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TAMARIND GLOBAL NEWSLETTER



JUNE 2024

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# Bhutan

What makes Bhutan unique is **Gross National Happiness** as a measure of progress that prioritizes wellbeing over materialistic development. Bhutan's commitment to remaining **carbon neutral** and its extensive forest coverage distinguish it as a leader in environmental preservation. Bhutan's high-value, **low-impact tourism policy** ensures a unique and responsible travel experience. Popular destinations to explore in Bhutan include Thimphu, Punakha, and Paro.

**Thimphu** is the capital and largest city of Bhutan. Popular attractions at Thimphu are Buddha Point one of the largest sitting statues of the Buddha, located at an impressive height of 51.5 meters; **Simply Bhutan**, an enchanting and interactive "living" museum; **Tashichho Dzong** which serves as the location for the King's throne room, as well as the offices of the secretariat and the ministries of home affairs and finance.

**Dochula Pass**, situated on the road to Thimphu and Punakha, is a remarkable sight of 108 memorial chortens, known as "**Druk Wangyal Chortens**," built by the Queen Mother in tribute to the Bhutanese soldiers who lost their lives in the battle against Assamese insurgents in December 2003.

**Punakha** is famous for its remarkable 17th-century fortress, unique rice-growing techniques, and stunning architecture.

**Punakha Dzong**, oldest surviving fortress is at the confluence of two rivers, the Mo Chhu and Po Chhu and serves as a significant monastic and administrative center.

**Chimi Lakhang**, known as the Temple of fertility, holds a special place in Bhutanese culture and is associated with the Divine Madman Lama Drukpa Kunley. Couples visit this sacred site seeking blessings for fertility and childbirth.

**Phallus paintings** are proudly adorned on the houses and buildings specially in the Lobesa village, famously called the ' Land of Penis.

**Paro** is home to the iconic **Paro Takstang (Tiger's Nest)** monastery perched dramatically on a cliff. It was built in 1692 around a cave where Guru Rinpoche meditated and introduced Buddhism to Bhutan.

According to legend, Guru Rinpoche arrived here on the back of a tigress, giving the place its name "Tiger's Nest".



# Hotel Openings

## Ramada Encore by Wyndham, Udaipur

### **Located at Udaipur (Rajasthan)**

The opening of Ramada Encore by Wyndham Udaipur has transformed the Roopnagar strip into a lively lifestyle and entertainment destination. Guests can easily access cultural landmarks, shopping districts, restaurants and upcoming dining areas.

### **Rooftop Pool Bar with views of the Aravalli Mountains**

The only hotel in the area with a rooftop pool bar, it offers panoramic views of the Aravalli mountains, allowing guests to enjoy the magical sunset while savoring signature beverages.

### **Enjoy the Best of Classics**

Guests can indulge at Basil, the all-day dining restaurant, handpicked to offer the best of classics and reinvented creations, this all-day dining restaurant offers a menu that puts forward natural flavours, and staples from regional cuisines while carefully mixing contemporary with tradition. Walk into the lobby café – Patio for quick bites over meetings, a coffee and a sandwich on the go. The restaurant-bar-pool trio 'Citrus' with lounge seating and a cozy atmosphere offer a sophisticated and elevated dining experience.

### **Experience at Udaipur**

Staying in Udaipur offers a unique blend of luxury, culture, history, and natural beauty for a memorable experience. Guests can enjoy heritage walks, authentic Dal Bati Churma thalis, lake boat rides, and mountain treks. Cultural enthusiasts can explore the grandeur of City Palace and Jagdish Temple, visit Shilpgram for local crafts, and watch cultural performances at Bagore Ki Haveli.



## Radisson Resort Hatgad Saputara

### **Located at Hatgad (Nashik), Maharashtra**

The resort's strategic location near attractions like Hatgad Fort and Saputara Lake makes it ideal for exploring Maharashtra's beauty.

### **Private Balconies, Tranquil Experience and more**

At Radisson Resort Hatgad Saputara, the seamless integration of nature and luxury creates a distinctive experience. Guests can relish the tranquility of the surrounding mountains from their private balconies or unwind at their all-day dining restaurant offering international and vegetarian delights.

The on-site bar, exuding old-world charm, offers a perfect escape with its vibrant drink selections. For those seeking wellness, their fitness and wellness center includes a gym, spa treatments, and steam rooms, providing a holistic rejuvenation experience. Their event venues cater to memorable weddings and conferences, with state-of-the-art amenities ensuring a rewarding occasion.

### **Stay at the Hotel**

Their inviting rooms and suites, equipped with modern amenities, ensure a restful stay. The resort's diverse dining options promise culinary delight, while the 24-hour café, digital workspace, and EV charging stations adds to convenience. Families benefit from the children's play area and kid-friendly activities. With a multilingual staff, comprehensive services, and a focus on sustainability, your stay will be comfortable and memorable. Safehotels Alliance certification ensures safe and secure accommodations.



## Chillaru Spa and Resort, Solan

### **Located at Solan, Himachal Pradesh**

Set amidst the picturesque rolling hills and lush pine forest, our resort offers an unparalleled escape that promises relaxation, rejuvenation, and unforgettable experiences

### **An array of Unique Experiences**

At Chillaru, guests can unwind in a winter-ready outdoor Jacuzzi under starry skies or enjoy a romantic poolside dinner. The resort offers multiple pools, a steam room, and a variety of wellness options including yoga, steam baths, and the healing properties of the lush pine forest.

Evenings feature communal bonfire gatherings with live music, storytelling, and stargazing. Guests can also engage in activities like archery, air rifle shooting, painting sessions, and private chef services for a personalized culinary experience. Serene picnic spots with breathtaking views, guided treks, and trails enhance the nature retreat, while live game screenings and team-building activities ensure a memorable stay. Personalized services, such as round-the-clock assistance and curated activities, guarantee comfort and satisfaction.



### ***The Sustainable Touch***

The resort's sustainable practices include water conservation, energy efficiency, and local sourcing, ensuring an environmentally friendly stay.

### ***Event Spaces***

The versatile event spaces are ideal for weddings, corporate meetings, and social events, supported by expert planners to ensure successful gatherings.

## **ITC by Mementos, Jaipur**

### ***Located at Jaipur, Rajasthan***

Nestled at the foot of the Aravalli Hills, Mementos by ITC Hotels, Jaipur offers an intimate retreat with 64 luxurious suites and villas spread over 12 acres.

### ***Heritage with Luxury***

Each accommodation is a tribute to Jaipur's rich heritage, featuring Mughal-inspired gardens, ancient trees, and roaming peacocks. Stay in opulent villas and suites like the Premium Villa, featuring open sit-outs and Thikri artwork bathrooms, or the Mementos Pool Suite with its private plunge pool. Enjoy personalized adventures crafted by the Mementos Ambassadors, ensuring each moment is memorable.



### ***The Regional Touch***

The Amber Pavilion and Mayur Lounge provide exceptional culinary experiences, blending global cuisines with regional favorites and exquisite beverages. The Shahi Bagh venue, with its Fatehpur Sikri-inspired stage, is perfect for hosting grand, unforgettable weddings.

## **Fountain, Mahabaleshwar - IHCL SeleQtions**

### ***Located at Mahabaleshwar, Maharashtra***

Nestled in the heart of Mahabaleshwar, it merges historical allure with modern sophistication. Guests enjoy a tranquil and opulent retreat, immersed in the breathtaking natural landscapes of Mahabaleshwar.

### ***The Contemporary Elegance***

Crafted with Lancashire beams and locally sourced Chira and Khadnki stones, the architecture harmoniously merges colonial design with global influences. The hotel features 77 well-appointed rooms with private balconies and valley views, catering to both leisure and family travellers. Its pet-friendly accommodations and family



travellers. Its pet-friendly accommodations and family rooms make it versatile for diverse guest needs. Conveniently located near Mahabaleshwar's town center and major attractions, the hotel provides easy access to outdoor activities such as trekking and rock climbing. Recreational facilities include an indoor game zone, a modern gym, an outdoor pool, and a tranquil spa offering rejuvenating treatments.

### ***Culinary Delights and Scenic Views***

Saddleback, the all-day dining venue, offers a unique culinary journey with a scenic alfresco area and community dining options. Dusk bar provides a relaxing ambience with panoramic valley views, ideal for unwinding. The hotel boasts an expansive 11,000 sq ft deck, the largest in Mahabaleshwar, perfect for weddings and events against the backdrop of the Koyna Valley.

# Leader Lens

## Mr Vikram Lalwani MD & CEO Sterling hotels & Resorts

I am privileged to be sharing with you my journey and professional experience, but more importantly I would like to emphasise on certain leadership traits that I strongly believe in.

1. Focus on results, and not on ego, status.
2. Embrace accountability across all levels and do away with falling into the popularity trap.
3. Encourage productive conflict for the betterment of the organisation rather than going along with the harmonious culture.
4. Focus on clarity.
5. Do not compromise on trust and integrity in favour of invincibility.
6. Treat people in the same way as you would like to be treated.



One of the youngest Non-Hotelier  
General Managers in a key Taj property,  
at the age of 25

After six long successful years in reviving businesses and turning around the hotels that I headed, I chose a completely different path again. I moved industries to take up new challenges and to get out of my comfort zone. From Hospitality I shifted to IT and ITES; the transformation and change here was visible and significant.

A leadership position in a different industry comes with its own challenges. The ability to bring in your skill sets in a new environment again requires a suitably different mindset. Five years in leadership positions in an alternate industry changed my outlook on managing people and geographies remotely. But as they say, once a hotelier always a hotelier. In 2016, I joined Sterling in a much-reduced title/role from my previous assignment and went back to start revenue management at Sterling. Again, it's not about status/titles/roles that could be a baggage to future opportunities and growth we need in ourselves. I believe that at some point in one's career being a stone in the catapult that gets pulled back can sometimes give a breakthrough trajectory forward.

Today as the MD & CEO at Sterling, I stand as a testament to the statement that it's not about armchair leadership roles, but the ability to change, transform and create an everlasting positive impact in the organisation. Throughout the journey and prior to having the privilege to head Sterling, I was virtually title-less.

But did I do only revenue management? In simple words, No!

I handled Customer Engagement then progressed to Business Development and thereon to Hotel Sales. So, what was my title? Nothing that could be definitive.

It was all about confidence in driving that transformation and change, for which I did not bother about what title it might bear.

Sterling transitioned and transformed quickly with a swift change in the business model, and the teams here showed the ability to embrace this change. The transition was happening in the business model from predominant vacation ownership to hospitality companies, which took place with the least disruption.

So, I guess my adrenaline comes from the opportunities I see for transformation and change, I am still a learner, and am driven by the challenge of it.

Which is why the above six leadership traits are what I hold very close to myself. It keeps me focused on the path ahead.

## Towards Greener Globe

- Dubai's Emirates is now using sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) from Singapore. Changi Airport has added 3.3 million litre of blended SAF to its fueling system.
- Thailand's tourism sector is focusing on long-haul travelers with improved flight connectivity and sustainable practices. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) announced a strategy to attract visitors from distant locations by expanding airline routes and promoting eco-friendly tourism.
- Bengaluru Kempegowda Airport Launches Electric Taxi Fleet for Sustainable Travel

Call them leadership traits or guiding principles in a professional work-life, feel free to look at them interchangeably. As the first Revenue Manager in the Industry, in India, in the pre-2000 era (with Taj Group), I quickly realised that to be an effective contributor one must learn how to drive and interject change within an organisation, irrespective of position, titles, seniority or status. Engaging with people within the organisation with clear proof of concept is the first enabler to induce a behavioural change in the setup that eventually brings about change. I consider myself an accidental hotelier, with a completely diverse background in engineering and business administration, I chose to take the path that no one else took. The ability to differentiate yourself from the rest and demonstrate success in that was a key driving factor for me to take the path least taken. Knowing fully well the pushbacks I would receive, like not knowing how hotels are run, hence I chose to be skilled and get exposed to hotel operations even if I had to take a few steps back. The quest to succeed and the self-confidence I had in me, drove me to achieve results in a very short time, and become one of the youngest non-hotelier General Managers in a key Taj property, at the age of 25. Today, looking back, the basis of this change was the ability to transform not only myself personally but even professionally, to create a difference and an impact.

But the quest for transformation didn't stop there...



# Tamarind Suggests

## Rakkh Resort, a member of Radisson Individuals Retreats

Rakkh, a member of Radisson Individuals Retreats, is a 6.5-acre secluded property in the Himachali valleys, that offers stunning mountain views, follows sustainable practices, supports the local community, and provides various cultural experiences, all within driving distance from Amritsar, Shimla, Chandigarh, and Delhi.

Each cottage is set among the lush greenery, providing residents with a peaceful and private environment. They are filled with natural light and offer spectacular views of the snow-covered mountains.

Rakkh offers a variety of activities for everyone, both indoors and outdoors, as well as exciting excursions.

Indoor activities include Adventure activities like Archery, Wall Climbing etc, Cultural activities like Pottery, Handloom weaving etc., Yoga, and gardening, Culinary experiences like folk music, dance and traditional meals in an authentic setting, DIY experiences like DIY cotton candy/Pizza/Chai/BBQ etc.

Outdoor activities include guided walks and treks, village tours, picnics, biking, and kid-friendly events and attractions.

Excursion options include Dharamshala Stadium, monasteries, cable car rides, the Tibetan Market, Bir Billing, tea estates, paragliding, tea factory visits, Kangra City, Hindu temples, forts, and the Masroor Temple.

Commitment to sustainability:

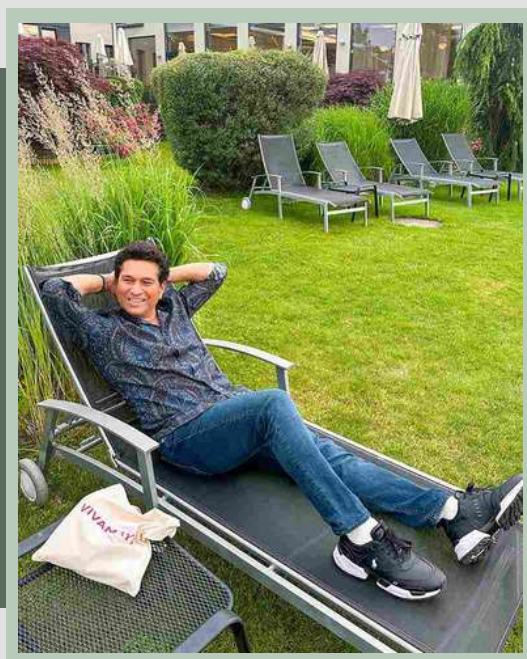
The resort has 1,100 fruit trees, additional trees along the periphery to attract birds, and grass for grazing. It sources ingredients locally, mainly from village farmers and uses nutritionally superior flour from water-run mills. The resort avoids single-use plastics, uses copper bottles, supports the local community, preserves natural spring water, and features sustainable architecture.



## June Highlight

Sachin Tendulkar recently enjoyed a holiday at VIVAMAYR Maria Wörth in Austria. He posted some photos on Instagram, where he appeared very relaxed and happy.

Situated on the shores of Lake Wörthersee, VIVAMAYR Maria Wörth is a wellness retreat and medical center in Austria. It provides a variety of personalized health therapies designed to meet individual needs. Guests can select from programs such as Weight Care, Body & Mind Detox, Immune Boost, or Diabetes management. The facility's doctors and therapists offer treatments aimed at helping you relax, rejuvenate, and enhance your overall health and well-being.



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# Behind the Scenes

## Discovering the Wonders of Meghalaya & Assam by Riddhi Kothari

Currently, I'm on an enchanting fam trip in Meghalaya and Assam with my co-colleagues, covering the beautiful locales of Shillong, Cherrapunji and Kaziranga. The lush green landscapes, majestic waterfalls, and vibrant culture here are breathtaking.

The refreshing mist and serene lakes of Shillong have been incredibly relaxing. Every corner of this beautiful hill station is brimming with scenic beauty and warm hospitality. While Cherrapunji's rain-drenched beauty known for being one of the wettest places on earth, with its living root bridges, Garden of Caves and stunning view of Seven Sisters Waterfalls right from my hotel, has been a surreal experience. Kaziranga National Park in Assam has been another awe-inspiring experience witnessing the majestic rhinos, in their natural habitat.

I am thoroughly enjoying the rains, which add a mystical charm to the scenery. The natural beauty, adventure, and serenity of this place is leaving an unfading mark on my heart.



# From Tamarind's Desk

## Visit to Ayodhya: Insights from Alok Verma & Ravi Gupta

My visit to Ayodhya, particularly to the Ram Mandir, was truly profound. The experience began with a sense of inner belief and anticipation, culminating in the joy of receiving the blessings of this sacred place.

Before going to the Ram Mandir, tradition guided me to Hanuman Gadhi Mandir, emphasizing the importance of seeking Hanumanji's blessings before approaching Lord Ram. This symbolic gesture added a deeper layer of reverence to the pilgrimage.



Within a kilometer's distance awaited the Ram Mandir located at the site which is believed to be the birthplace of Rama. It is partially constructed, and the serene white Makrana marble Sanctum Sanctorum is ready where the revered idol is housed.

Ayodhya, renowned as the birthplace of Lord Ram, holds profound significance in Hinduism. The legal and cultural victory surrounding the Ram Mandir construction has drawn devotees in large numbers, each eager for a brief but powerful 'darshan' of the 51-inch idol depicting Lord Ram as a five-year-old. The sight of the small idol that was worshipped before the construction began, was a moment of quiet awe.

Despite ongoing construction, the sheer faith drawing people in numbers was palpable. The efficient crowd management and secure locker facilities ensured a smooth experience, allowing visitors to focus solely on their spiritual journey.

In addition to the Ram Mandir, Ayodhya boasts other religious attractions. Kanak Bhawan, a magnificent temple gifted by King Vikramaditya to Goddess Sita, showcases three golden-crowned idols of Lord Ram and Sita. The Sarayu River, revered as the city's lifeline, offers a serene riverfront with picturesque ghats, creating a tranquil escape and enhancing Ayodhya's profound religious and cultural ambience. My journey to Ayodhya was not just a visit, but a spiritual encounter that left an indelible mark on my heart and soul.

### From the Calendar

#### World Environment Day: 5 June

The theme for 2024, "Our Land, Our Future. We are #GenerationRestoration," emphasized the importance of restoring land, combating desertification, and enhancing resilience to drought.

#### International Yoga Day: 21 June

This year marked the 10th International Day of Yoga with the theme "Yoga for Self and Society." Yoga, a transformative practice, represents the harmony of mind and body, the balance between thought and action, and the unity of restraint and fulfillment. It integrates the body, mind, spirit, and soul, offering a holistic approach to health and well-being that brings peace to our hectic lives. Its power to transform is what we celebrate on this special day.

## Brain Twister

Which sustainable destinations will you visit?

You're planning an eco-friendly vacation and have chosen four destinations known for their commitment to sustainability. Each destination is famous for a particular sustainable practice or landmark. Can you solve the clues to uncover your green travel itinerary?

1. This Nordic country is known for its geothermal energy and stunning waterfalls. Which country is it?
2. Famous for its cycling culture and extensive canal system, this European city prioritizes green transportation. Which city is it?
3. This island nation in the Indian Ocean is recognized for its eco-resorts and marine conservation efforts. Where are you headed?
4. In this South American country, you'll explore rainforests and sustainable coffee plantations. Which country is your destination?

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