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# AVIATION TIMES



## **COVER STORY**

**India's Critical Technology  
Path to Capitalise on its  
Aviation Boom**

## **FACE TO FACE WITH**

**Krešimir Kučko,  
CEO, Air Mauritius**

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**This issue of Aviation Times contains 76 pages including cover**

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# AVIATION TIMES

## Editorial

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**FRANKFINN**

Greetings!

In this edition of Aviation Times, we bring to our reader's numerous interesting topics from the Aviation, Hospitality and Travel industries. Our chairman talks about the growth of medical tourism in India.

The Cover Story of this edition is about Vistara - which is adopted Innovative Technology with Aerowash. In the Face-to-Face Section, we shared our conversation with Christoph Schnellmann, Chief Executive Officer of Noida International Airport and covered ITA Airways in the Profile Section. In the Aviation Section, our journalists write about Lufthansa and Airbus Mark Delivery of the 600th Lufthansa Aircraft and the Record-Breaking Summer for flydubai.

In the Hospitality Section, this issue of Aviation Times features Royal Orchid Fort Resort, Mussoorie. We also share our conversation with Mr Rakesh Sethi, GM, Radisson Blu Hotel, New Delhi. Our journalist writes about the History of Madhya Pradesh and an interview with Mr Kumar Padmapani Bora from Assam Tourism Development Corporation Ltd where he shares plans and propaganda for Assam tourism.

We have covered a range from Boldify in the Skin Care section. The Motivation section has an inspiring write-up by Radhika.

In the New Appointments section, our readers can learn about the change in top management positions in the Aviation, Travel and Hospitality industries. We hope you will enjoy this issue.

Do let us know if there are any other topics, you'd like us to include in our upcoming editions.

**Editor**

## CHAIRMAN'S PAGE

The emergence of low-cost carriers (LCCs) has disrupted the protocol of air travel and fuelled aviation growth by making it accessible to larger strata of the economy. Given its prevalence, the LCC model has a pivotal role in the growth of India's aviation industry. Low-cost carriers (LCCs) now make up almost a third of global airline capacity. In March 2023 they accounted for 32% of all scheduled airline seats globally, up from 29% in 2019 and 25% in 2015. Currently, the LCCs take 74 per cent of the entire Indian aviation market. Over the last decade, the LCC capacity showed incredible growth of 331 per cent from a mere 30 per cent to reach 125 million.

The low-cost surge in India began in the early 2000s, with the launch of carriers such as SpiceJet and IndiGo. The new entrants quickly began threatening the market position of Jet Airways and Air India with their lower fares and strong advertising. By the early 2010s, low-cost carriers (LCCs) had taken the lead over full-service airlines, a lead which would only continue to grow.

The main reason for the success of low-cost airlines in India has been simple: lower fares. The Indian market is notoriously price-sensitive, which means passengers are willing to take whichever airline gets them to their destination at the cheapest fare. Airline loyalty and in-flight services all take a backseat to ticket prices, making India a unique market in this regard.

This price sensitivity strongly works in favour of low-cost airlines. With lower expenses across the board, ranging from lesser staff to a no-frills in-flight service, airlines can offer cheaper fares. These cheaper fares have allowed airlines to maintain high load factors and remain profitable. By comparison, full-service carriers struggle in the Indian market. The high costs of airlines such as Air India and Vistara lead to higher fares, making the airlines uncompetitive.

IndiGo, India's budget airline, placed an order of 500 A320neo aircraft from Airbus last month at the Paris Airshow, making the multibillion-dollar deal the largest by a single carrier in civil aviation history. IndiGo has the largest market share in the Indian aviation market with it ferrying 56.2% of the country's passengers. Budget carrier Akasa Air started commercial operations in August last year. In a short span of 10 months, its market share has grown to 4.8% from 0.2%. Presently it is scheduled to operate to and from 20 destinations in India until October. It is also eyeing expanding its network and fleet. At the Paris Airshow, the airline said that it is on course to announce another significant three-digit aircraft order by the end of 2023.

The full-service carriers are facing pressure from the success of LCCs to optimise their revenues and reduce unit costs through strategic initiatives. As a result, the full-service carriers are trying to adopt practices typical to the LCC's domain. It could be perceived that the delineation between LCCs and legacy airlines is blurring and that there are now carriers adopting a truly hybrid model.

The spectacular growth of the LCC sector has brought about profound and far-reaching economic effects on the aviation industry. The LCCs have become an essential element of the contemporary lifestyle that has made air travel more accessible for people around the world. As the market is becoming more cost-sensitive, the LCC business model will continue to revolutionise the travel industry leading to the emergence of more low-cost airlines thereby generating more job opportunities and more revenue.

Thanking you,

(K.S. Kohli)



(Mr. K.S. Kohli is a practising Advocate in Delhi High Court and Supreme Court and is the non-executive Chairman of Frankfinn Group)





## Mail Box



My knowledge of the aviation industry has really increased because I am a regular reader of 'Aviation Times'. I keep myself updated about this industry only through your magazine, on the sidelines; I also get to know about the hospitality and travel industries.

*Vijay Singh, Kanpur*

I have just finished my higher secondary education. I have a strong desire to become an air hostess. To fulfil my dream, I regularly read Aviation Times — the only magazine of its kind to serve as a guide for me. The magazine has instilled confidence in me and I am sure that my dream will become true very soon.

*Richa Malhotra, Chandigarh*

## QUEST & QUENCH

**Ques. What is the job profile of a Flight Attendant? How can one prepare to go for an interview of a flight attendant?**

*Manoj Anand, Delhi*

Ans. The Flight Attendant career offers an exciting, privileged lifestyle that allows you to travel the world while being paid, as well as offering amazing free travel benefits and incredible perks for you and for your family and friends. Besides the amazing benefits, it also requires one to be smart, patient, empathetic, attentive, alert and agile. A flight attendant helps ensure the safety and comfort of passengers on airline flights. Being a flight attendant is one of the most desirable and rewarding career options. There are institutes like Frankfinn Air Hostess Training Institute that offer certificate courses for becoming a flight attendant. After this training the airline that hires you will train you. All you need to do is prepare and apply. The Flight Attendant career is truly open to everyone. You need to know the following before heading for an interview:-

- The basic, industry-specific questions that you can be asked and group discussion exercise.
- A detailed, well-constructed resume.
- Knowledge on how to succeed in pre-interview tests (things like worldwide city codes and the 24-hour clock).
- Detailed information on flight attendant hiring requirements of that particular airline, plus proven methods of enhancing your work history and background to appeal to airline interviewers.
- Everything about the airline, including detailed guidelines that will tell you exactly what your interviewer will be looking for.

**P.S. — Readers are requested to send their queries to:**

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# AVIATION NATIONAL



## AIX Connect Receives Regulatory Approval To Fly Under The Brand Name 'Air India Express'

**AIR INDIA**  
**express**

**A**IX Connect, operating as AirAsia India and a subsidiary of Air India, announced a major milestone in its ongoing integration process with Air India Express. The airline has now received regulatory approvals to operate its flights under the 'Air India Express' branding. This development marks a significant fast-tracking of the integration efforts, including harmonisation of customer touch points, products and services across both airlines.

The approval from the regulator allows both Air India Express Ltd. and AIX Connect flights to be marketed, distributed and operated under a common brand name 'Air India Express', prior to the subsequent scheduled legal merger of the two entities. The proposal to synergise the consumer offerings under a unified and renewed brand within the next few months demonstrates the commitment to a superlative customer promise, streamlining product and service standards and unlocking synergies between the two companies.

Over the past few months, Air India Express and AirAsia India have taken significant steps towards the integration. In March, the airlines introduced a unified website, [airindiaexpress.com](http://airindiaexpress.com), providing a comprehensive user interface, enabling users to access services of both carriers on a single platform, streamlining their travel experience.

In their pursuit of enhancing the in-flight experience, Air India Express recently introduced AirAsia India's successful 'Gourmair' in-flight dining menu with a wide range of delicious hot meals, light bites and desserts. Earlier this month, 'Xpress Ahead' priority services were extended as an ancillary add-on to guests of both airlines, offering priority check-in, boarding and baggage. Both airlines will also be synergising a host of other ancillary add-on services and common sub-brands.

AIXL currently operates flights from 20 Indian cities to 14 regional international destinations, while AIXC serves 19 domestic destinations, complementing each other's networks to provide more extensive travel options for passengers.



## Air India Announces Delhi-Dhaka Direct Flights From 15 September

Air India, India's leading global carrier and a Star Alliance member, recently announced non-stop flights between Delhi and Dhaka, bringing greater convenience and comfort to travellers flying between the capital cities of India and Bangladesh.

Starting 15 September 2023, Air India will fly four times a week between the two cities using its Airbus A320 aircraft.

Air India currently flies thrice weekly between Kolkata and Dhaka. The additional frequency will help serve the increased demand for international travel to and from Dhaka on the back of Bangladesh's rapid economic growth and overall development.

Air India's flight AI237 will depart Delhi at 1755hrs, arriving in Dhaka at 2045hrs. The return flight AI238 will leave Dhaka at 2145hrs, arriving in Delhi at 2350hrs.

With four additional weekly flights from Delhi, Air India offers enhanced frequency to Dhaka, enabling convenient connections via Delhi to and/or from 14 destinations in India and 14 destinations across North America, UK, Australia, the Middle East and the Far East.



## Aviation Minister Scindia launches UDAN 5.2 to Boost Air Connectivity



Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia announced significant developments in the aviation sector during the 5th Helicopter & Small Aircraft Summit (Heli Summit 2023) in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh. He highlighted the impressive growth of the aviation fleet from 400 aircraft in 2013 to 700 currently, with plans to expand it further to 1,500 within five years.

The event also marked the launch of the UDAN 5.2 programme, aimed at improving air connectivity to remote regions of India through small aircraft. Additionally, a mobile application called HeliSewa

was introduced to streamline approvals for helicopter operators from government authorities through a single-window service platform.

Mr Scindia emphasised the efforts made under the leadership of Prime Minister to make air travel accessible to citizens living in remote areas. He also inaugurated three Flight Training Organizations (FTOs) in Khajuraho and announced the forthcoming launch of a wide-body aircraft flight between Khajuraho and Varanasi.

UDAN aims to make air travel more affordable and accessible to a wider range of citizens by capping airfare on regional routes and providing financial incentives to airlines and airport operators. It encourages airlines to operate on underserved routes that may not be financially viable otherwise.



## IndiGo Announces Direct Connections Between Indore, Surat, Rajkot, And Udaipur

IndiGo has announced new connections between Indore-Rajkot, Indore-Surat, Rajkot-Udaipur, and Udaipur-Surat, effective from August 21, 2023. These vibrant destinations, known for their rich cultural heritage and thriving commercial significance, make them ideal gateways for both leisure and business travellers. As IndiGo continues to grow, it remains committed to provide customers with enhanced connectivity to facilitate seamless travel across. With daily operations, these flights will open doors to exciting opportunities for trade, travel and tourism, further reinforcing IndiGo's dedication to fostering convenience and accessibility for its passengers.



Mr Vinay Malhotra, Head of Global Sales at IndiGo, expressed, "We are thrilled to announce the expansion of our direct flight offerings, now catering to the states of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Rajasthan. Recognizing the immense potential and seeing an opportunity to connect these vibrant regions for trade and tourism, we have introduced these new flights, further enhancing domestic connectivity. At IndiGo, our commitment to customer satisfaction drives us to proactively implement strategic measures, ensuring a seamless travel experience for our passengers. Our commitment to providing on-time, affordable, courteous and hassle-free experiences remains unwavering across our extensive.

## Air India's iconic mascot 'Maharajah' may take a back seat amid rebranding



Air India's iconic mascot, the Maharajah, may take a back seat and get a new role as the Tata Group embarks on a long-awaited revamp of the national carrier's brand, reports say.

The airline is likely to continue using the Maharajah image for its airport lounges and premium classes but it won't be used as a mascot, The Economic Times reported, citing people with knowledge of the matter. The over 76-year-old Maharajah logo was designed back in 1946.

Furthermore, the airline will also get new livery that will feature red, white and purple, the report said. While red and white are

Air India's colours, the purple will be derived from the livery of Vistara.

The Tata Group announced the consolidation of its airlines - Vistara and Air India. The transaction is estimated to be completed by March 2024. Tata Sons had acquired a 100 per cent stake in Air India on January 27, 2022.

## DGCA Set To Issue Record Commercial Pilot Licenses This Year

India is set to issue a record number of commercial pilot licenses (CPLs) in 2023, surpassing the figure from 2022, Union minister for Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia said recently.

The civil aviation regulator, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in 2023 issued 1,135 CPLs, which is the highest for any year. This figure comprises both certifications for domestically trained cadets and license conversions for those trained abroad.



# AVIATION INTERNATIONAL



## Airasia Superapp Partners with STAAH to Grow Travel Packages

Airasia Superapp, the leading one-stop travel platform by Capital A has partnered with STAAH, a leading hotel distribution and booking technology specialist, to grow its package travel offering.

Following the integration, the company will have a direct connection with more than 18,000 properties, expanding the travel options available for the thousands of travellers choosing airasia Superapp to book their flights, accommodation and transport.

Mr Tan Mai Yin, Chief Commercial Officer of airasia Superapp, says the move offers the dual benefits of greater online visibility for local hotels and a one-stop solution for consumers who otherwise suffer from browsing fatigue.

“For hotels, airasia Superapp partnership with STAAH provides an opportunity to be seen on our platform and gain a diverse reach in Asean. For travellers, this means more accommodation options to select from as part of a complete travel package,” said Mr Tan.

Mr Tan highlighted that typical customer behaviour involves booking flights first. “We understand from our customer data that they would like to book accommodation and transport at the same time, if given the option. They are tired of looking at multiple booking sites and never truly knowing whether they got the best price and package. By offering a broader suite of accommodation options to complement the lowest flights in the sub-continent, consumers can be confident they are receiving the best package.”

The airasia Superapp is the one-stop travel platform business of Capital A offering consumers over 15 lines of products and services via the Superapp as well as the airasia.com website. Powered by data and technology, the airasia Superapp leverages its digital ecosystem of 51 million users and 40 million downloads to generate a personalised and seamless consumer experience. Users can also engage in real-time conversations, join like-minded communities, play games and much more. From travel needs to everyday lifestyle essentials, there is always something for everyone on the airasia Superapp.

“We are proud to offer such an important connection as airasia Superapp to our hotel partners looking to expand their reach, particularly in the Asian region,” says Mr Tarun Joukani, Director – STAAH. “Our deep footprint in the Asian region combined with airasia Superapp’s penetration here provides a brilliant opportunity for our partner hotels to convert the growing and highly engaged traveller subset on the airasia Superapp platform into guests.”



## BG Supercharges its Connectivity with Sita Connect



**B**iman Bangladesh Airlines Ltd. (BG) has partnered with SITA to adopt a suite of state-of-the-art connectivity solutions that will increase network speeds, optimise the airline's operations and reduce expansion costs.

SITA Connect Go is a new Secure SD-WAN (Software-Defined Wide Area Network) solution designed specifically for the air transport industry. The solution was developed in partnership with Versa Networks, the recognised secure access service edge (SASE) leader. It offers a software-based solution that allows multiple airlines, ground handlers and other tenants to digitally transform at whatever pace they choose. Secure access is provided to virtualised applications and infrastructure

at airports and in the cloud, delivering more scalable and agile performance.

The deployment will improve the airline's performance by giving the IT operations team a granular view and full visibility into their network usage and application performance. This will enable better decision-making and critical business application performance. It is all managed through a centralized platform that simplifies network management and orchestration.

SITA Connect solutions will empower BG with an increased bandwidth of up to 600%, enabling unrivalled speed, flexibility and agility to connect quickly and securely to applications and systems at their town and airport offices. These enhancements have been extended to BG at no additional cost demonstrating a reduction in total cost ownership as BG expands its network.

The deal comes as SITA and BG celebrate 50 years of partnership and will future proof the airline's operations for planned growth, ensuring BG is ready to embrace a hybrid cloud environment in the future and add new applications as and when they need to.

## Jazeera Airways now flies to Tehran

**J**azeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low-cost carrier now flies direct from Kuwait to Tehran two times a week. Travellers from Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai and Kochi, will greatly benefit from these Jazeera flights connecting via Kuwait.

In addition to Tehran, Jazeera Airways also flies to the beautiful cities of Mashhad and Shiraz in Iran. With a network of 66 destinations across the Middle East, Europe, Central & South Asia and Africa, Jazeera also provides other convenient connections through Kuwait. This includes touristic destinations like Istanbul, Bodrum, Baku, Cairo and Sharm El Sheikh.



To book your flights online, you may visit the Jazeera website ([www.jazeeraairways.com](http://www.jazeeraairways.com)) or the mobile application.

## Pegasus Launches Flights to Montenegro



**P**egasus Airlines is launching flights from Istanbul to Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro, one of the most popular European holiday destinations.

Four times weekly flights from Istanbul to Podgorica have started as of 19 July 2023. Flights from Istanbul Sabiha Gökçen Airport to Podgorica Airport depart at 11:10 on Mondays, 11:30 on Wednesdays, 11:45 on Fridays and 11:50 on Sundays. Flights from Podgorica Airport to Istanbul Sabiha Gökçen Airport depart at 12:50 on Mondays, 13:10 on Wednesdays, 13:25 on Fridays and 13:30 on Sundays.



## Vietjet Increases Flight Frequency to Bali



Vietnam's leading new-age carrier, VietJet has increased its flight frequency to Bali, making it easier for travel to the world's largest island nation - Indonesia from Vietnamese biggest Southern City of Ho Chi Minh City. The airline will operate 4 flights per day from Ho Chi Minh City to Bali and 2 flights per day from Bali to Hanoi from August 12, 2023. The new flights will be scheduled from Ho Chi Minh City at 07:05 and arrive Bali at 11:55 (local time). The new flights from Bali will be scheduled at 13:10 (local time) and arrive at 17:25 in Hanoi.

The airline is one of the most popular airline options among passengers for its extensive route network, practical flight times and extremely low cost. Passengers on all Vietjet flights will receive perks, such as compensation for medical costs incurred due to accidents or illnesses (including Covid-19), assistance with flight-related issues and 24-hour access to Global Travel and Medical Support Services.

Additionally, passengers have the opportunity to purchase tickets priced from INR 5,555(\*) every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday (GMT+7), applicable to all the international flight network. For further details: Visit the website [www.vietjetair.com](http://www.vietjetair.com) and Vietjet Air mobile app.

Further catering to the needs of its Indian customers, Vietjet is offering special in-flight hot and fresh meals with a variety of dishes, both vegetarian and non-vegetarian, served by a dedicated and friendly cabin crew as well as other services.

## RwandAir Set to Launch Daily Direct London Flights

RwandAir is to launch daily direct services between London Heathrow and Kigali this winter, as it continues to expand its European network and meet the extra demand for UK flights.

The African airline, which has been operating from London since 2017, will increase capacity on its London Heathrow route from 29 October 2023, with the addition of a new daily service.

The new direct flights, which are now on sale, will operate daily, which marks a significant increase from the airline's current four-weekly operation.

Flight WB711 departs the British capital at 8:30pm each evening, arriving at RwandAir's home hub at 7:00am the following morning.

Returning flights WB710 departs Kigali each evening at 11:35pm, arriving in London at 6:20am the following morning.

Customers travelling to the 'Land of a Thousand Hills', will experience RwandAir's Airbus A330, which offers a choice of flying in one of up to 30 fully lie-flat Business Class seats or their spacious Economy Class which has up to 244 seats.

This winter, the airline will now offer seven weekly flights to London, three weekly flights to Paris and three weekly flights to Brussels.

Customers flying with RwandAir can enjoy complimentary in-flight dining, free drinks and great in-flight entertainment on seat back video screens.

RwandAir also offers a very generous baggage allowance with customers flying in Economy Class able to check-in two bags of 23kg each, while those flying in Business Class can check-in up to three bags of 23kg each.





## Indulge in the Serene Splendour and Unforgettable Luxury of Noormahal Palace this Monsoon Season

Escape the chaos of city life and indulge in a monsoon getaway at Noormahal Palace Hotel. Nestled in the heart of Karnal, Noormahal Palace Hotel offers an unparalleled experience of grandeur and elegance. The Palace is a true reflection of the rich heritage and culture of India, from the regal architecture to the opulent interiors, the hotel provides an experience that is both luxurious and authentic.

Noormahal Palace, the epitome of majestic splendour, invites guests to immerse themselves in the opulence of Indian Royalty with a wide range of 1N/2D packages. Starting at just INR 12,000/-, the Club Room at Noormahal Palace offers a visually appealing interior coupled with breath-taking views. Step into a realm of royal vibrancy and understated elegance with our Club Royal Room, starting at INR 13,500/-. For those seeking to embrace the magic of prosperity and happiness, our Heritage Suite beckons with its comfort and luxury, starting at INR 20,000/-.



Set amidst lush green surroundings, the heritage hotel presents a captivating blend of rich history and modern luxury, offering guests a truly memorable experience. With the launch of a special monsoon staycation package, guests can now immerse themselves in the serene tranquillity of Noormahal Palace Hotel and create everlasting memories.

For those looking to experience the uber luxurious stay in a Maharaja style, a unique package for Presidential suite offers unprecedented luxury coupled with bespoke services and modern amenities. Bedecked with demure interiors and soft lights, this suite is an epitome of effortless luxury flaunting a regal décor with 2 bedrooms, a living room, a bar and an in-room pantry. Presidential suite is available for INR 55,000/-.

Noormahal Palace Hotel's award-winning restaurant, Frontier Mail, invites you to embark on a culinary journey that captures the essence of the monsoon season. Inspired by the legendary Frontier Mail train that traversed the Bombay to Peshawar route, this dining destination takes you back to the pre-independence era, immersing you in a world of royal indulgence. The restaurant's ambiance is adorned with actual antiques and elements reminiscent of the train, creating an immersive experience. Explore a menu that celebrates the flavours of the regions encountered during the train's monsoon-soaked journey. From the fiery Laal Maas to the mouth-watering kababs, each dish is meticulously crafted to showcase the rich and aromatic monsoon cuisine. At Frontier Mail, savour the delights that evoke the magic and romance of the monsoon, allowing your taste buds to dance with the rhythm of the rain.



## Lemon Tree Hotels Signs a New Property in Lucknow

Lemon Tree Hotels announced its latest signing – Lemon Tree Hotel, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow. The property is expected to be operational by Q3 of FY 2026 and shall be managed by Carnation Hotels Private Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary and the management arm of Lemon Tree Hotels Limited.



The property will feature 72 well-appointed rooms, a banquet, meeting rooms, a restaurant, a bar, a fitness centre and other public areas.

Lucknow, the charming city of Nawabs, weaves a rich tapestry of heritage, cultural splendour, and unparalleled grace. With its vibrant festivals, soul-stirring music and warm-hearted inhabitants, Lucknow encapsulates a unique essence that leaves an indelible mark on the hearts of all who visit.

The city attracts a diverse array of travellers, from history enthusiasts, art and culture lovers to food connoisseurs. Additionally, Lucknow also plays host to business travellers as it is a major centre for commerce and government administration in Uttar Pradesh.

The Chaudhary Charan Singh Airport is about 24 kms from the property while the Railway Station is just 11 kms away. The property is connected by both public and private transport from all major cities in India.

This latest signing, with AKM Hospitality Pvt. Ltd, will be the third property of the group in the city including the operational, Lemon Tree Hotel, Lucknow at Transport Nagar and the upcoming, Lemon Tree Premier, Lucknow at Gomti Nagar.

## Marriott Hotels Cluster Announces an Exciting Leisure Stay Offer

The Marriott International recently announced the launch of ‘Bonvoy, Explore, Escape’ an exclusive leisure offer, providing guests with an extraordinary experience across a range of luxurious hotels in Pune. From July 15th to September 30th 2023, guests can take advantage of this remarkable promotion at the: Courtyard by Marriott Mahabaleshwar, Courtyard by Marriott Pune Chakan, The Westin Pune Koregaon Park, The Ritz-Carlton Pune, Marriott Suites Pune, JW Marriott Pune, Courtyard Pune Hinjewadi, Sheraton Grand Pune Bund Garden Hotel, Le Meridien Mahabaleshwar Resort & Spa and Fairfield By Marriott Kharadi.

As part of this exclusive offer, guests can choose from a delightful array of complimentary benefits and discounts designed to enhance their stay. Enjoy a delectable start to your day with a complimentary breakfast, allowing you to fuel up for a day of exploration or relaxation. Indulge in mouth-watering culinary delights with a tempting 20% discount on food and beverages, available at the various dining outlets within each hotel. Furthermore, guests can avail a 20% discount on spa services, ensuring a rejuvenating and pampering stay.

In addition to these fantastic discounts, guests will also receive 1000 bonus points per stay, which can be redeemed for future stays or other exciting rewards within the Marriott Bonvoy loyalty program. To provide a greater flexibility and convenience, a late check-in option will be available, subject to availability, allowing guests to make the most of their stay.

Marriott India presents an impressive collection of world-class hotels in Pune, each with its unique offerings and charm. Whether you choose to immerse yourself in the serene natural beauty of Mahabaleshwar at the Le Meridien Mahabaleshwar, or experience the opulent luxury of the Sheraton Grand Pune, each hotel promises an unforgettable stay. From the exquisite dining options to the state-of-the-art fitness & spa facilities, every aspect of your visit is designed to provide a truly indulgent experience.



## India Emerges as Fastest Market to Reach Pre-Covid Levels of Inbound to Australia



India has emerged as the fastest market to recover to pre-Covid levels with 1,375,000 visitors to Australia for the year ended May 2023, recording a recovery of 102%.

Currently, Tourism Australia is hosting its flagship trade initiative, Australia Marketplace India (AMI0) in Bengaluru, for the first time since 2019.

Mr Andrew Hogg, Executive GM, Eastern Markets and Aviation, Tourism Australia, said, “India has been Australia’s fastest growing source market and continues to be one of Australia’s most valuable and promising tourism markets now and into the future. Australia Marketplace India is our prime platform bringing together some of Australia’s leading industry experts and tourism delegates to showcase Australia’s world-class appeal to India’s trade stakeholders; to drive future growth in visitation and tourist spend from India.”

The marketing campaign of Tourism Australia ‘Come and Say G’day’ has recorded over 433 million views and 89% more visitors are likely to take an Australian holiday with this campaign. This video film has been promoted on social, digital, OTT Cinema and Out-of-Home platforms.

The spend by Indian tourists increased by 16% to AUD 1.97 billion (INR 11,000 crore), ranking on the fifth position of inbound market spend. India was the 6th position on this parameter in 2019. Alongside, there has been a surge in business events by six times. All this has been possible with tripling of direct aviation capacity, speed and ease of visa processing.

## FIFA appoints Booking.com as Official Online Travel Sponsor for Women’s World Cup 2023

Booking.com has been signed on as the Official Online Travel Sponsor of the FIFA Women’s World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023.

Offering a wide choice of places to stay, including over 28 million listings in more than 220 countries and territories across the globe, not to mention over 60,000 in host countries Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand alone, Booking.com is perfectly positioned to help travellers and football fans book their accommodation when travelling to see their favourite team play, the company said.



Taking place across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand from July 20 to August 20, 2023, the FIFA Women’s World Cup 2023, is set to be the biggest women’s sporting event in the world, with 64 matches that will be played in 10 iconic venues across the two countries. As the Official Online Travel Sponsor, Booking.com will allow booking accommodation, from hotels to vacation homes and apartments and everything in between, during the matches, giving fans the opportunity to experience all that the host cities have to offer.

The FIFA Women’s World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023 is a celebration of sport and diversity that aims to empower people, places and communities to integrate with local fans and cultures across Australia and New Zealand. Continuing Booking.com’s recent investments into women’s sporting events, Booking.com has continued its commitment to supporting elite women’s sport by partnering with the FIFA Women’s World Cup 2023.

“Football is the world’s #1 passion and when combined with the excitement and adventure of travel, the FIFA Women’s World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023 tournament will create the perfect synergy for memorable experiences that last a lifetime,” said Mr Arjan Dijk, CMO and Senior Vice President at Booking.com. “We’re excited to play a role in inspiring travellers and making it easier for everyone to book their accommodation through our user-friendly app that helps turn bucket list dreams into reality.”

# India's Critical Technology Path to Capitalise on its Aviation Boom

By: Nitu

With an unprecedented \$12bn investment in new air transport infrastructure and 500 million passengers expected by 2030, India has a unique opportunity to build a modern, sustainable ecosystem that is the world's envy.

By leveraging emerging technologies, including biometric-focused projects like the Digi Yatra initiative across 145 existing and 70 new airports by 2025, India has shown commitment to using smart technologies to increase efficiencies for airports and airlines and streamline the passenger journey, which will be vital to ensuring strong and sustainable growth.

Technology will be the future defining factor for the air transport industry. India has been the front-runner in adopting advanced technology, which will be essential to address operational challenges to meet this new demand. But with rising passenger volumes and rapid industry growth, comes a significant risk of operational turmoil leading to congested airports, flight delays and cancellations. The industry must now focus on operational efficiency, agility and delivering a modern, seamless passenger experience.



## Embracing Digital Travel

The passenger experience will be at the centre of this infrastructure investment. India is transforming air travel as we speak to deliver a seamless and hassle-free experience. The

country has already embarked on Digi Yatra. This biometric-focused initiative uses facial recognition at airports to provide a digital-first, contactless passenger experience.

SITA contributes to Digi Yatra's success with tech expertise and unique air transport experience. In collaboration with NEC and the Airports Authority of India (AAI), SITA successfully launched India's first biometric boarding experience with passengers flying with low-cost airline IndiGo out of Varanasi Airport (VNS).

Since then, Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) has partnered with SITA to implement a state-of-the-art biometric solution, Smart Path, for a seamless passenger experience at Terminal 2 at over 280 touch points. The project is fully compliant with the Indian Government's Digi Yatra initiative and is operational now, with more touch points expected to go live in the third quarter of 2023.

The biometric enablement is aligned with the airport and Ministry of Civil Aviation's strategy, resulting in faster passenger processing and smooth passenger experience at various touchpoints, especially check-in counters and self-service.

With the proliferation of biometrics used for everyday activities like banking, app downloads and consumer purchases, passengers increasingly expect their phones to become their remote control for travel and their face to act as their boarding passes. These solutions must be considered with privacy by design and tested methodically to ensure passengers benefit from the technology's massive potential to streamline the journey, thereby improving efficiency for airports and airlines.

## Cloud services for agility and scale

To prepare for the impending influx of passengers, Indian airports are transitioning to SITA's agile cloud-based passenger processing systems. In the past, airports had to invest in on-premises infrastructure to benefit from common-use platforms for



passenger processing. In its simplest form, "common use" allows airlines at the airport to share workstations (computers, printers, scanners) at check-in and boarding gate counters.

Now, thanks to cloud computing, airports no longer need to find space to operate and maintain a "core room" full of hardware. The light approach saves airports the cost of servers and other equipment without compromising security or functionality while helping them achieve their sustainability goals. Furthermore, airports and airlines can scale their services on demand to support fluctuating workloads, i.e., passenger volumes. And they only pay for what they use.

In July 2023, SITA announced a landmark deal with the Airports Authority of India to support one of the biggest growth markets globally, providing technology to 43 of India's biggest airports.

The deal will see improvements in over 2,700 passenger touchpoints, signifying the largest cloud deployment for passenger processing globally and paving the way for the adoption of new-age solutions to meet modern passengers' expectations. Initially deployed across 43 airports, the technologies are scalable to an additional 40 airports over the next seven years.



The rollout of new cloud technology will enable Indian airports to shift to common-use passenger experiences where multiple airlines can leverage the same infrastructure, such as check-in counters, self-service kiosks and boarding gates. Moreover, it helps future-proof operations and provides scalable platforms for future innovation.

### Mitigating post-pandemic recovery issues seen in Europe and North America

With more passengers comes more risk of operational

challenges. We've seen the headlines from major markets like Europe and the US featuring mountains of bags, congested airports and delays and cancellations. Preliminary findings from the 2023 SITA Passenger IT Insights revealed that 32% of passengers cited anxiety about cancellations when booking their next flight. Nearly 2 out of 10 passengers surveyed cited concerns around congestion in the airport and pointed to high airfares. This was fuelled by past experience, where 56% of respondents said they had experienced delays or cancellations and 48% had long airport queues.

Cloud services and powerful airport management systems can help ensure reliable flight information and planning capabilities. The systems can empower the airport to review performance, strategise operational efficiency improvements and capture resource utilisation statistics.

Ensuring all new airports are equipped with highly customised solutions that offer flexibility and transparency for all airport partners will help ensure smooth and efficient operations.

Airport management systems establish a platform for collaborative decision-making which is vital for achieving operational efficiencies, which will become increasingly important over the next five years with expected passenger growth.

Baggage is another key pain point for many developed air transport markets. The SITA 2023 Baggage IT Insights report revealed spiralling issues around mishandled baggage. Airlines and airports are struggling to meet the increased demand.

Baggage reconciliation systems ensure a high level of baggage accountability, preventing losses and security concerns, which is critical to industry recovery. Customers who've implemented SITA Bag Manager report a 20% reduction in the number of bags mishandled.

The technology is advancing in tandem with the industry's growth and we see new innovative solutions being developed to both avoid mishandling and recover mishandled bags more efficiently.

Focusing on delivering digital travel and a seamless passenger experience, maximising operational efficiency and future-proofing operations with smart, agile cloud solutions, India has a unique opportunity to lead the way with truly world-class infrastructure. □

# Face to face with **Krešimir Kučko**

## CEO, Air Mauritius

By Manchumi

**A**ir Mauritius, the national airline of the Republic of Mauritius, has recently confirmed an order for three Airbus A350-900 aircraft in its fleet. The three latest generation aircraft will bring Air Mauritius' Airbus A350 fleet to seven. The national carrier's widebody fleet currently consists of four Airbus A350-900S, two Airbus A330-900neo and one Airbus A330-200 aircraft. A second Airbus A330-200 aircraft is expected to join the fleet in August this year.



To know more about Air Mauritius' plans and the facilities they are providing to Indian travellers, I did an interaction with Krešimir Kučko - CEO - Air Mauritius.

Mr Krešimir Kučko brings a wealth of experience and a proven track record of success in the airline industry. With over 30 years of experience in various top-level executive positions, Mr Kučko deeply understands the challenges and opportunities facing airlines today.

Before joining Air Mauritius, Mr Kučko served as an Advisor to the Board of Directors and as the CEO of Gulf Air, the state-owned airline of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

### **What are your most important international markets vis-à-vis footfalls and revenue?**

Air Mauritius recognises the significant value of Africa, Asia and Europe as primary markets in terms of both footfall and revenue. These markets have been crucial to the sustained success of our operations and we remain committed to providing exemplary service to our passengers. We continuously enhance our offerings to ensure customer satisfaction and long-term growth.

### **What is the present network of Air Mauritius? Are you planning to expand it?**

Air Mauritius currently operates direct flights to 10 destinations. As the national airline of Mauritius, we commemorate 50 years of steadfast operations to prominent destinations such as Mumbai, London and Paris. We will also further consolidate and expand our network. In line with our strategic objectives, we are excited to introduce new destinations, beginning with two weekly operations to New Delhi since 03 May 2023. Furthermore, we are pleased to offer two weekly seasonal flights

to Geneva from 02 October 2023. As we continue to fortify our market presence, we are marking a significant milestone by transferring London operations from London Heathrow Airport to London Gatwick Airport while increasing our five weekly frequencies to one daily flight as of 29 October 2023. In the longer term, new destinations are currently in an evaluation process along with the fleet expansion.

**How important is it for airlines to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and what steps is Air Mauritius taking to support this target?**

The airline industry generates 2% of global carbon emissions and an average of 5.5 million tons of waste annually. Air Mauritius is committed to the CORSIA program (Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation) and is constantly looking for new ways to improve its sustainability efforts. We aim to fly greener with the introduction of environment-friendly initiatives.

Environmental Protection has been and remains one of the top priorities of Air Mauritius. Among several important initiatives undertaken by Air Mauritius is the fleet modernisation program started in 2017 with the delivery of the first two Airbus A350-900S and subsequently followed by another two Airbus A350-900 and two Airbus A330-900neo in 2019. These new generation aircraft are up to 25% more fuel efficient than previous generation aircraft, contributing significantly to the reduction of the airline's carbon footprint.

Other significant initiatives have been implemented to reduce the aircraft payload. These measures include lighter equipment, elimination of non-essential uplifts and a paperless environment. They contribute

to a weight reduction of more than 2200 tons in a typical year representing more than 500 tons less fuel burnt. Air Mauritius, in collaboration with Mauritian Wildlife Foundation, launched the "One take-off, One Tree" reforestation program in 2007. This joint initiative has contributed to endemic reforestation, as only less than 2% of endemic forests exist in Mauritius. Over 75000 endemic and native trees have been planted across Mauritius and



Rodrigues with the "One Take-off, One Tree" initiative.

**What are the benefits you are providing for Indian travellers?**

Air Mauritius acknowledges the diverse attractions that have established Mauritius as a highly sought-after destination for Indian travellers. Mauritius is well known to the Indian market for the various prospects it offers, such as lavish Indian weddings, honeymoons, promising business opportunities and as a gateway to Africa. At Air Mauritius, we take pride in facilitating seamless travel experiences for our Indian travellers and we are committed to continuing to provide exceptional service to all who choose to fly with us to this beautiful destination.

**What aspect of operations do you think is ripe for change through technology or revamping existing processes?**

The air travel sector has been ripe for a technological overhaul for quite some time now. Aircraft are already seeing upgraded technology that collects a massive amount of data. The amount of data from each aircraft is astounding from fuel use to weather systems. Digital connectivity offers

agility to work seamlessly on a real-time basis. We are in the process of upgrading our website, where real-time schedule changes, notifications and updates will be a prime feature of the new website shortly.

**What is your strategy for the airline?**

As the CEO of Air Mauritius, I aim to establish the airline as a long-term, sustainable business model that serves our country's strategic interests by providing global and domestic connectivity through cutting-edge technology and state-of-the-art aircraft. With a firm commitment to customer satisfaction, we will strive to enhance our offerings while prioritising operational efficiency and profitability continually. By investing in the latest technology and modern aircraft, we will



remain at the forefront of the industry and continue to provide an exemplary travel experience to all our passengers.

### **Can airlines afford to pursue sustainability in the current environment and do you look at green initiatives from a business or environmentalist point of view?**

Airlines are increasingly recognising the need to pursue sustainability in the current climate, both from a business and environmentalist point of view. While sustainability initiatives may require significant investments, we understand that implementing such measures can result in long-term cost savings, brand differentiation and customer loyalty.

From a business point of view, airlines understand that sustainability can drive down operational costs by reducing fuel consumption, optimising routes and improving aircraft performance. For instance, using alternative fuels, such as biofuels, can help airlines reduce their carbon footprint while also ensuring energy security and independence.

From an environmentalist point of view, airlines recognise the aviation industry's impact on the environment and are therefore taking steps to mitigate their carbon footprint. Such initiatives may include:

- Investing in more fuel-efficient aircraft.
- Implementing carbon offsetting programs.
- Working towards achieving net-zero carbon emissions.

In conclusion, while implementing sustainability initiatives may require significant investments, airlines understand that

pursuing such measures is not only the right thing to do from an environmental standpoint but also makes good business sense in the long run.

### **How do we encourage the production of sustainable aviation fuels to scale up?**

To encourage the production of sustainable aviation fuels (SAFs) to scale up, several actions can be taken at the industry and policy levels:

Scaling up the production of SAFs requires a collaborative effort between governments, industry associations and private companies. By creating a regulatory framework, incentivising research and development, establishing public-private partnerships and educating the public, we can accelerate the adoption of SAFs and reduce the aviation industry's carbon footprint.

### **How vital has cargo been and what can the industry do to improve cargo processes?**

Cargo has played a crucial role in the aviation industry, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, when it became a vital lifeline for the transportation of medical supplies, vaccines and essential goods. Even before the pandemic, cargo had been an important source of revenue for airlines, including Air Mauritius, accounting for a significant portion of their total revenue. We can certainly expect a progression in cargo operations by streamlining processes, applying new digital solutions with partners and implementing sustainable practices.

### **How do you see the prospects for travel in Asian markets?**

I believe the prospects for travel in Asian markets are very promising and we foresee steady growth in these important markets. At the same time, we recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic has created significant challenges for the travel industry. Still, we also see recovery and a need to explore new opportunities for growth in the Asian markets.

### **How is Air Mauritius tackling diversity and inclusion?**

Mauritius boasts a multicultural society which includes people of various origins and ethnicity. Air Mauritius, the proud national airline, reflects this multi-ethnicity as an equal-opportunity employer and is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion within our organisation. We recognise that a diverse workforce brings a range of perspectives, experiences and skills that can contribute to our success. Air Mauritius is determined to create a workplace culture that values diversity and fosters inclusivity.

□

# NORSE ATLANTIC AIRWAYS

By: Manchumi

**N**orse Atlantic Airways as is a Norwegian low-cost, long-haul airline headquartered in Arendal, Norway. Founded in February 2021, the airline operates a fleet of Boeing 787 aircraft between Europe and North America. Its inaugural flight took place on 14 June 2022 from Oslo Airport to New York City's John F. Kennedy International Airport.

## NETWORK

Norse Atlantic Airways serves 11 destinations including New York, Los Angeles, Fort Lauderdale, Orlando,

Washington, San Francisco, Boston, Oslo, London, Berlin, Rome and Paris.

Norse Atlantic Airways has virtual interlining agreements with the following airlines: easyJet, Norwegian Air Shuttle, Spirit Airlines, Vueling.

## FLEET

Norse has a fleet of 15 modern, fuel-efficient and more environmentally friendly Boeing 787 Dreamliners and five are in order.

## CLASS

The cabins of Norse Atlantic's

Boeing 787s retain the original seating configurations of their previous operators, Norwegian Air Shuttle and its associated subsidiaries. They are thus configured in two classes of service, consisting of Premium and Economy classes. Seats in its Premium cabin are configured in a 2-3-2 layout, while its Economy seats are configured in a 3-3-3 layout. Norse Premium Class has a wider seat, 43-inch pitch offering lots of room to stretch out and a generous recline, allowing to rest, sleep and arrive at the destination refreshed.

As a low-cost carrier, the airline charges





fees for extra services and amenities depending on the class of service. Seats in both cabins are equipped with an in-flight entertainment system allowing playback of video on demand through personal screens and the airline has additionally announced intentions to offer in-flight Wi-Fi access.

### NORSE CARGO

Norse Cargo offers services with some of the industry's most highly regarded Ground Handling Agents. They operated across Europe, Scandinavia, the United Kingdom & the United States,



### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Aviation represents about 2 per cent of global emissions and Norse Airways contributes to reducing carbon impact while

sustaining and creating jobs and economic growth. A modern fleet of Boeing 787 Dreamliners, optimising fuel efficiency and carbon offsets, reduces the overall carbon footprint. The airline uses sustainable aviation fuels at commercially sustainable volumes and prices.

Norse Airways operate direct flights only, using the most modern and carbon-efficient fleet of Boeing 787 Dreamliners. Their Dreamliners have more seats than the competition while offering a great customer experience. That combination gives us best-in-class carbon emissions per passenger on



transatlantic flights. The airline also offers their customers the option to carbon offset their flights, thus reducing their total environmental footprint.

In addition, Norse Airways work diligently to eliminate waste generation through source reduction and recycling/reuse where possible. They also support legislation that provides incentives and funding for climate change, including sustainable aviation fuels. □

## Innovation Driver

# Lufthansa Group

By: Rohit Ashok

**L**ufthansa Group has invested in new technology to transmit flight trajectory information in real time. Since every drop counts, an optimised flight path saves fuel and reduces CO2 emissions. With the standard installation of a new, innovative technology for transmitting flight profile information in its new A320neo/A321neo aircraft, the Lufthansa Group aims to further improve airspace management in Europe, avoid unnecessary detours and thus fly more sustainably.

Starting as early as 2024, the Lufthansa Group will receive more than 65 Airbus A320neo/A321neo aircraft on order - equipped with the new ADS-C EPP (Automatic Dependent Surveillance - Contract Extended Projected Profile) flight profile information technology. As a pioneer, the airline group is thus investing in the new technology at an early stage and promoting its fastest possible introduction throughout Europe. From 2028, the new technology must be installed as standard in all newly delivered aircraft and ATC ground systems in the EU.

The new technology for transmitting flight path information in real time will in future automatically transmit 4D flight path information generated

by the aircraft's flight management system to air traffic control at any time. This so-called 4D flight trajectory describes the further course of a flight in the three spatial dimensions (length, width, height) as well as time as the fourth dimension. Based on the more precise information about the further

flight path of an aircraft, air traffic control can control the airspace more efficiently and optimise the routing of the aircraft.

“When it comes to using new technologies for more sustainable flying, the Lufthansa Group plays a





pioneering role. That is why we have made a conscious decision to use the new technology for transmitting flight path information in real time as standard on our new Airbus A320neo/A321neo aircraft as early as 2024. This will enable our pilots to fly even more efficiently on first flights within Europe as early as next year, thus reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions,” says Dr Detlef Kayser, Member of the Lufthansa Group's Executive Board responsible for Fleet and Technology.

### Important Contribution to EU Airspace Modernisation

The automated transmission of flight path information is contributing to EU airspace modernisation. The Lufthansa Group's new aircraft equipped with ADS-C EPP will initially be able to use the new technology in Maastricht airspace (MUAC), which is the first airspace in Europe to meet all the requirements. The Lufthansa Group is working together with other air navigation service providers to ensure that it will be possible to fly even more fuel-efficiently in an increasing number of European airspaces as quickly as possible. The new technology is currently certified for aircraft of the Airbus A320 family and the Airbus A330neo.

### Lufthansa Group Pursues Ambitious Sustainability Goals

The Lufthansa Group has set itself ambitious climate protection goals and aims to achieve a neutral CO<sub>2</sub>

balance by 2050. Already by 2030, the Lufthansa Group wants to halve its net CO<sub>2</sub> emissions compared to 2019 through reduction and compensation measures.



The reduction target until 2030 was validated by the independent Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) in August 2022. The Lufthansa Group was the first airline group in Europe with a science-based CO<sub>2</sub> reduction target in line with the goals of the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement. For effective climate protection, the Lufthansa Group is focusing in particular on accelerated fleet modernisation, the use of SAF, the continuous optimisation of flight operations and offers for its private travellers and corporate customers to make a flight or the transport of cargo more sustainable. In addition, the Lufthansa Group has been actively supporting global climate and weather research for many years. □



# FIVE Hotels and Resorts Launches

## FLY FIVE

By: Rohit Ashok

**F**IVE Hotels and Resorts (FIVE) has just announced the launch of their exquisite private jet offering - Fly Five. A 16-occupancy passenger jet with a unique aviation experience redefining global hospitality luxury. As with FIVE Hotels and Resorts on the ground, Fly FIVE invites' guests to experience a fresh new in-flight entertainment experience in the air, allowing passengers to dine, entertain and invigorate in the most opulent and private environment.

FIVE Hospitality, a Dubai-based vertically integrated real estate development and hospitality group, was helmed by Indian entrepreneur and hotelier – CEO Mr Alok Batra and businessman and philanthropist – Chairman, Mr Kabir Mulchandani.

FIVE Hotels and Resorts, which includes the hottest destinations in Dubai - the unrivalled FIVE Palm Jumeirah and the uber-cool FIVE Jumeirah Village, for a discerning group of travellers looking for an unrivalled luxury vacation experience that encompasses the iconic Beach by FIVE, Dubai's most Insta-Famous social pool and a chic penthouse lifestyle with 269 pools and Jacuzzis. Switzerland's ultimate dining and nightlife hotspot, FIVE Zurich, showcases 45 luxurious suites and 42 suite-sized lifestyle rooms with glittering skyline city views or lush forest views.

Additionally, 62 'Amazing Rooms' will soon welcome guests to the Vibe at FIVE in Europe. FIVE's first international outpost hosts multiple international award-winning restaurants, a rooftop nightclub and a buzzing outdoor social pool. Guests may detox at the lavish wellness spa with an indoor pool and hot tub. Ready to launch in Q4 of 2023 is FIVE LUXE, JBR - a prime beach property in the heart of Jumeirah Beach Residence with sweeping sunset vistas of the Dubai Eye and Palm Jumeirah. This uber-luxurious lifestyle destination will embody the authentic and

of eco-conscious luxury living.

### THE FIRST OF ITS KIND

The ACJ (Airbus Corporate jets) two twenty Cabin is one of the most advanced, innovative and technologically equipped aircraft cabins ever designed. 9H-FIVE will provide guests with a first-hand experience of the masterful combination of design, engineering, craftsmanship and luxury used to create a one-of-a-kind space for FIVE Hotel and Resort's newest home in the skies. From high-speed Wi-Fi Connectivity to an entertainers' kitchen deluxe onboard



unique Vibe at FIVE that global Millennials love. SENSORIA, ultra-luxe residences for discerning luxury aficionados at FIVE LUXE, JBR will continue FIVE's legacy

shower and mega 55-inch TV screens for your ultimate viewing pleasure - Flying FIVE will perfectly showcase FIVE's award-winning hospitality.

**IT'S TIME TO FLY HIGH, FLY FIVE**

Amongst its bespoke features are 16 seats, a dining table for eight passengers, a Master Suite with a king-sized bed and shower and in-flight music - allowing guests to start experiencing the inimitable 'FIVE-styled' experience from the very moment they take flight.

**ELEVATED PRIVATE AVIATION**

Fly FIVE's ultra-luxe and customised cabins reflect FIVE's luxury lifestyle, hospitality and entertainment ethos. Extraordinary care and attention to detail have gone into constructing the Cabins – which truly reflect FIVE's signature deluxe design styling and provide an elite customer journey.

**FLY FIVE. FLY GREEN.**

Fly FIVE has taken off into a new sustainability frontier. Committed to completely offsetting FLY FIVE's annual



Flying FIVE will be an unmatched, flawless, curated experience for customers seeking the unique 'Vibe at FIVE' in the sky.

emissions, the company has aligned itself with Nature-Based Carbon Credits, becoming a direct proponent of rainforest preservation and reforestation. By purchasing credits attached to forest conservation projects, FIVE has taken steps to safeguard our planet's lungs and critical biodiversity.

"FIVE has the experimental spirit of the modernist vanguard. Thus, Fly FIVE is an exciting evolution of FIVE's award-winning disruptive hospitality ethos," says Mr Alok Batra, CEO of FIVE Hospitality. "With this customised, ultra-luxe, immersive private jet experience like no other, FIVE is once again delivering an elevated – and electric – customer experience for a worldwide diaspora".

Dwarka clings with avant-garde design and impeccable luxury

# Vivanta New Delhi

By: Rohit Ashok

**V**ivanta New Delhi, Dwarka - Designed to delight highfliers from all angles. Laidback but efficient. Elegant and spacious. Directly connected to the city's heart with easy access to the Sector 21 Metro station. As one of the most opulent business hotels in New Delhi, it aims to change the face of business in a space where you can work and play seamlessly. Vivanta New Delhi, Dwarka spans 7 acres and is one of the best hotels near New Delhi airport. The stylish space has a chic lobby, never-ending rooms and multiple outlets for the finest culinary experiences.

## ROOMS

There are 250 well-appointed rooms and suites. All the rooms and suites are spacious and comfortable for ultimate

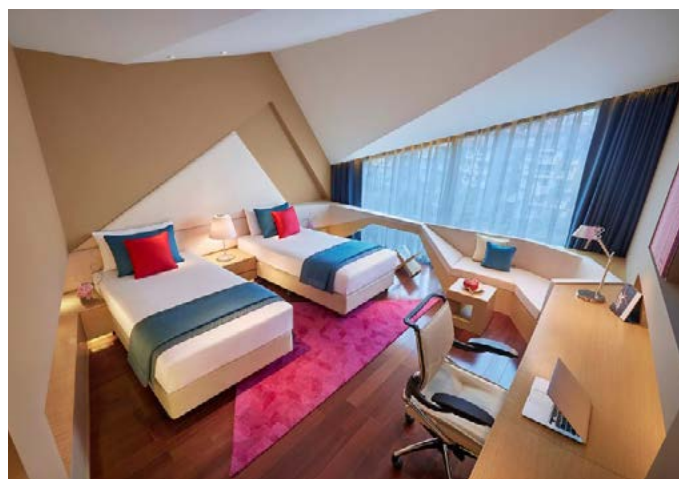


relaxation and the interiors are ultra-modern and minimalistic with all modern amenities.

### Superior Rooms

Superior Rooms bring the avant-garde architectural theme

of the hotel indoors. Striking angular windows let in plenty of sunlight and the sculptural design – complemented by



stylish furniture, fixtures, origami-like flooring and recessed lighting – scores high on both style and comfort.

### Deluxe Rooms

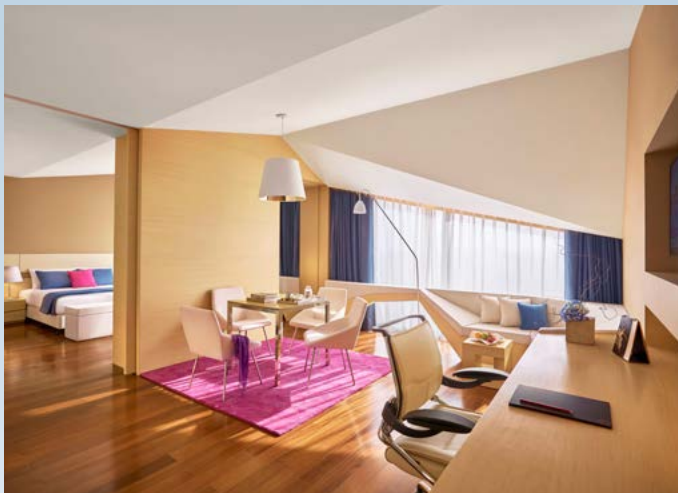
Deluxe Rooms are ideal for the discerning business traveller with a fine-tuned sense of aesthetics. Guests can choose a room with a city or airport view. Guests can enjoy the sun-bathed interiors with distinctive origami-like patterns, sophisticated Indian motifs and custom-built furniture that is as comfortable as it's sleek.

### Premium Rooms

Premium Rooms offer uninterrupted views of the airport and runway. The decor is sculptural and futuristic without sacrificing comfort. Angular windows let in plenty of sunlight, while a soothing colour palette with bright pops of Indian colour and motifs infuse the room with character and vibrancy.

### Deluxe Suite

Deluxe Suites – with an option of a city or airport view



– are amongst the capital's trendiest guest residences. The hotel's award-winning sculptural architecture is carried indoors with a decor – including custom-built furniture, premium furnishings and fixtures - that's futuristic, aesthetically pleasing and comforting all at once. A separate living room and bedroom have 40-inch LED smart televisions, ensuring happy co-inhabitants.

### Nirvana Suite

A plush residence with the modernism of a bat cave and the warmth of a home, the Vivanta Suite pulls out all the stops to woo design connoisseurs and discerning globe trotters. This five-bay suite houses a separate living room and dressing area, a master bedroom lorded over by a king-sized bed and a second bedroom with twin beds.

### DINING

**CREO** – It is a chic and cheery all-day diner located on the hotel's lobby level.

**INDUS EXPRESS** – This fine dining restaurant, Indus Express, traces a vintage journey across pre-partition, undivided India's Northwest Frontier.

**CARAMEL** – It is the patisserie of the hotel. Caramel is a bright and modern space for great conversations over bistro-style savoury bites and divine desserts. The food menu offers an array of freshly baked bread, gateaux, salads, sandwiches, burgers, wraps, quiches, muffins, cupcakes, pastries and artisanal chocolates.

**TIPPLE** – Tipple marked on their bar-hopping itinerary throughout the week, especially over the weekend. Icy cool reflective interiors with strategically placed contemporary artworks infuse the famous lounge with high-octane energy.

**CELSIUS POOL BAR** - Located by the swimming pool at the lobby level, the Celsius pool bar offers a lovely al fresco spot for a snack and drink between dips in the water.



**CABANA DINING** – It is an idyllic setting for dining in the garden cabanas. Guests can have an unforgettable evening with a specially crafted four-course meal with a decorated table for an exclusive dining experience.

**INDUS EXPRESS SAMPLER** - Diners can book the chef's table for a legendary meal that travels back in time, chugging through the Indus basin in undivided India.

### BANQUETS

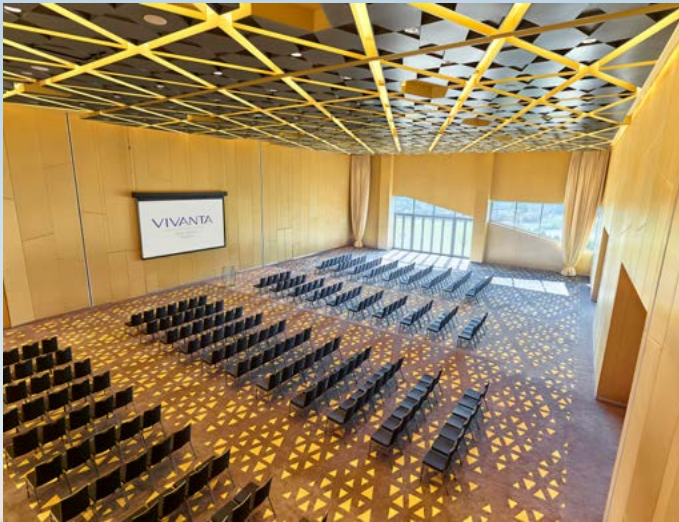
With over 1858 sq. mt. of indoor and outdoor space dedicated to events, Vivanta New Delhi, Dwarka is the premier choice for business conferences, social soirees, and weddings. Five well-equipped, tech-powered meetings rooms and venues with capacities ranging from 18 to 12000 are designed to cater to diverse requirements, from a cosy meeting room with state-of-the-art conferencing facilities to a grand ballroom with stately pillars and a plush al fresco area for a glamorous wedding reception, and every manner of corporate dos and parties.

### TANGO BALLROOM

This pillarless ballroom has a 27 ft ceiling height, an inbuilt projector, and a grand screen. This hall can further be divided into three break-out venues with a vast, separate pre-function area.

### NUCLEUS

This space has projectors and whiteboards built-in, making it the perfect location for productive meetings about innovative business concepts.



### AGENDA BOARDROOM

It is an 18-seater fixed boardroom with a 65-inch LED screen & a separate cubicle for one-on-one sessions. Natural light is one of the pre-requisites of this venue.

### DEBATE

This boardroom is equipped with inbuilt projector facilities & whiteboards. This hall is ideal for discussing new business ideas and high-powered meetings.

### STRATEGY

Equipped with whiteboards and built-in projector capabilities, it is perfect for high-powered meetings and discussions of fresh company concepts.

### RHYTHM LOUNGE

This venue is perfectly suited for small gatherings, meetings and presentations.

### REACTIONS

#### JIVA SPA & SALON

Instant detox and karmic therapies feature at the JIVA spa sanctuary, a luxurious haven with four treatment rooms. At Jiva Spa, experienced therapists offer guests a time-tested range of wellness and beauty treatments. They can also do a quick grooming session at the salon.



### FITNESS CENTRE

Equipped with the latest cardio and strength training equipment, the 24/7 Fitness Centre ensures guests can drop in for a workout at any convenient time.

### SWIMMING POOL

The hotel has a separate children's plunge pool and an outdoor Jacuzzi to soothe tired muscles.



### INDOOR GAMES & OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

The hotel offers indoor games such as chess and ludo and outdoor activities such as badminton, cycling and croquet.

Vivanta New Delhi, Dwarka whisks you away into an upscale lifestyle that's equal parts work and play. □

# Hotel Indigo

## Makes Brand Debut in Romania

By: Nitu

IHG Hotels & Resorts has announced the signing of Hotel Indigo Satu Mare, a brand debut in Romania. This latest signing delivers the lifestyle brand's market debut in the Balkan nation and strengthens the brand's presence in Eastern Europe.

Located in one of the area's best-known Art Nouveau building in Satu Mare, the hotel will celebrate the neighbourhood's individuality through a reimagined upscale boutique-design - creating a gateway to discover the local culture.

Satu Mare is a city located in Romania's northern borderlands and is known as a gateway to some



of the country's most picturesque landscapes, has some of the oldest architecture in the region and excellent

rail links to the rest of the country. The Old Town is famed for its quaint 'village-like' feel and archaeological heritage dating back to the Bronze and Middle Ages. The hotel's façade is one of the most iconic aspects of the city's skyline, with architecture dating back to 1902.



Slated to open in 2025, Hotel Indigo Satu Mare joins IHG's three other properties in Romania; Intercontinental Athénée Palace Bucharest, Crowne Plaza Bucharest and Holiday Inn Bucharest-Times - with other properties such as Crowne Plaza Constanta Mamaia Beach in the pipeline - further strengthening IHG's footprint across the emerging market

and overall growth momentum in Europe. Romania is one of the fastest growing economies in the CEE, presenting plentiful opportunity for hotel development and investment.

Comprising of 62 design-led rooms and suites, Hotel Indigo Satu Mare will feature a locally inspired restaurant, stylish cocktail bar and a spa. Signed under a franchise agreement with Dacia SRL, a subsidiary of Manevi ZRT, the hotel also ushers in a new era of collaboration between IHG and a new, ambitious owner group. The hotel will be operated by Hotel & More, a Hungarian hotel Operator with a vast experience in the hotel sector and in the region.

Ms Willemijn Geels, VP Development, Europe, IHG Hotels & Resorts, said, “This new signing marks the beginning of a new partnership in Romania; to have introduced another brand to this growing market is an



exciting milestone and we are so proud to be redeveloping one of the country’s most iconic hotels. Hotel Indigo Satu Mare will bring a defined lifestyle presence to the city and paves the way for further development in Romania.”



Ms Orsolya Pacsay-Tomassich, Director General of Foundation for Preserving Built Heritage in Central Europe, said, “We are proud to be partnering with IHG Hotels & Resorts to bring the first Hotel Indigo property to Romania. Given the rich history of the building and Hotel Indigo’s famed appreciation for the unique details of individual neighbourhoods, it is set to be a perfect pairing and one which will transform the city of Satu Mare. This deal marks the start of a partnership with IHG that will bring new and exciting projects to Romania.”

Mr Balazs Klemm, CEO, Hotel & More Holding, said, “We are excited to be taking on the operation of the first Hotel Indigo property in Romania. The lifestyle brand is renowned worldwide and we’re confident we can deliver exceptional stays for guests coming to explore Satu Mare.”

IHG® Hotels & Resorts is one of the world’s leading hotel companies, with presence in more than 100 countries to deliver ‘True Hospitality for Good’. Its diverse portfolio of differentiated brands is well known and loved by millions of people around the world. Simple but powerful, the brand’s purpose of True Hospitality for Good inspires and informs everything it does – shaping its culture, bringing its brands to life and representing a commitment to make a difference to its guests, colleagues, owners & communities and to protecting the world around. □

# Explore the Eco-Friendly Homestays of the Heart of Incredible India

By: Nitu

As the sun rises over the picturesque landscapes of Madhya Pradesh, a symphony of nature's wonders greets you. The gentle whispers of the wind, the vibrant colours of flora and the rhythmic melodies of wildlife create a harmonious environment

an authentic and sustainable experience.

Principal Secretary Tourism and Culture Department and Managing Director MP Tourism Board, Mr Sheo Shekhar Shukla (IAS), said, "Responsible Tourism is an initiative to make better places

executed the idea of Responsible Tourism. Various initiatives, including Homestays, Gram Stays and Farm Stays, have been developed for the tourists to feel close to nature and culture. Safe Tourism Destinations for Women is a key factor for the Board because we want to provide



like no other. Get ready to embark on a transformative journey to the heart of India, where more than 50 eco-friendly rural homestays await, offering

to visit and live. It essentially conveys economic enhancement and community development. Madhya Pradesh is a pioneer state which has successfully

a safe and reassuring experience for solo female tourists. Responsible Souvenir is a program initiated to ensure and encourage traditional souvenirs and art forms. Solid



waste management - Clean Destinations has always been a priority; Madhya Pradesh is home to the top two most-cleanest cities in the country and we take a lot of pride in our idea for providing clean destinations for the tourists. The Mission's Humsafar program is raising awareness of the challenges the differently abled face and working to reduce and remove the barriers to their enjoyment of tourism. Skill Development and Employment Generation for the youth are the standout features of the development plan, which have been acknowledged worldwide".

Here is a glimpse of some of the most pristine homestays of Madhya Pradesh, offering unique and exotic experiences.

### Mahua Homestay Ladhpora, Orchha

Escape the concrete jungle and immerse yourself in the untouched beauty of rural Madhya Pradesh. These eco-friendly homestays embrace sustainability principles, celebrating the delicate balance between humans and the environment. Nestled amidst the lush greenery, these havens offer a serene retreat, allowing you to reconnect with nature and recharge your spirits. Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board is dedicated to minimising the state's carbon footprint and making MP an eco-friendly state for tourists.

Each homestay has been thoughtfully designed to minimise the ecological footprint while providing a comfortable and



enriching experience. It is constructed using locally sourced materials and traditional techniques. These accommodations blend seamlessly into the landscape, creating a harmonious coexistence with nature. From thatched roofs to mud walls, every aspect reflects a commitment to preserving the region's cultural heritage.

### Kekadiya and Khari

Awaken to the melodious chorus of bird song as you open your eyes to breath-taking lush green forests in the homestays of Kekadiya and Khari. Engage yourself in organic farming



activities, where you can learn about traditional agricultural practices and indulge in the cultural activities of the village. Adventure lovers can also find fascinating cycling treks alongside other environmentally friendly recreational activities.

Places of Interest – Rock Shelter Paintings and Jain Temple

### Sabarwani

Located just 20 km from Pachmarhi Sabarwani is one of the unique hill station homestays where visitors can find exciting homestays and enjoy activities like trekking, bird watching and hot springs alongside dazzling millet dishes of the region.

Places of Interest – Choti Anhoni and Badi Anhoni

### Kokhra and Thadipather

In the buffer forests of the Sanjau Dubri Tiger Reserve in Sidhi, Kokhra and Thadipather are two exemplary villages where visitors can enjoy the shelter of the tall trees and relax in the white sand beach.

Places of Interest – Sanjay Dubri Tiger Reserve

Ladhpora Khaas – One of the most spiritual destinations of MP, Orchha has a majestic village called Ladhpora Khaas, where travellers can find royal homestays and enjoy other destinations like the Orchha bird sanctuary, sunset points of Orchha and blend in the culture with their drama and musical performances. You can also enjoy activities like pottery and other rural arts. It was also nominated for the Best Tourism Village Awards by UNWTO in 2021. □

# Stotrak Hospitality

## expands its footprint in the Queen of Hills

By: Divya

**S**otrak Hospitality, an eco-friendly boutique hotel chain with a diversified portfolio of properties across Uttarakhand, Himachal & Rajasthan, has jointly with Kool-Stays, announced the opening of 'Hotel Luxury Inn' in the Queen of the Hills, Mussoorie, Uttarakhand. It is the second hotel of the group to mark its presence in the city. The development reinstates Stotrak Hospitality's growing presence in leisure destinations pan India.

Stotrak Hospitality is the brainchild of two Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) alumni Manish and Yogita, with experience having worked across luxury Hotels across India. They aim to open properties that make experiences driven stay possible for all.

Located in the heart of Mussoorie's bustling Picture Palace area, Hotel Luxury Inn is a walkable distance from the mall road, thus making it a preferred choice for travellers looking for easy access to the area's many attractions. Contemporary in design and spirit, the hotel features 26 chic and well-appointed rooms and suites.

All Cottages are embellished with interiors that reflect the calm and serene sensation of nature while proposing an exquisite view of the surroundings

as well as the vegetable garden. Hotel Luxury Inn offers experiential stays with excursions and activities such as plucking own vegetables, mountain

biking, guided hiking tour, swimming pool, high tea under the rainfall canopy, yoga/ Zumba/meditation sessions, and village treks.



Stotak Hospitality already operates hotels in Mussoorie (The Kenilworth), Deharadun (Sukoon and Spice Hotel), Ranthambore (Earth Resort & Spa), Jaisalmer (Sam Dunes) and Nahan.

Commenting on the development, Mr Manish Goyal, Founder of Stotak Hospitality, said, “Mussoorie has always been an important destination within our leisure destination portfolio and we are delighted to witness our growing presence in the city. This recent opening is the culmination of our vision to create a luxury hotel that provides the best in comfort and convenience and offers guests an authentic local experience. Our partnership with Kool-Stays has been instrumental in bringing this vision to life. We are confident that our shared commitment will enable guests to witness a distinguished Stotak hospitality that equals the experience and beauty of the destination.”



of the valley, an intimate lobby lounge and other world-class amenities, including high-speed Wi-Fi and 24-hour hot and cold water.

Mr N Gupta, Co-Founder, Kool-Stays, commented, “Hotel Luxury Inn marks a special milestone for us as it represents

for providing guests with exceptional hospitality and an authentic local experience. Together, we are dedicated to creating a hotel that showcases the best of Mussoorie, from its breath-taking natural scenery to its vibrant local culture.”

Ranging from its immersive itineraries that allow guests to explore the scenic viewpoints, trails around the local market and famous landmarks (such as the clock tower located in Landour etc.) and given its connectivity to Jolly Grant Airport, Indira Gandhi International Airport and Rishikesh Railway Station, the boutique hotel is perceptively designed for solo travellers, family vacationers, business visitors and transiting visitors to the city.

“We are happy to continue our relationship with Stotak Hospitality to bring the Kool-Stays experience to even more travellers from around the world. We can't wait to see what the future holds for this exciting partnership,” said Mr Gupta.



Among dining facilities, the hotel offers a rooftop multi-cuisine restaurant that specialises in local fare and popular Indian delicacies with spectacular views

our second collaboration with Stotak Hospitality. The first one is Kool-Stays at Rishikesh. Our partnership with Stotak has been built on a shared passion

Whether you're looking for a relaxing or adventure-packed vacation, Hotel Luxury Inn makes for an ideal weekend getaway. □

The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group presents

# Shree Anna

The Healthy Millet, Food Promotion

By: Radhika

Under the visionary leadership of our Prime Minister, Hon'ble Shri Narendra Modi, United Nations declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets. In support of India's Millet Mission, The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group, one of India's leading hospitality brands, is proud to announce the

launch of "Shree Anna" - a pan India promotion of India's millets, taking place at all The Lalit properties across the country including The Lalit Suri Hospitality School and Subros. The launch event was held on the 19th of July. It featured some of the foremost personalities in the city, including the Chief Guest Mr Ganesh Joshi,

Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development & Sainik Welfare, Govt. of Uttarakhand.

The Lalit Group is a renowned hospitality brand in India, known for its luxurious hotels and exceptional dining experiences. With a commitment to excellence and sustainability, The Lalit Group aims to provide memorable experiences for its guests while promoting India's rich cultural and culinary heritage.

Millets, a home-grown crop with diverse varieties, are being promoted by The Lalit Group for their exceptional nutritional value and versatility. This promotion aims to raise awareness about millets, their health benefits and their importance in supporting the livelihoods of farmers.

The event started with an address by the chief guest, who explained the concept and significance of the event. Guests were treated to a sumptuous plated meal featuring a variety of millet-based dishes. Media interactions took place after the meal, providing an opportunity to learn more about millet's health benefits and versatility.



To commemorate the occasion, each guest received a box of homemade ragi cookies and a booklet highlighting the health benefits and origins of millet. Following the launch event, the Healthy Millet Menu will be available for a month at all The Lalit outlets across India, including 24/7, Oko and Baluchi. Each city's executive chef will play a pivotal role in showcasing the menu.

“The Healthy Millet Menu is a celebration of India's rich culinary and agricultural heritage. Millets are not only packed with nutrients, but they also provide a sustainable solution that benefits both our well-being and the livelihoods of our farmers,” said Chef Ravi Kant, Executive Chef at The Lalit New Delhi.

The Healthy Millet Menu offers a wide range of millet-based dishes that cater to different tastes and preferences. Each variety brings unique flavour and nutritional benefits, from Foxtail Millet and Barnyard Millet to Finger Millet and Kodo Millet. The menu features delectable options such as Crunchy Edamame and Amaranth Salad, Thai



Spiced Infused Foxtail and Pomelo Salad, Crunchy Quinoa Bites and Ragi Idlis.

In addition to promoting the culinary delights of millets, The Lalit Group is committed to supporting local farmers and promoting sustainable farming practices. By incorporating millets into their menus, The Lalit Group is creating demand for this traditional crop and contributing to the well-being of both consumers and farmers.

The initiative was taken in the backdrop of the declaration of the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the United Nations to celebrate 2023 as the International Year of Millets (IYM2023) for awareness about millets' health and nutritional benefits.

The UN declared 2023 IYM after the Government of India proposed to celebrate 2023 as the International Year of Millets to encourage the production and consumption of millets. The Government of India notified millets as Nutri-Cereals in April 2018, which includes Sorghum (Jowar), Pearl Millet (Bajra), Finger Millet (Ragi/Mandua) and Minor Millets, namely; Foxtail Millet (Kangani/Kakun), Proso Millet (Cheena), Kodo Millet (Kodo), Barnyard Millet (Sawa/Sanwa/ Jhangora), Little Millet (Kutki) and two Pseudo-millets viz Buckwheat (Kuttu) and Amaranthus (Chaulai).

Take the advantage of this opportunity to experience the Healthy Millet Menu at all The Lalit hotels across India from the 20th of July to the 20th of August. □



# Interview with Joyjit Chakravorty

## GM - Hilton Garden Inn New Delhi / Saket

By: Rohit Ashok

**H**ilton Garden Inn New Delhi/Saket is located in the heart of South Delhi's shopping and tourist hub. The hotel has 115 well-appointed rooms and all of the rooms offer mall or city views. To know more about the property and its plan, we interviewed Mr Joyjit Chakravorty, General Manager - Hilton Garden Inn New Delhi / Saket.

With a career spanning over 22 years with leading hospitality companies, including The Leela Palace Goa, Taj Land Lands' End, Mumbai, Swissotel Kolkata (Now Taj), Ramada Lucknow, a large portion of his professional life was spent with the Marriott (at JW Marriott, Juhu Mumbai, Goa Marriott) Westin Sohna and Sheraton Grand Bangalore (Now Marriott) and with Hilton where he held many Food and Beverage leadership positions.

### How does Hilton Garden Inn Saket stand out in the competition?

We are privileged to be the only Hilton brand hotel in Delhi and being located in the heart of south Delhi's shopping and tourist hub, we are also located inside the mall with direct access to the two top malls of NCR. Apart from our location, we are the best 'Bleisure hotel' where business and rejuvenation happen every day of the week, also awarded by the renowned "Travel + Leisure magazine. The restaurant has also been acknowledged as one of the best "Family Buffet Restaurants" by the Times Hospitality Icon Awards. However, as the ship's captain, I strongly believe the team and service are our biggest differentiator and USP for the hotel.

### Is F&B (food and beverage) a big revenue earner for the property?

The India Grill Restaurant and in-room dining supports our in-house guests and acts as the best catch-up place over a drink for our business clients. Over the weekend, it is the favourite

destination for non-residential customers, with live entertainment and an array of delectable offerings from the culinary brigade. The colonial High Spirit Bar is also the most popular venue for corporate get together and family celebrations.

### What is the marketing strategy you have adopted to promote your property?

HGI Saket has been operating since 2009 and hence word of mouth has always been our key first strategy for getting repeat business – truly acknowledged by the most popular international travel portal awarding the "Travellers Choice" hotel, which is only awarded to the top 10% consistently earned great positive



reviews from travellers. We also have a strong presence in the social media channels along with the Hilton marketing tools to remain on top of the game. On a unit level, our marketing team is always active with local business partners, influencers and collaborators, including the mall, to remain connected with our city patrons.

**What sustainability initiatives has Hilton Garden Inn Saket taken and what is your sustainability roadmap for the next few years?**

HGI Saket is part of the "Travel With Purpose" 2030 goals, Hilton's ESG Strategic Framework. All hotel members have 9 Pledges to accomplish for this year, contributing to converting all bulbs to LED, adding water aerators in all public restrooms for water savings and monitoring our food waste. We have also pledged to have a 20% women workforce in the team and promote employment opportunities for the less privileged. Every hotel team member would contribute at least ONE voluntary manhour this year serving the society. We have also started procuring cage-free eggs for our in-house patrons. We are also working towards organising carbon-neutral meetings with our regular corporates and offset by the carbon credit(s), which work towards offsetting emissions generated from that meeting. Hilton also uses an industry-leading LightStay ESG management system to track and report progress, giving us the visibility and awareness to improve over time. As the ESG Lead for India, my goals are to achieve our pledges for Saket and assist my fellow Hilton colleagues in India to collectively progress in fulfilling the pledges we have taken together.

**What do you think it takes to succeed in this industry?**

In my opinion, be genuinely happy to serve and help, persevere, be disciplined, keep on improving your learning & interpersonal communication skills and stay updated.

**What, according to you, is the latest trend in the hospitality industry?**

My take on trends, people have started travelling now, which is visible after the last few years of muted travel. The desires to travel and explore are strong. The customer experience-centric approaches adopted by all of us in the industry are also fuelling the confidence to travel. The innovative new features and marketing campaigns from our travel fraternity - the travel now pay later, EMI schemes, nation on vacation, trip coupons, all-inclusive pricings, block seats and pay later, etc.- are all adding to the reason. I must also add here the

Govt. support and initiatives in building infrastructures like the new airports, roadways, dedicated trains & flights for shorter distances along with the beginning of the Char Dham Yatra and other pilgrimage destinations for spiritual enrichment also contribute to the recent surge.

The previous trend that emerged in the aftermath of the pandemic, a preference for shorter trips and rejuvenating staycations of 1-3 days, continues this year as well. The weekend trend of booking "Great Small Breaks" by Hilton, a curated quick urban escape with a chance to unwind, valuing quality experiences over extended durations, still drives the weekend occupancy of our hotel at Hilton Garden Inn Saket.



Lastly, I can also see the younger generations embark on road trips with relaxed itineraries, enjoying their way to their destinations. They are willing to spend more on experiences and believe the influencer marketing vs traditional ways. There is also an upward trend from multi-generational families to young professionals /millennials, couples and ad hoc friends travelling together to celebrate special occasions and holidays.

**What are the key challenges that lie ahead for you in the future?**

Our industry is equally competitive like the airlines business and hotels always need to continually innovate, improvise their services and create unique experiences to stay ahead of the curve. I would probably use the word "Opportunity to Reposition and Recalibrate" instead of a challenge. Hence, we all have to rise up & proactively strategise together on the ongoing complicated realities of cancelled flights, surging airfares, climate change impacts, manpower shortages and corporate travel curbs. Together we should unite to contribute to the fastest-growing economic sector & cherish the fruits of it. □

## In talks with

# Patrice Landrein

## GM of Premier Village Phu Quoc Resort Vietnam

By: Divya Bhatia

In 2022, Phu Quoc experienced a significant surge in tourism, welcoming 100,000 foreign tourists within the first eight months, successfully meeting half of the annual target. Encouraged by this success, the hospitality industry on the island is eagerly preparing to attract even more Indian tourists in 2023.

Recognising the growing interest of Indian tourists in Phu Quoc, luxury hospitality establishments have tailored their offerings to cater specifically to this market. The island's resorts and hotels are actively enhancing their amenities and services to ensure a memorable and comfortable experience for Indian travellers. The industry focuses on providing opulent accommodations, personalised services and unique cultural experiences to the Indian traveller.



Here is an interview with Mr Patrice Landrein – General Manager of Premier Village Phu Quoc Resort Vietnam, where he shared about the facilities and initiatives they are taking, especially for Indian travellers.

### Phu Quoc is emerging as a preferred destination in Vietnam for Indian travellers. What would be the reason?

Phu Quoc is emerging on the travel map with its renowned Emerald Bay, pristine beach, and ancient tropical forest. Indian visitors will experience moments of relaxation and can unwind by harmonising with nature to relieve stress. They can experience fishing and scuba diving to explore the coral and walk around the beach to admire the breathtaking sunrise and sunset. The experience of discovering the local culture attracts the curiosity of visitors. They were experiencing the visit of King's Well in the South of the island, stepping into the rich history of the fascinating island through a visit to historical sites and enjoying Phu Quoc cuisine with myrtle wine and freshly caught seafood. Imagine one day you wake up in serenity, head to the beach to listen to the sound of waves, and then cross the forest to breakfast to begin a day; it will be a simple but very different experience for our faraway guests.

### What unique features or offerings does your hotel group provide that would appeal to Indian tourists?

Premier Village Phu Quoc Resort is situated on the southernmost point of Phu Quoc Island, which offers a unique location. The ocean surrounds the resort, with two immaculate beaches and stunning ocean views from dawn to sunset. Unwind in one of our 215 villas with a private pool linking the two beaches on the peninsula. Private villas are suitable to accommodate couples for a romantic getaway and are fully furnished for vacations with kids. Staying at the resort will always be exciting with our distinctive family activities,



including kayaking, yoga class, and the village farm visit. If you want to enjoy adventurous activities, join a scuba diving class to discover marine life. We offer activities and attractions for all ages, most of which are complimentary.

The wellness journey makes us outstanding in all resorts in Phu Quoc. With well-trained staff and natural surroundings, we promise to accompany guests on their journey to come back to inner tranquility. Guests are welcome by a healthy drink in the lobby, then attend a singing bowls workshop, and experience a relaxing Phu Quoc pepper signature spa treatment before finishing with the Aqua Yoga. During the stay, all wellness activities are organised daily and easy to reach for guests. They can walk on the beach and join the mindfulness sunset, then, the other day, they can join the meditation in the Spa Lobby or the back-neck-shoulder workshop in Main Lobby. We welcome guests everywhere with wellness activities during their stay.



**Can you share any information on partnerships or collaborations with Indian travel agencies or tour operators to enhance the overall experience for Indian tourists?**

We currently feature on all Online Travel Agents and work with Indian Travel agents and wholesale partners to introduce our products to Indian markets, partner with some Sales Representatives to penetrate the Indian market, organise fam trips with airlines and invite travel agents. We also collaborate with Indian travel agencies or tour operators to enable joint marketing and promotional activities targeted toward Indian tourists. This can include digital marketing campaigns, social media promotions, and offline events or roadshows to create awareness and generate interest in the travel offerings among the Indian audience. Indian KOLs were invited to experience

services, and they all gave excellent feedback. With the wellness journey we are preparing, we look forward to more Indian bookings soon. Packages are customised for families with complimentary kids sharing the same bed with parents to attract Indian family guests as well.

**How important is the Indian market for you? Can you share any numbers from the Indian market for your property?**

The Indian market holds significant importance for our property in Phu Quoc. With flight connections between Phu Quoc and India, we recognise India as an important source market for our business. We are actively seeking to expand our presence in this market, especially with the launch of new direct flights. To reach Indian travellers, we have established



partnerships with well-known Indian distribution platforms and actively participate in events organised by local tourism authorities.

In addition to these efforts, we collaborate closely with Accor's corporate regional and global sales teams in India to drive inbound bookings. By leveraging these partnerships and relationships, we aim to attract a more significant number of Indian guests to our resort. Indian guests rank 3-4 in terms of nationality among the resort's guests. This indicates that Indian tourists are already a significant segment of the property.

To cater to the preferences of Indian travellers, we have curated wellness-focused experiences that offer a wide range of treatment options from our Spa Menu. Among our signature treatments are the King Well's Holistic Journey and Phu Quoc Pepper Treatments, which provide unique and rejuvenating experiences for our guests. □

# In talks with Rahul Saxena

## Area GM, Royal Orchid Fort Resort, Mussoorie

By: Nitu

**N**estled amidst a serene setting and picturesque view of Picture Palace Road in Mussoorie is the Royal Orchid Fort Resort. Striking architecture and a blend of grandeur, luxury and comfort signify the resort's immense beauty and immaculate facilities. An added advantage is its proximity (1 km) to the city's centre - Landour Bazaar Road.

The resort has a fully equipped gym, spa, restaurant and free Wi-Fi. It has the Summer Hall, Courtyard, Winter Hall, Pine Terrace, Sundeck, boardrooms and banquet halls, each well-equipped with state-of-the-art facilities for conferences, weddings and events. Additional facilities include free parking space, housekeeping, complimentary breakfast, 24-hour front desk, car hire, newspapers and activities like table tennis and mini golf.

The 92 fully furnished rooms/suites are designed to perfection and fitted with modern amenities to ensure a royal stay for guests. They have Deluxe Rooms, Premium Rooms, Premium Rooms with Terrace, Executive Rooms, Duplex Rooms, One Bedroom Suites and Two Bedroom Family Rooms. Some in-room amenities include a mini bar, electronic safe, large beds, room service, in-room dining, Wi-Fi and tea/coffee maker.

Mr Rahul Saxena, Area General Manager at Royal Orchid Fort Resort, Mussoorie, shares more in-depth details about the hotel with us in this interview.

Mr Rahul has over twenty-seven years of hands-on exposure in managing hotel and hospitality divisions and earned rich exposure related to market forces with hotel chains like Grand Mercure, Jay Pee Group, Parkland Hotels, Radisson Group, Holiday Inn Group, Hilton Group, Accor Group, Intercontinental Group, Sarovar Group and Royal Orchid & Regenta Group of Hotels. Mr Rahul is currently taking care of five Royal Orchid



hotels in Uttarakhand i.e., Mussoorie, Dehradun, Haridwar, Rishikesh and Ookhimath (Kedarnath).

**What type of clientele does Royal Orchid Fort Resort, Mussoorie serve?**

We serve all the clientele like leisure, business, social, weddings & MICE gatherings, national and international.

**What is the marketing strategy you have adopted to promote your property?**

We focus on every online and offline channel, participating in every major trade related to travel and tourism and showing our presence in the global market.

**How is Royal Orchid Fort Resort, Mussoorie performing in MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) tourism?**

Our resort is always in high demand for MICE. Having two Banquet Halls, one Board Room and three terraces, makes it a perfect blend for MICE gatherings to accommodate diversified demands in one place.

**What is the hotel doing to keep up with the tech-savvy travellers?**



As Mussoorie is a leisure destination, most people come here to relax and in vacation mode. Otherwise, we have high-speed Wi-Fi in the entire resort for in-house guests and smart TVs to cater to tech-savvy travellers.

**According to you, what is the USP of Royal Orchid Fort Resort, Mussoorie?**

We have one of the city's best views, having 180 degrees view. The resort's location is so beautiful that at one end, you can look at Mussoorie hills and on the other side, you can look at the entire Doon Valley. The property is spread over 6.5 acres and built like a Fort. It is a

perfect blend of magnificent architecture with ample open areas. Our resort has the second largest room inventory of 92 rooms in Mussoorie and has three Banquet Halls & three open-air venues.

**What sustainability initiatives has Royal Orchid Fort Resort, Mussoorie, taken and what is your sustainability roadmap for the next few years?**

We are recycling the STP wastewater to be used for landscape & horticulture purposes. We are also harvesting the rainwater and organising a cleaning drive from time to time nearby the resort. We are using sensor lights in public toilets and public areas to save electricity. We have energy-efficient LED Lamps installed on the property to save energy.

**What do you think it takes to succeed in this industry?**

Any hotel can succeed by using its resources efficiently and innovative ideas to achieve high guest satisfaction.

**Lastly, what major challenges do you foresee?**

Global economic uncertainty is a major challenge for the entire industry. □



# Interview with Hugues Miranda

## VP Sales - Europe, Russia, CIS & Asia Pacific, Oetker Collection

By: Divya Bhatia

Oetker Collection hotels are true masterpieces in the world's most desirable destinations. Each property is a landmark and a timeless icon of elegance. With profound devotion to local culture and community, their Hosts of Choice preserve a tradition of legendary European hospitality and genuine family spirit that began in 1872.

In a conversation with Aviation Times, Mr Hugues Miranda, Vice President Sales, Europe, Russia, CIS & Asia Pacific, Oetker Collection, talks about the importance of India as a source market, plans for Asia and many more.

Mr Hugues Miranda has been associated with Oetker Collection for nine years.

**How do you see the demand for luxury outbound tourism in the Indian market? Which of your properties are key drivers for business in India?**

The Indian market is very exciting and valuable for us at Oetker Collection. In addition to couples and family stays, we are very happy to see more and more weddings, events and celebrations taking place in our masterpiece hotels, including Le Bristol Paris, The Lanesborough in London, The Woodward in Geneva, Brenner Park-Hotel & Spa in Baden

Baden, L'Apogée Courchevel, our ski resort, as well Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc & Chateau Saint-Martin & Spa in the South of France. By virtue of the distance that guests must travel from India, many stay for extended periods of time and we also see several guests visiting multiple

**from other luxury high-end properties across the globe?**

There are beautiful hotels worldwide, but I believe what sets us apart is what we call the 'masterpiece circle'. By definition, masterpieces are truly unique examples of rare craftsmanship and are created



Oetker Collection properties while they are travelling around Europe - for instance, they may spend some time in London, then Paris and then onto Germany for a few days.

**What sets Oetker Collection apart**

with almost obsessive attention to detail. Think of a sculpture by Michelangelo. We translate this concept to the world of luxury hospitality.

The foundations of a masterpiece must be there - starting with the best location in



town and super architecture and then we instil bespoke interior design, the highest quality of material, a generous sense of space and compelling operating concepts, from spa to culinary. This is all coupled with excellence in service provided by truly passionate and dedicated team members.

It's the people who imbue a hotel with a soul and our teams embody our company values of family spirit, genuine kindness and elegance. This rare combination of quality and attitude creates something exceptional and defines us.

**Do you expect the Indian market to grow strongly in generating demand for luxury accommodation space in the years to come?**

I believe the Indian luxury travel market will continue to grow at pace, especially as Knight Frank recently shared that the ultra-wealthy population, those with over \$30 million, is set to grow by 58.4% in the next five years. Like many markets, we saw the revenge travel trend take place post Covid. We have also noticed a huge demand for our most spacious suites and private accommodation, as we often see

large groups and multigenerational travel from the market. For Oetker Collection, we are fortunate to offer larger suites than many of our competitors and many of our properties offer private villas.

Like many of our other clients, we know the Indian market values customisation – personalised service is something we pride ourselves on - and they are also seeking comfort and luxury while experiencing and embracing local culture. Our Indian guests tend to be discerning, educated and worldly and want to experience the best wherever they visit. At Oetker Collection, our hotels all have a sense of place tied to the location. The Lanesborough in London, for instance, is an opulent, Regency-style hotel with a butler for each room, so it is very British and regal in feel - and then it boasts one of the most coveted addresses for the city's best shopping and cultural offerings.

**Recently, many luxury hospitality brands like Raffles, Hilton's Waldorf Astoria etc., have announced their plans to introduce their luxurious brands in the Indian market. Do**

**you see an opportunity to introduce your brand in the Indian domestic market?**

India is magnificent and we would love to explore opportunities there at some point. What we do would resonate as we have many loyal and valued clients from the market, but for now, our key focus is on the 11 hotels we have in operation. We just opened Hotel La Palma in Capri this June, marking our first-ever Italian masterpiece hotel. Then next year, all efforts will be on our debut in the US market with our 12th hotel as we open The Vineta in Palm Beach, Florida. As you can imagine, all energies will be spent ensuring these two additions meet and exceed guest expectations.

**Regarding marketing and distribution of your products in the Indian market, what are your focus areas?**

We have an extensive Sales, Marketing and Communication team based in India with offices in Mumbai and New Delhi mainly. We are working closely with them to position Oetker Collection as one of the world's most-loved luxury hotel brands. My team and I and the General Managers of the hotels have also been travelling to India regularly, organising key events over the last few years with special dinners, cocktails and exclusive gourmet activations, bringing some of our top chefs to cook in India.

For example, at the beginning of 2023, we visited the Oberoi Mumbai, where our Executive Chef Olivier Jean from The Woodward Geneva, who received his first Star Michelin at the end of last year, spent three days thrilling guests with a specially curated menu. We hope to revisit this unforgettable dining experience in India but this time in New Delhi. Stay tuned.

# In talks with Sanjay Patti

## GM, Hyatt Centric Janakpuri New Delhi

By: Nitu

**H** Hyatt Centric Janakpuri New Delhi is in the heart of the upscale neighbourhood of Janakpuri in West Delhi. Hyatt Centric Janakpuri New Delhi is an upscale lifestyle hotel conveniently located next to District Centre Complex and Janakpuri West Delhi Metro, close to sightseeing, shopping and everything in between. They have 224 spacious and imaginative rooms, an outdoor pool and Kitchen District, their culinary destination for every occasion, where guests can unwind and experience artisanal cuisines and craft cocktails.

We interviewed Mr Sanjay Patti, General Manager of Hyatt Centric Janakpuri New Delhi, to learn more about the hotel and how they promote themselves.



Mr Sanjay Patti brings over 25 years of rich experience in the hospitality industry and has been associated with Hyatt Hotels Corporation for over 20 years. His first stint was with Taj Hotels Resorts & Palaces in 1997, wherein he looked after the Food & Beverage division for nearly five years before moving to Hyatt. His Hyatt journey began at Goa and he served through the ranks across various positions in the region. He demonstrated a passion for delivering exceptional guest service and experiences. Sanjay's remarkable journey as a General Manager with the brand kicked off in 2015 with Hyatt Centric, Goa pre-opening. With his unwavering dedication and expertise, he has consistently delivered results across several Hyatt brands in India.

### How does Hyatt Centric Janakpuri, New Delhi, stand out in the competition?

Hyatt Centric positions itself at the centre of unique destinations, always in the middle of the action. We are a local home base, preparing our guests to explore the best of our cities that it has to offer so they can go forth and discover. Our hotel primarily caters to business travellers who have easy access to some of West Delhi's key business and market hubs owing to our good connectivity with the Delhi Metro, which no other hotel in the vicinity can offer. We are multifaceted as we focus on delivering huge banquet spaces for social gatherings and local residents seeking a break from a regular day in the city. With easy accessibility to the District Centre, Metro Station and Airport, Hyatt Centric Janakpuri, New Delhi offers seamless and fast access to everything Delhi offers, from famous leisure sites to shopping, nightlife and unique local flavours that characterise the bustling city. Thus, it stands out in the competition with its rich uniqueness with quick on-the-go accessibility.

### What are the USPs that your hotel offers vis-à-vis others in the market?

Hyatt Centric Janakpuri is strategically located close to

the business areas, shopping arcades and residential hubs of West Delhi. The hotel enjoys proximity to any part of Delhi/ NCR through its convenient Delhi Metro connectivity, making this modern hotel a perfect destination for today's fast-paced travellers. We are also the perfect hub for social gatherings, with over 52,000 sq. ft. of event area featuring four indoor and two outdoor venues. The pillarless centric ballroom and spacious halls are fully equipped with state-of-the-art technologies. Distinctive indoor and outdoor event spaces are the key USPs of this hotel, which are ideal for meetings, cocktail dinners, networking events, product launches, fashion shows, training and seminars. All our banquet spaces on the ground floor offer separate entrances for



our guests. The Centric Ballroom, located on the hotel's first floor, offers a ceiling height of 40 feet that features natural light and opens into many functional areas.

**Is F&B (food and beverage) a big revenue earner for the property?**

Food and beverage contribute close to 55% of the total hotel revenue and thus play a crucial role in creating new trends that evoke an emotional response and create powerful memories. With superlative F&B offerings, it drives healthy revenue streams attracting the right customers. West Delhi is famous for its street food. It has evolved as a prime market, resonating with the resounding nightlife and innovative food promotions, directly impacting hotel revenues.

**What is the marketing strategy you have adopted to promote your property?**

We strongly believe that a hotel's marketing plays an incredible part in building a hotel's success story. With key effective marketing strategies, we can always bring in new guests, retain our existing guests, build brand loyalty and increase the hotel's revenue.

With the correct strategy, hotels can enhance performance by targeting the right audiences with engaging campaigns. Our prime focus now remains on tapping the right audience through digital marketing, which has evolved in every industry possible and helps businesses navigate in identifying their key guests, partners etc. Marketing is no longer limited to email campaigns, website optimisation and content creation. Our marketing approach has now shifted to combining all traditional platforms, including outdoor marketing, ads, etc.

We have also started focusing on market research, which helps us understand guest preferences, analysing focus areas through market demographics and tailor-made campaigns. Market Research can help any hotel identify any areas where they are lacking in providing exceptional guest experiences. This helps improve the hotel's overall scores and can help them drive better hotel reviews.

As guest expectations have also now changed, thus, adapting newer methods of marketing plays a crucial role in creating marketing strategies.

**What, according to you, is the latest trend in the hospitality industry?**

With the travel and hospitality industry reaching the pre-Covid levels, travel is one area that will only see an increase with consumers pushing their vacations. The hospitality industry must continue to adapt and meet new traveller expectations, optimise property operations and constantly find ways to increase the hotel's overall revenue. Hotel room rates have continuously seen an increase with high demand. Thus, it is imperative that we continue to personalise and leverage offers which are both fruitful for our guests and for the hotel.

Today every traveller seeks to experience local areas. For us, partnering with local influencers and businesses is a great way to learn about the market trends in the hospitality sector. Guest today wants to maximise their stay in every way possible.

**What are the key challenges that lie ahead for you in the future?**

With the changing time and our changing guest-list, from millennials to Gen Z, the needs of these travellers/customers and their habits have changed too. Understanding the needs and their behaviours will be of key importance. Post that, it is imperative to make sure that we are in a position to meet their needs and demands. □

# Indian Travellers

## Remain Resilient Despite Economic Challenges

By: Rohit Ashok

According to Booking.com's recently released Asia Pacific (APAC) Travel Confidence Index (TCI) 2023 edition, India emerged as the country with the second most confident travellers, closely behind Hong Kong. China comes in third, followed by Singapore and Taiwan. Booking.

climate change and supply chain disruptions, this year's research uncovers a striking paradox. A remarkable 86% of Indian travellers are brimming with optimism about their travel plans, while 61% have no intention of postponing their travel plans in the next 12 months. Even more striking, over half (59%) of

particularly in their approach to planning itineraries and their emphasis on food. More than half (57%) prefer a planned itinerary and make pre-bookings for trip accommodations, activities and dining. This indicates a desire for a structured travel experience and the assurance of securing desired services



com's TCI 2023 surveyed 11 APAC markets. The report offers insights into the mindsets of APAC travellers and the profound impact of economic and global uncertainties on their travel decisions.

Despite complex global challenges, including inflation, geopolitical instability,

these travellers intend to maintain, if not increase, the number of trips they take and 68% intend to increase their travel expenditure budget for the year ahead.

### Travel behaviours

While travelling, Indians exhibit a distinct behaviour that stands out,

in advance. While they are open to exploring different cuisines, a substantial number (60%) consider it crucial to have access to Indian food when deciding on travel plans.

Indian travellers are more inclined to explore their own country (43%)



and foster meaningful connections on their travels (33%). When it comes to destinations they would like to cover domestically, a majority of the respondents (71%) want to travel to North India, 60% lean towards places in South India, 41% West India, 37% North East India, 16% East India and 13% opted for Central India.

### Travel motivators

Travel is one of the most apparent desires of people across the APAC



region, providing an escape from the daily routine. For 3 in 5 APAC travellers, their top motivation to travel is the pursuit of relaxation, rejuvenation and an escape from the chaos of everyday life. However, when it comes to Indian travellers, besides the desire for a relaxing vacation (57%), other travel motivators include the desire to learn about their travel destinations (34%) and to immerse in the local culture (26%).

### Top travel concerns

While there is a strong desire to travel, there are a few travel concerns for travellers in India and across APAC.

- 39% of Indian travellers consider taking time away from work as one of the main challenges when planning a trip (Hong Kong 37%, Singapore 35%)
- 34% have financial concerns when choosing to embark on their travel (Thailand 57%, New Zealand 55%)

• 32% of Indian travellers wishing to travel outside the country are concerned about the complicated, expensive and time-consuming visa processes (Singapore 26%, Vietnam 25%)

• Additionally, environmental issues emerge as another significant concern, reflecting the growing awareness and consciousness towards sustainable travel practices among travellers in the region.

To save on travel costs, 39% stated that they are inclined to plan their trips around travel discounts and deals, 38% would travel during off-peak season and 36% would take advantage of staying with friends or family to save on travel costs.

### Top Places & Activities of Interest While Travelling

When it comes to travel experiences, Indian travellers show a significant inclination towards nature and scenic locations (67%), indicating a desire to immerse themselves in the beauty of natural landscapes, followed by beaches (63%) and food and dining (57%), that also holds a strong appeal. Other activities of interest include tourist attractions & landmarks (56%), local culture & lifestyle (55%) and shopping (52%).

“The survey demonstrated that despite the ongoing global and economic hurdles, there is a prevailing sense of positivity and enthusiasm among travellers. A significant 84% of respondents are actively planning their next trip within the upcoming 12 months,” said Mr Santosh Kumar, Country Manager for India, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Indonesia at Booking.com. “Along with the high travel confidence that places India among the top three countries, Indian travellers are also most keen to prioritise sustainable travel. Our Travel Confidence Index 2023 shows that despite certain macroeconomic headwinds and fewer COVID-19 restrictions, APAC travellers' spirit of adventure and desire to make lifelong travel memories remain unwavering and robust. We are confident that the travel sector will continue to thrive in the years to come with this zest and enthusiasm for travelling among people.” □

# Explore the Unique National Parks in India

## During Summers

By: Nitu

Plenty of National Parks in India are worth visiting during the summertime. Summers are the warmest time of year, but that doesn't mean it's too hot to enjoy the outdoors. In India, many National Parks are in high altitudes with mild and pleasant summers. These parks are also adorned with diverse enthralling wonders of nature. The National Parks in such locations are filled with wonderful wildlife and astonishing natural magnificence. If you want to enjoy a one-of-a-kind wildlife tour, plan to explore these National Parks.

Listed below are some National Parks in India which can be visited during summer: -

### Hemis National Park, Kashmir

In India this is the highest-altitude National Park and the largest national park in India. It is located in the eastern Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir. This park is at an altitude of



12000-20000 feet. The park spans an area of nearly 4400 sq. km. Established in 1981, Hemis National Park is renowned for its pristine alpine landscapes, rugged mountains and diverse wildlife. The park boasts the biggest population of Snow Leopards worldwide. It is home to the endangered Eurasian Brown Bear.

You can catch a glimpse of Tibetan Gazelle, Tibetan Wolf, Red Fox, Ibex, Snow Leopard and Argali. It is also a paradise for birdwatchers, with over 70 species of resident and migratory birds. You will see vibrant wildflowers everywhere, from the snow-capped peaks to glistening glaciers, from meandering rivers to lush valleys.

Visitors to this park can engage in various activities, such as wildlife safaris, trekking, camping and birdwatching. The park offers a unique opportunity to immerse oneself in the Himalayas' serene and untouched wilderness, providing tranquility and rejuvenation.

### Pin Valley National Park, Himachal Pradesh

Pin Valley National Park is in the Spiti Valley of Himachal Pradesh, India. It is located at an altitude of 3,500 to 6,000 metres (11,500 to 20,000 feet). The park is over an area of approximately 675 sq. km. Established in 1987, Pin Valley National Park is a designated biosphere reserve. It is home to various wildlife, including Snow Leopards, the Golden Eagle,



Ibex, Red Fox, Tibetan Gazelles and Brown Bears. It is also known as the land of the Snow Leopard, one of the endangered animals in this world.

This National Park is also home to ancient monasteries, such as the Kungri Monastery and the Dhankar Monastery, which are architectural marvels and important centres of Buddhist learning. These monasteries add a spiritual and cultural dimension to the park, making it a holistic visitor experience.

### **Khangchendzonga National Park, Sikkim**

Khangchendzonga National Park is at an altitude of 9,843 to 27,966 feet. It spans over 1,784 sq. km. and is named after the imposing Mount Khangchendzonga. During the summers, the average temperature remains around 20° C. This park was established in 1977.



This park is a haven for numerous endangered species. The elusive Snow Leopard, Himalayan Black Bear, Red Panda and Musk Deer can be seen here. It is also home to over 550 species of birds, making it a delight for birdwatchers. The colourful Himalayan Monal, Blood Pheasant and Satyr Tragopan are some avian delights that can be spotted here.

The park's diverse ecosystem ranges from temperate forests to alpine meadows and glacial lakes to snow-clad peaks. Towering rhododendron forests, cascading waterfalls and pristine rivers add to the park's natural splendour. The sacred Lake Gurudongmar, one of the highest lakes in the world, is also located within the park's boundaries, attracting pilgrims and nature lovers alike.

### **Gangotri National Park, Uttarakhand**

Gangotri National Park is a magnificent sanctuary encompassing the river Ganges' sacred source. Covering an area of approximately 2,390 sq. km, the park is named after the revered town of Gangotri, a significant Hindu pilgrimage site. This National Park was established in 1989 and is at an altitude of 7,083 m.



This park is a shelter home for Snow Leopard, Musk Deer, Brown Bears, Black Bear, Blue Sheep, Himalayan Snowcock and Himalayan Monal.

The religious and cultural significance of Gangotri National Park cannot be understated. Gangotri, with its ancient temples and spiritual aura, attracts pilgrims from far and wide. The park is an integral part of the Char Dham Yatra, a revered pilgrimage circuit that includes Gangotri, Yamunotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath.

### **Namdapha National Park, Arunachal Pradesh**

It is the third-largest National Park in India. Namdapha National Park is a 1,985 sq. km large, protected area in Arunachal Pradesh. This park, at 4500m altitude, was established in 1983. It nurtures more than a thousand floral and faunal species. The national park harbours the northernmost lowland evergreen rainforests in the world at 27°N latitude. It also harbours extensive dipterocarp forests, comprising the north-western parts of the Mizoram-Manipur-Kachin rain forests eco-region.

Namdapha is home to a wide variety of wildlife, including Tigers, Leopards, Clouded Leopards, Snow Leopards, Elephants, Rhinoceroses, Bears, Primates and many more. It is also one of the few places in the world where the Hoolock Gibbon, the only ape species found in India, can be seen. Namdapha National Park is a truly unique and special place. It is a must-visit destination for anyone interested in wildlife and nature.

A few other names worth mentioning in this list are: The Great Himalayan National Park, Himachal Pradesh; Nanda Devi National Park, Uttarakhand; Dachigam National Park, J&K; Valley of Flowers National Park in Uttarakhand and Singalila National Park in West Bengal. □

# Monsoon Magic

## Must-Visit Destinations in India

By: Divya

India is a land that has marvellous landscapes and regions to explore across all seasons throughout the year. However, monsoons in the country hit something different, the season holds endless moments filled with mesmerising sights and captivating experiences. From lush greenery of the countryside to the soothing sounds of raindrops on historical sites, the monsoon season offers an enchanting adventure for travellers, who can visit places filled with magnificent waterfalls, mysterious hills and rain-kissed cities.

Here is a list of the top places you must visit during this season:

### ZIRO VALLEY, ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Monsoons in the Ziro Valley in Arunachal Pradesh are a spectacle for travellers worldwide, with the rains transforming the region into a paradise. Sitting at an elevation of 5500 feet above sea level, Ziro offers breathtaking scenic beauties ranging from terraced rice fields



to bamboo forests and nature trails. Moreover, the valley is also home to the Talley Wildlife Sanctuary, where tourists can get close to nature and wildlife, sometimes even having the opportunity to spot the elusive clouded leopards.

### ATHIRAPALLY FALLS, KERALA

Located in the verdant forests of Kerala, Athirapally Falls is a natural beauty often dubbed the "Niagara of India". This enchanting waterfall creates an awe-inspiring spectacle for tourists worldwide, with the lush greenery



and wildlife offering visitors a wonderful break from the busy city life. Moreover, the forests surrounding it are home to wild animals, including leopards, elephants and bison. The location is also one of the places where travellers can spot all four South Indian hornbills.

### DZUKOU VALLEY, NAGALAND-MANIPUR BORDER

Situated on the Nagaland-Manipur border, the Dzukou Valley is one place that completely transforms into a magical paradise during the monsoons. Known as the 'Valley of Flowers', the region is one of the most frequently



visited tourist attractions in the Northeast. During the monsoons, the Dzukou Valley comes alive with vibrant greenery and blooming flowers, with the region very famous for its treks.

### AGUMBE, KARNATAKA

Resting in the captivating state of Karnataka, the mystical beauty of Agumbe has a lot of enchanting



adventures for travellers. Travellers visiting the region will experience awe-inspiring landscapes and abundant flora and fauna, with the trip including lush forests, majestic waterfalls, rivers and mist-kissed hills. Agumbe is also rich in biodiversity and famous for its many waterfalls, which include Onake Abbi, Bakarna and Jogi Gundi Falls.

### CHERRAPUNJI, MEGHALAYA

Known as one of the wettest places on the planet, Cherrapunji in Meghalaya is one such region that has monsoon months throughout the year. The place is

of extraordinary allure and serves as an enchanting destination for travellers who can visit the famous living root bridges, a result of bioengineering practised by the locals. The root bridges are crafted by the intertwining



roots of ancient trees. Or be enthralled by the majestic Nohkalikai Falls, gracefully descending from great heights.

### LONAVALA, MAHARASHTRA

With the onset of the monsoon, the Sahyadri mountain ranges and the ghats revive with alluring greenery, breath-taking waterfalls and a pleasant climate. For a quick escape from the bustling city, plan a trip to this quaint destination. Enjoy the extensive view of a stream flowing by at the cliff top called The Tiger Point



and relish in the tranquillity of Karla caves built by the Buddhist monks around the 3rd-2nd century BC. There's a famous waterfall near Bushi Dam, a popular spot for all monsoon lovers. This is among the best places to visit in the rainy season in India. □

# A July in Canberra That Will Warm Your Heart

By: Divya

Winter in Canberra is a captivating season that offers an array of exciting activities for tourists seeking a unique holiday experience. From embracing the great outdoors to indulging in cosy and delicious treats, the Australian capital has something to offer everyone. Whether you're an adventure enthusiast, a foodie or simply searching for a delightful escape, Canberra has covered you. So, bundle up and get ready to explore various kinds of winter wonders this July.

Historically, Madhya Pradesh has

been ruled by many dynasties, who built temples, forts and palaces across their empires in the state.

Dozens of museums across the state are aiding the efforts to document and preserve the history of Madhya Pradesh as it has come down to us in art and sculptures, pottery and fossil, jewellery and weapons. Let's have a look at a few museums in Madhya Pradesh.

### Discover the great outdoors

Despite the cooler temperatures,

Canberra's natural beauty remains ever-enchanting. Lace-up your boots and embark on breath-taking hiking trails, such as the Mount Ainslie Summit Walk (just 10 minutes from the city centre), where you'll be rewarded with panoramic views of the cityscape against the backdrop of snow-capped mountains or if you're feeling more adventurist, you can head out to Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve or Namadgi National Park for a full day's hike or further! For a more leisurely experience, explore the Australian National Botanic Gardens, a mesmerising paradise in the city boasting stunning flora and fauna.

### Cosy up with Canberra's charm

When the chilly weather beckons you indoors, Canberra has an abundance of cosy activities to keep you warm. Spend an afternoon at one of the city's charming cafes, enjoying a steaming cup of locally roasted coffee while immersing yourself in a captivating novel. Explore Old Bus Depot Market's quaint boutiques and antique stores or indulge in a relaxing spa day to rejuvenate your senses.

### Truffle indulgence

Canberra is renowned for its culinary delights and this is the perfect time



to savour the region's most coveted treasure—truffles! Explore the local truffle scene with a visit to one of the many restaurants that offer delectable truffle-infused dishes, ranging from mouth-watering pasta to indulgent desserts. Let your taste buds rejoice as you immerse yourself in this delicacy's rich, earthy flavours. Or, if you're after that authentic paddock-to-plate experience, why not take part in a truffle hunt and degustation at The Truffle Farm or Pialligo Truffles.

**Kid-friendly adventures:**

If you're travelling with the family, Canberra offers various engaging activities to entertain the little ones. From interactive museum exhibits to outdoor ice skating, the capital becomes a winter wonderland for kids of all ages. If you feel like heading indoors, explore Questacon, the



festival, where you can experience enchanting light installations, ice sculptures and thrilling outdoor ice-skating rinks. Immerse yourself in the festive spirit as you explore the bustling markets, sample seasonal

in the Northern Hemisphere. Head to the Christmas in July markets at the Queanbeyan Showground to find all the delights of a mid-year Christmas gathering, including more than 100 market stalls, delicious Christmas food, a carols/karaoke competition and plenty more!



National Science and Technology Centre, where children can participate in hands-on experiments and learn while having a blast.

**Festive cheer**

Winter in Canberra is synonymous with festive celebrations that fill the air with joy and merriment. Take advantage of the city's annual winter

treats and enjoy live performances, amongst other spectacles.

**Celebrate Christmas in July**

One beloved Australian winter tradition is Christmas in July. Because Aussie summers can be scorching, many people like to celebrate a second Christmas in winter, when the weather's a little more like a Christmas

**Canberra Writers Festival**

Canberra is hosting its annual Writers Festival. The festival brings a varied and popular lineup of authors from Canberra, Australia and overseas to inspire and engage audiences with the power of writing. It will be a fascinating program this year; the theme is Power Passion Politics and the festival aims to explore important contemporary issues, reflect on the past and dream about the future. This year, the festival will host more than 70 live events. The concession price for most events is \$20–30, so have your Student ID handy. The world-class literary event will have something for everyone, whether you're a writer yourself or just enjoy reading and engaging with contemporary culture. □

# Prepare for an Extravagant Holiday Experience

By: Nitu

Are you looking for a once-in-a-lifetime vacation? Or do you want to see where the rich and famous go to relax? If so, you may want to consider visiting some of the most expensive holiday destinations in the world. These destinations offer a unique and exclusive travel experience that is sure to impress. Of course, these destinations come with a high price tag. But for those who are willing to splurge, they can be an amazing way to see the world and experience something truly special. If you are looking for a luxurious and unforgettable travel experience, then these destinations may be worth considering. However, it is important to be aware of the high cost of travel before you book your trip.

These are some of the most expensive holiday destinations in the world:-

## New York

New York City is one of the most expensive cities in the world and it is no surprise that it is also one of the most expensive holiday destinations. Being a popular tourist destination, New York receives a high demand for accommodation and other



services. The city has some of the most luxurious hotels, restaurants and shops in the world. With its iconic landmarks, vibrant culture and endless possibilities, New York is a city that will never cease to amaze. From seeing a Broadway show to visiting the Statue of Liberty, there is something for everyone in New York.

The cost of accommodation, food and activities in New York is significantly higher than in most other cities. However, if you are willing to spend extravagantly, New York can be an amazing place to visit.

## Paris

Paris is another tourist destination which is very popular, besides being expensive. This iconic city also offers a wealth of experiences that are simply not available anywhere else in the world. The city offers a wealth of cultural treasures, picturesque streets and world-class cuisine. However, it also



demands a substantial budget to fully indulge in its delights. For a comfortable stay, there are luxurious hotels and quaint boutique apartments. The city boasts an array of Michelin-starred restaurants, elegant cafes and charming bistros, where the culinary scene is a delightful blend of tradition and innovation.



The city's renowned attractions, including the Louvre Museum, Notre Dame Cathedral and Palace of Versailles, often involve purchasing admission tickets or paying for guided tours. Despite its reputation as an expensive destination, Paris continues to allure travellers from around the globe.

### Tuscany

Tuscany, located in central Italy, is renowned for its stunning landscapes, rich history and world-class wine and cuisine. Staying in a charming Tuscan villa with panoramic views of rolling hills and vineyards is undoubtedly a luxurious experience but can come with a hefty price tag. Exploring Tuscany's famous attractions, such as the historic cities of Florence, Siena and



Pisa, often involves purchasing tickets for museums, galleries and landmarks. Exclusive shopping districts, such as Florence's Via de' Tornabuoni, offer a range of luxury brands and high-end fashion.

Tuscany's unique blend of history, art, wine and gastronomy makes it a desirable choice for those seeking a luxurious and unforgettable holiday experience.

### Dubai

Dubai, a gleaming metropolis in the United Arab Emirates, is widely recognised as one of the most expensive holiday destinations in the world. Known for its lavishness, opulent hotels and extravagant attractions, Dubai offers an array of experiences. There are luxurious 5-star hotels to breath-taking resorts, which boast world-class amenities and stunning views of the city or the Arabian Gulf. Staying in these upscale establishments often comes with a premium price, especially for iconic hotels like the Burj Al Arab, known for its unparalleled luxury and service. Dubai's renowned landmarks include the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building and the Palm Jumeirah, an

artificial island in the shape of a palm tree. Dubai's reputation as a shopping paradise is well-deserved, with its vast malls, designer boutiques and high-end brands.

Despite its high costs, Dubai offers a unique blend of modernity, luxury and cultural experiences that continue to captivate travellers. The city's stunning architecture, pristine beaches and world-class entertainment make it a desirable destination for those seeking an extravagant and unforgettable holiday.

### Oslo

Oslo, the capital city of Norway, is often considered one of the most expensive holiday destinations. Known for its high quality of life, stunning natural beauty and rich cultural heritage, Oslo offers an array of experiences that come with a premium price tag. Upscale hotels, boutique accommodations and luxury apartments offer comfortable and stylish stays but charge higher rates compared to other destinations. Popular



landmarks such as the Oslo Opera House, Vigeland Sculpture Park and the Viking Ship Museum often require entrance fees. The city is known for its contemporary design stores, high-quality Norwegian brands and unique boutiques.

Oslo's stunning natural landscapes, well-preserved historical sites and vibrant cultural scene make it a captivating city to explore. A visit to Oslo offers an opportunity to immerse oneself in this distinctive city's charm, experience the Norwegian way of life and create lasting memories.

The world is dotted with several destinations that are renowned for their luxurious offerings but come with a hefty price tag. While they may be costly, the allure and grandeur of these destinations continue to captivate those who are willing to splurge for an exclusive and extravagant holiday experience. □

# Beyond Skiing and Snowboarding – Off-Beat Activities in New Zealand

By: Radhika

**T**o all winter lovers, step into a world of enchantment as New Zealand's alpine landscapes embrace a mesmerising winter wonderland from June to October. Beyond the exhilaration of skiing and snowboarding ingrained in Kiwi culture, an array of captivating experiences awaits in wintertime exploration. Marvel at the awe-inspiring migration of majestic humpback whales gracefully traversing towards tropical waters. Embark on a scenic train odyssey through celestial alpine vistas, evoking a sense of pure wonder. And behold the celestial spectacle of the Matariki cluster ascending, a celestial dance that leaves you spellbound.

Unveiling New Zealand's cherished winter activities, this handpicked list extends far beyond traditional winter sports, offering extraordinary adventures that will ignite your wanderlust.

## Glacier hiking and Ice climbing

Glacier hiking and Ice climbing in New Zealand are considered to be among the best in the world, as one gets to explore breathtaking landscapes that will leave everyone in awe. There are opportunities to experience the glaciers for people with all ability levels. You can follow the walking tracks up to the terminus of



either glacier for a close-up view or hike through the bush to a viewing point. And if touching the ice is on your bucket list, then a guided tour (with all equipment included) will allow you to get up onto the glacier face.

## Fox Glacier Guiding, West Coast

To see Fox Glacier, you can head towards Lake Matheson on Cook Flat Road for magnificent views. You can arrange an ice-hiking adventure or book a scenic flight. Embark on a mesmerizing helicopter journey from the base, where you'll be transported to a remote and exceptionally stunning section of the glacier. Immerse yourself in an unforgettable experience on the



ice, creating memories that will last a lifetime. After your awe-inspiring time on the glacier, enjoy a second scenic helicopter ride that will bring you back to the base in the heart of the charming Fox Glacier township. There are glow worm caves just a short walk from the town centre, where you can also find a good choice of cafes and restaurants. Close to Fox Glacier is beautiful Lake Matheson, one of the most photographed lakes in New Zealand. On a clear day, it reflects Mount Cook.

## Franz Josef Glacier Guides, West Coast

Franz Josef Glacier is five kilometres from the town of the same

name and a 1.5-hour walk will take you to within 750m of its terminal face. If you want to make contact with the glacier, take a heli-hike or a guided ice walk. Embark on a thrilling glacier climbing expedition, renowned for offering some of the world's finest experiences. Your adventure commences with a comprehensive briefing at the Glacier Base Building, where an experienced guide will equip you with all the necessary gear for your ice-climbing expedition. Aerial sightseeing is another option.

There's a range of natural attractions like rainforests, waterfalls and lakes in close proximity to Franz Josef Glacier Village. In the town, you'll find plenty of places to stay and eat or explore the wildlife centre. At nearby Lake Mapourika, you can take a kayak tour or rent a stand-up paddleboard.

### Winter stargazing

Dark, clear skies, unique celestial features and otherworldly landscapes make winter stargazing in New Zealand a breathtakingly magical experience. In New Zealand, the winter months bring forth the emergence of Matariki, experience a mesmerising cluster of stars that graces the early morning sky at the below locations:

- **Chameleon Stargazing, Canterbury**

Immerse yourself in a 90-minute astronomy adventure alongside fellow stargazing enthusiasts (maximum 12 participants) and you will be treated to captivating insights about the night sky and get a chance to observe deep sky objects through an impressive 9.25-inch telescope and warm blankets to ensure you can fully enjoy the celestial spectacle. As the tour ends, enhance your comfort with outdoor furniture, cosy pillows and comfortable mattresses and gather around the cosy fire bowl, where you can bond with friends and family while roasting delicious marshmallows. It's a magical experience you won't want to miss!

- **Tekapo Star Gazing, Lake Tekapo**

Tekapo Star Gazing combines the stunning Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve with the soul-warming hot pools of Tekapo Springs. A 2-hour tour, the first half begins with an introduction to the night sky with star gazing guides and is complemented by looking through high-powered telescopes pointed at interesting features of the night sky. Then let the real world melt away as you relax in the hot pools on a floating hammock to ensure easy sky viewing. You'll feel like

floating among the stars while your guide tells stories combining astronomy with local tales and Maori myths.

### Geothermal walks:

New Zealand's geothermal activity is truly captivating. Within these remarkable geothermal areas, one can encounter bubbling mud pools and awe-inspiring geysers, providing a first-hand encounter with the Earth's raw power. To fully immerse yourself in these extraordinary natural phenomena, embarking on a geothermal walk is a fantastic choice. Witness first-hand the incredible wonders that New Zealand's geothermal landscapes have to offer by visiting the below locations:

- **Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland, Rotorua**

Prepare to be astounded by the breath-taking beauty of Waiotapu Thermal Wonderland, an extraordinary display of New Zealand's vibrant and extraordinary geothermal features crafted over countless millennia of geothermal activity. Its unique features include the world-famous Champagne Pool, naturally



coloured springs, bubbling mud, steaming ground, expansive vistas, huge volcanic craters and sinter terrace formations. Visitors can choose one or all of three walks which take between 45 and 90 minutes.

- **Waimangu Volcanic Valley, Rotorua**

Take an eco-focused nature walk or hike through the spectacular Waimangu Volcanic Valley thermal park. This trail will wind down to the serene lake, where a delightful 45-minute cruise awaits you on the tranquil waters of Lake Rotomahana. As you embark on this leisurely cruise, prepare to witness captivating geothermal activity that can only be accessed by boat, unveiling a hidden world of natural wonders. Along the way, keep an eye out for the presence of rare native bird species, adding an extra touch of enchantment to your experience. □

# TAAI's 67<sup>th</sup>

## Annual Convention in Colombo will boost Sri Lanka's Tourism Sector

By: Rohit Ashok

**T**he Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) concluded its 67th annual convention in Colombo, marking a significant milestone in the collaborative efforts to support Sri Lanka's tourism sector. With the Sri Lankan government's ongoing endeavours to revive tourism, the convention is expected to play a crucial role in boosting the industry.

The four-day convention, held in partnership with the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB) and the Sri Lankan Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO), has brought together over 500 delegates, including travel agents, tour operators, industry experts and media personnel. Under the theme of "Transcending Borders, Transforming Lives," the convention aims to explore opportunities for regional cooperation and discuss strategies to facilitate cross-border travel, trade and investment.

The convention provided a platform for participants to exchange ideas, explore emerging trends and strengthen connections within the travel and tourism industry.

Addressing the press conference during the convention's official opening, Ms Jyoti Mayal, President of TAAI, expressed optimism about the future of tourism between



India and Sri Lanka. She stated, "I am confident that Sri Lanka is going to receive many more tourists in the days to come," highlighting the potential for strengthened tourism ties between the two nations.



Ms Mayal asserted the significance of collaboration among stakeholders at various levels to adopt a holistic approach, integrating policies, regulations, incentives, standards, technologies and best practices. This approach, she pointed out, would contribute to the sustainable growth of the tourism industry in the region.

She referred to the event as a "resounding success" and emphasised its significance in transcending borders and transforming lives. The convention facilitated networking and showcased the diversity and potential of the Indian and Sri Lankan travel market.

The convention's opening ceremony was graced by the presence of Sri Lankan President Mr Ranil Wickremesinghe as the Chief Guest. The historic BMICH venue witnessed vibrant cultural performances by a troupe of artists, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of Sri Lanka. A video presentation by the SLTPB also outlined the Sri Lankan government's vision to revitalise the tourism sector and restore it to full operation.

Mr Gopal Bagley, the High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka, also attended the inaugural ceremony and addressed the delegates. Bagley highlighted the improved air connectivity between India and Sri Lanka, including the



resumption of air services between Chennai and Jaffna. He shared that both governments are trying to establish ferry services between Karaikal in the Union Territory of Puducherry and Kankesanthurai (KKS) in Jaffna, enhancing

connectivity and promoting people-to-people exchanges.

Mr Nishad Wijetunga, President of SLAITO, expressed enthusiasm about the event, highlighting the association's long-standing relationship with TAAI. He noted that hosting the convention reflected Sri Lanka's resilience and recovery following the challenges faced in the past.

Mr Chalaka Gajabahu, Chairman of SLTPB, shared that the island nation, for the first time in 15 years, is going to implement a comprehensive 360-degree marketing



strategy targeting key international source markets, with a particular emphasis on India and China. As part of these efforts, approximately 1,000 social media influencers from around the world will be hosted to showcase the diverse tourism offerings in Sri Lanka.

"The forthcoming Asia Cup cricket tournament is an excellent opportunity to attract Indian tourists, especially during the highly anticipated India-Pakistan matches," said Mr Gajabahu. He praised the contributions of Sri Lankan cricket legend Mr Sanath Jayasuriya, who serves as a tourism ambassador, for promoting Sri Lanka's tourism initiatives in India.

As the convention progresses, industry professionals and experts will engage in fruitful discussions, fostering stronger partnerships and paving the way for a prosperous tourism industry in both nations. □

# Advantages of Exploring Timeshare Travel through

# RCI

## Compared to Traditional Vacationing

By: Divya

**A**fter World War II, the desire of Americans to get away from it all and a booming economy fuelled the growth of vacation homes and condominiums in popular tourist locations around the nation and outside. The US timeshare industry originated in the mid-1970s when banks started

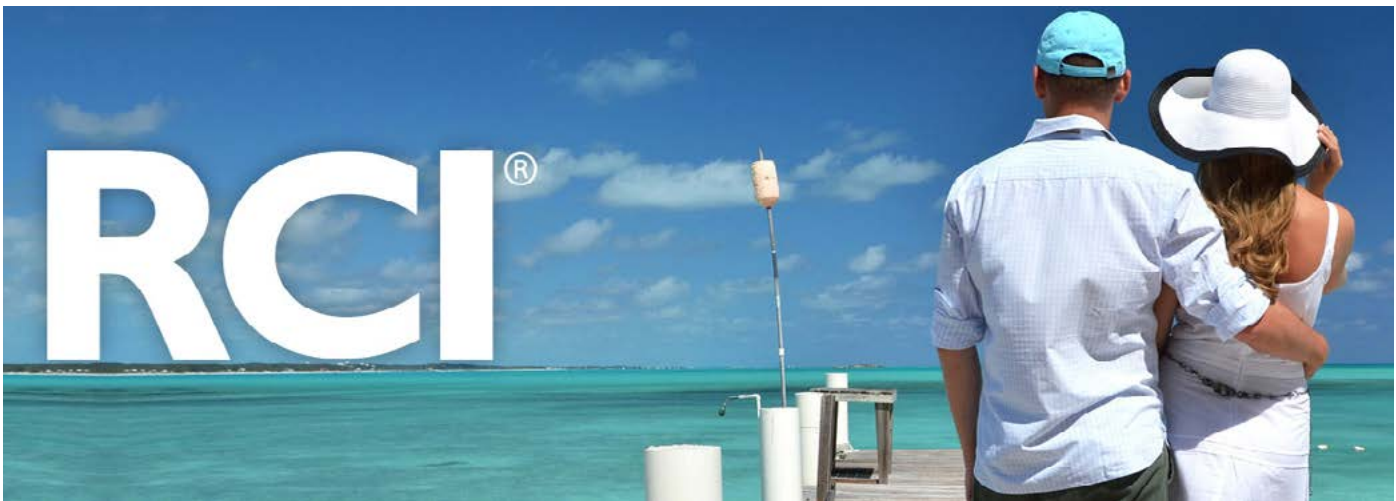
international destinations.

Here, RCI uncovers the key reasons why we should start looking at Timeshare travel over regular travel.

RCI is the new shape of travel™. As the worldwide leader in membership travel services to the vacation

### Timeshares are Cost-Effective:

One disadvantage of vacation is that you must pay for everything every time. If you decide to go on vacation four times this year, each time for a week, you will have to pay for your hotel and other accommodation for four weeks. This can quickly add up depending on the hotel you choose



turning condominiums into timeshare resorts due to overbuilding that left more units than could be occupied. Timeshare, also known as Vacation Ownership, gives consumers the opportunity to own condominium-style accommodations at quality resorts, which typically offer an array of amenities in popular domestic and

ownership industry, the company offers the industry's leading vacation exchange platform to its 3.7 million members around the world, providing access to more than 4,200 affiliated resorts in approximately 110 countries. RCI Travel offers enhanced travel services allowing its members to travel year-round flexibly.

and where you go. However, if you own a timeshare, the more you use it, the more you get out of the money you paid for it. As a result, money is saved.

According to an analysis by the Timeshare Users Group (2022), 95.90% of respondents preferred

timeshares over hotel rooms. Additionally, the analysis found that the majority of timeshare owners feel they save money on vacations, with only 20% of owners reporting that they do not save any money with their Timeshare.

**Flexible Vacation Options:** Vacation owners also enjoy the peace-of-mind Timeshare provides when travelling each year. They don't have to deal with the stress of planning a vacation and booking accommodation. They know they have a place to return to each year.

**No-Maintenance Ownership:**

While you will be financially responsible for maintaining and improving the timeshare property through annual dues, you will not be required to handle maintenance or improvements personally. The timeshare company will do these things. This lack of responsibility can greatly



benefit timeshare ownership as long as it is done well. Having a vacation home or condo you own, completely comes with additional responsibilities.

**World-Class Amenities:** Timeshare accommodations offer spacious floor plans and home-like amenities compared to traditional hospitality

products like hotels and may include kitchens, laundry facilities, living room space and multiple bedrooms - all in the privacy of the owner's unit. At the same time, through timeshare exchange companies like RCI, owners have the flexibility to vacation at resorts all over the world. Today, tens of millions of timeshare owners enjoy vacation ownership at properties developed by some of the best-known hospitality brands in the world.

According to a recent report from the ARDA International Foundation (AIF), the International Foundation for Timeshare (ITF), to fulfil the research needs of the fast-evolving timeshare industry, young generations are the fastest-growing purchasers of vacation ownership. In 2022, Gen Z and millennials accounted for more than half of all timeshare owners (57 per cent) and more than half of new sale purchasers (53 per cent). This continues a trend seen over the last 16 years since AIF first began conducting owner studies of a steady decrease in the age of owners. □



Most Accessible

# International Holiday

## Destinations & Ideas for Upcoming Long Weekends

By: Divya

**Y**ou may be a last-minute packer or a meticulous planner. Long weekends get everyone revved up. A shared element among travellers is the desire to visit a location that offers distinctive encounters while minimising the challenges related to visa processes, language barriers and long-haul flights. With two long weekends coming up – August 12 - 16 and August 26 - 30 – plan strategically. We have compiled the ultimate wish list for you and now it's up to you to take care of your leave application. Whether you prefer to travel solo, going on a trip with friends, enjoying a family vacation or seeking thrilling experiences, these conveniently located countries have plenty to offer.

### Seychelles

Perched near the equator on the Indian Ocean, Seychelles is an excellent holiday destination with pleasant weather



throughout the year. Indians can enjoy a visa-free holiday in Seychelles with a direct 4.5-hour flight from Mumbai to Mahé on Air Seychelles, the country's national carrier. Other airlines like Air India, IndiGo, Emirates, Ethiopian and Qatar Airways also offer connecting flights from different hubs in India. While the official languages in Seychelles are Seychellois Creole, English is widely spoken and understood. So, Indian tourists can easily communicate with locals and navigate the destination without language barriers. Travellers can exchange Indian Rupees for Seychellois Rupees at authorised currency exchange counters in airports, hotels or banks. Carrying cash in small denominations is better, as not all local establishments accept cards. Comprising 115 islands, Seychelles is the perfect destination for island hopping. From the inner islands like Mahé, Praslin and La Digue to outer islands like Aldabra Atoll and Desroches Island, each offers a unique escape to the world of tropical wonders. No matter where you are in Seychelles, you can be sure of finding world-class water-based activities such as diving, snorkelling, kayaking, surfing and sailing.

### Thailand

Thailand is one of the most easily accessible and affordable holiday destinations with stunning scenic and culinary experiences. Just a 4-hour flight away, there are many flight options from India's marquee cities to Bangkok and Phuket. The Southeast Asian kingdom has also introduced the e-Visa-on-Arrival to make the visa acquisition process hassle-free for Indians. The country also has a range of affordable accommodations, transportation and food options, making it a budget-friendly





destination. Being a tourism-driven country, tour guides, hotels, hospitality employees and even local vendors in Thailand can communicate in English, thus making it much easier for Indian tourists to navigate. Indian rupee can be exchanged in most major Thai banks and money exchange centres. While ATMs and exchange desks at Thai airports offer this service on the go, it comes with a significant surcharge.

### Vietnam

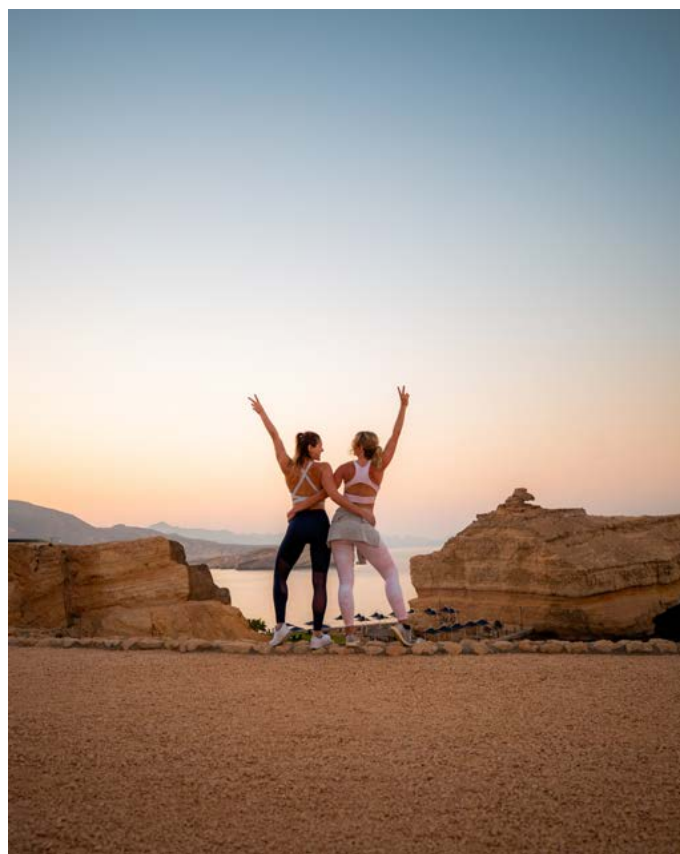
Vietnam is also one of the more proximate destinations to India. Vietnam Airlines and VietJet offer direct flights from Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata to Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Phu Quoc. You can apply for the e-Visa on their official website, pay a nominal fee and receive the visa within four working days. Vietnam is a tourism-driven country; therefore, local tour guides and vendors can converse in English. Foreign currencies can be easily exchanged for Vietnamese Dong at airports, banks or other authorised currency exchange jewellery shops in the



country. Vietnam has much to offer beyond the touristy traps, especially the Mui Ne and Nha Trang coastal towns. If you stay at an all-inclusive hotel such as The Anam Vietnam, which is easily accessible from Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, not only you enjoy the best-in-class culinary experiences, but you can also visit the historical vestiges of the past Champa Kingdom that ruled south-central Vietnam and has an ancient Indian connect. You can visit the centuries-old Phan Thiet city and its Hamu Lithit community. Named by the Cham people, it leapt on the global radar in 1995 due to a rare solar eclipse sighting. Adventure seekers can enjoy a desert safari in white and red dunes, visit the fairy stream and even a fish sauce museum.

### Oman

Oman is an exotic destination replete with incredible attractions and unique experiences. Its capital Muscat is a gem for travellers seeking a culturally immersive vacation. The port city is famous for its vibrant souq and seafood. It is also a great place to trek, spot dolphins and indulge in Omani hospitality at clifftop resorts like Shangri-La Muscat. This resort's private beach is one of Oman's top



five turtle nesting sites. If you visit between February and September, you can witness more than 100 turtles from the endangered hawksbill and green turtle species and their hatchlings returning to the sea. You can join hands with the hotel's Turtle Ranger to protect their nests. The Oman Electronic Visa (eVisa) allows Indian citizens to apply for an Omani visa online in minutes by paying the fee and getting it via email within five business days. Oman Air, Air India, Vistara and IndiGo offer direct flights. English is widely spoken and the Indian rupee can be exchanged for Omani Rial at airports, money exchange companies, banks and hotels at a standardised rate.

### Qatar

Ranked as the safest country five times in a row by Numbeo Crime Index 2023, Qatar is a vibrant desert peninsula surrounded by a spectacular coastline full of



natural and cultural wonders. The national carrier, Qatar Airways, connects Doha to more than 160 destinations across six continents. Qatar is easily accessible due to a free visa-on-arrival provision for citizens of over 95 countries, including India and an average of 3-5 hours flight distance from anywhere in the world. The visa application process for all other nationalities is simple with the refreshed Hayya platform. With a range of assets, including world-class hotels, restaurants, beaches and a bustling atmosphere, Qatar offers the best of the Middle East all in one safe and accessible place. As a country, Qatar has the perfect mix of indoor entertainment along with outdoor sun, sea and sand activities making it an excellent fit for all kinds of travellers and budgets.

Furthermore, Hamad International Airport, Doha, retains its title as 'Best Airport in the Middle East' and has also been awarded 'Third Best Airport in the World', per the Skytrax World Airport Awards. Bollywood has a strong influence on the culture; thus, encounters with Hindi-



speaking locals are common. Qatar is blessed to have year-round pleasant weather for all kinds of activities and its strategic location also allows it to be a good stop-over destination. Modernity and tradition converge in Qatar, making it a top-notch destination for all.

### Mauritius

Mauritius, a tropical paradise known for its cultural diversity and enchanting natural attractions, offers a hassle-free Visa-on-Arrival process for Indian travellers with basic document requirements. Various airlines like Vistara, IndiGo, Air Mauritius, Air Seychelles and Emirates connect India to this captivating island nation. A wonderful accommodation option is The Residence Mauritius, where you can enjoy a harmonious blend of modernity and tradition. The architectural style of this beachfront property draws inspiration from historic plantation houses. In addition to engaging in water-based activities, there are several noteworthy places to explore, including Sancho Island, Riviere des Galets Beach, Black River Gorges, Gris Gris and Vanilla Nature Park. A visit to Chamarel is highly recommended to marvel at the multi-coloured dunes. Hindi, one of the languages brought by Indian migrants in the early 1800s, is widely spoken in Mauritius, making it convenient for Indian visitors. □



## Launches New Trip Planning Secret Weapon

By: Nitu

The summer travel season is here and despite price hikes, flight prices have increased by around 6% year over year for domestic travel and 10% for international travel in the second half of the year. According to KAYAK search data, people continue to prioritise travel, with searches on KAYAK increasing by around 47% for domestic travel and about 16% for international travel vs. last year.

To help travellers continue to navigate some of the increased pricing, KAYAK, the world's leading travel search engine, is launching a new "Best Time to Travel tool" as the go-to place to start your trip planning, uncovering optimal times of the year to fly and when-to-book-by, for a great price and trip experience.

With over 280,000 routes to choose from, KAYAK's 'Best Time to Travel' tool incorporates predictive data from KAYAK's billions of travel queries to forecast future flight and hotel prices so travellers can easily compare pricing against weather and seasonality information to determine the best time to travel for their next trip. Let's give it a whirl.

### Step 1: Enter Your Destination - Learn About the Best Month to Travel

KPlug in your home airport, final destination and choose from KAYAK's most popular trip lengths (i.e. are you travelling for 4, 7 or 14 days). KAYAK will return the best month to visit based on a number of factors, including price, crowds and weather. For example, for Delhities (from New Delhi), March is the best month to visit Toronto for a seven-day trip (one of KAYAK's most popular summer travel destinations) for low flight prices, good weather and fewer crowds.

Travellers can also view a breakdown of the average, minimum and maximum flight prices for every month of the

year. Continuing our theme, flight prices to Toronto are generally highest during the summer months (May through August) and cheapest during the low season months like March.

### Step 2: Narrow Down Your Travel Dates

Now that you've nailed down which month to travel in, it's time to figure out which days to fly at the best price. KAYAK's calendar view provides a yearly overview of how flight prices change depending on your chosen dates. For example, for a 7-day trip to Toronto, leaving on March 6 and returning on March 20 to March 26 will be your best bet.

### Step 3: Time Your Booking Window to Maximise Savings

Once you know where and when you're going, it's time to figure out when to book. And guess what? KAYAK's new tool has you covered here too. Recommended dates from KAYAK will automatically populate and the tool will advise you on the best day to book your flight and hotel before prices rise. For a 7-day trip to Toronto, KAYAK recommends booking your flight in October.

Mr Tarun Tahiliani, Country Manager – KAYAK, said, "At KAYAK, every tech-backed tool is built to make travel simpler, cheaper and more efficient for users, be it our travel search engine that finds the great deals or the price alert that makes it easy to lock in the best price. The 'Best Time To Travel' tool is our next natural progression since it addresses a key pain point – uncertainty while planning. Using our search data, including weather forecasts, price forecasts, projected crowds and much more, we're removing the guesswork for the travel planning process. With our predictive analysis, travellers can rest assured that they're choosing the best month to travel and the most economical booking window. We're using our data to give travellers the information they need to make decisive actions and ultimately simplify the planning process for everyone." □

# The Best of Tri-Valley Summers

By: Divya

Summertime in the Tri-Valley means day trips to the lake, scenic drives up to Mt. Diablo State Park's summit and spine-tingling plummets down the waterslides at The Wave. Between warm, sunny weather and fun seasonal festivities, summertime is one of the best times to visit the Tri-Valley. Take advantage of these top summertime must-sees and must-dos below!

## See Shakespeare in The Vineyard

For nearly 20 years, Shakespeare's Associates, Inc, dba Shakespeare & Performing Arts Regional Company (SPARC), has built a community in the region by producing high-quality



theatrical experiences in vineyards, public establishments, performing arts venues, schools, colleges and universities. In 2020, SPARC was named Best in the East Bay's "Best Live Theater" for a third consecutive year by the readers of the East Bay Times. Shakespeare in the Vineyard is a week-long summertime line-up of live theatrical performances. Classic and modern Shakespearean-inspired works are performed beneath the stars at the picturesque Darcie Kent Winery each year.

## Rent A Boat at Lake Del Valle

Del Valle Regional Park is a haven for recreational activities during the summer. Rent kayaks, bikes, stand-up paddle boards and lawn games from Outback Adventures near the swimming beach on the lake's northeast side. Deep in a valley framed by oak-covered hills, with sailboats and sailboards skimming over its waters, Del Valle is like



a lakeside resort only 10 miles south of Livermore. The centerpiece of the park is a lake five miles long with a variety of water-oriented recreation, from swimming to windsurfing and boating, surrounded by 4,395 acres of beautiful land for hiking, horseback riding and nature study. Del Valle also is the eastern gateway to the Ohlone Wilderness Trail, 28 miles of scenic back-country trail.

## Go Summer Stargazing

With virtually zero light pollution for 100 miles south, Del Valle Regional Park is one of the best places in the Bay Area to stargaze. Reserve a camping spot to view



the skies inside the park or watch from the outskirts just up the road from the entrance gates.

### Water Slides at The Wave

The City of Dublin is proud to bring you The Wave, its newest and most exciting community facility. The Wave is a 31,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art aquatics facility anchored by a natatorium (indoor pool), outdoor



sports pool, waterslide tower, and splash zone with water play features. Rent poolside loungers and cabanas for an extra convenient and comfortable visit.

### Concerts in the Park

Every Friday evening throughout the summer, local bands take the stage at Lions Wayside Park for a night of music and dancing in the heart of downtown Pleasanton.

Grab dinner on Main Street just around the corner, then head to the park for a night of free and fun entertainment.

In 1984, the City Council recognised this special business area by creating the Pleasanton Downtown Association (PDA). The PDA operates as an assessment district to



develop and promote a vibrant downtown community. It is a non-profit organisation with funding provided by member assessments, matching City funds, sponsorships and revenue-producing events.

As a Main Street Community, the PDA is organised under a four-point strategy incorporating the elements of organisation, economic restructuring, promotion and design or physical appearance. Successful implementation of this strategy involves a mutual effort by the PDA staff, business owners, property owners, Associate members and community volunteers.

### Explore Mt. Diablo

Mount Diablo State Park features miles of interconnected trails and views of the entire San Francisco Bay Area, making it a summer hotspot for hiking, biking, camping, and more. Explore Rock City's ancient wind caves or the "Trail of Time". Head up to the Summit Visitor Centre, where you can stand on the summit of the Bay Area's tallest peak. Mt. Diablo State Park is home to a variety of outdoor recreational activities, unique geological landmarks, rare plant and animal species and 20,000 acres of explorable terrain. □

# Where East Meets West

By: Rohit Ashok

**L**OT Polish Airlines, a member of Star Alliance, operates daily nonstop flights from Delhi and Mumbai to Warsaw, offering travellers from India easy access to one of the most fascinating European capitals. Travellers from India can immerse themselves in Warsaw's vibrant fusion of cultures, where East meets West – and where history meets modern city life with shopping, dining and lots of unique experiences.

As the proud recipient of the esteemed "Best European Destination 2023" award, Warsaw represents

heritage through opulent interiors and exquisite artworks. The Museum of Warsaw offers a vivid journey through the city's past, with artifacts and exhibits that bring history to life.

## Gateway to the rich heritage and modernity

Shopaholics will be delighted by Warsaw's diverse and vibrant shopping scene. Nowy Swiat Street, with its stylish boutiques, international brands and charming cafes, offers a wide array of options. For an authentic shopping experience, the historic Old Town Market Square

design, catering to a variety of tastes.

The charm of Warsaw's Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, lies in its meticulously restored buildings and picturesque cobblestone streets that transport visitors back in time. The colourful facades, historic churches and the lively ambience of the city's charming cafes and restaurants create an immersive experience worth exploring. Outside the city centre is the majestic Wilanów Palace, a baroque residence surrounded by beautifully landscaped gardens, offering a serene escape from bustling city life.

## A culinary fusion of cultures

Polish cuisine, renowned for its hearty and flavourful dishes, has something to offer, including many vegetarian options. Indulge in traditional Pierogi, delectable dumplings with various fillings or savour the famous Zurek, a sour rye soup that can be prepared in a vegetarian version. Polish cuisine also boasts a wide range of delicious salads, fresh vegetable dishes and mouth-watering desserts.

When it comes to dining in Warsaw, there are several notable restaurants worth exploring:

**Dawat** is a more upscale restaurant that serves traditional Indian cuisine in a luxurious setting. Definitely one



Poland's rich heritage and modernity. Travellers will be captivated by the city's enchanting landmarks, such as the meticulously reconstructed Royal Castle, showcasing Poland's regal

features local handicrafts, unique souvenirs and traditional Polish products. Additionally, the Złote Tarasy shopping centre combines world-class fashion with modern

of the best of its kind in Poland. Vege Miasto is a newer vegetarian restaurant that prides itself on offering creative and flavourful plant-based dishes. Their menu changes seasonally, so there's always something new to try. U Fukiera, a Michelin-starred establishment, offers an elegant setting where guests can savour the best Polish cuisine. Zapiecek, a cherished local restaurant chain with multiple locations, has been delighting patrons with a diverse selection of traditional Polish dishes for over a century. Bollywood Lounge Warsaw, for Indian and fusion dishes, plus DJ sets, party nights & dance shows.

**Travelling in style, flying in comfort**

LOT Polish Airlines provides daily nonstop flights from India to Warsaw: Every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from Delhi; every Sunday and Wednesday from



Warsaw during lunchtime, giving travellers plenty of time to reach their hotel downtown from the airport and start exploring this unique city.

On all flights from India, LOT Polish

making travelling more relaxing. On the routes from Delhi and Mumbai, LOT Polish Airlines offers three classes of service: LOT Business Class, LOT Premium Economy Class and LOT Economy Class. Passengers



Mumbai. India-originating flights depart mid-morning and arrive in

Airlines operates a modern Boeing 787 Dreamliner with many amenities,



can opt for Indian dishes catered by well-known Taj Sats and they can also enjoy Indian movies and music in the in-flight entertainment program.

The flights from Delhi and Mumbai to Warsaw are available for sale through all major distribution channels. □

# Travel friendly gadgets

for hassle free vacation

By: Rohit Ashok

**T**ravelling is all about taking a break and disconnecting from daily life, but that doesn't mean you must leave all your electronic gadgets at home. Whether planning a big family vacation abroad or being a frequent traveller for work, many handy travel accessories can make travelling so much easier.

That's why we've compiled this list of the best travel electronics and tech gadgets that you must carry and save extra room for in your luggage.

## GaN Pro travel adapter

Syska Accessories, a leading brand of innovative and high-quality accessories for electronic devices, has recently announced the launch of its latest product - the GaN Pro



travel adapter. With an ideal solution for all your charging needs, this Made-in-India adapter makes for the perfect travel companion. The compact and lightweight solution

provides fast and efficient charging for multiple devices simultaneously.

All the variants of the adapters offer short-circuit protection for enhanced safety during fluctuations while charging. Both variants of 65W offer advanced temperature control along with overcurrent protection. The Syska 33W travel adapter has a 3.5A Type-C to Type-C cable that enables fast charging up to 3.5A output. The 20W and 33W adapters provide flexibility to use multiple devices simultaneously, as dual ports (PD+USB) offer convenience and fast charging. The two adapters have been incorporated with over-temperature protection, making it a reliable and safe choice for all charging needs.

Additionally, the adapters have been equipped with overvoltage protection, ensuring the safety of the devices during voltage spikes. The travel adapter has a warranty of up to 2 years from the date of purchase and is available in the colour 'White'.

## GOVO GoBuds 945

GOVO GoBuds 945 earbuds boast dynamic 12mm drivers that deliver deep bass and true audio, providing an immersive and rich sound experience. It has an impressive battery life of up to 52 hours, powered by a 400mAh battery capacity and supported by Type-C input; it ensures uninterrupted music playback for extended periods. GOVO GoBuds 945 is equipped with 4 Mic Environmental Noise Cancellation (ENC), the earbuds ensure crystal clear call quality by effectively reducing background noise and enhancing voice clarity. With the Chrome X technology finish, GoBuds 945 features a premium design, combining style and durability to enhance your listening experience with elegance. The earbuds have





the latest Bluetooth version of V5.3, offering up to 30 feet of seamless connectivity. With a simple touch, the earbuds allow you to effortlessly access and utilise your Google or Siri voice assistant and with the touch control feature on the GOVO GoBuds 945, users can conveniently interact with their earbuds, allowing them to seamlessly navigate through music tracks, adjust volume and answer calls. The earbuds provide a fast charge feature, allowing you to enjoy uninterrupted music for extended periods without a lengthy charging session. It is one of the best choices for your travel.

### Anker Soundcore Life P2i Earbuds

They're portable, comfortable and offer a great listening experience without the hassle of wires. One of the most popular affordable options on the market right



now is the Anker Soundcore Life P2. They're sweat and water-resistant, have a long battery life and offer noise-cancellation technology. Light and compact enough for travel without sacrificing audio quality, in-ear headphones are perfect for more or less every situation you can think of throwing at them – running, biking, hiking or simply walking around town. These earphones have a lot to offer. Comfortable to wear for extended periods, these earphones also produce impressive sound quality with a sound signature that is true to life.

### SanDisk Extreme PRO® Portable SSD V2

SanDisk Extreme PRO® Portable SSD V2 is a powerful SSD offering 2000MB/s read/write speeds in a portable drive that's reliable enough to take on any adventure. It comes with up to two-meter drop protection and IP55



water and dust resistance and a handy carabiner loop for securing your belt or backpack; in other words, it is rugged enough to take anywhere. It comes in massive up to 4TB capacity. This light and small form factor device is a perfect gift to match the on-the-go lifestyle.

### SanDisk Ultra® Dual Drive Go USB Flash Drive

If your partner loves to make memories without worrying about deleting them due to lack of space on your phone. The SanDisk Ultra® Dual Drive Go USB Flash Drive is a perfect choice to help them easily store and transfer memories. They can move files between USB Type-C smartphones, tablets, Macs and USB Type-A computers. There is no need to choose which pictures or files to save and which ones to delete. They can simply plug in the SanDisk Ultra Dual Drive Go USB Flash Drive



and easily move files from their smartphone, freeing up valuable space. With all that extra space, they can make more memories!

### Blaupunkt Atomik Series BB25 and BB50 Boomboxes

Blaupunkt, the iconic German brand renowned for its exceptional audio products, has unveiled its latest additions



to the Atomik series: the BB25 and BB50 boomboxes. It is designed to bring people together through the power of music. These cutting-edge devices deliver an unparalleled audio experience that will impress even the most discerning music enthusiasts.

BB25 and BB50 boomboxes produce an extraordinary sound that takes your senses to the next level. The BB25 delivers an impressive 35 Watts, while the BB50 takes it even further with an astounding 50 watts. The clarity, deep bass and powerful volume generated by these devices create an unforgettable audio experience.

Both boomboxes come equipped with high-capacity batteries designed to deliver extended playtimes without compromising performance. The BB25 houses a robust 3000mAh battery, while the BB50 boasts an impressive 4500mAh battery. Drawing on Blaupunkt's nearly 100 years of experience, these larger batteries can support TurboVolt technology, ensuring fast charging capabilities.

These boomboxes' meticulous design and high-quality materials eliminate vibrations and distortions, ensuring uninterrupted sound excellence. Elevate your gatherings



and add a touch of panache with the built-in RGB lights of the BB25 and BB50. These vibrant lights come alive and synchronise with the music, creating an immersive visual experience.

These boomboxes are ready to amplify your talent, offering specially tuned microphones that deliver outstanding results. The balanced audio mix, rivalling professional studio levels, ensures an exceptional performance that will impress both you and your audience. Let BB25 and BB50 transform any gathering into an unforgettable karaoke extravaganza.



# Monsoon Skincare by WOW Skin Science

By: Radhika

Post a short summer spell, the weather has changed and monsoon showers have brought a relief from the scorching sun. The monsoon season is known as the season of fun and frolic. Monsoon brings the nature to full bloom and there is beauty all around. However, no matter how much we love this season, monsoon also has a downside to it. The weather causes an increase in humidity, grime and pollution, which can intensify your skin and hair woes. Your skin requires all your care and attention in this season as dust particles easily settle on your skin which eventually damages the regular soft and toned look your skin possess. Similarly, your tresses also need a lot of care in the rainy season. Your hair remains moist for longer due to the humid climate and wet hair may lead to other problems.



Stay ahead of the weather woes and make the changes in your skincare regime in order to maintain that glowing skin this monsoon season.

Here are a few products from WOW Skin Science that will ensure you healthy and glowing skin.

Born in India, WOW Skin Science delivers high-performance, plant-powered solutions backed by science. All the products are 100% vegan hair care, skincare, face and body grooming essentials for your lifestyle. Featuring all-natural solutions that are free of animal testing, parabens and sulfates for a healthier you, WOW Skin Science believes in holistic care to balance the

mind, body and spirit! WOW Skin Science curates authentic, vegan beauty that bridges the gap between natural remedies and modern science. Its potent and premium products are powered by bioactive ingredients to address present-day skin, hair and wellness concerns. WOW's natural essentials are made in India without artificial additives, harmful synthetic chemicals or animal testing, ever.

## Vitamin C Foaming Face Wash

Before you apply any skin care products, wash your face with this Vitamin C face wash. By gently eliminating a layer of dead skin cells and controlling excess sebum, the vitamin C face wash helps to revive dull skin. The face wash has a built-in face brush with soft silicone bristles that can be used to deep clean your skin's surface and unclog pores.

## Water Resistant Sunscreen Lotion

Applying sunscreen is the most important step of your skincare routine. WOW Skin Science's Water-Resistant Sunscreen Lotion SPF 50 will not only protect your skin from sun damage but will also protect your skin on rainy days.

**99% Pure Aloe Vera Gel:** This is like a two-in-one solution for your hair and skin. Aloe vera from WOW Skin Science is 99% pure, meticulously harvested from the plant, and packaged to preserve its restorative and renewing properties. It is a multipurpose beauty product made for maintaining healthy skin, hair, and scalp.

## Vitamin C Clay Face Mask

It is a moisturising solution that removes pollutants and dead skin cells without affecting the natural lipids and moisture barrier of your skin. Made with Kakadu plum, activated vitamin C, shea butter, bentonite clay, jojoba oil and essential oils of lemon and orange, this mask helps to replenish the skin's natural moisture levels, increasing the elasticity and suppleness of the skin. □

## Redefine Your Skincare Regime with



By: Radhika

**R**iyo Herbs, brings a new and international concept, tailored for all skin types to redefine your outlook on skincare and help nurture the beautiful you. The brand passionately believes in the healing power of nature and hence offer products that are sulphate and paraben-free. The Company's vision is to create a pure and natural skin care range consisting of contemporary Botanical Actives to let people connect to nature.

Riyo Herbs ensures a healthy concoction of advanced sciences and natural extracts to provide you with utmost benefits for an all-round personal care regime.

With a keen interest in the customer's well-being, Riyo products go through a series of tests to ensure that the products are non-toxic, clinically tested and safe-to-use. The products are charged with nature's unparalleled healing powers and aim to keep your skin free from problems like ageing, blemishes, acne, dark spots, irritation, dead skin cells and sunburn.

Riyo Herbs has a R&D team that enables them to explore new territories and innovate for future products. A future where beauty products don't just beautify but also protect, pamper and nourish your skin.

Here are a few products from Riyo Herbs that will leave your skin glowing.

### **Riyo Herbs Hydration & Glow serum**

Riyoherbs Hydration & Glow serum is a skin lightening and brightening formula. It helps reduce dark spots, brightens



complexion and also improves skin texture, leaving the skin well-hydrated and glowing. It also reduces tanning & prevents skin from damage caused due to sun rays, makeup and other environmental damage.

### **Riyo Herbs Sun Protection Spray SPF 50**

Riyo Herbs Sun Protection is a broad-spectrum SPF50 spray which is a lightweight, non-greasy, daily-use formula that protects skin from harmful UVA and UVB rays. It is enriched with the goodness of carrot oil, watermelon extract and vitamin E rich in Vitamin A & E that helps to avoid sun damage and fights signs of ageing. Its non-oily, non-patchy, non-sticky formula spreads evenly and gives a protected shield to the skin. The simple shake and



spray sunscreen make it very easy to use after applying any SPF cream on moisturised skin. It can be easily reapplied after makeup to give the skin more protection during the day.

**Riyo Herbs Green Tea Gel Cream**

Riyoherbs green tea gel cream is enriched with the goodness of green tea extract, Niacinamide, Aloe vera



and Vitamin E & C that benefits oily and acne prone skin, leaving skin refresh & oil free. Green tea has anti-inflammatory and anti-microbial properties that reduces acne scars, blemishes and acne growth.

**Riyo Herbs De-Tan Cream**

Riyoherbs De-Tan cream is a no-bleach cream for sun removal, skin brightening and even tone skin. It is

formulated with natural extracts like Grapeseed Oil, Olive Oil & Chamomile Oil which gives instant whitening and fair looking skin. You will see visible results with first use of the cream.

**Riyo Herbs Steam Distilled Rose Water**

Riyo Herbs Steam Distilled Rose Water is a pure form of rose water that is processed with the ancient technique of steam distillation. It tones up the skin, rejuvenates skin



cells, controls excess oil, prevents acne, delays ageing & brings a natural glow.

This Rose Water can be used as a face toner, makeup remover and body mist and can also be added to your face pack powders for extra benefits. It has anti-inflammatory properties that help to reduce the redness of the skin and reduce puffiness around the eyes. Spray the required amount of Rose Water to get these benefits as it is in its purest form, made from handpicked roses from the fields directly. It has no artificial fragrance and or alcohol.

**Riyo Herbs Night Cream**

Riyo Herbs night cream comes with the goodness of collagen, retinol, centella asiatica extract, cocoa butter, Shea butter & liquorice. These extracts help in reducing the fine lines and wrinkles. Daily use will make your skin firm and prevent sagging.

Riyo Herbs products are available on company’s official website: [riyoherbsindia.com](http://riyoherbsindia.com) and other leading e-commerce portals including - Amazon, Flipkart, Nykaa, firstcry, Recode etc.



# Making The Right Choice

By: Radhika

Making a right choice is a critical skill. What role does instinct play in opting for a choice? While not many people possess the instinctive ability, it is believed that instinct plays a dominant role in making the right choice.

In work-life, the ability to do things right, take the right decisions and produce satisfactory results is deeply appreciated by the superiors.

The new “brave world” is believed to be the world of the mind and an instinctive ability amongst young professionals is going to play a crucial role. Independent India’s leading bureaucrat Shri P.N. Haksar decodes its mystery. He says, “I have often wondered whether instructive ability is not really the capacity of the human brain to exploit by processes as yet unknown to us; but which operate on the cumulative knowledge lying dormant in some part of our brain”.

In the modern digital age, with the surge of technology; (artificial intelligence and robotics notwithstanding) knowledge is outstripping wisdom. Interestingly, having come a full circle after studying various factors which impact “making of a choice”; concluded, “A right choice is the product of wisdom!!” German Philosopher, Mr Immanuel Kant.

Now, wisdom needs nourishing and cultivation. It is not something which can be acquired overnight.

In the domains of technology, there is a general rule that in any machine, the “engine” must be powerful – to produce results. That is exactly the case with human beings too. Dosages of wisdom are needed – to accomplish anything.

In modern day world, regrettably, our mental space is highly overcrowded by the external forces viz. pulls and pressures,

social media and information-load. They monopolise our attention. How can we cultivate wisdom? Try the following strategies:

**A. FIRST THING FIRST – THE SECOND THING, NEVER:** We have all heard about ‘Prioritise or Perish’. Unless one learns to prioritise, one is only grappling in the dark. Incidentally, human beings are ‘wired’ to do only one thing at a time with excellence. Multitasking overloads the brain’s processing capacity. The result is in the midst of confusion, one may miss visualising the “finishing line”. He/she would be leaving the tasks incomplete or mostly in a lurch.

To make the best use of time/opportunity, the priority must be fixed and assessment made as to in which order the task must be undertaken and brought to a logical conclusion.

**B. RISK TAKING ABILITIES:** Do not worry about risks involved. If not assessed objectively, they lead to ‘indecision’. Indecision is responsible for the collapse of the mechanism of choice-making. However, one should take calculated risks; they are quite different than being rash.

**C. WHEN IN DOUBT – CUT IT OUT: ACT FEARLESSLY:** It is never the situation but the lurking fear of failure that casts shadows of doubt. No other factor robs the mind as effectually as a set-back syndrome. We tend to forget that failure and success run parallel in pursuit of an endeavour. A healthy relationship between the two is essential.

Motivation expert Mr Deepak Chopra has a recipe to tackle the fear of failure. He assigns this responsibility to the individual himself. He says, “Relinquish your need for external approval. You alone are the judge of your worth. It does not matter what anyone else thinks”. □

# NEW Appointments

## ANUJ SOIN WAS APPOINTED THE GM OF RADISSON HOTEL SECTOR 29 GURUGRAM.



Mr Anuj Sooin was appointed General Manager of Radisson Hotel Sector 29 Gurugram. With over 17 years of hospitality expertise in commercial and operational roles, Mr Anuj's primary responsibility will be to develop business strategies and operations for the hotel.

He has been with Radisson Hotel Group for over four and a half years, and his last assignment was with Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport as Director of Operations.

## AIR BP APPOINTS FEDERICA BERRA AS SENIOR VP



Air bp announces the appointment of Ms Federica (Fede) Berra as senior vice president, effective immediately. Before working for bp, Ms Fede was with ExxonMobil holding a wide range of leadership roles in Europe and North America in gas and power marketing.

## SHARAD DATTA APPOINTED AS A GM OF JW MARRIOTT, AEROCITY



JW Marriott, Aerocity, has recently appointed Mr Sharad Datta as its new General Manager. With more than two decades of comprehensive experience as a hospitality professional with prominent brands like Marriott International, Hyatt International and Oberoi Hotels & Resorts, Mr Sharad is a seasoned leader who brings expertise to the new role.

## ASA APPOINTS ARIAEN ZIMMERMAN AS HEAD OF OPERATIONS AND PROGRAMS



Aviation Services Association (ASA) has announced the appointment of Ariaen Zimmerman as the company's new Head of Operations and Programs. Mr Ariaen brings a wealth of experience, with a versatile and extensive background in aviation, particularly in air cargo. His previous roles, including

Executive Director at Cargo iQ, have showcased his exceptional management skills and expertise in the industry.

## THOMAS WOLDBYE WAS APPOINTED THE NEW HEATHROW CEO



The Board of Heathrow Airport has confirmed the appointment of Thomas Woldbye as the new CEO. Having served as the CEO of Copenhagen Airport since 2011, Thomas brings with him a wealth of experience and a proven track record as a CEO of a major airport championing passenger service, sustainability and growth.

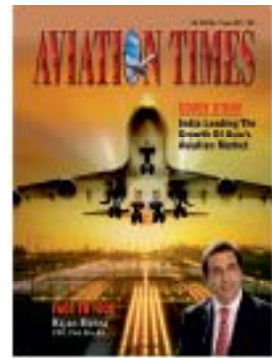
## CHEF ANURAAG NARSINGANI APPOINTED AS DIRECTOR OF CULINARY AT JW MARRIOTT NEW DELHI AEROCITY



JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity has announced the appointment of Chef Anuraag Narsingani as the Director of Culinary. With a rich background in the hospitality industry, Chef Anuraag brings exceptional culinary expertise and an unwavering passion for creating unparalleled dining experiences.

Before joining JW Marriott New Delhi, Chef Anuraag held the esteemed position of Head of Culinary Operations at Encalm Hospitality, overseeing culinary endeavours across India.

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