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GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

- 12** Foreign tourist arrivals cross 2 cr as India emerges strong post-Covid performer - says Union Minister for Tourism and Culture, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat

EVENTS AND MORE

- 28-42** The BOTT Knowledge Conclave emerged as a resounding success, bringing together close to 400 senior travel and tourism professionals from across the country for an immersive day of dialogue, insights and strategic thought leadership at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi on November 21, 2025.

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Letter from the *Editor's Desk*



Dear Industry Colleagues,

As we draw the curtains on another eventful year, I find myself reflecting with gratitude—thankful for a year that brought growth, learning, and renewed possibilities for the travel and tourism industry. Yes, 2025 was marked by a few unfortunate incidents that shook our global tourism landscape, reminding us of life's unpredictability. Yet, if there is one truth this industry has taught us time and again, it is that human beings are resilient, hopeful, and endlessly inspired to explore. Travel remains the greatest gift we give ourselves—an escape, a discovery, a celebration. And no setback can diminish that spirit.

November was especially momentous for us at **BOTT** as we successfully concluded the second edition of the BOTT Knowledge Conclave at Bharat Mandapam. What a phenomenal day it was—a full house with over 400 travel professionals, industry leaders, association heads, innovators, and young minds under one roof.

The event opened with a powerful keynote address by Ankush Nijhawan, whose insightful, data-backed presentation decoded the current and future landscape of inbound and outbound tourism. His perspectives on niche segments including MICE, weddings, domestic travel, luxury, and experiential journeys set the perfect tone for the day.

We were honoured to have Shri Sheo Shekhar Shukla, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary – Tourism, Culture & Home and Managing Director, Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, address the audience with his forward-looking insights on India's inbound readiness and the role of states in powering tourism growth.

The conclave went on to host two dynamic panel discussions featuring top industry names from airlines, hotels, associations, and wedding specialists—each session rich with ideas, debate, and audience engagement. The highlight of the afternoon was the launch of the CSR Magazine by Shri Suman Billa and leaders of 10 national associations, all valued partners of the Conclave.

In this issue, catch glimpses and a detailed report of everything that unfolded at the **BOTT** Knowledge Conclave 2025.

Wishing you all Merry Christmas, joyful festivities, and a hopeful, brighter year ahead. May 2026 bring renewed energy, stronger partnerships, and boundless opportunities for our industry.

Happy Reading!

Warm regards,

Priyanka Saxena Ray
Editor, **BOTT** India

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- More new wide-body aircraft with world-class cabins joining by early 2026

VFS GLOBAL INTENSIFIES FIGHT AGAINST VISA FRAUD WORLDWIDE

VFS Global has strengthened its anti-fraud efforts by amplifying its #DoNotFallForFraud campaign through employee-led social media advisories and the removal of over 700 fake pages misusing its brand name. Now in its eighth year, the initiative has generated over 30 million views globally, including 10 million impressions in 2025 alone. Featuring multilingual video advisories, the campaign educates visa applicants on safe appointment booking, identifying fake guarantees, avoiding unauthorised payments etc.

ZONE BY THE PARK OPENS IN KOLKATA'S ICONIC NEW MARKET



Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Ltd. has launched Zone by The Park in New Market, Kolkata. The 42-room hotel features the all-day dining restaurant Bazaar, the legendary Flurys in its lobby, and playful, modern interiors tailored for urban travellers. Located close to Kolkata's major landmarks, the hotel offers easy access and lifestyle comfort. The soon-to-open Townhall venue will host up to 100 guests for business and social events.



IHCL INKS 90-KEY GINGER HOTEL IN SHILLONG, MARKING MEGHALAYA DEBUT

Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL) has signed a deal for a 90-room Greenfield Ginger hotel in Shillong — the brand's first presence in Meghalaya. The new property will include Ginger's signature all-day diner Qmin, a bar, meeting room, and a fitness centre, targeting both business and leisure travellers. With this addition, IHCL's portfolio in Meghalaya grows to three hotels.

BANYAN GROUP OPENS MANDAI RAINFOREST RESORT IN SINGAPORE

Banyan Group has marked a global milestone with the grand opening of Mandai Rainforest Resort by Banyan Tree, its first property in Singapore. Nestled within the Mandai Wildlife Reserve, the resort blends luxury hospitality with immersive nature and wildlife experiences. Owned by Mandai Wildlife Group, the resort strengthens Singapore's positioning as a world-class eco-tourism destination.



WELCOMHERITAGE UNVEILS ARKA RESORT & SPA IN RISHIKESH

WelcomHeritage has launched WelcomHeritage Arka Resort & Spa in Rishikesh, a serene retreat overlooking Shivalik peaks, natural ponds and the point where the Ganges flows into the plains. Set across 3.5 acres at an elevation of 4,300 ft, the resort features 25 nature-inspired chalets built in Tudor style with pine-log ceilings and large windows. It is located 30 km from Tapovan via Rajaji National Park.



BWH HOTELS TO OPEN SURESTAY BY BEST WESTERN IN KHARAR

BWH Hotels has signed a new SureStay by Best Western in Kharar, a rapidly growing town in the Chandigarh Tricity region. Expected to open in 2027, the midscale-lite property will feature well-designed guestrooms, an all-day dining restaurant with bar, banquet and meeting spaces, and a modern gym. Positioned to cater to rising residential, educational, and commercial demand, the signing strengthens BWH Hotels' presence in North India.



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BRAND USA UNVEILS 'AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL GAME' HUB FOR 2026 WORLD CUP TRAVELLERS



Brand USA has launched America the Beautiful Game, a new digital trip-planning hub designed to help global football fans explore the U.S. during the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Live on AmericaTheBeautiful.com/Football, the portal features destination guides, must-try local cuisine, and AI-powered sample itineraries linking all 11 host cities. In line with America 250 celebrations, Brand USA is also spotlighting 50 experiences across host cities and beyond.

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SKÅL INTERNATIONAL INDIA OPENS 20TH CLUB IN KASHMIR

Skål International India celebrated a historic milestone with the installation of Skål International Kashmir, its 20th club, at Taj Dal View, Srinagar. For the first time ever, an Indian Chief Minister — Omar Abdullah — inaugurated a Skål Club. The ceremony followed official Skål protocols, including oath-taking, pinning of office-bearers, and recognition of tourism contributors.



FLY91 WAIVES CONVENIENCE FEE AMID TRAVEL SURGE

Pure-play regional airline FLY91 has announced a full waiver of convenience fees on all bookings made via its official website throughout December. Valid for tickets booked until December 31, 2025, the initiative comes amid peak festive travel demand and ongoing operational distress in the aviation sector. The waiver applies to any future travel date, enabling passengers to enjoy instant savings and a seamless booking experience.

TURKISH AIRLINES, SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS SIGN CODESHARE PACT

Turkish Airlines and South African Airways have signed a new codeshare agreement effective 1 March 2026, expanding connectivity between Türkiye, Africa, and key global hubs. The agreement was signed in Geneva by Turkish Airlines Chairman Prof. Ahmet Bolat and SAA CEO Prof. John Lamola. Turkish Airlines will place its TK code on SAA flights across major African cities, while SAA will place its SA code on selected Turkish Airlines flights to Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Frankfurt, Paris, and London.



TEZJET NAMES AEROPRIME ITS INDIA GSA; LAUNCHES DELHI-BISHKEK DIRECT FLIGHTS

TezJet Airlines has launched direct weekly flights between Delhi and Bishkek, marking a boost in India-Kyrgyzstan air connectivity. The inaugural ceremony at Delhi Airport saw participation from the Kyrgyz Embassy and GMR leadership. Aeroprime Group has been appointed TezJet's GSA in India and will oversee passenger and cargo sales, marketing, and customer support. The once-a-week Sunday service aims to enhance tourism, trade, and cultural ties.



ANTARA CRUISES LAUNCHES 'TIDES OF CELEBRATION' FESTIVE VOYAGES

Antara Cruises has unveiled 'Tides of Celebration', an exclusive Christmas and New Year series of 3-night luxury cruises aboard MV Bengal Ganga. Designed for global travellers, the boutique vessel offers private balconies, refined 1970s-inspired interiors, gourmet cuisine and curated cultural experiences along the Ganges. Sailing into 2026, the festive journeys promise serenity, river views and immersive engagements.





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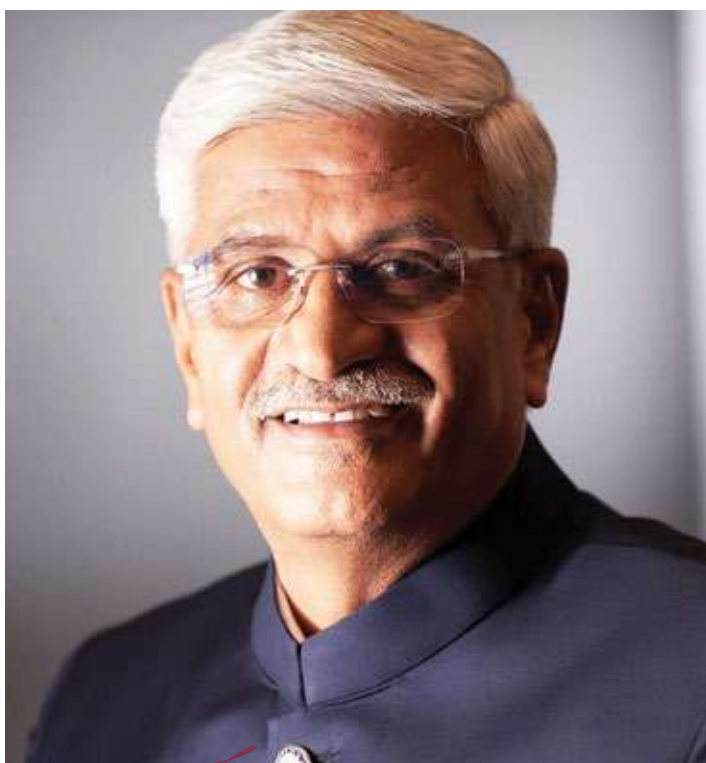
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- * Kinkakuji Golden Pavillion
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- * Fushimi Inari Taisha : Tori Gate
- * Kiyomizu Dera Temple : Oldest Buddhist temple
- * Asakusa Sensoji Temple and Tokyo Imperial Palace drive Through

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Foreign tourist arrivals cross 2 cr as India emerges strong post-Covid performer



*In a resounding affirmation of India's burgeoning tourism sector, Union Minister for Tourism and Culture, **Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat**, told the Rajya Sabha recently that the country has achieved one of the strongest recoveries in global tourism following the COVID-19 pandemic.*

BOTT Desk

pandemic. Official data from the Ministry of Tourism, shared in a written reply during the same session, paints a picture of steady growth in Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs). In 2021, amid lingering restrictions, arrivals stood at just 15.27 lakh. By 2022, this surged to 64.37 lakh, climbing further to 95.21 lakh in 2023 and 99.52 lakh in 2024. Provisional figures for January to October 2025 already show 69.80 lakh visitors, signalling that the full-year tally could easily surpass pre-pandemic levels of 1.09 crore recorded in 2019.

Shekhawat attributed this success to concerted government efforts, including eased visa norms, enhanced infrastructure, and targeted promotional campaigns. "The Ministry of Tourism is working tirelessly to make India a seamless, end-to-end tourism destination," he added, pointing to initiatives like the revamped Swadesh Darshan 2.0 scheme and the Challenge Based Destination Development (CBDD) sub-scheme. These programs focus on sustainable tourism, with financial assistance extended to states for developing eco-friendly infrastructure, such as bio-toilets, waste management systems, and solar-powered facilities.

The minister's optimistic outlook aligns with broader economic projections for the sector. At a recent industry conference, Shekhawat forecasted a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of over 20% for Indian tourism, driven by rising global interest in experiential travel and India's diverse offerings—from spiritual circuits to adventure hotspots. He also announced ongoing work on reciprocal visa-on-arrival facilities with select countries and faster e-visa processing to further lower barriers for international travellers. **BOTT**

*I*n a resounding affirmation of India's burgeoning tourism sector, Union Minister for Tourism and Culture, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, told the Rajya Sabha recently that the country has achieved one of the strongest recoveries in global tourism following the COVID-19 pandemic. Highlighting the sector's robust rebound, the minister revealed that more than 2 crore foreign tourists visited India in the last one year alone.

Responding to a starred question (SQ No. 49) on the promotion and development of tourism in Tamil Nadu, Shekhawat emphasised India's position as a top performer worldwide. "Among the countries that have shown the best recovery in the tourism sector after COVID, India is one of them," he stated during the Question Hour session held recently in Rajya Sabha, as captured in a widely shared video clip from the proceedings. "In the last one year, more than 2 crore foreign tourists have come to India."

The minister's remarks underscore a dramatic turnaround for a sector that was decimated by the



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VIETJET THAILAND

expands India network with Ahmedabad–Bangkok launch

*VietJet Thailand is strengthening its India presence with the launch of its new Ahmedabad–Bangkok service beginning December 4, 2025. In an exclusive conversation with **BOTT** India, Pinyot Pibulsonggram, Chief Commercial Officer, VietJet Thailand, shares the strategic thinking behind this expansion, the airline's enhanced inflight offerings, and what passengers can look forward to as travel demand between India and Thailand continue to soar.*

Priyanka Saxena Ray



India: One of our most strategic growth markets

India is one of VietJet Thailand's fastest-growing markets. After a strong start in Mumbai, the airline now adds Ahmedabad with four weekly flights—operating Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Flight AMD–BKK departs Ahmedabad at 23:55 and arrives in Bangkok at 05:35. The return BKK–AMD service departs Bangkok at 19:40 and arrives at 22:55 on the same days.

Kolkata will join the network in January 2026 with four weekly flights. The airline is also exploring expansion to Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai, while aiming to upgrade Mumbai and Ahmedabad to daily services and introduce Phuket connections soon.

Ahmedabad: A perfect mix of leisure, business and MICE travel

There are many reasons behind choosing Ahmedabad. It ranks among the top 10 Indian cities in population and has a strong ability to travel. Importantly, it offers the right mix of leisure and business demand, including robust pharmaceutical and MICE segments. Business travel provides year-round stability, while leisure boosts volumes seasonally. This combination makes the route very viable.

Expanding fleet to benefit India most

We currently operate the Airbus A320 and A321

aircraft (200+ seats) on India routes. The good news is that our fleet upgrade has had zero operational impact—we haven't grounded any aircraft. In addition, we have already inducted the first Boeing units into our fleet, with seven more arriving this month. Over time, these aircraft will also operate on India routes.

Award-winning service

We are extremely proud of our inflight service. We've won the award for 'Most Friendly Cabin Crew' for three consecutive years. Beginning January, passengers can enjoy free inflight entertainment through their personal devices, including movies and music. We also offer seamless through-check of baggage for connections to Vietnam, Japan, Taiwan and domestic Thai destinations. For our India routes, we have introduced dedicated inflight meal offerings tailored to Indian tastes.

VietJet Thailand Boarding Pass privileges

Because we are a Thai carrier, our partnerships with local attractions and shopping establishments are strong. Passengers can use their VietJet Thailand boarding passes to enjoy discounts at various retail and entertainment outlets in Bangkok and Phuket. It's a unique value-add that sets us apart. **BOTT**

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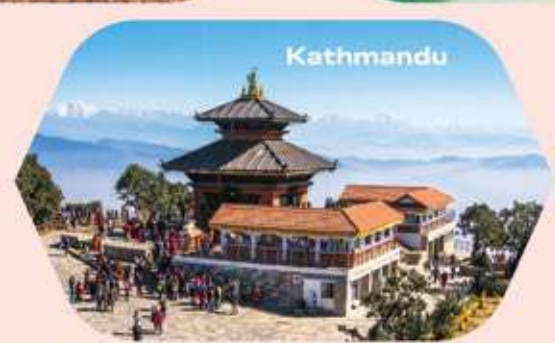
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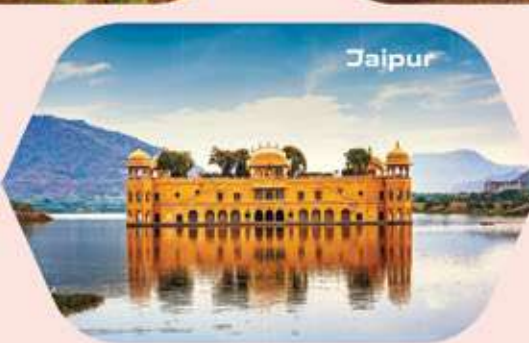
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MADHYA PRADESH TRAVEL MART 2025

signals a new era of Tourism, Investment and Cultural Convergence

The Madhya Pradesh Travel Mart (MPTM) 2025 concluded in Bhopal with remarkable milestones—₹3,665 crore worth of investment proposals, nearly 9,000 B2B meetings, global participation from 27 countries, and strategic announcements shaping the future of tourism in the state. Held from October 11–13 at the Kushabhau Thackeray International Convention Center, the event emerged as a powerful platform for cultural exchange, economic empowerment, and industry collaboration.

BOTT Desk



rganised by the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, MPTM 2025 welcomed over 700 participants, including 100+ international tour operators, top hoteliers, investors, state delegations, and industry leaders. The Mart brought alive a vibrant confluence of cultures, strengthened business networks, and spotlighted Madhya Pradesh as one of India's fastest-growing tourism destinations.

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, alongside Union Tourism Minister

Key announcements included:

- Two Letters of Award issued to Indore Treasure Town Pvt. Ltd. for major tourism projects.
- Contracts awarded to Ease My Trip and Aagman India Travel for establishing tent cities in Hanuwantiya, Tamia, Mandu, and Orchha.
- Trans Bharat Aviation and Jet Serve Aviation entrusted with launching regional helicopter services across three sectors.
- Balaji Telefilms committed to a ₹50 crore investment for film, OTT and documentary production in Madhya Pradesh.
- Partnership signed with Curly Tales to boost digital outreach.
- Collaboration between ASI and Madhya Pradesh Tourism for heritage conservation and tourist facility enhancement.

Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, State Minister Shri Dharmendra Bhav Singh Lodhi, and senior officials including Shri Anurag Jain and Shri Sheo Shekhar Shukla, inaugurated the event. Renowned entertainers and film personalities such as Ekta Kapoor, Gajraj Rao, Raghuvir Yadav, and international delegates from the Spanish Film Commission also graced the occasion.

Dr. Yadav emphasised that the Mart will now be held annually, showcasing India's cultural heartland on a global stage. He noted that participation from 27 countries affirms Madhya Pradesh's growing stature as an international tourism hub.

Record Investments

MPTM saw investment proposals totalling ₹3,665 crore across hotels, resorts, integrated tourism projects, and film infrastructure. Nearly 9,000 B2B meetings were conducted, reflecting strong industry confidence.

MPTM 2025 gave unprecedented visibility to rural tourism. Twenty homestay operators and 27 craftspeople showcased unique offerings from villages such as Bancha, Navdatoli, Bothu, Bhartipur and more. Handloom weavers, Chanderi artisans, Gond artists, and folk performers presented Madhya Pradesh's cultural richness to international buyers.

In addition, over 120 stalls displayed handicrafts, handlooms, and art traditions, complemented by vibrant performances featuring choreographer Maitreyi Pahadi and the popular Mayur Band.

Sessions on inter-state collaboration highlighted joint circuit development—such as the Ram Van Path with Chhattisgarh, Jyotirlinga circuit with Maharashtra, and heritage tourism initiatives with Rajasthan. Experts agreed these partnerships will position Madhya Pradesh as the central hub of India's tourism map.

A special roundtable on MICE and Wedding Tourism, organised with FICCI, explored opportunities to promote Madhya Pradesh as a global destination for corporate events and grand weddings.

The event also saw the grand launch



of The Sitarist, a new tourism film featuring world-renowned sitar maestro Anoushka Shankar, highlighting the soul and serenity of Madhya Pradesh.

Awards and Felicitations

Best Stall Awards were presented to:

- First Prize: **Shambhala Resort, Bhopal**
- Second Prize: **Yar Nagar Jungle Resort, Budhni**
- Third Prize: **Enchanting Madhya Pradesh, Gwalior**

With global participation, robust investments, strategic partnerships, and a vibrant cultural showcase, the Madhya Pradesh Travel Mart 2025 has firmly positioned the state as a rising powerhouse in India's tourism landscape. The event not only boosted investor confidence but also strengthened the state's commitment to sustainable, inclusive, and globally competitive tourism development.

MPTM 2025 indeed emerges as a landmark event—one that propels Madhya Pradesh from being India's hidden gem to a globally celebrated travel destination. **BOTT**



*With evolving traveller expectations and a growing demand for experiential, design-forward hospitality, Indeva Hotels & Resorts has emerged as a fresh, multi-segment brand with a clear vision for the future. In this interview, **Barun Gupta**, Chief Operating Officer, discusses the inspiration behind the brand, its differentiated positioning, and its strategic growth roadmap.*

Priyanka Saxena Ray

INDEVA HOTELS & RESORTS

Crafting design-led, experience-driven stays

What inspired the launch of Indeva Hotels, and how does this new brand differentiate itself from existing hospitality offerings under the ExpoInn umbrella?

Indeva Hotels and Resorts was established with the vision of creating a distinctly modern and elevated hospitality ecosystem that goes beyond the conventions of traditional business hotels. Designed to meet the evolving expectations of today's discerning travellers and event planners, the brand brings forward a fresh, contemporary perspective on comfort, design, and experiential stays. While ExpoInn has earned its reputation for dependable, full-service hospitality supported by well-loved dining destinations such as Paprika, Altus, Amaris, and Bean & Brew Co., Indeva Hotels and Resorts has been intentionally structured into segments that deliver a more curated, design-forward, lifestyle-meets-business experience.

What market segment is Indeva Hotels primarily targeting, and how does the brand align with the changing preferences of today's travellers?

Indeva Hotels and Resorts is positioned to cater to a broad yet distinctly defined spectrum of travellers — targeting guests across mid-upscale, upscale, and luxury segments, while also extend-

ing into retreat and nature-inspired getaways. This wide-ranging approach enables the brand to serve modern business travellers, leisure seekers, corporate groups, and experience-driven guests who seek design, comfort, and efficiency across varied price points. T

Looking ahead, what is the growth roadmap for Indeva Hotels in terms of expansion plans, brand development, and strategic positioning?

Indeva Hotels has a clearly defined growth roadmap focused on purposeful expansion, strong brand-building, and precise strategic positioning. The vision is to establish Indeva as a multi-segment hospitality powerhouse blending design, efficiency, and experience-driven stays. We are targeting 50 hotels across South Asia by 2030 through a mix of owned assets, management contracts, and strategic partnerships. Each sub-brand will expand into markets aligned with its positioning. Simultaneously, the group will strengthen brand identity through design coherence, signature guest touchpoints, enhanced F&B and wellness experiences, and technology-led convenience. Indeva's competitive advantage lies in its ability to deliver experience-led, aesthetically appealing, event-ready hospitality across multiple segments. **BOTT**

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ALEFIYA SINGH

‘Year 2025 has been a very rewarding year for us at IRIS Reps’

The year 2025 proved exceptionally strong for IRIS Reps, driving both business growth and deeper industry relationships. Strong momentum across its DMC partners and hospitality brands reflected the growing confidence of the Indian outbound traveller, with experience-led travel emerging as a clear priority. Alefiya Singh, Director and Founder of IRIS Reps, shares more insights.

Priyanka Saxena Ray



How has 2025 been for your organisation in terms of overall performance and market response?

Year 2025 has been a very rewarding year for us at IRIS Reps, both from a business and relationship point of view. We saw strong momentum across our DMC partners as well as our hospitality brands, which clearly showed how confident and curious the Indian outbound traveller has become. The market response was encouraging, with travel partners engaging more deeply. One clear shift we noticed was how experience-led travel has taken centre stage. Travellers were happy to spend more when the offering felt meaningful—be it a thoughtfully planned island stay, a wildlife journey, or a culturally immersive itinerary. Long-haul destinations, celebrations, family holidays, and special-occasion travel grew steadily. There was also greater demand for hotels that offer a complete experience, not just a place to stay.

Have there been any new additions to your portfolio or clientele this year, and how have these strengthened your presence in the Indian market?

Yes, 2025 was a strong year for strategic portfolio expansion. On the hospitality front, we were delighted to add Barceló Hotels & Resorts in the Maldives and Phuket. These resorts have connected very well with the Indian market, especially travellers looking

for contemporary, vibrant properties with strong dining, leisure, and family-friendly experiences. They have given our trade partners refreshed options in two extremely popular destinations.

From a DMC perspective, welcoming Rickshaw Travels for Kenya, Tanzania, and Rwanda was a significant step for us. Alongside our existing partners like Tour Managers Fiji, Pacific Pearl Holidays for Australia and New Zealand, and Authentic Asia for Vietnam, this has made our portfolio more balanced and future-ready.

How is India performing as a source market in international tourism, and do you have any strategic announcements lined up for 2026?

India continues to perform exceptionally well as a source market for international tourism. Travel is no longer limited to metros—there is strong outbound interest coming from tier 2 and tier 3 cities, and travellers are increasingly well-informed and aspirational. There is also a healthy demand across both hospitality and destination-led travel, which makes India a key focus market globally.

As we look at 2026, our focus will be on deeper engagement with the trade, stronger education around both hotels and destinations, and building campaigns around niche travel segments such as wildlife, wellness, family travel, and celebratory journeys. **BOTT**



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NEETI SHARMA

‘What stood out this year was quality of interest rather than just volume’

Intrepid Marketing and Communications has firmly established a niche for itself in the competitive representation landscape. In 2025 alone, the company added Sun Siyam Resorts Maldives, NextMile Travel DMC Czechia, and Costa Navarino, Greece to its

portfolio—an impressive testament to its commitment and credibility. Neeti Sharma, Director, Intrepid Marketing and Communications shares more.

Priyanka Saxena Ray

How has 2025 been for your organisation in terms of overall performance and market response?

Year 2025 has been a strong and steady year for Intrepid Marketing and Communications. Participation in OTM 2025 helped us build early-year momentum for our clients, including the Moroccan National Tourism Office (MNTTO), which saw significant tourist footfalls this year. The recently organised MNTTO multi-city MICE roadshow highlighted Morocco’s appeal as a future-ready MICE destination and attracted a strong turnout of tour operators and agents from multiple cities.

Our hospitality client, Sun Siyam Resorts, celebrated a milestone with their 35th anniversary events in Delhi and Mumbai, where they unveiled a refreshed, culture-led brand identity - “The Home of the Maldivian Spirit.” Additionally, we debuted representation for Costa Navarino in India, laying the groundwork for its entry into the Indian outbound travel market, including a collaborative event with the Greek Embassy in Delhi.

What stood out this year was the quality of interest rather than just the volume. We observed a clear rise in slow travel, offbeat and less tourist-heavy locations, and more thoughtful family and HNI travel.

Have there been any new additions to your portfolio or clientele this year, and how have

these strengthened your presence in the Indian market?

Yes. In 2025, we added Sun Siyam Resorts Maldives, NextMile Travel DMC Czechia, and Costa Navarino, Greece to our portfolio.

These clients will strengthen our portfolio by allowing us to support diverse destination needs; from Maldives’ luxury and romance-led travel, to authentic Central European experiences, to premium Mediterranean positioning through Costa Navarino. By representing these brands in India, we are able to build stronger trade relationships, drive more targeted storytelling, and create deeper visibility for each destination across media and the travel fraternity.

How is India performing as a source market in international tourism, and do you have any strategic announcements lined up for 2026?

India continues to be one of the most promising and fast-evolving source markets. Demand is strong from metros, but the real story is in emerging cities.

For 2026, we are looking at expanding our destination portfolio in regions where Indian travellers are showing strong early intent, while strengthening our focus on weddings, luxury, and experience-led storytelling. We also plan to invest more in integrated campaigns and market-specific communication strategies that help destinations connect more personally with the evolving Indian traveller. **BOTT**

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At the vibrant heart of SG Highway, Novotel Ahmedabad stands as a symbol of modern hospitality — where contemporary design meets heartfelt service. With an unwavering commitment to creating experiences that resonate personally with every guest, the hotel continues to redefine how comfort, connection, and community come together under one roof.

A Location That Connects You to Everything

Strategically positioned along SG Highway, the hotel offers swift access to corporate hubs, retail destinations, and key attractions. From heritage sites and cultural landmarks to vibrant dining and shopping — guests can explore the rich identity of Ahmedabad with unmatched convenience. Whether it's a business trip, a family holiday, or a weekend escape, Novotel Ahmedabad places you right in the center of the city's business buzz and tourism charm.

A True MICE Destination

With world-class infrastructure and seamless event execution, Novotel Ahmedabad stands as a premier destination for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE).

- Crystal Ballroom 3,000 sq. ft indoor space + 1,850 sq. ft pre-function foyer + 5,500 sq. ft Crystal Lawn — perfect for grand celebrations and large-scale corporate events.

Seven Versatile Venues Flexible meeting rooms designed for board meetings, training sessions, social gatherings and ideation workshops — accommodating from 12 to 80 guests with ease. Smart layouts, cutting-edge technology, and a dedicated events team ensure every experience runs flawlessly — from first briefing to final applause.

Wellness and Staycation Retreats

From relaxing at the spa to quality family time in the kids' play area or a serene moment in the Premier Lounge, Novotel Ahmedabad blends leisure, comfort, and rejuvenation. Its thoughtfully designed amenities cater equally to business travellers, families, and city dwellers seeking refreshing staycations.

A Stay That's More Than Just Rooms — For Leisure & Local Exploration

While business travellers and event guests find everything they need under one roof, leisure guests, families, and staycationers benefit from Novotel Ahmedabad's proximity to Ahmedabad's cultural heartbeat and heritage offerings. Whether it's a heritage walk, a visit to temples and museums, a leisurely stroll by the lakes or riverfronts, or a taste of local cuisine and markets — guests can effortlessly explore Ahmedabad's charm without compromising on comfort or convenience.

Thus, Novotel Ahmedabad doubles as both a refined business-class address and a comfortable launchpad for discovering the city's rich heritage and diverse tourism attractions.



**GENERAL MANAGER,
AMIT SANGWAN**



Novotel Ahmedabad brings comfort, innovation, and community together under one roof. By elevating everyday experiences and focusing on what truly matters, the hotel reimagines hospitality — making guests feel valued, connected, and at home in the heart of the city.

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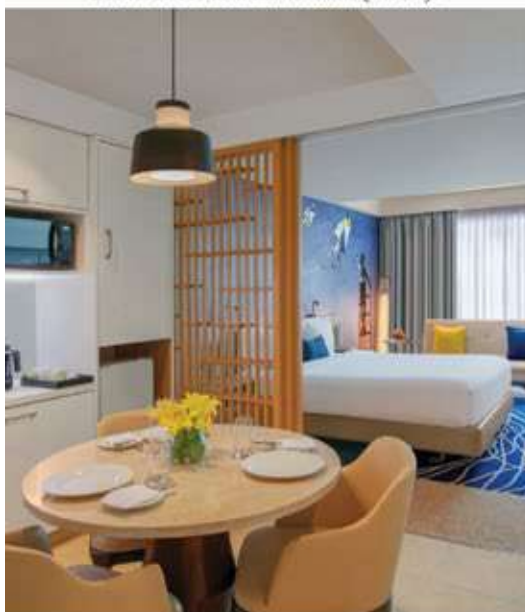
Guests can explore a spectrum of flavours: The Square celebrates global cuisines in an all-day dining format. Café Deli-tel offers a chic setting for casual bites or business discussions. Infine, the city's midnight dining destination, is run entirely by an all-female team and offers European-inspired cuisine, handcrafted mocktails, and a glass-enclosed design for a unique urban experience. Infine balances global innovation with local sensibilities while upholding sustainability and mindful sourcing.

Pet-Friendly Hospitality

As Ahmedabad's only pet-friendly hotel, Novotel ensures every furry guest feels right at home with dedicated pet amenities and open outdoor areas for a truly inclusive stay.

Sustainability Meets Comfort

Driven by its Green Key Certification, Novotel Ahmedabad champions responsible hospitality through smart initiatives like in-house water bottling, EV charging, MyByk cycles, motion-sensor lighting, bio-gas & water recycling, and reduced single-use plastic — supported by strong community partnerships.



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Embark on an unforgettable adventure to the wild beauty of Alaska with Holland America Line's award-winning Alaska cruises. Departing from Seattle or Vancouver, these voyages range from 7 to 28 days and traverse majestic coastlines, glacier-sculpted inlets, and remote frontier towns.

What sets these cruises apart is access: Holland America holds more permits to enter the pristine Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve than any other cruise line, allowing guests to experience up-close encounters with towering ice walls and cascading tidewater glaciers.

Onboard, natural-history experts and National Park Service rangers guide deep-dive programs into Alaska's glacial and wildlife ecosystems, complemented by immersive "We Heart Alaska" experiences that highlight local culture, cuisine and nature.

Ports of call like Juneau, Ketchikan and Sitka deliver frontier town charm, forested fjords and whale-watching opportunities. Meanwhile, departures from Vancouver offer one-way or round-trip options along the famed Inside Passage, allowing for diverse itineraries and longer explorations like Kodiak Island.

Holland America also brings a refined onboard experience: ships are sized to glide into less-crowded waters, offer wrap-around decks for glacier-watching, and serve sustainably sourced Alaskan seafood—part of their industry-leading commitment to responsible dining at sea.

Whether you're witnessing calving glaciers, spotting humpback whales or simply sipping a warm drink on a deck as icebergs drift by, Holland America's Alaska cruises invite you to savour the world's last frontier with elegance, comfort and depth.



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UDAAN HOTELS & RESORTS

Steering growth with experiential excellence

*In an evolving hospitality landscape driven by experience-led travel, boutique concepts, and rising demand across leisure destinations, Udaan Hotels & Resorts has emerged as a distinctive brand. In this conversation, **Ajay Kumar Wadhawan**, Executive Director, Air IQ, shares insights on the brand's performance in 2025, its differentiators in a competitive market, and the strategic roadmap shaping its expansion in the years ahead.*

Priyanka Saxena Ray

How has Udaan Hotels & Resorts performed in 2025 in terms of expansion, guest response, and brand visibility, and what key trends are influencing your growth strategy?

The growth of Udaan Hotels and Resorts has been an excellent experience, both in terms of expansion and business trends. Our overall growth in business has been over 40% in 2025, including the additional capacity of around 11%.

What differentiates Udaan Hotels & Resorts in today's competitive hospitality market, particularly in terms of guest experience, design philosophy, and positioning across leisure and experiential travel segments?

Udaan Hotels and Resorts are strategically placed in a key segment of hospitality, with a major focus on excellence in experiential stays, boutique products, and the highest quality. They offer mid-

sized, beautiful, and well-located properties with no compromise on quality.

What are your strategic priorities and expansion plans for 2026, and how do you see the Udaan brand evolving to meet the changing demands of new-age travellers?

We are clear on the strategic priorities and expansion in the coming years, too. We started with a property a few years ago, and today we successfully manage more than 22 properties, with 24 more on the way. The aim is to complete a total of 30 by FY 2026-27 and 50 by FY 2030. As far as the demand of the new age travellers is concerned, we are fortunately already working, strategically placed currently, and focusing accordingly. After consolidating Siliguri, the North Bengal Hills, and Sikkim, we are getting open to covering the rest of North-east India too, with plans to expand our hospitality network to at least five more locations. **BOTT**



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BOTT KNOWLEDGE CONCLAVE – TOURISM 2026

brings industry stalwarts together for charting the future of Indian Tourism

The **BOTT** Knowledge Conclave emerged as a resounding success, bringing together close to 400 senior travel and tourism professionals from across the country for an immersive day of dialogue, insights and strategic thought leadership at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi on November 21, 2025. The conclave reinforced **BOTT's** position as a powerful platform where policy, innovation and industry expertise converge to shape the future of Indian tourism.

The event commenced with a compelling keynote address by Ankush Nijhawan, Co-Founder & Joint Managing Director at TBO Tek Limited, whose mind-boggling presentation offered a sweeping overview of the evolving global travel ecosystem. Taking the audience through current trends in inbound and outbound tourism, he highlighted how the sector is witnessing unprecedented growth, driven by higher traveller spend, expanding aviation networks and rapidly changing consumer behaviour. He shone a spotlight on niche segments such as MICE, weddings and domestic travel, underlining their growing role in redefining tourism dynamics.

“Global tourism is expanding like never before – more people are travelling, exploring more destinations and spending more. India’s 75,000+ travel agents are a powerful force, and the future lies in immersive, offbeat, luxury and gourmet-led experiences,



powered by Human-AI collaboration, live tourism events, cruise travel and wellness tourism,” said Ankush, setting the tone for a forward-looking conclave.

This was followed by a powerful address by Shri Sheo Shekhar Shukla, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary – Tourism, Culture & Home and Managing Director, Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, who presented a strong state perspective on tourism development. Emphasising the state’s diverse tourism

offerings, he stated, “Madhya Pradesh is ideally placed and offers enriching experiences for singles, families, Gen Z travellers, adventure enthusiasts and wildlife lovers. Our offerings cater to every kind of traveller, and we are committed to strengthening our global footprint with equal focus on domestic and international markets.”

The first thematic session, “Smart Inbound: Using AI to Attract the World to India,” brought together a distin-

guished panel moderated by Himmat Anand, Chief Visionary Officer, Snowfox Escapes. The panellists included Shri Suman Billa, IAS, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, Anil Parashar, Executive Director, ITQ, Ajay K. Bakaya, Chairman, Sarovar Hotels, Ravi Gosain, President, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), Anshul Sethi, Head of Sales – India, IndiGo, and Prateek Hira, President & CEO, Tornos.





The discussion delved deeply into how artificial intelligence is redefining inbound tourism—from data intelligence and smart segmentation to predictive marketing and personalised travel design. The session witnessed an extremely interactive atmosphere, with four to five insightful questions from

the audience, making it highly participative.

In a compelling address, Shri Suman Billa, IAS, formally announced the reboot of the iconic Incredible India campaign with an AI-driven vision. “AI is inevitable and has revolutionised the way of doing things. It helps create cus-

tomised solutions tailored for travellers. We must develop synergy between states, adopting nimble and flexible strategies while embracing a unified ‘One India’ approach.”

Adding to the perspective, Ravi Gosain, President, IATO, highlighted the need for India to diversify beyond



Global travel is on a sharp upward trajectory, and I see it expanding with more people, more destinations, and higher spending than ever before. With aviation opening new corridors and Q1 2025 already showing strong tourism momentum, India's 75,000+ travel agents remain one of the strongest forces in this ecosystem. Travellers today are shifting toward offbeat, immersive, luxury, and even gourmet-led experiences, with influencers playing a major role in shaping demand. I firmly believe that human-AI collaboration, live tourism events, cruise travel, and wellness tourism will define the next powerful cycle of growth.

- Ankush Nijhawan





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traditional offerings. “As destinations evolve, relying solely on traditional tourism and culture is no longer enough. The future lies in adventure, luxury, and truly immersive experiences. AI is transforming how we understand travellers—helping us identify market segments with precision and craft itineraries that feel personal and seamless. AI won’t replace tour operators; it will empower them. To support this shift, IATO is hosting a one-day workshop dedicated to the power of AI in modern travel,” he said.

From the aviation lens, Anshul Sethi, Head of Sales – India, IndiGo,

emphasised, “AI turns information into intelligent travel insights. With predictive analysis, we understand traveller demand more clearly than ever. Technology isn’t just a tool—it’s a catalyst for generating new demand and shaping tomorrow’s journeys. Strengthening intra-state connectivity remains key, and AI is helping us build a consistent world-class experience for customers.”

Representing hospitality, Ajay K. Bakaya, Chairman, Sarovar Hotels, outlined, “AI delivers tailored solutions, helping governments and major companies design sharper, more effective strategies. It learns your likes and

dislikes—and responds with an uncanny ability to match your preferences. As technology advances, the gap between human and AI-generated content will continue to narrow.”

From a state tourism perspective, Prateek Hira, President & CEO, Tornos, stressed, “Every state should celebrate its unique identity—standing distinct, yet united, under the larger Indian flag. Uttar Pradesh is embracing AI in a big way, setting a powerful example of how technology can elevate tourism and governance.”

The discussion centred on how artificial intelligence can revolutionise in-



bound tourism through data analytics, predictive tools and smart marketing. The session witnessed vibrant interaction, with four to five questions from the audience, making it highly engaging and participative.

A key highlight of the conclave was the official launch of CSR-ESG Impact, a special BOTT initiative promoting Responsible Tourism and CSR, unveiled by Shri Suman Billa, alongside ten partner association heads representing the industry bodies supporting the BOTT Knowledge Conclave.

The second session, moderated by Vir Sanghvi, Author & Senior

Journalist, explored the psyche of the next-gen traveller—tech-savvy, experience-driven, and deeply mindful of sustainability. It featured an eclectic panel comprising Sanjay Kumar, Executive Director, SpiceJet, Himanshu Patil, President, OTOAI, Seema Roy, Area Managing Director – South Asia, Middle East & Africa, Preferred Hotels & Resorts, Vikramjit Singh, Founder & CMD, ALIVAA Hotels, and Vikramjeet Sharma, Founder & MD, Le Florence Weddings. The lively session explored evolving traveller psychology, personalised journeys, premium experiences and the rising demand for destination

and sustainable weddings, with Vir Sanghvi ensuring an engaging and spirited exchange of ideas.

The conversation touched upon personalised travel, changing luxury perceptions, and the explosive rise in destination weddings. Himanshu Patil, President, OTOAI, underlined the power of social platforms in influencing Gen Z. He said, "Gen Z travellers are incredibly well-informed and research-driven, choosing to spend more on meaningful experiences. Instagram especially inspires them to explore new destinations. Many prefer two or three short getaways instead of one long hol-

EVENTS AND MORE



iday. With domestic travel booming, stronger direct flight connectivity is the need of the hour."

From a luxury standpoint, Seema Roy, offered a nuanced view: "There's a fundamental shift in how luxury is perceived today. While conventional destinations still attract strong demand, we're seeing deeper interest in offbeat, immersive experiences. Young travelers are becoming increasingly mindful of the positive impact they leave behind. Hotels too are evolving—connecting with guests through emotional touchpoints and creating experiences that feel personal and meaningful."

Representing the booming wedding industry, Vikramjeet Sharma, highlighted, "Gen Z weddings are all about curating fresh, memorable experiences. Longer celebrations, unusual destinations, and the growing ease of planning weddings internationally are redefining how this generation chooses to say 'I do.'"

Adding the aviation growth perspective, Sanjay Kumar, Executive Director, SpiceJet, said, "We're seeing a clear surge in travel demand, supported by better infrastructure and a growing number of travellers. New airports









are opening fresh opportunities for growth, and with this momentum, India—already the world’s third-largest aviation market—is well on its way to becoming the second largest.”

The two sessions together highlighted one overarching message—the future of tourism will be driven by AI-powered insights, emotionally res-

onant experiences, seamless mobility, and a bold new generation of travelers shaping the narrative. The Vote of Thanks was delivered by Gunjan Sabikhi, Director, BOTT, acknowledging the unwavering support of stakeholders, partners and participants.

The BOTT Knowledge Conclave successfully created a platform where

technology, creativity, strategy, and storytelling converged—setting the stage for India’s next chapter as a global tourism powerhouse. The conclave concluded with an elegant networking dinner, providing a perfect setting for collaboration and meaningful interactions among industry leaders.

Summing up the spirit of the con-

EVENTS AND MORE



clave, Priyanka Saxena Ray, Editor, BOTT, remarked, "The BOTT Knowledge Conclave represented a crucial platform where policy meets practice and vision meets execution. As India positions itself as a global tourism powerhouse, the integration of artificial intelligence into our tourism strategy is no longer optional—it's imperative. This conclave catalysed meaningful conversations that translated into actionable strategies for 2026 and beyond."

With strong backing from the Government of India's Incredible India initiative and the presenting partner states Odisha and Madhya Pradesh, the BOTT Knowledge Conclave reaffirmed India's collective commitment to innovation, sustainability and global leadership in tourism. **BOTT**

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India strategy after a blockbuster multi-city showcase



The 'Spectacular Saudi' Multi-City Showcase 2025 concluded on a high note after an extraordinary three-day run across Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, and Hyderabad, drawing an impressive 200,000+ visitors. The experiential showcase brought to life the soul and culture of Saudi Arabia through art, calligraphy, Ardah dancing, Sadu weaving, culinary showcases, on-spot visa kiosks, and unbeatable travel offers. Celebrity visits by Kareena Kapoor, Kartik Aaryan, Ananya Panday, Rakul Preet Singh, Arjun Kapoor and others added significant star power.

*During his India visit, **Meshaal Qureshi**, Senior Director – India & Subcontinent, Saudi Tourism Authority, spoke to us about India's phenomenal response, new attractions like Qiddiya, easier visa access, women-friendly travel initiatives, and more.*

Priyanka Saxena Ray



You were in Mumbai, and now in Delhi. How has the vibe in India been through the ‘Spectacular Saudi’ showcase?

India never fails to surprise us. The energy has been overwhelmingly positive across all five cities. We crossed 100,000 footfalls in just two days and ended with more than 200,000 visitors. People are genuinely excited to discover Saudi’s culture, food, history, and experiences. Seeing over a dozen Saudi dishes being served with Jain and vegetarian options amazed many visitors.

The event builds on STA’s expanding footprint in India and follows the hugely successful “I Came for Football, I Stayed for More” global campaign featuring Cristiano Ronaldo (CR7), which spotlighted Saudi’s year-round events calendar, world-class entertainment and music festivals like MDLBEAST Soundstorm, and Saudi’s unprecedented rise as a global sports hub.

With the Riyadh Season, one of the world’s largest entertainment festivals, running from October 2025 until all the way through March 2026, the timing of the showcase offered Indian travellers a direct pathway into a world of concerts, global

sporting showdowns, immersive attractions, cultural celebrations and fashion events.

The showcase offered on-spot visa processing. How has that impacted travellers?

Hugely. We had visa kiosks in every city, making the process seamless. Along with this, 11–15 major Indian travel partners offered exclusive Saudi packages—some starting as low as ₹13,000 for two nights. Saudi has never been this accessible and affordable.

Qiddiya has created massive buzz. Tell us more.

Qiddiya is the world’s first “city built for play”—the largest entertainment city globally with over 140 experiences. Six Flags Qiddiya City opens on 31 December, 2025, followed by Aquarabia, a first-of-its-kind water theme park, e-gaming zones, a futuristic stadium, and more. It will redefine entertainment tourism.

It’s first attraction, Six Flags Qiddiya City will feature 28 rides including record-breaking experiences, such as: Falcons Flight, the world’s tallest, fastest, and longest roller coaster, and Iron Rattler, the world’s

tallest tilt coaster, and more. 18 of these rides are specially designed for families and younger entertainment seekers ensuring entertainment for all generations and strengthening Saudi’s position as a family destination. And not to forget availability of a variety of international dining options, including Indian cuisines, retail outlets, and more.

How is Saudi enhancing safety and appeal for solo women travellers?

Safety is a top priority. Madinah has been ranked among the safest cities for women by independent global bodies. We also offer dedicated itineraries under “Saudi for Her”, and even host Indian-style kitty parties in Saudi.

What about MICE and weddings? Are these segments growing?

Massively. We launched major MICE initiatives earlier this year, and destinations like King Abdullah Economic City and Qiddiya are emerging as strong contenders. During this showcase alone, we received several wedding and pre-wedding enquiries from India. **BOTT**

THE GENTING DREAM

Redefining the art of Cruising

Genting Dream, the flagship of Dream Cruises, redefines luxury cruising in impeccable style. A pioneer and trendsetter in hospitality with a rich legacy spanning 50 years, it promises a memorable mosaic of experiences to be cherished for a lifetime. A Fam trip was organised for seventeen media representatives from India to experience the diverse offerings and unforgettable moments onboard the majestic Genting Dream.

Shreya Shimpi

With the Genting Dream, you embark on a journey to discover the unknown. As the magnificent skies meet the mighty ocean, the cruise ship sets sail—while the city gently shrinks from sight and the horizon stretches endlessly. StarDream Cruises hosted seventeen Indian travel media representatives onboard the regal Genting Dream for a 3-night, 4-day sailing from Singapore to Phuket and back, filled with fun, entertainment, adventure, and delectable gastronomic experiences.

Accommodation

The ship boasts a jaw-dropping length of 335.3 m, 18 decks, a capacity of 3,352 passengers, and 1,674 staterooms—offering a classic resort experience on the sea. It encapsulates the A to Z of happiness, one deck, one port, and one shore at a time. Guests can choose from various accommodations across budget segments, including interior staterooms, balcony staterooms, and ocean view staterooms. The Palace is an ultra-luxurious “ship within a ship” boutique hotel featuring 24-hour butler service and exclusive private facilities.



Naresh Rawal,
Senior Vice President – Sales & Marketing,
StarDream Cruises





A Cruise crafted for all travellers

The Genting Dream is the perfect choice for couples, solo travellers, multi-generational families, MICE groups, and even weddings. Under approved supervision and safety protocols, fire rituals in Hindu weddings can be performed onboard. The ship offers a plethora of activities for every age group and every type of traveller.

Gastronomical Experiences

The ship offers a smorgasbord of dining options, ranging from common dining areas such as The Lido to fine dining venues serving international and Halal cuisine—including Indian vegetarian and Jain meals. Specialty dining options include The Silk Road, Umi Uma, Blue Lagoon, The Oasis, and

Hot Pot, Bar 360, Bar City, and the Sun Deck Bar offer refreshing ambrosial drinks.

Entertainment and Activities

The opulent Zodiac Theatre showcases scintillating productions such as Harmony—an unmissable masterpiece featuring acrobatics and aerial stunts—alongside the vibrant Dazzling Departure Party. Children can enjoy the Little Dreamers Club, waterslides park, and The Arcade, while guests of all ages can indulge in Bingo, games, dance nights, and the iconic Foam Party. The Red Carpet brings in glitz and glamour, with guests getting the chance to meet the Captain of the ship.

The Zouk Beach Club, Glow Bowling Alley, Karaoke, Silent Disco, and casinos further elevate the entertainment quotient. The Sportsplex houses mini-

golf, a rock-climbing wall, a jogging track, a ropes course, and a thrilling 35-metre zipline.

Shore Excursion

The ship docked at Phuket Deep Sea Port, giving guests the opportunity to explore Patong Beach, followed by a delectable dinner.

The media contingent also had an exclusive first preview of upcoming multimedia films featuring the Genting Dream, innovatively unveiled by **Narresh Rawal**, Senior Vice President – Sales & Marketing, StarDream Cruises, and Jiten Vasavda, Senior Manager – Marketing, StarDream Cruises.

The voyage concluded with a meet-and-greet with Michael Goh, President, StarDream Cruises, who reinforced his commitment to working closely with the travel trade fraternity. **BOTT**

SENIOR TRAVEL BOOMS

Asego unveils USD 1 million coverage plan

Recent market studies reveal that the global senior travel market reached approximately USD 115.3 billion in 2024, with strong growth projected over the next decade.

Rising disposable incomes, early retirements, and decent life expectancy are key contributors to this upward trajectory. At the same time, heightened awareness of health-related emergencies has driven demand for specialised travel protection designed exclusively for older travellers.

This trend is equally reflected in the insurance landscape. The senior citizen travel insurance market—valued at USD 3.6 billion in 2023—is projected to soar to USD 16.7 billion by 2032, underscoring the increasing need for robust and customised risk-mitigation solutions for this demographic.

Against this evolving backdrop, Asego's Senior Citizen Global Assistance Plan stands out as a timely and purpose-built solution. It is designed to offer senior travellers and their families the assurance that every international trip—whether a long-awaited vacation, a visit to children abroad, or a personal milestone journey—is backed by comprehensive protection and dependable real-time support.

Age often brings travel challenges such as, higher vulnerability to medical emergencies, limited familiarity with foreign healthcare systems and increased anxiety around managing unforeseen events abroad. Asego's plan addresses these concerns through generous medical coverage of up to USD 1 million, including outpatient treatments in addition to cashless hospitalisation.

The plan further safeguards travellers against practical setbacks such as loss or delay of checked-in baggage, loss of passport, and other essential travel-related contingencies. It also covers unexpected situations like trip cancellations, travel delays, and unforeseen mishaps that can disrupt plans.

Understanding that many seniors travel with longstanding health conditions, Asego extends coverage to pre-existing medical conditions (within plan eligibility). This enhances accessibility for



Dev Karvat
Founder & CEO, ASEGO

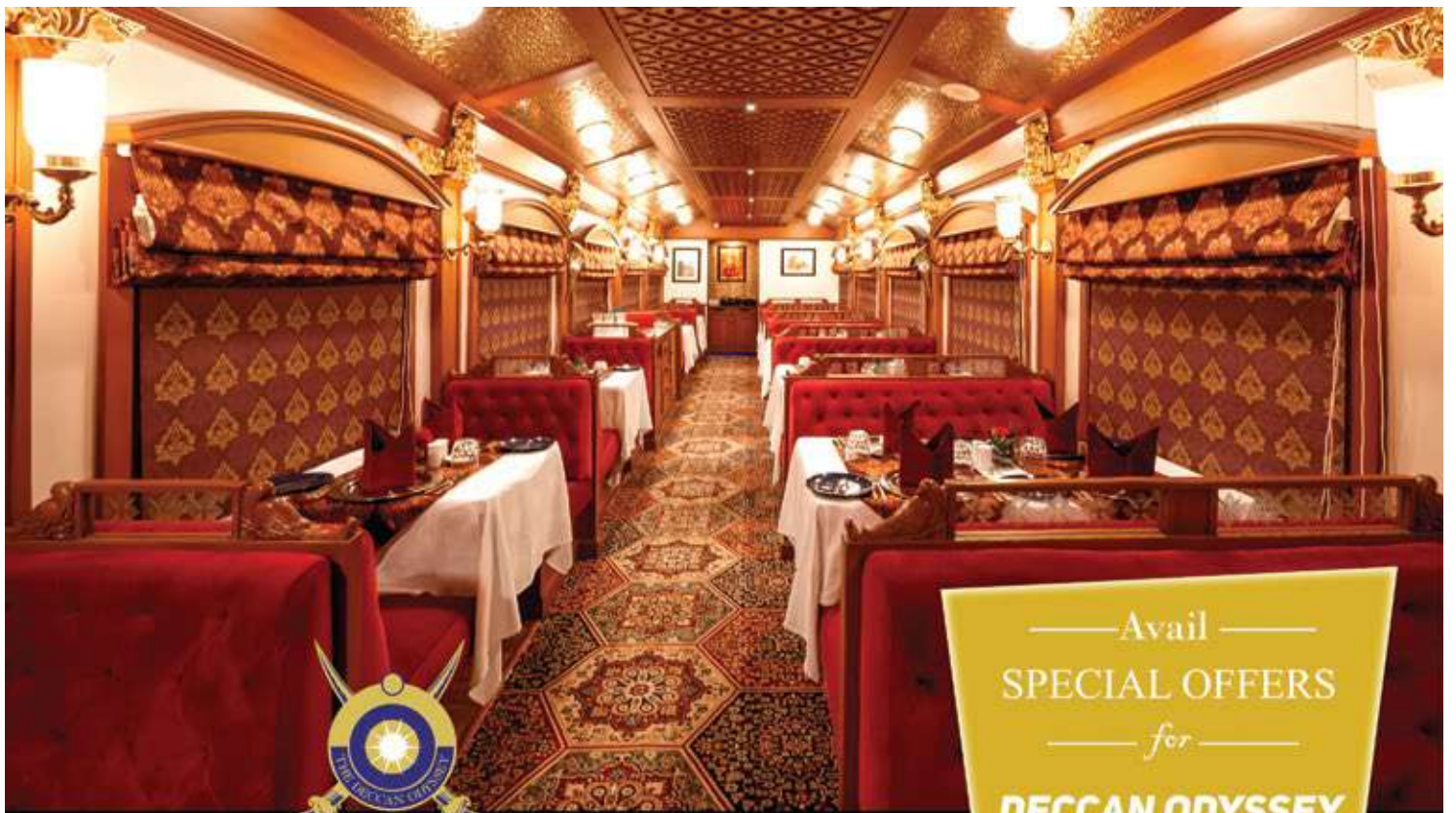
travellers who may otherwise avoid international trips due to insurance limitations. Coupled with 24/7 global emergency medical assistance, cashless medical facilities, and priority claims support, the plan ensures that senior travellers can embark on their journeys with comfort and complete peace of mind.

Asego's Senior Citizen Global Assistance Plan is more than a protection plan; it is a promise. A promise that age will not limit exploration, health concerns and other travel risks will not overshadow adventure, and that every senior traveller can experience the world with confidence—knowing that expert help is always just a call away. **BOTT**

***Benefits may vary based on the plan selected, age of traveller, and sum insured opted.**

Note: Assistance services are provided by Asego Global Assistance Limited. All Insurance policies are sold under the Corporate Agency of Asego Global Assistance Limited bearing IRDAI registration no. CA0776

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MESMERISING

Malaysia

The Heartbeat of Southeast Asia

Malaysia is a melting pot of culture, history, awe-inspiring architecture, warm hospitality, and delightful gastronomical experiences woven into its rich tapestry. As part of the Global Travel Meet 2025 in Kuala Lumpur, media representatives participated in exclusive pre- and post-Fam tours curated by Tourism Malaysia to showcase the country's diverse offerings.

Shreya Shimpi

From the glittering skyline of Kuala Lumpur to Penang's colonial architecture, Malaysia dazzles. Enjoy the cool, misty highlands of Genting or unwind on the pristine beaches of Sabah. Johor Bahru offers adventure-packed theme parks, while Sarawak welcomes visitors with lush rainforests. Malaysia is a magical mosaic of experiences, making it a premier tourist destination. A multi-generational favourite, it offers something for everyone. Known as the 'Land of the Hornbill', the destination is every traveller's delight. The Fam tour spotlighted iconic attractions and offered a glimpse into Malaysia's rich diversity, indigenous heritage, vibrant nightlife, natural beauty, and modern charm.

Petronas Twin Towers

A visit to Malaysia is incomplete without seeing the iconic, breathtaking Petronas Twin Towers, also known as the KLCC Towers—an interlinked pair of 88-storey skyscrapers. Standing at 451.9 metres, these architectural marvels dominate Kuala Lumpur's skyline. Remarkably, each tower was constructed by a different company—one Japanese and



one Korean—to meet the government’s six-year deadline, yet both look strikingly identical. They stand as a symbol of Malaysia’s modern identity, embodying precision and unity.

Genting Highlands

About an hour’s drive from Kuala Lumpur, the misty Genting Highlands offer a refreshing escape. The scenic journey transitions from city bustle to serene mountains. A highlight is the memorable cable car ride to the summit, offering panoramic views of the valley and the Chin Swee Caves Temple. Situated at 1,800 metres on Mount Ulu Kali, Resorts World Genting is an integrated hill resort home to hotels like Genting SkyWorlds, Awana, Genting Grand, First World Hotel, Resort Hotel, Crockfords, and the Highlands Hotel. The vibrant First World Hotel holds the Guinness World Record as the world’s largest hotel with 7,351 rooms. The return cable car ride, set against a sunset in hues of orange and gold, is simply magical.

Batu Caves

The sacred Batu Caves are the colourful heart of Malaysia. Formed from 400-million-year-old limestone, the caves house a magnificent shrine built in 1920. A major highlight is the striking 140-foot golden statue of Lord Murugan at the base of the 272 vividly painted steps. This blend of natural beauty, intricate architecture, artistic sculptures, and spiritual serenity makes Batu Caves one of the most photographed and unmissable attractions.

Independence Square

A guided walking tour is ideal for exploring Kuala Lumpur’s historical landmarks. Beginning at Independence Square and concluding at Central Market, the colonial heritage trail offers a glimpse into an era gone by. Along the way are Dataran Merdeka—the city centre—colonial buildings, Padang, and the iconic Masjid Jamek, which stands gracefully at the confluence of the Gombak and Klang rivers.

Central Market

Central Market is a lively shopping hub filled with souvenirs, handicrafts, boutiques, and food stalls. Visitors can shop for fridge magnets, specialty chocolates, handbags, handmade jewellery, and the famous batik fabrics and garments at this vibrant marketplace.

Malaysia is a multicultural treasure offering a captivating blend of art, culture, gastronomy, natural splendour, history, and hospitality—enchancing travellers from around the world. It is not just a destination but a memory you will cherish forever. The Fam tour beautifully blended these experiences, capturing the essence of Malaysia—Truly Asia. **BOTT**

SWOSTI PREMIUM BEACH RESORT, PURI

Where coastal serenity meets modern luxury

There are places that don't just promise an escape—they become one the moment you arrive. Swosti Premium Beach Resort in Puri is exactly that kind of destination. Located on the New Marine Drive Road at Sipasarubali, this beachfront haven blends the rhythmic calm of the Bay of Bengal with the refined elegance of contemporary hospitality.

Pallavi Sharma

*S*pread across the magnificent coastline of Puri, Swosti Premium Beach Resort feels like a breath of fresh sea breeze the moment you step inside. The resort features 125 well-appointed rooms, including six distinctive suites, each designed with comfort, warmth, and modern aesthetics in mind. Some rooms come with private verandas, others with sweeping sea views, but all offer plush king-sized beds, fine linens, rainfall showers, and smart in-room amenities.

The sea-facing rooms are particularly magical. As the morning light filters through, you wake not to alarms but to the gentle music of waves—steady, soothing, and



unmistakably comforting. A room with a private sit-out transforms your mornings into a quiet ritual: sipping tea while watching fishermen begin their day against the golden horizon.

One of the standout highlights of the resort is its spectacular swimming pool—an infinity-style expanse that appears to merge into the sea. The sun-kissed deck becomes a place where time slows down, letting guests read, dream, float, and simply breathe.

For those who prefer a more active rhythm, the resort offers a fitness centre along with spacious indoor and outdoor recreational zones. Even these spaces exude an air of unhurried leisure; they don't demand your presence—they gently invite it.

Flavours of the coast and beyond

Culinary indulgence at Swosti Premium mirrors the soul of Puri—fresh, comforting, and full of character.

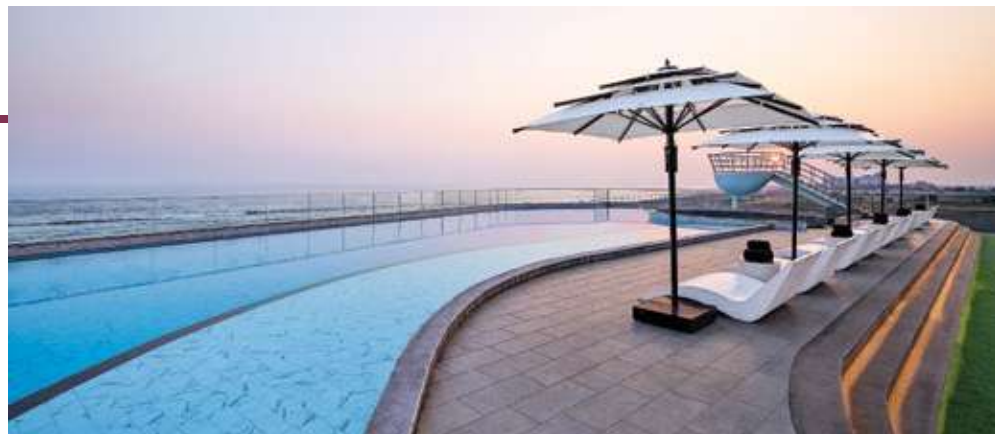
Beach Hut, the all-day dining restaurant, brings together global favourites and authentic local delicacies. Its earthy ambience, paired with expansive sky-and-sea views, makes meals here an experience rather than a routine. Breakfasts are leisurely, lunches feel wholesome, and dinners become enchanting when paired with the salty coastal breeze.

Bean Hive, the resort's stylish lounge, sets the tone for laid-back evenings with finger foods, beverages, and soft conversations. It's the kind of space where hours slip by effortlessly.

Majestic Venues for momentous celebrations

Swosti has long been synonymous with memorable celebrations, and this resort carries that legacy forward with grandeur. The property boasts a range of indoor halls and open-air venues perfect for weddings, socials, and corporate events.

The crown jewel is Boita Voyage, a stunning pillar-less hall that can host up to 1,000 guests. Inspired by Odisha's maritime heritage, it balances regal aesthetics with contemporary elegance. Smaller yet equally charming venues—Panorama, Portrait, and Mahari Courtyard—offer refined spaces for intimate



gatherings. The beautifully landscaped lawns across tiered levels make magical settings for sunset weddings or seaside soirées.

What sets Swosti Premium Beach Resort apart is its thoughtful celebration of Odisha's art, craft, and culture. Its interiors draw inspiration from Mahari and Odissi dance forms, Sambalpuri and Ikat weaving traditions, and the fluid curves of ancient Kalinga boats. This artistic touch doesn't feel decorative—it feels authentic, as though the property is narrating the story of the region with every detail.

Sustainability is subtly woven into the resort's ethos through eco-con-

scious materials, responsible energy practices, and designs that respect the natural environment it stands within.

Puri is a rare destination where spiritual devotion and natural beauty coexist effortlessly. Located just 3 km from the sacred Shree Jagannath Temple, the resort offers pilgrims the perfect blend of tranquillity and convenience.

The iconic Sun Temple of Konark is only 40 km away, while the handicraft villages of Pipili and Raghurajpur—famous for appliqué art and traditional crafts—are easily accessible. This makes the resort an ideal base for cultural exploration combined with seaside relaxation. **BOTT**

WORLDWIDE CRUISE ASSOCIATES, FLORIDA appoints Travstarz Global as its exclusive India Sales & Marketing partner

BOTT Desk



Steve Bloss and Diana Bloss, Co-founders of WCA



Pankaj Nagpal, Managing Director of Travstarz Global Group and Sucheta Nagpal

Worldwide Cruise Associates (WCA), the marketing and operations division for leading cruise lines around the globe, has appointed Travstarz Global Group, a TripAdvisor Invested Company as its exclusive Sales and Marketing partner for the Indian market. This strategic partnership represents a significant milestone for both organizations, aligning WCA's extensive cruise expertise with Travstarz's robust presence in the Indian travel sector. Founded in 1989, Worldwide Cruise Associates brings over 36 years of experience in handling an array of cruise programs, including sea, river, and boat cruises as well as shore excursions and transfers.

Steve Bloss and Diana Bloss, co-founders of WCA, stated, "We are thrilled to form a partnership with Travstarz Global Group, given their well-established expertise in the Indian B2B market. India is rapidly growing into one of the most significant cruise markets in the world, and this collaboration comes at an opportune time. Our specialization in cruise charters for groups and MICE events, alongside our commitment to providing comprehensive service from planning to execution, will allow us

to cater effectively to the needs of Indian clients seeking unique travel experiences."

With an impressive array of partnerships spanning major cruise lines—including Avalon Waterways, Carnival Cruises, Celebrity Cruises, and many others—WCA offers comprehensive solutions for corporate events, incentive trips, conferences, and themed cruises.

"Partnering with WCA, a pioneer in the cruise sector with over three decades of experience, is an exciting development for Travstarz Global Group," said Pankaj Nagpal, Managing Director of Travstarz Global Group. "Through this collaboration, we aim to tap into the burgeoning segments of luxury and leisure cruise bookings in India, as well as cater to MICE operators seeking bespoke cruise and charter options worldwide. Our goal is to become the preferred partner for agents and operators in India by bridging their clients with exceptional cruise offerings. As the Indian cruise market continues to expand, this partnership promises enhanced access and opportunities for travel agents and tour operators seeking to offer innovative cruise solutions to their clientele." **BOTT**

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Theme of FMITC - Kolkata: Inbound Tourism

At FMITC-Kolkata, we are highlighting the growing importance of Inbound Tourism as it drives economic growth by creating jobs and generating revenue through tourist spending.

The program schedule of FMITC-Kolkata

Day 1: 31st January 2026

- a) Onsite Registration of FMITC – from 9:30 am to 10 am
- b) Inauguration Ceremony at 10 AM & starting of B2B Session
- c) Speeches by Chief Guest & Guest of Honour
- d) Panel discussion:

Subject: Importance of Inbound Tourism to make India as a Global destination

- e) Network Lunch
- f) Audio-Visual Presentation by Partner (State/National)
- g) Audio-Visual Presentation by Partner State
- h) Cocktail-Dinner

Day 2: 1st February 2026

- a) Audio-Visual Presentation by State/Participant
- b) Audio-Visual Presentation by State/Participant
- c) Network Lunch
- d) Felicitation of Guests & participants.

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Know what your stars say about December 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 December 2025.



March 21 – April 20

Work will be exciting for Aries this month, with new challenges that you will truly enjoy. Fresh opportunities and job offers are on the horizon. Relationship issues are likely to resolve harmoniously, while family life remains stable and abundant. A short trip with loved ones is also indicated.



July 23 – August 21

Love and fun are highlighted this month. Expect new adventures and a carefree approach to relationships. Professionally, mental clarity and breakthroughs will help you make important decisions. Use your sharp intellect and bold thinking to succeed.



November 23 – December 22

December brings fresh momentum, renewed clarity, and a burst of optimism. You'll feel more aligned with your long-term goals, making it a great month for bold decisions and new beginnings. Relationships strengthen through honest conversations.



April 21 – May 21

This month will be phenomenal as you progress on both professional and personal fronts. Happiness and growth await you, though you must stay cautious about your health. You will have ample opportunities to innovate and gain immense popularity.



August 22 – September 23

You are ready to express your emotions and pursue romantic interests enthusiastically. Career advancement is likely as you move past previous challenges and enter a more peaceful, stable phase. Make the most of new growth opportunities.



December 23 – January 20

Your creativity will be your strength this month. You'll excel at multitasking as work demands intensify. Despite a busy schedule, make sure to spend quality time with your family.



May 22 – June 21

On the career front, maintaining a positive attitude is essential. Stay patient, work diligently toward your goals, and follow your plans with consistency. Your family life will bring peace and a sense of fulfilment.



September 24 – October

This month brings love and abundance. Embrace nurturing energies in your relationships and allow emotional support to strengthen you. Professional worries may arise, but stay calm—take things step by step and seek help when required.



January 21 – February 19

Love and adventure are highlighted this month. New experiences may bring joy and lightness to your relationships. At work, clarity and breakthroughs will guide you in making significant decisions. Your intellect and bold approach will drive professional success.



June 22 – July 22

You are juggling many ideas, but it's time to focus. Refocus, recalibrate, and deliver your priorities. Mood swings may affect your family, so remain mindful. Avoid investments or deals that claim to be risk-free.



October 24 – November 22

This month encourages introspection. Know your strengths and work on your weaknesses. Those starting their professional journey may find promising opportunities. Couples can plan moments of relaxation and deeper bonding.



February 20 – March 20

Now is the time to step up confidently and take on any professional obstacles that come your way. You may be spending a bit more than you earn, so it's important to reassess your budget. Avoid getting involved in debates or discussions that aren't relevant to you.



UTEN, in collaboration with KAZIN DMC, Successfully Hosted an Exclusive Offline Showcase dedicated to Uzbekistan and other CIS Destinations including Georgia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan.



presence of approx 85 travel trade selected filtered partners and travel professionals were present for an engaging knowledge and interactive presentation session, showcasing the Cultural Richness, Tourism Potential, and Hidden Gems of these fascinating destinations.



Thanks & Regards
UTEN Founders Team - Winifred D'Souza & Satyaprakash Gupta

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APPOINTMENTS

BUENA VISTA GARDEN RESORT, JAIPUR

Buena Vista Garden Resort, Jaipur has appointed **Gagan Katyal** as its new Executive Assistant Manager, marking a significant leadership addition as the resort gears up for an accelerated expansion phase. With a distinguished career spanning renowned brands such as Marriott, ITC Hotels, and Ananta Hotels & Resorts, Katyal brings deep expertise in luxury operations, brand building, guest experience enhancement, and business growth.



JW MARRIOTT NEW DELHI AEROCITY

Vishal Singh has been appointed General Manager. With nearly 30 years in luxury hospitality, he brings strong operational expertise and strategic insight. Previously GM at JW Marriott Chandigarh, he drove performance and strengthened brand presence. His deep understanding of Delhi's hospitality landscape adds value to the role.



MALAYSIA AVIATION GROUP

Captain Nasaruddin A. Bakar has been appointed President and Group CEO. He succeeds Datuk Captain Izham Ismail, who retires after four decades with the company. Captain Nasa steps into the role as part of the Group's strategic succession plan.

THE WESTIN RESORT & SPA, HIMALAYAS

Chinmaya Chikkamath has been appointed General Manager. With 17 years of experience across Marriott International hotels in India, he brings strong expertise in luxury hospitality and operations. Known for leading high-performing teams and enhancing guest experience, he has held key leadership roles across prominent Marriott properties.



THE LEELA BHARTIYA CITY BENGALURU

Sandeep Singh has been appointed General Manager. With close to two decades of experience across international brands, he brings a visionary leadership style aimed at strengthening the hotel's position as one of Bengaluru's leading luxury destinations.



SUMMIT HOTELS AND RESORTS

Anjila Yonzon has been appointed Group General Manager – Sales. A dedicated team member for over twelve years, she has grown from reservations to leading the sales network. Her strong customer focus and industry relationships continue to contribute to Summit's expanding footprint.

FOUR SEASONS HOTEL MUMBAI

Rajat Bhatia has been appointed Commercial Director. With over 25 years of experience in sales, marketing, revenue, and commercial strategy, he will drive the hotel's commercial vision and growth. His leadership strengthens Four Seasons' focus on service excellence and luxury positioning.



RAMADA BY WYNDHAM GANGTOK HOTEL & CASINO GOLDEN

Saurav Gupta has been appointed General Manager. He will oversee strategic growth, revenue, operations, and safety compliance. Previously General Manager at Regenta Central Jaipur, he brings strong expertise in planning, revenue management, and guest satisfaction.



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