

EaseMyTrip on aggressive expansion spree; keen to acquire more asset-light brands

The NSE-listed agency has acquired 51% stake in Guideline Travels, TripShope Travel Technologies and Dook Travels to grow its holiday division

TBM Staff | Mumbai

Businesses in the travel & tourism space seem to be back on the competitive track with aggressive expansion plans. A relatively late entrant in the online travel space, EaseMyTrip is the latest to announce a series of acquisitions for scaling operations and gain competitive advantage in the e-commerce space, by establishing a strong B2B connect.

The New Delhi-based NSE-listed company is set to pick up 51% stake in three established travel brands in the holiday space, based out of diverse geographical locations in India – Mumbai (Guideline Travels), New Delhi (Dook Travels) and Jammu & Kashmir (Tripshope). Besides these, EaseMyTrip is

space. All these three companies are profitable businesses, and these acquisitions are being made through swapping of equity shares, and are entirely cashless transactions. We have



more such acquisitions in the pipeline in the coming months using the equity swap mode. Talks are underway with profitable, debt-free brands and asset-light companies."

Commenting on the acquisition, Nishant Pitti, Co-Founder of EaseMyTrip, "These

"Being pioneers at cruise selling, we sought an aggressive online selling platform for cruise products around the world. Our partnership with EaseMyTrip gives us a big thrust to bring a bouquet of cruise products to our B2B as well B2C clients. Partnership with EaseMyTrip opens up our horizons and will allow us to bring to fruition our vision hence propelling Guideline Travels to new height," said Pradeep Saboo, Director of Guideline Travels.

"This is going to be a quantum leap in the travel, tourism and employment generation of Jammu and Kashmir," said Adil Sathu, Founder and COO, Tripshope, "The brand equity of EaseMyTrip is also going to help us expand in Jammu and Kashmir, apart from other parts of the country," he added.



Prashant Pitti
Co-Founder
EaseMyTrip



Nishant Pitti
Co-Founder
EaseMyTrip



Pradeep Saboo
Director
Guideline Travels



Adil Sathu
Founder and COO
Tripshope



Sandeep Gupta
Director
Dook Travels

in talks with more such brands to add to its portfolio through the acquisition mode.

Prashant Pitti, Co-Founder, EaseMyTrip, says they have established their air travel and hotel verticals, and these acquisitions are part of their strategy for inorganic growth of the holiday division, including cruise travel, by acquiring asset light companies. "These companies offer fixed departures, customised packages and are huge consolidators in their

three companies have a strong track record and a wealth of experience in their respective areas. Together, with these remarkable travel companies, we extend and embrace to a diverse spectrum of exceptional services catering to larger markets. Together, we are poised to ignite the wanderlust of countless explorers, crafting unforgettable journeys that resonate with every soul and paint the world with the colors of adventure and discovery."

"Tourism for CIS destinations is poised to grow exponentially for next several years because of increasing air connectivity, simplification of visa process and cordial bilateral relations with India. We together shall be able to leverage our positions as market leader in CIS destinations through our extensive agent network, strong hold in airlines and EaseMyTrip's extensive customer name and brand value," said Sandeep Gupta, Director, Dook Travels. ♦

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TMIndia successfully concludes its Annual Travel Market event in Mumbai

TBM Staff | Mumbai

TMIndia, the premier community for travel enthusiasts and industry professionals announced the successful conclusion of its highly anticipated annual event, #TMIndia2023. The event, held on 1st-2nd July 2023 at the latest launch of Accor in Mumbai- Novotel International Airport, brought together a diverse and dynamic group of participants, reaffirming TMIndia's commitment to fostering collaboration and driving innovation within the travel industry.

The event witnessed the esteemed presence of keynote speaker Bhawna Shinde, representing the Ministry of Tourism. Shinde opened the event by providing detailed guidance to travel agents on the process of registering with the Ministry and the benefits it entails. Her insightful session served as a valuable resource for attendees, empowering them with knowledge and tools to leverage government support for their businesses.

According to the release, Travel Market India, an event that has become a cornerstone of the travel industry calendar, witnessed a

remarkable gathering of travel enthusiasts, industry leaders, startups, and businesses from around the world. Attendees were

exemplified the spirit of unity and resilience that defines the TMIndia community.

"We are immensely proud of the success



treated to a captivating program featuring insightful presentations, and engaging networking sessions.

The event served as a platform for knowledge sharing, networking, and forging meaningful connections. Industry professionals seized the opportunity to exchange ideas and explore potential collaborations. The vibrant and inclusive atmosphere of the event

of Travel Market India and the invaluable contributions of all participants," said Gaurav Hasija, Community manager of TMIndia. "This event exemplified our commitment to collaboration, innovation, and the collective growth of the travel industry. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who played a role in making this event a resounding success." ♦

JANDEC Travel JSC, and Ambassador Cruise, Halong Bay, Vietnam appoints AllKnown Marketers as Indian Sales Representative

TBM Staff | Mumbai

JANDEC Travel JSC, and Ambassador Cruise, Halong Bay, Vietnam, a holistic tourism service provider and cruise liner based in Vietnam, assigns AllKnown Marketers (AKM) the task of performing its trade and marketing initiatives in the Indian market. The AKM team will be

responsible for endorsing these diversified products & services, hence, to encourage Indian tourists to experience Vietnam's tour varieties in gastronomy & culture, nature & landscape, and other outdoor adventures. Since JANDEC Travel JSC, and Ambassador Cruise, Halong Bay, Vietnam debuted in the Indian market early 2023, the business penetration will further enhance its presence through a strong partnership with sustainable efforts and consistent outreach between both parties.

Vietnam is long known for its destination rich in natural beauty such as white sandy beaches, crystal clear seawater, historical sites & remnants, however, it is also an emerging hub within the Southeast Asian

region for travelers looking for a holiday destination that has

many other experiences to offer across all segments. Jandec Travels JSC Vietnam deviates from any traditional travel companies in promoting holiday packages by catering to all age groups including individuals, families, groups, or corporate organization. Constantly

improving its holiday trails through innovation and creativity with the aim of making every holiday a unique living experience for all tourists.

Meanwhile, Ambassador Cruise is a 5-star cruise company that operates in Halong Bay, the renowned UNESCO World Heritage Site. A state-of-the-art cruise company, premium options of cruise packages have been delicately designed from the exquisite experience of overnight cruises, superb day cruise and magnificent dinner cruise. Every cruise offers intriguing shore excursions, on board entertainment and well-crafted dining options to suit Indian travelers.

Commenting on the appointment, Vu Cong, Vice President said, "We are

delighted to commence our journey in the Indian market with AllKnown Marketers. The travel industry has undergone a sea change in the past couple of years due to the unprecedented pandemic, however we are certain that exciting times await the entire industry to resume fully soon. The AKM team will assist us in navigating through the Indian travel trade diaspora and to comprehend the ever-evolving Indian travellers. We are looking forward to marking our presence in the key markets whilst building stronger relationships with the travel trade fraternity."

Welcoming JanDec Travels JSC and Ambassador Cruise Halong Bay Vietnam to the portfolio, Madhuri Verma, Director, AllKnown Marketers said, "The ongoing interest and eagerness of Indians to travel to Vietnam is extremely encouraging. In the coming times, we will endeavor to establish JanDec Travels JSC and Ambassador Cruise as a preferred partner for Vietnam across key source markers in India and accelerate arrivals to Vietnam in the forthcoming years". ♦

ATOAI organises roadshow & seminar in Mumbai

TBM Staff | Mumbai

The Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) in association with Indiatourism Mumbai, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India concluded its highly anticipated Seminar & Adventure Tourism Roadshow in Mumbai on 13th July 2023. The event brought together adventure travel enthusiasts, industry professionals, and stakeholders from across the country for a day filled with inspiration, knowledge sharing, and networking opportunities. With a focus on promoting best practices and enhancing skills in selling adventure tourism products, the event proved to be a resounding success.

The ATOAI Seminar & Adventure Tourism Roadshow provided a platform for participants to exchange valuable insights and experiences. The engaging sessions on best practices and selling adventure travel captivated attendees, equipping them with practical tools and strategies to excel in their respective ventures. Industry experts shared their expertise, shedding light on effective marketing techniques and emphasizing the importance of offering authentic adventure experiences to travellers with risk mitigation & sustainability as two key pillars.

The event's highlight was the presence of authentic sellers of adventure products. Exhibitors showcased a wide range of thrilling adventure tourism experiences, from adrenaline-pumping activities to awe-

inspiring expeditions. Attendees had the opportunity to interact directly with these sellers, gaining first-hand knowledge and understanding of the incredible adventures available across the country. The event served as a catalyst for forging new partnerships and collaborations within the adventure tourism industry.

The First Aid, CPR & Wilderness Responder & Responsible Adventure Travel course is a two-day program spanning 16 hours. It is a certified course aimed at



ADVENTURE TOUR OPERATORS
ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

providing participants with the necessary skills to respond to emergency situations in the wilderness. The course includes comprehensive training in first aid, CPR, wilderness response techniques, and responsible adventure travel practices. 30 participants were certified.

The ATOAI Seminar & Adventure Tourism Roadshow emphasized inclusivity, welcoming individuals from various backgrounds and roles within the adventure travel sector. The diverse participation fostered a vibrant and

collaborative environment where networking and relationship-building thrived. Participants had the chance to connect with like-minded individuals, exchange ideas, and explore potential synergies, thereby paving the way for future growth and development in the industry. Adventure Sports Cover 360 has been recognised as ATOAI Adventure Insurance and Rescue Partner for this roadshow.

Ajeet Bajaj, President of ATOAI, expressed his satisfaction with the event's outcome, stating, "We are extremely pleased with the success of the ATOAI Seminar & Adventure Tourism Roadshow. This event provided an invaluable platform for adventure travel enthusiasts and industry professionals to come together, learn from each other and build meaningful connections. By sharing best practices and promoting authentic adventure experiences, we are confident that we will contribute to the growth and enhancement of the adventure tourism industry in India."

The ATOAI Seminar & Adventure Tourism Roadshow marks another significant milestone in ATOAI's commitment to promoting responsible and sustainable adventure tourism practices in India. The event showcased the immense potential of adventure travel in the country and highlighted the natural beauty and cultural richness that awaits travellers.

ATOAI Seminar & Adventure Tourism Roadshow will now travel to other parts of the country as mentioned below. ♦

TripJack opens office in New Delhi to focus on North India market

TBM Staff | Mumbai

B2B platform TripJack has opened an office in New Delhi. This strategically located



office will focus on key markets of North India and boost the adoption of its seamless, intuitive and robust travel portal.

Located in the heart of Delhi, the expansion marks a significant milestone in

TripJack's journey of providing hi-tech and innovative travel solutions to its travel partners. The new office will serve as a hub for cutting-edge development that will deliver even greater value to its travel partners.

Speaking on the announcement, Hussain Patel, Director, TripJack, said, "The inauguration of our Delhi office embodies the culmination of our vision and commitment to our travel partners. The new office will be a pivotal center for us in the north, strengthening our ability to cater to the evolving needs in the B2B travel space." ♦

Swiss Embassy clarifies not suspending Visa appointment for Indian Tour Groups

TBM Staff | Mumbai

The Swiss Embassy in New Delhi in a statement has clarified that it has not suspended Schengen visa appointments for Indian tour groups and has almost 800 daily appointments through the end of September 2023. The mission asserted that people-to-people contact is at the core of Swiss-Indian relationship.

"In 2023, the Embassy of Switzerland in India has processed more visa applications than it did in 2019. We have surpassed our pre-pandemic times processing level. From January until June, we handled 129,446 applications, as against



120,071 during the same period in 2019 – a 7.8% increase. The following measures have been implemented since the beginning of this year to further ease the visa application process for Indian applicants," the statement further read.

First, it is possible for the applicants to apply for their visa six months before their date of travel, as against one month in the past. So, someone wishing to travel in June can already apply for a visa in January, it added. ♦

Ayush Visa launched for foreigners seeking treatment under Indian medicine systems

TBM Staff | Mumbai

The Government of India has launched the Ayush Visa, a newly created category created for foreign nationals looking to receive medical treatment here through traditional Indian systems of medicine.

The introduction of this visa category fulfils the proposal to create a special visa scheme that allows foreigners to visit India exclusively for therapeutic care, wellness, and Yoga treatments under Ayush systems and other Indian systems of medicine, the government said.

A new chapter, Chapter 11A, titled "Ayush Visa" has been updated in the Visa manual. This chapter focuses on treatment under the Indian systems of medicine, and it has been introduced after the existing Chapter 11 – Medical visa. Amendments have been made to various chapters of the Visa Manual, 2019, to accommodate this new visa category, the Ayush ministry said in a statement.

According to Sarbananda Sonowal, Union Minister of Ayush and Ports, Shipping & Waterways, this move will have a positive impact on medical value travel in India. The initiative aligns with their vision of promoting Indian traditional medicine on a global scale, he added.

Sonowal, said, "The creation of a new category of Ayush Visa for foreign nationals seeking treatment under Ayush systems/Indian

systems of medicine is a significant step. It will boost Medical Value Travel in India. This initiative will strengthen our endeavour to accomplish Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for making Indian traditional medicine a global phenomenon. I also want to compliment Shri Amit Shah, Union Home Minister, GoI for his efforts in creating a special Ayush Visa category."

The Ministry of Ayush in the statement said the introduction of Ayush Visa category is part of the country's roadmap for the Heal in India initiative. ♦

TRADE RELATIONS MANAGER: INDIA

Local recruitment in India (Fixed Term for 24 months)



Purpose of the role: South African Tourism is searching for a result driven, credible individual with strong interpersonal and influencing skills, strong business acumen and creative flair to join our dynamic organisation as a Trade Relations Manager: India.

KEY OUTPUTS

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- Develop and maintain travel trade relationships
- Develop and execute Annual Business plan
- Identify and maintain a database of all sales and related stakeholders
- Develop, identify, negotiate and close partnership and sales opportunities
- Submit periodic financial and performance reports
- Manage within legal parameters and according to company policy and procedures
- Reporting in line with SAT formats

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Bachelor's Degree in Trade Relations Management, Tourism Management, Sales and Marketing or equivalent.
- Masters degree is a distinct advantage.
- At least 5 – 8 years' collective working experience in Trade Relations Management, Tourism Management, Sales and Marketing or equivalent, of which 3 years' experience should be at a managerial level.
- Travel and Tourism experience is a must
- Past experience in government relations is beneficial
- Budget & financial management experience
- Indian citizens only
- In-depth knowledge of the Indian travel and tourism landscape.

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Visit: www.southafrica.net

Should you have not heard from us Four weeks after the closing date, kindly consider your application unsuccessful.

No late applications will be accepted.

Only India based citizens may apply.

South African Tourism does not offer Work Permit sponsorship.



‘The growth from India is a good indicator of the interest for Sabah’

Sabah Tourism is keen to get a share of the Indian outbound pie, and is hopeful that the Tourism Malaysia e-learning programme will assist in driving destination awareness among the travel trade in India. **Sabah Tourism Board** spoke to **TravelBiz Monitor** about their key attractions and outreach in India.

Q Based on 2019 data, Sabah's top feeder markets were Taiwan, China, Brunei, Singapore and South Korea. What is your plan to put India on that list? Do you think the current e-learning programme will help you in this direction?

Indian arrivals to Sabah increased in numbers before the Covid-19 pandemic, with 5,606 Indian visitors registered in 2018 and 6,548 in 2019.

In 2020, the number of Indian arrivals in Sabah was at 1077, and 332 in the following year. In 2022, Indian arrival in Sabah increased to 3987. The positive growth is a good indicator of interest to travel to this region.

Since after Sabah Tourism Board's recent participation in the Tourism Malaysia and Malaysian Association of Tour And Travel Agents (MATTA) roadshow to India in January to February this year across Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, and New Delhi, Indian tour agents that were met, who had been sending clients to other Malaysian states numerous times, are now introducing Sabah as a new holiday destination and hidden jewel of Malaysia to the Indian market.

With the current Online Training Program, valuable information can be provided to the B2B segment, such as the attractions, culture,

activities, and experiences that Sabah can offer to the Indian market. It can further showcase the beauty of the destination, highlight unique experiences, and educate potential tourists/agents about what Sabah has to offer.

Q Tell us how natural wonders such as Mount Kinabalu, Maliau Basin, and Tip of Borneo.

Mount Kinabalu, Maliau Basin, and the Tip of Borneo are amazing natural wonders based in Sabah, North Borneo, each offering unique tourist experiences.

Here's how they differ:

1. Mount Kinabalu: As one of the highest peaks in Southeast Asia, Mount Kinabalu (4,095m) attracts adventure-seekers and nature lovers. Climbing this majestic mountain offers stunning scenery, diverse ecosystems, and a sense of accomplishment for the climbers. It's a challenging but rewarding experience, allowing visitors to witness the sunrise from the summit and observe various flora and fauna at higher altitudes. It is also where the world's highest Via Ferrata is located.

2. Maliau Basin: Known as the "Lost World of Sabah," Maliau Basin is a pristine rainforest wilderness. It offers a more immersive and

in-depth nature experience. Visitors can take guided hikes, explore its extensive trail network, and encounter rare wildlife species. Maliau Basin allows for a quieter and more secluded adventure surrounded by natural wonders. The terrain is tough and generally requires visitors to embark on a hiking and camping excursion for a minimum of 4 days in its primary forest.

3. Tip of Borneo: Situated in the northernmost part of Sabah, the Tip of Borneo offers a unique coastal experience with a blend of natural beauty and cultural diversity. Visitors can relax on white sandy beaches, marvel at stunning sunsets, and explore nearby villages such as the Honey Bee Farm, Gong-Making Village, and the Rungus Longhouse. The area is also home to ethnic communities with rich traditions, making it an opportunity to learn more about local cultures.

Q Which are some of the traveller segments that Sabah Tourism Board (STB) is targeting in India?

Sabah Tourism Board is looking to tap into the Indian tourism market, particularly for destination weddings, and MICE groups, as Indian tourists love Sabah's beaches, islands, resorts, diving, wildlife, and cultures. Sabah has hosted approximately 9 Indian weddings in Kota Kinabalu within a span of 3 years pre-pandemic. We also received a Golf group from India in May after a successful meeting between golf operators at SATTE 2023 in India during February.

Q What are the recent steps have you taken on the sustainable tourism front?

Sabah has always been involved in conservation and working with the communities on rural tourism - For information, Sabah will play host to the inaugural ADEX Ocean Partnership Summit, from August 18-20 at the Sabah International Convention Centre (SICC). The summit will feature global experts and trailblazers to discuss and explore diving disciplines, ocean conservation, and sustainability issues while offering a platform to connect and network not just with Tourism industry players, but also with the conservation and education segment.

Q The Indian market offers huge potential to every tourism board, keeping this in mind, does STB have any specific strategy for this market?

Sabah Tourism Board will continue to work closely with Tourism Malaysia, tour agents and airlines to expand indirect passenger traffic to Sabah. Currently, Indian tourists can travel to Sabah via Singapore, with 21 flights weekly to Kota Kinabalu, and via Kuala Lumpur, 164 weekly connecting flights to Kota Kinabalu. ♦



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HOW ABOUT A RAINBOW UCC?

The travel industry doesn't have to necessarily be an activist to espouse for better business sense.

Philosophical exhortations of travel being the flag bearer of world understanding and peace aside, its sheer financial outcomes and gains remain an attractive incentive. If the bottom-line is shaky what does gratuitous pontification mean anyway?

Despite the rather unstated yet steady acceptance and growth of tourism in India in the LGBTplus sector, there is still a reluctant aura of going out and grabbing it as far as the market is concerned.

It is amazing how the authorities that be still do not seem to grasp the almost astronomical benefits that will accrue once the Indian destination gets a LGTB friendly tag. The puritans and conservative traditionalists frown on it yet the extent of a larger social acceptance of diversity is vastly under estimated by the elite.

The tourism industry needs to shed its kid gloves and for once take up a pragmatic discussion with the government for the minority view. While on this, it's important to understand that this issue shouldn't be left solely to the western-fed and often politically loaded narrative peddled by most rights groups in this sector.

At the present juncture the buzz around uniform civil code is hotting up in the country. There could even be some concrete action on that front. By espousing space for all orientations in that law, this is an opportune time to bring about a change. For example, even the presumably conservative state of Uttarakhand for itself has also considered the rights of the LGBTQ community in the draft of the proposed UCC. It's incomplete but it's a good way to start.

Internationally, the growth of conjugal rights to LGTB couples has produced a whole new market segment and providers in both source countries and destinations. By at least giving a nod to civil partnership norms in the immediate stage in India, it will open doors to an entire new market.

Pink tourism is a whole new, untapped and immensely attractive chunk of the international travel business for India. The figures projected by FICCI of 30.5 billion tourists by 2028 do not include this segment at all. Imagine the business with that new opportunity! If the government can't see the writing on the wall at least the industry should try to spell it out for them.

Business is a great argument for human rights. Don't forget that.

Anurag Yadav
Industry Expert

Anurag Yadav is a travel author and columnist, writing on hospitality and design. An avid traveller, he has published five books and divides his time equally between Delhi and London.

The views expressed in the column are of the author, and may or may not be endorsed by the publication.

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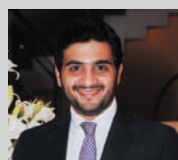
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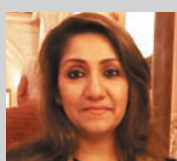
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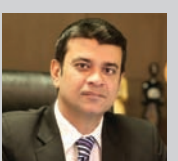
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VietJet to operate 3 weekly flights to Tiruchirappalli from Nov 2, 2023

TBM Staff | Mumbai



Vietnam is set to start direct flights connecting Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam) and Tiruchirappalli (Tamil Nadu) from November 2, 2023. Constantly expanding the flight network connecting India with Vietnam, the airline will operate with a frequency of three flights/week on this route.

Flights from Tiruchirappalli will depart at 00:30 and land in Ho Chi Minh City at 7:00 (local time) on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Return flights will depart from Ho Chi Minh City at 20:00 (local time) and arrive in Tiruchirappalli at 23:30 on every Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday.

With the addition of this new route, the airline will now operate 35 weekly return flights between India and Vietnam, connecting big cities in India – Mumbai, New Delhi, Ahmedabad, Kochi and Tiruchirappalli and the Southeast Asian country.

Indians can further plan their Diwali travel with VietJet's signature mega sale promotions on every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday with a one-way ticket price

from only INR 5,555. Details are available at www.vietjetair.com or mobile app. ♦

MARKETING AND TRADE OFFICER: INDIA

Local recruitment in Mumbai, India (Fixed Term for 6 months)



Purpose of the role: To assist the Marketing & Communications Manager to implement and execute the SA Tourism marketing strategies in the India hub that will build the brand's reputation. To perform trade training, execute trade campaigns and various administration tasks.

PROJECTS / MARKETING SUPPORT

- Collate, evaluate manage reverts from the agencies in the country to deliver on their KPI's (PR, Social Media, Media Buying, Activations).
- Develop project plans to execute the overall marketing plan with objectives and deliverables
- Execute, track and monitor consumer and trade marketing campaigns as per annual marketing plan and activity plans
- Collect, analyse and share data trends to inform the team of opportunities and methodologies.
- Compile and submit monthly reports.
- Track and analyse campaign results with Marketing & Communications Manager to modify approaches to increase effectiveness and meet market demands.
- Administer the hosting process: consumers, media and trade
- Create, deploy and manage content distribution on all SA Tourism own channels (correct and current) in line with brand guidelines and integrated marketing plan.
- brief campaign updates, including in product training
- Duty travel required
- Help identify and develop the trade training needs for SA Tourism.
- Attend all SAT and industry events/travel shows as per requirement
- Manage agencies/supplier invoices and document as per agreed process and procedure
- Marketing, logistical and other administrative support

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Diploma in Public Relations/ Marketing/ Journalism/ Trade Relations Management, Tourism Management, Sales and Marketing or equivalent.
- Minimum 5 years collective working experience in Trade Relations Management, Tourism Management, Sales and Marketing or equivalent
- Travel & Tourism experience is a must. Experience in working for a government is preferred
- Budget & financial management experience
- Indian citizens only

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF:

- In-depth knowledge of the Indian travel and tourism landscape.
- India government priorities and imperatives.

Detailed CV to be sent to: tourismexecution@southafrica.net

Closing date: 18 August 2023

Visit: www.southafrica.net

Should you have not heard from us Four weeks after the closing date, kindly consider your application unsuccessful.

No late applications will be accepted. Only India based citizens may apply.

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Yas Island: A World of Unparalleled Attractions and Experiences

TBM Staff | Hyderabad

Yas Island is Abu Dhabi's leading leisure and entertainment destination, offering holidaymakers a diverse mix of experiences. From award-winning theme parks and a thrilling Formula 1 racetrack, to the world's largest indoor skydiving flight chamber and the Middle East's first true Links golf course – one will be spoilt for choice. For those who seek a tranquil getaway, you can unwind at Yas Beach, with its white sands, crystal clear waters and natural mangrove surroundings, or indulge in any one of our many renowned hotels. Yas Island is also home to a multitude of dining and shopping options and world-class entertainment.

Yas Waterworld Yas Island, Abu Dhabi

Spanning across 37 acres, this colossal water park in the UAE delivers the ultimate aquatic adventure. With over 45 exhilarating rides, twisting slides, and extraordinary experiences, guests of all ages can find thrills suited to their preference. It's a comprehensive family-friendly destination that guarantees non-stop fun. Dive into the excitement of a looping free-fall waterslide, ride the thrilling waves, and hold on tight on the longest suspended rollercoaster in the Middle East. Yas Waterworld pays tribute to the Emirati culture and heritage of pearl diving with a unique pearl diving attraction that showcases traditional Emirati pearl diving.

Ferrari World Yas Island, Abu Dhabi

Experience the ultimate speed at Ferrari World, Abu Dhabi. With the world's fastest rollercoaster and a pulse-pounding atmosphere, this thrilling destination offers a stellar mix of record-breaking rides that ignite passion and fuel excitement in the hearts of guests of all ages.

Warner Bros. World™ Yas Island, Abu Dhabi

Step into a vibrant animated world where fan-favorite DC Super Heroes like Batman, Superman and Wonder Woman, alongside beloved Animation characters from Looney Tunes and Hanna-Barbera like Tom and Jerry, Bugs Bunny, Scooby-Doo and The Flintstones come to life. The world's first

ever Warner Bros. branded indoor theme park offers topnotch entertainment shows, immersive experiences for the whole family, and an incredible blend of fiction brought to life with astonishing realism.

SeaWorld® Yas Island, Abu Dhabi

SeaWorld Abu Dhabi offers a fascinating experience. The park boasts eight immersive realms that transport guests on a remarkable journey from the polar regions to the vibrant tropics. Within SeaWorld Abu Dhabi, patrons can delight in over 100 animal encounters and presentations, providing an up-close



and personal opportunity to learn about the interconnectedness of our vast oceanic world. From mesmerising expeditions to unforgettable encounters, guests are sure to gain a deeper understanding of the awe-inspiring One Ocean that unites us all. Beyond the marine life experiences, SeaWorld Abu Dhabi offers a plethora of interactive activities and thrilling rides. With over 35 engaging experiences and rides to choose from, guests can embark on exhilarating adventures while immersing themselves in the wonders of the park. To cater to the diverse needs of guests, SeaWorld Abu Dhabi boasts an impressive selection of dining options, with 17 establishments offering a wide range of culinary delights. Additionally, guests can browse through 13 retail outlets, ensuring they can take home a memento to cherish from their unforgettable experience.

CLYMB™ Abu Dhabi

The ultimate adventure hub that redefined

indoor skydiving and climbing. Discover the world's largest indoor skydiving flight chamber and the tallest indoor climbing wall in the region. Prepare to conquer two ground-breaking experiences, all within a single exhilarating destination.

Yas Marina

Set against Abu Dhabi's picturesque coastline. Whether it's savoring a waterfront meal, leisurely strolling along the dock, or embarking on a peaceful paddle amidst hidden mangroves, there's something for everyone. For an added thrill, jump aboard a cruise to explore the pristine coastline or get your feet wet with a variety of water sports.

Yas Beach

Escape to the serene paradise of Yas Beach, where pristine white sands, clear waters, and tranquil mangrove surroundings create an idyllic retreat for water sports enthusiasts and families alike. Relax on a sun lounger and bask in the sun's warmth, or indulge in refreshing tropical drinks and delectable dining options at our exquisite restaurants.

Yas Mall

Experience an unparalleled blend of shopping, dining, and entertainment, all conveniently located under one roof. Explore a wide array of 400 international brands, catch the latest blockbuster at our 24-screen cinema, and delight in endless family entertainment within the mall's vast entertainment zone.

Yas Marina Circuit

Experience the electrifying atmosphere of the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix at Yas Marina Circuit, where the roar of car engines fills the air. Take control of a high-performance vehicle and compete with friends on this iconic Formula 1 track.

Yas Links Abu Dhabi

The first true links golf course in the Middle East, designed by renowned golf course architect Kyle Phillips. Located on Yas Island, it offers a Championship Links course, luxurious clubhouse, top-notch facilities, and has been ranked among the world's best golf courses. It is the new home of the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship. ♦

Rail Europe adds Eurail Greek Islands Pass to its portfolio

TBM Staff | Mumbai

Rail Europe has introduced the Eurail Greek Islands Pass, to its B2B inventory and available via its B2B website and API.

"With the launch of the Eurail Greek Islands Pass, we are proud to present an unparalleled opportunity for our B2B partners' to enhance their customers' travel experiences. The Eurail Greek Islands Pass serves as a gateway to a myriad of experiences across Greece's captivating islands, from the alluring glamour of Mykonos to the inspiring landscapes of Santorini, and the pristine serenity of Crete, three top destinations in Europe. We are thrilled to foster further collaboration with our partners as we jointly promote this unique pass and showcase the captivating islands it encompasses.", says Björn Bender, CEO & President, Rail Europe.

The Eurail Greek Islands Pass allows travellers to explore the Greek islands via national ferry – travel possible via the Attica Group (Superfast Ferries, Blue Star Ferries & Hellenic Seaways) – for 4 domestic travel days, as a mobile pass. It's also a great addition to the Eurail Greece pass, for travellers willing to visit highlights like Athens, Thessaloniki and Olympia, or the European continent as a whole. Eurail passes is the perfect choice to discover

the wonders of Europe by train. Rail Europe's trade partners from across the world have been promoting and selling these rail passes for decades. Considered as the most popular pass, Eurail Global Pass is seen by many as the easiest way to travel within Europe. It offers unlimited rail travel across 33 destinations in Europe, giving travellers a unique experience and an in-depth knowledge of the European culture. ♦



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67th TAAI Convention

Sri Lanka-India bilateral tourism gains Spotlight

TBM Staff | Mumbai

The 67th Convention and Exhibition of the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) concluded in Colombo, Sri Lanka with the historic presence of the President of the island nation.

The Sri Lankan hospitality was at its best and they left no stone unturned in organising a wonderful and memorable experience for all the delegates. The insightful and invigorating Business Sessions kept the audience captive



as they listened in rapt attention to the suggestions and viewpoints of their industry colleagues.

The inaugural function of the 67th Conference of TAAI commenced at the BMICH in Colombo, setting the stage for an opening ceremony that left the audience

captivated. The conference centred around the profound connection shared by India and Sri Lanka, showcasing the vibrant essence of Sri Lankan culture through a performance by the renowned Channa Upuli Dance Troupe.

Nishad Wijetunga, President SLAITO, extended a warm welcome to the distinguished delegation. Both Jyoti Mayal, the President of TAAI, and Gopal Baglay, the Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, addressed the gathering, emphasising the significance of India-Sri Lanka relations in the context of tourism. The Chief Guest of the evening, His Excellency President of Sri Lanka, Ranil Wickremesinghe, further reiterated the profound bond between the two nations with a speech that highlighted the awe-inspiring sights found in Sri Lanka.

The Day 2 of the 67th TAAI Convention kick-started with a houseful of travel and hospitality professionals, eagerly waiting for engaging business sessions followed by a B2B session showcasing the best of Sri Lanka's Accommodation Providers and Destination Management Companies.

The Session on India Tourism Vision 2047: A Transformed Landscape of Experiences and Connections witnessed an exciting discussion between Arvind Singh, former Secretary Tourism, Government of India; Madhavan Menon, MD, Thomas Cook India Limited; Nipun Agarwal, Chief Commercial and Transformation Officer, Air India; K.B. Kachru, Chairman Emeritus & Principal Advisor – South Asia, Radisson Hotels Group and moderator Ashish Gupta, Consulting CEO, FAITH.

Insightful presentations were made by



Ranil Wickremesinghe
Prime Minister, Sri Lanka

Pieter Elbers, CEO, IndiGo and Tisum Jayasuriya, Chairman Sri Lanka Convention Bureau. An interesting discussion on the potential of aviation was moderated by Kapil Kaul, CEO and Director, CAPA India with panellists Amitabh Khosla – Country Director – India, IATA; Praveen Iyer – Co-Founder & Chief Commercial Officer, Akasa Air; Rajeev Bhatia – Chief Commercial Officer, Amadeus India; Vinay Malhotra – Head of Global Sales, Indigo and Richard Nuttall – CEO, Sri Lankan Airlines.

Adding a stimulating perspective to travel were two intriguing sessions. One was a detailed presentation on Experiential Travel – A Paradigm Shift in Tourism by Dr Navina Jafa, Expert Cultural Skills & Sustainable Development and other was a motivational story of a true journey by Ajeet Bajaj and his daughter Deeya on climbing the Seven Summits – The Trailbalzers' journey.

A evening to cap off Day 2 was held at the Cinnamon Grand. Following a Sri Lanka Theme, the event was named "an evening in Colombo" and featured captivating dance performances, oriental music and delicious meals & drinks. The evening was graced by the presence of Hon. Minister of Tourism & Lands Harin Fernando and the Chief Guest Hon. Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena, who both gave exhaustive speeches highlighting the importance of the Indian market for Sri Lanka. Besides cultural





affinity, both countries share crucial tourism ties too.

Sharing her thoughts, Mayal said, "For us it was important to stick to our commitment of holding the Convention in Sri Lanka. I personally believe that Sri Lanka as a destination has much to offer and as a neighbouring country, we must do everything in our power to help the country come out of the economic crisis. India's relationship with BIMSTEC countries presents a significant opportunity for enhancing tourism ties and we all must work upon it. We are thrilled to be hosted by Sri Lanka and completely overwhelmed by the warm response that we have received. I am confident that this Convention will prove to be a milestone in the India – Sri Lanka relations and also the country's tourism graph."

During the course of the evening, the Hon. Tourism Minister also shared his opinion. He said, "We have a target of 4 million tourists and we are confident of achieving it because India is out No.1 source market. We are not just a beach destination, but also a beautiful island that is brimming with touristic offerings – we are a 365 days destination. Sri Lanka is called the Pearl of the Indian Ocean for its beauty and multitude attractions."

The Minister also spoke highly about TAAI, especially Mayal, who has remained a loyal friend of Sri Lanka and stuck to her commitment of holding the Convention in

the country, obstacles notwithstanding. The closing speech was given by Chairman Organising Committee Maahen Kariyawasam followed by the Vote of Thanks by VP TAAI Jay Bhatia.

The Day 3, the final day of the TAAI Convention took delegates to a new venue – Shangri-La Colombo. The morning started



with the signing of the MoU between Nexus DMC CEO Vinay Gupta and TAAI President for its new landmark website – NEXTAAI. "The total size of the Global Tourism sector is 8 trillion and with NexTAAI we have combined the strength of people + innovation + experience + relations. This is the first time that an association has taken such a move for its members," said Gupta. Giving a presentation, he explained how

TAAI members can make use of this new portal to create flawless itineraries in a short span of time and also do easy follow-ups and changes.

Roping in international viewpoint, the session on Transcending Borders – Strengthening International Relations for a Transformed World brought together Ho Thi Thanh Truc, Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Sri Lanka; Paul Stephens, High Commissioner, High Commission of Australia, Sri Lanka; Katsuki Kotaro – Charge D'Affaires, Embassy of Japan, Sri Lanka; Fakhri Alivev – Charge D'Affaires, Embassy of Azerbaijan, New Delhi and Maged Mosleh – Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Sri Lanka.

Any noteworthy discussion on tourism is incomplete without discussing how Technology has upped the game in travel. Titled Differentiating Travel – Perspectives from Industry Experts, the panellists included Dev Karvat – Founder and CEO, Asego Travel LLP; G B Srithar – Regional Director, India, Middle East & South Asia, Singapore Tourism Board; Commander Nevil Malao – Senior Vice President, JM Baxi & Co.; Noel Swain – COO – Passport, eVisa, Identity & Citizen Services, VFS Global, and was moderated by Amish Desai, Member Managing Committee, TAAI.

Another day full of engaging business sessions was followed by a B2B session showcasing the best of Sri Lanka's Accommodation Providers and Destination Management Companies.

Drawing the curtains to the event at the Heritance Negombo, the TAAI delegates were treated to the very best of English, Sinhala, Tamil & Hindi entertainment. The performances were complimented by dances, fireworks and food & drinks, and lucky draw. ♦



Power Trips!

Unleashing the Potential of Energy Tourism

By **Dr. Nimit Chowdhary**, Professor of Tourism
Faculty of Management Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.

Energy tourism is gaining momentum worldwide as many people are interested in understanding the science and ideas behind energy generation and consumption. Energy tourism offers a one-of-a-kind opportunity to see areas associated with various sources of energy and develop an awareness of the environmental benefits and drawbacks of these. In this essay, we will discuss the growing popularity of energy tourism, its link to sustainable development, and the economic opportunities it provides, as well as highlight some notable examples from around the world.

"Energy tourism" refers to more than just viewing power plants and other energy production facilities. It includes areas that emphasise renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, hydroelectric power and those that employ more energy-efficient practices. These destinations provide various activities and excursions, from instructive tours to hands-on activities such as cycling or walking through wind and solar fields. The increased awareness of the effects of climate change and the need to discover environmentally acceptable energy solutions have contributed significantly to the surge in interest in energy tourism. As people become more conscious of the relationship between the amount of energy they consume and its environmental impact, energy tourism has evolved as a way to experience and learn about the production and consumption of sustainable energy.

Another factor contributing to the growth of the energy tourism business is the growing interest in alternative types of energy and the commercial opportunities they provide. Governments worldwide are investing in renewable energy technology to reduce carbon emissions and achieve sustainable development. Energy tourism offers a platform for displaying these technologies and drawing attention to the financial benefits of using renewable energy. Furthermore, energy tourism can benefit the local economy by promoting the growth of local businesses and creating new job possibilities. Local towns around energy tourism sites often benefit economically



Dr Nimit Chowdhary is a Professor at the Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management at Jamia Millia Islamia. He has more than 29 years of academic experience, of which he has been a full professor for 16 years in India, China, and Mexico. In addition, he was a visiting faculty at Gotland University (Sweden), the University of Girona (Spain), IIM Sirmaur, IIQM, and EDII. He is a recipient of many academic awards and recognitions. He has authored 20 books and more than 200 academic papers and chapters. He has travelled extensively to around 40 countries and almost all states within the country

because these locations provide various services such as hotels, food, and other amenities.

Energy tourism offers significant opportunities for developing environmentally responsible tourism but poses challenges. The construction of renewable energy infrastructure in rural areas can potentially worsen current tensions between renewable energy expansion and tourism expansion. Concerns have been made about the prospect of an impact on the environment's biological and cultural authenticity, which could reduce the region's attraction to tourists. However, it is critical to recognise that renewable energy

projects have the potential to become attractions in their own right, resulting in unique travel experiences. Wind turbines and solar panels, for example, can be physically appealing while simultaneously educating tourists about renewable energy technology.

By enthusiastically embracing the sector, certain localities have established themselves as leaders in energy tourism. One notable example is Germany's "Energy Route," a network of more than 50 energy-related locations such as wind farms, solar power plants, and hydroelectric power stations. Furthermore, the Energy Route includes information centres, museums, and visitor centres to educate tourists about renewable energy generation. Similarly, tourists to Iceland's "Golden Circle" can learn about the country's geothermal energy usage and its role in its sustainable development efforts. Millions of holidaymakers interested in renewable energy and other environmental problems have visited these destinations.

Another country that has begun to encourage energy tourism is India, which has a variety of places that provide one-of-a-kind experiences. The *Bhadla Solar Park* is one of the country's largest solar parks. It is located in Rajasthan, known for its massive solar farms. This state contains the Thar Desert. Visitors will be able to learn about the various benefits of solar energy and witness the enormity of solar power generation firsthand. The *Sardar Sarovar Dam* in Gujarat is one of India's most significant hydroelectric power projects. The dam offers guided tours to tourists, during which they can learn about the dam's operations and the benefits of hydropower. The southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu is home to various wind farms, the most notable of which is the *Muppandal Wind Farm*. Visitors to this location can take in the spectacular sight of wind farms while learning about how wind power is created.

India is an ideal choice for travellers interested in energy tourism due to its commitment to using renewable energy sources and its target of obtaining 40% of its electricity from such sources by 2030. Those who visit the country can witness the country's transformation to more sustainable energy sources firsthand and appreciate the efforts made.

There is a growing interest in eco-friendly activities and alternative energy sources, fueling the expansion of the energy tourism industry. Anyone listening! ♦

'The views expressed in the column are of the author, and may or may not be endorsed by the publication.'

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In the world of luxury gaming and hospitality in India, one name stands out above the rest is Deltin. With a remarkable journey that started in 2008, Deltin has grown exponentially to become a trailblazer in the industry. Led by the **Anil Malani, CEO, Deltin** the brand has left an indelible mark on India's gaming landscape with its portfolio of iconic offshore – onshore casinos and 5-star hotels. In an exclusive interview with Malani, **Asmita Mukherjee** delves into Deltin's future plans and its commitment to excellence in the realm of hospitality-focused gaming.

'Delta Corp's plans a sprawling 100-acre integrated resort in Goa'

While speaking on Deltin's inception and evolution Malani explained that the inception of the Deltin brand created by the visionary Jaydev Mody. "Our operations began with one casino in 2008. Since then, Deltin has expanded exponentially and currently has 3 iconic offshore casinos, 5 onshore (land based) casinos and 2 five-star hotels under its portfolio. Deltin is distinguished by its investments in the creation of high-quality luxury gaming and hospitality infrastructure. Delta Corp Ltd, the sole publicly traded Indian casino and online gaming company, owns the Deltin brand. Deltin has set itself apart by investing in high-quality luxury gaming and hospitality infrastructure, earning it a position as the sole publicly traded Indian casino and online gaming company, under Delta Corp Ltd.

Goa, Daman, Sikkim, and Nepal are the strongholds for the 'Deltin' brand of gaming and entertainment. Deltin continues to be the undisputed market leader in its segment."

In regard to their impressive portfolio, Malani highlighted the significant impact of three offshore floating casinos, which have become iconic luxury gaming destinations in Goa – Deltin Royale, Deltin Jaqk, and Kings Casino (formerly Deltin Caravela).

Looking ahead, Deltin's vision is to further elevate its presence in the market. He stated, "We have also mark our presence with five exceptional land-based casinos, including Deltin Zuri at The Zuri White Sand Resorts in South Goa, Deltin Gold at the Sinq Prive Hotel in the popular Candolim belt of Goa, Deltin Denzong at Hotel ITC Denzong Regency in Sikkim, Deltin Casino International in Kathmandu Marriott Hotel, Nepal, and Deltin Suites Casino at Hotel Deltin Suites in Goa.

Also, Deltin owns two 5-star hotels – Deltin Suites, a 106 room, all-suite hotel with a casino and The Deltin, a 176 room five-star hotel in Daman, which is an integrated resort with a proposed casino."

According to Malani, the gaming scenario in India portrays a young and rapidly expanding market. He emphasised by saying, "The country's rapid economic development and the accompanying surge of urbanisation are driving an

increase in demand for high-end gaming, entertainment and hospitality. 'Deltin' has a strong business model and an effective management structure, and it is an industry pioneer, therefore it's expected to remain at the top of its field for the foreseeable future."

The Deltin – gaming-focused hospitality unit, is facing certain restrictions as it seeks to expand its operations to new geographical locations. Malani informed that currently, live gaming (casinos) is permitted only in the states of Goa and Sikkim in India. Nevertheless, Deltin has already made a significant impact in both of these gaming destinations, establishing a dominating presence. The company is eagerly awaiting its casino license in Daman, pending regulatory approvals. Despite the limitations in India, the Deltin has also ventured into the international market, operating a casino in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Mentioning that Deltin's growth and success fuelled by its strategic business approaches

Malani stated, "A key factor is their adeptness in acquiring gaming licenses at the right time, enabling them to stay ahead of the competition. Deltin have also made significant investments in creating exceptional gaming and hospitality infrastructure, including offshore vessels, onshore casinos, and luxurious five-star hotels, by bringing luxury gaming experiences to India, comparable to renowned destinations like Vegas and Macau, Deltin has played a pioneering role in putting India on the global map for gaming and entertainment."

Elaborating on the expansion and innovation plans of Deltin Malani explained, "In the short term, the company's business thrives with a healthy income stream, capitalising on the booming gaming market in India. Looking ahead, a dream project takes shape as Delta Corp plans an integrated resort spread across 100 acres in Goa. With in-principal approval from the Investment & Promotion Board, this resort will be a one-of-a-kind destination, offering a 5-star hotel, electronic casino, theme park, shopping mall, gaming zones, and a plethora of family recreational activities. Envisioned to attract both international tourists seeking cultural experiences and Indian outbound travellers."♦

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India emerges as fastest market to reach pre-Covid levels of inbound to Australia

Australia Marketplace India witnesses record participation of 94 agents

TBM Staff | Bengaluru

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

The marketing campaign of Tourism Australia Come and Say G'day has recorded over 433 million views, and 89% more visitors

market spend. India was the 6th position on this parameter in 2019. Alongside, there has been a surge in business events by six times. All this has been possible with tripling of direct aviation capacity, speed and ease of visa processing.

Tourism Australia held the 18th edition of its flagship trade initiative, Australia Marketplace India (AMI), in Bengaluru from July 23 to 25. The return of this key B2B

services to a record 94 Indian travel agents, demonstrating the country's rising appeal as a holiday destination for Indian tourists.

AMI has been a pivotal platform in connecting India's top travel agents with Australian tourism industry stakeholders and delegates to promote Australian holidays with the country's latest and diverse offerings and experiences. This year's participating Australian tourism representatives and distributors included a diverse set of businesses, including lodging and tour operators, attractions, experiences, cultural institutions, along with state and local tourism organizations. Compared to AMI 2019, this year's event saw a 20% increase in seller delegates, who support Tourism Australia's commitment to growing tourism demand from India to enable a competitive and sustainable tourism industry by exploring destinations through new experiences and products. The Indian travel buyers have been represented by 94 companies from across 8 Indian cities – Mumbai, Delhi NCR, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai, Pune, Ahmedabad, and Kolkata.

Commenting on the event, Andrew Hogg, Executive General Manager – Eastern Markets and Aviation, Tourism Australia, said, "India has been Australia's fastest growing source market and continues to be one of Australia's most valuable and promising tourism markets now and into the future. Australia Marketplace India is



Susan Coghill, CMO, Tourism Australia with Nishant Kashikar, Country Manager - India & Gulf, Tourism Australia addressing the press at AMI in Bengaluru.

are likely to take an Australian holiday with this campaign. This video film has been promoted on social, digital, OTT Cinema and Out-of-Home platforms.

The spend by Indian tourists increased by 16% to AUD 1.97 billion (INR 11,000 crore), ranking on the fifth position of inbound

event, for the first time since 2019, aimed to assist representatives from the Australian tourism industry to develop and establish business relationships with key qualified travel agencies and tour operators from India. At the three-day event, 86 Australian tourism businesses displayed their products and

Indian Visitor Arrivals to Australia

Calendar Year	Visitors	% Change	Calendar Year	Visitors	% Change
2006	83,800	23.2	2013	171,700	7.9
2007	95,200	13.6	2014	197,000	17.0
2008	116,000	22.0	2015	233,000	18.6
2009	124,800	8.0	2016	262,300	11.3
2010	138,700	11.1	2017	302,200	15.2
2011	148,200	6.9	2018	357,700	18.2
2012	159,400	7.5	2019	399,200	11.6
			YE May 2023	375,500	2.3%

Purpose of Travel (YE May 2023)

Purpose of Visit	Arrivals	% Share
Visiting friends and relatives	231,582	61.7%
Holiday	48,967	13.0%
Business	32,460	8.6%
Employment	25,073	6.7%
Education	21,412	5.7%
Other	15,806	4.2%

Port of Arrival (YE May 2023)

Port of Arrival	YE May 2023	% Share
MELBOURNE	171,750	45.8%
SYDNEY	126,684	33.8%
PERTH	30,483	8.1%
BRISBANE	28,196	7.5%
ADELAIDE	12,057	3.2%
COOLANGATTA	2,882	0.8%
CAIRNS	1,796	0.5%
DARWIN	1,336	0.4%

our prime platform, bringing together some of Australia's leading industry experts and tourism delegates to showcase Australia's world-class appeal to India's trade stakeholders; to drive future growth in visitation and tourist spend from India. We continue to receive outstanding support from our Indian travel partners, who are some of our biggest advocates in making Australia a preferred holiday destination for India's High Yield Travellers."

Nishant Kashikar, Country Manager – India & Gulf, Tourism Australia, shared, "India has improved its ranks among Australia's source markets, and reached a milestone of emerging as the first market to recover to pre-Covid levels, with several marketing, public relations, distribution, and partnership initiatives aimed at

enhancing Australia's attractiveness and consideration. Our Key Distribution Partners, Aussie Specialists and Business Event agents have been vital in inviting Indians to Australia. We seek to maintain our current trajectory and unlock India's potential growth towards the next decade of travel."

India ranked as Australia's fourth-largest inbound tourism market for arrivals for the year ended May 2023. According to Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), visitor arrivals data for the year ended (YE) May 2023 confirms Australia welcomed around 375,500 visitors from India, surpassing the pre-Covid levels. Spending by Indian visitors for YE March 2023 was AUD 1.97 Bn (+16% over YE March 2019), exceeding pre-Covid levels. ♦





‘Our various ancillary revenue streams significantly contribute to our balance sheet’

We have maintained our brand image by focusing on delivering exceptional service and quality experiences. This has resulted in increased guest satisfaction and repeat bookings, driving revenue growth in the rooms segment, says **Chandan Thakur, Asst. Vice President (Operation), MAYFAIR Spa Resort & Casino, Gangtok, Sikkim** in a conversation with **TravelBiz Monitor.**

Q What is the USP of your Property? What impact has it made on the hospitality scene in Gangtok?

MAYFAIR Spa Resort & Casino Gangtok is an iconic boutique resort that seamlessly blends local culture, heritage, and craftsmanship into its architecture and ambiance. Nestled in the foothills of the Himalayas, MAYFAIR Spa Resort & Casino is the first offshore Casino at Gangtok, Sikkim. With 93 well-appointed rooms, including executive rooms, cottages, suites, and villas, our 5-star deluxe hotel caters to honeymooners, nature enthusiasts, and those seeking tranquility and luxury. Our resort's location makes it the ideal hub for connecting nearby tourist destinations including Changu Lake, the Nathula border (between India and China), Lachung-Lachen, Namchi, etc.

In addition, our award-winning spa facilities, multi-cuisine restaurant, bar, and indoor/outdoor games offer a complete experience of premium boutique and cater to MICE clientele as well.

Situated 10 km from Gangtok in the charming town of Ranipool, our resort spans 48 acres of land. We are honored by the Sikkim government, who refers to us as the “Jewel of Sikkim.”

We boast our tagline “Stay With Us, Stay With Nature” by creating a microclimate, surrounding the

property for a unique eco-friendly experience that is one of a kind. Hence, with a commitment to preserving local heritage, providing exceptional service, and creating unforgettable experiences, MAYFAIR Spa Resort & Casino Gangtok stands as a testament to luxury and elegance in the heart of Sikkim.

Q How do you plan to target inbound travellers? Do you have any plans for B2B tie-ups for your hotel?

To target inbound travellers, we utilise Regional Sales Offices in Delhi, Kolkata, Guwahati, Siliguri, and Odisha. These offices serve as key touchpoints for engaging directly with potential customers and promoting our hotel's offerings tailored to their needs. Our Centralized Reservation System efficiently manages bookings and inquiries from inbound travellers. Decisions related to inbound, B2B, and corporate tie-ups are made from our corporate office, ensuring a coordinated approach. Through strategic partnerships and a centralized system, we aim to effectively target inbound travellers and expand our reach in the market.

Q What are your major revenue streams and how have they grown?

Our major revenue streams include rooms, food and beverage, and banquets. We have witnessed

significant growth in these areas through various strategies. Firstly, we have maintained our brand image by focusing on delivering exceptional service and quality experiences. This has resulted in increased guest satisfaction and repeat bookings, driving revenue growth in the rooms segment. Secondly, our food and beverage offerings have attracted a loyal clientele due to the variety and quality of our cuisine, leading to consistent revenue growth. Finally, our banquets department has successfully hosted a range of events, thanks to our well-appointed event spaces and professional services, resulting in increased bookings and revenue. Overall, our commitment to maintaining brand reputation, retaining clients, and leveraging positive word-of-mouth recommendations has fuelled the growth of our major revenue streams.

Q What are your promotional strategies for the F&B segment?

We utilize various promotional strategies to enhance our F&B segment. This includes effective brand positioning to communicate our unique value proposition and appealing packaging to create a positive impression. Emphasizing our distinctive features sets us apart from competitors. Blogging establishes our authority in the industry while email marketing keeps customers informed about promotions and events. Social media marketing amplifies our brand visibility through captivating visuals and customer testimonials. Additionally, participating in food festivals allows us to showcase our culinary expertise and generate excitement. These integrated strategies help us strengthen our brand presence, attract new customers, and foster loyalty within the competitive F&B market.

Q What are the major ancillary revenue streams that you witnessed significantly contributing to your balance sheet?

We have observed significant contributions to our balance sheet from various ancillary revenue

streams. Our spa services have played a major role, attracting both residents and non-residents seeking relaxation and wellness treatments.

Additionally, offering memberships for our spa, swimming pool, and gym facilities to non-residents has proven to be a lucrative source of revenue. Our travel desk services have also made a notable impact, catering to the travel needs of guests by providing assistance with bookings, tours, and transportation. These ancillary revenue streams have not only enhanced our overall financial performance but also added value to the guest experience, making them an integral part of our business model.

Q What sustainable practices are being implemented at your hotel property to contribute to the environment?

Our brand & resort at Gangtok, has put in place a number of sustainable practices to help the environment following the lead of Sikkim, the nation's first organic state. We focus on reducing food waste through efficient inventory

“ Our brand & resort at Gangtok, has put in place a number of sustainable practices to help the environment following the lead of Sikkim, the nation's first organic state. We focus on reducing food waste through efficient inventory management and promoting responsible dining practices

management and promoting responsible dining practices. Water usage beyond the hotel room is minimized through the incorporation of water-saving fixtures and guest involvement in conservation efforts. To combat plastic pollution, we have taken significant steps to eliminate single-use plastics throughout our premises like completely stopping the usage of plastic water bottles. Energy conservation is prioritized as well, with the use of energy-efficient appliances and lighting systems.

Sustainability is integrated into our hotel architecture, employing eco-friendly materials and design practices for optimized energy

efficiency. Additionally, we practice rainwater harvesting, prioritize local and seasonal produce, avoid disposable products, and utilize natural, eco-friendly cleaning supplies. These comprehensive sustainable practices reflect our commitment to environmental preservation while delivering exceptional hospitality experiences.

Q What are your biggest challenges? How do you plan to overcome them?

At Mayfair Spa Resort and Casino Gangtok, we face several challenges. These include the increasing number of casino establishments, the impact

of the monsoon season, and natural calamities owing to the demography. The monsoon causes problems with airport connectivity, travel difficulties on mountain routes, and various natural disasters like landslides, and roadblocks, which are very typical in hilly locations. These obstruct regional travel and tourism. To overcome these challenges during the monsoon season, we refine our strategies by enhancing facility maintenance, implementing effective contingency plans, and arranging alternative transportation options. In Gangtok, we take advantage of our verified market share and the lack of direct segment competition to sustain our guest inflow and eliminate the competition. Our extensive network of properties in the Northeast region provides us with the flexibility and resources needed to ensure uninterrupted guest services in our one-of-a-kind Casino resort. These proactive measures enable us to navigate the challenges and provide exceptional experiences at Mayfair Spa Resort and Casino, Gangtok. ♦

Europe's Outletcity Metzingen appoints AVIAREPS as Sales & PR Representative in India

NEWS ROUND UP

TBM Staff | Mumbai

With an aim to strengthen its presence in the Indian market, Outletcity Metzingen, a luxury shopping outlet in Europe, has appointed AVIAREPS as its Sales and PR representative in India. The dedicated team of tourism experts at AVIAREPS will be responsible for curating and implementing cross-channel promotional strategies for Outletcity Metzingen with an ultimate goal to increase visitor numbers and spends from India.

A home to over 150 premium and luxury brands, Outletcity Metzingen is the only place in the world that gives the feeling of walking amongst the great designers themselves. The true-to-the-original interiors of the many flagship outlet stores confirm Metzingen as a City of Fashion for guests from all around the world. The affordable designer trends are as international as the cosmopolitan guests, representing 185 nations in a city which speaks one language: fashion.

Commenting on the appointment, Angela Rieger, Senior International Partnership Manager at Outletcity Metzingen, said, "We chose AVIAREPS as our marketing representation for India due to their exceptional track record in the travel industry, coupled

with their in-depth knowledge of the Indian market. This strategic partnership will enable us to effectively penetrate the Indian market, leverage AVIAREPS' extensive network and expertise to attract a broader audience, and establish a strong brand presence in this significant region."

Speaking on the company's diverse and expanding product portfolio, Ellona Pereira, Head, AVIAREPS India, said, "We are extremely proud to add Outletcity Metzingen to our portfolio of esteemed clients. Outletcity Metzingen offers an incredible shopping experience that has the potential to create an everlasting memory in the most rewarding way. Our team will work towards the development and implementation of effective sales and PR strategies to create awareness about Outletcity and its unique offerings amongst Indian travellers. Our aim is to reach out to the right target audience

that will ensure Outletcity's firm positioning on the itinerary of every Indian fashion enthusiast visiting Germany."

Outletcity Metzingen is located in SouthWest Germany – just 30 minutes by car from Stuttgart, 1 hour from Baden-Baden and 2 hours from Munich, Frankfurt and Zurich. A magnet for fashion lovers and hometown of Hugo Boss, it attracts over 4 million visitors per year. ♦





‘Currently, Indian travellers constitute the largest proportion of Sentosa’s international guests’

We are working with the right people and partners to penetrate the Tier-II & III markets. Therefore, the cities with direct air connectivity to Singapore are on our radar, says **Chin Sak Hin, Assistant Chief Executive & CFO, Sentosa Development Corporation**, in an exclusive interview with **Prasenjit Chakraborty**.

Q What is the purpose of your visit and how do you want to promote Sentosa in India?

I will say this is a dual-purpose visit. I just signed an MoU with Thomas Cook and SOTC. This is to work together with them to promote Sentosa. Besides this, I’m here to thank our partners and our corporate customers. We really appreciate the support we have been getting over the years.

Q Can you elaborate on the deal that you have made with Thomas Cook and SOTC? How will it help you?

We will be working with them to develop travel products for Sentosa, and to distribute them in particular, to Tier-II & III cities. They are a multifaceted travel agency in the MICE and corporate segment.

Q Covid has brought in many changes in the travel industry. So, how has Sentosa changed post lockdown?

I think Covid has really reminded us how important hygiene, safety, and security are. It was our endeavour to provide (hygiene, safety, and security) that even pre-Covid time. But I think that Covid has taught us the importance of these even more. It has fast-tracked our digital journey during a period of limited physical

interaction. People are more conscious about their own health, wearing a mask if they are not feeling well. Correspondingly, we have continued with the cleaning regime that we have put in place since Covid.

Q What kind of itinerary is preferred by Indians for Sentosa? Are you curating any exclusive itineraries for Indian travellers?

We already have itineraries that are well suited for the families, because they do come regularly to Sentosa to enjoy the attractions. We have attractions ranging from Universal Studios Singapore, Skyline Luge Singapore, Sentosa Cable car, among others. So,

all these are very familiar to the families.

We sincerely believe we have a lot more things to offer to our guests. We have a plethora of things that can suit young adults, couples, whethersomeoneisnewly married or wants to get married. We have very nice beaches, beach clubs and beach restaurants, where they can unwind. And just recently one of our partners, the Shangri-La Group has developed their first lifestyle precinct that is not part of a hotel. That is called the Palawan @ Sentosa. It has a range of activities from electric go-karting to beach cabanas to water play areas for the whole family. There is also Ultra-golf which is the only 18-hole mini golf in Singapore. And the Palawan Food Trucks is a unique food truck cluster with 10 food trucks. In the upcoming months, we will be opening up Topsy Unicorn Beach Club, which is run by the Topsy Collective group in Singapore. They run various F&B operations in Singapore. Topsy Unicorn is 19,000 square feet of beach club, pools, and restaurants and it has a 5,000 square feet space for MICE events. So, it is a kind of a lifestyle club.

Q What is your capacity to accommodate MICE guests?

In terms of accommodation, we have 17 hotels on the island and we have meeting and conference facilities at the largest resort at Sentosa that can accommodate up to 6,000 people. We also have smaller spaces and restaurants that can hold smaller groups. So, working together with all the island partners we can help to curate a very customised MICE programme on Sentosa.

Q India is a vast country, and it is not possible to concentrate on all cities simultaneously. So, which are the cities currently your target other than Mumbai and Delhi?

We have established our presence in all the metros. But we are also working with the right people and partners like Thomas Cook to penetrate the Tier-II & III markets. So, the cities with direct air connectivity to Singapore are on our radar.

Q How many people visited Sentosa Island from India last year?

Tourism numbers are not back to pre-Covid levels. Sentosa Development Corporation has seen a total of 13 million visitors to Sentosa Island for the period April 2022 to March 2023. This is an increase of 38 percent when compared with the total visitors in the same period in the previous year. While we do not track visitors for individual Indian cities to Sentosa, Indian travellers make up the largest proportion of Sentosa’s international guests currently.

Q What is your message to the Indian travel trade and Indian people so that they visit Sentosa?

Sentosa is in your neighbourhood. This is a journey of four or five-hours by flight. We are well connected to multiple cities in India. Sentosa is a place where you can almost feel at home yet you can enjoy all the tourists and different experiences we can offer in Sentosa. We welcome back our Indian friends, who have been very strong supporters, pre-Covid time. ♦

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Remarks : Rates and offers are subject to change and subject to availability. Tourism Dirham Fee is not Included. Valid till 30th September 2023. T&C apply.



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