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Left to right: Sara Corner, Femina Miss India World 2001; Celina Jaitly, Femina Miss India Universe 2001; and Maheshwari, Femina Miss India Asia-Pacific 2001.

«Wow Switzerland!»

Miss India in Switzerland.

Some 20 to 25 million people followed the visit to Switzerland of the three Femina Miss Indias in the Indian media.

The Indian subcontinent is one of the most fascinating emerging markets for Switzerland Tourism. For years now, the number of overnights attributable to visitors from India has enjoyed twin-figure growth. Even though the visitor figures still make up only a fraction of those from Europe, there is enormous potential among the billion inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent. In India, Switzerland is the most popular travel destination after the United Kingdom. This popularity is largely due to the fact that Swiss scenery is one of the preferred «exotic» backdrops in countless films and video clips produced by India's «Bollywood» studios. Indians thus get to know Switzerland in this way and imagine what it would be like to travel to this dream world, something about 100 million Indians could afford to do. This represents an enormous potential that needs to be nurtured.

Such an opportunity arose when Celina Jaitly, Miss India Universe 2001, Sara Corner, Miss India World 2001, and Maheshwari, Miss India Asia-Pacific 2001, visited Switzerland in April 2001. Along with a team of photographers the three ladies were invited to Central Switzerland, and the Lake Geneva region by Kuoni/ SOTC India, the Times of India and Switzerland Tourism. As well as photoshoots on Glacier 3000 and on Titlis after a fresh fall of snow, the programme also featured visits to jewellers' shops in Geneva and Lucerne.

Our guests left with fond memories of their trip to Switzerland and the hospitality extended to them throughout. In May 2001 the Times of India published a four-page supplement entitled «Wow Switzerland!», allowing 8.1 million readers to join in the trip. Shortly afterwards, Femina magazine produced a four-page

illustrated report called «Swiss Misses». Other articles appeared in the Indian media as well. Switzerland Tourism estimates that some 20 to 25 million readers in India followed the visit of the three beauty queens to Switzerland.

This trip was made possible by the support of various tourism regions, the Swiss transport companies, the Palace Hotel Lucerne and Le Montreux Palace Hotel, various shops and Presence Switzerland, who were rewarded by the fantastic media coverage, an exposure worth its weight in gold.