

KTS Chronicle

Jan-Mar 2024

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Editor's Note

Hello friends!

THE last quarter of 2023-24 capped a resurgent tourism sector in India. It is satisfying to see that our industry has come back a long way since the abyss of covid period. While the domestic tourism has surpassed pre-covid levels for many states in India, including Karnataka the international guests coming into India is yet to catch up. I am sure, our industry is on the right path in terms of wooing them so that Indian Tourism sector bounces back.

While many may attribute this uptick in tourism statistics to 'revenge tourism' phenomenon, let us not forget some fundamental facts about developments that have been taking place in the Indian, as also in Karnataka's case. The 'great Indian middle class' is becoming more and more affluent. Disposable incomes are increasing. Travel and holidaying is now becoming a 'must have' for most families. Going on a vacation (or should I say, vacations?) is becoming more regular. In fact, it is not unusual for families to go on 2-3 vacations in a year. Or even on long weekends. There are more excuses than just meeting 'relatives and friends' for Indians to go on vacations in today's times. That the government has significantly contributed (and continues to do so) by way of ramping up infrastructure like new, wider highways, better designed railway and inter-city bus terminals, airports, new class of long distance trains, wayside convenience infrastructure, etc. has only fuelled this mad rush for domestic travel. No wonder, last year over 1731 million domestic tourist visits were made across India. (Source: Statista).

While through out the earlier part of 2023-24, there was not much activities, the DOT, Government of Karnataka extended good marketing support to our sector. The DOT participated in 4 key domestic and international travel events. Many tourism stakeholders from Karnataka benefited by way of participating as co-exhibitors with the DOT to make crucial B2B connections with partners from both, domestic and international markets. The KTS also did its bit by



holding a Destination promotion campaign to bring Sellers from Chikkamagaluru and Sakleshpur with Buyers from Bengaluru. The event held in the last week of March elicited fantastic response.

As we get into the new financial year, we are hopeful that the Dept. of Tourism, Govt. of Karnataka will continue to provide our sector with marketing support and enable more stakeholders to take benefit of it. I might remind all of you that Karnataka Tourism's biggest showcase event, the Karnataka International Travel Expo (KITE) is planned to be held in August 2024. Look out for more announcements on the same in the coming weeks. Till then, wishing you all a successful start to your new financial year!



S Mahalingaiah (Manu)
Secretary

KTS Welcomes new Tourism Secretary



Ms. Salma K Fahim, IAS, the new Secretary to the Department of Tourism, Government of Karnataka being welcomed by KTS President, Mr. Syama Raju, Secretary, Mr. S Mahalingaiah, Treasurer, Mr. G K Shetty, Committee Member, Mr. P C Rao and Convener, Mr. Ratnakar HT.

Jungle Lodges get new Managing Director



Mr. Prashanth Shankhinamath, IFS takes charge as the new Managing Director at Jungle Lodges & Resorts Ltd. Mr. K Syama Raju, President and Mr. Manu, Secretary of the KTS met him and welcomed him on behalf of the Society.

New Year. Newer Journeys and the India Tourism story!

■ By Rohit Hangal

THE headlines roared "Tourism in India in 2024 will break records!" With multiple hotels, airlines and trains going through a phase of depleted capacities, all wishing they had doubled their existing inventory! Domestic travel with a rebounded economy has delivered to the Indian tourism industry. The entire country is on construction mode, whether it is the green field airports, upgraded railway networks to highways that we as a generation, who grew up in the eighties and nineties could only dream about!

2023 was also about breaking the headline market with India's G20 presidency to the Cricket World Cup. The year also saw mega Convention centres being opened and re-creation of new religious tourism destinations of Varanasi and Ayodhya. The year also saw, amid record crunching airline occupancies, headline grabbing record orders for Boeings and Airbuses, while there emerged some difficult times for a couple of our airlines as well. The year 2023 also saw record travel-agent associations / consortiums / alliances being formed to take up the cudgels on behalf of the Indian tourism industry!

A five trillion-dollar economy is no longer a long-term mission statement and India will be among the top three economies in the world before this decade. As a country, 'India that is Bharat' became another headline to wake up to. More than a mere nomenclature, it is a timely opportunity



to reposition Brand India as a civilizational state with its heady cocktail of heritage, culture, and unbridled chaos!

Inbound Travel into India

As the Indian hospitality and travel industry wakes up from a very successful 2023 hangover, the Indian inbound industry continues to lag as compared to their industry partners. Numbers are still not back to levels of 2019 with not much

hope for 2024 as well. You can blame it on Post Covid traumas, the current geopolitical mess in Ukraine and Israel and weakening western economies. The inbound industry needs more than a helping hand.

In a sector where uncertainties dominate, inbound business is built over decades of consistent marketing backed by credible quality service delivery. India Tourism's initiative to shut down its international office is a shock and a set-back. Though the argument that the Indian Embassies and consulates will be mandated to market the destination sounds okay in theory, the practicality of our babus interacting with the global travel-trade and media is a different ball game. Let our noble diplomats do what they are good at and leave destination-marketing to professionals. Just merely participating in a few International



fairs is not good enough, though the 'Incredible India' campaign has stood the test of time. The Incredible India brand should be backed with budgets and manpower in a very aggressive marketplace. Inbound business needs a consistent campaign delivery and India Tourism's efforts should be on steroids mode to say the least, when the numbers are flaking.

Hopefully, the new government in May will relook at opening of India Tourism offices abroad once again. India has since Independence has been a long-haul destination with our markets being in North America and Europe. With economies in Europe not in the best of shape and with crazy air travel fares, it is a further dampener. The airfares which are predicted to be high for the next few years till we get used to it as the 'new normal'. India Tourism and the inbound players may wish to reach-out to markets closer to home for luxury travel.

Tourism on Atma Nirbhar mode – go domestic

As elections heats up the already hot Indian summer, the Indian tourism industry taking cue, also logs on to the Atma Nirbhar vehicle!

The big fat Indian wedding razzmatazz has already taken cue from the Prime Minister's call to shift destination-weddings in India. The scale and spectacle of the recent Ambani wedding just proved that. With another International inbound season seeing marginal increases, domestic travel sure saved the day for the Indian hotels, with booming rates. Destination weddings in India have also pushed hotel rates to a new high, which the Indian Inbound players now find themselves to be the preliminary collateral damage!

Why Now? With the rise of hotel inventory across sectors and having successfully outpriced ourselves in the international markets, India has handed over our 'bread and butter' market to our

Asian rivals on a silver platter!

With a relatively high taxation rate in form of GST of 18% imposed on rooms over Rs. 7500 in an inane attempt to beat some sort of record, Govt. of India has taken extreme pains to shoot itself in the foot. In an era, when the Indian foreign exchange was miniscule, India Tourism has always had a favorite son with the long-haul foreign tourist bringing in the much-needed dollar. But in the changing scenario, where the reserves are more than USD 600 Billion and inbound arrivals on status quo, the timing to woo the domestic desi traveller has never been good.

With the Prime Minister happening to remind people to travel within India, it is also a 'Shot in the Arm' to the domestic travel market. The segment is diverse, blessed with a world-record population of nearly 1.5 billion, all year round and ever so aspirational. The statistic on this varies from anything from 175 - 550 million travelling, of course, it is dependent on whom you ask!

A growing, consumption-driven economy growing at a bustling 8.4% has created a large and increasingly affluent middle class. Additional interest in niche tourism sectors such as medical, wellness and adventure tourism has also contributed to this growth. Increased smart phone and internet penetration have also contributed to an increased number of online bookings.

India and the hospitality conundrum

The great Indian hotel boom is back. With investments on mega mode with almost every hotel chain worth its name is back to visualizing their hotel brands in multiples of hundreds! Rev Pars and Average Room Rates are at time high. Banquets and conferences rates are breaking every moolah barrier. Just received a quote from a leading hotel chain for an event, which included additional charges for using air-conditioning as well!

Good times are back, with global brands overtaking independent hotels in sheer scalability. Hotel brands from across the world are making their beeline into the Indian shores like never before. Homestays, once back of nowhere are now wooed by brands like no other. Consolidators and Aggregators are the new buzzwords in the room inventory factory. If you are a global hotel brand and do not have an India plan, you are passe! A good time nevertheless if you are in the master-franchisee line. Brand extensions are here to stay. The era of new jargon like 'Asset-light' are key buzzwords you will hear more in the Indian hospitality branding market. With 90% of the new hotels being invested upon by those from outside the industry, it is also a good time for consultants and multi-brand franchise operators.

Hospitality Education and the road to nowhere!

Just a couple of years ago, hotel management institutes were unable to fill-up seats. There is still a tremendous stress on the manpower and upskilling. Hotel standards have dropped amid rising ARR's and mixed customer feedback. One veteran hotelier also remarked on the trained manpower shortage that, he is putting up a board outside his hotel which will scream "Trespassers will be recruited!" It is criminal to see hotel management institutes struggling to fill-up. The industry and the government should incentivize or even bankroll education of half a million students in the skills of the industry. Though it is part of every hospitality association's lead theme for its convention; the storyline gets carried forward into the next convention!

So, here is to 2024; "A year where your business not only makes headlines but writes them as well. Fasten your seatbelts and let the adventure begin!"



Rohit Hangal is a Hospitality Professional by academia, a 'Tourism Media Marketing Professional' since the last 25 years, presently involved in managing hospitality,

travel and tourism media brands as Co-Founder and Director of 'Sphere Travelmedia & Exhibitions Pvt. Ltd., Bengaluru

FKCCI to organise Dakshin Bharat Utsav 2024

FKCCI is organizing Dakshin Bharat Utsav 2024 in collaboration with the DOT, Govt. of Karnataka, between 15th & 16th June 2024 in Bengaluru, to showcase the tourism potential of Southern Indian states. This will be an annual event; initiated by FKCCI and will be conducted in each South Indian State, starting with Karnataka. The primary objectives of the Dakshin Bharat Utsav are to highlight investment opportunities and foster employment generation in the tourism sector in all the Southern States.

We believe, it will enable the dynamic Tourism Industry and engage stakeholders of the Tourism sector for two days in verticals like Tourism Investors Meet, an exhibition showcasing the culture, food, and tourism-related activities of the South Indian States, Conferences, B2B, B2G and cultural events.

The Dakshin Bharat Utsav Logo was unveiled by Shri H K Patil, Hon'ble Minister for Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Tourism, on 3rd July 2023 and the Curtain Raiser of event was inaugurated on 22nd September 2023, at FKCCI, in the presence of distinguished dignitaries and investors from all southern states. It brings us immense joy to share that on the same day, we received a significant number of Expressions of Interest for Investments in the Tourism sector.



The Main aims and objectives of Dakshin Bharat Utsav -2024 are to:

- To organize seminars, workshops, and interactive sessions to educate delegates about the significance of responsible tourism practices, conservation efforts, and community-based tourism initiatives in South India.
- To raise the profile of South India as a premier tourism destination on both national and international platforms.
- Showcase the strengths and attractions of South India's Tourism and investment opportunities available and to foster employment generation in South India
- Promote tourism, foster cultural exchange, and facilitate business opportunities.
- Highlight the rich cultural, historical, and geographical diversity of South India.
- To provide a platform for stakeholders in the tourism industries to network, collaborate, and forge partnerships for sustainable tourism development.



Ramesh Chandra Lahoti
President – FKCCI

Bengaluru tourists throw trash into Cauvery, made to clean up

Article courtesy: Express News Service, 12 March, 2024

WITH domestic tourism growing in leaps and bounds, the need to encourage sustainable tourism is becoming ever so critical. It is every one's responsibility to make sure that while we enjoy visiting various tourism destination, we make sure that the sanctity and beauty of such places are not just enhanced, but preserved for future generations to enjoy as well. Let us not forget that we, the today's generation are mere custodians of such natural treasures to be passed on to the generations coming after us. Here's a beautiful example of how some of our citizens acted in the nick of time as guardians of our natural assts.

MADIKERI: A wedding party that had littered river Cauvery in Kushalnagar was summoned back by an eco-conscious



couple and environmentalists and was made to clean the water body on Monday.

The couple, Chandramohan and Vanita, residents of Kushalnagar and members of the Cauvery Swachata Andolana, found piles of paper floating in the river near Kushalnagar-Koppa Bridge. The couple picked up a few of those papers and found them to be invitation cards dumped by

some miscreants. Over 500 wedding cards were floating in the river.

The couple found a mobile phone number mentioned on the cards and called the number. When the call came, the family that had thrown the cards in the river was on its way to Bengaluru in a private bus. The couple told the family that if they don't return and clean the river, legal action would be taken against them.

Twenty-two members of the family, who returned, took to cleaning the river. They told the couple that their priest had suggested to them to throw the undistributed wedding cards into river Cauvery. The family apologised to the couple and vowed not to trash public places again.

KTS holds 'Discover Chikmagalur and Sakleshpur' B2B Meet

KARNATAKA Tourism Society organized the inaugural edition of Destination Showcase Events 'Discover Chikmagalur and Sakleshpur' in Bengaluru on the 26th of March 2024. The event was inaugurated by Mr. D Venkatesan, Regional Director, Southern India for India Tourism. Other dignitaries, who graced the occasion, included Mr. Mohamed Farouk, Director – India Tourism, Bengaluru, Mr. Janardhan, Joint Director, Karnataka Tourism and Mr. Yuvaraj, General Manager, Jungle Lodges and Resorts.

For the first time, Chikmagalur and Sakleshpur, two picturesque destinations nestled in the lush Western Ghats of Karnataka, were the destination theme for an exclusive B2B Tourism Showcase, inviting industry professionals and stakeholders to explore the untapped potential of these Coffee Tourism destinations. The event unveiled its rich cultural heritage, breathtaking landscapes, and diverse offerings that these regions possess. The KTS 'Chikmagalur and Sakleshpur Tourism Showcase' fostered collaboration,



Mr K Syama Raju, President, of the KTS in his welcome address said

networking, and partnerships. With a focus on sustainable tourism practices and community engagement, the event highlighted the unique experiences awaiting travellers in these pristine locales.

"This showcase presents an unparalleled opportunity for travel agents, tour operators, hospitality professionals, and other stakeholders to discover the hidden treasures of Chikmagalur and Sakleshpur. We believe that by bringing together industry leaders and showcasing the distinctive offerings of our regions, we can unlock their full potential and drive sustainable growth."

In addition to exploring the scenic wonders of Chikmagalur and Sakleshpur, attending delegates had an opportunity to engage with leading hotels and resorts, sample authentic cuisine, and network. The event showcased 24 leading properties, making it one of the key tourism promotion activities for the destination.

Chikmagalur, known as the 'Coffee Land of Karnataka,' offers visitors a blend of verdant coffee plantations, mist-covered hills, and cascading waterfalls. Sakleshpur, on the other hand, boasts of its serene landscapes, ancient temples, and biodiversity hotspots, making it an ideal destination for nature lovers and adventure enthusiasts alike.

Chikmagalur and Sakleshpur are two prominent tourist destinations located in the Western Ghats of Karnataka, India. Known for their scenic beauty, rich cultural heritage, and biodiversity, these regions attract travellers from across the globe seeking immersive experiences amidst nature.

B2B Events in Jan-Mar 2024

This quarter was marked by participation in various B2B events by the Dept. of Tourism, Government of Karnataka. Some of our KTS members also took part as co-exhibitors within the DOT pavilion and benefitted from networking with tourism stakeholders from other geographies. Here are some highlights:



Event highlights

Event held at	: Taj MG Road, Bengaluru
Event held on	: 26 March, 2024
SELLER delegates	: 24 (from Chikmagalur, Sakleshpur, Moodabidri)
BUYER delegates	: 203 (from Bengaluru)
Sponsors	: Jungle Lodges and Resorts Ltd., Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India and Dept. of Tourism, Govt. of Karnataka
Post-event PR coverage	: 18 Travel & Tourism digital media houses covered the event extensively to provide good publicity

A copy of the SELLERS' Directory was provided to all BUYER delegates who attended the event. Likewise, BUYER Delegate details who had registered for the event was shared with the SELLER organisations. This will enable them to continue their networking beyond the event.

The KTS is committed to holding similar events with a view to promoting various destinations from across Karnataka.



TTF Chennai

15-17 Mar | Chennai Trade Centre

The Travel-trade of Karnataka was represented by: Galaxy Tours & Travels; Intersight Tours & Travels, SBIT Travels, TGI Hotels & Resorts,



Mysore Trip Zone, Hotel Ministers Kourt, Roopa Group of Hotels, Lee Vacations, Sigghartha Voyage Solutions, Dholes Den Eco Safari Homestay, Hotel Aadrika, Mysore International Travels, Wisdom Vacations, Java Rain Resorts, Quality Holidays & Cards Pvt. Ltd, Bindiga Peak Resorts, Crystal Inn, The Silver Sky Hotels & Resorts and the Aurora Group of Hotels.

TTF Bengaluru

16-18 Feb, 2024 Palace Ground

The Karnataka Tourism Pavilion was inaugurated by Mr. Mohamed Farouk, Director - India Tourism, Ministry of Tourism (Bengaluru), Govt. of India in the presence of Mr. Manoj Kumar, MD, Jungle Lodges & Resorts Ltd. and Mr. Janardhan, Joint Director of Karnataka Tourism



The Travel-trade of Karnataka was represented by: The Yellow Bamboo Resort, BookForUs, Skyway International Travels, Blue Bird Tours & Travels, VHF Resorts, Quality Holidays & Cards, Arya Coorg resorts & Spa, Safeway Explorers, Parichaya Holidays, The Silver Sky Hotels & Resorts, Hotel Le Ruchi the Prince, SBIT Travels, Milan Enterprises, The Aurum Hotels & Resorts, Coorg Cliff Resorts, Lee Vacations, Galaxy Tours & Travels, Tripbanao, Trawel.in, Intersight Tours & Travels, BooknTravel India, Hotels Ministers Kourt, Hotel Sandesh the Prince, Country Club Hospitality & Holidays, Mookanamane Skill & Spa Resorts, TGI Hotels & Resorts, Give Sancturys Safari LLP, Bindiga Peak Resorts, The Windflower Resorts & Spa and Global Village Resorts.

SATTE New Delhi

Like every year, the Dept. of Tourism, Govt. of Karnataka had a big presence at the SATTE, New Delhi (22-24 Feb) 2024 held at India Expo Mart, Greater Noida, Delhi. This Time, Karnataka had the highest number of co-participants that included: KSTDc, JLR, Hotel Golden Castle, Blue Bird Tours & Travels, Nrayani Holidays & Conferences, Quality Holidays



and Cars, Woodstock Resorts, Book for Us, Dravidian Routes, The Yellow Bamboo Resorts, Agarwal Holidays & Hospitality, Hotel Malligi, Turquoise Holidays, Bangalore Taxi & Holidays, Skyway International Travels, Welwet Travel Pvt. Ltd., Mysore Taxiwalla Car Rentals, Bookntravel India, Sbit Travels, Karan Tourist, Tripbanao, Dynamic Travels, Hotel Sandesh the Prince, Kadkani River Resort, The Quorum Hotel, Ab Travels South India, Megha Comforts, Transprofessional Tours & Travels, The Silver Sky Hotels & Resorts, Country Club Hospitality, Ayara Coorg Resort & Spa, Global Village Resorts, TGI Hotels & Resorts, The Windflower Resorts & Spa, MSIL and Sanskruti Resort.

ITB Berlin

The ITB Berlin, had been one of the most important B2B travel and tourism event in Europe, not just because it is at the epicentre of the European market (for us in India), it also provides an opportunity for all tourism stakeholders from Karnataka to also re-establish connections with partners from other geographies across the globe, as it is one of the most visited travel-trade meet.



This year, the ITB was held bet 5-7 March, 2024 in the internationally acclaimed ITB Berlin Convention Centre. Following partners participated as co-exhibitors in the Karnataka Tourism pavilion: Shathaye Ayurveda Yoga Retreat, Daddy and Friends Cafe (OIA), The Serai Resorts, Orchit Travel & Tours, Mokaana Resorts, Mysore International Travels, Holiday Monk and Dhole's Den. The Karnataka Pavilion was led by Shri Ratnakar HT, Advisor to Jungle Lodges & Resorts Ltd.,

Road Show in Milan

After the ITB Berlin, the Karnataka State Tourism Contingent stopped at Milan (Italy) to hold a Road show to interact with outbound travel businesses in that region. The half-day event organised at Hyatt Centric Hotel, Milan was well attended by leading local tour operators. The event was inaugurated by Mr. Raj Kamal, Consul of the Consulate General of India, Milan.

Karnataka Tourism Society Renewal and New Membership Enrolments

To apply for new membership or to renew your membership, kindly log on to the link provided here below. Please note - ONLINE RENEWAL HAS BEEN SIMPLIFIED EVEN MORE:

<https://www.karnatakaturismsociety.org/membership-registration/>

For New Membership - kindly note:

Please keep following documents (in < 1 GB in pdf format) while applying online

For HOTELS:

1. Trade Licence
2. PAN Card
3. GST Certificate
4. Labour Licence

For TRAVEL AGENTS / TOUR OPERATOR:

1. Trade Licence
2. PAN Card
3. GST Certificate
4. Labour Licence

You may upload any 2 documents in all and proceed. Approval will be granted.

ONLINE RENEWAL HAS BEEN SIMPLIFIED

Please log in to your account for renewal.

KTS Membership and Subscriptions:

Admission & Subscription Fee					
No	Membership Category	One time Admission Fee	Annual Subscription	GST	Total
1	Active Member	2500	3000	990	6490
2	Affiliate Member	2500	2000	810	5310
3	Ordinary Member	1000	1000	360	2360
4	Life Time Member *	50000	NIL	9000	59000
	Life Time Member	25000*	NIL	4500*	29500*

Renewal Fee					
1	Active	Nil	3000	540	3540
2	Affiliate Member		2000	360	2360
3	Ordinary Member	Nil	1000	180	1180

*Life Time Membership is being offered at a 50% discount just for this financial year; i.e. 2024-25

For any clarifications, feel free to contact **Mr. Ganesh Kamath on 99869 30885**

Placement of Advertisement and/or Advertorial

Karnataka Tourism Society will be happy to carry your advertisements and promotional messages in the KTS Chronicle. The KTS Chronicle reaches focussed audiences comprising over 10000 member institutions across the Indian Tourism fraternity. The KTS Chronicle is published every Quarter and is circulated among all Members of the KTS as well to member organizations: SHIRA, IATO, BCIC, FCCI, TAFI, ETTA, SKAL, KTF, KSTOA, MTA, Dept of Tourism Govt. of Karnataka, JLR and KSTDC office and the Minister of Tourism, Govt. of Karnataka's office as well.

Advertisements can be carried in following sizes and positions. The tariff is as follows:

Size/ Position	Cost/ Ins (in ₹)
Full page (inside pages)	9,000/-
Half Page (inside pages)	5,000/-
Quarter Page (inside pages)	3,000/-
Back cover (full page)	15,000/-
Quarter page (front page (solus)	7,500/-
A4-Gatefold (front or back page) – single side	25,000/-
Centre spread (double spread)	17,500/-

Kindly Note

- The above rates are valid for both, advertisements as well as advertorial content
- Client to provide content in digital format.
- Above costs are exclusive of GST, as applicable
- Material to be provided at least 15 days prior to date of publication.
- Payment to be made in advance and may be paid along with ad content to be published.
- Ad cancellation will not be entertained within 15 days from publication date.
- KTS will not be responsible for authenticity or veracity of ad content. Any disputes or legal resulting in lieu of the same will be borne by the Advertiser.
- All payments to be made via check only and in favour of Karnataka Tourism Society.

For all enquiries with regard to placement of advertisements/advertorials are to be addressed to: The Secretary, Karnataka Tourism Society at karnatakaturismsociety@gmail.com

