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Published and Printed by
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RNI/DELENG/2019/1343884

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- Held on December 18, 2024, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, the BOTT Knowledge Conclave brought together leading voices in tourism to deliberate on the opportunities, challenges, and innovations shaping the future of inbound and outbound travel.

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From the

*Editor's
Desk*

Dear Readers,

Happy New Year!

As we step into 2025, we at BOTT extend our heartfelt wishes for a year filled with new opportunities, growth, and prosperity. May this year bring exciting journeys, meaningful connections, and continued success for the entire tourism fraternity.

The January issue of BOTT is a celebration of insights, milestones, and new beginnings. This edition is centred around two key highlights:

First, we reached out to nearly 50 tourism professionals and veterans to gather their perspectives on 'Tourism Vision 2025'. Their collective wisdom, innovative ideas, and industry forecasts have been thoughtfully compiled to present a comprehensive outlook for the future of tourism in India.

Second, we take immense pride in showcasing the success of the 'BOTT Knowledge Conclave', held at the iconic Bharat Mandapam. The event was attended by close to 500 industry leaders and stakeholders, featuring engaging sessions, thought-provoking discussions, and stellar presentations. Ankush Nijhawan's keynote address and his insightful presentation on emerging tourism trends were a major highlight, receiving widespread appreciation. Smt. Mugdha Sinha IAS, DG Tourism captivated the audience with her eloquence, while the Hon'ble Minister for Tourism expressed an encouraging and optimistic vision for the growth of tourism in India.

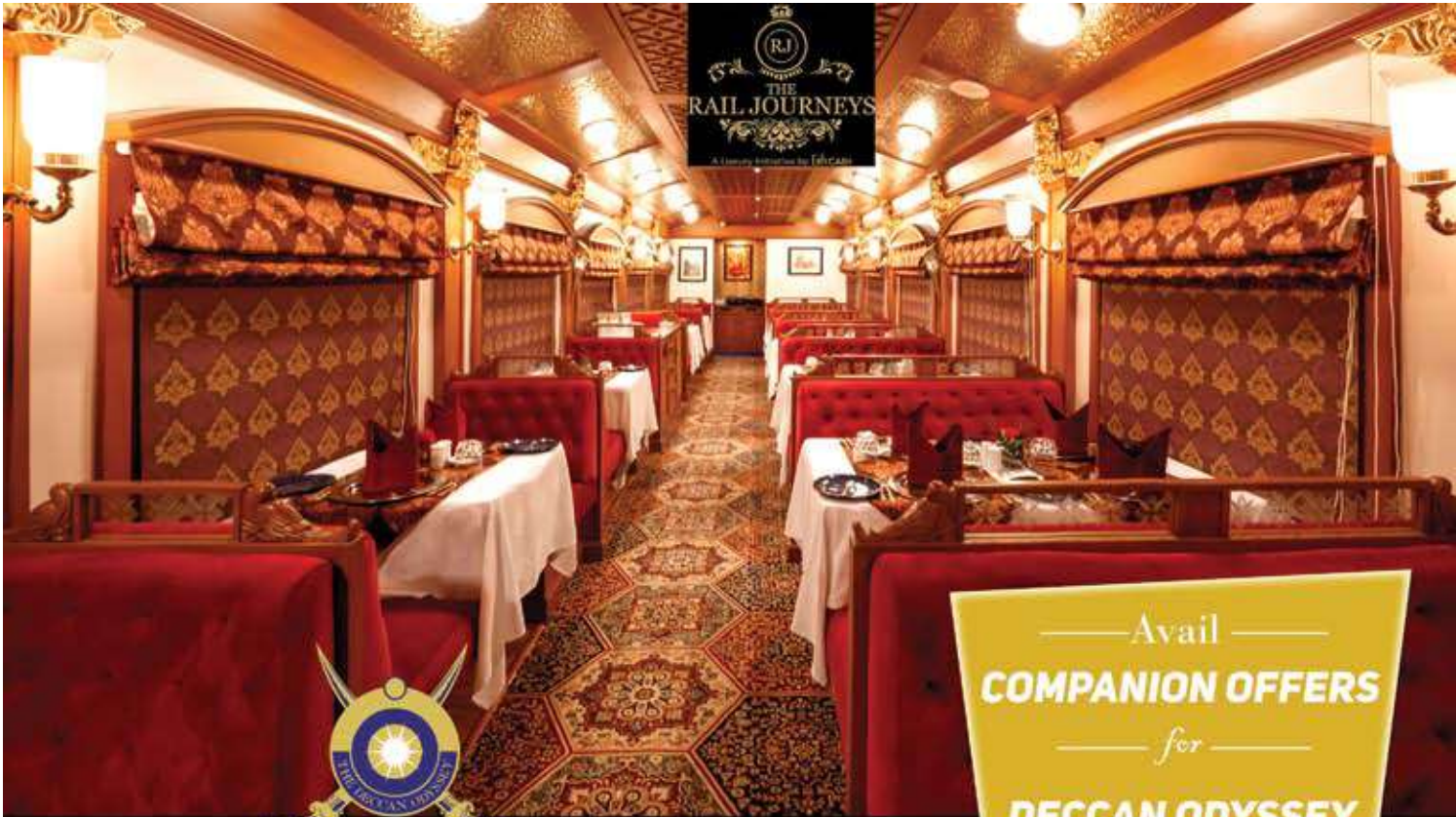
In addition, this issue includes extensive coverage of the BRICS Summit in Moscow, an exciting Taiwan FAM trip, and our regular interviews with industry trailblazers. We're also thrilled to introduce a brand-new section, 'Mumbai Diaries', which will spotlight the latest news, trends, and happenings from India's commercial capital.

As always, we remain committed to bringing you the latest updates and in-depth analyses from the world of travel and tourism. Let's make 2025 a year of collaboration, innovation, and shared success.

Happy reading!

Warm regards,

Priyanka Saxena Ray
Editor, BOTT India
priyanka@bottindia.com



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Royal Jordanian launches non-stop flights from Delhi and Mumbai

Royal Jordanian Airlines announces the launch of new non-stop routes connecting Amman with Mumbai and New Delhi. The Mumbai route will operate with four weekly flights starting on April 17, 2025, and the New Delhi route will commence with four weekly flights starting on September 17, 2025. These new routes align with Royal Jordanian's growth and expansion strategy, focusing on positioning Jordan as a premier tourism destination for the Indian market.



Malaysia Airlines launches global "Time For" Campaign



Malaysia Airlines is starting the new year with the launch of its global "Time For" signature marketing campaign, inviting travellers worldwide to embrace the joy of discovery and make 2025 a year of memorable journeys. In conjunction with the launch of this "Time for" marketing campaign, Malaysia Airlines is offering an exclusive global sale with savings of up to 30% on fares to over 60 destinations.

Air India introduces in-flight Wi-Fi Internet on Domestic Flights

Air India has rolled out Wi-Fi internet connectivity services on board domestic and international flights operated by Airbus A350, Boeing 787-9 and select Airbus A321neo aircraft. This makes Air India the first to offer in-flight Wi-Fi internet connectivity on flights within India, enabling travellers to stay connected to the internet during their flights, and to enjoy browsing, accessing social media, catching up on work, or texting friends and family.



IndiGo connects Bhubaneswar with Dehradun, and Dehradun with Srinagar



IndiGo announces the launch of new domestic routes with direct flights from Bhubaneswar to Dehradun and Dehradun to Srinagar, scheduled to begin operations from February 06, 2025. These additions underscore IndiGo's commitment to enhancing regional and domestic connectivity across India, offering more travel options for passengers. The launch of these routes provides convenient and affordable travel options.

SSR Travel Solutions appointed India Rep for Alliance DMC Jordan

Alliance DMC Jordan has announced its strategic partnership with SSR Reps as its official representative in India. This collaboration marks a key milestone for SSR Travel Solutions, adding Alliance DMC Jordan as the sixth distinguished brand in its Representation portfolio. This alliance further solidifies SSR Reps' reputation as a reliable partner for international travel brands seeking to establish and grow their presence in India.



Turkish Airlines introduces "UNESCO Türkiye Series" Amenity Kit Collection



Turkish Airlines has introduced new amenity kit collection, called the "UNESCO Türkiye Series," which is inspired by six outstanding UNESCO World Heritage sites in Türkiye which are Nemrut, Göbeklitepe, Cappadocia, Ephesus, Ani, and Troy along with four different ebru (Turkish Marbling) designs and three traditional carpet-rug motifs. These new kits are now being offered in Business Class on flights ranging from five to eight hours.

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ITC completes Demerger of ITC Hotels

The much-anticipated demerger of ITC Hotels Ltd. from ITC Ltd. has been successfully completed, marking a significant milestone for the conglomerate. As part of the restructuring, ITC Ltd. retains a 40% stake in its hotel business, while the remaining 60% is directly held by shareholders through a rights entitlement. The demerger aims to unlock value for the company's 36 lakh shareholders, offering them direct exposure to the hospitality sector.



Sterling Holiday Resorts unveils Sterling Brookstone Coorg

Sterling Holiday Resorts has unveiled its latest property, Sterling Brookstone Coorg. The resort features villa and cottage-style accommodations that offer stunning views. Guests can enjoy an array of facilities, including a swimming pool, banquet hall, and an upcoming spa, making it an ideal destination for a well-rounded holiday. Dining at the in-house restaurant, Planter's Kitchen is a culinary journey.

Jetshen joins Sumi Yashshree Hotels & Resorts as Brand Ambassador

Sumi Yashshree Hotels & Resorts has announced Jetshen as its official Brand Ambassador, marking a significant milestone in the brand's journey. Known for her remarkable determination, talent, and inspiring story, Jetshen embodies the core values of grace, resilience, and purpose that align perfectly with the ethos of Sumi Yashshree. As a symbol of inspiration, she adds a new dimension to the brand's identity.



TAAI-NR engages with IATA to address BSP concerns

In a proactive initiative, Neeraj Malhotra, Chairman of TAAI-NR (Travel Agents Association of India – Northern Region), led a meeting with Ritam Saha, Assistant Director of Passenger and Cargo Services, IATA. The session also included the participation of the TAAI-NR Managing Committee alongside a member of TAAI's central Managing Committee. The discussion focused on addressing concerns related to BSP (Billing and Settlement Plan) processes. To further empower members, TAAI-NR announced plans to organize a knowledge session with Saha soon.

TreeHouse Hotels & Resorts announces new property in Belgaum, Karnataka

TreeHouse Hotels & Resorts has announced its upcoming property in Belgaum, Karnataka. TreeHouse Kambers will open its doors shortly and will feature thoughtfully designed rooms and suites, ideal for both business and leisure travellers. The property will boast a spacious banquet hall, perfect for hosting meetings, conferences, and social gatherings. The Hotel will have a "Mountain View Café" at the Roof Top with stunning views of the city.



Bahrain to unveil Middle East's first Surf Park in 2026

Bahrain has announced the launch of Bahrain Surf Park – Club Hawaii Experience, the first surf park in the MENA region to use state-of-the-art 'Wavegarden Cove' technology from Spain. Set to open in early 2026, Bahrain Surf Park will be located on the southwest side of the island, on Bahrain's sunset coast. Bahrain Surf Park will offer over 140,000 surf sessions annually at the Club Hawaii Surf Academy.

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Moscow hosts 2nd 'Meet Global MICE Congress BRICS Edition' with 1300+ Industry Leaders

Moscow recently witnessed a landmark event in the realm of business tourism — the second edition of the Meet Global MICE Congress: BRICS Edition. This highly anticipated gathering brought together over 1,300 representatives from the business tourism sector across BRICS nations, including Brazil, Russia, India, and China, along with participants from the Global South. The event, the largest of its kind in Russia, underscored Moscow's growing stature as a pivotal player in the global MICE industry.

Suhani Mehra



The two-day conference focused on fostering international cooperation, showcasing Moscow's capabilities in hosting world-class business events, and advancing the collective goals of the BRICS nations in the tourism sector. With a series of plenary sessions, discussions, and collaborative opportunities, the Congress served as a platform for dialogue and innovation, reinforcing Moscow's commitment to international tourism partnerships.

Now in its second year, the congress saw its participation and expert presence double, firmly establishing Moscow as a pivotal hub for fostering interaction, building connections, and creating new business opportunities among representatives from 17 BRICS and Global South countries.

The core theme of this year's business program was "Global Challenges and Trends of the MICE Industry: Towards Sustainable Development through the Prism of Experience and Knowledge

of BRICS Countries and the Global South". Participants explored the major transformations shaping the global MICE market and discussed strategies for ensuring sustainable development within the industry.

The program included sessions addressing key issues relevant to both public and private sectors. Topics ranged from developing congress and exhibition infrastructure to leveraging new technological solutions like big data and artificial intelligence.

With 13 business sessions featuring over 50 Russian and international experts, the congress saw high-profile contributions from figures such as Dmitry Vakhrukov, Deputy Minister of Economic Development of the Russian Federation; Evgeny Kozlov, Chairman of the Moscow City Tourism Committee; Amaresh Kumar Tiwari, Immediate Past Vice Chairman of the India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB); and Masood Ahmadvand, Cultural Counsellor of the Embassy of Iran in Moscow. Renowned Russian TV

presenter and producer Andrey Malakhov also spoke, offering a universal recipe for successful event planning.

For the first time, the congress combined cultural and business programs, reflecting modern MICE industry trends. The venue featured unique exhibits such as the 'Moscow Tea Time' and 'Made in Moscow' projects, alongside 18 themed lounges from Russian regions and BRICS countries. These lounges showcased regional MICE opportunities and facilitated new business connections. Attendees also enjoyed live performances by musical groups, highlighting the cultural diversity of BRICS nations.

During the B2B session, foreign delegates conducted over 2,000 meetings. Many participants acknowledged the congress as a significant platform for strengthening cross-border industry relationships, paving the way for more international events to be hosted in Moscow in the near future.

In his keynote address, Kozlov emphasized the importance of creating enduring business ties and collaborating with countries like India, which holds significant potential for expanding bilateral tourism. He announced plans to open an International Congress & Exhibition Complex in Moscow by 2027, highlighting the city's focus on fostering teamwork and innovation.

"Moscow is a reliable partner for tourism," he stated, adding, "We are committed to joined projects aimed at creating international tourism opportunities and hosting regional events on a monthly basis to keep the momentum alive."



Speaking on the sidelines of the Congress, **Evgeny Kozlov**, Chairman of the Moscow, City Tourism Committee shared his admiration for the rich cultural heritage of India and its potential for deepening ties with Moscow.

How does Moscow view collaboration with India in tourism and business sectors?

India is a universe of cultures, and I deeply admire its history and traditions. Moscow sees India as a significant partner in the tourism sector. However, there are logistical challenges, such as the limited number of direct flights – currently only seven from Delhi to Moscow. We hope to see this improve soon.

What steps is Moscow taking to ensure seamless travel for Indian tourists and business travellers?

Previously, the Russian authorities introduced an e-visa regime, making it easier for Indians to visit Moscow.



Currently, discussions are underway between Russian and Indian authorities on the possibility of introducing a visa-free regime for tourist groups. We are committed to making travel more convenient and more accessible.

How does Moscow ensure safety and comfort for international visitors?

Moscow is one of the safest cities in the world, with 230,000 CCTV cameras powered by AI security systems. Public transport, including metro and buses, has near-zero crime rates. In terms of

creating an environment that provides a comfortable stay for international guests, we particularly focus on catering to diverse culinary preferences with a range of Indian and Chinese cuisines, reflecting our hospitality and cultural inclusivity.

What is your vision for business tourism in Moscow?

The mix of hospitality, cultural heritage, and state-of-the-art facilities positions Moscow as a prime destination for business tourism. With initiatives like monthly regional events and the upcoming expo center, we are confident of driving significant growth in this sector.”

The Meet Global MICE Congress not only strengthened Moscow’s role as a global tourism hub but also paved the way for deeper collaboration among BRICS nations. With its focus on safety, accessibility, and cultural inclusivity, Moscow continues to rise as a beacon for business tourism, fostering partnerships that transcend borders.



EXPERT OPINION

Amaresh Tiwari

**Immediate Past Vice Chairman,
India Convention Promotion Bureau**

BRICS thrives because of the 'I' in the middle—that's the significance of India. The global MICE industry has already surpassed \$1 trillion, yet India's share is just 1%, amounting to \$10 billion. However, domestic and outbound MICE together contribute approximately \$33 billion, projected to grow to \$97 billion by 2032.

The World Economic Forum estimates that every \$100 spent on MICE generates an indirect impact of \$160 on the local GDP. In India, over the next three years, we aim to create a \$100 billion impact, significantly boosting the GDP.

Our Prime Minister envisions a convention centre in every state. With facilities ranging from 200 to 1,000 seats, like Bharat Mandapam, these centres will drive economic growth. Investment in infrastructure impacts local GDP positively, benefiting stakeholders such as hotels, venues, and the entire supply chain.

The Government of India's immediate goal, aligned with ICPB, is to increase our global MICE market share from less than 1% to 2.5% and position five Indian cities in the top 100 MICE destinations. In the long term, we aim for a 10% market share, with at least five cities in the top 50 and 10 cities in the top 100.

Gajesh Giridhar

**National Coordinator, NIMA
(Network of Indian MICE Agents)**

Connectivity remains India's biggest challenge when traveling to destinations like Moscow. Discussions are underway regarding additional flights, and we have assurances that more flights will soon be available, as the Moscow government is taking this issue seriously.

In terms of infrastructure, India is well-prepared with large convention centres. However, there is a shortage of skilled MICE professionals. To address this, NIMA has initiated a training program to educate upcoming students about the MICE industry. We have partnered with multiple universities across India to prepare the next generation of professionals capable of managing MICE groups effectively.

Ajay Sharma

Delight Holidays

We have been actively promoting Russia as a destination, and it has been very well-received. Travelers are happy with the seamless experience, and the number of tourists is steadily increasing, even during winters. Russia is successfully positioning itself as a winter destination, which Moscow is keen to promote further.

Some ambassadors believe that a visa-free policy might not necessarily attract more tourists, but the destination's unique appeal continues to draw travellers.

Avni Parekh

Ezy Holidays

This has been an invaluable training program for us, offering real-time insights into the destination. It helps us understand the Indian market better, including clients' comfort zones and expectations. The destination's infrastructure and facilities are outstanding, and the hospitality is exceptional. Visitors experience a high level of comfort and security, which adds to the appeal of promoting this destination. ■

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Vision 2025



Dr. Subhash Goyal,
Chairman STIC Travel and Air
Charter Group

My vision for 2025 is that Indian Tourism will exceed the 2019 figures and digital marketing will become more aggressive. I also hope that all those countries where Indian tourist offices have closed down we should appoint Marketing agents in all the source markets. By 2025, I see the tourism industry becoming more sustainable, eco-friendly and innovative. It will focus on protecting nature and culture while giving travellers meaningful and memorable experiences. Technology will make travel easier and smarter, helping people explore the world in ways that are both convenient and eco-friendly. Sustainable practices will redefine the industry, integrating eco-friendly infrastructure and carbon-neutral transportation. Local communities will play a bigger role, sharing their traditions and stories while benefiting from tourism in fair and lasting ways. Tourism will become more than just traveling. It will connect people, promote understanding, and inspire everyone to take care for the planet.

Tourism Vision 2025

Insights and Aspirations

As the world steps into 2025, the travel and tourism industry stands poised for unprecedented growth and innovation. Over 40 distinguished industry leaders have come together to share their insights, aspirations, and strategies for shaping the future of tourism. From leveraging technology and sustainability to unlocking new markets and enhancing experiences, their collective vision offers a roadmap for progress, resilience, and global collaboration.

Compiled by : Priyanka Saxena Ray, Gunjan Sabikhi, Anjali Pokhriyal,
Shreya Shimpi, Pallavi Sharma

Rajiv Mehra
President, IATO



Tourism 2025 stands as a beacon of opportunity, promising innovation, sustainability, and growth. As we step into this pivotal year, our collective mission is to redefine tourism by embracing resilience, inclusivity, and environmental stewardship. Our roadmap for 2025 focuses on collaboration among stakeholders—governments, private enterprises, local communities, and travellers. Technology will be a cornerstone, with digital transformation enhancing customer experiences, streamlining operations, and promoting destinations globally. Simultaneously, sustainability will take centre stage, with a commitment to green tourism, conservation of natural resources, and minimising carbon footprints.

Empowering local communities is essential for long-term success. Tourism must serve as a vehicle for cultural preservation, economic growth, and skill development. By investing in infrastructure, fostering partnerships, and promoting inclusive policies, we aim to create a tourism ecosystem that benefits everyone.

As we move forward, our vision is clear: to position tourism as a force for good—one that celebrates diversity, protects our planet, and builds a future where exploration and progress coexist harmoniously. Together, we will craft a thriving and resilient tourism industry for generations to come.



Sunil Kumar
President, TAAI

The year 2025 marks a significant juncture for the travel and tourism industry, offering unparalleled opportunities to innovate and grow. Guided by the principle of “Continuous Improvement – Consistent Performance,” we at TAAI recognize the need to evolve and stay attuned to the dynamic changes shaping our world. This vibrant era demands proactive adaptation, and 2025 stands as a year brimming with “Opportunities Like Never Before.” At TAAI, our priorities are clear and purposeful. We aim to put Members First by fostering inclusivity, addressing their needs, and providing robust support. Strengthening our Network will remain central to our efforts, creating collaborative opportunities and fostering partnerships that drive collective growth. Embracing Technology Support, we will work towards empowering our members with tools and insights to thrive in an increasingly digitalized world. Additionally, 2025 is particularly special as we gear up to celebrate a landmark occasion—TAAI’s 75th year. This milestone inspires us to honour our rich legacy while setting bold new aspirations for the future.



Ankush Nijhawan,
Joint Managing Director,
TBO.COM

India is witnessing remarkable growth in outbound tourism, a trend that shows no signs of slowing down. In fact, there is every reason to believe that this growth can not only match but significantly surpass the levels achieved in 2019. Several key factors contribute to this optimistic outlook.

Firstly, the aviation sector is expanding rapidly, with an increasing number of aircraft being added to fleets. This development is not only enhancing connectivity but also making international travel more accessible to a broader segment of the population. Additionally, the opening of new destinations, both domestically and internationally, is providing travelers with a wider array of choices, catering to diverse preferences and interests.

Another major driver is the rise in disposable income among India’s burgeoning middle class, coupled with a growing aspiration for global travel experiences. As more people gain the financial means to explore the world, the demand for outbound tourism is expected to skyrocket. This is further bolstered by the proliferation of user-friendly travel platforms and increasing awareness of international destinations, making planning and booking trips easier than ever before.



Chander Mansharamani,
Vice Chairman, ICPB

Tourism in 2025 should prioritise expanding inbound foreign tourism while sustaining the growth of domestic travel. Domestic tourism has shown remarkable resilience and is thriving, but relying solely on this segment limits our potential. The international market must be nurtured and expanded to fully capitalize on India’s diverse offerings. With proactive support from the Ministry of Tourism and initiatives like improved infrastructure and global marketing campaigns, the outlook for inbound tourism is promising. The MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) segment holds immense potential, especially with state-of-the-art convention centres like Yashobhoomi and Bharat Mandapam. These facilities position India as a prime destination for global events, driving economic growth and enhancing its global tourism profile.

Vision 2025



K.B. Kachru,
President, Hotel Association
of India (HAI) and
Chairman – South Asia,
Radisson Hotel Group

India's hospitality sector is poised for significant growth in 2025, continuing to build on the previous years, largely on domestic demand for leisure, business travel, weddings and Select Events. For the fiscal 2023-2024, the branded and organised hotel sector in India closed with a nationwide occupancy of 67.5%, with a record high ADR of ₹8,055 and a RevPAR of ₹5,439.

According to a recent ICRA report, the revenues of the sector are expected to grow by 7-9% year-on-year (YoY) in FY 2024-25, and 6-8% YoY in FY 2025-26.

The demand outlook is healthy, supported by several factors like enhanced infrastructure including convention centres, roads, airports, rail that have improved connectivity, growth in tier 2 and 3 cities, India's burgeoning middleclass with travellers taking more than 3 leisure trips in a year, events like Mahakumbh, Cold Play concert in addition to the demand for weddings and other events. Reportedly the supply is expected to grow only at a CAGR of 4.5-5%, lagging demand and this will improve yields as well.



Domestic tourism to outpace economic growth by 15%: Gajendra Singh Shekhawat unveils vision for India Tourism at BOTT Knowledge Conclave

Domestic tourism in India is poised to grow exponentially, outpacing the nation's economic growth by 15 per cent over the next five years, said Union Minister of Tourism & Culture Gajendra Singh Shekhawat unveiling his vision for India Tourism.

Addressing a gathering at the BOTT Knowledge Conclave: Tourism@2025, held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, the Minister spotlighted India's unprecedented strides in the tourism sector, cementing the nation's position as a global travel hub. "India has witnessed a remarkable 95.64% increase in domestic tourist numbers, propelling the country's ranking on the Global Travel and Tourism Development Index from 65 to 39," he said.

"Investments exceeding ₹6,800 crore have been directed towards destination development, with additional projects worth ₹3,295.76 crore approved to enhance lesser-known tourism sites across states. Initiatives like the e-tourist visa facility have greatly benefited international visitors," said Shekhawat.

Highlighting the sector's pivotal role in economic growth, the Minister emphasized a paradigm shift from monumental tourism to experiential tourism. He also acknowledged emerging trends in Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) tourism and medical tourism, while underscoring the need for enhanced infrastructure to meet global standards. "Tourism connects cultures and bridges nations."





The ‘Whole of Government’ approach initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has redefined the tourism landscape by integrating development and heritage preservation. This transformative vision has not only fuelled domestic tourism but also elevated India’s global standing,” he said. “We must collaborate to ensure that tourism becomes the driving engine of the Indian economy. We are preparing for 45 crore visitors for Mahakumbh in Uttar Pradesh,” he added.

BOTT Knowledge Conclave: Tourism@2025 - Charting the Future of Tourism

BOTT – Business of Travel Trade, India’s premier travel trade magazine is known for doing things differently, once again stood for its ethos of keeping the content supreme by hosting an extremely successful Tourism 2025 Knowledge Conclave, a landmark event that highlighted the immense potential of the global travel industry. Held on December 18, 2024, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, the conclave brought together leading voices in tourism to deliberate on the opportunities, challenges, and innovations shaping the future of inbound and outbound travel. With the theme ‘Tourism 2025: Navigating Opportunities in Inbound and Outbound Tourism,’ the conclave provided valuable insights into the evolving travel landscape and explored strategies to drive growth in this dynamic sector. Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister of Tourism, Government of India, graced the event as the Chief Guest, addressing the audience with his vision for India’s tourism sector in 2025.

The BOTT Knowledge Conclave featured two compelling Theme Sessions. The first session delved into the rise of inbound tourism, discussing India’s growing global appeal through emerging destinations, evolving traveller preferences such as sustainable and wellness tourism, and the pivotal role of infrastructure and innovation in enhancing the tourism ecosystem.

The second session examined the future of outbound tourism, highlighting global destinations, visas and aviation issues related to them, the growing demand for experiential and luxury travel, and the importance of fostering partnerships between international tourism boards and Indian travel operators.

Vision 2025



Himanshu Patil,
President, OTOAI

I am deeply honored to serve as the President of the Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI). My vision for Tourism 2025 is to create a thriving, dynamic, and resilient outbound tourism sector. I am highly optimistic about the growth of outbound travel, with businesses poised to expand as new opportunities emerge in global markets. At OTOAI, we are committed to undertaking initiatives that enhance the knowledge and expertise of our members, enabling them to adapt to the evolving travel landscape. This year, we plan to organize workshops, training programs, and our annual convention to foster collaboration and innovation. Together, we aim to set higher industry benchmarks and position India as a leading player in outbound travel.



Vision 2025



Rajat Sawhney,
Vice President, ADTOI

India's Vision for Tourism 2025 is centred on sustainable practices, digital transformation, and diversified travel experiences. Sustainability will be a top priority, with destinations embracing eco-friendly measures to protect the environment. The use of digital platforms for booking and planning is expected to grow exponentially, with technology enhancing resilience in the sector. Artificial intelligence will help predict trends, personalize itineraries, and manage overtourism. In 2025, India will witness a digital transformation that will reshape the travel landscape.

Experiential, spiritual, and wellness holidays will dominate in 2025, with travellers seeking unique and meaningful experiences. Exotic locations, culinary tours, and immersive activities like visiting the Northern Lights or engaging in wildlife experiences will be highly sought after. Personalized, responsible, and community-based tourism will take centre stage.

Destination weddings will surge, particularly as younger generations look to host extravagant, fairytale-like celebrations in stylish and unique settings. This sector will become a significant contributor to tourism in 2025. Domestic tourism will continue to thrive, while outbound travel will experience remarkable growth.



THE INAUGURAL SESSION

Priyanka Saxena Ray, Editor, BOTT, welcoming guests said, "The BOTT Knowledge Conclave is a pioneer in its approach, bringing together media, government, and tourism stakeholders on a common platform. It serves as a catalyst for meaningful dialogue, fostering partnerships that will drive the growth of tourism in India and beyond. Looking ahead, 2025 holds immense promise for the tourism sector. With global travel rebounding and new destinations emerging, we foresee a significant boom driven by innovation, sustainability, and enhanced connectivity. The optimism is palpable, and as an industry, we are ready to harness this momentum."





Keynote Address

Ankush Nijhawan, Joint Managing Director, TBO.COM narrated the 'Story of Tourism' through an extremely exhaustive and brilliantly curated presentation that drove some very interesting points home –

- Culture, Adventure, Wellness are key themes after leisure seeker
- The global accommodation market is expected to reach \$1250 Bn in 2027 growing at a CAGR of 10% between 2023 and 2027.



Vision 2025



Rajnish Kaistha,
Sr. Vice President, IATO

As we look toward 2025, the roadmap for tourism is brimming with opportunities and optimism. Having emerged from the challenging shadows of COVID-19, the industry is now on a strong recovery path. Aviation is at the forefront of this resurgence, with IndiGo and Air India expanding their fleets, increasing domestic and international routes, and improving connectivity to tier-2 and tier-3 cities. Additionally, the influx of international airlines adding more routes to India signals the global interest in our country as a key destination. This growth is laying the foundation for a thriving tourism ecosystem, offering travellers a blend of modernity, heritage, and unparalleled experiences, creating a bright future for the sector.

Vision 2025



Ravi Gosain,
Vice President, IATO

We have to think tourism as a resilient, sustainable and inclusive growth driver which adapts to global challenges and opportunities. It not only enriches the experiences of travellers but also promoting cultural exchange, environmental awareness and socio-economic development. We entered 2025 amid geopolitical tensions, wars and inflation around the world, so focus should be on safeguarding framework for the tourism industry and collaborating with international organisations like UNWTO to monitor risks and establish robust plans for disruptions. In India domestic tourism is strengthening which serve as buffer against international tourism (inbound and outbound) market fluctuations. Development of lesser-known destinations will create more opportunities, diverse tourism ecosystem. Sustainable tourism practises and digital transformations will be the key to success. Thus, in 2025 vision focus should be on resilience, sustainability and innovation which will ensure long term growth, adaptability and positive impact on both global and Indian tourism sectors.



- India Inbound: 2024 arrivals set to match pre-pandemic levels; likely to exceed in 2025.
- India Inbound: FEEs hit \$15.3 billion (INR 1.27 lakh crores) in H1 2024. Registering 17.6% rise from 2023 and 5.5% growth vs 2019.
- The outbound air traffic is expected to reach 42 million passengers in 2027 growing at a CAGR of ~6% between 2023 and 2027.
- Outbound Indian market could reach 100 million international trips by 2030

MINISTERIAL ADDRESS

Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister of Tourism & Culture, Government of India said, "India has witnessed a remarkable 95.64% increase in domestic tourist numbers, propelling the country's ranking on the Global Travel and Tourism Development Index from 65 to 39. Investments exceeding ₹6,800 crore have been directed towards destination development, with additional





projects worth ₹3,295.76 crore approved to enhance lesser-known tourism sites across states. Initiatives like the e-tourist visa facility have greatly benefited international visitors. Tourism connects cultures and bridges nations. The ‘Whole of Government’ approach initiated by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has redefined the tourism landscape by integrating development and heritage preservation. This transformative vision has not only fuelled domestic tourism but also elevated India’s global standing. We must collaborate to ensure that



Vision 2025



Vaibhav Kala,
Sr. Vice President, ATOAI

Year 2025 should bring a renewed urgency to bring a return of inbound travel into the country, which is yet to return to pre-pandemic levels. India’s reputation as a safe and attractive destination should continue to be bolstered. The reopening of foreign tourist offices, campaigns to showcase India’s natural heritage, little known destinations and our great biodiversity is the need of the hour. Adventure tourism promotion and efforts must be highlighted to display our intent in ensuring India will have world class standards, through the formation of the National Board for Adventure Tourism as part of the national strategy for promotion of adventure tourism accompanied by its opening of more border areas, relaxation of satellite phone usage, formation of a model law on adventure tourism and adoption of ATOAI guidelines across 29 verticals of adventure travel.

Vision 2025



Arshdeep Anand,
Vice President, ATOAI

The Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) envisions positioning India as the world's leading adventure tourism destination, attracting travellers throughout the year. ATOAI plans to expand its network of responsible members through a nationwide membership drive while championing sustainable tourism practices. ATOAI exemplified the possibility of doing large-scale events in a responsible manner in the recently concluded Convention to Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh, which is an ecologically sensitive area.

Central to this mission are several key initiatives. These include skill development through comprehensive guide training programs, which are being held in various parts of the country and the exploration of border tourism opportunities in collaboration with the Indian Army. ATOAI is also committed to identifying and promoting new adventure tourism areas across the country. Additionally, ATOAI's Women's Collective is in the process of developing guidelines for safety of women travellers will be working closely with all stake holders to create awareness about gender responsibility through workshops, webinars to ensure that adventure tourism in India is both safe and inclusive, for everyone.



tourism becomes the driving engine of the Indian economy. We are preparing for 45 crores visitors for Maha Kumbh.”

SESSION CHAIR ADDRESS

Mugdha Sinha, Director General of Tourism, Government of India, said, “Tourism holds the transformative power to reshape the way the world works. It can elevate the per capita income of the nation, generate employment on a massive scale, and bring communities closer together. To harness this potential, we must ensure that the governance of our tourism infrastructure aligns seamlessly with global standards and vocabulary, enabling India to shine brighter on the





Vision 2025



Jyoti Mayal,
Chairperson-THSC and Chief Executive, New Airways Travels (Delhi)

In 2025, the tourism industry in India will thrive on synergy and collaboration, with public-private partnerships playing a pivotal role. These partnerships will drive innovation and infrastructure development, ensuring the sector remains competitive and resilient. Emphasis on skilling and upskilling will empower the workforce to deliver exceptional service, enhancing the overall travel experience. The consumer will be the king and will require personalized and seamless travel experiences tailored to individual preferences. Sustainable practices will be at the forefront, preserving the natural and cultural heritage of destinations. By fostering a culture of inclusivity and accessibility, the tourism industry will create memorable and enriching experiences for all travellers. This vision will not only boost the economy but also promote responsible and conscious travel, making tourism a force for good in the world.

Luxury travel & MICE will see a significant boost, with a focus on providing exclusive and bespoke experiences. Marketing strategies will highlight the unparalleled luxury and unique offerings of destinations, leveraging digital platforms and social media to reach a global audience.

world stage. Domestic tourism is already witnessing remarkable growth, fuelled by a growing interest in experiential travel, heritage exploration, and wellness tourism. Simultaneously, we are optimistic about a robust rebound in inbound tourism, as international travellers rediscover India's timeless charm and unparalleled hospitality. By working together, we can make inbound tourism not only viable but immensely profitable, turning it into a cornerstone of India's economic future."



Vision 2025



P.P. Khanna,
Immediate Past President,
ADTOI

The BOTT Knowledge Conclave marks a pivotal moment in shaping India's tourism vision for 2025. Domestic tourism, which contributes approximately 95% of the industry's revenue, is our backbone. While we celebrate its growth, we must now focus on promoting inbound tourism by highlighting India's cultural, natural, and spiritual treasures to the world. With global travellers increasingly seeking unique and immersive experiences, India's appeal as a destination is undeniable. Strategic marketing campaigns, improved infrastructure, and partnerships with global tour operators will be critical. By prioritizing inbound tourism, we can ensure sustainable growth, generate employment, and solidify India's position on the global tourism map.



THEME SESSION: 1

Tourism@25 – India Tourism Perspective

Ankur Kalra, General Secretary, EEMA

The wedding business in India contributes ₹5 lakh crore to the economy. However, Indians spend an additional ₹3,000–5,000 crore on weddings abroad. This is why the 'Wed in India' initiative is so critical. If we can create impactful campaigns and provide world-class facilities, we can bring this spending back to India and stop this economic outflow. The range of wedding destinations and experiences we offer here in India is truly unparalleled.



Dr. Jyotsna Suri, Chairperson & Managing Director, The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group

Growth is inevitable, especially in a country like India with its aspirational demography. We have the youngest population globally—an aspirational class with increasing disposable incomes. We haven't even scratched the surface of our potential. While there are concerns about sluggish inbound tourism and a growing outbound market, domestic travel is thriving. It's the domestic movement that helped hoteliers survive the pandemic and its aftermath.



Vision 2025



Amaresh Tiwari,
Past Vice Chairman, ICPB

The tourism industry in 2025 has the potential to reach unprecedented heights, particularly if policymakers strategically prioritize the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) segment along with inbound tourism. Despite India's vast cultural, natural, and historical resources and its expanding infrastructure, these critical sectors remain underutilized, leaving significant room for growth and global positioning.

To transform India into a world-class MICE destination, a multi-pronged approach is essential. This includes enhancing cost competitiveness to attract international organizers, investing in skill development to create a highly professional workforce, and upgrading infrastructure to meet global standards. Efforts must also address seamless connectivity, state-of-the-art convention centres, and support services that align with the needs of international events.

Government initiatives like Incredible India 2.0 and Meet in India hold immense potential to reimagine India's global brand and position it as a top choice for international conferences, exhibitions, and events.



Vision 2025



Preeti Khanna,
Executive Director, EMMA
(Event Management
Association of India)

Tourism in 2025 is poised for significant growth across multiple segments. The domestic market has proven to be a cornerstone of resilience, particularly during the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, as the world reopens, India is uniquely positioned to attract international tourists with its unparalleled diversity, offering everything from adventure and spirituality to cultural heritage and natural wonders. Our country is a treasure trove for travellers seeking immersive experiences, and with targeted marketing strategies and enhanced infrastructure, the international market will flourish. India's ability to cater to a broad spectrum of interests ensures tourism will continue to thrive in the coming years.



Rajeev Kohli, CIS, CITP, DMCP, Joint Managing Director, Creative Travel

MICE is a massive opportunity for India. Unfortunately, our sector has often relied on infrastructure as an excuse for stagnation. According to ICCA, India ranks 33rd globally for hosting events. In the meetings space, there are only a few of us actively promoting India as a MICE destination. The marketing focus often leans towards leisure tourism rather than business events. We need to shift that perspective and aggressively promote India for its MICE potential.



Tanuja Pandey, Advisor & Steering Committee Member, Directorate of Tourism, Maharashtra and Founder Director Miceonline & Uniqstays

Maharashtra ranks fifth in domestic tourism and second in international tourist arrivals, with 15 lakh visitors on tourist visas. Mumbai, in particular, is on the wish list of nearly every international traveller, second only to Varanasi. We're making significant efforts to improve our rankings in both domestic and international tourism. The key lies in targeted marketing and creating the right kind of buzz around our offerings.



Vision 2025



Rajeev Kohli,
 CIS, CITP, DMCP, Joint
 Managing Director,
 Creative Travel

I am highly optimistic about the future of tourism in 2025, especially with the Ministry of Tourism taking proactive measures to elevate India's global profile as a premier travel destination. Recent announcements and initiatives reflect a forward-thinking approach, aligning with evolving consumer preferences and the changing dynamics of the global travel landscape.

Key areas of focus include leveraging digital campaigns to reach a broader and more targeted audience, promoting sustainability to appeal to environmentally conscious travellers, and curating immersive travel experiences that offer deeper cultural connections. If these strategies are implemented effectively, they have the potential to reshape India's image, positioning the country as a leader in the global tourism industry.

The growing demand among international travellers for authentic, cultural, and eco-friendly experiences presents a significant opportunity.



Vision 2025



Jagdeep Bhagat,
President, Tourism India
Alliance (TIA)

The tourism sector is gearing up for a phenomenal year in 2025, with stakeholders working collectively to unlock new opportunities. This optimism is rooted in the growing demand for unique travel experiences, improved connectivity, and government support for tourism initiatives. From domestic travel to inbound tourism, the industry is expanding its horizons, leveraging India's diverse offerings. The focus on sustainability, cultural preservation, and digital innovation will play a key role in shaping the future. By embracing change and fostering collaboration, we can ensure multifaceted growth, making India a preferred destination for travellers worldwide. The potential for success is truly limitless.



Anshul Sethi, Head of Sales – India, IndiGo

As an airline, we understand the critical role we play in bringing travellers into the country. At IndiGo, we've launched an incredible initiative called 'India by IndiGo,' which connects travellers to every corner of the country. The government is also contributing through relaxed visa norms and the introduction of e-visas. We've taken this a step further with our 10 codeshare partners, extending our reach globally and enhancing connectivity.





THEME SESSION: 2

Tourism@2025 – Outbound Tourism Perspective

Yummi Talwar, Chief Operating Officer for the South Asia Region, VFS Global

India's outbound travel market has seen remarkable growth. In the first half of 2024, we exceeded the visa volumes of pre-pandemic 2019, and the momentum continues to build. The embassies we work with are highly optimistic, and India



Vision 2025



Ankur Kalra,
General Secretary, EMMA
(Event Management
Association of India)

Tourism in 2025 is set to be a transformative period for India. The government's proactive initiatives, including infrastructure upgrades, digital campaigns, and ease of doing business, are creating a conducive environment for growth. Associations like EMMA are complementing these efforts by promoting tourism-linked events that showcase India's diversity and capabilities. The rise of hybrid events and unique travel experiences will further elevate the appeal of India as a destination. With greater collaboration between stakeholders, the industry is well-positioned to reach unprecedented levels of success. Tourism will continue to contribute significantly to the economy while enriching the cultural fabric of India.

Vision 2025



K.S. Sahani,
Indian Tourist Transporters
Association

Tourism in 2025 is expected to flourish across multiple dimensions, offering unparalleled diversity for travellers. The rise of medical tourism has positioned India as a global hub for healthcare services. Simultaneously, niche segments like forest tourism, jungle tourism, palace tourism, and spiritual tourism are witnessing exponential growth. Gone are the days when tourists primarily visited the Golden Triangle—Delhi, Agra, and Jaipur. Today, destinations like Ayodhya, Shri Amritsar Sahib, and other religious and spiritual landmarks are attracting a significant influx of travellers. Moreover, the allure of India's wildlife and luxury resorts is drawing attention from global and domestic markets. We are optimistic that 2025 will usher in one of the best seasons for tourism, redefining India's appeal on the world stage.



is now a key focus for many foreign markets. This year, everyone is preparing to handle larger volumes. To meet the growing demand, we've upgraded our visa application centres, expanded our reach through travel advisors across different cities, and increased capacity. Earlier this year, we introduced temporary service points for UK visas in Tier-4 cities like Ludhiana, Shimla, Mohali, and Amritsar, where we don't usually have permanent centres. Additionally, we've begun hosting roadshows for travel advisors and tour operators to ensure smooth operations in the years to come.

Manish Puri, Head of Sales, Air India

The outbound market is expanding at an incredible pace, driven by the younger generation's eagerness to explore new destinations. The data clearly





Vision 2025



Himmat Anand,
Founder, Tree of Life

highlights the increasing need for wide-body aircraft, not just for domestic circuits but also for international travel. Pre-COVID, Air India was the only Indian carrier operating wide-body aircraft, but now that landscape is changing. Looking ahead to 2027, 2030, and even 2047, India's fleet size is expected to grow exponentially. At present, we have 570 aircraft, 90 of which are wide-body planes, with 60 actively flying. By 2028, Air India alone will likely operate 150 wide-body aircraft. The demand is undeniable, and now is the time to bolster our domestic carriers and scale up international operations. Supporting and promoting Indian airlines is the need of the hour.

My expectations for tourism in 2025 are optimistic, driven by the strong performance of domestic tourism and niche segments like destination weddings. While these sectors lead the way, it is crucial to address the gaps in inbound tourism to realize the industry's full potential. India's cultural richness, coupled with an expanding network of hotels and airlines, provides a solid foundation for growth. However, strategic improvements in visa policies, destination management, and global promotion are essential to attract more international travellers. As we move forward, 2025 promises to be a pivotal year for tourism, offering exciting opportunities for growth and innovation in the sector.



Vision 2025



Mita Vohra,
Board Director – Sarova
Hotels & Resorts

As we celebrate our 50th Anniversary this year and look forward to marking our 51st year in April 2025, we are proud to reflect on our legacy of delivering exceptional hospitality while focusing on the future. India remains a key market for Sarova Hotels, and our participation in major trade shows like OTM and SATTE, alongside city roadshows and sales calls, highlights our commitment to this vibrant market. From leisure to MICE and weddings, we continue to showcase Kenya's unique travel experiences and our signature Sarova hospitality.

Looking ahead to 2025, we are excited about planned renovations at Sarova Shaba Game Lodge and the creation of an incredible rooftop experience at Panafric Hotel. These initiatives reflect our dedication to enhancing guest experiences and strengthening our position in the Indian market. We thank our Indian travel partners for their unwavering support and look forward to further collaboration in the coming year.



Isha Goyal, CEO, STIC Travel Group

Today, any Indian who dreams of traveling is making it happen. Three years ago, pre-COVID, cruises were seen as aspirational and out of reach for many. Now, they are accessible to everyone—even students—and that's incredibly exciting. Tourism brands from around the world are eager to enter the Indian market because everyone wants a piece of it. What has changed dramatically post-COVID is the diversity of our customer base. Earlier, we grouped travellers into broad segments like students, leisure, or MICE. Now, we're seeing micro-segments emerge within these categories. For instance, in adventure travel,





there are budget and luxury travellers; within leisure, there are dozens of niches, including solo travellers. This diversity is the most exciting aspect of India's outbound travel market. There's now an Indian traveller for every type of experience.

**Surabhi Rana, Head-Air Service Development,
Noida International Airport**

The Noida International Airport is fully managed by Zurich Airport



Vision 2025



**Amulya Kakkar,
Vice President and General
Manager, Hotel Clarks
Shiraz Agra**

2024 was a remarkable year for the industry and as we look ahead to 2025, we are optimistic about another bright year. The inauguration of Jewar Airport, scheduled for April 2025, is set to transform connectivity. With 30-40 domestic flights and 10-15 international flights expected, Agra—just 1.5 to 2 hours away—will significantly benefit. This enhanced access will position Agra as a prime tourist destination, driving both domestic and international visitor numbers.

Historically known as India's tourism capital, Agra's infrastructure has improved considerably in the last 7-8 years, yet more needs to be done. Enhancing night-time activities and completing pending projects like the Shivaji Museum, light-and-sound shows at Agra Fort, and the musical fountain at Shahjahan Garden are critical.

For Agra to thrive as a two-night destination—similar to Jaipur—the state government must prioritize these projects. Tourism is the backbone of Agra's economy, and boosting overnight stays will not only revitalise the city but also significantly contribute to the state's economic growth.

Vision 2025



Randhir Gupta,

**Vice President – Commercial
& Business Development,
MAYFAIR Elixir (Mayfair
Hotels & Resorts)**

Luxury travel is set to witness rapid growth in 2025, driven by evolving preferences among younger travellers who are increasingly opting for short, indulgent getaways to nearby destinations. This demographic shift highlights a growing trend: luxury travellers are no longer just seeking opulence but are also prioritizing unique and meaningful experiences that provide fulfilment and a deeper connection to their destinations. Luxury travellers in 2025 are expected to splurge on special occasions, gravitate towards visibly branded luxury products and services, and demand exceptional value for their investments. These trends reflect a shift in consumer behaviour, where personalization, exclusivity, and high-quality offerings are becoming non-negotiable. Despite global uncertainties, including ongoing geopolitical tensions and economic challenges, India's resilient economy, projected to grow at an impressive rate of over 7% GDP, will play a significant role in sustaining and driving the luxury travel market.



International. It is 100% owned by them, and we've set up an Indian subsidiary to oversee its operations. We have a 40-year concession from the Government of Uttar Pradesh to design, develop, and operate the airport in four phases. Currently, we are working on Phase 1, which will handle over 12 million passengers annually. Once fully developed, Phase 4 will have the capacity to process 70 million passengers per year. This reflects the immense growth and demand in the region. The airport is set to serve 60 to 90 million people, covering not just Delhi and Gurgaon but the entire NCR and Western Uttar Pradesh. These areas have strong potential in both tourism and cargo. We are in advanced discussions with several airlines, including Air India, and have already signed agreements with IndiGo and Akasa Air. Construction is underway, and we are confident that the airport will effectively meet future demands.





Seema Roy, Area Managing Director - South Asia, Middle East & Africa, Preferred Hotels & Resorts

Today's travellers are seeking unique and authentic experiences alongside traditional draws like shopping and food. To cater to this, we recently launched the campaign 'We Like a Legend,' aimed at audiences who desire extraordinary experiences. This campaign highlights our stunning, ultra-luxurious hotels that



Vision 2025



Vibhas Prasad, Director, Leisure Hotels Group

The year 2025 signals a new era for Indian tourism, fuelled by surging domestic travel, the rise of leisure tourism, and a growing preference for authentic and eco-conscious experiences. Travellers seek more than just a destination; they're looking for meaningful journeys that connect them to nature, culture, and wellness. At Leisure Hotels Group, we see immense potential in promoting India's diverse landscapes through community-centric stays, wellness retreats, and experiential travel offerings that showcase the country's heritage and natural beauty. Yet, the tourism sector faces challenges such as inflation, rising costs, and global uncertainties, which challenge sustainable growth. Additionally, balancing environmental responsibility with guest expectations calls for innovative, forward-thinking strategies. Talent acquisition, especially in remote tourist destinations, also remains a key area of focus. With the right blend of vision, innovation, and commitment, 2025 offers an unparalleled opportunity to shape the future of Indian tourism and create experiences that inspire global travellers.



Vision 2025



Barun Gupta,
General Manager, Experience
Suites and Convention

The travel industry in 2025 is on the cusp of unprecedented growth, propelled by significant investments in infrastructure development across India. Key projects, such as the construction and modernization of airports, the evolution of the hospitality sector with world-class accommodations, and the establishment of an expansive and efficient road network, are laying a robust foundation for this surge. These advancements are not merely enhancing physical connectivity but are also transforming the travel experience for both domestic and international tourists, making it more seamless, enjoyable, and memorable.

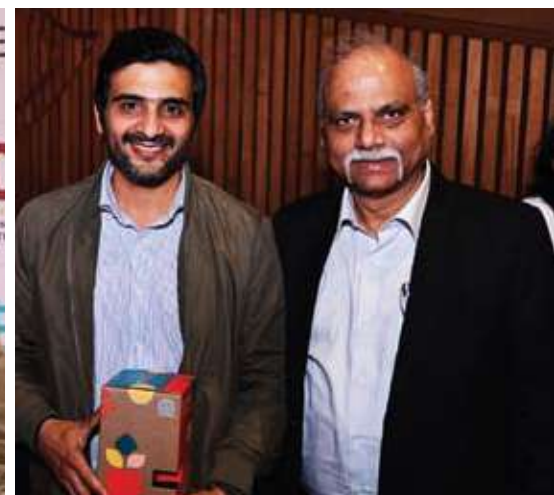
The ripple effects of these improvements extend far beyond convenience, fostering economic growth, boosting local communities, and positioning India as a premier global destination. To sustain this upward trajectory, it is imperative to maintain a strategic focus on integrating cutting-edge technologies such as AI-driven travel solutions, digital ticketing systems, and smart infrastructure.



offer authentic local immersion. At Preferred Hotels and Resorts, we represent independent hotels that emphasize genuine hospitality. By combining luxury with unique experiences, our properties have become the preferred choice for discerning travellers.

Dev Karvat, Founder & CEO, Asego

Currently, 70% of Indians traveling abroad don't purchase travel insurance, and that's a major concern we are addressing at Asego. We work closely with our partners—travel agents, airlines, and visa facilitation companies—to bridge this gap. However, much of it comes down to mindset. Many travellers assume





that nothing will happen to them, which is a poor excuse to skip insurance. Considering travel insurance costs less than 1% of a trip's total cost, it's surprising how underutilised it is. In mature markets like Austria, the UK, and the US, about 85% of international travellers purchase insurance. India still has a long way to go. To address this, we are developing tailored products for different types of travellers—be it for adventure, study, or leisure trips. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that 85% of Indian travellers opt for travel insurance in the near future.



Vision 2025



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

The tourism industry in 2025 will focus on sustainability, personalization, and innovation. Travellers are prioritizing eco-conscious journeys that celebrate cultural and natural heritage, encouraging the adoption of sustainable practices and authentic storytelling.

Technology will play a pivotal role, with advancements like virtual reality and smart tools transforming how people plan and experience travel. Meanwhile, the rise of slow travel—fostering deeper connections with destinations—will benefit both travellers and local communities. In India, the hospitality sector is poised for remarkable growth, with revenues projected to rise by 9–11% in FY25. By combining sustainability, innovation, and inclusivity, the tourism industry will lay the foundation for a future that delivers meaningful experiences while supporting long-term growth.

Vision 2025



Rajeev Nangia,
COO, TRAC Representations

Moving ahead in the near future, AI technology adoptions will rise, and it will remain the central service that the traveller continues to rely on, from trip planning to destination-based services. In today's fast paced life, it has become a personal as well psychological need to travel and take frequent breaks from the hectic work life. Nowadays, the easy access to low-cost carriers, advanced purchase deals, and flexible travel options has made it easier for people to travel more often. Today, the younger generation is more inclined towards the digital facilities.

Due to the flexibility provided by the digital options, youth is now more inclined towards making the best use of it at their own convenience.

Future of Travel will incline towards realistic and actual-lived experiences. Even though, influencer-based content has led to decision making over the years, the upcoming generation of travellers would focus more on genuine accounts of people who highlight their real experiences. Authenticity will rule supreme over perfectly curated works.



Vote of Thanks

Rai Umraopati Ray, Publishing Editor, BOTT

A big shout-out to the Ministry of Tourism for its unwavering support and to our Valued Partners—Delhi Tourism, Maharashtra Tourism, Uttar Pradesh Tourism, Madhya Pradesh Tourism, EEMA, ITQ, Air India, ASEGO, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, Le Meridien New Delhi, Expo Inn, Martinhal Resorts, Saraca Hotels & Resorts, Fly24, The Deccan Odyssey, Eros Hotel, Kazin DMC, The Boutique Collection by Outbound Marketing, Communication Casa, Elios





Management Consulting and Mayfair Hotels & Resorts. Your partnership is the wind beneath our wings—although we hope no turbulence comes our way! We are equally grateful to our Association Partners—IATO, TAAI, TAFI, ADTOI, ATOAI, OTOAI, ICPB, TIA, ETTA, UTEN, Chamber for Service Industry and ITTA. Your collaboration strengthens our resolve to serve this industry better, one conclave at a time.



Vision 2025



Priyanka Nijhawan,
Director – Representations,
Nijhawan Group

As we step into 2025, the Indian travel industry is poised for a transformative journey, marked by a fast-paced growth of outbound travel, traveller segment diversification and constant innovation. Industry reports indicate that India’s luxury market is on a remarkable trajectory, projected to expand 3.5 times and reach \$85-90 billion by 2030. This growth is fuelled by rising disposable incomes and a new wave of aspirational travellers seeking unique, personalized experiences.

Our vision for 2025 prioritises in leveraging our strong sales network in India by reaching out to key partners not just in Tier I cities but also further expanding our presence in Tier II & III cities through regular physical sales calls, tele-calling, webinars, trainings, workshops and boutique networking events. Moreover, powerful influencer partnerships, designing impactful digital campaigns and customizing offers around India’s holiday and festive calendar will give us the edge to deliver personalized deals.

Vision 2025

Vision 2025



Sheema Vohra,
Managing Director, Sartha
Global Marketing

The travel trade industry has been ripe for transformation driven by more sustainable and responsible practices. We are seeing increased passion-based travel, be it culinary, sports, or event-related reasons, which is fantastic because that means consumer behaviour is changing, creating opportunities for personalized experiences and fostering meaningful connections with people and places. As India's economy thrives, Indians are becoming the most sought-after visitors around the world. Indian travellers are making sophisticated choices and look at travel as a lifestyle, with a growing appetite for luxury, immersive experiences, and independent travel. Technology continues to be an industry driver, and Indian travellers are extremely digitally savvy. I am excited as 2025 is poised to be a great year for the tourism industry.

I hope to see international tourism continue its sharp growth trajectory witnessed in 2023-24. While MICE, FIT leisure, and wedding tourism have shown remarkable momentum, segments like wellness, wellbeing, and sustainable tourism still have significant untapped potential. I strongly recommend that major international hotel chains operating in India collaborate on a consumer awareness campaign to promote sustainable tourism. Such a campaign should inspire travelers to become responsible tourists, creating an aspirational shift toward sustainability.

On the domestic front, there is an urgent need to act decisively to address growing challenges. My wish list includes setting up a dedicated committee to implement a controlled tourism strategy. With surging domestic travel numbers, many destinations are on the verge of being overburdened, which could compromise both the environment and the quality of visitor experiences. Regulating tourist numbers is essential to maintain balance and ensure long-term sustainability. Eco-sensitive zones must be protected by enforcing a complete ban on plastic and requiring brands to adopt compostable or biodegradable packaging, including for popular ready-to-eat products like noodles, chips, and biscuits.



Vasudha Sondhi,
Managing Director, Outbound Marketing

Lubaina Sheerazi,
CEO & Co-Founder, BRANDit



Over the years, we've seen the evolution of traveller preferences shape our tourism industry. A cornerstone of global economy, travel is no longer just about the business we generate- but has become an essential part of people's lives, it's how we see the world, connect with cultures and grow as individuals. Today's travellers have charted their own paths, discovered new destinations, broken down the 'so-called' rules of travelling, like travelling in 'dead weeks', or prioritizing learning and experiential based travel, and the industry must innovate and accelerate its efforts to keep up with these trends. I firmly believe, the key to success lies in building a collaborative environment where destinations, product marketers and other stakeholders come together to create products and offerings that resonate with the modern traveller. I strongly believe that the future of tourism lies in the industry's ability to adapt and innovate with the dynamic expectations of discerning travellers.

Vision 2025



Munnunn Marwah,
COO, Think Strawberries

Driven by a shift towards luxury, exclusivity and immersive experiences, outbound tourism from India will experience a remarkable transformation in 2025. If one were to look at the numbers, a recent travel trade survey highlighted a 32% growth in the number of Indians taking two or more international trips annually, indicating a rising appetite for frequent and premium travel. This surge is further supported by a growing interest in luxury experiences, as evidenced by a 10% increase in searches for business class flights. The shift towards high-end travel will define 2025, with more Indian travellers opting for business class, luxury stays, and personalised itineraries tailored to their specific needs.

Additionally, wellness tourism will be a major focus, as Indian travellers increasingly seek destinations that combine relaxation with health-conscious offerings. Also, this trend is part of a broader shift towards sustainable and responsible luxury tourism, as travellers demand eco-friendly accommodations and experiences that minimise environmental impact.



Neeti Sharma,
Director, Intrepid Marketing
and Communications

In 2025, we will see a rise in slow travel, with families and individuals looking for destinations that not only offer safety and adventure, but also a sense of belonging. Technological innovation will continue to enhance convenience, but it will be the human connection—the ability to connect with local cultures, traditions, and communities that will define the next wave of tourism. Indian travellers, in particular, are leading this shift, seeking journeys that offer more than just a destination—they're searching for deeper connections, authentic cultural exchanges, and meaningful adventures.

At Intrepid Marketing and Communications, we help our clients stay on top of the new trends. By understanding emerging consumer behaviours and leveraging innovative marketing strategies, we will aid them in connecting with their audience holistically this year.



Sunil Puri,
Managing Director, Mileage Communications and
Joint Managing Director, Sartha Global Marketing

The tourism industry is fast evolving, in line with customer expectations, demands, and preferences. I see our industry using technology more and more, ranging from automation and AI to mobile apps – all for an elevated travel experience, including destination information, efficiency, and customization. As AI develops this year, it will also be used more and more to recommend unique experiences based on individual traveller needs and will offer people the ability to adjust their itineraries during their travel. The next trend for 2025 will be greater demand for more experiential and customised programs. With a noticeable change in demographics, especially among Gen Z and millennial couples and families, people will look for unique destinations, experiences, and cuisine – places that are Instagrammable and offer “bragging rights”. Also, demand for events, such as concerts and competitive sports, will increase and become pivotal in attracting niche/ high-spending travellers to a destination.

Vision 2025



Naresh Rawal,
Senior Vice President –
Sales & Marketing, Resorts
World Cruises

At Resorts World Cruises, we are optimistic of the continued and dynamic growth of the tourism sector in 2025, especially for the Fly-Cruise segment. We've seen a year-on-year growth in demand for our brand; and with the latest addition of our third cruise ship Star Scorpio, joining the Genting Dream and Resorts World One in the fleet in 2025, we will expand our reach to a wider target audience with more cruising options and exciting itineraries this year. These include multiple homeport deployments in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Taiwan and Dubai, sailing to popular and exotic destinations across Asia. These deployments will be fuelled by demands from various segments, including younger travellers, young families and multi-generational families, as well MICE and corporate groups.

AVIAREPS envisions a 2025 tourism industry centred on sustainability, innovation, and inclusivity. As a global leader in tourism representation, we are dedicated to crafting eco-conscious and immersive travel experiences that benefit both travellers and destinations. By embracing technology to personalize journeys, implementing smart travel solutions, and promoting diversity, we foresee a future where tourism nurtures meaningful connections and drives economic growth. Collaboration is essential to our approach. We are committed to partnering with our stakeholders to improve access, explore new markets, and support local communities. We also prioritize health and safety; focus on lesser-known regions and boosting growth in emerging destinations. We leverage our inhouse digital platforms such as our Digital Ecosystem, which simplifies digital marketing for travel professionals.



Additionally, our SwayFluence platform connects reputable brands with influencers, enhancing engagement through authentic and impactful campaigns. Together, we aim to build a resilient, sustainable tourism industry that celebrates cultural heritage, empowers communities, and ensures memorable experiences for travellers, all while protecting our planet for future generations.

Ellona Pereira,
General Manager – India, AVIAREPS

Dipti Adhia,
Director, Discover the World – India (Represents
Carnival Cruise Line & AmaWaterways in India)



As one of the world's most resilient industries, tourism is evolving to meet changing traveller preferences, embracing cutting-edge digital technologies, championing sustainable practices and much more! This Vision emphasises sustainable growth that minimises environmental impact while maximizing economic benefits. Digital tools like AI and VR are and will continue to revolutionize travel planning, enabling seamless and hyper-personalized experiences.

India's inbound and outbound travel is set to thrive. Segments such as MICE, Cruise (Ocean, River and Expedition) Vacations, Adventure, Luxury, Wellness, Sports and destination weddings will be witnessing exponential growth. Global alliances and local partnerships will pave the way for innovative opportunities, making travel more aspirational and accessible. By 2025, tourism will transcend beyond mere travel, emerging as a platform for enriching lives, preserving cultural heritage, fostering meaningful global connections and more through unforgettable, personalised and sustainable journeys that inspire generations to come.



Sucheta Nagpal,
Director & COO Travstarz Global Group

We look forward to 2025 with renewed vigour and great expectations as we look at further strengthening our position as a Leading DMC and Purely B2B Consolidator for travel fraternity in India. With an aim to further strengthen our operations with even better contracting and services across all our destinations specially Egypt, Turkey, Greece, Georgia, Vietnam, Abu Dhabi, Oman, we strive to be the number one DMC Partner of Choice for Travel agents across the country. Our recent collaboration with certain travel agent consortiums and associations especially in Tier 2 & 3 cities combined with our renewed Partnerships with several Tourism Boards with a focus on city-wise roadshows and networking events for our travel agent partners, will give further impetus to our goal of achieving 100% YOY growth in the year 2025 both in terms of revenue and passenger count across all our destinations.



Manoj Singh,
Country Head India,
Norwegian Cruise Line

Travellers today are increasingly drawn to experiences that align with their passions, seeking adventures that resonate deeply and leave lasting memories. This trend continues to gain momentum as more people prioritize unique and meaningful journeys that enrich their lives. Whether it's discovering hidden gems or revisiting favourite destinations, the allure of exploring Europe's timeless charm or Alaska's breathtaking landscapes remains irresistible.

At Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL), we pride ourselves on understanding and responding to the evolving desires of our guests. We offer an unparalleled selection of experiences across 400 global destinations, ensuring there's something for everyone to see, do, and enjoy. Our exclusive 'More at Sea' program enhances every voyage by delivering exceptional value, including premium amenities such as an open bar, specialty dining, and shore excursion credits, allowing travellers to maximize their enjoyment at each port of call.



Amr Aly,
Regional Head, Egypt Air

The travel and tourism sector is on the brink of a dynamic resurgence by 2025, especially in the Middle East and its neighboring regions. As airlines progressively restore their operations to pre-pandemic levels, the spotlight is firmly on expanding global networks, elevating customer experiences, and ensuring smoother, more seamless travel for passengers. This resurgence is deeply tied to the aviation industry's progress, as enhanced connectivity directly fuels tourism by making destinations more accessible and enticing to travelers. India, with its rapidly growing inbound and outbound tourism markets, is uniquely positioned to reap substantial benefits. The nation's strong cultural appeal, coupled with its economic growth and rising middle-class travelers, make it a significant contributor to global tourism. The synergy between airlines, tour operators, and government initiatives will play a pivotal role in sustaining and accelerating this growth. Such collaboration will ensure innovative solutions, better infrastructure, and tailored offerings to meet the evolving preferences of travelers. Looking ahead, the future of the travel and tourism industry holds immense promise. With endless opportunities on the horizon, the focus on connectivity, collaboration, and innovation will undoubtedly lead the sector into a new era of prosperity and growth.

Asego celebrates 25-year milestone

Team Asego is celebrating 25 momentous years in the Indian Travel Trade of serving the travel industry as the preferred travel assistance and Insurance provider.

On this occasion, Dev Karvat, Founder, Asego said, “I extend my deepest gratitude to our esteemed clients, partners and every member of the Asego family. Your support, trust, and belief in our vision have been instrumental in shaping Asego into what it is today. This milestone and success are as much as yours as it is ours.”

Since its inception, Asego has been driven by the mission of not only delivering unparalleled travel assistance and insurance solutions to travellers but also ensuring the mutual growth of agent partners in ancillary business.

Asego's commitment to excellence extends beyond products. The company invests in comprehensive engagement and training programs for its partners, enabling them to up-sell and cross-sell effectively. These initiatives not only drive additional ancillary revenue for Asego's partners but also reinforce the company's position as a trusted partner in the travel industry.

Asego, one of India's leading dedicated providers for travel assistance & insurance has distinguished itself by creating a robust global network of hospitals and service partners, allowing the company to offer seamless, end-to-end assistance to travellers worldwide. From emergency medical services, including doctor-on-call access, to covering flight delays and cancellations, Asego ensures that travellers are fully supported, no matter where they are. The company's suite of travel assistance and insurance solutions acts as a safety net against the unexpected, offering comprehensive protection that empowers travellers to explore with confidence.

What truly sets Asego apart is its singular focus on travel protection. This clear and focused vision has allowed the company to create products that deeply resonate with the unique needs of travellers. With a portfolio of over 200 customized offerings—spanning leisure, business, and student travel—Asego has built a legacy of trust, innovation, and customer-centric service.

Moreover, Asego's commitment to excellence extends beyond products. The company invests in comprehensive engagement and training programs for its partners, enabling them to upsell and cross-sell effectively. These initiatives not only drive additional ancillary revenue for Asego's partners but also reinforce the company's position as a trusted partner in the travel industry.

With its innovative approach, unmatched flexibility, and unwavering dedication to customer care, Asego continues to set the standard for travel protection, ensuring that every journey—wherever it may take your customers—is safeguarded by the best in the business. ■





Winifred D'souza
Founder's

☎ 9867750707

UTEN

Empowering Travel Fraternity

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Satyaprakash Gupta
Founder's

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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.

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.

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



Exploring Taiwan

A Journey through Culture, Scenery, and Experiences



When we first stepped into Taiwan, I was struck by its seamless blend of vibrant culture, breathtaking landscapes, and warm hospitality. Over a period of five days on an enthralling FAM Trip hosted by Taiwan Tourism Administration to experience Taiwan, we – a group of 8 journalists explored a variety of destinations, each offering unique experiences that left us all yearning for more. Here's a brief on some of the must experiences in Taiwan...

Rohan Gupta

Day 1: Discovering Taichung's Colours

The journey began in Taoyuan, and from there, we travelled to Taichung to visit the famous Rainbow Village. This quaint settlement, adorned with whimsical murals and vibrant colours, felt like stepping into an artist's dream. Each wall told a story, and the playful atmosphere was contagious. After immersing myself in this colourful wonderland, we checked into Taichung Dayi Laoye, a cozy retreat that offered a blend of traditional charm and modern comforts.

Day 2: The Tea Heritage of Nantou County

The lush landscapes of Nantou County were a stark contrast to Taichung's urban vibe. Our first stop was the serene Tan Jia Lang Tea Garden, where we wandered through rows of verdant tea bushes and learned about the meticulous art of tea cultivation. The experience deepened at the Sonboling Tea Culture Centre, where we had a hands-on lesson in brewing the perfect cup of Taiwanese tea.

Later, we arrived at the Wyndham Sun Moon Lake Lili Hot Spring Hotel, a luxurious haven overlooking the tranquil Sun Moon



Lake. The evening was reserved for unwinding, either soaking in the hotel's hot springs or exploring the serene surroundings.

Day 3: Sun Moon Lake and Cultural Immersion

Day three was all about experiencing the splendour of Sun Moon Lake, a jewel of Taiwan. A boat tour revealed the lake's serene beauty, framed by misty mountains. The ride on the cable car offered panoramic views, leaving me spellbound.

The journey continued at the Formosan Aboriginal Cultural Village, where we delved into the history and traditions of Taiwan's indigenous tribes. The distance

was covered in a Cable Car, offering us splendid views of the scenery. The village showcased vibrant performances and detailed exhibits that celebrated their rich heritage.

The day ended with a visit to the Taiyi Ecological Leisure Farm, where the lush landscapes and serene atmosphere provided the perfect backdrop for reflecting on the day's adventures.

Day 4: From Nantou to Taipei

After a delightful farm breakfast, we boarded the high-speed rail from Taichung to Taipei, a journey that was impressively swift and comfortable. Once in Taipei, we headed to the famed Forbidden City, a treasure trove of ancient Chinese artifacts. The intricate designs and fascinating history of the exhibits were mesmerizing.

A stop at the Jiji Wunchang Temple offered a moment of spiritual tranquillity. The day ended on a vibrant note with a stroll through the Raohe Street Night Market, where the lively atmosphere, colourful stalls, and tantalizing aromas showcased the essence of Taiwan's street culture.

Day 5: Taipei's Icons and Trails

The final day began with a visit to the iconic Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall, a grand tribute to Taiwan's history. From there, I explored the Rongjiin Time Life Park and the artistic Songyan Cultural Park, each offering unique insights into the city's cultural fabric.

A trek along the Xiangshan Trail rewarded me with stunning views of the Taipei skyline, capped by the towering Taipei 101. The observation deck provided a breathtaking perspective of the city, a fitting culmination to my Taiwan journey.

A Culinary Delight

Throughout my trip, I was amazed by the culinary diversity. Whether it was authentic Taiwanese flavours or familiar Indian dishes, Taiwan catered to every palate. For Indian food lovers, the variety was delightful, with restaurants offering both vegetarian and non-vegetarian options that felt like a taste of home. ■

Uzbekistan Airways JSC

Soaring high and expanding horizons in India

2024 has been a transformative year of growth and expansion for Uzbekistan Airways JSC, marking significant milestones in its journey toward establishing a stronger global presence. The airline has made remarkable strides in enhancing its operations, connectivity, and service offerings. Anish Arya, the Representative of Uzbekistan Airways JSC in India and the driving force behind Aero World Travels and ARYA Enterprises, sheds light on the airline's progress and future aspirations.

Shreya Shimpi



Anish Arya,
Representative of Uzbekistan Airways JSC in India



How has the year 2024 been for Uzbekistan Airways JSC?

2024 has been good with a performance notably better than the previous year. We've had good revenues and increase in direct passenger bookings. The support from the Embassy of Republic of Uzbekistan in India and the Ministry of Tourism Uzbekistan has played a major role in this achievement.

Have you added any new sectors to your portfolio in the last one year?

2024 has been bright and happening for our India region. We expanded our

wings to Mumbai and North Goa, in addition to daily flights ex New Delhi

Are you looking at any new target markets to increase your frequency to or add a new service?

Starting April, we will upgrade to 3 flights from Mumbai (currently twice a week). Sales are already open on all OTA's and local GDS/CRS. Target markets include MICE, corporates, medical student groups, medical patients coming from Uzbekistan and beyond to India for treatment.

How important is the India market for Uzbekistan Airways JSC?

India is important as we're operating flights since 1992, the same year the country of Uzbekistan came into existence. HY stays committed to

fostering growth and catering to the increasing travel demand between both countries.

What are the strategies being implemented to increase your outreach in the India market?

Lately, we have reached everyone's mobile phones and laptops owing to the existing established framework of tie up between 'ARYA ENTERPRISES' as BSP Consolidator and all Indian Online OTA's.

Uzbekistan Airways JSC revenues from India have surged owing to the partnership with both 'AERO WORLD TRAVELS' and 'ARYA ENTERPRISES' as we're all committed to ensure strong growth of the carrier. Our partnership dates back over 32 years and is witness of the dedication & commitment amongst all stakeholders and paves the way for further expansion in times ahead. ■

VFS Global's journey through 2024 and plans for 2025

Yummi Talwar, Chief Operating Officer, South Asia, VFS Global Group, reflects on the organization's remarkable achievements in 2024, its commitment to innovation, and plans for 2025. She shares insights into how VFS Global continues to set benchmarks in visa facilitation services and its focus on improving the applicant experience.

Priyanka Saxena Ray

Key Achievements and Milestones in 2024

In 2024, we signed several global contracts, notable ones including Indonesia's eVisa on Arrival for 97 nationalities, Schengen visa and residence permit services for Finland in 32 countries, and biometric collection services for Australia's Department of Home Affairs in Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa, building on the seven regions awarded in August 2023.

In South Asia, we were appointed to deliver Algeria visa services for India, Nepal and Sri Lanka and in India, the mandate to deliver Moldova visas.

A key milestone was crossing the 300 million applications mark in December last year. It is notable that the last 100

million applications were achieved in the past five years despite the pandemic-driven travel slowdown of 2020-2022.

Overall, business momentum continues to remain strong, and we have grown in line with the growth in the outbound market in 2024.

forefront of delivering innovative solutions. We have developed a hybrid digital journey for our Appointment Management System, combining the benefits of visa application centres and online processes. This system ensures that only verified applicants get appointments and they will only have to visit the Visa Application Centre for their biometric appointments.

The Visa at Your Doorstep (VAYD) service has gained immense popularity, with services extended to 17 Schengen



Ms. Yummi Talwar,
Chief Operating Officer, South Asia,
VFS Global Group

VFS Global has always been at the forefront of delivering innovative solutions. We have developed a hybrid digital journey for our Appointment Management System, combining the benefits of visa application centres and online processes.

from the date of travel and a UK visa three months from the date of travel. Advanced planning will help applicants get their appointments on time.

Second, visa appointments are free and available only on www.vfsglobal.com on a first-come, first-served basis. Due to high travel demand, some unscrupulous operators promise appointments for a fee, which is illegal, and they should not fall for it. As a responsible service provider, we continue to create awareness against this menace and have deployed countermeasures on the appointment booking system to prevent fraudulent misuse by bots and third-party entities. ■

million applications were achieved in the past five years despite the pandemic-driven travel slowdown of 2020-2022.

Overall, business momentum continues to remain strong, and we have grown in line with the growth in the outbound market in 2024.

Innovative Solutions in 2024

VFS Global has always been at the

member states and the UK in India, branded as On-Demand Mobile Visas.

Message to Travel Agents and Tour Operators for 2025

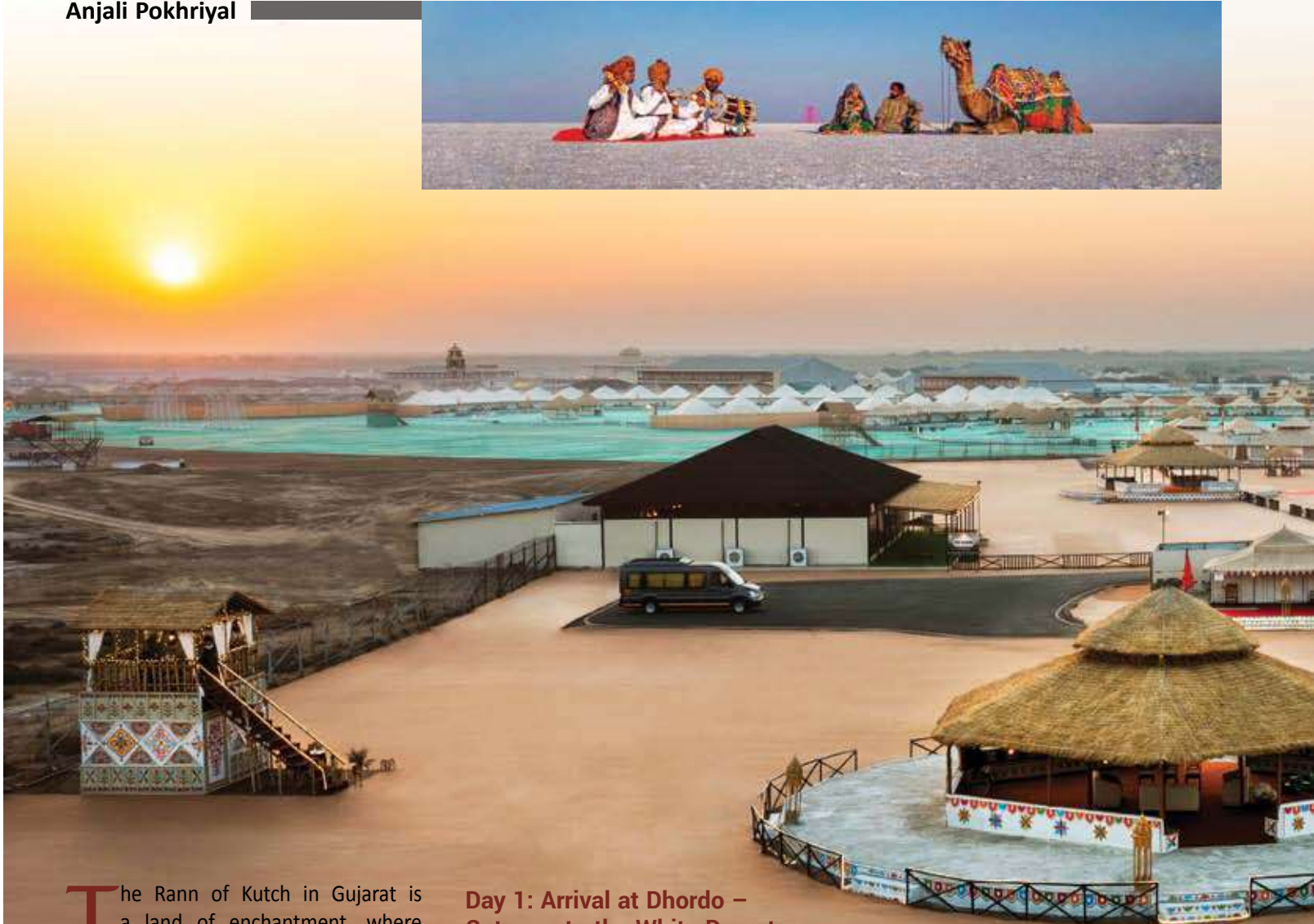
We have been educating them to advise their customers to apply in advance and not wait until the last minute due to the seasonal rush. One can apply for a Schengen visa six months

Discovering Kutch

An unforgettable journey to Dhordo and Dholavira

Recently, Evoke Experiences, renowned for crafting exceptional journeys, organized a 3-night, 4-day familiarization (fam) trip for media professionals, spotlighting the wonders of Dhordo and their newly launched property, Evoke Dholavira. Here's an overview of what we experienced –

Anjali Pokhriyal



The Rann of Kutch in Gujarat is a land of enchantment, where nature, culture, and history converge in extraordinary harmony. Despite the devastation of the 2001 Bhuj earthquake, this resilient region has rebounded with unmatched spirit. The annual Rann Utsav, a 100-day celebration in the White Desert, stands as a testament to this resilience, offering a vibrant showcase of Kutch's rich heritage, breathtaking landscapes, and colourful culture.

Day 1: Arrival at Dhordo – Gateway to the White Desert

The adventure began in Dhordo, home to the iconic Tent City, just 80 kilometres from Bhuj. This seasonal marvel hosts 400 luxurious tents equipped with world-class amenities, from ensuite bathrooms to premium living spaces, offering unmatched comfort amidst the desert's expanse.

As the sun set over the ethereal White Rann, the group was treated

to an evening brimming with local artistry. Traditional music and dance performances, including the lively acts of the Siddhi community, filled the air with joy and rhythm. Instruments like the Nagara and Damru added a touch of authenticity, while a vibrant marketplace displayed intricate Kutchi handlooms and handicrafts, showcasing the region's artisanal brilliance.

Day 2: Exploring the White Desert and Cultural Splendour

Sunrise over the White Rann was a spectacle beyond words. The salt flats, illuminated by the golden hues of dawn, created a serene yet awe-inspiring landscape. Camel rides, folk music, and the tranquil beauty of the desert added layers of unforgettable charm to the morning.

The magic deepened in the evening as the full moon bathed the White Desert in a celestial glow. The shimmering salt flats seemed otherworldly, leaving every visitor captivated by the timeless beauty of this natural wonder.

Day 3: Dholavira – A Glimpse into Ancient Civilization

The journey continued with a scenic

drive to Dholavira, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a pivotal city of the ancient Indus Valley Civilization. The newly opened Evoke Dholavira, featuring 44 air-conditioned cottages, welcomed the group with a seamless blend of luxury and desert charm. A sparkling swimming pool and an on-site restaurant offering authentic Gujarati cuisine enhanced the stay, adding indulgence to exploration.

Walking through the ruins of Dholavira was a humbling experience. The advanced water management systems and architectural ingenuity of this ancient city stood as a testament to human brilliance. Nearby, the Wood Fossil Park, with its millions-year-old petrified trees, provided a fascinating glimpse into Earth's prehistoric past, echoing the enduring spirit of Kutch's

landscapes and people.

Evoke Dholavira: Redefining Hospitality in Kutch

Evoke Dholavira is not just a property—it's a tribute to Gujarat's heritage. Open year-round, it serves as a gateway to Dholavira's rich history and the raw beauty of the Kutch region. Guests can immerse themselves in cultural workshops, marvel at the starlit desert skies, and connect with the soulful traditions of the region.

For travellers seeking an unforgettable journey, the combination of Dhordo's Tent City during the Rann Utsav and the timeless allure of Dholavira offers a truly immersive experience. Evoke Experiences ensures seamless transfers and top-notch hospitality, making exploration effortless and memorable. ■



Ajay Prakash

'Passion, Adaptability and Expertise: Keys to success in the travel industry'

Once a Thespian, now a dynamic travel industry veteran with an exceptional repertoire, Ajay Prakash, President, TAFI, Vice Chairman, FAITH, Global President, IIPT shares personal anecdotes, professional insights and more in a candid interview.

Shreya Shimpi

Looking back on your journey so far, what inspired you to enter the travel industry, and how has it shaped you as a professional?

My passion was theatre. I never wanted to be a travel agent. I taught English to students as I was translating Shakespeare to Hindi but the chalk on the blackboard got to me and I had to quit that. I worked with Air India for eight years and that's where my travel journey started. I started Nomad Travels in 1988. I discovered it is a fascinating field and so I enjoy my work.

As a professional, the travel industry has made me more sensitive to people. It does not produce anything, except, hopefully happy memories and big

smiles. It has also made me pay attention to detail because travel is very close to people's heart. Holiday travel is a very important part of people's lives. Hence, whoever is assisting in the planning, needs to be sensitive to what the client is looking for and be able to craft that sort of an experience with minimum things going wrong.

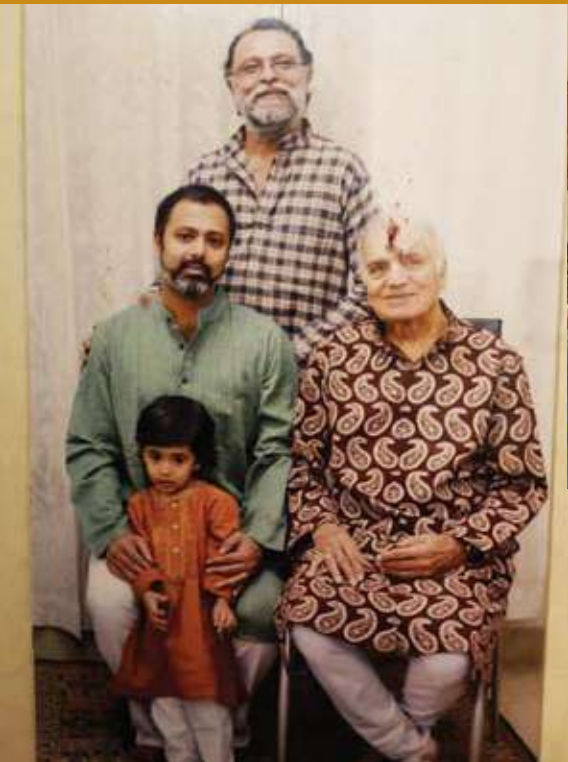
Reflecting on 2024, what would you say were the three highlights of the year for you—personally or professionally?

2024 was a positive year. Professionally, in terms of business, we had a decent inbound season last year. It wasn't a spectacular year but a year of consolidation. I am satisfied the way

2024 has ended for us. Heading TAFI has also been satisfying; steering it through uncertain times with a lack of assistance from the Government to this industry. We created new Chapters and added about 100 new members last year.

As a key figure in TAFI, what is your long-term vision for the organization? Could you share a major initiative or change you've been proud to lead?

TAFI is a very vibrant association with 1700 plus members across the country and 12 Chapters. The idea is to have people at every level in the association involved in the activities of the association, so the young leadership can take over. The vision is to have a



strong, unified and coherent voice for this industry and better lobbying efforts that the Government will listen to. We need to promote Inbound Tourism as it is a form of cultural diplomacy. When tourists go back, they become ambassadors for your country.

The biggest change that we have brought about in the last couple of years is the democratisation of TAFI. We have the 'Joint Bank Guarantee Scheme' for our members in which, instead of giving an individual guarantee to IATA, TAFI undertakes to give a guarantee on behalf of those agents.

What keeps you motivated to push boundaries in this industry?

I still enjoy my work and that keeps me motivated. It is gratifying when people come back from a trip and tell me they had a wonderful trip! That keeps me going.

If you could pick one dream destination to visit in 2025, where would it be, and why does it captivate you?

I will go back to Ladakh anytime. It is one of the most unique places in the world. It is within our country; language is not a problem and you can vibe with people. I also recently visited Arunachal Pradesh and loved it.

Travel comes with its ups and downs—could you share



one of your most memorable trips, both one that exceeded expectations and one that didn't go as planned?

My first visit to Corbett was amazing when elephants were still allowed and seeing a tiger ten feet away was a thrilling experience. In ten days, we saw six different tigers. Also, my first trip to Ladakh, where I drove from Manali to Leh, was memorable.

A trip that went bad was probably

QUICK SHOTS

- Birthday / Sun Sign – July 1 / Cancer
- Mountain or Beaches – Mountains
- Favourite holiday destination – Ladakh and Vietnam
- Best travel hack – Travel light
- Window or Aisle? – Aisle
- Favourite cuisine – Rajasthani
- Favourite Quote - "No one is born hating anybody for the colour of their hair or skin. People must learn to hate. If they can learn to love, they must be taught to love because love comes more naturally to human beings"- Nelson Mandela
- Hobbies- Reading, listening to Rock Music and old Hindi songs, Spending time at my farm, driving my motorcycle and travelling through the country
- Travel souvenirs – Love them or leave them? – Leave them
- Travel advice for the first time traveller – Travel with an open mind and a gentle heart for you will discover that the differences that divide us are nothing in comparison to the similarities that can unite us!

when I lost my phone when I landed in Toronto. Luckily, I got it back as I had accidentally dropped it below my airplane seat!

What advice would you give to young professionals in the travel trade who aspire to reach the heights of success you've achieved?

Be interested in people. You have to enjoy interacting with people and understand their needs. Stay updated with technology. Be product aware, specialise and create a niche. Be resilient. Understand world geography.

The travel industry has its challenges. What do you find to be the biggest obstacles, and if given the chance, what one change would you make to improve the industry?

Inbound tourism is an important part of the tourism ecosystem. Unfortunately, the perception of India as a destination has taken a bit of a hit. Two aspects particularly highlighted are safety of women and the general cleanliness. Both these require a concerted effort from the industry and the Government together. We need to sensitize our countrymen to the fact the tourist is not only providing economic benefits but they will also carry the word about India and Indians as people. We need incentives for the tourism industry. Taxation is another issue that needs to be addressed. GST is high. We need better tourist vehicles and seamless movement across state boundaries. More flights are needed for better connectivity.

Could you tell us a bit about your family and share one cherished childhood memory that still makes you smile?

I have two sons. One is working in Toronto and the other is pursuing Theatre in Delhi. I have two grandsons. My wife helps me with the inbound tourism work from October to March.

I grew up in Mount Abu. I loved the hills there. We used to walk to school across a bridge. In rains, if that bridge was under water, it was a holiday! I had a great childhood. I think I am a small-town boy. ■

Know what your stars say about January 2025



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 January 2025.



March 21 – April 20

This month will be phenomenal for you as you progress on both professional and personal fronts. You will be happy and joyous and grow by leaps and bounds. Be cautious on your health front. You would have a lot of opportunities to innovate and earn immense popularity.



July 23 – August 21

It's probably time for a job change that you have been thinking about for quite some time. You may think of it and start applying for new jobs during this time. There are a lot of community get togethers on the cards. There might be small challenges in terms of your health.



November 23 – December 22

Having an efficient work ethic and a keen eye for detail can help you rise in the professional ranks and even earn you recognition from your peers. Avoid investments or deals that promise to be risk free. Take good care of your health.



April 21 – May 21

You are strong and always lead by example. You will be instrumental in many people's success by empowering them big time. Your business will expand, and jobs will bring you success. Spend time with family.



August 22 – September 23

You are going to get some kind of education or training in your career field that leads you to a new level or pasture. Learning is needed and will lead you onto this new pathway. Couples can plan for relaxation and better bond-in.



December 23 – January 20

Remove anxiety. Be positive and look on the brighter side. Conflicts at career front will be resolved through honest conversations. Plan to manage your finances. Goal will be achieved and bond will be stronger with partner.



May 22 – June 21

Need to be vigilant and not lose focus at work, as this might affect your work quality. You will surely achieve the peak of your true potential by channeling your entire energies constructively. Avoid arguments with your loved ones. Do yoga and meditation. Avoid overthinking.



September 24 – October 23

You would need to work hard to keep up with your work commitments as your schedule will be tight. October predictions advise you to take work only as much as you can deliver. Maintain a healthy relationship with spouse. Follow a healthy routine.



January 21 – February 19

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



June 22 – July 22

You are carrying a lot of ideas and eager to keep all that spinning but, it's time to focus. Refocus. Recalibrate. And then deliver your priorities. Your mood swings could effect your family. Avoid investments or deals that promises to be risk free.



October 24 – November 22

There could be times when you will find it difficult to communicate with your family. Try to express your feelings. Misunderstandings at the workplace might hurt you. Your professional endeavour requires thorough research and planning. Take good care of your health.



February 20 – March 20

There will be warmth, love and excitement in your relationship. You are getting closer to a breakthrough in your career and have a clear vision of the future. Your work will get noticed. Good time for investment.



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Ms Rakhi Kankaria
Chairperson - Tourism Committee
FTCCI



Aamaghati Wildlife Resort

Aamaghati Wildlife Resort has announced the appointment of **Ravindra Nath Purohit** as its new General Manager. In this role, Purohit will lead the resort's operations, elevate guest satisfaction, and uphold excellence in hospitality. With over 16 years of experience in the

industry, he has worked with prestigious properties like Taj Rambagh Palace, Jaipur; Taj Falaknuma Palace, Hyderabad; and Ananta Hotels.



Jumeirah Group

Jumeirah Group has appointed **Thomas B. Meier** as its Chief Executive Officer. With a proven track record and extensive industry experience, Thomas has played a pivotal role in the brand's achievements. As CEO, he will lead Jumeirah's Mission 2030 strategy, aiming

to double its portfolio by 2030. His focus will be on international expansion and reinforcing Jumeirah's standing as a global leader in luxury hospitality.



GRT Hotels & Resorts

Puneet Dutta has joined GRT Hotels & Resorts as the new COO, overseeing operations for the brand's portfolio of 22 hotels and resorts across India. This appointment aligns with GRT's ambitious expansion plans both domestically and internationally. With over 20 years of

expertise in the hospitality sector, Dutta excels in operational excellence, leading cross-cultural teams, hotel pre-openings, and property turnarounds.



NCLH

Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings Ltd. (NCLH) has announced **Jason Montague** as Chief Luxury Officer, effective February 17, 2025. In this role, Montague will oversee Regent Seven Seas Cruises and Oceania Cruises, leveraging his extensive expertise to execute NCLH's multibillion-

dollar fleet expansion and elevate its ultra-premium and luxury cruise brands.



Radisson Hotel Group

Radisson Hotel Group (RHG) has promoted **Pankaj Saxena** to Area General Manager, West India, while he continues as General Manager of Radisson Blu Pune Kharadi. With 27 years of exceptional leadership experience in hospitality, Pankaj will now oversee

RHG's operations and growth in West India. His expertise will drive the group's strategic initiatives and strengthen its presence in the region.



Taiwan Tourism Administration, Singapore Office

Paul Shih has been appointed as the Director of Taiwan Tourism Administration (TTA), Singapore Office. In this role, Shih will oversee tourism

markets in India, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and the Middle East. With significant experience and proven leadership across sectors, Shih is poised to further strengthen Taiwan's tourism footprint in these regions.



Aralea Beach Resort, Morjim

Subhro Mukhopadhyay has joined Stonewood Premier as the General Manager of Aralea Beach Resort by Stonewood Premier, Morjim, North Goa. With over 22 years of experience

across tourism, hospitality, and aviation, Mukhopadhyay has held key positions at Hyatt, Sahara Airlines, Jet Airways, Qatar Airways, Zuri Hotels, and Sarovar Hotels. His wealth of expertise will contribute significantly to the resort's growth and guest experience.



IATO Punjab Chapter

The Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) has announced the appointment of **Gurinder Singh** as the Chairman of its Punjab Chapter. As the Managing Director of Discover Punjab Tours & Travels, Gurinder brings over 21 years of experience in the tourism industry. Since

beginning his journey in 2004, Gurinder has made remarkable contributions to promoting tourism in Punjab. Known for his extensive network and strong collaboration with Punjab Tourism Government officials, he is poised to strengthen IATO's presence in the region.

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