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North India Travel Awards

Pink City celebrates travel excellence



Radha Bhatia, Chairperson, Bird Group, joins the 'Gallery of Legends'. She is felicitated by Gajendra Singh Khimsar, Cabinet Minister of Industries, DMIC, NRI, Sports & Youth Affairs, Government of Rajasthan, Dr. Tanushree Pandey, Mrs India 2015 and SanJeet, Director, DDP Group

North India Travel Awards 2015 celebrated the accomplishments of the travel and tourism industry of North India at the Crowne Plaza Jaipur Tonk Road on December 8. The awards commemorated the achievers from different segments of the industry, such as GDS, Hotels and Resorts, Travel Agents, Tour Operators and Technology. Gracing the occasion with his presence was **Gajendra Singh Khimsar**, Cabinet Minister of Industries, DMIC, NRI, Sports & Youth Affairs, Government of Rajasthan, as well as other dignitaries from the travel and tourism industry in North India.

Radha Bhatia, Chairperson, Bird Group, joined the Gallery of Legends, while **Bhim Singh**, Managing Director, Rajasthan Tours and President, Federation of Hospitality and Tourism of Rajasthan (FHTR), was honoured as the DDP Trailblazer. **Ajeet Bajaj**, Founder & MD, Snow Leopard Adventures was declared as the DDP Game Changer and it was **Mittu Chandilya**, MD & CEO, Air Asia India, who was named the Face of the Future at the glittering ceremony.

More than 120 guests attended the black-tie event, which was full of applause and accolades. The winners of India Travel Awards (ITA) are defined by a fair and unbiased selection process done through online voting and judgement by a panel of jury consisting of travel industry luminaries. The total scores of the judges and the number of votes received by each nominee determined the final scores of the winners.

MOT steps up safety and cleanliness



Dr Mahesh Sharma
Minister of State for Culture and Tourism
(Independent Charge) & Civil Aviation

In 2015, the Ministry of Tourism implemented measures to make India safer and cleaner, including Swachh Bharat Mission, Incredible India Helpline and Tourist Police.

TT BUREAU

Encouraging tourist arrivals, cleanliness and safety schemes have been adopted by MOT. This supports the simplified visa-on-arrival policy and the government

is leaving no stone unturned to increase foreign tourist arrivals.

The number of arrivals are already on the rise as FTAs during January-November 2015 are 71 lakh with a growth of 4.5 per cent, as compared

to 67 lakh in the same period last year.

As part of the national cleanliness campaign, a theme based cleaning drive focused on tourism sites was undertaken from December 1-15, 2015. To

keep the focus on cleanliness, MOT encouraged practices including the installation of flex board messages in religious places and heritage sites on importance of cleanliness and print entry

Contd. on page 22 ►

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Canada on a branding spree

Canada has gone all out to promote the destination to Indians in exciting campaigns. As part of their marketing initiative, Destination Canada branded 200 radio taxis and Select Citywalk Mall, Saket in New Delhi.

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Destination Canada inaugurated its Radio Cab branding at Canada House and the branding campaign in Select Citywalk Mall, Saket on November 24, and December 7, 2015 respectively.

“We are very excited about our promotional activities in India. There is high demand from the Indian market for Canada and we are raising awareness about the destination. We have branded 200 radio cabs in New Delhi, which will run throughout December 2015. Our other promotional activities include radio promotions, print advertisements which point out the price points along with itineraries and experiences in Canada,” said **Rupert Peters**,



Rupert Peters
Regional Managing Director
Destination Canada

Regional Managing Director, Destination Canada.

The campaign at Select Citywalk Mall, Saket, was officially inaugurated by **Nadir Patel**, High Commissioner for Canada to India. Speaking at the event, Patel said, “The mall branding is a fantastic opportunity for us to showcase Canadian visuals, scenery, colours, and tourism products at one of the busiest



Nadir Patel
High Commissioner
of Canada to India

public places in the city. We are promoting the winter tourism season in Canada.”

Discussing the special deals being offered by Canada for the winter, **SanJeet**, India Representative, Destination Canada, said, “We have been collaborating with the travel trade and with their efforts we saw a growth of over 10 per cent till now. Travel agents are



SanJeet
India Representative
Destination Canada

selling packages to the clients in the mall and if someone avails those packages at this time, they get a special deal. This is a way of working with the agents who can meet their numbers for Canada and spread awareness about the destination. Also with the direct flight between Toronto and New Delhi, we expect to see a substantial growth.”

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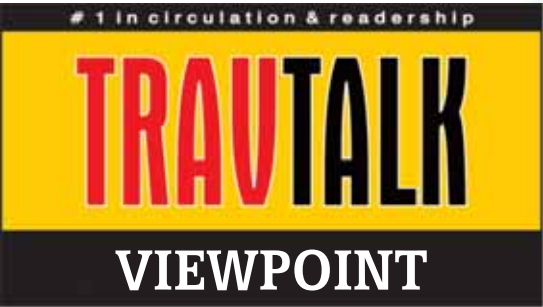
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Targeting Millennials

Backed by the current growth impetus, travel, hospitality, luxury and leisure companies saw strong benefits in 2015. However, it's becoming imperative to leverage technology to effectively respond to competition and a globe-trotting online customer, the Millennial.

The Millennial group is expected to represent up to three quarters of the global workforce within 10 years. To be successful with this group, any consumer business must understand their needs and desires. The good news is that Millennials love to travel. They want a customised experience. Their experience begins already with the online search and then evolves to the doorstep of the travel company or hotel. The industry needs to find the right amalgamation of information and technology to win loyalty of the Millennial customer.

In 2016 total global passengers are expected to rise to 3.8 billion travelling over some 54,000 routes, making it an exciting time for the tourism industry.

- A combination of some of the factors that should add to the success of the industry are:
- Lower oil prices
 - Strong demand for travel
 - Stronger economies - India's growing middle class and faster recovery of the eurozone (which should outweigh the slower growth in China)
 - Airlines increasing capacity and high load factors - Passenger capacity growth is expected to accelerate from 6.0% in 2015 to 8.4% in 2016 as new aircraft are delivered to accommodate this growth (especially in major emerging markets like India).
 - e-Tourist Visas being offered by India and other countries to promote tourism globally

Even though everything seems to be spiraling upwards, steps need to be taken very quickly to ensure tourism is not hampered due to lack of security and safety.

To motivate the industry and celebrate their success, India Travel Awards felicitated the achievers at four separate regional events in 2015, awarding them with the Maya, and indulging them with elaborate black-tie ceremonies in the North, South, East and West. The appreciation for these awards and the concept has been overwhelming!

1,224bn in tourism visitor exports

Visitor exports generated ` 1, 224.4bn (4.1% of total exports) in 2014. This is forecast to grow by 5.2% in 2015, and grow by 6.3% p.a., from 2015-2025, to ` 2,377.2bn in 2025 (4.2% of total).

India: Visitor Exports and International Tourist Arrivals

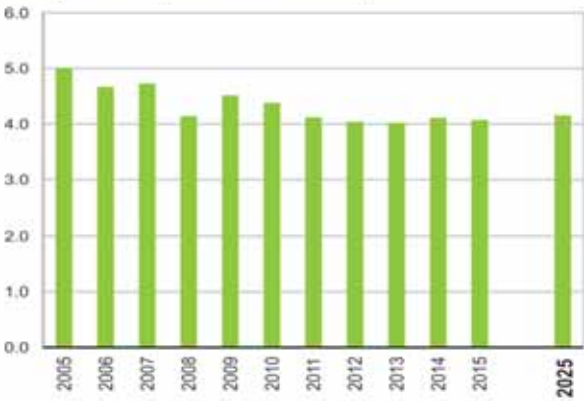


Money spent by foreign visitors to a country (or visitor exports) is a key component of the direct contribution of Travel & Tourism. In 2014, India generated ` 1,224.4bn in visitor exports.

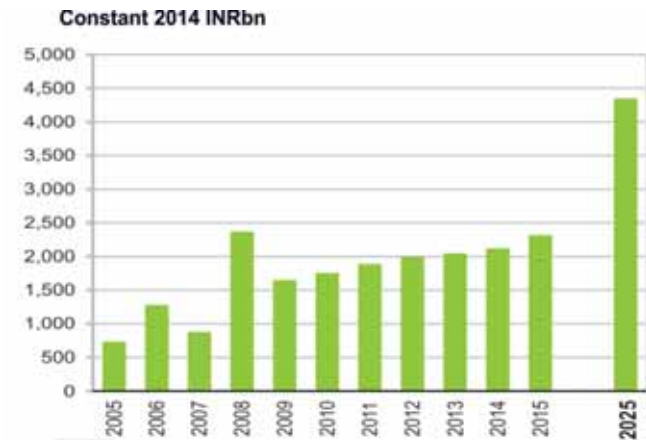
In 2015, this is expected to grow by 5.2%, and the country is expected to attract 7,757,000 international tourist arrivals.

By 2025, international tourist arrivals are forecast to total 15,291,000, generating expenditure of ` 2,377.2bn, an increase of 6.3% pa.

Foreign visitor exports as % of total exports



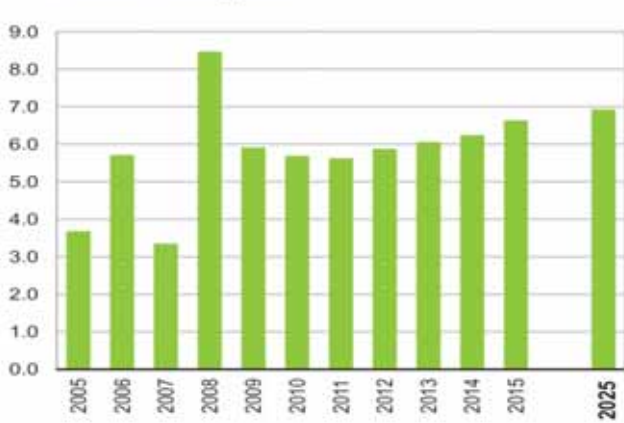
India: Capital Investment in Travel & Tourism



Travel & Tourism is expected to have attracted capital investment of ` 2,107.2bn in 2014. This is expected to rise by 9.3% in 2015, and rise by 6.5% pa over the next ten years to ` 4,337.8bn in 2025.

Travel & Tourism's share of total national investment will rise from 6.6% in 2015 to 6.9% in 2025.

% of whole economy GDP



Source: WTTC Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2015



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'Capping of airfare crucial for industry'

IATO President Subhash Goyal voices his opinion on the various challenges in the Indian tourism industry and identifies several areas that need swift improvement for a more competent industry.



AHANA GURUNG & SAMAPTI DAS

The year 2015 has been quite an eventful one for the travel trade and tourism industry in India, with reforms taking place in every aspect – some for the better, some for the worst. One of the major milestones achieved so far is the implementation of the e-Tourist Visa, a radical step taken towards boosting inbound tourism in the country but one that still needs some fine-tuning here and there.

Subhash Goyal, President, IATO, feels that several other issues need to be looked into for these changes to have an effective impact and says, "For eTV to achieve the desired effect, it needs to be well publicised by the Indian embassies abroad. There are still so many tourists who have no clue about these developments and I have heard of many such instances where a group of tourists have been left waiting for a normal visa. Another matter of importance is that at the airport, some of the machines that clear approval of eTV at immigration either do not function, or are not sufficient in number. It should ideally take just 2-3 minutes to clear the visa, but currently, it takes about an hour."

Goyal highlights several other matters that need to be worked on. "One of the biggest challenges, I would say, is the exemption of service tax based on foreign exchange earnings," says Goyal. "This is very important because we feel that we are being discriminated against since the physical exporters based on FEE are exempted from service taxes. Therefore, the tour operators, especially the smaller ones, are really being hassled because of this. Additionally, the Swachh Bharat cess of 0.5 per cent has also come into effect. Although we have always been supportive and have participated in the Swachh Bharat campaign since the very beginning, this levy of cess, I feel, is not justified. I'm not in favour of over taxation as we are already a highly taxed country," he elaborates.

Goyal also throws light on the compulsory licensing of travel agents and is of the opinion that although they are against the idea as an association, bringing about discipline in the industry is crucial. "If you are recognised by MOT, all you need to do is present your registration papers to Delhi Tourism and you will get the license. The misuse of the Incredible India branding by

unscrupulous agents needs to be curbed and strictly regulated," he says.

He goes on to address the issue of lack of coordinated efforts between Civil Aviation and the tourism industry. "We want air services to be liberalised," he states. "The most crucial factor for the benefit of

the consumer is the capping of air fare. It is a common fact that during the peak season, the airlines charge a higher fare on frequently travelled routes. When the Government of India is regulating hotel tariff and taxi tariff, I fail to understand how they can not stabilise air tariff. There needs to be an upper limit to the fares – people today are not travelling just for leisure."



"If one-window clearance for tourism and hospitality industry can be created, a lot would be achieved. This would also encourage investment."

Subhash Goyal
President, IATO

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Philippines brands Mumbai's radio cabs

To create more awareness among the growing Indian outbound travellers, the Department of Tourism of Philippines recently undertook a marketing development strategy of branding 100 radio cabs in Mumbai.

TT BUREAU

As part of its marketing development strategy, the Department of Tourism (DoT), Philippines recently branded 100 radio cabs in Mumbai. **Rajshree Birla**, Consul General (A.H), Consulate General of Republic of Philippines, inaugurated this initiative on December 7, 2015.

terms of numbers and DoT's marketing campaign, "Visit the Philippines Year 2015 (VPY 2015) which is an invitation to experience "It's More Fun in the Philippines," was a big hit. The Indian market has continued to be one of the important contributors of international visitors to the Philippines. India has jumped up to the 12th position for tourist arrivals in the Philippines till September this

year, with over 22.4 per cent more Indians choosing the country as their preferred travel destination. February 2015 recorded an impressive growth of arrivals to almost 40 per cent.

The growth in arrivals could be attributed to the marketing efforts and participation of the country in international travel fairs as well as tourism

infrastructure development being undertaken. India's growing outbound tourist markets are an important source of visitors to the Philippines. The destination wants to leverage on its tourism product offerings and attract the Indian traveller to achieve its target of 100,000 tourist arrivals by 2017.



Navritu Kaushal Rai
Account Director
Philippines Tourism Marketing Office

Branding taxis and buses are an appropriate method to promote the Philippines as a fun destination since these cover print as well as mobile forms of advertising

Navritu Kaushal Rai, Account Director, Philippines Tourism Marketing Office, India, said, "The DoT of Philippines is focusing on consumer promotions for 2015 and 2016 and we feel that branding taxis and buses are an appropriate method to promote the Philippines as a fun destination since these cover print as well as mobile forms of advertising. This increases the number of eyeballs and awareness and presence of the Philippines as a tourist destination in the India market."

She added that 2015 was a phenomenal year in

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Year-end thumbs up to 2015

Industry players reflect on how 2015 was, and, though the year had its ups and downs, they remain upbeat on the future and tackling challenges by involving all the players.

TT BUREAU




Travel and Tourism already accounts for five per cent of India's employment and its huge potential for further growth. India's relevance as business travel destination is increasing along with its economic growth, it remains a price-competitive destination and recent changes in its visa regime have the potential to boost international arrivals. In 2015, we saw consistent growth, both in terms of revenue and markets.

Rishi Khandelwal
Managing Partner, Wish Bone India



The year 2015 for the tourism industry overall has been a year of mixed feelings. There was a boost in some segments of tourism but on the whole the industry was low. For us in particular, the year was mostly about expansions. We extended our operations from Latin America, China, Korea and North Africa in 2015.

Madan Kak
Chief Operating Officer- Tours, Minar Travels



The year 2015 was a year of skepticism. There was no particular sentiment in the tourism industry. 2014 was a very good year and we had hoped that 2015 would be better. However, from business point of view it was not as expected. The economy in 2015 could not pick up and the travel trade could not unite for a cause. We hope it would be better in the coming time.

Rohit Shorey
Director, International Tours, Destination Travel Service




This year we saw an unexpected boost in luxury travel segment and thus 2015 was a wonderful year for us. The luxury sector in tourism on the whole did fairly well in comparison to previous years and worked well for all luxury tour operators.

Atul Singh
Founder and CEO, Travel Connection India



Overall, 2015 was a good year for the MICE and hospitality industry. People took advantage of the euro and dollar being lower and steady. In 2015, we saw newer destinations picking up, like Central Europe, Seychelles, Tashkent apart from the regular must-see destinations.

Zelam Chaubal
Director, Kesari MICE



The biggest achievement in 2015 is the extension of travel access to more people to journey all across the world. This enabled companies to enjoy the overwhelming growth of interest from travellers to have an easier process to travel. The new direct flight from Dubai to Orlando on Emirates opens doors to accomodate and encourage more people to travel to the USA, Canada & South Africa.

Akarsh Kolaparth
Director, 7M Tours USA

Contd. on page 10

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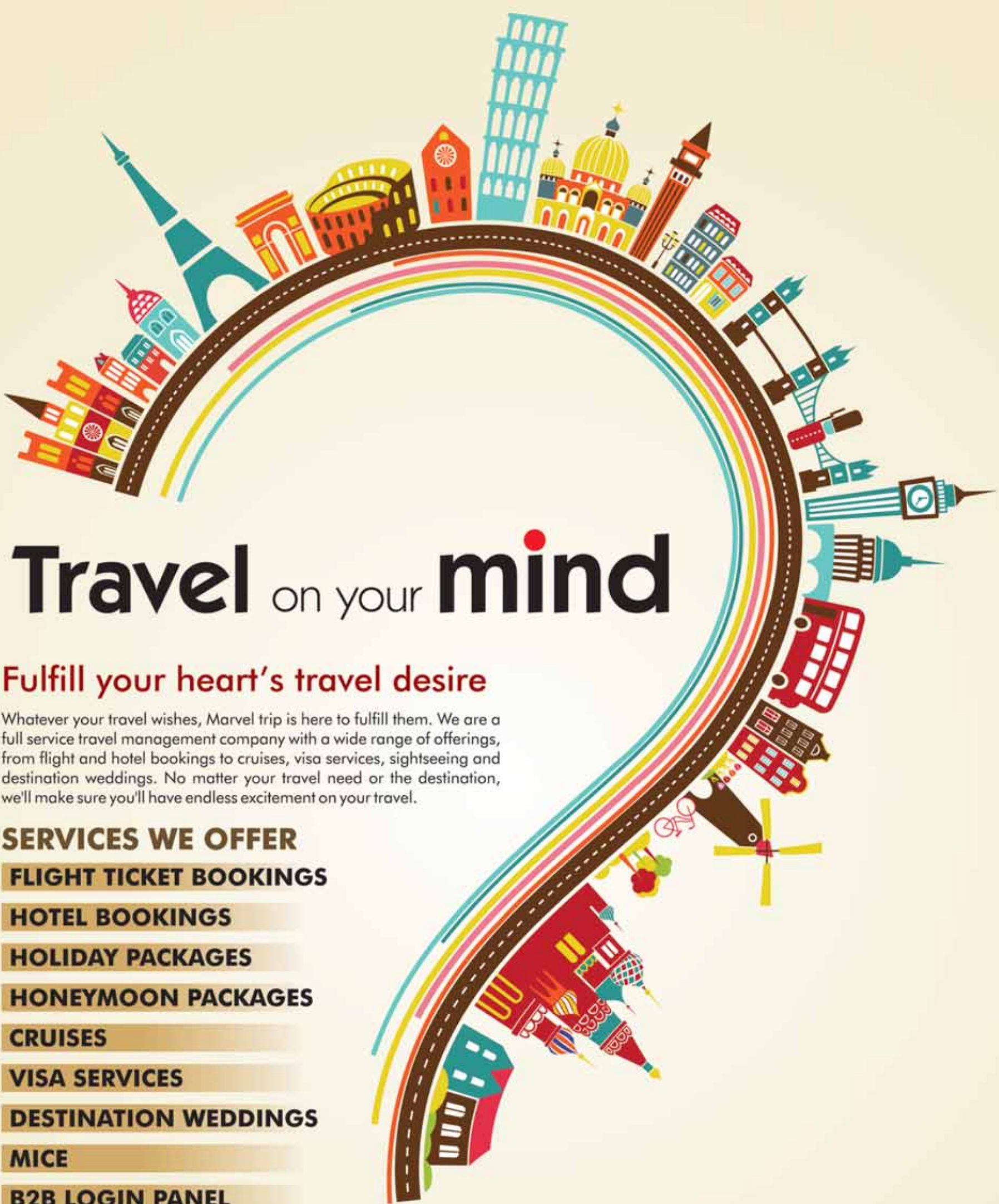


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Growth is here to stay

► Contd. from page 8



2015 has proven to be favourable for the hospitality industry with all its key drivers of growth in place especially with the implementation of pro-tourism initiatives by the new government, such as e-Tourist Visa to drive tourist arrivals in the country. India's vast size with its population, urbanisation, strong emerging middle class, cost-competitiveness and massive talent pool have contributed to a rapid growth in travel, which has led to an increase in domestic travel of 740 million travellers.

Jean Michel Casse
Senior Vice President
Operations – AccorHotels, India



Whilst the industry has seen many positive developments in the last couple of years, there remain a number of key areas that need to be addressed. Top among them are: 1) The inadequacy of infrastructure - More can be done to improve the country's infrastructure – such as air, rail and road connectivity. The Government's announcement detailing the plans to develop more infrastructure is welcome news and a positive sign. 2) Lack of skilled workforce - By 2020, the hospitality sector in India will require an additional 180,000 rooms and more than 200,000 people to run them. The industry itself has to play a role in responding to the need for skill development to meet this demand.

Shantha de Silva
Head of South West Asia, IHG



Due to the economic sentiment, the last few years have been tough for the hospitality industry in the country. Sarovar Hotels managed to consolidate its presence despite tough operating conditions by cutting down on costs and putting in a lot of energy conserving measures. I believe that 2016 will be a turning point for hotel operations as well as for new hotel development. It should again be a great time in the hospitality industry!

Ajay Bakaya
Executive Director, Sarovar Hotels and Resorts



Business in Delhi has indeed fallen in terms of occupancy and ARR and a large part of this is credited to the additional surplus of room inventory in the city. Furthermore, visits from international travellers has reduced significantly. The image of the city- Most polluted city, unsafe for women, toxic air, poor hygiene etc., has deterred foreign travellers from visiting the capital city. In fact since the taxes paid by the customer at hotels is so high, many international travellers are choosing alternative destinations while planning vacations. Many digital room distributors such as OYO and ZO rooms have entered into the market and have also taken a share of business.

S.M. Shervani
E.C. Member, FHRAI, MD, Shervani Hospitality



Things are looking up. Our hotels operating performance has been improving with Pune having shown a significant demand surge in the hotel occupancy and the ARRs. The supply growth has slowed down and we don't expect too many new hotels opening up over next few years. This coupled with the economic growth revival in India, would further improve the performance of the hospitality industry over the next few years.

Naveen Jain
President, Duet Hotels



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The easing of visa policies by Government of India and e-Tourist Visa facility has definitely helped in growth of tourism in India. After almost four years of downward trend, our industry has now started picking up and I am sure the coming months are going to be the best for hospitality industry. The signs are positive.

Sanzeev Bhatia
General Manager
The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa



The intent of the government to frame a 'cruise tourism policy' is regarded as a milestone in the cruising industry. The year 2015 has been a great year for this segment as more individuals are experimenting with destinations and are looking for experiences more than just a holiday.

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



2015 saw the tourism industry beginning to appreciate and endorse safety, safety standards and recognise its value. Customers are beginning to value and pay for quality, especially safety. The governments, states and other stakeholders are increasingly becoming conscious of the environment. 2015 has marked the importance of eco-tourism as a key player.

Zia Hajeebhoy
Director, Aquasail

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eTV: Highlight of 2015

► Contd. from page 10



2015 has been a very successful year. We could achieve something that we have been trying for the past 20 years, i.e. e-Tourist Visa (eTV). We are thankful to the Government that the eTV was implemented. We are hopeful that many such initiatives will be in place that will benefit the tourism industry greatly and in turn help the country grow further.

Subhash Goyal
President, IATO



2015 saw a lot of growth in the tourism industry as a whole, but the most visible growth was witnessed in the outbound sector. This year also witnessed an increase in online bookings, which have become hugely successful and have been a boon not just to the airlines, but to the online travel agents as well. This shows that convenience is primary for travellers, and cost secondary. We need to enhance our capabilities especially in the digital aspect.

Sunil Kumar
President, TAAI



In the past 30 years of my experience in this industry, this is the first Indian government that has given importance to tourism and has recognised it to be one of the prime sectors contributing to the growth of the country. Despite the low share market and property rates, we still saw the outbound market grow steadily. It was expected that the market would be buoyant and more disposable income would be available, which was not the case earlier.

Guldeep Singh Sahni
President, OTOAI



The Tourism Industry saw some ups and downs in 2015 such as the fluctuating euro rate. However, the overall tone has been positive, with outbound figures from India growing steadily. The disposable incomes available with the ever growing middle class have been expanding and we see this as a contributing factor to the increase in outbound travel from India. Germany witnessed a growth of 10% until January to August 2015 as compared to the same period last year.

Romit Theophilus
Director of Marketing and Sales Office India
German National Tourist Office



2015 has been very fruitful with the implementation of the Multiple-Entry Tourist Visa and the recent addition of Dreamliner Boeing 787 on the Bangkok-New Delhi route by Thai Airways. From January to September, we received over 8 lakh Indian visitors and are expecting the numbers to rise to 10 lakh by the end of the year.

Runjuan Tongrut
Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), New Delhi



In 2015, the extension of e-TV to more countries was a big step forward. It is surely a big move to attract more tourists. We have seen a remarkable boost in MICE tourism. New destinations also came up like Lombok, Bandung, Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Bintan, and Batam beyond the usual destinations like Bali.

Shelly Chandhok
Country Manager-Visit Indonesia Tourism Office, India

Contd. on page 14 ►

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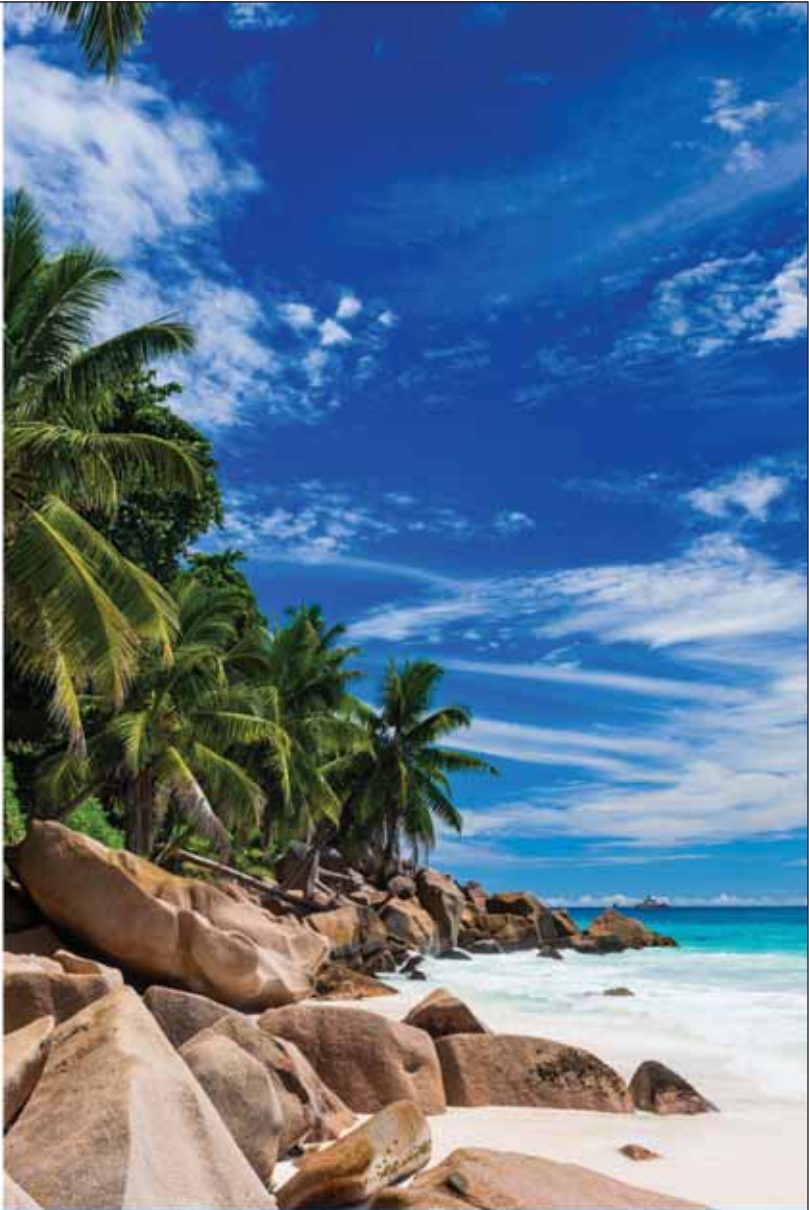
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- Stop for some hand-woven goods at the Yakan weaving village.
- Dine in one of the restaurants along Dipolog Boulevard at sunset.
- Feast on fresh seafood such as curacha (giant crab-lobster).
- Visit the home-in-exile of the Philippine national hero Jose Rizal in Dapitan.

Pink Beach, Zamboanga  itsmorefuninthephilippines.com  facebook.com/itsmorefuninthephilippines



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Robust year for aviation

► Contd. from page 12



India witnessed the entry of three scheduled domestic carriers — Vistara, Air Pegasus, True Jet — in 2015 and now they hold 1.4 per cent of the market share (average Jan-Oct 2015). Vistara started its operations in January followed by Air Pegasus and True Jet in May, August respectively. The entry of these carriers to Indian skies amidst low ATF prices and rebounding economy — Indian GDP — could not have been better than this. Due to high load factor — 82 per cent, average of Jan-Oct 2015 — Indian carriers carried more number of passengers and clocked a growth of 20 per cent. IndiGo was market leader in 2015 followed by Jet Airways and Air India.

Satyendra Kumar
Associate Manager, CAPA India



Poised to become the world's third largest travel market by 2026, the Indian aviation industry is on a high growth trajectory. It is one of the five fastest growing aviation markets. With 150 million flyers daily, the industry is growing rapidly marking a year-to-date growth of 16.5 per cent. Forecasting the growth trends for the coming decade, experts foresee the industry growing at over 10 per cent annually, corresponding to double the average global growth rate.

Ankur Bhatia
Executive Director
Bird Group & Member of CII's Core Committee on Aviation



India is a very important and strategic market for Ethiopian Airlines. With its vast potential and the recent improvement in Indo-African ties, Ethiopian Airlines views India as a huge source of its future revenues. We have been operating daily flights from Delhi and Mumbai and both our routes are doing well and we had an average load factor of more than 75 percent on both routes. We are aiming for much better performance in 2015 and observing good results in the last few months.

Tadesse Tilahun
Regional Director India Sub Continent
Ethiopian Airlines

United marks 10 years in India



United Airlines celebrated the 10th anniversary of its Delhi-New York service in India by hosting a gala night for its travel trade partners. The airline added over 200 aircrafts to its fleet over the last five years. By the end of 2015, the airlines plans to add 25 new Boeing 787 Dreamliners, expects to take delivery of Boeing 777-300 aircraft in December 2016 and by 2018, United Airlines will also add the Airbus 350-1000 to the fleet.

Stars descend on Jumeirah Vittaveli



The Jumeirah Vittaveli Maldives was the perfect spot for actor Dia Mirza and her husband to unwind and enjoy warm Maldivian hospitality. Marketed in India by Iris Reps, the property has villas with private pools and plenty of privacy.



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Connections LUXURY Italy, 3rd Apr



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VKONECT LUXURY India, Sept



Connections MEETINGS Ecuador, 19th Sept



ASTANA LEISURE, Kazakhstan, 21st Sept



JATA Japan, 22nd Sept



Connections LUXURY Brazil, 16th Oct



VKONECT MICE India, Nov



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MoU to boost India-Korea traffic

Byungsun Lee, Director, Korea Tourism Organisation (KTO), shares his views with **TRAVTALK** about India's growing interest in the destination and the steps they are taking to boost arrivals from India to Korea.

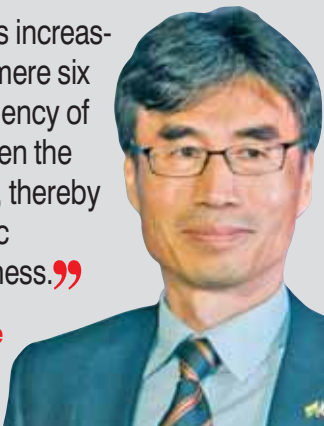
AHANA GURUNG

The Korea Tourism Organisation (KTO) is focused on increasing the Indian tourist arrival numbers and has been striving towards the same by organising various travel fairs and other such campaigns. Elated by the outcome of their efforts, **Byungsun Lee**, Director, Korean Tourism Organisation, comments, "For the first time ever, the number of Indian tourist arrivals are expected to exceed 1,50,000 by the end of this year," he says. "In the past five years, the growth of Indian tourist arrivals to Korea has increased by over 70 per cent. Ever since I began my role as the director of the KTO in India, I've noticed a sharp growing interest in Korean tourism from the travel industry. Korea is now becoming their top priority in terms of a new destination," he adds.

Of late, major developments have been made between India and Korea's relationship in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India and Ministry

“With flight operations increasing to 19 times from a mere six times a week, the frequency of flights operating between the two countries will triple, thereby bringing about a drastic change for airline business.”

Byungsun Lee
Director
Organisation (KTO)



of Land, Infrastructure and Transport of the Government of Republic of Korea, which was conveyed by **Dr. Mahesh Sharma**, Minister of State for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation in a written reply to a Lok Sabha question.

Commenting on the initiative, Lee says, "Thanks to the MoU, the air route between Korea and India will get a lot busier. With flight operations increasing to 19 times from a mere six times a week, the frequency of flights operating between the two countries will triple,

thereby bringing about a drastic change for airline business. We hope that this will help increase the tourist arrivals from India."

With one of the chief obstacles out of the way, KTO is now focusing on promoting winter tourism in Korea. "Korea has world-class ski resorts and we want to spread awareness about it in India. Our winter tourism facilities are top-notch, so much so that the next Olympic Winter Games in 2018 is scheduled to take place in PyeongChang,

Korea. However, this fact is not very well known in India and we are aiming to vigorously promote this," Lee adds.

Recently, New Delhi played host to the annual roadshow held on November 30 where over 250 travel agents attended the travel mart. It was followed by a celebratory Korean Night at Hyatt Regency New Delhi where KTO appreciated its Indian travel trade partners for their efforts in promoting the destination with an awards ceremony and entertained the guests with a fun-filled performance by a non-verbal martial arts performance called Jump. The chief guest of the evening was H.E. Cho Hyun, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to India.

Year Wrap

- ✶ The number of Indian tourist arrivals to Korea are expected to exceed 1,50,000
- ✶ The air route between Korea and India will get a lot busier with 19 flights a week

CGH Earth finalist at World Legacy Awards

■ CGH Earth is the lone finalist from India for the World Legacy Awards in the Category: Sense of Place — Recognising excellence in enhancing cultural authenticity, including implementing vernacular architecture and design, support for the protection of historic monuments, archaeological sites, indigenous heritage and artistic traditions.

The World Legacy Awards, a partnership between the National Geographic Society and ITB Berlin, showcases the leading travel and tourism companies, organisations and destinations — ranging from large resorts to small eco-lodges and from wildlife conservancies to geoparks — driving the sustainable tourism transformation of the travel industry based on National Geographic's work of inspiring people to care about the planet.

CGH Earth operates 16 properties in southern India emphasising local cultural heritage, including lodge design, community relations and helping guests experience authentic local culture. All of its properties emulate the traditional design of the region's villages and are built using local, recycled and reclaimed materials, while the introduction of organic farming and local markets contributes to the conservation of local biodiversity.

The winners will be announced on stage at the World Legacy Awards ceremony on March 10, 2016, during ITB Berlin.

Finalists and winners will also be featured in National Geographic Traveler magazine and other National Geographic media.



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Agents need to be one-stop shop

The Travelport e-volve Middle East Summit took place at the Shangri-La Bosphorus hotel in Istanbul, Turkey. TRAVTALK brings you the trends as disclosed by senior spokespersons.



KANCHAN NATH FROM TURKEY

Giving an insight on the workings of Travelport, **Rabih Saab**, President & Managing Director of Africa,

of sale. No other GDS has invested at the point of sale in helping airlines to sell the way they want to. So if airlines are

is an opportunity to up sell hotel side, car rentals and go so far as to even sell theatre tickets."

Will Owen Hughes, Senior Director, Air Commerce Middle East and Africa, elaborating on redefining air commerce, said, "In spite of security issues we are seeing a huge growth in Gulf carriers and also the Indian carriers. That growth is coming both in terms of wide and narrow bodies on the low cost side. We continue to expect to see 10 per cent YOY growth till 2020 on the low cost side."

Telling us about the evolving travel agents, he said, "They will need to reevaluate their proposition, look at their service fee models and make sure they are driving value there, as airline products becomes differentiated, they need to integrate all of that choice. Travel agents have to change the way

Anthony Hynes, MD & CEO, eNett, gave five important trends for the Indian market.

▶ Posting cash deposits with airlines is not a very sensible thing to do. In Europe 90 airlines went broke in 10 years. Some sort of electronic payment (globally accepted and a guaranteed payment) should be the mode for payments instead of cash deposits.

▶ Even with the cultural requirement of face to face communication, people are still of the opinion that they can grow their business with better supply relationships or better deals.

However, I feel what travel agents need to focus on is to grow business it is essential to better the internal process, have more process efficiencies.

▶ As online grows, pay supplier/vendor through card and not cash. In case of

▶ There is always a lot of noise about different forms of payment. It is important to understand the ones consumers really want and trust. Use the ones which have resulted in good customer experience.

There may be 210 forms of payment but the world only uses 20. Have value with few tested forms of payment.

▶ Reduce risk, improve reconciliation and efficiency and being able to deal with suppliers in all markets, because you can satisfy them with the form of payment that they accept. Prepayment means a better rate on the hotel and better relationship between you two."

default, your money will not be stuck. The idea of taking a card paying from the consumer and paying the supplier in cash is not sensible, because if the supplier goes broke, your payment is stuck and you still have to refund the customer.

in which they shop/sell /service for their customers. Price is the key factor for

the proposition, but there is a lot more to it. Travel agents need to become the

one-stop-shop so that they can speak in an informed way to the customer."



Rabih Saab
President & Managing Director of Africa, Middle East & Asia



Will Owen Hughes
Senior Director, Air Commerce Middle East and Africa



Anthony Hynes
MD & CEO, eNett

Middle East & Asia, said, "Although we are technically a GDS, we have done a lot of work in the past few years to reposition ourselves as redefining travel commerce." Talking about the changing role of the Airlines, he added, "Airlines have invested a tremendous amount of money in their brand identity. They want to project this brand identity at the point

able to sell all the ancillaries, they make more money, the consumer is better looked after, and the travel agent gets to provide all the products and services that any airline has to offer, rather than the consumer having to do it himself and losing that opportunity. He concluded, "Traditionally travel agents were used to selling only air tickets but now there

Get the edge with training programmes

Agent training programmes, for educating travel and tour operators to become destination specialists, allow them to become well-versed with the products that they sell to their clients.



ANKITA SAXENA

The training programmes conducted by various Tourism Boards in India, provide certification to agents along with exclusive benefits to get an edge over others. "At present, VisitBritain's online destination specialist program has over 800 qualified BritAgents in India and over 2,000 registered to complete the course," says **Shivali Suri**, Country Manager-India, VisitBritain. **Christine Mukharji**, Director, Austria National Tourist Office, explains, "We also conduct personalised training programmes for our partners and their sales staff at their convenience which happens in person at their offices. We offer a separate program for Vienna



Shivali Suri
Country Manager-India VisitBritain



Christine Mukharji
Director Austria National Tourist Office



Sara Gonzalez
Market Executive-Emerging Markets, VisitScotland

called Vienna Experts Club (VEC)."

Discussing the need for a trained agent in the evolving tourism industry, **Sara Gonzalez**, Market Executive-Emerging Markets, VisitScotland says, "A trained agent not only knows the destination better but can also sell the destination better to one's own clients." **Navritu Kaushal Rai**, Account Director, Philippines Tourism Marketing office, India, outlines the importance of these programmes. "A trained agent is more aware of the Philippines as a destination and since he

would have better product knowledge, he would be able to chalk out better itineraries for his clients as per their requirements," she adds.

Talking about the learnings of the programme, Suri says, "The program enables agents to increase their commission rates along with basic information and tools they need to plan and book the client's visit. As a BritAgent, the agents can sell tourism related products at a commission of eight per cent."

SanJeet, India Representative, Destination

Canada, highlights the specific regional learning. "The Canada Specialist Program is organised for learning through various modules to cover each and every aspect of Canada. The agent can learn to sell just one state for in-depth visits or learn to plan longer itineraries by combining stays across states for their clients. In addition they can easily learn about the airline connectivity from each state, connecting their clients to the Canadian Signature Experiences," he says.

Agents who complete the training programmes get exclusive benefits. They receive

monthly newsletters on updates about the destination and new tourism products; accredited certification from the respective NTO; commissionable deals; marketing material; NTO logo to complement the company collaterals; special incentive and FAM trips; priority invites to B2B

Program (CSP) reduced travel rates from various states on their personal trips to Canada."

The various agent training programmes can be completed within a stipulated time or at the pace of the agent's convenience. There is a particular pass percentage for



Navritu Kaushal Rai
Account Director, Philippines Tourism Marketing Office, India



SanJeet
India Representative Destination Canada

engagements and directory of suppliers of the destination among many others. SanJeet explains, "Canada Specialist gets access to key suppliers of all experiences listed in the training module and can also enjoy Canada Specialist

each module to become a certified destination agent. "The program consists of eight lectures and seven hours of content of all about the Philippines, from beaches to malls to nightlife," adds Rai."

National Tourist Office	Registered Number Of Indian Agents (Approx.)
United Kingdom	800
Scotland	2300
Canada	2900
Philippines	600

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Plan your next "Be There! Do That!" family holiday in the Midi-Pyrenees region located in South-West France. An eclectic mix of the great outdoors, spatial experiences and unlimited entertainment guarantee unforgettable memories of a picture-perfect holiday!

Suggested Experiences:

Day 1: Air and Space Adventures in Toulouse:

Pink City Toulouse promises many fascinating adventures for its families. A must-visit is a discovery of the Airbus Factory home to the majestic A350s and A380s. Take a behind the scenes tour of the factory and unravel the secrets of the world's only authentic double-decker. Do not miss a visit to Aeroscopia - an aeronautical museum located on the Airbus factory premises. Invite your kids to climb aboard a real Concorde or admire a collection of aircrafts. Go behind the scenes of an aircraft or navigate your own flight thanks to a simulator session! Spend an interesting afternoon at the Cité de l'Espace - an adventure park dedicated to space. Encounter the cosmos at its IMAX® cinema with a screen as high as a 6 foot storey

building or discover unknown astronomical worlds at the vaulted 360 degree screen of its planetarium. The Moon Runner simulator gives your budding cosmonauts a chance to walk on the moon!

Day 2: A Rendezvous with the Stars at the Pic du Midi

A rendezvous with the sky awaits you at the Pic du Midi located 2hrs 30 minutes from Toulouse. Access the summit located almost 3000 m above sea level with a cable car ride. Outstanding 360 degree panoramas of the Pyrénées mountain range and the plains of the South-West greet you on arrival. Include a visit to its astronomical observatory. Revel in the Starry Night Experience (Apr-Oct) that includes an evening dedicated to astronomy! Make the experience even more special with a stay at the tallest hotel in Europe found atop the Pic du Midi.

Day 3: Discovering the Great Outdoors in Gavarnie

Connect with the great outdoors with a visit to the grandiose Cirque de Gavarnie located 2 hours from Toulouse. This natural bowl carved out by ancient glaciers in grey, ochre and pink limestone rocks enjoys a UNESCO World Heritage classification. Kids are sure to enjoy the ride from the village of Gavarnie on horses, donkeys or ponies which will lead you to the foot of the Cirque. The time will be just right to soak in views of Europe's largest waterfall with its 413m vertical drop and permanently snow-covered mountains and enjoy encounters with marmots, wild goats or birds of prey. Head to Lourdes located at an hour's distance from Gavarnie. Cosmopolitan Lourdes invites you to divine encounters at its sanctuary. Take on visits of its medieval castle that offers stunning views of the sanctuary and the mountains.

For more information on the Midi-Pyrenees region, log onto: www.tourisme-midi-pyrenees.com For more on self-drive experiences in the Midi Pyrenees, email: keshavar.bhagat@atout-france.fr or atoutfranceindia@gmail.com



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Movers and Shakers of 2015

2015 was a roller-coaster ride for the travel industry. Mergers, takeovers, new appointments, there was no dearth of activities throughout the year. TRAVTALK lists the 10 groundbreaking news of the year which have the potential to change the face of our industry.

MOT gets new Secretary

Ministry of Tourism got a new tourism secretary in Vinod Zutshi on August 30, 2015. An IAS officer of 1982 batch Rajasthan cadre, he was Deputy Election Commissioner, Election Commission of India, before being appointed for his new assignment. 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.



Lohani takes over Air India

Ashwani Lohani took over as the new Chairman & MD of Air India, on August 31, 2015. He succeeded Rohit Nandan. An Indian Railway Service officer of the 1980 batch, Lohani will have a three-year term. A qualified mechanical engineer, Lohani is a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport. He is the founder member of the Indian Steam Railway Society and member of CII National Council on Tourism.



Thomas Cook takes over Kuoni India business

Thomas Cook concluded the acquisition of 100 per cent shareholding of Kuoni Travel (China) Limited, Hong Kong from the Kuoni Group on November 9. In August, Thomas Cook (India) Ltd. signed an agreement with Kuoni Group to acquire its entire travel businesses in India and Hong Kong for ₹ 535 crore. As part of the acquisition, Thomas Cook will take on the approximately 1,800 employees of Kuoni's in India and Hong Kong.

Marriott acquires Starwood

The boards of directors of Marriott International and Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide on November 16 approved a definitive merger agreement, under which the companies will create the world's largest hotel company. The transaction combines Starwood's leading lifestyle brands with Marriott's strong presence in the luxury and select-service tiers, as well as the convention and resort segment, creating a more comprehensive portfolio. The merged company will offer broader choice for guests, greater opportunities for associates and should unlock additional value for Marriott and Starwood shareholders. Combined, the companies operate or franchise more than 5,500 hotels with 1.1 million rooms worldwide.

Sabre acquires Abacus

Sabre Corporation completed the acquisition of Abacus International, the leading Global Distribution System (GDS) in the Asia-Pacific region, on July 1, 2015. It had announced the acquisition plans on May 14. Sabre, which previously owned 35% of Abacus, acquired the remaining portion for net cash consideration of \$411 million. The acquisition includes new long-term distribution agreements between Sabre and the 11 Asian airlines that previously shared ownership of Abacus with Sabre.

Air India's first direct flight to SFO

Air India's inaugural flight from Delhi-San Francisco took off with 230 passengers on board on December 2 this year. With the launch, the national carrier of India has become the first airline to offer direct connections from India to San Francisco. A special cake was cut to celebrate the occasion and passengers were presented with rose buds at the time of check-in. In attendance for the special day, at Indira Gandhi International Airport, was Ashwani Lohani, CMD, Air India.



Sunil Kumar wins over TAAI

Sunil Kumar, Former Acting President of Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) was elected as the President for tenure of two years (2015-17). TAAI recently concluded its 64th annual general meeting and elections. A total of 745 votes were casted, out of which Kumar bagged 284 votes. The other candidates, Harmandeep Singh Anand and Rajji Rai got 239 and 219 votes respectively. Other office bearers are – Marzban Antia as the Vice President; Lokesh Bettaiah as Secretary General and Jay Bhatia as Treasurer. The managing committee members are Anil Kumar, Jyoti Mayal, Shreeram Patel, Imtiaz Qureshi, Bhagwan Ramnani, Devaki Thiagarajan, R Venkatachalam.



Bengaluru hosts PATA Travel Mart

The PATA Travel Mart hosted by Department of Tourism, Government of Karnataka, was held at Bangalore International Exhibition Center (BIEC) from September 6-8. This edition of PATA Travel Mart for the first time had an Investment Forum. About 1,100 delegates from 61 participating countries registered for the 38th PATA Travel Mart 2015. Twelve hotels from the city were the official hotels as part of the PATA Travel Mart, which accommodated these delegates. Extensive media publicity campaign has been launched for the promotion of PATA across the globe by Karnataka Tourism department. PATA Travel Mart is a PATA signature event and a premier travel trade show in the Asia-Pacific region.



50 years of FHRAI Convention, in Bhubaneswar

The 50th annual convention of Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) opened at Mayfair Convention in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, on September 25. Minister of State for Culture (Independent Charge), Tourism (Independent Charge) and Civil Aviation, Dr. Mahesh Sharma, and Tourism Secretary Vinod Zutshi were present during the inauguration. The three-day convention concluded on September 27, 2015. Technical sessions were held on all three days. Heritage Walk and carnival had been planned to celebrate World Tourism Day on Sept 27, which showcased the folk dance and culture of various parts of the country.

India Travel Awards (ITA) - 2015

◆ ITA - South

- ◆ Visakhapatnam
- ◆ April 16
- ◆ Chief Guest
Ganta Srinivasa Rao
Minister of Human Resource Development, Government of Andhra Pradesh

◆ ITA - West

- ◆ Goa
- ◆ October 14
- ◆ Chief Guest
Dilip Parulekar
Minister of Tourism, Government of Goa

◆ ITA - East

- ◆ Chandigarh
- ◆ November 19
- ◆ Chief Guest
Basanta Rajkumar
Executive Director, Punjab Heritage & Tourism Promotion Board, Government of Punjab

◆ ITA - North

- ◆ Jaipur
- ◆ December 8
- ◆ Chief Guest
Gajendra Singh Khimsar
Cabinet Minister of Industries, DMIC, NRI, Sports & Youth Affairs, Government of Rajasthan

AccorHotels adds Fairmont, Raffles and Swissôtel to its portfolio

French hotel chain Accor is buying the company that owns luxury hotel lines Raffles, Swissôtel and Canada's Fairmont in a deal worth about \$2.9 billion US in cash and shares. Accor is buying the company known as FRHI from joint owners Qatar Investment Authority; King Holding Co., which is the private investment arm of Saudi Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal; and Oxford Properties Group, the real estate division of OMERS, Ontario's municipal workers pension plan.



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The LAN & TAM South America Specialist Program has been running in India since 2013. The program trains local travel agents and outbound tour operators as experts in South America Destinations, LAN & TAM Network and Itinerary development. To register please login to www.lanandtamsas.com

Big leaps of the year

The tourism and hospitality industry saw some of the most discerning institutions handing over their reins into trusted hands. TRAVTALK brings to you a round-up of such appointments.



TT BUREAU



Mittu Chandilya was appointed as the Managing Director of AirAsia India in addition to its role as the CEO of the airline. The AirAsia India Board appointed Chandilya as the Managing Director and as first full time independent Executive Director of the company. On the appointment, Tony Fernandes, Group CEO, AirAsia said that Mittu was given the added portfolio because of his exemplary performance leading AirAsia India.

Mittu Chandilya
Air Asia



After playing a crucial role in establishing the Lemon Tree Hotels brand, Rahul Pandit came back to Taj Hotels, after being appointed as CEO of Roots Corp. Limited which operates 'Ginger' chain of hotels, a wholly owned subsidiary of The Indian Hotels Company (IHCL). An industry veteran with over two decades of experience in the hospitality and travel industry, Rahul is one of the founding members of Lemon Tree Hotels Ltd.

Rahul Pandit
Roots Corporation Limited

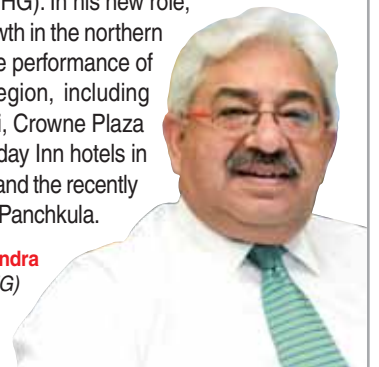
Zubin Karkaria became the first Indian to have been appointed Chief Executive Officer of Kuoni Group. Karkaria was the COO of the Kuoni India Tour Operating Division in 1999, and moved on to become the Deputy CEO and Head Business Development in 2003. He conceptualised and launched VFS Global in 2001, and was appointed as the CEO and MD of Kuoni India and South Asia in 2005. In March 2013, in line with the development of VFS Global as an important Division of Kuoni Group, Karkaria was appointed on the Executive Board of Kuoni Group. He graduated from Mumbai University and completed his Business Management studies from Mumbai.

Zubin Karkaria
Kuoni



Greesh Bindra was appointed as Area General Manager, North India, InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG). In his new role, Greesh is in charge of IHG's growth in the northern Indian markets and oversees the performance of the company's hotels in the region, including Crowne Plaza New Delhi Rohini, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Mayur Vihar, the Holiday Inn hotels in Mayur Vihar, Pune and Amritsar and the recently opened Holiday Inn Chandigarh Panchkula.

Greesh Bindra
InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG)



Umang Narula was appointed as the Chairman and Managing Director of ITDC. Narula, an IAS officer of 1989 batch, Jammu and Kashmir cadre, was the Chief Electoral Officer of Jammu & Kashmir prior to this role. He successfully conducted the Lok Sabha Elections and the J&K State Assembly elections in 2014. He was Deputy Secretary in the Department of Culture under the Union Ministry of Tourism and Culture during 1998-2002. He also worked as a Director in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). In J&K, he was Deputy Commissioner in Kargil and later shifted to Anantnag district.

Umang Narula
India Tourism Development Corporation



Vikramjit Singh Oberoi took over EIH, which runs the Oberoi Hotels under the aegis of The Oberoi Group, on 24 March 2015 as the Managing Director (MD). He was appointed as the MD following the resignation of Shib Sanker Mukherji as Chief Executive. The decision of restructuring the top management was taken at a board meeting chaired by the Chairman Prithvi Raj Singh Oberoi. Vikram Oberoi is also the President, Hotel Association of India.

Vikramjit Singh Oberoi
EIH Limited under Oberoi Group

MOT steps up safety and cleanliness

►Contd. from page 1

tickets to these sites with a cleanliness message.

In order to counteract and regulate crime against tourists, the Ministry of Tourism has come up with several guidelines to ensure their safety and security. On pilot basis, the Incredible India Helpline has been set up by the Ministry to guide and provide assistance to tourists in need.

Additionally, a set of guidelines that serve as a code of conduct for safe and honourable tourism has been adopted which encourages tourism activities to be undertaken, with respect to basic rights like dignity, safety and freedom from exploitation of tourists and

local residents, women and children in particular.

The state governments and union territory administrations of Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha have deployed Tourist Police. Moreover, the immediate implementation of effective steps have been requested to all the chief ministers and administrators of state governments and union territories, along with the provision of central financial assistance to state governments of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra for setting up of the Tourist Facilitation and Security Organisation (TFSO).

Add value with quick forex

Fxkart.com a new portal offering quick and easy foreign exchange has created an opportunity for travel agents and tour operators by offering value-added services to their clients while earning a bigger commission.



HAZEL JAIN

Abdul Hadi Shaikh, CEO, Fxkart.com, says the focus will be on inbound as well as outbound tourists. "We enable the exchange of forex in a very transparent and quick way. It is a very essential service and it needs to be smooth and hassle-free. We have developed a mobile application for money-changers and a mobile-enabled portal for the travel agents."

Launched in April this year, Fxkart.com is a UAE-based Free Zone Company with its R&D centre in Bengaluru. According to Shaikh, it has already enabled 2,500-plus transactions. "Agents can buy forex for their clients



Abdul Hadi Shaikh
CEO, Fxkart.com

online when they sell an international trip and have it delivered to their clients at the best price available in the city. The portal shows all the available rates and the location of that moneychanger. The best rate emerges in real time. Agent can not only offer value-added service to their cus-

tomers, but also earn a bigger commission since they are free to fix their own rates/margins. They can get a cheaper option online as against their regular moneychanger thereby maximising their margins," he adds.

Explaining the process, Shaikh says that once the deal is booked, their call centre co-ordinates between the travel agent and the moneychanger, and helps close the deal. The transaction can be made in 10 minutes and the currency can be obtained within one hour. It's also geo-located allowing the agent to know where the moneychanger is. It does not require any registration fee.

Shaikh says, "Travel agents have responded well so far. Bengaluru is doing excellent and so are Mumbai and Delhi. Hyderabad and Ahmedabad have been the surprise elements that are doing very well. We have some big travel agents as well as local agents who do 100 pax a month already on our platform. We are now looking to tie up with big travel agents and negotiations are on. Our portal is as per regulation with verified and licensed moneychangers across the spectrum. We also verify them on the RBI website and collect the license copies and verify them by our legal consultant."



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Face of Bali Tourism in India 10.94% Indian catapult

In an effort to grab a bigger chunk of the Indian outbound market, Bali Tourism has appointed Representation World to promote itself amidst the travel fraternity.

HAZEL JAIN

Bali Tourism Promotion Board has appointed Representation World LLP, as its India representative with effect from December 1, 2015. This was



Gilda Sagrado, Vineet Gopal and Monica Mohindra

announced at an event hosted by the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia along with Consulate General of Indonesia in Mumbai, where the Indonesian delegation made a destination presentation and interacted with the travel trade fraternity to promote a new segment of adventure and eco-tourism.

Vineet Gopal, who heads New Delhi-based Representation World LLP,

says, "The Bali Tourism Promotion Board head office is looking at the India market in a very big way and being present here is the first big step. The idea is to go forward aggressively, and we have charted out

a plan for 2016-17 starting with educating the travel trade, which will remain our prime focus. We want the travel trade fraternity to understand the product well before they can start selling to the clients. Our upcoming activities will be on a mega scale as we want to close this year with 1,20,000 arrivals."

Further he added, "Apart from roadshows for Bali, we will launch a destination

specialist program by March 2016 and they will qualify for familiarisation trips."

Gilda Sagrado, Executive Director (Promotion & Marketing), Bali Tourism Promotion Board, who was also present at the event, says, "Year 2014 saw Indian arrivals touch 88,074, which was already an increase of 36 per cent over the previous year. This year, up until October 2015, we have recorded 90,327 Indian tourists into Bali and we are looking at doubling these numbers by 2016 end. We expect Garuda Air to launch direct flights between India and Bali soon."

Monica Mohindra, Brand Ambassador, Tourism Promotion Relations through Bali Tourism Promotion Board, said, "This is the first time we are focusing on India, which is a very important for us. We want it to be among the top ten markets for Bali. There's a huge connect between the countries in terms of culture, religion, language, heritage, etc and we want to tap India's potential through this aspect."

Rita Sofia, Deputy Director, Ministry of Tourism, Indonesia, gives details on the newest tourism products they have on offer and the various tie-ups with Indian tour operators.

AHANA GURUNG

It was revealed at a press meet organised by Visit Indonesia Tourism Office or VITO (India) that Indonesia has recorded a growth of 10.94 per cent in Indian tourist arrivals during September 2015 over the same month of the previous year. January-September 2015, witnessed 195,214 Indian tourists while 2014 registered 237,990 Indian arrivals with a growth of 16.23 per cent over 2013's 204,756 FTAs.

With the implementation of 30-day visa-free facility, the Ministry of Tourism, Republic of Indonesia hopes it will boost tourism and provide substantial growth in terms of Indian arrivals in India. Rita Sofia, Deputy Director, Ministry of Tourism, Indonesia expresses, "We hope that the recently introduced free visa scheme will give the numbers the necessary push and help us achieve our goal." Commenting on the key markets for Indonesia, she says,



Rita Sofia
Deputy Director
Ministry of Tourism, Indonesia

"At present, India ranks 13 on the list of our source markets. We are hopeful that India's rank will increase to at least eighth position by the end of next year. As of now, the number one source market is Singapore, followed by Malaysia, China and Australia."

She states that this year, three regions in Indonesia are in focus, namely Greater Bali, Greater Jakarta and Greater Batam. "The three regions, Greater Bali (Surabaya, Banyuwangi, Bali, Lombok and Komodo Islands), Greater Jakarta (Jakarta, Bandung, Puncak,

Bogor and Banten) and Greater Batam (Batam, Bintan and Riau Archipelago), have plenty of tourism attractions, with the likes of pristine beaches, shopping hubs and heritage sites," she says.

Furthermore, Sofia feels that Bali particularly would prove to be a big winner among Indian tourists, thanks to the close proximity in religion and the availability of Indian cuisine. "Bali is highly popular among honeymooners and is also a fine leisure destination, along with Lombok. Jakarta is mainly a MICE hub and is a popular vacation spot for families. Surabaya, as well, is frequently visited by numerous families," she elaborates.

Sofia informs that they have also tied up with TUI to offer packages to Indonesia. "The package depends on the length of the stay and is currently available for Bali and Jakarta. We hope to have more such tie-ups with other tour operators in India in the near future," she adds.

A successful stint at WTM 2015

Manish Fitkariwala, Director, Catapultt Services enthuses about their participation at WTM London 2015.

TT BUREAU

Providing end-to-end management for services such as ticketing, hotel reservations, tour packages, training and on-ground management during an event, Catapultt Services

Manish Fitkariwala, Director, says, "Our expectations were simple from WTM – we have been successful in both business and branding. We conducted some very good meetings at WTM with prospective clients and things have already started moving for us." Fitkariwala adds that the group eagerly looks forward to WTM 2016 to further enhance their presence and reach into Europe.

When it comes to work ethics, Fitkariwala believes in adapting to the clients' way of working. "Catapultt's USP is that our way of working is your way of working," he says. "We don't ask our clients to work according to us but we adapt to their work culture, processes, service standards etc., to make it extremely convenient for them to work with us. Of course, as and when required, we do make suggestions based on our local expertise of the destination," he states.

Our expectations were simple from WTM – we have been successful in both business and branding

Manish Fitkariwala
Director, Catapultt Services

offers a variety of domestic and international tours.

Catapultt recently participated in WTM London 2015 and speaking about the experience,

250 Delhi agents @Travelshop roadshow



Travelshop Turkey recently conducted a seven-city roadshow from Dec 7-15, in New Delhi, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Chennai, Bangalore, Ahmedabad and Mumbai. The fourth edition of the annual roadshow witnessed stakeholders such as Movenpick Hotel, Istanbul, Gamirasu Cave Hotel, Cappadocia and Dosso Dossi Hotel, Istanbul as partners of the event. The B2B event featured presentations on airlines, hotels and products, along with B2B network meetings, and registered over 250 travel agents in the New Delhi edition, held on Dec 7 at The Royal Plaza.



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Metaphors

Russia on revival route

Bharat Bhushan Atree, Chairman & Managing Director, Caper Travel Company, speaks to TRAVTALK on what is affecting Russian arrivals to India and what can be done to put Russia back on the top of tourism chart.

ANKITA SAXENA

The devaluation of ruble saw Russian tourism market spiral down in 2015. "The year has been a disaster due to various reasons—the dwindling economic situation; unpredictable fluctuations in local currency market; change in government policy to promote domestic tourism over outbound tourism; restrictions on government employees to holiday outside Russia amidst the general unrest in the current geopolitical situation," says Bharat Bhushan Atree.



Bharat Bhushan Atree
Chairman & Managing Director
Caper Travel Company

With the closure of Egypt as a destination for Russian tourists, we expect to see an increase in the demand for India as a destination

In these tough times India, however, can be of importance to the Russian tourists. Atree says, "The tourism market shall not suddenly improve as the reasons hampering outbound tourism are still in force. However, with the closure of Egypt as a destination for Russian tourists, we expect to see an increase in the demand for India as a destination." He also pointed out that the Russian tourists coming to India are mostly budget clients.

Discussing the challenges India faces in attracting Russian tourists and the required support of the travel trade partners, Atree says, "Travel agents are crucial network for us and we are keeping them motivated and enthusiastic about the destination by offering them many lucrative holiday packages." He adds,

"All concerned partners like hotels, transporters, DMCs etc., should offer competitive packages for the Russian market at least for the coming one to two years and thus make India an affordable destination for Russian tourists."

Speaking about the main agenda in 2016 to tap the Russian market, Atree adds,

"Our main focus currently is to maintain low costs due to the devaluation of the Russian currency by almost 100 per cent. For the Russian tourists, almost everything has become double the price. We are also looking at an effective use of technology to make the distribution of products easier and cost-effective. We aim to continue promoting India as a

destination in the Russian market in these difficult times as well. It is also important that the Indian tourism market increases its marketing spend in Russia to continue to get tourists from the Russian market." Atree calls upon the Indian government to support Russia by offering true visa on arrival facility instead of e-Tourist Visa.

WTTCII appoints new Chairman and Vice Chairman

■ Kapil Chopra, President, The Oberoi Group, has been appointed as the Chairman of World Travel & Tourism Council, India Initiative



Kapil Chopra



Ashwani Lohani

(WTTCII) for the year 2016. Chopra, who served as the Vice Chairman of WTTCII for the year 2015, takes over from Manav Thadani, Chairman, HVS, South Asia. WTTCII announced its new office-bearers for the year 2016 during its Annual General Meeting that was held on December 9, 2015 in New Delhi. Ashwani Lohani, Chairman & Managing Director, Air India has been appointed as the Vice Chairman of WTTCII for the year 2016.



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European Quartet eyes India market

European Quartet, comprising the countries of Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia, conducted roadshows in New Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai to promote their countries in the Indian market.

ANKITA SAXENA

In a B2B engagement with travel and tour operators, the four countries presented their products on offer to increase the number of Indian tourists to their respective countries.

Talking at the event, **Emilia Kubik**, Project Leader, Department of Marketing Instruments, Polish Tourist Organisation, says, "2015 has



Emilia Kubik
Project Leader, Department of Marketing Instruments, Polish Tourist Organisation

been a good year. We saw 30,000 Indian tourist arrivals into Poland." Explaining the products on offer, Kubik says, "The tourist attractions that we offer are very inspiring, emotional and something that one can not find anywhere in Western Europe." In meetings with agents, Kubik explained the two important events in the cities of Kraków and Rzeszów



Jan Herget
Director of Foreign Offices & Online, Czech Tourist Authority

in 2016, which the agents can target to sell to their clients. "The infrastructure in Poland is growing and improving to welcome a larger number of tourists." Discussing the significance of the travel trade in the promotion of the four countries, Kubik said, "We engage with the tour operators on a daily basis via newsletters, social media and B2B meetings to commercialise our products," Kubik says

Jan Herget, Director of Foreign Offices & Online, Czech Tourist Authority, says, "We want to invite Indian tourists not just to Prague but to other cities in the Czech

Republic which are equally beautiful." **Roman Masarik**, Deputy Head of Mission, Counsellor, Embassy of the Czech Republic, says, "We issued 8,000 visas to Indian tourists but the real numbers may differ as tourists can travel to multiple countries across the border with one Schengen visa."

Matej Franco, Manager of Marketing, Events Department, Slovak Tourist Board, says, "We are relatively new to the Indian market and number of Indians visiting Slovakia is very less. We are working towards engaging with as many tour operators to increase awareness about our products and packages."

Zsolt Pakozdy, Senior Economic and Commercial Counsellor, Embassy of Hungary, says, "India is an important source market for Hungary. We issued nearly 7,000 visas to Indian tourists but the number may be higher due to Schengen visa." Talking about initiatives taken by Hungary, Pakozdy says, "We



Matej Franco
Manager of Marketing, Events Department, Slovak Tourist Board



Zsolt Pakozdy
Senior Economic and Commercial Counsellor, Embassy of Hungary

have opened a visa consulate in Mumbai to make visa regime conducive to the tourists

and promote Hungary better. In 2016, we hope to grow by 30 per cent."

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Oman Air increases frequency Kochi, Emirates' busiest route

From December 1, 2015, Oman Air, the national carrier of the Sultanate of Oman, will increase its frequencies to some key destinations in India.

TT BUREAU

In a major move, Oman Air will double its connectivity from Muscat to Bengaluru and Kochi and will operate 11 flights to Lucknow and 10 flights to Jaipur, weekly. Adding frequency to Goa, Oman Air will now fly daily from Muscat as compared to six flights per week.

With the increase in the number of flights, Oman Air will now offer more than 5,000 additional seats to these key Indian sectors and will operate Boeing 737-800 and 737-900 aircraft. Once the uplift in frequencies has been introduced, Oman Air will operate a total of 126 flights per week between Muscat and its destinations in India. Oman Air flies to 19 destinations in the Indian Subcontinent (ISC) that includes India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives, out of which 11 destinations in India.

Sunil V.A., Senior Manager Sales, ISC, Oman Air, said, "The demand for travel from Muscat to key des-



Sunil V.A.
Senior Manager Sales, ISC
Oman Air

With daily or double daily flights to all our eleven destinations in India, we are delighted to be offering many more air travellers the opportunity to fly with us and strengthen our presence in the Indian market

tinations in India has been consistently on the rise. With daily or double daily flights to all our eleven destinations in India, we are delighted to be offering many more air travellers the opportunity to fly with us and strengthen our presence in the Indian market.

"Our new flights to Bangalore, Kochi, Goa, Lucknow and Jaipur will offer improved connectivity and convenience for both leisure and business travellers. This move not only supports the growth of tourism in Oman and India, but will also help to promote vital trade partnerships between the two countries. We are confident that our additional flights will be greeted with enthusiasm by both our frequent flyers and those who are new to Oman Air."

Key Destinations

Oman Air flies to 19 destinations in the Indian Subcontinent

In an interview with Essa Sulaiman Ahmad, Vice President-India and Nepal, Emirates Airlines, TRAVTALK finds out more about the carrier's plans for India.

KANCHAN NATH

Emirates, and the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) in New Delhi, released the results of an economic impact study that measures Emirates' contribution to the Indian economy. NCAER estimates that Emirates' operations have contributed over US\$848 million annually to India's GDP, supporting over 86,000 Indian jobs and generating almost US\$1.7 billion in Foreign Exchange Earnings.

Talking about the Indian market, Essa Sulaiman Ahmad said, "We are not planning to start any new destination that we have announced in India, but we are looking at our bilaterals. As per the announcement of NCAER, we have Kochi as the busiest route in India at 91% seat load factor."

Talking about year 2015 and plans for 2016, he said, "We have been growing positively and we have a great travel pattern from different type of indus-



Essa Sulaiman Ahmad
Vice President - India and Nepal,
Emirates Airline

We have Kochi as the busiest route in India at 91% load factor

passengers flying to and from India. The outlook for 2016 also looks positive."

Talking about competition, he said, "With Emirates it's about how we have grown all these years. There was confidence in the brand, as well as in our product offerings. Going forward our stand has always been to keep on spending on our products and on how to make that experience even better. At the end of the day, the choice remains with the consumers, and they will decide whom they want to travel with." Currently, Emirates Airline operates 183 weekly flights to nine Indian cities with its hubs at Mumbai and Delhi.

Commenting on the draft civil aviation policy for India, Ahmad, said, "The government has taken a very positive step to include the stakeholders and talking about it. We have been asked by the government to look at the draft civil aviation policy, and respond with our views as stakeholders and we will be doing that in due time."





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EVENTS, MEETINGS, INCENTIVES, CONFERENCING, EXHIBITIONS,

Maya takes Jaipur by storm

The North India Travel Awards held in the Pink City saw the who's who of the travel and tourism industry being recognised for their excellence in a formal black-tie ceremony.



The best in the business of travel and tourism from North India raised a toast to achievers from the region at the North India Travel Awards, 2015, held at the Crowne Plaza Jaipur Tonk Road on December 8, 2015.

The black-tie event brought together more than 120 attendees for an exciting evening celebrating tourism excellence. The chief guest at the glittering ceremony was

Gajendra Singh Khimsar, Cabinet Minister of Industries, DMIC, NRI, Sports & Youth Affairs, Government of Rajasthan.

North India Travel Awards commemorated the achievers from different segments of the industry, such as GDS, Hotels and Resorts, Travel Agents, Tour Operators and Technology. The evening started with the ribbon cutting, followed by the felicitation of **Radha Bhatia**, Chairperson, Bird Group, who entered the Gallery of Legends

► DDP TRAILBLAZER



Bhim Singh, MD, Rajasthan Tours and President, Federation of Hospitality and Tourism of Rajasthan (FHTR), was awarded the 'DDP Trailblazer' and was felicitated by **Gajendra Singh Khimsar**, Cabinet Minister of Industries, DMIC, NRI, Sports & Youth Affairs, Government of Rajasthan, **Dr. Tanushree Pandey**, Mrs India 2015

► DDP GAME CHANGER



Ajeet Bajaj, Founder & MD, Snow Leopard Adventures, joins the 'DDP Game Changer'. He is felicitated by **Gajendra Singh Khimsar**, Cabinet Minister of Industries, DMIC, NRI, Sports & Youth Affairs, Government of Rajasthan, **Dr. Tanushree Pandey**, Mrs India 2015

► FACE OF THE FUTURE



Mittu Chandilya, MD & CEO, AirAsia India, joins the 'Face of the Future'. His colleagues **Suhail Bhatta** (left) Manager, Distribution, and **Pawan Nagpal** (right) Commercial-Sales & Distribution received the award from **Gajendra Singh Khimsar**, Cabinet Minister of Industries, DMIC, NRI, Sports & Youth Affairs, Government of Rajasthan, **Dr. Tanushree Pandey**, Mrs India 2015

► ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR



The award was given to **Pankaj Nagpal**, MD, Travstarz Holiday & Destinations, and was felicitated by **Gajendra Singh Khimsar**, Cabinet Minister of Industries, DMIC, NRI, Sports & Youth Affairs, Government of Rajasthan, **Dr. Tanushree Pandey**, Mrs India 2015

at the North Indian Travel Awards 2015. **Bhim Singh**, Managing Director, Rajasthan Tours and President Federation of Hospitality and Tourism of Rajasthan, was honoured as DDP Trailblazer. After that, **Ajeet Bajaj**, Founder and Managing Director, Snow Leopard Adventures, was named the DDP Game Changer.

Also, **Mittu Chandilya**, CEO and Managing Director, AirAsia India, was declared as the Face of the Future. Due to the airline's rescue operation in Chennai, he could not be present at the ceremony.

SanJeet, Mentor, India Travel Awards, said, "These awards signify the growth of the industry, which has developed immensely in the last few years. Encouraged by the enormous success of India Travel Awards in other regions, we wish to continue with this. India Travel Awards is a platform, which recognises and applauds the true leaders of the fraternity, to acknowledge the emerging leaders. We are proud to have been instrumental in helping it flourish, and will continue with our endeavours."

Canada hosts an evening of revelry

Celebrating a successful 2015, Destination Canada in conjunction with Nadir Patel, High Commissioner of Canada to India, organised a dinner reception at Canada House on November 26, 2015, to thank the trade for their continuous support. The affair was organised to introduce Destination Canada's new regional managing director, Rupert Peters, and to highlight the importance of the trade as a key to success for the NTO.



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City	Date	Time	Venue
Kolkata	18 January, Monday	10:00 - 14:00	The Oberoi
Delhi	19 January, Tuesday	10:00 - 16:00	Le Meridien
Hyderabad	21 January, Thursday	10:00 - 14:00	The Park Hyatt
Mumbai	22 January, Friday	10:00 - 16:00	The Palladium

EVENT TALK

DECEMBER 2015

NATIONAL

18-20	Siliguri	Tourism Fair
22-24	Mumbai	Travel Tourism Trade Fair – World Travel Trade Mart
23-27	Haridwar	CII Uttarakhand Fair
23-27	Kolkata	Mega Tourism & Hospitality Expo

JANUARY 2016

INTERNATIONAL

20-24	Madrid, Spain	FITUR
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NATIONAL

1-10	Visakhapatnam	Mega Tourism & Hospitality Expo
8-10	Nagpur	Global Panorama Showcase
8-10	Chennai	Travel & Tourism Fair
14-16	Kochi	India International Travel Mart
15	Kolkata	Tourism Fiji Roadshow
15-17	Bengaluru	Travel & Tourism Fair
15-17	Mumbai	India International Travel & Tourism Exhibition
18	Delhi	Tourism Fiji Roadshow
18	Kolkata	South African Tourism Roadshow
19	Ahmedabad	Tourism Fiji Roadshow
19	Delhi	South African Tourism Roadshow
20	Mumbai	Tourism Fiji Roadshow
21	Bengaluru	Tourism Fiji Roadshow
21	Hyderabad	South African Tourism Roadshow
22	Mumbai	South African Tourism Roadshow
22	Chennai	Tourism Fiji Roadshow
22-24	Nagpur	India International Travel Exhibition
22-24	Coimbatore	Holiday Expo
22-24	Mumbai	Travel Tourism Trade Fair – World Travel Trade Mart
23	Hyderabad	Tourism Fiji Roadshow
29-31	Delhi	SATTE

FEBRUARY 2016

INTERNATIONAL

11-13	Milan, Italy	BIT
24	UK	Travel Technology Europe
24-25	UK	Business Travel Show

NATIONAL

1	Mumbai	Koh Samui Roadshow (Tourism Authority of Thailand)
1	Kolkata	Global Destinations event
2	Ahmedabad	Global Destinations event
3	Bengaluru	Global Destinations event
4	Mumbai	Global Destinations event
6-8	Chandigarh	India Travel Mart
9	Mumbai	Austrian National Tourist Office roadshow
10	Ahmedabad	Austrian National Tourist Office roadshow
11	New Delhi	Austrian National Tourist Office roadshow
11	Hyderabad	India Expo
12-14	New Delhi	Travel & Tourism Fair (Delhi Tourism Fair)
13	Chennai	India Expo (India Gulf Expo)
15	Ahmedabad	India Expo
18-20	Mumbai	Travel & Tourism Fair
18-20	Mumbai	OTM
22	Pune	DOT Philippines Roadshow
24	Ahmedabad	DOT Philippines Roadshow
26-28	Vijaywada	India International Travel Exhibition
29	Chennai	Destination Canada Roadshow

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

Focus on sharing economy

David Chapple, Event Director, Business Travel Show (BTS), tells TRAVTALK about the comprehensive business conference programme featuring more than 7,500 industry professionals.



VAISHALI DAR

Focus and Theme of BTS

The Business Travel Show is Europe's leading event for buyers, bookers and managers of corporate travel. Exhibitors will also be able to enter the Disrupt Awards for the first time, the winner of which will receive valuable mentoring and £8,000 stand at the 2017 show. There will be a greater focus on



“252 exhibitors were at the show in 2015, an increase of 10 per cent on last year. There are always a few people attending from India but the main focus for the event is currently on Europe.”

David Chapple

Event Director, Business Travel Show

About the venue

The show is using 8800 sqm of floor space and Olympia Grand is a beautiful Victoria building with gable windows (it used to be a train station), but with all modern facilities for visitors and exhibitors.

issues such as data, distribution and the sharing economy.

Exhibitors

More than 250 leading business travel suppliers from around the world exhibit at the event each year. This year, new exhibitors include American Airlines, Belmond, The Nadler, Avis, Eurostar, Hertz, HRG and India's Jet Airways.

Growth in buyers, sellers and visitors

252 exhibitors were at the show in 2015, an increase of 10 per cent on last year. There are always a few people attending from India but the main focus for the event is currently on Europe.

Technology at the show

BTS has been around for 22 years and is committed to

provide the ultimate event for European buyers to source, learn and network. We have incorporated social registration and there is a shift to a larger digital spend from traditional marketing methods. We don't use an app as visitors prefer to use the show guide onsite.

Growth in online bookings

Visitor pre-registration grew 10 per cent in 2015 due to the introduction of social registration and peer invitations. Registering socially is having a huge impact on visitor conversion.

The Business Travel Show and Travel Technology Europe

take place at the Olympia Grand Exhibition Centre in London, UK on 24-25 Feb, 2016.

Salient Features

There is a brand new feature on the show floor this year – Launchpad – which provides a platform for start-ups with innovative travel products and services.

Visitor numbers have increased by 15 per cent this year to 7,424 compared to 6,459 in 2014, which in itself was a 10 per cent rise year on year.

New doors into Eastern India

Anil Punjabi, Chairman, Travel Agents Federation of India (Eastern India) & Chairman, Tourism Committee, Bengal Chamber of Commerce, speaks on what Mega Tourism & Hospitality Expo can do for West Bengal.



TT BUREAU

“Travel Exhibitions are important in West Bengal as it gives us the chance to showcase the state. With the State Government taking active measures to improve infrastructure in popular tourist spots, we welcome the chance to showcase West Bengal to the rest of India and the world. We hope that other tourism bodies who are participating in the expo go back and actively sell West Bengal in their states. The expo will also give people of Bengal a chance to learn first-hand more about destinations they wish to travel to,” Punjabi said.

For this reason, TAFI (Eastern Region), with the official support of the Incredible India campaign of the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, is organising the Mega Tourism



Anil Punjabi
Chairman, Travel Agents Federation of India (Eastern India)



Prakash Shah
Chairman
G. S. Marketing Associates

& Hospitality Expo in Kolkata from December 23-27, 2015. The event is held along with its flagship event — India International Mega Trade Fair (IIMTF) — to encourage further growth.

According to the organisers, fairs like these provide a platform to the Government Tourism Departments of different countries and states, nation-

al and International tour operators, hospitality providers, etc., to showcase and market their tourist destinations and services to a huge number of prospective tourists.

The expo is also set to be held in Visakhapatnam, Bhubaneswar and Ranchi in the next one year. These fairs are jointly organised by the Bengal Chamber of

Commerce & Industry and G. S. Marketing Associates and are approved by ITPO, under the Ministry of Commerce, Government of India.

“We are indeed very fortunate to get the valuable support of the Incredible India campaign of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. We are also very grateful to Sri Lanka Tourism, Bangladesh Tourism Board, the tourism departments of Malaysia, Thailand and the Tourism Departments of West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Telangana, Puducherry and Jharkhand. Last and most important, we are very fortunate to tie-up with the Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) for Presenting this exclusive fair,” said Prakash Shah, Chairman, G. S. Marketing Associates.



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Incentives on semi-luxury trains

Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation unveils two semi-luxury tourist train services that will showcase the charm of deserts and heritage of India. Dr. A.K. Manocha, Chairman and Managing Director, IRCTC, invites suggestions from agents and offers them special incentives.



SAMAPTI DAS

IRCTC has launched two semi luxury train services for the desert and the heritage circuit. Both trains will depart from the Delhi Safdarjung railway station offering deluxe facilities across its five days of round trip dotted with sightseeing facilities. Desert Circuit started on December 13 and will run till April 21 and will cover the cities of Jaisalmer and Jaipur in Rajasthan, while the Heritage Circuit will start on December 20 and wind up on April 24 and will take the passengers to Varanasi, Khajuraho and Agra.



Dr. A.K. Manocha
Chairman and Managing Director
IRCTC

Dr. A.K. Manocha, Chairman and Managing Director, IRCTC, says "Now that the tourist season is on, we expect good occupancy. The tariff for the journey is competitive as well as all-inclusive."

He adds, "We would love the travel agents to come and we would like to offer them bigger discounts. We have already provided some margin for them. We also welcome suggestions. They may let us know if they

want some add ons or the circuit to be modified."

IRCTC has done huge publicity for these trains and are giving inaugural discounts to groups and individuals as well. For example, a senior

about the tie up with various food joints.

He says, "We take regular feedback from passengers and following that we have entered the e-catering services which the ministry has permit-



citizen group will be given a 12 per cent discount.

Till now we have already booked around 15 passengers and about 100 odd enquiries have come. In his conversation with **TRAVELLER**, Manocha also talks

ted at 45 stations. We already have 85 joints listed like Bikanerwala, Haldirams and Dominos. We are looking at a lot of aggregators like Food Panda. This is a pilot project and we are open to any suggestions."

IITT 2016 expects 300+ buyers

IITT 2016 is scheduled to be held from January 15-17, 2016, at the Bombay Convention & Exhibition Centre, Mumbai.



TT BUREAU

Sprawling over 15000+ square metres of area, IITT 2016 will have participation from 500+ exhibitors from over 25+ featured states and 20+ featured countries including travel agents, tour operators, airlines - domestic and international, hotel chains, cruise liners, resorts and allied industries.

Visited by 10,000+ trade visitors and 15,000+ consumers, IITT is one of the leading platforms to showcase your brand to the target audience and plays a vital role in achieving success.

The organisers will be hosting 300+ buyers from over 30 cities pan India. These buyers generate large buying volumes & have the potential to transact business with the exhibitors. The buyers will also consist of wedding planners and MICE operators from across India.

Few key brands that will be showcased at IITT 2016 are

Turkish Tourism & Culture, Kuwait Airways, Lavasa Tourism, Gem Tours & Travels, Akquasun Group, Booking.com, Treebo Hotels, OYO Rooms, DNATA, Ottila, Yatra.com, Vistara Airlines, Oberoi Hotels & Resorts, Marriott and many more such brands

The event is supported by Incredible India – Ministry of Tourism and is also backed by leading associations like TAFI, OTOAI, IATO, IAAI, ATOAI, ATTOI, ETAA, etc.

Mohit Mewani, Event Director – IITT, says, "IITT has grown 40% in its 3rd edition and has maximum visitor turnout through its unmatched media campaign and B2B visitor promotion campaign. Conference, workshops, training academy & the corporate lounges are few key drivers that generate real time business. IITT being the first travel exhibition of the calendar year, witnesses many buyers contracting with suppliers at the exhibition itself. ABEC (the organiser) is the largest exhibition organizing



Mohit Mewani
Event Director
IITT

IITT has grown 40% in its 3rd edition and has maximum turnout through its media campaign and B2B visitor promotion campaign

200+ large corporate companies to visit the expo for their MICE requirements."

IITT 2016 will also introduce special workshops for promoting some of the hottest destinations of the world to encourage Indian out bound tourism. The program will cover international destinations like Switzerland, Indonesia, Mauritius, South Africa and many more.

A Training Academy has also been planned to help the upcoming tourism professionals to network with some of the successful players in the tourism industry.

IITT is expected to have a growth of 40% in its portfolio in its 3rd edition in 2016.

Girish Shankar, Additional Secretary Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, who inaugurated IITT 2015, said, "The exhibition is at par with other exhibitions and comprises a very enthusiastic team."

company in India and has a large portfolio of clients from various leading industries. We intend on harnessing these existing relations and invite



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Shangri-La's Eros Hotel

New Delhi

Shangri-La's Eros Hotel, New Delhi, has appointed **Parmeet Singh Nayar** as its new General Manager. With an experience of over two decades, he has played a crucial role in operations, renovations, re-positioning and assisting in brand augmentation and expansion for many prestigious hotels. Prior to joining Shangri-La's Eros Hotel, New Delhi he held the position of General Manager at the Hilton Worldwide and Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group. His international stints include Global & Asia Pacific Carlson Rezidor conferences and hotels in Bahamas, Washington DC, Florida, Singapore, Phuket, Wuxi (Shanghai) as well as Italy and North America.



Four Points by Sheraton

Bengaluru

Four Points by Sheraton Bengaluru has recently appointed **Jitesh Patta** as the General Manager. Jitesh has been involved with the hospitality industry for the past 18 years and his previous association with Four Points by Sheraton saw him in the role of General Manager at Four Points by Sheraton, Dehradun. Prior to his association with the Starwood Hotels & Resorts, Jitesh has worked with brands like Carlzor Rezidor group, Country Club India Limited, Tivoli garden, Royal Goan Beach Club, Fortune Jodhpur, The Clarks and The Surya New Delhi.



Mirage Lords Inn

Kathmandu

Amrendra Kumar Karn has recently joined Mirage Lords Inn, Kathmandu in the capacity of General Manager. He carries with him more than 19 years of long experience in the industry and has worked in properties in Nepal like Soaltee Crowne Plaza, Hyatt Regency, KGH Group of Hotels, Grand Hotel Tahachal, Park Village Hotel, etc. A graduate in B.Sc Honors in Chemistry from Lalit Narayan Mithila University, Darbhanga, he spent early part of his career with Marco Polo Business Hotel, Kathmandu as Assistant General Manager. Prior to joining Lords, he was working with Howard Plaza, Agra in the capacity of General Manager.



Victoriatour- Vietnam

New Delhi

Victoriatour and General Commercial Company Limited, Vietnam has appointed **Pruthi Ranjan** as Market Manager for India. Prior to this, Pruthi was Head Business development for ICS Travel group for Pan India. With more than 10 years in the hospitality sector, Pruthi brings a wealth of international experience and expertise. He has been instrumental to establish DMCs, hotels and Tourism Bureau across several disciplines including Operations, Marketing strategy and Business development. An alumni of regional colleague of management, Bhubaneswar; Pruthi holds Masters degree in Tourism Administration.



Radisson Blu Hotel New Delhi

Dwarka

Mohammed Shoeb has been appointed as the General Manager of Radisson Blu Hotel New Delhi Dwarka. He has done a Post Graduate Diploma in Tourism & Hotel Management and has been associated with the hospitality industry for more than 25 years. He was earlier working with Accor Hotels and was involved in the successful opening and operation of the Novotel Vishakhapatnam and the Novotel Chennai. In the last 10 years Shoeb has opened four hotels in the southern part of India. He has also worked in IT Welcomgroup and the Intercontinental Hotels group.



Park Plaza Noida

Noida

Park Plaza Noida has appointed **Ankur Mehrotra** as the new Director Sales & Marketing. Before joining here, Ankur worked with Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group for three and a half years. With an enriching experience of 12 years behind him, Ankur aspires to direct all sales & marketing efforts towards achieving the operational goal of the hotel. Previous assignment was with Country Inn & Suites Sahibabad as Director of Sales. Other assignments in the past include hotel companies like The Claridges, Jaypee Hotels & Intercontinental Hotels.



Goa Marriott Resort & Spa

Goa

Abhay Singh joins the Goa Marriott Resort & Spa as Director of Food & Beverage from November 2015. Abhay started his career in 2008 at The Renaissance Mumbai Hotel and Convention Centre, as F&B Executive. He then joined Courtyard by Marriott, Mumbai, as Assistant Events Manager and later moved to JW Marriott Pune as Events Manager with the pre-opening team. While at JW Marriott, Pune, Abhay also worked as a Front Desk Manager for a period of one year. His next role was Director of Events at Renaissance Mumbai Hotel & Convention Centre. His most recent assignment was that of Director of Events at JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar.



Humble UNA Smart

Amritsar

Ajay Thakur joins Humble UNA Smart, Amritsar as Rooms Division Manager, where he will be overseeing the entire rooms division and ensuring that the hotel attains desire occupancy and ARR. Ajay comes to Humble UNA Smart from Sterling Holidays Munnar where he was working as a Front Office Manager. Ajay brings to Humble UNA Smart, Amritsar a wealth of experience in room division management. He has handled housekeeping & front office functions in various capacities in the upscale and business travel segments.

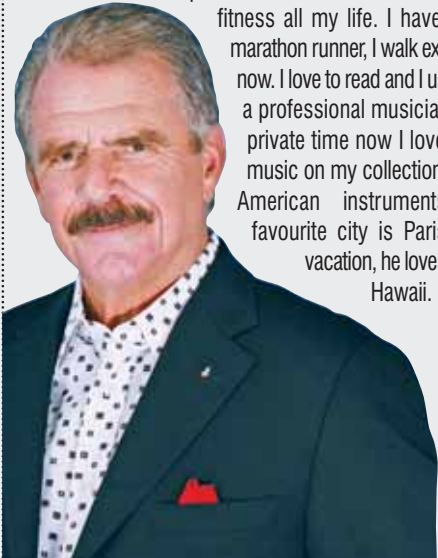


Park Plaza Noida has appointed **Shivankar Kodesia** as Food & Beverage Manager. He comes with over 14 years of experience. At Park Plaza Noida, he would be responsible for directing all Food and Beverage efforts towards achieving the operational goal of the hotel. Prior to joining Park Plaza Noida, he was with Hilton Worldwide. He has also worked with DoubleTree By Hilton Gurgaon as a Food and Beverage Manager.



TALKing People

U. Gary Charlwood, Board Chairman & CEO, Uniglobe Travel, says he has travelled the world and seen groups of people. "I always say that I am on vacation 365 days a year, because I enjoy what I do, blend my work time with pleasure time. I have a grown family and they are very much part of my life. On a personal front I have tried to maintain fitness all my life. I have been a marathon runner, I walk extensively now. I love to read and I used to be a professional musician. In my private time now I love to play music on my collection of Latin American instruments." His favourite city is Paris. For a vacation, he loves to go to Hawaii.



Monica Suri, General Manager, Le Meridien Kochi, says her passion lies in exploring a new country every year. "Beyond sight-seeing or clicking few photos, I travel to experience the location, its culture and to learn something new. Travel is a dream come true for me and I look forward for a greater travel adventure the next time, which helps me bridge the gap between the few 'known' and the many 'unknowns'." She believe this helps her keep good health and well-being. "I find time for myself and ensure that nothing disturbs the outward and inward discovery," she says.



Ashish Kumar Rai, General Manager, Westin Mumbai Garden City, says, "We are in an industry that demands us to be available all the time, which keeps us busy all the time. It is essential to make sure I take time out to invest in things that I love doing especially something like spending time with my family." Reading is something he enjoys a lot and considers it as one of his favourite destressing activity. "I also love travelling and my all-time favourite holiday destinations are London and Scotland. Something that has been on my wish-list for a longtime is that I would like to explore South America," he adds.





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Karnataka's 18 new products

R.V. Deshpande, Minister for Tourism and Large & Medium Industries, Govt. of Karnataka, in an exclusive to **TRAVTALK**, elaborates on its CSR initiatives and efforts to ease travel in the state.



DEEPA SETHI FROM LONDON

QWhat are the latest initiatives Karnataka is taking to exploit tourism's potential?

Tourism as a whole has a huge potential, and I don't think any industry can generate employment and revenue as much as tourism is able to. We are also very committed to the MICE product. We have an international airport, and a convention centre with a capacity for 6000. We always have people coming in for business meetings, conventions etc.

In India all the states have not been able to tap the rich potential we have. So in our wisdom, the state government of Karnataka has made tourism a priority and we are trying to attract large groups of tourists by taking some definitive steps. We have come up with a unique tourism policy with 18 products. Good incentives, concessions, and some in the industry say it could be the best policy in the country today.

We have also decided to be more professional, so we have appointed 4 professional rating agencies to rate our hotels, homestays... we have also come out with an industries tourism facilitation act, where we licence our guides, so that nobody is cheated. We are pushing for infrastructure cooperation where we can go for public private partnerships.

QWhat would you say are the top concerns for the tourism industry?

The concerns in this country and industry and in the states are security, cleanliness, last-mile connectivity and infrastructure. We are trying to tackle all these one by one. The second big concern, with the help of the home department in the state government we have trained young homeguards and we are posting them at all important destinations in a phased way. Their job is to receive the tourists with a smile, guide them, help them and provide them security. They should be in their position by the end of this year. More than 250 people have already been trained in the first phase.

We are training our guides. Majority of them do not know how to speak English or a foreign language. So we are taking the help of five universities and training them in English, Russian, French, Chinese

and many other languages so that it helps the foreign tourists.

QPlease elaborate on how the PPP format is working in Karnataka.

With regard to cleanliness, we have got a new scheme for corporates. Corporates can now take on tourist desti-

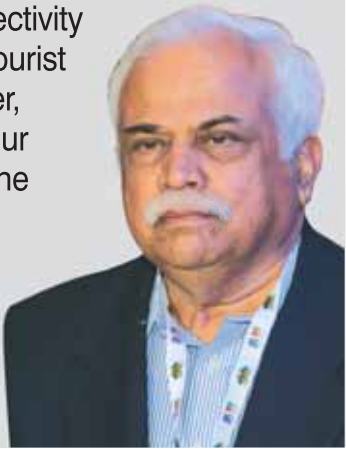
decisions. So we are marching ahead and our goal is to make Karnataka the best destination.

We have also requested the Government of India to relax their CRZ regulations. We have 320km of coast. Because of the CRZ regulations the beaches are virgin. We can't use them

“We are trying to see that roads are there and last-minute connectivity is also there. And in these tourist spots there should be power, drinking water, toilets etc. Our goal is to make Karnataka the best destination.”

R.V. Deshpande

Minister for Large & Medium Industries & Tourism,
Govt. of Karnataka



nations with their CSR funds. So many of them are voluntarily coming forward to adopt these tourist destinations. They will keep them clean, they will maintain them, they will improve them and they can build some infrastructure also there.

For example there are some tourist attractions in Karnataka that are being adopted by corporates:

- ❖ **Belur and Halebidu** - Cafe Coffee Day
- ❖ **Lalbagh** - Bangalore Chambers of Industry and Commerce.
- ❖ **Venkatappa Art Gallery** – Abhishek Poddar, businessman, art collector and gallery owner.
- ❖ **Government Museum, Kasturba Road** – Sangita Jindal, JSW Foundation.
- ❖ **Old Post Office, Museum Road** - Prestige group.

Likewise, we are trying to see that roads are there and last-minute connectivity is also there. And in these tourist spots there should be power, drinking water, toilets etc. We have formed a regional group under the chairmanship of Mohan Das Pai where eminent people help us in taking these

because of restrictions. The Government of India and the Environment Ministry is also very keen to relax it. Once this happens the entire coast of India will get a boost.

QWhat according to you are India's marquee products as a destination?

We have all types of tourism; our strengths are wildlife tourism, wellness, heritage, eco tourism and adventure tourism to name a few. We just need to market ourselves properly. Travel marts and roadshows help us to market India and Karnataka to build a destination for the world to visit.

Quick Facts

- Karnataka is training its guides in English, Russian, French, Chinese among many other languages
- It has appointed four professional rating agencies to rate its hotels and homestays
- Trained homeguard are being deployed at key destinations



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