

India's Leading International Travel Magazine

travel mail

Find Your Rush In Ras Al Khaimah



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Editors Desk

Dear Readers,

Hope you're all doing great. 2023 is halfway over and the memories we have created are stored with us and in our phones. Life is funny when we stay, you need to enjoy every single moment. For that moment we should feature a destination that offers a lot more than you can imagine.

Ras Al Khaimah offers a unique blend of tradition and modernity. Amidst its breathtaking landscapes of golden deserts and rugged mountains, the emirate proudly showcases its rich heritage. From the historic Dhayah Fort, which bears witness to battles of the past, to the thriving souks that teem with the colors and aromas of local spices and crafts, every corner tells a story.

Ras Al Khaimah boasts unparalleled opportunities. Explore the rugged terrain of Jebel Jais, the UAE's highest peak, through hiking or thrilling zip-lining adventures. Or indulge in serene moments along its pristine coastline, offering water sports and a tranquil beachfront.

It's an all-in-one destination that's available year-round. But plan anywhere you can. It's about putting yourself out there for the best adventures in the game of life.

Happy Reading!
Regards,
Ajay Gupta

RNI. NO. 65222/96

**CHIEF EDITOR /
PUBLISHER**
Ajay Gupta

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Siddharth Gupta

**EDITORIAL AND
DESIGNING**
Rishika Gupta

CIRCULATION
Mukesh Kumar

**EDITORIAL &
ADVERTISING**

199, First Floor, CM-1,
Office Complex,
Jhandewalan Extension,
New Delhi, Delhi 110055
(India)

Phone : 011-23626465,
23631359, 23679843,
9810148601, 9582693236

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Airbnb: Enabling Underserved Communities to Share in the Benefits of Tourism

TRAVEL MAIL:

Amidst the pandemic's unprecedented disruption to global tourism, Airbnb emerged as a key player in dispersing travel and driving economic opportunities for underserved communities. A first-ever analysis of Airbnb and Open Street Map data reveals the value of Airbnb listings in allowing tourists to explore lesser-known destinations, embracing the allure of the road less travelled.

Airbnb's Positive Impact on Small Communities:

Amanpreet Bajaj, General Manager for Airbnb India, Southeast Asia, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, emphasizes the crucial role of home sharing plays in preserving economic opportunities for small communities and their businesses. Without Airbnb, these opportunities might otherwise be lost. Compared to traditional hotels, which are typically concentrated in high traffic areas, Airbnb allows guests to travel to a wider range of destinations, ensuring that economic benefits are dispersed more equitably.

Airbnb's Contribution to Global Travel Dispersion:

In 2022, Airbnb guests stayed in over 100,000 different cities and towns globally. Interestingly, the top 10 most-visited destinations accounted for only around 7 percent of all trips, down from 10 percent in 2019. This shift indicates that tourists are increasingly exploring new and diverse destinations rather than concentrating on a few popular spots. Airbnb has contributed significantly to spread tourism to new places. The number of communities globally that hosted guests increased by over 25 percent in 2022 compared to five years ago. Moreover, since March 2020, more than 13,000 cities worldwide received their first booking on Airbnb, including nearly 100 cities and towns in India.

Empowering Domestic Tourism:

During times of crisis, domestic tourism has proven to be resilient and economically impactful for local communities. Weekend getaways to nearby destinations have become increasingly popular due to their ease of planning and affordability. Airbnb has played a crucial role in facilitating this type of tourism by providing more affordable accommodation options and expanding into new

destinations. In India, domestic nights booked on Airbnb doubled in 2022 compared to 2019, underlining the platform's role in driving domestic travel and supporting local economies.

The Sustainable and Positive Impact of Distributed Travel:

Airbnb's distributed travel model offers sustainable and affordable alternatives, positively impacting local economies and communities. Unlike traditional travel, which often concentrates on tourism in specific areas, leading to overcrowding and congestion, Airbnb's approach disperses guests, tourism income, and benefits to new and trending destinations, including those that lack hotels.

Amanpreet Bajaj reiterates Airbnb's commitment to invest in solutions that address the challenges posed by mass tourism trends while creating additional income opportunities for locals and encouraging guests to explore new communities. Airbnb's endeavours to enable underserved communities to partake in the benefits of tourism align with its mission to foster sustainable and inclusive travel experiences worldwide. As the world continues to evolve, Airbnb's role in diversifying travel and empowering local communities will undoubtedly remain integral to the future of the travel industry.



Kerala Blog Express 2023: Embarking on a Magical Journey to God's Own Country

TRAVEL MAIL:

7th edition of the Kerala Blog Express 2023 (KBE): In an endeavour to inspire travellers worldwide and provide them with an immersive experience of the enchanting beauty of Kerala, **Tourism Minister Shri P.A. Mohamed Riyas** flagged off the 7th edition of the Kerala Blog Express (KBE) at the prestigious Hotel Mascot in the heart of the city.

A Journey Beyond Blogging: Experiencing Kerala's Magic:

Minister Shri Riyas emphasized that the Kerala Blog Express is more than just a blogging trip; it is an opportunity to spark inspiration among globetrotters and extend a warm invitation to witness the magic that Kerala has to offer firsthand.

Celebrating Natural Beauty and Cultural Heritage:

The Kerala Blog Express 2023 is an extraordinary campaign initiated by Kerala Tourism, bringing together top travel bloggers from around the world for a two-week-long road trip across the state. This adventure on a luxury bus took them through meticulously curated

destinations in Kerala, where they created captivating stories and engaging content for social media platforms.

Creating Inspiring Experiences:

Selected from a pool of talented applicants, around 30 renowned content creators embarked on this thrilling journey through Kerala. Their experiences included interacting with locals, savouring the rich and diverse cuisine, and immersing themselves in Kerala's unique cultural realm.

A Visual Presence and a Traveling Ambassador:

The customized KBE luxury coach is adorned





with Kerala Tourism's campaign logo and message will traverse the length and breadth of the state, creating a captivating visual presence and serving as a symbolic ambassador of Kerala's tourism.

A Journey of Captivating Landscapes and Cultural Wonders:

Minister Shri Riyas expressed that the *KBE promises an extraordinary journey, showcasing the essence of "God's Own Country."* The travel bloggers witnessed Kerala's stunning pristine beaches, backwaters, lush green hills, rich heritage, and vibrant traditions during their two-week-long adventure.

A Curated Programme: Uniting Bloggers as One Community:

Kerala Tourism Secretary Shri K Biju explained that *KBE is a specially curated program, designed to enable each blogger to visit different locations and create lasting memories, fostering a sense of community among them.*

The Question of 'God's Own Country:

During this exciting journey, the bloggers will delve deep into Kerala's soul and endeavour to answer the timeless question of why Kerala is often referred to as **'God's Own Country.'**

The Global Presence of Kerala Blog Express 2023:

KBE 2023 has attracted participation from around the world, with 30 social media content creators hailing from various countries. Among them are two Indian bloggers, along with representatives from Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Bulgaria, Italy, Romania, the USA, the UK, Netherlands, Canada, Kenya, South Africa, Malaysia, Indonesia, New Zealand, Turkey, and Colombia.

An Enthralling Itinerary:

The bloggers' itinerary included visits to diverse destinations in Kerala, beginning with Kovalam and other destinations in the state capital. Their journey continues to Kumarakom and Alappuzha, followed by trips to Thekkady, Munnar, Athirappally, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Shornur, and Kochi.

#KeralaBlogExpress7:

Shri Riyas urges everyone to follow the hashtag **#KeralaBlogExpress7** on social media. Kerala Blog Express 2023 promises to be an enchanting escapade that showcases the beauty, culture, and wonders of Kerala to the world. As the bloggers venture forth to unravel the secrets of 'God's Own Country,' their stories and experiences will undoubtedly inspire travellers from every corner of the globe to explore this magical destination themselves.

Kerala Tourism: Tourism Minister Unveils Revamped DTPC Website

DTPC Website serves a vital role for Kerala Tourism in identifying, developing, and maintaining destinations across the state.

TRAVEL MAIL:

In a momentous stride towards bolstering Kerala's allure as a tourist haven, **Tourism Minister Shri P A Mohamed Riyas** has inaugurated the revamped websites of all 14 District Tourism Promotion Councils (DTPCs) across the state. These overhauled online platforms are set to redefine the way travellers access information about Kerala's diverse attractions, facilitating seamless trip planning.

Embracing Technology for Tourism

Promotion:

Shri Riyas, during the launch event in Thiruvananthapuram stressed the pivotal role of cutting-edge technology in the modern tourism landscape, especially with the growing influence of social media. The updated DTPC websites are meticulously designed to captivate visitors, offering a treasure trove of information and captivating imagery. They empower tourists to navigate through the wealth of options, aiding them in selecting destinations and utilizing available facilities.

"In an era dominated by the rapid growth of information technology, recognizing its potential is paramount for the advancement of Kerala's tourism sector. Therefore, the constant evolution and enhancement of technological platforms, such as websites, using state-of-the-art technology is crucial for our state's tourism promotion," stated Shri Riyas.

A Leap Forward After Two Decades:

Remarkably, this website overhaul marks the first in 20 years for Kerala Tourism, signalling the department's commitment to staying in sync with global transformations. DTPCs, serving as vital branches of Tourism Department, plays a pivotal role in identifying, developing, and maintaining destinations

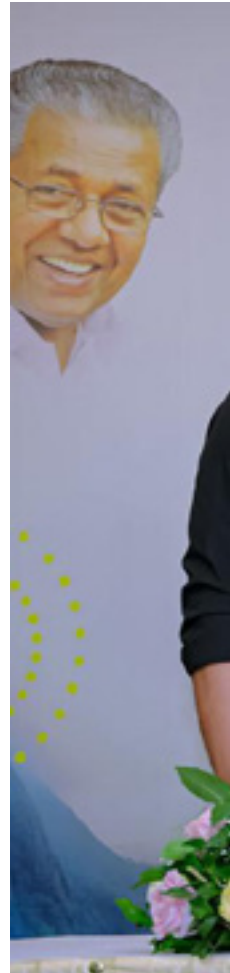
across the state. The revamped websites promise to streamline the coordination of tourism activities within each district, offering comprehensive information on local attractions. Shri Riyas urged DTPCs to enrich their websites with details about cultural and historical events, showcasing Kerala's renowned hospitality and communal harmony. Innovative marketing strategies are also encouraged, taking inspiration from successful global models, including the United Kingdom.

Showcasing Kerala's Natural Beauty:

One exciting addition to these revamped websites is a dedicated section highlighting trekking and hiking destinations in each district. Special Google maps provide information on these spots are in the works. For international travellers who often plan well in advance, the websites will feature a calendar format displaying climatic conditions for each district.

Meeting Kerala Tourism's Challenges:

Shri Riyas emphasized the pivotal role of DTPCs in achieving the goals of Kerala Tourism's destination challenge initiative. They are expected to identify new tourist centres and develop them sustainably, further enhancing Kerala's tourism appeal.





Furthermore, the Minister announced that the public will soon have access to accommodation facilities offered by PWD rest houses through these revamped websites.

A Glimpse into the Future:

The ongoing technological transformation of Kerala Tourism’s website, incorporating the latest advancements like Artificial Intelligence (AI), is expected to conclude within two months. The integration of AI has made websites more accessible and appealing to global travellers.

The websites now feature visually captivating video banners showcasing each district’s unique attractions. Visitors can access important information about tourist centres, gain insights into the traveller’s experience, explore tourism programs, and discover events happening in each district. AI-driven features also allow visitors to select suitable travel packages.

Simplified Navigation and Online Services:

The “Find on the Map” feature, links tourism centres with Google Maps, simplifies navigation for tourists. Additionally, a hyperlink system enables online services required for travellers, including access to weather details for each tourist centre. These DTPC websites are now seamlessly integrated with Kerala Tourism’s main website.

A Vision for Tomorrow:

The revamped websites currently boast 30 pages, with room for expansion to include more tourist centres and additional information. Each website is integrated with social media, ensuring it stays dynamic and engaging.

In closing, Kerala Tourism Deputy Director Shri Prem Bhas extended gratitude, recognizing the monumental efforts put forth to bring this technological transformation to fruition. The event also featured valuable insights from South Kerala Hoteliers Forum Vice President Shri M R Narayanan and DTPC Secretaries from various districts.

Unlocking the Magic of New York City Tourism: A Night of Broadway Brilliance in Mumbai



TRAVEL MAIL:

In a spectacular extravaganza hosted by New York City Tourism + Conventions, the official destination marketing organization and the convention and visitors bureau representing the five vibrant boroughs of New York City, a piece of the Big Apple's charm was transported across the seas to Mumbai. This enchanting evening unfolded against the backdrop of the legendary Broadway sensation, West Side Story, at the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre. Dive into the heart of this captivating event where trade partners and media were treated to a slice of New York City's allure.

Captivating Mumbai with West Side Story: Revisiting a Timeless Classic:

The world-renowned West Side Story is a true masterpiece of musical theatre, continues to mesmerize audiences across the globe with its timeless narrative. Drawing inspiration from William Shakespeare's immortal love story, Romeo and Juliet, the narrative is artfully transplanted to the mid-1950s in the Upper Manhattan, New York City. This was an era when the city thrived as a multiracial, blue-collar neighbourhood, providing the perfect backdrop for the epic tale of love and rivalry.

Strengthening Bonds and Creating Memories: Fostering Partnerships for Unforgettable Journeys:

Makiko Matsuda Healy, Senior Vice President of Tourism Development in New York City Tourism + Conventions, emphasized the organization's commitment to nurturing robust partnerships within the tourism industry.

Makiko Matsuda Healy expressed, *"We firmly believe that forging strong alliances within the travel sector are paramount to curating exceptional experiences for travellers. As part of our enduring dedication to promoting diverse cultural encounters, we endeavoured to bring a slice of New York City to our esteemed trade partners in India. Our goal is to deepen connections, spark innovative collaborations, and consistently present New York City as the ultimate cultural haven."*

Networking for a Brighter Tomorrow: Exploring the Latest Trends:

The networking soiree not only served as a platform for trade partners to connect but also as a forum for sharing insights into the ever evolving landscape of travel and tourism. It provided a unique opportunity to dissect the latest trends and developments shaping the industry.

Over 10+ Crore Jobs in Tourism by 2030: A Job Creation Engine for India's Future

TRAVEL MAIL:

P rime Minister Narendra Modi illuminated the promising prospects of the Indian economy, emphasizing its robust trajectory towards rapid growth. This economic upswing isn't just numbers on a chart; it's a profound transformation that spells vast employment opportunities for our nation's youth.

A Rozgar Mela Paving the Way:

Recently, at a Rozgar Mela, the Prime Minister took a pivotal step towards this vision by personally handing out over 51,000 appointment letters, predominantly to aspirants in the security forces. This event symbolized the government's unwavering commitment to fostering job creation, and multiple sectors poised for substantial expansion.

Driving Employment Through Diverse Sectors:

Prime Minister Modi highlighted several sectors that are set to flourish and offer substantial employment opportunities. These sectors include:

1. Automotive Industry Acceleration: The automotive sector, a vital cornerstone of our economy, is gearing up for exponential growth. As this industry surges forward, it will rely heavily on the energy and enthusiasm of our young workforce. The Prime Minister confidently asserted that this surge will translate into abundant employment openings for our youth.

2. The Pharma Powerhouse: The pharmaceutical industry is another beacon of promise. Currently valued at a staggering Rs 4 lakh crore, this sector is projected to skyrocket to Rs 10 lakh crore by 2030. This meteoric rise implies a significant demand for youthful talent, guaranteeing substantial job prospects for those who choose this field.

3. The Tourism Triumph: Tourism, often described as the "smile industry," carries the potential to contribute a colossal Rs 20 lakh crore to our economy by 2030. Beyond this impressive financial injection, it has the capacity to spawn between 13 to 14 crore fresh job opportunities. The future of tourism in India is brighter than ever.

India's Ascent on the Global Stage:

Prime Minister Modi boldly declared that India is



poised to emerge as one of the world's top three economies during this decade. This ascendancy is not merely a statistic; it's a promise of prosperity for every citizen.

Fostering Holistic Growth

The Prime Minister underlined the importance of comprehensive development. He stressed that progress is not the sole domain of a single sector but a collective effort spanning various domains. From agriculture to aerospace, from small startups to space exploration, each sector has a role to play in this grand narrative of economic growth.

The Uttar Pradesh Paradigm

Drawing attention to the state of Uttar Pradesh, Prime Minister Modi credited the state's commitment to good governance as the catalyst for the rule of law. This, in turn, has attracted substantial investments. The lesson here is clear: a secure environment and a robust legal framework accelerate development, instil confidence in the populace, and invite investments that generate jobs.

The Menace of Rising Crime:

Conversely, the Prime Minister cautioned that states grappling with increasing crime rates often experience a decline in investments and diminished employment prospects. Security, he emphasized, is an indispensable foundation for growth.

EEMAGINE 2023: Ministry of Tourism Launches India's Dream Wedding Destination Campaign

TRAVEL MAIL:

DEEMAGINE 2023 by the Event and Entertainment Management Association (EEMA) which is currently being held in Mumbai, the Ministry of Tourism has unveiled a captivating wedding tourism campaign aimed at unravelling the immense potential of India's booming wedding industry. Shri G.K Reddy, the visionary behind this initiative, cordially invites couples worldwide to discover the enchanting dream wedding destinations scattered across our incredible nation.

India: The Ultimate Wedding Destination:

Aligned with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's visionary "Developing Tourism in Mission Mode," the Ministry of Tourism has embarked on an ambitious journey to project India as the ultimate wedding destination on the global stage. This campaign aspires to unlock untapped avenues for scaling up India's tourism industry. It's primary goal is to broaden the horizons of India's wedding sector, alluring couples from every corner of the globe to embark on a remarkable journey to celebrate their special day in the heart of India.

A Remarkable Launch at EEMAGINE 2023:



At the grand launch of this particular campaign, **Shri G. Kishan Reddy, Union Minister for Culture, Tourism and DoNER**, shares his

enthusiasm, *"Today marks the commencement of an extraordinary voyage—a mission to position India as the epitome of wedding destinations worldwide. With the inauguration of this campaign, I extend a heartfelt invitation to couples from around the world to explore the captivating dream wedding destinations that grace our incredible nation."* He further emphasizes, *"Our comprehensive approach guarantees that every moment, from the initial 'hello' to the final 'I do,' will be a testament to India's warm embrace and rich heritage."*

Exploring India's Magnificence:

This campaign takes off by spotlighting approximately 25 key destinations across the country. It delves into how India seamlessly integrates into couples' wedding dreams in multiple ways. From awe-inspiring landscapes to sacred traditions, from tantalizing culinary experiences to cutting-edge infrastructure, this campaign encapsulates the essence of India's grandeur, beckoning couples to say "I do" against a backdrop that transcends imagination. It celebrates the fusion of India's ancient heritage with modern elegance, weaving a narrative that entices the world to embark on an unforgettable journey of love and celebration.

A Collaborative Approach:

A notable feature of this campaign is its collaborative approach, developed in close consultation with industry experts, associations, and seasoned wedding planners. Their

invaluable insights have shaped a comprehensive narrative that unveils India's allure as a wedding tourism destination. This narrative addresses diverse aspirations and showcases the myriad facets of this incredible nation.

Mr Samit Garg, President of the Event and Entertainment Management Association (EEMA), applauds this initiative, stating, *"It's truly remarkable to witness this idea come to life. A heartfelt appreciation goes out to the Ministry of Tourism for translating the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision into action, bringing the Wedding Tourism Campaign to fruition."*

A Tapestry of Possibilities:

The campaign explores India's stunning locales, ancient rituals, sumptuous gastronomy, and world-class infrastructure, weaving a captivating tapestry of possibilities.

Prerna Saxena, CEO and Founder of Theme Weavers Designs shares her excitement for the campaign, *"India is indeed a vast tapestry of cultural microcosms, each woven with its own unique threads of traditions, values, colours, and joy."*

A Multi-Faceted Approach:

Adopting a 360-degree strategy, the campaign harnesses the power of digital marketing, social media campaigns, strategic partnerships with wedding planners, collaborations with domestic

and international influencers, and various offline and online activations. The aim is to redefine India's image beyond royal, extravagant weddings. This thematic approach encompasses wedding themes such as Beach Weddings, Nature Weddings, Royal Weddings, Himalayan weddings, and more, allowing couples to craft their dream celebration amidst India's captivating charm.

A Transformative Initiative:

This groundbreaking initiative showcases the beauty and diversity of India as a premier wedding destination on the global stage. By opening the doors to India's captivating locales, vibrant rituals, rich gastronomy, and world-class infrastructure, the campaign has the potential to enthrall couples from across the world. This campaign is merely the inception of a strategic endeavour to elevate India as a wedding tourism destination, with further initiatives in the pipeline to captivate the domestic market as well.

Incredible India's Vision:

Incredible India's wedding tourism campaign aspires to establish India as the foremost choice for couples seeking an extraordinary wedding experience. Simultaneously, it aims to bolster the growth of the wedding industry and overall tourism in India. Through this ambitious endeavour, Incredible India seeks to create timeless memories and celebrate the beauty of love against the backdrop of India's rich tapestry of traditions and treasures.



Enhancing Civil Aviation Cooperation: India and New Zealand Sign MoU

TRAVEL MAIL:

In a significant development, India and New Zealand have recently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), aiming at strengthening their collaboration in the realm of civil aviation. This landmark agreement encompasses various facets, including the introduction of new flight routes, code-sharing services, traffic lights, and capacity entitlement.

Expanding Horizons: The MoU Overview:

Under the able leadership of **Shri Rajiv Bansal, Secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation**, and **HE Mr. David Pine, the New Zealand High Commissioner**, the MoU was formally sealed. The ceremony was graced by the presence of **Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia**, India's Minister for Civil Aviation, and **Mr. Damien O'Connor**, who serves as New Zealand's Minister for Trade and Export Growth, Minister of Agriculture, Minister for Biosecurity, Minister for Land Information, and Minister for Rural Communities.



operate an unlimited number of services employing any type of aircraft, complete with third and fourth freedom traffic rights. These rights extend to and from cities in New Zealand, including Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and three additional points to be designated by the Government of India.

A Brief History of Collaboration:

This isn't the first instance of cooperation between New Zealand and India in the field of civil aviation. In fact, the foundation for this MoU was laid with the signing of an Air Services Agreement in Auckland on May 1, 2016. Over time, both governments have meticulously reviewed their existing arrangements pertaining to air services between the two nations. The signing of the MoU is poised to elevate the bilateral ties in civil aviation, further enhancing connectivity and convenience for travellers.

Key Provisions of the MoU:

The MoU introduces several crucial provisions aimed at fostering stronger aviation ties. According to this agreement, the designated airline from New Zealand are granted the liberty to operate an unrestricted number of services employing any type of aircraft. Furthermore, they enjoy third and fourth freedom traffic rights to and from six key destinations in India, namely New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Kolkata.

On the other side of the spectrum, the designated airline(s) of India are also afforded similar privileges. They have the authorization

An Exciting Future for Air Travel:

Speaking at the signing ceremony, **Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia** expressed his enthusiasm, stating, *"Today marks a pivotal moment for civil aviation between India and New Zealand. With the signing of this MoU, we are unlocking a world of possibilities for air transport between our nations. The implementation of the open sky policy, along with the expansion of point of calls and intermediate points, underscores our commitment to enhancing air connectivity."*

All-Cargo Services: A Boon for Trade:

In addition to passenger services, the MoU also extends its benefits to all cargo services. Designated airlines from both India and New Zealand can now operate an unlimited number of all-cargo services, employing any type of aircraft. This includes third, fourth, and fifth freedom traffic rights to and from any point within the other party's territory, even via intermediate points and beyond points, irrespective of the points specified in the Route Schedule.

Utkela Airport Inaugurated by Shri Jyotiraditya M Scindia, Introducing Direct Flights to Bhubaneswar

TRAVEL MAIL:

In a monumental moment for regional air travel, **Minister of Civil Aviation, Shri Jyotiraditya M Scindia, in collaboration with Gen. Vijay Kumar Singh (Retd.), MoS, Ministry of Civil Aviation**, spearheaded the inauguration of Utkela Airport and the commencement of direct flights between Utkela and Bhubaneswar. This significant event unfolded seamlessly through video conferencing, marking a new era in air travel connectivity.

Utkela Airport: A Marvel Under UDAN Scheme:

Utkela Airport, proudly owned by the Government of Odisha, has emerged as a key player in regional aviation, all thanks to the visionary UDAN scheme by the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India. A substantial investment of Rs. 31.07 Cr has been devoted to its development. The airport boasts a runway extending over 917 m (2,995 ft.) with a width of 30 meters, setting the stage for seamless air travel experiences. With the inclusion of Utkela Airport, Odisha now spreads its wings with a total of five airports, elevating its air connectivity profile.

Wings of Progress: Utkela – Bhubaneswar Flight Route Takes Off:

The freshly inaugurated Utkela – Bhubaneswar – Utkela flight route is set to revolutionize regional air connectivity, playing a pivotal role in the economic growth of the region. To facilitate this air journey, the operator will be deploying a 9-seater Cessna C-208 aircraft, in alignment with the UDAN scheme.

Bridging Distances:

Utkela to Bhubaneswar in Just Over an Hour:

In his inaugural address, Shri Jyotiraditya M Scindia emphasized that the Utkela to Bhubaneswar Air connectivity will drastically reduce travel time, cutting down an arduous 8-hour road journey to a mere one hour and twenty minutes. This transformation promises to kickstart a new era of economic prosperity in the Kalahandi region, paving the way for diverse employment opportunities. Shri Scindia underscored the close cooperation between the central

government and the Odisha government in the development of civil aviation infrastructure within the state.

A Testament to Investment: Redevelopment of Utkela Airport:

Union Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways and Civil Aviation, Gen Dr. V K Singh (Retd.), revealed that the central government's significant investment of approximately Rs. 31 Crore has rejuvenated the Utkela airport. With the launch of flights connecting Kalahandi to Bhubaneswar and other key cities in the state, this development is poised to be a catalyst for the region's growth.

A Distinguished Gathering:

The event witnessed the presence of the esteemed dignitaries, including Shri Sujit Kumar, MP Rajya Sabha; Shri Basanta Kumar Panda, MP Lok Sabha; Smt. Tukuni Sahu, Minister, Water Resources and Commerce & Transport, Govt. of Odisha; Shri Rajiv Bansal, Secretary Ministry of Civil Aviation; Smt. Usha Padhee, Principal Secretary, Govt of Odisha; and CEO of India One, Shri Arun Kumar Singh, all contributed to the grandeur of this landmark occasion.



Seychelles Roadshow 2023: Unveiling Seychelles' Tropical Splendor with Three-City Roadshows in India

TRAVEL MAIL:

Tourism Seychelles made waves with its recent three-city roadshow in India, held between July 30 and August 1, 2023. This event served as a captivating showcase of Seychelles' unmatched beauty and its status as an exquisite destination for leisure and luxury. The roadshow, spanning Mumbai, Delhi, and Ahmedabad, was a pivotal moment in fortifying the bond between Seychelles and the Indian travel trade.

Reviving the Tourism Industry:

In the wake of the tourism industry's revival from its most trying years, this roadshow had a singular focus: bringing together with key tourism stakeholders. It aimed to facilitate interactions and spotlight the destination's offerings through personalized meetings with over 180 leading travel agents and tour operators across India. The delegation from Seychelles included not only the Tourism Seychelles team but also Air Seychelles, with **Ms. Eliza Moïse, Manager Sales & Market Development, Commercial, and Harshvardhan D. Trivedi, Sales Manager** in India. They were further endorsed by partners such as destination management companies (DMCs) like 7 South, Holidays Seychelles, and renowned hotels including Berjaya Beau Vallon Bay Resort & Casino, Club Med, Hotel Raffles, Silver Pearl, Savoy Seychelles Resort & Spa, and Coral Strand Smart Choice Hotel.

Engaging with Indian Travel Enthusiasts:

Throughout the event, Seychelles' tourism team was engaged in productive discussions and networking with esteemed travel agents, tour operators, and professionals from all three cities. The primary goal was to provide these agents with immersive insights into the diverse tourism offerings, reinforcing its position as a preferred choice for Indian travellers seeking exceptional experiences. Attendees were able to explore tailored packages and gain firsthand knowledge of the destination's exceptional hospitality and adventurous activities.

A Commitment to Excellence:

Mrs. Bernadette Willemin, Director General of Destination Marketing at Tourism Seychelles, expressed her enthusiasm for the event: "India has always been a significant market. We are



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strengthening our partnerships with key trade partners in India to welcome more visitors to our islands and provide Indian tourists with top-notch experiences. Our roadshows play a vital role in promoting Seychelles as a year-round destination catering to every kind of traveller, including honeymooners, nature enthusiasts, luxury seekers, families, diving aficionados, and thrill-seekers. One of our essential offerings for environmentally conscious travellers are eco-tourism. We are firmly committed to expanding our presence in the Indian market, and this roadshow has paved the way for new collaborations and partnerships.”

Seychelles: A Distinctive Choice:

Seychelles has carved out a niche in the outbound travel market, especially among Indian tourists seeking distinctive destinations that cater to travellers of all ages and preferences. Many discerning travellers now prioritize eco-friendliness and a closer connection to nature in their choices.

The increasing interest in Seychelles can be attributed to its reputation as a breathtaking tropical paradise. The country boasts an abundance of natural beauty, captivating visitors worldwide with its untouched white-sand beaches and a vibrant array of flora and fauna. In addition to its luxurious offerings, Seychelles offers island-hopping adventures, domestic cruises, and a proactive approach to satisfying the evolving needs of modern tourists. These needs revolve around local travel experiences, sustainable practices, and a profound connection to nature.

A Resounding Success:

The roadshow undeniably emerged as a resounding success. It provided travel trade partners with the latest information and insights about Seychelles, its various tourist products, and offerings. This event unquestionably sets the stage for enhanced collaboration and a promising future for Seychelles within the Indian market. Seychelles is poised to continue captivating the hearts of Indian travellers, offering them the allure of an unparalleled tropical escape.

Showcraft Productions: The Most Innovative Event Agency Triumphs at India Travel Mart 2023

TRAVEL MAIL:

Showcraft Productions, India’s foremost Experiential Marketing Agency, is elated to announce its recent accolade and triumph at the prestigious India Travel Mart (ITM) 2023. This August 11th to 13th event, held at the majestic Rajasthan International Centre (RIC) in Jaipur, Rajasthan, witnessed Showcraft being lauded with the esteemed “Most Innovative Event Agency” award.

Unveiling the India Travel Mart:

India Travel Mart stands tall as India’s premier B2B Travel & Tourism Showcase & Conclave. This year, the event centred its focus on the theme “MICE & Wedding B2B EXPO, CONCLAVE & AWARDS.” The platform’s objective is to champion tourism through collaborative endeavours, the exchange of market insights, fostering partnerships between public and private sectors, and removing travel impediments.

Showcraft Productions: Pioneers in Event Excellence:

Showcraft Productions has been at the forefront of the events and entertainment industry since its inception in the year 2000. With an illustrious history spanning over 23 years, Showcraft has impeccably executed and managed over 2,500 projects across the globe. The accolade from ITM serves as an emphatic endorsement of Showcraft’s unwavering dedication to innovation, creativity, and commitment to delivering extraordinary event experiences.

Mr Lalit Gattani’s Perspective:

Mr Lalit Gattani, the Founder and CEO of Showcraft Productions, expressed his heartfelt appreciation, remarking, *“At Showcraft, we are firm believers in crafting experiences that transcend the ordinary, and this award scores the passion and devotion to our exceptional team. Our journey has been a continuous odyssey of exploration, pushing boundaries to redefine very essence of what events can be. Receiving the ‘Most Innovative Event Agency’s award at India Travel Mart inspires us to perpetuate our mission of creating narratives that leave indelible marks on all we touch.”*

The Bridge Between Industry and Audience:

India Travel Mart (ITM) plays a pivotal role as the bridge connecting the travel industry and its clientele. It offers a unified platform for interaction, fostering business collaborations and engaging consumers. Over the years, ITM has successfully united the travel and tourism sector, nurturing growth and advancement through its diverse editions held across cities such as New Delhi & NCR, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, and more.

Showcraft Productions: A Versatile Success Story:

The success narrative of Showcraft Productions is marked by its diversification across various facets of the entertainment industry, encompassing Events, Solutions, Displays, Sports, and Films & AVs. From intimate private gatherings to monumental crowds numbering in the hundreds of thousands, Showcraft has consistently showcased its knack for transforming spaces into mesmerizing experiences. The agency’s international ventures spanning the USA, UK, France, Germany, Poland, Dubai, and China have further magnified its proficiency and global footprint.



Embracing Sustainability: IBTM World's Association Leaders' Forum

TRAVEL MAIL:

In the bustling heart of Barcelona, on November 28th, 2023, IBTM World will host a revamped Association Leaders' Forum, is set to cast a spotlight on sustainability and its ever-pressing challenges within the association community. In partnership with the esteemed European Society of Association Executives (ESAE), this event aims to empower industry professionals to shape the future of business and culture.

Shaping the Future: A Gathering of Association Leaders:

The IBTM World Association Leaders' Forum has evolved into a paramount annual gathering where association leaders converge to share, learn, and advance their knowledge and best practices. It's an invaluable peer-to-peer exchange that transcends traditional business norms.

Revitalizing Connections: A Fresh Approach:

This year's forum introduces a fresh format, teeming with high-level presentations, lightning talks, and interactive debates. The intent is clear: to infuse energy and restore the sense of community that may have waned during the era of remote work.

Exploring Trends and Sustainability:

Kicking off the program is a thought-provoking glimpse into association trends for 2024, courtesy of Mike Morrissey, ESAE President, and CEO of the European Cancer Organisation. Following this, a panel of speakers, led by Mohamed Mezghani, Secretary General of UITP (The International Association of Public Transport), will delve into the intersection of travel and sustainability. They will explore the concept of carbon offsetting and the broader societal benefits of meetings and conferences.

Lightning Talks: Hot Topics Unveiled:

The afternoon promises fast-paced lightning talks, diving into scorching subjects such as Artificial Intelligence, ESG, and the interplay between Impact and Environment. These talks will be complemented by ample networking opportunities during and after the forum, over refreshing drinks.

Voices of Insight:

Mike Morrissey, ESAE President, expressed, *"When associations converge to share knowledge and ideas, they wield the power to effect real change. This forum provides a*



platform for association and event professionals to tackle issues that are uniquely theirs. We are thrilled to collaborate with IBTM on curating the content for this significant event and extend an invitation to all association events professionals to join us, connect, and share their inspirations and ideas."

David Thompson, Event Director at IBTM World, added, *"This engaging forum, centred on sustainability encompassing environmental, social, and governance aspects, is designed to spark curiosity, inspire action, and foster a culture of growth. Business culture flourishes when we come together, and this forum provides the ideal setting for nurturing that culture."*

ESAE: Fostering Association Excellence:

ESAE stands as Europe's premier organization for uniting association professionals. It serves as a conduit for the exchange of best practices among peers, ensuring that both current and future leaders grasp the intricacies of association business and strategy.

Joining the Conversation:

The Association Leaders Forum extends an open invitation to Association Buyers and select Media attending IBTM World. To participate in the Hosted Buyer Programme and Forum, kindly submit your details via the IBTM World website.



Think Business, Think Hong Kong: Leveraging Opportunities in ASEAN

Over 2,000 business buyers from ASEAN keen to leverage the Hong Kong platform

TRAVEL MAIL:

The Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) successfully organized the signature promotion event, Think Business, Think Hong Kong (TBTHK), in Bangkok. This event received an enthusiastic response from Thai government officials and business leaders, showcasing Hong Kong's strengths and positioning it as a leading international business hub.

Leveraging Hong Kong as a Gateway:

The two-day event attracted over 2,000 buyers from 8 ASEAN countries, along with their local chambers and associations, highlighting their interest in using Hong Kong as a gateway to expand their businesses globally. This reinforces Hong Kong's role as a preferred destination for businesses looking to access both the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) and ASEAN markets.

The Exclusive Hong Kong Night Cocktail Reception:

On the first day of the event, an exclusive Hong Kong Night Cocktail Reception brought together

Thai, ASEAN, and Hong Kong business leaders to network and explore potential opportunities.

The event was opened by **Dr. Peter K N Lam, HKTDC Chairman**, with speeches delivered by **Mr. Algernon Yau, Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region**, and **Dr. Chadchart Sittipunt, Governor of Bangkok**.

Capitalizing on Hong Kong's Unique Strengths:

During the event, Dr. Lam emphasized a focus on lifestyle and shared insights on e-commerce,

sustainability, ESG, and the future of retail through a series of Trade Talks. These topics were of great interest to Thai businesses and aligned with Thailand's BCG growth strategy. Dr. Lam highlighted that Hong Kong's strategic location between the GBA and ASEAN presents numerous opportunities for Thai businesses and further strengthens Hong Kong Thailand's economic ties.

Fostering Collaboration and Innovation:

Mr. Yau acknowledged the flourishing partnership between Hong Kong and Thailand over the years. He emphasized that Hong Kong with its unique strengths under the one country, two systems principle, connects global investors with promising projects along the Belt and Road, fostering collaboration and innovation within the GBA.

Working Together for Mutual Success:

Dr. Sittipunt stressed the importance of working together, stating that Bangkok and Hong Kong are two thriving cities in Asia, each with its unique strengths and advantages. By pooling their strengths, expertise, and resources from the government, public, and private sectors, they can create more opportunities and foster a business ecosystem that attracts investments drives innovation, and supports emerging industries in the region.

Exploring New Business Opportunities:

The TBTHK Trade Expo allowed Thai companies

to source new and innovative quality lifestyle products and services from 120 Hong Kong exhibitors. The Expo featured products and services from various sectors, including fashion & lifestyle, health & wellness, home & living, toys & gadgets, and smart city solutions. Over 80% of these offerings were new to the Thai market.

Insights from Retail Experts:

The Trade Talks held during the event covered various topics, including retail technology, licensing opportunities, e-commerce, cross border logistics, sustainability, and ESG. Experts from renowned retail groups, associations, and innovative companies shared their market insights. For instance, Mr. Anson Balley, Head of Consumer & Retail, APAC of KPMG China, emphasized that artificial intelligence (AI) would become the most disruptive technology. He also discussed other emerging trends, including IoT security, virtual events, digital twins, sustainable fashion, and packaging.

Citywide Promotion of Hong Kong Lifestyle and Design:

To showcase Hong Kong's dynamic lifestyle and design-led products and fashion, the HKTDC collaborated with Hong Kong-linked merchants and restaurants in Bangkok for a citywide promotion. Partnership included well-known brands such as Kam's Roast, Maxim's, City Chain, and others. Additionally, in collaboration with LINE MAN, select Hong Kong-style restaurants offered exclusive dining offers.



Cleartrip and Axis Bank Forge Industry-First Alliance for 12.5 Million Users

TRAVEL MAIL:

In a groundbreaking move, Cleartrip, a subsidiary of Flipkart, has teamed up with Axis Bank, one of India's premier private sector banks. This partnership aims to unveil an unprecedented offering, catering to both existing and new Axis Bank credit cardholders who choose Cleartrip for their travel needs.

The collaboration ushers in a host of exclusive advantages for domestic flight bookings, including seats valued up to INR 1200, complimentary meals worth up to INR 500, waiver of convenience fees, and the option to cancel or reschedule flights for a nominal fee of just Re. 1 under the CT FlexMax program. Furthermore, Axis Bank credit cardholders can access tailor-made travel deals without the hassle of accumulating and redeeming points.

Revolutionizing Travel Discounts:

This strategic partnership represents a significant departure from the traditional approach to domestic flight booking discounts. Most Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) in today's market focus on providing instant cash discounts through bank partnerships.

However, these discounts are often offset by hefty convenience fees and additional charges for seats and meals. Moreover, the flexibility of such bookings is typically limited to cancellations or date changes, often at a premium cost. In stark contrast, our program redefines the norm by offering a comprehensive suite of services for a nominal fee of Re. 1. This innovative approach eliminates the need for large discounts to be compensated for by inflated convenience fees.

Cleartrip's Visionary Collaboration:

Ayyappan R., CEO of Cleartrip, expressed, *"Cleartrip is committed to revolutionizing the OTA space through transparency and customer-centricity. Our partnership with Axis Bank is an embodiment of this commitment. It encompasses features like flexible bookings, cancellation options, and date changes, all without any additional*

expenses. This unique offering truly sets us apart in the market and is poised to benefit nearly 12.5 million customers."

He added, *"Axis Bank is a trusted financial institution with a strong affiliation with Flipkart and a vast user base. We are thrilled about this new chapter and anticipate strengthening this collaboration, thereby enhancing our value proposition."*

Axis Bank Elevating the Customer Experiences:

Sanjeev Moghe, President & Head of Cards & Payments at Axis Bank, commented, *"We are excited to collaborate with Cleartrip, a brand that shares our vision of providing unparalleled customer experiences. We continue to focus on innovation driven partnership models to deliver a value proposition tailored to our customers' evolving requirements while ensuring greater convenience and more benefits. We've noticed that travel is an area of high engagement for our customers, and this one-of-a-kind offering with Cleartrip will greatly enhance their travel plans."*

The Cleartrip-Axis Bank partnership is poised to reshape the future of travel with its comprehensive suite of privileges. With a relentless focus on customer-centricity driving the company's growth, Cleartrip remains committed to exploring unique value propositions for its users, ensuring sustained business growth.



cleartrip

Skyscanner's Commitment to India: A Game-Changer with the Launch of Its New Hindi Product

TRAVEL MAIL:

In a groundbreaking move, Skyscanner is now empowering millions of Indian travellers to seamlessly plan, search, and book their journeys in their native language – Hindi. This strategic initiative underscores Skyscanner's relentless commitment to the burgeoning Indian market.

Expanding Horizons: Skyscanner's Global Reach:

Skyscanner's dedication to enhancing the travel experience is boundless. The introduction of a Hindi language experience across its suite of products and services is a testament to its unwavering mission. This move will undoubtedly elevate the travel landscape for both Indian globetrotters and the travel industry as a whole.

Embracing Hindi: A Global Trend:

Hindi, the third most widely spoken language globally, is experiencing a surge in its digital footprint. As more internet users seek content. The app is perfectly positioned to meet this demand. With the Indian travel market projected to soar to an astonishing US\$ 125 billion by FY27 and Indians increasingly gravitating toward online travel bookings, this localized experience is poised to revolutionize travel planning. Its impact will be felt not only in metro cities but also in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities across India.

The resurgence of Indian Travel:

Indian domestic and international air travel is experiencing a remarkable resurgence, surpassing pre-pandemic levels. This rekindled enthusiasm for travel is mirrored on the platform. In 2023, the app witnessed an unprecedented surge in search volume, reaching levels not seen since the pre-pandemic year of 2019. Notable trending routes in August include:

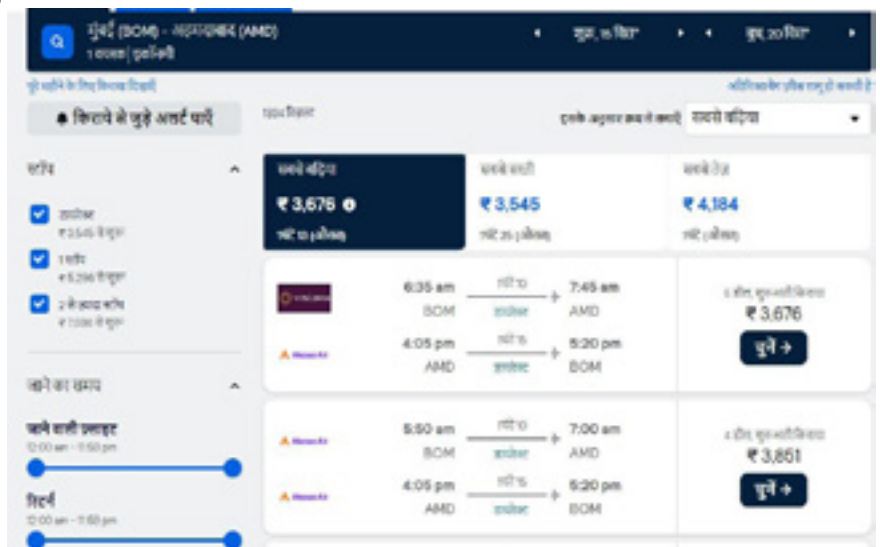
1. Srinagar to Jammu
2. Hyderabad to Bengaluru
3. Mumbai to Dubai
4. New Delhi to Seoul
5. Srinagar to New Delhi

A Visionary Perspective:

Hugh Aitken, VP of Strategic Relations at Skyscanner, expressed his thoughts stating, *"The Indian travel market is one of the fastest growing in the world, and we see immense potential in connecting millions of travellers with some of the most ambitious travel providers in the industry. When accessing flight options on the app, travellers will now be seamlessly redirected to the Hindi locale on the airline or OTA site. In addition to native language support, we are making substantial investments across our entire product portfolio benefiting not only consumers but also our partners in crucial areas such as distribution, advertising, and data."*

Strengthening Partnerships:

It's journey in India has been enriched through collaborations with market-leading partners. Names like MakeMyTrip, Indigo, Goibibo, SpiceJet, Yatra, EaseMyTrip, and Cleartrip have joined hands with Sky scanner, forming a formidable alliance. Their relentless pursuit of excellence means that this network is poised for continuous expansion.



Indians Want to Spend More Time and Money on International and Domestic Travel in 2023: ACKO YouGov Travel Report

TRAVEL MAIL:



ACKO YouGov Travel Report: After lacklustre years, the travel industry is poised for a resurgence with a surge in demand among travellers. Did you know, in 2023, 31% of Indians plan to embark on international trips? To reveal the latest travel trends and insights, as well as to understand post-pandemic travel behaviour, ACKO, India's leading tech-first insurance company, partnered with YouGov to release its newest research report: ACKO Travel Index 2023.

Travel Budget and Duration:

The report, based on a survey of 1000 respondents across seven major Indian cities aged between 24 and 45, identifies key travel considerations among Indians. With the increased desire for travel experiences, approximately 48% of Indians are allocating a higher budget for their trips in the coming year. Furthermore, 37% are extending the duration of their trips to embark on extraordinary adventures and seize every opportunity.

ACKO YouGov Travel Report: International Travel Demand:

ACKO YouGov Travel Report indicates a significant rise in demand for international travel. As Indians plan their domestic journeys, 44% are allocating a larger budget for travel post-pandemic, 31% are intending to take more domestic trips in 2023-24, and 30% are planning to increase the duration of their trips.

Travel Budget Preferences:

According to the ACKO YouGov Travel Report, around 71% of respondents are willing to spend Rs 1–6 lakh on their international trips, while those travelling domestically prefer to spend up to Rs 1 lakh.

Shifting Travel Behavior:

Apart from destinations and budgets, the report highlights a significant shift in the behaviour of travellers. Cleanliness is now the foremost concern during trip planning, followed by flexibility and convenience. Additionally,

respondents expressed a desire to avoid crowded spaces.

Insights from Brijesh Unnithan, SVP, Embedded Insurance:

Speaking at the report's launch, Brijesh Unnithan SVP, of Embedded Insurance, remarked, "We wanted to understand how Indians plan to travel in 2023 and how their travel preferences have changed over the past couple of years. The survey clearly shows that travellers now prioritize convenience and flexibility, and they are willing to invest more in the overall experience.

It is great to see that Indian travellers recognize the importance of travel insurance and understand what to expect from a policy. They are more conscious about their well-being during a trip and demand customized insurance products that cater to their needs and expectations. They seek products that provide confidence, knowing they are well-prepared for any eventuality."

Travel Preferences: Domestic vs. International:

The survey of 1000 respondents aged between 24 and 45 from seven major Indian cities revealed that 60% desired international travel, while 40% preferred planning only domestic journeys.

Top Considerations:

During trip planning, the utmost consideration is the comfort of the journey throughout. Around

50% of respondents agreed that travel convenience is paramount, followed by lower ticket prices, flexible ticket booking, and the cleanliness of the transportation they are boarding.

When choosing accommodation, cleanliness ranked highest, followed by convenience, safety, and accessibility of the location. Convenience also topped the list of considerations when choosing local activities, with cleanliness being a close second.

Understanding Travel Insurance:

The report addresses the question of whether Indians understand travel insurance. 67% of respondents said that travel insurance is mandatory when planning their trips, and 62% are aware that travel insurance provides medical and accident coverage, which they consider a top priority when evaluating a policy. 49% are also aware of the lost baggage cover, followed by trip emergency coverage, missed or delayed flight cover, and trip flexibility cover.

When asked about their insurance preferences, 48% stated they prefer comprehensive travel insurance policies. However, 39% expressed interest in more flexible and customizable travel insurance policies tailored to their needs. Only 13% said they do not want to take out a travel insurance policy.

Offline Vs. Online:

Most Indians rely on a combination of online and offline sources to plan their trips. For instance, 45% of respondents use both online and offline information to choose local transport for their destination. 44% rely on both streams of information when deciding on accommodation, and 43% determine their travel options based on research from both sources.

Preferred Destinations:

Respondents also shared their preferred international destinations, with Dubai ranking first, followed by the Maldives, Singapore, Switzerland, and Bali. Among domestic travel destinations, Goa ranked first, followed by Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Uttarakhand, and Rajasthan. Interestingly, 1 in 3 respondents expressed strong interest in adventurous holidays. Some travellers seek scenic locations, like the sea or mountains, while others travel for shopping, to try new cuisines, or to experience theme parks.

Travel Companions:

36% of Indians prefer to travel with their friends, 35% with their spouse or partner, and only 14% opt for solo trips. A few individuals (4%) also enjoy traveling with their pets.



26 Countries Offering Visa Free, Visa on Arrival and E Visa for Indians

TRAVEL MAIL:

Several countries offer visa-free travel for Indian citizens, this means you can pack your bags and embark on exciting journeys without the need for extensive paperwork and visa applications. 60 countries welcome Indian travellers with open arms, providing an overview of each destination and the visa requirements, or lack thereof.

So, let's dive in and discover the 26 countries that offer visa-free travel for Indians are Albania, Oman, Mauritius, Barbados, Micronesia, Bhutan, Nepal, Montserrat, British Virgin Islands, Cook Islands, Niue, Dominica, El Salvador, Qatar, Fiji, Senegal, Haiti, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Vanuatu Kazakhstan, Tunisia Macao (SAR China).

Discover the Latest Visa-on-Arrival/e-Visa Destinations for Indian Travelers in 2023:

Embarking on a journey to obtain a visa on arrival is a fascinating experience, where immigration officials meticulously inspect your passport and capture your biometrics while collecting the necessary payments before finally granting you the coveted visa permit. Remember, the visa will be issued upon your arrival at prominent entry points of your destination country.

Since its establishment in 2014, the Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) system has been catering to Indian explorers, with periodic updates on eligible countries introduced in 2015. Now, in 2023, we present an exclusive compilation of countries that extend visa-on-arrival and e-Visa privileges to Indian citizens in Bolivia, Mozambique, Botswana, Comoro Islands, Myanmar, Burundi, Palau Islands, Rwanda, Cambodia, Cape Verde Islands, Samoa, Seychelles, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Gabon, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Saint Lucia, Iran, Jordan, Tanzania, Thailand, Laos, Timor-Leste, Madagascar, Togo, Maldives, Tuvalu, Marshall Islands, Uganda, Mauritania, Zimbabwe.

Now to the Countries offering e-Visa Facility to Indian Passport Holders **are** Angola, Malaysia, Antigua and Barbuda, Moldova, Australia, Morocco Azerbaijan, Russia, Bahrain, São Tomé and Príncipe, Benin, Singapore, Colombia, Suriname, Djibouti, Taiwan, Georgia, Tajikistan, Kenya, Türkiye, Kuwait, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Vietnam, Lesotho, Zambia.



FAQs:

Do I need a visa for short stays in these countries?

No, Indian citizens can enjoy visa-free travel for short stays in these countries. However, it's essential to check the specific entry requirements and duration of stay allowed in each country to ensure compliance with immigration regulations.

Are there any restrictions or limitations on visa-free travel?

While visa-free travel allows Indian citizens to visit these countries without a visa, there may be certain restrictions or limitations. These can include limitations on the duration of stay, restrictions on employment or study, and specific entry requirements. It's crucial to review the immigration regulations of each country before planning your trip.

Can I work or study in these countries without a visa?

Visa-free travel generally does not permit individuals to work or study in these countries without a proper visa or permit. If you intend to work or study, it's important to obtain the necessary documentation and comply with the immigration regulations of the respective country.

Do I need travel insurance for visa-free travel?

While travel insurance is not a mandatory requirement for visa-free travel, it is highly recommended. Travel insurance provides coverage for medical emergencies, trip cancellations, lost baggage, and other unforeseen circumstances. It offers peace of mind and ensures you are protected during your travels.

Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Records Skyrocketing Half-Year Arrival Numbers

TRAVEL MAIL:

Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA) has achieved a remarkable milestone, recording its highest-ever half-year arrival figures. Between January and June 2023, this scenic Emirate welcomed a staggering 600,000 visitors, marking a substantial 14.8% surge compared to H1 2022.

Notably, this period also witnessed the highest tourism-related revenue ever generated during a half-year period. This extraordinary performance underscores Ras Al Khaimah's growing prominence as a premier travel destination.

Ras Al Khaimah Tourism's International Tourism Soars:

One of the standout achievements of this exceptional half-year is the resurgence of international tourism, accounting for more than 52% of all visitor arrivals. Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority has taken significant strides toward becoming a regional leader in sustainable tourism by 2025. It proudly secured Silver Certification, making it the Middle East's first Earth Check-certified tourism board.

Expanding Aviation Connectivity:

Ras Al Khaimah's aviation strategy has received a substantial boost through its partnership with Qatar Airways, providing direct access to the Emirate via Qatar Airways' extensive global network spanning 150+ countries.

Strengthening European Ties:

The Emirate has also made significant inroads in European markets. An agreement with FTI GROUP, a leading European outbound tour operator, has been linked to boost inbound traffic from Germany one of the top five visitor source markets.

Surging Demand for Accommodations:

The demand for accommodations has surged, with a year-on-year growth rate of +33.6%, attributed to the addition of new hotel brands in the Emirate in 2022. Notable additions to the growing hotel portfolio include Earth Hotels, Le Meridien, and Nobu Hotels, with plans to double the number of guest rooms in the coming years.

Luxury Cruise Visits:

Ras Al Khaimah has attracted luxury cruise liners,



half of the year, welcoming over 2,500 passengers and crew.

Boosting MICE Tourism:

The Emirate has also been actively focusing on the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) market, with a 26% increase in MICE room nights compared to H1 2022. It has hosted several significant events, including the Ras Al Khaimah Half Marathon, Arab Aviation Summit, DP World Tour, and Exotic Wedding Planners Conference (EWPC).

Enhancing the Wedding Destination Experience:

Ras Al Khaimah has elevated its status as a wedding destination with the introduction of civil law marriage licenses and new wedding incentives and certification programs. These initiatives are set to bolster the Emirate's position as a preferred wedding destination.

Recognitions and Digital Initiatives:

Raki Phillips, CEO of Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority, has earned accolades, being named one of Forbes Middle East's Top 100 Travel & Tourism Leaders and Business person of the Year by Arabian Business. The Emirate has also launched 'Get More,' a cutting edge digital-first summer campaign, garnering over half a billion impressions and more than 2.5 million clicks, surpassing industry benchmarks.

Experience the Vibrant Nightlife of Bahrain After Dark



TRAVEL MAIL:

Delve into the lively and exciting realm of Bahrain's nightlife! Get ready to immerse yourself in a world of pulsating beats, delectable drinks, and unforgettable experiences that come alive after dark.

Bahrain's Nightlife: A Dynamic and Inclusive Scene:

Bahrain's nightlife scene is renowned for its dynamic and inclusive nature, catering to a wide range of preferences and interests. Whether you're a party enthusiast, a music aficionado, or someone who appreciates exquisite dining experiences, Bahrain's nightlife offers a plethora of unique and delightful options tailored just for you.

Adliya or Block 338: The Heart of Bahrain's Nightlife:

Adliya or Block 338, also known as the renowned "Restaurant Road," serves as the pulsating epicentre of Bahrain's nightlife. This dynamic neighbourhood boasts a lively ambience with its eclectic collection of fashionable restaurants, stylish cafes, and energetic bars. As night falls, Block 338 transforms into an enchanting destination, brimming with an electrifying atmosphere. Take a captivating stroll through its charming narrow streets and uncover delightful

treasures, including rooftop lounges that offer exceptional cocktails and vibrant live music establishments where talented performers showcase their artistry.

Bustling Neighbourhoods for Unforgettable Clubbing:

For those seeking an extraordinary clubbing experience, Bahrain has other bustling neighbourhoods known for its vibrant nightlife. When the sun sets, the surroundings come alive with an energetic and captivating atmosphere that caters to various tastes and preferences. The dynamic neighbourhoods are home to some of Bahrain's hottest nightlife, drawing in partygoers from all walks of life. From trendy bars and nightclubs to cosy pubs and lounges, Bahrain offers a diverse range of venues for nocturnal entertainment. Whether you're looking to dance the night away to pulsating beats, enjoy live music performances, or simply relax with friends over drinks, the nightlife scene has something for everyone. The lively ambience and

exciting options promise unforgettable nights filled with excitement and memorable experiences.

Bahrain Bay: Where Sophistication Meets Nightlife:

If you're seeking a sophisticated and refined evening, Bahrain Bay is the perfect destination. This exquisite area is home to lavish hotels and chic lounges that provide an upscale environment for relaxation and socializing. Immerse yourself in the elegant ambience as you savour expertly crafted cocktails prepared by talented mixologists, all while being treated to awe-inspiring vistas of the sparkling city skyline. Delight in the gastronomic pleasures offered by renowned chefs, who present an array of gourmet dishes from various cuisines around the world, ensuring a tantalizing experience that will please even the most discerning palates.

The Bahrain National Theatre: An Artistic Haven:

The Bahrain National Theatre serves as a vibrant hub, offering a diverse range of artistic performances, including theatre productions, musical concerts, and dance recitals. This esteemed venue showcases the immense creative talents of both local and international artists, providing an immersive experience that truly captivates its audience. You can also visit the Al Dana Amphitheatre, a captivating cultural hub nestled in the heart of a bustling city. With its inviting ambience and state of the art facilities the theatre serves as a haven for performing arts enthusiasts. The theatre's commitment to promoting cultural exchange and artistic expression makes it a cherished destination for audiences seeking unforgettable experiences.

Manama Souq: Where Tradition Meets Nighttime Charm:

To embrace a more relaxed ambience, a visit to the renowned Manama Souq is highly recommended. As the evening sets

in, this bustling marketplace becomes a captivating hub that offers a glimpse into Bahrain's rich heritage. Immerse yourself in the vibrant atmosphere as you meander through the lively stalls, featuring an array of traditional handicrafts, aromatic spices, exquisite fabrics, and dazzling jewellery. Engage with the local vendors to uncover hidden treasures that beautifully showcase Bahrain's time-honoured traditions and exceptional craftsmanship. It's an opportunity to immerse yourself in the cultural tapestry of Bahrain while enjoying the mellow and enchanting vibe of the souq.

Safety and Warm Hospitality:

Safety is a top priority in Bahrain, ensuring that everyone can enjoy the nightlife with peace of mind. The streets are well-lit, and the Bahraini people are known for their warm hospitality, making visitors feel welcome and comfortable throughout their nighttime adventures.



Revolutionizing Air Travel: Digi Yatra Expands to Six New Airports

TRAVEL MAIL:

In a significant leap towards enhancing air travel efficiency and passenger convenience the Digi Yatra facility is set to make its debut at six more prominent Indian airports. The month of August 2023 will witness the grand introduction of Digi Yatra at Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Kochi, Lucknow, Jaipur, and Guwahati airports. This strategic expansion aims to revolutionize the travel experience for millions of passengers.

Expanding Horizons: Digi Yatra’s Reach:

With this momentous move, the tally of Digi Yatra-enabled airports will skyrocket to an impressive thirteen, covering key regions across the country. This remarkable growth highlights the commitment of the aviation industry towards harnessing cutting-edge technology to streamline air travel.

A Milestone Achieved: Digi Yatra’s Soaring Popularity:

Since its inauguration by the honourable Minister of Civil Aviation and Steel, Shri Jyotiraditya, on December 1, 2022, at three pioneer airports – New Delhi, Varanasi, and Bengaluru, Digi Yatra has rapidly gained traction. In a short span, it has been seamlessly integrated into four additional airports: Vijayawada, Pune, Hyderabad, and Kolkata, thus elevating the count of Digi Yatra-enabled airports to seven. Now, with the imminent inclusion of the six aforementioned airports, the total number of airports embracing Digi Yatra will surge to a remarkable thirteen, ensuring that a more significant portion of the flying population can relish the benefits of this revolutionary system.

Embraced by Millions: Digi Yatra’s Impact: Seamless Travel with Digi Yatra:

The impact of Digi Yatra on the travel landscape is undeniable. As of August 10, 2023, an astonishing 3,460,454 passengers have availed themselves of the convenience offered by Digi Yatra. Moreover, during the same period, the Digi Yatra mobile application garnered an impressive user base of 1.29 million. Digi Yatra is a groundbreaking mobile application based facility that strives to achieve a contactless and seamless passenger processing

experience at airports. This innovative system relies on Facial Recognition Technology (FRT) to facilitate travellers’ journeys through various airport checkpoints. The use of facial features for identity verification and travel details confirmation ensures a paperless and contactless travel experience.

Security and Privacy at the Core:

One of the most significant aspects of the Digi Yatra process is its unwavering commitment to passenger security and privacy. Unlike conventional systems, Digi Yatra does not maintain central storage of passengers’ Personally Identifiable Information (PII) data. Instead, all passenger data is meticulously encrypted and stored securely within their smartphone’s wallet. Furthermore, this data is exclusively shared between the passenger and the origin airport, where the Digi Yatra ID is meticulously validated. After the passenger’s flight departs, the data is promptly purged from the airport’s system, typically within a mere 24 hours. This strict data management protocol ensures that passengers’ information is shared exclusively during their travel and solely with the originating airport, upholding the highest standards of privacy and security.



BLR Airport's Terminal 2 Launched International Operations

TRAVEL MAIL:

Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru (BLR Airport) Terminal 2 (T2) opened its doors for international operations on August 31. This marks a significant milestone for the airport, as it prepares to welcome more than 30 daily international departure flights from its brand-new 'Terminal in a Garden.' Singapore Airlines SQ508/SQ509 was the first foreign carrier, while IndiGo 6E1167 was the first Indian carrier to kick off international operations within the new T2 facility.

Smooth Transition: All International Flights from T2:

Starting from August 31, all international flights, both arrivals and departures, will transition from T1 to T2. This move signifies a remarkable shift for Bengaluru Airport and its commitment to enhancing passenger experiences. T2 will cater to 30 to 35 daily international departures across 27 airlines, comprising 25 international carriers and 2 Indian airlines.

A Message from the CEO:

Hari Marar, the MD & CEO of Bangalore International Airport Ltd (BIAL), expressed his excitement, stating, *"The commencement of international operations at T2 represents a major milestone for Bengaluru Airport. With this move, international operations will be exclusive to T2, while our domestic operations will be divided between T1 and T2. We are committed to providing our passengers with an unparalleled travel experience, and T2 reflects our dedication to delivering world-class facilities and services. With our expanded international operations, we look forward to strengthening Bengaluru's connectivity to the rest of the world."*

Enhancing the Passenger Experience:

This transition to international operations at T2 underscores Bengaluru Airport's commitment to meeting the increasing demands of global travellers and enhancing overall passenger satisfaction. T2 is meticulously designed to efficiently handle higher passenger volumes, offering modern infrastructure, state of the art technology, and passenger centric amenities.

Seamless Travel Experience:

Passengers will find spacious check-in counters and self-baggage drop counters for swift and hassle-free check-in processes. Arriving at T2, travellers can expect seamless transfers and streamlined immigration and customs procedures.

Retail and Dining Choices Galore:

Furthermore, T2 will soon introduce an array of retail and dining options in the coming months. These offerings will encompass a diverse range of cuisines and shopping opportunities, catering to the diverse tastes of global travellers. T2 also boasts an international lounge, providing travellers with a comfortable space to relax, recharge, or attend to their work.

Safety and Excellence at the Forefront:

BLR Airport is fully prepared to welcome international airlines and passengers to its new T2. It is committed to upholding the highest safety standards and ensuring a seamless transition for all international flights. As T2 ushers in a new era of international travel from BLR Airport, passengers can look forward to a world-class experience.



Singapore Airlines to Temporarily Increase Seat Capacity from Kolkata During Durga Puja Holiday Period

TRAVEL MAIL:

Singapore Airlines (SIA) is pleased to announce a temporary upgrade of its Boeing 737-8 services to Airbus A350-900 services during the Durga Puja festival from 17th to 20th October, 2023 and again on 26th and 27th October 2023. Pending regulatory approvals, this aircraft change from narrow-body to wide-body will cater to the increased travel demand during this festive period.

Temporary Aircraft Upgrade for Durga Puja Period:

Currently, Singapore Airlines operates daily flights from Kolkata, utilizing its 154-seater B737-8 aircraft from Tuesdays to Fridays and its 303-seater A350-900 aircraft every Monday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Increased A350-900 Services:

With this temporary gauge, the Airline will provide daily A350-900 services from 14th to 23rd October, 2023 and again from 26th to 30th October 2023. This upgrade will result in a remarkable 22% increase in SIA's total capacity from Kolkata during the Durga Puja period. Moreover, passengers can enjoy an expanded inventory of 40 lie-flat Business Class seats per day, a substantial upgrade from the mere 10 offered on the B737-8 aircraft

Updated Flight Schedules:

For your convenience, please refer to Annexe A at the end of this release for the complete current and revised flight schedules for Kolkata. All timings mentioned in the schedules are local.

Sy Yen Chen, General Manager India for Singapore Airlines, Shares Delight:

Mr Sy Yen Chen, General Manager India for Singapore Airlines, *expressed his delight with the announcement of the temporary capacity increase from Kolkata during the Durga Puja period. This enhancement comes at a time when travel*

demand surpasses the availability of seats. He emphasized the Airline's unwavering commitment to the West Bengal market and the desire to provide customers with seamless connections to their preferred destinations on their favourite Airline.

Enhanced Comfort and Service Excellence:

Mr Chen further added, *"Our modern Airbus A350 medium-haul aircraft, combined with award winning inflight service and complimentary Wi-Fi across cabins, will provide enhanced comfort to travellers from Kolkata, further demonstrating SIA's commitment to product and service excellence."*

As the festive season approaches, Singapore Airlines is prepared to meet the heightened travel needs with upgraded aircraft and outstanding service. The temporary increase in seat capacity from Kolkata will undoubtedly provide passengers with a comfortable and enjoyable journey during the Durga Puja holiday period.



Introducing ENCALM PRIVÉ: Redefining Luxury at Delhi International Airport Terminal 3

TRAVEL MAIL:

Encalm Hospitality Pvt. Ltd., renowned for providing delightful airport experiences, proudly presents ENCALM PRIVÉ – an exquisite lounge catering to premium business travellers. The launch of PRIVÉ at Delhi International Airport's Terminal 3 marks a groundbreaking advancement in airport lounges, offering an unparalleled experience for travellers seeking luxury and superior hospitality.

A Magnificent Oasis of Elegance and Comfort

With a sprawling area of over 30,000 sq. ft. and more than 550 seats, ENCALM PRIVÉ sets a new standard of grandeur in airport lounges.

Meticulously designed to epitomize airport hospitality, every facet of this lounge caters to the discerning needs of travellers seeking top-notch service. From a state-of-the-art business centre to a dedicated library and a captivating kids' play area, ENCALM PRIVÉ embraces travellers of all ages without compromising its exclusivity and opulence.

Unparalleled Luxury at Your Fingertips

ENCALM PRIVÉ spoils travellers with extraordinary amenities that redefine luxury. Whether you seek tranquillity in the serene wellness zone, indulge in delectable creations from live cooking stations, or savour curated beverages at the dedicated bar, the lounge ensures the finest hospitality experience with Encalm's finesse and unwavering commitment to quality. The core facilities are already exceptional, and the upcoming

additions, including a spa, fitness centre, sleeping pods, gaming zone, and showers, promise to elevate the experience even further.

Setting New Standards in Airport Lounges

"The PRIVÉ isn't your ordinary airport lounge," proclaimed Vikas Sharma, CEO of Encalm Hospitality, discussing the positioning of this flagship establishment. "Our mission has always been to provide delightful experiences that leave lasting memories for our customers, and PRIVÉ takes us another step closer to achieving that vision. As our premier lounge, PRIVÉ will surely delight travellers who rely on our unmatched quality and amenities. We aspire to redefine premium hospitality and elevate the perception of airport lounges in India."

Luxury Matches Enclam Prive

Step into a world of luxury and sophistication with ENCALM PRIVÉ, where exceptional experiences await travellers who demand nothing less than the epitome of airport hospitality. From the moment you enter, you will be immersed in a realm of opulence that promises to transform your travel endeavours into cherished memories. Experience the grandeur of ENCALM PRIVÉ and discover a new paradigm of luxury airport experiences in India.



Japan Tourism: Ryo Bunno Takes the Helm as JNTO Delhi's Executive Director



TRAVEL MAIL:

In a significant move, the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), Delhi, has ushered in a new era by appointing **Mr. Ryo Bunno** as its dynamic Executive Director, a position he officially assumed on the 15th of August 2023. With a diverse background spanning Journalism, Communications, Digital Marketing, and Public Relations, Ryo Bunno brings a wealth of expertise and a global perspective to his pivotal role.

Ryo Bunno's Journey of Excellence:

Ryo Bunno's journey with the Japan National Tourism Organization began in 2018 when he joined the Tokyo office, setting the stage for a fulfilling career. During his tenure, he made indelible contributions to the Digital Marketing and PR section. His exceptional skills and unwavering dedication didn't go unnoticed. In recognition of his outstanding achievements, he was handpicked for a crucial role at the JNTO Manila Office in July 2022.

Here, he continued to amplify the organization's presence on the international tourism map. His term in Manila, which concluded in August 2023,

marked yet another milestone in his illustrious career.

Charting a New Course with Global Perspective:

In his new role as Executive Director, Ryo Bunno is set to steer the JNTO Delhi Office towards its next phase of growth and innovation. With his extensive experience, commitment to excellence global perspective, and an undying passion for travel, he stands as an invaluable asset to the organization. Under his adept leadership, the JNTO Delhi Office is primed to continue its mission of positioning Japan as a must visit destination for Indian travellers.

Concept Hospitality Appoints Mr Ajay Singh as General Manager of The Fern Kesarval Hotel & Spa, Verna, Goa

TRAVEL MAIL:

Concept Hospitality is delighted to announce the appointment of **Mr Ajay Singh as the General Manager of The Fern Kesarval Hotel & Spa in Verna, Goa.** This promotion recognizes Mr Singh's exceptional dedication to fostering teamwork, establishing trust, providing professional leadership, and surpassing stakeholder expectations. As he steps into this new role, Mr Singh is fully committed to delivering his best by continuously enhancing his knowledge and skills in line with the latest trends in the hospitality industry.

Ajay Singh, An Energetic and Motivated Leader:

Mr Ajay Singh brings infectious enthusiasm and an unwavering motivation to his new responsibilities. His primary focus will be on enhancing efficiency, driving departmental profits and effectively managing all aspects of the hotel's operations.

Upholding Excellence and Sustainability:

In his role as General Manager, Mr Ajay Singh assumes a vital position in upholding The Fern's exceptional standards of excellence and sustainability. His exceptional leadership skills, industry experience, and commitment to providing extraordinary guest experiences will play a pivotal role in driving the hotel's success. With his expertise, The Fern's position as a prominent and leading hotel brand in India will be further strengthened.

The Fern Hotels & Resorts: Celebrating 100 Hotels and Counting:

The Fern Hotels & Resorts, India's premier environmentally conscious hotel chain and one of the fastest growing brands in the country celebrates a remarkable milestone with 100 hotels and resorts currently operational or opening soon across 85 locations in India and globally. The Fern boasts a diverse portfolio of brands, including The Fern, The Fern Residency, The Fern Habitat, Zinc Journey by The Fern, and Beacon Hotels. The brand's commitment to sustainability and delivering unparalleled

hospitality experiences have been instrumental in its impressive growth and success.

A Testament to Dedication and Hard Work:

Reaching the milestone of 100 hotels in India is a significant achievement for The Fern, a testament to the unwavering dedication and hard work of the entire team. The Fern's steadfast focus on sustainable practices and expanding service offerings to diverse destinations nationwide has distinguished itself within the hospitality industry. This milestone exemplifies The Fern's vision of creating extraordinary and sustainable hospitality experiences for guests while positively impacting the environment and the communities in which it operates.

With Mr Ajay Singh at the helm of The Fern Kesarval Hotel & Spa, guests can expect exceptional service and a commitment to sustainability, reflecting the core values of Concept Hospitality and The Fern Hotels & Resorts. Congratulations to Mr Ajay Singh on his well-deserved promotion, and we look forward to witnessing the continued success of The Fern Kesarval Hotel & Spa under his leadership.



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