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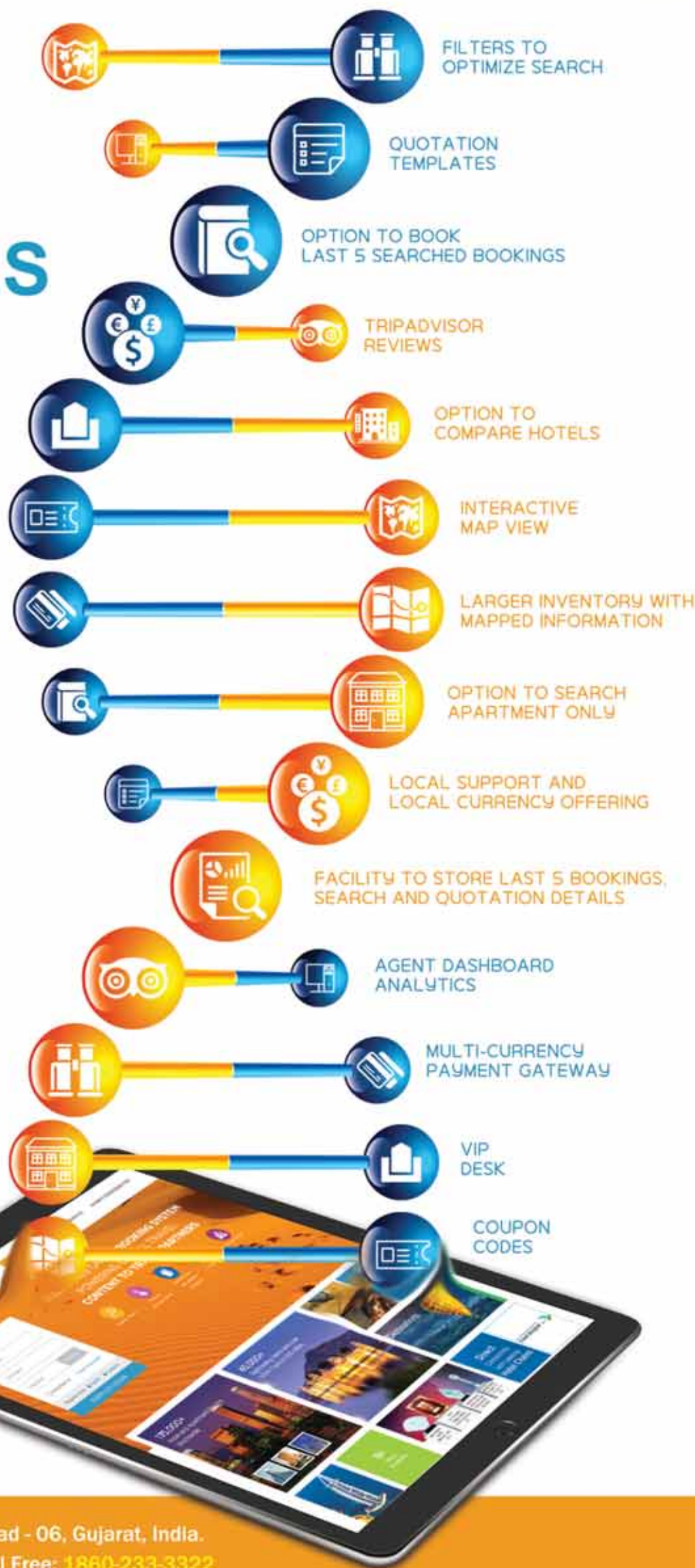


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## MOT's focus on National Tourism Policy

As the New Year begins with assurance of progress in the tourism sector, **Suman Billa**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, gives **TRAVTALK** a preview of what MOT has in store for 2016.

**AHANA GURUNG**

2015 has been a chapter of establishing and promoting growth in the Indian tourism industry as several initiatives were undertaken by the Ministry of Tourism, such as the development of the eTV, release of the National Tourism Policy draft and formation of the Swadesh Darshan and PRASAD schemes, among many others. Ushering in the New Year with gusto, the MOT is all geared up to make tan-

gible changes that will enhance the overall focus of the industry.

Imparting the same message, **Suman Billa**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism says, "In a way, 2015 has marked new beginnings for MOT—it was a build-up phase where we put several plans in play. It was a year where we consolidated and did a lot of ground work for a number of initiatives to take off." Furthermore, he gives a preview of 2016 and expresses

that MOT will bring about substantial changes in the tourism industry. "2016 will be the year where all the initiatives we introduced in 2015 will come about in full swing," he states. "Things such as the new tourism policy and a different approach to publicity and social media will set into play. The National Tourism Policy, most likely to come into effect by early 2016, will definitely change the face of the Indian tourism industry."

Contd. on page 10 ►

"The new tourism policy and a different approach to publicity and social media will set into play. The National Tourism Policy, most likely to come into effect by early 2016, will definitely change the face of the Indian tourism industry."

**Suman Billa**  
Joint Secretary  
Ministry of Tourism



## Ushering a new era for tourism

As we welcome the New Year, the travel industry looks forward to a significant upswing. **TRAVTALK** finds out from tourism industry players about their expectations and plans for the year 2016.

**TT BUREAU**



We are expecting the number of passengers to increase manifold this year and several reforms put in place by the Indian government in 2015 to further support and nurture the growth of both domestic and international airlines next year.

**Wolfgang Will**  
Director - South Asia, Lufthansa Passenger Airlines



I believe there is significant scope for expansion of both transport infrastructure and the hotel and accommodation sector, particularly outside major cities and in more rural areas, which would benefit from an increase of tourism spending in the coming year.

**Rajan Dua**  
Managing Director, Udaan

Contd. on page 12 ►

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# State roadshows needed: ADTOI

The Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI) recently held a meeting where insights were given about religious destinations like Anandpur Sahib and new-age accommodation concepts like BnBnation.

ANUPRIYA BISHNOI

ADTOI conducted its General House Meeting on December 26 where the top agenda besides taking the association forward, was to have informative sessions and presentations for the members. **Jyoti Kapoor**, President, ADTOI said, "The main agenda was to have sessions and presentations. We had a session on the Service Tax levied by the government. Also, there was a presentation on Anandpur Sahib where members were shown how culturally rich the place is. Then we had a presentation on BnBnation which is a new age accommodation in India."

Also the ADTOI Convention is in the offing. Kapoor said, "We are planning to hold the convention by third week of March. State tourism



“We are planning to hold the convention by third week of March. State tourism boards are coming forward to help us; we are just trying to narrow down on that and decide where to hold the convention.”

**Jyoti Kapoor**  
President, ADTOI

boards are coming forward to help us; we are just trying to narrow down on that and decide where to hold the convention. But by January 7 or 10, we should be able to finalise the venue and the date.”

Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and J&K. In fact these states want to host us. But we are just waiting for the dates to get finalised.”

He believes that state tourism boards should promote themselves more to have more visibility. Kapoor believes that domestic tourism is moving forward. He said, “Domestic tourism is the backbone of our country but we need to regulate it and we need to have state tourisms to organise mega roadshows because they have to create a visibility. Domestic tourism still needs to be branded because Incredible India doesn’t talk about domestic tourism. I believe Incredible India should be promoted within India.”



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To a great 2016

The National Tourism Policy, likely to be out in June 2016, is the most-awaited development of the year.

eTV led to easing of the visa regime to a great extent as FTAs from January to November, 2015, stood at 7.10 million. The growth for many businesses has come from the domestic segment. A further rise in domestic tourists is expected in 2016. Betting big on this segment, many State Tourism Boards are upping their act. They are investing in modern structure and offer a combo of historic and state-of-the-art venues and hotels.

Outbound travel will also increase considerably as many countries are targeting India. Trends for 2016 show that the youth, the Millennials, are keen on travel. Many airports will be upgraded as new airlines will be granted permits to operate from several Indian cities.

Though the implementation of Goods & Service Tax (GST) will remove multiple taxation and bring ease of doing business, everyone is a bit sceptical about the rate at which it will be capped. In addition, these tax rates tend to vary across different states in the country. This is affecting the growth of the industry in India and India is losing out to other low-cost destinations. GST will offer reprieve to a highly-taxed tourism industry, provided it is capped at a lower rate.

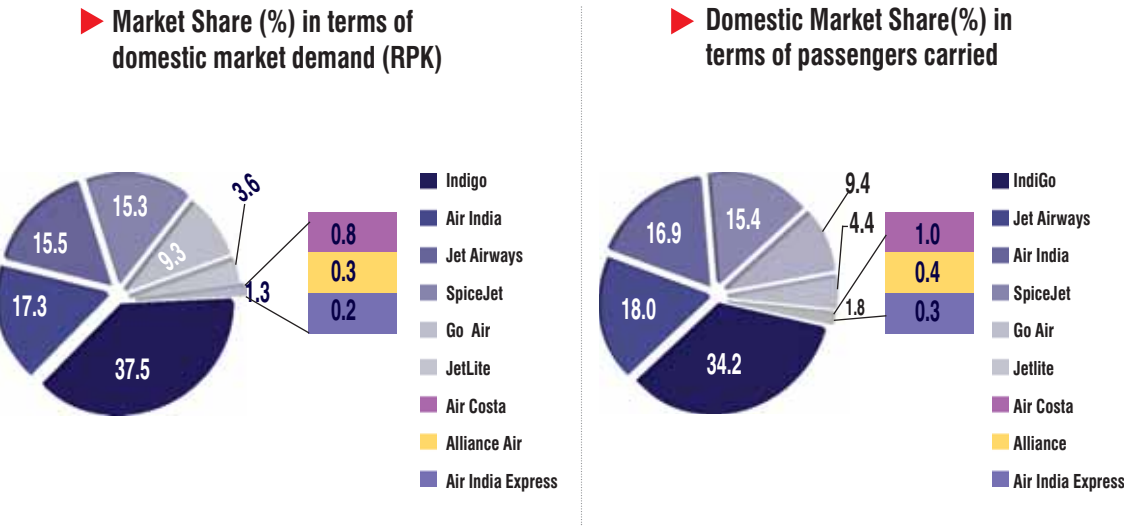
After Marriott International bought Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide recently, AccorHotels acquired FRHI Holdings Ltd (FRHI), parent company of Fairmont, Raffles, and Swissôtel chains, consolidating the fact that mergers and acquisitions are the way forward in the New Year.

The industry must focus on sustainability practices in the wake of the havoc wreaked by the rain and floods in Chennai. A Comprehensive Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India (STCI) for three major segments of tourism industry has been launched by the Ministry of Tourism (MOT). The tour operators approved by Ministry of Tourism have to sign a pledge for commitment towards Safe and Honourable Tourism and Sustainable Tourism to fully implement sustainable tourism practices.

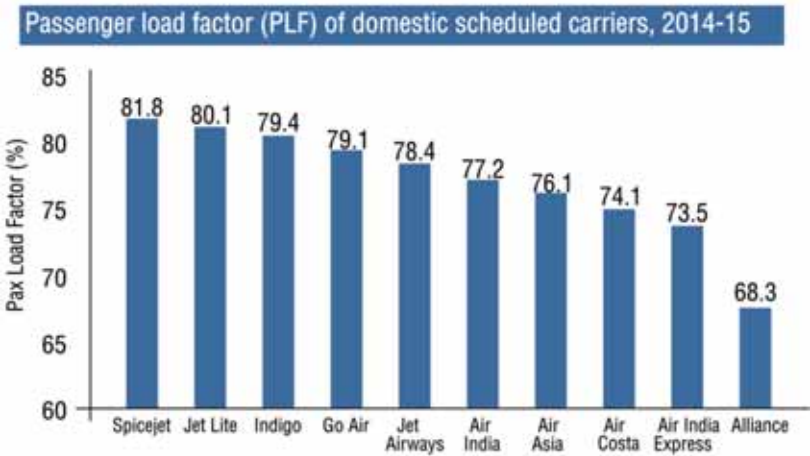
Let's work towards growth in tandem with sustainability in 2016!

Over 15% growth in domestic air traffic

In 2014-15, air passenger traffic in India registered a robust growth compared to previous year. While the domestic passenger traffic registered a growth of 15.52 per cent, international passenger traffic witnessed a growth of 6.15 per cent during the same period.



In the year 2014-15 in terms of passenger carried, IndiGo had maximum market share followed by Jet Airways, Air India and SpiceJet.



In terms of Passenger Load Factor (PLF), a measure of capacity utilisation of airlines, SpiceJet registered the highest PLF of 81.8 per cent followed by JetLite (80.1 per cent), IndiGo (79.4 per cent), and GoAir (79.1 per cent).

► Market share (%) of top 15 scheduled operators-International operations, 2014-115

Jet Airways	14.47
Air India	11.93
Emirates	11.39
Air India Express	5.23
Qatar Airways	4.05
Air Arabia	3.82
Etihad Airways	3.45
IndiGo	3.18
Saudi Arabian Airlines	3.10
Oman Airlines	2.72
Sri Lankan Airlines	2.68
Singapore Airlines	2.63
Thai Airways	2.53
Lufthansa	2.51
Malaysian Airlines	2.19

Out of total 75 scheduled international Operators, 6 airlines accounted for 50 per cent of International Passenger traffic. Jet Airways had the maximum share followed by Air India, Emirates, Air India Express, Qatar Airways and Air Arabia.

More than half of the traffic to and from India is accounted for by the countries in the Africa & Middle East.

The domestic passenger traffic registered a growth of 12.03% (CAGR) over the period from 2005-06 to 2014-15 while International passenger traffic grew at 9.52% (CAGR) during the same period.



# Philippines eyes Indian wedding market

TRAVTALK meets **Glen Agustin**, Chief Tourism Operations Officer, Market Development Group, Department of Tourism, Philippines, to understand what makes the destination unique and how they are attracting travellers.



ANUPRIYA BISHNOI FROM THE PHILIPPINES

**Q**How has the tourism scenario changed over the last three years?

For the last three years we have been running a new campaign—‘It’s More Fun in the Philippines’. It has a huge following and a lot of impact on the travel industry. This campaign is different from our older campaigns in a way that people of the Philippines will relate to it better. In the last three years, the foreign tourist arrivals to the Philippines have moved up. However, there has been a slump because of the natural disaster and calamities, but we are picking up now.

As far as India is concerned there have been challenges too, like that of visa and lack of direct flights. But despite that, there have been some developments, which have secured the regular inflow of the tourists from India to the Philippines. For example, while Philippines Airlines discontinued direct flights, there has been more frequency from other air carriers via some Asian countries. India has overtaken Germany in terms of tourist arrivals to the Philippines, and is now listed at number 12, while Germany is at number 13.

**Q**What are the new initiatives to promote tourism?

Right now we are focusing on how to drive more families and weddings into the country. This is the new segment we are looking at now. We recently organised a Fam trip for the Indian wedding planners and showcased wedding destinations and venues like Boracay, Cebu and Bohol wherein they got to experience the nuances of how weddings can be organised at various hotels and venues. We are aggressively promoting MICE too. In fact, the success of the Indian arrivals to the Philippines can also be attributed to MICE movements. DOT India has been successful in attracting large numbers of corporate to the Philippines. Earlier this year we had about 500 group arrivals into the country.

**Q**Which new destinations are you promoting?

Davao City, on the southern Philippine island of Mindanao, has been identified as a luxury destination. However, it’s a little farther from Manila. It takes two hours via plane to get there. Now, we are trying to work with Singapore Airlines and SilkAir to fly out of

India into Singapore and directly into Davao. For this, we will be partnering with Cebu Pacific. Of course, we are continuing to push for Palawan, but now we will be promoting other islands of Palawan like Coron, where it’s more about adventure and island hopping. Bohol too, will now be treated as a luxury destination because the city recently witnessed opening of various luxury resorts.

“The new campaign is different from our older campaigns in a way that people of the Philippines will relate to it better. In the last three years, the foreign tourist arrivals to the Philippines have moved up.”

**Glen Agustin**

Chief Tourism Operations Officer  
Market Development Group, Department of Tourism, Philippines



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**New Venues**

- Davao City has been identified as a luxury destination
- Bohol recently witnessed opening of various luxury resorts



# Change and stay relevant

Indian travellers are evolving to become far more demanding so it only makes sense for the tour operators to change with time to remain relevant.

The year gone by was quite satisfying with respect to our business growth, customer satisfaction ratings and service excellence achieved by team members at World Travel Studio. Apart from further building our dominance in the customised holidays in the B2C segment, this year we witnessed a huge surge in the B2B business, wherein travel agents across the country entrusted us to handle VIP clients for their customised leisure vacation arrangements.

Another highlight was our successful entry into the study tour segment under a new brand FLEARN. We also won the Best Tour Operator Award at the India Travel Awards - West India for the second year in a row.

Last year witnessed two very important developments in the travel industry – the sale of its travel business by Kuoni and the merger of Starwood with Marriott International. At the same time the industry also witnessed start-ups set off on the growth path in travel as well as the hotel space. Interesting, isn't it!

### Outlook for the year

Based on the current economic indicators, I feel growth will continue to be subdued. However, I am very hopeful that the economy will recover faster and the initiatives taken by the central government recently should start showing some positive results.

These are the best times for the Indian consumers,

wherein they are being pampered the most with a wide array of product options, extreme convenience and quirky service by new age companies. Indian consumers are changing and are far more demanding than before. This will continue as they are exposed to global content and now demand world-class service delivery. This means that the Indian travel companies will have to update their service delivery process to global standards. Also, this is actually the best time to travel, thanks to an all-time low price of fuel that has made air fares very attractive.

Here is a list of a few trends that would influence the travel industry in the coming years:

● **BLEisure:** With work-life balance gaining importance amongst Indians, more and more Indians are now increasingly clubbing their business trips with leisure family vacations.

● **Self-drive vacations:** This segment is set to explode with Indians seeking absolute flexibility and desire to indulge in exploratory experiences. Self-drive vacations are becoming the most preferred mode of vacation.

● **Solo travellers:** With changing lifestyles and aspirations, this segment is gradually growing in India as well.

● **Dominance of smartphone:** These gadgets continue to influence and dominate individuals' time and decision-making, pre as well as on-tour

and hence it's very important to have an appropriate strategy to integrate the smartphone in one's service strategy.

● **Offline or online:** This battle will continue. Purchasing habits of the Indian customers are changing, but not to the extent the way it's being projected. With more information available on the net, clients are doing detailed research. However when it comes to leisure family vacation they are still booking offline. That's because they get great value and convenience, when it comes to investing time and money in a well-planned customised vacation offered by a brick-and-mortar tour operator.

● **Experiential vacations:** Standard sightseeing tours are becoming passé and clients are looking at newer experiences and destinations.

One of my favourite quotes by Heraclitus goes, 'There is nothing permanent except change.' Hence, it's very important to adapt to the changing environment swiftly and stay relevant.



-The author is Haresh Koyande, Founder & MD, World Travel Studio

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OVERLAND ESCAPE

## JTB's English tours to Europe for Indians

■ Europamundo Vacations, owned by JTB (Japan Travel Bureau), one of the largest travel and tourism company in the world, is introducing English guided tours to focus on Indian travellers and their requirements.

Europamundo was founded over 20 years back and has grown at an average rate of 20 % annually. Europamundo carries 125,000 tourists annually from 22 Spanish or Portuguese speaking countries and is one of the largest coach tour operators in the world.

Riding high on its success in Spanish and Portuguese speaking markets, Europamundo researched the Indian travel market to evaluate how its seat-in-coach product could add value to middle income travellers as well as the travel agency fraternity in India. After seeing the results, Europamundo is now introducing English guided tours with a particular focus on Indian requirements. The tours will also provide them the best Price/Quality ratio and flexibilities that the modern Indian is looking at. According to Europamundo, the decision to enter the Indian market is based on the fact that no other market is growing at a healthy rate of 10-12 per cent and the middle income group has a desire to see Europe.

In India, Europamundo will be represented by one distributor in each region. Depending on demand and development, it may engage more distributors.

The company is looking at distributing Europamundo products all over India and Sri Lanka, and is currently targeting the middle income group who opt for European packages and

be promoted in other markets with an interest in English guided seat-in-coach tours.





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# India to ramp up social media presence

► Contd. from page 3

Billa comments that MOT has also identified several parameters that need attention and further enhancement. He says, "We are going to focus on a lot of areas that require enhancement such as cruise and film tourism, to name a few. We have already started working on both aspects, especially with customs and immigration to simplify the procedures and norms and have assigned a task force as well. For film tourism, we launched the single window clearance for film producers in Goa in November and significant results are expected in 2016," he elaborates. Similarly, he mentions that the Ministry is also working on an ambitious digital presence, especially on social media. "Soon enough, India will erupt on the digital platform," he says. "We strongly feel that the digital age is the future and expect to get vendors on board by February 2016."

In terms of building infrastructure, Billa informs that significant work has already begun. "By the end of the financial year, funds to the tune of ₹1900 crore will be approved. Till date, approxi-

mately ₹1100 crore funds have been sanctioned for the development of tourism infrastructure," he states.

Moreover, he acknowledges the importance of promotion of eTV and says that its logo will be promoted along with the Incredible India branding in advertisements on television, print, etc., to draw focus to eTV. "Nonetheless, it is safe to say that eTV has essentially taken away a major shortcoming of the tourism industry," he adds. "There are larger issues that affect tourism in the country like the state of the economy and the business scene – these are aspects we cannot determine, but we are hoping for a fruitful year with momentous changes ahead."

### 2016 Prospects

- ✦ MOT will focus on cruise and film tourism this year
- ✦ eTV logo will be promoted along with Incredible India branding in advertisements

# Arrivals grow by 12 to 15 per cent

Delhi Airport gears up for the fog season to ensure continuity of flight operations during Low Visibility Period (LVP). I Prabhakara Rao, CEO, Delhi International Airport (DIAL) and Marcel Hungerbuehler, COO, DIAL, tell more.

KANCHAN NATH

GMR Group led Delhi International Airport (P) Limited (DIAL) along with Air Traffic Control (ATC) and MET Department announced its preparedness for the fog season at the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA).

Sharing his advice to travellers, I Prabhakara Rao, CEO, DIAL, said, "My fundamental requests to you all, when you are touching Delhi, please see weather report first. That gives you good information and you can plan well. Secondly, rest assured that this airport is well-equipped to handle fog. However, you all need to understand when it comes to zero visibility; none of us can do anything. Please look at the weather report and when there is an expectation of dense fog, kindly try to manage your travel according to that."



I Prabhakara Rao  
CEO  
DIAL

For the first time, runway 09/27 is equipped with three Runway Visual Range (RVR) devices, which allows flight departures upto 400 meters of visibility. MET office has installed 15 RVR devices at Delhi Airport and three new Drishti RVRs will soon arrive as reserve RVRs for Runway 10/28.

The operator has also increased the parking bays configuration at Terminal-2 Apron area where the number



Marcel Hungerbuehler  
COO  
DIAL

of parking bays has now been increased from 21 to 28 for different aircraft types. In conjunction with ATC, DIAL has also introduced Pre-Departure Sequencing tool as part of Delhi Airport-Collaborative Decision Making (DA-CDM).

The three runways – 28, 29 and 11 – at the IGI Airport are certified for CAT III B operations, which would allow landing of the compliant air-

crafts with visibility as low as 50 metres.

Talking about the growth, in terms of the number of passengers at the airport, he added, "Compared to 2014, on average arrivals have grown by about 12 to 15 per cent. Domestic growth has been higher at 22 per cent and international is about 17 per cent. In 2016, I am expecting a growth of six to seven per cent. Since aviation is doing well, it augurs for good growth."

Marcel Hungerbuehler, COO, DIAL said, "Over the last 12 months we had 45 million passengers using our airport and also the numbers of flights have steadily increased. We actually had a new record with 1116 flights in one day. This is quite an increase, and the highest numbers of passengers in one single day, has now exceeded 150,000."

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25 Oct. 2015 – 8 Dec. 2015	CZ360/359	A330-300	N.A.	30 seats	47 seats	196 seats	273 seats
9 Dec. 2015 onwards	CZ360/359	A330-200	4 seats	24 seats	47 seats	141 seats	216 seats



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# GST will ease doing business

Goods and Services Tax (GST) will offer reprieve to a highly taxed tourism industry, provided it is capped at a lower rate. **U.K. Joshi**, Director, ASSOCHAM, talks about the implications of GST for the tourism industry.

 **KANCHAN NATH**

Though the implementation of Goods & Service Tax (GST) will remove multiple taxation and bring ease of doing business, everyone is a bit skeptical about the rate at which it will be capped. Joshi says, "The expected quantum of tax between 17 and 27 per

try), and various taxes on transportation. In addition, these tax rates tend to vary across different states in the country."

As far as tourism is concerned, the lower tax policy is being followed by most of the countries across the globe to promote tourism. However,

few countries also levy high taxes on tourism activities to generate revenue. Talking about the best policy for GST so as not to impede the growth of the tourism sector, Joshi says, "GST will offer reprieve to a highly taxed tourism industry, provided it is capped at a lower rate. Currently, the taxes are high and India has not been able to attract

tourists unlike the neighboring countries, where the tax burden on tourists is low. GST regime will definitely make doing business easier and reduce paper work for companies, but taxes should be capped at 10 per cent. When the tax rate is high, it will negatively impact the revenue model of the companies."



**U.K. Joshi**  
Director  
ASSOCHAM

GST regime will definitely make doing business easier and reduce paper work for companies, but taxes should be capped at 10 per cent

cent will be rather high for the industry. The hospitality sector could be impacted after GST because it would appear that the total cost has gone up. Currently, while service tax at abated rate of 4.944 per cent (5.6 per cent after June 1) and VAT at 12.5 per cent is levied on restaurant bills, after GST, one could see a much higher percentage of 24-25 per cent (whatever the decided rate is) being charged on the bill."

Travel and tourism in India is a highly taxed industry, which makes India expensive as a tourist destination. This is affecting the growth of the industry in India and the country is losing out to other low-cost destinations. Inbound tourism is the one most affected.

Talking about multiple taxation in the industry, Joshi says, "Various taxes are levied across the entire industry right from tour operators, transporters, airline industry to hotels and these include Service Tax, Luxury Tax, tax on transportation, tax on aviation turbine fuel (airline indus-

## E-boarding at Hyderabad airport

**Ashok Gajapathi Raju**, Union Minister for Civil Aviation, recently inaugurated E-boarding facility at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA), Hyderabad, for all domestic passengers. The E-boarding solution fully eliminates the need to manual stamping of boarding cards even for physical boarding cards issued by CUSS (Common Use Self Service) machines or the check-in counters. Further, it covers end-to-end all the key passenger processes at the airport viz. starting from entry to terminal and including check-in, security check, boarding gate and finally the boarding bridge check before entering the aircraft. Developed in-house, the E-boarding Solution by GMR Hyderabad

International Airport Ltd. (GHIAL), is the first end-to-end e-enabled boarding solution. RGIA is the first airport in India to have this facility. After getting the approval from Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) under the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) in August 2015, GHIAL implemented the E-boarding process for all domestic passengers at RGIA. With this, the airport has embarked on providing a whole new experience to the domestic passengers. The innovative end-to-end E-boarding process has triggered a paradigm shift in air passenger handling process in the country, making Hyderabad Airport a pioneer in the field of technology enabled Airports in India.

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# Industry calls for stronger policy

► Contd. from page 3



The Tourism Policy of 2015 projected India as a Must Experience and a Must Revisit destination. To ensure this, it is imperative to seriously consider showcasing India as a safe destination. We need improvement in infrastructure; streamline taxes levied on tourism products, which are sometimes levied twice; uniformity in services provided by multiple providers and have checks in places to ensure all service providers meet basic guidelines. In 2016 we will promote ourselves as a major Destination Wedding company.

**Vijay Dadhich**  
Managing Director, Blue Moon Travels



The government plays a pivotal role and should consider reinstating tax policy 80HHD under the Income tax Act; reduce the taxes on hotels and harmonise inter-state taxes for tourist vehicles. This would make the destination more competitive compared with other Southeast Asian countries and make travel industry more lucrative for new entrepreneurs, creating employment and innovation in our industry. We plan to introduce destinations like Brazil, Peru and Argentina for outbound travel.

**Vikas Abbot**  
Managing Director, Vasco Travels



Indian travel industry faced a tough time amidst worldwide fear of terrorism and political unrest. It's very crucial to have a strong policy from the government to take tourism forward in such tough times. Inbound tourism was on a lower end in 2015, and we really have to work hard to see the growth in 2016. Strict policy decisions on safety, cleanliness and easy visa regime must be the priority for the government and they must market this to the world to make India a safe tourism destination.

**Ravi Gosain**  
Managing Director, Erco Travels



The National Travel and Tourism policy establishes an achievable goal of increasing jobs by attracting and welcoming 20 million international visitors, who we estimate will spend \$50 billion annually, by the end of 2021. India can achieve this goal in 2016 and beyond by promoting the country better, and enabling and enhancing travel and tourism to and within India.

**Surpal S Deora**  
Director, Maxxfun Holidays



New recommendations from the Tourism Board; critical intervention and support from the government in the form of the eTV and other priority issues; and the successful implementation of policies, will strengthen and benefit the industry greatly and contribute to making India even more attractive to the world – this is what we look forward to. Our significant focus will be on contributing to marketing and promoting India as the finest travel and tourism destination in the world.

**Mario Habig**  
Managing Director, Le Passage to India



By 2016, about 40 million travellers are expected to visit India. Corporates are setting up their offices leading to increase in the travel. VFR (Visiting Friends and Relatives) is bound to pick up pace and increase outbound travel. Not to forget medical tourism on a steady move attracting more and more people to come to India and undergo treatments and procedures. Destination weddings add to inbound travel in places like Goa. The top 3 destinations for 2016 will be Thailand (Krabi/ Phuket/ Bangkok).

**Swati Gandhi**  
Co-founder, BookMyTravel Worldwide

Contd. on page 15 ►



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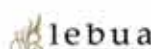
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# Better connectivity: route to success

► Contd. from page 12



In 2016, the travel industry can expect to see an increasing growth in mobile users, further strengthening the need for travel businesses to have mobile responsive sites and apps. The need to have travel insurance is increasingly being felt among the Indian traveller who is more aware about exigencies that may arise during any trip. Personalised products and services, perpetual touch points between the service provider and traveller, and frictionless purchasing will characterize the traveller's experience in the future.

**Dev Karvat**  
Managing Director, TrawellTag Cover-More India



In the last couple of years many interesting travel start-ups have been launched in the offline as well as online space across the country and these would influence the industry in a positive manner in 2016. Mergers and acquisitions will continue and we will witness further consolidation. In terms of business growth, based on the current economic indicators, I feel it will continue to remain subdued.

**Haresh Koyande**  
Founder and Managing Director, World Travel Studio



The online users are on a rise and can book air tickets and hotels directly. The use of credit cards is gaining confidence. Domestic and international tourism boards are publishing offers with prices mentioned, which deprives the travel agent to sell by adding service charges. Airlines are announcing their cheapest offers, which again are by-passing the agents. IRCTC is another strong competitor to travel agents to offer all inclusive domestic tours. The introduction and increase in Service Tax is affecting the trade.

**Om Prakash**  
Director, InORBIT Tours



Travel and tourism industry contributes nearly 7 per cent to India's GDP and is expected to experience a growth of 8 per cent in 2016. We are expecting the government to bring in vital tax reforms across the country to help tourism, improve current state of economy and position India as a globally competitive tourist destination. Our main agendas for 2016 would be to increase awareness about cruise holidays in India with the help of increased number of trade partners.

**Kunal Sampat**  
Managing Director, MSC Cruises



The government, in cooperation with various state tourisms, is continually coming up with innovative plans to cater to this continuing stream of tourists. Infrastructure still remains the most important impediment in realising the high potential that the tourism industry holds for India. Hopefully in 2016, we will surely inch much closer to realising our endeavour to provide reasonably good accommodation options, better transport network, more tourist centres and safe and clean surroundings for tourists.

**Dr. Sumita Misra**  
Principal Secretary, Department of Tourism Government of Haryana



We are working towards improving infrastructural facilities in Delhi. There are many new projects in the coming year and initiatives like the 'Every Other Day' Adventure Park. With the city hosting performers like Zubin Mehta and A R Rahman, we expect more travellers in the coming year.

**Kapil Mishra**  
Minister of Tourism, Delhi

Contd. on page 16 ►

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# Aiming for the sky in 2016

► Contd. from page 15



We are very optimistic about the market's potential for future growth, particularly as customers become more discerning. British Airways recently launched its state-of-the-art Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner connecting New Delhi and London. British Airways will continue to improve services for customers rolling out more new aircraft across its worldwide network as deliveries continue over the next three years. We are constantly evaluating routes across our network and keep making appropriate changes as the markets demand.

**Moran Birger**

Regional Commercial Manager-South Asia, British Airways



The year 2016 looks very positive for the industry. Year 2015 was phenomenal, though there was huge competition. The new government has just established itself which is a big change after 10 years. So there was a little bit of impact and ups and downs in the market. However, it was quite good for our business.

**Sachin Nene**

Regional Manager - India, Air Arabia



2016 looks promising for the aviation industry in India as we expect 2016 to carry forward the optimism of 2015. Last year was an important year as we saw the emergence of some new domestic carriers, which improved connectivity within the country. The plans of making India an MRO hub in Asia is an optimistic step as it will put India on the global MRO map and ensure maintenance of domestic carriers in India itself.

**Sajid Khan**

Country Manager, India, South African Airways



Due to a clear lack of new and substantial developments, the demand-supply ratio is getting skewed in favour of supply. Apart from some over-supply in markets like Delhi and Bengaluru, we shall see a sharp turn in hotel rates.

Adding to this the aggregators who are creating new markets and demand for more weekend travel with their aggressive prices. The opening of new private airports and the trend of PPP in transportation and unlocking of land at state levels for industry and development will lead to higher demand.

**Amit Dholakia**

Managing Director, Orritel Hotel



We hope the present political turmoil will settle down and progressive measures like the GST will be passed in parliament, as this will further boost the industry. From an inbound perspective, the image of India has improved overall. India is also fairly peaceful and not in the thick of the terrorism discussions, so a general sense of safety exists. India also has the opportunity to project our efforts and success stories in the sustainable tourism space.

**CB Ramkumar**

Founder & Managing Director, Our Native Village



2015 has seen a few paradigm shifts in the tourism industry as a whole. Backpack holidays, increase in last minute bookings and budget accommodation are amongst the few trends that were witnessed this year. 2016 seems to be a promising year in travel with the government extending e-visas facility to a number of countries. Overall, 2016 has tremendous potential especially for the domestic market with the increasing number of International travellers on account of the diminishing value of the rupee.

**Amit Agarwal**

Senior Marketing Manager, Hotels.com

Contd. on page 18 ►

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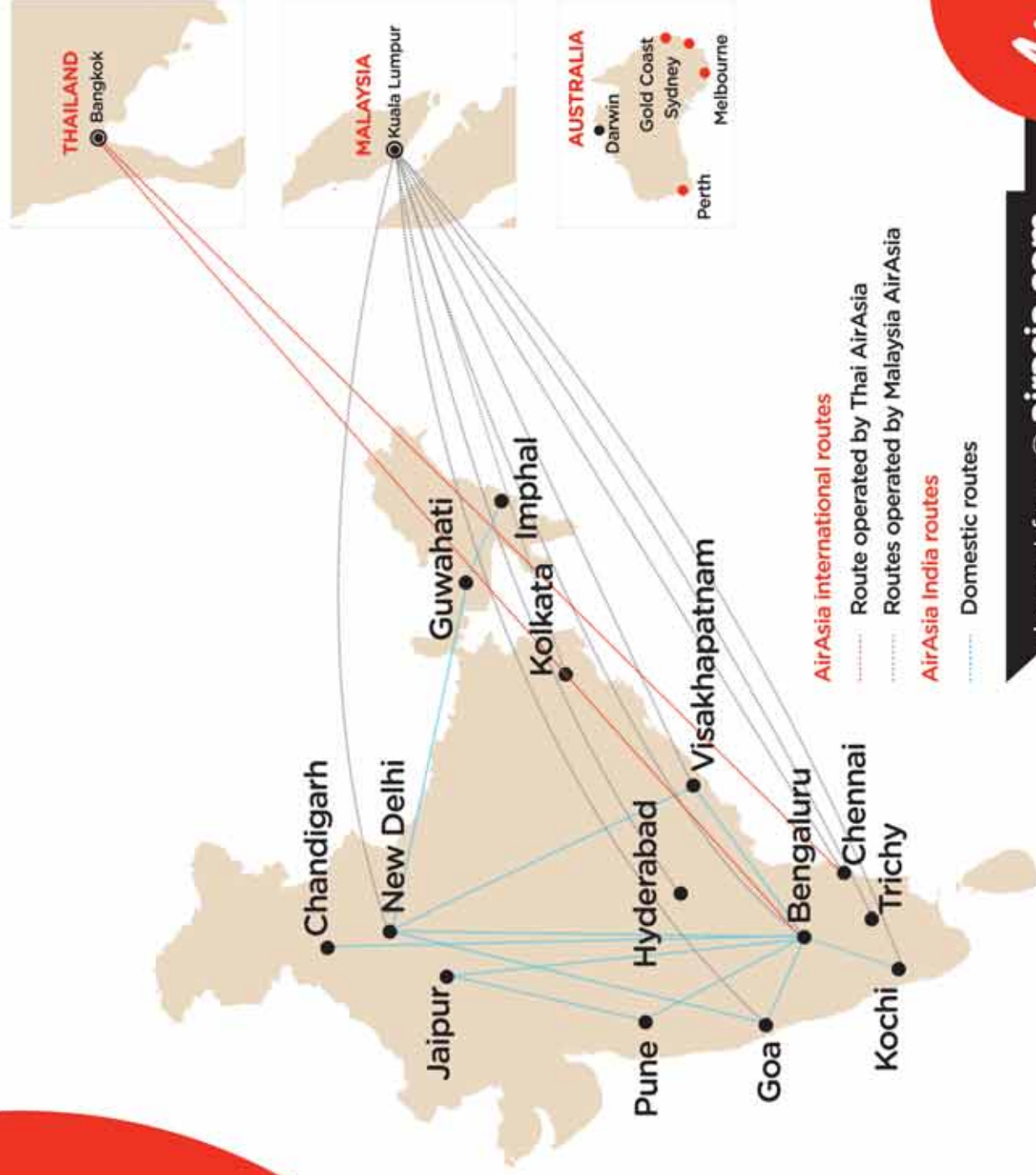


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# Technology: buzzword for 2016

► Contd. from page 16



To start new ventures in Tier-I and Tier-II cities will be our growth model. Qualitatively, adding facilities to our resorts and targeting specific groups of weekend and women travellers, attracting talent to our human resources will be given priority. Challenges will be to monitor high energy costs by efficient use of EMS, by implementation of green practices. To tackle high capital costs, poor infrastructural facilities and scarcity of land for new projects, and issues of safety and security are of permanent importance.

**Dilip Ray**

EC Member, FHRAI CMD, Mayfair Hotels and Resorts



We hope that the coming year is a peaceful one around the globe as unforeseen events in any part of the world affect tourism worldwide. Japan is great as a destination because of the currency ratio of yen and dollar. Similarly, with India's e-visas rules and successful campaigns like the Incredible India campaign, it's safe to say that India is fast becoming the top destination on tourist's map.

**Atul Lall**

VP Operations and GM  
The Claridges Hotels & Resorts



India is poised for financial harmony and if continues on its current trend it is in an excellent position to attract more events with the success of recent events and constant efforts of the government and ministries. Our current trends point out Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore as the top three destinations for the coming year.

**Davinder Juj**

EAM, Rooms and Business Development  
Eros Hotel, New Delhi



Judging from past trends, 2016 will continue to be an extremely robust year for the market. Our focus on our tech savvy traveller continues and will be on top priority for 2016 facilitating and encouraging web check-ins. The top 3 destinations for 2016 will be Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Thailand.

**Ranju Alex**

General Manager, Goa Marriott Resort & Spa



As per a Google report, consumer confidence to do online hotel bookings is on the rise in India, with an estimated 8.4 million Indians likely to book hotels online by 2016. The online hotel booking industry will be worth \$ 1.8 billion from the current \$0.8 billion. The growth of

Internet has also opened up new opportunities for hotels to market their products through various other platforms, including their own website, online travel agencies (OTAs), etc. The top 3 destinations for 2016 will be Ladakh, Sikkim and Bhutan.

**Shashi Razdan**

Director of Sales & Marketing, Golden Tulip Hotels



In 2016, we anticipate higher growth in Ludhiana with rising occupancy and Average Daily Rate (ADR) than 2015. Restrained supply growth has helped us in Noida and we expect to be busier and more profitable in 2016. Like last year, RevPAR growth will continue marginally.

**Sonica Malhotra Kandhari**

Director, MBD Group



At the industry level, prospects look bright as the vital economic parameters are stable and showing upward trend. This augurs well for the overall growth of hospitality industry. In 2015, new initiatives by the government like easier loans for hotel industry, e-visas have been taken. Consolidation of room aggregators which came in a big way also helped the cause of the industry though some operators felt differently. We at Lords Hotels and Resorts established ourselves with e-booking channels and grew majorly on these by almost 40 per cent.

**Rishi Puri**

Vice President, Lords Hotels & Resorts



Gurgaon's hospitality market has demonstrated a strong performance in the past one year despite addition of more inventories and considering economic parameters looking positive Vivanta by Taj, Gurgaon expects a buoyant 2016. With the opening of other new hotels in Gurgaon the demand grew at a healthy pace but since the supply growth was relatively higher than expected it created pressure on room rates. However it didn't have any large scale impact on us since our guests belong to the cosmopolitan business segment that travel in and out of Gurgaon and are looking out for a strategic location to stay at.

**Sumeet Taneja**

General Manager, Vivanta by Taj, Gurgaon



With the Pune Government's focus to turn the city into a 'Smart City' by 2016, we expect speedy growth and development in the city's infrastructure. In the upcoming year, we also look forward to stronger implementation of government policies, such as GST, which shall nurture the hospitality industry. However, apart from steady increase in hotel rooms in city, increase in tax structure in terms of Service Tax in June 2015 followed by Swachh Bharat Cess in November 2015 played a major challenge, as it became difficult for hotels to justify the same to our customers, especially in the price driven market like ours.

**Bandish Mehta**

General Manager, Novotel Pune

Contd. on page 20 ►

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# Rise of India outbound

► Contd. from page 18



In the past five years, the growth of Indian tourist arrivals to Korea has increased by over 70 per cent. Korea is now becoming India's top priority in terms of a new destination. 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 look forward to seeing an increase in tourist arrivals from India in 2016.

**Byungsun Lee**

Director, Korea Tourism Organisation



With increasing economic growth, we are expecting a potential growth in domestic, leisure and MICE travel in the coming year which will in turn boost revenue from a tourism standpoint and help propel India's economy. We also believe that the government is making the right moves and announcements like eTV facilities which will help the tourism industry flourish.

**Deepika Arora**

Regional Vice – President, Eurasia Wyndham Hotel Group



The tourism industry has grown leaps and bounds in 2015. Recognising the industry and its stalwarts through establishment of regional awards is also very inspiring. Number of Indian travellers to Canada has been on the rise. We hope to achieve double digit growth by popularising Canada as a great leisure and MICE destination. The simpler visa processing under the CAN+ program and direct connectivity between Delhi and Toronto will also encourage more travellers to Canada.

**Sanjeet**

India Representative, Destination Canada



I feel eTV has been one of the biggest achievement for the travel and tourism industry in India. In 2016, we should enhance our top source markets like the US and visit larger parts of the US and identify the markets where work still needs to be done. PATA organised Indian Tourism Business meets in various destinations like Montreal, Huston, Chicago and Canada. In Europe destinations like Zurich need attention, where as Frankfurt and Vienna have been good. In 2016 we should focus on business development.

**Runee Sangha**

Executive Director, PATA India Chapter



India is a promising market for not only Munich but also incoming for Germany as India is one of the faster growing markets. Munich Tourism continues to record a consistent upward growth, year-on-year and saw growth in the number of visitor arrivals from India during Jan–May, 2015 recording a 22.4 per cent increase over same period in 2014. The upsurge and double-digit growth validates that Indian tourists are looking at exploring Munich and hopefully the outbound market from India will continue to grow for the benefit of many destinations.

**Ashish Saran**

Account Head, Munich Tourist Office, India



The year 2015 has been a great one for us as the market saw a positive growth with a rise in occupancy levels and ADRs. The overall market has seen a 10 per cent growth in terms of occupancy. The bifurcation of the state has also gone a long way in increasing occupancy levels. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) bill as and when introduced is expected to help the hospitality industry favourably.

**Madhav Bellamkonda**

General Manager, Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach

## Sharjah targeting family tourists & MICE

Sharjah is working towards promoting itself as a family-friendly destination to attract more travellers from India, which is its one of the top two markets.



TT BUREAU

Counting India among the top two markets with the most potential after China, Sharjah has been consistently investing increased effort and money in the market. Having conducted many annual multi-city roadshows in India, the last one concluded in December 2015, the Sharjah Commerce & Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA) has made it clear that it is looking to attract families and MICE.

**H.E. Khalid Jasim Al Midfa**, Chairman, Sharjah Commerce and Tourism



**H.E. Khalid Jasim Al Midfa**  
Chairman  
SCTDA

Development Authority (SCTDA), said, "Sharjah has a lot of culture and heritage to offer. In 1998, UNESCO announced Sharjah as the cap-

ital of Arab culture. In 2014, we became the capital of Islamic culture and in 2015 the League of Arab States made us the capital of Arab Tourism. So we are a complete family destination.

"The emirate has seen double-digit growth in the last five years. In 2014, we recorded 41 per cent increase in terms of numbers of Indian hotel guests at 123,000. So there is huge scope. We already get a lot of traffic from VFR and business travellers and now we want more families and MICE," he added.

"All seven emirates complement each other with

each of them offering something unique. Travellers can see seven different destinations with a single visa. We are not very commercial but we are increasing our marketing efforts. This will be our third roadshow within a year, because we want to be present in India round the year," Midfa said.

The recent four-city roadshow was conducted in association with Air Arabia to develop a closer relationship with key members of the travel industry and promote both the airline and the destination's tourism offerings. ✈

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# Canada hosts Mumbai trade partners

Destination Canada organised a dinner reception at the InterContinental Marine Drive Hotel to thank the trade for their continuous support and to introduce Destination Canada's new Regional Managing Director Rupert Peters.



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# Philippines: Perfect for great Indian weddings

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# GPS 2016 takes the green route

The Global Panorama Showcase (GPS) will now cover a total of five cities starting with Nagpur and reap the benefits of being the first show of the year. It will also showcase the global launch of a product—an international cruise liner.



HAZEL JAIN

Nagpur-based Jagsons Travels is setting the stage for a bigger Global Panorama Showcase (GPS) in 2016. Starting from just one city in its first edition, GPS 2016 has grown to cover five cities, starting from Nagpur from January 8-10, 2016 and then travelling to Coimbatore (South) on July 14-15, followed by Kolkata (East) on July 21-22, Chandigarh (North) on July 28-29 and finally Ahmedabad (West) on August 4-5, 2016.

**Harmandeep Singh Anand**, MD, Jagsons Travels, says, "We are at an advantage this year as GPS 2016 will be the first event of the year. It offers great opportunities for exhibitors as well as buyers. We are planning to have an equal number of exhibitors as last year at 100-plus. We will also host 150 buyers bringing them from feeder cities by tying up with coach companies. For international buyers, we

are in touch with both our airline partners."

This year will see a host of pre- and post-tours to Pench, Kanha, Tadoba, Navegaon and Nagzira that offer excellent sightings. Anand added that this year will also see the global launch of a product—a cruise liner, which is almost double the size of Star Cruise Virgo. "We are positioning ourselves as an event that can do global launches. This will be unique to GPS. TravTalk is our premium media partner along with TravelTV. Starwood will again be our global hotel partner, Centrepont Hotel will be our venue partner, and Lavasa will be present as well," he adds.

## Hosted buyers

He expects good participation from South East Asia and the Middle East in the fourth edition of GPS from DMCs and local operators. This edition will not have any presentations or business sessions on B2B days but January 7, 2016 will see about five



**Harmandeep Singh Anand**  
MD  
Jagsons Travels

We are planning to have an equal number of exhibitors as last year at 100-plus. We will also host 150 buyers bringing them from feeder cities by tying up with coach companies

workshops of about 45 minutes each for various tourism boards and others who are interested. "We are expecting about 500 attendees in Nagpur and have been aggressively promoting the event through regular mailers, online and social media creatives, advertisements in media, and of

interact with the local buyers and the second day will have corporate meetings along with a networking evening," Anand clarifies.

## Green expo

The format for this edition has also been tweaked. GPS has rebranded itself this

year. "The central India region needs a lot of exposure and their products. Buyers will also get a goodie bag worth ₹3,000 for registering in advance, we will have lucky draws and lots of prizes that can be won during the show," Anand says.

"The central India region needs a lot of exposure and

## Jagsons to announce NGO Tourism at GPS

Harmandeep Singh Anand, MD of Nagpur-based Jagsons Travels, that organises and promotes Global Panorama Showcase (GPS), has said that his company will announce the launch of NGO Tourism. "There are many Indians, specially NRIs and PIOs, who want to return to India and contribute to the welfare of their countrymen. Even foreign tourists want to come here and want to work with an NGO. To cater to this segment we plan to launch a unique concept of NGO Tourism which is probably the first of its kind in the world, at this year's GPS 2016 on January 8 morning in Nagpur. This is the first time that anyone will be focusing on this niche tourism," Anand said.

course word of mouth. The other four cities will have select exhibitors with a ratio of 1.5:2 in terms of buyers that we will host. These buyers will be from surrounding areas of the respective cities like Patna, Bhubhaneshwar, Darjeeling and Gangtok for Kolkata. The first day will allow exhibitors to

year with a new logo in olive green. This, Anand says, is to showcase that the event is gradually going green. So there will be no standees and no brochures or leaflets. "We are in talks with a company to offer tablets to our exhibitors that they can use to showcase

that is what we are trying to do with GPS. The number of agents in Nagpur has grown to more than 300 and this provides a lot of opportunities to not only DMCs and representations but also hotels and large tour operators who have fixed departures," adds Anand.

## A promising long-haul market

Scandinavian Tourism Board organised the annual three-city Scandinavian Seminar, which included a delegation of 20 Scandinavian partners.



AHANA GURUNG

In a bid to engage the Indian travel trade and provide a platform to network with Scandinavian professionals from Denmark, Sweden and Norway, the annual three cities Scandinavia Seminar 2015 took place in full-swing in Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai. The delegation at the seminar included national tourism boards, regional tourism boards, hotel chains, museums, airports, cruise and voyage companies, along with DMCs, who travelled to Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai to help boost the number of Indian tourist arrivals to the region.

**Mohit Batra**, India Representative, Scandinavian Tourism Board, comments, "The seminar received participants that included members of senior management, product managers, business owners and front line executives. There was an opportunity to explore possible business alliances, new product development and renewing past relations. Our aim is to raise awareness of the



**Mohit Batra**  
India Representative  
Scandinavian Tourism Board

Scandinavian region at large—but also raising awareness of what each individual countries of Denmark, Norway and Sweden have to offer," he said. He further added, "Denmark this year has witnessed an increase of 30 per cent on overnights from India, and Sweden approximately 15 per cent on an already higher overnight base. Norway is not yet taking account of the Indian overnights but the growth seems to have been exponential," he says.

Speaking at the occasion, **Per Hotle**, Market Director Tourism, Asia and New Markets, Innovation

Norway, says, "Norway has 13 different UNESCO heritage sites to offer and is blessed with a plethora of natural wonders such as fjords, archipelago, the famous northern lights, the midnight sun, and a variety of Nordic cuisine that would definitely appeal to the Indian market," he says.

**Lotta Thiringer**, Regional Director Growth and Development Markets, Visit Sweden, says that bednights in Sweden are rapidly increasing. "India is the third biggest long-haul market for Sweden, after the US and China," she says. "We expect to see a minimum 15 per cent increase in the number of Indian tourists arriving by the end of next year," she added.

**Flemming Bruhn**, Director, Visit Denmark also said, "We witnessed an increase of 30 per cent of Indian tourists in 2014-15. I think we will see very good figures next year as well and expect at least a 20 per cent growth."

## Cyprus seeks trade ties

Cyprus is looking to work with major Indian tour operators for promotional activities. January 2016 will see a delegation from Cyprus Tourism Organisation for an orientation.



HAZEL JAIN

The Mediterranean island of Cyprus has not been very active in the Indian market but it wants to remedy that in the new year by collaborating with major tour operators to promote itself as a tourism and MICE destination. It has already tied up with Thomas Cook with whom it will create packages. **Demetrios A. Theophylactou**, High Commissioner at Cyprus High Commission, reveals, "In our effort to market Cyprus in India effectively, we have to create some partnerships with major tour operators here. So we have partnered with Thomas Cook and are exploring other opportunities as well."

He adds that Cyprus is not looking to attract the masses but instead tap select segments like MICE and special interest tourism like sports, adventure and film shoots. "We are open to tying up with other tour operators who can provide sufficient numbers in terms of

quality and quantity. Thomas Cook has already covered some distance and we are happy with their strategy. They



**Demetrios A. Theophylactou**  
High Commissioner  
Cyprus High Commission

will be entrusted to market Cyprus in India by focusing on specific profile of travellers such as corporate and HNIs," he adds. Cyprus Tourism Organisation will pay an orientation visit in January 2016 to study the market first hand.

"Visas are the least of the problems. Our focus is to increase numbers through quality tourists. The current figures are too low – around

2,000 in 2014. India has been neglected for too long so we have trained our focus here. While we don't have any direct flights at the moment, air connectivity is not too bad with many connecting flight options. We are working on improving this, of course," Theophylactou said.

He reveals that while Cyprus works together with Israel, Egypt and Greece to promote combined packages in other parts of the world, it has not done it in India as yet. "We will work with both Egypt and Israel in India soon. We want to have a trilateral co-operation," he says.

## Looking Ahead

➤ Cyprus received about 2000 Indian travellers in 2014

➤ There are no direct flights to Cyprus but there are many connecting flight options





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# Neptune Foundation's charity polo match

Neptune Foundation, an NGO committed to the cause of the girl child and the aged, hosted a polo match at Jaipur Polo Grounds, New Delhi. This was the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the annual event. The Chief Guest for the noble event was **Ratan Watal**, Finance Secretary-Government of India, and **Sanjana Jon**, renowned fashion designer and social activist, was the Guest of Honour.



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# A fascinating tale of grit and glory

Credit for this occasion goes to Ankush since it was his idea. After working hard for years, today I have no regrets because I have achieved what I wanted and through this biography, I want to share my experiences with all of you. I am extremely proud to have children who are taking it to greater heights.

**BL Nijhawan**  
Founder, Nijhawan Group



In commemoration of Bansi Lal Nijhawan's extensive contribution to the travel industry, the Nijhawan family organised a gathering and launched his biography 'Bansi Lal ka Jahaaz' on December 13, 2015. The event was attended by the who's who of the travel industry from across the country and abroad. Penned by Mrinalini Patwardhan Mehra, the biography is an account of B.L. Nijhawan's journey to success—from his life in the Royal Air Force during the Second World War, to transitioning into a thriving businessman. The book recounts the experience of his days in the British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC), now British Airways, with various anecdotes that he deems important in shaping his life, and the trials and tribulations in his career which eventually led to success and expansion. Here are what various industry leaders have to say about the man who pioneered the overseas-travel industry:



My father is a person who sets rules for himself and believed that everything under the sky was achievable for him—nothing is impossible. He has always been someone who puts importance on evolving with the changing times and always stuck to his decisions. He says set your goals, work hard with discipline and you will achieve them, maybe a little later but you will always get there. His simplicity and love for work is his driving factor.

**Sham Nijhawan**  
Chairman, Nijhawan Group



I'm delighted to know about the contribution that B.L. Nijhawan has made to the travel industry since 1946. His deep-rooted commitment to bring integrity, discipline and setting of high standards are commendable. I send my best wishes on the book launch with his experiences penned down that will be a great guide for others in the industry.

**Letter from Dr. Mahesh Sharma**  
Minister of State for Culture and Tourism  
(Independent Charge) and Civil Aviation

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When I had just joined the tourism industry, I had no idea how to run a travel business. B.L. Nijhawan was the first person who visited me in my office to see how I was doing and offered help, if I ever needed any. He gave me his blessings and since then, he has always tracked my progress.

**Guldeep Singh Sahni**  
Managing Director, Weldon Tours and Travels



Bansi is humble and hardworking, and a good human being. Being straightforward, he would meet every travel agent himself to talk about business and offer help. Even the agents knew that when it comes to business, Bansi is the person to speak to. That is the kind of reputation he has in the industry.

**Kapil Bhatia**  
Executive Chairman, InterGlobe Enterprises



I first met B.L. Nijhawan in Jalandhar and he was representing British Airways during the time. I have always been inspired by his honesty and integrity and he's worked very hard to build an empire for himself and his successors.

**Subhash Goyal**  
President, IATO



It has been a privilege working with B.L. Nijhawan. Even at the age of 90, he has so meticulously provided minor details and dates of his life with such clarity. His passion for learning never ends—even now, he has been attending classes on how to use smartphones and laptop; that's Mr. B.L. Nijhawan for you.

**Mrinalini Patwardhan Mehra**  
Author



Currently, we don't have a proper framework in the industry where we can document the achievements of stalwarts in a structured manner, so I think it was a brilliant move to get this done. Such documentation is important to record the contributions of various leaders so that the next generation learns from them.

**Kapil Kaul**  
CEO—India and ME, CAPA



The idea of documenting his life came from an aunt sometime in late 2014. It struck as a very good one since how many people can say they have actually lived to observe so many changes in the industry? It took almost a year to complete this and I think the wait was worth it.

**Ankush Nijhawan**  
Managing Director, Nijhawan Group



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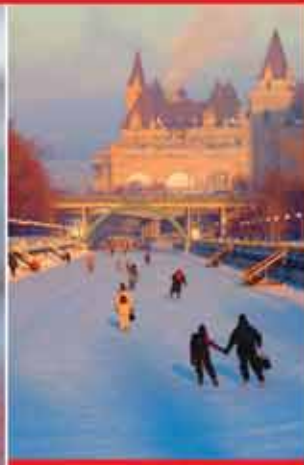
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**DESTINATION**  
**CANADA**





# Redefining travel commerce solutions

Addressing some of the latest innovations from InterGlobe Technology Quotient (ITQ), Anil Parashar, President and CEO, talks to **TRAVTALK** about ITQ's top priorities and gives an outlook on the tourism industry.



AHANA GURUNG

Anil Parashar is jubilant about their accomplishments in 2015, which range from bagging awards to celebrating the first anniversary of Travelport's Rich Content and Branding.

## In focus

So, what will be ITQ's top priority in 2016? "Our focus on developing technology will continue and we will definitely provide some new products," says Parashar. "We will continue to bring Interglobe synergies by value-addition in different businesses that we are in, get them together, and offer customers services beyond GDS." One of the initiatives ITQ is giving key importance to, is the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by the company. Parashar elaborates, "We are increasingly focusing on the development of trade and giving back to the fraternity. For this purpose, close to 300 young women are being trained to become travel experts and counsellors with the help of NGOs and are also promoting skill development with the assistance of various trade associations across the country. In brief, we are mainly concentrating on the development of the less fortunate for their benefit, as well as the industry," he says.

## Technology talk

Of late, talks of a new payment solution for airlines called eNett VANS using Travelport Smartpoint have been making the rounds. "Virtual Account Numbers (VANS) is a payment forum supported and owned by Travelport," says Parashar. "It is a very convenient tool for travel agents and the travel fraternity. It provides a secure payment mode at a lower cost and reduces the risk of fraud since a unique number is used for each new booking or payment transaction," he adds. VANS are automatically generated MasterCard numbers that agents can use to make secure payments. "At the moment, it is not available in India but it is only a matter of time before it is," he clarifies. "The fact is that such innovations will give an impetus to other partnerships to build such products and bring ease of travel to the customers. Technology will bring new dimensions of development." Other products like ITQ's Trip38—a travel app that guides you at every stage including when your phone is

off, since it is linked to the airport systems; and Travelport's Rich Content and Branding—a solution provider that allows airlines to effectively market and retail their offering to travel agencies around the world; are actively contributing in redefining travel commerce.

## Point of view

In Parashar's opinion, the Indian tourism industry's future


seems promising. "India has the youngest population, high disposable income, and while the middle class is bound to double in another five years, the industry is in the cusp of major growth. Strategies such as Make in India and Swachh Bharat, are contributing to the development of the industry in a major way," he concludes.

"We are increasingly focusing on the development of trade and giving back to the fraternity. For this purpose, close to 300 young women are being trained to become travel experts and counsellors and are also promoting skill development with the assistance of various trade associations across the country."


Anil Parashar

President and CEO, InterGlobe Technology Quotient (ITQ)






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# Tier-II, III: promising markets

Anubhav Bhan, Director of Sales & Marketing, Radisson Blu Hotel Indore, talks about the hospitality market in the city and the new initiatives by the property.

TT BUREAU

Radisson Blu Hotel Indore is currently the only internationally branded 5-star hotel in the city and this remains the hotel's biggest strength and USP. Bhan says, "Apart from being the only internationally branded hotel in Indore, our dining options, which offer options between a multi-cuisine buffet, specialty Indian dining experience, fine dining Chinese experience or a cozy atmosphere of our lobby bar remain our USP. The hotel's rooms are the most luxuriously and tastefully designed rooms in the city. The hotel also retains the position as a preferred venue for any MICE requirements in the city, due to availability of flexible and ample convention space."

In Indore, there is a huge gap between demand and supply, with supply outstripping demand by almost 50 per cent. Bhan says, "As the economy of the city is fast growing, there is growth in every sector, pharmacy, manufacturing, agriculture, FMCG, sports, automobiles etc."



**Anubhav Bhan**  
Director of Sales & Marketing  
Radisson Blu Hotel Indore

We are working towards better waste management and power conservation project

The initiatives for 2016 of Radisson Blu Indore, would revolve around two subjects – enhanced service levels and conservation of environment. Bhan says, "We are currently working towards better waste

management and power conservation project. This enables us to control our costs as well as continue to work towards energy conservation pledge."

Indore, historically has not been a leisure destination, thus, demand from travel trade sector has always been limited. "In the era of online travel agencies, increase in investment by the tourism ministry to promote tourism in the state over last few years there has been a steady growth in the segment. This will especially be visible during Simhashta 2016. We are forecasting a growth of 12 -15 per cent in leisure segment for the year 2016. The majority of this growth will be via religious tourism due to Simhashta, proximity of Mandu and Maheshwar to Indore etc. This segment primarily moves through travel agencies either online or traditional agencies. Thus, hotel's team enjoys very healthy relations with most of the major operators of the city and India in travel trade segment," adds Bhan.

# RezLive's new avatar

To provide a better booking experience, RezLive.com has gone through a makeover and added a variety of new features, inventory and interface.

TT BUREAU

With offices in 19 countries and over 15 years of experience in the industry, RezLive.com, the global B2B online booking system has taken a leap forward and made drastic changes in UI, architecture and technology to provide its users the best B2B online booking system. It now offers 175,000 hotels and apartment rooms, more than 45,000 sightseeing items, over 5,000 tours in 500 cities and 5,000 transfer options in over 900 airport and city locations across the globe.

Speaking on the initiative, **Jaal Shah**, Group Managing Director, Travel Designer Group and Founder, RezLive.com, said, "We have been consistently providing the best and biggest inventory to the travel partners globally, by sourcing them through multiple suppliers and collaborating with hotel chains across the globe. We give our travel partners the platform to create their future and prosper together."



**Jaal Shah**  
Group Managing Director, Travel Designer Group and Founder, RezLive.com

We consistently provide the best and biggest inventory to the travel partners globally, by sourcing them through multiple suppliers

Some of the innovative features that have been included in the new system are express search option, filters

to optimise search, quotation templates, option to compare hotels, larger inventory with mapped information, coupon codes, agent dashboard analytics, multi-currency payment gateway, apart from many others. Now, travel partners can register free of cost and with a larger inventory, global travel needs will be met throughout the year. What's more, assistance from a multilingual team and real-time online booking confirmations at competitive wholesale rates are some of the additional benefits of the upgraded RezLive.com.

## Upgraded Inventory

RezLive now offers 175,000 hotels and apartment rooms, more than 45,000 sightseeing items, over 5,000 tours in 500 cities and 5,000 transfer options in over 900 airport and city locations across the globe

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# Swiss Travel Pass SuperStar

## The winners take it all!

*Yet another triumphant Swiss Travel Pass SuperStar campaign, season 3!*

Switzerland Tourism, Swiss Travel System and Rail Europe jointly initiated this campaign to promote, spread awareness and enhance the knowledge of Switzerland

and various Swiss Travel System Passes amongst Travel agents and Tour operators. The success rate was high, with 855 people registering for it. Selection was on the basis of monthly quizzes

as well as the number of Swiss Travel Passes sold during that month. With so much effort and dedication, these winners definitely deserved their prize(s).



Monthly prizes consisted of iPhone, iPads and iPods or Bucherer watches which were distributed during events held in Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata. A treat for many of the winners was receiving a monthly prize as well as the Grand trip.



The cherry on the cake - a 6 nights / 7 days all-expenses paid trip to Switzerland. In early December 2015, 30 successful and lucky performers got to explore some of the most beautiful places in Switzerland. There were three groups of ten participants each and they visited Basel-Lucerne-Interlaken or Lucerne-Davos-Zurich or Lucerne-Zermatt-Zurich.



In Lucerne, an excursion to Mt. Rigi followed by a Gala Award Ceremony made it a perfect day with fun and adventure. It was a grand celebration with participants from all around the world - Brazil, China, GCC, South-east Asia, Australia and India. On Mt. Rigi, there was not only snow but also folklore music and activities



like painting small wooden cows and giving a shot at the Alphorn. In the evening, the Award Ceremony was graciously held in Stadtkeller and ended with lucky draw of Bucherer watches.



### TESTIMONIALS

Mr. Sanu Mathew, TUI, Mumbai

"It was wonderful to be part of the Swiss superstars fam trip. It made us explore offbeat city like Davos along with the regular tourist centric cities of Lucerne and Zurich, which was in a way great learning experience. Big thanks for all involved for the superb arrangements made to make this a great success. It was truly memorable time spent with such a fantastic group."

Ms. Shalini Kalani, NCS Travels & Tours Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata

"I had a great experience during my visit to Switzerland. I was very impressed with the ease our tours were arranged. The accommodation & meals were excellent as well. We were pampered right from the beginning to the end. I also got to meet some amazing people and we shared some very special memories. My heartfelt thanks to Switzerland Tourism for arranging such a wonderful & well-organised trip & for giving us the opportunity to be a part of them. It was truly a memorable & unforgettable experience!! :-)"

Ms. Anchal Rastogi, Make My Trip (India) Pvt. Ltd., Delhi

"My first trip to Switzerland & that too fully sponsored by STPSS was an amazing experience. I really loved the way itinerary was organised with education & leisure both in perfect combination. We covered the unexplored regions /museums/ mountain excursions/cruises/ tasted Swiss food...it was just so wow! Swiss looked so amazing and beautiful in December that it just made our experience more memorable. The icing on the cake was the Gala event. I have never seen an official event organised on such a large scale abroad in such a fantastic manner."

I am glad that I participated in STPSS contest...every effort made towards the same was worth it!"

Ms. Aakriti Tripathi, Nomads Holidays, Nagpur

"This was my first time to Switzerland. I was a bit scared when I was coming that it would be too cold and I won't be able to enjoy. But, it was very beautiful and enjoyable."

Mr. Devendra S. Solanki, Euro Tours Destination Management Company Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai

"The trip was excellent. The experience of Zermatt, a car-free city and the Matterhorn, which is the highest peak in Switzerland, was excellent. Best of the experiences we had thanks to Switzerland Tourism and Swiss Travel System. Swiss Travel System (STS), the best way to explore Switzerland, valid on trains, buses, boats and trams. It's the best way to enjoy your journey and the scenic beauty of Switzerland. Please do not forget, a special note - always be on time. If you are not there then you will miss your train to your destination."



## Getting familiar with Fiji



Tourism Fiji with Fiji Airways recently hosted eight travel agents from five different cities for a Fam trip to Fiji. The group travelled to different regions and islands in Fiji and stayed at properties popular in the Indian market. Apart from site inspections, the itinerary included various cultural activities and experiences that sets Fiji apart from other beach destinations

## Time to get tech-savvy

Spokespersons at the Travelport e-evolve Middle East Summit, at the Shangri-La Bosphorus hotel, in Istanbul, Turkey, highlight trends in the industry.



KANCHAN NATH

**Niklas Andreen**, Senior VP & MD, Hospitality Commerce, Travelport, spoke about redefining hospitality. He said, "As travel agencies evolve, whether there are OTAs or traditional travel agencies, more and more hotel business is becoming important for them; also rental cars to provide a seamless experience to guests. So, we at Travelport have dedicatedly added on more hotels in the space. For every 100 airline tickets that we sell, we have 48 hospitality bookings or segments. 63 million hotel nights is going to be booked by our travel agencies through our system this year.

**Allison Bell**, Director, Sales, Mobile Travel Technologies (MTT), elucidated on redefining mobile. "India is an extremely interesting market. It is moving from e-commerce to mobile commerce. It has a lot of mobile utilisation penetration. India has had some very interesting payment aggregations,



**Niklas Andreen**  
Senior VP & MD  
Hospitality Commerce, Travelport

much ahead of Europe as well as the USA."

Giving few trends to better business for agents, she said, "Payments are a big thing, making payments as easy as possible and as integrated as possible is definitely at the top of everybody's agenda, because you want to get that conversion rate up. It's about looking at big data, looking at understanding the customer, and predicting analytics; trying to build a story around what is that the customer going to want next. It's about how a supplier, how an airline, how a travel management company, or how an OTA,



**Allison Bell**  
Director, Sales, Mobile Travel Technologies (MTT)

actually is engaging with a customer through mobile. It's about how you use the technology and have an instant way of communicating with the end customer, the traveller."

### Changing Landscapes

- Travel agencies relying on hotels and cars to grow business
- Shopping behaviour in hotel space is moving from lowest price to value of hotel property and location

## Wellness in the wild

Kanha Village Eco Resort will increase working with travel agents and increase its online presence.



TT BUREAU

**K**anha Village Eco Resort is an eco-friendly, semi-luxury wildlife lodging facility, situated in the village Boda Chhapri in the buffer zone of Kanha Tiger Reserve. Keeping in mind the philosophy of sustainable and socially responsible tourism, the property has been developed in ethnic style, with locally available bio degradable materials. The hotel is the only resort in Kanha preserve which offers ethnic dwellings with all required modern amenities.

"We are focusing on creating awareness on eco-wildlife tourism in domestic and inter-



**Navneet Maheshwari**  
Owner  
Kanha Village Eco Resort

national market. Responsible eco-tourism guidelines are followed to its best in working of the resort. Along with wildlife safari we arrange jungle walk, bird watching, village visit, Yoga/ Meditation programme, etc., as per interest of guests," says **Navneet Maheshwari**,

Owner, Kanha Village Eco Resort.

Guests can enjoy, relax and rejuvenate in natural surroundings by doing jungle walks, yoga, meditation and healthy food along with jungle safari. We have a games room, conference hall (for 40 people), TV lounge, library, massage room, souvenir shop, swimming pool, etc. to cater to tourists, he adds.

Maheshwari notes that the resort has seen increased online booking through OTAs. "Safari booking is done 90 to 100 days in advance so we suggest travel agents dealing in wildlife tours to plan well in advance," he says.

Maheshwari cites inbound, young generation as a growing market. However, he emphasises on more exposure to wildlife and eco-friendly tourism. "We need options to market eco and wildlife tours and eco friendly properties exclusively as it is a niche market," he adds.



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# Industry needs to capitalise on PM visits

Indian tourism industry has a new supporter in Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose overseas trips are bringing the country's attributes into focus. It's now up to the industry to maximise this favourable situation. **M.P. Bezbaruah**, Permanent Representative (Hon.), UNWTO, puts things in perspective.



INDER RAJ AHLUWALIA

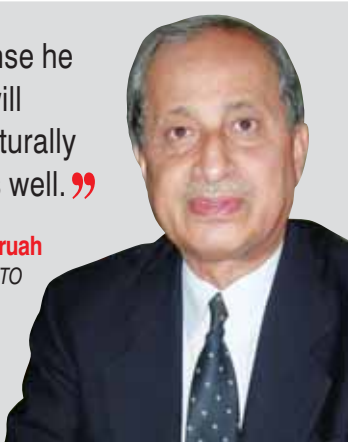
**Q**Would you agree that the Prime Minister's foreign visits have done good for Indian tourism?

While the Prime Minister (PM)'s overseas visits are useful, until now their value has been somewhat limited. During this year, foreign tourist arrivals to India have actually declined, which underscores the fact that tourist arrivals require much more than high profile visits. Also, it's clear that the impact of such visits may not be seen immediately and need time to fructify. An excellent start has been made, but one has to build on it. There's no doubt about the fact that Mr. Modi's visits have been more extensive and more high profile than perhaps any other Prime Minister we can remember. Such visits and the positive response he has been able to elicit everywhere will create more interest about India. Naturally there will be a spin-off for tourism as well.

“Such visits and the positive response he has been able to elicit everywhere will create more interest about India. Naturally there will be a spin-off for tourism as well.”

**M. P. Bezbaruah**

Permanent Representative, (Hon.), UNWTO



**Q**How important have the visits been for Indian tourism?

That depends on a number of factors like what the PM is focussing on, how important the countries visited are in terms of their outbound tourism, and what focus the local media in those countries are giving to the visits. All these factors play a key role. The PM has spoken to Parliamentarians in the UK. He has spoken eloquently in the

United Nations Headquarters. And he's addressed other forums overseas. These events must have created greater awareness and interest about India. There will be follow-up visits resulting from such interests. But the impact will be only marginal, because tourism is not central to his interactions.

**Q**Where do you see the maximum gain from these visits?

The most striking parts of some of the visits have been the PM's interaction with the NRIs and his ability to excite and motivate them about India. The response has been phenomenal. From a tourism point of view NRIs are a major part of the inbound tourism segment. However, if the PM could persuade each of the NRIs to influence at least five of his foreign friends to visit India,

that will lead to a quantum jump in tourist arrivals.

**Q**Would India's emerging status as a business centre help generate tourism?

We can see that the PM's focus has been on business, investment in India and the like. India is again seen as a rising economic power and with great investment potential. As a result there certainly will be increase of business travel. But that will also be marginal.

**Q**What follow-up steps have to be taken in order to capitalise on the visits?

Tourism is not high on focus in the Prime Minister's visits. That is rather unfortunate because he is known as a patron of tourism. The Ministry of tourism and the industry could leverage these visits to great advantage. They have to become more pro-active so that they find a place in the scheme of things. They must

request the PM to accord them higher priority, and to mention tourism more prominently in his speeches. Moreover, he should portray tourism as a business opportunity.

The Ministry and the industry have to jointly mount intensive publicity campaigns and media briefings etc in those countries, synchronising with the visits. They should take advantage of the tremendous goodwill created by the PM's capacity to reach out to the people. Like the industry and business delegations that either accompany the PM, or visit coinciding with the official visit, tourism industry delegations must be part of the entire planning. This would provide a huge boost.

The situation is clear! The PM's overseas visits and speeches have provided Indian tourism with a potent weapon. How much dividend is gained will depend on how this weapon can be exploited. 🐦

## 92,000 unique properties

roomsXML.com has introduced 11 innovations that have set it distinctly apart from its competitors since its launch in 2007. The innovations are market driven and developed to enhance user experience, efficiency and profitability.



TT BUREAU

Talking about the USP of the company, **Prakash Bang**, Managing Director, roomsXML Solutions, says, “We are totally concentrated on B2B engagements and are accommodation-centric.” Bang explains that the year 2015 has been excellent for the company and says, “Despite a little slowdown at a global level, roomsXML.com has been growing steadily. Our year on year for the last three years is at 55 per cent. The inventory that we offer has been at the highest level. Currently roomsXML.com offers 92,518 unique properties across the world. These properties are genuinely unique as each hotel or apartment appears only once due to the uniqueness of our system's de-duplication technology.”

Discussing the response to the company from the travel and tourism industry, Bang



**Prakash Bang**  
Director  
roomsXML Solutions

says, “The response to our company from the industry has been more than overwhelming. Standing testimony to this is the fact that we do not offer any credit facilities neither do we sell our inventory below cost. Our growing revenues prove that travel agents are backing our system which signifies their trust in our product and services that we offer.”

Talking about the special deals for travel trade partners, Bang explains,

“As we do not work to achieve set sales targets, we invest in product innovation and support systems. With that in place, more revenues come our way. We introduce time bound, destination specific deals every now and then for our travel trade partners.”

In 2016, roomXML plans to continue to enhance its products. Elucidating the same, Bang says, “We are not introducing any new products in the coming year but will be working on product development and user-experience enhancement. We are looking at more product innovations and sustainable growth in 2016.”

Expressing the expectations from the tourism industry Bang says, “We hope that the travel and tourism industry will work on making travel safe and enjoyable for all.” 🐦

## Meant for leisure

Ivy Kwan, Vice President, Sales & Marketing, Asia Pacific, One&Only Resorts, explains the brand's portfolio and reveals its plans in this region.



TT BUREAU

**Q**Kindly explain the portfolio of One&Only.

Kerzner International is our parent company, and within the portfolio, we now have nine resorts. We started in 2002, and it grew with destinations in Mauritius and Dubai, that's where our global office is located. We also have resorts in Bahamas, Mexico and South Africa. We recently re-opened One&Only Palmilla in Mexico and the iconic One&Only Ocean Club has commenced renovations. It's important for us to grow our portfolio but it's equally important for us to choose the locations that are unique.

**Q**When will India have a One&Only property?

I would love to be in India. We love this country, and I think it is a natural progression to be here. India has some beautiful spots in the world. We are essentially a management company. We look for owners who love quality and who can



**Ivy Kwan**  
Vice President, Sales & Marketing  
Asia Pacific, One&Only Resorts

make our level of investments. Then, we also need to ensure the unique locations that One&Only resorts is known for, which are also there in India.

**Q**Who are your clients?

We basically are dealing with the leisure market. We have couples celebrating anniversaries and birthdays and families are huge for us. We have a special thing called Kids Club where, across all our resorts, we offer an entire day of activities to the kids. There is an educational component to the experience

and that is unique to every single of our resorts.

**Q**How many Indian guests do you get each year?

The number of Indian guests varies across each market. In locations such as Dubai and Mauritius we see a higher percentage of Indian guests. However, in locations like Bahamas and Mexico, we get a smaller percentage of Indian clients.

**Q**How closely are you working with travel agents?

We are working very closely with travel agents. They are our lifeline. Without our trade partners, we wouldn't be where we are today. The trade partners in the Indian market are an integral part of the business landscape. It is important for us to secure the distribution. Now that we have them, there is the part of educating them of what One&Only is all about so that they, in turn, can articulate what the brand values are. 🐦



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# Bringing travel consultancy to the forefront

TRAVTALK spoke to **U Gary Charlwood**, Board Chairman & CEO, Uniglobe Travel and **Ritika Modi**, Regional President, Uniglobe Travel, to find out more about the company's growth story.

**KANCHAN NATH**

**Global Business Travel Trends**

Talking about the changing trends of business travel, Charlwood said, "Technology is at the foot of all this. Business travellers can research the multiple avenues of how they conduct their travel. There was a time when the corporation made the decision, but now the individual wants to have the flexibility of making his/her own decision, which is a problem for the corporation from the cost perspective. So, one of the roles

turnover of all these agencies is currently over 3000 crore and I believe that the number will be more than double in the next five years." She added, "We as a group have grown by more than 16-20 per cent internationally. In domestic we have grown by about 10 per cent in terms of the volume of business that we've done. And it may not have been because of the same generic business but because

of the corporate accounts we've added. When it's the downturn, we look at the opportunities we can get out of that situation and I believe that it's this time when we can go and talk to customers and show them how better we could help manage their travel spend."

**Rupee fluctuation**

With reference to the fluctuating value of the rupee,

she said, "If I look at the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) study, I see that the total travel market for India is 25 billion. So there are lots of corporations, which are growing. I believe there have been certain number of corporations that are looking to travel. They may have downsized, for example in the class (instead of travelling first; they may now be travelling business class).

However, there has been a little bit of restraint and cost cutting in terms of the number of trips that they would make. But this also means that we have to pick up more corporate accounts on the other side. So we have seen that the Uniglobe system is growing in terms of number and volumes. However, attrition is always there, which is normal. But a lot of corporations have also reduced their

travel spend as compared to previous years."

**Fact File**

- Uniglobe has over 40 agency owners at 55 locations in South Asia
- Gross annual turnover of these agencies is over 3000 crore



**U Gary Charlwood**  
Board Chairman & CEO  
Uniglobe Travel

of the travel agent is to make sure that they blend both these opportunities to the satisfaction of both the individual and the corporation and technology facilitates that."



**Ritika Modi**  
Regional President  
Uniglobe Travel

**Bringing expertise to the table**

The demand for expertise in any field is growing and the trend seems to be consistent with business travel as well. **Ritika Modi**, Regional President, Uniglobe Travel said, "Business travel in India is changing dramatically. Mostly corporate companies are not looking at just order takers, but more at consulting and expertise. And they want people to analyse and guide them better. So travel consultants have to be better prepared and move away from being order takers."

**Uniglobe growth story**

Currently Uniglobe has 40 plus agency owners with more than 55 locations in South Asia. Modi added, "The gross annual

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FITUR Spain, 20<sup>th</sup> Jan



BIT Italy, 11<sup>th</sup> Feb



TTE UK, 24<sup>th</sup> Feb



BTS UK, 24<sup>th</sup> Feb



MITT Moscow, 23<sup>rd</sup> Mar



UITT Ukarine, 30<sup>th</sup> Mar



Connections LUXURY Italy, 3<sup>rd</sup> Apr



AITF Azarbaijan, 7<sup>th</sup> Apr



COTTM China, 12<sup>th</sup> Apr



SITT Russia, 14<sup>th</sup> Apr



KITF Kazakhstan, 20<sup>th</sup> Apr



CXSRITE China, 22<sup>nd</sup> Apr



Connections MEETINGS Spain, 29<sup>th</sup> May



Connections LUXURY Thailand, 19<sup>th</sup> Jun



BITE China, 24<sup>th</sup> Jun



LA CITA USA, 30<sup>th</sup> Aug



Connections MEETINGS Europe, 18<sup>th</sup> Sept



ASTANA LEISURE, Kazakhstan, 21<sup>st</sup> Sept



JATA Japan, 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept



Connections LUXURY Brazil, 16<sup>th</sup> Oct



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# Manoharan bids adieu

Saying goodbye is never easy, especially after 15 years. But **Manoharan Periasamy**, Director of Tourism Malaysia in Mumbai, is leaving by end of 2015 with fond memories of India and the people he met here, specially the travel fraternity.

**HAZEL JAIN**

## QHow does it feel to be leaving India?

It is difficult for me to say goodbye to India after 15 years of calling it my home, to wake up one day and not find myself in Mumbai but in Kuala Lumpur. It still has to sink in because there is a lot of attachment. I have worked only nine years in the head office but 15 years abroad. It's a different culture back home – more bosses and bureaucracy. Here, I was free to do a lot of things while referring to the head office. So fitting in with the local culture in Malaysia will be a challenge.

## QHow was your experience here?

People ask me how I survived here for so long. It was very difficult for me initially, with setting up the India office. But I told myself that somebody needs to do this job and take one day at a time. Just enjoy the stint here and do your best. So in order to make things easier and be accepted by the people, I decided to dance along with them – whether it is bhangra, Kathakalli or the lungi dance! And it worked. I was accepted by the travel industry wholeheartedly.

## QHow was it working with the trade here?

The relationship I have built with the trade over the years is based on trust and both sides honour that trust. The trade, especially the travel associations, have given their wholehearted support to Malaysia and assured its inclusion in their packages. I am extremely grateful for this. For instance, in 2003 during the SARS threat, we saw a lot of cancellations. TAAI was on the verge of cancelling their convention in Malaysia but they still went ahead. Hats off to the industry for the confidence they have shown in me. They never

considered me a foreigner; many of them even spoke to me in Hindi. Their acceptance level was very high and that made my journey here very smooth and easy.

## QAny advice you want to share with the incoming director?

I have learned that one needs to massage people's ego here. Also, it is a

good idea to have a plan B because it is difficult for people to say they don't know something. But I always tell expatriates that if you come here thinking that you can't trust Indians, they can't expect to be trusted by them. The new person will also take over as the Chairman of ASEAN Promotional Chapter for Tourism (APCT)–India Chapter.

“The trade, especially the travel associations, have given their whole-hearted support to Malaysia and assured its inclusion in their packages.”

**Manoharan Periasamy**  
Director of Tourism Malaysia in Mumbai



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## Global Hospitality Conclave dates announced

■ Global Hospitality Conclave will take place on 8th January 2016 at The Leela Ambience Gurgaon Hotel & Residences. The conclave would serve to be a useful lever and a strong platform for participants to project their capabilities and opportunities to the industry elite from across the global hospitality spectrum.



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# Now book charters online

The new online marketplace for private charters by Baron Aviation allows agents and tour operators to offer a new value-added service for their clients.

TT BUREAU

Mumbai-based Baron Aviation has launched an online platform called BookMyCharters to book private jets and helicopters that integrates about 12 operators currently who have listed 40 aircraft. This allows travel agents and tour operators to offer a new service to their clients. **Rajeev Wadhwa**, Chairman and CEO, Baron Aviation, said that it will reach out to segments like celebrities, politicians, corporate, HNIs and inbound traffic through various channels including tour operators and tie-ups with hotels. "This new initiative will bring aircraft owners and users on a single platform. We have dedicated dashboards of aircraft owners and operators, making us the only platform to have this. BookMyCharters has a live feed about availability with instant quotes – not estimates. The portal is mobile-friendly and there is no charge for registration."

He added that the company plans to tap end travellers through tour operators and trav-



**Rajeev Wadhwa**  
Chairman and CEO  
Baron Aviation

el agents soon as they provide access to a ready market. "This is a user-friendly and quick tool to book a private jet that automates several manual processes and crunches multiple variables through our advanced algorithms to reduce the entire process of searching and quoting an aircraft in as much time and ease as it takes to book an airline ticket online," he said.

BookMyCharters expects to grow the existing market by 30 per cent, bringing in new customers especially from non-metro cities and inbound traffic that can book and pay online. "The total charter market cur-

rently stands at ` 1,800 crore and expected to grow to ` 5,000 crore by year 2020. We already have 12 operators with 40 aircrafts right now and will be bringing onboard five more operators with 10 aircrafts in total. We will have pan-India presence and operational in all seven hubs," he said. The company also plans to reach out to mature markets like America and Europe and emerging markets like Africa in the coming years, either directly or by engaging partnerships with local players. Some of the key features of BookMyCharters include — option to select aircraft, book and pay online, confirmed bookings, assigned concierge post booking, and 24x7 availability.

**Key Features**

- Option to select aircraft, book and pay online, confirmed bookings, assigned concierge post booking, and 24x7 availability

# ICPB's new governing board elected at 28<sup>th</sup> AGM

■ **Chander Mansharamani** of Alpcore Network Travel & conferences Management Company, was elected as the new Vice-Chairman of India Convention Promotion Bureau, at the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting at Hotel Samrat, Chanakyapuri, on December 21, 2015. **Amresh Tiwari** from A T & Seasons Vacations Travel, is the new Honorary Secretary of ICPB. The Immediate Past Vice-Chairman was **Captain Swadesh Kumar** of Shikhar Travels (India). The election for the governing board of ICPB happen every alternate year, and this year it was held under the supervision of **D. Venkatesan**, Assistant Director General (TT) as Returning Officer. ICPB is a management oriented organisation that has been promoting and establishing India as a preferred MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions & Exhibitions) destination. The Chairman of ICPB is automatically the Joint Secretary, Tourism, Government of India – **Suman Billa**.

The rest of the members in various categories are as follows:

**Active Category:**

- ❖ Hotels: Saurabh Bhargava from Taj Hotels Resorts & Palaces
- ❖ Airlines: No valid nominations were received
- ❖ Travel Agents: Gunjan Suri from Thomas Cook India and Naveen Chibber from Orient Express
- ❖ Tour Operators: Ajay Vinayak from Palomino Hospitality and Vineet Batra from Eastbound Tours & Travels Private Limited
- ❖ Congress/Convention Centres: Sudeep Sarcar of India Exposition Mart Ltd (IEML)
- ❖ Professional Congress /Convention Organisers: Amit Saroj of Attitude Events
- ❖ Professional Exhibition Organisers: Sanjay Soni of Incredible Design

**Allied Category:**

Avinash Browne of Sun Business Machines Pvt. Ltd. and Ripudaman Singh Chauhan from Translink Express



**Chander Mansharamani**  
Vice Chairman  
India Convention Promotion Bureau



**Amresh Tiwari**  
Honorary Secretary  
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# Industry's take on single window clearance

Relaxed event licensing norms in Delhi and Mumbai are a win-win situation for the events and experiential marketing industry. The announcement assures all the permissions required from the state government through one window only. TRAVTALK spoke to industry experts to find out how worthy this move is for the travel fraternity.



VAISHALI DAR



With the state governments in Delhi and Mumbai becoming aware of the difficulties and problems faced by events and entertainment industry in getting

clearances and with the assurance that they will set up a single window clearance system, it is a welcoming move and step that will bring events and shows of international standards to the two metros. It will also attract international companies to hold events. We also expect the fear of last-minute cancellations, due to police clearances, to be taken care of.

**Guldeep Singh Sahni**

President, OTOAI & Managing Director, Weldon Tours & Travels



Single window is a major step ahead, with far reaching benefits for all parties concerned. Single-window licensing process will bring in benefits in terms of effectiveness and value. It will bring in greater transparency, cost effectiveness and equal opportunities for companies, bringing direct benefit for clients also. It will also take care of red tapism, stringent licensing process and corruption. This empanelment will make events an organised line of business for Delhi and Mumbai in the longer run and may also attract substantial inbound event business.

**Syed A Asim**

Executive Director, Borton Holidays



This is definitely a positive step towards making both the cities – Delhi and Mumbai very attractive destinations for events. This will provide structured and time bound process to obtain approval from nodal agency – avoiding last-minute stress and uncertainties, which usually deter most of the large event companies undertaking quality events in cities since international clients are increasingly requesting suppliers to offer guarantees in the areas of deliverables and compliance.

**Amit Aggarwal**

Managing Partner, Wish Bone India

We welcome the stand taken by EEMA to create a single-window licensing process for events and are delighted to know that the Government is supporting them in this initiative. This is a good initiative that will be beneficial for both the public and private partners. Also the change in the entertainment tax depositing framework for EEMA members is a big boon to the industry and number of ticketed and corporate events in the city will see an increase. There will also be a drastic change in the cost that will be incurred in organising events.



**S D Nandakumar**

Head Special Interest Tours, Tour Operating- Kuoni India

Holding large scale events in big cities like Mumbai and Delhi was a big hassle before as the taxation policies for these events had a tedious and a lengthy process. Hence, corporates always preferred doing their events in smaller cities. But now the government of these cities have joined hands and done a collaboration with Event and Entertainment Management Associations (EEMA) to solve and resolve these issues, lot of these problems have been rectified by streamlining the process, by starting the 'single window licensing. It is a win-win situation for the companies and travel agents handling events.



**Rashmi Pisal**

Associate Director MICE & Leisure Travel, Harvey India Tours & Travels Pvt Ltd

# Room aggregators reach out to agents

Online accommodation reservation services like OYO Rooms, ZO Rooms and Room on Call are changing the face of the online hotel booking segment of the Indian hospitality industry. TRAVTALK finds out their association and benefits for the travel trade.



ANKITA SAXENA

The Indian hotel industry is estimated to touch \$1.8 billion by 2016, up from a current total size of \$800 million, according to a report from ICRA. The share of online hotel bookings is 16 per cent of the total hotel bookings currently and is expected to reach 25 per cent in 2016 which implies that around 8.4 million Indians are likely to book hotels online by 2016, up from 3.5 million in 2014.

The deepening penetration of Internet usage and smartphones has led to increased booking of hotels through online portals and applications in recent times. Online accommodation reservation services like OYO Rooms, ZO Rooms, Room on Call are gaining popularity. These budget hotel room aggregators are revolutionising low-cost accommodation in India with on-the-go

room booking facility using technology.

Travel agents form an important sales network for all budget hotel room aggregators. Discussing the associa-

tion with agents, **Kavikrut**, Chief Growth Officer, OYO Rooms, says, "We have tied up with more than 2000 travel agents and consider the network an important source of corporate, leisure, and pilgrim travellers." Adding to the importance of the travel agent

agents benefit as we have a vast network of 30,000 rooms spread across 140 cities, across various categories. A large inventory is offered to them and easy availability of rooms ensures a hassle-free

agents who sell an added inventory. Chouhan explains, "We provide our agents with best commission rates and they in turn, value the trust and business quality offered to them. We offer them the reach and product quality which helps them acquire more and more customers." Kavikrut adds, "We have exciting offers and deals running, at regular intervals, for travel agents and for corporate companies doing bulk bookings with us like an exclusive 'Bangkok Chalo' offer for travel agents booking bulk room nights with us through which if travel agents met a certain criterion we gave her/him a free trip to Bangkok."

clocking an occupancy of over 95 per cent in better-performing pockets and over 80 per cent overall." Kavikrut adds, "Hotel partners typically see their occupancy increase from as low as 20 per cent to as high as 90 per cent post the partnership. While this automatically increases the revenue flow, we also enable them to earn alternative revenue streams."

The hotel room aggregators target different segments of the hospitality industry. **Pradeep Sajjan**, CEO, Room on Call, explains, "There is a huge inflow of foreign travellers in India who come for medical and leisure tourism to India. We have marketing initiatives which are planned in different languages according to the countries." Chouhan adds, "As we cater to all kinds of travellers, our target groups vary in demographics. In case of Zostel, almost 80 per cent of our consumers are international."



**Kavikrut**  
Chief Growth Officer  
OYO Rooms



**Dharamveer Singh Chouhan**  
CEO and Co-founder  
Zo Rooms



**Pradeep Sajjan**  
CEO  
Room on Call

tion with agents, **Kavikrut**, Chief Growth Officer, OYO Rooms, says, "We have tied up with more than 2000 travel agents and consider the network an important source of corporate, leisure, and pilgrim travellers." Adding to the importance of the travel agent

agents through regular meetings, conferences; arrange demo and property showcase rounds with them."

Talking about the benefits to agents and hotels which partner with the aggregators, Kavikrut explains, "Travel

booking process even in the case of bulk bookings. OYO assigns them an account manager which is the single point of contact for everything related to bookings."

Attractive commission rates are an incentive for

Discussing the marketing plans and initiatives to increase occupancy and RevPar, Chouhan says, "We work towards revenue maximisation of each property, and use techniques like dynamic pricing. We see the average price and demand elasticity and are





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Hyderabad	21 January, Thursday	10:00 - 14:00	The Park Hyatt
Mumbai	22 January, Friday	10:00 - 16:00	The Palladium



# Face of the Future: Dev Karvat

Not one to shy away from a challenge, Dev Karvat, Founder and CEO, TrawellTag Cover-More, India, aspired to build a unique and innovative business, which led him to start a travel assistance services company.



HAZEL JAIN

## Two mantras that worked for me

To hit the road leading to success, one has to be driven by a clear sense of purpose and passion. Also, I believe that one cannot take this journey alone. Hence, having a culture of collective ownership in the team and converting your vision into the group's vision is extremely crucial.

## How I got into this business

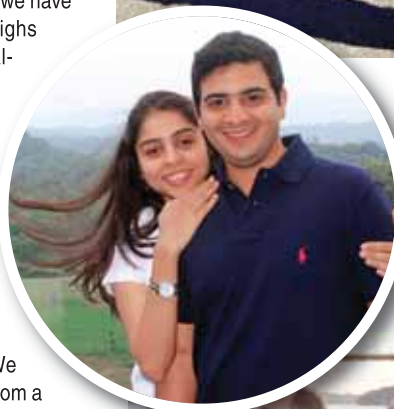
There were basically two things that really inspired me to get into this business—one was to build a unique and an innovative business and the other, to make a difference.

ence to as many lives as possible. My aspiration enabled me to come up with the idea of starting a travel assistance services company, which was a very nascent concept back then. Also, hailing from an insurance dominating family background gave me the opportunity to understand the travel insurance business in a better light and evolve it to suit today's requisites.

## My struggles

It has been a journey of discovery and learning. Like any other business, we have had our share of highs and lows. The challenges were enormous like any growing business had to face, right from the perception of the customer to the operational issues that emerged from time-to-time. We

have grown from a small enterprise of a mere 10 people in a single-office to a full-fledged MNC with staff strength of 500 in across 57 branches in India over a period of 10 years. Our partnership with Cover-More, world's leading dedicated provider of travel insurance and medical assistance



has propelled our growth and goodwill. I feel very fortunate to have been part of this ever evolving industry for the last 15 years and to have been accepted by all the

lovely people of this industry.

I enjoy my work because...

## Message to the youth

I learned early in my career that it's not only the desire to succeed that drives you toward your goals but it's the hard work and commitment that takes you to the next level. I would like to urge the younger generation to never let success get on to their head because if you think you have achieved your greatest success, you clearly have decided to stop pushing yourself.

The travel industry is fascinating and colourful. Travel makes people's dreams come true. So being in this industry enables us to be the caretakers of travellers. We are constantly developing new and innovative

protection products, which is exciting. It brings us a sense of achievement when we see TrawellTag Cover-More launch a fantastic new offering into the market. With this in mind, I can say that I don't have one favourite aspect of my line of work—I have many.

## My biggest motivation

When you are following your passion, you actually don't need a better motivating factor to keep you going. As for people, my biggest motivation has been my beautiful wife and my entire team who have stood by me like a rock in this long but exciting roller-coaster ride.

Dev Karvat won the Face of the Future Award at the 2014 West India Travel Awards

# Fitur 2016: sustainably renewing tourism

The Fitur Green 2016 Forum will feature success cases, initiatives, projects and real experiences to show how the tourism management of the destinations, from a perspective of sustainability and local development, leads to an improvement in their inhabitants' quality of life and favours economic stimulus.



TT BUREAU

The International Tourism Fair, Fitur, the Instituto Tecnológico Hotelero (ITH) and the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) are organising a new edition of Fitur Green, which will take place as part of Fitur from January 20 to 22. Under the banner of 'Innovative and sustainable management: a commitment to the tourist,' the seventh staging of this forum will have as its keystone subject the renewal of tourism according to criteria of sustainability and social responsibility.



Directing the tourism industry towards sustainability is a necessary step not only in

reducing the environmental impact of their activity but also in positioning destinations and

businesses to enable them to meet the needs of a tourist profile that is increasingly aware

and who is no longer content with receiving a quality service but is also interested in having their stay make the least possible impact on the environment. This is why sustainability is an issue in which the different tourism agents have to become involved, both in the public and in the private sphere.

All of these issues will give shape to the Fitur Green 2016 programme, which will be divided into thematic areas, one for each session: 'Nearly-zero-energy

hotels, the potential for change'; 'The business return of sustainability: the domino effect'; and 'Renewables as the sustainable driving force of tourism.'

In addition, during its staging, Fitur Green will hold the '2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Thinktur / ITH Club for Trends in Sustainability and Energy Efficiency,' which will attract the presence of the heads of the sustainability and energy efficiency area of hotel chains, hotel SMEs and independent hotels.



# Outbound travel gains momentum

The winner of the Entrepreneur of the Year at the West India Travel Awards, 2015– Aparna Basu Mallik, CEO, Club7 Holidays shares the latest trends in the industry.

TT BUREAU

## QWhat is your agenda for 2016?

Club7 Holidays will continue to have its standard group departures and other products across leisure and MICE with a few popular additions in terms of new itineraries, new upcoming destinations and newer attractions.

## QTell us about the USP of Club7 Holidays?

We believe in honest and transparent prices. Club7's biggest forte is customer care. Our passengers have grown year on year. There is always a sense of loyalty.

## QWhat are the factors to choose top destinations in 2016?

As far as the factors to choose the destinations are concerned, a sense of security is involved. Also the cost of currency, diverse products offered, shopping and experiential travel, shall contribute to top destinations in 2016.

## QWhat are your expectations from NTOs in terms of packages and destinations?

NTOs should continue with destination trainings, Fam trips, Corporate Fams and other marketing support activities as these help us in working closely with the organisations.

## QWhat are the leisure activities or post-con-

## ference activities usually in demand?

It all depends on the destination. A lot of people are quite keen on shopping, massage, spa and nightlife.

## QPlease share the new happenings in MICE/ travel industry?

Thailand continues to see an increase in inbound numbers because of the ease of

visas. Domestic destinations are becoming increasingly popular. Hyatt and Marriott continue to be the favourite brands for corporate events. People are considering long-haul international travel like Paris, East Europe, etc. International travel seems to be the best reward for performing employees for most companies. Hence, this trend is gaining momentum.

“People are considering long-haul international travel like Paris, East Europe, etc. International travel seems to be the best reward for performing employees for most companies. Hence, this trend is gaining momentum.”

Aparna Basu Mallik  
CEO, Club7 Holidays



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**Top outbound destinations in 2016**

Canada and USA are becoming popular and people are more open to long haul destinations for MICE. Spain, Greece and South Africa have also gained popularity. The Philippines, Thailand and Singapore continue to be among the top destinations because of ease of visas, prices and other things.

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# Agents get together for common ‘goal’

Emirates Airlines recently organised its ‘Emirates Football Tournament 2015’ in which BCD Travel emerged as the champion team. Held at Hotful Arena in Mundhwa, Pune, the tournament had 16 teams competing with each other. Earlier this year, Emirates had also hosted a two-day cricket match for its trade partners. The tournament was co-sponsored by Amadeus and Star Cruise in association with TRAVALTALK along with two leading travel associations—The Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) and the Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI).





# Philippines brands BEST buses in Mumbai

To create more awareness among the growing Indian outbound travellers, the Department of Tourism of Philippines recently conducted a marketing campaign of branding 100 BEST buses in Mumbai in association with Kesari Tours.

TT BUREAU

As part of its marketing development strategy, the Department of Tourism, Philippines, has branded 100 BEST buses in Mumbai in association with Kesari Tours. Navritu Kaushal Rai, Account Director, Philippines Tourism Marketing Office, India, said, "The Philippines offers its visitors a wide variety of attractions and activities for a perfect vacation.

ing workshops will help. "Another thing that has worked for other international destinations is promoting itself through a big-budget Bollywood movie. The Philippines has the potential to be popular among Indians — it has beaches, adventure, snorkelling, scuba-diving, nightlife, shopping, good infrastructure, and Indian food. We have done a few small groups but real breakthrough is yet to

be achieved. We will definitely promote the destination with the support of the tourism board," she adds. The year 2015 turned out to be quite positive for DoT Philippines, and its 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.

Speaking about how popular Philippines is for MICE, Chaubal says, "Corporates are looking for newer destinations beyond the usual. Philippines is a good option. To promote any destination, a direct flight and ease of visa are key ingredients. Philippines is gaining popularity and quick visas — which could come in three working days — will help to promote the Philippines."



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

This initiative of branding BEST buses is in accordance with our current market development strategy. We are promoting the Philippines as a luxury, MICE and wedding destination and our focus is on consumer-driven




Zelum Chaubal  
Director (Kesari MICE)  
Kesari Tours

campaigns. The BEST buses ride all over Mumbai and therefore branding bus-backs gives us visibility and a high number of eyeballs. Our joint partnership with Kesari Tours for this campaign reinforces our commitment and support towards our travel partners."

Speaking on this marketing initiative, Zelum Chaubal, Director (Kesari MICE), Kesari Tours, said, "This joint campaign will create more awareness and curiosity for the Philippines as a travel destination. The main purpose of this campaign is branding and awareness about the destination."

Sharing her perspective on other ways in which the Philippines can create a stronger brand recall, she adds that increasing visibility through travel partners, hoardings, advertisements, talks, and train-



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Get the aerial view of the Niagara Falls, experience the thrill of Edgewalk at CN Tower and shop local delicacies at Ottawa Farmer's Market—Canada packs the right punch for everyone this winter.



KARISHMA KHANNA FROM CANADA

### NIAGARA FALLS

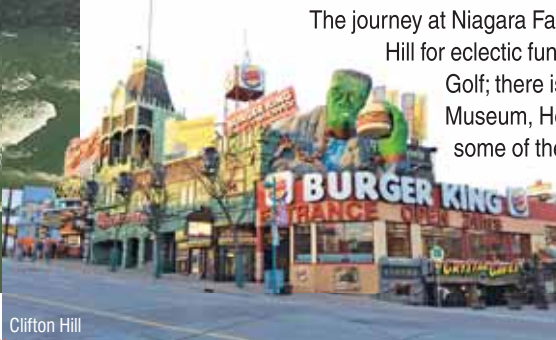


Niagara Falls is the collective name for three waterfalls that join the international border between Canada and the United States. From largest to smallest, the three waterfalls are the Horseshoe Falls, the American Falls and the Bridal Veil Falls. The Horseshoe Falls lie mostly on the Canadian side. Hear the wall of roaring water that was perfectly carved during the ice age more than 12,000 years ago and feel its spray as it rushes by.

Travellers can experience the grandeur through Journey Behind the Falls. The elevator takes the visitors 150 feet down through bedrock to tunnels behind the falls and visitors stand in the mist and witness the natural spectacle of the falls around

them. One can also ride into the heart of the falls aboard the Hornblower Niagara Cruises. The view is dotted with multiple rainbows making it all the more spectacular. Get onboard one of the Niagara Helicopters, which take visitors on a flight with awe-inspiring views. These seven-seat helicopters fly over just about every major site in Niagara. The wonder of the falls is not limited to only daytime as you can view the falls at night with various colour changing light displays.

The journey at Niagara Falls does not end right there. One can visit Clifton Hill for eclectic fun. From a giant skywheel to a Dinosaur Adventure Golf; there is something for everyone. Movieland Wax Museum, House of Horrors, and Wax Hands Emporium are some of the attractions there. Also visit the Bird Kingdom, which is a large indoor free flying aviary; go to Inniskillin Winery for a tour and wine tasting. Finally, end your trip with shopping at the Outlet Collection with great offers.



Clifton Hill



Niagara Falls

### TORONTO

Toronto sits on the northern shore of Lake Ontario and has a shoreline stretching 43 km featuring sandy beaches, marinas and working ports. For that only-in-Toronto experience, there are must visit places to find the essence of the city's past and present. You can take a city tour and shopping tour through Yorkville, Queen West and Kensington for vintage foods, organic coffee, and gourmet cheese shops. A must-visit is atop the CN Tower. One can book a lunch or dinner reservation at the 360 Restaurant, which features delicious food combined with a magnificent revolving view of Toronto more than 1,151 feet below. It also has access to the LookOut and Glass Floor levels of the CN Tower. Stroll along the highest sidewalk at the CN Tower's Edgewalk. Being the world's highest full circle hands-free walk on a 5 feet wide ledge encircling the top of the Tower's main pod, 1168 feet (116 storeys) above the ground; visitors walk in small groups, while attached to an overhead safety rail via a trolley and harness system. The Royal Ontario Museum is a museum of art, world culture and natural history in Toronto, Canada. Another must to visit place is a One of a Kind Show featuring work of artisans. One must also go to the Christmas market, which takes place at the Distillery Historic District in Toronto from November 20 to December 20 every year. It recreates the magic of traditional European Christmas markets and features family-friendly entertainment, food and merchandise from around the world. For history and art lovers a must visit site is the Aga Khan Museum.



Toronto skyline

### OTTAWA

A short flight from Billy Bishop Airport will take you to the city of Ottawa. It is a cosmopolitan city on the Ottawa River. One should visit the Ottawa Farmer's Market at Lansdowne Park for a fresh produce of local fruits, vegetables, meat, arts and crafts. Visit the Glebe Neighbourhood to experience the village life. A must-see site is the Parliament Hill. The buildings are home to Canada's federal government. A guided tour of the premises takes you through the chambers and also to the working library which is most spectacular unit inside the building. You can also walk down to the Royal Canadian Mint, which houses the collector's coins and view the art of gold and silver coin making. While in Ottawa, you must try the Beaver Tails pastry — a real Ottawa delicacy. While in Ottawa one can stay at the historic Lord Elgin Hotel, centrally located to many downtown attractions. To unwind and reenergise at the end of the trip visit the Nordik Spa–Nature.



Library at Parliament Hill







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# New Year brings good cheer

North India Travel Awards 2015 held in Jaipur concluded the year on a high note. TRAVTALK finds out from the winners what it feels like to be appreciated for hard work and how they plan to change the face of the industry in the New Year.

The award ceremony is an excellent boost to the morale. An award like this is very encouraging for all. Rajasthan has been one of the focal points of tourists coming to India. Rajasthan is the epicentre of culture and colours and no journey is complete without experiencing this state. The private enterprises are doing good work with so many travel partners and organising fairs in the state that it is bound to increase exposure and travel to this destination in 2016.

**Gajendra Singh Khimsar**

*Minister of Industries, Sports and Youth Affairs, DMIC & NRI, Government of Rajasthan*



## Gallery of Legends

The policies in travel and tourism industry are still underway and we are eagerly awaiting them to come into function. We have launched a 'Women in Aviation' India Chapter, which is the chapter of the US International Body. I believe that in our industry, the number of women in aviation is limited to the pilots and stewardess. There are so many opportunities with new government in place, which will open new avenues for ladies in this industry in 2016.

**Radha Bhatia**

*Chairperson  
Bird Group*



## DDP Game Changer

It is a great feeling to be recognised by the industry, which motivates us to work harder. In 2016, we are hoping that the upward string continues and there is stability in all sectors of tourism. In the coming year we hope that adventure tourism will increase more as the notion that this form of tourism is unsafe, is changing. There are more than two million adventure tourists. Almost 73 per cent of the Himalayan range is in India, which opens amazing opportunities for nature and adventure travellers. We are working very hard with the government and states to bring out this form of tourism better.

**Ajeet Bajaj**

*Founder and Managing Director  
Snow Leopard Adventures*

## DDP Traiblazer

The India Travel Awards is a great initiative and the fact that it has happened in Jaipur, will create more publicity for this city. The inbound segment of tourism came down considerably in 2015 but domestic tourism segment did well. Rajasthan Tourism, is working on improving the infrastructure in the state and with Resurgent Rajasthan and signing of MoUs worth ` 3,000 crores, it is going to generate more awareness and reach to various sectors of travel and tourism.

**Bhim Singh**

*Managing Director, Rajasthan Tours and President, Federation of  
Hospitality and Tourism of Rajasthan*



## Best Tour Operator Outbound

The award ceremony is an exciting experience and great platform which recognises the good efforts of the industry. In 2016, I feel, we need to be more professional, bring in more products, and digitise our products to meet the demand and competition of technology. I am positive about the growth of the tourism industry but at the same time I feel there will be a demand of non traditional products and destinations in the coming year.

**Samina Munshi**

*Director, N. Chirag Travels*



## Best Car Rental Company

2016 looks like a promising year. Inbound has been slow and low in 2015 but will surely catch up and do well in the coming year. The domestic tourism segment has done very well in the last year and outbound travel is on a growth trajectory and this will continue in 2016.

**Sunil C. Gupta**

*Director  
Travel Bureau*



## Best Travel Management Company

Travel has become a trending industry especially with the Prime Minister travelling to various countries. It is a step in marketing India in the global market. The India Travel Awards is an event, which enables networking and recognises the achievers. We feel very encouraged and motivated and these awards are an inspiration for us.

**Pradeep Agarwal**

*Regional Sales Head, B2B  
Bonton Holidays*

## Best Visa Facilitation Company

Since travellers like to explore their options, newer destinations will come up in 2016. The offbeat countries have done exceptionally well. In 2016, it is expected that Eastern Europe will come up in a big way because till now there is no need for a biometric visa which is seen as a problem by a few. Unstable factors affecting tourism are expected to settle down in the coming year. We are promoting Croatia in a big way, like conducting a Fam for 75 to 90 potential tour operators of the MICE and FIT segment of tourism.

**Rajan Dua**

*Managing Director  
Udaan India*



## Best Customised Tour Operator

These awards are an inspiration for us. We hope to come out stronger and improve ourselves in 2016 and become the best travel company. The competition from the industry acts like a push to perform better and do good work.

**Anish Munjal**

*Director  
India Loves Holidays*



## Best Luxury Resort

The award ceremony at Crowne Plaza Jaipur Tonk Road is a brilliant opportunity to showcase this new property and the city. With the economy getting a boost, the tourism industry will grow in 2016. Factors like FDI in tourism and Make in India are initiatives that are way forward. Tourism is on the growth trajectory. 2016 will see a boost in business and leisure travel. The supply has been enough but demand has been little less in the previous year, which shall catch up with economy opening up in 2016.

**Nikhil Vahi**

*Senior Vice President  
Hospitality Operations & Development, DS Group*



## Best Business Professional

The India Travel Awards is like the Oscar award for the travel and tourism industry and most key players look forward to this ceremony. With a population of 1.3 billion in India, there is a huge potential for travel to grow as more people have started travelling and there is so much untapped potential for consideration.

**Sandeep Bhatt**

*Managing Partner  
Eximius Business*



# for travel industry leaders

## Best Luxury Train

Travel from and in India has increased over the few years. The number of outbound travellers is expected to reach 50 million in the next 10 years in comparison to 20 million right now. However, this is still less as compared to China, which stands at 120 million. Outbound tourism is going to grow. The focus area will continue to be Europe and America apart from newer destinations. We are launching exclusive packages for the customers. With our 170 offices in India, we are trying to reach out to the inner circuits of Tier II and Tier III cities.

**Sanjeet Joher**

*Vice President, Combined Buying Group Asia Pacific and Middle East, The Deccan Odyssey by Cox and Kings*



## Best B2B Travel Portal

2015 started pretty well, but in the later part of the year with terrorist activities in France and Russia, the outbound tourist figures from India would certainly be affected. However as it is said that human memory is short and on the way forward, people are still going to travel in 2016. I hope factors like oil prices and global terrorism are controlled for the tourism industry to grow. The fundamentals of outbound tourism in India are very strong and the numbers should grow in 2016.

**Ankush Nijhawan**

*Managing Director, Nijhawan Group and Co-Founder & CEO Travel Boutique Online*



## Best Rail Tour Operator

With the new government in place, there are so many new initiatives being taken for the travel and tourism industry to grow. The marketing of the country is going to be crucial in getting more business in the year 2016.

**Mainish S Saini**

*Director Worldwide Rail Journeys*



## Best International Airline

2015 was not very good as per our expectations. Economic growth of the country and the promotion of the country in other source markets will definitely impact the number of tourists coming to India in 2016. We hope to cover our losses from this year with better business in the New Year and definitely hope for some new initiatives from the industry.

**Surendra Sharma**

*District Sales Manager Oman Air*

## Best Travel Technology Provider

Despite the tourism industry experiencing a dull overall, we have fortunately not had a slow down. In fact we saw a 30 per cent growth in business. With our UAE office, 2016 will be a year focussed on international business for the company.

**Rajan**

*Director-Sales Zillious Solutions*



## Best Debut Travel Portal

India Travel Awards is like the Filmfare or Grammy award for the travel and tourism industry. 2015 has been a good year with its share of ups and downs. We are expecting a good growth in the coming year especially with the backing from the new government. Inbound tourism in India will grow better and outbound tourism, which is anyway doing well, will continue to grow. Despite the rupee fluctuation or the Paris terror attacks, people will continue to travel.

**Sucheta Nagpal**

*Director Travstarz Holidays and Destinations*



## Best Business Hotel

With the Modi government, the enhanced visa facilities have developed business but we are hoping that the coming year is going to be better with more tourist influx. A lot of international hotels are investing in India and with so many chains coming to India, competition will increase. We are targeting secondary and tertiary markets like Hampi and get more clientele to the city.

**Sumit Kumar**

*General Manager Hyatt Place Gurgaon Udyog Vihar*



## Best MICE Operator

In 2016, I feel, with the ease of visa facilities and new circuits coming in various destinations, we will see better growth in inbound and MICE tourism segments. We are also focussing on the incentive tourism market, which has huge potential.

**Chetan Kapoor**

*General Manager-Sales and Marketing (Inbound) Wish Bone India*

## Best Luxury hotel

It is a pleasure to be here. It is interesting to meet the industry under one umbrella and I thank the organisers for such a great event. In 2016, the factors of growth will be concentrated on the fact that with a stable government at the centre and the state, tourism industry is getting its due share of importance and diligence. The foreign tourists coming to India will pick up and with the right perspective, tourism industry is bound to grow better.

**R Murali**

*General Manager ITC Rajputana Jaipur*



## Best Hotel in the Middle East

India is one of the biggest markets for us. In 2016, it is expected that we will witness more rate wars. The challenge that the hotel industry may face is more concentrated on fares than struggling for occupancy.

**Sona Rawal**

*Director- Sales JW Marriott, Deira, Dubai*



## Best Travel Agency

2015 was not the best year ever, but we have been pushing forward. India is the best destination to go to, especially North India. The eTV will help in generating more number of tourists coming to India in 2016 and many new initiatives are expected to flow in the New Year.

**Maud Le Bars**

*General Manager Shanti Travel*



## Best Software Solution Provider

We are enhancing our technology and upgrading mobile applications. We are increasing suppliers on the portal and shifting to digital marketing. 2016 will be a year which focuses on technology and digitisation of tourism products and the need of the hour is that the tourism industry embraces the change happily.

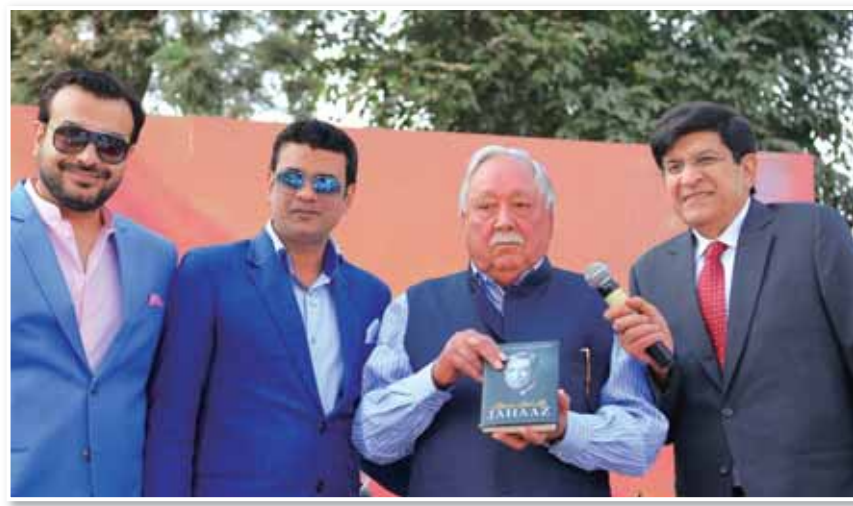
**Meenu Sachdeva**

*Managing Director and Co-Founder TI Infotech*



# A story of perseverance

The Indian travel fraternity assembled to raise a toast to Bansi Lal Nijhawan, the founder of the Nijhawan Group, in honour of his widespread contribution to the industry. In commemoration, his biography 'Bansi Lal ka Jahaaz', penned by Mrinalini Patwardhan Mehra, was officially launched at the exclusive event which was attended by the crème de la crème from the travel trade sector.





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# Event Talk 2016

## JANUARY

► <b>National</b>		
8-10	Chennai	Travel & Tourism Fair
14-16	Kochi	India International Travel Mart Cochin
15-17	Mumbai	India International Travel & Tourism Exhibition
15-17	Bengaluru	Travel & Tourism Fair
22-24	Coimbatore	Holiday Expo
22-24	Nagpur	India International Travel Exhibition
29-31	Delhi	SATTE New Delhi
► <b>International</b>		
20-24	Madrid, Spain	FITUR 
28-31	Istanbul, Turkey	EMITT

## FEBRUARY

► <b>National</b>		
4-6	Kolkata	India International Travel Mart
6-8	Chandigarh	India Travel Mart
12-14	New Delhi	TTF & OTM
18-20	Mumbai	Outbound Travel Mart
21-23	Agra	Uttar Pradesh Travel Mart
26-28	Vijaywada	IITE
► <b>International</b>		
9-11	Abu Dhabi, UAE	IBTM Arabia
11-13	Milan, Italy	BIT 
13-14	Brisbane, Australia	Travel Expo
17-19	San Juan, Puerto Rico	Routes American
21	Adelaide, Australia	Travel Expo
23-24	Melbourne, Australia	Asia Pacific Meetings and Incentive Expo (AIME)
24-25	London, UK	TTE 
24-25	London, UK	BTS 

## MARCH

► <b>National</b>		
3-5	Mumbai	IAAPI Amusement Expo
4-6	Kolkata	IITM
11-13	Raipur	Indian International Travel Exhibition (IITE)
TBA	Ahmedabad	Gujarat Tourism Mart*
► <b>International</b>		
6	Darwin, Australia	Travel Expo
6-8	Manila, Philippines	Routes Asia
9-13	Berlin, Germany	ITB
10	Singapore	AHDA, Asia Hotel Design Award
10-11	Moscow, Russia	Luxury Travel Mart Spring Edition
23-26	Moscow, Russia	Moscow International Travel and Tourism Exhibition (MITT) 
29 Feb 2-Mar	Tokyo, Japan	International Luxury Travel Market
30 Mar 1-Apr	Kiev, Ukraine	UITT 

## APRIL

► <b>National</b>		
8	TBA	India Travel Awards-South & East
► <b>International</b>		
1-3	Cape Town, S. Africa	Cape Getaway Show
3-6	Sicily, Italy	Connections Luxury 

April Contd....

April Contd....

4-6	Cape Town, South Africa	International Luxury Travel Market Africa (ILTM Africa)
6-8	Cape Town, South Africa	World Travel Market Africa
7-9	Baku, Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan International Tourism Fair (AITF) 
12-14	Beijing, China	China Outbound Travel Tourism Mart (COTTM) 
14-16	Siberia	SITT (TOURSIB) 
17-19	Stuttgart, Germany	German Travel Mart
20-22	Almaty, Kazakhstan	Kazakhstan International Tourism Fair (KITF) 
22-24	Xian, China	CXSRITE 
23-26	Knakow, Poland	Routes Europe
24-27	Montreal, Canada	Rendezvous Canada
25-28	Dubai, UAE	Arabian Travel Market (ATM)
29-31	Sao Paulo, Brazil	World Travel Market Latin America

## MAY

► <b>International</b>		
6-8	Shanghai, China	Corporate Travel World
7-9	Durban, South Africa	Indaba Expo
19-22	Shanghai, China	World Travel Fair
10-13	Rotorua, New Zealand	Trenz
29 May 1-Jun	Malaga, Spain	Connections Meetings 


## JUNE

► <b>International</b>		
9-12	Seoul, South Korea	Korea World Travel Fair
15-17	Chicago, USA	IBTM America
16-19	Hong Kong, SAR China	International Travel Expo
19-22	Phuket, Thailand	Connections Luxury 
24-26	Beijing, China	BITE 
30 May 2 Jun	Shanghai, China	International Luxury Travel Market Asia (ILTMA)
31 May 5 Jun	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Asian International Trade & Tourism Expo

## JULY

► <b>National</b>		
TBA	Hyderabad	Travel & Tourism Fair (TTF)*
TBA	Kolkata	Travel & Tourism Fair (TTF)*
► <b>International</b>		
11-12	Melbourne, Australia	Travel Industry Exhibition
18-19	Sydney, Australia	Travel Industry Exhibition

## AUGUST

► <b>National</b>		
3	TBA	India Hospitality Awards - West & South
4	TBA	India Cargo Awards - West & South
5	TBA	India Travel Awards - West
8-9	Mumbai	SATTE Mumbai West
TBA	Mumbai	India International Travel Mart *
► <b>International</b>		
7-8	Beijing, China	China Incentive Business Travel Market (CIBTM)
30-Aug 1-Sept	Miami, Florida	La Cita 

## SEPTEMBER

► <b>National</b>		
TBA	Gurgaon	India International Travel Mart*
11-13	Ahmedabad	TTF
18-20	Surat	TTF
24-26	Mumbai	TTF
► <b>International</b>		
7-9	Jakarta, Indonesia	PATA Travel Mart
8-10	Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam	International Travel Expo
15-16	Moscow, Russia	International Trade Fair for Luxury Travel
18-21	Europe	Connections Meetings 
20-21	Paris, France	MAP Pro Le Monde A Paris
21-24	Moscow, Russia	Meetings Industry & Business Travel RUSSIA
22-25	Tokyo, Japan	JATA Tourism Expo Japan 
24-27	Chengdu, China	World Routes
26-29	Riviera Maya, Mexico	ILTM America
27	Kiev, Ukraine	Luxury Travel Mart
27-29	Bangkok, Thailand	Corporate Travel World Asia-Pacific
29-1 Oct	Astana, Kazakhstan	Astana Leisure 
30	Almaty, Kazakhstan	Luxury Travel Mart

## OCTOBER

► <b>National</b>		
TBA	Pune	TTF*
► <b>International</b>		
4	Moscow, Russia	Luxury Travel Mart Autumn Edition
TBA	Moscow, Russia	PIR Hospitality Industry*
TBA	Kiev, Ukraine	Tour Expo*
5-7	Kiev, Ukraine	Ukraine International Travel Market
5-7	Tashkent, Uzbekistan	Tashkent International Tourism Fair
13	TBA	Emirates Awards*
16-19	Rio de Janero, Brazil	Connections Luxury 
18-20	Las Vegas, USA	IMEX America
19-21	Singapore	ITB Asia
20	Birmingham, UK	Group Leisure & Travel Trade Show
21-23	Montreal, Canada	International Tourism & Travel Show

## NOVEMBER

► <b>National</b>		
23	TBA	India Hospitality Awards - North & East
24	TBA	India Cargo Awards - North & East
25	TBA	India Travel Awards-North
TBA	Guwahati	Travel & Tourism Fair Guwahati*
► <b>International</b>		
TBA	Taipei, Taiwan	Taipei International Travel Fair*
4-6	Bremen, Germany	Reiselust
7-9	London, UK	World Travel Market (WTM)
7-9	Shanghai, China	FHC China-Retail & Hospitality
29-Nov 1 Dec	Barcelona, Spain	IBTM World

## DECEMBER

► <b>International</b>		
TBA	Shanghai, China	Marintec China*
1-3	Chengdu, China	CITE 

For more details, contact: [talk@ddppl.com](mailto:talk@ddppl.com)

\* TBA: To Be Announced

The dates shown on the annual event calendar are subject to change. Please refer to Event Talk in TravTalk to track the changes in dates



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## VISA TALK



### Thailand Multiple Entry Tourist Visa

The Royal Thai Government has introduced 'Multiple Entry Tourist Visa' scheme. Applicants can now avail the Thailand Multiple Entry Visa. The validity of this visa will be six months and the duration of stay up to 60 days per visit. For more details please logon to [www.udaanindia.com](http://www.udaanindia.com)



### Nigeria Visa Outsourced to OIS (Online Integrated Solution)

The High Commission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, New Delhi has announced that the submission and collection of Nigeria Visa for all categories i.e. Business, Tourist, Transit, Temporary Work Permit and STR (Subject to Regularisation) has been outsourced to Online Integrated Solutions (OIS). Hence, all Nigeria visa applications will be submitted to OIS (Delhi). For visa fee and other related charges kindly contact [udaan@udaanindia.com](mailto:udaan@udaanindia.com) or visit [www.udaanindia.com](http://www.udaanindia.com)



### Kosovo Visa

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

### Visa Snippets:

a) The High Commission of Sri Lanka, Delhi has announced that, with immediate effect Sri Lanka business visa application (for all jurisdictions) has to be applied online (Business Purpose ETA).

b) Udaan India Hyderabad and Kolkata office have moved to new premises. All operational activities and day-to-day functionalities will be handled from the new address:-

Hyderabad: 8-2-57/58, Srinagar Colony, Main Road, Hyderabad - 500073

Kolkata: 71, Park Street, Park Plaza, Ground Floor, Room No.3, Kolkata - 700016

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Agents from Delhi and Jaipur experienced the hospitality of Akquasun Group and comfort of Sri Lanka Airlines on a familiarisation trip organized to Sri Lanka and Maldives. Akquasun Lanka and Akquasun Maldives jointly designed a relaxed but informative itinerary for these agents. The accommodation in Colombo was at OZO Colombo and The Kingsbury hotels. In Maldives, the stay was arranged at the Paradise Island Resort Maldives and Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa.





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Department of Tourism, Goa

**Goa**  
**Sanjeev C. Gauns Dessai** has taken over as the new Director of the Department of Tourism, Goa with effect from December 15, 2015. He replaces Ameya Abhyankar, IAS. Dessai will oversee the department's role in the maintenance of the state's beach cleanliness, beach safety, tourist policing, master plan and all other tourism policies.



Jet Airways

**Mumbai**  
 Jet Airways has announced that **Gaurang Shetty**, whole-time Director of the carrier, will be the acting CEO of the company after Cramer Ball, resigned from his post as CEO. The new appointment will be effective from February 29, 2016. Shetty, who has over 35 years of industry experience and has been with the company for over 19 years. Shetty is a Bachelors in Science and joined the company in 1996 as General Manager - Marketing and was promoted to Vice President - Marketing in 2004. Prior to joining the company, he was with British Airways as its Marketing Manager - South Asia.



Thomas Cook India

**Mumbai**  
**Madhavan Menon** has been redesignated as Chairman and Managing Director by Thomas Cook India. Menon has steered the company as Managing Director since 2006. He holds bachelors in business from George Washington University, USA, and MBA, Finance & International Business, George Washington University, USA. He comes with an experience of over 33 years. His previous assignment prior to joining TCIL was as Chief Operations & Administrative Officer of Birla Sunlife Asset Management, Citibank and ANZ Grindlays Bank. His expertise spans over Banking, Finance and Travel-related Foreign Exchange Management.



Kuoni Group

**Dubai**  
**Dhiren Savla**, Chief Information Officer (CIO) of VFS Global and SVP & Head of Global IT (Shared Service Centre) for Kuoni Group, has been appointed as Group CIO of Kuoni Group. In this role, he is responsible for providing strategic leadership to the IT function and strengthening the company's global IT delivery model across geographies. He will be based in Dubai and will concurrently continue in his current VFS Global role. In the past, Savla has held various leadership positions within Merrill Lynch, G.E. Shipping and IL&FS in India. He is a graduate from the University of Mumbai with a degree in Engineering.



WelcomHeritage Hotels

**New Delhi**  
**Sunil Gupta** has taken over as the Chief Executive Officer of WelcomHeritage Hotels. He brings along an experience of 30 years in the hospitality industry and is associated with ITC Hotels since 1995. He has served at various positions at ITC Hotels in the span of 20 years. For the past 7 years, he was the General Manager at ITC Rajputana, Jaipur and after this rich tenure he has now been appointed as the CEO of WelcomHeritage Hotels.



Hyatt Raipur

**Raipur**  
**Tushar Garg** has been appointed as Director Sales & Marketing at Hyatt Raipur. He holds a diploma in Hospitality and Tourism Management from Australia and completed Hotel Management from Glion Hotel School, Switzerland. Garg started his career as a Management Trainee in one of the Preferred AAA Diamond Ski Resorts in Vermont USA. Upon completion of the same he worked in India with Jaypee Vasant Continental Hotel, New Delhi as Duty Manager, later he moved to The Lalit as Duty Manager. Garg held the post of Director of Sales and Marketing at the Park Inn by Radisson, Gurgaon before joining Hyatt Raipur.



India Exposition Mart

**Greater Noida**  
**Sudeep Sarcar** has been promoted as Vice President of India Exposition Mart Limited (IELM). Sarcar joined India Expo Centre & Mart as General Manager in 2011. With more than 21 years of extensive global experience; he has successfully brought Greater Noida on international convention and exhibition industry map. With big ticketed events such as Auto Expo-the Motor Show, FDI World Annual Dental Congress and India Handicrafts and Gift Fair series, he has converted Greater Noida as one of the most sort after MICE destination in India and Asia.



Jameson Inn Hotel

**Kolkata**  
**Sandeep Basu** has been appointed as General Manger at Jameson Inn Hotel at Kolkata, managed by Cygnett Group of Hotels. Basu, an Hotel Management graduate from NIPS School of Hotel Management & Post Graduate Diploma in Marketing Management has had a noteworthy career spanning 17 years in the hospitality industry. He started his career with The Park Hotels and was mostly associated with ITC.



Fraser Suites

**New Delhi**  
**Erum Khan** has been promoted as the Manager Marketing Fraser Suites, New Delhi. She is a marketing specialist with 12 years of experience with leading companies. She has previously worked with Political Express (Newspaper & Magazine), the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs, and Bureaucracy Today Magazine. Apart from marketing, she is skilled at events management, PR and office administration. Khan holds a Master's Degree in English Literature from Kanpur University.

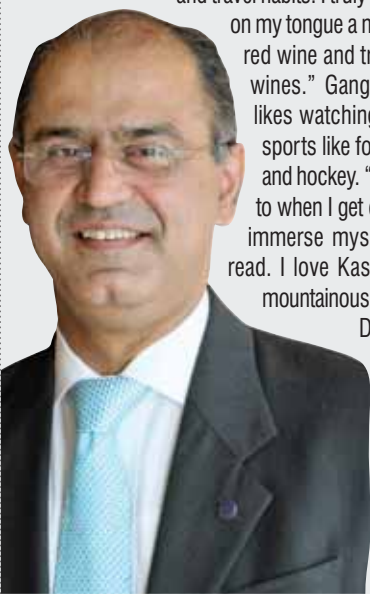


TALKing People

**Anuraag Bhatnagar**, General Manager, St. Regis Mumbai and Area General Manager India, Starwood Hotels & Resorts, says when he gets time off work he likes to catch up on movies. "I am fond of cinema and try to watch new films at the theatre or classics at home." A few times a year, Bhatnagar plans holidays with his family. "I bid a farewell to all hotels in my region for a holiday with my family. With a heavy heart I leave the hotelier in me behind and travel for the sheer joy of the experience. I favour London for its constant activity and Paris for its spectacular food. With so many trips, even my family members have their own list of recommendations and personal favourites in these cities," he says.



**Vijayan Gangadharan**, General Manager, Four Points by Sheraton Pune, is a wine lover and enjoys exploring new cultures and cuisines. "I like interacting with people and engaging them in conversation, learning their culture, food and travel habits. I truly enjoy swirling on my tongue a nice full bodied red wine and trying out new wines." Gangadharan also likes watching and playing sports like football, cricket and hockey. "I look forward to when I get quality time to immerse myself in a good read. I love Kashmir, Manali, mountainous northern Italy, Dusseldorf, Huan Hin, Goa, and Malaysia."



**Nasir Shaikh**, General Manager, Courtyard by Marriott Pune Chakan, believes nothing energizes him more than spending quality time with family. "Whenever I get time to rejuvenate and recharge, there is nothing that works for me better than spending time with my son Ayaan and wife Farheen. It brings instant energy and positivity. Other than this, expressing myself on the canvas is something that helps me to chill. I am spiritual at heart and I do like to meditate and connect with God in my 'me' time." He strongly agrees with the Dalai Lama when he says, "Once a year, go someplace you've never been before."





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Gujarat has an assortment of places that have immense historical importance in the struggle of India's independence. After all some of history's finest monuments, forts and temples were built here. Also visit the twin UNESCO world heritage sites of Champaner fort and Rani Ki Vav along with other landmark places like Lothal, Dholavira, Modhera, and many more for an unforgettable experience.

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# J&K promotes adventure, MICE

Farooq A. Shah, Secretary Tourism, Jammu and Kashmir and Managing Director, Jammu & Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation (JKTDC), plans to promote adventure, spiritual, golf, heritage and rural tourism in the state.



VAISHALI DAR

## Q Tell us about the important tourism circuits in Jammu & Kashmir.

There are a number of tourism circuits starting from Jammu, Vaishno Devi, Patnitop, Bhadarwah, Kashmir, Pahalgam, Sonamarg, Srinagar, Kokernag, Verinag, Aharbal and Kargil, Pangong and Nubra in Ladakh. The government is also working on developing products such as orchard tourism; education with a special emphasis on IT and skill development and food technology, as these sectors can be promoted outside the state and in turn promote the tourism circuits.

## Q What is the state government doing to promote tourism?

We plan to publicise our convention centres in a big way as MICE is an important sector for the state. We also support Fam trips. A helicopter service at 10,000 to the resorts of Pahalgam and Gulmarg from Srinagar Airport gives you the thrill of an aerial view of destinations like Pahalgam, Sonamarg and Gulmarg. Such services will also promote heli-skiing, adventure tourism, golfing, and incentive and conference tourism. With state-of-the-art venues like Pahalgam Club, Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC), and five-star chains like Starwood, Hyatt, ITC and Radisson eyeing the valley will help in boosting tourism. We are creating waiting lounges at the gondola stations and post-event activities in the city. We need to change the perception and focus on domestic market. We want to create J&K as no off-season destination of the country.

## Q Has eTV facility helped in increasing the number of tourists coming to the state?

Yes, it has really helped the city and increased tourist footfall in the state.

## Q Are there any special packages for travel agents that the state offers?

We have announced a number of packages for travel agents from the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Corporation (JKTDC) to book properties. For high-end customers, we can customise packages as per their requirement and give the most affordable packages in the country.

## Q Are you looking at any PPP models to boost tourism in the state?

Our government has announced many models to improve our holding capacity. The cabinet has approved the policy and we are hopeful to upgrade our infrastructure. With high-end hotel brands and private stakeholders in the hospitality sector investing in a big way to improve

The Pahalgam Club is a complete destination, constructed at a cost of 24 crore, and can accommodate about 270 people. It has a banquet hall with an auditorium, multi-cuisine restaurant, a coffee shop, a four-lane bowling alley, swimming pools, gym, a beauty salon, a library cum



“With high-end hotel brands and private stakeholders in the hospitality sector investing in a big way to improve the tourist footfall, we are hopeful to have a cascading effect on related sectors like handicraft and hospitality.”

**Farooq A. Shah**

Secretary Tourism, Jammu and Kashmir  
and Managing Director, JKTDC

the tourist footfall, we are hopeful to have a cascading effect on related sectors like handicraft and hospitality.

reading room and 21 luxury suites. With such spaces, we invite large corporate houses to hold their conferences every year.

## Q What are the provisions for safety of tourists in the state?

We are keen on planning a complete safety policy which is an important aspect for all our investors. Safety measures with the provision of dedicated security personnel and life-guards at major tourist destinations are very important.

## Q What are the lean period strategies of the state?

Winter, especially December onwards, is a lean period for us. We want to utilise Gulmarg during this period and have also announced winter and New Year packages, national skiing championships and ice skating. We also want to promote Patnitop as a winter sports destination.

## Q What are the strategies to market the state in the international market?

Every year we see about two crore people travel outbound, but our domestic market is quite huge. We want people to visit the state and we are keen to tap the domestic market first.

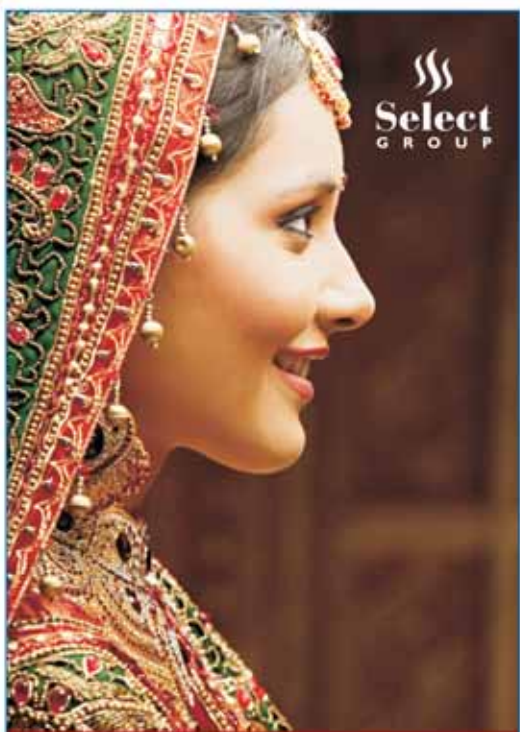
## Q Tell us about the states convention facilities and centres?

## Q What are the issues and challenges in MICE industry?

We would like to emphasise on skilled manpower where guides, drivers can be well trained to enhance tourism culture. We are also going to introduce programmes in colleges with special faculty to train manpower and manage skill based enterprises in the state.

## Q What is the state tourism's agenda for 2016?

We will ensure that tourists get the best of facilities. Be it pilgrim, golfing, heritage, shopping, cuisine or destinations, we are looking to improve our infrastructure in the next 2-3 years and be the best destination as far as infrastructure is concerned. Our main focus will be on the development of entertainment parks, light and sound shows, air safaris, river and lake cruises. We also plan to focus on new products like eco-tourism and rural tourism. The local resorts have tied up with five-star chains to improve high-end tourism in the valley. Hopefully, 2016 should be a good year for us as we want to promote adventure tourism, golfing, pilgrim tourism in J&K and Ladakh.



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# Maya in North honours achievers

The best known faces and brands of the travel industry gathered to commemorate the achievers of North India Travel Awards on December 8, 2015. The awards ceremony was held at Crowne Plaza Jaipur Tonk Road.



Winners of North India Travel Awards with their trophies at Crowne Plaza Jaipur Tonk Road



TT BUREAU

**G**ajendra Singh Khimsar, Cabinet Minister of Industries, DMIC, NRI, Sports & Youth Affairs, Government of Rajasthan was the Chief Guest for the evening. The black tie event brought together more than 120 attendees for an exciting evening celebrating tourism excellence.

Jaipur was chosen for the awards because it is an enthralling historical city and the gateway to India's most flamboyant state. The city's colourful, chaotic streets ebb and flow with a heady brew of old and new. **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."

**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, was declared the DDP Trailblazer. DDP Game Changer was **Ajeet Bajaj**, Founder and Managing Director, Snow Leopard Adventures, while **Mittu Chandilya**, CEO and Managing Director, AirAsia India, was announced as the Face of the Future. **Pankaj Nagpal** was pronounced the Entrepreneur of the Year.



(L-R): Dr. Tanushree Pandey, Mrs India 2015 and SanJeet, Director, DDP Group, unveiling the special edition on North India Travel Awards at the event

India Travel Awards supports and promotes the Indian travel and tourism industry by identifying and rewarding excellence, and inspiring its practitioners to continuously raise the standards of their products and service offerings. Based on a unique system of jury judgment and voting, these awards are fair and unbiased. The formal ceremony was

glitzy, glamorous and was graced by the who's who of the travel industry. India Travel Awards is supported by the Government of India, Ministry of Tourism and is now hailed as one of the most esteemed awards in the tourism industry of India. These awards are also braced by esteemed trade bodies like Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI), Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI), Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) and IATA Agents Association of India (IAAI).

India Travel Awards runs and governs a comprehensive programme across a range of awards developed to recognise the industry's most vital sectors and product offerings. Awards are presented across four regions—South, East, West, and North. 🇮🇳





## ► GALLERY OF LEGENDS



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

## ► DDP GAME CHANGER



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

## ► ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR



The award was given to **Pankaj Nagpal**, Managing Director, Travstarz Holiday & Destinations by **Gajendra Singh Khimsar**, Minister of Industries, Sports and Youth Affairs, DMIC & NRI, Government of Rajasthan, **Tanushree Pandey**, Mrs India 2015 and **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Group

## ► DDP TRAILBLAZER



**Bhim Singh**, Managing Director, Rajasthan Tours & President, Federation of Hospitality and Tourism of Rajasthan becomes the 'DDP Trailblazer'; he is felicitated by **Gajendra Singh Khimsar**, Minister of Industries, Sports and Youth Affairs, DMIC & NRI, Government of Rajasthan, **Tanushree Pandey**, Mrs India 2015 and **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Group

## ► DDP FACE OF THE FUTURE



**Mittu Chandilya**, CEO & Managing Director, AirAsia India was named the 'DDP Face of the Future'. The award was received on his behalf by **Suhail Bhalla**, Manager-Sales & Distribution, and **Pawan Nagpal**, Commercial-Sales & Distribution and given by **Gajendra Singh Khimsar**, Minister of Industries, Sports and Youth Affairs, DMIC & NRI, Government of Rajasthan, **Tanushree Pandey**, Mrs India 2015 and **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Group





Chief Guest **Gajendra Singh Khimsar**, Minister of Industries, Sports and Youth Affairs, DMIC & NRI, Government of Rajasthan being honoured with Pearl Trophy 'Maya'

#### ► BEST HOSPITALITY PROFESSIONAL



The award was given to **Tekla Maira**, Director, Global Sales India, FRHI Hotels & Resorts

#### ► MOST ENTERPRISING HOSPITALITY PROFESSIONAL



The award was given to **Amit Rana**, General Manager, Holiday Inn Chandigarh Panchkula

#### ► BEST B2B TRAVEL PORTAL



The award was given to **Travel Boutique Online** and was received by **Ankush Nijhawan**, Managing Director, Nijhawan Group & Co-Founder & CEO, Travel Boutique Online

#### ► BEST BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL



The award was given to **Sandeep Bhatt**, Managing Partner, Eximius Business

#### ► BEST HOSPITALITY SALES & MARKETING PROFESSIONAL



The award was given to **Dhananjay Saliankar**, Regional Director, Starwood Sales Organisation, South Asia

#### ► BEST INBOUND TRAVEL PROFESSIONAL



The award was given to **Khalid Khan**, Executive Director, Le Passage to India, Tours & Travels & President, Rajasthan Association of Tour Operator (RATO)

#### ► BEST BUDGET HOTEL BRAND



The award was given to **Clarks Inn Group of Hotels** and received by **Sahil Bhargav**, General Manager, Clarks Inn Jaipur, **Rahul Banerjee** AVP Operations, Clarks Inn Jaipur, and **Nitin Srivastav** General Manager Sales & Marketing, Clarks Inn Jaipur,



## ► BEST CORPORATE TRAVEL COMPANY



The award was given to **Dnata** and received by its Head-Human Resources, **Joseph Fernandes** and Business Head, Special Project & Partner Management, **Nippun Juneja**

## ► BEST SOFTWARE SOLUTION PROVIDER



The award was given to **TI Infotech** and received by its Senior Vice Presidents, **Ajay Arora**, **Darshan Sharma** and Managing Director & Co-Founder, **Meenu Sachdeva**

## ► BEST HOTEL IN THE MIDDLE EAST



The award was given to **JW Marriott, Deira, Dubai** and received by its Director Food & Beverage, **Bhavesh Rawal** and Director-Sales, **Sona Rawal**

## ► BEST GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM (GDS)



The award was given to **Travelport Galileo** and received by its Regional Head North, **Anoop Tewari** and Chief Commercial Officers, Interglobe Technology Quotient, **Sandeep Dwivedi**

## ► BEST WEDDING AND MICE HOTEL



The award was given to **Crowne Plaza Jaipur Tonk Road** and received by its General Manager, **Ashwani K Goela**

## ► BEST TRAVEL AGENCY



The award was given to **Shanti Travel** and received by its Chief Relationship Officer, **Neeraj Kumar** and General Manager, **Maud Le Bars**

## ► BEST LCC AIRLINE



The award was given to **AirAsia** and received by its Manager-Sales & Distribution, **Suhail Bhalla** and Commercial-Sales & Distribution, **Pawan Nagpal**

## ► BEST LUXURY TRAIN



The award was given to **The Deccan Odyssey by Cox & Kings** and received by its Vice President, Combined Buying Group Asia Pacific and Middle East, **Sanjeet Joher**



► BEST EMERGING TRAVEL PORTAL



The award was given to **Hotel Expertz.com** and received by its Directors, **Raman Kehar** and **Rajan Kehar**

► BEST BUSINESS HOTEL



The award was given to **Hyatt Place Gurgaon Udyog Vihar** and received by its General Manager, **Sumit Kumar**

► BEST NTO



The award was given to **Destination Canada** and received by its Sr Manager Sales, **Sonia Prakash** and Account Director, **Richa Chopra**

► BEST INTERNATIONAL AIRLINE



The award was given to **Oman Air** and received by its District Sales Manager - Jaipur, **Surendra Sharma**

► BEST MID-MARKET HOTEL



The award was given to **RK Sarovar Portico**, Srinagar and received by its Managing Director, **Saddam Zaroo** and General Manager, **Shafiul Alam Ishaque**

► BEST RAIL TOUR OPERATOR



The award was given to **Worldwide Rail Journeys** and received by its Director, **Mainish S Saini**

► BEST TRAVEL MANAGEMENT COMPANY



The award was given to **Bonton Holidays** and received by its Regional Sales Head B2B, **Pradeep Agrawal** and Executive Director, **Sayed A Asim**

► BEST LUXURY RESORT



The award was given to **Namah, Jim Corbett National Park** and received by Senior Vice President, Hospitality Operations & Development DS Group, **Nikhil Vahi**



## ► BEST DESTINATION MANAGEMENT COMPANY



The award was given to **STHI Holidays India** and received by its Director Operations, **Paras Arora** and Director-Sales & Operations, **Gagan Kumar**

## ► BEST TRAVEL TECHNOLOGY PROVIDER



The award was given to **Zillious Solutions** and received by its Technical Associate, **Nishant Gupta**, Senior Technical Associate, **Payal Kumari** and Director Sales, **Rajan**

## ► MOST VERSATILE COMPANY-AVIATION & TRAVEL



The award was given to **Eximius Business** and received by its Vice President-Business Initiatives, **Raman Kapoor** and Vice President, Corporate Affairs, **Ajay Bhadwal**

## ► EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR BEST FOOD & BEVERAGE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA



The award was given to **J W Marriott, Deira, Dubai** and received by its Director-Sales, **Sona Rawal** and Director Food & Beverage, **Bhavesh Rawal**

## ► BEST INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY PRODUCT



The award was given to **Travel Boutique Online** and received by **Ankush Nijhawan**, Managing Director, Nijhawan Group and Co-Founder & CEO, Travel Boutique Online

## ► BEST LUXURY TOUR OPERATOR



The award was given to **Terra Ignota Tours** and received by its Managing Director, **Nitin Sambhi**

## ► BEST VISA FACILITATION COMPANY



The award was given to **Udaan India** and received by its Managing Director, **Rajan Dua**

## ► BEST DEBUT MID-MARKET HOTEL



The award was given to **Crystal Sarovar Premiere**, Agra and received by its General Manager, **Lokesh Kumar Upadhya**



► BEST DEBUT TRAVEL PORTAL



The award was given to **travelrezone.com** and received by its Managing Director, Travstarz Holiday & Destinations, **Pankaj Nagpal**

► BEST HERITAGE HOTEL



The award was given to **Ajit Bhawan Palace, Jodhpur** and received by its General Manager, **Ajay Upadhyay**

► BEST BOUTIQUE TOUR OPERATOR



The award was given to **Go Explore** and received by Director, Far & Beyond Journeys, **Shishir Parab** and Managing Director, **Shalini Dugar**, Go Explore

► BEST MID-MARKET HOTEL CHAIN



The award was given to **Mansingh Group of Hotels** and received by its Managing Director & CEO, **Bharat Kumar**

► BEST TOUR OPERATOR OUTBOUND



The award was given to **N. Chirag Travels** and received by its Managing Director, **Riaz Munshi** and Director, **Samina Munshi**

► EMERGING HOTEL CHAIN



The award was given to **DS Hotels & Resorts** and received by its Senior Vice President, Hospitality Operations & Development DS Group, **Nikhil Vahi**

► BEST CUSTOMISED TOUR OPERATOR



The award was given to **India Loves Holidays** and received by its Director, **Anish Munjal**

► BEST HERITAGE RESORT



The award was given to **WelcomHeritage Khimsar Fort & Dune** and received by **Gajendra Singh Khimsar**, Minister of Industries, Sports and Youth Affairs, DMIC & NRI, Government of Rajasthan



## ► BEST GSA



The award was given to **Group Concorde** and received by **Navneet Sharma**, Regional Manager, China Airlines and **Payal Mehta**, Business Manager, Group Concorde

## ► BEST CITY HOTEL



The award was given to **Holiday Inn Amritsar Ranjit Avenue** and received by its General Manager, **Divakar Shukla**

## ► BEST MICE OPERATOR



The award was given to **Wish Bone India** and received by Assistant General Manager-Sales & Marketing (Inbound), **Chetan Kapoor**

## ► BEST LUXURY HOTEL



The award was given to **ITC Grand Bharat, Gurgaon** and received by Sales & Marketing Manager, **Suvarna Mani Pradhan** and General Manager, ITC Rajputana Jaipur, **R Murali**

## ► FASTEST GROWING TRAVEL TECHNOLOGY PROVIDER



The award was given to **e-care Technology Labs** and received by its Co-Founder and VP-Technology, **Harish Sharma**

## ► BEST CAR RENTAL COMPANY



The award was given to **Travel Bureau** and received by its Associate, **Suyash Gupta** and Director, **Sunil C. Gupta**

## ► BEST TOUR OPERATOR



The award was given to **Travel Care** and received by its Managing Director, **Arun Choudhary**

## ► BEST EXPERIENTIAL TOUR OPERATOR



The award was given to **Journey Sutra** and received by **Shishir Parab** Director, Far & Beyond Journeys, and **Shalini Dugar** Managing Director, Go Explore



► BEST AIRPORT HOTEL



The award was given to **ibis Delhi Airport** and received by its Director of Rooms, **Anuj Chaudhry**

► BEST CORPORATE HOTEL



The award was given to **Ramada Jaipur** and received by its Director of Sales, **Anmol Narang** and General Manager, **Harsh Kumar**

► BEST TRAVEL RETAIL STORE



The award was given to **Craft House, The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa** and received by **Monisha Gupta**

► BEST BOUTIQUE HOTEL



The award was given to **Flute Boutique Hotel, Jaipur** and received by its Director, **Rachna**

► HOSPITALITY PARTNER



The award was given to **Crowne Plaza Jaipur Tonk Road** and received by its General Manager, **Ashwani K Goela**

► AIRLINE PARTNER



The award was given to **AirAsia** and received by its Manager, Commercial-Sales & Distribution, **Pawan Nagpal**

► BEVERAGE PARTNER



The award was given to **Aspri Spirits** and received by its Assistant Manager-Trade Marketing (North and East), **Prateek Vijay Pandey**



# North celebrates crowning





# of travel & tourism stars





# 2016

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## india TRAVEL awards

April 8<sup>th</sup> : South & East  
August 5<sup>th</sup> : West  
November 25<sup>th</sup> : North

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