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# Finally! National Civil

Heralding a new era of flying, the National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) was finally approved by the cabinet on June 15, 2016, after much debate and discussion. The new policy opens up opportunities for new and existing aviation players alike, encouraging regional connectivity and reworking the 5/20 rule.



NISHA VERMA

While many arguable points are settled, NCAP brings in many passenger-friendly measures, promotes regional connectivity and gives the much-needed boost to the domestic aviation sector. A delighted **P. Ashok Gajapathi Raju**, Civil Aviation Minister, said, "We had unveiled the Draft Civil Aviation Policy only a few months back and since then a nationwide discussion has happened and we had received 450 good suggestions. There have been extensive interactions with all the stakeholders, be it airlines or airports, and we even had an informal consultation with a group of ministers. Finally, the cabinet has come to conclusion. The entire civil aviation department and all the secretaries have worked very hard on this, but the centrepiece of this policy is the commitment of making regional connectivity a reality."

Explaining the salient points of the policy, **Rajiv Nayan Choubey**, Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, said,



Rajiv Nayan Choubey, Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Dr. Mahesh Sharma, Minister of Tourism & Culture (Independent Charge) and Minister of State, Civil Aviation, and Civil Aviation Minister P. Ashok Gajapathi Raju

"It is the first time that an integrated Civil Aviation Policy has been decided and put into operation. It is a progressive step. The fulcrum of this policy is to take flying to the masses by making it affordable and convenient. Apart from that, with the policy, we are proposing to create an ecosystem which will promote tourism. It would lead to employment generation and balance the regional growth

because there are many airports and airstrips which are in contact with the backward parts of the country, and will get revived with this policy."

## Regional Connectivity

Choubey said that regional connectivity is one of the biggest highlights of the policy and they have worked not only on making airports available to remote areas, but also capping the airfares

in such regions. "The regional connectivity scheme will be put into operation in the second quarter of 2016-17, i.e. July-September. And we have proposed an airfare of about ₹2500 for a one hour flight that includes at least one Tier-II or Tier-III city. And to implement the same, we will revive the already existing air strips as no frills airports at an indicative cost of ₹50-100 crore. There is

a goldmine of 350 unused air strips and airports which were built during and after World War II. The revival of the airports will happen in a phased manner and will be demand driven. It will only happen in those states which are ready to reduce the VAT on Airline Turbine Fuel to one per cent and offer other support services and 20 per cent of Viability Gap Funding (VGF) to airline operators."

## 5/20 changed to 0/20

The new policy trashed the much debated 5/20 rule and replaced it with the 0/20 rule, which doesn't bar any airline to fly international, provided they have a fleet size of at least 20 aircraft. "We wanted the airlines to fly quickly so that there is greater competition, and thus the revised rule says that all airlines can commence their international operations provided they have 20 aircrafts. If that is there, they don't even have to wait even for a day. However, the airlines must deploy 20 per cent of their total capacity for domestic operations," said Choubey.

Raju added, "We want Indian players to serve Indians first. And 20 aircraft is a good mark for serving Indian skies and also fly abroad."

Apart from these main points, the policy states that India will enter into 'Open Sky' ASA on reciprocal basis with SAARC countries located beyond 5000 km from Delhi. The policy is dedicated towards bringing down the operational cost of flying, and hence they

# A game changer for the industry

The newly launched National Civil Aviation Policy has been welcomed by the industry. Some opined that involving the stakeholders' suggestions was the best thing, while others still want to wait and watch how it pans out.



TT BUREAU



Pankaj Srivastava  
Director-Commercial  
Air India

"The Civil Aviation Policy, which was much-awaited by all the stakeholders, addresses every issue. The roadmap has been laid out for all the stakeholders to develop on the policy. Apart from that regional connectivity is extremely important in this country. What we've seen is explosion of traffic between metros and Tier-I cities, but nothing much was done to connect Tier-III cities. But with this policy smaller towns would also get a chance to get connected and come in the mainstream."

"The key focus of NCAP 2016 is on affordability, connectivity and ease of doing business. The regional connectivity scheme (RCS) under NCAP will connect India's remote unconnected regions, boost tourism, create jobs and stimulate the economy in Tier 2-3 cities. The highly illogical and anti-competition 5/20 rule has been replaced with 0/20. However, the NCAP is unfortunately silent on other issues like formation of an independent Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), privatisation of Air India, market-listing of AAI, hive-off of Air Navigation Services (ANS) from AAI. The road ahead will be tougher as we go for its implementation in letter and spirit."



Amber Dubey  
Partner and Head, Aerospace  
and Defence, KPMG in India



Ajay Singh  
Chairman and Managing  
Director, SpiceJet

"It's a very good thing that there is a Civil Aviation Policy after so many years. There are some extremely positive features of the policy including the effort that is being made to increase regional connectivity as well as the effort to ensure that MROs in India become viable and profitable. The fact that the government is encouraging setting up of many new Brownfield airports and has even allowed self-handling by airlines, is a great positive as well. Although there are some areas of concern and we hope that the government is going to be open to suggestions while formulating the rules to this policy."

"It's a very bold step and was required for a very long time. There is indirect benefit to the outbound industry because after the 0/20 rule, an increased number of airlines will be flying out of India. However, one thing that the government must look at is the number of seats being utilised for outbound. There are almost 20 million people travelling out of India, and if these people do not utilise the infrastructure, it is going to get difficult. Airlines are going to withdraw if their seats are not utilised."



Guldeep Singh Sahni  
President  
OTOAI

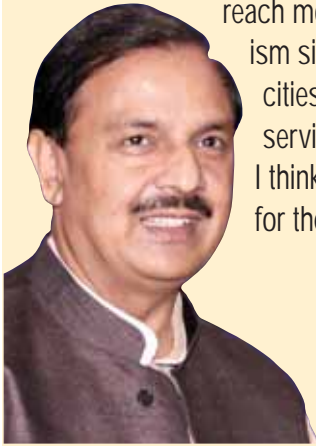
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# Aviation Policy takes off



“It’s our vision to take the tourism share of our country, which is less than one per cent to at least one per cent by 2020, and to 2 per cent by 2025. International tourists cannot reach most of the places where the tourism sites are situated in Tier-II and Tier-III cities because of non availability of air services, as well as lack of proper roads. I think this policy will be a game changer for the tourism industry.”



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

## Salient features of the National Civil Aviation Policy

- Airfare of about ₹ 2500 per passenger for a one-hour flight
- Allow Indian carriers to provide security services to other domestic airlines subject to approval of BCAS
- There will be no airport charges. Reduced Service Tax on tickets (on 10% of the taxable value) for one year initially
- The MRO business of Indian carriers is around ₹ 5000 crore, 90% of which is currently spent outside India.
- All airlines can now commence international operations provided that they deploy 20 aircraft or 20% of total capacity (in term of average number of seats on all departures put together), whichever is higher for domestic operations
- In the budget for 2016-17, customs duty has been rationalised and the procedure for clearance of goods simplified.
- Gol will enter into 'Open Sky' ASA on a reciprocal basis with SAARC countries and countries located beyond 5000 km from Delhi
- MoCA will persuade State Governments to make VAT zero-rated on MRO activities.
- Encourage development of airports by AAI, State Governments, the private sector or in PPP mode
- Provision for adequate land for MRO service providers will be made in all future airport/heliport projects where potential for such MRO services exists

have allowed domestic airlines to opt for self handling of their aircraft without of course breaching the security requirement, said Choubey. Another strong point of the policy is to bring down the cost of Maintenance, Repair ,and Overhaul (MROs), for which the government will take measures. Choubey stated, “In our country, the size of the MRO business is about ₹ 5000

## 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in aviation

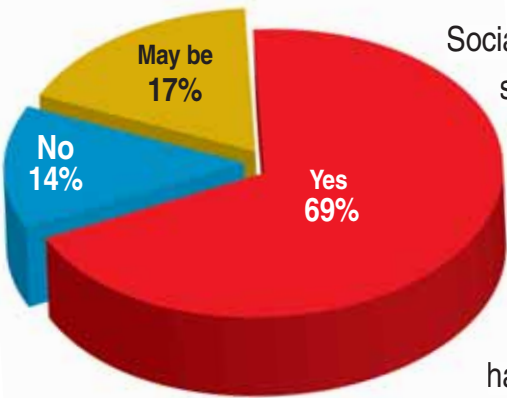
In a bid to modernise airports and attract money in the aviation sector, the Government of India has announced big changes in its Foreign Direct Investment policy and has opened up the airline business to 100 per cent ownership. Under the new FDI norms, foreign investors, except overseas airlines, can have up to 100 per cent stake in local carriers, while the equity holding has remained restricted at 49 per cent. In addition, the Government will now permit 100 per cent FDI in Brownfield Projects under automatic route, extending the earlier cap of 74 per cent. The extant FDI policy on airports permits 100 per cent FDI under automatic route in Greenfield Projects. As per the present FDI policy, foreign investment up to 49 per cent was allowed under automatic route in Scheduled Air Transport Service/ Domestic Scheduled Passenger Airline and regional Air Transport Service. It has now been decided to raise this limit to 100

per cent, with FDI up to 49 per cent permitted under automatic route and FDI beyond 49 per cent through Government approval. For NRIs, 100 per cent FDI will continue to be allowed under automatic route. However, foreign airlines would continue to be allowed to invest in capital of Indian companies operating scheduled and non-scheduled air-transport services up to the limit of 49 per cent of their paid up capital and subject to the laid down conditions in the existing policy.

crores, and of this 90 per cent goes out of the country. It’s a pity that our aircraft have to go to neighbouring countries for maintenance work when the technological skills available within the country itself are remarkable.” Choubey claimed, “With this policy, we expect the ticketing, which is today 80 million passengers, to at least grow to 300 million passengers in five years, which means there will be a growth of four times in passenger ticketing. Already the growth rate of domestic ticketing has been 22 per cent in 2015-16 as compared to 2014-15, while the growth rate in the world is just five per cent. And it will reach new heights if we reach the 300 million mark in five years.”

## Social media gets most likes

Social media has moved on from being just a photo-sharing platform to a decision-influencing one. But does social media presence transform into real revenue for an organisation? A TRAVTALK poll reveals that 69 per cent of the industry believes that an online/ social media presence gives the necessary impetus to businesses. About 17 per cent remain unsure of its utility, and 14 per cent feel that it has no contribution to a company's earnings.



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# Kolkata beckons Maya

The third edition of East India Travel Awards, to be held on July 15 at Novotel Kolkata Hotel and Residences, will honour the achievers of the eastern region, who have contributed to the growth of travel and tourism industry.



The third edition of the East India Travel Awards returns to honour the hard work and achievements of the travel and tourism industry from the region in the past year. Novotel Kolkata Hotel and Residences is hosting the event for the second time on July 15, 2016. The award statuette, Maya, celebrates the grandeur of tourism and imbibes the best representation of power to change the industry.

Sharing details about the event, **Gunjan Sabhiki**, Convenor, India Travel Awards, says, "Everyone needs encouragement to grow and India Travel Awards helps the industry in this endeavor. The Awards recognise the contribution and achievements of travel and tourism players and



**Gunjan Sabhiki**  
Convenor  
India Travel Awards

rewards those who have gone above and beyond to offer a superior tourism experience to travellers. The only Awards to recognise talent at regional level, over the years they have become the standard of excellence for businesses and organisations in the travel industry. We have received nominations from the remotest corner of the region. Industry



**Jai Kishan**  
General Manager  
Novotel Kolkata Hotel and Residences

awards in turn help the winners in improving their relationship with their suppliers, build their credibility and help them break into new markets."

According to **Jai Kishan**, General Manager, Novotel Kolkata Hotel and Residences, "India Travel Awards has proved to be immensely successful ever since its incep-

tion. Congratulations are in order for their seamless operations, unbiased jury decisions and the fillip that it provides to the entire tourism and hospitality industry. The benefits of hosting the Awards ceremony range from the tangible to all other realms of acceptance and visibility for the hotel and its team as the event provides an unmatched exposure across a plethora of relevant platforms," he says. Setting a new benchmark for the hospitality industry, the hotel has made preparations galore for the event. The property offers a 12000 sq. ft. rooftop banquet which is the city's largest all-day diner with 204 covers, a 24-hour fitness center, and is located within minutes from the international and domestic airports. The hotel has fared well for a ramp-up property with about 60 per cent occupancy in 2015.

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## A new feather in the CAP

The National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) is out and ready to be implemented. While much has been said about the policy and the ever archaic 5/20 rule, which has been replaced with 0/20, there is a lot in the aviation policy which is yet to unfold. Firstly, the goal towards regional connectivity, which does look interesting, is a humongous task to be achieved. However, the government is asking states to come up and ask for development of airports by giving subsidies. Even airlines will be asked to subsidise their taxes. The government will also be giving VGF on routes that fly to Tier-II, Tier-III cities. This would mean a number of stakeholders, that too with conflicting interests, on one table. How fruitful that would be is still to be seen, but the capping of airfares at ₹ 2500 per hour is certainly the first step in this direction. In order to save the cost that airlines are spending outside for MROs, the policy is aspiring towards making India a MRO hub, which in itself is a herculean task. However, it only reflects the government's primary goal—affordable flying. All that is needed now is a well-defined roadmap with timelines in place.

## Adapt to evolve

As per a Phocuswright report, India is predicted to be APAC's fastest-growing major travel market from 2013 to 2017 achieving a CAGR of 11 per cent, in line with China. However, India occupies a measly 7 per cent share in online travel in the APAC region while China's share is bigger than Australia & New Zealand (ANZ) and Japan combined. For a country that boasts the second largest population in the world and is also considered among the forerunners in technology, the online travel market does not do justice. Infrastructure is indeed one of the roadblocks and the Prime Minister's Digital India scheme is aimed at changing that, but a major chunk of the industry still remains pessimistic about the adoption of technology. With the future in technology's hands, a more fruitful approach for growth in business and the industry would be to adapt and evolve with the times and make the most of the opportunities. After all, if you can't beat them, join them.

TRAVTALK brings to you the news and events that made headlines 25 years ago and are even relevant today. From the year 1991, November issue:

### Bolghaty Leased to Oberois

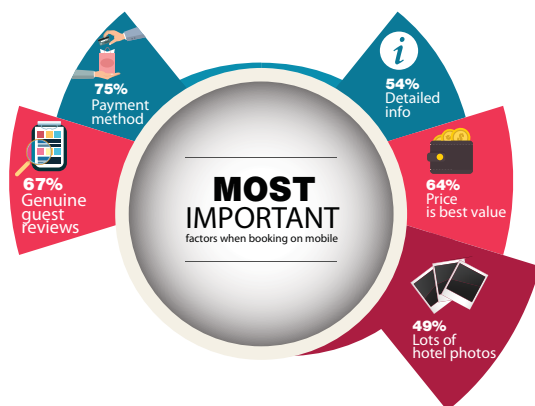
- ❖ The Kerala Government leased out the Bolghaty Palace at Ernakulam to the Oberois.
- ❖ However, differences cropped up between the Oberois and the state government over Oberois wanting complete control of the hotel.
- ❖ Speculations were rife that other KTDC run hotels would also be leased out to private players.

### UFTAA, IHA SIGN CODE OF PRACTICE

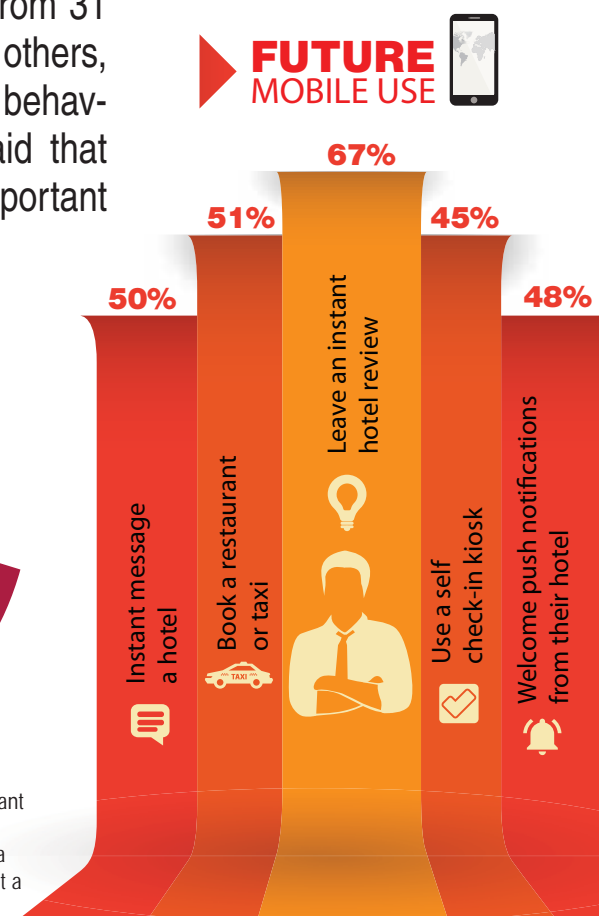
- ❖ The Universal Federation of Travel Agents' Association (UFTAA) and the International Hotel Association (IHA) signed a code of practice.
- ❖ The code applied to agreements between travel agents and hoteliers in different countries.
- ❖ The aim of the code was to offer advice and guidelines to travel agents and hoteliers to ensure smooth relationships, avoid problems and resolve any litigation amicably.

## Payment method affects booking

A survey done with 9,200 adults from 31 countries revealed, among many others, the impact of mobiles on booking behaviors. Interestingly, 75 per cent said that payment method is the most important factor when booking on mobile.



The survey also looked at what activities travellers would be prepared to do in the future on their mobile devices whilst travelling. The most popular future usage was leaving an instant hotel review (40%), 35 per cent said they would like to use their mobile to book a restaurant or taxi whilst travelling and a third of people said they would be happy using their mobile at a self check-in kiosk at a hotel.



Source: Hotels.com Mobile Travel Tracker



# Mining tourism on the anvil

With several projects to develop existing religious sites in the pipeline, Jharkhand plans to make the most of its mineral reserves by transforming several abandoned mines into tourist attractions, reveals **Prasad Krishna Waghmare**, Director – Tourism, Govt. of Jharkhand.



AHANA GURUNG

## Q How has tourism in the state fared so far?

At the time of formation of the state, we recorded only 23,991 tourists while the counting of foreign tourists was just 172. But in 2015, the total number of tourists visiting Jharkhand was recorded at 33,179,530 and the counting of foreign tourist reached 1,67,855. Jharkhand also held the 9<sup>th</sup> position in the country in terms of visitor arrivals in 2014. We are committed to bring our state at the top in this financial year.



Prasad Krishna Waghmare  
Director – Tourism  
Govt. of Jharkhand

We see mining tourism to be a prospective area and are following the best global practices to transform several abandoned mines of the state

## Q What are some of Jharkhand's tourism products?

Jharkhand is a fascinating state with luxuriant forests, captivating wildlife, enthralling waterfalls, exquisite handicrafts, sprawling water bodies. Wildlife sanctuaries, dense forests, sacred places and dams in Jharkhand have already been developed as a tourist destination. Around the capital, dams like Hatia, Kanke, Patratu, Dhurwa have always been popular among visitors while other places such as Dimna lake, Chandil dam, Tilaiya dam, Tenughat and Maithon dam are some of the frequently visited places.

## Q What are some of the new initiatives the government is focusing on?

The department is working on different aspects to boost tourism in the state. The main focus is to develop tourism infrastructure and

add more activities at all the tourist hotspots based on the profile of various locations.

One destination that has very good tourism potential is Maluti which is a treasure trove for age-old temples. It is a small village consisting of 72 ancient temples intricately decorated with terracotta, and is being developed to attract

religious tourists and travelers from the world over. Since Jharkhand is home to several mine reserves, we see mining tourism to be a prospective area and are following the best global practices to transform several abandoned mines of the state as a tourist attraction. It could be a different experience for the visitors and tourists who visit Jharkhand.

## Q What are some of the challenges in the industry?

Safety and security of tourists is one of the biggest challenges in the industry. However, we are committed to it and several steps have been taken to make their stay safer. The deployment of patrolling and static security personnel or 'Paryatak

Mitra' has been ensured at all the tourist destinations of Jharkhand. What's more, the people of Jharkhand are known for their simplicity and hospitality.

## Q What is your outlook of the Indian tourism industry?

In last 15 years the tourist arrival to the state

is showing an increasing trend which is a result of publicity campaign, building better environment for tourists and developing the basic infrastructure in a very short span of time. Tourism has a major role to play in promoting faster, sustainable and inclusive economic growth of the state. 📈

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## TAFI's new office bearers

All four office bearers for TAFI's national team have been elected unopposed and the new national team takes office on July 1, 2016.



TT BUREAU

After examining the nominations that were received by the TAFI Secretariat in Mumbai, a list of names were announced of those who have been elected unopposed and those who contested the elections on June 30 at Hyatt Regency in Ahmedabad. All four office bearers for the national team have been nominated unopposed. **Praveen Chugh**, of Delhi-based Business Travels, has been elected unopposed to the post of President of Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI). His nomination was proposed by Sheraton Travels and seconded by Golden Phoenix Travel. He previously held the post of Vice President, TAFI.

The last date for receiving nominations for this year's TAFI national elections, held biennially, was June 15, 2016.

**Pradip Lulla** of Cupid Travel & Tours has been elected unopposed as the Vice President of TAFI. His nomination was proposed by Trust Travel & Tours and seconded by Shrishti Tours & Travels. He earlier held the post of General Secretary,



**Praveen Chugh**  
President  
TAFI



**Pradip Lulla**  
Vice-President  
TAFI



**Aditi Bhende**  
National General  
Secretary, TAFI



**Jayesh Tharani**  
Treasurer  
TAFI

TAFI. **Aditi Bhende** of Pune-based Aarohan Tours & Travels is the new National General Secretary of TAFI. Her nomination was proposed

by Ashok Travel World and seconded by Kass Travels. She was elected unopposed to the post. She earlier held the post of TAFI Treasurer. **Jayesh Tharani** of Hopco Travels has been elected unopposed as Treasurer of TAFI. His nomination was proposed by Shoiz International Travel Services and seconded by Tulsidas Khimji Holidays.

As for the five posts for the Managing Committee, TAFI received seven nominations. These are: **A. Basheer Ahmed, Rajat Bagaria, Urvashi Dogra, A Satheesh Hegde, Bharat Shah, Darshan Shah, and Jyoti Singh.** Lulla, the newly-elected Vice President, TAFI, said, "Since we have received more applications for the Managing Committee Members than the posts, we will have the elections for these posts on June 30."

## Felicitating women

OTOAI has felicitated a number of women in the travel trade, reveals **Chitra Bhatia**, Chairman – Ladies Wing, Outbound Tour Operators Association of India.



NISHA VERMA

**B**hatia reveals, "When the Ladies Wing was formed in OTOAI, we wanted to do something for the women in the travel trade industry. We realised that there is female staff in every travel agency, who despite working and contributing a lot to the company, does not get enough recognition. And thus we decided to honour them."

As a first step, Bhatia, along with the OTAI secretariat, reached out to the members. "We had invited members to acknowledge



**Chitra Bhatia**  
Chairman – Ladies Wing  
OTOAI

women team members of their company. And they shared with us how some women in their organisations had evolved, contributed towards

their growth, as well as tirelessly worked for their own enhancement of knowledge and expertise in the domain of Outbound Travel and Tourism. The criteria were simple — loyalty, specialisation, initiatives, polishing of skills which got them recognised by their employers," says Bhatia.

She adds, "We got an overwhelming response from OTOAI members across India. After the names were in, I spoke with each employer as well as the nominee personally. I was pleasantly surprised that some of the companies had all women teams, while others nominated more than one member. And most of them had interesting stories to share about their journey within the organisation."

To commemorate the achievements, OTOAI mailed the trophies and certificates to the winners and their names were announced at OTOAI Convention in Bali.

### Names of the award recipients

- ✦ Krishna Barbhaya - Transglobe Travels, Rajkot
- ✦ Pooja Sharma - Holiday Merchants, Delhi
- ✦ Tina Raisinghani - Om Holidays, Ahmedabad
- ✦ S. Saranya - Grand Royal Tours Pvt. Ltd., Tamil Nadu
- ✦ Seema Ahmed - Gainwell Travel & Leisure Enterprises Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata
- ✦ Bhavana Purohit & Eden Dsouza - Windmill Holidays Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai
- ✦ Naina Mistry - Hana Travels Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai
- ✦ Sheha Narnaware & Mayuri Mattawar - Rising Sun Travel, Nagpur



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Industry welcomes NCAP

► Contd. from page 2



Conrad Clifford  
Regional Vice President,  
Asia Pacific, International Air  
Transport Association (IATA)

Overall, the final National Civil Aviation Policy announced by the Indian government last week is a step in the right direction. However, we are concerned with the way the policy on hybrid till was written. While the draft NCAP indicated that ‘tariff at all future airports will be calculated on a hybrid till basis,’ the final policy states ‘future tariffs at all airports will be calculated on a hybrid till basis’. This change will impact the basis for tariff determination for private airports in India, and also signal AAI to switch from the single-till approach used currently, to the hybrid-till. Passenger charges in India will increase, making air travel more expensive.

The policy has come after intensive deliberations by the Civil Aviation Ministry. We complement it for being a landmark development. It is definitely a comprehensive policy capturing the needs of an entire ecosystem of aviation sector covering airports, airlines, cargo, MRO, general aviation, aerospace manufacturing and skill development. And also, the policy has very categorical timelines and measures with statements like vision, mission and objectives. One important aspect is, for the first time, the ministry wants to bring the service levels in customs, immigration and security.



K. Narayan Rao  
Chairman  
ASSOCHAM



Bharat Malkani  
President  
FHRAI

The NCAP is not going to have any direct impact on the hospitality business, because we need a specific tourism policy that will enable the hospitality to grow. The National Civil Aviation Policy may allow greater flexibility for airlines to operate and there will be some growth in domestic tourism. We need a more rounded ecosystem for this industry, which includes civil aviation and tourism together. And we need the Finance Ministry to act on it. Unfortunately we do not have developed cruise routes as well as hostile borders due to which people do not come via road as well.

The Civil Aviation Policy is a step in the right direction. One highlighting fact is that it’s very consultative and reached out to all of us as Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM). A lot of our feedback has been taken into account, and thus it’s a step in the right direction. The government has addressed many of the areas, but there is always room for improvement. India is a big country and we have a number of tourist spots, and in order to enjoy all of them, it’s important to have regional connectivity.



Srinivasan Dwarkanath  
President  
Airbus division in India



Pradeep Panicker  
CCO  
Delhi International Airport

The NCAP is a game changer. I think it’s going to increase the number of more domestic passengers travelling by air. However, the fuel prices are major constraint. If fuel prices are stable, then we might see huge growth. One of the biggest things that the government is pinning its hopes on is regional connectivity. While it is an interesting thought with the support of airlines and investing into new airports with AAI, it would be interesting to see how the Viability Gap Funding (VGF) is going to work.

The Civil Aviation Policy needs to recognise the Non Scheduled Operators (NSOs) as a priority sector. The NSOs are considered to be only catering to the luxurious few. We are flying everyone and are also part of a lot of national calls during tragedies like the Uttarakhand floods. What we’ve asked for is just rationalising our costs that are prohibitively high. There are airports which are not served by scheduled carriers and will never be. Till then we are there. We connect to more than 100 airports in India today. We have requested the government to support and help us.



Bhupesh Joshi  
CEO  
Club One Air



Indiver Rastogi  
President & Country Head –  
Corporate Travel  
Thomas Cook (India)

We applaud the Government’s new Aviation Policy, truly a game changer on multiple levels: expanding the market by extending access/connectivity, affordability and opportunity for the airline, travel and tourism industry. The `2500 cap on one hour flights and carrier incentives ensure affordability, making last mile connectivity a reality for regional and middle class India. The move from 5/20 to 0/20 is a focused initiative aimed at encouraging fresh entrants and infusing fresh blood into the aviation industry, ensuring a catalysing effect for travel and tourism as a whole.



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# Less than 5% claim travel insurance

The need for travel insurance maybe growing but lack of proper knowledge about the benefits entailed in insurance plans leads to less than 5 per cent travellers actually making claims for the same.

**ANKITA SAXENA**

The number of passengers taking insurance has increased over the years as travellers realise that the benefits far outweigh the cost of such products. **Pankaj Nagpal**, Managing Director, Travstarz Global Group, feels that the competition in the space has been an added advantage as the rates have gone down thereby giving value for money to the passengers. "It is more preferred for international travel and still not so much for the domestic travel. The number of international passengers taking insurance will be around 70 per cent of our travellers," he says.

The data from Bajaj Allianz General Insurance clearly indicates the growing popularity of travel insurance, with a 14 per cent growth in the number of travel policies sold in the last two years while Tata AIG General Insurance estimates that approximately 4.5 to 5 million travellers buy travel insurance each year. "Also, as travel insurance is

mandatory for application of schengen visa, this rule has increased the coverage of Indians availing this facility," says **Ravi Menon**, Head, Foreign Exchange and Insurance, Cox & Kings.



**Pankaj Nagpal**  
Managing Director  
Travstarz Global Group

ism for which people avail travel insurance. Also, with many universities mandating students to have a travel insurance cover, this segment is also increasingly opting for such covers."



**Ravi Menon**  
Head, Foreign Exchange and Insurance, Cox & Kings

within and outside the country normally avail an annual cover. Trip on trip insurance is most commonly availed by travellers from the leisure segment. **M Ravichandran**, President-Insurance, Tata AIG General



**Dr. Abhijeet Ghosh**  
Head - Health Administration Team  
Bajaj Allianz General Insurance

Despite increase in number of Indians availing travel insurance, there is lack of knowledge about the benefits it entails. "Any person who is a frequent traveller and buys travel insurance is generally



**Syed A. Asim**  
Executive Director  
Bonton Holidays

travel insurance depending on the situation accounting for less than 5 per cent travellers who actually claim the insurance. Asim strongly believes that it is the moral responsibility of the tourism employ-



**M Ravichandran**  
President - Insurance  
Tata AIG General Insurance

Travel insurance is mostly availed by corporates families, especially travellers with kids enrol for the same. **Dr. Abhijeet Ghosh**, Head-Health Administration Team, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, says, "As per the company's data, leisure, education and business are the major segments of tour-

**Syed A. Asim**, Executive Director, Bonton Holidays, adds, "It is to be noticed that Indians travelling to domestic destinations have almost completely ignored travel insurance."

Students studying abroad, corporate and business travellers who travel often

Insurance, adds, "Medical treatment abroad is far more expensive than in India and in most cases, travellers do not carry that much money. Consequently investing some money towards an insurance premium can ensure a cover of up to \$500,000 which is a good option when travelling abroad."

aware of the benefits it brings and will make claims when due. A lot also depends on the travel agent to guide the travellers in the right way while giving them insurance and also guiding them at every step of the way in case of claims," says Nagpal. According to Ravichandran, on an average 5 out of 100 customers would claim

ees to make the users aware about the benefits of using travel insurance. "We add such inclusion on our buying costs and at times lesser than their buying cost to travellers. Not only shall this keep our patrons secure, we wish to ensure that every traveller gets insured hence secured," he says.

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# India in their eyes

Is India considered an 'easy' and 'doable' destination by international travellers? Six heads of National Tourist Offices draw from their experience of promoting one country into another and share what India should now do to boost its image.



HAZEL JAIN



**Hanneli Slabber**  
Country Manager – India  
South Africa Tourism

“ The Incredible India campaign was held by every single tourism board as a go-to campaign. It put India on the map. But as far as South Africa is concerned, India does not have the kind of prominence she deserves. A big part of the problem is rates. Only a handful of operators are selling India in South Africa making it incredibly expensive for South Africans. There needs to be more operators selling India with more products in the mid to budget segments.”



**Sheetal Munshaw**  
Director (India)  
Atout France

“ To further elevate India's allure, the Ministry could consider working on a systematic action plan to include the following: identify and work closely with key inbound operators; partner with travel professionals and benefit from their experience of different markets to create packages that would interest different countries; improve infrastructure and maintain the upkeep of our tourist sites, hotels and public spaces, showcase diverse flavours of Indian gastronomy and involve prominent chefs in its promotion.”



**Hector Dsouza**  
Director – India, South  
West German Tourism

“ MOT is doing a commendable job, especially over the past couple of years with new initiatives. It should now encourage other state tourism departments to do state-wise campaigns and set up their own offices in different continents. Fam trips for foreign press, bloggers and tour operators should be held at least once every two months. More emphasis should now be placed on getting more visitors from China and other Asian countries. India Tourism must also focus on ethnic travel.”



**Soraya Homchuen**  
Director, Tourism Authority  
of Thailand – Mumbai

“ Apart from its history and culture that strongly emerges in its Incredible India campaign, there is a need to showcase the amazing luxury experiences that are a big part of an Indian holiday. From palaces and heritage hotels to safari lodges and adventure sports, these high-end experiences that draw the luxury-seeker need to be seen by HNIs the world over. Of course, putting private entities into tourism campaigns is challenging. But I know that India – like Thailand – is trying to realign its focus to attract higher-spending tourists.”



**Lubaina Sheerazi**  
India Representative  
Ministry of Tourism, Oman

“ The first thing the MOT needs to do is change the popular perception that all we have is poverty mostly because of the way India is showcased in films and on television. As a result India tends to attract a higher percentage of backpackers. We need to showcase facilities and experiences that appeal to the luxury-seeking millennials. We also need to welcome production of films that showcase India's contemporary side. At the backend, our tourist sites need to be cleaned up and safety of women should become a reality.”



**Sumathi Ramanathan**  
Regional Manager (Asia  
Pacific & Middle East),  
VisitBritain

“ India has the potential to exceed eight million visitors a year. It needs to keep in mind that all promotional activities need to start with the customer at the heart. The disruption of technology in the way consumers seek information and purchase travel is evolving and India need to be comfortable embracing data, technology and digital platforms. At the base level though, it is still key to ensure a friendly visa policy, sufficient air capacity, efficient airports and transport links, improvements to health and safety including hygiene factors are fundamental.”



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# Luxury on the dunes

Rachit Roshyan, GM, WelcomHotel Khimsar Fort and Dunes, Rajasthan, spoke about the property’s various offerings at the ITC Luxury Showcase in New Delhi.

TT BUREAU

ITC Hotels showcased its luxury offerings at the Luxury Showcase held at ITC Maurya in New Delhi, which saw representatives from the many properties of the brand under one roof. The event focused on each of the ITC properties defined the destination with their architecture, culture and cuisine. “I think it’s a very good platform to meet representatives from various source markets that we have, including various travel agents, those from the corporate world, and sales institutions. I think it’s the perfect platform where we can get together to exchange views and also up sell our properties,” Roshyan said.

Talking about the Khimsar property, he said, “We are an 85 room property, which includes 18 luxury huts at the dunes. The hotel is the perfect MICE destination, wedding destination, as well as the best place to be for a fam-

ily getaway. The hotel has all the facilities including swimming pool, tennis court, spa, gym, mini theatre, evening cultural programmes,



Rachit Roshyan  
General Manager  
WelcomHotel Khimsar Fort and Dunes

In Khimsar, the hotel is a destination hence, we have a number of activities at our property to keep guests engaged

and a bonfire dinner at the dunes is the most unique experience one can have.”

However, Khimsar is not a stand-alone destination for those who come to Rajasthan. Roshyan says, “In Khimsar, the hotel is a destination. There is nothing else in Khimsar, and hence we have a number of activities at our property to keep guests engaged. We do jeep safaris, desert safaris and camel safaris and many other things. Also, we host a number of corporate events, product launches and many car rallies and motor bike rallies pass through Khimsar.”

He noted that Europe remains their biggest market. “The fort construction began in 1523. There is a historical, mystique attachment to it, which is very popular amongst Europeans, especially German and French guests. The character of the hotel and the concept around it, added with the experiential benefits that people can get out of staying in a hotel, counts a lot,” he added.

# 5 new properties in 2016

With five new openings scheduled this year, Rohit Vig, MD, India, Stay Well Hospitality Group, is upbeat about the brand’s expansion plans in India.

TT BUREAU

Riding high on its three-hotel-strong portfolio, Stay Well Hospitality Group has its feet firm in the India market, and now they are looking at expansion across India. The group has two hotels in Jaipur — Park Regis and Leisure Inn, and a Leisure Inn in Gurugram. In July, they are opening Leisure Inn Banjara Hills in Hyderabad, with 98 rooms and promising F&B outlets.

“After Hyderabad, we will be opening a second Park Regis in Goa with 120 rooms. Then we will be opening a Leisure Inn in Jodhpur at the end of this year. Also, within the next few months we will be taking over two more hotels operated by a big Indian operator, which will be converted into Park Regis,” Vig said.

They are also planning a Leisure Inn serviced apartments in Greater Noida, with 200 apartments, another on Sohna Road, Sector 68,

Gurugram, called Leisure Inn VSR Apartments; and one more in Sector-114 Gurugram, which is closer to the



Rohit Vig  
Managing Director, India  
Stay Well Hospitality Group

We have a variety of products for agents, both in India as well as around the world, which they can sell it to clients

airport. He also revealed that towards the end of next year, the group will be opening hotels in Kolkata, Bengaluru, and Mumbai. The company has sales offices in Mumbai, Delhi,

as well as eight regional sales team managers in India and seven overseas offices. Vig said they are also very active on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, where they promote the properties and various events and packages.

To engage with travel agents, Vig said, “We take part in many travel trade fairs and exhibitions. Also, we do door-to-door calling and organise cocktail dinners for trade every month. In fact, we have a variety of products for travel agents, both in India as well as around the world, which they can sell to clients.”

On mid-segment hotels, he said, “We are just starting. Today even when people visit friends and relatives in another city, they prefer staying in a hotel and that’s where we come into the picture. Leisure Inn is priced between ₹3,000-5,000, and Park Regis is ₹6,000 onwards. The growing middle class of this country is where the growth is.”

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Sabre President & CEO to resign effective Dec 31

■ **Tom Klein**, President and CEO of Sabre Corporation announced that he will step down from his role, as well as from the Board of Directors effective December 31, 2016. He will continue to serve as



**Tom Klein**  
President and CEO  
Sabre Corporation

CEO till the board finds a suitable successor. He said, "It's a tremendous honour to serve as President and CEO of Sabre and to work with our talented team around the globe. We have transformed Sabre into a dynamic software company and the business is positioned for continued consistent growth, so my successor will have a strong hand to play."

Klein's career with Sabre began while it was still a unit of AMR Corp., where he originally held sales and marketing roles with American Airlines, and then joined Sabre, leading a joint venture in Mexico. He went on to serve in a number of executive roles, including group president of both Sabre Travel Network and Sabre Airline Solutions. He was named president of Sabre in 2010 and CEO in 2013.

# Getting LCCs on GDS imperative: ITQ

With the domestic market getting more profitable, offering ancillary products through GDS and convincing the LCCs to join the GDS club can further open up the untapped growth potential, says **Anil Parashar**, President & CEO, InterGlobe Technology Quotient (ITQ).



TT BUREAU

InterGlobe Technology Quotient has been through heydays during the first quarter of 2016 as the organisation has witnessed constant growth the past few months, informs Parashar. He says, "Last month we have grown at more than 20 per cent and are hoping for a similar growth throughout the rest of

pace, he adds. "I think international and domestic travel is on the verge of explosion and we are looking to draw maximum benefits from this."

Parashar elaborates that this year they are focused on continuing to provide solutions to the travel partners. "How do we make the life of a travel agent and the traveller more comfortable? We aim



**Anil Parashar**  
President & CEO  
InterGlobe Technology Quotient

this year after a total of 30.9 million (309.35 lakh) passengers were carried during Jan-Apr registering a growth of 23.22 per cent as against the corresponding period last year. Domestic airlines carried 81.09 million passengers in 2015 and at this rate; the DGCA expects the numbers to cross the 100 million mark by the end of the year.

"A major chunk of the growth is coming from the domestic sector but the problem is that none of the low cost carriers (LCCs) are on

the global distribution system (GDS) and it reduces the size of the market," he says. "We have to try and get them on board that will reduce the work because today, most of this distribution is done through APIs which are very specific links. The other aspect is very critical to the travel community – if ancillary products can be offered through GDS, the ancillary revenue will definitely grow manifold. Not only does the airline earn more, the traveller also gets all its requirements under one roof. I think these two will be very helpful to grow the market by at least 85 per cent."

In Parashar's opinion, India has no dearth of opportunities that are still waiting to be tapped and foresees immense growth in the coming years. "As more airports open and new flights begin operations from India, it's only a matter of time that international travel will also grow even further," he re-

marks. The travel tech scenario in India is an equally high-growing segment, he informs. "There is no stopping it but the penetration level in the industry is low – it is not nearly as high as it should be. The reach needs to be widened as that is what drives the industry."

How do we make the life of a travel agent and the traveller more comfortable? We aim to provide solutions for these through various application programs, constant R&D and newer innovations

the year. Products like Travelport Rich Content & Branding and Trip 38 have been a success – over 150 airlines are on Rich Content and Branding while more than 1000 travel agents are on Trip 38. To be fair, the travel industry has been growing at a good

to provide solutions for these through various application programs, constant R&D and newer innovations," he says.

The airline industry is on an upward trend as well. The DGCA is upbeat on the growth of domestic airlines

## The only way is up

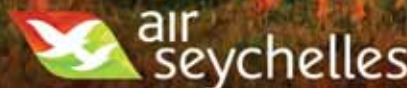
- Over 150 airlines are on Travelport's Rich Content & Branding while more than 1000 travel agents are on Trip 38
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# World's only Alpine town

Chamonix-Mont-Blanc boasts of all things exotic in France. **Nicolas Durochat**, General Manager, Chamonix - Mont Blanc Tourism Board, reveals more.



HARSHAL ASHAR FROM FRANCE

## What are the current numbers from India?

We receive up to 10,000 visitors from India annually, however these numbers are increasing year by year. The visitors mostly consist of groups or individuals who come in with tour operators.

## What is your marketing strategy?

The main point of our marketing strategy is working with Indian tour operators by sending them updates of the place and meeting up with them at



**Nicolas Durochat**  
General Manager  
Chamonix - Mont Blanc Tourism Board

various trade exhibitions. There will also be a personal visit sometime later on in the year, to engage with tour operators, and will also take part in an exhibition with Atout France to promote the region amongst the travel trade in India. We will also work with the media to increase awareness about the region by sending information and inviting them on Fam trips to visit the place. There would be a plan to disseminate and increase communication on different websites about the place.

## What is the USP of Chamonix?

The USP of the place would definitely be the Mont Blanc, and during winter skiing is a big draw. During the other seasons such as spring and summer there is the peak Aguille De Midi, the Montanvers and the Mer de Glace. There is no other point in the world where you could walk on glaciers. The charm lies in the fact that Chamonix is the only Alpine town in the world.

## Please outline the association between Chamonix Tourism Board and Cox & Kings?

The association with Cox & Kings is a historic and a strategic one. We have had a mutually beneficial and fruitful association thus far and are delighted to see that the night share in Chamonix Mont Blanc has been augmented to two nights instead of one in the series product.

In so far as the future is concerned we would like to focus on the MICE segment and showcase the many USPs of our destination in this domain through this strong alliance. We would in association with Cox and Kings like to invite head honchos of their leading corporate clients visit us and discover our myriad

offerings including the Golf offering, the varied gastronomy options including a slew of vegetarian options as well as Indian options, our state-of-the-art conference facilities and convention centre, off the beaten track team building activities and of course world renowned sightseeing highlights such as the Aguille du Midi, the Mer de Glace glacier, the Mont Blanc.

# SA slashes visa requirements

■ The South African Department of Home Affairs has finally submitted to the demands of the travel agents and tour operators regarding visa issues for Indians.

**Hanneli Slabber**, Country Manager – India, South Africa Tourism, has revealed that Indians do not have to carry birth certificates while traveling with children anymore.

"There are some more new requirements for Indians that is very, very positive. We are very happy that the visa process for Indians has been simplified. The processing time has also been brought down to less than five days from 15 days. The department has also eliminated the need

for carrying birth certificates for children. The Department of Home Affairs office has mapped out the seasons and they send us extra support people during those times. So the processing is quickened at both the High Commission as well as the Consulate specifically for the Indian market. The big part of our travel is during the Indian monsoon from May through August, which led to a huge bottleneck," she said.

She explains that the idea behind the document requirement was to ensure safety of the child travelling with adults.

"Fortunately, we realised that in India, the names of the parents appear in the child's



**Hanneli Slabber**  
Country Manager – India  
South Africa Tourism

passport. So that resolved the problem," she added.

The changes were announced by the South African Department of Home Affairs sometime in May 2016. Slabber will continue to head the tourism board until December 2016.

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## Air Manas starts 3<sup>rd</sup> Delhi-Bishkek

Air Manas, the Kyrgyzstan-based airline, will now be operating three times a week between Delhi and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.



TT BUREAU

The new addition comes after an overwhelming response that the airline as well as destination Kyrgyzstan has got from India. **Yusuf Serdar Erman**, VP - Commercial, Air Manas, says, "We opened the Delhi-Bishkek route on February 20, 2015. We are happy that our business is growing logarithmically and there is a huge demand from India for Kyrgyzstan. Thus, we are starting out third flight from Delhi to Bishkek. In fact, the route would offer better connections to Moscow, as well as Istanbul."

Throwing light on destination Kyrgyzstan, **Sharad C. Goel**, Managing Director, Lark Logistics, the GSA for Air Manas in India, says, "It's a beautiful country and a potential



**Yusuf Serdar Erman**  
VP - Commercial  
Air Manas

tourist destination for Indians as it hasn't been explored as yet. It is called the Switzerland of Central Asia. Ever since Air Manas' service started, we have been able to send around 8000-10,000 Indian tourists to the country, and in the last two months, the figure has already crossed 3000."



**Sharad C. Goel**  
Managing Director  
Lark Logistics

Air Manas also held a roadshow in Delhi recently to reach out to the trade and corporates as well. Goel, says, "With this roadshow we aim to meet our target. Leisure tourism is already established, while MICE tourism still needs to be developed in the right earnest."

After the roadshow, we have received 10-15 enquiries of big groups of more than 100 people each. In fact, Kyrgyzstan could be a very beautiful wedding destination. And the biggest advantage is that the flight is only three hours, and the rates are very low. We start from \$300 plus, and with big group, the rates are fixed. We do not charge anything extra."

Erman adds, "Travel agents can add the GDS to sell our products like Amadeus. Now, we are also opening our system to Abacus as well as Sabre for Indian market. Also, from Delhi there is a lack of flights to China hence starting August this year we will be connecting our Indian guests to Beijing via Bishkek."

## 'Infrastructure & cost' roadblocks

IATA foresees a robust capacity growth of 9.1 per cent ahead of a demand growth of 8.5 per cent among airlines in the Asia Pacific region.



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According to IATA's revised financial outlook for the global air transport industry, airlines in the Asia-Pacific are expected to accomplish a \$7.8 billion profit in 2016, up from \$7.2 billion in 2015. The outlook further explains that while capacity is forecast to expand by 9.1 per cent, the demand is likely to grow by 8.5 per cent.

At this year's IATA AGM, it was revealed that hindrances such as intense competition with the rapid expansion of the budget sector and restructuring in the Chinese economy have been identified as major challenges in the Asia Pacific region. Specifically for India, IATA draws



**Tony Tyler**  
Director General and CEO  
IATA

Lower oil prices are certainly helping — though tempered by hedging and exchange rates

attention to the continuing infrastructure and cost difficulty in the market as major

setbacks for the industry. The global air transport industry is expected to rake in \$39.4 billion this year (with a prior forecast of \$36.3 billion in December 2015) that will be generated on revenues of \$709 billion for an aggregate net profit margin of 5.6 per cent.

"Lower oil prices are certainly helping — though tempered by hedging and exchange rates. In fact, we are probably nearing the peak of the positive stimulus from lower prices. Performance, however, is being bolstered by the hard work of airlines. Load factors are at record levels. New value streams are increasing ancillary revenues. And joint ventures and other forms of cooperation are improving efficiency and increasing con-

sumer choice while fostering robust competition. The result: consumers are getting a great deal and investors are finally beginning to see the rewards they deserve," said **Tony Tyler**, Director General and CEO, IATA.

He added that despite adverse economic conditions, "it is a good time for the air transport industry. Consumers are getting great deals and lots of choice, investors are beginning to see reasonable rewards for the capital they risk and airlines are able to make critical investments and shore-up their resilience by paying down debt — although it will take several years of solid profitability to fix most balance sheets properly."

## Ethiopian adds 1<sup>st</sup> A350 XWB to fleet

Ethiopian Airlines has acquired the first African Airbus A350 XWB. In its successful 70 years of history, Ethiopian has so many firsts in African aviation industry. The A350 XWB will be the first Airbus aircraft in Ethiopian fleet and the first of its kind in Africa.

All seats are fitted with the latest high-definition touchscreen personal monitors and a higher selection of movies, TV series and audio channels. Inflight Wi-Fi connection will be



**Tewolde GebreMariam**  
Group CEO  
Ethiopian Airlines

made available on this aircraft in the future. Passengers with smart devices can connect to the world while others can use the smart individual touch screens on their seats when the Internet service goes operational.

Group CEO of Ethiopian Airlines **Tewolde GebreMariam**, said, "We are very pleased that Ethiopian has taken the leadership role in Africa and has become among the few leading airlines in the world to

invest in this latest technology and efficient flying machine.

Operating the youngest fleet in the industry with modern and comfortable customer features in cabin is one of the four pillars of our Vision 2025 15 years strategic road map and the introduction of the A350 is one component of this strategy. We have also made sure that our aircraft is designed and configured to surpass the expectations of our customers."



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## jüSta's Design Hotel in Chennai

■ jüSta Hotels and Resorts has launched Design Hotel Chennai, at Phoenix Market City, Chennai. A 26-room boutique hotel, the property aims to seamlessly connect past and present international design movements to the timeless local traditions of South India. Designed on the styles of four distinct contemporary art, each floor at Design Hotel is an infusion of traditional South Indian Art / Architecture, namely – Atri, Maya, Rooh and Nunya; and has been designed by renowned interior designer – Pronit Nath.

## Thumbs-up for travel tech

■ Travelport and its digital services companies Locomote and MTT were recognised for their contribution to the travel industry with four innovation awards, three gold and one silver at the Asia-Pacific Stevie Awards held in Sydney.

Commenting on behalf of Travelport and its sister companies Locomote and MTT, **Stephen Shurrock**, CCO, Travelport, said, "We are delighted that Travelport, Locomote and MTT have all been recognised for our innovation in travel technology at the Asia-Pacific Stevie Awards. The team has done an exceptional job in the development of new solutions for the travel industry as we continue to redefine travel commerce for our customers."

# Engage via email marketing

As the traveller continues to evolve, agents need to come up with revolutionary concepts to keep them hooked and keep coming back for more. Email marketing is one such tool if used smartly.

**W**hat is your response to the next travel related email in your inbox? The sector is very competitive with multiple options for

fun, curiosity and transparency is through email marketing. Today, email serves as one of the most engaging channels to target consum-

ers with what they want or may want. Mentioned below are key factors to help brands use email marketing to their advantage by engaging with customers to address their explicit and implicit needs.

Today, consumer's loyalty is determined on the basis of the engagement and responsiveness by that respective brand. Feedback and survey emails are one of the best ways to keep one's ears to the ground besides aiding in customising the message

a consumer to choose from. With today's consumer making informed choices, many of them are adopting a do-it-yourself approach by planning their own vacations, booking flights and hotels instead of merely relying on travel agencies to find the best deals. It is hence important for travel companies to find creative ways to better market to potential customers. One of the best ways to engage with the end consumer by keeping the element of

ers with what they want or may want.

Mentioned below are key factors to help brands use email marketing to their advantage by engaging with customers to address their explicit and implicit needs.

### Customer segmentation & personalised data

Imagine a scenario where you get an email in your inbox speaking about exactly what would click with you. It could

### Short, customised and snappy subject lines

Subject line optimisation is a science. Today, marketers can use advanced analytics to use the most relevant keywords and phrases in a subject line, so that they resonate with the end consumer. The key is to personalise content leaving an element of fun and curiosity. Brevity is equally important, with more than 50 per cent of the emails being opened on the mobile phone.

### Optimising time

According to studies, while email volumes within the travel industry peak in the summer, the winter season (January-March) witnesses the highest email open and click rates. Even the time of the day should be optimised for different customer segments based on past behavior.

### Mobile friendly

Email campaigns should be checked for rendering across all devices and browsers by using appropriate tools available in the digital ecosystem.

### Ask for feedback

A brand's responsibility does not end at just the customer's booking process. Today, consumer's loyalty is determined on the basis of the engagement and responsiveness by that respective brand. Feedback and survey emails are one of the best ways to keep one's ears to the ground besides aiding in customising the message.

### Follow up on abandoned bookings

Online cart abandonment is quite a concern in the travel segment as consumers shop through comparison. Travel companies should re-target consumers by sending two to three cart abandonment emails. The last abandoned cart email in the series can be sent with

a sweetened offer to tip over the transaction.

### Innovate

Break the clutter. Use cutting-edge innovations like video in emails, countdown timers, device and location targeting, decision analytics and creative optimisation to get the best click rates.

(The views expressed are solely of the author. The publication may or may not subscribe to the same.)



**Kunal Tomar**  
Head of Sales for Experian Marketing Services & Business Information Services, Experian India



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# Is India ready to travel smart?

If you thought the advent of web check-in was impressive, wait for what the Internet of Things (IoT) has in store. While still at a nascent stage, IoT will open the doors of convenience in travel. But, are we ready for the massive upgrade it will bring?



AHANA GURUNG



**Anil Parashar**  
President & CEO  
InterGlobe Technology Quotient

“The convergence happening through IoT of Apps and devices has already taken the travel market to a new level of exclusivity and is definitely going to put across more opportunities and convenience for travellers by giving access to wide information with just a click. Services can be automated as per the preference of the end user and has immense potential to help the travel industry and make it more efficient. With the emergence of modern technology support, we are moving towards an age where digitalisation has become a necessity. India, having an immense travel market is sure to grow in leaps and bounds. Though, for adoption of IoT, basic Internet infrastructure needs to be in place.”

“With IoT, hoteliers will take the personalisation experience for customer delight to a whole new level. This will see them embrace an integrated technology architecture that stimulates a reaction from the time a consumer has searched for a hotel or a travel experience to the time the guest actually checks out of the hotel. Hoteliers leveraging IoT technologies may even win the war against price discounts as it allows them to provide a unique value and create a loyal customer base in this fiercely competitive hospitality industry.”



**Avinash Lodha**  
Chief Executive Officer  
RezNext Global Solutions



**Meenu Sachdeva**  
Managing Director  
TI Infotech

“The Internet of Things (IoT) is most talked about these days. The IoT's thumb rule for the future has become “anything that can be connected will be connected.” Thus, growth in analytics and cloud computing is increasing the connectedness of travellers. The travel industry has doubtlessly seen further evolution which can be termed as good effects of IoT. Almost every company has stepped up its digital innovation of late. Today's travellers are ingenious; they need enhanced comforts along with personalised consideration. Hence, digitalisation has changed the way we connect with customers giving a more ‘personal digitised’ touch.”

“IoT is a debatable topic but I believe that everything will be connected. As everything that you have will be connected, you can access anything from anywhere and this will lead to more searches, more bookings and ultimately better revenues for the travel companies. We are at such a juncture where the people in India are looking for devices or mediums for them to get connected and eventually save their time and money, but at the same time we need to take care of issues related to data security and how the companies will find out a way to store, track, analyse and make sense of the vast amount of data that will be generated when more and more devices will get connected.”



**Jaal Shah**  
Group Managing Director –  
Travel Designer Group & Founder –  
RezLive.com

Contd. on page 24 ►



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## XML API

### HOTEL XML API

The hotel booking process can be a complex and lengthy one. With a multitude of accommodation options in every destination, each offering various facilities, quality, pricing, and availability, the task of navigating through this maze can be extremely tough.

### FLIGHT XML API

In recent years, the flight booking segment of the travel sector has become increasingly competitive. With the largest tour operators and websites offering customers a wide range of options all in one place, it's difficult for the smaller travel agents to compete.



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## Digital itineraries with Wetu

With over 400 operators and more than 40,000 suppliers currently on board, Wetu allows tour operators and travel agents to create engaging digital itineraries.



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In an attempt to cater to the technologically forward approach of consumers in the travel industry, Wetu ventured into the Indian market in 2014 and has been growing steadily ever since. It enables tour operators and travel agents to build inspiring digital itineraries with ease and provide media-rich content that motivates the traveller.

Paul de Waal, CEO, Wetu, says that the need for digital itineraries was crucial to match the expectations of travellers. "Most often, a flat, boring PDF document does little to incite the traveller's imagination. The traveller's expectations, fuelled by online research in which they access high resolution images, videos, virtual tours, and the like, are not met leading to disappointment.



Paul de Waal  
CEO  
Wetu

Wetu brings the digital age right to the convenience of your personal gadgets."

The tool is beneficial not just for the operator but for the supplier as well. "Through Wetu, tour operators, travel agents and destination management companies get to convert more enquiries into bookings. What's more, suppliers get to empower operator sales

through rich content and distribute it efficiently from one central platform," he adds. The software's large database of suppliers (hotels, lodges, guest houses, etc.) offers up-to-date information and presents a variety of options that fits every client's requirements.

Over 440 tour operators, travel agents and destination management companies from more than 25 countries all across the world currently use Wetu. De Waal comments, "We're growing quickly, and typically add tens of clients monthly."

Wetu has grown steadily since entering the Indian subcontinent, he informs. "A big factor is developing a good base of content in a region, and over the past 18 months this has been enriched substantially."

## Innovating to stay ahead

Rezlive.com has its own niche in the realm of travel technology, claims Jaal Shah, Group Managing Director – Travel Designer Group, Founder – Rezlive.com.



TT BUREAU

Rezlive.com provides its travel partners the option to book hotels, sightseeing and transfers all under one interface. "When travel agents connect with us they get access to mapped inventory for across the world. Our greatest achievement is in our in-house product development and service standards," says Shah.

"There are many features that make us stand out i.e. board basis filter; search by location; point of interest filter; dealing in local currency; no registration fees; quotation option; responsive site; store last five bookings; search and quotation details; option to book last five searched bookings; booked and map view; VIP desk; to name a few. The features that we have introduced are game changers and



Jaal Shah  
Group Managing Director – Travel  
Designer Group, Founder – Rezlive.com

are still the industry standards," he adds.

However, to survive in the industry, one needs to innovate every now and then. Shah says, "As far as customer experience is concerned, we have state-of-the-art infrastructure, backed by 24x7 service support and local presence in 22 countries. From business perspective, we have

been working on increasing our direct connectivity with leading hotel chains across the world and have been majorly concentrating on post-sale services. Also, to reach out to a larger target audience, we have a bigger and better sales team. We have even made RezLive.com responsive, in order to provide better booking experience to our travel partners."

Rezlive offers a plethora of products for the agents. Elaborating, he says, "Designer Indya, which is our inbound DMC, takes care of the needs of our travel partners for India, Nepal and Bhutan. Rezlive Thailand is the inbound Thailand DMC, and Designer Packages is the outbound product offering packages for across the globe. Travel Designer WLL is the Qatar DMC, and XMLHUB is our wholesale reservation system for XML needs."

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# TBO mobile App for agents

Travel Boutique Online is introducing a new B2B mobile application for the travel and tourism industry to offer a seamless and integrated booking platform. TBO is the only travel portal that offers a technological platform along with commercial fulfillment to its travel trade partners.



The TBO mobile application will be launched around July 11 for the travel agents. **Ankush Nijhawan**, Chief Executive Officer, Travel Boutique Online, says, "We want to allow travel agents to book travel services seamlessly without opening their desktops or laptops, just by using a mobile and tablet even when they are on the move."



Ankush Nijhawan  
Chief Executive Officer  
Travel Boutique Online

We want to allow travel agents to book travel services seamlessly without opening their desktops or laptops, just by using a mobile and tablet even when they are on the move

According to Nijhawan, the USP of TBO is that it offers its travel partners a technology platform where they develop the look and feel of the website and provide them with Application Programming Interface (API) for payment gateways. "Along with the technological support TBO also offers the largest inventory for hotels, airline services, insurance, rail bookings etc., thus making it the only company which offers this integrated technical and commercial combination," he adds.

The API system allows users to connect to a server through secured environment which allows confidential transfers. The payment gateway is designed in the travel partner's name and the client does not know that the transaction is taking place on TBO platform. The travel partner pays a

one-time fee to TBO and the client is charged annual maintenance fee by the travel partner based on volume of services procured.

TBO also offers Software as a Service (SaaS) model to

the travel markets in the Middle East and Africa. Nijhawan explains, "There is lack of knowledge amongst the travel agents in India regarding the services rendered under this system. The agents need to understand and value

software intellectual property and the quality of services being offered in order to understand the fee payment of such services. For us the India market is still a nascent market in this field as people don't like to pay

## On the offing

Along with technological support TBO also offers the largest inventory for hotels, airline services, insurance, rail bookings

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for these technology services and thus we have not introduced it in the country yet." He also points out that technology will be the survival quotient for the travel and tourism industry in times to come and dynamic packaging with a gamut of integrated solutions will be the future.



# Hassle-free connections

▶ Contd. from page 20

“By connecting smart devices, systems, processes and people, IoT is streamlining the back-end operations of airlines, hotels, resorts, cruise lines, and rental cars. At the same time, data from these connections is helping OTAs deliver more personalised campaigns and enhanced traveller experiences. As per TCS 2015 study, travel industry spent approximately \$128.9 million on IoT in 2015 and a huge chunk of this spend will go towards customer monitoring (30%) followed by product monitoring (26.4%).”



**Simon Fiquet**  
General Manager SEA & India  
Expedia



**Himanshu Verma**  
Chief Technology Officer, Yatra.com

“In the world of travel, IoT translates into access to more data and sharing of content. In times to come, while booking a hotel, the traveller may be presented with not just the hotel facility but also the room and its amenities that can be viewed prior to the booking. As of today, the Indian traveller is pushing for more technology on the mobile phones where they want to be connected on the move, but the low cost of labour lends itself to designate a travel agent at the backend to manage all the services. Thus, India is a mixed market of both offline and online systems but in times to come integrated solutions will be introduced.”

“IoT is in its beginning stages in travel but it is going to gain traction. It will greatly reduce the amount of hassle that travellers and travel providers have to go through today, via the power of technology. The travel industry will fundamentally change in next few years due to multiple technologies are reaching a tipping point - Cloud, IoT/Mobile and Big Data - and will change the way we travel. India has the potential to be an early adopter of new technologies, if not the first one. Our travel infrastructure is broken at the seams and technology will provide a way to utilise it much more efficiently while new infrastructure gets built.”



**Greeley Koch**  
Executive Director and CEO  
Association of Corporate Travel  
Executives (ACTE)

# RezNext helps evolve

RezNext is aiding the technological transformations that we are currently witnessing in the hospitality industry for hoteliers and travel agents.



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Once highly fragmented and unorganised, the hospitality industry is today being brought together by aggregators and management companies. There is a lot of effort to create standardised offerings and bring supply from Tier-II and III cities online. This transformation is happening within the mid-market hotel segment, says **Avinash Lodha**, CEO, RezNext Global Solutions.



**Avinash Lodha**  
CEO  
RezNext Global Solutions

He believes this transformation is driven by technology at the core. “Hoteliers are embracing technology to improve their operations and RoI from their online distribution efforts. RezNext is now addressing this need in the market with our revenue-enhancing technology tools and services. We help hoteliers establish an online presence directly through

their brand website as well as through connections with all the online travel agents. Our real-time business intelligence empowers hoteliers to stay in complete control of their distribution plans while our specialised revenue service helps them improve their yield,” Lodha adds.

RezNext Global Solutions is also powering the technology for some of the

leading travel agents and corporate aggregators. It sees great synergies in partnering with travel agents and corporate booking consolidators as they bring to the table the strength of demand and supply. “Meanwhile we enable a quick and amazing booking experience, powered by our sub-second data transfer functionality. Our solution suite has an overarching business intelligence tool built into it. Connected, seamless, real-time – these form the core pillars of our technology architecture,” Lodha says.

Other than business hotels in the metros, hotels in the leisure markets, Tier II cities and seasonal markets are also partnering with RezNext. There is an increased demand from hoteliers and travel agents to adopt both m-commerce and e-commerce concepts to be able to connect better with guests.

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## Revenue Management Solutions 3.0

Internet Moguls has just launched its Revenue Management 3.0 version for the small and mid-sized hotels.

Hotel marketing agency Internet Moguls has unveiled its Revenue Management version 3.0 for eight of its client countries. **Avijit Arya**, Chief Mogul, Internet Moguls, said, "I think we've hit the sweet spot in this new version of our solution for small and mid-sized hotels, the right mix of revenue management tools and backed by 24-hour trained revenue management experts coupled with an army of digital marketing experts with an award winning creative team, gives the hotel a No Excuses solution. So plug into our network, a 7-day set up and the hotel owner and general manager is free to do what they do best and transfer the revenue promises made to the CFO to an able team of professionals and systems, with a track record of delivering over 20 million in revenues for over 550 hotels across the globe. I am the son of a small hotel owner and I understand their problems and the Moguls Revenue and

Digital Solutions are made for small and mid-sized hotels who struggle to find honest partners that have a time tested infrastructure of people + systems. We're very excited because before this press release went out we got a few 'it's working Avijit, why the



Avijit Arya  
Chief Mogul, Internet Moguls

**We've hit the sweet spot in this new version of our solution for small and mid-sized hotels, the right mix of revenue**

hell didn't you launch this earlier' mails from clients. I would love to talk to hotels who think we understand their problems and can help them," he said.

## Next level of DMC platform

Bonton Infotech is offering its agents a new DMC fulfillment system and Software as a Service (SaaS) model, facilitating them with the latest travel technology to be relevant in the changing spectrum of the industry.



TT BUREAU

Keeping pace with evolution in travel booking formats and automation of customer services and back office processes, Bonton Infotech has introduced the next level of Destination Management Company (DMC) platform which apart from regular DMC operations has a Customer Service Fulfillment Module for the ground operations team like drivers, guides, restaurants, etc.

Through this unique module, the clients are provided with QR Code enabled service vouchers which can be produced on the mobile phone or a printed copy of the same when presented is scanned by the ground service provider through the Bonton mobile application and updates the system on delivery of the service in real time.

"This will allow hassle free and seamless delivery of services, eliminating the manual errors and communication gaps. Coming versions will also have a system of Client Rating against each service that will help improve services and an Agent Dashboard that will help travel agent to view status of services rendered to their clients," says **Syed A Asim**, Executive Director, Bonton Infotech.

The company has also introduced the SaaS (Software as a Service) based technology platforms which essentially entails paying a small subscription fee on per usage basis for travel agents. This is possible due to adoption of latest technology stack and cloud enabled systems. "Pay per usage of software is becoming more important than installing full-fledged systems from the various providers. The



Syed A Asim  
Executive Director  
Bonton Infotech

agents can pay per use of the services without the hassle of hardware, security and heavy installment costs. Agents are moving towards providers for an ecosystem of complete solutions and not stand-alone technological assets," he adds.

According to Asim, as of today, 85 per cent of the travel business takes place through offline agents while only 15 per cent is contributed by online bookings. Customers want informa-

tion to be on their tips and thus it is necessary that the agents should be abreast with the latest happenings in the technology spectrum, he explains. "While technology will play its important role, clients in India will still depend on the personal touch of the service provider, as and when needed. This will require a strong integrated system at the back-end for the seamless service delivery experience," adds Asim.

There is an increased demand for automation in travel industry. "The myth that the advent of technology may leave the offline agents redundant is gradually fading away. There is more acceptance among the agents as they see that adoption of technology, not only enhances their business but also makes them more relevant in the changing spectrum of the industry," he says.

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# Online B2B platform trends

Are online B2B agencies lagging behind in an industry where B2C is the stronger buzzword? **Paresh Parihar**, MD & CEO, Qtech Software, speaks with **TRAVTALK**.



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**Q** Are B2B travel businesses shying away from the online world?

Not at all. The B2B market has unexplored potential. As more and more agencies go online, there are certainly more competitors, but this provides for a healthy and competitive ecosystem that gives the end traveller unprecedented choice. Of course, as the market has evolved over the years, there are new challenges as agents expect more and more. Online travel companies that have anticipated and addressed these needs are surging ahead.

**Q** What innovations will contribute to the growth of online B2B companies?

The way inventory is distributed has become better and faster. As redistribution of inventory evolves from a traditional website to API connec-

tions, online B2B travel companies are able to leverage the buying and selling power of their partners to increase sales, in many cases, exponentially. For smaller agents without the budgets for a full-



Paresh Parihar  
MD & CEO  
Qtech Software

fledged technology platform, a white label solution from a large consolidator opens up opportunities.

Secondly, service level expectations are higher than ever before, and personalisation is a key aspect to the booking process, especially

for B2B. Accessibility is key – as the workplace goes mobile, agents are able to leverage the power of a mobile interface through a mobile-friendly website, or an App; to take advantage of high value bookings that come in during non-working hours with a fast response time. By interpreting data on a system level to simplified graphs and tables, sales teams have the information they need for follow-ups at their fingertips.

**Q** What is the latest buzzword in travel technology?

Artificial Intelligence will change the game for many online travel players. Big data is now adopted by the larger consolidators in the market, but leveraging on processing this data is still a challenge. Artificial intelligence will open up new avenues to meet multiple challenges that the industry faces, and also to bring in the next level of personalisation.

# Mid-back office system

When it comes to choosing the right technology provider for your company, a number of things have to be kept in mind.



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**S**peaking on the importance of a mid-back office system, **Mohandas P. Unni**, General Manager, Core Solutions, says, "A good mid-back office system is the backbone of a travel agent's business. Many people go for the cheaper options, and in most cases it will lead to bigger losses. Choose a system with proven track records, talk to the customers who are already using that system for last few years. Check the credibility of the vendor, check how long they are in the travel technology."

With a number of new technology solution providers mushrooming in the industry, Unni advises, "It's always risky to take back office system from newbies. Make sure that this vendor is in the market for at least 5



Mohandas P. Unni  
General Manager  
Core Solutions

to 10 years; is serving 100+ customers; and catering to 3 to 4 others countries. It's an investment for next many years and needs to be done in the right one."

Another thing he says one should keep in mind is product features. "If possible get a live demo of the product, and ask how it would help in your business cases. The system should also have multi-GDS compatibility; mul-

ti-currency support; real time credit control system with GDSs; auto invoicing facility; automatic BSP reconciliation; integrated front office module; multi-user, multi-location and multi-department support; right chart of account; defined user roles; detailed audit trail & version control; dynamic reporting capability; integrated fixed assets module; possibility of future enhancements; automatic and manual backup support; data exporting (from reports at least) to CSV, EXCEL, PDF or XML; capabilities of a CRM; and facility to send invoices and statements directly from the system," he lists.

Unni says that one should also ask for local support (before & after implementation) and issues tracking system in case one needs to report anything.

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# New accounting App for trade

Travelacct, the latest accounting software provider on the block for travel agents, is all set to launch its App, reveals **Paresh Shah**, Director, Travelacct.



**Paresh Shah**  
Director  
Travelacct



TT BUREAU

Offering backend accounting software to all types of travel agents, tour operators and car-hire agents, Travelacct, is comparatively a new kid on the block. Shah elaborates, "Travelacct is developed

using state-of-the-art PHP and SQL technology. The software is completely web based and thus can be accessed from anywhere."

However, he said that they are making sure that it is compatible with the Indian market. "In India most of the

Chartered Accountants prefer data in Tally, so we have integrated export to Tally function. We have covered each type of travel agent, whereas other software cater only to a specific type of travel agents." But it is inevitable to be able to adapt to the growing needs of the industry. Shah agrees,

"With most travel agents going online we also offer to integrate the accounting software directly to their portal so there is no delay in preparing accounts. In fact, we are open to any type of customisation that the client wants." In order to be accessible on the go, Shah is developing

an App for Travelacct. "Very shortly we are also coming out with an App of our software, so the clients can access the software directly from their smartphones. We already have a base of around 150 agents using our software in a short span of six months. We hope to

promote and sell the software throughout India, Asia, Middle Eastern and African countries," he reveals.

## Mobile bookings on the rise

According to **Sarada Muduli**, Revenue Manager, Lords Hotels and Resorts, 90% of travellers reserve their choices, services and products through the mobile platform.



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Muduli believes that in 2017, the total mobile users is expected to double to 4.77 billion users which will help the hospitality industry to have more competitive price points and quality services which will in effect ensure higher guest satisfaction.

"At Lords, we offer smart online booking facilities making it beneficial in terms of both room tariff as well as convenience of room reservations for the guests. At the hotel level most of our new properties are Wi-Fi enabled, offering clients with seamless connectivity. Besides this, digital conference facilities, mobile communication and automation, smart room keys and direct feedback on social media platform are some of the other initiatives to help the guests keep up," says Muduli.



**Sarada Muduli**  
Revenue Manager  
Lords Hotels and Resorts

Digital conference facilities, mobile communication and automation, and smart keys help the guests keep up

Muduli believes that technology has an advantage which allows replacement of expensive human labour with technological labour, thus not

only reducing labour costs but also avoiding issues of customer service.

Identifying the impact of technology in various segments, Muduli says, "We are witnessing that technology has a significant role in the airline industry as well where dynamic fares help to increase the passenger traffic. Similarly the dynamic price point through revenue management software, channel manager helps to float rate on all Online Travel Agents (OTAs) for both Internet Distribution System (IDS) and Global Distribution System (GDS) and review management helps to keep an eye on review of all competition." He also adds that in today's hospitality scenario, customer retention is more important than creating new customers. Many loyalty based technology helps the hospitality industry to maintain and operate guest loyalty programmes.

## Quick response to demand

The travel trade is now actively adapting integrated comprehensive solutions to meet the customer demands in shorter time.



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Noida-based TI Infotech offers end-to-end technology solutions and services to the travel and tourism industry. Its globally-accepted solutions, Travel Cloud Suite, which is an online booking engine, and Travel Assist, a comprehensive tour management software, helps its clients to automate and streamline their business in a lucrative manner.

**Meenu Sachdeva**, MD, TI Infotech, says, "When we talk about business travel, the booking process is key. Hence, we have come up with Corporate Self Booking Tool, one of the enhanced module of our product TCS. It is a robust, user-friendly web-based solution designed to run a smooth liaison between corporate clients and travel houses. We have also been enhancing our existing products by



**Meenu Sachdeva**  
MD  
TI Infotech

adding new modules time to time based on the market requirements."

She believes in educating the customers rather than merely selling products. According to her, when a customer is better informed, it becomes easy for them to make purchase decision. TI Infotech uses social media, direct mailers and few other digital platforms to educate the benefits of its products, which has been fruitful in many

instances and earned it a lot of customers.

Underlining the cities in India that are showing a growing potential for technology products, Sachdeva adds, "In recent years, the Indian start-up environment has really taken off. Tier-I cities already existed in this league, now Tier-II and Tier-III cities are in the excessive lead of evolving technology and flourishing its domestic market. We get a lot of product query from Tier-II and III cities of late."

She insists that adopting technology in these times isn't an option. Technology is very important to tap the main trends that are affecting the supply and demand of the travel sector. The travel trade today knows this fact and is actively adapting integrated comprehensive solutions to meet the customer demands in shorter time, she adds.

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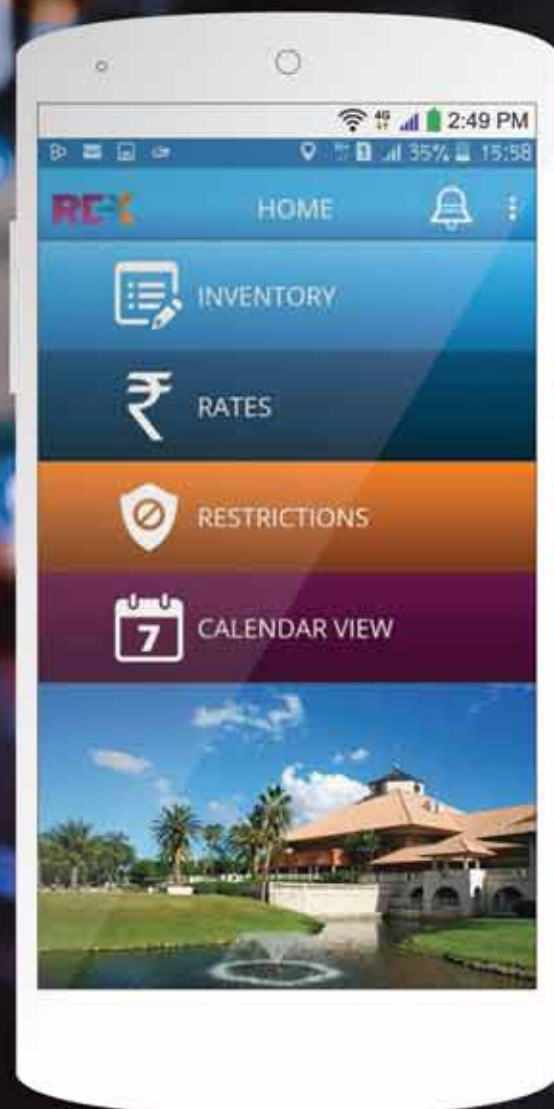
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# Mobile web reservations

eCare Technology's latest offering Rezofy brings the entire web reservations platform on mobile and also adds loyalty to whole scheme.



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Technology is rapidly drifting towards mobility. Anything related to travel has to be available, even while on the move. As a consequence, most travel services have migrated to mobile devices including but not limited to bookings, research, planning and mobile city guides, explains **Vivek Sanghi**, Co-founder, eCare Technology Labs. "We anticipate more specialised tools that will help optimise last-minute pricing and managing unsold inventory without affecting the revenue. What is lacking is a very important component — a market place for travel agents to help them bring more business," he says.

After feedback from customers, Sanghi realised that despite being online, the lack of mobile offerings had caused many SME Travel



**Vivek Sanghi**  
Co-founder  
eCare Technology Labs

Business clients to lose business to industry leaders as they were drifting towards mobile ecosystem. "As a matter of fact, a large percentage of bookings, as high as 45 per cent, happen on mobile devices, which clearly indicates the steep growth."

To fill this gap, eCare Technology Labs has launched Rezofy which brings the entire web platform on

mobile and not only adds additional sales channel, but also brings loyalty to the business. "The whole idea and passion our team carries here is 'to make all reservations online', be it on web or mobile platform. We have been constantly working to add more and more features to make the system more useful, powerful so that our customers can utilise the full potential of the technology to maximise their business interest. Rezofy opens a completely new sales channel which is a mobile App that can be downloaded from the travel agencies' own website as well as app stores on iOS and Google, complete with personal branding," Sanghi elaborates.

Sanghi says they are working on increasing their presence in the Indian sub-continent first, and then plan to move to other emerging markets similar to India.

# 360° online presence

BookingJini offers technology solutions to its hotel partners and believes that staying connected is directly proportional to conversions in terms of sales.



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**Sibasish Mishra**, Chief Executive Officer and Co-founder, BookingJini, says, "We offer complete technology solutions to the hotel industry which is our USP. With the help of various tools we ensure a 360 degree online presence with absolute sync across platforms, social media, web 2.0 etc. Our online presence executives ensure that the website of the hotel is generating revenue. The online reputation management tool provides hassle free and easy online upload of information."

This online platform ensures that the hotel is connected to thousands of tour operators and travel agents to cater to their needs and thereby increasing the distribution and sales of the property. BookingJini believes analytics and guest tracking



**Sibasish Mishra**  
Chief Executive Officer and Co-founder,  
BookingJini

is a key factor in today's competition. Mishra adds, "Social, Mobility, Analytic and Cloud Computing (SMAC) are the key for success in the digital world today. Our analytics and revenue managers work together to ensure the website lookers are bookers. With real-time offers and real-time handholding our team will increase the conversion rate and enhance the bottom-line of the hotel."

Mishra explains that the company is innovating and introducing products as per the specific needs of the hotel industry. "The hotels offer various products like room inventory, conference halls, restaurants and other ancillary services. BookingJini will launch separate products to increase the sales of the hotel from various platforms like online and mobile," says Mishra.

Opining on the technologically spectrum in the hospitality industry, Mishra points out that digital bookings are gaining ground gradually. "In 2016, our focus is to expand our services pan-India and once that is established we will move to neighboring countries. Middle East market and other South East Asian countries will be focused upon hereafter and the market of Africa will follow on or expansion map," adds Mishra.

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# 100 bigwigs to attend UNWTO-WTM summit

WTM London this year will tackle the vital matter of traveller safety, terrorism and other problems facing the industry.

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WTM London is the event where the travel and tourism industry conducts its business deals. Buyers from the WTM Buyers' Club have a combined purchasing responsibility of \$22.6 billion (£15.8 billion) and sign deals at the event

London delegates his vision and experiences on the rise of digital transformation, innovation, connected consumerism and digital lifestyles when he takes to the WTM Global Stage on November 7, 2016.



worth \$3.6 billion (£2.5 billion). The three-day summit will be held from November 7-9, with opening hours extended from 10 AM to 7 PM for all three days.

The new boss at travel giant TUI Group will make the opening address at the UNWTO & WTM Ministers' Summit at WTM London 2016. Fritz Jousen will speak to an audience of around 100 tourism ministers and senior industry executives from across the globe at the high-profile event, which will celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the summit. The summit will explore how the tourism sector can work together to make travel safer and more seamless.

"Safety and security in all its aspects is a global challenge that can only be addressed through collective action and a global response," said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai. "Public and private sectors must plan, work, communicate, and respond together. Stepping up cooperation between the industry and governments is fundamental to enhance security and advance travel facilitation."

Simon Press, Senior Director, WTM London, said, "This year's summit will tackle the vital matter of traveller safety, looking at terrorism and other problems facing the industry, ranging from volcanic ash clouds to floods and earthquakes."

Award-winning author, digital analyst and futurist Brian Solis is also a keynote speaker at the summit. Solis will share with WTM

## Musical Saturday nights @ The Park New Delhi



Saturday nights will now get more musical with the launch of a new band at the Aqua Lounge at The Park New Delhi. Rohit Arora, Area General Manager, The Park New Delhi, welcomes everyone who would like to enjoy old Western classics by the pool. A group of music maestros of the city have come together to form this band who would play every Saturday from 8:30 pm-10:30 pm at the Aqua Lounge, The Park New Delhi.



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# IATO's first luncheon meet post election

The Indian Association of Tour Operators' (IATO) luncheon meet, first after the elections, was held at Pride Plaza Hotel, Aerocity, New Delhi. The event saw in attendance the newly-elected team and the members were informed about the initiatives and opportunities IATO was working on for their benefit.



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# American's GSA in India

American Airlines held a cocktail reception in Delhi to announce the appointment of TAL Aviation as its GSA in India, and also celebrate its 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.



Speaking at the occasion, **Parviz Ladha**, Regional Offline Sales Manager EMEA & Southern Asia, American Airlines, said, "TAL Aviation has been a partner of American for over 20 years. They've represented American Airlines in Russia, Turkey, Israel, Poland and now they are going to be the eyes and ears for us in India. They have a dedicated team to support and sell American in the marketplace."

TAL Aviation has been in India for the last seven years. They started with representing Alamo, international car rentals in India. "Our main focus will be on partnership with British Airways. Besides London, we will be looking forward to the traffic from India via many other gateways in Europe — Madrid, Paris, Barcelona, Milan, Rome, Frankfurt, Munich, Brussels, and Zurich," said **Gideon Thaler**, President & CEO, TAL Aviation Group.



**Parviz Ladha**  
Regional Offline Sales Manager EMEA & Southern Asia, American Airlines



**Gideon Thaler**  
President & CEO  
TAL Aviation Group

Ladha is optimistic that sales will boost after the appointment of the new GSA. "We have a strong partnership with British Airways, which would help us to sell as we code-share with them out of five Indian cities. We fly to all of the major US cities including New York, Chicago, Miami, Dallas, and Los Angeles, which are frequented by Indians and we have connections from the nine major hubs in the US. We have a great product in hand. We have invested over three billion dollars on the ground and in the air to improve it further," she said.

Ladha claimed that travel agents are the spine of their success in India. "Whether it's a DMC or OTA or the brick-and-mortar travel agency, they are the ones who promote American. Our GSA actually goes on for sales calls. We also do agents seminars to educate the consultants on how to sell American. We also do joint sales calls with British Airways," Thaler added. "We appreciate the travel agents' know-how and skills in the market. We are not going above the travel agent, and not approaching the corporate directly."

# Promoting India in Oz

The 'Know India Better' series by India Tourism and Australia India Travel & Tourism Council has helped agents in Australia to learn about Indian destinations.



A horde of travel agents and tour operators, keen on knowing more about India, attended the 'Know India Better' event held in Sydney. This was the final of a series of sessions that was launched last year as a joint strategic initiative of In-

India, AccorHotels, Intrepid Travel, Insight Vacations, Far Horizon, Taj Hotels, Grace Hotel, Special Holidays Travel were present at the event.

Attendees heard about India from various presenters — India Tourism, Intrepid Travel and Air India — and

to **Sandip Hor**, Chairman, AITTC, this project has immensely aided the industry allowing agents and tour operators to excite potential travellers on India.

**B Vanlalvawna**, Consul General of India in Sydney, in his address outlined im-



dia Tourism Sydney and Australia India Travel & Tourism Council (AITTC).

**Kanchan Kukreja**, Acting Director, India Tourism Sydney, said, "Australia has moved from ninth to the seventh position in the list of foreign tourists arriving India." Air

about India's various tourist draws including some of the economic and technological developments. **Madhu Mathen**, Manager, Air India, emphasised how the direct flights between Sydney/Melbourne and Delhi are contributing to the growth in bilateral travel. According

portance of tourism as an excellent link for enhancing bilateral relationship between India and Australia. Award-winning travel writer **Catherine Marshall** and former politician and long distance runner **Pat Farmer** narrated their recent experiences of travelling in India.



# Accelerate visibility and bookings

**Simon Fiquet**, General Manager – South East Asia & India, Expedia, talks about the Accelerator Overview program that allows hoteliers to boost their visibility to the top on city-wise search, and explains why India is a top priority for the online marketplace.

 AHANA GURUNG

Expedia entered the Indian market in 2010 and by early 2011, they had rolled out their first brand campaign announcing their venture. Ever since, the group has grown immensely in the Indian market, owing to the innovative products, competitive offers, and novel marketing campaigns witnessing a consistent growth, informs Fiquet.

“India is amongst the first key markets for us given its importance, scale, and potential. It is amongst the top three markets in



Simon Fiquet  
General Manager – SEA & India  
Expedia

Accelerator enables hotels to adjust compensation for the days they need more visibility and bookings; the goal is for them to get a boost in our marketplace relative to other hotels

terms of size and growth in Asia and one of our largest markets, with sizeable workforce here, it is a priority market,” he says.

What’s more, a report by consulting firm KPMG states that the Indian online travel market will reach \$13 billion by 2017, up 53 per cent over 2014, and will outpace several western markets in terms of online travel growth.

Fiquet says continuous research and understanding of the consumer and catering to their requirements has had a huge hand in the constant evolution of the group. He elaborates, “Our focus is to continue to invest in content supply and market-

ing spends. Further we will also align our global acquisition to realise greater consumer value for this market. Technology has been a key differentiator for Expedia and we are leveraging data analytics as an underpinning tool to redefine consumer experience and also to cater to their needs in a seamless intuitive manner.”

Working in line with their principle of constant evolution for growth, Expedia launched the Accelerator Overview tool earlier this year. “Accelerator enables hotels to adjust compensation for the days they need more visibility and bookings; the goal is for them to get a boost in our marketplace relative to other hotels with similar strengths

and quality score ratings,” Fiquet says.

Another strategy adopted by the organisation is the Real Time Feedback that is designed for feedback from hoteliers who want more support in securing positive hotel reviews, and targets the mobile-savvy traveller. Shortly after a guest

checks into an Expedia.com-booked hotel, they receive an email or App notification asking them a set of short questions after which the review is transmitted in real time to the hotelier via Expedia Partner Central, giving them the opportunity to act upon the feedback and avoid a potentially negative trip review.

**Real Time Feedback**  
Shortly after a guest checks into an Expedia.com-booked hotel, they receive an email or app notification asking them a set of short questions after which the review is transmitted in real time to the hotelier via Expedia Partner Central

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## For a better tomorrow

IndeBo India, a Delhi-based DMC, distributed low smoke stoves that save 65-75 per cent of fuel among eight village households in Reni Pani, Madhya Pradesh as a part of its CSR activity.



## 3 additions to portfolio

Mumbai-based Global Destinations has added three new products to its portfolio to bring three distinct international tourism brands to the travel trade in India.



Global Destinations, that does representation, marketing and consultancy, has announced the addition of three new products to its portfolio effective June 15, 2016: Dorsett Hospitality International, Chehobo.com and Gray Line.

**Pranav Kapadia**, Founder, Global Destinations, said, "I am extremely happy to be assigned the task of handling marketing, sales and public relations activities for Dorsett Hospitality International, Chehobo.com and Gray Line New Orleans." Dorsett Hospitality International is a subsidi-

ary of Hong Kong-based Far East Consortium International, owns and manages all of its hotels in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Wuhan, Chengdu, Jiangxi, Kuala Lumpur, Johor Bahru, Labuan, Singapore and London.

Dorsett Hospitality International currently operates 22 hotels, with seven hotels in the pipeline in China, Hong Kong, Malaysia and United Kingdom making up a total of more than 8,600 rooms. chehobo.com is a sales and trade sys-



**Pranav Kapadia**  
Founder  
Global Destinations

tem based in the UAE designed specifically for travel and tour agencies as well as corporate companies in order for them to purchase cheap hotel, tour and flight tickets.

It has strong connections within Hotel Networks around the world. Gray Line offers a variety of tour products in the city of New Orleans from scenic motor coach tours and intimate walking tours to swamp and river cruises.

Wanderlust Marketing (an associate company of Global Destinations) has been appointed as the representative for 'My Private Villas', a collection of luxury properties available for rent directly from their owners in France, Italy, Spain, Greece, Caribbean, Thailand, South Africa through to the Swiss and French Alps and many more.

Kapadia adds, "I am excited to enter the luxury space and to be assigned the task of handling marketing, sales and public relations activities for My Private Villas. It has over 400 villas across 40 countries in some of the most exclusive destinations in the world. The properties enrolled in the club portfolio are not just holiday villas. They can be rented for weddings and team-building events."

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# ADTOI in Chhattisgarh

The Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India recently launched its Chhattisgarh Chapter. The event was attended by the entire central leadership of ADTOI and all of their Executive Council members. Chairman and Vice Chairman of Chhattisgarh Tourism Board along with the General Manager were also present in the grand function.



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# A reunion to remember

Key trade members came together for a fun filled evening in Delhi at The Park, New Delhi. Around 45 people were present for the occasion, some among whom flew down from Mumbai, Allahabad, Kuwait and Dubai.



## 60 SECONDS ABOUT

### World Travel Market London, Senior Director, Simon Press previews WTM London 2016

**WTM London 2016 is a three day event for the first time. What was behind the move? What are the benefits for exhibitors and visitors?**

That's right WTM London 2016 will take place between Monday 7 to Wednesday 9 November. Opening hours have been extended to 10am - 7pm for all three days. The move comes following exhibitor feedback and will help to reduce ancillary costs of attending the event for all participants. We have received positive feedback from all visitor groups to the move and look forward to a hugely successful WTM London 2016.

#### What else is new for WTM London 2016?

We have introduced a brand new theatre (WTM Inspire Theatre) on the exhibition floor which will be situated in the North Hall. Furthermore, the WTM International Press Centre has been moved to the exhibition floor for the first time, situated in the South Hall.

We are also enhancing the quality of speakers in the event programme. I am delighted to be able to say we have secured travel expert Doug Lansky and futurist Brian Soles for keynote sessions, with more big names to be announced.

#### How much business can exhibitors expect to conduct at WTM London 2016?

WTM London 2015 saw more than 865,500 on-stand meetings facilitating more than £2.5 billion in business deals. For WTM London 2016 we expect even more business to be conducted. More than 9,100 senior

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industry buyers are expected at the event with a total purchasing power of £15.8bn. So WTM London provides unrivalled business opportunities for exhibitors.

#### Which exhibitors should we look out for?

There will be around 5,000 exhibitors from 182 countries taking part in WTM London 2016 with many new exhibitors taking part for the first time, including Travago, Chelsea Football Club, Visit Greenwich and the Balearic Islands.

India will have a large presence at WTM London, as its looks to benefit from the cultural and historical ties between United Kingdom and India. Indonesia will also have an increased presence at the event due to its sponsorship of WTM London registration.

#### Are there any travel and accommodation discounts delegates can take advantage of?

Delegates attending World Travel Market London can take advantage of discounted air fares with oneworld airlines. Furthermore, discounted hotels are also available alongside savings on Europcar car hire, Thames Clippers and the Emirates Airline Cable Car. To view and book discounts visit: [wtmlondon.com/discounts](http://wtmlondon.com/discounts).

#### Where can buyers and visitors register for WTM London 2016?

Visit [wtmlondon.com/register](http://wtmlondon.com/register)

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# B2B services on the cards

BigBreaks.com, a part of Trans India Group, is all set to launch its B2B services as well as a smartphone App.



TT BUREAU

Launched only a few months ago, BigBreaks.com is aiming to be a one stop shop for those wishing to travel within or from India. But, with the OTA market being already superfluous, how does BigBreaks stand out?

Kapil Goswamy, MD, BigBreaks, says, "While the others are technology companies doing travel, we are a

travel company that adopted technology to give their clients the three Cs i.e. Choice, Convenience and Cost effectiveness. Putting their business online means that customers will have a wider choice; the convenience of 24x7 online bookings; and the cost advantage that comes with online bookings."

Explaining how they operate on a different model altogether, Goswamy informs,



Kapil Goswamy  
MD  
BigBreaks

"Bigbreaks has a hybrid business model, which gives the

choice and convenience of an OTA along with the assurance and service standards of a brick and mortar travel company that has a pedigree of over 25 years."

However, he revealed that BigBreaks is not going to restrict itself to the B2C market. "We are soon going to launch our B2B services. Also, in the next few days, Big Breaks will be launching its Android and IOS mobile Apps."

# Most inclusive cruise liner

Ian Banerjee, Director, Global Anchor Cruises, says the company is excited to promote the Seven Seas Explorer cruise.



TT BUREAU

**Tell us about your upcoming trip on the Seven Seas Explorer cruise?**

I am excited to go on-board the 'most luxurious ship ever built' – Regent Seven

Seas Cruises' special brand of all-inclusive luxury – the Seven Seas Explorer – which is truly a masterpiece. Her Serene Highness Princess Charlene of Monaco has accepted to serve as the ship's godmother at a christening event in Monte Carlo on July 13, 2016.

**How are you planning to promote it among the trade?**

Regent Seven Seas Cruises is a brilliant product for the Indian luxury market and is the most inclusive cruise liner we have ever promoted. The cruise fare covers suite cost (97 per cent rooms are suites with verandas), a large variety of shore excursions at every port of call, entertainment and internet on board and also a pre-cruise hotel stay. We intend



Ian Banerjee  
Director  
Global Anchor Cruises

to use all available mediums – digital and print as well as trade fairs – to build relationships with our travel partners as well as reach out to new luxury travel agents.

**Tell us about your plan to showcase this product to the agents through virtual reality?**

In the travel business, the biggest hurdle is giving a sample of the experience mainly due to availability, distance and time. We plan to overcome this hurdle by leveraging technology. On our website you will be able to view the Seven Seas Explorer in complete 360. The user will experience as if he or she is actually visiting the beautiful rooms.

**What kind of trends do you see among travelers from India these days?**

The Indian traveller no more the stereotype traveller who are only interested in complete package tours but now are more adventurous and have a growing curiosity for offbeat passages. Norway and Antarctica top the list. We have also seen a rise for Baltic cruises in which we specialise.

# Travel

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# NZ: Call for direct air connectivity

TRENZ 2016, which hosted 13 Indians, opened an array of business options for travel professionals who sell or market New Zealand. TRAVTALK catches up with few of the attendees about the event and New Zealand as a destination.



AMIT BHASIN FROM NEW ZEALAND



**Chintan Kayani**  
Director  
Xtreme Destinations

“ New Zealand is an amazing destination; in fact we term it as an 'Xtreme Destination' as it has everything to offer right from romance to adventure, from bag packing to luxury. We have been doing close to 450 plus travellers. We have been attending TRENZ for almost four years in a row. It's a platform where all the products right from luxury to adventures are featured at its best. Apart from more flight options or a direct flight, New Zealand does not face any such challenges. We focus on luxury holidays to Adventurous people. We also focus a lot on honeymooners and tailor-make it with romance all around.”



**Tanuj Ahuja**  
Director  
Aerospace Holidays

“ New Zealand, the country known as 'Adventure Capital of the World' is always on the bucket list of every traveller. It's good to see the NZ Tourism Board in India being very active and helpful and they have been doing a wonderful job promoting the destination. We are currently doing around 150-200 passengers a year in FITs and after having attended TRENZ 2016, I am sure these numbers are going to shoot up. The major challenge we have been facing is that there is no direct flight from India to New Zealand and we have seen potential guests changing their destination due to this reason.”



**Sweta Maheshwari**  
Manager - Operations  
ATD Honeymoon Holidays

“ We are quite young into this business but our growth rate has been impressive. Approximately 100 plus people travelled with us to New Zealand this year, growth of about 17 per cent from last year. Events like TRENZ help us to get to know the offshore travel trade, educate about NZ products and build business relationships and networking with hundreds of other operators and people from the New Zealand Tourism Industry. New Zealand is evolving as key destination with most of the travellers and tourism in this continent has increased in heaps and bounds recently. It also serves as a transit to Bora Bora Island and Fiji Island. Hence, there is huge gap between supply and demand in terms of getting good accommodation during busy season.”



**Vishal Choksi**  
Chief Operating Officer  
Freedom Tourism

“ We currently host thousands of passengers per year for New Zealand and it keeps growing every day. Events like TRENZ 2016 do help as it gives a global exposure and widens our horizons to explore new markets. The normal itinerary is around 12 to 13 night average and the usual ratio is 40 per cent in North Island and 60 per cent in South Island. Honeymooners and adventure explorers choose off the beaten track destinations like Abel Tasman, Nelson, Southland, Bay of Plenty and more. The biggest challenge is the limited air connectivity which makes it really difficult for them to promote and higher fare makes it even more difficult to convince the end client for New Zealand.”

“ Abercrombie & Kent Vacations, India has seen an exponential growth with travellers to New Zealand, with main focus on luxury and experiential travellers. Events like TRENZ help increase product knowledge which needs to be fresh and improvised periodically. New Zealand, as mentioned is a complete destination in terms of landscapes, experiences, accommodation and dining. However, the travel time and distance from India, impacts the traveller's decisions. They need to pre-plan the long-haul holiday and keep time in hand. Based on this Indians cannot mostly use the various long weekends or short breaks to visit New Zealand.”



**Iyishha Jubbil**  
Deputy General Manager –  
Marketing & Product  
Development, Abercrombie  
& Kent Vacations

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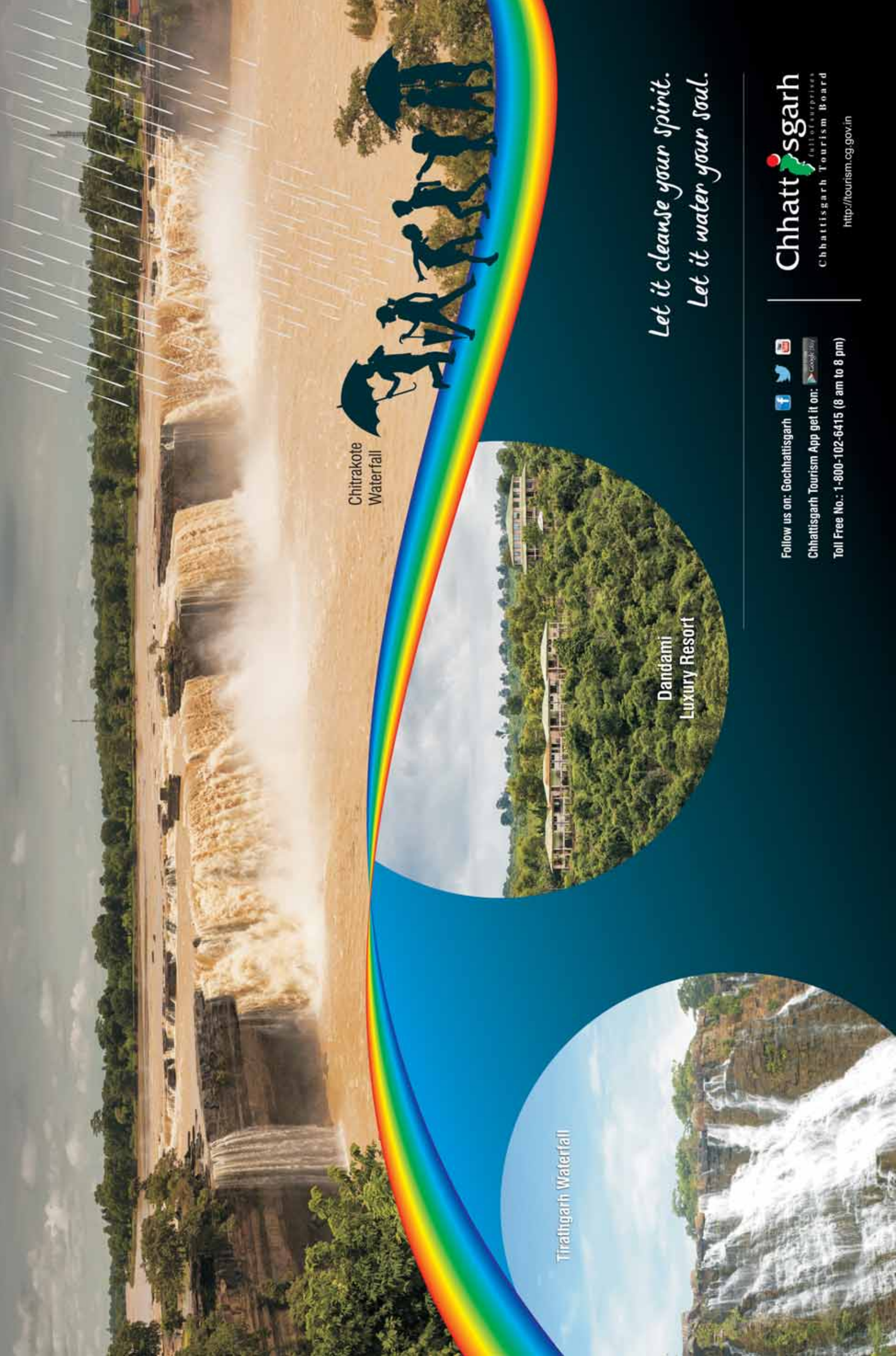
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# EVENT TALK

## JULY 2016

Mekong Tourism Forum	Cambodia	July 5 -7
Travel & Tourism Fair (TTF)	Kolkata	July 8-10
Travel Wedding Show	Gurgaon	July 9-10
India Travel Awards East	Kolkata	July 15
Global Panorama Showcase (GPS)	Ahmedabad	July 15-16
Travel and Tourism Fair (TTF)	Hyderabad	July 15-17
GBTA Convention	Denver	July 16-20
Global Panorama Showcase (GPS)	Chandigarh	July 21-22
Tourism Investors Meet	New Delhi	July 28-29
Global Panorama Showcase (GPS)	Kolkata	July 28-29
PATA – WWF Bagh Mittra Awards	New Dehli	July 29
India International Travel Mart	Chennai	July 29-31

## AUGUST 2016

CAPA Australia Pacific Summit	Brisbane	Aug 3-5
India Hospitality Awards West & South	Pune	Aug 4
Global Panorama Showcase (GPS)	Coimbatore	Aug 4-5
Hospitality Expo	New Delhi	Aug 4-6
India Travel Awards West	Pune	Aug 5
India International Travel Mart	Bengaluru	Aug 5-7
Tourism Australia-India Travel Mission	Chennai	Aug 18-21
SATTE	Mumbai	Aug 19-20
Travel Technology Show	Gurgaon	Aug 20-21
Taipei Tourism Expo	Taipei	Aug 26-29
La Cita USA	Miami	Aug 30-Sept 1

## SEPTEMBER 2016

TTF	Ahmedabad	Sept 2-4
Philippines Travel Mart	Pasay	Sept 2-4
International India Medical Tourism Congress	Hyderabad	Sept 3-4
PATA Travel Mart	Greater Jakarta	Sept 7-9
TTF	Surat	Sept 9-11
Busan International Travel Fair (BITF)	Busan	Sept 9-12
TTF	Mumbai	Sept 16-18
Incredible India Tourism Investors Summit	New Delhi	Sept 21-23
Manila International Travel Expo (MITE)	Pasay	Sept 22-24
JATA Tourism Expo	Tokyo	Sept 22-25
IITM	Mumbai	Sept 23-25
TTF	Pune	Sept 23-25
Kerala Travel Mart	Kochi	Sept 27-30

For more information, contact us at: [talk@ddppl.com](mailto:talk@ddppl.com)

# Promoting tourism through food

The state of Victoria will push its tourism products such as self-drives through its food and is getting its partners to weave these into the itineraries.



TT BUREAU

The state of Victoria located in the south-east part of Australia has always been popular among Indian tourists due to its capital city of Melbourne. In order to increase numbers, the government body that promotes tourism in the state – Tourism Victoria – will now focus on reaching the Indian hearts through their stomachs. **Celia Ho**, Regional Manager (South and South East Asia), Visit Victoria, was in Mumbai recently to meet the trade partners and discuss its focus areas for this new financial year that starts July 2016.



Celia Ho  
Regional Manager(South and South East Asia), Visit Victoria

She says, “We want to focus more on food since it is getting popular in India. We are keen to work with a few key trade partners to promote the ‘Melbourne Food & Wine Festival’ that is held in end

of February for two weeks at different venues in the city. Its opening event ‘The World’s Longest Lunch’ is also a big draw and we will push these two events in India. The trade is also very keen to promote this as part of their Australian itinerary this year.”

Ho says Victoria is also at road trip self-drive routes. One is the ‘Great Southern Tourism Route’ which includes its best-selling ‘Great Ocean Road’. “Self-drives have become popular in India now specially in Victoria and our travel partners have said that they have seen more Indians driving in

Victoria because of this Great Ocean Road. We now intend to promote it in a different light by introducing a gourmet trail along the route so they can go for cheese tasting, visit a winery, visit a farm for a barbecue lunch, or even a One Hat restaurant,” she adds.

Tourism Victoria will guide the tour operators in putting this itinerary together. She also added that agents now ask for off-the-beaten track products for their clients as they want it to be more experiential. The NTO has also asked for a bigger budget this financial year.

# Luxury on wheels

Catering to the luxury market in India, Parveen Travels has introduced a new vehicle which caters to families and corporate travellers both.



TT BUREAU

Parveen Travels has recently launched Asia’s most luxurious vehicles — Toyota Hi-Ace Commuter S. This vehicle is specially designed to provide space and comfort in addition to ergonomically seats (10+1) with ample leg room. “The vehicle is equipped with Euro 5 standards, which is considered to be environmental friendly as it reduces the carbon footprints in the country,” says **A. Arif**, Director, Parveen Travels. The seats are designed to offer 360

degree rotate option which provides an overall travel experience to the guests. This vehicle caters to a range of segments from a family outing to a business meeting. In addition to the existing luxury fleet, the company has also added two Volkswagen Crafters with a seating capacity of 15 and two more Toyota Coaster with a seating capacity of 17.

“Being the trendsetter in the travel industry either to introduce a new product or technology, our dedication and passion in providing utmost



A. Arif  
Director  
Parveen Travels

customer satisfaction with commitment on reliability, safety and quality is the core USP of our company,” explains Arif.

Apart from the travel services, the company provides all end-to-end solutions for the client’s traveling needs which include international and domestic holiday packages, forex, visa and passport assistance, resorts and restaurant bookings.

Arif adds, “We have ambitious plans to add many more vehicles in this particular segment as we are getting many requirements from various types of customers such as foreign tourists, corporates, celebrities and high end luxury car users.”

# MTOA resolves issues with Kerala, HP

The Maharashtra Tour Organisers’ Association spoke to the Kerala and HP authorities to resolve the issues its members are facing in these states.



HAZEL JAIN

The Maharashtra Tour Organisers’ Association (MTOA) recently met up with concerned authorities of two popular states – Kerala and Himachal Pradesh – in order to iron out the problems its travel agent members have been facing with their clients.

**Sudhir Patil**, President, MTOA, revealed that the team from the association met **U. V. Jose**, Director, Kerala Tourism Board to discuss various issues. “One of the major issues on the agenda was that of the liquor policy implemented by



Sudhir Patil  
President  
MTOA

the Kerala Government and the consequent high-cost permit requirement for the same, which is having negative impacts on the MICE and inbound movement in the

state. Jose was very receptive and he noted the suggestions we gave,” he said. This meeting, that saw the presence of other key travel associations as well, also saw the attendance of Bollywood film producers, who are keen to explore Kerala as a film shooting location.

The MTOA team also wrote a letter to Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister, its Tourism Minister as well as the Deputy Director of Himachal Pradesh Tourism Board to bring to focus the issue of the new online system for booking a taxi to travel to the snow point

in Manali. “The Himachal Pradesh Tourism Board and the Himachal Road Transport Corporation has implemented a new online system, according to which the number of vehicles that can go up to the snow point has been limited and restricted. This is specially hampering group tours. We have also raised this issue with Minister of State for Environment, Forests & Climate Change Prakash Javdekar, seeking their intervention and ensuring a smooth movement of group tours at one of India’s most popular holiday destinations,” Patil adds.



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**PUBLIC NOTICE**



It is brought to the attention of the general public that:


**Shri Dheeraj Kumar,**

has resigned from the employment of **SWISSTOURS** on 31st May 2016. He is no longer connected with this organization and all persons dealing with him in any capacity should do so subject to the foregoing information.

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Sarovar Hotels

New Delhi

Sarovar Hotels has appointed **Ameet Wagh** as General Manager of Sales (West). Bringing with him an experience of over 18 years in Sales and Marketing in the hospitality industry, Wagh was previously associated with Sun-n-Sand Hotels as Corporate Head of Sales & Marketing. An alumnus of the R.A. Podar College of Commerce and Economics, Wagh started his career with Sterling Holiday Resorts India, after which he went on to work with Le Meridien Hotels & Resorts, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, InterContinental The Grand Mumbai, and InterContinental Marine Drive.



India Hotel Group

Lucknow

India Hotel Group has appointed **Atul Kumar** as General Manager of its property in the city. Kumar, an IHM Kovalam alumni, brings with him 13 years of experience in the hospitality industry with specialisation in hotel operations. Prior to this appointment, Kumar worked with Fraser hospitality Taj Mansingh Delhi and Leela Gurgaon. Kumar has played a crucial role in Sales & Marketing, Relationship & Management Contract, Finance and Human Resource. He also has hands on operational knowledge, especially on pre-opening new age restaurants (Chez Nini/Uzuri/La Bodega/Gastronomica).



Premier Inn Goa Anjuna

Goa

UK-based hotel chain, Premier Inn announced the appointment of **Manveer Kapoor** to the position of General Manager of Premier Inn Goa Anjuna. Kapoor will oversee Premier Inn's latest property in India Premier Inn Goa Anjuna, which is currently in its pre-opening phase. Kapoor previously served as General Manager at Country Inn Suites Goa Panjim and has over 16 years of international experience, covering all aspects of hotel management and operations.



Westin Resort and Spa

Pushkar

**Jagdeep Nambiar** has been appointed as the General Manager of the yet to be opened Westin Resort and Spa in Pushkar, Rajasthan. He started his career in 1992 with The Leela and spent 10 years with them. He started with Mumbai and then moved onto Goa and Bengaluru. Then he moved out of the industry and joined a BPO in Bengaluru for the next five years. He again joined back The leelas in the year 2006 and after that has been with The Lalit with their Goa property and his last assignment was The Lalit Sri Nagar.



Novotel Imagica Khopoli

Mumbai

AccorHotels has appointed **Namit Bhavsar** as the new Director of Sales and Marketing for Novotel Imagica Khopoli. In his role, Bhavsar will be responsible for leading and further improving all aspects of the sales, social and digital marketing communications, and promoting brand strategies. A seasoned hotelier, he has been in the hospitality industry for over eight years. Prior to joining AccorHotels, Bhavsar was the Associate Director of Sales at The St. Regis, Mumbai. After pursuing MBA, Bhavsar started his career with Oberoi Hotels & Resorts and then went on to hold various positions across leading hotel chains in India.



Trip Tap Toe

New Delhi

**Karan Singh** has been appointed as Business Development Partner at Trip Tap Toe, New Delhi. Singh brings with him an experience of about 12 years in the travel and hospitality industry. Some of his previous assignments include roles as Partner at TGG New York and Managing Partner of Royal Tours and Travel in North East India. Singh has been involved in successful pre-opening projects for the last three years in the US, including Royal bnb, Pennsylvania and Bharat Tours and Travel India and New York. He holds an extensive Travel Marketing and PR experience.



Sonnet Holidays

New Delhi

**Rajender Kr. Rathore** joins Sonnet Holidays as Director - Sales & Marketing. With 18 years of extensive experience, he brings a wealth of industry knowledge in the luxury travel segment. In his previous role he held senior positions in many travel companies such as VacationTravels, Travel Spirit International, Banyan Tours, etc., and Corporate Marketing where he led the operation teams to drive sales and service to excellence.



Hyatt Pune

Pune

Hyatt Pune has appointed **Shul Ambwani** as Director of Rooms. Ambwani started his career in 2005 with Taj Banjara, Hyderabad and this was followed by his association with brands including Park Hyatt Goa Resort & Spa, and Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre where he advanced as Front Office Manager. He came back to the Hyatt family as a Front Office Manager and joined Hyatt Pune in August 2014 and has now advanced as the Director of Rooms at the property.



Trans India Holidays

New Delhi

**Amit Arora** has joined Trans India Holidays, a leading DMC, as it's Manager-International Sales. Having worked both in Hotel Operations and Sales, Arora brings with him an experience of over 12 years in the hospitality industry. Arora has worked with brands like Hyatt, Oberois, IHG, Shangri-La and Claridges. In his last assignment, he was heading Travel Sales at The Suryaa New Delhi. In the new role, Arora will be responsible for developing Sales from International Markets.

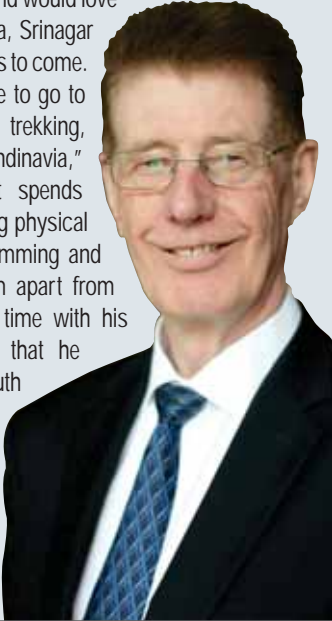


TALKing People

**Teo Keng Chong**, Director of Sales-Travel Experience, Sabre Travel Network Asia Pacific, loves to spend his free time with his family and kids and loves to listen to music. He says that his family is the biggest inspiration of his life and drives him to work better. He says that today's generation is very impatient. "The millennial generation should live life to the fullest. Even if they feel that their goals are far away, they should not give up and continue to live life with no regrets," says Chong. Chong would love to travel to London, Egypt and South America.



**Roger Wright**, General Manager, Hyatt Regency Gurgaon, feels India is like a second home for him. Having lived here for more than eight years, he has visited many places in India like Jaipur and Agra amongst others and would love to travel to Shimla, Srinagar and Kerala in times to come. "I would also love to go to Istanbul, Italy for trekking, Ireland and Scandinavia," he says. Wright spends his free time doing physical activities like swimming and going to the gym apart from spending quality time with his family. He says that he can have south Indian food any time and that is his favourite cuisine.



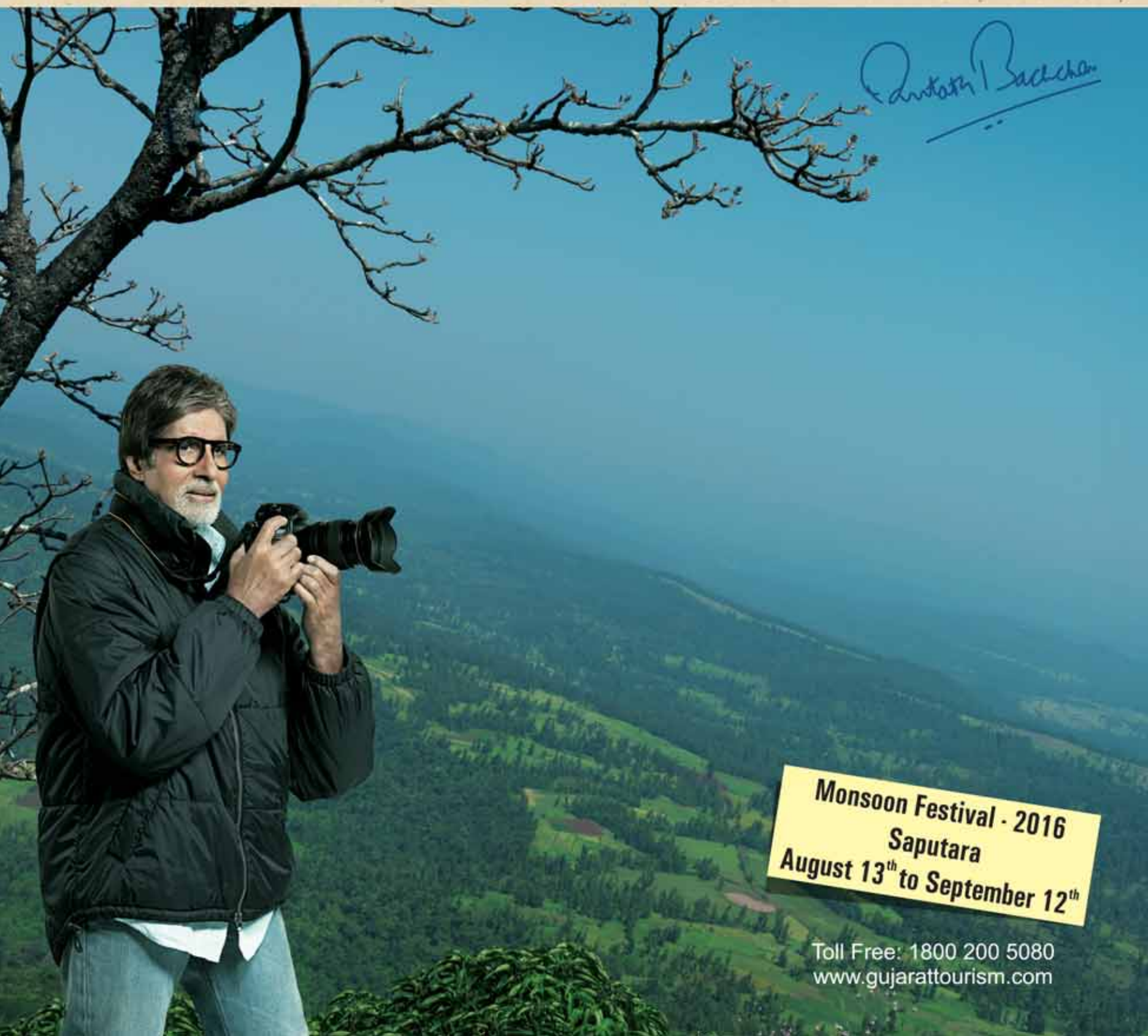
When travelling, **Paul Gomes**, General Manager, Four Points by Sheraton Agra, generally prefers a clean and hygienic hotel fitting his budget. Besides cleanliness, his basic need is also a good breakfast as wherever he travels he needs to be working the entire day. He says that he mostly travels to Delhi/NCR and Mumbai for business. Being a hotelier he only gets time off during the summers and chooses to travel to the hills mostly the ones closer to his hometown so that he travels less and enjoys more.





You can't lose your way when there are no wrong turns. That was the feeling I got in Saputara. Here, every turn offered me new things. Like the meandering Ambika river. Each step brought me closer to nature. In the dense jungles of Dang, I felt as if all the trees and shrubs were my old friends.

The local tribesmen, their art, culture and traditions made me experience a harmony we city dwellers miss. Saputara gave me the solitude I always craved for, with just clouds and fine weather for company. How can one even think about leaving a place like this?



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# MP Tourism eyes MICE

After allocating whopping `271 crore to develop tourism under Wildlife, Heritage and Buddhist Circuit, Madhya Pradesh is throwing its weight behind convention centres. **Hari Ranjan Rao**, Managing Director, Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corp (MPSTDC), elaborates.



ANKITA SAXENA

## What is being done to enhance the existing tourism circuits in Madhya Pradesh?

The Simhastha in April-May 2016 in Ujjain was a major attraction. Besides, we intend to focus upon and showcase some of the hidden jewels of the state like Mitawali, Padawli and Bateswar near Gwalior, rich state museum and the remnants of the empire of Raja Chhatrasal at Dhubela, the natural wonder Bhedaghat near Jabalpur, the historical treasure troves of and around the ancient town of Vidisha and the under exploited Buddhist Circuit. Also the overall drive for improving tourist infrastructure and showcasing the existing tourist destinations of the state would continue.

## Please elaborate on incentives offered to the private sector?

At the Global Investors Summit in Indore, Madhya Pradesh presented numerous opportunities for investment in the tourism sector in the state. The development of tourism infrastructure is aimed through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) and Private Sector Participation (PSP). The state government has amended its tourism policy. MICE is a major segment the state tourism is vying for, and the government has already announced incentives for investing in conference and convention centres. MPSTDC has already identified land banks at key tourism destinations in the state including Sanchi, Orchha, Khajuraho, Indrasagar, etc.

## What are the promotional plans of the state in 2016?

We do believe in promotional activities be it media campaign through radio, TV or print media. The user friendly website provides in-depth information about the tourist destination of the state and online booking facility. MP Tourism is also on Facebook for direct interaction. For international promotion, MP Tourism participates in most of the major road shows and trade events which take place in various countries. We also regularly take part in WTM and ITB, the two major tourism platforms.

“MICE is a major segment the state tourism is vying for, and the government has already announced incentives for investing in conference and convention centres.”

**Hari Ranjan Rao**

Managing Director

Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corp (MPSTDC)



## Are there any new products that can be expected in 2016?

Madhya Pradesh Tourism has opened new accommodation units at Kerwa, viz, Kerwa Resort, Midway Treat Dodi and Highway Treat Handia. Apart from this we are specially promoting Water Tourism in the water bodies of the state like Tawa-Madhai and Bargi-Mandla with cruises being the main attraction. River rafting at Betwa river in Orchha is also a popular activity amongst the adventure seekers. To offer a unique travelling experience to the tourist, caravans are specially designed vehicles for the excitement seeker.

## What developments have been made to promote niche segments of tourism?

The eco-tourism destinations have been dotted all over the state. They include Samardha Jungle Camp, and Kerwa Jungle Camp. The South East Asia's longest twin zip, kayaking and rappelling are major attractions of Kerwa. At Kathotiya the eco-traveller and adventurer can visit ancient rock shelter and paintings, caves, waterfalls, and do village

tours focused on vernacular architecture and tribal art. The activities and nature tours are being organised by trained local community at Kathotiya which include monkey crawling, rappelling, mountain biking, trekking, bird watching etc.

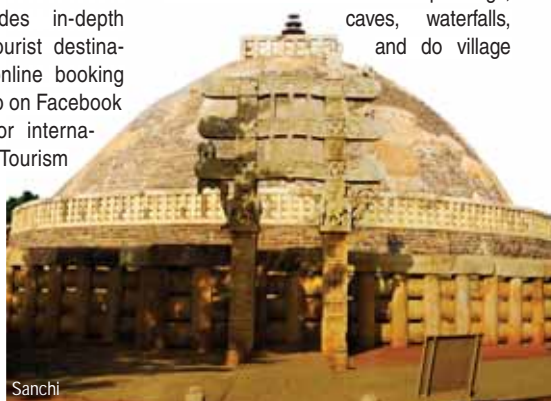
## What is being done to ensure safety of tourists in the state?

Madhya Pradesh has set up the state's first tourist police post at Pachmarhi and it is soon to be followed at other tourist destinations also. It is an important initiative taken by the government, as a special force for the protection and benefit of tourists is now in place. These posts would provide information, security and assistance to domestic and foreign tourists visiting Madhya Pradesh. It will also help the tourists in case of any emergency, manage the tourist enquiries, complaints and ensure that the language barrier does not hamper safety and security. 288 police personnel, trained as tourist police, will be deployed at 12 tourist police posts across the state.

## Latest from MP

MPSTDC has identified land banks at key tourism destinations in the state including Sanchi, Orchha, Khajuraho, Indrasagar, etc

At Kathotiya the eco-traveller and adventurer can visit ancient rock shelter and paintings, caves, waterfalls, and do village tours



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