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**Cambodia,
your next
great escape**

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**A world
united in
festivity**

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**Sustainability
drives Vasudha
Sondhi's vision**

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Dear readers,

Welcome to the celebratory months of the year, where we are thrilled to present an immersive exploration of ASEAN's (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) vibrant cultural landscape. This month, our focus is on Cambodia, a jewel of Southeast Asia renowned for its ancient temples and rich heritage. Our feature will transport you to this captivating country, revealing its historical treasures and cultural marvels.

Our journey in the month of September extends beyond Cambodia to encompass all ten ASEAN member nations including Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Each country brings its own unique flair to the region, particularly through its festivals. October is a month brimming with celebrations across ASEAN, offering a perfect opportunity to delve into the rich tapestry of regional traditions. Thadingyut Festival in Myanmar, Cambodia's Pchum Ben, Hari Raya Haji festival unites Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore, The Philippines' Kadayawan Festival, Indonesia's Ubud Writers & Readers Festival, and Vietnam's Tet Trung Thu also known as the 'Mid-Autumn Festival'.

As you decide which festival to attend, enjoy reading features from some of the most influential leaders shaping the travel industry. Vasudha Sodhi, Managing Director of Outbound Marketing Pvt. Ltd. and co-founder of Parvada Bungalows, talks about the innovations in the hospitality sector. Mukesh Kumar Meshram, Principal Secretary of Uttar Pradesh's Department of Tourism and Culture, discusses transformative initiatives in UP Tourism and Michael Goh, President of Resorts World Cruises, shares insights on the evolving luxury cruise sector.

Join us as we explore ASEAN countries and the festivals that light them up.

Enjoy the journey!

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Anil Kalsi's journey of passion and dedication

Uttar Pradesh: Rising to the top as India's premier tourist hub for global and local travellers

Uttar Pradesh is rapidly emerging as one of India's most sought-after tourist destinations, drawing both domestic and international visitors to its rich cultural, historical and spiritual sites. Mukesh Kumar Meshram, Principal Secretary of the Department of Tourism and Culture, Government of Uttar Pradesh, sheds light on the state's ambitious strategies to boost tourism, particularly in Bundelkhand, Ayodhya and the Kumbh Mela.

By Ayushi Anand



A multi-faceted approach towards strategic marketing

The Uttar Pradesh Tourism Board has prepared a multidimensional promotion plan not only to showcase Uttar Pradesh's potential for tourism before the country and the world but also to attract maximum tourists to the state. At the domestic level, this includes social media campaigning, influencer marketing, participating in travel trade shows and advertisement through the print and digital mediums. For attracting more tourists to the state, the board also arranges familiarisation trips for travel agents, tour operators and media persons. Internationally, Uttar Pradesh is being anchored through overseas offices in crucial markets such as Dubai, Singapore and London. World travel fairs and targeted online campaigns are the other initiatives. The State collaborates with international

tour operators and travel agencies and conducts cultural events abroad to showcase UP's rich heritage.

Be it Bundelkhand, Ayodhya or the Kumbh, the state has a strategy that focuses on their respective attractions. Bundelkhand's natural beauty and wildlife is being promoted along with its eco-tourism initiatives. Similarly, Ayodhya's spiritualism is being sold as pilgrimage packages, while Kumbh Mela with its profound cultural and religious significance is being pitched as special tour packages for national and international tourists.

Impressive boost in tourism

Uttar Pradesh is fast emerging as "India's Most Favoured Tourism Destination" both internationally and domestically. In 2022, the state has witnessed an incredible surge in domestic tourist visits of 32 crores (No. 1 in India) as compared to foreign tourist arrivals of 6.5 lakhs (No. 5 in India).

About 3 lakh tourists will be visiting Ayodhya every day as per Niti Aayog and as per an estimate, about 6.8 crores of both domestic and international tourists will be visiting Ayodhya till 2030. This inflow is boosted with the inauguration of the Ram Mandir, which estimates the amount of tourism revenue in Ayodhya to be approximately INR 55,000 crore yearly. The brokerage firm Jefferies expects the makeover to bring in roughly 50 million tourists every year, along with the opening of a new airport and reinvestment in infrastructure.

Accommodation challenge in Ayodhya

This surge in the numbers will definitely

create a challenge of accommodation in Ayodhya. To address this, Uttar Pradesh is promoting homestays through various initiatives aimed at boosting rural tourism. The state has formed a Project Management Unit (PMU) and activated a few agencies for home-stay infrastructure development in picturesque rural areas. The collaborations have been made with organisations such as The Naturalist School and Bewajah Samiti that organise nature guide-training and storytelling workshops for improving the visitor experience. These initiatives make rural communities develop a sustainable source of income while providing opportunities for visitors to have real cultural experiences.

Managing tourist influx during festivals

Religious festivals in Uttar Pradesh become the focal tourist attractions, mainly because of Ayodhya, but also during the Kumbh Mela. Ayodhya witnesses 10,000-20,000 tourists on a regular day, which becomes at least a million during festivals like Ram Navami and Diwali. The religious Mela of Kumbh, organised every 12 years, attracts the flow of 30-50 million tourists within 48 days.

There are immense measures to manage these surges that are undertaken through crowd control, enhanced security and provision of emergency services. Apart from this, the Prayagraj Development Authority, responsible for Kumbh Mela, undertakes crowd management systems, varied safety measures, including CCTV surveillance, sanitation and disaster management plans.

Collaboration with local communities

Making the tourists' experience safe and enriching requires cooperation from the local community. Uttar Pradesh is developing iconic tourism circuits like the Ramayan Circuit and Buddhist Circuit, building infrastructure and promoting unknown destinations. The state focuses on eco-tourism with sustainable practices. It helps the local communities to reap benefits through initiatives like home stays. Hospitality and sustainable tourism-related training programs are undertaken so that locals can actively participate and benefit from tourism.

Embracing technology

Technology in UP Tourism is used to project UP's destinations and facilitate the best possible experience for tourists. This would include a website and mobile application detailing information on attractions, accommodation and information on tour packages. Features would include socially interacting with tourists, doing transactions digitally, tourist guide with GPS, smart city, augmented reality, data analysis and intelligent transportation systems. Use of the augmented reality, data analytics and intelligent transportation systems only reconfirms the commitment of UP toward including technology within the purview of its tourism strategy.

Bundelkhand: Rich both culturally and historically

Bundelkhand, loaded with the past and other cultural traditions, is being marketed for tourism. Majestic forts like Kalinjar Fort, Jhansi Fort, Rampura Fort, Samthar Fort and Baruasagar Fort showcase a blend of Rajput and Pratihara architecture. Notable temple sites include the Dashavtar Temple in Lalitpur, the Rahila Sun Temple and the Devgarh Jain Temple, all famous for their stunning architecture and intricate sculptures. The natural beauty of Bundelkhand, with its picturesque landscapes, hills and rivers, adds to its allure.



The serene Betwa River offers opportunities for water sports and boat rides, enhancing the region's appeal to tourists.

Ecotourism and sustainable development

UP Tourism has concrete vision and commitment on eco-tourism and sustainable tourism in Ayodhya, Bundelkhand and Kumbh. Its state Eco-Tourism Development Board, however, formed in 2022, is reaching out in inter-departmental efforts to promote environmental best practices and help the locals develop strands of sustainable tourism initiatives: top of the list is the promotion of eco-friendly accommodations, nature-based tourism activities and waste management programs.

Preserving mythological and historical heritage

UP Tourism is also of the belief that this rich mythological and historical heritage preserved and promoted through Bundelkhand, Kumbh and Ayodhya would be a great initiative. Such initiatives involve mythological trails, heritage walk, on-site attraction of ancient traditions, collaborations with religious institutions, digital content including community engagement, and events that will definitely

make the visitor relate to these places not just at the surface level but in a deeper spiritual and historical context.

Improving tourism experience and infrastructure

Making the visitor experience memorable, UP Tourism is investing into infrastructure development, namely in the areas of roads, hotels and amenities. The state is also enhancing tourist facilities with regard to guided tours, interpretation centres and audiovisual presentations. Keeping sustainable tourism practices in mind, existing environment and local heritage is being conserved and efforts are combined with the local communities for fresh and original visits for the tourists.

Future events and attractions

Looking ahead, UP Tourism has lined up a calendar full of events and fests, from Bundelkhand and Kumbh to Ayodhya, that will attract tourists to visit the state. Now, with the infrastructure upgradation being carried out by the state and the new push being given to sustainable tourism, Uttar Pradesh certainly becomes a perfect destination for any tourist looking at an enriching cultural and spiritual experience.



Germany's cultural treasures: New UNESCO sites stand in spotlight

Germany has recently seen a notable enhancement of its cultural heritage with the inclusion of two new sites in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

By Anubha Surana

The UNESCO committee has acknowledged the Residence Ensemble Schwerin and the Saxon settlements of the Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine, bringing Germany's total number of UNESCO sites to 54. This achievement firmly places Germany among the top three countries with the highest number of UNESCO sites globally.

Germany's growing heritage

Germany has been the leading cultural travel destination for Europeans for over a decade, and these new additions further enrich the reasons for travellers to explore the nation's remarkable heritage.

The Residence Ensemble Schwerin combines stunning architecture with

natural beauty which showcases the flourishing court culture of the 19th century. At its heart is the grand palace, surrounded by picturesque lakes. The site also includes a court theatre, museum and various administrative buildings, making it a significant cultural landmark in Mecklenburg Vorpommern, which already boasts two UNESCO sites: the historic old towns of Stralsund and Wismar.

The settlements of the Moravian Brethren, founded in the Saxon town of Herrnhut, have also been added to the UNESCO list. This community is seen as a model for religious and social organisation, its influence extending to the planning and architecture of more than 30 settlements around the

world. Following Muskauer Park and the Ore Mountains, this marks the third UNESCO site in Saxony.

For those eager to explore Germany's UNESCO sites, the German National Tourist Board has curated eight unique UNESCO routes, catering to a variety of interests. From family-friendly itineraries to wellness-focused journeys, there is something for everyone.

Romit Theophilus, Director of Marketing and Sales Office of GNTO India, said, "We are proud to have 54 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Germany, showcasing Germany's rich cultural and natural heritage. These sites are not only important to Germany but also for Indian travellers who love exploring these hidden gems."



CHUCHAI BURI
Sri Amphawa



CHUCHAI BURI SRI AMPHAWA HOTEL - SONGKHRAM THAILAND -

The Hotel is located in Amphawa District, Samut Songkhram Province, about 90 km. southwest of Bangkok. It is on the way to Hua Hin, another famous destination in Thailand. The hotel setting is located on the bank of Amphawa Canal, about 700 meters away from the center of the town where the floating and local market, restaurants, and governmental offices are located. The famous Chulamanee Temple and King Rama 2 Memorial Park are also nearby.

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Bin Ali Tourism expands horizons from UAE to the world by unveiling bold plans for Vision 2030

Bin Ali Tourism LLC, a well-established Destination Management Company (DMC) based in the UAE with more than 14 years of experience in Dubai, has unveiled an ambitious plan as a part of its VISION 2030 growth strategy.

By Anubha Surana



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It has decided to move away from being predominantly an inbound tourism company from India to a DMC that will be able to handle both inbound and outbound travel from the UAE. Their goal is to emerge as a leader in the DMC

sector in the UAE, managing travel across multiple countries.

The strategy also involves expanding its reach into tier 2 cities across India, building on the strengths gained in tier 1 cities over the past decade. For the second half of 2024, the company has planned a range of activities, including hosting a VIP familiarisation tour for its top-performing trade partners from India in Dubai in early September. This will be followed by their participation in Abu Dhabi Tourism's upcoming roadshow in three cities of India, which will exhibit the first edition of the Melange Expo in Mumbai and welcome a prominent tourism professional to their Board of Directors.

Jeetu Frantz, founder and managing director, said, "India is a vibrant and resilient market that has a deep connect with UAE for business and leisure. Our deeper dive into Tier 2 cities is based on a robust strategy, built on the tested experience of over 14 years across Tier 1 cities. This is matched with our brand equity built locally in the UAE amongst hotels and attractions. In short, we are now capable of handling traffic from many Tier 2 cities with our well-heeled team of B2B sales and operations."

Frantz, further said, "Our 2030 strategic direction will be driven with the induction of a seasoned tourism professional onto the Board of Directors and fueled by expanding our business footprint not only within the UAE but to

include GCC and beyond. We have made a major investment into our visa capacity which is now being geared to cater to the growth that we anticipate. Further we will be looking more closely at bilateral movement of passengers from East Africa and North America."

Commenting on the VIP FAM, Frantz added "It was time to honour our top performing heroes of Bin Ali's India B2B trade channel. Accordingly, we have invited 10 of our best performers on an exclusive FAM that include indulging with a stay at Atlantis - The Royal and One & Only One Zabeel, two iconic luxury properties in Dubai, UAE. The members of the FAM educational visit will further experience curated visits to Sea World, Qasr Al Watan and Museum of Dubai.

They will also have an opportunity to network with other Dubai stakeholder partners."

Kyp Charalambous, Vice President Sales, Atlantis Dubai, said, "Bin Ali Tourism LLC has consistently demonstrated exceptional performance, and we value our continued partnership with them. Their VIP trade FAM visit showcases their dedication to fostering stronger ties with Atlantis Dubai, and we look forward to playing a key role in their ambitious expansion plans. We are excited to welcome an even greater influx of inbound visitors from India and other markets, further solidifying our shared commitment to excellence and growth."



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Discover Dholavira's luxury at 'White Rann, The Tent City'

Evoke Experiences has recently unveiled its latest venture, "White Rann, The Tent City," situated in Dholavira, Gujarat, which will offer the travellers a unique chance to discover the breathtaking landscapes and rich cultural heritage of Kutch.

By Anubha Surana



"White Rann, The Tent City" offers an immersive experience that seamlessly combines luxury with adventure. The journey to this extraordinary location is as memorable as the stay itself, particularly with the introduction of the "Road to Heaven." This 30-kilometre scenic route links Khavda to Dholavira, leading travellers through the vast white salt desert of the Great Rann, where the horizon appears to blend into the sky, creating a mesmerising atmosphere. As one travels along this ethereal "Road to Heaven," the landscape not only captivates with its endless salt flats but also springs to life with the vibrant presence of flamingos. "We're thrilled to introduce another exceptional property in India, a destination we believe is still underexplored. Evoke Experiences is committed to bringing unique travel experiences to hidden gems and this new property embodies that vision. We can't wait for travellers to discover the magic of this less-talked-about locale, where culture, nature and luxury converge. Our goal

is to inspire curiosity and provide an unforgettable stay that truly captures the spirit of this remarkable destination," said Bhavik Sheth, COO of Evoke Experiences. At "White Rann, The Tent City," every moment celebrates nature, history and culture. The day adventures are truly a hit but the celebrations don't stop there. The evening comes alive with cultural performances that feature Kutch's traditional music and dance. The luxurious tented accommodations provide comfort so that guests can unwind. Yoga sessions are also held for rejuvenating in the nature's lap. People can also enjoy national and international cuisine during their stay. For those searching for an immersive travel experience that reveals the true spirit of Kutch, "White Rann, The Tent City" by Evoke Experiences offers the perfect escape. With seamless transfers from Bhuj Railway Station, Bhuj Airport and Dhordo, guests can look forward to a smooth and stress-free journey into the heart of this remarkable destination.



Imagine a bustling village in Punjab. Beautiful mud houses, lassi being churned, men busy in animated discussions on their charpais, children climbing trees, artisans creating something beautiful, women singing a soulful melodies, a group of youngsters breaking into a joyful dance.

THAT'S
SADDA PIND
Best Tourist Destination in Amritsar



WHAT IS SADDA PIND?

Sadda Pind is a vibrant, living museum that offers visitors an immersive experience into the art, culture, and rich heritage of rural Punjab and transports you back in time, allowing you to experience the traditional ways of life in Punjab. Situated in the holy city of Amritsar, just 8 KM from Golden Temple and 7 KM from Airport, Sadda Pind offers a perfect setting for a weekend getaway or a short stay with family and friends. The elderly can remember their happier times. Foreign tourists can sample the true Indian rustic lifestyle.

WHAT CAN YOU DO HERE?

At Sadda Pind, experience the vibrant culture of Punjab with folk dances, music, handicrafts, and local cuisine. It offers day packages and you can also stay here overnight. You can learn a traditional art or create a masterpiece of your own. Punjabi jutti, clay toys and utensils, ironwork, durries, agricultural implements are some of the traditional arts showcased here. At Sadda Pind, treat your senses to the vibrance and beats of traditional Punjabi folk dances like Bhangra, Gidha, Jhumar and Kikli.



CULINARY EXPERIENCES

Your trip to Punjab is incomplete without savouring its authentic flavours. At Sadda Pind, you can sample the traditional North Indian or authentic Punjabi cuisine at Chayee Ji Ka Vehra, the Dhaba at Sadda Pind. We offer an ala carte menu as well as a traditional thali. Kadhi chawal, amritsari naan, lassi, makki di roti, sarso da saag, naan, missi roti, gulab jamun & kheer are a few of our specialities.

STAY EXPERIENCE SADDA PIND

Staying at Sadda Pind is an unforgettable experience. You can enjoy bhangra, gidha on the beats of dhol and music and can also participate in dance with over artists. Sadda Pind offers 20 spacious and comfortable guest rooms. Each room has been choicely designed with rustic motifs, offering you an experience of a traditional Punjabi village. It is an experience of a life time and we would want you to have it.



• HOW TO REACH SADDA PIND

Sadda Pind is located in Amritsar which is easily accessible from anywhere in India by

🚆 By Train | ✈️ By Air | 🚗 By Road

• BEST TIME TO VISIT

Open year-round to visitors.

• WHO CAN VISIT

Sadda Pind is a living museum of Punjabi village culture, perfect for families, friends and colleagues. Enjoy a day visit or stay overnight, with attractions for all ages and interests.

SADDA PIND PACKAGES

A day package allows you to spend whole day at Sadda Pind. It offers a complete tour of the place along with fun filled activities. You can experience the traditions, culture, flavours & celebrations of Punjab. You can also book a night stay at Sadda Pind.



Plan Your Visit Today

Experience the magic of Punjab at Sadda Pind, where every visit is a homecoming. Book your stay today and discover why Sadda Pind is the most talked-about destination in Amritsar.

For further information, visit www.saddapind.co.in or call: +91 99152 44999 | email: info@saddapind.co.in

Saudi Arabia tourism soars: Vision 2030 milestones achieved early

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its 2024 Article IV Consultation report has highlighted Saudi Arabia's tourism sector as a major contributor to the country's economic diversification.



Saudi Arabia has surpassed the tourism targets set by Vision 2030. The goal was to attract 100 million visitors annually by the year 2030 which was achieved seven years earlier than planned. In 2023, tourism revenues reached \$36 billion, with a 38 per cent increase in net tourism income. The sector's contribution to the nation's GDP, both directly and indirectly, was 11.5 per cent in 2023 and it is anticipated to rise to 16 per cent by 2034.

This remarkable breakthrough was driven by robust domestic demand and a surge in international arrivals. The rise of non-religious tourism has been particularly significant, with

leisure travel and visits to friends and relatives increasing, supported by high-profile international events such as Formula One, the 2027 Asian Cup and the 2030 World Expo. The report that IMF has provided highlights the shift in Saudi Arabia's service balance to a surplus, driven by tourism. Saudi Arabia is now earning more from international visitors than it is spending on outbound tourism, achieving a positive balance in 2022 and seeing further gains in 2023, particularly through increased revenues from transportation and service exports. The transformation of Saudi Arabia's tourism sector is the result of its extensive connections across various

industries, including food and beverage, travel, cultural industries and accommodation, which are helping to reduce the country's dependence on oil-intensive sectors. Significant projects such as Red Sea Global and Diriyah Gate are crucial to this shift, focusing on luxury tourism, cultural preservation and infrastructure development. Vision 2030 remains Saudi Arabia's comprehensive plan for economic reform, with tourism playing a central role. The IMF's recognition of Saudi Arabia's achievements underscores the substantial potential of its tourism sector to drive sustainable economic growth in the future.

Annie Smakratthagit returns to lead Asia at TravelBullz



TravelBullz has appointed Khun JatnipsisSmakratthagit, known to many as Annie, as the new Regional Director for Asia. It is her second tenure with TravelBullz.

Based in Bangkok, Smakratthagit will play a key role in overseeing sourcing and relationship development across the Asian supply chain. Her educational background includes a degree in Hotel Management from Vancouver, Canada and an advanced course in Hotel Revenue Management at Cornell University, with a specialisation in pricing and demand strategies. She is also proficient in Thai, Chinese and English, having obtained a certificate in the Chinese language.

She brings over 21 years of experience in the hospitality and online travel trade industries, having held positions with renowned hotel brands such as Dusit Thani, Sofitel, Marriott, The Chedi, Ramada and Grand Millennium.

Deepak Raj Joshi returns as CEO of the Nepal Tourism Board



Deepak Raj Joshi has been reappointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Nepal Tourism Board. Joshi, who previously held the position from December 2015 until January 2020, has been selected for a second term after a comprehensive selection process.

The reappointment was decided during a Thursday meeting of the Board of Directors. Joshi was among three finalists chosen by a subcommittee led by Indu Ghimire, the joint secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation. The other contenders included former CEO Dhananjaya Regmi and Gyaneshwar Singh Mahato, both shortlisted from a total of 14 applicants. The CEO role had remained vacant since 28 January 2024, following the conclusion of Regmi's term.

Discover Cambodia: An ultimate travel guide to the 'Kingdom of Wonders'

The gem of Southeast Asia, Cambodia, has the richness of historical and cultural heritage, with serene natural beauty. It has a perfect blend of ancient temples and pristine beaches, strong culinary traditions and vibrant cities. Whether you are an adventurer or just in search of lesson-rich cultural experiences, Cambodia is the place to visit.

By Vaidehi Kaushik



The country is deeply rooted in Buddhism. This affects the lives of people living there to a great extent. In recent years, Cambodia has become an increasingly popular destination for travellers seeking a mix of history, culture and natural beauty. From the pristine beaches of Sihanoukville to the remote temples of Preah Vihear, Cambodia offers diverse experiences for everyone. Also known as the 'Kingdom of Wonder' and is home to the river-Tonlé Sap, which reverses its flow seasonally. This natural phenomenon supports one of Southeast Asia's largest freshwater fisheries.

Best time to visit

With a tropical climate throughout the year, Cambodia offers two distinguished seasons - dry and wet. The country is better visited during the dry stretch, which is between November and March,

characterised by cooler temperatures and the lowest amount of rainfall. This period is best for visiting the temples, beaches and indulging in many outdoor activities and festivals such as Angkor Wat half marathon in November, ChaulChnam Khmer event (Cambodian New Year) in mid-April, Visakha Pooja (Buddha's Birth) in May or June, Pchum Ben (Festival of the dead) in October and Bon Om Tuk (Water Festival) in November.

The wet season falls between June and October due to the heavy rains, especially in the afternoons. However, this creates beautiful sceneries with lush vegetation and less congestion of tourists. It allows for good exploration if one does not mind a downpour.

Places to visit

The temples of Angkor Wat

Angkor is a UNESCO World Heritage

Site, dominated by the magnificent temple of Angkor Wat—an architectural masterpiece and the most extensive religious monument in the world. This ancient city was constructed by the great Khmer Empire, has more than one thousand buildings that houses some of the most beautiful temples including - Bayon with its enigmatic faces of stone, Ta Prohm, smothered by the roots of giant tree and the huge Angkor Thom. This is one of the many attractions in Angkor Wat which is dedicated to the Hindu God Vishnu. The site testifies to the extent of magnificence of Khmer architecture.

Discover the royal splendour of Phnom Penh

The blending of old-world charm with the energy of today's urban life makes Phnom Penh a popular tourist destination. The capital city has



It is a busy place with markets, riverside cafés, and a nascent arts scene. The Angkor National Museum is worth visiting to get a deeper understanding of the history related to the Angkor temples.

Experience the countryside charm of Battambang

Often overshadowed, Battambang is Cambodia's second biggest urban area and offers the traveller a rare glimpse into the countryside. The town holds massive stretches of French colonial architecture and is also the home of the bamboo train, the shaky train that shudders its way along a single rail and has become a tourist attraction. Out in the countryside are the pre-Angkor temples and caves which one must visit.

Sample the flavours and views of Kampot and Kep

Kampot is well-known for its pepper plantations and the nearby Bokor Hill Station, which was a former French resort town and offers lovely views over the Gulf of Thailand. Kep, just a short drive from Kampot, is known for its seafood, particularly its crab dishes and the nearby Rabbit Island offers a more peaceful getaway with lovely beaches.

attractions such as the Royal Palace which should be visited for its stunning Silver Pagoda, the National Museum housing ancient Khmer artifacts and the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum. On the riverfront one can take a stroll near the lively markets, trendy cafes and shake a leg or two at the hip night clubs. Wat Phnom is a historic pagoda seated atop the city's only hill, offering views in all directions.

Unwind on the beaches of Sihanoukville

Sihanoukville features white sand beaches and clear waters. Famous spots of Sihanoukville are the Serendipity Beach which is popular for its nightlife and activities, Ochheuteal Beach which is favoured for its long stretch of sand and beachfront amenities and Otres Beach which is laid-back and has a secluded atmosphere, perfect for people looking for a quiet experience. Sihanoukville also serves as the gateway to nearby islands, such as Koh Rong and Koh Rong Samloem, which

are known for their pristine beauty and outstanding coral reefs. Sihanoukville has grown into a bustling town with casinos, a myriad of hotels and restaurants which cater to many food enthusiasts, thus making it a haven for tourists and expats.

Explore ancient wonders in Siem Reap

Siem Reap is the gateway to Angkor Wat and it is a small town with mixed colonial and Chinese-style architecture.





Watch the sunrise at Angkor Wat

Angkor Wat is a stunning blend of spirituality and symmetry, an enduring example of humanity's devotion to the gods. During March and September, the sun rises directly over the central tower of Angkor Wat.

Experience the elephant valley project

Under the Elephant Valley Project, people can walk with the herd of elephants in a sanctuary situated in Monduliri, a beautiful mountain valley. Elephant riding is strictly prohibited here, people can simply walk through the forest with the elephants and observe them in their natural habitat. In the process, you learn about elephant behaviour as well as Indigenous Bunong culture and forest ecology.

Sign up for Cambodian cooking class

Cambodia is not that well known in international food circles. But Khmer cuisine is pretty special, with a great variety of national dishes, offering a unique Cambodian twist. To learn some amazing cooking tricks, you can sign up for a cooking course. This is a great way to introduce your Cambodian experience to your friends back home by knowing the difference between your teuk Trey (fish sauce) from your prahok (fish paste).

Must try dishes

Fish Amok

Made with coconut, this dish is a curry-based preparation with ingredients such as a chock-full of freshwater fish, lemongrass, turmeric and other traditional Khmer spices. The whole

Adventure awaits in Ratanakiri

Situated in the far northeast, Ratanakiri is a real haven for adventurous travellers. This place is graced with ethnic minority villages, volcanic lakes and waterfalls. The Yak Lom Lake, full of crystal-clear crater water, is ideal for swimming and picnic.

Riverside serenity and cultural riches of Kratie

A picturesque province in northeastern Cambodia, Kratie is renowned for its charming riverside town and the rare Irrawaddy dolphins in the Mekong River. The town features French colonial architecture and offers stunning sunset views over the river. Visitors can explore the nearby Koh Trong Island, known for its traditional Khmer lifestyle, or venture to the Phnom Sombok, a hilltop pagoda with panoramic views. Kratie serves as a peaceful retreat, blending natural beauty with cultural experiences, making it a must-visit destination for those exploring Cambodia.

Things to do

Take a cruise on the Mekong River

Experience life along the Mekong River—Southeast Asia's longest river, flowing through countries such as China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. Take a river cruise to see rural landscapes and floating villages of Cambodia from a unique perspective. The river is most magical during the sunset, offering stunning views of the horizon. Mekong River cruise boat, Toum Tiou is the first Cambodian cruise boat which offers international standard of accommodation.

Trek to the Cardamom Mountains

In the southwest of Cambodia lies the Cardamom Mountains, with opportunities for trekking, wildlife spotting and eco-tourism. The site is home to several endangered species, such as elephants and tigers and is also one of the largest rainforests in Southeast Asia.



with rice, fried egg and a tangy dipping sauce made from lime juice and black pepper. It is very popular among the people of Cambodia. It is marinated in soy sauce to give it flavour, followed by a stir fry with onions, garlic, and tomatoes.

Kuy Teav

This is a popular noodle soup made from a clear broth. It has rice noodles in it and you can order it with either beef, pork or chicken. Garnished with fresh herbs, bean sprouts and lime, this is one refreshing, comforting meal that can be enjoyed at any time of the day.

Places to stay

Luxury hotels

Cambodia has quite a number of splendid high-end hotels and resorts. In Siem Reap, the Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor and the Amansara Resort come with unparalleled services. In the capital of Cambodia, there are the Rosewood Phnom Penh and the Sofitel Phnom Penh Phokeethra offering exceptional services.

thing is steamed in banana leaves, which imparts the mix with a fragrant and rich flavour that nearly melts in your mouth. It is a perfect introduction to Cambodian cuisine.

Samlor Korkor

Popular as Cambodia's national dish, Samlor Korkor is a hearty and nourishing soup made from a variety of vegetables, fish, or pork and flavoured with prahok (fermented fish paste), kroeung (a traditional spice paste) and roasted ground rice. The strong flavours are deep and earthy and have made this dish a staple in Khmer homes for generations.

Bai Sach Chrouk

It is a famous breakfast in Cambodia made simply by adding grilled pork to rice. Thin slices of pork are marinated in coconut milk and garlic, then grilled to perfection. Combine that with broken rice, pickled vegetables, cucumber and a side of clear broth and you have a comforting morning meal. It is simple yet delicious.

Nom banh chok

It is known as the Cambodian pasta, but maybe even more accurately, nom banh chok is a Cambodian dish of thin rice noodles—chilled with a touch of green—topped with a fish-based, lemongrass, turmeric, kaffir lime and herbaceous sauce. Fresh herbs, bean sprouts, and banana blossoms add texture and freshness to the dish.

Lok Lak

It is actually a stir-fried beef dish served





Mid-range hotels

Travellers can select budget friendly and comfortable stays across Cambodia. In Siem Reap, Shinta Mani Shack and the Golden Temple Hotel can be opted whereas in Phnom Penh the Plantation Urban Resort and the White Mansion would be a few good options.

Budget-friendly hostels

Cambodia is also one of the meccas for budget travellers. There is a wide spectrum of hostels and guesthouses found across the country. The best ones in Siem Reap include the Mad Monkey Hostel and the Lub d Cambodia and in Phnom Penh one can select between the Onederz Hostel and Eighty8 Backpackers.

Eco-friendly stays

Expect a few eco-lodges and resorts for eco-friendly travel in Cambodia. 4 Rivers Floating Lodge in the Cardamom Mountains and the Song Saa Private Island in Koh Rong are highly recommended for those wanting to stay in style leaving a low ecological footprint on the planet.

Cambodia is quite a land of contrasts: ancient history against the charm of today and nature in its splendid attire against cities teeming with life. Be



it the enigmatic temples of Angkor, peaceful beaches in the south or the pulsing energy of its cities, Cambodia never fails to make an impression.

Visa requirements for tourists

Only ASEAN Countries are allowed VISA free entry in Cambodia. Most nationalities can obtain the Cambodia Visa on Arrival (VOA) at all international airports, seaports and land border crossings in Thailand, Vietnam and Laos. Cambodia Visa on Arrival is issued for stays up to 30 days, single-entry only, although a one-month extension is possible. VOA can be obtained at Phnom Penh and Siem Reap international airports and all international land border crossings from Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. The VOA fee is 30 USD payable in US dollars only.

How to reach

By air

To travel to Cambodia by air, you will need to book a flight to one of the major airports, with Phnom Penh International Airport (PNH) in the capital city being the most common entry point. Siem Reap International Airport (REP) is another popular option, especially for those visiting the Angkor Wat temples.

By land

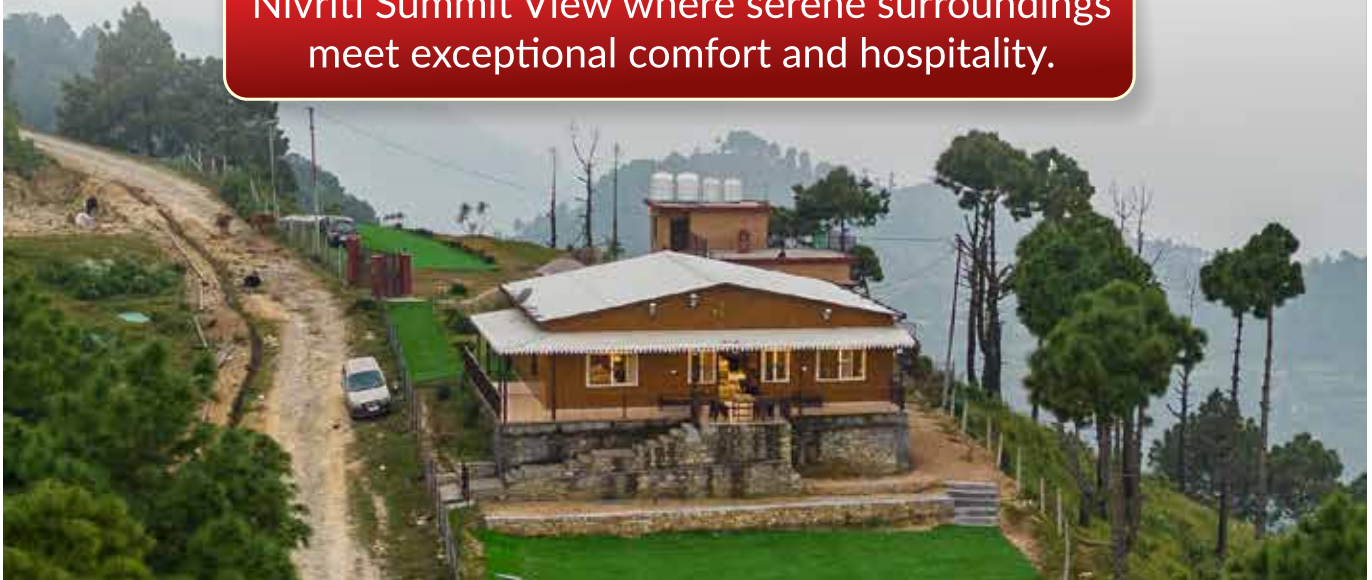
Cambodia can be reached by land from Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos. Buses and taxis run from the border towns of Poipet (Thailand) and Bavet (Vietnam). The journey is long and can be quite wearisome; thus, this option is for those who seek adventure.



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Global Celebrations: The largest festivals in October 2024

October 2024 is indeed an exciting month for festival-goers around the world, with a diverse variety of cultural celebrations and events spanning continents. From the vibrant spectacle of hot air balloons in New Mexico to the serene spiritual festivals of Southeast Asia, there is something for every traveller.

By Vaidehi Kaushik

Whether it's sailing through the Mediterranean at the Barcelona Regatta, dancing the nights away at the Amsterdam Dance Event, or immersing oneself in ancient traditions like Ramnagar Ramlila in India, these festivals offer unforgettable experiences that showcase the unique traditions, artistry and spirit of each destination.



Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta

Dates: 5-13 October, 2024

Location: Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA

The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta is the largest hot air balloon festival in the world. Hundreds of colourful balloons rise into the skies above Albuquerque each October in mass numbers. Some of the most significant events of the festival include the Dawn Patrol, where balloons glow against the pre-dawn sky and Night Magic Glow, where balloons light up the night. One should not miss the Special Shape Rodeo with uniquely shaped balloons, which is the highlight of the event.



Barcelona Regatta

Dates: 12-20 October 2024

Location: Genoa, Italy

The Barcelona Regatta is one of the top sailing competitions of the Mediterranean Sea, hosting the world's greatest sailors from every corner of the globe. The starting point is Genoa, Italy, with a challenging route headed towards the endpoint at Barcelona in Spain. Different competitive racing categories, such as monohulls and multihulls, ensure action for an entire week in front of the viewers. Thereafter, the event closes with the award ceremony in Barcelona.

Oktoberfest

Dates: 21 September - 6 October, 2024

Venue: Munich, Germany

Oktoberfest is the largest beer festival in the world which takes place annually in Munich, Germany. This 16-day fest combines classic Bavarian folk music, excellent food and plenty of beer. Many different beer tents are available to visitors, all having varied atmospheres and choices of Munich-brewed beers on tap. The parade of brewers and traditional costume parade are among the major happenings of the festival.



Berlin Festival of Lights
Dates: 4-13 October, 2024
Location: Berlin

The Berlin Festival of Lights transforms the city's key landmarks into a living, breathing canvas of light and colour. For more than ten consecutive nights, legendary locations such as the Brandenburg Gate, Berlin Cathedral and the TV Tower are bathed in kaleidoscopic light installations and projections. It is thus a must visit fest for any photographer or night owl, featuring guided night tours, light-seeing boat trips and a photography contest.

Amsterdam Dance Event (ADE)
Dates: 16-20 October, 2024
Location: Amsterdam, Netherlands

The Amsterdam Dance Event is the world's first electronic music conference and festival. Over five days, ADE hosts more than 1,000 events across 200 venues, with top DJs, producers and fans of electronic music from all over the world. This event brings together a large-scale daytime conference with a nighttime festival program, thus enabling one to learn about trends in electronic music and network with industry professionals.

Ramnagar Ramlila
Dates: 2-21 October, 2024
Location: Ramnagar, Varanasi, India

Ramnagar Ramlila is the oldest and one of the most famous Ramlila across the world, which is actually a dramatic enactment of Lord Rama's life. This month-long festival culminates with performances in October, which come alive with the ancient epic of Ramayana. This is the longest Ramlila, dating back 200 years which also makes it a UNESCO Cultural Heritage Site. This is held in various locations across Ramnagar, with the grand finale taking place at the Ramnagar Fort. Being



deeply linked with tradition, these performances offer a spiritual and cultural experience.



Ziro Festival of Music
Dates: 3-6 October, 2024
Location: Ziro Valley, Arunachal Pradesh, India

The Ziro Festival of Music is among the most picturesque music festivals in India, based in the serene Ziro Valley of Arunachal Pradesh. It is a four-day event with a repertoire of indie, folk and rock music by local and international artists. This festival incorporates eco-friendly practices, hence offering a unique opportunity to merge oneself with the beauty of the valley while enjoying a variety of musical performances.

Thadingyut Festival
Dates: October 2024
Location: Myanmar

The Thadingyut Festival, also known as the Festival of Lights, marks the end of the Buddhist Lent. It is a nationwide celebration with streets illuminated by candles, lanterns and electric lights, symbolising the Buddha's descent from heaven. This three-day festival involves religious activities like offering alms to monks and paying respect to elders, along with vibrant performances, feasts and community gatherings.



Pchum Ben

Dates: September-October 2024

Location: Cambodia

Pchum Ben is one of Cambodia's most important religious festivals, a time to honour ancestors and loved ones who have passed away. Families gather at pagodas to offer food to monks and pray for the spirits of the dead. Pagodas across Cambodia become centres of activity with offerings, religious chanting and traditional ceremonies that blend spiritual reverence with cultural traditions.



Ubud Writers & Readers Festival

Dates: 18-22, October, 2024

Location: Ubud, Bali, Indonesia

The Ubud Writers & Readers Festival is one of Asia's leading literary events, gathering authors, poets, artists and thinkers from around the world. Set in the beautiful town of Ubud, the festival features panel discussions, workshops and performances that explore literature, culture and global issues. The event offers a rich cultural experience, blending intellect with art in the heart of Bali. Even when October comes to end, the memories of these diverse festivals will still linger. Whether it's the colourful skies of Albuquerque, the illuminated landmarks of Berlin, or the spiritual depth of the Thadingyut and Pchum Ben festivals, these events will stay in the hearts of people, forever. As the world comes together to celebrate, October 2024 serves as a reminder of the shared joy and connection found

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“The hospitality industry is no longer about just a roof over your head—it’s where experiences are made and memories are created,” Vasudha Sondhi

Shedding light on India’s ever changing hospitality sector, Vasudha Sondhi, managing director, Outbound Marketing Pvt. Ltd. and co-founder of Parvada Bungalows, explains the current trends that are re-shaping the travel industry.

By Ayushi Anand



With years of exposure and a deep understanding of market dynamics, she has an edge while explaining current trends that are rewriting almost everything about travel and accommodation. “It is an industry that no longer focuses on putting a roof over someone’s head but has evolved into a platform where experiences are made and memories are created. From destination weddings, which mix travel with personal milestones, to multi-generational leisure travel—nothing has shaped the sector more than answering the modern traveller’s changing needs,” she said.

According to her, one of the major changes must be, greater emphasis on

wellbeing and sustainability. It is the uniqueness, a desire to be authentic and finding meaningful connections that travellers are looking for. To this effect, the hospitality industry has begun changing and embracing these trends.

Ensuring exceptional customer service

Extreme personalisation is critical when it comes to delivering enhanced customer service. In particular, luxury travellers want the best. “Travellers today are sophisticated and evolved, viewing travel as part of their lifestyle. Especially luxury travellers expect high standards because they already live in beautiful homes. Exceptional customer service means understanding each guest’s specific needs, recognising them without being intrusive, offering dining experiences that go beyond just preferences and allergies but are also conscious and making them feel genuinely welcome. It’s about providing an extreme level of personalisation,” she said. Hence, going beyond the ordinary is what one should focus on.

Technology is nothing new to the hospitality sector. Sondhi claimed that she is greatly excited about new developments that lower environmental impact. She emphasises on how technology seamlessly integrates with each aspect of hospitality services today, from booking systems to guest services, “We’re particularly excited about innovations that help reduce the environmental impact of events, such as Melia’s partnership with Creast, a technology company specialising in

measuring, reducing and offsetting the environmental impact of events, offers MICE clients a tool for rigorous and traceable CO2 calculation, considering transportation, energy and water use, materials, waste, catering, and accommodation services. Technology is integrated into food and beverage services, front office operations, rooms division, booking, service, guest complaint, history, and more,” she said.

Beating industry challenges

Challenges to any business industry are apparent. For the hospitality industry, Sondhi mentioned the shortage of skilful manpower. Therefore, her establishments emphasise on total training programs and constant development. Another challenge would be to adjust the services to customer requirements in new markets, like India where constant refining and fine-tuning must be done.

Promotion of new tourist places and commitment to sustainability

New destinations in travel require sensitivity to the directions that the market is taking and a great reliance on reports from various tourism organisations. This keeps Sondhi at the cutting edge of knowledge and ensures that new destinations are effectively thrust to the fore. The other foundation of Sondhi’s strategy is sustainable tourism. All her hotels are leaders in this area, with initiatives ranging from the rehabilitation programmes for local communities like skilling and tree planting, to waste and food

management initiatives in Uttarakhand. This commitment to sustainability is increasingly earning the interest of corporate and MICE travellers for responsible travelling.

Managing seasonal fluctuations in tourism

Managing the seasonal fluctuations of tourist demand is a delicate balancing act. Sondhi commented that there is barely a “low season” due to the strategic management of high and shoulder seasons. The success of outbound travel in 2023 and 2024 has filtered through to early bookings for 2025, which heralds a booming industry with absolutely no signs of any slowdown.

“For our brands we have already started bookings for 2025. So, it is just busy and busier. In Uttarakhand, our sustainable model allows us to utilise resources efficiently year-round. Our team work in our orchards when we don’t have guests or simply go home to plough their fields,” she mentioned.

The role of cultural heritage and successful marketing strategy

Cultural heritage assumes a very significant role in tourism marketing campaigns. At present, Sondhi is actively promoting an initiative being taken up by the Santani hotels’ owner, who has a game-changing partnership with the Australian government on the subject of ‘how cultural tourism could create programs inclusive of traditional Sri Lankan arts, crafts and wellness practices to exhibit how cultural tourism can save heritage for generations to come.’ Any great marketing strategy needs to consist of a proper understanding of the product, audience and timing. Here, the role of social media and digital marketing is instrumental in targeting a very large audience and creating a community of loyal travellers. Metrics such as website traffic and engagement rate help refine strategies for campaigns to be successful in the future.



Vasudha Sondhi’s homestay- Parvada Bungalows in Mukteshwar

Staying ahead of the trends and overcoming marketing hiccups

Keeping up with the changing market trends is what Sondhi and her team at Outbound Marketing do best. Ever since the company was started 22 years ago, they have always been on their toes, watching out for changes happening around them in the industry by embracing new technologies and consumer behaviours. This proactive approach keeps strategies fresh, relevant and effective in a fast-changing industry. One of the major marketing challenges Sondhi faced was how to adapt quickly to the emergence of digital marketing. She did this by upskilling her team, investing in new technologies and partnering with digital marketing experts on developing a web presence and reach.

Inspiration and advice for the next generation

When asked about Sondhi’s inspiration, she described Thangam Philip, a pioneer in hotel management education in India. According to Sondhi, it is the dynamic energy of the hotels, guest interactions and the fun of rising to a challenge that drew her into the hospitality industry. Her advice for people starting a career in hospitality and tourism marketing is never to stop being curious, passionate and keep

learning. It’s all about building strong relationships and deeply understanding the audience. She said that creativity matters, but it is the readiness to change and innovate in this ever-evolving field. Talking about the essential skills required to succeed in the field she said, “In a nutshell one must enjoy the servicesector and enjoy handling people. Essential skills include strong communication, adaptability, problem-solving, creativity and a deep understanding of customer needs. Leadership and the ability to work well under pressure are also crucial. Lastly one needs to be very disciplined, have the energy through good health to work long hours and withstand the pressure.” Sondhi has provided detailed insights into the present and future scenario in the hospitality sector, from personalisation to technology and sustainability with the strategic balancing of resources for the complex task of running a hospitality business enterprise in a dynamic and ever-changing environment. Her innovation and adaptability, coupled with her deep passion for the industry, are an inspiration not only to current professionals but also to future generation entering the field. Her experiences underline knowledge of the market trends, learning and continuous development of meaningful and unique experiences for travellers.

Jumeriah Appoints Julien Soyez as Vice President of Communications

With an impressive history in luxury fashion and lifestyle communications, Julien Soyez has been appointed as the new Vice President of Communications at Jumeirah. He holds a Master's Degree in Communication from Sorbonne University in Paris.



Soyez has led significant events and cultural initiatives and is set to enhance Jumeirah's communication strategy, boosting the brand's visibility as it expands into new markets globally. Before joining

Jumeirah, Soyez worked at Gucci in Milan, where he held the role of Worldwide Press Director. His career also spans roles in Paris and the Middle East with renowned global brands such as Cartier, Louis Vuitton, and Marc Jacobs. Based at Jumeirah's corporate office in Dubai and reporting directly to Chief Brand Officer, Micheal Grieve, Soyez will manage all aspects of Jumeirah's communications and social media activities.

On his appointment, Grieve commented, "Julien will play a crucial role in steering our communication strategies in line with the evolution of the Jumeirah brand. His deep understanding of luxury narratives, along with his extensive network, will be instrumental as we look to enhance our visibility with a blend of culture, conversation, and connection that builds

our reputation as a brand of influence – both in the Middle East and globally. With plans to expand our portfolio into new destinations across the globe, Julien's international experience and exposure to art, fashion, and culture will help us identify and leverage the right opportunities to further enhance our brand perception in the luxury hospitality sector." While talking about this new role, Soyez said, "Joining Jumeirah at this transformative time is an incredibly exciting opportunity. The brand's commitment to growth and innovation in the luxury hospitality sector is inspiring, and I look forward to leveraging my experience to help it achieve its future ambitions. Together with Michael and the wider team, we will write an exciting new chapter for Jumeirah."

Vaibhav Verma to lead Udman Hotels' bold expansion



Vaibhav Verma has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of a distinguished brand in boutique and luxury hospitality, Udman Hotels and Resorts. He has been

in the industry for 28 years hence bringing a wealth of experience and insight that perfectly aligns with the goals of Udman for the future.

For taking the brand to the next phase of strategic growth, there is an expansion plan to increase the portfolio from 7 boutique and luxury hotels to 50 within the next five years. This transformative period is in the right hands of Verma who has a proven track record in managing and leading teams perfectly. He has worked with brands such as Bestwestern, Business World Magazine, Accor Hotels, ITC Fortune Hotels, JHM Interstate Hotels, Taiping Carpets and Jaypee Hotels. His pre-opening and operational experience were demonstrated while launching properties like Four Points by Sheraton in

Jaipur, Pune and Vishakhapatnam, Khyber, Gulmarg among others. Most recently he was working with at juSTA Hotels and Resorts as Chief Revenue Officer.

"I am thrilled to join Udman at such a pivotal time in its journey. The opportunity to contribute to a brand that values both luxury and individuality is truly exciting. I look forward to working closely with the talented team here to further enhance our offerings, ensuring that each guest experience is as memorable and enriching as the next," said Verma.

While welcoming Verma, Vikaas Gutgutia, Founder and Managing Director, Ferns N Petals said, "I am delighted to welcome Vaibhav to the Udman family. His journey in the hospitality sector and his ability to blend strategic thinking with hands-on

Atmosphere Gurugram set to redefine the NCR experience in 2026



A new luxury restaurant, the Atmosphere is coming up in the National Capital Region (NCR). Atmosphere Core has partnered with Tara Golf Hotel Pvt Ltd to open this restaurant in Gurugram, just 45 km from New Delhi which is set to open in the first quarter of 2026. This collaboration is part of Atmosphere Core's strategic expansion in India, aiming to establish 25 properties by 2025. The resort is designed to appeal to leisure travellers and aligns with Atmosphere Core's vision to establish a presence in key locations within the Delhi NCR region. Atmosphere Gurugram, which will open in early 2026, promises to be a stunning addition to the Atmosphere Hotels and Resorts brand. Guests can expect to stay in one of the 46 luxurious villas, each equipped with private pools and offering panoramic views of lush greenery, the Aravali hills, and a sprawling golf course. The resort will provide a variety of high-end amenities to enhance the guest experience. Guests would experience a sophisticated culinary journey with an all-day dining venue having alfresco

options, a speciality restaurant and a library-cum-bar. Distinct dining spaces will have distinct gourmet options, catering to guests' palate ensuring an excellent dining experience.

A range of indoor and outdoor activities will also be available, catering to different interests and preferences. Whether guests seek adventure or relaxation, the resort will provide something to satisfy everyone, enriching the overall leisure experience. The resort's spa and wellness centre, operated by the renowned ELE|NA brand, will offer a peaceful retreat. Its luxurious atmosphere will also make it an excellent venue for private events and intimate celebrations, with expansive outdoor spaces and scenic landscapes.

Vinod Mittal, Managing Director of Taru Golf Resort Private Limited, express his excitement, stating, "Our partnership with Atmosphere Core is poised to significantly elevate this property, transforming it into a world-class resort with outstanding services and experiences. Atmosphere Core's reputation for excellence and their impressive portfolio demonstrate a commitment to high standards and exceptional service. This collaboration is not only a strategic move to expand their presence into the NCR region but also promises to bring their legacy of excellence to this dynamic market. I am confident that our combined efforts will create a success story that reflects the very best in luxury hospitality."

"NCR Gurugram has always been a priority for us when it comes to establishing a luxury resort. It is not only a major business district in India but also one of our country's most rapidly growing metropolises, renowned for its rich cultural heritage, vibrant business environment and cosmopolitan atmosphere.

Vivanta by IHCL to bring modern luxury to Puducherry

Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL) announced the signing of a new hotel in Puducherry. This hotel is a Greenfield project, branded as Vivanta.

Suma Venkatesh, Executive Vice President, Real Estate and Development, IHCL, spoke on the occasion, stating, "In recent years, Puducherry has emerged as a popular destination for both domestic and international travellers. This hotel will be a modern oasis in the heart of the charming former French colony. This strategic expansion aligns with IHCL's commitment to establishing its presence across key locations in India. We are delighted to partner with Ajay Virmani and Sandip Ganguli for this venture."

This 85-key hotel will feature an all-day diner, a bar, a gym and treatment rooms for wellness offerings. There would be spacious meeting rooms and pre-function areas for corporate meetings and social gatherings. The hotel will incorporate seamlessly blended modern aesthetics with Puducherry's French influences. Its strategic location will provide easy access to the city's major attractions which will allow the guests to immerse themselves in the local



culture and experience the true essence of this beautiful city. Ajay Virmani, and Sandip Ganguli of Auroma Soft Resorts and Hotels Pvt. Ltd. expressed, "We are delighted to collaborate with IHCL to introduce the Vivanta brand to Puducherry. This partnership will bring a fresh and exciting energy to the city, providing guests with a distinctive and exceptional stay."

Culinary brilliance unveiled at The One at Le Meridien Hotel

The One at Le Meridien Hotel in New Delhi houses an accessible and refined culinary experience for food enthusiasts. The serene ambience and a menu as diverse as the city itself entices the guests to this all-day dining restaurant. Its proximity to key landmarks such as Connaught Place and India Gate makes it a convenient choice for those looking to explore the cultural and historical sights of the capital city.

By Ayushi Anand

Ambience

First thing that greets you upon entering the restaurant is an atmosphere of minimalism. With a chic and modern setting, floor-to-ceiling windows allowing plenty of natural light into the dining space creates an ideal spot to catch up for meals. The muted colour tones and minimalist design creates an inviting setting for the guests. The One offers a perfect family-friendly atmosphere, a business lunch or a relaxed evening with friends. With features like wheelchair accessibility, indoor seating and high chairs for toddlers, it's designed to cater to all guests, including families with young children.





The dining experience

With an exemplary service and a team of well-trained staff, The One offers cuisine from all parts of the world. The salad counter offers cold-cuts, cheese, nuts, fancy salads such as the sprout and peanut, papaya, the Russian salad and the popular Caesar Salad. Tucked in the corner of the restaurant is a chaat stall to satiate all your savoury cravings.

One must try the barbecued pineapple with grilled vegetables and the chicken biryani. From the global counter sample handmade pasta, burgers, pizza and fish and chips. Each dish is thoughtfully curated to offer something for every palate. The One offers a dining experience that combines impeccable service with a menu that celebrates both local and global flavours. Not to miss are the cakes from the dessert counter. From the likes of chocolate to pound cakes, ice creams and tiramisu – the dessert options are plenty. Another highlight at The One is their indulgent

Sunday Brunch which is a four-course feast featuring soups, salads, kebabs, main courses and desserts from both Indian and Continental cuisines.

The One at Le Meridien is more than just a place to eat. It's a destination in itself, offering a harmonious blend of tradition and modernity both in its menu and setting. Whether you're a

local looking for a new favourite spot or a traveller in search of an authentic dining experience, The One is sure to leave a lasting impression on your visit.

For reservations contact:

**Address: Le Meridien, Windsor Pl,
Connaught Place, New Delhi,
Delhi 110001**

Phone: 011 4502 0200



Inside the kitchen: Chef Sukesh Kanchan on crafting coastal masterpieces at Sana-Di-Ge

Sana-Di-Ge, a unit of Goldfinch Hotels Pvt Ltd, is a popular fine-dining restaurant located in Chanakyapuri, New Delhi. The restaurant is renowned for its coastal seafood dishes with ingredients freshly sourced from the coast of Goa, Kerala and Maharashtra.

By Ayushi Anand



The restaurant's décor strikes a fine balance between elegance and cultural warmth. With tasteful nautical elements, wooden accents and ambient lighting, one is immediately drawn to the traditional art pieces from the coastal belt of India. As I took a sip of the Kokum drink (welcome drink), a variety of dips along with papadams were placed in front of me. I knew that I was in for a lavish treat comprising dishes made from crabs, prawns, mutton and chicken. After sampling chicken ghee roast, prawns in butter garlic sauce and appam with stew, I decided to meet the executive chef, Sukesh Kanchan to learn about his inspiration and most importantly the recipe for a few dishes which I could make in my home kitchen. With

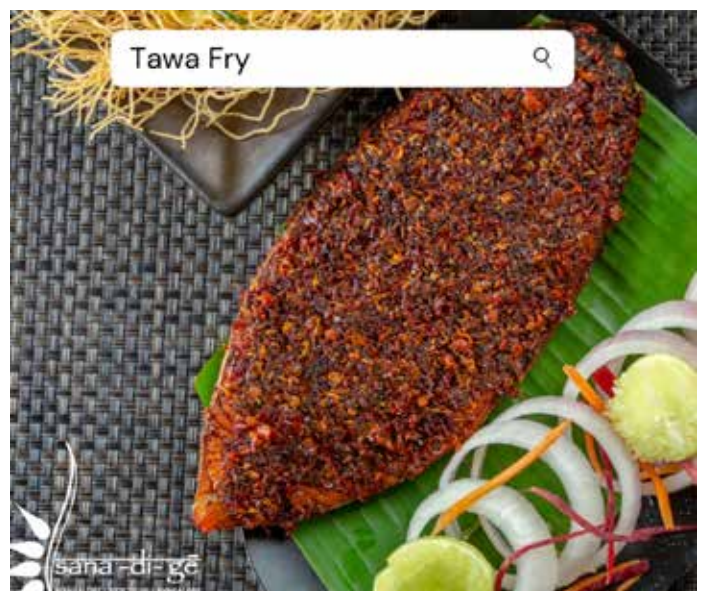
over two decades of experience in the hospitality industry, Kanchan revealed the work it takes to create authentic coastal dishes.

Sourcing ingredients

Sana-Di-Ge does not compromise on the quality of its food and certainly not on the promise of authenticity. Hence, the ingredients used in the cooking are seasonal and local. As Kanchan puts it, "My approach to sourcing ingredients is rooted in the belief that the quality of a dish starts with the quality of its components. I prioritise local and seasonal produce whenever possible, as I believe these ingredients not only taste better but also contribute to a more sustainable and connected food system." Seasonal ingredients guide the creative process greatly. When you work with what's available, the menu naturally evolves throughout the year, ensuring that dishes are fresh, relevant and aligned with the changing seasons.

No compromise in authenticity

All the chefs at Sana-Di-Ge are either from Mangalore or Udupi and hence the authenticity and love that they pour





into the dishes can never be questioned. They use traditional techniques and freshly procured ingredients to prepare genuine Mangalorean cuisine. Balancing traditional coastal flavours with contemporary trends or fusions requires a thoughtful approach. Kanchan said, “By blending authenticity with creativity, you can craft dishes that honour coastal traditions while exciting modern palates.”

Training the next generation to take charge

For building a strong and cohesive team, training young professionals properly is very important. Demonstrating professionalism and passion is of utmost priority. Allowing younger chefs to give their input for menu ideas and giving them hands-on training in culinary techniques can go a long way. According to Kanchan, “Promoting teamwork, communication and a strong team dynamic which ensures that everyone supports each other, makes the kitchen more efficient and enjoyable to work in.”

Handling customer feedback

Respecting both positive and negative feedback is crucial for ensuring better results in the future. “For positive feedback, I express gratitude and share it with the team. It reinforces what we’re doing right and boosts morale. It’s also an opportunity to identify our strengths and ensure that we maintain consistency. For negative feedback, I approach it with an open mind and no ego. Every critique is a chance to improve. I listen carefully, ask clarifying questions if needed and try to understand the issue from the customer’s perspective. If possible, I address the concern immediately, whether by re-making a dish or offering a gesture of goodwill. Afterwards,



I analyse the feedback with the team to determine if it’s an isolated incident or a systemic issue that needs addressing,” revealed Kanchan.

Master the basics

Sharing a message to his younger self and new chefs in the profession, he said, “Culinary greatness isn’t always about complexity. It’s about mastering the basics, letting quality ingredients shine and understanding that simplicity done well can be profoundly satisfying. I’d remind my younger self to focus on the fundamentals, to take pride in each step of the process and to trust that the skills and care put into even the humblest dishes will set the foundation for future creativity and success.” This is something that turns simple ingredients into a plate of love and emotions curated to satisfy hunger while also bringing a smile to the faces of the customers.

Anil Kalsi's journey of passion and dedication

When there is a talk about unwavering passion about travelling and understanding the intricacies of the travel-trade business, the journey of Anil Kalsi, Vice President of TAFI (Travel Agents Federation of India) comes to mind.

By Ayushi Anand



From the onset of his career, Kalsi's love for travel has shaped every step of his professional path, influencing the projects he has taken on and the decisions he has made. His dedication to helping others experience the world has driven him to excel, making him a key figure in India's travel industry. Today, Kalsi is recognised not only for his contributions to the sector but also for his personal commitment to making his clients' travel dreams a reality. Reflecting on his career, Kalsi feels fortunate to have played a role in countless journeys, helping travellers create unforgettable memories. For Kalsi, success has always been a byproduct of doing what is right and monetary rewards have followed naturally. This philosophy has seen him rise to the position of Vice President at TAFI, where he takes great pride in representing the organisation and its members.

A journey fuelled by passion

With over three decades of experience, Kalsi's journey in the travel industry is a testament to the power of passion. His career has been shaped by a love for travel that has influenced every decision, project and initiative that he has taken. From the very beginning, Kalsi believed that following his passion for travel would allow him to excel and time has proven him right. Reflecting on his career, he considers himself blessed to have been a part of his clients' journeys, helping them realise their dreams and create unforgettable memories.

Following personal values

Throughout his career, Kalsi has adhered to a set of personal values that have served as his guiding light. "The righteous path always leads to success," he says, attributing his achievements to his sincere dedication to work. For him, money was never the goal; instead, it followed as a byproduct of hard work and commitment to doing what was right. His steadfast approach has seen him rise to the position of Vice President at TAFI, a role he holds with immense pride. "It is an absolute honour," Kalsi shares, emphasising the unity and selflessness of the TAFI team.

His role at TAFI

By representing TAFI in key discussions with government bodies, industry stakeholders and airline partners, Kalsi plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of India's travel industry. His involvement with organisations such as FAITH (Federation of Associations of Indian Tourism and Hospitality), VFS, BLS and major industry stakeholders such as, tourism boards demonstrate his commitment to fostering collaboration and driving positive change.

ASEAN's rise as a preferred destination

As travel has evolved, ASEAN countries (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) have emerged as a favourite choice among Indian travellers. As Kalsi believes, "We are now a nation of hardworking, successful people with a

passion for travel.” The ease of travel, coupled with visa-free access policies, has been a major catalyst, allowing Indians to explore the region with newfound freedom. New direct flights, particularly to destinations like Phuket, have further contributed to the surge in numbers and Kalsi believes this trend will continue to grow. When asked about the most popular ASEAN destinations for Indian travellers in 2024, Kalsi highlights Thailand as the clear leader. Its combination of no visa requirement and direct flight connectivity has made it a top choice for Indian tourists. But there is potential for other ASEAN countries to make their mark, and Kalsi is confident that travel agents in India can help by tailoring their offerings to suit Indian tastes. By focusing on Indian-specific details such as hotel locations, food options, and shopping and sightseeing opportunities, travel agents can tap into this growing market.

TAFI’s role in strengthening ties between India and ASEAN

Kalsi sees TAFI playing a vital role in strengthening tourism ties between India and ASEAN countries. The federation has already taken significant steps, signing an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with Malaysia Tourism and a recent agreement with the Cambodia Association of Travel Agents (CATA) in Siem Reap. Vietnam, Singapore and Thailand are also high on TAFI’s list of priority destinations. Kalsi also shows his excitement about the potential these collaborations hold for boosting tourism in both directions.

Memorable visit to Cambodia

Kalsi visited Cambodia and it was indeed an enriching experience. He recalls being particularly impressed by the luxurious Nagaworld Hotel and Casino complex in Phnom Penh. The awe-inspiring cultural gems of the Angkor Wat complex left a lasting impact on him, as did the signing of the TAFI tourism MOU with CATA. As he put it, “The cultural gems of Angkor wat complex were awe inspiring.” For Kalsi, these moments were not just highlights of the trip but a sign of the future possibilities between India and Cambodia. Kalsi believes that Indian travellers can be better introduced to Cambodia’s rich cultural heritage and stunning landscapes through more effective marketing efforts. By packaging Cambodia’s offerings in a way that appeals to Indian tourists, he believes that the country can open its doors to more visitors from India. TAFI is already sharing destination information with its members to help promote Cambodia as a must-visit destination.

The vision for the future

As he looks to the future, Kalsi’s passion for travel remains as strong as ever. His vision for strengthening tourism ties between India and ASEAN countries, combined with his unwavering dedication to his work, ensures that the travel industry will continue to thrive under his leadership. For Kalsi, travel is not just a career—it is a lifelong commitment to helping others experience the world and create lasting memories, just as he has done throughout his remarkable journey.

Additional Paragraphs for introduction:

Kalsi is the owner of Ambe World Travels, an International Air Transport Association (IATA) approved travel organisation which is essentially a one-stop shop for all travel needs. The organisation has been working since 1992. It was established with a dedicated team in order to deliver excellence to the clients at value prices. Client satisfaction is of utmost importance to Kalsi. His journey in the travel industry shows how the zeal to do something can shape a fulfilling career. Throughout his journey in this industry, Kalsi has consistently prioritised the joy and satisfaction of his clients, ensuring that their travel experiences are as enriching as possible. His approach to work is grounded in sincerity and a commitment to doing what is right and not what seems to be good. Now, as the Vice President of TAFI, he plays a pivotal role in representing and advocating for the interests of travel agents across the nation. His leadership is marked by a collaborative spirit and a dedication to fostering strong relationships within the industry.

TAFI’s role in strengthening ties between India and ASEAN

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TAAI Elections set for September 30 with Jyoti Mayal running for President



“It has been a long journey of various ups and downs that we have withered with great zeal. I have ensured we continuously engage with our members, government authorities on national and state-levels, international tourism boards and also highlight new business avenues for our members to explore.” The journey indeed was not easy for Mayal, but she worked hard to be where she is today. Also, she is determined to deliver her plan within 100 days of taking over her Presidential post. Everybody is familiar with her vision, but she will be sharing it and the key focuses of her leadership role in the coming days. She will be discussing her agenda and goals in the near future.

The Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) will hold its national leadership elections on September 30, 2024, at ITC Maratha in Mumbai. Jyoti Mayal will fill her nomination for the post of

President and wishes to get the reigns for the third time.

While talking about her tenure of leading the oldest and largest travel trade association in India, Mayal said,

Iqbal Mulla enters the TAAI Presidential race



In a recent development ahead of the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) elections, former President Iqbal Mulla has announced his candidacy for the top position. Mulla is advocating for urgent collective action to revitalise the association by campaigning under the banner “Change is Eminent.”

Leading the TAAI Premier Team, soon to be introduced formally, Mulla aims to amplify industry voices and work

diligently to benefit TAAI members. He has identified taxation and compliance issues as significant challenges facing the industry. He emphasised the need for clarity and reduction in GST rates for tour operators and travel agencies, calling for simplification of Input Tax Credit (ITC) complexities, particularly concerning packaged tours and services for international tourists. He has urged both the industry and government to collaborate on reducing these burdens. Addressing issues related to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), Mulla noted that many members face difficulties securing tickets from major airlines and are often forced to rely on consolidators. He has pledged to work towards restoring independent access to airline inventory for members. Mulla highlighted a crucial issue:

the absence of incentives for young members to participate in the national committee. “The current rules of the association require a member to serve 3 years at the Chapter and Region level, before applying for the post of Committee Member or Office-Bearer at the National level. This evades the young minds to contest for the decision-making posts, since the process is lengthy. I would like to focus on changing this and encourage more young members to take active role in the activities,” he said.

Mulla also criticised the pre-travel Income Tax policy, arguing that it disadvantages members by encouraging customers to book international trips directly. He has vowed to campaign for the rollback of this policy to level the playing field.



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ITA Airways resumes flights between Tel Aviv Ben Gurion and Rome Fiumicino from September 5

The flights between Tel Aviv Ben Gurion and Rome Fiumicino have been resumed by ITA Airways (Italia Trasporto Aereo), from September 5, 2024. The airline is initially operating a daily daytime service, with AZ807 flight departing from Tel Aviv at 2:30 pm (local time) and arriving in Rome by 5:15 pm (local time). The return AZ806 flight departs Rome at 9:10 am (local time), reaching Tel Aviv at 1:30 pm (local time), offering passengers convenient travel times for both business and leisure. In addition to the daytime services, ITA Airways plans to reintroduce its nighttime flights from October 1, 2024, which will remain suspended throughout September. The airline's decision to restart nighttime operations is a sign of confidence in the safety and demand for the route,



though they remain cautious and continue to closely monitor geopolitical developments in the Middle East.

ITA Airways has assured its customers that all flights can be easily booked through their official website, or the

company's customer service, travel agents and at airport ticket offices. The airline is taking steps to ensure that the passengers remain informed about any potential changes due to inevitable circumstances.

Oman Air and the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism join forces to offer free Oman stopovers to passengers travelling through Muscat

As part of their shared commitment to highlight Oman as a preferred tourist destination, Oman Air and the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism have joined forces for a special stopover promotion for passengers transiting through Muscat. Available until November 30, 2024, the offer provides a free one-night hotel stay for premium class passengers when booking a stopover in Muscat, while those travelling in Economy Class can enjoy two nights for the price of one. In addition, guests have access to exclusive discounts on tours, car hire and other services, making it the perfect opportunity to explore Oman's charming capital and beyond. Launched just in time for the winter season, visitors can experience Muscat

at its very best, with warm weather, stunning landscapes and cultural activities promising an unforgettable retreat. Committed to promoting the natural beauty, rich heritage and friendly, genuine hospitality of its home-base, Oman Air remains dedicated to serving as a gateway for tourists to Oman, providing them with seamless connectivity, convenient flight schedules, and award-winning onboard products and services. Passengers who hold a return ticket to any destination on Oman Air's network with a transit through Muscat can take advantage of the limited-time offer. Guests can simply fill out the online request form and make their stopover booking by



30 November 2024. It is important to note that the complimentary hotel stay includes the room only and is subject to availability. A maximum of one stopover per return ticket applies. For more details, contact Oman Air Holidays at holidays@omanair.com

Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu extends DigiYatra facility to nine additional airports

The DigiYatra facility which seeks to provide a seamless, contactless and intelligent passenger processing experience using real-time facial biometric validation has been formally introduced by the Union Minister of Civil Aviation, K Ram Mohan Naidu.



The launch took place across nine Airport Authority of India (AAI) airports. The minister underscored significant advantages that this facility offers by enabling a more streamlined and touch-free journey for passengers at additional airports. The minister also highlighted the functions

of the facility, noting that all essential passenger information is securely stored on their mobile devices. This ensures a smooth and efficient passage through airport procedures.

“I am happy to announce that today we are inaugurating 9 DigiYatra facilities in 9 airports in the country...the most important thing of this DigiYatra facility is the seamless and contactless facility to the passengers,” said Naidu. DigiYatra is a system which is designed to enhance the efficiency of air travel in India. It is a biometric-based system which is largely paperless. Passengers are required to register their ID and biometric details before entering the airport terminal and then utilise the system at critical points such as airport entry, security checks and boarding gates, eliminating the need to carry physical travel documents.

DigiYatra facilitates a quicker process for entry, check-in and boarding while also enhancing safety and security

measures. Naidu also highlighted that the DigiYatra facility represents a significant technological advancement within the civil aviation industry. It is adopted by over 30 million users today. He shared the ministry’s ambitious plan to extend the DigiYatra facility to all airports across the country, assuring passengers of strong data protection measures. Naidu also touched upon the regional connectivity scheme by the Ministry of Civil Aviation, reaffirming the government’s dedication to expanding the nation’s civil aviation infrastructure and flight connectivity. He mentioned that India currently has 157 airports, with plans to increase this number to 400 in the coming years. The active efforts to achieve this goal are already in motion.

The DigiYatra initiative is a collaborative effort by the AAI and the Ministry of Civil Aviation which indeed is a transformative development of India which has been widely admired.

Uzbekistan Airways to launch direct flights to Goa from October 27

Uzbekistan Airways is set to launch direct flights from Tashkent to Goa starting October 27, 2024. These flights will operate twice a week between Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan and Manohar International Airport in North Goa, using an Airbus A320 aircraft.

This new route is expected to enhance tourism and cultural exchange between Uzbekistan and Goa. The introduction of this route aligns with Goa’s broader strategy to diversify its tourist base and promote the state as a year-round destination.

Hon’ble Minister for Tourism, Rohan A. Khaunte, said, “The introduction of direct flights from Tashkent to Goa marks a significant milestone in enhancing Goa’s connectivity with Central Asia. This new connection will not only boost tourism but also strengthen our cultural ties with Uzbekistan. We are committed to developing Goa as a well-connected and accessible destination for travellers worldwide.”

“Uzbekistan Airways’ decision to commence flights to Goa underscores the growing global interest in our state as a prime tourism destination. This direct connectivity will undoubtedly



enhance the travel experience for visitors from Uzbekistan, making Goa more accessible and inviting,” said Suneel Anchipaka, IAS, Director Tourism and Managing Director GTDC (Goa Tourism Development Corporation).



From hotels to high seas: Michael Goh's cruise to success

With a strong foundation in hospitality, Michael Goh, President of Resorts World Cruises, reflects on his transition to the cruise sector. Goh saw cruising as an opportunity to explore new avenues and apply his expertise in a different context.

By Ayushi Anand

"I wanted to explore new options and cruising offered something different and unique," he shared, highlighting his passion for the industry. With over 30 years of experience in the hospitality sector, Goh's foray into the cruise industry has been marked by a thirst for excellence and innovation. Under his leadership, Resorts World Cruises has navigated the intricacies of the cruise market toward growth and further expansion.

The power of partnerships

Goh emphasised on the importance of collaborations in building a successful cruise brand. "No industry and corporation is an island," he stated, underlining the necessity of partnerships with travel partners, authorities and businesses. These partnerships have been instrumental in building Resorts World Cruises and driving further cruise industry expansion. In this regard, Goh states that successful collaboration will come from like-minded partners.

According to him, identifying partners with similar brand values and goals is essential for any partnership.

Enhancing customer experience

Making customer experience better is at the heart of the operations of Resorts World Cruises. Goh shares that the company addresses diverse customer interests through strategies such as certified Halal for Muslims and vegetarian or Jain cooking for the Indian fly-cruise segment. They also introduced



popular thematic cruises, enrichment programs, et al, to appeal to different demographics. “Collating and listening to our guests and partners’ feedback is important to introduce offerings that resonate with our targeted guests,” he said, emphasising on the value of customer feedback in shaping services.

His commitment to sustainability

Environmental sustainability is a priority for Resorts World Cruises. Goh detailed the company’s efforts to implement sound environmental practices, including energy efficiency and eco-friendly shore excursions. “We are constantly working towards finding that balance and exploring initiatives to reduce environmental footprints,” he said.

Leadership and teamwork

Goh’s leadership style is centred on teamwork and clear communication. “It’s important to have clear and open communications so we can identify challenges and opportunities together,” he explained. This approach has been vital in guiding the company through



the competitive cruise industry, fostering a collaborative environment that drives success.

Looking back and moving forward

Reflecting on his career, Goh expressed pride in his achievements, particularly in launching Resorts World Cruises swiftly and effectively. “Being part of that journey to lead and launch Resorts World Cruises within a short span of time... together with the right team, we overcame challenges together,” he recalled. Looking ahead, the company is optimistic about its growth prospects, with plans to expand its fleet and

explore new destinations.

Advice for aspiring entrepreneurs

Goh advises those looking to enter the cruise industry to find passion in their work. “Having passion and motivation is important to propel you further,” he said. Michael Goh and Resorts World Cruises continue to chart a course for success in the dynamic cruise industry. Their vision for the future promises further innovation and growth, setting new standards for the industry while navigating towards a more sustainable and customer-centric voyage.

The Korea Tourism Organization (KTO), in collaboration with the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Chennai, hosted the first-ever Korea-India Friendship Night. This landmark event, held in Chennai in honor of both nations' Independence Days, was a vibrant celebration of cultural and diplomatic ties.

This event not only celebrated shared heritage but also laid the groundwork for future collaborations between India and Korea.



IATO's 39th Convention which was held at Taj Lakefront concluded in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. With participation from over 1200 members, the event provided a huge networking platform opening opportunities for inbound tourism.



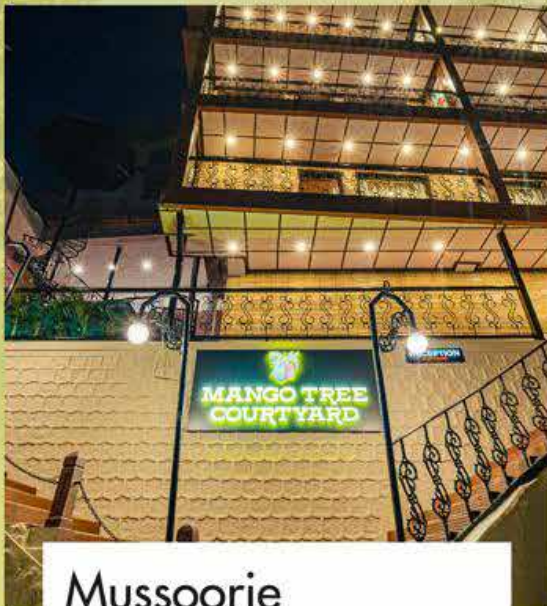
BLTM 2024, India's leading show on Business+Leisure Travel and MICE, was held at Yashobhoomi, Convention Centre in Dwarka, New Delhi from 29th August to 31st August 2024. This year's edition marked a notable achievement with the event doubling in size and showcasing a remarkable array of more than 500 exhibitors from across the world. Among the participants were national tourism organisations, convention bureaus, Indian states, hotels and resorts, destination management companies, tour operators and MICE agents.



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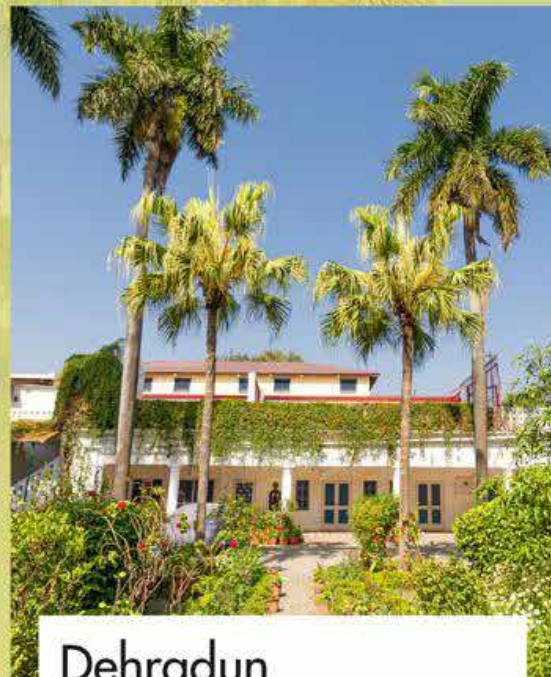


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Goa

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The Saudi Tourism Authority (STA) held a series of networking events across four major Indian cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Kolkata, to strengthen ties with the Indian travel trade.

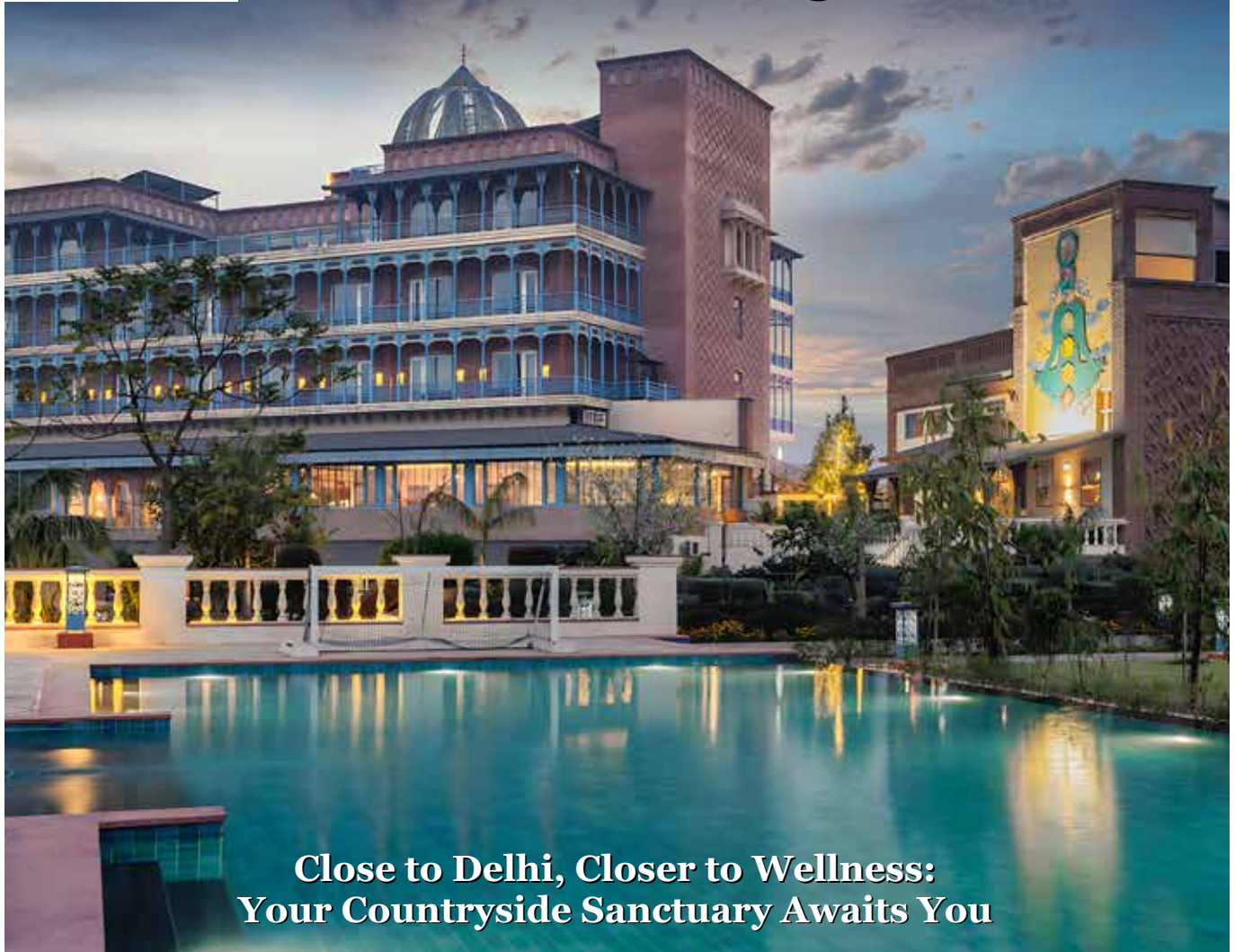
These events highlighted Saudi Arabia's diverse offerings as a top travel destination, with a focus on leisure, cultural heritage, corporate travel and pilgrimage. Tailored to the interests of each city, the events included immersive experiences, detailed presentations and networking opportunities, attracting over 100 travel agents and industry representatives. STA's initiative also emphasised on the ease of obtaining visas for Indian travellers, including options like e-visas, visa-on-arrival and stopover visas.





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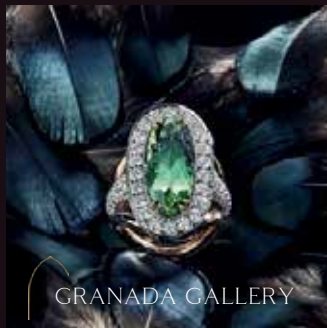
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