

**travelbullz**  
destination management company

# Diwali Special Thailand Fixed Departures

## 04 Nights / 05 Days

### INR 29,999\*

Airfare inclusive

**Departure Dates:**  
**October - 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 26**

#### Package Inclusions:



Flights



Hotels



Breakfast



Transfers



Sightseeing

T&C Apply

\*\*Prices & Inventory are subject to availability

\*\*Rates are subject to change as per ROE changes

\*\*Prices mentioned are indicative and subject to change as per date of travel

Contact us:  
T : +91 87500 65466  
E : Online@travelbullz.com

[www.travelbullz.com](http://www.travelbullz.com)

# SUBSCRIBE travel SPAN



## TRAVELSPAN.IN

Inspiring the most affluent and discerning travellers.

Engage with the website and its social media platforms through: Display ads, carousels, videos, photos and more.

 @travelspanindia  travelspan1

 travel span  @travelspan1

For advertising queries please contact  
91-124-411 1182

## Why Subscribe?

- 33% off on annual subscription
- delivery monthly to your doorstep
- 42% off on digital subscription and read Travel Span on any device

Subscription	Cover Price	You save	You pay
Print	₹ 250 x 12 = ₹ 3000	₹ 890	₹ 2110
Digital	₹ 250 x 12 = ₹ 3000	₹ 1440	₹ 1560

## HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

online: [www.travelspan.in](http://www.travelspan.in) / call: +91 124 411 1182

All Payments in favour of Profiles Media Network Pvt Ltd.  
Contact: **Studio 9 Productions** - C-59, Defence Colony, Chetna Marg, New Delhi 110024, India

LUXURY AND LIFESTYLE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

# travel

# SPAN

Volume 22 | Issue 8 | September 2022 | ₹250 / \$10 US

A Profiles Media Network Publication

[www.travelspan.in](http://www.travelspan.in)

**DreamFolks**  
facilitates technology-driven  
enhanced airport experience

**Embrace  
German Nature**

**Kazakhstan  
Land of wonders**

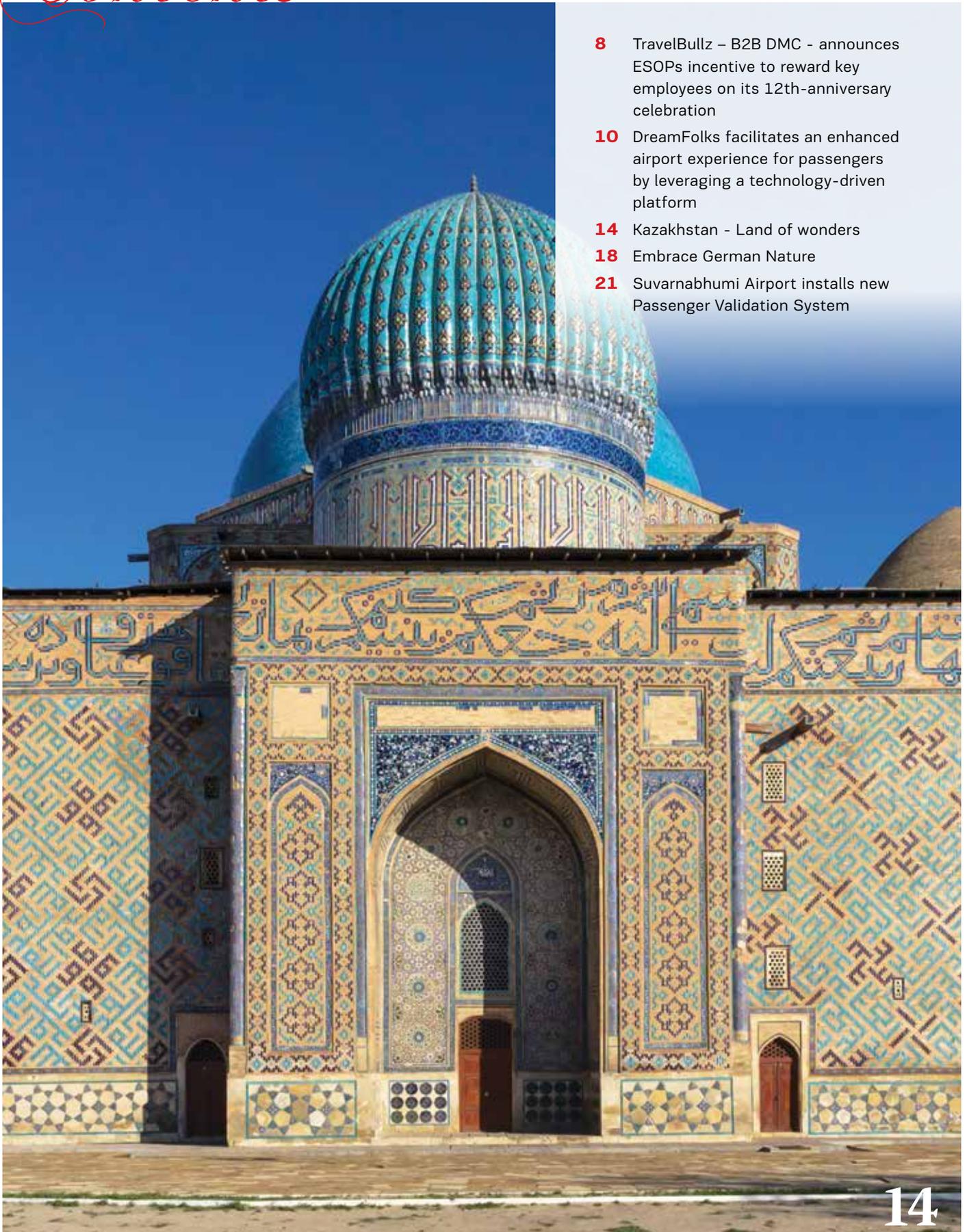


**How to enjoy 100 hours in Qatar?**

# Contents

Volume 22 | Issue 8 | September 2022

- 8** TravelBullz – B2B DMC - announces ESOPs incentive to reward key employees on its 12th-anniversary celebration
- 10** DreamFolks facilitates an enhanced airport experience for passengers by leveraging a technology-driven platform
- 14** Kazakhstan - Land of wonders
- 18** Embrace German Nature
- 21** Suvarnabhumi Airport installs new Passenger Validation System



# Contents



- 22** Online travel market is expected to reach \$1,835.6 billion by 2031
- 24** Sri Lankan Airlines Flying the Nation's Flag Globally for 43 Years
- 26** Thailand grants visa extensions for tourists to stimulate the upcoming high season
- 28** India emerges as the global leader in travel in 2022 as per Travel Lifestyle Network survey
- 29** The Leela Bhartiya City Bengaluru launches the largest convention center in Bangalore
- 30** 100 days until the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022TM – how to enjoy 100 hours in Qatar
- 34** Time to again Reconnect, Rebuild, and Move Forward says Jyoti Mayal, President TAAI
- 38** Virgin Atlantic and IndiGo announce new codeshare agreement



# Editor's Letter



## LUXURY AND LIFESTYLE TRAVEL MAGAZINE **travel** SPAN

**DEVENDER GROVER**  
Editor in Chief & Publisher

**GAURA G BAHL**  
Group Editor

**ANURADHA M**  
Associate Editor

**JYOTSNA MALIK**  
International Sales Director

**RASIKA MATHUR**  
Events Coordinator

**RAJESH MAURYA**  
Head of Finance

**JITESH GANDHI**  
Creative Director

Address changes and subscription  
order to [travelspan@gmail.com](mailto:travelspan@gmail.com)

Registered with Registrar of  
Newspapers of India under  
RNI No. DEL/ENG/2000/03308

**PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY**  
Profiles Media Network Pvt Ltd.  
C-59, Defence Colony, Chetna Marg,  
New Delhi 110024, India  
Tel - +91 (124) 4111182  
Mob- +91 99999 97607  
Website: [www.travelspan.in](http://www.travelspan.in)

**PRINTED BY**  
STUDIO 9 PRODUCTIONS  
C-59, Defence Colony, Chetna Marg,  
New Delhi 110024, India

Volume 22, Issue 8, September 2022

Content may not be reproduced in any  
format without written permission from  
**Profiles Media Network Pvt Ltd.**

## Akasa Air adds Delhi to its network; to start direct flights from Bengaluru, Ahmedabad

**A**kasa Air, India's newest airline, today announced Delhi as the sixth destination on its network, adding to its existing network of Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Kochi, Chennai and Mumbai. The newly commencing flights on the Delhi-Bengaluru and Delhi-Ahmedabad routes will start on October 7, 2022, exactly within two months of the airline's commercial start. To further enhance connectivity on existing sectors, the airline has also announced additional daily flights on the Ahmedabad-Bengaluru route also commencing from October 07, 2022.

Akasa Air has been aggressively scaling up its operations and will have crossed 250 flights per week by October 10, 2022, along a total of nine routes. With a fleet expansion plan that adds one new aircraft every 15 days, the airline will soon put its fifth aircraft into operation.

It will continue to grow its network to establish a strong pan-India presence with a focus on metro to tier 2 & 3 route connectivity. Akasa Air's fleet size will be 18 aircraft by the end of March 2023 and over the next four years, the airline will add 54 additional aircraft, taking its total fleet size to 72 aircraft.

Commenting on the rapid expansions, **Praveen Iyer, Co-Founder, and Chief Commercial Officer, Akasa Air**, said, "Elated to



have added our national capital, New Delhi, to our fast-growing network. With our fifth aircraft coming into operations shortly, we will achieve the milestone of 250 flights per week soon. Apart from flights between Delhi and Bengaluru, we further augment our network between Bengaluru and Ahmedabad by adding the 2nd frequency between this route. In addition, we also announce another new route, Delhi - Ahmedabad - Delhi with very convenient timings, all effective 7th October. As Indian air travellers continue to return to travel in promising numbers, Delhi has been witnessing significant revival in passenger traffic. We look forward to catering to the growing demand and continue adding more destinations on our network".

Akasa Air is planning to increase fleet size to 18 by the end of March 2023 - Akasa Air has announced Delhi as the sixth destination on its network, adding to its existing network of Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Kochi, Chennai and Mumbai.

We are on



**DEVENDER GROVER**

RNI No. DEL/ENG/2000/03308 Travel Span is Printed Published Edited and Owned by Devender Grover. Printed at G S Graphic Arts. A-18, Naraina Industrial Area, New Delhi - 110028

Editor: Devender Grover. All Rights Reserved. Reproduction in whole or part without written permission is strictly prohibited. All information is correct at the time of going to press but subject to change. Editorial material, views and opinions expressed in Travel Span are those of authors. Editor(s) assume no responsibility of any errors or omissions. Neither is any liability assumed resulting from the use of this information. The Publisher will not be responsible for any damage or loss caused by the late Publication, errors or failures of advertisements to appear. Products and services mentioned are subject to change without prior notice.

Visit Finland launches its brand  
new E-Learning Platform

# Become a Certified Finland Travel Pro

Register on [www.finlandtravelpro.com](http://www.finlandtravelpro.com)

# TravelBullz – B2B DMC - announces ESOPs incentive to reward key employees on its 12th-anniversary celebration



*The leading B2B online destination management company has announced an incentive in the shape of an Employee Stock Option Plan (ESOPs) to reward the company's 14 key employees. This is a first-of-its-kind initiative in the travel and tourism industry, where ESOPs are being issued and wealth is shared with employees by a self-funded Private Limited company.*

**O**n the eve of the **12th Foundation Day celebrations of TravelBullz**, a leading B2B Online Destination Management company announced an incentive in the shape of ESOPs (Employee Stock Option Plan) to reward the company's 14 key employees.

These 14 employees have been selected based on their long-term association, contribution, and commitment to the company's growth and vision. The recognition has been through the rank and file, ranging from front-line executives to heads of Departments.

This is a first-of-its-kind initiative in the travel and tourism industry, where ESOPs are being issued & wealth is shared with employees by a self-funded Private Limited company.

According to the scheme, employees

of TravelBullz will be able to vest their ESOPs after 2 years. The grant of ESOP shall generate wealth for the ESOP holders in line with the company's valuation in 2 years.

Founder & President TravelBullz **Mr. K. D. Singh** said, "We owe our growth in the last 12 years to "OUR PEOPLE" & their dedication.

*We wish to reward their complete ownership, their unflinching support through the pandemic & their outstanding performance. I wish that in the coming years everyone working with TravelBullz should have ESOPs so that they could align their growth to the company's growth.*

**Ms. Shalini Nair**, Founding Member, TravelBullz, further added, "Our employees are our most valuable asset, and their devotion and hard work have

*allowed us to expand significantly in the last year. This ESOPs is our method of expressing our gratitude in a very humble way to our employees and, as a result, making them stakeholders in our success"*

TravelBullz was founded in August 2010 with the sole objective to revolutionize and redefine the Wholesale Business in Travel Trade. The prime objective of the team at TravelBullz is to provide intelligent Travel Solutions to its channel partners and engage them in a world where delivering quality service is the only way of conducting business. The TravelBullz wholesale booking engine has the latest technology platform and its user-friendly interface conveniently connects to over 15,000 travel & tour companies worldwide seamlessly to search for the best prices with availability for instant confirmation of Hotels, Apartments, Transfers, and Tours.

# Emirates invests over US \$ 350 million in next-generation inflight entertainment systems for the new A350 fleet

As part of its continued drive to ensure customers 'fly better', Emirates has selected the new Thales' AVANT Up system for its incoming fleet of Airbus A350 aircraft, scheduled for delivery in 2024.

The airline's investment of over US\$ 350 million will see its 50-strong fleet of A350s equipped with next-generation inflight entertainment solutions that offer a memorable cinematic and personalised passenger experience.

**Adel al Redha, Emirates' Chief Operating Officer** said: "Emirates has always regarded inflight entertainment as an essential aspect of our onboard experience, and we were the first airline to put personal screens onto every single seat onboard when that was far from the norm over 30 years ago. Today, Emirates ice remains unmatched in inflight entertainment content and experience, having won best-in-the-sky awards consecutively for the past 14 years. Our investment in next-generation Thales systems for our new A350 fleet will further our lead, enabling us to deliver even better experiences to our customers. Watch this space."

**Yannick Assouad, Executive Vice-President, Thales Avionics** said: "At Thales we are proud to partner with Emirates in their mission to Fly Better. Thales' AVANT Up brings to Emirates the latest consumer technologies and capabilities of aircraft. Combining our Optiq 4K QLED HDR displays, award-winning dynamic power, and next-generation digital services, Emirates customers can expect the extraordinary."

The game-changing technology in Thales' AVANT Up system features Optiq 4k QLED HDR displays - the only aircraft displays using Samsung's QLED technology to immerse viewers



in more than a billion colors. This rich display capability provides the perfect medium for Emirates' unmatched **ice** inflight entertainment product which delivers over 5,000 channels of multi-language content including live TV, the latest box office movies, TV shows, and music hits, and the world's first inflight shopping channel, EmiratesRED.

The new system from Thales will also provide an enhanced 'live' television solution that offers a broader choice of live television and news in the highest available definition at 40,000 feet.

Emirates' customers can also look forward to enhanced passenger connectivity with Optiq - the first smart display in the industry to offer two Bluetooth connections, built-in Wi-Fi for passengers to pair multiple devices including phones, tablets, headphones or even game controllers, while supporting up to 60 watts USB-C to fast-charge personal

devices.

To further enrich passenger engagement, Emirates has chosen a variety of AVANT Up digital services including highly integrated personalisation features, expanded personal electronic device (PED) capabilities, and user interface enhancements which also enable visually impaired passengers to have an immersive experience.

Emirates is also the first airline globally to select Thales' Pulse, a patented power management technology that will ensure that charging performance will be unaffected no matter how many users are charging their devices at the same time.

Reflecting a shared vision to innovate and shape future inflight experiences, Emirates and Thales also continue to collaborate on programmes through Dubai's Aviation X-Lab, an aviation-specific incubator.

# DreamFolks

facilitates an enhanced airport experience for passengers by leveraging a technology-driven platform

*DreamFolks' dominant position is underpinned by its estimated market share of over 95% in Fiscal 2022 of all India issued Card Based access to domestic lounges in India*

## **DreamFolks Services Ltd. IPO opened on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

**D**reamFolks Services Ltd. (DreamFolks) is India's largest airport service aggregator platform (Source: F&S Report). DreamFolks facilitates an enhanced airport experience for passengers by leveraging a technology-driven platform (as ratified by the F&S Report). DreamFolks' dominant position is underpinned by its estimated market





Liberatha Kallat,  
Founder & Managing  
Director of DreamFolks

share of over 95% in Fiscal 2022 of all India issued Card Based access to domestic lounges in India (F&S Report). DreamFolks provides services to all the Card Networks operating in India including Visa, Mastercard, Diners/Discover, and RuPay; and many of India's prominent Card Issuers including ICICI Bank Limited, Axis Bank Limited, Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited, HDFC Bank Limited (in respect of debit card lounge program) and SBI Cards and Payment Services Limited. DreamFolks has tie-ups with some of India's prominent corporates including airline companies, the telecommunications company, OTA, loyalty aggregators, and other corporates such as Interglobe Aviation Limited, Go Airlines Limited, Air Asia (India) Limited, Vodafone Idea Limited, Jet Privilege Private Limited, Hettich India Private Limited, Easy Trip Planners Limited and Mahindra Holidays and Resorts India Limited.

DreamFolks carefully crafted a service proposition and a tech platform to provide DreamFolks clients (such as card network providers, banks, airline operators, and hotels) the option of offering a wide-ranging bouquet of services to their end customers, as part of their customer engagement and loyalty management programs. It provides access to a host of services: from the door-step to the airport, within the airport, and again from the airport to the door-step at the destination, including Lounges, Food and Beverage, Spa, Meet and Assist, Airport Transfer, Transit Hotels/Nap Room access, and Baggage Transfer. DreamFolks has 50 Clients including the Card Networks and many of India's prominent Card Issuers as of March 31, 2022, and 9.79 million (97.9 lakh) pax (people or passengers), cumulatively, had availed of its services, since Fiscal 2020.

Through its partnerships with other service providers, DreamFolks has a global footprint extending to 1,416 touch-points in 121 countries across the world out of which, 244 Touch-points are present in India and 1,172 touch-points overseas, as of March

31, 2022. Out of the total estimated 75 lakh passengers accessing lounges in India in FY20 (pre-pandemic), 48.8 lakh passengers did so through DreamFolks' network. In FY22 (pandemic year), DreamFolks facilitated access to 35.3 lakh out of a total of 52 lakh pax accessing lounges in India. DreamFolks' dominance is underpinned by facilitating access to 100% of the 54 lounges currently operational in India (Source: F&S Report). It also enjoyed a market share of over 95% of all India-issued credit card and debit card (Card Based) access to airport lounges in Fiscal 2022. Additionally, in Fiscal 2022, DreamFolks accounted for around 68% of the overall lounge access volume in India. (Source: F&S Report).

DreamFolks' RHP filed with the regulator states that over the years, the company has transformed from being an airport lounge access aggregator to an end-to-end technology solutions provider for designing and delivering services that enhance the airport experience. DreamFolks' first mover advantage in the lounge access aggregator industry in India has enabled it to become a dominant player in the industry with a share of over 80% in the domestic lounge access market in India. (Source: F&S Report).

Thanks to its asset-light business model, operational efficiency, and demonstrated track record,

*DreamFolks provides services to all the Card Networks operating in India including Visa, Mastercard, Diners/Discover, and RuPay; and many of India's prominent Card Issuers.*

DreamFolks' revenue from operations have increased from ₹ 98.7 crores during Fiscal 2017 to ₹ 165.99 crores during Fiscal 2018 to ₹ 248.28 crores during Fiscal 2019 and to ₹ 367.04 crores during Fiscal 2020, at a CAGR of 54.93%. Also, during the same period, our profit before tax increased from ₹ 8.11 crore in Fiscal 2017 to ₹ 16.64 crores in Fiscal 2018 to ₹ 21.87 crores in Fiscal 2019 and to ₹ 43.56 crores in Fiscal 2020, at a CAGR of 75.10%. DreamFolks' EBITDA increased from ₹ 8.65 crores in Fiscal 2017 to ₹ 45.85 crores in Fiscal 2020 at a CAGR of 74.37%. DreamFolks' return on capital employed was 76.93%, 78.83%, 61.48%, and 63.46% in Fiscal 2017, Fiscal 2018, Fiscal 2019, and Fiscal 2020, respectively. DreamFolks' revenues were Rs. 367.04 crores in FY20; Rs. 282.5 crores in FY22 and Rs. 105.63 crores in FY21 showcasing the pandemic impact on the travel and aviation business. The EBITDA was Rs. 45.85 crores in FY20 (pre-pandemic); Rs. 24.04 crores in FY22 and Rs. 2.1 crore in FY21 (pandemic years). The gross profit margin was 16.01% in FY22; 17.13% in FY21 (pandemic years) and 18.39% in FY20 (pre-pandemic). The company's ROCE and ROE were 23.99% and 19.78% in FY22 (pandemic impact); and 63.46% and 48.36% in FY20 (pre-pandemic).

**Liberatha Peter Kallat, Promoter, Chairperson, and Managing Director** has significant experience in the hospitality industry and has worked with Indian and global multinational companies such as Indian Hotels Company Limited. Liberatha has been instrumental in envisioning the business opportunities and growth potential of the industry. She has been at the forefront of incubating the industry which has led to DreamFolks' first mover advantage. This first mover advantage along with DreamFolks' business model is one of the key reasons for its dominance in the industry. Liberatha's deep understanding of the industry and her direct involvement with key Clients and Operators form the bedrock of its

business relationships. DreamFolks has 100% coverage of operational lounges in Indian airports and offers a unique value proposition to its Clients by enabling access to a network of all operational airport lounges in India. Consumers have access to lounges, including in large airports like Bengaluru, Chennai, Mumbai, and New Delhi operated by various entities including Premium Port Lounge Management Company Private Limited, Travel Food Services Private Limited, and Saptagiri Restaurant Private Limited.

In terms of Food and Beverage offerings, DreamFolks tied up with various entities to facilitate access to around 57 restaurants / F&B outlets at 18 airports across India, as of March 31, 2022. DreamFolks also facilitates access to spa-salon services through a tie-up with O2 Spa Salon Private Limited. DreamFolks entered into an agreement with an international airport concierge service provider facilitating the 'meet and assist services at various airports across countries such as Australia, Austria, Canada, Belgium, Brazil, France, Germany, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, and United States of America.

The number of Indian passengers

*DreamFolks' first mover advantage in the lounge access aggregator industry in India has enabled it to become a dominant player in the industry with a share of over 80% in the domestic lounge access market in India.*

who opted for air travel, as the mode of transport, increased from approximately 99 million in CY 2016 to 143 million in CY 2019. Indian air travel propensity (i.e. the ratio of passenger traffic to the overall population in a given region) is low (at 0.08 in CY 2020) and there is significant scope for growth.

The number of passengers availing of lounge facilities is estimated to have

increased from 5.1 million (51 lakh) in Fiscal 2018 to 7.5 million in Fiscal 2020 (pre-Covid-19). In Fiscal 2020, of the total Indian domestic lounge access, around 80% was through India-issued credit cards and debit cards. (Source: F&S Report). Therefore, for card issuers, providing consumers access to the Services, including lounges, is increasingly becoming a key aspect of their credit/debit card service offering. The number of credit cards and debit cards with lounge access in India is estimated at around 57 million (CY 2021). Of this, around 8% of the population who are eligible for lounge access use the facility, which reflects a low penetration (CY 2021). (Source: F&S Report)

DreamFolks Services Ltd. (DreamFolks), India's largest airport service aggregator platform (Source: F&S Report), opened on August 24, 2022, with an initial public offering (IPO) of 17,242,368 (1.72 crores) equity shares. The Public Issue closed on August 26, 2022. **The IPO comprised an offer for the sale of 1.72 crore equity shares by the promoters Mukesh Yadav, Dinesh Nagpal, and Liberatha Peter Kallat (also Chairperson and Managing Director).**

## DreamFolks Services IPO shares debut with a 56% premium at Rs 509

*DreamFolks Services | Healthy IPO subscription, positive market conditions, leadership in the airport lounge aggregation industry, and asset-light business model boost investor confidence.*

Airport service aggregator platform **DreamFolks Services** listed with a strong 56 percent gain on September 6, which was better than analysts' expectations and a grey market premium of 30-40 percent. The stock opened at Rs 505 on the BSE, against the issue price of Rs 326, and the opening tick on the NSE was Rs 508.70. **Healthy initial public offering (IPO) subscription,**



**positive market conditions, leadership in the airport lounge aggregation industry, and an asset-light business model boosted investor confidence.**

The Rs 562-crore IPO had received a strong response from investors, getting subscribed 56.68 times during August 24-26. It was entirely an offer for sale by shareholders.

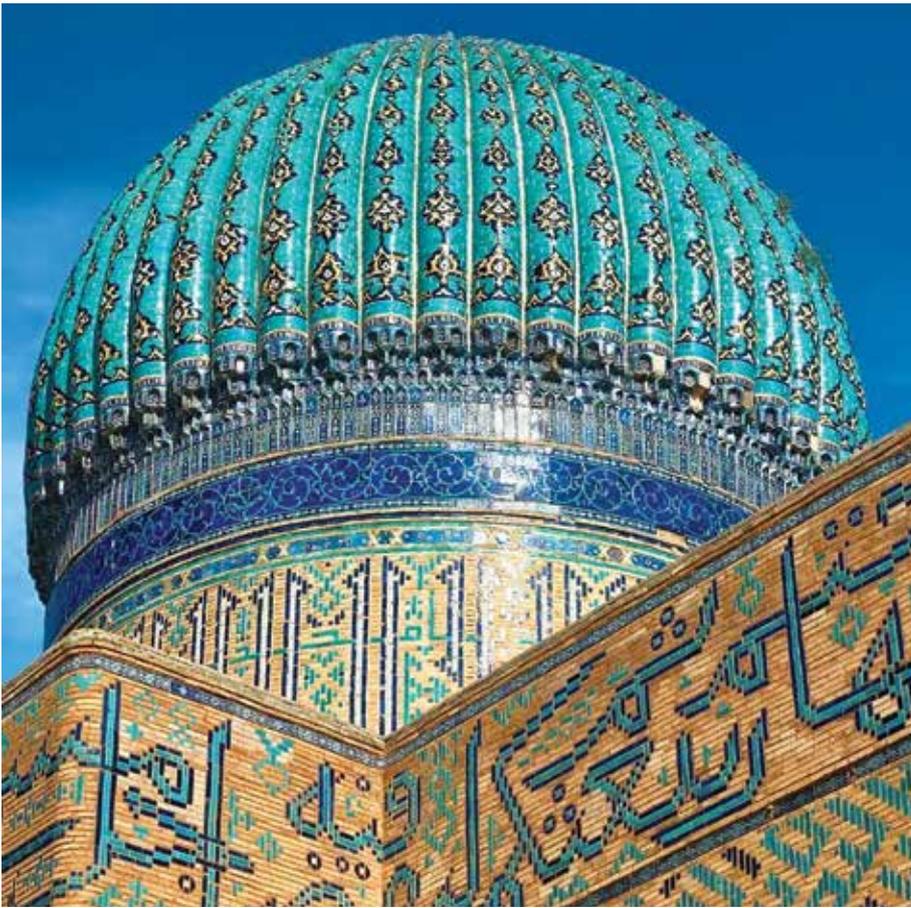
DreamFolks Services is a dominant player and India's largest airport service aggregator platform. The company facilitates access to airport-related services such as lounge, food & beverages, spa, and pick up and drop service. Most analysts had a subscribe rating on the issue, citing significant market share and early mover advantage in the segment.

"The firm enjoys a 95 percent market share and early mover advantage in the segment. It has been an asset-light business model gaining the preference of air travellers. Further, it has focused on diversifying and increasing its services portfolio.

# Kazakhstan

## The Land of Wonders

*Kazakhstan's natural wonders are worth coming to this Central Asian nation.*



Once an important part of the ancient Silk Road trade route, Kazakhstan today is one of the most overlooked Central Asian destinations. Its stunning natural attractions are incredibly diverse, yet they are not widely known. The world's 9th largest country stretches across 1.1 million square miles of snow-capped mountains, deep canyons, vast swaths of steppes, and arid deserts of Central Asia. The ability to explore an ancient nomadic culture, try foods you wouldn't normally eat, and visit the city



of the future and it's clear: Kazakhstan deserves an extended stopover on a Central Asian adventure.

Kazakhstan is a unique region in the world because of its history, geographical position, and size. Being the world's 9th largest country and located in the centre of Eurasia, it is also the largest landlocked country in the world. These factors have resulted in the country's particular climate and nature, which seem to absorb the brightest examples of the landscape of both continents. In addition, the complicated history of the Kazakh people and the constant interaction of nomadic lifestyle with settled people in South Kazakhstani ancient cities have led to Kazakhstan's unique and authentic culture.

These peculiarities have created an opportunity to develop diverse offers in Kazakhstan's travel and tourism industry, including authentic cultural tourism; nature-based activities, including ecotourism and birdwatching



in national parks and protected areas; skiing or trekking in the mountains; water sports, sunbathing, and swimming in the many lakes and rivers of Kazakhstan; and many others.

### **Nature-based tourism**

The diversity of Kazakhstan's natural areas has contributed to its rich flora and fauna. The country is a habitat for about 122 mammal species, 500 bird species, and 107 fish species; in addition, over six thousand species of plants grow in the region. To preserve such a rich world of plants and wildlife, a network of national parks and nature reserves was established in the country. Recently, these protected areas have become accessible to visitors.

The most famous of them among tourists include *Aksu Zhabagly Nature Reserve*, which is home to snow leopards and other rare animals, and is also known as the "Kingdom of Tulips", as it is believed that tulips originated here, long before they were introduced in Holland; also, *Korgalzhyn Nature Reserve* is famous for its pink flamingos and other rare species of wildlife and is popular among bird-watchers; *Altyn Emel National Park* is interesting for its mystery of Singing Dune; and *Katon-Karagay National Park* is a habitat of marals (red deer), unossified antlers of which are used as a precious medicine.

### **Mountains: Trekking and winter sports**

A series of mountain ranges of various sizes – such as the Tien Shan, Altay, Ulytau, and Kazygurt –



## KAZAKHSTAN

are naturally beautiful and attract tourists from all over the world. The Tien Shan Mountains are the highest among them (with the highest peak being about 7,500 metres [24,500 feet]), and Almaty, the largest city in Kazakhstan, is located at its base. Thus, tourists interested in trekking and winter sports can easily access marvelous landscapes directly from the city of Almaty.

The most popular climbing routes are located in the Small Almaty Valley and Bogdanovich Glacier. Attractions in these places include Pogrebetsky Glacier (4,231 meters [13,881 feet]), Tuyuc Su (4,100 m [13,451 ft]), and Ordzhonikidze (3,980 m [13,058 ft]), among others. In addition, Kazakhstan's high mountains are ideal for winter sports. It's no wonder that Kazakhstan hosted the Asian Winter

Games in 2011 – one of the priorities of the country has been to promulgate winter sports.

A unique sports complex Medeu (sometimes spelled as Medew or Medeo), with a skating rink popular among tourists, was built in the 1950s, at 1,691 metres (5,548 feet) above sea level, which makes it the highest skating rink in the world. A sophisticated artificial refrigeration system enables it to keep high-quality ice coverage for 8 months of the year. Another major winter sports attraction of Kazakhstan is Shymbulak (Chimbulak) ski resort, also located not far from Almaty. Snow can be found there from November till May; however, sunny weather is also registered there more than three hundred days a year. The resort hotel can accommodate up to 114 tourists.

### **Lakes and rivers: water sports, sunbathing, and health resorts**

Kazakhstan is more than its steppes and mountains; it is also a country of rivers and lakes. A lake among the steppes can be like an oasis among empty deserts.

Kazakhstan's coastline along the largest lake in the world, the Caspian Sea, is perfect for sunbathing, swimming, and fishing. The largest number of reservoirs is concentrated in the southeast part of the country, in the region symbolically named Zhetysu – "Seven Rivers". Almost all the rivers of Zhetysu belong to the basin of Lake Balkhash, which is also a popular tourist destination for its health centres and recreation camps. Besides health resorts, the lakes offer serene boating and sailing, and extreme tourists can find rafting opportunities in mountain rivers.





**Culture: Ethno tourism**

Kazakhstan’s unique culture is a reason why many tourists travel to Kazakhstan. In almost every corner of the republic, a visitor interested in the

lives of genuine Kazakh people – their traditions, their rituals, their art, and their culture – will find much interest. This can include museum complexes, ethnic villages depicting the traditional

lifestyle of Kazakh people, historical sites of medieval cities, and much more.

Tourists are offered to experience the traditional lifestyle of Kazakhs, try national dishes, and to interact with the local people in *Shabanbay Bi Village*, situated in Kyzylaray Mountains, Central Kazakhstan. Zhambyl Zhabayev museum complex in the Almaty region includes a house with a garden, where the poet lived in the XIX-XX centuries, and a mausoleum. This is a visual representation of not only Zhambyl’s life but also of a whole era in which the poet lived and worked. South Kazakhstan is famous for ancient cities located along the routes of the Great Silk Road with historical monuments and other sites.

Ethno-memorial complex Map of Kazakhstan - Atameken, located in Astana, is the largest ethnographic park in Kazakhstan and a unique outdoor museum.



# Embrace German Nature



## All-New Tourism Campaign Targets Indian Visitors Seeking Unforgettable Outdoor Experiences



Recognising an increased demand for outdoor experiences this summer among visitors from the Indian market, the German National Tourist Board (GNTB) is debuting the brand-new Embrace German Nature campaign that focuses on highlighting sustainable, open-air activities.

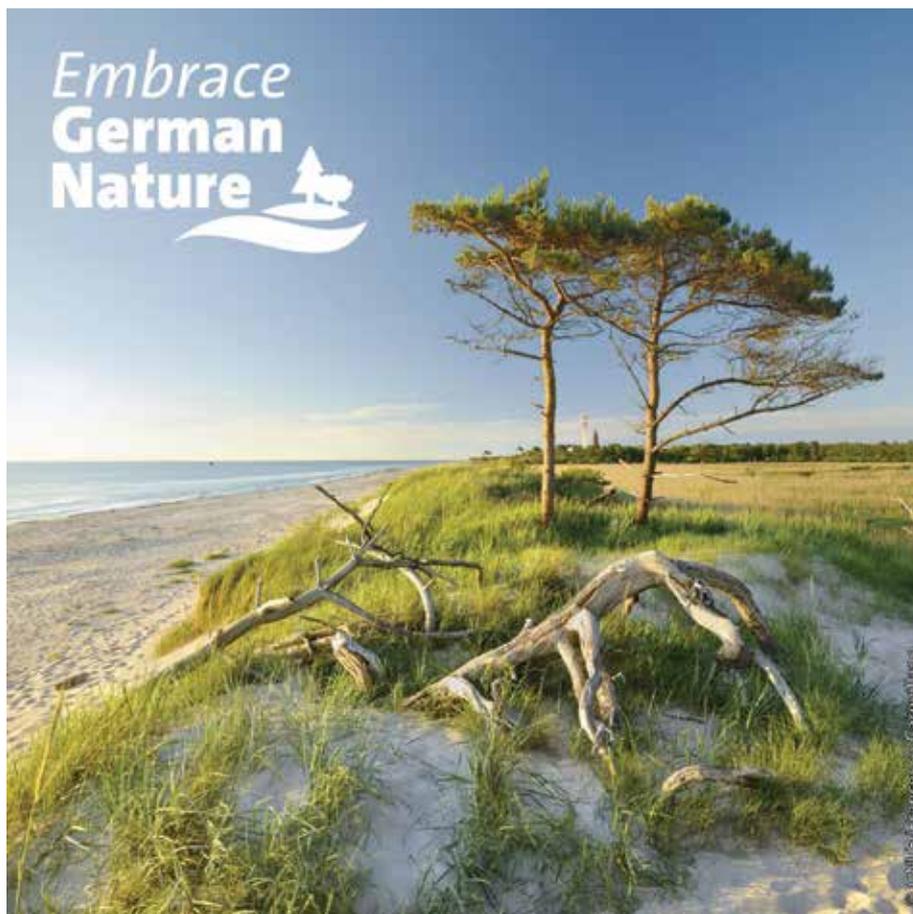
Germany is home to more than 130 protected natural landscapes, including a plethora of stunning forests, lakes, valleys, and hiking and cycling trails just waiting to be explored. It also boasts three UNESCO World Natural Heritage Sites, 16 UNESCO biosphere reserves, 16 national parks, and 106 nature reserves.

“Indian travellers are keen to visit countries that possess ideal summer climates with a wide range of things to do,” said Romit Theophilus, director German National Tourist Office, India (GNTO). “Germany’s diverse selection of outdoor activities ensures something for everyone, from hiking trails to relaxing spa towns. Our Embrace German Nature campaign will improve access to and information about these opportunities even further, in a sustainable way.”

Four unique picks that fit the campaign are:

### The Bavarian Forest National Park

Visitors can explore this natural space, which is left to grow without any human interference, across hiking routes, cycle paths,



and skiing trails spanning several hundred kilometres. The treetop trail is just one example of the fun adventure routes also available. Whichever route visitors decide to take, a view of the Alps is guaranteed.

### Rhine Castles Trail

The Rhine Castles Trail is the little brother of the Rheinsteig, a trail that unfolds on the other side of the river. Travellers can even make up their route and cross the Rhine on a vessel. On the Rhine Castles Trail, the trip starts at the Mouse Tower in Bingen in the Upper Middle Rhine Valley UNESCO World Heritage Site, extending to Koblenz. One can naturally see a lot of castles on the route – around 20 in total, and also visit some of the castle grounds. Wine is another major theme along the Rhine Castles Trail.

### Berlin-Copenhagen Cycle route

The cycle route promises a cycling adventure between Berlin and

Copenhagen that is sure to be anything but exciting. Cyclists will head across the water to Denmark via Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

### Baden-Baden

Baden-Baden, a chic little town in the south of Germany, is surrounded by stunning scenery and is home to stylish hotels, lush green spaces, and no end of health offerings. Whether visitors head to the health clinic, spa, or wellness hotel, they are sure to find an outstanding selection of exclusively tailored treatments waiting for them.

The GNTB has a three-pronged recovery strategy for overcoming the challenges of the restart after the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Raising awareness of the Destination Germany brand and enhancing the brand profile with a focus on sustainability and climate change mitigation
- Supporting the travel industry,

which is dominated by small and medium-sized businesses, through relationship management and the sharing of knowledge

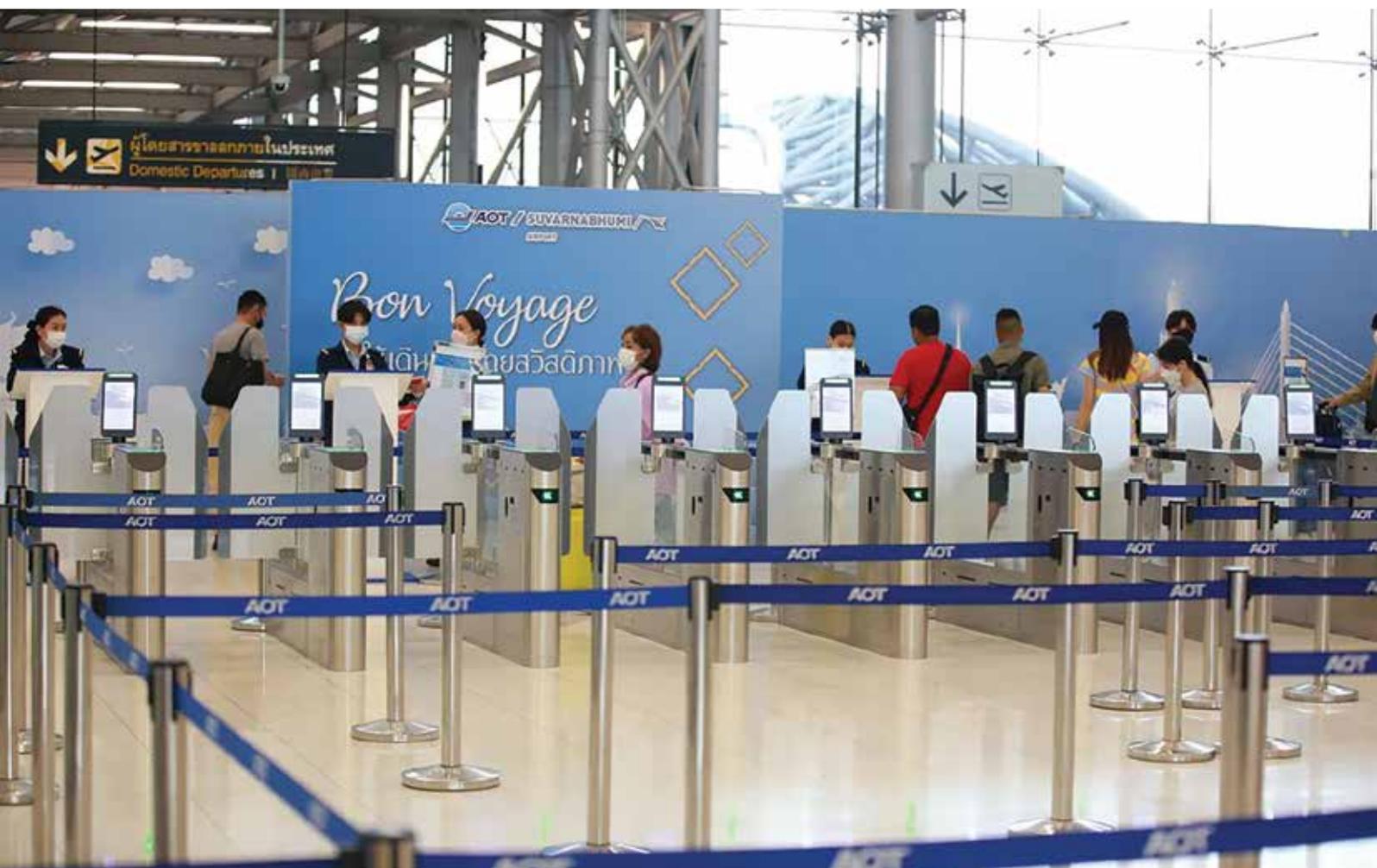
- Developing evidence-based action plans based on targeted market research and ongoing analysis of changing customer demand.

### Focus on digitalization and sustainability

The GNTB promotes forward-looking and sustainable tourism in line with the objectives of the German government. The focus here is on digitalization and sustainability. The GNTB is a pioneer when it comes to using immersive technologies (virtual, augmented, and mixed reality), voice assistants and other conversational interfaces, and artificial intelligence applications such as chatbots. To ensure that tourism offerings are visible on AI-based marketing platforms, the GNTB coordinates the German tourism industry's open-data project, which aims to develop a tourism knowledge graph.

Sustainability has been a core overarching topic for more than a decade and we engage with it as a strategic issue across all areas of the organization. Our organization follows a three-pillar strategy that combines the sharing of knowledge with external partners and a supporting communications strategy with our internal sustainability initiative. The GNTB promotes responsible tourism, a key growth area, by showcasing Germany as a sustainable and inclusive destination in the international travel market. This is particularly important as the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the global shift in travellers' values towards greater social and environmental responsibility.

The GNTB has 27 foreign agencies that cover more than 40 markets around the world. Its head office in Frankfurt, Germany, is home to strategic departments such as Business Intelligence, Business Development, and Brand Communications for Destination Germany.



## Suvarnabhumi Airport installs new Passenger Validation System

**F**or better passenger flow and security, the new system is in operation from 1 September, 2022, at key points in the airport, Thailand's main international gateway.

Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport has announced that it will activate a new Passenger Validation System (PVS) on 1 September, 2022, as part of its overall security upgrade and service improvement.

The PVS system is an important enhancement that is being made for the safety of all passengers and staff and to better improve traffic flow through Suvarnabhumi Airport, which is the primary international gateway

to Thailand and which is aiming to position itself as one of the world's best airports.

From 09.00 Hrs. on 1 September, the PVS will be in operation at:

- The entrance to the domestic departure checkpoints behind the check-in counters at Rows C-D (a total of eight units in place);
- The entrance to the international departure passenger checkpoints at Zone 2, behind check-in counters at Rows J-K (two units), and behind check-in counters at Rows L-M (two units);
- The entrance up to the international departure passenger

checkpoints at Zone 3, behind the check-in counters at Rows S-T (three units).

The PVS verifies passenger travel information to optimise the screening capability and increase safety standards, and works by having passengers put their paper or E-boarding passes onto the machine which will read and check their travel information. The system enables the screening of passengers to be precisely accurate and prevents unauthorised persons from entering airside and restricted areas. It can also prevent boarding passes that have already gone through the system from being used again.



## Allied Market Research: Online travel market is expected to reach \$1,835.6 billion by 2031

*The global online travel market was valued at \$354.2 billion in 2020 and is estimated to reach \$1,835.6 billion by 2031, registering a CAGR of 14.8% from 2022 to 2031.*

The travel market has evolved considerably over the past few years, owing to digitalization of travel services and the growth in travelling trends, worldwide. The proliferation of mobile devices largely supplements the growth of this market. The market is witnessing consolidation, with leading online travel agencies (OTAs) acquiring start-ups and other smaller players, thereby, giving tough competition to established direct travel suppliers and travel agents.

According to a new report published by **Allied Market Research**, titled, "Online Travel Market by Service types,

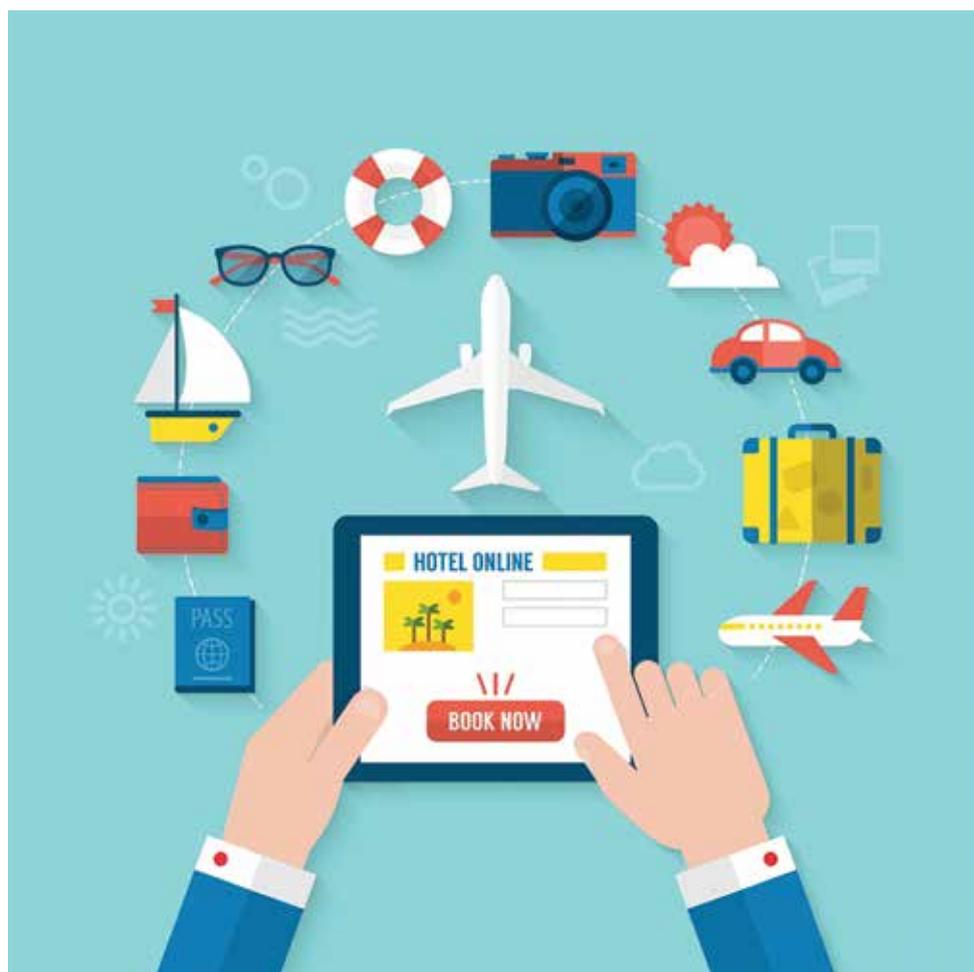
*Platforms, Mode of booking and Age Group: Global Opportunity Analysis and Industry Forecast, 2022-2031,*

The global online travel market was valued at \$354.2 billion in 2020, and is estimated to reach \$1,835.6 billion by 2031, registering a CAGR of 14.8% from 2022 to 2031. Globally, the number of people in the middle and upper middle classes is increasing rapidly.

People now opt for more than one trip every year with the growth in living standards and increased purchasing power. Furthermore, for convenience and easy transactions, people have started availing online travel services, thus saving time & resources, and fostering the growth of the online travel market. Growth of the online travel market is driven by the increase in internet penetration, rise in disposable income of people in emerging markets, and ease of comparing a variety of travel options online. Market players introduce innovative travel and vacation package deals to assist travelers' in making sound travel decisions as per their spending capabilities, such as affordable packages for international destinations, discounts on car rentals, and cashback on international flights.

Political disturbance and natural calamities are some of the factors that restrain the growth of the online travel market. Furthermore, low digital literacy and the unavailability of internet connections in remote areas are expected to limit the growth of the market. The outbreak of COVID-19 negatively affected the growth of the online travel market in 2020. Frequent lockdown practices, social distancing, and a ban on travel and tourism in most countries were some of the attributes of decreased growth of the market in 2020.

The players operating in the online travel industry have adopted product launch and business expansion as their key developmental strategies to expand their market share, increase profitability, and remain competitive in the market. The key players profiled in this report include **Expedia Group, Inc., Ebury Partners UK Ltd,**



**Fareportal Inc., Hostelworld.com Limited, Hurb Co S/A, HRS, Make MyTrip Ltd., Oracle Corporation, Priceline (Booking Holdings Inc.), SABS Travel Technologies, Tavisca Solutions Pvt. Ltd., Thomas Cook India Ltd., travelomatix.com, Trip.com Group, Tripadvisor, Inc., and WEX Inc.**

According to the online travel market opportunities, region-wise, North America dominated the online travel market share and is expected to be dominant during the forecast period. The surge in demand for travelers seeking perfectly clean sites and personalized services in a normal environment also increases the demand for tour packages in North America. Growth in the number of trips per year and the emergence and increase in demand for agro-tourism, and eco-tourism are further attributable to the growth of the market in North America.

#### Key findings of the study

- The online travel market size was valued at \$354.2 billion in 2020 and is estimated to reach \$1,835.6 billion by 2031, registering a CAGR of 14.8% from 2022 to 2031.
- In 2020, depending on service types, the transportation segment acquired \$145.8 billion, garnering 41.2% of the global market share.
- Based on platforms, the mobile segment acquired \$108.8 billion, exhibiting 30.7% of the global market share.
- In 2020, by mode of booking, the direct travel suppliers segment was valued at \$197.3 billion, accounting for 55.7% of the market share.
- U.S. was the most prominent market in North America in 2020 and is projected to reach \$93.2 billion by 2031, growing at a CAGR of 12.0% during the forecast period.



# SriLankan Airlines

## Flying the Nation's Flag Globally for 43 Years

**S**ri Lankan Airlines has been the fabric of commercial aviation in Sri Lanka since the dawn of the airline 43 years ago. Launched on 1 September 1979, Sri Lankan Airlines' 43rd Anniversary is perhaps

an opportune moment therefore to reflect on the airline's greatest accomplishments, which are often intertwined with Sri Lanka's milestones in aviation and tourism.

Sri Lankans' contribution to the

economy of Sri Lanka as the country's flag carrier cannot be understated. The airline has been the ultimate gateway between Sri Lanka and the world. With a current all-Airbus fleet of 24 aircraft, Sri Lankan has been connecting Sri



Lankans to 119 cities in 60 countries across continents through direct and codeshare operations. Moreover, Sri Lankan Airlines is the only airline to operate direct flights between Colombo and several global power cities including London; Paris; Frankfurt; Melbourne; Sydney; and Tokyo, enabling socio-economic ties with these markets.

Sri Lankan has also played a central role in introducing Sri Lanka and the country's spectacular heritage to

discerning international travellers. Sri Lankan has for nearly half a century helped bridge distances; position Sri Lanka as one of the most desired holiday destinations; and link millions of passengers to Colombo, Southern India, and the Maldives with expedient connections. Over 95 percent of passengers transiting via Bandaranaike International Airport are carried by Sri Lankan Airlines and Sri Lankan remains the most frequently booked airline to travel to Sri Lanka.

The proof is in the numbers. Between 1979 and now, Sri Lankan has served over 89 million passenger journeys for both local and foreign passengers – a number that is equal to the population of Sri Lanka, four times over. The airline is, unquestionably, a key foreign currency earner for Sri Lanka as over 85 percent of its revenue is earned in foreign currency from international markets.

Sri Lankan Airlines has also powered economic activity across the supply chain of the travel and tourism trade of Sri Lanka. This includes creating jobs and supporting livelihoods, even if indirectly, for thousands employed in the sector. Consequently, it has been estimated that SriLankan Airlines makes a significant contribution to Sri Lanka's gross domestic product.

Aside from passenger services, strategic business units of the airline such as Sri Lankan Cargo and Sri Lankan Engineering have all progressively contributed to the organization and country. Sri Lankan Cargo, stepped up its operations to fly essential goods and facilitated trade to and from Sri Lanka in the absence of other operators during the pandemic effectively allowing the airline to redeploy resources for cargo operations in ensuring the survival of the airline as passenger travel ceased.

Sri Lankan Cargo has transported a whopping volume of over one million metric tons across borders solely in the past ten years. Similarly, Sri Lankan Engineering has amped its profile in the region and beyond by providing outstanding third-party maintenance services for other airlines; sealed many

new contracts including five signed just this year; and earned several million dollars in the process.

Nevertheless, the path leading up to the 43rd anniversary of the national carrier has been a rollercoaster of sorts with many challenges along the way. Sri Lankan Airlines, however, has persisted over the years; adapting when the situation necessitated it and extending steady support to the nation when needed. This has never been more evident than during times of national crisis.

Reflecting on the significance of the airline to the country, **Ashok Pathirage, Chairman of Sri Lankan Airlines** stated, *"For the past four decades, we have been flag bearers of the nation through thick and thin. Sri Lankan Airlines has not only prevailed through each challenging chapter that the country has had to navigate through but endeavored to help the country back on its feet. From sustaining travel and trade links between Sri Lanka and the world as other airlines cut back on flights to Sri Lanka due to the country's ongoing economic crisis to bringing down stranded Sri Lankans home during the thick of the pandemic in the recent past, Sri Lankan has always been a pillar of strength to the nation. The resilience of our legacy is the resilience of our people, and I would like to thank every employee of Sri Lankan Airlines for their show of dedication and commitment that has seen us through difficult times."*

Additionally, Sri Lankan Airlines has brought pride to the country with each international award brought home. While the awards won by Sri Lankan since 1979 are too numerous to list, the airline has won close to 50 prestigious international awards in the last decade alone. The most recently secured awards include Diamond status by the APEX Health and Safety Audit powered by SimpliFlying 2021; World's Leading Airline to the Indian Ocean by World Travel Awards 2021; APEX Passenger Choice Awards- Best WIFI in Central Asia 2022; and APEX Passenger Choice Awards- Best Cabin Service in Central Asia 2022.

# Thailand grants visa extensions for tourists to stimulate the upcoming high season



Effective from 1 October 2022, until 31 March 2023, tourists from countries/territories are entitled to a visa exemption and visa on arrival to Thailand.

Thailand's Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) approved the proposal by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) to extend the period of stay to 45 days for tourists from countries/territories entitled for visa exemption, and to 30 days for those eligible for a Visa on Arrival (VOA). This will be in effect from 1 October 2022, until 31 March 2023.

TAT has proposed the extension to stimulate the upcoming high season, which normally runs from October until March.

During the specially granted 6-month period, the length of stay per time will be extended from 30 days to 45 days for passport holders of the following countries/territories who may enter Thailand under a tourist visa exemption scheme: Andorra, Australia,

Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Monaco, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, The Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovak, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the UAE, UK, Ukraine, and USA.

Also, during the same 6-month period, the length of stay per time will be extended from 15 days to 30 days for passport holders of the following countries/territories who may apply for a VOA: Bhutan, Bulgaria, China, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, India, Kazakhstan, Malta, Mexico, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Uzbekistan, and Vanuatu.

In addition, passport holders of the following countries/ territories may enter

Thailand without a visa under a bilateral agreement: Cambodia (14 days), Myanmar (14 days), Hong Kong (30 days), Lao PDR. (30 days, Macau (30 days), Mongolia (30 days), Russia (30 days and VOA), Vietnam (30 days), Argentina (90 days), Brazil (90 days), Chile (90 days), Korea (ROK) (90 days), and Peru (90 days).

Nationals of certain countries/ territories are required to apply for a visa only at the Royal Thai Embassy or the Royal Consulate-General in their country of residence or at the designated Royal Thai Embassy/ Consulate-General. Therefore, travellers are advised to contact the nearest Royal Thai Embassy or Consulate-General to find out if they are eligible to apply.

Information on the location and contact number of Royal Thai Embassies and Consulate-Generals is available at [www.thaiembassy.org](http://www.thaiembassy.org).

To apply online, visitors may check their eligibility to do so at the official website of the Thailand Electronic Visa at [www.thaievisa.go.th](http://www.thaievisa.go.th).

Thailand warmly welcomes travellers from all countries/territories with proof of either a certificate of vaccination or, for unvaccinated individuals a negative RT-PCR or professional ATK test result within 72 hours of travel. These can be in a print or digital format. Random checks will be made on arrivals at Thailand's international airports or land border checkpoints (in 22 provinces).

While in Thailand, both vaccinated and unvaccinated/not fully vaccinated travellers are advised to strictly follow the health and safety standards. Travellers who are experiencing COVID-like symptoms should get tested. If testing positive, they must get the appropriate medical treatment.

# Thailand introduces new 10-year long-term resident visa for foreigners

Applications are now open for the visa, which offers multiple benefits for the holder including a 10-year visa (extendable), fast-track airport service, multiple re-entry permits, and permission to work in the kingdom.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has advised that applications opened on 1 September 2022, for Thailand's new 'Long-Term Resident (LTR)' visa, which offers multiple benefits for holders, including a 10-year visa (extendable) and permission to work in the kingdom.

Mr. Yuthasak Supasorn, said "The new long-term resident visa is aimed at enhancing Thailand's attractiveness to 'high-potential' foreigners as a regional hub to live and do business in. Also, it will embrace a crucial role to promote Thailand as a 'Remote Worker Friendly' destination and help us tap this targeted segment. It is expected to attract foreign talent and expertise that can contribute to domestic spending and support economic growth. With

the long-term resident visa, the Thai government wants to bring one million wealthy and talented foreigners to Thailand in the next five years."

The LTR visa is available to four categories of foreigners:

- Wealthy global citizens – having total assets of not less than US\$1 million, personal income of not less than US\$80,000 per year in the past two years, who invest in Thailand to a value of not less than US\$500,000.
- Foreign retirees (wealthy pensioners) – have a personal income of not less than US\$80,000 per year.
- Work-from-Thailand professionals – having a personal income of at least US\$80,000 per year in the past two years, work experience of not less than five years, and be working in a legally

registered company that has an income of not less than US\$150 million within the past three years.

- Highly skilled professionals – having a personal income of not less than US\$80,000 per year, are skillful in the target industry, and have not less than five years of work experience.

Spouses and children under 20 years of age of an LTR visa holder also qualify (up to four dependants per visa holder).

The LTR visa offers multiple benefits to the holder. These being:

- A visa with 10-year validity (which can be extended);
- The requirement to report to immigration once a year instead of every 90 days;
- Fast track service at international airports in Thailand;
- Multiple re-entry permits;
- Permission to work in Thailand (digital work permit);
- Personal income tax rate reduction to 17% for highly skilled professionals;
- Exemption from the four Thais to one foreigner employment requirement ratio.



# India emerges as the global leader in travel in 2022 as per Travel Lifestyle Network survey



India leads Asia-Pacific in its intent to travel in the second half of 2022 with 50 per cent Indians expressing the desire to spend more money on booking a vacation in the survey conducted by Travel Lifestyle Network in a post-pandemic setting. While international travel still remains a point of contention among many, with only 15 per cent respondents willing to travel abroad, 29 per cent people are planning to vacation in India. India emerged as the global leader in domestic travel with 24 per cent people undertaking at least one vacation every month, for which the global average stands at 11 per cent. The country is also way-ahead of its global counterparts in business travel with

almost 18 percent of Indians travelling for work within the country once a month.

With participation from 179,446 people across 28 countries, the survey, released last week, provides insight into the state of travel across the 28 relevant markets including travel behaviour patterns.

In terms of leisure travel, over 36 percent of Indians are most likely to take road trips in 2022, followed by long weekends influencing 34 percent of Indians to bite the travel bug. In terms of factors influencing travel behaviour, India is at par with the global average, as at least 26 percent of Indians indicated that their destination choice would be based on value for

money, while 22 percent attributed it to a relaxing experience.

In the context of the evolving cost-of-living crisis, with inflation rates soaring in many countries, the travel industry needs to contend with consumer concerns relating to the price of travel. Affordability is likely to have a significant impact on travel-related purchasing in the second half of 2022 and into 2023 with over a quarter (26 percent) of the global respondents rating value for money as the key factor that has the most impact on decisions about where to travel on vacation. Overall, the survey discovered that wanderlust abounds with a strong desire to seize the experiences that travel offers in the post-Covid climate.



# The Leela Bhartiya City Bengaluru launches the largest convention center in Bangalore

**T**he Leela Bhartiya City Bengaluru announces the launch of their convention centre, the largest in the city.

Nestled amidst the pristine environs of Bhartiya City, one of India's largest integrated smart cities, spread across 125 acres, the hotel exudes modern luxury and sophistication. A part of immaculately designed Bhartiya City, a next gen tech park, home to leading global technology clients, theatre, entertainment Bhartiya Mall of Bengaluru and residences. With sprawling open spaces surrounding the Central Park, landscaped gardens, promenades and cycling paths, the city is a perfect location for both social and corporate events, away from the hustle-bustle of a burgeoning city.

Keeping the modern user in mind, The Leela Bhartiya City's convention centre seamlessly blends contemporary chic with the timeless Leela aesthetic to create the perfect destination for corporate and social gatherings and events, from mega to intimate in size and style.

With one of the largest convention centres in Bengaluru, sprawling over 7432 sqm including a Grand Ballroom, a Royal Ballroom, The Terrace, The Boardroom and other meeting rooms, the hotel offers extensive choice and flexibility for bespoke events as well as iconic celebrations. From intimate gatherings to extravagant galas to business meetings of any scale and size, to elaborate weddings,



personalised services and state-of-the-art-technology offer both comfort and convenience.

The Grand Ball room which is cleverly lit with warm tones of natural daylight is furnished with a subtle touch of opulence in line with the look and feel of the brand The Leela. Flexible breakout options, a studio kitchen and a spectacular entrance sums up this space. The Grand Ball room which is more than 668 sqm in area, can accommodate both Theatre and Cluster style seating and is perfect for major occasions.

The plug and play meeting venues in the hotel are all located conveniently on the same floor as the Grand Ball Room and are ideal for small briefings or can even be used as break out rooms for big events. They can be customised according to the structure of the event.

The venues are aptly named after iconic locations from across Karnataka– Bidar, Hampi, Varuna, and kabini.

Besides these indoor venues, the property offers a magnificent outdoor space with lush greenery. Guests have the option to select from any of the following spaces like the Central Park, a Performing Arts Platform, The terrace, and Upper Deck lawns for an unforgettable experience as hosts and guests. The expansive convention centre caters to all clientele and offer vibrant spread of Food and Beverage. Every dish is perfectly concocted by hotel's chef to weave together a dining experience.

The venue also offers a wide range of luxury services like, signature spa experiences, chopper rides, shopping at the Bhartiya city Mall of Bengaluru, Vineyard tours and is an idyllic spot for picnics on the lawns.



## 100 days until the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ – how to enjoy 100 hours in Qatar

- *FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™* kicks off on 21 November 2022
- *Qatar Tourism reveals top activities for fans to do outside watching a match*

To mark 100 days until the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™, Qatar Tourism reveals how fans should spend 100 hours in Qatar while visiting for a match.

With more than one million visitors set to descend on Doha for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™, fans will be searching for activities to pack into their schedules whilst not attending

matches. Qatar is perfectly placed to provide visitors with every type of experience they may be looking for. And with each fan's 'Hayya Card' – required to enter Qatar – providing free public transport, including the new air-conditioned metro on match days, it will be quick and convenient to discover the peninsula's best sites and things to do without breaking the bank.

### **Action and adventure – 24 hours (Day 1)**

With more than 560 kilometres of coastline, the calm crystal waters of the Arabian Gulf make Qatar an ideal spot for water sports. From beginners to the experienced, adventurers should try stand-up paddle boarding around The Pearl-Qatar, go sunset kayaking through lush green



mangroves, or have a thrilling jet ski ride exploring the stunning skyline. Then, a visit to the undulating dunes of Qatar's desert is a must-do. Only an hour's drive from Doha, one of the most popular tours is to experience the stunning Khor Al-Adaid or 'Inland Sea', recognized by UNESCO as a natural reserve with a beautiful landscape. The journey commonly includes dune bashing in a 4x4, swimming in the beautiful waters, and, of course, a camel ride.

Back in the city families looking to get their thrill-fix should visit Doha Quest, the latest of Qatar's theme parks which opened last summer and offer an array of attractions for all ages. The highlights are the two Guinness World Record-holding rides - the 'Tallest Indoor Rollercoaster' and the 'Tallest Indoor Drop Tower Ride.'

#### **Art and culture – 48 hours (Day 2)**

Culture, art, and history are around every corner in Qatar. One of the most

breath-taking public art installations is East-West/West-East by Richard Serra, which comprises four, huge, 14-metre steel plates amongst the Ras Abrouq rock formations in Zekreet.

For those wishing to stay in the city, a number of iconic museums including the National Museum of Qatar (NMQ), with its captivating design in the shape of desert rose crystals, the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) designed by I. M. Pei, and the new 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum – an ambitious project, billed as the world's most innovative sports museum.

Later, stroll through Souq Waqif, a traditional market, best experienced in the evening when the alleyway shops and restaurants come to life and fill with locals, residents, and curious visitors. Try the local cuisine, pick up a souvenir, or just enjoy the hustle and bustle.

#### **The beach – 72 hours (Day 3)**

After an action-packed 48 hours, it is time for some relaxation. Whether





you want to read a book, sunbathe on the sand, or have a refreshing dip in the sea, a day at the beach is a must. For uninterrupted sunset views, try Al Shamal on the north coast and Fuwairit Beach.

Those after a family-friendly break can visit Hilton Salwa Beach Resort & Villas, which has 3.5 kilometres of powder-soft beachfront, Desert Falls Water & Adventure Park, and recently launched a dolphin cruise. Another option is taking a short boat ride to the glamorous Banana Island Resort Doha by Anantara, which this summer reopened a surf pool and launched whale shark excursions.

### **Affordable exploration – 96 hours (Day 4)**

Qatar offers something for everyone and all budgets. The capital has a variety of eclectic city districts where it is fun to simply stroll around and discover all the hidden nooks, street art, and culture. One of the most intriguing areas is the Pearl-Qatar, an expansive man-made island to the north of Doha that features Mediterranean-style yacht-lined marinas, boutique shops, and colourful Instagrammable streets in the Qanat Quartier zone. For an area that blends more

Arabian heritage with modern sustainable urban architecture there

is Msheireb Downtown Doha with its trendy cafes, art galleries, and museums.

Visiting fans will be among the first to experience a range of new tourism developments set to launch just before the tournament begins. Exciting openings include Lusail Winter Wonderland on a sandy island, a state-of-the-art kite beach resort Fuwairit Kite Beach, the first “Entertainment Island” in Qatar Qetaifan Island North, and new public and private beach areas forming part of the West Bay North Beach Project.

It is worth a wander through one of the glittering shopping malls. The largest is the Mall of Qatar and



Doha Festival City, with theme parks and family-friendly eateries amongst many hundreds of household-name brands. On the luxury end is Galeries Lafayette with its outdoor air-conditioned walkways and the new Place Vendôme, which has a grand outdoor canal, dancing fountain, and architecture inspired by the famous high-end shopping street in Paris, Rue de la Paix.

Finally, no itinerary in Qatar is complete without sampling food from the mix of local and international restaurants. There is a raft of new options such as ADRIFT Anda by celebrity chef David Myers, and Lobito de Mar at the Marsa Malaz Kempinski hotel. Visitors will also find a huge variety of budget-friendly, delicious street food options, from tacos to shawarma. These are often all grouped in a convenient zone such as the Lusail Night Market. For an authentic local snack, every fan must try Qatar's

acclaimed café restaurant Chapati & Karak, named after an Indian-inspired flatbread treat and sweet tea available together for only a couple of dollars.

### Now for the match! – 100 hours

For those final four hours, it is time for a match. Qatar is the first ever Middle Eastern or Arab nation to host a FIFA World Cup™ and has made extensive plans to ensure every traveller is satisfied / Travel Trade related to the experience of a lifetime.

**Chief Operating Officer of Qatar Tourism, Berthold Trenkel,** said:

*“From thrilling water sports to shopping at the souqs, exploring mesmerising museums to soaking up the sun on the beaches, there is something for every type of traveller when they come to Qatar. We invite football fans from around the world to explore our plethora of attractions, all with the promise of a warm welcome and generous hospitality that is customary of Arabian culture.”*



# Time to again Reconnect, Rebuild, and Move Forward says Jyoti Mayal, President TAAI

The Royal Caribbean cruise – Spectrum of the Seas sailed from Singapore for a three-day cruise to Penang and back. The convention was well attended by 312 delegates on board, a first of its kind. An organized early check-in saved a lot of time for

the delegates. **President TAAI Ms. Jyoti Mayal** said that support from the members and TIRUN Marketing helped TAAI to have the event designed in a record 12 days.

Stressing the need for regional tourism, Ms. Mayal said that promoting

*The Limited edition of the 66th cruising TAAI convention concluded successfully on a high note*



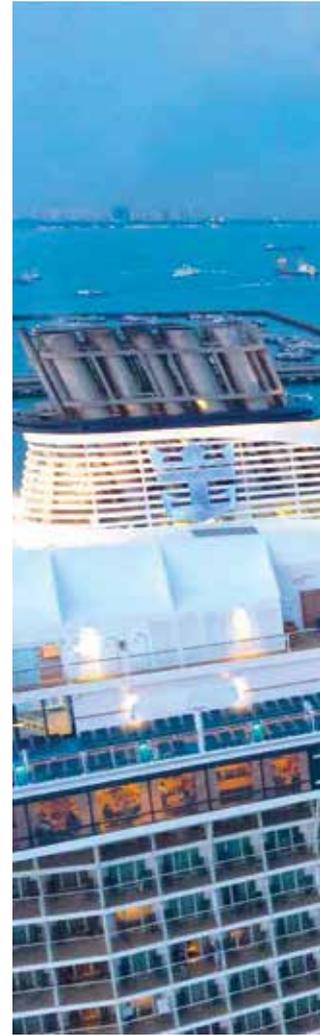
regional tourism, catering to a well-connected traveller, and the struggle to find the right balance between the use of technology and human interface in the travel industry is the need of the hour. India's neighbouring countries should come forward for the revival of the tourism industry which is now re-connecting and Rejuvenating, amongst the tourism industry is the need of the hour as collective efforts will bear more success.

*“Regional tourism is an aspect which I have been supporting. Our borders don't need to be closed, another Covid or no Covid, pandemic or no pandemic, we need to keep our borders open so that we can continue tourism. Like I say let India be one state and let the regions be one India. So let us move forward with that thought and see how we can make tourism policies better so that more people can travel, and how can visas be facilitated. Maybe even how we can have one visa and one tourism policy, one tax structure for tourism only,”*

**Mayal said.**

*“The travel trade fraternity in India needs to come together and work closely to bring about a change in perspective and approach. “We need to break from convention to make a good convention. We need to move forward and explore all those opportunities. And believe me, there's a market for all of us. So, there is no competition, there is nothing called the OTAs. There's nothing like brick and mortar shops, all the stakeholders are together in it, and*





*we all need to work together to gain our good share of the business,” Mayal said.*

The interactive sessions during the three-day convention refreshed the minds of the participants as spokespersons shared their valuable experiences. One of the sessions – ‘The Connected Traveller’ was well discussed where professionals from airlines, hotels, and cruise companies discussed

how to integrate technology to make travel seamless, faster, and easier for the travellers.

While some speakers highlighted how they were using advanced technology like facial recognition to make customer experience better, others raised the issue of intrusive technology and lack of respect of privacy without adequate safeguards to protect the users.



The travel industry needed to adopt technology to keep abreast with customer needs and expectations, which have undergone large-scale changes since the outbreak of the pandemic. Technology represented an opportunity more than a challenge. "Post-pandemic the times have changed and things need to be looked at differently. The traveller is looking for experiences.

Representatives from Sri Lanka Tourism, Nepal Tourism Board (with 16 members) and Kazakh Tourism participated and shared the tourism potential their countries have to offer.

The Guest of Honour for the inauguration of the **convention P Kumaran, High Commissioner of India to Singapore**, spoke about the importance of regional tourism and how the event could be a platform to

promote travel from South-East Asia to India and vice-versa.

**Angie Stephen, Vice President, Asia Pacific, Royal Caribbean Group**

in an exclusive to Travel Span informed that Royal Caribbean sees India as an emerging cruise market that they want to target for increasing the number of people who cruise with them. "Cruising is now popular in the metro cities and spreading to the mini-metros... Most of the major cruise liners are present in India today. Cruising is now a part of the consideration set of the affluent and well-traveled.

**TIRUN Travel Marketing**, which represents Royal Caribbean in India, is expanding its network in India. Royal Caribbean's newest ship, *Spectrum of the Seas*, has finally arrived in Asia and

*we are happy to have the maiden 66th TAAI cruise convention on the Spectrum of The Seas with A 3-night cruise to Kuala Lumpur (Port Klang) from Singapore. Post-Covid RCI sees more growth in the next year as it launches a new vessel 'IKON of the Seas'.*

**Ratna Chadha, CEO, TIRUN Marketing said'**

*cruising is for everyone and not just a particular segment. She stressed the need for a favourable policy by the government of India to attract foreign cruise vessels to sail from India and benefit from the vast coastline of 7516.6 km that India possesses.*

The 66th cruising convention has been a success in terms of numbers in terms of participation in terms of the knowledge sessions.

# Virgin Atlantic and IndiGo announce new codeshare agreement



**V**irgin Atlantic and IndiGo have announced a new codeshare between the UK and India, offering seamless connections and increased opportunities for frequent flyers to earn more points than ever before.

The codeshare partnership will mean customers booking a Virgin Atlantic ticket will be able to fly on the airline's London Heathrow to Delhi and Mumbai flights and connect to and from 7 additional cities in India. Later this year the agreement will be expanded to cover a total of 16 destinations throughout India, as well as connections onto Virgin Atlantic's extensive US network operated via London Heathrow.

The agreement will allow Virgin Atlantic to sell seats to passengers connecting onto IndiGo flights. The initial codeshare destinations in India include Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Goa, Delhi and Mumbai. The additional destinations will include Kochi, Chandigarh, Jaipur, Pune,

Coimbatore, Nagpur, Vadodara, Indore and Visakhapatnam.

The new codeshare agreement will allow Virgin Atlantic's Flying Club members to reach their rewards faster, with opportunities to earn both Virgin Points and Tier Points available on every codeshare with IndiGo.

The codeshare flights will be available this week for booking for travel beyond 27<sup>th</sup> September, subject to government approval.

**Juha Jarvinen, Chief Commercial Officer at Virgin Atlantic, commented:**

*"We're thrilled to launch a new codeshare partnership with IndiGo. This summer marks our largest ever flying programme from India with three daily direct services to London and our new partnership takes our commitment to even greater heights. IndiGo is India's largest airline and its extensive network will offer Virgin Atlantic customers even more choice when travelling between the UK and India, as well as offering seamless connections*

*for onward travel across our extensive US route network.*

*"It's great news for our Flying Club too, by providing more opportunities for members to earn valuable points. This new partnership aims to respond to the large, fast-growing demand for visiting friends & relatives, leisure as well as business travellers looking for more choice between UK and India."*

**Mr. Ronojoy Dutta, Chief Executive Officer and Wholetime Director, IndiGo said:**

*"We are pleased to announce our codeshare with Virgin Atlantic to provide enhanced connectivity to the passengers. This will not only help offer a seamless travel experience from London to as many as 16 destinations in India but also open up international trade opportunities throughout the country via enhanced accessibility. We look forward to having Virgin Atlantic's customers on our lean clean flying machine, as we extend our on-time, affordable, courteous, and hassle-free travel experience."*

# EXPERIENCE

THE BEST OF TRAVEL AT  
**YOUR FINGERTIPS**

SUBSCRIBE TO THE DIGITAL ISSUE



Scan this QR code to get the latest issue of TravelSpan Magazine on your tablet or mobile device!

**AVAILABLE ON**



A welcome  
you'll never  
forget



Rijal Alma, Asir  
[visitsaudi.com](https://visitsaudi.com)

*Saudi*  
Welcome  
to Arabia