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Finally a tourism-friendly budget

A lot of optimism is in air in the travel trade with the declaration of Budget 2015. The expansion of VoA to 150 countries and the announcement of developing heritage cities sounds quite interesting for the tourism industry.



TT BUREAU

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley presented the Union Budget in the Lok Sabha on February 28, 2015. Here are some takeaways from the budget for the tourism industry and the reaction of the industry to the budget.

- ▶ Visa-on-Arrival extended to 150 countries in different phases.
- ▶ World Heritage Sites - churches and convents of old Goa, Hampi, Elephanta caves, Leh Palace, Varanasi temple town, Jallianwala Bagh etc., will be developed to make them more tourist-friendly.
- ▶ Service Tax rate increased to 14 per cent.
- ▶ Corporate Tax rate will be reduced to 25 per cent over the next four years.
- ▶ 100 per cent deduction for contribution to Swachh Bharat and Clean Ganga schemes.

We are very happy with the Budget. The individual tax payer benefits from the exemptions. The government has reduced customs duty which is another very good move. The extension of VoA to 150 countries is an excellent move and it will change the way India is perceived as a destination. India will become an important destination. The introduction of GST from April 1, 2016, will clear a lot of ambiguities on the current tax issues particularly service tax.



Sunil Kumar
Acting President, TAAI

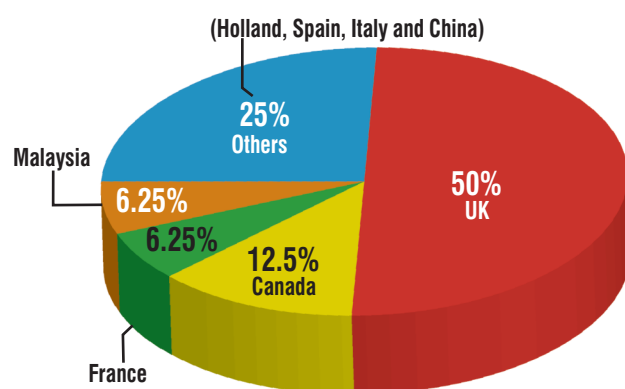
The main aspect for tourism is that VoA that has been extended to 150 countries, which is very good news for tourism and will give a boost to inbound. The fact that corporate tax will be reduced from 30% to 25% over the next four years is also good news.



Anil Madhok
Managing Director, Sarovar Hotels

Contd. on page 24 ▶

UK should be next in line for eVoA



TRAVTALK, in its latest poll, had asked its readers about which countries should get the eVisa-on-Arrival facility in the next phase. UK came up as the first choice from our readers. It notched 50% of votes. The other countries which followed were Canada, Malaysia and France. Besides these countries, Holland, Spain, Italy and China also emerged as a leading choice for granting eVisa-on-Arrival facility.



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BULLETIN

500 registrations & counting

By 2015-end, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) is looking at about 100 tie-ups for its membership cards with add-on benefits & discounts.



MEGHA PAUL

TAAI has already received over 500 registrations for its 62nd Annual TAAI Convention in Bali. Talking about the recent development, **Harmandeep Singh Anand**, Secretary General, TAAI said, "We have received an overwhelming response for our upcoming convention at Bali International Convention

Centre from March 26-28. Over 500 registrations for the convention, including spouses have been received as of now. There is a high interest in our pre-FAM and post-FAM tours as well."

Chalking out a roadmap ahead for TAAI, Anand revealed the association has unveiled a membership card and certificate for its members.

Targets

- ▶ TAAI is the oldest and biggest travel agents' association in India
- ▶ To take it forward, it needs to give its members more benefits and strengthen its network pan-India
- ▶ Thus, its membership cards and certificates for 2015 come with add-on benefits and discounts
- ▶ By 2015-end, it is looking at about 100 tie-ups
- ▶ Currently, it has over 25 tie-ups



"We've received an overwhelming response for our upcoming convention at Bali International Convention Centre from March 26-28"

Harmandeep Singh Anand
Secretary General, TAAI

"TAAI is the oldest and biggest travel agents' association in India. To take it forward, we need to give our members more benefits and strengthen our network pan-India. Thus, our membership cards and certificates for 2015 come with add-on benefits and discounts. By 2015-end, we are looking at about 100 tie-ups. Currently, we have over 25 tie-ups. Most of our tie-ups are with hoteliers and other allied partners," he added.

TAAI is in favour of seeing the association as a more active organisation in the form of a corporate body. Urging the members to be proactively involved in the working of the association, he pointed out, "It's time for TAAI to change its way of working. We need to change it into a corporate body for liaisoning with government, airlines and suppliers. We have a big agenda to help members overcome problems and to be able to get more revenues."

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Coming up: Krishna & NE Circuits

Port Blair-Neil Havelock-Little Andaman, Kashmir, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Braj-Agra Circuit, Gangtok are among 50 circuits identified by MOT for tourism development.



TT BUREAU

The Ministry of Tourism has identified 50 circuits for development of tourism. These circuits/ destinations cover major and relevant tourist places and attractions and have a judicious mix of culture, heritage, spiritualism and eco-tourism to give tourists a holistic perspective of the country.

Port Blair-Neil Havelock-Little Andaman (Andaman and Nicobar), Kashmir Circuit

(Jammu and Kashmir), Desert circuit (Rajasthan), Nature Tourism Circuit (West Bengal), Braj-Agra Circuit (Uttar Pradesh) and Gangtok (Sikkim) are the identified circuits among others.

The Ministry has formulated a scheme Swadesh Darshan for integrated development of tourist circuits around specific themes. The five circuits identified under this scheme are: Buddhist Circuit, Himalayan Circuit,

Coastal Circuit, Krishna Circuit and North-East Circuit.

The Ministry provides Central Financial Assistance (CFA) to various State

were sanctioned to the states and an amount of ₹ 929 crore was sanctioned to them for these projects. In 2013-14, the number of projects sanctioned to the states was 261

The new circuits have been identified as

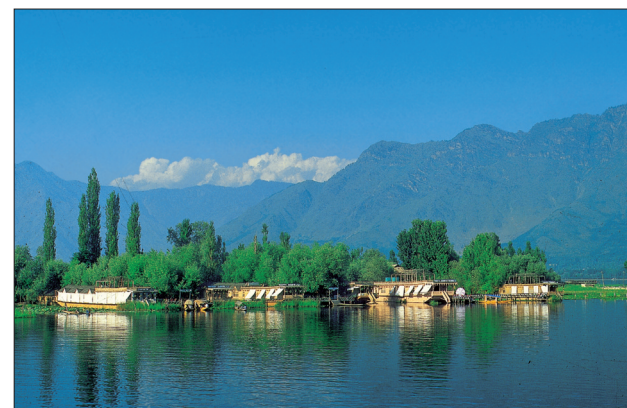
Port Blair-Neil Havelock-Little Andaman (Andaman and Nicobar), Kashmir Circuit (Jammu and Kashmir), Desert circuit (Rajasthan), Nature Tourism Circuit (West Bengal), Braj-Agra Circuit (Uttar Pradesh) and Gangtok (Sikkim), among others.

Governments/Union Territory Administrations for various tourism projects prioritised every year in consultation with them subject to availability of funds, inter-se priority, liquidation of pending utilization certificates against the funds released earlier and adherence to the scheme guidelines.

In 2012-13, a total of 136 projects

and an amount of ₹ 1801 crore was sanctioned to them. In 2014-15 (till December, 2014) a total of 53 projects were sanctioned to the states and a sum of ₹333 crore was sanctioned to them for these projects.

This information was given by the Union Minister of State for Tourism (Independent Charge), Culture (Independent Charge) and Civil Aviation, **Dr Mahesh Sharma**, in Lok Sabha.



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TRAVTALK

VIEWPOINT

Good days ahead
for Incredible India

The fact that the Modi government is pro-tourism was well established with the Prime Minister mentioning development of tourism industry in his speeches within the country and abroad. The Union Budget 2015-16 furthered this commitment towards the travel and hospitality sector, and why not, after all, this is an industry that contributes 7 per cent of India's GDP and helped create more than 40 million jobs last year!

The travel industry cheered the decision of Finance Minister Arun Jaitley to increase eVisa facility to 150 countries in a phased manner. However, if we are to make a success of this initiative of the government then we also need to keep in mind a few things. Firstly, we need to make sure that the facility is extended to countries that figure among India's primary source markets and contribute greatly to the Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTA) to the country. Once that's done, we need to ensure adequate steps are taken to reduce queues at the airports. A seamless experience at immigration counters is what is needed to make our guests feel welcome in our country. For this we need sufficient manpower and successful implementation of technology.

The World Heritage Sites that so far had been wallowing in apathy have also got much-needed attention and with this shot in the arm, we hope that our monuments attract tourists in droves.

The GST to be implemented from April 1, 2016, is also expected to remove ambiguity in taxes and help the travel and hospitality sector. Also, the tax exemption will increase disposable income among people hence giving them more options to indulge themselves and go for more holidays.

However, with so many bouquets, can brickbats be far behind? The increase in service tax from 12 to 14 per cent will increase cost and make air tickets and hotel stay more expensive.

Nevertheless, the Budget this year has got more cheers than jeers from the tourism industry and with a sea of opportunities thrown at them, we hope that the stakeholders are adept at acting on this and making the most of it. We have it in us, we sure do!

What Budget 2015 has in store

The Tourism Industry's main takeaway from Budget 2015 is Visa-on-Arrival for 150 countries and restoration of India's 25 Cultural World Heritage sites. On the other hand, the increase in Service Tax to 14 per cent will lead to a drop in demand for hospitality and aviation sectors. Here is a comprehensive research for the travel and hospitality industry studying the budget impact.



TT BUREAU

HOSPITALITY

₹38,117

MARKET CAP (₹CR)

Net Sales (₹cr) 16,822

PAT (₹cr) -622

Sample Size 40 Companies

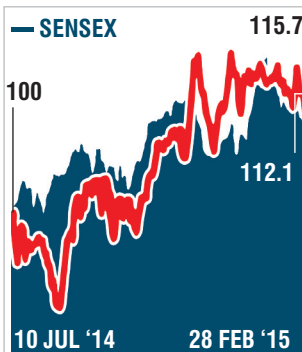
MEASURES

- THE GOVERNMENT plans to increase the visa on arrivals given to travellers from 43 countries to 150 countries in stages

IMPACT

This will boost foreign tourist arrivals in the country and provide strong business to hotels and travel companies.

Premium hotel companies derive close to 70% of their revenues from foreign tourist arrivals. For travel companies, the identification of 25 world cultural heritage sites for restoration provides good business from foreign tourists, who have keen interest in these sites.



COMPANIES TO BENEFIT

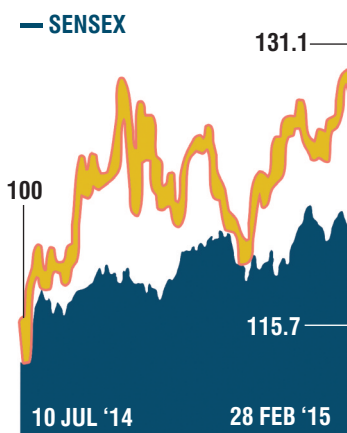
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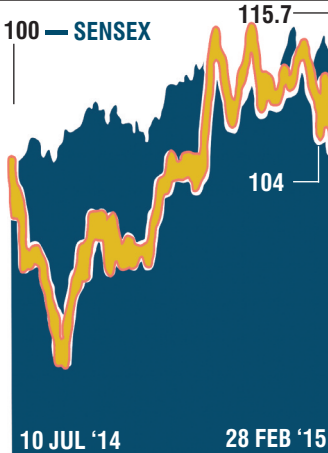
12-MONTH TARGET

Cox & Kings: India will benefit from Visa-on-Arrival being extended to more countries and restoration of 25 cultural world heritage sites. It has more than 30% market share in inbound travel and derives 15-20% revenue from foreign tourists. Moreover, margins in packages for foreign tourists are higher than in the outbound business.



CMP(₹)	319.5
P/E	-204.8
Market Cap (₹CR)	5,410
Div. Yield (%)	0.3
Inst. Holding (%)	39.3
Promoter Holding (%)	48.0

INDIAN HOTELS



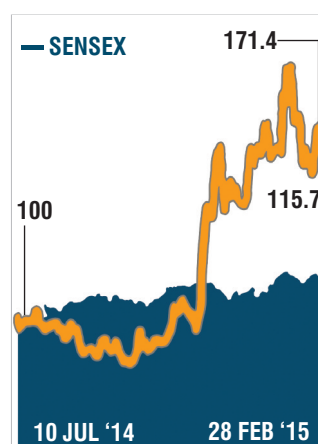
CMP(₹)	112.0
P/E	-39.0
Market Cap (₹CR)	9,044
Div. Yield (%)	0.7
Inst. Holding (%)	42.4
Promoter Holding (%)	37.5

₹102.5

12-MONTH TARGET

With Visa-on-Arrival proposed to be extended to visitors from 153 countries against 43 now, foreign tourists inflow will rise. Indian Hotels will be a key beneficiary. Premium hotels derive close to 70% of their revenues from foreign tourists' arrivals. In the last fiscal, foreign tourist arrivals had grown by a healthy 8.1% to 7.53 lakh

JET AIRWAYS



CMP(₹)	442.4
P/E	-2.2
Market Cap (₹CR)	5,025
Div. Yield (%)	0.0
Inst. Holding (%)	14.5
Promoter Holding (%)	51.0

₹607

12-MONTH TARGET

The government's proposal to change the service tax structure for business class fare will be marginally negative for the company. Service tax will be applicable on 60% of the fare against 40% earlier. This will make air fares (business class) dearer by 2.4% and have a small impact on passenger traffic growth of the company.

Source: Economic Times



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Is IATA replicating GDS system with NDC?

NDC is a travel industry-supported programme for the development and voluntary market adoption of a new, XML-based data transmission standard for communication between airlines and travel agents. It will be open to any third party, intermediary (like a GDS), IT provider or non-IATA member. It replaces the pre-internet standard common today.



TT BUREAU

Q Will it work in the same way as the GDS Booking system and some of the XML based solutions offered by GDS's to agents and online IT booking companies?

While some GDSs have already begun to use some XML-based communication protocols, they have each developed these using proprietary standards rather than the open global standard offered by NDC. However, some GDSs have begun using the NDC standard as well. For example, last summer, Amadeus announced it was deploying the industry's first NDC 1.0-

Q If there is a fee, will it be segment based or is there a new business model?

NDC is not a business model or a system. It is an XML-based data transmission standard. Users will decide their business models for themselves.

Q Please give more details about the Innovation Fund.

Airlines and agents will require tools and applications to manage the rich

content the NDC standard will enable. While we have every confidence in the abilities of existing players to use the NDC standard to develop solutions and capabilities, IATA has also partnered with Travel Capitalist Ventures, a leading travel-focused investment firm, to create the NDC Innovation Fund. The NDC Innovation Fund is a stand-alone venture capital fund. This fund will support innovation in airline distribution by investing in small- and

Contd. on page 9 ▶

And the beneficiaries are...

▶ Currently, an estimated 50-60% of airline tickets are sold via brick and mortar travel agencies and online travel sites, so this is a very important distribution channel for airlines

▶ However, the vast majority of ancillary products and services are sold directly by airlines on their own websites, where customers are able to view detailed product information



Yanik Hoyles
Director, New Distribution Capability (NDC) Program, International Air Transport Association (IATA)

IATA's NDC aims at addressing limitations in agency distribution by providing capability for travel agents to be able to sell products and services

enabled connectivity for travel agency distribution in North America to support the sale of United Airlines' Economy Plus product.

Q Will it be free of cost for agents, IT providers etc. or will it come at a cost?

NDC is an open standard and available for downloading from the IATA website. It is not a system for distributing tickets, it is a data transmission standard. There will be costs associated with the transition to the NDC standard but IATA does not have an estimate. As more and more airlines, travel technology providers, GDS and agents participate in the ongoing and future NDC pilots and tests, we should get a better sense of transition costs. At present, more than 14 airlines have conducted pilots or have announced plans to do an NDC pilot.

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TAFI Convention puts spotlight on Israel

It was two days of business sessions in Jerusalem that led to a collective epiphany of attending TAFI members and buyers during the association's annual convention in Israel. What followed was a wholesome understanding of the fascinating destination.

 HAZEL JAIN

The Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) has always strived to take its conventions to a place less travelled to by Indians. Israel was, by far, one of the most

days of the convention and pre and post event tours.

The members got plenty of time to do that with six business sessions and half day city tours over two days. During the inauguration, the Director

of challenges and surprise. While some of you experienced the storm in Tel Aviv, others saw the snow in Jerusalem and the floods on the way to the Dead Sea. But Israel has much to offer, despite its size – from different weather to a variety of cuisines, and a gamut of experiences. There are many who come from India to learn about the new technologies of Israel, especially in agriculture and water harvesting. We see tourism as another platform to strengthen our ties with India through leisure, pilgrimage and incentives."

Warmth amidst the cold

The convention started with the keynote address by the articulate Ambassador of India to Israel – **Jaideep Sarkar**. He said, "Having lived here for two years, I can tell you that the cold weather is no reflection of the warm hospitality of the Israeli people. The caption for the TAFI Convention logo: 'Israel - the Land of



Creation' has a very deep meaning, not only 1,000 years ago but even in contemporary Israeli society."

Jerusalem, he added, was a very special venue for the convention. "I have travelled all over the world, but Jerusalem should be on your bucket list of the top three places to see before you die. It's a mix of religion, politics and history. The sheer atmosphere

of the place is quite unforgettable. Many know Jerusalem as a holy place for three of the world's monotheistic religions – Christianity, Judaism and Islam," Sarkar added.

Crowd matters

Stepping away from the customary was a session by **Lior Zoref**, a motivational speaker from Israel, who spoke about how crowd sourcing can often turn out to be a good way

to find solutions – no matter what field or industry you may be. "You can use crowd-sourcing to improve your business because a crowd is smarter than you alone. This is the basic idea behind the idea of the concept called 'Wisdom of crowds' because in some conditions, big crowds can be very clever. My research is how crowds and crowd-sourcing

Contd. on page 32 ►

“Air connectivity and visas are two big concerns for the agents and we are talking to the ministry to iron these issues out. Safety was a concern for the agents but seeing is believing...”

Zakir Ahmed Kalarikkal
President, TAFI



fascinating destinations it has taken its members to, and even less understood by them. The aim was therefore to allow its members to unravel the mysticism of Israel during the two

General of Israel Ministry of Tourism, **Amir HaLevi**, said, "Shalom, and welcome to Israel. Welcome to Jerusalem! Like in ancient times, your pilgrimage to Jerusalem was full



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GSA INDIA



Heritage tourism: The money spinner

The fourth edition of India Heritage Tourism Conclave organised by PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry provided a platform for discussion between government and private sector investors regarding issues and opportunities affecting investment in Heritage Tourism...



TT BUREAU

The Tourism Ministry has been consistently pitching for higher allocations with the finance ministry to protect, preserve, promote and restore its



Dr Lalit K Panwar
Secretary-Ministry of Tourism
Government of India

While the general attitude a few years ago was 'do not touch the heritage', today the mantra is 'touch the heritage but with care

rich heritage of over 5,000 years of Indian history. Therefore, the aspirations and expectations of the tourism ministry have already enlivened so that with



Dr Suman Billa
Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism
Government of India

There is a need for a change in mindset to exploit the economic potential of heritage monuments for conservation

the higher allocations, the tourism ministry is able to implement the PM's vision for developing its tourism and heritage, Dr Lalit K Panwar, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India said. Panwar was

speaking at the recently concluded fourth edition of India Heritage Tourism Conclave organised by PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The event was aimed at providing a platform for open house discussion between the government and private sector investors regarding issues and opportunities affecting investment in Heritage Tourism in India.

According to Panwar, heritage is the backbone of the Indian tourism industry and the sector cannot prosper without caring for and nurturing the rich heritage. Talking about the changing outlook towards using heritage for tourism, he added, "While the general attitude a few years ago was 'do not touch the

heritage', today the mantra is 'touch the heritage but with care'."

According to Dr Suman Billa, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, there is a need for a change in mindset to exploit the economic potential of heritage monuments for their conservation. He said that these monuments can be the back-

drop for events, and the economic benefits that accrue from them can in turn be used to support their conservation. Moderating a session on 'Opportunities and Challenges of Heritage Conservation', he cited the example of the implementation of the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model in Kerala for heritage conservation.

Why heritage is important

► Heritage is the backbone of the Indian tourism industry

► The sector cannot prosper without caring for and nurturing the rich heritage



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WTM Latin America 2015 the biggest and best yet

World Travel Market Latin America 2015 is poised to be the biggest and best yet thanks to a new venue and a range of new initiatives.

The third WTM Latin America and 43rd Braztoa business event will take place at the Expo Centre Norte São Paulo from 22-24 April. The move from the Transamerica Expo Center to larger Expo Center Norte in 2015 allows WTM Latin America to expand and meet exhibitor demand. New exhibitors – including Traveltek, Delta Tours and Istanbul Chamber of Commerce – will take part in WTM Latin America alongside long-term exhibitors Chile, Israel, Mexico and Peru, which have all increased their presence for 2015 and will help it surpass last year's \$341 million of business deals facilitated by the event.

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

The massive amount of business that is expected to be generated can, in part, be accredited to the array of great networking opportunities that are available for delegates to take advantage of:

- WTM Latin America Speed Networking - More than 100 buyers and 600 exhibitors will take part in the one and half hour long session on Thursday 23 April to negotiate and agree a number of business deals
- WTM Latin America Hosted

Buyer Programme returns to the event with up to 100 senior level travel industry buyers attending the show as a VIP. Already confirmed for 2014 are buyers from leading travel providers Emirates, Thomas Cook and JAC Travel.

- Braztoa's Caravanas returns with Braztoa hosting 900 Brazilian travel agents, while the tour operator association will also host 70 product managers.
- New for 2015 - Corporate Travel Area with ALAGEV (Latin American Association of Events and Corporate Travel Managers) as the official partner is being added to the exhibition floor to host global travel management companies (TMCs), airlines, hotels and technology suppliers. 100 Brazilian business travel buyers will be hosted to conclude deals with the business travel exhibitors.

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STATES

Germany on Goa's radar

With the Visa-on-Arrival (VoA) already acting as a contributing factor for the Goan tourism market, Goa is looking forward to host more and more foreign tourists.



SIMAR RANA

While Russia and Ukraine are huge contributors and important markets, Goa is now also looking at targeting markets such as Germany. Plans for an increased number of flights from various destinations are underway and Goa is also looking to attain a limited

the facility to 150 countries, we are looking at a very substantial increase in foreign tourist arrivals into Goa as a result of the VoA."

With a capacity to hold eight and a half million people, Goa is taking great measures to create carrying capacity to bring in tourists, both interna-

special rates from destinations such as Delhi, Bengaluru and more, so that even if airfares are high, people have this option available to them.

Abhyankar also spoke to us about the branding exercise they have been doing in the last couple of years to make people aware that Goa is much more than just sun and sand.

Elaborating on the same, he said, "We have a very diverse and rich hinterland. We have backwaters, we have trekking, we have eco-tourism, we have adventure, spice plantations, culture, heritage, food and that apart we have a very vibrant festival calendar. So from Sunburn and Supersonic, you have an India Bike Week. You have the cashew and coconut festival, carnival, shigmo and much more. Recently, Goa has been ranked 6th in the world as the nightlife destination. So I think all these things bring in a lot of value and truly make Goa a 365 day destination."



"Ever since the inception of the VoA and extension to 40 odd countries, we've seen almost 10,000 arrivals in the last two and a half months under the VoA

Ameya Abhyankar
Director, Tourism Department
Government of Goa

open sky policy to compliment and go well with the VoA.

Commenting on the VoA and what it has done for the inbound in Goa, **Ameya Abhyankar**, Director of the Tourism Department, Government of Goa, said, "I think the Visa-on-Arrival is going to be a game changer for the industry and the tourism sector in India. Ever since the inception of the VoA and extension to 40 odd countries, we've seen almost 10,000 arrivals in the last two and a half months under the VoA. So I think with the budget announcement where they are going to extend

tional and domestic. In an attempt to do so, they are looking to provide additional night parking space for aircraft, additional aerobridges and are also talking to Indian railways for

Go Goa

▶ With a capacity to hold 8.5 million people, Goa is taking great measures to create carrying capacity to bring in tourists, both international and domestic

▶ They are looking to provide additional night parking space for aircraft, additional aerobridges and are also talking to Indian railways for special rates from destinations such as Delhi, Bengaluru and more, so that even if airfares are high, people have this option available to them

Plugging the loopholes

▶ Contd. from page 5

medium-sized companies seeking to develop solutions which support airlines and agents as they leverage the enhanced distribution capabilities enabled by the NDC standard.

Q Who will benefit from this? The users or the airlines?

Air travellers, travel agents and airlines all will benefit from the adoption of the NDC Standard. Currently, an estimated 50-60% of airline tickets are sold via brick and mortar travel agencies and online travel sites, so this is a very important distribution channel for airlines. However, the vast majority of ancillary products and services are sold directly by airlines on their own websites, where cus-

tomers are able to view detailed product information that may not always be easily accessible on systems used by agents. Furthermore, travellers can receive customised offers on airline websites.

IATA's New Distribution Capability (NDC) is intended to address these limitations in agency distribution by providing the capability for travel agents to be able to sell these products and services as well. This will equip agents with more tools to better serve their clients, and as a consequence, air travellers finally will have access to full and rich air content and a transparent shopping experience when they shop with a travel agent or online travel site. Travellers will have the ability to have their status recognized or to shop anonymously. And air-

lines will be able to give travellers a consistent shopping experience wherever they choose to purchase air travel.

Q Anything else you would like to share?

It is true that NDC had a bumpy start in terms of industry acceptance, but over the past 12-18 months we have seen a major shift as the benefits of the NDC standard have become more widely understood. At the World Passenger Symposium in October 2014, Amadeus, and Sabre Travelport each endorsed NDC and said they would use the NDC standard if their airline partners asked them to. And in December, IATA announced an agreement with a coalition of national travel agent associations to look at options that could benefit travel agents as the industry transitions to NDC. ↴

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- ✓ Manage payment and credit accounts of subagents.
- ✓ Manage promotional advertisement and notice board on subagent dashboard.
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- ✓ Agents bookings and payments through extensive reporting system.
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- ✓ Centralized ticketing for all subagents.
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NEWS

Tourism's Bollywood connect

The Film Federation of India recently got Indian filmmakers under one umbrella for its third edition of 'IIFTC Locations Show' held in Mumbai recently.



TT BUREAU

The apex trade body of Indian film industry – Film Federation of India (FFI) recently held the third edition of its annual film tourism event, India International Film Tourism Conclave (IIFTC 2015) now rechristened as 'IIFTC Locations Show' in Mumbai.

The 'IIFTC Locations Show 2015' was also held in

sion to shoot in all states across the country.

According to **Supran Sen**, Secretary General of Film Federation of India, "Our filmmakers are constantly looking for new and exotic destinations to shoot. Our objective behind IIFTC Locations Show is to facilitate a direct interaction between our film industries with the foreign film commissions, tourism boards and line producers, who

According to **Harshad Bhagwat**, Director of IIFTC and Director of Mercury Integrated, "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. With IIFTC, our aim is to create an official and credible platform for film and tourism industry to meet each other."



Delegation at the inauguration of IIFTC

Chennai and Hyderabad with participation from various Asian, African, European and South American countries vying to garner a larger slice of the ever-increasing foreign shoots of the Indian film industry.

In Mumbai, the panel discussion also echoed the need to set up a film commission in India to bring in the common policy and simplified procedure for granting permis-

sion to promote their locations and services for the purpose of film shoot."

'IIFTC Locations Show 2015' saw participation from some exotic countries such as Kenya, KwaZulu Natal (South Africa) Fiji, Oman, Jordan, Taiwan, Egypt to name a few and Indian States like Gujarat, Goa, Maharashtra, New Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Telangana.

Renowned Bollywood producer and director Rakesh Roshan was the chief guest at the event. Some well-known personalities from film industry who graced the occasion included Mukesh Bhatt and Tigmanshu Dhulia. They all shared their views on the various aspects and issues related to film tourism.

Since its inception in 2013, within a short span of two years, IIFTC has successfully hosted nine film events in five major film markets of India, establishing itself at India's premier film tourism event. It is a great platform for film commissions, international and state tourism board and other related services, to meet the representatives of the top production houses, who are on a constant lookout for the best of locations around the world. Each of IIFTC's events has witnessed an overwhelming support from the film fraternity.

IIFTC Locations Show is organised by Mercury Integrated Marketing Services PL and promoted by Film Federation of India in association with South Indian Film Chamber of Commerce (for Chennai event) and Telugu Film Chamber of Commerce and Telugu Film Producers Council (for Hyderabad event).

Scripting History

► Since its inception in 2013, within a short span of two years, IIFTC has successfully hosted nine film events in five major film markets of India, establishing itself at India's premier film tourism event

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Etihad, Jet bring football fever to Bengaluru



Etihad Airways and Jet Airways hosted another edition of the Manchester City Football Coaching Clinics, this time at the Mallya Aditi International School in Bengaluru. The coaching workshop featured the prestigious Barclays Premier League trophy and was attended by 450 youngsters



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UP Travel Mart debuts in Nawabi style

The Uttar Pradesh Travel Mart 2015, held in Lucknow from Feb 22-24, for the first time, was a pioneering effort to exploit the great potential of the state. A highlight of the mart was the mesmerising Wajid Ali Shah period show, Indrasabha, put up by filmmaker and Lucknow-lover Muzaffar Ali and his team at the historic The Residency. The choice of the famed La Martiniere for the grand opening function, complete with dance and music, came in for much praise from both domestic and international delegates and guests.



Red Apple finds new place in Asia

Specializing in leisure and MICE travel, Red Apple Travel Group now has five different business units. But it remains loyal to its core interests of becoming a strong DMC for the UK and Europe markets.



TT BUREAU

Mumbai-based DMC, Red Apple Travel Group, with presence in across the Far East, has now expanded its horizon to enter the highly competitive transport and events business. It has also set up its own chain of restaurants throughout the Far East as individual strategic business units between Thailand and Malaysia, and is opening shortly in Bangkok and Singapore. On the transport front, through carefully chosen strategic acqui-

Five business units

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❖ **Hidden Doors** offers customized tours to explore the unexplored

❖ **Redapple F&B** offers meal booking with different restaurants for RA destination with multiple cuisine options. It has the concept of meal coupons.

and customer satisfaction levels are amongst the best in the industry. While the Indian subcontinent is where our heart is, our sights are firmly

set on the GCC and China markets. Red Apple is also focused on venturing into the food and spa businesses," Roy reveals.

"As a DMC, we are connected with several restaurant chains and we want to promote those restaurants and our spa businesses globally," Roy says.

Red Apple game plan

Speaking about the game plan for 2015, he adds, "We want to be a strong DMC for UK and Europe markets

with a closure of approx. 17,000 guests for 2014. Our focus is also on increasing our B2B distribution network both physical and virtual. We seek global positioning of brand 'Red Apple' with global standardisation as well as increase in product line in Indo-China and Eastern Europe markets. For this, we will be doing marketing spends and upping our

Contd. on page 32 ►



Prithwijit Roy
Head of Operations,
Red Apple Travel Group

We seek global positioning of brand 'Red Apple' with global standardisation as well as increase in product line in Indo-China and Eastern Europe markets

sitions, it has taken over large transport companies throughout the East. **Prithwijit Roy**, Head of Operations, Red Apple Travel Group, says, "With a dedicated fleet of coaches, luxury sedans and vans in Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore, the transport division works like a separate SBU, selling its services to other players in the inbound market throughout the East."

Talking about its core competency, Roy adds, "We are proud to say that no one knows Asia like we do. Thanks to years of experience, we have learnt how to handle every individual traveller's needs and have successfully entered not only the leisure tourism industry but also ventured into MICE and religious tourism markets."

With offices in Egypt, India, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, London and Bali, the DMC specialises in leisure and MICE travel. "Our service

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TAFI Convention in the Land of Creation

The annual convention of the Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) was held from Feb 22 – 25, 2015 in Israel. The host country known as the cradle of three great religions - i.e. Judaism, Christianity and Islam, is blessed with a rich and ancient history and culture.





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ATM to concentrate on travel technology

With online bookings witnessing an upward growth trend, travel technology will be the point of focus at ATM 2015. YouGov survey of 22,600 MENA residents reveals regional online bookings increased to 31% up by 10% year-on-year.



TT BUREAU

The Arabian Travel Market (ATM) scheduled to be held from May 4-7, 2015, is set to highlight growth of technology within the tourism industry, as online travel bookings in the MENA region increased by 10 per cent in 2014. According to YouGov data for which 22,686 online respondents were surveyed, (all MENA residents), 31 per cent booked all of their travel requirements online, an increase of 10 per cent over 2013. Of those surveyed 25 per cent used their smart-phones

Spontaneity in the decision making process for choosing a destination has increased by 11 per cent according to the data. **Paul Richer**, senior partner of travel technology consultancy, Genesys, will host two dedicated seminar sessions at this year's exhibition addressing a range of topics including latest developments in mobile, digital marketing and digital distribution issues and how these are impacting the consumer. The



Gen Y market (those aged 18-30) in the region is placing even further emphasis on the hotel industry's need to offer uninterrupted broadband internet access for guests as well as a consistent social media campaign, marketing a bouquet of hotel services.

The technology theme is only a part of a packed agenda being developed for ATM 2015. Other highlights include budget travel, health and well-being, shopping, transportation, luxury, sports, culture and heritage, and adventure. The 2015 event will also build on the success of last year's edition with the announcement of an additional hall. Last year ATM saw total attendance increase by 12 per cent with

In the offing

- ▶ ATM to focus on technology in travel industry
- ▶ Amadeus, Sabre Travel, Payfort and M-hospitality return to the show, while LeGate, 24x7rooms.com, and TravelClick will make their debut
- ▶ Seminars on mobile, digital marketing and digital distribution issues

33,000 participants and business deals signed worth more than US\$2.1 billion over the four days.



Nadege Noblet
Exhibition Manager
ATM

The industry as a whole is embracing technology like never before, to compete in a digital market place where accessibility & speed are critical to the demands of today's tech-savvy travellers

to book hotels online while mobile usage to access online travel guides or to book leisure activities rose by six per cent.

"Throughout the region, we are witnessing major growth in online bookings as airlines, tour operators and hotels develop ever-more sophisticated digital platforms and social media strategies to ensure they reach out effectively to both existing and potential guests," said **Nadege Noblet**, Exhibition Manager of ATM, which will take place at the Dubai International Convention & Exhibition Centre.

"The industry as a whole is embracing technology like never before, to compete in a digital market place where accessibility and speed are critical to the demands of today's tech-savvy travellers, especially mobile compatible sites for hotels, tour operators and leisure attractions," Noblet added.

The next 11 pages
make other hotel booking systems
quite old-fashioned.



22 new destinations on SWISS platter

Subsidiary of the Lufthansa Group, Swiss International Air Lines (SWISS), will fly to 22 new destinations in 17 European countries, starting this summer. In a freewheeling interview with **TRAVTALK**, Markus Altenbach, General Manager - India, Swiss International Air Lines, reveals more...



MEGHA PAUL

QHow important is the India market for your airline?

SWISS achieved a growth of 1.5 per cent globally in 2014 compared to the last financial year. SWISS currently flies to over 104 destinations in 48 countries with a fleet of 91 aircraft. Now talking about the India scene, it is a strategic market for us. The India

market has been growing at a rapid pace. We see a huge potential and a healthy load factor across all cabin classes. SWISS aims to continue with a sustainable growth from the Indian market, thereby working on long-term initiatives within the Lufthansa Group.

QWhat are your expansion strategies for this year?

Swiss International Air Lines (SWISS) will fly to 22 new destinations

in 17 European countries, starting from summer 2015. The connecting time for flights within Europe will gradually be lowered to 35 minutes with this new addition. Sixteen of these, namely Naples, Bari, Bilbao, Porto, Toulouse, Leipzig, Dresden, Graz, Gothenburg, Helsinki, Riga, Krakow, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Sofia, and Zagreb will be flown to with year-round service, while the remaining six, including Santiago de Compostela, Palermo,

Brindisi, Malta, Thessaloniki and Izmir will be served during summer.

QAny new investments you are looking at this year?

We are looking at investing about CHF (Swiss Franc) five billion to upgrade the existing fleet of the national carrier of Switzerland to a state-of-the-art fleet. The new-generation Bombardier C Series will replace Avro RJ100s in 2015-16. The C



Markus Altenbach
General Manager - India,
Swiss International Air Lines

We aim to continue with a sustainable growth from the Indian market, thereby working on long-term initiatives within the Lufthansa Group

Series will set new operating benchmarks in reducing noise output by half, and lowering fuel consumption by 25 per cent. The Airbus A340 fleet will be replaced by six Boeing B777-300ERs. The present long-haul aircraft fleet of SWISS will begin the replacement from 2016 onwards. An Airbus A321ceo will be added in 2016. The airline will also replace ten A320 aircraft with ten eco-friendly and fuel-efficient A320neo. The five A321s will be replaced by five A321neo in the near future between 2019 and 2022.

QHow has the year 2014 been for the airline?

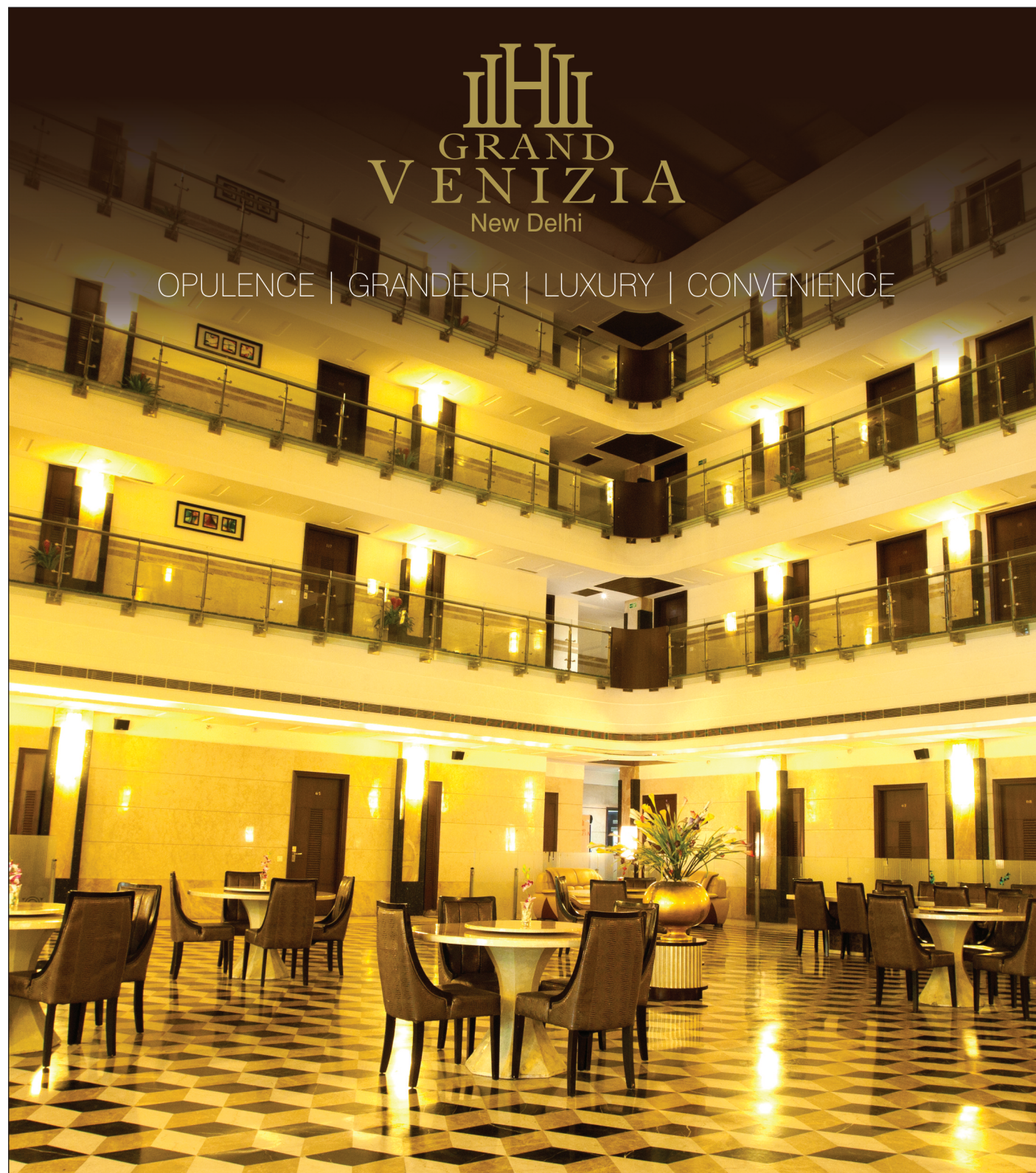
2014 has been a good year. Going forward, the eVoA will be beneficial for all carriers from India. Yields are good for high-quality airlines such as SWISS, which constantly deliver quality service with competitive pricing.

Flying High

► Swiss International Air Lines (SWISS) will fly to 22 new destinations in 17 European countries, starting from summer 2015

► The connecting time for flights within Europe will gradually be lowered to 35 minutes with this new addition

► SWISS currently flies to over 104 destinations in 48 countries with a fleet of 91 aircraft



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Ethiopian for 6% commission to agents

After expanding its codeshare with Air India and announcing double dailies from Mumbai and New Delhi, Ethiopian Airlines is now busy planning a hectic year ahead, starting with agent incentives, tour packages and activating the Ethiopian tourism board.



HAZEL JAIN

Ethiopian Airlines, a 100 per cent government-owned airline and the largest in Africa, recently expanded its code-share coverage with Air India offering passengers travelling between India and Africa seamless connectivity options from any part of Africa to any part of India.

sengers as well as agents. "We will be offering our top selling agents an additional three per cent commission over and above the regular three per cent commission on the newly-mounted flights. This takes the total commission offered to agents at six per cent on the new flights." The airline does not have any seat limitations from Mumbai and Delhi from

the DGCA. "We can operate any type of aircraft twice daily. India is a big market by its own, which can be operated independently. We don't want to extend India flights to anywhere else," Tilahun said. The airline has so far not done any promotions among agents as it had limited capacity with full flights. "Now with expanded capacity, we will be looking at

doing many activities with the Indian travel trade in not just Mumbai and Delhi but all metros. We also see huge traffic from Chennai because of business relations and Bengaluru with the IT companies. Ahmedabad too sees a lot of VFR traffic," the regional director added. Revealing information about the country's tourism board presence,

Over and above commissions

► The airline has announced multiple discount offers on the new flights for passengers as well as agents

► It will be offering top selling agents an additional three per cent commission over and above the regular three per cent commission on the newly-mounted flights

Tilahun informed, "Ethiopia has not promoted itself as a tourist destination so far, which

is a pity. We have also designed Ethiopia holiday packages for India."



Tadesse Tilahun
Regional Director (India Sub Continent),
Ethiopian Airlines

Now with expanded capacity, we will be looking at doing many activities with the Indian travel trade in not just Mumbai and Delhi but all metros

Tadesse Tilahun, Regional Director (India Sub Continent), Ethiopian Airlines, Mumbai, said, "With the existing codeshare destinations, passengers can fly from any part of India with a single ticket to any part of Africa out of the 49 destinations we service. We have now expanded our agreement to include Entebbe, Kigali, Harare, Dar-e-Salaam, and Nairobi. We will be codesharing unlimited seats with Air India. They can sell as much as they can and we can sell as much as we can on Air India."

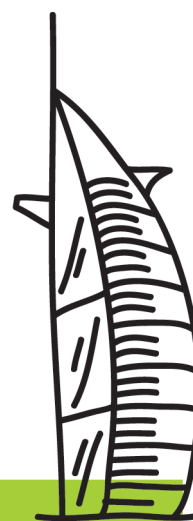
Air India's domestic routes on the codeshare now include Mumbai, New Delhi Chennai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Bengaluru, Trivandrum and Kochi. Speaking about the airlines' plans, Tilahun added, "Apart from direct flights from Mumbai and Delhi to Ethiopia, we are studying to launch more flights connecting two southern cities. We will announce the names within this year."

6% commission

The airline has announced multiple discount offers on the new flights for pas-

393 hotels in Dubai.

Room names exactly as the hotels call it.



The hotels and apartments in Dubai now have fascinating room names. Not fancy really, just correctly presented.

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As an example, your customer saw the "Deluxe Room with Palm Beach View" at the Atlantis The Palm, so that's exactly what roomsXML calls it. Meanwhile other hotel booking systems, simply show it as "Beach View Room". Of course, you can book with them, but until your customer gets there you will not know what it is you have booked.

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The wind beneath her wings

Women are flying high, having created a niche for themselves in a space crowded by men. With India getting its first woman DGCA M. Sathiyavathy, it is bound to inspire more and more women to take up careers in aviation. TRAVTALK speaks to four such personalities who share their experiences on reaching soaring altitudes.



HAZEL JAIN

The travel sector is far more progressive than many other industries. Traditionally, women have had a sizeable presence in this sector. We are proud of the fact that nearly 45% of our employees are women. As many as 300 women pilots work for Lufthansa of which nearly 80 are captains. The challenges I have faced as a woman in the workplace are no different from those faced by women working across industries in India. There were no sector-specific challenges. In fact, if at all, the openness to women in the travel trade makes it easier for us to prove our mettle. I prefer to blot out stereotypes and think of solutions as a professional with a sharp focus on my goals.



Sangeeta Sharma

Manager, Marketing & Communications, Lufthansa German Airlines, South Asia

Traditional perspectives are changing today and mindsets have expanded with more and more women in positions of command and leadership in various industries. Companies too are evolving as many multinational corporations have today even incorporated day-care centres. At our company, women play very significant roles – from the board to CEO to the senior management. I did face some challenges in order to make my mark in the industry. Not only was I a woman but I was also very young. What got me through was having faith in the knowledge that I acquired and believing in my own abilities. Over the past decade, I have seen how capable women are and how have they reached the top in all areas of the airline including flight operations, HR, commercial and IT.



Upekha Abeyssekera

Senior Manager, Revenue Accounting, SriLankan Airlines



Careers in aviation have been dominated by men. But that is changing now. Women hold a fair share of aerospace jobs. Once our president was interviewing a lady with an engineering degree for another position but not for the hanger that is in the middle of the airport. When he asked why she wasn't being interviewed for the relevant position, the reply was because there were no toilets for the ladies. A woman's washroom was then constructed and today we have 16 women at the engineering hangar. For the first time, a woman went for an overseas check of the aircraft. About 43 per cent of our workforce is women and a third of our leadership team is made of them.

Suman Chopra

VP, In-Flight Services, IndiGo



I wouldn't say that it is more difficult for women to enter and work in the aviation industry. However, women in higher management positions are still not as common as they could be. There are many reasons behind this such as historical ranks of a company, culture and connections. But many companies worldwide have discovered benefits of hiring women. We bring fresh ideas and a different perspective. I do, however, believe that getting a good education, believing in myself, receiving support from other women and men who were of the opinion that I was/am the right person for the job played a role. Adapting certain personal traits and not being afraid in bringing in my own style is probably what has helped me.

Kimberley Long-Urbanetz

Head of Distribution, Hahn Air

ATM Means business

4 - 7 May 2015 / Dubai

23,600 visitors from 131 countries

\$2.1bn of new business generated at ATM 2014

2,745 exhibiting companies

arabian travel market

arabiantravelmarket.com

kerzner **IHG** **Anantara** **THE VISION HOTELS** **Emirates** **Dubai Tourism**

Hurray! No hike in rail fare

TRAVTALK features key highlights of the Rail Budget presented by Railway Minister, Suresh Prabhu, in the Lok Sabha.

- ❖ No increase in rail fares
- ❖ Investment of ₹ 8.50 lakh crore envisaged over the next five years
- ❖ Railways will introduce all India 24X7 helpline 138 from March 1; Toll free No.182 for security complaints. Food can be ordered online through IRCTC website
- ❖ Delhi-Kolkata, Delhi-Mumbai overnight trains
- ❖ Railways to raise reserved ticket booking window to 120 days compared to 60 days
- ❖ Railways plan to raise annual freight capacity to 1.5 billion tonne from 1.0 billion tonne.
- ❖ 17,000 toilets to be replaced by bio-toilets; stress on 'clean Railways'
- ❖ Railways allots 67% more funds for passenger amenities
- ❖ Railways to go through transformation in five years; to increase track capacity by 10 per cent to 1.38 lakh km; SMS alert service to inform passengers about arrival & departure of the trains
- ❖ Operation 5 Mins launched - a passenger travelling unreserved can purchase a ticket within 5 min with special devices
- ❖ Online booking of wheelchairs for senior citizen, patients and differently-abled people will be made available
- ❖ Government to give major thrust to Railway connectivity to North East and J&K.

Form - IV

Statement about ownership and other particulars about newspaper TravTalk to be published in the first issue every year after the last day of February

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I, SanJeet, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date : 01/03/2015

Sd/-
SanJeet
Signature of the Publisher

- ❖ Meghalaya finally on India's railway map, over 60 years after Independence
- ❖ Paperless ticketing, to introduce hand held device for TTEs
- ❖ To raise finances via SPVs, partner
- ❖ More general class coaches to be added in identified trains; more AC EMU services for Mumbai suburban section
- ❖ Open WiFi to be available at 400 railway stations; proposal to revamp the station re-development scheme
- ❖ Feasibility report of high speed train between Mumbai and Ahmedabad by mid-2015.
- ❖ Preparing 5-year corporate safety plan to be ready in 3 months to identify annual quantifiable targets ₹ 6,750 crore allocated for eliminating 3438 level crossings; 970 road-underbridge and road-overbridge to be constructed.

Wooing Indians to Discover Thainess

The recent visit of Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul, Minister of Tourism & Sports for Thailand, to launch the 'Discover Thainess' campaign in India, added steam to the tourism authority's efforts to promote authentic Thai experiences here. On her first visit to India, she talks about the creative methods they will use to promote the campaign.



HAZEL JAIN

Q What is Thailand's target for this year?

We are targeting 10,50,000 Indian travellers this year. We want India to join China, Malaysia, Russia, Japan and Korea all of which contribute a million arrivals to Thailand's incoming tourist numbers annually. The Indian market has surged in importance as one of our most resilient markets and also one that continues to grow. For TAT, India is the number one market in South Asia and even globally the market stands at a significant sixth. Thainess has appeal across segments. Our gastronomy is world-renowned and goes beyond the street food that most are familiar with. Consequently, focus areas will be locations and experiences that give travellers an insight into Thainess. Locations will be promoted as '12 Hidden Gems' and will include Lampang, Phetchabun, Nan, Buriram, Loei, Samut Songkhram, Ratchaburi, Trat, Chanthaburi, Trang, Chumphon and Nakhon Si Thammarat.

Q Is there a special focus on women?

I think that we can work on special packages for women consisting on Thai wellness therapies, Thai Boxing/Muay Thai, beauty treatments and shopping. I think that we could develop this segment in India with the number of financially-independent women here.

Q Can you share details of the celebrity engagement?

We have signed Mary Kom as our brand ambassador for the Indian market. She took a Thainess-focussed vacation in Thailand along with her family. Additionally, Gagandeep Bhullar is our brand ambassador for the high-end segment, particularly golfers.

Q What are your key segments in India?

Families, groups of youngsters, couples, honeymooners, weddings and groups are all keen to return to Thailand but they also want to experience something that

they haven't before. The events, experiences and destinations being marketed under Thainess will help achieve this.

Q What trends do you see emerging in Thailand tourism?

Indian leisure travellers initially chose only Bangkok and Pattaya. But with a large chunk (about 60 per cent) consisting of repeat visitors, popularity for Phuket, Chiang Mai, Samui, Chiang Rai, Krabi and Ayutthaya is now brimming. Experienced

travellers are also heading to Kanchanaburi, Rayong, Ko Tao and Ko Chang. Shopping, sightseeing and nightlife for at least one day in Bangkok are integral to all itineraries. Other encouraging trends include a marked rise in the number of Indian film-makers, MICE, destination weddings, honeymooners, seniors and special interest groups like golfers, divers and bikers; increasing average length of stay (from five to seven days) and average spend (40,430 THB) and a shift in market mix in favor of FIT and higher yield.

“The Indian market has surged in importance as one of our most resilient markets and also one that continues to grow

Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul
Minister of Tourism & Sports
for Thailand



193 hotels in Singapore.
Room names exactly as the hotels call it.

The hotels and apartments in Singapore now have fascinating room names. Not fancy really, just correctly presented.

In Singapore and many other global destinations, we show the room names exactly as the hotels call it. When you book a hotel with roomsXML, you don't have to do any guesswork. Your customers would know what to expect, exactly.

As an example, your customer saw the "Orchid Garden View Suite" at the Marina Bay Sands, so that's exactly what roomsXML calls it. Meanwhile other hotel booking systems, simply show it as "Suite". Of course, you can book with them, but until your customer gets there you will not know what it is you have booked.

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Eyeing Numbers

► Thailand is targeting 10,50,000 Indian travellers this year

► For TAT, India is the number one market in South Asia and even globally the market stands at a significant sixth

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eVisa for 150 countries: A welcome step

► Contd. from page 1



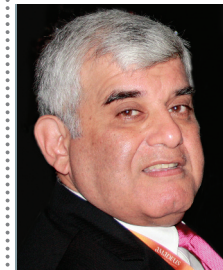
The budget appears to lay a roadmap for lower taxes, simplification of process and ease of doing business in infrastructure sector. The proposed bankruptcy law which I expect will be akin to Chapter 11 provision present in US will help unshackle massive investments which are stuck in stalled projects. Plug and Play Projects, re-look at the PPP framework, reduction of litigation, introduction of MUDRA bank, social sector schemes, Pension funds, make this year's budget a budget of ideas and if implemented well should lead to great growth in the Indian economy. The proposal to increase visa-on-arrival to 150 countries is a welcome step that will boost tourism as well as aviation in the country. Moving towards a unified regime of GST will also help in unifying the taxes across the country and will be helpful to the aviation sector.

Ajay Singh
Founder, SpiceJet



The decision to extend VoA to 150 countries is very good. It spells good news for tourism. After the introduction of VoA to 43 countries were announced, the December figures for inbound tourism were impressive. I hope this decision also boosts outbound tourism as other countries reciprocate this decision of India and grant VoA to Indians.

Guldeep Singh Sahni
President, OTOAI



There are no direct tangible benefits with the exception of the following: Service tax provision in budget - The abatement for executive (business/first class) air travel, wherein the service element is higher, is being reduced from 60 per cent to 40 per cent. Consequently, service tax would be payable on 60 per cent of the value of fare for business class. The increase of service tax from 12 per cent to 14 per cent will be a deterrent.

Pradip Lulla
National General Secretary
Travel Agents Federation of India

Extending VoA to 150 countries will strengthen the travel industry. Besides encouraging international carriers to consider fortifying operations in India due to a probable increase in tourist inflow, the move is also likely to contribute towards improving the domestic load factors. However, inclusion of facilities like amusement arcades, theme parks, water parks, concerts etc in the negative list for Service Tax restricts such establishments from reaping the benefits of growth in tourism. Additionally, proposed changes to increase Service Tax rate to 14% will lead to a hike in air ticket prices.



Sajid Khan
Country Manager – India, South African Airways

The introduction of GST is a welcome step. The extension of VoA to 150 countries is a very good decision. We hope foreign tourist arrivals will go up to 10 million soon and if this happens it will benefit the hospitality industry as well.



TS Walia
President, FHRAI

The Union Budget has recognized and shown commitment to tourism as an important revenue and employment generator for the Government. The focus on development of World Heritage Sites, the VoA scheme to be increased to 150 and more growth in terms of investment in infrastructure, will transform the travel and tourism sector. Proposals such as exemption to individual taxpayers, proposal to cut corporate tax and a series of measures to boost consumption will allow the travelers to consider holiday and travel options more favourably. This will help in tapping the huge potential in India of the domestic and outbound markets.



Rajeev Wagle
Managing Director, Kuoni India



The Government's pro-tourism strategic vision sees continuum and we applaud the vision and long term initiatives of Budget 2015-16, including expanding the VoA scheme to 150 countries in a phased approach as also the welcome move of eliminating some of the concerns and apprehensions that tourists as well as operators had as to how this system operates; focus on developing World Heritage Sites is of huge value. In addition to this, the investment of Rs 2 lakh crore towards sanitation is critical for Incredible India's image, overall. The rail and road infra thrust too will aid domestic and inbound tourism.

Madhavan Menon
Managing Director, Thomas Cook (India)



The proposed increase in the number of countries under the VoA scheme, should catapult the inbound foreign visits to exceed 8 million in the current calendar year. Conservation and promotion of World Heritage Sites need to be done as per international standards. Initiatives such as Swachh Bharat, Clean Ganga, smart city, women safety, and tax benefits to Yoga need to be widely communicated. Overall the tourism, travel and hospitality sector would benefit within the positive economic outlook facilitated by enhanced investment in infrastructure, ease of doing business, Make in India related impetus and more predictable tax environment.

Jaideep Ghosh
Head of Tourism and Hospitality sector, KPMG in India



We can see around 30% increase in tourist arrivals. Short haul from neighbouring countries will get a boost. This will be a significant contributor to Indian economy as well as a driver of progress through creation of jobs. It will give India an edge over neighbouring countries and will have multiplier effect on businesses connected directly and indirectly with tourism and foreign exchange earnings. The move will help in creating a robust tourism industry. Seems like achey din is in store for the tourism industry.

Ajay Bhatia
Vice President & Chief Operating Officer, Mercury Travels

Wow ! Thumbs up to budget 2015! With a new VoA policy, we have made the world a global playground and this will be a great impetus to travel and tourism industry. With this move, we are confident that the tourism industry will make a quantum leap in growth. This will have a direct impact on aviation, infrastructure like airports, hotels, resorts and will also attract global skill sets which will make India a strong global visible player.



Y Rajeev Reddy
CMD, Country Club Hospitality & Holidays Ltd

Visa-on-Arrival to 150 countries is a welcome addition for the travel and tourism industry. As a country, our offerings in terms of heritage and culture are unparalleled, therefore, with a clear commitment towards restoration of these heritage points, we can ensure higher growth for the travel industry. We now need the government to look into cruise tourism as it's a multi-million dollar revenue generator and job creator which requires more attention with improved infrastructural facilities.



Varun Chadha
COO, Tirun Travel Marketing,
Exclusive India Representative for Royal Caribbean Cruises

The long due attention to the infrastructure challenges at the World Heritage Sites in India is an important move. We hope that this initiative is attributed and extended to all the 25 World Heritage Sites in India. The Budget envisages expanding the VoA to 150 countries. WTTCII welcomes this move, but with immediate priority, the Government of India must ensure that China, France, Italy, Spain and United Kingdom are included in the list. Equally important is the immediate roll out of a revamped "Incredible India" campaign and a proper marketing plan to generate consumer interest in these countries.



Manav Thadani
Chairman, WTTC, India Initiative

Race your way to Sepang this season

Sepang International Circuit along with Tourism Malaysia are targeting Indian corporates with 'Race your way to Sepang' challenge to promote the Malaysian leg of the F1 craze. Sharmila Nadarajah, Chief Commercial Officer of the Sepang International Circuit (SIC), speaks what the F1 fans can expect.



Q What is the aim of the 'Race your way to Sepang' challenge?

With India riding high on the racing popularity wave, Tourism Malaysia and the Sepang International Circuit (SIC) held the 'Race your way to Sepang' challenge among corporates to promote the Malaysian leg of the F1 craze and also the facilities at the circuit. We have also launched a special Formula1 package with Yatra.com. The Formula 1 Petronas Malaysia Grand Prix is scheduled for March 27-29, 2015. This will be the second stop in the F1 calendar after the Rolex Australian Grand Prix.

Q How will you leverage this event?

The SIC is not just about the Formula1 race but also the state of the-art facilities. Situated 85 kms from the Kuala Lumpur city centre, the track features 15 corners and eight straights including two high-speed stretches. The high standard facilities are an ideal place for world-class international events and corporate to commercial programmes. Sepang International Circuit is very keen on promoting the venue for events like weddings, family days, conferences, annual dinners and team-building programs.

Q How has F1 contributed to footfalls from India?

Sports tourism is gaining popularity in India and we are happy to see that the numbers are steadily increasing. Also, since Malaysia is seen as a

family destination, it is convenient for tourists to combine this sporting event with a summer family vacation. Last year, we had more than 1,000 exclusive Formula One fans visiting from India.

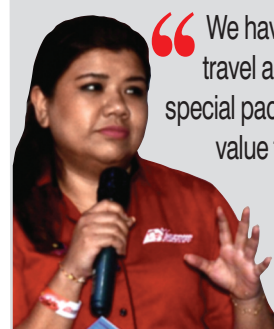
Q What is the kind of numbers Malaysia is expecting this year from F1?

Due to the ongoing cricket world cup fever, the numbers we are expecting is somewhere close to 800 pax.

Q Tell us about the special package designed for travel agents around this.

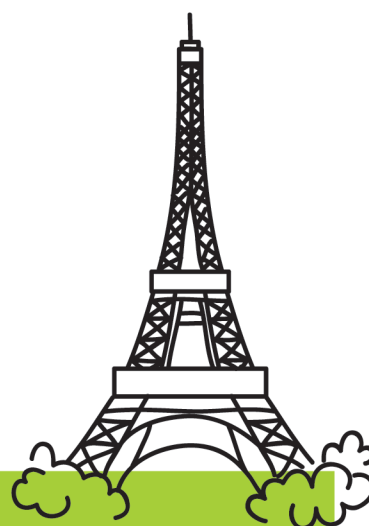
We have tied up with various travel agents and have developed special packages, which are complete value for money deals.

The package includes air tickets, hotel stay, hotel transfers, half day city tour and of course Grand Stand tickets to the event.



“We have tied up with various travel agents and have developed special packages, which are complete value for money deals

Sharmila Nadarajah
Chief Commercial Officer,
Sepang International
Circuit (SIC)



925 hotels in Paris.
Room names exactly as the hotels call it.

The hotels and apartments in Paris now have fascinating room names. Not fancy really, just correctly presented.

In Paris and many other global destinations, we show the room names exactly as the hotels call it. When you book a hotel with roomsXML, you don't have to do any guesswork. Your customers would know what to expect, exactly.

As an example, your customer saw the "Deluxe Room with Eiffel Tower View" at the Hyatt Regency Etoile, so that's exactly what roomsXML calls it. Meanwhile other hotel booking systems, simply show it as "Deluxe View Room". Of course, you can book with them, but until your customer gets there you will not know what it is you have booked.

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Price Points

► The Malaysian Grand Prix tickets are sold from ₹1,640 for Hillstand seats

► The Grandstand seats are sold for ₹ 5,720 for F1 stands and ₹ 13,470 for K1 stands, where fans will have a perfect view fronting the first turn of the circuit

► The main grandstand starts from ₹ 6,940 to as high as ₹ 36,100 for the best view

► The venue also has Club Suite that offers fine-dining for those who experience the race from inside SIC luxury suites starting from ₹ 93,800

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OTM continues legacy of trade meets

The 2015 chapter of OTM Mumbai – the biggest ever travel trade show in India, held from Feb 4- 6 2015, at the Bombay Convention and Exhibition Centre, recorded 20% growth over last year. With participation of over 850+ exhibitors from 50 countries, OTM was spread over 20,000 sq m, housing various domestic and international destinations, state and country pavilions, hotels and resorts, etc. Around 10,000 travel trade visitors from all over India and abroad visited the show.



Tourism Malaysia on growth track

Tourism Malaysia's Deputy Director General (Planning) Dato' Azizan Noordin, led a tourism delegation, comprising officials from the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, State representatives and members of the travel trade fraternity to New Delhi.



PEDEN DOMA BHUTIA

Focussing on the country's bountiful and diverse cultures and festivities as a tourist attraction, the Malaysian Tourism Board also launched Malaysia Year of Festivals (MYFest) 2015 with the theme 'Endless Celebrations'.

As part of its efforts to raise awareness on the celebration of MYFest 2015 in India, Tourism Malaysia embarked on a Sales Mission from February 9-17 to Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai and Hyderabad.

"India has always been an important market for us; the sixth top tourist generating market to the country. And the numbers continue to be encouraging. Until October 2014, we have registered 6,43,335 Indian tourists, which is a 20.7% increase for the same period last year (5,32,964). This year, we are expecting to welcome 800,000 Indian guests," says Dato' Azizan.

Talking about the profile of Indian tourists, he says, "We mostly get families, young couples and honeymooners to Malaysia from India, but now we see that there is a growing interest among young executives to travel to Malaysia. These travellers go for soft adventure, so, we are also promoting sports tourism in India. Last year, our target was 28 million tourists. With all incidents, we were worried that the arrival would go down, but we found out that until October, we got 22.8 million tourists which was a 9.2% per cent increase from the same period last year. So we found out that we are still doing fine, except for the China market which was down by 11.2%, but after October, the market came back with positive arrivals. We may not meet the growth of 28 million mark but we still see a positive trend building up."

About promoting new destinations, he says that they are now planning to popularise Borneo in India.

Talking about the looming effect of the MH 370 incident, he says that it did affect arrivals but the tourism board went in for a major re-strategisation of their market policy.

"We put a lot of emphasis in South Asia, especially

India, West Asia, like the Arab countries, Australia and Europe. Even though arrivals from the China market went down, we did promote Malaysia in the Tier-II and Tier-III cities in China, so we had charter flights coming from there to Malaysia."

Connectivity has also helped the market a great deal, says Dato Azizan, With Malindo Air entering the

Indian market, he says it has contributed to the growth of Indian arrivals. "Now that we have four airlines, we have 165 direct flights every week from various cities in India to Malaysia. We hope we can get more. We are also trying to increase connectivity and focusing on Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities like Malindo Air now flies from cities like Trichy Kochi and Vizag."

“India is the sixth top tourist generating market to the country. Until October 2014, we registered 6,43,335 Indian tourists, which is a 20.7% increase for the same period last year

Dato' Azizan Noordin
Deputy Director General
(Planning) Tourism Malaysia



146 hotels in Las Vegas.

Room names exactly as the hotels call it.

The hotels and apartments in Las Vegas now have fascinating room names. Not fancy really, just correctly presented.

In Las Vegas and many other global destinations, we show the room names exactly as the hotels call it. When you book a hotel with roomsXML, you don't have to do any guesswork. Your customers would know what to expect, exactly.

As an example, your customer saw the "Forum Tower Deluxe King Room" at the Caesars Palace, so that's exactly what roomsXML calls it. Meanwhile other hotel booking systems, simply show it as "Deluxe Room". Of course, you can book with them, but until your customer gets there you will not know what it is you have booked.

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Malaysia Calling

► Malaysia Year of Festivals (MYFest) 2015 was launched with the theme 'Endless Celebrations'

► As part of its efforts to raise awareness on the celebration of MYFest 2015 in India, Tourism Malaysia embarked on a Sales Mission from Feb 9-Feb 17 to Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai and Hyderabad

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Networking takes centrestage at TTF

Travel & Tourism Fair (TTF) was recently held in New Delhi. The travel show at Thyagaraj Sports Complex brought together people from the travel and hospitality industry to interact and network with various National Tourism Boards, State Tourism Boards from all over India and the world.



Bridging bricks with clicks

Vivek Sanghi, Director, ecare Technology Labs, says that ecare's latest offering - ecarelBE SaaS is an affordable travel e-commerce platform, which helps agencies launch their own travel portal with an investment as low as ₹ 5,000 per month and in as less as 3 days.



Q What is the USP of your company?

The USP of our company is that every team member works like a technology contributor but thinks like a Travel Agent i.e. we belong to the business and are able to understand customer's pain point. The USP of our solution is a tested and affordable (but robust and scalable) solution, powered by heroic support. The support is important because we understand that customers are not tech-savvy and it makes a lot of sense to handhold the customers till they effectively start using technology. With our Travel e-commerce platform 'ecarelBE', travel business can set up their online portal in as less as three days and ecarelBE comes pre integrated with 40+ APIs for air, hotel, car and bus service. For travel trade, we want to bridge the gap between bricks and clicks i.e. empower each brick and mortar travel business with technology at affordable cost so that they set up their online presence to increase reach, increase revenue, improve efficiency and profitability!

Q What have your achievements been so far?

Our solution powers 150+ travel portals including Small and Medium Enterprises, helping them expand their business. Our biggest achievement is that our customers have been able to get the Return On Investments on the technology spend and our customers are our testimonials.

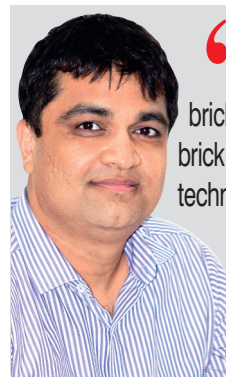
We are the first one in the industry where new customers willing to evaluate our application, gets the fully functional, fully loaded application integrated with their portal in

real time environment without investing a single penny. They can showcase it to their own team, beta customers and friends and family for feedback and use it for 15 days to understand the solution, use it live and make bookings in production environment.

Q What is your focus on the travel industry?

We consider ourselves as a contributor to the travel business eco-system.

We are determined to bring every small and big travel business online and with process automation help improve the efficiency and allow them to compete with the OTA in terms of the service offering. As an organisation, our complete focus is on travel technology only and we realise that Innovation is going to be the key and hence we plan to add a lot of value added modules and features on the portal which can help travel business be more efficient.



“For travel trade, we want to bridge the gap between bricks and clicks i.e. empower each brick and mortar travel business with technology at affordable cost so that they set up their online presence.

Vivek Sanghi
Director, ecare Technology Labs



756 hotels in Bangkok.

Room names exactly as the hotels call it.

The hotels and apartments in Bangkok now have fascinating room names. Not fancy really, just correctly presented.

In Bangkok and many other global destinations, we show the room names exactly as the hotels call it. When you book a hotel with roomsXML, you don't have to do any guesswork. Your customers would know what to expect, exactly.

As an example, your customer saw the “Deluxe Space Zone Room” at the Baiyoke Sky, so that's exactly what roomsXML calls it. Meanwhile other hotel booking systems, simply show it as “Deluxe Room”. Of course, you can book with them, but until your customer gets there you will not know what it is you have booked.

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How it Works

► The company is the first one in the industry where new customers are willing to evaluate its application, gets the fully functional, fully loaded application integrated with their portal in real time environment without investing a single penny

► They can showcase it to their own team, beta customers and friends and family for feedback and use it for 15 days to understand the solution, use it live and make bookings in production environment.

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BIT brings back old glory

Italy's premier travel industry trade show, BIT, was recently organised at the new Milan Fairgrounds in the suburb of Rho. BIT took place in two giant glass buildings – one for Italian destinations and the other for lands abroad. It hosted over 1,500 buyers from all over the world; 250 from Italy and 85 buyers from India alone. The exhibition was divided into 2 distinct divisions - one for Italy and the other called 'The World'. This was the only show in the world where the exhibitor has the option of pre-booking appointments with 1,500 global buyers



Udaan celebrates 23 years of success

Udaan India recently celebrated 23 years of success with some fun and frolic at a cocktail party in New Delhi. The party was attended by people from the travel industry. Rajan Dua, Managing Director, Udaan India gave a warm welcome to all the guests.



Beaches, peaks, deserts: All in a day

Happy about the 20% growth on Indian arrivals, Steven Dixon, Regional Manager - South and South East Asia, Tourism New Zealand, says they hope that the Cricket World Cup will drive many people to New Zealand.



PEDEN DOMA BHUTIA

Q *New Zealand has been promoting itself very aggressively in the Indian market, is it a conscious decision?*

India for us is a priority as an emerging market and so we are putting a lot of our resources into our marketing campaigns and concentrating on the trade. We are conscious that India is a big market for us and that we are focusing strongly on it.

Q *Which markets in India are responding best to New Zealand?*

Naturally the Tier-I markets are responding well, but as time goes on and numbers come in, hopefully the Tier-II and Tier-III markets will show some good numbers. The Tier-II markets for us would be around Bengaluru, Kolkata, Chennai, the Tier-III markets are developing markets for us, like Gujarat and Nagpur. Even from cities like Rajkot and Jaipur, there are people generating business for New Zealand. These markets are showing promising results for travel to New Zealand.

Q *New Zealand being a long-haul destination, does the lack of a direct connectivity mar its tourism potential?*

We understand at the moment the difficulty in not hav-

ing a direct flight and we are working very closely with airlines to rectify that. However, the Singapore Airlines and Air New Zealand alliance has created more capacity and that has been a great benefit to us.

Q *How has the response to the World Cup been?*

According to the figures until November 2014, we did 37,000 arrivals from India, which is almost a 20% increase, year-on-year, so that's positive, but for us the Cricket World Cup is a big crowd-puller, it's also a legacy piece for us, we hope this will

drive many people to New Zealand and encourage people to visit the country further on, outside the World Cup. We are excited about the double digit growth out of this market. New Zealanders are naturally good hosts so around the Cricket World Cup, there are 7 host cities around New Zealand and there will be events in each of these cities where people will warmly receive Indian travellers, so there won't be a corner of New Zealand where they will not be talking about cricket or the ties between India and New Zealand.

Contd. on page 33 ►

“ The Tier-I markets are responding well, but as time goes on and numbers come in, hopefully the Tier-II and Tier-III markets will show some good numbers **”**

Steven Dixon

Regional Manager - South and South East Asia, Tourism New Zealand



648 hotels in Rome.

Room names exactly as the hotels call it.

The hotels and apartments in Rome now have fascinating room names. Not fancy really, just correctly presented.

In Rome and many other global destinations, we show the room names exactly as the hotels call it. When you book a hotel with roomsXML, you don't have to do any guesswork. Your customers would know what to expect, exactly.

As an example, your customer saw the **“Executive Room with Balcony & Garden View”** at the **De La Ville Intercontinental**, so that's exactly what roomsXML calls it. Meanwhile other hotel booking systems, simply show it as “Executive Room with View”. Of course, you can book with them, but until your customer gets there you will not know what it is you have booked.

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News for agents

Kiwi Link in the last year went to 4 cities, in the last 6-7 years that we've hosted it, it's been primarily about Mumbai and Delhi, but in the last 2 years, we went to places like Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Kolkata, but this year, we are planning to do a big event in our Tier-1 markets but we are looking to cover agents all over the India, our key agents who we work with. We currently have around 14 travel agents categorised into Tier-I and Tier-II



partners with whom we work very closely, but in 2015, we are looking at increasing this number and we are going to look for more partners to do business with and build strategic tie ups and create awareness.

Neha Bhola

Country Manager, India, Tourism New Zealand

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Word of mouth: Key for every agent

► Contd. from page 6

has enabled people to become smarter together."

This, he said, could be done on any online platform such as social media or forums. Explaining his idea further, Zoref added, "A travel agent specialising in the diamond industry told me that the most important thing for us in this digital age is word of mouth. It's not advertising but what others are talking about us. This is shifting completely in the age of social media. If someone is talking good things about a company, they are not talking to just one friend; they are talking to a very big crowd."

It's all Hebrew

An interesting session on the second day was with the General Manager of Israel Incoming Tour Operators Association, **Yossef Fatael**, who spoke about how the Israeli travel agents as a community worked with IATA and the airlines for the commissions, BSP and service tax in Israel.

"IATA is a global entity that exists everywhere and actually they are nowhere. They are drowning us in thousands of papers and resolutions and loss and we agents never have the brain or the time to fight it. When you question them about something, they say there is a resolution for it. BSP is a totally different entity and we need to challenge them separately," he said.

Speaking about anti-trust, Fatael added, "Almost 95 per cent of national associations don't communicate with the anti-trust commissioners in their countries. They don't fight them. In Israel, when we start to fight the issue of the commission,

the airlines filed a complaint against us and the anti-trust investigated us. They saw us as the monopoly, which is ridiculous. We are still fighting them and we are now suing the anti-trust commissioner."

He later answered questions raised by the TAFI president, **Zakkir Ahmed**; National General Secretary, **Pradip Lulla**; and **Jayesh Tharani**, member of TAFI.

Challenges to overcome

Underlining the few loose ends that may put a spanner in the works, Zakkir Ahmed Kalarikkal, President, TAFI, said, "Air connectivity and visas are

two big concerns for the agents and we are talking to the ministry to iron these issues out. Safety was a concern in the minds of agents but seeing is believing and I think everyone who has attended this convention has seen the ground realities as they stand. You don't see police around but the security is tight."

Air connectivity is a concern. "El Al flies direct from Mumbai thrice a week, which is not enough and crossing the border from Amman is not preferable by travellers. We have therefore been discussing with El Al as well as Indian carriers like Air India and Jet Airways to increase flight frequency especially from Delhi as there are no flights connecting it. It's a matter of time before we have more flights to Israel," Ahmed added.

Another challenge is of the visas. He said, "The Ministry of Tourism, Israel is looking into making it easier and quicker. They are looking into e-visas as well. It currently takes about five working days but the process is a little tight.



Yossef Fatael
General Manager, Israel Incoming
Tour Operators Association

IATA is a global entity that exists everywhere and actually they are nowhere. They are drowning us in thousands of papers and resolutions & loss

We have also suggested issuing visas to travellers with valid UK or US visas. So they can apply it online and get a paper



Amir HaLevi
Director General,
Israel Ministry of Tourism

There are many who come from India to learn about new Israeli technologies. We see tourism as another platform to strengthen our ties with India

visa. These are all suggestions we have provided to the ministry. They are open to this idea." ↴

EXHIBITOR TALK

"It was a very good opportunity to meet the travel agents one on one. The attendance was very good. We met many travel agents and tour operators who were visiting Israel for the first time. They told us that they were very impressed by what they saw. We all hope that this event will generate new traffic of Indian tourists to Israel."



Arie Sommer
Director General
Jerusalem Hotel Association



"After attending the TAFI Convention, I have decided to create a special budget and develop the market from India. My focus will be on the luxury market rather than on the pilgrimage or budget market. As of now, I am the only tour operator offering premium tours in Israel."

Benji Shavit
MD, Regina Israel

ATTENDEE FEEDBACK

"TAFI and the Israel Ministry of Tourism did a splendid job in engaging delegates with some thought-provoking business sessions and showcasing the destination. It gave us a glimpse of what Israel has to offer to the experiential traveller. Apart from being rich in culture and heritage, it also has a vibrant nightlife that attracts the young, discerning traveller."

Thomas C. Thottathil
AVP - Corporate Communications & CSR, Cox & Kings

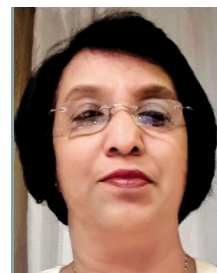


"This year's TAFI convention was the birthplace of ideas, discussions and debates. We were looking to engage in gratifying interactions and build strong relationships. The congregation of distinguished delegates at the convention presented us with opportunities for enriching collaborations, resulting in rich value addition for our business. We returned very satisfied from the convention. TAFI's trend of choosing exotic destinations for the convention is one of the key success factors, which attracts remarkable participation from the entire trade fraternity. Being TAFI's preferred global assistance and travel insurance partner for over 10 years now, we look forward to attending the convention not just next year but for years to come."

Dev Karvat
MD, TrawellTag Cover-More India

"The conference was very well organised and offered good networking opportunities. The business topics and speakers were excellent and very informative and thought provoking. The accommodation, meals and tours were excellent. As the travel trade in India comprises at least 50 per cent, a greater concerted effort must be made to include more women in panel discussions and presentations."

Bunny Bhoola
MD, African Link



Red Apple brings 'Hidden Doors'

► Contd. from page 13

technology. We will now be launching 'Hidden Doors' product for sole travellers for offbeat destination and high-end clients." The

company plans to participate in different travel exhibitions in India and offer familiarisation trips for several Red Apple destinations for 25 highest performing agents in India and the Sub-

Continent. Adding to its options available on its online portal, Red Apple will be adding a CMI banner, itinerary apps with notification and vehicles tracker with updates, co-

branding, mobile inventory, visa online integration (Dubai visas), mobile apps (iOS and Android), SEO plan for business promotions, as well as ready-made package module.

Sharing some trends he sees emerging in the Asian market, Roy says, "Sole travellers are getting more active in independent travelling and they are knowledgeable enough to discover new destinations and

excursions on their own. It's good because the offbeat destinations get explored. Secondly, Asian travellers are getting more attracted to Europe destinations nowadays. MICE movements are also increasing." ↴

It's all work and all play for ANTO

The aim of designing the game 'Snapshot Austria' is to reinvent Austria and launch a new promotion in the Indian market. This initiative has been taken by the ANTO India office, making India the first market to receive the app.



MEGHA PAUL

In a bid to reinvent Austria in the Indian market, Austrian National Tourist Office (ANTO) has recently launched a mobile game called Snapshot Austria exclusively for the India market. The game is focusing on promoting various destinations in the country such as Salzburg, Tyrol and Vienna. The game is available in both Android and iOS platform and also includes a lucky draw wherein the winners get a chance to fly to Austria.

Giving more details about the new development, **Christine Mukharji**, Market Manager, ANTO India said,

"The app is an interactive game which can be played both online and offline, and will feature Tirol, Salzburg and Vienna at first. The aim of designing the game was to reinvent Austria and launch a new promotion in the Indian market. This initiative has been taken by the ANTO India office, making India the first market to receive the app." The game will later on be launched in the

Emirates and Japan as well, she added.

Set against a backdrop of Austria, with settings as per Austria's USPs, the game will educate the consumers and trade about the destination. "When we launch we will also run a campaign 'Austria Snapshot Adventure' wherein posting a snapshot of yourself from the game could stand you a chance to win a holiday to

Austria. We are working together with airlines for the same," she pointed out.

Speaking about the tourist influx from India, Mukharji remarked, "We received around 85,000 visitors from India in 2014, which is almost same as 2013. However, the average stay for Indians has increased to 1.9 nights. This year ANTO expects a growth of anywhere between 10-15 per cent."

"The aim of designing the game was to reinvent Austria and launch a new promotion in the Indian market. This initiative has been taken by the ANTO India office, making India the first market to receive the app

Christine Mukharji
Market Manager, ANTO India



Numbers Talk

▶ Austria received around 85,000 visitors from India in 2014, which is almost same as 2013

▶ However, the average stay for Indians has increased to 1.9 nights

▶ This year, ANTO expects a growth of anywhere between 10-15 per cent

Cricket World Cup: Big crowd-puller

▶ Contd. from page 31

QHow has the response of the Indian MICE market been to New Zealand?

We are seeing some good numbers from the MICE market in India, particularly around the incentive business. Also, the time when the MICE market from India travels to New Zealand is a great fit for us in terms of capacity and pricing. New Zealand, at the moment, is a key destination in the global MICE sector. We have new developments coming up - we have the new convention centre coming up in Auckland in 2018. The Chirstchurch Convention Centre will be open around 2017, so for us, there are 3 sectors of investment at the start of our 3-year strategy - one was the MICE sector, the other was priority emerging sector and the other in the premium sector, so for us, MICE is a key focus. Because MICE is a relatively new focus for us, we are emphasising on the accessibility that the country allows travellers to once you land in New Zealand. The accessibility within New Zealand allows you to see beaches, rainforests, mountains and arid deserts all in one day, this is our USP.

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347 hotels in New York.

Room names exactly as the hotels call it.



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In New York and many other global destinations, we show the room names exactly as the hotels call it. When you book a hotel with roomsXML, you don't have to do any guesswork. Your customers would know what to expect, exactly.

As an example, your customer saw the "Superior Guest Room" at the Waldorf Astoria, so that's exactly what roomsXML calls it. Meanwhile other hotel booking systems, simply show it as "Guest Room". Of course, you can book with them, but until your customer gets there you will not know what it is you have booked.

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Adding the 'e' in e-invoices

In its 25th year now, Excel Software Consultancy introduced the travel industry to e-invoices. Today, it boasts of more than 2,000 agents from all over the world who have been successfully using its software products.



TT BUREAU

A very crucial section of any business is financial accounting. If it is not strong, it will affect other departments like sales. Most travel agents buy particular accounting software because it is the cheapest one. This also gives them the tag of being 'computerised'. They are very happy and also very satisfied so long as their accounting software can generate an invoice.

Excel Software Consultancy is a software development company that introduced e-invoices to the travel industry. It has been providing accounting solutions to travel agencies since 1991. Today, it has more than 2,000 agents from India, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE using its software. **Muffazzal Hafiji**, Chairman and MD, of Excel Software Consultancy, says, "To give our products an edge, we develop and migrate upwards using the best available resources from time to time. We started development in Clipper, followed by Visual Basic and xBase. Our latest product (commercially launched in 2011) is xLWebPro Ver 6.0 which is developed in Visual Studio C# and is today used by over 375 agencies. Putting in nearly 30 years of programming experience, xLWebPro is undisputedly the best product of its kind in the world."

He credits its popularity to its simplicity and user-friendliness. "Due to these features, xLWebPro has among the highest number of owners who are using their accounting software hands-on. Owners who work on their accounts software are less dependent on their accountants, and also accountants are more careful and prompt in their entries," Hafiji says.

About xLWebPro

xLWebPro has some unique features like:

- Auto CRS Invoicing
- Single Invoice for all services
- Forex Gain/Loss Posting
- Splitting Invoices
- Editing the document from Trial Balance
- Opening multiple screens
- 75+ outstanding report styles
- Statistical reports
- Report Designer to generate your own reports

Excel Software has trained staff based in major cities in India who provide all services like product demonstration, implementation and training. They also handle minor trouble-shooting. It also has a dedicated helpdesk at its Mumbai office and instant support is provided via Teamviewer. "Our software is used not only in major cities but also in remote locations. Our clients who are satisfied with our products and

services promote our software to other agencies at various forums and this positive feedback convinces prospective agents to start using our software," Hafiji adds.

Excel's edge

Hafiji stresses on the fact that Excel Software has always believed in honesty and fair trade practices. "That is why we publish a price list on our website www.excelsoftware.co.in

and also allow the agent to prepare a quotation based on the modules they desire," he says.

Speaking about what agents can expect from Excel Software, he says, "Whatever it may be, one thing is certain that they can always expect the unexpected. We never copy or imitate any other software. We have reached this position solely on our hard work, imagination and passion."

"We first introduced the concept of 'BDR' which was then adopted by BSP. We first introduced e-invoice and later the agents got e-tickets

Muffazzal Hafiji
Chairman and MD
Excel Software Consultancy



199 hotels in Hong Kong.

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As an example, your customer saw the "Harbour Club Court View Room" at the Harbour Grand Kowloon, so that's exactly what roomsXML calls it. Meanwhile other hotel booking systems, simply show it as "Club Room". Of course, you can book with them, but until your customer gets there you will not know what it is you have booked.

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'Offline mobile guide' for 1300 places

With MOT's emphasis on domestic tourism, Dr Lalit K Panwar, Secretary, MOT, recently launched HolidayIQ's offline mobile guide, offering information on over 1300 destinations. We spoke to Hari Nair, Founder & CEO, HolidayIQ.



KANCHAN NATH

Each destination guide will contain details on hotels, sightseeing options, etc, allowing the user to download and access traveller reviews and maps for on-the-go access, even while offline.

Telling us about the mobile guide, **Hari Nair**, Founder & CEO, HolidayIQ, said, "The product that we have launched is built on the whole mobile revolution that is coming to India. We have built a mobile guide and the most interesting aspect of the guide is that you can get entire information about 1300 tourism destinations in India on your phone, complete native-mobile experience without having the internet. Our constant battle within our team was to provide access to this large database of information on-the-go, where internet accessibility is the biggest challenge."

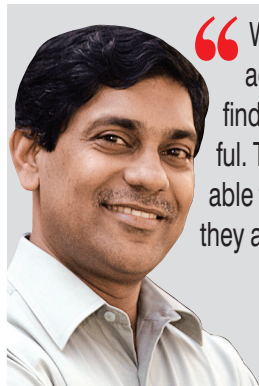
He added, "So even if you are in the furthestmost corner of India, wherever there is no internet, you will not be lost. The information that is there on Holiday IQ will be in your hands about that destination even without the internet. It's a revolutionary new approach and we are covering every destination in India for tourism."

Nair further said, "With issues of internet connectivity during travel, especially when travelling in rural pockets of the country, jungles, deserts, hilly areas etc, the offline guides will certainly prove to be every traveller's boon."

Talking from the travel agents point of view, he said, "We find that even travel agents and their employees

find the guide incredibly useful. That is because they are able to get the information that they are looking for. The information on guide is collected from millions of real travellers in India. The whole Indian travel industry, leisure travel industry and tourism industry turns now to Holiday IQ for the information they are looking for."

Telling us about the revenue model for Holiday IQ, he



"We find that even travel agents and their employees find the guide incredibly useful. That is because they are able to get the information that they are looking for"

Hari Nair
Founder & CEO
HolidayIQ

said, "The business model for Holiday IQ is very simple, we collect all our information from actual travellers. We do not pay them to write this, they are all part of our community, they write voluntarily. We now have 3 million, ie 30 lakh travellers who are now a part of our travel community. They write for us for free." How we make money, is through all those consumers who come to our website, to plan

holidays and after researching, are interested to make bookings. We connect them either to online travel agencies or off line travel agencies. We connect to more than 15 OTAs who do online booking for hotels. We also have 1000 off-line traditional travel agents across India on our network. We make money when we pass on customers to OTAs and offline travel agents."



586 hotels in London.
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The hotels and apartments in London now have fascinating room names. Not fancy really, just correctly presented.

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As an example, your customer saw the "Jimi Hendrix Suite" at the Cumberland, so that's exactly what roomsXML calls it. Meanwhile other hotel booking systems, simply show it as "Suite". Of course, you can book with them, but until your customer gets there you will not know what it is you have booked.

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Business Model

► The business model for Holiday IQ is very simple. They collect all information from actual travellers

► They do not pay them to write this as they are writing voluntarily

► The company now has 3 million, i.e 30 lakh travellers who are now a part of travel community

► How they make money, is through all those consumers who come to their website, to plan holidays and after researching, are interested to make bookings

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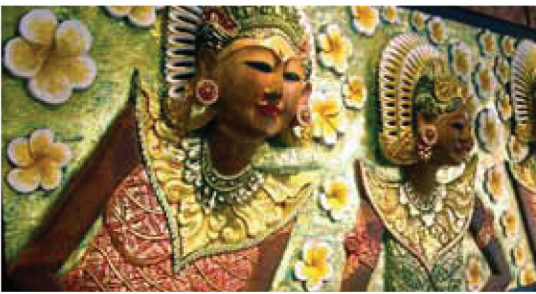
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TAAI CONVENTION - 2015 BALI, INDONESIA

INDIAN TRAVEL CONGRESS, 62nd Convention & Exhibition of TAAI, 26 - 28 March 2015

TAAI has announced its most prestigious annual event the Indian Travel Congress, 62nd Annual Convention and Exhibition, to be held from 26th to 28th March 2015, in Beautiful Bali, Indonesia at the Westin Resort Nusa Dua Bali. Visit our website www.taai.in and click on the convention logo for registration



Get ready for a most fruitful and interesting convention. Expert speakers will enthral you with their insights and inputs related to the industry and panelists will involve you in meaningful debates. There will be lots of sight-seeing and shopping in and around this beautiful city whilst on the specially arranged tours along with exciting pre and post Convention packages that have been put together just for you all. Log on to our website to register for these tours too. Do not delay and miss out !

At the TAAI Convention 2015 at Bali, ITTE is being held from the 26th to 28th March 2015 (all three days). There will be B2B opportunities for Exhibitors; Buyers & Sellers from all over. One cannot be away from grabbing the most

potential of buyers. In the past years, ITTE served its purpose extremely well. Do contact us for stalls and your participation. You are invited to shake hands with industry leaders with the most potential and be rewarded with a successful relationship.

The Convention will showcase how much INDIA can offer in terms of tourism for the people of BALI & INDONESIANS. Surely, a great opportunity for Indians and India Tourism to showcase this great country and the vast tourism spectrum we offer. It is also the perfect platform for Indonesia to promote its culture and diverse values. The Indonesian Tourism players can use this opportunity to attract Indians in a big way.

Hurry! Do not delay and miss out !



CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

- The Congress will be held at the most majestic Bali International Convention Centre (BICC).
- Impressive 3 day Congress packed with presentations, sessions & partnerships.
- Value add business sessions that will focus on industry players to evolve in a changing environment to optimize opportunities.
- Abundant opportunities during the day and at lunches & dinners to network in order to hand-shake new relationships
- The Convention will house TAAI's exclusive B2B Exhibition - ITTE - India Travel Trade Expo from 26th to 28th March. Exhibitors offered ample opportunities to showcase their products and services to the visiting delegates.
- Delegates offered good opportunity to experience tours within Indonesia
- Exciting attractions with Pre & Post Tours to Jakarta, Lombok, Yogyakarta and cruise on the super Gemini from Singapore.
- Fun evenings full of entertainment, cuisine and festivity

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Conventions in unconventional setting

As the hospitality industry in Bengaluru evolves beyond its conventional IT City, Vinesh Gupta, General Manager, Mövenpick Hotel & Spa Bengaluru speaks to **TRAUTALK** about how the hotel is tapping the growing corporate clientele in defence, food processing and other emerging segments in the region.



MEGHA PAUL

The 'defence' edge

The Make in India campaign, conceptualised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to transform India into a global manufacturing hub, has been a welcome move. There is lot of demand from international defence companies that have tenders, projects or plants set up in India and are looking at new opportunities. This year has begun on a good note for our hotel. We have already seen an increase in occupancy due to this development. We expect a growth of 18 per cent in 2015. This development is expected to boost ADRs and occupancies for many other hotels in Bengaluru as well.

Strategic location

We are extremely close to the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre (BIEC), Manpho Convention Center and Yelahanka Airbase. In fact, we are the closest to the Yelahanka Air Base, which also hosts the spectacular Yelahanka Aero Show. The penetration of the hotel in all these conference venues is commendable. We are partners with all these convention centres. Even for the recently concluded Aero Show, we were the Hospitality and Food & Beverage Partners. Thus, apart from ITC, we were the only hotel that had about 25,000 sq ft restaurant inside the Aero Show.

Also, out of our total inventory, we have 54 twin bedrooms. The twin beds are one of the primary room requirements for most MICE and conference events. Thus, we are well-suited for the purpose. We are also witnessing increase in business traffic from the Manyata Tech Park and World Trade Centre, which are also in the vicinity and act as our vital feeder markets.

Where planning meets enjoyment

- ▶ An event space of 25,000 sq.ft.
- ▶ Among the largest in the city.
- ▶ Exclusive banquet floor with separate entry points.
- ▶ Pillar-less ballroom for grand events.
- ▶ Valet parking for up to 500 cars

Going the unconventional way

The conventional Bengaluru market is saturated. We are not in the Electronic City, which gets a lot of IT-related business. Thus, we are looking at tapping alternate corporate clientele in a big way. PM Modi is looking at Tumkur as all food processing units will come up here. To go

to Tumkur, you need to cross the hotel. So we see this hotel to be in a futuristic location.

Unique spaces

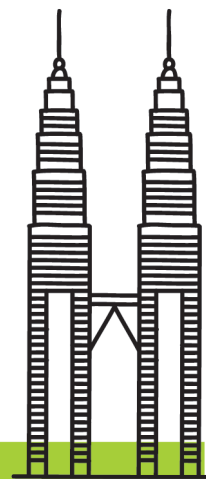
The Mövenpick Hotel & Spa Bengaluru has evolved as an upscale five star hotel with extraordinary event spaces in the last three years. It is superbly designed as a contemporary business destination. The property also offers

exciting leisure opportunities for relaxation, dining and entertainment. With over 25,000 sq. ft. event space, Mövenpick Hotel & Spa Bengaluru can arrange functions for up to 800 guests and meetings for 300 delegates. We provide a team of expert planning, dazzling entertainment, innovative food & beverage, and services with personal touches.

“This year has begun on a good note for our hotel. We expect a growth of 18% in 2015. This development is expected to boost ADRs and occupancies for many other hotels in Bengaluru as well.”

Vinesh Gupta

General Manager,
Mövenpick Hotel & Spa Bengaluru



218 hotels in Kuala Lumpur.

Room names exactly as the hotels call it.

The hotels and apartments in Kuala Lumpur now have fascinating room names. Not fancy really, just correctly presented.

In Kuala Lumpur and many other global destinations, we show the room names exactly as the hotels call it. When you book a hotel with roomsXML, you don't have to do any guesswork. Your customers would know what to expect, exactly.

As an example, your customer saw the “Premier Room” at the Sunway Resort Hotel & Spa, so that's exactly what roomsXML calls it. Meanwhile other hotel booking systems, simply show it as “Standard Room”. Of course, you can book with them, but until your customer gets there you will not know what it is you have booked.

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The ITA winners take it all

From North to South, India Travel Awards has honoured those who have worked hard in the travel trade. **TRAVTALK** features the views and opinions of these winners...



The Metropolitan

India Travel Awards is a great platform to recognise those behind the triumph of the travel and tourism industry and to make them feel like achievers. This reputed award provides luxury hotels with recognition for their world class facilities and service excellence provided to guests. The award supports, promotes and develops the Indian travel and tourism industry by identifying and rewarding excellence. It also aims to inspire its practitioners to continuously raise the standards of their product as well as service offerings. I wish India Travel Awards more success.

Sanjeev Bhatia
General Manager

Thai Airways

I would like to thank India Travel Awards for this award. It was really great to see DDP Group organise the show here in the North and we are honoured to be one of the recipients of the award.

Ravi Talwar
Area Sales Manager-India



Holiday Inn Amritsar Ranjit Avenue

With a big number of hotels opening all over the country, India Travel Awards is a fantastic opportunity and a big platform for us to network and showcase our properties. This is something really very exciting.

Kunal Shanker
General Manager



Radisson Blu Hotel Amritsar

I would like to thank India Travel Awards (ITA) for honouring us with the award for 'Best Wedding Hotel in Punjab'. It recognises the efforts of the hotel team and management in the field of hospitality, guest satisfaction and services. We are glad to be a part of this industry as well as supporters and enterprising team like ITA. We are looking forward to continue to work together with the same vision and support.

Hema Dhoke
Director of Sales



VKonect Events

This is a great step taken by TravTalk. Recognising the regional players is something brilliant. There are so many people doing great work in the regional platform and to get an award is a big encouragement for them. Holding 'Maya' in hand is dream come true for everyone in the travel industry.

Vineet Gopal
Consultant & Advisor



Global Connect Travels

India Travel Awards is another best thing that has happened in the travel industry. As the Indian Government has recognised the awards, it is a boon to the travel fraternity which provides so much of employment and revenue. The awards also give a boost to new upcoming markets and companies. It is an honour to receive such recognition among all other hoteliers and airlines and encouragement for us to reach a new milestone every year.

Sudhir Kaul
Founder & Director



Wish Bone India

I want to thank the organisers of India Travel Awards, a wonderful competition honouring the achievements of those behind the success of the travel and tourism industry in different categories in each region. I am more than thrilled to receive an award as the 'Best Corporate Incentive Tour Operator (North)' for Wish Bone India's performance in this specific category. This will definitely encourage us to set ourselves for higher goals in the coming years.

Amit Aggarwal
Director



The Experience Factory

It is always a pleasure and honour to receive an award. We are glad that we have been recognised in such a big platform even though we are a travel agency from Ludhiana. Recognising each and every region and cities from around the country is a sign of inclusive development of travel trade. This is a positive initiative towards creating tourism awareness.

Nishant Gupta
Director



Bacardi India

It has been an honour to be present at the India Travel Awards. It is really a great opportunity to be associated with it. The award is a big achievement for all in the travel industry.

Ashima Wadhwa Mehta
Trade Marketing Manager



Terra Ignota Tours

India Travel Awards is a unique platform that strives to acknowledge, reward and celebrate excellence in tourism across all regions of India. The unbiased selection process through online voting by the travel industry fraternity, both in India and globally, adds on to the credibility of the recognition. Terra Ignota Tours is proud to receive the 'Best Luxury Tour Operator' award at the North India Travel Awards and we are happy to be acknowledged and encouraged for our endeavour to create authentic travel ideas in the form to engage, inspire and enrich travellers with truly memorable and powerful experiences.

Nitin Sambhi
Managing Director

Clarks Group plans expansions in 2015

In its tenth year of operations, Clarks Inn Group of Hotels is looking at adding at least 15 more properties to its portfolio and making further inroads in South, East and West India. The group will also expand its leisure footprints, especially in the hill stations.



TT BUREAU

Currently in its 10th year of operations, Clarks Inn Group of Hotels has emerged as one of the fastest growing hotel companies in India. Talking about the USP of the group, **SN Srivastava**, President & Co-founder, Clarks Inn Group of Hotels said, "The company boasts of more than 51 hotel properties, including 29 hotels currently in operation and the remaining under various stages of development. Importantly, we have also established presence

Regarding growth plans this year, he revealed, "We expect 2015 to be another landmark year in our growth as we celebrate 10 year operations and extraordinary growth later this year. We are expecting to add at least 15 more properties to our portfolio and make inroads in further South and eastern and western India. We are also looking at expand-

ing our leisure footprints, especially in the hill stations. And most importantly, we are looking at making our international foray later this year."

Clarks Inn group currently operates across a family of four brands. They include Clarks Inn, Clarks Inn Suites, Clarks Exotica and Clarks Residences.

"Clarks Exotica is an exclusive leisure brand designed to cater to the growing leisure segments and we aim to add few more in the coming months. Besides, Clarks Inn, that is essentially a brand catering in the budget business segment is also positioned and designed to cater to the leisure segment," he added.

All About Clarks

► Clarks Inn Group currently operates across a family of four brands. They include Clarks Inn, Clarks Inn Suites, Clarks Exotica and Clarks Residences

► Clarks Exotica is an exclusive leisure brand designed to cater to the growing leisure segments. Besides, Clarks Inn, that is essentially a brand catering in the budget business segment is also positioned and designed to cater to the leisure segment



SN Srivastava
President & Co-founder
Clarks Inn Group of Hotels

We are looking at expanding our leisure footprints, especially in the hill stations. And most importantly, we are looking at making our international foray

where fewer have ventured and have helped develop those markets. These destinations including places like Bareilly, Patna, Deoghar, Alwar, Binsar, Gadag, Mathura, Moradabad and Hubli among others." The extraordinary growth that the company has been able to achieve as a hotel management company can solely be attributed to its ability to deliver on the brand promises to the owners and the hotel guests alike, he added.

"As a home-grown hotel company, key to our deliverance is our ability to understand the Indian market and expectations of the developers and put up a communication system that makes it very convenient for the owners to interact with us. Besides, we have a highly dedicated team at the corporate level with various unit heads willing to go any distance to deliver on the Clarks Inn's brands' promises," he pointed out.

15 020/quiksel.com



209 hotels in Los Angeles.

Room names exactly as the hotels call it.

The hotels and apartments in Los Angeles now have fascinating room names. Not fancy really, just correctly presented.

In Los Angeles and many other global destinations, we show the room names exactly as the hotels call it. When you book a hotel with roomsXML, you don't have to do any guesswork. Your customers would know what to expect, exactly.

As an example, your customer saw the "Hollywood Sign View Room" at the Loews Hollywood Hotel, so that's exactly what roomsXML calls it. Meanwhile other hotel booking systems, simply show it as "Hollywood Room". Of course, you can book with them, but until your customer gets there you will not know what it is you have booked.

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They led the way in 2014

India Travel Awards has scripted a success story on the global map. Some of the most prominent awards category, The DDP Trailblazer Awards and the Face of The Future, have honoured the prominent faces of the industry. **TRAVELTALK**, in this issue, features the winners of these two categories in South, West, East and North India.

DDP Trailblazer Awards

West India Travel Awards



Iqbal Mulla, Chairman & Managing Director of the MIM Group receives the 'DDP Trailblazer (Outstanding Contribution)' award from **Parvez Dewan**, Secretary of Tourism, Government of India, accompanying him are **Amita Motwani**, Mrs. India International 2013 and **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Group

North India Travel Awards



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

East India Travel Awards



Apurva Salarpuria, Executive Director, The Salarpuria Group receives the 'DDP Trailblazer' Award from **Bratya Basu**, Minister of Tourism and Culture, West Bengal, and **Amita Motwani**, Mrs. India International 2013 and **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Group

DDP Face of the Future Awards

North India Travel Awards



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

West India Travel Awards



Dev Karvat, Managing Director of TrawellTag Cover-More, accepts the 'The DDP Face of the Future' Award from **Parvez Dewan**, Secretary of Tourism, Government of India, accompanying him are **Amita Motwani**, Mrs. India International 2013 and **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Publications

East India Travel Awards



Debjit Dutta, Founder & CEO, Impression Tourism Services receives 'The DDP Face of the Future' Award from **Bratya Basu**, Minister of Tourism and Culture, West Bengal, and **Amita Motwani**, Mrs. India International 2013 and **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Group

South India Travel Awards



Zaheer E. Najeeb, Executive Director, ATE Group of Companies, receiving 'The DDP Face of the Future' award from **Chandana Khan**, Special Chief Secretary, Andhra Pradesh Tourism, **Amita Motwani**, Mrs. India International 2013 and **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Publications



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EVENT TALK

MARCH 2015

NATIONAL

17	Bengaluru	Tourism Office of Spain, Presentation & Networking Dinner
17	New Delhi	Travel trade Seminar, Atout France
18	Chennai	Tourism office of Spain, presentation and Networking Dinner
19	Mumbai	Product update Mauritius Tourism Board
20-22	Guwahati	India International Travel Exhibition
21-23	Chandigarh	India Travel Mart
23	Mumbai	Canadian Tourism Commission, B2B Roadshow
24	Kolkata	Canadian Tourism Commission, B2B Roadshow
24	New Delhi	Vietnam Embassy, Presentation and Roadshow
26	Bengaluru	Canadian Tourism Commission, B2B Roadshow

INTERNATIONAL

18-21	Moscow	Moscow International Travel & Tourism Exhibition (MITT)
25-27	Kiev	Ukraine International Travel & Tourism Exhibition (UITT)
26-28	Bali	TAAI Convention

APRIL 2015

NATIONAL

9	Mumbai	MICE Roadshow, Korea Tourism Organization
14	Jaipur	Best of Australia, Tourism Queensland & Tourism Victoria
15	Chandigarh	Best of Australia, Tourism Queensland & Tourism Victoria
16	Visakhapatnam	South India Travel Awards
17	Indore	Best of Australia, Tourism Queensland & Tourism Victoria
19-21	Jaipur	Great Indian Travel Bazaar
21	Coimbatore	Best of Australia, Tourism Queensland & Tourism Victoria
21	Bengaluru	Tourism Ireland- Visit Britain

INTERNATIONAL

14-16	Beijing	China Outbound Travel & Tourism Market
14-16	Shanghai	IT & CM China 2015
15-17	Cape Town	WTM Africa
22-24	São Paulo	WTM Latin America

MAY 2015

NATIONAL

8-10	Cochin	Hoteltech Kerala
25	Chennai	B2B Roadshow, Oman Tourist Office
27	Bengaluru	B2B Roadshow, Oman Tourist Office
29	Delhi	B2B Roadshow, Oman Tourist Office

INTERNATIONAL

4-7	Dubai	Arabian Travel Mart
9 - 11	Durban	Indaba 2015, South African Tourism
21-23	Dhaka	Bangladesh International Tourism Fair (BITF)
26- 29	Ontario	Rendezvous Canada 2015, Canadian Tourism Commission

JUNE 2015

NATIONAL

1	Mumbai	B2B Roadshow, Oman Tourist Office
10	Kolkata	Why Spain? – Presentation & Networking Dinner for Travel Trade
11	Ahmedabad	Why Spain? – Presentation & Networking Dinner for Travel Trade
12	Pune	Why Spain? – Presentation & Networking Dinner for Travel Trade

INTERNATIONAL

21-25	Melbourne	Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE)
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For more information, contact us at: talk@ddppl.com

OPPORTUNITY

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We are looking for travel industry professionals with a unique combination of experience and talent who are excited to work in a highly competitive and an ever-changing business environment. At Amadeus, we provide formal and informal ways of learning and nurture inventiveness to steer career development. If you meet any of the below requirements, we encourage you to apply.

MANAGER/S – KEY ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT (GURGAON)

Graduate with 3-6 years' of experience in managing corporate and large accounts. Acquiring and servicing new & existing clients. Demonstrable experience in customer relationship management and handling corporate clients.

MANAGER/S – BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (CHENNAI / KOCHI)

Graduate with 4-6 years' experience in business development or account management. Must have team management experience. Proven ability to acquire new accounts and forge excellent relationships with existing clients.

ASSISTANT MANAGER / SR. EXECUTIVE / EXECUTIVE – BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (BANGALORE / CALICUT / DELHI / KOCHI / MUMBAI / PUNE)

Graduate with 2-4 years' experience in business development. Capable of pitching for new business, having good communication, sales negotiation and presentation skills.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT – GURGAON

Graduate with 2 – 4years' experience in product development & client interface. Exposure in handling new product lifecycle independently, writing documentation, user guides, internal & external communication for product release.

EXECUTIVE – HELPDESK (TRAVEL) – DELHI / GURGAON

Graduate with 1 year diploma in travel & tourism, working knowledge of ticketing & reservation. Willing to work in shifts. Fresher's can also apply.

TRAINER – TRIVANDRUM (SOUTH)

Graduate with 2-4years' experience in imparting training and presentations on GDS / CRS. Excellent communication and interpersonal skills. Capable of handling product training independently, maintain documentation and training records.

SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS (GURGAON)

BTECH/MCA with 2.5-6 years' of working experience in developing software in the travel domain. Understanding of technical innovations within the software engineering field & possesses excellent analytical and conceptual thinking. Technology skills: C#, ASP.NET, OOPS, SQL Server.

NON TRAVEL

MARKET ANALYST (DELHI)

Graduate with excellent communication skills and flair for data analysis. Understanding of research terminologies preferred with good working knowledge of MS Office, especially MS Excel.

TELESALES EXECUTIVES (GURGAON)

1-2 years' experience in outbound calling profile with good communication & negotiation skills.

Send your resume at hr@amadeus.in mentioning the role you are applying for in the subject line or contact@+91 9599676633.

For other countrywide openings at Amadeus applicants can also drop in their resume at above email id specifying the location.

Opportunities @ Amadeus

OPPORTUNITY

MARCH 2nd FORTNIGHT ISSUE 2015 TRAVELTALK

45



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OPPORTUNITY



INDER
RESIDENCY

UDAIPUR

RESIDENT MANAGER

MINIMUM EXPERIENCE:
8- 10 years in a similar position

EDUCATION:
Diploma/Degree in Hotel Management

JOB DESCRIPTION:
A team builder in all sense. To manage and sustain infrastructure, profit margins and human resources to meet customer needs and stakeholder expectations.

F&B MANAGER

MINIMUM EXPERIENCE:
7-10 years in similar position

EDUCATION:
Diploma/Degree in Hotel Management

JOB DESCRIPTION:
An achiever and exploring the new trends and methods to attract destination-weddings. Conceptualize the operational procedures to extend a "wow" factor to the guests.

RESERVATION MANAGER

MINIMUM EXPERIENCE:
5-7 years in similar position

EDUCATION:
Diploma in Hotel Management

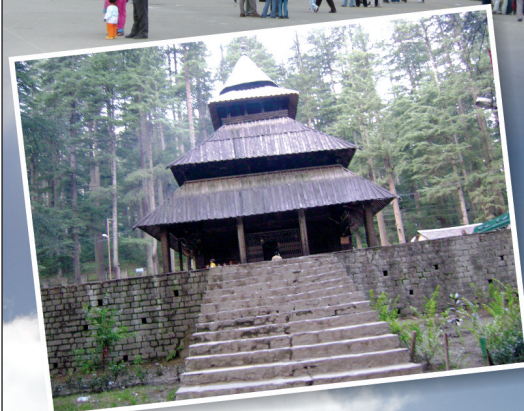
JOB DESCRIPTION:
HE/SHE MUST have excellent knowledge about the hotel software. Flare in written and verbal communication. Knowledge of revenue management is an added advantage.

HOTEL INDER RESIDENCY UDAIPUR

Hotel Inder Residency, a classified 5 star hotel established in 2008. Being an indian brand it has gained immense confidence of inbound as well as domestic tourists. Successfully conducted many international events and made a bench mark in hospitality industry.

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Marriott International Inc.**Singapore**

Marriott International Inc. has announced **Rajeev Menon** (Raj), currently Area Vice-President - South Asia to take over as the Chief Operations Officer (COO) for Marriott International in South-East Asia & Pacific. In his new capacity as COO, Menon will be a key member of the Continent's senior leadership team and will function as the operational business leader for the region, under his responsibility. He will be based in Singapore. He has led the growth of India from 6 operating hotels in 2007 to 27 Marriott managed hotels operating under 7 brands (with a pipeline of another 49 hotels under construction).

**Hyatt India****Mumbai**

Kurt Straub has been appointed by the Hyatt Hotels and Resorts as vice president of operations in India. In his new role, quarters in Gurgaon effective February 20, 2015. Straub joins Hyatt in India with more than 20 years of experience across multiple Hyatt brands in different countries. Most recently, he was area vice president for full and select service hotels in Mexico. Originally from Rapperswil, Switzerland, Straub is a graduate of the Hotel School Belvoirpark, Zurich.

**Radisson Blu Hotel Ghaziabad****Ghaziabad**

Radisson Blu Hotel Ghaziabad has appointed **Hemant Mehta** as General Manager of the Hotel. He has more than 24 years of experience in hospitality having worked with different locations in India, Middle East, Africa and Europe. He has been associated with brands like The Taj, Leela Kempinski. Most recently he was associated with Hyatt (India) where he worked for more than 10 years. Prior to joining Radisson Blu Hotel, Ghaziabad, Mehta was working with The Raintree Hotel, Chennai as General Manager.

**Keys Resorts Ronil, Goa****Goa**

Berggruen Hotels Pvt. Ltd which operates in India under the brand name of Keys Hotels and Keys Resorts has appointed **Kevin Rodrigues** as the General Manager of Keys Resorts Ronil in Goa. Kevin comes with a rich experience of over 20 years in the hospitality industry and F&B sector including stints at well known resorts and casinos in Goa. As the General Manager, Kevin will be responsible to ensure smooth functioning of Financial, Marketing, Operational and Administrative activities as well as building Guest relations.

**Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru****Bengaluru**

Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru announces the appointment of **Patrick Lefranc** as Director of Food and Beverage. With an experience of over 20 years, Lefranc joins Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru from Shangri-La's Boracay Resort & Spa, Philippines, where he was director of food and beverage. He previously worked for The Atlantis Hotel in Bahamas, Le Meridien Hotel Limassol in Cyprus and more. Lefranc's expertise and fresh insights will ensure that Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru continues to provide guests the best culinary experiences and service in Bengaluru.

**Sheraton Bangalore Hotel****Bengaluru**

Sheraton Bangalore Hotel has announced **Mohammed Khan** as the Director of Food & Beverage. Khan has been associated with the F&B industry for over 12 years starting 2002, serving in various hospitality positions across India. From his most recent and successful stint at Marriott as the Director of F&B, Khan has also been a pre-opening champion serving in various capacities in Marriott Chennai, Pune and Renaissance Mumbai Hotel & Convention Centre etc. His passion and expertise is clearly noticed in the Food & Beverage sector. Khan graduated doing his course in Hotel Management & Catering Technology from Anjuman-I-Islam's Institute of Hotel Management & Catering Technology.

**The Orchid Mumbai****Mumbai**

The Orchid Mumbai has appointed **Raj Panda** as their Food and Beverage Manager. Before this, he was working in the same capacity at Ramada Gurgaon Central, Gurgaon. Panda's key skills include pre opening of various restaurants, administration and operations of food and beverage, staff training, troubleshooting and implementing improvement procedures as well as documenting operating procedures and financial management. Raj started his career at Marriot Welcome, New Delhi. He was also involved with the opening of Feast India, UK. Later he joined The Imperial, New Delhi.



Zal Tarapore has been appointed as Director of Rooms by Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru. He will utilise 15 years of hospitality knowledge and experience to further develop the rooms division and execute the company's philosophy of 'hospitality from the heart'. Tarapore is a hotel management graduate and has gained extensive hospitality experience in India, the United States and Britain with such hotel groups as Marriott, Taj, Rezidor and IHG and Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts. He believes in team work and has a great sense of humour.

**Alila Diwa Goa****Goa**

Shubhendu Kadam has been appointed as Executive Chef at Alila Diwa Goa. He brings with him a wealth of knowledge with over 18 years of experience in the hospitality industry. Shubhendu has worked with various hospitality brands in different market segments such as city hotels, resorts, casino operations, cruise ships and hospital catering in India and internationally. At Alila Diwa Goa, in the capacity of the Executive Chef, Kadam will spearhead the kitchen operations across the various food and beverage venues at the property. His area of expertise lies in Teppanyaki, western banquet fare, fine dining and seafood specialties.

**TALKing People**

Carol Coetzee, CEO of KZN Film Commission, loves spending time in open spaces - in the bush or on the coast. "I enjoy being away from the bustle of life. It allows me to de-stress. This, or of course, a wonderful day at the spa! If I could choose where to live it would be deep in a game park!" she says. Her most memorable holiday moment is being chased by an elephant in the Hluhluwe Game reserve in KwaZulu-Natal. "Sadly I have not been able to explore the destinations in India but I would certainly love to find out more about this beautiful country," Coetzee adds.

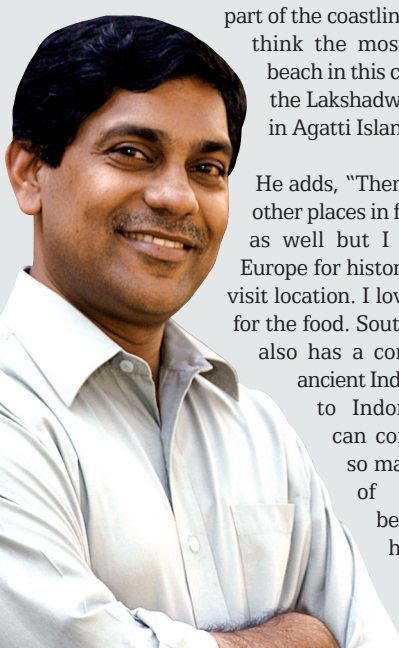


Rajan Dua wanted to be a cricketer himself but instead now he is a successful Managing Director of Udaan India.



Dua says, "I am a big fan of cricket. I couldn't be a cricketer but I love watching Indian team playing." He loves travelling so he tries not to miss any of the travel conventions happening at different places around the globe. Though Croatia is his new love, he likes travelling to Goa and also to one of his favourite cities, Bengaluru. Dua relishes all kinds of vegetarian cuisines.

Hari Nair, Founder & CEO, HolidayIQ, says, "Beaches appeal me the most. My ambition is to cover every part of the coastline in India. I think the most beautiful beach in this country is in the Lakshadweep islands in Agatti Island."



He adds, "There are many other places in foreign land as well but I would say Europe for history is a must visit location. I love Thailand for the food. South East Asia also has a connect with ancient India. If you go to Indonesia, you can connect with so many aspects of Indonesia, because there history is written in Sanskrit."

In the land of Lord Krishna they say you attain enlightenment. As I climbed the 56 steps toward mine, there were so many questions I wanted to ask. But as I reached the top, I received the only answer I will ever require – Salvation.

There is still one question that remains though.
Why aren't you at Dwarka?

Anant Singh Sachdev



DWARKA

www.gujarattourism.com

Israel plans to invest more in India

The Israel Ministry of Tourism is focusing on India that is emerging as one of the top markets in Asia. On the cards are aggressive marketing activities fuelled gradually by expanding budgets. Oren Drori, Deputy Director General & Head of Marketing Administration, for the Israel Tourism Ministry, talks to **TRAVTALK**.



HAZEL JAIN - JERUSALEM

Q What is the kind of investment you are making in India?

We started with a relatively smaller budget of USD 5,00,000 to 600,000. Within three to four years, we hope to take this to USD 2-3 million, depending on the approvals we get from the government.

Q How do you plan to use this?

We plan to participate in many more trade fairs in India, conduct roadshows and seminars for travel agents, tour operators and other decision makers. We have already done some activities with corporates as MICE is very strong in India.

Israel many years ago but they stopped because of internal reasons. I think it's only a matter of time before they restart. We are constantly talking to airlines, including Air India and Jet Airways, and we will continue to discuss possibilities. For now, Turkish Airlines offer the good frequencies from India and we are very happy with them.

Q How do you plan to change the perception of Israel as a country in conflict?

Israel, like India, suffers from a lot of misconceptions. People who are not familiar with Israel are fed by media and the news is always, always overrated. We don't really understand who is who and what is what. But we at the ministry took a strategic decision to invest

a bit of stagnation in some of the classical markets.

Q Are you considering working with other tourism boards?

We have done a lot of joint activities with Jordan in the past. But we are open to working with any of the neighbouring countries to attract tourists together.

Q How will the recent TAFI Convention help Israel?

Our main target is to bring people here. This is why the TAFI Convention was terribly important for us. Only after visiting Israel will visitors realise that the issues they thought were true are actually inaccurate. One is the issue of safety, or the image of war, which is not true. Secondly, some people think that Israel is not modern. But when they visit, they realise that while there is a lot of history, it's with a new and modern vibe. This is our first big shot for the India market – of bringing 500 outbound

“ Hopefully, within a few years, we will be able to abolish visas for Indians as well. For now though, we would like to simplify it. We are also pushing for e-visas for the India and China markets

Oren Drori

Deputy Director General & Head of Marketing Administration
Israel Ministry of Tourism

Q Visa is an issue for Israel. How do you plan to tackle this?

We abolished visas for Russia six years ago and for Ukraine three years ago. I believe it's a slow process of understanding between the ministries of tourism and the interior. Hopefully, within a few years, we will be able to abolish visas for Indians as well. For now though, we would like to simplify it. We are also pushing for e-visas for the India and China markets.

efforts, time and money into the Indian market. We believe undoubtedly that this will be a game-changer for us. Up until now, we were investing mostly in North America and Europe but we see some emerging markets and India is certainly one of them. We are seeing



On Target

- ▶ Israel's main target is to bring people here
- ▶ This is why the TAFI Convention was terribly important for them
- ▶ This was its first big shot for the India market – of bringing 500 outbound travel agents
- ▶ To spread the word, it intends to do more advertising
- ▶ 2014 saw only 40,000 Indian visitors but Israel aims to reach 100,000 in five years

travel agents. To spread the word, we intend to do more advertising. The year 2014 saw only 40,000 Indian visitors but we are just beginning. We don't expect it to grow in one year. If 2015 is a good year, we will see 45,000 tourists. We aim to reach 100,000 in five years but we will have to be patient.

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