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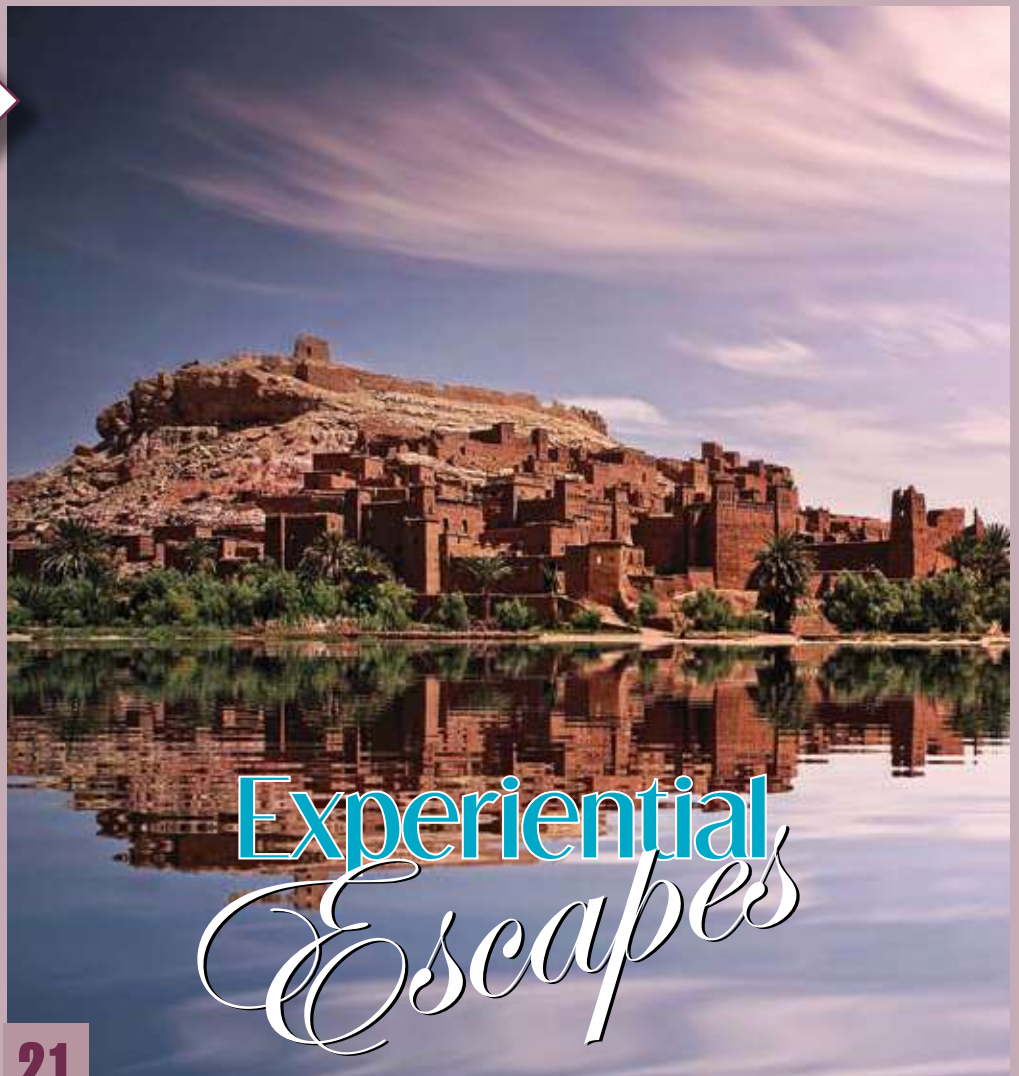
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From the

*Editor's  
Desk*

Dear Readers,

**A**s we approach the end of another transformative year in the travel industry, the December Outbound Issue of BOTT delves into the exciting possibilities that await us in 2025. This edition highlights a curated list of emerging international destinations set to captivate travellers. From the culturally vibrant streets of Uzbekistan and the serene turquoise waters of the Seychelles to the European charm of Batumi in Georgia, the historic grandeur of St. Petersburg, the exotic allure of Morocco, and the architectural marvels of Hungary, we present a comprehensive guide for those ready to explore the world anew.

Adding to the excitement, this issue features our detailed coverage of WTM London, where India's Honourable Tourism Minister launched the ambitious Chalo India Campaign. This initiative aims to position India as a must-visit destination for global travellers, underscoring the nation's diverse cultural, natural, and historical offerings.

Closer to home, the ITM Guwahati saw a gathering of ministers and industry leaders, focused on amplifying tourism in the Northeast. The event highlighted the region's immense potential, fostering collaborations to boost both domestic and international travel.

For adventure enthusiasts and members of the Travel Trade, the ATOAI Convention in Tawang was a celebration of India's growing prominence in adventure tourism. Nestled in the scenic landscapes of Arunachal Pradesh, this event showcased how adventure travel can become a key driver of sustainable tourism.

Packed with interviews, features, and industry insights, this issue promises to inform, inspire, and ignite wanderlust. Here's to an exciting 2025 filled with unforgettable journeys!

Happy reading!

Warm regards,

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

Editor, BOTT India

priyanka@bottindia.com



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## Kerala to be made safest tourism destination for women

The government will draft a special policy to make the tourism sector completely women-friendly aimed at making Kerala the safest tourism destination in the world, Tourism Minister P.A. Mohamed Riyas said. In the run-up to this mission, an audit report has been prepared on the prevailing women-friendly environment in the state's tourism sector and being presented at the Global Women Conference on Gender Inclusive and Responsible Tourism.



## IndiGo announces daily direct flights between Kolkata-Phuket

IndiGo has announced daily direct flights between Kolkata-Phuket, starting December 27, 2024. This will be IndiGo's second direct flight to Phuket, following Delhi. The new route will expand IndiGo's global network and cater to the growing number of tourists from India to Thailand. The addition of this new route will enhance accessibility for tourists to Phuket from the eastern part of the country.



## Turkish Airlines debuts in Sydney with its longest-ever flight

Turkish Airlines has launched its longest flight with the addition of Sydney flights. Flight between Istanbul and Sydney will be operated with the airline's new, modern fleet of Airbus A350-900 aircraft which is designed for long haul comfort with 32 flatbed seats in Business Class, and 297 recliners for Economy travellers.



## Air India Express announces launch of 4 new routes from Bhubaneswar

Air India Express has announced the launch of four new routes from Bhubaneswar as a part of the airline's expansion plan in eastern India. These services will connect Bhubaneswar to Jaipur, Lucknow, Kochi and Patna. The services to Jaipur and Kochi will commence on January 3, 2025, followed by launch of flights to Lucknow on January 4 and Patna on January 15.



## Saudia receives 'Best Airline Cabin Crew' Award

Saudia, the national flag carrier of Saudi Arabia, has announced that it has been awarded the prestigious Editorial Award for 'Best Airline Cabin Crew' at the Business Traveler U.S. Awards 2024, held in Miami, USA. This is the first time this award is being given, making the recognition even more significant. It highlights the exceptional hospitality and service delivered by our dedicated cabin crew, placing Saudia ahead of the industry in terms of cabin service excellence.



## Malaysia Airlines expands network with inaugural flight to Kolkata

Malaysia Airlines proudly celebrated the inaugural flight of its new route to Kolkata (CCU), marking another milestone in its mission to provide seamless connectivity between Malaysia and key destinations in South Asia. With the addition of this new service, Malaysia Airlines, in partnership with IndiGo, now connects Malaysia to 16 destinations across India.





## Jumeirah moves into Africa with exclusive Island & Private Safari Reserve

Jumeirah has unveiled a unique partnership with the Thanda Group, a refined collection of privately owned hospitality experiences, for the introduction of two new iconic destinations: Jumeirah Thanda Island in Tanzania, and Jumeirah Thanda Safari in South Africa. This is the first of its kind private island and safari offering for Jumeirah.



## VIVA Cruises hosts key travel partners on a European Journey

VIVA Cruises recently hosted a group of key travel partners on one of its signature voyages aboard VIVA One. The 4-night/5-day journey traversed the picturesque waterways of Germany and the Netherlands. Travel partners onboard relished world-class hospitality, indulging in gourmet meals paired with exquisite drinks. The voyage was filled with camaraderie, as old friendships were rekindled and new ones formed.

## MTPA hosts Agents aboard Indigo's inaugural flight from Bengaluru to Mauritius

To inaugurate this new flight route, Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA), organised a Familiarization (FAM) trip for Bengaluru's leading travel agents wherein they experienced Mauritius's remarkable hospitality, vibrant culture, and natural beauty. During the FAM trip, the participants explored some of island country's most luxurious hotels.



## Kirchofer appoints Global India Reps as exclusive Marketing Partner for India

www.kirchofer.com, renowned for offering one of Switzerland's most prestigious retail shopping experiences, has announced the appointment of Global India Reps as its exclusive market representative for India. This strategic partnership aims to strengthen Kirchofer's presence in the Indian market and attract discerning Indian travellers to its exceptional stores in Interlaken, Grindelwald, and Jungfrauoch.

## Tourism Fiji unveils 'Happy Passports': Chapter 2 of Happiness

The tourism sector in Fiji continues to surpass expectations, with the country on track for another record-breaking year, marking a 6.5% increase over 2023, surpassing pre-pandemic levels and further cementing Fiji's reputation as a must-visit destination in the South Pacific. This success is fuelled by the impact of Tourism Fiji's global brand platform, Where Happiness Comes Naturally.



## EaseMyTrip & Yas Island Abu Dhabi partner for unbeatable travel experiences

EaseMyTrip.com and Yas Island, Abu Dhabi are teaming up for an innovative campaign featuring 30 of India's top content creators and engaging them in thrilling challenges across Yas Island's theme parks. These creators explore the destination's attractions, while creating compelling content and facing challenges to inspire Indian travellers to explore the destination as a memorable experience.

# Ministry of Tourism shines at WTM London 2024 launches innovative “Chalo India” Campaign



India's presence at WTM 2024, from November 5-7, 2024, at the Excel Centre in London was nothing short of spectacular, with the Incredible India Pavilion drawing significant attention from global travel professionals, media, and stakeholders. The pavilion, designed to reflect the vibrancy and diversity of India, featured a stunning display of cultural elements, including a special mock Mandapam setup, symbolizing India's world-renowned wedding tourism segment. This year's focus areas were MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions), Mahakumbh, and Wedding Tourism, highlighting the country's niche tourism experiences.

The pavilion was jointly inaugurated by the High Commissioner of India to the UK, Shri Vikram Doraiswami, and Ms. Mugdha Sinha, Director General, Ministry of Tourism. The inauguration ceremony was attended by prominent dignitaries, including Smt. Parvati Parida, Deputy Chief Minister of Odisha, and Tourism Ministers from the states of Telangana, Goa, and Uttarakhand.

The Ministry of Tourism led a strong delegation of nearly 50 stakeholders, including state tourism boards, inbound tour operators,

airlines, and hoteliers, all eager to promote India's tourism potential. States like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Kerala, and Karnataka, among others, showcased their unique offerings, from pristine beaches and backwaters to royal heritage and vibrant cultural festivals. The participation of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) like IRCTC and other key tourism players underscored India's collective effort to position itself as a top global travel destination.

The highlight of India's participation at WTM was the launch



of the “Chalo India” campaign, an ambitious initiative aimed at engaging the vast Indian diaspora in promoting inbound tourism. In a first-of-its-kind move, the Indian government announced the provision of ‘one lakh free e-visas’ for foreign nationals nominated by Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders. The program allows

each OCI cardholder to nominate up to five foreign friends on a special portal, encouraging them to explore the diverse attractions of Incredible India. This initiative not only aims to strengthen cultural ties but also to boost India’s appeal as a must-visit destination for global travellers.

Hon’ble Minister of Tourism,

Government of India, attended the event, further boosting India’s presence. Speaking at the launch, the Minister emphasised the potential of the Indian diaspora as ambassadors of Indian culture and tourism, noting that the “Chalo India” campaign could serve as a game-changer in attracting more international tourists to the country. ■

# ITM Kaziranga

## Showcasing the Northeast's cultural wealth and tourism potential

The 12<sup>th</sup> International Tourism Mart (ITM) was inaugurated on November 26, 2024, in Kaziranga, Assam, by Union Minister for Tourism and Culture Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat. The event witnessed the presence of esteemed dignitaries, including Assam's Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma and Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Shri Pema Khandu, along with the participation of Ms. Mugdha Sinha, Director General of the Ministry of Tourism, who actively contributed to discussions on enhancing the region's tourism potential.

Shri Shekhawat emphasized ITM as a distinctive platform to celebrate Northeast India's vibrant heritage, crafts, and natural splendour. Hosting the event in Kaziranga, a UNESCO World Heritage Site famed for its iconic one-horned rhinoceros, underscores the rising prominence of the region on India's tourism map.

Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma lauded the Mart as a catalyst for cultural exchange, ecological conservation, and economic growth, envisioning its role in positioning the Northeast as a global tourism destination.

This year's ITM commemorates significant milestones, including the 50th anniversary of Kaziranga National Park and the UNESCO recognition of the Moidams of Charaideo. A Coffee Table Book titled Guwahati and Around was unveiled, capturing the essence of Assam's history and culture.

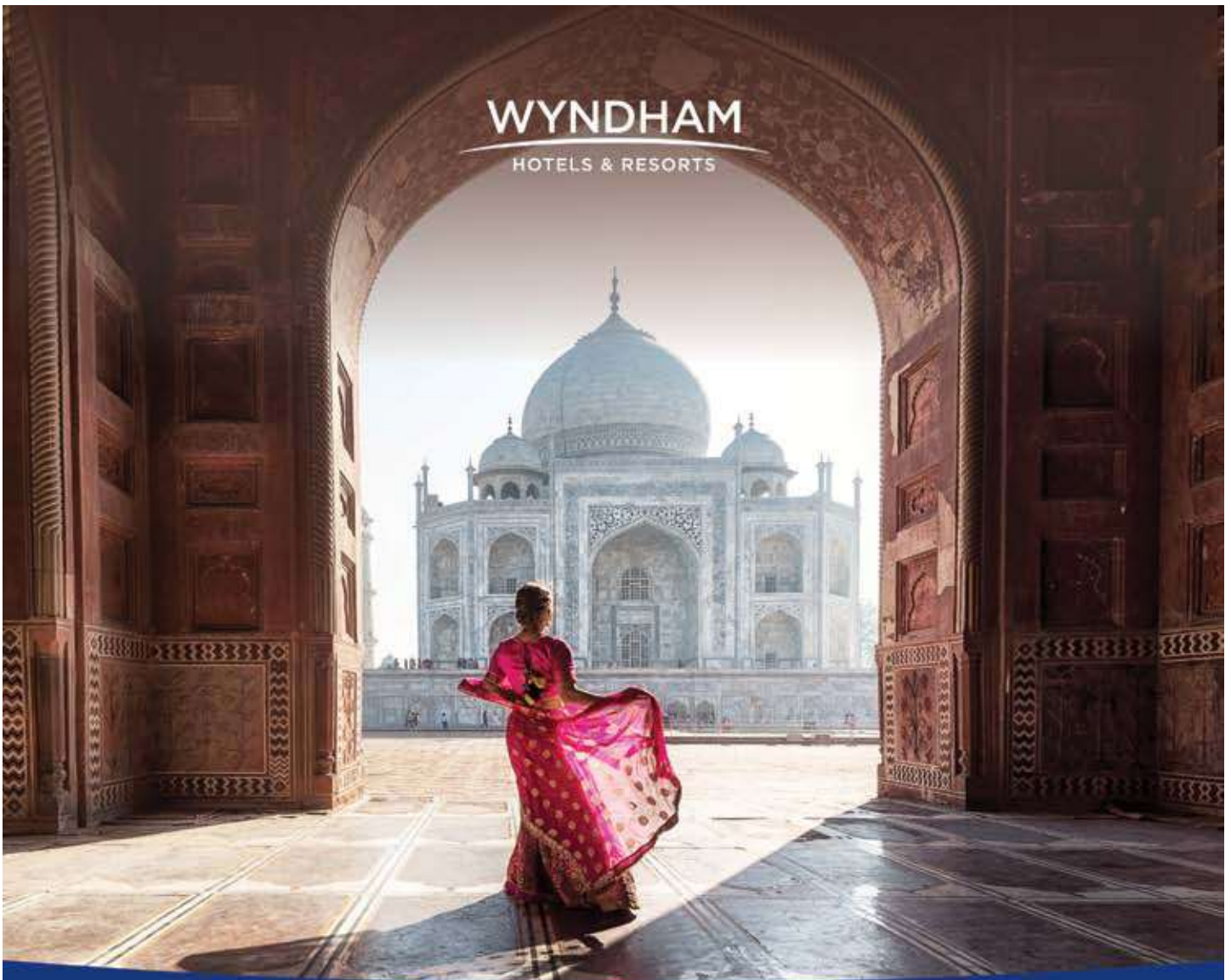
Key attractions of ITM 2024 included B2B meetings, panel discussions, cultural showcases, culinary demonstrations, and guided tours to iconic sites such as the Charaideo Moidams, Kaziranga National Park, and Hathikuli Tea Estate. Representatives from over 30 countries participated, bringing together international influencers, tour operators, and domestic stakeholders.

Focusing on sustainable tourism, the Mart aligns with the Ministry of Tourism's "Travel for Life" initiative, reinforcing a commitment to responsible travel practices. By fostering collaboration among stakeholders, ITM Kaziranga aims to unlock the immense tourism potential of Northeast India, paving the way for the region to emerge as a globally sought-after travel destination. ■



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# 16<sup>th</sup> ATOAI Convention concludes in Tawang, focuses on Sustainable Border Tourism

*The 16th Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) Convention concluded in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh, spotlighting sustainable tourism in India's border regions. The event attracted over 250 delegates, including international participants, to discuss the future of adventure tourism and the importance of eco-friendly practices in remote and sensitive areas.*

Pallavi Sharma



The inauguration featured a ceremonial lamp-lighting by dignitaries including ATOAI President Ajeet Bajaj, Lt. Gen. Rakesh Kapoor (Deputy Chief of the Army Staff – IS&C), Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu, and Tourism Minister Pasang Dorjee Sona. Discussions highlighted the challenges and opportunities in promoting border tourism, focusing on infrastructure, community upliftment, and preserving natural beauty while combating over-tourism.

“It has been a fantastic day and an equally fantastic start to our 16th Annual Convention of the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) here in Arunachal Pradesh, one of the most beautiful parts of the planet. This year’s convention, themed around exploring Arunachal Pradesh – India’s last Shangri-La, truly reflects our admiration for this mesmerizing state,” said ATOAI President Ajeet Bajaj.

“We were honoured by the presence of the Honourable Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Mr.

Prema Khandu, the Honourable Tourism Minister, Mr. Pasang Dorjee Sona, and dignitaries from the esteemed Indian Army. With 250 delegates from across the country and international participants, today’s sessions set a vibrant tone for the convention. We eagerly look forward to engaging in discussions and meaningful activities over the next few days,” he added.

“I am incredibly proud of the successful conclusion of the 16<sup>th</sup> ATOAI Conclave that has concluded in Tawang recently. and would like



to extend heartfelt gratitude to the Government of Arunachal Pradesh and AP Tourism for being gracious hosts. Their support and warmth have made this convention a remarkable and inspiring experience for all of us. This marks a significant step forward for the adventure tourism industry. We are proud to spotlight two transformative initiatives by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India, reflecting our unwavering commitment to a sustainable and inclusive future. Our first major step is the organization of a net-zero event, showcasing our dedication to minimizing our environmental footprint and setting a benchmark for responsible tourism. I am equally excited to announce an upcoming initiative under ATOAI Women's Collective that reflects our collective commitment to equity and inclusivity. We are focusing on creating awareness around gender responsiveness in adventure tourism and developing comprehensive guidelines for gender-inclusive practices. These steps aim to ensure that our industry remains a safe, equitable, and empowering space for all individuals, irrespective of their gender," said Arshdeep Anand, ATOAI, Vice President.

Day 2 emphasised industry collaboration and adventure tourism's humanitarian impact.





Experts like Gustavo Timo (ATTA) and Akshay Shah (Hanifl Centre) provided insights into global trends, while Ajeet Bajaj's keynote on "Rethinking India Adventure" highlighted India's untapped potential in the global adventure tourism market.

Panellists John Panye, Nino Dai, and Tsering Wange discussed Arunachal Pradesh's unique opportunities for adventure tourism, focusing on sustainable practices and developing mega trails. A session on safety standards led by Lauren Stover (ACCT) and Vaibhav Kala stressed the importance of minimizing risks in adventure activities.

The convention also featured an exhibition showcasing cutting-edge adventure equipment and innovations, along with B2B networking sessions. On the final day, Union Tourism and Culture Minister announced the launch of the 3D National Adventure Racing Championship in Mechuka. A highlight was Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav's video announcement that the state would host the 2025 ATOAI Convention.

The event concluded with a Q&A session with the Union Minister and a vote of thanks from the Convention Co-Chair. The convention reinforced the importance of balancing ecological preservation with economic growth, setting a roadmap for sustainable adventure tourism in India's border regions. ■







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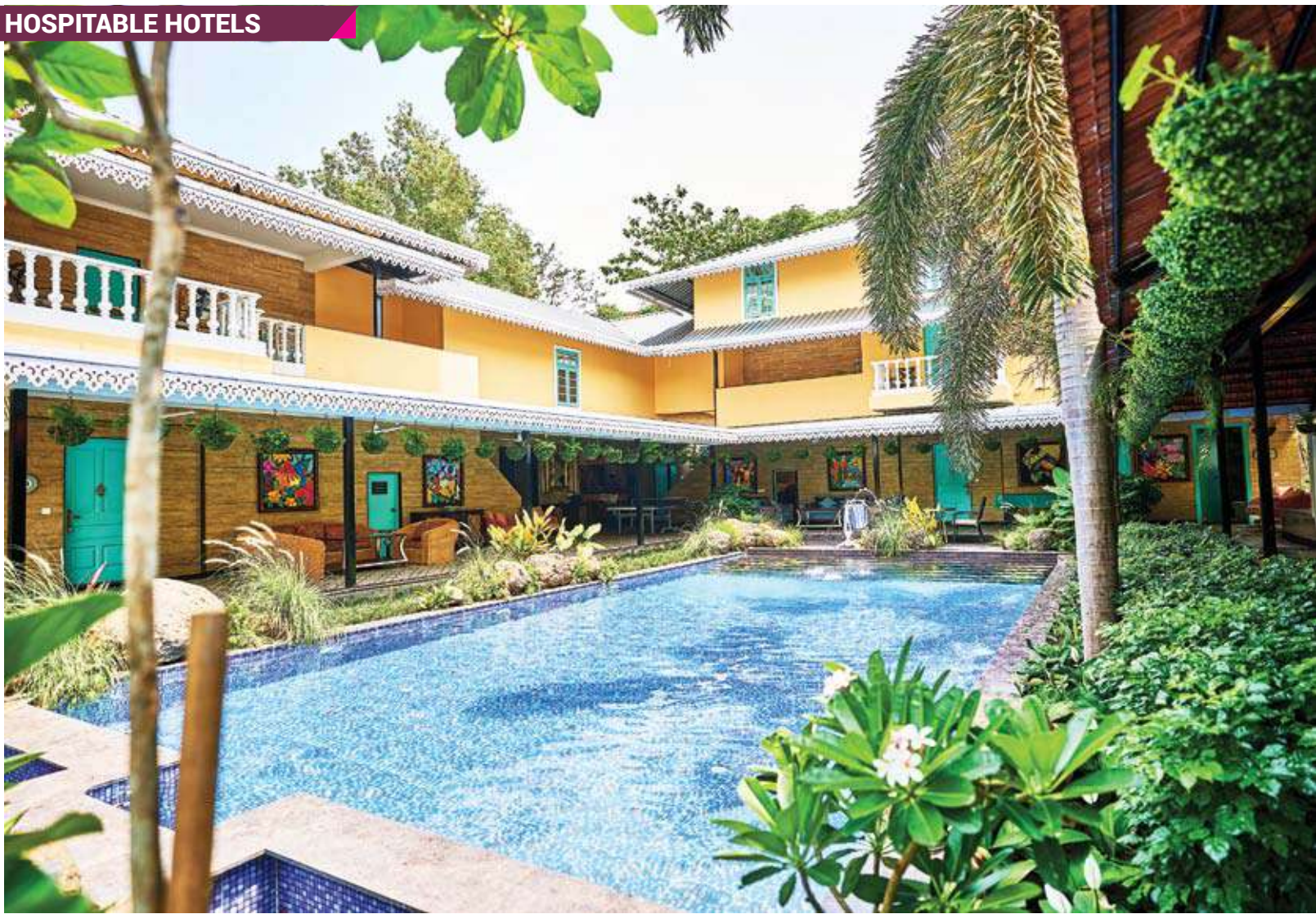
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# Mayfair Manor, Alibag

## A luxurious retreat redefining elegance in Coastal Maharashtra

*Mayfair Hotels & Resorts, in collaboration with Mayfair Elixir, proudly launched the exquisite Mayfair Manor, Alibag, expanding its footprint in Maharashtra. This boutique luxury villa, unveiled at an exclusive media preview on November 15, 2024, offers a harmonious blend of traditional charm and modern sophistication, promising an unparalleled guest experience.*

**Shreya Shimpi**

### Mayfair Manor, Alibag: A Coastal Haven

Nestled in the serene coastal town of Alibag, just a 20-minute speedboat ride from Mumbai's iconic Gateway of India, Mayfair Manor is an experiential seven-room luxury villa designed for tranquillity and indulgence. Set across three acres, the property features two lavish villas with 2, 5, 7 bedroom options, offering

amenities such as a swimming pool, jacuzzi, and a picturesque gazebo.

The villa's artistic landscaping, vibrant interiors, and lush greenery create a unique microclimate, making it the perfect venue for intimate celebrations, leadership retreats, or family getaways. Guests can enjoy a dedicated living room, dining space, library, and games area featuring pool, carrom, and table tennis. Expansive lawns provide a stunning backdrop for

events and gatherings.

### A Culinary and Hospitality experience like no other

Mayfair Manor seamlessly blends luxurious comfort with homely warmth. Its culinary offerings range from exotic dishes to classic favourites, tailored to suit every palate. The property also includes a convenient pickup and drop service from Mandwa Jetty, ensuring a



seamless travel experience.

## Leadership Speaks

Bjorn Noel DeNiese, Managing Director of Mayfair Elixir, highlighted the property's unique charm, saying, "Mayfair Manor Alibag is a boutique villa that offers the warmth of home and the luxury of a hotel. It's a perfect escape for small parties, retreats, and family breaks, delivering exceptional service and unforgettable experiences."

Randhir Gupta, Vice President - Commercial & Business Development, emphasised the ultra-luxurious amenities and bespoke experiences offered by Mayfair Manor. "With its proximity to Mumbai and the natural beauty of Alibag, the property is a sanctuary of elegance and comfort," he remarked.

Pooja Ray, Managing Director, Mayfair Hotels and Resorts, added, "This villa is a testament to our commitment

to delivering unparalleled luxury. We are thrilled to offer this exceptional retreat to our guests and partners in Mumbai."

## An Unforgettable Escape

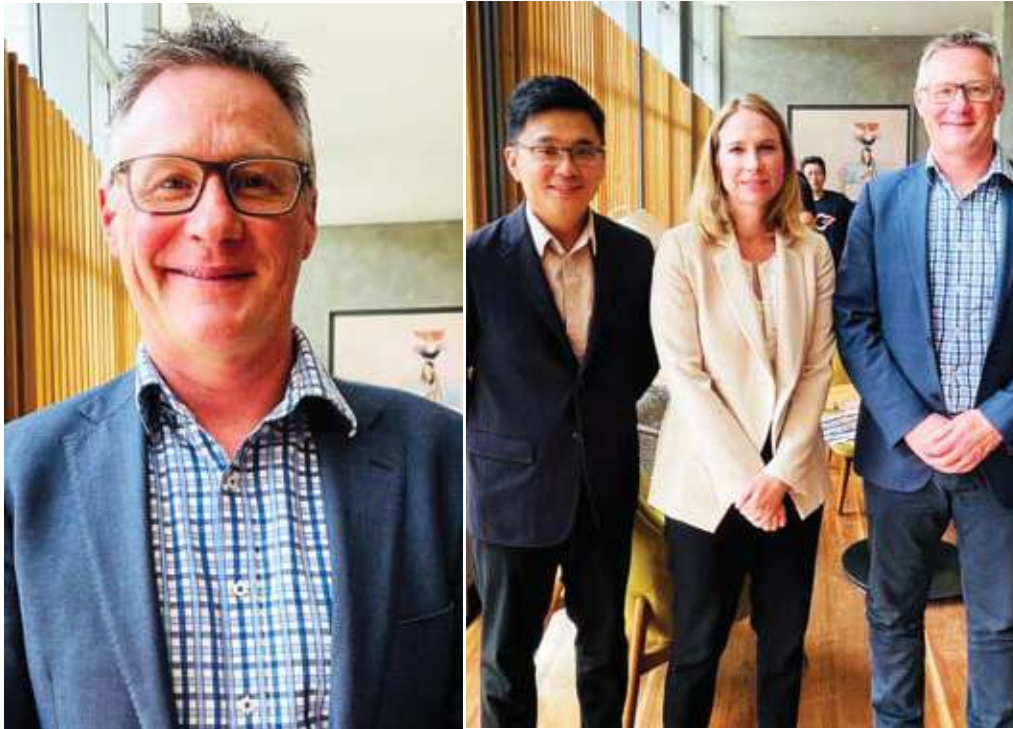
Mayfair Manor, Alibag, encapsulates the essence of luxury, elegance, and tranquillity. Whether for a celebratory occasion or a peaceful retreat, it promises to leave guests with cherished memories in the signature Mayfair style. ■

# Adelaide

## A new Destination for Indian Travellers and MICE Tourism

*Adelaide, the picturesque capital of South Australia, is rapidly emerging as a preferred destination for Indian tourists and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) planners. In an exclusive interview with Damien Kitto, CEO of Business Events Adelaide, and Emma Terry, CEO of the South Australian Tourism Commission, they expressed their excitement about the Indian market and their strategic plans to position Adelaide as a top destination for Indian travellers.*

Anjali Pokhriyal



and rhinos, is another unforgettable experience.

### How is Adelaide preparing for MICE tourism from India?

We're positioning Adelaide as a premier destination for MICE tourism. Our Adelaide Convention Centre can accommodate up to 5,000 delegates, and we have exceptional venues like the Adelaide Oval, complemented by a range of unique experiences to keep attendees engaged.

Adelaide is also clean, green, safe, and highly affordable—perfect for corporate events. Hotel rates here are 20-30% lower than in Sydney or Melbourne, providing excellent value.

Another focus area is educating Indian travel agents and corporates about Adelaide. We've conducted webinars, partnered with travel agencies, and hosted familiarization trips for Indian agents to experience Adelaide firsthand.

### How has the Indian market responded so far?

The response has been phenomenal. Before the pandemic, we welcomed around 80,000 Indian visitors annually. That number has now grown to 120,000, and we're just getting started. We've already secured several corporate groups and are seeing increasing interest in featuring Adelaide in event proposals. It's an exciting time. Indian travellers are seeking new and diverse destinations, and Adelaide offers it all—cricket, safaris, wine, festivals, and more. We're confident that our relationship with India will continue to grow. ■

### What inspired your focus on India as a market for Adelaide?

India is a dynamic and promising market for us. Adelaide already has a vibrant Indian community, a robust education sector, and, of course, a shared passion for cricket! The connection feels natural. With Indian tourism expanding rapidly, we see a significant opportunity to welcome more visitors from India. The potential India offers is incredible.

### What makes Adelaide unique compared to other Australian cities?

Adelaide is what we call a "global boutique city." It's intimate and welcoming, yet equipped with world-

class infrastructure. It's affordable, easy to navigate, and filled with unique attractions.

Adelaide is surrounded by stunning landscapes, like the Barossa Valley, renowned for its world-class wines, and Monarto Safari Park, the largest safari park outside of Africa. Visitors can enjoy premium experiences without the crowds or high prices of cities like Sydney or Melbourne.

And let's not forget the iconic Adelaide Oval. It's more than just a stadium—it offers rooftop climbs, guided tours, and unique venues for hosting events. For wine enthusiasts, the Barossa Valley is just an hour away, offering some of the world's finest wines. Monarto Safari Park, where you can get up close with lions

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## Experiential Escapes

### Top International Destinations for Indian Travellers in 2025

*As Indian travellers continue to seek more meaningful and immersive experiences, 2025 is set to witness a shift in their travel preferences. Beyond traditional hotspots, experiential destinations that offer unique cultural encounters, adventure, and sustainability are capturing their imagination. From the culturally vibrant streets of Uzbekistan and the serene turquoise waters of the Seychelles to the European charm of Batumi in Georgia, the historic grandeur of St. Petersburg, the exotic allure of Morocco, and the architectural marvels of Hungary, we present a comprehensive guide for those ready to explore the world anew*

**Compiled by:  
Priyanka Saxena Ray**



# Hungary

**H**ungary is a captivating blend of rich history, breathtaking landscapes, and innovative attractions. Whether you are an adventurer, a history buff, or an art enthusiast, this Central European gem offers a wide array of unique experiences that promise to surprise and delight visitors. Hungary is a mesmerising travel destination with stunning locations

and vibrant culture. With an array of options to suit every traveller's desires – Budapest's charming architecture, riverside town of Szentendre, idyllic vineyards of Tokaj, the majestic Danube River, and countryside castles – Hungary offers an unforgettable blend of experiences.

With its premium collection of hotels, state-of-the-art convention

centres, and unparalleled leisure activities, Hungary has emerged as an outstanding destination for hosting Indian weddings and corporate events. Renowned for its exceptional venues, breathtaking landscapes, and seamless travel options, the country offers a unique blend of business and leisure experiences, making it a preferred choice for discerning organizers and





*Hungary is one of the oldest wine making countries with one of its wine regions being a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and yet waiting to be discovered. Every region produces distinct varieties and the origin is usually labelled on bottles.*



travellers alike.

Hungarian restaurants have successfully retained their Michelin stars and recommendations, and there are new additions to the roster of last year's esteemed winners.

Hungary is one of the oldest winemaking countries with one of its wine regions being a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and yet waiting to be discovered. Every region produces distinct varieties and the origin is usually labelled on bottles. The Tokaj Wine Region is home to some of the most loved varieties of wine. Beautiful landscape is dotted with cellar labyrinths, vines and slopes, nestled at the foothills of the Zemplén Mountains. Its winemaking history dates back over a thousand years. ■

# Unveiling Uzbekistan

## A traveller's delight on the Silk Road

*Nestled in the heart of Central Asia, Uzbekistan is a vibrant tapestry of cultures and civilizations. Beneath its majestic domes and intricate mosaics lies a rich history waiting to be explored. Offering a captivating blend of heritage, profound history, and awe-inspiring architecture, Uzbekistan invites travellers from around the globe to experience its wonders. Read on to discover this hidden gem of the Silk Road.*

**Shreya Shimpi**

### A Gateway to Exploration

Recently, Uzbekistan Airways JSC, in partnership with Arya Enterprises—the official Sales and BSP Consolidator for the airline in India—hosted a familiarization trip for five Mumbai-based travel media representatives. This initiative aimed to showcase the country's diverse offerings and highlight its untapped tourism potential. Organized by Asialuxe Travel, a leading tour operator in Uzbekistan, the journey was meticulously planned to provide participants with a comprehensive experience of the nation's hospitality, history, and modern appeal.

### Seamless Connectivity

Uzbekistan is easily accessible with direct flights from major Indian cities. Uzbekistan Airways operates twice a week from Mumbai to Tashkent, with a flight duration of approximately four

hours. The airline also offers biweekly flights from Goa and daily connections from Delhi, ensuring seamless travel for Indian tourists eager to explore this Central Asian gem.

### Tashkent

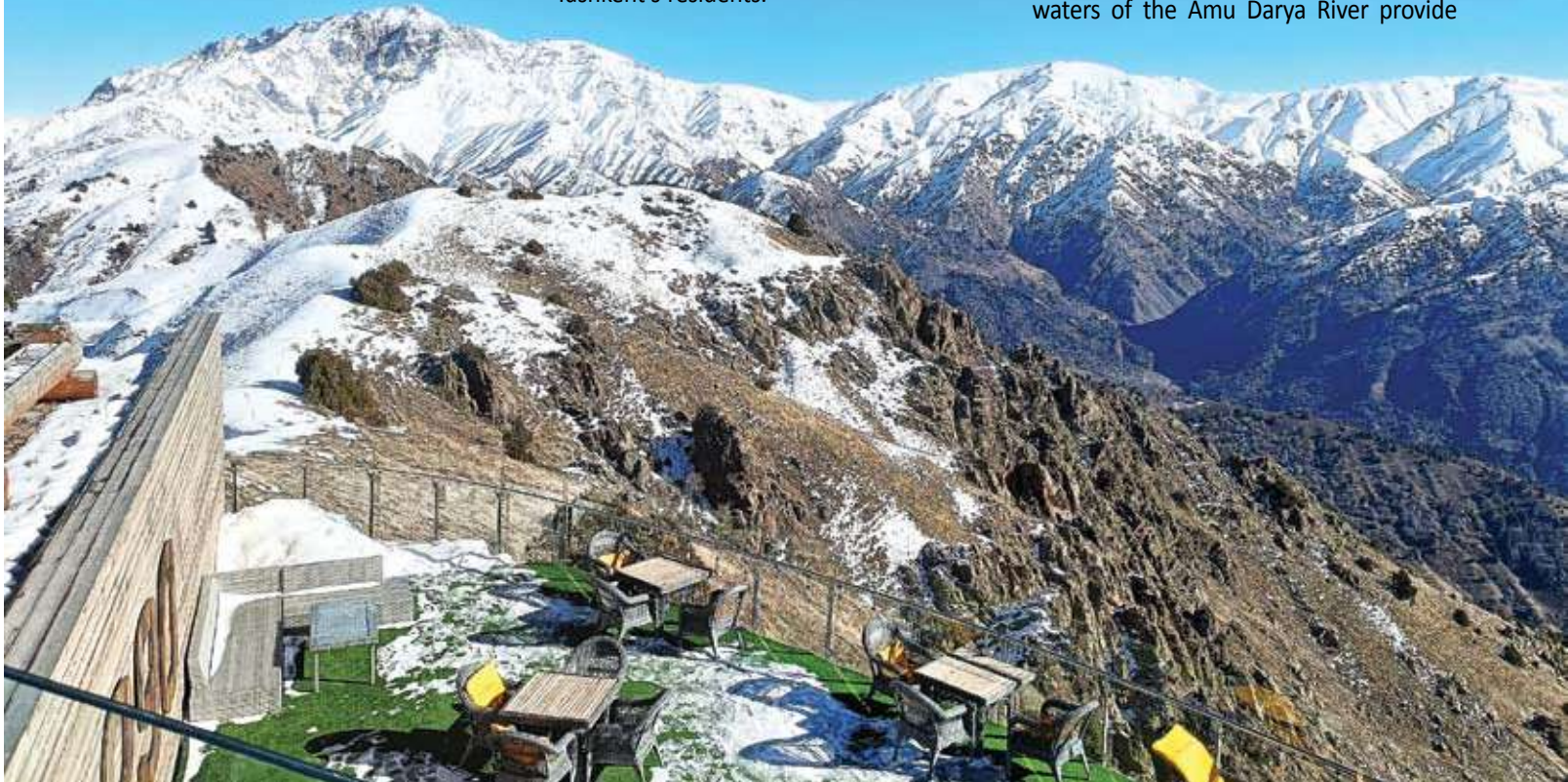
The capital city of Tashkent is a dynamic blend of modernity and tradition. Its bustling streets, contemporary architecture, and vibrant markets provide a striking contrast to its historical landmarks. Visitors can explore the Lal Bahadur Shastri Memorial, which pays tribute to India's former Prime Minister, and wander through Amir Temur Square, a central hub dedicated to the revered Turco-Mongol conqueror. The Chorsu Bazaar, with its vibrant stalls and bustling atmosphere, offers a sensory feast of local flavours, crafts, and textiles, providing a glimpse into the daily life of Tashkent's residents.

### Khiva

A short domestic flight from Tashkent to Urgench, followed by a scenic drive, brings travellers to the ancient city of Khiva. Designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Khiva has a well-preserved inner town, Ichankala, which is a maze of narrow streets, grand mosques, and ornate madrasahs. Landmarks such as Kalta Minar and the Kunya Ark, the city's ancient fortress, offer a glimpse into the architectural prowess of Khiva's past. The Juma Mosque, with its forest of wooden columns, and the intricately decorated Muhammad Rakhimkhan Madrasah further enhance Khiva's allure.

### Bukhara

The journey from Khiva to Bukhara is an adventure in itself, taking travellers through the vast expanse of the Kizilkum Desert. Along the way, the shimmering waters of the Amu Darya River provide







Sales and BSP Consolidator India



a stunning backdrop. Bukhara, one of the most ancient cities on the Silk Road, is a treasure trove of historical sites. The Samanid Mausoleum, a masterpiece of early Islamic architecture, stands as a testament to the city's rich heritage.

### Samarkand

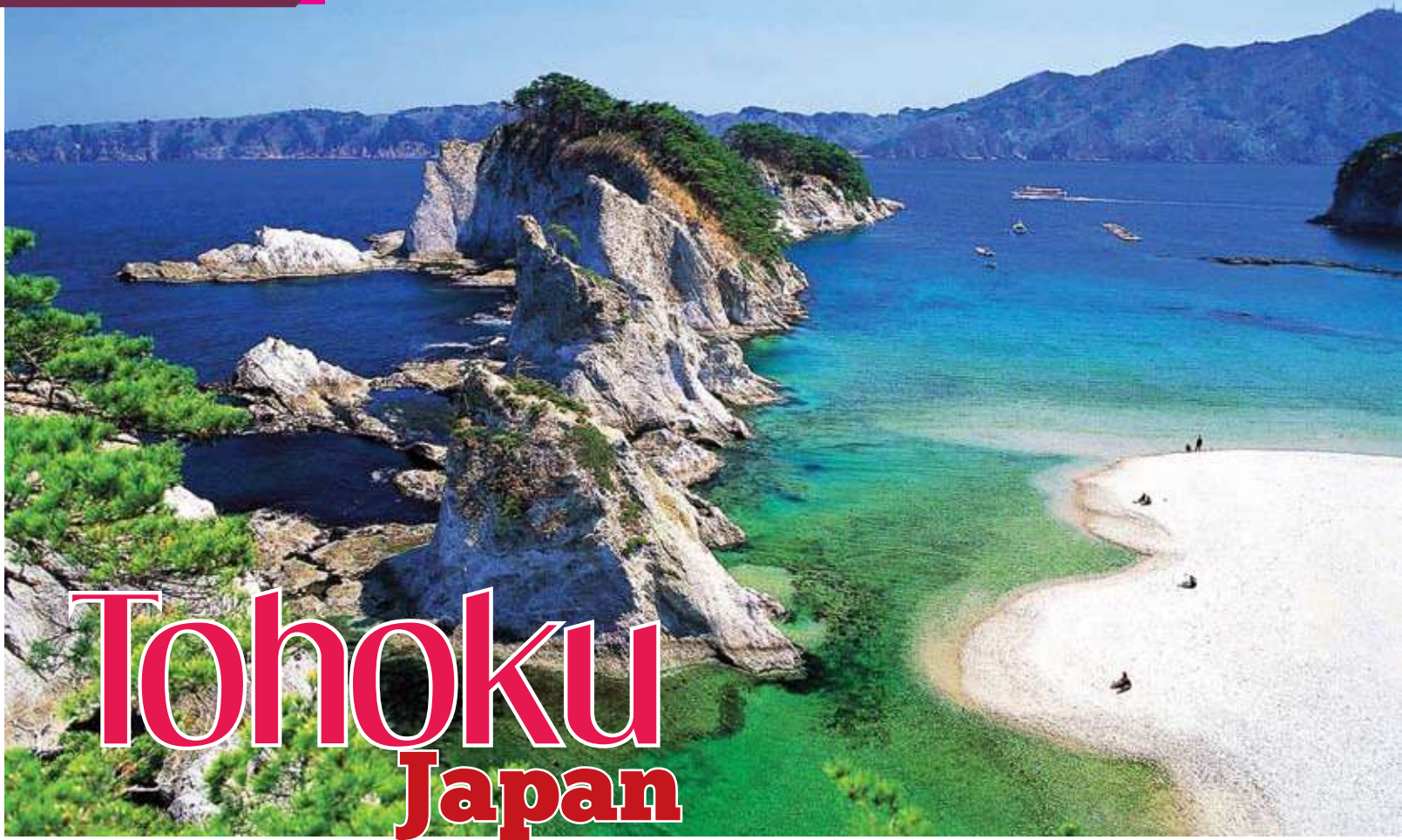
This city, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a living testament to the grandeur of ancient civilizations. Registan Square, with its trio of majestic madrasahs, serves as the city's heart and hosts a mesmerizing light and sound show that brings its history to life. Other must-visit attractions include the Ulugbek Observatory, a pioneering astronomical centre of the medieval world, and the Gur-e-Amir Mausoleum, the final resting place of Timur, the founder of the Timurid Empire.

### Accommodation and Hospitality

Uzbekistan's hospitality sector caters to a wide range of travellers, from luxury seekers to budget adventurers. In Tashkent, the Azimut Hotel offers modern amenities and a central location. In Bukhara, the Sahid Zarafshon provides a blend of traditional charm and contemporary comfort. Samarkand's Savitsky Plaza offers elegant accommodations with easy access to the city's major attractions. For those visiting Khiva, the ultra-luxurious Hotel Farovon combines traditional architectural elements with modern conveniences.

### MICE and Weddings

Uzbekistan is rapidly emerging as a premier destination for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Events (MICE), as well as weddings. The Eternal City, with its boutique cafes, artisan workshops, and elegant banquet halls, offers a unique setting for memorable events. Guests can immerse themselves in the country's rich heritage while enjoying modern amenities and services, making Uzbekistan an ideal choice for both corporate events and intimate celebrations. ■



Nestled in the northern region of Honshu, Tohoku offers an enchanting blend of natural beauty, rich culture, and year-round attractions, making it a must-visit destination for discerning travellers seeking authentic Japanese experiences. While often overshadowed by the bustling metropolises of Tokyo and Kyoto, Tohoku's serene landscapes, ancient traditions, and welcoming communities provide a refreshing contrast to Japan's more frequented destinations.

One of the region's standout features is its stunning natural scenery, which transforms with the seasons. In spring, cherry blossoms blanket the iconic Hirosaki Castle, creating a pastel

wonderland. Summer invites visitors to explore the tranquil shores of Lake Towada and hike through the mystical Oirase Gorge. As autumn arrives, the forests of Naruko Gorge explode in vibrant hues of red, orange, and gold, offering some of Japan's most breathtaking fall foliage. Winter transforms Tohoku into a snowy paradise, with world-class ski resorts such as Zao Onsen, where visitors can glide past the famous "snow monsters" — ice-coated trees that take on otherworldly shapes.

Tohoku is also a cultural treasure trove. Historic temples, such as Chuson-ji in Hiraizumi, a UNESCO World Heritage site, showcase the region's deep spiritual heritage. The area is renowned for its vibrant festivals, like the Aomori Nebuta

Matsuri, where giant illuminated floats light up the night sky. Meanwhile, local artisans continue to craft traditional goods such as lacquerware and kokeshi dolls, providing unique souvenirs for visitors.

Food lovers will be captivated by Tohoku's culinary delights, from fresh seafood harvested along the Sanriku Coast to hearty regional specialties like Hachinohe senbei-jiru, a savoury rice cracker soup. Shoppers can explore Morioka's vibrant markets or indulge in upscale boutiques in Sendai.

Accessible by the Shinkansen bullet train, Tohoku promises an unforgettable journey through Japan's untouched charm, offering the perfect blend of adventure, tradition, and tranquillity. ■



# Morocco

## North Africa



Nestled in the heart of North Africa, Morocco is a land of captivating contrasts, offering a diverse tapestry of landscapes and cultures. From the vast, golden sands of the Sahara Desert to the towering peaks of the Atlas Mountains and the picturesque coastal stretches along the Atlantic and Mediterranean, the country's natural beauty is both varied and awe-inspiring.

Morocco is steeped in rich history and vibrant culture, evident in its ancient medinas, bustling souks, and awe-inspiring architecture. Cities like Marrakech, Fez, and Meknes boast intricately designed royal palaces, centuries-old mosques, and lively marketplaces that pulse with energy. The country is also a treasure trove of traditional arts, including pottery, weaving, metalwork, and intricate wood carving, all of which reflect its deep-rooted heritage.

The cultural fabric of Morocco is a harmonious blend of Arab, Berber, and European influences, offering visitors a unique and immersive experience. Wander through the enchanting blue streets of Chefchaouen, trek across the windswept dunes of the Sahara, or explore the medieval labyrinths of Fez and Marrakech. For nature enthusiasts, the rugged beauty of the Atlas Mountains provides a stunning backdrop for hiking and adventure.

No trip to Morocco is complete without indulging in its world-renowned cuisine. Savor dishes like tagine, couscous, and pastilla, bursting with the flavours of fragrant spices, fresh herbs, and local ingredients. ■

# Discovering the Wonders of Seychelles

Rai Umraopati Ray



“Tourism is our passport to prosperity,” once said the late Sir James Mancham, the first president of the Seychelles. This island nation, an archipelago of 115 islands scattered across the Indian Ocean, has certainly embraced this vision. With its pristine beaches, lush forests, and vibrant marine life, Seychelles has become a sought-after destination for honeymooners and families alike. A tropical sanctuary of untouched beauty, vivid marine life, and cultural richness and with experiences ranging from exploring UNESCO-listed natural treasures to basking on world-renowned beaches, these exotic islands promise unforgettable escapes. Here, time seems to slow down, and the worries of the world melt away.

One of the surest ways to experience this is through a semi-submarine

excursion -- a perfect introduction to the underwater marvels of Seychelles. Gliding beneath the clear waters, visitors are treated to views of vibrant coral reefs, playful fish, and other marine wonders—all without getting wet. Coral reefs stretch as far as the eye can see, supporting ecosystems of over 1,000 species of fish and other marine life. Seychelles is a haven for snorkellers and divers, with nearly 30% of its waters protected as marine reserves, underscoring its commitment to conservation.

For those seeking a deeper connection with Seychelles' aquatic beauty, Teddy's Glass Bottom Boat excursion is a must. The journey includes snorkelling, beach lounging, and a visit to Moyenne Island, part of the Sainte Anne Marine Park, which is a nature lover's dream. This tiny island is home to over 100 Aldabra giant

tortoises, some of which are over 150 years old. These ancient creatures, some over a century old, wander freely, creating a magical, prehistoric-like atmosphere. Visitors can stroll through nature trails, surrounded by lush vegetation and the soft hum of endemic bird species. The surrounding waters, clear and vibrant, are perfect for snorkelling, offering encounters with parrotfish, butterflyfish, and occasionally, curious reef sharks. The excursion also features a mouthwatering BBQ lunch by the beach, with fresh seafood and local flavours taking centre stage. The day concludes with leisure time on the quiet shores of Round Island, offering a chance to relax or explore the crystal-clear waters.

For honeymooners, the Seychelles offers a romantic escape like no other. Imagine secluded beaches, crystal-clear



waters, and luxurious resorts. The island of La Digue, with its iconic Anse Source d'Argent beach, is a popular choice for couples seeking an idyllic setting. Characterised by its striking granite boulders, powdery white sand, and tranquil turquoise waters, it's no surprise that this beach is among the most photographed in the world. The shallow waters make it ideal for swimming, while the golden hues of sunset create a scene of unparalleled splendour.

For families, the Seychelles offers a diverse range of activities, from snorkelling and diving to hiking and birdwatching. The islands of Mahé and Praslin are perfect for exploring, with their stunning natural beauty and rich cultural heritage. The Vallée de Mai on Praslin Island, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is home to the iconic largest intact forest of the endemic Coco de Mer palm, the largest seed in the plant kingdom. Popularly known as the "Garden of Eden", walking through this ancient forest feels like stepping back in time. Millions of years of isolation have led to the evolution of unique species, including the Seychelles black parrot, which flits through the dense canopy. Endemic species like tiger chameleons, day geckos, caecilians, tree frogs and bulbul can be spotted on the serene trails, shaded by towering palms, make this one of the world's most captivating natural reserves. If you're lucky enough to be guided by a passionate expert, you'll gain fascinating insights into the male and female Coco de Mer palms, their unique pollination process, the "Casanova" tree, and the

### Eden Bleu Hotel

Eden Bleu Hotel, situated on a manmade Eden Island, features over 80 luxurious rooms and suites overlooking the marina. This modern retreat offers world-class dining, state-of-the-art conference facilities, and exceptional service. Its exclusive location and stylish amenities make it an ideal base for exploring Seychelles' natural beauty.

### Berjaya Beau Vallon Bay Hotel

Berjaya Beau Vallon Bay Hotel is a beachfront resort on the lively Beau Vallon Beach, offering over 200 well-appointed rooms and suites. Guests enjoy diverse dining options, including an authentic Indian restaurant, pizzerias, and seafood grills. Its prime location and amenities make it ideal for relaxation, water sports, and cultural exploration.

record-holder for the most Coco de Mer seeds.

While Mahé, the largest island in Seychelles, offers a mix of natural beauty and vibrant culture. The Victoria Market, built in 1840 and still a bustling hub, is the heart of local life. Here, vendors sell everything from fresh seafood to handmade crafts, providing a sensory dive into Seychellois culture. Nearby, the Hindu Temple and Clock Tower are architectural gems that tell the story of the island's multicultural heritage. Another interesting attraction at the hilltop is Mission Lodge, which offers breathtaking panoramic views. Once a school for freed slave children, the site now serves as a historical landmark and a serene retreat. Similarly, Le Domaine de Val de Pres captures the essence of Seychelles' colonial past and artisan traditions, showcasing local crafts, music, and cuisine.

No trip to the Seychelles is complete without a visit to a rum distillery. The Takamaka Rum Distillery offers tours

and tastings, providing visitors with a fascinating insight into the rum-making process and the unique flavours of this island nation. For dining, Seychelles caters to all palates, with an array of restaurants offering diverse cuisines. Indian travellers, in particular, will feel at home with options like Bravo Restaurant, Chez Jules Restaurant, and the renowned Marie Antoinette Restaurant, serving everything from freshly grilled seafood to traditional curries.

Seychelles is more than a destination—it's an immersion into nature's finest creations and a celebration of cultural richness. It's a destination that offers something for everyone, from adventure seekers to those simply looking to unwind and relax. Whether exploring pristine beaches, hiking through lush forests, or indulging in world-class cuisine, the Seychelles is sure to leave a lasting impression. It's true that tourism is not just a cornerstone of its charm but a vital pathway to its economic success and sustainable future. ■

# Batumi

## Georgia



Nestled along the Black Sea coast in Georgia's Adjara region, Batumi is a destination that seamlessly blends modernity with history. Often called the "Pearl of the Black Sea," it offers an enchanting mix of natural beauty, rich culture, and exciting adventures. From the picturesque Batumi Boulevard, lined with palm trees and bustling cafes, to the panoramic views from the Alphabet Tower, there's something for everyone.

Nature lovers can immerse themselves in the lush Batumi Botanical Garden or explore the scenic Makhuntseti Waterfall and its ancient arched bridge. For adventure seekers, Batumi is a paradise with activities such as zip-lining, rafting, and hiking through



the stunning landscapes of Adjara. Horseback riding along the coastline offers a unique way to enjoy the region's beauty.

Batumi is also renowned for its vibrant cultural scene. The Black Sea Arena hosts international concerts and festivals like the Black Sea Jazz Festival, while the Batumi Drama Theatre stages captivating theatrical performances and ballet. The city comes alive with street performances, adding a lively atmosphere to the summer months.

Shopping in Batumi is an experience in itself, with modern malls and local markets offering unique souvenirs, traditional crafts, and delicious Georgian wines. Batumi's culinary scene delights with iconic dishes like Khachapuri and fresh seafood, perfect for any food lover. ■





# Busan

## South Korea



**B**usan, South Korea's second-largest city, is a vibrant metropolis where stunning natural landscapes blend seamlessly with urban sophistication. Renowned for its pristine beaches, vibrant markets, cultural landmarks, and bustling nightlife, Busan is a must-visit destination for Indian travellers seeking diverse experiences.

### Key Highlights of Busan

#### Haedong Yonggungsa Temple

Nestled along a dramatic cliffside, this Buddhist temple offers breathtaking views of the ocean. A rare coastal temple in Korea, it provides visitors with a serene atmosphere and a glimpse into Korea's rich spiritual heritage.

#### Haeundae Beach

One of Korea's most famous beaches, Haeundae boasts golden sands and a lively atmosphere. It's a perfect spot for sunbathing, water sports, or simply enjoying the vibrant festivals hosted year-round.

#### Gamcheon Culture Village

Often called the "Santorini of the East," Gamcheon is a colourful, artistic village known for its pastel houses, street art, and winding alleys. It's a favourite among photographers and art enthusiasts.

#### Busan International Film Festival (BIFF)

Busan is the epicentre of Asian cinema, hosting the prestigious BIFF annually. This festival attracts global filmmakers and enthusiasts, solidifying the city's position as a cultural hub.

#### Jagalchi Fish Market

One of the largest seafood markets in Asia, Jagalchi, offers a unique experience where visitors can taste the freshest seafood and immerse themselves in the bustling market's lively energy. ■





# Krabi Thailand



**K**rabi, the capital of southern Thailand's Krabi Province, is a stunning resort town nestled along the Andaman coast. Surrounded by towering limestone karsts and lush mangrove forests, this destination is a haven for nature lovers and adventure seekers. One of its most iconic landmarks,

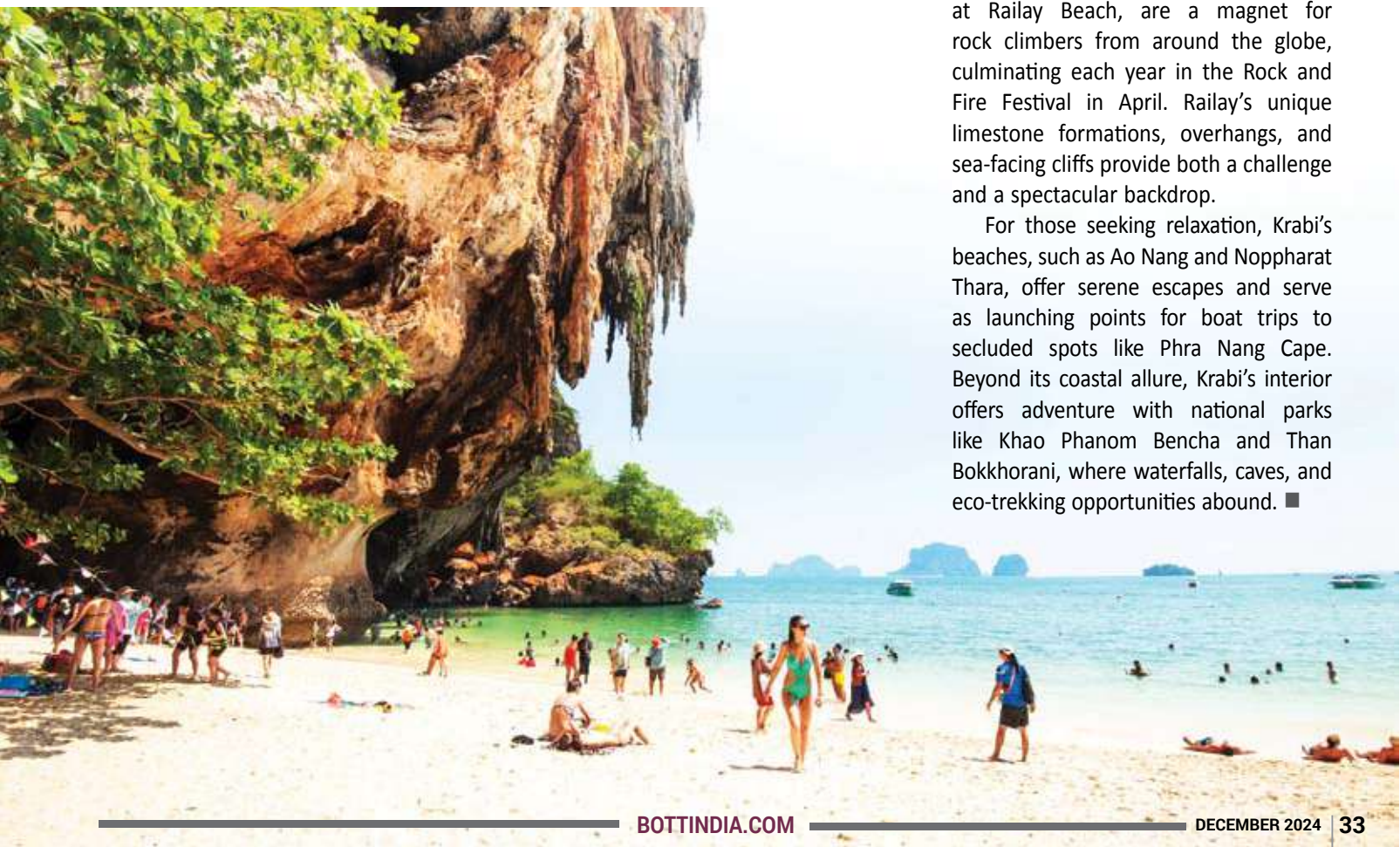
the Tiger Cave Temple, sits atop a hill offering panoramic views, rewarding those who climb its many steps.

Known as one of Thailand's top romantic getaways, Krabi boasts breathtaking natural beauty, world-renowned beaches, vibrant nightlife, and luxurious resorts, making it a favourite

among honeymooners. With over 150 islands scattered across its turquoise waters, the province offers endless opportunities for exploration. Koh Phi Phi and Koh Lanta, part of Krabi's national parks, are island paradises perfect for scuba diving, snorkelling, and sailing.

Krabi's limestone cliffs, particularly at Railay Beach, are a magnet for rock climbers from around the globe, culminating each year in the Rock and Fire Festival in April. Railay's unique limestone formations, overhangs, and sea-facing cliffs provide both a challenge and a spectacular backdrop.

For those seeking relaxation, Krabi's beaches, such as Ao Nang and Noppharat Thara, offer serene escapes and serve as launching points for boat trips to secluded spots like Phra Nang Cape. Beyond its coastal allure, Krabi's interior offers adventure with national parks like Khao Phanom Bencha and Than Bokkhorani, where waterfalls, caves, and eco-trekking opportunities abound. ■





# St. Petersburg

## A Timeless City, A Modern Marvel

Rai Umraopati Ray

Imagine a city where the echoes of imperial Russia mingle with the buzz of modern innovation. A city where history's grandeur meets contemporary elegance. St. Petersburg, often dubbed the "Venice of the North," is just such a place. Beyond its opulent palaces and iconic bridges, this cultural powerhouse has emerged as a leading global destination for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE).

### A City for All Seasons

St. Petersburg's allure extends beyond its historical significance. Summers, with their famous "White Nights," offer endless daylight hours for exploring the city's vibrant festivals, concerts, and outdoor markets. Winters transform the city into a winter wonderland, perfect for cozying up in museums, theatres, and festive markets.

As Sergey Azarenkov, General Director of the St. Petersburg Convention Bureau, aptly puts it: "With its unique blend of history, architecture, and art, St. Petersburg offers an unparalleled setting for business gatherings and events. Our city is constantly evolving,

with innovative tourist geography projects introducing fresh public spaces, unusual routes, and museums, alongside timeless excursion classics."

### A Step Back in Time

Founded by Peter the Great in 1703, St. Petersburg is a living museum. Palace Square, the city's heart, has witnessed countless historical events. Its centrepiece, the Winter Palace, now houses the State Hermitage Museum, one of the world's largest and most prestigious art collections. Here, masterpieces by Rembrandt, Michelangelo, and Picasso tell the story of human creativity.

The Mikhailovsky Theatre, renowned for its world-class ballet and opera performances, reflects the city's artistic soul. Other iconic landmarks, such as the Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood and the Peter and Paul Fortress, showcase the grandeur of Russian architecture and history.

### A Modern Marvel

St. Petersburg is not just a historical city; it's a modern one too. The St. Petersburg Convention Bureau plays a

crucial role in positioning the city as a premier business destination. It provides comprehensive support to international organizations, ensuring seamless and memorable MICE experiences.

For conferences and exhibitions, the Russian Railways Museum offers a unique blend of industrial heritage and modern facilities. This sprawling museum, with its state-of-the-art infrastructure, is the perfect venue for congresses and exhibitions.

Another standout





venue is Planetarium 1, a futuristic space ideal for events that demand a cutting-edge ambiance. Its innovative design and facilities make it a favourite among corporate planners.

### **A Luxurious Stay**

St. Petersburg's hospitality scene is as diverse as its cultural offerings. Historic hotels like the Astoria and Angleterre offer elegant settings for conferences, seminars, and high-profile events. For those seeking a more contemporary vibe, Hotel Indigo provides chic, boutique-style accommodations with excellent facilities for small-scale meetings and events.

### **A City Reborn**

St. Petersburg's urban landscape is constantly evolving. New Holland, a man-made island, is a prime example. This unique destination combines industrial architecture with modern amenities, featuring exhibition halls, cafes, and a lecture hall. It's a beloved public space, perfect for both casual exploration and large-scale events.

### **A Culinary Delight for Indian Travellers**

Indian travellers will find themselves at home in St. Petersburg. Restaurants like Botanika cater to vegetarian tastes, while Tandoor Indian Restaurant, Oh! Mumbai, and Namaste serve authentic Indian cuisine, ensuring a delightful culinary experience.

### **An Unforgettable Experience**

Whether you're attending a large-scale conference, exploring the city's cultural treasures, or simply indulging in a leisurely getaway, St. Petersburg has something for everyone. From the grandeur of Palace Square to the innovation of Planetarium 1, from the historic charm of the Astoria Hotel to the vibrant energy of New Holland, St. Petersburg offers unforgettable experiences.

With its seamless blend of old-world charm and modern sophistication, St. Petersburg is a city where history meets opportunity. It's a top choice for MICE events and tourism, year-round. ■



# St. Moritz



Nestled in the heart of the Swiss Alps, St. Moritz stands as a beacon of glamour, lifestyle, and adventure. Known as the birthplace of Alpine winter tourism in 1864, this cosmopolitan resort town has twice hosted the Winter Olympics and remains synonymous with luxury and pioneering spirit. Its mineral springs, discovered over 3,000 years ago, first established St. Moritz as a summer spa destination, but today, it is equally renowned for its exhilarating winter experiences.

St. Moritz boasts an unrivalled concentration of six luxury hotels, world-class restaurants, and Europe's highest luxury shopping street, making it a haven for discerning travellers. The town is also a hub for culture and art, featuring international galleries, museums, and the iconic Segantini Museum, home to the largest collection of Giovanni Segantini's works.

For adventure enthusiasts, St.



Moritz offers over 580 kilometres of hiking trails, ranging from tranquil lake walks to challenging glacier hikes. The surrounding ski regions, including Corviglia, Corvatsch, and Diavolezza, feature 87 World Cup-standard slopes catering to beginners and seasoned skiers alike. The historic Olympia Bobrun, the world's oldest natural ice track, offers adrenaline-pumping bobsleigh rides, while the legendary Cresta Run challenges riders to hurtle headfirst down the icy channel at speeds of up to 140 km/h.

Water sports enthusiasts can explore over 90 alpine lakes, perfect for sailing, windsurfing, and stand-up paddleboarding. In winter, these lakes transform into natural ice rinks, offering magical ice-skating experiences. Visitors can also enjoy snow kiting on the frozen Lake Silvaplana or tobogganing down the thrilling Muottas Muragl track. ■

# Positioning South Africa as a perfect getaway for Indian families

South Africa is quickly emerging as a preferred destination for Indian travelers, particularly for multi-generational families seeking immersive and personalized travel experiences. In this exclusive interview, **Gcobani Mancotywa**, Regional General Manager for Asia, Australasia, and the Middle East at South African Tourism, discusses the growing significance of the Indian market. He sheds light on evolving travel trends, South Africa's diverse offerings, and the country's initiatives to make travel easier, more affordable, and culturally enriching for Indian tourists.

Priyanka Saxena Ray

## Importance of India market

India remains one of the most important source markets for South African Tourism, with an increasing trend toward multi-generational travel. Families are embracing the joy of traveling together, often with the youngest and eldest members of the family, driven by changing lifestyles and the need for quality bonding time. This shift reflects an evolution in travel preferences, with younger family members influencing decisions, leading to a shared desire for meaningful and immersive experiences.

## Promoting South Africa in India

Through close collaboration with our trade partners, we have placed a special emphasis on promoting South Africa's

SA' workshops in tier-2 and tier-3 Indian markets, empowering our travel partners with updated strategies and tools to promote the Rainbow Nation effectively. To make South Africa more accessible and enjoyable for Indian travelers, we had partnered with Ethiopian Airlines, offering value-driven packages with return tickets starting at just ₹39,990/-.

## Visas

Families from India typically experience a faster turnaround time when applying for visas to enter South Africa. South Africa provides visa processing facilities in nine major Indian cities as part of its partnership with VFS: New Delhi, Gurgaon, Jaipur, Kolkata, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Pune, Goa, and Bangalore. Participants merely need to



**Gcobani Mancotywa**,  
Regional General Manager for Asia,  
Australasia, and the Middle East at South  
African Tourism

*"India remains one of the most important source markets for South African Tourism, with an increasing trend toward multi-generational travel. Families are embracing the joy of traveling together, often with the youngest and eldest members of the family, driven by changing lifestyles and the need for quality bonding time."*

hidden gems that offer fresh perspectives while supporting local communities, fostering economic growth, and creating jobs across provinces. We have successfully concluded two 'Learn

provide simple, readily available travel-related documentation, and visas are processed in five to seven business days. Families can apply through VFS, and the South African visa application process is

often quick and easy. Stamped passports can be obtained within 7 working days of the application date, and the visa processing period is incredibly quick. There is no visa fee for Indian nationals. However, the VFS logistics fee to process visas from Mumbai and Delhi is ₹2040/- and ₹2301/- to process visas from Gurgaon, Jaipur, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Pune, Bengaluru, and Goa. ■

# Taiwan gears up to position itself as a Preferred Destination for 2025

*In 2024, Taiwan's tourism industry made significant progress in the Indian market. Paul Shih, Director, Taiwan Tourism Administration, Singapore Office, in an exclusive chat with BOTT, talks about its plans for the India market, MICE facilities in Taiwan and its tailor-made offerings for the India market.*

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

## Reflecting on 2024, how has Taiwan's tourism industry performed in the India market?

In 2024, Taiwan's tourism industry made significant progress in the Indian market, enhancing awareness and interest among Indian travellers by participating in key travel exhibitions such as OTM, ITB, and Taiwan Expo. Notable achievements included successful familiarization (FAM) trips that highlighted Taiwan's diverse attractions to Indian travel influencers, media representatives, and agents. This led to increased coverage and the development of customized tour packages for Indian visitors. Taiwan's collaborative B2B efforts with Indian tour operators, along with targeted B2C campaigns, contributed to its growing appeal among Indian tourists.

## What are your strategic plans for promoting Taiwan as a preferred destination in 2025? Are there any new initiatives or marketing campaigns for India market?

For 2025, our tourism strategy aims for significant growth in the leisure travel, incentives, and eco-tourism segments. Our goal is to attract a substantial number of Indian travellers, building on the current target of over 50,000 annual visitors from India. We plan to include more familiarization (FAM) trips for media, travel agents, and influencers, as well as increase B2B collaborations and develop new consumer-focused digital campaigns to showcase Taiwan's diverse attractions. Additionally, we will focus on on-ground activations with leading airlines that have strong connectivity to Taiwan in key source markets.

## How does Taiwan plan to attract more Indian MICE groups, and what unique offerings does the country have for corporate travellers?

To attract more Indian incentive groups,

Taiwan is enhancing its offerings with tailored incentives, excellent infrastructure, and unique cultural experiences. The MICE Incentive Plan in Taiwan provides financial support to Indian corporate companies, which can amount to up to INR 1500 to 2,000 per person, depending on individual circumstances and subject to specific terms and conditions. This plan includes a Group Visa and on-ground support, making it an attractive option for corporate groups from India. Taiwan's tech-savvy environment, reliable transportation, and modern convention centres are complemented by engaging team-building experiences.

## How is Taiwan tailoring its tourism products and services to cater to the growing outbound and its varied segments from the Indian market?

Taiwan is customizing its tourism offerings for the Indian market by providing tailored packages that cater to various traveller segments, including families, young professionals, Incentive and luxury travellers. Acknowledging India's cultural and dietary preferences, Taiwan has increased the availability of vegetarian food options and has trained English-speaking guides. Additionally, it is creating itineraries that combine popular attractions with unique cultural experiences, such as night markets and adventure tours. Taiwan is also actively promoting eco-tourism and island tourism, appealing to young, nature-focused travellers from India. ■



# Resorts World One celebrates grand inaugural voyage from Dubai

*Resorts World Cruises, the World-Class Cruise Line that 'Knows the Gulf Best' arrived in Dubai commencing her first sailing from November 1, 2024. The 1800-passenger cruise ship departs from the Port Rashid Cruise Terminal 2 in Dubai three times a week to three Gulf destinations.*

Shreya Shimpi



**Naresh Rawal,**  
Senior Vice President, Sales and Marketing,  
Resorts World Cruises

A special celebratory event was held on the boutique ship for around 600 invitees to commemorate this milestone event. Resorts World Cruises' President, Michael Goh and its senior management welcomed onboard regional dignitaries, authorities, members of the press and key influencers. The port-stay event included a series of special memento presentations with invitees having the chance to experience the onboard LIVE performances, the wide array of cuisines and a guided ship tour of the ship's accommodations, facilities and offerings.

As part of the inaugural sailing celebration, guests were offered special added-value promotions. It included complimentary Food & Beverage Onboard Credits valued at AED 700 or US\$190 per cabin for sailings in November for both the 3-night Oman Cruise and the 2-night Qatar Cruise. During the deployment, Resorts World

One provides exciting new vacation options from Dubai for the weekend with the 2-night Sir Bani Yas Weekend Cruise departing on Fridays. Guests can also look forward to the two-night Doha (Qatar) Cruise departing Wednesdays and the three-night Muscat-Khasab (Oman) Cruise departing Sundays. For longer cruises, guests may combine the itineraries. The shore excursions are worth looking forward to as well where guests can explore the rich wildlife at the Sir Bani Yas Island or watch dolphins during their Oman sailing and explore the rich culture and heritage of Muscat –Khasab and Qatar.

The inaugural sailing coincided with Diwali and the ship had Diwali-themed decorations and a special Gujarati Food Festival. The luxury boutique ship offers certified Halal cuisines, including vegetarian / Jain cuisine. Along with casual all-day buffet options, guests can

indulge in cuisines from across the world at the speciality dining restaurants on the ship such as Umi Uma, Silk Road and Mozzarella serving Japanese, Chinese and Italian delicacies respectively.

There are various accommodation





options such as Interior and Oceanview Staterooms, Balcony Staterooms and the luxurious Palace Suite. With a plethora of entertainment options, there is never a dull moment onboard with world-class entertainment shows such as Trustfall, dance classes and the exclusive foam party. The party scene is vibrant, with silent discos and themed parties such as Arabian Nights, Sand and Oasis, and Bollywood Nights.

Sharing his excitement about the maiden Gulf voyage, Michael Goh, President, Resorts World Cruises said, "We have been counting down the days and we are delighted that the Resorts World One has arrived in Dubai and is ready to sail. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the local and regional governments, authorities, travel business partners, media and our guests for their support. We have taken over 200 media and trade partners from Southeast Asia and North Asia. We are excited at the responses that we have been receiving so far."

Naresh Rawal, Senior Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Resorts World Cruises said, "We are onboard the Resorts World One today and it has been a hard work of two years which finally culminated into its arrival in Dubai. The ship caters to various segments such as the FlyCruise market along with the domestic market. It caters to MICE, FIT and wedding segments. We have been successful in getting a couple of groups from India. There is a pre-wedding charter from India which is confirmed. We have corporate groups ranging from 200-1400 passengers. In totality, it's going to be a success and we will have a good deployment."

Speaking about the food and entertainment options being tailored for the India market he added, "There won't be a need to put in a special food request as a proper spread of Indian vegetarian and Jain options will always be available onboard. India is always going to be an important source market since it is close to Dubai with good flight connectivity, convenience of getting visas and no language barrier."

An unparalleled luxury resort experience at the sea awaits you onboard the magnificent Resorts World One. ■

# Experience luxury at the high seas with **Royal Caribbean's** Anthem of the Seas

*The Royal Caribbean recently hosted hundred plus members including travel agents and the media on their iconic ship 'Anthem of the Seas'. The members were given a guided tour of the ship which showcased the various offerings that the ship had to offer.*

## Shreya Shimpi

The cruising industry is gaining momentum in Asia, with nearly 2.4 million passengers recorded this year alone. Royal Caribbean hosted an exclusive media event, which offered the members a unique opportunity to explore the pinnacle of luxury cruising first-hand, onboard the magnificent 'Anthem of the Seas' during its Mumbai halt. The ship is en route from Dubai to Singapore. The ship is a testament to Royal Caribbean's legacy of over fifty years of delivering memorable

experiences with world-class ships providing bespoke experiences suited for multi-generational travellers. The guided tour helped participants explore the outstanding design of the ship, marvellous interiors, amenities, restaurants, bars, swimming pools (2 Indoor and 2 Outdoor), adventure activities, and the theatre.

The cruise  
ship

has a capacity of 4,905 guests (total) and an international crew of 1,500. There are a total of 16 decks, with 14 guest decks and 2,090 State Rooms. There are three First at Sea activities of the ship which include RIPCORDER by IFLY, a skydiving simulator. The North Star holds the Guinness World Record for the tallest viewing deck on a cruise ship. The Bionic Bar is where two robotic bartenders can shake, stir and mix your drinks.

Guests onboard the ship, have a choice of dining at four complimentary multi-cuisine restaurants. There are various speciality dining options such as Jamie's Italian, Chops Grille, Izumi etc. The Café @Two70 is where cutting-edge tech can transform 270 degrees of windows two stories high. Guests can indulge their sweet tooth at the La Patisserie. The SeaPlex is the largest indoor active space at sea offering a full-size basketball court and bumper cars. The award-winning musical 'We Will Rock You' is a must watch at the spell-bonding Royal Theatre. ■



# TOFTigers urges India to lead a new era of Re-Wilding and Conservation

TOFTigers, which recently held its annual event and Awards night in New Delhi and is also celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2024, is calling on India to lead a global movement in re-wilding and conservation, using nature tourism as a key tool for protecting the country's biodiversity.

## BOTT DESK



With global studies revealing the alarming loss of wilderness — a tenth of the Earth's wilderness has been lost in the past 25 years — TOFTigers is urging the tourism industry and government to embrace sustainable tourism as a means to protect India's rich natural heritage. The organization highlights how well-managed nature tourism can provide vital ecosystem services, including clean air, water, flood prevention, and soil fertility, while also offering significant economic returns through tourism.

As part of its anniversary celebrations, TOFTigers recognised leaders in sustainable tourism through its Wildlife Tourism Awards, honouring individuals and organizations demonstrating a strong commitment to conservation. These awards were held on 6th February at Bikaner House Delhi. Looking ahead, TOFTigers remains focused on creating a future where wildlife thrives, and tourism plays a key role in conservation and community development.

On the awards, Vishal Singh, Cofounder & Director of TOFTiger said, "TOFTigers envisions a future where nature tourism drives a new wave of support for wildlife conservation, rural communities, and re-wilding efforts. Being on the bucket list for global tourists, it's the perfect moment for India to lead by example, demonstrating how responsible tourism can simultaneously protect our natural landscapes and benefit local economies. By opening these areas to well-managed, sustainable tourism, we unlock immense ecological and economic value. With the TOFTigers Wildlife Tourism Awards, we hope to ignite a new era of collaboration between the tourism sector, NGOs, and government, creating a lasting legacy of conservation and community empowerment."

In addition to its policy and certification work, TOFTigers has empowered local communities through skill development and employment opportunities, helping to ensure that tourism benefits both people and the environment. The organization regularly collaborates with wildlife experts and naturalists to provide training in sustainable tourism practices, strengthening its network of conservation advocates. ■

# Asego introduces all-new real-time baggage tracking solution - TrackMate

*Dev Karvat, Founder & CEO, Asego talks about his all-new real-time baggage tracking solution – Asego TrackMate, which has been designed to make the baggage tracking and retrieval process seamless and efficient.*

BOTT Desk



## The issue of mishandled baggage is a significant concern among travellers. Can you share some insights on the current state of this problem?

Absolutely. Mishandled baggage is indeed a major issue. According to SITA, the global mishandled baggage rate spiked by 74.7% in 2022, reaching 7.06 bags per thousand passengers. This increase is largely due to the resurgence of international travel post-pandemic and the operational challenges faced by airlines and airports. Out of the 28 million mishandled bags each year, 5% are lost, 18% are damaged, and 77% are delayed. These figures highlight the urgent need for an effective baggage

tracking solution like our all-new real-time baggage tracking solution – Asego TrackMate.

## How exactly does TrackMate address the baggage mishandling issue?

TrackMate is designed to make the baggage tracking and retrieval process seamless and efficient. The service includes guaranteed compensation of up to ₹66,000 per bag if it remains unreturned after 96 hours. This assurance removes the financial stress of replacing essentials, which we know is one of the most pressing issues for passengers with lost luggage.

## Could you tell us more about how TrackMate keeps travellers updated on their luggage status?

Keeping travellers informed is key, and with TrackMate, they don't need to chase updates from the airline. Travellers receive real-time email notifications for any changes in their baggage status, so they're constantly aware of its location and progress. This kind of proactive communication gives peace of mind, allowing passengers to focus on their journey, knowing their bags are in good hands.

## What does the purchasing process look like for TrackMate? Is it accessible to all travellers?

TrackMate is indeed accessible to all travellers as a bundled product with our Asego Plus Plan. However, soon we plan to offer it as a standalone solution, providing even more flexibility and value to our customers. Travellers can purchase it up until their flight's departure, which means even last-minute planners can now safeguard their baggage throughout their journey with ease. Plus, it covers all checked baggage—even those bags that passengers might gate-check at the last minute.

## How does TrackMate fit in with traditional travel insurance?

That's a great question. It is important to note that Asego TrackMate is an add-on service specifically designed to cover delayed or lost baggage. While it provides substantial compensation for mishandled luggage, it doesn't replace traditional travel insurance, which covers a broader range of issues like medical emergencies and cancellations. Instead, TrackMate complements travel insurance, offering an extra layer of protection focused solely on baggage. ■

# Experience luxury and wilderness at Ananyamaya Nature Lodge, Ranthambore



**A**nanyamaya Nature Lodge is a serene retreat that seamlessly blends luxury, comfort, and the untamed beauty of Ranthambore. Located near Ranthambhore National Park, home to Rajasthan's largest tiger reserve, this nature-inspired haven offers adventure seekers and wildlife enthusiasts a perfect gateway to the wilderness.

The lodge's name, Ananyamaya, meaning "unique illusion," reflects its commitment to providing a distinctive experience. Conveniently situated approximately 185 km from Jaipur airport and well-connected by rail, the lodge is also a sanctuary for India's native flora, with over 1,000 trees, including Neem, Mango, and Amaltas, planted across the property.

## **A visionary leader with passion for Hospitality**

The resort is owned by a young and passionate entrepreneur, Rohit Singh, who is an IHM graduate from Jaipur and has been actively pursuing his passion in the hospitality sector. He has a vast experience in the field of wildlife working with some premium properties in jungles.

## **Culinary delights at SPECTRAA**

The in-house restaurant SPECTRAA offers a delectable dining experience, making every meal memorable. Guests can savour a variety of cuisines while soaking in the lodge's tranquil ambiance.

## **Activities and adventures**

Adventure thrives at Ananyamaya Nature Lodge, where guests can embark on thrilling jungle safaris via Gypsy or Canter to explore the rich wildlife of Ranthambhore. A boat ride on the Chambal River adds an extra layer of excitement, providing opportunities to observe rare and endangered species.

## **Facilities for relaxation and business**

The lodge also caters to corporate needs with a 30-seat conference area and a theatre offering insights into Ranthambhore's unique



ecosystem. Guests can unwind in the beautifully designed swimming pool, making their stay both rejuvenating and refreshing.

At Ananyamaya Nature Lodge, luxury meets the wild in a celebration of nature and hospitality. It is more than just a stay; it's an unforgettable journey into the heart of Ranthambhore. ■

**Marketed by Terra tales. For more details please contact Gita Choudhry +919810362445**

# TAAI Northern Region hosts members' meet to celebrate new Leadership

The TAAI Northern Region recently organised a members' meet at the Hilton Garden Inn, Saket, marking the first gathering since the election of the new Northern Region Committee comprising Neeraj Malhotra, Anurag Agarwal, and Neeraj Sarna for the 2024-26 tenure.

Sham Nijhawan, Chairman of the Nijhawan Group, was the Guest of Honour for the event. He was presented with a plaque by the TAAI Northern Team in recognition of his unwavering support for TAAI and its members. The occasion also paid tribute to the late Mr. Bansi Nijhawan, a pioneer of the Indian travel and aviation industry, as December 2024 marks his centenary year.

Dr. R.K. Suman, Regional Director of the India Tourism office in New Delhi, graced the event as the Chief Guest. He addressed the attendees and assured the full support of his office in advancing tourism-related initiatives.

Additionally, Awanish Mishra, Tourist Information Officer at India Tourism Delhi, delivered a presentation on the streamlined online process for the registration and certification of travel service providers under the Department of Tourism, Government of India. ■





# Boheda Manor, Udaipur A Luxury Retreat



**B**oheda Manor, Udaipur, is a boutique luxury retreat that seamlessly blends the rich heritage of Rajasthan with contemporary comforts. Located in the serene Shikarbadi area, away from the city's hustle and bustle, the manor offers a tranquil escape surrounded by the majestic Aravali Hills. Guests can enjoy the mesmerizing view of Govardhan Lake from select rooms, enhancing the serene experience.

With its 15 exquisitely designed luxury rooms, a Moroccan-style pool, and lush green lawns, Boheda Manor invites visitors into an oasis of sophistication and relaxation. The property reflects the refined taste of its owner, Rawat Vikram Singh Boheda, harmoniously combining colonial charm with modern architecture.

Rooted in history, Boheda Manor takes its name from "Jagir



Boheda," honouring its royal lineage. The manor's interiors and courtyards echo the grandeur of a bygone era, offering personalised hospitality that embodies Rajasthan's regal traditions.

Ideally located just 10–15 minutes from iconic attractions such as the City Palace, Lake Pichola, Jag Mandir Island, and Bagore Ki Haveli, Boheda Manor serves as a perfect base to explore Udaipur's treasures.

Dedicated to preserving and showcasing Rajasthan's artistic heritage, the manor proudly displays works by local artists, creating an immersive cultural experience for its guests. With its serene ambiance, stately living spaces, and warm hospitality, Boheda Manor offers more than just a stay – it delivers a gateway to Rajasthan's history and charm. ■

Marketed by Terra tales. For more details please contact Gita Choudhry +919810362445



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 December 2024.



**March 21 – April 20**

This month, exercise caution in your career and financial dealings. If you're contemplating a career change, it's better to wait a while longer. Family tensions, if any, can be eased by planning some quality time together.



**July 23 – August 21**

Warmth, love, and excitement will mark your relationships this month. A significant breakthrough in your career is on the horizon, with your efforts receiving due recognition. It's also a good time for making investments.



**November 23 – December 22**

A career milestone awaits if you successfully tackle a challenging task. Stay goal-oriented while adhering to rules. However, it's advisable to refrain from making critical financial decisions for now.



**April 21 – May 21**

Your creativity and skills will shine this month, enabling you to multitask efficiently. Expect a busy period on the professional front. Don't forget to spend quality time with your family amidst the hustle.



**August 22 – September 23**

You'll have several professional opportunities to choose from, and your judicious decision-making will benefit your long-term goals. Focus on strengthening personal relationships and take extra care of your health.



**December 23 – January 20**

This is your time to confidently tackle professional challenges. Watch your spending, as you may be outpacing your earnings. Avoid engaging in irrelevant debates to maintain focus and peace.



**May 22 – June 21**

Prioritize self-care and your well-being. Stay adaptable and persistent, as your courage and talent will propel your career forward. However, avoid making major financial decisions during this time.



**September 24 – October 23**

Adopt a positive outlook and focus on the brighter side of things. Additional responsibilities may arise at work, but avoid risky investments. Incorporating healthy habits into your daily routine will bring long-term benefits.



**January 21 – February 19**

A career change might lead to greater success. Open and honest communication is key to strengthening relationships. Pay attention to your health and indulge in spiritual pursuits for inner growth.



**June 22 – July 22**

Meeting professional goals may be challenging this month. Hard work and seeking help when needed will be crucial. If considering a property purchase, proceed with caution. Be mindful of mood swings as they could affect your family dynamics.



**October 24 – November 22**

This month encourages introspection. Recognize your strengths and work on your weaknesses. Aspiring professionals might find new opportunities opening up. Couples can plan some downtime to enhance bonding and relaxation.



**February 20 – March 20**

Achieving professional goals may seem tough this month, but hard work and seeking assistance will help. Avoid rushing into property investments. Be mindful of mood swings, as they might impact your family life.





Winifred D'souza  
Founder's

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# UTEN

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At present UTEN has more than 8000 Travel Agents & Tour Operators, Hoteliers, DMC Suppliers, Cruise Liners, Forex Partners & Visa Partners pan India who deal in both Outbound & Inbound destinations. Travel Trade Partners under UTEN is growing day by day.

Since the start of UTEN on a regular interval we conduct online & offline Travel & Tourism Training & Presentations, Knowledge Sessions for our UTEN members by taking State Tourism Boards, International Tourism Boards, Cruise Liners, DMC Suppliers, Hoteliers, Forex Companies & Visa Service Providers. UTEN also conducts & organizes regularly a partial paid educational fam ( recce ) trips for our UTEN members on different destinations, hotels, resorts, attractions, theme parks, etc..etc.. for both domestic & international sectors.



UTEN Founder Teams Mr.Satyaprakash Gupta & Ms.Winifred Dsouza has an experience of more than 17 years in Travel & Tourism Industry which helps UTEN Suppliers & Hoteliers in doing networking during the time of this travel trade expo shows where they connect the right suppliers/hoteliers/forex/visa partners.

Till the date UTEN has conducted more than 200 Online & Offline Training, Presentations, Knowledge Sessions, Educational Fam Trips for which the list is also enclosed with this profile along with UTEN Events List till the date has been concluded.

UTEN works with a motto of Empowering Travel Fraternity.

Media Partner



Today's start-ups companies may become tomorrow's reputed firm

Today's reputed firm was yesterday's start up companies or beginners

With this concept we started UTEN in the year 2018 and registered it as GST compliance LLP company.

Agents from Travel & Tourism who register with us, we refer to them as UTENian's

We have UTENian's as new as 4 months old and as old as more than 30 years.



UTEN has organized online & offline events with Ministry of Tourism ( MOT ), Cruise liners like MSC Cruise with Visit & Offline Training Sessions, Offline Australia Tourism Board Destination Presentations, Costa Cruise Visits with offline training sessions, Offline training and presentations with AVIAREPS India on the product which they represents like UTAH in USA, Brussels Tourisms, Budget Car Rental, Offline & Online Training Sessions with TBO, Online Sessions with One Above DMC, NCL Cruise Offline Presentations through PSA Guidelines Travels in Mumbai, India and many more such online & offline training & presentations session organized by UTEN for their members.





### Cheval Collection

TRAC Representations has appointed of **Dr. Banani Saikia** as the new Deputy Director for Indian market. In this important leadership role, Dr. Saikia, a seasoned hotelier, will enhance and augment the development of Indian strategy. In her new role, she will

be responsible for the development of Cheval Collection’s operations, business, and brand in the Indian subcontinent, thus reinforcing the company’s already expanding presence in this dynamic and promising market region.



### Star Alliance

**Michael Rousseau**, President and CEO of Air Canada, has been elected as the new Chairperson of the Star Alliance Chief Executive Board (CEB). He succeeds Scott Kirby, CEO of United, who held the post since December 2020. In his new role as CEB Chairperson of the largest airline

alliance in the world, Mr. Rousseau will lead the two annual board meetings and serve as the spokesperson for the board, guiding the strategic direction of the Alliance, which consists of 25 global member airlines.



### DoubleTree by Hilton Agra

**Rajani Nair Deb** has been appointed as the General manager of DoubleTree by Hilton Agra. With over 22 years of hospitality experience, Rajani most recently served as Commercial Director at Hilton and Hilton Garden Inn Bengaluru Embassy Manyata Business Park, where

she played a pivotal role in driving exceptional growth in hotel performance metrics. Rajani’s career is a testament to her expertise in business development, revenue management, and pre-opening planning.



### Ramada by Wyndham Gorakhpur Gorakhnath Mandir Road

The Ramada by Wyndham Gorakhpur Gorakhnath Mandir Road at Saket Nagar has appointed **Binit Tripathi** as the new General manager for the

hotel. In his New role, Binit will be responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the hotel. This can include managing staff, overseeing finances, budget & forecasting ensuring guest satisfaction, and maintaining the overall appearance and functionality of the property.



### Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport

The Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport has appointed **Varun Pandey** as the new Director of Sales & Marketing. With an impressive career spanning over 16 years in the hospitality industry, Varun brings

a wealth of experience and a proven track record of success from renowned properties, including Courtyard by Marriott Gurugram Downtown and Le Meridien Gurgaon Delhi NCR.



### Air India SATS

Air India SATS Airport Services (AISATS) has appointed **Ramanathan Rajamani** as its Chief Executive Officer. With a distinguished career spanning over two decades, Ramana brings a wealth of experience in leadership, innovation, and operational excellence to the

organization. This marks Ramana’s second tenure as AISATS CEO, a position he previously held from 2018 to 2021.



### Hyatt Place Aurangabad

Hyatt Place Aurangabad Airport has appointed **Ganapati Pandurang Patil** as the new Director of Sales, effective April 2024. With over 16 years of extensive experience in the hospitality industry, Patil in his current role at Hyatt Place Aurangabad Airport, will be responsible

for overseeing key projects and ensuring their successful execution. He collaborates with cross-functional teams to drive innovation and streamline processes within the organization.



### The Earth at Ranthambore

The Earth at Ranthambore has appointed **M L Choudhary** as its new General Manager. With over 15 years of extensive experience in the hospitality sector, ML Choudhary brings a wealth of knowledge in strategic operations, guest satisfaction, and team management.

His leadership is set to enhance the resort’s offerings, ensuring guests continue to enjoy unparalleled wildlife and cultural experiences.

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