

LUXURY AND LIFESTYLE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

travel

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contents



13 CRUISES: 10 best Ocean cruise-lines for 2020

Looking for a 2020 cruise vacation that will make some waves? Then don't just hop aboard any old boat: When it comes to planning your perfect trip, travel foresight is «20/20,» thanks to this sneak peek at the 10 most exciting cruise ships on the roster for the year ahead.

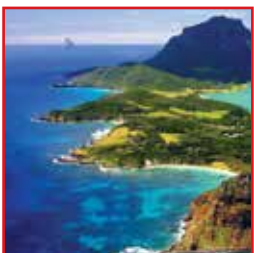
26 WOMEN SPECIAL: Celebrate International women's day with Travel Span

The untapped and unmeasured contribution of women is enormous. It's International Women's Day 2020 – a day to both celebrate the achievements of women, and to recognize that we still have a way to go towards gender parity. We're using it as an occasion to shine a light on fantastic female entrepreneurs in the travel and tourism industry. Read on what they have to say...



40 INTERNATIONAL: New Zealand welcomes Indian with a heartfelt good morning

Tourism New Zealand welcomes Indians with its new campaign creative and announces expansion of Tourism Industry Partnership for quicker visitor visa application processing



42 INTERNATIONAL: Book a trip to New South Wales

Explore Australia's most geographically diverse state at any time of the year. There are many stunning NSW destinations, such as the Blue Mountains near Sydney. Whether weekend getaways, family holidays or adventure holidays, you'll find plenty of points of interest and amazing attractions. From romantic weekend getaways in rolling wine country to memorable beach holidays on the NSW coast, finding the perfect short trip in NSW is easy. Discover delicious foodie experiences and thrilling adventure, as well as spectacular natural wonders and more.

contents



46 INTERNATIONAL: Indian tourist arrivals in Turkey marks 57% growth in 2019

The Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism India revealed that between January to December 2019, it has registered a 57% increase in the number of Indian tourist arrivals in comparison to the same period last year, hosting 230,000 Indian visitors. In 2018, it hosted 147,000 Indian visitors while the numbers started to increase drastically from 2019. With such positive growth rate recorded, Turkey Tourism is expecting a growth of approximately 35% in the Indian tourist arrivals by the end of 2020. The latest official statistics also revealed that 51.9 million foreign tourists visited Turkey within the period of January to December 2019, indicating 13.7% increase from the previous year.



47 TRAVEL TRADE: Ebix cash signs an agreement with Amadeus to propel its end-to-end travel vision

With 210K travel agents to service and 4.5 million users of its travel app, EbixCash needs access to an extensive range of content and the best, scalable technology to deliver what its agents, corporations and travelers need. The partnership will provide EbixCash's online websites, travel agents and corporations in Asia Pacific and UAE with greater access to the unrivalled breadth of content offered by the Amadeus Travel Platform, enabling EbixCash to better serve its customers. Built on fully open systems, the Amadeus Travel Platform harnesses artificial intelligence to bring a greater level of personalized content into one integrated platform



58 HOSPITALITY AND FOOD: Gaj Kesri - A sparkling red jewel in the middle of nowhere

Gaj Kesri an upscale royal themed resort on the outskirts of Bikaner in Rajasthan is the perfect place to get away for a holiday filled with luxury. The brainchild of Sunil Rampuria who has designed the place, the resort has 41 well appointed rooms. The design of the resort resembles a palatial home and all the artifacts are made in house.



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Editor's Letter

UK gets ready for new points-based visa system; Indians may benefit

UK Home Secretary Priti Patel announced the launch of the UK's new points-based visa system, aimed at attracting the "brightest and the best" from the world, including from India, and cutting down numbers of cheap, low-skilled workers coming to the country,

The new system will come into force from January 1, 2021.

The new post-Brexit system, which will apply equally to the EU and non-EU countries like India, is based on assigning points for specific skills, qualifications, salaries and professions, with visas only awarded to those who gain enough points.

"Today is a historic moment for the whole country. We're ending free movement, taking back control of our borders and delivering on the people's priorities by introducing a new UK points-based immigration system, which will bring overall migration numbers down," said Patel, the senior-most Indian-origin Cabinet Minister.

"We will attract the brightest and the best from around the globe, boosting the economy and our communities, and unleash this country's full potential," Patel, in charge of the UK's visa and immigration system, said.

"The new single global system will treat the EU and non-EU citizens equally. It will give top priority to those with the highest skills and the greatest talents, including scientists, engineers and academics," the Home Office said.

The Global Talent Scheme, a fast-track visa to be in operation from Friday, will also apply to the EU citizens from next year to allow highly-skilled scientists and researchers to come to the UK without a job offer.

All applicants will be required to have a job offer and, in line with the Migration Advisory Committee's (MAC) recommendations, the minimum salary threshold will be set at 25,600 pounds - lower than the previous 30,000 pounds level for Tier 2 work visas.

The new points-based system will also expand the skills threshold for skilled workers. Those looking to live and work in the UK will need to be qualified up to A-level or equivalent, rather than degree-level under the current system. This will provide greater flexibility and ensure UK business has access to a wide pool of skilled workers, the Home Office said.

We are on



DEVENDER GROVER

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Vistara

enters Uttarakhand with Daily Flights to Dehradun Starting 29 March



Vistara, India's finest full-service carrier, today added Dehradun, Uttarakhand as the 36th

destination to its fast-growing network. The airline will operate daily flights between Delhi and Dehradun starting 29 March 2020. Bookings open today with introductory all-inclusive one-way fares starting INR 2,499 in Economy Class, INR 4,699 in Premium Economy and INR 12,299 in Business Class.

Customers from Dehradun can also take seamless connections through Delhi to other cities on Vistara's network, including but not limited to Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai,

Hyderabad, Indore, Kolkata, Mumbai, Pune, Ranchi, Raipur and Varanasi.

Vinod Kannan, Chief Commercial Officer, Vistara said, "With its close proximity to several of India's most-visited tourist destinations, Dehradun is the gateway to the state of Uttarakhand. Over the past decade, the city has seen tremendous upswing in economic growth following the establishment of software technology parks and SEZs. We see a significant demand for a

full-service flying experience on the Delhi-Dehradun route and look forward to bringing our five-star rated service to business and leisure travellers alike."

Vistara is India's highest-rated airline on Skytrax and TripAdvisor and has been the winner of several 'Best Airline' awards. In a short span of five years, Vistara has raised the bar for operations and service delivery in the Indian aviation industry by offering the finest flying experience to travellers.

SCHEDULE OF FLIGHTS BETWEEN DELHI AND DEHRADUN

(All timings shown are in local times)

Flight No.	From	To	Departure	Arrival	Frequency
UK617	Delhi (DEL)	Dehradun (DED)	1350 Hours	1455 Hours	Daily
UK618	Dehradun (DED)	Delhi (DEL)	1530 Hours	1630 Hours	Daily

Above mentioned flight details are subject to final regulatory approvals.

Japan Airlines and Vistara expand codeshare



Japan Airlines (JAL) and Vistara have announced the expansion of their codeshare. This will enable both the carriers to offer better connectivity and flexibility on sectors between India and Japan.

Starting from March 15, the two airlines will offer codeshare on JAL's international routes to India namely Tokyo-Delhi and Tokyo-Bengaluru in addition to connecting flights to major cities between the two destinations.

As a part of this deal, JAL will add 13 new Indian destinations to its network including Goa and Amritsar, while Vistara will add five Japanese cities such as Sapporo, Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, and Fukuoka.

Codeshare routes (from March 15, 2020)

Operated by Japan Airlines (International)

Narita-Delhi

Operated by Japan Airlines (Domestic)

Haneda-Sapporo
Haneda-Osaka Kansai
Haneda-Osaka Itami
Haneda-Nagoya
Haneda-Fukuoka
Narita-Sapporo
Narita-Osaka Itami
Narita-Nagoya
Narita-Fukuoka
Operated by Vistara

Delhi-Goa
Delhi-Amritsar
Delhi-Bhubaneswar
Delhi-Kochi
Delhi-Guwahati
Delhi-Bagdogra
Delhi-Chandigarh
Delhi-Leh
Delhi-Ranchi
Delhi-Lucknow
Delhi-Raipur
Delhi-Sri Nagar
Delhi-Varanasi
New codeshare routes (from March 29, 2020)

Operated by Japan Airlines

Haneda-Delhi
Narita-Bengaluru

Commenting on this partnership, **Hideki Oshima, JAL's executive officer for International Relations and Alliances** said, "The travel demand from India to Japan has more than doubled in the past decade, making this a key market for Japan Airlines. By strengthening our partnership with Vistara, we will provide an international network that better matches the actual needs of our mutual customers."

Adding to this, **Vinod Kannan, chief commercial officer, Vistara**, said, "Japan is a strong market for business and leisure travellers from India and this partnership will help us offer greater convenience, ease of connection and increased choices to our customers traveling to different cities in Japan."

Air India signs distribution agreement with Amadeus, Sabre out in the cold



Amadeus and Air India have signed a new distribution deal, ending a protracted period of talks after the carrier withdrew its inventory from the global distribution system.

In late-2018, the Indian government-owned carrier announced it would be reducing its presence on global distribution systems and awarded Travelport sole distribution rights of its domestic inventory.

Legal proceedings from Amadeus began in 2018, as it tried to renegotiate the agreement, although the Spain-based company later dropped the case.

Fast-forward a year, and the pair have now forged a new relationship enabling travel sellers in India to access international content and retailers in the rest of the world to access both domestic and international from Air India.

Amadeus says: "In light of the agreement that we have now reached with the airline, and in the belief that this agreement heralds the start of a new and positive relationship with the airline, we

have agreed to drop the case."

Last week, Sabre announced that Air India content would no longer be available in the GDS.

Sabre says it attempted to negotiate a new deal with Air India for the "better part of a year." The GDS was close to a deal last October, but the agreement never went ahead.

Sabre adds that it will continue to work with Air India on a new agreement.

The announcement of the deal by Amadeus came after an earlier note circulated by Air India to its agency customers, and seen by PhocusWire, saying an agreement with Amadeus had been made and inventory would be soon available via the platform.

Meenakshi Mallik, commercial director for Air India, says in a press statement: "We are pleased to renew our relationship with Amadeus to support our growth strategy globally and hope that this is the first step in our new journey together, we look forward to working closer with Amadeus to support agencies and travelers in the future."

MATTA goes all out to attract Indian travellers



The Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA) has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with three national travel associations from India to boost traveller traffic between Malaysia and India, in conjunction with Visit Malaysia 2020.

The associations are Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) and Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI).

MATTA's president Tan Kok Liang said in a statement that MATTA will be "introducing fresh itineraries and attractive tour packages to encourage more tourists from India to visit Malaysia".

Work with airlines to expand routes and flight frequencies will continue so as to build India into a "stronger tourist source market".

Last year, the Malaysian government extended the Electronic Travel Registration and Information (eNTRI) system, exempting tourists from India and China from applying for a visa for visits of up to 15 days.

Indian arrivals to Malaysia have grown from 552,739 in 2017 to 750,000 in 2019.



Air Canada

Unveils Its First Airbus A220-300



Air Canada unveiled its first Airbus A220-300 at the company's headquarters in Montreal January 15, 2020.

The 137-seat narrowbody is the first of 45 A220-300s the Canadian

flag carrier expects to receive through 2022.

Manufactured by Airbus Canada (previously Bombardier) at its facility in Mirabel, Quebec, the former Bombardier CS300 is a major

component of Air Canada's fleet modernization plan, which will see the Montreal-based carrier retire its fleet of Embraer E190s in favor of the newer, more fuel-efficient A220.

"The A220 represents the

transformation Air Canada has undergone and the innovative culture we've developed," Air Canada president and CEO Calin Rovinescu said in remarks at the company's headquarters Jan. 15. "Over the past 10 years, we've undertaken a renewal of our entire mainline fleet, spending more than \$12 billion. It began by accumulating state-of-the-art widebody aircraft. The arrival of the A220 represents the next phase of narrow-body renewal for our fleet."

Air Canada became the first North American airline to place a firm order for the former C Series when it finalized a letter of intent for 45 CS300s in June 2016, with options for 30 more, at a list price of \$3.89 billion. That order paved the way for other large North American carriers including Delta Air Lines and JetBlue Airways to place firm orders for the C series, helping to shore

up the program at a time of financial difficulties for Bombardier.

Air Canada's A220 will officially enter into commercial service Jan. 16, when it will make its maiden commercial flight between Montreal and Calgary. As Air Canada takes delivery of more A220s, the narrowbody will be initially deployed from Montreal and Toronto on existing Canadian and transborder routes, including to Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa, Winnipeg and New York LaGuardia Airport.

The first new A220 routes are scheduled to begin May 4, with the introduction of Montreal-Seattle and Toronto-San Jose service, the only nonstop service between those city pairs.

"The A220 will allow Air Canada to further strengthen our position on transborder and transcontinental markets and be instrumental in our

continued growth," Air Canada VP-network planning Mark Galardo said. Air Canada will be the first North American carrier to operate the larger A220-300 variant, which has a range of 3,200 nautical miles, compared to 2,950 nm for the smaller A220-100. The airline will fly the A220 in a 137-seat, two-class layout, with 12 business class seats in a 2x2 configuration and 125 economy seats in a 3x2 layout.

While Air Canada plans to use the A220 to retire its fleet of 14 E190s—with an average fleet age of 14 years—those plans may have to be put on hold temporarily while the carrier's fleet of 24 Boeing MAX 8 aircraft remains grounded. Air Canada currently has orders in place for 26 more MAX 8s and 11 MAX 9s, which are intended to replace some of its older A320-family aircraft.

IndiGo to start daily flights on Delhi-Bangkok route from Mar 29

Low-cost carrier IndiGo has said that it will start daily flights on the Delhi-Bangkok route from March 29, making Thailand's capital city the 14th international destination in its network to be connected with New Delhi. Currently, IndiGo has daily flights to Bangkok from five Indian cities - Kolkata, Bengaluru, Varanasi, Mumbai and Chennai. William Boulter, Chief Commercial Officer, IndiGo, said, "The ease and cost-efficiency of travelling to Thailand for an international vacation from India will be the growth driver for the route."

The launch of this new service highlights Indigo's global network expansion strategies for New Delhi, as Bangkok will be the 14th international destination connected with the capital city. William Boulter, chief commercial officer, Indigo said, "This route will increase mobility and promote



trade and tourism between New Delhi and Bangkok. The ease and cost-efficiency of travelling to Thailand for an international vacation from India will be the growth driver for the route. "Our new route will complement the Thai government's proactive measures to promote Bangkok as a leisure destination."

Flight Schedule:

Flight No.	Departure	Arrival	Time of Departure	Time of Arrival	Frequency
6E 0085	Delhi	Bangkok	1055	1640	Daily
6E 0086	Bangkok	Delhi	1740	2030	Daily

The Indian low-cost carrier operates flights to two destinations in Thailand — Bangkok and Phuket.

AirAsia Implements New Digital Solutions To Improve Efficiency, Reduce Carbon Footprint

In line with its continued focus on innovation and sustainability, AirAsia is taking its environmental responsibilities a step further by implementing digital solutions that are aimed at further improving fuel efficiency and reducing carbon emissions. Developed by Paris-based Safety Line, the OptiFlight-In-flight guidance is a unique suite of digital solutions that optimises all flight phases.

Following extensive validation tests, AirAsia has implemented OptiClimb which will save up to 3 percent of its climb fuel, potentially representing a fleetwide carbon footprint reduction of at least 73,000 tons of CO2 per year. By introducing a number of new digital initiatives to its flight operations, AirAsia is not only offsetting its carbon emissions but also pro-actively reducing them at the source whilst also further reducing costs for the benefit of its customers.

AirAsia Group Chief Operations Officer Javed Malik said, "AirAsia is making every effort to improve its operational efficiency and become a digital airline in all aspects of our business including flight operations, and OptiFlight will allow us to leverage vast amounts of flight data with the aim of reducing CO2 emissions. Needless to say, we are excited to be the very first airline to implement OptiClimb in Asia and we continue to look at new ways to innovate and further reduce our carbon footprint."

On leveraging data to reduce emissions, Safety Line Founder & CEO, Pierre Jouniaux said, "On AirAsia's medium haul flights, the initial climb alone can represent more than 30% of trip fuel, offering the most potential for savings. However, climb is also the most complex phase, with many parameters changing simultaneously as the aircraft ascends. AirAsia will use historical flight data and Artificial

Intelligence to address this complexity and predict fuel burn in different scenarios to recommend optimal climb speeds to pilots for each flight, taking into account individual aircraft performance and accurate 4D weather forecasts."

Jouniaux further added, "Getting AirAsia on board as a customer and innovation partner is a privilege and we look forward to working closely together to explore ways of reducing Air Transport's carbon footprint." In addition to implementing OptiClimb, AirAsia has joined the OptiFlight Innovation Partnership in September 2019 which provides further flight optimization opportunities that will be explored in all flight phases. For instance, AirAsia will be the first airline in Asia to trial OptiDirect, a solution that recommends some adjustments to pilots based on historical tracks flown and forecasted weather on the route.

Travel Span partners with ITB India

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Travel Span India is proud to collaborate with ITB India as a media partner. The inaugural ITB India is a three-day business-to-business trade show being held from April 15 to April 17, 2020 at Bombay Exhibition Centre in Mumbai.

The event will bring together industry leaders and international exhibitors from the world of travel, MICE, leisure,

corporate and travel and technology. This trade fair is expected to further strengthen global business ties with India and other south Asian markets.

What makes this ITB India-Travel Span India partnership all the more special is that our leading consumer publication is celebrating its 20th anniversary in April alongside ITB's India debut.

As a media partner, we will bring you

all the latest updates and key highlights from this grand trade show, which will be available on all our digital platforms.

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10 best ocean cruise lines for 2020

Whether you prefer long days at sea or ample time in diverse ports of call, mega-ships packed with features or intimate yachts, more restaurants than a resort or a single luxury dining room, there's a cruise line out there for you.

No. 10 Oceania Cruises. One of the world's largest luxury cruise lines, Oceania Cruises attracts passengers with its destination-centric itineraries to more than 330 ports around the world. And that's in addition to its stellar culinary program headed by Master Chef Jacques Pépin and its spacious accommodations (the Regatta, Insignia, Nautica and Sirena only carry 684 guests).

No. 9 Celebrity Cruises. Celebrity Cruises earns high marks for spacious accommodations, as well as the money and effort the line spends to keep its fleet sleek and modern. While kid- and teen-centric amenities are there, Celebrity really shines with its adult offerings, including above-the-norm alternative restaurants, world-class art collections, upscale boutiques and AquaClass cabins geared toward the spa-going cruise crowd.

No. 8 Royal Caribbean International. Royal Caribbean International designed its fleet with the active cruiser in mind. Sure, you can laze away sea days on a deck lounge or ship library, but you can also go rock climbing, sky diving, zip lining, surfing, ice skating or bowling – all at sea. Royal Caribbean operates the four largest ships in the world, including the Symphony of the Seas, which debuted in 2018.

No. 7 Paul Gauguin Cruises. Paul Gauguin's luxury small ship sails primarily in Tahiti, Fiji and the South Pacific, with onboard service that ranks among the best in the industry. And what the small vessel lacks in on-board activities, it makes up for in world-class cuisine and stops at the line's two private islands, where beach barbecues and plentiful aquatic activities abound.

No. 6 Holland America Line. Holland America Line offers enriching journeys in distinctively classic cruise style, connecting guests to the most fascinating people, places and cultures on earth. Itineraries span the globe with more than 400 ports of call, a number unequaled among premium cruise lines, and more than 500 carefully crafted itineraries. With elegant fine dining and gracious service, Holland America Line's mid-sized ships welcome guests onboard to discover timeless cruising, refined for a new generation.

No. 5 Seabourn Cruise Line. Seabourn's fleet of all-suite, low-capacity ships carry a maximum of 600 guests each, allowing them to sail to some of the world's most desirable destinations. Passengers enjoy a nearly one-to-one ratio with crew and one of the highest space-per-guest ratios in the industry. Each of the five luxury ships offers a complimentary water sports marina, open bars serving wine, champagne and spirits, and world-class cuisine.

No. 4 Hurtigruten. Hurtigruten specializes in exploration voyages in Norway, Iceland and Greenland, as well as Europe, Africa, South America, Central America, Arctic Canada and the

Antarctic. While the Hurtigruten fleet of expedition ships is designed to sail to remote areas, onboard facilities are modern and comfortable – a perfect base for enjoying spectacular scenery, immersive shore excursions and nature-based activities.

No. 3 Princess Cruises. Princess Cruises' line of large and mega-sized ships sail nearly everywhere big ships can go, and they do so with traditional style and innovative touches. Adults-only deck areas and poolside movie screens were largely Princess innovations, and the fleet's atriums, called Piazzas, pioneered the idea of an atrium gathering place, filled with dining and drinking options.

No. 2 MSC Cruises. MSC Cruises, the largest privately-owned cruise line in the world, has deep European roots evident in each of its 15 ships and on each of its sailings through elegant decor, authentic internationally-inspired cuisines and elevated onboard entertainment. MSC also offers the highest percentage of sea view balcony staterooms per ship of any line.

No. 1 Viking Ocean Cruises. Viking Cruises earned its reputation through its affordable, destination-focused river cruises. With the debut of Viking Star in April 2015, the line made a grand entrance into the world of ocean cruising. Now, the line has six ocean vessels (with a seventh on the way). All cabins come with balconies and are notably larger than the industry average, and while the ships lack a casino and kids club, they offer the same destination-intensive programming that made river cruising so popular.



CSMIA

offers direct connectivity to over 108 destinations



On the occasion of National Tourism Day, GVK Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL) celebrates the successful growth in global connectivity through Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA). Besides witnessing a growth in passenger traffic of 48.8 million passengers in FY 18-19 from 25.9 million in FY07-08, the airport has also expanded its reach to 108 destinations in FY18-19 from 66 destinations in FY07-08.

The digital revolution brought about a transformation in the travel industry as it enabled the availability of information at one's finger tips. Passengers nowadays are more knowledgeable about new destinations and the services and facilities available to them. This has led to the development of numerous trends such as an increase in corporate travel, bleisure travel, country coupling, solo travel, eco-tourism amongst others.

Catering to the ever-changing needs and preferences of its passengers, CSMIA connects and enhances travel and tourism to and from Mumbai as well as adjacent cities for business, MICE and leisure. On an average the airport has introduced two new international airlines every year since 2007 and has helped in playing a pivotal role in stimulating demand for international carriers like Air France, British Airways, Cathay Pacific Airways, Iran Air, Korean Air, Kenya Airways, Nepal Airlines, Singapore Airlines to name a few.

Since FY18-19, the airport further expanded its reach to new destinations by introducing new airlines like Garuda Indonesia, Jazeera, Air Italy, RwandAir, Air Tanzania, Star Air, Virgin Atlantic, Delta Air Lines and Uzbekistan Airways. From relaxing at the beautiful beaches of Bali, Phuket and Maldives, deep diving into the historic cities of Tashkent, enjoying your honeymoon in exotic Mauritius, shopping at port cities like Guangzhou and experiencing the rich array of wildlife and wilderness in Tanzania, passengers today have direct access to Southeast Asian, Middle Eastern and African countries as well as several Island nations from the Mumbai International Airport.

Maximising passenger delight, MIAL introduced the operation of various aircrafts as well like Air Mauritius's new A330 Neo and A350 along with Singapore Airline's new and refurbished A380R with premium first-class suites, among others. Acting as a key driver in the promotion of tourism and continuing to work in conjunction with airline operators, the airport plans to expand its connectivity in these regions to include at least seven International destinations, including Russia, China amongst others in the year ahead. A prominent gateway to the country, CSMIA offers world-class services and facilities to its passengers and leaves them with a memorable experience of their journey through the airport.

Muscat Airport City

master plan revealed



The airport will also have a 200,000 square metres logistics portal

As part of the National Aviation Strategy 2030, the Oman Aviation Group is adopting a master plan to launch Muscat Airport City.

The plan aims to achieve the highest levels of utilisation of the new airport's high capacity and increasing air traffic. It also takes advantage of the land areas surrounding the airport

to create a stimulating environment for the establishment of aviation-related projects.

Mustafa Al Hinai, Group CEO, Oman Aviation Group, said, "The city is meant for Oman's future generations because the development will take over 20 years, and these 20 years require critical planning, dedication, specific teams, knowledge,

credibility and accreditation for it to become one of the recognised international cities in the region.

"Both the national travel operator and the airport city will be separate entities under Oman Aviation Group but they are light in nature. We expect most of the investment from the private sector and international investors who will serve as anchor investors.

"The group will invest a minimum to ensure that the blueprints of the city are there in place and try to make sure that the required main utilities are available. We have signed an international partnership and we will announce this at a later stage along with other international agreements that we will have."

The Muscat Airport Free Zone, which occupies an area of 3.3 million square metres, is devoted to light industries and storage activities for air freight, e-commerce, manufacturing and packaging of national products, in addition to aviation equipment, office spaces, an integrated service delivery station and public facilities which are available to serve the users of the airport.

The Muscat Airport City will consist of a hospitality portal, logistics and a business portal among others. The airport will also have a 200,000 square metres logistics portal,

an area designated for air freight services and logistics, which includes the air freight building at Muscat Airport.

The business portal, which is a mixed-use project in an area of more than 1.1 million square metres, will have spaces designated for the office units of airlines and related economic sectors. The airport city will also feature an aviation portal, which includes the passengers' terminal area and the location of the previous air freight buildings in an area of 166,000 square metres.

This portal will host aviation, cultural and social activities, innovation centres for the aviation sector and a specialised emergency hospital serving the sector in accordance with global aviation safety regulations, and supporting social services.

The hospitality portal, which occupies an area of 192,000 square metres, will include hospitality, duty-free shops, offices for travel companies, and hotels for travellers or short-term visitors.

The project is being developed in cooperation with the national economic sectors that contributed to the building of the aviation sector ecosystem during the previous era, and through new investments. It will be assigned to the private sector and SMEs.



SBI Card and Vistara

Come Together to Launch Premium Co-Branded Credit Cards

SBI Card and Vistara, India's finest full-service carrier, have joined hands to launch a one-of-its-kind premium credit card for travel savvy urban Indians. Launched in two variants, Club Vistara SBI Card PRIME and Club Vistara SBI Card, the new card has been designed to offer a rewarding travel experience to cardholders, through unique benefits and unmatched value proposition, on domestic and

international travel spends. The newly launched Club Vistara SBI Card PRIME will further address the evolving needs of the Indian travellers who aspire to travel in style and luxury. The card offers benefits such as, one-way Premium Economy tickets on joining and achieving spends-based milestone(s), complimentary Club Vistara Silver tier membership, up to six free cancellation of flight

tickets booked on Vistara channels viz. website, app and helpline, and also complimentary lounge access- up to four international and eight domestic, among host of other benefits.

Speaking at the launch, Mr Hardayal Prasad, MD & CEO, SBI Card, said, "SBI Card has always strived to bring products for its customers that are customised as per their diverse lifestyle and preferences, offering maximum value and enhanced experience. Travel is one of the key spend categories for our cardholders. Through our partnership with Vistara, India's best airline, we aim to address unique requirements of our customers, especially urban millennials, whose spend on travel has increased over a period of time and are looking for related privileged benefits. This launch, has increased our travel credit card portfolio that we have built over the years, targeted at fulfilling varied needs of our customers."

Mr. Leslie Thng, Chief Executive Officer, Vistara, said, "Our endeavour is to enhance the value proposition of Club Vistara and elevate its position from a frequent flyer program to a more attractive, comprehensive lifestyle program that makes an essential part of everyday lives of our customers. As travel spends continue to significantly

rise among today's urban consumers, we wish to provide more options to the ever-increasing number of our loyal customers to join Club Vistara and enjoy the privileges of their Club Vistara membership."

The two variants of the Club Vistara SBI Card come with several benefits and privileges, such as complimentary Club Vistara Silver/Base tier membership, welcome tickets on Vistara's domestic network, One-Class Upgrade voucher, free cancellation on Vistara bookings, travel insurance protection, lounge access vouchers, complimentary membership to Priority Pass Program, and attractive rewards on reaching milestone spends.

Club Vistara SBI Card PRIME holders earn nine Club Vistara (CV) Points for every INR 100 spent on flight ticket bookings with Vistara.

Club Vistara SBI Card holders earn up to four CV Points for every INR 200 on eligible spends on the card. These CV Points can be redeemed for domestic and international flights on Vistara and its partner airlines.

The joining fees for Club Vistara SBI Card and Club Vistara SBI Card PRIME are INR 1499 plus GST and INR 2999 plus GST, respectively, renewed annually at the same charges.

Highlights of Club Vistara SBI Card PRIME:

- Complimentary Club Vistara Silver tier membership every year
- 9 CV Points for every INR 100 spent on Vistara flight ticket bookings
- 1 Lounge Access voucher & 1 One-Class Upgrade voucher
- Priority waitlist clearance
- Priority airport check-in at Premium Economy Counter
- Increased check-in baggage allowance (+ 5kgs)
- Increased check-in baggage allowance for Economy Lite fares (+1 Piece)
- A one-way Premium Economy class ticket on Vistara's domestic network as welcome benefit and on renewal each year
- Up to 4 additional one-way Premium Economy class tickets on Vistara's



domestic network upon reaching key milestones in spends

- Hotel gift voucher of worth INR 10,000 upon reaching key milestones in spends
- Up to 6 free cancellation of flight tickets booked on Vistara channels viz. website, app and helpline through the card
- Up to 8 complimentary visits to domestic lounges per year (subject to maximum 2 per quarter)
- Complimentary membership to Priority Pass program (worth USD 99) for the entire duration of the product; Up to 4 complimentary international lounge visits per year (subject to maximum 2 per quarter)
- 3000 bonus CV Points on spending INR 75,000 within 90 days of card issuance
- 4 CV Points per eligible spend of INR 200 on the card
- Comprehensive travel insurance cover
- Air accident cover of up to INR 1 crore, lost baggage and personal documents, baggage delay, loss of passport, baggage damage, flight cancellation
- Fraud liability cover of up to INR 1 lakh
- Joining and annual renewal fee is INR 2999 plus GST

Highlights of Club Vistara SBI Card:

- Complimentary Club Vistara Base membership

- 8 CV Points for every INR 100 spent on Vistara flight ticket bookings
- A one-way Economy Class ticket on Vistara's domestic network as welcome benefit and on renewal each year
- Up to 3 additional one-way Economy Class tickets on Vistara's domestic network upon reaching key milestones in spends
- Hotel gift voucher of worth INR 5,000 upon reaching key milestones in spends
- Up to 4 free cancellation of flight tickets booked on Vistara channels viz. website, app and helpline through the card
- Complimentary membership to Priority Pass program (worth USD 99) for the entire duration of the product
- Up to 4 complimentary visits to domestic lounges per year (maximum 1 per quarter)
- 1000 bonus CV Points on spending INR 50,000 within 90 days of card issuance
- 3 CV Points per eligible spend of INR 200 on the card
- Comprehensive travel insurance cover
- Air accident cover of up to INR 50 lakh, lost baggage and personal documents, baggage delay, loss of passport, baggage damage, flight cancellation
- Fraud liability cover of up to INR 1 lakh
- Joining and annual renewal fee is INR 1499 plus GST

Rooftop lounge ‘VUE Bar & Grill’ opens at Courtyard by Marriott Amritsar

The bar is located on the IXth-floor showcases the euphoric view of the cityscape and nightlights

After the successful unveiling of its all-day dining restaurant - Amritsar Kitchen, Courtyard by Marriott Amritsar recently unveiled VUE Bar & Grill. The bar is located on the IXth-floor showcases the euphoric view of the cityscape and nightlights. Coated in warm tones and shades, this rooftop lounge offers a cozy ambience to unwind and boasts of live DJ performances, handpicked cocktails and flavoursome grills.

Equipped with an expert mixologist, his exemplary skills behind the bar definitely sweep the audiences of their feet. The lounge also offers an array of sundowners and delightful late-night mixes with upbeat tunes. Signature cocktails and curated blends on the menu include jack rose (rum with berries flavored with berries,

peaty lemon grass (lemongrass infused whisky), mango chilli (vodka with mango) whereas the grill section includes a splendid list with murgh malai tikka, seekh kebab, mahi tikka and tacos filled with barbequed chicken.

Speaking on the occasion, Rahul Sharma, hotel manager, Courtyard by Marriott Amritsar, shared, “Located in an enchanting city offering a wealth of dining options, ‘VUE’ which interprets a beautiful scenic view, stands true to its name. We expect people to swing by to enjoy a night of live entertainment



and music. With this opening, we have entered into the party scene of Amritsar and are all set to be the most favored destination for Amritsar’s glitterati.” The opening of this rooftop bar at Courtyard by Marriott Amritsar is said to enthrall the nightlife circuit of the city.

IRCTC’s first pod hotel to come up at Mumbai Central railway station



Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), the catering and e-ticketing arm of Indian Railways, will soon be setting up its first pod hotel at the Mumbai Central railway station. It has been reported that waiting rooms located on the first floor of Mumbai Central railway station are likely to be converted into a pod hotel.

Once ready, the IRCTC pod hotel will consist of a building with multiple extremely small and ultra-modern capsules or pods that will provide overnight accommodation to passengers at an affordable price. It will also boast a lounge area, changing areas, washrooms as well as a cafeteria. The IRCTC pods are

likely to provide accommodation to passengers for up to 12 hours. Besides, the passengers will be given an option to choose between Classic and Suite pods. The Classic pods will cater to one passenger and will be equipped with lockers, baggage space and charging sockets. While the Suite pods will consist of a large bed for two passengers, WiFi service and personal lockers.

As per IRCTC, the pod hotel is expected to be cheaper than the retiring rooms that are available. The official also reported that the tendering process for the construction of pods has commenced and it is aiming to launch the pod hotel service by the month of December 2020.



Divinity trails

Taj launches unique spiritual experiences

Taj Hotels has unveiled, 'Divinity Trails at the Taj' – new experiences across key destinations in India. Spiritual or religious tourism in India accounts for 60% of total domestic tourism, based on estimates.

Indian Hotels Company (IHCL) with all its brands is a dominant player in many other cities of spiritual significance including Nashik, Ajmer, Katra and Dwarka with a footprint of 32 hotels in 17 significant locations across India with over 4,000 rooms.

Renu Basu, senior vice president of global sales and marketing IHCL said: "There are many soulful journeys

to be taken in India – a country that is synonymous with spirituality globally. Divinity Trails at the Taj is our way to encourage travellers to explore self-fulfilling and spiritual experiences while enjoying a luxurious break."

Among the key Divinity Trails destinations included is the newly-launched **Taj Tirupati**, a suitable base for experiencing the Lord Venkateswara Temple in Tirumala, one of the most visited religious sites on earth. Rishikesh has long attracted spiritual seekers to India, including, famously, the Beatles, who visited in 1968. **Taj Rishikesh Resort & Spa, Uttarakhand** located on the banks of

the River Ganges, offers a restorative stay for those looking to immerse themselves in yoga and meditation.

Famous for the exquisite Golden temple and inextricably linked with the history of Sikhism, Amritsar is the location of the **Taj Swarna, Amritsar**. Millions travel to take a dip in the holy Ganges at Varanasi which is considered the spiritual capital of India. Join in the spectacular ceremony of *Ganga Aarti* whilst staying at **Taj Nadesar Palace or Taj Ganges, Varanasi** and watch thousands of floating diya light up the sacred River.

In Madurai avail of curated temple tours arranged by **Taj Madurai** and hear tales of gods and goddesses whilst getting a glimpse of the town which has been the seat of divinity from time immemorial.

From sacred temples and religious pilgrimages to yoga ashrams and beyond, experiences in India offer visitors spirituality, healing, wellness, and the chance to forge a deeper connection with their inner self.

Hence, From sacred temples and religious pilgrimages to yoga ashrams and beyond, the experiences include Taj Swarna, Amritsar; Taj Nadesar Palace and Taj Ganges, Varanasi and Taj Madurai.

Crowne Plaza Greater Noida launches world's first hotel virtual reality experience center



Crowne Plaza Greater Noida, a leading business hotel in Delhi NCR, has launched World's First Hotel Virtual Reality Experience Center, in association with Noida-based VR-Tech startup, The Knotty Tales. The Experience Centre was inaugurated by Honorable Dr. Mahesh Sharma, MP G B Nagar and Ex Central Minister, Government Of India. The VR Experience Center, located

strategically at the hotel lobby, would allow users to indulge in an immersive 8K three-dimensional, computer generated virtual environment that can be explored and interacted with as per the client's requirements. With this initiative, Crowne Plaza Greater Noida becomes the world's first hotel to adopt VR technology with a physical Experience Centre on-site. 'This is the future', says hotel General Manager, Ashwani Nayar at the launch event. 'VR is such a powerful immersive medium that perfectly complements the experiential nature of our industry. I am certain about the potential this holds for hotels to technologically advance the way we present our product to a prospective client or a business partner'.

Apart from 3D mapping of each and every facet of the hotel property, Virtual Reality would provide the hotel an edge in several aspects. • Virtual and Physical Inspection – Complementing a

physical inspection, the 8K VR Services would additionally enable the clients to experience a 360 tour of various hotel spaces from one point at the lobby. This will be a unique immersive and interactive virtual experience that would etch an impact the guests will remember for a long time.

• **Showcase Multiple Décor Setups** – Virtual Reality would play a key role in showcasing hotel's expansive and versatile 51,000 sq.ft. banqueting space. It would also allow the guests to experience and visualize multiple décor setups for the same space, thus assisting with decision making and positive closure of business queries.

• **Global Distribution through WAVE** (What's App Virtual Experience) – Exclusively created by TheKnottyTales, WAVE helps send Virtual Experience of the hotel to internal or external stakeholders in any part of the world through any instant messaging platform including WhatsApp & Facebook messenger.

• **Virtual Booking Process** – Now, VR guided solutions will make it possible for the prospective clients to survey different services of the property and get important information about them through a live chat before booking. Thus, helping in enhancement of sales and easy way to track the consumer behavior.

• **Scalable** – to add new events, properly enhancements, saves cost on printing materials, support training, adds a reporting of past events, data mining for customer profiling with a trailblazing 8K technology.

This technology additionally allows the product to be carried to the doorsteps of the potential customers and allow a technologically advanced way to explore a hotel like never before.



Luxury floating hotel opens in Sweden

Bathed in the glowing winter sun, and surrounded by icy winter, this floating edifice is a circular structure adrift on the Lule River, reachable only via a wooden walkway.

Arctic Bath, a new luxurious floating hotel has opened in the Scandinavian north and the structure indeed serves as a dialogue between nature and man-made creativity.

Bathed in the glowing winter sun, and surrounded by icy winter, this floating edifice is a circular structure adrift on the Lule River, reachable only via a wooden walkway.

In the middle of this luxurious floating hotel is a giant ice bath, that offers a pretty spectacular spa experience, and the rest of the building is comprised of various saunas and bathing experiences.

Designed by architects Bertil Harstrom and Johan Kauppi, the hotel has 12 rooms which are dotted around the river banks and on the water's edge.



The designs for 'Arctic Bath' was premiered back in early 2018.

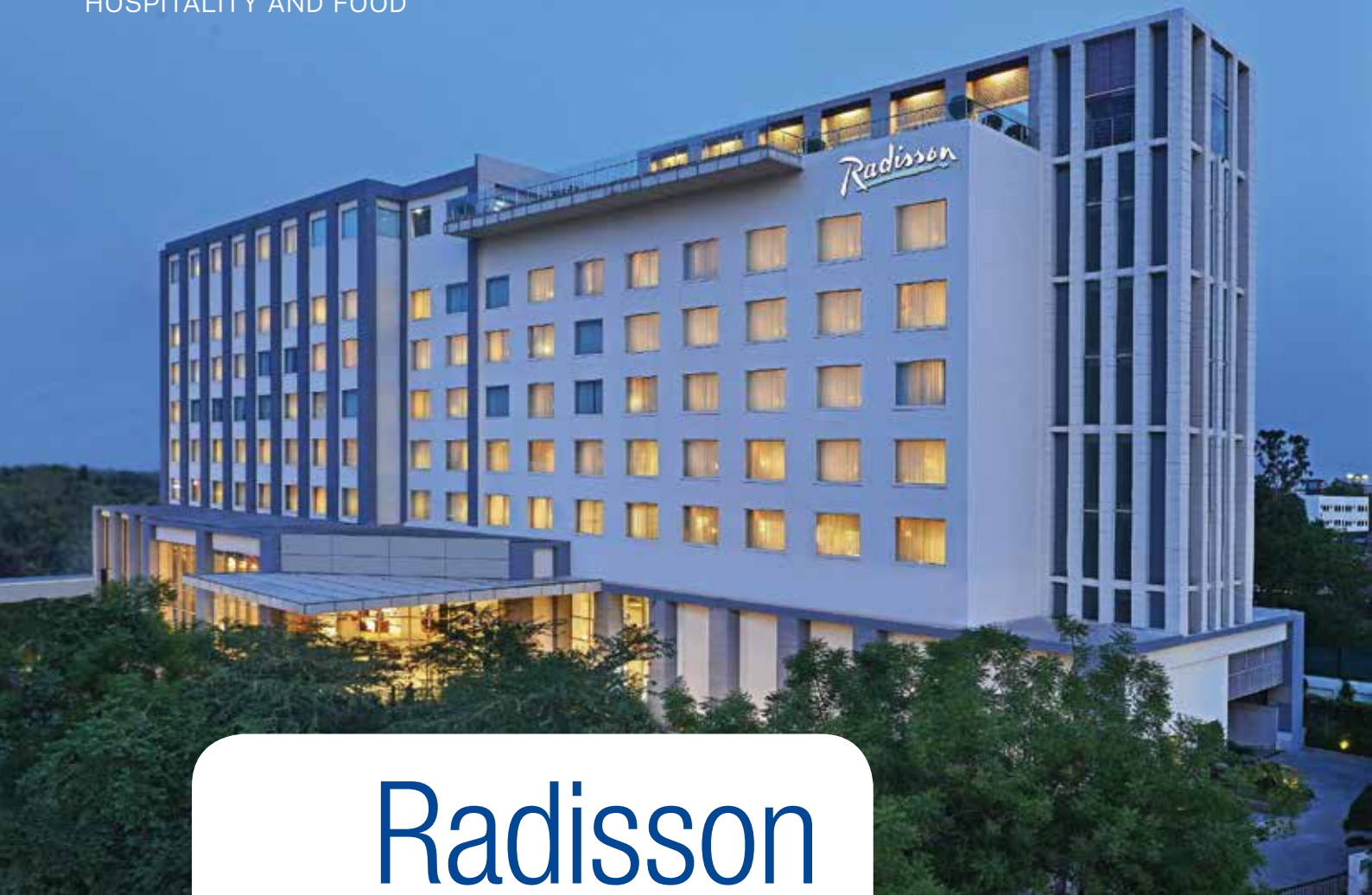
CEO Peter Engstrom told CNN Travel that taking the hotel from design to reality wasn't always easy. In fact, he thinks if the team knew about the technical challenges in advance, it might have put them off altogether.

The floating hotel located about an hour and 15 minutes from Lulea Airport, is a spot for business activities

and also provides first-rate culinary offerings at the hotel restaurant.

Located in the Swedish Lapland, the hotel also has space for yoga, meditation, and also offers outdoor fun with horseback riding and courses in wildlife photography.

Framed by abundant woodland, 'Arctic Bath' is a great chance for the guests to know about local Sami culture by visiting a local resident at their home.



Radisson Hotel Group

Starts
2020 on a
High with

17

New
Hotels
in
India

Radisson Hotel Group has celebrated the start of the new decade by announcing the signing of 17 new hotels in India. As the Group enters the third year of “Destination 2022”, its global expansion and transformation strategy, these signings will boost the company’s portfolio in South Asia to more than 150 hotels and 17,000 rooms, both in operation and under development.

One of the fastest growing international hotel operators in India, Radisson Hotel Group is now present in more than 60 cities across the country. The Group is actively pursuing opportunities to introduce its industry-leading brands to key gateway cities and rapidly emerging destinations nationwide, including Tier 2 and 3 cities.

“We are excited to open the year on a high note with 17 impressive hotel signings. We are focused on developing strong partnerships across the country and delivering exceptional guest experiences, in line with our global standards. We remain fully committed to our owner relationships and will continue delivering maximum returns for our esteemed investors,” commented Zubin Saxena, Managing Director and Vice President, Operations, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group.

With domestic and inbound travel on an upward trajectory¹ and India projected to be the world's fastest-growing business travel market in the coming years², Radisson Hotel Group is extremely optimistic about the opportunities for growth. The new hotels will add approximately 1,880 hotel rooms across India.

Radisson Blu Hotel Jaipur Malviya Nagar – Located in Jaipur, one of the three cities in Golden Triangle tourist circuit, the city is well connected with major cities of India through its international airport as well as through its prominent presence on rail and road network. The 180-room hotel will feature an all-day dining restaurant, a themed bar, a specialty restaurant, meeting and conference facilities including a pre function area, ballroom and meeting rooms, a fitness center and a swimming pool. The hotel is expected to be operational by 2025.

Park Plaza Amritsar City Center – Situated in the heart of Amritsar and close to the railway station, the hotel offers easy access to all major tourist and commercial centers of the city. The 100-room hotel will house an all-day dining restaurant, coffee lounge and specialty restaurant along with a swimming pool and fitness center. The hotel is expected to be operational by 2022.

Radisson Hotel Greater Noida – With a high-visibility location in the National Capital Region (NCR), surrounded by blue-chip companies, this hotel will enjoy strong connectivity to Delhi via the Noida Expressway and to Agra via the Yamuna Expressway. The 180-room hotel is part of a mixed-use project featuring 1,200 office units, boosting corporate demand. Facilities will include an all-day dining restaurant, a bar, rooftop pool, fitness center and extensive event space. The hotel is scheduled to open in 2021.

Radisson Hotel Dehradun – Located one kilometer from the center of Dehradun, the state capital of Uttarakhand, the hotel will delight guests with 360-degree views of the forest and Mussoorie Hills. The 120-room property will attract leisure guests and business travelers alike.

Guests will have access to multiple Food & Beverage (F&B) outlets, including a rooftop bar and restaurant, and a spa, swimming pool, fitness center and event spaces, including a ballroom. The hotel is expected to be operational by 2023.

Radisson Hotel Agra – Newly-opened in June 2019, the hotel is perfectly positioned in Agra, one of India's top leisure destinations. The 165-room hotel overlooks the Taj Mahal, creating outstanding options for leisure travelers and the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) market. Guests will enjoy a

of conference space. Scheduled to be operational by 2023, this hotel will be a preferred location for social and corporate functions.

Radisson Hotel Bareilly – This will be the first international upscale hotel in Bareilly, one of India's 100 planned smart cities. Located off the Bareilly Bypass Road, less than one kilometer from the new Bareilly Airport, this 100-room hotel will also be easily accessible from Lucknow and Delhi. Guests will have access to function space, a restaurant, bar, fitness center and swimming pool. The hotel is expected to be operational by 2021.

We are excited to open the year on a high note with 17 impressive hotel signings. We are focused on developing strong partnerships across the country and delivering exceptional guest experiences, in line with our global standards.

rooftop pool, several F&B outlets, a fitness center, spa and salon, and indoor and outdoor event spaces, including a pre-function area.

Radisson Hotel Gurugram Sohna Road City Center – Operational since April 2019, this 135-room hotel enjoys a prominent Tier 1 location on Sohna Road, Gurugram, which is home to more than 250 Fortune 500 companies, making it ideal for corporate business and MICE. The hotel features 511 square meters of space spread across ballrooms and meeting rooms, two restaurants, a bar, swimming pool, spa, salon and fitness center.

Radisson Hotel Vadodara – Located in Vadodara, one of the largest cities in Gujarat, this hotel will be an important flag for Radisson Hotel Group. Situated in the city's industrial hub, the hotel will offer 140 rooms, two restaurants, a deli and coffee lounge, a fitness center and swimming pool, along with 1,670 square meters

Radisson Hotel Vaishno Devi – This 100-room hotel will mark the Group's entry into Katra, one of India's most important pilgrimage sites, with over eight million visitors per year. The hotel is conveniently located close to Katra Railway Station and features meeting spaces, a restaurant, fitness center, spa, salon and swimming pool. It forms part of a dual-branded development with Park Inn by Radisson. The hotel is scheduled to open in 2022.

Park Inn by Radisson Vaishno Devi – The hotel will be the second part of a dual-branded development with Radisson Hotel Vaishno Devi. Together, the complex will deliver a choice of 184 rooms and suites across two international brands – midscale Park Inn by Radisson and upscale Radisson – catering for different guests, including short-stay pilgrims. The hotel will feature an all-day dining restaurant and a fitness center. It is scheduled to open in 2022.

Park Inn by Radisson Kashipur Resort – The hotel will mark the company's debut in the industrial city of Kashipur, Uttarakhand. Located on the access road to Jim Corbett National Park, the hotel will cater to leisure travelers attracted by the area's natural wonders, as well as business and MICE guests. Nestled in landscaped gardens, the hotel will offer a total of 100 rooms, a restaurant, meeting spaces, outdoor swimming pool and fitness center. This property is scheduled to open in 2022.

Park Inn by Radisson Saputara – This will be Radisson Hotel Group's first hotel in Saputara, Gujarat's most popular hill station. Located close to the city's main tourist locations, the hotel will offer open function spaces for weddings and other events. Nestled in rocky hills with lush green views, Park Inn by Radisson Saputara will compete for both leisure and MICE business. It is expected to be operational by 2022.

Park Inn by Radisson Surat – Radisson Hotel Group's first hotel in Surat, this property will be a part of mixed-use development consisting of commercial, retail and entertainment facilities. Park Inn by Radisson Surat will offer a total of 100 rooms, an all-day dining restaurant, a swimming pool, fitness center and 260 square meters of meeting space. Located in a prime city spot surrounded by commercial establishments, this hotel is expected to be operational by 2021.

Park Inn by Radisson Jalandhar – Located in one of India's 100 new "smart cities", this property will have excellent rail and road connectivity to other major cities in Punjab, as well as Delhi NCR. This centrally located midscale hotel will feature an all-day dining restaurant, a bar, fitness center and swimming pool. It is expected to be operational by 2023.

Park Inn by Radisson Gwalior – The hotel will mark

the Park Inn by Radisson brand's market entry into the "smart city" of Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. Located near the railway station and just 2-3 kilometers from the main commercial and retail areas, the hotel will feature an all-day dining restaurant. It is expected to be operational in 2020.

Park Inn by Radisson Jabalpur – Located in the growth hub of Jabalpur, the hotel will be situated approximately eight kilometers from the city center. The hotel will feature 115 rooms and house an all-day dining restaurant, rooftop bar and ample meeting spaces. The hotel is expected to be operational in 2022.

Park Inn by Radisson Mashobra – The hotel will be the first international hotel in Mashobra – a preferred tourist getaway destination in North India. The hotel will offer 125 rooms with beautiful valley views and is expected to be operational in 2023.

Lemon Tree Hotels Announces its Debut in Bhutan

The hotel, located on Changlam street, Thimphu, features 27 well-appointed rooms, complemented by a multi-cuisine restaurant, Citrus Café, with a picturesque alfresco dining area, Citrus Patio; a hip recreation bar, Slounge; a well-equipped fitness centre and more.

Lemon Tree Hotels Limited, through its management subsidiary Carnation Hotels, announced its debut in the second international destination, Bhutan, with the launch of the first Lemon Tree Hotel in Thimphu. Lemon Tree Hotels Limited is India's largest hotel chain in the mid-priced hotel sector, and the third-largest overall.

The hotel, located on Changlam street, Thimphu, features 27 well-appointed rooms, complemented by a multi-cuisine restaurant, Citrus Café, with a picturesque alfresco dining area, Citrus Patio; a hip recreation bar, Slounge; a well-equipped fitness centre and more.

Speaking on the occasion, **Rattan Keswani, Deputy Managing Director**

– **Lemon Tree Hotels and Director – Carnation Hotels**, said, "We are delighted to enter Bhutan with this chic hotel. This is our first operating hotel in Bhutan, and we feel that the market holds immense business potential. We have a locational advantage, with the hotel strategically situated in immediate proximity to key attractions like the famous Changlimithang stadium, Norzin Lam street, the clock tower square and also close to other attractions such as the iconic statue of Buddha Dordenma, Tashichho Dzong, Dechen Phodrang Monastery. The hotel is also well connected to the Paro International Airport and the Thimphu Bus Station"

He further added, "The addition of this hotel opens a new international

destination for the brand, thereby increasing our appeal to our existing and potential customers. It will also add to our repertoire of hotels in the region, which include our existing hotels in Gangtok and Siliguri, and upcoming international launches in Darjeeling, Bhutan and Nepal. We are confident that our partnership will enjoy mutually beneficial results within a reasonable stabilization period after the launch."

Traditional Bhutanese architecture is interwoven with aesthetic design elements that reflect the city's culture and spirit, complemented by a welcoming ambience and modern facilities and amenities, make this hotel perfect for business and leisure travellers alike.

ITB



B Berlin 2020

cancelled due to Coronavirus

An official statement by ITB Berlin announced that due to Coronavirus the largest travel and tourism event in the world has been cancelled. The Federal Ministry of Health and Federal Ministry of Economics came to the conclusion that ITB Berlin be cancelled and yesterday, the responsible health authority of Charlottetburg-Wilmersdorf in Berlin imposed tighter restrictions on holding the event.

The authority required each participants to prove to Messe Berlin that they were not from a designated risk area or were either in contact with a person or persons from a risk area.

For Messe Berlin it was not possible to satisfy these requirements overall.

For weeks Messe Berlin had made it known that a decision on holding or cancelling large-scale events would only be considered on the instruction of the relevant authorities. In order to draw the right conclusion only they have the necessary information and specialist knowledge.

Dr. Christian Göke, CEO of Messe Berlin GmbH mentioned that with more than 10,000 exhibitors from over 180 countries ITB Berlin is extremely important for the world's tourism industry. They take the responsibility for the health and

safety of the visitors, exhibitors and employees very seriously. It is with a heavy heart that they must now come to terms with the cancellation of ITB Berlin 2020.

Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Messe Berlin Wolf-Dieter Wolf mentioned that not once in the 54-year history of the event have ITB Berlin and Messe Berlin experienced a similar situation. He thanked all exhibitors and partners from all over the world who over the past few days and weeks have stood by ITB Berlin. He was looking forward to continuing the trusted relationship with the partners in the market.

International Women's Day:

Because Female Entrepreneurship has an Amazing Power

The untapped and unmeasured contribution of women is enormous.

It's International Women's Day 2020 a day to both celebrate the achievements of women, and to recognise that we still have a way to go towards gender parity.

We're using it as an occasion to shine a light on fantastic female entrepreneurs in the travel and tourism industry.

In that spirit, we asked some women entrepreneurs just one question:

Could you please define the role, scope, functions, and qualities of successful Women entrepreneurs in the Travel and Tourism Industry

Here is what they have to say.

JYOTI MAYAL

President TAAI

"We are women & we can make difference in this world, to this world"

In spite of their increasing number in every field, women still remain perhaps the world's most underutilized resources. According to WTTC, India employs only 12% of women in Travel & Tourism.

I think it's time that we woman take pride in who and what we are. We are women & we can make difference in this world, to this world. We need to take ownership of our lives & recognize the power within. Power can be feminine, soft, beautiful & compassionate.

An important aspect I believe in is that we need to be inspired by each other & ourselves. We make ourselves go weak and hide behind our weaknesses. Inspiration comes in many forms, especially when we least expect. I think inspiration is all around us, we just have to be ready for it and see it when it's in front of us. We have to be open to being inspired and that comes back to our attitude, our level of gratitude and our belief in hope for ourselves and for those around us. We need to encourage women to come in front & support them to do so.

There is huge scope of women employment in travel & tourism. More the women come in this industry more will the country be a safer place & more will the travel increase. We should encourage more women drivers, guides, police & in other hospitality & travel jobs.

Women are used to multitasking & are better organizers. In food, hospitality a woman's thought is very important & I believe she should be more & more involved because views from a woman will always be more creative & carry the atithi devo bhavo thought process.

The women who have created a space for themselves in this Industry certainly know their business; have knowledge & the confidence in themselves. They are bold & know how to handle relationships. Most important they respect themselves & everyone around them.

I am in this Industry for over three decades and I am now the President of the oldest & nodal travel association, Travel Agents Association of India. I believe that when a woman steps out of home to work she should know that she is walking into a world where good & bad exists. She is grown up to work so she should be mature enough to handle herself and people around her. She has to compete in this competitive world and she should learn to take life in her stride. She has to merge with the environment, treat her colleagues equally & with respect and thus expect the same from all. I believe that if you do not take anyone easy no one will take you easy. You have to gain and command that respect. Yes surely as a woman you have to keep your eyes and ears open and stay away from bad omens. Always trust your instinct. We should be aware of our surroundings and remember to be alert and move with caution.



Jyoti Mayal

My most sincere advice to the young women who steps into the working atmosphere would be, Do not be intimidated or patronized by your superiors. No one is superior to you. You are answerable to yourself. Lead your life boldly with your head held high. Do not give in to any wrong demands. Have the courage to say NO and respect yourself & also teach yourself to walk out of any situation you do not want to be in. One door closes many more open.



Priyanka Nijhawan

PRIYANKA NIJHAWAN

Director, Nijhawan Group

Travel and tourism as a sector provide women with more opportunities to participate, lead & empower themselves

Women are actively taking up senior roles in diverse industries and travel & tourism has not been left behind to be male dominated, women naturally have a flair for hospitality. Female headship in tourism is a legitimate goal and I firmly believe that it is important to recognize and empower women to assume leading positions. Travel and tourism as a sector definitely provide women with more opportunities to participate, lead & empower themselves. India being a developing nation, has given rise to entrepreneurial ventures led by passionate women and I honestly believe that the sector needs a more positive narrative women they can look up to. This sector is such where the operational nature of the job eventuates high demand on employee time, which is naturally a major barrier to women's progression at times, positive role models can help tell their tales of success to attract and retain talented women. I reckon that conquering women's equality at work has a number of positive advantages including better performance and stability, a more innovative & creative working culture, helping to close the growing skills gap, better relationships between organisations and their customers, with constant scope of improvement.

VASUDHA SONDHI

Director Market Strategy & Research, Om Marketing

In the industry women today have their own travel agencies, representation companies etc. majorly all small scale. The scope and the real challenge will be to build scalable business like hotel companies, technology powered companies etc most of which are driven by men today. The scope is also to get into niche areas like adventure tourism, building sustainable small scale businesses



Vasudha Sondhi

around heritage sites like specialised guiding.

The qualities required would be to have a management background from a reputed institute, understanding of finance and technology .

SHEEMA VOHRA

Managing Director, Sartha Global Marketing

Women are multi-taskers. With education and business experience, women are working hard to prove their credentials in the world of commerce.

Qualities for successful entrepreneurship is not gender specific. In the past most entrepreneurs have been men and women have only recently entered their ranks. But we are better multi-taskers. With education and business experience, women are working hard to prove their credentials in the world of commerce. So, it is wonderful to see an increase of women entrepreneurs in the tourism industry.

For me it has been a great journey, going after my passion and enjoying what I do. I have been able to build a diverse team of professionals who are as passionate about the work we do. Also to succeed, one does not need to follow the beaten path and be continuously innovative. Women need to be fearless and have confidence in their intellectual abilities. Business today is dynamic and we need to ensure that we are aware of new business practices, and are on the cutting edge of technology.

NEHA BHOLA

Country Manager – India, New Zealand Tourism

"You don't become what you want, you become what you believe" ...

women entrepreneurs are not only creative and innovative, but also add a wider perspective to business...

Women tend to bring in compassionate leadership which nurtures failures into success, ensures empathy for staff facing work-life challenges and help build better relationship with stakeholders, while

keeping the purpose of business, central to their actions

Oprah Winfrey has been an inspiration to me in many ways. Her quote ‘You don’t become what you want, you become what you believe’ . This embodies an important message to women entrepreneurs, to believe in oneself.

The rapidly growing role and participation of women as entrepreneurs and business leaders in India is on the rise. The facts captured in the last Economic Census released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, women constitute around 8.05 million (14%) out of the total 58.5 million entrepreneurs. Women continue to play an important role across all sectors in India and female contribution in travel and tourism industry is only growing by leaps and bounds.

The tourism industry is all about people and experiences, and building great relationships is crucial to success. My observation is that technology is one of the key enablers in this progress, as it provides young entrepreneurs flexible work timings, and ability to network and connect with mentors, investors and customers alike. In principle I believe that success eventually boils down to individual ability. Having said that, there are common characteristics that can be both, attributed to and derived from, from successful women entrepreneurs.

New economy business models are encouraging women participation in tourism. Interestingly, as per statistics shared by Airbnb, there are more women than men in its global community (54 per cent of Airbnb’s Stays hosts and 50 per cent of Airbnb’s Experience hosts globally are women). With Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata and Jaipur being the top five cities in India with the highest number of women, roughly 34 per cent of all hosts in India are women.

Some of the women entrepreneurs I know tend to be natural multi taskers and given their agility, adapt to change better. I feel there is higher resilience

among women when it comes to facing downturns in business. These women entrepreneurs are not only creative and innovative, but also add a wider perspective to business. They are constantly thinking about how their business can have a positive contribution to society and environment. There are great examples of women CEOs using their creativity and ingenuity to offer novel products to the tourism industry. Shivya Nath’s venture India Untravelled is a great example, as a social enterprise it aims to introduce travellers to unique experiences in rural India through village homestays and farm-stays, and creates a win-win model for all stakeholders.

Women also tend to bring in compassionate leadership which nurtures failures into success, ensures empathy for staff facing work-life challenges and help build better relationship with stakeholders, while keeping the purpose of business, central to their actions. There are various ways women can influence and enhance this industry from a woman-point of view. For instance, flexible working hours allows staff to manage work-life commitments thus encouraging better productivity, retention and participation.

Women as travellers and entrepreneurs have played a key role in influencing products and experiences that are focussed and in-tune to their needs. Great examples being ‘women only tours’ , ‘women only hotel floors’ offered by leading travel brands. The entrepreneurial spirit of fresh and upcoming talent can be given wings through mentorship. Budding students can get a feel of the real deal through encouraging internships.

My advice to new women entrepreneurs is to believe in your journey, be prepared to take risks and avoid letting naysayers discourage you from your dream. The first and the last word though belong to the inspiring and often level headed poetess Maya Angelou, “Nothing will work unless you do”.



Sheema Vohra



Neha Bhola



Shoba Mohan

SHOBA MOHAN**Director Rare India**

Whatever field a woman chooses, she will bring her own inimitable style and focus to the type and area of tourism she would like to accomplish herself in.

First of all, ladies in travel and hospitality have to define their own parameters of success and this has to be devoid of guilt as she sets her own priorities and timelines. Whatever field a woman chooses, she will bring her own inimitable style and focus to the type and area of tourism she would like to accomplish herself in. With trends and challenges are also opportunities and to zero in on an opportunity a lady entrepreneur should lead bold and follow through with diligence. There is no second to hard work, personal drive and creativity. When a woman delves into her inner creative energy, motivates herself and drives an idea powerfully she has the ability to create something outstanding and that is who we all aim to be. Especially now when we all have to be conscious of the kind of travel in the world, the mother element or Shakti in her can fuel the idea of nourishing and preserving the planet. It comes to her naturally I think.

SAMINA MUNSHI**Director N.Chirag**

Don't shy away from challenges, but use them as opportunities to grow

The number of women entrepreneurs in India are increasing by the day and it is heartening to see women shedding the traditional mould and achieving remarkable success as leaders, innovators and business owners in the travel and tourism industry. Exploring uncharted territories, availing new ideas from around the world and taking bold decisions is the hallmark of a successful woman entrepreneur in travel.

The travel industry is constantly evolving, and creating and nurturing a business from the ground up is not

easy, whether for men or women. As an entrepreneur, one has to be willing to take risks and show leadership in times of hardships. You're always going to have things coming at you that you never anticipated or never wanted, but being committed to fixing those problems and recommending constantly is what defines entrepreneurship. My advice to all aspiring women entrepreneurs is to believe in themselves and be persistent in the pursuit of their goals. Obstacles will be there but if you believe in your abilities, you will overcome them.

My entrepreneurial journey has been an ever-learning curve and there's never been a dull moment. I started off my career as a small entrepreneur working from home and designing clothes while simultaneously completing my graduation. However, travel had always been my deep rooted passion which then took shape as N.Chirag, and this passion has been the driving force behind my entrepreneurial journey. The stories I hear from our travellers when they return from their holidays makes me love what I do and motivates me to put my best foot forward each day.

Over the years, I have come to realise that women lead differently and two qualities we all women share is an enormous capacity to multi-task and care deeply about values. As entrepreneurs, we get to create a value system that drives the culture of our business. At N.Chirag, more than 75% of the team is women and they are all leaders who have achieved the balance in their homes and workplace seamlessly. They are all confident, creative and innovative women who thrive off each other's energy and empower others to see more of world.

Thus, my word to young women entrepreneurs would be to venture into the travel and tourism industry with self-belief and resilience because you will never know what you can achieve until you give it a go. Don't shy away from challenges, but use them



Samina Munshi

as opportunities to grow. With over thirty years of experience in the travel industry, I can say without a doubt that it is a rewarding industry that will take you places - literally!

KOMAL SETH

Director, LinkIn Reps

Women need to constantly keep themselves abreast with latest trends, come up with newer ideas, support other women, empower & motivate more women to join tourism industry

There is no industry worldwide where women have not made their mark. From armed forces to space, we are marching ahead as equals with others. In the last decade, there has been a surge of women entrepreneurs in travel & tourism industry, which is so important & welcoming. Women play very important role especially in hospitality and tourism industry. Their contributions are not only restricted as employees, but also equally in business and entrepreneurship. So women need to play the role of diversifying travel opportunities, take leadership and yearn towards introducing women friendly practices & packages.

Tourism, with its broad geographical reach and a huge range of skills required, has the opportunity to pull women out of poverty, equip them with skills and provide dignified, sustainable employment. In struggling nations, it is invariably the women who struggle most, as any semblance of equality falls away. Women and girls are disadvantaged from the outset by a lack of access to education, scant maternity benefits, cultural expectations about the woman's role in the home, and inherent gender bias in the workplace.

So – the tourism industry holds a huge amount of potential. A lot of women undertake unpaid roles within tourism – supporting family businesses as invisible customer service providers, chambermaids, PAs and so on. Women need to constantly keep themselves

abreast with latest trends, come up with newer ideas, support other women, empower & motivate more women to join tourism industry.

SHEETAL MUNSHAW

Director, Atout France India

Women leaders bring in a strong sense of EQ to their management abilities and are attuned into the emotional requirements of their team

The travel industry is one of the few domains which does not differentiate on the basis of gender alone on opportunities for growth and women have broken the proverbial glass ceiling with their achievements. It would be safe to say that this domain is pre-dominated by women across all verticals and also successfully managing teams and organizations. Women are naturally empathetic and multi-taskers so juggling different tasks at the same time comes easily to them. Women leaders bring in a strong sense of EQ to their management abilities and are attuned into the emotional requirements of their team. There is a sense of personalization, a keen eye to detail and a strong sense of aesthetic sensibilities to their execution of projects and commitments.

SUCHETA NAGPAL

Director & CEO, Travstars Global Group

women have led from the front in creating big brands and have shaped their entrepreneurial journey... Travel and Tourism sector provides women with more opportunities for workforce participation, leadership, entrepreneurship and empowerment than many other sectors

Women constitute around half of the total world population. So it is in India also. They are, therefore, regarded as the better half of the society. In traditional societies, they were confined to the four walls of houses performing household activities. In modern societies, they have come out



Komal Seth



Sheetal Munshaw

*Sucheta Nagpal*

of the four walls to participate in all sorts of activities. Now if you talk about Travel & Tourism industry it has almost twice as many female employers than other sectors. The sector provides women with more opportunities for workforce participation, leadership, entrepreneurship and empowerment than many other sectors.

I feel that not only in the tourism and hospitality industry, but women have been in the forefront in almost all the industries across the spectrum. Talking particularly about the tourism and hospitality business we can see various examples where women have led from the front in creating big brands and have shaped their entrepreneurial journey. I can take many names including that of Ms. Jyoti Mayal who has contributed immensely in her role as the current President of TAAI and many others from whom even I have taken inspiration in my journey so far.

India remains one of the fastest growing tourism economies in the world with a very young millennial population with high disposable incomes and a free spirit to experience the world by travel. I see this trend continuing to exploring newer destinations and even cruising which I believe will be the growth engine for tourism in India. We expect the growth to come from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities more than the metros with increased internet penetration and increased awareness.

Travstarz was founded by me and my husband with a clear vision of making it one of India's Most Loved and Respected B2B company and over the years we have worked hard towards achieving that vision. With CTRIP coming in in 2018 that vision has become closer to reality and in the next 10 years we see this happening completely. Besides the business I am very keen on contributing to the society in every way I can and I have been doing this in the past as well whether it was my work with blind schools or the women's cricket fraternity and in the

next 10 years I see a more devoted role for myself to such causes specially in the sphere of educating the girl child.

AKANSHA GARG

Director, Waxpol Hotels & Resorts

Akansha continues to strive for the upliftment of the local people and woman empowerment. Her take on being successful - Learn each day, be motivated, treat people with respect and most of all respect yourself.

Akansha Garg started her entrepreneurial foray into the travel industry at the age of 18. Since the very beginning she has championed sustainable tourism as one of her guiding business principles, evident in all of her operations even after all of these years.

Akansha's debut project was the Sundarban Tiger Camp, established in 2004, followed by The Riverwood Forest Retreat in Dooars, West Bengal in 2008 and The Riverwood Forest Retreat in Pench National Park, Madhya Pradesh in 2013. Today, the 3 properties are part of the Waxpol Hotels and Resorts hospitality brand, of which Akansha is Director.

In recognition of her efforts, Akansha has won numerous high-profile tourism awards. In 2008, she was awarded the TiE Tiger Award for her tourism development initiatives in the Sundarbans, and the Rotary Club Award for CSR and the East India Travel Awards 'Face of the Future' Award in 2016. In 2019, Akansha has been extensively featured as one of the Top Women Hoteliers in India and one of the favourite women in Hospitality around the world. Her conservation and sustainable tourism efforts have been featured in many magazines and articles.

Akansha was recognised by India Leadership conclave as the Most Innovative and Promising Woman Hotelier 2019.

She continues to strive for the

*Akansha Garg*

upliftment of the local people and woman empowerment.

Her take on being successful.

Be passionate about what you are doing: If there is passion in what you are doing, it will help you thru all the hurdles. It will make you feel like you are made to do this!

Have a positive attitude: Whenever one starts their own business there are situations to handle risks and negative comments. Positive thoughts and vibes help you overcome hurdles. So be positive about what you are doing.

Integrity: It should be at the chore of your character. One should always put honour before money. people do business with people they trust.

Do not be afraid to fail: Everything does not work, so start small invest enough that you are able to bear the loss. Every time one fails one gets experience how to do things better. Don't give up!

Get feedback on how you are doing: Until you don't know how your business is doing or how people outside perceive it. If you don't know how your brand is being perceived, you will not know if you are on the right path you cannot made amendments and modify your business plan. Don't take feedback personally!

Build your resources and Network: You must keep on at it, trying harder every day. Don't take 'NO' for an answer.

These are just a few of the things one can do to be a successful woman entrepreneur.

Learn each day, be motivated, treat people with respect and most of all respect yourself.

REENA CHOPRA

Director, Magical Holidays Pvt. Ltd.

"As you achieve success, Be a Role model for the next generation of young agents. Recruit them, Inspire them and Mentor them"

Travel & Tourism industry has become the largest employer of women in recent times. The hospitality

experience would prove to be quite incomplete, without the charming smile of a woman at its outset. The feminine touch indeed lends grace and elegance to the hospitality and tourism industry. In fact, it would only be fair to say that the industry today holds more potential for women than ever before. Travel and tourism seems to be an important sector for women (46 % of the workforce in this sector are women employees)

Travel and Tourism provides unique work opportunities for females. In India, women representing as a brand image of service sector due to their pleasing nature of working. The marketing of tourism, aviation and hospitality services, women are the 'Face and Brand' of the sector.

The gender war of the yesteryears has finally come to an end with a firm acceptance that the women are a great work force in any segment of profession and with sheer hard work and true demonstration they have made the size of their berth bigger. We can easily say that the women work force in all its true sense is the icing on the cake !!!!

"As you achieve success, Be a Role model for the next generation of young agents. Recruit them ,Inspire them and Mentor them"

LIBERATHA KALLAT

Founder & Managing Director - DreamFolks

Empathy, dedication, ability to multi-task, confidence coupled with the creative strategy and of course feminine instinct are few of the best practices that women entrepreneurs are bringing on the table

Travel & Tourism industry has been considered as one of the most demanding industries across the world which requires an individual to be available round the clock. Women, specifically in this segment of workforce have inculcated a positive change ranging from encouraging more inclusive & diverse working



Reena Chopra



Liberatha Kallat



Mamta Pall

culture, attracting more women talent to anticipating and understanding the needs of the guests better with the god gifted ability as a woman combined with the Indian mindset of "Atithi Devo Bhava" makes us the natural stars within this industry.

As per the Startup India ("Women climbing up the ladder in hospitality" report published in March 2019), Women in leadership have showcased that their influence has led to greater motivation and better results along with promoting healthy work life balance.

Empathy, dedication, ability to multi-task, confidence coupled with the creative strategy and of course feminine instinct according to me are few of the best practices that women entrepreneurs are bringing on the table. I would really like to quote a real-life example of women working in leadership position at "Indian Space Research Organization" who actually took India to space with "Mars Orbiter Mission" – a territory unknown with sheer dedication, confidence, efficiency and ability to achieve results. We as women can achieve anything we wish to. All we must do is "be original", have faith in our capabilities, passion towards our ideas and confidence to nurture our passions.

MAMTA PALL

Group Director, Outbound Marketing

Women formulate strategies for business growth, and analyse them regularly thereby preparing for change which is the only constant in the travel and tourism industry

Role of successful women entrepreneurs in the Travel & Tourism Industry: Their role is diverse and it comprises of various elements, right from handling and motivating teams effectively to achieving optimum results aligned with the current dynamics of the business. They also formulate strategies for business growth, and analyse them regularly

thereby preparing for change which is the only constant in our industry. They are great leaders, and they tend to lead by example. As they embark on their journey towards growth, they ensure that their teams grow with them. They work hand in hand with other industry leaders, to create synergies.

Scope: Their scope of work is vast, and encompasses Administration, Finance & Accounts, Human Resources, Sales & Marketing, Public Relations and Team Management. It also extends their role to risk handling, and resolving uncertainties of the business.

Qualities: Leadership skills, Multi-Tasking Skills, Team Player, hard-working, integrity, persistence, accountability, commitment, Self-motivated approach, positivity, Go getter, discipline, persuasiveness, humility, compassion, confidence, innovation, uniqueness, ability to inspire and continuous ability to learn. All of these are qualities of a successful woman entrepreneur in the Travel & Tourism Industry.

KAJAL KHANNA

Business Head, Travel Engineers, A Unit of Khanna Enterprises.

Women in the Travel & Tourism industry are ambitious and hardworking with a clear vision

Despite coming from a different industry, I have always believed that if you utilize your strengths wisely and let your passion drive you there is nothing you cannot accomplish. Over the last two years in Travel & Tourism I have empowered myself with incredible knowledge that has given me the confidence to define my goals and has taught me to be resilient. Today women in the Travel & Tourism industry are ambitious and hardworking with a clear vision that truly inspires me.

GEETA MAHESHWARI

Director, Hospitality Marketing Services.

Try and maintain gender equality at workplaces... be more empathetic



Kajal Khanna

towards what women need, not just 'hear' their opinions but 'listen' to what they have to say...

As a female entrepreneur in India, my 'feminist' daughters often asked me, "How do you deal with gender inequalities in the industry and how do you plan to bridge it?"

Mr. Amitabh Kant said that it is impossible for India to grow until women don't become key entrepreneurs. I started 25 years back and I could see a few women in our industry. Today, I see at least one woman at an important position in every company. They stand as a testimony showing that we weren't born to follow. I respect every woman who comes to work every day despite the stigma that entails of our industry for women. I feel that women not only bring empathy to the store but a different perspective and the brains to not see the situation in isolation.

Over the years, the needs of tourists have changed and so have the demographics of the people travelling. We see that the number of solo-female travellers has diametrically increased and I believe that in this world of inherent patriarchy where women's needs have never been adequately discussed owing to the lack of social awareness, only women are capable of understanding certain requirements.

This Women's Day, I would urge each and every person in the industry to try and maintain the sex-ratio at the their offices, to be more empathetic towards what women need, not just 'hear' their opinions but 'listen' to what they have to say, be more understanding if they say that they are going through a turbulent phase and above all, respect them and treat them as equals. When I say 'equal', I don't mean men and women should be treated 'identically'. But, in a way that the differences do not cause discrimination in access to benefits and opportunities in our society.

While I certainly stand for women, I would like to acknowledge the men

who constantly support their female counterparts. Contrary to popular belief, Patriarchy is harsh on men as well. The societal pressure of earning money, work late nights shifts and not getting paid paternity leaves is certainly taxing. Thus, my take is that we must work together regardless of our normative gender roles. We must be more inclusive, less judgemental, less discriminatory and more supportive towards each other. This is the only way we can build a community where each person working feels empowered, safe and strong.

SHIKHA MISHRA

Vice President, PR & Media, Think Strawberries

A successful women entrepreneur today has to be strong, focused and passionate. With so much demanding our attention these days -- from home to work to social media and then other commitments -- it's very important to do one thing at a time so you can do it very well. Stay in the present and move ahead steadily.

EKTA WATTS

Director, Equator Tours

Balancing between work pressure and domestic responsibilities...Perseverance and Persistence is god gifted in women ... women entrepreneurs should do their bit to uplift the society and also should empower to motivate the unprivileged women

Entrepreneurship is always recognized practice in tourism industry as it encourages in creative freedom and accepting challenges.

Women plays a vital role in Hospitality and Tourism industry and just not as employees but also in business and entrepreneurship. Times have changed the gender specific issues do not account for the under performance of the women entrepreneurs. The leadership qualities, management skills and knowledge will always contribute to a success of any women in business. The balancing



Geeta Maheshwari



Shikha Mishra



Ekta Watts



Arshdeep Anand

between work pressure and domestic responsibilities, career and family has to be maintained. Perseverance and Persistence is god gifted in women, they just have to push themselves a bit and then I think nothing can stop them to fulfill their dreams but on the other hand we as women entrepreneurs should do our bit to the society also to empower to motivate the unprivileged women who are still sitting in their corners.

ARSHDEEP ANAND
CEO, Holiday Moods Adventures

Women entrepreneur create, sell and execute successful travel experiences with self-confidence... Successful women entrepreneurs in travel & tourism industry are confident, enlightened and mindful; take calculated risks, and do not hesitate to innovate.

Managing travel comes naturally to women, with responsibility and management embedded and wired into their system. Woman entrepreneurs overcome cultural, societal, economic obstacles. They accept challenges to gratify the personal need to be an achiever & to be economically independent.

I have had the good fortune to work in adventure tourism sector since past 23 years, in a segment where women are employed at various levels. For women, there is a huge scope in travel & tourism industry, as they are known to create, sell & execute successful travel experiences with self-confidence. It comes naturally to them as they are known to multitask, efficiently balancing personal, family & social life.

It gave me an opportunity to discover multi facets of my own personality. I learnt to push beyond my own boundaries & try various adventures that came my way. Adventure tourism gave me wings to fly. Successful women entrepreneurs in Travel & tourism are confident, enlightened & mindful; take calculated risks, hence do not hesitate to innovate. They are purposeful & dedicated so can control, supervise &

lead their enterprises to achieve the desired goals, without sacrificing the quality.

My husband & I started the company together. We ourselves worked at every aspect of running the business, before building teams. Travel has become an experience today & women have an edge here as they can empathize & perceive the requirements to create a holiday which is memorable for the travellers. I got opportunity to experience the beauty of Himalayas on various treks. This experience gave shape to my life & work. Camps were very basic & the washrooms non-existent. So when we made our own campsites, we made sure that we have clean linen & proper washrooms so that women feel comfortable & non availability of washrooms does not become a deterrent.

Being a mother of two children, I realized that children, today, are less connected with nature. Hence I took an active interest in building curriculums for school children which focus on adventure activities, along with community service and learning a skill for sustainable development. This is a way of giving back, by helping the environment, generating employment for local communities & influencing young minds. It is very liberating to empower the women in our industry. We have women as porters, guides, instructors, camp leaders, business developers, sales & marketing teams, tour executives, administrators – a whole spectrum.

As a successful woman entrepreneur, it is imperative to make sure that they are given due respect & encouragement.

Women entrepreneurs in our industry are empowered with great leadership skills to successfully steer the ship over storms in bad weather!

SHALINI JAIN
Chief Travel Curator, clicktotravel.in

Time Management is key to success
Time Management would top the list



Shalini Jain

for any Woman Entrepreneur, for her to divide her time and do justice to every aspect of her life from kids, home, office and social commitments.

Another important trait would be to put herself first, without being guilty about it and think about her well-being. Only then can she take care of her world.

As an entrepreneur the role would define strategizing, organizing and delegating. For sure, one cannot do everything themselves and delegating is one important aspect of being successful.

Public Relations and Initiation are pivotal in any success story.

Travel & Tourism is a high pressure industry where one has to be available 24x7, keep innovating and have up to date information about new products. It is no easy feat for a woman to manage it all and still we do it all with ardor.

Kudos to all the women out there for being Amazing!

DEEPIKA KHANNA

Founder & CEO, Anchor Destinations & Travel Management Pvt. Ltd.

Women entrepreneurs should have ability to recreate and redesign even with limited resources... there is no substitute for your own dreams, passion and hard work

When it comes to driving the organization, there's huge intensity in each role that is played by a woman travel entrepreneur.

One carries great responsibility on shoulder. What is important is the zeal and the motivation to succeed despite all odds. Travel is one such business that each day there is a new challenge. Our roles do not confine to being only a Lady Boss, it goes beyond and reaches to every aspect of being a resolver, motivator, educationist and balancing work and home together. Many a times a compassion ear needs to lend out and many times tough decisions needs to lash out. Learning the difference between giving out and giving up is very important.

Today the world perceives Women Entrepreneurs with huge respect. There have been women leading all front of travel profession with same challenges as a man. What makes her a little different is the ability to recreate and redesign even with limited resources.

I have been recently gifted with a beautiful book entitled "Atomic Habits" authored by James Clear. I guess this is for every woman who wants to start making a difference to herself. Simple yet so meaningful way to lead a beautiful and successful life. One may always not be lucky but there is no substitute for your own dreams, passion and hard work. I would like to express my gratitude to my mother and mother in law for being my pillars in my life. Every support system needs to have an equally strong back support.

Wishing all the beautiful women of the Travel Trade Fraternity a Happy Women's Era.

TINA WADHWA

Director, Lets Travel

What is the role of a parent in their child's growth? The answer is a bit obvious, isn't it? Similarly, the role of entrepreneurs in the development of an tourism business is like the role of a parent in the growth of their children.

For me it goes beyond discovery and does implementation. Like everyone in this world whether you are a homemaker, a professional, someone who is doing a job, a freelancer or are the creative type like an artist or a writer, all of us go through self-doubt time and again and the people who choose to overcome it gain confidence.

I also feel entrepreneurship gives you the freedom to be your own boss but, that also means you are responsible and accountable for every single thing, which means sometimes you can't afford to take a holiday when you want one or need one. There are a lot of sacrifices that come with Freedom.

I feel lucky and blessed to have a baby called Let's Travel.



Deepika Khanna



Tina Wadhwa

Union Tourism Minister Shri Prahlad Singh Patel launches multilingual Incredible India website in New Delhi



*Chinese, Arabic and Spanish versions of website will attract tourists from these regions :
Shri Prahlad Singh Patel*

The Minister of State (IC) for Tourism & Culture, Shri Prahlad Singh Patel launched the multilingual Incredible India website in New Delhi. The website is currently hosted in English and Hindi is now launched in Chinese, Arabic and Spanish to attract tourists from these regions. On this occasion secretary, Ministry of Tourism Shri Yogendra Tripathi, Director General, Ministry of Tourism Smt. Meenakshi Sharma, senior officials of the ministry, foreign delegates and stakeholders of tourism industry were also present.

Speaking on the occasion Shri Prahlad Singh Patel said that the Incredible India website and mobile app, a digital initiative launched by the Ministry of Tourism, aims to showcase India as a popular tourist destination worldwide. Shri Patel said that our objective is to showcase various tourism products of India on a global platform and increase tourism awareness, attractions and opportunities by providing tourists with

personalised and contextual digital experiences.

Shri Prahlad Singh said that today Incredible India website and mobile app is being launched in Chinese, Arabic and Spanish languages with the main objective of effectively connecting with visitors in countries where these languages are predominant, through web and social media platforms; and thus establish better contact with them.

He said that every year many tourists come to India from countries using these three languages. Many people from India also visit these countries for tourism and other purposes. He added that this exchange of tourists plays an essential role in making us understand and appreciate each other's culture. In 2019, India witnessed the arrival of more than 10.9 million foreign tourists, of which about 6 lakh people speak Chinese, about 2 lakh speak Arabic, and about 1 lakh 25 thousand speak Spanish.

Shri Patel said that immersive experience-based content is

provisioned on the website through 360 degree-experience-based walk-throughs and stories and experiences related to Food & Cuisine, Heritage, Nature and Wildlife, Luxury, Spiritual, Adventure, Art, Shopping and much more.

Shri Patel said that Ministry of Tourism's Incredible India 2.0 website aims towards showcasing the varied tourism products of India at a global arena by providing visitors with relevant, personalized and contextual digital experience escalating tourism awareness, attraction and opportunities.

The website now comprises of a plethora of information around 165 destinations, 2700+ pages, 28 States + 9 UTs along with multiple attractions. The website which is currently hosted in English and Hindi is now launched in Chinese, Arabic and Spanish with primary objective to effectively engage the visitors across web and social media platforms thereby providing an exciting experience to the travellers visiting the website from countries from where we witness major tourist footfall.

The website will be dynamic and constantly evolving with new design and theme, periodically. Going forward, the website will be available in other major international languages.

Thailand

breaks tourists' arrival record with the arrival of 39 million international tourists

destinations, Thai people and their hospitality were big reasons for her return to Thailand after her first visit 21 years ago to Koh Samui in Surat Thani province.

According to the Tourism and Sports Ministry, the number of foreign arrivals during January to November this year stood at 35.87 million — an increase of 4.44% year-on-year — and generated 1.74 trillion baht in income, up by 3.67% from the year before.

This year, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is expecting Thai tourism to achieve a growth rate of 4% in both volume and value to 39.7 million foreign tourists which will generate 1.96 trillion in income for the country.

The tourism agency forecasts the number of tourists will reach 40.8 million in 2020, an increase of 2.5%, which will contribute 2.02 trillion baht to the economy, up 3% year-on-year.

Srisuda Wanapinyosak, TAT deputy

governor for Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas said that for the Russian market, one of the most important for Thai tourism, the Tourism Authority of Thailand is hoping to attract more tourists by reaching new cities such as Vladivostok, Irkutsk, Yekaterinburg, and Novosibirsk via charter flights by next year.

This year, the number of Russian visitors hit 1.47 million, similar to last year, despite predictions that tourism revenue from this market would drop by 1% to 100 billion baht. Ms Srisuda said Thailand experienced an uncontrollable challenge at the beginning of this year as the country's southern provinces, which host popular beach destinations, were affected by Tropical Storm Pabuk.

The numbers from the Russian market were also predicted to decrease due to the country's economic situation and the strong baht which led many Russians to choose short-haul destinations like Turkey instead.

Thailand has broken its annual tourism record with the arrival of more than 39 million international tourists this year, up from about 38 million last year. The 39 millionth tourist was from Russia. The Tourism and Sports Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn said that the kingdom of Thailand remains one of the all-time favourite destinations of global travellers.

In the closing days of 2019, 140,000 tourists are expected to arrive every day, which means that Thailand is expecting to welcome a total of 39.6 million to 39.8 million tourists by year-end.

Anna Pavlovskaya, who was travelling to Thailand with her family for the third time, said that besides tourist



New Zealand

welcomes Indians with a heartfelt Good Morning

Tourism New Zealand welcomes Indians with its new campaign creative and announces expansion of Tourism Industry Partnership for quicker visitor visa application processing

In many cultures, light has been a symbol of consciousness and spiritual illumination. Indians have always followed the principle of how a new morning, brings a new hope, a new day, full of positivity and productivity. Since ancient times, Indians are familiar with Surya Namaskar (salutation to the sun), a popular yoga asana which is known to express gratitude to the sun for sustaining life on this planet.

Similarly, New Zealand too celebrates mornings, and to signify this, Tourism New Zealand launched its new global brand marketing campaign

creative, '100% Pure Welcome – 100% Pure New Zealand' in India. Inspired by the fact that New Zealand is one of the first places to see the sunlight of a new day, Tourism New Zealand, as a part of 100% Pure Welcome – 100% Pure New Zealand, has released a content series with 'Good Morning World' messages shared by locals welcoming visitors from their favourite spots across the country. The campaign showcases what makes New Zealand unique as a holiday destination – the warm and friendly people, stunning landscapes and variety of things to do.

Ms. Venessa Chen, Regional Consumer Marketing Manager, Asia, Tourism New Zealand is excited to launch a campaign that shares a genuine insight into New Zealand's offerings. "In Māori culture, dawn is a significant time of the day - every dawn, we celebrate life and new beginnings. With each morning, we acknowledge its potential. The 'Good Morning World' content series, which is part of a global brand marketing initiative, aims to share the warmth of the people while showcasing the stunning landscape and activities visitors can enjoy. This content series is our own unique way to highlight the warm and welcoming nature of our people. We want to encourage Indian travellers to visit the country as we open our hearts and homes to the world and welcome them to an unforgettable experience in New Zealand."

Through an Instagram video on the brand's social platform, **New Zealand cricketers Mitchell McClenaghan**



and **Colin Munro** shared their own experience while playing New Zealand backyard cricket, their own form of Indian gully cricket, at Waiheke island in Auckland specifically for the brand launch in India. To coincide with the brand launch, Tourism New Zealand and Immigration New Zealand together launched an extension of the Tourism Industry Partnership (TIP) Programme to facilitate faster processing of visitor visa applications for Indian leisure travellers.

With this new arrangement announced today, Indian leisure travellers will benefit from a more streamlined visa service with a faster processing time of seven working days.

Commenting on this new agreement, **Tourism New Zealand's Regional Trade Marketing Manager, Asia, Mr. Steven Dixon** said, "The extension of this programme is built on the success of our existing partnerships over the last five years. We are grateful to continue our association with Kulin Kumar Holidays Pvt Ltd, SOTC Travel and Thomas Cook

India and we are looking forward to welcoming many more Indian leisure travellers by adding Flamingo Transworld Pvt. Ltd., Kesari Tours Pvt. Ltd. and Veena World. Between the three new partners, Indian visitors can now get expedited visitor visa processing in 60 additional locations across India."

The Tourism Industry Partnership was originally launched in November 2014. Valid only for incentive visas in the first year, a grand total of 876 applications were processed. Last year, during the period of June 2018-July 2019, more than 5,000 (5,492) applications (which included incentive and leisure visas) were processed under the partnership which is a positive 627% increase compared to the first year.

Commenting on this partnership, **Ms. Marcelle Foley, Head of Operations Immigration New Zealand** said, "INZ is pleased with the success of the TIP programme over the last five years. This is a positive development to extend our partnership and include an increasing number of travel agents."



(L-R) Ms. Meeta Shah, Director, Flamingo Transworld Pvt. Ltd, Ms. Sunila Patil, Director, Veena World, Ms. Marcelle Foley, Head of Operations, Immigration New Zealand, Ms. Neha Bhola, Country Manager – India, Tourism New Zealand, Ms. Venessa Chen, Regional Consumer Marketing Manager, Asia, Tourism New Zealand and Mr. Himanshu Patil, Director, Kesari Tours Pvt. Ltd

Tourism Industry Partnership (TIP) Programme Travel Company Profiles

Flamingo Transworld Pvt. Ltd.

- A renowned travel company planning holidays for Indian travellers since the last 24 years. With outbound vacations to more than 75 countries and over 30,000 satisfied passengers yearly, Flamingo is now one of the pioneers of the tourism industry in India.

Kesari Tours Pvt. Ltd. - This company began as a family run business in 1984 and are the forerunners of the family tour holiday options in the country. With exception service since the last 36 years, their philosophy is to continuously improve working practices to provide prompt and quality services with complete guest satisfaction.

Veena World - Established with a vision of delivering incredible holiday experiences to celebrate life. With a combined expertise of over 30 years within the core team, this company has under their wings a team of 1000 travel professionals and has serviced more than 5,00,000 guests.

Tourism New Zealand is the organisation responsible for marketing New Zealand as an international visitor destination. Its mission is to boost New Zealand's economy by growing the value of international visitors. Tourism is the beating heart of New Zealand and crucial to the health of the New

Zealand economy. As the number one export earner tourism delivers over \$16 billion to the economy each year and employs nearly one in seven Kiwis. The major tool we use to do this is the 100% Pure New Zealand marketing campaign, a campaign that has evolved over the past two decades to make New Zealand one of the world's most well-respected tourism brands.

Follow the campaign and the daily 'Good Morning World' messages via @GoodMorningWorldNZ on Instagram and Facebook, as well as the official 100% Pure New Zealand YouTube page.

Visa procedure: - One may forward their application to the VFS Global office in Mumbai or Delhi, which will then be directed to Immigration New Zealand. www.immigration.govt.nz

Airline connections: Connecting flights to New Zealand are available on Singapore Airlines/Air New Zealand, Thai Airways, Cathay Pacific and Malaysia Airlines with stop-overs in their respective hubs. New Zealand's international gateways are Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Queenstown.

Domestic services: You can fly between all New Zealand cities and most major towns using domestic air services. Air New Zealand and Jetstar are the main providers. Their services are complemented by regional airlines, charter companies and scenic flight operators.

Book a Trip to New South Wales (NSW)



New South Wales (NSW) is issuing an open invitation to the world to make a date with Sydney and NSW by booking a trip to explore its spectacular coastline, iconic attractions, outback towns and charming regional centres.

The majority of the state, including Sydney, South Coast, North Coast, the Hunter Valley and Blue Mountains, is now welcoming visitors and booking a holiday in NSW is one of the best ways to help support towns and people impacted by the pressures of recent

bushfires and drought.

Tourism is a vital economic driver for the state with travel dollars providing benefits to entire local communities of accommodation providers, restaurants and cafes, visitor sites and small businesses which are both immediate and long-lasting.

When visitors stay local and buy local, it not only provides a financial boost to these areas but significantly boosts community spirit.

Here are some of the top reasons to take a NSW trip now and in the coming months that you'll enjoy and give back:

Road Trips Galore

A road trip is the perfect way to enjoy all the things to do and see in the wonderfully diverse State of NSW. From a *South Coast* road trip, to a *Hunter Valley* wine escape, a surfing safari along the *North Coast* or heading out to explore *Outback NSW*, New South Wales offers countless year-round opportunities to jump in the car for a week or two of fun and adventure. While on the road, make sure to check out our *events* calendar for a variety of local festivals, farmer's markets and entertainment on offer throughout the state.

Valentine's Day, Fri 14 February

Impress your true love with a romantic escape that gives back and book a trip at a cute bed and breakfast or *Bubbletent*, dine locally and stock the car with local produce and wine. For a relaxing nature filled escape, be sure to book a stay out in the gorgeous Blue Mountains villages of *Leura* and *Blackheath*, a beach escape to *Port Macquarie*, *Yamba*, *Bermagui* or *Mollymook* or for a true wine escape head to the vibrant wine making regions of *Mudgee*, *Orange*, *Cowra*, *Hunter Valley*, *Southern Highlands* and *The Shoalhaven*.

Easter Holidays

The South Coast areas of the Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla and Sapphire Coast are always a hit with visitors so take advantage of the Easter holidays and explore the South Coast and its

network of coastal villages. Go *dolphin watching* in Jervis Bay, *snorkeling with seals* at Montague Island, paddle boarding in Tathra and explore the *Killer Whale Trail* in Eden. While visiting, make sure to also pop in to the *Sydney Royal Easter Show*, a twelve day celebration featuring agricultural competitions, animal experiences, live entertainment, carnival fun and shopping - fun for the whole family is guaranteed.

Autumn leaves and Spring flowers

The cooler weather is the ideal time to head to the Southern Highlands, Snowy Mountains, Blue Mountains and Hunter Valley. Be it truffle and mushroom hunting in Oberon, apple picking in Batlow or Bilpin or taking in the autumn leaves at Tumbarumba, Katoomba or Bowral. Visitors planning a trip in Spring will have the chance to enjoy the famous

jacaranda festival (mid October-November) in Grafton, whose streets are transformed by a bloom of beautiful purple colours.

Sydney's Iconic Events

The beautiful harbour city shines all year with spectacular and iconic events - why not book a trip to New South Wales to coincide with one or more? Vivid Sydney (May), the largest festival of light, music and ideas in the Southern Hemisphere, transforms the city into a hub of creativity, while Sculpture by the Sea, Bondi (October-November) offers the world's largest annual free to the public outdoor sculpture exhibition, along a 2km sculpture walk starting at Bondi Beach. Fans of stage shows and theatre will also be delighted, with Disney's *Frozen the Musical* premiering on 7 July 2020, making Sydney the first city outside North America to host the highly acclaimed musical adaptation.

Whales

Whale watching season kicks off along the NSW Coast from May to November each year. More than 30,000 whales make their way along the Humpback Highway, and you can watch the spectacular show from clifftops, beaches and cruises. At Coffs Harbour, you can swim alongside whales with *Jetty Dive*, while in Port Macquarie *Port Jet* gets you out into open-ocean in under 10 minutes. Further South, at Batemans Bay you can join *Region X* or *Bay and Beyond* for a sea kayaking tour, at *Broulee Island* you can enjoy a 360 degree view of the ocean and in Eden you can celebrate the whales at the annual *Eden Whale Festival* in November.

Visitors to NSW are reminded to always refer to *NSW Rural Fire Service*, *Live Traffic* and *NSW National Parks* for the latest information about local conditions.



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Global tourism spend in Egypt reaches \$16.4bn in 2019

Tourism spending in Egypt last year reached US\$16.4 billion last year according to a report from Arabian Travel Market (ATM).

GCC tourists to the country are expected to spend \$2.36 billion in 2020, marking an increase of 11% compared to the previous year.

Saudi Arabia for example is forecast to account for 1.8 million tourists to Egypt by 2024, showing a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of %. Saudi visitors also spent \$633 million in 2019, estimated to grow at a CAGR of 11% through to 2024, this number will reach \$1.13 billion.

ATM exhibition director ME, Danielle Curtis explained: "Egypt has a significant outbound market for the GCC. 1.84 million visitors arrived in 2019 and this is estimated to increase to 2.64 million by

Within the next five years, global tourism spending is expected to reach \$29.7bn

2024." Outside the GCC, total tourism spend is projected to hit \$29.7 billion in the next five years.

Source markets

According to ATM, Egypt's top source market is Germany, with 2.48 million arrivals

and a total spend on \$1.22 billion last year. German arrivals are forecast to hit 2.9 million in the next five years, with spending hoped to near double at \$2.18 billion.

After Germany, Ukraine is the largest source market, boasting 1.49 million

visitors, attributed to improved air connections.

Regionally speaking, Europe is set to be the largest contributor to Egyptian tourism. European arrivals will increase from 6.2 million in 2018 to 9.1 million tourists in 2022 said ATM; arrivals from the GCC at 11% will represent one of the highest growth rates.

"Over the last 12 months, Egypt's tourism industry has witnessed remarkable growth, with arrivals up 57.5% from 11.3 million in 2018 to 17.8 million in 2019. Growth has been fuelled by the cheaper Egyptian Pound and government incentives for charter airlines operating international flights," said Curtis.

Curtis concluded: "Looking further than its current top source markets, the 2020 influx of UK visitors, the bulk of Russian visitors still to come back, as well as the Chinese market, the future looks promising for Egyptian tourism."

Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) New Delhi gets a New Director

Mr. **Vachirachai Sirisumpan** has been appointed as the new Director of Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) New Delhi Office from 1st February, 2020.

He has been with TAT for more than 20 years with extensive experience working in various division including International Relations Division, Europe, Middle East and

Africa Markets Region, Domestic Marketing, and Policy and Planning Department. Prior to his assignment to head the TAT Delhi Office, Mr. Vachirachai Sirisumpan was the Director of Southern Market Division promoting and coordinating Thailand's Southern Region for domestic tourist market. In his previous assignment, Mr. Vachirachai Sirisumpan had been posted at TAT Dubai Office as Deputy Director for Middle East between Market 2012 - 2016.

As the new Director of TAT New Delhi Office (that holds responsibility to promote Thailand as a favorite destination for Indian travelers, in the area of North India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan) Mr. Vachirachai will continue to carry forward the work of Mr. Isra Stapanaseth, his pre-successor. Under his guidance, new destinations will be introduced and promoted aggressively in the Indian market such as destinations beyond Bangkok like Kanchanaburi and Khao Yai or beyond Phuket like Khao Lak, new attractions in and around Krabi as well as hidden gems in Koh Samui and the islands around it.

Indian millennial travelers will be the focus for TAT New Delhi, this year. Niche market, including wedding celebrations, special



occasion celebrations, honeymoons & golf tourism will be explored for new marketing tactics and promotions. In addition, Mr Vachirachai Sirisumpan aims to strengthen networking initiatives and carry out more joint collaborations with all travel partners as well as enhance on direct consumer promotion activities in the markets that are under TAT New Delhi Office.

Indian tourist arrivals in **Turkey** marks 57% growth in 2019



- *Indian outbound travel to Turkey sees an upward trend consecutively for the second year*
- *Increase in number of Indian weddings & MICE groups in Turkey*



The Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism India revealed that between January to December 2019, Turkey has registered a 57% increase in the number of Indian tourist arrivals in comparison to the same period last year, hosting 230,000 Indian visitors. In 2018, Turkey hosted 147,000 Indian visitors while the numbers started to increase drastically from 2019.

With such positive growth rate recorded, the Turkey Tourism is expecting a growth of approx. 35% in the Indian tourist arrivals by the end of 2020. The latest official statistics also revealed that **51.9 million**

foreign tourists visited Turkey within the period of January to December 2019, indicating 13.7 percent increase from the previous year.

Turkey has emerged as a popular destination for Indian Travellers across categories. From leisure travel to FITs, Indian weddings to Mice summits, there has been a significant increase in all segments. This year Turkey witnessed a substantial surge in the number of big budget Indian destination weddings across Turkey. Similarly, MICE travel to Turkey increased at an incredibly fast pace.

Basis the current arrival numbers, and the activities planned in months

to come, the tourism board is hoping to reach a record number of Indian tourist arrivals in Turkey by the end of 2020. Turkey tourism board has been constantly engaging with Indian audience by highlighting important festivals, summits & international events that are being held in Turkey. A number of fairs and engagements are being held regularly from India market to different parts of Turkey with a focus on cuisine, culture, landscape, history and nature.

Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism office India will also be associating with top Indian travel associations in upcoming quarters.

EbixCash

Signs an Agreement with

Amadeus

to Propel its End-to-End Travel Vision



The partnership will provide EbixCash's online websites, travel agents and corporations in the Asia Pacific and UAE with greater access to the unrivalled breadth of content offered by the Amadeus Travel Platform, enabling EbixCash to better serve its customers.

EBIXCASH, an international supplier of On-Demand software and E-commerce services, announced a strategic travel technology partnership with Amadeus to grow its footprint across the Asia Pacific region and UAE and become a one-stop-shop for travel.

With 210K travel agents to service and 4.5 million users of its travel app, EbixCash needs access to an extensive range of content and the best, scalable technology to deliver what its agents, corporations and travellers need. The partnership will provide EbixCash's online websites, travel agents and corporations in the Asia Pacific and UAE with greater access to the unrivalled breadth of content offered by the Amadeus Travel Platform, enabling EbixCash to better serve its customers. Built on fully open systems, the Amadeus Travel Platform harnesses

artificial intelligence to bring a greater level of personalized content into one integrated platform.

"Our vision is to build an end-to-end travel solution for the industry. We want to empower travel agents and travellers alike. EbixCash today is the largest end-to-end financial exchange in the Indian sub-continent, besides its parent company Ebix being the largest insurance exchange in the world. We are always looking for new ways to stay ahead of our competitors. Partnering with Amadeus gives us access to innovative technology that will allow us to further expand our footprint across the region, especially in India, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, Dubai and Abu Dhabi, where we see the greatest potential," said Robin Raina, Chairman of the Board, President and CEO, Ebix.

"Our growth strategy is built on the premise of having an unrivalled 'phygital' presence in the region – combining our physical distribution outlets in Southeast Asia with an omnichannel digital presence that allows our seller partners to have access to extensive real-time data

and e-commerce solutions across all digital channels. Amadeus' technology empowers EbixCash to deliver this and truly become a one-stop-shop for travel," he further added.

"Partnerships are the foundation of progress. As EbixCash's preferred travel technology partner, we are proud to support the company's strategy to deliver increasingly personalized experiences across all travel touchpoints in APAC and UAE. Amadeus' open, collaborative approach allied with the scale, efficiency and performance offered by our Travel Platform means that we remain best placed to support our travel sellers — and their travellers — as they navigate the changing travel landscape," said Champa Magesh, Executive Vice President of Retail in Travel Channels and Managing Director EMEA, Amadeus.

The Amadeus Travel Platform gives travel sellers access to additional and diverse content, including accommodation and ground transportation, so that travel seller can remain competitive and sell travel in an efficient and personalized way.

INR 5 lakh crore of **Losses** in Tourism & Hospitality, 3.8 crore **jobless** FAITH

The Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH), the umbrella body of the industry has written a letter to the Prime Minister of India highlighting the devastating economic impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on the tourism industry and seek his intervention in terms of financial relief for the industry to grapple with the situation.

FAITH estimated the Indian tourism industry was looking at pan India bankruptcies, closure of businesses and mass unemployment. It believed that around 70 percent out of a total estimated workforce of 5.5 crores (direct and indirect) could become unemployed (around 3.8 crores). This effect of job losses and layoffs had already begun throughout the country.

A large percentage of total tourism business activity of India, which is estimated at USD 28 billion plus in *forex* and upwards of INR 2 lakh crores in domestic tourism activity would be at economic risk through the year. Thus, in excess of INR 5 lakh crores of direct tourism industry and almost double that of total economic activity was at risk, according to FAITH.

Some of the key industry asks that are highlighted in the letter to

the Indian Prime Minister include:

- Twelve months moratorium on EMLs of principle and interest payments on loans and working capital from Financial Institutions (both banking & non-banking).
- Double working capital limits and on interest free & collateral free terms. This will prevent all our tourism businesses from going bankrupt.
- Deferment for twelve months of all statutory dues whether GST, Advance Tax payments, PF, ESIC, customs duties at the Central Government level or at any state government level the excise fees, levies, taxes, power & water charges, bank guarantees & security deposits and deferment of all renewals, across the tourism, travel, hospitality & aviation industry.
- Set up a support fund for twelve months on the lines of MNREGA to support basic salaries with 'direct transfer' to affected tourism employees.
- Defer introduction of TCS (tax collected at source) on travel that has been proposed in Finance Bill 2020 to be levied from 1st April 2020 as it will displace business from India to overseas, which will lead to shutting down businesses of most Indian tourism companies.

- Deferment of increase in any insurance premium for a period of 12 months such as for example for Standard fire and special perils rate for fire, loss or profits.
- A complete GST Tax Holiday for the Tourism, Travel & Hospitality Industry for a period of twelve months. With almost nil revenues there is hardly going to be any GST collection. This will make a very strong statement and will promote both domestic and inbound travel.
- Grant a 200% weighted exemption for twelve months on expenses to Indian corporates to hold exhibitions, conferences and incentive trips in India. This will be a big shot in the arm and will help revitalise the industry.
- Restoration of 10% duty credit of SEIS scrips to promote foreign exchange earnings. Additionally, to kick start the working capital take the previous year's foreign exchange earnings as a reference point for credit.
- Regular meeting of a national tourism task force of all relevant ministries of the Central Government along with ministry of tourism and chief secretaries of State governments and industry stakeholders to fast track all tourism investment approvals

CII predicts

USD 28 billion revenue loss for Tourism & Hospitality Sector; 2 crore possible job loss

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) estimates the revenue loss for the Tourism & Hospitality industry in the country to be around USD 28 billion during the period October 2019 to April 2020 season. Considering 75 percent of the industry is Small and Medium Enterprises, the CII expects more than half of the industry going sick leading to loss of jobs to nearly 2 cr people in the sector. With travel sentiments across the globe is expected to take a long time to revive in the wake of the Covid pandemic, the industry body does not expect the sector to see any cash flow normalization before November this year.

CII has demanded the government to intervene with stimulus measures for the industry. The industry confederation has demanded six to nine months' moratorium on all working capital principle, interest payments on loans and overdrafts bringing in liquidity allowing for business continuity, without categorizing the companies as NPAs. It has also asked for deferment of GST & Advance Tax payments at the Central Government level and removal of fees for any upcoming licenses/ permits renewal/ Excise exemption for liquor for the hospitality and travel industry across the states.

As a lot of conferences, events, etc. got cancelled for which the GST has been paid already, the industry body has asked for immediate refund. Heat-Light-Power (HLP) on average equates to 25 percent of the industrial costs. Therefore, a 50 percent reduction to our HLP costs is required for the sustenance of business.

Another major recommendation

of CII is pertaining to EPCG and SEIS schemes. CII has asked the government to consider an extension in export obligation fulfilment period for EPCG to an additional 3 years from the existing 6 years. The notified services are incentivised under SEIS at an enhanced rate of 10 percent based on the companies last year submissions of net foreign exchange earnings. CII also demanded short term interest free or low interest loans and double overdraft facility for the industry to overcome the fund crisis arising out of the Covid-19 situation.

In order to avoid there is mass retrenchment in the industry, CII has demanded Financial support under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

2005 (MGNREGA) or a similar Scheme should be extended to entire travel industry in order to prevent employment loss. The proposed TCS on travel in Finance Bill 2020 to be deferred and open a sectorial conversation on the merits and demerits of the law. The TCS ruling will shift all sales of outbound tourism to overseas suppliers denying the government of all GST Revenue, CII stated.

Taking the serious crisis in the Aviation industry separately, the CII has asked for immediate relief by way of subsidy packages, tax/fee rationalisation to tide the current crisis. The industry confederation has reiterated the demand for bringing ATF into the GST ambit, to enable full input tax credit; rationalisation of VAT on ATF by states, relief on Air Navigation Service (ANS) and Land Parking and Housing charges, etc.

Thailand's tourism

events and activities go on as usual

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) said that in Thailand and around the world that tourism events and activities scheduled during this month and the next will take place as usual. They include international events; like the Amazing Thailand Marathon Bangkok 2020 on 2 February, GSB Thailand Open 2020 presented by EA from 10-16 February in Hua Hin, Honda LPGA Thailand 2020 on 22-23 February in Pattaya, and PTT Thailand Grand Prix 2020 MotoGP, from 20-22 March in Buri Ram.

TAT would like to reiterate that Thailand is working with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other countries to further understand any infections caused by the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) and to ensure that they are prevented and controlled. There is no outbreak of 2019-nCoV in Thailand.

To-date, the Ministry of Public Health has confirmed 14 cases in Thailand (13 Chinese and a Thai). Five of them (four Chinese and a Thai) have recovered and returned home. The other nine Chinese patients remain at medical facilities.

Thailand has effective health surveillance systems for disease control

Thailand is implementing an intensive and unrelenting screening and surveillance for the 2019-nCoV, especially at the international points of entry, including Suvarnabhumi, Don Mueang, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Phuket and Krabi International Airports. The screening covers passengers and air crew on all flights from China. Nationwide medical labs have been upgraded for a real-time RT-PCR (reverse transcription polymerase chain

reaction) laboratory technique allowing blood test results to be obtained within three hours. This is part of the ongoing intensive screening and disease surveillance for the 2019-nCoV.

Thai public and private sectors step up hygiene measures

As well as airports, mass public transport including the BTS Sky Train, shopping malls, hotels, and public areas have stepped up hygiene measures, including extra cleaning and disinfection as well as providing hand sanitisers. This includes the preventive measures by all airlines comprising passenger screening and ground service measures and inflight service measures.

Tourism business operators to monitor for symptoms

For tourists and travellers in Thailand, tourism business operators are instructed to monitor for symptoms of their customers. If any traveller has respiratory symptoms including coughing, sneezing, panting or a runny nose after arriving from any affected areas, tourism business operators are to seek medical care at a hospital immediately and inform the doctor regarding the person's history of recent travel from China.

How to reduce your risk of coronavirus infection

For regular updates on the 2019-nCoV situation in Thailand, tourists and travellers can visit <https://ddc.moph.go.th/viralpneumonia/intro.php>, which is available in Thai, Chinese and English

and includes the following guidelines:

- The 2019 novel coronavirus can be prevented using the principles for respiratory disease prevention, i.e., washing hands, wearing masks and avoiding contact with patients who have a respiratory disease.
- People can still travel to China; however, it is recommended to avoid visiting crowded places and making contact with patients who have respiratory symptoms. If this is unavoidable, people should wear a mask.
- If anyone has symptoms including coughing, sneezing, panting or a runny nose within 14 days after departing from Wuhan, China, please seek medical care at a hospital immediately and inform the doctor regarding the history of recent travel to China
- It is recommended to avoid visiting markets selling carcasses or live animals. If touching or handling live animals, people should wear gloves.
- Regularly wash hands with water and soap or use alcohol gel. It is also recommended to avoid using your hands to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Do not use or share personal items with others (i.e. handkerchief, glasses, and towels) since pathogens causing respiratory disease can be transmitted to other people through secretions.
- It is recommended to avoid eating uncooked food.

Once again, TAT would like to affirm travellers and the international community that every effort has been made by the Thai authorities to prevent the outbreak of 2019-nCoV in Thailand.

TravelBullz's



KD Singh,
Founder & President,
TravelBullz

The Great India Road Show a great success, adds Dubai, Singapore and Bali to its portfolio



Winner of multiple India Travel Awards, online B2B Destination Management Company TravelBullz successfully concluded two-city roadshow titled 'The Great India Road Show' in Mumbai and Delhi. The Road Show brought together more than 50 hotels and

attractions from Thailand. The 'Great India Road Show' is a unique platform for hoteliers and travel partners to meet under one roof. Over 250 agents each attended the event in Mumbai and Delhi.

TravelBullz took this opportunity to announce new products and initiatives to its travel trade partners. **KD Singh, Founder & President, TravelBullz**, in an exclusive to Travel Span informed that 2020 is an important year for them as the company completes 10 years and at the same time they will spring board to next level.

Speaking on the sidelines of the event, KD Singh said, The company has been working consistently on Thailand, Macao and Hong Kong and now **we are adding Dubai, Singapore and Bali.** "We have already added Dubai in January and the remaining two destinations will be added soon, he said.

TravelBullz is also taking significant steps on technology frontiers, "Through technology, we have integrated with 80 other suppliers around the world. Our promise is to provide best possible price to our customers in real time. We are a pure technology player," he stated. The API and technology business of the company is also going quite well. "Our API and technology business is growing at CAGR 300%. On the API front alone, we expect a business of 12 million this year and will help us connect customers around the world. We have already booked for 69 nationalities, and this year the figure will reach 100," he said.

He said that the company has registered a healthy growth, however, the later part of 2019 was a challenging one. "The situation in Hong Kong held back our growth little bit and that is why we opened new destinations in the first quarter of the year to cover up the loss," said Singh.

PATA

Annual Summit 2020 canceled

PATA CEO and President addressed PATA members with an announcement to cancel the PATA Annual Summit in Ras Al Khaimah, UAE

He addressed PATA members in an email:

PATA Members and Industry Colleagues, <Due to the evolving dynamics of the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and after much discussion and deliberation with the Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAK TDA) and the PATA Executive Board, the PATA Annual

Summit 2020 in Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates from March 31-April 3 will no longer take place.

The safety and well-being of our members, industry colleagues, and local communities is fundamental in our mission in acting as a catalyst for the responsible development of travel and tourism to, from and within the Asia Pacific region.

With this in mind, we had come to this tremendously difficult decision.

We are extremely disappointed in making this announcement; however, we have been closely monitoring this continually developing situation and believe that it was best that we made this decision in a clear and timely manner.

All of us at PATA were excited to welcome all members and delegates to Ras Al Khaimah, and our discussions and meetings with the host ensured us that this would have been a successful event would it not have been for the current situation.

With this in mind, we are pleased to announce that RAK TDA has agreed to host the PATA Annual Summit 2021 and dates for next year's event will be announced in due time.

For those delegates that have paid

the registration fee or purchased tickets for the PATA Foundation Charity Dinner, you have the option of transferring the registration fee and/or the Charity Dinner ticket fee to the PATA Annual Summit 2021 or receive a full refund.

For our members inquiring about the PATA Executive Board, Board, and Category and Advisory Committees, as well as the Annual General Meeting, further details will be communicated in the coming weeks.

At PATA, we continue to encourage all industry stakeholders to remain calm but stay vigilant and take proper precautions as necessary.

Most importantly, we ask that you get your information from reputable sources such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and your local authorities.

During times such as these, it is vital to gather all proper facts and information before measuring an appropriate and responsible response.

We will continue to provide any updates as necessary and, as always, we are here to offer all of our members and industry colleagues our support and assistance as needed during this difficult .

5th OTOAI Convention Postponed



In light of the recent developments regarding spread of the Corona Virus outbreak all across the world, the Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) has decided to postpone its Convention. The Convention was scheduled to take place in Antalya, Turkey from March 15-18, 2020.

RiazMunshi, President, shares, "It is unfortunate that we had to postpone the Convention but given the prevailing circumstances we thought it is best to do so. The decision

has been taken keeping the safety of our delegates in mind as we would never do anything that might put their health in jeopardy. I am sure that the effect and spread of Covid-19 will subside with time and once that happens, we will re-announce the convention with a fresh set of dates." "We would like to thank all the members of the travel trade, media and our partners in Turkey who have been extremely supporting. We look forward to your continued support in the future also and we are confident that as soon as the Covid-19 cases are curbed, we will announce the new dates of the convention," elaborates HimanshuPatil, Vice President and Convention Chairman, OTOAI. While Turkey has not reported a single confirmed case of Covid-19, the decision has purely been taken keeping the various travel advisories being issued in mind. Once things are back to normal, the OTOAI Convention will take place in Turkey with fresh dates.

TBO Group Hosts

Annual Fete and Awards Gala in Mumbai and Delhi



TBO Group raised the bar yet again as it hosted the biggest and the most awaited party of the year for its trade partners on 15th February 2020 at Nijhawan Farms in Delhi. A notch above last year, the party was thronging with more than 2400 trade partners from the travel fraternity including Hotels, Airlines, Tourism Boards, Media, Government bodies and who's who of the Travel, Tourism and Hospitality industry. This one of its kind 'Sundowner Party' created waves from late afternoon until midnight. The celebrations began on a cheerful



note preceded by an Awards Ceremony to felicitate productive partnerships for top performers. Addressing the gathering Mr. Ankush Nijhawan, Co-Founder, TBO Group and Managing Director, Nijhawan Group thanked the travel fraternity for their continued support and contribution. The evening concluded with pulsating music that set the stage ablaze, lavishly spread food palate and cocktails.

ON THE MOVE

Prachi Chaturvedi Joins Pride Group of Hotels as Corporate Marketing Head



Ms. Prachi Chaturvedi has joined as Corporate Marketing Head of Pride Group of Hotels. As Corporate Marketing Manager, she will be responsible for Marketing Communications & Brand functions for all Pride hotels and Resorts in India.

She has worked with brands as Brand/MarCom Head for Absolute Hotel Services (U Hotels & Resorts, Eastin Hotels), Papa John's Pizza, Mad Over Donuts and Midday Multimedia Ltd & Hindustan Times respectively prior to joining Pride Hotels, India.

Sanjay Gupta General Manager at Le Méridien Gurgaon



An alumni of St Xavier's college and Institute of Hotel Management Kolkata, Sanjay's hospitality journey began in the year 1993. His passion for service, saw him scale up to various management roles across all departments, within a hotel format.

Prior to joining Le Méridien Gurgaon his last assignment was in the capacity of a General Manager at Le Méridien Jaipur. His past associations include: Le Méridien Coimbatore, Radisson, Hyatt Regency Delhi and the Oberoi Hotels and Resorts.

In his current role, he is focused on bringing the Le Méridien Gurgaon brand promise – 'Destination Unlocked' to life, while he indulges in inspiring guests as they discover Delhi NCR with a new perspective each time they stay at Le Méridien Gurgaon.

Apart from being a passionate hotelier, Sanjay is a passionate father to Armaan and Yash his sons who often join him during his adventurous weekend kitchen experiments. One of the many things that he indulges in, to unwind over weekends

Rubina Sharma

appointed
as
Director of
Sales and
Marketing

Rubina Sharma has been appointed as Director of Sales and Marketing at Eros Hotel New Delhi Nehru Place. She will be responsible for spearheading sales and marketing strategies for the hotel. Earlier, she was Director of Sales at Eros Hotel for last 2 years, where she honed her leadership skills and streamlined the activities of sales, revenue and reservations teams and developed the strategic action plan for the demand generators in Delhi Market. Armed with a degree in Hotel Management, she comes with a total experience of 16 years extensively in Sales and Marketing and spent three years each in Housekeeping and Front office in different properties like



Imperial, Taj Palace, Jaypee Group of Hotels, IHG and finally Eros Hotel. On her appointment, Rubina said "I have been with Eros for more than 5 years and it feels great to be a part of such a talented team. It was one of the few companies that I always wanted to be associated with and I now look forward to an incredible journey filled with new learning, success and enriching opportunities."

Former Air India CMD Ashwani Lohani

Appointed Chairman of AP Tourism Development Corporation



The Andhra Pradesh government has appointed former CMD of Air India Ashwani Lohani as the Chairman of the AP Tourism Development Corporation, assigning him the rank of a Cabinet minister. The appointment is for a period of one year. A retired officer of the Indian Railway Service of Mechanical Engineers, Lohani had previously served as CMD of India Tourism

Development Corporation and also Chairman of Railway Board. The AP government expects Lohani's experience in varied sectors would help harness the tourism potential of the state. He is the second former bureaucrat brought in from New Delhi for a key post in the state, with the rank of a Cabinet minister, after former Union Finance Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg.

Sayaji Hotels Ltd. appoints Amit K Singh as Corporate General Manager - Operations

Sayaji Hotels Ltd. has appointed Amit K Singh as Corporate General Manager - Operations. A seasoned professional, Mr. Singh comes with a rich experience of over two decades in the hospitality industry. In his new capacity Amit will play a pivotal role in driving and overseeing all aspects of Operation Excellence at Sayaji Group of Hotels. A stickler for perfection and attention to minor details, Mr. Singh has motivated his team at all times leading from front to achieve targets and has been responsible for the overall growth in his previous role.

Prior to this, he has worked with reputed Brands such as Pride Group of Hotels as Area GM Gujarat, ITC Hotels, Ramee Group Of Hotels, Choice Group of Hotels and more. Mr. Singh commits to provide strategic leadership expertise that ensures effective and efficient overall management across the chain. Amit believes in constant evolution, innovation and collaborative leadership, thereby achieving results through people. He is a fitness freak and in his leisure time he loves doing photography and spend time with his family



Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel appoints Jen Varghese as the Director of Sales and Marketing

Bengaluru city's finest luxury hotel, Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel warmly welcomes Jen Varghese as the Director of Sales & Marketing. With a robust experience of 16 years in the hospitality sector, Jen has enriched his professional expertise in the areas of sales, business development, strategic planning, and team management, after having worked for key brands in the Hospitality Industry. His passion for the industry has seen him rise rapidly through several positions within the hospitality industry with responsibilities spread across a gamut of functions. Jen possesses an intuitive understanding of brand management and with his outstanding communication and leadership skills, he is able to effectively manage relationships with clients and stakeholders and lead cross-cultural teams. At Renaissance

Bengaluru Race Course Hotel, Jen's core responsibilities will include maximizing hotel revenues through result-oriented sales and marketing strategies, exploring business opportunities through events.

Prior to joining Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel, Jen was associated with Le Meridien Bangalore for over three years as Director of Sales and Marketing. After completing his Hotel Management course, Jen started his career as Banquet Sales Office Executive and F&B Supervisor at Taj West End Hotel for three years. He has been heading sales teams for various hotels since 2007, starting with The Park Hotel Bangalore in the capacity of Associate Director of Sales.

He further prospered in his career and held sales head positions with key hospitality players such as The Lalit Hotel, Bangalore, The Leela Bangalore,



Moevenpick Hotel and Spa, Bangalore and Le Meridien Bangalore. Jen hails from Kerala and has been in Bengaluru for the past 30 years. He has a MBA degree from R.V.S College, Coimbatore (Bhartiyar University). Passionate and driven, Jen will be a great addition in developing and sustaining the growth of the hotel's revenue and market share in this highly competitive city. When not at work, Jen likes going on road trips and exploring new places within the country.



Anil Chadha named as new COO of ITC Hotels ITC Hotels Big 2020 Leadership Appointments

With an intent to further strengthen its focus on growth and expansion, ITC Hotels announced the appointment of Anil Chadha as Chief Operating Officer – ITC Hotels. Prior to this, he was Vice President, Operations. A career spanning over two decades at ITC Hotels across various cities: New Delhi, Agra, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Chennai, has facilitated Anil's in-depth experience and understanding of the business dynamics of micro-markets within India. While hotel operations remain his forte, his passion and acumen for global

culinary trends has held him in good stead to lead the evolution of new food and beverage brands for the chain.

As part of the organizational realignment, Kuldeep Bhartee moves from Area Manager South and General Manager ITC Grand Chola to ITC Green Centre in Gurgaon as Vice President – Operations

Zubin Songadwala moves as Area Manager South and General Manager ITC Grand Chola [From Area Manager West and General Manager ITC Maratha]

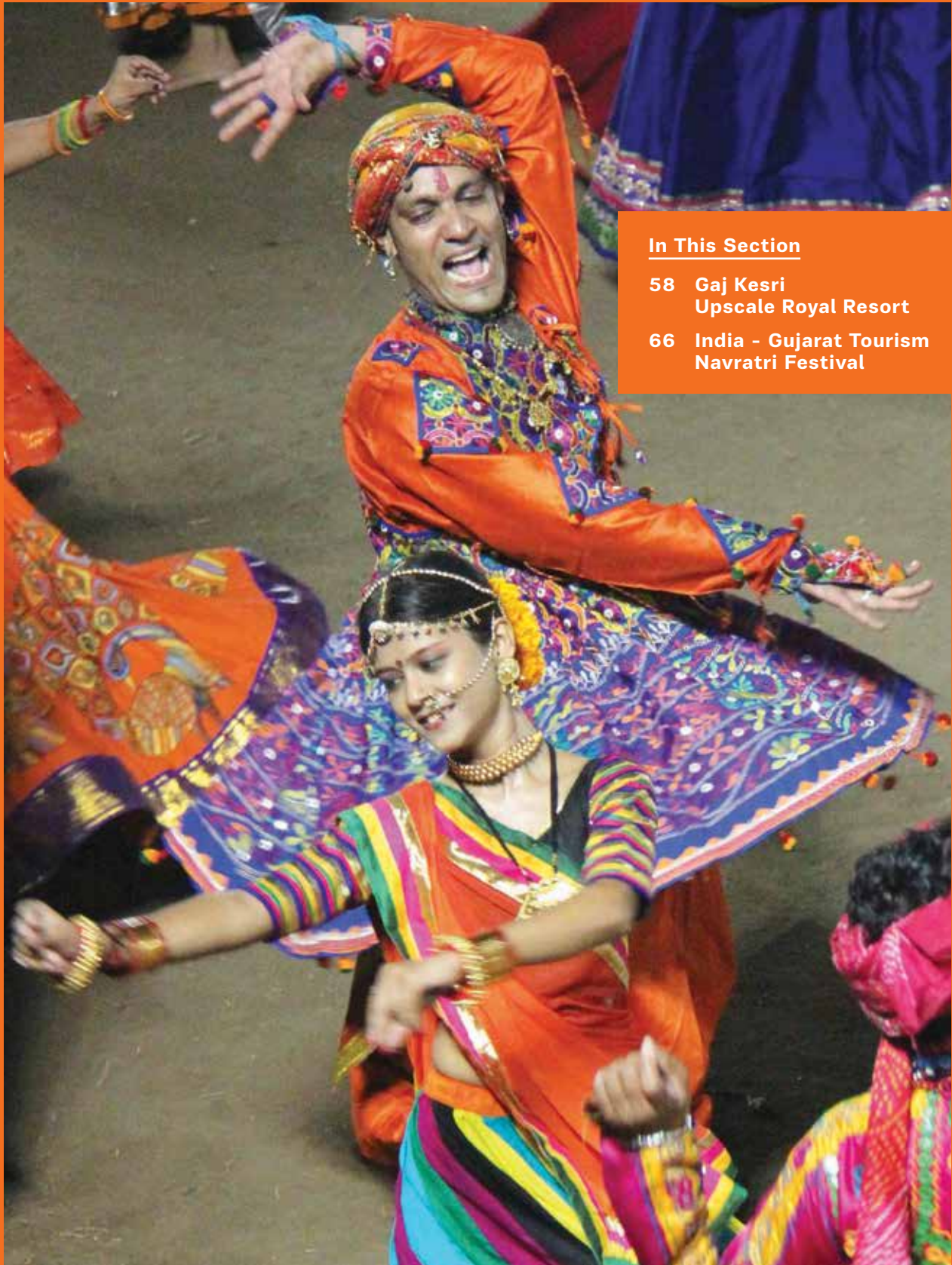
Atul Bhalla moves as Area Manager West and General Manager ITC Maratha [From Area Manager East and Cluster

General Manager ITC Sonar and ITC Royal Bengal]

Tejinder Singh moves as Area Manager East and Cluster General Manager ITC Sonar and ITC Royal Bengal [From General Manager, ITC Kohenur]

Prashant Chadha is the new General Manager at ITC Kohenur.

Talent Management remains the cornerstone of ITC Hotels collective success. The team brings together diversified skill sets and renewed vigour needed to enlarge and deepen ITC Hotels footprint through a robust, growth strategy.



In This Section

- 58 Gaj Kesri
Upscale Royal Resort
- 66 India - Gujarat Tourism
Navratri Festival



*Gaj
Kesri*



an upscale
royal themed
resort is the perfect
place to get away for a
holiday filled with luxury

G

aj Kesri is a small elegant boutique hotel in the outskirts of Bikaner with easy access to the city and its chief attractions.

The hotel houses a fine collection of art and local handicrafts and combines modernity and tradition to provide its guests a happy and comfortable stay.

The hotel offers the most wonderful venues and catering for weddings and other events.

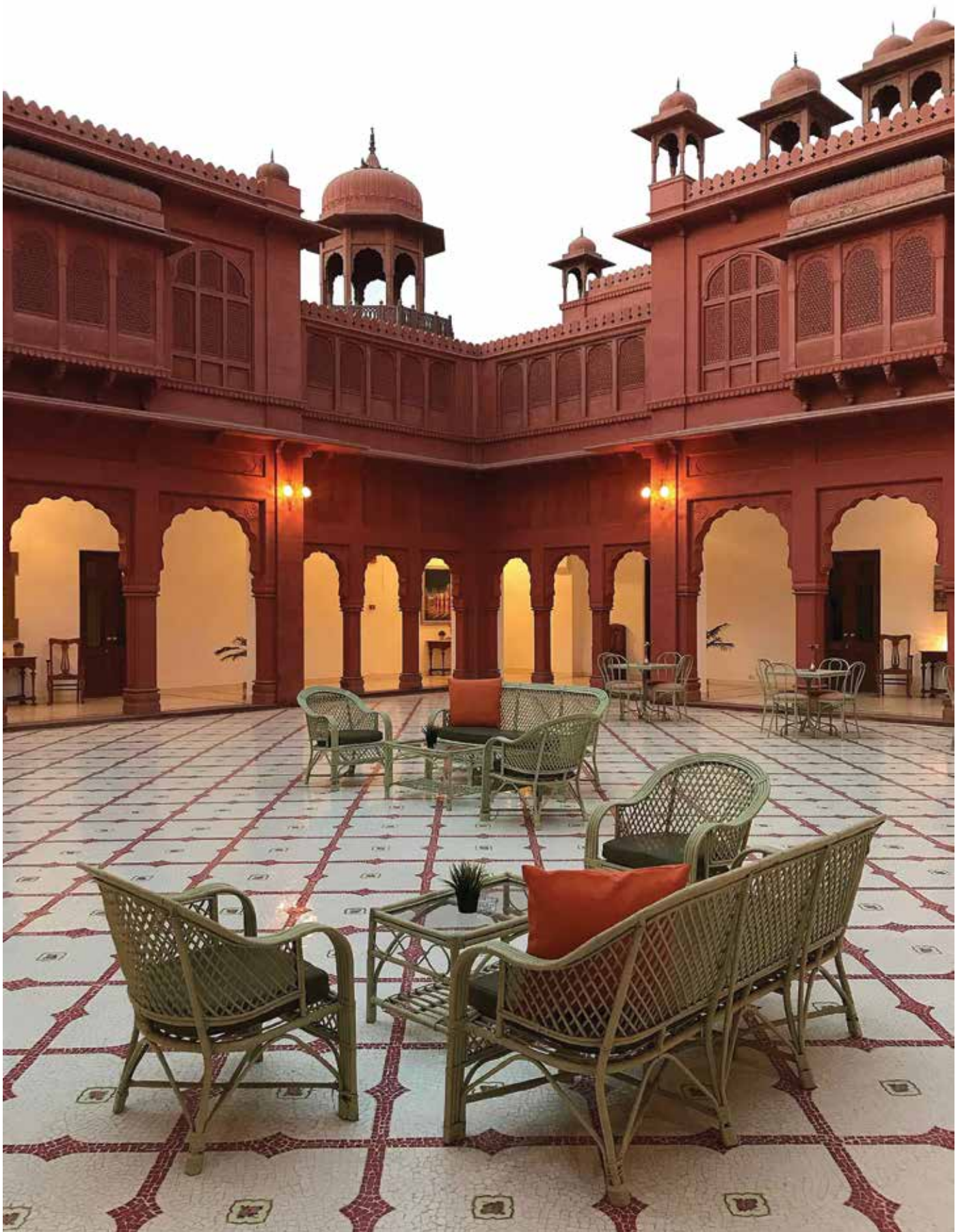
Flying into Bikaner's small airport is quite an experience. Well for one this is a small defense airport that has limited connectivity and your luggage is actually physically handed over to you.

The desert city of Bikaner is beautiful dotted with heritage buildings called havelis that are an ode to its rich royal legacy.



It is worth mentioning that Bikaner is home to one of the only two models of the biplane used by the British during World War I. They were presented by the British to Maharaja Ganga Singh, then ruler of the city. Another unique aspect about Bikaner are the sand dunes that are scattered throughout the district, especially from the north-east down to the southern area. Bikaner is situated in the northern region of Rajasthan. One of the earlier established cities, Bikaner still displays its ancient opulence through palaces and forts, built of red sandstone, that have withstood the passage of time. The city boasts of some of the world's best riding camels and is aptly nicknamed 'camel country'. It is also home to one of the world's largest





camel research and breeding farms; as well as being known for having its own unique temple dedicated to Karni Mata at Deshnok, called the Rats Temple.

The origins of Bikaner can be traced back to 1488 when a Rathore prince, Rao Bikaji, founded the kingdom. Legend has it that Bikaji, one of Rao Jodhaji's five sons, left his father's Durbar in annoyance after an insensitive remark from his father, the illustrious founder of Jodhpur. Bikaji travelled far and when he came upon the wilderness called Jangladesh, he decided to set up his own kingdom and transformed it into an impressive city.

Located at a distance of about 30 minutes from the airport, Gaj Kesri, a resort spread over 30 acres off the city limits is the brainchild of owner Sunil Rampuria who has designed the artistic property. It has 41 well-appointed

rooms. (*The rooms have a royal yet modern touch. Colourful cushions grace the white sheets of the cozy bed besides green hand painted wall. The room divided in the dressing area and living area and had all amenities from a work desk to small cupboards to big wardrobe with a stunning nature inspired view. Bedside lamps, a beautiful mirror and couches add the aesthetic touch along with hand painted walls, furniture and decorations. The open, spacy hotel follows 4 colour schemes and is aesthetically called as Art Hotels.*) The design of the resort resembles a palatial home and all the artefacts are made in house.

As you enter the gated property, colourful lawns with hollyhock plants lead you to the resort's main entrance. While you make your way past the lobby, you are greeted by a bright

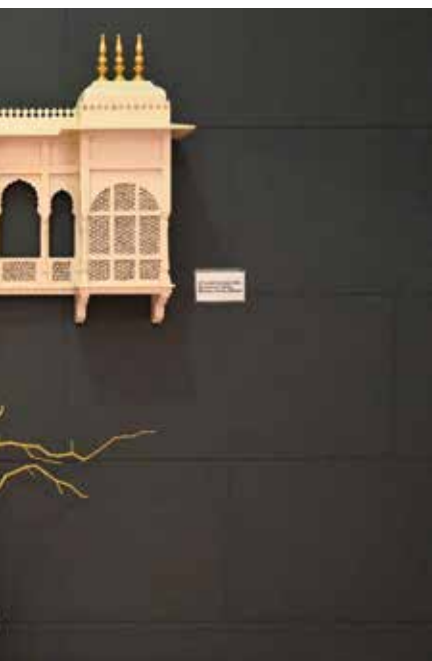
courtyard that is open to the sky. The resort is extensively furnished with local handicrafts.

With beautiful arches, carved pillars and artefacts that blend into a natural landscape the resort offers a getaway that is both tranquil and peaceful. Each of the rooms are also done up using several local influences in terms of the art and furnishings used and has hand painted walls. The ten garden suites are done up in a more contemporary manner using more of the European décor sensibilities. These rooms are larger and have plain walls and have fewer artefacts.

Gaj Kesri is home to a superb and unparalleled collection of contemporary **Usta Work** which is the glorious art form of Bikaner which is all created in their own workshop at Bhanwar Niwas, said Sunil. (Usta is







an art form that comprises different techniques including gold embossing work.) This makes the hotel a museum of sorts.

It is amazing to see that Art is seen everywhere in the property and specially the 3D models on the walls as well as the ceramic tiled flooring in the courtyard are eye catching. The chandeliers here have been brought them to life by the artists is the creation of Sunil who has been passionately involved for the last 35 years in keeping this lovely art form alive. Nothing will give you more pleasure than seeing the masterpieces created by the brothers Asghar, Iqbal, Ayyub and Ameen (all third-generation artists) adorning the spaces inside the main building.

There are three drawing rooms in the property The Big Drawing Room, the T Drawing Room that has a T shape and a lovely portrait of Tara Rampuria



(Sunil's mother) that dominates the room and the Little Drawing Room. All these rooms are furnished with beautiful teak wood furniture and local artefacts and serve as a great window to the culture of the city.

The restaurant at Gaj Kesri serves fantastic local vegetarian fare and gives you a great insight into Indian and Continental fare. When here do try of the local food. For special occasions the restaurant also sets up a table on the pool side for special occasions. The property has a large swimming pool on the premises.

Enjoy your evenings and dance to a local music band that plays music every day in the evening.

The resort has a spa to relax. You can go in and experience a royal massage to remove fatigue of the day tours.

Going Around

Junagarh Fort is one of the must-see sights in Bikaner. (It is an impregnable bastion that holds the distinction of having never been captured. It was constructed in 1588 AD by Raja Rai Singh, one of Emperor Akbar's most distinguished generals. The fort complex houses some magnificent palaces constructed in red sandstone and marble and visitors can feast their eyes on an attractive assortment of courtyards, balconies, kiosks and windows.)

While in Bikaner, you must visit the Junagarh Fort, Havelis in the walled city, The Lalgah Palace and Museum, Jain Temples, markets and bazaars, mithai and namkeen shops, Devi Kund Sagar royal cenotaphs, The Camel Research Centre, The State Archives, The Ganga Golden Jubilee Museum and the Karni Mata Temple at Deshnok among other important sites.

The city is famed for its snacks and it makes for a great food souvenir to take back home. An experience at Gaj Kesri is all about living the royal life and it is the friendly staff that makes for a memorable stay. Bikaner has an airport that has flight connectivity from Jaipur and Delhi currently that has made the destination more accessible.

N Here's why you should spend Navratri in Gujarat

The colourful attires, exciting buffets, melodious tunes and unmatched fervour; Navratri surely doesn't get bigger than in Gujarat. As the entire state dresses up in pop coloured, embroidered fineries and crowd the various garba and dandiya raas venues, the vibrant nine days of celebrations make it one of the longest dance festivals in the world. Experiencing Gujarat during the Navratri festival is one of the most colourful encounters.

Navratri, meaning 'nine nights', is one of the most popular and widely celebrated Hindu festivals in many parts of India. Gujarat, however, is the only state that erupts into a nine-night dance festival, perhaps the longest in the world. Each night, all over the state, villages and cities alike, people gather in open spaces to celebrate feminine divinity, referred to as Shakti.

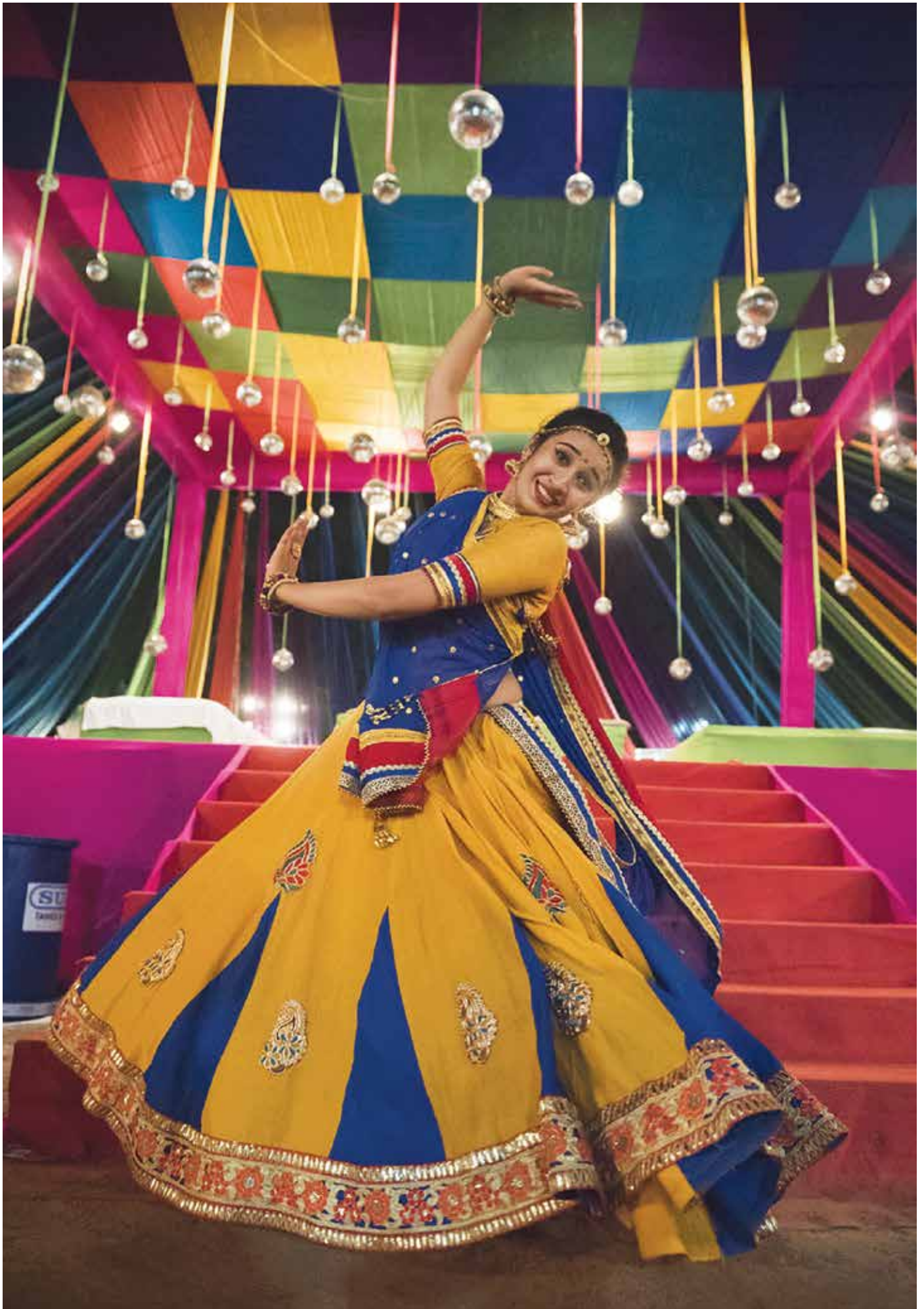
The dance form known as ras garba (also joined sometimes by dandiya, which uses small wooden sticks), comes from Lord Krishna's worship rather than Goddess worship, from the Gop culture of Saurashtra and Kutch. Stories of relationships between Krishna and the Gopis, and their emotions, also often make their way into the ras garba music.

Drenched in colours and steeped in tradition, there's no place like Gujarat to immerse yourself in the festive spirit of Navratri



Nevertheless, the focal point of every garba circle is the small Goddess shrine erected by each community to mark the beginning of the festival, on the first day of the Hindu month of Ashwin. The shrine includes a garbo, an earthenware pot, in which a betel nut, coconut, and silver coin are placed.

Each night the village or urban neighborhood gathers to perform a puja to one of the nine forms of Goddess. The nine nights are also broken up into sections of three; the first is for Durga, the goddess who destroyed an evil force represented by the demon Mahishasura, and who destroys human impurities; the





second is for Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity; the third is for Saraswati, the goddess of wisdom and art. It is a time to celebrate fertility and the monsoon harvest, represented by a mound of fresh soil in which grains are sown.

After the puja begins the music; it is unmistakable to those who are familiar with the style and irresistible to many. People begin to dance in a circle, whirling away till late into the night. It is not uncommon to find dancers with swords or lit flames and other spectacles.

The traditional dance steps are simple, though over the years people have been inventing more complex steps. Similarly, the music was traditionally acoustic, principally composed of drums and singing, but most people now use amplified sound systems or a blend in the form of a live band with modern instruments. Vadodara is a good place to find the full range of these styles, traditional to modern, acoustic to amplified, simple to complicated, each one represented in its extreme somewhere in the city.

The tenth day, Dashera, also known as Vijayadashami in South India, is celebrated by doing a puja to bless one's vehicle, and is also the day to buy new vehicles, if necessary. It 's also celebrated, probably after getting up far later than usual, by unabashedly eating lots of fafda, a salty fried crunchy snack and jalebi, a sweet fried sticky snack.

Religion and tradition aside, a garba circle can take on a surprising spiritual power. Women often give up certain eatables during these nights, which can be quite a purifying experience, if done right. It is a time for even the most traditional and housebound women to be out of the house and whirling, uninhibited, towards the divinity that hides within her own body. Many of the songs begin slow and gradually speed up, sending the dancers into a trance, especially when the music and dance is in its rawest form. When you come to a garba, wherever in Gujarat you may find yourself for Navratri, imagine this: A circle, or concentric circles, moving around the central representation of a universal creative force, the source of

life; everybody performing the same step; a mandala of energetic potential; the Mother Goddess unleashed.

Bright lights, drapes of varied hues, the soft sounds of folk music in the background are a common occurrence in Gujarat - also, a plausible scenario during the time of festivals. But as it goes from dawn to dusk, Gujarat too, takes on a new façade - one that quickly moves from sly deception to outward extravagance - leaving you in a tizzy. What begins as a faint sound of a group of anklets lurking in the background at the beginning of the night turns into blaring vibrations of folk music perfectly mixed with the tunes of today. While all of India celebrates Navratri with much enthusiasm, nothing beats the fervour of Gujarat during the nine-day festival. Night after night, people from this state gather around in different cities to celebrate the feminine divinity referred to as 'Shakti.' Along they bring a palette of unimaginable colours and a heart so full of festive excitement; it can bring anything to life.

The spirit of the festival overpowers Gujarat in such a way that it makes it impossible for someone to not blend in with the quintessence of the state to worship and celebrate the power of one-true-Goddess in her nine avatars.

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

The celebrations of Navratri in Gujarat go beyond the excitement of Ras Garba. The festival comes from a place of great devotion for the Almighty, which is evident from the enthralling myths and legends associated with the festival.

There are many enthralling legends and myths attached to the history of Navratri:

One version says that - The demon Mahishasur, after being given a boon by the fire god Agni that he wouldn't be killed by weapons bearing masculine names, caused grave destruction and terror. The gods sought the help of Lord Shiva, who advised the invocation of the goddess Shakti. With the gods' prayers, a divine luster sprang from the heart of Lord Shiva and the bodies of all the gods and formed the goddess Adhya Shakti. The gods gave her ornaments, arms and a lion as a vehicle. She fought with the evil Mahishasur for nine long days and nights, and at last, resulted in the beheading of Mahisa on the tenth. The nine nights came to be known as Navratri, while the tenth day was called Vijaya Dashami, the tenth day that brought the triumph of good over the evil.

Second story narrates - Sati (also known as Uma) married Lord Shiva against the wishes of her father, King Daksha Prajapati. In revenge, Daksha organized a huge yagna and invited all the gods and deities except his new son-in-law. Sati decided to attend the yagna despite Lord Shiva's attempt to persuade her not to. The King ignored his daughter's presence and publically abused Lord Shiva. Unable to bear her father's insults, Sati committed suicide by jumping into the yagna fire. However, she was reborn and again won Lord Shiva as her groom and peace was restored. It is believed that since then Uma comes every year

with her four children Ganesh, Kartik, Saraswati and Laxmi and two of her best friends or 'sakhis' called Jaya and Bijaya, to visit her parent's home during Navratri.

These legends and story are part of the history that surrounds the festival of Navratri and are going to be around as long as the festival continues.

Also, signifying a time of soil fertility and monsoon harvest, a mound of fresh soil with grains sown is kept in every house that worships the Goddess and it is well-watered till the very last day of the festival.

A festival that initially began as a token to honour the greatness of the Adhya Shakti has today metamorphosed into an event of outrageous proportions with thousands of people coming together to sing, dance, and make merry. The Goddess is worshipped in different forms in the nine-day long festival, which is also one of the world's longest and most celebrated dance festivals.

Garba happens at night in villages and neighborhoods all around Gujarat, so just step outside and follow the booming garba music. Vadodara is considered the cultural capital of Gujarat, and the most sought after location for celebrating Navratri. Try to visit at least one village garba too, for a range of experience.

Religious pilgrimage during this festival focuses mainly in the Shakti Peethas: Ambaji, Pavagadh and Bahuchraji near Mehsana. There are also major celebrations in temples such as Ashapura Mata-no-Madh in Kutch, Khodiyar Mandir near Bhavnagar, and Chamunda Mata Mandir at Chotila on the Ahmedabad-Rajkot National Highway.

Begin your journey at the cultural capital of Gujarat, Vadodara. The United Way of Garba, one of the most-well known Ras Garba events in the country, takes place here and witnesses as many as 30,000 people (at least) every night for nine nights. The cheeriness of the crowd at this event is contagious and so wide-spread, that even the most popular celebrities cannot keep away from it. Began for a good cause

to raise charity, the event continues to donate the money to 140 charitable organizations around the state. From good food to dance competitions, the event is a one-stop destination for dance, dine and everything fine.

Ahmedabad is another destination that attracts a huge crowd during Navratris alongside a number of famous singers and popular faces from films and television, who dance to the tunes of folk music perfectly synced with modern-day tunes. An atmosphere of merriment quickly takes over the city during this time, especially at the Pols area. A must-attend event in Ahmedabad during this time is the Vibrant Gujarat Navaratri festival that is organized at the GMDC Ground every year.

Gujarat's best-kept secret (for visitors to the state), Somnath's Navratri event - the Navratri Mahotsav at Somnath Mahadev Temple in Somnath is a delightful sight and should be a part of your itinerary. As long queues finish up after prayers, the place takes a 360-degree turn with bright lights, stalls serving authentic Gujarati food, and people dressed in beautiful Ghagra Cholis and Dhotis swaying to the loud music.

Other popular destinations that should be a part of your sojourn are Rajkot and Surat. Rajkot's Leo-Pioneer Group Navratri Event and the event at Race Course Club are much-loved by not just locals and tourists, even celebrities. A riot of colours, you will find different troupes here performing folk dances and participating in events to identify exceptional dancing and singing talent.

Gujarat welcomes you with open arms and takes you in its embrace, filling your heart with joy, and eyes with wonderment at the sights you witness during this time. Navratri is celebrated for nine nights, beginning on the first day of the bright fortnight of the Hindu month Ashwin, roughly corresponding to dates in the Gregorian calendar in September/October. This also usually coincides with the end of the rainy season. Dasara/Vijayadashami, is the tenth day of Ashwin.

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