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New Delhi: +91 11 4151 5885

Bengaluru: +91 80 4165 6324

Indore: +91 731 4911 374

Pune: +91 20 4002 6960

Chennai: +91 44 4555 8582

Kochi: +91 75938 63903

Nasik: +91 253 231 0044

Coimbatore: +91 99527 17750

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'The Belgium Consulate in Mumbai receives 20 visa applications per hour'

Prasenjit Chakraborty | Mumbai

The Indian travellers' interest to visit Belgium has been increasing day by day as the country has rich history, architecture, gastronomy, and culture. However, the destination is lesser-known to Indians when compared with other European cities, said Frank Geerkens, Consul General the Kingdom of Belgium in Mumbai, while speaking to **TravelBiz Monitor** on the sidelines of the Visit Brussels event.

"Belgium is a very good destination but lesser known to India unlike Paris, London. But when people visit our country they are enchanted," said Geerkens.

Talking about visas, he said that

the Belgium Consulate Office in Mumbai receives 20 visa applications per hour. Geerkens also appealed to people to follow the proper procedure while applying for the visa. "Travellers should apply with valid documents," he exhorted. "After Covid restriction was lifted, we observed a surge in travel, and everyone wanted to travel at the same time. But still we are managing it," he explained. Geerkens also said that people should apply for a visa at least 15 days before travelling.

Talking about relations between India and Belgium, he said that both the countries enjoy a warm and cordial relation. "There is a great interest from Belgium people, companies and universities



Belgium Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation

Frank Geerkens
Consul General the Kingdom of Belgium in Mumbai

towards India. Both sides are keen to engage," Geerkens pointed out.

According to him, "Visit Brussels event will further consolidate the engagement between the two countries. "We have to make extra efforts to promote Belgium here in India," admitted Geerkens.

"We are very impressed that India made it to the moon; please make it to Belgium too," said Geerkens.

Meanwhile, Pieter Callebaut, International Business Developer, Visit Brussels, termed India as a potential market, and wants quality tourism from this market. "As of now the business from the India market is not satisfactory. However, we have invested a lot in this market (India) as it offers huge scope," pointed out Callebaut. ♦

prasenjit.chakraborty@saffronsynergies.in

Uganda Airlines looking for partnership with local carriers after foraying into India with direct flights

Prasenjit Chakraborty | Mumbai

Uganda Airlines has forayed into India with the launch of its direct service, connecting Mumbai Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport and Entebbe International Airport in Uganda.

This flight is operated thrice a week between the two cities, with a direct service on Airbus A330-800 neo aircraft. The service offers a three-class configuration with the Business (20 seats), Premium Economy (28 seats) and Economy (210 seats). The development will be the first time in more than 50 years that India and



Uganda will be connected by a non-stop air service.

The route augments Uganda Airlines service outside the African continent and joins a rapidly expanding network that offers travellers convenient connections to South, West, Central and Eastern Africa. The direct service will last approximately 5 & 1/2 hours

in each direction, bringing convenience to people travelling between the two points for business, family or tourism.

"We are excited to introduce this, the latest addition to our network, which affirms Uganda Airlines expands travel options for our passengers. Besides convenience, we

hope this route will add energy to the existing business and commercial relations between India and Uganda that date back more than a century," said Adedayo Olawuyi, Chief Commercial Officer, Uganda Airlines.

"Since 2017, I have relentlessly pursued the dream of a direct flight from Mumbai to Entebbe, believing it to be the catalyst for enhanced trade, commerce, and tourism between our two nations. I am elated to witness the realization of my vision." H.E. Madhusudan Agrawal, Hon. Consul of Uganda.

Speaking exclusively

to **TravelBiz Monitor**, Lenny Malasi, Country Manager-India, Uganda Airlines, said, "Mumbai is the commercial capital of India and because of this a lot of trade activities happen between Mumbai and Uganda. When it comes to student traffic, they (Students) mostly come to Mumbai and then go to other universities located in different parts of India. When it comes to business especially manufacturing segment, a lot of visitors originate from Mumbai. Because of this we are starting our flights from Mumbai."

Contd PG. 4 ►

US booking platform RateHawk eyeing India market

Prasenjit Chakraborty | Mumbai

US-based RateHawk which offers booking of hotels, air tickets, transfers and other travel-related services for professionals is on an expansion spree. Recently Victoria Vlasenko, Senior Sales Manager, Asia Pacific Region, RateHawk, visited Mumbai to study the potential of the Indian travel and tourism market.

While speaking exclusively to TravelBiz Monitor, Vlasenko said that RateHawk is making rapid strides since its inception in 2016. The company has made a strong presence in Europe, the Middle East, Latin America. "When I joined the company in 2019 there were only 800 employees, today,

our staff strength is 2600 across the world. We have offices in Warsaw, London, Milan, Dubai and other destinations," she said.

Talking about priority, Vlasenko said that their focus is on expansion and localisation of products. "We are working with the big players in the market but realised that it is also important to work with mid-size and small companies (travel agencies). Working only with big players is not enough," she pointed out.

The company also has plans to induct people in Australia and India markets in the third quarter. "My trip is just the beginning in that direction. I am talking to various stakeholders of the Indian tourism industry to ascertain their

views. I must say the discussion is very positive and they have shown interest to work with us. I will submit a detailed report to our team, they will analyse it and after that decision will be taken," explained Vlasenko. She added, "We expect a very good result from this market as India is one of the largest economies in the world. The country has a huge population and the number of travel agencies is also enormous."

Speaking on trade engagement, Vlasenko said that they participate in all major trade shows across the world. "We also have plans to participate in SATTE," she revealed.

RateHawk's main products are hotel bookings, air tickets,



VICTORIA VLASENKO
Senior Sales Manager,
Asia Pacific Region, RateHawk

transfers and offline car rental. "In our system we have 2.2 million hotels, flights of more than 350 air companies as well as transfers in over 150 countries. Our strength is inventory and technology. We also work through API, and have a dedicated support team who works round the clock," she pointed out. ♦

prasenjit.chakraborty@saffronsynergies.in

Western India emerges as a key source market for Balitrip

Prasenjit Chakraborty | Mumbai

Balitrip, a Destination Management Company (DMC), organised a roadshow in Mumbai yesterday to showcase the best of Bali's hospitality industry to the travel trade.

While speaking on the sidelines of the event to **TravelBiz Monitor**, Dheeraj Ranjan Kumarr, Founder Director, PT Balitrip Wisata, said that the aim of the sales mission is to create a bridge between the buyers and hospitality sector of Bali. "We are becoming a bridge between them," said Kumarr.

Besides Mumbai, the roadshows are slated to be held in Ahmedabad, Pune and Delhi. When asked to

comment why the focus is more on the Western region of India? "It is because the Western region contributes 60% of the total arrivals from India to Bali for our company. For others also, the Western region contributes more when it comes to visiting Bali," replied Kumarr. He attributes this to flight connectivity. "The region has more flight connectivity when compared with the Southern part of India," he said.

Kumarr also said that Ahmedabad alone has three flights from different airlines which connect to Bali. "Mumbai being the hub has many flights with different frequencies. That is why traffic is

more from this region to Bali," he pointed out.

According to him Bali has become more popular to the Indian tourists after the pandemic. "This is because the destination offers many upscale products right from luxury to super luxury. Besides, Bali also offers many wellness products.



DHEERAJ RANJAN KUMARR
Founder Director,
PT Balitrip Wisata

That is why the crowd which used to come to nearby destinations has shifted to Bali," explained Kumarr.

There were 16 hospitality exhibitors that participated in the event which include Double Six Luxury Hotels, Pita Maha Group, Inivie Hospitality, Sadara Resorts, etc. Talking about service, he said that the company always focuses on innovation and adds new products every quarter. "We are the only DMC which offers flight packages," claims Kumarr.

In their endeavour to popularise Bali in the Southern region of India, the company has recently appointed two sales representatives to Bengaluru and Chennai.

"We are trying to create an eco-system for our travel partners, retail agencies empowering them with the knowledge of destination. Once their knowledge is enhanced, it will help us consolidate our position in the market further," said Kumar. ♦

prasenjit.chakraborty@saffronsynergies.in

Uganda Airlines looking for partnership...

CONTD from PG 03 ►

When asked to comment, whether they have any plans to codeshare agreement with other African airline to provide wider connectivity in the African countries? Malasi replied that they are looking for a partnership with local airlines. "Absolutely no way one can work alone in these days, hence, we are exploring partnerships with local airlines. Because India has a vast domestic network and we have to ensure that our passengers have connectivity both in India as well as Africa," explained Malasi.

The schedule has been designed to fit neatly into the existing network to meet needs of those passengers who might wish to continue their journeys beyond Uganda.

Bookings are open and have been made convenient through the Uganda Airlines App, which allows passengers to make reservations, pay for tickets, modify itineraries and print boarding passes. The app is available on both Google Play and Apple iStore.

Uganda Airlines currently operates flights to Dubai, Johannesburg, Bujumbura, Nairobi, Mombasa, Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam, Kilimanjaro, Juba, Kinshasa and Mogadishu. Flights to Lagos, Nigeria, are scheduled to start shortly. ♦



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LATAM Airlines records more business from india post-covid

Prasenjit Chakraborty | Mumbai

InterGlobe Air Transport, GSA for the LATAM Airlines Group in India organised a workshop for the travel trade in Mumbai.

Speaking to TravelBiz Monitor on the sidelines of the event, Eduardo Patta, Sales Manager, Asia, LATAM Airlines Group, said that the purpose of the event is to showcase our product, route network and connectivity from India to South America. "We don't fly directly to India. We use our interline partners for our passengers to reach our gateways

from Europe and the USA. One can reach the LATAM network and fly to all the countries and destinations that we connect in Latin America," said Patta.

Talking about India, he said that the market is growing. "Currently, we sell more inventories in this market when compared with that of the pre-Covid period. However, there are increased possibilities. We truly believe in the potential of India, and the market offers an ocean of opportunities," he pointed out.

When asked what makes him think India as a potential market?

Patta replied, "India's economy is growing, and the local carriers have placed orders for aircraft which are significantly high. The Indian travellers now not just want to travel in one country rather they want to see an entire region. So, we feel the market will grow more and more in the days to come."

The airline deploys its Boeing 777-300 and 787 Dreamliners for long-haul flights. "The configuration our aircraft offer is a combination of Economy and Premium Business Class with first few rows of Economy being



EDUARDO PATA
Sales Manager, Asia,
Latam Airlines Group

LATAM+ seats with more leg room. For domestic and regional flights, we offer Premium Economy and Economy classes," said Patta.. ♦

prasenjit.chakraborty@saffronsynergies.in

House Panel asks ASI to adopt best global practices to attract visitors

TBM Staff | Mumbai

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) should assess the impact of its efforts towards getting more visitors to monuments falling under its jurisdiction, and compare them with the best global practices.

A high-level Parliamentary panel has suggested this to the Culture Ministry in a recently released report.

Referring to footfalls at Centrally-protected monuments, the Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture recommended that the Culture Ministry "should make an assessment of the cumulative impact of all the ASI efforts towards attracting more number of visitors to ASI monuments and examine these efforts vis-à-vis the best global practices".

It has further suggested that state-of-the-art technologies being adopted by other countries in promotion of culture also need to be studied so that the same could be replicated in India as well.

The Rajya Sabha panel further sought to know about the fate of 50 missing Centrally-protected monuments and recommended the ministry to direct ASI to initiate an urgent survey of such monuments in light of the lack of physical security instead of making it "as and when" matter based on the inputs of ASI field officers.

While appreciating ASI's efforts towards retrieving antiquities, the committee sought to be briefed about the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) being followed in this regard, especially the responsibility of upkeep and preservation of the repatriated antiquities, including the role of respective states and the involvement of museum authorities.

The committee also suggested that the Culture Ministry should put in all efforts to allocate adequate funds to North eastern states.

The Ministry should strive make an effort for 100 per cent utilisation of the budget grants available for promotion and awareness of its varied schemes being implemented in North eastern areas, it said. ♦

MoCA keen on reducing risks & maintaining confidence of aircraft lessors

TBM Staff | Mumbai

The Ministry of Civil Aviation in India has expressed its commitment to maintaining the confidence of aircraft lessors in the Indian aviation market by reducing their risks. This commitment comes in response to changes made to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) by the Corporate Affairs Ministry on October 3rd, allowing aircraft lessors to recover their aircraft during insolvency proceedings.

The Civil Aviation Ministry noted that the earlier IBC regime was affecting agreements between Indian airlines and foreign lessors. It was estimated that Indian carriers were spending USD 1.2-1.3 billion more in rentals due to difficulties in aircraft recovery.

The key change introduced by the Corporate Affairs Ministry was the declaration that Section 14(1) of the IBC, which imposes a moratorium on the admission of an insolvency plea, would not apply to transactions, arrangements, or agreements related to aircraft, aircraft engines, airframes,



and helicopters. This change was aimed at addressing the roadblocks faced by lessors when repossessing aircraft.

The Civil Aviation Ministry emphasized that the earlier IBC regime, which imposed a moratorium on aircraft recovery, could result in a reduction in the supply of aircraft on favorable terms to Indian airlines. This, in turn, could impact the entire aviation industry, potentially leading to higher airfares and affecting sectors dependent on connectivity, such as tourism and cargo.

The Ministry stated that the changes made on October 3rd are in line with civil aviation treaties and conventions that India is a party to, including the Cape Town Convention. The Cape Town Convention, established in 2001, aims to protect the repossession rights of aircraft lessors and creditors, reducing the risk associated with aircraft financing and insolvency situations. ♦

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Chennai: +91 44 4555 8582

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF & CEO

Sheldon Santwan

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Prasenjit Chakraborty

prasenjit.chakraborty@saffronsynergies.in

+91 9819263364

EDITORIAL TEAM

MUMBAI

CHIEF SUB-EDITOR: Disha Shah Ghosh

disha.shah@saffronsynergies.in

SR.REPORTER: Asmita Mukherjee

asmita.mukherjee@saffronsynergies.in

CONTRIBUTORS

Hugh & Colleen Gantzer, Anurag Yadav,

Hector D'souza & Amala Dantas

MARKETING TEAM

MUMBAI

HEAD - SALES & MARKETING

Ajay Wadode

+91 8087127814

ajay.wadode@saffronsynergies.in

GOA

HEAD - GOA

Harshad R. Bhonsle

+91 8999047490

harshadrhonsle@gmail.com

COORDINATION, SUBSCRIPTION & DATABASE

Gauri Sawant: +91 8369080796

gauri.sawant@saffronsynergies.in

*Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act



Saffron Synergies

Sterling House, 5/7 Sorabji Santuk Lane,
Opp.Dr.Cawasji Hormasji Street, Dhobi Talao, Marine Lines (E),
Mumbai 400 002
Tel: 91-22-6101 1700 / 701 Fax: 91-22-6712 1854

CITY SPACES NEED A FACELIFT

Entrusting urban space design to local councillors and sundry officials will never work.

The buzz and excitement post G20 has centred around how India has come of age and how it is determined to up its game on infrastructure and international impression. All good. However, in its wake a blunt assessment has to be made about how India's cities and urban spaces in general are shaping up.

Philosophically governments- both state and union- understand that Transit Oriented Development (TOD) design concepts create liveable, sustainable, and accessible cities. Unfortunately, despite the extensive attention towards at least the newer developmental projects, the social responses to infrastructure are left to be managed by junior functionaries and sundry departments.

The slick airports and rail stations planned, especially the latter, along with bus stations, do not seem to recognize the proliferation of vendors, local shopping, public rest, and utility services. A cursory look at any such center will reveal how hawking, vending, and public jaywalking wrecks it all.

While on this, another direction requiring attention is street art, aesthetics, and institutional dedication towards it. In Mumbai's Mahim and other areas, murals on the walls lift the mood dramatically. In other cities as well, for example in Lodhi colony and Sarojini Nagar in Delhi and even small towns like Rishikesh, independent artists are commissioned to create street art that transforms the space aesthetically.

A Mumbai-based artist has enunciated it very succinctly. She said that we created kitsch Indian art because our milieu didn't understand Western sensibilities and wanted to retrofit our content with their (western) treatment and it didn't work out too well for us.

There does seem to be a need for clearly welding a defined art narrative into city planning and decorating. NID and similar institutions must get some sort of legislative control over some aspects of decorating city spaces. Signage, wall décor, and street art need more professional supervision and guidance.

The hoarding allotment and poster-pasting management must go out of the purview of city corporations. The sooner it is transferred into the hands of professional evaluation boards, the better it will be for aesthetics in the country.



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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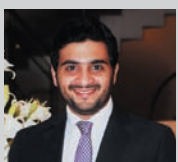
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A Foodie's Guide to Savor the Flavors of New Orleans



Food is a delectable component of the New Orleans experience, woven into the fabric of this vibrant city's culture and identity. Exploring the city's food scene is not just a gastronomic journey but a cultural immersion, where each offering tells a story of Creole and Cajun influences, gumbo gatherings, and music-infused cocktail nights. In this gastronomic haven, food is more than sustenance; it is an art form and a testament to the city's enduring love affair with culinary excellence.

Explore Traditional New Orleans Cuisine

What unites everyone in New Orleans is the city's passionate love affair with its traditional fare. It is a romance graced by a delicious bowl of gumbo in a bistro courtyard with a refreshing New Orleans cocktail, or on a picnic bench with a po-boy sandwich stuffed with fried oysters. From the soul-warming jambalaya to the beloved beignets at Café du Monde and the iconic muffuletta at Napoleon House, each dish has its own history and unique story. The iconic crawfish boil, BBQ shrimp, oysters on the half shell, and

fried seafood tower are all part of the rich tapestry of flavors that make New Orleans a food lover's paradise. New Orleans also



provides an array of vegetarian dining choices. Chefs are typically willing to accommodate dietary preferences if they are not already available on their menus.

Tours, Nightly Spirits, Underground Donut Tour and many more.

Celebrate Food and Drink Festivals

New Orleans is a city that hosts a series of festivals dedicated to food and drink and knows how to celebrate its culinary delights throughout the year. The New Orleans Wine and Food Experience gathers enthusiasts in the spring. The Crescent City Blues & BBQ Festival is a must-visit for a blend of music and barbecue. Tales of the Cocktail takes you on a journey through the city's cocktail history. Make sure to attend Emeril Lagasse's Boudin, Bourbon, and Beer Festival, a mouthwatering culinary event that showcases the city's diverse flavors.

Wine and Dine at the Best New Restaurants

New Orleans has witnessed a culinary renaissance with the emergence of exciting new restaurants, many of which have become local favorites, from the tempting Senegalese-influenced tasting menu at Dakar NOLA to the authentic Caribbean cuisine, including famous Trinidadian doubles served up by Queen Trini Lisa. Ayu Bakehouse quickly became a neighborhood staple, especially for their savory "Boudin Boy" pastry, earning them a spot on the coveted list of "23 Dishes to Try in 2023." The feast never ends in a city with hundreds of legendary restaurants.

Visit the website at www.neworleans.com to plan your itinerary, discover hidden gems, and immerse yourself in the wholesome energy that defines New Orleans. ♦



Get on a Culinary Tour!

Eating fabulous food is integral to the New Orleans experience. A culinary tour is one of the best ways to pack the most grazing into the shortest time. Some culinary tours of the city, each with a slightly different take, are: Destination Kitchen Tours/ Must Do Nola, New Orleans Secrets, The Premier New Orleans Food Tour, Tastebud Food & History

Korea Tourism showcases its MICE opportunities at Mumbai roadshow

TBM Staff | Mumbai

The Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) organised a MICE roadshow in Mumbai, yesterday at Sofitel BKC, showcasing the diverse and dynamic offerings for business events and corporate travel in Korea.

The event brought together key players in the tourism and hospitality industry, featuring participation from 7 Destination Management Companies (DMCs), 2 Airlines, 1 Regional Tourism Organization (RTO), and 1 Shopping representative.

The MICE roadshow served as a platform for fostering strong ties between Korean tourism stakeholders and the vibrant business and tourism community in Mumbai, highlighting the unique opportunities and facilities available for hosting successful MICE events in Korea.



Attendees had the chance to engage with representatives from various sectors, gaining insights into the country's capabilities as a premier MICE destination.

Participating DMCs brought forth their expertise in curating immersive experiences, showcasing the cultural richness, modern infrastructure, and diverse landscapes that Korea has to offer. The 2 Airlines in attendance emphasised the connectivity and convenience of travel to and within Korea, making it an accessible and attractive destination for international events.

Ulsan Culture & Tourism



Foundation, the RTO provided valuable information on regional attractions and collaborative opportunities, encouraging attendees to explore beyond the convention halls. Additionally, Lotte Duty-Free highlighted the country's unique retail landscape, showcasing a distinctive blend of unparalleled shopping experiences.

Myong Kil Yun, Regional Director India & SAARC Countries, Korea Tourism Organization, expressed his enthusiasm for the event, stating, "We are thrilled to have had the opportunity to bring Korea's MICE offerings

to Mumbai. The roadshow allowed us to connect with key stakeholders and demonstrate why Korea is an ideal destination for hosting memorable and successful business events."

As the global landscape for MICE tourism evolves, Korea continues to position itself as a leading destination, offering a perfect blend of modern infrastructure, cultural richness, and unique experiences. The Mumbai roadshow marks a significant step forward in promoting Korea as a preferred destination for corporate events and business travel. ♦

TAT restructures Deputy Governor positions

TBM Staff | Mumbai

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has restructured five Deputy Governor positions effective since October 1, this year.

Chattan Kunjara Na Ayudhya has been appointed the Deputy Governor for International Marketing – Asia and the South Pacific, from previously holding the position of Deputy Governor for Marketing Communications.

In his new role, Chattan will oversee the marketing and promotion of Thai tourism products and services, and the cooperation with potential partners in Asia and the South Pacific to attract tourists from these markets.

Somradee Chitchong has been appointed the Deputy Governor for Domestic Market from previously holding the position of Deputy Governor



for Administration. In her new role, Chitchong will oversee the planning and execution of domestic tourism campaigns to encourage Thais and expatriates to travel more within Thailand.

Nithee Seeprae has been appointed the Deputy Governor for Marketing Communications from previously holding the position of Deputy Governor for Digitalisation, Research and Development. In his new role, Nithee will oversee the planning

and execution of strategic advertisement and public relations campaigns across all media channels to ensure the positive image of Thailand as a preferred tourist destination.

Rujiras Chatchalermkit has been promoted to the position of Deputy Governor for Administration. She was previously the Executive Director of the Marketing Services Department. Teerasil Tapen has been promoted to the

position of Deputy Governor for Digitalisation, Research and Development. He was previously the Executive Director of Europe, Africa, and Middle East Region. In his new role, Teerasil will oversee the Digital and Information Technology Department as well as Research and Development Department.

Three other Deputy Governors in their existing positions are:

Numphon Boonyawat, Deputy Governor for Policy and Planning. She has been holding this position since 2019.

Siripakorn Cheawsamoot, Deputy Governor for International Marketing – Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas. He has been holding this position since 2022.

Apichai Chatchalermkit, Deputy Governor of Tourism Products and Business. He has been holding this position since 2021. ♦

Cinnamon Hotels upbeat about Indian visitors with opening of Cinnamon Life Integrated Resort

Disha Shah Ghosh | Mumbai

Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts, based in Sri Lanka, is highly optimistic about the influx of visitors from the Indian market, particularly with the anticipated opening of the Cinnamon Life Integrated Resort in 2024.

This development is poised to become the largest in the island nation, featuring a diverse offering that includes 800 rooms in total. Within this integrated resort, there will be two hotels providing 687 rooms, an additional 102 rooms tailored for ultra-high-net-worth individuals (HNIs), facilities to accommodate the substantial MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) traffic arriving in the country, as well as commercial space, a casino, and a mall.

Talking to **TravelBiz Monitor** during his recent visit to India,



RADHEY TAWAR
CCO, Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts

Radhey Tawar, CCO, Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts, said, "India is the number 1 source market for Sri Lanka, and Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts with 3 hotels in Colombo, and 8 resorts in Sri Lanka. We received an estimated 16-18% of visitors arriving in Sri Lanka."

Currently, in India, the metro cities of Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru and Chennai are the key source markets for the hotel

company, and they have seen big groups coming in from Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab and surrounding areas of Delhi. "There is a lot of appetite from travellers beyond the main metros. Our larger traffic comes from the main metros due to direct flight connectivity, and we are more for additional flights and newer routes to enhance visitors to our hotels and resorts."

On an average, the company caters to 10-12 Indian weddings, and this number will only increase with the latest addition in their portfolio. "We are looking to 2 million visitors to Sri Lanka this year. There are a lot of new and exciting projects upcoming in the hospitality space and other



sectors, and we expect 2025 to be a spectacular year, and are absolute certain that India will remain will remain the number one source market for Sri Lanka, and will continue to grow."

Cinnamon Hotels and Resorts has a luxury and lifestyle who work with wedding partners to give them the right kind of access for product information to sell to their clients. "We are open to exploring new hotels opportunities in variety of markets." ♦

disha.shah@saffronsynergies.in

Ajay Prakash takes over as President of IIPT

TBM Staff | Mumbai

Ajay Prakash, Founder President of IIPT India has taken over as the President of International Institute for Peace Through Tourism (IIPT). Speaking about it, he stated that 2023 marks the midpoint in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the celebration of the International Day of Peace 2023 coincides with the SDG summit to mark this mid-point milestone.

This year's theme is "Actions for Peace: Our Ambition for the #GlobalGoals."

It is a call to action that recognises our individual and collective responsibility to foster peace. IIPT was formed 37 years ago with precisely this vision – that Tourism could become a global peace Industry and that every tourist is



potentially an Ambassador of Peace.

Prakash said, "IIPT was founded in 1986, the UN International Year of Peace. There was a crying need for tourism which was fast becoming a big industry, globally, and the aim was to make the world a better place, and recognise tourism as a force for good. In its momentous journey of 37 years recognising great leaders, I am proud, honoured and humbled to take over the President of IIPT. 2023 also is the mid-

point of the SDGs by the UN, and IIPT has a role to play here in bringing greater awareness, to the industry and world at large. It is one of the largest industries, and has the potential to make an impact. It is our intention to get tourism to play a larger role in the world to foster peace and development, as tourism cannot function without peace and natural harmony." ♦

DU Digital Global secures visa processing contract for Thailand in New Delhi

TBM Staff | Mumbai

DU Digital Global Limited has acquired visa processing contract from the Royal Thai Embassy in New Delhi. Effective since October 1, 2023, the company is managing and submitting visa applications for aspiring travellers.

DU Digital Global

Speaking about this landmark achievement, Rajji Rai, Chairman, DU Digital Global Limited, said, "Securing this partnership with the Royal Thai Embassy is a testament to the global trust and excellence associated with DU Digital Global. Our seasoned team stands ready to provide a seamless and efficient visa application process for all applicants, reinforcing our leadership in delivering world-class administrative services for governments worldwide." ♦

'92% Indians intend to purchase travel insurance for their next international trip'

TBM Staff | Mumbai

ICICI Lombard General Insurance, one of India's leading general insurers on the occasion of World Tourism Day on 27th Sept, has published the findings of its recent consumer study on International Travel Behaviors of Indians and has found that 76% purchased Travel Insurance for their most recent trip and the intent to purchase the same for the next trip reached a whopping 92%. The findings further explain that a remarkable 73% of respondents demonstrated a high level of awareness regarding the importance of travel insurance, underscoring the growing consciousness of safeguarding travel experiences. Furthermore, the study uncovered that awareness of Travel Insurance increases with the progress of the family stage, as married couples with kids emerged as the highest travel insurance purchasing class at 78%, followed by married couples with no kids (67%) and singles (66%).

The study, delved deeper into the psyche of the Indian traveller and shed light on their preferences, awareness and habits, unique to each type of customer class – family, couples and singles. Through the study, the insurer shed light on the current challenges with planning and executing travel plans internationally, any gaps or needs that are currently unfulfilled that can be potentially looked into and how these changes will affect the travel insurance landscape of India.

Ms. Sheena Kapoor – Head Marketing, Corporate Communications & CSR, ICICI Lombard, said, "These statistics underline a growing consciousness among travelers to safeguard their travel experiences and protect themselves against unforeseen events. It is indeed encouraging to see that travel insurance is no longer an afterthought but a proactive choice for a majority of respondents. Additionally, the correlation between family stages and travel insurance awareness is a noteworthy discovery, demonstrating that individuals are increasingly recognizing the importance of securing their travel plans, particularly as they progress through various life stages. At ICICI Lombard, we are committed to providing comprehensive and tailored travel insurance solutions that cater to the diverse needs of our customers. We believe these findings will serve as valuable insights to help us further enhance our offerings and continue to be a trusted partner for travelers, ensuring peace

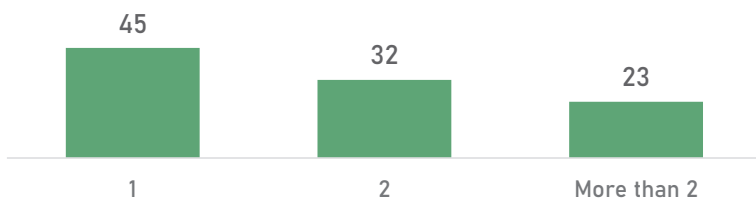
of mind during their journeys."

With an exponential rise in international travel, there is a corresponding rise in the need for Travel Insurance. Recognising this trend, ICICI Lombard's has been promoting travel in collaboration with Radio One featuring the enigmatic Bollywood superstar Ranveer Singh as the host in the #1Travel show Get Some Sun (Season 7) on radio.

According to the survey results, a significant 70% of the respondents liked the show while overall 62% find the concept to be excellent. The



International trips in the last year



Age group	% of 2 or more trips	Base
25- 35 years	54%	480
36-45 years	61%	242
45+ years	31%	35

International trips in a year	Planned and did it by self / independently	Someone (Friends/ Family) else did	Travel agent /Tour Operator was used	Booked a complete tour package	Used an online travel agency
1	38%	14%	20%	15%	14%
2	42%	10%	13%	15%	19%
More than 2	46%	2%	12%	12%	27%
Base	310	74	121	108	142

Respondents with kids more inclined to have more than 2 trips a year

1. Comparing age groups, 61% in the middle age group tend to take 2 or more trips in a year which reduces to 1 in 3 in the 45+ age group.
2. Respondents traveling once a year tend to have slightly longer duration trips – avg. 13-14 days while those taking 2 or more trips avg. at 11-12 days on their latest trip
3. Single travelers tend to take 1 trip a year (55%)

Q1. How many times have you travelled internationally in the past 1 year for any reason other than your work/business?
 Q3 How long was your travel?
 Q4 How did you plan your travel for this most recent trip i.e. booking of tickets, visas etc.?

show has further helped to drive preference for ICICI Lombard as 97% of the respondents claim to prefer ICICI Lombard as their Travel Insurance provider for their next international trip.

The survey also confirms that ICICI Lombard is one of the top 3 purchased brands in Travel Insurance. ICICI Lombard's travel insurance assures quality health care with a medical cover of up to 5 lakh USD. The various offerings of ICICI Lombard cover travellers from 3 months to 85 years without any medical check-up for policy issuance. The policy covers your safety and provides value-added services for your family back home. For more details, visit <https://www.icicilombard.com/travel-insurance?source=prodcategory&opt=travel#products>

Key takeaways from the study:

I. On overall travel behavior

- **Respondents with kids more inclined to have more than 2 trips a year;**
 - o Comparing age groups, 61% in the middle age group tend to take 2 or more trips in a year which reduces to 1 in 3 in the 45+ age group.
 - o Respondents travelling once a year tend to have slightly longer duration trips –average. 13-14 days while those taking 2 or more trips avg. at 11-12 days on their latest trip
 - o Single travellers tend to take 1 trip a year (55%)
- **2 in 5 have faced an issue while planning their latest international travel**
 - o Customers married without kids seemed to have faced the most issues with their planning (48%)
 - o While applying for visas and finalizing booking (51% each) are the biggest issues faced by the younger age group, the middle age group struggles with airline booking and arranging logistics between cities (48% each). Travel insurance issues are lowest among both age groups.
 - o Logistics between cities is a highly faced issue irrespective of the booking medium used

II. On travel insurance behavior

- Awareness of Travel Insurance
 - o Awareness of Travel Insurance (mostly aware + complete

- awareness) increases with the family stage –Single (66%), Married without kids (67%) and Married with kids (78%)
- o Customers booking through someone tend to have the lowest awareness (mostly aware + complete awareness) on Travel Insurance (57%)
- o Among people who have most/complete awareness, the purchase of travel insurance increases to 82% which drops to 18% among customers with less/no awareness
- o For international trips: 3 out of 4 respondents purchased travel Insurance for their latest international trip
- o Safety/ having financial protection (28%), coverage and claim limits (18%) and travel destination (16%) are the top 3 factors that motivate people to purchase travel insurance
- o Maximum difficulty in purchasing travel insurance is faced when the insurance booking is done by someone else (80%) while 50% of respondents who bought the travel insurance themselves and 52% who bought travel insurance by tour operator/ travel agent also faced difficulties in the same.

III. Future travel behavior

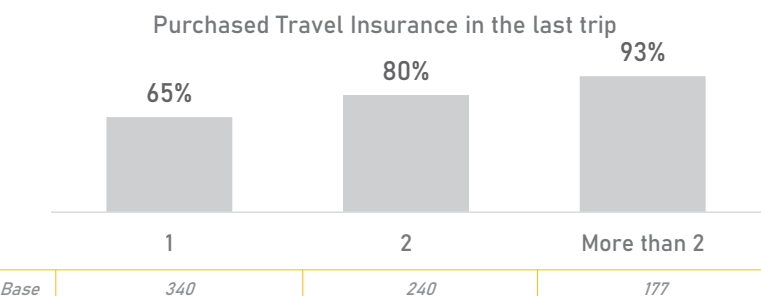
- Preference in travel destination
 - o SE Asia (47%) and Middle East Asia (40%) emerged as the most popular travel destinations among respondents for their next international trip
 - o 71% claim that destination completely determines the need for travel insurance
- 92% intend to purchase travel insurance for their next international trip
 - o The intention to purchase travel insurance increases with family stage – Couple with kids (94%), Couple with no kids (92%) and Single (87%)

ICICI Lombard reaffirms its commitment to the well-being of Indian travelers. With the remarkable shift in intent to purchase travel insurance for future trips and the increasing awareness of its importance, as a brand, ICICI Lombard is more dedicated than ever to provide top-notch travel insurance solutions that align with the evolving needs of our customers. We look forward to continuing our journey alongside the vibrant Indian travel community, ensuring that your experiences are not only memorable but also secure. ♦

No differentiation in the purchase behavior basis gender, duration of trip and source of planning

The middle age group has a higher propensity to purchase Travel Insurance (81%) compared to the younger age group (74%)

Life stage	Purchased Travel insurance for the last trip	Base
Single	69%	150
Married without kids	71%	205
Married with kids	82%	395



76% purchased Travel Insurance for the latest international trip they took

1. Purchase of travel insurance has a trend similar to awareness – increases with the life stage.
2. Along with awareness, significant increase in the proportion of Travel Insurance purchase proportion with the increase in number of trips

Q8 : Did you purchase or take any Travel Insurance for this trip

Efficient marketing strategies for destinations: unveiling hidden opportunities

By Dr Tristan Chong | Professor and Area Head of Marketing, Associate Editor, Industrial Management & Data Systems, S P Jain School of Global Management

In the field of destination marketing, the cost of promoting a location is a significant investment, making the effectiveness of promotional expenditure a crucial consideration. Discovering improved techniques to enhance this efficiency holds immense value. Conventionally, clustering techniques have been employed to identify

resolutions. In simpler terms, it can map data clouds on various scales and perform clustering using diverse distance criteria. This means that unlike current practices in tourism literature, there's no need to standardize variables before analysis. Through this method, a broader range of topological features can be detected and assessed, revealing true reflections of underlying spatial characteristics. Features that emerge only under specific conditions may otherwise be artefacts of noise, sampling processes, or poorly defined parameters. PH constructs a real-world data representation in a topological manner, capturing persistence across multiple scales and offering robust insights. While PH has found rich applications in areas like neurosciences, sensor networks, signal processing, medical imaging, and biomedical engineering, its potential in the realm of travel research remains untapped.

The realm of tourism analysis and strategy stands to gain numerous advantages from PH. To illustrate this, we draw on data from the United Kingdom International Passenger Survey (UK IPS) to demonstrate how PH can effectively cluster high and low spending visitors. In this study, we utilise deciles to segment the market due to the dataset's size, ensuring a clear understanding of the top spenders. Our focus specifically hones in on overseas passengers departing the UK after a holiday, excluding business travellers and those visiting friends or family. With the aim of efficiency, we narrow down the key variables relevant to our analysis.

PH leverages fundamental geometric topology to empower managers in making informed decisions when allocating marketing budgets. One of its key advantages is its ability to exploit the geometric data within a dataset to generate high-quality quantitative models. By utilizing the topological connectivity of tourist behaviour elements, we propose a PH-based model to characterize spending behaviour evolution, offering valuable insights for marketing strategies. Fine-tuning categories and expanding datasets could amplify these benefits further. Remarkably, this study pioneers the analysis of tourism data through a high-dimensional, topographically faithful lens, unearthing crucial details within the broader picture. These findings provide a complementary perspective to existing theories endorsed by industry leaders. Moreover, the study highlights the shortcomings of

conventional clustering techniques and demonstrates how PH effectively addresses these flaws with clarity, robustness, and transparency. The tourism industry now calls for solutions that are resilient to noise and free from imposed relationships, optimized to pinpoint targets for effective promotion. This study answers that call by delivering marketing solutions that align more accurately with the travel behaviours of inbound tourists.

The predictive capabilities of PH offer evident benefits for managers, contributing to a deeper understanding of visitor patterns. For instance, by analysing search engine behaviour, managers can identify stable data patterns that serve as precursors to periods of high demand. This insight enables timely adjustments in preparation and pricing. Similar strategies can be employed for downturns and periods of low demand. Recognizing the role of social networks and social media in destination marketing, PH can aid in better characterizing behaviour in these domains, yielding managerial dividends. Integrating existing tourism research with PH's development in network analysis holds direct merit. The exploration of systematic data point removal introduces avenues for both managerial analysis and theoretical advancements. Future endeavours will delve deeper into these possibilities.

PH exemplifies a topographical analysis that reveals patterns within data that traditional statistical methods in tourism often overlook. Unburdened by predefined relationships, PH boasts immense potential across the industry. This study serves as a preliminary stride in unlocking these opportunities. Through an empirical examination of inbound tourist spending in the UK, we demonstrate the tangible benefits, showcasing instances where projected high spenders fall within the lowest 10%. This exposes the challenge of targeting top 10% promotions through nation-specific advertising. Extending our scope, we envisage various future applications where PH's insights could enhance the efficiency of promotion spending for both advertisers and tourism authorities alike. In embracing PH, the tourism industry can unlock hidden potential and navigate marketing strategies with unprecedented precision. ♦

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

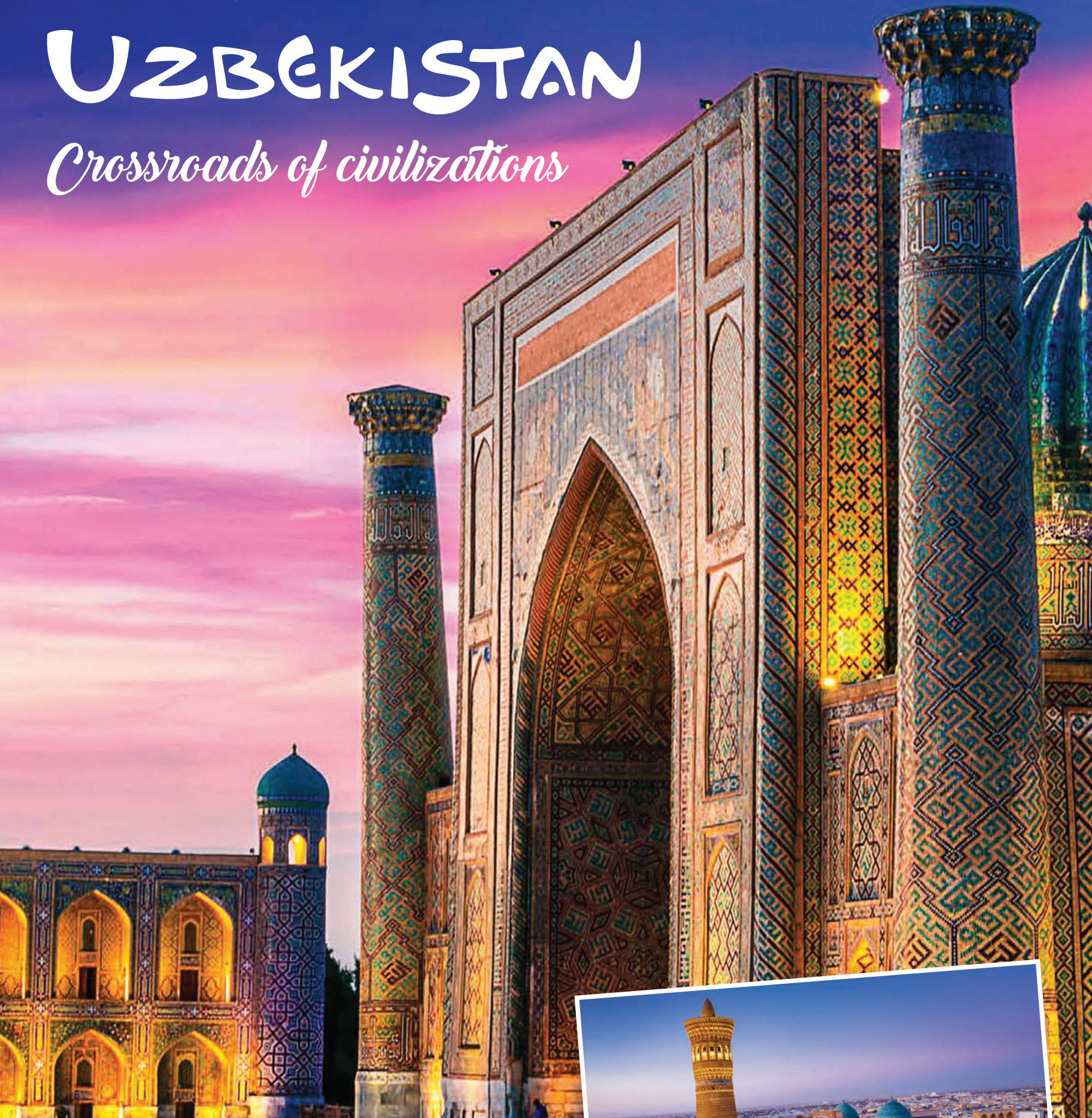


target markets; however, these methods have faced criticism for introducing biases. Enter Persistent Homology (PH), an innovative approach that sidesteps the prejudices inherent in most regression models and identifies key tourist groups based on similar behaviours. PH not only offers a fresh perspective but also allows for more precise and easily promotable market segmentation. Consequently, by leveraging PH, unexplored promotion opportunities that might otherwise go unnoticed can be highlighted. This study exemplifies the application of PH to pinpoint the highest and lowest spenders among tourists visiting the United Kingdom. Moreover, we offer an intuitive theoretical foundation that underscores the intrinsic value of this methodology for advancing tourism research. The potential impact extends beyond this study, holding promise for diverse applications across various aspects of the tourism industry.

Over the past decades, scholars have harnessed the power of PH as an effective computational tool for characterising clustering patterns within extensive datasets. What sets PH apart is its unique ability to compute data across different topological spaces and spatial

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Tourism Committee at the Ministry of Ecology, Protection of Environment and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Email: info@blinkbrandsolutions.com | **Phone:** +91 98350 69443

Add: 107B, Amir Temur Street, Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan

Role of facility management in experiential tourism shaping unforgettable journeys in India

By Vinitha Kannambroth, Regional Head – IFM Operations, Embassy Services Pvt. Ltd.

Experiential tourism has transformed the way travellers explore and engage with destinations, seeking immersive and authentic experiences that go beyond the ordinary. In this dynamic landscape, facility management emerges as a silent yet powerful force shaping the very essence of experiential tourism. Millennials and Gen Z are generations known for their tech-savvy nature, desire for flexibility, and prioritization of experiences over material possessions. Workcations, which combine work and leisure in a single trip, can be particularly appealing to these generations for several reasons such as remote work adaptability, desire for experiences, networking, health and well-being. From crafting eco-friendly lodges nestled in pristine natural environments to curating captivating cultural experiences, facility managers play a pivotal role in creating spaces and moments that transform vacations into extraordinary memories.

Facility Management's Contribution to Sustainable Tourism

The Indian tourism sector is increasingly committed to environmental sustainability, drawing in eco-conscious tourists by implementing energy-efficient lighting, heating systems, water conservation measures, and waste management programs. As the tourism sector contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, facility management becomes crucial in incorporating renewable energy sources like solar panels and optimizing resource usage, implementing waste reduction, and recycling programs, and creating an environment that resonates with both tourists and the tourism sector alike. With local sourcing, facility managers are not only helping local economies and providing employment opportunities within the community but also fostering meaningful connections between travellers and the indigenous products and people of the region.

Crafting Immersive Experiences

In the quest to meet the demands of experiential tourists, facility managers are at the forefront of designing and maintaining immersive attractions and



accommodations. Clean, well-maintained hotels, resorts, transportation hubs, workcations and tourist attractions enhance the overall experience, leaving a lasting impression on travellers. Through strategic planning and effective management, facility managers ensure maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness, safety, and comfort, ensuring that travellers feel pampered and secure throughout their stay. Facility managers can facilitate interactions between tourists and local communities, fostering an understanding of local customs, traditions, and sustainable practices. This engagement adds depth to the experiential tourism journey and benefits both travellers and residents.

Facility management plays a multifaceted role throughout a tourist's journey, ensuring a seamless and enjoyable experience. Before travel, facility managers oversee the maintenance of transportation hubs, including airports, bus terminals, and train stations, to ensure cleanliness, safety, and comfort. During travel, they manage onboard services on cruises, trains, or buses, guaranteeing passengers have comfortable seating, clean restrooms, and access to dining and entertainment. In the exploration and activities phase, facility managers maintain tourist attractions, such as museums and theme parks, to ensure safety and a pleasant experience. Accommodation-wise, facility managers in hotels, resorts, and vacation rentals focus on creating welcoming environments,

and overseeing housekeeping, security, and guest services. In dining experiences, they ensure restaurant cleanliness and food quality. Finally, post-travel, facility managers at airports and terminals facilitate passenger disembarkation and baggage handling. Throughout the journey, an increasing emphasis on sustainability sees facility managers implementing eco-friendly practices, such as waste reduction and energy efficiency, aligning with eco-conscious tourists' preferences.

Preserving Heritage and Upholding Standards

Preservation of historical landmarks is another key facet of facility management in the Indian tourism industry. Facility managers ensure that these heritage sites are not only preserved but also protected for future generations by adhering to regulations and standards. The upskilling and privatization of the facility management sector have further boosted the Indian tourism industry's ability to provide high-quality service. Properly trained and equipped staff are better able to meet the needs of visitors, enhancing the overall visitor experience.

Conclusion

Facility management plays an indispensable role in experiential tourism, helping to create unforgettable adventures and contribute to the goals of sustainable tourism in India. From developing eco-friendly accommodations to preserving historical landmarks and ensuring compliance with standards, facility managers are instrumental in shaping the landscape of experiential tourism. As tourists increasingly seek destinations committed to green tourism values, the facility management sector is revolutionizing the Indian tourism industry, making it more immersive, sustainable, and memorable for travellers from around the world. With the synergy of facility management and tourism, India is poised to offer unique and unforgettable experiences to every traveller who embarks on its shores. ♦

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



Q What is the market size for managed travel in India today?

The global MICE market size, in terms of revenue, is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 6.6 per cent from 2022 to 2030 to reach USD 1563.3 billion by 2030. The revenue of the organised events industry in India was estimated to be more than 100 billion Indian rupees in the financial year 2021, and it employs 60 million Indians directly and indirectly.

Q How do you leverage technology solutions for a seamless business travel experience?

Technology is an enabler to enhance the customer experience and ease of business:

- Hybrid event platforms for managing diverse participation needs accommodating both in-person and online attendees seamlessly.
- A dedicated event app for schedules and interactive features also creates a very personalised experience.
- We also incorporate

and management

- Event budget management and financial reporting platforms

These tech solutions not only elevate attendee experiences, but also showcase our commitment to cutting-edge event management solutions.

Q What kind of investment are you making for new customer acquisition and securing new events?

Our approach for new customer acquisition and securing events for MICE is holistic - combining digital marketing strategies such as social media outreach, search engine optimisation, relationship-building, maintaining partnerships

‘Our aim is to be the travel management company of choice for meetings & events’

with key stakeholders across industries and tourism boards, valuable content creation, and technological innovation for immersive event experiences to create a well-rounded and effective strategy. We are also investing in

to increase, with recent data showing conferences and events being one of the top two reasons for travel among both SME owners and decision-makers. The passion and engagement we're seeing are very encouraging, and this is something that has been and continues to be felt globally.

We have a talented and diverse FCM M&E leadership team in key markets across the globe who are genuinely thrilled at the opportunity to elevate our MICE offering across our prospective and existing client base.

Our recent announcement is a significant milestone for FCM M&E, a business that already has a strong footprint across several countries on multiple continents, and the company is committed to providing its customers with unique and memorable experiences – while staying true to the wider FCTG 'glocal' philosophy.

Upbeat about the prospects of MICE travel, **Manpreet Bindra, FCM India Meetings & Events President**, is keen to leverage technology solutions for capitalising on the growing demand for high-quality and personalised event experiences. Talking to **Disha Shah Ghosh**, he sheds light on the industry forecast and their business expansion.

“Our recent announcement is a significant milestone for FCM M&E, a business that already has a strong footprint across several countries on multiple continents, and the company is committed to providing its customers with unique and memorable experiences – while staying true to the wider FCTG 'glocal' philosophy.”

augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) experiences for immersive and interactive events whenever needed.

- Implementing gamification elements within the event also increases engagement and participation. This could involve quizzes or scavenger hunts, all facilitated through technology.
- Onboarding of technology for Strategic Meeting Management
- Event Management technology for registrations

our people by upgrading our sales and account managers in meetings and events space.

Q What is your action plan for expansion beyond India?

We believe the meetings, events, and event travel markets are ripe for disruption worldwide. FCM Meetings & Events is expanding globally to be well-positioned to capitalise on the growing demand for high-quality and personalised event experiences that have seen an exponential bounce back.

It's clear the demand for in-person connection continues

Q What is the division of business vs. events to your India business?

In India, more than 20 per cent of our business comes from Meetings & Events. Our aim is to be the travel management company of choice for meetings, events, and event travel. ♦

disha.shah@saffronsynergies.in

New Zealand sports tourism market anticipated to reach USD 4,585 mn in 2022

The New Zealand sports tourism market size is anticipated to reach US\$ 4,585 Million in 2022. As per the report, sales are forecast to increase at a robust 8% CAGR. Total sales in the New Zealand sports tourism market represent ~2%-6% of the global sports tourism market.

Businesses are assisting customers with post-COVID innovation by using QR codes and the NZ COVID Tracer, which allows us to track the contacts of anyone who has been exposed to COVID-19. The nation can accomplish this quickly and effectively by keeping track of people's movements. We can stop the disease from spreading further the quicker we identify contacts.

The New Zealand sports tourism market serves a diverse group of visitors who travel to various locations around the globe to take part in and watch sporting events. Travel, lodging, and food and drink are additional expenses for tourists.

As sports tourism encourages the New Zealand sports tourism market expansion of the tourism supply chain, which results in an increase in the nation's GDP, this has a positive impact on the economy.

In order to boost revenue from their tourism industries and thereby fuel the New Zealand sports tourism market growth, several governments are concentrating on promoting sports tourism.

2017 to 2021 New Zealand Sports Tourism Market Outlook Compared to 2022 to 2032 Forecast

Sports tourism is one of the most contributing sectors to the economy of New Zealand. New Zealand is an island country formed of two mainland islands which is further divided into

700 smaller islands.

New Zealand has been a prominent name in the world of sports and games. Most of its sports events are mainly influenced by the British during the period of colonization. The most popular game played in New Zealand is Rugby Union. Apart from it, cricket and netball are also played quite widely in this country.

New Zealand's rugby team (All Blacks) is ranked number 1 or considered the top best team in the world. So, naturally, it attracts people all over the world to see their matches, especially their dance before the match popularly known as 'Haka', which is the traditional dance of the Maori tribe. Many sports enthusiasts and admirers around the globe come to watch these eye-catching events.

As per the FMI New Zealand sports tourism market statistics, recent technological developments have had much of an impact on the New Zealand sports tourism market, and they most definitely have. Due to the ability to buy sports tickets online through various applications and websites, people now have access to resources that were not accessible ten years ago constructively impacting the New Zealand sports tourism market's future trends.

People are also better prepared for the cost and time needed to attend the events because they are more aware of the dates, locations, and schedules of the games and competitions. In fact, it is currently the New Zealand sports tourism market's fastest-growing sector, bringing in billions of dollars annually. In the upcoming years, the New Zealand sports tourism market trends are anticipated to intensify.

What is the Key Trends Driving the New Zealand Sports Tourism Market?

Sports are an intrinsic part of the economic and social life of the communities of New Zealand boosting the New Zealand sports tourism market trends. It supports the GDP as sports tourism is an established segment of the tourism industry.

New Zealand's sports are unique and quite different from others because they always blend their sports activities with its ethnic culture, for example- the traditional war dance of the Maori tribe has been adopted by the rugby team symbolizing their strength and unity.

It was later on adopted by other New Zealand teams during their international matches. This uniquely seen event encourages tourists to visit and experience it in person. This leads to an increase in tourists and hence boosts the New Zealand sports tourism market growth as well as New Zealand sports tourism market opportunities.

The number of matches played by the New Zealand teams has played during the historic period has increased leading to rising in the number of tourists visiting New Zealand with an HCAGR of 7.7%, which results in an escalation of New Zealand sports tourism market key trends and opportunities.

Increasing Recreational Activities Expected to Boost the Sports Tourism Industry in New Zealand

Most of the fans not only visit New Zealand to watch and cheer for their team but also to see their favorite player playing. To maintain their high spirits, organizations conduct various activities like organizing gameplay between the players and the fans, taking them a round





guide to places carrying historical importance to sports, and boosting the New Zealand sports tourism market's future trends.

In New Zealand, people believe in strong participation in sports and recreation, the agencies can provide special offers to the tourists and indulge them in various activities depending on their age category. This will bring out other tourists' attention and them along with their family and friends will contact these travel agencies. Hence, building up the tourist visiting rate resulted in the New Zealand sports tourism market trends and forecasts.

Country Insights

How are Government Initiatives Boosting the Sports Tourism Industry in New Zealand?

Government Initiatives Expected to Boost the Tourism Market in New Zealand

As per FMI, sales in the New Zealand sports tourism market are expected to grow at a CAGR of 8% over the forecast period.

Sports tourism is one of the fastest-growing segments in the tourism sector. Many tourists are fascinated by sports activities during their trips whether sports are the main objective of travel or not skyrocketing the New Zealand sports tourism market opportunities. New Zealand has a long-standing reputation as a 'social laboratory' due to its historically radical approaches to public policy. In particular, the changes after 1984 represent some of the most wide-scale reforms undertaken by a modern Western government.

Its new strategic idea for sports supports the policy prescription of rationalization/integration through various initiatives. Precisely, the tactic prescribes more directed funding, stating that future allocations will be 'made on the likelihood of achieving a return on investment' (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2002b).

SPARC (Sport and Recreation New Zealand) has also distinguished seven sports as 'significant sports', eliminated at the community level (formerly administered by local government), and strategies to pilot a new contract for regional sports trusts. While these changes have met with significant

public criticism it impacts the New Zealand sports tourism market growth.

Category based Insights

Which Tourism Type is the Most Preferred?

Individuals are Preferring Active Sports Tourism in New Zealand

Based on the sports tourism type, active sports tourism holds the maximum number of New Zealand sports tourism market share. New Zealand sports tourism market growth can be attributed to a growing preference among millennials and younger adults as they prefer watching popular games known, watched, and played by all. Active sports also include sports events that attract huge crowds from around the world.

What Type of Booking Channel is the Most Prominent Channel through the Forecast Period?

Online Booking is More Preferred by Tourists

Sports Tourism has grown in popularity as a result of its performance throughout the period with which it can be booked and made available through online platforms. Tourists prefer to use an online booking or mobile application platform since it provides for a direct, hassle-free digital transaction, as well as quick tracking and enhanced security.

Travelers may use the internet to search for and compare information on vacation locations, accommodations, restaurants, and other aspects, making online booking a more popular approach around the world escalating the New Zealand sports tourism market trends.

Which Age Group is more likely to Travel?

The popularity of New Zealand Sports Tourism among Middle-aged People Will Remain High

In terms of the age group for the New Zealand sports tourism market, the number of tourists in the 26-35-year-old group is anticipated to rise considerably since the people in this age category are people who are high-spirited about sports and travel across places to see

and cheer when their team plays.

Consumers in this segment place a high value on recreational and sporty activities. Moreover, they are inclined to visit stadiums conducting the game events.

What Tour Type is More Preferred by the Sports-based Tourist?

Package travel is mostly preferred by the consumers

As for tour types in the New Zealand sports tourism market, package travel is regularly chosen by the tourist as the tour operators offer numerous package travel tours by even offering customization in the tours.

Whereas in the package tours, the operators even provide some services which are not been included in other types such as accommodations, heavy discounts on package tours, etc. affecting the New Zealand sports tourism market key trends and opportunities.

Competitive Landscape

Leading New Zealand sports tourism market players operating and other country-based companies operating in New Zealand are focusing on expansion and new to expand their business across islands in New Zealand.

Recent Development:

Investment:

In February 2022, US-based QuintEvents made a significant investment in Sportsnet Holidays. The newly formed partnership will allow Sportsnet Holiday to broaden the offering of top sporting events and travel packages through Sportsnet's long-term relationships with the world's biggest sporting events.

Acquisition:

On June 6, 2022, New Zealand's biggest travel distributor Williment Travel Group Ltd. Was acquired by Sydney-based travel distribution company Helloworld Travel Ltd.

These insights are based on a report on New Zealand Sports Tourism Market by Future Market Insights ♦

The *Dvaita* and *Advaita* of Travel

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

Dvaita Vedanta, often attributed to Madhvacharya (also known as *Anandatirtha*), focuses on the fundamental duality between the individual soul (*Jivatman*) and the supreme reality (*Brahman*). Thus, in Dvaita Vedanta, the individual soul (*Jivatman*) is considered separate from the supreme reality (*Brahman*). This duality emphasises the uniqueness of each individual soul and its relationship with the divine. According to this view, any exploration should contribute to a dualistic experience.

When it comes to travel, individuals may experience the world and its diversity in a dualistic manner, perceiving the distinction between themselves and the places they visit. This duality underscores how distinct individual each soul is, and it must strive to relate with the 'other' entity that is divine- the '*Brahman*'. Travel may reinforce this duality as one experiences the world- perceiving and appreciating the distinction between themselves and the places they visit- as a creative expression of the divine.

Travel is seen as a way to explore and appreciate the diversity of creation, which is a manifestation of *Brahman*, according to the philosophical underpinnings of *Dvaita Vedanta*. By travelling to different places, individuals may witness the varied landscapes, cultures, people, and energies that make up the world. This exploration can lead to a deeper appreciation of divine creativity as expressed in the diversity of forms. As one travels, this learning expands one's perspective, thereby facilitating their growth metaphysically. In the context of *Dvaita Vedanta*, this expansion might be seen as a way to enhance one's understanding of the world and the diversity of souls that exist within it. The place where the *Jivatman* finds the energy to feel connected with the divine is the spiritual experience for the individual while maintaining the fundamental dualistic framework.

Dvaita also emphasises devotion (*Bhakti*) to the divine and his creation in a tangible way. While pilgrimage is one simple interpretation of travel for this connection, a more profound meaning is associated with respect for all animate and inanimate elements of the destination as a creation of the divine and ensuing concern for its welfare and thus a non-intrusive, least impactful travel that harnesses duality and



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

thus the sanctity of the place being visited. Duality, as in the differences because of both gaze and perspective, must be ensured. We have gotten back to these ideas as notions of responsible tourism.

Different from *Dvaita* are the philosophical underpinnings of *Advaita Vedanta*. *Advaita Vedanta* is often attributed to Adi Shankaracharya, who asserts that the ultimate reality is an undivided, interconnected whole. This philosophy holds that the perceived multiplicity of the world is an illusion, and the true nature of existence is unity. *Advaita Vedanta* suggests that by mindfully engaging with different elements of a place, travellers can get to recognise the underlying interconnectedness that unites all aspects of the world.

Advaita Vedanta's perspective encourages travellers to look beyond superficial appearances and seek the essence that binds everything together. This involves transcending the surface-level experiences and delving deeper into the cultural, historical, and natural layers of a destination. Experiential travel can help visitors understand the interplay between animate and inanimate elements, leading to a transformative shift in their perspective.

Furthermore, *Advaita Vedanta* purports the importance of self-awareness and introspection. This aligns with the notion of mindful travel, which encourages travellers to be fully present in each moment and engage with their surroundings in a contemplative manner. By practising self-awareness during travel, individuals can connect with the external world and gain insights into their own inner landscapes of the sacred world of karmic relations with other individuals.

The concept of "*Atman*," the individual soul, is central to *Advaita Vedanta*. According to this philosophy, realising the true nature of the self (*Atman*) leads to the realisation of *Brahman*, the ultimate reality. In the context of travel, this can be interpreted as a journey of self-discovery that is intertwined with the exploration of external realities.

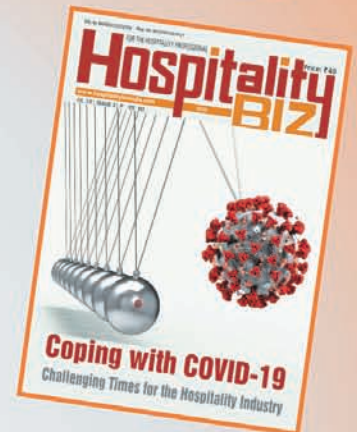
Thus, *Advaita Vedanta* also provides a philosophical framework that aligns with the idea of mindful travel and the transformative power of connection. By encouraging individuals to see beyond the surface and recognise the interconnectedness of all things, this philosophy offers a profound perspective on how travel can lead to lasting personal transformation and a greater appreciation of the varied and intricate realities that the world has to offer.

Thus, whatever our perspective- *Dvaita* or *Advaita*, travel helps build connections with transformative implications for the traveller. In fact, they can simultaneously embrace both *Dvaita* and *Advaita* standpoints, shifting between them as needed. This fluidity allows for a balanced approach, recognizing duality in everyday life (*Dvaita*) while seeking unity and spiritual oneness (*Advaita*), reflecting the complexity of human spiritual experience. ♦

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

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Ajay Wadode: +91 8087 27814 | ajay.wadode@saffronsynergies.in

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'In 2023, TravClan experienced 400% y-o-y growth in revenue'

Arun Bagaria, Co-Founder & CEO, TravClan talks to **Disha Shah Ghosh** about their platform, supporting the travel trade with varied content, and marketing collaterals.

Q The travel tech space has seen an influx of a large number of players in the past five years. What does TravClan bring to the table that is different from its peers?

TravClan is a global B2B Travel Tech Platform that aims to enhance the way travel agents sell and provide exceptional travel experiences worldwide. The platform empowers travel agents to sell travel online while offering comprehensive end-to-end on-ground travel services. What sets TravClan apart is its distinction as the world's first tech-enabled global destination management company, with a local on-ground presence in more than 18 destinations worldwide. This ensures that customers have delightful experiences at every step of their journey.

TravClan functions as a comprehensive one-stop shop, enabling travel agents to instantly book complete holidays, including flights, hotels, activities, sightseeing, and transfers all within the platform. Additionally, agents can distribute ancillary financial products like insurance and forex cards to their customers, simplifying the travel planning

process.

Unlike others, our approach is to assist travel agents in improving their business rather than completely changing it. Given our experience and understanding of how the travel industry works, our

product is designed to seamlessly integrate into the lives of travel agents, making their work easier and more efficient.

Q Which are some of your digital tools that aid smaller agents from the feeder markets of India?

Travel agents, especially smaller travel agents who are just starting up, need help attracting new customers. As a B2B company we offer a free-to-use repository of marketing posters and videos that agents can download with their

own logo and branding details. These digital assets help agents in getting leads through social media, Facebook ads etc.

In today's day and age building an online presence is the first step to scaling your business. In addition to social media marketing assistance we also help agents with lifetime free travel websites to help them build an online presence. These websites are customisable with add ons such as flights API, etc.

Additionally, we have an inhouse team of experts that host weekly webinars for travel agents to learn about destinations, marketing and other important developments

that can help them scale their businesses.

Q What kind of revenue growth have you witnessed in the past one year?

In 2023, TravClan experienced

“As a B2B company we offer a free-to-use repository of marketing posters and videos that agents can download with their own logo and branding details. These digital assets help agents in getting leads through social media, Facebook ads etc.”

400% y-o-y growth in revenue along with 250% year-on-year growth in Gross Merchandise Volume (GMV) during the same period. Over 65% of its revenue is generated from the Hotels & Holiday segment unlike other platforms that rely on flight bookings. This allows TravClan to provide a comprehensive range of services, offering accommodations, holiday packages, and activities, ensuring a seamless and holistic travel experience.

TravClan empowered travel agents by enabling them to create personalized travel websites,

with over 2,000 websites already built on the platform. The target is to continue growing and reach USD 10 million Annual Revenue Runrate by the year-end.

Q Tell us about your plan for scaling operations.

With a team of over 200 dedicated professionals spread across eight offices in India, Singapore, and Dubai, TravClan has established an extensive global network of suppliers and nurtured strong relationships with airlines, hotels, and government tourism authorities. As we grow we aim to expand and strengthen this network by-

- Focusing on improving on-ground travel experiences by building a technology enabled network of suppliers across the world that deliver exceptional experiences. We have a bigger team of experts who interact with service providers on ground to onboard the best from the industry.
- Global Expansion -- Target to expand travel offerings to 25+ countries and work with travel agents in 5+ markets in India, South East Asia & Middle East

Q What is your outreach strategy towards the travel trade?

As a B2B service provider, our primary goal is to establish trust within the close-knit community of the travel and trade industry. To achieve this, we offer various services that cater to the day-to-day challenges faced by travel agents, such as free travel websites, marketing posters, invoice generating tools and other features. These unique selling points help us attract new agents.

Our aim is to onboard new agents effectively, and to support this process, we have a dedicated team of account managers who guide and assist agents in making the most of the services provided by TravClan. Additionally, our on-ground team actively engages with agents in different cities, specifically targeting travel agents from Tier-I and II cities, to expand our network and provide them with the necessary support. ♦

prasenjit.chakraborty@saffronsynergies.in

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For further information, write to:

Ajay Wadode

ajay.wadode@saffronsynergies.in
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disha.shah@saffronsynergies.in



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