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India's 1st Travel Wedding Show



L-R: Punam Singh, Shaji Thomas, Rajeev Jain, Guldeep Singh Sahni, Sarika Bhambani Rawal

Bringing the travel and wedding world under one roof for the very first time in India, the Travel Wedding Show was held on July 9-10 in Gurgaon. The show hosted 30 exhibitors and 30 buyers on both days and saw participants engage in 1200 meetings in a round-robin format. **Rajeev Jain**, Managing Director, Rashi Entertainment, gave an upbeat picture of the wedding industry in his keynote address on the inaugural day. He said: "The Indian wedding industry is flourishing at a growth rate of 25 per cent per annum and is pegged at an estimated ₹ 250,000 crore (\$40 billion)." Jain also added that with Indians spending 80 per cent of their wealth on weddings, the sector has proved to be a great contributor to GDP.

While the first day of the closed-door event catered to wedding planners and organisers, the second day was exclusively for travel agents specialising in global weddings. The show was officially inaugurated by **Jain, Sarika Bhambani Rawal**, General Manager, Travel Wedding Show, **Punam Singh**, Associate, Pacific Leisure Group, **Shaji Thomas**, Director – Destination Tourism Development, Ras Al Khaimah, and **Guldeep Singh Sahni**, President – OTOAI.

New MoS for Civil Aviation and Railways



Jayant Sinha
Minister of State
Ministry of Civil Aviation

Rajen Gohain
Minister of State
Ministry Railways

In a major Cabinet reshuffle held recently, the Ministry of Railways and Ministry of Civil Aviation welcomed new members who took charge as Ministers of State.



TT BUREAU

Rajen Gohain assumed the charge of new Minister of State for Railways. Gohain, an MP from Nagaon constituency in Assam, soon after taking charge, had had a brief discussion with Chairman, Railway Board, **A.K. Mital**. He listed out his priority

areas as safety and security, expansion and growth of railway infrastructure, passenger amenities and passenger services, improving punctuality, redressal of public grievances, expediting railway projects in North-East.

Gohain will continue to work alongside the current Minister of State for Rail-

ways **Manoj Sinha**, who has assumed the charge of Minister of State (Independent charge) of Ministry of Communications.

Jayant Sinha takes charge as Minister of State in the Civil Aviation Ministry. He earlier held the office of Union Minister of State for Finance from November 9,

2014, and remained in the position till July 5, 2016. He lived in the USA for about 20 years (in Philadelphia and Boston). During his stint at the Ministry of Finance, he aggressively pursued recovery of black money. His experience in finance and technology will surely come in handy in his new role at the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

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ADTOI election on August 10

The Association of Domestic Tour Operators (ADTOI) will start accepting nominations from July 16, which will close on the evening of July 20. The Metropolitan Hotel, New Delhi, will serve as the venue of the election.



The Association of Domestic Tour Operators (ADTOI) is all set to have its election on August 10, 2016. **Jyoti Kapur**, President, ADTOI, revealed, "The formalities and procedures have been worked out and the elections have been announced for August 10. The last date for payment of subscriptions for this year is July 14. On July 15 we will have the electoral college ready. Then, on July 16, we will start accepting the nominations and we will be taking the nominations till July 20, 5 pm. And by 6 pm we will be announcing the list of candidates. On August 10, the election will take place at The Metropolitan Hotel, New Delhi."

However, keeping in view the ADTOI election in 2014, which even reached the court,

there are many things that have to be kept in mind. "This is the reason we have appointed a Returning Officer (RO), who is quite experienced in this

he has very comprehensively made all the rules to be followed by all the members. He is not only following the Society Act, but also our memoran-

successful as we have tried our best to plug every loophole," said Kapur.

Kapur neither revealed any details about probable candidates, nor about his own interest to pursue for the President's post this time around. However, he said, "We have been successful despite all odds and not only we created visibility about ADTOI, we also organised our convention successfully. Apart from that we even launched a new chapter in Chhattisgarh."

Revealing further about regional chapters, he said, "We will be creating new chapters in Rajasthan as well as in Odisha. We want to spread our wings in the South as well and want to have our chapters in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. And I am sure, this way we will be able to give a boost to domestic tourism."

“The formalities and procedures have been worked out and the elections have been announced for Aug 10. The last date for payment of subscriptions for this year is July 14. On July 15 we will have the electoral college ready.”



Jyoti Kapur
President, ADTOI

field. **Harbans Singh** has been a former Secretary of the Election Commission of India and

dum, and has come out with a very good action plan. We hope that the election will be

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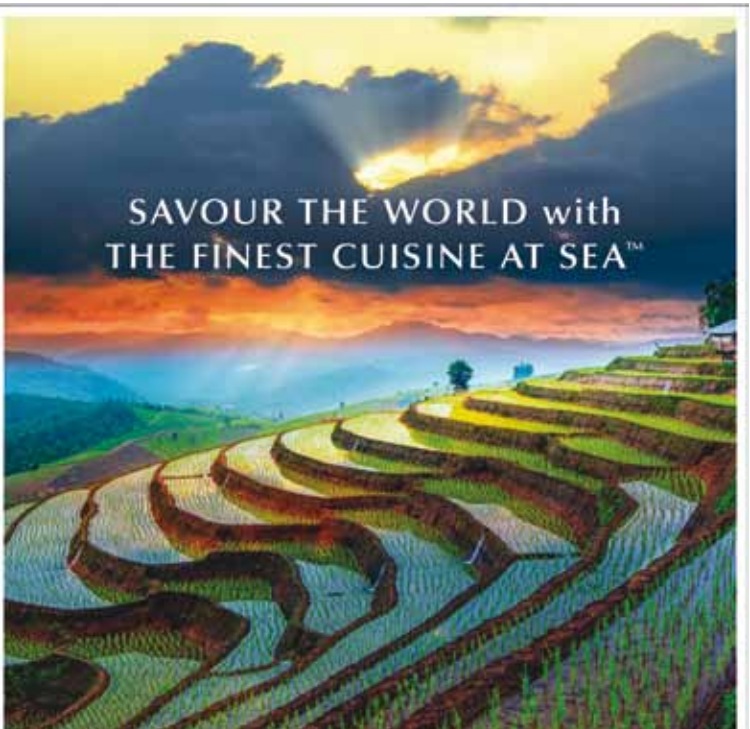
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TRAVTALK

VIEWPOINT

Experience sells

More and more travellers are choosing their destination and activities based on the kind of experience it will provide them. It is what gives their travels character, what gives them the bragging rights on social media. This should, in turn, spur tour operators to embark on their own little journey. 'What can I offer my client – discerning as they are – that will tempt them to stay with me?'

Fortunately, every destination has products that have not been discovered and explored yet. Based on the traffic on its website, global travel search site Skyscanner revealed that in 2015 Indian travellers were the most experimental in the Asia Pacific region when it came to choosing holiday destinations. The website added that the trend has continued in 2016 with Indian travellers seeking adventures off the beaten track. It also said that this year, searches to destinations such as Bhutan, Russia (possibly due to the weakening ruble) and the Middle East (not Dubai or Abu Dhabi but Iran and Jordan) have gone up by 75 per cent. So go forth, and create itineraries!

Countering terrorism

In recent times terrorists have targeted many destinations, giving them a chance to strike the tourism industry at its heart. With attacks like those in the commercial area of Jakarta, Tunisia, Turkey, Paris, Brussels and Istanbul, a question has been raised – How safe is it to travel?

While anxiety clouds the targeted areas, in the long-term, such events do not seem to affect a region at a macro-economic level. According to a WTTC research, on an average, it takes approximately 13 months for a destination to recover from a terror attack. The immediate short-term effects though can be a dampener with direct effect on hotel occupancies and decreased tourist numbers to a destination. Despite all said, tourism is a resilient sector and travellers may change their destinations but they do not tend to stop traveling as a whole. While terrorism breeds fear and divides the world, tourism is a strong force that unites people despite differences, making the world a more amicable place. Tourism can be used to counter terrorism.

Asset management in hotels

With the advent of new age real estate developers and private investors in the hospitality industry other than the existing hotel giants, the emergence of asset management vertical has become imperative.

In the last two decades, there has been a significant growth in international branded hotels in India along with emergence of new domestic, mid and economy hotel brands. Industry has seen a burgeoning growth in branded hotel rooms in India in the last decade. More recently, institutional investments have also entered the hospitality segment in India. Today, Indian hospitality space has eclectic mix of ownership from old Indian institutions such as house of Tatas, ITC and Oberoi to new age real estate developers and now more recent addition of institutional/private equity investors likes of Goldman Sachs, GIC, Forum Partners, etc. Hence, the emergence of the discipline of asset management in Indian hospitality industry.

The purpose of asset management is to work with operators and owners to ensure best interest of the hotel asset are met, leading to improved yield. A typical value chain of the asset management function includes capital raising, acquisition and de-

velopment of asset, operator selection, operation management and the Capex cycle.

Another significant trends that has emerged, is the increasing number of conversions/rebranding of existing hotels. The conversions help create value in the hotel by rebranding and repositioning the asset. This trend strongly points towards the rising significance of asset management within the hospitality industry.

A hotel asset management company provides a balanced long term approach that comprehends the ownership strategy and the operational needs; supporting the objectives of both sides. As the owner's representative, they play a critical role in ensuring a consistent growth trajectory, along with liaising with the brand. The clear strategy is to align revenue and profits from operations with investment goals, that gives way to a more proactive and analytical approach. The tactics involved lays a higher emphasis on growing ADR and stabilising rate integrity vs. short term occupancy, and

harmonising segmentation to ensure that the most profitable and sustainable mix of business is achieved.

An asset management company has a thorough knowledge of the industry owing to their line of business that encourages them to work with various hotel brands, operators and markets, and that gives them all rounded perspective. Given the plethora of new tools and strategies, working with an asset manager as a resource with experience beyond a particular brand family, or management company, can prove valuable. The asset management discipline encourages knowledge share and leads to transfer of best practices across portfolio of hotels. The team also analyses the life cycle of the physical asset.

The operator typically looks at the short term goals of the asset and the owner analyses the long term goals. This well-established practice in mature markets is increasingly becoming the need of the hour in the Indian context as well.

SAMHI Hotels is a hotel investment and development company. It has world class shareholders that include Sam Zell led Equity International, Goldman Sachs, GTI Capital Group & IFC (member of the World Bank Group). Hotels owned by SAMHI are operated under partnerships with Marriott, Starwood, Hyatt and Accor. Currently it has 16 operating assets in the country and another nine in various stages of development.

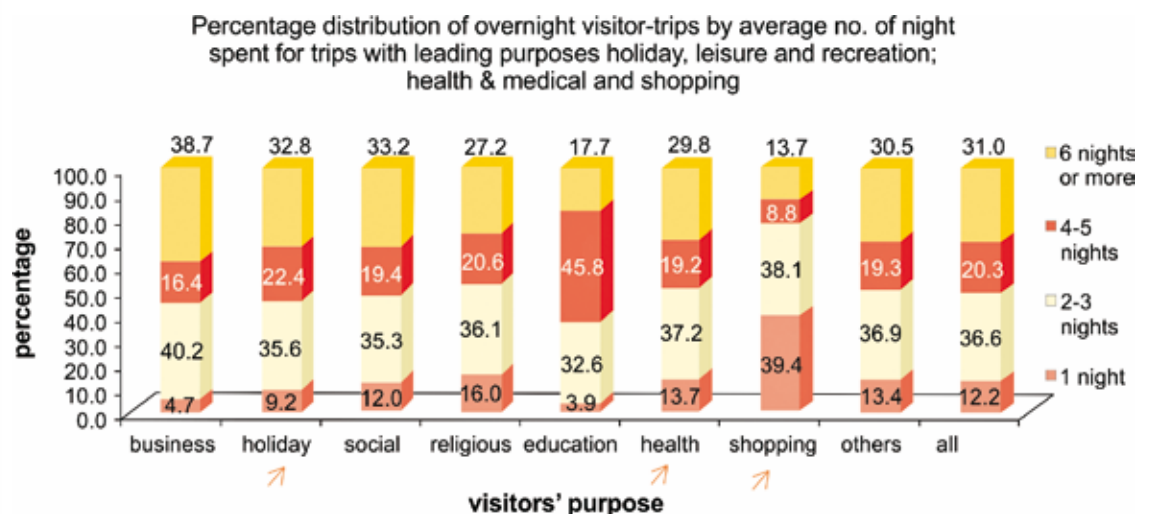
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Vinay Gupta
Vice President
SAMHI Hotels

55% Indians holiday for 4+ nights

Nearly 55% of Indians when vacationing in the country holiday for longer duration (4+nights), while 80% of visitor-trips for shopping were of shorter duration (2-3 nights). The average duration of visitor-trips was 6-7 nights.



Source: Key Indicators of Domestic Tourism in India, NSS 72nd Round (July 2014 - June 2015), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation National Sample Survey Office

6 more Dreamliners to join **AI** fleet

Pankaj Srivastava, Director - Commercial, Air India, says that more airlines plying international would mean more competition, and this would in turn boost the Indian aviation market.



NISHA VERMA

Booyed by the new National Civil Aviation Policy, which emphasises on regional connectivity, Air India is upbeat about its 'Connect India' programme.

Pankaj Srivastava, reveals, "With the regional connectivity scheme, the smaller towns will get a chance to get connected and come in the mainstream. As far as Air India is concerned we are quite upbeat on regional connectivity and have already started connecting some of the destina-

announcement of 100 per cent foreign direct investment in aviation. Srivastava disagrees, "We need funds to be infused in the civil aviation sector and with 100 per cent FDI, technology upgrade will take place and bigger players will come in the market."

But this would lead to more competition. He claims, "Competition is always healthy. More the players, the better it is for the passengers because that gives them choice and flexibility. On the other hand, it helps the airlines to improve their services."



Pankaj Srivastava
Director- Commercial, Air India

tions, which have never been connected. And as our aircraft fleet position becomes better, we would increase regional connectivity to a great extent and help in government's vision to connect the whole of India."

He revealed that Air India is dedicated towards fleet augmentation. "We have been doing it in the past few years. We already have 21 Dreamliners in our fleet, and another six will be joining our fleet in the next 8-9 months.

"Besides that, we have three 777-300s on order, which will be delivered in 2018. We have also ordered 29 Airbus 320s which will start coming in from early next year. For regional connectivity, we have started getting ATR 72s. Expansion is the only way to remain afloat in this market."

In fact, Air India is already plying the Dreamliners on the domestic routes. "We are already having the Dreamliners do twice a day to Mumbai, Bengaluru and Kolkata. As and when we get more Dreamliners, we are sure that the deployment on the domestic routes is going to increase."

However, the market might just change with the

Delhi to Washington on Air India by May 2017

"The National Civil Aviation Policy is very progressive and talks about connecting Tier-II, Tier-III cities. Air India too is looking at expansion. Owing to the demand for our San Francisco flight we will be starting a thrice-a-week flight from Ahmedabad to London to Newark from August 15, 2016. Also, we will be starting a flight from Delhi to Washington around April-May 2017. It will be the fifth connection between India and United States. From August we'd be adding a plane almost every month. We will also open a hub in Hyderabad, Bhopal, Raipur, as well as in Delhi. We will be connecting Tier-II and Tier-III cities under the Connect India programme. Within the group we have 130 aircraft and we are looking at almost doubling it in the next four years."



Ashwani Lohani
CMD, Air India

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TrawellTag Cover-More engages agents in Punjab



TrawellTag Cover-More conducted a Travel Agents Engagement Programme in the cities of Jalandhar and Chandigarh in June for the members of Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) and Punjab Travel Agents Association (PTAA).

OTOAI conclave in Turkey

The Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) is focusing on training its members, and for that it is taking them to Turkey on an educational tour.



NISHA VERMA

OTOAI is going to organise a conclave on countries which are going to show potential this year as well in the coming years. **Guldeep Singh Sahni**, President, OTOAI, reveals, "We are taking a big delegation of our members to Turkey this year, most probably in September. It's a dedicated educational

tour where we will be meeting B2B sellers there and the members will be educated about the destination by various means."

The association is also organising workshops for its members, on not just educating them about the destinations, but also visas and other things involved in outbound travel, Sahni said.

He says that OTOAI is dedicated towards training its members. "We are also educating our members on how to select their DMC. They need to look at how tour operators function and know that if something goes wrong they can't just blame the



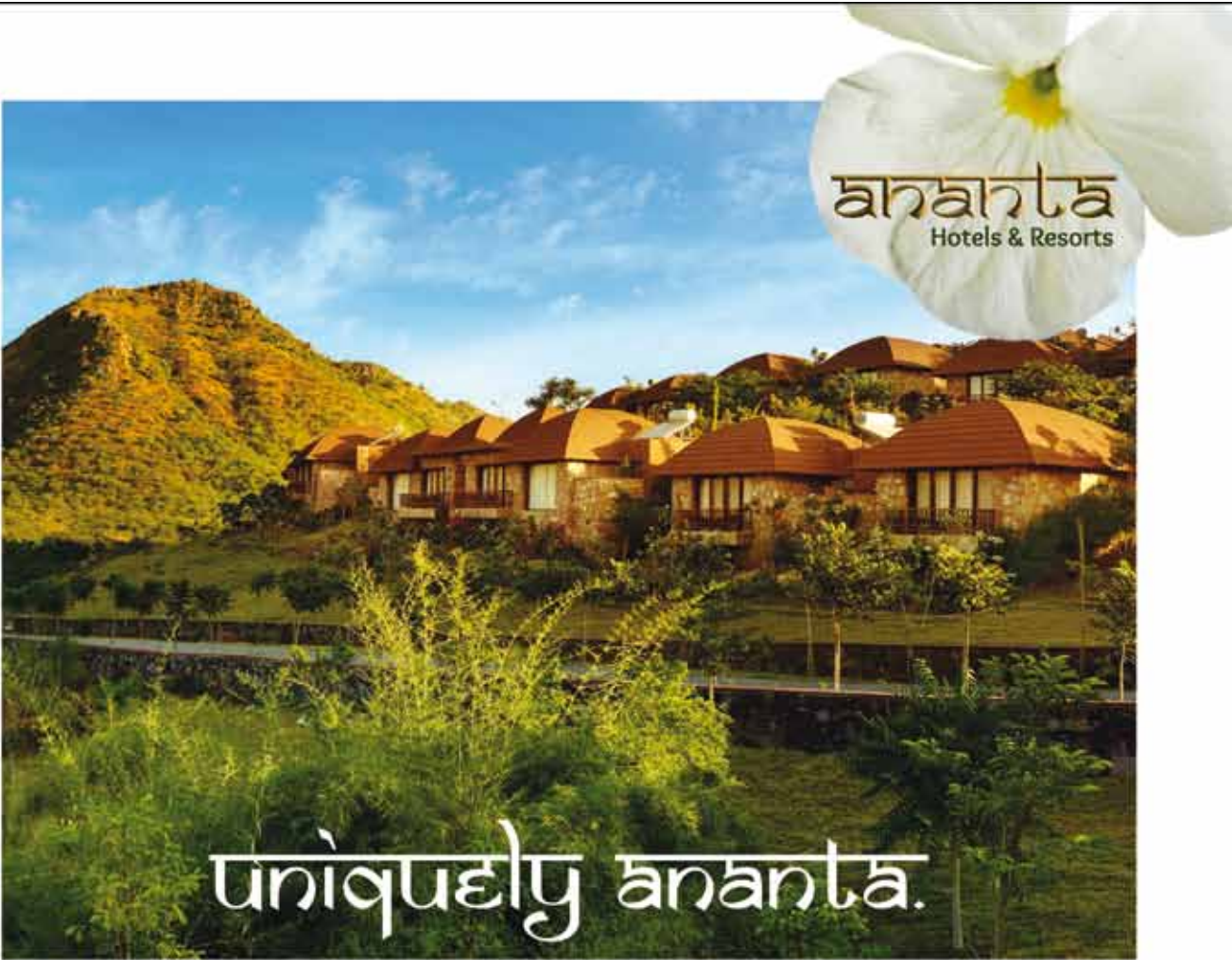
Guldeep Singh Sahni
President
OTOAI

We are in touch with the Civil Aviation and Tourism Ministry to involve outbound in their studies and dialogues, as it is one of the important aspects of tourism

DMC and it's their responsibility to look at what kind of international partners they are selecting."

Sahni insists that the government needs to focus on outbound tourism as well. "We are in touch with the Civil Aviation and Tourism Ministry to involve outbound tourism in their studies and dialogues, because it is one of the important aspects of tourism as well." Adding further he said, "We are also looking at the taxation part. Outbound tour operators are thought of as foreign exchange spenders, and we are doubly taxed both in our country and outside. The dollars can't be parked in the country. They need to rotate. This is the only industry, which, while rotating the dollars, is making income as well. We are planning to take out a white paper on that, but we need government support for that."

- Action packed Year
- OTOAI educational workshop in Turkey in September this year
 - Educating member agents on selecting DMC
 - Seeking govt. intervention in educating members on outbound travel



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Dubbed "The Jewel of Langkawi," this 35-acre resort is surrounded by smaller islands, waterfalls and golden sandy beaches, promising a tranquil and relaxing experience to holidaymakers and business travellers alike.

Blending seamlessly with the resort's landscape are themed food and beverage outlets that include *Spice Market*, an all-day dining restaurant serving an array of Asian favourites alongside a comprehensive menu of Western options; *Cba*, a beachside restaurant and bar that transforms into a happening nightspot; *Pelangi Lounge*, a lobby lounge serving cocktails and refreshments to the accompaniment of nightly live bands; and *Cascade Pool Bar*, a swim-up island bar serving signature thirst quenchers and light bites.

The versatile mix of water sports and outdoor activities offered at the resort is complemented by wellness and rejuvenation facilities that include a state-of-the-art fitness centre and *Pelangi Spa*, where guests can enjoy signature offerings of holistic beauty and massage therapies in a Zen-inspired setting.

Meritus Beach Resort & Spa, Langkawi continues to be a widely popular destination with MICE organisers for its versatile indoor and outdoor venues ideal for team building activities and themed events. Corporate guests can also enjoy exclusive privileges and personalised service in the tropical environment of the resort's *Meritus Club Lounge*.

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Heavy taxation hindering outbound

The Indian outbound market is amongst the fastest growing segments globally, yet faces basic challenges like high taxation, unethical practices and closed sky policies. **TRAUTALK** finds out what sells amongst the Indian travellers and what plagues this industry.



ANKITA SAXENA

Popular destinations

"For the first time travellers going abroad, South East Asian countries like Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Indonesia are very popular. For the well-travelled, there is a growing demand to explore European regions and the US," says **Riaz Munshi**, Managing Director, N. Chirag Travels. Dubai, France, the UK, and Switzerland continue to top the charts amongst Indians. "They are popular because of various reasons like visa on arrival facility or ease of procuring a visa, availability of Indian or vegetarian food, safety, value for money and direct flights or comfortable connections are a booster," says **Guldeep Singh Sahni**, President, Outbound Tour Operators Association of India.

Emerging destinations

Indian travellers are looking for experiential holidays in unexplored destinations. Russia, Portugal, Bhutan, Georgia, Iceland, Korea,

Eastern Europe, Greece, Coatia, Japan, islands in the Indian Ocean, and Myanmar are some of the destinations gaining popularity.



Riaz Munshi
Managing Director
N. Chirag Travels

"Future travellers would be enthusiastic about off-beat itineraries like a wildlife safari trip to Kenya, cruising to Alaska, spending weeks on the island of Ibiza or road-trips exploring wildlife of the US (Colorado, Wyoming, Montana). I also see potential for the South American region — Mexico (Cancun, Cabo San Lucas), Brazil (Rio and Sao Paulo), Peru, Uruguay to name a few," says Munshi.

can region — Mexico (Cancun, Cabo San Lucas), Brazil (Rio and Sao Paulo), Peru, Uruguay to name a few," says Munshi.



Guldeep Singh Sahni
President,
OTOAI

Trends

"Indians are looking at short-haul international destinations as an extension to weekend destinations and with improved air connectivity and increase in low-fare airlines, this trend is set to increase," says **Hussain Patel**, Director, Atlas Travels Online. "There has also been an

increase in interest in holidays during the peak summers and the enquiries have increased manifold," informs **Surpal Singh Deora**, Director, Maxx-



Surpal Singh Deora
Director
Maxxfun Holidays

fun Holidays. Special group movements are another new trend like ladies group, groups with food habits, groups with common interest amongst others," adds Sahni.

Challenges

According to Deora the challenge for outbound industry is due to the closed sky

policy as countries then face accessibility issues. Other challenges include volatile foreign exchange, political upheaval in some countries and



Hussain Patel
Director
Atlas Travels Online.com

long visa processing time. Sahni says, "The new biometric system for Schengen countries gave ulcers to tour operators during the summer vacation rush. Some online portals in their endeavour to increase the customer base sell products cheaper than they source it but tour operators cannot go below the purchase cost to match

that. As a result, travellers buy products online but when faced with issues of visa and cancellation costs, tour operators are left to do the fire fighting, thus creating a lot of confusion in the market." He also adds that the government of India is not engaging outbound tour operators in the tourism policies. Munshi says, "Service tax on outbound tourism is the biggest challenge. A substantial amount of business is going to overseas agents, hotels, other service providers, who do not have to pay service tax on the same product. The services are being consumed outside India and yet we bear the brunt of taxes."

Government Support

Munshi points out that concrete laws are needed to protect the interests of small and mid-sized tour operators as, today, the focus has shifted from building sustainable businesses to maximising customer acquisition by increasing one's own burn rate. 📉

JEWEL IN THE CITY OF TAJ MAHAL

Agra's iconic hotel, **The Clarks Shiraz**, with the distinction of hosting legends like Jackie Kennedy, Neil Armstrong, Mohammed Ali, is recently renovated and become the latest 5 star deluxe hotel in the city.

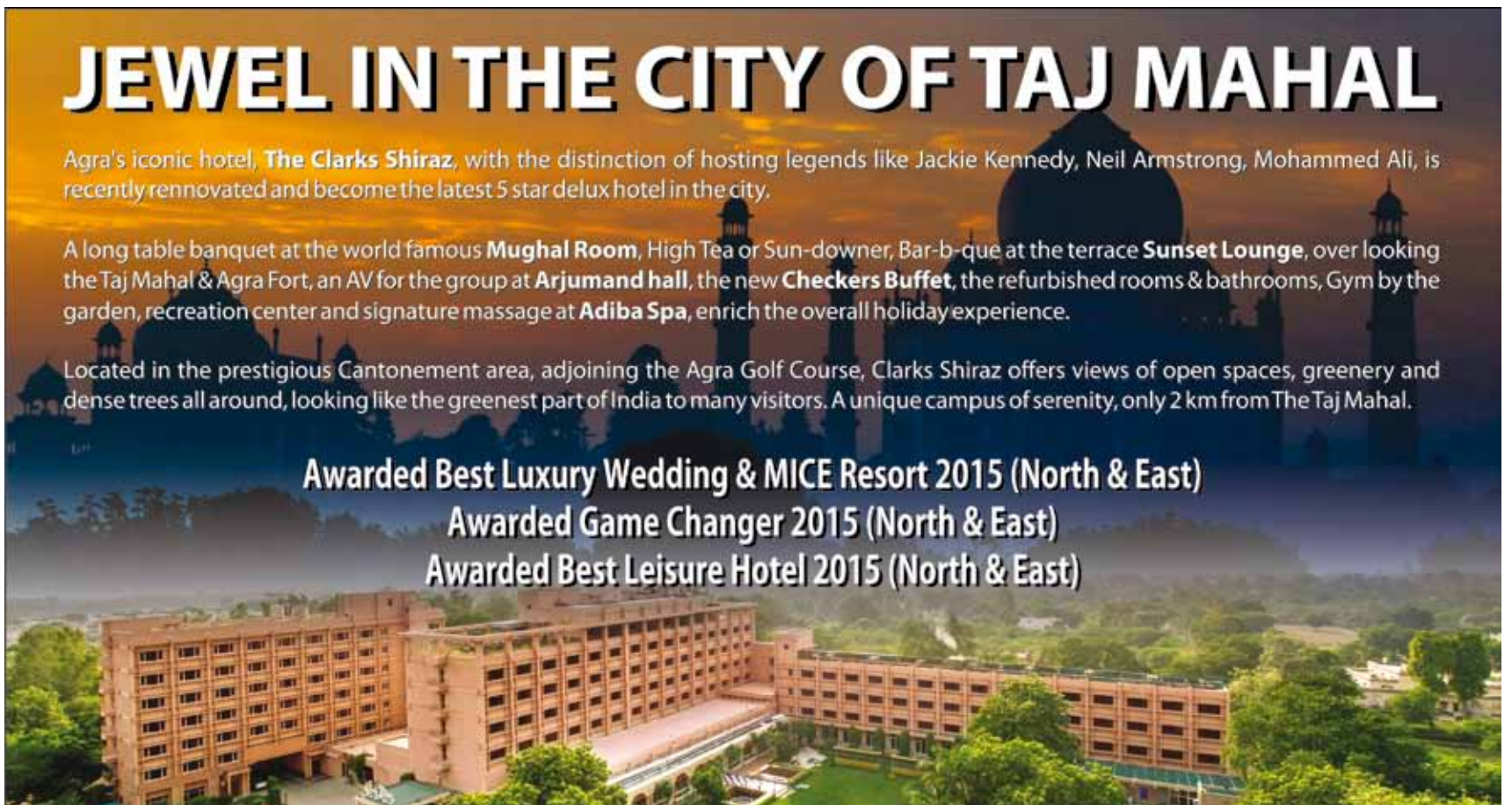
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NEWS from Sri Lanka

❖ Asia Hotel & Tourism Investment Conference in SL

The first Asia Hotel & Tourism Investment Conference (AHTIC) is set to be held at the Hilton Colombo in Sri Lanka from Nov 27-29, 2016, in partnership with the Sri Lanka Tourism Club (SLTC). AHTIC will attract an international audience of senior figures and decision-makers involved in all aspects of hotel and tourism investment in South Asia. The conference will focus on hotel development and infrastructure plans in these key markets.

❖ UNWTO Conference in Sri Lanka

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has joined hands with Sri Lanka Tourism to organise a Conference on 'Tourism: A Catalyst for Development, Peace and Reconciliation' in Passikudah from July 11 to 14, 2016. The event will have in attendance prominent personalities including the Secretary General of the UNWTO, a number of tourism experts and more than 60 international delegates.

❖ Sri Lanka Tourism conducts roadshow in Seoul

Sri Lanka Tourism wrapped its roadshow on June 7, 2016. Sri Lanka Tourism and the representatives of Sri Lankan travel agencies visited Korea, and introduced tourist attractions and vision of Sri Lanka to the travel industry and media of Korea. Also B2B consulting was provided in the event.

The ambassador of Sri Lanka to Korea, **Manisha Gunasekera**, said, "Currently not many Korean tourists visit Sri Lanka since direct flights from Korea to Sri Lanka have recently been created. However, Sri Lanka has become one of popular countries to travel in China and Japan. We are focusing on promotion of tourism in Korea through participating in Korea World Travel Fair and Busan International Travel Fair, and in the planning stage to promote cooperatively with Korean Air which flies to Sri Lanka."

Unregulated hotels a menace

Sri Lanka is faced with the dangers of mushrooming unregulated hotels. There is an urgent need for the stakeholders and government to join hands in tackling it, claims **Hiran Cooray**, President of Tourist Hotels Association of Sri Lanka and Director of Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority.



TT BUREAU

Q What are the issues faced by hotels in Sri Lanka, and how does the association try to address them?

I believe our biggest problem right now is that Sri Lanka, despite enjoying high arrival numbers, is still not positioned as strongly as we would like. We have been on a level playing field with countries such as Malaysia, Maldives, Thailand etc., for some time now in terms of products and services. However, we have struggled to capture the attention of the world adequately.

On the home front, there are issues of accommodation explosion—with the sudden growth of tourist arrivals, the number of unregulated informal businesses has escalated. Whilst we encourage investment in the hospitality sector, there must be certain standards and checks in place to ensure safety,



Hiran Cooray
President of Tourist Hotels Association of Sri Lanka (THASL)

quality, and promotion of Sri Lanka as a valuable destination. THASL seeks to address these issues by coordinating very closely with stakeholders and government authorities, and lending aid in the form of education and advice wherever possible.

Q What are your plans for the association in future?

We would like to see more of small and medium hoteliers joining the association. We are specifically targeting to serve

their needs. We have strengthened our secretariat with a full time Chief Executive Officer who will assist these members with legal, operational, training and marketing advice. We would also like to encourage international brands to join our membership as well, so that they too can seek our assistance.

Q What are your views on the minimum room rate policy in Sri Lanka? Why is there a debate on the same?

Minimum rate in Colombo was 'god sent'. Finally hoteliers started to make money as there was little space for undercutting. Naturally this move by the Government, which was welcomed by hoteliers in Colombo didn't go down well with the travel agents. Thus, the debate continues and I know eventually market forces will prevail and there will be a free flow within the next 24-36 months.

Q How has inbound tourism changed in Sri Lanka after the war ended?

End of the war opened the whole world to us. During the war, we survived due to the efforts from tour operators in Europe and India. They continued to support us despite travel adversities and warnings. We will always remain grateful to that. Now we see independent travellers roaming all over the country. We believe 30-40 per cent of them stay in accommodation provided by the informal sector. Naturally online agencies play a leading role in connecting these service providers with the consumers.

Q Which has been the biggest inbound market for Sri Lanka?

Traditionally, it has always been the European market – it still is. However, countries such as China and India are very close behind.

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Can Brexit propel India outbound?

The exit of Britain from the European Union has left the travel and tourism industry speculating on its impact on travel business. Despite hopes of an increase in outbound segment from India to the UK, the industry opines that it is too early to predict the long term effects of Brexit.



ANKITA SAXENA



Pankaj Nagpal
Managing Director
Travstarz Global Group

“I don't think Brexit will have a major impact on the outbound market from India as UK always had a separate visa regime and independent border controls from EU. Chances are that outbound to UK from India may actually improve with the falling pound, making travel cheaper and a break from EU could translate into stricter border controls and better security thus boosting tourism.”

“Visitors from India have the potential to benefit from the weakened pound which means that Britain offers particularly good value this year and online travel agents have experienced an increase in online holiday searches for travel to Britain. VisitBritain is also considering the imminent launch of tactical campaigns with some of our travel partners including India. Inbound visits from India to the UK set a record in 2015 with visits up eight per cent to 422,000.”



Sumathi Ramanathan
Director Asia Pacific,
Mid East & Africa
(APMEA), VisitBritain

“With the drop in pound, travel to the UK becomes attractive to Indian travellers and we foresee a surge in demand for the country. Indians being smart travellers and cost conscious might see this as a great opportunity to merge the holiday in the UK with a visit to friends and family. We can expect more promotions flowing from the hotels and airlines to gather larger market share.”



Sanjay Temkar
Director of Sales-India
Trafalgar Travels

“It is far too early to know the full impact of the results of the European Union referendum. India is an important market for us and we will continue to work closely with our partners and stakeholders to ensure visitors from around the world continue to come to Scotland to enjoy its spectacular landscapes, its rich heritage and, the warm welcome of its people.”



Malcolm Roughead
Chief Executive Officer
VisitScotland

“We do not expect Brexit to have any negative impact on tourism from India to Ireland and we believe that with the British Irish Visa Scheme (BIVS) there will be a continued increase in Indian visitor arrivals to the island of Ireland. A key priority for tourism are Common Travel Area between the UK and Ireland and we note and support that this is a priority recognised by all to enable the free movement across the borders.”



Beena Menon
Representative India
Tourism Ireland

“We have observed that travellers who are considering multiple destinations tend to choose more stable destinations and hence a short term shift in the destination bookings is seen. However as a medium to long term effect, we don't foresee any impact of Brexit on outbound travel between India and the UK. Our mix of travellers to Europe is more skewed towards family leisure trips and thus for that reason, our assumption is that there could be some short term impact on the choice of UK as a destination by this segment of customers.”



Deep Kalra
Chairman and Group
CEO, MakeMyTrip

“Brexit has led to the depreciation of pound hence making travel to the UK much cheaper for Indians. The number of tourists and students travelling to the UK will see a surge in the short term but if in the long run Britain prospers as the leader of the Brexit movement then pound will be stronger and holidays to the UK will become less affordable. Hence the long term impact on travel business remains to be seen.”



Monish B Shah
Chairman and Managing
Director, TravelLibro

New exhibitors @WTM London

■ The world's largest hotels search site, an aircraft charter specialist and the fourth largest city in Ecuador are among the new exhibitors already signed up for this year's World Travel Market London.

One such first-time exhibitor is Trivago, a price comparison site focused on hotels which is part of Expedia. It will be present in the Global Village region, where it will be joined by other first-time exhibitors including Autoclick Rent a Car, a car hire business based in Spain.

Elsewhere in the Global Village, Air Charter Service will be promoting its range of global aircraft chartering options, including its specialist solutions for tour operators and travel agents. Visitors to the Travel Technology region will have the chance to do deals with a range of WTM London debutants, including some businesses based in Asia such as Rish Iyagi, a South Korean marketing agency with branches in Shanghai and Tokyo. Continuing the Asia theme Paysec, a payments service provider based in the Philip-

pires, will be on hand for travel businesses looking at ways to accept debit cards from users.

Making a shorter journey is German hotels software business Booklogic. Another near neighbour heading to WTM London for the first time is AudioPev, a French company specialising in the design and rental of audiophone solutions for guided tours. Finally, the Americas region will welcome for the first time representatives from the city of Machala in southern Ecuador. It is the fourth largest city in Ecuador.

Westin enters Pushkar

Jagdeep Nambiar, General Manager, Westin Resort and Spa, Pushkar, gives a sneak peek into the new property ahead of its opening in August this year.



SAMAPTI DAS

The 100-room Westin Pushkar is going to be the first big brand in Pushkar and is going to open its doors during the Independence day weekend this year. Nambiar says, “The hotel is spread over 100 acres of green land. Predominantly, we are looking at the weekend, MICE and wedding markets. That's where we are going to position ourselves.”

Pushkar Mela, which happens in the first week of November, will also be a key focus for the newly appointed general manager of the hotel. Nambiar adds, “Right now priority for me is the timely opening of the hotel and seeing that we are able to live up to the

standards of both Starwood and Westin.”

Being the first big brand in Pushkar, there is a lot of expectation in and around the market about the opening of the hotel, he says. “In terms of trends, the main players are going to be the domestic market. Inbound is an important sector but that's only for a period of time in the year. From our side we will make sure that we customise our hotel for every guest. We follow a philosophy of ‘It's not one size that fits all.’ We are going to market ourselves as a very strong kid friendly hotel,” he adds.

Talking about the changing face of hospitality, Nambiar says, “A lot has changed. Earlier it used to be the FITs that would be the bread and butter for most of the hotels, but over a period of time most of the domestic markets have proven to be big in terms of revenue. With increase in travel, people nowadays know what to expect and what to get from a hotel.



Jagdeep Nambiar
General Manager
Westin Resort and Spa, Pushkar

In terms of trends, the main players are going to be the domestic market. Inbound is an important sector but that's only for a period of time in the year

So, it has become more challenging to meet the expectations and go beyond that especially for the domestic travellers.”

Sheraton Maldives hosts Fam Trip



Sheraton Full Moon Resort & Spa, Maldives co-hosted a familiarisation trip with SriLankan Airlines, RezLive.com and Island Holidays. The Fam trip was organised to Maldives in order to make the travel agents familiar with the location visited and promote the same to their customers. During the stay the group stayed at Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa Maldives and got an opportunity to explore the facilities for their honeymooners, family and leisure groups in a much luxurious manner.

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Military Tourism in India

Maharashtra Ex-servicemen Corporation has started the first-of-its-kind military tourism initiative in India under the 'Veer Yatra' brand.



TT BUREAU

For the first time in India, tourists will get a ring-side view of the military life with 'Veer Yatra' organised by Maharashtra Ex-servicemen Corporation (MESCO) – a government of Maharashtra undertaking established in 2002 for the welfare and resettlement of ex-servicemen. It aims at strengthening the emotional bond that exists between the military establishment and the civilian population.

Col (Retd.) Suhas S Jatkar, Managing Director, MESCO, says, "While Military Tourism is a well-established concept worldwide, it has not been explored in a structured way in India so far. As ex-servicemen, we strongly feel the need to promote Military Tourism with a view to inculcate sense of patriotism among the children and youth of the country. This kind of tourism will offer an insight into the lives of military personnel. It offers civilians

unique opportunities to experience the thrilling world of the defence forces from close quarters. We will associate with travel agencies and corporate companies soon."

MESCO is still exploring the security aspects of this initiative before it approaches international DMCs to tap inbound travellers. "We will be working closely with the Ministry of Tourism as well as Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporations and tourism boards of other states for designing packages for inbound travellers. Given the security issues involved, we will have to design these packages with additional layer of security. We are discussing these issues internally right now," he said.

MESCO is starting with nine packages that are between three to eight days. The packages are for around ₹2,150 to ₹32,000, depending on the tour. All profits will be utilised for welfare of soldiers' widows and handicapped. MESCO



Col (Retd.) Suhas S Jatkar
Managing Director
MESCO

We strongly feel the need to promote Military Tourism with a view to inculcate sense of patriotism among the country's youth

plans to add more packages to include strategic military establishment locations. It also plans to start border tourism in areas like J&K, Kargil, Ladakh and North East region.

1st SAARC Tourism Summit

India's first SAARC Tourism Summit will be hosted by Maharashtra in Aurangabad this October and will showcase the various tourist destinations the state has to offer.



TT BUREAU

The Ministry of External Affairs has decided to hold the country's first SAARC Tourism Summit in Aurangabad, the tourism capital of Maharashtra in the second week of October. The state government will also provide financial assistance of up to ₹50 lakh to entrepreneurs in the tourism business under the 'Start Up' scheme.

The two-day summit aims to tap FDI under 'Make in India' and 'Make in Maharashtra' schemes. **Valsa Nair Singh**, IAS, Principal Secretary Tourism and Culture, Government of Maharashtra, said, "The Ajanta-Ellora caves have always been the biggest tourism attraction in the state among foreigners and Indians. Ajanta also has one of the world's best visitor centre with several life-size replicas of Padmapani (sculptures of Buddha). The conference aims at promoting Aurangabad and other destinations of Maharashtra."



Valsa Nair Singh
IAS, Principal Secretary Tourism and Culture, Government of Maharashtra

A proposal to set up Buddhist Centre on MTDC's 900 acres land at Ellora is under consideration

The Department of Tourism (DoT) is trying to seek appointment of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to inaugurate the event. On the first day, officials from SAARC countries, which includes Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan,

India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, will attend the conference. On the second day, the ministers of tourism from these countries and from Indian states would participate.

Singh adds, "2017 will be celebrated as Visit Maharashtra Year and the year 2018 we will be celebrating completion of 200 years of the discovery of Ajanta Caves by British officer John Smith. A campaign to promote tourism destinations of Maharashtra all over the world will be undertaken aggressively under Visit Maharashtra 2017. In 2018, many events will be hosted to attract international and domestic tourists to Ajanta and other destinations of the city. A proposal to set up Buddhist Centre on MTDC's 900 acres land at Ellora is under consideration."

In addition, the three-day Ellora-Ajanta Festival will be held under the aegis of MTDC from October 14 to 16, 2016.

Yoga Day in the wild @Namah



On the occasion of International Yoga Day, Namah Resort by DS Group located in Jim Corbett, combined promotional activities of the property with wellness programmes. The Bloggers Retreat Programme was hosted over three days, engaging the participants in a host of health rejuvenating activities. Bloggers from different genres catering to hospitality industry experienced the taste of luxury at the property and reviewed it on various platforms. The activities involved yoga sessions with body cleansing programmes in order to engage with the property's idealistic location, multi-cuisine restaurant, luxurious utilities, hospitality and ambience.

VisitBritain Mumbai-bound

VisitBritain has moved its headquarters from New Delhi to Mumbai and has named Vishal Bhatia as its Interim Country Manager. **Sumathi Ramanathan**, Director - Asia Pacific, Middle East & Africa, VisitBritain, explains this move.



HAZEL JAIN

Q Why is the head office moving from New Delhi to Mumbai?

Mumbai is the business and financial hub and therefore allows us to strategically engage with our key airline, trade and entertainment industry partners who are all headquartered there. We are still maintaining a senior presence in Delhi with the impending appointment of a Deputy Country Manager to be based there. Our trade engagement in the North and East are vital for our business and we will maintain a B2B role in Delhi as well.

Q Is this part of the global shift in structure at VisitBritain?

As most businesses, adapting to business needs is necessary and this is an India specific move to ensure we are best placed to be optimising opportunities



Sumathi Ramanathan
Director, Asia Pacific
Middle East & Africa VisitBritain

India remains one of our key growth market and we will continue investing in relevant partnerships with the trade, airlines, media and Bollywood

to grow the inbound market from India to Britain. Tourism

thrives on interdependencies and partnerships and we are investing in senior resources in both Mumbai and Delhi to ensure we are strategically placed to nurture these partnerships.

Q Will VisitBritain also amend its strategy for the India market?

The strategy remains the same and it reflects the vision to increase global visitor numbers to 40 million visits by 2020. India remains one of our key growth market and we will continue investing in relevant partnerships with the trade, airlines, media and Bollywood. We will weigh our focus on content and digital marketing with the aim of converting more visitors to not only stay longer in Britain but to also explore the countryside and key capital cities including London, Birmingham, Manchester, Cardiff and Edinburgh.

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Sands Resorts welcomes the smash-hit Broadway show SHREK The Musical, the outrageous antics of Blue Man Group in Macao, as well as Kung Fu Panda and the DreamWorks gang over the summer months. Alongside these spectacular shows and events, Sands Resorts offers a vast selection of duty-free shopping and extensive dining options to fill every moment with extraordinary experiences.



Showtime

SHREK The Musical brings to life the hilarious and heartwarming story of how an ugly ogre with a heart of gold comes to the rescue of a helpless princess in a fairytale kingdom. This show runs from 22 July until 7 August at The Venetian Theatre.

Blue Man Group in Macao brings the world-famous performers and their unique stage act to The Venetian Theatre from 11 August until 28 August. The world-famous troupe blends rock music, percussion, movement and mime into an entirely distinctive mix.

Kids and adults alike will love to immerse themselves in the fantasy realm of Planet J, the world's first "live-action role-play" theme park with over 200 individual games. The 9,300 sqm area is composed of 8 different themed zones which connect the adventures of the Magic Stone Kingdom.

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Travstarz hosts Indian agents at Hua Hin & Bangkok



Travstarz Global Group organised an exclusive Luxury FAM trip for selected travel partners to Thailand covering Hua Hin and Bangkok from June 27 till July 1, 2016. The trip was organised in association with the Minor Hotels Group who hosted the agents at their Anantara Hua Hin Resort & Spa, Hua Hin; Anantara-Sathorn, Bangkok, and the newly opened Avani Riverside, Bangkok.

New routes from London

The 1st airline to start operations in India through crowd-funding, People Over Profit (POP) wants to fly a direct route that isn't served by any other LCC. But will it see the light of day?

HAZEL JAIN

There's a new low-cost, long-haul airline in the making and it wants to launch a direct route not served by any other airline out of London: non-stop flights from the UK to Amritsar and Ahmedabad. The only hitch is that before it gets its operating licenses, it needs to sell Gold Passes via crowd-funding. **Nino (Navdip) Singh Judge**, Chairman and Principal, POP (People Over Profit), says, "We are currently pushing the £500 Gold Passes which come with a free ticket and eight VIP benefits worth £500 every time they travel for the next five years. Oh, and money-back guarantee if we don't fly!" POP requires £5 million to launch the airline's first-year operation.

Interesting proposition, but will it work? Judge is upbeat. He says, "POP is different – it is going to be a UK airline who's DNA is Indian. The Punjabi and Gujarati communities both in the UK and India historically have had strong



Nino (Navdip) Singh Judge
Chairman and Principal
POP (People Over Profit)

family and business connections and that desire for both communities to keep in touch and visit each other has not abated over the years. There are vast numbers of potential passengers waiting for an airline like POP." The airline aims to cater to the business sector as well as the VFR and leisure tourism markets and has planned three flights a week to Ahmedabad and three per week to Amritsar. It plans to sell through its website and a handful of travel agents including TravelPack.

Currently, flights between the UK and India are between London Heathrow and just two cities, Mumbai and Delhi,

and three supporting ones, Bengaluru, Chennai and Hyderabad. This ignores the secondary cities of India. POP will no doubt benefit from the new Civil Aviation Policy that makes provisions to boost regional connectivity in India.

POP's business model will donate 51 per cent of its profits to charities in the communities that it serves. To this, Judge says, "LCCs have the best profit margins. 51 per cent of net profits will go to charity after re-investment into business." He hopes that the first POP flight will depart from Stansted Airport this year in Q4 (2016) beginning to Amritsar using a 378 seat all-economy Airbus A330-300 aircraft in POP livery. "We plan to introduce more routes between the UK and India like Kolkata, Lucknow, Panaji/Mangalore, Surat/Pune and Bhubaneswar (Odisha) (presuming upgrading as international airports); also Sylhet (Bangladesh)," he adds. POP plans to have offices in Amritsar but its India headquarters is not yet finalised.

FRHI hosts Global Meetings Exchange

FRHI Hotels & Resorts recently hosted 80 clients from the UK, USA, China and India in Dubai for its Global Meetings Exchange 2016 at Fairmont Ajman. The four-day event included one-on-one meetings, informal networking sessions with professionals and partners, encompassing industry specific educational discussions and exchanges. The event concluded with a gala dinner at Raffles Dubai.



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Spain roadshow in Oct

Spain Tourism Board's roadshow in India from Oct 13-17, will see DMCs and travel service providers of Spain interact with their Indian counterparts.



TT BUREAU

The roadshows will be held from October 13-17 in Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Kolkata, respectively, informed **Ignacio Ducasse Gutierrez**, Director, Tourism Office of Spain in Mumbai. Spain welcomed 84,903 Indian tourists in 2015 and registered approximately 11,195 Indian tourist arrivals from January to March this year. "We are aiming to achieve a growth of about 10-15 per cent this year thereby touching approximately 100,000 Indian tourist arrivals," says Gutierrez.



Ignacio Ducasse Gutierrez
Director
Tourism Office of Spain in Mumbai

On an average, Indians spend about ₹2,000 per trip (including flight tickets) and over ₹200 per day. The major tourism segments in the Indian outbound market to Spain are luxury, shopping, football, culture, sun and beach, night-life and festivals.

"We are currently targeting the segments of gastronomy, self-drive, adventure, golf, arts and culture and honeymoon and weddings. We believe a vast untapped potential lies in these niche segments and could result in increased growth in the com-

ing years. We are also paying special attention to the World Heritage Cities and this year, we will additionally be focusing on the Canary Islands, in particular Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and Tenerife," says Gutierrez.

Also, for the first time India was included in the celebrations of World Tapas Day, which was held on the third Thursday of every June from 2016 onwards and will be investing in several promotional campaigns to highlight the other mentioned segments in Spain," adds Gutierrez.

Thirty per cent of tourists in Spain belong to the MICE segment and the country is targeting this segment aggressively, informs Gutierrez. "A big MICE event is being planned for the India market which will be held tentatively in New Delhi in November," he says.

Hola India!

Spain will be celebrating World Tapas Day on the third Thursday of June this year onwards

It's currently targeting segments of gastronomy, self-drive, adventure, golf, arts and culture and honeymoon and weddings

Chamonix bullish on MICE

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 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 com-

munication 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.

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



Nicolas Durochat
General Manager
Chamonix - Mont Blanc Tourism Board

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 the heads of their leading corporate clients visit us and discover our myriad offerings including the Golf offering, the varied gastronomy 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.

Village tours at Mana Hotels

In September, Mana Hotels, Ranakpur, is organising an event to showcase the hotels' new offerings like jungle safari and activities like hot air balloon rides.



TT BUREAU

According to **Dheeraj Jain**, Marketing Manager, Mana Hotels, Ranakpur, besides the architecture, the guest-oriented services are the company's strengths. "Mana Hotel accounts to be the best luxury resort in Ranakpur, located besides the river and within the vicinity of Ranakpur Jain Temple. It is a place to be experienced. The tranquility at this hotel and the food served is another major highlight of Mana Resorts," says Jain.

The inbound tourism market has been low for the past two years according to Jain. However he points out that Mana Hotels was able to attract more international clients than the previous year and even though the percentage of international guests at the property are low in comparison to the domestic guests currently, the company hopes that this share will increase in the remaining year. Jain says, "In addition to cater to our domestic guests, we are organising a big event



Dheeraj Jain
Marketing Manager
Mana Hotels, Ranakpur

Mana Hotel accounts to be the best luxury resort in Ranakpur, located besides the river and within the vicinity of Ranakpur Jain Temple. It is a place to be experienced

this September which includes hot air balloon rides at the hotel which will be a new addition for us. Along with these, we are also introducing new packages

like jungle safari, Maharaja package, etc., to cater a variety of guest segments."

He further elaborates that the inbound tourists normally prefer to see the old charm of India. "At Mana, we provide the guests with village tours including visit to villagers' homes where they experience the rural lifestyle. Along with these tours we also offer activities like a pottery workshop, champi massages, animal rides etc. which have been appreciated by all guests," he says.

Jain emphasises the importance and relevance of marketing the property both in national and international markets on online platforms and reveals that the company is targeting the digital medium of promotion in 2016.

At your service

Guests at Mana Hotel get to experience village tours including visit to villagers' homes where they get an opportunity to experience the rural lifestyle.

Aiming at 300,000 arrivals

The Australian High Commission in India recently issued 150,000th visitor visa and celebrated the occasion in Delhi by felicitating the visa recipient.



TT BUREAU

Calling it a significant milestone for Tourism Australia in India, **Nishant Kashiker**, Country Manager, India & Gulf, Tourism Australia, says, "In 2015, we crossed the 100,000 visa application mark and in just a year we have touched the 150,000 mark. Last year, arrivals went up by almost 19 per cent with 233,000 arrivals. Indian tourists contribute significantly to the Australian economy and last year the total spend went



Nishant Kashiker
Country Manager, India & Gulf
Tourism Australia

up by 38 per cent, which was a total of ₹5,500 crores. We have an overarching 2020

objective of reaching the 300,000 Indian arrivals to Australia, contributing over 1.9 billion dollars to the Australian economy."


He insisted that growth has been constant in the last few years. "From being the 11th largest market to being the 8th largest market in Australia today, India is expected to be amongst the top five markets for Tourism Australia by 2025. And there are many factors behind this — right from a double digit growth in the arrivals; to the stability in the Australian dollar; improved aviation access between the two countries with Air India's direct flight and Scoot commencing flights from Chennai, Amritsar and now Jaipur; as well as the bilateral relations between India and Australia being at an all time high. The announcement for the launch of the electronic lodgement of visa applications and the pilot three year multiple entry visa applications are also going to encourage lot of Indians to visit and keep coming back to Australia."

Streamlined visa process

Many perceive that Australian visa is difficult to get, but for visitor and tourist visas, we have a much more streamlined process than before. We have a service level requirement of issuing visa within a month and in practice it's much faster than that. In 2015, we issued 233,000 visitor visas for tourism and business, and we can easily reach 250,000 this calendar year.

Harinder Sidhu
Australia's High
Commissioner to India





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Bird Travel appointed RwandAir's GSA for India

RwandAir has appointed Bird Travels, the Airline Management Services arm of Bird Group as its new General Sales Agent for the Indian market. RwandAir is planning to commence operations to Mumbai, India in the last quarter of this year, and the appointment of Bird Travel as its GSA comes in line with that.

"Bird Travel is happy to be associated with RwandAir

as their exclusive GSA in India. RwandAir is one of the fastest growing airlines on the African continent and has aggressive plans to connect India and Africa through their hub in Kigali, Rwanda. We look forward to a great working association with RwandAir and are optimistic of making their online operations a success," commented **Praful Khosla**, Executive Vice President, Bird Travel.

BA Dreamliner to fly Mumbai-London in 2017

After unveiling its most technologically advanced Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner on the New Delhi-London route on October 25, 2015, British Airways is all set to fly the state-of-the-art aircraft on the Mumbai-London route as well. **Moran Birger**, British Airways, reveals, "We will also be launching the Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner on our Mumbai-London route later this year. British Airways has been flying to India for over 90

years and currently operates 49 flights a week from London Heathrow to five major cities in the country – New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

"In 2015, we had 15 new aircraft in our fleet including two A380s and the first five Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners. BA has committed to investing more than £5 billion globally between 2012 and 2017 in our products and services."

Oman Air open to invest in India

The airline espies much potential in India and is open to investing here – not just in Indian airlines but also in related activities like setting up an MRO facility. It will also introduce daily Muscat-Manchester flights in April 2017.



TT BUREAU

Following the announcement of 100 per cent FDI in Indian aviation by the Finance Minister recently, Oman Air has revealed that it is open to investing in India. **Paul Gregorowitsch**, CEO, Oman Air, said, "We do not exclude any financial participation in any Indian airline. If an opportunity arises, we will take it; it's an open issue for us. Investment is not limited to an Indian airline. It could also be in related businesses such as setting up an MRO facility in India where our aircraft could be maintained."

He added that this year, Oman Air will receive a budget of close to USD 100 million from the Government of Oman. Of this, the airline will spend USD 1.1 billion on infrastructure and promoting the destination. Gregorowitsch also revealed that it will introduce daily flights from India to Manchester with a stop-over

"Six of our 11 destinations already have double daily frequencies. If we are allowed either on an extended bilateral agreement or via an open sky policy, our first intention would be to go triple daily to these six destinations we already serve and go double daily in the other cities."

Paul Gregorowitsch
CEO, Oman Air



in Muscat from April 1, 2017. Apart from this, it also wants to increase its weekly flights between Muscat and India from the present 126 weekly flights to 175 weekly flights by 2018. It currently operates to 11 destinations in India, including double dailies to Mumbai, Delhi, Kochi, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Chennai.

Gregorowitsch adds, "Six of our 11 destinations al-

ready have double daily frequencies. If we are allowed either on an extended bilateral agreement or via an open sky policy, our first intention would be to go triple daily to these six destinations we already serve and go double daily in the other cities. We are already running load factors of close to 90 per cent in our existing operations thanks to the travel trade and the Indian nationals living

in the UK, USA and Europe who want to travel home." The carrier has no plans to add new destinations in India to its route.

The remaining five destinations each enjoy 10 or 11 frequencies per week. In all, Oman Air operates 126 flights per week between Muscat and India, which means 21,147 seats totally. This, Gregorowitsch adds, it wants to grow to 29,000 by 2018. The CEO was visiting Mumbai to meet and thank Oman Air's top 20 travel agents. The airline also celebrates 23 years of its India operations this year.

Bhanu Mohan Kaila, Country Manager (India), Oman Air, said that 50 per cent of their business is generated through the travel trade in India including the bigger consolidators in the market. "Corporates also form a huge chunk of our clients for Business and First Class seats. We are also exploring other channel of distribution," he said.

ANA Mumbai hosts agents to Japan



All Nippon Airways Mumbai and Yamagata prefecture-Japan organised a Fam trip to Japan for select partners. The agents visited Tendo City-Yamagata prefecture, and Yokohama-Tokyo. Hotel Iitaku arranged this trip with the support of Yamagata Prefecture and All Nippon Airways (ANA). Other than cherry picking and the Maiko dance performance, they also enjoyed fruits-picking, Mogami-river cruise, Soba-noodle (Japanese popular buckwheat noodles), and Japanese traditional cuisine.

Taking on unfair pricing

Small and medium-sized tour operators have taken legal action against the alleged unethical business practices and predatory pricing systems deployed by OTAs.



ANKITA SAXENA

In a first of its kind protest, more than 1000 small and medium enterprising (SME) tour operators protested against the OTAs at Jantar Mantar recently. The SME tour operators alleged that OTAs are deploying unethical business practices in order to kill competition in the market by selling products and services below the purchase cost aided by foreign funds. **Subhash Goyal**, Immediate Past President, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), says, "The foreign funded OTAs are buying a hotel room for ₹ 2,000 and selling it for less than ₹ 1,000. With this type of practice none of the small operators can compete and slowly they are going bankrupt. This is a very serious situation and the government and all travel associations must look into it."

Harjinder Singh, Partner, 24x7travels.com, informed that an association of small and medium tour operators is



Subhash Goyal
Immediate Past President
Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO)

This is a very serious situation and the government and all travel associations must look into it

also on the cards to address the issues in a united voice where the sales staff, marketing executives along with the non-IATA agents will also be represented. Singh adds, "We are not against use of technology and in fact implore SMEs to adopt technology. However,

OTAs are garbing behind technology and actually using predatory pricing which is illegal under CCI. They are using their dominant position and not technology to kill the business." The agitators said they are against the e-coupons and cash discounts offered by the OTAs to reduce actual costs and argued that funding received by OTAs is a result of black money flowing into the industry.

Neeraj Rustagi, Director, Regency Tours, says, "Indian hotel industry has to maintain their agreements with the vendors and OTAs have to maintain the rate contracted on a condition of not subsidising it and devaluing the property in the market." A memorandum to this effect has been sent to the Prime Minister and Tourism Ministry and various travel and tourism associations will take up a legal battle with CCI under unfair and unethical trade practices informed **Shailendra Srivastava**, Managing Director, Krishna Holidays.

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VoA for Indian groups

Tunisia is the latest entrant among the countries that want to grab a bite of the Indian tourism pie, and is offering visa-on-arrival for Indian groups of minimum 20 people.



The Embassy of Tunisia in India, along with BTC Travel Group presented the various attractions of the destination in front of the leading members of the travel trade. **Tarek Azouz**, Ambassador, Tunisia to India, said, "We think there is big potential in India market and we believe that Tunisia, with its proximity to Europe can be easily included in European itineraries."

Tushar Jain, Group Managing Director, BTC Travel Group, said, "Our focus is to tell Indian travel agents that they can come to Tunisia, and for that we are looking for couple of more events in Mumbai, Kolkata and Bangalore. We are helping the embassy to market Tunisia in India and we will be organising some small educational trips and some presentations."

Azouz added, "We participate in fairs as well. We had one team in Mumbai last September and we did tours

and promotions. We are also trying to work with Bollywood. Last year 6.5 million tourists visited Tunisia, which includes Chinese in big numbers as well as Europeans and North Americans. Indians are only starting to explore the destination and the numbers are

fective. The hotels range from three to five star and are not very expensive."

Jain added, "Tunisia is the perfect destination for MICE groups and the Embassy of Tunisia has introduced visa on arrival facility for Indian



Tarek Azouz
Ambassador
Tunisia to India



Tushar Jain
Group Managing Director
BTC Travel Group

only in a few thousands." In fact, Tunisia is very well connected via Gulf countries, Europe, as well as Istanbul. "We are focusing on every type of traveller, be it FITs or groups. Another advantage is that Tunisia is very cost ef-

groups. If a travel agent has a group of 20 people, they can send prior information to the embassy and they can get visa at the immigration counter. All one needs to produce is the hotel voucher at the time of immigration."

Targeting 1.6mn tourists

Iceland is focusing on India as a potential market and is trying to boost the numbers through roadshows and social media.



Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Iceland, reveals that Iceland has everything on offer for tourists from India. "We would like to increase tourist numbers from India by marketing Iceland as a destination. One can experience something new in Iceland. Iceland has everything and one can travel from here to the US in five hours, and to Europe in three hours."



Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Iceland



Thorleifur Thor Jonsson
Manager Promote
Iceland

Talking about the promotions in India, **Thorleifur Thor Jonsson**, Manager, Promote Iceland, says, "We work closely with travel agents and have conducted roadshows in Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru, with a focus to set up contact with B2B companies. We are educating and informing travel agencies, so that they can consider Iceland as an option for the sophisticated Indian travellers." Apart from that, Jonsson adds, "We use social media as the primary source of information and attract people. This is the best way to reach our clientele."

However, the number of Indians visiting the destination is not huge. "We are seeing a small number, between 1000-2000 Indian visitors to Iceland every year. However, it is growing pretty fast and I am convinced that with the huge boost in publicity that Iceland has got through Indian cinema, we would see much more of Indians coming to Iceland," adds Jonsson.

Sveinsson reveals, "We got 1.2 million tourists in 2015 and are estimating 1.62 million this year. It has been growing around 20 per cent every year. The majority of tourists come

from US, Europe, Germany, and UK. The number of tourists from Asia, especially Japan and China, is also growing. In fact, our international airport sees about 6-7 million passengers because of the connection between Europe and North America. Currently, we have around 20 airlines flying to Iceland from Europe and US."

Jonsson added, "Next summer, you'd be able to fly to Iceland from 80 different destinations. We don't have direct flight from India as yet, but all the major hubs will have direct flights to Iceland."

Agents up for some fun in the Philippines

The Department of Tourism (DOT), Philippines hosted a trip for the winners of a trade event held during the last roadshows in the cities of Lucknow, Delhi, Chandigarh, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Pune and Mumbai. The six-day itinerary highlighted top excursions, guides and other offerings. The participants explored the locales like Manila, Cebu, Bohol and beaches of Boracay and Batangas.



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EVENT TALK

JULY 2016

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)	Philippines	Sept 22-24
JATA Tourism Expo	Tokyo	Sept 22-25
IITM	Mumbai	Sept 23-25
TTF	Pune	Sept 23-25
ILTM Americas	Mexico	Sept 26-29
Kerala Travel Mart	Kochi	Sept 27-30
India International Travel Mart	Gurugram	Sept 30 - Oct 02

OCTOBER 2016

Ukraine International Travel Market	Kiev, Ukraine	Oct 05-07
Tashkent International Tourism Fair	Tashkent, Uzbekistan	Oct 05-07
UNWTO Conference on Religious Heritage and Tourism in a Changing Society	Netherlands	Oct 05 – 07
Connections Luxury	Brazil	Oct 16-19
2016 World Tourism Conference	Penang, Malaysia	Oct 17 – 19
IMEX America	Las Vegas	Oct 18 – 20
ITB Asia	Singapore	Oct 19-21

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

Chokhi Dhani: A lux experience

Chokhi Dhani Resort, a must-see attraction in Jaipur, has recently joined hands with Lux Hotels to take the property's promotion worldwide.



TT BUREAU

Known to everyone who has ever visited Jaipur, Chokhi Dhani is a destination in itself offering a quintessential Rajasthani experience. And now it has become the latest hotel to partner with Lux Hotels for promotion and marketing around the world. "Awarded India's most innovative project by Government of India, Chokhi Dhani Resort literally means the Fine Hamlet. The five star ethnic village resort in Jaipur offers traditional and picturesque dwellings set in an expansive property," says Mehul



Vaswani, Director Hotels, Chokhi Dhani Group.

The property is traditionally built, and has a variety of accommodations — Royal

Cottages, Family Royal Suites, Royal Suites, Silver, Golden & Copper Dhola Maru Suites, Haveli Suites, Chokhi Dhani Duplex Suite and Presidential Suite. Spread over 10 acres of

landscaped areas, the property exudes a rustic look. A village fair is created every evening as an ongoing celebration of the rich and vibrant cultural heritage. He claimed that Chokhi Dhani is on the must-visit list of Jaipur in all the itineraries and attracts a huge footfall.

Vaswani says they believe in word of mouth publicity. "Over the years, thousands of guests have experienced their stay and village fair at Chokhi Dhani, and their experience itself is the best publicity we can have," he adds.

Platform to claim refunds

Eve Buchner, Founder & CEO, refund.me, is all set to launch this client management service for claiming compensation for flight delays, cancellations, overbooking and boarding in India.



TT BUREAU

"We were the first platform to delivered this service to people, and today we are serving customers from 145 countries and dealing with more than 350 airlines worldwide," reveals Buchner. And now refund.me is coming to India.

"Indians are flying worldwide and it's well known that Indian aviation market will be the third biggest within the next 5-8 years. We did Facebook and Google marketing and got a huge response from the Indian market, where we found that every second flight is delayed. Since people came to us

saying that we need this service for India, we established a platform based on Indian regulation. It will be soon launched, enabling customers to claim compensation for flight delays of more than three hours and cancellations, not only in Europe but India as well," she adds.

Explaining further she says, "We can serve to B2C as well as B2B market, like travel agents, online booking engines as well as travel management companies. If you are a travel agent and you have a number of people complaining about flight delays even if they travel internationally over Europe and to Europe and back and



Eve Buchner
Founder & CEO
refund.me

forth, you can come to us for any claim and compensation management. We take a commission of 25 per cent on the refunded amount for our service. We are working on a no win-no fee basis, which actually takes away the risk." And how much time it takes for the

compensation to come? Buchner reveals, "In Germany, the success rate is quite high and it takes around two weeks, six weeks, and sometimes longer according to the law system in the country concerned."

However, dealing with big airlines and lawyers is a huge task. Buchner says, "We negotiate with the airlines, especially when a company is buying tickets worth a million of dollars. Usually it works. Else, we also take the airlines to court. And customers or travel agents can monitor the progress of the case on our website through their exclusive account number."

Travog will empower TMCs

The disorganised business travel sector in India needs to adopt a robust and futuristic technology platform in order to have a sustainable business.



TT BUREAU

QuadLabs this year is focusing primarily on marketing its business travel platform 'Travog' which provides end-to-end travel and expenses (T&E) management solutions to corporates.

Gaurav Chiripal, Founder and CEO, QuadLabs, says that MICE is the fastest growing segment in the industry today. "We are seeing a tremendous decline in leisure business in the B2B space



Gaurav Chiripal
Founder and CEO
QuadLabs

and we feel that various businesses have to re-think on their strategy going forward. For the smaller travel agents

to survive they have to focus more on bundled packages and bring enough value to the customer to stop them from going direct to supplier. End supplier will rule the market in the years to come."

Travog is the first ever on-demand T&E management system with pre-book policy compliant system with an internal self-booking tool. The USP is the integrated travel marketplace of content procured from global travel suppliers and travel management companies

(TMCs). It is a bridge between the corporate travel needs and the TMC services with almost zero cost of ownership for both. The internal engine connects to various GDSs, supplier system and content providers to provide comprehensive set of travel deals and corporate fares in the single system. Travog mobile App works as a travel companion providing various location-based services. The system also provides expense management to business travelers to manage post-trip expense.

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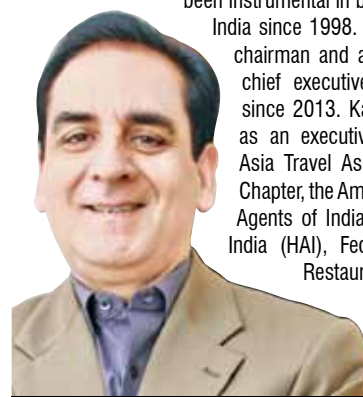
The Board of Directors of Malaysia Aviation Group Berhad (MAG) has announced that current COO **Peter Bellew** will be taking over as Group Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer. Bellew has been a member of MAB's senior management team since the first day of its full operations. He has over 20 years of experience in the aviation industry. He joined MAB from Ryanair, where he served in various roles since 2006, leaving the airline as the Director of Flight Operations.



Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group, South Asia

Gurgaon

K.B. Kachru has been appointed Chairman Emeritus and Principal Advisor, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group, South Asia. Kachru has been instrumental in building the business in India since 1998. Most recently, he was chairman and a mentor to Raj Rana, chief executive officer, South Asia, since 2013. Kachru has also served as an executive member of Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) India Chapter, the American Society of Travel Agents of India, Hotel Association of India (HAI), Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Association of India (FHRAI) and India Convention Promotion Bureau.



Red Apple Travel DMC

Mumbai

Mushtaq Y Vakani has been appointed as Head of Sales for Maharashtra, Gujarat & Madhya Pradesh at Red Apple Travel DMC for 11 countries. Vakani brings with him 24 years of experience in travel with specialisation in sales and operations. He will be managing and directing sales, managing existing travel agent as well as expanding new travel agent base for outbound in this region. He has previously been associated with Lama Tours and North Tours heading Western India and has also worked with SriLankan Airlines as Western India Manager and Jet Airways.



Express Inn Nasik

Nasik

Express Inn Nasik has announced the appointment of **Hrishikesh Joshi** as the General Manager. He has over 15 years' experience in the hospitality sector. Some of his previous assignments include Starwood Mumbai & Chennai, Carlson Calcutta, Ramada Cochin, Taj Residency Nashik & Taj Holiday Village Mumbai Hotels. Joshi's areas of expertise includes Room & Revenue Management, Customer Service.



Vivanta by Taj

Gurgaon

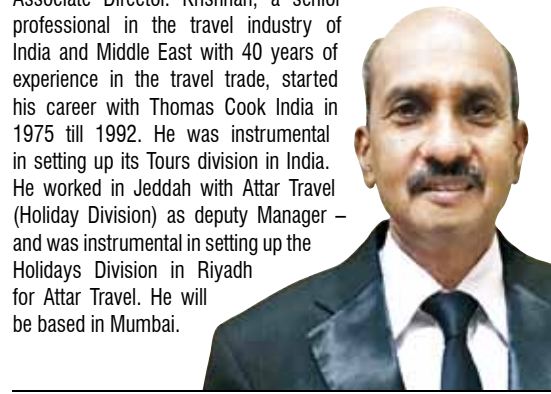
Vivanta by Taj, Gurgaon has announce the appointment of **Manu Sharma** as its General Manager. Sharma joins Vivanta by Taj, Gurgaon, after his last tenure with The Gateway Hotel, Kolkata as its General Manager. He has spent more than a decade with the Taj group, playing various roles in the sales function in Kolkata, before moving to Mumbai. He was appointed the Resident Manager of Taj Bengal, Kolkata in 2011 and in 2013 was entrusted with the task of opening the first prototype Gateway hotel – The Gateway Hotel, E M Bypass, Kolkata. Sharma holds a Master's degree from the prestigious S.P. Jain Institute of Management and Research, Mumbai.



Takemytravel.com

Mumbai

Takemytravel.com (India), an online booking portal for international and domestic travel and stay, has appointed **M.N. Krishnan** as Associate Director. Krishnan, a senior professional in the travel industry of India and Middle East with 40 years of experience in the travel trade, started his career with Thomas Cook India in 1975 till 1992. He was instrumental in setting up its Tours division in India. He worked in Jeddah with Attar Travel (Holiday Division) as deputy Manager – and was instrumental in setting up the Holidays Division in Riyadh for Attar Travel. He will be based in Mumbai.



Byke Hotels & Resorts

Mumbai

Mihir Sarkar has been promoted as Executive Director of Byke Hotels & Resorts. He joined the Group as Vice President in October, 2013. Sarkar has been instrumental in planning, organising, directing, controlling, developing and evaluating the hotel operations and sales and marketing. He is a graduate with Diploma in Hotel Management and has served various hotels across India in a variety of managerial positions. Sarkar comes with over two decades of experience in these verticals.



Berggruen Hotels

New Delhi

Keys Hotels, a brand by Berggruen Hotels funded by Berggruen Holdings, a New York-headquartered proprietary fund, has announced the appointment of **Nidhi Gupta** as Regional Director, Sales and Development. She will play a pivotal role in generating new sales leads and contacts, whereby leading to the growth and expansion of the Keys brand into new markets. Gupta has close to two decades of experience in the hospitality sector. Prior to joining Berggruen Hotels, she has worked with Country Inn & Suites By Carlson, Sarovar Park Plaza Hotels & Resorts and Concept Hospitality. Gupta holds a Masters degree in Arts.



Hyatt Regency

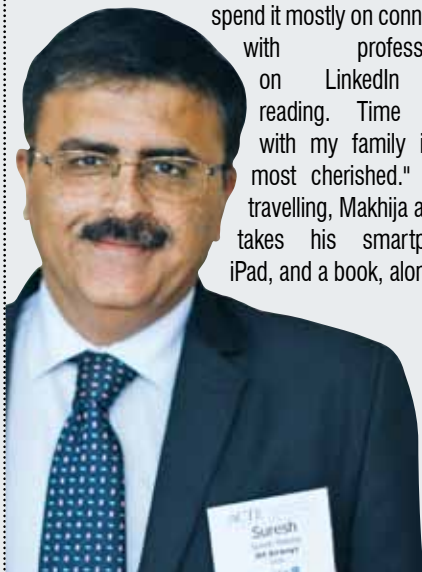
Gurgaon

Simmi Sood has been appointed as the Marketing Communication Manager of Hyatt Regency Gurgaon. Sood comes with over 15 years of experience in the media and marketing space, and a background in communication and marketing. She started her career with a media group Rajasthan Patrika and then moved to hospitality industry with Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts. Her last assignment was at The Leela Ambience Gurgaon where she was involved in conceptualizing designs and promotional plans to ensure maximum brand visibility and capture optimum market shares.



TALKing People

New Zealand, South America, and South Africa, are on the must-to-visit list of **Suresh Makhija**, Vice President-Corporate Sales, Jet Airways. He would love to go back to his favourite destinations - Phillip Island for the penguins, London, and Switzerland. He says, "Whenever I get time, I spend it mostly on connecting with professionals on LinkedIn and reading. Time spent with my family is the most cherished." When travelling, Makhija always takes his smartphone, iPad, and a book, along.



Viren Batra, CEO and Co-founder, Nirvana Excursion, believes in three things: eating, drinking and travelling the world. Batra's favourite holiday memory would be a trip to Amazon for his honeymoon. "We travelled for around 30 hours from Mumbai to the middle of the Amazon jungle. After a good night's rest, when we walked out of our cottage the next morning we were met by a large red parakeet in the verandah and a lovely view of the rainforest and the Amazon river. The look of sheer delight on my wife's face is something I am unlikely to ever forget."



Nicholas Dumbell, General Manager, Bengaluru Marriott Hotel, Whitefield unwinds by playing football or rugby with his two boys. "I passionately believe in treating everyone with respect and supporting people to develop themselves both personally and professionally," he says. Speaking about his most memorable holiday moment, Dumbell says, "Playing with the amazing marine life in the Maldives – turtles, sharks, rays – all around you when you snorkel was phenomenal. In India I love Jodhpur in Rajasthan."



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FRHI eyes South India

The annual FRHI Global Meetings Exchange 2016, held from June 22-26, at Fairmont Ajman, saw 130 clients including 11 select Indian partners. **Bastien Blanc**, Vice President, Sales & Marketing for MEAL, FRHI Hotels & Resorts, speaks to **TRAVTALK** on the sidelines of the event.



SHIVANI KAUL FROM AJMAN

QTell us about the FRHI Global Meetings Exchange and how it taps the MICE market.

FRHI Hotels & Resorts' Global Meetings Exchange is our biggest event for which we invite, once a year, our biggest partners from the MICE market to join us at a particular location. Two years ago we had this in Abu Dhabi, this year again we welcomed the delegates to the Middle East, in Ajman & Dubai. We have partners coming in from across the world – from Australia, the US, Poland, UK, Germany, France, Turkey, India and South Africa.

The annual event, GME is usually held over 4-5 days. It is a mix between one-on-one meetings, where we give an opportunity to our partners to meet and exchange all their needs and potential. We are also spending a few days at the destination, showing and demonstrating what the destination has to offer to the MICE market.

QWhich are FRHI's biggest source markets for its hotels in India and the UAE?

Basically for UAE, the biggest markets remain the UK and the US, especially for MICE. But we can see constant growth in business coming from India, Russia, Poland, and CIS markets.

For India, we have a strong presence in the country with Fairmont in Jaipur and Swissotel in Kolkata. For us it is a very strong market specially in terms of outbound. We also have our Global Sales Office in India. Due to the potential of the Indian market, we see a lot of potential in the Middle East. We have seen more and more demand in the wedding market, which seems to be huge, and especially in demand are Ajman and Abu Dhabi.

India by itself has a huge and strong domestic market. This market also has a lot of demand for the UAE, Kenya, and also getting some demands for Seychelles.

QWhat are FRHI's expansion plans in the India market?

At present, talking about the development in India, we have got some good leads in the pipeline but I cannot disclose all of that yet. But we would be diversifying

the regions. Like I said, we are present in Jaipur and Kolkata, so we need to expand our presence throughout the country. Our next destination would be bit more in the south (India).

QDoes the group have any plans to open its luxury Raffles property in India?

At present there is no plan to open Raffles in India. We are opening Raffles in other parts of the world and there are a lot of Indian clients for the Raffles Hotels outside of India. But as of now there are no plans of Raffles for India. How-

We have a peer director based in Dubai coordinating for Middle East Africa and India and we also have agencies working for us in different countries to make sure that we are always on the top in terms of coordinating efforts at national levels as well. We make sure that for FRHI we are aware of what is happening in different markets and we interact with the right partners not only in traditional marketing but also in digital marketing. Over the years FRHI has been developing different tools and partnerships in digital marketing and it is a key differentiator for our brands throughout the world.

“For India, we have a strong presence in the country with Fairmont in Jaipur and Swissotel in Kolkata. For us it is a very strong market specially in terms of outbound. We also have our Global Sales Office in India. Due to the potential of the Indian market, we see a lot of potential in the Middle East.”

Bastien Blanc

Vice President, Sales & Marketing for Middle East, Africa & India, FRHI Hotels & Resorts



ever, Swissotel and Fairmont are the two brands which have the strongest potential of development in India.

QHow does FRHI engage with the travel trade? Are there any special incentives?

For the trade what we are developing are tools which enable them to have the right elements in hand in order to sell a destination. We provide them with information about the incentive opportunities for the destination so they have additional elements to help sell the destination. We want to work faster and in an efficient way. We have a tool called Pass Key. It enables to create a microsite leading to an easy way to create a room list and also have access to another tool called Package on the Flight, which is à la carte, where people can choose incentive activities or additional benefits for their participants during their events at our hotels.

We have a strong peer plan that we keep on developing throughout the year.

QIn terms of digital marketing, will you improve your online presence?

In terms of digital marketing we are already very strong. Through this digital marketing our online growth has been over 70 per cent over the past year just for UAE. This shows that there has been a strong demand and put in huge efforts.

GME Factfile

- 130 Meetings and Events clients from across the world participated in Global Meetings Exchange 2016
- 80 clients from the UK, USA, China and India attended the Global Meetings Exchange 2016 at Fairmont Ajman
- 11 select FRHI partners from India attended the one-on-one meetings



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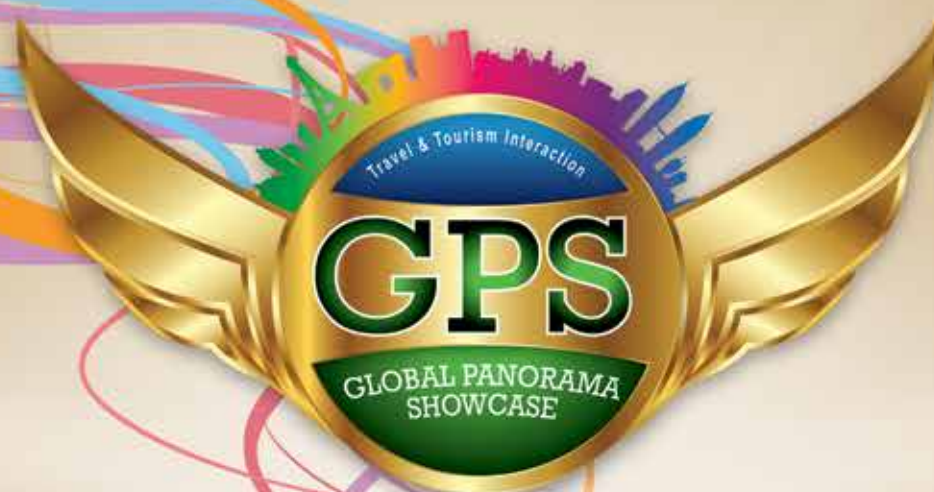


MARIO HARDY

CEO of PATA gives a
lowdown on PTM 2016

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AHMEDABAD 14 JULY 2016	CHANDIGARH 20 JULY 2016	KOLKATA 27 JULY 2016	COIMBATORE 3 AUGUST 2016
TIME	SESSIONS	SPEAKERS	
10:30 hrs	Registration opens		
11:00 to 12:00 hrs	Starwood Hotels & Resorts	Team Starwood	
12:00 to 13:00 hrs	Business enhancement session	Aman Kaushik-TrawellTag Cover-more	
13:00 to 14:00 hrs	Hosted lunch for all attendees		
14:00 to 15:00 hrs	Genting Hong Kong (Star, Dream & Crystal Cruise	Team Genting Hong Kong	
15:00 to 16:00 hrs	Service tax session	CA Manish Gadia-GMJ & Co.	
16:00 to 17:00 hrs	Soft skill development	Team ITQ	
17:00 to 18:00 hrs	Boost your business/Service tax FAQ	Nitin Sachdeva/CA Manish Gadia	
AHMEDABAD 15-16 July	CHANDIGARH 21-22 July	KOLKATA 28-29 July	COIMBATORE 4-5 August
B2B SESSION (INTERACT WITH OVER 70 PRODUCTS AND SERVICES)			
DAY - 1		10.30-18.00 hrs	
DAY - 2		10.30-17.00 hrs	

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LONG WAY TO GO...

I remember the very first time I attended a global trade show. I was fascinated by the bevy of people streaming in and out of halls, the air filled with a murmur of all the 'business talk' that was taking place. The same night, I sat in front of my laptop and searched for information about the Indian exhibition industry only to realise that there was hardly anything on it. What a sorry state of affairs, I thought.

The exhibition industry brings together a total of more than 260 million visitors per year worldwide, according to UFI, and is valued at a whopping \$55 billion. 4.4 million companies exhibit each year and the industry creates around 700,000 direct jobs. Exhibitions deliver important face time with potential clients and business partners and are equally effective in forming ties with them.

While countries like the US and Germany are a few of the key players in the sector, the Indian exhibition industry is struggling to catch up. The last tabulated data suggests that 950 exhibition planners in India organised 3,569 exhibitions on 77 subjects in 88 cities between September 2013 and August 2014. Since then, there have been more additions but no report that suggests so.

On one hand, the country has realised the potential of the industry with the Prime Minister's Make in India campaign set to change the face of the industry, but how far will the change be likely? When the rest of the world is already talking about upcoming trends and the way the industry will be affected by various factors, we are still trying to establish our own. The need is of drastic measures that will not only propel the sector, but also put India on the global exhibitions map and increase its prominence from the minuscule share it currently occupies.

AHANA GURUNG

NEWS IN BRIEF



UNWTO & ASTANA EXPO 2017 JOIN HANDS

Astana EXPO 2017 National Company and UNWTO have signed an MoU to promote sustainable tourism at the international exhibition which will be held in Astana in 2017 under the theme 'Future Energy'. The partnership, which entails the dissemination of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017 and the promotion of energy efficiency in tourism and of the UNWTO Silk Road initiative, was signed by UNWTO Secretary General, **Taleb Rifai**, and **Akhmetzhan Yessimov**, Chairman, Board for Astana EXPO 2017 National Company. "This is an excellent opportunity to highlight the role that the tourism sector has in advancing a greener future," the UNWTO Secretary General said.



MP Travel Mart starts Oct 14

The third edition of the Madhya Pradesh Travel Mart will be held from October 14-16, 2016 at the Hotel Lake View Ashok in Bhopal. **Om Vijay Choudhary**, Executive Director, Madhya Pradesh Tourism, said, "We are going to increase the scale of the convention and will be inviting more buyers, exhibitors as well as media."

India's Global Travel Mart from Feb 1-4

The Ministry of Tourism (MOT), Government of India, will be hosting a mega India Global Travel Mart in February 1-4, 2017, in Delhi. Speaking at the opening ceremony of the 7th Annual Convention of the Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI), **Vinod Zutshi**, Secretary - Tourism, Government of India, announced, "The mega India Travel Mart will be on the lines of international trade shows like ITB Berlin and WTM London."





26,000 business appointments at RVC 2016

The 40th annual Rendez-vous Canada (RVC), Canada's premier tourism marketplace, took place from April 24-27, 2016, in Montreal, Québec. During the conference, international tourism buyers met with Canadian sellers at 26,000 face-to-face business appointments. Hosted by Tourism Québec and Tourism Montreal, at the Palais des congrès de Montreal, this year's sold-out event featured 536 buyers from 28 countries and 582 Canadian sellers from coast to coast — boasting the best seller-to-buyer ratio ever with one seller for every buyer. "With a record attendance of 1,680 delegates at this year's RVC, buyers and sellers are working to captivate and drive more people to visit Canada," says **David Goldstein**, President and CEO of Destination Canada.



ITB Asia 2016 to focus on MICE

The ninth edition of ITB Asia 2016, scheduled to take place from October 19-21, 2016, at the Sands Expo and Convention Centre, Marina Bay Sands, will showcase its strongest meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) line-up to-date with a full day conference programme. The tradeshow is organised by Messe Berlin (Singapore). On the second day of ITB Asia (October 20), the inaugural MICE Day @ITB Asia will be held at a specially designed conference room, and will include sessions from a wide range of industry partners, covering a full spectrum of topical issues facing the MICE sector today.

7,600 prescheduled appointments at 2016 edition of WTM Africa

The WTM Africa 2016 show held in Cape Town, South Africa, attracted more than 600 exhibitors and 850 buyers from over 77 different countries.

A total of 7,600 prescheduled appointments were recorded while the show saw a 23 per cent increase on 2015 visitors and 19 per cent increase on overall participation at the show. WTM Africa 2017 show will be held from April 19-21. Approximately 637 sqm of

floor space has been sold to over 30 exhibitors, most of them reportedly repeat exhibitors. **Chardonmay Marchesi**, General Manager, Africa Travel Week, said, "WTM Africa provides a fantastic opportunity for exhibitors to engage with the right buyers on a local, regional and global platform."



ICPB's training program

India Convention Bureau Program's (ICPB) first entry level training program for the year 2016-17 was held on June 17-18 in New Delhi. The program attracted more than 70 participants from ICPB members and non-members. The two-day interactive program comprised four sessions with presentations from learned speakers of the industry.

Maiden GMTM kicks off in New Delhi

Around 32 Foreign Tour Operators from 12 countries, and 10 corporates attended the 1st edition of Global MICE Travel Mart (GMTM) held in New Delhi. In all, 42 buyers and 27 sellers were in attendance. The next edition of GMTM will be held in July 2017, announced **Dr. Jyotsna Suri**, Chairperson, FICCI Tourism Committee, at the inauguration. It was organised by FICCI and the Ministry of Tourism (MOT) and India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB). The FICCI-MRSS report on 'India Inbound MICE Tourism – Trends and Opportunities' was also released during the session where Dr. Suri, Dr. A Didar Singh, Secretary General, FICCI, Chander Mansharamani, Vice Chairman – ICPB, Suman Billa, Joint Secretary, MOT and Rahul Chakravarty, Director & Head – Tourism, FICCI, spoke about MICE tourism in India.



345 buyers and 344 sellers at TTM+

The latest edition of Thailand Travel Mart 2016 Plus, held in Chiang Mai, was attended by 345 buyers from 56 countries and 344 sellers. Most of the buyers were from China (42), the United Kingdom (27), Australia (23), India (19), and Italy (13) out of which 154 (44.63%) were first-timers and 191 (55.36%) were repeat attendees. By region, the buyers came from Europe and Africa (135), the Americas (21), East Asia (61), ASEAN (69), domestic (29) and on-site buyers (30). Another 115 trade visitors also participated in the event. The event was held for the first time outside Bangkok in Chiang Mai to showcase Thailand's northern region as a gateway and bridgehead to the Northern ASEAN nations.



IAEE launches India Chapter

The International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE) announced the addition of its latest chapter in Asia, the IAEE India Chapter. The IAEE Board of Directors approved the creation of this new chapter during its meeting held. "This is another important step forward in the internationalisation of IAEE," said IAEE President & CEO David DuBois, CMP, CAE, FASAE, CTA. "We have been met with great enthusiasm about our member benefits and CEM Learning Program, and it is very rewarding to see the expansion of our global impact." In addition, IAEE's CEM Learning Program added 30 graduates from India as certified in exhibition management professionals.

ATF 2017 to bring 1600 delegates together



Singapore will play host to the 36th ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) from January 16-20 with the theme 'Shaping Our Tourism Journey Together'. ATF's trade show, Travex is a one-stop shop for the latest in ASEAN tourism products and services and targets 500 exhibition booths and 1600 delegates in the upcoming edition. ATF 2017 also coincides with the 50th anniversary of ASEAN.



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*Images courtesy:
PATA HQ*

EVOLVING

A travel connoisseur and a true global citizen, **MARIO HARDY**, CEO, Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), gives a lowdown on PATA Travel Mart 2016 and the exhibition industry's growth.

DIMENSIONS

AHANA GURUNG

What is in store for PATA Travel Mart 2016?

PATA Travel Mart (PTM) 2015 was extremely successful with over 1,500 delegates in attendance. PTM 2016 will be hosted by the Ministry of Tourism, Republic of Indonesia, with the support of PATA Indonesia Chapter and will take place in Jakarta from September 7-9. Alongside this year's travel mart, on September 7, we will be hosting a PATA Travel Innovation Forum in partnership with Phocuswright and Connecting Travel and a Blogger Forum in collaboration with the Professional Travel Bloggers Association (PBTA). This year for the first time, we will also have a Digital Hub, an exhibition platform dedicated to innovative technology impacting the travel and tourism business. The Digital Hub provides online, technology and digital marketing companies the opportunity to showcase their business, and is an exciting addition to the mart.

How has the show progressed over the years given that there have been several editions of it?

PTM may be 38 years old and one of the oldest travel trade shows in the



BIGGER & BETTER

UFI'S 11th edition of The Trade Fair Industry in Asia has reported a 6.8 per cent growth in total net exhibition space sold in 2014, rising from 17,453,000m² in 2013 to 18,641,750m² last year. Above-average growth was registered in Asia's larger exhibition markets – China was up by 7.4 per cent, India by 7.6 per cent, Taiwan by 8.8 per cent and South Korea by 8.2 per cent. It expects to see a 5.2 per cent year-on-year increment in net space sales.

Asia Pacific, but it has evolved in recent years to be a place for business, network and knowledge sharing, where industry friends gather and where new relationships are built.

PATA Travel Mart (PTM) has maintained its low cost approach to trade shows, offering Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) the perfect platform

to trade with similar counterparts in new destinations. PTM has the unique feature of moving from destination to destination every year providing its host the opportunity to showcase what it has to offer to global tourists and trade professionals.

What else is on PATA's radar for the rest of the year?

We have several other activities planned for this year besides PATA Travel Mart such as the PATA Global Insight Conference 2016 (PGIC 2016) on September 30 in Auckland, New Zealand, followed by the 10th UNWTO/PATA Anniversary Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook in Guilin, China from October 20-22. We then have the New Tourism Frontier Forum 2016 taking place in Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh



from November 23-25, after which the PATAcademy-HCD will take place from December 7-9, at our Engagement Hub in Bangkok.

What do you think about the state of tourism exhibitions across the globe?

The global events calendar has got really busy over the recent years; there is not a week when there isn't a tourism related event in the world. The vast growth of tourist arrivals in Asia has been matched with an increased interest in events being organised in the region.

Unfortunately, terror attacks have become frequent and happening in places we would least expect. The

affected destination gets impacted almost instantly with event organisers questioning if it is safe for them to host their upcoming events in these areas. We all wish that event organisers do not give up on the destination, but they also have a responsibility to protect their business interests and the safety of their employees and delegates.

Has technology impacted the exhibition space?

Exhibitions are still very much based on the need for human interaction; the need to shake hands and meet people face-to-face. Technology and social media have helped spread the word about upcoming events faster and more widely, potentially reaching out to a greater audience. In addition, mobile applications are helping delegates interact with each other before, during and after the event.

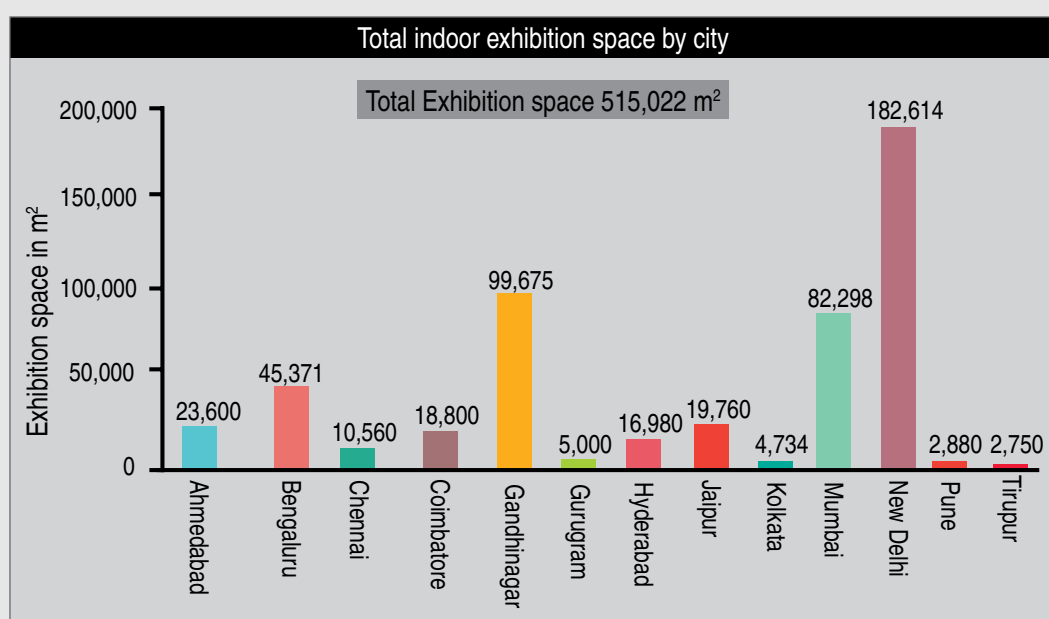
What are some of the aspects you would like to see more emphasis on at trade shows?

I am a strong believer that smaller, human-size, niche trade shows are more effective and offer a well-targeted audience a more realistic way to engage in conversations that will deliver better results. I would like to see more educational programmes and more social interaction between delegates – it drives an exchange of information that will probably help cover more issues and challenges and solving problems becomes that much easier.

EXHIBITING INDIA'S MIGHT

A round-up of all things MICE from India shows the industry's slow but gradual rise.

NEW DELHI HAS THE MOST EXHIBITION SPACE AVAILABLE IN INDIA



KEY INDUSTRY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GROWTH

- Maintaining good relations can go a long way
- Keeping long-term vision
- Investments in developing world-class green infrastructures
- Create formal training courses to develop professionals
- Benchmark with global exhibitions
- Adopt new technologies
- Set standards and policies
- Adopt an SME involvement strategy

950 exhibition organisers in India organised 3,569 exhibitions on 77 subjects in 88 cities between September 2013 & August 2014. A total of around 750 exhibitions are held every year

FACTS & FIGURES

Delhi NCR & Mumbai are two keys locations – they contribute 52 per cent exhibition area of total space available, followed by Gandhinagar, Bangalore & Ahmedabad. Average size of Indian exhibitions is about 5,000 sq mt

LOCATIONS

INDIA'S ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

GLOBAL PRESENCE

A total of 106 and 88 exhibitions were conducted by Indian enterprises in Germany and Singapore in a year

CAPITAL

India has the potential to grow to ₹7,000 crores by 2020

A total of 5,15,000 m² indoor exhibition space across 13 cities is currently available. Plans to add 6,00,000m² of space across India are in the pipeline

FLOOR PLAN

PM's Make in India is set to change the face of the exhibitions industry and will have a completely new facet on display and in talk as well. Emphasis would be on manufacturing, technology, exchange, equipments and the likes.

DEVELOPMENTS

Source: The Economic Times



When two WORLDS COLLIDE

The maiden edition of Travel Wedding Show took off at Le Meridien, Gurgaon, from July 9-10 and brought the wedding and travel industry under one roof. Organised by the Pacific Leisure Group (PLG) and DDP Group, the event is the first of its kind in the country.

The wedding market in India is a multi-billion industry with thousands of weddings taking place in the country throughout the year. The industry has flourished since time immemorial and is probably the only one that thrives even in the face of recession.

The need for a consolidated face-to-face opportunity between the two sectors has led to the birth of the Travel Wedding Show, held over a span of two days. The closed door event witnessed 30 buyers and 30 exhibitors on each day where appointments took place in a round-robin format. While the first day held emphasis on wedding planners and event management companies, the second day was solely focused on travel agents.

“There have been events focusing on either weddings or travel, but never together. Travel Wedding Show aims to bring a select group of people together and facilitate business for the growth of the industry. Moreover, the idea is to bring select people from the two worlds together for face-to-face interactions that are most effective,” shared **Sarika Bhambani Rawal**, General Manager, Travel Wedding Show.

Elated by the outcome of the show, **Punam Singh**, Associate, Pacific Leisure Group, said, “The show has been a huge success in conducting meetings. We have been able to conduct around 1200 meetings in the two days. Everyone has gone back with at least 50 meetings.”

To inform the audience about the increasing potential of the industry, a speaker session was held on the inaugural day with speakers like **Shaji Thomas**, Director - Destination Tourism Development, Ras Al Khaimah and **Guldeep Singh Sahni**, President - OTOAI.

Keynote speaker **Rajeev Jain** who is the Managing Director of Rashi Entertainment, enlightened the gathering about developments in the sector. “The wedding industry is flourishing at a growth rate of 15 per cent p.a. and is pegged at an estimated ₹250,000 crore or \$40 billion,” he said. Jain added that with Indians spending 80 per cent of their wealth on weddings, the sector has proved to be a great contributor to GDP.

About 8 per cent of Indians opt for destination weddings from which connectivity and accessibility is the chief factor while choosing locations. Additionally, Thailand hosted 780 Indian weddings last year where the average expenditure on each wedding was ₹4 crore, Jain revealed.

Thomas said that realising the potential of the multi-billion dollar Indian wedding industry, the country is keen to grab a piece of the pie. “We are just 45 minutes away from Dubai; and India is home to fantastic, luxurious hotels capable of hosting larger-than-life weddings. We encourage you to host weddings here as it caters to all sorts of client genres, thanks to the infrastructure and tourism products like beaches.”

SUCCESS STORY

- Around 1200 meetings held
- 30 exhibitors & 30 buyers
- First day focused on wedding planners, second on travel agents

BIG FAT WEDDING

- Valued at approx ₹250,000 crore or \$40 billion
- Indians spend 80% wealth on weddings
- 8% opt for destination weddings
- Average of ₹4 crore on destination weddings



Glimpses of the show



Attendees say...

It was a fabulous show focusing on the exponentially growing wedding market in India. People are showing interest in destination weddings and getting married in the country itself is a completely different experience.

VISHAL SINHA
COO
TUI



The wedding sector is one of the core segments which is growing in India and is a big one for us. This has given us an opportunity to meet the right buyer and I think it was a great idea to initiate the Travel Wedding Show.

BARUN GUPTA
Account Director (Global Sales) - Starwood
Sales Organisation, Starwood Hotels & Resorts

This was an excellent initiative to connect the buyers with service providers like destinations, hotels and bring people together for proper discussions. Inviting only a select group of people was a good idea as time is utilised well.

VIVEK ANAND
Country Manager-India
Mauritius Tourism



Taking part in such a show has been a first for us and it was a very good decision to do so. I hope that everyone has benefitted from this experience and returns with good leads.

KALPANA SINGH
Director of Sales (C&E)
Eros Hotel New Delhi

The wedding industry is definitely growing but I feel more emphasis should be on small-scale weddings as well. I think the sector needs to mature more and give leverage to experiential weddings.

HIMMAT ANAND
Founder
The Tree of Life Hotels



The show's structured appointments were very effective for us as we have recently ventured into the wedding industry. The sector has many prospects and we hope to get more business after our participation.

GEETA SUBRAMANIAN
General Manager-Marketing and Sales
Hotel Clarks Shiraz Agra

The show was very productive and well orchestrated. The difference here was in execution of the event. This event is not a static display but a machinery with moving parts, and your team ensured that all these parts worked together.

IREAN KHAN
Director of Sales & Marketing, Radisson Blu
Resort Temple Bay Mamallapuram



This has been a brilliant platform to showcase products and we are very glad to be a part of the first edition. Our property is popular for theme-based weddings since it's heritage-based so we are on the lookout for more clients.

SURENDRA SINGH AJMERA
Manager Operations
Chokhi Dhani



Members of the European Major Exhibition Centres Association (EMECA) proudly support the first ever Global Exhibitions Day 2016

CONNECTING THROUGH #GED16

June 8, 2016 marked the first ever Global Exhibitions Day (GED 16), an initiative driven by Paris-based UFI and the International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE). A total of 60 countries participated in the campaign by using the #GED16 hashtag on social media.



Professionals from Messe Essen Germany take part in the campaign



UFI's first ever #GED16 selfie



RE Rogers strike a pose with the official logo



The RAI Amsterdam decked up for the celebrations



Enthusiastic employees of Kuzbass Fair from Russia



Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre show their love



Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau members say cheese



Joining the festivity is Zagreb Fair, Croatia



Bangkok International Trade & Exhibition Centre gathers a huge crowd



Sweet delights

Source: www.ufi.org/ged
Contact info: GED@ufi.org

Leveraging business through HOSTED BUYERS

Quality Hosted Buyers' presence at exhibitions not only boosts overall business, but also often encourages other professionals to participate in the show. Experts give a lowdown on the program's impact.

AHANA GURUNG

The Hosted Buyer Program has taken the exhibition world by storm. Initially a popular business model in Europe, its reach has extended to the Asia Pacific in the past few years, with more and more trade shows hosting high-quality buyers to boost meetings.

FITUR is one such show that has successfully implemented its International Hosted Buyers program for six stagings, hosting around 200 invitees from 50 countries at the 2016 edition. **Ana Larrañaga**, Director, FITUR, says that the program allows exhibitors to focus on an average of 10 to 20 meetings over two days with potential clients who are highly qualified and have considerable decision-making authority. "This way both parties achieve added profitability in the investment, saving time and money. For their part, buyers also benefit given that they arrive with a pre-arranged program of meetings with the exhibitors that most interest them."

She informs that the program involves an intense schedule of pre-arranged meetings between exhibitors and hosted buyers. More than 5,000 meetings were held at the last edition of FITUR and Larrañaga points out that a good part of the program's success is measured by the correct buyer identification. "The right buyers are the ones who are greatly interested in being present at a leading trade show in the world of tourism, particularly in regard to the Latin American market, which is especially attractive for such buyers."

TAPPING THE RIGHT BUYERS

Most trade shows have a set of pre-requisites that buyers have to fulfil, like in the case of INDABA's Hosted Buyer Program. "A well-considered and stringent selection benchmark for buyer participation at INDABA ensures the renowned trade show attracts only the best global buyers through the

Image courtesy: FITUR



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Image courtesy: ACE of M.I.C.E

“The program can be very fruitful if implemented the right way. I feel many exhibitions need to vet the screening process of selecting buyers to fully reap its benefits.”

VIKRAM MADHOK
Managing Director
Abercrombie & Kent India



“The Hosted Buyer Program works very well in engaging business and it lets vendors meet a variety of clients from all over the globe. It is a very effective tool on the whole.”

KAPIL BERERA
CEO
Quintessentially Travel India



“The Hosted Buyer Program connects the right clients and has fruitful results mostly. What’s more, it allows the buyer to pick and choose the right partner for their business.”

SHRAVAN BHALLA
Proprietor
High Flyer



Hosted Buyer Program. They are selected through South African Tourism’s country offices based in the various markets worldwide,” shares **Hanneli Slabber**, Country Head, South African Tourism. When such discerning buyers meet with eager suppliers who have innovative offerings and packages to share, valuable connections are forged. “That is ultimately the objective – to facilitate connections and business discussions between interested parties. Such efforts go a long way in creating a synergistic ecosystem to grow the overall industry,” she adds.

In 2015, more than 550 product executives from the most influential tour operators for African travel around the world had applied and were evaluated for their ability to bring the most business value. “Only the top 301 most influential of these gained admission to the INDABA Hosted Buyer Program,” says Slabber. “This year, that number grew by 16.3 per cent and a total of 350 of the most prominent buyers were hosted.”

SUCCESS RATE

Turkey’s only MICE show ACE of M.I.C.E. was organised for the third time with a successful buyer programme. “The show hosted 200 international and 550 local buyers during three days and 9,843 pre-scheduled B2B meetings were performed between buyers and exhibitors,” reveals **Selin Kamil**, International Relations Executive, Turizm Medya Grubu, adding that the number of Hosted Buyers has increased in comparison to the previous year and strengthened the size of business. “We select Hosted Buyers from various profiles – MICE industry professionals, corporate companies, pharmaceutical industry, associations, ministries and federations are the most preferred choices. The reason exhibitors participate in the shows is to promote and improve business by meeting right buyers. If that requirement is met with, it ultimately means more connections are made, more business is being done, and newer products are discovered.”

LESS IS MORE

The success rate of the program has in turn inspired many other shows to completely run on the same format. Connections, a closed-door B2B show promotes and recruits a network of senior professionals that come together over two days. “Our programmes are carefully designed so that buyers and suppliers can come together and forge meaningful relationships,” explains **Micaela Giacobbe**, Founder & Director of Commercial Events, Connections. She adds that the idea is to take away the operational side of things, in order for them not to have to think about where they need to go, who they need to meet, because their bespoke programme is pre-scheduled. The format has also been a hit because top level people interact and that’s what makes it hugely different. “What we’ve done is completely change the structure, by giving them something much more relaxed and enjoyable, so the creativity flows much more than what is, unfortunately, a normal, high pressure trade show environment.”

Treading the Spice Route

Organised by the Kerala Tourism Mart (KTM) Society and Kerala Tourism department, the 9th Kerala Travel Mart will host a culinary festival with chefs from the Spice Route as a prelude to the event.



HIGHLIGHTS

- At KTM 2016, two series of seminars in 6 different locations will be held with support from well-reputed training masters on varied subjects
- Quality buyers from new destinations such as Argentina, Brazil and Poland have shown interest. The US continues to strengthen its participation at KTM
- KTM will focus on 'Responsible Tourism', a set of special festivities themed 'Muziris and Spice Route' will be held in line with World Tourism Day on Sept 28

the 31 Spice Route countries will compete to discover the famed gastronomic delights of the state.

NEW ELEMENTS AWAIT

KTM 2016 will introduce pre-scheduled appointments for the first time, for domestic and international buyers in an effort to ensure participants fully benefit from the business sessions. "We're hoping this will help make the sessions more effective to both buyer and seller. We will also be bringing in quality buyers from new countries as well as from conventional markets," says George. This year, new markets such as Argentina, Brazil and Poland have shown a keen interest in KTM while registrations from the US continue to multiply.

"Visitors of KTM 2016 can also look forward to two series of seminars in six different locations which will be held with the support of well-reputed training masters on different subjects to empower our members," George concluded.

After welcoming more than 1000 buyers in the last edition, the 9th Kerala Travel Mart 2016 is set to open its doors from September 28-30 in Kochi. The biennial trade show aims to host 20,000- 30,000 business meetings this year, buoyed by positive responses at the last KTM.

KTM President **Abraham George** says that they are mainly focusing on increasing tourist footfalls from the new world market. "In the next two years, we hope to substantially grow the number of tourists. We have received a great response from the domestic and international tour operators in yesteryears," he says. The UK, Germany, France, the US and the Middle East are some of the biggest source markets for KTM, he informs.

SETTING THE THEME

While the ninth edition of KTM will focus on 'Responsible Tourism', a set of special festivities themed 'Muziris and Spice

Route', will be held in line with World Tourism Day on Sept 28. "As part of World Tourism Day celebrations, UNESCO with Kerala Tourism and Union Tourism Ministry has partnered to host an international culinary festival in Kochi, Kerala as a prelude to KTM," adds George. Gathering in God's Own Country, selected chefs from

MEETING EXPECTATIONS

Highlighting the pros and cons of pre-scheduled appointments and walk-in meetings, industry professionals determine which meeting format would trump the other.

KAPIL GOSWAMY

*Managing Director
Trans India Holidays*

While both exhibition formats have their pros and cons, I'd say that shows that offer pre-scheduled meetings work better for us purely from a business perspective. Thanks to advancing technologies and information readily available online, one is able to take advantage of the short 15 or 20 minute pre-scheduled appointments by doing a bit of research about the prospective buyer, even before actually requesting for an appointment. Having pre-scheduled appointments allows us to find out a bit about the products that would potentially interest the buyer, the kind of services the buyer's company provides, and hence gives us a head start on what to present to the buyer. Larger exhibitions like ITB are of course good from the branding perspective, and for meeting industry colleagues and pre-existing buyers, but smaller shows with pre-scheduled appointments like PATA Travel Mart, or ILTM are better from the pure business generation point of view.



GULDEEP SINGH SAHNI

*President
Outbound Tour Operators Association of India*

In my opinion, both are equally important and effective. Pre-Scheduled Appointments give visitors an opportunity to meet the exhibitors at leisure, get to know their potential client and plan future business prospects with ease. But the visitor should also have an option to meet some of the exhibitors onsite and if he finds someone important while interacting during the event, they can meet them too within the remaining slots. 50 per cent of appointments should be pre-scheduled while another 25 per cent should be for walk-in meetings. Some percentage of slot should be given to exhibitors too as they should be allowed to select the visitors they want to meet. The whole experience can be more beneficial and fruitful if a combination of all these options are offered.

**PANKAJ NAGPAL**

*Managing Director
Travstarz Global Group*

Exhibitions present an opportunity for the buyers and sellers to meet not only their existing contacts, but also develop new ones and enhance their knowledge about new destinations and its service providers. But to bring about maximum benefits, it is very important to create the platform to schedule the right appointments for both buyers and sellers. The Pre-Scheduled Appointment diary, now available for most exhibitions, is an important tool for this as it provides detailed information on the company profiles and services etc. to the buyers and sellers much before the event thereby helping in fixing the appropriate appointments and facilitate business exchange. However, even though the Pre-Scheduled Appointments are of utmost importance, the relevance of walk-in appointments cannot be ruled out completely. Many a times you may miss out on checking some important profiles in the pre-scheduled appointments diary, thus on-site appointment may bridge this gap. To summarise, both forms play an important role for a successful event but the relevance of pre-scheduled appointments is still higher.

NAVEEN SETH

*Director-Exhibitions
PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry*

As changes knocked the trade show experience and everyone started talking about ROI for exhibitors and visitors, the first major change that was witnessed was pre-scheduled meeting or more conveniently baptised match making. What Pre-Scheduled Appointments (PSA) gained over walk-in appointments is that firstly, it helps optimise the visit as it allows you to shortlist your preferences. It also ensures adequate attention from the seller so that both parties are clear about their requirements and subsequently, put their best sales resource to handle queries. Unlike walk-in, one does not have to wait for hours and wonder who the right person would be to speak to. PSAs are also often a deal-breaker for many who want to make a choice between shows that are taking place at the same time. It will help narrow that gap, as you'll know your key suppliers and their presence in these exhibitions.

**GAURAV SUNDARAM**

*Regional Director - India, Global Business
Travel Association*

Trade shows and networking opportunities are generally driven by an over-riding concern for ROI. For the exhibitors, their main concern usually is "Do they generate adequate leads & contacts to justify their investment in the event?" while buyers deliberate if the event provides them access to quality suppliers who can improve the efficiency of their program. Given both the objectives, a pre-scheduled meeting generally generates more meaningful interactions and productive discussions. Both parties have the opportunity to clearly plan their time and organise their objectives. Pre-scheduled meetings would require very clear compelling profiles of exhibitors so their offering and value proposition is clearly visible to a potential buyer.

Backstage BANTER

Most of us are witnesses to the grandeur and hustle-bustle of trade expos with the elaborate floor-plans and eye-catching decor all perfectly synced together. But how many actually have an idea of what goes on behind organising these larger-than-life shows?

Raju Kannampuzha, Managing Director, Executive Events, is no stranger to the madness that goes on behind the scenes. With experience in organising expos from different sectors like pharmaceuticals, and health, to name a few, to planning large-scale weddings, Kannampuzha deals with major clients like Kerala Travel Mart and the Department of Tourism – Kerala and is responsible for the state's elaborate booths at international travel marts like WTM London, Arabian Travel Mart and ITB Berlin, among others.

SETTING UP

"As I'm an organiser, our role starts from planning to sourcing materials and to on-site management as well as the entire coordination of the event. We have different teams that look after separate aspects and work harmoniously to get the job done," he reveals.

Through his experience, an average sized expo takes at least a minimum of six months to plan while a global mart takes not less than a year. "It takes more

to plan a global mart because of all the travel arrangements that have to be done months in prior. Additionally, we don't just think about experience of the expo, we also like to give the experience of the destination." The sole motive is to meet the needs of clients at both ends, he adds. "The balancing of the buyers' and the sellers' demands is the most crucial part of the job."

ROADBLOCKS

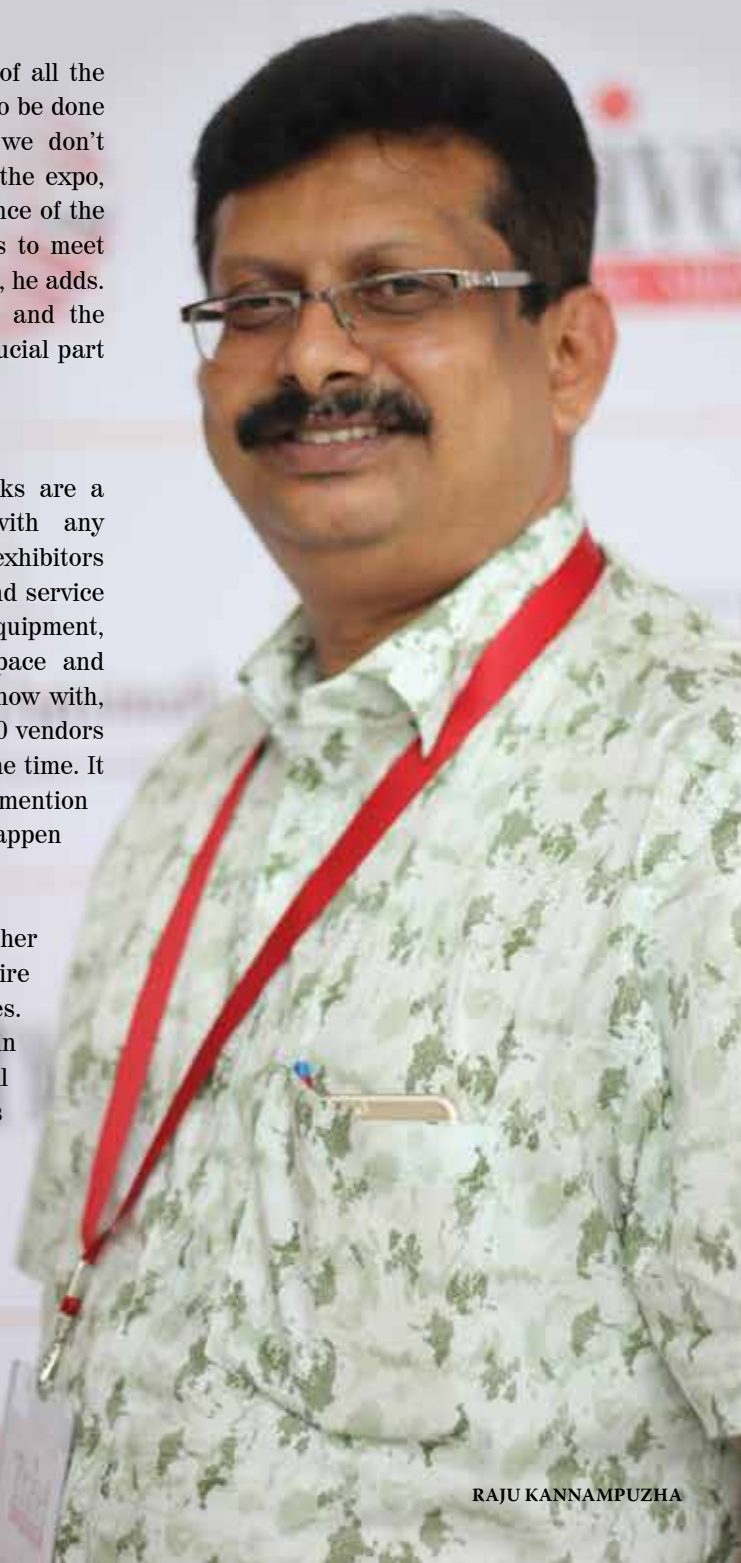
With so much to do, roadblocks are a frequent phenomenon like with any other event, he informs. Most exhibitors come with their own vendors and service providers who require a lot of equipment, logistics and availability of space and manpower. He shares, "For a show with, say, about 300 stalls, around 300 vendors and fabricators work at the same time. It becomes very chaotic. Not to mention the last-minute changes that happen every now and then."

Safety measures are another cause of concern since they require several approvals, he states. "We have to maintain certain standards, as well as fulfil all the parameters. A lot of time is spent in acquiring permissions from various statutory bodies, like Fire & Safety, Electrical Inspectorate, Public Works Department, etc."

However, working in other markets where the location of the mart has remained constant is not a big problem, Kannampuzha adds.

THAT'S HOW WE DO IT

- **Average number of shows per year:** 40-50 shows
- **Minimum time taken for planning:** 6 months, 12 months for large expos
- **Busiest time:** Last quarter of the year (December)



RAJU KANNAMPUZHA

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With the ability to bring convenience and accessibility into users' lives, mobile Apps have made their way into the trade show world with India being the most recent market embracing the trend.

Technology has revolutionised the travel industry by levels manifold making tasks so much easier and information readily available, all with just a click. While Apps have been in the market for a while now, several trade shows around the world have embraced the trend and built their own for the use of the participants.

The Global Panorama Showcase (GPS), set to commence from July 13, 2016, is one of the very first travel shows in India which has launched its own mobile App. Containing every information pertaining to the event, as well as contact details of exhibitors and registered participants, the App has already gone live and was welcomed by an impressive number of downloads, informs **Harmandeep Singh Anand**, Managing Director, Jagsons Travels (organisers of GPS).

BOOSTING THE TRADE SHOW EXPERIENCE

The use of the App goes beyond just event schedules and contact details of the participants—Anand aims to make it a marketplace for all participants. He elaborates, “Through this App, participants can showcase their products since Tier-II and Tier-III cities require a lot of attention and exposure to the destinations and the products they have on offer. In addition, the GPS App will allow exhibitors to place banner ads.” It is available on iOS, Android, BlackBerry, and Windows platforms.

But with half of the industry still offline, will this trend pick up in the Indian market? According to **Anil Parashar**, President & CEO, InterGlobe Technology Quotient, the ease of use is only going to drive it forward. “Such Apps are very handy especially during trade shows where everything is about time slots and schedules. It consolidates all the important functions in one space. As content improves and becomes readily available, the demand for Apps will subsequently increase. Moreover, the quality of data keeps getting higher every year so it’s only a matter of time that the trend catches up with shows.”

MULTI-TASK & MULTI-PURPOSE

An interesting aspect about Apps is the way they make themselves indispensable to the user. Take for example Phocuswright’s official attendee networking platform App – it has been built in such a manner that it

becomes the user’s go-to planner during the course of the event. Handy tools allow access to the attendee list and individual profiles, instant messaging capabilities, company information for sponsors and companies competing in the Innovation Platform, meeting request capabilities with an easy-to-use agenda.

“We’ve made sure to include as many networking and informational tools as possible in our App,” shares **Tony D’Astolfo**, Managing Director, Phocuswright. “Another very important aspect of our App environment is the seamless transition between the App, mobile web and desktop web – it’s all one system that is optimised for every screen.” He adds that to drive more people to login into the App, the polling and voting feature for their awards was added. “We are constantly thinking of ways to make the App and digital environment all-encompassing and seamless to use. When that digital experience is seamless, it encourages more participation in our face to face events.”

“Through this [GPS] App, participants can showcase their products since Tier-II and Tier-III cities require a lot of attention and exposure to the destinations and the products they have on offer.”

HARMANDEEP SINGH ANAND
Managing Director, Jagsons Travels



says that it has hovered around 70-80 per cent for the last four or five events. “The adoption depends on the market – we’ve seen more active attendees in Europe who make more use of the Apps and conduct actions such as sending messages, adding agenda items to personal calendars, etc.”

Event management technology company Cvent recently extended its event management platform to help event professionals, marketers, and executives deliver exceptional events. Customers will now be able to increase attendance, deliver engaging experiences, and gain data-driven insights in order to understand the impact of their events from costs to improving ROI.

With the comprehensive event management platform, organisations of all sizes will be able to execute even the most complex events says **David Quattrone**, Co-founder and Chief Technology Officer, Cvent. Detailing the development, he says, “We have invested heavily to extend our event management platform. We are now providing our customers with day-of-the-event solutions like OnArrival and LeadCapture, which have gained significant momentum and adoption in the marketplace because of their ease of use and their ability to reduce registration wait times and more easily capture attendee information on site.”



“As content becomes readily available, the demand for Apps will subsequently increase. Moreover, the quality of data keeps getting higher every year so it’s only a matter of time that the trend catches up with shows.”

ANIL PARASHAR
President & CEO, InterGlobe Technology Quotient

Block your DATES



AUGUST 2016

Global Panorama Showcase	Coimbatore	Aug 4-5
Hospitality Expo	New Delhi	Aug 4-6
India International Travel Mart	Bengaluru	Aug 5-7
SATTE	Mumbai	Aug 19-20
Taipei Tourism Expo	Taipei	Aug 26-29
La Cita USA	Miami	Aug 30-Sep 1

SEPTEMBER 2016

Travel and Tourism Fair	Ahmedabad	Sep 2-4
Philippines Travel Mart	Pasay, Philippines	Sept 2-4
India International Medical Tourism Congress	Hyderabad	Sept 3-4
PATA Travel Mart	Greater Jakarta	Sept 7-9
TTF	Surat	Sept 9-11
Davao International Travel Expo	Davao, Philippines	Sept 9-11
TTF	Mumbai	Sept 16-18
Astana Leisure	Astana, Kazakhstan	Sept 21-23
JATA Tourism Expo	Tokyo	Sept 22-25
Manila International Travel Expo	Manila, Philippines	Sept 22-24
IITM	Mumbai	Sept 23-25
Kerala Travel Mart	Kochi	Sept 27-30

OCTOBER 2016

Connections Luxury	Brazil	Oct 16-19
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Business, Travel and Gen-Y

Millennials throughout the world are slowly replacing the 'baby-boomer' generation (Gen-X) in terms of spending across a range of markets which brings us onto the focus of this article: how to create a corporate event or networking session that caters for the emerging business travel needs of Gen-Y.

Research in America has shown that millennials make up approximately one-third of business travel in the air. By 2020, this figure is set to reach 50%, while the ever-disappearing baby-boomer market will make up a mere 11%.

It's also worth noting that the younger generation of business travellers can be a little fussier when it comes to flying – extras like more legroom, optional meals, drinks, onboard Wi-Fi – plus the fact that young business travellers tend to book their flights at the last minute are all factors that increase spending and the overall cost of the business trip.

It's no surprise that Gen-Y are utilising tech much more than baby-boomers, with studies showing that around a third of young people use their smartphones to make a booking, while for business travellers over the age of 45 this figure is just 12%. The fact that young professionals are booking their travel themselves shows spontaneity and connectivity. It also shows that the traveller is more involved in the decision-making process of the business trip; they get a say as to which hotel they'll be staying at, what airline they'll be using and which taxi service will take them around town.

With increased usage of online booking apps, getting the customer to sign up to 'loyalty programs' have become a lot easier. Around half of all Gen-Y travellers consider signing up in order to reap the benefits (such as free hotel nights and air miles), whereas only a third of older travellers bother.

The very nature of business meetings for young professionals is changing too, with more emphasis placed on tech, as well as creating a fun and engaging environment. Event organisers are starting to shift the focus away from just organizing dates, budgets and seating plans, but rather look into the nature of the event, and what its specific purpose actually is.

In conclusion, as your demographic changes so should your methods. Event planners and organizers need to connect to all the latest channels, apps, and trends or risk missing a large, emerging segment of the market. Tune-in or lose out should be your mantra.

Source: TCEB Blog

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