurance ecosystem, offering end-to-end technology solutions for the management of travel insurance portfolios. Ancileo's core capabilities include API solutions, white label, agent portal management, claims automation, and policy management. And localized payment solutions for travel insurance premium collection. ■



First Cambodia-India Tourism Year launched in New Delhi



The '1st Cambodia-India Tourism Year' was inaugurated in New Delhi recently. The ceremony also celebrated the inaugural direct flight service by Cambodia Angkor Air between Phnom Penh and New Delhi, which commenced a day prior. The launch was officiated by Manisha Saxena, Director General (Tourism), Ministry of Tourism of India and Long Phirum, Secretary of State, Ministry of Tourism of Cambodia.

India Tourism Year' will facilitate citizens of both countries in rediscovering their common heritage. She believes it will boost economic opportunities for tourism businesses and enhance mutual prosperity and understanding.

The historical ties between India and Cambodia were highlighted during the event, with references to the deep-rooted cultural and religious connections spanning over a thousand years. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has emphasized the importance of these connections on several occasions, including during the Cambodian Prime Minister's visit to India in January 2018, where both leaders agreed to enhance connectivity and cooperation in tourism," Saxena said.

The Memorandum of Understanding signed between India and Cambodia in 2015 and the work of joint working groups have laid a strong foundation for ongoing cooperation in tourism. The fourth joint working group meeting held in February 2024 exemplifies this commitment, focusing on key areas such as information exchange on tourist arrivals, infrastructure development, training programs in tourism and hospitality, and exploring joint venture partnerships in the hotel industry. ■

BOTT DESK

In their addresses to an audience that included government officials, tour operators from both countries, and Indian businesspeople, Saxena and Phirum emphasized the importance of this initiative. Speaking in Cambodian, Phirum highlighted the designation of

national carrier, began its first direct flights between Phnom Penh and New Delhi on June 16. These flights are scheduled four times a week – on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays. Many Cambodian delegates arrived in India on this inaugural flight.

The Memorandum of Understanding signed between India and Cambodia in 2015 and the work of joint working groups have laid a strong foundation for ongoing cooperation in tourism. The fourth joint working group meeting held in February 2024 exemplifies this commitment.

2024 as 'Cambodia-India Tourism Year' as a "significant milestone." She also noted the celebration in Phnom Penh of the new direct air link between the two capitals.

Cambodia Angkor Air, Cambodia's

The event in Delhi was also attended by Cambodian Ambassador Koy Kuong and Seila Hul, Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Tourism of Cambodia.

Manisha Saxena expressed optimism that the new flight and the 'Cambodia-

UTEN

Empowering Travel Fraternity

UTEN MAY 2024 OFFLINE CONCLUDED EVENTS



Coordelia Cruise Training and Presentation for UTEN with Guidelines Travels on 04th May 2024



UTEN - Dubai and Abu Dhabi Educational Study Fam (Recce) Trip Covering Arabian Travel Mart from 05th May to 12th May 2024 Hosted By Tickat.Com



UTEN - FOREX Guidelines Training and Knowledge Presentation Session by Transcorp Enterprises on 24th May 2024



UTEN - ZARA'S Resort Study Fam Trip for 01, N 02 Days Hosted By ZARA'S Resort and Supported By Travel Dhamaka from 31st May to 01st June 2024



MISTY MEADOWS RESORTS LONAVALA & 7APPLE RESORTS LONAVALA PROPERTY SHOW ROUND ON 31ST MAY 2024 & 1ST JUNE 2024



UTEN with BRAND it Offline Destination Bhutan Training and Presentation by My Bhutan on 30th May 2024



UTEN MAY 2024 ONLINE CONCLUDED EVENTS

- Destination Srilanka Training and Presentation by Walker's Tours supported By Srilanka Tourism on 17th May 2024.
- UTEN - Destination Madhya Pradesh Online Training and Presentation by MP Tours and Supported By Madhya Pradesh Tourism on 21st May 2024.
- UTEN - Azerbaijan Tourism Destination Training and Presentation Hosted by Alison Travel & Supported By Azerbaijan Tourism on 23rd May 2024.
- UTEN - Yas Island, Abu Dhabi Online Destination Training and Presentation by Destination Partner Yas Island, Abu Dhabi on 28th May 2024.
- UTEN - Selina Resort Presentation & Knowledge Session by BRANDit on 29 May 2024.

Media Partner **BOTT** Business of Travel & Tourism BOTTINDIA.COM

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Thailand Travel Mart Plus (TTM+) 2024 showcases Phang Nga's tourism potential

The 21st edition of the Thailand Travel Mart Plus (TTM+ 2024) was held from June 5 - 7, at the JW Marriott Khao Lak Resort & Spa in Phang Nga, marking a significant milestone as the event's first-ever debut in the southern province. The event was aimed at showcasing Phang Nga's potential as a high-value tourism destination as it brought together 425 buyers from 50 countries for an exclusive meet with 430 Thai sellers.

Pallavi Sharma



Grand Opening and Strategic Highlights

At the opening ceremony, Chattan Kunjara Na Ayudhya, Deputy Governor for International Marketing Asia and South Pacific at the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), expressed pride in Phang Nga's debut, stating, "This is a first for us and Phang Nga; we've never held an event of this scale here before." The event was expected to facilitate 15,000 business appointments, generating an estimated three billion baht (US\$81 million) for Thailand's tourism industry, with 30 million baht projected to benefit local communities.

The TTM+ is regarded as Thailand's most important B2B travel event by the TAT. In his address, TAT Governor Thapanee Kiatphaibool highlighted the annual rotation of the event to different provinces, allowing various regions to shine. Phang Nga was chosen for its robust logistics, infrastructure, and service support, aligning with the

TAT's focus on high-value tourism, appealing to high-end travellers with its national parks, fishing villages, caves, rafting adventures, beaches, and a well-developed dining scene, including 12 Michelin-recommended and Bib Gourmand locations for 2024.

A Record Turnout and Diverse Participation

This year marked the first event post-lockdown without any travel restrictions, resulting in a 13.64% increase in buyer participation year-on-year. Notably, nearly half (44.5%) of the buyers were first-timers, indicating a healthy mix of returning and new participants. The event also saw a strong turnout from the Middle East, with 107 attendees, including 12 from Saudi Arabia, supporting TAT's plans to open its first office there next year.

Sellers from across Thailand participated in large numbers – 247 from south, 119 central and 41 east regions. The TTM+ 2024 showcased diverse

tourism offerings, focusing on luxury, wellness, soft adventure, and sustainable tourism, under the theme "Amazing Thailand: Your Stories Never End." This concept underscored the promotion of meaningful travel experiences designed to inspire travellers to share their memories and motivate others to seek out their own stories in Thailand.

Showcasing Thailand's Diverse Offerings

During the Thailand Product Update, Nithee Seeprae, TAT Deputy Governor for Marketing Communications, emphasized the aim to inspire travellers with unforgettable stories. The update highlighted various tourism segments:

Luxury Stories: Elevated experiences in Phuket and Phang Nga with stays at pool villas, treehouse villas, or private islands, and dining at Michelin-starred restaurants. Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai offered luxury journeys through nature and culture, including luxury tented camps and boutique



its readiness to host such a significant event. Looking ahead, TTM+ will continue to rotate annually to different provinces, with next year's event scheduled for Chiang Mai, giving the northern region an opportunity to showcase its attractions.

Promoting a Sustainable Future

TAT emphasized the importance of sustainability and responsible travel. The event included a zero-waste initiative, sorting waste into organic, recyclable, and general waste categories to minimize environmental impact.

Thailand's Tourism Landscape

In 2023, Thailand recorded over 28 million international arrivals, generating 1.2 trillion baht in revenue. The top markets were Malaysia, China, South Korea, India, and Russia. From January to May 2024, Thailand welcomed over 14.76 million international arrivals, generating more than 682 billion baht. The TAT has set a tourism revenue target of 3 trillion baht for 2024, with goals of 1.92 trillion baht from 35 million international arrivals and 1.08 trillion baht from 200 million domestic trips.

The TTM+ 2024 successfully highlighted Thailand's commitment to delivering meaningful travel experiences, showcasing diverse and sustainable tourism offerings, and reinforcing its status as a premier travel destination. ■

hotels.

Wellness Stories: Health and wellness offerings at La Vita Sana Khao Lak, Phang Nga, and top wellness retreats like RAKxa Wellness & Medical Retreat in Samut Prakan and THANN Wellness Destination in Ayutthaya.

Soft Adventure Stories: Water sports in Phang Nga, forest walking at Doi Inthanon National Park in Chiang Mai, and exploring nature caves at Lam Khlong Ngu National Park in Kancharaburi.

Sustainable Tourism: Initiatives included promoting responsible travel practices through the Thailand

Tourism Awards and the Sustainable Tourism Goals (STGs). High-quality and sustainable products and services included Wareerak Hot Spring and Wellness in Krabi, Siam Bayshore Resort Pattaya in Chon Buri, and Mekin Farm in Khon Kaen.

Phang Nga's Recovery and Future Prospects

Reflecting on Phang Nga's recovery from the 2004 tsunami, Na Ayudhya noted, "The province is very ready. If anything, the event should have come here sooner." The resilience and development of the area demonstrated

Türkiye Tourism and OTOAI successfully conclude Mega Fam event

Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA) in partnership with Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) recently organised a mega familiarisation trip from June 30 – July 6, 2024. Around 40 OTOAI members from across India including members of the Travel Trade Media participated in the Mega Fam and experienced the touristic places, culture and cuisine of Türkiye.

Gunjan Sabikhi

OTOAI, a leading travel association in India, represented outbound tour operators and travel agents is committed to promoting international travel from India. Its recent collaboration with TGA reflected a shared commitment to nurturing tourism partnerships and facilitating meaningful exchanges within the travel industry, further strengthening ties between India and Türkiye.

The familiarisation trip or Mega Fam

as it was referred to, offered OTOAI members an immersive journey through Türkiye's iconic destinations, ensuring an unforgettable experience rich in cultural exploration and scenic marvels. Covering the enchanting cities of İstanbul, Antalya, and İzmir with specific visits to Pamukkale and Kuşadası, participants explored the diverse array of attractions that Türkiye had to offer, ranging from ancient ruins to breathtaking natural wonders. Each stop on the

itinerary was meticulously curated to highlight Türkiye's rich cultural heritage, spectacular landscapes, and renowned hospitality, providing OTOAI members with a comprehensive understanding of the country's tourism offerings.

In addition to sightseeing excursions, the trip also included strategic B2B meetings scheduled in İstanbul, where Turkish tourism sector representatives and Indian travel agents convened to foster meaningful discussions and





forge valuable partnerships. These meetings served as a pivotal platform for collaboration, allowing industry professionals to explore innovative avenues for enhancing tourism between India and Türkiye. By facilitating dialogue and exchange, the aim was to strengthen bilateral ties and promote sustainable growth in the tourism sector that both nations could benefit from.

Sharing his thoughts on the completion of the Mega Fam, Riaz Munshi, President, OTOAI said, "We are delighted with the success of the FAM trip. As India's leading association of outbound tour operators, we are dedicated to promoting international travel and fostering collaborations that benefit our members and the global tourism industry. This familiarisation trip offered our members invaluable insights into Türkiye's tourism offerings and facilitated networking opportunities with key stakeholders in the Turkish tourism sector. Indian tourists have shown a strong preference for a variety of tourism experiences in Türkiye and after this Mega Fam, we are confident that tourist traffic from India to Turkey will only grow further."

Türkiye, a premier destination for travellers worldwide, continues to see a remarkable surge in tourism from India. In the first 5 months of 2024, the number of Indian visitors reached an impressive 1,26,000, representing a 34% increase compared to the same period in 2023. This surge is notable against the backdrop of 2023, wherein Türkiye welcomed a total of 2,74,000 Indian tourists for the entire year. This significant growth highlights Türkiye's ongoing appeal and its strategic efforts to attract more Indian tourists. ■



Azerbaijan Tourism Board appoints BRANDit as its Indian Representative Office

On June 07, 2024, the Azerbaijan Tourism Board, in collaboration with BRANDit, held a press conference in Mumbai, India which was attended by the top local media representatives. The event marked a milestone in Azerbaijan-India tourism relations, announcing BRANDit as the new representative office.

Shreya Shimpi

trips which are a big achievement". Speaking about the marketing strategies to increase the outreach in the Indian market he added, "We have an ongoing roadshow this week and they have been travelling around India. We have conferences such as BLTM coming up. There is also specific activation planned with media colleagues. The activation will be high in terms of media trips, FAM trips etc. Azerbaijan is closer than ever. Not only geographically, but emotionally and culturally as well," said Florian.

He also announced the successful finalization of a roadshow in three Indian cities — Bangalore, Pune and Kolkata with top Indian travel trade representatives. Comparing to the same period last year, the number of Indian tourists visiting Azerbaijan has surpassed a twofold rise (2.6).

"We're thrilled to partner with the Azerbaijan Tourism Board as part of BRANDit's growing portfolio. Our collaboration aims to unveil Azerbaijan's hidden treasures and connect Indians with its unique experiences and use our expertise in the Indian outbound market, travel trade, and media to capture the growing interest in the destination." said **Lubaina Sheerazi**,

Azerbaijan is gaining popularity among Indian travellers as one of the most sought after destinations. The destination offers a great melange of culture, history, art, varying landscapes, exceptional gastronomical experiences and a lot more. The appointment of BRANDit highlights the growing interest of Indian travellers in Azerbaijan. During the event, Florian Sengstschmid, CEO of the Azerbaijan Tourism Board, and Lubaina Sheerazi, CEO of BRANDit, shared their insights and future plans for enhancing Azerbaijan's visibility in the Indian market.

The appointment of BRANDit highlights the growing interest of Indian travellers in Azerbaijan. The destination offers a great melange of culture, history, art, varying landscapes, exceptional gastronomical experiences and a lot more.

"The number of Indian travellers to Azerbaijan has been intensively increasing which means we will also get extended weekend trips from both Mumbai and Delhi. Travellers are opting for longer stays and combined

CEO and Co-founder, BRANDit.

The press conference concluded with an interactive session, where attendees had the opportunity to engage with speakers. ■



A weekend in NEW ORLEANS

New Orleans is a city steeped in history and culture. If you are visiting for a weekend, this vibrant city will captivate you with its unique neighborhoods and colorful lifestyle. Explore historic architecture, savor local delicacies, and let jazz music transport you into the lively nightlife for an unforgettable time in this magical destination.

DAY ONE:

Kickstart your Journey

Begin your day with a stroll through the iconic French Quarter. This historic district, at the heart of New Orleans, is known for its colorful buildings, lively street performers, and rich cultural heritage. Don't forget to visit the stunning St. Louis Cathedral, a symbol of the city's deep Catholic roots. Treat yourself to a delightful experience at the iconic Café du Monde and indulge in their signature beignets, a beloved New

Orleans pastry.

Afternoon Adventures

After your gastronomic adventure, head to the combined Audubon Aquarium and Insectarium. Located along the Mississippi River, these attractions are perfect for both nature enthusiasts and families. Encounter exotic insects at the Insectarium and explore marine life at the Aquarium. For a year-round taste of Mardi Gras, visit Mardi Gras World, where you can experience elaborate floats and costumes that bring this famous celebration to life.

Evening Highlights

End your day with a night of soul-stirring jazz at Preservation Hall. This historic venue has been a cornerstone of the New Orleans music scene for decades. The intimate setting allows you to truly connect with the music and the culture that defines this vibrant city.

DAY TWO:

Continue your Exploration

Start your next day by hopping on the historic St. Charles Streetcar, which will take you through the Garden District, renowned for its beautiful antebellum mansions and oak-lined streets. It's a delightful way to experience the city's unique architecture. You can also enjoy a historic carriage ride for an exclusive neighborhood tour.

These mule-drawn carriages still line up on the Decatur side of Jackson Square, offering leisurely tours with colorful commentary.

Mid- Day Excursion

After your morning exploration, head to Vue Orleans, a unique indoor and outdoor observatory and cultural experience showcasing the city skyline. Enjoy a laid-back afternoon with handcrafted cocktails and jazz at the historic Sazerac House. Participate in guided tastings featuring iconic drinks like the Sazerac, and explore a captivating collection of vintage cocktail shakers that offer a glimpse into the city's spirited past.

A Perfect End to the Weekend

To get a taste of authentic New Orleans music, end your weekend with a visit to Frenchmen Street. Once a hidden gem among locals, Frenchmen Street is now recognized as one of New Orleans' best spots for finding live music of all genres. This iconic street is lined with bars, clubs, and street performers. Immerse yourself in the lively atmosphere, grab a famous cocktail, and dance the night away.

New Orleans is a city that leaves a lasting impression on all who visit. Prepare to pack your bags and experience the enchantment of New Orleans in just a weekend, for you'll be eager to return for more! Visit www.neworleans.com for more information. ■





Experience the Royal Splendour at The Claridges Nabha Residence in Mussoorie

The Claridges Nabha Residence by Claridges Collection, located in Mussoorie, is a splendid heritage hotel that offers a unique blend of royal grandeur and modern luxury. Originally built in the 19th century as the summer residence for the Nabha family, the palace is steeped in history and surrounded by lush deodar forests, creating an idyllic retreat from the bustling city life. Here's a detailed first-hand experience at this exquisite property.

Bijayalaxmi Nanda and Nupur Ray

The architecture of The Claridges Nabha Residence by Claridges Collection, is a testament to its royal past, with intricate woodwork, antique furnishings, and opulent interiors that reflect the elegance of a bygone era. The property has been meticulously restored to preserve its historical charm while incorporating contemporary amenities to cater to the needs of modern travellers. The hotel has recently undergone extensive

renovations, adding more beauty to its interiors.

The Claridges Nabha Residence by Claridges Collection boasts an opulent, single-story colonial building that provides breathtaking views of the hills and valleys, capturing the splendour of a bygone era. The residence holds a unique place in the historical narrative of Mussoorie having hosted British officials, Nawabs, Rajahs, and Maharajahs. The hotel features 22 stylishly designed





rooms, each room a haven of comfort blending modern elegance and timeless charm. The meticulously designed suites and rooms – from Deluxe, Club, to Duplex and The Claridges rooms are ideal for hosting intimate to big groups, offering panoramic views of mist-kissed mountains and verdant valleys. An unforgettable escape with your loved ones!

Guests at The Claridges Nabha Residence by Claridges Collection can indulge in various experiences that enhance the stay. The in-house all-day dining restaurant Pavillion serves a delectable array of cuisines, blending local Flavors with international dishes, ensuring a memorable culinary experience. The restaurant offers a remarkable ambience where the best of cuisines are prepared with ingredients sourced from the hotel's organic farm. Ragi roti, Pahari Mutton, Pahari raita, Zaiki ke aloo, Bhatak ki daal are some of

the must-try offerings. Live music during dinner time turns every evening into a memorable one.

Adventure enthusiasts can explore the scenic beauty of Mussoorie with guided treks and nature walks organized by the hotel. The 1 km long trail takes you down to a small camp space where you can just sit amidst nature and enjoy the serene beauty of the place. The nearby attractions, such as the famous Mall Road, Kempty Falls, and Gun Hill, offer further opportunities for exploration and sightseeing.

The Claridges Nabha Residence by The Claridges Collection is not just a place to stay; it is an experience that transports guests to a world of royal splendor and tranquillity. Whether for a romantic getaway, a family vacation, or a solo retreat, this heritage hotel promises an unforgettable stay amidst the serene hills of Mussoorie. ■

ADTOI's enchanting retreat to Jaipur and Sariska

Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI) in partnership with Eight Continents Hotels, recently arranged a study-cum-FAM trip for its members to Jaipur (The Nest, Jaipur) and at The Astroport, Sariska from July 6 – 7, 2024.

Anjali Pokhriyal

Nestled in a tranquil area, away from the city's hustle and bustle, The Nest Resort in Jaipur is a serene urban oasis in The Pink City. The resort, known for its perfect blend of indoor and outdoor venues, has become a premier destination for weddings, corporate retreats, and social celebrations.

Upon arrival at The Nest Resort in Jaipur, delegates were warmly welcomed in traditional Rajasthani style, setting the tone for an immersive and enriching experience. After a delightful lunch, ADTOI members, along with the hotel staff, embarked on a property tour, discussing the intricate details and inspiration behind the resort's rooms and suites. The Nest boasts a variety of accommodations, including deluxe, super deluxe rooms, and all-weather suites, offering the perfect ambiance for a rejuvenating holiday.

On the second day, the adventure continued as ADTOI members explored Astroport Sariska, India's first resort dedicated to nature and astronomy lovers. This unique concept resort offers an astronomy camp equipped with modern telescopes and educational programs for all ages, enabling guests to learn about the stars and constellations.

Astroport Sariska stands out with its commitment to sustainability, sourcing organically-farmed produce for its cuisine and offering educational programs on sustainable practices. Guests can visit the resort's organic farms or explore the Sariska National Park, home to rare species such as the Bengal tiger, striped hyena, four-horned antelope, and Nilgai. Bird enthusiasts can spot a variety of species, including the crested serpent eagle, white-throated kingfisher, and golden-backed woodpecker. ■



Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board hosts 'Masterclass' in Delhi

Madhya Pradesh Tourism recently hosted a workshop in Delhi that was aimed at elevating Madhya Pradesh as a premier tourist destination, showcasing its rich and diverse tourism experiences. The event highlighted Madhya Pradesh's tourism offerings and encouraged collaboration among key industry stakeholders.

Anjali Pokhriyal

The Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board recently organised a workshop 'MP Tourism Masterclass' on July 4, 2024 at the Madhya Pradesh Bhawan, New Delhi. The workshop was aimed at promoting Madhya Pradesh as a top tourist destination, highlighting its rich and unique tourism experiences. Described as an "Offbeat Multispecialty Destination of First Choice," the state offers a wide variety of attractions. This workshop showcased the state's tourism offerings and encouraged collaboration among key industry stakeholders. The renowned 'Tiger State of India' with 785 tigers and Cheetah, has set a new tourism record in tourist footfalls in

2023, which is 112.1 million compared to 34.1 million in 2022.

Bidisha Mukherjee (IAS), Additional Managing Director Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board highlighted the boom in religious tourism in Madhya Pradesh along with the efforts that MPTB is taking to boost the number of tourist footfall. She said, "Ujjain, which is one of the most popular cities in MP from religious point of view, has seen great success of its newly developed 'Mahakal Lok'. Madhya Pradesh is expanding its religious tourism efforts with plans to develop three new religious destinations which are Devi Lok in Salkanpur, Hanuman Lok in Chhindwara, and Ram



Raja Lok in Orchha."

When asked about the initiative that MPT is taking to boost inbound tourism she mentioned, "The MP Tourism Board is also engaging with international embassies to increase global tourist inflow. Many countries have shown a keen interest in Madhya Pradesh's local festivals, including the Khajuraho Dance Festival and the Tansen Festival. The embassies are very enthusiastic about our major festivals," she said. ■



Discover the joy of 'Luxury Sailing' with Sail Lanka

Sail Lanka offers you a chance to explore the picturesque landscapes and scenic beauty of Sri Lanka from the sea. You can swim in clear water, snorkel reefs, and enjoy experiences such as paddle boating and Minibee sailing. With Sail Lanka, you can unravel the beauty of various places such as Colombo, Mirissa, Jaffna, Trincomalee and many more along the coast of Sri Lanka. Mario Stubbs, Managing Director of Sail Lanka Charter and the Founder and CEO of The Serendipity Collection – an expert in crafting luxury travel experiences shares more with BOTT.

Shreya Shimpi



USP of the cruise line

At Sail Lanka, we pride ourselves on our custom-made catamarans and cruise vessels which are perfect for hosting intimate events such as pre- and post-wedding celebrations and other social gatherings. Our commitment to sustainability is evident in our use of eco-friendly materials and practices. Guests can enjoy guided tours that explore marine life, calm ocean waters, and breathtaking scenic views, all through our customizable packages.

Importance of India market

The Indian market is of significant importance to Sail Lanka. We understand the growing demand for luxurious and

personalized sea experiences among Indian travellers. They prefer shorter, more intimate cruises with their close groups, and our offerings are designed to meet these preferences. Our packages range from day-long cruises to options spanning 1, 2, or 6 nights, ensuring there is something for everyone. By catering to these specific needs, we have positioned ourselves as a preferred choice for Indian tourists seeking exclusive and memorable maritime experiences.

Experiential travel

Experiential travel is increasingly popular among travellers of all ages who seek to capture and share their memories in our digitally connected world. At Sail Lanka, we understand that today's travellers crave Instagram-worthy experiences that are immersive and memorable. To meet this demand, we focus on providing a sensorial journey in every aspect of our cruises.

From the activities we offer, such as whale watching and minibee sailing, to the gourmet dining experiences onboard, we ensure that each moment is captivating and immersive. Our vessels are designed to provide an enchanting ambiance, enhancing the overall experience.

Use of Technology

Technology is a crucial enabler for enhancing the cruise experience at Sail Lanka, both before and during the trip. Our vessels are equipped with state-of-the-art technology in crucial areas like navigation and efficiency, ensuring a seamless cruising experience for our guests. Additionally, our tech-backed cruise management system optimises costs and ensures flawless inventory management. We are actively integrating AI and ML into our inventory management systems to further minimize manual errors and streamline our operations, allowing us to better serve the growing cruise market. ■



Heavens Portfolio

continues to embrace Innovation and Growth

Heavens Portfolio, an Asia-based agency that works with some of the world's most luxurious and alluring travel brands and experiences will be completing 20 successful years of operations next year. With a team of 60 experts having a pulse on the market, Heavens Portfolio takes luxury representation to the highest level with tailored solutions for luxury travel brands. Christine Galle Luczak, Founder and CEO, Heavens Portfolio shares insights on her journey so far and her plans for the future.

Priyanka Saxena Ray

Innovation and Growth

I strongly believe in constantly innovating and challenging yourself—challenging the status quo. When you've been running a business for 20 years, it's crucial to celebrate your wins and the empowerment of your team. However, it's equally important to look forward to opportunities for evolution. Without evolution, complacency sets in. This constant drive to innovate fuels my passion for every new project.

Current Projects

We are currently working on several new initiatives, including territorial expansion and a comprehensive IT overhaul. We're also focusing on social media, which will bring significant changes across all our markets. Given the diversity of the markets we operate in, each with its unique prerogatives, we strive to respect the values of each country and adapt our strategies accordingly.

Reflecting on 20 Years of Journey

My journey began when my previous employer at Chiva Som encouraged me to start my own company, promising to be my first client. The company grew organically through word of mouth and my passion for the industry. I recognized early on the need for market experts, so we quickly established branch offices in India and China, which were our first hubs. Our concept of providing ultra-luxury services resonated with many, leading to rapid team growth.

Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic prompted us to introspect on how to improve, streamline processes, and increase profits. We transitioned from being a sales-driven company to a marketing-driven one. Post-COVID, we have adopted a 360-degree approach to hotel management, encompassing sales, marketing, PR, consumer markets, and associations. We remain open to new ideas and innovations.

India Market

India is a vast market. Pre-COVID, China overshadowed India, garnering much attention. During the pandemic, with China muted, India had the opportunity to shine. It was magical to witness this transformation. While I can't choose a favourite market, seeing India's growth and expression has been incredibly rewarding.

Growing Portfolio

Our portfolio's growth has been largely organic, with many clients coming to us through word of mouth. As we expand, we plan to venture beyond hospitality. I firmly believe in investing in talent who are experts in their segments before bringing in clients. For instance, if we bring in a Destination Management Company (DMC) or a Tourism Board, I ensure we have the right talent to manage those accounts effectively. ■



A vibrant photograph of two bamboo rafts navigating a clear, turquoise river. The rafts are constructed from numerous bamboo poles and are being guided by local guides using long wooden poles. The river is surrounded by a dense, lush tropical forest with various types of trees, including palm trees, creating a canopy of green. The water is exceptionally clear, showing the riverbed and the surrounding vegetation reflected in its surface.

Discover the Diverse Wonders of Jamaica

While the world often envisions Jamaica through the lens of sun-drenched beach days, the island offers so much more. Known as the “Land of Wood and Water,” Jamaica is an island of contrasts, where diverse experiences coexist in beautiful juxtaposition. Spanning just over 4,000 square miles, Jamaica’s topography ranges from the low-lying plains of St. Elizabeth to the majestic heights of the Blue Mountains, and from ice-blue rivers to a rugged coastline with black and powder-white sand beaches, as well as dramatic cliffs perfect for cliff-jumping.

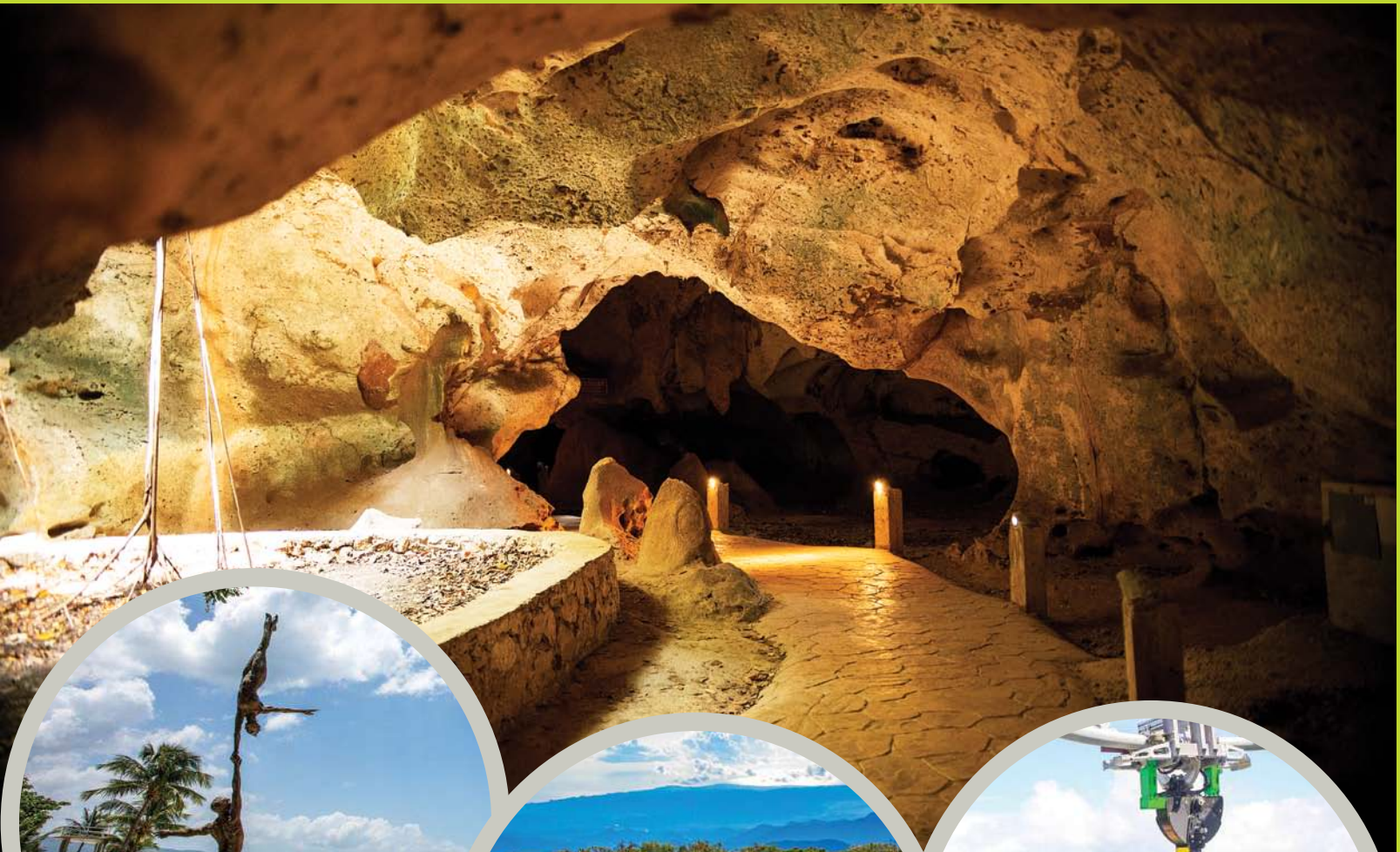
For visitors looking to explore beyond the popular beaches, Jamaica

offers a wealth of attractions and adventures that promise a lifetime of memories. The Blue Mountains, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, provide a unique perspective of the island from an elevated vantage point. The Blue Mountain Peak, standing at 7,402 feet, offers a challenging yet rewarding 7-mile hike for those seeking adventure.

The Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park, one of the Caribbean’s largest migratory bird sites, is a haven for over 120 bird species that seek refuge in Jamaica’s tropical rainforests during the winter. The Blue Mountains are also renowned for producing some of the world’s best coffee, an indigenous

product alongside Red Stripe Beer and Appleton Rum. Jamaica is a paradise for food enthusiasts, offering a diverse culinary landscape that ranges from street food to fine dining, all rich with authentic Jamaican flavours and spices reflecting the island’s cultural heritage.

For breathtaking views, visitors can experience the Rainforest Sky Explorer in Ocho Rios at Mystic Mountain. This state-of-the-art chair lift takes visitors 700 feet above the treetops, offering unforgettable vistas. The return journey can be as thrilling, with options to zip back down on custom-designed bobsleds or through the trees on a zip line.



Jamaica's adventure offerings extend underground as well, with its fascinating caves and sinkholes. Cockpit Country, located in the heart of the island, holds significant historical and cultural importance.

Descending from the Blue Mountains, visitors arrive in Kingston, the vibrant capital of Jamaica. Unlike the idyllic beaches depicted in postcards, Kingston offers a raw and authentic Jamaican

experience. The city's dynamic atmosphere, filled with the sounds of street vendors and the aroma of street food, provides an immersive sensory experience. Kingston is the heartbeat of Jamaica, driven by its rich musical heritage. From mento and ska to rocksteady, dub, dancehall, and reggae, Jamaican music has influenced global popular music for over 50 years. The legacy of Bob Marley, the icon who brought reggae to the world, is deeply felt throughout the city, especially at his former home on Old Hope Road.

A visit to Downtown Kingston's National Gallery offers a journey through Jamaica's cultural and visual heritage. Established in 1974, it is the oldest and largest public art museum in the English-speaking Caribbean.

The gallery's collection includes early, modern, and contemporary art, showcasing a comprehensive vision of Jamaica's artistic evolution.

From cliff-diving beaches to hidden waterfalls, winding rivers, bottomless lagoons, and mineral-infused pools, Jamaica's natural beauty is unparalleled. One of the most iconic water experiences is rafting on the Martha Brae River.

Venturing beyond the beaches allows visitors to truly appreciate Jamaica's diversity as a travel destination. While the beaches are undeniably stunning, Jamaica's true allure lies in its varied landscapes and cultural richness. From mountain peaks to valleys and everything in between, Jamaica invites you to explore, discover, and stay a while. ■

Grand Copthorne Waterfront Singapore

A Blend of Modern Luxury and Eco-Friendly Innovations



Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel is a well-known name in the Indian market best known for its outstanding location, warm hospitality and outstanding F&B offerings. The Hotel, which is part of the Millennium Hotels and Resorts (MHR), has recently unveiled its S\$40 million renovation, showcasing a sophisticated redesign of all 573 guestrooms and suites with eco-friendly features, expanded conference facilities and upgraded public spaces aimed at providing guests with a memorable experience. Here's an overview of this gorgeous property, centrally located in Singapore.



At the heart of Grand Copthorne Waterfront's stunning renovations are its 33 versatile function rooms. Spanning over 6,200 square meters across three floors, these conference spaces feature luxurious carpeting, modern LED lighting, and large windows that allow an abundance of natural sunlight. Eco-conscious practices are integrated throughout, with the use of recyclable and biodegradable stationery, filtered drinking water replacing plastic bottles, and linen-less table setups.

Each function room is equipped with cutting-edge technology, including wireless video signal transmission, laser projectors, and 2K to 4K high-resolution LED video walls, ensuring seamless and successful events. The pillarless 850-square-meter Grand Ballroom boasts two giant LED screens on two walls, which can be divided into smaller screens and junior

ballrooms to accommodate various event sizes.

Complementing the hotel's redesign, Grand Copthorne Waterfront offers enhanced food and beverage concepts across its four restaurants, along with

Northern Indian cuisine. Catering to the diverse needs of its function spaces, the hotel operates three individual kitchens, including a Halal-certified kitchen to meet guests' dietary requirements.

Grand Copthorne has introduced NEW EXPERIENTIAL STAY | STAY AND EXPLORE, an exclusive promotion offering guests the chance to bring home adorable mascot otters by booking directly on the hotel's page.

customized events catering. Food Capital is a spacious all-day dining buffet restaurant; The Lobby Lounge serves as a cocktail bar; Riverside Terrace offers alfresco dining with a selection of barbeque and grilled seafood delicacies; and SanSara specialises in

The Executive Club Lounge, located on Level 29, has undergone a complete transformation. It now boasts a sleek, contemporary living room ambiance that complements breathtaking vistas of Singapore's iconic cityscape. ■



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 July 2024.



March 21 – April 20

You will work hard to carefully plan your strategies. A drastic change in your surrounding environment would stimulate your creativity and help you achieve better results. Mutual trust and comprehension may strengthen your relationship.



July 23 – August 21

Positive emotions are likely to persist throughout this month for you. Examining your investment portfolio to eliminate losses may be a sensible move. If you want to feel fit and energised, sticking to an exercise routine may be essential.



November 23 – December 22

Having an efficient work ethic and a keen eye for detail can help you rise in the professional ranks. Avoid investments or deals that promise to be risk free. Weigh your options carefully before committing. Take good care of your health.



April 21 – May 21

If you keep an optimistic outlook, you can achieve your goals. Get ready to put in the effort and pursue your goals. Maintaining a stable family budget is important to avoid wasteful spending. Pay attention to your partner. Take care of your health.



August 22 – September 23

It may be a career high point for you if you manage to pull off a particularly challenging task with flying colours. Keep your goals in mind as you move forward while following the rules. You should avoid making crucial financial decisions.



December 23 – January 20

Now is the time to step up confidently take on any and all professional obstacles that may lie in your path. You may be spending a little more than you earn, so it's time to look at your budget. Don't bother getting involved in debates that aren't relevant to you.



May 22 – June 21

Be cautious in your career and financial dealing this month. Those who are thinking of making a career change should hold off for a while longer. If relations within your family have been tense, it may be good idea to make plans to spend some time together.



September 24 – October 23

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



January 21 – February 19

Now is the time to move forward with positive attitude. Quick healing from illness is expected. Maintain focus with concerted efforts. Search for the new job will take some more time. Spend time with family.



June 22 – July 22

If you are willing to be flexible and open to new opportunities, this could be a turning point in your career. Expenses may arise this month. Be sure to give all your plans some serious consideration. This is a great time to host a small get together.



October 24 – November 22

Some people may want to take this month to think things over. Know your strengths and work on your weaknesses. Those interested in beginning a professional life may soon be able to do so. Couples should plan for relaxation and better bonding.



February 20 – March 20

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


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The Suryaa Hotel, New Delhi

Greesh Bindra, a distinguished veteran of the hospitality industry, has been promoted as the Executive Vice President of The Suryaa Hotel in New Delhi. With a career spanning

over four decades, Mr. Bindra brings a wealth of experience and expertise to his new role, promising to elevate the hotel's standard of luxury and service. In his new role, he will continue his legacy of excellence.



Shangri-La Muscat

Shangri-La Muscat announced the appointment of **Philippe Kronberg** as the new Resort General Manager for Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah and Shangri-La Al Husn. Philippe Kronberg, a French-Australian dual citizen, brings a wealth

of experience to his new role in Muscat. He will oversee the strategic direction and daily operations of the resorts' 640 suites and rooms, spread across three distinctive hotels on 124 acres along the vibrant shores of the Gulf of Oman.



Radisson Blu Palace Resort and Spa, Udaipur

Radisson Blu Palace Resort and Spa, Udaipur appoints **Mahesh Singh Jasrotia** as Vice President of operations. In his new role, he will spearhead the integral functions,

drive business growth, and sustain high standards of service excellence. In his new role he will contribute to strategic planning, business development and brand image management.



Ramada Gorakhpur Gorakhnath Mandir Road

The Ramada Gorakhpur Gorakhnath Mandir Road at Saket Nagar has appointed **Aparup Biswas** as the General Manager for the hotel. In his new role, Biswas will be responsible

for overseeing the daily operations of the hotel. This can include managing staff, overseeing finances, ensuring guest satisfaction, and maintaining the overall appearance and functionality of the property.



Cleartrip

Cleartrip has announced the appointment of **Anuj Rathi** as the Chief Business and Growth Officer. With an extensive background in business strategy, product development, and growth initiatives,

Anuj brings a wealth of experience to drive Cleartrip's mission of providing seamless travel experiences to customers. Anuj Rathi has a distinguished career spanning two decades, with significant leadership roles in prominent tech and e-commerce companies.



Holiday Inn Jaipur

Holiday Inn Jaipur City Centre has announced the appointment of **Puneet Sharma** as the new General Manager. In his new role, Puneet will focus on driving business growth and enhancing guest experiences through

strategic initiatives. An industry veteran with over 24 years of experience, Puneet brings a wealth of knowledge and a proven track record in the hospitality sector. He aims to elevate the training of colleagues and ensure the services are taken to a higher level.



Fortune Hotels

Fortune Hotels has announced the appointment of **Samarth Agarwal** as the Head of Development. With over 20 years of extensive experience in hospitality business development, investments, and consulting,

Samarth is poised to lead Fortune Hotels into its next phase of growth. In his new role as Head of Development at Fortune Park Hotels Limited, Samarth will be instrumental in expanding the network of Fortune-branded hotels across India.



Raga Svara

Raga Svara announces **Aria Arora** as official appointed PR representative. Her experience in the tourism industry brings invaluable insight and dedication to enhancing Raga Svara's communication efforts. Aria's

expertise will play a pivotal role in promoting holistic wellness and cultural enrichment at Raga Svara. Raga Svara offers an exceptional retreat experience in Rajkot, India, seamlessly blending wellness, Ayurveda, and yoga.

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Red Sea, Jeddah

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