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CORPORATE BUSINESS, AVIATION, MICE & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

COLLECTOR'S ISSUE 2022

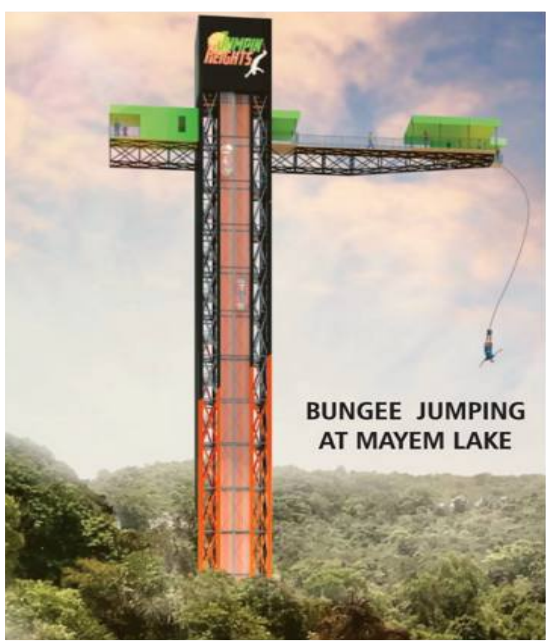
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CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE**





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# CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE



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# FOREWORD



**T**he world has certainly changed in the last few years and this change has impacted economies, lifestyles, businesses, and individuals across the globe. The pandemic has also pushed societies towards change when it comes to sustainability and energy conservation. People are now more aware of how their choices affect the environment, leading to more people choosing sustainable products and making changes in their lifestyles to reduce their carbon footprint.

Sustainability has also taken a major step forward, as people become more conscious of their own environmental footprint. There are many benefits to change – from better health, improved mental awareness, stronger family bonds, and a greener planet.

The travel and hospitality industries have been particularly affected by change. However, both sectors have shown resilience and started to rebound by innovating new products, leveraging technology and providing better services.

Digitalization and innovation are two areas that have particularly seen a boom as a result of all the changes – with more people turning to online solutions for everyday tasks, industrial processes, and even entertainment. There have been new opportunities through technological advancements such as AI, automation and cloud computing. This has enabled businesses to reduce costs while improving productivity, customer service and experience. For example, e-commerce has enabled businesses to reach a much wider audience, while advancements in the travel sector have made travelling easier and more accessible.

India is a great example of this trend – many hotels now offer virtual tours of their facilities, contactless check-ins, and other amenities such as food delivery apps and online booking systems to ensure that customers have the best experience possible. Technology has enabled them to take advantage of digital tools to provide remote services, while they have also come up with new ways of engaging customers and delivering new product offerings.

Change is thus driving innovation, digitalization and sustainability across the world – and India is no exception. With change comes opportunity, and it has never been more important to stay ahead of the curve in order to have a greater understanding of ourselves and the world around us. The key is to find ways to adapt and use change as an opportunity not only for growth but also thrive - leading to a better world for us all.

**Amitabh Kant**, G 20 Sherpa,  
Former NITI Aayog CEO

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# HEADWINDS OF CHANGE

Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future." - John F. Kennedy. This quote reminds me that change and disruption are inevitable. The Covid-19 pandemic has been a disruptive force across the world, and the travel, tourism, hospitality, and aviation industries have borne the brunt of it.

Global statistics of the downturn in these industries are daunting - travel was down 80% during the peak of the pandemic and India saw a maximum drop of 88%.

However, in the face of disruption and uncertainty, there are those who have risen and emerged as champions of change. This special Silver Jubilee Collector's edition showcases these inspirational leaders and companies that remind us that change is also an enabler and positive force in our businesses, our lives, and our society.

## ADAPTING TO DIGITAL DISRUPTION

A study by Harvard Business Review reveals, "The best response to disrupters is another thing people often get wrong. The default is to fight back with a new digital unit or a transformation. But there are three other valid strategies: doubling down on your existing strengths (as Disney did); retrenching to ensure your survival (as banks are doing); and moving into new opportunities (as Fuji did)."

Another Harvard paper on the impact of OpenAI's ChatGPT quotes Nobel prize winner Daniel Kahneman as saying that "Yes, AI may have flaws, but human reasoning is deeply flawed, too." Therefore, "Clearly AI is going to win," was Kahneman remark. "How people adjust is a fascinating problem."

## CHANGING CONTOURS OF TRAVEL

In a similar vein, the tourism industry acknowledges that the pandemic has revolutionized the very concept of travel. Sustainability is now a key issue with travellers be it the hotel, transport, or destination. Today businesses are operating in such a dynamic environment that there is a huge possibility of overnight changes in policies, procedures, prices, and products.

Adaptability remains our best bet in unlocking a better tomorrow.

*Kamal Gill*

(KAMAL GILL)





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# THE CONSCIOUS CAPITALIST

In a world obsessed with net worth, Ratan Tata's philanthropic endeavours speak volumes about the importance of doing business for the greater good.

**TT BUREAU**



Indians rarely agree upon anything. However, a quick internet survey would reveal that an overwhelming majority support Ratan Tata's name for India's highest civilian honour – the Bharat Ratna. In fact, in March 2022, a PIL was filed with the Delhi High Court, seeking to direct the government in bestowing the 82-year-old industrialist with the honour.

Although the matter was dismissed, the issue remains a topic of intense internet conversation and speculation. Videos of speeches and interviews by Ratan Tata generate hundreds of likes on the internet, with the comments section overflowing with praises on how the Tata family has been at the forefront of India's growth story. The praises are not entirely off-the-mark.

So far, only one industrialist has been awarded the honour – he too was from the Tata family. J.R.D. Tata, a distant relative of Ratan Tata, was awarded the rare honour for his contribution to the Indian industry.

### **INDIA'S FIRST FAMILY**

What makes the Tatas a tour de force in the Indian economy? For over five generations, the family has contributed immensely to the growth and development of India which has helped the country become what it is today. Established in 1868, the Tata Group is India's largest private conglomerate with hundreds of product offerings and footprints in more than 150 nations across the world. The success, however, has come with the able and visionary leadership of several Tata stalwarts, including Jamsetji Tata, Dorabji Tata, and JRD Tata.

Ratan Tata too has carried forward his family's legacy through his multi-billion dollar conglomerate that deals with everything – from IT services to civil aviation. Apart from possessing remarkable business foresight, he is also a great humanitarian who remains uncorrupted by fame and success. In a country with overwhelming poverty, there are only a handful of industrialists who are as admired as he is.

### **A GLOBAL ENTERPRISE**

While his predecessors, Jamsetji Tata and JRD Tata, were known as the fathers of the Indian industry and aviation respectively, Ratan Tata took the leap in making the Tata Group a truly global enterprise. At a time, when globalisation was making its hesitant steps, Ratan Tata acquired the ownerships of a number of international companies, thereby setting the trend of acquisitions for corporate India.

Beginning with Tata's acquisition of Tetley in 2000, he went on a shopping spree acquiring 36 companies in less than 9 years. Some of the most prominent acquisitions of the Tata Group, under Ratan Tata's tutelage, include Tetley's acquisition by Tata Tea, Tata Steel's acquisition of Anglo-Dutch steelmaker Corus, and Tata Motor's acquisition of automobile marquee Jaguar and Land Rover.

### **SWEET SUCCESS**

To be sure, Ratan Tata has had his fair share of failures. In 1998, he launched the Tata Indica Car, which failed to attract buyers' interest. This prompted the board and committee members to suggest that Ratan Tata sell the vehicle to Ford.

He and his team flew to the US to strike the deal with Ford. But according to rumour mills, the then-Ford chairman apparently "humiliated" him, saying that Ford would be doing a huge "favour" by buying the business. The deal did not go ahead. But it only strengthened his determination to make Tata Motors profitable. What happened later is one of the best failure-turned-success stories.

Tata Motors not only proved to be successful, but it was also profitable enough to buy two of Ford's most iconic brands – Jaguar and Land Rover – during the Great Recession of 2008 when Ford went bankrupt. Today, Tata Motors is one of the key players in the automotive manufacturing market, making passenger cars, trucks, vans, coaches and buses.

### **PHILANTHROPY**

His business achievements are matched in equal measure with his philanthropic endeavours. The holding company of the Group, Tata Sons is a private entity made up of several charitable trusts that own over 66% of the shares. The Tata family owns a very small percentage of the holding company. A large portion of the earnings of the company goes to charitable causes, making Tatas one of the largest philanthropic enterprises in the country.

It must be added here that much before corporate social responsibility became fashionable, Tatas were already making generous contributions to various non-profit organizations in the country. Over the years, both the scope and volume of philanthropic contributions have increased with the growth and expansion of the Tata Empire.

Ratan Tata's philanthropic initiatives include a broad range of areas, including health, education and rural development. Tata Education and Philanthropic Trust has donated 28 million USD to set up Tata Scholarship Fund, which provides financial aid to undergraduate students from India. The scholarship supports over 20 meritorious students to access quality education abroad regardless of their financial position.

In 2014, the Group donated 950 million INR to the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay to design and develop engineering principles suited to the needs of people and communities in India. It has also donated 750 million INR to the Centre for Neuroscience to study the underlying causes of Alzheimer's disease in India and evolve methods for early detection and treatment. During the Covid-19 crisis, the Group pledged and donated over 1,500 crore INR to fight the pandemic.

### **CONCLUSION**

Ratan Tata's name may not feature in the list of the richest people, but in a world obsessed with market cap and net worth, his contributions to the development of the country speak volumes. Although he has retired from active business, his guidance and ideology continue to influence the decisions of the board of directors of the Group who are driven by a desire to bring about a positive change rather than making just profits. Fuelled with empathy, compassion and a desire to give back to society, the Group continues to win the hearts of millions of Indians.



# HOME-GROWN GLOBAL ENTREPRENEUR

Anand Mahindra is the poster child of India Inc. – an epithet he richly deserves.

**TT BUREAU**

If there is any poster boy of Indian capitalism, it is Anand Mahindra. In 2013, *The Economist* called him the “face of Indian capitalism,” and it did so for very good reasons. Unlike the old-school entrepreneurs, Mahindra understands the value of innovation, knows the potential of social media, and has figured out a way to champion the cause of Indian home-grown entrepreneurship both domestically and internationally.

### **THE POSTER CHILD OF INDIAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

For those who are still unaware of his achievements, here’s a low-down: Mahindra, aged 67, helms the Mahindra Group, a conglomerate that, like the Tatas, has a presence in almost every sector of the Indian market – from aerospace to defence, from automobile to IT services.

He is a giant in the automobile space, especially in the SUV sector and sells the highest number of tractors in the world. But his influence extends far beyond business. An avid lover of film and photography, he has donated generously to the cause of the humanities and works tirelessly on various social causes – from climate change to the education of the girl child.

### **BACKGROUND**

Mahindra graduated in the year 1977 from the prestigious Harvard College and later secured an MBA from the Harvard Business School. He entered his family business of steel production in 1981 and shortly afterwards started diversification into other areas, such as real estate, hospitality and automobile.

In 1991, he took on the role of the deputy managing director of Mahindra and Mahindra Limited – a producer of off-road vehicles and agricultural tractors. He was also the co-promoter of Kotak Mahindra, one of the largest private sector banks in India, although later, he ceased to be a promoter and continued with his role as a non-executive director.

### **RISE AND EXPANSION**

Over the years, the Mahindra Group has expanded both organically and through some major acquisitions, including those of Peugeot Motorcycles, Holiday Club Resorts and Pininfarina S.P.A. Italy.

Today, it has ventured into several major industrial sectors, both domestically and internationally. But it is not his rapid expansion that has made him the face of Indian entrepreneurship.

### **A PRACTICAL NATIONALIST**

Mahindra has been an outspoken critic of crony capitalism and the red-tapism that afflicts the Indian economy. At the same time, the nationalist in him defends his country when it’s necessary.

In 2018, he vehemently criticized Steve Wozniak, the co-founder of Apple, when the latter said that Indians are hard workers but not creative people. He also recently mocked Winston Churchill, on the occasion of the Indian-origin Rishi Sunak becoming the prime minister of the UK, saying that Churchill had once said that all Indian leaders “will be men of low calibre and men of straw.”

### **A GLOBAL CITIZEN**

Despite wearing his patriotism on his sleeve, he is still a global citizen and has served on the advisory body on several international bodies, such as the UN Global Compact Board, Global Board of Advisors of the Council on Foreign Relations, and the World Bank Group’s Advisory Board for Doing Business.

### **PHILANTHROPY**

He uses his money and fame for causes that are close to his heart - be it donating generously to the Harvard Humanities Centre or initiating the Nanhi Kali programme for girls, almost 20 years back, much before the education of the girl child became fashionable in India.

The project has so far supported more than 1 lakh and 30,000 girls in India. His support for the arts is also well-known – a trait that is rarely seen among Indian capitalists, barring a few.

His Mahindra Blues Festival regularly sees breakthrough talents making it big in the Indian musical scene. Similarly, the Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards honours veteran stars from the world of theatrical arts.

### **HONOURS**

For both his philanthropy as well as his visionary leadership, he has received civilian honours in France and Italy. He was appointed the Knight in the National Order of the Legion of Honour by the President of the French Republic and conferred the title of the Grand Officer of the Star of Italy by the President of the country.

In 2014, he became the first recipient of the Harvard Alumni Association’s Medal. In his own country, he received the Padma Bhushan – the third-highest civilian honour – in 2020.

### **CONCLUSION**

Anand Mahindra’s worth, however, is not in the multiple honours or accolades he has received, but in his zeal for ushering in an entrepreneurial renaissance in India – one that believes in following principles of conscious capitalism along with fostering a competitive environment suitable for business growth.

Given his illustrious career, his long list of honours and his formidable achievements, one can safely say that he has been successful to a great extent.





# THE MIRACLE WORKER

Dr Preetha Reddy Executive Vice Chairperson, Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Limited, is on a mission to provide world-class, affordable healthcare to millions of Indians

**TT BUREAU**



There's only a handful of women entrepreneurs in India, especially in the field of pharmaceuticals and healthcare. The names, Apollo Hospitals, and Preetha Reddy are shining examples in this field.

Founded in the year, 1983, the Apollo Hospitals is one of the largest private healthcare companies based in India. Along with its eponymous hospital chains, the company also operates a chain of pharmacies, primary care and diagnostic centres, and digital healthcare services.

Helming such a large private healthcare company is no mean task, especially by a woman. However, Preetha Reddy has shown that nothing is impossible when there is will and determination to succeed.

### LEARNING FROM THE BEST

Preetha grew up in a family of doctors and observed her father closely during her growing up years. She recalls that during her youth, she used to visit HM Hospital, where her father, Dr. Pratap Reddy, a leading cardiologist of India, used to work. Preetha and her sisters watched their father closely as he went about his day providing healthcare to patients.

Those formative years were crucial as they helped in easing her into the family business. Preetha, like her sisters, never went to any fancy business school to learn the tricks of the trade. Everything she learnt, she learnt on the job.

### PURSUING HER DREAMS

Although she wanted to become a doctor and even secured an admission to Madras Medical College, she was eventually dissuaded from doing so by her father. She eventually opted for a course in Chemistry and even did a Masters course in Public Administration. Although, she got married at the tender age of 19, it did not prevent her pursuing her dreams.

### EARLY SUCCESSES

Preetha entered her family business in the 1989, when Apollo still was a small company having only a single 150-bed hospital in Chennai. Since then, the company has progressed by leaps and bounds. Today, Apollo is a giant player in the healthcare industry in India with more than 10,000 beds, 400 clinics and 5,000 pharmacies in the country. Under her leadership, the hospital chain has also been successful in getting the much-coveted JCI accreditation. She has also been instrumental in venturing into other areas of the healthcare business including the arms that deal with medical insurance, online consulting, primary care and diagnostics.

In 2014, she was elected unanimously as the executive vice chairperson of the company, succeeding her father. Under her, the number of beds grew exponentially when the company's annual turnover rose from 110 crore to over INR 3,860 crores.

### OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Although critics have frequently questioned her lack of a medical or a management degree, her colleagues and sisters say that her greatest strength is her people management skill. After all, the guiding principle of her father has been "providing the best medical care through tender loving care at the lowest possible



cost." People who have worked with her have repeatedly praised her problem-solving skills. Very early on, during her career, she was confronted by a strike by the hospital staff. Preetha came forward and resolved the dispute through talks and deliberation.

### PRIVATE HEALTHCARE IN INDIA

The path ahead, however, is not an easy one. While undoubtedly, there has been a rise in number of private hospitals in India, there is also a growing mistrust among the general Indian public regarding inflated hospital bills, quotas for doctors, opaque dealings between insurance providers and hospitals. However, Apollo Hospitals has been a shining example how world-class healthcare can be provided in India at price points that are a fraction of the healthcare cost in the west.

There are challenges galore. The Indian healthcare system imports a lion's share of its medical infrastructure from abroad. Life saving drugs are also often imported. The high custom duties that these product attract often make them expensive, thereby pushing up the healthcare costs. Furthermore, insurance cover among Indians remain pathetically low.

### ON THE RIGHT TRACK

The current Union government under the able leadership of Narendra Modi is on a mission to make healthcare affordable for all. For private players like Apollo, the incentives and schemes by the government are crucial factors for the overall growth of the sector.

The Ayushman Bharat scheme promises to be a game-changer, offering INR 5-lakh cover to poor and vulnerable families in India. This along with a host of new policies announced recently by the government, such as skilling Indian youth for medical services, focus on medical research and innovation, and increasing private-public partnership will prove to be beneficial, writes Preetha in a recent article in a leading newspaper.

### FUTURE PLANS

The Apollo Hospitals Limited helmed by Preetha is certainly leading the change in the healthcare sector from the front. The company is on an expansion plan and has earmarked INR 17,000 crore for setting up new beds and tertiary care units in North India. While providing affordable healthcare to a large population like that of India remains challenging, Apollo Hospitals has shown that with the right focus and priorities, nothing is impossible.





# THE DISRUPTIVE INNOVATOR

Through his wondrous innovations, Musk has truly proved his worth as one of the finest minds of our times

**TT BUREAU**



The term “disruptive innovator” may seem to have a negative ring to it, but in today’s day and age, every tech expert worth his name wants to be called one. Alas, very few succeed.

### **DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION**

For Elon Musk, however, the epithet comes naturally. His electric cars are a fine example of true-blue disruptive technology that has forced established players in the business to play the game as per his rules.

Musk also wears many other hats. He is also the founder of SpaceX, which designs and manufactures advanced rockets and wants to terraform Mars. Finally, he recently acquired Twitter for a neat sum of 44 billion USD, not for profit but, in his own words, to turn it into a “common digital town square, where a wide range of beliefs can be debated in a healthy manner.”

### **HUMBLE BEGINNINGS**

Born in South Africa, Musk developed an interest in computing and video gaming from early childhood. Although he studied physics and economics as a graduate student, it was technology in which Musk found his true calling.

In the mid-Nineties, he developed an internet city guide with maps, directions and information about local businesses that Compaq acquired for a hefty sum of 307 million USD. Musk later used this money to set up another company called X.com – an online financial services and email payments company. The company later changed its name to PayPal and was acquired by eBay. Here too, he received 175.8 million USD by selling his shares.

### **INITIAL SUCCESSES**

Musk’s first two ventures may have been short-lived, but they gave us a hint of what was to come in future. Both the companies – the online directory and the digital payments company – were way ahead of their time in terms of their product offerings. These initial ventures led to more sustainable enterprises in the coming years, starting with SpaceX – a company founded to reduce the costs of space exploration and colonize Mars.

### **BIG BREAKTHROUGH**

Among its many successes, one can count the making of reusable launch vehicles and engines as one of its enduring contributions. Although the colonization of Mars remains a distant dream, SpaceX nonetheless has been able to send a spacecraft to the International Space Station and a liquid propellant rocket to orbit the earth. In fact, SpaceX has flown and landed its Falcon 9 series of rockets over one hundred times.

### **THE TESLA REVOLUTION**

But Musk’s most enduring contribution to humanity has been Tesla – an automotive and clean energy company that manufactures, among other things, electric cars, solar panels and related products.

The company began its journey in 2003, producing the first generation Roadster – a battery-operated sports car that could travel 320 kilometres per charge. The vehicle was a great hit, despite its high price point and qualified for governmental incentives in many European countries. Next, Tesla entered the mainstream market with two models, both of which would eventually catapult the company to limelight, helping it to launch its IPO, get fresh rounds of funding and eventually reach a valuation of 1 trillion USD (the sixth US company to do so).

### **A SERIES OF INNOVATIONS**

Other innovations of Musk include the Hyperloop, a proposed high-speed transportation system that runs substantially free of air resistance; OpenAI, a non-profit company dedicated to the development of friendly AI meant for the larger public good, and Neuralink, a start-up that aims to connect AI with human intelligence.

It must be said here that not all of Musk’s invention has seen fruition. Several of his dreams are still unrealized. For instance, SpaceX is nowhere close to terraforming the red planet. The company spends millions of dollars on research and development without government support. However, its success depends to a large extent on the successful launches of missions – a feat that is incredibly hard to achieve. Similarly critics have also raised doubts about the efficacy of the Hyperloop, arguing that cost of production simply does not justify such an expensive enterprise. Finally, Tesla’s driverless cars have also raised concerns of safety.

### **FINEST TECHNOCRAT**

Despite these failures, Musk remains undeterred. He realizes that he has lofty ambitions. But, nonetheless, he works hard to achieve them, often slogging for 80 to 100 hours a week. While there has been criticism of his micromanagement style of leadership, but Musk says that his extreme micromanagement helps in refining the product through constant prototyping and testing.

He approaches all this business plan from the point of view of an innovator with a scope for betterment. This has worked wonders for many of his companies, especially for Tesla, which now produces some of the finest electric vehicles in the world.

While the jury is still out on the efficacy and the sustainability of his businesses, there’s no doubt that Musk has proved his worth as one of the finest technocratic minds of our times.



# MAN OF THE HOUR

Adar Poonawalla's role in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic has been unparalleled.

TT BUREAU





**T**he names, Adar Poonawalla and the Serum Institute of India (SII), have been a part of our everyday conversation for the past two years. However, the company has been quietly manufacturing vaccines for the past five decades. Even before the deadly Covid-19 pandemic hit the world two years ago, the institute was already the largest manufacturer of vaccines in the world (by the number of doses produced and sold).

Largely unknown to domestic consumers, the company had earned admiration from all over the world. In fact, billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates was so impressed by the work of the institute that his non-profit organization, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, donated over 300 million USD to SII to manufacture the crucial Covid-19 vaccine when it fell short of funds.

### **A HOUSEHOLD HERO**

It was Poonawalla's role during the Covid-19 crisis that made him a household name. His visionary leadership and farsightedness not only helped India to withstand the Covid-19 crisis but also made sure that in a country with very little awareness about vaccines, people took inoculation seriously. Thanks to the early roll-out of the vaccine, India was able to not only tide over the crisis but also send surplus doses to poor African nations. It was this vaccine diplomacy that earned the country a lot of accolades from various international quarters, including the World Health Organization (WHO).

### **HIS JOURNEY IN THE WORLD OF VACCINES**

Poonawalla's journey is indeed worthy of emulation. Educated in Poona and the University of Westminster, he joined SII in 2001. He focussed on the international market, making sure that the products are licensed and prequalified by the World Health Organization for supply to international agencies like UNICEF and PAHO.

In 2011, he became the CEO of the company, overtaking the day-to-day affairs of the company. As a CEO, his job was to bring down the prices of vaccines in the world for the benefit of poor and vulnerable communities. He also concentrated on experimenting and innovating with new vaccine types for different viruses.

### **THE COVID-19 CRISIS**

Yet, the importance of SII was little understood by the masses. Covid-19 seemed to change the fortune of the company forever. When the pandemic first broke out in late 2019, no one had any idea about the impact the scourge would have. Vaccine research which usually takes years was started on a war footing. In India, SII took the lead in producing a credible Covid-19 vaccine by partnering with Astra Zeneca. It received emergency approval for the vaccine in India as well as in several low and middle-income countries, such as Argentina, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico, etc. The vaccine was

shown to be safe in clinical trials at preventing symptomatic Covid-19 cases with no cases of hospitalization after 14 days of the second dose.

Poonawalla took charge of producing mass doses of the vaccine even before it had cleared all the safety tests. It was not only a huge risk but one that could potentially go wrong. But for him taking risks is a part of his overall leadership strategy. In a recent interview with Money Control, he said, "If you don't bet on your strategy early and execute, the market won't be there for you. Take your risk, build your team and remain focussed."

### **A VISIONARY LEADERSHIP**

His strong leadership skills are matched in equal measure by his strong opinion about everything. Be it vaccine diplomacy or climate change, Poonawalla is not afraid of speaking his mind.

For instance, when he was asked about the handling of the Covid-19 crisis by the international community, he said that he wished there was greater cooperation and sharing of resources and knowledge regarding vaccines by countries. Similarly, when the Finance Minister of India released the first tranche of financial aid, he tweeted, "Given the scale of disruption a relief package of at least \$200 billion should supercharge spending and restore confidence in our economy. We can recover it back through taxes as our growth rate moves beyond 6 per cent. I hope our FM announces this in phases soon."

His tough decisions and plain-speak have often landed him in trouble. During the peak of the Covid-19 wave, he claimed that he received threats from some of the most powerful people in the country, prompting the Indian government to provide him with Y-category security. It also led him to fly out of India and live in London for an extended time. Later, he clarified that his move to London was part of a larger plan to expand the global footprint of the company and set up a manufacturing hub in the UK.

### **FUTURE PLANS**

Since then, much water has flown under the bridge. The SII since December 2021 has stopped the production of the Covid-19 vaccine due to the waning of the pandemic situation and the low demand among the population. But Poonawalla is undeterred. He is now looking to expand India's vaccine manufacturing capacity and find new frontiers to invest his family's fortunes in greener pastures. He plans to open manufacturing units in Africa and manufacture vaccines for diphtheria, BCG, measles, rubella and other conditions. He believes that the next decade will be the golden age of vaccine manufacturing in India.

Given his visionary leadership skills and business acumen, one is sure that the Serum Institute's future and that of Adar Poonawalla look bright and shiny.



# QUEEN OF HEARTS

From an awkward starlet to being considered one of the finest actors of her generation, the story of Alia Bhatt is nothing short of a miracle.

TT BUREAU





**T**he transformation of Alia Bhatt from a chubby, awkward starlet to the reigning diva of our times has been an epic one. When she started off in Karan Johar's *Student of the Year*, almost 10 years back, no one took her seriously. She was instantly dismissed as just another star kid trying to use her father's connection to make it big in the film world.

To make things worse, her appearance in the hit show, *Koffee with Karan*, and her subsequent faux pas with regard to a question about the president of India made her the butt of countless internet memes and jokes. Fast forward 10 years, and she is now helming solo-heroine projects – a phenomenon rarely seen in Bollywood.

### **AN AWKWARD START**

Bhatt's first venture in cinema was Karan Johar's home production, *Student of the Year*. There, she played, what film critic Anupama Chopra called, a watered-down version of Kareena Kapoor's character in *Kabhie Khushi Kabhie Ghum* that lacked a "killer attitude".

Other critics were equally harsh. *Hollywood Reporter* called her a "total washout" and noted how "inelegant" she was in most of her dance numbers.

### **TOWARDS A NEW BEGINNING**

Dismayed by poor reviews, Bhatt began taking up more challenging roles. People first took notice of her acting calibre in the movie, *Highway*, where she played the role of an abducted girl with Stockholm syndrome. Bhatt's performance effectively captured the pain and the trauma of a girl struggling with the ghosts of her past and her feelings for her captor.

But it was her role in the 2016 crime drama, *Uda Punjab*, which had both critics and audiences swooning over her performance. For the role, Bhatt watched hours of documentaries on substance abuse and even learnt to speak Hindi with a Bihari accent.

### **THE RISE AND RISE OF BHATT**

Her first major hit in a solo-heroine project came with the espionage thriller *Raazi* which saw her essay the role of a spy working for India during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971.

The huge commercial success of the film proved that she alone was capable of bringing audiences to the theatre without the help of a male hero. She further buttressed this position with the 2022 film, *Gangubai Kathiawadi*, where her portrayal as a sex worker earned rave reviews, including one from *The Guardian*, which included her performance in its listing of best big-screen performances of all time.

### **OTHER VENTURES**

While her on-screen performance has steadily improved, her off-screen endeavours too have seen a rise. She has ventured into film production and has even starred in a Hollywood film

– a feat managed so far by only a handful of actors in India.

Her maiden venture as a producer, *Darlings*, explored the sensitive issue of domestic violence through the prism of a dark comedy. The film amassed over 10 million hours of view on Netflix and won rave reviews for the storyline, direction and performances of the lead star cast. Bhatt would be next seen in the Hollywood spy thriller, *Heart of Stone*.

### **BRAND VALUE**

With the steady successes of her films, Bhatt has also seen a rise in her brand value, which as per 2022 estimates stands at USD 68.1 million. She endorses a range of high-profile brands, including *Coco Cola*, *Garnier* and *Maybelline*.

While Bollywood celebrity endorsements are not uncommon, it must be noted that most of the top valuable



celebs in India are male. In a list prepared by Duff & Phelps, Deepika Padukone and Alia Bhatt were the only two female celebrities who managed to feature despite the overwhelming presence of men.

She has also consistently featured in power lists prepared by magazines and digital platforms, including the 50 most influential people in India by *GQ* and the *Forbes* 100 list. The crowning glory of her career came this year when she won the *TIME* 100 Impact Award for her contribution to the film industry.

### **CONCLUSION**

For a starlet who was dismissed as another fly-by-the-night actor, Bhatt has consistently proved her critics wrong. From physically transforming herself to proving her mettle as a power-packed performer, Bhatt has left no stone unturned to prove to the world that she is far more than a star kid.

In fact, it would not be far-fetched to say that she indeed is one of the finest actors of her generation, who effortlessly traverses between script-oriented movies and big-budget films.

While her choice of some films has been questionable, she has time and again tried to rise above the averageness of the script to prove her worth as an artist and a performer.



# REDEFINING THE RULES REIMAGINING THE BUSINESS

Change maybe the only constant in life and business, but our ability to respond to change defines the best of leaders and champions.

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The world, fueled by globalisation, powered by technology and connected by ideas came to a screeching halt over two years ago, with an unprecedented global health crisis taking the spotlight. Borders closed overnight, travel came to a stop and businesses paused operations; all while keeping teams and team spirit alive.

Travel and tourism, one of the biggest industries in the world accounting for over 10% of global GDP, had in modern history never ever seen such a steep decline and a frozen business environment. As with every dark cloud, there comes a silver lining. The global pause became the crucible of business restructuring, as teams went online and processes needed to be overhauled, almost immediately.

Business leaders sat down to look at balance sheets and profits, beyond numbers and evaluated the value of human capital. Mindsets evolved as hybrid work models emerged to keep the economy and cash flows moving. Technology and digital communications kept the world connected, and boundaries began to blur. We became digital citizens, connecting over ideas, overstepping time-zones and sharing talents, skills and thoughts through social media.

Travel, tourism and hospitality – the industry that pre-pandemic had generated over 9 trillion USD in 2019, was amongst the ones which bore the brunt of the unexpected

global crisis. For an industry that depended on cross-border movement of people, it was a time of business solidarity and rethinking a better future. One that would be resilient to withstand the unknown yet supple enough to make the most of every challenge that was thrown in its way.

If the global pandemic was a mammoth unprecedented change; the leaders of tourism, travel and hospitality became the champions of leading through this change with their chin up. The usual methods of doing business were restructured, marketing plans went digital, menus were uploaded onto websites, QR codes and contactless dining became the buzzwords – in a nutshell, the biggest industry in the world was on its way to not only master this new change but lead its way well into the future.

When borders were closed, digital travel took flight. Destinations opened up their websites to digital nomads, restaurants and hotels soon partnered with technology partners and aggregators to entice customers with their tastiest menus. Webinars, industry forums became online meets; sales and marketing teams met on digital platforms to connect with guests and patrons, social media ramped up its presence, learning and development switched to online modules and courses.

The travel, tourism and hospitality industry, which thrives on structure, processes and hierarchy adapted swiftly and surely to the new frontiers of change, empowering a digital

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world to still have travel dreams and itineraries, which were to become reality, as the post-pandemic world were to emerge.

As travel takes off to a flying start once again, and hotel lobbies begin to throb with the anticipation of check-ins and check-outs, Today's Traveller 'Champions of Change' brings together an eclectic, inspiring collection of stories of such change makers. They stayed put in the face of business adversity, adapted to unlearning the old and embracing the new and today stand poised to bring forward the new era of business and industry success, within their teams and beyond their roles.

The global pandemic has changed business models and mindsets irrevocably. Digital mediums and technology, which hitherto was relegated to a select group has today become the mainstay of millions. From payments to ticketing, online dining to food aggregators, cloud kitchens to homestays, the pandemic had ushered in hybrid models, across industries, services, skills and sectors.

Traditional business models in travel, tourism and hospitality which had perfected the art of 'Atithi Devo Bhava' or 'Guest is God' from the hotel lobby have today evolved to engaging with guests right from the first click on their websites. The boundaries of reality today overlap both virtual and actual worlds, and the 'Champions of Change' in our book have bravely and proactively chosen to be part of the post pandemic new business environment.

The business and commerce ecosystem of tourism, travel and hospitality may return to pre-pandemic revenues, however the mindset shift is of a more permanent nature. The change in the eco-system begets new leadership paradigms and initiatives that will future-proof the industry and its future leaders, making way for business models that are inclusive, open to new ideas and forward acting in every way.

As an industry whose economics is acutely prone to being affected by socio-political changes, the ecosystem in hospitality, travel and tourism has to invest in its human capital all the more today. Future leaders have to be groomed today, with industry and global workplace exposure, to take up senior roles across domains when the time comes.

The trio of travel, tourism and hospitality fosters the career ecosystem for young talent, and to retain this human capital for future roles and leadership is paramount. Diversity, equity and inclusion are no longer human resource catch phrases – they are the pillars of a strong, resilient workforce that can embrace change quickly while retaining the ethos of discipline and leadership across ages. Representation requires policies and programs that train today's employees to become global leaders who will lead with empathy and experience.

The pandemic was a time for reassessing oft-repeated business practices, amongst them the slow adaptation to technology being the one to take a beating almost overnight. Travel, tourism and hospitality in the post-pandemic world have to invest in technology and digital mediums to engage, inform and retain guests from a virtual to actual experience.

The global pandemic has eased the use of technology for millions, and it presents a fantastic opportunity for the hospitality and tourism industries to cash in on this new-found digital engagement of new netizens. Destination marketing can become the new forefront of digital media for countries and brands alike, and hospitality brands can ease the use of their web mediums for a more guest-centric interface.

The pandemic has also brought into sharp focus the need to look closer to home for business that is sustainable and hyperlocal in practice. As people ease into travel once again, it is paramount to remember that India as a country has a plethora of hyperlocal tourist places and experiences that can be tapped into. Merely leaning on high inbound numbers will not sustain travel, tourism and hospitality in the new Indian ecosystem. The domestic, home-grown and local travel scenario has to be looked upon with greater focus, adequate investment and industry coalition to develop a thriving domestic tourism portfolio.

From big hotel chains to local homestays, Indian tourism and hospitality must drive the trend to popularise domestic interstate tourism, elevating stay and culinary experiences. India's immense cultural, culinary, socio-religious and health tourism potential remains vastly untapped for its domestic travel enthusiasts. The pandemic has highlighted the crucial need to develop strong local tourism base which can become employment and revenue generators in uncertain times. A strong bulwark to weather global uncertainty, and keep the industry going.

The post pandemic industry dynamics today are at an interesting inflection point. The pre-pandemic era was indeed a time for rapid expansion, a trillion-dollar global industry which generated revenues and employment across countries. The pandemic pause has allowed for reflection of age old business practices and blind-spots to be addressed and corrected, so that the post-pandemic run of this huge industry stands strong and self-sustaining.

With Champions of Change, our aim is to celebrate and honour those outstanding leaders, trend-setters and brand-makers who saw the uncertain times as an opportunity to herald a new era of travel and hospitality in India. They have made bold moves, restructured businesses as needed and ushered in change through innovation and leadership, while retaining empathy, kindness and fun along the way.

The past two years have not been easy, but then, no change ever comes with a manual of being accommodating. It is through continuous development, focus and keeping team spirit alive, that leaders and brands usher in their finest moments of triumph.

Their stories today, is of the rainbows that shine when the sun starts shining again. From building new revenue streams to keeping teams together, pioneering learning and development goals to charting collective efforts at brand building, these leaders and mentors showed the way on how to come back stronger.



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*Titans*



# CALLING THE SHOTS

KB Kachru, Chairman Emeritus & Principal Advisor, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group, in his three-decade association with the brand has helped its strategic growth and expansion making it a key player in Indian hospitality.

TT BUREAU



**K**B Kachru's achievements and contribution to Indian hospitality go beyond the pages of making Radisson Hotel Group a game-changer in the industry. In true leadership style, KB Kachru has shown time and again why he has always bet big on India, and how he made an international brand become synonymous with Indian travellers.

A believer in teamwork above self, KB Kachru epitomises the spirit of 'Champions of Change' and shares his insights on how the future of Indian hospitality will evolve in the years to come.

"There are three constants in life – change, choice and principles", says KB Kachru, quoting late author and leadership guru Stephen Covey. He continues, "Every opportunity and adversity rests on these three fundamentals, be it life or business cycles, it always comes down to how strong the basics are. Hospitality is one of the largest industries globally, generating revenues across nations, and the pandemic, though unprecedented, is the silver lining for us to reflect upon our business basics, restructure our processes and get prepared for the future."

Kachru believes that as business leaders and owners, the pandemic totally gave all players a makeover time to understand that human health and commerce are inextricably linked. As an industry that transcends time zones, hospitality is one of the largest revenue generators in the world and facilitates the movement of human capital across nations.

Even as the world moves towards a post-pandemic global recession, it is imperative to look ahead at business cycle recovery and take every measure to ensure that the impact on the livelihood of those engaged in this industry is cushioned to the best of their abilities.

Kachru is convinced that technology and talent will drive the future and investing in human potential is always a good place to start afresh. Domestic tourism will continue to be the flagbearer of recovery and it is time that we gave it its rightful place in the sun.

#### **'YES, I CAN' AND 'INDIA UNIFICATION PLAN'**

In an insightful take, Kachru shares, "The global pandemic has singularly overturned conventional business aptitude on its head, and this also presented us with an opportunity to embrace change on the front foot. The unprecedented slowdown gave us the time to step off the growth accelerator and take an overview of our brand and business."

He adds, "As a global stakeholder in Indian hospitality, we have had a two-pronged focus drawn for navigating business challenges during the pandemic and post-pandemic scenarios. Steady business continuity, cost optimization, and a positive return on investment for our owners were our immediate concerns to look into, as the global pandemic escalated. Simultaneously, protecting the livelihood of our team members, and attracting and retaining the right talent

became our next areas of focus. We implemented the 'India Unification Plan', which has helped us turn around our growth by leveraging the strength of our network and recalibrating our business strategy."

For Radisson Hotel Group team members, who aspire to be part of the brand and industry, the brand is committed to 'Radisson Future Leaders' program, which empowers young hospitality leaders and hotel school graduates to have holistic exposure to inter-departmental training, corporate office administration, participation in the General Manager's engagement workshops, and pre-opening operations to accelerate their careers. Radisson Hotel Group actively hones new talent, and at Radisson Hotel Group, team members truly have a 'Yes, I Can' spirit that drives everyday excellence at work.

#### **TALENT, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**

"Our investments are focussed on talent and technology, which we believe will drive the next generation of growth in hospitality," says Kachru, adding, "Our business projection over the next three years includes 12 to 15 new openings every year, which will create over 6000 jobs, across various verticals. Our technology investment includes EMMA which is Radisson Hotel Group's unified technology platform."

This 360-degree customer experience platform is designed to encompass revenue management, property management, and business analytics. "As the brand evolves and grows deeper across newer markets in India, we look forward to strengthening our presence in new leisure destinations along with a conscious effort towards a high-performance, technology-driven mindset," asserts Kachru.

#### **CHALLENGING PARADIGMS AND TRANSFORMING THE FUTURE**

Change when initiated proactively cuts through resistance and helps drive innovation. "At Radisson Hotel Group, we have used the last few years in redefining our brand portfolio and ushering in measures that will help us stay in business in the years to come. We represent one of the most widely connected domestic networks in India today and are present within a four-hour drive across the length and breadth of the country. This strategic advantage and our technology and human capital investments are empowering us for a future-ready organisation. Delivering a scale of operations with a structured approach and a quality-driven mindset is our growth game," points out Kachru.

Great hotels are created and led by hoteliers who put consumers first and can develop great teams who have a sense of ownership and empathy for all stakeholders – owners, colleagues, and guests. Developing a culture where individual members can build and innovate in delivering the highest customer service standards is what defines a passionate leader. "This is something that I as an individual have always championed and will continue to do so," concludes Kachru.



# LEADING TRANSFORMATION

Puneet Chhatwal, MD & CEO, IHCL, has led the transformation of IHCL in becoming one of India's leading hospitality companies, and has set a new benchmark for the industry.

## TT BUREAU

Puneet Chhatwal's tenacious dedication and passion for excellence have propelled the organization forward into new markets and opportunities. He is a true Champion of Change who is helping to shape the future of India's hospitality industry. He shares his thoughts on the way forward...

"I would like to begin with Darwin's Origin of Species, 'it is not the most intellectual of the species that survives; it is not the strongest that survives; but the species that survives is the one that is able best to adapt and adjust to the changing environment in which it finds itself.' We all came away imbibing the insight that has been around for ages. It was truly a transformative period and today's organisations need champions who welcome change while creating flexible and responsive institutions.

While the pandemic is past us we haven't forgotten that COVID-19 triggered a global crisis like no other—a health crisis resulting in the worst recession since the Second World War. It continues to impact the economy causing deep damage that will extend to fundamental factors of growth and have a long lasting impact on people's lives.

As one of the key contributors to the GDP of the country and one of the largest sources of employment, the hospitality industry is an invaluable asset to India's overall economic development. And the recovery of the hospitality and tourism industry will be the key to India's economic revival while further tapping into the travel and tourism potential of India.



## EVERY CRISIS HAS AN OPPORTUNITY

The unprecedented crisis presented an opportunity to adapt to change. It inspired us to re-imagine our business and pushed us to think like a start-up, as we have expanded the boundaries of our creativity and innovative skills to explore offerings that have been untapped.

In response to the pandemic, IHCL moved quickly and devised a fresh strategy RESET 2020, to tackle the new scenario.

## INNOVATIONS AND NEW BUSINESSES

The new reality required a new approach from the organisation. In the hospitality sector too, consumer expectations led to changes in ways in which the hospitality industry conducts its business.

Post the pandemic, people are gravitating more than ever towards trusted and authentic brands with well-defined propositions, and safety and service standards. Customer preferences have changed and people are more accustomed to technology.

Customer demand for frictionless experiences is transforming the hotel experience from dreaming to booking to check-out. Contactless payments have become more popular in retail settings, while mobile check-ins have emerged in hotels, restaurants and airports. Many of these technologies have grown because they help to reduce contact and cut waiting times.

The growing awareness about the environment and the impact of our actions on it have made people more conscious about the brands they associate with. People are increasingly choosing brands with sustainability at the core.

In response, IHCL introduced new businesses like Qmin, our culinary and food delivery platform, in June 2020. Today, Qmin is available across 25 cities in India and has grown across multiple formats like food trucks, QSR's and cafes.

It was the right opportunity for us to focus on expanding ama Stays & Trails – our homestay portfolio, which today is over 100 bungalows of which 43 are under development. Throughout, the pandemic we were focused on building a sustainable tourism landscape and to that effort, IHCL launched Paathya - a framework to drive all our sustainability and social impact measures.

Despite the pandemic we continued to sign and open new hotels and emerged to be one of the fastest growing hospitality companies in India during this period. All of these developments will chart an exciting journey for IHCL in the years to come.

## EMPLOYEES MORALE

Among many things, the crisis has reinforced the importance of communication. It became the key connect between the organisation and its employees and it was instrumental in keeping the morale high. Transparent and honest



communication with empathy is imperative to leadership as well as organisational growth.

In addition, under the umbrella of Taj@Family - IHCL continued to extend support to its employees and their families including rehabilitation, providing food, medicines and other support for children and dependents of those hospitalized.

## COMMUNITY AT HEART

As the scourge of the virus continued and the country faced one of the biggest humanitarian crisis, we at IHCL extended ourselves in assisting with India's fight against the pandemic. The entire industry came together to support those in need.

We at IHCL have always believed that community is the reason for our existence, and we continued to be guided by our values and purpose during the pandemic. We launched "Meals to Smiles" initiative which served over 4.5 million meals to healthcare workers, migrants and others across the country and offered room stays to the medical fraternity at our hotels across the country.

Taj was recognised as the World's Strongest Hotel Brand twice in a row as per Brand Finance 2021 and 22, reiterating our stakeholders' continued trust in us. It was a matter of great pride, not only for us but for the Indian hospitality industry to shine on the global stage.

## MANAGING CHANGE

If change is the only constant, then managing and leading change just might be the most essential attribute for leaders to master.

Stepping into the future, organisations must look out for managers who have the capacity to view every unforeseen change as an opportunity to grow. Going forward the scale, pace and frequency of change will be enormous.

Every company will need leaders who are change champions and guide their employees through uncertainty and upheaval while inspiring a culture of exponential growth.



# THE LAST BLACK UNICORN

Funny, down-to-earth and bawdy, Tiffany Haddish knows how to use the power of comedy to heal others

TT BUREAU

There aren't many people who can turn tears into laughter, sorrows into moments of celebration. Comedians, such as Robin Williams, Jim Carrey and Joan Rivers, are just some of the funny men and women, who have overcome personal tragedies to create art on the screen and the television.

While growing up in the United States of America as a person of colour, Tiffany Haddish — one of the most promising newcomers in the field of stand-up comedy — had to face an abusive father, bullying, homelessness and racial injustice. But she found an opportunity to turn her tragedies, heartbreaks and failures into an opportunity to make people laugh. Although she is over forty and has been in the business for long, her breakthrough performance only came as late as 2017, when she starred in *Girls Trip*, a buddy comedy, where she starred as a loud, happy-go-lucky friend of Regina Hall.

Her performance did the same thing to her career what Melissa McCarthy's performance in 2011 film *Bridesmaids* did to *Bridesmaids* (minus the Academy nod). Since then, however, her career has skyrocketed. She won a Primetime Emmy Award for her work in an episode of *Saturday Night Live*, published a memoir and executive produced and voiced the character of Tuca — a life-sized anthropomorphic Toucan bird, who lives with her best friend in the same apartment building.

The film that inspired her was the 1988 cult classic *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*. Speaking to the media, Haddish once said, "I watched *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* one day, and the detective asked the rabbit, 'Why are all of these people doing nice things for you?' He goes, 'Because I make them laugh. If you make them laugh, people will do anything for you.'"

Thankfully, she followed her heart and after a few successful comedy gigs, opportunities came knocking



at the door. From taking up stand-up specials like *Who's Got Jokes* to special appearances in OWN's *If Loving You Is Wrong*, she took several acting opportunities, which catapulted her to the limelight.

She finally wrote a book called *The Last Black Unicorn*. It chronicles her difficult upbringing in one of poorest quarters of south-central Los Angeles through a series of essays. But like its author, the book is inspiring, funny and brutally honest.

Unicorns are rare, magical creatures that only exist in myths and folklores. Haddish is indeed one of such unique creatures who uses her trauma to turn it over its head, making other people laugh.

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# RESPONSIBLE LUXURY

With sustainability at the heart of everything they do, ITC Hotels offer world-class luxury in harmony with the environment and society by setting new benchmarks for Planet Positivity.

## TT BUREAU

ong synonymous with immersive luxury, ITC Hotels are famed for their hospitality ecosystem and curating a mosaic of authentic, indigenous luxury experiences. While sustainability is revolutionising every facet of the world at the moment, for the prodigious ITC Hotels, eco-consciousness is a core belief that was introduced over a decade ago.

With several awards and accolades under their belt for the pioneering innovations that combine grandeur with eco-efficiency, sustainability is incorporated into the very essence of ITC Hotels—all their properties and services reflect an inherent commitment to be ecologically sound—be it design or the detailing that goes behind creating iconic hotels that celebrate the destination and its local culture through cuisine, decor, and art. Brandishing innovation in sustainable luxury from using renewable energy to recycling solid waste and conserving water, these initiatives don't even begin to scratch the surface of the endless measures taken by the brand in order to bring their guiding premise—Responsible Luxury—to life, while offering unparalleled bespoke experiences to their guests.

### ITC GRAND CHOLA

Located in the heart of Chennai is the palatial ITC Grand Chola, a veritable destination in itself. Exhibiting awe-inspiring architecture, the property's grandeur reveals sustainability at its helm: as the World's second and largest "LEED Zero Carbon Certified" hotel and largest LEED platinum certified hotel during inception, ITC Grand Chola meets close to entire of its electrical energy demand through wind & solar farms and

also successfully achieves almost complete recycling of waste generated by hotel operations.

### ITC GARDENIA

Set in the heart of Bengaluru, ITC Gardenia is an ode to the city's lush gardens and is the first hotel in Asia to have a LEED platinum rating in the new construction category. It is World's third hotel to achieve "LEED Zero Carbon Certification". A breath of fresh air in the lively metropolis, ITC Gardenia reflects the brand's unwavering commitment to planet-positivity with a unique wind cooled lobby and by harnessing renewable energy, recycling water and solid waste, and sourcing a significant portion of ingredients locally to curate an ingeniously opulent experience for their discerning guests.

### ITC KOHENUR

Nestled in Hyderabad's new business district, ITC Kohenuur overlooks the picturesque Durgam lake. Taking inspiration from the famed jewel, the property boasts excellence in accommodations and experiences that mirror Eco consciousness at its roots. The LEED platinum rated hotel is constructed at a specific alignment to optimise its interaction with the sun, maintaining an ideal balance of sunshine and shade to enable effective cooling.

### ITC MAURYA

An imposing structure of timeless luxury and inspiring architecture, ITC Maurya, New Delhi, epitomises luxury with a conscience in its truest sense—with the world's first



solar paraboloid concentrator in the hospitality landscape, renewable energy is harnessed, water is recycled and reused to prevent wastage.

### ITC WINDSOR

The First hotel in the World to receive the LEED Zero Carbon Certification, ITC Windsor is imbued with an endless charm and overlooks the rolling greens of Bangalore Golf Club. Almost entire electrical demand of the hotel is met through renewable energy sources. With an exquisite facade rich with intricate details, one can only expect true opulence to come into realisation inside, married with environmental stewardship.

### SUSTAINABILITY AT ITS CORE

ITC Hotels has been a pioneer when it comes to setting new benchmarks in planet positive initiatives, which is evident in the luxury hotel chain's many measures. From using renewable energy, recycling solid waste, conserving water, and mitigating usage of single use plastic, to reducing their carbon footprint at every step, ITC Hotels has made significant strides in safeguarding biodiversity. Here's looking at the five main pillars that the brand's long-standing focus on sustainability firmly rests on:

#### DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE

As much as good design and architecture is about being innovative and aesthetic, it is also about being eco-conscious and reducing the environmental impact. And, when it comes to employing sustainable practises in design, ITC Hotels is leading by example. The hotel chain holds the title of being amongst the first, largest and greenest chains in the world to achieve LEED platinum certification (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) for all its luxury properties in the country. This global rating granted by the U.S Green Building Council is the highest certification awarded to organisations around the world who are employing sustainable practices.

#### WATER CONSERVATION

From reducing water consumption at all hotels and recycling water, to augmenting rainwater harvesting activities and employing unique methods of irrigation, ITC Hotels has reduced its fresh water consumption significantly over the last few years with entire wastewater being treated and recycled and reused. In fact, adding to their mission is the SunyaAqua programme that purifies drinking water inside the hotel premises using a state-of-the-art bottling and filtration technology that meets stringent global standards.



#### RENEWABLE ENERGY

To ensure a positive environmental footprint, ITC Hotels has adopted a low-carbon growth strategy which focuses on enhanced use of renewable energy sources as well as reduction in energy consumption.

The brand's over a decade long commitment towards sustainability has resulted in over 57 percent of the total electrical energy requirements being fulfilled through renewable sources such as windmill farms and solar panels. In addition, major portion of electrical energy at ITC Mughal, ITC Rajputana, ITC Maratha, ITC Grand Central, ITC Windsor, ITC Gardenia, ITC Grand Chola, Welcomhotel Sheraton New Delhi, Welcomhotel Bengaluru, Welcomhotel Chennai, Welcomhotel Coimbatore, Welcomhotel Guntur and others is met through renewable sources.

#### WASTE RECYCLING

More than 99 percent of the solid waste generated in the hotels is recycled / reused. Organic waste is converted into manure through OWC machines and many properties such as ITC Maurya, ITC Maratha, ITC Grand Bharat, ITC Grand Goa and Welcomhotel Sheraton New Delhi also have an onsite biogas plant, where biogas generated from waste is utilized in hotel kitchens for cooking.

#### LOCAL SOURCING

Over 50 percent of the food consumables used at ITC hotels are sourced locally ensuring reduced carbon footprint by saving on transportation costs, packing costs and fuel costs. What does this essentially mean? The produce does not need cold storage, the consumables come from local farmers or communities, ensuring your food is organic. That's not all. Over 70 percent of paper, stationery and wood used at ITC Hotels is either FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified, sourced locally or recycled.

#### MITIGATION OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC

ITC Hotels is among the First hotel chains to mitigate single use plastic by about 2.5 Lakh Kg/year. The key contributors identified were 150 lakh water bottles, 15 lakh straws, 8 lakh stirrers, 8 lakh toothbrushes, 7 lakh ear buds, 3 lakh shoe shine and others. These plastic items have been replaced with a sustainable & eco-friendly alternative.

Two simple words, though rarely found together, have become the bedrock of belief and commitment for ITC Hotels- Responsible Luxury. This is luxury most certainly, but luxury with a conscience.



# RADICALLY PROGRESSIVE

Radisson Hotel Group believes that change remains the only constant as it expands the brand's focus to three crucial components of the hospitality industry – Climate, Communities, and Consumers.

## TT BUREAU

The hospitality industry is known for its versatility in providing seamless experiences to guests and patrons, keeping pace with the ever-evolving needs and expectations of the times. The industry has changed drastically in the past two decades, adding considerable contemporary elements to the sector. Ranging from the pre-pandemic time span to the post-pandemic shift, developments have taken place in the domains of hotel ownership and management, the expansion and development of online reservation systems, and the proliferation of lodging options. New age consumers seek more personalized experiences, especially when they have all the information and lodging options available at a click on their smartphones.

Change remains the only constant and this is certainly true from a hoteliers' perspective. With the continuous shift in consumer needs, new trends, and competition, the need to identify and adapt to these changes is critical to surviving and thriving in this industry. Business ecosystem today has to integrate systems and processes that are forward acting and calculate their impact across nature, environment, and culture. Thus, the new trend is expanding the brand's focus to three crucial components of the hospitality industry – Climate, Communities, and Consumers.

Radisson Hotel Group, with a focus on expanding its India portfolio to 100 hotels by end 2025, aims to precisely do that. Federico Gonzalez, CEO, Radisson Hotel Group is



**Zubin Saxena**, Managing Director & Vice President of Operations, South Asia at Radisson Hotel Group

bullish on India's growth story and definitely keen to make Radisson leading the hospitality success chart in terms of hotel footprint, revenue maximisation and sustainable travel. As he says "India's development and speed of change is rapid. Asia Pacific will lead the road to recovery in the post pandemic era and India tops that list".





Radisson Blu Resort Dharamshala



Forest Cottage



Reception



Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa, Nashik Lobby



Radisson Blu Resort & Spa Karjat

Hospitality has long prioritized health and safety, but the past two years have radically changed how we live, emphasizing how crucial these factors are to our wellbeing and wellness. Hospitality too has undergone a massive mindset shift, giving visitors experiences that make use of improved hygiene and safety measures. As global travel picks up and the economic cycle once again starts to roll efficiently, business leaders have come to realise the importance of preserving nature and the ecosystem.

Sustainability is the need of the hour as the sector is aiming to promote ethical business and tourism, from better managing energy and water usage to banning single-use plastics and food waste. Initiatives ranging from constructing 'green' meeting areas and self-bottling their own water to providing recycling bins for all of their visitors, companies are now reviewing their sustainability practices.

Radisson Hotel Group (RHG) has consistently demonstrated a dedication to the environment and has been a pioneer in reversing climate change through initiatives that help the environment around us. By committing to establishing emission reduction goals that are supported by science, the group is building on its long history of sustainability and intends to attain a net-zero carbon future by 2050. In keeping with this commitment, the group in collaboration with SunFuel has made all its properties EV friendly by installing EV chargers.

Zubin Saxena, Managing Director & Vice President of Operations, South Asia at Radisson Hotel Group emphasises this "Destination charging will be a big driver of India's adoption of electric automobiles and the launch of our charging facilities is a testament to our commitment to shaping the future of responsible travel. There is a Radisson

hotel every four hours and guest convenience to 'fuel up' during their travel will help us engage and empower sustainable travel".

Hotels are now laying more emphasis on adopting new technology and sustainable practices to reduce costs, increase overall efficiency, and improve customer satisfaction so far, but in the recent few years, especially during the pandemic, this has increased dramatically. Right from no-contact bookings, payments, and F&B services to implementing integrated digital platforms for effective day-to-day operations, hoteliers are using technology to its full potential. New trends where technology is intermingled with sustainable practices are also around the corner.

At Radisson Hotel Group, there are in-house water purification set-ups in some of the properties that ensure well-planned water management. Radisson has construction guidelines in place to minimise its footprint in terms of energy and water consumption.

Corporate and individual social responsibility too has seen an uptick in recent years. The hospitality fraternity is now leaving no stone unturned in giving back to the community whenever possible. Guests and patrons prefer to support establishments that give back to society. Guests want to feel included and be responsible about their travel, and hotels can proudly showcase their CSR partnerships, allowing guests to be a part of it through active engagement, onsite visits and charitable endeavours.

These changing factors demonstrate how adaptable and resilient the hotel sector is to shifting consumer demands. The adjustments and patterns will carry on developing, shifting, and growing as we traverse this new era of travel.



# REDEFINING HOSPITALITY BY CHAMPIONING PEOPLE

Sunjae Sharma – Managing Director,  
India and Southwest Asia, Hyatt  
India Consultancy Pvt. Ltd.

**TT BUREAU**



The pessimist complains about the wind. The optimist expects it to change. The leader adjusts the sails" said John Maxwell, the American leadership coach and author. Simply put, this line beautifully encapsulates the personality and leadership style of Sunjae Sharma, Managing Director, India and Southwest Asia, Hyatt India Consultancy Pvt. Ltd. A hospitality veteran with over two decades in the industry, he has seen many business cycles, helmed diverse teams, and always stood firm in leading from the front, always. In an exclusive for Today's Traveller Collector's Issue "Champions of Change" 2022, Sunjae Sharma talks about the unforeseen pandemic, challenges of business in the post pandemic world and how he is focused on making brand Hyatt bigger and better in India.

Hyatt's India seeds were planted over 39 years ago in the national capital with Hyatt Regency Delhi. Today brand Hyatt commands an impressive portfolio in India with 41 Hyatt hotels and 8 distinct brands in the country – Andaz, Alila, Park Hyatt, Grand Hyatt, Hyatt Regency, Hyatt, Hyatt Centric and Hyatt Place. The brand plans to add 3800 keys to its burgeoning portfolio. The return to normalcy has been a steady one, and Sharma is making sure that Hyatt in India is leading the wave of innovation and expansion in hospitality.

Hyatt champions people and guest experiences and while the pandemic did place an unexpected pause, Sharma is celebrating Hyatt's expansion plans in India in 2022 and beyond. The brand is eyeing a 70% growth and a milestone of 50 Hyatt-branded hotels in India in 2023. A multi-brand presence in one of the most promising economies of the world, as Sharma succinctly puts it. Innovation, distinct brand experiences, signature food and beverage spaces and a culture that celebrates equality, inclusivity, and diversity – Hyatt's guest experiences are driven by a synergy of business, brands, and bold choices. This is evident with its impressive flurry of new hotel openings such as, Hyatt Regency Dehradun, Hyatt Centric Janakpuri New Delhi, Hyatt Regency Jaipur Mansarovar, Hyatt Centric Juhu Mumbai, Grand Hyatt Gurgaon, Hyatt Place Bharuch, Hyatt Centric Sector 17 Chandigarh, Hyatt Place Jaipur Malviya Nagar, and Hyatt Regency Trivandrum in 2022.

"We are in the business of, for and by people", Sharma elaborates that Hyatt's values of hospitality are rooted in its ethos of understanding and caring for its people and its mission to deliver distinctive experiences for its guests. Hyatt champions women's leadership, diversity, equality, and inclusivity in its people policies, with a strong emphasis on a culture of respect, empathy, and fun. Gender diversity and creating equality driven leadership are fundamental to Hyatt's work culture and Sharma emphatically points out that Hyatt's commitment to create an inclusive workplace, is led by a Global Inclusion and Diversity Council (GIDC), which focusses on creating a holistic, empathy driven workspace.

On its well-loved brands, Sharma says that post pandemic, Hyatt in India is focused on taking advantage of the projected high inbound tourism rate for 2023 and the growing demands



of domestic travellers. "Our brands have a distinct feel and flavor, which is our biggest strength and future forward, we are looking to introduce our brands into destinations that are already in demand or are projected to have domestic and international footfalls in India. Our recent new hotel openings in Dehradun, Mumbai, Bharuch, Jaipur, Trivandrum and Delhi highlight our optimistic sentiment". New properties need people, and a practice of sustainable growth and Hyatt is deeply invested in both. The veteran Hyatt leader details the brand's strong focus on sustainability, guest experiences that echo 'vocal for local' concepts and a culture of hiring local team members and using technology to enable smart energy consumption.

Hyatt has simultaneously been hosting training and development programs and formulating new projects to upskill colleagues in both on-site and online settings. On the organizational front, sabbatical policies have been eased and staffing structures have been evaluated to meet operational gaps across hotels and teams. When it comes to hiring new talent, a community-first approach has been adopted, and Hyatt works closely with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to provide employment to opportunity youth through our RiseHY programme. "With that intent, we have been moving forward with our RiseHY program to build a diverse workforce by upskilling and hiring Opportunity Youth and supporting their professional and personal growth journeys. Globally, we aim to hire 10,000 Opportunity Youth between the ages of 16-24 into Hyatt roles by 2025," says Sharma.

A firm believer in India's growth story, Sharma says that being part of Hyatt's India leadership team is a matter of pride and performance. India is growing intellectually and commercially, and it is a strategic part of Hyatt's global portfolio. "We have had 9 new hotel openings in 2022 and this is the beginning of business resurgence for us. New destinations beckon and we are looking forward to celebrating the 50th hotel milestone in India soon." That said, with a candid smile and focus on the future, Sharma signs off to write the new growth chapter of Hyatt in India.







# FUTURE-FORWARD THINKER

Distinguished hotelier Rajiv Kaul stands tall as an inspirational leader on the hospitality stage.

## TT BUREAU

**H**e has worked tirelessly to create successful hotel properties and brands, constantly pushing the boundaries of industry standards and setting new heights for hospitality excellence.

As a leader who has steered reputed luxury brands through the threshold of change, Rajiv Kaul, in a career spanning over four decades, has helmed the operations at some of the most iconic properties of Oberoi, Taj, and Leela groups.

He is credited with transforming the hotel industry, creating first-of-its-kind services and amenities that have set standards around the world. As a passionate advocate for the power of hospitality to improve people's lives, he has been honored with numerous awards from leading industry organizations.

Shares Kaul, "I have been fortunate to serve luxury at some of the finest hotels in the country – at Oberoi, Taj and Leela, which provided me an opportunity to usher higher operational standards of excellence; enhance the global reputation of luxury Indian hospitality; and also mentor generations of hoteliers, many of whom are providing leadership to leading hospitality brands in India."

### IMPACT OF PANDEMIC

Ruminating on the lasting impact of the pandemic Kaul believes that both big and small players in the ecosystem will have to rapidly keep adapting to the continuous emerging changes, in a fast evolving marketplace. The speed of response and ability to nimbly implement changes shall determine their level of success, while those who decide to 'wait and watch' are likely to be punished.

He believes that need for greater simplicity and transparency will bolster innovation and customer centricity and that the market of the future will reward players who offer unique and authentic experiences.

### EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY

Traditionally, hospitality companies have been slow in adapting to technological changes, but the pandemic compelled them to embrace change and accelerate investments in technology. While technology is ubiquitous, it is no replacement for the human touch. However, it is a great enabler and shall continue to impact guest

experience- helping us to deliver efficient, personalised and even anticipatory service.

As far as operations are concerned, Kaul says guest centricity and speed of response have become the cornerstone of service excellence. "In our VUCA world, we need to continually experiment with creative high tech and high touch solutions in real-time and keep looking for new ways to delight our guests, while accepting that not all we do shall succeed. After all the biggest room in the world, is the room for improvement".

"The greatest successes in life come from taking risks, not avoiding them" is a big part of Rajiv Kaul's philosophy – one of striving for excellence and embracing change.

### FUTURE TRENDS

Rajiv Kaul also takes the opportunity to reflect on the future trends that are going to dominate the hospitality landscape. Travel has matured to the point of being an integral part of our lives. Travel is not just recreation and leisure but is therapy, education, discovery and building cultural bridges.

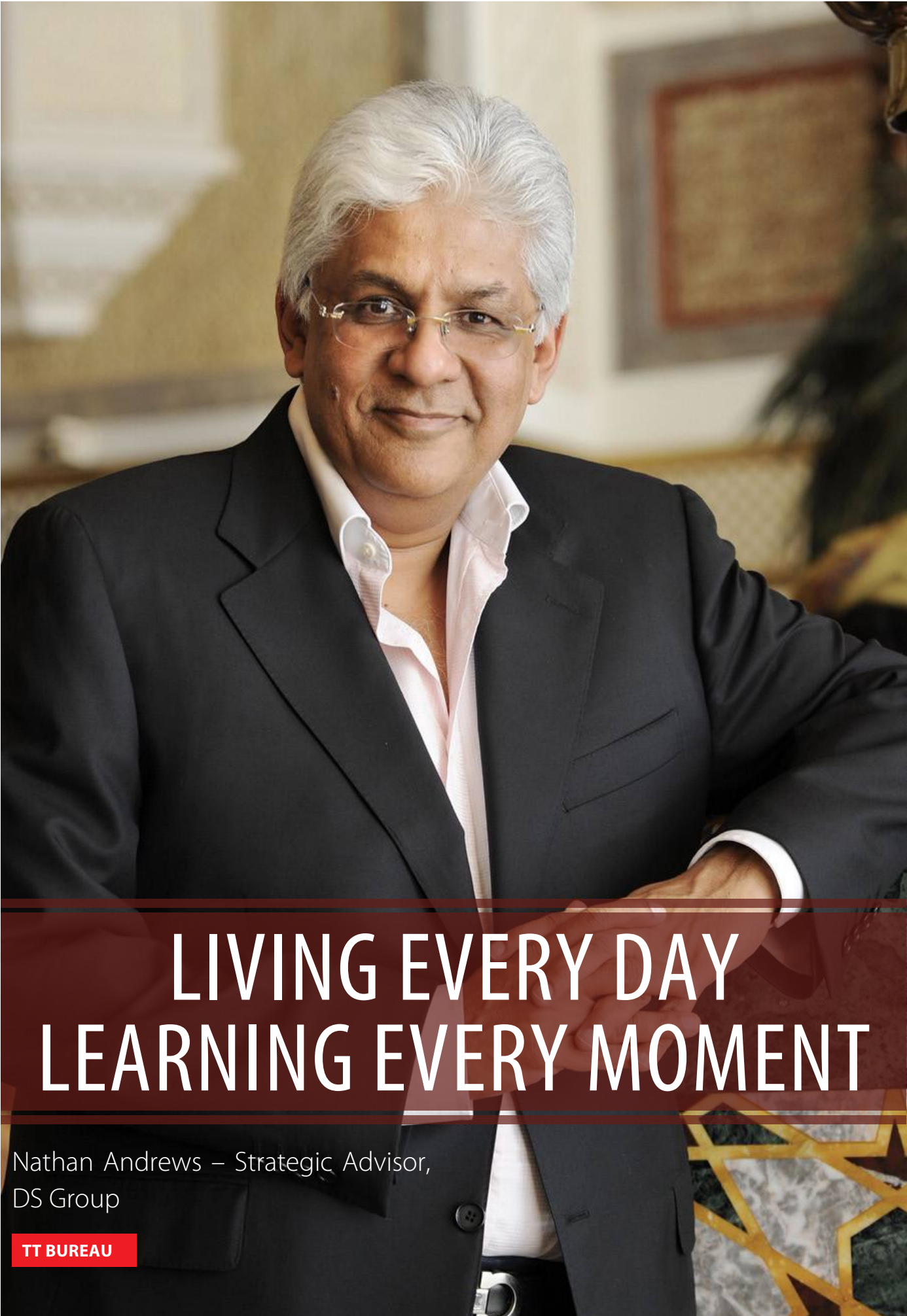
The good news is that the pent up demand from all segments, including Millennials and Gen-Z is not abating. Business travel, thinks Kaul, will be driven by technology and influenced by parameters of efficiency, productivity and cost-effectiveness, while leisure travel will be more "experience led" and largely be about curiosity, connection, self-expression and community-building. Investment in hospitality and tourism remains vital as growth is key to meeting future demand.

### LEADERS OF TOMORROW

The aftermath of the Covid-19 crisis calls for monumental changes. The easier part of this would be the sundry changes in processes, practices, and protocols. The tougher part would be to adapt to the paradigm shift. But the real key is understanding that in the midst of all these changes, what shall remain unchanged .....and building one's key competence around it. Quality of service and personalised experiences shall remain strong differentiators and those who deliver this better shall be leaders of tomorrow.

"The ability to appreciate the stillness in business is not everyone's cup of tea, but as Gautam Buddha taught us, the most profound learnings of life came to us at very still moments," says Kaul while signing off.





# LIVING EVERY DAY LEARNING EVERY MOMENT

Nathan Andrews – Strategic Advisor,  
DS Group

**TT BUREAU**





Some people make careers. Others follow their calling'. In a nutshell, it describes Nathan Andrews stellar career in hospitality and real estate consulting, which spans over four decades in India, Oman and Canada.

Andrews, an industry veteran is a man of faith, both literally and figuratively which reflects in his career choices and the many challenges that he has embraced, willingly along the way.

As the Strategic Advisor- DS Group, Andrews sat down for a tête-à-tête with Today's Traveller 'Champions of Change' Coffee Table Book 2022, to reminisce about the pre-pandemic days, the lull in business and how DS Group is forging its way ahead.

Straight-shooting in an unassuming way, Andrews begins the conversation by highlighting the diverse portfolio of DS Group. Andrews draws attention to the fact that the group diversified assets spanning across hospitality, FMCG and retail are its strength, backed by a culture of innovation, technological integration and a strong team.

The pandemic was unprecedented and hospitality did come to a standstill but Andrews who has seen many a turnaround in his 40-year career is steadfast in the belief of business recovery in the months ahead.

Balancing the bugle of optimism with the alarm of caution, Andrews does highlight an interesting fact and challenge facing the industry – Technological leadership, adaptation and integration.

Andrews says candidly "Tourism in general and hospitality in particular, have been lagging way behind when it comes to technology. Our customers are getting younger by the day and they use more recent technology than we do.

Sitting in our ivory towers, we do not realise that the gap between industry perception of what we think they want and unexpressed customer expectations is widening and this deep chasm isn't good for an industry as service oriented as hospitality.

We must address this challenge of technology leadership immediately, without being geeky or letting go of the personal touch."

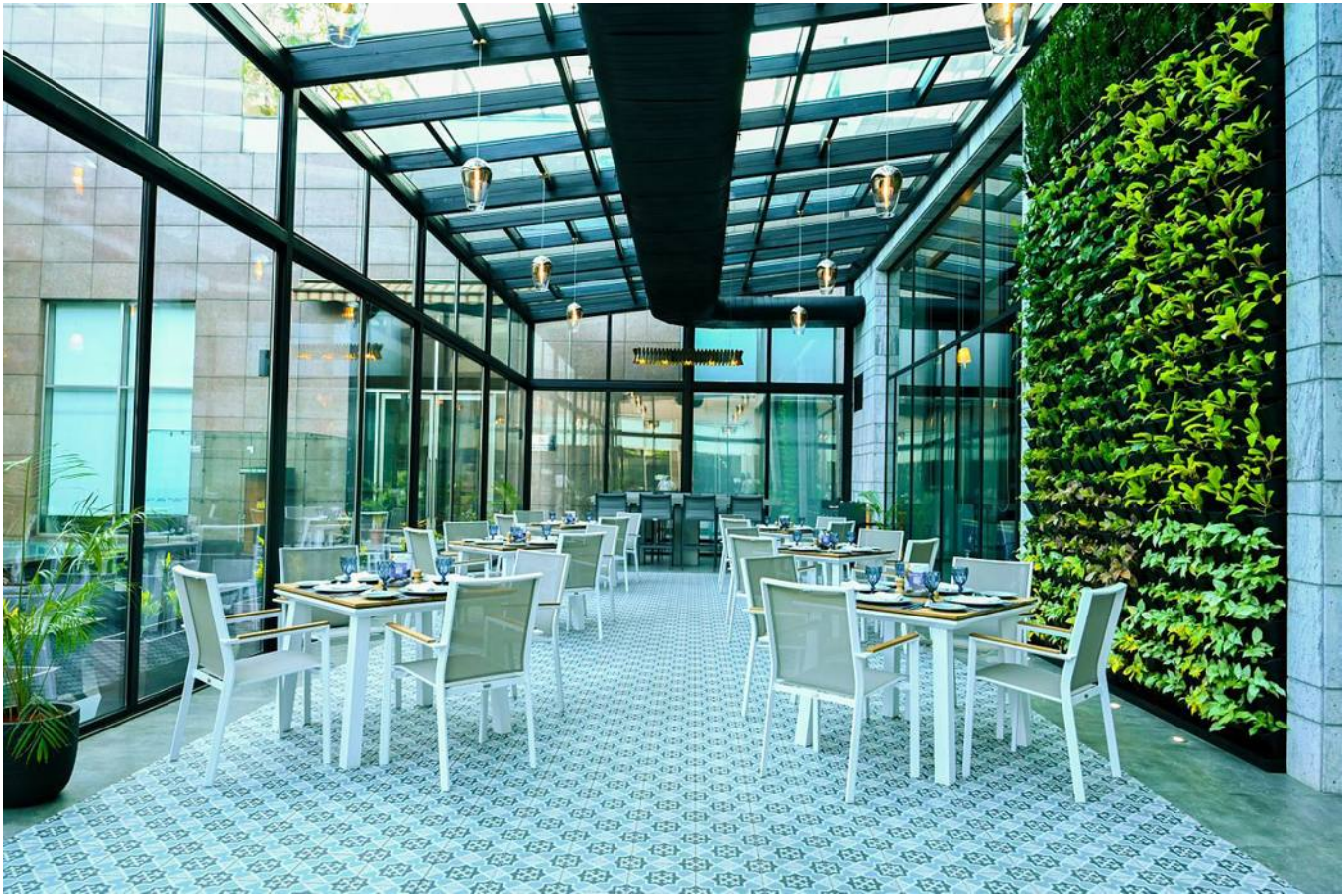
DS Group which owns a stunning portfolio of hotels such as Crowne Plaza Jaipur Tonk Road, The Manu Maharani



Nainital, Namah Jim Corbett National Park, Radisson Blu Guwahati and Holiday Inn Express Kolkata is working on its customer facing and back-of-the-house technology integration and Andrews is optimistic that they will bridge the technological gap sooner than later.

The group believes in going slow and steady with their real estate acquisitions and partnerships and Andrews is focussed on designing plans that are aligned to the group's core strength of diversity.





Real estate and hospitality professionals love an ever-expanding portfolio and Andrews admits he is no different. However, the pandemic did thwart the plans of many, and Andrews has learnt to be cautiously optimistic, sometimes slow even.

As he says disarmingly “The pandemic has reinforced an overarching lesson for me and others, that is, never to presume the future. There are no rules set in stone. The future is uncertain. We must expect the best, be grateful if things go our way, resilient enough to withstand the vagaries of destiny and accept a different reality if needed”.

Such gritty advice is not often heard in an industry that thrives on unbeatable optimism but Andrews has never been the regular one in his storied career either. Andrews abhors status-quo and loves change, which is a leitmotif in his cross-continental professional journey.

From starting out at The Oberoi, New Delhi in the late seventies to being a part of India’s booming retail culture, Andrews has adapted himself quickly, bringing the famed hospitality gentleman suaveness to the more demanding nitty-gritty space of retail operations.

Andrews candidly admits that he has worked his career around his core personality of thriving in paradigm challenging endeavours and his fondness for change, both of which have stood him in good stead.

Life, especially in a senior advisory role for a conglomerate can be mentally stimulating and exhausting and Andrews emphasises his habit of penciling in downtime in his packed schedule – be it coffee with a friend, a family holiday or mentoring young minds.



For the next generation of hoteliers, professionals and the young crowd in general, the soft spoken, silver haired Andrews has an unconventional piece of advice “Be like a spare wheel – always ready, always be prepared to step in or step up, as the situation may demand. Until then, seize the day. Carpe Diem, my friend!”





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# THE ALCHEMIST

"It's the possibility of having a dream come true that makes life interesting.". This line from 'The Alchemist' by author Paulo Coelho, has been the bedrock of many dreamers and doers.

TT BUREAU



For Naveen Kundu, Managing Director, EbixCash Travel Services - India, South East Asia & Middle East, this personal leitmotif has helped him build and rebuild himself, as many times as life has thrown him a curveball.

A firm believer in being the architect of his fate, Kundu has charted a career that has taken him from his native Kashmir to global heights. Tenacity, grit, and conviction, along with his personal adage "Try harder, not just work harder", have given Kundu awards, accolades, and experience galore. In a free-wheeling tête-à-tête with Today's Traveller for the Collectors Issue "Champions of Change" 2022, Kundu reminisces about his career, corporate lessons, and life in between.

Kundu's earliest days were spent in Srinagar, one of the most scenic and tourist-loved places in India. The carefree days were short-lived as political upheavals changed the socio-economic landscape of the state, as Kundu pursued his Bachelor's in Management Studies. Even as his home state was mired in uncertainty, India took forward the leap of economic reforms in the early nineties, unleashing new opportunities for one and all.

Kundu, determined to make better choices and have a rock-solid career, began his corporate journey with Choice Hotels, leading marketing and communications, sales, and franchise development. As part of the first team of the American brand, building its India base, Kundu established India's first global sales office for outbound hotel sales. It was a role that would give him plenty of exposure and the multi-faceted experience sowed in him the seeds of entrepreneurship, early on in his career.

### **PATH TO PROGRESS**

Headstrong and industrious, Kundu's path to progress wasn't without its share of struggles. But his never-say-die attitude coupled with an insatiable determination and discipline, helped him to navigate the cut-throat world of the travel and tourism business, like no one else.

His next stop was his own company, Leisure Corp (formerly Leisure Tours), which he founded in 2001. Over the next two decades, Kundu would go on to change the face of the travel and tourism business in India. With his innate drive and discipline, Kundu's business strategies became a game-changer for meetings and events (MICE) business in India.

Kundu's business clairvoyance to foresee trends has been one of his biggest strengths. After over two decades of helming Leisure Corp, he realised that the time had come to scale up and shape up his business to the next level. Kundu took a strategic decision to let his business become part of a larger conglomerate and challenge himself yet again to another adventure.

Tourism and technology became Kundu's next frontier, with EbixCash and its 'Phygital' strategy to disrupt the

market. Today EbixCash is possibly the only company of its kind in Asia covering all aspects of the travel landscape from online, offline, inbound, outbound, domestic, cruises, MICE, and corporate travel, to visa and financial exchange. The company is the largest in Indonesia and the Philippines with a strong presence in Singapore, Dubai, Malaysia, and most areas of this region.

### **A GOOD LEADER**

A good leader must have the ability to think and see beyond himself, and Kundu has that in spades. Tourism and hospitality have always been and will continue to remain Kundu's career of choice, and he has changed the perspective of the business many times by integrating processes with his brand of passion and personalisation.

Kundu has a deep understanding of the travel and tourism industry, having handled a wide range of business functions within it. His expertise extends to all aspects such as air ticket distribution, corporate travel management, technology solutions for web and mobile interfaces; event management, and much more.

He is also credited with successfully launching multiple strategic initiatives that have enabled him to become an industry leader.

He has built an enviable track record in delivering superior customer experience and value to travellers. His passion for service excellence is core to his leadership style and he leads from the front to ensure that customer satisfaction is maintained and his company becomes the most preferred travel partner in these regions.

As a highly respected member of the Indian travel and tourism industry, with a strong track record of success in driving business growth and delivering results, Kundu continues to be an inspiration and role model for many aspiring entrepreneurs looking to make their mark in the field of travel and tourism.

### **UNMATCHED PASSION**

Having been an esteemed leader and a successful entrepreneur for decades, Kundu has established himself as one of the most influential figures in the travel and tourism sector. His achievements range from successful business ventures to humanitarian work, and he is known for his exceptional problem-solving skills.

Kundu's passion for the business is unmatched, though when not chasing targets and closing deals, he prefers to enjoy a run now and then, with occasional tri-athlete competitions on the anvil.

Clearly, when it comes to competition, Kundu prefers to challenge himself. To be better than his own self. The young lad from Kashmir truly has never given up on himself. And India's tourism and hospitality business has been better off for it.



# THE LUXURY RAINMAKER

“Change before you have to”, said Jack Welch, noted American business executive and management guru. He could well have described Hemant Mediratta, whose career, life, and leadership are defined by change that he has willingly embraced at every step.

TT BUREAU



Juggling a packed schedule that calls for speaking engagements, advisory roles, and building HMC, his hospitality management company; Mediratta cuts a busy figure.

As he sat down for an interview with Today's Traveller for the Champions of Change Collector's Issue 2022, the prolific hotelier and commercial leader gave an insight into what makes him the best in the business even after three decades.

Suave, sharp, and soft-spoken, Mediratta's gentle demeanor belies his professional achievements, which well deserve their own tone. Of his three decades in hospitality, Mediratta has spent half in the hallowed halls of The Oberoi Hotels and Resorts, which tremendously shaped his commercial knowledge.

Mediratta bid adieu to the iconic brand in 2020, capping off his journey as the Senior Vice President leading commercial excellence for the group. He began his career in the early nineties with The Park Group, and as the hospitality scene in India began to grow with the economic reforms and subsequent globalisation; Mediratta's career too took flight, with solid years parked at IHG and Hyatt Hotels.

Having honed his skills and knowledge long enough, entrepreneurship beckoned Mediratta. It came at a time when no one could have predicted what lay next in store for the world ahead. Mediratta embarked on his solo flight as an entrepreneur in the first quarter of 2020, the defining year.

A lesser mortal would have easily buckled under the unprecedented turn of the business environment, but Mediratta, having cracked many a tough sales deal knew that pressure gives way to diamonds. He held fort and set up HMC which is an advisory, management, and private equity firm with a footprint in India, Japan, and UAE. HMC today has over 50 passionate professionals spread across 10 geographies handling over 100 hospitality and tourism customers. HMC, brands include "One Rep Global", a leading Sales & Marketing organisation for luxury and ultra-luxury hospitality and tourism companies.

"Eleven Inc" - An integrated marketing & communications company in the hospitality and tourism space. "MICEverse" as India's first and only representation company for MICE and Weddings. He also co-founded Antara Luxury River Cruises.

Mediratta is focussed on building an organization with the guiding philosophy of being the number 1 or the only one in its line of business, with One Rep Global, that addresses India's existing gap in representation companies in luxury and uber luxury space, as compared to other parts of the world. When it comes to the companies and brands he is building, true to his three-decade career in sales, the astute entrepreneur talks of ROI-driven efficiency and excellence. His meritocracy approach has helped him build an impressive client portfolio in the past three years with One Rep Global today, servicing luxury and uber-luxury hospitality and tourism brands in more than 15 geographies.

His integrated marketing firm Eleven Inc, on the other hand, manages marquee global hospitality brands spread across the country, streamlining their integrated communications.

With Indian Weddings and MICE business growing exponentially MICEverse is in a strategically unique position being the only player in this segment.

Always bullish on India's growth, Mediratta believes that while the pandemic has changed fundamental business rules; it is all for the better.

Experiential holidays with a lesser carbon footprint and more social responsibility will continue to lead industry trends in the days to come and Mediratta is well-prepared for it.

His entrepreneurship dreams go beyond building his own company; they extend to supporting other global change-makers as well.

With HMC's Private Equity initiative in early-stage luxury and travel set-ups, Mediratta has his pulse on the changing face of hospitality trends.

Besides studying term sheets and valuations, Mediratta actively mentors new-age founders on product-market fit, talent hiring, and retention and on building a founder's mindset for business success.

Having built his entire career in hospitality sales, Mediratta is well aware that in life, as in sales; relationships built on trust take you places. Goodwill is the invisible secret key that can open doors, create opportunities and seal deals even when things seem impossible.

He believes in paying it forward and he established the Mediratta Philanthropic Foundation. Its focus is to empower individuals and enterprises to create scalable and sustainable businesses to generate employment.

Wealth building through mentoring micro-entrepreneurs, especially women leaders in rural areas, education of girls, and providing quality health services to marginalised communities are some of the causes Mediratta Philanthropic Foundation actively contributes to.

A man who dons multiple hats with ease, Mediratta is also a fine orator, commanding the microphone at various business conferences to share his thoughts on motivation, leadership, luxury selling, and an entrepreneurial mindset.

He is also on the governing board of the Responsible Tourism Society of India, a non-profit organization with the aim to promote and ensure environmentally responsible and sustainable practices in the tourism industry.

Anyone else may just be overwhelmed with such multiple undertakings but not Mediratta. Passionate, prolific, and proactive, the sharp-eyed, quick-witted business leader looks at change as the ultimate challenge.

As the interview drew to a close; besides reading, travelling, and participating in design thinking, is there anything else up his sleeve these days, we ask. Alternative medicine, says Mediratta with a quick grin.

Another horizon to explore, another sky to soar to. This one doesn't wait for change to knock on his door. He embraces it on the go.







The background features a dense, overlapping pattern of ribbons. The ribbons are primarily in shades of gold and a muted, dusty blue. They are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and texture, with some ribbons appearing to be layered over others. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the metallic sheen of the gold ribbons and the smooth texture of the blue ones. The overall effect is one of elegance and high-end luxury.

*Luxe*



# A BIT OF SPARKLE

Small, stylish and superbly elegant – this pair of cufflinks by William Penn can uplift any humble white shirt. Made from tough Basildon steel and inlaid with mother-of-pearl, this nifty piece is a must-have in any gentleman's wardrobe.





# HAPPY RABBIT TIE BY HERMES

Perhaps the most visible piece of formal garment is also the most neglected one. But not anymore. Hermes is on a mission to save men from stylistic disasters and its new range of quirky ties is the perfect tool in its arsenal. Wear it with pride!





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# AIR INDIA EXPRESS: CONNECTING HOME-BOUND HEARTS TO INDIA

Homegrown and reliable, Air India Express has built its market share on two things Indians love – convenient travel and pocket-friendly fares.

## TT BUREAU

The Kochi-headquartered, wholly-owned subsidiary of Air India, this airline connects 14 international destinations to 19 Indian cities, from metros to small towns. The low-cost carrier took flight in 2005, scripting aviation history as it made affordable and convenient air connectivity possible for the flourishing Indian expatriate community in the Gulf region. Delivering quality, comfort, and convenience; the airline ensures a unique travel experience for its guests.

### THE FIRST OF MANY

In the 17 years, since its inception, Air India Express has notched up many firsts to its credit. India's first international

budget airline, Air India Express began as a solution to the growing demand for easily affordable travel to the Gulf from smaller Indian cities.

The meteoric rise of the Indian community in the Gulf, especially from Kerala saw a growing demand for continuous travel between the borders. Today the airline's fleet of 24 Boeing 737-800 aircraft operates medium and short-haul routes, operating to 34 destinations in the Gulf and South East Asia.

During the pandemic, it became the first airline to use robotic technology for UV sanitisation of aircraft. True to its spirit, Air India Express operated the country's first Vande Bharat Mission flight and was the first Indian airline to operate an international flight with a fully vaccinated crew.



## INDIA FIRST AND ALWAYS

Air India Express is the first airline to join Tier 2 and Tier 3 Indian cities with international air connectivity. On many regional international routes, this airline is the only one to operate direct flights. Keeping India first in its brand ethos, the airline's cabin crew is predominantly hired from smaller cities and North East India, giving many youngsters their first ticket to economic independence and global opportunities.

Post the global pandemic, the airline ramped up its operations and has succeeded in adding to its expanding team from cities and towns like Mangalore, Kozhikode, Trichy, Kochi, Imphal, and Guwahati, apart from metros.

Cementing its name in the economic growth of India, the airline operates one of the most successful low-cost-carrier business models in the country, with one of the lowest seat capacity costs globally. Prior to the pandemic, the airline had recorded net profits for five consecutive years and is revving up its operations to make the post of the post-pandemic growth in international travel to and from India.

## AIR-BOUND FOR INDIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

The India-Gulf region, one of the largest migration corridors in the world fosters the movement of human capital and is among the busiest air routes in the world. It serves as a major source of income for India through remittances. Air India Express through its affordable and enhanced air connectivity has given flight to the Gulf dreams of millions of Indians who in the past decade have been instrumental in increasing the remittance income for India.

When the pandemic disrupted the global supply chain and slowed down India's exports; Air India Express rose to the challenge and established a cargo organisation, operated cargo charters, and introduced Passenger to Cargo (P2C) flights to airlift India's agricultural produce to overseas destinations.

This novel quick turnaround initiative created an overseas market for Indian farmers in the Middle East, South and South East Asia, empowered 35,000 tons of farm produce exports, and generated steady income for Indian farmers and exporters, until the global supply chain resumed normalcy in January 2022.

Cargo-in-cabin operations also brought in a steady income stream for the airline and helped the airline to

optimise capacity utilisation with P2C flights and it also carried cargo in the belly holds of its normal passenger flights, thereby maximizing revenue opportunities all the way.

## PROMOTING INDIAN CULTURE IN GLOBAL SKIES

Keeping its India centric approach; Air India Express promotes Indian art in its everyday operations. The airline's Boeing 737-800 fleet features stunning tail art; each aircraft's embellished tail art draws inspiration from the country's inimitable cultural diversity.

Given its Kochi roots, the airline is all set to flaunt contemporary artwork from Kochi Muziris Biennale (scheduled in December 2022), India's first biennial of international contemporary art. This interesting collaboration is set to exemplify a new marketing innovation to showcase an Indian art extravaganza in the skies, literally.

## EMPOWERING EQUALITY, IN-FLIGHT AND ON LAND

Air India Express showcases the spirit of new India. Progressive and assertive, the airline maintains a firm stand on promoting diversity, inclusion, and gender equality. Forty percent of its team comprises of women leaders. Interestingly, the proportion of women pilots in Air India Express is higher than the national average.

The airline has 45 women pilots (16 Captains and 29 First Officers) and women leaders across key departments such as Commercial, Finance, Company Secretariat, Flight Dispatch, and Training. Feted and recognised as among the 'Best Places to Work', 'Iconic Brands in Aviation' and for its CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) initiatives in reputed forums and industry meets; Air India Express has made a workplace that celebrates excellence and talent from across India.

As the post-pandemic world opens up, Air India Express is looking ahead to be the wings beneath India's growing global impact and influence. The airline, already a market leader in the low-cost carrier (LCC) segment in the Gulf route is ramping up its business pillars of reliability, efficiency, safety, and service excellence. After all, connecting home-bound hearts and dream-laden eyes is never just business. It's an act of priceless service to the nation.





# TIMELESS ICON

The Laureato 42mm is a daily wear watch that combines vintage design with a sporty finish. Reliable and manufactured in-house, the movement is made up of 191 components. The see-through case reveals the oscillating weight decorated with Côtes de Genève.



# FROZEN TEMPTATION

There are only 29 pieces of this limited-edition chronograph which accounts for the hefty price tag. A collaboration between Ulysse Nardin and Norrona, this watch resembles the rugged aesthetics of the Fjords and the volcanic rocks of the Scandinavian countryside. Meant for the great outdoors, this timepiece will surely keep you in good company during your winter excursions.



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# DISTINCTLY VIBRANT AND ONE-OF-A KIND



The first and the only Andaz in India, this one-of-its-kind luxury hotel brand from the house of Hyatt creates and curates unmatched and exceptional experiences, offers and promotions.

## TT BUREAU

**H**ardip Marwah, General Manager, Andaz Delhi says “We have been extremely fortunate to be embraced by our guests as a preferred choice in the market we are located. We foster a spontaneous environment, free of both physical and mental barriers, all leading to new discoveries and ultimately to unforgettable memories.

Andaz Delhi is a design and experience-led formally informal hotel in the ever-evolving capital bringing to life ‘401 Reasons to Fall in Love with Delhi’. We created a vibrant luxury lifestyle hotel experience woven into the fabric of the local culture, fueling our guests’ creativity and inspiring them to express their own unique styles and passions.”

Indeed, guests have come to recognise its unique art pieces in each of its sprawling 401 guest-rooms, among the largest in Aerocity. Locally inspired details thoughtfully adorn

the premises of this beautiful hotel, which is equidistant from downtown Delhi and the commercial business district of Gurgaon.

Close to the U.S. Embassy and Consulate General, the artsy hotel is also in proximity to quintessential Delhi landmarks such as India Gate, Qutub Minar, Lodhi Gardens and the more recent ones like DLF Emporio, DLF Promenade, Ambience Mall and WorldMark.

Dining is relaxing, thoughtful, artisanal and instagram-worthy at Andaz Delhi. Dine at AnnaMaya, a modern FoodHall inspired by the colours and flavours of the world. The menu is locally sourced and thoughtfully crafted to inspire mindful, sustainable eating, making meals synonymous with a culinary tour on your plate. For those who wish to enjoy more of AnnaMaya’s offerings, artisanal produce is also available for purchase.

As the motto lovingly says, 'Eat Mindful, Shop Artisanal, Raise Awareness', food is truly revered at Andaz Delhi. Soul Pantry, another quirky bespoke eatery, led by an all-women team curates a menu inspired by nutrition-dense grains of India.

Fresh juices, pizzas, salads and desserts are on display. All food and no play it isn't at the Andaz Delhi. It houses Juniper, the award-winning India's first Gin Bar is a perfect place to socialize for gatherings of any sort. The talk of the town is the diverse selection of 40 stylized gin and tonic infusions, all revolving around the botanical and medicinal history of juniper.

Enjoy the signature Juniper experience with large communal bar tables, exciting in-house gin infusions, and an eclectic range of cocktails inspired by the legacy of gin. Served with utmost creativity and originality by the most talented mixologists.

Centered around today's collective consciousness and growing awareness of well-being, Soul Pantry is a bespoke eatery, inspired by the forgotten and nutrition-dense grains of India.

Enjoy fresh salads and juices, your favourite pizza in the nutrition-dense flatbread along with a daily selection of desserts and beverages.

Business, leisure, events and weddings, Andaz Delhi is a definite choice for all those who visit the capital or call it their home. With 37,500 sq ft of event spaces, the hotel is perfect for events and socials, big and small.

Barrier free spaces, modern chic décor and a hands-on event management and catering team, ensure seamless planning and execution. For those who love themselves a well-tended to event, the Grand Ballroom, pillar-less and oval shaped can beautifully accommodate 1500 guests.

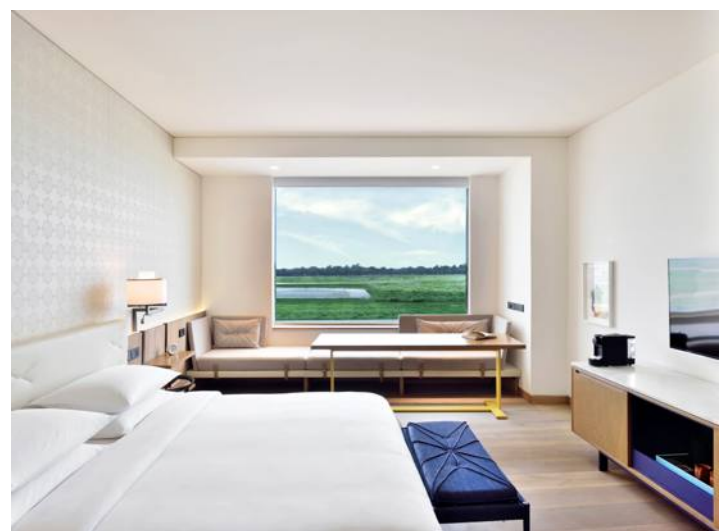
Indian weddings are no fun without the customary 'baraat' and Andaz Delhi boasts of the unique 'Elephant Path'; a route that leads right into the hotel's central courtyard and goes up to the entrance of the Ballroom. Truly, a non-stop celebration!

Business travel is on the rise once again, and Andaz has rolled out the red carpet for its loyal guests and those who are city-hopping into the capital, every now and then. For those who are in the capital for a few days, their Executive offer is definitely a wallet-smart choice.

Daily amenities include breakfast, quick laundry service, high speed internet, happy hours during early evening and special offers on beverages. Works like a charm when you have meetings to attend, a few hours to unwind and a red-eye to hop on to.

Those who prefer to stay longer in the capital, should opt for their Long Stay offer. This one comes with a host of privileges including buffet breakfast, a daily discount on food, beverages, laundry and spa services and the best one – one way or two-way airport transfers (depending on whether you opt for deluxe rooms or suites). For fitness enthusiasts, a modern fitness centre, pool and spa come in handy too.

While Andaz Delhi remains the only Andaz property in India for now, it is easy to see why guests have more than 401 reasons to fall in love with it. Seamless service, exceptional experiences and unmatched hospitality are some of it.







# STUNNINGLY SPORTY

Travellers, sports enthusiasts, and adventure-seekers pay close attention! Carl F. Bucherer Manero Central Counter is a sporty chronograph in many shades of green and black with just the right hint of glamour. With a hybrid rubber strap, domed sapphire crystal and stainless steel casing, this limited-edition timepiece is going to take your breath away.



# A VILLA FOR YOUR MAJESTY

*Staycation or a life decision, we welcome you!*

**S**pread across 235 acres of pristine landscapes right here in Gurgaon, Karma Lakelands is a fascinating blend of nature's inundated glory and luxury, offering rare experiences that ensure your moments here become beautiful memories.

## **VILLAS OF KARMA LAKELANDS**

Nestled between acres and acres of greenery, picturesque landscapes, golf course, alluring fauna and flora, the Karma Villas are the resort's flagship offering. Spacious living room, well lit bedrooms, saunas, private butler, expansive backyard with an infinity pool or a lake view; a pool table, beautiful terraces are just a little glimpse of this tree top destination. The Villas are uniquely designed on different themes of nature and colour patterns to choose from. There are 3-bedroom and 4-bedroom options, so you can come with your whole family or friends for a staycation. There are cottages and garden suites for couples and solo travelers looking for some quiet time.

Imagine waking to birdsongs as sunlight filters into your beautiful room. And as you step out, there is a spring in your step for mother nature has blessed this bountiful land. The lakes, flowers, trees, soil, birds all smile at you in this fairyland. Karma may be the only residence or resort destination where you will not find concrete fencing between villas of different residents, for nature has filled your heart with love and purity. Sigh! Welcome to the wonderland.

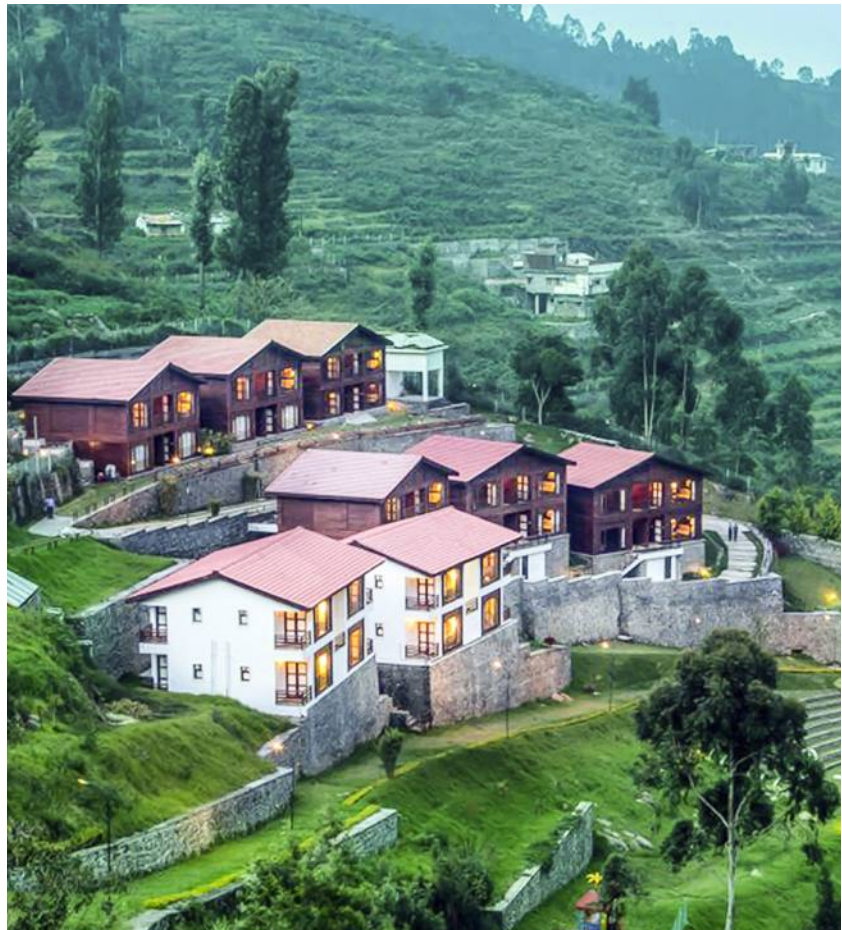
You may never tire of the long walks, and introspective hours by the lake, beautiful sites, but there is a lot more that this place offers. Klub Karma has been designed to ensure every worldly experience and luxury is at your disposal. It offers a wide variety of indoor and outdoor activities, including squash, badminton, cricket ground, an outdoor swimming pool and an indoor all-weather pool, table tennis, jacuzzi, yoga classes and horse riding. Yes, this paradisiacal land is pet friendly and home to many farm animals. Spend time here and acquaint yourself with the rustic life.

Food is an integral part of our experiences. To ensure culinary delights elevate your staycation, there is a multi-cuisine restaurant - On Course, AK's Cocktail Bar and a pet friendly specialty outdoor restaurant, Pizza Bay. Also, a one and only lake side dining experience in NCR offering fusion food and elaborate high teas. The ingredients in all restaurants are freshly sourced from karma's organic farmlands.

Come, experience our paradise, you will want to lay down your roots in this land where even time stops for a breather!



# GRT HOTELS & RESORTS – A PROMISE OF COMFORT AND WARMTH, BUT IN STYLE



The award-winning hospitality group has made its mark in South India, and continues to deliver bespoke, charming experiences to guests from across the world.

## TT BUREAU

Since its inception, GRT Hotels & Resorts has had a single defining goal. This has been to provide guests with quality care, bespoke experiences, and, of course, warm hospitality.

The attention to detail and carefully-curated spaces reflect the value the group puts in making guests feel more than welcome. Be it the unique décor that reflects the ethos of the land, or specially-crafted services that almost seem to anticipate what a guest may want — every aspect is planned and executed with care.

It's no wonder then that GRT Hotels & Resorts has been bestowed 'The Best Hospitality Company for Customer Satisfaction' award by Today's Traveller magazine in its 25-year celebratory edition. The national-level award ceremony was held on October 18 at the Taj Palace Hotel in New Delhi.

## CRAFTING EXPERIENCES FOR EVERY TRAVELLER

GRT recognises that every guest is different. While some may be looking for adventure, others may be searching for a home away from home. Therefore, the focus is on providing holistic and personalised experiences for one and all.

It is this ability to recognise and empathise with guests that has made GRT Hotels & Resorts a leading name in South India's hospitality industry. Launched in 1998, the group has grown and innovated exponentially to deliver its 'Promise of More'.

Grand Chennai by GRT Hotels is its flagship. Located in the heart of the city, this eclectic and trendy hotel is one of Chennai's favourite hospitality destinations. Adorned with unique décor such as Seth-Klove lighting, Krsna Mehta art and uniquely-themed lobby spaces, Grand Chennai by GRT Hotels has an inimitable appeal.



Guests get a chance to travel across time and space at the unique concept restaurants and bar. You can roam the streets of Istanbul at the buffet restaurant Bazaar, surprise your taste buds at the experiential desi-laboratory J.Hind (Jugalbandi Hindustani) or discover the back alleys of 1920s Chicago at Steam & Whistles Bar.

Even as GRT Hotels & Resorts grows and expands, its mission to provide unique experiential stays remains constant. This sentiment reflects strongly across the new properties at Bengaluru, Pondicherry and Kerala.

Radisson Bengaluru City Center, which overlooks the serene Ulsoor Lake, offers the unexpected at every turn. Carpeted walls, room numbers on the floor, upside-down lamps, rocking daybeds and staff with serious dance moves are just a few of the ways in which this hotel delights guests.

The ideal spot for corporate travellers, the hotel provides cutting-edge workstations in every room. Food and fitness lovers are in for a treat too – Slo Food Co.2, the all-day diner, offers global fare prepared using ‘slow cooking’ techniques that truly brings out the flavours of everything you eat. The diner is eco-friendly, and prides itself for using only local, organic produce to reduce its carbon footprint.

### IN MOTHER NATURE'S LAP

GRT Hotels & Resorts realises the value in the healing power of nature. GReaT Trails by GRT are nature resorts in handpicked, gorgeous spots that do justice to the abundance of natural beauty across South India.

GReaT Trails Wayanad by GRT Hotels is an oasis of luxury and beauty in God's own Country. Located in the midst of a private coffee estate atop a hillock, the boutique resort offers guests a chance to experience that serene estate life, with the smell of fresh coffee and spices wafting through the air. Exquisite coffee



and spice themed villas and bungalows provide scenic views of the surrounding hills and forests.

From sipping on the local tattukada chai to getting a rejuvenating spa therapy at the award-winning Bodhi Spa by GRT Hotels, guests get to learn the meaning of unwinding at this newest property by the group.

If its ‘beaches over mountains’ for you, then Radisson Blu Resort Temple Bay Mamallapuram and Radisson Resort Pondicherry Bay are must-visits. The two resorts overlook the azure waters of the Bay of Bengal. The former boasts of 159 chalets and villas and is spread over 46 acres, with a 27,000 sq. ft. meandering swimming pool. Radisson Resort Pondicherry Bay gives guests a glimpse into the Franco-Tamil heritage of this unique destination for a truly immersive experiential stay.

GReaT Trails properties in Kodaikanal, Yercaud and Thanjavur are also crafted to provide unique experiences. Each property has one-of-its-kind décor, curated activities, decadent dining and many ways to kick back and relax.

### REIMAGINING BUSINESS TRAVEL AND SPIRITUAL TOURISM

The culturally-rich state of Tamil Nadu itself has GRT properties in six cities called Regency by GRT Hotels. Contemporary design meets tradition and culture here, with each hotel catering to the regional business person and the spiritual tourists from across the world.

Speaking of business, ZIBE by GRT Hotels is a chain of ‘smart stays’ currently operating in Salem, Hyderabad and Coimbatore. These hotels are designed vibrantly keeping in mind the changing profile of the modern-day traveller, and also capture the local essence of the place.

Always scouting for new locations, designs and innovations, the GRT Group is expanding fast with new projects to widen its reach. Next up is Radisson Blu Hotel, GRT Chennai — a fully tech-enabled soon-to-be-launched property. From airport pickups and drops inclusive with stay, to a salt-water pool and unique dining and banqueting spaces — the hotel is set to redefine business stays.

You may be travelling for a number of reasons — a wedding, business, or to explore a new city. Whatever the reason may be, GRT Hotels & Resorts makes sure all your needs are met and that you have a truly memorable stay. Soon, you will find yourself becoming part of a family, where the doors are always open and comfort is in every nook and corner.



# LUSH LUXURY WITH GOLF GREENS

Golf greens, farm-to-fork menu, mesmerizing vistas of nature – this sums up the urban escape Karma Lakelands is all about.

TT BUREAU

A picture postcard example of landscaped luxury, Karma Lakelands spread across 235 acres in Gurgaon is the perfect balance between a cosy homestay and upscale hospitality. Check into your own chalet or villa, and let the bespoke luxury living, begin.

## AT ONE WITH NATURE

At Karma Lakelands, the focus isn't merely on living, it is truly being one with nature. The sprawling golf greens make it a verdant wonderland, where you can truly experience the thoughtfulness of creating a space that lets you truly unwind.

The best way to explore and experience the lush environs is to ditch the four wheeler ride and hop on a bike. The estate yields itself to fun easy nature driven activities, so go for a walk, challenge yourself to a run and simply treat your lungs to clean, fresh air. An open gym is available too for those who still enjoy a more regulated work-out. Bougainvillea swathes, golf greens, forested lands replete with flora and fauna – whether you visit the Lakelands for a day tour or a longer stay; this place is Instagram worthy and a secret hideout, all at once.

## PRIVATE SPACE, PERSONALISED LUXURY

Karma Lakelands, defines unobtrusive luxury, so there is a plethora of options to choose from for a staycation. There are villas, suites and cottages, each with its own unique view and design, so whether one is a solo traveller in search of peace, or a seasoned traveller who prefers their own people; there is a slice of paradise waiting for one and





all. Karma villas, the resorts flagship offering are ideal for families and groups; the cottages and garden suites more amenable to couples and solo vacationers.

The villas are spacious, with 3-bedroom and 4-bedroom options, each with a well-equipped kitchen, sun-lit rooms, sauna, a private butler and an expansive garden with a pool or lake view, as one may please. The coveted address is the Presidential Villa, while others include Portico, Atrium, Pavilion, Terrace and Courtyard villas. The Presidential Villa includes four bedrooms, bespoke hospitality, housekeeping services, massive pool, porch swings and a well-kept garden.

A blend of royal aesthetics and modern amenities, Karma Cottages, set against the golf green backdrop are great for a short vacay. The Garden suites, a 900 sq ft area of curated living, has the best of suite in the lap of nature. For those who love to have their own villa, Karma Lakelands offers lease and long-term rentals too; a perfect investment in the nation's capital with eco-living and a luxe address.

### FARM-TO-FORK DINING

At Karma Lakelands, organic is a way of life. Nature, soil and environment are not seen as merely ecological entities but as gifts of Mother Nature, to be revered and respected at all times. True to the spirit of the land, dining at Karma Lakelands makes the best and the most of the local produce and kitchen gardens. Culinary excursions of the Lakelands include On Course, AK's Cocktail Bar and Pizza Bay, a pet friendly, specialty outdoor restaurant.

Lake 360, by the shore is for those soul stirring sunsets and water-front dining. Garden fresh produce makes its way onto the menu, jazzed up with music, delectable barbeques and fusion food. Fashionable dining, designer cocktails, manicured lawns – dining at Karma Lakelands goes beyond the obvious.

### KLUB KARMA

A community building initiative, Klub Karma is where goodwill and participation find their permanent address. Drawing on the spirit of kinship, Klub Karma has been designed to facilitate and initiate variety of indoor and outdoor activities.

Azure blue swimming pool, 9-hole golf course, jacuzzi, obstacle course, tennis, squash, gym or pet farm animals – Klub Karma membership has it all for its tribe.

The Kaizen Lounge, deserves a special mention, for its exclusive member benefits and the property grounds are party perfect and shoot ready, always. Business matters or finding your kind of people, Klub Karma brings the best of people together.

### STRENGTHENING GOOD KARMA, SUSTAINABLY

True hospitality is one that elevates the mind, body, spirit and Karma Lakelands epitomizes staying true to its name. Environment and its care form a huge part of its ethos, and responsible living is practiced at every possible opportunity.

The golf resort is zero waste, does not use plastics and promotes usage of renewable energy sources. Bee farming, rainwater harvesting, bio-composting, organic agro activities and using eco-bricks are few of the many fundamentals on which Karma Lakelands is building its brand and its future. The place also is a no-horn zone to preserve the aural symphony of nature and maintain its ecological integrity.

The beauty of Karma Lakelands lies in its intrinsic philosophy of developing authentic hospitality revering nature and its bounty. True to its name, Karma Lakelands envisages living in harmony with Nature; where vacation does not feel like an escape from life. It feels like homecoming.



# THREE DECADES OF MODERN HISTORY



In the heart of the capital, Le Meridien New Delhi has withstood the test of time for remaining the preferred choice of travellers and tourists with its impeccable hospitality, stunning design and its evergreen charm.

## TT BUREAU

**M**ore than three decades since it began operations, Le Meridien New Delhi signature glass building remains firmly ensconced in the top 100 landmarks of the city.

Nestled right amongst the political and cultural bastions of the city, Le Meridien New Delhi towers over Lutyen's Delhi, showcasing a contemporary space that has evolved over time, to remain a forever favourite.

### AN ARCHITECTURAL ICON AND EPITOME OF FINE LIVING

Sophisticated and serene, Le Meridien New Delhi is an address synonymous with the city for over three decades now. An epitome of modern architecture, fashion, inspired living and impressive cuisine, the hotel is in proximity to commercial, political and cultural hubs of the city.

Janpath market and Connaught Place are a short walk from the hotel, which stands surrounded by media centres and ministries. All in all, perfect for business and leisure travellers, who plan to visit India's capital to formalize a business deal or get a peek into its history.

Functional and chic, the hotel's décor exudes a minimalist charm with an abundance of glass and light, giving it an airy, spacious vibe. Plush amenities, clutter free décor and sweeping vistas of Lutyen's Delhi grace the 299 rooms including 59 thematic suites. For those who prefer solitude and style added, the luxury residential suites, on the 19th floor of the hotel are perfect.

Six distinct styles adding to contemporary glamour, these suites overlook the power capital of India in all its beatific hues. An outdoor pool on the fourth floor, a fitness center and spa add to the comfort of a luxury stay.





### DINING DELIGHTS

Le Meridien New Delhi serves up some of the finest culinary creations in the capital, along with hearty portions of majestic city views. The hotel's two specialty restaurants and all-day-dining café and bar is on the 20th floor, overlooking the city's skyline.

Le Belvedere is amongst the hottest culinary places in the city for some delish Chinese and Pan-Asian fare. Red and white, wood paneled Oriental décor, ceiling to floor glass windows and Cantonese, Szechwan recipes. It is a menu for soul satiety.

Keeping a cozy corner for Indian food, eau de Monsoon dishes contemporary Indian cuisine, where authenticity meet avant garde on the plate. The One, rightfully named is definitely the one place for all-day dining and to keep you feeling full on the go. For those who fancy some Goth inspired time-out, Nero, the bar is the right choice. With the longest cocktail menu on offer, guests can be sure that there is plenty of high spirits to keep one going! Last but definitely not the least, Longitude, the lounge, rustles up savouries, snacks and house-brewed coffee for those small breaks in-between.

### EVENTS AND SOCIALS

The imposing hotel boasts of one of the largest event space in the city. Over 20,200 sq ft of event space, two ballrooms, six meeting rooms and a boardroom; Le Meridien New Delhi is truly a one-stop address for events, conferences and socials alike.

From seven to over 700, the event space can transform into mini-hubs for intimate socials or dance floor for a grand party; the choices are endless. Latest technology, in-house catering and event planning services; Le Meridien New Delhi does offer some of the best venues in the city meetings, trainings, mehndi, cocktails or a full scale Indian wedding! Seven breakout rooms, nine event rooms in the heart of Lutyen's Delhi means it is an address that is hard to miss and impossible to replicate.

### HUB, LOUNGE & MORE

Innovating as guests' demand more; Le Meridien Hub reimagines the traditional hotel lobby into a chic social space for creative conversations and ideas exchange. Curated art



pieces from local artists, contemporary and traditional set the tone for a space that is refreshing and invigorating for the mind and spirit.

The Hub is divided into experience zones – Arrival, Experience and Interact, each space designed to gently open up artistic conversations and truly open your heart to art. At Le Meridien New Delhi, the art of waiting at the lounge is elevated to a lifestyle experience, to heighten the senses and truly live in the moment.

The Club Lounge, a Le Meridien New Delhi exclusive is housed on the 20th floor. The Club Lounge, an exclusive access space is designed to let guests enjoy personalized business services throughout the day. Plush, modern, efficient yet relaxed ambience; Club Lounge evokes bespoke lifestyle, thoughtfully curated and tastefully presented. A hospitality touch that is decidedly European in its roots and American in its approach.

### THREE DECADES AND COUNTING

Amongst the first global hospitality brands to grace the capital city, Le Meridien New Delhi indeed has remained a favourite with the elite, global and Indian celebrities, and the new-age millennial. Towering over the historic landscape of Lutyen's Delhi, surrounded by powerhouses like the Rashtrapati Bhawan, Parliament House, Rajpath, India Gate and Pragati Maidan; the hotel sits well in these august surroundings and promises to bequeath memorable experiences to its many guests.



# OLFACTORY SENSATION

One of the most expensive perfumes in history, Bulgari's limited edition Opera Prima has notes of orange blossom, florals, lemon and musk. But it is the bottle that is a collector's item. Showcasing fine Italian craftsmanship, it is finished in gold leaf and studded with diamonds.



# AN ICON IN A BOTTLE

When it was first introduced in the year 1921, it sent shockwaves through the world of perfumery. Initially reserved for the 100 most valuable customers of Chanel, the perfume went on to become one of the most iconic smells of the 20th century. Prepared by French perfumer Ernest Beaux, this perfume has notes of rose, jasmine and synthetic aldehydes. Perfect for evening wear, this is one iconic smell that is hard to be forgotten.





GREAT DESTINATIONS

HOTELS & RESORTS PVT LTD.



#3, Kumarakrupa Rd, Madhava Nagar, Gandhi Nagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560001



# A DREAM RUN OF BUSINESS GROWTH

Contemporary accommodation, new destinations, competitive pricing, and cuisine par excellence define Fortune Hotels, as the leader in the upscale, mid-market hospitality segment in India.

## TT BUREAU

The wholly owned subsidiary of ITC Ltd, India's leading hospitality chain, Fortune Hotels focuses on first-class, full-service business and leisure hotels with 54 signed alliances encompassing over 4112 rooms in 45 plus destinations. As tourism begins to show signs of business recovery, Fortune Park Hotels, which is growing upwards of 20% in revenues, is decidedly upbeat about its growing portfolio of over 17 hotels in 14 new locations across India.

### ENLARGING FOOTPRINT WITH A LEAP OF FAITH

Catering to the masses, Fortune Hotels scales the length and breadth of India, positioning itself to leverage the strength of ITC and build its own loyal fan following. Drawing on its parent company's strong hospitality practices, customised to its own brand positioning, Fortune Hotels has ramped up an impressive growth chart over the years. The brand has seen a turn of fortunes with it adding new hotels in 2021 and 2022, and a healthy business pipeline for the years ahead. Post-pandemic, the brand has added more leisure destinations to its brand mix, aiming for a fifty-fifty ratio of its reach between leisure and business destinations.

In 2022, Fortune Park Katra and Fortune Park Kufri, Shimla were added to the portfolio, two important leisure destinations that see a heavy influx of holidaymakers and families. A new business focus for the brand is to strengthen its presence in



Samir MC, Managing Director, Fortune Hotels

pilgrimage destinations, which explains the addition of its second hotel in Jammu- Fortune Park Katra.

Fortune Park Kufri, Shimla is the brand's fourth property in picturesque Himachal Pradesh, an all-around-the-year favourite holiday destination. More keys are in the pipeline in Amritsar, Tirupati, Madurai, Haridwar, Dharamshala, Deogarh, Shirdi, and Ajmer, expanding the brand's presence into the pilgrimage tourism segment.





## SIGNIFICANT TRANSFORMATION

Over the past few years, the hotel business has witnessed significant changes as consumers have evolved and are embracing change. During this transformation, Fortune Hotels' leadership has made a concerted effort to learn what customers' desire and has been successful in incorporating it into their services.

This approach has assisted the chain in dealing with market changes, streamlining operations, and even boosting the brand's flexibility and revenues, all the while, keeping the brand relevant in the eyes of the consumers.

"With the right perspective and adaptability, change presents an organisation with new possibilities, such as the ability to capitalise on shifting demographics, new technology, or even the creation of new markets. Fortune Hotels' business strategies are centred around the development of a culture that both fosters and welcomes the adoption of new products and services in the market. The brand has always had a constructive approach toward evolution, which has enabled us to stay ahead of the curve," shares Samir MC, Managing Director, Fortune Hotels.

Fortune Hotels has been very quick to integrate emerging trends and solutions into its services. Be it leisure, experiential trips, staycations, digitized and contactless services, or upgrading our safety and health protocols, the chain has welcomed all these with a positive outlook and used them to advantage.

"We understand the need for change, in the face of the new realities. When the travel and hospitality industry was confronted with a dark phase, our brand was able to see beyond it, the larger emerging picture of new possibilities. We saw a huge uptick in demand for leisure hotels. Even

though our brand was primarily viewed as a business hotel, by acknowledging this change in consumer preference, the brand is now in the process of introducing more leisure properties and is close to reaching a 50-50 mix," points out Samir MC.

The hotel chain has also been swift to see the potential of Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities. "It is a market in which we anticipate significant growth over the next decade and also where some of our newly launched and upcoming properties are based. By studying the environment, planning ahead, and adopting change with a fresh perspective Fortune Hotels has been able to achieve persistent growth," remarks Samir MC.

## NEW SIGNINGS, NEW TIDINGS

As the brand completes a glorious twenty-five years in the Indian tourism ecosystem, Fortune Hotels is truly focussed on solidifying its presence in all regions of the country. Fortune Hotels is poised to reap the rewards of foresightedness in investing in India's upcoming commercial hubs. The interesting destination mix gives the brand a unique lead in driving travel to these cities while remaining the preferred hospitality partner of the guests.

Fortune Hotels brand experience is the name that today is the choicest address for travellers and brand investors, who are a part of India's growth story. It is bringing its two-and-a-half decade of operational excellence, culinary knowledge, and hospitality experience to the domestic market, partnering with like-minded investors and local resources.

Fortune favours the brave, they say, and definitely, the brand is looking at not only turning the tides in new markets, but true to its name, being the harbinger of good fortune for its parent company, brand partners, and patrons.





# HISTORY AND HOSPITALITY IN THE CITY OF PEARLS

Elegant, understated and refined, Oakwood Residence Kapil Hyderabad epitomises modern luxury in the legendary old 'City of Pearls'.

## TT BUREAU

**O**akwood residences and studio apartments strike a delicate balance between the city's rich history and its global clout as an IT hub; a blend of modern living and nostalgia. Well-appointed luxury residences for both short and extended stays, Oakwood Residence Kapil Hyderabad remains a smart choice for business travellers, who prefer simplified and sophisticated hospitality.

### BETWEEN THE OLD AND THE NEW

Hyderabad, Telangana state capital is a city of contrasts, where history and hospitality are warming up to each other in recent years. The old city, which houses Charminar is where history resides in crevices of old shops, narrow lanes than open up to old eateries and the land of Nizams comes alive in stately mosques, noisy bazaars and decadent pearl shops. Alongside this slice

of history, the new Hyderabad stands swanky and stylish with Hitech City (Cyberabad) and Gachibowli areas leading the way. While old Hyderabad maintains its slow indulgent pace of life, the financial district replete with IT consultants and brands pulsates with new energy. Amidst the steel and concrete, Oakwood Residence Kapil Hyderabad since 2018 has been the city's favourite address for business travellers.

### STYLE AND SERVICE

Between hotels and homestays lies a space which has the amenities and facilities of a five-star hotel along with the warmth and comfort of a homestay. Oakwood Residence Kapil Hyderabad perfectly encapsulates this feeling. Its 158 fully-furnished residences, including six exclusive duplexes are stylish, functional and pet-friendly.

A half an hour drive from Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, these serviced apartments cater both to corporate and solo travellers. Well-connected to the city's elite commercial hubs via the Outer Ring Road, these western style residences are perfect for those who are in the city for an extended stay or travelling with families and groups.

Oakwood Residence Kapil Hyderabad is the first serviced apartment in the city with an international brand and the only one fully furnished with western style amenities, laundromats and state-of-the-art kitchens.

### HOME AND AWAY

Hyderabad, as city offers plenty of sightseeing, pearls to platinum shopping, gourmet fare to enjoy and not-to-be-missed gastronomic favourites. Oakwood Residence Kapil Hyderabad is well-connected to the city's elite corporate hubs like HITEC City, shopping arcades and heritage sites, making it the perfect choice to stay and savour the city. The property has an all-day-dining multi cuisine restaurant 'Oakleaf', a coffee & snack bar 'Café 115', a 24-hour fitness centre and an indoor swimming pool making it, so be it a day of sightseeing or a day of staying in; both are possible with ease.

The serviced apartments are equipped with fully-functional kitchens, and facilities that can help you enjoy the comfort of home with the high end hospitality. The amenities, services and facilities include state-of-the-art refrigerators, home entertainment systems, washers and dryers, high-speed internet

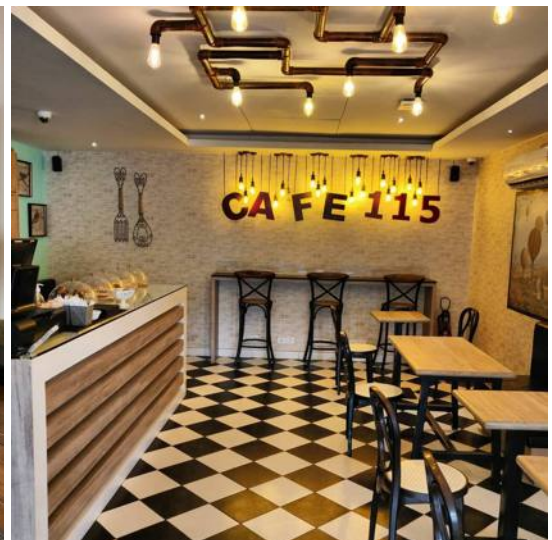
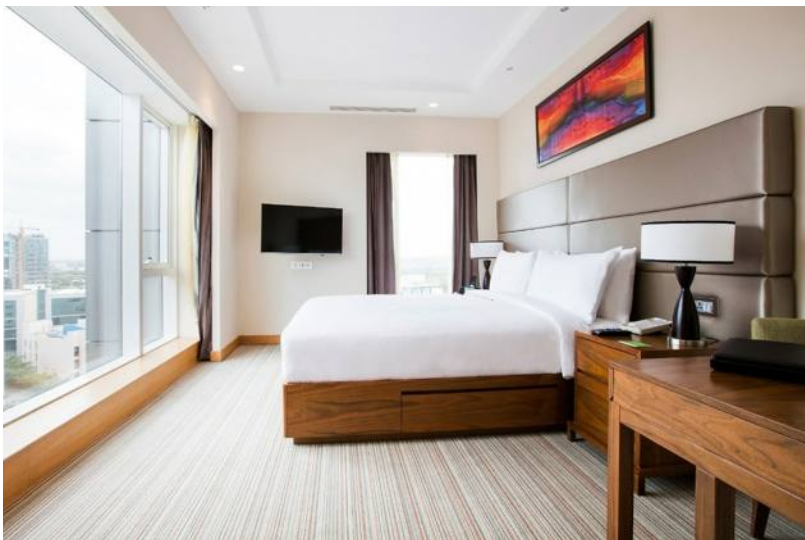
connections, as well as 24-hour guest service and security with CCTV surveillance. Recreational facilities are well-maintained, be it the gym or the pool, so no excuses for not hitting your fitness goals while enjoying your stay.

Oakwood Residence Kapil Hyderabad makes it easy to swap with work-from-home to work-from-hotel with its extensive banqueting, conferencing facilities. Over 3000 sq ft of event space; accommodates 250 guests, five meeting rooms with business facilities, the hotel is perfect to host team building events, blue-sky thinking retreats or even the annual gala dinner.

Oakwood Residence Kapil Hyderabad is especially a boon for small and medium business owners, corporate head-honchos who prefer understated work-focussed stays and meets. For meeting and event planners looking for a great place with style and sensibility, this remains an ideal choice.

Hyderabad, fondly called the 'City of Pearls' and 'City of Nizams' is a city that is on the cusp of history that never gets old and growth that is taking flight. Amidst the corporate stay and impeccable service at Oakwood Residence Kapil Hyderabad, the architectural marvels of the city are not to be missed. The Golkonda Fort, Salar Jung Museum, Gandipet Lake, Charminar, Chowmahalla Palace, Hussain Sagar Lake, Laad Bazaar, Begum Bazaar, Shilparamam are some of the best places to experience the city.

At Oakwood Residence Kapil Hyderabad, no matter the purpose of your stay; be rest assured that it will be comfortable, stylish. A home that you'd be willing to come back to again.





# LEISURE AND LUXURY BY THE BEACH

Idyllic and picturesque, Novotel Vishakhapatnam Varun Beach exudes relaxed luxury and understated elegance, which makes it perfect for beach weddings and leisure retreats.

TT BUREAU

Overlooking the Bay of Bengal, the stunning property, which boasts of one of the largest banquet facilities in the country is leisure and luxury combined, amped by impeccable service and delightful gastronomy.

There are beaches, there are beach resorts and then there is that one property which stands apart from all else. Novotel Vishakhapatnam Varun Beach, the stunning, 225 keys hotel is the best choice for those visiting the beach-city for a getaway or planning an elaborate beach wedding. Located within a walking distance from the stunning beach, and with a banquet space of 56,000 sq ft, the expansive hotel can accommodate over 1250 guests. The hotel makes for an impressive first look, designed in modern aesthetics, and is the first five star property in the state.

Beachside weddings have a charm of their own, and Vishakhapatnam offers the perfect alternate to the more popular albeit commercial Goa. Homely and understated, the

city remains an underrated choice for weddings and leisure retreats, whereas it does offer plenty of things to do and absolutely unbeatable views for gorgeous wedding shoots. The beaches are clean and well-maintained, offering great spaces for pre-wedding and post-wedding festivities.

For those who are keen to discover, laze around and perhaps have a beach destination wedding, the Novotel Vishakhapatnam Varun Beach ticks all the boxes at one go. Destination, location, amenities, facilities and services, the hotel has been hosting big ticket events to private parties for over a decade now.

The property is no stranger to awards and accolades, having been feted at industry meets and tourism conclaves as among the best business and leisure hotels in the state, especially for its design and décor. What makes the Novotel Vishakhapatnam Varun Beach the best choice in the city is its postcard-perfect location, right in the middle of the VUDA







Marine Drive, alongside a bustling commercial mall with multiplex on one side and overlooking the beach on the other.

One can feast their eyes on the soothing seaside views, which are a constant in every one of their 225 rooms and suites. Or opt for an elevated dining experience in their cosy restaurants, which offer extensive menus to choose from. Beautiful lobby, warm toned furnishings, an elevated poolside, well-appointed guest rooms and a breezy location, makes the hotel a perfect destination onto itself.

The Square, the all-day-dining restaurant is part Mediterranean, part modern with glass bay windows and a soothing décor with splashes of colour. Perfect for a lazy brunch, The terrace is without a doubt the go-to choice for the city crowd for brunches and buffets, with a delectable side of sea-views on the side. It is an experience that will have you coming for more.

Beach and bar are a match made in heaven, and when at Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach; sundowners at Infinity rooftop bar and restaurant is not to be missed. At 150 ft above sea-level, the views, the vibes and the curated menu, make for the heady trio of luxury living. For tiny-tidbits and a quick energy fix, stop at Sugarr, the patisserie at the lobby, for fresh bakes, strong coffee and gourmet chocolates. When in a mood for some music and the works, you can check into Harbour Vue, the lounge bar for some international mixes.

Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach has a pillar-less banqueting space named V-Convention, which can host

over 1200 people, enough to cover haldi-mehndi-sangeet festivities and a grand reception. Those who want the best time of their lives, in the post-pandemic world amplified with classy hospitality and unobtrusive services, #VivaahAtNovotel celebrates the grandeur of weddings, and includes even at-home catering, Shagun hampers and a livestream so that guests can be part of the party, even when not present in person.

For leisure retreats and conferences too, the hotel offers a perfect offsite venue with a dedicated catering team to take care of all the nitty-gritties.

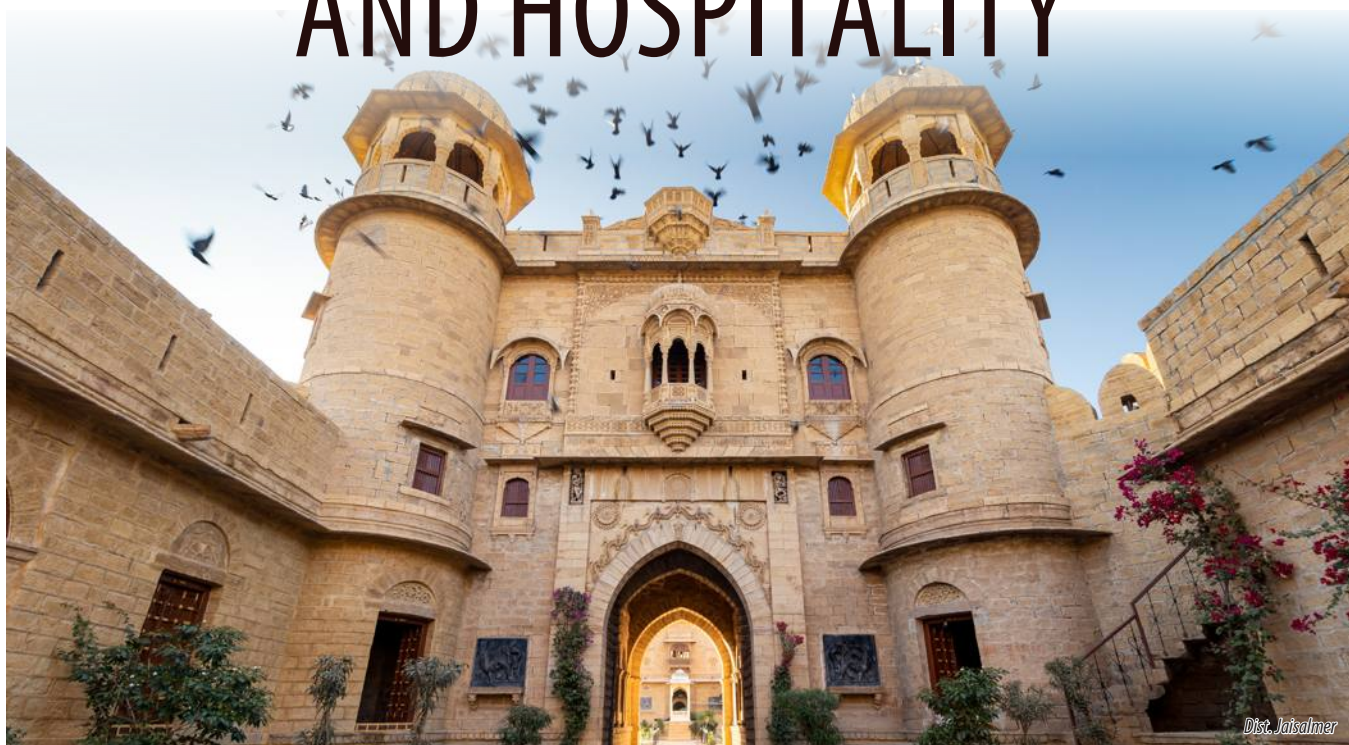
Visakhapatnam as a destination spells leisure, and Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach is definitely the only address to ever bookmark for stay and play in the city. Whether you decide to host an event or come as guest, do pencil in time to truly experience the Accor hospitality which houses the Novotel under its brand suite.

Novotel is present in 530 locations globally, and with Accor being amongst the largest augmented hospitality brands with over 5000 properties; be rest assured that the finest hospitality is on offer. Rooms, suites, restaurants and leisure activities are plenty, with recommended excursions to the Submarine museum, the beach and the Vizag port.

While it will remain an indelible memory to take a plunge in the infinity pool, gaze at the sunset and raise a toast to life, leisure and luxury do have a permanent address at the Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach.



# A LEGACY OF GREAT HERITAGE AND HOSPITALITY



WelcomHeritage, with its impressive portfolio of palaces, havelis, forts, and resorts in some of the most picturesque locations in India is the frontrunner in preserving India's rich cultural legacy of hospitality.

## TT BUREAU

As international and domestic travel opens once again, the brand is taking its legacy forward forging new partnerships and strengthening existing ones.

"The Indian Hospitality space is undergoing a transformation post-Covid with discretionary leisure destinations getting a lot of traveller and investment attention," says Abinash Manghani, Chief Executive Officer, WelcomHeritage Hotels, part of the ITC's Hotel Group, adding, "This is welcome as domestic and increasingly international tourists foray beyond the traditional Indian itineraries of the Golden Triangle, Kerala, and Goa. The "Discovery of India" by Indians has spurred the industry to start exploring their own country and the Hospitality industry has been the beneficiary."

WelcomHeritage, a joint venture between ITC Ltd. and Jodhana Heritage Resorts Pvt. Ltd. began with a commitment to preserve and present the diversity of India, its' eclectic and inspiring heritage through its hotel, service, and experiential stays.

The brand's journey began in 1997 with 5 hotels, and today has expanded to 43 properties in 38 scenic locations, with the choicest of forts, palaces, havelis, and nature resorts, for every type of holiday and interest - adventure, wildlife, history, and culture or simply to rejuvenate in the lap of nature and luxury.



**Abinash Manghani**, CEO, WelcomHeritage

The brand's USP is bridging the gap between old-world hospitality and the demands of modern travelers, pioneering boutique stays with their own signature style and spirit.

Traditionally concentrated in the Northern states, the brand's landmark hotels include the WelcomHeritage Bal Samand Palace in Jodhpur, WelcomHeritage Mandir Palace and WelcomHeritage MohanGarh Fort in Jaisalmer and more recently the WelcomHeritage Cheetahgarh Resort & Spa in Jawai, Pali all in Rajasthan. In Himachal and Uttarakhand, WelcomHeritage



veritably covers Shimla, Mussoorie, Kasauli, Solan, and Nainital with excellent Nature resorts in the Hill Stations of the North.

The brand is expanding in the South as well with the WelcomHeritage Fernhills Royal Palace (Ooty), WelcomHeritage Shivavilas Palace (Sandur, Near Hampi), WelcomHeritage Azora by Ayatana (Fort Kochi) showcases southern colonial heritage while WelcomHeritage Ayatana (Coorg) is a slice of living amidst fragrant coffee plantations.

WelcomHeritage Gurkha Houseboats in Kashmir depicts the famed houseboat living, gliding through the waters of Nagin Lake in Shikaras while soaking in the sights and sounds of Kashmir, literally a 'Paradise on Earth' moment. WelcomHeritage properties in Ladakh, Gujarat, Haryana, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh embrace the destination's local culture, and immersive experiences that are seldom advertised.

### OFFBEAT TO ACCESSIBLE LOCATIONS

Manghani says, "The discerning Indian tourist has arrived. I am decidedly upbeat as our destinations have become accessible to our guests due to enhanced connectivity in the form of excellent highways, better air connectivity, and superior train travel ushered in over the last few years".

He adds, "With the opening of inbound travel, we expect this segment to continue with renewed Foreign arrivals and resume its growth path albeit tempered with the fact that Indian outbound tourism will also flourish."

### SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

Green is the new black in the travel trade, and WelcomHeritage is decidedly focused on making it a brand practice to reduce environmental impact and pave way for a greener guest experience. The pandemic too has changed the focus and demands of Indian and international travelers and reducing carbon footprint is no longer lip service. Luxury today is being authentic, and a balance between commerce and community.

WelcomHeritage properties in ecologically sensitive locations and heritage destinations mean that it works closely with organizations and local authorities to ensure the business respects and restores the environment and eco-system it operates in.

For its new properties, WelcomHeritage has drafted stringent construction protocols, which use sustainable and local architectural materials. WelcomHeritage Jungle Home in Pench, Madhya Pradesh, and WelcomHeritage Tadoba Vanya Vilas Resort and Spa have received the prestigious TOFT rating for Quality practices. The brand has partnered with TOFTigers PUG certification, which represents South Asia's highest standards in eco-auditing for nature and eco-friendly-based accommodation providers.



At other WelcomHeritage properties, single-use plastics have been replaced with eco-friendly materials and energy-efficient LED lighting is being standardized across all new and upcoming properties. These aside, renewable energy use, EV charging stations, smart energy sensors, paperless collaterals, eco-friendly toiletries, locally sourced farm produce, and solar energy use are some of the other green initiatives found across the WelcomHeritage properties.

### ON-POINT TECHNOLOGY

WelcomHeritage has its pulse on the latest technology, for its guests and patrons. To give ease of booking to its guests, its room inventory and special rates for travel agents are managed on the brand website which allows guests and travel agents to receive a booking confirmation. 'Book Now, Pay Later' special packages for the holiday season are extremely popular, and guests can choose to book on the WelcomHeritage website and invest in a holiday with flexible payment options.

WelcomHeritage's partnership with 'GetSimpl' system integration allows it to manage flexible payment options with comfort and ease. The brand has been steadily investing in service touchpoints digitally to cash into the world of digital payments and customer relationship and Reputation management by partnering with Pinelabs and Revinate respectively to name a few.

### THE FUTURE OF HERITAGE AND HOSPITALITY

A successful 2021 and a focused 2022 have ensured that WelcomHeritage is poised for greater growth in the years to come. The brand has welcomed new members into its portfolio, notably the WelcomHeritage Elysium Resort & Spa, Shimla, WelcomHeritage Badi Kothi, Allahabad, and WelcomHeritage Cheetahgarh Resort & Spa, Pali - a total of 85 keys in 2021.

In 2022, the brand also opened the WelcomHeritage Parv Vilas & Spa in Kasauli Hills, Solan thus strengthening its footprint in Himachal Pradesh. In 2023, 132 new keys are being added including WelcomHeritage Azora, Fort Kochi, WelcomHeritage Ayatana, Ooty & the WelcomHeritage Santa Roza in Kasauli.

Agreements have been signed for 2023-24 the group will be adding hotels in Dungarpur, and Gangtok. As the post-pandemic business resurgence starts to pick up strength, WelcomHeritage is aiming to widen its footprint in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Gujarat, Rajasthan & Goa.

As the skies open up once again, the roads bustle with energy, and the post-pandemic business resurgence takes wings; WelcomHeritage is making sure that it encapsulates a slice of history and heritage for all those who enjoy refined hospitality. Far from the madding crowd.



# THE YOUNG TURK

Dynamic, energetic and ambitious, Great Destinations Hotels and Resorts is among the newest entrant to add its might to the Indian hospitality scene.

## TT BUREAU

Established in 2017, Great Destinations Hotels and Resorts, the hospitality division of GD Group, is on a rapid growth trajectory with a current inventory of 22 operating hotels in India and 19 more to be established before Summer 2023.

Buckling the post pandemic business environment, the brand is committed to having its presence in each segment of the hospitality which include budget hotels to beach resorts, in expected to exotic locations across the country. Great destinations, great value, experience and visibility – these are the four cornerstones on which the young brand is looking to upsurge its competitors and forge a path of its own.

### A BOLD START WITH NEW OFFERINGS

The Bangalore based hospitality brand, has earmarked ambitious growth with sub-brands, each having its own unique USP. Vividus Hotels, defines luxury in entry level hotel

5-star category. Redefining contemporary living, the brand gives modern curated conveniences to its guests in stellar locations. Fresh, bright and vivid, the brand aims to be the Y-Gen lifestyle hotel brand, with state-of-the-art facilities that aim to energize, engage and entertain the guests.

MySpace and MySpace Express, define luxury on a budget; these brands are for those who are searching for a budget-friendly hotel that incorporates well-appointed rooms, appetizing gourmet experiences, elaborate event spaces and great offers.

Ideal for millennials and Gen Z, these brands as the name suggests, aim to make guests feel, as if they are in their own space. Ezenza, the resort brand marries great locales with great experiences, with stays that have everything a luxury vacation is made of – curated experiences, culinary extravaganza, wellness options and onsite surprises that make postcard worthy memories!

Notwithstanding the business upheaval caused by the global pandemic, the brand has notched up impressive numbers. The brand has successfully expanded its footprint





across India with acquisitions across key leisure, business and pilgrim destinations from Kashmir to Tamil Nadu.

Katra (Jammu), Amritsar, Igatpuri (Maharashtra), Haridwar, Udaipur, Himachal Pradesh, Rishikesh, Coorg, Bidar, Tirupati and Namchi(Sikkim), Bangalore, Davangere, Belgaum, Lucknow, Vizag are some of the current destinations where the brand has a strong presence, with an operational inventory of 1250 rooms and 750 keys to be added by end of 2022.

### **PARTNERSHIPS AND PROJECTS**

Great Destinations Hotels and Resorts is focussed on building a brand harnessing the strength of its operational success and partnering with like-minded investors and individuals. From greenfield to turnkey projects, the brand has strong operational guidelines and experience to build, deliver and partner to bring new hotels to fruition.

As one of the fastest growing hospitality brands in the country with 12 operational hotels, 6 pre-opening projects, and 12 projects in advanced negotiation stages, the brand is well-equipped to deliver projects par excellence. Knowledge support for partners includes feasibility studies, market research, technology driven sales presence, marketing and brand SOPs, and as assured GOP percentage in 120 days.

As with a new, dynamic brand, Great Destinations Hotels and Resorts believes in being the value creation partner to its investors, keeping a high level of operational and financial transparency at every step. The brand also has an innovative 'Owner Services Group', which allows investors and partners dedicated access to conferences and events, rewards and recognition to facilitate communications and empowerment.

Whether it is designing a new hotel or refreshing an existing one, Great Destinations Hotels and Resorts has developed strong operational guidelines and a design portfolio that allows aspiring hoteliers to be part of an exciting growth story and build their entrepreneurial journey along the way. The goal is to develop and deliver a powerful brand with state-of-the-art systems and support, for a profitable business today and tomorrow.

### **STAY GROUNDED AND AIM HIGH**

A strong growth game backed by grit, determination and focus; Great Destinations Hotels and Resorts focussed on

building a hospitality brand that is Indian in spirit and global and outlook. The goal is to have 100 operational hotels and 18 plus strategic alliances with a deeper Pan-India presence by 2025.

Hospitality is a fine balance of art and science in business, where the product and the service need constant innovation and sustained excellence. As a young brand with lofty ambitions, Great Destinations Hotels and Resorts is keen to take the road less travelled.

One that may be challenging, and definitely not for the faint-hearted. But for those, who have faith in their dreams and back it with conviction in their efforts, it is a road of success and strength.

Innovation, result-driven solutions, forward thinking strategies, service excellence, enhanced guest experience amped by latest technology – with these modus operandi; the young brand is well on its way to become a force to reckon with in the years to come.











*Discover*



# GOA - THE SUNSHINE STATE JUST GOT A BIG UPDATE

A perennial favourite holiday destination for everyone; with its beaches, backwaters, forts and churches, Goa has everything a traveller could look for, and now, much, much more!

## TT BUREAU

From an epic solo trip to a family holiday, there's plenty to explore and experience in India's favourite holiday destination, Goa. When you hear the word Goa, the first things that come to your mind are holiday, fun, and happiness, but beyond the obvious sights and sounds, the tiny state packs a punch. From its colonial legacy to its Indian roots, the state's history is rich and diverse.

Be it traipsing through its old forts and churches, hiking to its wildlife sanctuaries and waterfalls, or watching the world go by lazing on the sunny beaches sipping on 'feni'; Goa truly has a permanent holiday vibe seeped in its energy.

The winds of change, however, blow strong along its coastline. This can be seen in the several novel attractions recently introduced by the Goa Tourist Department in order to enrich the tourist experience, even further.

A prime example of this is that its most famous fort, Aguada, has undergone a major revamp. Once used as a prison, Aguada is now being upgraded to a centre for historic and contemporary arts and culture.

The state is also proud to feature brand new adventure sports that are sure to get the thrill-seekers pulse racing and a variety of different guided tours that give you an intimate look into the history, culture and natural beauty of the coastal state.

It's safe to say that Goa has always had something to offer everyone, but with these new attractions, it is truly pulling out all the stops and offering you a travel experience worth remembering.

### AGUADA, A HISTORY

The Aguada Fort & Jail was built in 1612 in an age of seafaring, through a time when Goa was known as 'Little Lisbon' and 'Rome of the East'. It was built to defend the Portuguese hold on Goa from the Dutch and Marathas as well as a port to provide ships with a point of replenishment in the age of seafaring.

The fort originally had two segments: the upper part acted as a lighthouse and water storage station while the lower was a safe berth for Portuguese ships. At one time Aguada Port was the largest capacity freshwater replenishment in Asia.







In the 1930s, the dictator Salazar turned it into a site to be used to quell uprisings against his rule and house prisoners captured by his state. As the demand for Liberation rose, several freedom fighters of Goa were also held in its jail cells. In 1961, when Goa saw its liberation with Operation Vijay and Operation Chutney, here at Aguada's gate two of India's brave freedom fighters were also killed.

When Goa was finally Liberated from the Portuguese and became part of India, Aguada was converted into Goa Central Jail, which it continued to be till 2015.

### CONFINEMENT TO CULTURE

Today Aguada Fort has opened its doors and come to life once again. The once prison is to be converted to a contemporary hub of performing arts, music, history, design, eats & drink and now called 'Aguad' this is where Goa's past, its rich ecology & the cultural exchange it has seen over the course of centuries is set to be celebrated.

The Aguad brand takes its inspiration from a reservoir and an ancient aquifer that sit at its heart both above and below the ground; one made by the earth itself and the second-human. Both hold a spectacular story of human settlement

around water; of sea voyages and Goa's magnetic charm over centuries, and of the cultures & communities that have travelled to it.

Aguad will offer plenty for visitors to do, explore and discover throughout the day. It will feature live music, festivals, events and arts and crafts workshops in numerous air-conditioned galleries and exhibition spaces. Visitors can marvel at spectacular audio-visual shows which will be a wonder to behold. The site will also feature an Open Air Cinema that will seat over 300 delegates and a digital Museum that will help you rediscover Goa's unique history and culture.

Recent events at Aguad that enthralled visitors included 'The Way We Were,' a collection of vintage photos of Goa from the studio of Souza & Paul, 'Christmas By the Sea,' a festival that let you experience Christmas festivities the Goan way and the launch of the FDCI Men's Fashion Weekend.

Aguad also offers the opportunity for visitors to marvel at Goa's unparalleled natural beauty. With over 500 metres of sea frontage, one can sit back, relax and enjoy panoramic views of the vibrant sunsets the state is known for. Aguad also plans to set up jungle trails for children to play and learn about the unique ecology of the state.







Aguad will also showcase the exceptional food and beverage culture that Goa is known for. Planned features include a food court and several eateries like 'Black Market', 'Drunken Sailor @ the jetty', 'Motley Brew - Coffee Roastery & Bistro,' and 'Arbor Tap room and Grill.' While these dining experiences sound great, what's more, exciting is the sustainable aspect of Aguad, with its Hill Waste Negative & Enabled destination project.

It's certainly looking like Aguad is looking like a prime destination to go to during your next trip to Goa. Accessed by its jetty, road, or even helipad, visiting certainly will not be a challenge. Make sure to add it to your checklist to truly understand why Goa is Goa and soak it all in over laid-back sundowners at the waterfront.

#### WHAT ELSE IS NEW?

Goa is the place that has something to offer everyone and this is true for the new offerings of Goa's Department of Tourism as well. Whether you're a thrill seeker or a history buff, there's certainly something on their list for you.

While it had always been known for water sports and beach activities, its newest Konkani explorers project is a clear standout. On offer is a rich yachting experience with several associated nautical sports. Two yachts, built in New Zealand, will ferry tourists up and down the Goan coastline and rivers



and allow them to swim in the open waters or kayak through dense mangrove forests.

If you aren't afraid of heights, new paragliding and paramotoring experiences can also be enjoyed in the state. Participants can enjoy breathtaking views of the Goan landscape and the unparalleled experience of freedom that can only be found in flight.

For those that aren't faint of heart, you can now experience living on the edge, or rather, off it. We're referring to the incredibly thrilling bungee jumping experiences which are now available in both, North and South Goa.

History buffs and culture nuts can book a plethora of new guided tours that will bring you face-to-face with the rich culture and history of the land. The North Goa tour will expose you to exciting destinations including Anjuna, Vagator, Calangute and Coco beaches, Fort Aguada and Mayem Lake. The South Goa tour will take you across laid-back sites like Colva beach, Shantadurga and Mangeshi temples and several Old Goa churches.

Making Goa your next travel destination should be a no-brainer. Relax and enjoy sundowners at its beaches, witness its natural beauty, scale its forts and dine at bespoke eateries. Bow your head at its temples and churches, and bob your head at its discotheques. Don't forget to add Aguad and the several new offerings of the state to your travel checklist. See you there.



# GREAT PENMANSHIP

While the art of penmanship is all but dead, this special edition pen by Mont Blanc is sure to revive it. Designed as a tribute to Jimi Hendrix, this pen gives out a distinctly retro vibe with its stylish black cover. The rollerball tip uses water-based ink that makes writing sharper, clearer and more vibrant.





# NAGALAND - FESTIVALS, FOREST LORES AND EXOTIC ADVENTURES

Lush and landlocked, Nagaland captures the mysteries of nature and folklore in abundance. For those willing to trek an off-beat path, the state is the perfect travel thriller to unpack.

## TT BUREAU

Pristine forests, photogenic treks, diverse culture and global fests – Nagaland captures both exotic and experiential beautifully within its scenic forests and picturesque treks. Amongst the easternmost states of India, Nagaland remains an untapped tourist wonderland, cradling a rich culture symbolic with exotic costumes, tales of warlords, nature inspired life and a very 21st century creation – the Hornbill Festival.

Nagaland shares borders with Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Myanmar, drawing in the culture and history of both India and its neighbours, into its own unique social milieu. Visit this state to experience one of the last few bastions of ethnic culture left untouched by consumerism.

Among the easternmost states of India, Nagaland's unique geo-political location makes it perfect for off-road travels and treks. Blessed with Nature's bounty and perfect







'perpetual holiday' weather, the mountainous state is a blessed land indeed, replete with exotic fruits, blooming Rhododendrons, Orchids and adorned by the gentle sway of bamboo swathes.

Kohima is the capital city with good connectivity to the mainland and the best time to visit the state is between October to May. The weather is at its best with sunny skies, the land painted myriad shades of green and cultural festivals just round the corner.

Loosely populated, when compared to the Indian mainland, the 1.9 million Naga population comprise of 16 major tribes, each of whom enjoy their own predominance amongst the 11 administrative districts. The various ethnic groups lead a life deeply revering Nature and an agrarian economy, which translates into diverse festivals which run all year long. Pencil in your calendar to enjoy these exotic cultural events, wildlife sightings along with some off-beat adventure treks and trails in the lap of nature.

### THE HORNBILL FESTIVAL

An ambitious project to promote inter-racial harmony and showcase the rich ethnicity of the state, the Hornbill Festival was started in the year 2000. Twenty-two years on, the festival has become its most cherished and loved cultural export. Held in the first week of December every year to mark its statehood, this cultural extravaganza aptly named as 'Nagaland Hornbill Festival – Festival of Festivals' pays homage to the exotic Hornbill, a prized bird species of Nagaland.

The Hornbill, a revered theme in Naga culture across ethnicities, is symbolic of its unity and apt metaphor to showcase its diversity to the world. The ten-day festival commences at the foothills of Mount Japfu, in KISAMA, the Naga Heritage Village, which becomes a carnival of crafts,

cultural performances, indigenous games, music, fashion, cycling, kids shows, motor sports, floral galleria, food courts, films and various competitions.

The name KISAMA is an amalgamation of two villages – Kigwema (KI) and Phesama (SA) and MA which means village on whose land the Naga Heritage Village is commissioned and established by the State Government of Nagaland.

Barely 10 kilometers from capital Kohima, the majestic Naga Heritage Village offers visitors is a culture capsule, offering a window to the soul of Naga customs and traditions. Different ethnicities, customs and traditions are brought under a common management umbrella allowing for promotion of tourism as well as an opportunity for visitors to savour the beauty of Nagaland under one roof.

A must-see and definitely Instagram worthy are the imposing, majestic tribal 'Morungs' or 'Male Dormitories'. An important part of Naga culture, these Morungs are examples of vernacular architecture, and each of the 16 tribes have their own. A sight to behold are the large log drums, used by tribes to relay messages using various sounds and tempos, long before mobile communications made the world flat.

The Morungs representing the different tribes showcase their individual dialects, songs, dances and festivities which echo through the Hornbill festival. The Heritage Village houses more historical spaces such as A World War II Museum, Bamboo Heritage Hall and Pavilion and stadiums for live concerts, and shows which continue through the year.

### LANDLOCKED WITH WONDER

An ideal holiday in Nagaland is one that is best designed to be awestruck by Nature every day. The topography of Nagaland makes it replete with natural resources and an enchanting forest cover which truly is nothing short of an Alice-in-Wonderland feel.





The sixteenth state of the Indian Union is a treasure trove of rich flora and fauna, pristine mountains and gurgling lakes, all of which make for charming treks and at times, a bit of a climb.

The land is hilly (Saramati being the highest peak) and cut by rivers such as Dhansiri, Tizu, Zungki etc, so appropriate tough weather clothing and shoes are advisable during tours and travels.

Nagaland truly enjoys near perfect weather all through the year and this makes for great treks, off-roading adventures and nature trails.

Bird watching and wildlife trails are superb and it is worth taking the time to visit Pulie Badze Wildlife Sanctuary, especially for the rare Blyth's Tragopan and Dark Rumped Swift.

### **ORCHID CARPETS, BAMBOO CURTAINS, RHODODENDRON AND 'RAJA MIRCHA'**

Of the many sights the state has to offer, blooming orchids and rhododendrons dotting the terrain puncturing verdant green swathes of bamboo are the most common.

The state is home to over 360 varieties of orchids, which accounts for more than 27% of India's total Orchid species. Flowers are fruits are abundant in its rich bio-diversity, as is evident from the plethora of fruits found in Nagaland.

Well-known ones include the delicious Naga pineapples, dragon fruit, mangosteen, passionfruit and the global icon of fiery pungency – the Raja Mircha (King Chilli), the GI tagged product from Nagaland which was exported to London for the first time in 2021.



The gorgeous Rhododendron, the state flower is amongst its prized flora, and efforts are underway to commercially cultivate and export it to the mainland. The red ones are especially beautiful, and if you are lucky enough to spot the blooms, take a minute to soak it all in. It is indeed a sight to see.

Another prized Naga export is Bamboo, which makes its way to everyday Naga life in its various usage in food, commercial products, paper and textiles. The Bamboo Pavilion in KISAMA is a testament to this wonder grass, revered in Naga culture.

### **THREAD TALES AND CRAFT CORNERS**

A relatively lesser known fact about the state is its deft craftsmanship and edgy ethnic fashion. The unique designs of the Naga tribes, especially the ubiquitous red and black Naga shawls and throw overs are extremely popular worldwide. The Naga Heritage Complex, a permanent site at KISAMA, serves as a 'Window to Nagaland' (WTN), as a cultural preview to the state.

For the 16 recognised tribes, their customs and traditions translate into wearable art and artefacts and modern designers from the state are popularizing designs as well. Naga fashion is seeing its sunrise period and curating a few pieces is a must-do when visiting the state.

### **INDIGENEOUS MUSIC AND WARRIOR ARTS**

Music and Indigenous warfare are important aspects of Naga culture and the Hornbill Festival is a perfect choice to soak in these lesser seen-and-heard culture nuggets.

Ancient Naga songs passed on by oral traditions and punctuated with instruments made from bamboo, log drums and cattle skin are a rare treat to experience.

The tribes take pride in displaying their unique ethnicities and younger musicians are bringing forth these ancient arts into modern culture.

Nagas are also skilled at traditional warfare, being primarily hunter-tribes, martial arts and a natural agility is much prized in Naga communities. Traditional martial art like Ki-Ti-Do is popular.

A trip to Nagaland is unlike any other. Among the last bastions of nature-fed tourism, still untouched by commercialism, the place is truly a Gift of Gaia. A place to bookmark for your next adventure.



# SPECTACULAR NATURAL WONDERS OF THE WORLD

With so many gorgeous spots on the planet, an agreement on the top natural wonders of the world is impossible.

TT BUREAU



It is our interpretation of the world's natural wonders, which we believe symbolize the finest of what the world has to contribute. Many of these naturally-formed exhibits need an overhead perspective to fully appreciate their scope.

Take for example the Double-decker living root bridge in Meghalaya in India. Nongriat is no place for the faint-hearted, as one needs to climb down 3500 steps to reach the village with the marvelous Double-decker living root bridge. This two-tier root bridge is an enigma and a short but intense trek from the bridge leads to the breath-taking Rainbow falls and a hidden natural pool with aqua blue waters.

There are many such top natural wonders of the world that make you hold your breath in awe. We have selected just a few to ignite your imagination and make you curious enough to pack your bags.

These 10 natural wonders of the world are on the bucket lists of passionate adventurers, thrill-seekers, travelers, and photographers.

## THE NORTHERN LIGHTS: AURORA BOREALIS

The Northern Lights have become a tourist attraction for visitors to the Northern Hemisphere. The Northern Lights are auroras, which are natural phenomena that consist of stunning visuals of light in the sky. Northern lights move across the sky, emitting a scattered light over the northern skyline.

As one travels north towards the magnetic pole in the Arctic, the intensity of the northern lights rises. However, the northern lights emerge at irregular intervals, making them difficult to observe on a quick visit.

Residents in these northern locations are more likely to encounter them. Northern light viewing is particularly famous in Canada's far north, Alaska, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and Finland. The probability of seeing the Northern Lights increases during the winter months. They happen all year, but the gloomy nights of winter give them more visibility.



## NIAGARA FALLS

Niagara Falls is recognized worldwide for being the world's largest, most magnificent, and most regarded waterfall. They are indeed a wonder to behold, be it in the summer light or their wintery snowy majesty. Appreciate it from the observation platform, or if you're feeling brave, take a boat trip to see the 3,160 tonnes of water that rush over the waterfalls every minute. See behind the falls to view the water cascading from above.

Three bridges connect the Canadian city of Niagara Falls to its American counterpart, all of which provide excellent views of the valley that separates the two nations. The Niagara Skywheel, Canada's biggest observation wheel, is one of the newest sights in Niagara Falls. It is 175 feet tall and provides tourists with a fresh perspective on the rushing waterfalls.

## THE GRAND CANYON

You need to step on the Grand Canyon's rim once to understand why it is one of the world's ten natural marvels. The Grand Canyon is situated in Arizona, United States of America. Las Vegas and Phoenix are the closest big cities.

The Grand Canyon's vast and colorful scenery offers spectacular vistas experienced nowhere else on the planet. Most travelers visit the Grand Canyon's South Rim and spend an entire day savoring the sights from viewpoints that run around the canyon's edge. If you're in good shape and want a more immersive experience, take one of the many trekking paths down into the canyon.

Enjoy a helicopter ride of the Grand Canyon for a spectacular once-in-a-lifetime adventure for something a bit



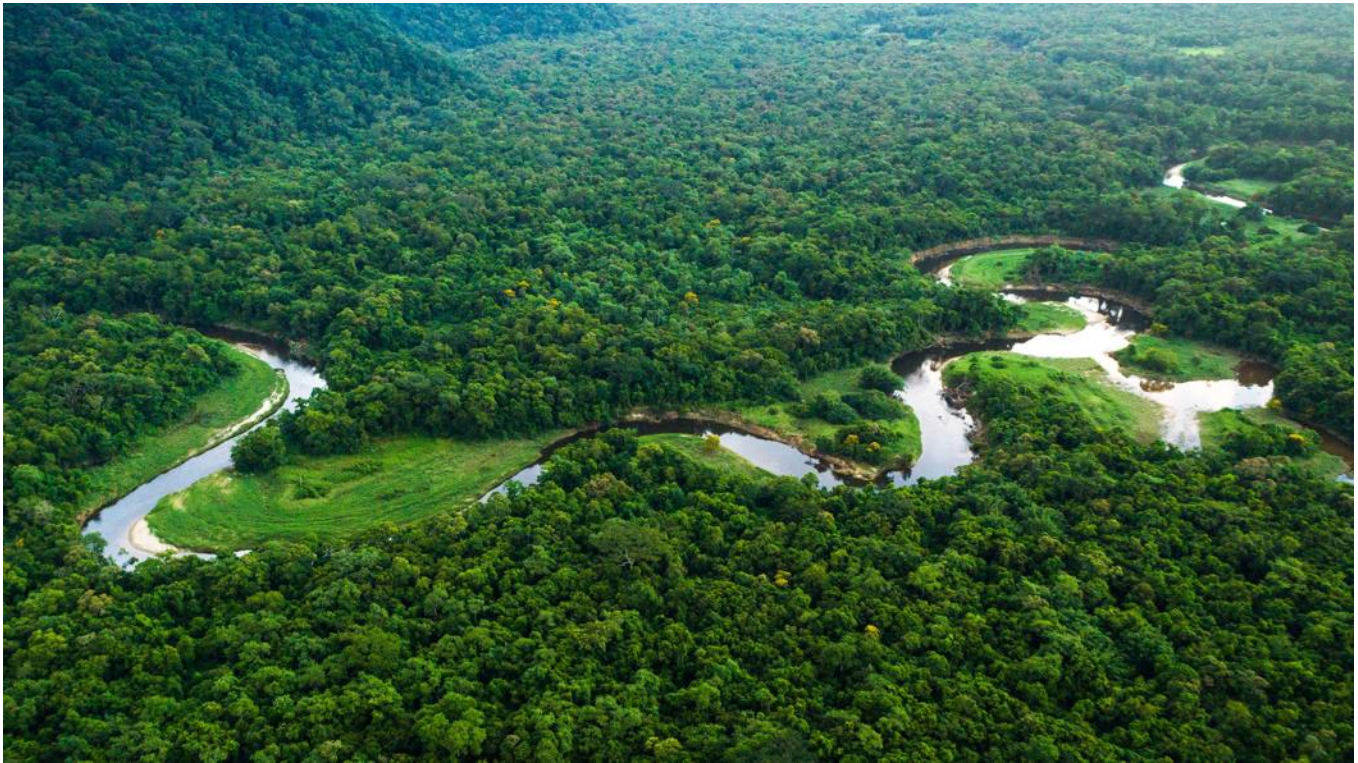
less demanding. If you're curious about the canyon's creation and geology, pay a visit to the Geological Museum. The rock strata of the canyon wall may be seen from Lipan Point along Desert View Drive.

## MOUNT EVEREST

Mount Everest is the tallest peak on the planet, standing at 8,848 meters (29,029 feet). It is situated on the border between Nepal and Tibet. Trekkers of all skill levels flock to the







world's tallest peak. Whereas other eight-thousanders, like K2, are far harder to climb, Mount Everest still has several intrinsic concerns, including altitude sickness, weather, and wind.

People who die while climbing are often left behind, and bodies are not uncommon near the traditional climbing routes. If you would not want to trek, Mt. Everest, there are other possibilities. Tourists may book a flight around the peak for an incredible aerial perspective.

Adventurers can climb base camp to completely immerse themselves in Mount Everest's scenery. Instead, you may get a distant glimpse of the summit from the comfort of a lodge in a Nepalese hill station.

### **PARICUTIN**

Even seasoned tourists may be unaware of Paricutin, owing to its location in Michoacán, Mexico. This cinder cone volcano was declared one of the world's seven wonders of the world, surpassing renowned volcanoes like Yellowstone. The last time Paricutin erupted was in 1952. It was named one of the world's natural wonders since people observed its birth and growth.

A twelve-mile round-trip hike or horseback ride to the volcano's top is possible. Climbers will stroll across lava fields and coastal banks encircling the volcano. You may visit Paricutin anywhere at any time of year. Plan on staying for a couple of nights.

### **AMAZON**

The Amazon is the world's greatest river by volume, with a total river flow that accounts for around one-fifth of the world's total. The river is home to approximately 3,000 known fish species, with more being found all the time. The Amazon Rainforest accounts for more than half of the world's surviving rainforests.

It possesses unsurpassed biodiversity being the biggest tropical rain forest. The Amazon Rain forest is home to one out of every 10 recognized species on the planet. A journey to the Amazon Rain forest will certainly become a vacation of a lifetime, whether you are searching for a family holiday place, a different honeymoon destination, or something different to do as a spouse.

### **GREAT BARRIER REEF**

The Great Barrier Reef in Australia is the world's biggest coral reef, with over 900 islands and about three thousand distinct reefs that support a complex ecology. There are about 1500 multiple species of fish, 215 unique types of birds, and 30 distinct kinds of whales, dolphins, and porpoises. The Great Barrier Reef is one of the most diverse ocean ecosystems known to man. Tourists may experience the reef up close and personal on boat cruises.

Snorkeling and diving expeditions may be organized, allowing you to observe colorful fish, coral, and marine life.



Experience the Great Barrier Reef from a different angle with a helicopter trip that allows you to observe the scattered islands and coastal ecosystems from above. Soar over the crystal clear waters, spotting land areas as you zoom above on an amazing experience. Trips might be single-day excursions or multi-day vacations.

### **HARBOR OF RIO DE JANEIRO**

Rio de Janeiro's harbor is bordered by rocky mountains and pinnacles, such as Sugar Loaf Mountain, Corcovado Peak, and the Tijuca Hills. It was formed as a result of erosion induced by the Atlantic Ocean. Tourists should intend to explore the Rio de Janeiro Harbor in Brazil from several angles to properly appreciate the splendor that this gem has to serve.

The very first sight should be taken from Sugarloaf Mountain, which offers vistas of the port, city, beaches, Corcovado, and the other monoliths. Travelers may tour Rio de Janeiro's harbor by helicopter for a stunning aerial perspective. Traveling to the topmost location enclosing the granite peaks that overlook the bay is the usual approach to exploring this natural beauty. It will give breathtaking views of the harbor's gorgeous beaches.

### **SAHARA**

The Sahara will astound you. For starters, it's definitely larger than you believe. The Sahara is the world's biggest scorching desert, spanning much of Northern Africa and nearly the size of the United States. Despite common opinion, enormous sand dunes (known as ergs) only make up a minimal portion of the Sahara.

The majority of the desert is made up of barren, harsh, rocky plateaus with minimal sand. On average, the Sahara



experiences fewer than three inches of rain each year. Perhaps in the driest sections of the Sahara, it may rain only twice a week and then no rain for months. A visit to the vast desert will delight your eyes with the unspoiled visual beauty of lonely kasbahs, massive dunes, the scorching sun, rocky stone plateaus, interesting camels, palm-forested valleys, and almond and hazelnut plantations.

### **VICTORIA FALLS**

Victoria Falls is located in Africa, between Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Zambezi River feeds this beautiful waterfall. The falls are accessible from Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe and Livingston in Zambia. Cross the border to witness this breathtaking stunning scenery from a different perspective.

The finest vistas are in Zimbabwe, while Zambia offers a more amazing atmosphere. Helicopter and microlight trips are also excellent ways to observe the waterfalls. Monsoon rains last from late November until early April. A nice time to go is right after this when the amount of water flowing over the waterfalls has been enormous, but the weather is lovely.



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