

LUXURY AND LIFESTYLE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

# travel

## SPAN

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## Centara

Reaffirms Commitment  
to Sustainability

## Qatar's

Art, culture and  
Heritage:  
A must experience

## Singapore Airlines

Named World's Best  
Airline at the 2023 World  
Airline Awards

## The Red Sea Project:

Redefining Sustainable  
Luxury Tourism

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13

## Aviation

- 13** 'Cruising onboard Emirates' Emirates announces a new brand ambassador, Penelope Cruz
- 24** Singapore Airlines Named World's Best Airline at the 2023 World Airline Awards
- 39** Malaysia Airlines successfully implements a full suite of Sabre Network Planning and Optimization technology.
- 45** Qatar Airways Wins World's Best Business Class and Three More Top Awards at the Skytrax 2023 World Airline Awards.

- 48** Boeing and Airbus Forecast Robust Demand for New Aircraft till 2042
- 52** Air India firms up order for 250 Airbus aircraft, and select new services.
- 55** India's IndiGo places record order for 500 A320 Family aircraft
- 56** Air Mauritius confirms the order for three A350 aircraft
- 57** Air Canada Named World's Most Family Friendly Airline and Top Canadian Carrier at the 2023 Skytrax World Airline Awards

- 58** Vistara Awarded 'Best Airline in India and South Asia' for Third Consecutive Year; Named 16th Best Airline Globally at the 2023 World Airline Awards by Skytrax

## Interview

- 16** The Red Sea Project: Redefining Sustainable Luxury Tourism

## International

- 20** Thailand is on the cusp of a new era of tourism prosperity in 2025
- 22** Tourism Malaysia Targets Gen Z Travellers and Wedding Segments from India

# Contents



**41** 'White Night' Campaign by Tel Aviv Global & Tourism with the Ministry of Tourism. Celebrates the 20th Anniversary of Tel Aviv's 'White City' Designation by UNESCO

#### **Cruise**

**28** COSTA Cruises announces New India cruises of 'Costa Serena'

#### **Travel Trade**

**30** Korea Tourism Organization launches K-incentive scheme for Indian travel agents

**36** Pokhara, Nepal welcomes over 200 delegates to the PATA Annual Summit and Adventure Mart 2023

#### **Feature**

**32** Qatar's Art, culture and Heritage: A must experience

#### **Events**

**38** New Zealand's business events capability on show at MEETINGS 2023

**50** WTTC G20 Public-Private Dialogue shines a light on Travel & Tourism opportunities

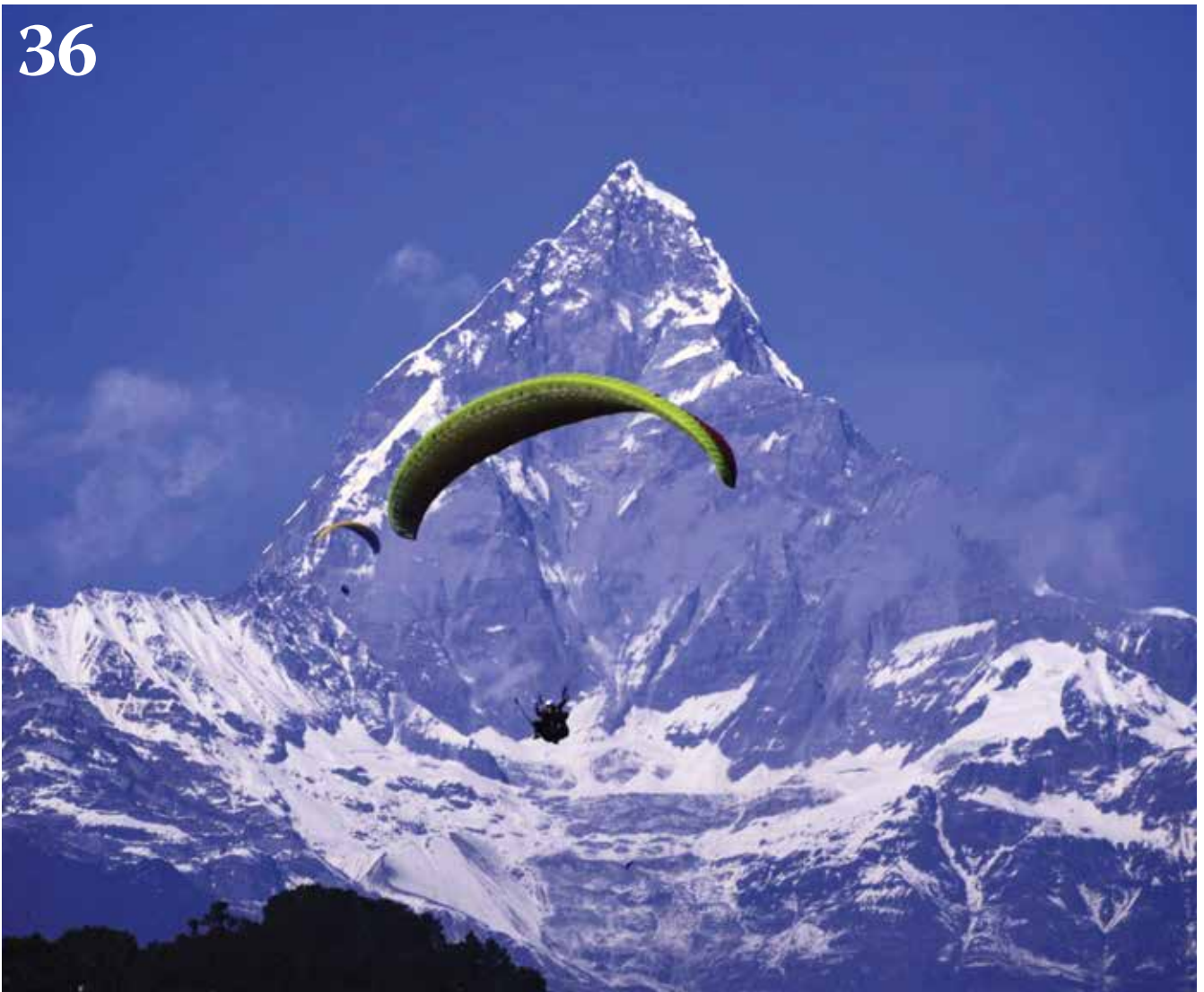
#### **Hospitality**

**43** Delhi NCR gets its first Hilton-branded hotel

**51** Centara Reaffirms Commitment to Sustainability

**62** Travel and tourism industry deal activity plummets by 41% YoY in January-May 2023.

36



# Editor's Letter

## Saudi Arabia and Egypt join the UAE in the top 10 destinations list for travellers in 2023

New insights from the Mastercard Economics Institute reveal that consumers, including those from the Middle East and Africa (MENA), are taking advantage of a more traditional travel ecosystem in 2023, prioritizing leisure travel and pioneering new corridors around the world. The Travel Industry Trends 2023 report delivers key insights about the global state of travel, punctuated by shifting economic landscapes, persistent consumer demands, and a reopening of mainland China.

### Key findings include:

- **Leisure and business travel are growing at the same pace.** Global leisure and business travel are now growing at the same rate, a 42% year-over-year-to-date change from 2022 to 2023. In the second half of 2022 into early 2023, corporate flight bookings caught up to leisure in regions with a strong return to office culture. From January to March 2023, leisure travel bookings in the UAE were up 49.5% compared to the same period in 2022.

- **Travelers establish new corridors.** In 2023, a new dynamic emerged, with travelers exploring destinations closer to home. Egypt and Saudi Arabia made the top 10 rankings this year, in seventh and eighth place, respectively. The U.K., U.S., UAE, and France remain the most popular international destinations for travelers leaving the Middle East.

- **Tourists continue to prioritize experiences.** Preference for experiences over things persists, and travelers worldwide are demonstrating new demand for the unique. Potentially influenced by social media and entertainment, travelers are landing in lesser-known destinations in search of cultural immersion. Global spending on experiences is up 65% while spending on things is up 12% compared to 2019.

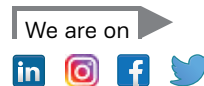
In the MENA region, experience-oriented spending is surging in certain countries, such as Morocco, where it was up a whopping 117.5% year-over-year by March 2023.

- **Travel and entertainment recovery for businesses is on the rise.** In the MENA region, travel and entertainment (T&E) spending by small businesses was up 49% when comparing March 2023 to March 2022. The upward trajectory continues – from January to March 2023, T&E spending by small businesses is up 56% compared to the same period in 2022. When comparing March 2023 to March 2019, spending is up 78% in MENA. Large businesses observed growth as well, but at smaller rates of 14%, 40%, and 37% respectively for the corresponding periods.

“One of the central themes of the Travel Industry Trends 2023 report is an emphasis on experiences over things – a strong preference among travelers that followed the easing of mobility restrictions. Also shaping the industry this year are the different ways people travel. Saudi Arabia and Egypt make it among the top 10 favorite destinations of travelers. This rise in popularity testifies to the successful post-pandemic recovery of key markets across the Middle East and North Africa,” said **David Mann, Chief Economist, Asia Pacific and EEMEA, Mastercard.**



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# Turkish Airlines

## to offer free and limitless messaging above clouds

**T**urkish Airlines will be offering free and limitless messaging services to all passengers on international flights where internet access is available, with the motto **“Enjoy Limitless Messaging”** through applications such as WhatsApp, Messenger or iMessage, along with others.

On the new service, **Turkish**

**Airlines CEO Bilal Ekşi** stated: *“We are adding another innovative development to the countless improvements we made for Türkiye’s aviation sector as the national flag carrier. By combining our innovative approach with customer satisfaction, we are ensuring our passengers will be able to freely message their loved ones above the*

*clouds, staying in contact with them without any limits.”*

With the limitless messaging service being complimentary to all Miles&Smiles member passengers, non-members will also be able to benefit from this service upon filling out the Miles&Smiles membership form available before or during the flight. Moreover; Miles&Smiles Classic Plus, Elite and Elite Plus members will be benefitting from enhanced free internet packages.

Aiming to provide its passengers with privileges beyond their expectations at every stage of their journey, Turkish Airlines will first launch this service on its aircraft with internet access by Turk Telekom, and then gradually on all aircraft with internet connection.

Turkish Airlines recently opened an airport lounge at New York JFK’s Terminal 1, which is now also available to Priority Pass members.



## Lufthansa: New long-haul destinations in the winter

- *Airbus A380 from Munich to Bangkok and Los Angeles, with Airbus A350 to Bangalore*
- *From Frankfurt to Hyderabad*

**L**ufthansa is launching new Airbus A380 destinations from Munich in the coming winter. From October 5 on, the airline will be flying an A380 daily to the Californian metropolis of Los Angeles. Shortly before the start of the winter flight schedule on October

28, there will be a special premiere: For the first time, a Lufthansa Airbus A380 will take off from Munich to the Thai capital Bangkok, increasing the seat capacity by almost 75 per cent compared to the A350. Lufthansa offers a greater premium product on this connection than ever before: the A380 offers 8 seats in First Class, 78 seats in Business Class and 52 seats in Premium Economy.

### New connections to India

Lufthansa is expanding its service to India. The new destination from Munich

is Bangalore, which, in addition to Delhi and Bombay, will be served by an Airbus A350. LH764 departs Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 12:10 p.m. to the southern Indian metropolis. Lufthansa guests will be able to enjoy one of the Lufthansa Group's most modern and economical long-haul aircraft, the Airbus A350-900. After a longer break, Lufthansa will also include Hyderabad in its flight schedule from Frankfurt. This will once again provide a direct connection from Germany to India's pharmaceutical and high-tech industries. Lufthansa will announce further details in midMay.

Lufthansa will offer a total of five destinations to the Indian subcontinent from its two hubs in Frankfurt and Munich in the coming winter.

# Airline associations join together to call for global alignment of slot regulations

*Fragmentation of slot regulation risks disruption to airline schedules and imperils the advances in global connectivity, efficiency, competition and choice which have characterized the aviation industry in recent decades.*



**A**irline associations around the world called for governments to ensure the global alignment of airport slot regulations to safeguard the consistent, fair, and transparent allocation of slots under the *Worldwide Airport Slot Guidelines* (WASG).

In a joint statement (pdf), the **African Airlines Association** (AFRAA), **Airlines for America** (A4A), **Airlines International Representation in Europe** (AIRE), **Arab Air Carriers Organization** (AACO), **Association of Asia-Pacific Airlines** (AAPA), **European Express Association**, **European Regions Airline Association** (ERAA), **International Air Transport Association** (IATA) and **Latin American and Caribbean Air Transport Association** (ALTA) set out the benefits of the WASG, which has ensured decades of stability and consistency in the application of slot management. Under the WASG, consumers have benefitted from consistent growth in reliable schedules and expansion to new markets, while airlines and airports have seen an increase in the utilisation of scarce airport capacity.

Fragmentation of slot regulation risks disruption to airline schedules and imperils the advances in global connectivity, efficiency, competition and choice which have characterized

the aviation industry in recent decades. With the number of slot-regulated airports worldwide growing steadily, it is vital that governments recognize the importance of the harmonization of slot regulations in line with the WASG.

The WASG has undergone a significant revision in recent years, with improvements to the new entrant definition to increase competition and access opportunities at congested airports. Slot performance monitoring has also been better defined to ensure optimal use of allocated slots. It is therefore important that national or regional slot regulations are aligned dynamically with the WASG so that the aviation sector and travelers can immediately benefit from these and other enhancements to the system.

The Associations also urged governments thinking of incorporating the WASG or amending existing slot regulations to work with the Worldwide Airport Slot Board, a body comprising slot experts from airlines, airports, and slot coordinators, who oversee expert revisions to the WASG. Consulting with this group of experts can ensure that governments, their economies and citizens, will continue to reap the benefits of an increasingly more interconnected, sustainable and efficient air transport network.

*"The air transport industry thrives on consistent global standards. The*

*Worldwide Airport Slot Guidelines are the unsung hero of the air transport system. Because of the WASG, travellers, businesses and economies the world over have benefited from constant growth in air connectivity, strong competition, and route diversity while ensuring that utilization of scarce airport capacity also increased. Governments should align their slot rules with this global standard to benefit from better air connectivity, efficiency, and consumer choice,"* said **Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General**.

The statement was issued at the 152nd Slot Conference in Dublin, Ireland. The Slot Conference attracts over 1,000 delegates, with representatives of more than 200 slot-coordinated airports and 215 individual airlines.

This twice-yearly conference has been taking place since 1948 and is a significant moment in the aviation planning diary, allowing the opportunity to meet for quickfire optimization of planned schedules, while looking at new opportunities for route and network growth. The goal of the conference is for airlines to obtain the slots that will give them the best possible schedule to offer their customers at coordinated airports. The next conference will take place in Dubai, UAE, on 14-17 November 2023.



# Jettwings Airways approved to boost regional connectivity in Northeast India



*Once Jettwings Airways secures approval for flight operations, it will become the first airline from the Northeast region to operate nationwide, showcasing the region's growing prominence in the aviation sector.*

**J**ettwings Airways, a new player in the aviation industry, has received the coveted No Objection Certificate (NOC) to operate Scheduled Commuter Air Transport Services in India as part of the government's regional connectivity scheme. The airline, headquartered in Guwahati, aims to enhance regional connectivity in the Northeast and eastern regions, offering passengers a convenient travel option under the UDAN Scheme.

With the necessary regulatory approvals in progress and an Air Operator Certificate (AOC) awaited from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Jettwings Airways plans to introduce a modern fleet consisting of turbofan and turbo-propelled aircraft. The airline is committed to providing premium economy services for regional travel, catering to the demand for reliable and high-quality air travel within the region.

Once Jettwings Airways secures approval for flight operations, it will become the first airline from

the Northeast region to operate nationwide, showcasing the region's growing prominence in the aviation sector. **Sanjay Aditya Singh**, Co-Founder and CEO of Jettwings Airways, expressed confidence in their commitment to becoming a sustainable and dependable airline deeply rooted in Northeast India, connecting vital destinations within the region.

Recognizing the need for efficient regional connectivity, Jettwings Airways has assembled a team of experienced aviation professionals to ensure reliable and quick service for passengers. Additionally, the airline plans to introduce a loyalty program to reward frequent flyers and further enhance customer satisfaction.

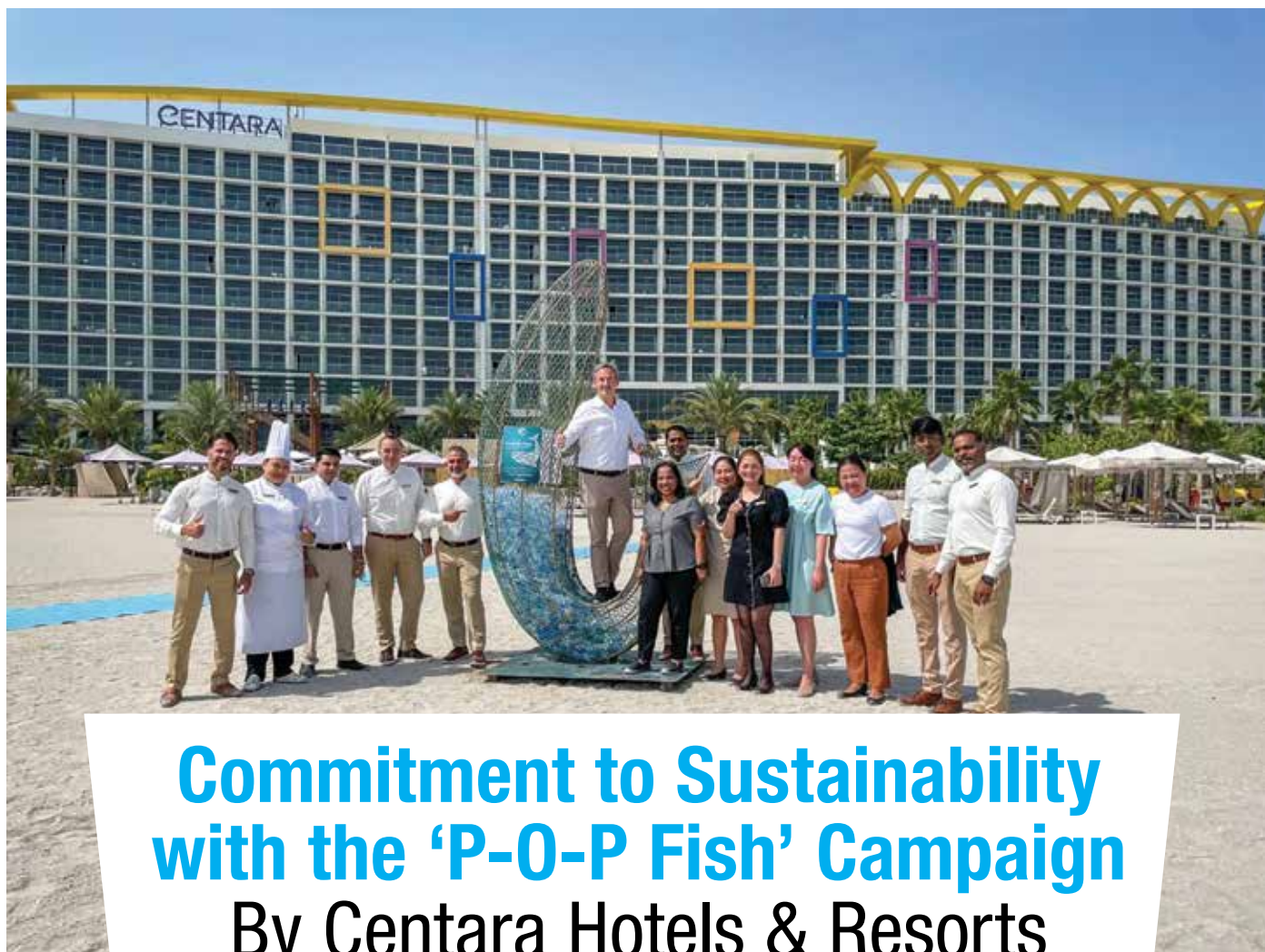
**Sanjive Narain**, Chairman of Jettwings Airways, applauded the government's efforts to improve regional connectivity, noting the positive impact it has had on trade, economic growth, and tourism. He emphasized the unique opportunity provided by the UDAN Scheme to transform connectivity and create new

economic avenues in the Northeast region.

Jettwings Airways' progress comes on the heels of Fly91, another regional carrier, which aims to enhance air connectivity from tier 2 and tier 3 towns across India. Fly91 recently obtained the No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Ministry of Civil Aviation and is working towards securing an Air Operator's Permit (AOP) from the DGCA.

While the Indian aviation market is highly competitive and has witnessed the downfall of certain airlines, Jettwings Airways remains optimistic about carving out a niche for itself by offering a unique and innovative travel experience. The airline is in the final stages of readiness and formalities with the DGCA, eagerly awaiting the AOC to commence scheduled commuter airline operations.

As India strives to become a global aviation leader by the end of the decade, Jettwings Airways aims to play a significant role in expanding regional connectivity and contributing to the country's thriving aviation sector.



## Commitment to Sustainability with the 'P-O-P Fish' Campaign By Centara Hotels & Resorts

**C**entara Hotels & Resorts, Thailand's leading hotel operator, is marking this year's World Environment Day (5th June) and Ocean Day (8th June) events with the revival of its highly successful 2019 'Plastics Only, Please' (P-O-P) campaign to raise awareness and take action against plastic waste. As part of its ongoing commitment to sustainability, all Centara's properties will feature POP sculptures - wire sea life creations - that serve as bins for plastic waste found on or around the beach from 5th - 30th June 2023.

Throughout this initiative, guests and staff are encouraged to collect plastic refuse and "feed" it to the hungry P-O-P creatures. At the end of each week, Centara's waste management teams will remove the contents, weigh the trash, and prepare

it for sorting and delivery to local recycling facilities. In 2019, these 'plastic-eating' sculptures collected over 400 kilograms of plastic waste, serving to lessen the burden of plastic in local landfills and ensuring reusable plastic materials were recycled and reused properly rather than thrown away.

"At Centara, we are deeply committed to sustainability and believe in doing our part to not only raise awareness about environmental issues, but to put those ideas into action. After the success of our 'Plastics Only, Please' campaign in 2019, we are looking forward to achieving even greater results this year with a new range of P-O-P sculptures to be featured at our incredible beachfront properties. We encourage guests, staff and anyone who happens upon plastic

waste to help support our initiative and #BeatPlasticPollution together," said David Good, EVP - Hotel Operations for Centara Hotels & Resorts.

Both the World Environment Day: Solutions to Plastic Pollution #BeatPlasticPollution and World Ocean Day campaigns are part of the growing worldwide plastic reduction movement that has gained significant traction in recent years. By 2025, Centara aims to have 100% of its properties certified as sustainable by accredited certification bodies as a key element of the organisation's long-term sustainability objectives and eliminate single-use plastic items, including drinking straws, laundry bags, take-away food containers, fitness centre and poolside plastic bottles, and plastic guest room amenities, to minimise environmental impact across the entire guest journey.



## CSR and Sustainability

# Centara Reaffirms Commitment to Sustainability



**1** 0-year roadmap to include 20% reduction in energy and water consumption, GHG emissions, and waste

Centara Hotels & Resorts, Thailand's leading hotel operator, announces a renewed commitment to environmental sustainability with new long-term goals

to meet climate-related targets.

The 10-year corporate level roadmap includes measurable goals for four key initiatives, including a drastic 20% reduction in energy and water usage, greenhouse gas emissions, and the amount of waste sent to landfills.

To achieve these goals, the group is implementing solar power projects, and installing sub-metering systems for water and electrical management. Energy conservation measures and heating system upgrades are being implemented wherever possible and embedded

into daily operations and ensuring that the waste management policy is being strictly followed by the individual property, especially keeping food waste reduction in focus.

By 2025, Centara aims to have 100% of its properties certified to an international sustainability standard, as well as eliminate single-use plastic items in the entire guest journey, further demonstrating the organisation's commitment to long-term sustainability.

"By adopting sustainable, green practices, we are actively choosing to be more aware of our environmental impact. This not only protects the natural surroundings that enhance the guest experience in so many of the locations where we operate, it also creates long-term benefits for the company, our customers and our employees. Setting long-term sustainability goals allows us to incorporate green practices into our identity and ensures that all our stakeholders are aligned with Centara's values and vision for a more mindful, ecologically conscious future." said

**Thirayuth Chirathivat, CEO of Centara Hotels & Resorts.**

He further added that Centara's approach to sustainability is intrinsically aligned with its mission: "To provide locally relevant, Thai-inspired experiences in each of our global destinations, delighting guests through a blend of innovation, authentic family values and the unique passion of Centara's people, whilst maintaining a commitment to sustainability."

# Emirates to offer Premium Economy on routes to India from October



- Premium Economy to be introduced on Emirates' service to Mumbai and Bengaluru from 29 October
- Newly-retrofitted A380 aircraft also features refreshed interiors across all cabins and a renowned signature experience

Emirates announced today that its highly sought-after Premium Economy offering will be available to customers flying to and from Mumbai and Bengaluru, starting 29 October. Emirates will operate its newly retrofitted flagship A380 aircraft to these two popular Indian points, featuring the new Premium Economy seats, as well as refreshed interiors that provide an elevated experience in all other cabin classes.

Travellers flying on the Dubai-Mumbai route can book Emirates' Premium Economy seats on EK 500/501, while customers flying between Dubai and Bengaluru can book their flights on EK568/569 to enjoy the industry's latest premium economy product with luxurious seats, more legroom, and an elevated dining experience. Seats can be booked immediately via [emirates.com](https://www.emirates.com), Emirates sales offices and travel agencies, for

travel from 29 October.

Emirates' daily flights offering the Premium Economy experience to/ from Bengaluru and Mumbai will operate as follows:

As the roll out of the retrofitted and enhanced Emirates A380s featuring a four-class configuration picks up pace, Premium Economy will be deployed on flights to more global destinations.

Premium Economy already features on flights to nine destinations globally, including US points New York JFK, San Francisco and Houston, in addition to London Heathrow, Sydney, Auckland, Christchurch, Melbourne and Singapore. Premium Economy cabins will also make their debut to Los Angeles in July, bringing the number of routes offering the distinctive product to 12 by the end of 2023.

In addition to the introduction of Premium Economy on the retrofitted aircraft, customers across all cabins

can enjoy the refreshed interiors which sport Emirates' signature ghaf tree motif. The refurbishments and aesthetic enhancements that can be enjoyed by passengers on their journeys on the retrofitted A380 aircraft include a blend of beautiful designs and new colour palettes, evident throughout the aircraft, in the carpeting, wall panels, and wood finishings.

The Emirates A380 is loved by customers for its spacious and comfortable cabins, quietness, and unique on-board features such as the Onboard Lounge and First Class Shower Spa. Customers can also enjoy award-winning inflight entertainment on ice with more than 5,000 channels of on-demand entertainment via the industry's largest screens across all cabins.

Emirates launched its services to India in October 1985, from Dubai to Delhi and Mumbai which formed the base of its initial route network. Since then, Emirates has grown its India operations to serve a total of nine destinations across the country including Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kochi, Kolkata, Mumbai, and Thiruvananthapuram.

Dates	Flight	Departure	Arrival	Aircraft type
From 29 October	EK500 (DXB/BOM)	21:50	02:15 (next day)	A380
	EK568 (DXB/BLR)	21:25	02:30 (next day)	
From 30 October	EK501 (BOM/DXB)	04:15	06:05	
	EK569 (BLR/DXB)	04:30	07:10	

\*All times are local.



# 'Cruising onboard Emirates'

## Emirates announces a new brand ambassador, Penelope Cruz



Launching mid-summer 2023, Emirates can reveal that its latest ad campaign and brand collaboration will feature Penelope Cruz.

The Academy Award winning actor and philanthropist is already a fan of the Emirates brand and a frequent flyer who has visited Dubai multiple times. In exclusive behind-the-scenes footage shot onboard a signature Emirates A380 aircraft, Cruz revealed her passion for Emirates and the positive association she has with the brand stating that she was thrilled to partner with Emirates after years of traveling with the airline, on some of the most special trips of her life.

The new TV spots will start to air globally from June 2023, in both English and Penelope's native tongue of Spanish. With a thought provoking

theme of 'travel is not just about the end destination; it's also about how you get there', the short ads show Cruz sampling all the exclusive luxuries that Emirates First and Business Class customers experience as they Fly Better, from a crafted beverage in the A380 Onboard Lounge, to an indulgent shower above the clouds, cheering for a football game shown on live TV, to relishing generous helpings of luxury caviar. In other spots, she enjoys the spacious seats in Emirates' new Premium Economy Class.

She interacts with Emirates Cabin Crew in multiple languages and enjoys the wide variety of movies and content on Emirates' award-winning ice inflight entertainment system, viewed on a huge 32-inch full HD LCD screen – the largest in the aviation industry. Cruz is also filmed using the

personal temperature controls in her private First Class Suite, using bespoke binoculars to enjoy the sky-high views, and wearing the Emirates hydra-active moisturising pyjamas to settle in for a siesta in her lie-flat bed, surrounded by an array of luxury amenities – ensuring her journey is spectacular from the beginning.

Each of the new TV spots were directed and brought to life by Robert Stromberg, a double Oscar-winning Hollywood director, with 21 award wins and 30 award nominations for movies, TV series and commercials throughout his illustrious career. Stromberg worked closely with the Emirates brand team to ensure the TV spots conveyed the thoughtful luxury of the Fly Better experience, while retaining a note of Cruz' cheeky sense of humour. Esteemed production house Ridley Scott Associates also supported the series of TV spots, and Framestore – the multi award-winning creative studio for special effects.

Richard Billington, Emirates' Senior Vice President of Brand and Advertising, commented; 'Emirates is all about Flying Better, where the journey to your destination matters as much as the place itself. We take care of every detail in the Emirates experience and wanted a brand ambassador who reflects the Emirates brand - it needed to be someone classy, stylish, and having modern global appeal. Penelope was the perfect fit.'

Following in the footsteps of other globally successful ads such as Burj Girl, Jennifer Aniston onboard Emirates, and Gerry the Goose, Penelope Cruz will partner in the ad series to be aired globally on TV news channels, featured on Emirates' own digital channels, with more joint activities to be announced over the coming year.

# Qantas unveils A350 Wellbeing Zone and economy seating



**Q**antas has unveiled designs for the economy and premium economy cabins which will feature on the carrier's A350 nonstop flights from Australia to New York and London from late 2025.

There will be a total of 40 premium economy seats (pictured above) configured in a 2-4-2 layout, with a 40-inch seat pitch, three amenity and personal storage pockets, a calf rest and an eight-inch winged privacy headrest.

Meanwhile, the economy will be configured 3-3-3 with a total of 140

seats, offering a 33-inch pitch, a six-way adjustable headrest, a seat back table and a shelf for personal devices.

Seats in both cabins will feature 13.3-inch IFE screens with Bluetooth connectivity, and two USB-C charging ports.

A much-touted Wellbeing Zone will be positioned between the economy and premium economy cabins, and will offer integrated "stretch handles", a guided on-screen exercise programme, a hydration station and "a range of refreshments".

The news follows the unveiling of

the carrier's prototype A350 first and business-class cabins earlier this year.

Qantas has ordered 12 A350-1000s as part of Project Sunrise, with the aircraft set to be configured with a total of 238 seats, compared to the 300-plus seats offered by existing A350 carriers.

The aircraft will be able to fly nonstop for up to 22 hours, enabling the carrier to reduce flight times from Australia to destinations in Europe and the US by more than three hours (compared to a one-stop journey).

Commenting on the news **Qantas**



**Group CEO Alan Joyce** said:

*"We have spent just as much time on the second half of the aircraft as we did the front, in fact, we started studies on the Wellbeing Zone before any other area of the A350. "The new Project Sunrise flights give us the opportunity to re-think long-haul travel in its entirety, from aircraft cabin design to what ingredients we include on the inflight menu. "Reducing the number of seats onboard our A350 to 238 compared to the 300-plus seat layout of other carriers means we maximise aircraft performance across long distances and give our passengers more space and comfort. "Fewer seats translate to more space for each customer and a dedicated Wellbeing Zone for travellers to stretch, help themselves to a snack and spend time out of their seat. We are the only airline in the world that will have a bespoke designed onboard stretch and movement space."*

Qantas has also published new research findings in collaboration with the University of Sydney's Charles Perkins Centre, which it says shows that it is possible to reduce the impacts of jetlag "by reshaping the inflight travel experience".

The study was conducted on the carrier's Project Sunrise research flights which were carried out in 2019, which included fitting 23 volunteer customers with wearable device technology during the 20-hour flights "as they followed a specially designed menu, lighting, sleep and movement sequences".

Qantas said that initial findings showed that movement and exercise, alongside different lighting and sleep schedules, mealtimes, and specific ingredients like chilli and chocolate during long-haul flights, resulted in less severe jet lag, better sleep quality, and better cognitive performance in the two days after the flight.

Meal times were adjusted "to align the body clock", and specific menu items were used including fish and chicken paired with fast-acting carbohydrates, in an attempt "to promote the brain's production of the amino acid tryptophan to help passengers drift off more easily".



**Peter Cistulli, Professor of Sleep Medicine at the University of Sydney** said that early results were "promising", adding that "it's given us great momentum to look to the next stage of customer research to support Project Sunrise product and service design".

*"We have a multi-disciplinary team of more than ten researchers from medicine, science and engineering backgrounds working together on this*

*project," said Cistulli. "This includes sleep researchers, circadian experts, nutrition and movement experts. No airline has ever done this kind of research before. "The early findings have given us optimism that we can make a real difference to the health and wellbeing of international travellers thanks to this partnership with Qantas."*

Parallel research has also been done to manage crew well-being on the forthcoming ultra-long-haul flights.

# The Red Sea Project: Redefining Sustainable Luxury Tourism



*In conversation, with  
Reema Almokhtar,  
Director - Destination  
Public Relations, at Red  
Sea Global*

**L**ocated on Saudi Arabia's west coast, The Red Sea Global is building the world's most sustainable luxury tourist destination, The Red Sea Project, the first phase of which is scheduled to open in 2023. The destination is set to place Saudi Arabia on the global tourism map, by creating a luxury tourism destination that's built around the region's natural assets, specifically its islands, nature, and culture.

## **Tourism in Saudi Arabia and Vision 2030**

The Red Sea Project is one of the

country's giga-projects, a series of large-scale infrastructure projects, which form part of the government's ambitions to transform the socio-economic landscape of the nation. This ambition, known as Vision 2030, identifies tourism as a strategic growth area for the Kingdom, and it's clear why:

"The hospitality industry in Saudi Arabia is a significant creator of jobs. It is also a driver of economic growth and an essential bridge between cultures. It helps to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of this unique and intriguing nation". The Project itself is a significant contributor to helping realize Saudi Arabia's wider Vision 2030 plan. "The Project brings together luxury, culture and sustainability, all in one of the world's last natural hidden treasures on The Red Sea in Saudi Arabia,"

## **The Red Sea Project**

The Red Sea Project will be an ultra-luxury destination, located within a pristine 28,000 km<sup>2</sup> area. Once complete, visitors will be able to experience a wide range of activities. There will be something for nature lovers, outdoor adventurers, cultural explorers, wellness seekers and more.

This 200-kilometre stretch of coastline is home to over 90 islands. 75 per cent of these will remain undeveloped and nine have been designated as areas of special conservation interest. There are dormant volcanoes, unspoiled marine habitats and ancient archaeological sites to be explored, as well as beaches, canyons, mountains and mangroves.

Here, the average summer temperature is 32 degrees and the region enjoys 360 days of sunshine,





making it a year-round destination. Guests can dive on the world's fourth-largest barrier reef system, where they will encounter corals and several endangered species. In addition to this, the islands will also support a variety of carefully monitored water sports activities.

Saudi Arabia has set forth its plan for Vision 2030, which outlines a comprehensive plan to diversify its economy and enhance its infrastructure while promoting social and cultural reforms.

More recently, the kingdom has paved its way to being a popular destination for sustainable travel and tourism through green initiatives and projects, with a vision to be a global tourism hub. And many developers in the region are working towards achieving this status.

One such company, Red Sea Global, a Saudi-based developer, is on the pathway to a sustainable future and forms part of the Saudi Vision 2030 program.

**In conversation, with Reema Almokhtar, Director - Destination**

**Public Relations, at Red Sea Global,** she walks us through the company's growing portfolio of projects, tourism business and sustainability challenges.

"At Red Sea Global, we think about the big picture, focusing on projects that integrate values of sustainability and innovation from day one and measure success against global standards, even setting new standards as we go. As a company, Red Sea Global aims to aid the kingdom's efforts to be a global tourism hub. It is working towards this goal by developing two of the world's most ambitious regenerative tourism destinations – The Red Sea and Amaala.

Once completed, the Red Sea and Amaala are said to provide significant economic benefits, contributing a combined \$8.8 billion annually to the Saudi economy. The destinations will create roughly 120,000 direct and indirect jobs for Saudis and others from the region.

"The Red Sea and Amaala can be seen as world-leading models for luxury tourism and sustainable development –

yet each has the unique selling points that set it apart from the crowd."

In terms of sustainability, The Red Sea aims to be the world's most ambitious regenerative tourism destination, delivering a 30% net conservation benefit by 2040.

#### **THE RED SEA & AMAALA – WHAT'S SO SPECIAL?**

**The Red Sea** as "marvelling at your favourite nature documentary." The Red Sea's lagoon is home to 195 species of fish and 175 different species of coral – including a special, super-resilient type of reef thriving despite global climate pressures. It will also offer 50 hotels and 1,000 residential properties, and natural beauty.

On the other hand, **Amaala** focuses more on wellness, sports, arts, and culture. Upon completion, Amaala will be home to 3,000 rooms across 25 luxury hotels and 900 villas, apartments, and estate homes, alongside high-end retail establishments.

Two of Amaala's signature attractions will be the Red Sea Marine

Life Institute — an educational and scientific research center designed by Foster + Partners – and the Yacht Club at Triple Bay Marina.

The Red Sea and Amaala will welcome guests in 2023 and 2024, respectively. *“We’ll achieve a zero-carbon footprint at Amaala and The Red Sea, with both destinations powered 100% by renewable energy.”*

*“Our absolute commitment to people and the planet. This means going beyond sustainability to enhance the environment and deliver better futures for the kingdom’s people. We put this ethos of regenerative tourism at the front of any planning or development considerations to ensure we can call ourselves true pioneers of responsible development.”*

### IMPACT ON ECOLOGY, FUTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY

The impact on local ecology is critical for the tourism and development sectors. *“We’ve capped visitors to The Red Sea at one million per year and annual visitors to Amaala at just 500,000, to limit our footprint. We’re only developing a small portion of each site to ensure we disturb the environment as little as possible – only one per cent of The Red Sea site and only five per cent of the Amaala site, respectively. At The Red Sea specifically, only 22 of the site’s 90 islands will be developed, with at least nine islands*

*designated as special conservation zones to protect the species that live and thrive there.”*

Once operational, The Red Sea and Amaala will be powered by 100% renewables. At The Red Sea, the purpose-built battery storage facility is said to be the largest in the world at 1200MWh. The resulting saving in CO2 emissions to the atmosphere across both projects will equal nearly a million tons each year.

We have a huge year ahead as **Red Sea Global; we will be debuting our first hotels in 2023** at The Red Sea destination, Six Senses Southern Dunes, The Red Sea, St. Regis Red Sea Resort and Nujuma, A Ritz-Carlton Reserve. Our international airport will also be welcoming first guests, beginning with domestic flights, a game-changing entity when it comes to sustainability. In line with the company’s sustainability goals, the entire infrastructure of The Red Sea destination, including its transport network, is powered by 100% renewable solar energy.

For Red Sea Global, our goal is to go beyond just educating peers on our development and what is to open in the coming years, we want to inspire and engage the stakeholders of our industry. Travel is going through a shift, there is a clear focus towards wellness and sustainability and digital advances with technology, and these

are areas in which Red Sea Global is playing a pioneering role – so we are looking forward to our debut and sharing more during the show on these topics.

### INDIA IS AN IMPORTANT MARKET

The Indian market is an affluent and valuable audience for Red Sea Global, with the benefit of being geographically close to both of our destinations. Visionary travellers who want to explore a previously unknown region will be able to experience luxury, adventure, sports and relaxation delivered at the highest sustainable standards. Working with our partners and in-market experts, we’ll be looking to showcase our destinations to captivate this audience and entice their curiosity.

The Indian market is aware of Saudi Arabia, Mecca Medina, etc. A huge number of travellers have already visited the Kingdom from India and this comes close to our heart, we are promoting it heavily in India.

We are focussing on adventure tourism, people who are in love with nature, she adds. We encourage partnerships to promote this project. We have 16 hotels and have announced 11 of them. GCC, India, UK, Germany, Italy, and France, are our prime target markets followed by the USA, CIS and China as these are also the primary major markets that we are trying to attract.







## No. of foreign travellers to Korea up almost sevenfold on-year in April

**T**he number of foreign travellers to Korea surged by sevenfold in April from a year earlier on eased travel restrictions amid efforts to return to pre-pandemic normalcy, data showed.

A total of 889,000 foreign travellers visited Korea last month, up nearly 600 per cent from the 128,000 tallied in the same month last year, according to the data compiled by the Korea Tourism Organization.

The monthly figure also accounted for 54 per cent of the 1.6 million tallied in April 2019, before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some 128,000 Japanese people travelled to Korea last month, up 5,651 per cent from a year ago, followed by 109,000 American visitors, up 252 per cent on-year.

Tourists from China shot up 10 times to 106,000 thanks to increased flights between the two countries and China's labour day holiday season.

The numbers from Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam totalled 77,000, 54,000 and 41,000 visitors, respectively.

Meanwhile, a total of 1.5 million Koreans travelled overseas last month, up almost sevenfold from a year earlier. (Yonhap)



# Thailand is on the cusp of a new era of tourism prosperity in 2025

## TAT predicts full tourism recovery by the end of 2024



Thailand is on the cusp of a new era of tourism prosperity in 2025, the Tourism Authority of Thailand confidently predicted in its latest forecast delivered at the country's annual travel trade show TTM+2023

Based on the country's tourism performance since 2022, after Covid-19 travel restrictions eased, TAT predicts full tourism recovery will be achieved by the end of 2024. The benchmark remains 2019's tourist arrivals that closed at 39.92 million, the last full year before the Covid-19 pandemic shut down global travel in March 2020. Thailand is now forecast to reach around 40 million tourist arrivals by the close of 2024, but the country will have lost four years to the pandemic, losses that cannot be recouped, said Sukanya Sirikanjanakul, Executive Director, ASEAN South Asia and South Pacific Region, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) in an exclusive to Devender Grover, Editor in Chief, Travel Span.

TAT is currently fine-tuning its 2024 marketing plan for release to the travel industry at the close of its weeklong MAP2024 marketing activity plan meeting in June. The



comprehensive marketing strategy aims to shatter the 2019 record in visitor arrivals and tourism receipts to declare business is back on track but with some differences. TAT's marketing plan will focus on sustainability, high-value tourism, and meaningful travel.

TAT New Delhi Director Siriges-a-nong Tirattanasongpol updated the progress of the Thai tourism industry in an interaction during the Thailand Travel Mart Plus (TTM+), which took place from 31 May to 2 June at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre for the first time since the complex underwent a major remake.

TTM+ attracted 374 international buyers from 50 countries, of which 42% were new buyers. This year's buyer count reflects an increase of 35.5% compared to the 276 buyers who attended the event in Phuket last year.

In addition to the sellers, TAT also extended invitations to more than 20 trade visitors from Saudi Arabia, providing them with a firsthand experience of Thai tourism products and services,

On the supply side, TTM+ delivered 435 sellers, mainly in the hotel and resort categories. This year's sellers also included Cambodia and Myanmar's national tourism organisations. The count marks an increase of 60.7% compared to the 264 sellers present last year. TAT noted that the B2B platform would generate 11,760 buyer/seller appointments as part of the effort to drive the recovery of tourism to achieve 80% of the revenue from the international market recorded during the pre-pandemic, or a target of THB1.5 trillion by the end of this year.

In the post-pandemic period, TAT set its targets to recover 50% in 2022, 80% in 2023 and 100% in 2024. The recovery of the flight capacity is one of the critical factors. According to TAT, the overall percentage of flight resumption to Thailand is 70% compared to the year before the pandemic. From China alone, flights in June reached 90% compared to 2019.

This year, TAT targets a possible 'base case scenario' of 25 million visitor arrivals. From 1

*Based on the country's tourism performance since 2022, after Covid-19 travel restrictions eased, TAT predicts full tourism recovery will be achieved by the end of 2024.*

January to 27 May, Thailand welcomed 10,378,457 international arrivals generating THB428 billion. The top five tourism markets were Malaysia (1,606,373), China (1,098,604), Russia (734,995), South Korea (627,760), and India (583,319).

To achieve the year-end target, TAT will continue implementing activities aligned with the 'Visit Thailand Year 2023: Amazing New Chapters' communication theme. The TTM+ is expected to serve as a platform to enhance performance in the year's second half. This year's edition of TTM+ continues to showcase and emphasise the ongoing efforts of the Thai tourism industry in promoting meaningful travel experiences.

TAT organised satellite activities alongside the TTM+ for the first time. These activities included

a domestic travel fair promoting travel across various regions. It also introduced Amazing Thailand Culinary City to enhance gastronomy tourism by bringing together food tourism suppliers to showcase their products and services to international buyers and consumers.


"TAT is illustrating Thailand as offering meaningful-driven travel to improve visitors' experience. Encompassing discovery, transformation, fulfilment, and engagement between people, cultures, and nature, this underscores TAT's direction to make a destination for protecting the country's vast natural and scenic beauty and instigating a range of environmental initiatives.", Sukanya Sirikanjanakul, Executive Director, ASEAN South Asia and South Pacific Region, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) concluded.

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# Tourism Malaysia Targets

**W**ith India ranking as the fourth-largest source market in 2022 with 324,548 arrivals between April and December, Tourism Malaysia is currently concentrating on attracting Gen Z visitors, adventure seekers, and wedding guests.

The government is emphasising Instagrammable locations and Gen Z vacationers who use digital technologies. In addition, weddings are a second area of interest, with hotels and resorts providing a range of locations for holding various rites and enhancing their vegetarian and Indian food offerings. The main goal of this

## Gen Z Travellers and Wedding Segment From India

approach is to diversify traveller routes away from Kuala Lumpur, the country's well-known capital city.

Having just taken over as Director for Tourism Malaysia, Mumbai, Noriah Jaffar spoke to select media professionals about their vision for India and these areas that need focus.

She said that they are preparing to celebrate Visit Malaysia Year 2026 and will see activities being undertaken during the next two years in that direction.

From January to April this year, Malaysia recorded 164,566 arrivals from India.



# BLS International signs visa outsourcing agreement with Embassy of Italy in Abu Dhabi

*Now collaborates with four Italian missions worldwide*



**B**LS International has entered into a significant visa outsourcing agreement with the Embassy of Italy in Abu Dhabi. The agreement aims to streamline the visa application process and enhance the overall experience for applicants. Earlier this year, BLS International effectively secured three new contracts with the Italian government in Singapore, Senegal, and Russia. With the recent addition of the Italian mission in Abu Dhabi, BLS International now collaborates with four Italian missions worldwide, significantly expanding its footprint.

The Embassy of Italy in Abu Dhabi has chosen BLS International as its preferred partner for visa processing services due to the company's expertise and commitment to delivering efficient and reliable solutions. BLS International,

with its extensive experience in handling visa and consular services, is well-equipped to manage the growing demand for Italian visas in the region.

Shikhar Aggarwal, Joint Managing Director of BLS International, expressed his enthusiasm for the collaboration, stating, "We are delighted to partner with the Embassy of Italy in Abu Dhabi and provide our best-in-class visa outsourcing services. This agreement reflects our continued commitment to delivering innovative and customer-centric solutions to our esteemed clients. We are confident that our advanced technology platforms and dedicated workforce will ensure a seamless and hassle-free visa application process for applicants."

With its strong global presence and advanced visa processing systems, BLS International is committed to ensuring a smooth and

efficient visa application journey. The company leverages cutting-edge technologies, including AI-driven platforms and data privacy measures, to ensure the highest levels of security and accuracy in the visa processing ecosystem.

The collaboration between BLS International and the Embassy of Italy in Abu Dhabi will provide applicants with a range of convenient services. This includes easy-to-access application centers, flexible appointment scheduling, and real-time tracking of application status.

BLS International has a proven track record in providing visa outsourcing services to various diplomatic missions and governments worldwide. The company's dedication to operational excellence and customer-centric approach has earned it a reputation for delivering high-quality and reliable services.

# Singapore Airlines named World's Best Airline at the 2023 World Airline Awards

World Airline Awards, Paris Air Show 2023, World's Best Airline 2023



**S**ingapore Airlines has been voted the **World's Best Airline** at the 2023 World Airline Awards, the fifth time that the airline has scooped the Airline of the Year title in the 23 year history of the awards.

The **2023 World Airline Awards** have been announced in a gala ceremony held in the iconic Air and Space Museum at the Paris Air Show. More than 350 guests attended the event from airlines across the world, with a large number of airline CEO's, Presidents and Senior Management present to accept their awards. As has become customary at the World Airline Awards, there were a lot of uniformed airline cabin crew showing off the airline corporate brands.

Widely regarded as 'the Oscars of the aviation industry', the World Airline

Awards began in 1999, and remain totally independent and impartial with all of the customer survey costs and awards event paid by the organisers, Skytrax.

**Mr Goh Choon Phong, Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Airlines**, received the World's Best Airline award on behalf of the Airline in Paris on 20th June 2023. *"This award is a testament to the indomitable spirit of our people, who worked tirelessly and made many sacrifices to ensure that SIA was ready for the recovery in air travel. That has allowed us to emerge stronger and fitter from the pandemic as a leading international airline,"* said Mr Goh. *"We are very grateful to our customers for their enduring loyalty to and affection for Singapore Airlines. During the pandemic, their support and encouragement gave us the strength*

*and determination to overcome the unprecedented challenges. Today, as we recover from the pandemic, we are firmly committed to innovating and investing in industry-leading products and services, and ensuring that SIA continues to offer our customers a world-class travel experience."*

The seven times winner of the prestigious Airline of the Year award, **Qatar Airways**, was ranked No 2 in the world for 2023, with **ANA All Nippon Airways** in third place, **Emirates** fourth, and **Japan Airlines** in fifth position, out of more than 325 airlines included in the survey results.

Edward Plaisted of Skytrax said: *"It is a fabulous achievement for Singapore Airlines to achieve this World's Best Airline title for 2023. Singapore Airlines achieved excellent results in many of the award categories, with the highlight*



being recognition of their First Class cabin as the World's Best First Class. We congratulate Singapore Airlines on this success which should be a source of great pride and satisfaction for the airline management and staff."

Big winners at the awards included **Qatar Airways** who scooped nine award wins, with **Singapore Airlines** also receiving nine awards. In North America, **Delta Air Lines** was a success in North America, winning six awards. In Europe, **Turkish Airlines** was dominant, receiving four awards including the highly competitive **Best Airline in Europe** title.

**Qatar Airways** continued its domination in business class, winning the awards for World's Best Business Class, the World's Best Business Class Seat, the World's Best Business Class Lounge (the Al Mourjan lounge at Hamad International Airport), the World's Best Business Class Lounge Dining and the Best Airline in the Middle East.

**Singapore Airlines** dominated the First Class travel awards, winning the awards for the World's Best First Class,

the World's Best First Class Seat, and the World's Best First Class Comfort Amenities and took the top position as the Best Airline in Asia.

**ANA All Nippon Airways** claimed third place in the global ranking and repeated its earlier successes by winning awards for the World's Best Airport Services and the World's Cleanest Airline.

**Kuwait Airways** wins the 2023 award as the World's Most Improved Airline, ahead of **StarLux** in 2nd place and **PLAY** in 3rd position. This award reflects an airline's Quality improvement across the entire Awards programme, evaluating an airline's change in the global rating, and their performance in different award categories.

**AirAsia** was the repeat winner of the World's Best Low-Cost Airline award, a title it has won each year since 2010.

**Scoot** won the award as the World's Best Long Haul Low-Cost Airline.

**Volotea** was named the Best Low-Cost Airline in Europe, this being one of the most competitive low-cost airline markets in the world.

A new award was introduced in 2023, for the World's Most Family Friendly Airline, this being won by **Air Canada**. This award includes family seating policies, dedicated family check-in facilities, priority boarding, children's meals, children's amenities / toys / activity packs, child specific onboard entertainment, free checked luggage and policies for carrycot / pushchairs, and the standard of service assistance from ground staff and cabin crew during the travel experience.

**Garuda Indonesia** was recognised with a top prize after being voted as having the **World's Best Cabin Staff** – the sixth time it has achieved success in this category.

**Plaza Premium** maintains its winning status by collecting the award as the **World's Best Independent Airport Lounge** operator. The Plaza Premium lounge at Rome's Fiumicino Airport which ranked No 1 in 2023, and Plaza Premium also had two other lounges featured in the Top 10 ranking.

**Cathay Pacific** had a notable achievement for 2023 as they were judged as providing the **World's Best**



**Inflight Entertainment** for the very first time.

**EVA Air** won the award for the **World's Best Premium Economy Class** (the travel cabin that EVA invented more than 30 years ago). EVA Air also won the award for the **Best Premium Economy Class Catering**.

**Japan Airlines** ranks No 1 in Economy Class, winning the award for the **World's Best Economy Class** as well as the award for the **World's Best Economy Class Seat**.

The **Best Regional Airline Awards** are for full service carriers that primarily operate domestic and / or International flights up to approx. 6 hours. Topping the global ratings as the **World's Best Regional Airline** is the repeat winner **Bangkok Airways**, a true customer favourite.

Rising up the rankings in 2023 is Australia's **Rex Airlines** winning the **Best Regional Airline in Australia / Pacific** award.

**Fiji Airways** secured the **Best Airline in Australia / Pacific** for the first time, and in a double success also won the award as the **Best Airline Staff Service in Australia / Pacific** for the third time.

In the India / South Asia region, **Vistara** reigned supreme and was again named winner of the **Best Airline in India / South Asia** award, in addition to **Best Airline Staff Service for the region**.

**IndiGo** maintains its winning No 1 position as the **Best Low-Cost Airline in India / South Asia**.

**Delta Air Lines** was the **Best Airline in North America**, in addition to **Best Airline Staff Service** for the region. **Sun Country Airlines** wins the **Best Low-Cost Airline in North America** title for the first time.

**Alaska Airlines** was the **Best Regional Airline in North America** in this very competitive market. **Air Transat** was another big winner from North America after being named the **World's Best Leisure Airline** – an award the Canadian airline has won on four previous occasions.

A relative newcomer to the market is Kazakhstan's **FlyArystan** which picked

up the award as the **Best Low-Cost Airline in the Central Asia / CIS** region.

For the sixth time, **Ethiopian Airlines** has won the **Best Airline in Africa** award.

In China, **Hainan Airlines** was named the **Best Airline in China** for the 12th time, as well as receiving the **Best Airline Staff in China** award.

## The World's Top 20 Airlines in 2023

1. Singapore Airlines
2. Qatar Airways
3. ANA All Nippon Airways
4. Emirates
5. Japan Airlines
6. Turkish Airlines
7. Air France
8. Cathay Pacific
9. EVA Air
10. Korean Air
11. Hainan Airlines
12. Swiss Int'l Air Lines
13. Etihad Airways
14. Iberia
15. Fiji Airways
16. Vistara
17. Qantas Airways
18. British Airways
19. Air New Zealand
20. Delta Air Lines

## The World's Best Cabin Staff in 2023

1. Garuda Indonesia
2. Singapore Airlines
3. ANA All Nippon Airways
4. EVA Air
5. Hainan Airlines
6. Qatar Airways
7. Cathay Pacific
8. Thai Airways
9. Emirates
10. Japan Airlines

## The World's Cleanest Airlines in 2023

1. ANA All Nippon Airways
2. Asiana Airlines
3. Qatar Airways
4. Singapore Airlines
5. Hainan Airlines
6. EVA Air
7. Cathay Pacific

8. Japan Airlines
9. Korean Air
10. China Airlines

## The World's Best Independent Airport Lounges in 2023

1. Plaza Premium – Rome Fiumicino
2. The Pearl – Bahrain Airport
3. IGA Lounge – Istanbul
4. Primeclass – Muscat
5. American Express Centurion – Dallas Fort Worth

## The World's Best Leisure Airlines in 2023

1. Air Transat
2. SunExpress
3. TUI Airways
4. Condor
5. TUIfly

## The World's Best Long Haul Low-Cost Airlines in 2023

1. Scoot
2. Jetstar Airways
3. Air Canada rouge
4. LEVEL
5. ZIPAIR

A number of Best Airline Staff Service awards were presented, these being important awards that recognise the combined airline staff service standards across both the airport and the onboard experience. **Austrian Airlines** was the winner of the **Best Airline Staff Service in Europe**, **Kenya Airways** was the winner of the **Best Airline Staff Service in Africa**, and **Oman Air** triumphed by winning the **Best Airline Staff Service in the Middle East** region award.

The World Airline Awards cover all types of travel classes, with an overall Best by Cabin award, Best Seats by Cabin, Best Lounges and Best Onboard Catering by Cabin. The overall winners of these awards are:

- The World Best First-Class Airline: **Singapore Airlines**
- The World's Best Business Class Airline: **Qatar Airways**
- The World's Best Premium Economy Class Airline: **EVA Air**
- The World's Best Economy Class Airline: **Japan Airlines**

# Noriah Jaafar

## Takes Charge As Director For Tourism Malaysia Mumbai



**T**ourism Malaysia has appointed Noriah Jaafar as Director for India, based at its Mumbai office.

She took charge last week. A dynamic leader at the forefront of Malaysia's tourism sector, she has been instrumental in promoting and advancing the country's thriving tourism and travel industry. With a remarkable academic background and extensive experience, she has consistently demonstrated her exceptional leadership skills throughout her career.

Her professional journey began in 2002 when she joined Tourism Malaysia as an Assistant Director at the Convention Division. Her dedication and expertise led to steady

promotions and a diverse range of roles, including as Director of Tourism Malaysia's Stockholm office in Sweden from October 2014 to March 2017, overseeing operations in Europe. Her international experience also includes managing the Thailand and Myanmar market for nearly two years.

Additionally, throughout her career, Noriah Jaafar has demonstrated exceptional language skills, excelling in both Malay and English. She also possesses a good understanding of Mandarin and Korean.

Hailing from Pontian, Johor, Malaysia, she has always had a penchant for travel. After obtaining a Bachelor's degree in Business

Administration from the National University of Malaysia (UKM) in 2001, she embarked on a journey to expand her knowledge and skills. In 2012, Noriah completed her Master's degree in Tourism Management at MARA University of Technology (UiTM).

As the Director of Tourism Malaysia Mumbai, Jaafar is currently leading efforts to promote Malaysia as a premier tourist destination. Her vision and dedication have positioned her as a significant force in the tourism sector. With her extensive experience and leadership abilities, she will further continue to contribute to the growth and success of Malaysia's tourism industry.

# COSTA Cruises announces New India cruises of 'Costa Serena' the largest cruise ship for domestic sailing with a blend of international luxury and Indian Hospitality

*From November 2023 to January 2024, Costa Serena will offer a total of 23 cruises from 2 to 5 days, visiting Mumbai, Cochin, Goa and, for the first time ever, the beautiful Lakshadweep Islands*



*L-R: Hon'ble Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Sarbanand Sonwal and Italy's Hon'ble Consul General Mr Alessandro De Masi at the Costa Cruises Announcement of Costa Serena's domestic sailings and launch event*

**COSTA CRUISES PRESENTS NEW INDIA CRUISES :** From November 2023 to January 2024, Costa Serena will offer a total of 23 cruises from 2 to 5 days, visiting Mumbai, Cochin, Goa and, for the first time ever, the beautiful Lakshadweep islands. Indian guests can enjoy an international holiday experience, with Italian warm hospitality; gastronomy and entertainment will be customized

especially for them.

**Costa Cruises** will offer a new cruise programme exclusively dedicated to **India**. The announcement was made today in Mumbai, in the presence of **Mr Sarbananda Sonowal**, Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Government of India; **Mr Roberto Alberti**, Senior Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer, Costa Cruises; **Mr Francesco Raffa**,

Director Asia Region & Growth Markets, Costa Cruises; **Mr Alessandro De Masi**, Consul General of Italy in Mumbai, and other senior officials.

The ship chosen by the Italian company for India is the **Costa Serena**, which, after itineraries from Thailand, South Korea and Taiwan, will further extend its deployment in Asia. There are a total of 23 new sailings in India from 4 November



2023 to 1 January 2024, designed in collaboration with Costa's General Sales Agent in India, **Lotus Aero Enterprises**. They will exclusively visit domestic destinations, giving Indian guests the opportunity to discover some of their country's most beautiful locations from a unique point of view. The itineraries, lasting between two, three and five days, will call at **Mumbai, Cochin, Goa** and, for the first time ever, the **Lakshadweep**, a beautiful tropical archipelago with white beaches and a magnificent coral reef.

**Mr Sarbananda Sonowal, Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Government of India** said, "India's waterways are a treasure trove waiting to be explored by tourists; our country is filled with scenic locales and beautiful destinations. I am happy to know about the new cruise programme exclusively dedicated to India by Costa Cruises. This programme also aligns with Shri Narendra Modi ji's vision of '**Dekho Apna Desh**' – an initiative that was launched as an appeal by the honourable Prime Minister to Indians to prefer domestic tourism".

Earlier today in Mumbai Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Shri Sarbananda Sonowal had a joint review meeting with Shri Devendra Fadnavis, Deputy Chief Minister, Maharashtra. During this meeting Sonowal and Shri Fadnavis took a detailed review on various projects related to ports and the shipping sector in Maharashtra under the Sagarmala program of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.

Speaking to GPN (Global Prime News) Media Shri Sonowal said "As per the grand vision of our Hon'ble Prime Minister, to celebrate the maritime activities of the coastal states of the country 'Coastal States Pavilion' have been proposed to be developed in the National Maritime Heritage Complex. Here Maharashtra has a unique opportunity to showcase its rich maritime heritage which would be state-sponsored in which the Maharashtra Government can contribute significantly".



*Ms Nalini Gupta – MD – Lotus Destinations, GSA Costa Cruise India Welcoming The Honourable Shipping Minister, Mr. Sarbananda Sonowal with a flower bouquet – Costa Cruises launch announcement of Costa Serena domestic sailings at Hotel Trident*

Speaking at the occasion, **Mr Roberto Alberti, Senior Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer of Costa Cruises**, said, we have a strong and lasting bond with this wonderful Country: we have already sailed our ships in India in the past, and many of our onboard colleagues are from India. We select and recruit them through dedicated training schools based right in the Country. We are strongly committed to offering our Indian guests a unique holiday experience onboard Costa Serena and we are truly looking forward to starting our operations in November. Costa Serena will be the largest cruise ship to operate domestic itineraries in India".

**Ms Nalini Gupta, Managing Director Lotus Aero Enterprises, GSA Costa Cruise India**, said, "We are excited to launch this programme for Indian travelers. This will also help unlock our country's true tourism potential and help travelers explore hidden gems and get to know our own country in a new light. We are particularly excited about taking travelers to Lakshadweep for the first time ever helping explore its magnificent coral reefs".

Costa Serena is an Italian-flagged

ship built by Fincantieri, which entered service in 2007. With 114,000 gross tons and a capacity up to 3,780 guests, on board guests will enjoy a wide range of international-style experiences, enriched with the Italian warm hospitality that has characterized Costa for 75 years of history. A local touch will also be featured: in particular, gastronomy and entertainment will be customized to the tastes of Indian guests.

The ship has a total of 1500 cabins, 505 of which have private balconies, and 14 passenger decks. To make the most of their cruise on board, guests can choose from a wellness centre and a gym with a sea view, a beauty salon, a theater, restaurants serving Indian and international cuisine, bars, 4 swimming pools, 2 of which have a self-propelled glass roof, a shopping area, and a kids' club for children and teenagers.

Costa Serena sailings in India are ideal for both families and couples, who can take advantage of the Diwali festivities for a holiday together. The cruises are also a great option for wedding ceremonies, groups and corporate incentive travel, thanks to the ship being able to offer reserved areas and services.

# Korea Tourism Organization launches K-incentive scheme for Indian travel agents



*The incentive scheme's main benefits include providing travel agents with prizes of USD 30 per passenger and support for quick, simple and hassle-free tour visas*

- *Foreign travelers to South Korea surged by sevenfold in April, reaching 889,000 visitors. The figure represents a nearly 600% increase compared to the same month last year.*
- *April's numbers accounted for 54% of the pre-pandemic levels recorded in April 2019.*
- *Japanese visitors increased by 5,651% to 128,000, followed by 109,000 American visitors (up 252%). Chinese tourists rose by 10 times to 106,000 due to increased flights and China's labor day holiday.*
- *Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam contributed 77,000, 54,000, and 41,000 visitors, respectively.*
- *South Korean travelers going abroad also surged, with a sevenfold increase to 1.5 million in April compared to the previous year.*



**A**s part of the ongoing marketing plans for 2023, Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) India office has launched a special K-incentive Scheme to boost sales of Korean travel packages in the market.

The new initiative, which is aimed towards travel agencies across India, was introduced at an event in Mumbai that was held especially for the occasion and in collaboration with OTOAI. With the launch of the K-incentive Scheme, KTO India hopes to get travel agents in India in the spirit for this special year as 2023 commemorates the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Korea.

The incentive scheme's main benefits include providing travel agents with prizes of USD 30 per passenger and support for quick, simple and hassle-free tour visas for visitors to

Korea between June and December 2023.

In addition to Seoul, KTO is keen to promote regional destinations in Korea including Busan, Gangwon province and Jeollanam-do province. Including any of these regional destinations in the itinerary would be a necessary condition to be eligible for the benefits of the K-incentive Scheme.

Speaking at the launch event, held on June 2, 2023, at Four Seasons Hotel in Mumbai, **Myongkil Yun, Director of KTO India**, said, "This is the first time any NTO is launching an incentive scheme for leisure travel packages in India and this initiative comes at a very opportune time when we are in the year of the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between our two nations."

**Riaz Munshi, President, OTOAI**, shared his thoughts on the launch as well, saying, "Korea has enormous

*potential to grow from the Indian market and I am confident that together we can generate good numbers for the destination. On behalf of OTOAI, I would like to thank Korea Tourism for specially curating this incentive program for our members and entrusting OTOAI. I would like to request all the members to wholeheartedly support the destination by recommending it to your clients. I assure you that your travellers will return with a unique and memorable experience in Korea".*

Myongkil Yun further added, "This year, South Korea is seeing a surge in visitors from India, and we are keen to further boost that many-fold with the launch of the K-incentive scheme. There is a lot to see and do in Korea, for visitors of all ages and we are ready to welcome Indian travellers in huge numbers to Korea, where K-culture begins."

## Sherry Varma joins Indiva Marketing as Director of PR & Media Marketing



**I**ndiva Marketing is delighted to announce the recent appointment of Sherry S. Varma as the new Director of PR & Media Marketing.

Sherry is well known in the media and communication circles and joins Indiva with over 16 years of professional experience spanning from banking to National Tourism Boards and other reputed PR companies.

**Beate Mauder Kakkar, Managing Director of Indiva Marketing** commented: Sherry joins us at

an exciting moment with India's travel and tourism industry thriving again and positive business growth across industries. Her experience in diverse fields of tourism will add much value and provide an excellent framework to benefit clients and continue Indiva's successful business journey.

Sherry will oversee all media and marketing initiatives across Indiva's destination and hotel industry clients and work closely with the PR team to enhance positioning and branding.



## **Qatar's art, culture and heritage:** **A must experience**

*Here is a list of must-see places in Qatar that boasts a dynamic art, culture and heritage scene*

**Q**atar is an outstanding leisure & travel location, but its heritage, art and culture are big contributors to its beauty. Qatar is home to some of the most majestic buildings and landmarks in the city, some of them carrying a strong historical significance. From world-class museums and iconic galleries to inspiring street art.

Here is a list of must-see places in Qatar that boasts a dynamic art, culture and heritage scene.

### **Museums**

#### *National Museum of Qatar*

Designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Jean Nouvel, the National Museum of Qatar draws inspiration from and recreates the naturally

occurring crystal formations known as the desert rose. Built around Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al-Thani's original palace, and the seat of government for 25 years, the National Museum of Qatar gives voice to Qatar's heritage whilst celebrating its future. It spans a whopping 430,500 square feet.

The museum traces Qatar's history





and development over the centuries, teaching visitors about the country's history and the creation of its early cities. Exhibitions bring together antiquities and modern influences, stimulating conversation about the effects of rapid change.

#### *The Museum of Islamic Arts*

Also referred to as the crown jewel of Qatar museums is another architectural wonder. Designed by another Pritzker Prize-winning architect

I.M. Pei, the museum reflects the history and culture of Islam.

#### *Qatar Museum Gallery*

Katara is another venue for public art projects and is part of the Katara Cultural Village, which also includes theatres, concert halls, and eateries. The intimate QM Gallery gives Qatar's museums a venue to display its holdings. The gallery presents artists whose work is primarily concerned with human topics to encourage a personal connection with audiences. These include Brigitte Lacombe's investigation of female athletes in the Arab world and Yan Pei Ming's photographs of well-known Arabs.

#### *Msheireb Museums*

Within the refurbished development of Msheireb in the oldest part of the capital, the Msheireb Museums celebrate the history of Qatar. Four heritage houses – Bin Jelmood House, Company House, Mohammed Bin Jassim House and Radwani House – were restored by property developer Msheireb and transformed into museums that explore key players and periods in Qatar's history and evolution.

### **Cultural Attractions**

#### *Souq Waqif*

On the banks of the Wadi Musheireb, Souq Waqif is a market filled with traditional charm showcasing a bygone era while remaining a hub of activity, where commerce and gossip collide. With its mud-daubed buildings, Doha's century old trading market, feels like an anachronism, particularly against the backdrop of Doha's dramatic modernist skyline. You can indulge in retail therapy from buying affordable, intricate gold jewelry to antiques to handicrafts, woven fabrics, rugs, wooden furniture, glass ornaments and more, the souq rewards treasure hunters with retail purchases from around the region.

#### *Katara Cultural Village*

Katara Cultural Village has a stunning beach promenade, an impressive open-air amphitheatre and

network of exhibition galleries and cutting-edge facilities. Spelled in the ancient manner, Katara is a self-styled cultural village nestled between the gleaming financial district of West Bay, and the half-moon towers of The Pearl residential neighbourhood. Bordered by a vast beach on one side, and the twin Katara Hills on the other, Katara is Doha's go-to destination for art, culture and cuisine.

Designed by Turkey's Zeynep Fadilloglu, who is believed to be the first female architect to specialise in mosques, the Katara mosque features Persian and Turkish tile and enamel work in shades of blue and gold, proffering a stark contrast to the surrounding buildings. The second mosque in Katara, called the Gold Mosque, is smaller, but no less eye-catching. Facing the amphitheatre, it is covered with gold tiling, which glints in the sun.

### **Heritage Sites**

#### *National Library of Qatar*

QNL provides an environment that fosters learning, play and innovation. Tools and equipment are provided at the library's Innovation Stations, catering to a dizzying array of activities and interests - videography, photography, design, sound editing and 3D printing. Designed by Rem Koolhaas, the diamond-shaped exterior of the library belies its spacious interior, which prioritizes light and visibility. The bookshelves themselves are an integral part of the 45,000 sq meter building, rising out of the floor and blending into the architecture.

#### *The Al Zubarah Archaeological Site*

This site in Qatar was recently added to the list UNESCO world heritage site in 2013. The fort, the houses markets, and the mosque built at that time by the inhabitants are among the archaeological relics of Qatar civilisation from 1760 that are preserved on the site. The structures in Al Zubarah are the only evidence that Qatar has always been a country with incredible architecture that combines traditional elements with modern ones.



#### *Purple Island*

One of the nearest historical sites in Qatar is the Jazirat Bin Ghanam, also referred to as Purple Island, 5-7 kkm from the city of Al Khor. The island was constantly used by traders, fishermen, and Pearl drivers in the year 1000 BCE but never by people. The pearl camp was organised on this island later, between 400 and 600 CE, during the Sassanian and Late Islamic periods. The island also houses the rare Mangrove around the shore along with shattered wildlife that includes migratory species like herons and flamingos.

#### *Ras Brouq*

The Ras Brouq is a peninsular land

lying towards the west coast in Qatar. Housing the remains of prehistoric settlements and occupation of humans, Ras Brouq is dominated by eroded cliffs and mushroom-shaped hills. Ras Brouq was never a permanent habitat for humans, but the remains of nomadic tribes and their hunting tools are discovered.

#### **Art Exploration**

When exploring Qatar, you will come across several public art installations. Some of the famous ones to look out for are The Force of Nature II, a large bronze sculpture by Lorenzo Quinn depicting Mother Nature as a woman hurling the planet

in circles. The Miraculous Journey at Sidra Medical and Research Centre illustrates the beauty of the extraordinary process of the development of a foetus. One of several impressive sculptures at the Hamad International Airport, the Lamp Bear by Urs Fischer is centrally located in the duty-free area. The plush 23-foot yellow teddy bear sculpted from bronze sits under a lamp. Both humorous and comforting, the piece reminds travellers of childhood or precious objects from home. Qatar is home to several heritage sites that offer a rich cultural and historical experience to history buffs across the country and beyond.

## Finnair showcases vintage uniforms at Helsinki airport

**F**innair has launched an exhibition at Helsinki airport showcasing its vintage uniforms from the past 100 years.

This initiative is the latest in a year-long programme of activities to celebrate Finnair's 100th birthday.

The never-before-seen colourful uniforms will be on display at Gate 29 in the airport's Schengen area until November 30, demonstrating how fashion has changed over the century.

Visitors can also vote for their favourite garment via a provided QR code, with the chance to win two return flights to a European destination of their choice.

Earlier this year the carrier launched a special postage stamp in partnership with the Finnish postal service, Posti, as well as an exclusive centenary trainer for its ground and aircrew in partnership with Finnish brand Karhu.



## Vistara Expands Bilateral Codeshare With Lufthansa, Enhances International Connectivity

**V**istara, India's leading full-service carrier and a joint venture of Tata Sons and Singapore Airlines, has expanded its codeshare partnership with Lufthansa, one of Europe's premier airlines, enabling enhanced connectivity to Vistara customers while travelling across Europe. As a result of this agreement, the 12 key destinations that get included in Vistara's network are Amsterdam (AMS), Stockholm (ARN), Berlin (BER), Budapest (BUD), Copenhagen (CPH), Rome (FCO), Hamburg (HAM), Helsinki (HEL), Lisbon (LIS), Munich (MUC), Oslo (OSL), Prague (PRG). The bilateral codeshare agreement between Vistara and Lufthansa enables both airlines to market and sell flights on each other's networks, which will offer convenient travel options to customers.

Vistara and Lufthansa had entered into a unilateral codeshare agreement,

back in 2019, enabling Lufthansa to add its designator code (LH) to Vistara flights to 18 destinations in India.

**Deepak Rajawat, Chief Commercial Officer, Vistara,** said, "We are delighted to further strengthen our partnership with Lufthansa, one of the world's leading airlines. This is a testament to our continued commitment of offering enhanced connectivity, world-class service and a wide range of options to our customers. This enables our customers to conveniently book their itineraries and seamlessly travel across various parts of Europe on the joint network of Vistara and Lufthansa."

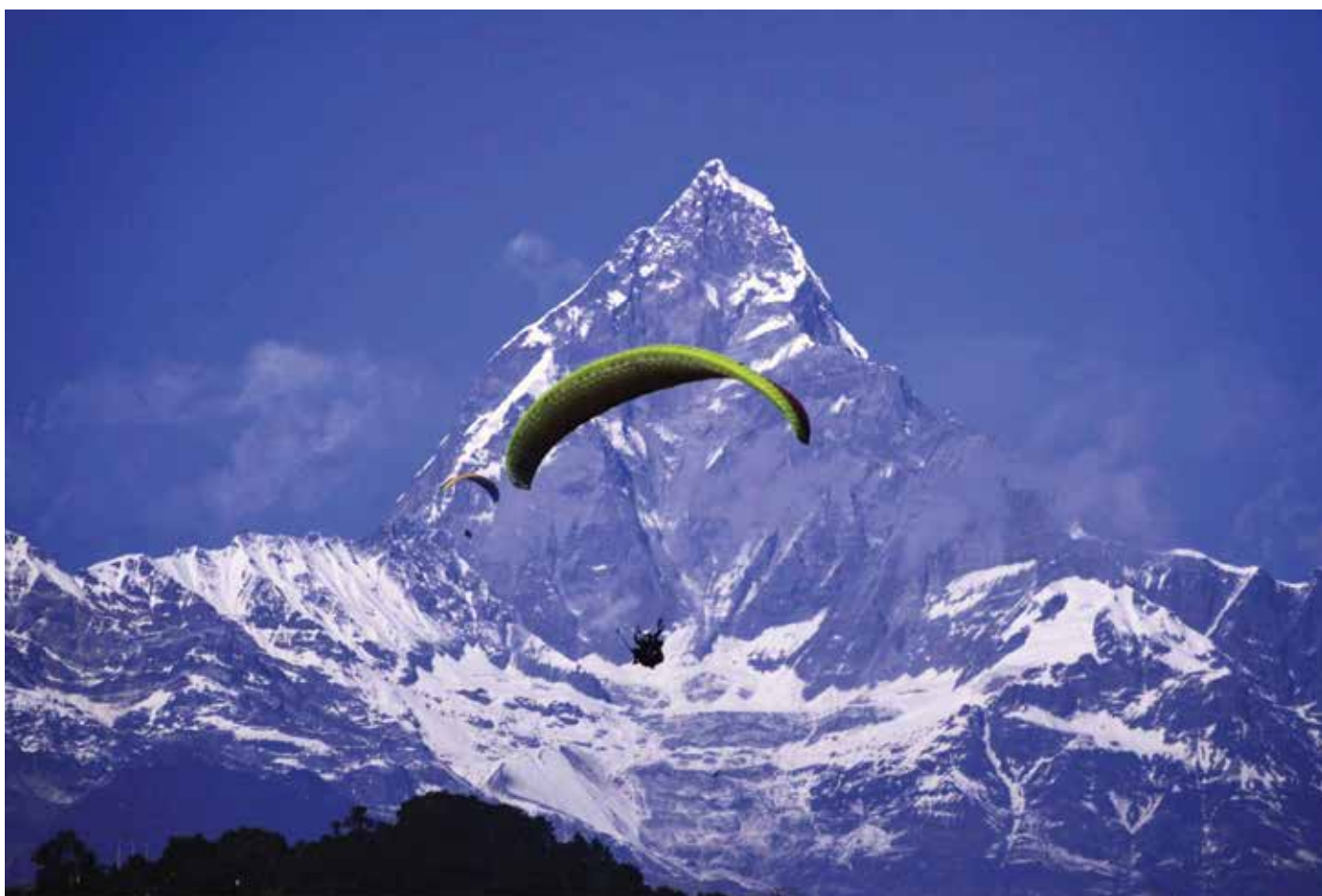
**Jeffrey James, Head of Communications APAC & Chief Spokesperson, Lufthansa Group,** said, "We take pride in our relationships and in India our partnership with Vistara embodies our strong commitment to

the country. As the third largest aviation market globally, India remains a key focus for our Group and we are delighted to further strengthen our relationship with Vistara, offering Indian travellers more choice, more options and more connectivity between Europe and the subcontinent."

Vistara has consistently focused on expanding its international reach and delivering exceptional service to its customers. The expansion of the codeshare partnership with Lufthansa is a strategic move that aligns with Vistara's growth strategy and its goal of connecting India to key global destinations. With this bilateral codeshare agreement, Vistara continues to establish itself as a leading player in the Indian aviation industry, known for its commitment to service excellence, innovation, and customer satisfaction.



# Pokhara, Nepal welcomes over 200 delegates to the PATA Annual Summit and Adventure Mart 2023



*The event encompassed various activities over the four-day programme.*

**T**he PATA Annual Summit and Adventure Mart 2023 (PASM 2023), under the theme 'Sustainability through Tourism', commenced in Pokhara, Nepal on Tuesday, May 30 with 222 delegates from 115 organisations and 22 destinations attending the four-day event.

Organised by the **Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA)** and hosted by the **Nepal Tourism Board** with support from **Event Patron**, the **Pokhara Municipality**, and

Local Partner, the **Pokhara Tourism Council**, the event encompassed various activities over the four-day programme. These included one-day PATA internal meetings for PATA members only (Executive Board & Board Meeting, Chapter Congress, and Government Meeting), a conference and adventure travel mart taking place across two days, the PATA Youth Symposium, and one-day destination experience as well as various networking sessions throughout the event.

*"PATA has enjoyed a long and fruitful relationship with both the Nepal Tourism Board and local industry stakeholders, continuously inspired by their enthusiasm and dedication to the sustainable growth of tourism in the country. That is why the Association was honoured to be able to bring the PATA Annual Summit and Adventure Mart 2023 to Pokhara," said **PATA Chair Peter Semone**. "By bringing together a diverse group of international thought leaders, industry shapers and senior decision-makers from both the*

public and private sectors, our aim was to engage in discussions addressing the challenges and forging solutions for a responsible recovery of the travel and tourism industry, not only in Nepal but also in destinations worldwide. In this manner, PATA remains steadfast in our commitment to facilitating these discussions and working towards our shared objectives.”

On Tuesday, May 30, the PATA Executive Board & Board Meeting, and PATA Chapter Congress took place, which focused on matters of the Association and Chapters respectively. The Government Bilateral Meetings and PATA Government Meetings also occurred at this time, with the latter meeting focusing on the complex issue of Human Capital Development across the region and beyond. The day ended with the Inauguration Ceremony and PATA Awards Presentation, presided over by the Chief Minister of Gandaki Province Honourable **Surendra Raj Pandey**.

The following day began with the main stage conference and a keynote presentation from **Andrew Staples**, Regional Head, (APAC), Policy & Insights, **Economist Impact**, who provided a succinct and engaging overview of global events, movements and trends – both economic, political, and cultural, and what all this means for tourism and its growth in the next two years. This was followed by a series of presentations on “*Insights into the Future of Tourism in the Asia Pacific*” from Dr **Anyu Liu**, Assistant Professor, School of Hotel and Tourism Management, **The Hong Kong Polytechnic University**; **Herbert Yum**, Research Manager, **Euromonitor International**; **Mayur (Mac) Patel**, Head of Asia, **OAG**, and **Sridhar Keppurengan**, Head of Cross Border Payments India & South Asia, **VISA**.

Following a quick break, **Carmen Roberts**, The Travel Show presenter from **BBC News**, moderated a panel session on “*The Challenges and Opportunities for a Responsible Tourism Industry*” with **Dr. Dhananjay Regmi**, CEO, **Nepal Tourism Board (NTB)**; **Dr Abdulla Mausoom**, Minister, **Ministry of Tourism Maldives**;



**Raki Phillips**, Chief Executive Officer, **Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA)**, and **Florian Sengstschnid**, CEO, **Azerbaijan Tourism Board**.

The rest of the day continued with a panel discussion on “*How to Drive Higher Value Tourism*” with **Rosabella Ong**, Principal Client Partner (SEA), **Tripadvisor**; **Lisa Choegyal**, Sustainable Tourism Specialist and Director, **Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge**, and **Upaul Majumdar**, Head of Practice – Tourism, **Dolma Consulting**, moderated by Mr Semone. This was followed by presentations on “*The Return of the Chinese Traveller*” by Prof. **Wolfgang Georg Arlt**, CEO, **China Outbound Tourism Research Institute (COTRI)**; “*The Opportunity of the Indian Market*” by Sanjeet, Director, **DDP Publications Pvt Ltd**; “How can artificial intelligence (AI) drive tourism business” by **Matt Gibson**, CEO, **UpThink**, Thailand; and “Sustainable Tourism Interventions in Nepal” by **Raj Gyawali**, Tourism Strategy and Promotion Expert, **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** and **Binita S. Khadka**, Senior External Relations Officer, **Asian Development Bank (ADB)**. In the later afternoon, the mart began, offering attendees the opportunity to engage in one-on-one meetings to explore potential collaborations and business opportunities with exhibitors from around the region.

The third day of the event began with dynamic panel discussions on “*Managing Crises and Challenges in the Post-Pandemic World*” with Datuk **Musa Hj. Yusof**, Deputy Director General (Promotion), **Tourism Malaysia**; **Madubhani Perera**, Director/ Public Relations, **Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau**, and **Nandini Lahe Thapa**, Senior Director – PR and Publicity, **Nepal Tourism Board**, moderated by **John Bailey**, Chief Operating Officer, **GoCrisis**; “*Activating Partnerships with Communities for Sustainability*” with Lucky Chhetri, Founder Director, **3 Sisters Adventure Trekking**, Nepal; Dr. **Chuwit Mittrchob**, Deputy Director-General, **DASTA**, and **Agnes Luz**, Chief of Party, **USAID Trade and Competitiveness Nepal**, moderated by **Pavnesht Kumar**, Sustainability and Social Responsibility Programme Head, **PATA**; and “*How To Work With Influencers on Social Media*” with **Monayac Karki**, CEO and Co-Founder, **Uptrendly**, Nepal and Mr Gibson, moderated **Shradha Shrestha**, Manager – Tourism Marketing & Promotion, **Nepal Tourism Board**. The afternoon continued with further one-on-one meetings at the mart, as well as the PATA Youth Symposium.

The final day of the event allowed delegates the opportunity to explore the beauty of Pokhara and included visits to Phewa Lake, Davis Falls, Gupeshwor Cave, the Peace Stupa and Shiva Temple.





# New Zealand's business events capability on show at **MEETINGS 2023**

New Zealand's capital, Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington is set to host New Zealand's largest business events showcase **MEETINGS 2023** next week, the first time it has been held in the city.

Staged by **Business Events Industry Aotearoa** (BEIA), **MEETINGS** will be attended by a record number of international and domestic buyers and exhibitors on 21 and 22 June. For the first time in four years, buyers from international markets in BEIA Chief Executive, **Lisa Hopkins** says Aotearoa New Zealand is incredibly appealing to business event organisers, with new infrastructure across the

country, excellent air connectivity, incredibly diverse regional character, strong cultural values, and innovative sustainability practices.

*"Following the opening of New Zealand's second new-generation convention venue, **Tākina Wellington Convention and Exhibition Centre**, Wellington now has the capacity and capability to host large-scale national events such as **MEETINGS**."*

*"Our visiting buyers, who are key event organisers, will have the chance to experience New Zealand's newest state-of-the-art international business events venue in action," she says.*

During two days, across two floors

at Tākina, buyers can pre-schedule appointments of their choice from 224 stands across 19 regions of New Zealand.

Over 100 buyers from Australia, 134 hosted buyers from New Zealand and 10 from international markets including North America and Singapore will attend. Up to 300 day buyers from Wellington and around New Zealand have also registered.

Many Australian hosted buyers are set to stay on and discover more with the support of Air New Zealand and regional business events bureaux. They can choose to visit Auckland, Taupō, Rotorua, Waikato, Hawke's Bay, Marlborough, Christchurch and Canterbury, Dunedin, Queenstown and Southland/Fiordland.

A range of professional development sessions are also part of **MEETINGS**. They include the Tourism New Zealand Knowledge and Destination Hub, Celebrity Speakers Showcase, and a Professional Conference Organisers (PCO) Masterclass.



# Malaysia Airlines successfully implements full suite of Sabre Network Planning and Optimization technology



*Malaysia's national carrier is now using six best-in-class Sabre solutions for enhanced decision support to make the most of every flight as it eyes full capacity recovery.*

**S**OUTH LAKE, TEXAS – **Sabre Corporation**, a leading software and technology provider that powers the global travel industry, announced the successful implementation of a full suite of Sabre Network Planning and Optimization solutions for **Malaysia Airlines**. The carrier has already started using these advanced Sabre solutions to optimize schedules, evaluate existing and future routes and partnerships, and make network planning decisions.

This milestone marks the completion of the second phase of the Sabre solutions implementation with Malaysia Airlines. Earlier this year, Sabre Schedule Manager, Codeshare Manager, and Slot Manager solutions were completed, and the carrier is now also able to utilize Sabre Profit Manager, Fleet Manager, and Network Manager. Together, these solutions give Malaysia Airlines enhanced decision support tools to further improve schedule profitability, and optimize capacity with

demand, aircraft utilization and network connectivity.

*"We're thrilled that we can now take full advantage of a wide range of Sabre solutions as we move forward with ambitious plan to capture, and create, growth in the Malaysian travel ecosystem and post pandemic travel recovery,"* said Mr **Bryan Foong**, Group Chief Strategy Officer, Malaysia Airlines. *"We're seeing the value these solutions are bringing us in making timely schedule changes operationally and profitably to respond to dynamic travel market condition changes as we continue to grow and optimize capacity to meet strong travel demand post pandemic."*

Headquartered in Kuala Lumpur, and part of the wider Malaysian Airlines Group, Malaysia Airlines flies an extensive global network with its own aircraft and through its codeshare partners. The carrier is now focused on ramping up capacity to pre-pandemic levels, and further optimizing its

network and looking at future routes using these enhanced decision support tools by Sabre solutions, including the regeneration plan for Subang Airport, which will be transformed into a city airport hub.

*"Having worked together for more than two decades, we're thrilled to have strengthened our long-standing, and valued, relationship with this important new milestone,"* said **Rakesh Narayanan**, Vice President, Regional General Manager, Asia Pacific, Travel Solutions, Airline Sales. *"For airlines to gain a competitive advantage in today's complex travel market, it is vital that they have the right tools to transition from making decisions based upon historic behaviours and can, instead, create schedules based on advanced analytics. Malaysia Airlines now has an extensive suite of best-in-class network planning tools that will provide them with invaluable decision-making support in their network and fleet management strategies."*

# Fortune Hotels expands its presence in Punjab with the opening of Fortune Inn Heritage Walk Amritsar



**F**ortune Hotels, member of ITC's hotel group opened its maiden property, Fortune Inn Heritage Walk in the pious city of Amritsar. The property is just five minutes from the sacred Harmandir Sahib, better known as the Golden Temple.

Blending in modern elegance with warm hospitality and impeccable services, Fortune Inn Heritage Walk Amritsar features well-appointed rooms and suites, each thoughtfully designed to combine modern amenities with blissful comfort. Guests can choose to try some local fare in the all-day-diner Zodiac, relax and stay connected with high-speed Wi-Fi, or simply stroll around on Heritage Street glimpsing the

old Amritsar city's charm and colour.

Announcing the launch of the hotel, **Samir MC, Managing Director, Fortune Hotels** said, "As we continue to expand our footprint in Punjab, we remain steadfast in our mission to redefine guest experience, driven by a perfect balance of business acumen, unwavering passion, and a deep understanding of the essence of true hospitality. With Fortune Inn Heritage Walk Amritsar, we combine our extensive knowledge of hospitality and genuine appreciation for the cultural tapestry that defines Punjab. By embracing the local traditions, warm hospitality, and top-notch service, this hotel is all set to be a beacon of excellence in the region.

*Boasting a rich cultural heritage, Amritsar is an important pilgrimage destination, making our decision to invest here a strategic and promising one."*

One of the few hotels in this area offering guest parking spaces on their premises, the hotel is conveniently located within proximity to key attractions like Jalianwala Bagh, Durgiana Temple, Wagah Border etc. Fortune Inn Heritage Walk Amritsar offers easy access to the Amritsar International Airport, Railway Station, Nexus Mall and VR Ambarsar Mall. It also serves as an ideal base for exploring nearby cities, with Jalandhar, Pathankot, Ludhiana, and Chandigarh within a reasonable distance.



# 'White Night' Campaign by Tel Aviv Global & Tourism with the Ministry of Tourism Celebrates the 20th Anniversary of Tel Aviv's 'White City' Designation by UNESCO

**T**el Aviv Global & Tourism's "White Night" Campaign marks the 20th anniversary of Tel Aviv being designated the "White City" by UNESCO. The "White Night" is regarded as one of the city's largest cultural events. The all-night celebration features performances, music shows from dusk until dawn, all-night museum access, yoga at sunrise, and much more.

Launched on June 17 through digital platforms, the "White Night" campaign, produced by Tel Aviv Global & Tourism, draws inspiration from the popular social media trend of emulating Wes Anderson's distinctive cinematic style. Anderson, known for his unique eccentricity, visual



finesse, and narrative style, serves as a creative influence for the campaign, to attract art aficionados and culture connoisseurs to the city and the "White Night" festival. The promotional video shows the campaign's protagonist navigating through the iconic "White City" of Tel Aviv, adorned with stunning Bauhaus architecture. The video also displays Anderson-esque elements, such as meticulous symmetry, precise camera movements, and signature colour palettes reminiscent of his films.

The tradition of the "White Night" celebration originated in July 2003 when UNESCO recognized Tel Aviv as the "White City," an urban treasure blending historical significance and architectural uniqueness, earning it the status of a World Heritage Site. Tel Aviv's city centre houses the world's largest collection of Bauhaus buildings, solidifying its distinct position in the realm of modern architecture. This heritage distinction intertwined with Tel Aviv's reputation as the "Non-stop city", combined to give rise to the all-night celebration that has become known as "White Night".

This year, "White Night" will happen on June 29th as Tel Aviv proudly commemorates 20 years since receiving the UNESCO designation. Explore the campaign.





# Air Astana heads to Tel Aviv

**A**ir Astana has opened ticket sales for a new direct flight from Almaty to Tel Aviv, which will be operated twice weekly by Airbus A321neo long-range (LR) aircraft starting in September.

This service represents an expansion of the airline's route network in a new direction and provides the first direct air service between Kazakhstan and Israel.

The flight will depart Almaty at 0430 and

arrive in Tel Aviv at 0815 on Thursdays, whilst on Sundays, it will depart at 0410 with arrival at 0755. Return flights will be operated at 0930 with arrival in Almaty at 1820. All times local.

The duration of the flights will be 6 hours 45 minutes outbound and 5 hours 50 minutes inbound to Almaty.

Air Astana's new-technology A321LRs feature 16 lie-flat business class seats across an alternating

2-2 and 1-1 configuration, as well as 150 economy seats across a 3-3 configuration with 32 inches of legroom.

The cost of a round-trip ticket in economy class starts from US\$603 and from US\$1438 in business class.

Kazakhstan citizens require a visa to enter Israel.

In related news, Air India recently confirmed a frequency increase to five weekly Boeing 787 flights

between its Delhi hub and Tel Aviv.

The city of Tel Aviv is famous for its sandy beaches along the Mediterranean Sea and offers tourists a unique blend of culture, architecture, history, entertainment and cuisine.

"We are delighted to offer our passengers the opportunity to take advantage of the new Air Astana service to Tel Aviv and discover a unique country in the Middle East," commented Air Astana Vice President of Sales and Marketing, Adel Dauletbek.

"Tel Aviv is an exciting city with limitless opportunities for tourism and new discovery. The high level of comfort and quality of service on our flights will make this journey unforgettable."



# Delhi-NCR gets its first Hilton-branded hotel

*Slated to open in 2026, Hilton Sohna Resort & Spa will be suited for leisure, bleisure and MICE travellers*

Hilton has announced the signing of Hilton Sohna Resort and Spa, marking the debut of its flagship brand in the Delhi-NCR region. This marks Hilton's second hotel and management agreement with the Dangayach Group, following the recent landmark signing of the country's first Waldorf Astoria in Jaipur. The Sohna property will also add the third full-service brand to Hilton's current footprint in the Delhi / NCR region besides the DoubleTree by Hilton Baani Square and DoubleTree by Hilton Gurugon.

*"We are excited to bring Hilton's flagship brand to Delhi-NCR and celebrate our deepening partnership with Dangayach Group," said Navjit Ahluwalia, senior vice president and country head, India, Hilton. "As Hilton strategically expands across India, we look forward to welcoming more guests with our signature hospitality and delivering best-in-class performance and returns to our owners."*

*"We are pleased to expand our partnership with the renowned hospitality company Hilton and leverage*

*its strong global reputation and brand equity," said Atul Dangayach, managing director, Dangayach Group. "With its proximity to business centres, good connectivity and planned infrastructure upgrades, Sohna is fast evolving as a popular MICE and leisure destination, and we take great pride in partnering with Hilton to set the benchmark for hospitality with the opening of the first Hilton Hotels and Resorts property in Delhi / NCR."*

Spread across 9.3 acres, the expansive 165-key resort will feature 105 Palace Rooms and 60 Villas and offer captivating vistas of the Aravalli Hills. With 7,500 sqm of indoor and outdoor space dedicated to meetings and social events, the resort is ideal for weekend getaways, destination weddings and corporate events. It will also feature multiple dining outlets, a state-of-the-art fitness centre and a designated spa zone. Located in close proximity to the recently opened Delhi Mumbai Expressway, Hilton Sohna Resort & Spa will offer easy access for travellers from both Delhi and Gurgaon.





# Dipti Ranjan Patnaik

## Appointed as Chairman of Atmosphere

**M**r Patnaik will bring to India the three renowned brands of Atmosphere Core, THE OZEN COLLECTION, COLOURS OF OBLU, and Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts, with two properties already in the pipeline.

Mr Dipti Ranjan Patnaik has recently been appointed as the chairman of Atmosphere Hospitality, a promising new entrant in the Indian hospitality scene. Atmosphere Hospitality is an associate of Atmosphere Core that will bring the distinguished Atmosphere brands to India, namely THE OZEN COLLECTION, COLOURS OF OBLU, and Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts. There are eight successful resorts in the Maldives within these three brands.

Regarding his new appointment, Mr Dipti Ranjan Patnaik says "I feel privileged to take on this role at such an exciting time for the Atmosphere Group, taking the Joy of Giving hospitality to new destinations. Atmosphere Hospitality's collaboration with Atmosphere Core allows us to bring the company's powerful portfolio of brands to India while leveraging their world-class, turnkey solutions."

Mr Dipti Ranjan Patnaik is a well-known name in the mining industry of

India having a strong base in Odisha. He primarily operates in the steel, iron ore mining, and power generation sectors, and has partnered with top companies worldwide.

Born to a renowned business and political family of Keonjhar, Odisha, Mr Patnaik has had a career spanning over 40 years during which he has set up and successfully run various enterprises. A self-made man, Mr Patnaik achieved success through hard work and focused efforts. He was nominated thrice as a Member of The Advisory Committee of Income Tax was honoured with the prestigious Rastriya Samman Award. Besides his strong presence in the mining industry, Mr Patnaik is also dedicated to elevating the hospitality and tourism industry in India through his focused and innovative vision. He has already made significant contributions to the industry by setting up exceptional hotels and resorts in Bhubaneswar, Kalimpong, and Kolkata. And he envisions expanding to various locations in India, Nepal, and Bhutan with Atmosphere Core. Atmosphere Hospitality is set to bring in a fresh and rejuvenating portfolio of resorts that stand out through a focus on hospitality real estate with soul.

Travellers can look forward to vibing with the destination through stays steeped in culture and an authentic sense of place.

Atmosphere Core and Atmosphere Hospitality will debut together in India in Q4 2024 with OZEN MANSION KOLKATA. Enviably located in Kolkata's New Town area, the grand hotel will be reminiscent of an impressive, stately residence with event venues that reflect a timeless elegance.

And bringing the celebrated Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts brand to India is a unique historical experience in Bhopal at Sadar Manzil Heritage By Atmosphere.

**Mr Souvagya Mohapatra, the Managing Director (India, Bhutan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka Operations)**

Atmosphere Core, says "We are honoured to welcome Mr Dipti Ranjan Patnaik as our partner and together we look forward to developing unique properties that will become some of the most sought-after stays in India. Expanding into India is a homecoming for us, with Salil Panigrahi the MD of Atmosphere Core hailing from Odisha. And I'm confident that with Mr Patnaik on board, our strategic plans will soon materialize into tangible achievements."



## Qatar Airways Wins World's Best Business Class and Three More Top Awards at the Skytrax 2023 World Airline Awards

- Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker and Chief Operating Officer of HIA, Engr. Badr Mohammed Al Meer received the awards
- Qatar Airways Scoops World's Best Business Class, Best Airline in the Middle East, World's Best Business Class Lounge and World's Best Business Class Lounge Dining

**Q**atar Airways won the World's Best Business Class award at the esteemed 2023 World Airline Awards event held at the Musée de l'Air et de l'Espace on 20 June at the Paris Air Show. Global customers, for the tenth time, have ranked Qatar Airways as the World's Best Business Class. The awards were received by Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker and Chief Operating Officer of HIA, Engr. Badr Mohammed Al Meer.

Qatar Airways winning the award for its Al Mourjan Lounge at Hamad

International Airport, signals its dominance in the World's Best Business Class Lounge category. The Al Mourjan lounge additionally received the premier accolade for the World's Best Business Class Lounge Dining. Qatar Airways was honoured with the title of Best Airline in the Middle East for the eleventh time in the history of the awards.

**Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker**, said: "Qatar Airways is delighted to win the World's Best Business Class award at this year's Skytrax World Airline Awards. This is

testimony to the collective endeavour in the airline that enables us to deliver an unsurpassed customer experience. Three further awards for Best Airline in the Middle East, World's Best Business Class Lounge and World's Best Business Class Lounge Dining illustrate Qatar Airways' leadership in the sector, as well as its high degree of innovation and commitment."

**Edward Plaisted, CEO of Skytrax** said: "Qatar Airways is a very firm favourite amongst customers and winning these top awards in 2023 demonstrates that their Business Class, both onboard flights and in the airports, stands out well above their competitors. Qatar Airways gained a very close second place finish in the overall global rating, ensuring that Qatar Airways again scooped the award as the Best Airline in the Middle East for 2023 for an eleventh time."





## Minor Hotels announces expansion of Tivoli brand in Italy

*Dillip Rajakarier, Group CEO Minor International and CEO Minor Hotels, the parent company of Tivoli Hotels & Resort: "With a beautiful location on the Adriatic Coast, this property will offer exceptional facilities to both business and leisure guests, with a world-class marina on its doorstep"*

**M**inor Hotels, a hotel owner, operator, and investor, currently with a portfolio of 530 hotels and resorts in 56 countries across Asia Pacific, the Middle East, Europe, the Americas, Africa and the Indian Ocean, announces the debut of its Tivoli Hotels & Resorts brand in Italy, with the addition of a property in Portopiccino, near Trieste, in northern Italy.

The **five-star 58-key Tivoli Portopiccino Sistiana Resort** will launch later this month.

Located in the beautiful Duino Cliffs Nature Reserve on the Gulf of Trieste, the property is within 20 minute's drive of Trieste Airport and features **58 guest rooms** and **73 branded apartments**.

The mixed-use development of Portopiccino overlooks the Adriatic Sea, with its beautiful turquoise waters and a luxury marina, allowing access to multiple ocean adventures.

In addition to several accommodation options, the Portopiccino complex offers hotel guests a great variety of elegant facilities including **four restaurants** and **two bars** with many dining options, **six swimming pools**, a **beach club** with three different areas, an in-hotel wellness and fitness centre, and a 3,600 sqm spa.

The impressive spa facilities include **8 spacious treatment rooms**, including a panoramic couple's spa suite, an outdoor and an indoor pool, saunas and steam rooms.

Tivoli Portopiccino also offers 1,200 sqm of meeting space, with state-of-the-art technology and spread between the hotel premises and the Pavillion, located near the beach.

With this upcoming debut in Italy, Tivoli Hotels & Resorts continues its expansion in Europe where it has recently added a property in Amsterdam in the Netherlands, an all-inclusive resort in Alvor in the Algarve, south of Portugal, and will soon launch in Tenerife in Spain.

In addition, the brand made its Asia debut in 2022 with the launch of Tivoli Chengdu at Cultural Heritage Park in China and is expanding its footprint in the Middle East, where Minor Hotels currently operates three Tivoli properties in Qatar, with two further new-build properties under development in Bahrain to launch in 2025 and in Muscat, Oman, slated to open in 2026.

**Tivoli Portopiccino Sistiana Resort**, a former member of the Marriott Luxury Collection, is part of the Portopiccino complex owned by the "Porto Piccolo Fund", managed by Investire SGR (Group Banca Fimnat),

a leading independent Italian asset management company.

**Dillip Rajakarier, Group CEO Minor International and CEO Minor Hotels, parent company of Tivoli Hotels & Resorts, commented,** "We are delighted to announce this exciting addition to the Tivoli portfolio and the brand's debut in Italy. With a beautiful location on the Adriatic Coast, this property will offer exceptional facilities to both business and leisure guests, with a world-class marina on its doorstep and easy access to the great cultural attractions that northern Italy has to offer. We look forward to working with the team at Investire to bring this property to fruition."

**Federico Velluti, Head of Hospitality and Alternative Markets at Investire SGR, said,** "We're very proud to announce the reopening of the hotel under the Tivoli brand, it will bring a meaningful contribution to the valorisation of the complex. This collaboration reflects our ambitions for Portopiccino and we believe that the partnership with Minor Hotels will be able to create a new world-renowned destination that celebrates luxury in a stunning location surrounded by nature."

With a history that dates back to 1933 in Lisbon, Portugal, and celebrating its 90th anniversary this year, Tivoli Hotels & Resorts stands out for its cultural heritage and authentic connection to each destination.

The brand has expanded from Portugal to Brazil and from Qatar to China and the Netherlands, currently with a portfolio of 16 properties.

# The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa

gets conferred with the most reputable  
Tripadvisor Award 2023



**T**he Metropolitan Hotel & Spa (a.k.a. THE MET), a Five Star Deluxe full-service hotel located in the heart of the business and commercial hub of New Delhi, India continues to win awards and honours and to add to the long list of laurels, the latest happens to be the ‘**Travellers Choice Award**’ by world-renowned travel portal, **Tripadvisor**. The prestigious title is conferred for Hotel’s exceptional service and is the highest accolade a Hotel can ever hope to receive. As for participants, this award challenges

service excellence and highlights the importance of constant improvement. The Award truly puts the Award winners ahead of their peers; adds to the honour, prestige and gives complete global exposure. With this, **THE MET** has touched another milestone and the award won is a fitting tribute to the hard work put in by all concerned and the love of our esteemed patrons. Expressing his happiness at this winning moment, **Mr. Vipul Gupta, Executive Director, The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, says**, “I am extremely proud

that our commitment to the highest standards has been recognized once again with this prestigious award. It is a real statement of an ultimately refined luxury experience for our guests and yet another testament to our continued passion for service excellence in the highly competitive hospitality industry. I am sure that this remarkable outcome will be an inspiration for the entire team to continue reaching for excellence and express our gratification and thank Tripadvisor for appreciating our efforts on such a significant platform.”



# Boeing and Airbus

## Forecast Robust Demand for New Aircraft till 2042

*Air travel outpaces economic growth.*

*Key takeaways*

- *Passenger traffic continues to outpace global economic growth of 2.6%.*
- *The global fleet nearly doubles to 48,600 jets, expanding by 3.5% annually.*
- *Airlines are replacing about half of the global fleet with new, more fuel-efficient models.*

**B**oeing projected demand for 42,600 new commercial jets over the next 20 years on June 17. A press release stated that the demand for aviation travel will exceed global economic growth of 2.6% by 2024 as domestic markets fully recover and international traffic returns to pre-pandemic levels. Approximately fifty per cent of the deliveries will replace older aircraft with more fuel-efficient models, reducing emissions. The value of new aircraft demand is \$8 trillion, while the value of commercial services is \$3.8 trillion.

Between 2023 and 2042, 1,810 Regional Jets, 32,429 Single-Aisle Jets, 7,440 Widebody Jets, and 925 Freighters will be delivered as

per the forecast. At the same time, Airbus increased its development forecast for the aeronautics market in mid-June. The European aircraft manufacturer anticipates demand for 40,850 passengers and cargo aircraft over the next two decades. There is a potential need for 32,630 single-aisle aircraft and 8,220 long-haul aircraft. In 2042, there would be 46,560 aircraft in the global fleet, compared to 22,880. While 5,710 aircraft will remain in service, 17,170 aircraft will be required to address renewal challenges, and 23,680 aircraft will be required to accommodate air traffic growth.

Airbus increased its freighter delivery forecast from 890 to 920





aircraft. This equates to the delivery of 39,930 passenger aircraft, of which Airbus estimates that 80% will be single-aisle flights such as the Airbus A320neo or Boeing 737 MAX. Airbus also significantly increased its forecast for the number of older aircraft to be replaced in the next two decades, from 15,440 to 17,170 units.

As per Boeing, the global aviation industry is on track to return to pre-pandemic traffic levels in 2023, with domestic and regional markets essentially recovered, followed by a rebounding international travel market. The Commercial Market Outlook (CMO) for 2023 provides a long-term forecast for air travel and aeroplane demand in an industry that has experienced

unprecedented disruption over the past three years. As in previous forecasts, it continues to be abundantly clear that the aviation industry is not only exceptionally resilient but also remarkably adaptable to shifting market conditions.

According to this year's CMO, passenger traffic will continue to become more regionally balanced, which predicts demand for over 42,000 new aeroplanes over the next 20 years. Asian markets continue to expand, converging with their North American and Europe counterparts. More than three-quarters of demand will be for single-aisle aircraft, and by 2042, low-cost carriers will account for more than forty per cent of this fleet.

With the easing of global travel restrictions, international markets are recuperating rapidly, with widebodies playing a crucial role in connecting global markets and accounting for nearly a fifth of all aeroplane deliveries over the next two decades. Many carriers are simplifying existing fleets, expanding premium cabin offerings, and providing more point-to-point capacity to adapt to market dynamics. Similarly, the evolution of supply chain models and the expansion of e-commerce continues to fuel robust demand for dedicated freighters.

*"The aviation industry has demonstrated resilience and adaptability after unprecedented disruption, with airlines responding to challenges, simplifying their fleets, improving efficiency and capitalising on resurgent demand," said Boeing senior vice president of Commercial Sales and Marketing Brad McMullen. "Looking to the future of air travel, our 2023 CMO reflects a further evolution of passenger traffic tied to the global growth of the middle class, investments in sustainability, continued growth for low-cost carriers and air cargo demand to serve evolving supply chains and express cargo delivery."*

The aviation industry has demonstrated resilience and adaptability in the face of unprecedented disruption, with airlines responding to challenges, simplifying

their fleets, increasing efficiency, and capitalising on resurgent demand, according to the company's senior vice president of commercial sales and marketing, Brad McMullen.

According to Boeing's projections for regional demand and critical trends through 2042, Asia-Pacific markets will account for more than 40% of global demand, with China accounting for half of that total. South Asia's fleet will increase by more than seven per cent per year, the highest rate globally, with India accounting for more than ninety per cent of the region's passenger traffic. North America and Europe will account for approximately 20% of global demand.

In 2042, low-cost carriers will operate more than 40 per cent of the single-aisle fleet, up from 10 per cent in 1992.

After omitting demand for Russia and Central Asia in last year's CMO due to uncertainty in the region, this year's forecast includes demand for Russia and Central Asia in the Eurasia region, which will account for approximately 3% of the global fleet by 2042.

Commercial Services anticipates a total served market worth \$3.8 trillion, which includes digital solutions that increase efficiency and reduce cost, robust demand for parts and supply chain solutions, expanding maintenance and modification options, and effective training to improve safety and support the pilot and technician pipeline.

In addition, during the 20-year forecast period, Boeing predicts that the demand for new single-aisle aircraft will account for more than 75% of all new deliveries, a modest increase from the 2022 forecast, and will total more than 32,000 aircraft. More than 7,400 new widebody aircraft will be delivered, allowing airlines to enter new markets and efficiently service existing routes. Air cargo will continue to outpace the growth of global commerce, necessitating 2,800 dedicated freighters. This comprises more than 900 new widebodies and narrow-body and widebodies that have been converted.

# WTTC G20

## Public-Private Dialogue shines light on Travel & Tourism opportunities



*Currently representing 9.2% of the world's GDP and supporting one in every 11 jobs globally, the sector is experiencing remarkable growth, outpacing the global economy by growing twice as fast.*

**T**he **World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC)** gathered leading **Travel & Tourism stakeholders** and **G20 Ministers** in a **Public-Private Dialogue** in Goa to address the sector's vast potential and challenges.

Joined by India's Minister of Tourism, the Hon. **G. Kishan Reddy**, and UNWTO Secretary-General **Zurab Pololikashvili**, **Julia Simpson**, WTTC President & CEO commended India's Ministry of Tourism for its leadership during India's G20 Presidency and

highlighted Travel & Tourism's substantial contribution not only to the global economy but to employment.

Currently representing 9.2% of the world's GDP and supporting one in every 11 jobs globally, the sector is experiencing remarkable growth, outpacing the global economy by growing twice as fast.

Julia Simpson, WTTC President & CEO, said: *"It is proven where governments and the private sector work together in Travel & Tourism the*



*economy is stronger, jobs are created, and people get to enjoy and understand other cultures. Together, businesses and governments can build back a better, stronger, and more resilient sector. Governments also heard first-hand the value of having streamlined visa processes, digital borders, and a strong focus on sustainability. We need each other to achieve this”.*

During her address, Simpson emphasised the opportunities for investors, governments, and society to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through collaboration.

India's impressive expansion in Travel & Tourism was praised as a prime example.

The sector is projected to contribute over INR 16.5TN to India's economy this year, create 1.6MN new jobs, to reach a total employment figure of nearly 40MN people.

By the end of the decade, Travel & Tourism is forecast to contribute approximately 7% of India's economy.

During the dialogue, Simpson addressed three key challenges facing the industry.

1. Visa backlogs pose a significant obstacle, with excessive waiting times ranging from 200 days to a year for certain destinations. Investment in digital visas and biometrics, exemplified by Dubai Airport's "smart gates", is a successful example of technology streamlining travel processes.

2. Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) plays a vital role in reducing carbon

emissions, with the potential to cut emissions by up to 80% compared to traditional jet fuel. However, current production levels fall short and WTTC called on all G20 countries to conduct feasibility studies on SAF, to further facilitate decarbonisation

3. Staff shortages resulting from the pandemic continue to be a challenge. Collaborative efforts between governments and the private sector, along with enhanced training programs and targeted support for women, young people, and high-wage jobs will be crucial in addressing this issue

Simpson also highlighted the groundbreaking environmental and social research conducted by WTTC in collaboration with Saudi-based Sustainable Global Tourism Center.

This research offers comprehensive insights into the sector's environmental and social impact, tracking data on wages, age groups, and gender, the research aims to drive progress towards the SDGs.

Simpson also underscored the potential of young people as a talent pool. With 65% of Indians under 35 years old, India's G20 presidency recognises the need to address youth unemployment and create opportunities for this demographic.

New data from WTTC and the Sustainable Global Tourism Center also reveals that the sector experienced a 27.6% growth in youth employment between 2010 and 2019.

Despite dropping in 2020 to almost

*During her address, Simpson emphasised the opportunities for investors, governments, and society to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through collaboration.*

the same level it was a decade before in 2010, sector youth employment appears to be rebounding quickly.

The data also shows that Travel & Tourism's share of youth employment has grown since 2010, from 6.4% in 2010 to 8.2% in 2021.

WTTC's latest research highlights the importance for high-quality jobs that provide dignity in their work, to make the sector an attractive industry for young people to develop their long-term careers.

Businesses from the private sector attending the Public-Private Dialogue included **VFS, VISA, Marriott, IHG, Airbnb, CLIA, The Oberoi Group, Indian Hotels Company Limited and MakeMyTrip.**

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# Air India

**firms up order for 250 Airbus aircraft, select new services**



- A350 aircraft of choice for Air India's renaissance in long-haul travel
- A320 Family to be the cornerstone of Air India's domestic and regional fleet
- IMS services to optimise Air India fleet operational performance
- Skywise: Air India to boost its digital transformation as the launch customer for Core X3

**A**ir India has firmed up its order for 250 Airbus aircraft and selected an Airbus maintenance and digital package to power the airline's transformation and growth strategy.



The aircraft order includes 140 A320neo and 70 A321neo single-aisle aircraft as well as 34 A350-1000 and six A350-900 wide-body jets. The airline had signed a Letter of Intent to acquire these aircraft in February 2023.

Air India will also be counting on Airbus to help ensure the highest level of fleet availability with the Integrated Materials Solutions (IMS) from Satair, an Airbus company. The Airbus-powered maintenance solution will ensure that every time the airline needs a rotatable or a consumable part, it is readily available and stocks are automatically replenished. And in its transformation and digitalisation journey, Air India will be the launch customer for Airbus' Skywise Core X3, the latest and most advanced aviation analytics platform. This once again demonstrates the avant-garde cooperation between Airbus and Air India.

The purchase agreements for the aircraft, as well as the Letters of Intent for maintenance and digital services, were signed in the presence of **N. Chandrasekaran, Chairman of Tata Sons and Air India, Campbell Wilson, CEO & MD of Air India, Guillaume Faury, Airbus CEO, Christian Scherer, Airbus Chief Commercial Officer and Head of International, and Rémi Maillard, President and Managing Director, Airbus India and South Asia** at the Paris Air Show 2023.

**Campbell Wilson, CEO & MD, Air India**, said: "Our

*We are excited to be a key partner in the renaissance of the Flying Maharaja. Under the leadership of the Tata Group and a focussed new management, this is one of the most ambitious projects in the airline business today.*

*ambitious fleet renewal and expansion programme will see Air India operate the most advanced and fuel-efficient aircraft across our route network within five years. We are proud to be working with all our partners, including Airbus, in this journey to rebuild a global airline which reflects India taking a more confident posture around the world."*

*"We are excited to be a key partner in the renaissance of the Flying Maharaja. Under the leadership of the Tata Group and a focussed new management, this is one of the most ambitious projects in the airline business today. We are proud that the efficiencies, comfort and range capability offered by our latest generation aircraft will contribute to the process, as Air India reclaims its rightful position as a world-class premium carrier. The Airbus services*

*package is a perfect future-oriented choice that will form a core element of Air India's transformation," said **Christian Scherer, Chief Commercial Officer and Head of International at Airbus.***

The historic Air India order marks the entry into service of the A350 in India, the world's fastest growing aviation market. The all-new, long-range aircraft will help unlock the pent-up potential of India's long-haul market, its technology, reach and second-to-none comfort enabling new routes and passenger experience with better economics and enhanced sustainability. Alongside the A350s, the A320 Family fleets will be the efficient, versatile asset to continue democratising and decarbonising air travel in India – from domestic, regional, up to international levels. Deliveries are set to commence with the first

A350-900 before the end of 2023.

The A350 is the world's most modern and efficient wide-body aircraft in the 300-410 seater category. The A350's clean sheet design includes state-of-the-art technologies and aerodynamics delivering unmatched standards of efficiency and comfort. Its new generation engines and use of lightweight materials delivers a 25 percent advantage in fuel burn, operating costs and carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions, compared to previous generation competitor aircraft.

The aircraft offers a 3-class configuration cabin that is the quietest of any twin-aisle and offers passengers and crew the most modern in-flight products for the most comfortable long-range flying experience.

The A321neo is the longest-fuselage member of Airbus' best-selling, single-aisle A320 Family, comfortably seating 180 to 220 passengers in a typical two-class layout, and as many as 244 in a higher-density arrangement. The A320neo has already set the standards as the world's most comfortable short-to-medium-haul aircraft that typically accommodates from 140 to 170 passengers, with a maximum capacity of up to 180 travellers. Its environmental performance allows for at least 20 per cent less fuel burn and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as well as 50 per cent noise footprint reduction, compared to previous generation aircraft.

# EaseMyTrip strengthens its leadership team and elevates Nutan Gupta as its Chief Operating Officer

*Nutan Gupta has been associated with the brand since 2018 as its President Alliance. In her new role, she will be responsible for business strategy and growth*



**E**aseMyTrip.com, one of India's largest online travel tech platforms, elevates Nutan Gupta as its Chief Operating Officer (COO). In her new role, she will be overseeing key functional areas such as business strategy and development, operations and supplier-building initiatives for the company.

Nutan Gupta joined EaseMyTrip in 2018 as President Alliance and during her tenure, she was the integral part, contributing towards building the brand and supplier relationship. Prior to this, Nutan Gupta has worked with various renowned firms helping them achieve

their business goals.

She is a professional bringing over 30 years of experience in the aviation, travel and tourism industries, wherein she has held multifaceted portfolios in leadership roles, both in airlines and tour companies. She is well recognised for her spirit of never giving up, strong will power and hard work. Nutan Gupta has handled diverse roles in key areas of Sales and Marketing, Market Research and Business Development, Revenue Management, International Relations and Brand Building. Her core expertise lies in devising and successfully implementing business

strategies for seamless operations for startups in the aviation sector and various tour companies. Additionally, Nutan Gupta was closely involved in foundation building, forward planning, financial strategy and conceptualisation and the launch of marketing campaigns for companies.

**Mrs. Nutan Gupta, COO, EaseMyTrip**, said, "EaseMyTrip's journey has been inspiring. In a short span, the company has established itself as a successful brand in the travel and tourism industry. It is working with an innovative business model and is doing all it takes to fulfill its customers' evolving demands. It's an honour to be associated with such a progressive and nurturing company and I am excited as I adorn the new role of a COO. With my industry expertise and the team's passion and skillsets, we will together take the brand to greater heights."

**Mr. Rikant Pittie, Co-Founder, EaseMyTrip**, said, "Nutan Gupta has been associated with us for over five years now and has contributed significantly to the brand's growth with her business acumen and impeccable leadership. We are delighted as she takes over the new role as the COO of the company and extend our best wishes and support. We are confident that she will continue to drive the company's growth and help EaseMyTrip reach the zenith. With her innovative mindset, creative outlook and in-depth understanding of the industry, we intend to etch a promising future for the company. We strongly believe that Mrs Gupta's vast experience, business insight, industry relationships will be a guiding force for EaseMyTrip."



## India's IndiGo places record order for 500 A320 Family aircraft

IndiGo, India's largest airline by market share, has placed a firm order for 500 A320 Family aircraft, setting the record for the biggest single purchase agreement in the history of commercial aviation. The latest agreement takes the total number of Airbus aircraft on order by IndiGo to 1,330, establishing its position as the world's biggest A320 Family customer.

The historic purchase agreement was signed by Rahul Bhatia, Promoter & Managing Director of IndiGo, Dr. Venkataramani Sumantran, Chairman and Non-Executive Independent Director of IndiGo, Pieter Elbers, CEO of IndiGo, Guillaume Faury, Airbus CEO, and Christian Scherer, Airbus Chief Commercial Officer and Head of International, at the Paris Air Show 2023.

**Pieter Elbers, CEO of IndiGo,** said, "It is difficult to overstate the significance of IndiGo's new historic order for 500 Airbus A320 Family aircraft. An order book now of almost 1000 aircraft well into the next decade, enables IndiGo to fulfil its mission to continue to boost economic growth, social cohesion and mobility in India. At IndiGo, we take pride in being India's preferred airline for connectivity in and with India; and by doing so, being one of the leading airlines in the world. This order strongly reaffirms IndiGo's belief in



*the growth of India, in the A320 Family and in our strategic partnership with Airbus."*

*"This landmark order marks a new chapter in Airbus and IndiGo's relationship that is democratising affordable air travel for millions of people in the world's fastest growing aviation market. It is also a resounding endorsement of the A320 Family's best-in-class operating economics that have been powering IndiGo's growth for almost two decades. We cherish our long-standing relationship with IndiGo and are proud of our success together. We look forward to contributing to the growth of India's air connectivity in its domestic network and into international markets through the expansion of this formidable partnership", said **Christian Scherer, Chief Commercial Officer and Head of International at Airbus.***

New Delhi-headquartered IndiGo is among the fastest growing carriers in the world. Since its first A320neo

aircraft was delivered in March 2016, its fleet of A320neo Family has grown into one of the world's largest with 264 aircraft in operation (162 A320neo, 79 A321neo, 21 A320ceo and 2 A321 freighters). IndiGo placed its first order with Airbus in 2005 (100 A320 Family) and again in 2011 (180 A320 Family including the NEO), in 2014 (250neo Family), and in 2019 (300 A320neo Family) taking its previous total order book to 830 A320 Family aircraft.

Over the last two decades, the A320neo has been instrumental in democratising air travel in India as an expanding economy and rising disposable incomes continue to add millions of first-time flyers to a booming aviation market.

Worldwide, the A320 Family is the undisputed leader in the single-aisle aircraft category. The aircraft has the widest single-aisle cabin in the sky that incorporates the very latest technologies. It features enhanced aerodynamics and the latest-generation jet engines, resulting in significant reductions in fuel consumption and lower emissions. With more than 8,700 orders from over 130 customers, the A320neo Family is the aircraft Family of choice for airlines around the world across all business models.





## Air Mauritius confirms the order for three A350 aircraft

*Air Mauritius has confirmed an order for three A350 aircraft to expand its network in Europe and South Asia.*

**T**he three latest generation aircraft will bring Air Mauritius' A350 fleet to a total of seven. The airline already operates four A350 and four A330 Airbus aircraft.

"Air Mauritius is proud to renew its confidence in Airbus and its products, continuing a three-decade long partnership. The additional A350-900 aircraft will help us strengthen our European network and secure further growth in other markets. We are looking forward to achieving our ambitious objectives together with Airbus," said **Mr Kresimir Kucko, CEO of Air Mauritius.**

*"We compliment Air Mauritius on putting the A350 at the heart of its long-haul fleet modernisation programme. With greater range capability, better economics, passenger capacity and comfort, the A350 is the perfect platform to connect the beautiful island of Mauritius to the world,"* said **Christian Scherer, Chief Commercial Officer and Head of International at Airbus.**

The A350 is the world's most modern and efficient widebody aircraft and the long range leader in the 300-410 seater category. The A350 offers

the longest range capability of any commercial airliner Family in production today with a range of up to 9,700nm non-stop.

The A350's clean sheet design includes state-of-the-art technologies and aerodynamics delivering unmatched standards of efficiency and comfort. Its new generation engines and use of lightweight materials make it the most fuel efficient large widebody aircraft. The A350 is the quietest aircraft in its class with 50 percent noise footprint reduction vs the previous generation aircraft.

# Air Canada Named World's Most Family Friendly Airline and Top Canadian Carrier at 2023 Skytrax World Airline Awards

*Air Canada is the first winner of new global award for family friendly travel*

- *Best Airline in Canada*
- *Best Airline Staff in Canada*
- *Air Canada Rouge Best Low-Cost Airline in Canada*

**A**ir Canada has been recognized as the world's most family-friendly airline at the 2023 Skytrax World Airline Awards presented at the Paris Air Show. The carrier was also named the Best Airline in Canada, its employees won for Best Airline Staff in Canada, and Air Canada Rouge was declared the Best Low-Cost Airline in Canada.

*"These awards recognize Air Canada's industry leadership in Canada and the world. But the real winners are our employees, who work very hard every day taking care of our customers*

*and delivering them safely to their destinations. I thank our employees for their dedication, and I also thank our customers for acknowledging their work by participating in the 2023 Skytrax awards survey, which garnered more than 20 million submissions worldwide,"* said **Michael Rousseau, President and Chief Executive Officer of Air Canada.**

Among the awards given to Air Canada at the ceremony was a new global award for family-friendly child-specific travel. Skytrax cited Air Canada's work in family seating

polices, dedicated family check-in facilities, priority boarding, children's meals, children's amenities/toys/activity packs, child specific onboard entertainment, free checked luggage and policies for carrycot/pushchairs, and the standard of service assistance from ground staff and cabin crew during the travel experience.

*"We are thrilled to be recognized with the inaugural Skytrax award for Most Family Friendly Airline. Air Canada takes pride in connecting family and loved ones through travel where celebrations and life-long memories are made.*

*We're continuing to introduce still more family-focused initiatives through our onboard products, services and Aeroplan Family Sharing, and we look forward to welcoming even more families onboard throughout our global network,"* said Mr Rousseau.





## Vistara Scores a Hat-trick:

# Awarded 'Best Airline in India and South Asia' for Third Consecutive Year; Named 16th Best Airline Globally at 2023 World Airline Awards by Skytrax



(Deepak Rajawat, Chief Commercial Officer, Vistara (second from left) and Rashmi Soni, VP & Head – Corporate Communications, Vistara (extreme right) receiving the awards along with Vistara team at the World Airline Awards 2023 by Skytrax)

- 'Best Airline Staff in India and South Asia for the fifth consecutive year
- Best Cabin Crew in India and South Asia for the third time in a row
- Best Business Class Airline in India and South Asia for the second consecutive year

Vistara, India's finest full-service carrier and a joint venture between Tata Sons and Singapore Airlines, has been ranked 16th worldwide, moving four places up from last year, at the 2023 World Airline Awards by Skytrax. This makes Vistara the only Indian carrier to



feature in the list of the World's Top 20 Airlines for the second time in a row. Additionally, the airline also won several prestigious awards including 'Best Airline in India and South Asia' for the third consecutive year, 'Best Airline Staff in India and South Asia' for the fifth time in a row, 'Best Cabin Crew in India and South Asia' for the third consecutive year and 'Best Business Class Airline in India and South Asia' for the second time. The award ceremony took place amidst the grandeur of the Paris Air Show 2023 at the iconic Musée de l'air et de l'espace.

Vistara also secured the 8th position, moving up by one rank from last year, amongst the 'Best Airlines in Asia 2023'. The airline ranked 20th amongst 'World's Best Airline Cabin Crew 2023' and 19th in the category of the 'World's Best Inflight Entertainment 2023'.

Vistara was voted for by travellers globally (from over 100 nationalities), as the World Airline Awards are based on the world's largest airline passenger satisfaction survey of more than 20.23 million travellers for the period between September 2022 and May 2023.

**Vinod Kannan, Chief Executive Officer, Vistara** said, "We are overjoyed to have done it again! It is extremely gratifying for all of us at Vistara to be awarded the Best Airline in India and South Asia for the third time, and Best Airline Staff in India and South Asia for the fifth time. We are also ranked 16<sup>th</sup> amongst the world's best airlines along with winning these stellar accolades at 2023 World Airline Awards by Skytrax. These awards are a strong endorsement of our customers' trust in our thoughtful service, consistent operational excellence and constant innovations, all aimed at elevating their travel experience. These awards are also a recognition of the hard work put in by our employees, especially the frontline teams, who have given their all to Vistara throughout our eight years of existence. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Skytrax for these coveted

awards which strengthen our resolve to delight our customers at every touchpoint and on every journey."

Congratulating Vistara and commenting on the awards, **Edward Plaisted, CEO, Skytrax** said, "We congratulate Vistara on the fantastic achievement of winning this award as the Best Airline in India & South Asia. The double success of scooping the award for the Best Airline Staff in India & South Asia for the fifth time is an unprecedented achievement in this region."

Vistara is India's highest-rated airline on multiple industry forums and has also been the winner of several 'Best Airline' awards. In a short span of over eight years since starting operations, Vistara has raised the bar for operations and service standards in the Indian aviation industry.

#### List of titles Vistara has won at Skytrax World Airline Awards since 2016

##### 2016

- Most Loved Airline

##### 2018

- Best Airline Staff – Central Asia and India
- Best Airline – India
- Best Cabin Crew – India

##### 2019

- Best Airline Staff – Central Asia and India

##### 2021

- Best Airline in India and Southern Asia
- Best Airline Staff in India & Southern Asia
- Best Cabin Crew in India & Southern Asia
- Highest rank in India for Cabin Cleanliness

##### 2022

- Best Airline in India and Southern Asia
- Best Airline Staff in India & Southern Asia
- Best Cabin Crew in India & Southern Asia

- Best Business Class in India and Southern Asia
- Entered the list of the World's Top 20 Airlines for the first time ever

#### 2023

- Best Airline in India and South Asia
- Best Airline Staff in India and South Asia
- Best Cabin Crew in India and South Asia
- Best Business Class Airline in India and South Asia
- Ranked 16 Worldwide; The only Indian airline to feature amongst World's Top 20 Airlines
- Ranked 8th amongst the Best Airlines in Asia 2023
- Ranked 20th amongst World's Best Airline Cabin Crew 2023
- Ranked 19th in the category of the World's Best Inflight Entertainment 2023

#### THE 2023 WORLD AIRLINE AWARDS

The World Airline Awards are wholly independent and impartial, introduced in 1999 to provide a customer satisfaction study that was truly global. Travellers across the world vote in the largest airline passenger satisfaction survey to determine the award winners. The awards are referred to by media around the world as "the Oscars of the aviation industry".

All costs of the Survey and Awards event are paid by Skytrax, and airlines do not pay any entry or registration fee. There are no charges for use of the Award logos and results.

The online customer survey operated from September 2022 to May 2023, together with invitations sent to previous year respondents in the survey database. The customer survey was provided in English, French, Spanish, Russian, Japanese and Chinese. Over 100 customer nationalities participated in the 2022/2023 survey with 20.23 million eligible entries counted in the results. Survey entries are screened to identify IP and user information, with all duplicate, suspect or ineligible entries deleted. More than 325 airlines are featured in the final Award results.



# Centara readies for Osaka opening

**C**entara Hotels & Resorts, Thailand's leading hotel operator, announces it will open its newest property, Centara Grand Hotel Osaka, on 1 July 2023.

This long-awaited milestone marks Centara's first-ever foray into the vibrant Japanese market. It comes after months of meticulous planning – from exquisite architecture and sophisticated design to crafting impeccable menus and preparing to welcome







guests worldwide with its signature warm hospitality, impeccable service, and Thai family values at the heart of every stay.

Centara Grand Hotel Osaka is a stunning 33-storey masterpiece in the heart of Namba, downtown's vibrant shopping and entertainment

district, just a few minutes walk to the nearest subway station. Poised to become a sought-after destination for business and leisure travellers alike, this breathtaking urban oasis delivers an eclectic selection of world-class bars and restaurants, including rooftop venues with spectacular skyline views,

as well as a fully-equipped fitness centre, co-working spaces and the award-winning SPA Cenvaree.

An elegant selection of 515 rooms and suites caters to the needs of every guest, each featuring stunning floor-to-ceiling windows and modern comforts to ensure a restful stay. Centara Grand Osaka also boasts many customisable event spaces, including meeting rooms, a Grand Ballroom and the exceptional rooftop Sky Event space, making it the ideal venue for hosting social, corporate and MICE events downtown.

In anticipation of the grand opening and its ongoing commitment to providing guests with an unparalleled customer experience, Centara offers two sensational new travel packages, the pampering Spa + Stay Experience and the culinary-led Sky-High Gourmet Escape.

#### **Spa + Stay Experience**

Escape the hustle and bustle of the city and immerse yourself in a world of tranquillity and relaxation at Japan's first-ever SPA Cenvaree with the Spa + Stay Experience. Let your worries melt away with a rejuvenating Thai couple's massage, complemented by an unforgettable stay in the hotel's sophisticated guest rooms and daily breakfast for two. The Spa + Stay Experience is available to book until 31 December 2023 for stays from 1 July to 31 December 2023.

#### **Sky-High Gourmet Escape**

Culinary enthusiasts will never forget the dazzling panoramic views of downtown Osaka as they experience an unparalleled journey of exquisite flavours and innovative creations meticulously crafted by world-class chefs as part of the Sky-High Gourmet Escape. In addition to a two-course rooftop dinner with 90-minute free-flow drinks, guests can spend the night in luxury in a tastefully appointed guest room and wake up to delight in the hotel's delectable breakfast. Bookings are open until 31 December 2023 for stays from 1 July to 31 December 2023.





## Travel and tourism industry deal activity plummets by 41% YoY in January-May 2023, reveals GlobalData

*The US, the UK, India, France, Australia and Japan witnessed significant YoY decline of 48%, 48%, 33%, 7%, 29% and 54%, respectively, in deals volume during January to May 2023.*

**T**he travel and tourism industry has witnessed a massive 41% year-on-year (YoY) decline in deal activity from 475 deals announced during January-May 2022 to 282\* during the first five months of 2023, reveals GlobalData, a leading data and analytics company.

**Aurojyoti Bose**, Lead Analyst at GlobalData, comments: *“The decline in deal activity in the industry indicates dampened sentiments and cautious approach of investors. The ongoing uncertainties and impact of the geopolitical tensions, inflation and recession fears have forced deal makers to adopt a more conservative approach.”*

All the deal types under coverage

registered a decline in volume. For instance, merger and acquisitions (M&A) deals volume decreased by 43% while the number of venture financing deals and private equity deals YoY declined by 34% and 44%, respectively, from January to May 2023.

Bose continues: *“The industry also witnessed a substantial YoY decline in deal activity across most of the regions worldwide during the period.”*

North America experienced a decline of 48% in deals volume from January to May 2023 compared to the same period during the previous year while Europe, Asia-Pacific and South and Central America regions registered a decline of 49%, 27% and 36%,

respectively. Meanwhile, deal volume for the Middle East and Africa region remained unchanged.

The US, the UK, India, France, Australia and Japan witnessed significant YoY declines of 48%, 48%, 33%, 7%, 29% and 54%, respectively, in deals volume from January to May 2023.

Bose concludes: *“On the other hand, easing of travel restrictions seems to be encouraging Chinese travellers. As a result, China stood out as a notable exception and registered a 19% YoY growth in the number of deals announced during the period.”*

*\*Mergers & acquisitions, private equity, and venture financing deals.*

*Note: Historic data may change in case some deals get added to previous months because of a delay in the disclosure of information in the public domain.*

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