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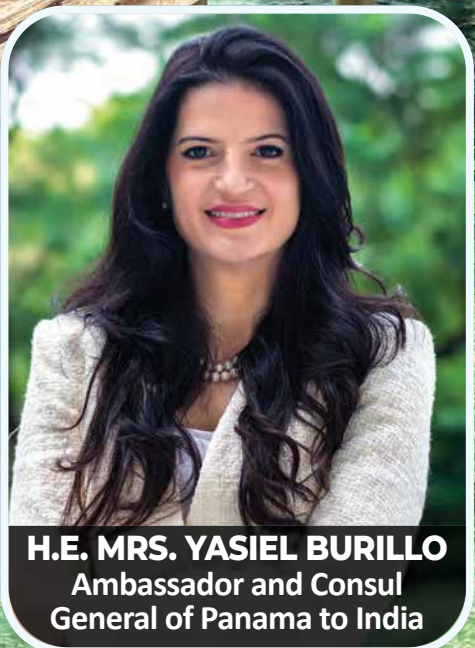
May-July 2023 | Vol 6 | Issue 3 ₹250



**H.E. ALBERTO A. GUANI,**  
Ambassador of the Republic of  
Uruguay to India

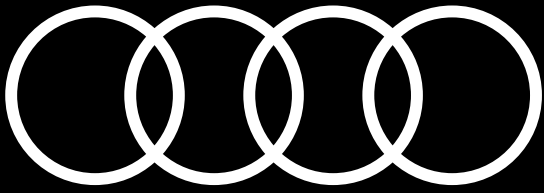
## THE LANKAN WAY - SRI LANKA

*The world  
of Sustainability*



**H.E. MRS. YASIEL BURILLO**  
Ambassador and Consul  
General of Panama to India

THE HUES  
OF BLUE..  
*Maldives*



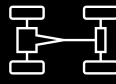
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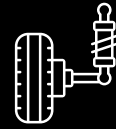
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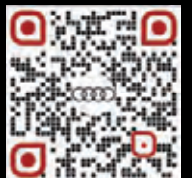
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# F O R E W O R D



**Hitasha Mehra Sharma**  
Founder & Editor  
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Life is a beach and so should you live!

Traversing through the waves of culture and traditions is what makes travel interesting. About time we kicked off the footwear and ran barefoot across the beach of life, manoeuvring through the highs and lows, relishing the occasional brush of calming waters.

This edition of TravelJingles brings you a dreamy roster of the most spectacular beaches, ranging from Maldives to Sri Lanka to Goa, where you're sure to find a stretch of sand that suits your fancy.

We present to you a low-down on destinations that offer a memorable and eco-friendly experience, like Bahrain...known for manifesting its cultural heritage; Peru, considered to be a land of epic natural wonder; South Africa, known for nature safaris and exotic rural experiences, Bhutan which truly abides by its National Happiness philosophy and many others.

Nothing gives more pleasure than to feel the grains of sand caress your feet and the sea breeze lift your spirits. The tropical wonder surrounded by shades of blue and red is just the thing to pick your life sails. This is exactly what you get in Maldives. A tropical island with a promise of a lifetime should definitely be your next stop.

Yet another surprise haven is Uruguay, which is cozily nestled between Brazil and Argentina. As expressed by **H.E. Mr. Alberto A. Guani, Ambassador of the Republic of Uruguay to India**, the country is safe and progressive. The Ambassador recounts visiting the Colonia del Sacramento, Canelones by Eladio Dieste Church as imperative, to closely understand the country's past. Uruguay literally translated as the 'river of painted birds' and it owes its lineage to a rich bio-diverse region apt for bird gazing. The Uruguay Carnival, is a not-to-be missed event as is drinking Yerba Mate.

From the river of painted birds to one of the seven 'modern' wonders of the world, Panama is a country unexplored. **H.E. Mrs. Yasiel Burillo, Ambassador and Consul General of Panama in India**, highlights why Panama should be on your bucket list. A melting pot of cultures, Panama is acclaimed for its reef, in Oriental Pacific, The Coiba National Park, famous for whale watching, snorkelling, etc. The island of San Blas is known for its traditional textile craft which is a riot of colours, in contrast with the landscape around.

The joy of beaches is incomplete without mentioning Sri Lanka. The country extends a luscious paradise of pristine beaches, historical wonders, spectacular flora and fauna, thus making it a must-visit destination. Take your pick from experiencing Lankan luxury either in the laid-back lanes, or the cosmopolitan settings of Sri Lanka.

In spirit with the idea of recognizing noteworthy destinations, TravelJingles hosted the Diplomatic Awards 2023, which saw the congregation of embassies. The event was a huge success.

Be it adventure, relaxation, or simply exploration, we hope that our list of destinations have set the bar high when it comes to beachy getaways. So, pack up and get ready as the beach is calling!

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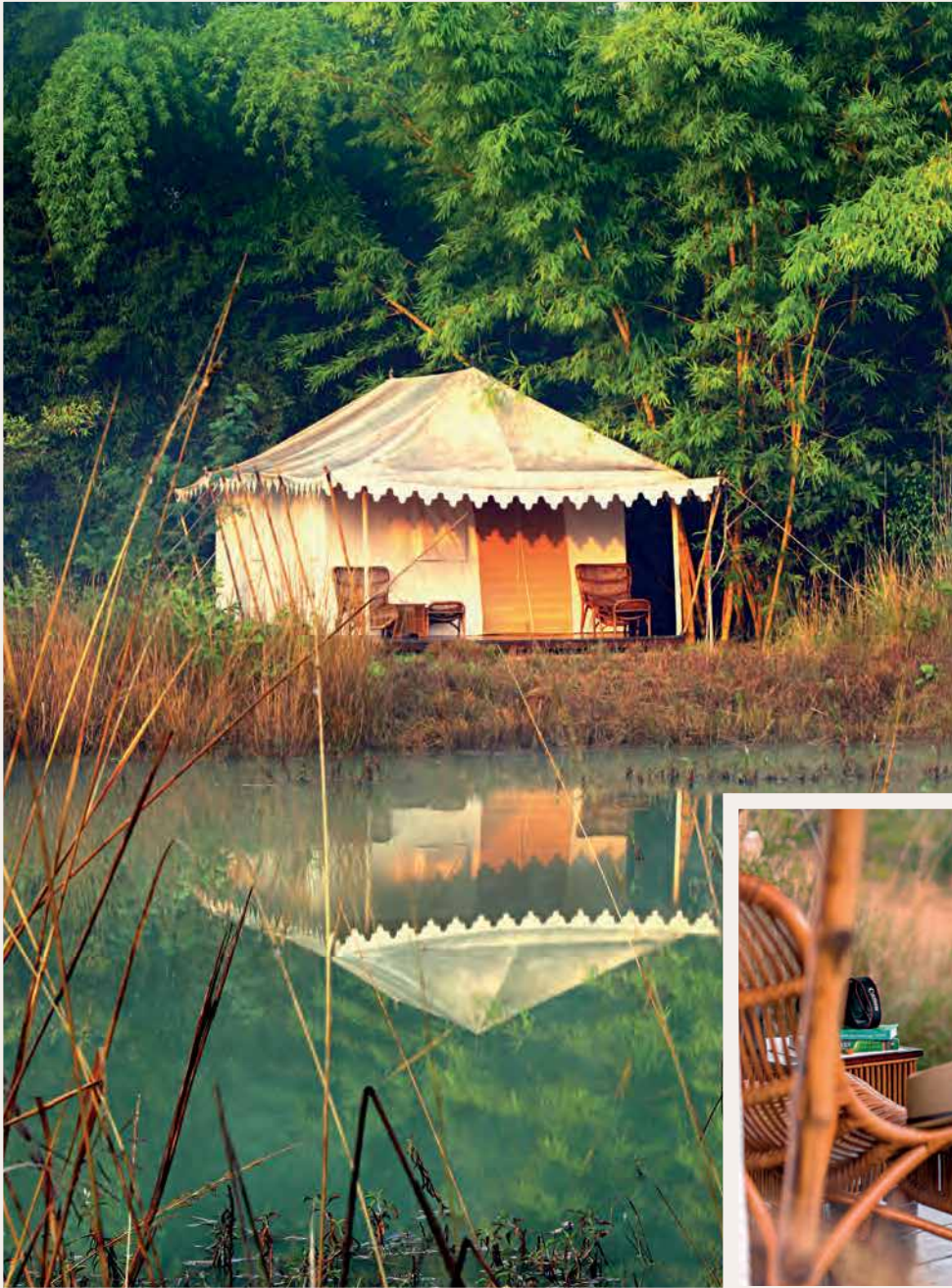
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# Bagh Villas



# EXPLORE OUR WORLD



Bagh Villas is a boutique jungle camp located on the periphery of Kanha Tiger Reserve. Tucked away in the heart of Central India's mystical forests, the Bagh Villas experience connects its guests with the jungle by seamlessly bridging the gap between man and nature. With our primary objective being wildlife conservation and sustainable tourism, all our safaris, curated experiences, amenities, homegrown produce, as well as our in-house practices focus on leaving no trace and a minimal carbon footprint. Inspired by the Maharajas during their hunting expeditions and battle campaigns, the accommodations at Bagh Villas are a tasteful blend of the traditional Jodhpuri Shikar design and the expansive, contemporary touch of an African safari camp.



## Bagh Villas | Kanha

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# Enjoy the Beach Vibe..

Vacation with a plush experience

-By TJ Bureau



Overlooking the luscious green hills of Goa, Holiday Inn Candolim, is just the address to relax in. Whether it be business or leisure, Holiday Inn is the place to kick your footwear and enjoy nature's bounty.

Featuring over 100 rooms, Holiday Inn, Candolim, is the perfect stop with amazing views. The property is a five minutes' walk from the beach with spacious and elegantly done up rooms. The attached balcony in rooms help oversee the panoramic greens of the meandering Nerul river.

A stone's throw distance from Candolim beach and clubs, like

Tomatoes and The Curry House, Holiday Inn, Candolim, is comfortably accessible by foot, or any vehicle. Besides a fully functional and well-maintained gym, the hotel also has an outdoor pool.

Splurge on the drinks and dining at Viva Lounge and the Bar, where one can enjoy handcrafted cocktails with the perfect ingredients to spruce your taste buds.

Candolim is known for hosting India's biggest electronic music and dance festival, the *Sunburn Festival*. Do check your dates and if you are lucky, you might just witness one of the most happening festivals around the world.





Along with Sunburn, Candolim also caters to groovy nightlife, exciting water sports, and the historic wonder of Aguada Fort. Aguada Fort is a well-preserved 17th-century Portuguese fort, known for its majestic site overlooking the confluence of Mandovi River and the Arabian Sea. The four-storey lighthouse and a stunning sunset view, more than makes up for the fort's dilapidated ramps.

'Holiday Inn Goa, Candolim, is a very modern upmarket hotel with great location, walking distance from the beach, providing memorable guest experiences and bringing back smiles to the hotel,' says Surajit Chatterjee, General Manager of the hotel.



Alternatively, one can indulge in some retail therapy at Calangute Beach, which is also in close vicinity and is popular for vintage items, spices, flavoured tea, etc. Apart from the Calangute, Baga and Sinquerim Beach are also explore-worthy.

Be it retail, or simple beach hiking, history seekers or party goers ... whatever be your vibe...you can live it up at Holiday Inn, Candolim, Goa



VFS.GLOBAL

# VFS GLOBAL MAKING CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY SEAMLESS AND SECURE

Outbound travel from India exploded over the past three decades and VFS Global, the world's largest outsourcing and technology services specialist for governments and diplomatic missions was the pioneer and driving force behind the outsourced visa services industry.



Starting with a pilot project for the US Consulate in Mumbai in 2001, VFS Global quickly expanded its global footprint and today manages the non-judgmental and administrative tasks related to applications for visas, passports, and consular services for governments of **67 countries** worldwide across over **140 countries of operations**. Consistent and continuous investment in technology and human capital development, and a deep-rooted commitment to customer service and business excellence charted an

unparalleled growth story for one of India's earliest unicorns. Founded in 2001 by Zubin Karkaria in Mumbai, the company has processed over **250 million applications** since its inception and over **116 million biometric enrolments** since 2007. Its operations managed through a network of more than **3,400 visa application centres** worldwide spread across more than 140 countries are equipped to provide relevant information in **52 languages and 1670 websites maintained in 57 languages**.



## Focus on customer-centricity

Customer orientation has been the hallmark of VFS Global's journey. All its service innovations revolved around keeping pace with evolving needs for trust, convenience, personalisation, reliability, and security. Two decades ago, VFS Global services were offered on a first-come, first-served basis, but with the growing demand for technology-based solutions, Appointment Management System was introduced enabling visa applicants to find their preferred Visa Application Centre (VAC), visiting time, and services.

Driven by customer needs, more customised and personalised services such as Premium Lounges & booths, Visa At Your Doorstep (VAYD), etc were rolled out. The introduction of highly secure biometrics enrolment capabilities was the real game-changer, which led to the evolution of new-age VACs. Our other optional premium services such as Form-filling assistance, Prime Time and Courier Service among others are designed to provide applicants with convenience, comfort, and personalised attention, throughout your visa application process.

## Socially responsible

With its underlying goal being to make cross-border mobility more seamless, VFS Global aspires to create deep brand affection amongst its customers, colleagues, investors, and communities, whilst developing business and enhancing shareholder value sustainably and securely. The organisation wants to ensure that its sustainability commitments are supported by measurable actions which are consistently reviewed and improved upon. By including sustainability targets in Executive MBOs, the company has mandated its leaders to lead the change in mindsets. Some key initiatives include transition to renewable energy, focus on diversity with a significant ratio of women in leadership roles and contributing towards communities around us.

## Innovation- the growth driver

VFS Global has always focused on providing technology-based innovative solutions to the sovereign governments it serves and visa

and consular services applicants worldwide which has been a key differentiator and business driver for the company. Going forward, VFS Global is focusing on customer centric technology products. The company's digital technology evolution path comprises AI-based automation and analytics becoming centre of overall delivery. While doing that we continue to focus on compliance, regulatory and security in our overall plans.

Going forward, the company's focus will be on further strengthening its position in outsourced visa services, by maintaining a technology-driven unique value proposition to the sovereign governments it works with, fortifying trusted partnerships and forging new relationships. It simultaneously aims to scale up diversification opportunities in high-growth potential businesses such as outsourced Passport services and eVisa services.





# Hello to the Sri Lankan Way...

Let's go the sustainable way

-by TJ Beauru



**Mr. Asoka Pathirage,**  
Chairman of SriLankan Airlines.

**S**riLankan is known for its hospitality. The airline believes in delighting the customers with a consistent and pleasant travel experience. Let's know more about the airlines, in conversation with **Mr. Asoka Pathirage, Chairman of SriLankan Airlines.**

**SriLankan is one of the most preferred airlines of Asia. What makes it so special? Comment.**

SriLankan Airlines has, over the years, earned a reputation for providing a warm and hospitable service to passengers on-board and that is

a service aspect that we strive to maintain. Nothing pleases us more than to have our efforts in this regard validated by our customers themselves. SriLankan Airlines was voted as the Visitors' Choice - Airline of the Year at the South Asian Travel Awards (SATA) 2022. SriLankan has also won numerous APEX Passenger Choice Awards® over the past two years for product attributes, such as food & beverage, seat comfort, onboard Wi-Fi and cabin services, in Central/Southern Asia. I think that these accolades symbolize what makes SriLankan Airlines special.

**Planet Friendly SriLankan, or an airline dedicated to preserve nature for the future. Comment.**

SriLankan Airlines has been a regional pioneer in championing for sustainable air travel. We were the first airline in Asia to introduce 'Planet Friendly Flights' back in 2009, and were named the second lowest carbon emitting airline in the Asia-Pacific in 2016, by *Business Traveller*.

Last year, SriLankan launched its critically acclaimed signature upcycle project 'Mathaka' (memories in English), which was born from a need to minimize SriLankan's ecological footprint by repurposing the airline's scrap material, which would otherwise go into landfill, into lifestyle products. Project Mathaka beat out 118 other submissions to

win the Best Aviation Sustainability Program Award at the recent Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum (SMBR) Global Aviation Awards, in December 2022.

SriLankan Airlines is also currently working with social, academic and environmental groups to advance the study and conservation of blue carbon ecosystems that encapsulate our island. We recently organized a workshop for local scientists and professionals on mapping local seagrass meadows, using drone-imagery. Seagrass meadows can capture carbon up to 35 times faster than tropical rainforests and for SriLankan Airlines, the decision to support seagrass conservation efforts was easy and fitting. The aviation industry has been grappling with carbon emissions for years and member airlines of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) including SriLankan Airlines, have committed to fly net zero carbon by 2050.

**Tell us about the new launches /partnerships the airline will be introducing in the coming year.**

We are a member of the oneworld alliance, and we have a number of codeshares and interline deals with other carriers. We are continuously working to expand our existing airline partner base and provide more options to our passengers.



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Surrounded by majestically protected coral reefs and lush vegetation, immerse yourself into the heart of authentic Mauritian culture and experiences while exploring the whole you.

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# AN IDYLLIC ISLAND ESCAPE... SRI LANKA!

Soak in its cosmopolitan luxuries.

-By TJ Bureau

The city of Colombo is exquisite and eclectic, given its colonial heritage juxtaposed with a cosmopolitan vibe. The entry and exit point of every tourist's itinerary, Colombo offers culture, art, serenity and adventure. It is this ambiance that is reflected at the Grandbell Hotel, located in the heart of Colombo's Central Business District. The property is a stone's throw distance from Colpetty Railway Station.

The interiors of the hotel are elegantly done up, matching the coastal surroundings and vistas thus promising an ideal island getaway. The 292 rooms, ranging from sea view with bath and terrace, are decked with all the modern amenities, and most of them, overlook the cerulean waters of the Indian Ocean.

Whether it be leisure or work, the Granbell goes a step further by offering a dance studio, a state-of-the-art fitness centre, a sauna, and a jacuzzi to keep you energized for the island sojourn. And if the open sky and water is your thing, then the Rooftop infinity pool is just the place

to drive away your stress.

With regards to the dining options, Grandbell has a dedicated Japanese restaurant, Minori, The bar on the top is just the place post a hectic day, while the All-day dining, offers local as well as international cuisine. Once relaxed, you can step out to explore the nearby places, like Gangaramaya temple, a 120-year-old sacred Buddhist temple, Colombo fort which is a perfect place to pick up souvenirs. Another must-visit place to visit is the UNESCO site of Galle town, known for its magnificent Dutch and Portuguese architecture and its mouth-watering delicacies.

Le Grand, Galle, is a quaint retreat situated on a majestic cliffhead overlooking the Galle Fort and the Indian Ocean. This is the perfect place to soak in the southern wind. The interiors of Le Grand, Galle are tastefully done up with the sea view dominating every area. You can't miss noticing, the metalwork art sculptures of fishermen and colonial-era pottery as they are very impressive.

Inspired by the tropical exquisiteness surrounding the hotel, the décor inside the room is equally breath-taking. One can opt for rooms







ranging from Premium, Deluxe, Jacuzzi or Plunge Pool suites, to rewind and rejuvenate.

The property also offers a gym, a spa focusing on Ayurvedic treatments, and a swimming pool with shallow paddling along with lounging areas. There's also direct access to a tiny sandy cove where you

can take a dip in the sea.

When it comes to food, Le Grand spoils one for choice with its menus featuring dishes infused with the richest flavours of the paradise island's favourite spices. 'Taste', an all day dining serves international dishes while 'Blue' has an ambiance open to the sea breeze, specializing

in seafood. 'Dip' opens onto the pool, offering refreshing cocktails while the live cooking station adds the enchanting delight of dining in the shimmering pool.

Places to visit around Le Grand include Galle Fort, Rumassala mountain, Galle River safari, among others.





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# Beacon of Green Destinations

Low-impact destinations that promise conscious wellbeing.

-By TJ Bureau

**A**s we evolve in our lifestyles to bring about a greener change, undertaking conscious travelling has also become a norm. Although

challenging, every conscious effort we put in contributes to safeguarding our surroundings.

Upholding the beacon of sustainability, travellers today are

preferring low-impact and eco-friendly travel practices. We bring forth destinations that are suited for mindful travellers, while contributing towards making our planet liveable.



## UTAH

Launched in 2019, Forever Mighty, is an initiative to ensure resilient destinations and sustainable growth in Utah. It is aimed to protect its treasured places, communities, and cultures. Increasing awareness and educating visitors about responsible travel to minimize the impact on nature is crucial to boosting tourism. The experiences encompass a wide range of actions from celebrating native communities, to dark sky preservation..



## BHUTAN

Conservation of the environment is one of the four pillars of Bhutan's Gross National Happiness philosophy. One of the only carbon-negative countries in the world, it has quite a few environmental and sustainability projects ongoing in the country. One of the projects undertaken is aimed to address the adverse impacts of climate change on rural livelihoods, and the effects of sector-led development practices on the ecological integrity of forested landscapes rich with biodiversity. The goal is to ensure effective climate-resilient management of forest areas, securing ecosystem services that underpin livelihoods, and climate change adaptation.



## SWITZERLAND

An intrinsic part of Switzerland, the Swiss Travel System is a representation of the country's eco credentials. The Grand Train Tour of Switzerland routing its way through panoramic settings, from glaciers to lakes, mountains to cities, is one of the most sustainable and trendy ways to explore the country, while contributing only 0.2% to the total of CO2 emissions of overall traffic. The Swiss Travel Pass allows visitors to hop on and hop off at will across the country.



## PERU

A land of epic natural wonder, Peru, is a wonder of a lifetime and is globally considered to be an ideal sustainable spot. From spiritual cleaning hikes to understanding and respecting local cultures and customs while exploring nature, the country believes in conservation and community development. Reforestation projects, conservation initiatives, and low-ecological footprint programs, like incorporating recycling, biodegradable cleaning, and low to no-energy devices to power are some of Peru's day-to-day operations.



## AUSTRIA

Austria's attractions consist of magnificent cultural landscapes: meadows, orchards with trees laden with fruit, river landscapes fashioned in ancient times, and well-kept Alpine meadows. The emotions are reflected in positive sustainability which on one hand enhances the visitor's sense of well-being, and on the other, secures the preservation of the landscapes. The typically Austrian mentality helps in enriching experiences through exceptional storytelling and sustainability reports used as a management tool, thus giving it the credibility it deserves.



## SOUTH AFRICA

Recognizing the importance of adapting to green hospitality, South Africa has taken the necessary steps to enhance the sustainability of their itineraries and transport facilities. The country actively showcases its sustainable product offerings and ecotourism experiences, such as cycling tours, nature safaris, conservation projects, and rural experiences. The feedback on initiatives till now has been positive, especially when it comes from conscious travellers who are mindful of their accommodation, dining options, and local travel choices.



## SPAIN

Spain continues working on the transformation of the tourism model towards sustainability along three axes: environmental, socio-economic, and territorial. It involves the implementation of measures in order to reduce the pressure of tourism on the territory, improve the coexistence with the environment, and incorporate respect for the environment and its load capacity. The upcoming sustainable tourism model measures involve various aspects like heritage conservation, smart destinations management projects, energy efficiency, digitization, automation, and creating awareness among others.

## ISRAEL

Israel seeks to protect its natural and cultural heritage while promoting tourism. The country's sustainable tourism initiatives focus on three main areas: environmental protection, cultural preservation, and social responsibility.

By reducing the impact of tourism on natural resources, such as water and energy, Israel is encouraging eco-friendly practices among tourists and businesses. The country supports local communities and ensures that tourism benefits all segments of society, including those who may be marginalized.





## BAHRAIN

Bahrain offers a spectacular way to travel responsibly and respectfully in and around the country. In keeping with sustainable trends, the government, has implemented many recycling programmes. The establishment of protected marine areas, and the promotion of eco-tourism activities have also gained the spotlight. Bahrain as a destination has established eco-friendly resorts and sustainable hotels using renewable sources of energy. This initiative aims at providing tourists with authentic experiences while contributing to the preservation of Bahrain's cultural heritage.



## THE RED SEA

The Red Sea and Amaala, developed by Red Sea Global, are two of the world's most ambitious regenerative tourism developments, set to achieve unparalleled levels of luxury and sustainability. Envisioned as one of the most sustainable destinations to completely run on green energy on the planet, the Red Sea, is designed to include hotels, residential properties, leisure, commercial and entertainment amenities, as well as supporting infrastructure. The destination will operate with a zero-carbon footprint once fully operational.

## AUSTRALIA

Sustainable tourism is an important priority for Australia. This includes their commitment in preserving their culture and heritage via Indigenous tourism, advocate and educate as many travellers as possible to undertake sustainable options. Australia's natural isolation, spectacular nature, rich Indigenous culture, clean air, water, produce, and wide-open spaces become an important leg in promoting sustainable tourism experiences. Australia has a number of sustainable tourist offerings, ranging from the Be Whale Aware and Be Dolphin Wise sustainable aquatic wildlife practices developed by the Pacific Whale Foundation Eco-Adventures Australia. Likewise, sustainable wildlife tourism experiences, such as the Sustainable Koala Watching by Echidna Walkabout Nature Tours; and the Great Walks of Australia, which offers immersive nature experiences.



# River of the Painted Birds

The country with the longest National Anthem in the world

-By TJ Bureau

**T**he country with the longest National Anthem in the world, Uruguay, is famous for its beaches and good cultivable land. It is known as one of the most progressive nations in the continent. The country is a delight for beef lovers and has a Spanish heritage. **H.E. Mr. Alberto A. Guani, Ambassador of the Republic of Uruguay to India, lets us know more about Uruguay.**

**The Barrio Histórico of Colonia del Sacramento has been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Tell us about three must-do things in the country.**

Uruguay has Colonia del Sacramento as the first World Heritage site recognized by UNESCO, apart from Fray Bentos, the church in Canelones by Eladio Dieste as an intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, Tango and Candombe. These sites

are very popular among tourists interested in visiting cultural and historic places that Uruguay offers. Colonia del Sacramento is a historic city, surrounded by a stone wall with wood bridges as entrances. Founded in 1680, it was the first Portuguese town towards the extreme South of the continent. The city was disputed between the Portuguese Kingdom and the Spanish Kingdom. The old houses and cobbled streets are kept in their original forms, creating the colonial atmosphere that makes this city charming and worthwhile, when discovering its unique attractions. It is across the line crossing the Rio de la Plata River, considered to be the widest in the world. Many tourists visit Colonia del Sacramento from the city of Buenos Aires during the day. The ride from Montevideo takes a little over two hours in comfortable buses and it is one of Uruguay's main attractions. One can find five-star hotels and excellent restaurants while being in proximity to

the region of Hot Springs.

**'Uruguay' comes from the language Guaraní and has a few different translations, such as 'river where the bird lives,' 'river of the painted birds,' 'river of the snails,' 'winding river.' Comment.**

Sometimes, Uruguay is confused with Paraguay. Both originate in the language Guaraní which is the official language of MERCOSUR countries. The name comes from the region where a variety of birds with distinctive colours are found. It is a great bird-watching site. Uruguay has great diversity which is seen in the regions where the Uruguay River passes. These are the regions inhabited by the immigrants from Europe. The river has many yacht clubs and services which cater to a programme initiated by the Ministry of Tourism, as the route of the painted birds.





For Indians sometimes, it is a bit difficult to pronounce the name of the country that sounds like *iuruguaii* and it is written as Uruguay.

**Chivito is the national dish of Uruguay. Tell us about the gastronomy of the country.**

Uruguay has the highest consumption of beef per person. It is 75 kilos of consumption per year. However, gastronomy is not restricted to meat. Rather there is a global presence like Mexican, Japanese, and even Indian in Uruguayan delicacies. The Chivito is one of the national dishes, consisting of a beef sandwich served with salad, boiled egg, bacon, tomatoes and olives. The local beer is also very good, and definitely one must try the Uruguayan wine that we will shortly be introducing in India. Uruguayan cuisine has a lot of influence from Spain and Italy. We eat a lot of pasta and every 29th of the month we eat gnocchi which is very Italian.

**Both tango and candombe have been recognized by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Tell us about the culture of the country.**

Indeed. Many people do not relate Uruguay to Tango but my country has given important figures like Gerardo Mattos Rodriguez, the author of La

Cumparsita, which is considered as the hymn of Tangos. And how can we forget Carlos Gardel, the world-famous singer, who was born in Uruguay.

It is also important to observe that Uruguay has the longest Carnival in the world. It begins at the end of December and lasts until mid-April each year. Candombe is the heritage of the Afro descendants and has a main instance called the "llamadas" in February. The drums and dances along with the vibrant costumes are



**H.E. Mr. Alberto A. Guani,**  
Ambassador of the Republic of  
Uruguay to India





also a big attraction. It is a great show to participate in and see the parades while enjoying the music, thus making it our best aspect, showcasing our rich and diverse culture.

**Drinking Yerba Mate is one of the oldest traditions in Uruguay. It's a practice passed down from the indigenous Guaraní people. Comment.**

Yerba Mate is an infusion that is basically the National Drink of Uruguay. It is believed that every Uruguayan is born with a thermos under their arms. It is very true. Once one is in any part of the country, one can witness a local with a thermos and more often than not drinking mate. It is a common tradition but became restricted during the Covid time as we could not share the mate.

Uruguayans are the biggest consumers of Mate in the world. The tea generally comes from Brazil or Argentina but now that native forests are growing again, we can say that Uruguayan tea is coming back and we will soon have production in the country.

The tradition of Mate was passed down by the Guaraní. In the hot weather they drink *Tereré* that is with ice and cold water, but the Uruguayans always prefer it with hot water. All over the country, there are places that sell hot water for Mate drinkers.







**Uruguay is running on 98% renewable electricity, according to the US International Trade Administration. What are the steps taken by the country on sustainability?**

All policies in Uruguay are designed to take into account sustainability. We are doing the same in India with an Uruguayan company named Berkes, which is producing boilers that will help reduce pollution, in association with India and Denmark.

In terms of renewable energies, Uruguay has since 2007, seen an enormous revolution and now stands second in the world in the application of renewable energy. This has to do with wind energy, solar, biomass, and soon in the pipeline - developing hydrogen as a new source of energy.

This has meant a lot for Uruguay as we progressed from an importer country to an exporter of energy. Interestingly, many of the big investments in the country have been based on the production of clean energy, and as determined, it is a reality that 98% of our electricity comes from renewable energies.

The effect has been reflected in transportation. Uruguay already has electric taxis and buses. We are also growing in the substitution of gasoline for electricity in cars that circulate in the country. The idea is to reach a big coverage of electricity in all our transport projects, by 2030.

It is also important to mention that the only highway in South America to be fully served by electric chargers is located in Uruguay.

**Do we have any similarities between India and Uruguay?**

Both countries are democracies. India is the most populated in the world and Uruguay is one of the oldest in the world. We have had political parties which are more than a century old. We are very respectful of our legal systems and in agreement that corruption is not acceptable. We are hard-working. We both like sports; in Uruguay football is our national sport and in India it is hockey. In many ways, we have similarities, but not too many in food.

**Which is your favourite destination in India and why?**

India is a beautiful and diverse country. Each region has its own distinctive features and one has to learn to appreciate them. India is a culture more than 5000 years old from which we have a lot to learn. It is very vast and one needs to travel a lot to appreciate the diversity it holds in each region and city. I still have a lot to see and I am looking forward to visiting many more places in Incredible India.

# A Chocolicious Experience!

A paradise for coffee lovers

-By TJ Bureau

Representing the tropical environment surrounded by smoky cacao harvest and blended to perfection with a trendy sunny disposition, Colocal is at once classic and suave. Having a presence in Delhi's bustling hotspots like Khan Market, Chhatarpur, and Noida, the cafe has made a definite impression



on caffeine connoisseurs. It has a relaxed and comforting vibe with minimalist interiors. Built as a quaint chocolate factory-cum-cafe, Colocal is complete with beautiful plants and jute lamps, an ambiance perfect for families with kids.

The open courtyard is welcoming and the setting promises an exceptional culinary affair. Soaring high on Sunday brunches, lunches, and casual dinners, Colocal's must-haves include Pesto Pasta Salad, Caramel Hot Chocolate, Spaghetti Carbonara, Colocal Sangria, a fruity and fizzy treat.



Besides offering a scrumptious menu, Colocal is known to be home to India's only live chocolate factory. It extends a variety of chocolate bars with 55%, 66%, 72%,

and 85% cacao. And if that's not all the café promises, a paw-friendly atmosphere too. So, you know where to head for with your family, friends, or your puffy baby!

WATCHES

**CHOPARD - HAUTE JOAILLERIE**

This is a white gold model entirely set with diamonds in a virtuoso arrangement of round and pear shapes, studded with emeralds exuding a mesmerising charm.



**VERSACE - SECRET WATCH**

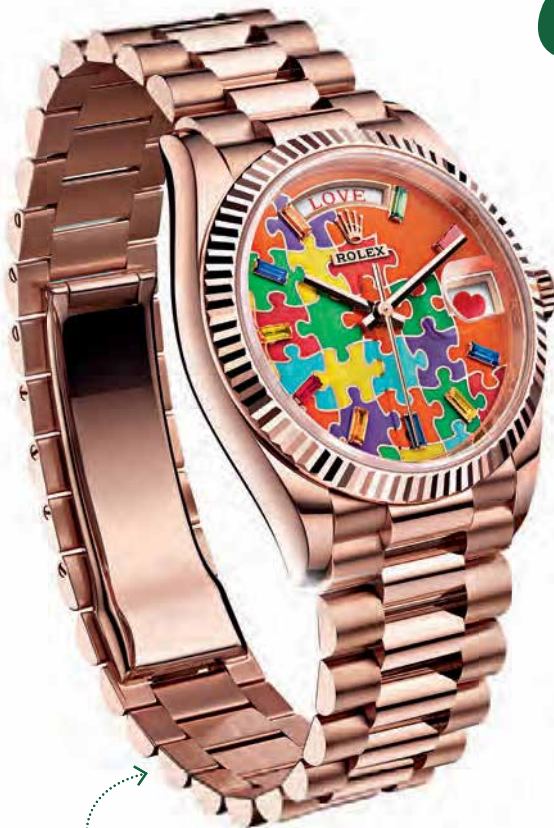
It is kept on the petite watch case that can be discovered by pressing the flap clip and the watch magically appears. The predominant icons are the Greek Key see-through and the Medusa head which lead it to be a jewel embellished with Versace uniqueness.

# DIVE IN THE *Luxury*



**ZENITH - PILOT BIG DATE FLYBACK**

This piece comes with a steel triple folding clasp. The dial comes with black horizontal grooves. One can choose between two straps: Black cordura effect rubber strap and a Brown calfskin leather strap.



**ROLEX - DAY-DATE 36**

has introduced three new variants crafted from 18 ct yellow, white or Everose gold and champlévé enamelling, revealing a motif inspired by a jigsaw puzzle and ten baguette-cut sapphires in six different hues marking the hour.

**BREGUET - CLASSIQUE QUANTIÈME PERPÉTUEL 7327**

Available in 18K white or rose gold, this new timepiece is paired with a midnight blue strap for the white gold model and a mysterious brown strap for the rose gold version.



**HUBLLOT - BB INTEGRATED TOURBILLON FULL CARBON**

This is a new Big Bang which unites a micro-rotor tourbillon manufactured in-house with an ultra-lightweight, robust carbon fibre and Textalium case and a seamlessly integrated strap.

COVER STORY

# Miami of Central America

The land where Northern and Southern worlds connect

-By TJ Bureau



**I**t is a country that has deserted islands, bright turquoise waters, ancient ruins, the world's richest canal and surprisingly cosmopolitan cities. **TravelJingles in a conversation with H.E. Mrs. Yasiel Burillo, Ambassador and Consul General of Panama to India**, to know more about this beautiful country.

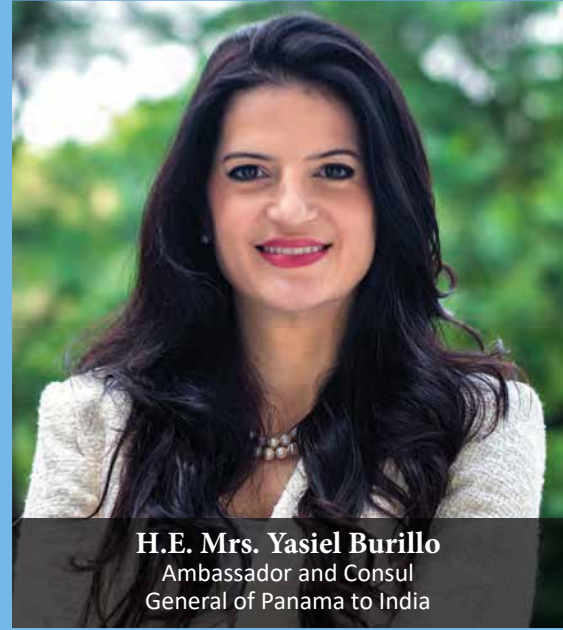
### **Tell us about the three must-do things in Panama.**

Firstly, one should experience the extraordinary engineering work of the Panama Canal operation which is considered as one of the Seven Modern Wonders of the World. Witness how the humongous post-Panamax vessels pass through, in a perfectly calculated synchronization

system of locks that takes the ship 85 feet above the sea level.

Secondly, the capital of Panama is three cities in one. A historic district, a rebuilt district, and lastly, a modern area. Panama City is a dynamic urban centre in the middle of the tropics, so expect to see massive skyscrapers surrounded by breathtaking nature.

Last, but not the least- the one thousand polleras festival in the month of January is an extraordinary celebration in the town of 'Las Tablas' in the province of Los Santos in which more than 1000 Panamanian women showcase their best polleras (national dress) in a huge parade, with allegorical floats. During summers, the famous Panama carnival is also celebrated at the same place.



**H.E. Mrs. Yasiel Burillo**  
Ambassador and Consul  
General of Panama to India



**Panama is a unique country in the world where one can watch clearly the sunrise on the East and the sunset on the West.**

You're right, because of our privileged geographical position the general surface of Panama is plain and narrow, so you just have to be in Panama City and watch the sun follow its whole route. In addition, in less than two hours by car you can view the two oceans, the Pacific Ocean (from Panama City) and the Atlantic Ocean (In Colon City). And if you are lucky enough to have a clear day and love climbing, you can view from the top of Baru Volcano both oceans at the same time. So come and experience!

**Panama has a massive variety of flora and fauna.**

It is amazing. To start, Panama has more bird species and plants than North America in proportion to its size. That's because Panama is uniquely located at the point where North America and South America connect, allowing plant and animal life from both continents to merge and flourish over time. This incredibly rich biodiversity combined with the fact that Panama is the most forested country in Central America at 68% coverage has made the tropical rainforests of Panama one of the most researched. In fact, the Smithsonian has been studying the tropical biology of the area for over 100 years. With such exuberant





second biggest reef in the Oriental Pacific, the Coiba National Park, perfect for whale watching, diving, and snorkeling with around 800 fish species and 15 species of whales.

**What is the gastronomy of the country?**

Our gastronomy consists mainly of seafood and you may find different dishes according to the region. The most popular dishes are fried green plantains called '*patacones*' or fried cassava '*yuca*', fried corn dough called '*tortilla*' and also '*tamales*'. Culantro, a kind of coriander, is a common herb used in food that makes a special Panamanian flavour. Other important dishes are chicken and rice, special beans



greenery, we are famous for being a carbon-negative country.

**There are innumerable islands in Panama, including the most famous San Blas Islands. What makes it so special?**

Because San Blas is an indigenous reserve in time, their natives have respected and preserved their nature. The community of Kunas lives there, keeping all their traditions, including the preservation of the famous art of molas. This is a traditional textile craft, made from layers of coloured fabric that are stitched and cut, using applique techniques to create patterns and pictures. It is beautiful to observe such an exposure of colours contrasting the landscapes. San Blas is located in the Caribbean side of Panama and it is a paradise with crystal clear beaches and white sands. It has 378 islands in total so our guests can visit each of them over the year.

**Tell us about the water activities the country offers to water enthusiasts.**

The majority of our surface is territorial waters, so we can offer a lot of possibilities for ocean lovers. We have been very famous for hosting International Surf Competitions and we are very well known as a desired destination for Sport Fishing. Also, we have the



added to the rice called '*guandú*', chicken soup called '*sancocho*' and much more.

**Which is your favourite country in the world and why?**

My favourite destination is Israel. I feel admiration for the Bible stories and suddenly they came to life in all their true colours. To visit Mount Nebo, the calmness of the Death Sea, the peace of the Galilee Lake, the vineyards in the desert, and finally the famous city of Jerusalem.

**Do we have any similarities between India and Panama?**

Panama and India are both melting pots. We have seven native indigenous groups that keep their culture. Later, we have the Spanish and from the Caribbean Antilles, the Africans. With the construction of the Canal, several nationalities came: North Americans, Chinese, Indians, among others. All of them mixed in time, and brought a new generation of Panamanians.

# An Ode to Indian Ocean...

## A Tropical Beach Paradise of Sri Lanka.

-By TJ Bureau

**G**ive in to the turquoise ocean and golden beaches on the South West coast of Sri Lanka in Bentota.

Taj Bentota, which is situated on a hillock, overlooks a palm-fringed golden beach, lapped by the waters of the Indian Ocean, exuding colonial elegance. About an hour and a half away from Colombo, Taj Bentota provides a serene, and calm environment to unwind.

The 160 rooms have colonial architecture, with red-tiled roofs and a terraced infinity pool. The rooms feature carved headboards and Portuguese artwork, with private sit-outs overlooking the lush gardens and the blue waters. Complete with modern amenities, Taj Bentota,

is ideal for lounging and enjoying the lazy sea breeze. Take your pick from either sea view or garden view rooms and sit back, while soaking up the elegance of the stately rooms.

Surrender yourselves to the wonders of decadent and authentic cuisine, which are a perfect reflection of the dynamic Sri Lankan culinary culture. Both indoor and outdoor venues provide a unique experience that is a treat for the senses. The Palms is a 24-hour restaurant, serving delicious international cuisine, while the

Oriental Pavilion, delights with its authentic Chinese offerings. Sample the freshest seafood at the open-air S.H.A.C.K, and dine at Sea View. The night can be rounded off by downing delectable cocktails at the TEASE bar or you could simply let your hair down at My Kind Of Place.

Discover the secrets of ancient Indian healing at Jiva Spa, where the







calming rhythms of the waves signal the beginning of a journey of bliss, promising to rejuvenate your mind, body, and soul. Apart from Spa, Taj Bentota, also offers a fitness centre, sauna and jacuzzi, and mountain bikes for adventure seekers.

Taj Bentota celebrates the beauty and traditions of the Lankan countryside, but not without doing its bit for nature, by way of its unique Conservation Project for the protection of endangered turtles, who call the shores their home. You can interact with the turtles while viewing playful dolphins, frolicking in the white-capped waves.

Taj Bentota is a leisure haven which is unspoilt and ready to knock you off with its golden sand and fresh surf. So come along and unwind in an array of refreshingly breezy, open spaces at Bentota.

# An Interplay of Equilibrium-Sustainability!

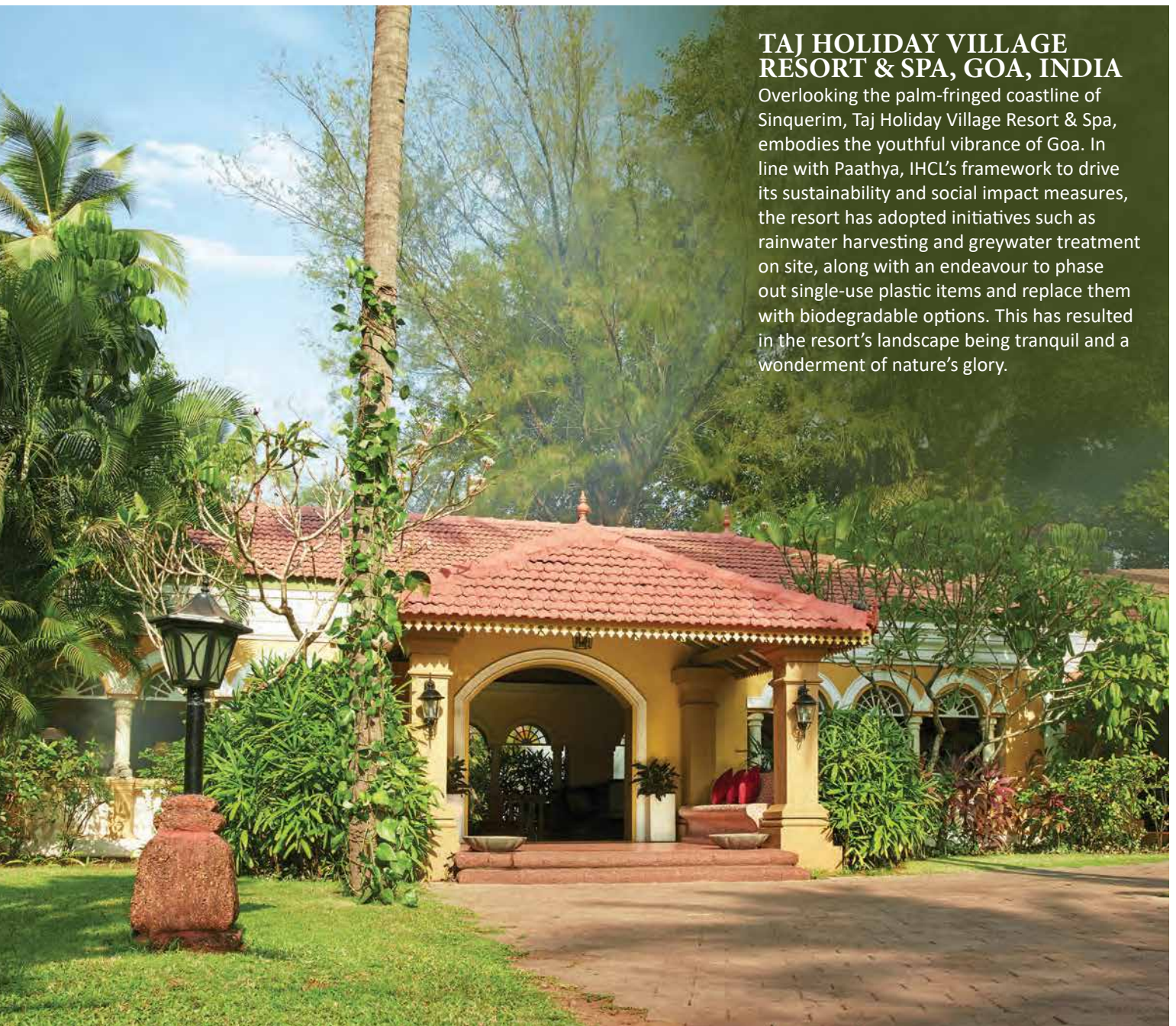
-By TJ Bureau

**E**xploring is human nature and travel, automatically becomes an integral part of exploration. However, responsible travel, is where one understands the repercussions

of each and every decision made during travel. Manifestation of elements outside and within a traveller, combined with surroundings brings out the harmony of nature, thus making the

journey credible.

We bring you a low down on hotels that have consciously chosen sustainability as their core, and continue to mark towards bridging the gap.



## TAJ HOLIDAY VILLAGE RESORT & SPA, GOA, INDIA

Overlooking the palm-fringed coastline of Siquerim, Taj Holiday Village Resort & Spa, embodies the youthful vibrance of Goa. In line with Paathya, IHCL's framework to drive its sustainability and social impact measures, the resort has adopted initiatives such as rainwater harvesting and greywater treatment on site, along with an endeavour to phase out single-use plastic items and replace them with biodegradable options. This has resulted in the resort's landscape being tranquil and a wonderment of nature's glory.



## SONEVA, MALDIVES

Pioneering a model with sustainability at its core Soneva believes that luxury and sustainability can be interconnected. Ranging from ocean, forest, green life, action against hunger and care for children, the foundation has for over 25 years, successfully inculcated several world-leading environmental projects. Using nature as an inspiration and belief in balancing the interconnection of each living creature, Soneva Fushi, has reduced the number of mosquitoes on the island by a whopping 95-98 percent, and that too pesticide free!



## JW MARRIOTT MUSSOORIE WALNUT GROVE RESORT & SPA, INDIA

Committed towards creating thoughtfully curated experiences, the JW Marriott Mussoorie Walnut Grove Resort & Spa, keenly focuses on sustainability and commitment focused towards the Himalayan community. The property works towards conserving nature and the greenery of the Himalayan belt, by growing unique herbs and botanicals in their greenhouse. JW Marriott Mussoorie Walnut Grove Resort & Spa, encourages local vendors to grow microgreens which are utilized by the hotel. The aim is to reduce the travel of ingredients and seek seasonal produce.

## RAFFLES UDAIPUR, INDIA

The regal setting of Raffles Udaipur, overseeing the Udai Sagar Lake, provides an unforgettable and sustainable experience. The hospitality extended is an absolute luxury, while creating opportunities for enriching cultural interactions and exposing guests to natural beauty. Raffles Udaipur utilizes zero carbon emission battery-operated boats to transport guests to and from the property. Following the Planet 21 guidelines to eliminate single-use plastics, Raffles Udaipur makes for a truly eco-friendly destination while being committed to being a responsible host.



## ALILA FORT BISHANGARH RAJASTHAN, INDIA

The 233-year-old warrior fort Alila, preserves indigenous Rajasthani traditions. The fort's sustainability philosophy begins with a simple idea: to make something better than what it was first encountered as. At Alila Fort sustainability is about being eco-friendly while being socially and economically viable, which can be witnessed in the horticulture practices. Goat manure and coffee residue, are used to grow plants organically, which is utilized and served in typical Rajasthani cuisine, thus encouraging the local way of life.

## W GOA, INDIA

W Goa, a luxury hotel situated in Goa, has implemented several sustainability activities to minimize its environmental footprint. The hotel has a wet garbage converter that converts food waste into compost, reducing the amount of waste sent to landfills. The hotel also has a sewage treatment plant for recycling water and reducing water wastage. To conserve energy, LED lamps are installed throughout the hotel, and timers are set for exhaust and landscape lighting. Additionally, W Goa will soon be installing a water bottling plant, where glass bottles are filled on-site, reducing the use of single-use plastic bottles. These initiatives showcase W Goa's commitment to sustainability and responsible tourism making it an excellent choice for conscious travellers.



## CHATEAU SAINT-MARTIN & SPA, VENCE, FRANCE

Château Saint-Martin & Spa, an Oetker Collection gem, long ago adopted the strategy for environmental sustainability. A tranquil refuge in the hilltops of Vence, it exhibits a unique insect hotel, installed within the labyrinths of a verdant garden. The property boasts of beehives, producing fragrant organic honey, used in whipping up delicious dishes on the restaurant's menu. Interestingly Château Saint-Martin & Spa also has its own olive oil made with olives collected from the property's groves.



## BANYAN TREE, BALI, INDONESIA

Literally meaning 'lantern of the earth', a Banyan Tree Escape, acts as a conservatory dedicated to supporting and restoring the local firefly population in Bali. Fireflies play an essential role in nature's food cycle stability and are an indicator of a healthy natural ecosystem. Being the first of its kind, inspired by the Balinese Tri Hita Karana philosophy that values connections amongst spirit, humanity, and nature, Lentera Bumi, works on increasing the survivability of the fireflies, using eco-friendly alternatives.



## THE METROPOLITAN HOTEL & SPA, NEW DELHI, INDIA

An upscale property in the heart of the city, The Metropolitan, believes in providing luxury with a conscience and thus relies on the well-thought environment program, EcoMet. Inspired by ancient Indian Vedic Science and Modern Science, the aim of EcoMet is to create a perfect balance between human consumption and the provisions of nature by implementing policies sustainable in the usage of available resources. The hotel features solar panels, automated taps, an enhanced flushing system & sewage treatment plant to recycle wastewater amongst other operations.



## RADISSON BLU PLAZA, NEW DELHI, INDIA

Ideally located in the heart of the city and consciously working towards protecting the environment, Radisson Hotel Group, has defined its own 'Build Planet' guidelines. Radisson Blu Plaza is a pioneer in building an in-house water bottling plant. The establishment of the on-site water plant is an effort to increase the availability, affordability, and dependability of clean drinking water, allowing the hotel to move closer to a sustainable living approach.



## KARMA LAKELANDS, GURUGRAM, INDIA

This Eco-Sustainable Resort, is an out-and-out eco-sustainable resort which homes thousands of lush trees and exotic flowers with four profuse forests within its contours. This sustainable luxurious living space consciously and strictly follows zero-waste policy and even a single remnant of plastic is poured back into the eco-brick to increase its density. The Karma Lakelands encourage agricultural practices like vermicomposting and bio-compositing to improve soil fertility. It also practices bee-farming to improve the quality of crops and produce high-quality pure and organic honey.





**GLADFUL**

Gladful's focus is to build high protein and fibre versions of foods, not only for gym-goers but for everyone. The brand offers highly distinctive protein pre-sprouted mixes, protein cookies, and dates and nut-based desserts. It is an ideal gift of health for families.

**NOURISH MANTRA**  
The Advanced Beard Growth Oil addresses common beard concerns, stimulates hair growth, resulting in a well-groomed, thick, and healthy beard. With key ingredients like Capilia Longa, Argan Oil, and Vitamin E, it promotes blood circulation, revitalizes dormant hair follicles, and provides a solution for patchy or uneven beard growth.



**KEVENTERS VEGAN RANGE**

This brand new range is 100% plant-based and gluten-free - a treat for people with dietary restrictions including gluten intolerance and dairy allergies. The two mouth-watering flavours—Vegan Strawberry and Vegan Dark Chocolate are available.

# Pamper yourself with the best

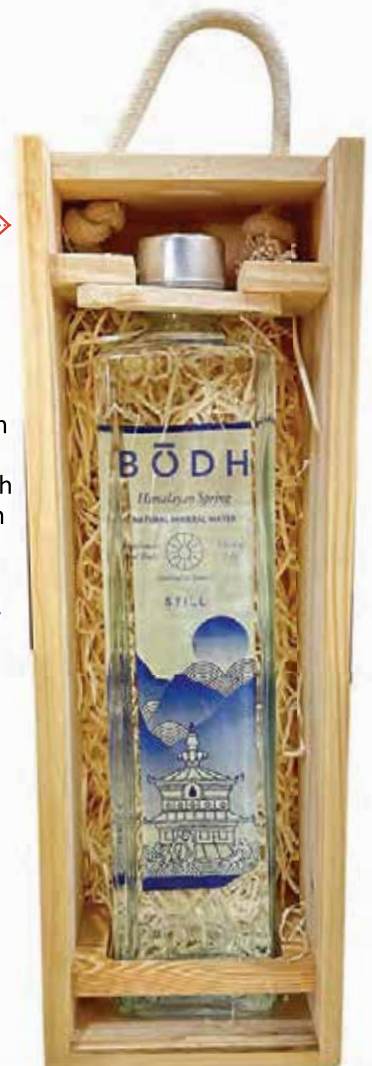


**KAIRALI - THE AYURVEDIC HEALING VILLAGE**

This Ayurvedic Healing Village is one-of-its-kind of a holistic space, which heals you internally and externally with traditional and authentic Ayurvedic therapies, treatments, and medications along with Yoga and Meditation. The village is based in Palakkad, Kerala. Kairali Ayurvedic facial oil is beneficial for youthful glowing skin leaving it rejuvenated.



**BODH WATERS**  
This pristine source of Bodh's natural spring waters lies in the Eastern Himalayas, in the Kingdom of Bhutan. Bodh is India's only Himalayan Spiritual Spring Water. Not just a product, but an experience of luxury. Catering to health and taste conscious individuals.



FROM OUR LENSES

# Cerulean Retreats

**Welcome to Waterfront Wonders in Maldives.**

-By TJ Bureau







A veritable paradise of sugar- white sand, crystal clear waters, and dramatic scenery, is what welcomes you to Maldives. The world-class beach destination is popular for its warm aquamarine seas, spectacular coral reefs, and underwater wildlife. We experienced our stay with ATMOSPHERE – Oblu Select Sangeli, Varu, and Kanifushi which was nothing less than uber luxury... from a luxury water villa experience to an enormous villa with a huge private swimming pool opening at the private beach. Every element of a plush vacation is blended into your stay for a truly carefree and memorable getaway at the finest beach resorts in Maldives. The sun, sand and water, were completely magical.

Lose yourself in a scenic setting - swaying palm trees, pristine white beaches, and a turquoise lagoon beaming with vibrant coral life. Look no further if you are looking for a romantic getaway with your partner, or simply a cosy family time..

### COLOURS OF OBLU SELECT, SANGELI

Cradled in cerulean hues, and dotted with elements of the tropics, Oblu Select, Sangeli, is a magnificent story that is at once enchantingly distinct. A necklace graced with a vivid collection of villas and suites, Oblu Select, Sangeli, offers an exotic display of flavours and unforgettable experiences.



## FROM OUR LENSES



One of the highlights of the resort is the sand massage which is a must at the ELENA Spa, a.k.a Elements of Nature. The ritual involves a warm sand-filled pouch massage to relax and ease the muscles. Being a certified Green Globe certified resort, Oblu Select, Sangeli, is closely involved in the conservation efforts of coral reefs amongst others.

### VARU

Indulge in a romantic set-up, complete with a heart-shaped floating tray of sparkling bliss, while surrounded by gin-clear waters. Alternatively, one can partake in snorkelling excursions, or swim with turtles and colourful reef fish, or simply enjoy water sports. However, we recommend fine dining at Kaage, a traditional Maldivian house set-up that presents a simple yet sumptuous juxtaposition of east meets west exquisite platter. A distinct feature of





the dining experience is the welcome where one is made to wear kandiki for ladies and mundu for men, followed by a short documentary on Maldivian history which is shared for visitors to understand the country better. With a huge sun-deck to our water villa to witness the sunset or simply sit back for star gazing added another feather to our trip here. We could nearly witness a million stars in the sky.

If you are here to relax and rejuvenate, then book yourself for

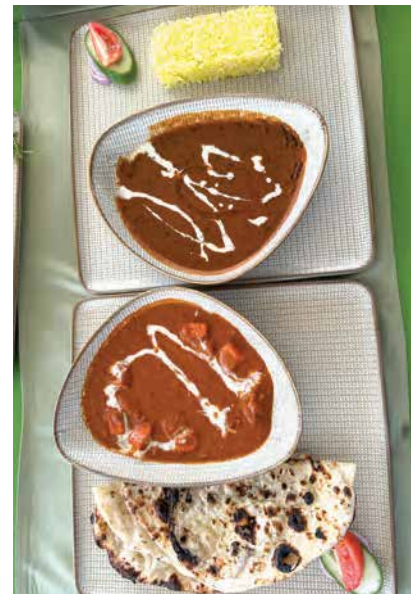


their special coconut shell massage. After cleaning the shell of the coconut, it is warmed up and rubbed on your body leaving you refreshed.

### KANIFUSHI

An unrivalled pristine resort, KANIFUSHI, can be accessed using a seaplane, across the panoramic azure hues. The resort offers exquisite ribbons of powdery-soft white sand, lapped by turquoise waters and backed by swaying palm trees. Surrender to the unspoiled tropical nature, that's calm, tranquil, and perfectly inviting, with delectable international cuisine, a selection of premium spirits from across the world along with a variety of cocktails.

Discover the Maldivian way of life through the island excursions of Naifaru and Kurrendhoo, or simply watch the sunset in the most romantic setting while on a cruise,



thus slowing down the clock.

We were lucky to witness a pod of dolphins accompanying us.

A visit to *Just Veg* is a must for its exclusive vegetarian platter, serving contemporary, plant-based cuisine from across Arabic, Indian and Mediterranean regions. Complimenting the delicacies are healing mocktails prepared by an Ayurvedic doctor that leave the body nourished and rejuvenated.

The aquatic paradise of Maldives promises blissful relaxation. So, get ready to dip your toes in the sand, live back and soak up the sun!

# A Spiritual Sojourn!

## Bask in the Tranquillity of Nature

-By TJ Bureau

Located in the Trikuta Parvat foothills, in Jammu, India, 'Fortune Park Katra' is an ideal place to rest and recoup. Imbued with the spirit of piety and worship, the property offers the highest standard of hospitality to the pilgrims of the revered shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi.

Despite the remote location, the amenities provided are exceptional keeping in mind the convenience of the traveller.

Fortune Park Katra, with its 83 well-appointed rooms and suites, provide panoramic views with coniferous lining. Each room is aesthetically designed, combining immaculate comforts and amenities. The rooms range from Fortune Club to deluxe rooms, junior suites to family suites, which ensure a calming stay coupled with immaculate service.



The experience of the stay is further enhanced by two exquisite culinary outlets. 'Rainbow' an exclusive vegetarian option providing a multicuisine, fine dining experience. Just as the name suggests, the restaurant offers dishes from seven different cuisines from across the world. Deli is a contemporary outlet, serving lip-smacking confectionery, bread, and savoury fare ensuring a relaxed ambiance to unwind.

Fortune Park Katra, also features a well-equipped gym, thus keeping you motivated to keep your fitness in check.

For those travelling with kids... Fortune Park Katra provides a dedicated kids' play zone to dispel their energies. The kids can play to their heart's content, while you can submerge in a rejuvenating therapy. Indulge in a therapeutic haven and experience the thoughtfully curated spa to attain the ultimate relaxation. When it comes to banqueting

options, Fortune Park Katra, provides an ideal solution in terms of a banquet lawn and conference room. Whether celebrating a milestone or organizing corporate events, the hotel provides tailor-made services to make your event a success.

So, whether you are looking for a spiritual journey or a relaxed staycation, Fortune Park Katra, lets you bask in tranquility while elevating your spiritual essence.



# THE COUNTRY CLOSEST TO THE MOON



**H.E. Mr. Francisco Teodoro Maldonado Guevara,**  
Ambassador of the Republic of Ecuador to India

**E**cador has everything for everyone! It has amazing volcanoes, beautiful mountains, the fascinating Amazonia, the fruity Coast, and the magical Galapagos Islands! Let's know more about the country from **H.E. Mr. Francisco Teodoro Maldonado Guevara, Ambassador of the Republic of Ecuador to India**

## Tell us about three must-do things in the country.

Difficult to mention just three must-do things in Ecuador but I would say snorkeling amid sharks, whales and mantarays in the Galapagos Islands; a visit to Quito, the capital with its historic centre, filled with baroque churches and convents and exquisite art. And, lastly, an expedition to the Amazon jungle to navigate placid rivers and penetrate into lush green jungles, filled with exotic birds and sounds. Ecuador is a land of diversity.

## What is the country doing towards sustainability?

Ecuador is doing a lot towards sustainability. We have 74 protected reserves that amount to 19.42% of the total area of the country in the National System of Protected Areas. It includes national parks, marine, ecological, biological, geobotanical reserves and other areas. In these areas special measures are implemented to protect and preserve their delicate and unique eco systems.

The largest reserve is the Galapagos Reserve, expanded by President Guillermo Lasso, to include a marine corridor that connects it to the Cocos Island in Costa Rica and the other islands in Panama and Colombia, to further

protect the migratory pathway of species, like sea turtles, whales, sharks and others.

On April 10th, Ecuador launched the initiative to establish an organization of mega diverse countries, that would include India, of course, among 16 other nations. It aims to foster cooperation and exchange of experiences and good conservation practices. A mega diverse country has at least 5000 species of endemic plants and marine ecosystems. Ecuador has the largest concentration of biodiversity per square kilometer in the planet.

## Which is your favourite destination in the world and why?

My favourite destination in the world is the Galapagos Islands, the sub-tropical archipelago where animals know no fear of man. It is a place where you can see evolution in the making and understand better why Charles Darwin developed his theory of the evolution of the species. The fauna in air, land and sea, is so incredible in the Galapagos Islands; as you have, among others, the northernmost penguins in the world, the big Galapagos tortoises and the wingless cormorant. It is a unique and magical place.

# SPREADING WINGS...



**Bilén Arefaine**  
Regional Director of India Sub Continent

**I**f you are planning a trip, overseas, we give you many reasons to fly with Ethiopian Airlines.

**Travelling in conversation with Bilén Arefaine, Regional Director of the Indian Subcontinent**

**Ethiopian Airlines is the best air carrier for Africa. What makes it so special?**

‘From Mules to Jets’ is an adage describing Ethiopian’s transition down the ages. Nearly 77 years old and counting, with 131 international destinations, and more than 60 within Africa, makes it the best African airline by way of maturity, experience, and state-of-the-art aircraft. The airline excels in both passenger and cargo operations besides having several in-house expertise businesses like MRO handling, Simulator training for Pilots, and Inflight crew. ET has spread its wings to train several other African airlines and today its

training school is in high demand. The ancillary services introduced make ET an enterprise or Group that handles diverse activities besides focusing only on aviation.

**What is the new partnership the airline is introducing (like with Europcar)?**

Ethiopian has entered a new partnership with Europcar and introduced the ‘Earn Miles with Europcar’ offer. With the same, our Sheba Miles members can now earn 500 miles every time they rent a car with Europcar and enjoy up to 15% discount on presentation of the Sheba Miles card/number. This partnership will make our passengers have a great customer experience not only in the sky but also on the ground.

**Which is your favorite destination? One**

Ethiopia



# LAND OF CULTURAL AMALGAMATION



**H.E. Mr. Nurlan Zhalgasbayev**  
Ambassador of the Republic of  
the Kazakhstan to India.

**K**azakhstan is considered home to about 120 ethnic groups and nationalities. Hospitality is considered as a sacred duty in Kazakh society. The country is a home of stunning nature, including the famed Altai Mountains and Kazakh steppe.

**Let's know more about Kazakhstan, Travelljingles in conversation with H.E. Mr. Nurlan Zhalgasbayev, Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to India.**

**Kazakhstan is known for its architectural marvels, the Caspian Sea, and the wild horses. Tell us about the three must-do things in the country.**

I would strongly recommend you to visit our wonderful cities of Astana, Almaty and Shymkent, as well as colorful and amazing natural places that are located near these cities, such as the Kolsai Lakes, the State National Natural Park 'Burabay' as well as one of the oldest cities in

Central Asia - Turkestan. Secondly, I would advise anyone who came to Kazakhstan for the first time to taste our Kazakh national cuisine, the cuisine of nomadic peoples, which reflects our cultural traditions. And in the end, I would suggest tourists from India to go to our wonderful museums, where you can get to know the history and culture of the ancient nomads.

### What is the country doing towards sustainability?

Kazakhstan remains committed to implementing the sustainable development goals (SDGs). Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, our country has been working step-by-step towards sustainable development. To date, Kazakhstan has introduced and effectively operates an institutional architecture to facilitate the achievement of the SDGs. The five main areas of sustainable development goals are People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships

In July 2022, at the High-Level Political Forum at the UN headquarters in New York, Kazakhstan successfully presented the second Voluntary National Survey on Sustainable Development by 2030, formed with the active participation of inter-agency working groups, the non-governmental sector, experts and international organizations. The document is a comprehensive assessment of Kazakhstan's progress over the past three years.

### Is there anything similar between India and Kazakhstan?

As for the similarity of Kazakh and Indian cultures, it can be noted that in Kazakhstan and India the elders are equally revered. As the Kazakhs say: 'Enbegine karay – kurmet, Zhasyna karay – izet', which means 'by merit – respect, by age – dignity'. I am sure that Indians also have similar or close proverbs about respect for elders.





**Ms. Angela Blair**  
General Manager International,  
Tourism New Zealand

# THE LAND OF ADVENTURES

most Indians are film lovers my first suggestion would be to visit the Hobbiton Movie Set. Just outside of the Waikato town of Matamata, Sir Peter Jackson discovered the perfect place to create The Shire and village of Hobbiton. To this day, the movie set remains and is a spectacular place to visit, and it's not just for fans of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit Trilogies*.

New Zealand is also blessed with dark skies and unique celestial features that are perfect for a magical stargazing experience, which isn't something that's easily visible in a lot of countries. The world's darkest skies can be seen at Aoraki Mount Cook, making it the ideal location for some stunning stargazing. You could visit the Big Sky Stargazing or take a tour with the Dark Sky Project at Mount John Observatory in Tekapo to see shooting stars and constellations in the clear, starry night sky.

## What are the steps taken by NZ on sustainable tourism?

The tourism industry in New Zealand has developed new and innovative experiences for visitors that range from new and refurbished accommodation options to new

attractions and tours. We have new sustainable stays like Sudima Kaikoura and Movenpick Auckland; or The Rees Hotel (Queenstown) - a hotel that is determined to achieve Carbon Neutral status by implementing several sustainable initiatives. Quite a few of our tourism operators, such as Shotover Jet (Queenstown) and Whaka e-bike trail (Rotorua) are providing trailblazing transformative, regenerative travel experiences throughout New Zealand, through their eco-conscious offerings and giving back to their local regions. The industry is undertaking a range of initiatives, such as commitment to carbon zero, sustainable experiences and the development of carbon neutral travel itineraries.

## Which is your favourite place and why? (Besides New Zealand)

One of my favourite places is Sri Lanka which I visited with my family in 2018. It is a country rich in history, with great diversity - from buzzing cities to beautiful beaches and amazing wildlife parks. As a lifelong cricket fan the trip included a visit to the picturesque grounds at Galle.

**N**ew Zealand is famous for its indigenous Maori culture, picturesque landscape and its national rugby team.

From towering mountains and mist-cloaked fjords, you can find serenity in golden beaches curled around quiet bays.

**Let's know more about New Zealand in an Interaction with Angela Blair, General Manager International, Tourism New Zealand**

## Tell us about two must-do things in NZ.

Well, it's hard to narrow it down to just two with two unique islands, 14 national parks, and multiple diverse cities to choose from. Since



# GREECE NATIONAL DAY

Greece Embassy, New Delhi, celebrated its National Day on 27th March 2023. Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi was the Chief Guest at the evening. Many diplomats including Ambassador, High Commissioner of Malta, The Czech Republic, Panama, and many others, were seen enjoying the evening.



# SOUTH AFRICA NATIONAL DAY

South Africa's High Commissioner to India H.E. MR. J.S. Ndebele hosted a celebration for the 29th Freedom Day celebrations in New Delhi. Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi was the Chief Guest at the evening. There were nearly 500 guests, including diplomats from several nations and members of the Government of India enjoying the evening.



# TRAVELJINGLES DIPLOMATIC AWARDS 2023

On Friday, 17th February 2023 The Embassy Magazine TravelJingles curated the Diplomatic Awards 2023 at the Delhi Golf Club, New Delhi.

-by Hitasha Mehra Sharma



**T**he Chief Guest at the event was the Eritrean Ambassador to India H.E. Mr. Alem Tsehaye Woldemariam, the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps. Mr. Bimal Mehra, MD & C.E.O. of TravelJingles commemorated the event by welcoming the honourable diplomats and all other guests. There were nearly 50 embassies seen attending the event.

There was an open house discussion on 'Travel – Today and Tomorrow'. Many diplomats were seen participating in the discussion. The discussion started with the Eritrea Ambassador, followed by the Chile Ambassador, Croatia Ambassador, Serbia Ambassador, Nepal Ambassador, Paraguay Ambassador, Tanzania High Commissioner, Jamaican High Commissioner, Honorary

Consulate General of Comoros, Honorary Consulate General of Palau, Honorary Consulate General of Marshall Island as participants. The list also include diplomats from Greece, Israel, Maldives, Tunisia, Vietnam, Bahrain, Uzbekistan, Belarus, Fiji, Morocco, Costa Rica, Togo, and many others associated with us.

Then, we had the much-awaited Diplomatic Awards 2023. The Chief Guest gave awards to various Diplomats under various categories.

The best beach destination award was given to Chile.

The best-emerging destination award was given to Serbia.

The best romantic destination award was given to Jamaica.

The best adventure destination award was given to the Maldives.

The best filming destination award was given to Greece

The best scenic destination award was given to Morocco.

The best wildlife destination award was handed over to Tanzania

The best eco-friendly destination award was handed over to Costa Rica.

The best promising destination award was given to Palau.

There were also some special awards that were distributed. The best Public Relation representation Award was given to Think Strawberries.

The best luxury destination in India was given to Raffles Udaipur, India.

The best marketing representation award was handed over to the Nijhawan Group.

The event was co-sponsored by VFS Global. We had AMP Motors, Think Strawberries, Raffles Udaipur, Nijhawan Group, Bezilla, and Diageo as partners in the event.









## AAHANA RESORT

Jim Corbett National Park

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“अतिथि देवो भवः”



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