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# AVIATION TIMES



**24<sup>Th</sup>**  
Anniversary Issue

## COVER STORY

Female Pilots  
Soaring High

## FACE TO FACE WITH

Song Jungsub  
Regional Manager -  
Asiana Airlines





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**This issue of Aviation Times contains 76 pages including cover**

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# AVIATION TIMES

## Editorial

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## FRANKFINN

Greetings!

In this edition of Aviation Times, we bring to our reader's numerous interesting topics from the Aviation, Hospitality and Travel industries. Our chairman talks about the improvement in India's aviation safety rankings.

The Cover Story of this edition is about how female pilots are soaring high. We have shared our conversation with Mr Song Jungsub, Regional Manager- Asiana Airlines, in the Face-to-Face Section and covered Hawaiian Airlines in the Profile Section. In the Aviation Section, our journalists write about how to Get 'Ready to Fly' with New Industry Standards and Cathay Pharma - A Solution for Post-Pandemic World.

In the Hospitality Section, this issue of Aviation Times features The Gateway Resort - Damdama Lake, Gurgaon. We also share our conversation with Mr Himanshu, Corporate Chef of Vinpa and and Mr Desislav Gospodinov - Group Director of Sales & Marketing Lily Beach Resort Maldives.

Our journalist writes about the World's Most Beautiful Cities in the Travel Section. You will also enjoy reading interesting articles like 'Pocket-friendly European cities to add to your bucket list' and 'UNESCO includes Azerbaijan's intangible elements on the World Heritage List'.

We have covered the interview with Mr Vidur Kapur who is the Director of the O3+ Skincare brand and Well Gummies by Modicare in the Skin Care section. The Motivation section has inspiring write-ups by Gp. Cap. D.C. Bakshi, VSM, IAF (Retd).

In the New Appointments section, our readers can get to know about the change in top management positions in the Aviation, Travel and Hospitality industries. We hope you will enjoy this issue. Do let us know if there are any other topics, you'd like us to include in our upcoming editions.

**Editor**



## CHAIRMAN'S PAGE

Air travel has been considered one of the safest modes of transport as safety is a high-priority concern for the Aviation industry. According to the Civil Aviation Authority, the fatality rate per billion kilometres travelled by plane is 0.003 compared to 0.27 by rail and 2.57 by car.

Mr Alexandre de Juniac, former Director General and CEO of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), says, "A person would have to travel by air every day for 6,033 years before experiencing an accident. Yet we still have accidents, so we know there is room for improvement. And that rededicates everyone in the Aviation industry to our common goal of having every flight take off and land safely."

In order to ensure the safety of all passengers and employees in the Aviation industry, regular safety audits are carried out by the governing body - International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).

ICAO recently conducted its Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) Continuous Monitoring Approach, an ICAO Coordinated Validation Mission for 187 countries to check the effective implementation of all critical safety elements.

In the latest rankings by ICAO, India's position has jumped to 48th place (with 85.49 per cent) from the 102nd spot in 2018; the highest ever received by India. Leaving China behind, India is now among the top 50 countries in terms of ICAO's comprehensive safety audits.

The ICAO audit was conducted in the areas of - legislation, organisation, personal licensing, operations, airworthiness and aerodromes. The results of USOAP activities allow ICAO to evaluate a State's ability to provide safety oversight by determining whether the State has effectively and consistently implemented the critical elements (CEs) of a safety oversight system.

The Director General of Civil Aviation, Mr Arun Kumar, said, "A robust safety oversight system certified and acknowledged by the experts is a sine qua non for flight safety and very assuring for the flying public. The DGCA team has worked tirelessly to strengthen Aviation safety. Now, we are at a peak and so the challenge is to maintain and improve further. DGCA is a bunch of extremely competent officials and we are confident that given proper support, we will improve further."

Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, Civil Aviation Minister, said, "With tighter oversight and improved standards, Indian Aviation is leaving no stone unturned to ensure passenger safety and security."

The improvement in India's Aviation safety ranking is a major breakthrough as it places India higher on the global map and will help domestic airlines for international expansion. Better ICAO ranking means easier international operations as countries with poor Aviation safety records find their aircraft being subjected to more surprise checks at airports abroad.

The Indian Aviation sector is slowly coming back into the growth trajectory after being severely hit by the Covid-19 pandemic and domestic air traffic is also inching closer towards the pre-pandemic level. ICAO rankings have come just in time as Indian carriers like IndiGo and Air India are planning major international expansions. Also, domestic airlines reported various technical snags in July 2022. However, the DGCA Chief said that the snags were only minor, and the Indian Aviation space was "absolutely safe" as all the ICAO protocols are stringently followed by the airlines. ICAO rankings have resonated with these facts.

Safety is a core value-offering of rapid and dependable air services and international cooperation on Aviation safety by governments and industry groups, through ICAO, has helped to make commercial aircraft the safest way to travel. The 193 countries that cooperate through ICAO are currently working towards their agreed global safety target of zero fatalities by 2030. It is in tandem with strengthening their regulatory capacities while pursuing a range of programmes and targets relevant to current core areas of global Aviation safety planning, oversight and risk mitigation.

Aviation safety has come a long way and has shown significant advancements; however, we must continue to advocate for further improvement in order to make it more standardised. Aviation safety requires an alignment of security, training, technology, infrastructure and regulations to maintain high-security standards and keep the Aviation industry safe and efficient.

Thanking you,

(K.S. Kohli)



(Mr. K.S. Kohli is a practising Advocate in Delhi High Court and Supreme Court and is the non-executive Chairman of Frankfinn Group)





## Mail Box



I like to read about the aviation and tourism industries a lot. I came across Aviation Times and found it to be a very informative and interesting read. One can enhance his/her knowledge by just reading this magazine as it covers all the latest happenings of these industries. Additionally, the interviews in the Hospitality section are very interesting and give great insights about the lives of the chefs and the hoteliers.

*Deepak Kalra, Delhi*

Aviation Times magazine is surely helpful for candidates who wish to join the aviation industry. I have come across first such magazine in India which covers the airline industry in such depth, along with other areas like hospitality and travel; all the three are interrelated and your magazine has articles from all these areas, which is a great thing”.

*Shilpa Kumar, Pune*

## QUEST & QUENCH

**Ques. Will I need a passport in order to begin applying for the job of a Flight Attendant?**

*Palak Desai, Hyderabad*

**Ans.** Not every airline will require that you already have a passport when you apply, but some will. As soon as you are hired as a flight attendant, you will need a passport. Having a valid passport at the time of your interview is a plus.

**Ques. Does taking up the job of an air hostess require relocating?**

*Poornima, Vijayawada*

**Ans.** At most airlines, relocation is a condition of employment. The companies will require some flexibility on your part during the first several months of your flying career. Newly hired flight attendants will be

assigned a base after graduating from training. You will be expected to report for duty from that base but may live wherever you choose. Also, you will normally be eligible for transfer from your initially assigned base to the base of your choice within the first three to nine months of your employment. That is the usual trend; it may differ with different airlines.

**P.S. — Readers are requested to send their queries to:**

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# AVIATION NATIONAL



## IndiGo announces 32 new connecting flights to enhance connectivity between India and Europe



Union Civil Aviation Minister Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia recently launched the first phase of the Centre's ambitious DigiYatra facility for three airports where entry and boarding will be made more seamless with the use of a facial recognition system.

The minister launched the system for Delhi, Bengaluru and Varanasi airports from Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport in the national capital and said that the data shared for it will be stored in a decentralised manner.

As part of the second phase, the system will be launched in Hyderabad, Kolkata, Pune and Vijayawada by March next year, he said.

The DigiYatra facility will allow passengers to link their travel and identity documents and create a facial scan beforehand which will do away with the need for them to produce boarding passes or identity cards when they arrive at an airport, drop their baggage or proceed for boarding. Instead, passengers will need to show their face to a facial recognition camera to authenticate themselves.

Amid concerns over data theft and privacy issues, Mr Scindia said the data shared for DigiYatra will be saved in an encrypted format in a decentralised manner.

"First, we thought of a centralised system that would house all the data but then issues of privacy, data theft, rightfully came up. So, we moved to a decentralised system which would house the passenger information on the mobile phones of every single passenger," he said.

The data that a passenger will upload will get completely wiped out in 24 hours even though it is protected by blockchain technology, Mr Scindia said.

The service is available for users of both iPhones and Android-based smartphones, Mr Scindia said.

For availing the service, a passenger has to register details on the DigiYatra app using Aadhaar-based validation and a self-image capture. In the next step, the boarding pass has to be scanned and the credentials are shared with the airport.

DigiYatra will provide a seamless process from the entry point until the embarkation point on planes, and no identification or boarding pass has to be shown by the passengers, Mr Scindia said.





## Vistara Announces Daily Direct Flights Between Mumbai and Muscat



Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Mopa International Airport in Northern Goa recently, named after former state CM, Mr Manohar Parrikar. The new airport in the region is an attempt to boost air connectivity in the region and is in sync with the government's aim to boost tourism in Goa.

The new airport has been built with a cost of INR 2,870 crore and is scheduled to begin operations on January 5, 2023. The Mopa International Airport will be the second airport in the state and will be operated alongside the Dabolim airport in South Goa. Moreover, the airport's inauguration gives the state an infrastructural boost and will supplement overall economic development in the state.

The Mopa International airport in Goa has been built with a sustainable infrastructure plan. In addition to other features, it has a solar power plant, green buildings, LED runway lighting, rainwater collection and a cutting-edge sewage treatment system with recycling capabilities.

The Mopa International Airport features a variety of best-in-class technology, including 5G-capable IT infrastructure and StabilRoad, Robomatic Hollow precast walls and 3-D Monolithic Precast buildings. The airport has 14 parking spaces, a location for aircraft night parking, self-baggage-drop facilities, a runway large enough to handle the largest aircraft in the world and cutting-edge, autonomous air navigation systems, among other amenities.

With an expandable saturation capacity of 33 million people per year (MPPA), Phase I of the airport will initially be able to accommodate roughly 4.4 MPPA. The airport will promote the socio-economic growth of the State while meeting the demands of the tourism sector. It has the capacity to act as a significant logistical centre, directly connecting different domestic and foreign sites. The airport will reportedly have connections to numerous types of transportation. Furthermore, IndiGo and GoFirst airlines have already announced their flight operations from the airport.

## Vistara Inaugurates Direct Flights to its Fourth Destination in the Gulf Region

Vistara recently inaugurated its daily, non-stop flights between Mumbai (India) and Muscat (Oman), its fourth destination in the Gulf region. Muscat is the third Gulf city that Vistara has added to its network in the last four months. With this, Vistara becomes the only carrier to offer the choice of Premium Economy class on the route, in addition to Business and Economy class.

There has been a consistent increase in demand for travel between India and the Gulf region and Vistara's middle eastern routes have been performing remarkably well. The airline has focussed on expanding its presence in the region this year with the launch of services to Jeddah and Abu Dhabi in August and October, respectively. Vistara also operates daily flights to Dubai to/from Mumbai.

Mr Vinod Kannan, Chief Executive Officer, Vistara, said, "The launch of operations to Muscat is in line with our goal to steadily enhance our footprint in the Middle East. The firm bilateral relationship and robust cultural and economic ties between India and states in the Gulf region have given great impetus to our growth plans and our successful business on the other Middle Eastern routes is a testament to that. We are excited to bring India's finest full-service carrier to Muscat with daily connectivity from Mumbai and are confident that Vistara with its award-winning product and services will be a much-preferred carrier on this route as well."



## IndiGo announces 32 new connecting flights to enhance connectivity between India and Europe



In line with its vision to strengthen international connectivity, IndiGo has announced 32 new connecting flights to Milan, Manchester, Birmingham, Rome and Venice, effective December 07, 2022, through its codeshare partnership with Turkish Airlines. These new routes will offer more options and add capacity for customers travelling between India and Europe in the upcoming holiday season.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Vinay Malhotra, Head of Global Sales, IndiGo said, “We are extremely pleased to add more capacity between India and Europe during this holiday season, given the high demand for international travel. These flights will cater to travellers exploring Italy and UK, with one stop connections to Milan, Manchester, Birmingham, Rome, and Venice via Istanbul. These new routes will not only strengthen international connectivity but also enhance affordability for travel to Europe. We will continue to strive to stay true to our promise of affordable fares, on-time performance, courteous and hassle-free service.”

These destinations are well known for their majestic tourist attractions throughout the year. Milan is an alpha global city famous for its art, history, architecture and football, as well as extraordinary fashion and culinary scenes. Rome is generally considered to be the "cradle of Western civilisation and Christianity", and the centre of the Catholic Church. It is known for its heritage and historical monuments/destinations. Venice, known also as the “City of Canals,” “The Floating City” and “Serenissima,” is arguably one of Italy's most picturesque cities. With its winding canals, gondola rides, vibrant streets, and carnival celebrations, striking architecture and beautiful bridges, Venice is a popular destination for travel.

Manchester is synonymous with football and is known for its lively music scene and sports clubs. Destinations like Heaton Park, Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester Cathedral, Etihad Stadium, Manchester United Museum & Stadium and Museum of Transport, Greater Manchester, are among the bucket list of every traveller. Known as England’s ‘Second City’, Birmingham is the largest city in England after London. It’s also known as the ‘City of a Thousand Trades’ due to its status as the world’s first manufacturing town.

## Air India leases 12 More Aircraft to Enhance Operations

Air India recently announced the lease of six Airbus A320neo narrow body aircraft and six Boeing B777-300 ER widebody aircraft to further augment its existing fleet. These aircraft are expected to be inducted in the first half of 2023 and will be deployed on Air India’s short, medium and long-haul international routes. The decision to lease twelve aircraft is in addition to the thirty leased earlier this year including twenty-one Airbus A320, four Airbus A321 and five Boeing B777-200LR widebody aircraft.

The Airbus A320neo will be operated on the airline’s domestic/short-to-medium haul international routes. Air India’s B777-300 ER will have four-class configuration of First, Business, Premium Economy and Economy and will be deployed to connect Indian metro cities with even more international destinations.



The airline’s aggressive expansion plan has already witnessed 19 long-grounded aircraft returning to the skies with nine more to follow even as the airline has stepped up lease of narrow and wide-body aircraft. As part of the expansion, Air India has raised the frequency of flights between key cities on the domestic sector and has also announced direct flights between Indian cities and key global destinations like Doha, San Francisco, Vancouver and Birmingham. Further, Air India is set to commence direct flights from Delhi to key European cities like Milan, Vienna and Copenhagen and from Mumbai to New York, Paris and Frankfurt.

Commenting on the lease of the aircraft, Mr Campbell Wilson, CEO & Managing Director, Air India, said, “Growing our network is an essential part of Air India’s Vihaan.AI transformational journey and we remain committed to increasing connectivity and frequency of flights both domestically and internationally. These additional aircraft leases will support our near-term growth even as we finalise plans to refresh and significantly grow our long-term fleet.”

# AVIATION INTERNATIONAL



## Aer Lingus launches largest UK transatlantic summer schedule to date

Aer Lingus has launched its biggest ever summer 2023 schedule for UK customers with a record-breaking 2.25 million seats on sale to North America.

The Irish flag carrier unveiled its largest North American summer schedule to date in line with customer demand for more transatlantic flights, including services from its popular Manchester hub. Customers can enjoy the ultimate choice and flexibility when booking their summer holidays next year, with a huge 270,000 seats on offer flying direct from Manchester to New York and Orlando.



Capacity from Manchester to New York has been boosted by a massive 72% by switching aircraft from the single-aisle Airbus A321LR to a wide-bodied A330, offering at least 133 more seats per flight.

Ms Susanne Carberry, Chief Customer Officer, Aer Lingus said, “After a highly successful year flying customers to and from the UK over the Atlantic, we’re excited to be launching our largest ever summer schedule for customers in 2023. Flights from Manchester have proved extremely popular so we have boosted capacity by introducing larger aircraft on transatlantic services to New York, and next summer will offer 270,000 seats on sale direct from our north of England hub. This will give our customers even greater choice and flexibility when booking their summer holidays for 2023 and make Aer Lingus first choice for flying to North America.”

Aer Lingus’ UK customers can choose to fly either direct from Manchester to North America or for a wider variety of destinations via the carrier’s Dublin hub scores of cities across its extensive transatlantic network.

Next summer, Aer Lingus will operate 17 routes to the US, including bringing back its popular Dublin to Hartford service, in addition to launching new flights from Dublin to Cleveland, Ohio, the home of the world-famous Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. For those UK customers looking for winter sun, Aer Lingus also offers a seasonal service to Barbados, direct from Manchester, which operates until Spring 2023.



## World's first C919 Aircraft delivered to China Eastern Airlines



The world's first C919 aircraft, with registration number of B-919A, was delivered to its world's first launch customer, China Eastern Airlines (CEA), on December 9, 2022.

The C919 is China's first homegrown large passenger aircraft in accordance with international airworthiness standards and owns independent intellectual property rights.

It features advanced aerodynamic design, propulsion system and materials, as well as lower carbon emission and higher fuel efficiency.

A pattern of a Chinese seal reading "world's first C919" in Chinese is printed in the front part of the plane delivered.

The aircraft adopts a 164-seat configuration that comes with a two-class cabin layout, including 8 business class seats and 156 economy class ones.

In the economy cabin, the middle seat in each three-seat row is 1.5 cm wider than its neighbouring ones, which offers more comfort. With an aisle height of 2.25 meters, the plane comes with an efficient air filtration system, a passenger-centric lighting system and low noise. Besides, there are twenty 12" drop-down screens that can play 1080P videos.

On the day of the delivery, a maiden flight of the C919 aircraft was made by three senior CEA pilots from the Shanghai Pudong International Airport to the Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport.

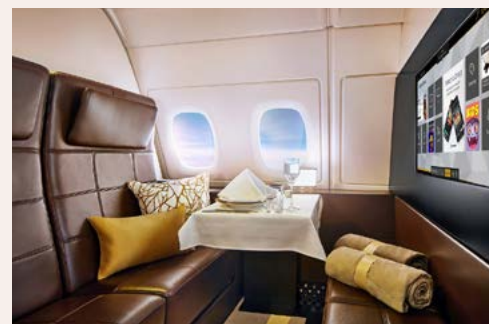
After arriving at the Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport and passing through a water gate, the aircraft was officially commissioned into the fleet of CEA. It is expected to be put into commercial use in the spring of 2023.

## Etihad Airways set to reintroduce its much-loved A380 fleet

Etihad Airways, the national carrier of the United Arab Emirates, has announced that it is reintroducing four of its A380s from the summer of 2023.

The move follows a surge in demand for air travel across the airline's network and customer feedback for the return of one of the most remarkable commercial flying experiences in the sky.

Mr Mohammed Ali Al Shorafa, Chairman, Etihad Aviation Group, said, "It is wonderful to announce the return of this splendid aircraft. The A380's reintroduction provides a further boost to Etihad's capacity into the key UK market, with a knock-on effect for the wider GCC and Indian subcontinent that will bring more visitors to the city of Abu Dhabi."



Mr Antonoaldo Neves, Chief Executive Officer, Etihad Airways, said, "We know this will be welcomed by our guests who love Etihad's incredible A380 and its award-winning cabins. We have decided the time is right to return some of our A380s into the fleet to satisfy the demand which has made them financially viable once more. We look forward to welcoming our guests again on board this remarkable aircraft."

Etihad's A380s feature The Residence as well as three cabin classes on the double-decker aircraft, including 9 First Apartments, 70 Business Studios and 405 Economy Smart Seats. This includes 80 Economy Space seats with a seat pitch of up to 36 inches. The nine First Apartments set across a single aisle, offer a private living space with a large leather lounge chair and an ottoman which opens up to become a separate 80.5" long fully flat bed.

## Budapest Airport welcomes new Air Serbia connection to Belgrade



**B**udapest Airport has announced another significant addition to its route network with Air Serbia to launch a new connection to Belgrade from 13 March 2023.

The Serbian national airline will initially operate the route 15 times weekly, before increasing to 17 flights per week in time for the peak S23 season.

Importantly, the service will provide excellent onward connections from Budapest, via Belgrade, to destinations including Spain, Italy, Greece, Cyprus and the USA.

The route is sure to be popular in both directions. Budapest is a UNESCO World Heritage Site with a rich history and beautiful landscapes, while the Serbian capital city of Belgrade is renowned

for its nature, history and culture.

Mr Balázs Bogáts, Airline Development Director, Budapest Airport, says, “It is fantastic to see the reintroduction of this route from Budapest to Belgrade, following a hiatus of several years. The market demand is considerable enough to support an increase from 15 weekly flights to 17 for S23 and the service offers significant potential with attractive onward connections. We are sure it will become yet another highly successful new route.”

## Emirates Skywards and Air Canada kick-off joint loyalty programme partnership



**E**mirates and Air Canada have expanded their partnership to offer frequent flyer members joint loyalty programme benefits. Emirates Skywards members can now earn and redeem Miles on all flights operated by Air Canada – accessing a network of more than 220 destinations worldwide.

Aeroplan members will also benefit from earning and redeeming Points on all flights operated by Emirates – with access to more than 130 destinations across six continents, via the airline’s home and hub, Dubai.

Dr Nejib Ben Khedher, Divisional Senior Vice President, Emirates Skywards, commented, “We’re very pleased to be enhancing our partnership with Air Canada and officially kicking

off our joint loyalty programme offering. Together, close to 40 million frequent flyer members will be able to earn and redeem Miles across a joint network of more than 350 destinations and enjoy selected benefits, such as lounge access. We look forward to opening new horizons for our loyal members and to also welcoming Aeroplan customers on-board Emirates with our award-winning products and exceptional services.”

Mr Mark Youssef Nasr, Senior Vice President, Product, Marketing, e-Commerce, Air Canada and President, Aeroplan commented, “The two most recognised loyalty programmes in their respective regions provided by the two most recognised airlines in their respective regions are coming together to offer something truly great. Whether it’s connecting friends and family from Canada’s rich immigrant diaspora or helping travellers explore some of the world’s most exciting destinations, there’s something for everyone. We’re proud to partner with Emirates and Skywards as Aeroplan continues to deliver on its member promise: travel more and travel better.”



# TRAVEL & HOSPITALITY



## EaseMyTrip enters an exclusive GSA with GO FIRST

GO FIRST signed an exclusive General Sales Agreement (GSA) with EaseMyTrip to sell, promote and market passenger tickets and other services to passengers in Saudi Arabia effective from this month. To establish a fruitful commercial relationship and expansive grip within one of the biggest travel markets in Western Asia, EaseMyTrip will be extending operations of GO FIRST by opening an independent branded office and representing the airlines in Dammam & Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and other locations in an attempt to cater to the larger travel markets.

The three-year exclusive partnership deal provides an opportune time for both brands to expand and bolster their service range in Saudi Arabia. EaseMyTrip and its sweeping reach, comprehensive marketing interventions and knowledge of the locals would help GO FIRST provide suitable schemes for Saudi tourists and locals, enhancing their experience. Furthermore, this association would necessitate all the other travel agents within the vicinity to create a purchase circuit from EaseMyTrip when they will be buying GO FIRST tickets from Saudi Arabia.

Articulating the agreement, Mr Rikant Pittie, Co-Founder, EaseMyTrip said, “At EaseMyTrip, we understand that Saudi Arabia attracts millions of tourists every year, and the locals love to travel as well. It is a significantly crowded travel market that is yearning for a better travel experience. With our successful endeavours in most associations and businesses around the world, we want to enter the market here in Saudi Arabia and serve the tourists with utmost dedication. We are overjoyed to begin our journey as a GSA partner with GO FIRST, one of the most popular and affordable airline services in multiple international destinations.”

Mr. Kaushik Khona, Chief Executive Officer, GO FIRST commented, “Saudi Arabia is a key market for us as we continue to expand internationally. We are pleased to partner with EaseMyTrip since the brand has been successfully catering to the travel needs of people globally and we are positive that this association will ease and enhance the travel experience of people travelling for work as well as leisure.”







## ShriGo Hotels & Resorts enters Thailand market

ShriGo Hotels & Resorts recently announced their next phase of expansion with the opening of ShriGo Resort & Spa Pattaya. The hospitality chain currently operates 43 properties across India and wants to add 50 more properties by 2023. Along with the domestic expansion, the company is also eyeing the international market. After Thailand the group will be entering Bhutan, Vietnam and Sri Lanka.

The newly opened ShriGo Resort & Spa Pattaya is within 2 km from Pattaya Beach and 5 km from Jomtien Beach. The luxurious resort has 70 rooms, restaurant, pool bar, spa and conference hall. All the rooms and public places are fully furnished, well equipped with technologies, amenities & facilities.

The chain hotels by virtue of the immense synergies, distribution network, central reservation systems, pan-India sales and marketing infrastructure, support and a deeper knowledge pool have a tremendous edge over stand-alone hotels. In order to stay ahead of the competition the chain is designing unique experiences to address the travel needs of today's well-travelled travellers. Along with this it has a major focus on staff grooming and development.

Mr Sudhir Awasthi, CEO, ShriGo Hotels & Resorts shared, "We have received a phenomenal response. With the increase in inbound and outbound tourism, the tourism sector is witnessing a healthy demand. As a group our focus is on national and international expansion. We are collaborating with multiple properties but have stringent checks in place. We ensure the property owners must share ShriGo brand ethos before being taken on board. In order to provide more flexibility, we offer multiple collaboration options to our prospective partners. Our aim is to open 150-170 hotels by 2023 with an average key size of 60 rooms and above. Also, we will be entering the European market."

In order to tap into the wildlife and spiritual market, by next quarter they will be opening properties in Jim Corbett, Bandhavgarh and Varanasi.



## Fortune Hotels expands its footprint in Uttar Pradesh



Fortune Hotels, a member of ITC's hotel group recently announced the signing of a new property in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh. Furthering the national footprint, this new property will be Fortune's fourth hotel in UP.

Fortune Park Aligarh, set to open in the winter of 2023, is strategically located on the Grand Trunk Road just off the RTO office and well connected with the upcoming Noida International Airport via Aligarh - Palwal Road offering easy access to the university town. The hotel is also in close proximity to prominent tourist attractions

like Jama Masjid, Aligarh Clock Tower, Aligarh Muslim University and Khereshwar Mandir.

Highlighting Fortune Hotels' India expansion spree Mr Samir MC, Managing Director, Fortune Hotels said, "Our focus on building the brand footprint in tier 2/3/4 markets continues as we forge another new partnership to enter Aligarh, the heartland of Uttar Pradesh. The state has always been a strong growth market for us and is poised to develop even more speedily in the next few years. Aligarh will be our fourth property here and we thank the owners for recognising the Fortune Advantage and showing their trust in us."

The modern hotel offers spacious rooms, complemented by a multi-cuisine all-day diner, large multifaceted banquet spaces and a rooftop restaurant with a trendy bar making it a perfect option for city residents and the upbeat business and leisure travellers to celebrate, engage and unwind.

## Airbnb signs MoU with Department of Tourism, Government of Goa to promote Inclusive Tourism



Airbnb has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department of Tourism, Government of Goa, to jointly promote Goa as one of the most sought-after high potential tourism destinations in India and around the world. This partnership is aimed at encouraging travel to unique destinations that are lesser-known and enabling economically regenerative community-led tourism in the State. On the side-lines of the official launch of ‘Rediscover Goa’, a week-long celebration of Goa's vast cultural diversity beyond its beaches and dazzling nightlife, Airbnb and Goa Tourism Department have joined hands to scale homestay capacity across the State and provide support to Goan homestay hosts in delivering quality tourism experiences to guests, both

domestic and international.

The announcement reflects the commitment of both parties to support the development of a sustainable tourism ecosystem in Goa, while highlighting current and upcoming tourism destinations in the state. By hosting knowledge sharing and training workshops for homestay hosts, the partnership will also enhance the potential of tourism to create jobs and sustainable livelihood opportunities for the local communities. There will be a spotlight on unique properties that enable more domestic and international travellers to explore Goa like never before and uncover some hidden gems.

The signing of the MoU took place in the presence of Shri Rohan Khaunte, Minister for Tourism, Government of Goa and Mr Amanpreet Bajaj, General Manager, Airbnb India, Southeast Asia, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

## Thailand Hits 10 million Visitors In 2022 As Tourism Recovers

Thailand celebrated the arrival of its 10 millionth international visitor of 2022 on December 10, 2022, according to the tourism authority, as the kingdom consolidated the recovery of its COVID-battered travel sector.

Thailand welcomed about 40 million people in 2019, but then the pandemic hit and travel was decimated as nations tightened border controls to contain the coronavirus.

With those restrictions easing worldwide, Thailand's travel numbers have begun a slow recovery and the government expects to generate nearly USD 16 billion in tourism revenue this year.

Traditional dancers and drummers at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi International Airport on 10th December 2022, welcomed passengers arriving on a Saudi Arabian Airlines flight that authorities believe clocked the 10-million milestone.

Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-Cha said in a speech at the airport, “The sky is open. We would like to build confidence that Thailand is still one of the top tourist destinations of people around the world.”

While Thailand has benefited from the loosening of travel restrictions by other nations, its tourism industry has also been affected by the global economic slowdown and persistent inflation.

Recovery in the tourism sector is also heavily dependent on China relaxing international travel rules, Thai officials have said. China was previously the biggest source of foreign tourists for Thailand.





# Female Pilots Soaring High

By: Gp Capt DC Bakshi, VSM, IAF (Retd.)

Attributing the human urge to fly – “TO BE UP THERE” – Wg Cdr DP Sabharwal (Retd.) IAF writes in his book, **Flight: The Basic Book – 100 years of Aviation**: “Nothing is achieved in a day. The aircraft that you see flying today is the cumulative effort of the indomitable spirit of human race. Hundreds of men and women from across the world were driven by vision, passion and relent to achieve the ultimate, viz., **To Be Up There!**”

In one of our earlier articles, we introduced Ms Amelia Earhart - an American lady pilot – to whom goes the credit of crossing the Atlantic Ocean (in years 1928 and 1932).



She also flew from Hawaii to San Francisco in the year 1935 – a route dreaded even by her male colleagues.

As the years rolled on, women pilots across the world continued to fly in large numbers in the USA and other European countries. They even surged forward for combat roles and actively flew during the World War II. (Aviation industry had yet to pick up in India and hence our track record in these tumultuous times remained in nascent stage).

However, that period is now gone-by. According to Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia, Civil Aviation Minister’s recent statement, “Our passenger-traffic has peaked “on daily basis” around 300,000 to 380,000. There is a sustained demand from tourism as well as the business sector”.

To haul that passenger-load, we have a vast network of trained men and women cadre. As an equal partner – along with the men, our women pilots too are putting in their best efforts. Flying (for Civil and Armed Forces) hitherto was



exclusive for “men-only”. Women’s participation in equal measure has now become a norm rather than an exception.

## A flashback – worth a mention

The virtual breakthrough came when the Indian Defence Forces provided the platforms for the much-needed push. Army/Air Force/Navy and the Para-Military Forces admitted young women in technical, support services and aviation cadres. It was not only that they flew helicopters and transport aircraft, but they also got into the fighter/maritime-patrolling stream.



### Sample this

Times of India flashed the news on 23 February 2018: “Meet Ms Avani Chaturvedi – the first Indian woman to fly a Fighter Aircraft, solo.”

She had created history. “Amongst the first three women fighter pilots being trained by the Indian Air Force, shattering the deep-rooted combat-exclusion policy for their gender in the Indian armed forces, Avani Chaturvedi flew a 30-minute sortie in a MiG-21 aircraft at the Jamnagar airbase.”

Indian women’s entry into flying careers could be attributed to the “courage” they have shown from time to time.



### Let’s have a peep into the past of this ‘revolution’! Who was the first Indian woman to obtain a commercial pilot’s license and what were the challenges she encountered?

Ms Prem Mathur was born in 1910 and soon after graduation, she looked for an opportunity to become a Commercial Pilot. After a decade-long wait, she succeeded in starting training as a commercial pilot at the newly established Flying Club at Allahabad. She got her license when she was around 38 years of age.

Those were the days when the very idea of a woman being allowed to fly a passenger aircraft did not find favour from stakeholders – the management and the passengers – in equal measure. And thus, her aspirations to fly a passenger airliner



remained unfulfilled (she had tried with eight airlines - big and small - operating in the country).

It was with Deccan Airways (Hyderabad) that in the year 1947 she finally got a breakthrough to fly as a co-pilot. The bias that passengers and crew will be uncomfortable with a female pilot as a Captain came in the way of her promotion as a Captain. She then decided to quit and explore alternate avenues.

The famous industrialist Shri GD Birla had a personal aircraft that ferried him to his multiple business locations. Captain Prem Mathur joined as a crew member viz as a Co-Pilot.

She later served in the Indian Airlines as a Captain (becoming the first Indian woman to hold this prestigious rank).



Aviation author, P. Anuradha Reddy records in her scholarly book, **AVIATION IN THE HYDERABAD DOMINION**, “Prem Mathur served in the Indian Airlines as Commander, Regional Director (Planning), Director (Operations) and retired in the year 1984.”

As an aviator, she had served for 30 years. Her passing away in 1992 was deeply mourned by the aviator colleagues of her time, as also her family members and a host of admirers.

To her goes the credit of inspiring a generation of female pilots – now dominating the skies! Today, we have the highest proportion of female pilots in the world. □

# Face to Face with Song Jungsub

## Regional Manager - Asiana Airlines

By Manchumi

**A**siana Airlines was established on 17 February 1988 and started operations in December 1988 with flights to Busan. Asiana Airlines envisions that 'customers are transported safely, promptly and comfortably to their desired destinations at their preferred time' as the core belief and fulfils 'customer satisfaction through superior safety and service' as the corporate philosophy.



To know more about the airline, its strategies and challenges, I interviewed Mr Song Jungsub, Regional Manager of Asiana Airlines.

### What are your most important international markets vis-à-vis footfalls and revenue?

Asiana Airlines holds a substantial market share primarily for America and Japan. Asiana Airlines flies to all the major Southeast Asia sectors. We are flying in Delhi for the last 25 years.

### What are the major challenges faced by the airlines as they try to recover?

All countries are easing the covid restriction as per their terms, whereas China - a major market for Asiana Airlines - is still under recovery due to China's Nil covid policy. We are still running just above 50% of our pre-covid levels and expect full recovery by summer 2023.

Besides that the aviation sector is experiencing a shortage of skilled manpower. Higher ATF (Aviation Turbine Fuel) cost and an average 70% load factor is building pressure on maintaining the running expenditures.

### How is Asiana Airlines managing to sustain and operate in the face of these challenges?







Asiana Airlines has a strong motive for safety and security which itself undermine any cost-cutting measures. Being a 5-star carrier certified by SKYTRAX we maintain high service standards. But to sustain in the current market we are driving on high commercial pax & cargo business. Aviation fuel has been bothering the industry for the last nine months and we would need to collectively stand for some corrective measures. The aviation industry needs more support from the government to offset any more fuel high.

**How vital has cargo been and what can the industry do to improve cargo processes?**

Cargo revenue has stood out during the covid times and still remains important though current rates and demand have experienced a downward curve. With the disruption in supply chain and sea cargo challenges, we expect air cargo can fill some gaps, but various cost and logistic challenges need more attention.

**Are any new routes Asiana Airlines is flying to?**

Asiana Airlines is observing the market trend and holding for any new initiatives.

**What technologies, whether it is for serving the customer or improving operations, particularly excite you?**

With the development of In-flight Entertainment, Full-Flat Business Seat, Wi-Fi and satellite network – paperless boarding, touch-free baggage handling and real-time RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) technologies stand out in serving the customer.

**What is the nature of Indian outbound traffic to Asiana Airlines - is it mostly business or leisure? How big is the FIT (foreign individual traveller) component and how is it panning out?**

Travel between India and South Korea has always been 80% Business and employment and 7-5% outbound leisure. Inbound Buddhist plus leisure happen from Nov-Feb. Now with K-pop, Kdrama and K-Beauty building ground in India, we expect to see substantial improvement in outbound leisure traffic for summer 2023.

**How would you describe India’s aviation sector in the present scenario? What lies ahead?**

India's domestic and international market is growing and we expect to gain more compared to other emerging markets. The future is bright as young India wants to explore business employment, studies and leisure beyond borders. India has rich demand for round-trip traffic for both business and leisure travellers.

**Are there any other areas in aviation on which we should focus?**

Education, training and aviation IT solutions can bring more focus to India as a world aviation hub.

**What advice would you give to young airline professionals?**

The service industry is evolving and technology is going to play a major part in its success. Stay focused, regular training & learning and quickly adapt to new technology.

Aim high and the sky is the limit. □



# Hawaiian Airlines

By: Manchumi

**H**awaiian Airlines ((Hawaiian) is the largest operator of commercial flights to and from the U.S. state of Hawaii. It is the tenth-largest commercial airline in the United States and is based in Honolulu, Hawaii. The airline operates its main hub at Daniel K. Inouye International Airport on the island of O'ahu and a secondary hub out of Kahului Airport on the island of Maui.

## FLEET

The Hawaiian Airlines fleet consists of 61 aircraft.

## NETWORK

Hawaiian Airlines serves 32 destinations in Asia-Pacific countries and territories. The airline added its eighth international destination,

Incheon International Airport near Seoul, South Korea. It also has daily and weekly direct, non-stop international flights from Honolulu to Tahiti, Australia, South Korea, Japan and New Zealand.

## CLASS Cabins

Hawaiian Airlines began offering Extra Comfort seating, as a new service class on its Airbus A330-200 aircraft. The Economy Comfort seating offered seating space upgrades for passengers, along with improved soft-product offerings for passengers on international routes. The new business class seats were upgraded; the airline would add 28 additional extra comfort seats. Hawaiian Airways revamp its business class seats from the standard

recliner seats to 180-degree lie-flat seats on their A330 fleet in a 2-2-2 configuration. The Airbus A321neo cabin uses Hawaiian-inspired designs, using a 3-3 configuration in the main cabin and a 2-2 configuration in business class.

## In-flight entertainment

Hawaiian offers DigEplayer portable video players for rent. Airbus A330 aircraft are equipped with on-demand units built into every seatback. The new Airbus A321neo is equipped with personal device entertainment via the app. All in-flight entertainment on the mainland to Hawaii flights is available, free of charge.

## Catering

Hawaiian provides complimentary



and paid beverage service on all of its flights. Meals are not provided on interisland flights because of their short length (30-45 minutes). On its U.S. mainland flights, Hawaiian is one of the only major U.S. airlines to provide complimentary meals in its main cabin (coach class); each meal is made with no preservatives and with all-natural ingredients and is packaged with recyclable materials. Hawaiian introduced premium meals in its main cabin, giving passengers the option of having a complimentary meal or paying to upgrade to a premium meal.

Hawaiian introduced a “tasting menu” or “tapas menu” for its first-class passengers on its U.S. mainland and international flights. The menu consists of twenty entrees set on a rotation, with five available on any given flight. Passengers are provided with information on the available entrees for their flight when they board or shortly after take-off and may choose up to three entrees as part of their in-flight meal.



**FREQUENT-FLYER PROGRAM**

Hawaiian Airlines’ frequent-flyer program is HawaiianMiles, which was started in 1983. Miles accumulated in the program allow members to redeem tickets, upgrade service class or obtain free or discounted car rentals, hotel stays merchandise or other products and services through partners. The most active members, based on the amount

and price of travel booked are designated Pualani Gold (fly 30 Segments or fly 20,000 Flight Miles) and Pualani Platinum (fly 60 Segments or fly 40,000 Flight Miles), with privileges such as separate check-in, Premier Club Lounge access in Honolulu, Hilo, Kona, Kahului and Lihu’e, priority upgrade and standby processing or complimentary upgrades.

Hawaiian also has frequent-flyer



partnerships with several other airlines, allowing HawaiianMiles members to earn credit for flying partner airlines and/or members of partner airline frequent flyer programs to earn credit for Hawaiian flights. Some partnerships restrict credit to only certain flights, such as inter-island flights or code-share flights booked through Hawaiian. □

# Mumbai International Airport

is an ode to a luxurious travel experience

By: Nitu

In the continued endeavour of pioneering efforts that supports and boosts the aviation industry of the country, Mumbai International Airport has launched the all-new, renovated General Aviation terminal facility, exclusively for private jets. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) introduces its all-new, revamped General Aviation (GA) terminal offering luxury and convenience at its best to its travellers.

Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL) is managed by Adani Airport Holdings Limited (AAHL), a subsidiary of Adani Enterprises, the flagship company of



the globally diversified Adani Group. MIAL is a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) venture between AAHL, holding a majority stake of 74% and the Airports Authority of India, holding the rest 26%. AAHL aims to converge India's biggest cities in a 'hub and spoke' model through the Group's proven strength in developing and managing complex transport & logistics hubs. With a strong

understanding of modern-day mobility requirements, the Adani Group's vision for MIAL is to reinvent Mumbai International Airport as India's biggest aerropolis, where the traditional airport nucleus of passenger and cargo infrastructure will be reinforced by interdependent clusters of commercial and residential infrastructure to create the nation's busiest airport ecosystem. MIAL has been further envisioned as a global air-travel focal point where domestic and international flyers actively engage in business and leisure supported by the metropolitan expansion that catalyses aviation-linked businesses and employment opportunities. At MIAL, they intend to create distinctiveness with an experiential offering that puts Mumbai first.

MIAL had switched to green energy sources, fulfilling 95 per cent of its requirement from hydro and wind, while the rest 5 per cent from solar power. Between May and July 2022, the facility witnessed a rise in natural energy procurement with 57% green consumption in April to a







whopping 98%. In August, Mumbai airport attained 100% utilisation of renewable sources of energy.

The GA terminal is all set to welcome passengers with luxurious interiors accentuated with height, light and space. Guests are warmly welcomed at the resplendent reception area by attentive and friendly staff on call 24x7, the terminal offers expansive lounges with butler service all complemented by a curated menu of super-food lite bites, a stylish bar to global cuisine served via a buffet and as per an a-la-carté menu.

Guests can reserve the meeting and conference room facilities with state-of-the-art audio and video aids in advance. From essential business requests to indulging when on leisure travel, CSMIA's GA terminal, spread over 753.26sq. mt redefines luxury. The terminal has been built with the aim to support the movement and processing of passengers flying through chartered flights from the airport. The all-new GA terminal at Mumbai Airport is a modern and stellar space that prioritises the safety, security and well-being of passengers at all times. The terminal offers an efficient processing area with Customs and Immigration and immediate access to private jet aircraft stands from the Terminal. Besides, having an access control system, Wi-Fi enabled services, IT system integrated systems, passengers are efficiently processed through all interaction points such



as enabling the boarding pass, dedicated porter service, check-in and hand baggage processing, with a minimum waiting period. In addition, the terminal is fully accessible to passengers with special needs and passengers with reduced mobility.

The Terminal can handle over 50 passengers every hour, thus ensuring that passengers board their flights on time. With the GA Terminal and the newly developed, General Aviation Aircraft Parking stands being co-located, passengers will find it more convenient to travel to and from the aircraft for boarding or de-boarding in no time. □

# ITA Airways

## Carving a Niche in India

By: Rohit Ashok

**I**TA Airways commenced its first flight from New Delhi to Rome Fiumicino on 4th December 2022. The new connection marks a step forward in the expansion of the Company's network towards the Asian market while confirming its commitment to attracting connecting customers.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony at New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport was attended by Mr Pierfrancesco Carino, Vice President of International Sales ITA Airways and Mr Fabio Bigotti, Country Manager India ITA Airways.

"We are happy to inaugurate the ITA Airways' Rome Fiumicino - New Delhi connections, the only direct flights between these two capitals", said Ms Emiliana Limosani, Chief Commercial Officer, ITA Airways. "With the opening of this new route for the transport of passengers and cargo between Italy and India, ITA Airways is further contributing to the cultural integration and development

of the economic relationship between the two countries, which have developed a solid political and commercial collaboration in recent years, with the presence of more than 600 Italian companies in India and a bilateral interchange that in 2021 reached a record value of more than 10 billion euros. We have thus taken an important step forward in the project of expanding our intercontinental network towards a fascinating destination and a market full of opportunities. In addition, thanks to the flight departing from New Delhi to Rome, our Indian customers will be able to visit not only Italy but all of Europe, thanks to convenient connections offered from our Rome Fiumicino hub", said the Chief Commercial Officer.

This is the first time ITA Airways operates in the Indian market and more importantly, the Company is the only airline to operate a direct Rome Fiumicino – New Delhi flight.

The new route will be operated by an Airbus A330, three times a week, departing from New Delhi, every Tuesday,



Thursday and Sunday at 03:50 am and landing in Rome Fiumicino at 08:10 am. Return flights from Rome Fiumicino will depart every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday at 2:10 pm and will arrive at New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport at 02:00 am, local time.

With the new intercontinental connection, ITA Airways is further expanding into the Asian market, while it continues to strengthen its ability to attract connecting customers, tapping into the flows between India and North America, Germany, Spain and France.

Through this new flight, Indian passengers will be able to discover the beauties of Italy's capital and the uniqueness of the 'Made in Italy' and will also use this flight as a

To support the new intercontinental flight from New Delhi to Rome and to enhance local awareness of the new Italian flagship carrier, ITA Airways has launched a multi-channel advertising campaign in India, which highlights the New Delhi-Rome connection as well as the beauty of Italy and its most iconic destinations.

ITA Airways continues to expand its intercontinental network: in the winter season, the Company will serve a total of 51 destinations, of which 9 are intercontinental, 22 are international and 20 are domestic and will focus primarily on its long-haul expansion project with several important new routes including, in addition to New-Delhi, the recently launched Tokyo-Haneda and the Maldives (Malé) which will be opened on December 17. All these



connecting one to start exploring other Italian cities, courtesy of 20 domestic connections offered by ITA Airways.

ITA Airways' Indian operations will be enhanced by flights operated in interline agreement with Vistara. Thanks to the collaboration with the Indian full-service airline, customers on ITA Airways' Rome – New Delhi flight will be able to fly on connecting domestic and international flights from Vistara's hub at Indira Gandhi International Airport. These include Mumbai, Amritsar, Kolkata, Bangalore, Kochi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Pune, Chandigarh and Dabolim in the Indian market and Bangkok, Kathmandu and Dhaka at the international level.

new intercontinental routes are joining flights to New York, Los Angeles, Boston, Miami, Buenos Aires and São Paulo opened earlier this year.

In addition and as recently announced, in 2023 the Company is also expected to open additional new intercontinental destinations with direct flights operated from Rome Fiumicino to San Francisco and Washington in the United States, to Rio de Janeiro in South America and, with the entry in the fleet of the new A321Neo aircraft, to destinations in the Middle East, such as Riyadh, Jeddah and Kuwait City.

□



# Get 'Ready to Fly'

## with New Industry Standards

By: Nitu

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has developed industry standards which will bring the aim of having travellers arrive at airports ready-to-fly one step closer to reality. The newly released Recommended Practice on Digitalisation of Admissibility will enable travellers to digitally prove admissibility to an international destination, avoiding a stop at the check-in desk or boarding gate for document checks. Under the One ID initiative airlines are working with IATA to digitalise the passenger experience at airports with contactless biometric-enabled processes

Programs are already in use in various airports enabling travellers to move through airport processes such as



boarding without producing paper documentation because their boarding pass is linked to a biometric identifier. But in many cases, travellers would still have to prove their admissibility at a check-in desk or boarding gate with physical checks of paper documentation (passports, visas and health credentials for example). The Digitalisation of Admissibility standard will advance the realisation of One ID with a mechanism for passengers to digitally obtain all necessary pre-travel authorisations directly



from governments before their trip. By sharing the “OK to Fly” status with their airline, travellers can avoid all on-airport document checks.

“Passengers want technology to make travel simpler. By enabling passengers to prove their admissibility to their airline before they get to the airport, we are taking a major step forward. The recent IATA Global Passenger survey found that 83% of travellers are willing to share immigration information for expedited processing. That is why we are confident this will be a popular option for travellers when it is implemented. And there is a good incentive for airlines and governments as well with





improved data quality, streamlined resourcing requirements and identification of admissibility issues before passengers get to the airport,” said Mr Nick Careen, IATA’s Senior Vice President for Operations, Safety and Security.

**What travellers will be able to do in future:**

- 1. Create a verified digital identity using the airline app on their smartphone
- 2. Using their digital identity, they can send proof of all required documentation to destination authorities in advance of travel



- 3. Receive a digital ‘approval of admissibility’ in their digital identity/passport app
- 4. Share the verified credential (not all their data) with their airline
- 5. Receive confirmation from their airline that all is in order and go to the airport

**Data Security**

The new standards have been developed to protect passengers’ data and ensure that travel remains accessible to all. Passengers remain in control of their data and only credentials (verified approvals, not the data behind them) are shared peer-to-peer (with no intermediating party). This is interoperable with the International Civil Aviation Organisation’s (ICAO) standards, including those for the Digital Travel Credential. Manual processing options will be retained so that travellers will have the ability to opt-out of digital admissibility processing.



“Travellers can be confident that this process will be both convenient and secure. A key point is that information is shared on a need-to-know basis. While a government may request detailed personal information to issue a visa, the only information that will be shared with the airline is that the traveller has a visa and under which conditions. And by keeping the passenger in control of their own data, no large databases are being built that need protecting. By design we are building simplicity, security and convenience,” said Louise Cole, IATA’s Head of Customer Experience and Facilitation.

**Timatic**

IATA’s Timatic offering is helping deliver the One ID vision with trusted entry requirement information for airlines and travellers. Integrating Timatic into the apps providing entry requirements registry model brings with it an established process for the global collection, verification, updating and distribution of this information.





# Cathay Pharma

## A Solution for Post-Pandemic World

By: Rohit Ashok

Cathay Pacific is the home airline of Hong Kong, offering scheduled passenger and cargo services to destinations in Asia, North America, Australia, Europe and Africa. Cathay Pacific is one of the world's biggest international air cargo carriers, operating a dedicated freighter fleet to 45 destinations. The airline's cargo division, Cathay Pacific Cargo, operates a fleet of 14 Boeing 747-8F freighters and six 747-400ERFs (Extended Range Freighter). The Cathay Pacific Group also includes Air Hong Kong, an express all-cargo carrier offering scheduled and charter services in Asia. Cathay Pacific is a member of the Swire Group and is listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. Cathay Pacific is committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, including targeting 10% sustainable aviation fuel use for its flights by 2030. Recently, Cathay Pacific Cargo has been consolidating and refreshing its comprehensive solution for pharmaceutical customers under a new name, Cathay Pharma and making it easier to identify all of the possible options for pharma shipments in a more streamlined

way. The refresh follows several busy years in which Cathay Pacific Cargo has brought its innovation and expertise to meet the evolving needs of the pharmaceutical and biotech industries. This has resulted in advances including Ultra Track, the Vaccine Solution and a revamped Priority solution.



Mr Tom Owen, Director, Cargo, said, “With these developments, we felt this was the ideal time to refresh our specialist shipment solution for our pharmaceutical customers. We understand all too well the potential costs in lives and dollars if pharmaceutical shipments don't arrive in perfect condition and want to ensure that we continuously improve and adapt to industry trends and developments as they happen.”

### Greater choice and a market-leading offering

Cathay Pharma is subdivided under two simplified headings – Active and Passive. The Active solution uses ‘active’ containers with thermostatic mechanisms, while

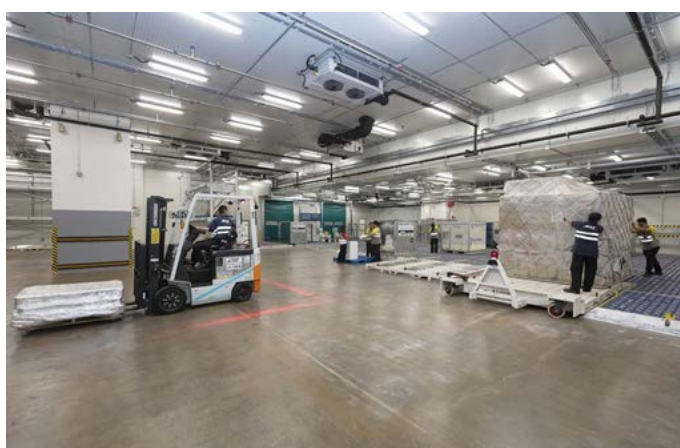






Passive uses passive coolants and insulation to maintain temperature. Bookings made under both Active and Passive include expedient ground handling and priority tarmac transfers, to limit the risk of temperature excursions while shipments are exposed to ambient outdoor temperatures.

Cathay Pharma offers four transportation temperature ranges to suit the most common types of pharma shipments, including ERT – extended room temperature: +2°C to +25°C – which is newly available in response to industry demand from customers. Cathay Pacific Cargo offers containers from seven supplier partners able to achieve specific temperatures



in an operating range from as low as -80°C to +40°C. This has created the widest choice in Asia for pharma customers.

**The signature track-and-trace service and en-route mitigation – Ultra Track and the Operations Control Centre (OCC)**

Customers making a Cathay Pharma booking can follow their shipment’s progress and condition with visibility and 24/7 proactive mitigation from the OCC offered by the Ultra Track service using the Bluetooth data loggers, with the option of data integration via Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) conforming to IATA’s ONE Record standards.

**Expert facilities and people, and industry accreditation for greater reassurance**

Every aspect of the shipment journey at the Hong Kong hub has been CEIV Pharma-certified across the airport community since 2017. The Cathay Pacific Cargo Terminal has recently opened Hong Kong International Airport’s largest dedicated pharmaceutical-handling centre, doubled the terminal’s temperature-controlled storage and further



enhanced its pharmaceutical capability. The facility includes truck docks with inflatable insulation to maintain ambient temperatures during loading, moveable power points to recharge containers and monitoring systems which enable real-time temperature and humidity management.

Across the network, Cathay Pacific Cargo has more than 70 qualified pharma centres. Only trained and qualified staff are allowed to handle Cathay Pharma shipments as an extra assurance for shipments.

“With our team of expert handlers and our technologically advanced offering, we are confident that Cathay Pharma is a comprehensive and best-in-class range of specialised and professional air cargo services for temperature-sensitive shipments including life-science deliveries,” Mr Owen added. “It is designed to meet exacting customer needs and ensure that high-value and life-saving pharmaceutical shipments arrive in perfect condition.”

# SATS to acquire WFS

## to become the largest global air cargo handler

By: Nitu

**S**ATS Ltd. (SATS) announced a proposed acquisition of Worldwide Flight Services (WFS), the world's largest air cargo handling firm to create a global leader in the aviation services sector. The strategic acquisition will advance SATS' twin growth engine strategy, expanding its network and capabilities in Asia and globally, while continuing to strengthen its Singapore core. SATS will acquire WFS from an affiliate of investment firm Cerberus Capital Management, L.P. (Cerberus) for a cash consideration of EUR 1.187 billion.

WFS generated a revenue of EUR 1.722 billion and EBITDA of EUR 232 million based on unaudited financials for the 12 months ended 31 March 2022. With an enterprise value of EUR 2.250 billion, the transaction implies an EV/EBITDA multiple of 9.7x. On a pro forma basis as of 31 March 2022, it would be immediately financially accretive,

raising earnings per share by 78% from 1.8 Singapore cents as reported in FY2022 to 3.2 cents on a pro forma basis and increasing FY2022 pro forma revenue by more than 200%. Through initiatives that include cross-selling, network expansion and deeper eCommerce cargo partnerships, the combined entity is expected to capture meaningful run-rate EBITDA (Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortisation) synergies in excess of SGD 100 million.

Mr Kerry Mok, President and Chief Executive Officer of SATS, said, "This is a transformational opportunity for SATS and our proposed acquisition of WFS will create a global leader that can become the go-to provider of mission-critical aviation services. From our hub in Singapore and in our newly combined markets, SATS and WFS will be at the heart of global trade flows, operating in the world's busiest airports and supporting the biggest companies. Our





customers are telling us that they want seamless support across regions, in a way that simplifies and strengthens their own operations. Combining with WFS will let us meet those needs through new cargo handling solutions and capabilities, enhanced service quality, greater digitalisation and better visibility and traceability across the whole supply chain. It is a hugely powerful combination for growth, as well as delivering greater business resilience.”

**A Global Leader**

The acquisition will enable SATS to better serve air cargo customers in strategic hubs in Asia, Europe and the US, as well as in complementary new growth markets including Latin America and Africa. The combined network covers trade routes responsible for more than 50% of global air cargo volume. WFS operates in five of the top 10 cargo airports in North America and EMEA, including Los Angeles, Chicago, Miami, Frankfurt and Paris. SATS is already present in four of the top 10 cargo airports in Asia, including Hong Kong, Taipei, Singapore and Beijing. Led by SATS, the combined group will have a greater ability to capitalise on growth across the cargo supply chain and benefit from stronger demand for eCommerce and specialised cargo handling for items such as pharmaceuticals and perishables. It will also add scale to SATS’ sustainability and ESG efforts, including decarbonisation and societal outreach as part of its purpose to feed and connect communities.

WFS will become a wholly owned subsidiary of SATS after the proposed acquisition and will continue to be led by Mr Craig Smyth, CEO alongside other key members

of the senior WFS management team. “WFS has become the leading global air cargo logistics provider thanks to our commitment to customers, our experienced team and our partners at Cerberus,” said Mr Craig Smyth, WFS CEO.



“As we look to our next stage of growth, this combination will deliver exciting benefits for our customers and our people. We have great respect for SATS and share similar values and look forward to working with their senior team in building the pre-eminent aviation services platform. By bringing together our complementary strengths, we will be able to build on our trusted relationships around the world.”

Ms Euleen Goh, Chairman of SATS, said, “This acquisition has been carefully selected to fit our strategy of significant scale and value-added growth. The board is pleased to welcome Mr Craig Smyth and his management team to augment the SATS leadership team led by Mr Kerry as Group President



and CEO, to build a world-leading cargo handling business. We look to bring the newly added capabilities to strengthen our partnership with our customers and support the drive for competitive standing of Singapore’s Changi Airport Hub.”





# Embraer

## New Sustainable Aircraft Concepts Revealed

By: Rohit Ashok

**E**mbraer is a global aerospace company headquartered in Brazil. It manufactures aircraft for Commercial and Executive Aviation, Defence & Security and Agricultural customers. The company also provides after-sales services & support through a worldwide network of wholly owned entities and authorized agents. Since it was founded in 1969, Embraer has delivered more than 8,000 aircraft. On average, about every 10 seconds an aircraft manufactured by Embraer takes off somewhere in the world. The aircraft transports over 145 million passengers per year. Embraer is the leading manufacturer of commercial jets with up to 150 seats and is the main exporter of high-value-added goods in Brazil. The company maintains industrial units, offices and service and parts distribution centres across the Americas, Africa, Asia and Europe.

Embraer delivered 10 commercial jets and 23 executive jets (15 light



/8 mid/super-midsize jets) in 3Q22, bringing YTD (year to date) deliveries to 27 commercial jets and 52 executive jets (33 light /19 mid/super-midsize jets). Although deliveries have been back-ended to 4Q22 due to supply chain challenges in 2022, they are close to the historical average for the quarter.

Embraer recently revealed new aircraft concepts as part of the company's progress report on Energia - Embraer's initiative to get the aviation industry to net zero by 2050.

A year on from Embraer's Sustainability in Action event, which detailed the study of four new aircraft concepts powered by new technologies and renewable energies, the company has been focusing on two 19-30-seater designs for hybrid electric and hydrogen-electric propulsion. Guided by the company's 50-year technical expertise, external inputs from airlines and joint studies with engine OEMs, these two approaches to net zero offer a technically realistic and economically feasible pathway to net zero.

Energia Hybrid (E19-HE and E30-HE) - revealed as a nine-seater in 2021, Embraer is exploring a 19 and a 30-seater variant:

- parallel hybrid-electric propulsion
- up to 90% CO2 emissions reduction when using SAF
- 19 and 30-seat variants
- rear-mounted engines
- technology readiness - early 2030's

Energia H2 Fuel Cell (E19-H2FC and E30-H2FC) - revealed as a 19-seater in 2021, Embraer is exploring a 30-seater variant:



- hydrogen-electric propulsion
- zero CO2 emissions
- 19 and 30-seat variants
- rear-mounted electric engines
- technology readiness – 2035

While still in the evaluation phase, the architectures and technologies are being assessed for technical and commercial viability. The Energia Advisory Group has also been launched to harness inputs and collaboration from partner airlines.

Mr Arjan Meijer, President and CEO, Embraer Commercial Aviation, said, “I believe we have set bold but realistic goals for these concepts to come to market. Since we announced our Energia concepts last year, we have been busy evaluating different architectures and propulsion systems. These efforts have resulted in the updates of our concepts that we are sharing with you today. A number of airlines are a part of our Energia Advisory Group. The experience and knowledge they bring to the study will be key to accelerating to the



next phases.”

“As new propulsion technologies will be first applied on smaller aircraft, Embraer is in a unique position. The 19 and 30-seaters are sensible starting points for focused studies since they are likely to present earlier technical and economical readiness,” said Mr Luis Carlos Affonso, Sr. VP of Engineering, Technology and Corporate Strategy, Embraer.



“While the challenges of net-zero are significant, in less than 25 years our commercial aircraft have already reduced fuel burn and CO2 emissions by almost 50% on a seat/mile basis, using only conventional fuels and propulsion – I’m convinced net-zero is a goal we can reach.”

### Energia

The presentations from Embraer’s Chief Engineer and Commercial Aviation CEO are available online. It features a 360° tour of two of the concepts Embraer focusing on - Energia H2 Fuel Cell and Energia Hybrid Electric. □



# The Gateway Resort Damdama Lake Gurgaon

## A Perfect Weekend Retreat of Luxury and Serenity

By: Aanchal Gupta

**N**estled in the lap of the Aravali hills, The Gateway Resort Damdama Lake Gurgaon is spread across 20 acres of lush, manicured gardens near Damdama Lake. The 78 nature-inspired rooms feature warm and contemporary decor with a patio and views of the garden. A variety of fun activities on-site include tennis, golf, rappelling, archery, paintball and ATV. The resort's trendy restaurants serve oriental delights, snacks and multi-cuisines. Whether you are looking for a room-only rate or intending to explore dining options or looking to discover unique experiences, The Gateway Resort Damdama Lake, Gurgaon provides exciting offers that meet your travel requirements.

### ROOMS

#### Superior Resort Room Courtyard View

The comfort of urban luxury is surrounded by the green foliage in spacious Superior Rooms. Escape from the hustle and bustle of the city and breathe in the fresh natural air while enjoying the simplicity of the countryside from the sit-out or unwind and relax your body, mind



and soul with our cosy beds, 40-inch LED televisions and walk-in showers.

#### Superior Resort Room Garden View

These rooms located on the first floor, bathe in the natural light streaming in. Soak in the sun with family and take in the stellar views of the greens from the balcony and get pampered with unmatched traditional hospitality.



#### Deluxe Resort Room

Deluxe Rooms boast modern designs blended with traditional elements - the perfect getaway to embrace both the charm of the rustic outdoors and the luxury of well-furnished indoors while enjoying the gracious hospitality.

#### Gateway Suite

The spacious Gateway Suites give you a chance to unwind with your family and immerse yourself in the royal luxury inside while taking in the views of lush



gardens outside. Ideal for weekend getaways or a relaxed slow-paced leisure trip, these suites with a spacious living room, a luxurious bathtub and a 40" LED Television are tastefully designed to make you feel close to nature while being pampered in luxury.

**DINING**

The Gateway Resort Damdama Lake Gurgaon serves some of the choicest traditional and international cuisines.



**Buzz**

This All Day Diner has it all. Delight in local North Indian specialties and let the buzz get to you. The chefs dazzle the guests with a spread of local dishes with an innovative combination of spices. For those looking for a healthy bite, it also offers an Active Foods menu. Buzz is inspired by a wooded canopy and can comfortably seat 60 guests.

**Sian**

This oriental restaurant is designed using the yin and yang concept in the décor. Sian can seat 38 guests in style.



**Swirl**

Shaped like a snail's shell is Swirl, an eclectic bar space that's stylish and sleek. The most happening bar by the Damdama Lake awaits your presence with an assortment of spirits including classic cocktails and a choice of wines.

**BANQUET**

There are 5 banqueting spaces (3 indoor & 2 outdoor) that can comfortably accommodate up to 600 guests.

**Boardroom**

Equipped with the latest technology, this boardroom provides the ideal setting for discussing new business ideas



and high-powered meetings. Maximum Capacity – 17

**Poolside Lawn**

Situated in the middle of the resort overlooking rooms and a swimming pool, this place is ideal to throw a cocktail party, a bachelor's bash or a corporate dinner. Maximum Capacity – 350





### Bargad Hall

This is the ballroom of the resort, pillarless with state-of-the-art infrastructure & facilities. The ballroom has a separate pre-function area. This hall can be divided into three break-out venues. Maximum Capacity – 500

### Bargad Lawns

Right adjacent to the Bargad Hall, this venue is commonly used for wedding reception parties, corporate product



launches, Family Days and team-building activities. Maximum Capacity – 600.

## RECREATION

### Spa

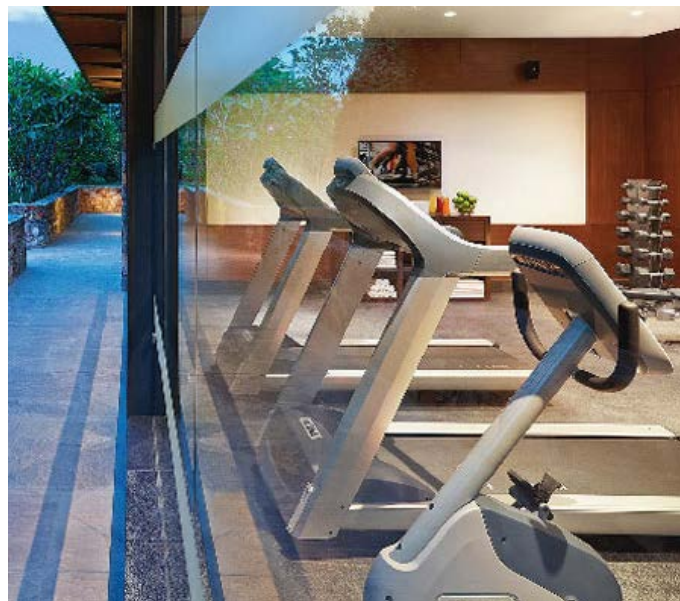
The Spa at The Gateway Resort Damdama Lake offers a bouquet of wellness treatments that recharge your spirits and revitalise your body. Each treatment is specially designed to meet your requirements. All the ingredients used are 100% natural and sourced extensively from Indian herbs, salt and pure essential oils. From relaxing massages to grooming treatments, the Spa offers a wide selection of therapies for



you to choose from. Their therapeutic deep tissue treatment is a favourite amongst travellers as it gives relief to aching muscles.

### Fitness Centre

With high-end equipment and plenty of space, their fitness centre can be used with or without personal trainers.



### Pool & Activities

The outdoor pool in the resort is perfect for a refreshing dip to unwind.

There is a kids' playing area in the resort. Guests can indulge



themselves in adventure sports facilities in the resort and they can also enjoy golf on the mini-putting greens.

Just a few miles from the hustle-bustle of Gurgaon, this one-of-its-kind resort is an oasis of peace and serenity. Soak in the joys of nature at its best while enjoying world-class hospitality only at The Gateway Resort Damdama Lake, Gurgaon. □



# In talks with Desislav Gospodinov

Group Director, Lily Beach Resort Maldives

By: Rohit Ashok

Nestled beautifully on the stunning Huvahendhoo Island, Lily Beach Resort is a perfect escape from the hustle and bustle of city life. Guests can experience a dream holiday amidst gorgeous white sandy beaches, lush tropical landscapes and turquoise blue waters of the Indian Ocean.



Here's an exclusive interview with Mr Desislav Gospodinov - Group Director of Sales & Marketing of Lily Beach Resort Maldives where he shares more details about the resort.

Mr Desislav was the Area Sales Director for Centara Hotels & Resorts before he joined Lily Beach Resort Maldives. He has more than 10 years of sales management experience and an international record to match it, spanning across Europe and Asia.

**What is unique about your hotel's location?**

Lily Beach Resort & Spa is located in a prime location just 25 minutes away from Velana International Airport via Seaplane. It is also located at an atoll that is famous for regular Whale Sharks and Manta Ray sightings.

**What sort of strategies do you implement for the development of Lily Beach Resort & Spa?**

Though we have always been a leading luxury all-inclusive resort in the Maldives, we do not take that title lightly. We have recently won the prestigious accolade of leading all-inclusive resort in the Maldives by World Travel Awards 2022. To hold on to this title we make sure our service is always meticulous and the vibe of the resort is always made to be friendly so that guests keep coming back, time and again. We also make sure to switch things up every year with special events and activities.

**What are some amazing experiences that your concierge can arrange for your guests?**

Our guest relations team with amazing and tirelessly

working guest relations officers from around the world are maestros in creating great experiences for the guests. Whether it be a getaway at a sandbank for romantic couples or a fishing adventure in the sunset for families, they have many amazing experiences on their sleeves.

**What makes your hotel a destination within itself?**

It's a unique experience we call Play & Relax at Lily Beach, one side of the resort where the sports facilities and



Communal Pool Bar Vibes are located is filled with activities to be active and fun while the other side has the water villas, the adults-only Infinity Pool at AQVA Bar and Spa is more about relaxation and zen. By doing so on our fun-sized island, it allows for families and couples to have their specific experiences without hindering the overall experience for each other.

**Is F&B (food and beverage) a big revenue earner for Lily Beach Resort – Maldives?**



Being an exclusively all-inclusive resort, food & beverages is one key pillar of the resort. We aim to make sure all our guests from around the world are kept well-fed and happy with delicious meals and snacks throughout the day. Especially with our Theme Night Dinners at Lily Maa - our scrumptious Buffet Restaurant – we make sure the food is super tasty and not boring.

**What are some of the trends you see impacting the hospitality industry?**

Wellness is an important factor now coming to the forefront due to the pandemic. There have always been Wellness resorts even in the Maldives but now all resorts do need to have some level of wellness beyond just a spa and yoga instructor. It depends on each resort, but for us, we are exploring many



ways to add some wellness activities to the resort. The key wellness feature is that Lily Beach has been celebrating Global Wellness Day annually since 2021 by having some unique wellness-related activities during that month and on the day itself, celebrating wellness as a whole.

**Looking forwards, what is your sustainability roadmap for the next few years?**

Sustainability is very important, especially in such a destination as the Maldives. As stewards of the island and its surroundings for several years, the Lily Beach team makes sure we take care of it well – from flora to fauna on land and underwater. One of the main initiatives we have put into play is limiting, as much as possible, the use of single-use plastic at the resort. We have managed to do this by eliminating the use of plastic straws instead opting for alternatives like paper and over time removing all plastic bottles from guest-facing and staff-facing areas and replacing them with glass bottles with our in-house desalinated water - Lily Water. □



# In talks with **Chef Himanshu** Corporate Chef, Vinpa

By: Radhika

**V**inpa is a Food & Beverage consulting company owned by Mr Vineet Tushir & Chef Pawan Bisht. Entire operations under Vinpa are handled by Mr Hitesh Saroha, CEO of the company and Chef Himanshu Dhondiyal, Corporate Chef of the company. Current outlets under Vinpa are Verandah (Delhi), Pick a pav (Delhi/NCR), Mahogany room (Nepal), Aabus bar and restaurant (Goa), Bache (Gurgaon), Verandah Culinary arthouse (Delhi). The company is growing at a fast pace on the vision to expand it to different states of India. A few upcoming and ongoing projects are in Goa, Delhi and Chandigarh.

One of the co-owners Chef Pawan is known as the Dark Horse of the Indian culinary industry. Chef Pawan joined IHM Mumbai straight out of school and trained in Kitchen Operations for three years. Post this he was selected by Olive Bar and Kitchens' very selective Chef Training program in New Delhi where he gained experience at Olive at the Qutab and Olive Beach. Chef Pawan also assisted with the opening of Soda Bottle Openerwala and Olive bistro and garnered valuable pre-opening experience. For this, he extensively travelled through Mumbai and explored all the different cuisines in Mumbai - Parsi, Irani, Mohd Ali Road, Colaba cuisine.

To know more about the company Vinpa, we interviewed Chef Himanshu who is the Corporate Chef of Vinpa. Chef Himanshu has an experience of 12 years in the industry now with some big names in his portfolio. He started his career with Bread talk (Singapore bakery chain) and then went to work with brands like Jaypee group of Hotels, Smoke House Room, Niche and Carnival Cruise Lines.

### How do you curate the menu of your outlets?

We make sure to change the menu seasonally, i.e., during summers and then during winters, keeping in mind the sharp change in seasonal flavours as well as the ingredients. Every time I work on changing the menu, I keenly stick to the factor of involving dishes favouring the taste preferences





of customers coming from different age groups so that they enjoy their meals to the fullest.

**Which are your most-selling dishes?**

Regional Indian dishes like Butter Chicken, Keema Pav, Soya Boti Kebab, etc. are highly chosen by customers. Other than these, our customers also enjoy Italian delicacies from our menu like our hand-rolled thin-crust variety of pizzas, pasta and even risotto.

**Which is your favourite dish?**

I personally really like the recently added avocado toast, risotto, hand rolled thin crust pizza, barley & avocado salad and bao's & tacos.

**Your favourite ingredients that you love to cook with?**

Star anise and garlic are two ingredients that I like experimenting with in the kitchen.

**Any expansion plan for Vinpa?**

Absolutely yes, we are carefully devising and planning



a strategy to make Vinpa reach new heights in the Indian hospitality sector, in the next two years hopefully.

**What do you think is the most overhyped food trend?**

According to me, the trend where food items are made rainbow-coloured and charcoal is added to the food really doesn't hit me much.

**Is there a chef you admire the most? Who and why?**

Chef Pawan Bisht is someone I admire the most in this profession. He has been my helping hand and mentor since



day one and I am forever grateful to him for supporting me in my career. Moreover, he is an expert in his line of work and takes our profession up the notch by inspiring many chefs under training.

**What is your favourite thing about being a chef?**

The thing that I like the most about my profession is how my experiments and amalgamations with different ingredients bring a smile to people's faces once they try my food. That warm expression of delight that I notice when the food is served to my customers is what makes my day at work worthwhile. □



# Embrace the season with family at these California Hotels

By: Nitu

California is one of the top vacation destinations in the United States, both for Americans and international travellers. Vibrant cities, beaches, amusement parks and natural wonders like nowhere else on Earth make California an intriguing land of possibilities for travel. The gateway cities of San Francisco and Los Angeles are home to some of the state's most well-known sites, from the Golden Gate Bridge to Hollywood and Disneyland. This is also where many of the top cultural attractions can be found.

This year, celebrate the season with a new family tradition: taking a vacation that makes the holidays feel like a vacation again. That means a holiday—whether it's Christmas, Hanukkah or New Year's Eve — at a hotel where the cooking, light-hanging or sometimes even the package-wrapping are done for you. Have enough time to build a gingerbread house, take the kids to meet Santa and then step outside to ski—or, depending on your destination, even stroll on the beach.

## Holidays at Montage, Healdsburg

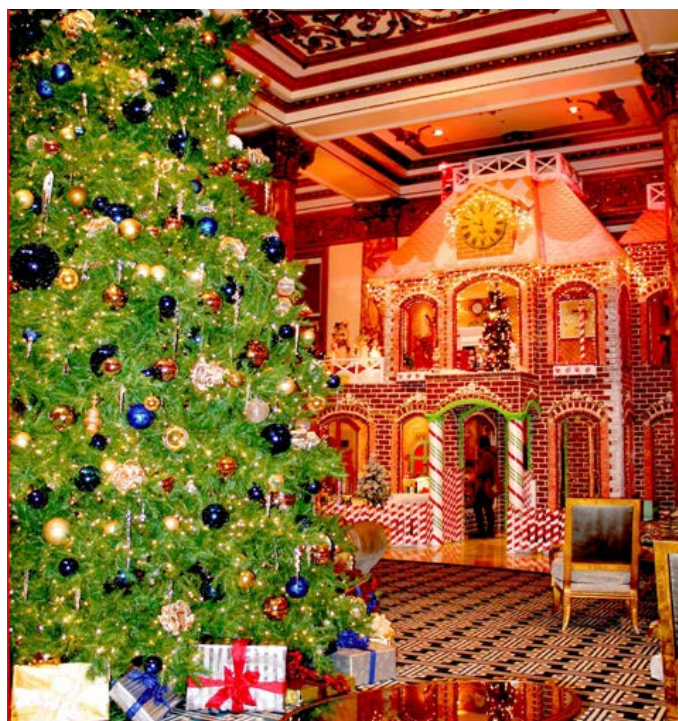
Set among 258 acres of rolling vineyards and oak tree groves, Montage Healdsburg offers guests unprecedented access to the best of Sonoma County. Featuring an 11,500-square-



foot spa, a zero-edge resort pool and three signature dining options inspired by the region's culinary heritage, Montage Healdsburg provides seamless access to Northern California's renowned wineries and outdoor experiences. Nosh on holiday cookies, let the kids build gingerbread houses while grownups sample cheese platters or sip mulled wine at Montage resort in Sonoma County and celebrate a wide range of activities from Thanksgiving through New Year's.

## Fairmont's Gingerbread Mansion, San Francisco

During the holiday season, Fairmont San Francisco embraces



Victorian architecture in an edible form by creating a two-story Victorian gingerbread house: 22 feet high and 23 feet wide, made with roughly 7,000 house-made gingerbread bricks covered with royal icing and candy. To get an up-close look, book a private dinner inside the house.



### Disneyland Resort Hotels, Anaheim

Escape reality at a hotel that defines grandeur at every turn—from premium accommodations and Craftsman-style



elegance to Disney’s impeccable service and renowned attention to detail. Hotel Guests can enjoy impressive amenities and rich dining experiences as well as utilise the convenient proximity to Disney California Adventure Park. The theme parks at Disneyland Resort are festooned with lights, baubles and a wealth of holiday goodies. Check out the ocean-themed Christmas tree at the Paradise Pier, the enormous Arts-and-Crafts-style gingerbread house at the Grand Californian and the kitschy decor and drinks at Trader Sam’s Enchanted Tiki Bar inside the Disneyland Hotel.

### The Holidays at La Quinta Resort, Greater Palm Springs

Every year, the Spanish-style La Quinta Resort & Club



morphs into a cactus-dotted version of Bedford Falls, the fictional town where Jimmy Stewart’s George Bailey has

his holiday awakening. Carolers often stroll the grounds and revellers can roast chestnuts at fire pits and listen for the occasional bell ringing.

### Teddy Bear Tea at Ritz Carlton, San Francisco

Bring your tea party fans plus their stuffed-bear friends to



this grand tradition at the Ritz-Carlton San Francisco in Nob Hill. Everyone can enjoy the afternoon show starring an elf and his giant teddy bear sidekick, then take a picture with the bear afterwards.

### Fairmont Grand Del Mar, San Diego

The resort is comprised of 249 elegantly appointed guestrooms and suites, featuring spacious marble bathrooms



with deep soaking tubs, expansive balconies and terraces and spectacular views of the resort gardens, The Grand Golf Club or Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. This luxury resort in San Diego’s North County pulls out all the stops for the season. Start with two options for a sumptuous Thanksgiving feast or build a holiday trip out of the outdoor ice rink, afternoon teas and on-site Nutcracker performances. □



# Radisson Hotel

## Group Launches New Midscale Brand Park Inn & Suites in India

**By: Radhika**

**R**adisson Hotel Group has announced that it is embarking on an exciting new era of hospitality in India, that drives the accelerated growth of its portfolio in the country through the launch of its new midscale brand, Park Inn & Suites by Radisson.

The Group is looking to double its Indian footprint with nearly 150 hotels and resorts to be added by 2025. To facilitate this ambition, the Group has entered a strategic alliance with Ruptub Solutions Private Limited which operates a domestic chain of 1,000+ properties in 120+ cities across India under the brand ‘Treebo’. Launched in 2015, the company is backed by marquee investors like Matrix Partners India, Elevation Capital and Ward Ferry Management, among others.

Tailor-made for the Indian market and adding to the diversity of the Group’s brand offering in the country, Park Inn & Suites by Radisson will deliver a warm and heartfelt hospitality experience in a modern yet familiar home-like setting. The brand’s essence is based on ‘Inviting Modern Comfort’ ensuring that guests feel welcome, valued and looked after. With an average size of 50 to 70 keys, these hotels will be equipped with inviting social spaces, a welcome corner, a fitness centre, services like free Wi-Fi and signature breakfast options for delivering a holistic experience to guests.

The partnership will identify and convert quick-to-market opportunities targeting the development of a 150-hotel-strong network of Park Inn & Suites by Radisson properties over the next decade. Both entities will channel their respective strengths across asset management, technology, business development and access to global distribution and sales systems to drive value-driven experiences for guests and owners alike. The brand will be powered by the combined technological strength of Radisson Hotel Group’s EMMA

CRS and Ruptub Solutions’ Hotel Superhero PMS, which will help accelerate the launch of properties under the brand.

Backed by large-scale expansion, Park Inn & Suites by Radisson is customised to fuel Radisson Hotel Group’s next phase of growth in tier 2 to 5 markets with a clear focus on value maximisation for its stakeholders. The development of these locations and strategic centres remains core to its growth strategy in India. The Group continues to command a leading presence in the Indian market and is one of the country’s largest international hotel operators with over 150 hotels in operation and development across 60+



locations. It continues to be the largest hotel operator in tier-1 markets like Delhi NCR and at the same time, more than 50% of its portfolio is in tier-2 and 3 markets where it has benefitted by being the first mover. It expects nearly 50% of business conversions in the future to be driven by these markets and has materialised this vision by opening hotels under multiple brands in locations like Katra, Surat, Nashik, Bhopal and Jammu.

Looking ahead, the Group intends to catalyse the Park Inn & Suites by Radisson brand by way of the master

franchise, collaboration and brand development agreements with high-quality hotel development partners.

Mr Ramzy Fenianos, Chief Development Officer, Asia Pacific, said, "India is one of Radisson Hotel Group's largest strategic markets. The launch of Park Inn & Suites by the Radisson brand in the country is a strong continuation of our Asia Pacific growth strategy. The brand will offer



midscale hotels in India an opportunity to enhance their visibility, create customer confidence and access a wider audience through our multiple distribution channels and a global sales structure. We are fully committed to bringing quality experiences to our domestic and international guests in all parts of the country, from major metros to upcoming destinations across tier-2 to 5 cities."

Mr Zubin Saxena, Managing Director and Vice President Operations, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group, said, "We are excited to announce the launch of Park Inn & Suites by Radisson in India. With over two decades of operations in India, the launch of this brand in the market marks new opportunities for the Group as we continue to expand and strengthen our footprint across the country. We have



dedicated all our efforts toward developing an indigenous brand architecture that will unlock economies of scale for the Group. We are delighted to have Ruptub Solutions as our trusted partner. This partnership is a timely and critical step toward our brand-building journey and meeting the growing demand of the discerning Indian traveller for high-quality accommodation."

Mr Sidharth Gupta, Founder and Director of Ruptub Solutions Pvt Ltd said, "Partnering with Radisson Hotel Group is a truly enriching experience for us as it continues to be among the strongest hospitality players globally. With this partnership, we collectively aim to leverage the Group's hospitality expertise combined with our technology offerings and wide presence in the market, especially in tier 2 to 5 destinations, to chalk a strong and sustainable path for the brand to grow. During the past few months, while crafting this partnership, we have resonated with the Group's 'Yes, I can!' mindset and see deep synergies between the two entities. The coming years will prove to be the game-changer for India's hospitality industry as we collaborate to launch hotels under the Park Inn & Suites by Radisson brand across the country." □



# Hyatt

## To Expand Independent Collection Brands in Key Global Destinations

By: Nitu

Hyatt Hotels Corporation recently announced the continued global growth of its Independent Collection brands, including recent openings and a strong development pipeline through 2025 across The Unbound Collection by Hyatt, Destination by Hyatt and JdV by Hyatt brands. This collection of brands encompasses diverse properties, each true to its destination and offers the modern traveller enriching luxury and lifestyle experiences in new and exciting ways.

“Each brand in the Independent Collection offers distinct properties that are all unique and feature one-of-a-kind experience for every occasion with more than 100 properties worldwide across all three brands – from on-site beekeeping and aerial yoga at Rancho Pescadero, part of The Unbound Collection by Hyatt brand, to embracing local history in Kelso, United Kingdom at Schloss Roxburghe Golf Hotel, part of the Destination by Hyatt brand,” said Ms Katie Johnson, global brand leader, Independent Collection, Hyatt. “We are excited to continue adding new luxury and lifestyle hotels on an even greater scale globally with openings in new key leisure markets like Mexico”

“Through our intentional long-term growth strategy and by working closely

with owners, Hyatt boasts five years of industry-leading net rooms growth driven by our unique position against the competition,” said Mr Jim Chu, Chief Growth Officer of Hyatt. “Hyatt is able to better care for luxury and leisure travellers and our award-winning loyalty program, World of Hyatt, has grown 20% in the past 12 months alone,

with owners, Hyatt boasts five years of industry-leading net rooms growth driven by our unique position against the competition,” said Mr Jim Chu, Chief Growth Officer of Hyatt. “Hyatt is able to better care for luxury and leisure travellers and our award-winning loyalty program, World of Hyatt, has grown 20% in the past 12 months alone,



delivering record levels of high-quality revenue to our owners.”

Create One-of-a-Kind Stories at The Unbound Collection by Hyatt

The Unbound Collection by Hyatt brand is more than a compilation of one-of-a-kind hotels, each of the 35 properties is a thoughtful curation of stories worth collecting. Whether couples

delivering record levels of high-quality revenue to our owners.”

Create One-of-a-Kind Stories at The Unbound Collection by Hyatt

The Unbound Collection by Hyatt brand is more than a compilation of one-of-a-kind hotels, each of the 35 properties is a thoughtful curation of stories worth collecting. Whether couples

are craving a romantic getaway, well-travelled connoisseurs are looking to add another trip to their collection or friends are seeking to craft unforgettable memories, they will find it in destinations that matter most to them.

Planned 2023 and Beyond Openings:

- NUMU (San Miguel de Allende, Mexico): Guests can discover the beauty, charm and history of San Miguel de Allende at this 44-room unique boutique hotel, slated to open in early 2023. With three onsite dining options and



the new room key in the Apple Wallet feature, NUMU will mark the first Hyatt property in San Miguel de Allende.

- Grand Hansa Hotel (Helsinki, Finland): Slated to open in summer 2023, the Grand Hansa Hotel will join The Unbound Collection by Hyatt, as the first Hyatt-branded hotel in Finland. Positioned in the very heart of Helsinki on Mannerheimintie, the hotel will be a fascinating fusion of heritage, modern elegance and luxury with 219 rooms and five suites, presenting guests with elevated luxury through contemporary finishes, keyless access and high-end amenities.



- Noor-Us-Sabah Palace (Bhopal, India): One of Bhopal's oldest and most sought-after hotels, Noor-Us-Sabah Palace will undergo extensive refurbishment and is slated to debut as a 60-room heritage hotel in 2025. Bhopal's history and



the Noor-Us-Sabah Palace's rich Nawabi heritage make it a perfect addition to The Unbound Collection by Hyatt's portfolio.

- Hotel in development (Crans-Montana, Switzerland): The luxurious 41-room boutique hotel is expected to join The Unbound Collection by Hyatt in December 2023 and will inspire unforgettable memories with its Swiss Chalet cuisine and front-row sporting experiences. The property is located in Crans Montana, one of the most prestigious and well-established year-round mountain destinations in the Swiss Alps and is also known for one of the most important golf tournaments on European soil.



- Hyatt also plans to add its second property as part of The Unbound Collection by Hyatt in Tokyo, Japan in 2023.

The Destination by Hyatt brand is a diverse collection of 55+ independent hotels, resorts and residences that are individual at heart yet connected by a commitment to embody the true spirit of each location. □



# Aahana

## The Corbett Wilderness - Where Luxury and Eco-Friendliness Go Together

By: Nitu

**R**euse. Reduce. Recycle. And Repeat. The mantra we all know and the one that the world needs right now. But are we committed in real life? Human beings, development, modernity, comfort, and convenience, when we bring these random words together, we test our planet Earth's ability to accommodate us all. With a growing thirst for development and modern existence, we create and seek avenues that address our comfort. And everything has to be convenient. In this process, oftentimes, we forget that ours is a fragile planet and everything is perishable unless we take care.

Aahana lives by this sentiment. Being mindful of the environment is not just one of the founding rules at



Aahana; it is a lifestyle choice. It is important to note that convenience and comfort are two driving forces that make us opt for things that are

easily sourced and utilised, often leading to the concept of 'Use and Throw'. It is just convenient for any establishment to adopt this process. This is where Aahana - The Corbett Wilderness stands out. In its zeal to live by its principles, a 5-Star property like Aahana utilises every resource possible to minimise its carbon footprint.

This is an experience one gets right from the resort entrance. A canopy of tall trees makes the winding path from the gate to the reception giving the visitor a sense of being in nature. There is an instant disconnect from the hustle and bustle of the town. It is the constant chirping of the birds





and the blowing of the cool breeze. A welcome bouquet made out of wildflowers, grass and leaves is your first hint that here at Aahana, everything is going to be au naturel.

Aahana does not have a well-manicured, photo-shoot look to it at a first glance. Neither does a forest. Thick and long grasses are just about everywhere on the property. These are not just any grasses that lacked the gardener's



attention, these are large tufts of lemongrass and citronella - a natural mosquito repellent. No wonder, despite the resort being in such close proximity to a dense forest, guests can enjoy outdoors as well as indoors without the nagging hum of mosquitoes. "We do not cut or mow grass & bushes so that insects may breed, in turn more birds will be attracted," says one of the many signboards at the resort premises. There are 173 bird species that will corroborate the theory. A large chunk of the 200 species of flora that dot the 13.5-acre resort ground is daily visited by many species of birds and butterflies, all indicating



that Aahana is an active part of a healthy ecosystem.

Aahana has Asia's biggest and most unique Sewage Treatment Plant, a brainchild of the founder Mr Kamal Tripathi. The Sewage Treatment Plant is a genius innovation that uses canna plants' root system to recycle 100 per cent wastewater from the resort facilities to provide clean recycled water for gardening purposes. All this is without the use of electricity and chemicals. That is one mighty example of being responsible and sustainable. The organic garden on the property gives fresh greens and other local vegetables and the many fruit trees that dot the premises help with all your fresh juice and fruit needs. Eco-friendliness is not just in what we see; it is also in what we eat and drink. You will find reusable glass bottles at every table at the restaurant, which immediately cuts down the use of plastic pet bottles. The dairy products at the resort come from the in-house gaushala. All this may not scream convenience for the management, but this is what makes Aahana stand out. With plastic use reduced to just 6 per cent, Aahana is a success story of sustainability. All this eco-friendliness does not come in the way of a luxurious stay at the resort. At Aahana, luxury and comfort are not compromised, they remain strong qualities. Being sustainable and eco-friendly is just Aahana thinking a bit outside the box.

However, in compliance with the Covid-19 safety precautions, all rooms do come with disposable water bottles and hand sanitisers and masks are made easily available for guests and staff. □



# Singapore

## Beckons You with New Experiences in Your Itinerary

By: Nitu

Singapore has always given travellers multiple reasons to visit, right from gleaming skyscrapers, lush landscapes, Instagrammable parks and boulevards filled with air-conditioned malls – the country has no dearth of attractions and experiences. In its endeavour to reimagine the tourism experience and give visitors something new to look forward to, the destination is now home to Avatar: The Experience at Gardens by the Bay and Bird Paradise at the Mandai Wildlife Reserve which will open in 2023.

Inspired by one of the highest-grossing films globally of all time, Avatar, “Avatar: The Experience” is an



immersive walkthrough showcase. Located at the Cloud Forest, Gardens by the Bay, the experience was opened to the public on October 28, 2022. Here visitors can interact with mystical creatures and flora and experience Pandora’s captivating culture through its bioluminescent environments. The remarkable interactives and startling material of Avatar: The Experience will give guests a chance to interact with a baby banshee handled by expert puppeteer docents providing unique photo opportunities for this event.

Set to open in the second quarter of 2023, Bird Paradise is a 17-hectare park that will be the first of the new wildlife parks located at Mandai Wildlife Reserve to open to the public. This will replace Jurong Bird Park, as announced



earlier. Bird Paradise will transport visitors into a colourful world that will be a home to 3,500 birds from over 400 avian species. Designed to encourage discovery at every turn, Bird Paradise will welcome visitors into immersive and naturalistic mixed-species habitats, where they will explore eight large walk-through aviaries which reflect different biomes of the world such as dense African rainforests, South American wetlands, Southeast Asian paddy fields, Australian dry eucalypt forests and more.



### Activities that one can do in the park are:

**Wildlife Experiences** - Meet some of the most beautiful birds Africa has to offer starlings - bold and unfazed by human company and the terrific turacos! Get an up-close encounter with the majestic kings of the skies. Hear from eggs-pert nannies on how endangered hatchlings are cared



for at the Breeding & Research Centre. All on the Bird's Eye Tour!

**Feed the Animals** - Catch the birds when they're most active – during feeding sessions! Listen to the keepers share stories and even get to feed the feather friends yourself.

**Keeper Talk** - Enjoy informative and entertaining live commentary from keepers as well as close-up encounters with the birds as they are being fed.

**For Kids** - A multitude of fun activities await the kids! From a watery playground for a splashing good time, uncovering an extensive egg collection and much more!

**Camps** - The camps encourage kids to explore with self-learning opportunities, team-bonding activities as well as unique insights into wildlife.



Mr GB Srithar, Regional Director, India, Middle East, South Asia and Africa, Singapore Tourism Board said, "Singapore is an exciting lifestyle and events destination, offering Indian vacationers a range of interesting options, right from tours and attractions, to entertainment, shopping and dining options. We are positive that the introduction of the new leisure experiences - Avatar: The Experience and Bird Paradise - will be welcomed by Indian travellers, who represent our top source markets for tourism. With the post-pandemic resumption of international travel, the industry is seeing a strong resurgence in demand for leisure tourism, with Indian consumers looking forward to travelling again and trying out new leisure experiences."

While in Singapore, travellers can enjoy some of the country's other latest leisure experiences, such as the Instagram-worthy Museum of Ice Cream, the open-air panoramic SkyHelix Sentosa and Adventure HQ, Singapore's first and largest multi-installation adventure centre. The city will see an exciting array of upcoming attractions, including the Jewel-rassic Quest, an immersive AR experience at Jewel Changi Airport's Canopy Park and Shiseido Forest Valley, among others.

□



## Amazing Countries Indian Can

# Travel Without Visa!

By: Rohit Ashok

**D**id you know that you can enjoy visa-free travel to some countries? Well, if this is the thing that has been stopping you from planning an international trip, fret not. You can visit a few countries that allow Indian travellers without a visa and save you from the extra paperwork. So, here is a list of pretty countries that Indians can visit without a visa.

### Bhutan

Bhutan is the last Himalayan kingdom, shrouded in amazing snow Peak Mountains and shadowy forests that create a picturesque landscape. But that's not all; the most unique and best thing about Bhutan is that it is the only country



that is 72% covered in forests making it not only carbon-neutral but the world's only carbon-negative country. Indian travellers can visit this beautiful country without a visa. Do note that those intending to visit Bhutan, need to make sure that they are carrying any of the two valid travel documents, i.e., a valid Indian passport with a validity of a minimum 6 months and/or a voter Identity card that has been issued by the Election Commission of India.

### Indonesia

Indonesia is a land gifted with pristine beaches, exotic water villas on serene islands, vibrant tribes and cultural



ethos. Spread out over a mind-boggling 17,000 islands, the country offers a vast melange of experiences to be sampled by visitors from across the world. Indian travellers will not require an Indonesia tourist visa or business visa to visit the country for a short stay. However, do note that if you intend to stay there longer, you will need to apply for a visa.

### Jamaica

Jamaica offers travellers a treasure trove of natural jewels and a colourful African vibe. Golden beaches; lush, green mountains; turquoise seas; coral reefs; rainforests and rivers



are just some of the island's enviable assets. Indian travellers will not require a visa to visit Jamaica and for a stay of up to 30 days. When they reach the destination, the immigration officer stamps their passport which works as a valid tourist visa. This means planning a visit to this destination will be less of a headache.

### Macau

Macau is a little slice of Portugal deep in the heart of the Far East. It seems hard to fathom that only 60 kilometres from the urban jungle of Hong Kong, well-preserved colonial architecture and cobbled streets exist and wait to be explored. Indian travellers visiting Macau for less than 30 days will not require a visa to enter the country. This also means that most of the travellers will not need to undergo the process of applying for a visa, assuming that the duration of their trip is for less than 30 days.

### Serbia

Siberia is an ideal location for travellers who want to encounter the untouched beauty of nature, mighty mountains and unexplored enigmas. Those travelling from India will not



require a visa to enter Serbia for a short stay and if their purpose of the visit is transit, tourism or business. In short, Indians can enjoy visa-free travel to the country for up to 30 days, in a period of one year.

### Tunisia

Once home to ancient Carthage and now governed from its capital, Tunis, Tunisia's historical significance and cosmopolitan charm are world-renowned. Indian travellers will not require a visa to travel to Tunisia for tourism purposes. However, one should bear in mind that their stay in Tunisia should not exceed three months. Also, they will be required to get a



visa in advance if they are travelling to Tunisia for purposes other than tourism.

### Svalbard

Svalbard is one of the world's largest untouched wilderness areas and it's precisely this vast area of raw and untamed nature that many find so alluring. Yes, you can visit this Norwegian archipelago without a visa. Home to immigrants



from more than 50 countries, Svalbard offers everything in superlatives. It's the world's northernmost year-round settlement that witnesses nights that stretch for straight six months!

### Saint Kitts and Nevis

Even though it is of the size of a pair of specks in the Caribbean Sea, Saint Kitts and Nevis Island nation has plenty of attractions. If Indian travellers visit Saint Kitts and Nevis for business and tourism purposes and they intend to stay there for a short period, they will not require a visa. This is another beautiful destination where Indians can enjoy hassle-free and visa-free travel. □



In-Talks with

# Sriram Gopalswamy

from Sabre India

By: Rohit Ashok



Sabre Corporation is a leading software and technology company that powers the global travel industry, serving a wide range of travel companies including airlines, hoteliers, travel agencies and other suppliers. The company provides retailing, distribution and fulfilment solutions that help its customers operate more efficiently, drive revenue and offer personalised traveller experiences. Through its leading travel marketplace, Sabre connects travel suppliers with buyers from around the globe.

In conversation with Mr Sriram Gopalswamy, VP – Site Reliability Engineering, Sabre Bengaluru GCC where he sheds light on the three innovations under progress.

### What are some of the travel tech innovations that Sabre is currently working on?

Currently there are three innovations that Sabre is working towards – first being adapting to NDC (New Distribution Capability), our position as both an aggregator and an airline IT provider allows us to deliver retailing solutions across the end-to-end customer journey, from offer creation all the way to fulfilment. Second, is the 'Offer and Order Management'. This retail travel



marketplace will allow airlines to tailor offers that are dynamically retailed and distributed across any channel and third, we are keenly researching and working towards Travel AI, in partnership with Google. This would mainly help OTAs (Online Travel Agents) or airlines to be able to personalise itinerary for travellers. These are the top three tech innovations that Sabre is planning to offer in the B2B space.

#### Which among these innovations are ready for roll out?

We are working simultaneously on all three tech innovations. Everything depends on the market demand and accordingly the innovations will be rolled out. One of the immediate innovations that we are looking to launch is the 'Offer and Order management'.

#### The travel industry deals with large amount of customer data. How are your products designed to protect and secure customer data?

Sabre Corporation is absolutely a GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) compliant organisation. We deal with numerous types of sensitive data. We spend a lot of effort to ensure all our employees understand the importance of data and how to handle it through periodic training and assessments. Since we are a complete GDPR compliant company, we make sure that we don't look at individual records. We work with large data sets and generalise it. No personally identifiable data is looked at or shared or taken for analysis.

#### Enlighten us on the developments at Sabre's Global Capability Centre in Bengaluru.

Overall, we are a part of building a cutting-edge technology that will change the way we travel. The Offer and Order Management, we also call it 'Retail Intelligence', is partly built from the Sabre GCC in Bengaluru. This innovation is a combined effort of different teams such as architects, R&D, product, sales, etc. On the People front, we have very flexible and open work culture, work timings and hybrid work models. On the people upliftment front, we make sure that employees are updated and they are provided with ample opportunities to up-skill themselves. We conduct a lot of trainings to help employees deal with the hybrid work model. Overall, we provide an environment where our team members can thrive, have fun and do their best work.

#### What are the measures implemented by Sabre to enhance its technology transformation?

Technology transformation is an important piece of Sabre's strategy. Over the past few years there has been steady investment towards tech transformation initiatives. Our focus is on migrating most of our compute to the public cloud which will help us innovate at a faster pace and deliver reliable, secure solutions faster to our

customers. We currently have more than 60% of our compute in public clouds, this gives Sabre the agility and a competitive edge.

#### How are your tech products geared to tap the changing landscape of the aviation industry?

Our tech products help large airlines, airports to perform large functions and their operations with ease. Our products give the ability to the airlines, agencies and OTAs to get better distribution and reach across channels. There are several innovative offerings that are being worked on currently to help our customers do their business with ease. □



# World's Most Beautiful Cities

By: Radhika

2023 is just around the corner and the world has almost come back to the good, old days of the pre-COVID era. It's time to get out and go again, enjoy the outdoors, feel mountain air in our hair and go dipping in the oceans once again. In our chase of such travel experiences, we have curated a list of the world's most beautiful cities.

For this listing, we have skipped the very popular and beautiful Paris, New York, Chicago, Rome and the like, for our readers to have fresher, more diverse choices when they plan the coming year; those places still have our hearts!

### Bergen

Bergen in Norway also makes it to our list of the world's most beautiful cities with its stunning settings in the middle



of majestic fjords and mountains. Colourful wooden houses that line the wharf here are a sight to behold; the city is also known as the Capital of the Fjords and you will know why once you're here.



### Havana

Cuba's Havana has a lot to its name with it being hailed as one of the best nightlife destinations in the world and its famous cigars, but more awaits you here. Old Havana will woo you with its Spanish colonial architecture, National Capitol Building, Catedral de San Cristóbal, etc. Add to it Havana's famous revolutionary Cuban iconography and the vintage cars that are a common sight here - this city deserves a place in your 2023 travel plans.

### Bruges

Belgium's Bruges is otherworldly; so much so that it has also caught the attention of the Indian film industry,



especially Bollywood. If a filmy romantic setting is also on your mind, Bruges will do the trick for you.

### Budapest

Hungary's capital, Budapest sees River Danube traversing across it, making it one of the prettiest cities in the world. St.



Stephen's Basilica, Chain Bridge, Hero's Square, Dohány St. Synagogue - there is so much in Budapest that adds to its beauty that you might have a tough time soaking it all in.

### Srinagar

Kashmir's capital Srinagar is as beautiful as it can get and it might be this city that got Kashmir its tag as the Heaven on Earth. There's music in the air here; the magic of waking up in the Himalayas as the sun rises over Dal Lake is a feeling that everyone deserves to live at least once in their lifetime. The neighbouring Gulmarg and Pahalgam are also delightful if you love the great Himalayan outdoors.



### Cape Town

Cape Town's majestic setting by a peninsula will take your breath away. Add to it the lure of Robben Island, Table Mountain, Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens, Clifton



and Camps Bay Beaches, Victoria & Alfred Waterfront and Boulders Beach - little wonder that the city is hailed as the most beautiful in all of South Africa and one of the prettiest in the world.

### Chiang Mai

Thailand's Chiang Mai drives home the beauty of the country's mountains, often overshadowed by its beaches and urban cities. Its beautiful landscape is made all the



more alluring with hundreds of Buddhist temples that make a great skyline.

### Amsterdam

There is so much beauty in Amsterdam that you might



just feel like you have fallen inside a pretty travel postcard that has come alive. The city canals are stunning, a boat ride or a bicycle tour will show you how! In addition, the floating flower market and Damrak's colourful dancing houses are also a delight.

### Florence

How can one skip mentioning Florence in a listing of the world's most beautiful cities? Mark it at the top of your 2023 travel wishlist if Italy's Tuscany region has always attracted



you and you're tempted for a dream trip. What better place than a city that captured the fancy of Michelangelo, one of the world's most famous sculptors?

### Hanoi

Hanoi, Vietnam's capital city, is a delight for anyone looking for a fine blend of quirky, old-school and beautiful, for the city has stories to tell in its beauty. A lot of architecture here is centuries-old, Truc Bach Lake makes for an unforgettable sight, the pagodas here are painstakingly preserved and beautiful, sites including the Temple of Literature, National



Museum of Vietnamese History, Ngoc Son Temple, Bach Ma Temple - all of this and more makes Hanoi captivating and inviting.

### Prague

Prague in Czech Republic often gets voted as one of the most beautiful cities in the world as per different surveys



and rightly so. The city is stunning and we wish there was a better word to describe it justly. It is home to the very famous Charles Bridge, the 600-year-old Astronomical Clock, Old Square and the banks of River Vltava - how does one get over the beauty of it all? We say you simply cannot!

### Kyoto

Japan's Kyoto is another beautiful city that deserves a place on your 2023 travel wishlist. Almost like a postcard,



it is a photographer's delight. The city is beautifully set with gardens, Shinto shrines, Buddhist temples and quaint traditional wooden houses that are a beautiful sight. It gets all the more surreal in the evening time, perfect if you like going out on delightful long walks. □

# Pocket-friendly European Cities

## to add to your Bucket-list

By: Rohit Ashok

Spending time in any city can be one of the most effective ways to tap into that country's culture. Whether it's a whirlwind weekend or a fortnight of getting to know a new neighbourhood, city breaks offer a full-bodied, in-at-the-deep-end immersion that beach resorts and remote country hotels seldom can. But that cultural crash course can come with a price tag and hidden ones at that; flights from London to Venice sell for as low as £11, but it's one of Europe's most expensive cities for accommodation and food. So, we've broken down some of the latest data on the cheapest city breaks in Europe for 2023, from a coastal cosmopolis to a snow-capped ski city.

### Athens, Greece

This year's Post Office City Costs Barometer ranked Greece's historical capital Athens as the cheapest



location for an autumn city break in Europe and noted that prices have dropped by 15 per cent since 2021. Accommodation in Athens is particularly good value, with plenty of small, family-run and boutique bedrooms. According to the survey, two nights at a three-star hotel for two guests average £89.

### Lisbon, Portugal

Several budget airlines fly from London to Lisbon (Ryanair, Easyjet, Wizz Air, Tap Air Portugal) and while the pretty Portuguese capital is known for its award-winning restaurants, travellers can still dine out on a



dime – after Athens, it's the cheapest city for a three-course meal (averaging around £40). Here, a beer costs around €2 (putting London's £6 pints to shame) and a €0.50 Viva Viagem card can save you up to half off tram journeys. For a place to stay, Lisbon is home to plenty of smart Airbnb with reasonable price tags. Some of the city's top trending Airbnbs can be taken over for around £50 per night.

### Klagenfurt, Austria

When return flights from the UK to Klagenfurt are cheaper than a one-way train ticket from London to Birmingham, it seems rude not to visit Klagenfurt. It is one of Austria's most affordable cities to visit (main courses are around €6; the farmers' market on Benediktinerplatz is a great place for local bargains) and its spectacular setting on the eastern bank of Lake Wörthersee makes it one of the most scenic, too. June is the cheapest time





to go before the summer crowds and wild swimmers descend on the waterfront.

**Kaunas, Lithuania**

Vilnius has long been topping the lists of the cheapest places to go on holiday, but Kaunas to the west is even less expensive and earlier this year was named as one of 2022’s European Capitals of Culture for its music, art and theatre. Its yearly City Telling Festival hosts a wide



variety of performances and exhibitions that place the city’s Jewish heritage centre stage and access to most events is free, while four-star hotel rooms are as little as €60 a night. For the best views of the Baltic city, a funicular up Aleksoto Hill will cost just a couple of euros.

**Riga, Latvia**

Riga is one of the cheapest cities in Europe, coming in a close second after Dublin for culture and Athens for accommodation. Wind your way through the narrow alleyways of the charming Old Town, find €2 samsas for

lunch at the central covered market located in converted Zeppelin hangars, watch free live music in Dome Square



and see striking architecture such as the House of the Blackheads (€6 entry) and the medieval Swedish Gate. But one of the most underrated ways of seeing Riga is on the water – rent a paddleboard for just €15 on the banks of the Daugava River.

**Berat, Albania**

Like Puglia’s trulli or Chefchaouen’s all-blue buildings, Berat’s unforgettable white Ottoman houses are totally unique in their collective existence and visual impact.



The simple, traditional rooms inside also provide a super-affordable way to stay here, as many are guest houses or independently run hotels, such as Hotel Vila Aleksandar or Hotel Mangelemi, both around £35 per night. Head up the steep cobblestoned streets to see the 13th Century Berat Castle (entry is free) and take in the ‘town of a thousand windows’ from the top.

### Brasov, Transylvania, Romania

A cheaper alternative to Bucharest (which is still, by European standards, incredibly good value), Brasov is surrounded by the scenic Carpathian Mountains. A cable car up to the top of Mount Tampa costs just 20 lei (£3.55) for aerial views of the brick-red rooftops, whilst local



tour operator Walkabout provides a free walking tour every morning at 10.30 am, setting off from the fountain in Piata Sfatului. Pick up local delicacy kurtoskalács (a spit-roasted, sugar-covered 'chimney cake') to maintain your energy levels from the stall nearby.

### Sofia, Bulgaria

Sofia, the capital, is just over 10km away from the Vitosha Mountains which provide impressive winter conditions for snow bunnies and cost a fraction of the



price of resorts in France or Italy. Wine and Bulgarian beers are extremely cheap and downtown Sofia is known for its high-energy party atmosphere. Entry to clubs is seldom more than €10, with live DJ sets and late-night

events at Maze or Culture Beat (which also has a great summer terrace for cocktails).

### Izmir, Turkey

On Turkey's Aegean coast, Izmir has resisted the price hikes of Istanbul and the tourist traps of Ankara whilst preserving its 8,500-year-old Kemeraltı bazaar and ancient Roman agora. The historic sites and architectural relics coexist with cosmopolitan culture and traditional



cuisine – try pide on the pier or baked potatoes with a choice of toppings at Atıştır Café. An hour out of town is Ephesus, an ancient city built by the Greeks and well worth a detour.

### Tbilisi, Georgia

Whilst the transcontinental city of Tbilisi is the most expensive place to live in Georgia, by European standards, it's exceptionally affordable for holidaymakers. A cascade of new hotels has opened in the last few years, such as



the lovely Guest House Lile with double rooms for £21 per night. Foodies should book a table at Barbarestan, a family-run restaurant with authentic recipes and local ingredients, where you can eat for around £40 each – not bad for somewhere given a nod by the crew behind the World's 50 Best Restaurants. □



# Where to Eat Al Fresco in Sharjah this Winter

By: Radhika

Sharjah City, the one that lies in the UAE district among various other well-known destinations, has a lot to offer to its visitors. Cars, luxuries, beaches, people, food, hotels, clothing, markets – there is diversity in every walk of this city. While most of us are only aware of Dubai and Abu Dhabi among other UAE nations – Sharjah city is also gaining increasing prominence in the world as a form of perfect tourist destination in the list. The emirate of Sharjah is well-known for its rich, cultural heritage – an



identity that has been recognised a number of times as shown by the winning of the Cultural Capital of the Arab World 1998 and Islamic Culture Capital 2014 awards. It is a vibrant city with an exciting food and art scene, a heritage area that is the largest restoration project in the region along with various commercial centres and over 22 museums.

FWinter means cooler, stunning weather that makes for a perfect time for eating al fresco. All across Sharjah, the third largest emirate in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), there are gorgeous outdoor areas to enjoy exquisite food while basking in the winter sun or feeling the nip of the chill in the evenings. Here are some spots to enjoy a meal and have a memorable time in the great outdoors.



## Al Majaz Waterfront

As you walk down the Sharjah Corniche, you'll notice a hub of lively activity ahead on the Al Majaz Waterfront. A popular leisure destination in the city, it is home to cosy cafes and is a great spot for family outings and evening strolls. It is the perfect place for dinner with a host of restaurants to choose from and dhow cruise boats sailing by.

Also boasts a lush park to enjoy a picnic under the sun this winter with family or friends. While you enjoy chatting



away and eating scrumptious food, kids can indulge themselves in the several attractions available for them here. As the ultimate destination for family attractions in the emirate, this waterside attraction features mini golf, a splash park and a mini train. A hit attraction for everyone, the Sharjah fountain periodically features an awe-inspiring light and sound display.

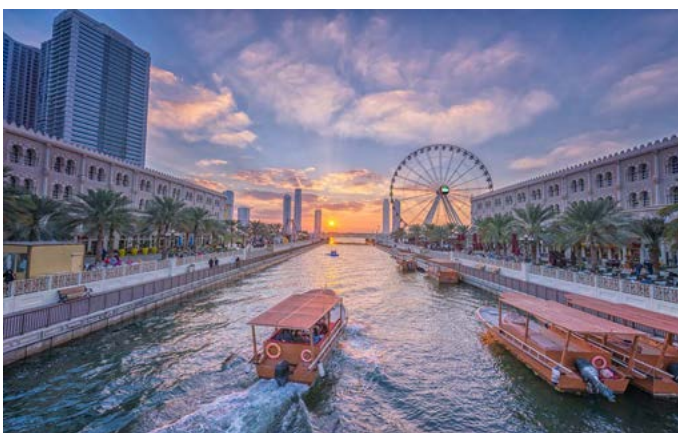
**Al Qasba**

Al Qasba is among the most popular places to visit in Sharjah, especially at night. It stretches along either side of the kilometre long Qasba Canal, which connects the Khalid and Al Khan lagoons. Get set to indulge in some lip-smacking delicacies here as the destination is packed



with popular cafes and restaurants with outdoor seating. It also offers a wealth of activities for children and adults alike with cultural events and art and design museums.

Parents often pick Al Qasba to unwind at a cafe while their children enjoy the musical fountain, frolic at the kids' fun zone and indoor soft play centre or choose from the many activities.



The scenic route to reach Al Qasba is a boat ride from Al Noor Island. It is also easily accessible from the Sharjah bus station. You can hail a cab from a number of waiting-for Sharjah taxis or walk from the closest stop along the Sharjah bus route.

**Mleiha**

Mleiha is perfect for visitors looking for an authentic desert experience. Venture deep into the dunes of the Arabian



Desert, catch the amazing sunset views at Camel Rock and then tuck into a sumptuous barbecue dinner at camp.

A UNESCO-nominated World Heritage Site in the Central Region of the Sharjah map, Mleiha is home to a number of significant sites, including Bronze Age tombs and pre-Islamic forts. There are also several opportunities for adventure in



the area with trekking, hiking, dune bashing, quad bike riding or even paragliding from the highest peaks in Mleiha. Visitors love to spend a night under the stars in Mleiha surrounded by picturesque sand dune formations. □



# UNESCO

## includes Azerbaijan’s intangible elements on the World Heritage List

By: Rohit Ashok

The rich historical, cultural and natural heritage of the country attracts visitors from all over the world. Untouched nature, mineral springs, the world’s only oil field treatment – naphthalene, a unique ancient architecture, unique culture, cuisine and more contribute to the formation in Azerbaijan of all types

World Heritage List during the 17th session of UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco.

UNESCO works to preserve the traditions, practices and skills of the world nations in order to pass the

social interaction”.

The traditional production of silk weaving is jointly represented by Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Türkiye, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. In their culture, people highly value silk products which are used for special social occasions such as weddings, funerals and family gatherings. This tradition is very unique as it not only unites the nations of different countries but also combines culture, art and science within its practice. In Azerbaijan, the legacy of the legendary Silk Road is notable in Sheki (UNESCO site) and the small mountain village of Basgal. The village is known for preserving the tradition of making kelaghayi which is the traditional Azerbaijani silk headscarf, also added as a part of intangible UNESCO heritage in 2014.



of tourism: business, sport, medical, cognitive, hunting, exotic, beach and even gastronomic. The tourism sector in Azerbaijan is developing day by day, becoming one of the most important sectors of the economy.

Four intangible cultural elements of Azerbaijan were added to UNESCO’s

legacy to future generations. Among the Azerbaijani traditions and skills recently inscribed by UNESCO are “Sericulture and traditional production of silk for weaving”, “Pehlevanliq culture: traditional zorkhana games, sports and wrestling”, “Telling tradition of Molla Nasreddin” and “Culture of Çay (tea), a symbol of identity, hospitality and

As an integral part of folk events and celebrations, Pehlevanliq culture in Azerbaijan has been a big part of traditional sports and games, such as wrestling and individual performances. In the traditional wrestling competitions, Pehlevans use specific heavy tools that resemble medieval weapons (such as swords, shields and bows) and are accompanied by traditional music or

fast-beating drums. Even nowadays, the local community shows big interest in this tradition as it provides a strong sense of identity, symbolising determination and social cohesion.

The social practice of “The Telling Tradition of Nasredding Anecdotes” is jointly celebrated and submitted by Azerbaijan,



Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. This narrative tradition refers to the telling of anecdotes by the philosopher and sage Nasreddin that are full of wisdom and witty repartees. The power of words in this anecdote carries a rebellious attitude within as they usually serve as the solution to complicated situations usually breaking the accepted norms of society.



Azerbaijan and Türkiye share many similar traditions, among which tea culture has a special place. Being an important social practice, the tea ceremony demonstrates hospitality and creates an environment for building social ties through celebrations and casual gatherings. Tea ceremonies have evolved over centuries to include their own rites and rituals. Azerbaijanis serve tea in



a special pear-shaped glass called an armudu, often together with lemon and sugar, honey, jam, nuts and sweets.

The fruitful collaboration between UNESCO and Azerbaijan has been motivated by the shared goal of the protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage. As for now, 19 intangible elements and three sites of Azerbaijan are included in the UNESCO heritage list.



Besides these, there are numerous hiking trails and routes frequented by tourists from all over the world in Azerbaijan. So, if you are a trekking enthusiast, the place is indeed a heaven for you. And if you are the kind of person who does not want to do anything but chill and relax, there are beaches for you to pamper you with a calm atmosphere. Hence, Azerbaijan is a holiday destination which has something in place for each and every type of tourist.

All this indicates that tourism in Azerbaijan is one of the priorities of the state policy and holds great promise for its economic development. □



Fall in Love with

# Fall Foliage in Virginia

By: Rohit Ashok

**F**all in Virginia is one of the most beautiful times of the year and travelling during this season can reveal an abundance of colour. Virginia's expansive woodlands, famously blue-tinged mountains and rambling scenic byways are the places to be when fall leaves are at their fiery peak. Forest canopies are a jigsaw puzzle of orange, yellow, red and green. Red maples continue to stand out this year, with individual trees ranging from yellow to orange to bright scarlet. Virginia's diverse landscape, from the highest mountains to the Eastern shore, provides a long foliage season, starting earliest in the higher elevations and moving eastward. From romantic destinations for couples to road trips with friends and family, you'll find all this and more in Virginia this fall!

## Take a road trip through Virginia's mountains

With fall foliage at peak throughout much of Virginia's mountains, now is the time to pack up the family and head out for a fun fall getaway. Cradled by the Blue Ridge and the Allegheny Mountains, Virginia's 140-mile Shenandoah



Valley is laced with spectacular scenic byways. Load up the car and explore stunning Virginia landscapes with one of these epic road trips. Enjoy outdoor fun, delicious cuisines at the restaurants and picturesque driving routes during an unforgettable vacation in Virginia's breathtaking mountains!

## Explore Virginia's Wine Country

The 300+ wineries around the state allow you to experience the freshly picked fruits of the season throughout the month, filling your glass with Virginia's award-winning



bounty. Visit Virginia vineyards with your friends and family to discover award winning Virginia wines and share them with the ones you love! Wine Trails and Wine Tours across the state make planning your visit easy and with more than 300 Virginia wineries to choose from, you'll find beautiful winery locations, stunning tasting rooms and plenty of unique winery experiences to ensure an unforgettable visit to Virginia wine country.

## Virginia's most stunning towns and destinations

Virginia cities and towns show off when fall colour shows up. Seasonal flavours grace restaurant menus while



festivals are held in and around downtown areas. Virginia's small towns, unique cities and notable neighbourhoods are treasure troves of great food, warm hospitality, immense history and Southern charm. Antiquers and outdoor enthusiasts equally will be at home in these destinations promising all the above and more. Some of the top towns and destinations for experiencing an unforgettable fall in Virginia filled with inspired foods, drinks and activities are Charlottesville, Salem and Roanoke, Blacksburg, Williamsburg and Yorktown, Norton, Loudoun County, Alexandria and Richmond.

### 48-Hour Fall Getaways

#### Day 1

Spend the day in Luray. Luray is not only the county portal to the four main attractions: Luray Caverns,



Shenandoah National Park, Shenandoah River and George Washington Forest, but is also the home to many unique side attractions. The Luray Zoo, Garden Maze, Lake Arrowhead are other fun adventures. In between your excursions, stop for a meal at our array of restaurants serving every taste bud, whether craving German schnitzel or southern country fried chicken.



Before snuggling in your cosy cabin for the night, enjoy nightlife and entertainment. The Mimslyn Inn Speakeasy and Main Streets Evenings are local hot spots for couples and families alike will enjoy.

#### Day 2

Travel south on Highway 340 into the quaint town of Stanley. This picturesque town is the perfect location for a country drive. You will be surrounded by the Massanutten



and Blue Ridge Mountains. Beautiful farmland and scenic wonder are what's in store. For an appetizing meal, stop by *Ciro's Pizza*. Before you head out of town take a ride along the riverbanks and through the woods with one of Stanley's well-established horseback riding guides. □



# In-talks with Young-Geul Choi

## Director, KTO

By: Rohit Ashok

**K**orea Tourism Organization (KTO) India, the tourism arm of the Republic of Korea under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism is taking significant initiatives to enable more travellers from India to access South Korea's luxury market, business leisure and learning experience.

With more than 130 unique activities and experiences, the country offers something for everyone. While Jeju Island and Gyeongju are tourist favourites for their scenic beauty and traditional charms, metro cities such as Seoul, Busan and Incheon are ideal for business leisure trips and to get a glimpse of the country's rich culture, unique venues and culinary offerings.

Here's an interview with Mr Young Geul Choi, Director, Korea



Tourism Organisation (KTO) where he shares how high value leisure travellers as well as millennials are expected to drive a strong revival of traffic from India to Korea in the coming year.

Mr Young-Geul Choi has been associated with Korea Tourism Organization, New Delhi office since 2019 and is currently heading KTO in India. His focus for the India market is Luxury and Special Interest Groups and has a keen interest in increasing awareness of Korean culture and the Korean language in India.

### What are the trends for outbound travel to Korea globally?

Thanks to the rise in popularity of the “Korean Wave”, or Hallyu, especially over the last couple of years, interest in travel to Korea has also increased greatly, around the world. India has also seen a great rise in interest in popular Korean culture over the years, encouraging people to absorb small bits of Korean culture into their daily life and ultimately inspire travel to Korea.

### What are the types of clientele you are looking for at the moment? Which are your main target areas?

In 2022, our office focused on promotion of luxury travel and Special Interest Groups like K-pop and K-Drama fans and students visiting Korea for educational tours. We recently wrapped up seminars in Delhi and Kolkata to promote educational tours to Korea, along with consumer events in collaboration with other Korean organisations in India, to give fans of K-culture a taste of Korea in India.

We intend to continue to focus on these areas of travel in the next year, with more such events and activities. We are aware of the interest for specially curated tour packages that contain attractions related to K-Pop and K-Dramas. We will

continue working together with our OTA and travel agency partners to develop unique travel products for these markets.



Additionally, ESG travel is another area of interest for us. There is now a need for higher safety and hygiene standards as a result of the pandemic and many people prioritise sustainability, even while travelling. Korea Tourism Organization has compiled a list of 125 safe travel locations for tourists to enjoy a worry-free holiday. The list includes destinations that have been vetted by travel and safety professionals and regional travel authorities.

#### **What are some of the luxury products and experiences that Indian travellers can experience in Korea?**

Luxury travel to Korea is an area of interest for our office and we plan to promote that in the coming year as well. There is a lot that Korea has to offer for a discerning traveller - from gourmet food at Michelin star restaurants to K-beauty treatments and experiences to unique Korean culture experiences with masters of the field, not to mention exclusive accommodation and shopping options.

Luxury travellers from India can look forward to enjoying beautiful natural sceneries on a yacht and playing golf. Or relax with a detox and wellness program at a resort,



stay at a hanok and enjoy special local food full of stories or focus on gourmet food and shopping experiences, or maybe go on a museum tour across Korea.

Travellers' interests can be taken into consideration to curate special experiences and KTO wants to collaborate closely with Indian luxury travel service providers to create one-of-a-kind experiences that are tailored to their preferences.

#### **What new destinations are being added up in 2022 to attract honeymooners and families?**

South Korea is still a fairly unexplored destination for a lot of Indians, so while certain new and unique experiences can of course be included, we do recommend first-time travellers to check out traditionally popular attractions like the royal palaces, theme parks or the DMZ.

HiKR Ground is a new attraction in Seoul, designed especially for Hallyu fans. It is a promotional hall that takes a new approach by integrating Extended Reality (XR). The space is filled with technology to experience diverse Korea content, including the areas of hallyu, arts and more.



Jeju Island continues to be the destination of choice for honeymooners. For couples looking for a romantic getaway, Jeju Island offers a variety of delightful experiences, from lavish experiences and spa treatments at beach resorts to thrilling activity choices for adventure seekers and a chance to immerse themselves in the local culture and cuisine.

Jeju Island also has a Visa-free policy which makes it an ideal destination to visit even on a short notice. □



# Get Ready for your Next Adventure With Roperro Travel Bags

By: Nitu

It is the perfect time for travelling to your favourite destination. But while planning your holiday is extremely fun, it can be daunting as well, especially when visiting a new or unknown city for the first time. To provide total peace of mind when you're on the road, this holiday season we have chosen the ideal travel companion for you to guarantee the finest travel experience.



Bringing to you Roperro - one of the select 'made in India' brands that stands out for its high-quality products matching global standards. It is founded by a 25-year-old entrepreneur Ms Arpita Katyal, CEO, who manifests to bring luxury to your doorstep and make everyday indulgence a global phenomenon. As the CEO of Roperro, she is catering to the styling needs of young adults through bags, apparel and accessories while specializing in leather creations. Ms Arpita has been recently

felicitated with the 'Global Leaders 2022' award.

Recognising the gap in the stylish travel bag market, Roperro has created a dynamic travel bag brand 'MiGear'. It understands the necessity for a durable and functional bag when travelling but also ensures that your style quotient stays a cut above the rest.

Here are some of our favourite selections from MiGear's newest collection that are absolute must-haves for your next trip.

## Rhino Rage Rucksack

The Rhino Rage Rucksack is every traveller's best friend and it's great for long hikes and treks. To ensure durability and strength in challenging circumstances, it is made of fine quality polyester. To provide comfort and ease when hiking, it has heavily padded shoulder straps and air-cushioned back



support. Are you ready to tick-off travel from your bucket-list this year? Then this is a bag you must own!

## Black Regimen Duffle Bag

One of their most liked products due to its size and sleek

design, the Black Regiment duffle bag has a polyester inner lining and is made of fine quality polyester fabric. It is a great option for travel and commuting. Your essentials are safe within its 4 external zip pockets and spacious main



compartment. If travelling light is your goal, then this is a bag that you must have.

### MT. Adventure Backpack

The Mt. Adventure backpack is everything a hiking back should be — strong, spacious, water-resistant and sturdy. It's designed to survive the most exhausting adventures. Its thoughtful design places pockets and storage areas at



convenient locations for you to use while hiking. The bag has adventure in its name, so if you are looking for a trusted hiking and travelling companion then we suggest you look no further.

### Gear-up Rucksack Backpack

The Gear-up Rucksack Backpack is every hiker's best friend and is perfect for hikes and treks. It is manufactured of high-quality polyester to guarantee sturdiness and strength in difficult conditions. It boasts of thickly padded shoulder straps and an air-cushioned back support for comfort and



ease when trekking. For comfort and support, compression belts and tool loops are provided.

### Camo Rider Combo

With a fashionable camouflage print that never goes out of style, the Camo Rider Combo is for everyone who loves style & travel! Our trendy cadet Camo Rider Backpack and our robust Camo Rider duffle bag make up the perfect Camo



Rider Combo for you. This robust backpack is perfect for both everyday use and your travel needs. It is extremely roomy and has lots of external pockets to safely store your essentials. It is simpler to carry it like a tote bag, thanks to the top handles.

Roperro travel bags will keep you covered for all your travel needs. It is a luxury brand that envisions making luxury an 'everyday indulgence'. Roperro has five sub-brands under its belt, with four offering a wide variety of handbags. Roperro's prime focus is to empower the young generation with 'everyday luxury'. Roperro collections are available on their website [www.roperro.com](http://www.roperro.com) and at select multi-brand retail outlets. □



*In talks with*  
**Vidur Kapur**  
*Director, O3+ Skincare*

**By: Radhika**

**O**3+ has evolved as Asia's first skincare brand in India to have both pharma and cosmetic license. The company not only deals in a professional range of treatments and products but also gives hands-on training and education for the same. Founded by Mr Vineet Kapur, MD, O3+, the brand is planning to venture into make-up, body care and pet range products in the coming years. The purpose of the company is to offer the best quality ingredients available in the international market. O3+ has acquired the highest share in the Indian professional skin care industry as the O3+ products are formulated in Italy by world-class dermatologists. The range of products is very thoughtfully designed keeping in mind the various skin concerns faced by different skin types. O3+ is recognised

by various European standards for quality to be able to deliver international quality in India. Innovative cutting-edge technology merged with skincare benefits in botanical, natural, organic and scientific ingredients has always been the cornerstone for O3+ award-winning products.

To know more about the O3+ products and their promotion strategies, we interviewed Mr Vidur Kapur – Director, O3+ Skincare

**According to you, what is the USP of O3+ products?**

The USP of the brand is to provide solutions to every skin problem people face. O3+ has always been successful in bringing the latest technology-driven innovation to the beauty industry. Our USP products are - Bridal, Dtan and Vitamin C Range.

**Tell us about the product range offered by O3+ and the price bracket of its products.**

The range of products is very thoughtfully designed keeping in mind the various skin concerns faced by different skin types. The Price Bracket is from Rs.308 to Rs. 3984.



**Who are your target consumers?**

O3+ targets mass premium and premium luxury end consumers in the age group of 18 years and above, both men and women. For the professional segment, the brand caters to all the leading salons and beauty professionals.

**Tell us about your latest launch or offerings or the innovations at O3+.**

O3+'s latest launch and offering are the Agelock Range for women in their 30s, to help them with their premature ageing and restoring youthful glow and radiance.

**Explain the technological integration and advancements at O3+ that set the brand apart from others in the segment.**

O3+ has given equal focus to the professional product Division, Digital Division & Consumer Product Division.



O3+ has also launched technological innovations like Oxy Jet Spray and Ultrasonic in India that enhance the delivery mechanism of the product.

**Could you tell us about your marketing strategies? What percentage of your overall revenue goes into marketing and promotions?**

O3+ works with two marketing strategies - salon and end customers. We understand our audience and plan the marketing strategies as per what they want to see or what they relate to. O3+ conducts seminars, events and workshops

to educate and enhance the skills of beauticians and for product launch purposes. Keeping in mind the international trends and needs of the end consumer, new products are launched every quarter. Basis seasonality and occasion, focus products are defined and all marketing initiatives are planned accordingly in the salon, print and digital space.

**What are your plans for expansion in terms of retail presence and product assortment?**

- To strengthen D2C (direct to customer) Platform and marketplaces,
- Augment Technology into the skin care segment,
- Aggressive focus on the CPD (Continuing Professional Development) with a new range now available at pharmacies & retail.

**How would you describe the status of the skin care industry in India? What are the challenges being faced, if any?**

Manufacturing or production of many skincare and cosmetic products causes detrimental effects on the environment. The beauty industry contributes largely to the Indian Economy. However, there is a lot of scope as we are lacking in training, education, skilled manpower and non-compliance with standards. Even the retention of skilled human capital is a big hurdle in India.

**How is O3+ working for the betterment of the environment?**

- Increasing our focus towards recyclable materials and using substitute material,
- We're contributing towards planting more trees with each purchase at our D2 platform.

Most products at O3+ are manufactured using the best possible combinations of renewable resources and eco-friendly practices. Moreover, O3+ has been using cartons made of recyclable paper to conserve energy. Moving towards the social side, we have been donating quarterly to the leading old age homes and orphanages for a good cause. We also hold motivating competitions for our employees' children and educate them from time to time to create a sense of belongingness. Recently, a 'Plant a Tree' contest was held in Himachal Pradesh followed by a 'Nature Talk'. In fact, we at O3+ are passionate animal lovers and donate generously to animal NGOs. Not only this, but our loving team has also adopted orphan dogs to provide them with a better home. □



# Well Gummies by Modicare

By: Radhika

With winters hitting us, we tend to get a bit more conscious about our health. As the season of colds, flus, joint pains, dry skin & hair, etc approach, we get more concerned about our immunity-levels and try to take proactive steps towards it. However, with hectic lifestyles or particular dietary requirements, it can be challenging to get all the nutrients we need solely from our diet. Therefore, supplementing with a multivitamin is particularly important to make sure you aren't missing out on those key vitamins and minerals.

Giving a fun twist to nutrition, Well Gummies range from Modicare underlines and advocates the need for improved dietary and lifestyle habits, especially among people who are always on the go. The range is apt for people who are not able to meet their nutritional requirements, given their busy lifestyle. The 'Well Gummy' range offers five different variants viz. Well Hair, Skin & Nail Gummy, Well Perfect Body Gummy, Well Detox Gummy, Well Sharp Eye Gummy and Well Yummy-tamin Gummy. These gummies are 100% natural, devoid of any artificial colours and rich in flavours with expertise from Europe & USA. Adding to the benefits, the nutrient-rich gummies also increase energy, strengthen immunity, improve metabolism and boosts overall well-being.

Here's what goes into Modicare's Well Gummies and how they will benefit you:

**Well Hair, Skin & Nail Gummy:** Powered by Biotin, this strawberry-flavoured gummy is the best companion for your long hair, glowing skin and healthy nails. It also helps fortify your immune system, maintains your energy levels throughout the day, fills dietary gaps and supports the body& metabolism for healthier living.

**Well-Yummy-Tamin Gummy:** If you are looking for overall development and optimum growth, then this lemon-flavored



gummy that is powered by multivitamins & minerals takes care of all your needs. It helps fill nutritional gaps, maintains high energy levels and boosts your overall well-being by supporting the immune system.

**Well Perfect Body Gummy:** Powered by Green Coffee Extracts and Vitamin C this orange-flavoured gummy helps maintain a healthy metabolism. It also helps in detoxifying the body, helps boost immunity and supports in burning glucose & fat.

**Well Detox Gummy:** This gummy supports a healthy appetite and helps manage bloating. This apple-flavoured gummy is powered by Apple Cider Vinegar and actively promotes pH balance, supports healthy digestion & boosts the immune system for an active lifestyle.

**Well Sharp Eye Gummy:** The strawberry-mix-flavoured gummy supports healthy eyesight. It safeguards your eyes from damage due to strain & fatigue and helps balance age-related vision loss. It supports the regeneration of damaged corneal nerves as well. □



# In the Grip of Charismatic Leadership

By Gp Capt DC Bakshi, VSM, IAF (Retd.)

In the scholarly treatise on leadership “THE HERO IN HISTORY”, author Mr Sidney Hook categorises great leaders under two headings – (a) The Eventful Leaders and (b) The Event-Making Leaders.

While an ‘eventful leader’ may be just a commoner – who may happen to be ‘on the spot’ and the choice falls on him – he is in fact a product of chance and becomes a beneficiary of circumstances. He bears little or no responsibility.

On the other hand, an “Event-Making leader” – his pathway to fame is through sweat and toil. He has displayed extraordinary qualities of leadership and in the long run, he will leave a positive imprint of his personality on the national psyche. In life, there is a long wait for acclamation. But still, amongst the few ‘event-making’ leaders – a “Charismatic Leader” may emerge!

Let us elaborate.

The word ‘Charismatic’ comes from the Greek word for ‘grace’ or ‘charm’.

Are there any ‘Business schools/Executive Development Programmes’ which improve an individual’s charisma potential? Yes, there are such schools in the USA/European countries where political heavy-weights and aspiring business leaders seek advice to enhance their personal appeal.

About Charismatic leaders, it is said that they can ‘fire-up’ crowds, ‘topple the regimes’ and also ‘win elections’. They can command blind loyalties from the public. They can ‘exhort’ people to donate generously for a cause. In extreme cases, they can make the audience rejoice boisterously or grieve emotionally.

In India, we have had our own share of charismatic splashes. BAPU could move masses with one stroke. The mighty British empire could not counter his manoeuvres when he launched his mass-movements for the country’s independence.

Albert Einstein paid homage to him. He had stated, “for centuries, the humanity will wonder in awe that such an individual walked on the planet Earth.” His charisma was like a mantra, a Gospel.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Independent India’s first Prime Minister was an endearing personality. His was an awe-inspiring charm and any opposition (if at all) would melt away before it could take roots.

This author remembers the masterly stroke viz KAMRAJ PLAN, when in the wake of mild dissidence, Pandit Nehru formed a new team of loyalists while showing the door to ‘misfits.’ There was not even a whimper. Such was the charisma of Pt Nehru.

Story of the Indian National Army (INA) and its heroic exploits are the classic examples of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose’s charismatic leadership. Single-handedly, he succeeded in infusing doses of patriotism and national fervour for India’s independence.

Smt Indira Gandhi was India’s leading charismatic leader in the truest sense of the word. She had steered the nation during turbulent years and adorned the crown of success when during the India-Pakistan (1971) war she led the country to a resounding victory.

Before we debate about the ‘New India’ march towards charismatic profile, let us see what the famous American author Mark Twain wrote about India years ago.

**“The sole country under the sun that is endorsed with imperishable interest. The one land, all men desire to see and having seen once – by even a glimpse, would not give that glimpse for the shows of all the rest of the Globe combined.”**

Fragrance of Indian version of Charismatic Leadership (after elevation of Mr Rishi Sunak – the charismatic leader, as UK’s Prime Minister) has best been summed up by columnist Ms Kishwar Desai (London Diary: Asian Age dated 31 October 2022): “One wonders if Mr RISHI SUNAK will be the Chief Guest for next year’s Republic Day Parade. What a compelling moment that will be with the Indian Prime Minister and the UK Prime Minister – both of Indian origin.”

The columnist is right when she concludes about sharing of dais by the two “Charismatic Leaders”. Who could have imagined this 75 years ago when India got its independence? □





# Be an Educated Guesser

By Gp Capt DC Bakshi, VSM, IAF (Retd.)

**F**oresight is a leadership quality - says Duke of Wellington. A simple question - during a crisis, can one easily guess - "What is on the other side of the hill"?

The future is unknown. Under normal circumstances, one cannot get its glimpse. Since ages, this has remained an irrefutable axiom. However, the psychologists talk of an 'indirect approach'. If applied dexterously, we can decode its mystery. One must be an 'educated guesser' says the Great Duke!

It is a leadership quality. In management parlance, it is called 'foresight'. Only a limited few can 'look over the hill'. Those who can guess rightly would qualify to possess foresight.

(Random House Dictionary defines foresight as 'Art of looking Forward' - an act/power of forecasting.)

Human beings are blessed by nature - with a capacity to observe, co-relate, even to connect and conceptualise. But only a few stand endowed with 'Intuition' through which they can get the 'clues' of the coming events.

Independent India's top diplomat/administrator Shri PN Haksar once explained the mysteries of 'intuition' thus: "I have often wondered whether intuition is not really the capacity of human brain - to extrapolate by processes as yet unknown to us; but which operate on the cumulative knowledge lying dormant in some part of our brain."

## TEST CASE

Take for example, our young students/professionals perpetually grappling with their career profiles. Success and failure are two sides of the same coin that keep playing hide and seek with each other. Will it not help, if they can rightly guess the developments with regard to "next moment"? Indeed, forewarned is forearmed and towards that end - they will be able to reset their effort mechanism and make course correction wherever necessary to accomplish the task.

Following measures/steps are recommended to sharpen the edges of FORESIGHT.

- **A Comprehensive Knowledge of the Issue:** Half-hearted text of the problem may mislead. It may bring in distortions in the planning procedures. Frequent changes mid-way must be kept to the minimum. They adversely affect the process of culmination with the result that whatever was earlier considered benign and promising may end up as a failure.

- **Guessing-Game:** Guessing-game is not a skill. It is a by-product of comprehensive knowledge and alignment of mind and heart. The formidable Muhammad Ali constantly "guessed" about his success against every opponent. He summed up his success in the following words: "If my mind can conceive, my heart can believe and then I can achieve." The 'mind-management' which assists the guessing mechanism accurately, was his forte!

- **Running Parallel with the Issue:** We tend to delegate and even pass off our responsibilities to others (at odd times aspirations too). We fail to monitor the progress till the show is over. But remember that by delegating and then going in hibernation; one's responsibility is not over. One must keep in constant/active touch. The individual has to in fact run parallelly. Guidance from mentors in terms of higher studies, specialisations and job shifts is considered valuable. Running parallel by constantly evaluating is the key to a qualitative product. A word of caution - running parallelly and monitoring is to provide help and not intercept; observe restraint lest it becomes an interference.

- **Avoid half-measures:** Keep up your tempo of positive curiosity and avoid half-measures at every stage. A holistic approach will assist you to obtain knowledge of things before they happen. Avoid being a dilettante. Keep a grip on the issue - from the word 'go' till it finally folds up to a logical conclusion. Author Kurt Vonnegut portrayed an individual whose working style revealed that he practiced half-measures liberally. Such a man "worked hard" to learn something, learnt it and then found himself no wiser than before.

In summation, foresight adorns a person. It brings in doses of success leaving behind scars of disappointments and failures. □



## Interview with Praneet Dutta

By Rohit Ashok

*“One should undertake research hypotheses with the understanding that not all the experiments will pan out”*: Praneet Dutta

Mr Praneet Dutta a Senior AI (Artificial Intelligence) Researcher at Google DeepMind, tackling real-world challenges in climate and sustainability. He was recently awarded the prestigious “adLET India Youth Engineering Icon Award 2022” for his passion for AI for good, solving humanitarian and environmental challenges and being a role model for Indian students and early career researchers.

Here is a conversation with Mr Praneet Dutta who is truly an inspiration for the aspirant students who can pursue their career in AI Research. Praneet Dutta completed his master's from Carnegie Mellon University in AI, partially sponsored by the JN Tata Merit scholarship. He's an alumnus of the Stanford Graduate School of Business Ignite program.

### What inspired you to take up this career?

I've always had an interest in cutting-edge technology growing up, inspired by binge-watching sci-fi movies. At university, I was able to take up advanced coursework in robotics and Artificial Intelligence. On the side, I spent some time on a student project for building (and racing!) Formula student race cars. With a close friend, I hypothesised how we could use neural networks (a class of Artificial Intelligence algorithm) to improve combustion engine performance. We got some preliminary results and presented an oral paper at a conference in London. From then onwards I went full steam ahead.

### How can technology be an enabler of sustainability?

We're in a pivotal period now, where there's been a strong need to focus on sustainability efforts. In my area of Artificial Intelligence, we've seen major advances leveraging it in improving agriculture efficiencies, grid intelligence, computational efficiency (faster matrix multiplication), minimising industrial system wastages etc. For the latter, our group published research where we were able to showcase AI-based control was able to minimise industrial energy wastage by up to double-digit per cent.

### What are the challenges that you want to be addressed?

I'm quite excited by the advances which applied AI technologies will bring. Like all new technologies, there are some aspects which would be important to pay attention to. Interpretability, fairness and mitigating biases are extremely important areas.

### What is the happiest moment for a professional working in your field?

I enjoy being able to have an impact and create value at scale. There are multiple such occasions during my almost five years at Alphabet. One of them was my first project joining Google, where I managed to lead efforts in AI for Seismic imaging super-resolution. This paper was published at a leading academic conference, which added to my delight.

### How do you motivate yourself and keep on going despite the challenges what drives you?

The short answer is - ups and downs are a part and parcel of life. For me, the important bit is to learn from adversity, which will help going forward. Additionally, having hobbies which keep me 'calm' and stimulate the mind have been helpful. I've been learning how to fly a Cessna 152 after work; it is a good way to relax.

### Given the rapid pace at which the world is changing, what leadership traits are necessary for success?

I can't confidently speak on leadership traits but as a practitioner, being inquisitive, open-minded, and always keep learning are some of my principles to keep up with the changes.

You are always positive. What keeps you going?

**What might appear as being "always" positive, took me time.**  
I'm generally optimistic and enthusiastic.

### What message would you like to give to our readers?

Don't forget to enjoy the journey





# NEW Appointments

## KARL EKLUND APPOINTED AS DIRECTOR OF STOCKHOLM AIRPORTS



Swedavia has appointed Mr Karl Eklund as the new Airport Director of Stockholm Airports as well as the Airport Director of Stockholm Arlanda Airport in Swedavia. Earlier Mr Karl Eklund worked as Deputy CEO of SAS Ground Handling Sweden and has

extensive experience from previous executive positions and assignments in the aviation industry. He will take over the position on February 1, 2023. Mr Karl Eklund is currently Deputy CEO of SAS Ground Handling Sweden and is also responsible for the Passenger Handling & Commercial business area.

## TAJ CITY CENTRE GURUGRAM WELCOMES THAI MASTER-CHEF NISA YIMTHONG



In a constant endeavour to offer unique and memorable experiences to its patrons, the Thai Pavilion at Taj City Centre, Gurugram is pleased to welcome its Thai Master Chef, Nisa Yimthong. As India's first Thai fine dining brand and as one of the best restaurants in Delhi-NCR, Thai Pavilion

has earned an iconic status since its inception in the nineties.

## COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT MUMBAI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT DESIGNATES NEHA CHOWDHURY AS DIRECTOR OF SALES AND MARKETING



Courtyard by Marriott recently announced the appointment of Ms Neha Chowdhury as the new Director of Sales and Marketing. Having secured years of experience in the hospitality industry, Ms Neha aims to further enhance the front office operations, sales and marketing

plans at Courtyard.

## AMIT MUKHERJEE JOINS AS GM AT PUSHKARA SAROVAR PORTICO, DIBRUGARH, ASSAM



Sarovar Hotels appoints Mr Amit Mukherjee as the new General Manager for Pushkara Sarovar Portico, Dibrugarh - Assam. A seasoned and versatile hospitality professional with a career span of 30+ years possesses niche expertise in operations management, F&B operations and Guest relationship management. Before joining Sarovar Hotels, he was last associated with Pugdundee Safaris a renowned wildlife resort chain.

## NAMIT VIJH APPOINTED CLUSTER GENERAL MANAGER BY RADISSON HOTELS GROUP



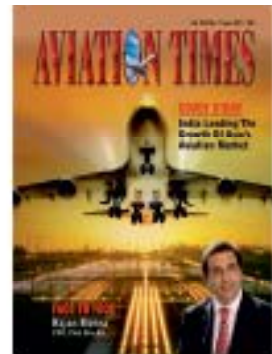
Radisson Hotels Group announced the appointment of Mr Namit Vijh as Cluster General Manager for Rajasthan and Agra. As part of his new role, Mr Namit will be responsible for a bigger portfolio comprising Radisson Blu Jaipur, Radisson Jodhpur, Radisson Nathdwara, Radisson Udaipur, Radisson Agra and Country Inn & Suites by Radisson Kota in addition to Radisson Gurugram Udyog Vihar. Mr Namit has been with Radisson Hotels Group for over 3 years as General Manager - Radisson Gurugram, Udyog Vihar where he contributed immensely to the hotel's profitability and soaring hotel ratings on TripAdvisor.

## BOEING APPOINTS DR BRENDAN NELSON AO AS PRESIDENT OF BOEING INTERNATIONAL (BI)



Boeing announced that Dr Brendan Nelson AO will take over as the President of Boeing International (BI) and lead the company's international strategy and corporate operations. The former Australian diplomat and government minister will succeed Sir Michael Arthur when he retires from Boeing in early 2023. Dr Nelson will move to London to take up his new role, effective Jan. 12, 2023.

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