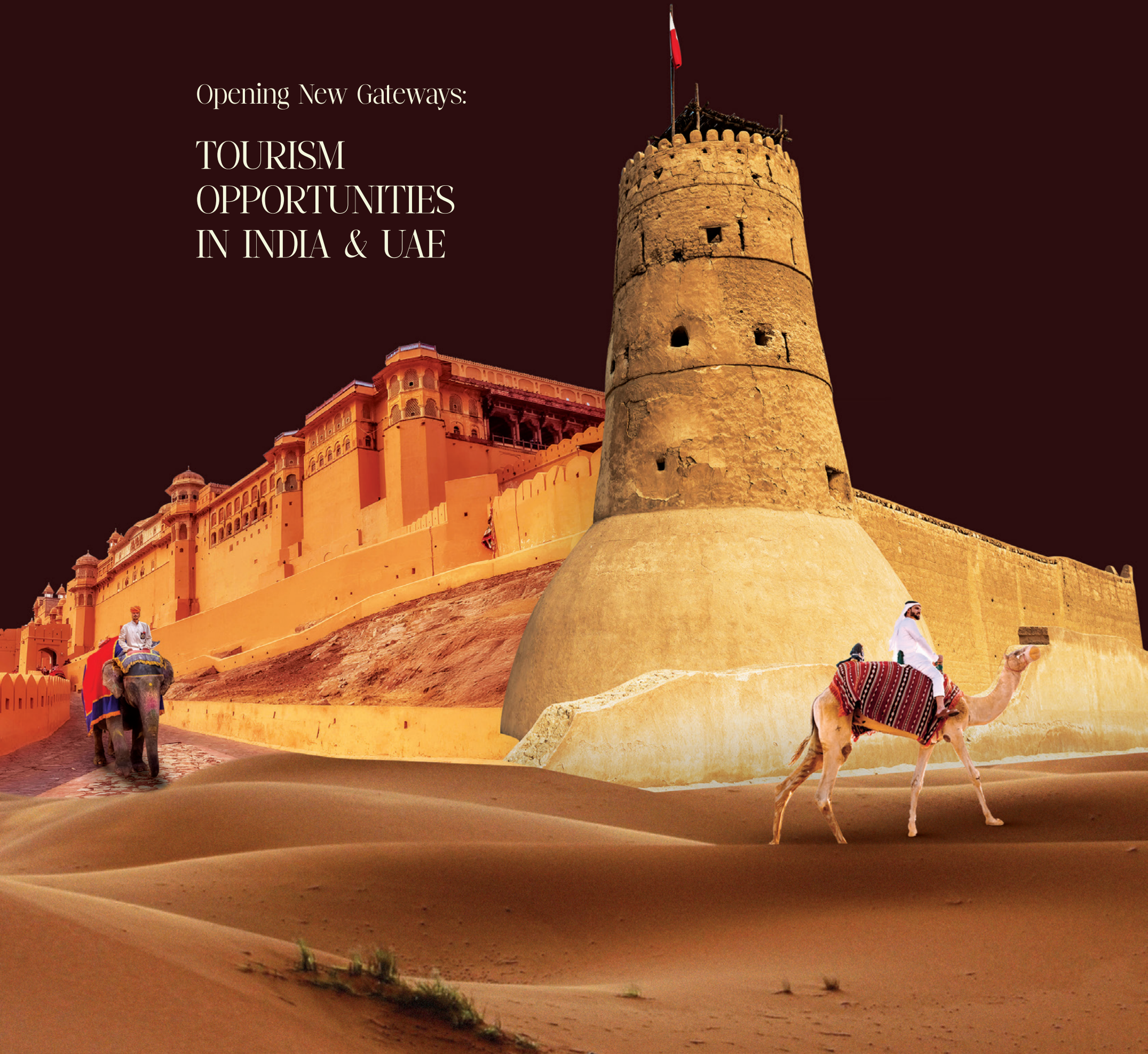


Opening New Gateways:

TOURISM  
OPPORTUNITIES  
IN INDIA & UAE













“ Our ancient scriptures have a saying “Atithi Devo Bhavah” meaning guest is God and that is our approach towards tourism ”

Shri Narendra Modi

Hon. Prime Minister of India



**صاحب السمو الشيخ محمد بن زايد آل نهيان**

رئيس دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة

**HIS HIGHNESS SHEIKH MOHAMED BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN**

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

“ The UAE has a proud history of people from diverse communities working together to create new possibilities. We remain committed to harnessing the power of mutual respect, understanding, and diversity to achieve shared progress. ”

H.H. Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan

President of the UAE, Ruler of Abu Dhabi



“ Tourism is key to diversifying our economy and boosting UAE’s global competitiveness. ”

H.H. Sheikh Mohammed  
bin Rashid Al Maktoum

Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE,  
Ruler of Dubai

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# Foreword by Chairman

It is with great pride that I introduce this coffee table book, celebrating the diverse and vibrant tourism offerings of both the UAE and India. As Chairman of the UAE-India Business Council UAE Chapter (UIBC-UC), I am pleased to highlight how tourism has become a powerful bridge between our nations.

The UAE has transformed into a global tourism leader, with landmarks such as the Burj Khalifa, the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, and the Museum of the Future, blending modernity with rich cultural heritage. Its luxurious resorts, world-class shopping, and diverse attractions continue to draw millions of visitors each year, establishing the UAE as a dynamic destination.

Equally, India's tourism gems—from the spiritual retreats in the Kerala to the stunning snowcapped mountains of the Himalaya—offer a wealth of experiences. India's rich culture, history, and natural beauty make it a must-visit destination for global travellers. Moreover, as a land of varied landscapes that dates back to thousands of years, India offers a variety of tourism opportunities such as cultural tourism, spiritual tourism & medical tourism, in addition to the more conventional luxury & backpack traversing.

In addition to the prowess of both nations individually, an important aspect that we cover in this coffee table book is how the India - UAE relationship goes beyond business, and is a rather people to people connection. With Indians being the largest chunk of not just residents in the UAE but also inbound visitors, it's only natural for the UAE to so warmly embrace elements such as Indian cuisines and Indian films as a part of it's culture.

In the UAE, Indian culture is celebrated through numerous concerts, performances, and events, fostering deeper cultural exchange. These shared experiences not only enhance mutual understanding but also highlight the enduring ties between our two nations.

This book underscores the significant role of tourism in fostering collaboration, enriching both economies and cultures. I hope it inspires readers to explore the wonders of India and the UAE and appreciate how tourism serves as a powerful tool for connection, growth, and shared learning.



# Preface

The tourism industry in India is a cornerstone of the nation's economy, fueled by its diverse landscapes, cultural heritage, and natural wonders. Over the years, it has significantly contributed to GDP, foreign exchange earnings, and the growth of small businesses, weaving opportunities across the nation.

Tourism in India transcends leisure travel, offering adventure, wellness, and cultural exploration. From the snow-clad peaks of Jammu & Kashmir to the golden deserts of Rajasthan, and the lush backwaters of Kerala, India's diverse landscapes promise unique experiences for every traveler.

Meanwhile, the UAE has transformed from a desert to a global luxury hub, showcasing how innovation, infrastructure, and vision can redefine tourism. Drawing inspiration from the UAE's success, India's tourism sector has immense potential. By embracing sustainable development and leveraging global investments, India can emerge as a premier destination, blending rich heritage with modern innovation.

This book explores India's journey in tourism, its recent breakthroughs, and opportunities for growth. It highlights how India can position itself as a global leader in tourism, fostering economic prosperity and cultural exchange while offering a promising future for travelers and investors alike.



# Acknowledgment

*The realization of **Opening New Gateways – Tourism in India & the UAE** has been a journey of collaboration, vision and dedication, brought to life through the contributions of remarkable individuals and teams.*

*We extend our deepest gratitude to UIBC-UC's founding members **Mr. Faizal Kottikollon**, Chairman of UIBC-UC and Chairman of KEF Holdings & Founder of Tulah, **H.E. Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Sharafuddin Sharaf**, Vice Chairman of UIBC-UC and Vice Chairman of Sharaf Group, **Mr. Adeeb Ahamed**, Board Member of UIBC-UC and Managing Director of Lulu Financial Holdings, **Mr. Tariq Chauhan**, Board Member of UIBC-UC and Executive Vice Chairman of EFS Facilities Services Group, and **Mr. Nishant Pitti**, Founding Member of UIBC-UC and Co-Founder of EaseMyTrip, whose visionary leadership and unwavering support have been the cornerstone of this initiative.*

*A special note of thanks to the UIBC-UC Team – **Kshitij Korde, Neha Sahni, Dev Doshi, Aditi Rao**, and **Prathibha Premkumar**, alongside other collaborators including Nikhaar Mirchandani and **Vinayak Ravi** – for their relentless efforts, creativity, and professionalism in shaping this endeavour.*

*To all those who have played a role in this project, we extend our heartfelt appreciation for their collective commitment in making this vision a reality.*



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# Chapter 1

Stats to Stories: The Economic Pulse  
of Tourism in India and the UAE

India



Taj Mahal, Uttar Pradesh, India



Dal Lake, Jammu & Kashmir, India

## The Economic Pulse of Tourism in India

As a land of unparalleled geographic diversity and a kaleidoscope of cultures, India offers travelers unique experiences that make it a leading global destination. India's travel and tourism industry is a cornerstone of its economy, demonstrating robust growth across key indicators.

The number of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India witnessed a remarkable increase in **2022**, reaching **6.44 million** compared to **1.52 million** in 2021, reflecting a substantial growth of **321.5%**. **2023 recorded a 43.5% increase with 9.24 million FTAs with 4.8 million FTAs** registered in the first half of 2024. This growth also marked a recovery of **58.9% compared to the pre-pandemic levels of 2019**. Additionally, 2022 saw a significant rise in Non-Resident Indian (NRI) visits and International Tourist Arrivals (ITAs).

In 2022, India recorded **1,731 million** domestic tourist visits, a 155.5% increase from **677.6 million** in 2021, and **8.6 million** foreign tourist visits, up **714.3%** from **1.1 million** in 2021. Uttar Pradesh (**317.9 million**) and Tamil Nadu (**218.6 million**) led in domestic tourism, while Gujarat (**1.8 million**) and Maharashtra (**1.5 million**) attracted the most foreign tourists.

In 2023, the tourism sector contributed **USD 231.6 billion (INR 19.13 trillion)** to the country's GDP surpassing 2019 levels by **9.7%**. This upward trajectory continues in 2024, with revenue projections estimated to reach USD 523.6 billion (INR 43.25 trillion) by 2034.

The resilience of India's tourism industry is evident in its recovery from the global pandemic. **International Tourist Arrivals (ITAs)** rose from **6.33 million in 2020 to 14.33 million in 2022**, reflecting India's ability to adapt and thrive in the face of global challenges.



Tea Plantation, Tamil Nadu, India

The accommodation market in India is a blend of traditional and modern, offering both classified and unclassified options. While **five-star hotels dominate the landscape**, homestays have surged in popularity, particularly post-pandemic. Online platforms like **OYO** and **Airbnb** have revolutionized the sector, focusing on budget-friendly accommodations and securing significant funding to expand their reach.

For FTAs, air travel is the preferred mode of transportation, with **83.5% of FTAs entering India** via air routes. Notably, in 2022, around **46.3% of all FTAs in India** arrived at the **Delhi** and **Mumbai airports**. Prominent airlines like **Air India**, **IndiGo**, and **SpiceJet** have contributed significantly to facilitating this growth.



The Rajabai Clock Tower, Maharashtra, India



Gangotri Dham, Uttarakhand, India



**Panchchuli Peaks**, Uttarakhand, India

The rise of online travel services has further transformed the industry. Leading platforms such as **MakeMyTrip**, **EaseMyTrip**, **Thomas Cook**, and **Yatra** have experienced remarkable success, making travel planning more accessible and seamless for both domestic and international tourists.

India's hospitality and tourism landscape reflects a perfect blend of tradition and innovation, offering an unforgettable experience to travelers worldwide. Whether exploring ancient monuments, indulging in luxury hospitality, or venturing into breathtaking landscapes, India continues to cement its status as a global tourism powerhouse.



**Jahal Mahal**, Rajasthan, India



Taj Hotels, Maharashtra, India

Stats to Stories: The Economic Pulse of Tourism in India



# Chapter 1

Stats to Stories: The Economic Pulse  
of Tourism in India and the UAE

UAE



Burj Khalifa, Dubai, UAE



Desert Oasis Village, Abu Dhabi, UAE

## The Economic Pulse of Tourism in the UAE

The UAE has emerged as a global leader in tourism, transforming its **vast desert expanses into a vibrant hub** that captivates millions of visitors annually. Tourism now stands as a pillar of the nation's economy, driving substantial growth in GDP and opening doors to opportunities across diverse industries.

**In 2022**, the travel and tourism sector significantly contributed to the UAE's economy, accounting for **USD 45.5 billion (AED 167 billion)** in revenues equivalent to **9% of the country's GDP**. International tourists in the UAE spent **USD 32 billion (AED 117.6 billion)** during the year, highlighting the sector's robust performance.

In the year 2022, the UAE's hospitality industry expanded, with the number of **hotels rising to 1,198** and the total hotel capacity reaching 203,000 rooms. Additionally, **UAE hotel revenues amounted to USD 10.3 billion (AED 38 billion)**, underscoring the strong synergy between tourism and the hospitality sector.

The country's appeal lies in its diverse offerings—**luxurious hotels, pristine beaches, awe-inspiring deserts, and bustling urban centers**. Each of the seven emirates contributes uniquely, with Dubai offering **unparalleled luxury experiences**, Sharjah showcasing **cultural richness**, Abu Dhabi boasting **iconic attractions**, such as the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque and the Louvre, Ras Al Khaimah excelling in **adventure sports** and Fujairah captivating visitors with its **scenic coastline**.



Traditional Arabic "Abra" wooden boat on Dubai Creek, Dubai, UAE

Among the emirates, Dubai has been a frontrunner in driving tourism growth. In **2023, Dubai welcomed 17.15 million visitors** exhibiting a significant recovery from the pandemic. The emirate's contribution to the UAE's tourism sector is unparalleled, but it is part of a cohesive national strategy that integrates diverse offerings from across the country. Landmark attractions such as the **Burj Khalifa, Palm Jumeirah, and Dubai Mall** have made it a hub for luxury tourism. Events like the **Expo 2020** drew more than 20 million visitors, have further bolstered the UAE's global reputation.



Louvre museum, Abu Dhabi, UAE



**Hatta Lake, Dubai, UAE**

Beyond Dubai, **Abu Dhabi** has established itself as a **cultural and family-friendly destination**. Attractions such as **Sheikh Zayed Mosque, Ferrari World, Yas Marina Circuit, and Qasr Al Watan** continue to draw millions of visitors annually.

**Sharjah**, designated a **UNESCO World Book Capital** in **2019**, appeals to those **seeking Emirati heritage and art**. Meanwhile, **Ras Al Khaimah** has positioned itself as a **hub for adventure tourism** with activities like ziplining and mountain trekking, particularly around **Jebel Jais**, the UAE's highest peak.

By embracing a unified vision across its emirates, the UAE exemplifies how a nation can transform its natural and urban resources into a global tourism oasis, providing a diverse and unforgettable experience for travelers worldwide.



The Museum of the Future, Dubai, UAE



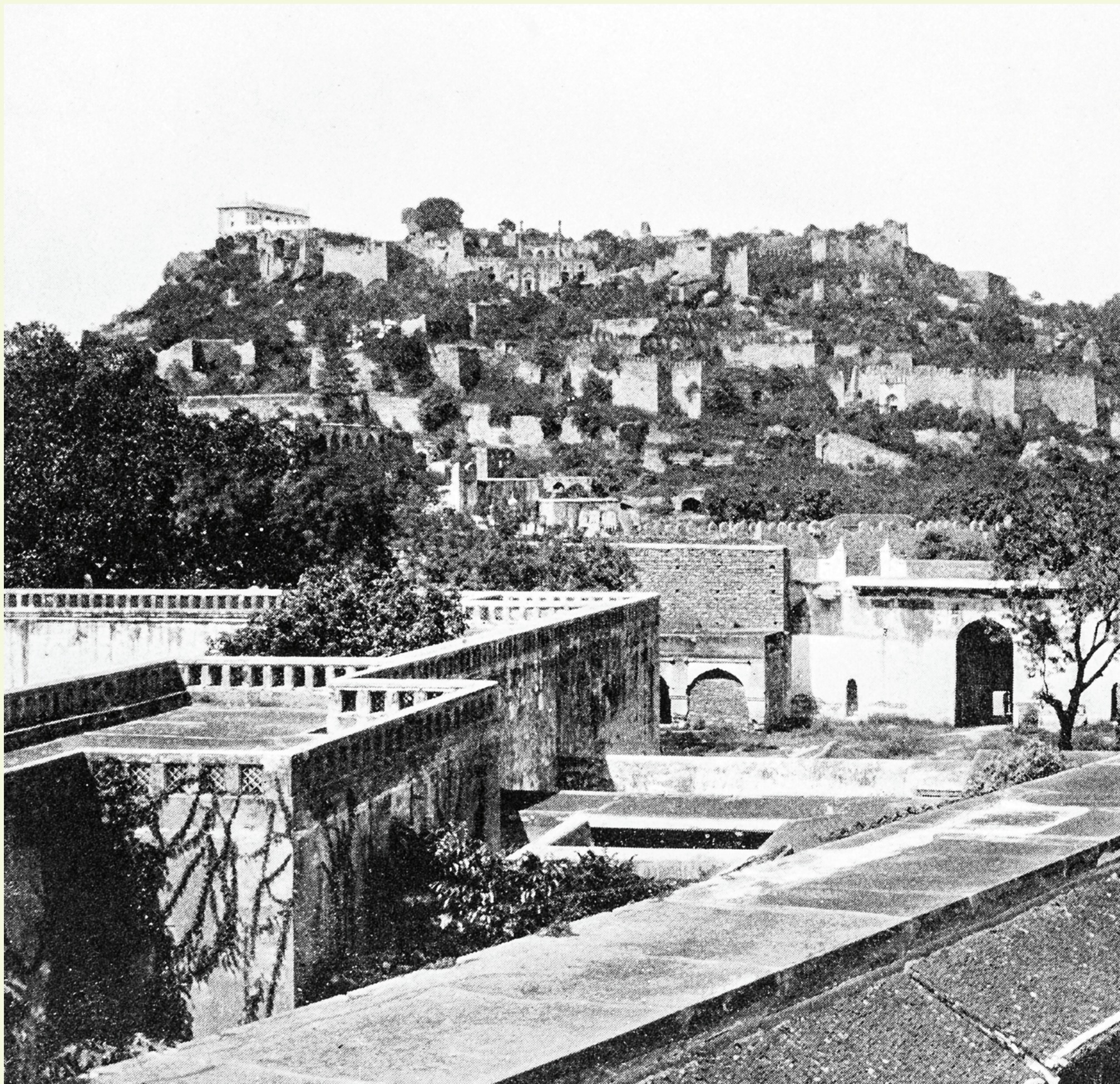
**Al Hajar Mountains**, Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirate



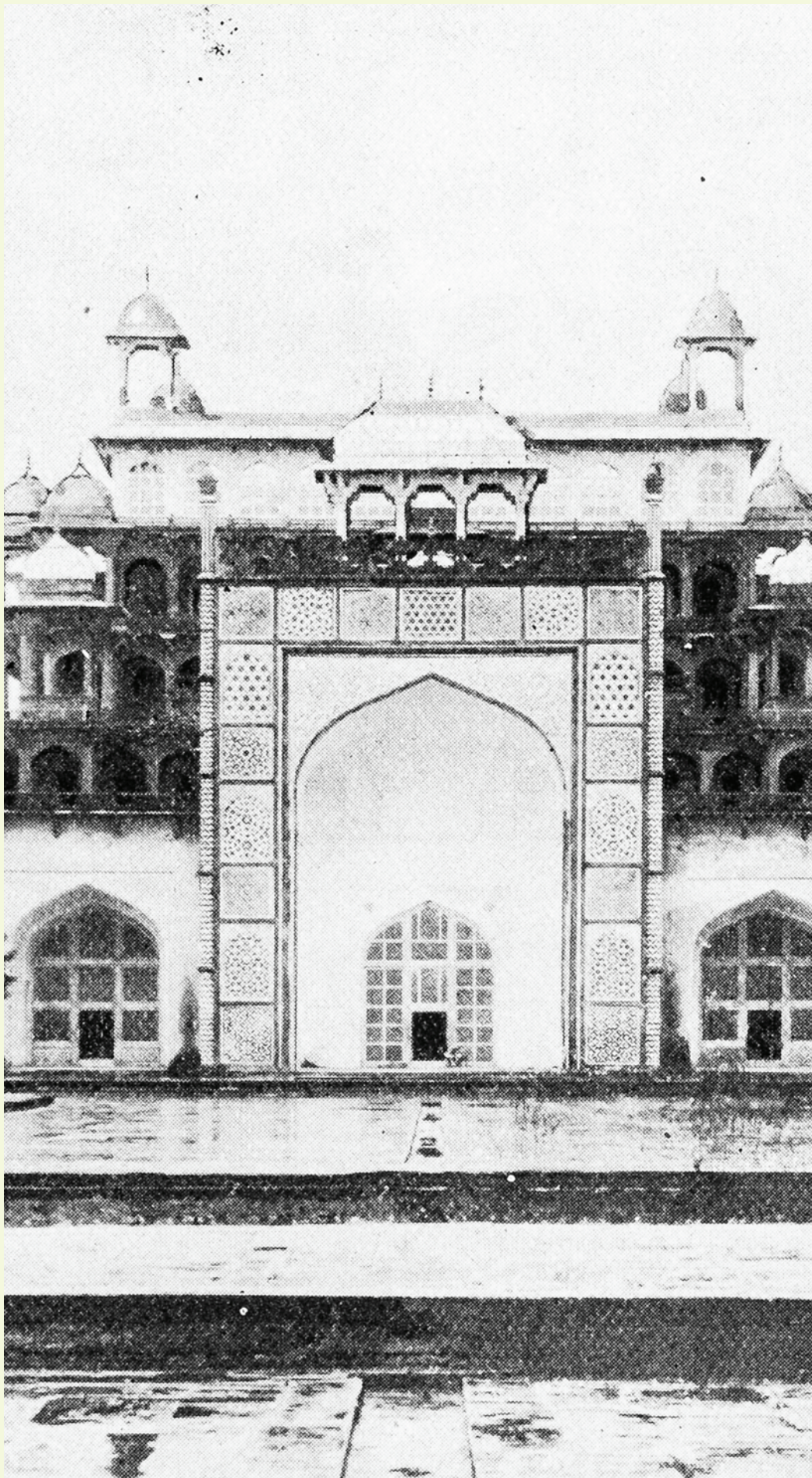
# Chapter 2

Timeless Trails: The History and  
Growth of Tourism in India and the UAE

India



**Golkonda fort**, Telangana, India



**Akbar's Tomb 1895**, Uttar Pradesh, India

## The History and Growth of Tourism in India

Tourism in ancient India was shaped through indirect sources. In its early agricultural period, India was known for its abundant produce, and the export of agricultural goods became a crucial trade link. Greek and Hebrew writers noted the wealth and wonders of India, emphasizing its significance in the global trade routes. As trade routes grew, overland connections between Asia and Europe facilitated travel, which gave rise to what we recognize as a tourism industry.

## Ancient Period (3000 BCE - 600 CE):

### **The Birth of Spiritual Tourism**

India's tourism journey began with spiritual and religious pursuits. The earliest traces of tourism can be found during the time of the Indus Valley Civilization, where early settlements facilitated trade and travel. By the Mauryan Empire (322–185 BCE), Emperor Ashoka championed Buddhism, embarking on extensive travels to promote the religion across India and beyond. The construction of stupas, viharas, and monasteries attracted pilgrims from far-off lands, including China and Southeast Asia. Notably, Takshashila and Nalanda, ancient centers of learning, became prominent destinations for scholars and intellectuals seeking knowledge. This era also saw the development of travel infrastructure like rest houses (dharmshalas) and the establishment of trade routes, including the ancient Silk Route, which connected India to the world and brought foreign travelers seeking spiritual enlightenment and cultural exchange.

## Medieval Period (600 CE - 1600 CE):

### **The Rise of Cultural Tourism**

The Medieval Period in India saw the rise of diverse forms of tourism, driven by political stability, thriving trade, and rich cultural and religious landscapes. The Gupta Empire (4th–6th centuries) fostered early cultural tourism with sites like Ajanta and Ellora caves, attracting pilgrims and scholars. The Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526) brought Islamic architectural wonders, such as the Qutub Minar, which drew visitors and traders. The Mughal Empire (1526–1600) epitomized the golden age of tourism, with monumental structures like the Taj Mahal and Fatehpur Sikri, blending Persian, Central Asian, and Indian architectural styles. Pilgrimage tourism flourished with sacred sites like Varanasi, Puri, Bodh Gaya, and Ajmer drawing pilgrims from Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim communities. The extensive trade routes, including the Silk Road and Indian Ocean maritime paths, facilitated the movement of traders, explorers, and travelers, as India was renowned for its spices, textiles, and jewels. Travelers like Ibn Battuta and Marco Polo documented India's cultural wealth, inspiring further exploration of its lands and heritage.

## Colonial Period (1600 CE - 1947):

### **Era of Exploration**

The colonial era marked a shift in tourism trends with the arrival of European explorers, traders, and the British East India Company. This period saw the establishment of hill stations like Mussoorie, Shimla, Darjeeling, and Ooty, which provided retreats for British officials seeking relief from the tropical heat.

Exploration tourism also gained momentum, with British and European travelers exploring India's rich natural resources, wildlife, and archaeological sites. Railways, introduced in 1853, revolutionized travel by connecting cities and enabling easier access to remote areas.

The Mughals, particularly rulers like Shah Jahan, were instrumental in creating enduring architectural wonders that attracted tourists. The Marathas and Rajputs also contributed to the tourism landscape through their forts and palaces. Over time, these explorations, hill stations, and historic sites formed the foundation of modern tourism in India, influenced by both British and Indian heritage.

Furthermore, the Archaeological Survey of India was founded in 1861 and focused on preserving India's historical sites, paving the way for cultural tourism.

## Post-Independence (1947 - 1980):

### **The Rise of Domestic Tourism**

Post-independence India saw a notable rise in domestic tourism, driven by socio-economic and cultural factors. As the nation emerged from British colonial rule, there was a growing sense of national identity, and people began exploring their own country to reconnect with its rich heritage, diverse landscapes, and cultural roots. The government played a significant role in promoting tourism, establishing the India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) in 1966 to improve infrastructure and services.

The advent of railways and the nationalization of air transport in 1963 enhanced connectivity, while Indian Airlines introduced schemes like the "Discover India" to encourage domestic exploration. The rise of the middle class and the expansion of leisure options led to increased domestic tourism, especially to religious destinations, hill stations, and heritage sites. Pioneers in the hospitality industry, such as TATA, IHCL, and the Oberoi Group, laid the foundation for India's modern tourism infrastructure.

## Contemporary Era (2000 - 2020):

### **Digital and Sustainable Tourism**

The 21st century ushered in a new era for Indian tourism, driven by advancements in technology and a global focus on sustainability. The introduction of the e-visa system simplified travel processes, boosting foreign tourist arrivals. The Indian government launched campaigns such as Incredible India and Atithi Devo Bhava, which positioned India as a top destination for adventure, cultural, medical, and wildlife tourism.

Adventure tourism and eco-friendly practices gained popularity, with destinations like Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, and the Sundarbans emphasizing sustainable tourism models. India also became a hub for medical tourism, offering world-class healthcare services at competitive prices.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 severely impacted the tourism sector, causing a dramatic decline in travel due to lockdowns and restrictions. Many businesses in the hospitality and travel industries faced financial strains. Despite this, the sector is gradually recovering, with a renewed focus on sustainable tourism and exploring domestic destinations as international travel remains limited.

## Post-COVID Era (2020 to Present):

### **Revival and Resilience**

The tourism sector is now rebounding from the pandemic, with a renewed focus on hygiene, safety, and technology. The concept of “revenge travel” has emerged, as travelers seek to make up for lost time. Hotels, airlines, and travel providers are adapting by offering flexible cancellation policies and work-from-anywhere packages, leading to the rise of work-cations and business tourism.

Innovations in digital technology, such as virtual tours and online bookings, have made travel planning more accessible. Sustainable tourism practices have gained momentum, with greater awareness about environmental and cultural preservation. Government initiatives like Aatma Nirbhar Bharat aim to revive tourism through local engagement and infrastructure development.

India’s diverse landscapes, rich heritage, and vibrant cultural experiences continue to attract millions of visitors, while the industry’s resilience and adaptability pave the way for sustained growth in the years to come.

# Chapter 2

Timeless Trails: The History and  
Growth of Tourism in India and the UAE

UAE



Heritage architecture, Dubai, UAE

# Timeless Trails: The History and Growth of Tourism in the UAE



Dubai Creek, UAE

## Pre 1971: From Pearls to Prosperity

The history of industries in the UAE dates back to the 1800s. Primarily known for its fishing industries on the coast of the Persian Gulf, the evolution of tourism began through indirect resources. Investments in textiles, expansion of fishing and pearl diving brought an element of stability to the UAE Economy.

During 1958-66, the discovery of oil in Abu Dhabi and Dubai transformed the economic landscape, ushering in a new era of prosperity and global relevance. The oil boom attracted foreign investments and laid the groundwork for infrastructure projects that would drive the UAE's development. By 1971, the formation of the United Arab Emirates, a federation of seven emirates, marked a significant turning point. Visionary leadership began to chart long-term strategies, laying the groundwork for Dubai's emergence as a global economic powerhouse.

## 1971 - 2000: Transformation into a Global Tourism Haven

The UAE saw significant advancements in tourism, driven by oil wealth and the strategic vision of its leaders. Dubai became a major global tourism hub with foundation of Emirates Airlines in 1985 and projects like Dubai Shopping Festival and iconic landmarks such as the Burj Al Arab & Dubai World Trade Centre, symbolizing luxury and innovation. The Palm Jumeirah, conceived in the late 1990s, further showcased Dubai's ambition.

Abu Dhabi focused on high-end tourism with projects like Emirates Palace and the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, attracting luxury and cultural tourists. Sharjah, named the Cultural Capital of the Arab World in 1998, emphasized on heritage tourism.

The 1990s also saw an influx of working-class expatriates seeking better job opportunities. The UAE distinguished itself by offering unparalleled living standards and a keen sense of safety and stability. Families settled, leading to the development of quality schools and world-class healthcare facilities. Tourism began indirectly through these sectors, as the UAE created a multicultural environment that appealed to travelers and potential residents alike.

## 2000 - 2010: Transformation and Diversification

The history of industries in the UAE dates back to the 1800s. Primarily known for its fishing industries on the coast of the Persian Gulf, the evolution of tourism began through indirect resources. Investments in textiles, expansion of fishing and pearl diving brought an element of stability to the UAE Economy.

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## 2010 – 2020: Shaping the Future of Tourism

The UAE's tourism landscape flourished across all its emirates, each cultivating its own distinctive allure. Dubai remained a global tourism leader, bolstered by the opening of attractions like the Dubai Opera and Expo 2020 preparations.

Abu Dhabi focused on cultural tourism, inaugurating the Louvre Abu Dhabi and developing cultural districts. Sharjah, designated the Arab World's Cultural Capital, promoted its museums, galleries, and festivals. Ras Al Khaimah capitalized on ecotourism, offering mountain adventures and luxury resorts.

Fujairah grew in popularity for its beaches and diving spots, while Ajman attracted family tourists with serene beach resorts. Umm Al Quwain focused on preserving its heritage and promoting historical sites. Government initiatives, including enhanced infrastructure, marketing campaigns, and sustainable tourism policies, played a vital role in diversifying tourism, supporting each emirate's development and enhancing the UAE's overall appeal as a multifaceted travel destination.

## Post Pandemic: Resurgence and Rejuvenation

Post-COVID, tourism in the UAE saw a vibrant resurgence, with each emirate prioritizing safety, innovation, and global appeal. Dubai, a longstanding tourism leader, introduced measures like the Dubai Assured Stamp and unveiled new attractions such as the Museum of the Future, while Expo 2020 continued to attract both local and international visitors.

Abu Dhabi maintained its focus on cultural tourism, opening new museums, hosting major events like the Abu Dhabi Film Festival, and inaugurating the symbolic BAPS Hindu Temple, reinforcing its message of tolerance and global unity.

Ras Al Khaimah thrived in outdoor tourism, offering nature retreats and adventure sports. Fujairah's peaceful beaches and ecotourism flourished, while Ajman became a haven for family tourism with its serene beach resorts.

Umm Al Quwain promoted eco-tourism and heritage preservation. Government initiatives, such as the Dubai 2040 Urban Master Plan and national marketing campaigns, played a crucial role in enhancing infrastructure, ensuring safety, and diversifying experiences across all emirates.



Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Abu Dhabi, UAE



*"Suha Hospitality's vision is to offer premium 4-star apartment stays tailored for both short- and long-term stays. Strategically located in urban areas, Suha Hospitality caters primarily to business travelers and large families, providing a perfect blend of comfort, convenience, and flexibility. By focusing on high-quality service and spacious accommodations, the brand ensures a home-away-from-home experience for its guests while meeting the demands of modern urban living."*

**H.E. Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Sharafuddin Sharaf**  
Vice Chairman of Sharaf Group  
Vice Chairman of UIBC-UC





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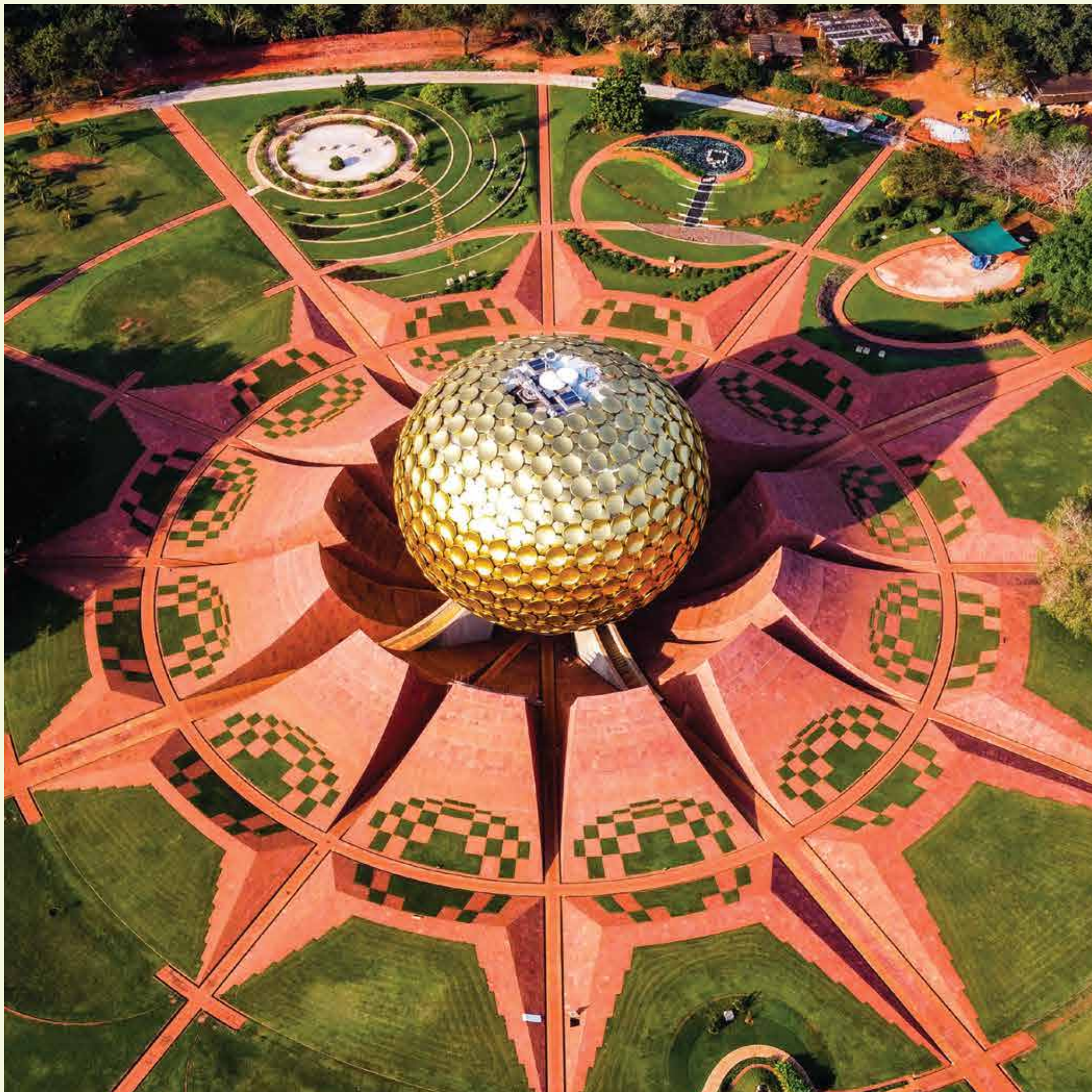
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# Chapter 3

The Tapestry of Tourism: India and the UAE

India



## 1. Cultural Odyssey: India

India is a mosaic of cultures, weaving unparalleled diversity that attracts travelers from across the globe. People visit to immerse themselves in vibrant traditions, seek spiritual enlightenment, and find their true selves amid the country's rich heritage. With the world's highest cultural imprint, India showcases a profound blend of history, spirituality, and modernity that enchants every visitor.

The country's festivals reflect its cultural exuberance, with celebrations like Durga Puja, Holi, Diwali, Ganpati, and Onam radiating joy and unity. Events like the Pushkar Fair and Kite Festival in Rajasthan showcase India's zest for life, while music festivals like the Tansen Music Festival in Madhya Pradesh draw global enthusiasts.

Indian weddings, known for their grandeur, have sparked "wedding tourism," with international guests eager to partake in this colorful spectacle. India's handicrafts, including Rajasthani block printing, Kashmiri Pashmina shawls, and Bengal's terracotta art, further enrich its cultural appeal. Add tea tourism in Darjeeling and Assam, coupled with diverse cuisines—from Punjabi Flavors to South Indian spices—India becomes a culinary and artistic treasure trove.

India's dance and music traditions are equally captivating. Tamil Nadu's Bharatnatyam, Kerala's Kathakali, Odisha's Odissi, and Gujarat's energetic Garba exemplify the nation's artistic heritage. Together, these cultural facets weave an intricate tapestry of traditions that captivate the world. From ancient art forms to festive fervour, India's cultural power is truly unmatched.









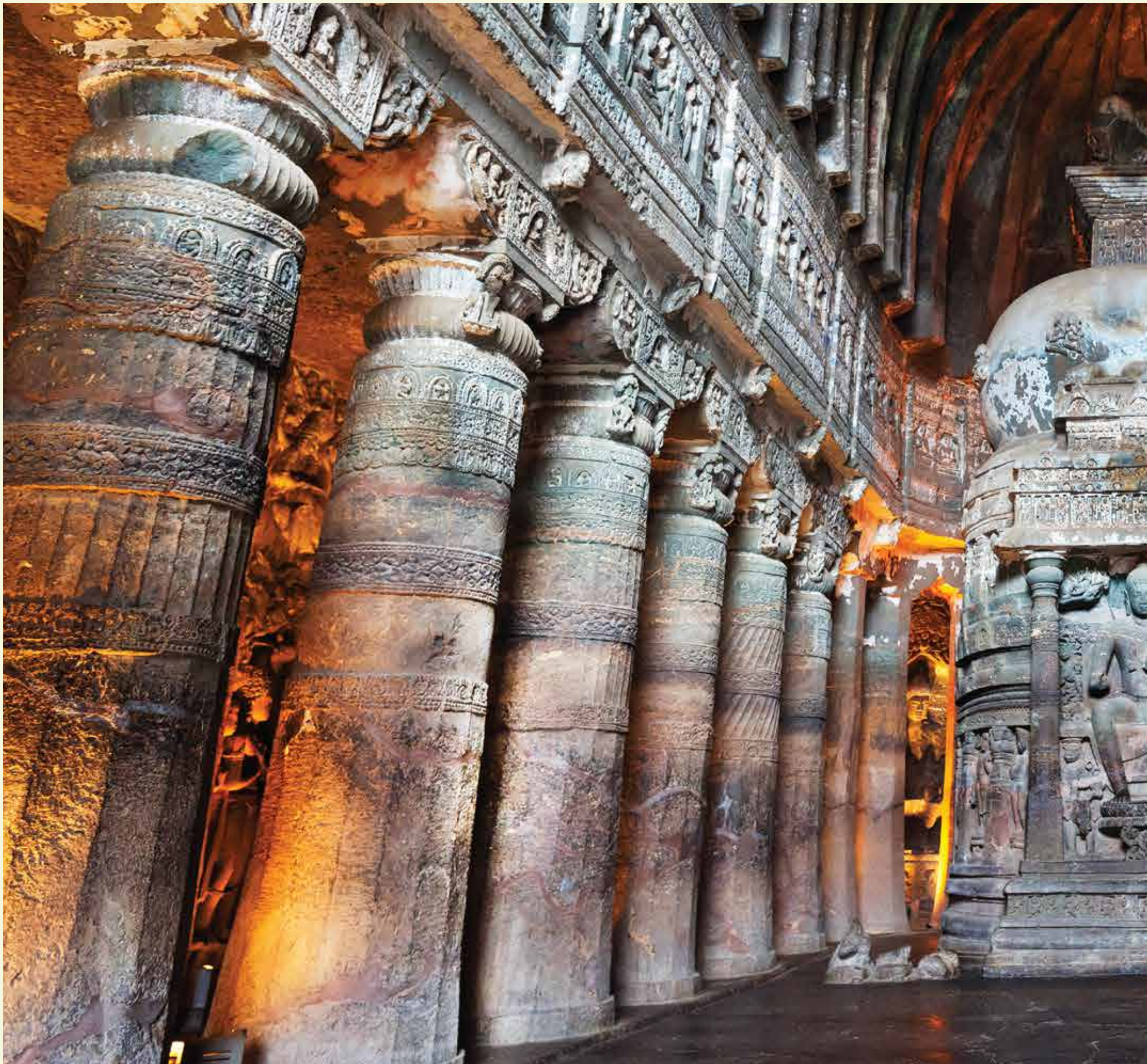


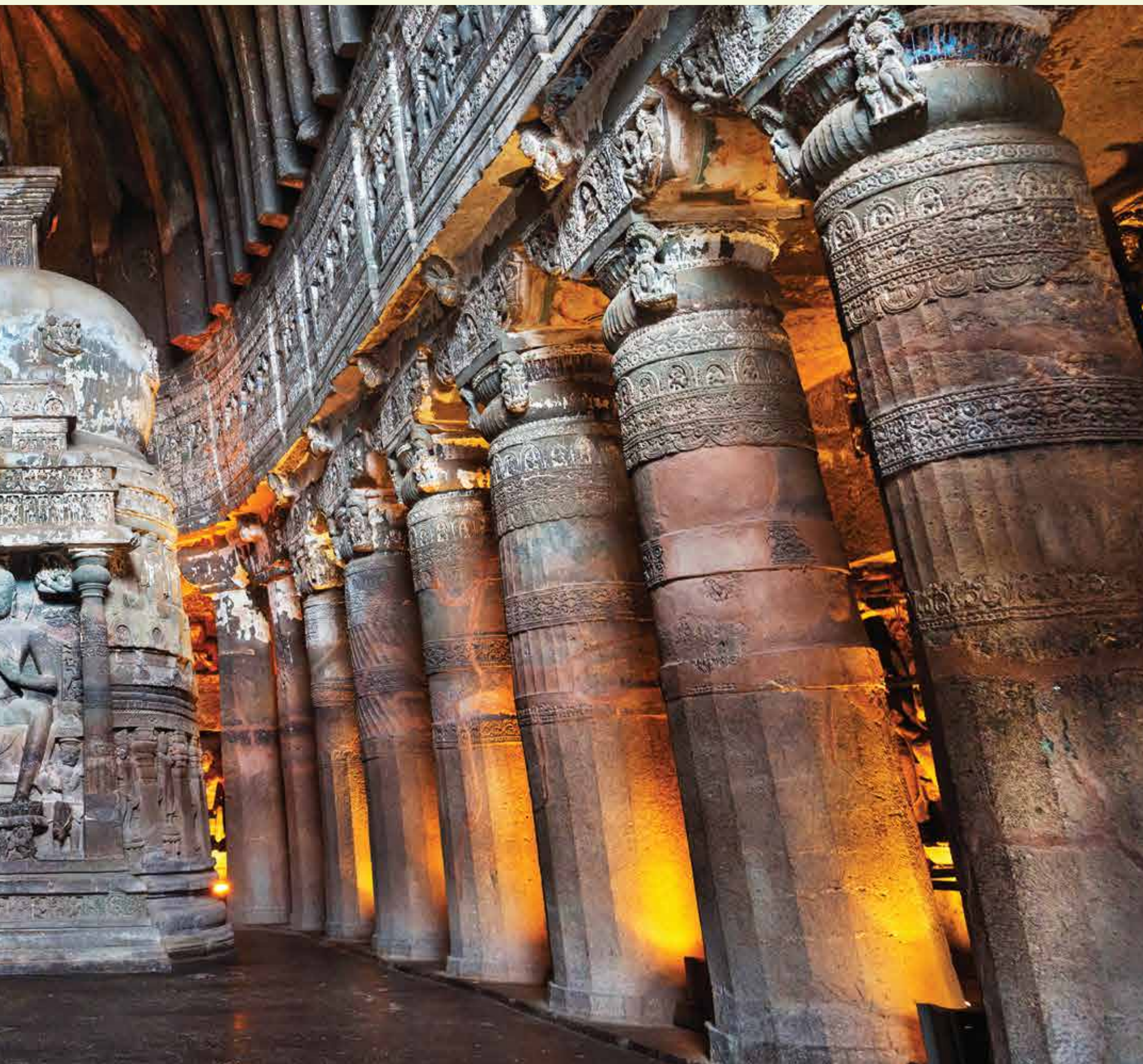


## 2. Timeless India: A Heritage Voyage

India, with its rich cultural and historical heritage, is one of the world's top tourist destinations. Each region offers a unique blend of mythology, architecture, craftsmanship, and tradition, making heritage tourism in India an enriching experience.

From majestic temples like Khajuraho Temple in Madhya Pradesh to awe-inspiring monuments like the Golkonda Fort in Hyderabad and the Akbar's Tomb in Uttar Pradesh, every place offers a glimpse into India's diverse cultural tapestry. Heritage tourism in India promises to soothe the soul, whether through its transcendental experiences or picturesque landscapes.







Twenty14 Holdings, an Abu Dhabi-based hospitality company, is a prominent investment firm specializing in the acquisition and management of assets worldwide.

*"Port Muziris, our Tribute Portfolio in Kochi, blends history, architecture, and imaginative storytelling to create a unique and enriching experience. The hotel's architecture reflects the rich heritage of the ancient multicultural port, seamlessly blending traditional Kerala design with influences from Portuguese, Dutch, and other cultures."*

*"At Twenty14 Holdings, we take pride in reflecting the vibrant culture and ethos of the region that the property is located in. For example, our property in Dubai, The Pullman Downtown at Business Bay, embodies the city's dynamic blend of modernity and tradition through thoughtfully designed interiors that incorporate modern Arabesque patterns, seamlessly blending contemporary aesthetics with regional heritage."*

**Representative from Twenty14 Holdings**

A Sister Concern of Lulu Financial Holdings  
Lulu Financial Holdings is a Board Member of UIBC-UC







### 3. Nature's Realm: Eco and Wildlife Tourism in India

India's diverse landscape, a remarkable blend of natural wonders, has made the country a leading destination for eco-tourism and wildlife experiences. Renowned eco-tourism spots like Havelock Island in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, known for its marine life, Cherrapunji in Meghalaya with its living root bridges, and Spiti Valley in Himachal Pradesh, celebrated for its serene vistas, exemplify sustainable travel in India.

India's wildlife is equally mesmerizing, with tigers, one-horned rhinos, and Asiatic lions drawing global visitors. Iconic sanctuaries like Jim Corbett, Ranthambore, and Periyar showcase this rich biodiversity, while the surreal beauty of Pangong Lake in Ladakh adds to the country's natural allure, offering eco-tourists unparalleled opportunities to immerse themselves in nature and conservation.











*“Tulah, which means Balance in Sanskrit, aims to lead the wellness tourism space by integrating clinical expertise with sustainable, eco-conscious practices...At the heart of KEF Holdings’ ethos is making a positive societal impact. Keeping this in mind we prioritize sustainability at this Net Zero wellness space, with energy-efficient infrastructure using technology such as aquifer pits and radiant cooling. While making this a community project empowering the people around us, we focus on organic farming based bespoke meals curated by world class chefs. Our commitment to environmental stewardship complements our holistic healthcare offerings, creating a comprehensive experience that promotes both personal well-being and global sustainability.*”

**Mr. Faizal Kottikollon**  
Chairman of KEF Holdings and Chairman of UIBC-UC





#### 4. Faith and Heritage: India's Religious Tourism

Religious tourism in India flourishes due to its profound religious heritage and the presence of revered sites across the country. The Golden Temple in Amritsar stands as a beacon of peace and devotion, drawing millions of visitors. Bodh Gaya in Bihar, a sacred pilgrimage destination for Buddhists, and the Haji Ali Dargah in Mumbai, dedicated to the 15th-century Sufi saint Pir Haji Ali Shah Bukhari, further enrich India's religious landscape. The Basilica de Bom Jesus in Goa, housing the relics of St. Francis Xavier, and the Udwada Atash Behram in Gujarat, the holiest Zoroastrian fire temple in India, showcase the country's diverse spiritual fabric. The Kumbh Mela, a grand congregation that transcends borders, continues to be a magnet for pilgrims, symbolizing India's deep-rooted spiritual traditions and offering an immersive experience of its culture, mythology, and faith.















## 5. India's Soulful Sojourn: A Spiritual Quest

For centuries, India has been a destination where individuals come to find themselves, seeking spiritual enlightenment and personal growth. The country's diverse spiritual practices, rooted in ancient traditions, continue to attract seekers from all over the world.

Renowned centers like the OSHO International Meditation Resort, Art of Living, and Brahma Kumaris provide spaces for reflection, meditation, and transformation. These retreats offer more than just spiritual teachings; they are immersive experiences designed to help visitors discover inner peace and achieve self-realization. With its deep spiritual heritage, India remains a leading destination for those on a quest for personal and spiritual awakening.





## 6. Healing Beyond Borders: India's Medical Tourism

India, ranked 10th in the Medical Tourism Index (MTI) for 2020-21 out of 46 global destinations, stands as a beacon of medical excellence. The country, renowned for its ancient Ayurvedic practices, also offers modern medical facilities at par with global standards. With world-class healthcare at a fraction of the cost, India has become a sought-after destination for patients seeking both affordability and exceptional quality.

Prestigious institutions like Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital, Tata Memorial Hospital, H.N. Reliance Foundation Hospital, Breach Candy Hospital, and Meitra Hospital, further solidify India's status as a global medical tourism hub. With internationally acclaimed doctors and cutting-edge treatments, India offers unparalleled healthcare experiences that combine expertise, innovation, and cost efficiency.







## 7. Wellness Awaits: India's Healing Retreats

India, with its ancient traditions of ayurveda, yoga, and meditation, has long been recognized as a global leader in wellness tourism connecting mind, body and soul. Rooted in centuries-old practices, India offers a comprehensive range of therapies aimed at promoting physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. From tranquil ayurvedic retreats to yoga ashrams in the Himalayas, and spiritual centres in places like Rishikesh and Kerala, India attracts wellness seekers from across the world. The country's blend of ancient wisdom and modern wellness practices, coupled with its expert practitioners, continues to make India a premier destination for holistic healing and rejuvenation.

Tulah represents a fusion of India's ancient healing traditions with modern clinical wellness practices. Its focus on Ayurveda, integrated with cutting-edge medical protocols, aims to provide a holistic approach to health and wellness. By blending time-honored practices with modern medical innovations, Tulah is creating a globally competitive wellness sanctuary.



*"The country's thriving wellness industry, which includes Ayurvedic resorts, yoga retreats, and eco-conscious wellness centres, aligns perfectly with the rising global interest in preventative healthcare and mental well-being...Tulah is not just about healing; it's about redefining global standards of care, offering a comprehensive and transformative experience that promotes mind-body balance and long-term well-being."*

*"Tulah's vision for expansion is global, with an emphasis on any individual or markets that align with wellness trends and has an appreciation for holistic health. Poised to most humbly be India's Gift to the World, this Uber Luxury Urban sanctuary will welcome guests from across the globe, offering bespoke therapies and treatments, going to the root cause of one's problems and aiming to not just subside, but reverse them. While the primary location of Tulah is in Kerala, popularly known as 'God's own country', we plan to expand our physical footprint with 'Urban Tulah' locations in cities like Dubai, New York, and London, offering bespoke wellness services at various cities of influence, providing a premium and personalized wellness experience in the heart of major metropolitan areas."*

**Mr. Faizal Kottikollon**  
Chairman of KEF Holdings and Chairman of UIBC-UC







## 8. India: Where Adventure Beckons

Adventure tourism in India has gained significant popularity, attracting thrill-seekers with activities like mountaineering, river rafting, skiing, and scuba diving. Destinations such as Himachal Pradesh, Goa, and Leh-Ladakh offer a perfect blend of excitement and natural beauty, providing diverse adventure opportunities.

Sandakphu, the highest peak in West Bengal, is a popular trekking destination, while the Brahmaputra River in Arunachal Pradesh is renowned for white-water rafting attracting enthusiasts across the spectrum. These locations provide the ideal combination of adventure and serene landscapes, making India a top choice for adventure tourism.















## 9. India: The Epicentre of Sporting Excellence

India, a distinguished destination for sports tourism, is celebrated for its cricketing legacy, with iconic venues such as Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium hosting prestigious events like the ICC Cricket World Cup. The nation's football fervour is equally reflected in landmarks like Kolkata's Salt Lake Stadium and Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, both arenas of intense competition.

India's exceptional golfing facilities, including the scenic Gulmarg Golf Course in Kashmir, further enhance its allure. Kerala's traditional boat races in Champakulam offer an immersive cultural experience, while India's growing global reputation for Kalaripayattu, the ancient martial art, enriches its sporting heritage.









*"Our vision for global sports tourism centers on leveraging the Indian Premier League as a critical platform to attract international visitors to India. By becoming the Official Travel and Experience Partner for the Rajasthan Royals, we are developing a multi-dimensional strategy to transform cricket from a mere sporting event into a comprehensive travel experience. We're creating specialized travel packages that combine match experiences with cultural exploration, targeting international cricket enthusiasts."*

**Mr. Rikant Pittie**

Co-Founder of EaseMyTrip  
EaseMyTrip is a Founding Member of UIBC-UC

## 10. India: The Pinnacle of MICE Excellence

MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) tourism has become a key sector in India, especially after the country's economic liberalization in 1991. As business leaders blended work with leisure, the demand for travel focused on meetings, conferences, and exhibitions grew. Iconic venues like the Bombay Exhibition Centre and Jio World Centre in Mumbai, and the Chennai Trade Centre and ITC Grand Chola in Chennai, have been central to this growth. Additionally, the "Meet in India" initiative launched under "Incredible India" aims to position India as a prominent global MICE destination, attracting prestigious international events and driving the sector's growth.









# Chapter 3

The Tapestry of Tourism: India and the UAE

UAE





## 1. Luxury: The Epitome of Opulence

The UAE is synonymous with luxury, offering visitors a taste of unparalleled grandeur. From high-end hotels and premium shopping destinations to bespoke entertainment, every aspect is designed to provide an indulgent experience. Abu Dhabi shines with landmarks like the Emirates Palace, a symbol of opulence, and the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, an architectural masterpiece that combines grandeur with serenity. Dubai dazzles with the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building, and the Palm Jumeirah, a man-made marvel housing iconic five-star hotels. Sharjah contributes its own charm with luxurious waterfront developments like Al Majaz. The UAE's opulent lifestyle ensures visitors leave with memories of exclusivity and sophistication.











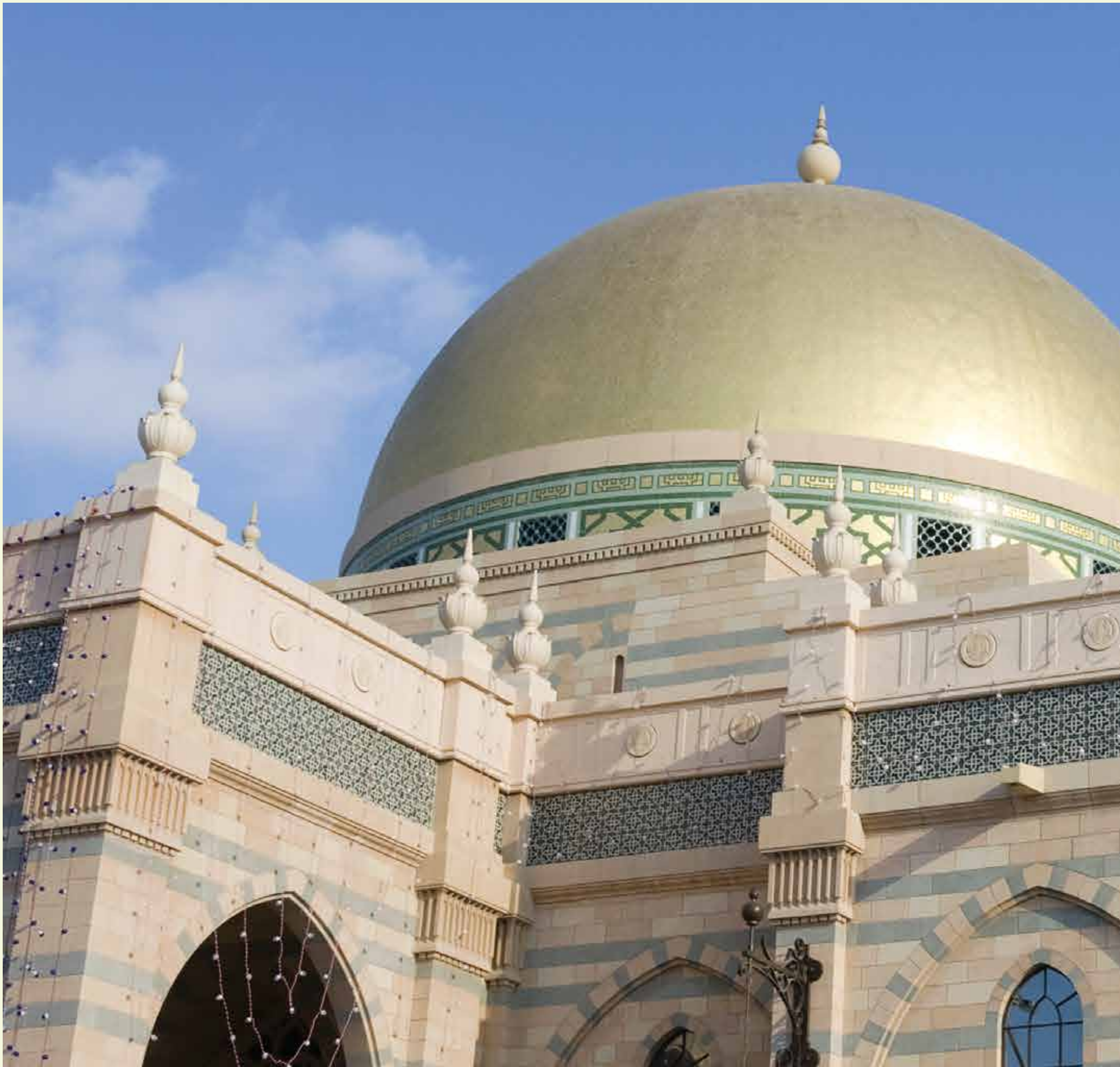


## 2. UAE: A Realm of Cultural and Heritage Grandeur

The UAE offers a captivating blend of cultural heritage and modern innovation. Visitors can explore world-class museums like the Louvre Abu Dhabi and the Etihad Museum, while also immersing themselves in traditional art at the Sharjah Art Museum and Calligraphy Museum. Historic landmarks, such as the Dubai Museum at Al Fahidi Fort, offer a glimpse into the UAE's transformation, and cultural festivals like the Liwa Date Festival bring the nation's traditions to life.

Traditional markets or souks play a central role in the UAE's cultural tourism. The Dubai Gold Souk, Spice Souk, and Textile Souk offer authentic experiences where visitors can shop for unique treasures and handcrafted goods. Sharjah's Blue Souk is another notable spot, showcasing the country's rich trading history. These vibrant markets provide a perfect mix of history, craftsmanship, and local culture.

Emirati cuisine is an integral part of the cultural experience, with dishes like Al Harees, Al Machboos, and Luqaimat offering a taste of tradition. Arabic coffee (Gahwa) and the art of Henna also reflect the UAE's social customs. Visitors can also explore the heritage of pearl diving, Sadu weaving, and traditional handicrafts, all contributing to the UAE's dynamic cultural landscape.







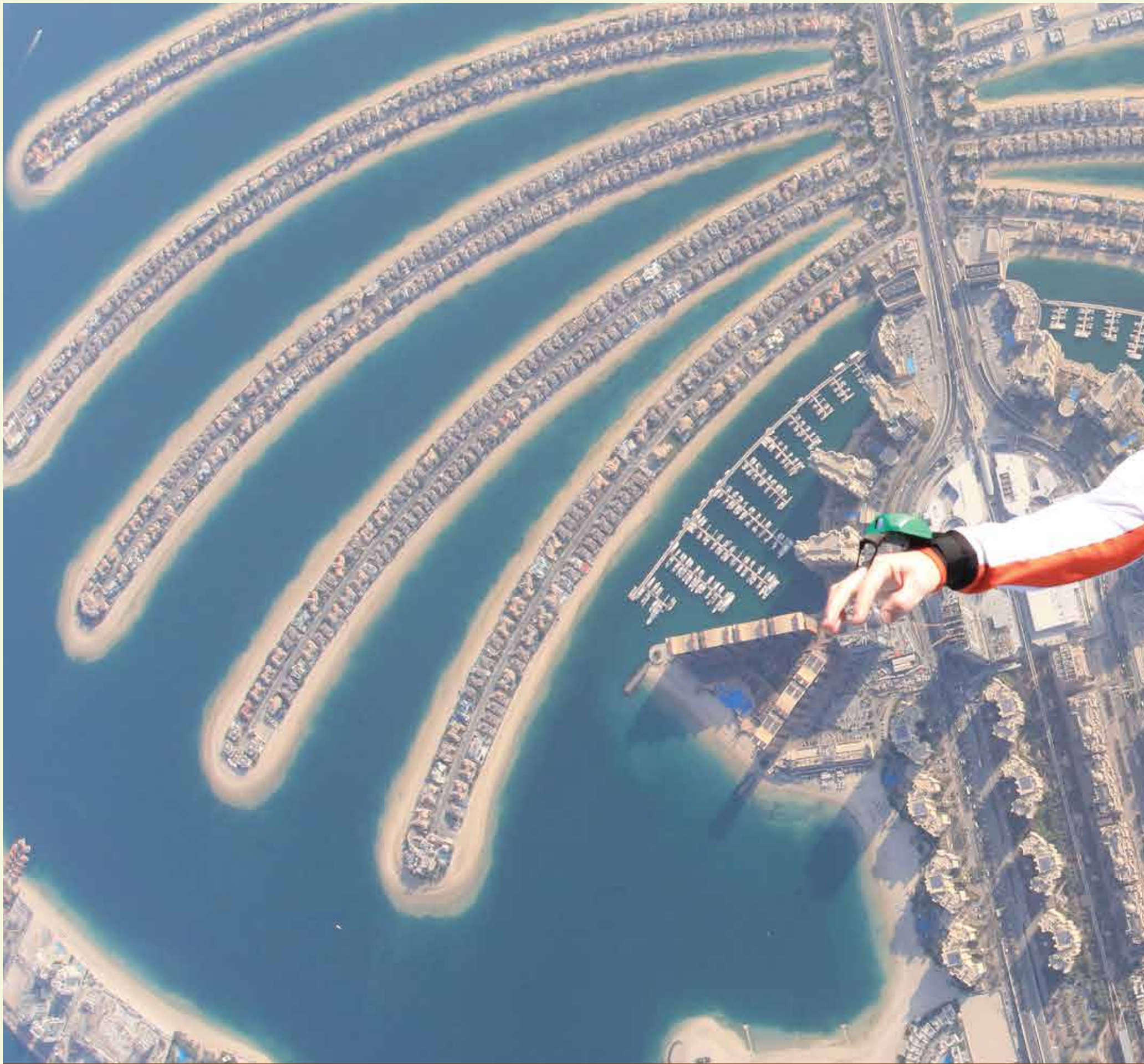


### 3. UAE: The Apex of Adventure Tourism

The UAE is a premier destination for adrenaline seekers, offering a wealth of thrilling experiences set against its stunning landscapes. From the exhilaration of desert safaris and skydiving over the iconic Palm Jumeirah to the serene beauty of kayaking and hiking in Hatta, there is no shortage of excitement.

For those seeking unique thrills, options such as flyboarding, ziplining, and paragliding await, while scuba diving and mountain cycling provide a blend of adventure and natural beauty. The UAE's world-class water parks, including Aquaventure, Yas Waterworld, and Ferrari World, further elevate the adventure tourism experience, ensuring a truly unforgettable escape.











#### 4. A Fusion of Business and Luxury: MICE Tourism in UAE

The UAE has firmly established itself as a premier destination for MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) tourism, offering a sophisticated blend of cutting-edge infrastructure and world-class hospitality.

Dubai and Abu Dhabi are at the forefront, with iconic venues like the Dubai World Trade Centre, Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre, and the Dubai Exhibition Centre, setting the stage for high-profile global events.

Renowned for its luxury, accessibility, and seamless services, the UAE serves as a dynamic nexus for international business, providing a state-of-the-art environment for corporate gatherings, incentives, and exhibitions. Its growing prominence in the MICE sector reflects its status as a global leader in hosting world-class events.

## 5. UAE: A Premier Hub for Sports Tourism

The UAE has become a distinguished destination for global sports, renowned for hosting premier events such as the Dubai Tennis Championships, international cricket matches, and the prestigious Formula 1 Grand Prix.

With its world-class stadiums and exceptional facilities, the country has solidified its place on the international sports calendar. Beyond major events, the UAE supports a vibrant local sports culture, offering top-tier venues for football, cricket, and various recreational activities, ensuring a dynamic environment for both athletes and enthusiasts year-round.









## 6. UAE: Gateway to Advanced Healthcare and Healing

The UAE has solidified its reputation as a premier destination for medical tourism, drawing patients from across the globe with its exceptional healthcare offerings.

Boasting world-class institutions such as Dubai Healthcare City, the American Hospital Dubai, Saudi German Hospital Dubai, and King's College Hospital Dubai, the country provides an extensive array of treatments, from routine care to advanced surgeries.

Renowned for global accreditation, cutting-edge medical technologies and a wealth of highly skilled specialists, the UAE combines innovation with professionalism to deliver unparalleled care, further strengthening its growing international presence as a hub for medical excellence.







## 7. UAE: Exploring Nature's Majesty with Eco Tourism

Renowned for its rapid modernization, the UAE is also emerging as a leader in eco-tourism, offering a refined balance of luxury and sustainability. From the peaceful dunes of the Arabian Desert to the rich ecosystems of Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuary, the country provides a diverse array of eco-friendly experiences.

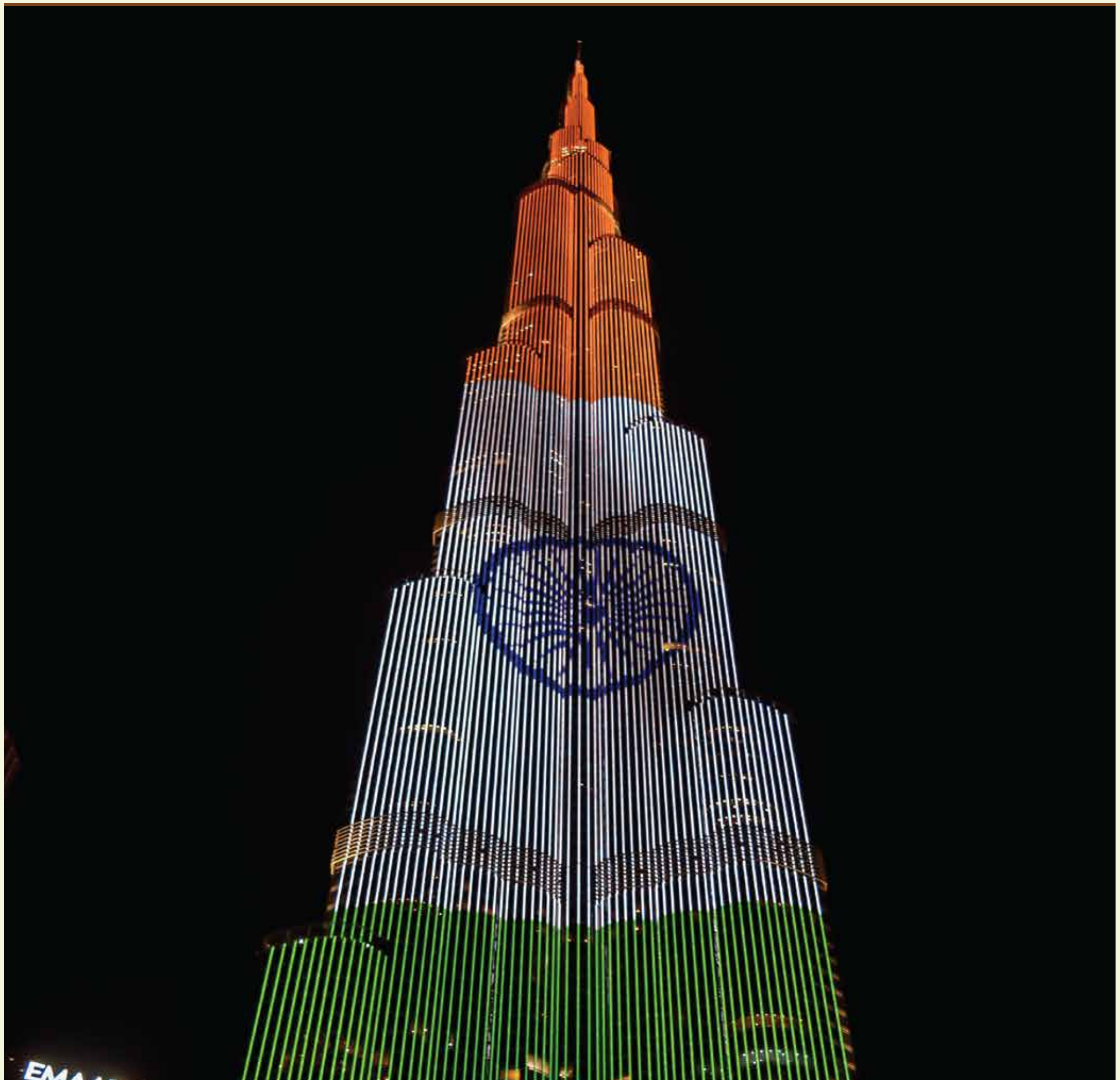
Visitors can explore the Al Marmoom Desert Reserve or enjoy guided eco-tours through the Hajar Mountains, all while surrounded by a strong commitment to environmental conservation. With its emphasis on sustainable development, the UAE is becoming an ideal destination for those seeking to connect with nature in style.





# Chapter 4

Cultural Cross-Pollination and Tourism:  
Bridging India and the UAE



**15th August 2024:** Burj Khalifa displaying Indian flag on the occasion of India's Independence Day, Dubai, UAE



India Pavillion at Global Village, Dubai, UAE

The cultural and tourism exchange between India and the UAE highlights a deep and evolving relationship. This dynamic blend of traditions, driven by centuries-old trade links and modern connections, is evident across culinary arts, entertainment, spirituality, and shared passions like cricket.

## Culinary Fusion

The UAE has embraced Indian cuisine, with celebrated establishments like Tresind Studio and Vark by Taj elevating traditional flavors into global culinary experiences. Staples such as saffron and cardamom unite Emirati and Indian dishes, while festive foods like samosas and sweets mark shared celebrations. Emirati delicacies, including Harees and Luqaimat, are also gaining favor in India's food scene.

## Bollywood & Beyond

Bollywood has deepened ties between the nations, with the UAE serving as a stunning backdrop for films like Happy New Year, Welcome, Dilwale, Airlift, Dil Dhadakne Do and Race 2 among others. Stars like Shah Rukh Khan and Priyanka Chopra, as UAE brand ambassadors, spotlight the region as a luxury destination, while Bollywood's popularity among Arab audience's further bridges cultures.



**The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi** taking selfie with HE Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan and HE Dr. Anwar Gargash at the Shiekh Zayed Grand Mosque, at Abu Dhabi, UAE



**BAPS Hindu Mandir, Abu Dhabi, UAE**

## Musical Mosaic

Renowned Indian singers and entertainers frequently perform in the UAE, hosting iconic concerts like Arijit Singh Live, Sonu Nigam Live, and Shreya Ghoshal Symphony. These events attract diverse audiences, including Emiratis who eagerly embrace Indian music and culture, deepening cultural ties and boosting tourism while showcasing the UAE's cosmopolitan spirit.

## Shared Spirituality and Celebrations

The UAE's inclusivity is reflected in its temples, gurudwaras, and churches, fostering unity within the Indian community. The country also hosts grand Indian weddings, showcasing its reputation for luxury and hospitality. From culinary innovations to cinematic connections, the India-UAE relationship exemplifies a thriving cultural partnership.

*"The recent introduction of the unified GCC tourist visa is expected to significantly enhance travel from India to the UAE and neighboring areas, particularly for 'bleisure' trips. To cater to these evolving preferences, we offer customized travel packages and personalized services catering to both business and leisure travelers. Our website showcases carefully curated itineraries highlighting the best of the UAE region, ensuring travelers can manage their work commitments while also indulging in leisure activities."*

**Rikant Pitti from Ease My Trip**

Co-Founder of EaseMyTrip

Nishant Pitti is a Founding Member of UIBC-UC



Visitors at 43rd GITEX Global 2023, largest tech and s

*"At EFS, Indian professionals represent close to 60% of our global workforce, underscoring their importance to our operational success. Their ability to seamlessly adapt and integrate to diverse cultural and operational environments has been instrumental in delivering exceptional service to our clients, further strengthening India's position as a talent hub for the hospitality industry."*

*"At EFS, we ensure that our workforce is equipped with globally recognized skills through a comprehensive and blended learning approach...As part of our global commitment to skills development, the EFSIM Skills Development Academy plays a pivotal role in upskilling our workforce. Based in India, this academy offers specialized training in domains such as Hospitality, Electrical, Plumbing, HVAC and more...To complement our skills development initiatives, EFS has established Centers of Excellence (CoEs) across UAE and Saudi Arabia. These centers serve as hubs that focus on specialized and practical training and knowledge sharing."*

**Mr. Faizal Kottikollon**

Chairman of KEF Holdings and Chairman of UIBC-UC



Visitors at 43rd GITEX Global 2023, largest tech and s



Startup event in the world, Dubai, UAE

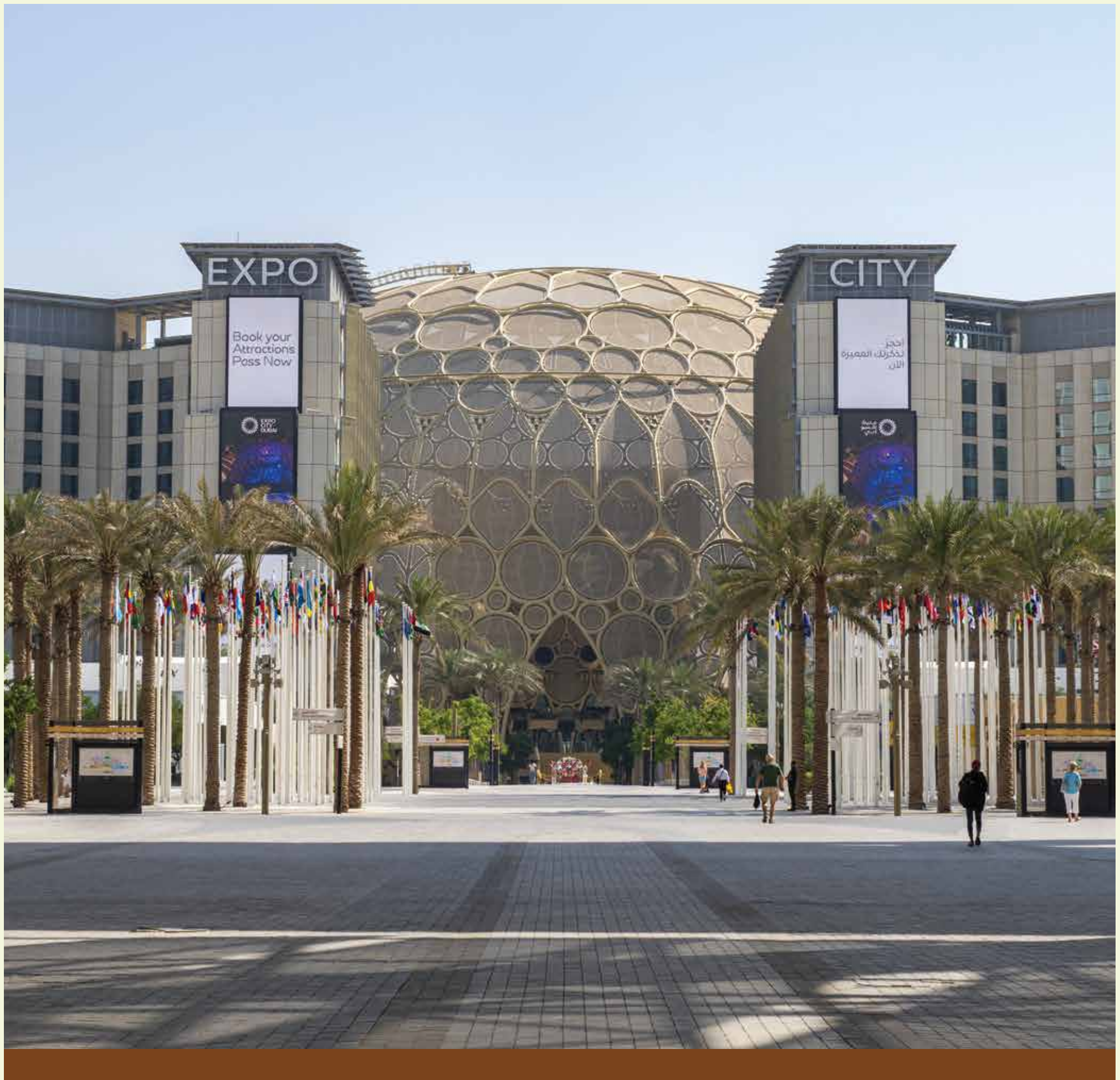


Startup event in the world, Dubai, UAE

# Chapter 5

Global Confluences: India and UAE's  
World Platforms





Global gatherings such as Expo 2020 Dubai and the G20 Summit have been transformative milestones for India and the UAE, elevating their global stature, driving economic growth, and positioning them as pivotal hubs for trade, tourism, and diplomacy. These large-scale events have showcased the countries' economic potential, cultural richness, and commitment to innovation, sustainability, and global collaboration.

## Expo 2020 Dubai: A Milestone for UAE and India

Expo 2020 Dubai was a landmark achievement for the UAE, attracting over 24 million visitors and generating USD 42.2 billion (AED 154.9 billion) for the economy. The event underscored the UAE's commitment to innovation and sustainability, featuring groundbreaking projects like the Sustainability Pavilion and Mobility District. It also bolstered the hospitality and tourism sectors, with hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues experiencing record occupancy levels, and secured billions of dollars in foreign investments, further solidifying Dubai's position as a global business and tourism hub.

The Indian Pavilion, a standout attraction, drew over 1.7 million visitors and celebrated India's cultural heritage, technological advancements, and economic potential. Highlighting India's art, culture, literature, cinema, and cuisine from its 36 states and union territories, the event offered a glimpse into Indian businesses spanning 27 economic sectors and showcased the world's third-largest startup ecosystem. Over 182 days, more than 150 major cultural and business events, along with 26 multilateral summits, were hosted. It showcased India as an emerging global leader in innovation and sustainability, while facilitating significant business opportunities in technology, food security, infrastructure, and renewable energy.

Expo 2020 strengthened India-UAE economic ties by fostering collaborations that deepened bilateral trade and investment relations. The event reinforced the strategic partnership between the two nations, laying a robust foundation for future economic and cultural cooperation.

## G20 Summit: India's Rising Global Influence and UAE's Role

India's presidency of the G20 Summit marked a pivotal moment in its journey as a global leader, showcasing its growing prominence on the international stage. The summit elevated India's standing and spotlighted its rich cultural heritage by hosting world leaders to address critical issues like climate change, global trade, and sustainable development. By organizing key sessions across diverse locations, the government highlighted India's vibrant traditions, ancient monuments, and culinary diversity, bolstering domestic tourism and positioning the country as an attractive destination for international travelers.

The summit in New Delhi also provided an economic boost by fostering global trade opportunities, especially for MSMEs, and attracting multinational corporations like Apple and Tesla. The UAE actively participated in the summit, contributing to discussions on climate change, trade, and innovation, emphasizing the importance of multilateral solutions to global challenges. His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan visited India on 8-9 September 2023 to attend the G20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi, where he met with India's Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi. During this visit, he participated in launching the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, further solidifying bilateral ties.

The UAE's active involvement in the G20 Summit and India's strong presence at Expo 2020 exemplify their symbiotic relationship. These events have deepened bilateral ties, attracted foreign investments, and enhanced the global perception of both nations.



India national Pavilion at Expo 2020, Dubai, UAE

**EFS participated in global events such as Expo 2020 and was honored with a Certificate of Achievement from Expo 2020 Dubai for their contribution and drive for continual improvement in worker welfare.**



*“At EFS Facilities Services Group, we recognize Indian manpower as a cornerstone of the global hospitality and facilities management industry. At EFS, Indian professionals represent close to 60% of our global workforce, underscoring their importance to our operational success. Their ability to seamlessly adapt and integrate to diverse cultural and operational environments has been instrumental in delivering exceptional service to our clients, further strengthening India’s position as a talent hub for the hospitality industry.”*

**Mr. Tariq Chauhan**

Executive Vice Chairman of EFS Facilities Services Group  
Board Member of UIBC-UC

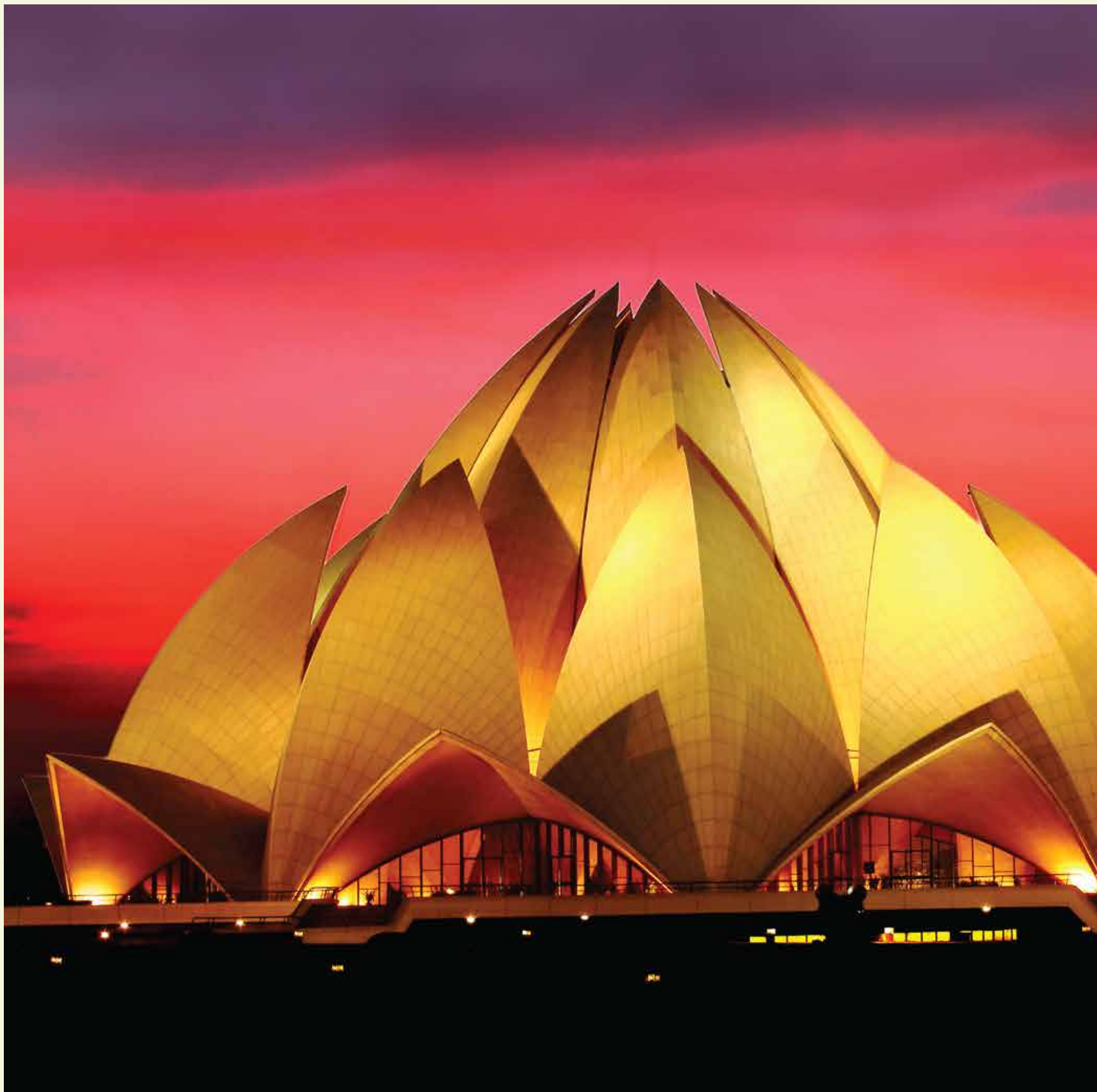




# Chapter 6

Hidden Gems

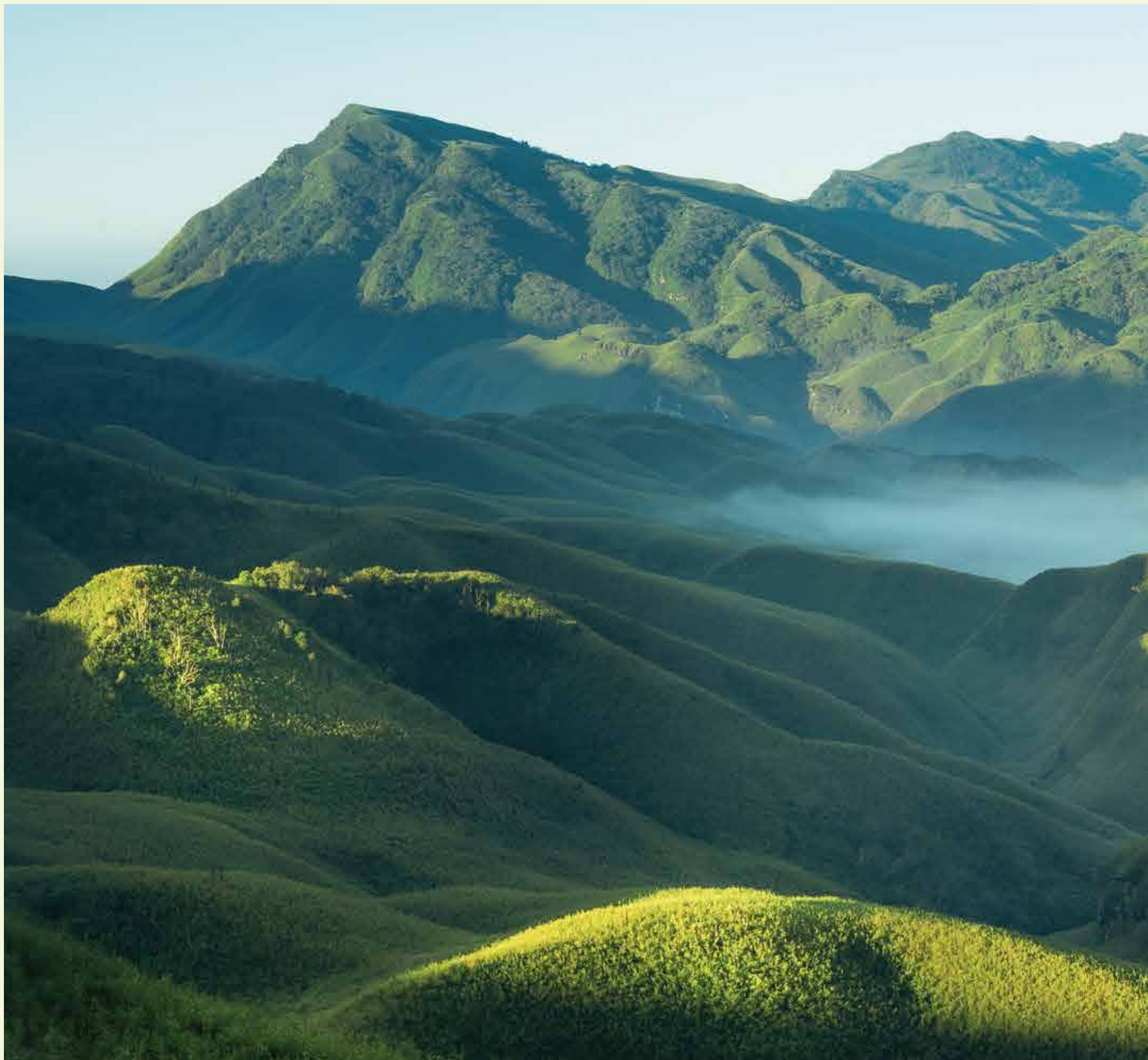
INDIA





Aryan Valley, Jammu & Kashmir, India





**Dzukou Valley, Nagaland, India**





**Chopta**, Uttarakhand, India





**Lonar Lake, Maharashtra, India**



# Chapter 6

Hidden Gems

UAE





Al Wathba Fossil Dunes, Abu Dhabi, UAE

