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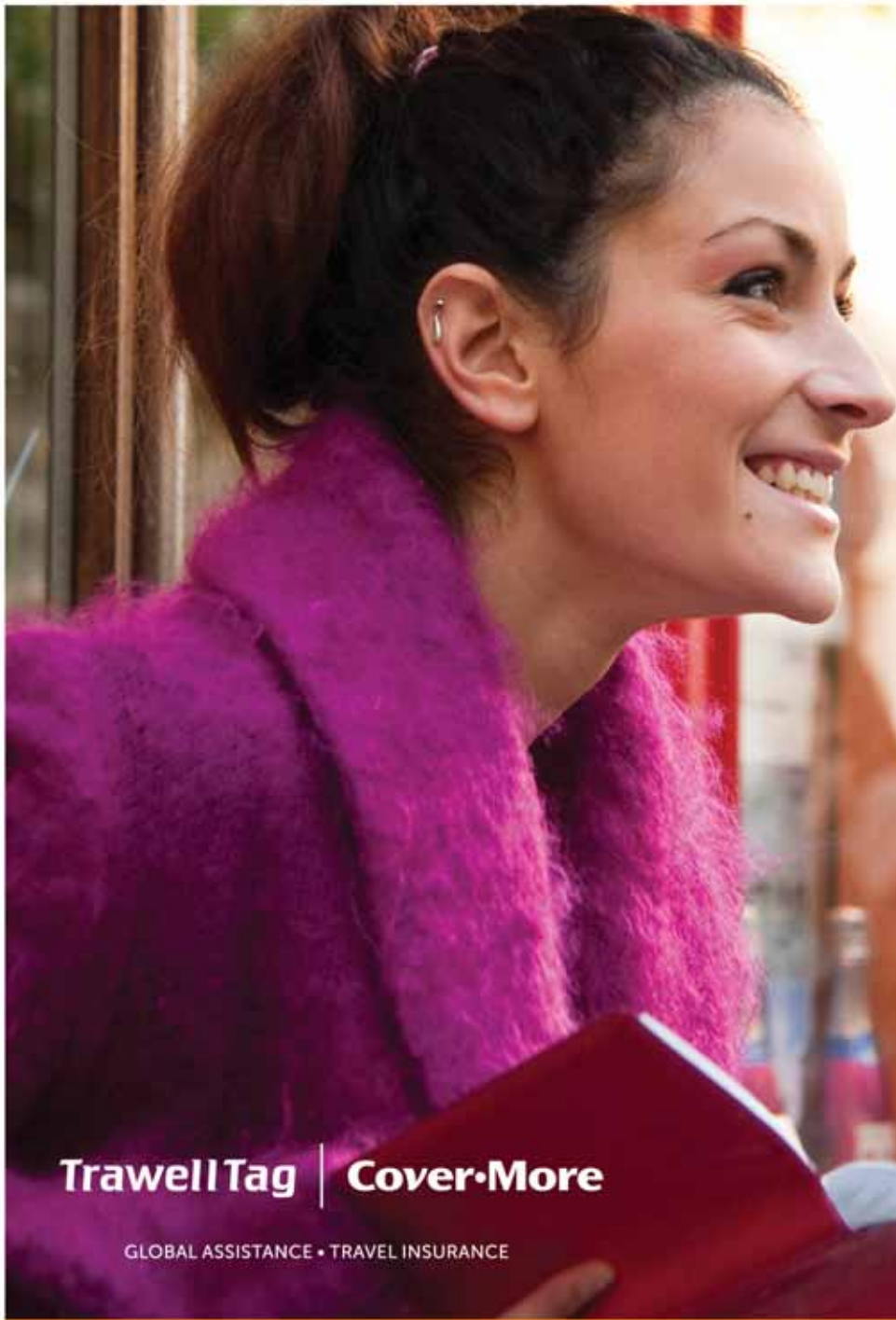


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421.6% more eVisas issued in Dec

In 2014, India issued 39,046 VoAs as compared to 20,294 in 2013, registering a growth of 92.4 per cent. The eVisa launch has worked wonders for tourism in India.

TT BUREAU

A total of 14,083 Tourist Visas on Arrival (VoAs) enabled by Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) were issued by the Indian government last month, as compared with 2,700 VoAs during December 2013, registering a growth of 421.6 per cent. The percentage share of top ten source countries for VoA during December 2014 were USA (24.26 per cent), Russian Federation (15.06 per cent), Republic of Korea (11.01 per cent), Ukraine (8.16 per cent), Australia (7.98 per cent), New Zealand (5.08 per cent), Japan (4.30 per cent), Singapore (4.27 per cent), Germany (4.05 per cent), and the Philippines (3.10 per cent).

Top 10 source markets for VoA in Dec' 2014

Country	%age
USA	24.26
Russian Federation	15.06
Republic of Korea	11.01
Ukraine	8.16
Australia	7.98
New Zealand	5.08
Japan	4.30
Singapore	4.27
Germany	4.05
The Philippines	3.10

Percentage share of VoA's in different ports

Country	%age
New Delhi	35.78
Mumbai	21.05
Goa	18.24
Chennai	7.17
Bengaluru	5.76
Kochi	4.54
Hyderabad	3.13
Kolkata	2.35
Thiruvananthapuram	1.98

Delhi (35.78 per cent), Mumbai (21.05 per cent), Goa (18.24 per cent), Chennai (7.17 per cent), Bengaluru (5.76 per cent), Kochi (4.54 per cent), Hyderabad (3.13 per cent), Kolkata (2.35 per cent), and Thiruvananthapuram (1.98 per cent). In the entire calendar year 2014, 39,046 VoAs were issued as compared with 20,294 in 2013, registering a growth of 92.4 per cent. This high growth was due to introduction of ETA-enabled VoA for 43 countries, launched by the Centre on November 27, 2014. Prior to that, only the VoA scheme was in operation for 12 countries. For stats please refer to page 12 ▶

per cent), Singapore (4.27 per cent), and the Philippines (3.10 per cent). The percentage share of different ports for VoA last month were New

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Indian aviation 3rd largest by 2020

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75 FTOs at UPTM's maiden show

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Explore the heart of India in Nagpur

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Confluence of ideas in the 'Land of Creation'

See full story page 14 ▶

50 million outbound tourists by 2020

India is one of the fastest-growing outbound travel markets in the world. With more than 1.1 billion inhabitants and GDP increasing by more than eight per cent every year, India offers enormous potential for outbound travel. Indians are increasingly travelling abroad to meet relatives settled abroad, shopping trips, global sport events or simply for leisure. The UNWTO predicts that India will account for 50 million outbound tourists by 2020. TRAVTALK reports more on these trends...

For complete story please read page 52 ▶

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230 hotels for Clean India

In what the industry calls a first-of-its-kind initiative, a total of 230 hotels, including 170 major ones, under the Hotel Association of India (HAI), have pledged that more than 500 of their employees will clean about 230 km of road around their hotels and 53 monuments in the country.

TT BUREAU
 “It’s simple and directly proportional: if the country isn’t clean, we attract less tourists,”

the government’s clean India initiative. EIH has tasked at least three employees per hotels to dedicatedly clean the areas around their hotels,”

Several five-star chains have beautified the areas around their hotels for years. The ITC Maurya and Taj Palace Hotels in Delhi and The Leela in Mumbai are examples of hotels that have kept pavement plants well-pruned and dust free.

Some hotels have given the power to general managers to schedule cleaning activities, while some others have dedicated staff to look after surrounding areas, clean nearby railway stations or public toilets around monuments.

Now they plan to do more. “All participating hotels are cleaning more than just the immediate surroundings and will cover a wider radius,” **Nakul Anand**, executive director, ITC added.

Industry executives said it’s difficult to define the size of the areas to be cleaned as its spread widely across geographies. Each partner hotel is working on the project as a single unit, setting its own goal and deciding how to go about

Quick Updates

- ▶ Each partner hotel is working on the project as a single unit
- ▶ Some have given the power to general managers to schedule cleaning activities
- ▶ Others have dedicated staff to look after surrounding areas, clean nearby railway stations or public toilets around monuments



“It makes sense for the hospitality sector to embrace the government’s Clean India initiative. EIH has tasked at least three employees per hotels to dedicatedly clean the areas around their hotels.”

Vikramjit Oberoi
 President, Hotel Association of India

Vikramjit Oberoi, President, Hotel Association of India said, “It makes sense for the hospitality sector to embrace

Oberoi, who is also the chief operating officer and joint MD of the group’s flagship EIH remarked.

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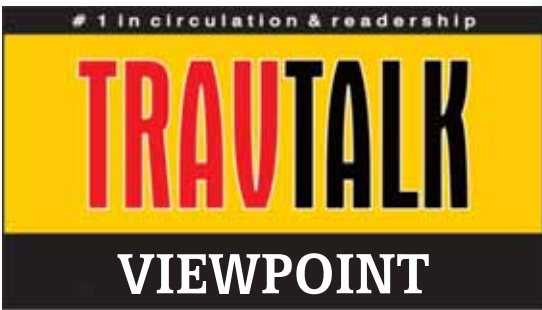
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Indians the new globetrotter

With the implementation of the Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) and the recent slew of initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Tourism on the occasion of the Good Governance Day, we are surely heading towards good times. A total of 14,083 Visas on Arrival (VoAs) enabled by ETA have been issued by the Indian government in December last year, as compared with 2,700 VoAs during December 2013, registering a growth of 421.6 per cent.

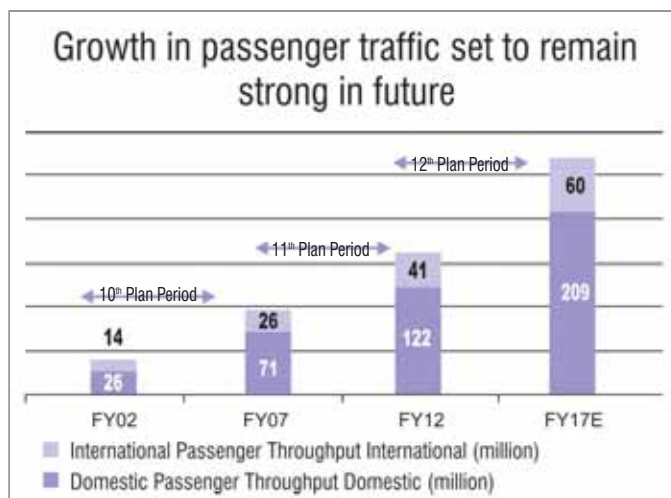
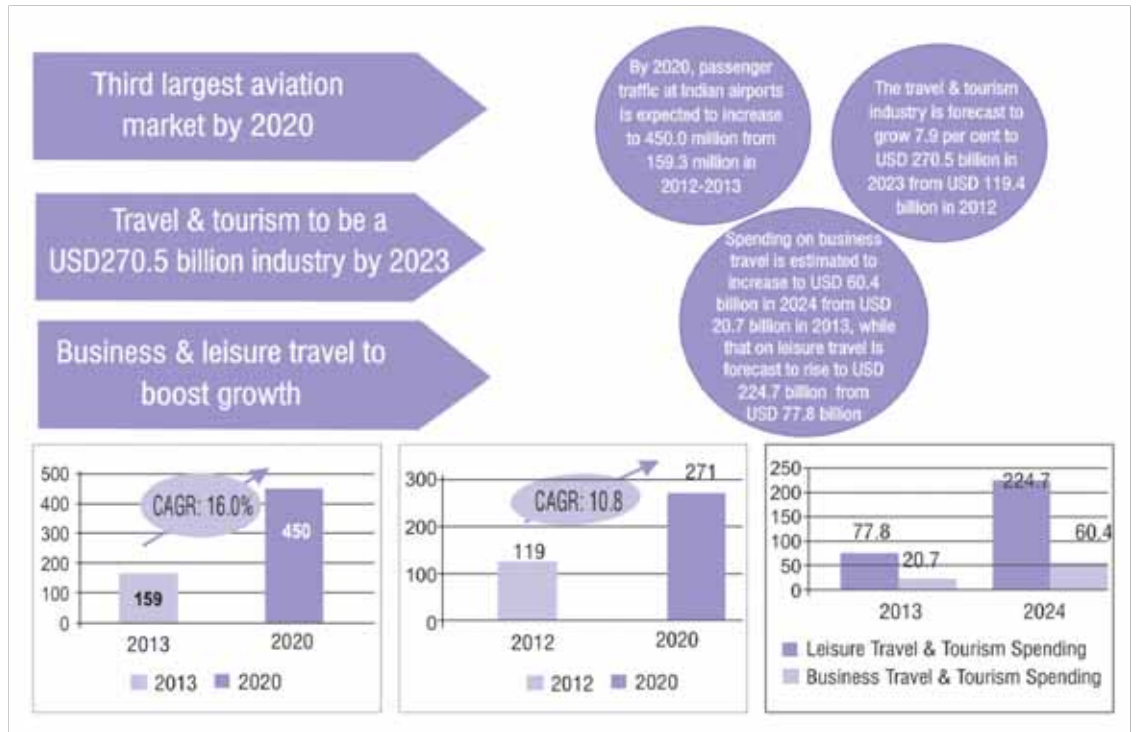
Not only have our inbound numbers risen, but there is good news on the outbound travel front as well. India has emerged as one of the world's fastest-growing outbound market and in absolute numbers, it is second only to China. The number of Indians travelling overseas is set to rise from around 15 million today to 50 million by 2020. This, in turn, will also mean a phenomenal growth in spending overseas. According to a recently released Amadeus-Frost & Sullivan tourism industry report, Indians travelling to Asia-Pacific alone spent \$13.3 billion in 2011. This figure is set to zoom to \$91 billion by 2030, making Indians the second-biggest spenders, after China, in the world on overseas travel.

Thus, it is but obvious that foreign tourist boards are gearing up to meet the growing number of Indians who are travelling abroad and splurging. Also, the trends of outbound travel from India are changing. With the introduction of direct flights to a number of foreign tourist destinations now, Indians are spending their extended weekends overseas. Weekend holidays in nearby hill stations are now passe. Short-haul direct international flights — anything around five hours of flight time — are seeing the biggest growth. Also evident is the fact that Indians are taking more frequent holidays.

In the near future, NTOs will need to aggressively market their products as more and more globetrotting Indians are turning experimental, opting for offbeat destinations, looking to customise trips and newer experiences.

Indian aviation 3rd largest by 2020

With the Indian aviation market estimated to be the third largest by 2020, business & leisure travel is expected to be a large growth booster. By 2020, passenger traffic at Indian airports is expected to increase to 450.0 million from 159.3 million in 2012-2013.

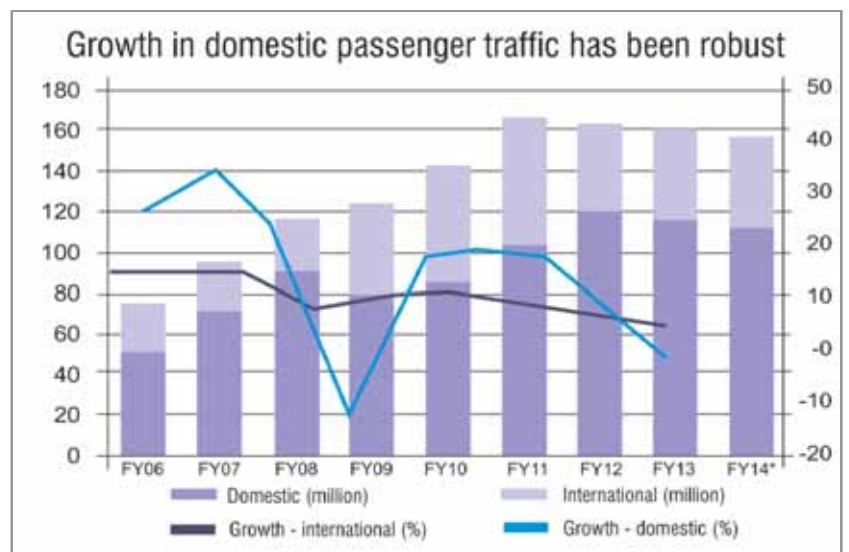


▲ Domestic passenger traffic expanded a CAGR of 12.5 per cent over FY 06-13; by FY 17 domestic passenger traffic is expected to touch 209 million

▲ International passenger traffic posted a CAGR of 9.8 per cent FY 06-13 and is set to touch 60 million by FY 17

▲ During April-February 2014, domestic passenger traffic increased by 5.5 per cent compared to similar period in the previous year

▲ During April-February 2014, international passenger traffic increased by 8.9 per cent compared to similar period in the previous year



Source:www.ibef.org



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WTM LA 2015 The biggest & the best so far

World Travel Market Latin America 2015 is poised to be a hit. Thanks to the new venue, The Expo Center Norte, São Paulo and a range of new initiatives that will add to the business value and meet exhibitors need.



TT BUREAU

The third WTM Latin America and 43rd Braztoa Business event will take place at The Expo Center Norte, São Paulo, from April 22-24, 2015. The move from the Transamerica Expo Centre to a larger venue this year allows WTM Latin America to expand by a further 10 per cent and meet exhibitors demand. New exhibitors including Traveltek, Delta Tours and Saint Petersburg Express will be



with an increased floor space in an improved location to bring the world to Latin America and Latin America to the world." The new addition for 2015 is 'A Taste of IBTM' that will see Reed

Travel Exhibition's event; IBTM's staff approve 60 qualified MICE buyers for exhibitors to negotiate business deals under one roof. WTM Latin America 2015 will also include a Business Travel Area, which will be added to the exhibition floor. It will promote networking among the participants like global travel management companies, airlines, hotels and technology suppliers. Moreover, 100

Brazilian business travel buyers will also be encouraged to close deals with the business travel exhibitors. The WTM Latin America Hosted Buyer Programme returns to the event with up to 120 international buyers, while Braztoa's Caravanas make a come-back by hosting 900 Brazilian travel agents. The tour operator association will also host 70 product managers.

A taste of IBTM

- ▶ The new addition for 2015 is 'A Taste of IBTM' that will see Reed Travel Exhibition's event; IBTM's staff approve 60 qualified MICE buyers for exhibitors to negotiate business deals under one roof
- ▶ WTM Latin America 2015 will also include a Business Travel Area, which will be added to the exhibition floor



Lawrence Reinisch
Exhibition Director
WTM LA

WTM Latin America 2015 will be the biggest and best event so far, with an increased floor space in an improved location to bring the world to Latin America and Latin America to the world

participating at the event alongside long-term exhibitors like Chile, Israel, Mexico and Peru. These countries have increased their presence for 2015 and will help surpass the last year's \$341 million of business deals.

Furthermore, the central location of Expo Center Norte in São Paulo will make the event more accessible to the city's travel agents. The new venue also offers an improved location for international exhibitors, buyers and visitors as the Expo Center Norte is near São Paulo's Guarulhos airport, the main aviation hub for Latin America.

WTM Latin America, Exhibition Director, Lawrence Reinisch said, "WTM Latin America 2015 will be the biggest and best event so far,

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Cruising high with rural touch in mind

Dr Mahesh Sharma, Minister of State for Tourism, Independent Charge, talks about the need to promote rural and cruise tourism at the first meeting of National Steering Committee for new plan schemes of PRASAD and Integrated Development of Tourist Circuits of Ministry of Tourism in Delhi.



The first meeting of National Steering Committee for new plan schemes of PRASAD and integrated development of tourist circuits of Ministry of Tourism, in New Delhi, was chaired by the Minister of State for Culture and Tourism (Independent Charge) and Civil

Aviation, **Dr Mahesh Sharma**. The meeting was attended by the representatives of various ministries. The stakeholders gave details of some of the projects to promote Tourism being implemented by them and how they can be dovetailed with PRASAD as well as scheme of Development of Tourist Circuits.

Inter-ministerial cooperation

Addressing the participants, the Minister emphasised the need for inter-ministerial cooperation and coordination to create proper synergy for the success of the schemes. Dr Mahesh Sharma said that there is a need to promote rural tourism since even urban India is not familiar with the rural life. Apart from this, India has rich resources like rivers which can be beneficial for developing Cruise Tourism which is non-existent in the country at present, he said.

Speedy implementation of projects

Suggesting the need for speedy implementation of PRASAD and development of integrated circuits, the Minister said that there

should be no delay in implementing those portions of the scheme which are within the ambit of the Central Government. He also urged the officials to launch within a week the projects already identified and in which a substantial ground work has already been done.

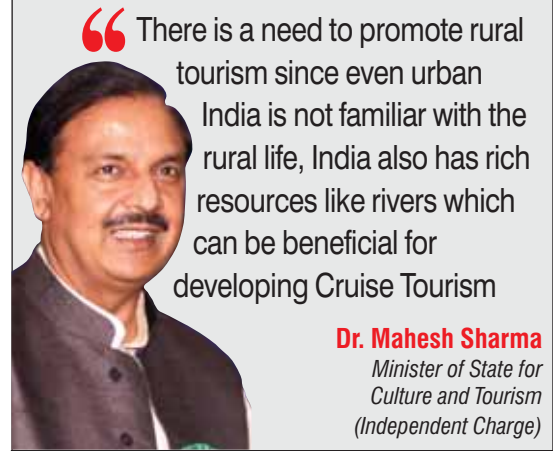
Soft skills necessary

The representatives of various ministries promised to send their proposals as discussed in the meeting in writing to the Ministry of Tourism. They suggested that there is not only a need to focus on infrastructure but emphasis should also be placed on soft skills like training of guides and generating livelihood and employment among local communities.

Buddhist circuits

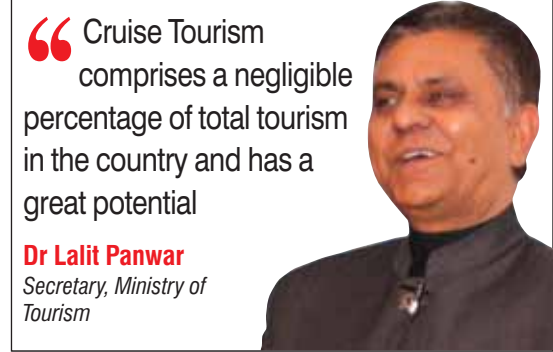
Secretary (Culture), **Ravindra Singh** pointed out that the locations for the

Walk the Talk



“ There is a need to promote rural tourism since even urban India is not familiar with the rural life, India also has rich resources like rivers which can be beneficial for developing Cruise Tourism

Dr. Mahesh Sharma
Minister of State for Culture and Tourism (Independent Charge)



“ Cruise Tourism comprises a negligible percentage of total tourism in the country and has a great potential

Dr Lalit Panwar
Secretary, Ministry of Tourism

Buddhist circuit must be finalised quickly and the Banaras circuit, which will form a good project to be taken up under the scheme, should also be developed. Secretary (Tourism), **Dr Lalit Panwar** highlighted the importance of Cruise Tourism saying that it comprises a negligible percentage of total tourism in the country and has a great potential.



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75 FTOs at UPTM's maiden show

The first edition of the Mart will witness participation of 75 foreign tour operators (FTOs), who will meet 80-100 leading sellers of wildlife, heritage and Buddhist tourism in Uttar Pradesh.



TT BUREAU

In a bid to boost tourism in Uttar Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh Travel Mart (UPTM) will be held in Lucknow from February 22-24, 2015. The maiden edition of UPTM is being organised by the Government of Uttar Pradesh in partnership with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). O P Singh, Minister of Tourism, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh had formally launched the Uttar Pradesh Travel Mart 2015 on November 15, 2014 at Delhi.

Foreseeing the power of tourism and hospitality in employment-generation, contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and giving a boost to economic growth, the Mart has been envisioned as a three-day travel mart. The Mart will exclusively focus on business of tourism for all stakeholders of tourism industry in



Rahul Chakravarty
Director, FICCI

“The first edition of the Mart will witness participation of 75 foreign tour operators (FTOs), who will meet 80-100 leading sellers of wildlife, heritage and Buddhist tourism in Uttar Pradesh

the state to promote tourism in a substantial way.

According to **Rahul Chakravarty**, Director, FICCI, the first edition of the Mart will witness participation of 75 foreign tour operators (FTOs), who will meet 80-100 leading sellers of wildlife, heritage and Buddhist tourism in Uttar Pradesh. Both top-of-the-line buyers and sellers will be handpicked by FICCI after validation of their creden-

tials, and will be hosted by the state government.

The USP of UPTM is to build a platform where both the buyers and sellers network over pre-scheduled, structured, organised B2B meetings and onsite marketing of target destinations in Uttar Pradesh through FAM trips, he added. There will be an exclusive focus to highlight and promote the heritage arc covering three

destinations i.e. Agra, Lucknow and Varanasi.

UPTM '15 is supported by Tourism Guild of Agra, Hotel and Restaurant Owners Association of Agra, Uttar Pradesh Hotels and Restaurant Association and the Varanasi Tourism Guild.

New Offerings

► The inauguration will be held on February 22

► The pre-scheduled B2B meetings will be held on February 23- 24 at Indira Gandhi Pratishthan, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow

► Around 1500 pre-scheduled B2B meetings expected in one and half days

Experience India's heritage

Talking about the 4th India Heritage Tourism Conclave, that will be held in Delhi on February 20, Yogesh Srivastav, Director, PHD Chamber, says they'll be focusing on opportunities & challenges in conserving Indian Heritage.



PEDEN DOMA BHUTIA

QHow has the response to the 4th India Heritage Tourism Conclave been?

The response has been very good so far. Various states have already partnered with us. We have also roped in renowned subject experts and several international tourism agencies like UNESCO and China Tourism which have extended their support in terms of knowledge inputs. We are getting a good amount of queries regarding participation and we look forward to making it a grand success.

QWhat are the topics that you'll be focusing on in this conclave?

India is known for its rich cultural heritage and an element of mysticism, which is why tourists come to our country. In this edition of the heritage tourism programme, we will be discussing the opportunities & challenges in the conservation & preservation of Indian Heritage and building & conserving new heritage for our upcoming generations.

QWhat do you hope to achieve with this conclave?

PHD Chamber is an industry association, which acts as a catalyst to bring the industry and government

QAt the third Heritage Tourism Conclave, Parvez Dewan, Former Secretary, MOT recommended that tourism and heritage sites all over the country should be devel-

workshops but also to International tourism Boards to share their best practices.

QPHD Chamber has promised to take the initiative to promote tourism and heritage to in all 12 States where it operates and even overseas where it interacts with its counterparts for mutual economic gains. How are you working towards this?

In different culturally rich nations across the globe like Turkey, Czech Republic, Venice, Thailand, France, China etc, we keep exchanging dialogue on issues of mutual promotion of foreign heritage among home travellers. Active participation of foreign tourism boards in our activities results in higher visibility to the targeted audience for both the parties. On the domestic front, this year we are not only promoting tourism in all the 12 states where PHD Chamber has physical presence but also amongst the north eastern states. That is the mandate we have with us by the new leadership of



Yogesh Srivastav
Director, PHD Chamber

“In this edition of the heritage tourism programme, we will be discussing the opportunities & challenges in the conservation & preservation of Indian Heritage and building & conserving new heritage for our upcoming generations

stakeholders all on one platform. Through this heritage summit, we aim to achieve higher inclination from diverse stakeholders towards the preservation, sustenance and wider publicity of Indian heritage, but we also need to deliberate whether we are creating new heritage for the next generation in India.

oped in such a way that original structures are intact and protected. Have you been following up on that?

We as a chamber are ensuring that the thought process of the Government of India is not only circulated to the State Tourism Boards through our conferences and

Luring new exhibitors in African style

WTM Africa 2015, the leading business-to-business tourism event in Africa, has added an array of new International exhibitors, including destination hot-spot Abu Dhabi and a number of major players from the hotel, travel technology, cruise and airline sectors.



The new exhibitors at WTM Africa 2015, which will take place at the Cape Town International Convention Centre from April 15th-17th, signed up for the event following its growing publicity and positive feedback from the hugely successful inaugural WTM Africa, last year.

lished itself as a major trade must-attend event. Our delegation of leading hotels, tour operators and national airline Etihad Airways will showcase the very best of Abu Dhabi's tourism opportunities, while also highlighting the culture and heritage of the emirate. Airlift to Abu Dhabi will substantially increase from March



when South African Airways will begin flights direct to the UAE capital, joining Etihad Airways' seven flights a week to Abu Dhabi, and this is an ideal opportunity for us to

increase our inbound visitors from the African continent."

From the airline sector, Fastjet, the low-cost pan-Africa airline, will be highlighting new opportunities following its newly launched routes to South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe from its Dar es Salaam base. This year's event has been expanded by an

extra day to become a three-day event and the exhibition floor space will be 50 per cent bigger. WTM Africa 2014 facilitated an impressive \$314 million in industry deals. WTM Africa, Thebe Reed Exhibitions, Managing Director, **Carol Weaving** said, "We're excited to welcome more of the world's key tourism players to WTM

Africa 2015. It's great to see such a wide range of new exhibitors from such different International tourism businesses, and it's a result of the buzz WTM Africa created during its inaugural event last year. WTM Africa 2014 saw almost 4,000 industry professionals negotiate deals worth \$314 million (£189 million)."



Mubarak Al Nuaimi
Director, Destination Promotion
Department, TCA Abu Dhabi

Our delegation of leading hotels, tour operators and national airline Etihad Airways will showcase the very best of Abu Dhabi's tourism opportunities

The Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority (TCA Abu Dhabi) is the latest destination to sign up to WTM Africa 2015, while, from the global accommodation sector, International Hotel Group (IHG), Best Western and Hotel Verde are the new exhibitors.

Mubarak Al Nuaimi, Director, Destination Promotion Department, TCA Abu Dhabi, said, "We followed with interest the success of the inaugural WTM Africa exhibition in 2014 and we are excited to be exhibiting this year at an event which has already estab-

Fast Facts

▶ Etihad Airways will showcase the very best of Abu Dhabi's tourism opportunities, highlighting the culture and heritage of the emirate

▶ Airlift to Abu Dhabi will substantially increase from March when South African Airways will begin flights direct to the UAE capital



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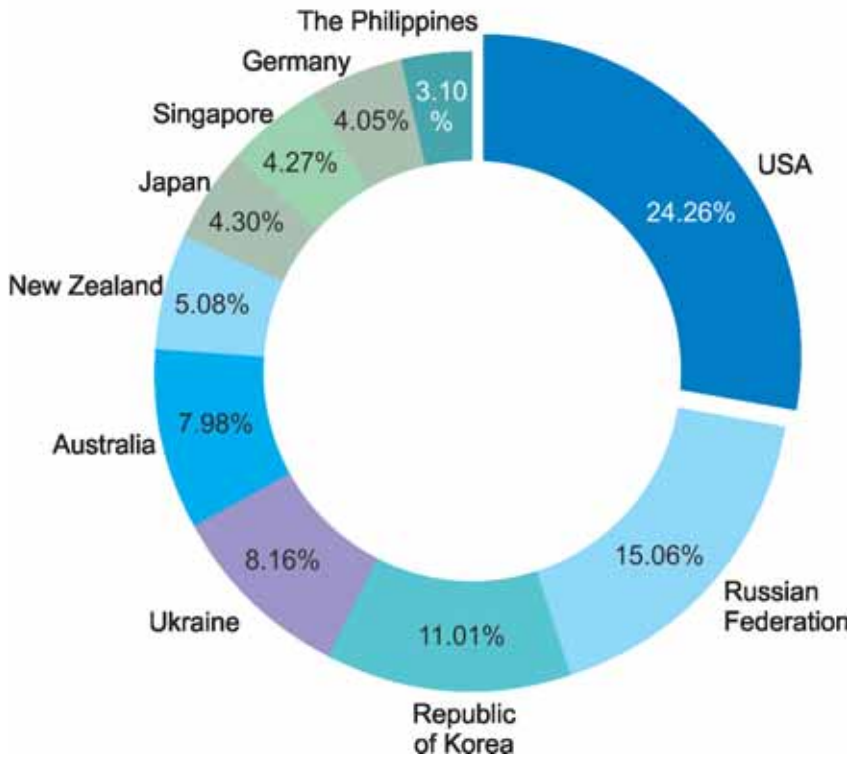
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421.6% hike in eVisas in Dec'14

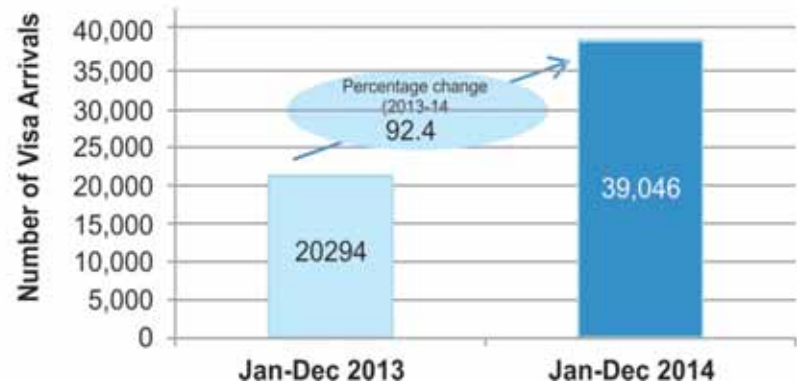
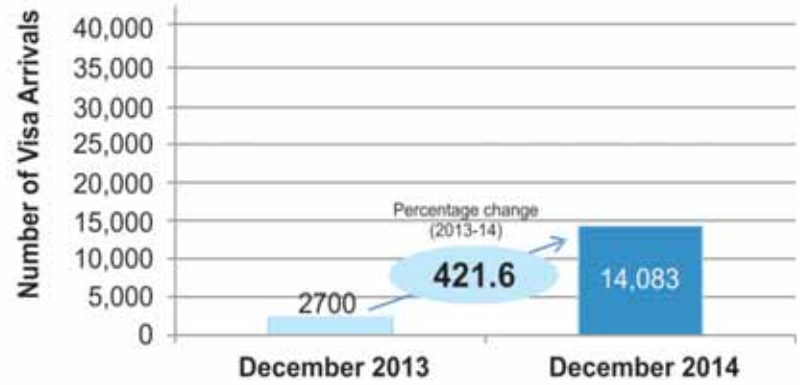
VoA registers an increase of 421.6% during December 2014 over the same period last year while the VoAs issued between January and December 2014 registered an increase of 92.4% over the same period.

▶ Contd. from page 3

Percentage share of different countries



VoAs issued



Source: MOT

Conserving heritage of India

▶ Contd. from page 10

PHD Chamber headed by **Alok B Shriram** as the President of PHD Chamber.

QWhat is the road ahead for heritage tourism in India?

India naturally is enriched with cultural heritage and tourism potential. Today modernization and tradition

co-exist, making Indian culture opulent, complex, magical and truly cosmopolitan. The country has seen a revival of the arts. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, has taken several innovative initiatives in promoting heritage tourism in the country like Swachh Bharat Swachh Pakwan (Hunar Zaika) and Swachh Bharat

Swachh Smarak. India has always been on the list of one of the most favoured heritage tourism destinations in the world and has quite a number of heritage cities and we hope we will be able to communicate this not only to domestic tourists but also to international tourists through International tourism boards. ↴

Now guiding tours with Jonty Rhodes



Former South African cricketer Jonty Rhodes who is the brand ambassador of South African Tourism in India recently hosted four Indians to his country. The four winners of #TakeMeToSouthAfrica contest went on a two-week trip to South Africa with Rhodes as the host and tour guide.

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Explore the heart of India in Nagpur

The upcoming Global Panorama Showcase in Nagpur hosted by Jagsons Travels will be witness to a multitude of mini events including a tie-up with Toronto university, launch of a research paper on Central India and an exciting food festival. Are you ready to feel the heartbeat of India?



TT BUREAU

Nagpur-based Jagsons Travels is setting the stage for a bigger and better Global Panorama Showcase (GPS) this February. Visitors can expect an exciting three days with not just great networking opportunities and workshops but also landmark announcements by the travel company.



Harmandeep Singh Anand
MD
Jagsons Travels

The theme of GPS is to 'Explore the Heart of India'. We want to showcase the highlights of Nagpur, which is a 'zero' mile city

Harmandeep Singh Anand, MD, Jagsons Travels and Secretary, TAAI, said, "In a first-of-its-kind tie up, we will be announcing our partnership with one of the top universities in North America – the York University in Toronto – for undergraduate and post-graduate programs in Canada. We have invited the Associate Director (Special Programs) at York University, **Emily Rush**, to GPS in Nagpur where we will announce this tie-up to the trade and visitors." Anand added that the young and dynamic Chief Minister of

New Tie-ups

► In a first-of-its-kind tie up, the company will be announcing its partnership with one of the top universities in North America – the York University in Toronto – for undergraduate and post-graduate programs in Canada

Maharashtra, **Devendra Fadnavis**, hails from Nagpur and they have invited him to be the Chief Guest to inaugurate the event and are awaiting a response from his office.

For the coming year

Next year's event, Anand added, will have a program for international

hosted buyers that will look at hosting at least 30 to 40 serious players from different countries. "Our aim is now to connect Nagpur directly to the rest of the world. We want to educate and empower Nagpur operators that will lead to a demand for allied industries," he revealed.

Launch of research paper on Central India

GPS will also see the launch of a research paper on Central India as a source market after the inauguration on the first day. **Madhu Saliankar**, Director of Entrep Solutions that has commissioned the report, said, "Through this research paper, we want to highlight the region's potential as a tourism destination. GPS will see a lot of attendees and exhibitors and we want to give them a perspective. We want to tell them how to tap this potential, and educate them on the popular destinations in Central India – not just to the domestic market but international attendees as well." She added that visitors from other parts of the country and world need to know why they should focus on Central India, what they should target, what they can expect, and how they can tap the potential that Central India offers.

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Visitors Profile

- Architects
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Confluence of ideas in the 'Land of Creation'

The 'Land of Creation' will soon bear witness to the birth of many ideas in the minds of TAFI members. With its theme of 'The Challenge of Change', the convention will have six business sessions that will deliberate on what agents must do for transition to the next level.

HAZEL JAIN

At the recently-held curtain-raiser for its upcoming annual convention, the Travel

Agents Federation of India (TAFI) announced details concerning the event to its members. Talking about Israel as the chosen destination, **Zakkir**

Ahmed, President, TAFI, said, "It was a challenge but we were determined to have the convention in Israel in association with the Israel Ministry of Tourism. We are conducting the convention after two years and we try and choose destinations that are not well explored. Israel as yet has not been explored for its MICE and leisure potential and I think this is not only an opportunity for our members but also for Israel."

Israel is a destination that you have to see to believe. We have limited seats to Tel Aviv and I request all members to please register as soon as possible."

Highlighting Israel's leisure potential, Samuel added, "The nightlife in Tel Aviv is among the top three in the world and Eilat is another happening city. Israel is all about the Dead, Red and the Med! Israel also caters to Indian food requirements and it is as safe as any other city – safer, in fact."

Addressing one of the common worries of travellers to Israel, **Pradip Lulla**, the association's National General Secretary, said, "There is no problem in getting visas on passports. We have it and we have travelled to the Middle East without any problems."

Industry Speak

“It was a challenge but we were determined to have the convention in Israel in association with the Israel Ministry of Tourism

Zakkir Ahmed
President, TAFI



“We have it and we have travelled to the Middle East without any problems. There is no problem in getting visas on passports

Pradip Lulla
National General Secretary, TAFI



“The TAFI Convention is a great opportunity for us. We see India as a virgin market for us and I am delighted to be associated with TAFI for this event

Judah Samuel
Director of Marketing – India, Israel Ministry of Tourism



Responding to safety-related queries received by members, Ahmed added, "There is no problem at all."

Also present at the event was **Judah Samuel**, Director of Marketing – India, Israel Ministry of Tourism, who said, "The TAFI Convention is a great opportunity for us. We see India as a virgin market for us and I am delighted to be associated with TAFI for this event. This has been my dream – I have been trying for 10 years and I didn't know it would be so easy with TAFI."

Logistical Updates

- ▶ A special facility for delegates who want to pay by credit card has been arranged in most cities. Centrum is the official forex partner for the convention
- ▶ The pre-convention FAM tours will be held from 19-22 February while the post tours are from 25-28 February. The package is for ₹ 59,999 PP on twin share for delegates for six nights, including pre/post tour
- ▶ The Israel Ministry of Tourism will issue a group paper visa for all delegates who register before 27 January
- ▶ Two hotels have been booked for members – Crowne Plaza Jerusalem and Dan Jerusalem Hotel
- ▶ Sakoya complex in Ma'ale Ha'Hamisha is located on the outskirts of Jerusalem. It has an outdoor garden by the pool side and can host up to 1,000 guests in round-table sitting arrangement

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Kuoni to sell off tour operating arm

Kuoni has decided to sell off its tour operating arm and focus on its core business as a service provider to the global travel industry. TRAVTALK speaks to Rajeev Wagle, Managing Director, Kuoni India to know more about company's policies.



TT BUREAU

Kuoni's Board of Directors and Group Executive Board have decided to focus the company's activities on its



Rajeev Wagle
Managing Director
Kuoni India

The strategic decision will not impact current or future bookings. The outbound business can be better developed under new ownership

core business as a service provider to the global travel industry and to governments.

In its new set-up, Kuoni Group will be structured into three divisions, Global Travel Distribution (GTD), Global Travel Services (GTS) and VFS Global. These core businesses benefit from leading

Strategising

▶ Kuoni Group will be structured into three divisions, Global Travel Distribution (GTD), Global Travel Services (GTS) and VFS Global

▶ These core businesses benefit from leading global positions and exposure to high growth markets

▶ They already represent around 60% of Kuoni's current consolidated turnover

▶ In particular, Kuoni will focus on markets with attractive, long-term growth potential such as Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

3-point strategic vision

- ❖ GTS is the number one player in the growing group travel market and handles 50 000 leisure tours per year. GTS generates 60% of its turnover from Asia/Pacific source markets.
- ❖ VFS Global works for 45 governments, operates 1400 Visa Application Centres in 117 countries and holds an estimated 50% market share of the global outsourced visa applications market. It generates almost 70% of its turnover from travellers from the Asia/Pacific region.
- ❖ GTD will invest in developing innovative front-end sales solutions, explore new online distribution channels and offer services for online and offline travel agencies, tour operators and other intermediaries in all large travel markets around the world, with a particular focus on China, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Indonesia.

global positions and exposure to high growth markets. In particular, Kuoni will focus on markets with attractive, long-term growth potential such as Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

Rajeev Wagle, Managing Director, Kuoni India, said, "In keeping with Kuoni Group's new strategic direction, it will be business as usual for all our staff, customers and clients.

Our focus remains on commitment to delivering expert services to our customers at accustomed quality and reliability. The strategic decision will not impact current or future bookings. We believe that the outbound business can be better developed under new ownership and we will be working closely with our colleagues in Switzerland to make sure we find the right owner."



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SA paradise for 'Buddymooners'

South Africa is one of the preferred destinations for newlyweds to enjoy their honeymoon. But what would you call a group of honeymooners travelling together in a single group? Buddymooners.

Travelling abroad has become an essential part of an average Indian's wish list. Growth in disposable incomes, better connectivity with various countries and increased awareness about unexplored destinations are a few factors that have led to a surge in the number of Indians vacationing in foreign locales. In 2013, around 130,000 visitors to South Africa were from India alone. That is a huge number of tourists from a single country. However, it is not just the numbers that are on the rise. Visitors to South Africa have exhibited certain traits and it is interesting to note how these attributes have actually gone on to become trends. For instance, it has been noticed that people prefer South Africa over its European or North American counterparts because of a favourable currency exchange rate against the Indian Rupee. This allows them to enjoy luxury at an affordable price.

South Africa is one of the preferred destinations for newlyweds to enjoy their honey-

moon. But what would you call a group of honeymooners travelling together in a single group? 'Buddymooners. Travelling as a single group makes sense for

these young couples as it gives them the option to keep their expenses under control, which is quite important for them considering the fact that most of

them are in the early stages of their jobs. Furthermore, it also gives them the freedom to ask their travel agent to send a cook along who can take care of their dietary needs. While the num-

bered by a cook provided by their travel agents. These cooks ensure that the food habits of the entire group are not compromised and they have access to home-cooked

Fascinatingly, unlike certain destinations that only attract one particular set of tourists, it is difficult to bucket travellers to South Africa in just one category. Its wildlife attracts enthusiasts; shopping options attract the people who love to splurge, while world-class spas appeal to the travellers who look for a quiet sojourn. At the same time, evolved travellers prefer vineyards and golf courses, and of course, with so many options to choose from, it makes the ideal holiday destination for families as well!

Indian Tales in SA

▶ In 2013, around 130,000 visitors to South Africa were from India alone

▶ It has been noticed that people prefer South Africa over its European or North American counterparts because of a favourable currency exchange rate against the Indian Rupee

▶ South Africa is one of the preferred destinations for newlyweds to enjoy their honeymoon

▶ A class of travellers have emerged which can be called as Buddymooners.

▶ Travelling as a single group makes sense for these young couples as it gives them the option to keep their expenses under control, which is quite important for them considering the fact that most of them are in the early stages of their jobs.

▶ In fact, Ahmedabad is the third most important market for South African Airways, after Mumbai and Delhi.

“ Ahmedabad is the third most important market for South African Airways, after Mumbai and Delhi. Quite like the Buddymooners, group travellers from the state have been noticed to be accompanied by a cook provided by their travel agents

bers may still be in the 'budding' stage, but it is interesting to note that an increasing number of couples are opting for group tours with each passing year.

If there was a single state that could be singled out for having the largest number of visitors to South Africa it would be Gujarat. In fact, Ahmedabad is the third most important market for South African Airways, after Mumbai and Delhi. Quite like the Buddymooners, group travellers from the state have been noticed to be accompa-

vegetarian food throughout their journey. Tourist establishments in a country often need to revamp themselves to suit the sensibilities of the visitors. Today, it is quite common to come across Indian restaurants in South Africa, some even specialising in pure vegetarian food. Additionally, even South African Airways recently started providing Jain and Gujarati meals on-request onboard. After all, nothing is more comforting to the passenger than food that makes them feel closer to home.



Authorised by Sajid Khan, Country Manager, India, South African Airways

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Concept to commissioning

TFCI has been active in financing hospitality training institutes, spas, theme/amusement parks, tourist trains and infrastructure sector...



TT BUREAU

TFCI, a specialised financial institution in the field of tourism, over its 25 years' of existence, has sanctioned financial assistance to about 700 hotel/other tourism-related projects in the country resulting in catalysing investments to the tune of Rs 24,581 crore in the tourism sector.

Regarding the USP of the company, **SK Sangar**, Managing Director, TFCI said, "TFCI, besides providing employment to about 83,749

the fact that hotel are long gestation projects)." TFCI also offers project/tourism-related services right from the 'Concept' to 'Commissioning', he added.

Talking about new tourism-related projects the company financed last year, he replied, "TFCI, besides the accommodation sector, has been active in financing restaurants, hospitality training institute, spas, theme/amusement parks, etc. Some of the new projects financed by our company last year include restaurants, resorts, hotels, etc."

core areas. Firstly, greenfield projects preferably three-star and budget in Tier-I and-II cities. Secondly, resort financing with operating arrangements and captive clients for renovation/ refurbishing, extension /expansion. Thirdly, takeover of construction of risk-free assets.

Government measures like extension of tourist visa on arrival (VoA), electronic travel authorisation (ETA), etc are all likely to drive the industry in 2015 leading to increase in FTAs, the MD opined.



“TFCI, besides providing employment to about 83,749 persons in tourism industry, has immensely contributed in accommodation growth by funding every third room in the country.

SK Sangar
Managing Director, TFCI

persons in tourism industry, has immensely contributed in accommodation growth by funding every third room in the country. TFCI, with its domain expertise, provides counselling to the promoter in shaping-up the project. TFCI also guides in configuration of project, cost of project, appropriate marketing tie-ups etc to maximise returns apart from providing finance. TFCI provides customised solutions to promoters in terms of reasonable repayment period ranging from 13-15 years and moratorium support to ensure smooth flow of project (understanding

Continuing with the tradition of helping the growth of tourism sector in the country, TFCI will endure to act as catalyst for investment in the tourism sector besides assisting the Central/State Governments in formulating/coordinating policies for the integrated development of tourism infrastructure in the country, Sangar added. "We propose to make long-term debt available to the entire gamut of viable project at the lowest/minimal cost. The growth focus of the organisation is mainly in three

How TFCI works

▶ TFCI, over its 25 years of existence, has sanctioned financial assistance to about 700 hotel/other tourism-related projects

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...and TrawellTag Eleven are champions



TrawellTag Eleven – the team that represented TrawellTag Cover-More at Travel Agents Fun Club Association (TAFCA) Cricket Cup, won the top honour at the finals. The TAFCA final match was held on Sunday, 11 January, 2015 at Colvin College Main Ground, Lucknow. The team won a cash reward by Interglobe.

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Goa looks beyond Russian tourists

There has been a decline in Russian charters because of the weak rouble and political crisis. However, this has been offset by the surge in other FIT foreign and domestic tourists.



MEGHA PAUL

The Goa Airport at Dabolim has issued over 4,000 eVoA in less than 30 days. This was revealed by **Nikhil Desai**, Managing Director, GTDC. "The eVoA facility was launched by the Union Home Ministry on

foreign and domestic tourists," he informed

Betting big on domestic tourists, Goa is now looking at a 30 per cent increase in tourist arrivals compared to the last year. "We are looking at almost 25-30 per cent growth over the



ing the Goa Tourism properties into two-star, three-star and four-star projects. "In a month's time, we will invite global tenders for this. By the mid of this year, we plan to award contracts so work can start by end of this year. The government will also set up an international convention centre in Goa with private sector participation on (PPP) mode considering the vast untapped potential of the state as an international convention hub," he added.

“Goa Tourism will be focussing on enriching the tourism experience of visitors to Goa through the medium of adventure and allied activities. The adventure services will focus on highlighting Goa's hinterlands

Nikhil Desai
Managing Director, GTDC

November 27 and Goa Airport started the process of issuing the visas from December 4. There has been a decline in Russian charters because of the weak rouble and political crisis. However, this has been offset by the surge in other FIT for-

last year. For the 17th St Francis Xavier Exposition alone in Goa, which concluded on January 4, 2015, Goa recorded over 50 lakh pilgrims," he added.

Buoyed by the success of white water rafting and the

women's taxi service in 2014, GTDC has set April 2015 as the target to launch new products and services. Outlining strategies for the year, Desai remarked, "Last year, we laid a strong foundation. We initiated an integrated system of beach management as that was the need of the hour. Going forward, GTDC will introduce new tourism prod-

ucts and services this year like paragliding, hot air ballooning, amphibious vehicles, hop on hop off buses, segway tours, adventure tours, river rafting, etc. Goa Tourism will be focusing on enriching the tourism experience of visitors to Goa through the medium of adventure and allied activities. The adventure services will focus on highlighting Goa's

hinterlands and will give tourists an opportunity to explore the rich geography of the state via the sky and the waterways."

In the medium term in the next four years, GTDC is looking at launching many Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) projects -- oceanarium, ropeway, theme park, upgrad-

Domestic Rules

▶ Betting big on domestic tourists, Goa is now looking at a 30 per cent increase in tourist arrivals compared to the last year

▶ For the 17th St Francis Xavier Exposition alone in Goa, which concluded on January 4, 2015, Goa recorded over 50 lakh pilgrims

Oz's largest delegation to India

■ As part of the Australia Business Week in India (ABWI) that is being held this month, the Australian government has brought the largest ever business delegation comprising 436 members visiting India for the very first time from January 9-16. The ABWI in India will be held in several cities led by Trade & Investment Minister, Robb to showcase Australian capabilities in a wide range of sectors – including tourism, food, energy, infrastructure, trans-



port, financial services, health and medical, sport, and cultural services.

Participants will be involved in various activities, including industry-specific events and significant investment forums including

Vibrant Gujarat 2015 across a number of Indian cities including New Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Jaipur and Chandigarh. Among the events are seminars in Mumbai attended by 36 delegates, who will showcase Australia as a leading innovation destination on January 14, 2015. On the same day, Tourism Australia is organising an Australian Food Festival with award-winning chef and restaurateur, Adam D'Sylva as part of its 'Celebrate Australia' campaign.

Goa's Food and Cultural Festival

■ Carnival 2015, the only one of its kind in India, is set to start on February 13 and will go on till February 17, 2015. Goa Tourism is also working around themes like 'Love Goa' and 'Celebrate with Goa'. King Momo will pronounce his reign over Goa for three days at the first parade in the capital city on February 14 and his entourage will be a sight to behold. Parades in other major cities of Margao, Vasco, Mapusa and Ponda



will be held during the four-day festivities. Cultural programmes and dances will also be organised all across the state. Goa Tourism and

Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) have set the stage for Carnival and the Food and Cultural Festival.



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Indians travelling to Mauritius up by 7%

Mauritius had 61,200 Indian tourist arrivals in 2014 which is an increase of nearly seven per cent as compared to 2013.

TT BUREAU

According to figures shared by Mauritius Tourist Promotion Authority (MTPA),



Sanjay Sondhi
CEO
OM Tourism

The rise in numbers can be attributed to a focussed strategy by the OM Tourism team

Mauritius had 61,200 Indian tourist arrivals in 2014, which is an increase of nearly seven per cent as compared to 2013.

Talking about the increase in India outbound figures, **Sanjay Sondhi**, CEO, OM Tourism said, "Considering the fact that OM Tourism was appointed as a representative office from March 2014, the growth from March to December is nine per cent as compared to the corresponding period in



Vivek Anand
Country Manager
MTPA India

India is one of the most important tourism source markets for Mauritius. The year 2014 has been a satisfying year

2013. The rise in numbers is attributed to a focussed strategy by the OM Tourism team, which has created awareness and positioned Mauritius as a round-the-year destination. Some initiatives undertaken in 2014 were a multi-city road show, trade and media familiarisation trips and agents seminars." MTPA, India showed a consistent pres-

ence in travel and wedding shows, golf and polo events, he added.

Outlining the importance of India as a source market, **Vivek Anand**, Country Manager, MTPA India remarked, "India is one of the most important tourism source markets for Mauritius. The year 2014 has been a satisfying

year in terms of achieving our targets. Apart from new visitors, we aim to get repeat travellers to the destination. Some activities such as sea kart and rum tasting are relatively new experiences that this pristine island has on offer. Our marketing activities in 2015 will revolve around luxury, destination weddings, MICE, adventure activities and golf."



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Spending more in Thailand

Runjuan Tongrut, Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand, says Indians now look at Thailand as a luxury destination and are willing to spend more during their travel. Eyeing 1.05 million Indian travellers to Thailand in 2015, she informs that they are launching Mary Kom as the brand ambassador of Muay Thai in India.

PEDEN DOMA BHUTIA

Q How will you be promoting Thailand in India this year?

This year, we will promote Thailand through our campaign, Discover Thainess, which means we are promoting Thai culture and Thai food. To this effect, we organised a ladies' lunch in Delhi to promote and create awareness about Thai culture, Thai food and here the ladies also had an opportunity to learn about Thai fruit and vegetable carving and how to make Thai desserts. We would also like to focus on women travellers. One of our strategies this year is to attract solo women travellers.

Q Thailand has always been a favourite destination for Indians, how was the response from Indian tourists in 2014? Did you notice a new trend among Indian travellers?

The number of Indian travellers to Thailand touched

almost 1 million in 2014. But the most important thing that we noticed last year was the average spend of Indian travellers to Thailand had skyrocketed. In 2013, we got US\$ 700 per trip per traveller, however, in 2014, it went up to US\$

2013: US \$700
2014: US \$1220

1220. We are very happy with this development, this shows we have been successful in promoting luxury travel and we want to further increase the spend of the luxury travellers. We are very seriously focussing on luxury travel as we know that Indian tourists want to travel luxuriously.

Q What are your other marketing initiatives for 2015?

The marketing campaign is mainly Discover Thainess, but we have many activities to

“ The number of Indian travellers to Thailand touched almost 1 million in 2014. Last year, the average spend of Indian travellers to Thailand skyrocketed. In 2013, we got US\$ 700 per trip per traveller, however, in 2014, it reached US\$ 1220



Runjuan Tongrut
Director
Tourism Authority of Thailand

follow up, and of course, we are participating at various marts. We have also selected Mary Kom as the brand ambassador of Thai boxing (Muay Thai) in India. We are very happy that we got her onboard; she loves Thailand and she likes Thai boxing. I'm happy she accepted my invitation to be the brand ambassador for Thai boxing. We target to increase Indian arrivals to 1.05 million in 2015, and we want to increase the spending power of our travellers.

Q Are there any new cities that you are focussing on?

We are still focussing on Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities. We want to create awareness about the destination in these cities. And in the metro cities, we want to focus more on luxury travellers, solo women travellers and student groups as well as wedding and honeymooners. Thailand is very popular for Indian weddings and we are aggres-

sively promoting it among honeymooners. Besides, the big metros like Delhi and Mumbai, we will continue to focus on Kolkata and in Punjab cities like Ludhiana and Chandigarh. People in these cities like to spend. Last year, we promoted Thailand in Bhubaneshwar in Orissa and after that we got our partner to do joint advertising in the city and the response was

very good. We are also focussing on the Northeast and are going to Guwahati for a product presentation. We will invite travel agents and media and organise one-on-one meetings with our partners so that they can update the travel agents about the latest product offerings. Agents from Guwahati, Shillong and cities nearby will be attending.

TAT for Tier-II and Tier III cities

- ▶ TAT focussing on Tier-II and Tier-III cities
- ▶ Focus will be more on luxury travellers, solo women travellers and student groups as well as wedding and honeymooners
- ▶ Thailand is very popular for Indian weddings and they are aggressively promoting it among honeymooners
- ▶ Besides, the big metros like Delhi and Mumbai, they will continue to focus on Kolkata and in Punjab cities like Ludhiana and Chandigarh



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The Deltin, Daman eyes events

Owned by Daman Hospitality, 176-key five-star deluxe property of The Deltin, Daman is eyeing a share of the events market with a keen focus on luxury weddings and corporate conferences. Akarsh Mathur, General Manager, The Deltin, speaks to TRAVTALK about the hotel's focus for this year and the strategy to promote the property in various markets.

TT BUREAU

QWhat markets are you focusing on right now?

We are actively pushing our hotel in the luxury weddings and the MICE markets for conferences and offsite visits.

QWhat is the property's USP?

Apart from being located at a convenient driving distance of just two hours from Surat and three hours from Mumbai, we have the perfect venues and facilities for big and small events.



Akarsh Mathur
General Manager
The Deltin

We also have our own internal sales force. The online channels include the OTAs

QWhat kind of MICE facilities do you offer?

We offer a full range of MICE and conferencing facilities. We have a pillarless ballroom of 8,300 sq ft which is a perfect size for large events and also four banquet rooms ranging from 2,300 sq ft to 924 sq ft; they are a perfect venue for team building, corporate presentations and small gatherings. The banquet rooms are divided into four categories (Spade, Hearts, Club and Diamond) and are suitable for large and small group events, ranging from 20 to 2,000 persons, all equipped with a range of amenities. Our poolside venue is ideal for corporates events.

QHow do luxury weddings figure in?

For weddings, we have a clear advantage with very opulent decor. Grandice - the grand ballroom is perfect for a wedding. The pillar-less space provides a seamless view of

the entire occasion. It is spread across the area of 8,319 square ft with the capacity of approximately 900 guests for a reception and 450 for a banquet. The Sky Terrace presented on the first level provides for 450 people for reception and 150 for a banquet with area of 7,000 square ft. One can also use our Grand Pool; it is perfect for a pool party or a wedding reception.

QHow has the response been so far?

The hotel has already become a preferred venue for corporate events and destination weddings. The restaurants at The Deltin such as 'Vegas', the all-day dining restaurant and 'Emperor', the Chinese fine-dine restaurant have also become very popular with all

Contd. on page 39 ▶

The Target Audience

- ▶ The company is targetting families, the leisure and the corporate traveller
- ▶ Daman is both a holiday destination for many cities in Gujarat and Maharashtra and being a Union Territory, it has several factors that influence people to come here
- ▶ The only five-star property in the area having several opulent suites with private jacuzzi

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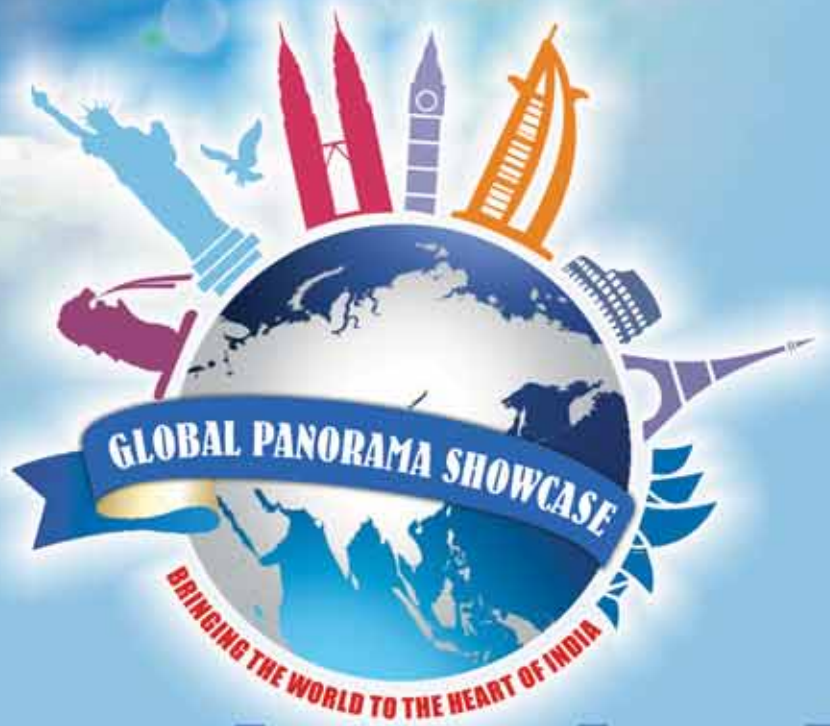
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Mantras for hotels to motivate guests

Want to understand what drives and influences traveller's behaviour at every stage of the travel journey? These insights can offer hoteliers a real edge in differentiating their offer, upping their game in all-round customer service from booking to staying, and ultimately in securing customer loyalty.

When you think of it, it might seem like an obvious question: what motivates people to travel on holiday and what are they looking to gain from the experience?

And yet, historically there has been surprisingly little industry research into this area. Partly because we would think that the answers are self-evident (though this misses the difference in influences that affect an individual's decision to travel) and partly it is



because the link between guest motivation and the bot-

tom line is less obvious. Who cares why people travel, as long as we know what they want when they get here? In fact, as our recent TripBarometer study into the Psychology of Travel shows, that is where some Indian hoteliers may be missing a trick. For many travellers, the experience of travel doesn't begin when they leave the front door, it begins at the point of researching and booking— whether that be while sitting in front of their computer, with a travel agent or on their mobile device. Yet, 71 % Indian hoteliers say they

Gain an edge over competition

When it comes to guests' psychological needs and motivations, there are some important lessons for hotel businesses. We explored holidaygoers' motivations and feelings from both a personal experience perspective as well as how they would like to be perceived by others. Using this established methodology, Ipsos found that the number one worldwide motivation to travel is the desire to 'enhance our perspective' (cited by 71% of global travellers). Yet, 71 % Indian hoteliers say they want to provide their guests with a sense of 'harmony'. In fact, this is actually the least influential motivation for most travellers going on holiday, along with a sense of 'order'. 'Order' and 'harmony' are the least important motivations for travellers, with only 21 percent falling into these categories globally. Hoteliers who are doing more to cater for travellers searching for a perspective enhancing experience will have a chance to gain an edge over the competition.

want to provide their guests with a sense of 'harmony'. In fact, this is actually the joint least influential motivation for most travellers going on holiday, along with a sense of 'order'. 'Order' and 'harmony' are the least important motivations for travellers, with only 21 percent falling into these categories globally. Hoteliers who are doing more to cater for travellers searching for a perspective enhancing experience will have a chance to gain an edge on the competition.

Build excitement from the start

Research firm Ipsos surveyed more than 53,000 travellers and hoteliers around the world as part of the biannual TripBarometer study. What we found was that the main emotion for a majority (54%) of global travellers is excitement when they make the actual booking. Yet, by comparison, nearly two thirds of Indian hoteliers (51%) said their main priority at that stage in their guests' travel journey was simply to ensure a smooth and efficient process at booking. This could be an opportunity for hoteliers to begin developing a lasting relationship with their guest; build the excitement right from the start, create a 'countdown to the holiday' and go some way towards making that guest a repeat customer for the future.

See what motivates travellers

When we analysed motivations across different traveller types, interestingly Indian millennials are more likely to plan more vacations (77%) and learn something new (35%), as a result of a trip, while families are more likely to prioritise more time on relationships with friends and family (32%) upon returning home from vacation. Ultimately, the benefit of research like this is to really understand what drives and influences traveller behaviour at every stage of the travel journey. In such a competitive industry as this, these insights can offer hoteliers a real edge in differentiating their offer, upping their game in all-round customer service from booking to staying, and ultimately in securing customer loyalty.



(The writer of the article is Helena Egans, Director, Industry Relations, TripAdvisor)

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IITT 2015 steals the show

In its second edition this year, the India International Travel & Tourism Exhibition (IITT) held in Mumbai was larger and better with the big daddies of the industry participating. The event was marked by good attendance and engaging business sessions.



HAZEL JAIN

The India International Travel & Tourism Exhibition (IITT), that has been conceptualised and executed by Asian Business Exhibitions & Conferences (ABEC), successfully completed

about her passion for travel and her target of travelling to at least three new destinations every year.

Good networking platform

Spread across 15,000 sq m, the exhibition offered great

target buyers and suppliers and helps them meet new suppliers from the market."

IITT 2014 was coined as the 'Best Emerging Expo of 2014 by Indian Travel Awards, West zone. This year's edition brought in more than 250 exhibitors and an estimated 10,000 attendees.

This year, IITT displayed a larger portfolio of exhibitors from India and the international market including national and international tourism

Session on domestic tourism

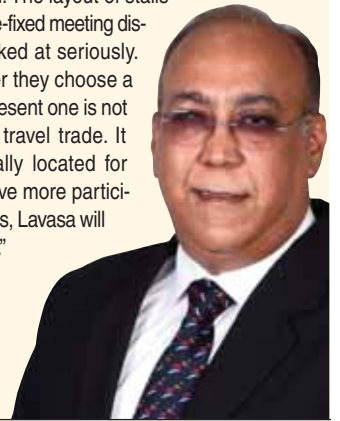
The first day saw three interesting business sessions that had its share of ministry participation. Starting with 'Innovation in Domestic Tourism,' the discussion veered towards India's bold step towards Visa-on-Arrival facilities.

Girish Shankar, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, said during the session, that 2014 was an historic year for India Tourism with the introduction of Visa-on-Arrival.

Feedback from exhibitor

"The show was well managed and ideally spread out. They advertised the show well in both print and hoardings. Quality was better than the quantity. However, international tourism board participation was limited. The layout of stalls was good but the B2B pre-fixed meeting discipline needs to be looked at seriously. Next time, I would prefer they choose a different venue as the present one is not very accessible to the travel trade. It should be more centrally located for Mumbai. I hope they have more participation in the third year. Yes, Lavasa will participate next year too."

Rajiv Duggal
Senior VP – Tourism
Hospitality & Education
Lavasa Corporation



It was our first experience exhibiting at IITT. Overall, it can be called good but there were a few things which should be worked on so as to get maximum benefit from such travel fairs. The

crowd has to be pulled in, more awareness should be created about IITT, and more hosted buyers should be there. They marketed it very well but the numbers in terms of footfalls and audience in the sessions were not that impressive. Our participation for next year depends on how this year goes on and what response we receive from the people we met at IITT 2015.



Rajan Dua
Managing Director
Udaan India

specific purpose, announced during the session that VisitBritain will now keenly look at improving the visa process to make it easier and quicker. "My main aim to be here in India is to look at how we can improve the visa process for Indian travellers to the UK. We are also working with the governments towards this in order to reduce the time taken to issue visas from 15 days as well as the pricing for a 10-year visa," he said.

He added that they will also work towards improving

the wrong perception Indians have about UK visas. "About 97 per cent of visas requested for in India were issued within 15 days. So we want to tell Indian travellers that it is easy to get UK visas," Rodrigues said.

With a focus on promoting MICE, the first day of the event concluded with a gala networking night. The two days devoted exclusively for B2B appointments saw a total of seven business sessions. ↴



Girish Shankar
Additional Secretary, Ministry of Tourism



its second edition at the Bombay Exhibition Centre, Mumbai from January 15-17, 2015.

networking opportunities for the trade people on the first two days. The last day was reserved for direct consumers.

Inaugurated with a beautiful rendition of *Ganesh aarti*, the exhibition started with lighting of the lamp by dignitaries and association heads that included **Girish Shankar**, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Tourism; **HE Erdal Sabri Ergen**, Consul General, Republic of Turkey; **Christopher Rodrigues**, CBE, Chairman of VisitBritain; **Guldeep Singh Sahni**, President of OTOAI; **Sanjeet**, Secretary of PATA – India Chapter and Publisher of DDPL; **Sarabjit Singh**, Vice Chairman – FAITH and Senior VP of IATO; **Biji Eapen**, National President of IAAI; **Harmandeep Anand**, General Secretary of TAAI; **Abhijit Khadiikar**, Joint Secretary of ETAA; and **Manish Gandhi**, COO of ABEC and Event Director of IITT. The star of the show, however, was actor **Kangana Ranaut** who spoke

Opening the exhibition was **Manish Gandhi**, COO of ABEC and event director of IITT, who said, "The aim of IITT is to allow the trade to explore the world on a single platform and meet the right people at the right time to leverage their travel business. It gives them networking opportunities with

boards, hotel chains, online B2B portals, domestic and outbound tour operators and DMCs. Among the main exhibitors were Turkey Tourism, Kuwait Airlines, Tamil Nadu Tourism, Lavasa Corporation and Grand Hyatt.

"India has never received such high priority from the Federal Government. This initiative is not just in words but also evident in action. Additionally, online Visa-on-Arrival was a path-breaking initiative and this year we will look at extending it to some more countries in phases," he added.

Feedback from attendee

"I felt that this year's IITT had fewer participants than the previous year with the main players missing, including some of the major tourism boards. However, what I liked about this year's show was the emphasis on the B2B format. I look forward to visiting the next year's edition hoping it will have a larger participation and with the presence of major tourism players."

Jitendra J. Chahcha
Founder
Khyber Indus Agencies



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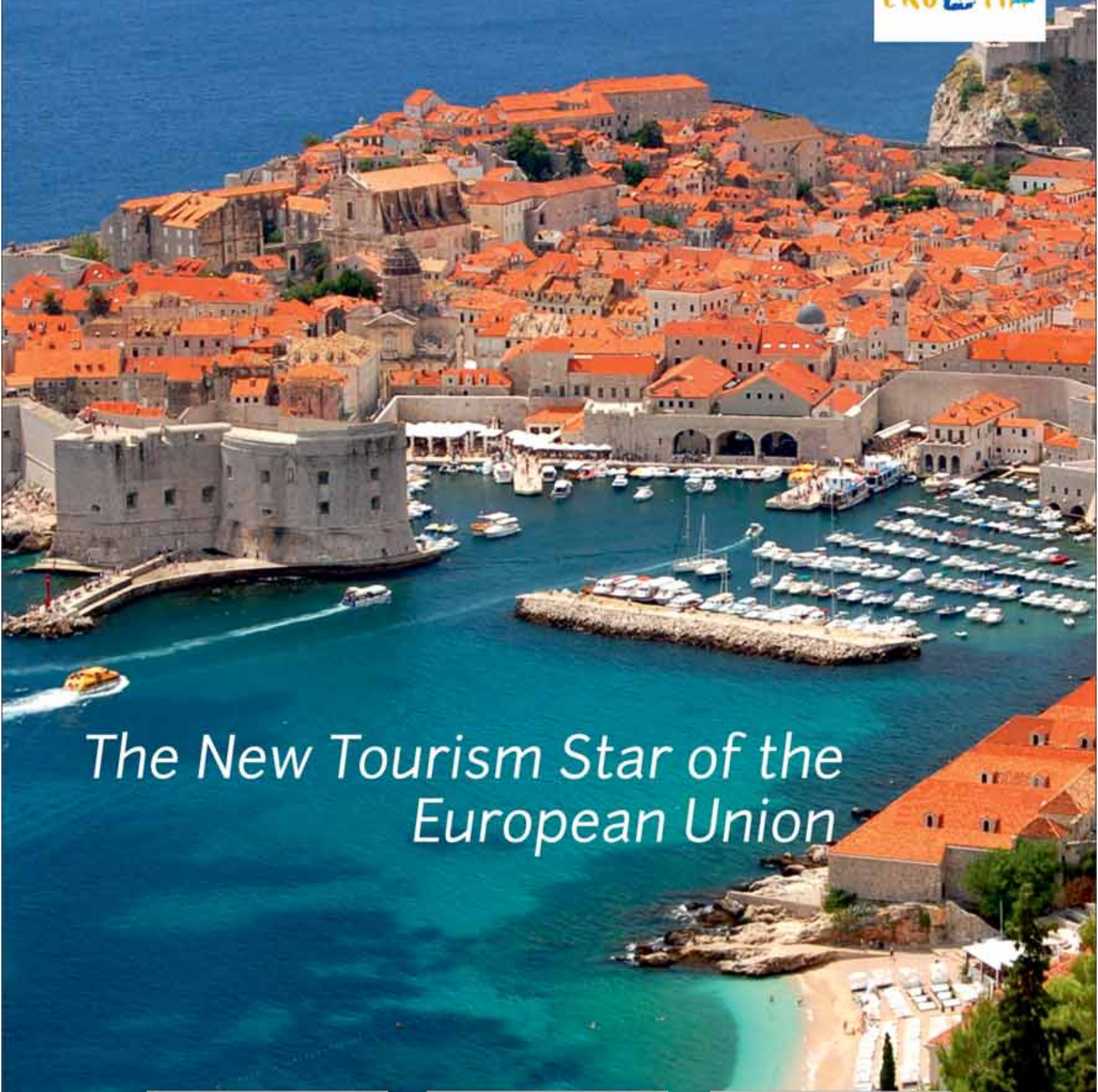
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Turkey agent sets shop in India

As they prepare to set up their marketing office in New Delhi, Ersan Atsur, President, Orion Tour, says they'll essentially target wholesalers selling to the trade and consumers, outbound tour operators, travel agents and travel management companies.



PEDEN DOMA BHUTIA

What was the thought behind opening an office in Delhi?

We are in the Indian market for almost 20 years and believe that we should put more effort than what we

countries through our well established contacts. Turkey has facilities that attract the Indian traveller in terms of shopping, food, entertainment and night life as well as very new and modern hotels in various categories. Turkey



“ Turkey has facilities that attract the Indian traveller in terms of shopping, food, entertainment and night life as well as very new and modern hotels in various categories

Ersan Atsur
President, Orion Tour

have already done. We now have more advanced and contemporary facilities to cater to the Indian market. Daily operating carriers provide more seats on a day-to-day basis between the two countries with a possibility of extending our services to our neighbouring

offers historical, archaeological and pleasure tours with her long history.

What is Orion's USP?

Orion Tour offers a wide range of FIT products, budget and 2TOGO tours, guaranteed departures and of course tailor-made programmes.

Which segment are you targeting at in India?

The segments that we are targeting at in India are:

- ▶ Corporate travel
- ▶ FIT market
- ▶ Group travellers
- ▶ First-time travellers
- ▶ Senior Citizens
- ▶ Leisure travel associates and families
- ▶ Honeymoon and wedding arrangements
- ▶ MICE

Which cities will you be essentially focussing on in India?

In the first phase, we would be targeting Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Pune, Ahmedabad and Chandigarh.

How do you intend to work with Indian travel agents and tour operators?

Since we offer a wide range of products, tours and programmes we also provide various commission levels for each of our products to different travel agents and tour oper-

ators. We intend to target the wholesalers who sell to the trade and to consumers, major outbound tour operators, travel agents, major travel management companies that handle both business and leisure for their large corporate clientele.

What is the potential of growth that you expect in the Indian market?

Outbound travel potential continues to rise from India over the years; thus, Orion Tour wants to expand its operation and to get enough share whereby our initial target may reach a volume of 3,500-5,000 pax in 2015.

Notable Points

- ▶ A wide range of FIT products, budget and 2TOGO tours
- ▶ Provide various commission levels for each products to different travel agents and tour operators

Adding new flavour to tourism

Adding new spice to the travel and tourism industry is Spicevacations Travel. The travel agency was constituted in 2008 and is a full service travel company, established by a group of travel professionals.



TT BUREAU

Talking about the evolution and the USP of the company, Harjeet Singh, Director, Spicevacations Travel said, "We believe in presenting India to the world in a way that is quite unique, unexplored, and unhindered. Our company introduced helicopter services to one of the Sikhs pilgrim centres in Sri Hemkunt Sahib. This is situated at a height of almost 16,500 feet above sea level. The services have been operational for three consecutive years, which has reduced the time of the journey from eight to three days."

According to Singh, the services offered by the company include hotel booking, air ticketing, etc. "We help you to get air tickets for all customers and clients at rock bottom prices. This service offers reasonable and attractive packages that can lure a person to roam the world and have a cracking travel experience," he added.

These holiday packages are available for both domestic and international destinations. "We are also dealing with government houses to provide them LTC packages/air tickets for domestic as well as international destinations," Ritu Sirohi, Director, Spicevacations Travel pointed out.

Going forward, the company is planning to set up a few branches within India to expand its business. "We would be launching air ambulance services at much cheaper cost. One more important aspect I

For the Customer

“ We believe in presenting India to the world in a way that is quite unique, unexplored, and unhindered

Harjeet Singh
Director
Spicevacations Travel



“ We are also dealing with government houses to provide them LTC packages/air tickets for domestic as well as international destinations

Ritu Sirohi
Director
Spicevacations Travel



want to share is that with budget airlines slicing profit margins and online aggregators making travel agents more of a

luxury than a necessity, times may seem tough in the travel industry," Singh pointed out. ↘

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IIT 2015 takes centrestage in Mumbai



In its second edition this year, the India International Travel & Tourism Exhibition (IIT) executed by Asian Business Exhibitions & Conferences (ABEC) in Mumbai was larger and better. It saw the big daddies of the industry exhibiting, serious attendees and interesting discussions during the business sessions on the sidelines.



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Indian Embassy, Oman partners BLS International for visa application

Indian Embassy in Oman, has renewed its association with New Delhi based BLS International Services for visa application for Oman, from January 1, 2015 for another four years.

According to the Memorandum of Agreement BLS International will open one centre in Muscat and another 10 collection centres at Sur, Salalah, Sohar, Nizwa, Buraimi, Shinas, Dibba, Khasab, Jalan Bu Ali & Ibri.

Diwakar Aggarwal, Director, BLS International Services said, "We are thankful that the Indian Embassy, Oman has renewed its faith in BLS International. We aim to provide better, faster and more convenient service to its applicants by using our global Expertise".

BLS International services Indian Missions in countries including Austria, Malaysia, Canada, Netherlands, Norway, Oman, Philippines, Poland, ROK, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, UAE and USA.

Seeing healthy load factors from India

Cathay Pacific Airways is gearing to notch up its trade engagement in the new year. Although it is not planning to expand its network in India just yet, it is hoping to play its part in the expanding aviation market in India. Rajesh Menon, Regional Sales and Marketing Manager - South Asia, Cathay Pacific Airways, discusses the airlines' plans with TRAVTALK.



HAZEL JAIN

Q How do you expect 2015 to turn out for the industry?

The overall outlook of the Indian aviation industry is largely positive. The new government's initiative of 'Make in India' is a great initiative and will definitely see a growth in the manufacturing sector in the coming years. There is significant industrial and economic development in and around most of the metros due to which the travel from this region is still healthy and growing. The potential in India is only rising and we look forward to playing our full part in growing the aviation business here.

Q Is Cathay looking at anything new for 2015?

The year 2014 was a good year and we are hopeful that 2015 will be the same or even better. We will continue our investments in new aircraft,

“We engage the trade by conducting sales blitz and workshops, corporate presentations and agency contests to promote new destinations, change in timings

Rajesh Menon
Regional Sales and Marketing Manager - South Asia, Cathay Pacific Airways



seats, lounges and other products, and in our extensive global network, in addition to maintaining our renowned 'Service Straight from the Heart' standard.

We believe there is still a lot of potential in the Indian market and can see the trends only moving upwards. Passenger demand has been strong and we have seen healthy load factors between 80-85 per cent from India. We

are keeping a close eye on the market and always have something up our sleeve that we would like to add in due time.

Q Do you have any activities planned for the trade?

We work very closely with travel agents as they form an integral part of our distribution channels. We plan familiarisation trips whenever there is a requirement to promote our products and destinations.

Along with such trips, we also engage the trade by conducting regular sales blitz and workshops, corporate presentations and agency contests to promote our new destinations, change in timings, increase in frequencies, etc. We also plan events like cricket and paintball to enable interaction with the staff which encourages and enables them to sell better.

Q Are you looking to take any new safety precautions given the recent aviation mishaps?

Safety is an important part of our vision and mission. A prerequisite for any airline to be considered successful is that it should operate safely. Cathay Pacific has established an excellent safety record but we can never relax our vigilance and focus on safety.

Q Any plans to add more Indian cities to your network?

Currently we have no plans of adding new Indian cities to our network. We are constantly reviewing new routes that could be profitable in the future. We are continuously monitoring market demand and exploring new opportunities.

Flying High

▶ The airline will maintain its renowned 'Service Straight from the Heart' standard

▶ Cathay will continue investments in new aircraft, seats, lounges and other products, and in our extensive global network

▶ The group constantly reviews new routes that could be profitable in the future



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India tops holiday charts

Wego reveals which countries around the world have the most public holidays. "There's no better remedy for the post-holiday blues and start of a new year than to look ahead and plan your next holiday," said Joachim Holte, Chief Marketing Officer of Wego. "Depending on where you live however, some of us have a lot more days off to play with than others!"



India on top

▲ India has the most number of public holidays at around 21 days each year, even more depending on which state you live in," he observed. "In the Asia/Pacific region, the Philippines follows with 18, 17 for China and Hong Kong, Thailand receives 16, 15 in Malaysia and Vietnam, 14 for Indonesia, 13 in Taiwan and South Korea, 11 in Singapore and 10 in Australia and New Zealand.

Leave swapping in China

▲ China is not only one of the fastest growing travel segments in the world, their government makes it easy for workers to take longer breaks. Should the year's public holidays fall on a weekend, the government swaps the official dates with weekdays, maximising time off," said Holte. "So this year, the total of 17 public holidays equates to 28 days off. Similarly, the Taiwanese total of 13 public holidays results in 29 days off inclusive of weekends.

Spain and UK not so holiday minded

▲ Europeans don't fare too badly with Sweden and Lithuania offering the most at 15 (the latter with an additional 28 days of paid leave), followed by 14 in Slovakia, 13 in Austria, Belgium and Norway and 12 in Finland and Russia. Spain and the UK are not so holiday minded, with only eight. In the United Arab Emirates, another fast developing travel market, you can expect 11 public holidays in 2015. "Mexico has the lowest in the world with only seven public holidays each year although the government permits a few more 'optional' public holidays, at the employer's discretion." "Some countries however provide a little more in the way of statutory holiday leave which can top up public holidays nicely," Holte continued.



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Thai Airways International wins 2015 Best Economy Class

■ Thai Airways International (THAI) recently picked up the Best Economy Class award. "Thai Airways International offers some of the best value in Economy Class not only in the Asian region but throughout the airline industry. Their service is perfect, meals filling and frequent and the in-flight entertainment of superior quality," said Geoffrey Thomas, Editor-in-Chief of AirlineRatings.com. "Thai Airways has always offered exceptional service, and the combination with cabin innovations of the Boeing 787 is a winning team," added Thomas.

A recent review by Sharon Petersen from AirlineRatings.com: THAI's Economy Class on the 787 Dreamliner offers a great sense of space, wide sculptured ceilings, large windows with dimmers and less jetlag. THAI is a major and equal player in the premium category of airlines. With a world class in flight product, brand new state of the art aircraft and excellent value for money, it is keeping its competitors in this premium travel category 'on their toes'.

McLeod Ganj gets Fortune Park Moksha

Fortune Park Hotels recently expanded its bouquet of hotels with the opening of the brand's 43rd hotel, 'Fortune Park Moksha' in McLeod Ganj.



Nestled in the scenic Strawberry Hills and surrounded by a thick cover of



pine trees with a beautiful view of the snow-capped Dhauladhar mountain range, Fortune Park Moksha is conveniently located just 6 km from the town's main square.

Owned by Moksha Health Resorts, Fortune Park Moksha provides an ideal retreat to trav-

ellers looking for leisure and peace. The hotel offers easy access to all main tourist attractions in and around McLeod Ganj, the picturesque

Himalayan town known for its natural abundance.

Commenting on the launch, **Suresh Kumar**, Chief Executive Officer, Fortune Park Hotels, said, "We are extremely happy to announce our 43rd property, Fortune Park Moksha in McLeod Ganj.

Since its inception, the Fortune Hotels chain has provided contemporary accommodation and great value for business and leisure travellers.

Now amongst the largest and fastest growing in the country, the chain caters to a wide spectrum of travellers, through its various sub-brands. With the launch of this hotel, Fortune Hotels has further strengthened its position in the leisure segment."

The guest rooms at Fortune Park Moksha are spread across three blocks, each with its own charm. The 59 well-appointed rooms include 36 Standard Rooms, 20 Fortune Club Rooms and 3 Suites. All the rooms have been done up in contemporary design and are equipped with a range of modern amenities. Amenities include room service, Satellite LCD TV, Hi-speed Wi-Fi internet connectivity, Working desk, Direct dial STD/ISD, Electronic safe, Mini bar, Tea/ coffee maker, Iron and ironing board, Hair dryer and Daily newspaper.

The hotel also offers state-of-the-art meeting and banquet facilities that can accommodate up to 175 guests. The dining options at the hotel include Orchid – a multi-cuisine restaurant offering 3-meal buffets and all day dining, Neptune bar that serves some of the finest premium spirits in a relaxed atmosphere and Fortune Deli featuring light snacks and sumptuous confectionery. Other offerings at the hotel include a Wellness Centre with a Swimming Pool, Spa and a well-equipped Gymnasium and Champion's Zone.

Sneak Peek

- ▶ The hotel offers state-of-the-art meeting and banquet facilities that can accommodate up to 175 guests
- ▶ The dining options at the hotel include Orchid – a multi-cuisine restaurant offering 3-meal buffets and all day dining
- ▶ The hotel include a Wellness Centre with a Swimming Pool, Spa and a well-equipped Gymnasium and Champion's Zone

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Hilton Jaipur has a perfect mix of offerings for both the business and leisure travellers. It is strategically located in the heart of the city, minutes away from famous tourist attractions, shopping hubs, government establishments and business districts.



TT BUREAU

Launched on 15 May 2014, Hilton Jaipur has witnessed an overwhelming response. The location of the property, well-appointed rooms, the exclusive meeting and event space and assurance of quality which comes with Hilton brand has played a constructive role in bringing better results. Talking about the USP of the

Regarding the target audience of the hotel, he adds, "The hotel has a perfect mix of offerings for both the business and leisure travellers. It is strategically located in the heart of the city, minutes away from famous tourist attractions, shopping hubs, government establishments and business districts

makes it a perfect destination for both the leisure and business travelers. Jaipur has always been one of the favorite tourist destinations in India and now with trending destination weddings and increased commercial movement in the city, we are targeting a fair share from all segments."



Rahul Joshi
General Manager
Hilton Jaipur

The hotel offers a superb city centre location and is minutes away from popular tourist attractions and shopping hubs

property, **Rahul Joshi**, General Manager, Hilton Jaipur says, "The hotel offers a superb city centre location and is minutes away from popular tourist attractions and shopping hubs, as well as business and commercial districts. The location and the reassurance of the brand 'Hilton Hotels & Resorts' with Hilton HHonors loyalty programme gives us added advantage in the market."

USP

► The hotel has a perfect mix of offerings for both the business and leisure travellers.

► It is strategically located in the heart of the city, near famous tourist attractions, shopping hubs, government establishments and business districts

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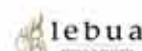
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Go cuckoo in SW Germany!

In order to push Indian arrivals up by at least 20 per cent, SouthWest German Tourism is busy gearing up for an intensive agent engagement with the launch of its online training program 'Going Cuckoo' and FAM trips to the destination.



TT BUREAU

Year 2014 saw the total number of overnights from India to SouthWest Germany (Baden-Wuerttemberg) reach 1,71,000 indicating a 10.1 per cent increase over the previous year. These Indian visitors, according to **Hector Dsouza**, Director (India), SouthWest German

To achieve this, he has planned a hectic 2015. One of the things the destination is busy with these days is launching its online training program (www.going-cuckoo.com).

"We will also organise roadshows in emerging Tier II cities, conduct familiarisation trips for the travel trade, and do

ly participated in the OTR (Outbound Travel Roadshow) that ended on January 20, 2015.

It is currently working with GNTO for selective promotions with no immediate plans with other European tourism boards. Speaking about its upcoming specialist program, Dsouza revealed, "Two lucky winners completing our online training program in the summer of 2015 will get to visit SouthWest Germany. A few more events are being planned for 2015, details of which will be announced soon."

Outlining the focus for this year, he says, "The thrust this year will again focus on our specialised products sought by travellers from India such as – the only city to have two world-famous car museums besides Detroit (Stuttgart), the only state to have four amusement parks including the highly acclaimed Europa Park, world-class spas at Stuttgart and Baden Baden because we possess the second-largest reserves of thermal springs in Europe."



"We are looking at a 20 per cent increase in arrivals this year, which is effectively 2,00,000 overnights from India

Hector Dsouza
Director (India)
SouthWest German
Tourism, Mumbai

Tourism in Mumbai, created a record by staying for an average of 6.3 days per visit as compared to the average of 2.1 days per visit from other nations.

"The average Indian traveller spends 6.1 days per visit with an average spend per person per night from India at an astounding Euro 175!" he says. These figures are encouraging him to aim even higher this year.

"We are looking at a 20 per cent increase in arrivals this year which is effectively 2,00,000 overnights from India. We are confident that we will reach these targets mainly because of a very positive outlook from the Indian market attributable to controlled inflation, falling oil prices, possible reduction in value of Euro vis-à-vis the Indian rupee and an increasing demand from India for outbound travel," Dsouza says.

joint promotions with German National Tourist Office (GNTO). Apart from this, we have our monthly newsletter that keeps our agent partners updated about the destination," Dsouza adds. The tourism board recent-

Highlights for 2015

- ▶ 300th birthday of one of world's first 'planned cities' of Karlsruhe
- ▶ The Black Forest National Park
- ▶ Europa Park
- ▶ Germany's local cuisine and wine
- ▶ ChocoART, Europe's chocolate festival
- ▶ Christmas markets
- ▶ Baden-Baden's Festspielhaus, Europe's largest and most beautiful modern opera house
- ▶ The Lake Constance Gardens
- ▶ The restored birthplace of the River Danube - 200th year of Stuttgart Beer Festival

Deltin taps leisure & MICE

▶ Contd. from page 21

guests staying at the hotel or those from Vapi and Daman looking for a gourmet dining experience. Our in-house spa has 10 massage rooms and offers a wide range of our signature wellness options.

QWhat segment of consumers are you targeting?

We are targeting families, the leisure and the corporate traveller. Daman is both a holiday destination for many cities in Gujarat and Maharashtra

and being a Union Territory, it has several factors that influence people to come here. Daman also has several factories and offices in close proximity and as a result, we receive a lot of corporate clients. Considering that we are the only five-star property in the area, we also have several opulent suites with private jacuzzi.

QWhich are your key markets?

Our key markets in India are Gujarat and Maharashtra

– basically anything that is a five to six hours' drive away because the road connectivity to Daman from all major cities is excellent. Also, the Vapi railway station is just a 10-minute drive from our property.

QWhat is your strategy to promote The Deltin, Daman in India?

We are looking at promoting our property through several channels, both offline and online. We also have our own internal sales force. ↴

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Light, action, camera at Film Tourism Conclave

The third edition of the annual film tourism event titled India International Film Tourism Conclave (IIFTC 2015) is scheduled to take place in Chennai, Hyderabad and Mumbai in February.

TT BUREAU

The Film Federation of India (FFI) will gather prodigious Indian film-makers under one umbrella in Chennai, Hyderabad and Mumbai for the third edition of India International Film Tourism Conclave (IIFTC 2015). It is scheduled to take place in Chennai at Sheraton Park & Towers on February 17, Hyderabad at Radisson Blu on February 19 and Mumbai at The Lalit on February 21. It



Harshad Bhagwat
Director
IIFTC

will see participation from some of the most renowned

film-makers in India. Previous editions of IIFTC have brought together some of the finest names including ace cinematographers **Santosh Sivan**, veteran director **Ramesh Sippy**, award-winning scriptwriter **Kamlesh Pandey**, renowned Marathi director **Mahesh Kothare**, and producer **Mukesh Bhatt** to name a few. IIFTC 2015 will see participation from some exotic countries such as Kenya, KwaZulu Natal, Fiji, Oman, Panama, and Taiwan.



Testimonials

“ Participating in IIFTC was a fruitful experience for Oman Tourism. We were very happy with the turnout and the response we received. The interactions we had with the people we met were highly productive.

Lubaina Sheerazi
Representative, Ministry of Tourism,
Sultanate of Oman

“ IIFTC 2014 was a great platform for DTTDC to showcase its locations in Delhi to the film fraternity of India. We got an opportunity to interact with key film markets in India as well as abroad.

Sudhir Sobti
Chief Manager (PR & Publicity),
Delhi Tourism

“ Events like the India International Film Tourism Conclave are the need of the hour. Coming together is the only way forward. I applaud an initiative like this and I feel it should be conducted every single year.

Mukesh Bhatt
Vishesh Films

Supran Sen, Secretary General, Film Federation of India says, “Our filmmakers are constantly looking for new and exotic destinations to shoot. Our objective behind IIFTC is to facilitate a direct interaction among our film industries with the foreign film commissions, tourism boards and line producers, who want to promote their locations and services for the purpose of film shoot.” IIFTC takes place in three most important film markets

in India in a unique road show format.

Harshad Bhagwat, Director, IIFTC and Director of Mercury Integrated, said, “Time and again, feature films have proved to be an excellent vehicle for destination marketing. Audiences are increasingly motivated to travel to places they see in their favourite films and countries around the world are welcoming Indian film makers to shoot in their countries in order to boost tourism.”

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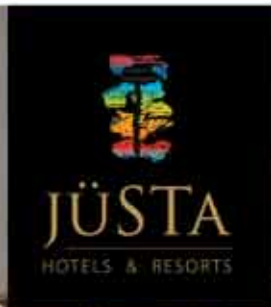
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- Quality Sellers of Tourism Products promoting the State of Uttar Pradesh as a leading tourist destination for HERITAGE, WILDLIFE, ADVENTURE, LEISURE AND BUDDHIST TOURISM.
- Hosted FAM trip for foreign tour operators leading to onsite marketing of tourism products of Uttar Pradesh.



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(February 24, 2015, Lucknow)



DNSW to double numbers in 5 years

Destination New South Wales is leveraging the Indian community in the region. The 13 per cent rise in arrivals attributed to its campaign, 'Jhappi Time' designed for the Indian market, proved that the agency is on the right track.



HAZEL JAIN

Mike Baird, Premier of New South Wales (NSW), who was in India recently to attend the Vibrant Gujarat Summit 2015 on the personal invitation of PM Narendra Modi, was part of a 436-member delegation from Australia. This kind of commitment indicates the level of importance the country Down Under attaches to India.

NSW is doing its bit too. Despite being in the middle of an election campaign, the Premier was in India visiting Gandhinagar for the summit, followed by New Delhi and Mumbai meeting the travel trade. Amidst travel partners in Mumbai, he announced that the 'Jhappi Time' campaign that showcases Sydney and the Australian state of NSW will be expanded onto television screens across India with Singapore Airlines as its partner. "The campaign launched in India early last year helped increase arrivals by 13 per cent. More than

86,500 Indians arrived in NSW in the year ending September 2014 adding AUD 6.3 million in visitor expenditure to the NSW economy. We have now secured the first airline partner

familiarisation tour of NSW from February 7-13, 2015. According to **Paramjit Bawa**, Country Manager – India, Destination NSW, "Focus on India will have a one-day B2B workshop fol-

“ Focus on India will have a one-day B2B workshop followed by a gala dinner where agents will get an opportunity to interact with NSW suppliers



Paramjit Bawa
Country Manager – India
Destination NSW

with Singapore Airlines for this," the Premier added.

'Jhappi Time' TVCs will offer travellers special airfares to Sydney and NSW on Singapore Airlines from February to November 2015. About 30 Indian travel retailers and wholesalers will travel to Sydney in February 2015 to take part in Focus on India, a

lowed by a gala dinner where agents will get an opportunity to interact with NSW suppliers in a preset appointment format. Before the event, the agents will be hosted for two nights in the NSW region."

Destination NSW is the first State Tourism Organisation in Australia to open a dedicated office in India.

MoUs with Indian states

Mike Baird reveals in a freewheeling interview with **TRAVTALK** that the region can double the numbers coming from India, not in 10 but five straight years. He also speaks about forging MoUs with some Indian states to develop bilateral tourism.

Tell us about your meetings while in India.

I'm meeting the CM of Maharashtra this afternoon and we are talking specifically about tourism. As you know, we entered into a sister-state agreement with Maharashtra in November 2012. We have also signed an MoU with the CM of Gujarat after meeting with the Gujarat tourism minister. We are working with these CMs on ways in which we can collaborate on tourism and develop bilateral tourism. Obviously, I am open to a dialogue with as many Indian states as possible.

What kind of numbers is NSW expecting from India?

We got about 86,000 visitors last year spending about AUD 194 mn and Destination NSW wants to double it in ten years. But I think we can do that in five years. The targets should be to reach 1,60,000 to 1,70,000 Indians annually. Double the figures would mean an AUD 400mn spend annually.

Are you looking at improving connectivity?

One of the things we need to follow up on is improving direct connectivity. Jet Airways is obviously one of the airlines we can talk to. This is one of the points of discussion we are having with the state CMs. Collectively, we can approach the airlines.

Jhappi Time focuses on VFR only. What's next?

Our next step would be to target the honeymoon segment.



Mike Baird
Premier
New South Wales
(NSW)

It has also invested in Bollywood with its film UNINDIAN starring former Australian cricketer,

Brett Lee and Indian actress, **Tannishtha Chatterjee**. Directed and produced by

Anupam Sharma, UNINDIAN has been filmed exclusively in NSW.

From tourists to travellers

MPS Puri, CEO, Nira Hotels, says their resort Shanti Maurice in Mauritius appeals to travellers looking for an unadulterated and authentic Mauritian experience.



TT BUREAU

Q How was 2014 for Shanti Maurice?

The year 2014 was a challenging year. Whilst the numbers of travellers to Mauritius has grown, some of that growth has come from Tier 3 and Tier 4 markets.

Q What are your plans for 2015?

We are looking to be able to grow through a more focused approach on specific markets; for example, the weddings market, top-end MICE, wellness retreats and so on.

Q How do you position the resort in Mauritius?

Spread over 36 acres, Shanti Maurice is a boutique lifestyle resort located in the largely untouched south coast of Mauritius, near the small town of St Felix. Not only do we have an award winning spa spread over 75,000 sq. feet, we also provide access to the sights, sounds and flavours of the unique mix of

“ Tourists have become more like travellers and through additional travel, they have become more discerning. We are working on growing our market share by focusing on niche markets

MPS Puri
CEO, Nira Hotels



Indian, African, French and Chinese influences that form the Mauritian culture.

Q Mauritius is a major tourist destination, how do you manage to stay on top of your game in this market?

In order to stay at the top of the game, we must appeal not only to the tourists but also to the travellers who are looking to satisfy their quest for travel, appealing to their sensibilities by creating an unadulterated, authentic Mauritian experience. To this end, we use digital and social media platforms to reach out to our potential guests.

Q What is the dominant profile of Indian guests who frequent the hotel?

The dominant profile of all our guests is that they are some of the most discerning and well travelled people.

Q In what way does your resort cater to Indian tourists?

We try and meet the expectations of all discerning travellers through our offerings – one can get a fantastic Indian meal here, or relax with the help of an Ayurveda treatments. We also provide butler services to our guests.

Victor Exotica will now be Radisson Goa Candolim, in the most happening place along the fame Calangute - Candolim Beach in North Goa

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eVisas: A boon to the industry

eVisa for 43 countries has given an evitable face lift to the tourism vertical in India. Even the winners of India Travel Awards-North feels so. Here's what they shared with TRAVTALK.



Kuoni Destination Management

In my days of being in the business, I think the greatest day for me was when eVisa was offered to 43 nations. It's definitely a path breaking initiative, which we should celebrate. It is going to change the course of business that we will do in the coming years. This has been one of our major demands and was considered by the government. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the government for considering the electronic visa. The three countries that need to be added to the list are France, Switzerland and UK.

Deepak Deva
CEO

Crowne Plaza, Greater Noida

I think eVisa given to 43 countries is a big achievement for the country. This is an incredible step taken by the government. I am a member of PATA and was one of the persons to push eVisa for almost a year and a half. Now, we all have smiling faces. It's so good to have something like this take shape in India.

Greesh Bindra, General Manager



Minar Travels

It is an awaited but a very good move taken by the Government of India. This will give a huge boost to the tourism domain. I feel a lot more countries; especially the European nations that has been left out should be added. Why should eVisa be given to only 43 countries? It should be granted to all of them.

H S Duggal, Managing director



Tree of Life Resorts & Hotels

As far as eVisa is concerned, I will believe only when the tourist arrivals increases. Till then, we will have to wait and see. I think there is too much of excitement with us in the trade, as usual.

Himmat Anand, Founder



BRYs Hotels Group

eVisa will really give a boost to the tourism industry. Earlier, people used to shy away from India because of the lengthy visa formalities that they had to go through. But now, since the process has become simpler, I think this should give a boost to the industry, in general. The Asian countries that have been left out should be added to the list.

Navneet Kaur, Director

Travstarz Holidays & Destinations

I think the government has proved how keen it is to focus on tourism. This will help all of us in the travel industry. But I think that only eVisa is not sufficient but other ground work is needed to be done. I think the travel industry, the associations and the Ministry need to work more closely to make things better and take India to the top.

Pankaj Nagpal, Managing Director



Forerez.com

It is a good concept and it is really nice to recognise the regional talent, and make sure that it gives some kind of a focus ahead. eVisa is a big initiative, which will bring a lot of tourists to the country. This was the biggest complain that any tour operator or a traveller had with India and if it is addressed and executed well, then it will triple our incoming.

Parikshit Sawhney, Managing Director



Hyatt Place, Udyog Vihar, Gurgaon

It is such a fantastic opportunity for a lot of people who want to come and explore India. We have always been wanting to have something like this and I think what it will do to the entire industry is unbelievable. This will give a huge boost to tourism in the country.

Sumit Kumar, General Manager



Sarovar Hotels

It is a brilliant initiative. But the ground reality is that it hadn't really kicked off in a way it should have, but gradually it is happening. Whenever a big issue like this takes place in India, it always faces some kind of teething problem but eVisa will definitely boost tourism; both in the short and long hauls.

Pradeep Kalra
Senior Vice President

Vasco Travel

It gives a good signal to the industry that the government is thinking about tourism. The fact that government has implemented it within six months of coming in power is really incredible. This will definitely going to boost tourism. UK and Canada should be added to the list.

Vikas Abbott, Managing Director



Abacus Distribution Systems India

It will give a big boost to tourism in India and we expect the numbers to grow up as far as inbound travellers are concerned. It is good for the economy of the country. This initiative will help invite people from different countries and exchange ideas, and culture among them. I think this is a very positive move.

Ankur Chatterjee,
Director of Sales
Winner of North India Travel Awards



Vivaana Culture hotel

The India Travel Awards is very exciting for us as we are a new entrant in the hotel industry. The eVisa should have happened twenty years ago. But now when finally it has happened, I think this is going to make a huge difference. In our business we travel a lot and wherever we go, people complain it takes a long time to get Indian visa. So, they preferred to go to other countries. But with the initiative finally taken, I think it will help the tourism industry to grow.

Atul Khanna, Managing Director

Maya shines in North India

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.



Investment cell for Make in India queries

The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) has recently launched a web portal, 'Make in India' and the officers from various Ministries have been nominated as Nodal Officers.

TT BUREAU

India Cell-ing

Invest India is the national investment promotion and facilitation agency for India. It acts as the first point of reference for foreign investors, handholding them through the pre-investment phase, execution and after care phases.

The objective of the Investment cell is to handle 'Make in India' queries as well as attract FDI to India. The Ministry of Tourism has also set up an Investment Cell to

▶ A tourist sitting at home can upload his image, first page of the Passport and through his credit or debit card, can pay online visa fees of US\$60

▶ Lot of interest is generated as India has a very close proximity with the Gulf region



IRV Rao
Assistant Director
India Tourism, Dubai

coordinate queries related to tourism sector. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has launched 'Tourist Visa on

Arrival' on Nov 27, 2014 enabled by Electronic Travel Authorisation' (ETA). Its appli-

cation is for the ordinary Passport holders for the nationalities of 43 countries in the world. UAE, Oman and Jordan are the ones from the

India Tourism Dubai has organised presentations to reach the travel agents for rest of the Emirates. This helps create awareness about these facilities among them

cable only for the ordinary Passport holders for the nationalities of 43 countries in the world. UAE, Oman and Jordan are the ones from the

IRV Rao, Assistant Director, India Tourism, Dubai expressed, "In association with Indian missions in UAE, Oman and Jordan and now with Air

India, India Tourism Dubai has organised presentations to reach the travel agents for rest of the Emirates, help create awareness about these facilities among them." This is a hassle free scheme. A tourist sitting at home can upload his image, first page of the Passport and through his credit or debit card, can pay online visa fees of US\$60. The confirmation of visa approval reaches them in 72 hours. Lot of interest is generated as India has a very close proximity with the Gulf region.

Now 'satellite route' for Air India Express

As part of Air India Express strategy to commission more number of outlets to reach out to valued clients in UAE, the airline opened on Jan 18, 2015, a new dedicated satellite office located at Al Aruba Street, Sharjah.

TT BUREAU

The new satellite office in Sharjah, which is aimed at enhancing service levels, is equipped to cater all reservations and ticketing requirements including sale of ancillary services on Air India Express services. More such offices are planned to be com-

missioned in other parts in the near future.

The airline is also in the process of developing online UAE visa service facilities for customers. This online service is expected to launch shortly.

"Presently, we operate over 100 flights every week from UAE connecting to 9 cities

in India. In the Summer' 15 Schedule, we have planned to restructure the 4 times weekly round-robin operations on the Mangalore-Muscat-Abu Dhabi-Mangalore into terminator services.

In summer schedule 2015, the airlines' passengers will have non-stop flights between Abu Dhabi-Mangalore and Muscat-Mangalore and vice versa. The flights from Abu Dhabi to Mangalore operating on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday will depart Abu Dhabi at 2.20 AM and reach Mangalore at 7.35 AM," informed **K. Shyam Sundar**, Chief Executive Office, Air India Express.

With a fleet size of 17 aircraft, Air India Express has carried about 2 million passengers in the current financial year till Dec 2014. It is projected that passenger

carriage will touch 2.6 million by the close of this fiscal year.

"UAE is a major market for us, accounting for about 60 per cent of our capacity and

factors. AIE is committed in maintaining the high degree of punctuality and reliability of services achieved in the current year," he further stated. Air India Express plans to increase its fleet size from the



K. Shyam Sundar
Chief Executive Office
Air India Express



Opening of the new satellite office



K Shyam Sundar addressing the press

revenues. The airline has achieved load factor of close to 85 per cent on the services to UAE. We are thankful to our esteemed clients especially to the expatriate Indian community in UAE who have helped us in achieving high occupancy

current 17 aircraft to 20 in early 2016. The process of leasing these three aircraft has been finalised to induct them during the summer schedule of 2016. In addition, five more aircraft will be added in 2016.

UAE is a major market for us, accounting for about 60 per cent of our capacity and revenues. The airline has achieved load factor of close to 85 per cent

India calling with eVoA

India Tourism, Dubai conducted a workshop/seminar on Visa on Arrival (eVoA) on Dec 29, 2014 in Al Ain. India Tourism, Dubai graced the occasion with power point presentation. 50 travel agents were present for the presentation and eVoA brochures specially printed based on the guidelines of MOT and other tourist promotional material with giveaways were distributed among them.



Atlas maps the technology trail

With a greater focus on its B2B online portal for the travel trade, Atlas Tours & Travels is gearing up to give its agent partners the best customer experience. Starting a new office for its call centre and delivering White Label solutions in just five days are two priorities on their list.



Riding on the wave of technology in the travel industry, Atlas Tours & Travels has consciously evolved itself to cater to the need of the hour.

Expanding on this trend is **Hussain Patel**, Executive Director at Atlas Tours & Travels, who says, "Atlas Group believes in 'evolving'. Since the past 25 years, Atlas Tours has kept pace with the

changing environment by regularly investing in state-of-the-art technology and building trust with all its trade partners. The company also deeply believes in being transparent in all its dealings."

call-back facilities and call-in-pin facility which will enable travel agents to cancel or book tickets on call without sending an email."

flow. We are constantly identifying reasons for which customers call to reduce the call inflow with the help of technology. This helps us in giving an overall good experience to our customers," Patel adds.

providing one of the most advanced White Label solutions. "Many of our agents had complained of their corporate accessing other B2C websites after office hours. Our White Label can be delivered with the agent's branding in just five days and can be given to their customers with various options to advertise their products on the platform," Patel reveals.

The company also provides visa services for all major consulates based in Mumbai and records an approval ratio of above 97 per cent given its team of experienced visa professionals.

Atlas Tours & Travels also encourages its sub-agents to sell ancillary air products like meals on board, baggage allowance, Marhabba services, seat preferences, etc. Most of the products can be purchased on its portal at the time of ticketing.

For the customers

- ▶ The company has B2B/B2E travel portal (www.atlastravelsonline.com)
- ▶ It comes with an end-to-end solution for travel agents and corporate companies
- ▶ It gives travel agents an improved customer experience
- ▶ Effective from March 2015, the company will be shifting the entire sales and operations along with the call centre of its online portal to its Lower Parel office
- ▶ It will be setting up a 24x7 call centre
- ▶ This centre will have facilities like call recording, screen monitoring, call-back facilities and call-in-pin facility, which will enable travel agents to cancel or book tickets on call without sending an email

The company's B2B/B2E travel portal (www.atlastravelsonline.com), which is an end-to-end solution for travel agents and corporate companies uses one of the most advanced technologies to allow them to do business with maximum ease. This philosophy of the group continues to be its biggest forte.

Explaining how the portal gives travel agents an improved customer experience, Patel says, "From March 2015, we will be shifting the entire sales and operations along with the call centre of our online portal to our Lower Parel office, where we will be setting up a 24x7 call centre. This centre will have facilities like call recording, screen monitoring,

"The internet has dramatically changed the environment and travel websites now compete (with a relatively good degree of success) with traditional travel agencies which in turn need to make use of the best of technology through travel portals

Hussain Patel
Executive Director
Atlas Tours & Travels



(TNC) facility. "Currently, tickets get auto-cancelled on the portal and the refund process is also automated that has reduced the call-in

White Label solutions

Atlas Tours & Travels is also helping sub-agents to increase their business by



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Outbound brings in the big bucks

With India emerging as the world's fastest-growing outbound market and in absolute numbers, second only to China, foreign tourist boards are gearing up to lure the outbound India traveller. TRAVTALK speaks to a number of tourism boards that are betting big on this segment about their strategies this year.



MEGHA PAUL



SanJeet

Tourism Attache, Philippines Tourism Marketing Office – India

► Double-digit growth from India

The Indian market continues to be one of the most important contributors of international visitors to the Philippines, which has recorded a double-digit growth of almost 50 per cent in Indian tourist arrivals in August 2014, as against the same month last year.

► MICE: the revenue driver

MICE and business travel are definitely areas that will boost outbound travel from India. The growing interest in MICE, especially incentive trips has been phenomenal over the recent months. Destination weddings are also gaining a good deal of attraction. The country is also promoting luxury tourism and shopping tours for the Indian market as the number of high network individuals in India is very large.

► **Roadmap ahead** Presently, DoT is focusing on enhancing the air connectivity between major airports of the two countries. The country is engaged in an aggressive marketing campaign, promoting its exotic destinations in the Indian market. With 2015 being declared as "Visit the Philippines



Madhvi Awasthi

General Manager, Media, Canadian Tourism Commission-India

► CAN+ wonders

In 2014, India continued to post encouraging numbers. The launch of the CAN+ visa program in India in July has facilitated double-digit growth in arrivals over the past few months. There was a rise of about 20 per cent in visitor arrivals from India from January-October 2014 over the same period last year. All months in 2014 have seen a positive growth with an exceptional surge of 46.5 per cent in July 2014. With the direct air connectivity to Toronto starting November this year, we hope to see increased outbound travel to Canada. We are looking at a double digit growth in 2015.

► New initiatives

With the onset of 2015, CTC is looking at increasing direct consumer interaction. Also, we are looking at doing radio promotions with leading radio channels, activities on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, etc to engage potential consumers with activities in Canada. We would also be undertaking trade-retail partnership wherein we will be branding premium malls.

► Eyeing leisure

CTC-India strongly promotes leisure travel to Canada in India. MICE has also seen an upsurge from India. There have been positive movements and the market is sure to grow in the coming years. Indians have also accepted soft adventure activities as a prime focus for their holidays. Families and groups enjoy adventure activities like the Hornblower cruise at Niagara-Ontario, the Glacier Skywalk-Alberta, Edgewalk at the CN Tower-Ontario etc.



Romit Theophilus

Director - Sales and Marketing, GNT0 India

► India: A significant market

Our growth in terms of Indian arrivals over the past five years has been consistently good. In the January-October period of last year, we've witnessed 5,58,398 overnights. This year, we are targeting a growth of 8-10 per cent in India outbound

► New growth drivers

MICE especially incentives and meetings was earlier mainly restricted to destinations in South and South East Asia. However, there is a noticeable growth in going medium and long haul for incentives now. This has to do with more awareness of value propositions from destinations away from the beaten track. We are sure to hear more from small exotic destinations vying for incentives and competing with the popular ones.

► Strategies for 2015

Our new marketing theme for 2015 is Traditions & Customs. The Overall objectives of the Traditions & Customs Campaign is to enhance the emotional appeal of the 'Destination Germany' brand, to create awareness of traditions, customs and their context and to highlight the cultural diversity and support intercultural dialogue. In 2015, we also expect more queries on MICE, incentive trips for corporate companies. We expect an increase in series departure, FIT travels, leisure trips for families, especially from Northern and Western regions of India.



Medha Sampat

India Representative-Argentina Tourism

► New offerings for India outbound

Adventure has been an emerging trend and Argentina is God's natural playground. Travellers want to create holidays which are beyond the ordinary as they have been fascinated with the marvellous scenery, stunning attractions, vibrant cities, variety of cuisine along with wine tourism bundled with adventure, sport and entertainment. For this reason Argentina fits in very well with Indian travellers as it allows them to discover many jewels in one trip.

► Growing India market

The Indian market is important for Argentina, and it must be noted that Argentina is the first South American country in India to recognise this potential and target the Indian traveller. Travellers want to spend more time to discover the other places in Argentina. On an average a tourist spends at least a week in Argentina. We have had over five thousand Indians that have visited last year. Argentina is also the most visited country in South America. With the incredible response received last year, we have also started targeting other cities beyond Mumbai and Delhi which include Ahmadabad, Pune, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Chennai.

► Long-haul MICE gaining momentum

Long-haul MICE has picked up and is an emerging trend. Although Argentina is a long-haul destination, we have seen some MICE movement from India. According to the ICCA worldwide rankings Buenos Aires holds the number one position in South America. Corporates are looking to explore and venture into new destinations. An evolution of theme-based itineraries has emerged and sports itineraries have gained popularity. Leisure has been the top scorer in the market. We are noticing a lot more young Indians who want to travel to experience itineraries on their terms.



Catherine Oden

Director-Atout France, India

► Emerging as mono-destination

In recent times, France has gained more appeal as a mono-destination. We have an increasing number of visitors who prefer longer stays in France and discovering regions beyond Paris. Recent trends indicate that experiential travel is here to stay and that people are motivated to include the offbeat as part of their travel plans while in France.

► 48-hour visa

France is very keen to augment its share of Indian arrivals.

This finds expression in the easing of travel formalities. From suspending biometrics on all visa applications in 2013 to easing of visa application procedures to the recent very positive development of issuing French visas in 48 hours also indicate the importance of the Indian market. We are still awaiting figures for Indian arrivals into France for 2014. However, it is estimated that France welcomed 3,49,000 Indian visitors to its shores in 2013.

► Now, a travel app

The French Embassy and Atout France-France Tourism Development in collaboration with a communication agency, the Links have also launched a travel application 'Chalo Paris' that has specially been customised keeping the Indian traveller in mind. Downloadable on smartphones (IOS and androids), this user-friendly application provides useful information on what to do once in Paris.

50+ countries for OTM 2015

OTM 2015 will be held from Feb 4- 6, 2015 at the Bombay Convention and Exhibition Centre and TTF New Delhi on February 10-12 at Thyagaraj Sports Complex.



TT BUREAU

Close to a thousand travel-product sellers from over 50 countries will be exhibiting at the show and over 10,000 buyers from the travel trade are expected to visit the three-day event.

The show is about 25% bigger in 2015, with many new participants this year. Mumbai is the biggest travel market in India, accounting for about a third of all outbound and domestic trips. With strong vicinity markets in the West and South India, for which it is the preferred port of departure for international trips, Mumbai accounts for about a third of all outbound trips from India. Maharashtra is also the leading inbound destination state overall as it attracts about a fifth of all foreign visits in India.

All dedicated to MICE

- ▶ Apart from Leisure Travel, OTM has a significant division dedicated to Business Travel & MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions-related travel)
- ▶ From this year on, this section is being presented as a show-in-show called BTM
- ▶ Started last year, Tourist Transport Show (TTS) is another interesting segment at the OTM, where one could see latest vehicles for the travel industry
- ▶ Business is more and more online. This has led to sophisticated travel technology solutions for agents and consumers alike, which will be on display at the Travel Tech @ OTM segment.

ed as a show-in-show called BTM. Travel Technology is one of the fastest growing areas within the travel industry that is fast evolving to cater to the

Started last year, Tourist Transport Show (TTS) is another interesting segment



Knowledge Series 2015

Kuoni India in association with India's largest travel trade show, OTM, has announced the launch of the Knowledge Series 2015. This one of its kind medium will serve as a platform for direct exchange between the various businesses in the tourism industry and will aid the exchange of ideas and insights. Knowledge Series 2015 is dedicated to mastering the challenges and opportunities within the travel industry. It will have sessions by Kuoni India's experts to discuss best practices and what future expertise and research could bring to new age travel, especially for the fast-growing emerging markets.

The event will bring together some of the most influential thinkers to discuss new approaches to sustainable tourism development. The aim of the knowledge series is to strengthen awareness of making holidays a priority with Indians. It will foster closer co-operation between tourism boards, executives and policy-makers and contribute to the enhancement of marketable holiday solutions. Kuoni-OTM Knowledge Series 2015 is to be held from 4 to 6 February at the Bombay Exhibition Centre, Mumbai. This is an invitation-only event and will consist of expert sessions with plenty of time for questions and discussion with extensive networking opportunities.

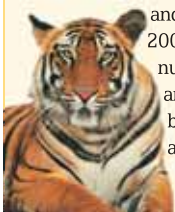
Apart from Leisure Travel, OTM has a significant division dedicated to Business Travel & MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions related travel). From this year on, this section is being present-

Internet generation. Business is more and more online. This has led to sophisticated travel technology solutions for agents and consumers alike, which will be on display at the Travel Tech @ OTM segment.

at the OTM, where one could see latest vehicles for the travel industry. The exhibits are neatly balanced with parallel conferences, seminars, panel discussions and product presentations by expert hotels.

Tiger numbers grow by 31%

■ As per a recent report by the National Tiger Conservation Authority's (NTCA), the estimated population of tigers has grown up to 30.5 per cent with about 2,226 (1,945 to a maximum of 2,491) tigers last year, compared to 1,706 (1,571 to a maximum of 1,875) in 2011 and 1,411 in 2008. The numbers are likely to be revised as the sampling



process is ongoing in some states. The sampling was done in 3,78,118 km of forests in 18 states (as compared to 17 states in 2010), with total number of 1,540 unique tiger photo captures in 43 tiger reserves in 2014 (as compared to 39 tiger reserves in 2010). Karnataka tops the list with 408 tigers, with the highest number of tigers in the age group of 1.5 years and more, followed by 340 in Uttarakhand, 308 in Madhya Pradesh, 229 in Tamil

Nadu, 190 in Maharashtra, 167 in Assam, 136 in Kerala and 117 in Uttar Pradesh. "These results confirm that more than half of the world's tigers are in India, and thus, an up-to-date and precise estimation becomes imperative for assessing the success of future conservation efforts. This demonstrates the impact of bringing together political will, strong science and dedicated field efforts," said Ravi Singh, Secretary General and CEO, WWF-India.



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Grand Tour of Switzerland on wheels

More budget this year

Urs Eberhard, Executive VP (International Markets & MICE) for Switzerland Tourism, spoke briefly to TRAVTALK.

Q What are your expectations from India in 2015?

We want more independent travellers and want them to stay longer by offering more experiences. We also wish to extend the seasons to include our winters in the itinerary. Our focus will therefore be on differentiating and highlighting our assets.

Q What kind of growth do you forecast amid currency fluctuations?

With the new theme, we expect a five per cent growth in 2015 with at least 5,00,000 overnights by Indians. Our confidence is reflected in the 10 per cent increase in our budgets this year. Our spend just on communication in India is roughly Swiss Francs 1.3 mn.

Q What kind of overnights did Indians do last year?

Indian travellers recorded overnight figures of 4,80,000 in 2014, an increase of three per cent over 2013.

Q How does India stand among other emerging markets?

India is slated to overtake Russia by becoming the second-most important market in the strategic growth markets (BRIC) only after China. Overall, it is roughly number ten or eleven based purely on hotel overnights.



Urs Eberhard
Executive VP (International Markets & MICE) for Switzerland Tourism

To make more and more Indians stay back longer and experience it better, Switzerland Tourism will be promoting its new route titled the 'Grand Tour of Switzerland' for self-drive and train journeys across the country.



TT BUREAU

Switzerland Tourism has revealed its new theme for 2015 for the Indian market – the 'Grand Tour of Switzerland' that highlights the country's best self-drive routes. Its intentions are clear: to make the discerning Indian traveller stay longer and spend more. It will also promote its 'Grand Train Tour of Switzerland' this year that was launched by Swiss Travel System for Indians who don't want to drive.

An 11-member team from Switzerland descended in Mumbai recently as part of the India Sales Tour. Leading the delegation was Urs Eberhard, Executive VP (International Markets & MICE) for Switzerland Tourism. Their agenda was to visit six cities starting with Mumbai, Pune, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Bengaluru and ending in New Delhi on January 23, 2015 to meet agents and conduct intensive training workshops

on the new products for about 150 frontline staff in Mumbai and then in New Delhi.

Ritu Sharma, Deputy Director, Switzerland Tourism India, said, "We are making

She added that the tourism board is gearing up for its annual workshop in Switzerland in February instead of September where it takes about 30 operators to experience winter. "The Grand Tour

followed by STM (Switzerland Travel Mart) that happens in Switzerland in September.

“The Grand Tour will be launched in Switzerland only in summer so the agents will not be able to experience it but they will be given an orientation on the new theme

Ritu Sharma
Deputy Director,
Switzerland Tourism India



infrastructural changes on ground and investing a lot in developing these routes in Switzerland, which will be permanent. These include signage on highways, GPS, mobile apps, etc. Eight routes have now been connected to one another for this.”

will be launched in Switzerland only in the summer so the agents will not be able to experience it but they will be given an orientation on the new theme,” Sharma said. August will witness the STE (Swiss Travel Experience) when the Swiss partners will come down again

Add - Ons

▶ August will witness the STE (Swiss Travel Experience) when the Swiss partners will come down again followed by STM (Switzerland Travel Mart) that happens in Switzerland in September

▶ Grand Tour of Switzerland' that highlights the country's best self-drive routes. Its intentions are clear: to make the discerning Indian traveller stay longer and spend more



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NTOs bet big on Indian travellers



Nishant Kashikar

Country Manager, India and Gulf, Tourism Australia

► Non-traditional destinations on the rise

Travel is no longer restricted to mere sightseeing, but has become more experiential. There is rising trend of Indian travellers opting for non-traditional destinations like Hamilton Island, Kangaroo Island, Ayers Rock and Tasmania. We have also seen a growing interest for culinary and sports tourism with experimenting with international cuisines and attending sporting events featuring high on travel wish list. Another interesting trend among the Indian tourists is the increase in preference for self-drive holidays.

► Tenth largest market

India is currently Australia's 10th largest inbound tourism market. India is the 12th largest source market in terms of expenditure. For 12 months ending June 2014, Indian visitors contributed A\$ 752 million to Australia's total expenditure. Arrivals from India are expected to perform well, with an average annual financial year growth rate of 7.2 per cent through to the financial year 2020-21. As per the 'India 2020 Strategic Plan', it is estimated that Australia will witness up to 300,000 visitors and up to AUD 2.3 bn in spend by the year 2020.

► Luring with sports and food

The ongoing tour of the Indian cricket team to Australia offers significant engagement opportunities for Tourism Australia. Tourism Australia has associated with Yatra.com to specially curate a portfolio of 30 travel packages showcasing the Best of Australia experiences for travellers planning their trip Down Under during the current and upcoming cricket season. The 'Restaurant Australia' campaign will be continued with a strong tactical focus on media vehicles including television, print, out-of-home and digital platforms, to coincide with the planning periods for Indian summer holidays.



Vivek Anand

Country Manager, MTPA-India

► India: the second major contributor

Footfalls from the Asian market went up by 19.5 per cent to reach 158,361 in 2014, with India, the second major contributor from the continent registering a growth of seven per cent to reach around 61,200. Mauritius saw a significant increase in arrivals from India during 2014 in the luxury and MICE Segments. We expect this trend to continue in the coming year.

► New targets for outbound increase

In 2015, while sustaining our endeavour to increase Indian footfalls from adventure, honeymoon and family segments, there will be a special focus on golf, weddings and MICE movements.

Pranav Kapadia

Tourism Fiji -India representative

► Attracting HNIs

The current season is looking extremely positive with an Indian couple spending an average of US\$ 6000 on a five-night Fiji package. The number of nights has also gone up from four nights to six-eight nights thereby increasing the yield as well. Indians are high spenders and apart from accommodation in high-end resorts, they also spend on activities such as sky diving, island hopping, jet skiing, jet boating, shopping and spa treatments.



► Rising numbers

Fiji is becoming increasingly popular in the Indian market and we have seen good growth in 2014. In the year to August 2014, Fiji welcomed 3,041 visitors from India. This is a 17 per cent increase on the previous twelve months period. We have had a few small incentive groups to Fiji from India in the last two years and have another group of 50 pax from South India travelling to Fiji in February. While the number of honeymooners and leisure travellers are on the rise, we have also witnessed an increase in small family/friends groups travelling to Fiji.

► Launching specialist programmes

We have also re-launched the Fiji Matai Specialist Programme for the global travel trade and will be aggressively promoting the programme among the Indian travel fraternity and offering several incentives for our Fiji Specialists. We are also planning to host the second edition of the India Fiji Tourism Exchange (IFTE) later in 2015 after the successful completion of the first edition held in September 2012. In 2015, we plan to organise IFTE on a larger scale and are looking to host about 50 Indian travel agents to Fiji for a two-day B2B meetings session.

Africa. Youngsters today want to feel that they are making a difference be it through wildlife conservation programs or adopting a penguin.

► Soaring outbound

The Tourism Ministry of South Africa has set a target of achieving one lakh Indian tourists to South Africa by 2014, but we are glad to share that we achieved our targets in 2012 itself. 2013 recorded 1,12,672 Indian tourists visiting South Africa which was an increase of 5.5 per cent vis-à-vis 2012. This year we had few challenges but we streamlined and fast-tracked our visa process. The first three months of 2014 has welcomed 24,556 Indian travellers to South Africa.

► No.3 market

Today, India is the third largest market in Australasia region for SAT. We are investing heavily in this market and constantly adapting to the changing consumer interests, diversifying our products and customizing our offerings to varied consumer demands. We have a lot of expectations from the Indian market and going forward our increasing engagement with trade and consumers would help us in realising this vision.

Lubaina Sheerazi

India Representative, Ministry of Tourism, Oman

► Tapping adventure seekers

India is set to have a huge youth population and this is a quickly growing segment of Indian travellers – mostly rich, hailing from India's larger cities who are more adventure seeking. We also foresee the luxury travel segment recovering from the financial crisis and the expect the demand to grow in this segment. MICE will also continue to grow and corporate will be on the lookout for new destinations. The most compelling trend however is certainly that of the growing demand for experiential travel.



► Building awareness

Since it's a short-haul destination from India, Oman is becoming popular with the outbound tourists from India. Indians are looking for a new, niche destination and Oman has a lot to offer in terms of culture, heritage and adventure activities. In the India market, our main strategy has been to build awareness about the destination by providing detailed information and product knowledge to the travel trade industry. We are hoping to receive a 10 per cent increase in arrivals in 2015.



Hanneli Slabber

Country Manager, South African Tourism

► Volunteer holidays on the rise

These days Indian tourists are planning their own itineraries tuned to their specific interests and preferences. Concepts like self-drive holidays, exploring unknown regions, or touring the city on running tours and partaking in voluntourism activities are slowly catching up and we expect these to grow in the coming times. We are also seeing a lot of youth travellers and young families travelling to South



Amusement parks keen to involve agents

In a bid to evolve the industry and take it to the next level, the Indian Association of Amusement Park & Industries (IAAPI) is looking at ways to get the travel agents across the country into their fold. Its upcoming expo in Mumbai might be an ideal platform for both the industries.

TT BUREAU

While the travel trade is looking at ways in which it can branch out, the amusement park industry on the other hand is exploring ways in which it can involve the travel trade and get agents into their fold. This was announced by **Yogesh Dange**, President of The Indian Association of Amusement Parks & Industries (IAAPI) and Director of GRS Fantasy Park located in Mysore. He said, "A large chunk of agents are not connected to amusement park and entertainment venue operators. Agents in the West are but



“If we develop the connection with agents, the number of footfalls to these parks can be doubled in the next five years

Yogesh Dange

President

The Indian Association of Amusement Parks & Industries (IAAPI)

not that much in India. Given their network and contacts, they are the ones who can push products to the end consumers. If we develop the connection with agents, the number of foot-

falls to these parks can be doubled in the next five years.”

Revealing some statistics to give this idea some perspective, Dange adds, "Approximate footfalls in stand-alone parks are close to 25 million visitors per annum and an equal number of footfalls are recorded in entertainment venues that are inside malls. This is definitely not our limit for us."

He also said that the synergy could be through a commission-based model or volume based – as decided between the two involved parties.

Get amused at this expo

The association is currently gearing up to host the 15th edition of its IAAPI Amusement Expo 2015 that will take place from February 11-13, 2015 at Bombay Exhibition Centre in Mumbai. This, Dange is hoping, will also

development makes for a better business model. We will also begin dialogues with hotel brands and developers for this," Dange adds.

The three-day exhibition will provide a platform to bring together not just manufacturers



attract travel agents since it is supported by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

He adds that the expo will also see a B2B session which is expected to discuss this issue. "Not just travel agents but we also want to involve hoteliers since mixed-use

– domestic as well as international – and amusement park owners but also travel agents and hoteliers. It will see around 100-plus exhibitors from India as well as 42 participants from 19 other countries along with 4,500-5,000 visitors. According to Dange, about ₹1,000 crore of investment has gone into this

industry in India so far as of March 2014. "The current revenue that this industry generates is close to ₹2,000 crore and we think we can push this to ₹5,000 by 2020. It has that much potential. These figures are not available in the public domain but were revealed by an internal survey we did with Ernest & Young some years ago," the president added.

Increase member base

Apart from this, the association also wants to improve its member base from the current 370 to at least 400 by March 31, 2015. "There are a lot of developments happening in our industry right now – investments coming in, new parks coming up, companies going for IPOs," Dange said.

Meanwhile, IAAPI has planned to take a delegation of its members to Vietnam, Bangladesh and Indonesia in 2015-16 to enable exchange of ideas and develop relationships.

Fact File

▶ IAAPI has planned to take a delegation of its members to Vietnam, Bangladesh and Indonesia in 2015-16

▶ The three-day exhibition will provide a platform to bring together not just manufacturers – domestic as well as international – and amusement park owners but also travel agents and hoteliers

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Brainstorming galore at HIFI 2015

The recently concluded Hotel Investment Forum India-HIFI 2015 was the annual meeting place for the leaders in the Indian hotel and tourism industry. The stalwarts came forward to discuss important trends, identify new opportunities, and do deals through a combination of plenary sessions, breakout panels and interactive workshops.



A THAI treat for the ladies



Tourism Authority of Thailand, along with Abercrombie & Kent, organised a quintessential THAI afternoon for the ladies in Delhi. Besides a sumptuous lunch, the ladies also tried their hands at some Thai fruit carvings and the weary lot got treated to some soothing Thai massage. It was indeed a great way for the ladies to relax and catch up.



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Higher goals discussed at HIFI 2015



'Visit Kerala 2015' to be launched on April 1

■ Kerala Tourism's 'Visit Kerala 2015', a new initiative to promote the state's tourist destinations, will be launched on April 1, with a series of events ranging from arts to sports, to woo both domestic and foreign tourists, **A P Anil Kumar**, Tourism Minister, Kerala said.

"The main focus of Visit Kerala 2015 will be to strengthen the promotion of tourism products, including Ayurveda, Responsible Tourism, and Spice Route-Muziris heritage", Kumar said. "The Tourism Department will host a tourism industrial meet to promote Responsible Tourism and encour-

age the participation of local communities in the tourism sector. The meet will provide guidance to people on setting up home stays and villas with investments on a small scale", he added. Kerala Tourism will explore more new markets in China and Sri Lanka through trade fairs, road shows and

familiarisation tours. Campaigns to target potential travellers in big traditional markets for Kerala will be conducted in the United Kingdom, France and Germany through trade fairs and road shows. Consumer fairs and familiarisation trips will be introduced in upcoming markets like the US. 'Visit Kerala 2015' will also pro-

mote Kerala Tourism products like cultural festivals, weddings, Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) and adventure tourism, besides cycling. The second phase of Kerala Tourism's 'Kerala - Home of Ayurveda' campaign will also be launched in the select national and international markets like Germany.

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20th February, 2015 at The Lalit, New Delhi



OBJECTIVES

- To provide a platform for open house discussion between Governments (Central and States) and private sector investors (industry) regarding issues and opportunities affecting investment in Heritage Tourism
- To provide suggestions / recommendations to improve the business skills and practices of regional attractions and heritage tourism operators in the states
- To provide new innovative strategies to assist tourism businesses and Tourism destinations promotion and enhancing their marketing and positioning
- To Improve the coordination and communication of the international and domestic airports, railway stations and inter state bus terminals.
- To change and enhance the image of Indian Heritage Sites across the globe
- To promote Heritage Tourism in a sustainable manner keeping in view the carrying capacity of the destinations

STAKEHOLDERS

- Captains of Tourism and Hotel industry • International & National Tourism experts
- Corporate Groups with investments in infrastructure /hotels projects • Indian and Foreign Tour Operators • Vacation Planners • Institutes imparting Tourism related Education
- State Tourism Board • Airlines • Entertainment/Activity Managers and Coordinators
- Tour Managers • Tour Guides • Historians/Storytellers and all other stakeholders

TAKE AWAYS

- Latest thinking from senior industry and policies from government leaders
 - B2B and professional networking
- New investment opportunities in Heritage Tourism market
 - Extensive scope of preserving Heritage properties
 - Meeting who's who of the heritage Tourism Industry

For further enquires please contact :

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Varun Gogia - (0) 011-49545454 Extn. 242(M) 98710-98716 ; (E) varun.gogia@phdcci.in

Manish Pandey - (0)011- 49545454 Extn. 226 (M) 97111-46341 ; (E) manish.pandey@phdcci.in

CHIEF GUEST



Dr. Mahesh Sharma

Hon'ble Minister for Tourism,
Govt. of India

Country Partner



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PREMIER MEDIA PARTNER



EVENT TALK

FEBRUARY 2015

NATIONAL

2	Mumbai	South Africa Tourism Board Roadshow
2	Delhi	Tourism Fiji Roadshow,
2	Mumbai	Austrian Tourism Media Launch
2	Kolkata	Dubai Tourism Roadshow
3	Kolkata	Tourism Fiji Roadshow
3	Mumbai	Austria Tourism B2B Workshop
3-4	Mumbai	SATTE
4	Ahmedabad	South Africa Tourism Board Roadshow
4	Chennai	Austria Tourism B2B Workshop
4	Mumbai	Tourism Fiji Roadshow
4	Chennai	Dubai Tourism Roadshow
4-6	Mumbai	Outbound Travel Mart
4-6	Mumbai	Business Travel And Mice
4-6	Mumbai	Travel & Tourism Fair
5	Bengaluru	Dubai Tourism Roadshow
5	Bengaluru	South Africa Tourism Board Roadshow
5	Delhi	Tourism Fiji Roadshow
5	Delhi	Austria Tourism B2B Workshop
6	Delhi	South Africa Tourism Board Roadshow
6	Chennai	Tourism Fiji Roadshow
6	Delhi	Austria Tourism Media Lunch
6	Mumbai	Dubai Tourism Roadshow
8-10	Nagpur	Global Panorama Showcase 2015
10-12	New Delhi	Outbound Travel Mart
10-12	New Delhi	Travel & Tourism Fair
11 -13	Mumbai	IAAPI Amusement Expo
17	Chennai	India International Film Tourism Conclave 2015
19	Hyderabad	India International Film Tourism Conclave 2015
20	New Delhi	India Heritage Tourism Conclave
20 -22	Kolkata	India International Travel Mart
20 -22	Bhubaneshwar	Indian Tourism Fair
21	Mumbai	India International Film Tourism Conclave 2015
21-23	Ahmedabad	India Travel Mart
22-24	Lucknow	Uttar Pradesh Travel Mart
27-1 Mar	Vijaywada	India International Travel Exhibition

INTERNATIONAL

16-19	Johannesburg	IIPT World Symposium
22-24	Jerusalem	TAFI convention
24-25	Melbourne	AIME

MARCH 2015

NATIONAL

3	New Delhi	Trinidad & Tobago
4	Mumbai	Trinidad & Tobago
12-14	Raipur	India International Travel Exhibition
20-22	Guwahati	Holiday Expo
21-23	Chandigarh	India Travel Mart
23	Kolkata	Canadian Tourism Commission B2B Roadshow
24	Mumbai	Canadian Tourism Commission B2B Roadshow
26	Bengaluru	Canadian Tourism Commission B2B Roadshow

INTERNATIONAL

4-8	Berlin	ITB
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Niche segments draw big moolah

Shibani Phadkar, Senior Vice President-Products & Operations, Leisure Travel (Outbound), Thomas Cook (India) talks about the surge in demand from sports tourism, educational trips and personalised holiday segments last year.



MEGHA PAUL

Thomas Cook (India) is betting big on sports tourism, educational trips and personalised holiday segments this year.

According to **Shibani Phadkar**, Senior Vice President-Products & Operations, Leisure Travel (Outbound), Thomas Cook (India), 2014 has seen a number of interesting travel trends. "We have witnessed impressive growth of sports tourism this year. For a cricket crazy nation, the IPL certainly holds much allure. When UAE had hosted matches during the summer holiday season this year, our teams at Thomas Cook India witnessed a uptake of demand over 25 per cent in comparison to 2013," she pointed out. Also, with Brazil playing host to FIFA 2014, football aficionados and enthusiasts from India showcased

strong interest not merely to witness this global event live, but to explore Brazil and South America. With bookings to Brazil commencing as early as June/July 2013, Thomas Cook

has created specialised 'University Tours' - aimed at providing a glimpse into the university life with visits to US colleges, including insightful interactions with both counsel-

day, My way'. Our teams at Thomas Cook India have reported a powerful growth of about 40-45 per cent in this segment of hobby/interest enthusiasts. Travel around culinary/cuisine has been clearly trending, with a 20 per cent upswing, while photography has seen a 15 per cent Y-o-Y growth," she added.



"We have seen luxury holidays take off extensively, even across tier II & III markets contributing approximately 25-30 per cent to our luxury market share

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

India, saw a delightful 20 per cent increase in queries, she added. The company has also witnessed demand for educational trips from their student clientele. Phadkar commented, "Our 'Travel & Learn' product team at Thomas Cook India

lors and students and meetings with university admission advisors. Another interesting trend observed is a quantum leap from the traditional holiday package to a personalised experiential itinerary created around the *mantra* 'My holi-

Specialised services

- ▶ Thomas Cook India has witnessed demand for educational trips from our student clientele
- ▶ Thomas Cook India has reported a powerful growth of about 40-45 per cent in this segment of hobby/interest enthusiasts

MGB has a new partner in India

Seeing tremendous potential in the Indian outbound market, one of Switzerland's largest railway companies - Matterhorn Gotthard Bahn - has appointed Zaka's Group's Maison de Voyage as its partner in India from 2015.



TT BUREAU

To make a stronger and a year-round presence in the Indian market, Matterhorn Gotthard Bahn (MGB) - one of

Faisal Siddiqui, Director at Maison de Voyage, who recently visited the Gornergrat, said, "Switzerland undoubtedly has some fantastic views and unmatched charm.



Switzerland's largest railway companies - has appointed Maison de Voyage as its partner from 2015. A division of Zaka Group, Maison de Voyage will focus on creating further awareness and promote Matterhorn Gotthard Bahn brands namely Gornergrat Bahn and Glacier Express. MGB has so far been promoted successfully by **Regi Wittwer** in the Indian market. She will continue her sales visits and will work closely with **Nikita Amburle** of Maison de Voyage to draw in numbers and promote sales.

However, Gornergrat is a must-see excursion, as you take in the breathtaking view of the Matterhorn surrounded by 29 peaks rising above 4,000m." He highlighted the fact that Indian food is also available on board. Matterhorn Gotthard Bahn extends from Disentis and Goeschenen to Zermatt from the Gotthard to the Matterhorn. Departing from Zermatt, Gornergrat Bahn, Europe's highest open-air cogwheel railway, climbs up to the Gornergrat peak at 9339m.

Nature's Only

"Gornergrat is a must-see excursion, as you take in the breathtaking view of the Matterhorn surrounded by 29 peaks rising above 4,000m transporting you into a different world



Faisal Siddiqui
Director
Maison de Voyage

"You can see glistening mountains in summer, a snowcovered fairytale landscape in winter, magic blossoms in spring and lush, opulent colours in autumn

Helmut Biner
Head of Markets and Sales, MGB



Helmut Biner, Head of Markets and Sales, describes the travel on Glacier Express as an unforgettable experience throughout the year. "You can see glistening mountains in summer, a snow-covered fairy-

tale landscape in winter, magic blossoms in spring and lush, opulent colours in autumn offer ever-changing scenery to be enjoyed through the panoramic windows of the comfortable carriages," he said.

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VISA TALK



Brazil documents to be uploaded online

Embassy of the Federative Republic of Brazil, Delhi & Consulate General of Brazil, Mumbai have announced that applicants have to upload all the documents while filling up the online visa application form. Embassy & Consulate will accept the applications only once all the documents have been uploaded online.



Change in Passport collection procedure for Belgium applications

With immediate effect, Embassy of Belgium, Delhi & Consulate General of Belgium, Mumbai have announced that representatives cannot collect the documents on behalf of an applicant from Belgium Visa Application Centres (applicable for all locations) except in following conditions:

- Immediate family member (that is Parents, Children, Spouse)
- One member of a family group collecting the passports of the whole family
- A person collecting on behalf of Government officials if authorized on the Government letter head.

However, applicants who do not wish to collect their documents in person and whose documents cannot be collected by one of the above, will get their passports back by courier at an additional cost of Rs. 300/- to the dispatch address mentioned in the courier form which has to be submitted along with the visa application.

Kindly Note:

- For Seaman applicants, the passports can be collected by the applicant personally from VFS or the passport will be couriered to the seaman's residential address only.
- For application withdrawal cases, the passport needs to be collected from VFS only.



Biometrics for Malaysian Work Visas

With immediate effect, applicants who are applying for Malaysian Work Visas have to enroll for biometrics to obtain Immigration Security Clearance (ISC) Certificate from VFS which is mandatory to get the applications submitted for Work Permit to the Malaysian Government. On receipt of the VDR letter from the Malaysian Government, the application can be submitted for visa processing at any of the following VFS Application Centers:

Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Delhi. The service charge for the biometric enrollment is Rs. Rs.2248 which can be paid by cash only. Therefore, everyone is requested to ensure to collect the receipt for the same from the VFS Officer.



Biometrics are no longer required to avail France Visa

With immediate effect, Consulate General of France, Bengaluru has announced that applicants do not have to visit consulate for Personal appearance & Biometrics for Short Term French visas and Consulate will advise the same for Long Term visas depending upon individual application.



Hungary New Visa Application Centre

With effect from 2nd Feb'15, Hungary VFS Global Visa Application Centre will commence its operations in Kolkata. Below is the address:
5th Floor, Rene Tower, Plot No. AA-1, 1842, Rajdanga Main Road, Kasba, Kolkata-700107.

Visa Snippets:

- Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Delhi has announced that representatives can submit the visa applications on behalf of the applicants, however, embassy may call applicants for personal presence irrespective of the visa category post submission of their visa applications.
- With immediate effect, Embassy of Bolivia, Delhi has announced that applicants have to submit Police Clearance Certificate issued from Passport office along with the Business Visa Applications and applicant's personal appearance is mandatory at the time of submission of application irrespective of the visa category.

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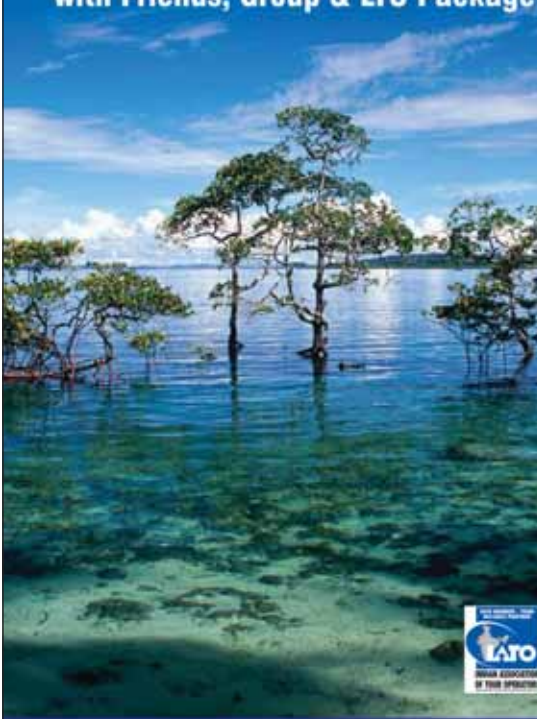
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Le Passage to India

Delhi

Mario Habig has been appointed the new CEO Inbound Business of Le Passage to India (LPTI), the market leading Destination Management Company in India, part of the Destination Services business unit within the Hotelbeds Group. Habig started his professional career within TUI Group Controlling in 2004. Prior to his latest role as Business Development Director of Destination Services, he headed the Executive Chairman's office and the Group Strategy & Business Development function at TUI AG. His global expertise in strategy implementation will be instrumental for LPTI to maintain its leading position in an increasingly dynamic and challenging business environment.



Hilton Garden Inn

Gurgaon Baani Square

Manish Garg has been appointed as the General Manager for Hilton Garden Inn Gurgaon Baani Square, the upscale hotel that is conveniently located near business and commercial hubs including Unitech Cyber Park and Infocity; leading medical facilities including Medanta – The Medicity, Artemis Hospital and Fortis Hospital; and shopping and entertainment districts in Gurgaon, Delhi NCR. Garg embarked on a career in the hospitality industry after receiving a Bachelor's degree in Business (Hotel Management) from the Australian International Hotel School in Canberra.



Hilton Garden Inn

Trivandrum

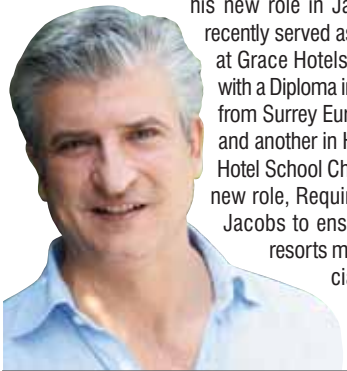
Vishal Gupta has been appointed as the General Manager for Hilton Garden Inn Trivandrum, the upscale yet affordable hotel centrally located on Punnen Road. The hotel is a 20-minute drive from the airport and 12 kilometre from the IT Technopark at Kazhakoottam. He has 14 years of experience in the lodging industry having worked primarily with Marriott International Inc. in India, the United States and the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis. Most recently, he was Director of National Sales – Delhi NCR, overlooking Travel Trade, MICE & Corporate segments for Marriott International Inc. in India.



Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas

Bangkok

Philippe Requin has been appointed Vice President, Operations for the hotel division of Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas, beginning his new role in January 2015. He most recently served as Chief Executive Officer at Grace Hotels in London. Graduating with a Diploma in Business Management from Surrey European School in the UK and another in Hotel Management from Hotel School Chamonix in France. In his new role, Requin will support CEO Neil Jacobs to ensure that the hotels and resorts meet all operational, financial and strategic objectives, as well as standards and efficiency.



Hyatt Regency Chennai

Chennai

Aully Banerjee has recently been appointed as the Public Relations Manager at Hyatt Regency Chennai. She carries with herself three years of work experience in Public Relations, Marketing Communications and Corporate Communications. At Hyatt Regency Chennai, she will be responsible for heading the Public Relations, Branding and Marketing Communications activities. Having worked with The Lalit Hotels & Resorts and The Imperia New Delhi, her core strength lies in communications, media relations, marketing communications and branding.



Eastin Hotel Ahmedabad

Ahmedabad

Eastin Hotel Ahmedabad appoints **Anil Jha** as the Director of Catering sales & operations. In his new role, Jha will oversee complete catering sales & operations. He will ensure smooth functioning of department, systems - procedures, revenue generation & banquet operations. He started his career as a management trainee and has had tenures with Country Inn & Suites by Carlsons, Radisson Hotel, Gandhinagar, Fortune Inn Ahmedabad to name a few. In his last role, he was with Radisson Gandhinagar, as Director Food & Beverage.



Alila Diwa Goa

Goa

Alila Diwa Goa recently appointed **Siddharth Manjeshwar** as its Food and Beverage Manager. Manjeshwar brings with him around 10 years of experience with leading hotels in India and internationally. In his current role, he will supervise the hotel's culinary offerings as well as direct and oversee the hotel's initiatives across all its food and beverage outlets. Prior to joining Alila Diwa Goa, he was the Food and Beverage Manager at Club Mediteranee in Japan. He holds a degree in Master of Business – Hospitality management from Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia.



Aarkay Hotels & Resorts

New Delhi

Aarkay Hotels & Resorts Company has appointed **Harmeet Chawla** as Sr. Manager Sales & Marketing. Aarkay Hotels & Resorts is a Hotel Sales, Marketing, Promotions and Representing Company. With more than 15 years of experiences in both hotel operations and over eight year experiences in hotel, sales & marketing, he had earlier worked with Classic Group of Hotels and other group of hotels in this Industry. Chawla with his vast knowledge of travel trade is expected to take company to new heights.



Meandering Vacations

Mumbai

Murtuza Bangdiwala has been appointed as Manager Sales at Meandering Vacations. He will be overseeing markets pan India. He brings with him an extensive experience of more than a decade in the travel industry. He was earlier associated with various MNCs including Cox & Kings, GoAir and Abacus India. Bangdiwala's expertise in creating and identifying opportunities for business growth is an asset to the ever-expanding Meandering Vacations. A key function of his team will be devising strategies to augment business, and promote products for business excellence.



TALKing People

Vincent Mercurio, General Manager, The Address Dubai Mall, loves spending time with his family. Some of his favourite holiday destinations are Europe and New Zealand, though he loves exploring new destinations in all parts of the world. Mercurio is also a cyclist and bikes at least once or twice a week. He is a pretty good runner too. He loves food and his favourite are Italian, Chinese and Japanese. He loves Indian food, especially different kinds of Biryani. Mercurio said, "I am a big fan of Biryani and I am ok even if they are spicy."



Stefan Viard, General Manager, VIDA Resorts and Hotels, loves travelling. He loves being in the Asian destinations for summer holidays and for Easter holidays, he loves going back to Europe for skiing and the mountains. He loves experimenting different cuisines only if they are not too spicy. Viard loves being with his family and his three little kids. Camping in the desert and visiting the beach are the favourite activities during the weekends for him. "I love water sports and a little bit of golf. One of my biggest passions is winter time skiing," Viard added.



Pariva Rustagi, Regional Director of Sales- India, Hilton Worldwide, likes to travel to new places. "I travel once a year to a new place on my own and once a year with my daughter. The places which currently are on my wish list include New York, Fiji, Prague and Istanbul," she says. An avid reader, Rustagi's favourite genre of reading include Sufism and management. The Forty Rules of Love, a novel by Rumi and Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell are her favourite books.



Fiji Matai Programme

Become a Matai Happiness Specialist with this online training programme and give yourself the knowledge to sell Fiji more effectively to your clients.



Become a Matai Happiness Specialist

What is the Fiji Matai Programme?

The Fiji Matai Programme is the destination training programme for travel industry personnel involved in selling or promoting Fiji.

What does 'Matai' mean?

'Matai' in Fijian means to be knowledgeable or to be an expert in something.

Why sell Fiji?

Fiji is the ideal tropical getaway, with sparkling surf, stunning beaches, pleasant climate, world-class diving, international standard accommodation, exciting dining and vibrant cultures, where you will be greeted with some of the warmest smiles you will ever see. Fiji is a destination you and your clients will enjoy coming back to again and again.

Who can become a Matai Agent?

Anyone can register with the programme to become a Matai Agent. You will receive e-newsletters with industry updates from Fiji and your local region.

Who can become a Matai Specialist?

Anyone within the travel industry can become a Matai Specialist by completing the four online training modules that will become a valuable reference source for Fiji. You will also need to complete one online refresher module per annum to retain your specialist status.

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Contains general information about Fiji, how to get there, entry requirements, getting around Fiji, quick guides to Fiji.

Module 2: Regions


Contains a quick overview, key selling points, getting there, places to stay and things to do for the regions of Fiji.

Module 3: Culture & Traditions

Learn about Fiji's unique culture and heritage, history and legends, village life, village visits and arts and crafts.

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A game changer

Over 32K visas issued in 6 weeks

The Government launched Visa-on-Arrival (VoA) enabled by Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) on November 27, 2014 for 43 countries. Earlier, the VoA scheme was operational for 12 countries. With a new Tourism Policy 2015 also on the anvil for this year, the Government is taking numerous initiatives to further tourism growth in the country.



KANCHAN NATH

The eVoA is seen as the game changer for tourism in

India. Telling us more, **Dr Lalit.K. Panwar**, Secretary, MOT, said, "We started ETA on November 27, 2014, and in the last six weeks, more than 32,000 visas have been issued. We have also requested the Government of India to consider granting this facility to big countries like

China, UK, France, Spain and Italy." Giving statistics and setting goals, he said, "Presently, our round figure for 2014 for inbound tourists has been 7.4 million. With this kind of visa regime and increased civil aviation connectivity, within three years, a figure of 14 million is not impossible, of course it may be difficult." He added, "With the

kind of support that we are getting from the government, I am quite optimistic that in three years, we will get one per cent share of the global tourist market which is 1.4 billion. So I am quite hopeful that we will attain this goal. You will see in the coming months a lot many more initiatives being taken in this direction."



“ We have requested the GoI to consider granting VoA facility to China, UK, France, Spain and Italy. Our round figure for 2014 for inbound tourists is 7.4 million. With this kind of visa regime and increased aviation connectivity, within three years, a figure of 14 million is not impossible

Dr Lalit K. Panwar
Secretary, MOT

Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan

Talking about the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan', he said, "The Clean India initiative is a national campaign and we, as the Tourism Ministry, have chipped in with clean monuments, clean tourism, clean street food and clean ecosystem around our hotels and flagship monuments. We are going to be an integral part of the national campaign of Clean India. Tourism Ministry and all our stakeholders in tourism industry are participating in a big way."



National Tourism Policy of 2015

Talking about other initiatives in the pipeline he added, "Our first priority is to ensure the safety and security of the tourists. Second priority is to request government to increase civil aviation connectivity for tourist places and third priority is revisiting the old National Tourism Policy of 2002." Telling us more about the new tourism policy, he said, "We are already in the process of consulting all stakeholders so that we have a pragmatic National Tourism Policy in 2015. The policy is likely to come out in the next six months after much deliberation and consideration. We will try to make the policy as practical, industry-friendly, and tourist-friendly as possible"

Festivals of India

Talking about Indian roadshows abroad, he said, "For the first time, we have tied up with the Ministry of Culture and we are organising a series of Festivals of India, all over the world. It will be organised by the Ministry of Culture, but, as the tourism ministry, we will also be joining hands with them. With our embassies abroad, all stakeholders



will come under the banner of Festivals of India. The Festivals of India will also have the food component." He concluded, "Our government has accorded a very high priority to the tourism sector. We are quite hopeful that in coming months and years, our industry is poised for a quantum jump qualitatively and quantitatively."

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Precision: expected.
Everything else: unexpected.

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than you think



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