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MoT-PATA roadshows in Canada, US

With China becoming the 77th country to be included in the eTV list recently, Lalit Panwar, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India, says UK is now on their wish list. He says the ministry in association with PATA will be holding roadshows in Canada and the US from the second week of June.

PEDEN DOMA BHUTIA

QHow is work on the National Tourism Policy coming up?

We had put the draft online to gather opinion from the public and we have received a good number of suggestions and feedback and now we are in the process of going for inter-ministerial consultations. After we discuss it with the various ministries we will then take it to the Cabinet. We expect to go to Cabinet by June, as we have to give at least three weeks to every ministry to respond.

QChina has now made it to the eTV list, how do you see that impacting Indian inbound tourism?

China being included in the eTV list will go a long way in getting a lot of Chinese outbound travellers to India. We are happy that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced this facility for Chinese travellers. We hope that with this announcement the Buddhist circuit will catch up and will be the greatest beneficiary, apart from the Delhi-Jaipur-Agra circuit.



Lalit Panwar
Secretary, Ministry of Tourism
Govt of India

QWhich is the next country on the wish list of the MoT for eTV?

We are now requesting the Home Ministry to include the UK in the eTV list as the UK is a major source market for us and now with 77 countries making it to the eTV list, the UK is the only major country that we are missing.

QMoT is working on developing various circuits, are there any new circuits that you will be promoting?

Under Swadesh Darshan, which is a theme-based circuit development, the North East and Krishna circuits are of high priority presently. Eventually we'll take up development of the desert circuit, tribal circuit, wildlife and Ganga circuits.

QHow is work on the Indian Culinary Institute coming up?

National Building and Construction Corporation (NBCC) has been given the task and tenders have been floated. Work will start next month and

they will be completing both the buildings in 18 months.

QWhat are the Ministry's focus areas this year?

Presently we are concentrating on the Tourism Policy but after that we are going for a very aggressive global media campaign as well as a domestic marketing campaign. These campaigns will begin before the onset of the next season. In association with PATA we will be holding roadshows in Canada and the US from the second week of June.

Service tax increases from 12.36% to 14% from June 1, 2015



Legal fee tops TAAI expenses

TAAI has been trying to curtail unnecessary expenses under this head so that the money can be used judiciously. It also tries to keep the balance credit-heavy through its events and conventions.

HAZEL JAIN

Among the oldest and the biggest travel trade associations in India, the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) has been in the

news for all the right reasons. It seems to have been breaking the traditional mould of an association and actively branching out to undertake newer, more innovative activities. This has not only been beneficial to its

members but as a happy side effect is also helping its treasury. **Marzban Antia**, Treasurer, TAAI, talks about the current state of the association's treasury. "Being a non-profit organisation, we have built the

reserves to a decent level through the support of sponsors for our events, roadshows, conventions, ITTE, etc. The daily expenses of running the secretariat office as well as the

Contd. on page 46 ▶



Marzban Antia
Treasurer, TAAI

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PM likely to unveil PATA Mart

134 buyers from 43 countries and 114 sellers from 66 organisations have already confirmed their participation at the PATA Travel Mart which will be held from September 6-8 in Bengaluru this year.



PEDEN DOMA BHUTIA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to attend the PATA Travel Mart. Addressing a press conference in Delhi, **RV Deshpande**, Minister for Higher Education and Tourism, Government of Karnataka, said the travel mart will help boost tourism not just for India but also for the entire country. He invited all stakeholders to participate enthusiastically in it. Giving out details of the mart, he said that 134 buyers from 43 countries and 114 sellers from 66 organisations have already confirmed their participation and it is for the first time that an Investors' Meet is being organised during the event. The press conference to announce the PATA Travel Mart 2015 was organised by the Union Ministry of

Tourism and Karnataka Government.

Tourism Minister **Dr Mahesh Sharma** said that the government is making all possible efforts to take the share of India in global tourism to one percent from the current 0.64 per cent. It is to this end that the scheme of e-Tourist Visa was launched. He said that the efforts of the government to give tourism a place of pride are beginning to yield results, and India has jumped up 13 ranks in the WEF Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index, 2015.

Referring to the importance of events like the PATA Travel Mart, Sharma said that partnership with all stakeholders, including private organisations and state governments, is essential to achieve the goal of one percent share in world



Jatinder Singh Taneja
Treasurer
PATA India Chapter

tourism. He said that the new National Tourism Policy would be interactive.

Deshpande said that Karnataka Government is bringing out Tourism and Trade Facilitation Act and will soon set up Tourist Friendly Police or 'Tourist Mitra'. The State has also come out with a novel initiative of Adoption of Tourist destinations by Corporate for

their maintenance and providing facilities there, he added.

Jatinder Singh Taneja, Treasurer, PATA India Chapter, informed that small and medium enterprises will get an opportunity to showcase their business during the event. The Travel technology pavilion is also being set up to promote the use of technology in Tourism sector. **Dr Lalit Panwar**, Secretary, Tourism, and senior officials of the MoT, and Government of Karnataka were also present at the event.

Tentative dates for PATA-MoT roadshow

- ➔ Montreal - June 10
- ➔ Toronto - June 11
- ➔ Chicago - June 16
- ➔ Houston - June 18

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Wildflower Hall	The Oberoi Cecil
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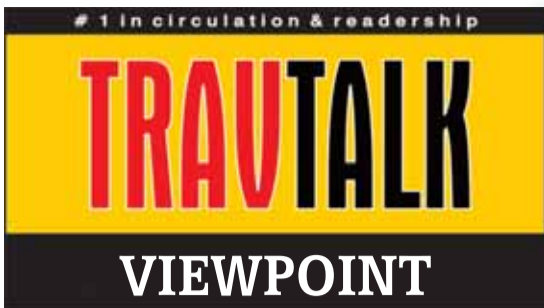


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Indians are honest travellers

A global survey from leading online accommodation booking website, Hotels.com, reveals what's on the Indian traveller's mind. The survey, conducted with 4,700 respondents, outlines their favourite amenities and the things they would do away with.

From afterthought into the limelight

India is surely playing on a new pitch with Ministry of Tourism taking the spotlight as it thinks, talks and also walks the talk on tourism. Cashing in on the tourist wanderlust to increase the country's share in world tourist arrivals from the present 0.68 per cent to one per cent by 2020, the Modi government has come out with a National Tourism Policy draft. As the draft is presented to the Cabinet this June, the travel and tourism industry is waiting with bated breath. However, what makes the new policy different from the last one already is the hike in tourism products being offered, and the concrete roadmap to achieve that. It calls for putting tourism — currently a state subject — into the Concurrent List to help the Centre play a significant role instead of being a mere accountant disbursing funds.

Another interesting development is the 38th PATA Travel Mart 2015, which will take place in September in Bengaluru. It is the third Travel Mart that is being organised in India after Hyderabad and New Delhi. And for the first time PTM will feature a Tourism Investment Forum, to boost the tourism potential of the state.

Our country has also climbed the charts in the rankings by ICCA annual statistics for the year 2014. India holds the 35th position in the rankings globally and achieved ninth position in the Asia Pacific region, seeing 116 global business events in 2014. The major cities which hosted the events were Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kolkata, Goa, Chandigarh, Jaipur and Cochin. Hyderabad has emerged as one of the leading metros in India for MICE destinations, ranking only behind Delhi, and is on the fast track to becoming India's Convention Capital.

For a sector which was mostly considered as an afterthought, these new developments will hopefully go a long way to get tourism into the limelight.

Free Wi-Fi is Still King

Indian business travellers appear to be more reliant on the free hotel Wi-Fi as it stood first on their priority list with (33%), while for leisure traveller's free breakfast and free Wi-Fi both top the amenities list (33%).

Leisure Travellers

- Free Wi-Fi 33%
- Free Breakfast 33%
- Free Parking 11%

Business Travellers

- Free Wi-Fi 33%
- Comfortable work chair and desk 22%
- Free Parking 11%

Sticky Fingers

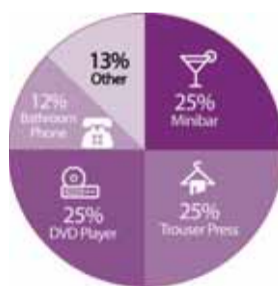
India stood 20th in global ranking with 57% of Indians bragging about not taking anything from hotel rooms while 29% of them have admitted to pocketing stationary. Meanwhile, Argentina (27%), Singapore (29%) and Spain (30%) lead the sticky fingers list. In contrast, 69% of Colombians and 67% of Norwegians indicated they have never stolen from a hotel.

Global Results

- 20% Stationery
- 12% Slippers
- 10% Room key



The End of Minibars



Apparently minibar (25%), DVD player (25%), trouser press (25%) and bathroom phones (12%) no longer appeal to the Indian travellers as they are never used. Indian travellers would do away with bath robes and use of pool, bathtub to lower the hotel rates (71%).

Statement showing the total number of passport applications received and passports issued, total miscellaneous applications received and services rendered; No. of passports issued as well as revenue under tatkaal scheme; and total revenue and expenditure of passport offices during January 01 to December 2014

RPO	Total No. of Passport application received (Normal+ Tatkal)	No. of Normal Passport issued	No. of Tatkal Passport issued	Total No. of Passports issued (Normal+Tatkal)
Hyderabad	6,73,886	6,16,314	30,254	6,46,568
Lucknow	6,00,127	5,52,457	22,980	5,75,437
Bangalore	5,07,350	4,53,747	58,477	5,12,224
Delhi	4,46,961	3,64,661	64,536	4,29,197
Ahmedabad	4,05,717	3,96,359	4,938	4,01,297
Kolkata	4,31,629	3,68,665	25,665	3,94,330
Chandigarh	3,67,126	3,60,680	13,696	3,74,376



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Over 150 buyers at 1st J&K Travel Mart

With a tremendous response from the recently held Travel Mart, Farooq A Shah, Managing Director, JKTDCC and Director, Tourism Kashmir, Govt of Jammu & Kashmir, shares some more tourism projects in the pipeline which includes night landing facility and International Yoga Centre.

TT BUREAU

Q What are your expectations from the Travel Mart?

It is definitely going according to the expectations of the trade and we have got tremendous response. We were expecting only 150 domestic buyers but much more than that turned out. Also foreign buyers have a good presence. So we hope that this mart will boost tourism in the state in a big way.

Q Please tell us some more about the night landing facility?

This is under consideration. The airport authority and the people looking after the security issues are discussing the matter. It will be implement-



Farooq A Shah
MD, JKTDCC and Director,
Kashmir Tourism

Kashmir is the best destination which can attract foreign exchange. We have a skiing resort in Gulmarg which is at par with any European resort

ed with the orders of the Chief Minister and will be in the interest of tourism and business. If a businessman goes to Delhi in the morning he can easily return in the evening.

Q The Chief Minister also talked about connecting Srinagar with other key destinations by helicopter facilities. Which are those destinations?

Our Chief Minister has a passion for tourism so he is keen on promoting the lesser-known places in Kashmir. People know Gulmarg, Sonmarg and Pehelgam but there are places which have not been promoted yet but are amazing tourist attractions. Like some places in Anantnag district and Kupwara district. We are in the process of starting heli services and I am hopeful that in the next few months the whole infrastructure will be in place.

Q What do you have to say about Bollywood coming back to Kashmir?

Bollywood has a deep relation with Kashmir. People need not go to Europe or Switzerland to shoot their films. We have started the single window clearance. If any producer or director applies for shooting permit in Kashmir, he can apply through this and he will get the permission within seven days.

Q How are you working with the travel agents in order to promote the state?

Kashmir is the best destination which can attract foreign exchange. We have a skiing resort in Gulmarg which is at par with any European resort. Every tour operator who promotes inbound tourism should promote Kashmir in a big way.

Q Which place has been decided to set up the International Yoga Centre?

We have identified Mantalai at Patni Top in Jammu to develop the International Yoga Centre. We are waiting for the Ministry of Tourism to consider the proposal and are hopeful to be able to do what we have decided. We keep conducting fam tours to invite tour operators.

Q What do you think about the 'Kashmir Calling' project?

We believe that Kashmir is the crown of Incredible India and we don't have any parallel in the country. The Chief Minister has asked to provide 40 per cent discount on accommodation after July 15. We are also involving handicrafts people so that we can promote the off season.

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German red carpet out for luxury travellers

Romit Theophilus, Director, Sales and Marketing, GNTO India, says smaller Indian cities act as feeder markets for big cities like Delhi or Mumbai and that they need to educate the travel trade a little more in the smaller cities.

PEDEN DOMA BHUTIA

QWhat is GNTO concentrating on in India this year?

Keeping in view the richness of Germany's traditions and customs, the German National Tourist Office has introduced Traditions and Customs as its new campaign theme for 2015. The focus of this year's campaign is strengthening Germany's image as a traditional and cultural travel destination, highlighting the culinary delights, living traditions and arts and crafts. The campaign will encourage foreign visitors to sample Germany's many local specialties, experience traditional festivals and customs in German regions and cities, such as the Munich Beer Festival and the Cologne Carnival, and to discover German cultural events and festivals, arts, crafts and music.

QWhat are you concentrating on in India?

The Germany India Pool is something we stopped last

“We have a new micro site called smart luxury, where we are talking about Michelin-starred restaurants, promoting beautiful castle stays etc. We have seen that people going to Europe are more evolved travellers and are also willing to spend more.”

Romit Theophilus
Director, Sales and Marketing,
GNTO India



year but we are now targeting the smart luxury traveller. We have a new micro site called smart luxury, where we are talking about Michelin-starred restaurants, promoting beautiful castle stays etc. We have seen that people going to Europe are more evolved travellers and are also willing to spend more. Therefore, we realised that we need to have some niche products to cater to these people. Staying in castles, travelling in private jets, yachts and luxury cars add to

what Germany has to offer. We are also targeting the youth and FITs as well with our Facebook page and by running various campaigns on social networking sites.

QHow was the Germany Travel Mart this year in the Thuringia region?

GTM was great. We had over 11 tour operators with us who had the opportunity to meet more than 400 suppliers from all across Germany,

be it hotels, tour operators and transports services — every industry related to tourism was there.

QHow has India been faring as a market for Germany?

India has been growing consistently — anywhere from 5 per cent to 6 per cent over the last few years. India is viewed as one of the major markets for the future. We are

India ranks in the top 5 in the overseas market.

QWhich are your source markets from India?

We have been doing this for the last six years and concentrating on many markets — Delhi, Pune, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Jalandhar and many other small places and we'll continue to do that. In

and Bengaluru. Apart from that, our office is making constant efforts to be present in smaller cities. We were in Nagpur earlier this year as well and we've been constantly going to Pune and Hyderabad.

QHow important are the Tier II and Tier III cities for you and what are you doing to educate the travel agents in these cities?

The smaller cities act as feeder markets for the big cities like Delhi or Mumbai and from our research we see that we need to educate the travel trade a little more in the smaller cities. We do a lot of seminars, we go to their offices and teach their frontline staff, we showcase what



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Sabre acquires Abacus for ~ 2,600 crore

Sabre Corporation has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire Abacus International, the leading global distribution system (GDS) in the Asia-Pacific region.

TT BUREAU

Abacus is currently owned by a consortium of 11 Asian airlines along with Sabre, which has a 35 per cent stake in the company. Sabre will purchase the remaining portion of Abacus for net cash consideration of nearly ~ 2,630 crore (\$411 million).

"The Asia-Pacific travel market is the largest and fastest growing in the world," says **Tom Klein**, President and CEO, Sabre. "Acquiring Abacus immediately combines the global capabilities of Sabre with the deep local market expertise of the leading Asia-

partners in Abacus, and our new agreements will provide benefits and confidence to travel agents throughout the Asia-Pacific region for many years to come," says **Greg Webb**, President, Sabre Travel Network.

"Abacus currently provides a broad set of services to its customers using a base of Sabre technology for the

large majority of core functions to market, distribute, sell and service travel in the Asia-Pacific region," Webb adds. Abacus will operate as a region of Sabre Travel Network, and Sabre expects its expanded Asia-Pacific direct presence will benefit Sabre Airline Solutions and Sabre Hospitality Solutions, which already provide mission-critical support to 78 air-

lines and thousands of hotels throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Sabre also will continue its partnership to provide technology services to INFINI, a local Japanese GDS.

"Sabre and Abacus have established the gold standard for service and content in the Asia-Pacific region, and that only gets better," Klein says. Subject to regulatory approvals

and other closing conditions, the transaction is expected to close in the third quarter of 2015. The acquisition, including associated working capital adjustments and cash acquired, is expected to be financed through approximately \$250 million in cash on hand, augmented by incremental net debt of approximately \$160 million. Pro forma for the transaction, Sabre esti-

mates its March 31, 2015 net debt to trailing twelve months Adjusted EBITDA ratio would be 3.3x, compared to 3.0x as reported. In 2016, Sabre expects the transaction to increase revenue by more than \$300 million, to increase Adjusted EBITDA by approximately \$50 million and to be accretive to Adjusted EPS by approximately \$0.05.



Tom Klein
President and CEO
Sabre

Acquiring Abacus immediately combines the global capabilities of Sabre with the deep local market expertise of the leading Asia-Pacific GDS

Pacific GDS. This powerful combination will give customers even more innovation and service options, while allowing Sabre to accelerate growth globally in a very capital efficient way — and to gain regional synergies in all three of our businesses serving travel agents, airlines and hospitality companies."

Abacus serves more than 100,000 travel agents across the Asia-Pacific region's 59 markets and has both global and uniquely local relationships with airlines and hotels, including the leading portfolio of low-cost content and Chinese airline content. Separately, the acquisition includes new long-term distribution agreements between Sabre and the 11 airline owners of Abacus.

"We look forward to continuing our long-term business relationships with our former

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OTOAI's new Executive Committee takes charge

The new team of OTOAI has come on board. At the helm of affairs is **Guldeep Singh Sahni** (Weldon Travels) as the President. **Riaz Munshi** (N Chirag Travels) is the Vice President and **Shravan Bhalla** (Hi Flyers) is the Secretary while **Gurdeep Gujral** (Gujral

Holidays) for Western India, **Sajan Gupta** (Vayuseva Travels) for Eastern India, **Manish Kriplani** (Baywatch Travels) for Southern India and **Vineet Gopal** (Engee Holidays) for Northern India.

Rajeev Sabharwal (Gaurav Travels) will head the Finance with Events



Travels) now holds the post of the Joint Secretary. The new treasurer is **Kapil Berera** (Astral Travels). The other members of the committee include **Rohit Shorey** (Destination Travels), **Ankush Nijhawan** (TBO), **Amod Thatte** (KUONI), **Himanshu Patil** (Kesari Tours), **Sujit Nair** (Aguasun) and **Chitra Bhatia** (Aashman Travels).

The new chapter chairpersons include **Mahendra Vakharia** (Pathfinders

Committee. **Siddharth Khanna** (Travel Engineers) will head the IT Committee. **Ranjana Sharma** (Trav & Tours International) will head the Education Committee. **Ankush Nijhawan** will head the Chapters Committee. **Chitra Bhatia** will head the Ladies Wing. The Government & NTO's team is headed by **Riaz Munshi**. **Ashwani Gupta** (Dove Travels) has been chosen to head the Environment Committee.

Rajasthan roadshow in 13 cities

The newly formed Federation of Hospitality and Tourism of Rajasthan (FHTR) will organise roadshows in about 13 cities including metros, Tier II and III cities. The federation is also coming up with a new portal to boost tourism in Rajasthan.



MEGHA PAUL

Soon after its formation, the Federation of Hospitality and Tourism of Rajasthan (FHTR) is gearing up for new initiatives to oversee tourism

for tourism by 120 per cent as compared to the previous year. "The focus on tourism sector has increased manifold and the government is also active in addressing serious concerns," **Randhir Singh**,

launch its website. Going forward, we will also look at expanding our membership base." FHTR comprises the prominent stakeholders from the tourism industry of Rajasthan and currently

the Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan has witnessed a positive response. We have had three to four meetings in this short span of time with the Minister and Secretary of Rajasthan Tourism along with routine discussions once in every 15 days to review the ongoing promotions. As we move forward, more and more activities would be included to benefit the members and the industry on the whole."



Bhim Singh
President
FHTR



Randhir Singh
Senior Vice President
FHTR



Sunil Gupta
Vice President, FHTR and General
Manager, ITC Rajputana, Jaipur

promotion. "The federation will organise roadshows in about 13 cities including metros, Tier II and III cities," says **Bhim Singh**, President, FHTR.

Realising the potential of the tourism for the state, the State Department of Tourism, has increased the budget allo-

Senior Vice President, FHTR points out.

Giving more details about the newly formed group, **Sunil Gupta**, Vice President, FHTR and General Manager, ITC Rajputana, Jaipur says, "To increase our brand presence, the association will soon

includes 35 members. The federation also has the backing and support of other associations, hotels and tour operators.

Talking about the great response FHTR has received till date, Gupta says, "Since the inception of the association,

Desert Diplomacy

State Department of Tourism has increased the budget allocation for tourism by 120% as compared to 2014

The association will soon launch its website and expand its membership

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For 2015-16, the Goa Tourism department has been allotted ` 260.09 crore as against ` 140.94 crore in 2014-15. Thus, it is now developing a three-pronged strategy to boost arrivals in the state.



MEGHA PAUL

Looking beyond Russians tourists and beach tourism segment, Goa is developing its infrastructure to introduce new services for tourists. In this financial year, Goa has significantly increased the outlay for the tourism department. For 2015-16, the tourism depart-

ment has been allotted ` 260.09 crore as against ` 140.94 crore in 2014-15. Thus, it is now developing a three-pronged strategy to boost arrivals in the state, says **Ameya Abhyankar**, Director, Goa Tourism.

Elaborating on the three-pronged strategy, he adds, "We are launching three initiatives in the next eight months. Firstly, we are looking at replacing the Tourism Act of 1982. This will be a forward looking act that

neurs to pass on the benefits they receive to the tourists."

The government, he informs, is also working on simplifying the licensing regime associated with organising such events, and for which, a new law will be tabled in the coming financial year. "We are coming up with an Event Management Act."

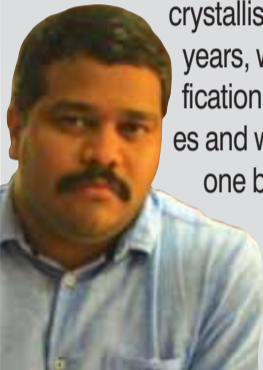
This will help create a de-regulated and hassle-free

licensing system to carry out events in Goa such as music and art festivals. It has been proposed to create an event calendar along with city branding, which will incorporate existing festivals and add many new ones. In this budget, ` 5 crore have been put aside for year-long festival calendar as well. Abhyankar adds, "Goa Tourism is also working on an integrated beach management system. This has not crystallised



Fort Aguada, Goa

"Goa Tourism is working on an integrated beach management system. This has not crystallised yet but within four years, we are eyeing ISO certification for at least four beaches and white flag for at least one beach in Goa."



Ameya Abhyankar
Director, Goa Tourism

ment has been allotted ` 260.09 crore as against ` 140.94 crore in 2014-15. Thus, it is now developing a three-pronged strategy to

will focus on facilitating business and offer single window for most clearances in tourism projects. The new act will encourage tourism entrepre-

Seaplane facility in Goa from August

Introduction of facilities like seaplanes, heli-tourism and amphibious buses would boost tourist inflow into the state by over 14 per cent, Goa Tourism Minister **Dilip Parulekar** said on the sidelines of the first ever trial landing of a seaplane in the Mandovi river off Panaji. "It is a novel concept in India, which combines convenience of travel with excitement of water takeoffs and landings. There is no investment by the state government for this service; it will be owned and operated by MEHAIR (a private aviation company). We are only providing them support to facilitate smooth operations," Parulekar said.

Goa is the second state after Maharashtra to allow seaplanes for tourism. The seaplane routes start from Goa's Dabolim airport to the picturesque Mandovi and Chapora rivers and the popular Coco beach, a beautiful bay some distance from Panaji. "The seaplanes will offer joy rides at affordable prices. A seaplane operation anywhere always creates excitement and attracts tourists by tapping into their curiosity and thrill seeking instincts," he said, adding that fares under the public-private partnership (PPP) project would be worked out in consultation with the company before its formal launch. The 9-seater amphibious seaplane will pick up passengers at Dabolim airport and fly them to the destination, for instance Coco beach, in just seven minutes. The seaplane will land in the water close to a floating jetty, onto which the passengers will alight. Smaller boats will then ferry them to shore from where they can drive away.

yet but within four years, we are eyeing ISO certification for at least four beaches and white flag for at least one beach in Goa."

Going forward, the government is also exploring the possibility of construction of a cable-stayed ropeway system to connect North Goa's beaches for travel and sightseeing. In order to enhance beach security, Goa government is also creating a territorial tourism force on the lines of a territorial army that is a part of the Ministry of Defence. ↗

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MTDC to monetise its properties via PPP

The Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation is looking to monetise all its properties and land banks scattered across the state with the help of private players. There's only one caveat for them: no windfall profits!



HAZEL JAIN

Transferred from the Maharashtra Maritime Board just four months ago, **Paraag Jain Nainutiia**, Managing Director, Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC), is already a busy man. His focus for this year is clear and with that he has defined the area within which he wants MTDC to perform – public private partnerships (PPP). He says, "We can do so much within this framework and I will make some policies to achieve this."

On top priority is the monetisation of all MTDC properties. Nainutiia adds, "We will switch to the PPP mode in a big way. This includes monetisation of all our properties which we own. We are also focusing on upgradation of our existing resorts at different spots in Maharashtra. We should see something concrete by end of this year. Government money will be utilised for this upgradation."

MTDC has about 85 existing resorts, of which about 20 are run by MTDC while the rest are leased to private companies. Once upgraded, he says, MTDC will put out adver-

tisements promoting those facilities and destinations.

"Simultaneously, we are also trying to find a formula where we can monetise our huge land banks with the help of private players. We have finalised the booklet that will be circulated to potential investors. We will have a meeting with them by June 2015 to explain and go over things," the MD

says. The land bank is estimated to include around 100 plots scattered all over the state.

"We are looking at wellness and spas as well for this and it will be done through Eol. When a private player comes in the picture, the government is obligated to ensure that it makes a profit that is due — at least something that is more than the bank interest rate that the com-

pany will be paying to raise the capital, but not windfall profit," Nainutiia says. He indicated that major hospitality companies will be brought in for the management of these new properties.

The MD also added that the new tourism policy will be ready by this year-end and will be "one of the best in India". We will just have to wait and watch.

"We will switch to the PPP mode in a big way. This includes monetisation of all our properties which we own. We are also focusing on upgradation of our existing resorts at different spots in Maharashtra."

Paraag Jain Nainutiia
Managing Director, MTDC



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MITM update

Speaking about the investment that MTDC will be making to make the first edition of 'Maharashtra International Travel Mart' (MITM) a success, **Nainutiia** says, "Money will not be a constraint. I am more concerned about the value that it will bring us for that money." Supposedly, MTDC has invested close to ` 3.5 crore into it. It will be held in September 27-29 in Mumbai.

MTDC also has an elaborate hosted buyers program for domestic and international buyers. "We will choose around 200 international hosted buyers for this but I don't want to pay for their private holiday so I will be very careful in choosing them. We will also conduct a familiarisation trip for the international and Indian hosted buyers on our Deccan Odyssey. It will be a complete B2B event with participation of all state tourism boards as well as major hotel players and airlines. We already have our Diamond Partner in place," he reveals.

MEETINGS 2015

NZ looks for MICE boost from India

Eighteen regions of New Zealand will talk business when the three-day CINZ MEETINGS 2015 opens in Auckland on June 10. Talking about the Indian participation at the mart, Steven Dixon, Regional Manager - South and South East Asia, Tourism New Zealand, says the MICE sector is a key focus in their Three-Year Marketing plan in India.

PEDEN DOMA BHUTIA

Q What is the strength of the Indian buyers at MEETINGS this year?

New Zealand's premier business events trade exhibition, CINZ MEETINGS 2015, returns for its 19th year in June, promising bigger business opportunities and an expanded programme. CINZ MEETINGS 2015 will showcase up to 180 exhibitors from throughout New Zealand including venues, theming companies, hotels, AV companies, Regional Bureaux, attractions and activities. Hosted in Auckland it showcases the best of facilities available in New Zealand for the MICE travel segment. Additionally, the event hosts key media from New Zealand's emerging business tourism markets.

The sellers at the event offer unique products for a

variety of requirements of MICE travellers. Tourism New Zealand is working extensively to grow the Business Events sector by promoting New Zealand's unique meeting, conference and incentive travel offerings. Over 180 exhibitors, including 20 new exhibitors will be on show in 2015. They will hold more than 6,000 meetings during the two days of pre-scheduled appointments and social networking events.

From India, there are nine agents — Zenith Leisure Holidays, Thomas Cook India, Cox & Kings, Trail Blazers Tours India, Centrum Direct, Harvey India Tours & Travels, FCM Travel Solutions India, Kuoni Travel India and Neptune Travco who will be present at MEETINGS. Singapore Airlines is the supporting partner with Tourism New Zealand to fly these buyers down to New Zealand.



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

Q How helpful was the Indian presence at MEETINGS 2014?

Tourism New Zealand hosted a group of five Indian travel industry professionals, Thomas Cook (India), Kuoni Travel India, Cox & Kings, Corporate Flyers and TUI India at MEETINGS 2014. The two-day trade exhibition aimed to promote the country's business tourism and events industry. After the event, Tourism New Zealand

hosted the delegates on a fun, adventurous and luxurious journey covering Queenstown, Wanaka, Terrace Downs and Christchurch. MEETINGS provided a platform for the Indian agents to meet the New Zealand industry professionals who specialise in MICE. Attending and engaging with the New Zealand industry has helped the Indian business events buyers build on their product knowledge thus translating into business for FY16.

Q What are Tourism New Zealand's expectations from India's presence this year at MEETINGS?

The MICE sector is a key focus in our Three-Year Marketing plan in India. We currently host many Indian incentive groups annually with group sizes usually ranging from 50-150 passengers.

However, it is not uncommon for larger groups of up to 400 passengers to travel to New Zealand from India. As we build our profile in the sector we look forward to hosting more Indian incentive groups in New Zealand.

New Zealand is already delivering quality incentive experiences for Indian corporates and Tourism New Zealand is seeking to grow the number of incentive groups it hosts annually.

FY14 – We supported a total of 13 bids with a 60 per cent conversion rate

FY15 – While we are in the 4th quarter, we have already supported 17 bids with an 82 per cent conversion rate.

Q How is the Indian market developing for Tourism New Zealand?

We have seen some significant results in the incentive business to New Zealand from India and will continue to increase the focus on the incentive market by showcasing our offering at corporate events to encourage more MICE travel to New Zealand. We will continue to foster our relationship with the travel trade through regular product updates and training to better equip the agents to sell New Zealand as the Ideal Business Events destination.

New Zealand not only provides the ideal backdrop, but also has state-of-the-art facilities for business events across both the North and South Islands. With Indian companies increasingly looking at overseas incentive and team-building destinations, the country offers an array of activities and experiences that can be customised to fit every travel checklist.

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Africa unites at INDABA 2015

Even as tourism in South Africa suffers amidst xenophobic attacks and Ebola fears, almost all African countries came together to put up a united front at the recently concluded Indaba 2015 held in Durban. It's business as usual in sunny South Africa!



HAZEL JAIN FROM DURBAN

Touted as the largest tourism marketing event in Africa and one of the top three tourism events on the global calendar, Indaba seemed to be quieter this year even as it celebrated its 35th anniversary. Held in Durban from May 9-11, 2015, INDABA recorded a slight drop in attendance with Democratic Republic of Congo, for one, boycotting the event in the wake of the anti-foreigner violence.

However, it did showcase a wide variety of South Africa's tourism products and buyers from India were happy with

what was on display. This was vital for South Africa since India is its second-largest tourism source market in Asia after China and seventh globally.

Quality over numbers

A quieter INDABA 2015 could also be attributed to the fact that there were at least three travel trade shows preceding INDABA all held in South Africa: WTM Africa, We Are Africa, Meetings Africa. **Thulani Nzima**, CEO, South African Tourism (SAT), said that he was happy with the number of meetings that took place between



Thulani Nzima
CEO
South African Tourism (SAT)

the 2,000-odd hosted buyers and 1,200 exhibitors. Referring to WTM Africa as a competitor to INDABA, he said, "Our drop this year is just under 10 per cent so we aren't too stressed. Our



Derek Hanekom
Tourism Minister
South Africa

focus is not on numbers but on quality."

Partner for INDABA

As a precursor to INDABA 2016, Nzima announced that SAT will be bringing in a partner for its show next year. "While we have run 'INDABA' and 'Meetings Africa' very well, that is not our core business. We thought it was time we bring in a third party who can help us improve the show whether it is in terms of technology, management or costs," he said, without revealing any names.

Nzima added that bringing in an international third party to conduct INDABA will

Durban wins INDABA 2016 bid

The pan-African show will be held in Durban again next year with the city extending its contract for another year. INDABA has been hosted in Durban for more than two decades now. The current contract ended this year. However, the contract has been extended only for one year since SAT is in the process of choosing a strategic partner to organise INDABA. She added that the next INDABA contract would be for more than four years, possibly a 10-year contract, to assure the new partner.

also give SAT an opportunity to market it at other shows and take it to the next level.

Increased budgets

Appointed just a year ago, Tourism Minister Derek Hanekom experienced his first INDABA this year. He said that from a total budget of 1.6 billion, he will allocate a large chunk to SAT. This increase in budget for tourism is attributed to the fact that the South African government is looking at tourism to resolve some of its problems, including that of unemployment.

"The last two decades has outstripped growth in tourism. Year 2014 showed a growth of 6.6 per cent in total tourism

numbers to South Africa and today contributes about 10 per cent to the total GDP – directly and indirectly. We want to focus on how all the African countries can work together to promote the entire continent, improve intra-African tourist flow, easing visa requirements and find an appropriate balance between promoting tourism and safety and security," Hanekom said.

That said, while the African continent is undergoing an upheaval of sorts – some natural, some manmade – it is trying to put up a brave and united front. This was evident at this "proudly African trade show" with most countries initiating dialogue to ease intra-regional travel.

Visa update

South Africa has now introduced two new legislations for Indians. First is the in-person biometric visa application that will make it difficult for tourists in remote parts of India to get one. The other is the unabridged birth certificate with those traveling with children under 18. This will greatly deter families that form a big chunk of tourists traveling to South Africa. Nzima said, "Sometimes, the tourism board and the Home Affairs are not on the same page. Home Affairs is concerned about the security of the state and protection of children. Our job is to market South Africa as a leisure and business destination. So these two specifications became a problem for us. The president has asked for a review of these regulations. It's not a legislation that we welcome. In fact, one of the things our tourism minister will question is whether there is a need between South Africa and India to have visas at all, or perhaps visa on arrival." He agreed that there might be a temporary dip in arrivals because of this.



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New LCC in southern skies

With introductory flights connecting Bengaluru, Thiruvananthapuram and Hubli, Air Pegasus plans to operate daily service to other cities and towns in South India over the next two years.



MEGHA PAUL

Bengaluru-based low-fare Air Pegasus' maiden flight took off from Bengaluru to Hubli in April, flying in the face of concerns about the viability of standalone regional airlines. Air Pegasus, the third airline to be launched in India in the past year, after AirAsia India and Vistara, aims to focus on South India for now. Its introductory flights connect Bengaluru, Thiruvananthapuram and Hubli.

Talking about betting big on South India and recognising the underlining potential in the under-served region, **Ashwin Thomas**, Director, Air Pegasus, remarks, "Positioning of regional airline is not by chance, it is by choice."

Following the launch, Air Pegasus will now look at eventually operating flights to Kozhikode, Kochi and Puducherry. "Kadapa in Andhra Pradesh will be our third destination from Bengaluru as it has no air connectivity. We will also

launch a daily service between Chennai and Tuticorin and Tuticorin-Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu when we get the addition-



Ashwin Thomas
Director
Air Pegasus

al three ATRs," Thomas points out. With a fleet of three ATR 72-500s, Air Pegasus wants to position itself as "a right-cost airline" and plans to offer all-inclusive fares, with no hidden costs, even providing food on board, unlike other low-cost airlines.

Union Civil Aviation Minister **Ashok Gajapathi Raju** flagged off the ATR-72 turboprop service at the

Bengaluru International Airport. Giving details about the flights, Thomas says, "We will operate a daily flight between Bengaluru and Hubli in the morning. The timings will be convenient to take connecting flights to other metros and cities from here."

The airline has permit to launch service to and from any of the 22 airports across southern India, connecting Tier II and Tier III cities with metros like Bengaluru, Chennai and Hyderabad.

Flight Plan

- With a fleet of three ATR 72-500s, Air Pegasus wants to position itself as "a right-cost airline"
- Air Pegasus will now look at eventually operating flights to Kozhikode, Kochi and Puducherry from Bengaluru

Oman's 4-city roadshow

About 12 suppliers from Oman visited India this May to meet travel agents from four cities starting from Chennai and going onwards to Bengaluru, Delhi and Mumbai.



HAZEL JAIN

After seeing a satisfactory return on investment it has made in India, Oman continues its efforts in promoting the country to the Indian travel trade. It recently conducted a four-city roadshow starting from May 25 in Chennai and going on to Bengaluru on May 27, New Delhi on May 29 and finally touching Mumbai on June 1, 2015.

About 12 suppliers were part of the Oman delegation, which was a mix of officials from the Ministry of Tourism of Oman, DMCS, airline and hotels. This included representatives from Al Bustan Palace – A Ritz Carlton Hotel, Shangri-La's Barr Al Jissah Resort & Spa, Al Nahda Resort & Spa, Oman Sail, Atana Hotels, Millennium Resort, Six Senses Zighy Bay, Bahwan Tours, Tour Oman, Zahara Tours and Oman Air.

Giving more details, **Lubaina Sheerazi**, India Representative of Ministry of



Lubaina Sheerazi
India Representative of Ministry of Tourism
Sultanate of Oman

We wanted to educate the Indian travel trade about all that Oman has to offer in terms of hotels and resorts, activities, places of interest and the visa procedure

Tourism, Sultanate of Oman, says, "This year we introduced a new format in which we invited travel agents from the four cities for prefixed meetings with the delegates from Oman. The

roadshow focused on various tourism products in Oman and the upcoming developments in the destination. We wanted to educate the Indian travel trade about all that Oman has to offer in terms of hotels and resorts, activities, places of interest and the visa procedure." The number of Indian arrivals to Oman in 2014 was 2,56,210 and witnessed a year-on-year increase in the arrivals. Oman has become aggressive in its marketing efforts in the country with Indians looking to holiday in newer and unique destinations. Its proximity to India also makes it an attractive short-haul destination.

Image Revamp

- Oman has become aggressive in its marketing efforts
- The number of Indian arrivals to Oman in 2014 was 2,56,210



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With wider seats, 'Book the Cook' meal service and a generous baggage allowance of 35 kgs, travellers on the Singapore Airlines' Premium Economy Class can expect business class service at economic pricing. Mak Swee Wah, Executive Vice President Commercial, Singapore Airlines, tells TRAVTALK what flyers can expect from the new offering.



SHIVANI KAUL FROM SINGAPORE

Following a two-year development programme and an investment of about \$80 million, the Premium Economy Class (PEC) seats were displayed for the first

Sydney, before being introduced to other cities such as Beijing, Delhi, Hong Kong, Frankfurt, London, Mumbai, New York, Shanghai, Tokyo and Zurich.



“This product is on A380 so that's why it is coming to Delhi and Mumbai. The roll-out depends on the planes and the trip length.”

Mak Swee Wah
Executive VP Commercial
Singapore Airlines

time on May 21, 2015 at a media launch in Marina Bay Sands, Singapore. The Premium Economy Class will be introduced on 19 Airbus A380, 19 Boeing 777-300ERs and the first 20 Airbus A350s. It will enter commercial service on August 9, 2015 to

This new segment will provide an extensive range of food and beverage offerings, which include the Premium Economy Book the Cook service, enabling advance ordering of a selection of main courses. Priority check-in and baggage handling, with a generous baggage allowance of

35 kgs, will be offered to customers. Members of the KrisFlyer frequent-flyer programme will also receive 10 per cent more miles when they fly in Premium Economy Class. SIA's Premium Economy Class seat and cabin have 38" pitch, 18.5-19.5" seat width and 8" recline. The seat have been manufactured by ZIM Flugsitz GmbH (for the A380 and 777-300ER) and Zodiac Seats US (for the A350), and designed by JPA Design.

On the timing of coming up with this segment, **Mak Swee Wah**, Executive Vice President Commercial, Singapore Airlines, says, "Any seat or class depends on a lot of factors. We have to look at the market, flight profile and time of the year. So the price will be at a level where customers find value in the product." He says PEC has been around for many years and in the last few years because of changing consumer trends, industry and product landscape show that a gap has been created between the tra-

ditional Business Class, which has become more luxurious, and Economy Class. "In the traditional corporate segments, there are different kinds of Business Class travellers. Even in the leisure segment, not everybody travels economy; there are those who seek more comfort. So I think the time is right now for us to enter this class, which is a mainstream offering by many airlines," Wah adds.

He informs that Premium Economy class will be offered on all Singapore Airlines offering, all A380s, and SQ's fleet of Boeing 777-300 are being retrofitted. In future, the first batch of A350 at least will be earmarked for long-haul flights, first of which will come in early 2016 will also have PEC.

On how Singapore Airlines will address passengers in this segment by offering something new, Wah says, "Clearly there is market segment for PEC. What we are offering is the SIA Premium Economy, which is a product that meets the expectations of those who want to have the entire experience of the seat, the food, and the excellent service that we are very proud of."



Wah is confident that SIA has found the right balance between its seats in Economy and Premium economy. "We offer four classes on the A380. On 777 we have four classes. We have sized the cabin according to the demand. We will also allow for flexibility in case there will be an upsurge in demand in future," he says.

The airline is targeting to retrofit all A380s by the end of this financial year.

The flight will start this class in Delhi on October 13 and Mumbai on October 21.

Wah says since the product is on A380, that's why it is coming to Delhi and Mumbai. "There are no plans to fit it on smaller planes. So the roll-out depends on the planes and the trip length," he adds.

On SIA's investment in Vistara, Wah adds, "We are working closely on Vistara. That will continue to expand as we go along and build up their network. Vistara has Premium Economy, that's in relation to narrow body domestic product. It is the first airline to India to have PEC. What we are offering today is PEC for long haul."

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- The brand new Hong Kong Airlines VIP Lounge located at Hong Kong International Airport Gate 23-25, available for Business Class, Silver & Gold Fortune Wings Miles Members
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'We need agents in traditional markets'

QHow profitable do you think Premium Economy is going to be on the India route?

Delhi has a very strong premium market. Even on a short flight of four hours from India to Singapore, Business Class and First Class are generally quite strong, even the Suites in A380. So for this particular market we want to target the SMEs, and smaller companies, hopefully a lot more leisure travellers, who see value in upgrading to Premium Economy. We also do very well in the Economy segment in India.

QDo you think that Business Class travel will be hit as people would opt for PEC?

The Business Class appears to be fairly stable. It will continue to grow. Affluent travellers will continue to be there in developing countries.

QWhat are SQ's plans for ME and Australian markets?

Our policy is not to target anyone. We will have to see where the key markets are.

Geographically we are in South Asia, so obviously our strength is within Southeast Asian and north, west Asian network. On a much longer haul, subject to the price of fuel, connectivity, there is some sort of relative disadvantage. At the end of the day overall profitability is important. We are a hub and spoke airline. At the end of the day the strategy has to be clear and you got to stick to what you know, focus on differentiation and customer experience. Our customers are willing to pay more as they see value in our product. Those who are very tight on pockets they might take SilkAir and Tigerair.

QDo you think keeping travel agents out of the picture has affected business?

I don't think so. I think we were certainly not the market leader in changing the industry commission. I think it was probably the right time. Everything is now electronic; there is a greater resurgence of self serve. This is the GenY phenomenon. But we maintain good relations with agents. I think it is still very much collaborative; the whole ecosystem

has got to click. Different markets have different stages of maturity. So we do work with agents where the markets are very traditional. Also where the geography is more widespread, the only way to reach consumers is through mobile and the Internet.



Tan Pee Teck
Senior Vice President Product & Services, Singapore Airlines

QAny further plans to enhance Vistara operations in India?

Vistara is growing. We just started out and India is doing quite alright. But we got to give them more time. The partnership people will continue to grow the code-share and connectivity going forward. We have time to focus on that.

MP's first investor portal for tourism

To promote Madhya Pradesh as a year-round destination and lure more investments in tourism, the state will float RFP in the next two months. The investment policy will guarantee certain general incentives for investors across industries, as well as few sector specific incentives as well.

MEGHA PAUL

As Madhya Pradesh observes 2015 as the "Year of Tourism", Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan is inviting private

and hospitality industry, Chouhan also launched a dedicated investor portal for tourism in the state.

Talking to the agents' fraternity, he says, "MP is a year-

MP raised \$30 bn in investment: DeSa

According to **Anthony DeSa**, Chief Secretary, Madhya Pradesh, MP is one of the most investor-friendly states and has been able to raise \$30 billion worth of investments through Global Investors Summits. Regarding new strategies being adopted by the state to lure fresh investments, DeSa reveals, "MP has identified land banks at key destinations, including the famous Indira Sagar Lake for developing tourism products like hotels and resorts, with private participation. Request for Proposal [RFP] is being finalised and will be floated in the next two months. The investment policy guarantees certain general incentives for investors across industries, as well as few sector specific incentives as well." Land will be given on lease of 30 years for investors who approach with viable propositions. The lease period can be extended to 50 years in case of special circumstances, the Chief Secretary adds. Regarding air connectivity which was earlier a huge roadblock in boosting tourism in the state, DeSa informs, "There has been a marked improvement in number of flights coming into key cities like Bhopal, Indore, etc.

We are hoping for further improvement with AirAsia starting operations in a couple of months. The state has also finalised an agreement with a private operator, Supreme Aviation, to start internal operations recently. Agreement has been finalised and operations are expected to start in a month.

The state will offer subsidy to the operator on the basis of flight hours."

“Popularly known as the ‘Tiger State of India’, MP boasts of three World Heritage Sites, namely Sanchi, Bhimbetka, and Khajuraho. The vision of the government is to elevate MP as the No.1 state for tourism in the country.”

Shivraj Singh Chouhan
Chief Minister
Madhya Pradesh



investors to come to the state and look at investment opportunities in the tourism sector. At a recently held event organised by Madhya Pradesh Tourism for the travel trade stakeholders

round tourist destination that offers experiences for all kinds of tourists. Popularly known as the ‘Tiger State of India’, MP boasts of three World Heritage Sites, namely Sanchi,

Bhimbetka, and Khajuraho. The vision of the government is to elevate MP as the No.1 state for tourism in the country.”

Regarding the next Kumbh Mela at Ujjain in 2016, Chouhan said the state is expected to welcome about

five crore devotees and would organise campaigns to promote the spiritual spectacle in overseas markets as well. ↴

Munich Airport opens 3rd recreation area in T2

■ A third recreation area has been added to the Munich Airport's Terminal 2. With the new recreation area now open close to gates G 43/44, Schengen passengers have access to two of these exclusive and spacious waiting areas with 28 comfortable places to sit or stretch out and 16 business stations equipped with their own power outlets for laptops, phones or tablets. They also have access to an exclusive reading area, supplied with 600 books courtesy of the Weltbild bookshops in which they are welcome to browse as they wait for their flights. Apart from the two recreation areas on the Schengen level, a similar facility has been available on Departure Level H (non-Schengen) for the past year and a half. All three can be used free of charge. The special waiting areas were developed by T2BG – the Terminal 2 operating company, held jointly by Munich Airport (60%) and Lufthansa (40%) – in cooperation with the furniture maker Vitra and the Munich design offices "studio PS" and "ZTR".

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Tailor-made for Indians

Having years old relation of working with India, RT&T Triple 'S' Travel & Tours expects to receive more Indians into Israel. Benny Binyamin, Owner, RT&T Triple 'S' Travel & Tours, shares the company's plans.

TT BUREAU

QWhat do you think about the Indian outbound to Israel?

Israel is a modern country with an ancient tradition and a visit to Israel for Indians is the holiday experience of a lifetime. When Indians come to Israel,



Benny Binyamin
Owner
RT&T Triple 'S' Travel & Tours

they get a sense of Israel's diversity. At every turn there is something amazing to see from holy sites to high tech buildings and infrastructures. As Indians drive through Israel they see how Israel has made the desert bloom. Indians enjoy Israel's

brehtaking scenery as they walk through the footsteps of history. There is something in Israel for everyone, from a spiritual pilgrimage to enjoying a 'sea and sun' holiday.

QWhat are the new plans that you are planning to implement this year?

We are very excited about the next couple of years.

We have been investing in designing 'tailor-made' programmes that meet the goals of Indian groups.

We are also developing new programmes and expanding our services to give personal service and maintaining a quality product.

QWhat is your business forecast?

Triple "T" Travel's forecast for next year is for 20 per cent growth. This is a very exciting

time for India, and as the Indian economy continues to develop, modernise and grow, our aim is to grow alongside the changing Indian economy.

QHow has the travel trends changed since you've got into business?

There are advances in technology today, but our business is still based on a quality product and excellent personal service. However, one of the biggest trends that we see today is that the Indian tourists have become more sophisticated.

QWhat kind of competition are you facing?

The market today has become very competitive due to the fact that many companies view India as an emerging economic power. However, much of the competition does not know or understand the Indian market, and understanding the needs of Indians is Triple "T" Travel's advantage. We have decades of experience working with India, and we speak your language.

Tourism in quake-hit Nepal

Employees of Nepal Airlines have collected some updates on the current situation in Nepal. The Himalayan nation is on the road to recovery from two major earthquakes and several aftershocks.

TT BUREAU

Nepal attracts nearly 1 million foreigners every year who travel to the country's World Heritage sites, UNESCO monuments, Buddhist and Hindu temples, and its majestic mountains,



including the Everest. The Himalayan nation's tourism industry suffered a major blow after a 7.8-magnitude earthquake hit the region on April 25, devastating the country's infrastructure and killing thousands of people. Seventeen mountaineers were also killed after the

earthquake triggered an avalanche on the Everest.

According to a local study conducted by Nepal Airlines, major destinations are still facing landslides, after the quake and its aftershocks have left mountains unstable. Most

hotels at Nagarkot have been shut down in absence of staff and shortage of food supplies. Road to and fro in the area are fine but much damage has been caused to local houses due to the earthquake.

Life in Lumbini is normal as the earthquake has not

caused much damage in that area. All hotels and transport systems are operating as usual.

In Dhulikhel, Mirabel and Himalayan Horizon have shut down due to lack of staff and food supplies. It is anticipated that Himalayan Horizon would open up in next two days' time. Staff at Dwarika's Resort and Dhulikhel Mountain Resort (DMR) said that they are open with very limited inventory and in-house services. Road traffic is operating as normal there.

Meanwhile, life has returned to normal in Pokhara, where hotels and transport systems are operating as usual. At Chitwan, situation seems normal as the natural calamity did not cause much damage in the area and hotels and transport systems are operating as regular.

Guests in Valley are safe and majority of them are lending a helping hand for voluntary relief work.

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India-China ink tourism deal

A delegation headed by Chen Wu, Governor of Guangxi Autonomous Region of China, met Tourism Minister Dr Mahesh Sharma in New Delhi, where both parties agreed to promote travel between the two nations.

TT BUREAU
The agenda of the meeting between the two leaders was to promote tourism between India and Guangxi, China. The visit coincided with

China. Last year 6,76,000 Indians have visited China, while only 1,74,000 Chinese had visited India in the same year, which shows a huge gap between inbound and outbound tourist flow between beauty and an interesting coastline. He requested Sharma to work towards promoting tourism to Guangxi. He also mentioned that The Tourism Expo on May 29, this year in Guilin, which can pro-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to China and the signing of a bilateral agreement on tourism between India and China.

Also, this year is being observed as a Visit India Year in China. The various developments in tourism will also help encourage the people from China to visit India, the Minister said. India will be happy to host the tour and travel operators of China to India during the Visit India Year in 2016, who can visit here and explore the potential of India as a tourist destination as well as promote the tourist destinations of China, he added.

The other members of Chinese delegation included **Mo Gongming**, Secretary-General of the People's Government of Guangxi Zhang Autonomous Region and **Yao Jing**, Minister Counselor, Embassy of China and senior officials of Tourism of Guangxi among others.

The Minister said that there is a huge gap between the inbound and outbound tourist flow between India and

PM Modi in China

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi entered into an agreement between India and China for strengthening cooperation in the field of tourism. The agreement will help both countries in creating an institutional mechanism for enhancing cooperation in the tourism sector. The main objectives of this agreement, amongst other things, are:

- ❖ To expand bilateral cooperation in the tourism sector.
- ❖ To exchange information and data related

to tourism.

- ❖ To encourage cooperation between tourism stakeholders including hotels and tour operators.
- ❖ To establish exchange programmes for cooperation in Human Resource Development.
- ❖ To invest in the tourism and hospitality sectors.
- ❖ To participate in travel fairs / exhibitions in each other's country.
- ❖ To promote safe, honourable and sustainable tourism.

the two countries. Sharma also mentioned that India is in the process of developing various circuits out of which Buddhist Circuit and Himalayan Circuit can be of great interest to the Chinese tourists.

Chen Wu said that they will make efforts to promote the Chinese tourist flow to India. He said that Guangxi is a beautiful region with a unique natural

vide India a platform to promote tourism. Dr Sharma said that the government will surely put Guangxi on the tourist map and help promote tourism to the region. The Minister said India values its relations with China since both countries share a long history of tradition in the world. China is also a good example of preservation of its natural resources and beauty and can act as a role model for India, he added.

Dragonair adds sixth flight on Kolkata-Hong Kong route



Dragonair has added an additional flight service from Kolkata to Hong Kong bringing the total numbers of flights between the two cities from five to six flights per week.

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Vietnam to sign 5-yr agreement with TAAI

With current Indian arrivals hobbling at just 27,000 per year, Vietnam has stepped on the promotion accelerator and will soon sign a long-term agreement with TAAI. It is also talking to two airlines to improve air connectivity.



HAZEL JAIN

Every year, Vietnam receives nearly eight million international tourists but only 27,000 of this are from India. Compare this with the total outbound figures from India of 16 million Indians every year and it looks minuscule. But it also shows immense opportunity and that is what **Vu Son Thuy**, Consul General of Vietnam, Mumbai, and a lifetime ambassador, wants to focus on.

Discussing various reasons for the lack of interest



Vu Son Thuy
Consul General of Vietnam
Mumbai

We want to increase Indian arrivals to at least five per cent of eight million which is 4,00,000... Indian tourists don't know Vietnam at all. We need to tackle this first

in Vietnam, he says, "The main reason is the lack of convenient air connectivity. The second reason is the lack of Indian and vegetarian food available there. Almost 98 per cent of Vietnamese are non-vegetarian. Moreover, the Tourism Authority of Vietnam does not have an office in India yet. It's a question that needs to be asked."

In a first, though the Vietnam Consulate organised

its first tourism promotion workshop in Mumbai jointly with the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) on Vietnam tourism on June 5, 2015 for its members. "So far we have done this only in New Delhi. We had planned a roadshow along with the workshop but it has now been postponed to September when we will also celebrate our National Day," Thuy says.

Vietnam will also be signing a long-term agreement with TAAI. Thuy reveals, "This will include agent familiarisation trips to Vietnam this year, bringing a Vietnamese delegation of tour operators and agents to India for a roadshow. We want to increase Indian arrivals to at least five per cent of eight million which is 4,00,000." Currently, China is its top

source markets followed by Japan, the US and Korea.

Vietnam is also looking to invite trade and investment from India. "Indian tourists don't know Vietnam at all. We need to tackle this first," the CG said.

Currently, there are 40 flights per week from India (Mumbai and New Delhi) to

Vietnam via Thailand. While they are direct, they have a stop in Bangkok and so it takes almost a day to travel. A non-stop, direct flight will bring the travel time down to only six hours.

"We are looking at getting a non-stop direct flight from India to Vietnam and are talking to two airlines in Vietnam — VietJet Air and

Vietnam Airlines. VietJet Air has agreed to start charter flights as long as we have good numbers.

They are looking at a minimum of 150 pax per charter flight, per week on their 180-seat aircraft and then increase the frequency — make it daily maybe," Thuy concludes on a positive note.



InterGlobe Technology Quotient Annual Sales Conference 2015

InterGlobe Technology Quotient held its Annual Sales Conference @ Novotel Hyderabad Airport from 24th – 26th April 2015. The conference was attended by relationship teams Pan India to create a road map for future with their theme "Refresh.Renew.Refocus" Mr. Anil Parashar, President and CEO ITQ, complimented and acknowledged the team's contribution in making InterGlobe and Travelport's Galileo and Worldspan Platforms respected travel brands in India. Hailing the efforts of all people in winning "Best Travel technology Awards" and "Best GDS – South India", Mr. Sandeep Dwivedi, Chief Commercial Officer, ITQ, unveiled future plans and strategy for ITQ to keep the momentum going. There were other interesting sessions that were also put together which were thoroughly engaging for the team. The team celebrated the success of winning by enjoying various team activities and DJ night.



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Did You Know?

Vietnam has two of the world's UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Ha Long Bay and Hang Son Doong cave

INDABA sends good vibes to India

The hosted buyers from India returned enlightened from Tourism INDABA that showcased not just South Africa, but most of the African continent. They share their feedback about the event and their experiences:



HAZEL JAIN FROM DURBAN



Africa has a lot to offer and this was apparent at this INDABA. Whether it is adventure, self-drive tours, or wine tours, South Africa has a lot to offer to the Indian market. It was a pleasure connecting with sellers from Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, etc. INDABA is a well-organised event and we look forward to be a part of it next year also.

Rohini Christie

AGM (Product Development), TBI



I was very impressed with the INDABA set-up. Even though I have been in the industry for the past 30 years, I have been promoting South Africa only since the last two years and I think it has huge potential. The only problem was that some booths had multiple smaller booths – sometimes going up to 20 – and it was very difficult to search for them as their numbers weren't clearly visible.

Neerja Arora

Director, Flag holidays



INDABA 2014 was our first time here and we loved interacting with our African partners. This year, we came here with more experience, and although we were not hosted, we were certainly treated as old and valued friends! We did close some business deals.

And yes, we found some good products. But most importantly, we were able to solidify our personal relationships with our African partners.

Smita Srivastava

Director, Chalo Africa Tours

This year's INDABA though smaller than the previous years (I have been attending for five years now) was of better quality as it was quieter and had fewer people. This gave us a chance to complete appointments uninterrupted and stay completely focused. I preferred this INDABA to the previous ones. I think a day more would help as it used to be earlier.



Shantanu Chand

CEO, GoBeyond

This year's INDABA was good but slightly disappointing as the event used to be way bigger in the past. Many sellers have moved to either WTM or WeAreAfrica which also happens more or less at the same time. We as a buyer expect all of them to be present under one roof as it is impossible for us to attend all these trade events.



Sanchit Ahuja

Director, Aerospace Holidays

This was my first INDABA and it was a great learning experience. I loved the vibe of the entire fair. I was happy to meet luxury brands and discuss ideas with them. I appreciate the fact that they were very open to feedback. South Africa is one of the hottest selling honeymoon destinations and I would love to attend again to gain more knowledge on premium products that it has to offer.



Aayushi Kothari

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Agents buoyant as ATM goes grander

One of the biggest travel industry showcases in the Middle East, Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2015, witnessed over 400 exhibitors and over 23,000 visitors. TRAVTALK speaks to some participants of the show, that has grown by seven per cent since last year.



MEGHA PAUL FROM DUBAI



The Middle East's \$72 billion travel market is set to grow further. We are predicting online travel bookings will represent 36 per cent of all bookings in the region by 2017, as opposed to 25 per cent currently. Revenue for the sector is expected to reach \$35 billion. As for offline sales, revenue will increase from \$54 billion to \$63 billion within the next two years. The Middle East travel industry is buoyant and poised for growth.

Rabih Saab

President & Managing Director-Africa
Middle East and South Asia, Travelport



The Indian market is important for us. Thus, we are focussing on certain markets in India. We have realised it is important to have not just distribution channels but face-to-face interactions in India. So we established an office in Delhi, Mumbai and now in Bengaluru. We are also looking at coming up in Chennai. Each of these regions has different booking patterns. Recently, we have also developed a toll-free line out of India. Post this development, Indian market has seen a rise of 74 per cent in business.

Russel Sharpe

COO- Hotel Division, Citymax Hotels

The Middle East region has delivered an outstanding performance due to demand for this market for inbound and outbound travel. Our successful expansion plans in the MEAPAC region is supported by a strong focus on localisation and customisation, which has allowed the Middle East, Asia, and the Pacific Islands to remain as the fastest-growing region with over 40% growth. UAE, UK, Thailand, Malaysia, Paris, Turkey and Singapore were the most visited countries by our agents.



Jaal Shah

Group Managing Director, RezLive.com

ATM is getting bigger and bigger as the years go by. This is because of the growing economy of the developing and emerging markets such as India, China, the GCC and Middle East. From the transaction point of view, it's becoming heavier than the other travel shows of the world. We have been really busy at this year's ATM and all days have been very good.



Ankush Nijhawan

Managing Director, Nijhawan Group of Companies



This is the second time we are exhibiting at ATM. We had been establishing a trend line for ATM for nine years. The response this year has been fantastic. This market has grown in relevance as a key feeder market to multiple destinations where we have our member hotels, especially Western Europe and United States - East and West Coasts. We are happy with the response we are receiving.

Saurabh Rai

Area Managing Director-South Asia and Middle East, Preferred
Hotels & Resorts



This is the 2nd year we are exhibiting at ATM. Among the countries in the region, the UAE reported the most rooms under construction with 21,893 rooms in 76 hotels. We are currently representing 150 properties across three collections — hotels, boutique and residences — and offer reservations, marketing and promotions for independent hotels enabling them to reach a global audience in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

Rahul Arora

Managing Director, Luxury Hotels Group (LHG)

ATM is one of the best places to be at. It has been giving us a great response for the last six years. This year has been bigger, and I have seen more people coming in from the region. It has been a great opportunity for us to interact with potential customers. We saw more GCC and Arab buyers. There were also quite a lot of Indian buyers this year. The meetings have been very productive. We have been very happy with the response that we have got. It has given us a good start to the season.



Gaurav Chiripal

CEO, Quadlabs

ATM has been very productive for our company. Going forward, we are looking at having a booth next year in ATM. Currently, we want to promote ourselves as one stop travel shop in the Middle East. We have been in the business for about three years now and mainly focus on inbound travel to the Middle East region. India is one of our key source markets. Now we are looking at the high-end clientele and getting more premium travel products.



Sabir Shaikh

Managing Director, Clover Travel & Tourism

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Africa & Europe on RezLive's radar

RezLive.com, the global B2B travel wholesaler, has anticipated growth in excess of 40 per cent on its Global Sales for the fiscal year 2015. RezLive participated for the 6th year in a row at ATM this year.

TT BUREAU

With an online inventory of over 125,000+ hotel and apartment rooms worldwide, 45,000+ sightseeing items and over 500 tours in 500 cities and 5,000+ transfer options in over 900 airport and city locations, the company plans to reach above \$102 million sales (Total Transaction Value) in this fiscal year surpassing their previous year figures. The company additionally expects to deliver double-digit growth across all its regions in 2015.

The Middle East region delivered an outstanding performance due to demand for this market for inbound and outbound travel. These current trends were presented by the company at Arabian Travel Market (ATM). RezLive.com presented 6th year in a row at ATM, which is considered one of the biggest industry event in the region in order to increase its footprint in the MENA region and connect with local clients and suppliers. The trade show



(From L-R) Manas Ranjan Pattanaik, Director – India Tourism (Ministry of Tourism Govt. of India) with Jaal Shah, Group MD, RezLive.com, and IRV Rao, Assistant Director – India Tourism, Dubai

was held in Dubai from May 4-7, 2015.

The company has been strengthening its proposition in the Middle East with a new and bigger office in Dubai (JLT) and with a large team of dedicated multilingual professionals to ensure that it delivers a cus-

tomised service to the Middle East market clients. RezLive.com's successful expansion plans in the MEA-PAC region is supported by a strong focus on localisation and customisation, which has allowed the Middle East, Asia, and the Pacific Islands to remain as the fastest-growing

region with over 40 per cent growth. UAE, UK, Thailand, Malaysia, Paris, Turkey and Singapore were the most visited /preferred countries by the agents of Rezlive.com during the year 2014 and the trend continues to be the same for the year 2015.

Group Managing Director, RezLive.com, **Jaal Shah** commented, "These figures clearly showcase that our efforts towards innovation and diversified inventory, are allowing us to maintain solid growth in all our regions and penetrate emerging markets. Our aim is to continue to consolidate our expansion into international markets, especially in Africa and Europe, while maintaining growth in our home markets of Middle East and Asia. We will also continue working to give our valued partners extra ordinary support service and diversified inventory."

The event became more memorable when the wonderfully crafted Designer Indya Brochure was launched in

front of the travel trade during ATM by **Manas Ranjan Pattanaik**, Director – India Tourism (Ministry of Tourism Govt. Of India) and **IRV Rao**, Assistant Director – India Tourism. Both the dignitaries were full of praise after looking at the brochure and applauded the team on the concept and the way whole India was covered in the Designer Indya brochure through different itineraries.

Shah further highlighted, "The key importance of product like Designer Indya in UAE market and how the local travel agents can utilise the services offered and make the experience of their clients more memorable with their travel to India and neighboring countries. At Designer Indya, we promote Luxury Inbound Indian Holidays to the international markets. With a dedicated team, Designer Indya is catering to the needs of travel partners all across the globe and also empowers RezLive.com with 1600 + Indian hotel allocations and

extends the facility to book Indian hotels online. Our detailed itineraries and package module allows International travel partners to send their booking requests online and customise their packages and inclusions through 'book your own tour'. With innovation of technology, Designer Indya has huge online presence, attracting large traffic of B2B as well as retail consumers, looking for customised Indian holiday experience."

Highlight

Designer Indya Brochure was launched in front of the travel trade during ATM by Manas Ranjan Pattanaik, Director – India Tourism (Ministry of Tourism Govt. of India) and IRV Rao, Assistant Director – India Tourism.



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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

Club Med on a branding overdrive

A pioneer of the all-inclusive concept globally, Club Med will go into a branding overdrive with a roadshow across India in order to educate the agents about its proposition that is an exact match to the Indian holiday-maker's mindset.



Ever since it initiated its Preferred Partner program last year, Club Med India has seen promising results. It now works with 11 trade partners located in key markets pan-India and will be conducting joint training workshops with them as soon as this season gets over.

Manoj Kumar Upadhyay, Head of Sales for India, Club Med, gives more details. "We will be conducting orientations and training workshops for the travel trade along with our preferred partners pan-India starting mid-July. We will be introducing our product



"We will be conducting orientations and training workshops for the travel trade along with our preferred partners pan-India starting mid-July."

Manoj Kumar Upadhyay
Head of Sales for India
Club Med

to them and highlighting our USPs. We have realised that awareness about Club Med and our unique all-inclusive proposition is lacking. We are looking at metros as well as Tier II cities, as recommended by our partners," he says.

Upadhyay adds that these training sessions will give confidence to the travel agents. "It will show them that we want to work with them. The problem in India is that everything is sold as per a set trend. There are so many

products that need to be sold the right way. We want to tell the agents that Club Med is an all-inclusive product on land and is set as per the Indian consumers' mindset. It's not a regular assembled product with zero hidden costs," he adds.

Another important point on the agenda for the roadshow is to dispel myths that agents have about Club Med. Upadhyay says, "A lot of agents think that we are about timeshares, memberships, even about medical tourism! They are not aware about our brand. So we want to position our brand correctly through the workshops and roadshow."

He claims that the company has seen double digit growth in India this year over the last financial year. "We have not yet covered the entire market so there is a lot of scope and opportunity. Until we cover all corners of India, I can safely say that we will see continued growth over the next three to four years. Our aim is to reach out to all the top travel agents in India," he says.

Club Med is happy with its current business model of working only with its set of preferred partners that look into sales, bookings and operations. "Our partners in turn are happy as they get happy clients as well as referrals.

What more does an agent want?" Upadhyay says. He adds that while Club Med is not actively looking at expanding its current portfolio of preferred partners, they are open to receiving interests from agents that understand the Club Med philosophy.

Club Members

- Club Med works with 11 trade partners in key markets
- It will continue to work with its set of preferred partners

Tranquility amidst the lake

Betting big on the concept of boutique luxury hotels, jüSTa Hotels & Resorts is expanding across the country. The group is eyeing leisure locations to drive business this year, says Rohit Katyal, Head of Sales & Marketing – NCR, jüSTa Hotels & Resorts.



According to Katyal, the company is in the process of expanding its footprints in

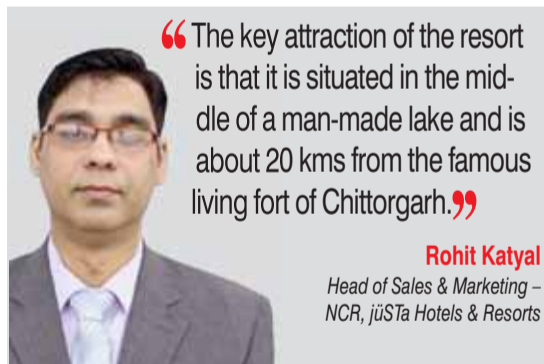
offer value and opportunity, so, we are actively pursuing these markets, especially in Indore, Lucknow, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, etc."

was acquired by the group about two years ago, Katyal informs, "Set in the middle of a private lake and surrounded by eighty acres of land and abundant wildlife, Lake Nahargarh Palace in Chittorgarh is surrounded by Aravalli Hills. It is a small luxury hotel in the middle of the lake as replica of the Lake Palace close to Chittorgarh. It is a seven-year old resort with 40 spacious rooms overlooking the lake with five suites."

ellers travelling via Boondi, Kota or Ranthambhore. On the other side, people travelling from Delhi/ Jaipur to Udaipur are also in for a treat. There are two trains

from Delhi – Mevar Express and Chetak Express. And with Delhi just 500 kms away, we are targeting travellers from the city in a big way. In the international

market a reasonable number of clients from Germany, France, Italy travel to Chittorgarh and these form our source markets as well."



"The key attraction of the resort is that it is situated in the middle of a man-made lake and is about 20 kms from the famous living fort of Chittorgarh."

Rohit Katyal
Head of Sales & Marketing –
NCR, jüSTa Hotels & Resorts

the leisure destinations. "Our focus in Rajasthan continues. We are also looking to move into Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Tier II towns also

One of the best hotels in its portfolio is Lake Nahargarh Palace, Chittorgarh - jüSTa Hotels and Resorts. Throwing more light on the property that

Talking about the key clients that the property is targeting, Katyal adds, "The key attraction of the resort is that it is situated in the middle of a man-made lake and is about 20 kms from the famous living fort of Chittorgarh. It is one of the best destinations for leisure trav-



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Brand You Can Trust

Seychelles on agents' minds

Destination Travel Services in collaboration with Banyan Tree Resort, Sainte Anne Resort, Constance Lemuria & Masons Travel, organised a Seychelles familiarisation trip with key agents to promote the destination. The fam was hosted keeping in mind the objective to showcase the breathtaking destination, luxurious hotels and the warmth of the country. Seychelles is considered only as a honeymoon destination. This showcase, changed the mindset of the agents about Seychelles.



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Walking Tours in Chhattisgarh

Chhattisgarh Tourism Board (CTB) has signed an MoU with India City Walks (ICW) which through its innovative walking tours will offer options to explore Chhattisgarh environs like never before.



TT BUREAU
Every walk designed by India City Walks (ICW) will offer the best of a locale and embrace the city's daily life. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by **Santosh Mishra**, Managing Director, CTB, and **Sachin Bansal**, Chief Explorer, ICW. The five-year MoU will see the organisations formalise their

activity to enhance destination activities and increase visitor numbers to Chhattisgarh from regional and international markets.

ICW will offer walking tours and trails across Chhattisgarh clubbed with the outstanding experiential opportunities like eco, spiritual, outdoors, among other things.

On Foot

ICW offers walking tours ranging from 1 hour to 4 hours and full day experiences across cities

Walking tours will be clubbed with experiential opportunities

According to Bansal, 'Walks' is ICW's core product. "We offer walking tours ranging from one hour to four hours and full day experiences across cities. The Chhattisgarh offering will include themes such as art, architecture, spirituality, nature, eco-tourism, heritage, food, bazaars and more. Our extension is into developing the interest driven concepts as well as enhancing

the awareness and quality of visitor experience opportunities," says Bansal.

"The Memorandum of Understanding will support CTB efforts for the growth and future sustainability of Chhattisgarh tourism," he adds. Chhattisgarh Tourism Board is responsible for infrastructural and institutional development, investment in facilities & hotels,



Santosh Mishra
Managing Director
CTB

The Chhattisgarh offering will include themes such as art, architecture, spirituality, nature, eco-tourism, heritage, food, bazaars and more

wayside amenities and above all aggressive marketing & promotion for the comprehensive development. It offers immense opportunities for Eco-Ethno, Adventure and Cultural tourism.

India City Walks (ICW) is a flagship brand of YEXPLORE and is into experiential travel offerings. ICW is a pioneer of walking tours in India and offer engaging interactions with local cultures. ICW focuses its efforts strictly on organising walking tours and interest-driven experiences of Indian cities thereby reaching a clear and targeted market.

Biometric data for German visa soon

■ Michael Siebert, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Mumbai, has announced that Germany will soon require visa applicants who want to travel to Germany to provide biometric data. "It has been mandatory for all Schengen countries to do so now and we will begin taking biometric data from travellers by the end of 2015 at all our VFS centres. This will be in time for the 2016 season. It will be valid for 59 months," he said.

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New lounge for Cathay Pacific at Manila Airport

■ Cathay Pacific Airways has opened a new lounge for passengers travelling out of Manila Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 3. Located at Level 4 near Gate 114 in Manila NAIA Terminal 3, the lounge adopts the new Studioilse design template first used in the airline's lounge at Haneda Airport in Tokyo. The Manila lounge measures 650 square metres which is almost twice as large as the previous lounge at Manila Airport Terminal 1, and can seat approximately 135 people. The brand-new lounge offers a comfortable environment and understated luxury for First and Business Class passengers to relax before their flight. With a greater focus on food and beverage services, the dining area features Cathay Pacific's signature Noodle Bar, a popular facility at the airline's world-renowned lounges at Hong Kong International Airport, which offers a selection of Asian noodles including dandan mien and wonton noodle soup, freshly prepared by a chef.

Emaar Hospitality launches Rove

Emaar Hospitality is coming up with a new brand Rove, **TRAVTALK** got in touch with Seema Pande, Corporate Director of Sales & Partnerships, Emaar Hospitality Group, to find out more.



KANCHAN NATH

Kindly tell us about Emaar Hospitality?

Emaar Hospitality has different brands, we have got the Address Hotels and Resorts, under which we have five hotels including the Palace Downtown Dubai. We are also looking at expanding in various other markets which will come as we go along. Meanwhile in March of next year we plan to open the Address Boulevard which is part of the collection of hotels in the downtown area.

The first hotel of the Rove Brand opens in December of 2015. We are to open 10 of these hotels before the World Expo 2020. We have identified seven areas already. The Rove brand is going to be very exciting because it's going to be a brand affordable for everybody. Since it has the Emaar name behind it, it will be the perfect blend of what we look for in an affordable hotel. The good thing about Dubai is that

we all work as a team, even though there is competition.

What are your expansion plans?

At the moment we are going to be in Istanbul, Turkey. In Istanbul we are building a miniature downtown area. There is going to be a shopping complex and hotels, there

are The Address Boulevard, The Address Fountain View, and The Address Sky View which will be in the downtown area. We would have also opened 10 Rove hotels. Vida hotels are also going to develop their residences.

So just as DTCM is gearing up for Expo 2020, all of us

are going to be a lifestyle element attached to it. There are talks on in Saudi, there is Cairo where Emaar is already present but we have yet to open a

What sets you apart from other hotel brands?

I think the biggest thing that sets us apart is that we are a lifestyle brand and we are not standalone hotels, so to speak. All our hotels are mixed-use hotels, which is a trend fast catching up across the world. Our hotels have a resident component to it. The Address becomes a place where you live, where you work, where you party, where you eat; not just a place to stay when you are in Dubai, it's a full experience. One of the main things for Address hotels is that it is very location specific. Location is one of our big brand attributes. It's about the downtown area, shopping, F&B, you've got the tallest tower, you've got

the fountain, it's the same thing as when you go to Istanbul.

How much business do you hope to get from ATM, Dubai?

I feel many years back most exhibitions were focused on signing contracts and getting some business done then and there. A lot of this used to happen because there were no emails. You could not do it over the telephone, so you see ITB used to be all about contracting for the next season. Now ITB is about talking about the rates for the next season and business contracts go out on email. The same thing happens with ATM. ATM is a time to renew contracts, build new partnerships, ATM is also a time to discuss what more we would like to do with our partners. The follow-ups happen through emails later on. It's also a great time for finding new markets, every single year, there are people coming in from Mexico, Brazil, Australia is a big market now, so it's also about making these new connections.

“The Rove brand is going to be very exciting because it's going to be a brand affordable for everybody. Since it has the Emaar name behind it, it will be the perfect blend of what we look for in an affordable hotel.”



Seema Pande
Corporate Director of Sales & Partnerships, Emaar Hospitality Group

our doing our bit. If you notice there is a lot of room inventory that's come in the market. By 2020, we will have three more Address hotels open. These

This time for Africa!

The three-day Tourism INDABA 2015 organised by South African Tourism in Durban from May 9-11 brought together more African exhibitors than any other show worldwide despite the fear of Ebola and xenophobia threatening to play spoilsport.





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Inbound focus at GITB 2015

Towards targeting potential consumers of tourism products from across the globe and India, the Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) organised the seventh edition of The Great Indian Travel Bazaar at JECC Sitapura, Jaipur, Rajasthan.



Ecuador's tax sops for travel agents

Underlining tourism as a priority, Ecuador is looking at to bring in investments from India. Pro Ecuador is offering huge incentives to the travel trade who might be interested in setting up in the Latin American country.

HAZEL JAIN

Tourist arrivals from India to Ecuador — located on the western coast of South America — haven't been very high. But its India office — Pro Ecuador — that opened three years ago has been trying hard to pump up the numbers. So while it has been promoting the destination for tourism, it is now looking to approach the mandate from a different angle: through investments from the Indian travel trade.

Jorge Diaz, Trade Officer, Institute for Export & Investment Promotion, Pro Ecuador, explains, "We are identifying Indian companies in the tourism industry who may want to start something new in Ecuador, either by way of joint



Jorge Diaz
Trade Officer, Institute for Export & Investment Promotion, Pro Ecuador

We are identifying Indian companies in the tourism industry who may want to start something new in Ecuador

ventures or direct investments. We are also in talks with a lot of hotel companies for this."

He adds that to encourage this, the ministry of tourism of Ecuador is offering Indian companies huge incentives for directly investing in their country. "For medium-sized companies, we are offering 100 per cent deduction on expenses incurred by the company for technical training, research and innovation, and setting up high-quality infrastructure on ground for one whole year," Diaz says.

The tourism ministry will also facilitate 100 per cent tax refund paid in the first year of operations to Indian companies who have set up office in Ecuador. This is not all. Diaz adds, "We know our market is competitive. That is why the Ecuadorian tourism ministry

will also help in promoting the Indian company once it is set up. We have public channels of marketing at our disposal in Ecuador which will be offered 100 per cent free for one year. This will help it establish itself in the market."

These incentives are not extended to companies that get into a joint venture with a local travel company because

they will have the support of that company.

To extend the avenues of bilateral trade and investment, the President of Ecuador will be visiting Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi this November. Currently, Indians do not require any visa to enter Ecuador and every visit is valid for three months that can

be extended. It will host three of the biggest travel companies in Ecuador next year to India to participate in a trade show in Mumbai and meet Indian companies as well. While figures of 2014 are not yet out, in 2012, Ecuador recorded 3,770 Indian arrivals which went down a little in 2013 at 3,364. Pro Ecuador has received interests from about five to six companies

including Mumbai-based Latin Aventuras and Benchmark. It has also received interests from hotels such as the Taj Group and Ramada Hotels.

Atul Parekh, owner of five-year old Latin Aventuras that sells bespoke packages to South America only, says, "Pro Ecuador is a very pro-active government body. They connect relevant industry partners

and organize meetings and visits to Ecuador. The spotlight in the coming decade will be on Latin America. To effectively penetrate the South American markets it would be wise to have a base in one of them and Ecuador is positioned perfectly for this. It is eager to grow swiftly and hence do not complicate procedures." Parekh is preparing to make a visit to Ecuador this year.



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ATM takes centrestage

The 2015 Arabian Travel Market (ATM) marked the 22nd edition of the annual industry showcase and once again boasted a packed programme that explored the broad spectrum of regional and international travel. This year's event included 400 exhibitors and over 23,000 trade visitors.



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Registration is free and you're welcome to bring multiple participants from your company. What's more, attendees stand a chance to win a Fam trip to South Africa.

The Programme will take place as follows:

DATE	TRAVEL	SESSION
Monday 13 July 2015	Goa	09h30 - 13h30
Tuesday 14 July 2015	Ahmedabad	10h00 - 14h00 • 14h00 - 18h00
Wednesday 15 July 2015	Ahmedabad	10h00 - 14h00
Thursday 16 July 2015	Jaipur	10h00 - 14h00
Friday 17 July 2015	Delhi	10h00 - 14h00 • 14h00 - 18h00
Monday 20 July 2015	Jalandhar	09h30 - 13h30
Tuesday 21 July 2015	Delhi	10h00 - 14h00
Wednesday 22 July 2015	Lucknow	10h00 - 14h00
Thursday 23 July 2015	Kolkata	10h00 - 14h00 • 14h00 - 18h00
Friday 24 July 2015	Mumbai	12h00 - 16h00
Saturday 25 July 2015	Pune	10h00 - 14h00 • 14h00 - 18h00
Monday 27 July 2015	Hyderabad	10h00 - 14h00 • 14h00 - 18h00
Tuesday 28 July 2015	Chennai	14h00 - 18h00
Wednesday 29 July 2015	Trichy	09h30 - 13h30
Thursday 30 July 2015	Chennai	09h30 - 13h30
Friday 31 July 2015	Bangalore	10h00 - 14h00 • 14h00 - 18h00
Saturday 1 Aug 2015	Cochin	09h30 - 13h30
Monday 3 Aug 2015	Mumbai	10h00 - 14h00
Tuesday 4 Aug 2015	Nagpur	10h00 - 14h00

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July 22-23, 2015, FICCI, New Delhi



Taking further the decision and commitment of "Make In India" Ministry of Tourism, Government of India in partnership with FICCI and Tourism Finance Corporation of India Ltd. is organizing the first ever **Tourism Investors Meet (TIM)** on July 22 – 23, 2015 at Federation House, FICCI, 1 Tansen Marg, New Delhi.

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- Multiplexes and Malls
- Roadways Developers
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- Sound & Light Shows organizers
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- Cruise & River Tourism
- Sanitation & Civic Amenity developers
- IT enabled service providers for Tourism
- Desert Safari
- Theme Parks / Amusement Parks
- Film Studios
- Airport Developers
- Mega Convention Centres
- Heli & Air services
- Food Chains/ Food Parks
- Night Safari Providers
- Golf Course Developers
- Camp Tourism
- Investors in monument conservation lighting maintenance
- Cable car
- Express way consultant
- Tech backed cab services

The TWO day event will focus on Interactive meetings where by exhibiting destinations will be showcasing their policy and facilities with respect to soliciting investment in Tourism Infrastructure through pre scheduled structured face to face business meetings between the State Governments and prominent investors.



Contact us

Anirban Chatterjee

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Business Destinations: Sarovar Portico–Ahmedabad • Davanam Sarovar Portico Suites–Bengaluru • Radha Homitel–Bengaluru • Park Plaza–Bengaluru • Optus Homitel–Bhiwadi • Homitel–Chandigarh • Radha Regent–Chennai • Abu Sarovar Portico–Chennai • Mahagun Sarovar Portico Suites–Delhi NCR (Vaishali) • Peerless Sarovar Portico–Durgapur • Park Plaza–Faridabad • Ambar Sarovar Portico–Gandhidham • Optus Sarovar Premiere–Gurgaon • Park Inn–Gurgaon • Aditya Park–Hyderabad • Aditya Homitel Ameerpet–Hyderabad • Radisson–Hyderabad • Sarovar Portico–Indore • Sarovar Portico–Jalandhar • Sarovar Portico–Jaipur • Nirwana Homitel–Jaipur • Park Inn–Jaipur • Paradigm Sarovar Portico–Kakinada • Gokulam Park–Kochi • The Peerless Inn–Kolkata • La Place Sarovar Portico–Lucknow • City Heart Sarovar Portico–Ludhiana • Park Plaza–Ludhiana • Grand Sarovar Premiere–Mumbai • Hotel Marine Plaza–Mumbai • Residency Sarovar Portico–Mumbai • Grand Homitel Malad–Mumbai • Majestic Court Sarovar Portico–Navi Mumbai • The Ashtan Sarovar Portico–New Delhi • Sarovar Portico–New Delhi, (Naraina) • The Muse Sarovar Portico–New Delhi • Noorya Homitel–Pune • Marasa Sarovar Portico–Rajkot • Homitel–Roorkee • Goldray Sarovar Portico–Salem • Park Plaza–New Delhi–Shahdara • Royal Sarovar Portico–Siliguri • Balaji Sarovar Premiere–Solapur • Park Plaza–Zirakpur.

EVENT TALK

JUNE 2015

INTERNATIONAL

9-11	Chicago	IBTM
21-25	Melbourne	Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE)

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
11-13	Pune	India Hospitality Expo
12	Pune	Why Spain? – Presentation & Networking Dinner for Travel Trade
25	Kolkata	East India Travel Awards

JULY 2015

NATIONAL

10	Delhi	VKonect MICE : B2C
10 -12	Bengaluru	India International Travel Mart
11	Delhi	VKonect MICE: B2B
13-14	Mumbai	Kiwi Link India workshop, Tourism New Zealand
13	Goa	Learn South Africa
14-15	Ahmedabad	Learn South Africa
15	Mumbai	Tourism New Zealand Frontline Training
16	Delhi	Tourism New Zealand Frontline Training
16	Jaipur	Learn South Africa
17-19	Chennai	India International Travel Mart
17 -19	Kolkata	Tourism Expo India
20	Jalandhar	Learn South Africa
20	Kolkata	Thailand Road Show
22	Lucknow	Learn South Africa
22	Delhi	Thailand Road Show
23	Kolkata	Learn South Africa
24	Mumbai	Thailand Road Show
24	Mumbai	Learn South Africa
24-26	Hyderabad	Travel & Tourism Fair
25	Pune	Learn South Africa
27	Hyderabad	Learn South Africa
29	Trichy	Learn South Africa
31	Bengaluru	Learn South Africa
31-Aug 2	Kolkata	Travel & Tourism Fair

AUGUST 2015

INTERNATIONAL

5-7	Beijing	CIBTM
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NATIONAL

1	Cochin	Learn South Africa
3	Mumbai	Learn South Africa
4	Nagpur	Learn South Africa
4	Kolkata	Tourism Authority of Thailand B2B Roadshow
4	Bengaluru	Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority B2B Roadshow
5	Delhi	Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority B2B Roadshow
6	Mumbai	Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority B2B Roadshow
6	Lucknow	Tourism Authority of Thailand B2B Roadshow
7-9	Vadodara	Holiday Expo
14 -16	Aurangabad	India International Travel Exhibition
17	Jaipur	VKonect & Let's Network
17	Ahmedabad	VisitBritain's 'Great Tourism Week' Roadshow
18-20	Delhi	Incentive Travel & Conventions Meetings India
18-20	Surat	Travel & Tourism Fair
19	Lucknow	VKonect & Let's Network
19	Mumbai	VisitBritain's 'Great Tourism Week' Roadshow
20	Coimbatore	VKonect & Let's Network
21	Hyderabad	VKonect & Let's Network
21	Pune	VisitBritain 'Great Tourism Week' Roadshow
26	Kolkata	VKonect & Let's Network
28	Chandigarh	VKonect & Let's Network
28-30	Mumbai	India International Travel Mart
31	Kolkata	VisitBritain's 'Great Tourism Week' Roadshow

For more information, contact us at: talk@ddppl.com

roomsXML's new booking feature

With the belief that innovation is the key differentiator for any company, roomsXML.com has launched an interesting feature that promises to prevent heartburns for travel agents' customers.



TT BUREAU

roomsXML.com introduced yet another feature that's first in the online accommodation segment at the recently concluded ATM 2015 in Dubai. The company has invested thousands of dollars and man-hours in building this feature that displays the room types exactly as per the hotel's very own room names.

Each hotel has their own nomenclature to name a room. But hotel booking systems hardly retain the original name. So instead of calling a 'Rainbow Tower Ocean Front Corner Room', other systems find it safe in showing the room simply as a 'Corner Room'.



Prakash Bang
Managing Director
roomsXML.com

Over 400 travel agents visited the roomsXML.com booth during the show in Dubai and learned about this new feature. **Prakash Bang**, MD, roomsXML.com, says, "Each one of them was fascinated with the demo because

when the travel agents or their customers call up the hotel to double check their booking — a mismatch in the room type cause heartburns. From a travel agent's perspective this feature not only removes the guess work whilst booking a room, but also keeps their customers happy!"

roomsXML.com is an accommodation wholesaler catering exclusively to the travel trade. It was established in 2007 and since then has gradually entered various global markets successfully. The company ranks amongst Dun & Bradstreet's Leading 100 SMEs of India. Bang adds,

"Innovation is the key differentiator. That's what keeps us leading the pack. Till date, we have introduced 10 specific features that are the industry's first — and many of them are yet to be emulated by others in the line!"

What's New

Over 400 travel agents visited the roomsXML.com booth during ATM

roomsXML.com has introduced 10 specific features that are the industry's first

One-stop shop for travellers

Travel & Telecom synergize to enrich customer experience, offer value for money experience and extend multi-travel solutions under one roof to international travellers.

Foreign destinations have not only attracted businessmen with a plethora of opportunities, but have become a major attraction among leisure and MICE market. An exponential increase in international travellers has opened avenues for the travel and hospitality sector to serve more number of travellers, every year.

With immense opportunities available, the travel companies are looking at bundling their products with value-add services such as insurance, forex etc. which help them earn ancillary revenue streams for their business and offer a bouquet of services under one roof to delight their customers' travelling experience.

Benefits of bundling

Make all travel arrangements in one go

International SIM cards allow you to stay connected during travel

Buy bundled products at cost effective rates

Enjoy additional discounts when buying multiple products

From both personal and professional perspective, we all want — we all need — to be connected to our respective networks nearly 24 hours a day. Hence, international

partnering with telecom service providers to bundle a variety of services so that necessary arrangements can be made before they travel abroad.

NEFT/RTGS, Credit/Debit cards etc.

The mobile technology has made everything possible on our fingertips. The advent of mobile apps has become a one-stop-solution for travellers to book tickets; make payments; check in online; make hotel reservations and so on. Similarly, the telecom companies enable customers to select, buy and recharge their SIM with the click of a mouse.

While everything is possible on smartphones nowadays, both the sectors are working together to offer a travel package which is powered by a telecom solution to enable round-the-clock connectivity for travellers going to distant destinations.

While everything is possible on smartphones nowadays, both the sectors are working together to offer a travel package which is powered by a telecom solution to enable round-the-clock connectivity for travellers going to distant destinations

mobility solutions such as voice and data SIM cards are also at a huge demand, while planning for overseas travel.

How bundling is beneficial for customers

- Make All Travel Arrangements In One Go
- International SIM Cards Allow You to Stay Connected During Travel
- Buy Bundled Products at Cost Effective Rates
- Enjoy Additional Discounts when Buying Multiple Products

Entering into Strategic Partnerships

The companies offer value to the customers at a price they can afford. Many large companies are also

How Technology Helps

Over investment in infrastructure and comprehensive CRM software is enabling international SIM companies to provide optimum solutions with complete transparency to ensure convenience, clarity and credibility for travellers.

They are even entering into agreements with other travel and forex companies. In the last decade there have been major technological innovations adapted by telecom and travel domain to improve travelling experience. The companies enable travellers to buy and pay online from anywhere and anytime by using different payment modes such as



Gaurav Dhawan
Executive Director
Clay Telecom

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VISA TALK



Indian E-Tourist Visa

The e-Tourist Visa facility has been extended to 31 more countries from May 2015. With the latest addition, the total number of countries under the scheme will go up to 76. Below are list of countries whose nationals are eligible for India E-Tourist visa.

Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Cayman Island, Chile, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Laos, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia, Montenegro, Montserrat, Myanmar, Nauru, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niue Island, Norway, Oman, Palau, Palestine, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Republic of Macedonia, Russia, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, Tuvalu, UAE, Ukraine, USA, Vanuatu, Vatican City-Holy See, Vietnam.



Additional Requirement for Botswana Visa

High Commission of the Republic of Botswana, Delhi has announced that with immediate effect, applicant has to submit a notarized copy of invitee's ID proof if applying for Business, Visit & Work visa. The copy of ID has to be notarized from local notary department in Botswana.



Kosovo Visa

Kosovo is a young country in Southeastern Europe that declared its independence from Serbia in February 2008 as the Republic of Kosovo. Persons holding a biometric valid residence permit issued by one of the Schengen member states or a valid multi-entry Schengen Visa can enter, transit, or stay in the territory of the Republic of Kosovo for up to 15 days. If the duration of stay is more than 15 days then the person needs to apply for Kosovo visa from Consulate General of the Republic of Kosovo in Istanbul, Turkey.



Change in Processing Time for South Korea Visa Applications, Mumbai

Consulate General of the Republic of Korea, Mumbai has announced that with immediate effect the processing of visa application will take minimum 5 working days.

Visa Snippets:

a) Indian nationals can visit Andorra by transiting through Spain or France, so the applicant should have either a valid Spain or France multiple entry Schengen visa as Andorra doesn't have an international airport.

Visa Bytes by



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Connecting outbound industry

Starting off 2015 on a busy note, Outbound Konnections is ecstatic. It has added three more products to its portfolio, which means more choice to the travel trade.



TT BUREAU

This year kicked off on a good note for Outbound Konnections. The addition of Chimelong International Ocean Resort in Zhuhai (China), TUI – Life Time Experience Products and Select Travels from Philippines to its portfolio has added that much more variety and broadened its service offerings.

Anjum Lokhandwala, Founder and CEO, Outbound Konnections, says, "Of course, we will be making further additions to the current list as the year goes on. Alongside this, we would also be working on some path-breaking and out-of-the-box strategies for our clients so that they will have a symbiotic growth with us."

Lokhandwala adds that the next step for Outbound Konnections is to make sure that the travel trade is regularly updated on its service offerings and client services through information via mailers, road-shows, online sessions, training and the likes. "At the same time, we are devoting considerable effort into diversifying our services, focus more on capturing the pace of the new-age Indian, tap the unexplored areas, etc. Besides major hub towns, we are expecting good

movements from Tier II Indian markets enabling deeper penetration," she says.

Speaking about the potential of luxury travel in

this changing Indian market," she adds.

Sharing her perspective on the current scenario of the Indian travel industry,

"We can see that the Indian outbound market is growing rapidly. Even today, there is continuous growth in the tourism traffic coming in as well as going out of India, thus giving a reason for us to go on with more determination."



Anjum Lokhandwala
Founder and CEO, Outbound Konnections

India, Lokhandwala, says that India is warming up luxury products. "India is now a mature luxury market and the number of high net-worth travellers are growing at a fast pace. Family holidays and honeymooners are the trend and they are seeking luxury. Indians are now more focussed in terms of choosing the destination they want to travel to, and from the destination the right products they want to experience. TUI – Life Time Experience Products being an out-an-out luxury product has huge potential in

Lokhandwala says, "In this age of globalization, India has emerged as a major tourism revenue generating destination. We can see that the Indian outbound market is growing rapidly. Even today, there is continuous growth in the tourism traffic coming in as well as going out of India, thus giving a reason for us to go on with more determination."

She feels that as always, more and more new destinations are entering India to reach out to the outbound Indian traveller. Whether the

tourist is experiential, adventure-seeking or a first-timer, there is always something new to experience.

"The country is setting a path for a better per capita income, so disposable income in middle-class families and upwards is increasing too. The size of the Indian middle class currently stands at approximately more than 350 million, with India ranked as one of the top five countries for potential outbound travel. Add to this, the number of Indians travelling overseas which is set to rise from nearly 17 million at present to 50 million by 2020. Together with wanderlust, this makes India an attractive outbound destination," Lokhandwala adds.

India's Potential

- India ranked as one of the top five countries for potential outbound travel
- The number of Indians travelling overseas which is set to rise from nearly 17 million at present to 50 million by 2020

India ninth best MICE Destination in APAC region:ICCA

International Congress and Convention Association's (ICCA) annual statistics for 2014 on the number of rotating international association meetings hosted by countries and cities were released recently indicating overall stability in the MICE business. Paris, France retained its top city ranking alongside the US winning the top country ranking in the latest ICCA annual ratings. In the city rankings, Vienna swapped places with Madrid, moving up from three to two, and Berlin and Barcelona swapped places from four and five respectively. India holds the 35th position in the rankings worldwide and achieved ninth position in the Asia Pacific region, seeing 116 global business events in 2014. The major cities which hosted the events were Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kolkata, Goa, Chandigarh, Jaipur and Cochin.

Curtailing legal costs

Contd. from page 1

association are well-monitored and budgeted every year by the Managing Committee along with the support of our Chapter office bearers," he says.

Outlining the main sources from where TAAI fills its treasury, he reveals, "The membership fees are a bare minimum and do not even help in meeting our fixed costs. Sponsorships for all our events and the Convention/ITTE held during the year assist in building our treasury. Unfortunately, it is the legal expenses which form a major part of the expenditure, followed by the TAAI secretariat expenses and meeting expenses of the Managing Committee and so on."

To keep a healthy balance, TAAI has tried to curtail unnecessary expenses of legal fees, which is a major account head, and has been brought under control. "An initiative by this committee is to have more road-shows and workshops to edu-

Unfortunately, it is the legal expenses which form a major part of the expenditure, followed by the TAAI secretariat expenses and meeting expenses of the Managing Committee and so on

Marzban Antia
Treasurer, TAAI

cate the members and the trade as a whole are on the cards and we have received fantastic support from a lot of tourism bodies as well as hospitality partners," states the Treasurer. The treasurer is happy that the association has admitted several new members under its active and/or allied categories. "By the efforts of this committee, we are endeavouring to gain more support of the trade to join TAAI so as to obtain continuous education, benefits and knowledge through regular updates of all that is happening in the industry. TAAI also has once again through APJC got the Joint Bank Guarantee for the IATA

agents back into force as a form of a financial guarantee to IATA. This is one of the first and only global schemes of its kind which is tried and tested in the past and has been a huge success for our members," he says.

Cutting Losses

- To keep a healthy balance, TAAI has tried to curtail unnecessary expenses of legal fees, which is a major account head, and has been brought under control

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Taj Krishna

Hyderabad

K Mohanchandran has been appointed as the Area Director – Hyderabad and General Manager at Taj’s iconic hotel Taj Krishna. In his new role Mohanchandran will be responsible for overseeing operations and business of all Taj Hotels across Hyderabad. With over 25 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Mohanchandran’s strength lies in his thorough knowledge of the industry. Prior to being appointed in his current role, he was the General Manager at the Taj Lake Palace in Udaipur, Taj Wellington Mews in Mumbai, Blue - A Taj Hotel in Sydney, and most recently Taj Bengal Kolkata.



Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield

Bengaluru

Vimal Bhat has been appointed as Associate Director of Sales of Bengaluru Marriott Whitefield. He comes with nine years of experience in the hospitality industry. Bhat commenced his journey with the Marriott family six years ago and was one of the pioneers that Marriott had in the Bengaluru as a part of NSO team. After a very successful stint in the NSO, he moved to Marriott Whitefield in 2012 as the Sales Manager and played a critical role in the successful opening and positioning of the hotel.



Myra Vineyards

Mumbai

Myra Vineyards announced the elevation of **Sachin Bhamri** to Head of Sales and Marketing, Maharashtra and Goa (except Mumbai). Bhamri was previously responsible for the sales and marketing of Myra, in Goa. Bhamri, who joined Myra Vineyards towards the end of last year, has been instrumental in accentuating Myra’s brand presence across all relevant platforms and outlets in Goa. Key highlights over the past few months includes presence at the Sunburn Festival, VH1 Supersonic After Party dovetailed with key tie-ups with over 30+ restaurants, 200+ supermarkets, and presence across leading five star hotels.



Shakun Jaipur

Jaipur

Shakun Jaipur has appointed **Anand Soni** as its new General Manager. He brings with him an experience of over 13 years in hospitality sector. Soni began his career with Moevenpick Hotels in Geneva. A graduate from Marriott Management Programme, he has worked with leading hotel brands like The Oberoi hotels, Taj hotels, Hilton and Marriott in Europe, USA and India. He holds an MBA in Marketing & Human Resources and diploma in Hotel Management from Les Roches Hotel School, Switzerland.



Grand Mercure Goa Shrem Resort

Goa

Accor has announced the appointment of **Rohan Sable** as the General Manager, Grand Mercure Goa Shrem Resort. Sable brings with him over 16 years of experience in the hospitality industry. He joined Accor in February 2013 and was the General Manager of IBIS Mumbai in his earlier role. In his new role Sable will be responsible for the overall management, strategic direction and lead the hotel to continually delight guests with the Grand Mercure hospitality. Sable has numerous years of experience in the various hospitality disciplines, from F&B to Operations to Sales and Marketing.



Park Inn by Radisson Gurgaon Bilaspur

Gurgaon

Arvind Shenoy has been appointed as General Manager of the Park Inn By Radisson Gurgaon Bilaspur. Shenoy comes with over 20 years of experience in the hospitality industry. He works with new and existing properties, combining cost controls with transitional and long-term team building to maximise advantages. Shenoy is a 1994 graduate from The Welcomgroup Graduate School of Hotel Administration, Manipal. He has served in various operating capacities, for franchises including Tulip, Carlson Rezidor hotels and various other single unit hotel companies.



Yatra.com

New Delhi

Himanshu Verma has been appointed as Chief Technology Officer by Yatra.com. He comes with two decades of diverse experience in the technology industry and the last ten years have seen him in key leadership roles with some of the biggest names in the e-commerce and Internet industries. In his new role, Verma will lead technology development for all businesses and products of Yatra. In this role, Verma will be engaged in growing the mobile business, which is now touted as the future of the travel industry.



Hilton Chennai

Chennai

Hilton Chennai recently announced appointment of **Achal Agarwal** as Executive Chef. With more than 15 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Agarwal has worked with chains like Taj Hotels, Resorts and Palaces, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts and Hyatt Hotels Corporation. He was associated with award winning Japanese restaurants like Sakura, Wasabi and Megu. Most recently he was in charge of the kitchen team at Hyatt Regency, New Delhi.



The Claridges

New Delhi

The Claridges, New Delhi has announced the appointment of **Sahil Sabhlok** as the Executive Chef. He comes to The Claridges, New Delhi with over a decade of experience in the hospitality and restaurant industry with an aim to make the hotel an epicurean hub with his experience across diverse cuisines. He will be instrumental in planning, implementing and overseeing the diverse and unique menus across all our restaurants. Sabhlok will lead a team of talented young chefs, allowing each specialty restaurant to retain its core premium focus, leading them into a new era.

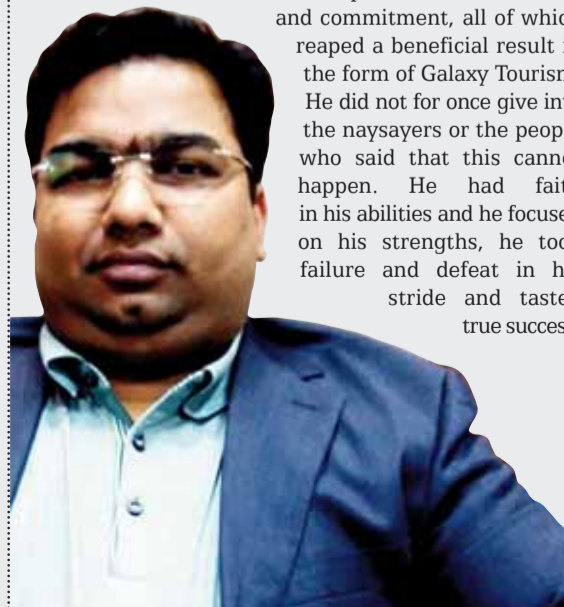


TALKing People

Avjit Chaturvedi, General Manager, Fortune Select Dasve, Lavasa, likes writing Hindi and Urdu poetry in his free time. He is also a photography enthusiast. Chaturvedi has been associated with an amateur theatre group for more than 10 years. "I enjoy listening to semi-classical and classical Hindustani music," he says. His preferred travel destinations are Ngorongoro National Park Tanzania & Masai Mara, Kenya and Kaziranga National Park, Assam, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.



Surya Bhan Singh, Chairman, Galaxy Tourism, is one of the youngest chairman in the Tourism Industry. Singh was grounded and practical and worked his way up the success ladder with perseverance, devotion and commitment, all of which reaped a beneficial result in the form of Galaxy Tourism. He did not for once give into the naysayers or the people who said that this cannot happen. He had faith in his abilities and he focused on his strengths, he took failure and defeat in his stride and tasted true success.



Saurabh Rai, Area Managing Director, South Asia and Middle East, Preferred Hotels & Resorts Rai travels extensively due to his work portfolio. Father of a two-year-old daughter, luxury for him, is time with his family – and as a team they enjoy unwinding by the ocean resorts in Thailand. Road trips within India, up to the hills or into the interiors of Rajasthan are a big hit. "The connotation of travel has altered since the arrival of my daughter. We recently went snorkelling in Maldives and that’s been added to my list of favourite things to do," he says.



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MARKS DIGITAL DESIGN

UP Travel Mart from Feb 22 next year

After a five-year agreement with FICCI at the travel mart in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh has now secured ` 1,600 cr from the World Bank to develop its tourism circuits. Om Prakash Singh, Tourism Minister, Uttar Pradesh, talks to **TRAVTALK**.

RUCHI J SINGH

QWhat would you call Uttar Pradesh's USP in terms of tourism?

We have an abundance of heritage and that's our USP. We may not have oceans and mountains but the state makes up for it in terms of religious and heritage sites of the highest repute. We have the world's oldest city, Kashi, and Lord Rama's birthplace, Ayodhya, which see massive domestic tourism. We are No. 2 in India when it comes to domestic numbers, and No. 4 for foreign tourists. The Taj Mahal alone saw up to 60,72,263 visitors from January 2014 to December 2014, out of which 6,94,467 were foreigners and 53,77,796 Indians.

QHow has e-ticketing for the Taj Mahal fared?

The response has been hugely positive. We have had 4,04,133 visitors in total who booked through e-ticketing from December 2014 to April 2015. Out of these 2,77,126 were foreigners and 1,27,007 Indians. Taking it forward, we want to make it systematic — something on the lines of Berlin Tower. The ticketing system is impeccable at this landmark in



Om Prakash Singh, Tourism Minister, Uttar Pradesh

Berlin and is mighty impressive. We want to implement this at other popular sites as well.

QWill UP Travel Mart be an annual event? If yes, please share the dates for 2016 edition?

Yes, seeing the response in Lucknow, we plan to hold the travel mart every year. It'll come back to Lucknow from February 22-24, 2016. We also agreed on a five-year agreement with FICCI which is a great achievement.

These people are duty-driven and disciplined which makes their job very easy and of highest quality. They are currently deployed at Mathura, Lucknow and Varanasi. I am proud to say that we haven't had any incidents that could tarnish UP's image as a tourist destination since its formation. As of now we have only one woman officer in Tourist police unit under SSP Agra, but we are looking to add more.

QWhat's up and coming on the UP Tourism front?

UP Tourism grew at 12 per cent in the past year. Our renewed focus on heritage-based tourism has revived many

Taj remains UP's crown jewel



60,72,263 visited the Taj Mahal from January-December 2014
4,04,133 booked their visit to the Taj Mahal through e-Ticketing from December 2014 to April 2015
Agra leads the state with **44.1%** hotel occupancy

Up and coming

- 2000 tourists in total from October 2014 to April 2015 took the Chambal Safari through the infamous ruins of Chambal once called home by numerous dacoits
- Sound and light show at Sarnath and Ramnagar Fort
- Chunar Fort being refurbished
- ` 640 cr assigned to cleaning and beautification of River Gomti in Lucknow
- 31 canals flowing into Gomti being restored
- A museum in Ghazipur district on Mughal history
- A gallery based on the events of 1857 mutiny

QCongratulations on receiving the aid from the World Bank. What are the investment projections?

We are thrilled to have secured ` 1,600 crore from the World Bank. Out of this, ` 441 crore will be allotted to Mathura, Ayodhya and Kashi Buddha circuit.

QHow has the concept of Tourism Police materialised?

We have recruited ex-military men to serve as tourism police in the state.

small areas/monuments/events which were regionally renowned but lacked national exposure. Some such events are the Mangla Aarti, Dev Diwali and Bharat Milap in Varanasi, Ramnagar Fort, Shahi Taalab in Lucknow. We organise light and sound show in Jhansi and Sarnath, Varanasi, and a musical show for the aficionados called Subah-e-Banaras. UP Tourism seeks the support of all media associated with the travel trade to highlight the wonders of this state and to dispel the negative coverage in the mainstream media.



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