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interglobe

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L to R- Greesh Bindra, General Manager, Crowne Plaza, Greater Noida, Amita Motwani, Mrs. India International 2013, SanJeet, Director, DDP Group, Dr. Subhash Goyal, President, IATO & Chairman, STIC Travel Group, S. Sohan Singh Thandal, Minister of Tourism & Cultural Affairs, Government of Punjab, Dr. Lalit K. Panwar, Secretary, Tourism, Govt. of India, Basanta Raj Kumar, Executive Director, Punjab Tourism Board and Ramesh Arora, Managing Director/VP Marketing, Montcalm Luxury Hotels at the maiden edition of the North India Travel Awards held at Crowne Plaza, Greater Noida on December 20, 2014. This glorious award function was attended by distinguished personalities who came together to acknowledge the contribution of the best in the travel and tourism industry by recognising and awarding them. Earlier this year, The India Travel Awards hosted their regional editions in South, West and East India

Dr Jyotsna Suri is FICCI President



Jyotsna Suri
President
FICCI

See full story 7 ▶

New Year, New Expectations

With the new government's focus on tourism, 2014 witnessed a number of remarkable changes in the travel trade. **TRAVTALK** spoke to travel trade on expectations for 2015 across various industry segments.



MEGHA PAUL

Since the launch of eVoA ,10,000 visas have been issued online. A tourist helpline has been unveiled. We have implemented a system where a tourist will be given a toll-free number for 24 X 7. We will have taxi services wherein the cab will have chip so that its movement can be tracked.

Dr. Lalit K Panwar
Secretary, Tourism, Government of India



Contd. on page 6 ▶

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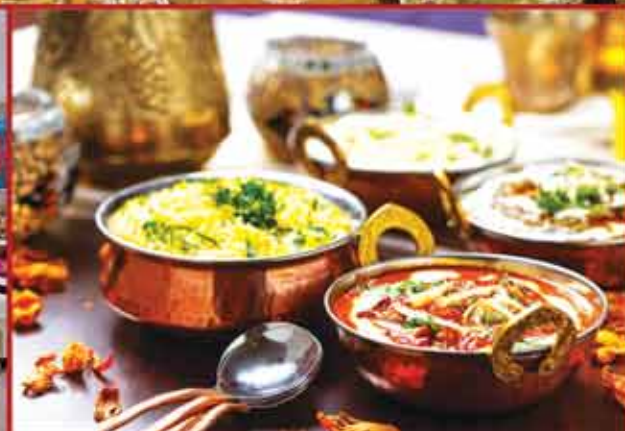
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Wait ends, Vistara flies from Jan 9

Travellers in India will get to 'Fly the New Feeling' as TATA-SIA airline will start operations on January 9, 2015, with Delhi-Mumbai, Delhi-Ahmedabad and Ahmedabad-Mumbai as its initial routes.

PEDEN DOMA BHUTIA

"The wait is over," these were the ominous words with which, **Phee Teik Yeoh**, Chief Executive Officer, Vistara, addressed the media as he announced that the full-service carrier will take off on January 9, 2015, with Delhi-Mumbai, Delhi-Ahmedabad and Ahmedabad-Mumbai as its initial routes.

Talking about delivering a seamless and personalised travel experience, through a slew of unique products and features to delight customers, Yeoh called Vistara their New Year gift to India, as the airline becomes the first Indian airline to offer premium economy seats to customers. Vistara's launch comes at a time when things are looking a little bleak for Indian aviation, however,

Yeoh is optimistic about the industry and says, "We believe in the immense potential of the aviation market in India, we've got what it takes to thrive in this industry and intend to make significant changes. We have

they are about putting in place an accountable and systematic set of solutions to unleash the potential that Indian aviation is poised to achieve. By 2020, this will be the third largest aviation market in the world."

Seamless check-in experience

To ensure a hassle-free and seamless check-in experience for customers, Vistara's innovative customer interface will offer four different ways to check-in, including an auto check-in facility, a first in domestic travel in India. Besides web check-in and check-in via the mobile app, Vistara will also provide personalized service and dedicated counters, as well as designated queues, for passengers to check in at the airport. Further enhancing the seamless experience, travellers with hand baggage can proceed for security once they check in at the mobile tablet service offered by Vistara customer service representatives.

a very strong government in the Centre, intent to remove the shackles around the industry. We applaud them for coming out with the draft aviation policy, this shows how serious

The airlines that starts operations from January 9 with two aircraft, plans to get five aircrafts by March and will then scale it up to 20 aircraft in four

Contd. on page 8 ►

We have a wide range of fares that cater to customers from all strata, the pricing will change according to the demand and supply and the value proposition that we are offering to the market

Phee Teik Yeoh
Chief Executive Officer
Vistara





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TRAVELTALK

VIEWPOINT

Ringing in the good times

As we bid adieu to 2014 and usher in the New Year, we also bid farewell to our 'wait and watch' game. From taking baby steps to now taking giant strides on the global tourism map, the Union Government has finally realised the potential of travel and tourism industry.

The latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer has also stated that international tourism has hit a new record by the end of 2014 with over 1.1 billion international tourists travelling the world in one single year. International arrivals in Asia and the Pacific increased by five per cent (through October), consolidating the region's growth trend of recent years. What is good news for us is that the best results came from South Asia (+ eight per cent), led by India (+ seven per cent).

While India always had immense potential to double the arrival number, our country is now looking at overcoming the 'credibility crisis' in relation to cleanliness, security and hospitality. With the implementation of the Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) and the recent slew of initiatives undertaken by the Ministry on the occasion of the Good Governance Day, we are surely heading towards good times. The e-portal of the Culture Ministry -- Swachh Bharat - Swachh Smarak (Clean India - Clean Monuments); Welcome Cards for foreign tourists; Incredible India Infoline Service; e-ticketing for Taj Mahal and Humayun's Tomb; programme to expand Hunar Se Rozgar programme to provide employment to local communities, is expected to boost inbound and domestic tourism further. Thus, while there will be challenges this year, there will be more opportunities for the industry.

For the travel and tourism stakeholders to cash in on the 'good times', it is important that they become partners to the development story and not just remain stakeholders. Diversification will be the need of the hour for our industry in order to keep up with the times.

▶ Contd. from page 1

With the recent introduction of ETA, we only see happy times for the inbound market. The inbound from many of our conventional markets, especially the US will grow tremendously. However, there has been a sharp decline in Russian tourists due to steep fall in rouble and the Ukraine crisis. Domestic travel will see good growth. Offbeat destinations like North East will see better growth than previous years and so will specialised luxury and wedding segments. Other segments which will see good growth are the adventure and sports segments. Educational travel and incentive travel will show significant increases as compared with the previous year.

Dipak DevaCEO- Destination Management, India & South Asia,
Kuoni Destination Management

The New Year would be much better. A new government and political stability would definitely help the economic growth. India was in the past a luxury market, so there were five-star hotels on one hand and guest houses and an unorganised set-up on the other.

Now, we have considerable market segmentation. This year we will witness more growth in the budget and economy hotels. However, the challenge will be to get trained manpower.

Anil Madhok

Managing Director, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts



Luxury travel is on the rise from markets such as the US and Far East. Experience, which is authentic, is one of the key drivers for travel and this trend will only grow stronger this year. An important development that we should watch out for is the

entry of AirAsia and Tata-SIA airlines in the domestic skies. Also, the introduction of ETA by government has removed bottlenecks for foreign visitors planning to come to India. We can expect more customers opting for experiential holidays as this is the new trend.

Vikram Madhok

Managing Director, Abercrombie & Kent India

The growth in outbound travel from India has also been fuelled by many factors. Now there has been a slew of direct flights being introduced. Foreign tourist boards have also realised the great potential of the Indian outbound segment.



MICE and business travel are definitely areas that will boost outbound travel. We see a rising interest in MICE, especially incentive trips in 2015.

Guldeep Singh Sahni

Managing Director, Weldon Tours & Travels

ICC Cricket World Cup 2015 in Australia and New Zealand is anticipated to garner keen interest. The Trans-Tasman joint visa agreement, for the match is truly a strategic move. At Thomas Cook India, our sales teams are reporting a strong 25 per cent increase in queries. Despite Australia & New Zealand being long haul destinations and prices at peak levels, the Indian consumers' growing interest augurs well for Sports Tourism.

**Shibani Phadkar**Senior Vice President-Products & Operations, Leisure Travel
(Outbound), Thomas Cook (India)

In 2015, India will get new domestic carriers and will also see a growth in international traffic. 2014 was an exciting, as well as, challenging year for the aviation industry. A visible growth was seen in the number of Indians opting for air travel domestically, the number of Indians travelling abroad also increased. However, at the same time, factors beyond control like Ebola had a major impact on the business.

Sajid Khan

Country Manager - India, South African Airways



To leverage the attention and viewership that 2015 World Cup is expected to receive in India, Tourism Australia has planned a robust integrated media campaign, to increase visibility for the country as a tourism destination. Strategic airline and travel agent partnerships will supplement the appealing imagery and brand content advertised by providing a strong call-to-action and attractive packages for potential travellers to book their holiday.

Nishant Kashikar

Country Manager, India & Gulf, Tourism Australia

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TRAVELTALK is printed, published and edited by Sanjeet on behalf of Durga Das Publications Pvt. Ltd., printed at Cirrus Graphics Pvt. Ltd., B-62/14, Phase II, Naraina Industrial Area, New Delhi - 110 028 and published at 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110 001

Iron lady at FICCI to focus on inbound

She is the first President representing the travel and tourism industry. To boost the travel and tourism industry, Suri’s main focus will be inbound and domestic tourism.

TT BUREAU
Dr Jyotsna Suri, Chairman & Managing Director, Bharat Hotels (Lalit Suri Hospitality), has now been appointed as President of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). The announcement of the appointment was made at the conclusion of the Chamber’s 87th Annual General Meeting recently. The only President

from the travel and tourism industry in FICCI, Dr Suri has been Chairperson of the FICCI Tourism Committee for the last

Hall of Fame

◆ Dr Suri has been Chairperson of the FICCI Tourism Committee for the last five years and is the only woman at the position

five years and is the only woman at the position.
To boost the travel and tourism industry, Suri’s main focus will be inbound and domestic tourism. “I see a lot of potential in domestic tourism and thus, at FICCI, the focus will be on promoting inbound as well as pushing domestic tourism. Inbound has been a challenge till now. However, with the government’s new initiative

of the e-visa, things will be back on track soon,” she revealed. Outlining her agenda for the next one year, Suri remarked, **“My vision for the next three months will be based on 3Cs – concise, collaborative and conclusive. Communication will be to the point and concise.**

Action and direction will be collaborative, first within FICCI itself and then with the industry and other industry associations and the government. The aim will be to conclude all initiatives taken in this one year by the end of my term.”
The Travel Trade has accomplished many achievements under her direction. One of her achievements


include the introduction of ‘The Great India Travel Bazaar’ in 2008 by FICCI and ‘The Great Domestic Tourism Bazaar’ in 2011, both of which have become keenly-awaited events in the annual calendar of travel and tourism business interactions. She succeeds Sidharth Birla to the top position. Prior to this, Suri was Senior Vice President of FICCI.

VoA grows by 63% in November 2014

■ During the month of November 2014, a total number of 2,968 VoAs were issued under this scheme as compared to 1,824 VoAs during the same month last year, registering a growth of 62.7 per cent. During January–November 2014, a total number of 24,963 VoAs were issued as compared to 17,594 VoAs during the corresponding period of 2013 registering a growth of 41.9 per cent. The 12 countries for which VoAs were issued under this scheme during November 2014 were South Korea (837), Singapore (467), New Zealand (427), the Philippines (350), Indonesia (326), Japan (310), Finland (125), Myanmar (64), Vietnam (22), Cambodia (20), Luxembourg (18) and Laos (2).


357 VoAs in 10 days of commencement at Goa Airport

■ The Goa Airport at Dabolim has issued 357 Visas-on-Arrival (VoA) within ten days of the commencement of the facility. The VoA facility was launched by the Union Home ministry on November 27, 2014 and Goa Airport at Dabolim started the process of issuing the visas from December 4, 2014. 43 countries have been extended this facility and Goa is one of the nine airports which has been selected for providing the VoA facility. VoA was issued to Russia (154), Ukraine (183), Germany (7), Jordan (3), Singapore (1) and USA (4).

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Wide range of fares for travellers

►Contd. from page 5

years, following which it will expand the route network accordingly.

Talking about the fare structure, Yeoh, says, “We have a wide range of fares that cater to customers from

Club Vistara

Keeping up with the times, Vistara has done away with the physical cards. Customers can start enrolling for the program through Vistara website and download their Club Vistara loyalty card. Additional bonus points can also be accrued as customers get upgraded to become Silver and Gold Members. Another unique feature of this program is Family Pooling which allows up to six members of a family to pool their points which can be redeemed by any one of them. Vistara will also be partnering with a few brands from the airline and non-airline space to extend benefits/redemption of points to their members thereby enhancing engagement with them.

Rubbing comparisons with AirAsia, Yeoh says, “There is no comparison with Air Asia, they’re a low cost airline while we are a world-class full-service airline.”

Meals and Dining

The menus will change every week and will only reappear every 4 weeks to continuously offer new dining experiences for frequent travellers.

all strata. The pricing will change according to the demand and supply and the value proposition that we are offering to the market. Our value proposition is that of seamless and personalised travel experience never experienced by travellers in India before. We are here to redefine the flying experience in India. Indian travellers are discerning. They look for value. We will offer fares that we strongly believe would be value for money for them.”

Chhattisgarh to get a facelift

The Tourism Minister was in Chhattisgarh recently. He met the state’s Chief Minister and promised a few sops for tourism development in the state. TRAVTALK gets you the detailed report of the minister’s visit to Raipur.

TT BUREAU

Dr Mahesh Sharma , the Minister of State for Culture(Independent Charge), Tourism (Independent Charge) and Civil Aviation made several announcements while speaking at Raipur airport during his offi-

monuments and well-developed connectivity to boost tourism.

He also held a meeting with the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, Dr. Raman Singh, in which several issues were raised related to promotion of tourism and culture in the state.



Tourism will be used to fight terrorism and generate employment in the country. There is a need for beautification, security and cleanliness of monuments and well-developed connectivity to boost tourism

Mahesh Sharma
Minister of State
Tourism & Culture (I/C)

cial visit to Chhattisgarh. The Minister said that tourism will be used to fight terrorism and generate employment in the country. He once again emphasised the need for beautification, security and cleanliness of

Singh requested Dr Sharma to include the important historical site of Sirpur in the Buddhist circuit. He promised that the Centre will seriously look into the demand to include Sirpur in its ambitious Buddhist Circuit

Chhattisgarh CM to Tourism Minister

- ◆ Include the important historical site of Sirpur in the Buddhist circuit
- ◆ One more tourist circuit should be sanctioned to Chhattisgarh in addition to the Bastar circuit already sanctioned

project. He also assured that funds will be sanctioned for Sirpur site development, especially for the construction of a museum and said that the Rs 48 crore proposal will be sanctioned on priority for the 7 amphitheater projects in the state for which DPRs have already been sent by the state government.


The Chhattisgarh Chief Minister also requested that one more tourist circuit should be sanctioned to Chhattisgarh in addition to the Bastar circuit already sanctioned. He also proposed that an international Tribal festival should be held in Raipur. The State Tourism

and Culture Minister of Chhattisgarh, Ajay Chandrakar, was also present at the meeting.

In the Civil Aviation sector, the Chief Minister raised the issues of upgrading Raipur airport into an international airport, the issue of Bilaspur airport as well as raising Jagdalpur as green field airport to which Dr Sharma assured all possible help.

The Minister also sanctioned Swamy Vivekanand’s statue for Swamy Vivekanand airport of Raipur. Earlier Dr Sharma dedicated the third aero-bridge at the Raipur airport to the nation.

TRAVEL AGENT EDUCATION AND REWARDS PROGRAMME



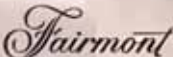
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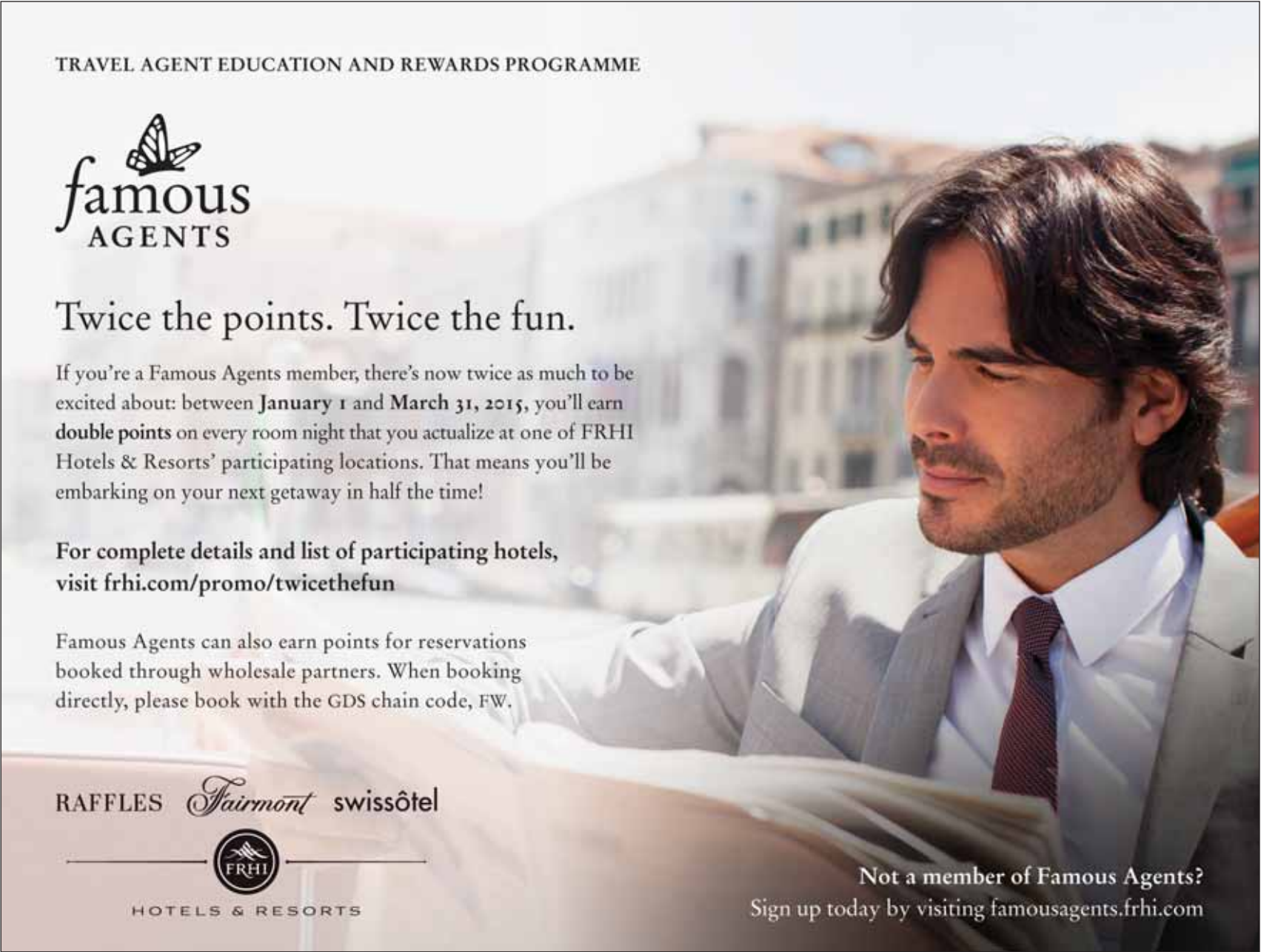
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Special trains fill cancelled flight void

Indian railways runs special trains to beat the rush and three more pilgrim special tourist trains are being planned. Chinese Railways has also identified two railway stations - Baiyyappanahalli (Bengaluru) and Bhubaneswar/New Bhubaneswar for undertaking prefeasibility studies.



TT BUREAU

Indian Railways is running premium special trains on 21 popular routes. The following special trains have been planned to run on seven new routes - Mumbai-Chennai, Pune-Karmali, Hyderabad-Mumbai, Hyderabad-Bangalore, Hyderabad-Chennai, Jaipur-Bandra Terminus and Jaipur-Ernakulam. These additional premium special trains have been planned to meet the Christmas rush as well as to fill the void created by the recent cancellation/reduction in flights.

Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), operates seven pilgrim special tourist trains from October 25-December 19 and further to this, three more pilgrim special tourist trains are planned till January 12, 2015. The new pilgrim destinations covered are Bijapur, Solapur, Badami, Melmaruvathur, Vaitheeswarankoil,

The development is envisaged at no cost to Railways by leveraging land and air space in and around the stations. Train operations would remain with the railways and only identified services would be provided and managed by private agencies. Moreover, while the stations are planned to be equipped

with modern facilities and amenities, these would cater to all classes of passengers.

It was announced in Railway Budget 2014-15, to develop at least 10 major stations of Metro Cities and important junctions to international standards on the lines of newly developed airports. Six sta-

tions, viz., Habibganj(Bhopal), Chandigarh, Bijwasan(New Delhi), Shivaji Nagar(Pune), Anand Vihar(Delhi) and Surat are entrusted to Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation Ltd.(IRSDC). Gandhinagar station has also been taken up by Rail Land Development Authority (RLDA).

All for Pilgrims

♦ Pilgrim special tourist trains were announced in Railway Budget 2014-15 with the purpose of connecting various pilgrim destinations across India

This entire information was given by the Minister of State for Railways,

Manoj Sinha, in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha. ↴



Thiruvankadu, Keelaperumpallam, Thirunallar, Alangudi, Surianarkoil, Kanjanur, Thirunageshwaram, Thingalur, Parasnath, St. Francis Xavier (Old Goa), Mecca Masjid (Hyderabad), Nanded Sahib, Nanak Jhira Gurudwara, Sri Patna Sahib, Kanchipuram etc.

Pilgrim special tourist trains were announced in Railway Budget 2014-15 with the purpose of connecting various pilgrim destinations across India.

In addition to this, two railway stations - Baiyyappanahalli (Bengaluru) and Bhubaneswar/New Bhubaneswar have also been identified for undertaking prefeasibility studies by the Chinese Railways at their cost under a Memorandum of Understanding.



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India on their minds

While most Indian airlines are struggling to keep their feet firmly on ground, international airlines that have recently added India routes to their network are telling a different story. TRAVTALK asks them how 2014 was and what are their plans for the New Year.

 HAZEL JAIN



Response from India has been very encouraging. The load factors average at about 70-80 per cent and during peak seasons can go over 90 per cent! We anticipate opening more routes connecting Malaysia and India in the next few years. We have increased frequencies to Trichy to 10x weekly and to Delhi to 8x a week. We are currently surveying other major cities in India for 2015. In 2015, we will be mounting 3x weekly flights to Visakhapatnam.

Chandran Rama Muthy
CEO of Malindo Air



India is vital in driving the carrier's growth trajectory. In the last three years, we have registered a rise in revenues from the Indian market. We saw a compounded growth of almost 20 per cent in the last three years. Air Canada is firmly committed to maintaining the momentum that has been achieved and ensuring that continuous improvement remain an integral part of our DNA. Moreover, Air India's code-sharing agreement with us gives Air Canada an edge in facilitating travel for India outbound to the US.

Gary Cross
Senior Director
(International Sales) Air Canada



The Indian market will grow tremendously. We see the need to have more communication with the market and visit more accounts. We need to inform Indians of what we are offering. The Indian market is among the top five for us. Within a year of our staff's direct contact with the Indian agencies, the market has become quicker and more efficient. Since the time our India operations have started, agents are pretty happy and satisfied with us.

Sanjay Shrivastava
Director (Global Account Management)
Hahn Air

We recently announced the addition of two flights weekly on our Singapore-Chennai route starting 4 December, 2014. We are constantly on the lookout for opportunities. There are plenty of growth opportunities in India. Singapore has observed a double-digit increase in arrivals from India and according to 2013 data from Singapore Tourism Board, India was its fifth-largest market with 6,70,000 visitors between January and September. We observe a significant percentage of our global passenger load factors coming from India.



Robert Yang
Commercial Director
Tigerair

We are constantly reviewing new routes and continuously monitoring market demand and exploring new opportunities. The potential in India is only rising higher and we look forward to playing our full part in growing the aviation business here. Year 2014 has been a good year and we are hopeful that 2015 will be the same or even better. We saw a growth in corporate travel which remains a focus area for us. Passenger demand has been strong and we have seen healthy load factors between 80-85 per cent from India.



Charlie Stewart-Cox
GM (South Asia, Middle East & Africa)
Cathay Pacific Airways

We recently launched one of the most significant routes in our five-year career with five weekly flights between Dubai and Mumbai. We will now be adding four new frequencies by March 2015 either from the current seven points that we fly to or some new airports we will be given access to. We currently have permission to land only in 11 Indian airports. So we definitely want to expand in India but are not getting permissions. The current capacity of five flights a week is hardly enough for a metropolis like Mumbai.



Sudhir Sreedharan
Senior VP, Commercial
(GCC, Subcontinent, Africa) for flydubai

Kerala only state with VoA at 2 airports

■ Kerala has become the gateway to India for holidaymakers from 43 countries who can now get Tourist Visa on Arrival (TVoA) enabled with ETA (Electronic Travel Authorisation) at the Thiruvananthapuram and Kochi international airports. Effective from November 27, the TVoA, enabled with ETA, will allow tourists to apply and pay the fee for the visa online, without having to travel to the

Indian missions in their home countries. Applicants who are approved will receive the official travel authorisation via email and they only need to present a printed copy of this to the immigration authorities upon their arrival in India.

Kerala is the only state to have two airports where the service has been introduced and the Thiruvananthapuram and Cochin air-

ports are among only nine in the country to offer this facility. Discussions are currently underway to introduce it at the Kozhikode airport as well. "This new facility will make travelling to Kerala hassle-free for citizens of many countries. We will ensure that potential visitors are aware of this advantage by intensifying our promotional campaigns there," Kerala Tourism Minister AP Anil Kumar said.

Holiday Savings Account

■ Thomas Cook (India) Ltd., in a pioneering initiative to provide an affordable holiday solution for today's travel hungry Middle India, has launched its innovative 'Holiday Savings Account' in association with IndusInd Bank. Thomas Cook India's consumer research and analytics, in partnership with Nielsen Media Research, revealed that for the rapidly growing market

of Middle India, while travel holds a strong opportunity, the upfront payment of such family holidays creates a significant barrier; further impacted by a reluctance to opt for a loan. Hence, in an attempt to offer a simple and attractive payment solution, Thomas Cook India's 'Holiday Savings Account' offers every Indian the affordability of a better holiday!



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DATE		TRAVEL	SESSION	VENUE
Monday	2 Feb 2015	Mumbai	10:00 – 15:00	The Palladium hotel
Wednesday	4 Feb 2015	Ahmedabad	10:00 – 14:00	Hotel Grand Bhagwati
Thursday	5 Feb 2015	Bangalore	10:00 – 14:00	Vivanta by Taj, MG Road
Friday	6 Feb 2015	Delhi	10:00 – 15:00	Le Meridien

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Nijhawan for Ocean Park Hong Kong

■ Nijhawan Group has been appointed by Ocean Park Hong Kong as its Sales and Marketing Representative in India. The group will focus on designing sales and marketing strategies to position Ocean Park Hong Kong as the leading edutainment destination. The sales and marketing activities include travel trade focussed initiatives to ensure achievement of revenue goals by tapping into relevant market segments.

Ankush Nijhawan, MD - Nijhawan Group, said, "We are delighted with this collaboration as India is one of Hong Kong's five new key markets. Ocean Park provides all the guests with memorable experiences that combine entertainment and education, while inspiring life-long learning and conservation advocacy."

Vivian Lee, Executive Director of Sales & Marketing at Ocean Park, said, "Since 2008, Indian guests at Ocean Park have more than tripled, making the country a top-three source market, excluding China. As Ocean Park's representative, Nijhawan Group will identify and work with high potential travel agents and tour operators to ensure Ocean Park is incorporated into the FITs (frequent individual travellers), group and MICE itineraries."

TAAI Western India EDW in Bhutan

About 50 TAAI members from Mumbai have returned from an Educational Destination Workshops that were held in Bhutan recently. On the cards for the association is the AGM in Mumbai and a new destination for its convention.



TT BUREAU

The Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) Western Region recently concluded the educational trip to Bhutan under its Educational Destination Workshop (EDW) programme



Sampat Damani
Chairman of TAAI
Western India Chapter

for 50 of its agent members from Mumbai. The tour was held from December 18-21, 2014 and was in collaboration with Druk Air, Sharaf Travels that is the GSA for the airline and Bhutan Bookings along with the Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB).



Sampat Damani, Chairman of TAAI Western India Chapter, said, "The EDW in Bhutan was very successful. The group was a good mix of agents who do corporate, leisure, MICE and even Bollywood movements. Forty-seven agents participated as three agents dropped out in the end. The agents interacted with officials from TCB and the airline."

He added that the chapter is discussing a few more destinations for more such workshops. "While in Bhutan, the group casually discussed their inclination to explore destinations like

TAAI AGM in Mumbai on Dec 30

TAAI will conduct its statutory AGM in Mumbai on December 30, 2014 at Hotel Orchid, revealed Jay Bhatia, TAAI's Chairman of Tourism Council. "We will be discussing plans for our annual convention and other accounting details. We had to cancel Jaipur as our proposed venue for the convention since the airport is undergoing major repairs and is not functioning normally at the moment. We have not finalised on any destination for it yet but will be discussing the details and logistics during the AGM," he added.



Jay Bhatia
TAAI's Chairman
of Tourism Council

Vietnam, Cambodia, Oman, Greece and even Portugal

amongst each other. We will explore these destinations

and accordingly start a dialogue with the concerned tourism board," Damani added.

When asked whether there were any new plans that the association will roll out for its chapter members, Damani said that they were in discussion and will be firmed up and announced during their next chapter meeting in mid-February next year. "We have one or two projects in the pipeline but they will be announced only in February since our members will be busy with the various trade events till then," he added.

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One Accor One Sales Meet 2014



One Accor One Sales Annual meet organised recently was rally of 210 Accorriors from all the Accor India properties, spread across 15 cities. The event was hosted by Novotel Hyderabad Airport and Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre in a grand style. The 2-day meet comprised a series of events starting with team building exercises, the OSOS meet, a suave black tie sit-down cocktail dinner, meeting and felicitating some of our key partners and the sales awards.

Maharashtra International Travel Mart

■ Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) is going to organise the first edition of Maharashtra International Travel Mart from February 26-28, 2015 at Bombay Convention & Exhibition Centre, Goregaon in Mumbai. The Mart is set on a B2B platform with over 250 registered buyers and media

from over 30 countries exploring business opportunities for discerning travel and tourism products.

Valsa R Nair Singh, IAS, Secretary, Tourism and Culture, Govt. of Maharashtra said, "Maharashtra is home to the largest inventory of tourism products that the country has to offer with five UNESCO

World Heritage Sites, over 900 caves, 350 forts with splendid wildlife and world-class beaches to adorn. 'Maharashtra International Travel Mart', being held for the first time, will provide the impetus to the inbound travel and tourism industry and would enhance the marketing efforts of Maharashtra Tourism.

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Adria takes off in India

From January 15, there will be daily flights from New Delhi to Ljubljana with a stopover in Frankfurt. TRAVTALK gives details on the new route.



MEGHA PAUL

Announcing its foray into the Indian market, Slovenian national airline Adria Airways will now have daily flights from Delhi to its capital city, Ljubljana from January next year. The flight is the result of the codeshare pact signed between Adria Airways and Air India last year.

Talking about the flight frequency and capacity within India, **Mark Anzur**, CEO, Adria Airways said, "We are hopeful the air traffic between both countries will witness an increase with the new route, thus strengthening our tourism ties. The airline will have daily afternoon flights from New Delhi to Ljubljana with a stopover in Frankfurt. Air India is the operating carrier with its Dreamliner 787 for New Delhi to Frankfurt and Adria will be the carrier from Frankfurt to Ljubljana."

Anzur was in Delhi recently to attend the first-ever Star Alliance Chief Executive Board Meeting (CEB) held in India.



Mark Anzur
CEO
Adria Airways

We are hopeful the air traffic between both countries will witness an increase with the new route

According to Anzur, Slovenia unfortunately has minimal presence in India currently. "We have lost some of our traditional markets due to the euro zone crisis.

Entering India is thus, a significant strategic move to build new key markets. Our main target here will be to increase the business traffic to Slovenia via the new route. We are targeting the MICE and leisure segment from India in a big way."

Air India, Aerodrom Ljubljana and Adria had previously signed an MoU in June 2012 to forge greater cooperation and improve traffic between the two countries, clearing the way for the codeshare agreement last year. Adria has also appointed Dex Aviation as its general sales agent for India to build its presence in the Indian market.

Delhi to Ljubljana

- ◆ Adria Airways will now have daily flights from Delhi to its capital city, Ljubljana from January next year.
- ◆ The flight is the result of the codeshare pact signed between Adria Airways and Air India last year.

PATA farewell to its chairman



PATA India Executive Committee members recently organised a warm farewell for Parvez Dewan, Former Tourism Secretary, Ministry of Tourism. Dr Lalit K Panwar, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism was also present on the occasion.

Wooing with wine & golf

South African Airways trains its focus on promoting not just the country's wines and golf courses in India but also its safety.



HAZEL JAIN

Even though 2014 wasn't as expected in terms of load factors for various reasons, South African Airways isn't wasting any time mulling over it. The airline, along with South African Tourism, is already getting into the thick of it to ensure that 2015 reflects better numbers, and more importantly, increased confidence in the destination.

Sajid Khan, Country Manager – India for South African Airways, says, "Year 2014 wasn't as expected. There were two reasons for this: during the high season, we had delays in visas. That caused a lot of corrosion of the market share. Then came ebola and that has really caused us a lot of damage. This was just a matter of mindset because the distance between West Africa and South Africa is as large as Hong Kong and Dubai."

The airline continues to educate the passengers and agents on the virus. "Most



Sajid Khan
Country Manager – India for South African Airways

Our two main focus areas are our wines and golfing. We will therefore do a wine-tasting event in January in Mumbai

agents know it is safe. It ultimately boils down to the confidence passengers have in South Africa's government in securing the borders. India,

meanwhile, has shown amazing efficiency and control in terms of managing the airport border protection. We have had a lot of discussions and circulars from DGCA and I am very impressed with the way the DGCA and the ministry has handled this," Khan admitted.

Plans for 2015

The airline is expected to get new large-body aircraft by April 2015. However, it is not looking at adding any routes beyond Mumbai as of now. "Our main focus is to build the confidence in the market again. I want to gain back the healthy market share we have always enjoyed. That is why we have planned a fam for six to seven agents to South Africa in February or March," Khan reveals.

The airline has also mapped out a marketing plan for 2015 along with South African Tourism that it will put into action from April 2015. "Our two main focus areas are our wines and golfing. We will

Contd. on page 20 ►

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33% passenger increase for AI

During the first-ever Star Alliance Chief Executive Board (CEB) meeting held in India, Rohit Nandan, CMD, Air India, says the airline will have Code Share Agreements with most Star Alliance members by March.

TT BUREAU

“We are looking at closer interaction with member airlines and have signed a code share agreement with Air Canada besides signing MOUs with Avianca and EVA



Rohit Nandan
CMD
Air India

We are looking at closer interaction with member airlines and have signed a code share agreement with Air Canada besides signing MoUs with Avianca and EVA Air recently

through Delhi or Mumbai but also at other airports such as London or Newark. Frequent Flyers are also taking advantage of the Alliance benefits, with over 80,000 having earned miles while flying on Air India since July and more than 20,000 Air India Flying Returns FFP members having miles credited for flights on other Star Alliance member carriers. With its 99-strong fleet, a mix of



B787 Dreamliners, B777s, A330s and the A320 family, it is one of the youngest in the world. A key boost to the brand comes from the comfort that these aircraft offer.

Air India introduced its Mobile Application on October 21, 2014 along with the launch of its Twitter handle (@airindian) in the micro-blogging social media site. This is over

and above the Facebook account that has been so popular with the travelling fraternity. Air India sees further opportunities to increase transfer traffic in Delhi and Mumbai and is working with Star Alliance, the member carriers and the airport operators to provide more connecting flights and ease the transfer process at the subcontinent’s main hubs.

Air recently. By March we aim at having code share agreements with most Star Alliance member airlines,” said **Rohit Nandan**, CMD, Air India. He was speaking during the first-ever Star Alliance Chief Executive Board (CEB) meeting held in India. He stressed upon the fact that Air India has been vastly improving its performance parameters in all the areas by constantly upgrading its service standards in every area of its operation. Air India has witnessed an increase of 33% in the number of passengers transferring between Air India and other Star Alliance member carriers, mainly

Via Social Media

- ◆ Air India introduced its Mobile Application on October 21, 2014 along with the launch of its Twitter handle (@airindian) in the micro-blogging social media site.
- ◆ This is over and above the Facebook account that has been so popular with the travelling fraternity.

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Be in touch with your customer

At WTM 2014, Paul Richer, Senior Partner, Genesys, discusses a customer's 'journey mapping' and how to conduct more effective business with higher customer loyalty. **TRAUTALK** gets you the excerpts from his session at WTM.

I was running my seminar programme at WTM and had speakers covering the subjects of mobile, search engines, big data and social media.

Even though these are quite disparate subjects, a common theme kept emerging. This was the need to understand your business's touch-points with your customers.

We are all familiar with the fact that customers are now interacting with us over many different devices. In the early morning bus queue they might be researching their next holidays on their mobile devices. This research might continue on the company PC during the lunch break or, if you have a retail presence, customers might call into your store. In the evening, customer might be interacting with your business using a tablet or a laptop.

As I have written before, we need an omni-channel approach to our customers. However, they are touching our

businesses, they need to know that these interactions are cohesive and fluent. Pricing and information offered need to be consistent across all channels. The flipside is that we need to have a single view of our customers, recognising them regardless of the devices they are using.

So what can you do to ensure you are meeting your customers' expectations at every point in your relationship?

A popular way to address this question is to create a customer journey map (CJM). This aims to map out the total customer experience across all touchpoints between the customer and the organisation, starting with initial contact, through purchasing, in-trip & post-trip, and hopefully onto renewal & purchase.

The CJM maps the experience that:

◆ you want to provide to the customer.

◆ the customer would like to receive.

Examining these 'moments of truth' will identify gaps between the experience the customer desires and the one actually received. It is these moments of truth that give the customer an opportunity to form (or change) his/her impression about your business.

How do you go about customer journey mapping? If you type 'customer journey mapping' into Google Images you will see that there are many, different types of map you could use. Have a look at some of them and decide which might be useful to you. You will need to list out all the elements of the customer journey and the different ways in which customers could be interacting with you at that point, whether it is face to face, telephone, tablet and so on.

As mentioned, the objective is to identify the gaps

between what your customers are expecting and what is actually happening. How do you do this? Well, how about talking to your customers, perhaps inviting them to a get together or speaking with them on the telephone. This will take a good deal of time and energy but the reward is a more effective business with higher customer loyalty. That's got to be worth the effort, hasn't it?



(The author, Paul Richer is a travel technology consultant and senior partner at Genesys. He was running my Genesys Sessions seminar programme at WTM this year)

Luxury amidst wilderness

Situated in Jamtara village near Pench National Park, Jamtara Wilderness Camp is a 12-room luxury tented property. **TRAUTALK** gets in a conversation with Amit Sankhala, Director, Jamtara Wilderness Camp, to know more about this luxury camp!



ANUPRIYA BISHNOI

What is Jamtara all about?

In the 80s, hardly anyone thought of going to MP for wilderness experiences. Infrastructure was limited and it took hours to get there even from a railway station. But that was the charm of going to true wilderness. No other vehicle in sight and one could enjoy their wildlife sightings in peace and observe animal behaviour. Today, it is hard to find this kind of exclusivity. Jamtara is a very quiet gate of Pench National

The idea of some exclusivity, which is abundant in Africa is what we aimed to deliver. But above, the community partnership was even more important

Amit Sankhala
Director
Jamtara Wilderness Camp



Africa is what we aimed to deliver. But above, the community partnership was even more important. The villages we are working with, have never seen outsiders before. They hardly have access to basic need like electricity. Almost 90% of the villages have farmers and their major problem is - wildlife feeding on their crops. Hence they sleep on the 'machaan' all night to chase away wildlife. We have been successful in seeing sloth bears, leopard, spotted deer, wild boards and some rare nocturnal mammals.

What is the clientele that you are dealing with?

Our clients are the travellers that want a true wilderness experience with the luxuries of modern day. Wildlife monitoring through camera traps, star beds, buffer walks, etc are all elements that allows you to complete your experience. ↴

Park with only 1 vehicle entering in a month. Although tiger sighting is a highlight, but that is not our focus. Instead, it is to deliver a true wilderness experience with a motive of learning and observing.

How did you conceptualise this idea and how is the Indian market fit for such luxury camps?

We wanted to have the least impact on the land, so we don't become a concrete structure. For many years now, I have taken a trip to Africa almost yearly. I have seen various concepts from Kenya to Namibia, South Africa to Uganda. I wanted to develop a very similar model and feel for the place. The idea of some exclusivity, which is abundant in

Challenges

◆ The villages we are working with, have never seen outsiders before

◆ They hardly have access to basic need like electricity. Almost 90% of the villages have farmers and their major problem is - wildlife feeding on their crops

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3rd party management realm

While announcing its flagship property in Mumbai's prime location of Lower Parel, Premier Inn – also revealed its plan to branch out to third-party management contracts.



HAZEL JAIN

Traditionally operating as an asset-heavy hotel chain based in UK, Premier Inn has revealed that it will now branch out to signing third party management contracts while continuing to invest its own equity in key locations. Its first management contract was signed in Dubai in mid-2014 and its second property under such an agreement will be in India in Chennai.



Aly Shariff
Senior VP (Operations)
for Asia at Premier Inn



David Vely
Senior VP (Development), for Premier
Inn Middle East, Africa and Asia

Asset right model

This will be followed by one in Mumbai, which will be its second property under management contract in India. Announcing this news, **Aly Shariff**, Senior VP (Operations) for Asia at Premier Inn, said, "This will be a 350-room hotel in partnership with the Kamala Group. It will be located in Lower Parel and will be ready for operations by 2018. This will be our flagship property in India catering to the mid-scale market segment." The property 'Premier Inn Mumbai Worli' will be a mixed-use project and will be the "second-largest Premier Inn outside of UK," Shariff said. The hotel chain already has two other Premier Inns in Anjuna (Goa) and in Chennai under construction.

David Vely, Senior VP (Development), for Premier Inn Middle East, Africa and Asia, was also present for the announcement. Elaborating on the change of strategy that now includes taking up management contracts, he said, "Our development model is to be 'asset right'. We will continue investing in India but we are now also open to third-party management contracts. It means that we will make selective investment of our own capital to establish brand presence while accelerating expansion through management agreements – not in UK but in international markets."

He added that expansion in India will now be mainly through management contracts but not limited to it. Explaining why Premier Inn prefers owning its properties, Vely said, "Most brands are not investors; they only manage properties, even in their own country. But we own and lease all our properties. We felt that it was the right way to start international development. When we enter a new market it makes sense to invest first, show our commitment to the market as well as our existing and potential partners. But most of all, owning the property gives us freedom to adjust to the dynamics of the market."

Committed to India

The India market has a lot of potential for The Address Hotels and Resorts. **TRAVTALK** talks to senior officers of The Address to know why the country is important for the group.



SAMAPTI DAS

Some of the biggest things that have come out of India are the MICE groups. Lately, there has been

Marketing, The Address Hotels & Resorts said, "It has always been important for us to focus on the India market. Based on that, we had taken Nijhawan

Bollywood also comes in. She said, "Indians who travel in one group want to stay in one hotel and so, we have recently taken up a project to provide up to 100 rooms in one hotel. It is a big chunk of our inventory for the Indian business group."



Seema Pande
Group Director of Sales and Marketing,
The Address Hotels & Resorts



Vincent Mercurio
General Manager,
The Address Dubai Mall

a huge growth in it and The Address Group have started giving more availability of rooms at The Address Dubai Mall as Indians love to shop after meetings and conferences.

Seema Pande, Group Director of Sales and

Group as the representative arm in India and they have been helping us for the past four years. They helped us establish business in India and we have seen a lot of growth coming in." Pande said that the families and group travellers from India love visiting Downtown Dubai and a lot of

Vincent Mercurio, General Manager, The Address Dubai Mall said, "The Indian market has been strong for us and we have continuously been represented here by The Address Hotels and Resorts brand coming to all major cities. We have just turned five years old this year. Towards the end of 2015 or the beginning of 2016 will be the launch of our first new Address Boulevard."

Tapping India

♦ The Address Group have started giving more availability of rooms at The Address Dubai Mall as Indians love to shop after meetings and conferences

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Visit Madhya Pradesh-Year 2016

The Madhya Pradesh state government has declared 2016 as the Year of Tourism. Blessed with beautiful temples, rich historical sites, pristine nature and wildlife, Madhya Pradesh has been successfully wooing tourists. TRAVTALK spoke to Raghwendra Kumar Singh, Managing Director, Madhya Pradesh Tourism, to know more...

 DEEPA SETHI

What is being done to improve tourism to MP?

We are focussing primarily on tourism-related infrastructure. We are also working on ways and means to get a good chunk of private investment in this sector in Madhya Pradesh. We believe that there has to be good public sector funding from the government. Simultaneously there has to be

good private sector investment also. Recently, we had the Global Investors Summit in Indore, which was a huge success. To encourage investment, our land allotment policy has been made simpler, aggressive and investor-friendly. Additionally, we have also revised our tourism policy, and I can vouch that it is probably one of the best in the entire country. Secondly, we are inviting private parties investing in hotels, transportation, etc.

Is MP concentrating on the 'Swachh Bharat' campaign?

Naturally. Madhya Pradesh has been popularising the campaign in a big way. Our Honourable Chief Minister has decided that for the entire year, we'll work on a Clean Madhya Pradesh/ Clean India campaign. So, we will be doing a lot of work in this area.

Are there any plans for the State to tie up with the Railways to bring in more tourists, especially to the smaller towns?

The prime issue with the Railways, I believe, is to have better connectivity to places of tourist interest, like Khajuraho, Kanha, Bandhavgarh, etc. Bhopal has great connectivity; in fact, it falls in the centre when travelling from North India to South India or vice versa. But connectivity still remains a big issue, so we are working to improve both domestic and international tourism into the state.

The Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister, when visiting Dubai recently, met airlines to

connect Dubai directly with Bhopal. He has spoken to Sri Lanka also to get their flights directly from Colombo to improve tourism numbers. We are also working on a philosophy of intra-state air connectivity. Today we are in the stage of finalisation of a new tender for having intra-state air connectivity, as well as inter-state air connectivity, which will give a big boost to tourists travelling in the state.

wildlife. The MP state government has declared 2016 as the Year of Tourism. We will have a big event and that is a priority for us, especially since the government has announced that people will come from across the world. So, I would like to invite people from all over the world for this event.

Is MP concentrating on Nature and Adventure Tourism?

Madhya Pradesh is known for its tiger reserves... Bandhavgarh, Kanha, Panna and we have spaces with big waterbodies, which we are developing in a big way. In a short time, you will hear about waterbound tourism-related activities in MP. There are religious and heritage sites, wildlife safari camps, river rafting and other adventure activities in MP. We have also started luxury and semi-luxury buses on about 17 routes and there will be about 40 luxury coaches plying between these popular places.



The MP state government has declared 2016 as the Year of Tourism. We will have a big event and that is a priority for us, especially since the government has announced that people will come from across the world. So, I would like to invite everyone for this event.

Raghwendra Kumar Singh
Managing Director
Madhya Pradesh Tourism

Which are the top three places you would recommend to visit in MP?

I would suggest travelling through the state, because there is so much to see and experience, whether it is temples, historical sites or nature and



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SAA calls wine lovers & golfers

►Contd. from page 14

therefore do a wine-tasting event in January in Mumbai. For golfing we have tied up with Bombay Presidency Golf Club in Chembur where we have sponsored a tee-off. We want to promote the destination in that community and will be taking a group of golfers to South Africa as well," Khan said.

This is part of its marketing plan and is currently working to make a package for them. Khan adds, "Currently, serious golfers make their own packages. They are CEOs and senior executives and they take off whenever they want. This is where we want to enter and show them what we have to offer. In Delhi, we will sponsor the Expat Golf Cup that is held in October and is supported by the High Commission."

He feels that the Indian aviation industry is set to boom. "The biggest deterrent so far was the ATF which has come down. New airlines are joining and the government is showing a lot of growth prospects. I don't see why we should not do well. The demand is there and people are ready to pay," he believes.

Hilton aims to touch 18 by 2015

The group has opened four hotels, one each in Kerala and Jaipur and two in Bengaluru, in the country in the past eight months and plans to take the total number of the hotels to 18 by the end of 2015. TRAVTALK reports on more developments.

MEGHA PAUL

India is a key strategic growth market for the Hilton group. According to **Dominic Sherry**, Head of Sales- Asia Pacific, Hilton Worldwide, the group plans to expand the network of its brand hotels in the country by the end of next year.

"India is a continuously growing and evolving market and thus, offers tremendous opportunities. The metropolitan cities have the capacity to absorb a larger inventory and aggressive economic growth in other regions and cities make these markets even more important. Hence, we are increasing footprint through multi-brand and multiple-partner strategy in India," Sherry said. Sherry, who was in India recently for the first Hilton showcase in the country, also informed that the group's first luxury brand hotel -Conrad-- will come up in Pune next year. The group has opened four hotels, one each in Kerala and Jaipur and two in Bengaluru, in the country in the



Dominic Sherry
Head of Sales- Asia Pacific
Hilton Worldwide

We are increasing footprint through multi-brand and multiple-partner strategy in India

past eight months and plans to take the total number of the hotels to 18 by the end of 2015, he revealed.



Daniel Welk
Vice President, Operations-India
Hilton Worldwide

The company is banking heavily on driving demand into its hotels on the back of its loyalty programme

Daniel Welk, Vice President, Operations-India, Hilton Worldwide said the company will push its mid-market



Pariva Rustagi
Regional Director of Sales- India
Hilton Worldwide

For the first time, the Hilton Showcase was hosted in India in key markets in Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai

brands, including Hampton and Hilton Garden Inn in the country, given the paucity of supply in the particular segment. "The

company is also banking heavily on driving demand into its hotels on the back of its loyalty programme and global distribution network," he added.

Talking about the first Hilton showcase in India, **Pariva Rustagi**, Regional Director of Sales- India, Hilton Worldwide informed, "For the first time, the Hilton Showcase was hosted in India in key source markets in Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai. About 85 hotels were represented by 13 international delegates. Also, 13 hotels from Hilton's portfolio in India were also present.

Eyes on India

- ◆ The group plans to expand the network of its brand hotels in the country by the end of next year
- ◆ India is a continuously growing and evolving market and thus, offers tremendous opportunities



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Tapping Indian market

Whether it's connectivity or lack of information, Ton Sinh Thanh, Ambassador to India, Nepal & Bhutan, S.R. of Vietnam, tells TRAVTALK, how both countries can work together to curb all ways to increase tourism from India to Vietnam.

 SAMAPTI DAS

Vietnam recently organised a roadshow in India in New Delhi for the first time. The occasion coincided with the celebration of Vietnam's 69th National Day. On the occasion, various tourist destinations including MICE, leisure and honeymoon destinations were showcased. Vietnam is a country with a mix of edgy urban with natural rural. One can find every aspect of nature in this country, from forest to sea and all kinds of architecture, from ancient to modern. The country is also a perfect destination for honeymooners and newly married couples.

Ton Sinh Thanh, Ambassador to India, Nepal & Bhutan, S.R. of Vietnam said, "In terms of connectivity, we highly appreciate the recent opening of direct flights by Jet

Airways from New Delhi to Ho Chi Minh City.

We hope that the connectivity could be further enhanced when Vietnam Airlines and Vietjet Air will open direct flights from Vietnam to India early next year."

Thanh informed that more roadshows are being planned in every quarter in different Indian states and cities. The next destinations will be Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Chennai. "Only about 30,000 Indian tourists visited Vietnam last year. This is a surprisingly low number, especially if we compare it to over 1 million of Indian tourists to Thailand in

2013, over 900,000 to Singapore and 200,000 to Indonesia, in the same period. We think the lack of information and connectivity is to be blamed," Thanh added.

He also mentioned that it is necessary for the Vietnamese and Indian tour operators to tap the huge potentials for tourism cooperation between Vietnam and India which will not only bring the benefits to the tour operators but also contribute in strengthening the people to people linkage and traditional friendship between the two countries.

More Roadshows

◆ More roadshows are being planned in every quarter in different Indian states and cities. The next destinations will be Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Chennai

Neptune Foundation Charity Polo match



Neptune Foundation hosted a Polo Match on December 21, 2014 at Jaipur Polo Ground, New Delhi. This was the 5th edition of the annual event. The chief guest for the noble event was Amit Burman, Vice Chairman – Dabur with Soonthorn Chaiyindeepum, Minister and Deputy Chief of Mission, Royal Thai Embassy. Other important guests who attended the match were Yuvraj Vikramaditya Singh, Mirjana Oberoi & many others

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Jasper and Banff in Canada calling

Jasper is one of the most charming picturesque mountain towns, most welcoming to visitors who want to experience its myriad attractions, and witness a fine balance between history and development. The other most rewarding experiences in Canada is to traverse the Icefields Parkway, which is one of Canada's national treasures. A real mountain experience, Banff offers vacationers preserved wilderness, abundant wildlife, facilities and options for adventure, exploration and relaxation.



HARSHAL ASHAR FROM CANADA

Jasper Wonderful by Nature

Jasper boasts the distinction of being a part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site, nestled into the largest most northerly Canadian Rocky Mountain National Park. Its extraordinary sites include glaciers, lakes, rivers, abundant and diverse wildlife, waterfalls, canyons and expanse of evergreen forests.

Attractions Maligne Valley Tour

The tour on the Maligne Valley provides a unique opportunity to witness the wildlife which includes grizzly

guided aerial ropeway in the Canadian Rockies. It is once in a lifetime experience enjoyed by the whole family and once you reach the top the views of the famous Lakes, landmarks and Mountain Ranges are absolutely breathtaking.

Athabasca Falls

The Rocky Mountains have the Athabasca Falls which are the most powerful falls, carrying both sand and rock, the walls have in fact been potholed and smoothed by this rushing water, due to the impact of these thundering falls, which are very great. These thundering falls rushing through a narrow gorge make for an overwhelming sight.

above the Sunwapta Valley which is reached by an interpretive interactive walkway.

Activities

Jasper offers a plethora of activities to be savoured and enjoyed by the visitors like riding, rafting, canoeing, hiking and cycling trails, skiing, snowboarding etc.

Riding:-Jasper Park Riding Stables

This activity can be enjoyed by all whether novice or horseback riding veterans. The well-trained experienced and able horses along with knowledgeable guides, lead you through spectacular natural beauty.



and black bear, mule, deer, caribou, wolves and mountain sheep present in the area, especially during the summer months. The tour also gives you a view of the famous glacially fed lakes known as the Medicine Lake whom the aboriginals named as such because of its magical powers, believing that certain spirits inhabit the lake and the Maligne Lake, which gets its name from the French word 'malignant' or wicked.

Jasper Skytram

The Jasper skytram is an aerial mode of transportation, into the Jasper National Parks alpine tundra, which affords a spectacular view of mountain ranges, lakes and rivers like the Athabasca, which is Alberta's longest river, along with scenic views of the town site of Jasper.

This captivating ride in the aerial tramway is the longest and highest only

Sunwapta Falls

The Sunwapta or the 'turbulent river' describes falls which abruptly change course and plunges into a cloud of spray into a deep canyon.

Glacier Explorer Tour

One of the highlights and enjoyable attractions of Jasper is the Glacier Explorer Tour, which is one of the largest accumulations of Ice South of the Arctic Circle. This vast expanse of Icefield is ringed by 11 of the Rockies highest peaks. This outlet feeds glaciers rivers and oceans.

Glacier Skywalk

A Birds eye view of the Sunwapta Valley is offered from the Rockies most exciting new attraction. This thrilling experience which has enthralled visitors since May 2014, has an aweinspiring glass floored observation platform suspended 280 metres (918 ft)



Rafting:-Jasper Raft Tours

This fun-filled adventure activity takes you down 16 km of the Athabasca River, in specially designed safe and comfortable rafts. This activity perfect for a first time rafter, gives you the chance to be introduced to Jaspers interesting history and relevant geographical facts during the ride by a National Park Licensed Guide.

Places of Accommodation The Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge

One of the leading lodge experiences in the world, and a year round destination of choice having 446 rooms on 903 acres, in the Canadian Rockies.

Glacier View Inn

With 32 large guest rooms, built with environment



sensitive design, fully furnished featuring all expected amenities.

Restaurants & cuisine

Jasper Best Western Inn and Suites

Popular with the locals, fine casual dining in this atrium highlighted dining room, with its fireside ambience and warm hospitality and friendly service provides the best in Canadian Cuisine.

Papa Georges Restaurant and Wine Bar:

A truly Canadian experience, since 1925, Papa George focuses on authentic Canadian Cuisine.

Sunwapta Falls Rocky Mountain Lodge

The restaurant offers the same spectacular service, synonymous to the personalised award winning hotel with a regionally inspired menu.

The Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge-Cavells Dining Room

International Cuisine from using local farm fresh ingredients from the onsite Herb Garden and Green House, the Rooftop Honey Bees and Twin Meadows Farm.

Glacier View Inn

Shopping :- Jaspers long main street Connaught Drive and one block west at Patricia Street which is gaining fame as the town's boutique area, as well as The Fairmont Jasper Park Lodges indoor arcade a destination in itself. Charmed by Jaspers wildlife and wilderness, visitors would like to take home tangible memories of the same.

Wildlife: It is home to a large number of animals and abundant wildlife, both. There are 20 species of small mammals ranging in size from the tiny pygmy shrew to the beaver.



Breathtaking views in the lap of nature

Banff Where Nature Rules

A real mountain experience, Banff offers vacationers preserved wilderness, abundant wildlife, facilities and options for adventure, exploration and relaxation. Banff National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Destination, with its myriad lakes, rivers, wildflowers, glaciers and grass as well as rugged mountain peaks, jutting into the vast expanse of skies.

Attractions:

The Brewster Explore Rockies Tour:- Enjoy a delightful sightseeing Tour of The Canadian Rockies, which would include spectacular and breathtaking views of Banff.

The Banff Gondola:-

Banff gives you the option of the ride on the BANFF Gondola at Sulphur Mountain. The carriages are extremely secure and are glass enclosed offering panoramic views all around town. This thoroughly enjoyable eight minute ride, transports visitors to an obser-

experiences, a part of it known as the Montane, which provides a critical habitat for wildlife like cougars, wolves and bears. The staggering cliffs and swamp provide a glimpse of wildlife inhabiting this area.

The Johnston Canyon will offer you a photo opportunity and a hike to the lower falls, the sound of the water rushing and the breeze provides an enjoyable walk along the Canyon.

The Lake Louise Gondola and Interpretative Centre:-

The choice to ride up in an automatic chairlift or a fully enclosed Gondola is yours. Take hikes to the summit of Mt Whitehorn; or enjoy short leisurely walks as per your inclination.

The Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise:-

Ringed by soaring mountain peaks, glaciers and turquoise lake, which gets its emerald hue from the melting glacier, this hotel is recognised universally

Ferrata, biking, boat tours, fishing, golf, helicopter tours, river rafting, skiing etc.

Canoeing:- The Banff Canoe Club offers you the opportunity to experience a leisurely and peaceful way to explore the Banff National Park through a Voyageur Canoe Ride.

Places of accommodation:-

The Inns of Banff:-

Provide a very comfortable stay, centrally located and can offer amenities like roof top hot pool, restaurants to

and savouries accompaniments to the same.

Masala Banff:-

This is a restaurant serving authentic Indian food, which has total vegetarian options along with meat and seafood dishes. This 'little piece of India' is very popular with locals as well as visitors alike, has lunch and dinner services and buffet options.

The Maple Leaf Grille

The Wild Bills Legendary Saloon

The Meatball Pizza

Shopping: Both Banff and Lake Louise have vendors to help you choose from a perfect souvenir from a boutique shop or a piece of art from a first class gallery. There is an assortment of shops in this mountain town, which will help you take back something special of your memorable stay here.

Wildlife: The park is home to a wide variety of wildlife like the Grizzly and Black Bears, deer, elk and big horn sheep, coyotes and a wide variety of interesting birds. Pikas, marmots,



vation area, where there are choices like enjoying a lunch at the Summit Restaurant or the Panorama Restaurant. There are hiking options.

The Banff Lake Cruise:-

The Lake Minnewanka, the longest lake at the Banff National Park, permitting public motorized boating, gives you the chance to enjoy a breathtaking scenic cruise.

The Bow Valley Parkway:-

The natural and historic Bow Valley Parkway is one of the most heritage

for responsible tourism and progressive environmental stewardship.

Moraine Lake:-

The Moraine Lake dwarfed in comparison to Lake Louise is nonetheless iconic and as scenic if not more than its nearby neighbour. A glacially fed lake, its situation being amongst the valley of the ten peaks, it makes for an outstanding picturesque view.

Activities:-

You can enjoy a plethora of activities at Banff too like Banff's only via

dine in, with lovely hiking trails in its area, and spectacular mountain views all around the same.

Restaurants & Cuisine

The Lake Louise Railway Station and Restaurant :-

One of the oldest buildings in Lake Louise Alberta, is a not to be missed experience whether just a passerby or you staying for a while. The station still awaits the return of its passenger train service; this piece of history has been carefully restored and upgraded.

The Fairmont Banff Springs

Afternoon tea could be experienced here in the finest of ambiances, surrounded by stunning jaw dropping views of mountains and lakes. The high tea would be a grand affair, enjoyed at the Upper Rundle Lounge with a wide array and selection of teas from all over as well as unusual delicious snacks

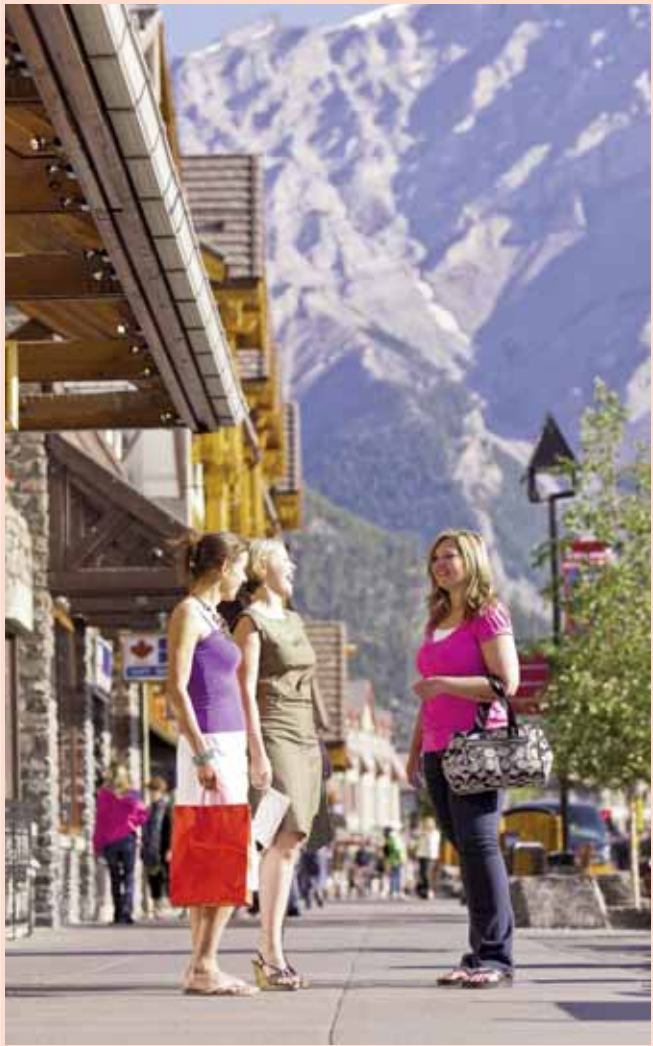
A fun western style Saloon experience.

Nourish Bistro

Here you would enjoy a tapas style service with the inclusion of dishes, intended for a unique tasting experience. A variety of sweet and savory snacks with the concept of sharing is kept in mind

marten and porcupines also abound in the area. All information on wildlife is also available at the Parks Information Centre.

Nightlife: Banff offers its visitors nightlife like bars, nightclubs live music, great concerts, karaoke, dancing and big screen, TVs for viewing pleasure of favourite sports etc.



2015: The game changer

► Contd. from page 6



Weekend trips, corporate team-building trips, incentives, conferences and annual conventions will facilitate the growth in domestic tourism. The trend towards more FITs and ad-hoc groups will continue. We will also see immense growth from the inbound segment, with the new introduction of the online visas. There has been an increase in room inventory with a number of international hotel chains and brands entering the country as well.

Sunil C Gupta
Director, Travel Bureau

At Cleartrip, we've seen an interesting trend around Advance Purchase Patterns, for travel in December. The volume of customers who have booked more than 40-day out has nearly doubled this year. In our view, this is clearly reflective of the impact the numerous Airline Flash Sales over the last couple of months, have had on buying behavior and this will continue. Again, Mobile played a great contributor to Advance Purchases. Cleartrip has seen almost 50 per cent of bookings for year-end travel come from Smartphones.

Subramanya Sharma
Chief Marketing Officer, Cleartrip



We expect the domestic sector to grow further as short weekend trips become a trend amongst Indian families. Today, each of the metro cities has at least 15 destinations that can be identified as popular weekend get-aways. With the new Government's thrust on religious tourism, we are bullish on our pilgrim tours which are a key segment for us. We continue to tap the tier II and III markets through our franchise model, which has been receiving an encouraging response from aspiring entrepreneurs. We are marketing our international holiday packages aggressively to promote popular as well as offbeat foreign destinations.

Neelu Singh
COO, Ezeego1.com



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Zoe Chan
Head of PR, Asia Pacific, Hotels.com



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New meaning to exotic tropical getaway

Offering a perfect blend of luxury and comfort, Adaaran Resorts in the Maldives presents unparalleled luxury with a touch of tradition. Nestled away in blissful seclusion, at each Maldives resort possesses a unique set of defining characteristics attracting guests from all over the world.



TT BUREAU

According to **Althaf Mohamed Ali**, Vice President-Sales & Marketing, Aitken Spence Hotel Managements, there has been an evolution of the hospitality industry in Maldives. Throwing light on the changing hospitality landscape of the region, he says, "Maldives has seen a substantial growth in the premium all-inclusive holiday concept, which is similar to that has been made popular in the Caribbean region." Throwing light on Adaaran Resorts and how it has helped in the development of the segment in the region, he adds, "Adaaran Resorts has been one of the pioneers in introducing this concept to the Maldives, which affords a traveller the possibility to plan their

teristics attracting guests from all over the world. Featuring plush accommodation in the lap of paradise, our efforts are focused on providing guests a holiday to be treasured. The portfolio is sub categorised into 'Club' for the budget traveller, 'Select' for the up-market traveller and families and 'Prestige' for the premium traveller."

Promoting concept of twin holiday experiences at Meedhupparu & Hudhuranfushi resorts, he points out, "The resorts Meedhupparu and Hudhuranfushi have four-star plus as well as a five-star deluxe category. Both these resorts are located in the same island with independent services and facilities. This provides the client a unique experience of enjoying

twin holiday experiences while being located in the same island, thereby saving costs on transportation." The other USP of the resort portfolio is its significant inventory within easy access from the Male airport. This facilitates shorter speed boat transfers as well as flexibility for immediate transfers for arrivals 24x7, he adds.



Adaaran Select Meedhupparu



Althaf Mohamed Ali
President-Sales & Marketing,
Aitken Spence Hotel Managements

Maldives has seen a substantial growth in the premium all-inclusive holiday concept, which is similar to that has been made popular in the Caribbean region

holiday better at a reasonable cost without having to compromise on the services and facilities. It also adds great value for money and hence is becoming increasingly popular not only with the traditional European markets but also with the emerging Asian markets such as China and India."

Talking about the group, he reveals, "Offering a perfect blend of luxury and comfort, Adaaran Resorts in the Maldives presents unparalleled luxury with a touch of tradition. Nestled away in blissful seclusion, at each Maldives resort possesses a unique set of defining charac-

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Beautiful China, 2015-Year of Silk Road Tourism



Photograph: Spring Crescent Moon



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Xi'an a City of History and Modernity

Xi'an is a must-visit city in beautiful China. For so many Indian travellers, if they know something about Beijing, Shanghai or Guangzhou, usually they can also talk a bit about the city of Xi'an.

The year 2015 has been designated as 'Year of Silk Road Tourism' by China National Tourism Administration, so let us know a little more about this city, which is the starting point of the ancient Silk Road.

Called Chang'an or Jingzhao in ancient times, Xi'an is one of the top four famous ancient capitals of the world. It is located in one of the birthplaces of Chinese civilization as well as one of the cradles of the Chinese people. It represents an outstanding miniature version of Chinese culture. Some of the most powerful dynasties in Chinese history, including Zhou, Qin, Han, Sui, and Tang, chose Xi'an as their capital. In fact, 13 dynasties used Xi'an as a capital.



Xi'an is among the first batch of cities proclaimed as "World Famous Historical Cities" by the UNESCO and among the first batch of National Famous Historical and Cultural Cities announced by the State Council.

Xi'an is a world-famous tourist site and is popularly referred to as a

'natural museum of history.' As the capital of Shaanxi Province, Xi'an nowadays is one of the six large cities in China known to each play a leading role in their respective regions, a center of knowledge and technological innovation in Asia, the leading city in the Chinese segment of the New Eurasian Land Bridge and in the Yellow River basin, and a jumbo jet

manufacturing base of China. In a plan released in 2011 by the State Council, the central government of China under the title of Results of Planning for Major Function Regions Nationwide, Xi'an has been chosen as a 'National History and Culture Base.'

On September 7, 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered a speech at Nazarbayev University, pro-

posing to build 'economic zone of the Silk Road', so as to strengthen economic ties and deepen mutual cooperation between European and Asian countries. For sure, the concept of 'economic zone Route Silk' and its actualization will help to build Xi'an into an international metropolis. And, more tourists from home and abroad will continuously flock to this time-honored city.



中国驻新德里旅游办事处
China National Tourist Office, New Delhi
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Korea comes calling

Korea Tourism Organisation, New Delhi organised 2-city roadshow on December 2 & 3 in Delhi & Ahmedabad respectively. Its Global Marketing Head Sang – Hoon Na led the group of delegates comprising Destination Management Companies (US Travels, Kim's Travel, Bosuk Tours Ltd. and Jane Tour & DMC) and Korean traditional music group from Korea. The Travel Mart highlighted products and offerings from Korea on leisure & MICE perspective and witnessed many attendees from travel trade, corporate & media in both the cities.



Winning laurels

The year 2014 has been an excellent year for Trans India Holidays. It also won the National Tourism Award for the second consecutive year.



The year 2014 was full of opportunities. "A major development for us during this year was our foray into Outbound and Domestic Holidays via the launch of our new business division, 'Trans World Holidays'," says **Kapil Goswamy**, Managing Director, Trans India Holidays.



Kapil Goswamy
Managing Director
Trans India Holidays

The current season is looking good too and we expect to close FY 2014-15 with a significant increase over last year. Outbound Tourism is a sector that has been witnessing double digit growth year-on-year and is set to continue on the growth curve for the next several years, thanks to the growing incomes and the growing aspirations of well-heeled Indians.

"We launched our advertising campaign recently with holidays to destinations like New Zealand, Australia, Southern Europe and Scandinavia and have been attempting to do things differently. For New Zealand, we are promoting Self Drive Holidays; for Europe, we are promoting the beautiful parts of Southern

Europe including Greece and Italy; for Northern Europe, the Scandinavian Capitals and Lapland, all of which are excellent destinations for the seasoned travellers. For Indians seeking to discover their own country, of course we do popular destinations like Goa (like everyone else), but we also offer holidays to Kabin and Coorg, Skiing holidays in Gulmarg, weekend packages for Kanha and Bandhavgarh, soft treks in Nepal, all destinations and activities that appeal to discerning travellers, he adds.

Goswamy further informs, "Currently, we are in the B2C space only, but during 2015, we hope to be entering in the B2B space too, and work with fellow travel agents."

Experiencing Mauritian adventure on FAM



Mauritius Tourist Promotion Authority (India) recently organised a travel agents familiarisation trip for six Southern India agents which took place from November 11-15, 2014. The agents were from Chennai and Bengaluru. The group experienced different accommodation categories and stayed in Shanti Maurice Hotel, Blumarine Attitude Hotel and Jalsa Beach Hotel & Spa. The objective of the trip was to showcase the destination and activities which are very exciting but not familiar to the Indian tour operators.



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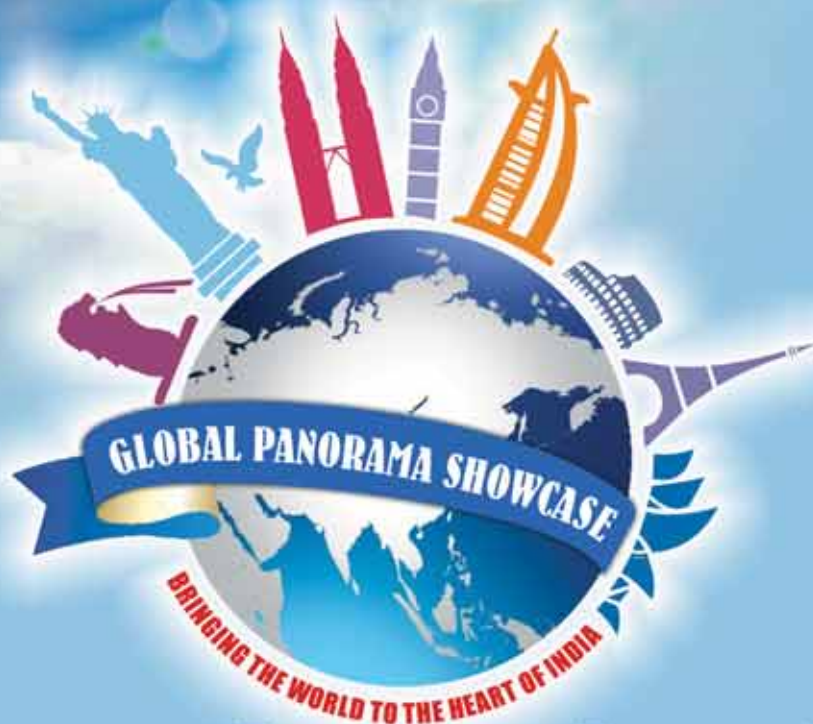


Dubai hosts the largest FAM from India

As part of a marketing strategy to expand the understanding and product portfolio of Dubai; Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing hosted the largest ever tourism industry Mega FAM trip comprising travel operators, wedding planners, MICE operators and niche segment specialists and experts representing 16 cities across India. It included 440 representatives of the travel industry providing them with a first-hand experience of Dubai.



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Redefining hospitality!

With the company's presence already being felt in various Indian cities, Sandesh Khandelwal, CFO, Sayaji Group, tells TRAVTALK about the company's plans to expand in other cities in the upcoming year

TT BUREAU

Could you tell us about the USPs of your Group?

We have a presence in Indore, Pune, Bhopal and Vadodara. F&B facilities at Pune include PORTICO (buffet restaurant), Barbeque Nation (Sayaji's flagship rooftop restaurant serving barbeque from around the world) and TURQUE (Poolside lounge). It has entertainment, fitness and leisure options also. In Vadodara and Bhopal too, Sayaji serves its guests with the same richness. Kolhapur is our upcoming property to be launched in February 2015.

How has the property positioned your group in the hospitality market?

The Sayaji Group has been redefining hospitality since its inception. It has always chosen strategic locations for its hotels for easy accessibility of its guests. The hotels have excellent connectivity with major cities, various

business destinations and places of tourist attractions.

What new trends has the Sayaji Group set in the hospitality segment in the region?

We have packaged solutions for all kinds of social functions and customers wherein complete end-to-end

Nation of Sayaji Hotel in Pune, is an exotic food experience destination.

What is your target clientele - Inbound, domestic or MICE?

We have customised packages for residential and non-residential conferences according to the need of the

We are taking major steps in making our presence felt in many Indian cities. Our next upcoming hotel is based in Kolhapur with 65 rooms' inventory and banquet options. Our Ankleshwar project will start in 2015 and will be ready by April 2016. We are also looking for expansion in other cities viz. Raipur, Ahmedabad, Surat, Goa, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and few more, where we intend to have management models or revenue sharing models.

Our next upcoming hotel is based in Kolhapur with 65 rooms' inventory and banquet options. Our Ankleshwar project will start in 2015 and will be ready by April 2016

Sandesh Khandelwal
CFO, Sayaji Group

services are being provided for guests to enjoy their functions. The group has stepped into the first chain of business hotels - Effotel, the latest trend in high definition services in Indore and Barbeque

hour. The hotel meeting room size ranges from 800 sq.ft. to 12,000 sq. ft. and can cater to all MICE requirements.

Any new initiatives planned for 2015?

New Trends

- ◆ The Sayaji Group has been redefining hospitality since its inception
- ◆ It has always chosen strategic locations for its hotels for easy accessibility of its guests
- ◆ It has stepped into the first chain of business hotels - Effotel, the latest trend in high definition services in Indore

International tourism numbers to hit record high: UNWTO

■ The latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer states that international tourism is set to hit a new record by the end of 2014 with over 1.1 billion international tourists travelling the world in one single year. During the first ten months of 2014 the number of international

to end the year at over 1.1 billion. By region, the strongest growth was registered in the Americas (+ eight per cent), followed by Asia and the Pacific (+ five per cent) and Europe (+ four per cent). By subregion, North America (+ nine per cent) and South Asia (+ eight per cent) were the star performers, as well as Southern and Mediterranean Europe, North-East Asia and Northern Europe (all + seven per cent).



Taleb Rifai
Secretary-General
UNWTO

Taleb Rifai, secretary-general, UNWTO said, "In view of this trend, international tourism is set to end 2014 with record numbers. These are remarkable results considering that different parts of the world continue to face significant geopolitical and health challenges, while the global economic recovery remains rather fragile and uneven. More importantly, we see a growing political commitment to the tourism sector in many countries. This is encouraging, not in the least because tourism is one of the sectors that is best able to deliver on employment at a moment when job creation need to be a priority to all."

tourists increased above expectations, growing by five per cent. Between January and October 2014, the volume of international tourists (overnight visitors) reached 978 million, 45 million more than in the same period of 2013.

With an increase of 4.7 per cent, international tourism continues to grow well above the long-term trend projected by UNWTO for the period 2010-2020 (+ 3.8 per cent), and is set

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Welcome to the e-world

Year 2014 saw many trends emerge and pass by in the travel trade. But one that promises to spill over to 2015 remains the increasing faith in technology. TRAVTALK finds out how agents feel about this new force and whether it is worth reckoning with.



HAZEL JAIN

The shroud surrounding technology among the travel trade is slowly lifting as more and more agents are assimilating it in their businesses.

Speaking about how things have changed over the years, **Om Prakash Sehgal**,

August 2014, refers to these changing times as the emergence of "e-world". "Now, we have paperless offices, paperless airline tickets, email and SMS hotel confirmations. All this requires technology and almost everyone relies on computers and different software to provide accurate information," he says. Bhatia is also the

How it helps them

Sehgal's company has taken advantage of technology, from e-tickets, high-speed internet and mobile internet for faster, cheaper communication, especially long distance, to improved storage of sensitive data, online marketing, net banking and online payments.

achieve important goals and change their operating models. By adopting new technology, we tend to innovate and increase productivity," Bhatia reveals.

Meanwhile, Karvat's core product, TrawellTag, is a metallic luggage tracking device. "Our team of IT professionals has improvised our existing technical features. Travel agents will now experience more refined user-interface with better API integration

Voyage - the Sales and Marketing arm of Zaka Group - feels that one should either get on the technology bandwagon or get extinguished. "We use it mainly for social media. It not only helps create awareness and promote our product to a larger audience but also get timely feedback, help HR with recruitment and other matters that help develop and improvise our product. Technology equals evolution," she sums up.

actively seek to use technology is educating the trade through webinars and online training."

Be warned though

While advocating technology though, each one of them warns of important pointers to keep in mind. Bhatia alerts, "One must keep in mind that competitive advantage doesn't just materialise through the use of new technology. It only makes possible new forms of organisation and new ways of operating."

Karvat also voices his concern as well. "Business owners should not look at technology as just a tool to get an edge over their competitors. Adopting technology is necessary to give customers a seamless experience when they avail your services," he says. Meanwhile, Daruwalla too urges the trade to not adopt technology blindly. Technology is the new buzzword in any business today, particularly in travel, says Pereira. "It's not to say that businesses cannot thrive in an environment sans technology, however it is the sheer dynamic nature of the businesses today that requires technology to give them the edge. Technology cannot be for technology's sake and successful adopters are those who can apply relevant technology to practical use thus achieving optimum results," he adds.



Om Prakash Sehgal
Director
In-Orbit Tours

Adopting the latest technology has become essential for convenience and survival

Director of In-Orbit Tours, says, "I started my career in 1977 when technology was as good as absent. Since then, we have travelled a long way into the modern era of technology in the travel business. Adopting the latest technology has become essential today not only for convenience but for survival."

Those who came after him agree. **Jay Bhatia**, Director and CEO of Tulsidas Khimji Holidays, who walked away with the 'Entrepreneur of the Year' award at the India Travel Awards - West India in



Jay Bhatia
Director and CEO
Tulsidas Khimji Holidays

Now, we have paperless offices, paperless airline tickets, email and SMS hotel confirmations

Chairman of Tourism Council for the Travel Agents Association of India.

The young ones blaze the trail. **Dev Karvat**, MD of TrawellTag India, says, "In today's fast-paced world, technology and business go hand-in-hand. New-age customers have increasingly become tech-savvy and want access to all information and avail services in the least possible time. This is where marrying the latest technology with your business gives you a superior edge in today's competitive world."



Dev Karvat
MD
TrawellTag India

New-age customers have increasingly become tech-savvy and avail services in the least possible time

"These advancements have helped the industry go a long way in servicing clients, attracting larger business opportunities, and saving on time and energy. Also, easy flow of data between the agency and airline, hotel or other service allows quick bookings that might have taken hours or days," he adds.

Tulsidas Khimji Holidays has also adopted it to improve time management and turnaround time. "A new generation of tools for virtual business operations is helping companies



Jenaifer Daruwalla
General Manager of Maison de Voyage - the Sales and Marketing arm of Zaka Group

Technology helps create awareness and promote our product to a larger audience

while using our platform to issue our plans to their customers," he says.

In 2015, TrawellTag Cover-More will launch its state-of-the-art e-commerce and m-commerce platforms to enable agents and customers to use its services online and via mobile devices.

Jenaifer Daruwalla, General Manager of Maison de



Savio Pereira
Director
Benchmark Travel Representations

We use technology to enhance productivity for both the agent and the DMC

As a representation company, Benchmark Travel Representations' focus is on making the processes between agent and DMC as seamless as possible. **Savio Pereira**, Director, Benchmark Travel Representations, opines, "We use technology in communication, information dissemination and promotional activities to enhance productivity for both the agent and the DMC. Another area that we

Click of the Mouse

- ◆ Technology is the new buzzword in any business today, particularly in travel
- ◆ Adopting the latest technology has become essential today not only for convenience but for survival

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Coming soon: Charter operators' alliance

Come 2015 and Foresee Aviation has new plans and strategies to implement its customer contact programme and more. Santosh Kumar Sharma, Director, Foresee Aviation shares his future plans with TRAVTALK.

TT BUREAU

How was 2014 for Foresee Aviation?

In 2014, we not only expanded in terms of areas of operations but also our team size. We have been able to add nine new clients to our client base. We have also got a couple of brand new business jets to market, which gave us an edge over our competitors.

Does Indian Aviation have a future?

The Indian civil aviation industry is on a high growth trajectory. India has a vision of becoming the third largest aviation market by 2020 and is expected to be the largest by 2030. I'm sure the aviation

job market will also improve in 2015 with two new airlines – AirAsia and Vistara entering the Indian market. There is a large untapped potential for growth in the Indian aviation industry. It is very important for the government to prepare and implement effective policies which will play a very critical role in shaping the future of aviation industry in India.

What are your new strategies for 2015?

Next year, we would like to make our sales & marketing division stronger by inducting more sales & marketing personnel. We'll focus on adding more aircraft and helicopters to the fleet of aircraft we offer to our clients. We are also planning to open an office in the US or the Middle East primarily to cater to the international char-

ter requirement of our clients. Our primary aim would be to focus on our current market and undertake aggressive sales & marketing plans.

What are your marketing strategies?

Our marketing department is currently under the process of finalising a comprehensive marketing strategy, which will be put into practice



Santosh Kumar Sharma
Director
Foresee Aviation

from January 2015. We will be implementing more specific and effective techniques ranging from employing direct sales personnel, making indirect customer contact and other practices. We will also be implementing our customer contact programme. Word-of-mouth advertising will complement and enhance direct mail. We are also in the final round of negotiation with couple of charter operators to form an alliance, wherein Foresee Aviation will take the exclusive marketing rights of their aircraft.

IITT 2015 expands portfolio

With stupendous success in its maiden event 'India International Travel & Tourism Exhibition' conceptualised and executed by ABEC Exhibitions & Conferences (ABEC), India's trade fair leader is all set to launch its second edition 'IITT- 2015'. The exhibition on 15-17 January 2015 at Bombay Exhibition Centre, Goregoan East Mumbai is expanding its avenues to bring together stalwarts from the global travel, tourism and hospitality industry.

Spread across 15,000 square metre, the travel extravaganza 'IITT-2015' will witness all the sparkle in its Grand Inauguration Ceremony by the esteemed presence of the 'Queen' of Bollywood, Kangana Ranawat. 'IITT-2015' promises bigger brands in its portfolio, with Turkey Tourism as the Platinum Partner, Kuwait Airlines - Silver Partner, Tamil Nadu Tourism-State Partner, Lavasa Corporation - Smart City Partner and Grand Hyatt as the Hospitality Partner.

'IITT 2015' showcases Israel Tourism and Oman Tourism as featured International destinations while Bihar Tourism and Madhya Pradesh Tourism will be showcased as the featured national destinations. Qatar Airways, Oman Air and Etihad Airways are associated as the featured airlines for the show. Explore the best destinations in India represented by Premium States present at the event like Assam, Telangana, Rajasthan, Bengal, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh Tourism.

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NEIIPP uncertainty hits tourism in North East

■ The uncertainty over continuation of North East Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy (NEIIPP) 2007 is to hit the growth of tourism industry in North East. Suspension of incentives available under NEIIPP will not only adversely impact industrial growth of North East but it will also amount to a major setback to integrating North East into the mainstream national economy.

NEIIPP was introduced by the Government of India in April 2007. The policy provides a special package of fiscal incentives, subsidies and other concessions, with the objective of promoting industrialization of North East. The policy covers Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim.

Outlining the positive outcome of NEIIPP, **Sudesh Poddar**, President, Hotel & Restaurant Association of Eastern India (HRAEI) said that it played an important role in positioning North East as a viable and competitive investment destination for the hospitality sector and helped in attracting capital

investment in manufacturing and services sectors. It has had a positive multiplier effect on the region's economy, by way of large-scale job-creation, youth empowerment through increased opportunities of skill development, infrastructure augmentation, strengthening social stability. It also generated substantial revenue for the exchequer.

To sustain the growth momentum, it is imperative for the North Eastern states to draw large investment in the hospitality industry. Infrastructure deficit occurring in the region's tourism industry in a big way needs early correction. The sudden suspension of incentives available under NEIIPP will put in peril prospective investments of a staggering ₹ 30,000 crore.

In this context, HRAEI President has submitted a memorandum to **Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman**, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Commerce & Industry urging the government to revoke the suspension at the earliest and dispel any ambiguity over the continuation of NEIIPP.

Technology is Caper's USP

Bharat Bhushan Atree, MD, Caper Travel, is hopeful that the electronic visa facility will be extended to more countries soon. He says that through technology, excellent domestic products and dissemination of information, they are working to counter the roadblocks in promoting domestic tourism.



TT BUREAU

What prompted Caper to diversify into travel verticals such as hospitality, aviation and online portals?

We are constantly expanding our business and we were looking at other industries that could be tied to the travel trade. That is how Era Hospitality, Jet Concepts and easyhols.com came about. Under Era Hospitality, we now have two hotels in Goa and will soon be increasing the number.

Are you planning to foray into any other sectors?

We are always open to change but there are no immediate plans. And apart from the businesses already mentioned, Caper Group also has under its umbrella two other tour operators - Aamantaran, whose expertise is Japan and Europe, and Hi-Life Tours, which is strong in the B2B inbound market. There is Softix as well, your one-stop shop to all IT solu-

tions, be it customised software or hi-tech hardware. So, as you can see, we have enough to keep us busy.

What sets Hi-Life Tours by Caper apart from other domestic tour operators?



For the next year, we are looking at different markets, especially the ones where electronic visa has been made available. Hopefully, more than 43 countries will be added to it soon

Bharat Bhushan Atree
MD, Caper Travels

Our group has offices pan India, which translates to better results. For instance, if a tourist faces a problem in Goa, we have staff at hand to handle it efficiently and quickly. With the already established Caper brand backing it,

Hi-life Tours by Caper has the management strength and expertise to handle all kinds of products. Not just that, from rates to booking to hotel availability, we are technology-based unlike other travel companies. Plus from

For starters, infrastructure and connectivity have been major roadblocks for the domestic sector. Added to it is poor promotion by state tourism departments. For an operator, it is the short gap between booking and travel time that often proves to be an obstacle. Domestic tourists generally tend to travel during school vacations or extended weekends. Through technology, excellent domestic products and dissemination of information, we are working our way to counter these obstacles.

How has 2014 been for you? What are your strategies for 2015?

2014 has been a tough year for the entire industry. For the next year, we are looking at different markets, especially the ones where electronic visa has been made available. Hopefully, more than 43 countries will be added to it soon.

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Due to heavy security blanket over Delhi for the Republic Day Parade on 26th January, Delhi Police has advised us to defer the Car Rally being held on 11th January, 2015.

Respecting security reasons and seeing the dense fog in Delhi, the rally stands postponed till March, 2015.

Everything else remains as it is.



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Dubai tops YouGov luxury travel survey

Arabian Travel Market to be organised from May 4-7, 2015, will feature International Luxury Travel Market (ILTM) as YouGov report highlights appeal of MENA region as global luxury hotspot.



TT BUREAU

Luxury travel trends will once again be a highlighted feature at Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2015, with the International Luxury Travel Market (ILTM) Middle East showcase matching luxury-focused exhibitors with travel buyers from around the world looking to discover the very best experiences in the region.

Taking place from May 4-7, 2015, at the Dubai International Convention & Exhibition Centre, the ATM line-up will include a two-day ILTM @ ATM programme with a series of pre-scheduled appointments and dedicated luxury travel focused seminars and panel debates to run on May 5 and 6. The Atlantis, The Palm will be the Official Luxury and Leisure Host Hotel for the duration of the four-day event, hosting the ILTM buyer group and international buyers from outside the GCC.

"A 2014 YouGov Luxury Travel report for the MENA

region showed that out of the 1,000-plus regionally based survey respondents, luxury clearly has a home in the Middle East with Dubai ranked in top spot as the preferred

minimum standard. Also those surveyed admitted they had taken an average of 1.9 luxury holidays over the last 12 months, meaning that the region's preponderance of

the perspective of the traveller. With no universally accepted definition of what luxury travel is, brands need to truly understand what luxury means to their customers in order to be successful. The subject is of strong interest to travel brands in this market and it is great to see ILTM focus on this issue, said YouGov's Travel & Leisure Research Director, Scott Booth. The YouGov report also highlighted the fact that 61% of luxury tourists from the MENA region choose to travel with their spouse, staying for an average of 5.1 nights, with four out of five people choosing to go on a luxury holiday for pure relaxation.

"Of the respondents surveyed, on average they reported typically spending around US\$8,310 per trip, with 60% choosing a destination based on recommendations from family and friends, and 53% personally booking their travel. Service delivery combined with exclusivity are clear prerequisites for a desirable luxury offering," noted Noblet.

Once in the hotel, respondents ranked a good view from their room and a choice of fine dining restaurants as paramount to ensuring an enjoyable experience with consumer opinion defining luxury as 'differentiating, discovery and experiences'.



"Interestingly, 77% of respondents said that they were likely to book an all-inclusive luxury holiday package, which is an area of opportunity that many Gulf destinations have yet to explore," said Mark Walsh, Portfolio Director for Luxury Events at Reed Travel Exhibitions. ILTM @ ATM 2015 will welcome up to 25 international hosted buyers with a specific interest in the Middle East luxury experience, and up to 28 exhibitors representing the luxury travel offering, from hotels and cruise lines to DMCs and destinations.

"ILTM @ ATM returns to ATM with an expanded programme of one-to-one appointments and is a crucial component in our global calendar of luxury events which cover Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe," added Walsh.

In addition the ATM 2015 line-up features a central Family Travel theme alongside branded exhibition trails including budget travel, health and wellbeing, shopping, transportation, sports travel, culture and heritage and adventure travel. At the event, ATM's research partner, YouGov will report new and fresh insights on Family Travel in MENA.

"We are honoured to be named the official hotel of Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2015. With the spotlight theme of Family Travel for 2015, our unique family offering ties in perfectly with the focus of next year's event, and we are looking forward to showcasing the amazing diversified attractions at Atlantis," David Loiseau, Vice President, Sales at Atlantis, The Palm.

Luxury at its best

- ◆ "A 2014 YouGov Luxury Travel report for the MENA region showed that out of the 1,000-plus regionally based survey respondents, luxury clearly has a home in the Middle East with Dubai ranked in top spot
- ◆ A total of 69% of respondents in the YouGov report agreed that luxury travel is defined by the availability of five-star accommodation as a minimum standard
- ◆ Of the respondents surveyed, on average they reported typically spending around US\$8,310 per trip, with 60% choosing a destination based on recommendations from family and friends, and 53% personally booking their travel

upscale destination," said Nadege Noblet, Exhibition Manager of Arabian Travel Market, WTM Portfolio, Reed Travel Exhibitions.

A total of 69% of respondents in the YouGov report agreed that luxury travel is defined by the availability of five-star accommodation as a

upscale hotel properties is perfectly positioned to capitalise on growing demand from high net-worth travellers eager to discover new destinations or enjoy an exclusive experience in their favourite resort.

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Mr. Arpit Srivastava

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Agents are our stakeholders

Varesh Chopra, Regional Director - South Asia & Middle East, Globus Family of Brands (India), says in 2015 they are rolling out a communication initiative called “We LOVE Travel agents”, which highlights the advantages of being an exclusive Globus family of brands partner.



TT BUREAU

How has 2014 been for the company?

Despite some extraneous challenges which perhaps all segments of the industry initially faced this year, we have seen an excellent growth into the higher double digits. We have also seen our comprehensive product portfolio being recognised as truly offering something for everyone in terms of style and budget.

Do you have any new initiatives on offer for travel agents?

Globus & Trade

- ◆ The Globus family of brands extends very generous special offers for personal travel trips of the trade fraternity.
- ◆ In the past 5 years more than 100 agents have utilised this unique benefit from the Globus Family Club

We not only offer a superlative and comprehensive line up products for travel agents to sell to their clients – we strongly believe in giving back as a token of gratitude for their support as well as having them experience our programmes first hand. In the recent past we have organised Air + Land programme, inclusive familiarisation trips to Spain ,Canada , UK , Europe multi country panoramas , Norway , South America with leading travel trade partners travelling to these exotic destinations in the legendary Globus family style. For 2015 we have assured a premium air inclusive GLOBUS programme to ALASKA and another one including the emerging touristic regions of ITALY. Since we rolled these out in our recently-concluded off site Symposium in November we have already got many agents trying to get ahead in the race early.

Apart from this the Globus family of brands extends very generous special

offers for personal travel trips of the trade fraternity. In the past 5 years more than 100 agents have utilised this unique benefit from the Globus Family Club – a prestigious by invitation-only group of Globus family of brands promoters. Exclusive training and workshop opportunities are provided from time to time to enhance the destination and product knowledge of agents. We treat travel agents as stakeholders and holistically invest on the relationship. We are rolling out a communication initiative called “We LOVE Travel agents” for 2015 which highlights the advantages of being an exclusive Globus family of brands partner. Watch out for more soon

What are the trends that you foresee for 2015, based on the 2014 response?

The signs for outbound travel volumes further increasing over 2015 are very positive – We will continue to see good

The signs for outbound travel volumes further increasing over 2015 are very positive – We will continue to see good demand for Europe as well as a lot of travellers will focus on regional discoveries and single country vacations

Varesh Chopra
Regional Director - South Asia & Middle East, Globus Family of Brands



demand for Europe as well as a lot of travellers will focus on regional discoveries and single country vacations, also venturing to newer destinations. As a brand, we find ourselves in a very advantageous position as we are already geared up with a multitude of choices. Having tasted success with unique programmes such as for Iceland, we have rolled out an Iceland and Greenland programme for next year. A very significant

development has been introduction of SOUTH AMERICA in our COSMOS product line – with four unique itineraries, it makes South America well within reach in an extremely affordable budget.

How has the Indian traveller changed and how are travel companies adapting to that change?

One finds that the Indian traveller has become much

more discerning and perhaps more assertive on what she or he wants. There is a plethora of information available in terms of planning resources as well as buying platforms. As a provider of services, you cannot be assured of long term loyalties any more till the time you adapt and renew your product offer and even ways of selling. The Customer is very wise – the customer wants to travel the way the world does and is looking for new and genuine experiences. At the Globus family of brands, we, of course, take this very seriously. You would notice us changing with the times in terms of product innovation, introduction of new destinations and experiences, even modes of travel always keeping to the core of our values of offering authentic experiences, making travel easy and enriching at the same time being straight forward, honest and open with our customers and partners.

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Mumbai (33%) is the largest source market of Outbound and Domestic tourists, followed by New Delhi (26%). All the major International travel companies operating out of India, like Kuoni, Thomas Cook and Cox and Kings are headquartered in Mumbai

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Consular service outsourcing Adventure training for agents

BLS International Services is betting big on the potential of consular service business. Globally, there is only 30 per cent of this segment, which is outsourced.



MEGHA PAUL

Visa and passport services company, BLS International Services, feels the ETA implementation will mean big business for the company. Commenting on the development, **Diwakar Aggarwal**, Director, BLS International Services said, "We see a win-win situation for all of us. The company is aiming to grow its business via consular services. And we see a direct positive impact on the business with ETA implementation."

The group deals in four verticals – visa, attestation, passport and consular services. Providing facilitation services for visa & passport processing, as well as document attestation and certificate verification services through 84 offices spread over 22 countries has been the USP of the company, he pointed out.

Regarding new initiatives in the company, Aggarwal revealed, "Going forward, the

group wants to tap the potential consular service business. Globally, there is only 30 per cent of this segment, which is outsourced." BLS International



Diwakar Aggarwal
Director
BLS International Services

services Indian missions in countries like Austria, Malaysia, Canada, China, Netherlands, Norway, Oman, Philippines, Poland, Lithuania, Spain, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, UAE, and USA. In India, BLS works with the High Commission of Malaysia, Embassy of the State of

Kuwait, Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ministry of External Affairs (Attestation & Apostille Services) in New Delhi, Chandigarh and Jalandhar, he added.

Talking about the global trends in consular services' outsourcing, he informed, "The focus is growing on single player, large-sized deals with the outsourcing government zooming in on deals that offer most value. The introduction of biometrics is becoming a major adaption for various governments. Value addition in the form of automation of processes and add-on services is also becoming critical both from client government and end-user perspective."

About BLS

- ◆ The group deals in four verticals – visa, attestation, passport and consular services. Providing facilitation services



TT BUREAU

You recently released a report on adventure tourism in India.

The 'Outbound Adventure Tourism India' report was an eye-opener in terms of the large number of Indians who are taking these trips, but in particular those that are not going through the Indian travel trade. This is clearly attributed to the fact that they fail to instill confidence among their clients.

It is also interesting to note that Indians are travelling to all places - most popular destinations being Thailand, USA and Malaysia. Business to Europe is fragmented, but as a region, Europe is on top. Indians are spending an average of ` 8,900 per day on adventure travel, but they come from all income brackets.

Are you working with international tourism boards?

Countries like Oman, Malaysia, Italy, Spain and Australia have a genuine inter-

est in growing this segment from India, and we see their commitment through specific collaterals, their interest in promoting new regions, etc; as well as in supporting new niche players like us. They are help-



Gauri Jayaram
Founder
Active Holiday

ing us increase awareness amongst the B2B segment.

Will you be working with the travel trade?

In the coming months, we will be spending a significant time in training and servicing the agents about international adventure holidays so they can build their adventure division. We recently held the first

Adventure Travel Symposium in Mumbai with close to 70 agents in attendance.

Your perspective on the current state of adventure travel in India?

Adventure Travel is a quiet revolution that has been taking place in India for the past decade and a half. In particular, the domestic and inbound segment has really been growing rapidly and India does have wonderful options for people who want to experience it - be it in the North, South, East or West and even Central India.

How can the travel trade help in improving dynamics?

Frankly, a lot of 'adventure travel' segment works through dis-intermediation, going directly to the source of the adventure experience provider. So from improving their knowledge to adding value to the customer by offering unique, safe experiences, there is a lot to be gained for the customer and travel agents if they invest in this segment.



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Calendar of TRAVEL EVENTS 2015

JANUARY

NATIONAL ◀

6.....	Chennai	Discover America Educational Programme
7	Bengaluru	Discover America Educational Programme
8	Hyderabad	Discover America Educational Programme
9-11	Chennai	Travel & Tourism Fair
15-17	Mumbai	India International Travel & Tourism Exhibition
16-18.....	Bengaluru.....	Travel & Tourism Fair
16-18	Kochi	India International Travel Mart Cochin
16-18	Kochi	India International Travel Mart
23-25	Coimbatore, India	Holiday Expo
23-25	Nagpur	India International Travel Exhibition
28.....	New Delhi.....	VisitScotland B2B Networking Dinner for Trade associations, Qatar Airways, Trade & Govt Partners
29-31	Delhi	SATTE New Delhi

INTERNATIONAL ◀

22-25	Istanbul, Turkey	EMITT
28-1 Feb	Madrid, Spain	FITUR (Fitur) 2015

FEBRUARY

NATIONAL ◀

2.....	Delhi.....	Fiji Tourism's Roadshow
2	Hyderabad	B2B Mission & Roadshow, Department of Tourism, Philipinnes
3-4	Mumbai	SATTE Mumbai West
4	New Delhi	Tourism Ireland - VisitBritain B2B Workshop
4-6	Mumbai	Outbound Travel Mart
6	New Delhi	Austria Media Lunch, Delhi
10-12.....	New Delhi.....	TTF & OTM
11-13	Mumbai	IAAPI Amusement Expo
20-22	Kolkata	India International Travel Mart
22-24	Lucknow	Uttar Pradesh Travel Mart

INTERNATIONAL ◀

1-3	Denver, Colorado	Routes American
10-12	Abu Dhabi	IBTM Arabia
21-22	Melbourne	Work & Travel Expo Sydney
23-25.....	Johannesburg, South Africa	South Africa Tourism' Meetings Africa
24-25	Melbourne, Australia	Asia Pacific Meetings and Incentive Expo (AIME)

MARCH

NATIONAL ◀

12-14	Raipur	Indian International Travel Exhibition (IITE)
20-22	Guwahati	Holiday Expo
21-23	Chandigarh	India Travel Mart
TBA	Ahmedabad	Gujarat Tourism Mart *

INTERNATIONAL ◀

4-8.....	Berlin, Germany.....	ITB
12	Singapore	AHDA, Asia Hotel Design Award
12-13	Moscow	Luxury Travel Mart Spring Edition
13-15	Cape Town	Cape Getaway Show
15-17	Kunming Yunnan, China	Routes Asia
16-18.....	Tokyo, Japan.....	International Luxury Travel Market
18-21	Moscow, Russia	Moscow International Travel and Tourism Exhibition (MITT)
25-27	Kiev, Ukraine	UITT
28-29	Ottawa	The Travel Vacation Show

* TBA: To Be Announced

APRIL

INTERNATIONAL ◀

2-4	Baku, Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan International Tourism Fair (AITF) Aitf
12-14.....	Aberdeen.....	Routes Europe
13-15	Cape Town, South Africa	International Luxury Travel Market Africa (ILTM Africa)
14-16	Beijing, China	China Outbound Travel Tourism Mart (COTTM)
15-17.....	Cape Town.....	World Travel Market Africa
16-18	Siberia	SITT (TOURSIB)
22-24.....	Sao Paulo, Brazil.....	World Travel Market Latin America
22-24	Almaty Kazakhstan	Kazakhstan International Tourism Fair (KITF)
26-28	Stuttgart, Germany	German Travel Mart

MAY

INTERNATIONAL ◀

4-7	Dubai, UAE	Arabian Travel Market (ATM)
8-10	Shanghai, China	World Travel Fair
9-11	Durban, Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa	Indaba Expo
19-20	Auckland New Zealand	Trenz
26-29	Canada, Niagara Fall	Canadian Tourism Commission's Rendezvous Canada

JUNE

INTERNATIONAL ◀

1-4.....	Shanghai, China.....	International Luxury Travel Market Asia (ILTMA)
9-11	Chicago, USA	IBTM America
10-14.....	Dhaka, Bangladesh.....	Asian International Trade & Tourism Expo
11-14	Hong Kong, SAR China	International Travel Expo
11-14	Seoul South Korea	Korea World Travel Fair

JULY

NATIONAL ◀

24-26	Hyderabad	Travel & Tourism Fair (TTF)
31- Aug 2	Kolkata	Travel & Tourism Fair (TTF)

AUGUST

INTERNATIONAL ◀

5-7	Beijing, China	China Incentive Business Travel Market (CIBTM)
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SEPTEMBER

NATIONAL ◀

1-3	Jaipur, India	IBTM India
TBA.....	Gurgaon.....	India International Travel Mart *
TBA	Mumbai	India International Travel Mart *
6-8	Bangalore	PATA Travel Mart
11-13	Ahmedabad	TTF
18-20.....	Surat.....	TTF
24-26	Mumbai	TTF
30-Oct 2	Kiev, Ukraine	Ukraine Travel Market
INTERNATIONAL ◀		
12-14	Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam	International Travel Expo
15-18	Moscow, Russia	Meetings Industry & Business Travel RUSSIA
15-16	Moscow, Russia	International Trade Fair For Luxury Travel
19-22.....	Durban, Kwazulu-South Africa	World Routes
22	Kiev, Ukraine	Luxury Travel Mart
24-26	Astana, Kazakhstan	Astana Leisure
25	Almaty	Luxury Travel Mart
25-28	Tokyo, Japan	JATA Tourism Expo Japan
28 Sept- 1 Oct	Mexico	ILTM America
29-30.....	Paris.....	MAP Pro Le Monde A Paris
30- 2 Oct	Bangkok, Thailand	Corporate Travel World Asia-Pacific

OCTOBER

NATIONAL ◀

2-4	Pune	TTF
INTERNATIONAL ◀		
1	Moscow	Luxury Travel Mart Autumn Edition
5-8.....	Moscow.....	PIR Hospitality Industry
TBA	Tashkent	Tashkent International Tourism Fair *
13-15	Las Vegas	IMEX America
21-23.....	Ukraine.....	Tour Expo
21-23	Singapore	ITB Asia
22	Birmingham	Group Leisure & Travel Trade Show
23-25	Montreal, Quebec	International Tourism & Travel Show

NOVEMBER

NATIONAL ◀

20-22	Guwahati	Travel & Tourism Fair Guwahati
INTERNATIONAL ◀		
2-5	London, United Kingdom	World Travel Market (WTM)
6-8.....	Bremen.....	Reiselust
6-9	Taipei	Taipei International Travel Fair
11-13	Shanghai	FHC China-Retail & Hospitality
17-19	Barcelona, Spain	IBTM World

DECEMBER

INTERNATIONAL ◀

1-4	Shanghai	Marintec China
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For more details, contact: ddpexhibitions@ddppl.com

The dates shown on the annual event calendar are subject to change. Please refer to Event Talk in TravTalk to track the changes in dates

StayWell Hospitality bets big on India

The group has already signed nine hotel projects in India, with two hotels operational in Jaipur and Gurgaon. Going forward, it has now lined up at least five more hotel openings in Goa, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Jaipur and Greater Noida in 2015.



TT BUREAU

Australia-based StayWell Hospitality Group (SWHG) is an independently owned global hotel management group and is based in Sydney, Australia. SWHG has a network of 34 properties in the



Rohit Vig
Managing Director-India
StayWell Hospitality Group

Asia Pacific Region with locations, including Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Cairns, Townsville, Hobart, Launceston and international hotels in Singapore, Dubai, Indonesia, India and New



Leisure Inn Grand Chanakya Restaurant

Zealand with hotels in India, UK and China currently in development. The company operates two hotel brands – Leisure Inn and Park Regis. Leisure Inn is a mid-scale brand and Park Regis is our upscale brand.

Talking about the USP of the group, **Rohit Vig**, Managing Director-India, StayWell Hospitality Group says, “We, as a group, specialise in running hotels efficiently, maximising returns for the owning board. The strength of our brands lie in

the mid to upper segment of the market. We also offer established systems and hotel networks supported by comprehensive staff training, something that we believe owners are looking for in the Indian market. At StayWell, we offer ‘value for money’ with high level of product and service standardisation with emphasis on customer satisfaction and loyalty.”

Regarding how the group has positioned itself in the hospitality market in India, he adds, “Leisure Inn intro-

duced two hotels in Jaipur and Gurgaon. Leisure Inn Grand Chanakya located on MI Road in Jaipur was a property that we signed in a semi-finished stage and turned out to be a jewel in the heart of the city with multiple F&B outlets like the iconic Grand Chanakya, Arya Bar and Grill on the roof-

January 2014. The location provides easy access to both business and leisure travellers with the New Delhi International airport a short 20-minute drive away as also the bus station and Gurgaon railway station being nearby. We have upcoming Leisure Inn hotels in Hyderabad,

epitomises comfort for the discerning traveller. Located in Arpora in North Goa, the hotel will offer 102 rooms measuring over 55 square metre and is atop a hill just a short distance from the bustling life of Candolim, Calangute and Baga. “We are excited to open at least four-five hotels in



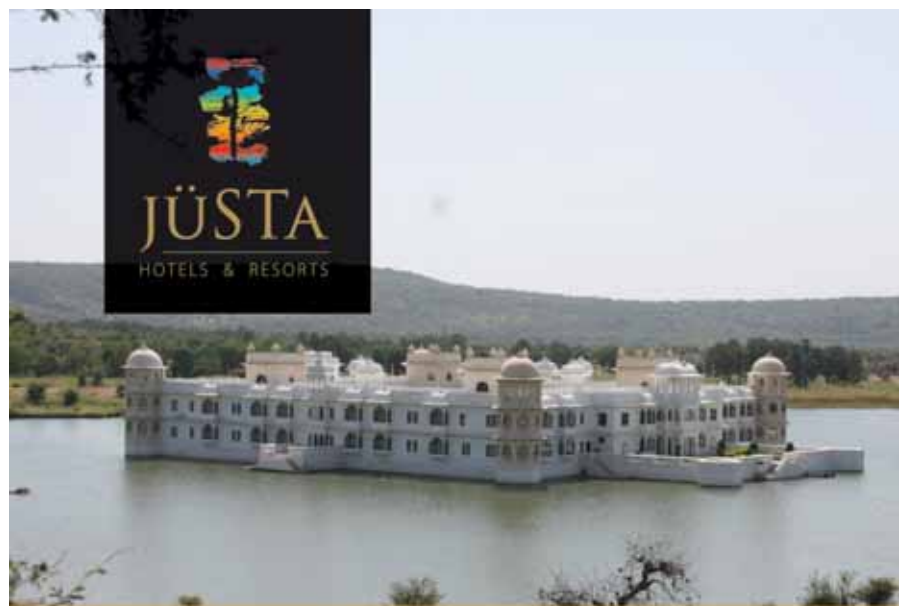
Leisure Inn West Gurgaon Sky Pool Roof Top

top and well-appointed rooms for the international traveller and local corporates. Leisure Inn West Gurgaon was an operational hotel that we rebranded and re-launched in

Mumbai, Greater Noida and other destinations.”

The first Park Regis in India will open in Goa end of first quarter 2015, which

2015. Our group is well positioned to capture the mid-market opportunities across Tier I, Tier II and Tier III cities in India,” he points out.



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VISA TALK



Issuance of France visa in 2 days

With effect from 1st January, 2015, Indian nationals traveling to France for Business or Tourism purpose will be able to get visas in just 48 hours. In case there would be an extension of deadline due to missing documents or inaccuracy in visa application, the applicant will get an automatic text for the same. Therefore, this will make travel much more convenient for Indian nationals.



Re-attestation of Chile Legalized documents

With immediate effect, applicants have to re-attest all the documents which have been legalized from the Embassy of the Republic of Chile, Delhi from the "Department of legalization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chile", post reaching Chile and the process is free of cost.

Address of Department of legalization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chile: Street Agustinas 1320, Corner Teatinos, Santiago

Opening Hours: 0900 hours to 1400 hours
In case applicant is not in Santiago, he can also approach the most nearby Ministry of Interior Office & request for Legalization.



Change in Passport collection Procedure in France

France VFS in Delhi has announced that they will send the passports through courier only at an additional cost of Rs. 300/- per packet to the dispatch address mentioned in the covering letter and will not handover the passports at the counter. If address has not been mentioned in the cover letter then by default the passport will be dispatched to the address mentioned in the passport.



An announcement by Venezuela Embassy due to Ebola Virus

Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Delhi has announced that a copy of Health Certificate against Ebola issued at least 21 days prior from the date of travel by any Government Hospital has to be submitted in the Embassy in order to get the visa application processed. The applicant has to carry the Original at the time of travel & the certificate must specify below mentioned details of applicant:

- Does not show any symptom of Ebola disease virus or been in contact with patients having this disease.
- Has not been in contact with body fluids of any patients with Ebola.
- Has neither visited any Health Centre nor Hospital which had provided Medical care to these patients. Therefore, the Health Certificate should state that the applicant is fit to travel to Venezuela.



Certificate required for Morocco Visa Applications

Embassy of the Kingdom Of Morocco, Delhi has announced that applicants have to provide an original certificate issued from the Ministry of Home Affairs and legalized by the Ministry of External Affairs, India if their first name or last name is not mentioned at the respective column in the passport. Therefore, applicants are requested to submit the same along with the visa application.

Visa Snippets:

- Indra Visa Fiduciary Services (IFS) is now the authorized Russian Outsourced visa application centre for Delhi & Chennai. To check more details, kindly log on to www.udaanindia.com
- Embassy of the Republic of Armenia, Delhi has announced that visa fees for Armenian visa has to be paid online prior submitting visa application in the embassy.
- Embassy of the Republic of Albania does not have Diplomatic Representation in India any longer. Hence, Indian Nationals who want to avail Albanian visa have to apply from Embassy of Albania in China. To check the procedure, kindly log on to www.udaanindia.com

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Inbound business, a mixed bag

Calling the eVisa facility to 43 nations, the biggest achievement of the tourism industry, HS Duggal, Managing Director, Minar Travels(India), says the tourism industry has to battle issues ranging from government red tapism to pervasive security threats.



TT BUREAU

How has the inbound business been for 2014?

The tourism industry in India is expanding. Inbound business has been a mixed bag. In spite of fall in numbers from some countries, the overall scenario is encouraging and by the end of 2014, we will have done better than for the corresponding period last year.

Now with eVisas being opened to 43 nations, how has the reaction to that been?

The eVisa is the biggest achievement for tourism industry in India. In the first month, more than 10,000/ tourists from 43 countries in the first list of eVisas have obtained their visas. With this facility, in place for 43 countries presently, the number of arrivals is bound to increase.

What are the challenges in promoting inbound tourism? How do you plan to counter them?

On paper, India should be a tourist powerhouse. The country has all the right ingredients - good food, rich culture, beautiful historic monuments, spirituality, and diver-

ment should make one, two, and three star hotels a priority. The tourism industry has to battle issues ranging from government red tapism to pervasive security threats in

have sensed the opportunity to skyrocket the air fares. India being a big and diverse country, low airfares play a role in inbound tourism.

What are your plans for 2015? Are you planning any new marketing initiatives?

At Minar Travels, we recognise the fact, that while the source markets are saturated, we are concentrating on new and developing markets. We have already opened representative offices in Seoul, Beijing and Argentina. We are identifying more markets, which could compensate us for drying markets such as Italy, Spain and Russia. India with its varied menu options is getting its share of MICE. We are strengthening this segment and hope to get good response. Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE) is holding its global conference in India, which should create awareness within this community about MICE in India.



We are identifying more markets, which could compensate us for drying markets such as Italy, Spain and Russia

HS Duggal
Managing Director
Minar Travels(India)

sity - to lure travellers from all over the world. Yet India lags behind Asian tourist hubs like Thailand, Malaysia, South Korea and China. The reasons for India's struggle to attract visitors are many, say tourism experts, ranging from infrastructure to formalities and security concerns, among others. The govern-

ment should make one, two, and three star hotels a priority. The tourism industry has to battle issues ranging from government red tapism to pervasive security threats in

The Aviation industry in India also poses a challenge to our incoming tourism. The connectivity to some remote areas in India needs up gradation and so do the fares, With sad news about SpiceJet, other players

Dimaz launches Russia packages

Russia has a certain mystery around it. Manish Synghal, Chairman and MD of Dimaz Group, who lived in Russia and CIS countries for over a decade in the 1990's, clears the mist shrouding it. He talks to **TRAVTALK** about the destination and the tour packages.



TT BUREAU

Share your views about Russia as a tourism destination.

For centuries, the world has wondered what to believe about Russia. The country has been reported variously as a land of unbelievable riches, cruel tyrants and great minds, generous hospitality and meddlesome bureaucracy, beautiful ballets and industrial monstrosities. These eternal Russian truths coexist in equally diverse landscapes of icy tundra and sun-kissed beaches, dense silver birch and fir forests and deep and mysterious lakes, snow-capped mountains and swaying grasslands - those famous steppes. Factor in ancient fortresses, luxurious palaces, swirly-spired churches and lost-in-time wooden villages and you'll begin to see why Russia is simply amazing.

Do you also facilitate Russian visas?

Visas are likely to be the biggest headache in organising a trip to Russia. There are sev-

eral types of visas, but for most travellers, a tourist visa (single or double entry and valid for a maximum of 30 days from date of entry) will be sufficient. But if a client is planning on staying

There are many good Indian establishments offering Indian cuisine there - more than 10 in Moscow and seven in St. Petersburg. We also have tie-ups with good Indian

France, Lufthansa, SWISS, Finnair, Uzbekistan Airlines, Air Astana and many more operate flights to Moscow and St. Petersburg from different cities in India and the connections are pretty good. The flying time is around 10 hours (including transit) from Mumbai to Moscow and on direct flight from Delhi to Moscow the flying time is approximately six hours.

Are you promoting anything in particular to Indians?

Nightlife, shopping and dining are all first-class in Moscow, the city boasts an impressive variety of bars, nightclubs, restaurants and fashion stores. St. Petersburg has a vibrant nightlife, catering to everyone from opera buffs, ballet to party animals. Indians will also enjoy going to baanya (Russian sauna) which is a very old Russian custom. Going to the bathhouse often is regarded as a way of getting rid of illnesses - it was called the "people's first doctor" (vodka was the second, raw garlic the third).



Visas are likely to be the biggest headache in organising a trip to Russia. There are several types of visas, but for most travellers, a tourist visa will be sufficient

Manish Synghal
Chairman and MD
Dimaz Group

longer than a month, it's advisable to apply for a business visa. Whatever visa they go for, the process has two stages - invitation and application. We assist travellers with visa support/invitation tourist as well as business and a hassle-free visa application process as we work closely with the Russian foreign mission.

Is the destination Indian tourist-friendly?

restaurants in Moscow and St. Petersburg where we arrange lunches, dinners and gala dinners for our groups. As far as English-speaking guides are concerned, the scenario has changed in the past 10 years.

Has the air-connectivity from India improved?

Most of the reputed airlines like Emirates, Turkish, Etihad, Aeroflot, Air Arabia, Air

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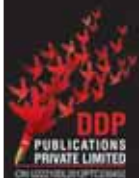
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Department of Tourism, Philippines

Philippines

Benito C. Bengzon, Jr was sworn in as the new Undersecretary for Tourism Development by DOT Secretary Ramon R. Jimenez, Jr. at the DOT Office in Makati City. Undersecretary Bengzon is replacing Daniel G. Corpuz, who recently retired after forty years in government service. Bengzon has also served as Assistant Secretary for International Tourism Promotions and Official Spokesperson of the Department of Tourism (DOT). Undersecretary Bengzon started a career with the DOT in tourism planning, product research, and development after getting his Bachelor's degree in hotel and restaurant administration from the University of the Philippines in 1984.



Vivanta by Taj - President, Mumbai

Mumbai

Sanjay Umashankar has been appointed as new General Manager for Vivanta by Taj – President, Mumbai. Prior to this, Umashankar was the General Manager of Blue Sydney, Australia where he introduced new strategies to improve occupancy and diversified the market mix to improve RevPar. Of his 25 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Umashankar has spent the last 11 years with the Taj Group. During this time, he has been the General Manager of Umaid Bhawan Palace, Jodhpur and has also served as Resident Manager at Taj Land's End, Mumbai where he successfully handled hotel operations, five F&B outlets and 14 function rooms with 600 staff.



JW Marriott Chandigarh

Chandigarh

Rubal Chaudhry has been appointed as the General Manager, JW Marriott Chandigarh, India. In this role, he will oversee the hotel operations, including guest and associate satisfaction, human resources, financial performance, sales and revenue generation, overall performance and strategy execution of the hotel. With a career in the hospitality industry spanning well over 17 years, Rubal who is admired for his discerning knowledge of the industry, brings with him a rich experience of having worked with various brands over a decade. In his last assignment, Rubal successfully established Hilton New Delhi/Janakpuri as a leading hotel in West Delhi.



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Chennai

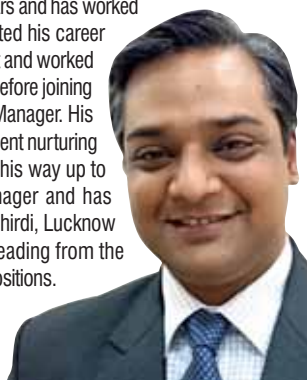
Sasikumar.U has been appointed as the Senior General Manager of Radisson Blu Hotel GRT Chennai. Earlier, he has been working as the General Manager of GRT Grand moves. U. started his career with the Taj Group of Hotels as a Hotel Operational Management trainee and after an extensive exposure in all the departments of the hotel took up Food and Beverage as his area of focus. He has got 24 years of experience in the hospitality field out of which ten years were spent with the Taj and nine and half with the GRT Group of Hotels. He has been a consistent peak performer with advanced skills.



VITS

Mumbai

Ranjan Kumar Das has joined as the General Manager of VITS luxury business hotels, Mumbai. Das has been associated with the hospitality industry for the last sixteen years and has worked in various capacities. He started his career in the F&B service department and worked with various hotels of repute, before joining Sarovar Hotels as a Training Manager. His job profile included training, talent nurturing and pre-opening. He worked his way up to the position of General Manager and has managed their properties in Shirdi, Lucknow & Delhi. Ranjan believes in leading from the front and enjoys challenging positions.



Shervani Hospitalities

Delhi

Ahsan Shervani is the new Vice-President of Shervani Hospitalities which owns and operates a chain of Hotels, Resorts & Restaurants in Delhi & Uttarakhand. Armed with an MBA in Hospitality from Les Roches International School of Hotel Management in Switzerland with a concentration in finance and a BSc in Management from Purdue University USA, Ahsan along with his MBA class was working as a strategic consultant for the Beau Rivage Palace hotel, Lausanne before returning to India.



Effotel

Indore

Kunal Katoch has been appointed as General Manager of Effotel – a business hotel by Sayaji and oversees planning, organising, directing, controlling and evaluating the hotel operations. Kunal holds a graduate degree in Hotel Management and has served various hotels across India in a variety of managerial positions. His experience spans 12 years and he has worked in several states. During his start of the career, he joined The Leela Kempinski, a 5-star hotel as a management trainee and grew up to the position of Asst. Manager (Front Office). Later, he assumed the role as Asst. Front Office Manager at The Sahara Star Hotel, Mumbai a 5-star deluxe hotel.



Sun International

Delhi

Tanushree Joshi has been appointed as Account Director India for Sunlux Collection by Sun International. The collection consists of three five star establishments, positioned in a 'Golden Triangle' that links Cape Town's, The Table Bay Hotel, Sun City's The Palace of the Lost City and Zambia's gracious Royal Livingstone Hotel. The hotels combined together provide an ultimate African experience for high-end visitors from India. Tanushree will be responsible to brand build Sunlux Collection through Sales and Marketing efforts in India.



Guidelines Travels

Delhi

Nitin Agnihotri has been appointed as the Senior Manager – Sales for North India at Guidelines Travels. He comes with a rich experience of nine years in the travel fraternity. He shall be responsible for further enhancing the company's travel partners' network. He will also be responsible for attending to all the queries related to cruise and international packages. With his experience of over nine years, he is expected to take company on newer heights.



TALKing People

Hassan Madah, Director, India, Israel Ministry of Tourism finds his experience of working in India very interesting.

He especially enjoys the mosaic of people and the different customs and cuisines. He likes the Indian food and finds it very similar to the Mediterranean cuisine. In his free time, he likes to pursue all kinds of sports. Being in the land of yoga, he has started to take some lessons in yoga. Vastly travelled, his favourite destinations include New Zealand for the landscape, Italy for the style, Utah for the adventure and New York as a vibrant city. His favourite dish is grape leaves stuffed with rice made by his mom.



Sanjay Shrivastava, Director, Global Account Management, Hahn Air, loves to spend time with his family when he's not working. He loves to explore small towns and the hill stations in and around Northern India. He says, "According to my family's demand, I try to explore new places every time. Manali is our favourite so we visit the place in every two to three years." Shrivastava loves to visit his sister in the US and explore the country. He loves Indian home cooked food but also likes trying continental cuisines from time to time.



Mohammad Labban, General Manager - Hyatt Regency Pune, says, "Hospitality industry is a demanding job. Hence, whenever I get free time, I make sure that I spend ample time with my family. It is a major priority for me. Another stress-buster for me is playing golf on weekends. Golf is relaxing as well as fun and I also get to catch up with friends and business colleagues." Talking more on his hobbies, he adds, "Travelling is a hobby. My favourite place to travel would be London. The city has a vibrant charm and a positive vibe and at the same time, it is the hub for shopping and sampling global cuisine."





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NIKKI DUGGAL DESIGN

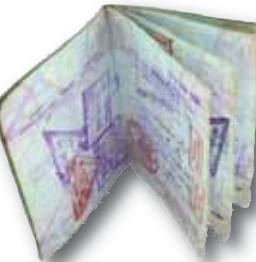
10K e-visas issued in 21 days

Post a successful ETA launch in November, the MOT has launched e-ticketing for monuments on Good Governance Day, says Dr. Lalit K Panwar, Secretary, Tourism, Ministry of Tourism. A few excerpts from his exclusive interview...

 MEGHA PAUL

Opening doors to India

Since the launch of Visa on Arrival (VoA) enabled by Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) for citizens of 43 countries in India on November 27, the government has issued 10,000 visas online. This information was revealed by Dr. Lalit K Panwar, Secretary, Tourism, Government of India. Regarding the new initiative, he pointed out, “We launched ETA for 43 countries on 27 November in its first phase. In the last 21 days of its operations, the Government of India has issued 10,000 visas online. US leads the pack of countries that has availed this facility. Currently many important source markets such as France, UK and China have been left out. Taking care of concerns of the travel industry, we will introduce ETA for these countries as well in the second phase.” The 43 countries which are eligible for ETA now are Australia, Brazil, Cambodia, Cook Islands, Djibouti, Fiji, Finland, Germany, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Laos, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia, Myanmar, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Norway, Oman, Palau, Palestine, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russia, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Tonga, Tuvalu, UAE, Ukraine, USA, Vanuatu and Vietnam.



Monumental strategies

As the Tourism Ministry embarks on ‘Swachh Bharat, Swachh Smarak’ (Clean India, Clean Monuments), it has set a target to clean the most visited monuments in the next three months, he informed. Cleanliness will also be taken up at the partially-visited monuments followed by those monuments which have been relatively unexplored. As the government decided to celebrate the birthday of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Madan Mohan Malviya as ‘Good Governance Day’ on December 25, MOT has launched the key initiative of e-ticketing for monuments. “On pilot basis, few monuments such as the Taj Mahal and Humayun’s Tomb will sell tickets online. The trial sale of e-tickets would be conducted by the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), the government undertaking which also handles online train ticket reservation. The e-tickets will have security features, including bar codes. Bar code scanners would also be installed at the entry gates,” he added.

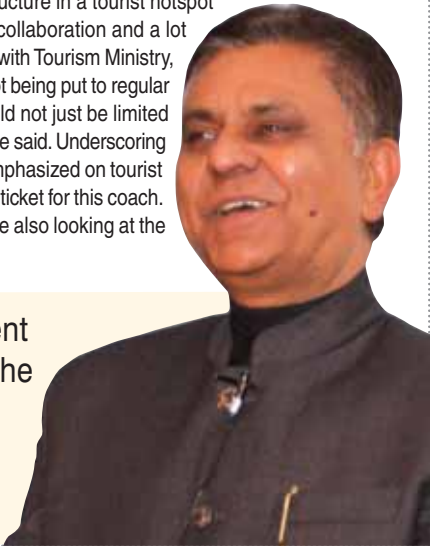


Open skies, open roads

Highlighting the need for better airport infrastructure and connectivity, Panwar opined, “The airport at Jaisalmer has been built at a cost of Rs 100 crore. The airport was ready to be operational three years back. But not a single flight has landed in Jaisalmer in the last three years. This is a classic example of how we have created infrastructure in a tourist hotspot like Jaisalmer but have not yet been able to utilise it. Thus, we need to work in collaboration and a lot more needs to be done. This is one big concern. With Civil Aviation being clubbed with Tourism Ministry, we get an added clout for us to bargain.” Also, there are many airfields which are not being put to regular use. The government intends to use them to boost tourism. Air connectivity should not just be limited to the metros but to Tier-II and Tier-III cities and India should have truly open skies, he said. Underscoring the need to improve road connectivity to enhance tourist infrastructure, he also emphasized on tourist train carriages. “We will have complete information of any passenger who books a ticket for this coach. The ticket for this may be 5-10 per cent costlier than the regular coach fare. We are also looking at the possibility of a surveillance camera in the tourist coach,” he added.

In the last 21 days of its operations, the Government of India has issued 10,000 visas online. US leads the pack of countries that has availed this facility.

Dr. Lalit K Panwar
Secretary, Tourism
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Maya gleams under Northern lights

Having travelled to all parts of the country, North India welcomed India Travel Awards with great gusto. Crowne Plaza Greater Noida played perfect host to the event which was graced by S. Sohan Singh Thandal, Minister of Tourism & Cultural Affairs, Government of Punjab, as its Chief Guest and Dr Lalit K Panwar, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism as the Guest of Honour.



The winners of the North India Travel Awards with their trophies, along with SanJeet, Director, DDP Group at the Crowne Plaza Greater Noida

PEDEN DOMA BHUTIA

After a successful run of the South, West and East editions, the India Travel Awards completed a full circle as it hosted the North edition of the awards at Crowne Plaza, Greater Noida.

And what an evening it was as the North India Travel Awards felicitated and honoured the captains, leaders, opinion makers and contributors of the tourism industry.

S. Sohan Singh Thandal, Minister of Tourism & Cultural Affairs, was the chief guest at the event while **Dr. Lalit K Panwar** graced the event as the Guest of Honour.

Lauding the efforts of the organisers of the award in recognising the initiatives of those working hard in tourism, Thandal talked about Punjab branding itself as a tourist-friendly state. He said that while five years ago, the state was ranked 28th in tourism, in terms of tourist arrivals, today, they come 12th. "Punjab



Amita Motwani, Dr. Lalit K Panwar, S. Sohan Singh Thandal and SanJeet releasing the book, Northern Heritage, an ode to the immense beauty, heritage, culture, and the delectable cuisine of North India at the Awards ceremony

shares a rich history which has always been a matter of interest for tourists. The various places narrating stories of ancient India should also be promoted. Amritsar is a city where thousands of tourists flock each day, Golden Temple gets around 80,000 to 100,000 visitors. The state is already working on projects worth ₹1,000 crore and this amount will be doubled in the next few years. This

will also trigger more numbers to the state. The other features attracting tourists from across the globe to Punjab is its lifestyle, food and fashion. Eco-tourism and village home tourism and farm tourism are other concepts catching the interests of tourists," Thandal said.

Dr Panwar praised the efforts of the present government in promot-

ing tourism and said, "I would like to assure you all that the tourism sector has never ever been given the priority that it now gets. Whether at the Madison Square Garden in the US or the BRIC or SAARC summit, our Prime Minister has mentioned tourism everywhere. This is a matter of pride for all of us that the leader of our country is trying to make the tourism sector the main engine of growth for the socio-economic development of our country. This is both a challenge as well as an opportunity for us.

Following the eVisa move on November 27, 10,000 eVisas have already been issued by the government. This is going to be a game changer and the world cup of tourism. We will all request the Indian Government to increase the number of countries being provided the ETA, from 43 to more. Then I am sure that the number of foreign tourists coming to India would definitely rise to 10 million in the next three years."

Receiving the Gallery of legends award **Dr Jyotsna Suri**, Chairperson & MD, Bharat Hotels and President, FICCI, called it a proud moment and said that tourism is all set to fly.

The other big winners were **Dr. Subhash Goyal**, President, IATO & Chairman, STIC Travel Group, who was awarded the 'DDP Trailblazer', while DDP Game Changer Award went to **Ajay Bakaya**, Executive Director, Sarovar Hotels and Resorts, and **Ankush Nijhawan**, MD, Travel Boutique Online, was awarded the 'Face of the Future'.

Buoyant about the industry's reaction to the awards, **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Group, said, "The industry has created 22 new categories. When voting was finally opened, over 412,700 votes were received from all over the world, and the total votes received were from 63 countries" Congratulating the winners, he said that he was confident they would all together take the industry to greater heights. 🚀

Gallery of Legends



Dr Jyotsna Suri, Chairperson & Managing Director, Bharat Hotels Ltd. was conferred with 'The Gallery of Legends' Award. She receives the award from **S. Sohan Singh Thandal, Tourism Minister of Punjab**, and **Dr. Lalit K Panwar, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism** and **SanJeet, Director, DDP Group**

The DDP Trailblazer



Dr Subhash Goyal, President, IATO & Chairman, STIC Travel Groups receives 'The DDP Trailblazer' Award from **S. Sohan Singh Thandal, Tourism Minister of Punjab**, and **Dr. Lalit K Panwar, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism** and **SanJeet, Director, DDP Group**

DDP Game Changer



Ajay Bakaya, Executive Director, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts receives the 'DDP Game Changer' Award from **S. Sohan Singh Thandal, Tourism Minister of Punjab**, and **Dr. Lalit K Panwar, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism**, **Amita Motwani, Mrs. India International 2013** and **SanJeet, Director, DDP Group**

The DDP Face of the Future



Ankush Nijhawan, Managing Director, Nijhawan Group of Companies receives 'The DDP Face of the Future' Award from **S. Sohan Singh Thandal, Tourism Minister of Punjab**, and **Dr. Lalit K Panwar, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism**, **Amita Motwani, Mrs. India International 2013** and **SanJeet, Director, DDP Group**



Tourism Ambassador - Overseas



The award was given to **Tourism Ambassador - Overseas** and received by **Ramesh Arora** from **S. Sohan Singh Thandal**, Tourism Minister of Punjab, and **Dr. Lalit K Panwar**, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, **Amita Motwani**, Mrs. India International 2013 and **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Group



Entrepreneur of the Year



The award was given to **Meenu Sachdeva**, Managing Director, **TI Infotech Pvt. Ltd.**

Outstanding Contribution to CSR



Most Innovative Hospitality Marketing Campaign



The award was given to **Accor Hotels** and received by its Regional Director Sales & Marketing – India, **Nikhil Dhodapkar**

The award was given to **Kuoni India** and received by its CEO, India and South Asia, Kuoni Destination Management, **Dipak Deva** and COO, India and South Asia, Kuoni Destination Management, **Vineet Mahendru**



Most Popular General Manager



The award was given to **Greesh Bindra**, General Manager, Crown Plaza Greater Noida

Mentoring Hotels into Renowned Brands



The award was given to **Sunil Ghadiok**, CEO, Nidra Hospitality Pvt. Ltd.

Best Hotel Middle East



The award was given to **J W Marriott, Deira, Dubai** and received by its Director of Sales and Marketing, **Gareth Cummings** and Director of Sales, **Sona Rawal**

Best European Airline



The award was given to **Lufthansa German Airlines** and received by its Manager Marketing - Communications, **Sangeeta Sharma**

Best Emerging Travel Portal



The award was given to **GRNconnect.com** and received by its Managing Director, **GRNconnect.com**, Aman Travels Limited, **Deepak Narula**

Most Progressive Trade Marketing



The award was given to **Punjab Heritage and Tourism Promotion Board** and received by its Executive Director, **Basanta Raj Kumar** and Senior Marketing Manager, **Razit Bhandari**

Pioneering New Concepts in Hospitality



The award was given to **Tree of Life Resorts & Hotels** and received by its Founder, **Himmat Anand** and Group Head, **Akhil Anand**

Best Global Distribution System (GDS)



The award was given to **Abacus Distribution Systems India Pvt. Ltd.** and received by its Director of Sales, **Ankur Chatterjee** and Regional Head North India, **Deblina Dasgupta**

Best Visa Facilitation Company



The award was given to **Udaan India Private Limited** and received by its Managing Director, **Rajan Dua**



Best Business Hotel



The award was given to **Radisson Blu Hotel, New Delhi, Paschim Vihar** and received by its General Manager, **Barun Jolly**

Best General Sales Agent



The award was given to **STIC Travel Group** and received by its Head of Sales - India, **Praful Khosla** and Head of Marketing, **Sanjay Kapoor**

Best Innovative Product



The award was given to **Forerez.com** and received by its Managing Director, **Parikshit Sawhney**

Fastest Growing Hotel Brand



The award was given to **BRYs Hotels Pvt. Ltd.** and received by its Chairman & Managing Director, **Rahul Gaur**

Best Inbound Tour Operator- Western Europe



The award was given to **Travel Spirit International Pvt. Ltd.** and received by its Managing Director, **Jatinder S Taneja**

Best Heritage Hotel



The award was given to **Vivaana Culture Hotel** and received by its Managing Director, **Atul Khanna** and Director, **Shiven Khanna**

Best Travel Portal



The award was given to **Travel Boutique Online** and received by its Managing Director, **Ankush Nijhawan**

Best Debut Business Hotel



The award was given to **Hyatt Place Gurgaon, Udyog Vihar** and received by its General Manager, **Sumit Kumar**

Best Foreign Exchange Provider



The award was given to **Centrum Direct** and received by its General Manager (North & East), **Harendra Choudhary**



Best Global Consolidation Services



The award was given to **Mystify Consulting (India)** and received by its Founder, MD & CEO, **Rajeev Kumar G**

Best Leisure Hotel



The award was given to **Clarks Shiraz** and received by its Jt. Managing Director, **Rupak Gupta** and Sr. Vice President, **Debashish Bhowmik**

Best Online Travel Product- B2B



The award was given to **RezLive.com** and received by its Associate Vice President, **Tirath Shah**

Best Debut Hotel

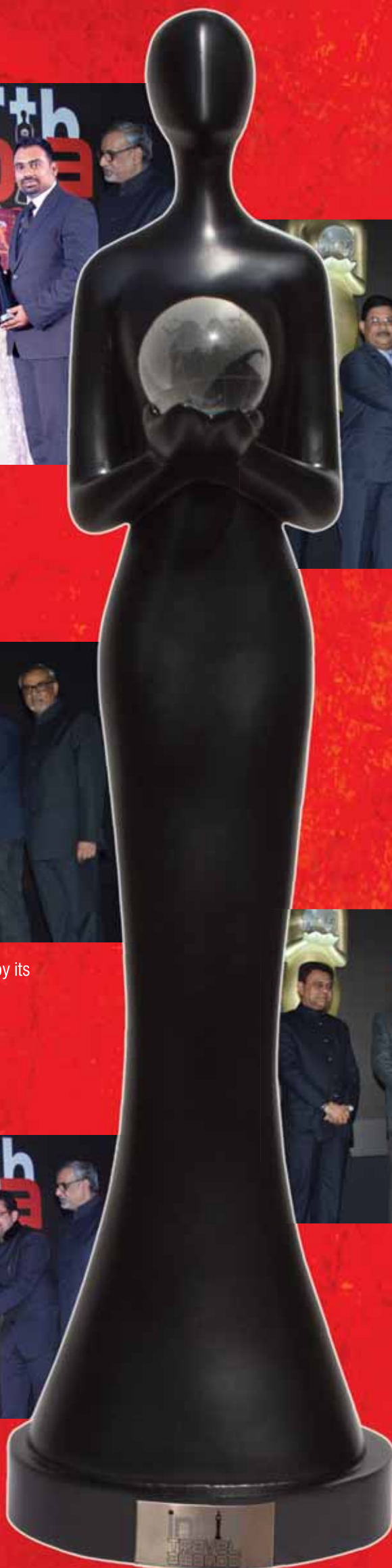


The award was given to **Holiday Inn New Delhi International Airport** and received by its General Manager, **Ranjan Malakar** and Director, Wave Hospitality, **Ashwin Malik**

Best Corporate Incentive Tours Operator



The award was given to **Wish Bone India** and received by its Directors, **Amit Aggarwal** and **Rishi Khandelwal**



Best Luxury Wedding & Mice Resort



The award was given to **Ramada Udaipur Resort & Spa** and received by its Managing Director, **Ratan Taldar** and Resort Manager, **Dolly Taldar**

Best Airport Hotel



The award was given to **ibis Delhi Airport Hotel** and received by its Senior E commerce Manager, **Kumar Preetam Jaiswal**

Best Travel Technology Provider



The award was given to **Zillions Solutions Pvt.Ltd.** and received by its Director Sales, **Rajan**

Best Debut Mid-Market Hotel



The award was given to **R K Sarovar Portico, Srinagar** and received by its Owner, **Saddam Zaroo** and General Manager, **Shaiful Alam**

Best Clean and Green Destination



The award was given to **Chandigarh Tourism** and received by **Razit Bhandari**, Senior Marketing Manager on behalf of Chandigarh Tourism



Best Boutique Resort



The award was given to **WelcomHeritage Ranjit's Svaasa** and received by its Director, **Ved Iqbal Rattan Mehra**

Best Travel Insurance Provider



The award was given to **TrawellTag Cover-More** and received by its Area Manager Delhi, **Deepak Singh**

Best International Tourism Board



The award was given to **Tourism Authority of Thailand** and received by its Director, **Runjuan Tongrut**

Best Tourist Attraction



The award was given to **Kingdom of Dreams** and received by its Director of Sales **Priyanka Vohra Sharma**

Best Luxury and MICE Hotel



The award was given to **Crowne Plaza Greater Noida** and received by its Director of Sales, **Achint Rastogi**



Best Inbound Tour Operator



The award was given to **Minar Travels** and received by its Managing Director, **H.S. Duggal** and COO - Tours, **Madan Kak**

Best Travel Management Company



The award was given to **Travstarz Holidays & Destinations Private Limited** and received by its Managing Director, **Pankaj Nagpal**

Best Mid-Market Hotel Brand



The award was given to **Clarks Inn Group of Hotels** and received by its President and Co-founder, **S N Srivastava**

Best Airline Representation Company



The award was given to **Concorde Group** and received by its Director, **Prithviraj Chug** and Business Head Passenger, **Payal Mehta**

Best inbound Experiential Tour Operator



The award was given to **Vasco Travel** and received by its Managing Director, **Vikas Abbott** and General Manager, **N.N. Satapathy**



Best Mid-Market Hotel



The award was given to **Holiday Inn Amritsar Ranjit Avenue** and received by its General Manager, **Kunal Shanker** and Managing Director, **Jagdeep Sandhu**

Best Emerging MICE Operator



The award was given to **Global Connect Travels Pvt. Ltd.** and received by its Founder & Director **Sudhir Kaul** and Director, **Sunil Pandit**

Best Outbound Experiential Tour Operator



The award was given to **The Experience Factory** and received by its Directors, **Nishant Gupta** and **Shailesh Dixit**

Best Hospitality Marketing Franchise Company



The award was given to **Alliance Hotels & Resorts** and received by its CEO, **Zia Siddiqui**

Best City Hotel



The award was given to **The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa** and received by its General Manager, **Sanjeev Bhatia**



Best Wedding Hotel- Punjab



The award was given to **Radisson Blu Hotel, Amritsar** and received by its Director of Sales, **Hema Dhoke**

Best B2B Luxury Travel Event



The award was given to **VKonect Events** and received by its Consultant & Advisor, **Vineet Gopal**

Best Luxury Tour Operator



The award was given to **Terra Ignota Tours** and received by its Managing Director, **Nitin Sambhi** and Sr. Executive Tours, **K. Krishna**

Best International Airline - Asia



The award was given to **Thai Airways** and received by its Area Sales Manager - India, **Ravi Talwar**

Best Boutique Tour Operator



The award was given to **Go Explore Pvt. Ltd.** and received by its Managing Director, **Shalini Dugar** and Business Development - Europe, **Kailash Pathak**

Beverage Partner



The award was given to **Bacardi India Pvt. Ltd.** and received by its Trade Marketing Manager, **Ashima Wadhera Mehta**

Hospitality Partner



The award was given to **Crowne Plaza Greater Noida** and received by its General Manager, **Greesh Bindra**

Entertainment Partner

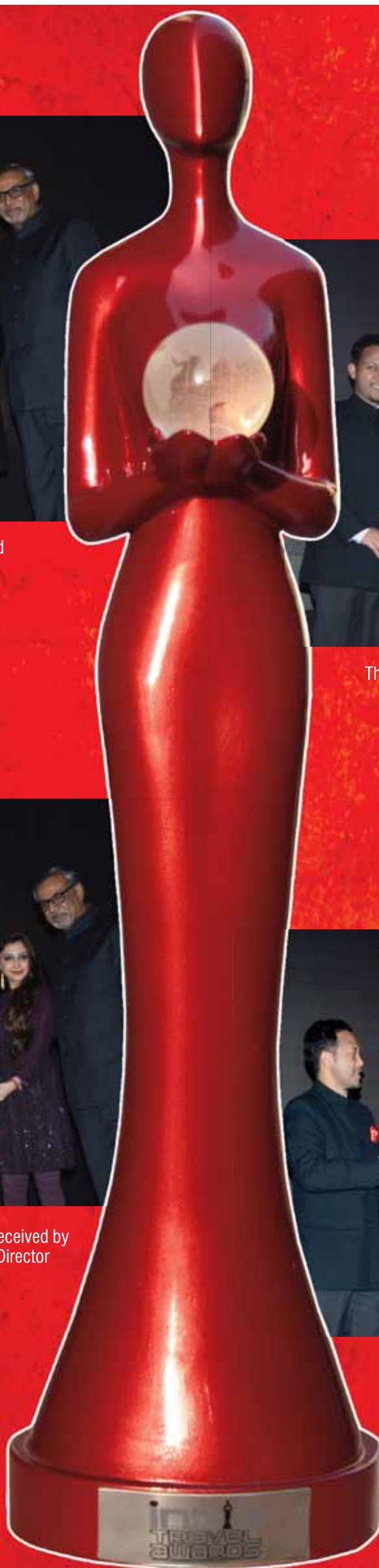


The award was given to **Kingdom of Dreams** and received by its Director of Sales, **Priyanka Vohra Sharma** and Director of Dance Cafe Crew, **Kanika Sharma**

Sponsor



The award was given to **BRYs Hotels Pvt. Ltd.** and received by its Chairman & Managing Director, **Rahul Gaur**



Chief Guest **S. Sohan Singh Thandal**, Tourism Minister of Punjab
being honoured with Pearl Trophy 'Maya'



“ I feel extremely proud to be invited here at the North India Travel Awards as the Chief Guest. There are many renowned names who have been honoured here and I take immense pride in meeting them. These diverse talents who have been awarded here are taking India tourism to newer heights. I thank DDP Group for organising this event at such a grand level. There are many people who have been working for the growth and progress of tourism sector who remain behind the screen.

The ITA awards will bring these hidden talents to come forward and show their talent to the world. Recently, Centre has launched eVoA for 43 countries. This initiative will push tourism and inbound will grow. There are many countries who are working hard to grow tourism as it contributes a lot to their GDP. The successful implementation of eVoA will bring India also in the league of these nations and tourism will be a major contributor to the GDP of India. ”

Guest of Honour **Dr. Lalit K Panwar** being honoured with Pearl Trophy 'Maya'



Thanking **Amita Motwani** for her support to India Travel Awards



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