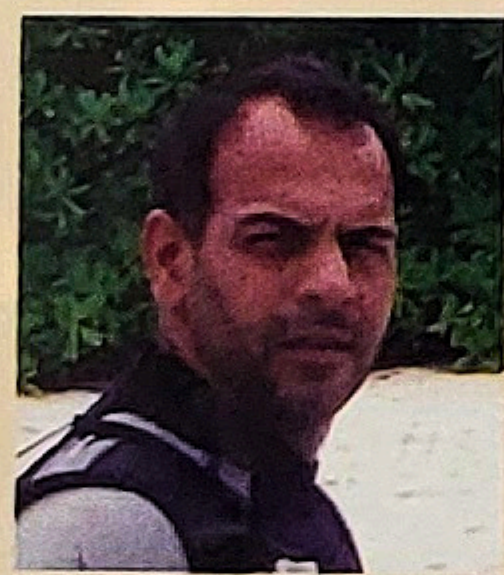


sports and tribal welfare departments, all working in isolation, with no results and no convergence of resources. The government should use locally available resources and expertise to develop at least one adventure centre in every district, and at least three centres each in Darjeeling and the Jalpaiguri districts. The government should also develop popular adventure products and organise online facilities for promotions and permits. ATOAI could be made a nodal agency for the development of Adventure Tourism products. Additionally, Siliguri could be declared as a Mountaineers' Base for the Himalayas, as this is the entry and exit point for Nepal, West Bengal, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh." Sanjay Sharma, Vice President, Botanix Adventure Camp stated, "There are two major factors that keep domestic tourists in India away from extreme adventure sports. One, domestic tourists still believe that extreme adventure sports carry risks and can be done only by professionals. They fail to understand that adventure sports can be performed by novices under the supervision of trained professionals. The second factor is cost of adventure sports in India, which is still higher than that in the West. You can promote Adventure Tourism in Himachal Pradesh, J&K, Goa, Uttarakhand and Damdama in Delhi – NCR."

Ecotourism

Ecotourism as a concept for sustainable growth of global tourism has enlarged its scope and meaning over the years. It is no longer confined to just environment-friendly practices. Today, it encompasses culture, traditions, local people, and inclusive growth. India, which is looking to make its mark on the global tourism map, cannot afford to ignore the potential of Ecotourism, and needs to understand the concept in its entirety. The country, with its diverse landscape, cultures, traditions, cuisines, art, architecture and heritage, has immense potential to position itself as an Ecotourism destination. However, we need to change our approach, and sensing this, the stakeholders are slowly realising that being eco-friendly is good business sense. International travellers are increasingly looking for authentic, 'off-the-track' experiences, giving them exposure to the nature, culture and heritage of the destination. Ravi Goel, Founder and Director, Ecomantra, said, "Currently, there is no national policy for Ecotourism in India. Ecotourism cannot survive without the support of the government at all levels. Private entrepreneurs who spend money and time, and help generate alternative employment for people living in remote places in penury, are being harassed by authorities, because there are no gazetted rules governing Ecotourism in the country." Jose Dominic, Managing Director, CGH Earth Hotels, revealed, "If you try to create a Disneyland in India and try to sell it, there will be no takers. Nobody can create unique tourism products like Kerala or Kumarakom anywhere else. People travel to far-away places to experience

and so, it is of utmost importance that we have good quality products and equipment." Anees Adenwala, Founder, Orca Dive Club, said, "Adventure Tourism attracts domestic tourists with disposable incomes and time on their hands. Youth, corporations and families are increasingly inclined towards adventure activities. Currently, white-water rafting and scuba diving are preferred adventure activities in India, as these offer thrilling experiences. Interest in adventure activities will grow as awareness about the products increases. Unfortunately, there are no government policies for scuba diving in India as it is still at a nascent stage. However, scuba diving is expected to grow at about 20 to 30 per cent year-on-year. However, it is still untapped due to lack of awareness." Rajesh Mudgill, Managing Director, Planet India Travels, said, "Although the current share of Adventure Tourism in Indian tourism is comparatively small, it holds huge potential for growth. It attracts tourists from all sections, be they group travellers, FIT or corporations. To cater to such tourists, training programmes need to be undertaken at the grass roots level. Tour operators promote adventure destinations and activities by announcing timely packages. But, to give a boost to this segment, the government should develop infrastructure, besides creating awareness through advertising and marketing. Also, setting-up special schools for training will attract people's attention." Supratim Basu, Director, Help Tourism, said, "The government has tourism, forest, youth,



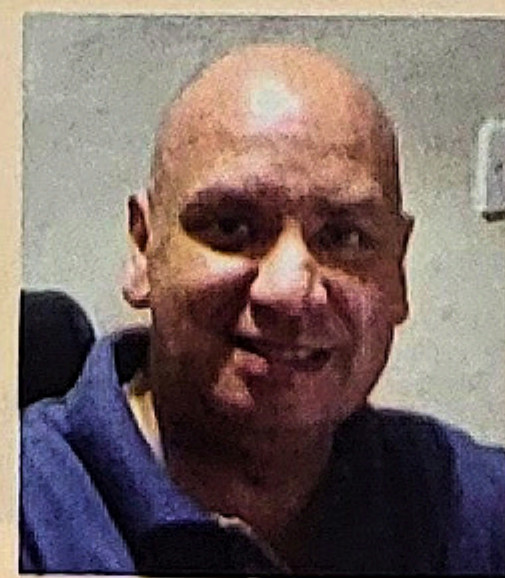
ANEES ADENWALA
FOUNDER, ORCA DIVE CLUB



RAJESH MUDGILL
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
PLANET INDIA TRAVELS



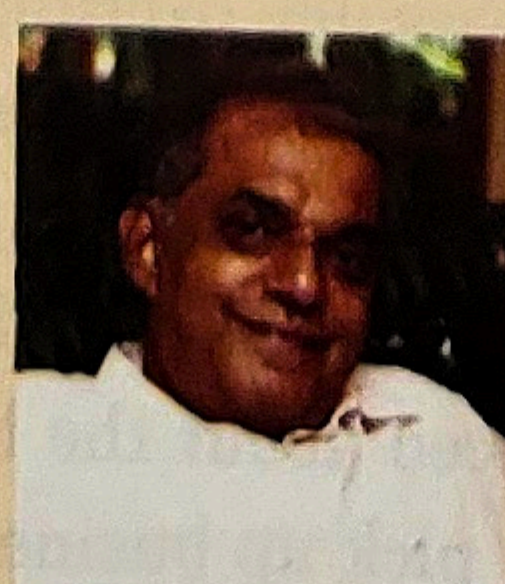
SUPRATIM BASU
DIRECTOR, HELP TOURISM



SANJAY SHARMA
VICE PRESIDENT, BOTANIX
ADVENTURE CAMP



RAVI GOEL
FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR,
ECOMANTRA



JOSE DOMINIC
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
CGH EARTH HOTELS

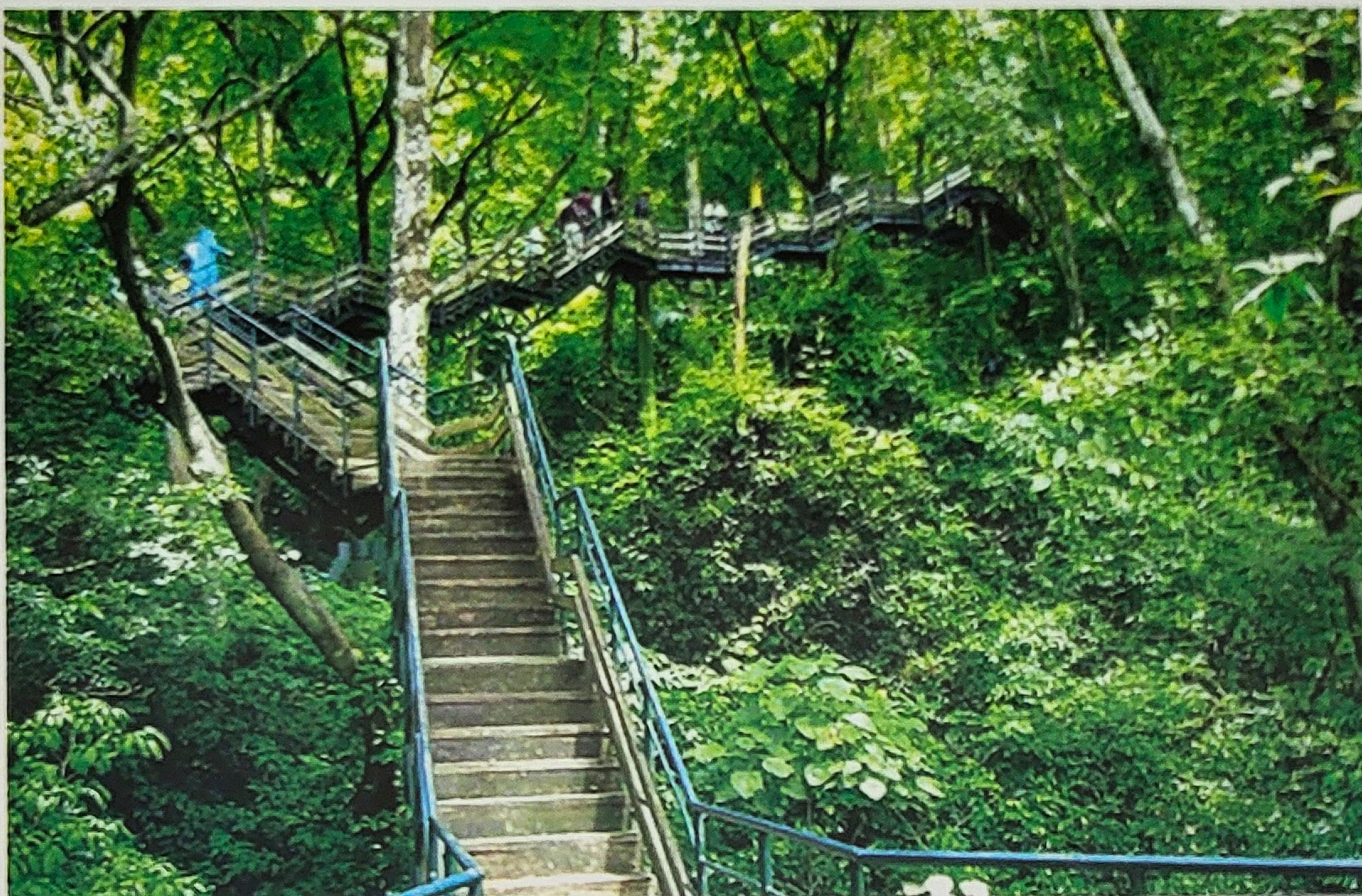
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the life and culture of the place, and this has to be presented in its original form in an unsullied manner; that's what people are looking for. The rulers of Indonesia developed the Western side of Bali with modern infrastructure by inviting investors from far across the globe, 20 years ago. On the Eastern side, Ubud is a traditional Balinese village where Balinese culture and traditions are preserved in their original forms to attract large numbers of tourists. Kerala could etch out a place for itself on the world tourism map over 20 years, because the effort has come from indigenous entrepreneurs, and not from foreign investors. Spice Village in Thekkady was a revelation for many entrepreneurs. Unplanned development is spoiling the natural environment in most places. The tourism industry has to do a lot for the preservation of nature so that India can tap the increasingly alert, independent traveller, who is looking for experiential travel. The era of the 'sun, sand and surf' traveller is fast dwindling." Mandip Singh Soin, President, Ecotourism Society of India, said, "We need to tread cautiously, implement the right guidelines, and stipulate the carrying capacity of each destination. We are on the cross roads. If we fail to act now, we will be failing on our responsibility to our natural environment. There is also a need for strengthening policy guidelines." Tushar Pandey, Group Executive Vice President & Country Head, Yes Bank, said, "The real issue is managing the destination, not marketing it. Our objective is to bring out PPP development institutional principles to all the relevant sectors, and tourism is definitely one of them. In the tourism sector, we want this capacity to be created around a large number of religious sites and rural villages."

Cruise Tourism

Cruise Tourism is one of the niche segments in India. Cruise travel from India to international destinations is increasing. However, India is yet to develop as a cruise destination. Despite India's vast coastline and ports, and its great potential to develop as a cruise destination, this segment is still unexplored. Besides the infrastructure, the country needs initiative on the part of the government to formulate a policy to enable Cruise Tourism in India. The Chief Minister of Maharashtra is in talks with the Ministry of Shipping, Govt. of India to develop an international quality cruise terminal in the state. Amit Mathur, Country Head - India, MSC Cruises, said, "India has a lot of potential to develop as cruise destination. However, the problem is that India lacks infrastructure. There are international cruise liners that want to foray into the Indian sea. However, the environment is not conducive. It's high time the government realised the huge unlocked potential of this segment, which is a great revenue and employment generator." Nalini Gupta, Managing Director, Lotus Destinations, said, "India has phenomenal potential as a cruise destination. The Indian market is ready and people have started travelling. People are taking flights



all the way to Dubai, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia to experience cruises. If India develops Cruise Tourism, then the cost of airfare will be eliminated and more and more travellers can experience cruises in the country. It is a booming industry." Dr Jagdish Patil, Managing Director, Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC), said, "We will tie-up with Maharashtra Maritime Board and Bombay Port Trust to develop jetties for Cruise Tourism. Also, an international

quality cruise terminal is in the pipeline and we would like to cover Alibaug, Ganpatipule, Sindhudurg and Tarkali."

"Cruise Tourism is a fast-growing and an important sector for the travel industry, since it contributes both directly and indirectly to the economy. It has tremendous potential in India, courtesy the beautiful and long Indian coastline. If it is made more affordable and the availability of cruise services is enhanced, it could attract a huge pool of client base within India itself. Some key points that need to be addressed for the development of Cruise Tourism in India are consistent quality and better facilities at port terminals; investment in health and safety measures at the terminals; and more international flight connections (not more than one stopover). Moreover, a common approach is required through a network of port authorisations, port agents, ground handling agents and government institutions.

The growing Indian travel segments offer a great potential to our cruise business and we should charm more domestic travellers to increase cruise sales to attract international cruise lines to India, preferably through a network of cooperating cruise GSA's. The government should also look at organising an exclusive Cruise Tourism conference inviting cruise line decision makers to witness the potential of India for Cruise Tourism and help create awareness for this relatively new travel segment." Arjun Sharma Managing Director, Le Passage to India

"Cruise Tourism is one of the important segments that India could develop and promote well because the country has good resources such as a long coastline, rivers, tourism attractions and other required facilities. India should upgrade its existing cruise facilities on the banks of river and encourage international cruise liners to come and set-up cruise operation at Indian ports. Also, the country needs more infrastructure, good ships and port facilities for cruising in ocean and cruises for cruising in river et al to develop and promote Cruise Tourism in a better way." Subhash Verma Chairman and Managing Director, Travel Plus ■



MANDIP SINGH SOIN, PRESIDENT, ECOTOURISM SOCIETY OF INDIA



DR JAGDISH PATIL, MANAGING DIRECTOR, MTDC



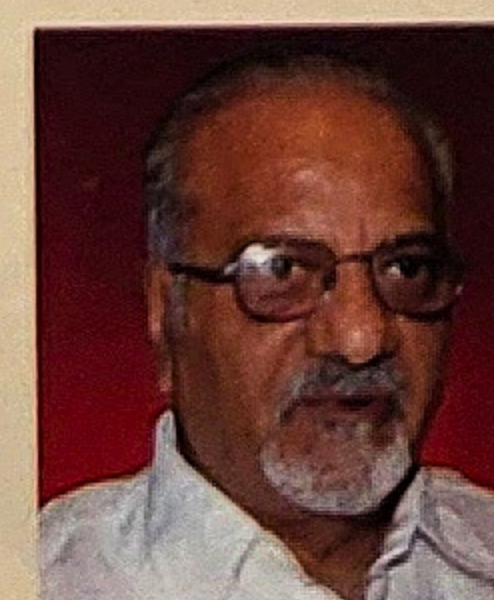
TUSHAR PANDEY, GROUP EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT & COUNTRY HEAD, YES BANK



ARJUN SHARMA, MANAGING DIRECTOR, LE PASSAGE TO INDIA



AMIT MATHUR, COUNTRY HEAD - INDIA, MSC CRUISES



SUBHASH VERMA, CHAIRMAN AND MANAGING DIRECTOR, TRAVEL PLUS



NALINI GUPTA, MANAGING DIRECTOR, LOTUS DESTINATIONS