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The October issue of Business of Travel Trade (BOTT) Magazine is dedicated to profiling those who anchor the ship in the turbulent seas of the hospitality industry - the General Managers (GMs) of India's leading hotels. This special issue will serve as a stage for the GMs to share their in-depth insights, personal experiences, and visionary leadership that drive their respective establishments' success. By doing so, we aim to shed light on the pivotal role they play, often behind the scenes, in shaping a guest's experience.

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# Spectacular Saudi



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From the

*Editor's  
Desk*

Dear Readers,

Let me start by wishing all our readers a joyous and prosperous festive season! As we step into this celebratory time of year, we are excited to present a power-packed October edition, focusing on leadership and innovation in the hospitality and travel industry.

This month's 'GM Special Issue' is an insightful collection of interviews with over 25 leading general managers from around the globe. From managing world-class hotels to navigating the challenges of an evolving industry, these leaders share their experiences, strategies, and visions for the future. Their expertise offers invaluable takeaways for professionals across the travel and hospitality sectors.

In addition to these exclusive interviews, we bring you comprehensive coverage of two recent FAM trips: Vietnam Airlines' premium business class experience, showcasing top destinations like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, and Yas Island's unique offerings for luxury and entertainment. Both trips highlight key tourism trends and experiences.

Our in-depth report on ITB India, held recently in Mumbai, covers the latest market insights, technological innovations, and business opportunities shaping travel. This edition also features the results of the much-anticipated TAAI election, along with an exclusive interview with the newly elected team.

As always, you'll find our regular mix of expert articles, updates, and industry news, keeping you informed and inspired. We hope you enjoy this special issue and look forward to your feedback as we continue to explore the dynamic world of travel.

Happy reading and festive cheer!

Warm regards,

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

Editor, BOTT India

priyanka@bottindia.com



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## Moroccan National Tourism Office successfully concludes MICE Mission in India

The Moroccan National Tourism Office (MNT) showcased the destination's readiness for MICE movements from India. In an exclusive Two-City event in New Delhi and Mumbai, the initiative served as a dynamic forum for fostering meaningful connections, strategic collaborations, and the exploration of new possibilities within the MICE segment.



## Nijhawan Group organises 3 successful FAM trips in September

Nijhawan Group successfully organized three exclusive familiarizations (FAM) trips for select B2B trade partners covering FIT and MICE travel in the month of September 2024, setting a benchmark for the industry. Aiming to showcase the offerings of Onyx Hospitality Group and Aitken Spence Travels Limited, these trips were meticulously designed to educate trade partners on the diverse offerings.



## GRN signs MoU with ASITA, Indonesia

GRNconnect has announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with ASITA (Association of the Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies) Indonesia. GRNconnect will serve as the official technology partner for ASITA's vast network of members. It will provide its innovative and robust travel technology solutions to over 7,000 members of ASITA.




## RezLive.com expands presence in Indonesia and Canada

RezLive.com has announced its expansion into the Indonesian market through partnership with PT Pantravel as its official GSA. It has also expanded into the Canadian market through partnership with International Travel Inc as its GSA. These collaborations are set to deliver enhanced services and opportunities to travel partners across Indonesia and Canada.

## Royal Thai renews VFS Global contract to handle visa applications in India

VFS Global has once again secured the contract to handle visa applications for Thailand from India. The company will cater to travellers from India across visa categories through visa application centres and drop off centres as per the jurisdiction of the Royal Thai Embassy in Delhi and Royal Thai Consulate General in Kolkata, Mumbai, and Chennai.




## Dusit Thani Bangkok reopens after a landmark transformation

Dusit Thani Bangkok, the flagship hotel of Dusit International has made its highly anticipated return after a stunning transformation as part of the upcoming Dusit Central Park project. The newly transformed hotel also unveiled its expansive meeting and events space, which in keeping with the grandeur of its predecessor, boasts one of the largest ballrooms in Bangkok.





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# Sunil Kumar and Team take over TAAI 2024 - 26 Term

*Sunil Kumar, a stalwart in India's travel and tourism industry, has once again taken over the esteemed position of President of the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI). As a fierce advocate for the Member First approach, Kumar remains committed to reshaping the future of TAAI by focusing on education, government relations, and bridging the gap between TAAI and international markets. In his new role, Sunil envisions revitalizing key areas like travel agent insurance, member education, Agency corporate credit card programs and more. His goal is to foster deeper engagement with airline partners, revive formal airline meetings, and strengthen TAAI's influence with government authorities on pressing issues like tax policies and financial security for travel agents.*

Priyanka Saxena Ray



**A**t the AGM held on September 30 at ITC Grand Maratha Mumbai, around 766 votes were cast by the TAAI Members wherein Sunil Kumar was elected as the new TAAI President with 304 votes. Jyoti Mayal received

and was elected as the new Honorary Treasurer.

The newly-elected Managing Committee Members includes Manav Soni (402 votes), Gopal Unadkt (366 votes), Amish Desai (388 votes), Lalit

asking our members to choose the leaders for the coming term. The 2024-2026 period presents a challenging landscape, but I'm pleased we have a strong committee in place. I look forward to working together to elevate TAAI to new heights. I am deeply grateful to our members for their continued trust in me and for giving me the opportunity to lead once again. My goal is not to simply repeat what I've done before, but to exceed it and achieve even greater results."

Sharing his thoughts, Lokesh Bettaiah, Vice President, TAAI said "As Secretary General of the Travel Agents Association of India, I served for a total of seven years, though not consecutively due to a two-year break. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the General Body for electing me as Vice President. This role carries a great responsibility, and I am committed to safeguarding the interests of both the association and its members. We will work tirelessly to ensure that the TAAI flag continues to fly high."

Shreeram Patel, Honorary Secretary General, TAAI, said, "As we look ahead, there is much work to be done. Several panels raised important points during the election, particularly regarding the future of TAAI and our 'Members First' program. We are fully committed to this initiative and will be working diligently to implement updates and host seminars that benefit our members. With Sunil Kumar leading as President, I am confident that we will grow exponentially and take TAAI to new levels of success." ■

*"The 2024-2026 period presents a challenging landscape, but I'm pleased we have a strong committee in place. I look forward to working together to elevate TAAI to new heights. I am deeply grateful to our members for their continued trust in me and for giving me the opportunity to lead once again. My goal is not to simply repeat what I've done before, but to exceed it and achieve even greater results."*  
- Sunil Kumar, President, TAAI

177 votes while Harmandeep Singh Anand received 286 votes. Lokesh Bettaiah was elected as the Vice President with 417 votes and Shreeram Patel became the new Hony. Secretary with 320 votes. Paras Lakhia got 342 votes

Kumar (346 votes), Hema Chander (336 votes), Sameer Karnani (321 votes) and Rajan Sehgal (380 votes).

Speaking to BOTT immediately after winning the elections, Sunil Kumar, President, TAAI said, "It has been a day of



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# Experience the magic of 'Spectacular Saudi' in Mumbai

Saudi's national tourism brand, 'Saudi Welcome to Arabia', kick-started its first-ever immersive event 'Spectacular Saudi' in Mumbai, Maharashtra. Currently hosted at the city's R2 Ground in BKC, the 8-day-long extravaganza began with an exclusive VIP showcase on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

## Shreya Shimpi

'Spectacular Saudi' – an exclusive VIP event was recently held in Mumbai, celebrating the heart of Arabia through immersive experiences. Magnificent art installations and delightful culinary experiences showcasing the rich culture and heritage of Saudi brought to life Saudi's vibrant traditions and modern marvels. Saudi Tourism Authority announced the launch of their highly anticipated consumer campaign.

The VIP preview brought together the crème de la crème of Indian cinema, business, sports, and fashion; giving them a sneak peek into Saudi's exceptional hospitality, immersive experiences, and culture. Welcoming popular personalities from the film industry like Vicky Kaushal, Shraddha Kapoor, Bhumi Pednekar, Arjun Kapoor, Aditya Roy Kapoor, Sonakshi Sinha, and Suniel Shetty, among others; they experienced a slice of Saudi in Mumbai starting with traditional coffee, dates, and Bakhour.

Renowned fashion designers like Gaurav Gupta and JJ alongside legendary sportspeople such as Sania Mirza, Saina Nehwal, PV Sindhu, and Mary Kom, Manu Bhaker explored the immersive exhibits. Business tycoons and industrialists including Yash Birla and Suketu Shah were also at the exclusive showcase.

Addressing the gathering, Alhasan Aldabbagh, President of APAC Markets said, "In Saudi every guest is treated like family. Saudis are known for their great hospitality and Indian people deserve the warmest welcome. In Vision 2030, we have ranked India to be one of our top source markets. Whether it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site like AlUla or Diriyah, the beautiful marine life of the Red Sea or the vibrant cities like Riyadh and Jeddah, Saudi is a destination with hidden gems where wonders await."

Anand Menon, VP of APAC Trade and Distribution said, "We are committed to making India Saudi's top source market by 2030 and to achieve this we are focussing on delivering unique experiences tailored specially for Indians. As someone who lives and works in Saudi, I can personally vouch for the warmth and hospitality that makes it feel like home away from home." ■



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# ITB India 2024

## Unveiling New Opportunities in the Travel Trade

*ITB India 2024, a three-day B2B Travel and Tourism Fair, brought together industry leaders, key buyers, and service providers at the Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai from September 11 to 13, 2024. The event concluded successfully with the participation of over 600 top-tier Indian and international buyers.*

### Gunjan Sabikhi and Shreya Shimpi

Co-located with MICE Show India, Travel Tech India, and the ITB India Conference, ITB India 2024 provided a dynamic platform for fostering meaningful business relationships within the travel industry. More than 25,000 business engagements took place, positioning ITB India as a milestone event in shaping the future of travel. Exhibitors from diverse segments, including leisure travel, corporate travel, international MICE players, and tourism boards, connected with high-quality buyers, creating numerous opportunities for collaboration.

Key exhibitors included AsiaPay, Club Med, Collinson Group, EVA Airways, Encalm Hospitality, Kenya Tourism Board, Melia Hotels International, Mize, Mondee, Novotel Jaipur, Prince Hotels and Resorts, Sarawak Tourism Board, Spain Tourism Office, Taiwan Tourism Administration, Uzbekistan Airways, visitBerlin and Visit Oulu. Exhibitors reported receiving exceptional responses through meaningful buyer interactions.

“We are proud to be part of ITB this year. The exposure has been remarkable, and the platform ensures genuine connections between the right people, avoiding duplication of representation,” said Anish Arya, Sales & IATA BSP Consolidator (India), Uzbekistan Airways JSC Aero World Travels, Arya Enterprises (IATA), an exhibitor at ITB India.

The event also introduced the inaugural ITB India Gala Dinner, which hosted over 400 international exhibitors and top buyers for high-level B2B networking.

Esteemed partners such as the Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI), Enterprising Travel Agents Association (ETAA), Network of Indian MICE Agents (NIMA), and





Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) contributed to bringing over 600 high-calibre Indian and South Asian buyers to the exhibition. The event also featured a series of insightful panel discussions on various topics.

Joyce Wang, Executive Director of Messe Berlin Asia Pacific, organiser of ITB India, MICE Show India, and Travel Tech India, commented on ITB India

2024, "Our aim in entering the Indian market is to elevate South Asian travel to the international stage. Under the ITB brand, we collectively represent Berlin, Asia, and China, with our newest addition, ITB India."

Reflecting on how ITB India 2024 differed from previous editions, Wang added, "The growth has been significant. The reception has been overwhelmingly

positive, with a notable increase in interest in the MICE sector. We've seen participation from convention boards and numerous international MICE exhibitors, which is a clear evolution from last year. This niche focus on MICE is gaining traction in both ITB India and ITB Asia, as the Indian market traditionally leaned more toward leisure travel." ■

# The Louisiana Office of Tourism organises its first Sales Mission in India

*The Louisiana Office of Tourism, the official tourism promotional agency for the state of Louisiana, USA, organized its first mission to India from September 23 to 27, 2024 in Mumbai and New Delhi. The objective of this mission was to increase destination awareness amongst the travel and media on the diverse range of tourism offerings available for potential Indian visitors.*

## BOTT DESK

The Louisiana Sales Mission in India was led by Billy Nungesser, Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana state, and Doug Bourgeois, Assistant Secretary of Tourism, Louisiana Office of Tourism, along with Louisiana's partners Visit Lake Charles, New Orleans & Company, and Mississippi River Country.

Visitor numbers from India to the USA continue to set new records. After the rapid recovery in visitor arrivals in 2023, exceeding pre-pandemic numbers, there has been an impressive growth of 35% in arrivals to the USA between January – July 2024, making India the second-largest overseas market for the USA. Louisiana, with its cultural experiences, unique local cuisines, music & entertainment, outdoors, and vibrant festivals, is a perfect extension for Indians planning a holiday in the US.

Supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce under the Market Development Cooperator Program, the expansion to the India market includes collaboration with



U.S. Commercial Services and the U.S. Embassy as part of the International Travel Office's efforts.

In 2024, Louisiana is celebrating the "Year of Music," highlighting its rich musical heritage as the birthplace of Jazz, Cajun, and Zydeco forms of music. This campaign aims to attract visitors from around the world by showcasing the state's vibrant and unique musical legacy.

"We're very excited to have continued our work in India," said Doug Bourgeois, Assistant Secretary of Tourism, Louisiana Office of Tourism. "The Indian traveler is looking for the kind of authentic experiences, amazing music and delicious food that Louisiana is known for. We can't wait to welcome even more visitors from India to our great state." ■





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### Celebrating 20th Anniversary

TOFTigers, in partnership with The Sanctuary Nature Foundation and Outlook Traveller, announces the 7th Wildlife Tourism Awards. Under the theme *"Celebrating Harmony: Fostering Sustainable Wildlife Tourism through Innovation and Collaboration,"* the Awards recognize eco-lodges, wildlife guides, tourism operators, community initiatives, photography & documentary experts and Climate guardians in India and Nepal for their leadership in sustainable tourism and conservation. *With over 200 global members,* TOFTigers continues to drive a vision where tourism actively supports the preservation of wildlife and natural heritage.

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### THE AWARDS CATEGORIES 2024

1. The John Wakefield Memorial Award for Most Inspirational Lodge (Four Awards will be awarded in this category - Outstanding, Quality, Footprint & Rising Star).
2. The Billy Arjan Singh Memorial Award for Wildlife Guide (Awards will be given in four regional categories - North, West, East, South)
3. Wildlife Promotion Company Award
4. Wildlife Tourism Community Initiative Award
5. Wildlife and Tourism Initiative Award
6. International Wildlife Tour Operator Award
7. Lodge Naturalist Award
8. Wildlife Conservation Photography Award
9. Wildlife Conservation Documentary Award
10. Wildlife Harmony Homestay Award
11. Kailash Sankhala Visitor Friendly Wildlife National Park Award
12. Sanctuary Asia Award for "Best State for Sustainable Wildlife Tourism."
13. Climate Guardian Award

For Further information visit:

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TOFTigers is formed in 2004, galvanising those most active in the Indian nature travel industry to promote best operating practices. TOFTigers engages with global travel and tourism operators, Indian destination management companies and local wildlife lodges and resorts helping them all adopt practices that promote sustainable business, community support and tiger conservation. By doing so TOFTigers not only helps support the tigers, the parks and local communities, but also helps these companies provide their clients with a more inspired, fulfilling and enjoyable experience. A true 'win-win' scenario.

The Sanctuary TOFTigers Wildlife Tourism Awards are a celebration of what has been achieved so far, and perhaps more importantly, are an inspiration for what can be done in the future.

# CM inaugurates the 39<sup>th</sup> IATO Convention in Bhopal, registers record attendance with 1200 delegates

*The 39th Annual Convention of the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) concluded successfully in Bhopal amidst august presence of dignitaries, senior government Ministers, officials, veterans from tourism and hospitality sectors and more. Held from August 30 to September 2, 2024, at the Taj Lakefront, this year's event set a new benchmark, with a record attendance of approximately 1,200 delegates, making it one of the most highly attended conventions in IATO's history.*

Priyanka Saxena Ray, Anjali Pokhriyal and Pallavi Sharma



The 39th IATO Convention began with an inaugural ceremony that included a vibrant cultural performance, showcasing the richness and diversity of India's heritage. The event was officially opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the exhibition area, followed by the traditional lighting of the lamp. Distinguished guests included Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister of Culture and Tourism; Dharmendra Bhav Singh Lodhi, Minister of State for Culture and Tourism, Madhya Pradesh; Mohan Yadav, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh; Sheo Shekhar Shukla, Principal

Secretary (Tourism) and Managing Director of the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board; Rajiv Mehra, President of IATO; and Ravi Gosain, Vice President and Convention Chairman of IATO.

In their addresses, the dignitaries discussed the current state and future potential of both inbound and domestic tourism in India. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat highlighted IATO's role as a leader in the tourism industry and its commitment to social causes. He expressed optimism about the future, predicting a fivefold increase in tourist arrivals over the next five years, while emphasizing the need for more

destinations and collaboration between the government and private sector to create a comprehensive tourism experience.

Shekhawat also noted the growing interest in domestic tourism, fuelled by rising disposable incomes among the middle class, and urged Indian states to enhance their tourism offerings through healthy competition. He called for increased efforts to boost India's share of the global tourism market, which currently stands at 7%, with a target to increase this share within the next 2-3 years.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav



spoke about Madhya Pradesh's vast potential as a tourism destination, expressing confidence that the state can attract visitors from around the world. He emphasized the importance of showcasing the natural beauty and cultural heritage of Madhya Pradesh to a global audience.

The convention's theme, "Resurgent India Inbound," reflects the industry's determination to exceed pre-pandemic tourism levels and its collective vision for the future. Ravi Gosain echoed this sentiment, explaining that the theme "Resurgent India Inbound" is more than just a catchphrase; it represents a vision

for India's growth in the global tourism arena, focusing on sustainability, responsible tourism, spiritual tourism, and more.

During the event, the IATO Hall of Fame Award was posthumously awarded to M. L. Rajdan of Rajdan Holidays, with the honour accepted by his daughter-in-law, Anita Rajdan. Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director and CEO of IHCL, was also recognised with a Hall of Fame award for his relentless contribution to the Hospitality Industry.

The three days of the Convention witnessed an eclectic mix of Business Sessions focussed on a wide variety of

topics. Some of them included Strategy to Reposition India amid Challenging Business Environment; Chasing Hotels for Inbound Tourism; Discovering the undiscovered - Lesser-known destinations, experiences, sustainability; Last Mile Connectivity; Marketing and Promotion of Inbound Tourism; Synergy in Tourism and Hospitality Industry; Legal Challenges for Women Empowerment and more.

Besides the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, and the Host State, Madhya Pradesh, there were 12 other states participated in the convention i.e. Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar,



Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh.

The Valedictory Session was graced by the Deputy CM of MP, Shri Rajendra Shukla who emphasized on the need for branding. The state tourism minister Shri Dharmendra Singh Lodhi used the occasion to inform the gathering about the initiatives taken, like developing the Kuno National Park as tourist destination, converting lakes into tourist destinations, development

of 1000 home stays and various other measures.

To mark the conclusion of the convention 'Run for Responsible Tourism' was held in which more than 500 members participated. Further post the convention special Fam tours were organised to showcase the known and new destinations.

"The convention, every year, is organised with the objective of showcasing the specific city's as well as that state's tourism potential and draw

in more foreign tourists with innovative strategies and help in boosting local economy. The response we received this year was unprecedented and we look forward to replicating this success at our next convention in Puri, Odisha," shared Rajiv Mehra.

Concluding the convention of a perfectly light and musical note was the brilliant performance by Sugandha Mishra who made many delegates dance to her tunes while ensuring everyone had a great time! ■

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## *Helms of Hospitality*



# Le Meridien New Delhi

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*Le Meridien New Delhi achieved dynamic growth in 2024, with strategic marketing and sustainability initiatives driving high occupancy, ARR, and guest experiences despite challenges. Meena Bhatia, Vice President & General Manager, Le Meridien New Delhi shares more...*



**Meena Bhatia,**  
Vice President & General Manager,  
Le Meridien New Delhi

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

### Year 2024

2024 has been dynamic for Le Meridien New Delhi in terms of occupancy rates and Average Room Rates (ARR). The year started strong, with high ARR and occupancy driven by a surge in both domestic and international travel following New Year celebrations. Our diverse offerings and strategic marketing efforts were instrumental in attracting guests during this peak period.

However, we faced a dip in occupancy and ARR during April and May due to the general elections in India. Despite this temporary setback, we witnessed a remarkable recovery starting in June, with occupancy and ARR surpassing city benchmarks.

### Renovation / Expansion

This year, we launched the “+1 for the Leap Year” campaign, celebrating the extra day with unique experiences. A highlight was the “Journey Through Time: +1 Day, +1 Story” exhibition in collaboration with the Archives of Tarun Thakral. Showcased in our Atrium Lobby on February 29, it featured hand-drawn Indian commercial posters from the 1920s to the 1960s, offering guests a glimpse into history.

We also introduced Mitsui, an authentic Japanese bakery at Longitude, offering delights like Custard Cream Cornets and Shokupan. Additionally, our Indian restaurant, Eau de Monsoon, unveiled a new menu celebrating the diversity of Indian cuisine. Looking ahead, we are renovating Le Belvedere, and guests can expect a refreshed experience soon.

### Sustainable Initiatives

Sustainability is integral to our operations. We've set ambitious goals to reduce electricity, water, and natural gas consumption. Our efforts include a sewage treatment plant, an organic waste composter, and solar panels for water heating and lighting. Comprehensive environmental training for staff ensures sustainability is embedded in our culture, making a positive impact on both the environment and guest experience. ■

*This year our Indian restaurant, Eau de Monsoon, unveiled a new menu celebrating the diversity of Indian cuisine. Looking ahead, we are renovating Le Belvedere, and guests can expect a refreshed experience soon.*

# Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport

## Sustainability is integral to our operations

*Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport is a luxury hotel offering world-class amenities, award-winning dining, and exceptional sustainability practices, located minutes from Delhi International Airport. Ashwni Kumar Goela, Vice President Operations - Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport & Area General Manager - Radisson Hotel Group, South Asia shares more...*

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

### Year 2024

The year 2024 has been highly positive for our hotel, maintaining over 95% occupancy throughout the year with a strong mix of corporate and leisure travellers. Average room rates have grown by over 9% compared to last year, positioning 2024 to be our best year in 26 years of operation.

### Renovation / Expansion

Our culinary offerings have been elevated through exciting collaborations. At our award-winning Thai and Pan-Asian restaurant, Neung Roi, we hosted a culinary showcase in partnership with ISSEI, a renowned Nikkei cuisine restaurant from Dubai. Additionally, we launched wine dinners paired with our signature kebabs at TGKF, complemented by Scotch-Trails at Savannah Bar, further enhancing the guest experience.

### Sustainability Initiatives

At Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport, sustainability is integral to our operations. We have implemented several key initiatives, including the installation of EV charging stations, energy-efficient heat pumps, and Watergen machines that convert air into water, ensuring our hotel remains plastic-free. Additionally, we recycle water for cooling, horticulture, cleaning, and flushing through our Sewage Treatment Plant (STP), recycling 61 KL of water annually. Our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint extends to minimizing electricity consumption by over 50% (compared to 2019 levels) through the installation of heat pumps and outsourcing laundry operations. To further our environmental efforts, we use an Organic Waste Converter, producing approximately 4.8 tons of eco-fertilizer annually, which is used for landscaping, horticulture, and public plantations. We also adhere to federal norms for managing construction, demolition, and waste disposal, having eliminated single-use plastics entirely and using certified plastics over 100 microns where necessary. Additionally, we've embraced natural resource management practices such as utilizing solar energy for heating via heat pumps and harvesting rainwater with a storage capacity of 10 KL. These efforts have earned us the WTTC Hotel Sustainability Basics certification and the prestigious Executive Category 2024 award by Safehotels, reinforcing our commitment to sustainability and safety in hospitality. ■



**Ashwni Kumar Goela,**  
Vice President Operations  
Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport &  
Area General Manager  
Radisson Hotel Group, South Asia

*In 2024, we achieved our highest guest experience scores, leading to a remarkable 64% repeat clientele. This accomplishment is particularly significant given the competitive landscape, with over 4,000 rooms nearby. Our success is a testament of our passionate team members.*

# Crowne Plaza Greater Noida



**Sharad K Upadhyay,**  
General Manager,  
Crowne Plaza Greater Noida

## Handling a balanced mix of domestic and international guests

*In 2024, Crowne Plaza Greater Noida experienced significant growth, driven by rising corporate and leisure travel, sustainability initiatives, and ambitious plans for expansion and renovation. Sharad K Upadhyay, General Manager, Crowne Plaza Greater Noida shares more...*

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

### Year 2024 Overview

2024 has been a remarkable year for Crowne Plaza Greater Noida, with a substantial increase in both corporate and leisure travel. While we missed key events like MotoGP due to logistical challenges, it remains our strongest year to date. Our total revenue growth is expected to reach double digits, primarily fuelled by an increase in Average Daily Rate (ADR).

### Renovation / Expansion

We are planning to open an adjoining tower in the near future, adding over 100 rooms to our inventory. In addition, we are expanding our banqueting facilities and are in the process of refurbishing guest rooms and public areas to enhance the guest experience.

### Sustainability Measures

As a leader in sustainability, diversity, equity, and inclusion, we've adopted around 10 sustainability initiatives ranging from recycling to resource reuse. As part of IHG, we align with the United Nations sustainability goals and are committed to making a positive impact. Our workforce includes colleagues from diverse backgrounds, including different sexual orientations, transgender individuals, and people with special abilities, contributing to a more inclusive workplace.

### Focus on Domestic and Inbound Travel

We enjoy a balanced mix of domestic and international guests. India's growing domestic demand in both corporate and leisure sectors is especially promising, and we've seen a sharp rise in this area. While MICE is largely driven by domestic clients, a significant portion of our corporate guests are international. With the upcoming opening of Jewar Airport, we

expect an even greater surge in domestic demand, followed by increased foreign travel in the years to come. ■

*We enjoy a balanced mix of domestic and international guests. India's growing domestic demand in both corporate and leisure sectors is especially promising, and we've seen a sharp rise in this area. While MICE is largely driven by domestic clients, a significant portion of our corporate guests are international.*



# Expolnn Suites and Convention

## Achieved a 122% increase in occupancy in 2024

*In 2024, Expolnn Suites and Convention achieved outstanding growth in occupancy and ADR, driven by strategic initiatives, market expansion, and enhanced guest experiences. Barun Gupta, General Manager, Expolnn Suites and Convention shares more...*

**Gunjan Sabikhi**

### Year 2024

In 2024, Expolnn Suites and Convention has shown remarkable growth in both occupancy and ADR. Compared to last year, we've achieved a 122% increase in occupancy, which is a significant milestone for us. This growth reflects the hard work of our commercial and sales teams in capturing new markets and driving guest interest. Additionally, we've seen a 40% improvement in our Average Daily Rate (ADR), which speaks to the value we've been able to create through strategic pricing and premium guest experiences. Our team's dedication to understanding market demands and delivering exceptional service has truly paid off, and we're excited to continue building on this momentum.

### Renovation / Expansion

We are pleased to share that Expolnn Suites and Conventions, was recently awarded a 5-star category status, with a full alcohol license, by the Ministry of Tourism—a recognition that reflects our commitment to excellence. We are also excited about our upcoming expansion plans, which we will officially announce soon.

### Sustainability Initiatives

We are always striving to enhance our sustainability efforts and have adopted few initiatives such as –

- We have implemented energy-saving lighting and appliances across the property. In addition, we generate our own electricity through a 2-megawatt solar power system, significantly reducing our carbon footprint and contributing to a more sustainable future.
- We encourage responsible water usage by offering towel and linen reuse programs and have installed water-efficient fixtures.
- We actively minimize waste through recycling programs and by reducing single-use plastics, offering refillable amenities instead.
- We support local businesses by sourcing produce and materials from nearby suppliers and contribute to community projects through volunteer efforts.
- We actively support the use of electric vehicles by providing car charging stations on our premises, encouraging both guests and staff to adopt cleaner transportation alternatives. ■



**Barun Gupta,**  
General Manager,  
Expolnn Suites and Convention

*We've seen a 40% improvement in our Average Daily Rate (ADR), which speaks to the value we've been able to create through strategic pricing and premium guest experiences. Our team's dedication to understanding market demands and delivering exceptional service has truly paid off, and we're excited to continue building on this momentum.*

# Fairmont Jaipur

## Introducing New Experiences that celebrate Local Culture

*Fairmont Jaipur, a luxurious destination, is renowned for its blend of heritage charm, premium offerings, and sustainability initiatives, attracting discerning travellers seeking exceptional cultural and eco-conscious experiences. Rajat Sethi, General Manager, Fairmont Jaipur shares more...*

**Gunjan Sabikhi**

### Year 2024

In 2024, we experienced a drop in occupancy compared to 2023, mainly due to extreme weather conditions and general elections, which impacted travel patterns in May and June. These external factors resulted in fewer bookings during these months, affecting our overall occupancy rates.

Despite this challenge, we are pleased to report a significant 16.3% growth in our Average Daily Rate (ADR). In 2023, our ADR was INR 17,320, and it has risen to INR 20,138 in 2024. This increase highlights our strategic focus on enhancing the guest experience through premium offerings, personalized services, and unique culinary experiences, which attract guests willing to pay more for exceptional value.

### Renovation / Expansion

Over the next year, my plans for Fairmont Jaipur include enhancing guest satisfaction, expanding our wellness and culinary offerings, and further advancing our sustainability initiatives. We aim to introduce new experiences that celebrate local culture while meeting the evolving expectations of luxury travellers. Additionally, we will continue investing in staff training and development to ensure our team remains at the forefront of hospitality excellence.

### Sustainability Initiatives

Fairmont Jaipur leads the way in sustainable hospitality, driven by innovation and a strong commitment to environmental stewardship. At the forefront is Orbisk, an AI-powered solution that significantly reduces food waste, underscoring the hotel's dedication to eco-conscious operations. Sustainability is integrated into every guest interaction, from eco-friendly wooden key cards at check-in to in-room cards promoting water and linen reuse, fostering greater environmental awareness among visitors.

Additionally, Fairmont Jaipur champions the 'Vocal for Local' movement, sourcing locally to support regional communities and preserve traditional craftsmanship. The property also operates its own in-house water bottling plant to eliminate single-use plastics. ■



**Rajat Sethi,**  
General Manager,  
Fairmont Jaipur

*Over the next year, my plans for Fairmont Jaipur include enhancing guest satisfaction, expanding our wellness and culinary offerings, and further advancing our sustainability initiatives. We aim to introduce new experiences that celebrate local culture.*

# Hilton and Hilton Garden Inn Bengaluru Embassy Manyata Business Park

## We have launched Tattva Spa with a focus on rejuvenation & stress relief

*Hilton and Hilton Garden Inn Bengaluru Embassy Manyata Business Park combines remarkable growth in occupancy with luxurious experiences, offering wellness and sustainability initiatives that cater to both leisure and business travellers. Manish Garg, General Manager, Hilton and Hilton Garden Inn Bengaluru Embassy Manyata Business Park shares more...*

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

### Year 2024

In 2024, we achieved remarkable and sustained growth by focusing on rate and occupancy management. This led to impressive results, including significant occupancy gains during key periods. Compared to 2023, occupancy surged by 29.4% year-to-date (YTD), driven by a strategic emphasis on transient and crew business, along with a 16.9% YTD increase in Market Penetration Index (MPI). Our consistent occupancy growth has been supported by complex selling strategies targeting both leisure and business segments.

### Renovation / Expansion

We are dedicated to providing exceptional experiences for our guests. As part of our ongoing efforts to enhance our services, we recently launched the Tattva Spa, offering a range of premium wellness therapies. These therapies blend traditional practices with modern relaxation techniques, including aromatherapy, deep tissue massages, facials, and Ayurvedic treatments like Abhyanga and Shirodhara.

### Sustainability Initiatives

We are deeply committed to sustainability through the use of premium eco-friendly amenities, such as reconstituted plant material mugs, significantly reducing plastic waste. Hilton's focus on sustainable bathroom amenities and microgreen planters for long-stay guests aligns with our "Travel with Purpose" goals. Our zero single-use plastic policy includes an in-house bottling plant producing 2,500 glass bottles per day.

We also prioritize renewable energy, with over 95% of our energy requirements met through renewable sources. Our rooftop solar panels heat 15,000 litres of water daily, and our in-house waste decomposition plant processes wet waste into manure. Additionally, we repurpose greywater for gardening and flushing, reducing our environmental impact. ■



**Manish Garg,**  
General Manager,  
Hilton and Hilton Garden Inn Bengaluru Embassy  
Manyata Business Park

*Our 'Food - Thoughtfully Sourced, Carefully Served' approach emphasizes nutrition, local produce, and partnerships with women-led organic farms to reduce our carbon footprint. We offer sustainable event options through our LEED Gold-certified building, ensuring positive environmental and guest impacts.*

# Holiday Inn Katra

## We tailor our services to appeal to millennial and Gen Z travellers

*Holiday Inn Katra Vaishno Devi achieved impressive growth in 2024, with higher occupancy and ARR, expanding banqueting spaces, and sustainability initiatives supporting responsible tourism and community engagement. Ritesh Sharma, General Manager, Holiday Inn Katra shares more...*



**Ritesh Sharma,**  
General Manager, Holiday Inn Katra

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

**Year 2024**

In 2024, Holiday Inn Katra Vaishno Devi has shown impressive growth, with our occupancy rate reaching 70%. This marks a significant improvement from last year, especially during the May-June summer vacation, when we saw a substantial influx of guests. As the Navratri season approaches, we are optimistic about another surge in bookings, driven by the festive spirit and the spiritual significance of Katra.

Additionally, our Average Room Rates (ARR) have increased by approximately 15%, reflecting the rising demand for our premium offerings. We have strategically tailored our services to appeal to millennial and Gen Z travellers, who seek authentic and meaningful experiences.

### Renovation / Expansion

We are expanding our property with new banquet spaces designed to foster community engagement and provide versatile venues for celebrations and events. These facilities address the growing demand for quality venues in Katra, creating a hub for local gatherings and cultural festivities. This initiative underscores our commitment to enriching the guest experience while supporting the vibrant community of Katra, making it a prime destination for meaningful connections and memorable celebrations.

### Sustainability Initiatives

At Holiday Inn Katra Vaishno Devi, we believe in the saying, "We have not inherited the world from our forefathers — we have borrowed it from our children." This philosophy drives our strong commitment to sustainability, with the IHG Green Engage program as the foundation of our responsible tourism efforts.

We have made significant strides in eliminating single-use plastics, including straws, and adopted a zero-waste cooking philosophy. Our root-to-stem approach ensures that every part of our ingredients is utilized, minimising food waste and promoting a more sustainable kitchen.

Beyond the kitchen, we actively organise mountain cleanup drives to preserve Katra's natural beauty and implement effective waste and water treatment systems to reduce our environmental impact. ■

*We have recently launched the 'Katra Divine Retreat' at Holiday Inn Katra. This year-round offering is designed to provide guests with a transformative spiritual experience set against the stunning backdrop of Jammu and Kashmir.*

# The Claridges New Delhi

## Focussed on elevating Guest Experiences

*In 2024, The Claridges New Delhi achieved remarkable growth, with rising occupancy rates, enhanced facilities, and sustainable initiatives. Hemendra Singh Kushalgarh, General Manager, The Claridges New Delhi shares more...*

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

### Year 2024 Overview

We're thrilled to report that 2024 has been a landmark year for The Claridges New Delhi. Our occupancy rates have surged, marking a robust rebound in travel, with increasing numbers of domestic and international guests, particularly in the corporate and leisure segments.

Additionally, our Average Room Rates (ARRs) have risen, underscoring strong demand and reflecting our dedication to delivering outstanding value. By focusing on elevating guest experiences and offering tailored packages, we've successfully driven this growth. Looking ahead, we remain committed to maintaining this momentum and providing exceptional service to all our guests.

### Renovation / Expansion

This year, we've made several impactful upgrades across the property. Our banquet facilities have undergone a complete renovation, incorporating cutting-edge technology and modern design elements, ensuring that we cater more effectively to corporate events and weddings.

We're delighted to reintroduce our signature fine dining restaurant, Jade, with expanded seating capacity from 45 to 90 guests, allowing us to host larger gatherings and deliver an even more refined culinary experience. Additionally, we've upgraded our Cinqtuair Spa to offer a more luxurious and serene environment, ensuring our guests can relax and rejuvenate in style. Our guest rooms, including the prestigious Wellington Suite, have also been refurbished to maintain our standards of comfort and elegance.

### Sustainability Initiatives

At The Claridges New Delhi, sustainability is at the heart of our mission. We've implemented several eco-friendly initiatives, including reducing plastic use, optimizing energy consumption, and sourcing fresh, locally-produced ingredients for our restaurants. Our goal is to make a positive impact not only within the hotel but also in the wider community, fostering a sustainable environment that benefits both our guests and the local area.

We remain dedicated to continuously improving our offerings while contributing to a greener, more sustainable future ■



**Hemendra Singh Kushalgarh,**  
General Manager, The Claridges New Delhi

*Cinqtuair Spa to offer a more luxurious and serene environment, ensuring our guests can relax and rejuvenate in style. Our guest rooms, including the prestigious Wellington Suite, have also been refurbished.*

# Pilibhit House, IHCL SeleQtions



Vikas Nagar,  
Hotel Manager, Pilibhit House, Haridwar

## Attracting diverse clientele & contributing to region's economic development

*With a vision to preserve the rich legacy of Pilibhit House, Haridwar, while catering to the contemporary needs of its guests, the hotel has made remarkable strides this year, witnessing strong growth in both occupancy and ARR. Vikas Nagar, Hotel Manager, Pilibhit House, Haridwar shares more...*

**Pallavi Sharma**

### Year 2024

Pilibhit House has witnessed a remarkable surge in occupancy and ARRs in 2024. Our unique blend of luxury heritage, spiritual significance, and modern amenities and a strong IHCL brand presence have attracted both domestic and international travellers seeking a truly immersive experience. We have observed a particular increase in demand during peak pilgrimage seasons and leisure travel periods, showcasing the enduring appeal of our location and offerings.

### Renovation / Expansion

We have recently opened our rooftop restaurant "THE TERRACE" which offers a unique culinary experience featuring Pan-Asian and Mediterranean flavours prepared using locally and ethically sourced ingredients and fresh produce. The experience is a reverent homage to the vegetarian ethos of the holy city of Haridwar and celebrates the sustainable culinary practices of the Himalayan region. We have also added a Fitness centre and Kids Zone to our property.

Our future plans include expanding our outdoor facilities to offer more immersive experiences, such as yoga and meditation retreats. We are also exploring opportunities to enhance our "The Dining Room" culinary offerings, showcasing local flavours and traditions.

### Sustainability Initiatives

Pilibhit House is deeply committed to sustainable practices, and social responsibility with our Paathya initiatives. Paathya brings together a bouquet of initiatives to lead a positive change with IHCL's core values of Trust of all stakeholders, Awareness around the needs of our ecosystem and joy at heart. We have implemented various initiatives to reduce our environmental footprint, support local artisans and businesses, and contribute to the well-being of the surrounding community. This is in line with IHCL's commitment to contributing to the society with an integrated approach towards creating sustainable growth and positive impact. ■

*As a General Manager, I am particularly proud of our team's dedication to preserving the legacy of Pilibhit House while providing exceptional personalised services, and our goal is to continue positioning Pilibhit House as a leading luxury heritage hotel in Uttarakhand offering a seamless blend of tradition and private luxury.*

# Crowne Plaza Kochi

## We have seen exceptional growth with significant increase in occupancy rates

*The 2024 has been exceptional for Crowne Plaza Kochi, with record occupancy rates driven by domestic travel and a strong focus on MICE and FIT segments. Dinesh Rai, General Manager, Crowne Plaza Kochi shares more...*

**Gunjan Sabikhi**

### Year 2024

The year 2024 has been exceptional for our property, marked by a significant increase in occupancy rates. This surge is largely attributed to the resurgence of domestic travel, particularly within the MICE sector, alongside an uptick in FIT movements. Despite losing approximately 1,200 room nights due to the Israel conflict, we achieved our highest revenue through citywide events and Pedicons while maintaining our average daily rate (ADR).

### Renovation / Expansion

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, we embraced the opportunity to extensively refurbish our restaurants, now among the city's most preferred: ZOKA and SkyGrill. Our Grand Ballroom has undergone a stunning transformation, featuring a vibrant new aesthetic and completely new carpeting. As we move forward with plans to renovate our guest rooms while prioritising sustainable practices, we are excited to introduce a dedicated kids' play area, thoughtfully designed to meet the needs of our guests. Our hotel's offerings have expanded to accommodate larger gatherings, including meetings and weddings, featuring a sprawling 14,000-square-foot banquet area designed to combine modern aesthetics with functionality, ensuring we meet the evolving needs of future conferences.

### Sustainability Initiatives

Our hotel is deeply committed to sustainability and giving back to society. We've installed a glass bottling unit that produces 900 glass bottles daily, eliminating approximately 27,000 plastic bottles each month. We've also replaced plastic bags with durable synthetic net bags for garden waste collection. Our eco-friendly initiatives extend to bulk dispensers for amenities, e-waste management (repairing over 150 LED TV panels), and responsible disposal of used oil. We also focus on reducing food waste with "No-bin days" for staff meals.

To further reduce our carbon footprint, we have incorporated electric vehicles for pick-and-drop services and installed EV charging stations for guests. Our onsite recycling plant processes waste efficiently, and treated water is repurposed for cooling towers, toilet flushing, and garden irrigation. We store approximately 500,000 litres of rainwater. ■



**Dinesh Rai,**  
General Manager, Crowne Plaza Kochi

*2024 has seen our hotel achieve the highest levels of occupancy and ADR since its inception. This outstanding accomplishment solidifies our position as a frontrunner in the industry and sets new benchmarks for excellence in hospitality. We are excited to continue this momentum and deliver exceptional experiences to our guests.*

# Roseate Hotels and Resorts

## Cultivating an environment where guests feel valued and cared for

*Roseate Hotels and Resorts strongly believe in empowering its teams and investing in their growth, ensuring that every member, from the front desk to the culinary team, embodies the core values of the brand. **Namit Agnihotri**, Area General Manager, Roseate Hotels and Resorts shares more...*

**Anjali Pokhriyal**

### Year 2024

2024 has been an outstanding year for both The Roseate New Delhi and The Roseate Ganges, continuing the momentum we established in previous years. Our occupancy rates have consistently hovered around 70 - 75%, showcasing the enduring appeal of our properties to both domestic and international travellers. We have seen a notable 15% increase in Average Room Revenue compared to last year, driven by our commitment to providing unparalleled guest experiences and our strategic approach to pricing.

### Renovation / Expansion

This year, we completed a meticulous renovation aimed at up keeping of our marvellous architecture and refreshing the outdoor spaces. Every corner of our property has been carefully attended to, ensuring that it exudes

elegance and warmth at every step, right from the moment a guest arrives. We believe that the first impression is crucial, and our dedicated team is committed to providing consistent touch-ups and maintenance to preserve the unique atmosphere. Looking ahead, we have plans for expansion of our wellness facilities and outdoor dining areas.

### Sustainable Initiatives

We are committed to implementing eco-friendly practices that not only minimize our environmental footprint but also enrich the communities we serve. One of our gratifying initiatives is the introduction of glass-bottled water throughout the property, significantly reducing plastic waste and promoting a more sustainable alternative for our guests. Additionally, we maintain our own vegetable farm, allowing us to source fresh, organic produce for our kitchens, thereby supporting local agriculture and reducing

our reliance on external suppliers. We also grow a variety of plants within the property, enhancing our green spaces and contributing to biodiversity. We have adopted elephants for their care and well-being in Mathura, reflecting our commitment to wildlife conservation. ■



**Namit Agnihotri**,  
Area General Manager,  
Roseate Hotels and Resorts

*Sustainability to us is not just limited to preserving the environment and its resources, but also profoundly extends to the diversity and inclusion that we mindfully practice amidst our teams. We provide a fertile conducive environment for them to constantly learn and acquire new skills, thus making their own professional journeys more sustainable*



# Sofitel Mumbai BKC

## Celebrating a more sustainable way of living

*In 2024, Sofitel Mumbai BKC has excelled in occupancy and ADR, attracting discerning travellers with luxurious accommodations and exceptional dining experiences, reinforcing its premier status. Manish Daya, General Manager – Sofitel Mumbai BKC shares more...*

**Gunjan Sabikhi**

### Year 2024

2024 has been a Magnifique year for Sofitel as a brand, marking another chapter in our 60-year legacy of luxury. The vibrancy of the Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC) micro-market, coupled with the grand opening of the Jio World Convention Centre, has both a new life into the City's Convention scene. We've witnessed an impressive 3% increase in occupancy and our REVPAR has grown by over 5%, outpacing last year. Sofitel Mumbai BKC is thriving to ensure each guest's experience, more unforgettable than the last.

### Expansion / Renovation

At Sofitel Mumbai BKC, we are continuously evolving to create extraordinary moments for our guests. With a Cousu main approach that is our signature gesture, our Ambassadors and Heartists enrich each stay with personalized and heartfelt touches. Looking ahead, we envision the opportunity to create MORE space for luxury experience even further. Enhancing our beautiful property operating since 2012 will allow us to offer more moments of joy to our guests.

### Sustainability Initiatives

Sustainability is woven into the very fabric of Sofitel Mumbai BKC. We proudly lead with green initiatives that echo our dedication to preserving the planet and supporting the community. From being the first hotel in India with Green Key certification to implementing Winnow's AI technology, we've significantly reduced food waste. We've replaced plastic with eco-labeled products and wooden room keys, and our in-house water bottling plant curtails single-use plastics. With electric vehicles for guest transfers and the use of organic, free-range produce, we celebrate a more sustainable way of living, inviting our guests to be part of this meaningful journey

### Domestic or Inbound

We delight in a harmonious mélange of both Domestic and International guests. In fact, it's a beautiful balance of 50% of our guests are from India, while the rest arrive from destinations across the globe. This unique mix allows us to celebrate both Local and International cultures, creating an experience that feels globally refined yet deeply connected to the spirit of Mumbai.

As we step into the festive season, we are thrilled to launch our Diwali hampers— Samaroh, crafted with authenticity and local flair. ■



**Manish Daya,**  
General Manager,  
Sofitel Mumbai BKC

*At Sofitel Mumbai BKC, joie de vivre is at the heart of everything we do. Whether guests are visiting for business or leisure, we offer a vibrant experience steeped in French elegance and Mumbai's electric energy.*

# Moksha Himalaya Spa Resort



**Vikas Sharma,**  
General Manager,  
Moksha Himalaya Spa Resort

## Focussed on Domestic Market, Destination Weddings, Weekend FITs & Conferences

*In 2024, Moksha Hotel saw an uptick in occupancy and maintained strong ADR, bolstered by renovations, sustainability efforts, and a focus on domestic destination weddings and wellness tourism. Vikas Sharma, General Manager, Moksha Himalaya Spa Resort shares more...*

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

### Year 2024

In 2024, we experienced a slight increase in occupancy rates compared to the previous year. Our ADR also remained robust, contributing to the hotel's overall solid performance.

### Renovation / Expansion

We recently refurbished and upgraded the guest rooms at Moksha, our luxury offering, to align with our premium brand positioning. These enhancements are designed to elevate the guest experience and uphold the high standards we continuously strive to deliver.

### Sustainability Initiatives

At Moksha, sustainability is a core priority, and we have achieved Zero Plastic status through a range of eco-friendly measures. We eliminated single-use plastics by introducing an onsite water bottling plant that provides natural spring water in reusable glass bottles. Additionally, we replaced plastic packaging with sustainable alternatives like paper for toiletries, banned plastic straws and swizzle sticks in favour of biodegradable options, and transitioned to paper-based materials for all takeaway packaging. These initiatives underscore our commitment to reducing plastic waste and minimizing our environmental impact.

### Domestic or Inbound Focus

Our key focus is the domestic market, particularly destination weddings, weekend FITs, and corporate residential conferences. Moreover, Moksha is positioning itself as a premier wellness destination, featuring Asia's largest spa, which spans 70,000 square feet and offers 14 treatment rooms.

Nestled in the picturesque Shivalik Ranges at an elevation of 5,000 feet, Moksha Himalaya Spa Resort in Parwanoo offers a perfect blend of luxury and tranquility. Surrounded by verdant mountains, it provides an ideal retreat for those seeking relaxation or adventure. Recognized as one of Himachal Pradesh's premier luxury resorts, Moksha is famed for its Ayurvedic spa, scenic cable car rides, infinity pool, breathtaking views, and exquisite dining experiences. Here, you can unwind completely, letting the peaceful ambiance rejuvenate both your mind and spirit. ■

*We replaced plastic packaging with sustainable alternatives like paper for toiletries, banned plastic straws and swizzle sticks in favour of biodegradable options, and transitioned to paper-based materials for all takeaway packaging.*

# Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre

## Setting New Benchmarks in 2024

*In 2024, Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre is on track to establish a new benchmark as India's top convention hotel, boasting exceptional revenue per sq. m. per key. Manuj Ralhan, General Manager, Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre, Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Centre, shares more...*

**Shreya Shimpi**

### Year 2024

The year 2024 has been spectacular, with Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre on track to set a new benchmark for convention hotels in its inaugural year. We are poised to achieve the highest revenue per SQM per key in India. Competing with premium and luxury brands, we rank second in room rates among a competitive set of five hotels. While overall room rates in Jaipur have risen by 6% to 13% depending on location, occupancy levels have slightly dipped.

Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre stands out for its facilities, venues, and the exceptional value it offers for every rupee spent. Unique to India, our pillarless exhibition/convention halls span up to 10,000 sq. m with a height of 43 feet, complemented by multiple open exhibition grounds, wedding lawns, and parking for more than 5,000 cars. The venue also includes 226 hotel rooms, making it one of the most versatile event spaces in the country.

### Renovation / Expansion

In just our first year of operations, we are already planning to add 100 more rooms and introduce soundproof partitions in the exhibition/convention halls. This expansion will make us even more attractive for large-scale MICE events, including conferences and award functions that require a minimum of 300 rooms. With over 1,500 branded rooms within a 15-minute radius and proximity to the airport, we are fast becoming Jaipur's "mini Aerocity."

### Sustainability Initiatives

Accor leads the way in global sustainability initiatives, and despite being newly opened, our hotel is already aligned with these goals. We have installed an onsite bottling plant, EV charging stations, and offer plastic-free guest supplies in rooms. Other initiatives include reusable wooden key cards, paperless check-in and billing, a robust food waste management system, and a focus on local community employment and improving our gender diversity ratio. A 3 MW solar plant is also under development as part of our key sustainability efforts.

### Domestic or Inbound

Our business is primarily driven by the domestic market in India, and for our unit in particular, it is entirely focused on domestic clientele. As a result, our key source markets include Jaipur, Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Ranchi, Rajasthan, Bhilwara, Kishangarh, Indore, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Chennai. However, international visibility remains crucial, and we are actively participating in key MICE seminars globally to expand our presence in international markets. ■



**Manuj Ralhan,**  
General Manager,  
Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre,  
Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Centre

*Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre stands out for its facilities, venues, and the exceptional value it offers for every rupee spent. Unique to India, our pillarless exhibition/convention halls span up to 10,000 sq. m with a height of 43 feet, complemented by multiple open exhibition grounds, wedding lawns, and more.*

# Radisson Blu Pune Kharadi

## Experiencing a stellar year of Growth and Innovation in 2024

*In 2024, Radisson Blu Pune Kharadi achieved remarkable growth, with 80% average occupancy and an 18% ADR rise, strengthening its position in the business hotel sector. Pankaj Saxena, General Manager, Radisson Blu Pune Kharadi shares more...*



**Pankaj Saxena,**  
General Manager,  
Radisson Blu Pune Kharadi

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

### Year 2024

The year 2024 has been exceptionally promising for Radisson Blu Pune Kharadi, boasting an impressive average occupancy rate of 80% and an 18% ADR growth over the past 15 months. This consistent upward trend reflects substantial progress compared to previous years, with ADR significantly surpassing last year's figures. The dynamic market environment has provided ample opportunities to further solidify our standing as the preferred business hotel in the region.

### Renovation / Expansion

At Radisson Blu Pune Kharadi, we are committed to evolving with the times. As part of our ongoing refurbishment, we've upgraded key areas of the property, such as the digital immersion in guest rooms with 55-inch interactive TVs and an enhanced sleep experience with Bridge and Basics in 2024.

One of the most anticipated developments is the upcoming "Highdive: Rooftop Bar & Social Terrace," described as a place where modern simplicity meets dynamic elegance. Designed by a leading American firm, this unique space will feature copper fenestration, Instagram-worthy corners, an infinity pool, and ledge seating.

### Sustainability Initiatives

We are fully committed to sustainability and social responsibility, implementing a comprehensive range of eco-friendly practices that include energy-efficient systems, waste reduction programs, and the use of sustainable materials throughout the property. Innovations such as water-saving technologies and LED lighting have significantly reduced our carbon footprint. Our sustainable water management program alone conserves 118,000 litres during monsoons. The hotel runs on 70-80% renewable energy, with electric vehicle charging stations, a kitchen garden, and robust recycling initiatives, treating 14,600 KL

of water annually and saving 109,500 kWh of energy per year. Additionally, we actively participate in community outreach programs, supporting local social initiatives. ■

*Our future expansion plans also includes the addition of 100 rooms and an 8,000 sq. ft. pillarless meetings and events venue, set to launch within the next two years, further cementing our reputation as a premier destination for events and luxurious stays.*

# Mayfair On Sea, Morjim, Goa

## In 2024 we have experienced Growth, Expansion & Sustainable Luxury

*In 2024, Mayfair Hotels experienced notable growth in ARR and occupancy, driven by luxury expansion and eco-friendly initiatives, enhancing its appeal across domestic and inbound markets. Paul Dhanraj, Resort Manager, Mayfair On Sea, Morjim, Goa shares more...*

### Gunjan Sabikhi

#### Year 2024

In 2024, our property saw positive growth in both ARR and occupancy compared to the previous year, reflecting steady progress.

#### Renovation / Expansion

Mayfair has always been synonymous with opulent maximalist luxury, deeply connected to nature. We are excited to unveil Mayfair Manor in Alibag near Mumbai this season, further expanding our portfolio of luxury destinations. Additionally, we are upgrading the Food & Beverage offerings at our resort, enhancing the guest dining experience with new and innovative culinary options.

#### Domestic or Inbound Market

We are focusing on both the inbound and domestic markets. A key advantage for our Morjim Beach resort in Goa is its proximity to the new MOPA Airport, which has now commenced several international flight operations. This enhanced connectivity is expected to increase charter movement from European countries to Goa. Furthermore, the airport's improved connections with the Middle East look promising for Goa's tourism sector.

#### Sustainability Initiatives

At Mayfair, sustainability is a core focus, along with personalization, wellness, and technological integration. In keeping with our motto, "Stay with Mayfair, Stay with Nature," we invest in sustainable amenities and waste reduction programs to harmonize luxury with eco-conscious practices. Our boutique resort is nestled in lush greenery, offering guests a serene escape while prioritizing the environment.

We have also implemented several eco-friendly initiatives, including operating our own bottling plant to significantly reduce non-biodegradable plastic usage. All guest amenities are crafted from biodegradable materials, and our in-house sewage treatment plant (STP) recycles filtered water for gardening, further enhancing our resource conservation efforts. ■



**Paul Dhanraj,**  
Resort Manager,  
Mayfair On Sea, Morjim, Goa

*A key advantage for our Morjim Beach resort in Goa is its proximity to the new MOPA Airport, which has now commenced several international flight operations. This enhanced connectivity is expected to increase charter movement from European countries to Goa.*

# Taj Corbett Resort & Spa

## Growth, Innovation, and Community-Centric Sustainability

*In 2024, Taj Corbett Resort & Spa saw impressive ADR and occupancy growth, capitalizing on brand strength to outperform the broader market despite declining destination-wide occupancy. **Ajay Sharma**, General Manager, Taj Corbett Resort & Spa shares more...*



**Ajay Sharma**,  
General Manager,  
Taj Corbett Resort & Spa

### Pallavi Sharma

#### Year 2024

Taj Corbett has shown solid progress in 2024, with a notable rise in Average Daily Rate (ADR) and occupancy. While overall occupancy for Corbett as a destination has declined due to increased international travel, Taj Corbett has achieved steady growth. The enduring strength of the Taj brand continues to drive demand, providing a significant edge in attracting guests even amidst wider market challenges. Taj Corbett remains a high-performing property, leveraging its brand recognition to maintain strong rates and favourable occupancy levels.

#### Renovation / Expansion

We are continuously enhancing the property to elevate the guest experience. Recently, we refurbished several room categories, adding new suites, including Presidential Rooms and Grand Luxury Suites, last year. In terms of Food and Beverage offerings, we introduced 'Makrut', a Pan-Asian Alfresco Restaurant. Additionally, our commitment to landscaping and horticulture has expanded the green cover, contributing to the preservation of local wildlife and flora.

#### Sustainability Initiatives

Guided by IHCL's "Paathya" sustainability program, Taj Corbett is deeply committed to environmental stewardship and social responsibility. We are preserving the ancient folk art of Kumaon, "Chaliya Art," and integrating local traditions like Kumaoni attire in celebrations and guest services. With most of our team recruited locally, we provide sustainable livelihoods, curbing migration.

Our sustainability efforts include monthly volunteering activities like cleaning drives around River Kosi, women's hygiene and sanitation sessions, and self-defence classes for local girls. We've also introduced the "Kosi Evening Arti," rekindling awareness of the river's vital role in the region. Furthermore, the resort has achieved EarthCheck certification, a testament to our ongoing commitment to renewable energy, water conservation, and waste reduction. Sustainability and community engagement are at the heart of Taj Corbett's operations. ■

*We are continuously enhancing the property to elevate the guest experience. Recently, we refurbished several room categories, adding new suites, including Presidential Rooms and Grand Luxury Suites, last year. We have also introduced 'Makrut', a Pan-Asian Alfresco Restaurant.*

# The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa

## Sustainable Luxury and modern upgrades amidst a challenging year

*This year, The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa has seen fluctuating occupancy, yet last-minute bookings and marginal ADR increases have provided some stability, amid a slow inbound market. Sanzeev Bhatia, President & GM, The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa shares more...*

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

### Year 2024

At The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, 2024 has been marked by uncertainty, with fluctuating occupancy levels. Despite hosting a few events in Delhi, most of our business has been last-minute due to a slowdown in inbound travel and the upcoming elections. As a result, occupancy levels have not met expectations. However, we have achieved a marginal increase in Average Room Rates (ARR) compared to last year, reflecting slight progress.

### Renovation / Expansion

We've made significant upgrades to the hotel, replacing all guest lifts with state-of-the-art Mitsubishi models and updating service lifts with the latest OTIS technology. This summer, we completed a major renovation of our guest rooms, enhancing comfort and modernity. Additionally, our culinary offerings have expanded with the introduction of new dishes in our restaurants and an updated pastry shop menu, featuring an exciting range of cookies, pastries, cakes, and more.

### Sustainability Initiatives

Sustainability is at the core of The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa's operations. Our ecological philosophy, "EcoMet," is inspired by both ancient Vedic principles and modern science, and we are ISO 14001:2004 certified for environmental management. Our efforts focus on the three 'R's: reduce, reuse, and recycle. This includes eco-friendly designs with heat-reflective materials, energy-saving lighting, and smart air-conditioning systems. We use Ayurvedic spa-based amenities in eco-friendly packaging and incorporate sustainable practices across all departments—from using locally sourced ingredients in the kitchen to implementing advanced water recycling and waste management systems.

We are committed to conserving water, reducing energy consumption, and managing waste responsibly. By planting trees in the hotel's surroundings and integrating horticulture within the property, we continue to promote an eco-conscious environment. ■



**Sanzeev Bhatia,**  
President & GM,  
The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa

*This summer, we completed a major renovation of our guest rooms, enhancing comfort and modernity. Additionally, our culinary offerings have expanded with the introduction of new dishes in our restaurants and an updated pastry shop menu, featuring an exciting range of cookies, pastries, cakes, and more.*

# Taj City Centre New Town Kolkata



Indranil Ray,  
Cluster General Manager Operations & GM – Taj City  
Centre New Town, Kolkata

## Innovations, Sustainability and Community Focus

*Taj City Centre New Town Kolkata is experiencing a thriving 2024 with innovative expansions, sustainability initiatives, and community engagement, offering a unique blend of luxury and responsibility. Indranil Ray – Cluster General Manager Operations & GM – Taj City Centre New Town, Kolkata shares more...*

### Anjali Pokhriyal

#### Year 2024

Taj City Centre New Town Kolkata continues to push boundaries, showcasing a blend of luxury, sustainability, and social responsibility. The property has witnessed steady growth in 2024, with several exciting developments and an increased focus on catering to both domestic and international travellers.

#### Renovation / Expansion

In 2024, the hotel introduced the Wykiki Brew Pub, an exceptional addition to its food and beverage offerings. This one-of-a-kind brewpub combines unique brews crafted by a master blender with a vibrant atmosphere, offering guests a truly immersive culinary experience. The Wykiki Brew Pub's eclectic menu and flavourful brews enhance the hotel's overall dining experience, setting it apart as a must-visit destination for connoisseurs.

Looking ahead, the hotel is preparing to expand its facilities further with the introduction of a salon and an outdoor event space, designed to cater to the growing demand for both leisure and corporate gatherings.

#### Sustainability Initiatives

Committed to reducing its environmental footprint, Taj City Centre New Town Kolkata has partnered with EarthCheck, a leading provider of sustainability benchmarking and certification. The hotel has implemented several eco-friendly initiatives, including energy and water efficiency programs, EV charging stations, and a Paathya bottling plant that minimizes the use of single-use plastics. Biodegradable packaging is also being used across the hotel's food and beverage and housekeeping operations.

#### Community Engagement

In addition to sustainability, the hotel is deeply engaged in giving back to the community. It employs differently-abled associates and organizes regular cleanliness drives along the Ganga River. The hotel also runs food and blanket donation drives at orphanages and old age homes, supports animal shelters, and promotes local artisans by offering them a platform to showcase their craftsmanship. ■

*Taj City Centre New Town Kolkata strikes a balance between serving domestic guests and attracting inbound travellers, ensuring a diverse and memorable experience for all. The property has witnessed steady growth in 2024, with several exciting developments and an increased focus on catering to both domestic and international travellers.*



# Statue of Unity Tent City 1

## We anticipate a substantial boost in business with upcoming festive season

*Statue of Unity Tent City-1 offers an immersive experience, combining luxury accommodation with stunning views of the world's tallest statue, fostering tourism and cultural appreciation. Chetan Verma, Operation Head, Statue of Unity Tent City -1 shares more...*

**Pallavi Sharma**

### Year 2024

At Statue of Unity Tent City 1, managed by Evoke Experiences, the year 2024 has shown a moderate trajectory thus far. The first quarter experienced slower-than-expected performance; however, the second quarter demonstrated significant improvement. As a leisure destination, our weekends consistently attract higher occupancy rates. We anticipate a substantial boost in business with the upcoming Ekta Diwas celebration on October 31, which historically invigorates both our property and the surrounding area. Looking ahead, we have strong bookings for the upcoming months.

### Renovations / Expansion

Continuous improvement and upgrades to our property remain a top priority. This year, we introduced our Live Kitchen restaurant, Reva, which offers an exquisite buffet for breakfast, lunch, high tea, and dinner. The restaurant features an enchanting ambiance, enhanced by instrumental music during lunch and a live guitarist during dinner. Our menu highlights regional Indian dishes, Asian flavors, and local traditional cuisine, all of which contribute to a unique dining experience.

### Sustainability Initiatives

We prioritize environmental stewardship and social responsibility by integrating sustainable practices throughout our operations. Notable initiatives include the elimination of single-use plastics, the provision of glass bottles in guest rooms and dining areas, and encouraging our chefs to minimize waste through best practices. Additionally, we organised a tree plantation drive involving both guests and employees to plant saplings within the resort. Each department adheres to the 3R's policy and sustainable practices. We are proud to have been recognized as the Best Eco-Friendly Resort at Statue of Unity – Ekta Nagar (Kevadia) and to be the first property in the area to offer an EV charging station. ■



**Chetan Verma,**  
Operation Head,  
Statue of Unity Tent City -1

*Our primary focus remains on the domestic market, a strategy that proved effective during the challenges of the pandemic. Corporate events, weddings, and MICE significantly contribute to our occupancy rates. However, we recognize the potential of future individual travelers, both domestic and international, and intend to actively engage and accommodate both segments.*

# Royal Homotel Suites

## A promising 2024 with Sustainability and Innovation at the forefront

*Royal Homotel Suites, a Sarovar Hotel that is ranked #1 in the Trip Advisor ratings, is intricately designed and provides top of the line accommodation facilities. Vishal Baid, General Manager, Royal Homotel Suites, Mumbai shares more...*

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

### Year 2024

The year 2024 has been exceptionally promising for us in terms of both occupancy percentages and Average Daily Rates (ADR). We achieved the highest ADR to date in FY24, reflecting a strong and robust business performance. The final quarter of the calendar year is expected to close with impressive numbers, and we anticipate this positive momentum will continue in the coming years, with demand surpassing supply.

### Renovation / Expansion

In line with our renovation and expansion efforts, we have installed an Electric Vehicle (EV) charging station to support the growing number of electric vehicles. Energy conservation remains a priority, and all rooms and public areas have been upgraded with LED lighting to minimise energy consumption. As part of our commitment to sustainability, we have eliminated single-use plastics, replacing all food packaging materials with eco-friendly options made from paper and paper pulp. Motion sensors have been installed in public areas to further conserve energy, and water-saving aerators have been fitted to taps in public spaces to help reduce water usage.

### Sustainability Initiatives

Our sustainability initiatives have also garnered recognition. Royal Homotel Suites was awarded a certificate from Muenzer Bharat for responsibly disposing of used cooking oil in accordance with RUCO guidelines, thereby contributing to a reduction in CO2 emissions and supporting a cleaner India. We also received a Certificate of Recycling from Krishna Metal Refinery for the proper disposal of e-waste, adhering to all MOEF and MPCB regulations. In our effort to reduce plastic use, the hotel now offers natural, eco-friendly drinking straws made from rice, which are chemical-free and edible. Additionally, we have installed an

OrganicWaste Composting (OWC) machine, which converts wet waste into organic compost used for our gardening purposes. All guest rooms are provided with RO-filtered water, enabling us to move toward a completely plastic-free environment. ■



**Vishal Baid,**  
General Manager,  
Royal Homotel Suites

*Majority of our business is from domestic market. We position our hotel as a MICE hotel because of the large banqueting facilities that the hotel possesses. We cater to social gatherings, thus making it an ideal place for guests to choose us.*

# Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa Nashik

## Having a positive outlook on the domestic market across different segments

Given Nashik's proximity to major cities, Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa Nashik stands out as a remarkable offbeat destination for weekend getaways, ideal for corporate retreats, and weddings, just 3 hours from Mumbai and 4 hours from Pune. **Jatish Ghai**, General Manager, Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa Nashik shares more...

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

### Year 2024

2024 has been phenomenal for us both in terms of occupancy and ADR, our major contributors are corporates and weddings for 2024 along with surge on leisure travelers to visit wine capital of India and some of the significant pilgrims.

### Renovation / Expansion

In response to the increasing demand from leisure guests, we are excited to introduce a new specialty restaurant, marking our fourth food and beverage offering. This will complement our recreation area designed for both children and adults, enhancing our appeal as a family-friendly destination. Guests can also enjoy our award-winning spa and spacious, well-appointed rooms, all set against the breathtaking backdrop of the Pandavleni hills, where you can awaken to stunning views shrouded in mist.

### Sustainability Initiatives

Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa Nashik is dedicated to achieving Net Zero by 2050 through a comprehensive approach to sustainability that benefits the environment, society, and economy. The hotel has integrated 50% renewable energy into its operations, optimized building design for natural light, and implemented innovative technologies like occupancy sensors to minimize energy waste. Notably, all meetings at Radisson properties are now carbon neutral, and the hotel fleet has transitioned to electric vehicles, promoting eco-friendly transportation. Through initiatives such as water recycling, waste composting, and community education programs, the hotel exemplifies its commitment to sustainability, earning recognition as the Global Winner for MOVE to Net Zero by Radisson Hotel Group in 2024.

Nashik boasts a diverse array of vineyards, ranging from local to international varieties, all set against the stunning backdrop of the Sahyadri Hills. It's close to cultural landmarks like the Trimbakeshwar Temple and the Kala Ram Temple, and also provides easy access to Shirdiy. This makes it an ideal locale for any traveller. ■



**Jatish Ghai**,  
General Manager,  
Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa Nashik

*We have a positive outlook on the domestic market across different segments. We see substantial growth potential, particularly with enhanced connectivity to key markets like Mumbai through the Samruddhi Highway. Additionally, Nashik boasts one of the 12 Jyotirlinga shrines and other important pilgrims, as well as beautiful vineyards.*

# Lyfe Hotels Bhubaneswar

## Leading the way with Innovation and Future-Ready Solutions

*Lyfe Hotels Bhubaneswar has a Glocal (Global + Local) outlook with its unique architecture, luxurious rooms and suites along with F&B outlets that have raised the bar among other hotels in the area. Vaishakh Surendran, General Manager, Lyfe Hotels Bhubaneswar shares more...*

Priyanka Saxena Ray

### Year 2024

Lyfe Hotels Bhubaneswar was in its infancy for most part of 2024, but it was an exciting addition to the Bhubaneswar market. Lyfe Hotels has carved a niche position of its own amongst other brands that have a traditional cookie cutter approach. Lyfe Hotels Bhubaneswar has a Glocal (Global + Local) outlook with its unique architecture, luxurious rooms and suites along with F&B outlets that have raised the bar among other hotels in the area. One of our F&B outlets, Sweet Basil, which is the authentic Thai restaurant at the property has also recently been recognized as the Best Trend Setting Restaurant in Bhubaneswar.

### Renovation / Expansion

Lyfe Hotels is future proof and strives to be ahead of the competition. We are progressing further with a new outlet within the property, that will redefine Mediterranean & Lebanese cuisine and we are hoping to open the doors for our guests as soon as early 2025. We are optimistic that this new offering will redefine the flavour palette of the connoisseurs of the city and will provide a fresh and authentic experience to the residents of the city as well as the tourists visiting Bhubaneswar from across the globe.

### Sustainability Initiatives

Lyfe Hotels Bhubaneswar is a sustainable hotel built with love and adhering to the highest standards, with the property certified by LEED. We have implemented a variety of environmentally friendly measures, including avoiding single-use plastic like glass water bottles, using our own in-house filtration plant, and even having an in-house ice cream maker capable of crafting ice cream from any ingredient. Additionally, we use digital media to avoid printed menus and compendiums. Corporate social responsibility is an important part of our ethos, and we believe in giving back to the underprivileged members of our society. ■



Vaishakh Surendran,  
General Manager,  
Lyfe Hotels Bhubaneswar

*Lyfe Hotels is a city hotel primarily serving corporates. We also have good capacity & venues to handle MICE. However, with Bhubaneswar being a temple city & a transit point for Puri, we get our fair share of leisure guests. We are also a perfect haven for staycations with our infinity pool, spa and multi-cuisine culinary and gastronomic experiences all under one roof.*

# Aralea Beach Resort by Stone Wood

## Focused on the domestic market, especially in the MICE and wedding segments

*Aralea Beach Resort by Stone Wood is primarily focused on the domestic market, especially in the MICE and wedding segments. **Shabbar Imam**, General Manager, Aralea Beach Resort by Stone Wood shares more...*

**Pallavi Sharma**

### Year 2024

Our property, a new boutique resort located in Morjim with 69 rooms adjacent to the beach, has had a promising start since its inception in 2023. As part of a recognized hotel chain, we benefit from an established reputation which has positively impacted our occupancy rates and ADRs. Currently, our ADR stands at ₹7,500, a figure reflective of our introductory offers. Positioned within the Stonewood Premium Category, we maintain high service standards tailored to meet guest expectations. Moving forward, we anticipate further improvements in our performance metrics.

### Renovation / Expansion

In our ongoing efforts to enhance guest experiences, we recently expanded our facilities to include a party lawn and a children's play area. Additionally, we are in the process of adding a spa, gift shop, and cake shop. The forthcoming season will also see the introduction of a gym and an expanded spa facility, further enriching our array of amenities.

### Sustainability Initiatives

Stonewood Hotels is committed to environmental stewardship and sustainable practices. We have implemented a range of measures aimed at reducing our carbon footprint. These include sophisticated waste management systems that utilise organic materials for garbage decomposition and a Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) for recycling sewage waste. These initiatives reflect our dedication to preserving the environment while contributing positively to society.

### Domestic or Inbound

We are primarily focused on the domestic market, especially in the MICE and wedding segments. Our presence in these areas has grown significantly, with our wedding bookings for this season being almost instantly sold out. Moving forward, we aim to expand further in the MICE sector and continue building on this success. ■



**Shabbar Imam**,  
General Manager,  
Aralea Beach Resort by Stone Wood

*We pride ourselves on offering a strong value-for-money proposition. Our goal is to make events possible at highly affordable rates while maintaining a focus on "affordable luxury." This approach allows us to offer premium experiences without the premium price tag, ensuring that our clients enjoy high-quality services within a reasonable budget.*

# Hyatt Centric Rajpur Road Dehradun



**Ajit Singh Gandhi,**  
General Manager,  
Hyatt Centric Rajpur Road Dehradun

## The perfect venue for networking events, MICE, team off-sites and more

*Located just 45-60 minutes' drive from Mussoorie, Haridwar and Rishikesh, Hyatt Centric Rajpur Road Dehradun enjoys a great location and is closely working with Inbound tour operators to promote the property as a default choice for the inbound leisure and incentives. **Ajit Singh Gandhi**, General Manager, Hyatt Centric Rajpur Road Dehradun shares more...*

**Gunjan Sabikhi**

### Year 2024

2024 has been a great year so far with both in terms of high occupancy and higher ARR. During the January-March quarter, the occupancy levels were consistent vis-à-vis our forecasted number. End of March & April recorded a slowdown due to the general elections in the country. The hotel saw an increased demand again in May and June. The late arrival of monsoon also extended the high occupancies and we fairly had a successful Q3 as well.

### Renovation / Expansion

The hotel today stands tall as the most preferred lifestyle hotel in the city with its great location. We have added 15,000 square feet of flexible event space, marking it as the perfect venue for networking events, business meetings, corporate dinners, team off-sites and more. The intimate pre-function spaces, a large pillarless ballroom with grand ceilings and an expansive

outdoor lawn—perfect for social gatherings. Very soon we are going to launch “Tapas” our Rooftop Pool Bar and Lounge.

### Sustainability Initiatives

We believe that luxury in hospitality has to be environmentally sustainable. The drinking water in glass bottles is a standard & is bottled in-house in our own bottling plant, making it one of few hotels to do so. NO bin initiative in our cafeteria takes closer to objective of a zero-food wastage in the hotel while providing top quality of food and service to our guest & employees. At Hyatt Centric Dehradun, we are continuously striving to elevate our sustainability initiatives. Along with our current efforts, we are excited to announce future implementations to further enhance our eco-friendly practices.

In the near future, we will work on “Go Green with Meetings and Events” initiatives where we will provide notepads crafted from recycled materials, our sustainable pens, made from repurposed waste materials, will reflect our commitment to reducing environmental impact and ensuring that even our smallest touches contribute to a greener future. ■

*Our hotel garners applause for its central location, making it a convenient choice for those visiting malls, handling city work, or engaging in sightseeing, pilgrimage tours etc. The hotel caters to domestic tourist at large however in recent past we have seen inbound guest using the hotel in their itinerary as well.*

# The Den, Bengaluru

## Continuously enhancing the quality and comfort of its offerings

*The Den, Bengaluru is the first hotel expansion by the renowned Israeli hospitality chain, Dan Hotels. Crafted for modern travellers, this premium staycation destination opened its doors in India in 2017. Vinesh Gupta, General Manager, The Den Bengaluru shares more...*

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

### Year 2024

In terms of business, 2024 has been an outstanding year. Occupancy rates have increased by approximately 12% year-on-year, while the Average Room Rate (ARR) has seen a growth of around 10%. Overall, business performance has been strong, and we have a robust pipeline ahead. We anticipate that 2025 will build upon the successes of 2024, with further improvements in both business volume and quality. Our commitment remains focused on continuously enhancing the quality and comfort of our offerings.

### Renovation / Expansion

We're excited to share our plans for enhancing our property with new features and facilities, aimed at delivering an elevated experience for our guests. Though 2024 has focused on more strategic planning for the next five to six years. At the same time, we have been working on introducing a very interesting cuisine which is still under the wraps for Layla.

### Sustainability Initiatives

In terms of sustainability, our hotel was built as a LEED Gold Certified facility and also operates as a zero-discharge unit. This means we are one of the few organizations that do not have a connection with a municipal or external sewer system. We are committed to consume and process all our waste internally, ensuring that no unprocessed materials are released into the environment.

Our eco-friendly practices extend to the details, such as the colour and the type of ink used in printing. The ink we used in printing is biodegradable. We ensure that our carbon footprint is reduced as much as possible, while prioritising our responsibility to give back to the community. We have taken initiative to support certain self-help groups.

We have implemented several initiatives to support local self-help groups. For instance, we purchase coconuts directly from a self-help group that harvests them, and we also source certain vegetables from nearby farmers. This approach not only helps us support the community but also aligns with our commitment to the farm-to-fork philosophy. ■



**Vinesh Gupta,**  
General Manager,  
The Den Bengaluru

*The Den is currently going through a very exciting phase of its growth journey and we are eagerly waiting for the years to come. Our aim is to redefine the quality of hospitality and elevate the service levels. We do understand it's all about experiences and how we create memories for the guests. We are diligently working on these principles and we will introduce our initiatives in due course.*

# OTOAI hosts Members' Meet in Mumbai; participates at ITB India

*The Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) orchestrated a spectacular Members Meet Evening on September 12, 2024, at the Lyla Bombay. This event was held in collaboration with Tourism Western Australia and ASEGO Travel Insurance, and it drew an impressive gathering of over 80+ members. OTOAI Members were also able to participate at ITB India in Mumbai, which was happening around the same time. At ITB India, the Association signed an MoU with Iranian Tour Operators Association.*

**BOTT Desk**



The OTOAI Members' Meet garnered tremendous support from Tourism Western Australia and ASEGO, highlighting the immense potential to attract tourists. Riaz Munshi, President of OTOAI, emphasised the association's unwavering commitment to enhancing members' knowledge and expertise. He expressed satisfaction with the exposure provided to emerging outbound destinations from India, noting the success of the event as a testament to the fruitful collaboration with Tourism Western Australia and ASEGO Travel Insurance.

The Members Meet Evening not only fostered knowledge exchange but also

showcased the collective enthusiasm of OTOAI, Tourism Western Australia, and ASEGO in shaping the future of outbound tourism from India. As the association continues to strive for excellence, such collaborative efforts pave the way for industry growth and innovation.

Meanwhile, the association participated in ITB India 2024, held from September 11 to September 13, 2024, at the Jio World Convention Centre in BKC, Mumbai. Riaz Munshi, along with Vice President Shравan Bhalla, Joint Secretary Monia Kapoor and EC Member Arshdeep Anand actively represented OTOAI at the event. ITB India 2024

served as an excellent opportunity for OTOAI members to engage with key stakeholders, fostering discussions around global tourism and potential collaborations.

A highlight of OTOAI's participation at ITB India 2024 was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Iranian Tour Operators Association (ITOA). The MoU was signed by Mostafa Shafie Shakib, Chairman of ITOA and Riaz Munshi, President of OTOAI, at the OTOAI Booth. The strategic collaboration marked a significant milestone in strengthening tourism ties between India and Iran. ■



# Sarova Hotels

## Celebrating 50 Years of Excellence

*As Sarova Hotels marks its Golden Jubilee this year, the brand reflects on a remarkable journey of indigenous hospitality and outstanding service. In an exclusive interview with BOTT, Mita Vohra, Board Director, Sarova Hotels & Resorts, shares her insights on the company's growth, the importance of the Indian market, and exciting future plans.*

**Shreya Shimpi**

### Importance of the Indian Market

“For us, India has always been a key market. We were the first hotel group from Kenya to tap into this region, opening doors between Kenya and India. This market has been close to our hearts for decades. Over the last three years, we’ve elevated our approach significantly, increasing our presence through marketing initiatives. This includes attending more trade shows, increasing our visits to India, and conducting frequent roadshows. The response has been overwhelming and incredibly rewarding,” said Vohra.

### Strategies to Expand in the Indian Market

“We’ve been highly active in this market. In 2023, we participated in OTM and SATTE, and the OTOAI Convention, which proved to be crucial for us. The attendees gave fantastic social media coverage, which was great for Kenya. We’ve also organized roadshows in 2022 and 2023, and based on the data we’ve gathered, we know which cities are most productive and which need more focus. This year, to celebrate our 50th anniversary, we’re hosting a special event in Mumbai, the city where our India journey began.”

### Property Renovations

“During the COVID period, we renovated the Panafric Hotel, updating 100 rooms. We’re now working on building a stunning rooftop hub, which will offer a variety of dining experiences along with live DJ and musical performances, transforming the property. Additionally, we’re in the process of upgrading our main restaurant.”

### Destination Weddings

“We’ve hosted numerous destination weddings, particularly at our Whitesands Beach Resort, with some smaller, more intimate ones at our Mara property, mainly with European clients. Kenya offers breathtaking venues with beautiful landscapes, and we have a highly skilled banqueting team. Clients can bring their own wedding planners, and we’re also investing in technology to further assist in making these events seamless.”

This milestone year not only marks a celebration of Sarova Hotels’ legacy but also highlights their dedication to continuous growth and innovation in the hospitality industry. ■



# Resorts World One commences Sailings from Dubai unveiling a new Cruise Adventure

*Resorts World Cruises officially launches the homeport deployment of Resorts World One in Dubai from November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, with the support of Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET), together with Oman Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Qatar Tourism, Department of Culture and Tourism, Abu Dhabi and the port authorities.*

**Shreya Shimpi**



**R**esorts World Cruises' hosted their first press conference with the support of the Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET), on September 4th, 2024 at the magnificent Raffles Hotel in Dubai. The cruise line announced the debut of Resorts World One in the Gulf in the Middle East. From November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, Resorts World One will homeport in Dubai via DP World's Mina Port Rashid, offering three weekly departures. These include the 2-Night Sir Bani Yas Weekend Cruise (Friday departures); the 3-Night Oman (Khasab-Muscat) Cruise (Sunday departures); and the 2-Night Doha Cruise (Wednesday departures). For a longer cruise vacation, passengers can combine either of the itineraries to make a 4, 5 or 7 Night Cruise.

As they commence their Gulf

sailings, 'The Cruise Line that Knows Asia Best' is all set to apply its decades of affiliated experience and in-depth expertise to tailor its offerings to the needs of the Gulf markets. Guests can enjoy certified Halal cuisines throughout the ship sourced from UAE Halal suppliers. Certified vegetarian and Jain cuisines are available. Shisha will also be available on board. No pork preparation will be served.

Onboard announcements will be made in English and Arabic. Also, same-gender services will be available for select facilities and venues. Resorts World One will be a party-themed Boutique ship designed for endless festivities with entertainment adapted to local culture and likings. There are onboard electrifying parties such as 'Dazzling Departure Party', 'Enchanting Arabian Nights Party', 'Sand & Oasis



Party', 'Bollywood Party' etc The Cruise line promises to offer unparalleled Asian hospitality. The commencement of Resorts World One on November 1 also coincides with Diwali. Guests can enjoy the 'Gujarat Food Festival' and festivities during the week-long Diwali celebrations. With the upcoming deployment, Resorts World Cruises is also excited to announce its new partnership with DP World.

Michael Goh, President, Resorts World Cruises spoke to BOTT in an exclusive chat. He said, "We are excited to host this press conference for the announcement of Resorts World One home-ported in Dubai from November 1. We are known for serving very good Indian food which includes vegetarian and Jain food. We shall have a series of parties and activities onboard for all age groups. Shisha will be available onboard. Besides food and entertainment, the destination is very important. We have

two-night and three-night itineraries but our guests can also combine all three itineraries so there is more flexibility to plan their holiday".

Speaking to BOTT in an exclusive chat, Naresh Rawal, Senior Vice President, Sales & Marketing-Resorts World Cruises said, "The ship will be here from November 1, 2024 until April 11, 2025. We adapt ourselves to the local values and cultures and that's the reason considering that we are in the Gulf region, the ship will be offering only hundred per cent Halal meats. Onboard entertainment has been adapted as well. There will be an availability of local favourites such as Turkish coffee, Lebanese cuisines and Shisha.

We are getting a fairly good mix of FITs as the November-December period is high on the FIT traffic. MICE has been reacting very well. We are also having a wedding charter being closed by one of

our corporates for his son's wedding in November. I think it's the convenience of reaching Dubai, the convenience of getting a visa and the proximity to home that makes all of this possible."

Highlighting the marketing strategies for the debut voyage he said, "Two different markets behave in two different ways. India is going to be very heavy with the Fly Cruise packages, not just the travel partners who do the series. It is the MICE partners as well. We work along with the Travel Trade and grow along with it. Our partners in India have been supporting us very well. Surprisingly, our partners in the GCC have reacted so well and considered these itineraries not only from a holiday perspective but as a seacation and as weekend cruises. They have been marketing and promoting it well. I am pretty confident that, with this deployment, India, South Asia in totality and the GCC will have a good cruising season this year." ■

# Sharjah invites Indian travellers to explore the cultural heart of UAE

*Sharjah, often hailed as the cultural capital of the UAE, has emerged as a dynamic destination for travellers seeking a blend of tradition, nature, and modernity. In an exclusive interview with BOTT Magazine, Khalid Jasim Al Midfa, Chairman of the Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA), shares insights into the city's rich cultural heritage, key attractions, and visionary projects that position Sharjah as a must-visit destination for global travellers.*

**Anjali Pokhriyal**

## Sharjah and India: A Historic Bond

Sharjah's unique appeal lies in its diversity and proximity to a range of experiences. The bond between India and Sharjah spans over 500 years, rooted primarily in trade. This exchange has not only driven commerce but has fostered deep cultural ties, with Indian influences seamlessly integrated into everyday life in Sharjah. Even many traditional Emirati dishes reflect Indian culinary influences, albeit with milder spices to suit local tastes.

The connection between Sharjah and India extends to tourism as well. Since 2014, we have been actively promoting Sharjah in the Indian market, and the response has been overwhelmingly positive. Indian tourists account for around 11% of our total hotel guests, making India one of our top four source markets.

## Transformative Tourism Projects in Sharjah

Guided by the vision of His Highness Dr. Sheikh Sultan Al Qasimi, Sharjah has embarked on several groundbreaking tourism projects. One standout initiative is Sharjah Safari, the largest safari outside of Africa, covering an impressive 9 square kilometres. This state-of-the-art experience is home to endangered species such as black and white rhinos, Arabian leopards, and more. What sets this project apart is our commitment to creating natural habitats for the animals, offering visitors an immersive and conservation-focused experience, rather than a traditional zoo setting.

In addition to wildlife conservation, we have made significant investments in

infrastructure, particularly in connecting Sharjah city to the east coast through new highways and tunnels. What was once a two-hour drive to destinations like Kalba and Khor Fakkan now takes only 50 minutes. This development has made these eastern cities more accessible, unlocking new eco-tourism opportunities.

One of our core values is preserving Sharjah's identity and heritage. While we're developing world-class attractions, we remain dedicated to showcasing our cultural roots. Our over 50 museums, which include some of the region's most significant archaeological sites, are a testament to our rich history. Unlike many commercial tourist destinations, we keep entry fees low because, for us, the return on investment lies in the knowledge shared and the unforgettable experiences created.

## Sharjah: A Hub for Luxury Experiences

Sharjah offers a range of luxury accommodations that cater to the discerning traveller. Al Bait Hotel, for instance, is a heritage property located in the heart of old Sharjah. With just 70 rooms, it provides an intimate experience, blending modern amenities with an authentic glimpse into Emirati heritage.

In the desert, Al Faya Retreat stands as a secluded luxury resort with only five rooms and a sprawling Himalayan salt spa, offering exclusivity and privacy. For those seeking an eco-friendly experience, the Kingfisher Retreat on the east coast offers luxurious tented accommodations set amid serene mangroves, providing guests with a unique connection to nature.



**Khalid Jasim Al Midfa,**  
Chairman of the Sharjah Commerce and  
Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA)

## Commitment to Sustainable Tourism

Sustainability is at the core of Sharjah's tourism initiatives. Whether it's the Sharjah Safari or eco-conscious resorts, we strive to create experiences that are enriching for visitors and environmentally sustainable. Our focus on sustainability also extends to supporting local communities, providing employment and business opportunities, particularly in Sharjah's central regions.

India remains a growing market for us, with increasing demand for luxury tourism products. Sharjah offers Indian travellers something different—cultural immersion, eco-tourism, and heritage-rich experiences, rather than the typical shopping and commercial tourist spots. With over 1,100 flights per week between the UAE and India, and just a two-hour flight from Mumbai, Sharjah is a convenient and attractive option for Indian travellers seeking an authentic connection with the UAE's history and culture. ■

# Yas Island hosts a Special evening in Mumbai honouring its top agents

**M**iral Destinations celebrated Yas Island's remarkable success with a special evening in Mumbai recently. The event, held on September 13, 2024 was a vibrant gathering filled with fun, excitement, laughter, and good vibes. The occasion was a heartfelt tribute to the invaluable support and relationships that have contributed to this achievement, inviting guests to join in the festivities and share in the joy of Yas Island's continuing success.



# Melange 2024 concludes its maiden event on a high note in Mumbai

*The inaugural edition of Melange 2024, a premier B2B travel trade exhibition organized by MTF Events, took place at the Jio World Convention Centre, Mumbai, on September 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The much-anticipated event exceeded expectations, receiving remarkable participation from the travel trade sector and establishing itself as a major success in the industry.*

Shreya Shimpi



Melange 2024 launched on an energetic note, drawing an overwhelming response from the travel fraternity. The event provided an exceptional platform for networking, engaging discussions on the latest travel trends, and fostering valuable business collaborations. With 128 exhibitors and a high turnout of genuine buyers, the exhibition proved to be a grand success. A diverse mix of industry professionals, including hotels, DMCs, visa service providers, technology platforms, airlines, representation companies, tour operators, travel agents, consultants, and cruise companies, came together under one roof. The first day alone saw over a thousand registrations, with entertainment programs, lucky draws, spot prizes, and photo booths keeping attendees engaged.

Pradeep Saboo, Co-Founder of MTF Events and Director of Guideline Travels Holidays India, shared his enthusiasm, "Melange aims to create a B2B platform

*Melange 2024 was launched on an energetic note, drawing an overwhelming response from the travel fraternity. The event provided an exceptional platform for networking, engaging discussions on the latest travel trends, and fostering valuable business collaborations. With 128 exhibitors and a high turnout of genuine buyers, the exhibition proved to be a grand success.*

where our B2C buyers across India can connect with a wide range of B2B suppliers from around the world, including Morocco, New Zealand, South America, and Greece. We are thrilled with the turnout, and it's been an incredible first day. At one point, we had to close entries as we were beyond capacity, which speaks to the event's success. We've had around 1200 unique buyers



and 128 exhibitors, making day one truly phenomenal.”

Ottla International, Urvi Luxury Destination, Tripjack, and One Above were the Platinum Sponsors for the event. Speaking about their experience, Aashish Bhatt, Senior Manager-Products at Ottla International, commented, “This is Melange’s first year, and we have been associated with MTF for the past two years. The concept behind this event is excellent, bringing together buyers and suppliers on one platform with a well-curated and organized approach. The quality turnout has been impressive, especially as we plan for the upcoming winter and summer seasons.”

Vishal Somaiya, Director & Group CEO of One Above, expressed similar sentiments, “Our first day at Melange has been exactly what we expected—wonderful. The footfall is focused and genuine, unlike other events, and the coordination has been top-notch. Best wishes to the team for future editions.”

Hardik Mehta of Urvi Luxury Destination added, “This is our second time participating in such an event since 2019, and the concept is fresh. The footfall has been encouraging, and we’ve received valuable leads for our business.”

Vishal Lagad, Vice President-Sales and Strategy at Tripjack, remarked, “The overall response and the quality of agents we’ve interacted with have been exceptional. With limited invitees, the quality of networking has been outstanding and has significantly benefited our business.”

Other notable exhibitors included Indigo, VFS Global, Discover the World, UTEN, Norwegian Cruise Line, Guideline Travels, Fly Creative, Asego, Aviareps, and Global Destinations. Melange 2025 is already scheduled for September 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025, and will take place at the soon-to-be-unveiled state-of-the-art exhibition space at NESCO, promising an even grander and more high-tech experience for exhibitors and visitors alike. ■



# Vietnam Airlines hosts a memorable media trip showcasing the luxurious side of Vietnam

*Vietnam Airlines recently organized an extraordinary Fam trip for media professionals, offering an exclusive opportunity to experience the airline's premium business class service. The journey, from Delhi to Hanoi, was a showcase of Vietnam Airlines' dedication to providing world-class comfort and an unforgettable in-flight experience. From seamless priority baggage check-in to exclusive lounge access and expedited immigration, every detail was crafted for the ultimate convenience and luxury.*

## Anjali Pokhriyal

Travellers boarded the state-of-the-art Airbus A350, which was launched on May 15, 2024, for the Delhi-Hanoi route. The aircraft features a two-class cabin configuration with 305 seats arranged in a 2-4-2 layout—29 seats dedicated to business class and 276 for economy class passengers. Vietnam Airlines operates 14 weekly flights from Delhi and Mumbai to Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, with seamless connections to destinations in China, Japan, Korea, Australia, and other Asian countries from India.

The experience was marked by indulgent culinary offerings and luxurious comfort, setting the stage for an unforgettable journey through Vietnam.

### A First-Class Experience in the Sky

From the moment the media delegation boarded in Delhi, they were treated to exceptional hospitality. Vietnam Airlines' Airbus A350 business class cabin is known for its spacious, comfortable seating and elegant ambiance, and this flight was no

exception. The fully-reclinable seats, designed for maximum comfort, allowed passengers to relax completely during the four-hour journey to Hanoi. Each seat was equipped with individual entertainment systems, personal lighting, and ample space for work or

by the airline's chefs. Featuring both authentic Vietnamese delicacies and international favourites, the menu catered to a variety of tastes, including Indian vegetarian options. The journey began with appetizers like fresh salads and fruits, followed by main courses

*Vietnam Airlines' Airbus A350 Business Class cabin is known for its spacious, comfortable seating and elegant ambiance. The fully-reclinable seats, designed for maximum comfort, allow passengers to relax completely during the four-hour journey to Hanoi. Each seat is equipped with individual entertainment systems, personal lighting, and ample space for work or relaxation.*

relaxation. Plush pillows and blankets added to the overall comfort, while the calming colour palette and refined decor further enhanced the travel experience.

One of the standout moments was the exquisite in-flight dining. Vietnam Airlines takes great pride in its culinary offerings, and media professionals were treated to gourmet meals prepared

such as Rajma Chawal and Paneer for vegetarian passengers. Each dish was made with high-quality ingredients and paired with fine wines and beverages.

The exceptional service from the cabin crew made the trip truly memorable. From the warm welcome upon boarding to the personalized attention throughout the flight, the crew





ensured every passenger's needs were met with professionalism and a smile. Whether offering recommendations from the menu or assisting with seat adjustments, the staff elevated the entire experience.

### Discovering Vietnam's Charm

Upon landing in Hanoi, the media group was greeted by a warm welcome

and guided to Ha Long Bay for an unforgettable experience aboard the luxurious Ambassador Cruise. The breathtaking beauty of the bay and the luxurious cruise offered the perfect setting for relaxation and exploration. Guests were treated to local Vietnamese coffee and a specially curated vegetarian breakfast for Indian travellers.

A highlight of the trip was the visit

a playground for the French, Da Lat still retains its romantic charm with French-style villas, temperate flowers, and lush landscapes. Today, the city is often referred to as the "Valley of Love," drawing visitors with its tranquil ambiance and cool mountain air.

### A Vibrant Finale in Ho Chi Minh City

The final destination of the journey was Ho Chi Minh City, a dynamic hub known for its vibrant energy and nightlife. After arriving, the media group visited the last incense village in Le Minh Xuan Commune, Binh Chanh District. Although fewer incense drying racks were present, the village's timeless beauty, a symbol of generations of tradition, remained intact.

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's financial capital, offered an exhilarating mix of bustling markets, nightlife, and historical landmarks. The group explored the famous night markets, renowned for their variety of branded bags and other products. Despite only having a short time in the city, the delegation managed to visit the iconic Saigon Central Post Office before heading back to India, bringing home unforgettable memories from this vibrant and culturally rich journey.

The Fam trip organized by Vietnam Airlines was a resounding success, offering media professionals a perfect blend of luxury, comfort, and cultural discovery. From the top-tier business class service to the gourmet meals and unparalleled hospitality, Vietnam Airlines has set a new benchmark for excellence in air travel. For those seeking a premium travel experience, the airline provides not only a luxurious journey but also a gateway to explore the beauty and charm of Vietnam. ■



to Hanoi's famous Train Street, where visitors witnessed the unique spectacle of a train passing through narrow streets. The delegation also strolled through the city, enjoying the pleasant weather and soaking in the vibrant atmosphere. Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, offered a diverse range of experiences—from bustling night markets and cozy cafés to fascinating museums and pagodas. The visit culminated in a live coffee-making demonstration at Hanoi Coffee Culture, showcasing why Vietnam is world-renowned for its coffee.

The next leg of the journey took the group on an early morning flight from Hanoi to Da Lat. Upon arrival, they were warmly welcomed by their local guide, Mr. Hien, who introduced them to the picturesque city known for its pleasant climate and scenic beauty. With temperatures around 15°C, Da Lat provided a refreshing escape. Once

# Exploring the thrills & cultural richness of Yas Island Abu Dhabi with Miral Destinations

*Yas Island Abu Dhabi, one of the finest leisure and entertainment sectors in the world, has been ranked among the most liked travel destinations for those longing for fun-filled adventures, luxury and culture. We had the opportunity to experience the amazing attractions of Yas Island during the Yas Island Familiarization Trip which took place from September 5 – 8, 2024. Hosted by Miral Destinations for its India partners, the trip provided an in-depth experience of the island's most iconic attractions, premier hotels, and culinary offerings. From action-packed theme parks to awe-inspiring cultural landmarks, here's an insider's look at everything Yas Island has to offer.*

**Pallavi Sharma**

## **DAY 1: Guest Welcome with Warner Bros. World**

Our five-day excursion commenced at the three hundred and sixty degree warming welcome reception at the Grand Millennium Al Wahda, its accommodation for the next four days. It was a good thing we first received an interesting tour of the hotel's posh facilities, and afterward trooped to Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi. The Warner Bros. World created within The Galleria is the world's biggest indoor amusement park which seeks to provides fun for visitors within despite any inclement weather. There is also a display of various recognizable characters from six well-known zones, starting with Gotham City, and includes various exciting attractions such as Justice Movie: Warworld Attacks, and Batman: Knight Flight among other rides. Families and kids were thrilled to meet beloved characters like Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, and Scooby-Doo, while adrenaline junkies sought out the pulse-pounding roller coasters in Gotham City.

After a delectable lunch at Warner Bros. World, we concluded the day with a visit to Le Royal Meridien, where a delightful dinner set the tone for the days to come.

## **DAY 2: Cultural Insights and Marine Wonders**

Our second day focused on exploring Abu Dhabi's rich cultural heritage. We



began with a tour of Qasr Al Watan, the Presidential Palace of the UAE. An architectural marvel, the palace is not only a working presidential residence but also a symbol of the nation's history and accomplishments. Its opulent halls,

showcasing marine life from tropical, Arctic, and deep-sea environments. Visitors were captivated by the Endless Ocean exhibit, home to over 10,000 marine creatures, including sharks, rays, and vibrant reef fish. The Dolphin

*Yas Island Abu Dhabi is a destination that appeals to travelers of all ages and interests. The island's unique mix of entertainment, culture, and relaxation makes it an ideal choice for family vacations, romantic getaways, and solo adventures alike.*

intricate mosaics, and towering domes offered a fascinating glimpse into the region's grandeur and leadership vision.

In the afternoon, we switched gears and headed to SeaWorld Abu Dhabi. As the region's first marine life theme park, SeaWorld offers an awe-inspiring journey through eight themed realms,

Presentation and Sea Lion Show were crowd favorites, highlighting the intelligence and charm of these incredible animals.

After a satisfying lunch within the park, we visited the Al Raha Beach Hotel, where modern luxury meets tranquil beachfront beauty. The evening



everyone involved. We then returned to the Grand Millennium for a relaxing evening and another delightful dinner.

### **DAY 4: High-Speed Thrills at Ferrari World and Sky-High Adventures at Clymb**

Our final day started with a visit to Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, the world's first Ferrari-branded theme park and a paradise for car enthusiasts. Home to the world's fastest roller coaster, Formula Rossa, Ferrari World offers unparalleled speed and excitement. Visitors also enjoyed Flying Aces, which features the highest roller coaster loop globally, and Turbo Track, a ride that offers a thrilling zero-gravity drop.

The day continued at Clymb Abu Dhabi, an extraordinary adventure hub boasting the world's largest indoor skydiving flight chamber and the world's tallest indoor climbing wall. For thrill-seekers, Clymb offers a unique way to defy gravity and push your limits in a safe, exhilarating environment. Afterward, we wrapped up the trip with a leisurely shopping spree at Yas Mall, picking up souvenirs and soaking in the vibrant atmosphere before heading to the airport. ■

concluded with a sumptuous dinner amidst the serene coastal ambiance.

### **DAY 3: Yas Karting Zone and Hotel Inspections**

The third day began with inspections of some of Yas Island's most prestigious hotels. First up was the chic W Abu Dhabi – Yas Island, known for its stunning architecture and prime location near the Yas Marina Circuit. Next, we explored

the Yas Plaza Hotels, offering a diverse range of accommodations to suit every traveler's needs.

After a relaxed lunch, we headed to the Yas Karting Zone, where the excitement reached its peak as participants competed on one of the region's top go-karting tracks. This thrilling experience was the highlight of the day, providing an adrenaline rush for





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 October 2024.



**March 21 – April 20**

This October will be a standout month for you, bringing growth on both professional and personal fronts. Numerous opportunities will come your way, enabling you to innovate and gain recognition. Be mindful of your health and maintain a balanced lifestyle.



**July 23 – August 21**

It's time to seriously consider the job change you've been contemplating. Start applying for new positions during this period. Social gatherings are on the horizon, but be cautious of minor health concerns.



**November 23 – December 22**

Your strong work ethic and attention to detail will help you rise in your career and earn peer recognition. Steer clear of deals or investments that seem too good to be true. Assess your options carefully before making any commitments. Ensure your health is well taken care of.



**April 21 – May 21**

See you playing a pivotal role in the success of those around you by empowering them significantly. Your business will expand, and professional endeavors will bring fruitful outcomes. Your disciplined approach will ensure both mental and physical well-being.



**August 22 – September 23**

You'll receive multiple professional offers this month. Choose wisely to secure long-term benefits. Take steps to nurture your relationships and make health a priority in your routine.



**December 23 – January 20**

This is the time to confidently tackle any challenges that come your way at work. Be mindful of your spending, as expenses might exceed earnings. Avoid engaging in arguments that don't concern you.



**May 22 – June 21**

You'll experience deep job satisfaction, something you've been seeking for a long time. This month will unlock new doors of possibilities for you. Prioritize your health and well-being to enjoy these opportunities fully.



**September 24 – October 23**

Your workload might be overwhelming this month, so manage your commitments carefully. Take on only what you can deliver. Foster healthy communication with your spouse and establish a balanced lifestyle.



**January 21 – February 19**

Move forward with a positive outlook. Expect a speedy recovery if you've been dealing with health issues. Keep your focus and remain patient in your job search. Meanwhile, spend quality time with family.



**June 22 – July 22**

Your emotions will become a source of strength rather than vulnerability as you channel them into realizing your potential. Continue learning, sharing, and growing, as this is the true mantra for your growth this month.



**October 24 – November 22**

Stay vigilant and maintain your focus at work, as distractions could affect your performance. Avoid unnecessary arguments with loved ones, and try not to overthink situations. Keep your mind calm and clear.



**February 20 – March 20**

Your meticulous approach and work ethic will bring you accolades and help you climb the professional ladder. Avoid investments that seem risk-free, and weigh your options thoroughly before committing. Keep a close eye on your health.

# UTEN

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## UTEN JULY-AUGUST 2024 OFFLINE CONCLUDED EVENTS



UTEN - Sasan Gir Educational Fam at Kavish Gir Lion Resort and Dwarka Fam from 18th to 22nd June 2024



UTEN Pavilion at TTF Ahmedabad Gandhinagar from 07th to 09th August 2024



UTEN - Srilanka Educational Fam Hosted By Srilankan Footprints from 29th to 05th July 2024



UTEN Chennai Roadshow on 30th July 2024 at Radisson Hotel, Chennai City Centre, Tamil Nadu



UTEN Pavilion in IITM Bengaluru from 26th July to 28th July 2024

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### Khao Lak Marriott Beach Resort & Spa

Marriott International, Inc. has appointed **Debdyuti "Dev" Dasgupta** as General Manager of Khao Lak Marriott Beach Resort & Spa. Dev is a talented hotelier who joins this new resort following his previous role as General Manager of Courtyard by Marriott Bangkok. He has transitioned into the GM's position following a successful career in the fields of financial management, auditing, compliance and accounting, with almost two decades of global executive experience.



### Sarovar Hotels

Sarovar Hotels has appointed **Umeish Yadav** as the new General Manager – Development at the Corporate Office in Gurugram. Umeish brings a wealth of experience in the hospitality industry, encompassing hotel operations, strategic planning, brand enhancement and revenue optimization. His diverse experience in both national and international hotel chains equips him to play a pivotal role in supporting Sarovar's strategic growth interests.



### The Lodhi

The Lodhi, New Delhi has announced **Anuj Nainta** as the new Hotel Manager. In his new role, Nainta will be responsible for overseeing daily operations at the luxury hotel, managing a team of 380 highly skilled associates, and enhancing guest satisfaction

while maintaining the establishment's world-class standards, optimising financial performance, and driving innovative initiatives.



### Hyatt Place Aurangabad

Hyatt Place Aurangabad Airport has appointed **Amit Jain** as the new General Manager. Amit brings more than 18 years of hospitality experience to his new role that will see him overseeing all hotel operations and driving revenue growth, while offering top-class service to guests of the Hyatt Place Aurangabad Airport.



### Sofitel Mumbai BKC

Sofitel Mumbai BKC welcomes **Tarana Lalchandani** to the role of Marketing & Communications Manager. To her role at Sofitel Mumbai BKC, Tarana brings extensive and valuable experience in the lifestyle and luxury space, as well as creative thinking, and the ability to

strategically develop and execute Marketing & Communications strategies for the hotel.



### Holiday Inn

Holiday Inn New Delhi Aerocity has announced the appointment of **Shuvendu Banerjee** as the new General Manager. At Holiday Inn New Delhi Aerocity, Shuvendu Banerjee will focus on elevating guest experiences through innovative service offerings and a commitment to operational excellence. He will work closely with partners from the travel industry, embassies, and corporate clients to strengthen key relationships and drive new opportunities for growth.



### Aviareps

AVIAREPS has announced the appointment of **Frederick Overton** as Global Head of Cargo. He will be tasked with overseeing and expanding the AVIAREPS' cargo division, building on existing relationships with airlines

and growing the AVIAREPS' air cargo expertise and division worldwide. AVIAREPS has been offering GSA services to cargo clients locally for several years and will now expand the business division globally.



### Ramada by Wyndham, Alleppey

The Ramada by Wyndham at Alleppey has appointed **Rajan Mathew** as the General Manager. In his new role, Mathew will be responsible for overall hotel operations, increasing revenue potential, enhancing guest experiences and creating a positive work environment for team members.

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