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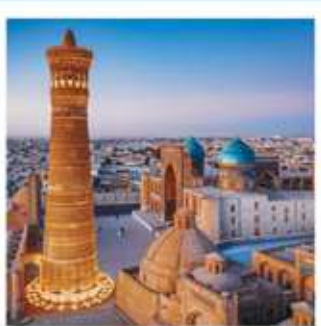
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BOTT brings extensive coverage from the successful edition of Great Indian Travel Bazaar 2026, which witnessed strong participation from international buyers, exhibitors and tourism stakeholders. The event once again reinforced India's growing position in the global inbound tourism market.

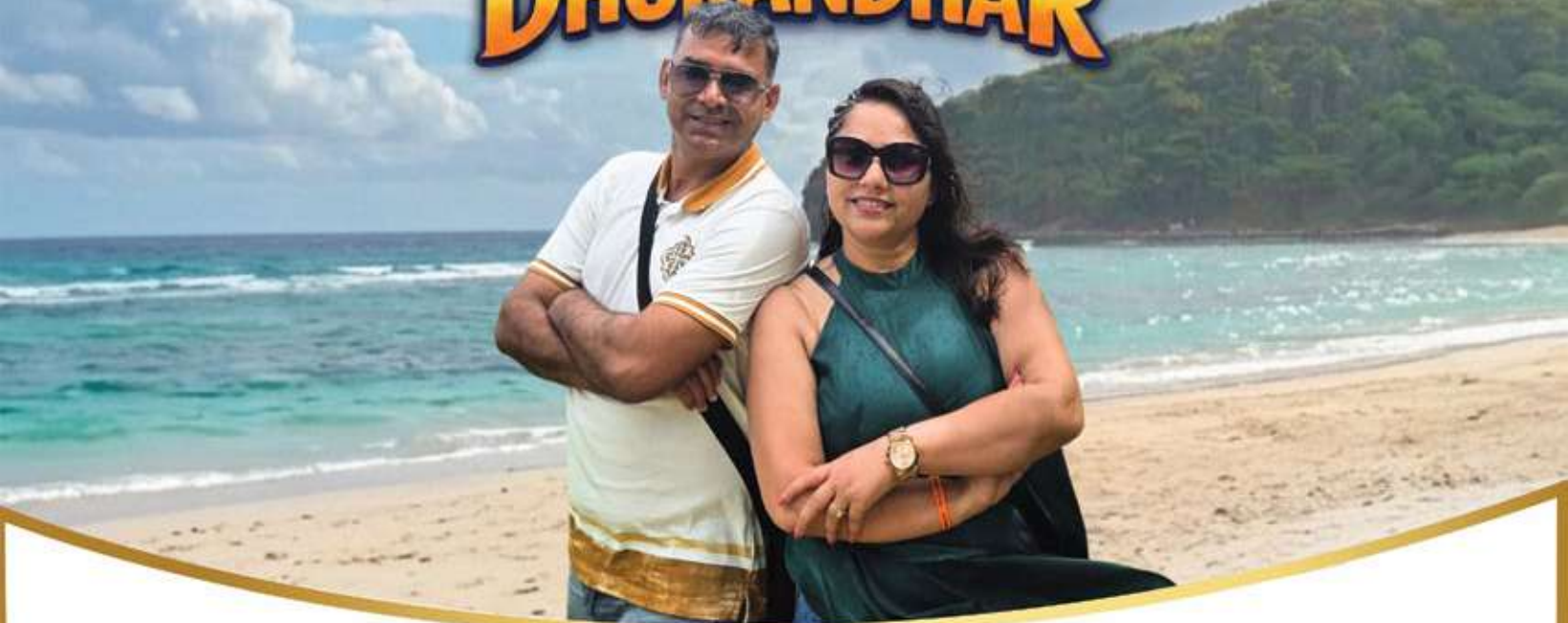
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Centara Hotels & Resorts Multi-City Appreciation Event celebrated its valued travel trade partners through a series of networking evenings, strengthening relationships and showcasing the group's hospitality offerings and expansion plans.

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India continues to strengthen its position as one of the world's most sought-after wedding destinations. This special feature explores luxury wedding venues, destination celebrations and hospitality trends shaping the booming wedding tourism segment across the country and beyond.

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Editor's LETTER

*D*ear Readers,

The travel and tourism industry has always demonstrated remarkable resilience, and the past few weeks have once again reminded us of that spirit. While geopolitical tensions and the uncertainty caused by the recent conflict impacted travel sentiment across regions, it is heartening to see that the situation has eased and tourist movement is gradually returning to normalcy. Yet, the reality remains that 2026 could prove to be a challenging year for global tourism, with changing traveller behaviour, rising operational costs and economic concerns continuing to test the industry. However, as always, the spirit of tourism remains unbroken — because the show must go on.

Amidst these challenges, one event that truly showcased the optimism and strength of India's inbound tourism sector was the recently concluded Great Indian Travel Bazaar 2026 in Jaipur. GITB 2026 emerged as a grand success, bringing together a strong line-up of international buyers, exhibitors, tourism boards, hoteliers and stakeholders from across the globe. The energy, networking opportunities and business exchanges witnessed during the event reflected renewed confidence in India's tourism story.

This May issue of BOTT Magazine captures that momentum. From a special focus on weddings in India — a segment that continues to position the country as a preferred destination for celebrations — to insightful interviews with industry leaders, this edition brings together perspectives that matter. We also bring you highlights from Centara Hotels & Resorts Multi-City Appreciation Event, along with coverage of a few 'iconic' launches and developments shaping the hospitality and travel landscape.

As always, we remain committed to bringing meaningful industry conversations, trends and opportunities to our readers. We look forward to your continued support and valuable feedback.

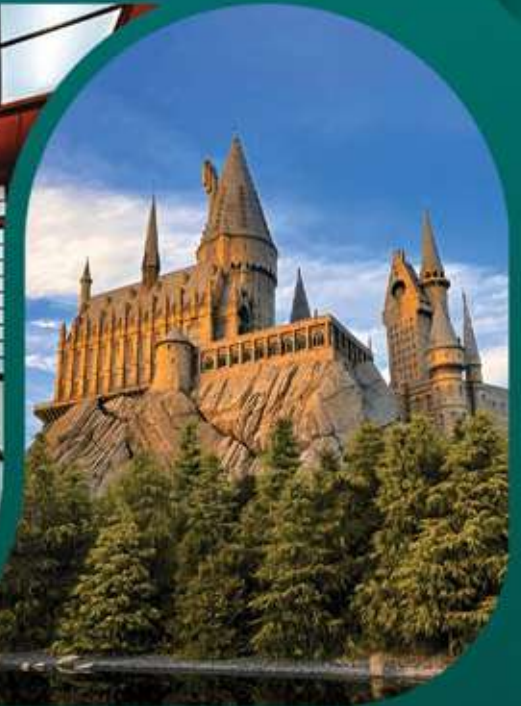
Happy Reading!

Warm regards,

Priyanka Saxena Ray
Editor, BOTT India

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SHORT NEWS

NOIDA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TO BEGIN OPERATIONS FROM JUNE 15



Commercial Operations at Noida International Airport will commence from June 15, 2026, boosting connectivity across NCR and western Uttar Pradesh. The first flight will be

operated by IndiGo, with Akasa Air and Air India Express to follow. The airport, developed as a world-class gateway, awaits final security clearance from Bureau of Civil Aviation Security.

THOMAS COOK INDIA LIMITED EXPANDS FOREX CARDS TO 28 CURRENCIES

Thomas Cook India Limited has expanded its prepaid forex card portfolio to 28 currencies, adding 16 new options including Vietnamese Dong and Qatari Riyal. The move addresses rising demand for seamless global payments and eliminates multiple currency conversions. Available via digital platforms, retail outlets, and partnerships like Blinkit, the initiative strengthens convenience, security, and flexibility for Indian travellers exploring emerging international destinations.



AIR INDIA LAUNCHES MAHARAJA CLUB POINTS FEST TO CELEBRATE 100+ PARTNERSHIPS

Air India has launched a special Maharaja Club Points Fest to celebrate crossing 100 lifestyle and banking partnerships under its loyalty programme. The limited-period campaign offers members up to 50% bonus Maharaja Club Points on spends with partner brands and conversion of bank reward points till May 31, 2026. Air India said the expanded partner ecosystem has driven over 4.2-million-member transactions in FY26, strengthening Maharaja Club as a lifestyle-led loyalty platform.



SRILANKAN AIRLINES WINS BIG AT PAX AWARDS 2026

SriLankan Airlines secured two major wins at the PAX International Readership Awards 2026 in Hamburg—Best Overall Passenger Experience and Most Improved Airline in South Asia. The awards recognise excellence across onboard services, including meals, entertainment, and seating. The achievement highlights the airline's focus on enhancing passenger experience through continuous innovation and operational excellence across all touchpoints.



VISIT QATAR ROLLS OUT 'KIDS GO FREE' CAMPAIGN

Visit Qatar has launched its 'Kids Go Free' campaign under the Hala Summer 2026 initiative, running from May to September. The offer allows children under 12 to stay, dine, and enjoy experiences free with paying adults. Over 100 hotels and multiple attractions are participating, alongside dining and entertainment offers, making Qatar an attractive family destination this summer.



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PRIDE HOTELS EXPANDS NCR FOOTPRINT WITH GREATER NOIDA HOTEL

Pride Hotels has launched Pride Premier Greater Noida, strengthening its presence in the NCR region with its second property. Located in Knowledge Park III, the 76-room hotel offers convenient access to India Expo Mart, commercial hubs, and educational institutions. Designed for both business and leisure travellers, the hotel will also feature event and meeting facilities, supporting Greater Noida’s growing hospitality and business ecosystem.

CHEVAL COLLECTION ANNOUNCES KNIGHTSBRIDGE BRANDED RESIDENCES



Cheval Collection has announced its second branded residence, Cheval Residences Knightsbridge Gate in London. Located in a Grade II-listed building, the ultra-luxury property features 15 residences with premium services including concierge, private chef, and personal assistance. Following its Dubai Islands project, this development strengthens the group’s branded residences portfolio. The apartments, currently on sale, will not be part of the rental inventory, offering exclusive ownership experiences.

ITC HOTELS SIGNS NEW FORTUNE PROPERTY IN VRINDAVAN



ITC Hotels has announced a new 100-key Fortune Hotel in Vrindavan, strengthening its presence in Uttar Pradesh. Scheduled to open by April 2030, the hotel will offer modern amenities, dining, and banqueting facilities. The development aims to cater to both leisure and spiritual travellers, enhancing premium accommodation options in a destination largely dominated by budget stays.



BWH HOTELS SIGNS BEST WESTERN HARIDWAR IN UTTARAKHAND

BWH Hotels has announced the signing of Best Western Haridwar, marking the brand’s debut in the spiritual city of Haridwar and its third strategic expansion in Uttarakhand after Jim Corbett and Mussoorie. Scheduled to open in 2027, the hotel will be located near Ram Ghat and key attractions including Har Ki Pauri and Mansa Devi Temple. The property will offer modern rooms, all-day dining, and meeting spaces for pilgrims and leisure travellers.



IHG HOTELS & RESORTS SIGNS GARNER JAGDALPUR IN CHHATTISGARH

IHG Hotels & Resorts has signed Garner Jagdalpur, marking the brand’s entry into Chhattisgarh’s Bastar region. The 117-key hotel, scheduled to open in 2029, will be developed by Freedom Hospitality and managed by United Hospitality Management. Located in Jagdalpur, the property aims to cater to rising business and regional travel demand. The signing further strengthens IHG’s expansion strategy across emerging Indian hospitality markets.

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Pullman and Novotel New Delhi Aerocity

Elevating experiences through scale, strategy & seamless hospitality

Manish Dayya, General Manager, Pullman and Novotel New Delhi Aerocity share how the hotels continue to strengthen their leadership in Delhi's hospitality landscape through strong MICE and wedding offerings, premium guest experiences, and a strategic focus on high-value business segments.

Priyanka Saxena Ray

How has the overall performance of Pullman & Novotel New Delhi Aerocity been over the past year?

For Pullman and Novotel New Delhi Aerocity, the past year has seen strong overall performance, broadly in line with (and likely outperforming) Delhi's upscale hospitality market. Occupancy has remained high and stable supported by steady corporate, transit and MICE demand while ADR (Average Daily Rate) has been the primary growth driver, benefiting from robust pricing power in a supply-constrained Aerocity micro-market. This combination has led to healthy RevPAR growth, largely driven by rate increases rather than occupancy gains. Key growth drivers include the strategic location near Indira Gandhi International Airport, strong recovery in international and corporate travel, large-scale MICE and banquet capabilities, and the dual-brand positioning that allows effective segmentation across premium and mid-up-scale demand.

How is the hotel positioned within the MICE and weddings segment, and what are the key offerings or strengths that set you apart in these categories?

With over 40,000 sq. ft. of flexible banqueting space including a pillarless ballroom, 13 co-meeting rooms, an outdoor venue alongside 670 rooms, the hotel is well-positioned as a leading destination for both MICE and weddings in Delhi. With its expansive infrastructure, the hotel can host large conventions, corporate events, and multi-day weddings entirely under one roof. The dual-brand setup allows for effective segmentation between premium and more cost-conscious segments, while strong F&B capabilities and experienced event teams enhance execution quality.

Moreover, to further strengthen the positioning of the hotel, we are leveraging our ALL FOR LOVE campaign, a brand initiative that places weddings at the centre of our MICE strategy. Backed by our expansive venues including the ballroom and out-

door spaces, we are well-positioned to host everything from intimate functions to large-format sit-down weddings. This is complemented by curated F&B offerings and a high level of customisation.

What are your strategic priorities and outlook for 2026?

For Pullman and Novotel New Delhi Aerocity, the strategy for the current year is focused on maximizing revenue quality, enhancing guest experience, and strengthening leadership in high-value segments rather than physical expansion. With strong occupancy already in place, the emphasis will be on driving higher room rates and profitability by targeting premium international, corporate, and MICE demand, while continuing to capitalise on proximity to Indira Gandhi International Airport. At the same time, investments in personalised, tech-enabled guest experiences, upgraded F&B offerings, and seamless event execution will help differentiate the property. **BOTT**

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Nguyen Trung Hieu,
Country Manager - India, Vietnam Airlines

Vietnam

strengthens its appeal as a preferred Honeymoon Destination for Indian travellers



Abhishek Goyal, CEO & Executive Director,
Aeroprime Group

Abhishek Goyal, CEO & Executive Director, Aeroprime Group and Nguyen Trung Hieu, Country Manager - India, Vietnam Airlines share insights on how Vietnam is rapidly emerging as one of the most sought-after honeymoon destinations for Indian travellers, driven by seamless connectivity, immersive experiences, luxury offerings, and evolving traveller preferences.

Priyanka Saxena Ray

to the hills of Sapa and luxury beach escapes in Da Nang and Phu Quoc.

He further highlights that Indian honeymooners today are increasingly seeking experience-driven travel rather than conventional sightseeing. Curated experiences such as private cruises, cooking sessions, cultural interactions, wellness retreats, and personalised luxury stays are becoming key decision-making factors. Emerging coastal destinations like Nha Trang are also witnessing growing interest due to their relaxed luxury, private villas, and pristine beaches. Couples are now opting for longer, multi-destination journeys that combine Vietnam's North, Central and South regions into one seamless experience. As the India GSA for Vietnam Airlines, Aeroprime Group is actively working with trade partners to position Vietnam as a preferred destination for Indian couples seeking meaningful and immersive holidays.

Speaking about connectivity and travel convenience, Nguyen Trung Hieu says Vietnam Airlines continues to strengthen its presence in India with direct flights from Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad to Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. The airline's growing network allows travellers to conveniently explore multiple destinations across Vietnam through strong domestic connectivity.

He adds that the airline is placing special emphasis on the wedding and honeymoon segment through curated travel experiences, premium onboard services, Indian-friendly cuisine, spacious cabins, and flexible group booking solutions for wedding groups and B2B partners. Vietnam Airlines is also collaborating closely with travel planners and tour operators to create customised honeymoon and wedding travel packages tailored to Indian preferences, ensuring a seamless and memorable journey from start to finish. **BOTT**

According to Abhishek Goyal, Vietnam offers a rare combination of accessibility and exotic appeal, making it highly attractive for newlyweds. With direct travel time from major Indian metros being around four hours, couples can enjoy an international honeymoon experience without the exhaustion of long-haul travel. He notes that Vietnam offers remarkable diversity within a single itinerary — from the scenic beauty of Ha Long Bay and the cultural charm of Hoi An



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Dev Karvat,
Founder and CEO, Asego

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BOTT Desk

What travellers need today isn't just reimbursement. They need real-time help. They need assistance. Recognising this shift, ASEGO has structured ASEGO BOLT, a powerful new travel assistance bundle created by combining real-time baggage tracking and lounge access during flight delays.

In today's fast-moving travel landscape, disruptions are no longer the exception — they're an expected part of the experience. According to a recent Global Airline Performance Report, over 25 million bags were reported mishandled globally, and more than 35% of all flights faced delays exceeding 60 minutes. While travel demand has bounced back post-pandemic, the quality of the journey often hasn't kept pace. Travellers are facing longer wait times, more lost luggage, and higher levels of uncertainty at every step.

This is where the gap between travellers' actual needs and travel reality becomes clear. Insurance coverage may reimburse financial loss after an incident, but it doesn't show up when a bag goes missing, when a connection is missed, or when travellers are stranded at a foreign airport with no immediate assistance.

What travellers need today isn't just reimbursement. They need real-time help. They need assistance. Recognising this shift, ASEGO has structured ASEGO BOLT, a powerful new travel assistance bundle created by combining real-time baggage tracking and lounge access during flight delays. Together, they deliver rapid response and real protection, exactly when and where customers need it most. It en-

ables global, real-time baggage tracking across all airlines and routes, with guaranteed compensation of up to ₹66,000 per checked-in bag (up to two bags) if the luggage isn't recovered within 96 hours.

Similarly, it automatically activates premium lounge access if a flight is delayed by more than 60 minutes—offering travellers comfort instead of frustration. Coverage extends across up to four flight segments in a single trip and includes access to over 1,300 lounges across more than 100 countries.

This isn't just a service upgrade — it's a mindset shift. Travel assistance is no longer an add-on; it's becoming a baseline expectation. As a travel advisor or booking partner, offering BOLT is more than an upsell — it's about being proactive, customer-centric, and aligned with what modern travellers truly value: peace of mind and dependable support.

ASEGO BOLT empowers travel agents to move beyond selling destinations and start offering dependable journeys. It's time to think beyond insurance and give your customers a protection layer that actually travels with them. Whether it's a family vacation, a corporate itinerary, or a solo international trip, assistance like this transforms stress into trust. **BOTT**

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Sri Lanka

emerges as a luxury favourite for Indian travellers

Luxury hospitality leaders in Sri Lanka believe the island is fast emerging as a preferred destination for Indian luxury travellers, driven by personalised experiences, wellness offerings, destination weddings, and seamless accessibility. Three leading GMs from Minor Hotels across Sri Lanka share their views in an exclusive chat with **BOTT**.

Somya Deep



Christoph Dueker,
General Manager,
Anantara Kalutara Resort & Avani Kalutara Resort



Frederik Van Den Borre,
General Manager,
Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort



Rajindra Daniel,
Area Director of Sales,
Minor Hotels, Sri Lanka

According to **Christoph Dueker**, General Manager, Anantara Kalutara Resort & Avani Kalutara Resort, luxury travel today is no longer defined solely by value or money but by thoughtful personalisation and memorable experiences. He says, “Luxury is personal. A great hotel employs a great host who can identify a guest’s needs whether it is catering to the needs of business travellers, families, ensuring that the kids are taken care of and making sure the food is delicious.” He also highlights that today’s luxury travellers seek destinations that are visually appealing and “post-worthy,” prompting resorts to create aesthetically designed experi-

ences and spaces.

Frederik Van Den Borre, General Manager, Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort notes that changing global travel patterns and the growing preference for short-haul destinations have positioned Sri Lanka favourably among Indian travellers. “With Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort located just a three-hour drive from the international airport, the property offers a tropical escape,” he says. He also highlights the rising demand for wellness-led travel experiences, including Ayurveda journeys, traditional therapies, yoga and personalised wellness programmes.

Rajindra Daniel, Area Director of

Sales, Minor Hotels, Sri Lanka, believes Sri Lanka’s appeal lies in its diversity. “Sri Lanka has so much culture. India is a growth engine for us, and we are seeing a high demand from high-spending, luxury segments,” he says. Destination weddings and wellness tourism are emerging as key growth drivers for Sri Lanka, supported by the island’s unique geography, scenic venues, and hospitality offerings. With over 500,000 Indian arrivals recorded in 2025 and strong momentum continuing in 2026, Minor Hotels is now focusing on long-term strategic partnerships and customised experiences to further strengthen Sri Lanka’s appeal among Indian travellers. **BOTT**



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GITB 2026

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The 15th edition of the Great Indian Travel Bazaar (GITB 2026) concluded in Jaipur on a high note, reaffirming India's growing stature as a leading inbound tourism destination.

Organised by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, in partnership with the Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan and FICCI, the three-day platform brought together policymakers, global buyers, and industry leaders, setting new benchmarks in scale, engagement, and strategic direction.

BOTT Desk



Inaugurated at Jai Mahal Palace, the event set a strong tone with a clear focus on high-value, experience-led tourism. Rajasthan's Deputy Chief Minister, Diya Kumari, emphasised the state's commitment to positioning itself as a world-class, year-round destination through heritage conservation, new tourism circuits, and infrastruc-

ture development. Aligning with the national vision, Suman Billa, Additional Secretary and Director General, Ministry of Tourism, highlighted India's ambition to double tourism's GDP contribution from 5.22% to 10% in the coming decade.

Ms. Diya Kumari, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister of Rajasthan, empha-



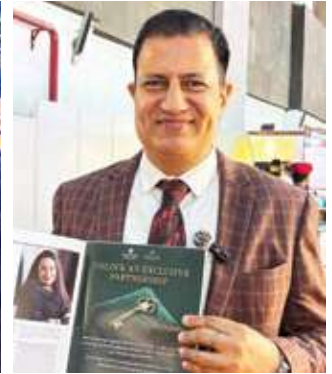
sised, “GITB showcases Rajasthan’s leadership in tourism while fostering global partnerships. Tourism is a key growth engine, driving employment, investment, and inclusive development. Through focused initiatives—from heritage restoration and stepwell conservation to new circuits like Shekhawati and improved infrastructure—

we are positioning Rajasthan as a year-round, experience-driven destination.” “We reaffirm our commitment to make Rajasthan a world-class tourism destination—driving investment, employment, and innovation—and invite global partners to be part of this journey”, she added.

GITB 2026 witnessed over 10,000

structured B2B meetings, connecting 195+ international buyers from more than 50 countries with 225+ Indian exhibitors, including hotels, tour operators, and state tourism boards. The event showcased India’s diverse tourism offerings—from heritage and culture to wellness, wildlife, rural, and experiential travel—reflecting evolving

EVENTS AND MORE



global demand patterns.

A major highlight was the release of the EY-FICCI report, "Reimagining Inbound Tourism in India: Towards Incredible India 4.0," which identified MICE, wellness, event tourism, and women-centric travel as the next high-growth segments. The report also called for policy interventions such as



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GST rationalisation to further boost international visitor spending and competitiveness.

The second day marked the debut of the Travel & Tourism Excellence Awards, celebrating industry leaders across 23 national and 11 Rajasthan-specific categories. Among the notable winners were Madhya Pradesh as Leading Tourism Destination, Rambagh Palace as Best Wedding Hotel, and MakeMyTrip as Best Online Booking Platform. The awards were adjudicated by an eminent jury including Arvind Singh, Ravi Gosain, Meena Bhatia, Ankush Nijhawan and Lakshmi Sarath covering 23 categories across hospitality, tourism boards, digital platforms, MICE, sustainability, and leadership excellence. **BOTT**



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Centara Hotels & Resorts

strengthens India connect with multi-city Partner Appreciation evenings

Travel partners from across India came together in New Delhi as Centara Hotels & Resorts concluded the latest edition of its annual Rewards & Recognition initiative, celebrating successful collaborations and growing engagement with the Indian market.

BOTT Desk



The hospitality group wrapped up the Delhi leg of its three-city partner engagement series on April 10, 2026, following earlier events in Mumbai and Ahmedabad. Hosted at Chica, New Delhi, the evening brought together leading travel trade stakeholders, retail partners, and destination management companies for networking, appreciation, and future business discussions.

The initiative, which has steadily grown over the years, reflects Centara's continued focus on India as a key source market across destinations including Thailand, Maldives, and Japan. The event also highlighted the increasing contribution of trade and retail partners in driving outbound travel to these destinations.

The Centara delegation present during the occasion was headed by Moumita Mukherjee Paul, Director of Sales & Marketing along with Hemant Jagtap, Assistant Director of Sales. They were accompanied by Francesco Pompilio, Cluster General Manager CRF & CIRM; Dr. Ma Xu, Corporate Global Sales Director; Jonas Sjostedt, Area General Manager; Worawan Wutthiyanon, Director of Sales; Anand Bhushan, CGCW – Sales Executive; Kriengkrai Soijkul, Area Director of Sales



and Marketing; Prapaijit Thongma, General Manager – AMN; and Aastha, Marketing Manager – AMN.

Sharing her thoughts, Moumita said, “India continues to remain one of the most important source markets for Centara Hotels & Resorts, and we are witnessing strong engagement across our key destinations including

Thailand, Maldives, Japan, and Nepal. Our focus has always been on building meaningful and long-term relationships with our travel trade partners while consistently delivering authentic hospitality experiences. Through initiatives like Rewards & Recognition Night, we aim to acknowledge the contribution of our partners and further

strengthen our collaboration as we continue to expand our presence and visibility in the Indian market.”

During the evening, Centara also recognised its top-performing travel partners for 2026, honouring companies that contributed significantly to the brand’s business growth and market outreach in India. **BOTT**

Manuj Ralhan

Powering Jaipur's rise as a global MICE destination

In an exclusive conversation, Manuj Ralhan, General Manager, Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre and JECC shares how they are redefining India's MICE landscape with world-class infrastructure and integrated hospitality.

Priyanka Saxena Ray



How is JECC strengthening its position as a leading MICE venue in India, particularly given the context of growing international events and exhibitions?

Jaipur has always had the soul of a great city. What it now has is the infrastructure to match. Over the last few years, the Pink City has undergone a quiet but decisive transformation — from a heritage tourism destination into one of India's most credible, high-capacity event cities. And JECC has been at the centre of that shift.

We sit 10 minutes from Jaipur International Airport, and from June, the new expressway corridor cuts Delhi travel to under two-and-a-half hours. Accessibility was once a question mark for Jaipur. It no longer is. That connectivity, combined with what JECC offers on the ground, has fundamentally changed the conversation with organisers.

The proof is in the portfolio. Pravasi Rajasthani Diwas brought global investors and policy leaders to our doorstep. The Jaipur Jewellery Show — the largest jewellery trade platform in the city — has made JECC its permanent home. And when the Ministry of Home Affairs needed a venue for the New Criminal Law Conference, they chose us. These are not events you win on price. You win them on trust. Jaipur no longer needs to compete for attention. The city earns it — and JECC delivers on the promise.

What key infrastructure upgrades or innovations have been introduced at JECC to enhance delegate and exhibitor experience?

At JECC, we have invested deliberately and strategically to ensure that our physical capabilities match — and in many cases exceed — what international organisers expect.

Our pillarless exhibition halls with a clear ceiling height of 43 feet are among the most impressive in India. This is not just an architectural statement — it translates directly into freedom for exhibitors: complex structural builds, high-impact immersive installations, double-decker stalls, and elaborate stage setups that simply are not possible at many other venues. Our rigging infrastructure supports up to 750 kg per beam, enabling production teams to bring their most ambitious creative visions to life.

On the technology and operations front, our advanced audio-visual systems, modular convention spaces, and multi-track conference capabilities ensure that whether we are hosting a 200-person policy symposium or a 14,000-attendee government convention — as we did during Pravasi Rajasthani Diwas — the experience is consistently seamless.

Our F&B infrastructure deserves a special mention. Grand food court operations capable of serving thousands simultaneously, specialised kitchen facilities, and the ability to customize menus for multi-cultural, mul-

ti-dietary delegate groups give us a hospitality edge that is rare in the MICE segment. This is complemented by the full-service Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre next door.

We are also continuously innovating on the sustainability front. From 100% LED lighting and smart thermostats to greywater recycling, rainwater harvesting, on-site organic waste conversion, and EV charging stations, JECC and NJCC represent a new benchmark for environmentally responsible event infrastructure.

With Jaipur emerging as a major events destination, how does JECC differentiate itself from other convention centres across India?

Most venues offer space. JECC offers an ecosystem. The integration between JECC's event infrastructure and Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre's hospitality — co-located, operationally unified — means organisers deal with one coherent team, not a patchwork of vendors. That simplicity is enormously valuable when you're managing a multi-day, multi-track event.

Our event portfolio spans more formats than almost any venue in India. Stone Mart and GJEPC trade exhibitions sit alongside MRAI — Material Recycling Association of India — conventions. Healthcare conferences like AIOC and Dermacon share our calendar with Decor India. JJS draws international jewellery buyers. Concerts sell out. Destination weddings for 3,000-plus guests are becoming a serious vertical. The breadth signals something important: we are not a single-format venue. We are a platform.

Jaipur gives delegates something no spreadsheet can quantify — the feeling of being somewhere extraordinary. That is our most durable competitive advantage.

What is your vision for JECC over the next 3–5 years, especially in terms of attracting global events and boosting inbound business tourism?

The ambition is straightforward: we want JECC on the shortlist of every global association, international trade body, and large-format event organiser — not just in India, but worldwide. The infrastructure is ready. Connectivity is improving. What we are now building is visibility and relationships at a global scale.

Domestically, the focus is on high-growth verticals: technology, pharmaceuticals, automotive, investor summits, and large-format government initiatives. The live entertainment pipeline continues to expand — Jaipur is becoming a genuine concert city, and we intend to deepen that positioning significantly. Destination weddings at JECC scale — hosting 3,000 to 4,000 guests — represent a significant revenue and brand opportunity that we are actively developing. 2026 is about one thing: making sure the world knows JECC's name. Not as a venue. As a benchmark. **BOTT**



Hyatt Centric Dehradun

Where every Celebration turns Lifelong

BOTT Desk



Three years, a hat-trick of success, and a growing reputation for hosting what matters most — from boutique weddings to high-profile events that shape the city’s social calendar.

Nestled in the heart of Dehradun, with the city on one side and the mountains on the other, Hyatt Centric Dehradun offers a setting that feels both connected and elevated. Framed by panoramic views, with Cloud 6’s poolside rooftop adding to the experience, every celebration here carries a distinctive energy — open, vibrant, and unmistakably alive. From intimate gatherings to large-scale social and corporate occasions, each experience is thoughtfully personalised, seamlessly executed, and designed to feel larger than life.

The hotel’s dining spaces further enhance the experience, with vibrant F&B outlets — Yokan, Falak, and Alfresco — overlooking the mountains and bringing together atmosphere, flavour, and a strong sense of place.

Culinary excellence has also been at the heart of some of the hotel’s most distinguished moments, including hosting the Hon’ble President of India and her official delegation, the Hon’ble Prime Minister’s culinary engagements, and the Hon’ble Chief Justice of India, where every detail was delivered with precision and intent.

A place that doesn’t just host celebrations — it becomes a part of them. **BOTT**

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Akoya Hotel & Spa

A luxury island escape for dream destination weddings



BOTT Desk

Nestled along the pristine white sands of La Saline-les-Bains, Akoya Hotel & Spa offers an idyllic setting for luxurious Indian destination weddings in Réunion Island. Combining contemporary elegance with the warmth of Creole charm, this five-star beachfront retreat creates the perfect backdrop for intimate ceremonies as well as grand multi-day celebrations.

Spread across a lush three-hectare landscaped park overlooking the turquoise lagoon, the resort features stunning outdoor venues including the Horizon Esplanade, pool terrace, and rooftop spaces, ideal for vibrant mehendi celebrations, glamorous sangeet evenings, and romantic sunset pheras by the ocean.

Akoya Hotel & Spa offers 104 ele-

gantly designed rooms and suites inspired by the multicultural heritage of Réunion Island, ensuring a comfortable and memorable stay for wedding guests. The resort's culinary experiences can be curated to suit Indian tastes, blending authentic flavours with international gastronomy. Guests can also indulge in the luxurious 600 sq. m. Orchidée Spa, infinity pool, wellness facilities, and bespoke concierge services.

With enhanced connectivity from India and the island's breathtaking landscapes of volcanoes, lagoons, and tropical forests, Réunion Island is emerging as a fresh and exclusive choice for Indian weddings, offering couples and their guests a celebration wrapped in luxury, culture, and unforgettable island experiences. **BOTT**



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NoorMahal

marks India debut of Autograph Collection Hotels

Pallavi Sharma

NoorMahal Delhi NCR Karnal marks the India debut of Marriott International's prestigious Autograph Collection Hotels, bringing a new era of heritage luxury to North India. Located on the historic Grand Trunk Road, the palace-style property blends regal charm with contemporary sophistication. In this exclusive interaction, **Roop Partap Choudhary**, Executive Director of NoorMahal, shares insights into this landmark partnership and the vision behind the property.

How do you see this partnership changing the hospitality landscape in North India and the Delhi NCR region?

This partnership introduces a globally recognized luxury soft brand to North India, elevating the region's positioning beyond conventional hospitality. It brings international visibility, higherservice benchmarks, and access to the Marriott Bonvoy ecosystem, placing the Delhi NCR belt firmly on the global luxury travel map.

What unique qualities of NoorMahal aligned with the Autograph Collection brand philosophy?

Noormahal's strength lies in its individuality, its palatial architecture, curated art collection, and deeply rooted cultural narrative. These elements align



seamlessly with the Autograph Collection philosophy of celebrating properties that are unique, story driven, and exactly like nothing else.

What was the biggest challenge in bringing an international luxury brand like Autograph Collection to India?

The key challenge was ensuring that global standards were integrated without diluting the soul of the palace. Maintaining authenticity while aligning with international expectations required meticulous planning across design, service, and guest experience.

What kind of traveller are you targeting with this property?

We are catering to a diverse luxury audience including discerning domestic travellers, destination weddings, high end social events, and international guests. With the backing of Marriott Bonvoy, we also expect to attract a strong base of global loyalty travellers.

What new experiences or services can guests expect after joining the Autograph Collection?

Guests can expect a heightened level of personalised service, seamless access to the global benefits of Marriott Bonvoy, and thoughtfully curated experiences that bring the palace to life. From immersive dining journeys and refined wellness rituals to bespoke cultural interactions, every touchpoint is designed to feel distinctive while preserving the authenticity and character of Noor Mahal.

How are you incorporating sustainability and responsible tourism into the hotel's plans?

Sustainability is embedded into our daily operations through responsible practices such as efficient waste management and recycling, use of water treatment systems, and conscious resource optimization across the property. We also actively support local artisans and preserve the cultural integrity of the palace. Our approach is to deliver luxury experiences in a way that is environmentally responsible and aligned with long term sustainability goals. **BOTT**



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WION ICONIC

Travel & Tourism Summit 2026

champions 'Tourism 4.0' Vision

BOTT Desk



The WION ICONIC Travel & Tourism Summit 2026, hosted by Red Hat Communications in association with Zee Network, concluded successfully at ITC Maurya, New Delhi. Held under the theme “Tourism 4.0: Coding the Resilience of the New Tomorrow,” the summit brought together influential voices from travel, aviation, hospitality, and policy to discuss the future of global tourism.

The event saw participation from leading CXOs, diplomats, and industry pioneers, who engaged in insightful discussions on digital transformation, AI-led innovation, sustainable growth, and India’s rising role in the global tourism landscape. Emphasising the importance of collaboration and skilling, Jyoti Mayal, Chairperson, Tourism & Hospitality Skill Council (THSC), noted that platforms like ICONIC foster meaningful dialogue and enable the industry to collectively navigate challenges while unlocking new growth opportunities.

The summit featured an impressive lineup of speakers including Nikhil Sharma, Managing Director & COO, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group; JB Singh, Director, InterGlobe Air Transport Ltd. and President & CEO, InterGlobe Hotels; Sandeep Dwivedi, Managing Director & COO, Amadeus South Asia; Manish Puri, Head of Global Sales, Air India & Air India Express; Meena Bhatia, Vice President & General Manager, Le Méridien New Delhi; Yummi Talwar, COO, South Asia, VFS Global; Ranju Alex, CEO, India & South Asia, Accor; Vasudha Sondhi, MD, Outbound Marketing Pvt. Ltd. and Anil Parashar, Executive Director, ITQ Technologies Pvt. Ltd.

Reflecting on the summit’s success, Mayal said, “With the right collaboration, innovation, and focus on skilling, Indian tourism has immense potential in the years ahead.” The summit concluded with a strong commitment towards building a smarter, sustainable, and globally competitive tourism ecosystem. **BOTT**

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TAAI Northern Region hosts members' meet in New Delhi

BOTT Desk



The Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) Northern Region convened its members' meeting on April 24, 2026, at Le Meridien New Delhi, bringing together key stakeholders from the travel trade for an engaging and celebratory evening.

The session began with a review of TAAI's ongoing initiatives, along with the approval of minutes from the previous meeting. Members were also presented with industry insights and updates, followed by a partner showcase by MakeMyTrip, highlighting evolving trends and opportunities within the sector.

Marking a significant milestone, the gathering also celebrated 75 years of TAAI, reflecting on the association's legacy and its continued contribution to India's travel and tourism industry. The evening featured engaging discussions on emerging industry matters, with members exchanging perspectives on navigating changing market dynamics and fostering collective growth.

A key highlight of the event was the presentation of the WOW Awards, recognizing excellence within the travel fraternity and applauding notable contributions by members.

The meeting concluded with a networking session over cocktails and dinner, offering attendees an opportunity to strengthen professional relationships and celebrate the enduring spirit of collaboration within the industry. **BOTT**



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Kushinagar International Buddhist Conclave highlights destination's global tourism potential

The Kushinagar International Buddhist Conclave brought together key stakeholders from the travel and tourism industry. The event highlighted Kushinagar's growing significance on the global Buddhist tourism map.

Somya Deep

The Kushinagar International Buddhist Conclave transformed this quiet pilgrimage site into a global stage. Walking through the venue, the air was filled with the chants of monks and on the other hand with the strategic murmurs of delegates from many countries. More than 2,000 followers of Buddha gathered here, proving that Kushinagar is a beacon in international spiritual destinations.

One of the primary challenges discussed at the Conclave was the day trip phenomenon. As **Ahmad Maaz**, Managing Director, Royal Tours Group, pointed out, many visitors currently treat Kushinagar as a stopover. "My perception is that all guests should stay a minimum of two nights. Kushinagar is an international fame name for the market for Buddha. It is a popular Buddhism tourism destination and it comes with the responsibility of its promotion as a Buddhist circuit and tourism destination," he said.

To transition from seasonal to year-round tourism, the local administration and private sector are making big moves. The spiritual triangle of Gorakhpur, Varanasi, and Ayodhya is being promoted to link Kushinagar with other major hubs. Infrastructure is catching up. The city currently hosts several local hotels; the hospitality landscape is shifting. Taj Hotels is planning a property in the region within the next two years.

Mahendra Singh Tawar (IAS), District Magistrate, Kushinagar, outlined ways to revitalise the region. He suggested, "Using the Buddhist platform to invite Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Ensuring the community benefits from the tourism economy and making the residents stakeholders in the city's growth." The DM's vision includes a Buddha Art and Craft Center, an experience hub that would commercialise Buddhist merchandise. It resonates with the fact that Buddha statues and motifs have become universal symbols of peace and home decor. By creating a centre for stonework, sculptures, and linguistic schools, Kushinagar also aims to become a skill centre for the world.

Prateek Hira, Chairman, IATO UP Chapter bringing the energy at the gathering, claimed, "The government has been very serious about promoting Kushinagar. We have a modern airport, and as part of this Buddhist conclave, we are working with airlines like Air India, Indigo, and SpiceJet to improve connectivity and bring in more passengers directly from Buddhist nations."

Going forward, the conclave will turn into an annual tra-



dition that matures year by year. Kushinagar is where a new chapter of Indian global influence is beginning and the city is indeed worth a visit. **BOTT**



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Neil Patil

Leading with vision & building a lasting travel legacy

From an incidental entry into the travel industry to being at the helm of 'Veena World', one of India's leading and trusted travel brands, Neil Patil, Founder, COO, CTO at Veena World, shares about his journey rooted in vision and resilience. Balancing legacy with technology and innovation, he has emerged as a young, dynamic voice transforming the travel landscape. In an exclusive chat with BOTT, he speaks about his milestones, challenges, favourite destinations, family, and more.

Shreya Shimpi





QUICK SHOTS

- Your Birthday / Sun Sign: **16 December, Sagittarius**
- Mountains or Beaches: **Beaches of Seychelles, mountains of India**
- Favourite Holiday Destination: **Tokyo**
- Best travel hack: **If you want to enjoy the best food, open Google Maps and find those hole-in-the-wall restaurants, as they will serve the best food.**
- Window/Aisle seat: **Window**
- Best advice for a first-time traveller: **Ensure that your suitcase has wheels, except in Europe where wheels and cobblestone streets are difficult!**

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 family has been in the travel industry for over forty years. While growing up, I was certain that I didn't want to follow the same path and aspired to join the banking and finance industry. After graduation, I was hunting for jobs in Singapore and Hong Kong. Around that time, we split from our earlier company and set up Veena World in 2013. Getting into the travel industry was a very incidental jump for me. I was at a point where I had to decide whether I had to pursue a job or set up a company with my parents, who bring in a lot of experience. Over the last 13 years, I have learnt a great deal and made my share of mistakes, which have shaped my personality and helped me develop a growth mindset.

Reflecting on 2025, what would you say were the three highlights of the year for you—personally or professionally?

2025 was a year of realisation for us, as it underscored the need to build a company that can withstand shocks such as terrorist attacks, natural calamities, etc. It reinforced our commitment to building an organisation that will far outrun our own lives, with the vision to build a centennial organisation. On a personal note, we welcomed a baby boy, our second child, four weeks ago—an incredibly special addition to our family!

What has been your proudest achievement to date, and what keeps you motivated to push boundaries in this industry?

I often say that our proudest achievement is yet to come. We have accomplished a great deal. Today, we serve 1,25,000 travellers annually, supported by a team of 1,100 employees, and have 150 touch points across India. In a service-oriented industry, we are growing in a resilient way. Everyone is committed to the mission, and guest satisfaction is the North Star.

Which are your top three favourite destinations, and what would be your dream destination for 2026?

Tokyo, Melbourne, and Istanbul are among my three favourite destinations because they show you a multi-cultural aspect of the world. Okinawa in Japan is on my wish list this year!

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

I am married to my wife Heta, and we are blessed with two children—a two-year-old daughter and a two-month-old baby boy. Growing up, my mom would take me along for recce trips to Sri Lanka, Australia, Europe, and the US—each journey was incredibly enriching and left me with lasting memories. Those trips shaped my personality. That is something that I am trying to inculcate in my daughter, who is two now and has already been to ten countries! **BOTT**

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We Respect your Trust which you all have in UTEN which Encourages and Motivates us always to come with more such activities in much better and efficient ways



Thanks & Regards
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Weddings in India

Grandeur meets Destination Dreams

India's wedding landscape is a spectacular confluence of tradition, luxury, and evolving global sensibilities. What was once a family-centric celebration has transformed into a curated, multi-day experience—where destinations, design, and storytelling play a central role. From imperial palaces and metropolitan icons to tropical beaches and tranquil backwaters, India offers a wedding canvas unlike any other. Across key cities and regions, luxury hospitality brands and heritage venues are redefining destination weddings, making India a magnet for both domestic and international celebrations.

Priyanka Saxena Ray





DELHI The Capital of grand, bespoke celebrations

Delhi stands at the forefront of India's luxury wedding circuit, offering unmatched scale, accessibility, and variety. The city's hospitality landscape is expansive, with iconic venues such as The Leela Palace New Delhi, ITC Maurya, Taj Palace New Delhi, The Oberoi New Delhi, Le Meridien New Delhi, The Imperial, Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport, Pullman New Delhi Aerocity, The Suryaa, Holiday Inn New Delhi Aerocity leading the segment. For those seeking resort-style settings within the city, The Roseate and Andaz Delhi by Hyatt provide expansive outdoor venues and contemporary elegance.

Delhi's strength lies in its ability to host large-format weddings with precision. Grand ballrooms, sprawling lawns, and multiple venue options within a single property allow seamless execution of multi-event celebrations. The city is also home to India's best wedding planners, designers, and culinary experts, making it a one-stop destination for curated, high-impact weddings. Whether it's a traditional gathering or a globally styled celebration, Delhi delivers scale, sophistication, and seamless execution.

MUMBAI Glamour, skyline views & contemporary luxury

Mumbai brings an unmistakable glamour to weddings—where luxury meets the vibrancy of India's entertain-

ment capital. The city is synonymous with high-profile celebrations, offering venues that combine world-class hospitality with stunning views of the Arabian Sea.

Landmark properties such as The Taj Mahal Palace, The St. Regis Mumbai, The Oberoi Mumbai, JW Marriott Juhu, JW Marriott Sahar, Four Seasons Hotel Mumbai, ITC Grand Central, Grand Hyatt Mumbai, and Sofitel BKC are among the most sought-after. Rooftop venues, sea-facing ballrooms, and elegant banquet spaces create a versatile setting for everything from intimate ceremonies to lavish receptions.

Mumbai weddings are defined by their contemporary flair—designer décor, curated entertainment, and elevated culinary experiences. The city's fast-paced energy, combined with its luxury infrastructure, makes it ideal for couples looking for stylish, high-energy celebrations with a cosmopolitan edge.

RAJASTHAN The Epitome of royal destination weddings

Rajasthan continues to be India's most iconic wedding destination, offering a royal backdrop that is both timeless and majestic. The state's palaces, forts, and heritage hotels provide an unmatched sense of grandeur and exclusivity.

JAIPUR

Jaipur offers a perfect blend of accessibility and regal charm. Renowned venues such as Rambagh Palace, Jai Mahal Pal-

ace, Fairmont Jaipur, The Leela Palace Jaipur, Samode Palace, Alila Fort Bishangarh, ITC Rajputana, and Hyatt Regency Jaipur Mansarovar cater to weddings of all scales.

The city's heritage architecture, expansive courtyards, and vibrant Rajasthani aesthetics create a visually rich wedding experience. Jaipur is particularly popular for large, elaborate weddings that combine traditional elements with contemporary luxury.

UDAIPUR

Udaipur remains the ultimate destination for romantic, fairy-tale weddings. With its serene lakes and palatial properties, the city offers a dreamlike setting that few destinations can match.

Iconic venues include Taj Lake Palace, The Oberoi Udaivilas, The Leela Palace Udaipur, Jagmandir Island Pal-

ace, Fatehgarh Palace, Chunda Palace, and Raffles Udaipur. These venues provide stunning waterfront backdrops, making every ceremony visually enchanting.

Udaipur weddings are known for their elegance and exclusivity, often featuring sunset ceremonies, boat processions, and intimate luxury experiences that create unforgettable memories.

JODHPUR

Jodhpur offers a dramatic and regal setting, ideal for couples seeking a royal yet distinctive wedding experience. The city's architectural grandeur and desert charm create a striking backdrop.

Top venues include Umaid Bhawan Palace, RAAS Jodhpur, Ajit Bhawan Palace, Indana Palace, Welcomhotel by ITC Hotels Jodhpur, and The Ummed

Jodhpur Palace Resort & Spa. Umaid Bhawan Palace, in particular, remains one of the most prestigious wedding venues globally.

Weddings in Jodhpur are characterised by their exclusivity, heritage detailing, and grandeur—often featuring royal processions, traditional music, and immersive cultural elements.

GOA

Beachside weddings with a vibrant spirit

Goa has redefined destination weddings in India, offering a relaxed yet luxurious alternative to traditional venues. Its sun-kissed beaches, Portuguese architecture, and lively atmosphere make it a favourite for modern couples.

Leading venues include Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, The Leela Goa, ITC Grand Goa, W Goa, Alila Diwa Goa,



Grand Hyatt Goa, Park Hyatt Goa Resort and Spa, The St. Regis Goa Resort, and Novotel Goa Dona Sylvia.

Goa weddings are known for their free-spirited vibe—sunset beach ceremonies, poolside mehendis, and vibrant after-parties. The destination is particularly popular for multi-day celebrations that blend luxury with leisure, making it ideal for couples seeking a fun, contemporary wedding experience.

KERALA **Intimate, scenic & soulful celebrations**

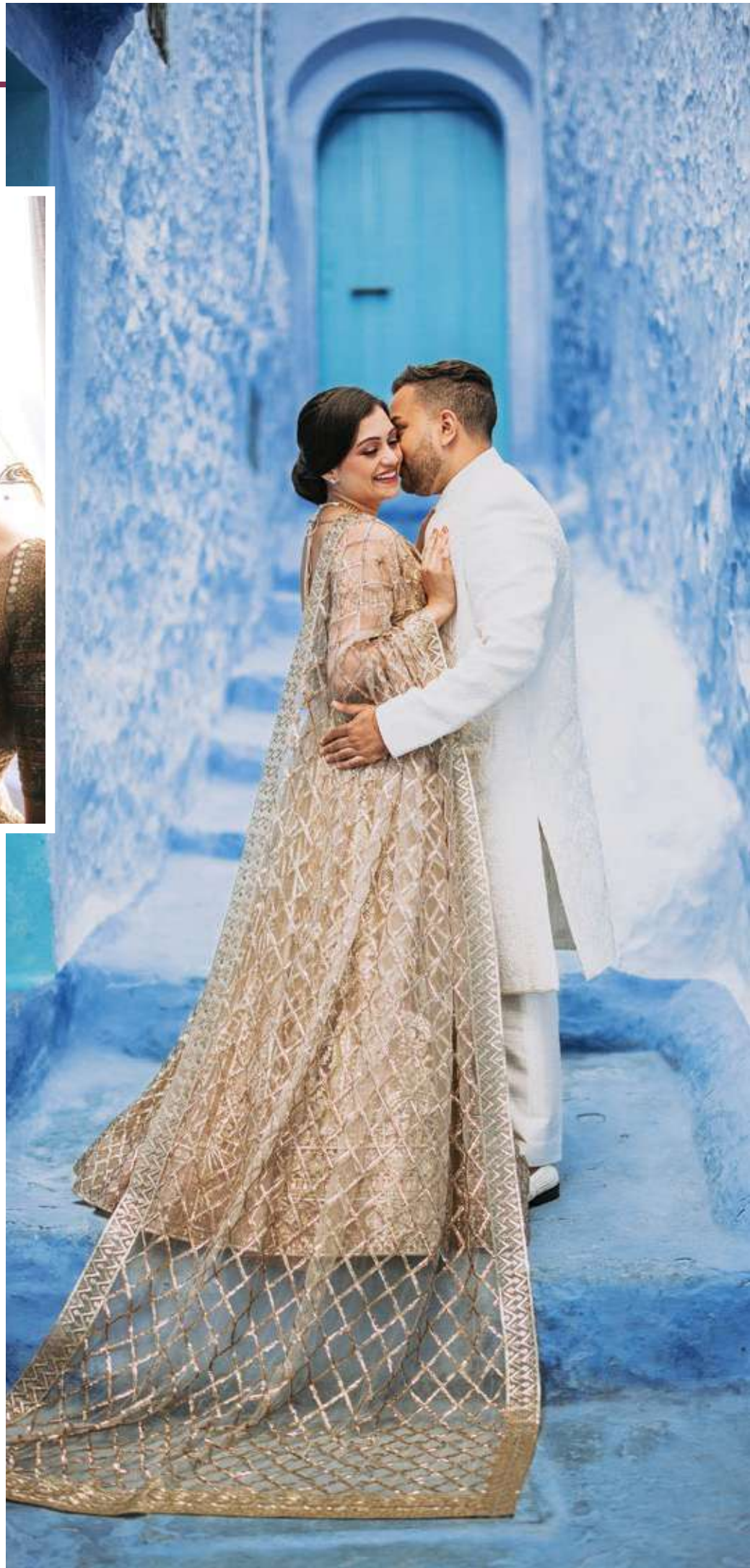
Kerala offers a completely different wedding experience—one that is serene, intimate, and deeply connected to nature. Known for its backwaters, lush greenery, and coastal beauty, the state is perfect for couples seeking understated elegance.

Top venues in-

clude Kumarakom Lake Resort, The Leela Kovalam (The Raviz Kovalam), Taj Bekal Resort & Spa, Grand Hyatt Kochi Bolgatty, Brunton Boatyard Kochi, Zuri Kumarakom, Niraamaya Retreats Surya Samudra, and CGH Earth properties.

Kerala weddings are often smaller and more personal, with a focus on meaningful experiences. Backwater ceremonies, beachfront rituals, and wellness-led itineraries—including Ayurveda and spa experiences—add a unique dimension. The natural beauty of the destination enhances every celebration, creating a tran-





quil and memorable setting.

Indian weddings today are evolving into immersive experiences, blending tradition with innovation. Personalisation is key—couples are designing celebrations that reflect their identities, from thematic décor to curated guest journeys. Technology, sustainability, and experiential elements are shaping the future of weddings, while inbound tourism continues to grow as international couples choose India for its diversity and grandeur.

From Delhi's grandeur and Mumbai's glamour to Rajasthan's royal legacy, Goa's vibrant beaches, and Kerala's serene landscapes, India offers an extraordinary range of wedding destinations. Each location brings its own character, ensuring that every celebration is unique.

In India, weddings are not just events—they are experiences woven with emotion, culture, and spectacle. And in this diversity lies the country's greatest strength, making it one of the world's most compelling destinations for unforgettable weddings. **BOTT**



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TOURISM MALAYSIA MUMBAI

Tourism Malaysia Mumbai has appointed **Haryanty Abu Bakar** as Director. She will spearhead Malaysia's tourism promotion and market development efforts across Western and Central India, as well as the Maldives. Driven by her experience across international and domestic tourism markets, Bakar brings a well-rounded mix of strategic leadership and market insight. She will lead strategic initiatives to position Malaysia as a preferred destination for Indian travellers.



NOIDA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Noida International Airport has appointed **Nitu Samra** as the Chief Executive Officer on an interim basis, until the Board of Directors can conclude a formal selection process. Samra has been serving as Chief Financial Officer of Noida International Airport since October 2021 and has been closely involved in the airport's development journey, overseeing financial stewardship, governance, and strategic planning during a key phase of the project.



SUMMIT HOTELS & RESORTS

Summit Hotels & Resorts has appointed **Tara Gurung** as Vice President – Human Resources. She brings with her a deep understanding of human capital, organisational culture, and leadership development. In her new role, Tara will lead the human resources function across Summit's expanding portfolio, with a focus on strengthening organisational culture, building leadership pipelines, and aligning people practices with the brand's growth ambitions.



HOLIDAY INN GURUGRAM SECTOR 90

Holiday Inn Gurugram Sector 90 has appointed **Rishabh Jain** as General Manager. With over 21 years of experience in the hospitality industry, he brings a strong blend of operational expertise, sales leadership and strategic insight. In his new role, he will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of hotel operations, driving financial performance, building high-performing teams, enhancing the hotel's market positioning and delivering exceptional guest experiences.



PULLMAN AND NOVOTEL NEW DELHI AEROCITY

Pullman and Novotel New Delhi Aerocity has announced the appointment of **Farzana Ali Khan** as Director of Rooms. With over 13 years of extensive experience in the hospitality industry, Farzana brings with her a strong track record of operational excellence, guest satisfaction and team leadership. In her new role, Farzana will oversee all aspects of the Rooms Division, including Front Office, Housekeeping and other ancillary departments.



NOVOTEL NEW DELHI CITY CENTRE

Novotel New Delhi City Centre announced the appointment of **Richa Tripathi** as Director of Sales and Marketing. With over 18 years of experience across the hospitality and aviation sectors, she brings strong expertise in revenue generation, strategic sales, and client relationship management. In her new role, Richa will lead the hotel's sales and marketing strategy, driving business growth across key segments including corporate, MICE, and social events.

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And yes thanks to all our Local Travel Trade Association Partners for their Support in each and every city. This built a lot of Confidence & Trust for UTEN team to do More such Activities on Regular intervals in there Cities

We UTEN team never forgot the Support, Ideas we get from our Active UTEN Chapter Heads Ranjeetha , Badal Shah , Sanjay Mehta , Nilesh Bhutwala , Raj , Manish Gupta , Kashyap Kanani who are our Backbone in Every Success & Activities we UTEN always do.



We Respect your Trust which you all have in UTEN which Encourages and Motivates us always to come with more such activities in much better and efficient ways

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

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Mugdha-The Grand Ballroom



Poolside Lawn



Mugdha Lawn

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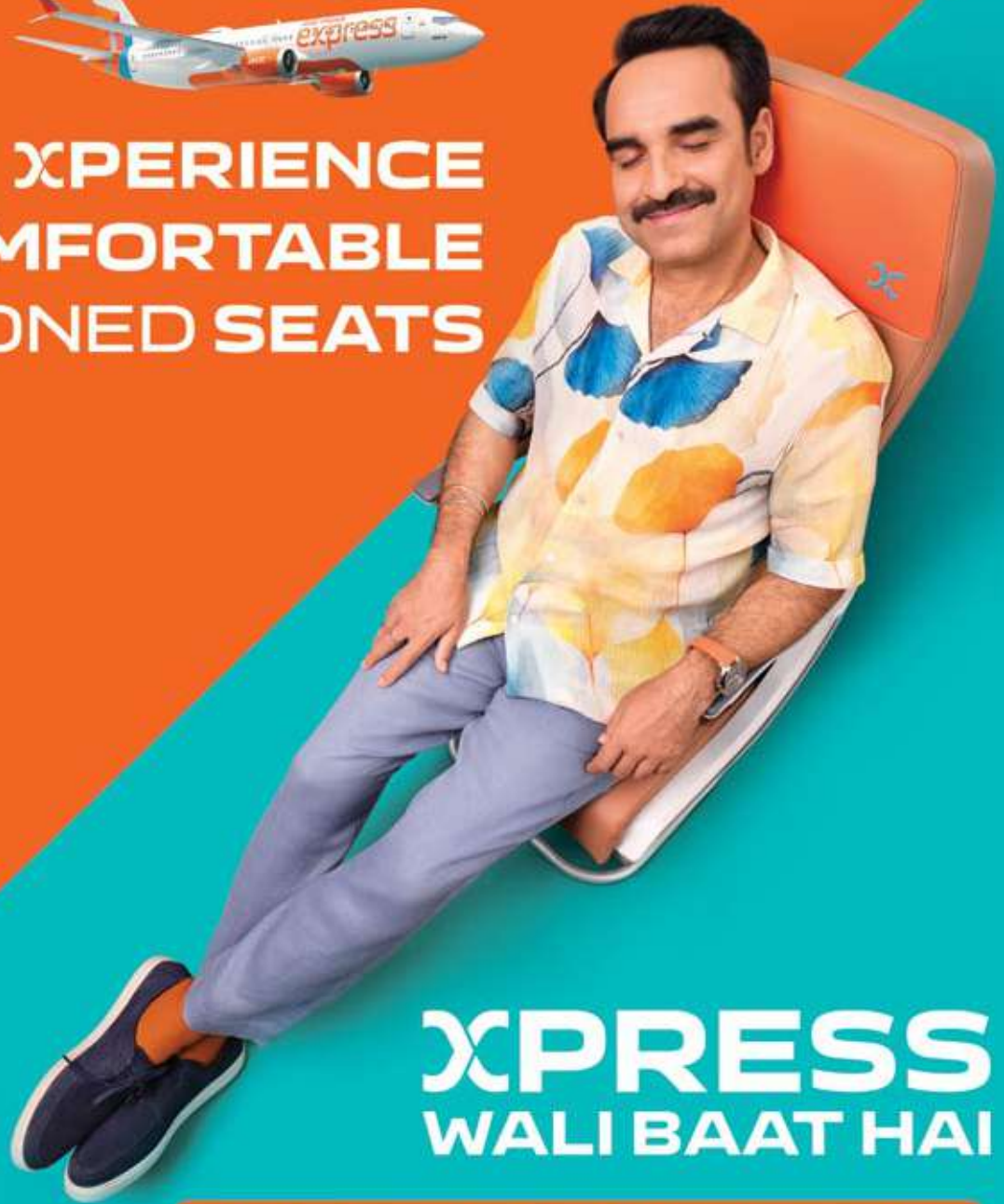
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