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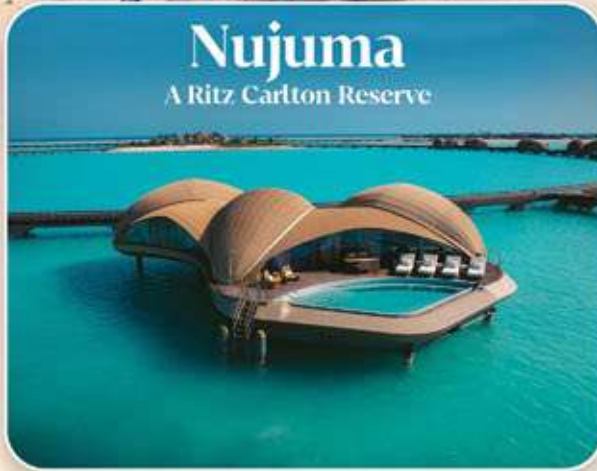
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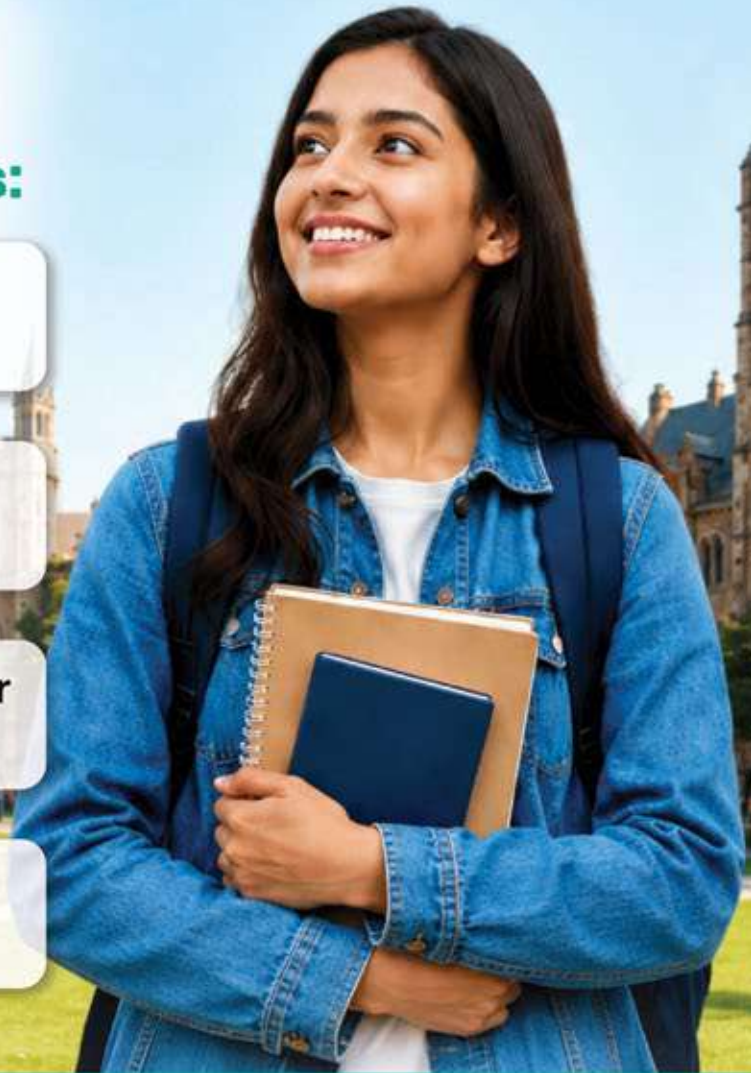
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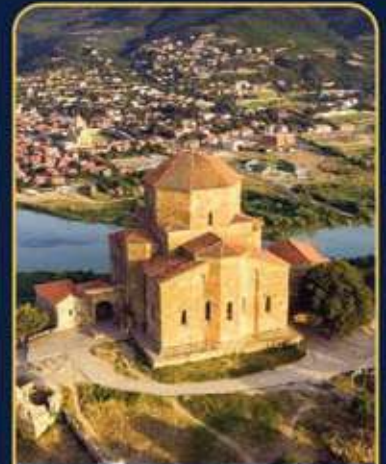
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The art of Indian cuisine

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Published and Printed by  
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RNI/DELENG/2019/1343884

**BOTT**  
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# Editor's LETTER

Dear Readers,

As the war now draws to a close, there is renewed hope that the worst is behind us and the travel industry can once again look ahead with cautious optimism. With stability returning, fuel prices are expected to ease, and we hope airlines will soon restart the routes that were halted, while also bringing down ticket prices to support faster recovery. For an industry built on movement, confidence and aspiration, this could mark the beginning of a much-needed rebound.

At BOTT, we believe that every challenge also brings with it a moment to reimagine opportunities. As couples across the world begin planning their weddings and honeymoons for the upcoming winter season, our July Issue brings to you an interesting and exhaustive selection of honeymoon options, both in India and overseas. From serene beaches and romantic escapes to adventure, culture, wellness and fun-filled experiences, these destinations offer a wide variety of choices for every kind of couple.

In addition, this issue also features an impressive list of top-notch resorts across Maldives, Bali, Krabi, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Kenya and more, specially curated for couples who simply wish to unwind, relax and enjoy the ambience, hospitality and exclusive facilities offered by these beautiful properties. For our B2B travel trade community, this edition serves as a useful guide to discover fresh honeymoon ideas and recommend meaningful, memorable and well-suited options to their clients.

Along with this special focus, we also bring to you our regular columns, insightful interviews, FAM trip coverages, industry updates and destination stories that continue to capture the changing pulse of the travel and tourism sector.

As travel bounces back with renewed energy, we hope this issue inspires the industry to look ahead with confidence, creativity and enthusiasm.

Happy Reading!

Warm regards,

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**  
Editor, BOTT India

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## SHORT NEWS

### SAUDI LAUNCHES PACKAGE VISA TO SIMPLIFY TRAVEL BOOKINGS



Saudi has launched Package Visa, a fully digital initiative that integrates tourist visa applications with curated travel bookings through qualified service providers in select international markets. The platform enables eligible travellers to book flights, hotels, visas and add-on experiences in one streamlined process. Building on e-Visa, visa-on-arrival and Stopover Transit Visa initiatives, the move aims to make Saudi more accessible and boost longer, experience-led stays, following 29 million inbound visitors in 2025 overall.

### KAZIN DMC STRENGTHENS AZERBAIJAN'S WEDDING TOURISM VISION

KAZIN DMC recently organised an exclusive closed-door interaction with leading Indian wedding specialists and Azerbaijan's premier luxury hotel brands, strengthening its vision to position Azerbaijan as a preferred destination wedding hub. Held on June 29, 2026, the event featured JW Marriott Absheron Baku, The Ritz-Carlton, Baku and Absheron Hotel Group. Discussions highlighted Baku, Shahdag and Shamakhi, focusing on luxury celebrations, visa-friendly policies and more.



Held on June 29, 2026, the event featured JW Marriott Absheron Baku, The Ritz-Carlton, Baku and Absheron Hotel Group. Discussions highlighted Baku, Shahdag and Shamakhi, focusing on luxury celebrations, visa-friendly policies and more.



### THE MOR STAYS BY INDEVA HOTELS & RESORTS ANNOUNCES NEW PROPERTY IN MATHURA

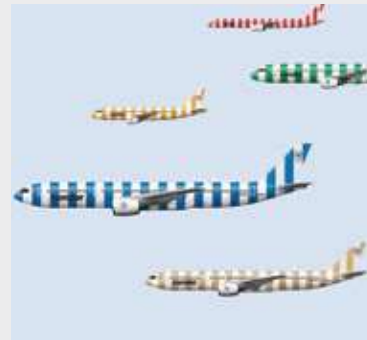
Indeva Hotels & Resorts has announced the signing of Hotel Sheetal Regency in Mathura under its midscale brand, The Mor Stays. Rebranded as Hotel Sheetal Regency – The Mor Stays – Krishna Janmabhoomi, Mathura, the property is located near Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi Temple. One of the city's established classified hotels, it will undergo phased brand integration with enhanced service standards, modern operating systems and improved guest experiences while retaining its legacy and warmth.



### RX INDIA UNVEILS WTM SPOTLIGHT INDIA

RX India hosted the WTM Spotlight India Leadership Gala at The Oberoi, New Delhi, officially unveiling WTM Spotlight India ahead of its inaugural edition from March 2–4, 2027, at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi. Part of RX's global World Travel Market portfolio, the event will connect international travel suppliers with India's growing travel market. The gala was attended by industry leaders, government officials and Shri Suman Billa, IAS, as Guest of Honour.

### AVIAREPS INDIA APPOINTED AS GSA FOR GERMAN AIRLINE CONDOR



AVIAREPS India has been appointed as the General Sales Agent for Condor in India. As Condor's offline GSA, AVIAREPS India will provide sales, reservations, ticketing and market development support across the country. The partnership will enhance awareness of Condor's global network among travel trade and consumers, while supporting demand through agencies, tour operators, corporate partners and stakeholders. Condor offers access to over 70 destinations through its Frankfurt hub.



### ITC HOTELS OPENS FORTUNE LAKEVIEW BHIMTAL

ITC Hotels Limited has opened Fortune Lakeview Bhimtal, a 63-key lakeside retreat in Uttarakhand, marking its 12th property in the region. Overlooking Bhimtal Lake and the Himalayan hills, the hotel offers rooms and suites, banqueting facilities for 200 guests, a boardroom, pool, gym and upcoming spa. Dining options include Zodiac, Neptune Bar and the soon-to-open rooftop restaurant Nakshatra, offering Kumaoni flavours, global cuisine and memorable lake-view experiences for guests.

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# FAITH Conclave 2026

## to unlock the economic power of Incredible India

With the theme “Incredible India: Invaluable Economics,” FAITH Conclave 2026 will bring together policymakers, global tourism leaders and industry captains in New Delhi to chart a roadmap for accelerating tourism-led growth and strengthening India’s position as a leading global tourism destination.



### BOTT Desk

As India accelerates its ambition to become one of the world’s leading tourism economies, the Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH) is set to host the FAITH Conclave 2026 on July 16–17, 2026 in New Delhi. The conclave, themed “Incredible India: Invaluable Economics,” will focus on strategies to unlock the full potential of India’s tourism sector and accelerate tourism-led economic growth.

The agenda of the Conclave has been designed around the key pillars of India’s tourism ecosystem. It will focus on important priorities such as year-round leisure tourism, aviation-led growth, hospitality competitiveness, frontier tourism and sustainable tourism development.

The Conclave will be inaugurated by Hon’ble Union Minister of Tourism & Culture, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat. The inaugural session will also feature addresses by the Hon’ble Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, Taranjit Singh Sandhu, and Hon’ble Chief Minister of J&K, Omar Abdullah, reflecting the growing recognition of tourism as a key sector in India’s economy. A key highlight will be the keynote address by Gloria Guevara, CEO, World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC).

The event will also feature a distinguished keynote address by Anurag Singh Thakur, Hon’ble Member of Par-

liament, Lok Sabha. A special fireside chat with Gen. Anil Chauhan PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, Former Chief of Defence Staff, will explore the theme “Unlocking the Strategic Potential of India’s Border Destinations.” Shri Suman Billa, Additional Secretary & Director General – Tourism, Government of India, will also address the Conclave.

The programme will include an engaging discussion with H.E. Dr. Philipp Ackermann, Ambassador of Germany to India, on “Reimagining India’s Inbound Tourism Strategy – Global Learnings,” along with an insightful session with Dr. Neeraj Kharwal, IAS, Managing Director, India Trade Promotion Organisation, and Shri Hari Kishore, IAS, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Chairman, ICPB – India Convention Promotion Bureau, on strengthening India’s leadership in the MICE sector.

Adding an inspirational dimension, the Conclave will host special sessions featuring acclaimed actor Boman Irani and veteran actor Anupam Kher, along with “The Fun Side of Incredible India” by author, poet and television personality Shailesh Lodha.

The tourism and hospitality industry will be represented by leaders including Puneet Chhatwal, Rajesh Magow, Zubin Karkaria, Dr. Jyotsna Suri, K.B. Kachru, Nipun Agarwal, Alope Singh, Kevin Markette and senior leaders from several prominent organisations. **BOTT**

GO BEYOND THE ORDINARY  
CRAFT A HONEYMOON THAT BECOMES YOUR FOREVER STORY

A vertical photograph of the Sydney city skyline, featuring the Sydney Opera House in the foreground and the Sydney Harbour Bridge in the background, with a blue sky and water.

AUSTRALIA

A vertical photograph of a white van driving on a winding road through a lush green landscape with snow-capped mountains in the background.

NEW ZEALAND

A vertical photograph of a person in a blue shirt paddling a small boat on clear, turquoise water under a blue sky with white clouds.

FIJISLANDS

A vertical photograph of a hot air balloon with red, yellow, and blue stripes floating in a clear sky over a savanna landscape with a herd of animals in the foreground.

KENYA

A vertical photograph of an elephant's head and tusks in a savanna landscape, with a herd of animals in the foreground.

TANZANIA

# 41<sup>st</sup> IATO Annual Convention in Vizag to spotlight India's tourism potential

The Indian Association of Tour Operators is all set to host its 41st Annual Convention in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, bringing together nearly 1,000 delegates from across the country under the theme "India: The World's Next Tourism Opportunity".

## BOTT Desk



The Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) is all set to organise its 41st IATO Annual Convention from September 10 – 13, 2026 in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh – popularly known as the “City of Destiny” and the “Jewel of the East Coast”. Announcing the convention, Ravi Gosain, President, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), informed that the theme of the convention will be “India: The World’s Next Tourism Opportunity”.

Gosain also announced that Sunil Mishra, Honorary Secretary, will be the Chairman of the Convention, along with Deepak Kumarr Bhatnagar, Honorary Treasurer, as the Co-Chairman of the Convention. Vijay Mohan, Co-Chairman, IATO Andhra Pradesh, will be the coordinator.

Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach will be the venue hotel for the convention. All activities across the three days, including registration, the inaugural function, business sessions and evening programmes, will be held at Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach.

Ravi Gosain apprised that the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Shri N. Chandrababu Naidu, and Shri Kandula Durgesh, Hon'ble Minister for Tourism & Culture, Government of Andhra Pradesh, have graciously accepted the invitation to grace the inaugural function.

IATO also looks forward to the wholehearted

support of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, for the Convention and will be honoured by the gracious presence of Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Hon'ble Union Minister for Tourism & Culture, Shri Bhuvnesh Kumar, Secretary (Tourism), and Shri Suman Billa, Additional Secretary & Director General (Tourism), Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, at the Inaugural Function as well as the Business Sessions of the Convention.

This flagship industry event will be hosted with the full support of the Government of Andhra Pradesh. Shri Kandula Durgesh, Minister of Tourism, Culture & Cinematography, Ajay Jain, Special Chief Secretary (Tourism & Culture), Government of Andhra Pradesh, and Amrapali Kata, CEO, Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority, have extended their full cooperation to ensure the grand success of the convention.

Highlighting the scale of the event, Sanjay Razdan, Vice President, IATO, shared that the association is aiming to attract nearly 1,000 delegates from across the country. He further added that curated post-convention tours will be organised to showcase Andhra Pradesh's diverse tourism offerings, enabling stakeholders to promote these experiences in both domestic and international markets. To add to the celebratory fervour, a lively “IATO's Got Talent – Karaoke Singing Competition” has also been planned. **BOTT**



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# 15<sup>th</sup> Conventions India Conclave to ‘Power the Future of Innovation’ in New Delhi

The India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB), sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, has announced the 15<sup>th</sup> Conventions India Conclave, scheduled to take place from August 19–21, 2026, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. The flagship event is being organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and jointly organised by ITPO and Delhi Tourism.

## BOTT Desk



Chander Mansharamani, Vice Chairman, ICPB

**T**hemed “Powering the Future of Innovation,” the 15<sup>th</sup> Conventions India Conclave will focus on all key segments of the MICE industry, including incentives, exhibitions, association conferences and corporate meetings. The conclave is expected to create strong opportunities for ICPB members and industry stakeholders to explore new avenues for business development.

The event holds special significance as the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of CIC 2026 and will also serve as an important platform to position ICPB as the parent body for marketing India as a preferred convention destination. This comes at a time when ICPB is working towards restructuring and strengthening its role in the country’s MICE landscape.

Unlike a traditional association event, the Conventions India Conclave is regarded as South Asia’s premium networking platform for buyers and sellers in the Indian convention industry. Organised on the lines of leading global MICE events such as IBTM, ITCMA and IMEX, CIC 2026 is positioned as a premium B2B event in this part of the world.

The exhibition and B2B meetings with pre-scheduled appointments will form an important component of the conclave. The event is expected to attract around 350–400 delegates, including domestic and international buyers, along with 75–100 exhibitors.

The two-day programme will also feature sessions and panel discussions on key industry themes, including “Technology Innovation in the Meeting Industry,” incentives and meeting expectations of corporates, and synergy between the exhibition and conference industries. Renowned international keynote speakers are also expected to share their experiences during the convention.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Conventions India Conclave will provide an ideal forum for opinions, views and standpoints on India’s meetings and convention industry, while further strengthening India’s positioning as a preferred destination for global MICE business. **BOTT**



# One Above Global DMC Announces Strategic Merger *with* Adi Holidays

Adi Holidays joins the One Above Global DMC network as its UAE division marking the network's first Gulf footprint and a major step toward building India's most trusted B2B DMC platform across the region.



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Powered by Adi Holidays, the UAE division brings together owned assets, direct hotel partnerships, and over two decades of on-ground expertise under one unified standard: Indian Hospitality at International Grounds.



**ROOTED IN RELATIONSHIPS.  
FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE.**

Led by Mak and backed by a long-standing relationship with Irshad Dadan dating back to their SOTC days, this partnership is more than a merger - it's the beginning of a stronger, more trusted DMC movement across the Gulf.



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FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE.**

From the UAE and beyond, we're now even better equipped to deliver seamless, scalable, and personalized experiences to our travel partners across markets and margins.



“The UAE has always been the most important outbound market for the Indian travel agent. With Mak's legacy, Adi Holidays' owned infrastructure, and our shared history - we are not adding a destination. We are planting the One Above standard in the Gulf. This is the beginning of our Gulf chapter.”

Irshad Dadan, Founder & CEO  
Saranjeet Kaur, Managing Partner  
One Above Global DMC Network

“In travel, my nickname Mak is more popular than my full name. The trade knows me - and the relationships behind that name span 24 years. With One Above, we take that trust across the entire UAE and, in time, the Gulf.”

Masroor Ahmad Khan (Mak), Director  
One Above Global DMC  
(Powered by Adi Holidays)



enquiry@one-above.com

# Wyndham

**bets big on India's evolving  
hospitality market**

In an exclusive interaction with **BOTT**, **Veenu Rastogi**, Head - Sales & Marketing, Eurasia, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts shares how strong domestic demand, rising interest in branded accommodation, weddings, spiritual tourism, MICE, and the rapid growth of Tier-II and Tier-III cities are shaping Wyndham's roadmap for India.

**Gunjan Sabikhi**



## How important is the India market in your larger global growth strategy, and what kind of expansion are you looking at in the coming years?

India is one of Wyndham Hotels & Resorts' most important strategic growth markets globally and continues to play a significant role in our long-term expansion plans. The country's strong domestic travel demand, rapidly growing middle class, expanding infrastructure and increasing appetite for branded accommodation create compelling opportunities across both established and emerging destinations.

Our growth strategy is focused on expanding where demand is strongest from major metropolitan cities to fast-growing Tier II and Tier III markets, as well as leisure, pilgrimage and commercial destinations.

Equally important is partnering with local developers who understand their markets and recognise the value that an international brand, global distribution network and one of the world's largest hotel loyalty programmes can bring.

## How is Wyndham adapting its brands and offerings to meet the expectations of both domestic and outbound Indian guests?

Indian travellers today are seeking far more than simply a place to stay. They are looking for authentic experiences, personalised service and excellent value, whether travelling within India or internationally.

Our approach is to combine the consistency and reassurance of a trusted global brand with experiences that reflect the local destination. At our leisure properties, this means curating experiences that celebrate local culture, cuisine and heritage. At our resort hotels, we continue to strengthen our offering for weddings, celebrations and multigenerational family travel, all of which remain important demand drivers in India.

For business travellers, we focus on

delivering seamless, efficient stays with flexible dining, modern technology and the comforts that Indian guests expect. Across every segment, our goal is to ensure guests enjoy a locally relevant experience backed by internationally recognised service standards.

## Which segments are driving the strongest growth for Wyndham in India – leisure, business travel, weddings, MICE, spiritual tourism or emerging Tier-II and Tier-III markets?

One of the strengths of the Indian market is that growth is being driven by several complementary segments rather than a single demand source.

Domestic leisure travel remains exceptionally strong, fuelled by increasing disposable incomes and a growing preference for shorter, more frequent holidays. Weddings and social events also continue to generate significant demand, particularly across our resort portfolio.

At the same time, we are seeing strong momentum in spiritual and cultural tourism. Destinations such as Ayodhya, Varanasi and Dwarka are attracting increasing numbers of domestic and international visitors, creating new opportunities for quality branded accommodation.

Perhaps the most exciting trend, however, is the continued growth of Tier II and Tier III cities. Improved connectivity, infrastructure investment and rising commercial activity are transforming many of these markets, making them increasingly attractive for hotel development and reinforcing Wyndham's long-term expansion strategy across India.

## How do you decide which brand fits a particular Indian destination, and are there any new brands you are keen to introduce in the market?

Selecting the right brand always begins with understanding the destination rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach.

We carefully evaluate the market's primary demand drivers whether they are corporate travel, leisure, religious tourism, weddings or mixed-use development as well as the competitive landscape, target customer and owner's investment objectives. From there, we identify the Wyndham brand that offers the strongest commercial opportunity while meeting the expectations of future guests.

With a portfolio of 25 brands, we have the flexibility to serve a wide range of markets and traveller segments. While we continue to strengthen established brands such as Ramada, Ramada Encore, Wyndham Garden and Howard Johnson, we also see opportunities to introduce additional brands over time.

## Sustainability, technology and loyalty programmes are becoming key differentiators in hospitality. How is Wyndham strengthening these areas?

Our Wyndham Rewards loyalty programme continues to be a significant differentiator, giving members access to meaningful benefits across thousands of hotels worldwide. For Indian travellers, who are travelling internationally more than ever before, the ability to earn and redeem points globally adds real value and encourages long-term loyalty.

Technology is another major focus. We continue to invest in digital platforms and solutions that make the guest journey more seamless from booking and check-in through to personalised experiences during the stay.

On sustainability, our focus is on helping hotel owners adopt practical initiatives that reduce environmental impact while strengthening operational performance. In India, we are also proud of partnerships that create a positive community impact, such as our collaboration with Christel House Bengaluru, which supports access to education and employment opportunities for underserved young people. **BOTT**

# Virginia

## sees India emerge as its largest overseas source market

Heidi Johannesen, Managing Director, Global Markets, Virginia Tourism Corporation, discusses the growing importance of the Indian market, Virginia's unique tourism offerings, upcoming opportunities around America 250, and the state's plans to deepen engagement with BOTT.



Heidi Johannesen, Managing Director, Global Markets, Virginia Tourism Corporation



### Pallavi Sharma

India has been identified as a strategic marketplace for Virginia Tourism. What makes India important for Virginia Tourism?

India has been a market that we've been invested in since 2018 when we retained Sartha Global Marketing. Just for comparison's sake, in 2019, India was our fifth-largest market. With the preliminary figures that have just come out for 2025, India has now moved into our second-largest market, only to Canada.

If you look at it from an overseas perspective, India is now Virginia's largest market. We welcomed nearly 65,000 Indian travellers in 2025, according to the preliminary figures. The final figures won't be out until later this summer. It continues to show steady growth for us, and the interest is there.

I think the vacation offerings that Virginia has are a perfect match for what the Indian traveller is looking for.

### How do you plan to strengthen engagement with the Indian travel trade?

We will continue our strong investment in the marketplace. We will continue working closely with Sartha Global Marketing and the travel trade to enhance the travel products we offer in Virginia.

We will also continue working with the media to build awareness. Virginia still has a great deal to showcase, and there is an awareness-building process we need to continue. We work on several levels of promotion. The first is education, leading to product development so that people have products to sell for Virginia. We also undertake missions, trade interactions, and familiarisation trips. Lastly, we work

with tour operators through cooperative marketing programmes to promote Virginia through mass media and travel trade media. That is the current strategy, and we will continue building on it.

### Going forward, what is your vision for Virginia's presence in the Indian market?

Our vision is to continue increasing the number of Indian visitors travelling to Virginia. The first step is increasing awareness of what Virginia has to offer, and we count on the trade, consumer media, and publications like yours to help us achieve that. India is already our number one overseas market, which is fantastic, but we would love to multiply those numbers significantly. Within the next few years, we would love to see 80,000 to 100,000 Indian visitors travelling to Virginia. That would make us very happy. **BOTT**

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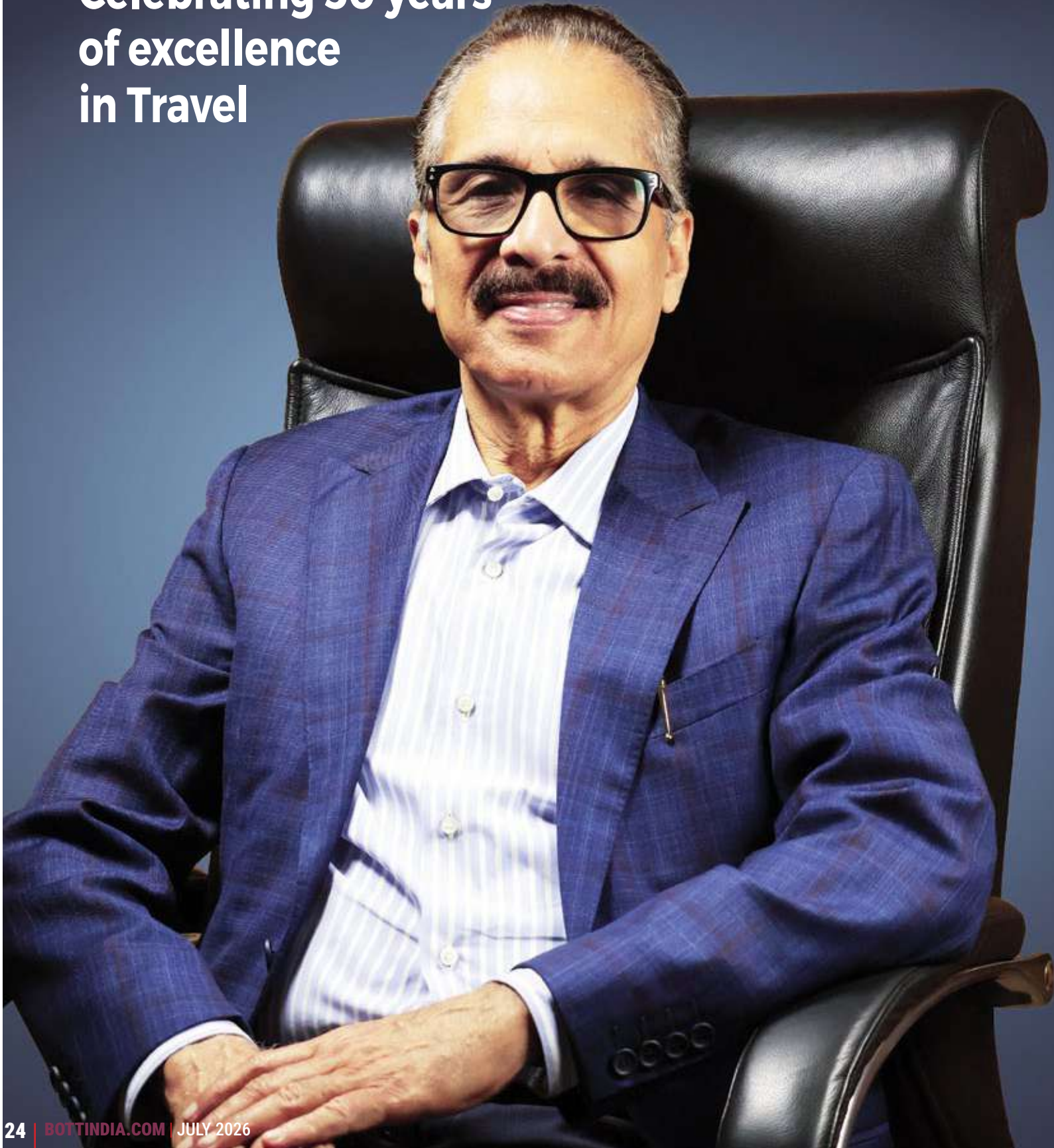
Flight No.	From	Departure	To	Arrival	Days
WY 101	Muscat	13:30	London	19:10	Daily
WY 102	London	20:50	Muscat	07:10(+1)	Daily
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WY 104	London	08:25	Muscat	18:50	Mon, Fri, Sat, Sun

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SPOTLIGHT

# GMJ Thampy

Celebrating 50 years  
of excellence  
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For over five decades, Riya Travel has been a pioneering force in the travel and tourism industry, guided by the vision and leadership of **GMJ Thampy**, Chairman & Managing Director, Riya Travel Group. As the company celebrates its remarkable 50-year journey, he reflects on the milestones, challenges and core values that have shaped this enduring legacy in an exclusive interaction with **BOTT**.

## Shreya Shimpi

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

No two days are the same in the travel industry. Every customer has different requirements, and I enjoyed helping them find the right travel solutions. What began as a professional opportunity gradually turned into a lifelong career. Even today, our industry continues to inspire me because it is fundamentally about connecting people, opportunities, and destinations. As a leader, I've learned that while tech-

credibly rewarding.

**What were the biggest challenges you faced in the early years, and how do they compare with the challenges of today's travel landscape?**

In my five decades, I have seen it all, from the Gulf War to the COVID-19 pandemic and recent geopolitical uncertainties. During these periods, I often worked nearly twenty hours a day to ensure business continuity. Today, the industry is more advanced and technology-driven, but the pace of change is much faster. The chal-

the traveller. They expect speed, convenience, and transparency, and rightly so. Every industry evolves with time, and travel is no different.

**What has been your proudest achievement so far, and what continues to motivate you to push boundaries in this dynamic industry?**

My proudest achievement isn't any single milestone. It's the trust we've earned over the years. We have customers who have been with us for decades, and today, even the next generation of their families continues to travel with us. Seeing the next generation of leaders within the organisation embrace new technologies, including AI, and prepare the business for the future gives me great confidence and motivation.

What qualities, values and guiding principles do you believe have helped you reach this pinnacle of success, and what advice would you give to young entrepreneurs entering the travel and tourism sector?

Work with integrity, honour your commitments, and build lasting relationships. In our business, trust is your greatest asset. To young entrepreneurs, I would say: don't try to do everything at once. Build expertise in one area, keep learning, and be prepared to adapt as the industry evolves.

**As Riya Travels celebrates this remarkable 50-year journey, what is your vision for the next decade, and what message would you like to share with your well-wishers?**

My focus is on continuing to innovate while staying true to my principles. To my dear customers, employees, partners, and well-wishers, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude. **BOTT**

**My proudest achievement isn't any single milestone. It's the trust we've earned over the years. We have customers who have been with us for decades, and today, even the next generation of their families continues to travel with us. Seeing the next generation of leaders within the organisation embrace new technologies, including AI, and prepare the business for the future gives me great confidence and motivation.**

nology evolves, trust, customer service, and taking care of your people remain constant.

**Over a journey spanning nearly five decades, what have been the major milestones that stand out for you the most?**

Honestly, what gives me the greatest satisfaction is seeing our organization grow from a team of just three people to nearly 2,500 today. Receiving our IATA accreditation in 1994 and entering airline ticketing was a major turning point. Each new venture, from corporate travel and marine travel to technology and education, has been in-

terviewed. The challenge now is staying agile, embracing innovation, and delivering personalised service in an increasingly digital world.

**How has the travel and tourism industry evolved over the last fifty years, and what changes have been the most significant in your view?**

When I entered this business, everything was manual. We worked with paper tickets, long queues, and limited flight options. Today, the entire travel booking experience fits into a smartphone. So, if you ask me what has changed the most, I would say it is

# India's most enchanting Honeymoon Escapes

India offers honeymooners a rare luxury — the freedom to choose a love story that matches their mood. From snow-draped mountains and serene lakes to golden beaches, tropical islands, tea gardens and royal palaces, the country brings together romance, comfort and discovery in one unforgettable journey. For couples looking to begin their new life with meaningful experiences, India presents a beautiful mix of intimate retreats, scenic drives, soft adventure, indulgent stays and cultural charm.

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

## **SHIMLA: Colonial charm and cosy mountain romance**

Shimla remains one of India's most loved honeymoon destinations, especially for couples who enjoy slow mountain holidays. Its colonial architecture, pine-scented air and misty views create an old-world charm that continues to attract new-weds. Couples can walk along Mall Road, visit Christ Church, explore Kufri, enjoy scenic viewpoints around Jakhoo Hill or take a heritage ride on the Kalka-Shimla toy train. Stay options range from luxury hill resorts and heritage hotels to boutique mountain retreats with fireplaces, private balconies and valley views.

## **GOA: Sun, sand and celebration**

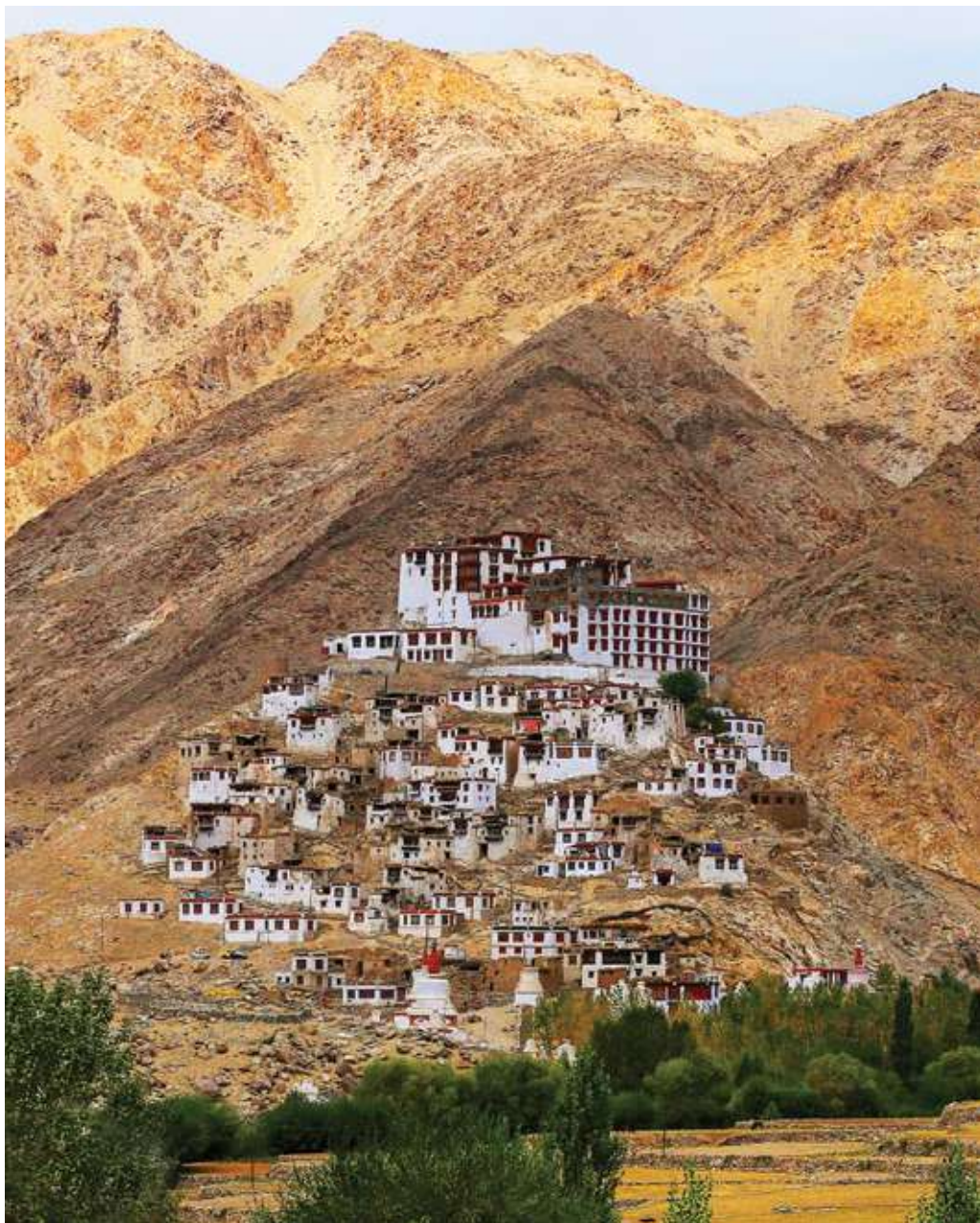
For couples who prefer a vibrant honeymoon, Goa offers the perfect blend of beach



Goa



Nubra Valley, Jammu & Kashmir



relaxation, nightlife, food, culture and leisure. North Goa is ideal for those who enjoy music, cafés, markets and lively beaches, while South Goa is more suited for couples seeking privacy, luxury and calm seaside moments. Newlyweds can explore beaches, take a sunset cruise, visit Portuguese churches, enjoy water sports or spend relaxed evenings at beachside restaurants. Stay options include luxury beach resorts, boutique villas, private pool stays and charming heritage properties.

### **ANDAMANS: Island romance at its best**

The Andaman Islands are ideal for couples looking for a dreamy tropical escape within India. With turquoise waters, white sand beaches and a peaceful island atmosphere, the destination feels exclusive and intimate. Havelock Island, now Swaraj Dweep, is especially popular for Radhanagar

Beach, scuba diving, snorkelling and candlelight dinners by the sea. Neil Island offers a quieter, more laid-back experience. Couples can choose from beach resorts, sea-facing cottages and premium island stays that offer privacy, comfort and easy access to water activities.

### **MANALI: Adventure, views and mountain warmth**

Manali is perfect for honeymooners who want both romance and adventure. Surrounded by snow peaks, rivers and forests, it offers a charming mix of scenic beauty and outdoor experiences. Couples can visit Solang Valley, Atal Tunnel, Hadimba Temple, Old Manali cafés and riverside spots around the Beas. During winter, the destination becomes even more romantic with snow-covered landscapes. Stay options include luxury mountain resorts, riverside cottages, wooden chalets and

boutique hotels with panoramic views.

### **SRINAGAR AND GULMARG: Kashmir's timeless magic**

Few destinations can match the romance of Kashmir. Srinagar offers the classic charm of Dal Lake, shikara rides, Mughal gardens and houseboat stays, while Gulmarg adds alpine beauty, snow activities and breathtaking meadows. A honeymoon here can be calm, cinematic and deeply memorable. Couples can enjoy lakeside sunsets, gondola rides, local cuisine and scenic drives through valleys. Stay options include heritage houseboats, luxury lake-facing hotels, boutique resorts and premium mountain properties in Gulmarg.

### **MUNNAR: Tea gardens and tranquil escapes**

For couples seeking peace, greenery



Neil Island, Laxmanpur Beach



Incredible India

Patnitop, Jammu & Kashmir



and soft romance, Munnar is a wonderful choice. Its rolling tea plantations, mist-covered hills and cool weather make it one of South India's most beautiful honeymoon destinations. Couples can visit Eravikulam National Park, Mattupetty Dam, Echo Point, tea museums and plantation trails. The destination is best enjoyed slowly, with scenic drives, spa therapies and quiet evenings. Stay options include plantation bungalows, luxury hill resorts, wellness retreats and boutique cottages surrounded by tea gardens.

### UDAIPUR: Royal romance by the Lakes

Udaipur brings grandeur and elegance to a honeymoon. Known for its lakes, palaces and regal hospitality, the city is ideal for couples who want a refined and memorable celebration. Boat rides on Lake Pichola, visits to City Palace, rooftop dinners and walks through old markets add to its charm. Stay options include palace hotels, lakeside resorts, heritage havelis and luxury boutique properties.

### ALLEPPEY: Backwater bliss

For an intimate and unhurried honeymoon, Alleppey offers the magic of Kerala's backwaters. A private houseboat journey through calm canals, coconut groves and village landscapes creates a deeply relaxing experience. Couples can combine it with Ayurveda therapies, local cuisine and beach visits. Stay options include premium houseboats, backwater resorts and wellness-led retreats. **BOTT**



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# Romantic Retreats

## Luxury Hotels for Newlyweds

A honeymoon is more than just a holiday — it is the beginning of a beautiful journey together. From private island retreats and mountain hideaways to beachfront villas and luxury city escapes, hotels across the world are curating unforgettable experiences for newlyweds. Here's a look at some of the finest honeymoon hotels across various countries and what each of them has to offer for couples seeking romance, privacy and indulgence.

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**



Outrigger Maldives Maafushivaru Resort

## dusitD2 Feydhoo Maldives

Experience a fresh side of the Maldives at dusitD2 Feydhoo Maldives, just a 7-minute speedboat ride from Malé International Airport. Whether you're planning a romantic escape, a fun-filled family holiday, or the destination wedding you've always dreamed of, our vibrant island resort offers the perfect setting. Relax in stylish beach and overwater villas, indulge in exceptional dining, enjoy an array of water sports activities, rejuvenate at our signature Namm Spa, or simply soak up the beauty of crystal-clear lagoons and white sandy beaches.

For couples, our stunning beachfront and oceanfront venues provide an unforgettable backdrop for intimate ceremonies and grand celebrations, supported by our dedicated wedding specialists who take care of every detail. With warm Thai-inspired hospitality, contemporary experiences, and exclusive offers for Indian travellers, dusitD2 Feydhoo Maldives is where unforgettable holidays and magical wedding moments come to life. Start planning your perfect Maldives escape today.

## Himalayan Hideaway Resort Pokhara, The Centara Collection

What if your honeymoon began with the sun rising over the Annapurnas, just for the two of you? Perched above Pokhara's serene valley, Himalayan Hideaway Resort, The Centara Collection, wraps newlyweds in a world of quiet luxury and untouched mountain romance — where cool crisp air, timeless peaks, and gracious Himalayan hospitality set the tone for forever. Couples retreat to a private pool nestled on a secluded hillside, indulging in exclusive services designed just for two, from candlelit dinners under starlit skies to soulful spa rituals. Every detail — from personalized turndowns to bespoke excursions — turns the beginning of forever into an unforgettable Himalayan love story.

## The Ritz-Carlton, Bali

The Ritz-Carlton, Bali offers a refined, all-in-one destination for weddings and honeymoons, particularly suited to Indian travellers seeking

convenience without compromising on luxury. Located along the beachfront in Nusa Dua, it provides a range of versatile venues that cater to both intimate ceremonies and large-scale celebrations. Options include a glass-lit chapel for elegant vow exchanges, expansive cliffside lawns for outdoor functions, and beachfront settings that bring in Bali's natural charm. The property's dedicated wedding specialists ensure end-to-end planning, from décor and rituals to customised menus that can accommodate Indian preferences. For honeymoons, the property transitions effortlessly into a private, indulgent retreat, with spacious suites and villas, personalised butler service, curated dining experiences, and access to wellness facilities, including the spa. Additional experiences such as beachfront dinners, cultural excursions, and relaxation-focused activities further enhance the stay.

## Lošinj Hotels & Villas, Croatia

Tucked away on Croatia's idyllic Lošinj Island, Lošinj Hotels & Villas

## HOSPITABLE HOTELS

offers honeymooners a destination where luxury is deeply intertwined with nature, wellness, and wellbeing. Renowned as the 'Island of Vitality,' Lošinj has been celebrated for over 130 years for its exceptional microclimate, clean Adriatic air, fragrant pine forests, and over 1,000 species of medicinal and aromatic plants. The island's unique air quality is widely recognised for supporting respiratory health and overall wellbeing, making it one of Europe's most restorative island escapes.

Couples can begin their mornings overlooking the turquoise Adriatic Sea, spend the day sailing through secluded coves, discovering picturesque coastal villages, or indulging in award-winning spa and wellness experiences inspired by the island's natural healing environment. Evenings unfold over fresh Mediterranean cuisine and candlelit dinners by the waterfront, with spectacular sunsets creating the perfect backdrop for romance.

### Crown & Champa Resorts (CCR)

For couples dreaming of the perfect honeymoon or a picture-perfect pre-wedding shoot, Crown & Champa Resorts (CCR) in Maldives offers an exceptional collection of island escapes where romance, luxury and the breathtaking beauty of the Maldives come together.

Set against pristine white-sand beaches, turquoise lagoons, iconic overwater villas, and spectacular sunsets, each of the CCR luxury resorts make for a perfect get-away for couples looking forward to creating timeless memories and celebrating their love story.

Whether it's the adults-only tranquility of Komandoo Maldives, known for its intimate atmosphere, romantic villas, and personalised honeymoon experiences, or the contemporary luxury of Hurawalhi Island Resort, home to the world's largest all-glass undersea restaurant, 5.8, every moment is designed for romance.

Couples seeking wellness and relaxation will find the perfect retreat at Kagi Maldives Resort & Spa, where holistic spa experiences and elegant overwater villas offer the ideal setting to reconnect. Meanwhile, Nala Maldives by Jawakara, an exclusive adults-only resort, combines refined luxury, exceptional dining, and access to more than 50 dive sites for adventurous couples.



Santani Kandy, Sri Lanka



Sala Srichan, Phulay Bay



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Sun Siyam

### Santani Kandy, Sri Lanka

After months of wedding planning, family gatherings and a whirlwind of celebrations, every couple dreams of pressing pause. Nestled in the hills of Sri Lanka, about an hour from Kandy, Santani offers exactly that — a chance to slow down, breathe deeply and simply enjoy being together. The journey itself feels like an escape. As the roads wind through emerald-green hills, forests and tea country, the noise of everyday life begins to fade away. Set amid 116 acres of former tea estate and wilderness, Santani is surrounded by mountains, tropical greenery and sweeping valley views. Couples can wake up to birdsong, spend lazy afternoons gazing across the landscape, and end the day under a sky full of stars.

This is not a honeymoon filled with packed itineraries. Instead, it's about unwinding. The pace is slow, allowing couples to reconnect after the excitement and exhaustion of their wedding celebrations. Food is another highlight. Fresh, nourishing and beautifully presented, every meal is designed to be as satisfying as it is wholesome.

### Lake Naivasha Sopa Resort, Kenya

Embark on your journey of eternal love where the wild meets the romantic: arrive upon lawns grazed to perfection by the hippos of Lake Naivasha, with towering giraffes, grazing zebras, and playful colobus monkeys serving as your extraordinary welcome experience masters. For couples seeking a honeymoon beyond the ordinary, Lake Naivasha Sopa Resort offers a unique blend of romance, nature, and unforgettable wildlife experiences in the heart of Kenya's Great Rift Valley. Located on the Southern shore of the freshwater Lake Naivasha, which is 90km from Nairobi and set amidst 150 acres of acacia woodlands and manicured gardens, the resort provides a serene escape where nature takes centre stage.





The spacious cottage-style accommodations are thoughtfully designed to offer privacy and comfort, with stunning views of the lake, gardens, and roaming wildlife. Couples can wake up to the sight of giraffes, zebras, and waterbucks grazing freely across the property, creating magical moments throughout their stay. Romantic experiences abound, from sunset boat rides on Lake Naivasha and leisurely walks through the resort grounds to intimate dinners under the African sky.

### **Outrigger Maldives Maafushivaru Resort**

Set on a private island in the pristine South Ari Atoll, Outrigger Maldives Maafushivaru Resort is a dream destination for honeymooners and couples seeking barefoot luxury, privacy, and unforgettable experiences. Just a scenic 25-minute seaplane flight from Malé, the resort is surrounded by powder-soft beaches, turquoise lagoons, and lush tropical beauty, creating the perfect setting for romance.

The resort's elegant collection of beach and overwater villas, including private pool options, offers couples an intimate retreat where they can enjoy floating breakfasts, oceanfront sunsets, and uninterrupted time together. Romantic experiences range from private dining under the stars and indulgent spa treatments to yoga sessions, water sports, and bespoke island adventures. The surrounding house reef and rich marine biodiversity invite guests to

snorkel, dive, and explore the underwater wonders of the Maldives. Couples can also join guided ocean excursions, learn about marine conservation from the resident marine biologist.

### **Berjaya Tioman Resort, Pahang, Malaysia**

Escape to a world of tropical romance at Berjaya Tioman Resort, Pahang, Malaysia, where pristine

beaches, swaying palms and lush rainforest landscapes create the perfect setting for an unforgettable honeymoon. Nestled on over 200 acres of tropical paradise on Tioman Island, the resort offers couples a unique blend of relaxation, adventure and intimate island charm.

Wake up to breathtaking views of the South China Sea, stroll hand-in-hand along the resort's tranquil beachfront or simply unwind in a charming chalet surrounded by nature. Couples can indulge in rejuvenating spa treatments, enjoy kayaking and snorkelling in crystal clear waters or discover the island's vibrant marine life through diving excursions. As the sun sets, romance comes alive with candlelit beach dinners, starlit walks by the shore and the soothing sound of waves creating the perfect backdrop for cherished moments together.

### **Sun Siyam Vilu Reef, Maldives**

Sun Siyam Vilu Reef is a tropical boutique island hideaway in the South Nilandhe Atoll, just a scenic 35-minute seaplane ride from Malé, and one of the most intimate, soulful destinations in the Maldives. Part of the Privé Collection within the House of Siyam, the island is home to one of the Maldives'



most spectacular house reefs and can be walked end to end in about fifteen minutes. Its sand-toned, tropical design-roof architecture and sandy-floored bars set a relaxed, barefoot tone from the moment guests step off the seaplane.

Home to just 153 villas, ranging from elegant beach villas tucked amid tropical greenery to overwater villas with private pools, expansive sun decks, and direct lagoon access, the resort offers a private cocoon for couples. Honeymooners are folded into a seamless 24-hour all-inclusive experience, with six dining and drinking venues serving everything from candlelit beachfront dinners to Maldivian-inspired tasting menus.

### Phulay Bay, a Ritz Carlton Reserve, Krabi

Phulay Bay, a Ritz Carlton Reserve, Krabi offers an ultra-luxury, intimate setting for destination weddings and honeymoons, ideal for Indian couples seeking exclusivity. Located along the Andaman Sea, the resort's limited villa inventory allows for private celebrations and even full buyouts, making it well-suited for bespoke weddings. Ceremonies can be hosted by the beach or within elegant indoor spaces, with dedicated planners curating every detail, including decor, rituals, and customised menus.

For honeymoons, the property transitions into a serene retreat, with private pool villas, butler service, and curated experiences such as sunset cruises, spa rituals, and destination dining. This focus on privacy, personalisation, and design-led luxury positions Phulay Bay as a strong choice for high-value, intimate celebrations.

### Meliá Whale Lagoon, Maldives

After months of wedding planning, guest lists and celebrations, Meliá Whale Lagoon Maldives offers newlyweds the chance to leave every decision behind and simply enjoy each other's company. Set in the South Ari Atoll, one of the

Maldives' most sought-after regions, the resort combines postcard-perfect beaches and overwater villas with one of the destination's biggest honeymoon advantages.

With meals, drinks and a variety of experiences included, there is no need to think about budgets, schedules or planning. Days unfold effortlessly, whether that means lingering over a leisurely breakfast with ocean views, enjoying fresh seafood and international cuisine for lunch, or ending the evening with a romantic dinner by the water. The all-inclusive concept makes the honeymoon feel truly carefree, allowing couples to focus on what matters most: spending time together.

### The Westin Turtle Bay Resort & Spa

Some places lend themselves to honeymoons without needing much explanation. The Westin Turtle Bay Resort & Spa is one of them. Set beside the protected waters of Turtle Bay Marine Park, it offers a softer, more grounded kind of romance from the very beginning.

The rooms set the tone. Heavenly Junior Suites bring the sea close, with direct ocean access and an easy intimacy that suits newlyweds well. The Well-being Suites offer more space to disappear into, with private balconies and enough room for breakfast in and no real reason to hurry.

What makes the experience stand out is how gently romance is woven through it. A couple's picnic on the beach feels fresh and thoughtful. The spa offers the kind of treatments that slow everything down, from massages for two to sound bowl meditation and quieter rituals built around rest.

There is also something especially charming about the shared experiences: a private chef's table, or time at the Westin Farm, picking ingredients together before sitting down to a dish prepared with care. It is intimate, easy, and very well judged. **BOTT**

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# Love Journeys

## Dreamy International Escape

For newlyweds, a honeymoon is more than a holiday — it is the first beautiful journey of a lifetime together. From sun-kissed beaches and turquoise lagoons to lush mountains, quiet valleys and intimate island retreats, the world is truly their oasis. Here's a look at some top international honeymoon getaways that travel advisors can suggest to clients looking to make their first vacation as a married couple truly special.

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**





## Mauritius: A timeless tropical escape for two

Mauritius is a timeless honeymoon favourite for Indian couples, offering the perfect blend of beachside romance, soft adventure and cultural warmth. The island is ideal for couples who want more than just a relaxed resort stay. Days here can begin with breakfast by a turquoise lagoon and unfold into scenic drives, mountain trails, waterfall visits, catamaran cruises or leisurely walks along powder-soft beaches. Its landscapes are beautifully varied, with national parks, lagoons, waterfalls, beaches, mountains and vibrant markets all adding to the experience. Couples can enjoy private dinners by the sea, rejuvenating spa therapies, water sports, local cuisine and charming island hospitality. Mauritius is also well suited for clients who want comfort, romance and exploration in one itinerary. For Indian honeymooners seeking a destination that feels exotic yet warm and welcoming, Mauritius offers a truly memorable beginning.

## Maldives: Private island luxury for honeymooners

The Maldives remains one of the most aspirational honeymoon destinations for Indian couples, and for good reason. With its private island resorts, overwater villas, crystal-clear lagoons and uninterrupted ocean views, it offers romance in its purest form. This is a destination where couples can slow down completely — waking up above the water,

enjoying floating breakfasts, snorkelling together over coral reefs, indulging in couple spa rituals or dining under a canopy of stars. The beauty of the Maldives lies in its sense of privacy, where every island feels like a world of its own. It is especially suited for clients who want luxury, seclusion and picture-perfect moments. Whether it is a short island escape or an indulgent once-in-a-lifetime honeymoon, the Maldives continues to define modern romantic travel with effortless elegance and deeply personal experiences.

## Fiji: Faraway romance with island soul

Fiji is a wonderful choice for Indian couples looking for a honeymoon that feels faraway, intimate and refreshingly different. Known for its breathtaking islands, warm hospitality and relaxed pace of life, Fiji is perfect for couples who want romance with a sense of discovery. Its beautiful beaches, island resorts, traditional bures, sunset cruises and clear waters create an idyllic setting for newlyweds. The Mamanuca and Yasawa Islands are especially appealing for couples seeking secluded stays, scenic views and authentic island charm. Fiji also works beautifully for those who enjoy soft adventure — snorkelling, diving, island-hopping, private cruises and cultural experiences can all be woven into the itinerary. What makes Fiji special is its natural warmth, often described through the famous Bula spirit. For couples who want a honeymoon that combines luxury, nature, culture and heartfelt hospitality, Fiji is a truly enchanting option.



Seychelles

### Seychelles: Island romance in nature's lap

Seychelles offers Indian couples looking beyond the usual honeymoon destinations a compelling mix of romance, privacy, luxury, and ease of travel. Set in the Indian Ocean, the archipelago is known for its pristine beaches, dramatic granite boulders, turquoise waters, lush nature reserves, and world-class island resorts, making it an ideal choice for newlyweds seeking an intimate yet experience-rich holiday.

The destination lends itself beautifully to slow, romantic travel. Couples can unwind in private pool villas, enjoy candlelit beachfront dinners, explore quiet coves, take sunset cruises, go snorkelling in clear waters, or island-hop across Mahé, Praslin, and La Digue. For those looking to add soft adventure and local flavour to their itinerary, Seychelles also offers nature trails, Creole cuisine, rum tastings, spa experiences, and cultural discoveries.

For the Indian travel trade, Seychelles presents a strong honeymoon proposition: premium, aspirational, and easy to package. With direct connectivity from Mumbai to Mahé and visa-free entry for Indian travellers, the destination is now more accessible for couples seeking a short-haul international island escape.

Combining natural beauty with exclusivity and visa-free travel, Seychelles remains a timeless choice for couples beginning their journey together.

### Courchevel: Alpine luxury for a snow-kissed honeymoon

Best known as one of the world's most iconic winter destinations, Courchevel unveils an equally captivating charm during the summer months. The snow-covered peaks transform into rolling emerald meadows, vibrant wildflower trails and crystal-clear alpine lakes, creating a spectacular backdrop for couples looking to celebrate their honeymoon somewhere refreshingly different.



France



Honeymoon in Morocco

Summer in Courchevel is all about embracing the outdoors together. Honeymooners can spend their days hiking scenic mountain trails, cycling through breathtaking landscapes, enjoying gourmet picnics with panoramic views, paddleboarding on pristine alpine lakes, taking picturesque gondola rides, or simply soaking in the fresh mountain air from luxurious spa terraces. Adventure seekers can even experience paragliding, via ferrata, mountain biking, and golf, while those seeking slower moments can wander charming alpine villages, browse designer boutiques, and savour Michelin-starred dining under the stars.

Blending adventure with tranquillity, world-class luxury with authentic mountain charm, and unforgettable experiences with complete privacy.

### **Thailand: Exotic romance with island charm and cultural soul**

Thailand continues to be one of the strongest destination wedding choices for Indian couples, combining ease of access with a wide range of venues, experienced hospitality partners and strong destination appeal. With more than 400 Indian weddings hosted annually, the country has built a reliable ecosystem for large-scale, multi-day celebrations.

For the travel trade, Thailand offers a versatile wedding proposition. Beach destinations such as Khao Lak and Koh Samui work well for resort-led celebrations, while Chiang Mai and Khao Yai offer scenic mountain settings for more intimate or experiential weddings.

The destination's proximity to India, visa exemption and strong air connectivity make it practical for families and large guest movements. Thailand's established network of wedding planners, hotels, DMCs and



hospitality professionals also helps simplify planning across décor, menus, logistics and guest experiences.

Beyond the wedding itself, Thailand allows agents to build extended itineraries around wellness, cuisine, culture, shopping and nature. This makes the destination equally relevant for pre-wedding travel, guest excursions, honeymoons and family holidays.

For Indian weddings, Thailand offers the right balance of beauty, convenience and operational strength, making it a destination that is both aspirational and easy to sell.

### France for Two

Planning a honeymoon beyond the usual tourist trails? France has many romantic escapes that go far beyond Paris and the Riviera's familiar hotspots. From fairy-tale towns and wine routes to alpine retreats, perched villages and gourmet valleys, France continues to live up to its timeless promise of romance.

In Alsace, Colmar charms couples with its Petite Venise district, quaint half-timbered houses, Unterlinden Museum and Bartholdi Museum, dedicated to the sculptor of the Statue of Liberty. The Route des Vins between Strasbourg and Colmar is perfect for a scenic drive, with beautiful wine villages such as Riquewihr adding old-world magic.

For mountain lovers, Auvergne Rhône

Alpes offers the French Alps, with Courchevel and Megève promising luxury hotels, Michelin-starred restaurants, wellness experiences, skiing, tobogganing, sledging and helicopter views. Annecy, at the foot of the Alps, is ideal for lake picnics, old-town walks and a kiss on the Pont d'Amour.

Away from the Riviera crowds, St Paul de Vence offers Mediterranean views, art and quiet romance. In Provence, Gordes in the Luberon region enchants with vineyards, ochre buildings, its castle and Senanque Abbey. For food-loving couples, Dordogne offers castles, caves, Périgieux, Sarlat la Caneda and truffle-led culinary discoveries.

### Jordan: Romance amid ancient wonders and desert skies

A honeymoon in Jordan is more than just a holiday; it is an unforgettable journey through breathtaking landscapes, ancient wonders and romantic experiences that create memories for a lifetime. From the rose-red city of Petra to the tranquil shores of the Dead Sea and the magical desert of Wadi Rum, Jordan offers couples the perfect blend of adventure, relaxation, romance and cultural discovery.

Begin your escape at Petra, the iconic UNESCO World Heritage Site, where hand-in-hand walks through the dramatic Siq lead to the magnificent Treasury. As evening falls, Petra by Night transforms



the ancient city into a candlelit wonder, creating a truly romantic setting.

Continue to Wadi Rum, where couples can enjoy desert adventures, Bedouin hospitality and a night under star-filled skies in a luxury desert camp. For complete relaxation, the Dead Sea offers mineral-rich waters and rejuvenating spa treatments, while Aqaba on the Red Sea promises beaches, coral reefs and sunset cruises.

With its warm hospitality and rich history, Jordan is perfect for honeymooners.

## Kenya: Where wild adventures meet romantic escapes

Magical Kenya presents a compelling proposition for Indian couples seeking a wedding that seamlessly transitions into an experiential honeymoon. The destination naturally lends itself to a bush-to-beach format, allowing planners to design multi-location celebrations with distinct backdrops. Coastal regions such as Diani Beach are ideal for wedding ceremonies, offering white-sand beaches, turquoise waters, and intimate venues suited for sunset pheras or private celebrations. Post-wedding,





Cappadocia Hot Air Balloon

**T**oday's honeymoon traveller is no longer looking for a conventional beach holiday; they are seeking meaningful experiences that become lifelong memories. New Zealand continues to captivate couples with its breathtaking landscapes and immersive experiences. Beyond the classic highlights, travellers are now exploring lesser-known gems such as Omarama, renowned for its dramatic alpine scenery and stargazing opportunities, adding a fresh dimension to a romantic journey through the country. East Africa is also gaining remarkable traction among honeymooners. Kenya and Tanzania offer an unmatched combination of luxury and wilderness — from intimate safari lodges and private game drives to hot air balloon rides over the Serengeti and unforgettable sunsets in the Maasai Mara. Fiji remains one of the world's most sought-after honeymoon destinations, celebrated for its pristine islands, overwater luxury, and extraordinary experiences. Whether it's a private dinner under the stars, diving through spectacular underwater caves, or staying at iconic resorts such as Likuliku Lagoon Resort and Tokoriki Island Resort, Fiji delivers a level of intimacy and exclusivity few destinations can match.

— Alefiya Singh, Founder & Director, IRIS Rep

couples can move into the Masai Mara for a honeymoon that is immersive and experience-led. The region is home to a wide portfolio of luxury safari lodges and tented camps that deliver privacy, exclusivity, and personalised service. Honeymoon experiences go beyond traditional formats. Sunrise hot air balloon safaris over the savannah, champagne bush breakfasts, guided game drives and curated sundowner experiences form key highlights. This combination of scenic diversity and curated activities allows travellers to experience Kenya as a premium and ideal destination for couples. Especially the ones looking to combine celebration with exploration, and for itineraries that extend beyond a single destination.

### Türkiye's most romantic escapes

For newlyweds seeking a honeymoon that is luxurious, personal and truly memorable, Türkiye offers an exceptional blend of privacy, refined comfort and exclusive experiences. With secluded resorts, private pools, world-class spas, MICHELIN-recognised dining, coastal retreats and rich cultural settings, the country is an ideal choice for couples looking to celebrate romance in style.

Antalya, with its golden beaches and Mediterranean charm, is perfect for couples who want luxury by the sea. Five-star resorts, boutique retreats, private villas, VIP beach clubs, yacht charters and



Fiji

sunset cruises create unforgettable moments along the Turkish Riviera. Adventurous couples can enjoy diving in Kaş, kayaking around Kekova, scenic Lycian Way walks, golf in Belek, couples' hammam rituals and refined seaside dining.

In Muğla, destinations such as Marmaris, Fethiye and Bodrum offer Aegean romance at its finest. Bodrum stands out with elegant resorts, private villas, infinity pools, luxury gulet charters, beach clubs, vineyards, designer boutiques and a vibrant social scene.

İstanbul adds urban opulence with palace hotels, private Bosphorus cruises, rooftop dining, Ottoman hammams, MICHELIN-starred restaurants, VIP cultural experiences and bespoke shopping.

For timeless romance, Cappadocia offers hot-air balloon rides, luxury cave suites, private horseback trails, vineyard tastings and magical dinners beneath the stars.

## Morocco: A journey of culture and contrasts

Nestled in the heart of North Africa, Morocco is a land of captivating contrasts, making it a memorable choice for couples seeking culture, adventure and romance. From the golden sands of the Sahara Desert and the majestic Atlas Mountains to its scenic Atlantic and Mediterranean coastlines, the country offers a stunning variety of landscapes.

Morocco's rich history comes alive in its ancient medinas, bustling souks, royal palaces, centuries-old mosques and striking architecture. Cities such as Marrakech, Fez and Meknes charm visitors with their vibrant marketplaces, traditional craftsmanship and old-world appeal. Couples can wander through the blue streets of Chefchaouen, explore the medieval lanes of Fez and Marrakech,



Mauritius



Dead Sea, Jordan



Uzbekistan



Jordan

or enjoy a desert experience under the stars.

Its blend of Arab, Berber and European influences adds depth to every journey, while flavourful dishes such as tagine, couscous and pastilla complete the Moroccan experience.

## Uzbekistan: A silk route romance

For couples seeking a honeymoon that blends timeless romance, rich culture and luxurious experiences, Uzbekistan offers an enchanting escape unlike any other. Home to the legendary Silk Route cities of Tashkent, Samarkand and Bukhara, the destination captivates newlyweds with its blue-domed architecture, cobbled streets, vibrant bazaars and magical sunsets.

Couples can stroll hand in hand through the magnificent Registan Square, enjoy candlelit dinners featuring authentic Uzbek cuisine, relax in luxury hotels, discover hidden cafés, visit art galleries and explore boutique shopping experiences. From cultural performances and premium spas to scenic mountain retreats near Tashkent, every day brings something unique and memorable.

With easy connectivity, visa-friendly travel, exceptional value and a beautiful blend of heritage and luxury, Uzbekistan is fast emerging as a unique honeymoon destination for Indian couples. **BOTT**

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# Thailand eyes 2.55 million Indian arrivals with high-value tourism push

Thailand is rolling out its most ambitious, high-value, and eco-friendly welcome mat for Indian travellers. Fresh off the massive success of the Thailand Travel Mart Plus (TTM+) 2026 in Pattaya, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has revealed an aggressive roadmap to welcome 2.55 million Indian visitors this year, projecting an incredible 97.86 billion THB in revenue.

**Somya Deep**

Currently ranking as Thailand's third-largest short-haul market, India is experiencing explosive, near double-digit growth. "The Indian market is still in the growth sector—it is nearly two digits, around 9%," confirmed Thapanee Kiatphaibool, Governor, TAT noting that over 1.11 million Indians arrived in just the first five months of 2026. To maintain this momentum, Kiatphaibool shared an exciting update on visa policy, "We are negotiating for a free visa for 15 days. Because the average stay in the Indian market is around 9 days," she said.

## Redefining Thai Holiday for Indians

Moving past the standard itineraries, TAT's new blueprint centres on high-quality, value-driven experiences, packaged under a captivating new theme. "We will promote the 'Healing is a New Luxury' campaign in Thailand," announced Khajornrit Khwanmongkol, Director, TAT, New Delhi Office. He added that the focus will heavily favour wellness and secondary gems, "We will promote Krabi, Khao Lak, and Phang Nga for luxury and health and wellness. For Chiang Mai, we have more of the nature and culture," he said.

This strategic pivot directly aligns with the changing habits of younger travellers. Pattaraanong Na Chiangmai, Deputy Governor for International Marketing (Asia and South Pacific), TAT, emphasised that Indian millennials are reshaping the





market, “They have their purpose to choose where to go and what to do. They do not travel just to relax.” To capture this, she revealed lucrative new cash incentives, spa vouchers, and flight tickets for Indian wedding planners and milestone celebration groups, adding, “Next month, we will cooperate with the luxury Thailand hotels to bring luxury travel agents to Thailand to explore.”

### TTM Plus: A goldmine for Indian travel agents

For the Indian travel trade, the massive scale of TTM+ 2026—which hosted over 15,000 business appointments—signifies a golden era of B2B opportunities.

Pinki Arora, Marketing Representative, North & East India, TAT, highlighting the event’s stellar matchmaking capabilities said, “It is about 550 buyers and 538 sellers who are present here... It encourages people to meet and then all the buyers can find out about the new products, the new destinations.”

Indian travel agents are already reaping the rewards of this centralised marketplace. Sanjay Malik of Wonderful Siam sharing his first-hand success story said, “Every time I come here, I get new connections. I started from the India market, and now I am dealing with 5 markets because of TTM. Today, on the first day, I got to know about 3 new products.”

### B2B support and secondary havens

As travel demand shifts from metro giants like Delhi and Mumbai toward Tier-II and Tier-III cities, TAT is actively stepping in to support regional Indian agents with presentation workshops, financial co-op campaign support, and specialised training to sell undiscovered hidden gems like Trat, Koh Mak, and Chanthaburi.

With aggressive luxury promotions, robust trade incentives, and a seamless visa process on the horizon, Thailand is firmly positioned as the ultimate all-year destination for the modern Indian traveller.

“Indians are more than happy to spend \$10,000 plus on Thailand on a holiday,” concluded Mayur Oberoi, Founder & CEO, LetsGoTrvl. “I got to learn about a lot of the new Thai experiences at TTM this year that I myself even after selling 20 years of Thailand was not aware of, such as experiences that are possible on the River Kwai, eco-friendly resorts, and luxury resorts.” **BOTT**

# Adl Karim

The new-age face of a travel legacy

Adl Karim, Joint Managing Director, FlyCreative Online Limited, represents the next generation of leadership in one of India's leading travel businesses. Having witnessed the evolution of the travel industry from a young age, he is carrying the legacy forward with a strong focus on expansion and a modern business mindset. In an exclusive chat with **BOTT**, he speaks about his journey, aspirations, experiences and more.

## Shreya Shimpi

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

I have always been a part of the travel industry since I was born. I have had the opportunity to witness my father's remarkable journey over the last four to five decades, and he has been one of the key figures in the travel trade. Having seen the evolution of the industry, I was always fascinated to be a part of it. Although I began my career as a pilot, I did not pursue it further, as the plan was to eventually return to the business. I completed a two-year programme called 'Family Managed Business', designed for students from such backgrounds, after which I joined our company in 2011.

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

We changed two offices, and we are currently in the process of expansion. It has been a tough year for the travel trade, given the geopolitical disruptions, the war and other challenges, but we managed to sail through, and we are here today with a bigger team.





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

I believe our biggest milestone is still ahead of us. We are growing, increasing our distribution space in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities, and expanding our footprint in North, Northeast and Northwest India. We now have a larger sales force to support this growth.

The travel industry is on the cusp of tremendous growth. Given its demographics, population and rising purchasing power, India is a key source market for many countries. Hence, the potential and the opportunities ahead keep me motivated. Also, the way my industry peers are growing serves as a source of inspiration for me. We aspire to be one of the largest travel distributors in the country.

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

The rich history and ancient civilisation of Greece have always fascinated me, and I look forward to visiting it 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 and blessed with a seven-year-old child. My parents and I stay in the same building. I have two younger sisters—one is married, works at Amazon and is settled in the US, while the other is completing her academics. Being a Keralaite, some of my fondest childhood memories are rooted in Kerala. Our vacations used to be big family gatherings, and those are moments I continue to cherish.

Kerala is also an incredible destination, offering lush greenery, beaches, backwaters, hill stations, wildlife and a lot more. It has every kind of experience, making it one of the best tourist destinations in India. I love that place and feel very connected to it. **BOTT**

**QUICK SHOTS**

- Your Birthday / Sun Sign: **March 26, Aries**
- Mountains or Beaches: **Beaches**
- Favourite Holiday Destination: **My native place, Kerala**
- Best travel hack: **Carrying a universal travel adaptor while travelling**
- Window / Aisle seat: **Aisle**
- Favourite Cuisine: **Thai**
- Best advice for a first-time traveller: **Quality over quantity, especially for Indian travellers, since they often want to cover many places in a short duration and end up missing out on experiences.**

BEYOND BOUNDARIES

# Sun Siyam Olhuveli

Where three Islands create one unforgettable escape

Just a 45-minute speedboat ride from Velana International Airport, Sun Siyam Olhuveli is one of the Maldives' most diverse and rewarding island resorts. Spread across three interconnected islands — Main Island, Dream Island and Romance Island — the resort brings together luxury, adventure, wellness and authentic Maldivian experiences in one spectacular destination.

**Pallavi Sharma**





### Three Islands, three distinct experiences

Each of the three islands has its own distinct personality. The Main Island is the vibrant heart of the resort, featuring lively restaurants, entertainment options and a wide range of water sports. Dream Island is ideal for those seeking tranquillity, contemporary luxury and wellness-focused experiences, while Romance Island is an adults-only sanctuary designed for privacy, exclusive villas and intimate moments. Together, these three islands create a rare resort experience where guests can enjoy different moods and settings without ever leaving the property.

### Stay in style

Accommodation at Sun Siyam Olhuvveli is thoughtfully designed to suit varied travel preferences. Guests can choose from Beach Pavilions, Sunset Beach Pavilions, Deluxe Rooms, Grand Beach Villas, Grand Beach Villas with Private Pool, Deluxe Water Villas, Grand Water Villas, Grand Wa-

ter Villas with Pool, Prestige Jacuzzi Water Villas, Family Villas and Two-Bedroom Beach Residences. Each stay option combines spacious interiors, modern comforts and direct access to either the white sandy beach or the crystal-clear lagoon, allowing guests to begin every morning with stunning views of the Maldives.

### A world of flavours

Dining is one of the resort's biggest highlights, with over 20 restaurants and bars offering flavours from around the world. Sunset Restaurant and Malaafai Restaurant serve lavish international buffets with live cooking stations, while Milano offers authentic Italian classics overlooking the lagoon. Seafood lovers can head to Maghrib Grill for fresh catch and grilled specialities, while Namaste brings rich Indian flavours to the island. Siyam Orchid serves Asian favourites, and Crust & Flame is perfect for handcrafted pizzas and relaxed beachside dining. From casual cafés to elegant fine dining, every meal is elevated by beautiful ocean views.

### Celebrating Maldivian culture

Beyond luxury, the resort also offers a meaningful connection to Maldivian culture through its Maldivian Roots programme. Guests can enjoy traditional evening tea with local delicacies, learn about island customs and witness coconut oil-making demonstrations using age-old techniques. These experiences add depth to the stay and offer a closer understanding of the Maldives' cultural heritage.

### Wellness and Island adventures

For wellness seekers, the overwater Ocean Spa provides a peaceful retreat with hydrotherapy, holistic therapies and signature massages overlooking the Indian Ocean. Adventure lovers can enjoy the popular Dolphin Discovery Cruise, where playful dolphins are often seen at sunset. Snorkelling, diving, kayaking and other water sports allow guests to explore the vibrant marine world, while the Manta Viewpoint offers the magical experience of watching manta rays glide through the waters after dark. **BOTT**



## VFS GLOBAL

**Vinay Malhotra** is set to be appointed as Head of Strategic Global Partnerships at VFS Global. In his new position, Malhotra will work with Zubin Karkaria, Founder and CEO, to drive the company's strategic partnership initiatives across global markets. Malhotra returns to VFS Global after previously serving in senior leadership positions within the organisation. His appointment is expected to strengthen the company's efforts to expand global partnerships and support long-term strategic objectives.



## VISIT CALIFORNIA

**Julie Coker** has been appointed President & Chief Executive Officer of Visit California, marking a new chapter for the state's tourism promotion organisation. Coker will officially assume the role on October 1, 2026. She brings three decades of experience in hospitality and destination marketing. In her new role, she will lead Visit California's efforts to promote the state as a premier global travel destination.



## FICCI EASTERN REGION TOURISM COMMITTEE

**Souvagya Mohapatra**, Managing Director – India, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka at Atmosphere Core, has been appointed Chair of the FICCI Eastern Region Tourism Committee under the National Tourism Committee for one year. With over three decades in hospitality, Mohapatra will support tourism development, policy inputs, investment-friendly frameworks, destination promotion, connectivity enhancement and service standards across Eastern India.



## PULLMAN AND NOVOTEL NEW DELHI AEROCITY

**Mala Makan** has been appointed Director of Sales at Pullman and Novotel New Delhi Aerocity. With 27 years of experience across hospitality, sales, events and business development, Mala will lead sales strategy, build key client and partner relationships, and identify new business opportunities. She has previously worked with Shangri-La Eros New Delhi, Hyatt Regency Delhi and Radisson Blu New Delhi, with expertise in corporate, government, diplomatic and MICE sectors.



## ANANTARA KOH YAO YAI RESORT & VILLAS

**Erik Billgren** has been appointed General Manager of Anantara Koh Yao Yai Resort & Villas by Minor Hotels. Billgren brings extensive experience from across Asia, with a strong focus on service excellence, luxury hospitality and sustainable operations. He is committed to elevating the Anantara Koh Yao Yai experience further, offering guests world-class facilities and authentic immersions in island life that showcase Koh Yao Yai's diverse beauty and culture.



## SUMMIT GREEN VILLAGE RESORT & SPA, KAZIRANGA

**Arun Daga** has been appointed General Manager of Summit Green Village Resort & Spa, Kaziranga, by Summit Hotels & Resorts. Daga brings nearly three decades of hospitality experience to his new role. In his new position, he will oversee the day-to-day operations of the property, with a focus on enhancing guest experiences, driving operational excellence, and strengthening its position within the region.



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