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SPECIAL ISSUE 2015

SEPTEMBER 24-27



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Bengaluru hosts PATA Travel Mart



PATA Travel Mart 2015 (PTM 2015) opened in Bengaluru, on September 6, and attracted over 1,000 delegates from 61 destinations. Here, Karnataka Chief Minister **Siddaramaiah** is seen with Tourism Minister **Dr. Mahesh Sharma** and **RV Deshpande**, Minister for Large & Medium Scale Industries and Tourism, Government of Karnataka.

Vinod Zutshi appointed Tourism Secretary

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has announced the appointment of **Vinod Zutshi** as the new Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. He succeeds **Dr Lalit Panwar**, who retired from service last month. A Rajasthan cadre IAS officer of 1982 batch, Zutshi was Deputy Election Commissioner in the Election Commission of India prior to his elevation as Secretary-Tourism. A post-graduate in Business Administration and an MBA, Zutshi started his career as an SDO in Rajasthan in 1984 and had been Managing Director, Industries, Secretary for Education, Agriculture, etc. in his home cadre Rajasthan. He was also Secretary Tourism, Rajasthan, and Chairman, Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation (RTDC) between 2004 and 2007 in Rajasthan. On Central deputation since 2009, Zutshi has been OSD and subsequently Deputy Election Commissioner in the Election Commission of India.



TAAI elections on Sept 30 in Mumbai



Harmandeep Singh Anand
Hon Secretary General
TAAI

HAZEL JAIN

After concluding all its Regions and Chapter elections, the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) is gearing up for its National elections on September 30, 2015 to be held in Mumbai.

The association has sent out notices for its national elections and 64th AGM that will be

held together on September 30, 2015 in Mumbai. Revealing this information is **Harmandeep Singh Anand**, Hon Secretary General, TAAI. "The elections and our AGM will be held at Sahara Star Hotel at 11:30 am. The elections will be for the post of four Office Bearers and seven Managing Committee members. September 16 is the last day to file the nominations and September 24 is the deadline to

withdraw them. However, it is premature to name the members who will be standing for the national body elections," he said.

The four Office Bearers that will be elected that day will be for the posts of: President, Vice President, Hon Secretary General and Hon Treasurer. TAAI elections are held every two years and this term will be for 2015-17. All chapter

bearers - four Regions and 16 Chapters - that have been elected will also take charge from the same day.

Key dates

Sept 16 is the last day to file the nominations and Sept 24 is the deadline to withdraw them

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FAITH committee elected unopposed

The Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality Industry (FAITH) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) and elections for the term 2015-17 on September 5, 2015.

TT BUREAU

The election for office bearers and core committee members of FAITH was held for the term starting October 1, 2015 till September 30, 2017. But in a remarkable show of unity, all the four positions for office bearers were nominated and elected unopposed by the board of directors of FAITH, each representing one member association.

The federation re-elected **Nakul Anand**, Executive Director, ITC, as its chairman and **Sarabjit Singh**, Senior Vice President, IATO, as the vice chairman, nominated by HAI & ITTA respectively. Former president, FHRAI, **S.M. Shervani**, nominated by FHRAI, has been elected to the post of secretary. He replaces outgoing Honorary

secretary **Subhash Verma** who had represented ADTOI.

Akshay Kumar, President, Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI), will be the treasurer. He replaces outgoing treasurer **Sunil Kumar**, who represented TAAI.

Aashish Gupta continues as the Consulting CEO.

FAITH, a national platform set up by 10 national tourism and hospitality associations namely, HAI, FHRAI, IHHA IATO, ADTOI, ATOAI, ITTA, TAAI, TAFI, ICPB, was launched in May 2013. It func-

tions as the nodal strategic policy think tank for tourism & hospitality for India and has been actively engaging with

Centre and State Government policy over the past two years. It has been involved in eTV, Foreign Trade Policy 2015-20 (tourism component) National Tourism Policy 2015, Economic Survey FY14, FY15 (tourism component), Cenvat taxation alignment, Union budget FY 14, 15 (tourism component), national tourism ministers meeting FY 13, FY 14, first joint strategy meeting between aviation industry & tourism industry, WTO/RCEP/SAARC suggestions and the likes.



Nakul Anand
Executive Director, ITC



Sarabjit Singh
Senior Vice President, IATO



S.M. Shervani
Former president, FHRAI



Akshay Kumar
President, ATOAI

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Date	SESSIONS	CATEGORY 1 (INR) TICKETS	CATEGORY 2 (INR) TICKETS
25/10/2015	Round Robin: Session 1	1495	845
25/10/2016	Round Robin: Session 2	3245	1645
26/10/2015	Round Robin: Session 3	3395	1645
27/10/2015	Round Robin: Session 4	1345	845
27/10/2015	Round Robin: Session 5	2945	1645
28/10/2015	Round Robin: Session 6	1345	845
28/10/2015	Round Robin: Session 7	2945	1645
29/10/2015	Round Robin: Session 8	1345	845
29/10/2015	Round Robin: Session 9	2995	1645
30/10/2015	Round Robin: Session 10	4745	2945
31/10/2015	Semi-Finals: Session 11	4745	2945
31/10/2015	Semi-Finals: Session 12	5895	3695
1/11/2015	Finals: Session 13	7045	4245

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Need of the hour Multiple entry eTV

The IATO Convention 2015 and the PATA Travel Mart (PTM) 2015, both took place one after the other, at the end of August and beginning of September respectively. This is immediately before the tourism season takes off in India, and we hope they will give a great boost to inbound tourism to India. They were well attended by a large number of international buyers/sellers from various countries and from across India.

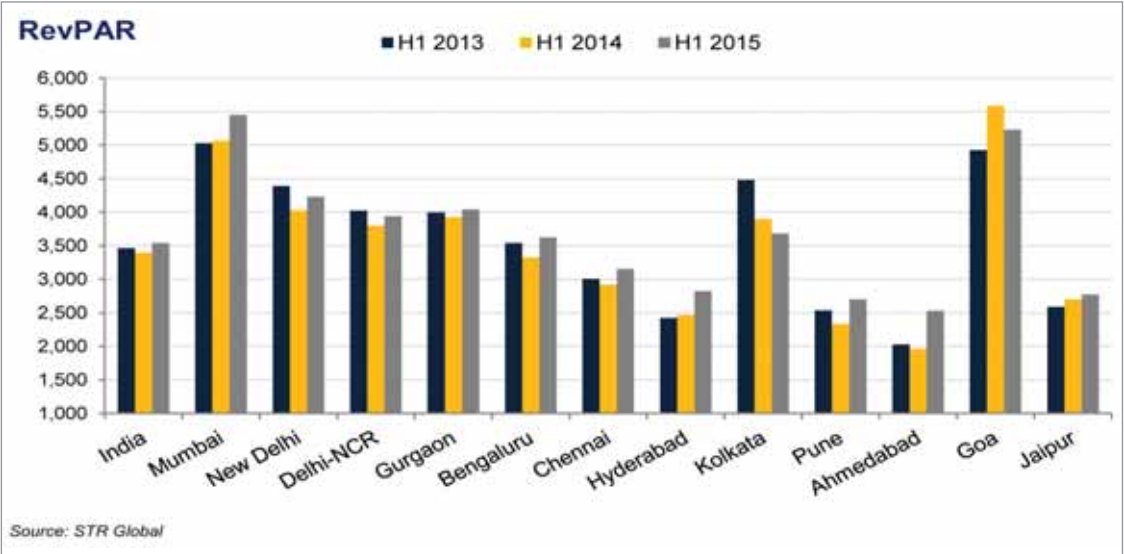
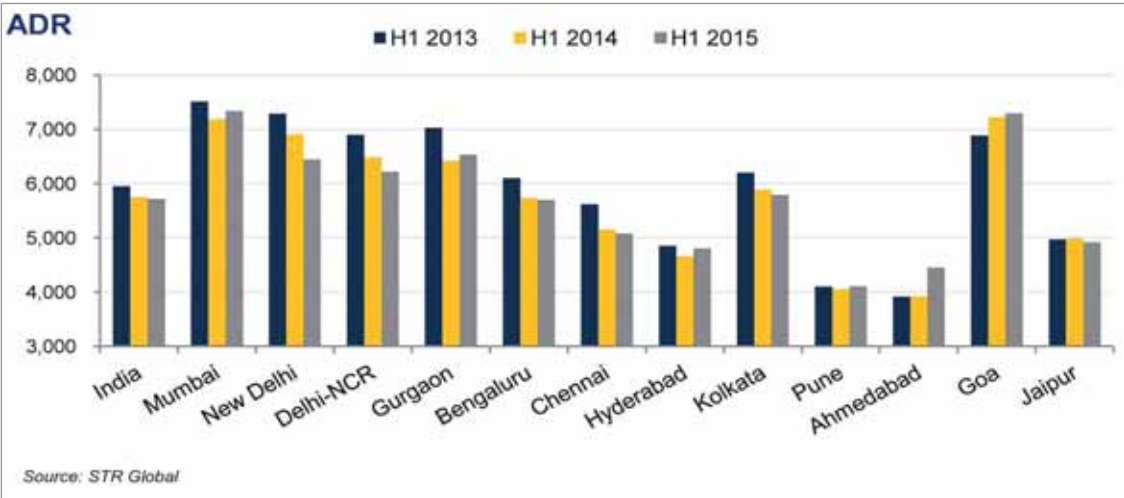
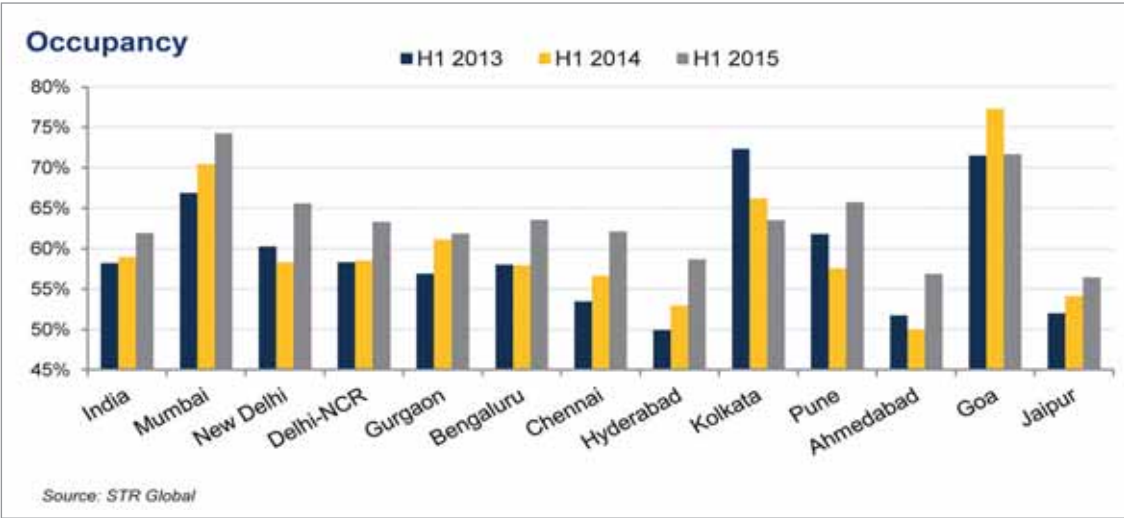
Both events were strongly supported by the state governments — IATO in Indore, by the MP Government and PTM in Bengaluru, by the Karnataka Government. Realising the importance of tourism in building the state’s economy, the state governments are also encouraging international airlines to fly directly into the state by providing visa and e-Tourist Visa (eTV) facilities at the state airports. These events give the much needed boost not only to the metros but also to secondary and tertiary cities, winning them recognition and word-of-mouth marketing, other than across-the-table business opportunities.

At the PATA event, while appreciating the eTV facilities being offered by the Indian government, travel associations, airlines, travel agents and others voiced their concern about the Indian visa norms still restricting tourism growth into the country; they need to now go one step further and relax the rules to allow tourists multiple entry, allowing them to visit other countries in the region and return to India.

With the economic mess manufactured in China and the falling rupee against the dollar just before the tourist season, as we head towards the festival season in India, can we use our reputed intellect and astuteness to make true what our PM has stated, ‘Let China’s loss be India’s gain!’

Mumbai hotels occupancy at 74.3%

Occupancy, Average Daily Rate (ADR) and Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR) trends nationally have revealed that Mumbai has strong occupancy levels, but hotels remain diffident on rates.



	H1-2015	H1-2014	H1-2013
Occupancy	64.9%	59.0%	58.2%
Average Daily Rate	` 5,716	` 5,754	` 5,954
RevPAR	` 3,539	3,393	` 3,464
Total branded rooms 30 Jun	107,449	98,643	85,778

Source: H1-2015 edition of the India Hotel Market Review Report in partnership with STR Global. The report is based on hotel performance statistics from STR Global and its analysis by Horwath HTL–India.

Chennai has gained 8.6 points occupancy since H1-13. Rates at luxury and upper-upscale hotels breasted the 8k mark with 3.8% growth and remain ahead of Delhi but behind Gurgaon and Mumbai. Goa’s story revolves around a slowdown of group and charter inbound travel, impacting occupancies but also enabling better rates from FIT and other demand. Kolkata continues a downward slide since H1-12.

eTV not enough, India needs more

Setting the tone for more friendly initiatives by the Indian government, Kevin Murphy talked about moving beyond just visa norms for garnering more revenues at the recently concluded PTM 2015 in Bengaluru.



MEGHA PAUL

Even though eTV facility has been introduced and extended to many nations, other visa facilities will be crucial to increase tourist footfall in the country, feels **Kevin Murphy**, Chairman, PATA. According to Murphy, India is limiting its options of tourism growth due to its stringent visa norms.

"Today, people don't plan a holiday 18 months in advance and tourist destina-



Kevin Murphy
Chairman
PATA

The government should allow visa-on-arrival applications to be reinvented so that more tourists can make multiple entries to this part of the world and business travellers can also make tourism commitments

tions need to adapt to that. Since technology is available to facilitate holidays that are planned in a short time, policies should also facilitate the same. With many young people coming forward to revamp tourism development in India, it appears that the sector is in for a major boost. However, we want the government to allow visa-on-arrival applications to be reinvented so that more international tourists can make multiple entries to this part of the world and business travellers can also make tourism commitments," he suggested, while talking about his reservations on the country's visa policy.

Regarding the business generated during this PTM

2015, he added, "Over the years the Mart's continued success has been due to its ability to continue to add further value for our delegates and members, while striking the right balance between quality and quantity for our registered buyers and sellers. This year's event attracted 1,000 delegates from 61 destinations, including 242 buyers.

The event being held in the city also means it will open up new tourist destinations in Karnataka to a worldwide audience."

On what prompted them to come to Bengaluru for the 38th PTM, Murphy informed, "Going forward, the strategy of PATA will be to look at destinations with potential for

tourism rather than already established destinations for hosting our PTMs. We were questioned on why we are coming to the IT city of India, but Karnataka has a lot of potential beyond just being the IT hub of India. Thus, coming to the city was a very strategic decision and is in line with our model."

Philippines attends 38th PTM

■ The Department of Tourism (DOT), Philippines, attended the annual PATA Travel Mart 2015 held in Bengaluru from September 6-8, 2015. This year, **Gerard O. Panga**, Tourism Attaché, Market Development Group, and **James Sy**, OIC for ASEAN and the Pacific Division, led the delegation of the Philippines, comprising six sellers from the Philippines who participated in the PTM 2015. The delegates were Shroff International Travel Care, BC Travel and Tours Corporation, New Goldmines Tours and Travel, ARK Travel Express, Select Travels and Celebrate Life. Alongside attending the various PATA events, Panga interacted with the media

and updated them on the latest marketing strategies for 2015 and 2016. Panga said, "The PATA Travel Mart is a premier travel trade show, offering a remarkable platform to showcase travel products and services and bringing together hundreds of international buyers and sellers." He also said that "a successful year-long campaign in 2015 has inspired the DOT, Philippines, to extend another year of welcome to overseas travellers. The upcoming Visit the Philippines Again (VPA) 2016 campaign will focus on travellers especially those who have had a great time at the destination before, with lures being exclusive travel deals, discounted airfares and hotel stays."

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TAAI Elections

Staff training key for moving forward

No change in Northern Region office bearers TAAI East team gets re-elected

TT BUREAU



We will invite leaders of different political parties, Parliamentarians and media for the meetings as there is a need for intensive interaction with members, media and government authorities. We have submitted the concerns of TAAI agents to Dr Mahesh Sharma, Minister of State with Independent Charge for Tourism and Culture and Minister of State for Civil Aviation, who has assured full support.

Rajan Sehgal
Chairman, TAAI Northern Region

There is a need to expand business horizons by educating travel agents on domestic and inbound tour packages and selling hotels and cruising options. DGCA is yet to implement the order of Kerala High Court, issued around four years ago, of giving a required amount of commission to agents.



Neeraj Malhotra
Secretary, TAAI Northern Region

The Northern Region will focus on providing more value for TAAI members. TAAI-NR will work closely with tourism bodies and the government to create more business opportunities for agents in the region. Our Facebook page, 'Travel Agents of India', is being followed by 578 members, along with airline officials and bureaucrats. The page provides updates on the events in the industry. TAAI-NR would start considering taking chapter members from cities such as Punjab for international FAM trips.



Gaurav Dogra
Treasurer, TAAI Northern Region

There are a few main issues that we want to look into. One is the education of our members, specially for their frontline staff. We want to train them on communication and soft skills as they deal with the clients directly. For the senior staff, we are looking at management training. Meanwhile, efforts are also on to educate members about various destinations and products – both inbound and outbound. We have organised two Fam trips for our members – one was to Sri Lanka in August and the other to Gujarat in September this year.



Devesh Kumar Agarwal
Chairman, TAAI Eastern Region

The team is trying to connect with all its members on a regional level and encourage them to be more active and participative. There are many agents outside Kolkata but they remain more or less isolated from the rest of the community like Patna, Bhubaneshwar, Jamshedpur, Imphal, Dhanbad, Cuttack, Darjeeling, Siliguri. The plan is to conduct out-station meetings in these smaller cities and engage agents there. We also invite them for all our meetings and our annual show that is like a get-together we do every year.



Vikas Sarawgi
Secretary, TAAI Eastern Region and ITA winner



Our focus is to try and get the agents exempted from paying service tax to the excise department or alternately, get the airlines to re-imburse them. We have already got Indigo to do this and now we will try for the other airlines as well.

Chandra Prakash Poddar
Treasurer, TAAI Eastern Region

Contd. on page 10 ►

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Training travel agents through webinar

Switzerland Tourism has gone on an overdrive with a new webinar launched this September for the frontline staff. It will cover one destination every month.

TT BUREAU

Switzerland Tourism has reportedly achieved a 26 per cent increase in the first six months of this year with 3,47,056 overnights from January to June 2015. But it is not resting. **Claudio Zemp**, who joined the NTO as its new Director (India) from May 1, 2015, has revealed that it has launched a webinar for the frontline staff who haven't had the opportunity to travel to Switzerland.



Claudio Zemp
Director – India
Switzerland Tourism

This is my first time working in India but I was welcomed by the trade from the start. Agents here are extremely motivated and hard-working and they come up with a lot of creative ideas

"We will cover one destination every month starting this September. It will be a 30-minute webinar which will cover all the products from accommodation, activities and even suggestions on how to combine the two. We will invite the people we have on our database but those interested can also contact us for this. This will be a regular thing from now on. There will also be a competition at the end of it," Zemp adds.

Meanwhile, its specialist programme which now has over 600 agents will see a total revamp by 2016.

Speaking about his first impressions, Zemp says, "Nowhere in the world is Switzerland as popular as it is here. This is my first time working in India but I was welcomed by the trade from the start.

Agents here are extremely motivated and hard-working and they come up with a lot of creative ideas."

Having completed a four-city roadshow in Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Chennai and New Delhi in August, he will travel to Zermatt for the Switzerland Travel Mart from September 21-23, 2015 with 25 hosted Indian buyers.

His immediate plans include promoting winter tourism and self-drive options. "For the first time we had our India workshop in winter this year in Switzerland and the feedback was really good. Our trade partners loved our winter experience so we are going to put some packages together. We have also introduced our self-drive programme in Switzerland starting this sum-

mer called the Grand Tour of Switzerland," Zemp says.

Switzerland Tourism has announced the launch of its 'In Love with Switzerland' campaign for Mumbai to celebrate 150 years of winter tourism. This campaign is to promote tourism to Switzerland from India, not only during summer but also during autumn and winter. The winter campaign was launched

in presence of tourism regions from Switzerland - St. Moritz, Davos Klosters, Rhaetian Railways and Ticino.

Apart from an increase in overnights, Switzerland also saw a rise in revenue for train tickets. "We have figures from our railways that indicate an increase of over 40 per cent in revenue for tickets bought mostly by individual

travellers. Indians love train travel and we have therefore launched a super special offer on our passes. Our Swiss Passes will be valid for five days instead of four and our eight-day passes will be valid for an extra two days. Many of our tour operator partners have come up with amazing offers as well giving away free accommodation as well," Zemp adds.



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TAAI Elections

Strengthening ties with members

Giving back to the association



We will focus on keeping our members updated and well informed on all the current issues of the travel industry. To facilitate this we shall have knowledge sharing sessions for smooth communication. We intend to bring about an awareness on inbound tours which is going to be a major revenue generator. To provide hard work, dedication, determination and confidence to the job is going to be our role.

Hema RV Chander
Chairperson, TAAI Southern Region



I have been elected as the treasurer and I take a resolution to contribute by making some much needed changes like spending ample time for the needs of the members and for the committee. We will contribute as a team with frequent meetings and regular follow ups. We will also ensure that adequate funds through subscription payment collection on time, for the needs of the travel industry is done by being consistent and trustworthy.

Santhi Sakthivadivel
Treasurer, TAAI Southern Region



I am proud to be an active member of TAAI since 2001 and I am proud that I am elected as the Hon. Secretary of the Southern Region. TAAI has been recognised as the voice of travel agents and tourism industry in India which celebrates six decades of phenomenal growth with high ethical and professional standards. Travel agents have some core issues which emerged since 2008 onwards. Despite that 75 per cent of travellers still prefer personalised services offered by travel agents. We need to bring about an awareness on inbound tours which is going to be major generator in near future.

Joseph Jaya Ravi
Secretary, TAAI Southern Region

A younger team in the West



I would like to thank the members who have entrusted their faith in me again. We had started off with a vision of empowering our members in the last term but the task is still undone. We did a lot of sessions in partnership with VFS and destinations like South Africa and Vietnam. We are in the process of negotiating similar sessions with Korea, Luxemburg and a few others. We also plan to increase our membership.

Sampat Damani
Chairman, TAAI Western Region

We did a lot of activities for our members in the last two years. I now plan to carry the same momentum forward in a much bigger spirit than I did in my earlier term. There are a lot of things that have already been planned that includes a lot of new activities.

Sameer Karnani
Secretary, TAAI Western Region



To make TAAI's base even stronger, I am looking at increasing membership, conducting more fundraising drives for the region, offsite meetings, team-building exercises, and workshops with more destinations. Details will follow soon as we crystallise the programme.

Madhuri Kanga
Treasurer, TAAI Western Region



890% surge in eTV arrivals from Jan-Aug

■ A total of 1,69,976 tourist arrived on e-Tourist Visa during January- August, 2015, as compared to 17,120 during January-August, 2014 registering a growth of 892.9 per cent. During August, a total of 22,286 tourist arrived on eTV as compared to 2,705 during the month of August, 2014 registering a growth of 723.9 per cent.

This high growth may be attributed to introduction of e-Tourist Visa for 113 countries as against coverage of earlier TVoA scheme for 12 countries.

The percentage shares of top 10 source countries availing e-Tourist Visa facility during August 2015 were as follows: USA (25.93%), Germany (10.00%), UAE (8.92%), France (8.76%), Australia (7.20%), Canada (6.39%), Republic of Korea (4.23%), Japan (3.41%), Russian Federation (2.37%) and Singapore (2.22%).

Indonesia & Bhutan on TAFI radar

Vijay K Gupta, Chairman, TAFI Northern India, updates on their future initiatives and agenda. He also throws light on the discussion with Lufthansa.



Q What is your new agenda?

We recently had our AGM to pass the accounts and we discussed that we need to have familiarisation (Fam) trips to Bulgaria and Georgia. We are in touch with the Indonesian Tourism Board also for Fam trips for North India agents to Jakarta and Bandung. We will have one Fam in October end or post Diwali. We are also in talks with a new airline from Bhutan besides Drukair.



Vijay K Gupta
Chairman
TAFI Northern India

We will have the convention wherever we get a good deal. It is basically for the benefit of our agents and the tourism promotion of the place we have our convention at. Tourism has always shown a growth in those places

They have agreed to provide us 20-30 seats. We have also tied up with hotels in Bhutan. We will soon update you on these developments as and when they are finalised.

Q What kind of support does the Northern Chapter get from the All India TAFI?

They are a big support. The North India Chapter Chairman is part of the

All India Managing Committee and the National Joint Council. Wherever they have their meeting in the country they invite all the chapter chairmen. North Indian is the biggest chapter in India. As most of our North India chapter meetings happen in Delhi, most of the agents from outside Delhi are unable to come here. So I talked to my national committee and they have allowed me to hold meetings in different places with agents of those places. The national committee supports me in whatever I need from them.

Q Where will you have your next convention?

That is not yet decided and our Managing Committee and Convention Committee are working on two to three options and we will have the convention wherever we get a good deal. It is basically for the benefit of our agents and the tourism promotion of the place we have our convention at. Tourism has always shown a growth in those places.

Q Please throw some light on the recent discussion with Lufthansa regarding the fare disparity?

There was a lot of opposition about Lufthansa's new step not only from India but also from across the world. But they still went ahead with it from September 1 as a yearly return (YR) and they have put it as a tax. But they have assured us that whatever YR is added, when somebody books through them it will be there also. Let's see what happens, as our Managing Committee is in touch with them through all channels available trying to sort out this issue.

Going international

→ TAFI discussed during its AGM the need to have Fam trips to Bulgaria and Georgia

→ The association is in touch with Indonesian Tourism Board for Fam trips for North Indian agents to Jakarta and Bandung

→ TAFI is in talks with airlines from Bhutan besides Drukair and has also tie ups with hotels in Bhutan

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IATO puts Indore on MICE map

The Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) Convention 2015 held in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, made it imperative for the organisers to ponder on whether an event of such magnitude should be held in smaller cities and towns or be left for the bigger ones.

 ANIL MATHUR

The selection of Indore as Host for the 31st IATO Convention was the reason why this question cropped up, as many felt that the city might not be able to handle such a big event. As many as 1,260 delegates attended the convention, and as IATO Convention Chairman **Pronab Sarkar** pointed out, over 350 potential delegates had to be refused participation due to a shortage of accommodation. He said that as a result of the convention in Indore, the IATO members would now be able to promote Madhya Pradesh (MP) destinations at shows like the ITB and WTM.

Raj Bajaj, MD, Adventure World, and an active IATO member, said that the MP administration has been very pro-active and the event helped delegates to learn about MICE and other facilities in the city. The quality and variety of food served came in for much praise,



dispelling the view of some that smaller, newer towns were not suitable for conventions of such magnitude. The exposure to new areas far outweighed any minor drawbacks in the facilities, most delegates felt, even as some said that compelling the delegates to stay during the sessions was not the best way to ensure attendance.

Connectivity was another issue that drew some criticism

from delegates from Odisha, who had to change flights more than once to get to Indore. **Sudhir Patil**, of Veena World, opined that minor inconveniences in smaller place were not serious and holding the meet in Indore was wise, as he could explore the region, just as he had done in Lucknow during the UP Travel Mart earlier this year. Patil, however, feels that time and schedules should be adhered to at all

costs. The Grand Bhagwati Palace provided good networking opportunities, as there were no distractions, Patil said. **Sehar Shamim**, General Manager-Sales and Marketing, Mapple, was impressed by the quality of the food and service and the convention gave her an opportunity to explore a new area. **Tanuja Panday**, Founder and CEO, IncentiWise, was full of praise for the convention venue but was quick to add that

a 200 room hotel near the convention centre would help promote the convention business. **Promod Dalvi**, Vice President-PR, Kesari Tours, praised the efforts of MP Chief Minister **Shivaraj Singh Chauhan**. He added that the infrastructure needs to be improved. **Harish Mathur**, Managing Director, Concord Travels, said MICE prospects were good and attention should be given to details. Also, safety was a matter of concern.

Andhra Pradesh Principal Secretary Tourism, **Neerabh Prasad**, used the convention to promote the State's experts and apex programmes. Amrawati, Tirupati and the Buddhist circuits must be promoted, he told the delegates.

Sunil Gupta, MD, Travel Bureau, Agra, said that it was not a question of small versus big cities, but one of old and new destinations for holding such meets. IATO stood for promoting new places and so

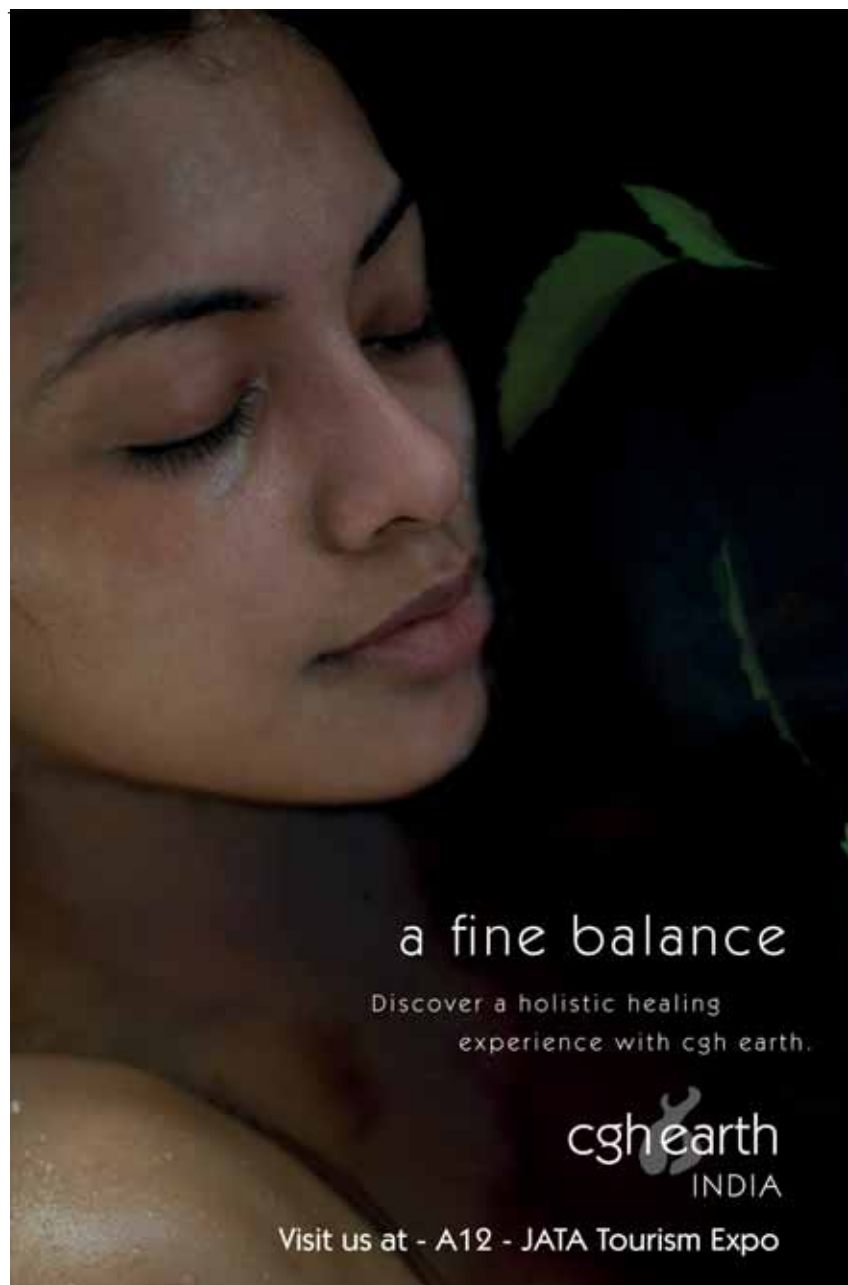
Indore was the right choice, even if it meant overcoming some logistical challenges, like getting good coaches from far and near. **Bjorn Noel De Niese**, Director, Mayfair Spa Resort & Casino Gangtok, said that Indore gave him an opportunity to see a new area and destination. He felt that there was a need for star branded hotels in the region.

C Nagendra Prasad, Chairman, Travelexpress, took the opportunity to go on a post convention tour to Bhopal, which he had never visited earlier.

Success Story

➔ As many as 1,260 delegates attended the convention

➔ The Grand Bhagwati Palace provided good networking opportunities, as there were no distractions

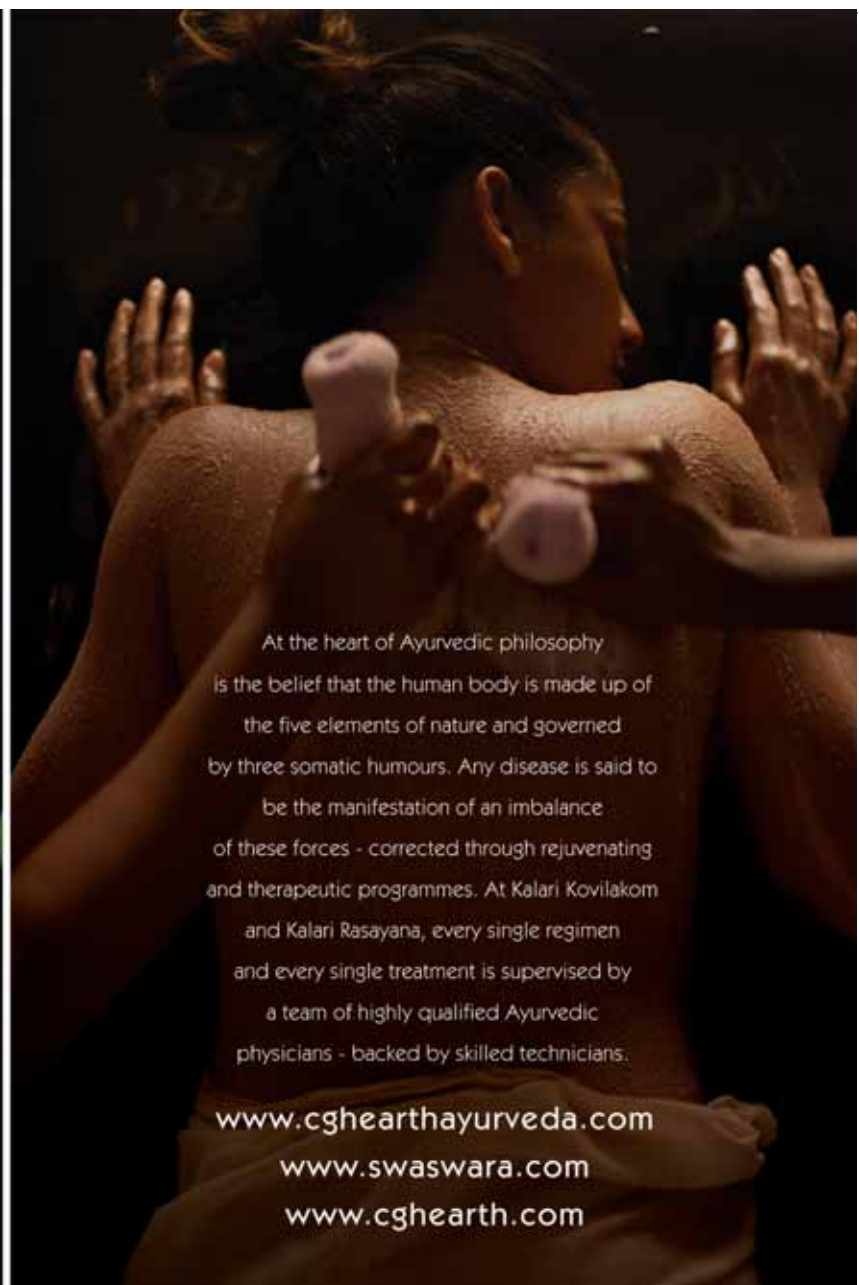


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Kerala Tourism starts holiday bid wars

Visiting 'God's Own Country' has gone under the hammer. And the winner will be the one bidding the lowest price. Holiday packages worth `8000 to `78,000 for lowest bids are up for the grabs.



TT BUREAU

The Kerala Tourism department has launched an online bidding game offering holiday packages to the state at virtually no cost. First-ever in the country for a destination, 'Visit Kerala Bid Wars' will be played out on the hugely popular Facebook page of Kerala Tourism.

The bid, joined by accredited tour operators in the state, will include packages from `8,000 to `78,000.

The bid, aimed at domestic travellers, is organised as part of the 'Visit Kerala 2015' campaign inaugurated by Kerala Tourism Minister **A P Anilkumar** in the national cap-

using Information Technology to spread awareness about the state's destinations. The tourism department's website, one of the most popular tourism websites in the world, has won several national and international tourism awards. "The online bidding not only carries forward the conversation with our fans, but also takes it to the next level," said

Kerala Tourism Director **P I Sheik Pareeth**.

For making the bidding a success, Kerala Tourism has partnered with accredited service providers from the state such as Kerala Tourism Development Corporation, Voyages Kerala, Intersight Holidays, Spice Land Holidays, Cosima Holidays, Dravidian Trails, Indus Holidays, and



Kerala Travels & Travel Planners. The packages range

from two nights to 10 days. The bidding process begins with

signing up on Kerala Bid Wars Facebook App or downloading the VisitKerala BidWars app from Play Store. After searching the package on offer, bid the lowest possible price, saying "this is the best year to visit Kerala". The bid will be active for a few days initially. The winner will be announced for each package soon after it ends and before the next package is up for bidding.



G Kamala Vardhana Rao
Secretary
Kerala Tourism

Kerala Tourism enjoys round-the-year engagement with our huge fan base across the world

ital in April. "Kerala Tourism enjoys round-the-year engagement with our huge fan base across the world," said Kerala Tourism Secretary **G Kamala Vardhana Rao**. "This bidding process is a unique way to acknowledge the bond with each other," he added.

The campaign will be anchored on an online bidding system known popularly as the 'lowest unique bid'. In this bidding system, the package, which is up for bidding, is won by the person whose bids the lowest as well as unique. If two people bid the same price, that amount will get cancelled. For example, if a person bids for a package worth `20,000 at `10, the package will be awarded to her if nobody else has bid `10 and no other unique bid is made which is less than `10.

Kerala Tourism, which has more than 1.2 million fans on Facebook, is a pioneer in



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Webinar facility at new Bonton office

Its new 10,000 sq ft corporate office in Andheri East, Mumbai, will now allow Bonton Holidays to host a training room equipped with state-of-the-art multi-location webinar facilities.



Seychelles boosts air links

Air Seychelles has established strong air links between Mumbai and Seychelles with direct four weekly flights to Mumbai and expanding code-share agreement with Jet Airways to nine cities in India.



Gearing up for national elections

With the national elections knocking at the door, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) Northern Region Managing Committee is hopeful to support and work together with each other. The team met the trade fraternity at a fun cocktail evening.



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India on Indonesia's visa-free travel list

Indians may no longer require visas to enter Indonesia, as the next batch of countries for visa free facility is to be announced later this year and India will feature in that list. The long awaited demand for direct flights between the two countries may also become a reality soon.



MEGHA PAUL

It is not just India which is promoting its tourism segment by introducing e-Tourist Visa to various countries. Joining the bandwagon is Indonesia that is now looking at visa free entry for Indian travellers. The Ministry of Tourism, Indonesia is contemplating adding India in the list of countries that are extended free visa by the end of the next month. This was revealed by **Arief Yahya**, Tourism Minister, Indonesia.

Talking about the new development, Yahya said, "We have not done enough for the Indian market till now. We hope this initiative will act as a catalyst that will lead to direct connectivity between the two countries. Our govern-

ment is going to soon have discussion with India's Civil Aviation Ministry to have direct flight between the two countries."

The move is expected to push airlines in both the countries to begin direct air connectivity, which is a long-standing demand from the industry. The country will look at adding direct connectivity from New Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai, Yahya added. Earlier this year, the Government of Indonesia had rolled out visa free entry to citizens of 45 countries, including Asian markets such as China, Japan and South Korea. Indonesia is now looking to add 48 countries to its list of visa free entry, thus taking the total to 93 countries by the end of this year. Visa-free

"Our government is going to soon have a discussion with India's Civil Aviation Ministry to have direct flight between the two countries."



Arief Yahya
Tourism Minister, Indonesia

arrivals are valid for 30 days in the country.

The Tourism Minister of Indonesia was in India at the recently concluded PATA Travel Mart in Bengaluru. Indonesia is gear-

ing up to host the PATA Travel Mart from September 7-9, 2016.

According to **Igde Pitana**, Deputy Minister for Tourism, Indonesia, it is the right time to create new

demand from the Indian market. "There has been a 10-fold increase in our marketing budget for India compared to the last year. We will engage in focused trade and consumer activities in cities such as New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru and Kolkata," Pitana said. At present, the country receives more honeymooners and leisure travellers from India. Post the direct connectivity, it will look at MICE travellers in a big way, Pitana affirmed. The country is also looking at becoming a golfers' top destination. "We are now also seeing a huge spurt in demand from the outbound golf travellers in India. We recently organised golf for an Indian incentive group last week and 600 more Indian golfers are expected to play in

Indonesia this month. Indonesia will engage with golf associations in India to tap this segment as well."

Indonesia recorded 2,40,000 Indian arrivals in 2014 and is expecting to welcome over 2,70,000 arrivals from India this year.

Island Hopping

Indonesia is now looking to add 48 countries to its list of visa free entry, thus taking the total to 93 countries by the end of this year

Visa-free arrivals are valid for 30 days in the country

Over 24% surge in Indian tourists to New Zealand

Tourism New Zealand is celebrating the milestone of reaching three million international visitors annually for the first time, saying it spells jobs, income and economic value for all New Zealanders.



Kevin Bowler
Chief Executive
Tourism New Zealand

Tourism is this country's biggest services export and Tourism New Zealand's Chief Executive **Kevin Bowler** says the industry is growing strongly. "The International Visitor Survey showed total international visitor expenditure up 28 per cent to \$8.7 billion, and now having topped three million arrivals. It's good news for all New Zealanders."

"International visitor spend is distributed widely across the economy; it's not just accommodation or tourism activities that benefit; spending occurs at the local supermarket, petrol station, dairy, retail shops, and a myriad of other local businesses," he adds. Even before this recent surge in visitor numbers, the tourism industry was directly responsible for nearly 100,000 jobs (4.7 per cent of employment) in New Zealand. A further

73,000 people are indirectly employed bringing the total number of people employed as a result of tourism to around 170,000 (or 8.3 per cent of all New Zealand's employment).

"We are also starting to see more visitors arriving outside of the traditional summer period and a wider regional distribution of visitor spending – all positive signs for the long-term growth of the industry and New Zealand's regions."

Data released by Statistics New Zealand show that for the year-ending July 2015, over three million visitors came to the country, an increase of 7.3 per cent over the previous 12 months. Leading the way was the Australians at 1.29 million maintaining steady growth of 4.1 per cent. New Zealand's second largest source of visitor arrivals is China at 315,248, growing at 29.5 per cent year on year. Whereas, there has been increase of 42,896 (+24.4%) visitor arrivals from the Indian market for the year ending July 2015. The UK, US, Germany and Japan round out New Zealand's top six source markets. Kevin says potential visitors to New Zealand continue to associate the country with landscapes and scenery, wildlife, and adventure. "For the past 15 years we have been playing to these strengths through the 100% Pure New Zealand campaign, during which time annual visitor arrivals have grown from around 1.54 million to where they are today."

Mauritius eyes 70,000 Indians

Mauritius recently conducted a three-city luxury roadshow in Mumbai, Bengaluru and Delhi, where Indian travel trade partners interacted with the stakeholders to understand the destination better.



TT BUREAU

The three-city roadshow of Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority saw participation from 20 stakeholders, such as Air Mauritius, top luxury hotels, DMCs and activity companies. The objective of the event was to create a platform where the Indian travel trade partners could interact with the stakeholders and understand the destination better.

This initiative, led by **Arnaud Martin**, Chairman, MTPA, saw an enthusiastic participation from top tour operators in Mumbai, Bengaluru and Delhi. Speaking on the occasion, Martin said, "From January to July this year we have had a tremendous growth of 21.5 per cent as compared to a similar period last year and we expect to close the year at over 70,000 tourists from India. India represents a very fertile ground for future growth and we expect it to become the source market in the next five years." The stakeholders were very happy to see a fantastic turnout in all three cities, which included the top management of outbound tour



Arnaud Martin
Chairman
MTPA

India represents a very fertile ground for future growth and we expect it to become the source market in the next five years

operators, wedding planners and golf tour organisers.

Vivek Anand, Country Manager, MTPA, said, "The incredible natural beauty of Mauritius is complemented by



Vivek Anand
Country Manager
MTPA

The natural beauty of Mauritius is complemented by some of the most luxurious seaside resorts in picturesque surroundings

some of the best and most luxurious seaside resorts in stunningly picturesque surroundings. Mauritius is the perfect destination wedding spot for couples looking to tie the knot in a far off and enticing loca-

tion. Martin said, "It is a great tribute to all the stakeholders of the Mauritian tourism industry who contributed towards the Wedding Planners Congress in May 2015 and it was a great honour for us to receive it on behalf of the Mauritian tourism industry. I dedicate it to everyone."

As part of the marketing initiative, MTPA India is conducting trade presentations and seminars in all major cities to increase the visibility of Mauritius to the trade and MICE partners. In addition, familiarisation trips are being organised for travel agents, wedding planners and the media to give them a first-hand experience of the destination. MTPA India is also participating in trade, wedding and MICE fairs and sponsoring golf and polo tournaments.

Number Speak

From Jan-July this year, Mauritius recorded a growth of 21.5% in tourist arrivals

The country expects to close the year at over 70,000 Indian tourists

FHRAI Convention expects 1000 delegates

The Golden Jubilee Convention of the Federation of Hotels and Restaurants Association of India (FHRAI) will be held in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, from Sep 25-27. T S Walia, President, FHRAI, tells us more about this mega event.



TT BUREAU

QWhat is the theme for the 50th Annual Convention for FHRAI? Tell us what initiatives are you taking for it?

The theme of the convention goes with the inherent spirit of Indian hospitality and elaborates as “Atithi Devo Bhava” - Guest is like God. As hoteliers, we want to spread this message across the world to bring more tourists to our shores as well as promote our domestic destinations. The venue will be the sprawling Mayfair Convention, with state-of-the-art facilities.



T S Walia
President
FHRAI

We are planning to host a “Heritage Walk” and carnival on Sep 27, which is also World Tourism Day. This will be a 2-km walk, in which all delegates will participate

QKindly elaborate on the convention taking place in Odisha.

The partner state for the convention, Odisha, has tremendous potential for becoming a major tourist hub and this event will be instrumental in furthering this objective. We are thankful to Odisha Tourism for agreeing to partner with us and expect them to come up with a policy framework for creating better infrastructure to help in the growth of the hospitality and tourism sector.

QTell us about the Heritage Walk that will take place during the convention.

We are planning to host a “Heritage Walk” and carnival on Sept 27, which is also World Tourism Day. This will be a 2-km walk, in which all

the delegates and their spouses will participate. This will showcase the folk dances and culture of various parts of the country. We will be looking at industry excellence, guest experience and human resource development, and welcoming our upcoming members, associates and those new to both our industry and our conference.

QHow many delegates are you expecting for the Convention?

Tell us a bit about the technical sessions.

It's a historic milestone that we have the honour to host the golden jubilee of our prestigious Annual Convention. Being the golden jubilee convention, we are expecting more than 1,000 delegates. High voltage technical sessions have been included on all three days. First day: *Atithi Devo Bhava* - The Legacy Continues; Taxation in Indian

Hospitality Industry - Challenges & Solutions. Technical sessions on Day 2 Include: Odisha Tourism: Opportunities unlimited; Voice from the Top; Iconic Hospitality Properties Creating Tourism Destinations - Is it Lack of Government Support or Absence of Entrepreneurship; Hotel Design - Futuristic Hotels.

There will also be Heart Talk: *Dil Se*, where there will be a discussion

between **Prabhu Chawla** face to face with **Rakesh Sarna**, MD & CEO, Indian Hotels Company.

Day three will see sessions like: Social Media & Technology - Influence on Hospitality Business; Restaurants of the Future and finally Online Portals - Necessary Evils? Entertaining performances and top of the line food and beverages are in store for delegates in the evenings.

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Aiming for the top spot

Riding high on its rising membership, SKAL Delhi has eyes set on becoming the No. 1 club in the world in terms of membership.

TT BUREAU

At its recently held AGM, the committee members informed about their forthcoming events and initiatives.

Skal International Delhi recently had its Annual General Meeting (AGM) at The Park Hotel in New Delhi. The main



Sanjay Datta
President
Skal International Delhi

points covered at the AGM are the initiatives and events that Skal has in pipeline. **Sanjay Datta**, President, Skal International Delhi, says that the AGM was a reflection of what they did in the years 2014 and 2015. He says, "We had a feedback of our activities in the past few months. We also had a presentation of accounts for our members and discussed the

upcoming events. We are going to have a Sufi night on Sept 23 at Four Points by Sheraton."

Sunil Ghadiok, Vice President, Skal International Delhi, informs that Skal's future initiatives include a lot of lunches and presentation by guest speakers and golf tournaments. He adds, "With our new Facebook page and updated website we expect to have more members and more participation during our dinners and lunches."

Greesh Bindra, Secretary, Skal International Delhi, says, "We had a very good gathering and we discussed whatever events we have done till now and what is going to happen next."

Sanjiv Tyagi, Past President, Skal International Delhi, says, "The AGM was to discuss the balance sheet of the previous year. We have a young team now which is dynamic and with Sanjay Datta being the President, the club has woken up. We are the largest club in the world and with our new members, who knows, we could be the number one very soon."

India answers call of the wild

Purequest Adventures, the adventure and wildlife arm of Le Passage to India, together with wildlife experts and select lodge owners across India has launched a first-ever industry initiative – Indian Wildlife Travel Experts to promote wildlife tourism in a sustainable manner.

TT BUREAU

Indian Wildlife Travel Experts (IWTE) is an alliance between some of India's boutique jungle lodges and Purequest Adventures India for building and promoting wildlife tourism to India. The group will collectively work to market India worldwide through its combined presence at select travel fairs or through roadshows in source markets in association with the India Tourism offices. **Prabhat Verma**, Director, India, Purequest Adventures, says, "Our objective is to pres-



(L) Mario Habig, Managing Director, Le Passage to India, with wildlife travel experts and Prabhat Verma, Director, India, Purequest Adventures (R)

responsible wildlife tourism driven by exceptional experi-

the most unique experiences that the Indian wildlife product can offer."

this is the first strategic and structured approach between the best safari lodges in India and a DMC to bring Indian wildlife on the global map. We have hand-picked best lodges as well as naturalists in the country who have put together exceptional experiences."

Purequest Adventures India is a part of a global adventure platform with special interest in curating wildlife and safaris experiences in the sub-continent. PQA India promotes its specially crafted experiences through its 16 local offices in India.

Explaining the methodology of the initiative, Verma says, "The initiative will work as a bridge between best safari operators overseas and boutique lodges in India. We will go out of our way to educate our partners and create awareness of India's magnificent wildlife wealth."

I am very excited about the new venture as this is the first strategic and structured approach between the safari lodges in India and a DMC to bring Indian wildlife on the global map

Mario Habig
Managing Director, Le Passage to India

ent to our customers the best wildlife experiences in India through a collection of excellent itineraries. Promoting

ences will be at the heart of IWTE's agenda. Each member has been carefully selected and represents some of

Ahoy, India! Dubai comes calling

Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DCTCM) held a multi-city roadshow in India. The roadshows were held in Bengaluru, Chennai, Mumbai and Delhi. The Cruise Tourism delegation included cruise brands, MSC Cruises, Costa Cruises, and Royal Caribbean International, who participated in the roadshows to develop better relations with the Indian travel industry.



Adopt tourist sites, says Karnataka

In a bid to increase inbound and domestic traffic to the state, the tourism department of Karnataka is looking at a slew of activities. This will include development of a one-stop portal for travellers, aggressive promotion of wellness and heritage circuits and introduction of tourist 'mitras' for safety of tourists.



MEGHA PAUL

According to **RV Deshpande**, Tourism and Industries Minister of Karnataka, the state is the first in India that has come up with a scheme where corporate companies can adopt tourist sites. These companies will maintain a tourist site as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative. "For the same, the state tourism department is looking to partner with private sector for development of



RV Deshpande
Tourism and Industries Minister
Karnataka

This portal will act as a one-stop shop for tourists. The website will have information on all tourism assets of the state, routes, tour package bookings, etc

tourism infrastructure in heritage tourist sites such as Hampi, Badami and Bijapur. Karnataka has identified 319 tourism destinations in the state and all these places will be developed in a phased manner," Deshpande said.

The state is also launching a portal that will offer travel and hospitality stakeholders a platform to market and promote their products and offerings in Karnataka. Giving more information about the upcoming portal, he revealed, "The design of the portal is ready and the department expects to launch the portal very soon. This portal will act as a one-stop shop for tourists. The website will have information on all tourism assets of the state, routes, tour package bookings, etc. Even a payment gateway will be available. The portal

will help tourists plan a holiday as well."

Karnataka Tourism is also looking to develop Mysore and Bengaluru as a destination for wellness and medical tourism. "Mysore and Bengaluru are the places that are perfectly placed for wellness and medical tourism.

These places provide state-of-the-art facilities at reasonable prices compared to any other country. We are targeting markets such as Middle East and Russia for medical and wellness tourism," he added.

For boosting safety and security measures for tourists, the state in the next three

months will introduce Tourist Mitras in all major tourist destinations.

Deshpande also revealed that the Union government and the Tourism Ministry have accepted the recommendations made by Swaminathan Committee on relaxation of Coastal

Regulation Zone (CRZ). "The beach resorts are being allowed in a radius of 50-100 metres of the seas in other states and nations whereas no such construction was allowed within 500-metre radius in Karnataka. We have 90 beaches along the 320-km coastline, but have identified only 44

beaches and four islands for tourism purposes," he lamented. Karnataka falls under CRZ-3 (meaning a no-development zone and all projects need approval from the Union Minister of Environment and Forest) which is a challenge before the State government.



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Unconventional meetings

Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group's innovative meetings concept, "Experience Meetings" for its Radisson Blu brand, hopes to provide successful meetings with the Brain Box and Brain Food concepts.



KANCHAN NATH

Experience Meetings would provide an atmosphere beyond the traditional meeting room settings. They have been designed in order to merge the casual atmosphere with serious corporate environment. They create an ideal environment for all types of small meetings and conferences where innovative and creative thinking is paramount. In Asia Pacific, there are 45 Radisson Blu hotels in operation and another 34 under development.

Telling us more about the concept, **Sandy Russell**, Vice President, Commercial Operations, Asia Pacific, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group, said, "This is the result of a lot of research we have done over a period of time, to try and find out what could we do that would differentiate us from our competitors. The concept would also impact the outcome of the meetings."



Sandy Russell
Vice President, Commercial Operations,
Asia Pacific, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group

The Experience Meetings concept would impact the outcome of business meetings

Talking about the Brain Box concept, she explained, "Brain Box speaks to the set-up for the meeting room. We have designed Brain Box to impact the way people learn. There are

four distinct learning styles: Kinesthetic, auditory, visual and tactile. We have addressed all four types of learning styles; with the type of furniture, the comfortable flexible seating, the bright colours, with the things that we offer in the meeting rooms — such as the canvases or the white boards that we line the rooms with."

She adds, "People who need to write things can use the white boards. Auditory people respond mostly to sound, they are impacted by sound. That's how they remember it. So you will always find, at an Experience Meeting, the finest quality of sound equipment. The audio part of audio visual will always be the best quality. That will help put those people who learn through auditory into the best possible state. We have come up with a playlist of appropriate music, to play in the background that is designed to spark creativity. That is one component of meetings."

IAAI fights license Raj

The new team at IAAI Maharashtra Chapter has jumped into the thick of things with intense discussions with the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai on bringing down the number of agency licenses.



TT BUREAU

The new team that has taken over the Managing Committee for IATA Agents Association of India (IAAI) Maharashtra Chapter recently is already in the thick of things. The team, led by **Chetan Momaya** as president of Maharashtra Chapter, IAAI, is in intense discussions with the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) to bring down the number of licenses that travel agencies in Mumbai need to acquire.

Momaya said, "We have been talking to MCGM and have already shared our suggestions to tackle some of the issues that we travel agents are having with them. One of them is the number of licenses that agencies need to operate. We have requested them to make it a single-window license system for us. Currently, agencies go through a lot of problems as they need a number of licenses including



Chetan Momaya
President
Maharashtra Chapter, IAAI

Tour operators can now function 24x7 on the condition that every employee puts in not more than 48 hours per week

labour license, performance license, Provident Fund, medical and women's cell for medium to big companies."

He added that the team has requested for an appointment with Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. MCGM had in the past assigned IAAI the responsibility to bring forth the issues of travel agents to the corporation. Momaya said, "We have already submitted the suggestions and one of the happy results is that tour operators can now function 24x7 on the condition that every employee in the agency puts in not more than 48 hours per week."

The new team, that has been elected for a two-year tenure, will also approach Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation. "We want to request them to improve the experience for our clients — provide more and better guides, introduce water activities, improve infrastructure for cruise liners at the passenger port, and not delay MTDC's hop-on hop-off bus service," Momaya adds.

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St Regis debuts in India

The erstwhile Palladium Hotel in Mumbai’s Lower Parel area has become the first hotel to fly the St. Regis flag in India after extensive refurbishment and rebranding.

TT BUREAU

St. Regis Hotels & Resorts, part of Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, has made its debut in India with the highly anticipated St. Regis Mumbai on September 1, 2015. Owned by Pallazzio Hotels & Leisure, the erstwhile Palladium Hotel underwent extensive rebranding and now flies the St. Regis flag, bringing bespoke luxury and refined elegance to the city of Mumbai.



Anuraag Bhatnagar
Area General Manager, India, Starwood
Hotels & Resorts Worldwide

Located in Lower Parel, the hotel combines timeless sophistication with modern luxury and is a befitting debut for the St. Regis brand in this fast growing market. Anuraag Bhatnagar, Area General Manager, India, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, said, “We are glad to bring the St. Regis brand to India. This is an extremely important market and it is now that we have successfully found the right partner and the right project to introduce our seventh brand in the country. Luxury makes up 15 per cent of

Starwood’s total pipeline, and 90 per cent of its future luxury hotels, will open in emerging markets such as India. We are optimistic about the growth of the hospitality industry going forward and believe that the time is perfect for the entry of The St. Regis as the Indian luxury travellers today are much more knowledgeable and adventurous and we are sure that we will meet their expectations with our exquisite brand offerings.”

Speaking about introducing other Starwood brands to India, Bhatnagar said that the

hotel company is on the cusp of a new golden age of luxury travel as technology and globalisation drive new trade routes, capital flows and wealth creation. “As domestic travel increases and Indian travellers continue to demand more sophistication in terms of both quality and experience, we have significant opportunity to grow our brands across the spectrum in gateway cities as well as in resort destinations. One of the greatest successes for Starwood has been to do more deals with our existing owners and developers. Our mantra for development has always been, ‘right location, right product, right partner’. We at Starwood are always open to the apt opportunities by partnering with the right owners; Starwood has been able to demonstrate much more robust growth than our competitors. Having been in India for almost 40 years, we expect to be in India for the next 40 and are not strangers in this country that many of our competitors are,” he said.

Alibaug next stop for MICE

Radisson Blu Resort & Spa Alibaug strikes the perfect balance between MICE and destination weddings, located conveniently between Mumbai and Goa.

TT BUREAU

Radisson Blu Resort & Spa Alibaug strikes the perfect balance between accommodation and meeting areas set amidst picturesque settings that make it different from other hotels. The hotel has a Mango



Deck with reflection pools where one may want to conduct an evening theme dinner or choose the manicured lawns as an option to host an entertainment function or alternatively choose the sedate settings of the courtyard to host a small gathering.

Shridhar V, Director (Sales & Marketing), Radisson Blu Resort & Spa

Alibaug, says, “This is the only hotel in the region accessible by a catamaran from the Gateway of India. The location itself has made the hotel, a destination of choice of families looking at a quick getaway, corporates looking to organize an offsite and also

vate event, cocktails or team-building activities. Alternatively, they can enjoy a live piano recital at the Piano Bar & Lounge every evening or shake a leg at Razz Ma Tazz, the state-of-the-art discotheque at the hotel, enjoy indoor games at the Time Out, swim at the Olympic size pool or spend the evening at the Thinking Room or just go back in history reading coffee-table books at the library.

The resort features seven different accommodation categories to choose from, in a combination of rooms, suites, Duplex villas, Spa Villas and Top Suites. All rooms offer complimentary high-speed internet. The resort also features five different meeting areas/breakaways to conduct an offsite or a conference. The meeting areas are fully equipped with Wi-Fi facility and the best of conferencing equipment.

The hotel has also become a sought-after wedding destination in India. It is booked as far as a year in advance for weddings.

as a wedding destination. The hotel is very popular with families looking at a quick getaway, Corporates looking at a residential offsite or a day conference, social groups and also the wedding segment.”

Guests can choose from one of the many hotel venues like the Pool Side, Mango Deck, Lawns, Courtyard, Razz MaTazz Terrace to host a pri-



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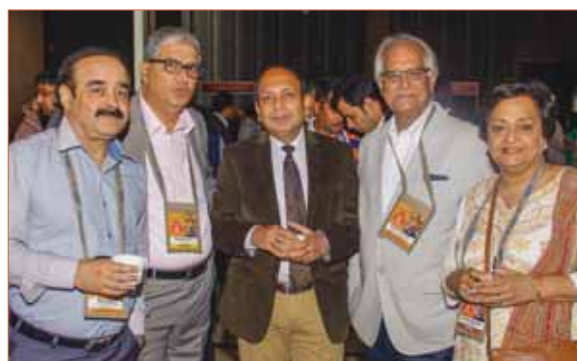
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Indore welcomes IATO members

MP welcomed around 1,500 delegates from across the nation and many international delegates at the 31st IATO Convention. **Amaresh Tiwari**, Treasurer, IATO, said, "The level of bureaucrats who are inaugurating the event shows the importance and the position of IATO. Indore is one of the cities with an excellent infrastructure. The way MP positions itself as a tourist destination is fantastic, the tourism board has helped us a lot to organise this convention. Also, this destination has a lot of unexplored places which many of our tour operators are not aware of. This convention will help a lot in understanding the destination."



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AI gets Lohani wings

Ashwani Lohani, erstwhile MD of Madhya Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation, has taken over from Rohit Nandan as the new Chairman and Managing Director of Air India.

PEDEN DOMA BHUTIA

Having achieved a turnaround of ITDC as its CMD and successfully launched the *Hindustan Ka Dil Dekho* campaign for Madhya Pradesh Tourism, 'Mr Turnaround' - **Ashwani Lohani**, has taken on himself to make the Maharajah fly high again. Lohani, erstwhile MD of MP Tourism Development Corp, will now take over from Rohit Nandan as the new Chairman and Managing Director of Air India. A qualified



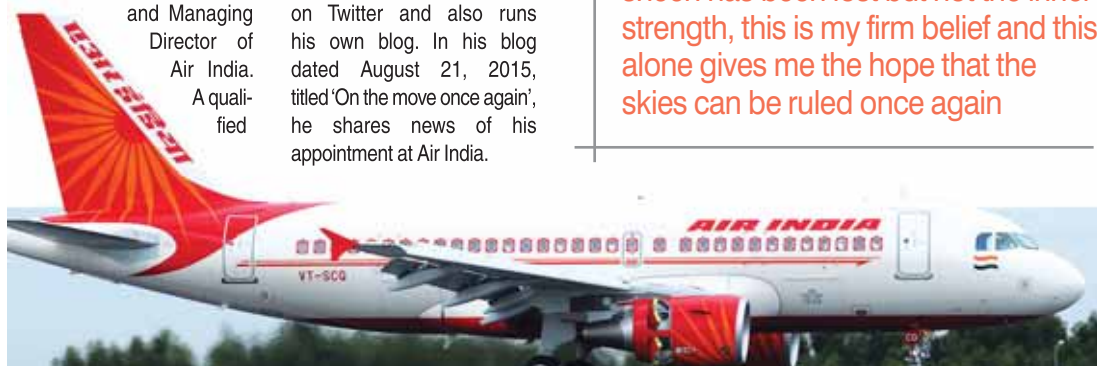
Ashwani Lohani

on Twitter and also runs his own blog. In his blog dated August 21, 2015, titled 'On the move once again', he shares news of his appointment at Air India.

firm belief and this alone gives me the hope that the skies can be ruled once again. And it shall happen... My experience in running commercial enterprises is that leadership by apex management indeed remains

a time when the government is finding it difficult to make the airline more sustainable, Lohani's appointment comes as a relief. He sounds optimistic in his blog, as he concludes, "Like always before I shall not fail this

This time to head the beleaguered Air India, the erstwhile Maharajah of the nation with its trademark logo. The sheen has been lost but not the inner strength, this is my firm belief and this alone gives me the hope that the skies can be ruled once again



mechanical engineer, Lohani belongs to the Indian Railways Services Mechanical engineering 1980 batch.

Unlike many bureaucrats, Lohani is highly active on social media platforms, he is a regular

Calling it a dream to head the national carrier, he writes, "This time to head the beleaguered Air India, the erstwhile Maharajah of the nation with its trademark logo. The sheen has been lost but not the inner strength, this is my

the primary issue, while the mundane takes priority and that too in a reactive manner. Providing proactive leadership is the crux and playing on the front foot the easiest way to demonstrate the same, is what I believe in." At

time also, perhaps my last innings in the service of the nation, is a promise that I have made to myself. May God give me the strength." We sure hope you'll live up to your sobriquet - Mr Turnaround! 🇮🇳

IndiGo adds 9 new flights

IndiGo's nine new flights will operate between Bengaluru, Varanasi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Pune, Delhi, Goa, Kolkata and Lucknow.

TT BUREAU

IndiGo is enhancing its customer experience in the domestic market with the launch of its nine new flights connecting Bengaluru to Varanasi (via Kolkata), Varanasi to Mumbai, Ahmedabad to Pune, Delhi to Pune, Mumbai to Goa, Bengaluru to Kolkata and Delhi to Lucknow. Furthermore, the airline is introducing its first flight on the Varanasi-Goa (via Mumbai), and Kolkata-Varanasi routes, effective September 1, 2015. With 647 daily flights connecting 38 destinations (as of September 1, 2015) across the globe, these new flights will allow corporate and leisure travellers to experience the matchless on-time performance IndiGo is synonymous with, thus further consolidating IndiGo's position as the fastest growing airline in India.

On the new flight schedule, **Aditya Ghosh**, President, IndiGo, says, "We are delighted to announce the take-off of



Aditya Ghosh
President, IndiGo

IndiGo's new flights between Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Goa, Lucknow, Pune and Varanasi. The increased flow of tourist and business traffic to and from these cities gave us just the opportunity to allow passengers to experience the hassle-free and on-time performance that IndiGo is synonymous with. We are certain that these flights will prove to be immensely popular and convenient to our passengers."

Effective September 1, 2015, IndiGo's first daily
Contd. on page 32 ▶



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15 years on, Virgin flying high



Virgin Atlantic has completed 15 years in India and is upbeat about the expansion in code-share with Jet Airways. The airline says agents are very important to them, especially in the Indian market.



TT BUREAU

Virgin Atlantic operates a daily service between Delhi and London Heathrow on a Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner, the newest aircraft in its fleet. The Dreamliner boasts an enhanced customer experience with Wi-Fi on every aircraft and the latest in-flight entertainment system, Vera Touch 2, featuring over 400 hours of on demand entertainment.

With the latest expansion in the code-share agreement with Jet Airways, Virgin Atlantic customers will be able to purchase tickets from Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai and Kolkata, connecting to Virgin Atlantic's Delhi - London Heathrow. The extended agreement will offer customers the convenience of having all of their boarding passes issued at the originating airport, whether their travel originates in the India or UK.



(L-R): Sameer Duggal and Nick Parker

Nick Parker, Head of India and Middle East, Virgin Atlantic, says, "We have expanded our code-share with Jet Airways, providing a second daily code-share connection from Mumbai to London, connecting Mumbai effectively with our transatlantic network. So it is really does help us expand our reach within India, giving our customer more choice to pick up our services and experience."

On Virgin Atlantic completing 15 years in India, Parker says, "I've been fortunate to work with Virgin Atlantic since 1999 and this is really an exciting time for us in terms of business. We've got very clear targets from our CEO, which is to drive record level of profitability, because we want to keep investing back in the customer. So we got £300 million worth investment coming back into customer experience in the next

few years. So there are investments going in, whether in the form of cabin products that we've got or on some of our existing aircraft, or rolling out Wi-Fi. But we are also retrofitting it onto the rest of the fleet. We are investing in our onboard catering products

important for them. "We deal very closely with the trade in India. Currently to focus more on the trade community we are strengthening our call centre and sales support as we see more and more calls coming in from the new code-share cities that we

We have expanded our code-share with Jet Airways, providing a second daily code-share connection from Mumbai to London, connecting Mumbai effectively with our transatlantic network

Nick Parker

Head of India and Middle East, Virgin Atlantic

To focus more on the trade community we are strengthening our call centre and sales support

Sameer Duggal

Head of Sales-India, Virgin Atlantic Airlines

because we want to make them even better."

On the airline's experience of working with agents in India, **Sameer Duggal**, Head of Sales-India, Virgin Atlantic Airlines, says trade is very

have started. Besides, we have also started a VS Flying Hub which is our trade-dedicated website, where they can log in and get updates. We keep coming out with special packages and promotions for them."



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1st year of Air India's Star Alliance

With the completion of one year of partnership with Star Alliance, Air India is looking forward to grow more with new routes and aircraft. Abhay Pathak, General Manager (Commercial) Northern India, Air India, talks to TRAVTALK about the airline's new initiatives.



SAMAPTI DAS

Air India, on July 11, completed a year of partnership with Star Alliance. It was on this day last year that India's national carrier formally became the 27th member of the Star Alliance network and with it opened up a completely different world to its passengers.

Abhay Pathak, General Manager (Commercial) Northern India, Air India, says, "We are celebrating this first year anniversary of Air

India joining Star Alliance, which is one of the biggest alliances in the world. It has 27 prestigious members."

Air India became the first Indian carrier to be inducted into Star Alliance network. This partnership gave the passengers an opportunity to travel to 1,316 destinations across the network and enjoy world class services, better connectivity and seamless travel.

It has earned the globe-trotter innumerable perks

besides seamless connectivity across the globe with more than 18,500 daily flights in 193 countries. The frequent flyer benefits between Air India's Flying Returns programme and those of the existing member carriers have benefited customers a great deal in earning and redeeming, upgrading and obtaining Star Alliance Gold Status. Flying Return members who hold Maharajah Club or Golden Edge Club status are automatically upgraded to Star Alliance Gold status, giving

"We have a number of aircraft joining including the brand new aircraft 787 with new technologies. We also have a number of routes which will be unfolded in the upcoming months."



Abhay Pathak
General Manager (Commercial)
Northern India, Air India

them access to more than 1,000 lounges across the global network.

Pathak adds, "We have a flying returns programme of Air India. So, any alliance air member or our members can redeem and also can accrue the mileage across the world for any airlines or 26 members. We have completed all those parameters which are required to become a Star Alliance member."

Talking about the airlines' future initiatives, Pathak

says, "We have a number of aircraft joining including the brand new aircraft 787 with new technologies. We also have a number of routes which will be unfolded in the upcoming months. This will further spread our wings and help us to network and provide our seamless products to all over the world."

Air India celebrated the occasion across its offices in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru.

Conquering Skies

✈ Air India became the first Indian carrier to be inducted into Star Alliance network

✈ The airline has presence across the globe with more than 18,500 daily flights in 193 countries.

✈ Air India has a number of aircraft including the brand new aircraft 787 with new technologies

✈ Flying Return members who hold Maharajah Club or Golden Edge Club status are automatically upgraded to Star Alliance Gold status



Peruvian-Axiom take off

Peruvian Airlines has chosen Axiom Travel Services as its new General Sales Agent (GSA) for India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka.



TT BUREAU

The appointment, which was made with immediate effect, sees Axiom Travel Services handle the airline's sales development, bookings and ticketing services, as well as conduct direct support services to the Peru's travel trade.

By appointing Axiom Travel Services, Peruvian Airlines aims to improve the positioning of its brand and generate awareness of its product and services in Peru by strengthening relations with existing trade partners and forging new strategic partnerships with specialised operators in a number of various segments. Another key feature of the appointment is the qualified support offered to travel agencies. This is also a strategic move by Peruvian

Airlines, which feels the Indian growing market of extreme importance, which can surely contribute to the airline's growth in the coming years.

Peruvian Airlines was founded in November 2007, receiving its Air Operator Certificate from Peru's aviation authority on August 7, 2008. The airline commenced operations on October 29, 2008. Today the airline has its headquarters in Lima and connects Arequipa, Cuzco, Iquitos, Piura, Tacna, Pucallpa, Tarapoto and La Paz with their existing fleet of Boeing 737-200, 737-300 and 737-500 www.peruvianairlines.com

Axiom Travel Services is an aggressive marketing, sales and representation company that is managed

and run by trade professionals. ATS has its headquarters in New Delhi's prestigious area of Vasant Vihar and has a pan-India presence. ATS is a boutique tourism marketing and PR company providing a full spectrum of integrated services specialising in developing and building the brand with sales the distribution through the Indian travel industry and consumer direct channels, Strategic Marketing Solutions, Representation Services, Public Relations Services and Media Management, Brand Building and Brand Management, Event/Roadshow Management, Strategic Communication and Business Solutions, Product Launches/Promotions, Market Intelligence, Familiarisation trips and Seminars.

Sky high luxury charter

Col S Bhutani, Partner, Air Limousines, shares his opinion on the growth of the private jet sector in the country and discusses strategies to enhance it.



TT BUREAU

Q How competitive is the air charter business?

The air charter business is extremely competitive. Clients often choose to go through operators and agents who provide them with the best deals which can be unfavorable to purely chartered businesses like ours. At the end of the day, customers want and get the best deals as price is a major factor.

Q How has the private jet service industry developed in India in the last 10 years? How can it progress further?

The industry has definitely gained more popularity in the last couple of years. However,



Col S Bhutani
Partner, Air Limousines

for a country as large and powerful as India, the standards need to be higher with more room for improvement. As of now, we have very limited options in terms of aircrafts. Another aspect that needs to be taken into consideration in this industry is that we are highly location centric. Currently, Delhi and Mumbai serve as the major hubs for these services

but in order to progress further, other cities need to be given similar importance.

Q How has business been for Air Limousines in 2015?

I would like to admit that business has not been as great when you compare it to 2014. I would call it average but last year was definitely better. 2015 has seen an approximate decline of about 8-10 per cent.

Q What is your USP?

I have learned that it is extremely crucial to be transparent and build a strong client-customer bond. Since this is the aviation industry, clients are more likely to be regular when they know they can trust you.



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Winning recipes on Lufthansa menu

The two winning recipes from the online culinary talent hunt, Lufthansa #cookandfly contest, will be featured on the airline's in-flight menu.



TT BUREAU

In a gripping finale, **Nandini Diwakar** and **Sanjeev Gakhar** beat six other finalists in a live cookout session to win India's largest online culinary talent hunt, Lufthansa #cookandfly contest held in partnership with The Leela Palaces, Hotels & Resorts. Diwakar and Gakhar were announced winners at a grand finale ceremony at The Leela Ambience Gurgaon. The winning recipes will be featured in Lufthansa's in-flight menu.

Lufthansa #cookandfly contest is Season 2 of Star Chef Contest where the nationwide hunt for India's largest online culinary talent is conducted by MasterChefs **Kunal Kapur** and **Vinod Saini** of The Leela and Lufthansa's culinary expert for the Asian region, Chef Thomas Brockenauer.

Wolfgang Will, Director, South Asia, Lufthansa Passenger Airlines, said, "Lufthansa's presence in India of 60 years gives it an unparalleled understanding of the



needs of its Indian customers. The brand has made huge progress towards embracing Indian culture and its needs, and the contest provides the right opportunity to not only help us understand India's food preferences but also help our Indian customers see the brand's 'Indian' side and connect with the brand even more. We are also happy that our decision to host the

contest on a social media platform helped us reach out to a wider target audience especially the younger audiences and connect with a new target group. Our brand philosophy of 'Nonstop You' gets very well-integrated with the contest as the winning recipe becomes a part of our in-flight menu. This definitely goes on to reflect a more Indianised version of the brand."

Conceived under Lufthansa's 'Non Stop You' positioning and 'More Indian Than You Think' philosophy, the Lufthansa #cookandfly contest celebrates India's cultural and cuisine diversity and aims to engage with target audiences on a topic close to their heart – their food preferences. Hosted on Facebook, the contest also harnessed the power and reach of social media and received over-

whelming response with entry submissions pouring even after the submission timeline was over.

The winner received a Lufthansa Business Class ticket to Europe and a six-week internship with celebrity chefs at The Leela. The winners also gets exciting prizes from The Leela including 1 voucher for 1 night stay for 2 in executive suite with regular inclusions. Other prizes for contestant and runners-up include 1 voucher for Lungo pranzo (long Sunday lunch) at Zanotta for two with sparkling wine (for second runners up); three vouchers for spectra weekend dinner for two and two vouchers for Diya weekend lunch. Other contest prizes include a premium quality Morphy Richards blender which was given to the "Chef's pick of the week" recipe.

Lufthansa's presence in India of 60 years gives it an unparalleled understanding of the needs of its Indian customers

Wolfgang Will
Director, South Asia
Lufthansa Passenger Airlines

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Make India airline-friendly: IATA

Tony Tyler, Director General and CEO, IATA, spoke of the challenges faced by players in the Indian aviation sector and highlighted priority areas to reduce airline operational costs in India.



Delivering the keynote address at the Aviation Day India organised by IATA together with India's Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Tyler, complimented Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Cabinet for focusing on the aspect of ease of doing business in the country.

"Indian aviation market is estimated to be valued at \$282 million by 2031 and will exceed a market value of \$360 billion post FY34," he said.

He further elaborated, "Already aviation and aviation-related tourism support 7 million Indian jobs and \$23 billion of India's GDP. But there are immense challenges which must be overcome — as seen in the sector's financial per-

formance. While demand growth is robust and some airlines are generating profit, sector-wide losses for India are still expected to exceed \$1 billion this year. Onerous regulation and processes, debilitating taxes and expensive infrastructure are holding back the industry's ability to deliver greater economic benefits to India.

In his address, Tyler highlighted three priority areas where work is needed to reduce costs in India:

Reducing the tax burden

The application of Service Tax should be aligned with a principle that it does not apply to services rendered outside of India, including those for overflight charges, global distribution systems, extra baggage fees and international tickets. He also highlighted that the incoming GST regime should also zero-rate interna-



"India needs smarter regulation. This essentially means taking a business-like approach to regulation using common-sense and proven principles. These include targeting regulation to address real issues, using global standards where they exist, satisfying a rigorous cost benefit analysis and consultation with industry."

Tony Tyler
Director General and CEO, IATA

tional air transport services in line with OECD guidelines, the need to follow international treaties that protect airlines from double-taxation on income and the need to avoid double-taxation within India in situations where airlines are effectively taxed on taxes collected.

Competitive Fuel Pricing

State taxes on jet fuel can be as high as 30 per cent. Tyler urged the government to

grant "declared goods" status for jet fuel which would limit taxation. "The decision to introduce competition in jet fuel supply at key airports needs to be followed up with open access to the pipelines that get fuel to the airport in order for efficiencies of a liberalised market to be realised," said Tyler.

Let AERA be independent

Tyler highlighted the importance of allowing the

Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) to do its work independently. He called for action in three areas:

Protect the independence of AERA and the principle of a "single till" for airport charges in light of stock exchange filings which show that the Ministry of Civil Aviation had instructed AERA to use a hybrid till for its "independent" determination of airport charges at Hyderabad.

Carefully assess the proposed privatisations of Jaipur, Kolkata, Ahmedabad and Chennai to ensure that the "single till" principle is maintained and that the privatisation terms are appropriate to the level of development at the airports. Significant public investment in these airports should be considered in a cost/benefit analysis aimed at determining if the public interest would be best-served by a concession contract or a management contract.

Smarter Regulation

"Regulation is also holding back the development of the sector. Well-intentioned regulations, but which are inconsistent with global standards, make doing business in India very difficult for the airlines. India imposes rules and requirements that are not seen anywhere else," said Tyler.

Contd. on page 32



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Flying far and wide

► Contd. from page 23

flight from Varanasi to Goa (via Mumbai) will take off, besides the commencement of its first daily non-stop flight between Kolkata and Varanasi, 2nd daily flight from Bengaluru to Varanasi (via Kolkata), 2nd daily non-stop flight between Varanasi and Mumbai, 2nd daily non-stop flight from Ahmedabad to Pune, 5th daily non-stop flight from Delhi to Pune, 6th daily

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Aditya Ghosh
President, IndiGo

non-stop flight from Mumbai to Goa, 7th daily non-stop flight from Bengaluru to Kolkata, and 8th daily non-stop flight between Delhi and Lucknow.

Flight No.	Origin	Destination	Departure	Arrival	Fare*	Via	Effective
6E 711	Varanasi	Goa	10:15	14:55	4499	Mumbai	1 Sep 2015
6E 712	Goa	Varanasi	14:50	19:15	4499	Mumbai	1 Sep 2015
6E 713	Kolkata	Varanasi	8:25	9:45	1999		1 Sep 2015
6E 716	Varanasi	Kolkata	19:45	21:05	1999		1 Sep 2015
6E 713	Bengaluru	Varanasi	5:25	9:45	4499	Kolkata	Sep 2015
6E 716	Varanasi	Bengaluru	19:45	23:55	4499	Kolkata	1 Sep 2015
6E 711	Varanasi	Mumbai	10:15	12:40	3399		Sep 2015
6E 712	Mumbai	Varanasi	17:00	19:15	3589		1 Sep 2015
6E 674	Ahmedabad	Pune	21:55	23:15	1999		1 Sep 2015
6E 673	Pune	Ahmedabad	23:45	1:05	1998		1 Sep 2015
6E 671	Delhi	Pune	20:50	23:00	3293		1 Sep 2015
6E 672	Pune	Delhi	23:30	1:40	3127		1 Sep 2015
6E 711	Mumbai	Goa	13:25	14:55	2117		1 Sep 2015
6E 712	Goa	Mumbai	14:50	16:15	1862		1 Sep 2015
6E 713	Bengaluru	Kolkata	5:25	7:55	4512		1 Sep 2015
6E 716	Kolkata	Bengaluru	21:35	23:55	4675		1 Sep 2015
6E 406	Delhi	Lucknow	21:30	22:40	1616		1 Sep 2015
6E 769	Lucknow	Delhi	6:40	7:50	1888		2 Sep 2015

Need smarter regulation

► Contd. from page 31

Tyler highlighted several examples where Indian regulation is out of step with global standards and best practices. "India needs smarter regulation. This essentially means taking a business-like approach to regulation using common sense and proven principles. These

include targeting regulations to address real issues, using global standards where they exist, satisfying a rigorous cost benefit analysis and consultation with industry. If we can work together to build regulations that meet the public interest, are consistent with global standards and which can be implemented efficiently then we are all winners,"

said Tyler. "There is a great opportunity for the government's ease of business agenda in aviation. By working with MoCA we could develop and deliver an effective action plan for aviation in India. Aviation should be the model sector demonstrating India's efforts to make it easier to do business here," said Tyler. ↴

Etihad is founding member of UAE Business Council in India

■ Etihad Airways has been announced as one of the founding members of the UAE Business Council in India, formed under the leadership of **HE Saed Mohammed Saed Al Muhairi**, Charge de Affairs, Embassy of UAE. **James Hogan**, President and CEO, Etihad Airways, said, "India is a crucial market not only for Etihad Airways but the UAE itself and therefore we welcomed the opportunity to

become a founding member of the UAE Business Council in India." Etihad Airways is

one of nine founding members of the UAE Business Council in India alongside First Gulf Bank; EMAAR; DP World; Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank; DNATA; NMC; Lulu Group and Borouge. One of the key objectives of the organisation is to act as a catalyst for commercial entities to exchange ideas which in turn promotes economic synergy between the UAE and India.



James Hogan
President and CEO
Etihad Airways



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TT BUREAU

How is the private aircraft and helicopter charter business in India for you?

With more and more corporate houses opting for either hiring or owning a private aircraft, the growth has been encouraging. At the same time, there has been upward trend as far as tourist inflow in concerned in India. A decent number of them utilises private plane for covering tourist destinations. However, though currently the private charter business is witnessing a pretty slow movement, I'm sure the traffic would increase soon.

From which cities and what segments does the demand arise from?

A major chunk of our business comes from Delhi and Mumbai market which is primarily dominated by corporate house and travel agents and tour operators respectively. Apart from these two cities, we get a decent amount of flights from Pune, Chennai, Bengaluru and Kolkata market.

How do you expect the charter business to grow in the next five years?

A decade ago, there were hardly any private planes or helicopters. But the scenario has changed drastically. At present, India has a fleet of 550 helicopters, planes with propellers and jets under the general aviation category. Over a period of time the business leaders

in India realised the benefits of owning their own private plane and hence, witnessed this growth. India is expected to become the third-largest aviation market by 2020 and is expected to be the largest by 2030.

implies that the tendency of Indians to spend more on holidays has increased.

Also, with new airlines coming up in India, we have large number of people preferring to fly than using

tice of sending emailers and direct mailers though which we try to keep our travel agencies & tour operators updated with the latest trend in private charter market. We also prepare customized presentations for these players,

able for large groups. This year, one of the main focus areas would be MICE movements. We are already working on a good number of large charter movements and I'm sure we will see some definite improvements in the numbers this year.

In spite of the rapid economic growth and technological advancements in our country, the air travel sector is still waiting for a major change. While the government is positively working towards encouraging growth in the aviation industry by bringing drastic changes in policies, current infrastructure is hardly capable to handle growth.

As a result of unprecedented growth that we have witnessed in the last few years, unfortunately the current infrastructure is unable to handle the flights, both schedule and non-schedule.

Though there has been a substantial increase in the number of private business jet aircraft and helicopters, the number of players who are operating charter flights in a dedicated way is limited.

Most of the charter operators work with one or two aircraft or helicopters and are not able to optimise their fleet utilisation, as it is not perceived as a serious business for them. It is time that 'air charter' is seen as a dedicated business, which would need substantial investments & of course policies, too, need to be relooked and made favorable for this business.



“We have a practice of sending emailers and direct mailers though which we try to keep our travel agencies & tour operators updated with the latest trend in private charter market. We also prepare customized presentations for these players.”

Santosh Kumar Sharma

Director, Foresee Aviation Pvt. Ltd.

Though the current market condition doesn't give a very positive picture, I'm sure with proper policies in place, scenario will certainly change.

alternate mode of transportation. This is also due to luring offers introduced by the airlines. Still, there is a huge potential here which remains to be tapped.

which is also a part of their marketing tools.

Very importantly, we have also held 30-60 minutes sessions with the tour operators and travel agencies on an individual basis sharing information about charter and how to handle private charter flights. This has proved to be extremely beneficial for them to grab charter business from the foreign markets.

How do you reach out to the travel trade?

We have a dedicated marketing division whose primary role is to devise and implement marketing strategies. Under the current market scenario, where there is a cut throat competition, marketing plays a very critical role in reaching our target clients.

Our sales department is in constant touch with the travel trade players through meetings. We also participate in travel trade fairs which are a wonderful platform to interact with these players and share our perspective with them. Also, we have a prac-

How are you promoting your products among corporates?

MICE constitutes a small percentage of our total business. We have devised a comprehensive strategy to promote our services for MICE.

Last year, we did few group movements. The numbers could have been more provided we had aircraft avail-

Tony Tyler to retire as IATA DG & CEO in 2016

■ The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has announced that its Director General and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), **Tony Tyler**, will retire in June 2016 after serving five years in the position. “Tony Tyler is a very effective leader of IATA, who is achieving much in his role as DGI and CEO. I regret that he will be leaving the Association, but respect his decision to retire next year after a long and successful career in aviation. The search will now start for a successor to be appointed at the next IATA Annual General Meeting in Dublin in June 2016. In the meantime the Board will continue to guide and support Tony and his team in their mission to deliver a safe, efficient and sustainable airline industry,” said **Andrés Conesa**, Chief Executive Officer, Aeroméxico and Chairman of the IATA Board of Governors since June this year.

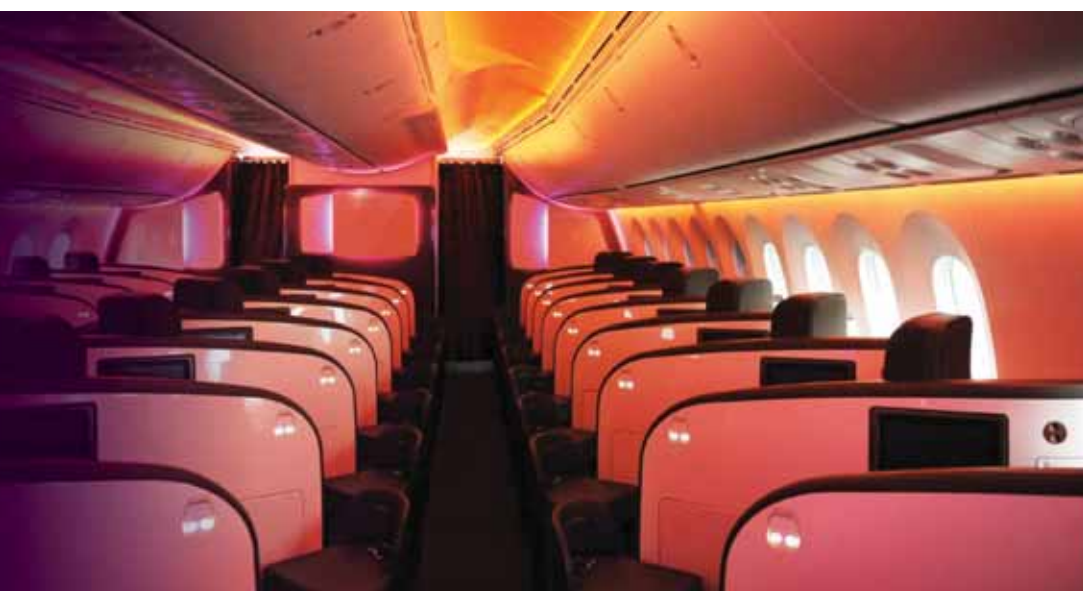
“After five years as Director General and CEO of IATA, I believe it will be time for me to retire and leave the organisation. It is a great privilege and responsibility to lead IATA, and I am proud of what the IATA team is achieving during my term of office. I greatly appreciate the support I receive from the Board of Governors and the membership at large, and from my colleagues. I remain fully committed to leading IATA until my successor is appointed in June next year,” said Tyler. Before joining IATA in 2011, Tyler was Chief Executive of Cathay Pacific Airways in Hong Kong, in which capacity he also served on the IATA Board of Governors including as its Chairman from June 2009 to June 2010.

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Aviation policy to ease business

The Aviation Day hosted by IATA, Ministry of Civil Aviation, and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), brought into focus the areas of opportunities, as also the multiple challenges that need to be addressed.



TT BUREAU

India's 5/20 rule was a popular topic of discussion at the Aviation Day conference. **Phee Teik Yeoh**, CEO, Vistara, called for the abolition of the rule mandating five years of domestic operations and fleet of 20 aircraft for airlines to fly international, and route dispersal guidelines. **Tony Tyler**, Director General and CEO, IATA, said, "The problem with such regulations is that by creating distortions to the free market, they influence long-term decisions made by airlines. And so, once they are imposed they become very difficult to change as circumstances

evolve, because doing so can't help being unfair to some or the other key industry player."

However, **Pusapati Ashok Gajapathi Raju**, Minister of Civil Aviation, said that instead of opposing the easing of the 5/20 rule, existing players on the international route must use existing bilateral allotted to them. Raju was addressing a gathering of senior airlines executives, officials from the Civil Aviation Ministry and Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), as well as aviation industry experts at the Aviation Day India, organised by IATA, India's Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA)



(L-R): Ankur Bhatia, Tony Tyler, Ashok Gajapathi Raju, GV Sanjay Reddy and Soma Banerjee

and the Confederation of Indian Industries.

Delivering the keynote address at the conference, Tyler called for the development of a comprehensive policy for aviation aligned with the

Indian Government's stated intention to make it easier to do business in India.

On the ministry's highly-awaited aviation policy, Raju said that the new policy would bolster growth and ease the

investment climate. He said that while the aviation sector would continue with the regulations, the rules would be amended for the growth of the sector. Replying to a question, Raju also said that at the moment government has put low-cost airport projects on hold due to feasibility issues.

Talking more about the aviation policy, **RN Choubey**, Secretary, Civil Aviation, said that the aviation policy would look to reduce cost of acquisition of aircrafts and airports, they would also work more closely with states and moderate taxes on ATF at the state level. "We are working to

see that all states can bring down the VAT rates to four per cent on ATF. This is crucial as India has to import crude oil and moderate fuel prices are a key component to making the industry competitive," he said.

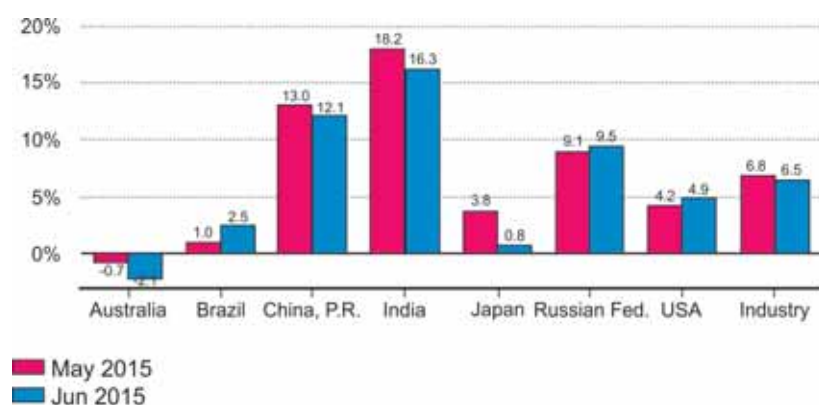
Choubey mentioned that the aviation policy has touched upon all the concerns of the industry, "The government is looking at various ways to reduce cost of operations for the airline, including ways to order for aircraft in bulk for all Indian carriers together. We are thinking on these lines and a final decision will come after consultations," he said.

16.3% surge in domestic air traffic in June

On domestic markets, India continues to record very strong growth, up 16.3 per cent, likely owing to market stimulation by local carriers as well as notable improvements in economic growth. Supportive monetary policy is expected to help economic growth in India surpass that of China during the next 2 years.

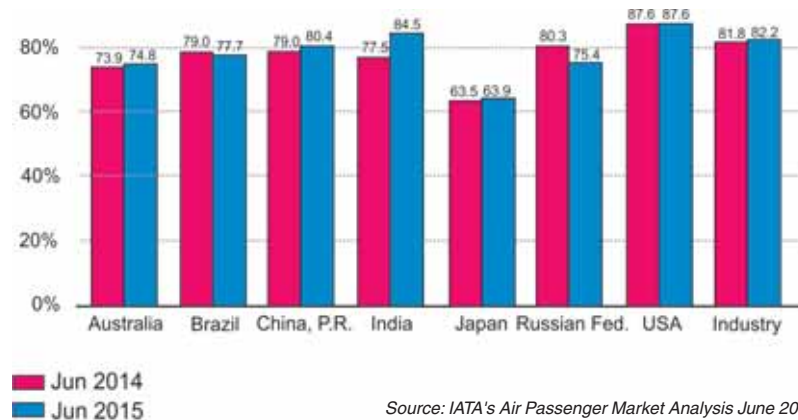
Domestic Passenger Growth by Country

% change over year



Domestic Passenger Load Factor by Country

% of ASKs



Source: IATA's Air Passenger Market Analysis June 2015



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Travstarz is GSO for Sterling Resorts

With Travstarz and Sterling Holiday Resorts coming together, both companies aim at getting more inbound tourists into the country.

TT BUREAU

Sterling Holiday Resorts has appointed Travstarz Holiday and Destinations as its General Sales Office (GSO) in New Delhi. The formal agreement was signed between **Ajay Kumar**, National Head-Sales, Hotel Division, Sterling Holiday Resorts and **Pankaj Nagpal**, Managing Director, Travstarz Global Group. Sterling Holiday Resorts was incorporated in 1986 and is now a 100 per cent independently managed subsidiary of Thomas Cook India, a part of



Pankaj Nagpal
Managing Director
Travstarz Global Group

We look at Sterling as a comprehensive holiday player and look forward to getting more and more people to holiday with them across the country and overseas

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varied holiday experiences. "Travstarz is one of the fastest growing travel wholesalers in the recent years and we see great value in this partnership between Sterling and Travstarz," says Kumar.

Nagpal says, "We have been expanding rapidly in the hotel wholesale business for the last three years and have many global brands associated

with us. We are also about to launch our online portal next month. All of Sterling's existing resorts have been upgraded and they are continually adding new resorts and destinations. We look at Sterling as a comprehensive holiday player and look forward to getting more and more people to holiday with them across the country and overseas as and when they expand."



Ajay Kumar
National Head-Sales, Hotel Division,
Sterling Holiday Resorts

Travstarz is one of the fastest growing travel wholesalers in the recent years and we see great value in this partnership between Sterling and Travstarz

Fairfax Financial Holdings, a \$38.2 billion global investment and insurance holding company, headquartered in Toronto, Canada. It has a network of leisure resorts at some of the best holiday destinations in India. Currently, Sterling has an inventory of 1,767 rooms spread across 24 resorts located in Corbett, Daman, Darjeeling, Dindi,

Sterling Spots

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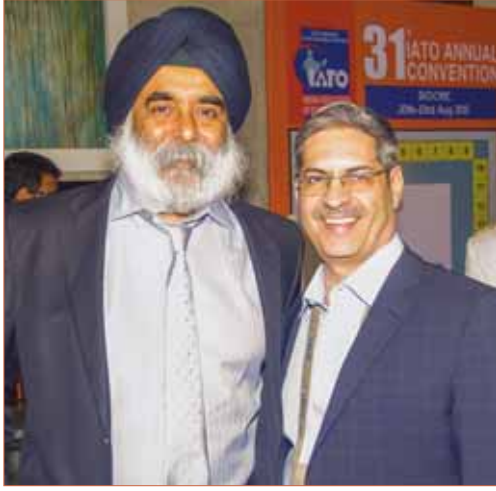
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▶ Contd. on page 38

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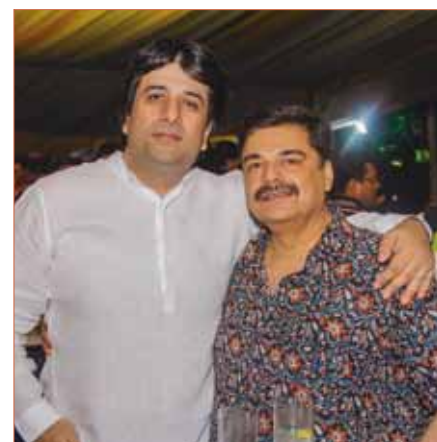
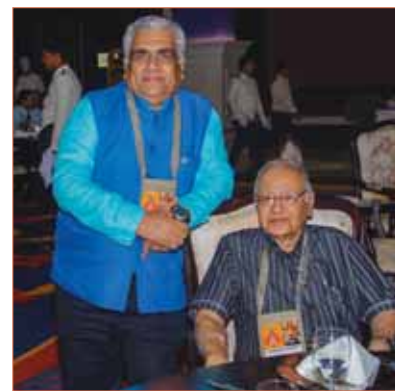


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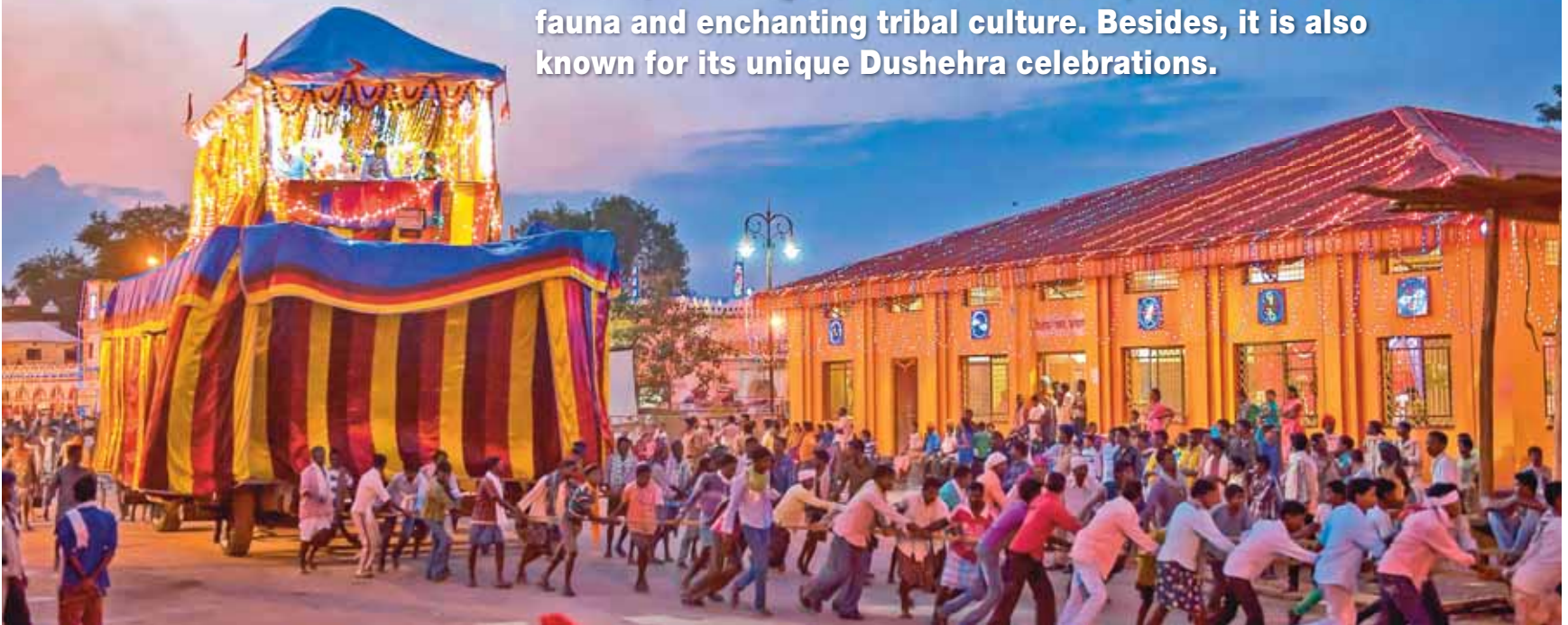
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Bastar abounds in natural beauty with rich deciduous forests, stunning waterfalls and caves, rare flora and fauna and enchanting tribal culture. Besides, it is also known for its unique Dushehra celebrations.



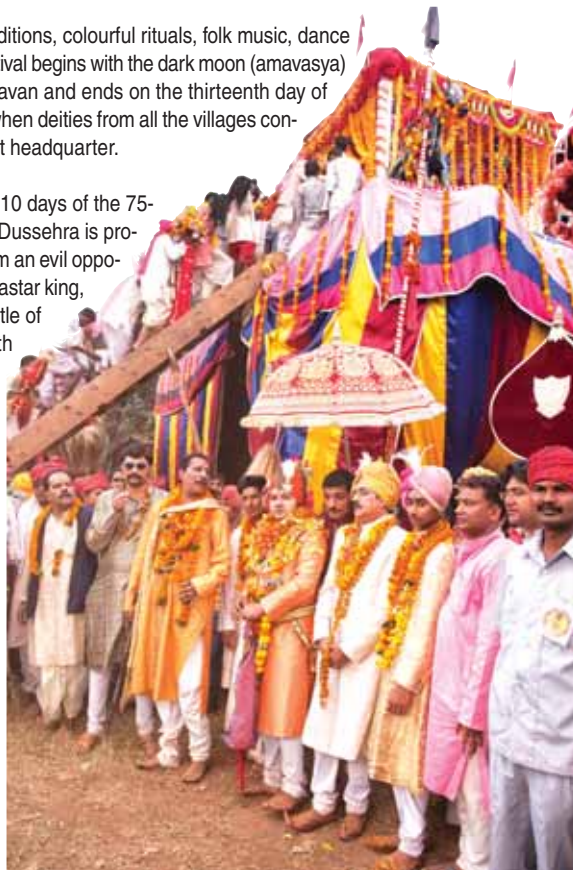
Bastar Dushehra

A joyous and vibrant congregation

Bastar Dushehra, a vibrant repertoire of rich tribal traditions, colourful rituals, folk music, dance and a lively crowd is simply not worth missing. This festival begins with the dark moon (amavasya) also known as Hareli amavasya in the month of Shravan and ends on the thirteenth day of the bright moon in the month of Ashwin. It's the time when deities from all the villages congregate at the temple of Danteshwari in Jagdalpur, the district headquarter.

The Bastar Dushehra reaches its crescendo in the last 10 days of the 75-day festival. The presiding deity is Ma Danteshwari Devi and Dushehra is propitiation of the goddess for having rescued the Bastar king from an evil opponent. Chalukya Purushottam Deo Kakatiya, the 15th century Bastar king, once visited Puri's Jagannath temple and returned with the title of Rathpati. This fourth Kakatiya king initiated the Dushehra rath yatra which is celebrated to this day with the same enthusiasm.

The longest Dushehra celebrated in India begins with Kachhangadi and Paat Jatra ceremony in front of the Danteshwari temple. The rituals include making offerings to a wooden log brought from nearby Bilauri village for the preparation of an eight-wheeled, double-storied wooden chariot. After the divine sanction granted by a young girl, symbolising the goddess, the chief priest performs the Kalash Sthapana ceremony in the Maoli temple on the following day (Pratipada). On Mahaashtami, Devi Maoli, a manifestation of Ma Danteshwari, is led to the temple at the Bastar palace. On the last day of Navratra, members of the royal family sit on the chariot while the head priest holds aloft the umbrella of Ma Danteshwari. The path of the chariot is lit by nearly 10,000 clay lamps. The festival concludes with Kachan Jatra (a thanksgiving ceremony) and a Muriya Darbar (tribal chieftains' meet).



Other important rituals at Bastar Dushehra

- ▶ **Jogi Bithai (The Jogi's Penance):** A youth of the Halba tribe sits (buried shoulder deep in a pit) in penance for the success of the festival.
- ▶ **Rath Parikrama (Chariot Circuit):** The four wheeled flower chariot begins to circumambulate the Maoli Temple every evening up to the seventh day in the month of Ashwin
- ▶ **Nisha Jatra (The Nocturnal Festival):** On Durgashtami, a procession of lights leads to the puja mandap in Itwari.
- ▶ **Jogi Uthai (Raising of the Jogi):** When the penance of the Jogi ends, he is ceremoniously raised from the pit he sat buried in, and honoured with consecrated gifts.
- ▶ **Maoli Parghav (Reception of Devi Maoli):** A warm welcome is given to Devi Maoli, an elder sister of Danteshwari Devi at the congregation of deities. A gala event is accompanied by spectacular fireworks.
- ▶ **Bheeter Raini with Rath Parikrama (The Inner Circuit):** On Vijayadashami, the eight wheeled chariot takes a circumambulatory course around the Maoli temple. After the completion of this inner circuit, it is parked for the night and as a ritual around 400 marias and murias steal the chariot away to Kumdakot (a sal grove).
- ▶ **Baahar Raini with Rath Parikrama (The Outer Circuit):** The day after the chariot is stolen, the king visits Kumdakot to offer cooked rice from the new harvest to the Goddess. After having prasada from her, the chariot is pulled back ceremoniously through the main road to the Lion Gate of the palace.
- ▶ **Ohadi (Farewell to the Deities):** After Kachan Jatra and Muriya Darbar, the deities who congregated at Jagdalpur from various parts of Bastar are ceremoniously bid farewell. This marks the culmination of the Bastar Dushehra.



Family first @WTM London

World Travel Market London 2015, the leading global event for the travel industry, has linked up with Worldwide Kids Company to host a seminar giving hotels and resorts detailed advice on how to appeal to high-spending families.

TT BUREAU

Family travel is one of the staples of the industry with a truly global reach. The market is not only growing but also evolving. The seminar will look at how it is changing and what hotels and resorts can do to take advantage of the opportunities. The seminar will be hosted by the Worldwide Kids Company, a childcare consultancy for hotels and resorts which has been in operation for 30 years. Its services range from health and safety audits, to providing registered childcare, sourcing equipment and design. Its senior consultant and founder **Kate Dicker** will host the seminar, with director **Richard Liddle** one of the panelists. The other confirmed speakers at the session reflect the variety of brands and destinations which are active in the market while the seniority of the participants indicate the organisational importance of family travel.

The speakers include **David Thompson**, Chief Operating Officer, JA Hotels & Resorts; **Amanda Hills**, Founder and CEO, Hills Balfour on behalf of its client Westin Costa Navarino in Greece; **Lyle Lewis**, General Manager, Conrad Rangali Island, Maldives; **Remko Werkhoven**, General Manager, Doubletree by Hilton Resort & Spa Marjan Island UAE; **Julian Houchin**, Commercial Director, Sun Gardens Resort and Spa in Dubrovnik, Croatia; and **Andreas Birner**, Managing Director, INOVA Hospitality Management.

The session will share best-practice examples of how to deliver an exceptional family holiday experience. Case studies will highlight how investment in the luxury family product can generate significantly higher revenues for hotels and resorts.

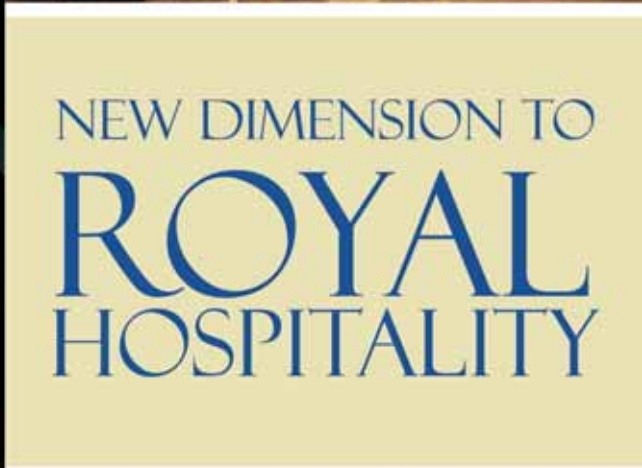
Simon Press, Senior Director, World Travel Market, said, "Family travel is an established part of the travel industry and is changing in response to wider shifts in society at large. Hotels and resorts at the top end of the market need to be aware of this so that they can offer an exceptional experience

to families. This seminar will provide practical guidance, insight and advice from the market leaders."

The seminar takes place on November 4. Almost 51,500 senior travel industry professionals, government ministers and international press, embark on ExCeL - London every November to network, negotiate and discover the latest

industry opinion and trends at WTM.

WTM London, now in its 36th year, is the event where the travel industry conducts and concludes its deals. WTM London is part of Reed Travel Exhibition's World Travel Market events, which also includes Arabian Travel Market, World Travel Market Latin America and World Travel Market Africa.



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Learning @WTM

The seminar will be hosted by Worldwide Kids Company to look at how the industry is changing and what hotels can do to take advantage of this opportunity

Maya only for the best in trade

India Travel Awards is a celebration of excellence and commitment of professionals toward this industry. TravTalk features the winners of the Gallery of Legends and DDP Game Changers from all five editions so far.

Gallery of Legends

SOUTH 2014



Vivek Nair, Chairman & MD, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts, was conferred with 'The Wall of Legends' Award. His daughter, **Amruda Nair**, Head of Asset Management, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts, received the award on his behalf from **Chandana Khan**, Special Chief Secretary, Andhra Pradesh Tourism

WEST 2014



Om Prakash Sahgal, Director of Inorbit Tours, was conferred with 'The Wall of Legends' Award. He receives the award from **Parvez Dewan**, Secretary of Tourism, Government of India, **Amita Motwani**, Mrs. India International 2013

EAST 2014



Jitendra Kumar Mohanty, Managing Director, Swosti Group of Companies, was conferred with 'The Wall of Legends' Award. He receives the award from **Bratya Basu**, Minister of Tourism and Culture, West Bengal, and **Amita Motwani**, Mrs. India International 2013 and **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Group

NORTH 2014



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

SOUTH 2015

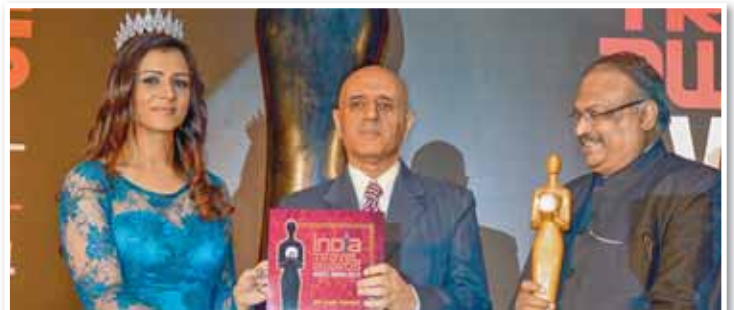


E.M. Najeeb Chairman and Managing Director, ATE Group joins the 'Gallery of Legends'. He is felicitated by **Ganta Srinivasa Rao**, Minister of Human Resource Development, Government of Andhra Pradesh, **Neerabh K Prasad**, Principal Secretary Tourism, Government of Andhra Pradesh, **Sindhura Kaviti** Miss Vizag

DDP Game Changer



Sunil Kumar, CEO, Travel World and Vice-President, TAAI, receiving the 'DDP Game Changer' Award from **Chandana Khan**, Special Chief Secretary, Andhra Pradesh Tourism



On behalf of **Sanjay Kaul**, Commissioner of Tourism and Managing Director of the Tourism Corporation of Gujarat, **Soman S. Pathy**, Liaison Officer, Gujarat Tourism receives the 'DDP Game Changer' Award from **Parvez Dewan**, Secretary of Tourism, Government of India, accompanying him are **Amita Motwani**, Mrs. India International 2013



JT Ramnani, Managing Director, Vensimal World Travel Agents Pvt. Ltd receives the 'DDP Game Changer' Award from **Bratya Basu**, Minister of Tourism and Culture, West Bengal, accompanying him are **Amita Motwani**, Mrs. India International 2013 and **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Group



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



On behalf of **G V Sanjay Reddy**, Vice Chairman, GVK and Managing Director, Bial, **Raj Andrade**, Vice President Business Development Marketing & Strategy, Bangalore International Airport Limited receives the 'DDP Game Changer' Award from **Ganta Srinivasa Rao**, Minister of Human Resource Development, Government of Andhra Pradesh, **Neerabh K Prasad**, Principal Secretary Tourism, Government of Andhra Pradesh, **Sindhura Kaviti**, Miss Vizag





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RezLive enters Thailand

RezLive.com is expanding its reach further in Asia by opening a new office in Bangkok, Thailand. Jaal Shah, Group Managing Director, RezLive.com, tells more.

TT BUREAU

RezLive.com already has a solid base in the Asia Pacific region and with its new office in Thailand, that will further strengthen its reach and scope of operations in this part of the world. Through the Thailand office, RezLive.com team will satisfy the growing travel-related needs of the local travel partners, and also will expand and establish direct contracts with hotels across the Kingdom. The company offers hotels, sightseeing and transfers under one window interface to its travel partners. The system is empowered by direct inventories of multiple suppliers and our own contracts with price comparison filters which provides the travel partners a larger pool of inventory with competitive rates. A part of Travel Designer Group, RezLive.com is backed by travel expertise, innovation and cutting edge technology.

Through offices in India, UAE, Qatar, Thailand, Kuwait, Jordan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Mauritius, Philippines, Saudi



Jaal Shah
Group Managing Director
RezLive.com

Thailand will act as a potential market for us and we would like to capitalise on the same by offering better inventory

Arabia, Australia, Nepal, Malaysia, South Africa, Algeria, Romania and Morocco, RezLive.com is empowering 11,000+ satisfied travel partners in over 18 coun-

tries in four continents. Travel Designer Group, which has its roots in the Indian travel industry for 15 years, also offers products like designer packages, designer India and product offerings for Qatar, with its arm named Travel Designer WLL. In less than 15 years, the group has made a mark on the sector and has grown at a whopping 50 per cent every year for the last five years. Today it is a 250+ member team with self-owned offices in four countries and GSA offices in 14 countries.

Jaal Shah, Group Managing Director, RezLive.com, says, "Thailand will act as a potential market for us and we would like to capitalise on the same by offering better inventory at best net rates to our travel partners, complemented by world class support. We are confident that we will be able to create a buzz about RezLive.com in this region and will replicate the same success story that we have in the Middle East and Asia Pacific region."

TravelBullz bullish on SL

TravelBullz, a fast-growing online travel companies in South East Asia, celebrated its 6th anniversary with the opening of its sixth destination - Sri Lanka.

TT BUREAU

TravelBullz has signed an affiliation partnership agreement in Sri Lanka with Walkers Tours, the island nation's premier destination management company for over 40 years. Owned by Sri Lanka's leading conglomerate, the John Keells Group, Walkers Tours has the advantage of being supported by the group's two hotel brands



Dilshaad Buhariwala
Chief Operating Officer
TravelBullz

We are the only DMC in Sri Lanka to provide online real time confirmations with the country's largest tourist transport fleet and our own direct contracts with hotels

travel agents make bookings on our web portal. Over 100,000 quotations are made by different travel agents across the world."

Dilshaad Buhariwala, Chief Operating Officer, TravelBullz, describes the partnership as their next most significant step to have TravelBullz people on ground in their office in Sri Lanka. She says, "We are the only DMC in Sri Lanka to provide online real time confirmations with the country's largest tourist transport fleet, and our own direct contracts with hotels to provide the TravelBullz signature service and specialised product offerings in Sri Lanka, to our individual and group customers across all our source markets of India, Middle East and Asia."

The product offering was launched in August with live availability and last minute inventory for a wide choice of hotels, land packages with offers valid till next year.

'Cinnamon' and 'Chaaya' along with the two most sought-after luxury 5 star hotels in Colombo, the Cinnamon Grand and Cinnamon Lakeside. All together the group manages close to 3,600 beds across the country. KD Singh, Managing Director,

TravelBullz, says, "We have five offices across the world. The latest addition is the Sri Lanka operations. With over 60,000 guests travelling on our network this year, we have over 78 per cent of our business which is completely online B2B business where

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In Mumbai, celebrating new

Atlastravelsonline, a simple, user-friendly online travel portal, recently opened a new office at Lower Parel in South Mumbai. The occasion was graced by many eminent travel agents, GDS companies as well as airlines stalwarts. The location of this office has its own significance as the area is the business hub of Mumbai.



beginnings for *atlastravelsonline*



Promote ayurveda & yoga worldwide

Close on the heels of the Ministry of Tourism formulating a National Medical & Wellness Tourism Board, the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry recently concluded a daylong Medical and Wellness Tourism Summit. The summit talked about branding India as an ideal destination for medical and wellness tourism.

TT BUREAU

The PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry through the Medical & Wellness Tourism Summit endeavoured to provide a platform for open house discussion between governments (central & states) and the medical and wellness fraternity regarding the issues and opportunities affecting

medical and wellness tourism in the country.

Inaugurating the summit, **Dr Mahesh Sharma**, Minister of Tourism, shared that the medical and wellness tourism potential of our country has not been harnessed and the need of the hour is to have a holistic approach and consolidate all the parameters of general tourism with this niche sector.

Dr Sharma complimented the PHD Chamber for organising a focused seminar on this sector and urged the private stakeholders to utilise and promote the strengths of India – in its traditional treatments, like Ayurveda, yoga and the best quality doctors.

The minister added that the Ministry of Tourism, as a facilitator, is working on addressing the lacunas in streamlining this important sector. He added that the min-



istry has already worked on the issues of e-Tourist Visa, being granted to 113 countries, thus encouraging more tourists to enjoy the untapped facilities in these areas.

Dr Sharma invited PHD Chamber and private sector to nominate their representatives for the proposed National

Medical & Wellness Tourism Board to forge partnerships and guide the growth momentum in this sector.

Speaking on the occasion, **AK Ganeriwala**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of AYUSH, shared that the ministry has started a mission to promote Ayurveda and yoga worldwide.

Gopal Jiwrajka, Vice President, PHD Chamber, **Vijay Mehta**, Chairman, Tourism Committee of the Chamber along with **Z U Siddiqui**, Managing Director & CEO, Delhi Tourism & Transportation Development Corporation Ltd.; **Tomasz Lukaszuk**, Ambassador, Embassy of Poland; **Radu**

Octavian Dobre, Charge D'Affairs, Embassy of Romania; **Avjit Goswami**, Central Council Member & Chairman Research and Journal Committee, Institute of Cost Accountants of India and **Yogesh Srivastav**, Director, PHD Chamber, addressed the inaugural session.

Future Plans

➔ MOT is working on addressing the lacunas in streamlining this important sector

➔ The Ministry has invited PHD Chamber and private sector to nominate their representatives for the proposed National Medical & Wellness Tourism Board

Medical and Wellness Tourism to the fore

PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry organised the Medical and Wellness Tourism Summit 2015 in New Delhi recently. The summit discussed the fact that in order to meet global standards, Medical and Wellness Tourism sector needs to focus on delivering quality service to patients, together with ensuring availability of excellent medical infrastructure among other things.



Star Cruises liner has partnered with new tourism boards to introduce Indian cruise passengers to newer routes. It is also in the process of getting a new ship in 2016.

HAZEL JAIN

With the intention of branching out and testing newer routes for the Indian market, Star Cruise is looking to introduce its Taiwan sailings to Indians. **Naresh Rawal**, VP Sales - India, South Asia, Russia, Middle East & South Africa, Star Cruises, says, "Our Singapore and Hong Kong

The cruise company is also in the process of getting a new build in 2016 followed by its sister ship in 2017. "It is not going to be a normal ship. It will be a technologically advanced mega ship, double the size of Virgo with 33 F&B outlets," Rawal says but reveals no more information.

Star Cruises introduced its specialist programme last

year that created 700 specialists out of the total registrations it received of 2,000 agents. Rawal says, "The entire programme was run over three phases. We plan to implement it again next year with our new product coming in. Next year will be on a much bigger scale with two webinars – one for the new set of agents who will register again and become specialists and the other for those

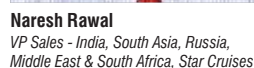
who have already become specialists. Right now we are in the process of structuring the entire programme."

Star Cruises recently participated in the Hong Kong Tourism Board roadshow in August followed by a Singapore Tourism Board roadshow in July 2015. As the year goes on, it will do more familiarisation trips. "We have

always seen double digit growth year on year and this year will be no different," Rawal says.

Star Cruises, together with Ark Travels, recently hosted more than 300 Ark partner agents to a party titled 'The Big Bang Nautical Fiesta' in Lavasa near Pune. The elaborate three-day event starting from August 26, 2015 saw their

top-performing diverge from various cities mainly from Maharashtra and Gujarat but also from North and East India. Rawal says, "It was to thank Ark Travels partners for selling Star Cruises. We wanted to do something different for our partner agents in a different location and we finally zeroed in on Lavasa. We wanted the agents to go back with a 'wow' feeling."



The entire programme was run over three phases. We plan to implement it again next year with our new product coming in. Next year will be on a much bigger scale with two webinars

products have been doing phenomenally well so we are trying to develop a new segment right now. We did a familiarisation trip with our PSAs on Superstar Aquarius ex Taiwan this September. The idea is to create a new business opportunity for our PSAs because every year the leisure or MICE market keep looking for new destinations. This could be a new product for them to sell."

This was done in partnership with the Taiwan Tourism Board head office which is sponsoring three out of the six nights on shore. Rawal adds that Star Cruises is in high-level talks with them to see if they can relax visa policies for Indian cruise passengers. "It's a working proposal," he adds.

On the trip, agents met up with local DMCs and the Okinawa Tourism Board. He adds, "Nobody has tried selling too much of Taiwan from India so we are excited about this new product."



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Star Cruises, together with Ark Travels and Lavasa, recently hosted more than 300 Ark partner agents to a party titled 'The Big Bang Nautical Fiesta' in Lavasa near Pune. The elaborate three-day event starting from August 26, 2015 saw their top-performing agents diverge from various cities mainly Maharashtra and Gujarat.



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EVENT TALK

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INTERNATIONAL

24-27	Tokyo	JATA
24-26	Kazakhstan	Astana Leisure

NATIONAL

16	Bengaluru	VisitBritain's 'Great Tourism Week' Roadshow
16	Hyderabad	Hyderabad Fair
17	Mumbai	Scandinavian, Baltic and Nordic Countries Workshop
18	Delhi	Scandinavian, Baltic and Nordic Countries Workshop
18	Hyderabad	VisitBritain's 'Great Tourism Week' Roadshow
18-20	Surat	Travel & Tourism Fair
24-26	Mumbai	Travel & Tourism Fair
28-30	Mumbai	Maharashtra International Travel Mart

OCTOBER 2015

NATIONAL

2-4	Pune	Travel and Tourism Fair
5	Mumbai	Turkey Roadshow
5	Mumbai	Thailand Luxury Roadshow 2015
7	Chandigarh	Tourism Authority of Thailand Luxury Roadshow
7	Delhi	Turkey Roadshow
9	Delhi	Tourism Authority of Thailand Luxury Roadshow
9-11	Indore	India International Travel Exhibition
9-11	Nagpur	Holiday Expo
9-11	Goa	Travel & Tourism Fair
10-11	Gurgaon	Vkonect Luxury B2B event
14	Goa	West India Travel Awards
15	Goa	India Cargo Awards West & South
16-18	Lucknow	India Travel Mart
16-18	Bhopal	Madhya Pradesh Travel Mart
26	Delhi	Scandinavian Tourism Board Media Brief
26	Mumbai	Spain Tourism Office Leisure Workshop
27	Delhi	Scandinavian Tourism Board Travel Trade Seminar
27	Mumbai	Spain Tourism Office MICE Workshop
28	Delhi	Spain Tourism Office Leisure Workshop
29	Delhi	Spain Tourism Office MICE Workshop
30-Nov 1	Noida	India Travel Mart

NOVEMBER 2015

INTERNATIONAL

2-5	London	World Travel Mart
17-19	Spain, Barcelona	IBTM, World

NATIONAL

6-8	Visakhapatnam	Holiday Expo
20-22	Guwahati	Travel & Tourism Fair
23	Delhi	German National Tourist Office B2B Roadshow
24	Bengaluru	German National Tourist Office B2B Roadshow
25	Ahmedabad	German National Tourist Office B2B Roadshow
25	Mumbai	Monaco Government Tourist & Convention Bureau B2B Roadshow
26	Mumbai	German National Tourist Office Networking Event
27	Mumbai	German National Tourist Office B2B Roadshow
27	Delhi	Monaco Government Tourist & Convention Bureau B2B Roadshow
27-29	Pune	India International Travel Mart
27-29	Ahmedabad	India Travel Mart
27-29	Kolkata	Travel East

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

Masterclass in hospitality

After a collaboration with NCHMCT, Anup K Chatterji, GM, HRD, ITDC and Principal AIH&TM, says to bridge the gap in the demand and supply of trained manpower in the industry, they are focusing on job-oriented short-term courses.



PEDEN DOMA BHUTIA

Tell us about the collaboration between AIH&TM and NCHMCT?

National Council for Hotel Management & Catering Technology (NCHMCT) has affiliated with Ashok Institute of Hospitality & Tourism Management (AIH&TM), run under the HRD division of India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) to conduct a three-year BSc Degree course in Hospitality & Hotel Administration (H&HA) from the academic session 2015-16. With this affiliation AIH&TM is now on a par with all existing IHMs under the umbrella of NCHMCT. However, AIH&TM is the first and the only IHM falling under a PSU. The intake to this course is done through all India Joint Entrance Examination conducted by NCHMCT which is an autonomous body under Ministry of Tourism. The present strength of students at AIH&TM under this programme is 53. At



Anup K Chatterji
GM, HRD, ITDC and Principal
AIH&TM

present one batch is being conducted under this course.

How will ITDC provide innovative, dependable solutions to the needs of tourism development through education?

AIH&TM has four decades of experience in hospitality-related training for various categories of students and employees. ITDC has always strived towards excellence in training and development in the hospitality industry through its HRD division, AIH&TM. The training methods adopted by

AIH&TM are innovative and are in tandem with the latest trends followed widely in the industry.

How urgent is the need for skilled labour in the Indian hospitality industry?

As per the report of National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) on Human Resource and Skill Requirement in Tourism, Travel, Hospitality & Trade, an investment of ₹ 10 lakh creates 78 jobs in the tourism sector while the same generates just 18 jobs in manufacturing and 45 in the agriculture sector. Being employment intensive, travel & tourism provides employment to approximately 31 million (both direct & indirect) people throughout the country and is one of the largest employers in the country; this number is expected to rise to over 40 million by 2019 and over 43 million by 2022. Looking at the future requirement and huge gap in the demand and supply of trained manpower to the hospi-

tal industry we are focusing more on job-oriented short-term courses. Apart from imparting skill development training in areas of food production, F&B service, accommodation operations and front office, we have added new areas such as event management, travel agency management etc., and intend to add a few more courses of tourism and allied areas in the near future.

What are the roadblocks to promote hospitality education?

Lack of proper infrastructure and shortage of skilled trainers in rural areas are roadblocks in spreading tourism awareness and tourism-related service providers in remote parts of the country. Also the mushrooming of institutes with below standard infrastructure and teaching facilities are resulting in poor placement records and are thus discouraging the segment of students wanting to take up a career in the hospitality industry.

Guest Column

Claim refund on delayed flights

As the problem of delayed flights intensifies across UK airports refund.me data shows worst affected flights occur during holiday seasons.

Of the over 30,000 flights that travel across European airspace on a typical July day, approximately a quarter of those flights occur within UK controlled airspace (NATS), and this figure is set to rise in line with recent trends.

Figures recently released by the UK Civil Aviation Authority reveal that on-time performance for all scheduled flights operating from the UK's 10 main airports in 2014 dipped to 79 per cent. This is one percentage point down from 2013 figures. The overall on time percentage of charter flights dipped four percentage points to a low of 73 per cent with an average delay of 18 minutes, up from 17 minutes in 2013. Research by refund.me, the global passenger rights service provider, confirms that passengers are increasingly experiencing disrupted travel from flight delays, cancellations and re-routings, with peak holiday season travellers experiencing the worst in airline punctuality.

The company reports a spike in claims during busy hol-

iday seasons with data from Easter 2014 alone showing a rise of 35 percent in passenger compensation claims from airlines compared to data outside the holiday period that same year. Peak travel days saw a rise of 45 percent, with claims most often filed due to flight delays in excess of three hours.

India an important market

India represents an important tourism and VFR market to and from Europe. The European Travel Commission's 'European Tourism 2014 - Trends and Prospects' study reports exceptional growth in traffic to certain European destinations such as Spain and Bulgaria in terms of arrivals, and Sweden and Finland in terms of the number of nights. The study also predicts continued strong growth in visitor arrivals and overnights from India across the UK and Europe as a whole.

Passenger rights

Passengers travelling to and from India via EU airports are potentially eligible to claim compensation for delayed flights based on European Union reg-

ulation (EC) 261/2004. The Regulation applies to all worldwide airlines departing from an airport located in the territory of a EU Member State regardless of whether the airline is or is not an EU Community carrier airlines. For flights from outside the EU to a destination within the EU, passengers are protected if flying with an EU-based airline licensed.

Airlines will sometimes attempt to provide compensation in the form of vouchers, but passengers are not obliged to accept this. They should also be aware that monetary compensation is always given in euros. With skies becoming increasingly crowded, many UK passengers travelling in the summer peak travel season of mid-June through August are likely to experience sub-standard on-time performance.

Unfortunately many consumers are unaware of their rights to compensation. Ninety per cent of air passengers don't even know that they have the right to claim for flight delays, and of those who are

aware of their rights to claim compensation, only 2 per cent of passengers actually do so as they perceive the process to be too difficult.

How travel agents can help

Refund.me provides an app for travel agents via the Sabre Red App Centre which automatically monitors thousands of bookings, detecting delays and cancellations eligible for compensation. When a qualifying reservation is detected, the travel agent is notified and can then efficiently pass on this information and a claim form to the passenger with just a few clicks.



Eve Buchner
Founder and CEO, refund.me

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Etihad Airways

Mumbai

Neerja Bhatia has been appointed to the position of Vice President India and Indian Sub-Continent (ISC) of Etihad Airways. She joined Etihad Airways in 2004 as Sales Manager Western India, shortly after the airline had launched its flights to Mumbai, its first Indian destination. Bhatia then progressed to become Manager for Western and Southern India, before being appointed as General Manager India in 2007.



Yatra.com

New Delhi

Yatra.com has appointed **Chakrapani Gollapali** as Chief Business Officer, Holidays for the Company. Chakrapani, a former Microsoft India executive, will be responsible for the strategic direction, operational execution and the overall business results for the Holidays Unit of Yatra. With over two decades of experience in technology, mobile and consumer businesses, Chakrapani has had led several established and also incubating businesses. In his last role, he served as the Country General Manager for Microsoft India, leading all of Microsoft's core consumer categories.



Renaissance

Lucknow

Rahul Maini has been appointed as General Manager at the Renaissance Lucknow. A graduate from IHM, Ahmedabad, Maini brings with him an extensive global hospitality experience, having worked in many cities around the world. His association with Marriott started in 2001 where he was the Food & Beverage executive at the Marriott Executive Apartments and Renaissance in Powai, Mumbai. Following his three year stint at the hotel, Maini moved to the Taj Group where he worked in the F&B function at various hotels including the iconic Taj Lake Palace Udaipur.



InterContinental Chennai Mahabalipuram Resort

Chennai

Vijai Singh has joined InterContinental Chennai Mahabalipuram Resort as General Manager. He comes to InterContinental from LUX Maldives. With 20 years of experience, Singh brings to InterContinental Chennai Mahabalipuram Resort a wealth of industry knowledge. He held senior management roles at Asia's first private island resort The Rania Experience, One&Only Reethi Rah and Taj Exotica in the Maldives. He holds a PG Diploma in Hotel Management and General Administration and a BA from the Hindu College, University of Delhi.



The Resort

Mumbai

The Resort, Madh-Marve, Malad has appointed **Satyajit Kotwal** as its new General Manager. Prior to this, Kotwal was the Hotel Manager at Keys Hotel Temple Tree, Shirdi -- a brand of the Berggruen Hotel. Kotwal brings to the table a rich and diverse experience of over 10 years in the Hotel Operations, Human Resources, and Training sector. Armed with a degree in hospitality from the Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology, Mumbai, Kotwal has worked with some of the leading hotels in the country in various capacities.



Praveen Sharma has been appointed as Director of Sales & Marketing. Sharma comes with over 16 years of experience and his expertise lies in development, strategic planning, customer relationship engagement, and pre opening with a complete understanding of the hospitality markets like Bhopal, Lucknow and Delhi. He held various positions in many organisations in the hospitality and MICE segment, before joining the Marriott group in 2009. His first role at the Marriott Group was as part of the Global Sales team based in New Delhi. In 2012, Sharma joined the Courtyard by Marriott, Bhopal as Director of Sales before joining Renaissance Lucknow.



RoomsTonite

Bengaluru

RoomsTonite has appointed **Riyaz Hyder** as Head of Marketing. With 15 years of experience in marketing field, Hyder has spent entire career in core marketing functions with some of the globally reputed brands like Samsung, HP & ING. In his last assignment, he was heading marketing at Paladion, Asia's largest pure-play information security provider. In his earlier roles, Hyder was a co-founder of Mobisy, a mobile app platform that creates context and location aware real-estate for better mobile marketing solutions. He is also actively involved in various mobile start-up ecosystem initiatives.



Crowne Plaza

Jaipur

Sanchita Tuli joins Crowne Plaza Jaipur as Director of Human Resources in the soon to be commissioned hotel, wherein she will be overseeing the complete human resource and training function. Tuli brings to Crowne Plaza Jaipur, experience spanning operations, Sales, Human Resource and Learning & Development function across varied hotel segments in India. Her most recent position prior to Crowne Plaza Jaipur was as Learning & Development Manager – ibis Hotels India, Accor Group. She has been associated with premier hotel companies like Accor India, Marriott India, ITC Hotels, Taj Hotels, Mahindra Holidays etc during her career spanning over 16 years.



Mohit Gupta has been appointed as Crowne Meetings Director at Crowne Plaza Jaipur, wherein he will be overseeing MICE sales and event operations of the hotel. Gupta comes to Crowne Plaza from Courtyard by Marriott, Bilaspur where he was Director of Sales. He has been associated with the Hyatt, Taj and Intercontinental Hotels Group (UK) before this assignment. He has completed his MBA (Hospitality Management) from International Management Institute, Switzerland and has done his dual degree and diploma in International Hospitality Management from Queen Margaret University.



TALKing People

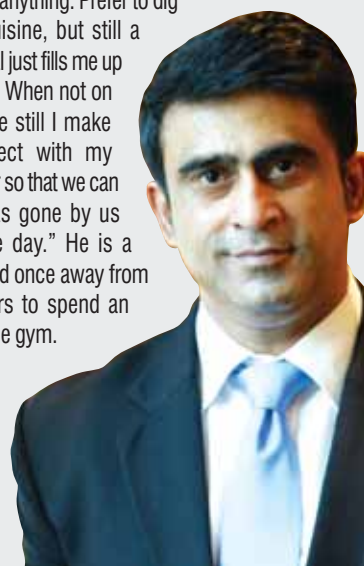
Sandy Russell, Vice President, Commercial Operations, Asia Pacific, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group, says she heads to Singapore to spend time with her family whenever she gets the opportunity. "We love to entertain, we love to cook, have people over at our home. We love going to restaurants. Apart from that I love to read. Well, every country is wonderful to travel to, the position that I have now assumed in Asia Pacific has afforded me the opportunity to experience things in Asia Pacific. I'm a Canadian and I still have a home in Canada and if you ask me my favourite place to holiday in, it's a tiny little resort town, outside of Toronto called Muskoka," Russel says.

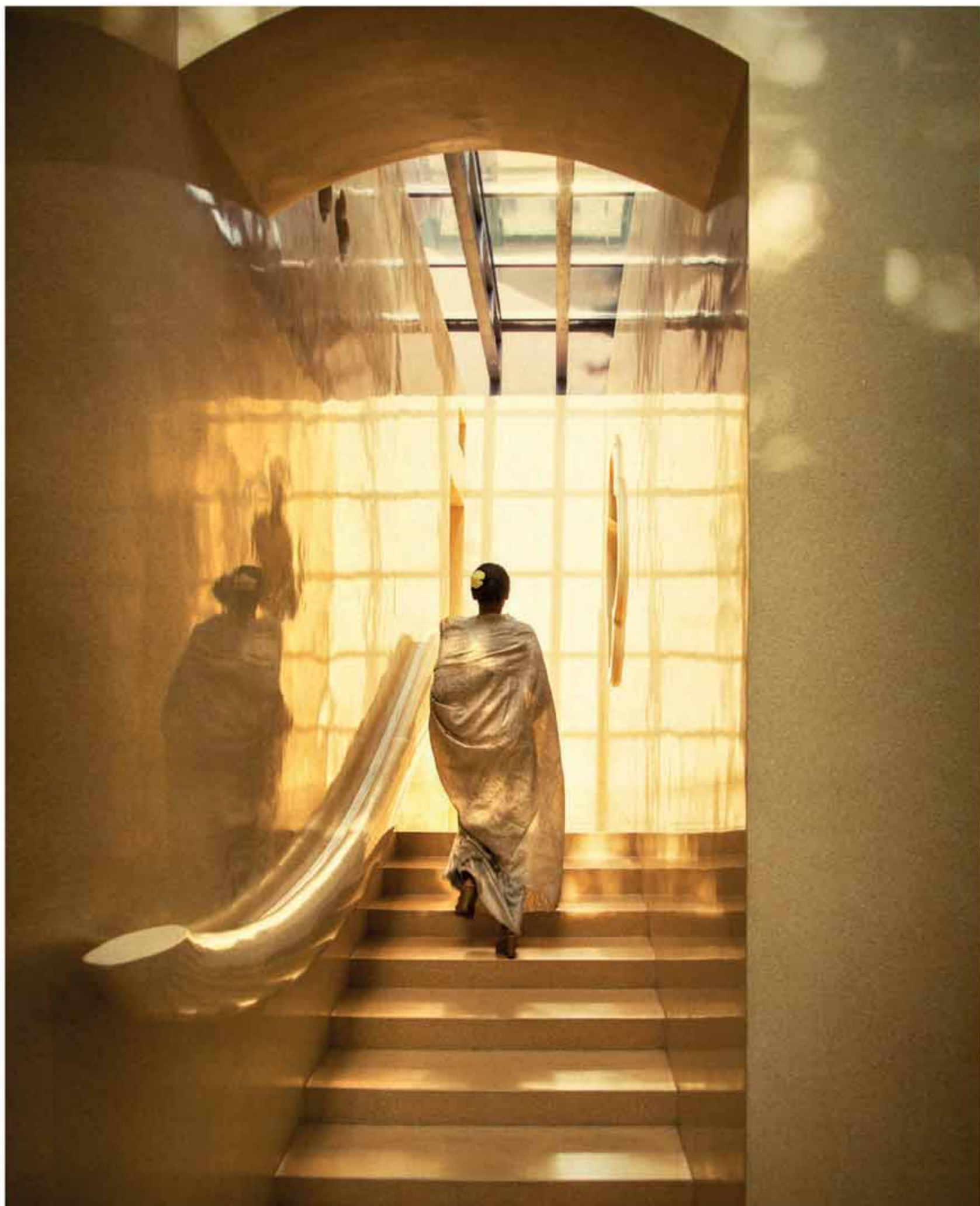


Ajit Sharma, Joint President – Operations, Jaypee Vasant Continental says even though he doesn't find enough free time, he likes to read and spend time with family. "I generally read trade magazines and like to keep myself updated about various travel destinations. And of course, there is nothing like spending time with my family and friends." His ideal domestic destination is Goa because of its beaches. "My international favorite destination is Geneva. From there, I like to visit Alps for their astounding picturesque beauty especially Jungfrauoch, which is called the 'Top of Europe'," Sharma adds.



Punish Sharma, Area General Manager- Meluha The Fern, Mumbai, says holidaying is a great way to rejuvenate and to bond with family. "I love to spend some quality time with my family at Mauritius if otherwise in India for a short break I prefer Goa." Sharma says, "Once out on a holiday I eat everything and anything. Prefer to dig in the local cuisine, but still a continental meal just fills me up with gladness. When not on a holiday spree still I make sure to connect with my family for dinner so that we can share what has gone by us throughout the day." He is a fitness freak and once away from work he prefers to spend an hour a day at the gym.





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As Air Canada gets set for its nonstop Delhi-Toronto flight on November 2, Gary Cross, Senior Director, International Sales, Air Canada, says Mumbai is high on their wish list of destinations.



PEDEN DOMA BHUTIA

Q*You've decided to start non-stop service to Delhi after 10 years. Previously you were operating the A340 and Boeing 767, has the introduction of the 787 Dreamliner bolstered the move?*

The Dreamliner is the key, it's had a huge customer appeal since we've introduced it. The aircraft is perfect for this route, the economics are fantastic. The aircraft gives us the range and the payload to carry passengers, bags and cargo. Our network in Canada has grown and our net-

India is an exciting destination and now being seen as a top-of-the-mind destination around the world. More and more young people have been taking interest in the country. There is a lot of growing interest from the Indian MICE market in Canada as a destination. As partners, Visit Canada is keen to promote the country as a destination. It is great value at the moment with the exchange rate of the Canadian dollar versus other currencies in the world. It is a fabulous value destination at the moment. It is a diverse country made up of communities from all over

and comfortably as possible and that's what the Air Canada experience is all about.

Q*ATA Chief Tony Tyler has appealed to the Indian government to help airlines do business in India. How conducive is the Indian environment for airlines to conduct their business?*

Judging by the set-up, the airport authority and the

“I think India is a very sophisticated market and they expect the best and Air Canada is geared up to offer that. The destination, the services at the airports, our award-winning lounges, our connection products are all part of the package.**”**

Gary Cross

Senior Director, International Sales, Air Canada



work into the US is going to be the key. We are the largest foreign airline in the US. We connect 54 destinations, you arrive in Toronto and connect everything into the US and the rest of Canada and some of our international destinations as well. The schedule is designed to make it much easier for Indian travellers to network.

Q*Do you think that the advantage to clear US immigration at Toronto Airport will help establish Canada as an international connection over established US hubs?*

The ability to pre-clear is a driving factor, we have had that for some time now and our European travellers have been availing that facility. When you check your baggage in at Delhi airport you'll collect it at the domestic belt of your destination in US. This is a great use for business travellers especially and of course for leisure travellers as well.

Q*How does the Indian MICE sector figure into your growth strategy?*

the world it's always had an open policy to welcome visitors. I think that is very encouraging as a destination. MICE destination is about ambience, setting and destinations to choose from and vibrant cities and all these aspects are available in Canada.

Q*Considering that you'll have 30 international executive lie-flat seats, do you think India's improving economy will translate into more Business Class seat sales?*

We have three classes – International Executive Class, Premium Economy, and Economy. I think India is a very sophisticated market and they expect the best and Air Canada is geared up to offer that. The destination, the services at the airports, our award-winning lounges, our connection products are all part of the package to get you from one place to another as quickly

government that we've been dealing with have been very helpful. Delhi is a very busy airport and for us to get the perfect schedule that we wanted has been very helpful. We are yet to start but I have not anticipated any issues at this stage, there are complexities and there's bureaucracy to go through but I wouldn't necessarily say it's overbearing here compared to other places.

Q*Are you looking at any other Indian destination?*

We are very keen to get back into Mumbai we have a lot of new aircrafts - a lot of new 787s coming in. There is a list of destinations that we want to serve throughout the world and Mumbai is high up on that list, it's not a question of 'if' but 'when'.



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