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Maya returns to enthrall North India



The 3rd edition of North India Travel Awards honoured excellence in the travel and tourism industry on October 21, 2016, at Hyatt Regency Gurgaon. The star-studded event was attended by the who's who of the industry including **Om Prakash Singh**, Tourism Minister, Government of Uttar Pradesh, the Chief Guest for the evening, along with **Parvez Dewan**, Advisor to the Governor of J&K; **Dr. Jyotsna Suri**, CMD, The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group; **Keshav Suri**, Executive Director, The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group; **Sham Nijhawan**, Chairman, Nijhawan Group; **Ajay Singh**, Chairman and Managing Director, SpiceJet; **Guldeep Singh Sahni**, Chairman of Weldon Group of Companies and President, OTOAI; **Sarab Jit Singh**, MD, Travellite, and Gladrags Mrs. India **Dr. Tanushree Pandey**. Speaking on the occasion, **SanJeet**, Mentor, India Travel Awards, said, "The awards are a true specimen of the contribution of various companies/ individuals to take the travel industry to greater heights. India Travel Awards will make a difference to the industry through recognition of regional talent and thereby raising the bar for the industry players."

MICE on MOT radar

To leverage MICE in India, the Ministry of Tourism has constituted an exclusive advisory body and will also appoint professional consultants to study the market and chart out an action plan.



TT BUREAU

MICE segment of travel is the fastest growing and high yielding segment of tourism which can act as a means to tide over the seasonality of the tourism industry, feels **Vinod Zutshi**, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. "India's efforts in attracting big conventions to its shores need to be re-imagined, moving away from the current model of supporting integrated operators to generate business to more reserved oriented framework. In addition, pre-and post-leisure activities need to be leveraged as a way of increasing the value of MICE tourism," he says.

Initiatives

The government offers various revenue generating schemes to help fund the bidding process for large conventions. In the

"We are going to have a beautiful pavilion, buzzing with different events and many states which will be joining us. Being the partner country, we have certain additional facilities and events allotted to us. We are trying to make the best use of it."

Vinod Zutshi
Secretary, Ministry of Tourism,
Government of India



upcoming budget, MOT will propose the constitution of a corpus fund which would help bring in big international conferences into India, informed Zutshi. "We have a Viability Gap Funding Scheme which allows us to grant 25 per cent of funding of the complete amount up to `50

crore in case of a project. It is unfortunate that not a single request was made for this grant in my tenure of two years. The private stakeholders have to realise that such schemes can be availed," says Zutshi.

Contd. on page 17 ▶

Vision for the industry

With the Tourism Policy at a fairly advanced stage, **Suman Billa**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, says the ministry is also forming an advisory committee.



PEDEN DOMA BHUTIA

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, has been working relentlessly to focus on improving the inbound figures for the country. Recently on the sidelines of Kerala Travel Mart, **Suman Billa**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, talked about the ministry's various

initiatives. While the initiatives are being undertaken and the MOT has been aggressively promoting the country, everyone in the industry is waiting patiently for the Tourism Policy.

When asked about the status of the policy, Billa says, "The Tourism Policy is at a fairly advanced stage, it has been concurred to by all the min-



Suman Billa
Joint Secretary
Ministry of Tourism, Government of India

istries. It's been to the Prime Minister's office and they've approved it too, now we are just waiting for the formal process of placing it before the Cabinet for formal approval. It's a process determined by the cabinet it's the prerogative of the Cabinet Secretary on when he chooses to place it before them."

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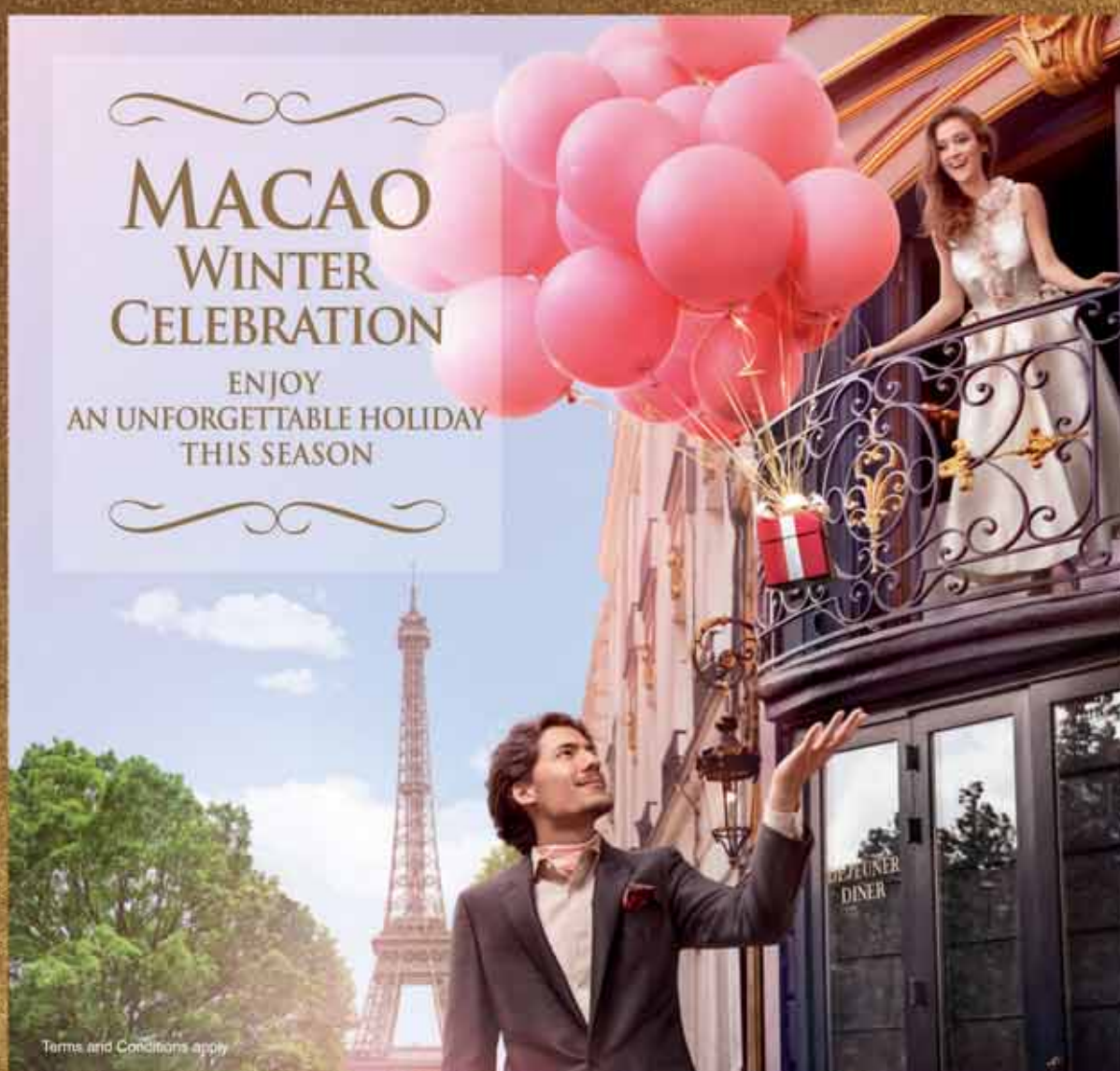
MOT's plan for WTM

- ❖ Most of the states are participating and some of the states are sending very high-powered delegation to WTM, some of them being the chief ministers themselves.
- ❖ A hall – Indian Exhibition Centre at the Reed Exhibition Centre – is going to be dedicated to India and India-based programmes for the three days of WTM. Some states will also be organising their events which will be supported by the Ministry of Tourism.
- ❖ A cultural programmes is being organised where India will be showcased along with a few other countries. In terms of branding, a huge amount of work is going on in the Greater London area.



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10 years of Responsible Tourism

This year's World Responsible Tourism Day marks two significant anniversaries for World Travel Market (WTM) and for the development of responsible tourism across the industry as a whole.



November 8th will see the celebration of the 10th anniversary of World Responsible Tourism Day, held at WTM in London every year since 2007. Over the last decade this annual occasion has grown considerably, so that events now takes place not only at WTM in London, but also across WTM's global portfolio in Africa, Latin America and the Middle East.

World Travel Market's Senior Director **Simon Press** will open the day, assessing the impact of what has grown to become the world's largest annual event dedicated to responsible tourism. As well as reflecting on WTM's decade of commitment to promoting responsible tourism, Press will look at the other major anniversary — the fact that



it is 20 years since South Africa published its groundbreaking White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa, widely seen as a founding document for the development of responsible tourism and the first time the principles were committed to by a country for the development of its destination.

To mark this year's multiple anniversaries, 2016 will see the spotlight turned onto some of the pioneers of responsible tourism themselves.

WTM has assembled a panel of leading figures from around the world, all of whom have long been instrumental in developing responsible tourism. They are: **Dr. Venu**

Vasudevan, Principal Secretary, Kerala Tourism, and responsible for the state's development and promotion of responsible tourism. **Dr. Auliana Poon**, Managing Director of Tourism Intelligence International, and author of the original South African white paper. **Justin Francis**, founder of responsibletravel.com and of the annual responsible travel awards held at WTM. **Jane Ashton**, Director of Sustainable Development at TUI Group. **Adama Bah**, Director of the Institute of Travel and Tourism of Gambia. And **Dr. Harold Goodwin**, organiser of WTM's responsible tourism programme and for many years a leading voice promoting responsible tourism around the world.

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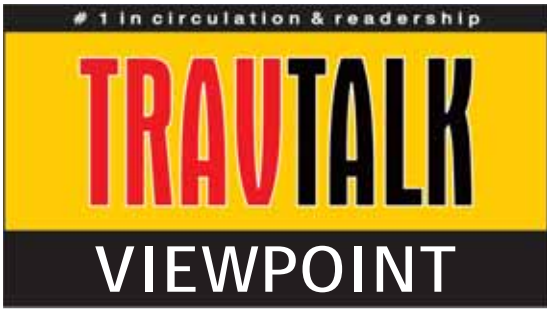
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An old winter's travel trail

Winter is finally here and the season brings with it travellers from far and wide, all keen to experience Incredible India! The onset of winter is perfectly complimented with various activities that keep everyone on their toes, starting with the much-awaited WTM London. This year at WTM, India is a partner country and why not, after all, India is now prioritising tourism and is pulling out all stops to woo foreign tourists. Not just that, Indians have also started to look at travel in a different way, little wonder then that the Indian outbound industry is a market waiting to be tapped by various foreign destinations. Also, the increase in air routes is now fuelling both inbound and outbound travel. MICE is also a very sought-after sector in the travel world and every country is trying their best to lure this crowd. As much as other countries are wooing the Indian MICE travellers, India, too, is putting together infrastructure and facilities to promote itself as a major MICE destination.

Digital India for smart agents

With the stepping up of facilities and infrastructure, India is using technology to usher in tourism opportunities. Travellers today are increasingly using their mobile devices to enrich their experiences. While travel becomes more and more app dependent, agents are also upping their game and making sure that they do not miss out on the technology boom. While digital innovation becomes the name of the game everyone is trying to grab a slice of the pie. And while technology has given rise to more and more DIY travellers, it has also provided an opportunity for small businesses in the travel sector. It's not just travel, technology has also entered hotel doors and is helping to personalise one's stay. But being a traditional market the Indian traveller is still increasingly dependent on the travel agent and trusted word-of-mouth recommendations to set their agenda. However, innovation is the buzzword and travel companies have to get smarter and adapt as consumers expectations rise.

Tapping domestic travel potential

In an uncertain environment, the Indian travel industry is coming to realise that domestic tourists are and will be their primary audience.

Holidaying is fast becoming a priority with the Indian traveller, revealed the 2015 Kuoni-SOTC Holiday Report. As a result, domestic tourism has increased considerably during the last couple of decades. Larger income, longer holidays coupled with lowered room rates and discounts of-

figure on most of the paying Indians' touring list, often seen as a budget destination. But in recent times, this trend has changed.

Tourism boards have started focusing on domestic tourists. They have TV and print campaigns for them

ing, medical and shopping purpose, whereas 17.7 per cent wants to travel outside their state. Maharashtra had maximum movement within the state followed by Uttar Pradesh. Considering visitors from outside states, Uttar Pradesh was the most visited state followed by Rajasthan.

On the other hand, for visitor-trips with leading purposes business, social, religious and pilgrimage, education and training and others, Uttar Pradesh was the most visited state followed by Andhra Pradesh and Telangana combined. These two states had also most visitor trips from outside states revealed a survey conducted by NSSO in 2015.

Destinations like Goa and Kerala always had a season. Today, 'Goa in the Rains' is being sold as a domestic package. The state is also rolling out other attractions designed specifically for Indians. Kerala, too, has a three-month monsoon, which is now

been packaged as the 'Dream Season'. There are other attractions — yoga, Ayurveda, wellness camps — thrown in. Tourists prefer to travel to domestic spa resorts as opposed to overseas spas. With no visas required, the ease of travel domestically has also attributed to its appeal. The rupee's travails have also given an accidental push to domestic tourism.

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



Amod Thatte
Head – Products & Innovation
SOTC

This is by far the largest segment of market with a potential of 20 crore local tourists travelling annually. Even if 10 per cent of the population travels outside the native state, it involves a massive movement of over 10 crore

fered by hotels, resorts and airlines are pushing up the country's domestic tourism. Indians are now considered as the world's largest holiday bargain hunters.

India's travel industry is booming and throwing up many new trends. There were quite a few surprises. A few years ago, visiting a nearby foreign country was seen as a trend, while India didn't much

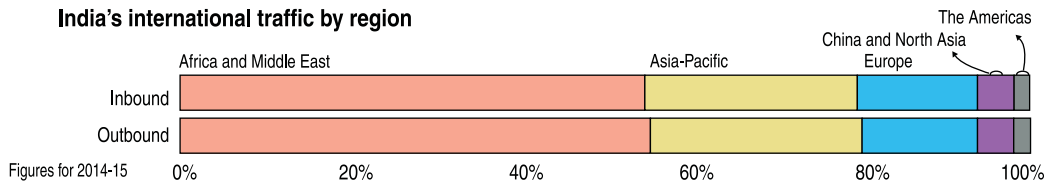
because ultimately, that's where the volumes lie. This is by far the largest segment of market with a potential of 20 crore local tourists travelling annually. Even if 10 per cent of the population travels outside the native state, it involves a massive movement of over 10 crore.

About 82 per cent of the population wanted to travel within the state for holiday-

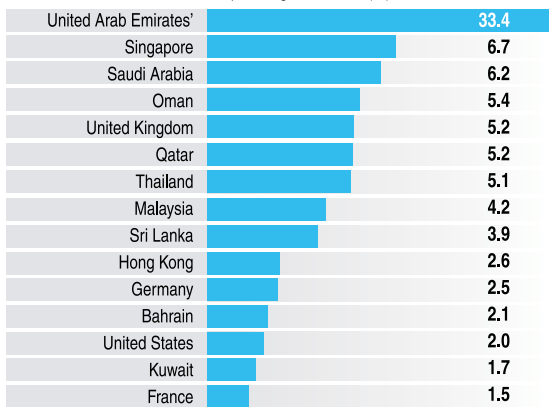
Shorter routes, greater volumes

Low cost carriers in India have capitalised by flying on shorter routes to the Middle East and Asia Pacific. Among the top 15 countries, accounting for 88 per cent of India's international traffic, 12 are short-haul routes with India.

India's international traffic by region

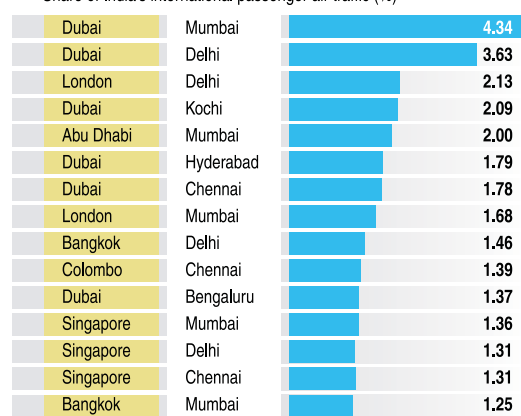


India's international traffic by top 15 countries
Share of India's international passenger air traffic (%)



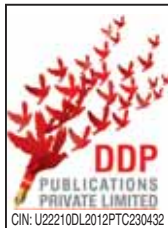
*Includes Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras al Khaimah and Umm al-Quwain; Figure for January to March 2016 quarter

India's international traffic by top 15 routes
Share of India's international passenger air traffic (%)



Figures for January to March 2016 quarter

Source: Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA); financial results of InterGlobe Aviation (which operates IndiGo) and Jet Airways



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Goa aims at 60 lakh tourists by year end

With the introduction of amphibious buses in Goa, the state has added another feather to its cap. **Nikhil Desai**, Managing Director, Goa Tourism Development Corporation, throws light on the special attractions of Goa and informs about the new convention centres coming up in the state.



TT BUREAU

Goa has seen a healthy growth in tourist arrivals. With the launch of the 'Duck Tour' amphibious buses among other initiatives, tourist arrivals in the state is all set to cross the 60 lakh figure. Desai says, "We had about six per cent year-on-year growth in foreign tourist arrivals and over 25 per cent growth in domestic arrivals. We have grown from a net arrival of 40 lakh tourists into the state in 2014 to almost 52 lakh tourists in 2015. This year we are all set to cross the 60 lakh figure. This growth I am sure will be sustainable in the years to come as we have added a lot of new initiatives."

Goa Tourism has increased the room capacity and added new products like heli tourism, sea planes, adventure tourism and AV tourism. Desai hopes that these initiatives keep up the tourist flow into the state in the years to come.

Projecting Goa as a strong MICE destination, Desai noted that even though national and international meetings and conventions take place in the state there is an urgent need to expand the infrastructure. "The Government has come up with a tender to set up a big convention and exhibition centre at GTDC's own land at Farmagudi near Ponda. The state government is also working on building a 5000-plus seating capacity convention centre at Dona Paula on its own land," he added.

Goa is one the first states in India to have promoted various festivals. Talking about the same, Desai said, "Our festivals are very unique and form an experiential tourism in itself. Festival tourism is reaping us rich dividends."

Goa Tourism has also become the first tourism board in the country to not only sell government hotels but also private packages. Desai said, "Our website has been converted



into a web portal. Very soon we will be selling all India packages which include Goa as one of the destinations to the source markets outside India. We have also started AV tourism and bird tourism. To promote the same, we are having a bird festival in November."

"We have grown from a net arrival of 40 lakh tourists into the state in 2014 to almost 52 lakh tourists in 2015. This year we are all set to cross the 60 lakh figure."

Nikhil Desai
Managing Director
Goa Tourism Development Corporation



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- ➔ GTDC will soon be selling all India packages which include Goa as one of the destinations to the source markets outside India
- ➔ A 5000+ seating capacity convention centre will soon come up at Dona Paula
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Aggressive marketing is imperative

Along with innovation in existing tourism products of North India, there is an urgent need for aggressive and focused marketing at international platforms in order to leverage tourism, say key industry players from the region.

TT BUREAU



Zia Siddiqui
Chief Executive Officer
Alliance Hotels, India Travel
Award winner

“The majority of sightseeing in northern Indian itineraries is the forts, palaces, wildlife products etc. and since the government has increased the entrance fee for monuments, the entire cost of the packages has increased, making it very difficult to sell the product in this competitive world. Multilingual guides are also a problem and the government’s point of view about monuments or regional and national guides is also not clear. Hence, it is very difficult to sell the northern Indian itineraries to tourists coming into India.”

“I feel that the major problem that we face in selling the northern region is the lack of innovation in our tourism products. We lack experiential holidays and in order to attract foreign tourists and also encourage repeat visits, we need to introduce newer experiences. New hotels have come up, infrastructure is being built rapidly and even connectivity is available but the products lacks appeal and value addition. There is a need for new ideas and good promotional activities to market the region better.”



Capt. Swadesh Kumar
Managing Director
Shikhar Travels



S. N. Srivastava
President & Co-founder
Clarks Inn Group of Hotels,
India Travel Award winner

“Not just North India but the entire country is a once-in-a-lifetime, dream destination for travellers world over, and in spite of the abundance of tourism products, the numbers are disheartening. This is because, we as a destination need to be aggressive in tourism marketing. It’s high time that the Incredible India campaign is revamped and re-launched. India Tourism overseas offices need to be more professional and visible and as a destination we need to send out a strong message to buyers at all these international tourism exhibitions and also convince the global travelling community on safety and security issues. Cleanliness is also an imperative issue to be addressed.”

“Not only the northern region but India as a destination has not been marketed well enough. Product gap in terms of seamless experience, high taxation which makes India an expensive destination, and less marketing leads to loss of numbers. We have been marketing India based on Taj Mahal, forts and palaces, temples, etc. and have not explored our natural abundance, adventure tourism, heritage which could hit the nerve in various segments. However, a new campaign is expected to address these issues.”



Sanjay Basu
Managing Director
Far Horizon Tours



Jitender Sohal
General Manager
Radisson Blu Hotel
Amritsar, India Travel
Award Winner

“We need more support from the government in order to promote the northern region especially a destination like Amritsar. Amritsar happens to be the 7th most visited city in the world and yet international and domestic air connectivity remains a challenge for seamless accessibility. Various initiatives have been taken to improve the experience of tourists at the Golden Temple, a War Memorial has been made at Wagah Border, the Gobindgarh Fort is being restored and light and sound shows are being introduced etc. We offer various tourism products like heritage tourism, culture tourism, pilgrim tourism, patriotic circuit and food trails that are unique to the destination but aggressive promotional campaigns are imperative.”

“Indian market has seen a considerable increase in FTAs and much of it can be attributed to eTV facility and ease of doing business in India. Many new tourism products have been recently launched in the northern region. I foresee acceptance of these new products in our travel fraternity and “investment tourism” is also getting popular in India. Tourism in 2017, will bring better results especially considering the fact that many international tourism and investments bodies have allocated fresh and bigger budgets for Indian market.”



Sandeep Bhatt
Managing Partner
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Singapore will host ITB Asia till 2019

■ Singapore will continue to be home to the next three editions of ITB Asia. Messe Berlin, the organisers of the event, have announced the extension of its partnership with the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) from 2017 – 2019, as it looks to continue supporting ITB Asia's impact in the region. This also marks Singapore as the official partner country for 2017. The next three editions of ITB Asia will take place from October 25–27, 2017, October 17–19, 2018, and October 16–18, 2019. Dr. Martin Buck, Senior Vice President, Messe Berlin GmbH, said, "Next year, ITB Asia will be momentous as we celebrate the show's 10th anniversary. Visitors, delegates and partners can expect a dedicated 'Corporate Travel Day' and 'Hotel Day', lined up with an exciting full day of conference programmes catered to these fast-growing sectors." Melissa Ow, Deputy Chief Executive of the Singapore Tourism Board, added, "ITB Asia has grown well since its inaugural show in 2008, delivering strong content and memorable experiences for delegates over the past nine years. We look forward to working with Messe Berlin to further entrench it as the leading travel tradeshow in the Asia-Pacific region."

East calls for connectivity & promotion

A step-up in highways, infrastructure and campaigns to highlight the diversity of East and North East India are the need of the hour to sell the region, inform industry players.

AHANA GURUNG



Suresh Periwal
Gallery of Legends, India
Travel Awards &
Managing Director
Clubside Tour and Travels

“Airline connectivity is by far the biggest challenge we face while promoting East India. Europe remains the single largest source market for inbound tourists and unfortunately there is no direct connectivity from Europe to East India ever since British Airways and Lufthansa have withdrawn services to Kolkata. Tourism infrastructure in the region is not at par with the rest of the country, but that is improving. The addition in the inventory of rooms in the first-class category at both Kolkata and Guwahati are certainly a step in the right direction. Cruise Tourism is expected to play a vital role in East India for which cruises are already plying on the Ganges and Brahmaputra.”

“There have been good efforts to promote destinations in the East and the government has been very pro-active in this regard but there must be an increased focus on reaching out to the right market. More leeway for development of infrastructure is required along with the construction of hotels. East India has not achieved its tourism potential despite its natural beauty, rich culture and heritage. A robust module and an effective consultation body needs to be in place for tourism to flourish – tourism requires all-year round, genuine effort to be able to reap its benefits.”



Deepak Gupta
CEO
Heat Travels and Tours



Debjit Dutta
Face of the Future, India
Travel Awards &
Director & CEO, Impression
Tourism Services

“Things have certainly improved because of the reinvented branding campaigns. Most often, foreign tourists have a particular notion of India that rarely goes beyond the Golden Triangle, Kerala or Goa. This is all because of aggressive branding in global markets. The East has so many things to offer that it is difficult to sell the region with just one iconic quality. Additionally, we need to sell the products, not the destination. For instance, not many people will know about Kalimpong but the keyword here is Himalayas – this is what needs to be promoted aggressively. Yes, there are other issues in terms of connectivity and infrastructure, but we need to use our limitations to our advantage.”

“It is sometimes difficult for us to sell the region to tourists as most are unaware of this region. Travellers only hear about the political unrest and the natural calamities prevailing in this region but the North East is much more than that – it has a distinctly different culture every 17 kms of your travel. You would find hills, snow-clad Himalayas, beaches, dense mangroves, ethnic tribes, ancient Buddhist relics and many more making it a whole platter of different destinations. Apart from that, the road conditions are also not up to the mark and the connectivity between the states is not so smooth. However, the region is fairly well-connected by train and air.”



Prabir Sen
Managing Director
Tibet Tours and Travels,
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Easy promotion in diversity

Tour operators and agents from India’s western region do not think it’s difficult to promote India abroad, but they believe it’s necessary to target the right client with the right products.

TT BUREAU

“It is not difficult to promote India. There is so much diversity that the country can offer. There is something for everybody here, right from culture, heritage, and experience, and we are selling all of this.”



Prayag M. Shah
Chairman, Destination
Tours & Travel Services

“India is a known destination today across the world, and hence it’s not that difficult to sell it in existing markets. The issues like visa have been sorted. People from the US and the UK are coming to India, as the recession is also over in these parts of the world.”



N.S. Rathor
CEO
Garha Travels



Ajay Prakash
Chief Executive
Nomad Travels

“The mysticism and charm associated with India works to a certain extent but it’s difficult to promote the whole of India together. It works better to promote certain areas such as Kerala and Goa, as people know about them. However, places like North East India and Chhattisgarh, are difficult to sell due to low awareness. The tour operators need to segment their offerings depending on the niche that they cater to.”



Himanshu Agashiwala
MD
Columbus Travel & Services

“It is not easy to promote India internationally, just the way we are doing it now, without enough support from our Ministry. There are many other reasons behind it as well, including bad media publicity, high cost of our destination, high taxes, unfavourable policy and lack of incentive to tourism industry.”

Japan to bolster presence

In an attempt to garner more Indian tourists and promote the destination, Japan is increasing its presence in India with a new tourism office to be launched in New Delhi by the end of the year.

TT BUREAU

The inaugural India-Japan Tourism Meet was organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce

ate Past President-FICCI, Chairperson-FICCI Tourism Committee, said, “Japan is the 10th largest source market for India with around 2.07 lakh Japanese arrivals in

dia, inaugurated the conclave where he drew focus to the similarities between the two countries that can be traced back to the sixth century when Buddhism was introduced in Japan. He further encouraged Japan to explore opportunities in the hospitality sector for investment and assured them of Indian government’s support.

H.E. Kenji Hiramatsu, Ambassador of Japan to India, addressed the gathering on the prevailing tourism scenario to and from both countries and observed that mutual tourism has not been as good as it should be, given the abundant tourism products. While Japan welcomed over 100,000 Indians in 2015, the same year saw 1.13 million Indians visit the U.S, he indicated. “The new networks that will be built among the participants today will create new opportunities,” he added.

and Industry (FICCI) in New Delhi from October 24-25 in New Delhi. **Kuniharu Ebina**, Senior Vice Commissioner, Japan Tourism Agency, was present at the two-day event, held to encourage bilateral relations and explore opportunities through tourism between the countries.

Welcoming the delegates **Dr. Jyotsna Suri**, Immedi-

2015. India has a very high potential to be one of the favoured destinations amongst the Japanese tourists, given the large number of destinations important from Buddhist interest as well as the burgeoning number of business tourists coming to India.”

Dr. Mahesh Sharma, Union Minister (I/C) of Tourism and Culture, Govt. of In-



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A global business that appoints local experts to design customised destination experiences — Le Passage to India Journeys constantly strives to reshape destination experiences.



It is a matter of pride for Le Passage to India Journeys to have participated in every World Travel Mart since its inception in 2005. Some of the core talking points at this year's World Travel Mart for the company will be on how it creates differentiation and exclusivities together with its partners for its guests in India, how it integrates itself in a 360-degree experience management ideal and be part of its partners' brand promise, and how it has innovated over the years, and implemented tools that will truly make a difference in servicing clients and showcasing the diversity of India.

Mario Habig, Managing Director, Le Passage to India (LPTI) Journeys, says, "We invite the trade to our global stand GV615 at WTM London this year. We are delighted to see that Incredible India has tied up with WTM as premier destination partner. This is a great development because joint active marketing through



the trade fraternity and Incredible India is the base for future growth for India's tourism industry. We hope this is also the starting point of active marketing support from the tourism board."

Defining the company's pivotal role in destination management, Habig adds that the company constantly strives to reshape destination experiences. "Ours is a global business that comprises local experts to design and craft customised destination experiences worldwide. In doing so, we are achieving and set-

ting stellar industry standards in everything we accomplish," he says.

Changing the formulae

The company strives to optimise its key assets to be both different and unique in destination services. It does this by the way it applies client engagement and tries to work as closely as possible with its partners. "In today's world, we need to think of this as part of one integrated service offering to travellers and guests in our destination, and not purely understand ourselves as another

link in the value chain. We apply this through various means, i.e. integrated team structures or shared content platforms. Second, is our understanding of product differentiation and exclusivities as being integral to our success. We need to create value for our partners by providing access to experiences that offer them a true differentiation with potential. Creating access to venues like our Mexican colleagues do – opening the Chichen Itza for clients well before anybody else can visit this iconic monument – is one such example. This is

what we strive for in India as well," Habig explains.

The company also believes in collaborative strengths. For LPTI, the great asset of being part of a global DMC business is that it offers the company access to financial resources – a develop-once-deploy-multiple-times advantage, using creative brainstorming across borders and business expertise across the globe. As Habig explains, "It ensures that we share the best practices not only between countries but between the three core client groups we operate: leisure clients, corporate clients, and cruise line clients."

Operational excellence

Le Passage to India Tours and Travels Pvt Ltd has successfully completed the ISO 9001:2015 certification. The company was officially certified by BSI Worldwide on May 2016 for the scope – Provision of Destination Management Services for Inbound & Domestic Tour Operations. "This makes us one of the

first Destination Management Companies globally to gain this distinction. By meeting the extensive criteria for these standards, we can proudly re-affirm that we have never lost track of our philosophy: to strive for operational excellence by implementing best practices not only from within our global network, but beyond, to provide the most reliable operational support and highest quality to our customers," Habig claims.

LPTI optimises key assets by:

- ↳ The way it applies client engagement and tries to work as closely as possible with its partners
- ↳ Its understanding of product differentiation and exclusivities as integral to its success
- ↳ Achieving operational excellence. The ISO 9001:2015 certification is one example
- ↳ Collaborative strengths with its being part of a global DMC business



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Dubai Parks fillip to JA Resorts & Hotels

The opening of Dubai Parks in October is going to be a game changer for JA Resorts & Hotels, the only brand to have their property around the new entertainment destination in Dubai.



TT BUREAU

JA Resorts & Hotels started in 1981, as part of the Dutco Group in Dubai. The 36-year-old company today has a portfolio of luxury hotels, serviced apartment and leisure associated projects not only in Dubai, but also outside.

David Thomson, Chief Operating Officer, JA Resorts & Hotels, was in India recently to talk about why the India market is special to them. "We have realised the potential of the Indian market and how Indians too love staying at resorts. We did put our products in the market earlier as well, but it did not work out. However, this time around we have a great representation partner- Avant Garde, which has helped us to better target our offerings. We know that the high-end and honeymoon market will go to the Maldives. The JA Manafaru is the northernmost resort in the Maldives, farthest from Male, and makes sure that the arrival is seamless. However, Indians can actu-



David Thomson
Chief Operating Officer
JA Resorts & Hotels

We have realised the potential of the Indian market and how Indians too love staying at resorts



William Harley-Fleming
Group Development Director
JA Resorts & Hotels & General Manager, JA Manafaru

JA Manafaru is a resort on 35 acres of an island. The property has 50 per cent water villas and 50 per cent land villas

ally fly from Trivandrum to a domestic airport near us, and enjoy great connectivity. We know this factor can work for us. Similarly, the Enchanted Resort in Seychelles would appeal to the honeymoon market."

William Harley-Fleming, Group Development Director, JA Resorts & Hotels & General Manager, JA Manafaru, spoke about the JA Manafaru and said that not only at this property, but across all their properties, it



is the engagement of associates and staff that makes them special as compared to their peers. Fleming said, "JA Manafaru is a fantastic resort on 35 acres of an island. The property has only 84 keys, with 50 per cent water villas and 50 per cent land villas, each of them having private pools. In fact, we have a total of 96 pools at the resort and seven F&B outlets, which is the USP of our property."

Thomson said that the opening of the Dubai Parks would also prove to be advantageous to them in Dubai. "JA Jebel Ali Golf Resort is only

six minutes away from The Dubai Parks, and we have shuttle buses running from the hotel to the Parks. Due to be completely open in December, the Dubai Parks are going to be a game-changer for the resort, particularly for this market. It is very close to India and can be a leisure centre for India. Hence, we expect a lot of people to be coming for short breaks to enjoy the parks, and we are going to be the only beach resort for quite some time, anywhere near the park. We are meeting the travel trade in India to showcase our product offerings and work with them

to boost the numbers to our properties," he added.

Speaking on the plans ahead, Fleming said, "After Seychelles and Maldives, we are now going into Sri Lanka, where we have signed our first management contract. The resort will be called JA Eclipse, which will open in the middle of 2018. We are also looking at other opportunities, including India, preferably Goa, as our core business is leisure. Our focus is to grow in the South East Asia first and we will be looking at some gateway cities around the world as well." ↴

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Beyond e-Tourist Visa: Next step forward?

Electronic Tourist Visa (eTV) has been one of the most successful and publicised initiatives of the Government of India in recent times. **TRAVTALK** asks industry stalwarts what else can be done to increase inbound figures.



NISHA VERMA

“Tourism falls into the category of infrastructure and services. If we have to become competitive, we have to rationalise things, especially taxes, as well as look into things like sanitation, security of women, cost of hotels and travelling, as well as the total brand image. We should focus on why an international tourist will come to India and not go to Bali or Thailand. The real thing missing in our case is that we are not serious. We are serious about eTV and it is doing well. The day we become serious on other issues, we will do well.”



R.H. Khwaja
*Legend in Public Service,
India Travel Awards &
Former Secretary Ministry
of Tourism, Govt. of India*



Dipak Haksar
*Chief Executive
ITC Hotels & WelcomHotels,
India Travel Award winner*

“The Government is doing its best in terms of improving infrastructure, identifying circuits, and investing money. New airports are coming up, roads have improved, and connectivity has increased. In government, both central and state, as well as all stakeholders have to play an important role and everybody has to contribute towards the growth of tourism. There are enough interactions and platforms available where the government is engaging with stakeholders. Things are happening, albeit slowly, but somethings have improved considerably.”

“The Visa-on-Arrival service was initially miscalculated and not projected as it was supposed to be. It was e-Tourist Visa and not visa on arrival. Hence, it had a bad effect. There are offices of the Ministry of Tourism outside India, but without a director. Where there is a regional director, there is no power in his hand, since he/she has to take approval from the head office for even signing an advertisement. The government is spending money, but I don't think it is going in the right direction.”



Gajendra Singh Panwar
Director, Indo Asia Tours



Sandeep Jain
*Director
Special Holiday Travel*

“Without the government's support, nobody can do business. Our government has been very responsible and responsive towards our demands. We need to understand that they also have restrictions and protocols to abide with. The country's image as a tourist destination has improved, and that is because of our Prime Minister. It is on us to encash on this opportunity and showcase the country in a better way.”



Rajiv Mehra
*Director
Uday Tours & Travel*

“While the eTV is there, the government has also started their media campaign which is very much required. I believe that the media campaign with various TV channels and newspapers would definitely help boost the country's image and get hold of more clientele.”



Anupam Singh
Director, Udai Hotels

“e-Tourist Visa has had a positive impact. Also in one of its initiatives, Rajasthan Government facilitates change of land use for potential hoteliers. If someone buys a land for residential or agriculture purpose the government helps them in converting it for commercial use. The National Civil Aviation Policy is a great move to increase regional connectivity. Also, roads are getting better in Rajasthan.”

MOT to take up study of MICE market

► Contd. from page 3

He points out that MOT has sanctioned a huge amount in Khajuraho to build a convention centre. A similar project has been sanctioned in Bodh Gaya which is planned to be even bigger than Khajuraho and two projects in Jammu and Kashmir to link eco-tourism, leisure tourism with conventions. MOT is also supporting Fam trips for international conference planners and trying to rationalise business visas.

Way forward

An exclusive advisory body will be constituted for MICE tourism with Secretary Tourism as Chairperson. The state governments, public and private sector stakeholders, associations and ICPB will all work in tandem with this advisory body. It will be a neutral body, responsible to chart out ways to push MICE travel to India, the Tourism Secretary informs.

The ministry will also appoint professional consultants who will conduct studies on the MICE market, chart out a roadmap for 5-10 years, define roles of the stakeholders and provide recommendations which will be implemented as a strategy/ action plan, he adds.

India @WTM

India is a partner country at WTM this year. "We are going to have a beautiful pavilion, buzzing with different events and many states which will be joining us. Being the partner country, we have certain additional facilities and events allotted to us. We are trying to make the best use of it," says Zutshi. There will be a session on Incredible India as well. Gujarat Tourism wants to make the Rann Utsav an international event, and they are interested in taking a slot to promote that. "We would

use this platform to promote all such important events and even the states would make their presentations. There will be a separate hall, which will be used for events, which is generally not available. In addition, we will be representing ourselves at the UNWTO and WTM roundtable conferences, which will put us on the world platform. Tourism Ministers and even Chief Ministers of many Indian states are likely to attend this year's WTM," he adds. ➔

Advisory committee on the anvil

► Contd. from page 3

Asked if the ministry is also forming an advisory committee to promote tourism, Billa quips, "There is an advisory committee that we are forming which comprises most of the stakeholders from the industry, from the non-governmental organisations and think tanks. The idea is to have a robust think tank which will advise the government and the industry on what it is that we need to be doing and to set the vision. There is a 20-member strong list

but they're fairly eminent people in their fields." When asked if the various heads of travel and tourism associations will also be a part of the exercise, Billa replies in the affirmative.

A regular at the Kerala Travel Mart, Billa observes, "KTM is getting bigger and better, the 9th edition is looking much stronger than the 8th. The important thing is that the mart is able to create a platform for small players to come and showcase their products here. So, here you have homestays and single

houseboat owners, who are able to come and access some of the biggest buyers in the world, in this way the mart is doing immense service to small players."

Billa also lauded the recently-concluded programmes of the ministry like the Incredible India Tourism Investors' Summit 2016, which he dubs as a 'huge success' and informs further that it'll now be an annual event. "The IITIS was far beyond our expectations, we had over 2000 delegates, we signed MoUs worth ₹15,000

crore and projects worth over ₹50,000 crore investment into India. The event has gained a tremendous amount of traction. We will do it every year, and next year we'll most likely host it in September."

Home Run

➔ Incredible India Tourism Investors' Summit 2016 had over 2000 delegates, MoUs worth ₹15,000 crore and projects worth over ₹50,000 crore investment into India were signed



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South India presents a sea of potential

What does it take to market South India in the international and domestic market? TRAVTALK asks travel industry players their viewpoints on how easy or difficult it is to do business in the region.



PEDEN DOMA BHUTIA



Madan Kak
COO – Tours Division
Minar Travels, India Travel
Award winner

“South India is emerging as a very important market for inbound tourism to India. As far as marketing is concerned, it's a mixed bag, as many good properties are coming up in South India. It is very easy to sell Kerala as there's a lot of demand for Ayurveda in Kerala and the infrastructure is also good in the state.”

“The South India market is growing year-on-year for the last three years. If you see the trend the occupancy levels are also growing. The segments that are growing and doing well for this market are inbound and MICE. This year between July and August was very good for our hotel and we are expecting it to go up further.”



Shuvendu Banerjee
General Manager
Crowne Plaza Kochi, India
Travel Award winner



Dr. P. Vasudevan
Managing Director
Vasundhara Sarovar
Premiere, India Travel
Award winner

“It's tough to promote some destinations in South India not just in the international market, but also within India. We have a resort in Vayalar, but it's tough to promote it as people don't believe that a five-star resort can exist in Vayalar, which unlike Kumarakom or Kovalam is not a very well-known place. So, before promoting our property we are now trying to promote Vayalar as a tourist destination.”

“South India has a lot of potential, people want to visit the region, but the problem here is of guides there are very few multilingual guides. We have English-speaking guides, but there are very few Spanish-speaking and Italian-speaking guides. There are a lot of bottlenecks in many cities, in terms of inventories. Kochi has hotel options unlike places like Periyar, Tanjore and Trichy. We, as a DMC, have issues in operating larger groups or during season times, as we don't get enough rooms to sell.”



Vikas Abbott
Managing Director
Vasco Travel, India Travel
Award winner



Hemant Mediratta
Vice President
Sales (Travel Trade)
Oberoi Hotels

“South India presents a great opportunity, we've seen a constant increase in our business. The city occupancy has also grown, it presents a new flavour and good alternative. Earlier, people first came to North India and then perhaps visited South India a second time. A lot of tour operators are now doing a North and South combined tour which is a good thing, as it's a longer itinerary and they spend longer time in the destination. With direct flights we are also seeing a constant rise in domestic business towards South India.”

“In terms of marketing, Kerala is doing a superb job, but it's time to incorporate other states also in this itinerary, there's still so much to be explored. We, at RARE, are trying to promote an itinerary that comes from Tamil Nadu right up to Kerala. We are looking at various options that connect our properties. Tamil Nadu and Kerala combined together make a very good itinerary.”



Sowmya R Vijaymohan
Partner
RARE Destinations



“In the years to come South India will see an increase in demand over supply. The number of flights coming into Kochi have increased and so have the number of cruise ships which will lead to increased demand of hotels. Kochi is growing as a MICE destination. The corporate market in Kerala, especially Kochi is growing with a lot of IT set-up coming up. The year 2017 is going to see a shortage of rooms in Kochi.”

Kunal Shanker
General Manager, Holiday Inn Kochi, India Travel Award winner

“Kerala has been focusing on different products on a regular basis and the government has also initiated a different product strategy this time and I'm sure the inbound into Kerala is going to improve over the coming years. There has been an increase in inbound numbers and more focus on different products will surely bring in more numbers for the region.”



Zacharia George
General Manager
Ramada Alleppey, India
Travel Award winner



Monica Suri
General Manager
Le Meridien Kochi, India
Travel Award winner

“The Kerala market has, over a period of time, become more popular. What you get in Kerala, you don't get anywhere else — you have the backwaters, the mountains and the greenery. The way in which responsible tourism has been adopted by the state government that's also a big help as it talks about sustainability and we need to sustain whatever we are promoting. The challenge is connectivity; we don't have enough direct flights coming in to Kerala. Few things like greater connectivity and flexibility on liquor rules will help Kerala market go forward and make it a favourable destination among domestic and foreign clientele.”

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3rd MP Travel Mart sets the bar high

The third Madhya Pradesh Travel Mart (MPTM) saw 45 exhibitors come together to showcase their products. Some of the attendees reflect on the quality and the way forward for a mart of this standing.



RUCHI J. SINGH FROM BHOPAL



Hari Ranjan Rao
MD, Madhya Pradesh State
Tourism Development
Corporation

“This is the 3rd MPTM and the success of this mart can be best evaluated by buyers and sellers, more so for the sellers. All the sellers have been very happy with the planning of this event. Sellers' feedback is that the choice of buyers is very good. They feel that buyers are serious, and they have done their homework and research. Most of the buyers are first-timers, which is a good thing. We have also increased the number of sellers. Of course, we are not satisfied yet because the scale has to be much larger, but it's the right beginning.”



Lally Mathews
Hon. Secretary
IATO

“This is my first time at the mart and in my experience it looks very well-organised and professionally done. The quality of buyers and sellers is also better. Hopefully, they will continue to improve. The international presence is impressive; we'll see how it goes from here. The sellers could have been more, when compared with the quality of buyers, but that's something for them to work on in the upcoming editions.”

“I have been here for three years in a row. It's definitely bigger and better organised and I see a lot of new technologies being employed. The number of sellers seems a little less. A mart of this magnitude should be more and more popular. Quality of buyers has improved. We have always supported Madhya Pradesh Tourism and I really want this to become bigger and better; and they need to zero in on quality of buyers. We met a few buyers who are very cued in about what they want. But mostly the vastness of India can be a little overwhelming. Briefing the agents therefore becomes very crucial. We should hold workshops for foreign agents, too.”



Sobha Mohan
Co-founder
RARE Destinations



P. P. Khanna
President
ADTOI

“This is the 3rd edition and we are seeing huge improvements. The improvement is majorly on the international level. The quality of buyers and sellers is very good. They are very sincere and the people who are attending want to do serious business with Madhya Pradesh Tourism. It's the efforts of Madhya Pradesh Tourism, both political and bureaucratic level. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister and MPTDC Chairman deserve many congratulations.”

“This is a perfectly well-organised mart. This time the participation is much higher, both domestic and international and people are now recognising MPTM as an international tourism mart. I can see quality booths and a lot of agents from Delhi are here too, which is a good sign. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister is pro-tourism and I hope other states' CMs also take part in tourism growth. MP is also organising the Investors' Summit to invite private players and the government will play the role of facilitator. This is a very good sign and we wish MPT all the best.”



Pronab Sarkar
President
IATO



Sarabjit Singh
India Travel Award winner,
& Vice-President, FAITH

“MPTM is on an upswing and it is going to be much better in future. With greater opportunities rising in the field of adventure and wildlife tourism, at least two or three destinations can come up in Madhya Pradesh itself. Rather than putting a resort or a hotel, Government should work on the macro level to develop such a destination on the lines of Genting Islands and Sentosa. Space constraint has kept the number of sellers limited, but Madhya Pradesh Tourism should work out a way to make it better and bigger. Quality of buyers has improved but there is still room for improvement.”



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Above the routine with TAAI

The TAAI Convention in Abu Dhabi took stock of the current growth of the tourism, aviation and hospitality industry in India and deliberated on the way forward.

ANKITA SAXENA FROM ABU DHABI

The Convention was inaugurated by **Anood Khalifa**, Asia and CIS Acting Unit Head, Promotion and Overseas Offices Department, Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority. The India Travel and Trade Expo (ITTE) saw participants from tourism, hospitality and ancillary services like travel agencies, hotels and resorts, heli tour companies, cruises, destination management companies, tourism boards, airlines, travel technology providers, travel insurance providers, air charter service providers, foreign exchange, amusement parks etc.

Sunil Kumar, President, TAAI, said, "The way we kicked off this convention coupled with the ambience, entertainment, luxury, the content, speakers and other services, this is perhaps one of the best conventions we have had in 63 years of TAAI. The business sessions focusing on the theme 'Tomorrow begins now; rise above rou-



Sunil Kumar
India Travel Award winner
& President, TAAI

time', had a number of verticals on which the speakers dwelled and spoke. The aspects in focus were areas for which travel fraternity must be ready, for the evolving change in order to sustain success levels."

The business sessions deliberated on topics like 'Global tourism-Growth; Impact; Prospects,' discussing the current trends in the tourism and hospitality industry and also highlighted the way forward. Other sessions focused on the impact

on cruise tourism, aviation trends, challenges and opportunities; growing demands of travel and tourism industry; technology empowered travel etc. The convention also celebrated Aviation Day on October 15, acknowledging the contribution of the aviation industry to the growth of travel and tourism industry in India.

Along with business sessions, exhibition for B2B meetings for travel agents to transact business, the convention also explored Abu Dhabi as a destination to be introduced to the Indian market. **His Excellency Saif Saeed Ghobash**, Director General, Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority, said, "The TAAI Convention taking place in Abu Dhabi is an honour for us and we are humbled by fact that we were chosen as the venue. It is a demonstration of our capabilities of being a good MICE destination for travellers from regions especially which are not farther than four hours of travel."

Make India top MICE charts

The India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB) convention from October 13-15, saw participation of 44 organisations and over 100 Indian and foreign buyers.

TT BUREAU

The event was inaugurated by **Vinod Zutshi**, Secretary Tourism, Government of India, **Suman Billa**, Joint Secretary-Tourism, Government of India Chairman, ICPB, **Chander Man-sharamani**, Vice Chairman, ICPB, **Pooja Joshi**, General Manager, Delhi Tourism, **Saurabh Bhargava**, Honorary Treasurer, ICPB and **Amaresh Tiwari**, Honorary Secretary, ICPB.

The world market for MICE tourism is estimated to be excess of \$280 billion. Of this, the share of Asia Pacific region alone is \$60 billion and India accounts for \$4.8 billion which is less than two per cent of the market share in comparison to Singapore which has 30 per cent of the market share, informed Man-sharamani. He said, "It is very encouraging to see 44 organisations showcasing their products at the conclave, more than 100 Indian and foreign buyers participating in the conclave which will create a good opportunity to net-



work and transact business, attend business sessions with industry professionals. The biggest challenge in this industry is lack of research."

According to International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) 2015 ranking, India's ranking has gone up from 35 to 31 with regard to international conference business marking a positive growth. Meetings, conferences, seminars constituted 41 per cent and trade fairs, exhibitions constituted 29 per cent which are the two largest MICE subsequent, informed Zutshi. "India has the potential to be one of the top 20 destinations for hosting international conferences, con-

ventions and events. For this dedicated resources and innovative marketing campaigns are necessary to position India as an attractive MICE destination which we are committed to support in consultation with ICPB," he added.

Billa observed, "The biggest bottlenecks for the MICE business to come to India is the high level of taxation in the country and GST today offers us a historic opportunity to set that right. If we are able to persuade the Ministry of Finance to bring tourism in the lower bracket of GST, I think there will be a significant amount of economic competitiveness in the global marketplace for the tourism sector."



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The adrenaline rush is all that counts

The young Indian traveller, within the age group of 20 and 40 years, is increasingly moving towards taking adventure trips abroad, exploring new destinations for an exhilarating holiday experience.



TT BUREAU

Adventure travel is one of the fastest growing segments of the travel industry in India and is enjoyed by anyone who is looking for more than just a typical vacation to a beach, cruise, or a sight-seeing trip to a big city. This includes many trips to destinations that offer eco-tourism or special interest expeditions or themes, explains, **Kulwant Singh**, CEO/ MD, Lama and Carfare Groups. "Countries like Italy, Greece, USA, Thailand etc. are very popular in this segment. Some of the typical tours can include soft adventure activities and cultural experiences like safaris, sailing, biking, hiking, fishing, wineries, barging, dude ranches, snorkeling, nature studies, and much more," says Singh.

Sajan Kumar Gupta, Director, Vayu Seva Tours and Travels, feels that exposure of the Indian market and awareness via the entertainment industry has played a major role in generating a demand for such leisure ac-



Kulwant Singh
CEO/MD
Lama and Carfare Groups

Countries like Italy, Greece, USA, Thailand etc. are very popular. Some of the tours can include soft adventure activities and cultural experiences



Sajan Kumar Gupta
Director, Vayu Seva Tours and Travels, India Travel Award winner

Skydiving has picked up majorly in the last 2-3 years. Australia is popular in this segment. Also, South Africa and New Zealand are other attractive destinations

Australia. Also, South Africa and New Zealand are other attractive destinations." Singh also adds that his company



Sujit Nair
Founder and Group Managing Director, Akquasun Holidays India

Budget travellers tend to divide the cost amongst a group and save on accommodation. They would take up a 3-star property but spend on activities

receives lot of requests for desert safaris. "Almost 70-80 per cent of our visitors fall into the category of travellers

looking for soft adventure when they travel to the Middle East," he says.

The travel industry stakeholders have seen a trend that FIT segment is in the age group of 20-40 years, is very active in taking adventure trips from India. "Backpackers are also exploring the unique features of the destinations which are yet untouched and pristine. The MICE segment, however, is not very actively looking for such activities. The average budget of travellers for adventure travel is estimated at ₹7000 per day. Budget travellers tend to divide the cost amongst a group and save on accommodation where they would take up a three-star property but spend mostly on the activities," says **Sujit Nair**, Founder and Group Managing Director, Akquasun Holidays India. He also adds that major travellers for adventure activities from India are male.

The passion of Indian travellers continues to grow year on year and the per-

centage of people travelling abroad is increasing. There has been a major transformation in how the travellers plan their holidays. Indians are keen on traveling to unconventional destinations and explore rather than visiting the beaten track. "Oman, Boracay, Hanoi, Tanzania, Argentina are some of the top destinations in the bucket list of an Indian traveller today," says Gupta. Seychelles, Cebu, Reunion Island and the Philippines are also some destinations gaining popularity among adventure seekers in India.

Identifying the mode of booking of such travel plans, Nair explains that it is not surprising to find that in today's time, online research plays a major role for information and is also one of the fastest growing methods of booking. "Adventure trips are booked online after research on reviews, blog posts and other social media posts. Sometimes word of mouth also plays stimulus to book a trip to a particular destination," he says.

Showcasing Naga heritage

The Ultimate Luxury Camp has seen a 30% growth in bookings for their Ladakh Camp and is optimistic about the one in Kohima from November 29 to December 12.



TT BUREAU

Conceptualised for travellers seeking more than the traditional luxury travel hotel stays, The Ultimate Travelling Camp (TUTC), the first-of-its-kind luxury camp offers guests a journey across the country's most beautiful landscapes amidst comfort and luxury.

Glamorous camping or 'glamping' as a concept is rapidly evolving in India which is clear from the growing response TUTC has received for their Chamba Camp Thiksey and Diskit in Ladakh informs **Rajnish Sabharwal**, COO. "We saw a Y-o-Y growth of 30 percent on bookings for our camps in Ladakh this year," he says. "This rise in bookings is proof that India has finally opened up to the concept of luxury camping and shows the keenness of travellers to go beyond the ordinary and experience the unexplored." TUTC added another feather on their cap as they were honoured at the 23rd World Travel Awards 2016 held in Vietnam



Rajnish Sabharwal
COO
TUTC

as 'Asia's Leading Luxury Camping Company'.

The experience has become a hit mainly among affluent Indians, NRIs and foreign travellers. "We've seen a strong response from Indians mainly from Mumbai, NCR, Gujarat and Bangalore. Then there are the Non-Residential Indians who are increasingly returning to India to showcase their home country to their second generation families and finally, foreigners who like to experience this concept in India."

What really draws more and more travellers to embrace glamping is the prospect of getting to know the local culture and a whole bunch of adventurous experience on a luxury platform to fill in the need of discerning travellers.

Sabharwal elaborates, "What we aim for our guests is that they do not simply stay at our camps with good amenities and services or visit tourist attractions but rather immerse themselves in the entire experience of the local culture and feel a part of it. Each of our camps celebrates the indigenous culture and traditions, unique fairs and festivals. Our Kohima Camp in Nagaland coincides with the Hornbill Festival, an annual melange of cultural displays from all 16 tribes of Nagaland, showcasing their rich heritage in this colourful pageant." The idea of glamping in the midst of tribal festivities is successfully attracting a lot of travel enthusiasts who wish to be a part of indigenous culture and traditions, he adds.

NEST

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Small towns with big wedding dreams

Destination weddings market from Tier-II and Tier-III cities is booming with increasing number of Indian couples looking at off-beat international and national destinations to celebrate their special day.

 ANKITA SAXENA

With the rising affluence of Indian middle class, marriages have also become more lavish and the combination of destination weddings and vacation is the latest fad. **Varender Anand**, Director (Weddings and MICE), Upasana Travels, says, "As the \$38 billion-Indian wedding market continues to grow bigger in size, the bridal brigade including the bride, groom and their respective families, across the country seem to have embraced the spending frenzy with open arms. About a decade ago, the most talked about society weddings were generally limited to familial lineages. Times are changing now and anyone who has the required finances is going for a destination wedding."

The most popular holiday destinations among Indians — Thailand, Bali, Dubai and Europe — are also popular wedding destinations. Some also look at off-beat destinations like Tur-

key, Maldives, Mauritius, the Philippines and Sri Lanka for weddings. Anand points out that for upscale weddings the popular destinations in India are Rajasthan and Goa while for international destination weddings Thailand, Bali and Dubai have done well. "We have also received queries for Greece and Spain. The top 10 wedding locations at destinations where people get married are hotels, country clubs, banquet halls, historic buildings, restaurants, garden sites, resorts, plantation sites, personal residences, and museums," he says.

Sangita Marda Agarwal, Partner, Vibrant Holiday Destinations, adds, "Thailand, Bali, Sri Lanka, Dubai, gained momentum due to proximity, good infrastructure and flight connectivity. Greece, Australia, South Africa are emerging as newer choices."

The growing trend of getting married out of the city, or even overseas, has caught the fancy of all kinds of people, from metro-savvy



Varender Anand
Director (Weddings and MICE)
Upasana Travels

With increasing brand awareness amongst the youth and purchasing power of the upper class in Tier II and III cities, destination weddings are on the rise here

to the illustrious and affluent families in Tier II and Tier III cities. "With increasing brand awareness amongst



Sangita Marda Agarwal
Partner
Vibrant Holiday Destinations

Thailand, Bali, Sri Lanka, Dubai, gained momentum due to proximity, and good infrastructure. Greece, Australia & South Africa are newer choices

the youth and purchasing power of the upper class in Tier II and III cities in India where luxury cars,



Gaurav Khandelwal
Global Head – Tours
ANTA Holidays

Tier II and Tier III cities like Agra, Raipur, Jaipur, have witnessed an upward trend in destination weddings due to better spending powers

and exotic holidays are no strangers, destination weddings are on the rise here," says Anand.

Marda says the well heeled class in cities like Kolkata, Jodhpur, Surat, Ahmedabad, Raipur and Pune, cannot be ignored as travellers from here are keen to go to any destination for weddings, just like their Tier I counterparts. **Gaurav Khandelwal**, Global Head – Tours, ANTA Holidays, adds, "Tier II and Tier III cities like Agra, Raipur, Jaipur, have witnessed an upward trend in destination weddings due to better spending powers."

The wedding group travelling overseas normally consists of a minimum of 200-400 guests. The cuisine is chosen as per the guest list and is mostly multi-cuisine though vegetarian food is preferred. Some of the guests prefer to carry their own chefs from specialty restaurants. "Destination weddings also are being marketed by a growing number of resorts, cruise lines and destinations — a trend that is expanding revenue opportunities for agents and choices for their clients," says Anand.




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NISHA VERMA



Nishant Kashikar
Country Manager
Tourism Australia

“Featuring in Hindi as well as regional films is a great way of reaching out to a wide audience base and we are glad to have collaborated with established brands of this industry to showcase Australia as an ideal family and romantic getaway.

Facilities: Australia's competitive Screen Production Incentives offer significant savings. The Federal, State and Territory Government each have a screen production agency that provides assistance and incentives.

Movies shot: *Chak de India, Salaam Namaste, Dil Chahta Hai, Hey Baby, Bhaag Milkha Bhaag, Singh is Kinng, and Bachna Ae Haseeno.* Family soaps *Bade Ache Lagte Hain* and *Pyaar ka Dard. Song in Shaadi Ke Side Effects* shot in Gold Coast.”

“Partnering with production houses from India increases our chance of attracting more tourists. We have received encouraging response from the Indian market, the requests from films and television production houses have been steadily increasing.

Facilities: South Africa extends support to various grounds ranging from tax rebates, availability of best quality technical support, no language barriers, easy shooting permissions, to splendid combination of professionalism combined with a dash of African warmth and hospitality.

Movies shot: *Race, Gandhi, My Father, Heyy Babyy, No Entry, Aankhen, Break Ke Baad, Dhoom 2, Ek Tha Tiger, Aashiqui 2, Cocktail, Dil Ka Rishta, Life Partner, Welcome, Blood Money and Ghajini.* The famous Zoozoo ads of Vodafone were shot in Cape Town. Other ads of brands like Wrangler (featuring John Abraham), Thumbs Up (featuring Akshay Kumar), Cinthol (Hrithik Roshan), Scorpio and Pantaloon. Photographer Atul Kasbekar shot one of his Kingfisher calendars completely in South Africa.”



Hanneli Slabber
Country Manager-India,
South African Tourism,
India Travel Award winner



Mohd Hafiz Hashim
Director
Tourism Malaysia

“It makes good marketing sense to capitalise on the current craze and develop tailor-made packages along with some of our preferred sales agents. We have seen considerable acceptance of such initiatives.

Facilities: Malaysian Government's 'Film in Malaysia Incentive' (FIMI) provides financial incentive for the production of creative content in the country. FIMI offers a 30 per cent cash rebate on all Qualifying Malaysian Production Expenditure (QMPE). National Film Development Corporation Malaysia (FINAS) facilitates all foreign film production work in Malaysia and offers various technical services and facilities.

Movies shot: *Kabali, Don, Don 2, Roy, and Singham 3.*”

“When films are produced in New Zealand it provides an opportunity for Tourism New Zealand to gain access to quality content, marketing opportunities and high impact media channels to promote New Zealand as a tourism destination.

Facilities: New Zealand Prime Minister John Key had signed a Film Co-Production Agreement between New Zealand and India in 2011, which has boosted the film industries in both countries. The agreement encourages further cooperation between New Zealand and India's film industries by enhancing screen co-investment, joint creative input, and film crew interaction. In April 2014 the New Zealand Screen Production Grant was introduced, by which international productions can access a 20 per cent baseline grant. A further 5 per cent is available for those that demonstrate wider economic benefits to New Zealand. The grant is managed by the New Zealand Film Commission.

Movies Shot: *Kaho Na Pyaar Hai, I Hate Luv Stories and Players.* New Zealand is popularly known as the destination where *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* trilogy have been shot.”



Steven Dixon
Regional Manager South
and South East Asia
Tourism New Zealand



Vivek Anand
Country Manager
MTPA India

“In India, feature films reach all types of target audiences and are watched by millions of people. This trend helps in promoting the destination in a big way.

Facilities: Due to its moderate weather, shooting in Mauritius is possible round the year. The Government of Mauritius provides a subsidy of up to 40 per cent of the costs incurred during shoots. The quantum of subsidy is dependent on the producers spending a minimum qualifying amount.

Movies shot: Bollywood movies like *Sorry Bhai!, Kidnap, Break ke Baad, Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*, have been shot in Mauritius. Some South Indian movies have also been shot here.”

“Film Tourism from India has created a huge impact on choices people make when planning their next travel. Nowadays, movies portray everything about a destination, from a country's beautiful landscapes and locations to unique experiences that you can have in your next travel destination.

Facilities: Spain offers fiscal incentives for both pure international or co-production shooting projects. These incentives may also be combined with subsidies and sponsorships by local and regional authorities, on a case-by-case basis.

Movies Shot: *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara, Vicky Cristina Barcelona, The Dictator, Knight and Day, Fast and Furious 6, and Game of Thrones Season 5 and 6* have also been shot in Spain.”



Ignacio Ducasse Gutierrez
Tourism Counselor, Embassy of Spain in India and Director, Tourism Office of Spain in India, Mumbai

“Films shot in Ireland have helped to increase awareness about the destination, to whet the appetites of Indian travellers who are always on the lookout for new destinations.

Facilities: Tourism Ireland also works closely with Irish Film Board (IFB), Northern Ireland Screen (NI Screen) and Invest Northern Ireland (Invest NI) for Bollywood opportunities and continues to see Bollywood as a key area of opportunity to raise the awareness among Indian consumers. From January 2015, Ireland's tax incentive for film and television was enhanced, creating a new tax credit programme with increased rate of relief, expansion of eligible expenditure criteria, and greater flexibility in the application process.

Movies Shot: *Ek Tha Tiger* and *Teraa Surroor.* *Star Wars* and the *Game of Thrones* series are being filmed on the Wild Atlantic Way and Northern Ireland respectively.”



Huzan Fraser Motivala
India Representative
Tourism Ireland



Celia Ho
Regional Manager, South
and South East Asia,
Tourism Victoria

“We have collaborated with established brands of this industry to showcase Victoria as an ideal romantic getaway. Victoria has hosted the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne, which has named Vidya Balan as its ambassador.

Facilities: We normally support production houses with on-ground arrangements such as shortlisting shoot venues/sites, F&B options and accommodation. Additionally, we also support the production house with the requirement for crew/ staff, if required. Victoria has a dedicated film commission that provides incentives to encourage producers to bring their film and television projects to Victoria; offer comprehensive location services including detailed, bespoke location surveys, budgets, schedule and logistical research, liaison with local authorities and industry stakeholders on behalf of clients and manage enquiries on a case-by-case basis and assist local production service companies pitching out on projects from India.

Movies Shot: *Chak de India, Bhag Milkha Bhag*, and television serials like *Pyaar Ka Dard.*”



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Going big with bookings

Paytm is fuelling funds to the tune of `300 crore and plans to add new categories like international flights, international hotels, holiday packages, cabs, etc. to its travel marketplace.



AHANA GURUNG

Mobile payment and commerce platform Paytm is fast expanding its footprint in the travel segment and has big plans to add more offerings on its travel marketplace following phenomenal responses. The marketplace touched the million mark in flight and bus bookings in August and expects twice the growth over the next six months. Moreover, flight bookings have been scaling at a 4x month-on-month growth since its launch in May.

Being modelled as a marketplace, Paytm has multiple sellers providing various travel services to customers and allows the platform to offer a diverse selection at the most competitive prices.

The company is upbeat about its evolution and looks to invest a whopping `300 crore on its travel business. Paytm's Vice President



Abhishek Rajan
Vice President
Paytm

Abhishek Rajan informs, "We are working towards launching several new categories on our travel bookings platform including international flights, international hotels, cabs, activities and holiday packages among others. Along with that, we also plan to offer travel insurance, forex, international SIM cards and visa services – we are constantly evaluating other options that have strong business propositions." Banking on the country's hugely untapped online

travel business sector is what largely drove Paytm's foray into travel, he explains. "Our reach into Tier II and III cities puts us in a strategic position to address the rising demand for online travel services. This will help us as we work towards our goal of building the country's largest cashless travel ecosystem." As part of Paytm's expansion strategy, partnerships with both offline and online travel service providers will also be looked into to enable their offerings on the travel marketplace.

While India's online travel market has been historically concentrated around metros like Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai, the real potential for growth lies in the smaller towns and cities in Rajan's opinion. He says, "We believe there is a larger opportunity in Tier II and III cities and expect the next wave of growth to come from these areas."

A custom-made holiday

Jaal Shah, Founder, Rezlive.com, Group Managing Director-Travel Designer Group, expresses that understanding the requirements of clients and catering to that need is crucial for growth.



TT BUREAU

Global B2B online booking system Rezlive.com has witnessed steady growth over the years and continues to expand its global presence. Currently boasting offices in over 19 countries, the organisation which continues its focus GCC countries has also increased its reach in Asia, with the latest addition being Thailand apart from Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam.

Speaking on the persistent growth, Jaal Shah, Group Managing Director – Travel Designer Group, Founder – Rezlive.com says, "This year has been fantastic. We've seen strong growth from North India and the support continues to increase. Over the years, we have attained that maturity where we have sufficient data to understand the customer which helps us personalise our services. We work very closely with our clients and understanding what



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

We've seen strong growth from North India. Over the years, we have attained that maturity where we have sufficient data to understand the customer which helps us personalise our services

their concerns are is the best way to grow bigger." Shah elaborates that client feedback is crucial to providing good and instead of offering just the services they have, Shah concentrates on services that their clients need.

To keep up with the growing requirements of customers, Rezlive.com keeps reinventing itself by adding new features every now and then. The booking system was upgraded in terms of UI, architecture and technology to provide it's a plethora of options and smoother services.

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

New Look
Rezlive.com was upgraded in terms of UI, architecture and technology



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Turkey rekindles trade ties

The Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism conducted an eight-city roadshow for the trade in India to re-establish their association with the country and ensure safe travel.



The 'Destination Turkey Workshop' was organised in collaboration with the Association of Turkish Travel Agents and Turkish Hoteliers Federation, for the travel trade in India, and saw a total of 35 participants from Turkey, including DMCs and hoteliers. Speaking at the event, **Özgür Aytürk**, Coordinator, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Republic of Turkey, said, "We are here to showcase the beauties of Turkey for different segments like golf, honeymoon, wedding, FITs, as well as MICE. We have conducted the roadshow in Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Lucknow, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Chennai. The response was really good in all the cities."

However, in the shadow of the recent unrest and attacks in Turkey, the tourism in the country has received a jolt. Aytürk agrees that they have seen a drop in numbers.



Özgür Aytürk
Coordinator, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Republic of Turkey

"In different markets, the impact was different. In India, we haven't seen that much of a drop, especially in FITs or leisure. However, the MICE movement was affected to an extent. One of the reasons, we are in India is to re-establish the association with Turkey and connect with our Indian friends, because we know that just like the rest of the world, they too are following international news, which tends to exaggerate things," he said.

Further revealing about the situation, he added, "After

the failed coup attempt, Turkey was re-stabilised within couple of hours. The airport and airlines started operating again. None of the touristic destinations got affected. In fact, right after the incident, Turkish Airlines had announced that any tourists wanting to leave the country can get their tickets preponed without any penalty. Even the Association of Turkish Travel Agents and Turkish Hoteliers Federation had announced that they would reimburse the money paid by the tourists, if they wanted to cancel their trip to Turkey or cut it short and head back home. However, only two or three per cent of the total visitors took the offer, and the rest stayed to enjoy their trip.

"Today, Turkey has recovered and settled down and is again ready to welcome tourists. In 2015, we had more than 131,000 Indian travellers to Turkey. This year, there was a drop, but I believe it would pick up very soon and in 2017, we might see a growth rate of over 20-25 per cent."

Fiji's strong Indian 'connect'

With daily flights from Singapore and Hong Kong to Fiji, the growth in Indian visitors to Fiji will certainly boost, says **Damend Gounder**, MD, Tour Managers Fiji.



Tour Managers Fiji and Mana Island Resort organised cocktails and networking events in Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai for their travel trade partners. "We are the major operator out of India for Fiji and have been in the market since 2007. This is our annual event and an opportunity to meet all our agent friends, as well as some new agents. That's how we look at opportunities that we have for Fiji for later part of this year and the early part of next year," said Gounder.

Abdul Kalaam, Sales Manager-MICE, Mana Island Resort & Spa, Fiji, said, "We are a very big island with 160 rooms. We did a lot of renovation and spent around \$5 million upgrading the property. But we came back to square one after the cyclone struck, and we had to put everything back together. It's a great event arranged by Mr. Gounder and



Damend Gounder
Managing Director
Tour Managers Fiji

The new flight by Singapore Airlines gives very good connectivity to Indian travellers

his team. We are meeting travel agents in different cities and it was fantastic. We were well received and we see potential in this market."

Gounder agreed, saying, "One of the major emphasis and focus is the new flight by

Singapore Airlines connecting Singapore with Fiji, which now gives very good connectivity for Indian travellers." He said that with the new connection, there are a total of seven flights to Fiji from Singapore and Hong Kong. He claimed that the numbers are increasing to Fiji. "If we look at the numbers from last year to this year, there has been a steady increase of about 5-6 per cent. Hopefully, this increase continues next year as well."

Overwhelmed by the support he received from travel agents here, Gounder said they will launch special packages for them. "In the first phase, we are just going to launch a major campaign in a few weeks with some wholesalers. The next phase is in December, when we will launch another set of campaigns, with another lot of wholesalers. We have partnered with Fiji Airways, and are investing close to \$50,000-\$60,000 just on advertising the product."

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Incredible India's offerings abound

Marts can be the pedestal to push inbound into the country as it helps exhibitors put out the best of offerings on a global platform. TRAVTALK spoke to foreign buyers at the Madhya Pradesh Travel Mart to gauge what's popular from India and what's new and exciting on offer.



RUCHI J. SINGH FROM BHOPAL



Stuart Miller
Partner
Complete India & Asia

"MPTM offers a good spread of hotels and operators. We were looking to find out what some of the resorts and hotels do for jungle lodges safari and what is available in Khajuraho and Gwalior. It helps us to build a programme because clients coming to India, especially first-timers, may have ideas of what they want but what they want may not be the best. On a second visit, we'd like to give them something different. Not just the Golden Triangle and Rajasthan, but the tribal circuit and festivals so that they can experience the real India."

"I am very happy to be here because after two months we'll have direct flights from Baku to Delhi and we hope to send a lot of tourists to India. That's why we should see the region of India. I am very excited to go on a tiger tour because we have nothing like this in our country. We'll be travelling to Agra and Jaipur to see more of India. Goa, Delhi for leisure and Mumbai is very popular for corporates."



Aysel Mailova
Tour Manager
Caspian Breeze



Goh Hock Gin
Managing Director
Bel Travel & Tours

"MPTM has been eye-opening. My forte has been religious tourism and leisure and I got to know about some heritage and religious sites in MP. First thing that struck me when I landed in Bhopal was the greenery and the beautiful lake. Religious and heritage attractions, especially Buddhist, are immensely popular among Malaysians. Golden Triangle is very popular at the moment. At this mart, I got to know about Sanchi Stupa that I'll market when I go back. I also got to know about opening of the Sikkim area which holds great potential."

"It's my first time in India. It's a great experience to discover new companies and contacts to promote India in Ukraine. Thanks to the organisers for putting such a great event together. We mostly sell Goa but we are at MPTM to discover something new since Madhya Pradesh is the centre of the country. Mostly we work with five-star hotels and the VIP segment so we are interested in new five-star hotels and luxury lodges for our clients."



Zhanna Loburak
Sales Manager
Chance private Club



Syed Mohamed Mohamed Faizal
Operations Executive,
SJ Holidays

"The mart has been good so far but the organisers need to work on better communication. Currently the pilgrimage tours are very popular. Golden Triangle used to be very popular, thanks to the marketing efforts of Incredible India. Kashmir is very popular but tourists are questioning travelling there because of the unrest. I am looking to promote Leh-Ladakh for Singaporeans, it's the next big thing. When one talks about safari, Singaporeans only know African but there are Indian versions also and I got to see so many options that I am going to go back and sell."

"I am looking for DMCs at this mart. As Americans we think India is all about the Taj Mahal but it is vast and varied and has a lot of everything. I just came for the first time and did the Golden Triangle, Cochin, Wayanad & Mysore and I was hungry for more. I have already set up a couple of packages to bring in groups to India. I am already asking some of the hoteliers if they'd be interested in other areas to give Fam trips so that I can bring in more agents and then they can promote India."



Wanda Forden
Travel Specialist
Luxury Travel by Wanda



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Canada paints Delhi red with 350 taxis

In a bid to create buzz about Canada in the city of Delhi, Destination Canada in partnership with Air Canada has branded 350 radio taxis and two Hop-on and Hop-off buses in the Capital.



Speaking at the launch of this initiative at the High Commission of Canada in New Delhi, **Rupert Peters**, Regional Managing Director, Destination Canada, said, "This taxi promotion gives us the opportunity to create visibility at a really important time in India, especially Delhi, to paint the city red with Canada, particularly with Air Canada launching their direct flights between New Delhi and Vancouver. I believe that it will create a good impact in New Delhi as people take taxis and on average spend 20-30 minutes inside the taxi. We have put leaflets in these cabs, explaining the new direct service with Air Canada to Vancouver as well as their Toronto service from New Delhi. It also mentions about packages with tour operators on what people can do when they come to Canada. So it's a really good opportunity for them to think and read about experiences that Canada has to offer."

Margaret Skinner, Director Sales, Europe, Middle East, Africa and India, Air Canada, said, "I think it's a fantastic example of Air Canada working in conjunction with Destination Canada to promote Canada and our new services. We are doing a lot of promotion throughout the year, and I think it's going to work very well."

Also present on the occasion was **Jess Dutton**, Acting High Commissioner of Canada to India, who said, "This promotion is an opportunity to showcase the beauty of Canada and to attract tourists to Canada, British Columbia, Ontario, and the entire country. It is also the opportunity to highlight Air Canada and its two nonstop flights to both Toronto and Vancouver. These connections are enablers of tours, students, business, and to enable people to visit their families. Thus, these flights are fabulous for the overall relationship between the two countries."

Peters added that they forecast over 211,000 Indian visitors to Canada this year, which is about a 13 per cent increase over last year. "I think we can double that next year with this new daily service." In order to achieve that, they are doing a lot of things, particularly in partnership with Air Canada as well as the tour operators in India. "We've got radio campaigns going on in New Delhi, and there will be shopping mall

promotions starting in December. We are also starting some online campaigns. We are using all the channels like travel trade, online consumers as well as the offline environment, such as the taxi branding to

really get the message that Canada is there to be discovered and enjoyed."



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Trade needs better coordination

Buoyed by growth and innovation in travel and tourism, the Indian travel trade stakeholders feel that to keep up the pace, India as a destination needs focused marketing, quality infrastructure and co-ordination amongst the industry players.



ANKITA SAXENA FROM ABU DHABI



Rajan Dua
Managing Director
Udaan India, India Travel
Award winner

“Earlier there used be to only travel agents, hoteliers and airlines attending conferences, but now the younger generation is coming up with such innovative products that it signifies the innovative bend that the industry is witnessing. Our competency lies in visa facilitation services to the B2B market and now we are venturing into DMC representations, offering packages, FIT, destinations, consulting etc.”



Nevil D' Souza
Head-Sales
Dubai Parks and Resorts

“The biggest achievement has been the growth especially from the key markets, predominantly destinations which are within four hours of flight distance including the Indian subcontinent and the GCC countries. Dubai Parks and Resorts will change the leisure and entertainment landscape of the Middle East. Indians have an affinity towards theme parks and we hope the Bollywood Park will be a key attraction for the Indian travellers.”

“I think the traffic for business class has increased substantially amongst the Indian travellers this year which means that people are willing to spend more unlike other economies in the world. Personally for me, entering the charter business is the biggest achievement for us in 2016. The biggest challenge at this point in the industry is to understand the law properly specially with regard to GST so that nobody is penalised unnecessarily when moving forward. Also, global terrorism, which is beyond anyone's control, is one of the biggest threats to our industry.”



Ankush Nijhawan
Managing Director
Nijhawan Group, India
Travel Award winner



Rajan Sehgal
Chairman-Northern Region,
TAAI and Director
Arrivals Air Services

“The Indian travel industry is going through a rough phase where the travel agents do not have a permanent source of income. There is no clear tourism policy in place and heavy taxes just make matters worse. Countries like Austria and France have different taxes for various products and tourism services which makes them more competent. Coordination amongst various stakeholders is missing which makes for a haphazard growth model. As a company we are venturing into new areas. We will be hosting a vintage car rally from February 17-19, 2017.”

“The biggest achievement in the hospitality industry has been the acquisition of Starwood Hotels by Marriot International. The factor that India has missed out on is destination marketing as we are still concentrated on few destinations like the Golden Triangle, Goa and Kerala and not many newer destinations have opened up for leisure tourism or convention venues. State tourism boards need to look at more investments and opportunities in their states to attract more leisure and business travellers.”



Dhananjay S. Saliakar
Regional Director of Sales
and Marketing and Starwood
Sales Organisation,
South Asia, Starwood
Hotels and Resorts, India
Travel Award winner



Mohammad Ameen
Managing Director
Parveen Holidays, India
Travel Award winner

“We have recently started our Dubai operations as a destination management company (DMC). We would be helping our clients from South India with best rates and vice versa. The conventions and meetings like this which are being held regularly are an achievement for the industry as such conventions help us meet the travel agents, visit various places to know the demand of the market and accordingly plan our strategies.”

Contd. on page 34 ►

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It's time to take challenges head on

► Contd. from page 32



Balbir S. Mayal
President
New Airways Travels

“There is a sea change in the industry since I first began my business and I feel it is only those who will be able to adapt with the rapidly changing technology will be successful and sustain in business. I feel there is a need for more support from the government's end. These conferences are excellent platforms to discuss and dwell on way forward for the industry and also allow fostering relationships over networking. We are focused on our level of services that we provide to the corporate clients and that has kept us buoyant despite the competition from OTAs.”



Ajit Singh
Managing Director
R.A. Travel Service

foreign tourist arrivals to India and especially to our region.”

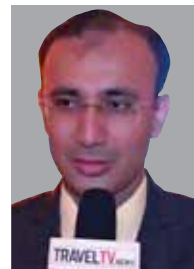
“The government has been announcing many initiatives to boost tourism but we have not seen much happening on the practical side. The schemes are in place but execution of the same is not satisfactory which is why we have not seen a substantial increase in the number of



H.E. Saif Saeed Ghobash
Director General, Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority

place in Abu Dhabi is a demonstration of our capabilities in being a good MICE destination.”

“We witnessed a 20 per cent year-on-year growth from the Indian market. What we offer to the Indian travellers is a destination full of luxury, plethora of unique experiences, cultural authenticity, family friendly travel, etc. In addition to that Abu Dhabi is also an important destination for Indian weddings market. The TAAI Convention taking



Prashant Madhani
Hon. Treasurer-Gujarat Chapter, TAAI

“TAAI is already working towards tackling issues with the airlines and creating a smooth functioning environment for the travel partners. In the last few years we have seen the number of Indian travellers going aboard has nearly doubled. Indian travellers are in high demand amongst various tourism boards globally given their curiosity to explore newer destinations, capacity to spend heavy amount of money and also because premium quality products are gaining popularity amongst the Indian travellers rapidly.”



Vijay Ladhani
Director, Shree Siddhivinayak Travels and Tours

they do not need to go back for repeat clients. We are planning to add countries like Turkey and Sri Lanka in the upcoming months.”

“We have seen a lot of repeat travellers to the UAE, upmarket, niche market and lot of people who come for shopping, relaxing and weekend travel. We are supporting travel agents by providing them dedicated user IDs; the website offers them customer records with a strong backup system so that



Nicholas A. Rana
Director-Sales and Marketing, Marriott Downtown, Abu Dhabi

in the Indian market, which is a key market for us. We have opened just a few days ago and TAAI was the first group we signed and the first event we hosted was for them.”

“We are looking to capture MICE and leisure travel market. Along with the corporate facilities, our hotel offers leisure activities. The average spend for large groups is expected to be around AED 500 while that for the leisure market depends on the seasonality. TAAI has played a significant role in putting out our name



Abdul Hadi Sheikh
Chief Executive Officer
FxKart

they have not left out the ‘human touch’ of hospitality to their travellers. This upholds our cultural ethos which is highly regarded globally.”

“I feel that the biggest achievement of the tourism and hospitality industry is the move towards technology and its increasing acceptance in the industry. However it is important to point out that while a large part of the travel industry is fast adopting technology solutions to give easy access and real time information about these solutions,



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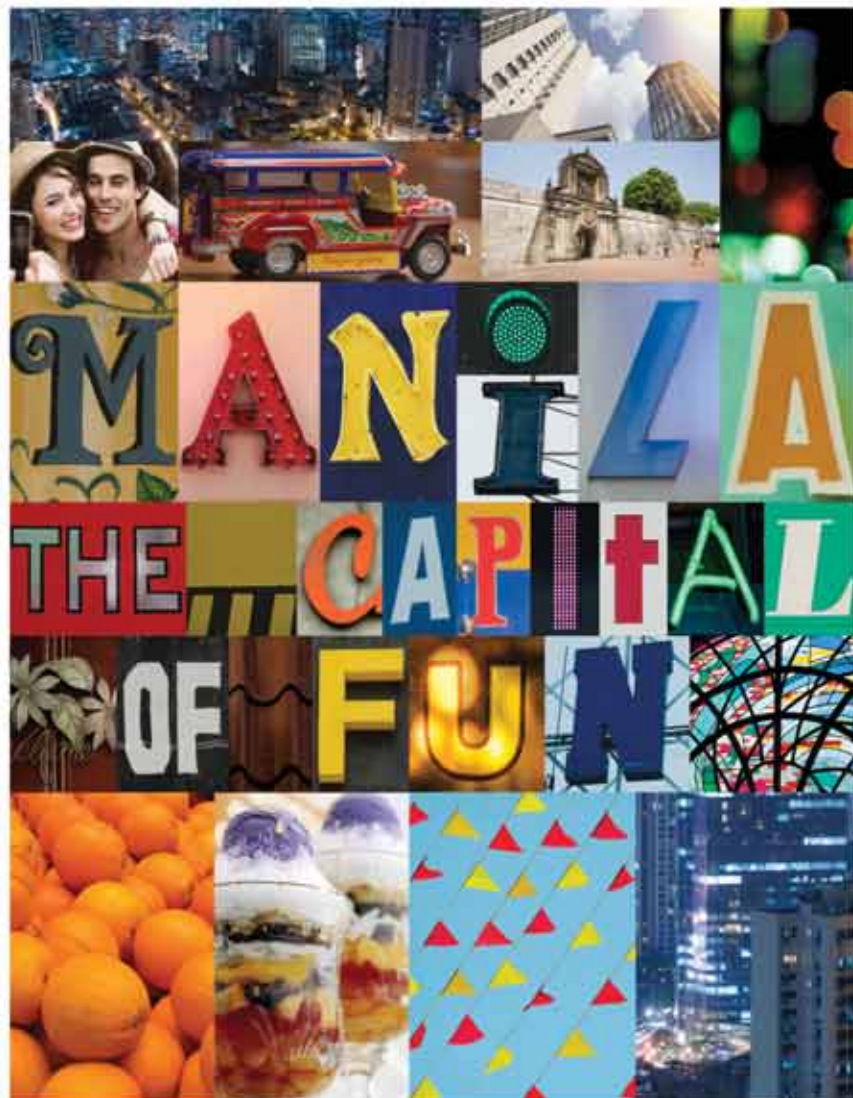
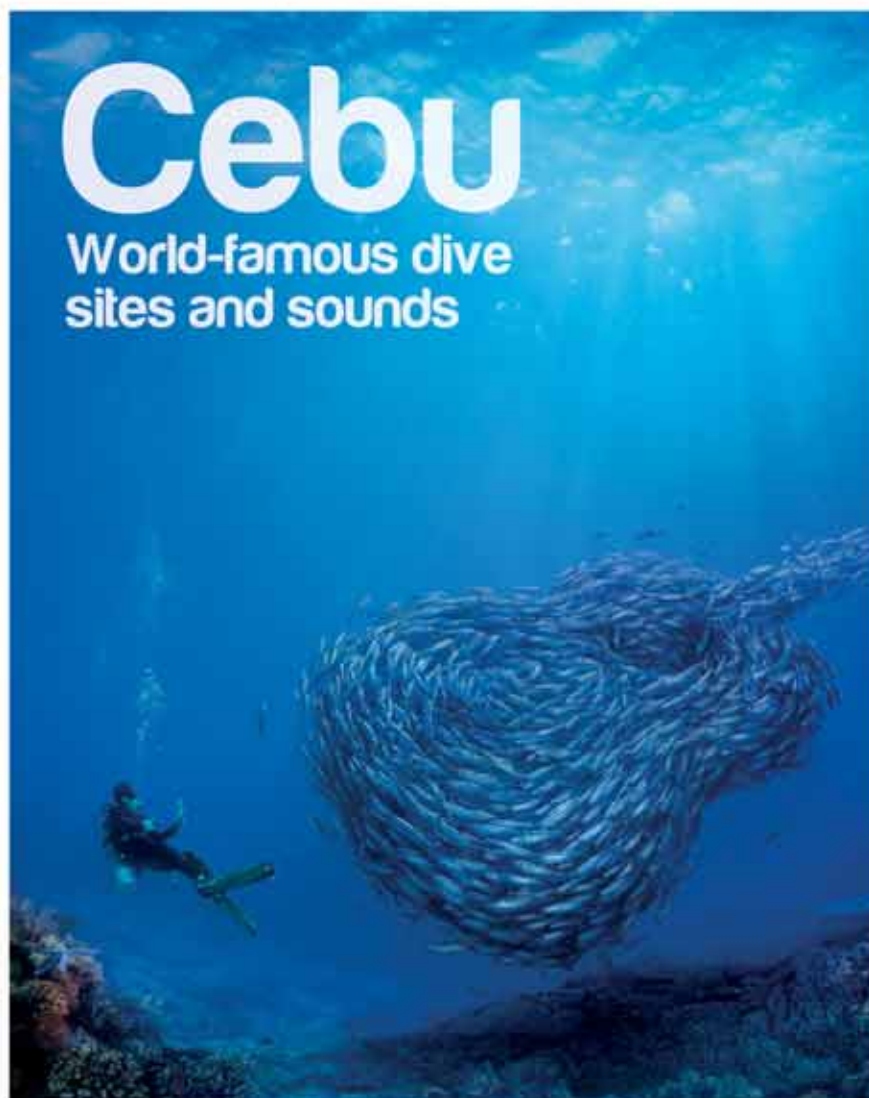


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Irish look to Indian market

Coupled with easy visa facilitation and improved connectivity to Ireland, the country is educating the travel trade about its new tourism offerings.



Ireland witnessed a growth of 20 per cent in the number of visas issued to Indians travellers, informs **Niall Gibbons**, CEO, Tourism Ireland. Ireland recently conducted its annual sales mission in Mumbai and New Delhi where Gibbons informed that the destination witnessed 27,500 Indian arrivals in 2015, corresponding to a 14 per cent increase over 2014.

Tourist arrivals from January to August, 2016, was up by 12.3 per cent with 6.55 million people visiting the destination during this period. "With Northern Ireland being a part of Ireland, we expect to have 10 million visitors by the end of 2016 corresponding to a double digit growth. Our traditional source markets are Great Britain, North America, Germany and France, comprising 70 per cent of the tourism business," Gibbons adds.

The BIVS scheme has also facilitated many Indian visits to Ireland points out Gibbons. Talking about the



Niall Gibbons
Chief Executive Officer
Tourism Ireland

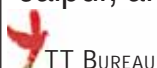
effects of Brexit, he explains that Ireland shares a common travel area with the UK and a hard border will affect consumer confidence to travel to the region altogether. "We are working on a market diversification strategy and looking beyond our traditional source markets. While the UK contributes almost 40 per cent of our visitor numbers and 24 per cent of the spend, reports say that the outbound market from the UK has declined by 2.5 per cent. With the increasing outbound from India, Ireland will be well-positioned to capture business from this market. We are targeting the Asian market including China

and Japan, New Zealand and Australia." He further added that Ireland, Scandinavia, Portugal and Spain have benefited as safe travel destinations post the unfortunate attacks in other European countries. Ireland is promoting the destination through screen tourism. The locations where *Star Wars* and *Game of Thrones* series were shot have been made into tourism products. Along with these, The Wild Atlantic Way, Causeway Coastal Route and Ireland's Ancient East, are popular products amongst Indians. Gibbons says, "While we do not offer any tax incentives for film shooting in Ireland, we do assist film-makers in location recce, hotel deals, visa facilitation and ground services."

According to Gibbons, the sales mission is a key element of their promotional programme in India. "We have interacted with over 150 operators companies in New Delhi alone. We are also investing in the specialist programme for the travel agents and tour operators," says Gibbons.

Expanding in North India

The MGB Group of Hotels is planning to launch at least three hotels by April 2017 in the cities of Agra, Gurugram, Jaipur, and Bharatpur, reveals its MD **Manish Bhatia**.



MGB Hotels Alwar is the Group's flagship property offering premium services to travellers. The property caters mainly to business travellers and extends modern amenities such as Wi-Fi connectivity, a fully equipped business centre, along with a host of other facilities.

Bhatia informs that their upcoming initiative includes a wider presence in North India for which new properties will be launched soon. "Our vision is to expand our business in the north and have



Manish Bhatia
MD, MGB Hotels
India Travel Award winner

properties in Gurgaon, Jaipur, Agra and Bharatpur by April next year."

Our vision is to expand our business in the north and have set a target to launch at least three hotels by 2017. We are working towards opening properties in Gurgaon, Jaipur, Agra and Bharatpur by April next year

set a target to launch at least three hotels by 2017. We are working towards opening

A state-of-the-art board room, modern conference centre as well as a banquet

hall which seats up to 400 pax makes MGB Hotels the model venue for large business conferences, lavish banquets or themed dinners, to suit the client's liking. The board room complements both casual and formal occasion for up to 25 to 30 pax.

Its proximity to Sariska Wildlife Sanctuary allows guests to indulge in outdoor activity post business, he informs.

"We even offer customised trips to the sanctuary on request for our guests. Other sites of interest like Bala Quila, Siliserh Lake, Ajabgarh, Bhargarh and Jaisamand Lake, we bring the best that Alwar has to offer to both business and leisure travellers."

The group believes in going 'glocal' and balancing the local fervour with impeccable services and at par with international standards.

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.

A long table banquet at the world famous **Mughal Room**, High Tea or Sun-downer, Bar-b-que at the terrace **Sunset Lounge**, over looking the Taj Mahal & Agra Fort, an AV for the group at **Arjumand hall**, the new **Checkers Buffet**, the refurbished rooms & bathrooms, Gym by the garden, recreation center and signature massage at **Adiba Spa**, enrich the overall holiday experience.

Located in the prestigious Cantonment area, adjoining the Agra Golf Course, Clarks Shiraz offers views of open spaces, greenery and dense trees all around, looking like the greenest part of India to many visitors. A unique campus of serenity, only 2 km from The Taj Mahal.

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Direct connection to boost Indian arrivals

The Department of Tourism (DOT) Philippines branded 135 radio cabs in New Delhi to raise awareness about the lesser-known places, as well as the popular ones. **H.E. Ma. Teresita C. Daza**, Ambassador, Republic of Philippines informs of India's increasing importance as a source market and how MICE movements and incentive travel have been key to its growth.



AHANA GURUNG

QHow has tourism from India fared this year?

There has been a vast growth in tourism from India as compared to last year. 2015 saw 74,824 Indian arrivals while between January to July this year, we've received about 53,498 tourists. There has been a growth of 25.41 per cent over 2015 and with this, India's position as one of our source markets has improved to 12th. In July 2016 itself, there were 9202 Indians with an increase of 65.35 per cent in comparison to July 2015. Our target is to achieve the 100,000-mark in 2017.

QWhat has led to the growth in Indian arrivals?

There has actually been a noticeable increase in MICE movements leading to the growth. Around 2,900 people have come to the country for meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions and is an increasingly potential segment. We are also encouraging group travel and to foster this, there is an ongoing discussion for visa-on-arrival for groups. Another area that has immense potential is the weddings segment.

QWhat is going to be instrumental in the Philippines achieving the target of 100,000 Indian arrivals?

There is no dearth of white-sand beaches in the Philippines but that's not all we have to offer. There are ample options to suit any kind of traveller, be it a quiet, leisurely holiday or one that's packed with adventure. Destinations like Manila and Cebu have always been very popular but this year, we are highlighting Palawan, Davao, Boracay, to name a few. There is an active nightlife and the products are as diverse as the country; we even have a relatively open visa process. But what we currently lack is direct flights to and from India, which is also in pipeline. Once that is implemented, the numbers are only going to grow since connectivity plays a chief role in attracting tourists.

QTell us about some of the newer initiatives that will be introduced soon?

The new government that has recently come to power is keen on reforming several agenda in the country and has been trying to increase peace and order. It is expected that the administration will make a few tweaks to the campaign for which more details will be re-

vealed most likely in the first half of 2017.

Once a new theme has been finalised, it will help in directing both our representa-

tives here and the embassy. Of course, 'More Fun in the Philippines' will continue to be used until the time the new marketing strategy comes into play. ↴

It's more fun in the Philippines



“The new administration will make a few tweaks to the campaign for which more details will be revealed most likely in the first half of 2017. Of course, 'More Fun in the Philippines' will continue to be used until the time the new marketing strategy comes into play.”

H.E. Ma. Teresita C. Daza
Ambassador, Republic of Philippines

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Targeting UK market for Goa

Martin Joseph, MD, Freedom Holidays, believes in promoting a destination rather than the company because if the destination gets business, everyone else does too.

TT BUREAU

QHow important is the World Travel Market for you?

This show is very important for us as well as the destination. We promote Goa as a destination and it is an absolute sellout destination among British and European tourists; they come in large numbers. WTM is one way in which we are reaching out to the international market. As far as Goa is concerned, the English-speaking market has picked up. The UK market was number one



Martin Joseph
Managing Director
Freedom Holidays in Goa

QWhat are your focus areas for the inbound market for 2017?

Since the UK and European markets are a huge source

The UK market was number one a couple of years ago but the Russians came and took that spot. The UK market is now coming back in a strong way and we expect good growth from there

a couple of years ago but the Russians came and took that spot. The UK market is now coming back in a strong way and we expect good growth from there.

for us and Goa as a whole, we have trained our focus on these markets at the moment. We will soon move to other markets like South America, Canada, China, Korea, Singapore and

Malaysia as they show a lot of promise. Our strategy is to do aggressive promotion through forthcoming travel exhibitions as well as social media.

QHow has 2016 been for you so far?

By God's grace we have done very well because we worked hard for some of our businesses and we don't sit and cry over spilt milk, we keep on trying all the time. We don't promote our company but we promote the destination like Goa because if the destination gets business we will all get business. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is like a brand ambassador for India and this will definitely help in getting more foreign tourists. Countries around the world are looking at India now and are keen on exploring it.

New Avenues

Freedom Holidays will soon move to other markets like South America, Canada, China, Korea, Singapore and Malaysia

Ode to Jaisalmer's heritage

In spite of its Old World charm, Jaisalkot is equipped with modern amenities. Arvind Singh Chauhan, owner, The Jaisalkot, reveals more.

TT BUREAU

The Jaisalkot is an ode to the rich, royal heritage of Jaisalmer. It's a brand new palace constructed as per 16th century designs of the royal palaces. The Jaisalkot endeavors to provide a modern viewpoint of a glorious warrior past which was rich in culture.



Arvind Singh Chauhan
Owner
The Jaisalkot

It has 50 tastefully-curated suites spread over 22 acres of land – meant to represent the proverbial oasis in the desert. "The idea is to provide a Rajputana experience which

modern and the era gone past for the discerning luxury leisure seeker," says Chauhan

For 2017, Chauhan plans to get the STP (Segmentation



is second to none; it is to blur the timelines between the

Targeting Positioning) right and put the distribution channels

in place. "We will also focus on creating a lot more 'wow' factor around our properties which already reflect in repeat bookings and great consumer reviews," he adds.

The hotel is in the process of entering into strategic alliances with a lot of DMCs, TMCs, e-commerce companies, and FTOs. "We are also looking at high-end destination weddings and MICE. The Jaisalkot as a vision is a product of years of planning and passion. It is envisaged as a future synonym for the Jaisalmer," says Chauhan. His son Manvendra Singh Chauhan has created the interiors of Jaisalkot.

He says the year 2017 will be built on buzz marketing to introduce the brand 'Jaisalkot', closely monitoring and curating perception-based marketing. "We will also focus on flawless service delivery, end-to-end sales support and maintaining a fluid position to create the first consumer-made luxury brand," he adds.

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SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM

Air India launches new App with SITA's iTravel

■ Air India has launched a new app to its more than 18-million passengers which will take the user experience to a new level. Built on SITA's iTravel platform, the Air India app offers the ability to book and pay for a flight by quickly and securely scanning both passport and credit card. The new app, developed by SITA, provides an elevated mobile experience where passengers can easily manage every step of their journey on their phone or tablet no matter where they are. Passengers can fully manage their book-

ing from their mobile device, including selecting their seat, making changes to their itinerary, buying additional services, choosing their meal and checking in. The app has also been integrated with Air India's Flying Returns loyalty program where passengers can securely access details of points earned or other updates to their accounts. The new mobile service will be available on Android, iOS and Windows. This means at check-in, passengers can choose to receive their boarding pass on their phone or smartwatch.

J&K showcases its MICE offerings

The priority of Jammu and Kashmir tourism department is to give fillip to golf tourism and promote the state as an affordable and safe MICE destination, reveals **Farooq A. Shah**, Tourism Secretary, J&K.



TT BUREAU

Jammu and Kashmir is evolving as one of the biggest MICE destinations in India with world-class convention centres in Srinagar, Pahalgam, Gulmarg and Ladakh. Shah says, "MICE and golf go together. So, we are interested in coming up with world-class golf courses. We are in talks with the government.

The vision of our late Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed was to make the state the best tourist destination in the world. We are also the most affordable MICE and golf destination."

Shah also says that there are major five star and four star hotels in and around the convention centres. He adds, "Our priority is to promote

MICE and golf sector and I am sure we will be successful in doing that."

Shah claims that the state has all kinds of tourism products whether its adventure, luxury or leisure. He says, "Jammu and Kashmir is a shopper's paradise and one of the best shopping destinations. The Pashmina shawls are world famous.

From Jammu to Ladakh we have a history of 5,000 years. Our cuisine is known as the 'King of cuisines'. Our Chief Minister is also the minister of tourism and is working hard to attract more tourists into the state."

Talking about promoting Ladakh as a Buddhist destination, Shah says, "Ladakh has got tremendous potential. The total population of Ladakh is 1.33 lakhs, whereas number of tourists is more than that i.e. 2.30 lakh. 50,000 foreign tourists from Europe and other parts of the world thronged Ladakh this



Farooq A. Shah
Tourism Secretary
J&K

Ladakh's USP is the Buddhist sites and the monasteries. We have asked the government to promote the destination as a Buddhist destination. It has a huge potential for heritage and cultural tourism

year. Its USP is the Buddhist sites and the monasteries. We have asked the government to promote the destination as a Buddhist destination. It has a huge potential for heritage and cultural tourism."

Homestays and eco-tourism sites are also a success in Ladakh. Talking about the recent disturbances, he says, "Kashmir is as safe as any part of the world or India. We had record tourist arrivals this year and we ensure that whoever comes to our state does not face any difficulty. Hospitality of our people is our strength and tourism industry provides employment to 70 per cent of our population."

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Focus on developing connectivity

Besides starting night landing facility at Port Blair airport, Andaman & Nicobar will get a new terminal in 2017.

TT BUREAU

The Andaman and Nicobar Administration has identified accessibility as a major hurdle in tourism development.

Amit Anand, Director, Tourism, Andaman and Nicobar Administration, informed, "Since the major issue is accessibility to the island, a new terminal is being developed and will be ready to commence operations next year. Night landing facility has also been launched at the current airport. We are looking at developing all types of transportation for the convenience of tourists."

Vistara has recently launched a new route connecting Port Blair and New Delhi via Kolkata with flights plying daily. A circuit covering Port Blair, Long Island, Baratang Island and Rangat is being built for which the administration is actively looking for private players to develop the locations for adventure



Amit Anand
Director, Tourism
Andaman and Nicobar Administration

sports. Anand informs that they are also increasing their presence in the e-space to keep up with the rapidly advancing penetration of technology in the travel industry.

"We are in the process of developing a website for single-window clearance to facilitate investments and are also streamlining the system for licensing procedure. The easiest way to connect with the world is by going online and we are hopeful that this move will bring about a positive change for us," Anand says.

Zip, zap, zoom on Delhi roads



The Department of Tourism (DOT) Philippines along with **Her Excellency Ma. Teresita C. Daza**, Ambassador, Republic of Philippines to India, launched 135 branded taxis in New Delhi as part of a promotional campaign.



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Hyderabad gears up for Skål Congress

With participation from seven Skål clubs across the country, Skål National Congress in Kochi was a big success. The next big event is the Skål International Congress to be held in Hyderabad and the Skålleagues are all geared up for it.



SAMAPTI DAS

“After a gap of 15 years we have been able to have two successful national congresses; last year in Goa and this year in Cochin. The response has been great and so are the arrangements. We wish more members could have come and enjoyed it. Now it's up to the club presidents and the members attending the congress to go back and tell their fellow Skålleagues what this is all about so that next time we have double the number of attendees.”



Jason Samuel
Director
Skål International India

“It's been really interesting to have the entire Skål India team here in Kochi. This is our second Skål National Congress. It is a wonderful experience to do business with friends. The friendship we have developed for the past two days and the hospitality of 'God's Own Country' has been the most valuable experience that people will carry with themselves.”



Ranjini Nambiar
1st Vice President, Skål
International India

“This is a very well organised congress and I am sure all my fellow Skålleagues will agree with me. We are also privileged to be able to host the Skål International Congress in Hyderabad next year. We have succeeded against six other countries in getting to host the Congress. I feel this is the greatest opportunity for India to promote travel and tourism as Skål International is the apex body globally.”



Vijay Mohan Raj
President, Skål
International Hyderabad



Ranjit Vig
Treasurer
Skål International Delhi

“I think holding congresses like this is very important for the national body. It brings the entire fraternity on one forum. We have seen great initiatives taken over here by the national body. They have brought together a large delegation. The events and the agenda that they have put together are refreshing and it is good to see the impetus being put into the forum.”



Jayan Gopinathan
President, Skål International Kochi

“The congress has been very successful. After the last one in Goa we won the bid to host the congress this year. We received about 100 delegates from across the country and their guests along with their spouses also attended the function. The presentations were very informative and were jam packed. We are looking forward to the Skål International Congress to be held in Hyderabad next year.”

“This is the second congress we are having after Goa last year and we hope to have this as an annual feature going forward. We have the World Congress in Hyderabad and we are all excited about it and will work hard and lend our support to the Hyderabad team which has done a remarkable job of bringing this platform to India.”



Carl Vaz
2nd Vice President, Skål
International India

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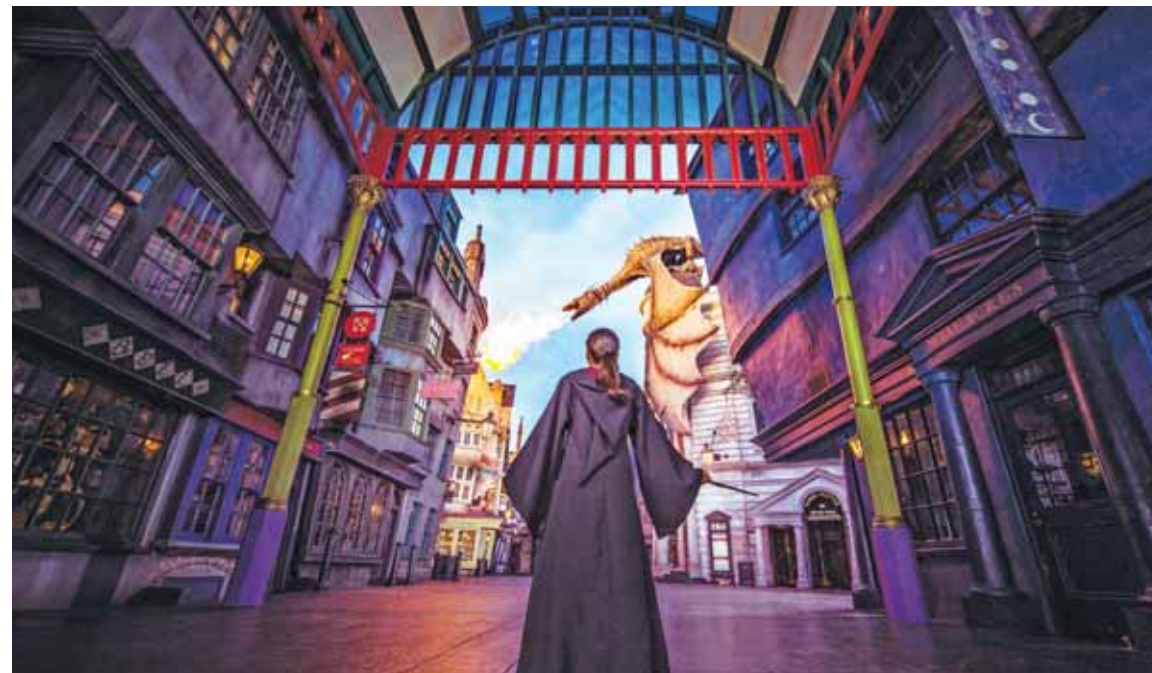
Universal fun in Orlando!

Two years in a row, 7M Tours has been awarded the prestigious India Travel Award as Best Destination Management Company in the USA. With a dedicated staff and direct presence in over dozens of cities around the world, 7M Tours ensures exceptional service to travellers and partners. For the 2016 travel season, their numbers have increased by 165 per cent growth, compared to 2015.



TT BUREAU

7M Tours' office is located at the centre of fun in Orlando, Florida USA, home to many great attractions, including one of the best places to enjoy blockbuster entertainment, thrills and excitement: Universal Orlando Resort. This famous resort offers the opportunity for families to really connect with one another. The experience starts with its two famous theme parks: Universal Studios Florida and Universal's Islands of Adventure. Explore Islands of Adventure, home to tons of great attractions. First check out Marvel Super Hero Island, where you can enjoy the Spiderman, Incredible Hulk and Doctor Doom's rides. Everyone knows any trip to a theme park is not complete without a water ride and Islands of Adventure has a whole section of the park just for them: Toon Lagoon. Here you will find Dudley Do-Right's Ripsaw Falls, where you're sent over a waterfall, and Popeye



& Bluto's Bilge-Rat barges, which is a fun and exciting white-water raft ride. Visitors can also release their inner explorer and roar into the Jurassic Park island to enjoy the Jurassic Park River Adventure, where a leisurely

ride goes terribly wrong, putting riders face-to-face with the gigantic T-Rex. Then – something that the kids will be sure to love – the famous Seuss Landing, where the beloved books of Dr. Seuss come to life in rides like The

Cat in the Hat, the High in the Sky Seuss Trolley Train Ride! and One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish, where riders can steer clear around obstacles and squirting fountains. One of the best places to see at Islands of Adventure is The Wizarding World of Harry Potter - Hogsmeade, which attracts millions of people each year. Here you can fly above Hogwarts with Harry Potter and his friends, experience the tasty delights of the Three Broomsticks and shop at Honeydukes sweet store. Those that dare can ride a Hungarian Horntail on the intertwining roller coasters of Dragon Challenge. Just opened this summer, the incredible new attraction, Skull Island: Reign of Kong, pulls visitors into a powerfully told story where guests are transported deep into a dark world to discover creatures of unknown origin and come face-to-face with the colossal Kong himself.

Right next door, Universal Studios Florida has an unrivalled list of film and TV-themed attractions. It's home to attractions such as Transformers: The Ride-3D, The Simpsons Ride and Springfield, Shrek 4-D, Men in Black Alien Attack, E.T. Adventure, Revenge of the Mummy and Despicable Me Minion Mayhem. Recently opened The Wizarding World of Harry Potter - Diagon Alley introduces guests to a new world of wizarding imagination. You can even pass through the iconic brick wall and board the Hogwarts Express at a life like King's Cross Station! This takes you on a breathtaking journey through the British countryside, encountering several magical creatures, and some of your favorite characters... but watch out for those Dementors. Fans can also take a one-of-a-kind stroll into the

bustling and wizarding hub that is Diagon Alley; exploring shops and alleyways just like in the books and films.

Connecting the two parks is Universal CityWalk – the hottest spot for great entertainment – with a mix of themed restaurants, shops, nightclubs and a huge 20-screen movie theatre. This 30-acre complex has something for everyone: enjoy well-known names such as Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville, Hard Rock Cafe and Bob Marley's or one of the many new restaurants – Antojitos Authentic Mexican Food, Vivo (serving delicious Italian food) and CowFish – where burgers meet sushi! One of the highlights here is definitely Rising Star – a karaoke bar like no other where you sing with a live band and backup singers on stage. CityWalk is also home to the famous Blue Man Group, which is filled with high energy, lights, pumping music, and paint! On top off this Universal are opening a water theme park! Universal's Volcano Bay will open in 2017. It's a new themed land that reimagines the meaning of the term water park. This place will offer radically innovative, thrilling attractions, peaceful moments of relaxation and a totally new experience inspired by a postcard-perfect tropical island.

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Marriott and Sabre come together to launch wholesalers programme

Marriott International together with Sabre Hospitality Solutions unveiled a new distribution and booking solution, www.MarriottWholesalers.com, that provides thousands of authorized wholesalers, destination marketing companies, and tour operators access to real time rates and inventory for more than 4,200 Marriott properties around the world. The solution is part of Marriott's strategy to transform the wholesale and leisure segment with technology and shift to dynamic rates and automated reserva-

tions, replacing antiquated processes for contracting, accessing inventory and booking hotel

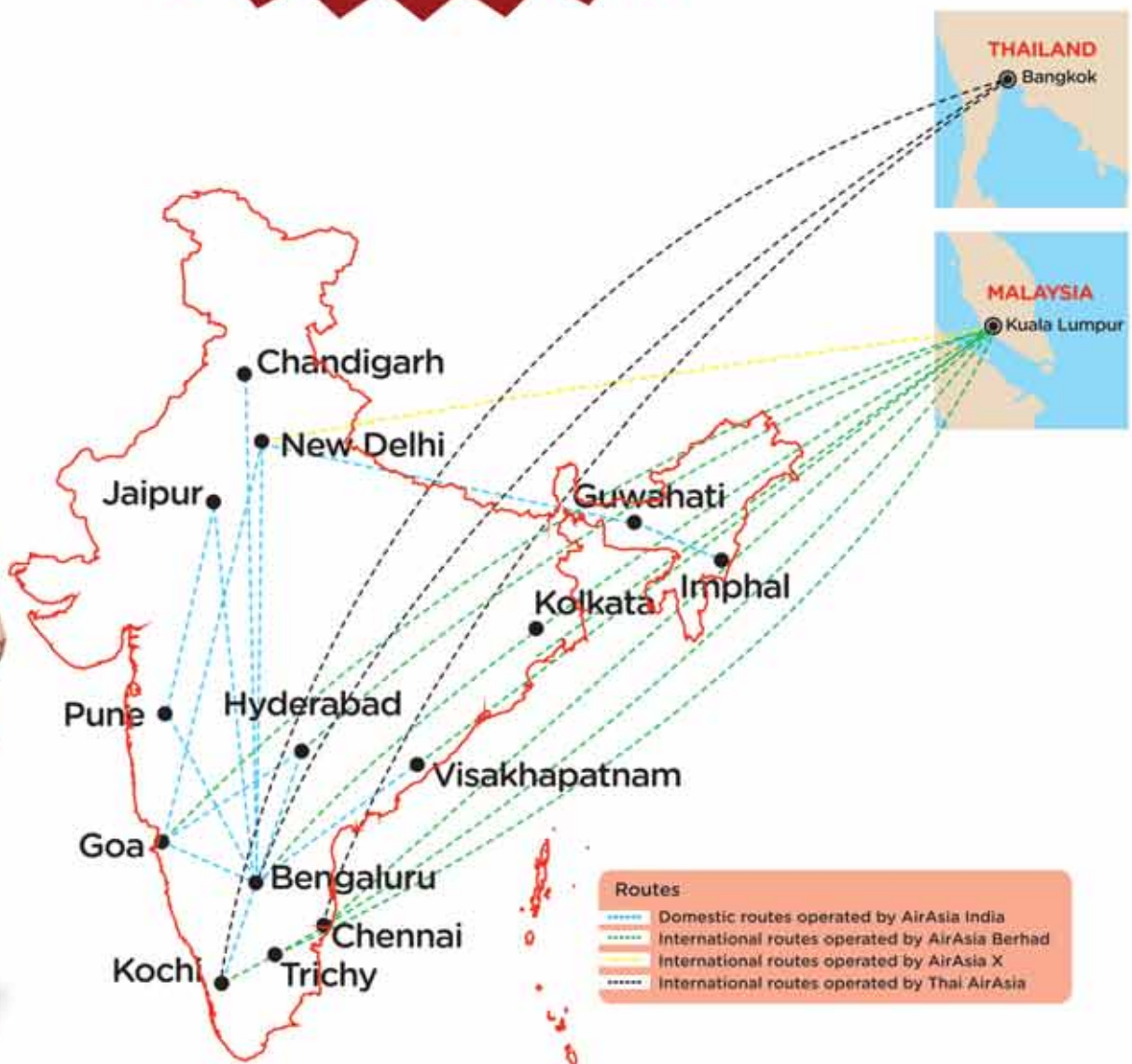


rooms. Approved wholesalers can now search real time hotel net rates and inventory globally to create tailor made packages for their customers. All hotel bookings are confirmed instantly

online. The solution provides significant value to smaller wholesalers by removing the need for them to make a technology investment to gain direct, dynamic access to rates and inventory. The solution will make it more efficient than ever to distribute Marriott's inventory to the broader leisure package segment. Wholesalers can establish or renew access in seven languages at MarriottWholesalers.com and once authenticated, they immediately have access to the booking engine.



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Hotelbeds partners with AccorHotels to double bookings

■ Hotelbeds has announced a strategic partnership with AccorHotels that aims to double sales for the hotel through the bedbank over the next two years. **Carlos Muñoz**, Managing Director Hotelbeds – Bedbank, said, “We are very excited and pleased to confirm that we have taken our longstanding relationship with AccorHotels to the next level with this strategic partnership. This summer’s trial resulted in the best ever booking results we’ve seen for the hotel. Based upon this we are already working together on a plan to double the amount of bookings that AccorHotels receives through Hotelbeds within the next two years.”

As a result of this new agreement – reached earlier in the year and trialed over the summer months – Hotelbeds has recently registered its best ever bookings results from the hotel chain. Hotelbeds is a long-standing B2B partner of AccorHotels that embraces its dynamic rates through outstanding XML connectivity.

FITUR 2017 for Sustainable Tourism

The trade show will be the stage for the opening ceremony organised by the UNWTO, adhering to the goals promoted by the UN of extending the contribution of the tourism industry to economic, social and environmental sustainability.



The International Tourism Trade Fair, FITUR, which is due to be held in Madrid from January 18 to 22, 2017, has been designated by the UNWTO to be the stage for the kick-off celebrations of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development declared by the United Nations Organisation and channelled through the Madrid-based World Tourism Organisation.

FITUR 2017 will thus make a special contribution to the goals that drive this initiative, helping through its participants to disseminate and promote the efforts the tourism industry is making in placing its activity at the service of a new model of tourism sustainability in the three main spheres: economic, sociocultural and environmental.

In this staging, Argentina will participate as the

principal partner of FITUR 2017. This Latin American destination thus joins the initiative launched by the

more than 9,500 businesses, institutions and bodies from the worldwide tourism industry, will contribute to show-

specialised sections organised by the UNWTO itself and the Instituto Tecnológico Hotelero, ITH — will be a



event in 2016 and known as ‘FITUR Partner’, which offers all participants in the trade show the opportunity of joining a partnership programme that gives the guest destination the broadest possible dissemination and publicity.

FITUR, as one of the industry’s relevant actors and one which gathers together

casing the latest solutions and advances being developed and which are helping to boost economic growth, social development, job creation, efficiency of resources, environmental protection, heritage values and cultural diversity.

In this context, FITUR-GREEN — one of FITUR’s

focus of interest in sustainability as the only option for the future of tourism. The reality, according to the ITH, is that 90 per cent of travellers would choose a sustainable hotel and 34 per cent would be prepared to pay more for staying in one. This defines an expansion model for the tourism and hotel industry based on values of sustainability, also a key factor in its competitiveness goals.

FITUR 2017 will be the stage on which the new reality of sustainability for tourism development will become apparent, with every tool — business opportunities, networking programmes promoting new relationships

and exchanges and others — being made available so that businesses, bodies and institutions can meet the challenge of sustainable development in order to become more competitive. The Trade Show will ultimately be a unique opportunity for accessing the knowhow and expertise that have been making their way into this field.

Through these actions FITUR is again proving to be a magnificent barometer of the situation in the worldwide tourism industry and aspires to renew the trust of its agents. In fact, the last staging set a new record in participation, with a total of 231,872 visitors — of whom 124,659 were participating professionals — and the presence of 9,605 businesses from 165 countries. ↓

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Anantara Kalutara Resort opens in Sri Lanka

■ Anantara Hotels, Resorts & Spas has announced its second resort in Sri Lanka – the 141-room Anantara Kalutara Resort, located along the island's southwest coast. Only 10 minutes from the town of Kalutara and an hour south of the capital Colombo, Anantara Kalutara has a unique setting

with the now well established Anantara Tangalle on the south coast."

The resort will also offer an ideal setting for meetings and events. Expected to open in March 2017, an impressive conference centre will be able to accommodate 500 delegates and up to 300 for



between the Indian Ocean and Kalu River and boasts coastal, river and lagoon frontage.

Dillip Rajakarier, CEO, Minor Hotels, says, "We are excited to open Anantara Kalutara, our second luxury Anantara resort in Sri Lanka. With its unique ocean and river front location and its original design by famed Sri Lankan architect Geoffrey Bawa, we are confident that Anantara Kalutara will become one of the 'must stay' luxury properties for discerning travellers visiting the island, along

a banquet. An SUV limousine service is available for journeys between Anantara Kalutara and Colombo's Bandaranaike International Airport, an hour and a half drive, and also Kalutara South Station just five minutes away.

A range of leisure facilities is available for guests to enjoy, whether for romance or quality family time. The Watersports Centre offers jet skiing, water skiing and banana rides. There are two swimming pools – the lagoon-side pool and children's section.

Regal sojourn in Jaisalmer

In a bid to recreate the success of Chokhi Dhani Resort, Jaipur, the group has now come up with a new property in Jaisalmer — Chokhi Dhani Palace Hotel & Desert Camp.



TT BUREAU

After creating the epitome of Rajasthani hospitality with Chokhi Dhani Resort in Jaipur, Chokhi Dhani Group is offering the real taste of Rajputana era at Chokhi Dhani Palace Hotel & Desert Camp Jaisalmer that promises unmatched comfort and traditional Indian hospitality.

Mehul Vaswani, Director Hotels, Chokhi Dhani Group, said, "If you wish to embrace the sublime contours of ethnic garbs, the drama of local fairs and the epic tales behind the magnificent Jaisalmer, then visit the royal Chokhi Dhani Palace Hotel & Desert Camp. Set amidst sun-kissed



Mehul Vaswani
Director Hotels
Chokhi Dhani Group

deserts, the property evokes the grandeur of this Golden City, like none other."

Recreating Rajputana hospitality, and offering luxurious accommodation in

royal haveli style. The property offers the best of heritage with modern living with a separate dining area, mini bar, and spacious bathroom with Jacuzzi. In addition, the Chokhi Dhani Palace Hotel Jaisalmer is an apt venue

accommodation, with all 5-star facilities, allows you to be close to nature, and Rajasthani culture. Along with camping, one can witness the bygone Rajputana era with desert safari, camel ride, folk dance and musical



for hosting theme weddings, corporate meetings and other events or celebrations.

performance as well as authentic Rajasthani food.

Get the best of Jaisalmer with Chokhi Dhani, as you stay at the royal haveli and also go on a desert safari. The Desert Camp, situated near Sam Sand Dunes, offers exotic, enthralling and exciting desert life. The fully equipped luxury tent

Vaswani claimed that the guests can relish a variety of experiences at the property and around. "Hop on a camel, live in Rajputana royalty, and feast on scrumptious, authentic meal. Chokhi Dhani Desert Camp offers a fairytale experience."



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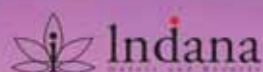
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Starry starry night on Air Canada

Air Canada's inaugural flight from Vancouver to Delhi received a grand reception at the Canada House in New Delhi. Gracing the occasion was a huge delegation from Air Canada, dignitaries from the High Commission of Canada and travel trade partners from India.



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AC 70	TORONTO	DELHI	21:20	21:40 (+1)	DAILY

Above timings are effective from 6th Nov 2016 and are subject to change

FLIGHT	FROM	TO	DEPART	ARRIVE	DAYS OF THE WEEK
AC 73	DELHI	VANCOUVER	06:55	08:20	MON, THU, SAT
AC 72	VANCOUVER	DELHI	23:15	01:55 (+2)	TUE, THU, SAT

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Akquasun chimes with Chimelong



Akquasun Hong Kong recently hosted a B2B networking evening with Chimelong Resorts in Mumbai that saw a great turnout from the travel trade fraternity with 25 agents.

2000 agents by 2017

Merakey, a start-up online travel agent launched in July 2016, plans to add over 2000 travel agents to its platform by March 31, 2017.



Till date the company has over 500 travel agents using the portal and over 1000 confirmed bookings for hotels and packages. **Sanjoy Bose**, Head-Marketing, Merakey, says, "We are the only online travel agent in India based out of Kolkata with sales, operation and support teams. We offer instant pay-

ment option with no transaction fees. Our visa division (Zenith Hospitality Group) is authorised by Singapore High Commission to issue online visas. We have our own offices in Bangkok, Dubai, London, Singapore and Dhaka so we can assure the best services and prices."

The company aims to have 7,500 bookings and 2,000

active agents on the platform by March 31, 2017. Merakey supports its travel trade partners with direct sales in different cities across India, online marketing through emailers, digital marketing awareness through various social media platforms, he adds. Merakey plans to penetrate operations in Tier II and Tier III markets in India and will also explore the South Asian markets. "The B2B

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Sanjoy Bose
Head-Marketing
Merakey

We have insurance, bus services, cruises, forex, visa, homestays in the pipeline which will soon be other additions to our offerings

products we are offering at present are instant confirmation worldwide, hotel accommodation, transfers, sightseeing and packages. We have insurance, bus services, cruises, forex, visa, homestays in the pipeline which will soon be other additions to our offerings," says Bose.

Elaborating on the growth strategy of Merakey, Bose points out, "In the long run we would like to integrate with all the major Global Distribution Systems (GDS) and wholesalers including channel managers to increase our inventory to offer the best available prices and move to the B2C platform. Today on an average about 40 per cent of travellers plan their travel via mobile devices and we will take full opportunity of mobile technology."

Services on offer

Merakey helps in direct sales, online marketing through emailers, digital marketing awareness through social media



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Get behind the wheels on a holiday

Recent years have seen an increasing trend of self-drive outbound holidays. As per Avis, Indians recorded 40 per cent rise in self-drive holidays and 25 per cent rise in IDP issuance. Experts who believe the trend is likely to grow in times to come give some insights.



KANCHAN NATH

Highlighting the trends of self-drive outbound holidays growing from India, **Shawn Mendes**, Director, Discover the World-India, the GSA for Hertz Rent A Car, says, "In 2015, it was estimated that the car rental market size was close to \$73 billion. Albeit, the percentage contribution from source market India is less than 10 per cent, and the outbound holiday segment approximately 25-35 per cent of the total India contribution. Though there has been a steady increase in the last few years due to rising disposable incomes, the maturity of the Indian traveller, familiarity to the destination and enhanced road infrastructure in most of the holiday destinations."

Sunil Gupta, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, Avis India, adds, "In the last few years more and more Indians are taking self-drive options while they are

travelling abroad. On general terms what we observe is that self-drive is most preferred if your purpose of travel is leisure as compared to business. Avis India is already selling international self-drive through our existing website, corporate relationships and travel partners. There is a rapidly growing desire for Indians to use self-drive cars while travelling abroad and so we plan to engage with travel agents, tour operator and travel management companies who have a strong focus on outbound travel."

Jay Hasler, Director, International Sales, Asia, Enterprise Holdings, says, "Overall the trends are very positive, as we are seeing more and more Indians select self-drive as they travel abroad. As more people become aware of the benefits that are offered by self-driving we see the opportunities as endless. Growth has been in the high double digits for



Shawn Mendes
Director
Discover the World



Sunil Gupta
Managing Director & Chief
Executive Officer, Avis India



Jay Hasler
Director, International Sales
Asia, Enterprise Holdings

many years and continues to grow."

For the driving enthusiast, as well as first-time explorer, the experience revolves around the route and the destination follows suite, says Mendes.

The choice of destination to undertake self drive is based on:

- (i) Destinations visited by a matured FIT traveller,
- (ii) Destination that creates self-drive opportunities for Indian drivers,

- (iii) Destinations that can be explored by an experiential traveller by road.

"Some of the most explored routes for the Indian traveller are the Pacific Highway 1 (California, USA), the Great Ocean Road (Victoria, Australia), the North Island Beaches and Geothermal Route (New Zealand), England Country Side & Wales Castle Route, and the Grand Tour (Switzerland) – to name a few. Understanding the same, we have chalked out

routes in over 30 countries," he adds. The top self-drive destinations for Indians is the US, UK, Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, Switzerland, Spain, South Africa, Scotland, Mendes says. Hasler adds, destinations such as Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Thailand have always been popular. North America is also a great destination for self-drive.

Talking about what Hertz offers to travel agents,

Mendes says, "Hertz is available through various distribution channels to the agents, even a simple web interface accessible via www.hertza-gent.com. For agents/OTAs that have API capability, we can directly plug into their website and for agencies that would like to create a package, we have package rates bookable in INR in India. Travel partners can seek more information by writing to our at hertz@discovertheworld.co.in."

The main challenges and positives for international self drive holidays for Indians are, Hasler concludes, "The ability to travel at your own pace, and see what you desire to see are some of the main benefits. The positives are many! There are no real challenges in taking a self-drive holiday. As long as the customer has a valid driver's license and credit card, you can take a self-drive holiday on your next trip!"

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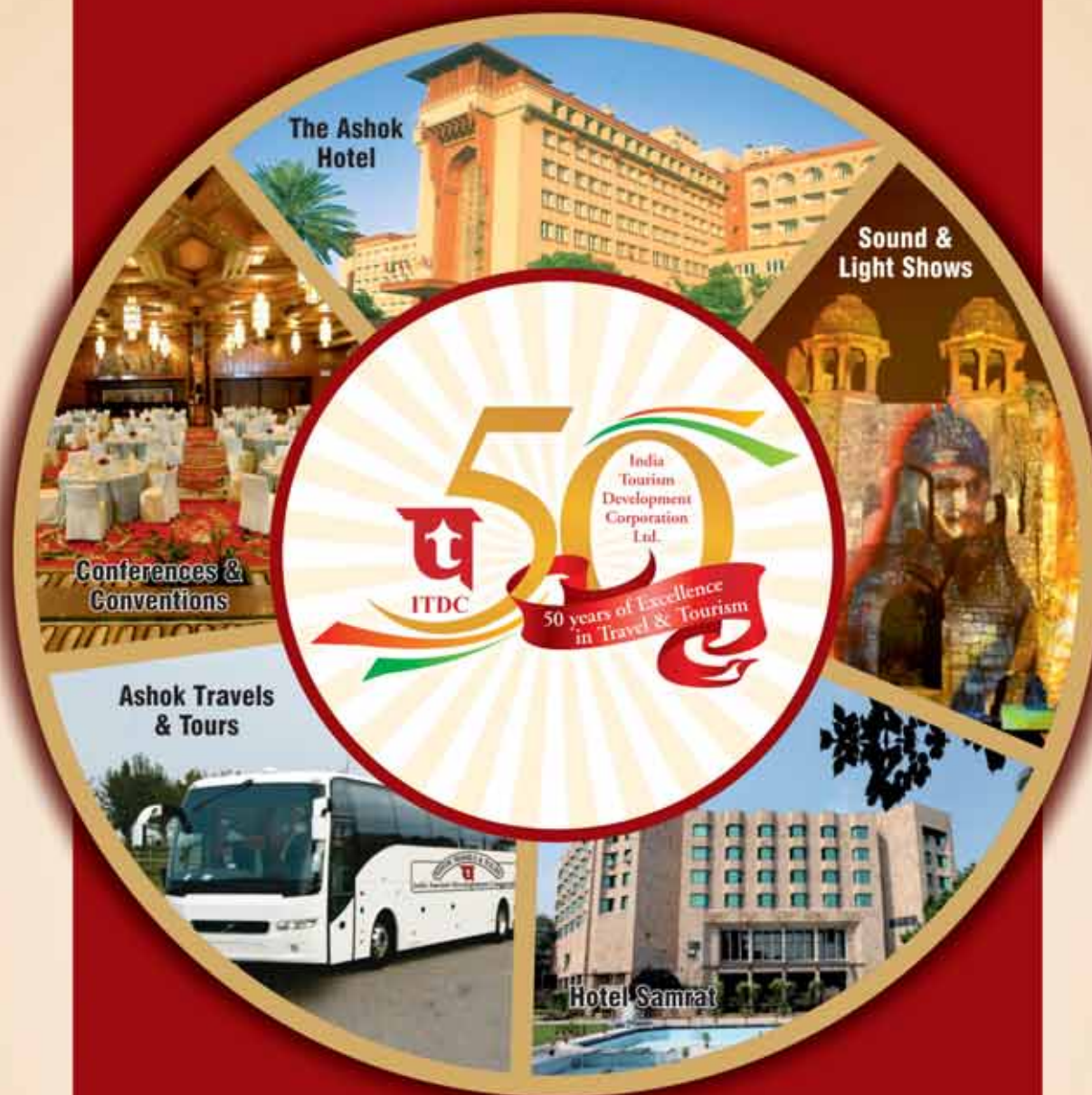
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Spanish salsa spices up the night

The Tourism Office of Spain recently concluded a three-city roadshow in Mumbai, Kolkata and Bengaluru that was attended by 17 suppliers from Spain and included hotel chains, tourism boards and DMCs. A lucky winner in each city got two free tickets on Air India with four-night stay at Melia Hotels International and Palladium Hotel Group.





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The **Swiss Travel Pass** includes extensive travel on trains, buses and boats, as well as travel on scenic trains such as the Bernina Express, Glacier Express, GoldenPass Line and Wilhelm Tell Express. The pass also covers public transportation in more than 75 Swiss cities, a 50% price reduction off most mountain railways, and free admission to more than 490 museums in Switzerland.

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China Southern forays into new markets

China Southern Airlines hosted an evening of cocktails and dinner for its trade partners in New Delhi to launch its new connections from Guangzhou to Adelaide and Toronto respectively. Starting December 7, 2016, the double daily flights would offer further connections for Indians travelling to these destinations, especially with a great frequency on the airline between Delhi and Guangzhou.



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Customised packages for India

M. Jawed Khan, Managing Director, Holiday Konsepts, believes that customisation helps companies deliver the level of service that is closest to the expectations of the client.



QWhat will be your focus for the international market next year?

Having established our business only last year, this year's focus will be on tapping new prospective areas of business. We will be promoting some different packages that showcase the essence of India such as the

Customisation helps deliver services to the closest level of expectation of client. They don't need to adjust or compromise to their requirements as the package is customised according to their requirements and preferences. Also, companies that can keep pace with consumer expectations will always have a better chance of being successful.

QHow has 2016 been for you so far?

Things were a bit slow in the first quarter. But they improved Q2 onwards. For outbound market, our focus and expertise lie with destinations like Europe, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Dubai where our FIT team did really well. We have a team of energetic destina-

tion experts, who did not leave any stone unturned to deliver the best and hassle-free services. We also have good response from our South Africa market for inbound. Even the Indian domestic market responded well to us in terms of MICE group and college/school group movement. In all, it's been encouraging and motivating for us.

Dhruv Shringi to head FICCI's Online Travel and Technology Committee

■ Keeping pace with the rapid penetration of internet and mobile, FICCI has initiated the Online Travel and Technology Committee which will function under the aegis of the existing FICCI Tourism committee.

The Committee will be led by **Dhruv Shringi**, Co-Founder & CEO, Yatra Online while the Committee will comprise of key stakeholders of online travel companies including

MakeMyTrip, Cleartrip and various other key stakeholder and knowledge partners from the online travel sector.

"The Committee has been formed for outlining the roadmap for a robust regulatory policy for the online travel industry and to encourage innovation in travel & tourism sector," informed **Dr. A. Didar Singh**, Secretary General, FICCI.



M. Jawed Khan
Managing Director
Holiday Konsepts

We are in touch with our overseas partners and we will soon come up with our associate office in Nimes in France

lifestyle in Indian villages with a taste of ethnic cuisine and many more. Based on this concept, we already have business from the South Africa market this year. For the new year, we have firm plans to represent ourselves in France. We are in touch with our overseas partners and we will soon come up with our associate office in Nimes in France.

QWhat is your strategy to achieve your target for 2017?

We are travelling in unexplored areas of India and preparing new packages keeping in mind the basic needs of a traveller. We will be promoting the packages round the globe through focused marketing i.e. advertisements in international magazines, websites and other social media platforms. We are sure that people will like the same and feel the true essence of India and will help us in achieving our goals.

QCustomisation of packages is your core strength that you offer to clients. Why do you think it is important today?



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Thai Smile takes off with Bird

The airline is the first to connect Bangkok with Gaya and Varanasi from Oct 1, Jaipur from Nov 15 and Lucknow from Dec 1, with three flights per week.



Thai Smile Airway has appointed The Bird Group as its General Sales Agent (GSA) for the Indian market. The organisation will handle the airline's sales development, bookings, and ticketing services within India as well as conduct direct marketing and service support to Indian travel agents.

Gaurav Bhatia, Executive Director, Bird Travels, stated, "The Bird Group is very pleased and excited to be associated with Thai Smile Airways as their GSA in India. We are also honoured to have been selected by an ambitious, reliable and dynamic carrier like Thai Smile to consolidate its brand in the Indian market and to increase sales through targeted, effective, and proactive actions."

Thai Smile Airways has started online operations to Gaya and Varanasi from October 1 and would be starting online operations to Jaipur



Gaurav Bhatia
Executive Director
Bird Travels



Isra Stapanaseth
Director
Tourism Authority of Thailand

from November 15 and Lucknow from December 1 with three flights per week. The flight will operate with A320 aircraft which will offer a Premium Economy Class (12 seats) and Economy Class (154 seats) and host of features for passengers.

Isra Stapanaseth, Director of Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) at New Delhi Office said, "Thai Smile makes it more convenient and effective in terms of tourism; segments like weddings, corporates, family, luxury travellers and commercial

trades will be benefited. With this direct connectivity, we are very positive that it will boost the tourism from these cities to Thailand in the near future."

Furthermore, **Captain Woranate Laprabang**, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Thai Smile Airways, added, "We consider these connecting flights as one of our strategic destinations in Indian region. Thai Smile Airways is undertaking an ambitious growth programme to develop network and ensure international connectivity."

Help at hand for VAT reclaim

VAT reclaim is a potential segment for businesses to improve cost efficiency. Clay Business Group explains how companies are saving on VAT paid abroad.



While companies collaborate with ideal partners to make arrangements for the travel, telecom and forex requirements of their employees, they overlook the potential to save on VAT paid abroad. Individuals pay approximately 10 per cent to 25 per cent VAT while buying goods and services abroad. This amount can be reclaimed by enterprises in accordance to the tax laws of the country of travel.

There are VAT experts working with Indian companies such as Clay Business Group that can make the entire process of reclaiming VAT easier for the enterprises. These experts verify the invoices that are eligible for VAT reclaim and initiate a VAT reclaim application on behalf of their clients.

"It is a huge opportunity for businesses to reclaim up to 100 per cent VAT on eligible invoices as per tax regulations of a particular country. We are enabling businesses to save



Gaurav Dhawan
Executive Director
Clay Business Group

We are enabling businesses to save their money by reclaiming VAT amount paid abroad

their money not only by offering customised international SIM cards and attractive forex rates, but also by reclaiming VAT amount paid abroad," says **Gaurav Dhawan**, Executive Director, Clay Business Group.

An enterprise can reclaim within a year for the expenses

borne by its employees in the countries such as the European Union, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan. "We act as cost management consultants who provide assistance in saving money on overall international travel including telecom, forex and VAT for our partners", says **Aditya Joshi**, Chief Operating Officer, Clay Business Group.

While businesses are looking for cost-saving measures in the volatile economy, they shouldn't miss an opportunity to reclaim up to 100 per cent VAT paid (which is about 25 per cent of their total expenditure) on their international travel.

VAT to do

- Collect all original invoices
- Do quality check & compliance
- Fill claim forms & complete documentation
- Submit to tax authority
- Transfer the reclaim VAT in your bank

Heartfelt gratitude to trade partners

SriLankan Airlines held its annual Agents Awards Night on September 30, 2016, at St. Regis Hotel, Mumbai, to commemorate its travel agent partners in India for their support.





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GST: Much-awaited game changer

The Goods and Services Tax, in terms of a new regime, will come with teething problems but it will be an important step towards simplifying the multi-layered tax structure in the tourism and hospitality sectors, say India Travel Award winners.



► Kashish Holidays — Best Customised Tour Operator

Travel no more a luxury

According to **Ravi H. Malpani**, Managing Director, Kashish Holidays, GST will be the single biggest game changer in tourism. He feels that tourism is overtaxed and the industry is paying high double-digit taxes at various levels. "If the government wants tourism to be a high driver of growth, then tourism and travel cannot be perceived as luxury anymore. Unlike the time of service tax introduction, we hope there will be clarity in understanding the GST bill from both the travel trade and the consumer's point of view as they may have to pay more for travel in a short term when GST is implemented, but in the long run they will benefit following removal of duplication of tax incidences on hotels and airlines," he says. Kashish Holidays is under the process of sharing new franchise module in different zones in Surat and the same would be initiated in early 2017. He adds, "We are keen on starting franchise as a customised travel agency unlike the group tours companies in different zones of Gujarat over next the three years."



► NexTourism — Best Business Travel Agency, Best Destination Management Company

Simplify tax structures

Saurabh S. Sanghavi, Director, NexTourism, feels that introduction of GST will be healthy for all industries including the tourism and hospitality sector. He says, "Uniformity in taxes is essential. Though GST may increase the burden on the industry by a small percentage it will be instrumental in reducing the complications of the tax structure in India in a big way." The company has extended its operations in the Gulf (Dubai). Sanghavi adds, "We no longer believe in vendor management. By the end of 2017, we are expected to have our own branches at Bangkok, Singapore and in the European market." He points out that the upward graph of the performance of the tourism industry is testimony to the growth of the industry. "Travelers are now exploring new places with luxury on mind. Budget is no more a barrier for the Indian travellers. The average spending ratio of every family on travel and hospitality has already taken a leap and this trend will only continue," says Sanghavi.



► Mahindra & Mahindra — Best Integrated Travel Practice

Make GST a fair game

Vijay Nair, Vice President-Employee Relations and Administration, Mahindra & Mahindra, feels that GST is going to be an interesting game changer and a potential source of cost savings for corporates. "It needs to be seen how would GST be implemented to various divisions across industries like high taxes on rooms and food would definitely bring reduction in spend. We need to see how it would get drilled to liquor consumption during banquet events. However, it could also work as a dampener in terms of taxes on air tickets in case it is levied at the existing structure," says Nair. He points out that the government has to make GST a fair game which would turn out to be a win-win situation for all.



► SilkAir — Best Airline International

Enhance investor's confidence

Jagdish Ram Bhojwani, General Manager-India, SilkAir, lauds the Government's efforts to have a unified and streamlined tax regime. "The draft bill is still at a nascent stage and its impact on the industry will be clearer, closer to its implementation in 2017. However, this bill is expected to enhance the confidence amongst international investors and facilitate the growth of the Indian economy," he says. SilkAir has recently launched an all-time favorites menu, offering Business Class customers a specially-curated selection of meals to choose from when travelling on flights leaving from Singapore that are three hours and above. The airline has also launched a new mobile app which offers travellers greater travel convenience from booking to boarding. "Designed to be fast and intuitive, the mobile app aims to provide users with a functional and seamless user experience. Key features of the mobile app include flight booking, exclusive fares and itinerary management," informs Bhojwani.



► Xtreme Destinations — Best Adventure Tour Operator

Organise the unorganised travel sector

Hemant Shah, Director, Xtreme Destinations, says, "GST would bring about teething problems for the travel and tourism industry as it is not very organised. Many small travel and tour operators may initially find it difficult to do business as earlier no tax was levied by them as most transactions were done in cash only. GST would help organise that. I would only request the government that the GST tax rate should be not more than two per cent as this would help the industry grow faster and also reduce cash transactions." Xtreme Destinations saw a good growth over the last 2-3 years and the company has striven to add newer and more interesting products for their clients. "We have managed to pitch our favourite holiday destination – New Zealand – in a very different manner to our clients. Every year we find newer and better adventures spots in New Zealand and we are able to convert almost 97-98 per cent of the enquiries into confirmed Xtreme Departures. We have also ventured into group tours and our first group tour – Xtreme Adventures is coming up in May 2017 which would be a specialised adventure travel-only tour.



► Hyatt Place Goa, Candolim — Best Debut Hotel

Reform multiple tax structures

Sanjay Patti, General Manager, Hyatt Place Goa/Candolim, says, "The travel, tourism and hospitality industry has a multiple tax structure currently but with the implementation of GST there might be a possibility of a single tax structure uniform to all. This I believe would have to go through many folds though." He further explains that the hospitality and tourism in India and especially in Goa is ever booming and has been one of the key drivers of growth in the service sector. "In the last year itself we have seen so many new hotels open in North and South Goa. The biggest achievement in my opinion is the new dimensions that tourism brings in terms of economics, employment and overall benefits," adds Patti.



Sabre's travel technology exchange

Sabre recently hosted nearly 550 travel agents, airline and supplier representatives and members of the APAC travel industry in Beijing, China. Organising their first-ever Travel Technology Exchange for the APAC region, they helped facilitate discussions about breakthrough technologies making waves at the intersection of travel and technology. Sabre also revealed its newest product, the Red workspace.



Bishkek rolls out red carpet for trade

A Bishkek-based LCC, Air Manas along with the Indian Embassy in Kyrgyzstan, hosted tourism stakeholders from India for an Incredible India evening in Bishkek on Oct 7. The event showcased India's tourism offerings and gave an opportunity to travel trade from both the countries to interact over cocktails and dinner.



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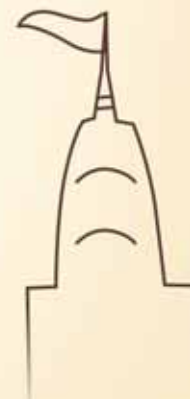
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Rajasthan scores home run at IITIS

Rajasthan signed a total of 56 MoUs worth `922 crore during the recently-concluded Incredible India Tourism Investors' Summit in New Delhi. MICE, heritage and adventure tourism score high in the list.



TT BUREAU

Exuding confidence on the success rate of the signed MoUs, **Ashutosh A.T. Pednekar**, Director-Tourism & Managing Director, Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation, said, "The best thing is that these are all firm MoUs, which means that land is available for all these projects. Thus, success rate of all these MoUs is going to be extremely high. We had presented around 103 investible projects, worth around `3,000 crore, for which we have invited investment. We have actually seen a great response in the field of MICE, heritage and adventure tourism."

Rajasthan is blessed with plenty heritage tourism products, which are a good investment catch. Pednekar, said, "The USP of Rajasthan is heritage, and we have put up a number of heritage properties for investment. Apart from that we have identified very important land sites for MICE tourism as well as adventure tourism. There are also upcoming destinations like Sambhar Lake, where we have a

massive land parcel available, which we are now going to develop in a focused manner."

Pednekar revealed that the Central Government has given funds to Rajasthan Government for investment in the long pending Sambhar Lake project. "We have already started spending money in that area. We are already developing rail track, temples, lake facilities, cycle track, camp sites,

light & sound show, and laser show. Now we are thinking of doing fairs and activities on a routine basis, since Sambhar has a very strategic location, being situated between Ajmer and Jaipur. There is a huge scope for niche areas like weddings, medical and wellness tourism," he added.

Homestays is another area on which the Rajasthan Government is laying empha-

sis. "We are already in touch with the aggregators in this sector. We can work innovatively with them and ensure that our hotel capacity is utilised properly, gets augmented and is available online as well. For medical tourism, we have created some projects around Jaipur, Pushkar, and Ajmer. In Shekhawati area, one private player is coming up with a project centred only around wellness," Singh says.

She revealed that they work with a number of B2B partners and are trying to widen their network as well. Pednekar added, "We'd want a good trajectory of growth, both in terms of domestic tourist arrivals and foreign tourist arrivals. Also we'd like the average tourist spend in the state to increase, and that would happen if the average tourist stay in Rajasthan would increase in terms of duration."



Ashutosh A.T. Pednekar
Director-Tourism & Managing Director,
Rajasthan Tourism Development
Corporation

We had presented around 103 investible projects, worth around `3,000 crore. We have actually seen a great response in the field of MICE, heritage and adventure tourism

Rajasthan Tourism has also extended full support to the private sector for investing in the state. **Roli Singh**, Secretary-Tourism, Government of Rajasthan, said, "We have the Rajasthan Investment Promotion Scheme, and we have also upgraded our tourism policy with a very specific tourism unit policy that offers a wide range of definition of tourism units, right from spa, resort, boutique hotel, heritage hotel, convention centres, adventure sport, eco sport, eco tourism, and everything related to tourism. So under that definition, we have the incentives which we are showcasing to the investors, including relaxations, so that land conversions take place in time; no duties for change in land laws and a number of waivers."

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Lemon Tree opens new hotels in Goa and MP

■ Lemon Tree Hotels has announced the opening of two new hotels – the Lemon Tree Hotel, Candolim in Goa and the Lemon Tree Wildlife Resort, Bandhavgarh in Madhya Pradesh.

The Lemon Tree Hotel Candolim is the group's second property in Goa. The hotel offers 34 rooms, with base category rooms measuring around 27 square meters. It also features an all-day dining restaurant, a terrace-top bar, a rooftop swimming pool and a conference room of approximately 800 square feet.

The Lemon Tree Wildlife Resort, Bandhavgarh is located in close proximity to Tala Gate, the most tiger inhabited zone of the Bandhavgarh National Park, and marks the group's entry into the wildlife resort segment. Spread over five acres, the hotel features 11 cottages measuring approximately 34 square meters, an all-day dining restaurant, a swimming pool and a 480-square-foot conference hall.

Thomas Cook focuses on agent training

Having partnered with many an NTO, Thomas Cook India's Centre of Learning will now look at getting more states onboard after its successful stint with Madhya Pradesh Tourism recently, to create training modules as well as to conduct them.



HAZEL JAIN

The Centre of Learning's (COL) 'Train the Travel Agent' programs are developed on behalf of several tourism boards and delivered to the travel fraternity across India. According to **Smeeta Gulvady**, Vice President & Head (Centre of Learning), TCI, the centre has thus far trained travel agents on behalf of Switzerland Tourism, Tourism Authority of Thailand, National Israel Tourism Office in India, Canada Tourism Commission, Czech Tourist Authority, Egypt Tourism Office, and Vienna Tourist Board.

"In fact, we are partnering with Switzerland Tourism for the fourth year in a row now. Similar trainings will be launched shortly for other tourism boards and service providers. While we have a few collaborations in the pipeline, we cannot divulge the information as of now," she adds.



"We have been awarded training in 20 cities across India for MP Tourism and the timing of the training has been kept in accordance with festive seasons like Diwali, Dusshera, and Christmas."

Smeeta Gulvady

Vice President & Head (Centre of Learning), TCI

The COL had also recently tied up with Madhya Pradesh Tourism which was its first ever tie up with any state tourism board. "Earlier all the tie-ups we had done were with international tourism boards. We have been awarded training in 20 cities across India for MP Tourism and the timing of the training has been kept in accordance with festive seasons like Diwali, Dusshera, and Christmas," Gulvady says. The centre completed training in 10 cities with more than 300

agents and is looking forward to more such trainings. Its focus was on products – from its UNESCO World Heritage Sites, national parks, sanctuaries to other natural attractions besides the village circuits.

She adds, "The aim of this initiative was to make people think of Madhya Pradesh when they think of a holiday. New agents can also get enrolled for the training programs. It is encouraging to see the government

making efforts to harness the tourism potential in the country. However, it is imperative to create an awareness programs. Trainings at our centre are focused and interactive where we educate agents and tour operators on diversified products available within the destination." The COL has also tied up with Tourism Authority of Thailand. It has completed the first phase with six cities and is now working on launching the second phase of the training.

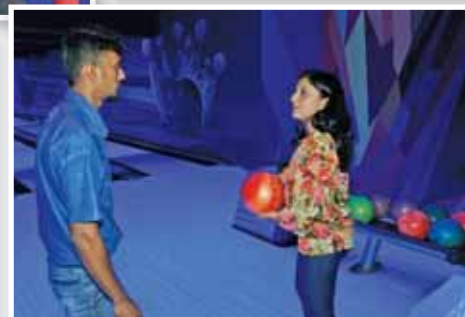
Leena Karkera, former Resident Manager in Mumbai, Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation (MPTDC), who had spearheaded the training with COL said, "Thomas Cook's COL travelled to all 20 cities we had identified to train the agents. We also took them on a familiarisation after the training to show our properties." Since then, Ashok Arora has taken over as MPTDC's Resident Manager in Mumbai.

Curriculum

- ← Thomas Cook's Centre of Learning has recently tied up with Madhya Pradesh Tourism
- ← Under the tie-up, COL will hold training sessions for MP Tourism in 20 cities across India
- ← The training will focus on products from its UNESCO World Heritage Sites, national parks & sanctuaries

Fiji says a big thank you to agents

Fiji-based specialist Destination Management Company, Tour Managers, held a networking night to appreciate the support extended by the travel trade in Mumbai, New Delhi and Kolkata. The Fijian company is represented in India by IrisReps.





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Korean enters new markets

To apprise the trade of new Delhi-Seoul flight, and destination Korea, Acumen Overseas, Korean Air's GSA in India, organised a networking event in Delhi.



Korean Air's newly launched five times a week flight from Delhi to Seoul would certainly boost the traffic between the two destinations. **Prithviraj Singh Chug**, Director, Acumen Overseas, GSA of Korean Air in India, said, "Korea has long been a corporate travel market, but we are focusing on Korea as a new holiday destination and also promoting both Korea and Japan together. We are giving connectivity to 11 cities in Japan and also trans-pacific destinations, where we have excellent connections."

The new flight is going to start in December, reveals **Choong Hee Lee**, Regional GM, Korean Air. "The Indian market is growing, but it isn't the case with Korea, where it's been steady for years. We are sharing the load with other airlines. Thus, we need to prepare for more service compared to other airlines," he added.

Pukhraj Singh Chug, Managing Director, Acumen

Overseas, also claimed that there is a lack of knowledge in the market about Korea as a destination, and that would be the main focus for them as well. "This flight, which will fly five times a week, is



Prithviraj Singh Chug
Director, Acumen Overseas
GSA of Korean Air in India

boosts connectivity to West Coast and Australia. Korean Air network is very large, and with the Mumbai flights being in operation already, we can do a lot of tailor-made products."



Choong Hee Lee
Regional General Manager
Korean Air

also going to help Koreans to come to India. It would bring a lot of possibilities to earn foreign exchange for Indian companies or businessmen. Secondly, this connection, the way it has been worked upon, offers immense opportunities for Indian travellers overseas. The new flight also

Prithviraj Chug added, "We are giving very good in-flight services and flat beds for Business Class. We are talking to big travel partners and we are convincing the end customer to actually shift its focus from Europe or Middle East, and actually try new destinations like Korea and Japan."

Delhi-Vancouver on Air Canada

Air Canada's inaugural flight from Vancouver arrived in Delhi on October 22, 2016 with a huge delegation of government officials and corporate executives.



Speaking after the landing of this flight, **Kevin Howett**, Senior Vice President, Regional Markets and Government Relations, Air Canada, said that they are very excited about the service as well as about the Indian market. "There is a lot of excitement around the new flight, with respect to the opportunities associated with the new route between Canada and India. There are a lot of opportunities for investment between both countries. This flight is step two in our three-pronged strategy that we have with respect to the Indian market for Air Canada. Last year, we introduced our services between Toronto and Delhi and now we are moving it to a daily service from November 6, 2016. On July 1, 2017, we will start our service from Toronto to Mumbai. Needless to say, we are quite optimistic about the Indian market," he added.

A lot of VFR traffic travels between India and Canada for a long time, but Air



Kevin Howett
Senior Vice President, Regional
Markets and Government Relations,
Air Canada



Margaret Skinner
Director, Sales
EMEA
Air Canada

Canada started with direct flights to India only recently. **Margaret Skinner**, Director, Sales – EMEA, Air Canada, said that they have been planning to come to India for a long time. "India has been on Air Canada's plan for quite some time. With the economy opening between both the countries, and also with our new Dreamliner 787 aircraft, it makes sense to start the connections. It's the right aircraft on the right route and hence one can see us expanding to this market. We are very pleased with

the results so far, and we are hoping for some more success here. We've had fantastic support from the travel trade as well and they seem to love our service."

Howett added, "The Dreamliner 787-900 has been designed for long haul missions like that. It has an incredible set of economics. Also, our airplane offers 3-cabin configuration — Business, Premium Economy and Economy, which covers the requirements of all kinds of travellers."



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SA Tourism bullish on India

Hanneli Slabber, Country Manager - India, South African Tourism, feels that India's growth as one of the fastest-growing outbound markets in the world warrants heavy investment.



What is your strategy for the coming year for India?

Over the years India has emerged as one of the fastest-growing outbound tourism market. According to our arrivals statistics of August 2016, India is the eighth long-haul tourism source market for South Africa. Keeping this in mind, we are investing heavily in this market and constantly adapting to the changing consumer interests and customising our offerings.

We will continue to focus on deepening our engagements with our trade partners by introducing innovative ideas to promote the



Hanneli Slabber
Country Manager - India
South African Tourism

We are currently running the 'Fastest 50' Campaign for our trade partners which will culminate with 20 of them winning an all-expense paid trip to South Africa in February 2017

destination and help them get a better understanding of the 60,000-plus registered products for Indian travellers.

Can you share details of the activities that you have planned for the travel trade for 2016-17?

Earlier this year, we announced the launch of 'Chalo South Africa', a portal designed for our Indian travel partners to feature their best packages at no additional cost. We are currently running the 'Fastest 50' Campaign for our trade partners which will culminate with 20 of them winning an all-expense paid trip to South Af-

rica in February 2017. Apart from that, our annual roadshow will be held in January 2017 where all our trade partners will get a chance to interact with South African service providers.

Any specific cities that have performed well?

India's major metros have been driving significant

amount of tourist traffic to South Africa. What is however extremely encouraging to observe is the upward rise in numbers from Tier II and Tier III cities. Also, while leisure travel has traditionally been a trend centric to South and West India, we have seen this gaining popularity quite rapidly in the northern region as well.

SA Sojourn

- South Africa Tourism annual roadshow will be held in January 2017
- The 'Fastest 50' Campaign for SA Tourism trade partners will culminate with 20 of them winning an all-expense paid trip to South Africa in February 2017
- India is the eighth long-haul tourism source market for South Africa

JW Marriott opens 1st hotel in Kolkata

JW Marriott Hotels & Resorts continues to expand its luxury portfolio with the opening of its eighth hotel in India, JW Marriott Hotel Kolkata. This is Marriott International's first hotel in Kolkata and East India and is located in the heart of the city, minutes from the old central business district. Comprising of 281 rooms, JW Marriott Hotel Kolkata, boasts the largest ballroom in the city and features a unique bridal room, offering brides an exclusive, private space available for pre-wedding preparations. In addition

to 38,370 square feet of indoor and outdoor event spaces measuring, the hotel offers five intimate studios for meetings, each one equipped with cutting-edge facilities. The hotel is also home to India's largest in-built video wall measuring 32 feet x 18 feet and comprising 64 LED panels. "The opening of the first JW Marriott hotel in Kolkata marks a great milestone for Marriott International. It was a matter of time before we presented one of our luxury brands - JW Marriott - to the city of Kolkata.

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670+ delegates throng Abu Dhabi

Over 670 delegates attended the 63rd TAAI Convention held in Abu Dhabi from October 14-16. The event focused on strategies for the future and the way forward to not just survive the changing times but to perform and thrive in business.



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Planning for future, breaking the routine



Disinvestment only a policy decision: ITDC

India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) completed 50 years and is focused on diversifying into different avenues while putting disinvestment woes behind.



NISHA VERMA

The corporation celebrated its Golden Jubilee during a grand event at its flagship hotel The Ashok, New Delhi. Present at the glittering ceremony were dignitaries from the travel and tourism industry, government officials and ITDC staff members. Speaking at the event, **Vinod Zutshi**, Secretary, Tourism, Government of India, said, "ITDC has had a glorious past, and the way things are going, I wish it'd have a more glorious future. When ITDC was set up in 1966, there was little infrastructure about hotels, and



fied into travel and tours and event management as well. It is one of the two pillars of the travel and tour arrangement regime of the government

of this moment and as ITDC is an extended family of the tourism ministry, we are celebrating this occasion."

Umang Narula, Chairman & Managing Director, ITDC, said that they had started the Golden Jubilee celebrations last year. "We had a small internal function last year and throughout this year, we have been doing some activities related with the celebration. We are offering various kinds of discounts, incentives to customers and stakeholders, and this celebration is a good oc-

casion to meet our industry friends, partners and clients, who have supported us for the last 50 years."

He also insisted that ITDC has been recording profits for the last couple of years. "We've been doing pretty well for the last three years. We've been giving dividends to the government. Last year, we had a profit of roughly ₹33 crore and over the last 50 years, we have given dividends over ₹130 crore. Even this year, our first quarter results have been really good and we are expect-

ing to do well during the latter part of the year as well."

However, there have been talks of ITDC's disinvestment. Zutshi clarified, "I have seen ITDC's performance this year, and from April till August this year, we have done ₹19 cores of net profit, as compared to four crores in the corresponding period last year. Disinvestment is only a policy decision of sharing the units by leasing or giving it to other stakeholders. However, it is not going to affect the morale if ITDC staff, as we are going to diversify into other

areas, and in that regard, only sky is the limit for ITDC."

Narula added, "The disinvestment is going on and it's not happening for the first time for ITDC. We have gone through one phase and we have come out of that much stronger. We have made all the disclosures to the stock exchanges. I would not like to focus on it too much because there are so many opportunities, as we have built up our strength in many other verticals. There are some areas we are doing very well and we will focus on them, including tours and travels, events, and hospitality education. We are also looking at many other areas and grow in those fields as well."

He added that ITDC is trying to grow The Ashok Travels and Tours division and venture into new areas. "We have launched a new set of tour packages recently and are also updating our portal. We are also trying to get into the logistics and cargo business," he revealed.

India is going to be a partner country at WTM, and ITDC will be part of the MOT delegation. We have many products to showcase there and we will be doing B2B meetings to get more business for the company.

Umang Narula
Chairman & Managing Director, ITDC

today not only it is an icon in hospitality, it has diversi-

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Sharjah on a roadshow drive

Sharjah Tourism successfully concluded its 4-city roadshow in Mumbai, Delhi, Chandigarh and Bengaluru. Sharjah considers India as a potential market. Both the countries share a great cultural history. For Sharjah the main trade has always been India for the past 500 years. With partners like AirArabia beside them, the nation is hopeful to attract more tourists from India.



Travel agents let their hair down



Experiential travellers on the rise

The Globus family of brands' budget friendly division Cosmos plans to add offbeat destinations like Vietnam, Mexico and Cuba, among others to its list.



The Globus family of brands has been providing travel services for decades, understanding and growing as per the needs of the evolving traveller. The group has four different categories to suit the requirement of every type of tourist – a luxurious Globus journey, budget-friendly Cosmos vacation, Monograms travel package for independent travellers and the all-inclusive Avalon Waterways river cruise.

Speaking about its budget travel wing, **Varesh Chopra**, Regional Director for South Asia and the Middle East, explains, "Cosmos targets experiential vacations to adventurous clients who love to learn and delve into new



Varesh Chopra
Regional Director, South Asia and the Middle East, Globus family of brands

cultures and unique destinations. They represent a new breed of savvy travel enthusiasts who appreciate more immersive experiences in the company of fellow international travellers," he informs. Cosmos' 2017 list additionally includes new destinations like Vietnam, China, Japan, Mexico and Cuba, unique destinations that have been overlooked for many years.

The group boasts a high repeat clientele factor. "A majority of our guests are repeat customers – around 60 per cent keep coming back to their favourite way of travelling," he says. In return, repeat travellers also get very attractive loyalty discounts which adds up to help agents and sellers effectively retain clientele, whilst ensuring they have a superlative experience.

For the coming year, the Globus family of brands will continue to focus on value. "Our choice of itineraries, destinations, travel styles, the length of stay, travel

dates and prices is unmatched and we will continue to focus on providing value to our travellers and that would mean the best experience at the least cost possible," adds Chopra.

Aitken Spence appoints Nijhawan Group as India representative

Aitken Spence Travels, a leading DMC in Sri Lanka, has appointed the Nijhawan Group as its Indian representative with an aim to increase their engagement in the Indian market.

Announcing the partnership with Aitken Spence Travels, **Ankush Nijhawan**, Managing Director, Nijhawan Group, says, "Nijhawan Group has been the representing partner for Aitken Spence Hotels, Sri Lanka since 2013 and this initiative has been taken in order to further strengthen this collaboration in India and to maximise the numbers from India to Sri Lanka

through Aitken Spence Travels."

Suranga Ratnayake, Assistant Vice President, Aitken Spence Travels, says, "With an estimated annual inbound volume of 130,000 tourists, Aitken Spence Travels is backed by a reputation of being the most professional in the business. The company is fully diversified into every aspect of tourism related activities namely; leisure, eco, adventure, MICE, shore excursions for cruise liners and luxury tours." Ratnayake further informed that Aitken Spence Travels is the only destination management company (DMC) to be accredited with



Ankush Nijhawan
Managing Director
Nijhawan Group



Suranga Ratnayake
Assistant Vice President
Aitken Spence Travels

the ISO 9001:2008 certification and its operations conform to 14001:2004 environmental standards in compliance with Carbon Neutral status. "Aitken Spence Travels's unique

travel excursions are made with friendly service equipped with tourist board approved chauffeur guides who operate a large fleet of luxury vehicles in the country," says Ratnayake.

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Trade throngs Madhya Pradesh mart

Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation successfully concluded the 3rd edition of Madhya Pradesh Travel Mart, from Oct 14-16, at Hotel Lake View in Bhopal. About 70 international buyers from 28 countries, 135 domestic buyers and 45 sellers were part of the 3-day exhibition.



Adventure travel at sea

Hurtigruten, the Norwegian exploration cruise line, plans to add two new hybrid powered expedition ships, due to be delivered in 2018 and 2019, which is expected to revolutionise adventure travel at sea.



TT BUREAU

The new ships are expected to be the first expeditionary ships sailing fully electric with sustainable hybrid technology. "We are combining Hurtigruten's more than 120 years of know-how with cutting-edge technology and design, and a strong commitment to sustainability, to offer the modern-day adventure traveller unprecedented experiences," says **Daniel Skjeldam**, Chief Executive Officer, Hurtigruten.

The latest innovative, environmental-friendly technology will allow for a total



Daniel Skjeldam
Chief Executive Officer
Hurtigruten

We are combining Hurtigruten's more than 120 years of knowhow with cutting-edge technology and design

reduction in fuel consumption and hence CO₂-emissions by 20 per cent, informed Skjeldam. The new exploration ships will be named after the two most influential Norwegian polar pioneers – **Roald Amundsen** and **Fridtjof Nansen** – from the era when the company itself first started offering adventure travels, points out Skjeldam

Elaborating on the various facilities that the ships will offer, Skjeldam explains that the new ships are designed by Rolls-Royce, in collaboration with the Norwegian yacht designer Espen Øino. The ships will have large observation platforms on several decks for guests to get up-close to nature and wildlife. Six out of 10 cabins will have their own balcony; two out of 10 will be suites. The vessels will have three

restaurants with menus reflecting local flavours and destinations. A special pool deck will include infinity pools, Jacuzzis and bars. 2018 and 2019 itineraries for Roald Amundsen will be announced in November. The ships can carry 530 guests and has 265 cabins. In the Arctic, Hurtigruten

now offers voyages to Greenland, Iceland, around Spitsbergen and from 2017 to Arctic Canada. In the southern hemisphere, it takes guests to the waters around Antarctica along both coasts of South America and from 2017, will also sail to the Amazon rainforests, added Skjeldam.

1st Chedi in India at Lake Powai in Mumbai

■ General Hotel Management (GHM) has joined hands with Rajesh LifeSpaces, Mumbai-based real estate company, to bring The Chedi brand to the hospitality market in India. **Hans R. Jenni**, Director and President, GHM, expressed his optimism for the project, "We have always wanted to plant a GHM flag in India and being able to establish The Chedi brand in the thriving city of Mumbai is an honour as well as a challenging opportunity my team and I are eager to face."

The Chedi Mumbai is situated in close proximity to the

Powai region, an area where infrastructure developments, connectivity and social ground-work have laid the foundation for the growth of a diverse expatriate community. It is also an increasingly favoured residential precinct among the locals and the burgeoning district is becoming an enclave for the who's who in society.

The strategic location of this iconic hotel is also not far from Bandra Kurla Complex: this ambitious development is set to be an emerging hub for work and leisure outside of South Mumbai and will house a new convention and exhibi-

tion centre, an art auditorium, cultural plaza, residences and offices. These, coupled with the fact that The Chedi Mumbai is close to both the domestic and international airports, and is supported by a comprehensive network of highways and roads, assure travellers of the ease of commuting and road-way connectivity between the northern and southern parts of the city. When viewed from these various perspectives, The Chedi Mumbai is truly a testament to the owner's vision for it to become a destination in and of itself, the epicentre of this metropolitan city.

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Trafalgar showcases products for 2017

Trafalgar successfully completed its 2017 V.I.P Consumer Product Launch in four major cities of Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata and Pune. Guests who have travelled with Trafalgar were invited for these events in which all products for 2017 were showcased along with exclusive deals to celebrate the 70th year anniversary. Guests had a great time with cocktail, dinner and a live band to entertain them.



Insuring success

TrawellTag Cover-More's strategy now is to be a step ahead and equip itself to better serve its customers and travel agents through partnerships, customisation and cutting-edge, technology-driven tools.



The focus this year for TrawellTag Cover-More will be on e-commerce, data analytics, technology and education by experience which it believes are inter-related. It recently partnered with competitive online travel engines and airlines to deliver customised travel protection for their customers that is backed by real-time data analysis, thus enhancing their travel offering and also providing them a model for optimising revenue.

Dev Karvat, Managing Director, TrawellTag Cover-More, adds, "Foraying into the e-commerce and data analytics space will be just one aspect of our future of-



Dev Karvat
Managing Director
TrawellTag Cover-More

ferings. Our primary focus has always been and will be to enable the travel agents to adapt to new business models and capitalise on travel ancillary services in order to evolve their revenue models. We also constantly strive to innovate our products based on their feedback."

To increase awareness about travel insurance and the protection it provides, TrawellTag Cover-More is implementing several initiatives with its partners. Karvat reveals, "We provide marketing support to our trade partners, particularly travel agents, so that they can talk to their customers about why travel ancillary services are important. One of our biggest initiatives is our 'Travel Agent's Engagement Programme', which reaches out to travel agents across India to enhance their knowledge of travel insurance and enable them to up-sell." The company has successfully completed this programme in 12 cities across India and it is looking to roll it out in 20 more cities in 2017.

Explaining how this programme has shown positive

results, he adds that travel agents are gradually realising that providing their customers with the right protection ultimately enhances their service standard. Also, offering personalised travel solutions with unique benefits are mandatory and no longer a frill benefit for vacationers. "Until a few years ago, less than 20 per cent of outbound travel-

lers from India would buy travel insurance, but in recent times there has been a shift in people's attitude towards buying travel insurance. Several insurance companies and ancillary service providers are now investing in educating people on the importance of being protected while travelling," Karvat adds.

Hahn Air awards top agents across Kolkata



Across travel agencies in Kolkata, Western Bengal, Hahn Air recently distributed awards and certificates to its top performing agencies for the year 2015. The top agency was Riya Travel & Tours, while Akbar Travels of India came in second and Globe Forex & Travels came in third. Sanjay Shrivastava, Hahn Air's Director Global Account Management for Northern and Eastern India presented the awards and certificates.

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Italian bonanza for travel trade

The 53rd edition of TTG Incontri was held in Rimini, Italy from October 13-15, 2016 and was attended by over 70,000 travel trade professionals. This is the biggest B2B travel trade fair in Italy and is amongst the top 5 in Europe.



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Upbeat on domestic market

For **A. Arif**, Director, Parveen Travels, the domestic market has huge potential and they are ready to serve that market with their transport inventory & PPP model.



Parveen Travels has opened its new office in Dubai as a Destination Management Company, and is on an expansion spree in India. Not only are they roping in newer vehicles in their convoy, but also ready to work with the government under PPP model for hop-on hop-off buses in Chennai.

"While everybody is talking of bringing hop-on hop-off buses in South India, we had first brought this concept in 2005. Unfortunately, we were not able to do it due to many restrictions, and at last the government had taken it up and did initially well. However, later they had to shut down those operations. Today, if the government is open to a PPP model, I am willing to support the government as a private stakeholder, and would like to run the hop-on hop-off operations in Chennai," said A. Arif.

Arif claims that they have brought in new kinds of luxury vehicles, and in South India,



A. Arif
Director, Parveen Travels,
India Travel Award winner

Today, if the government is open to a PPP model, I am willing to support the government as a private stakeholder, and would like to run the hop-on hop-off operations in Chennai

no other company has such an inventory available. "We have an inventory of more than 1200 vehicles, which are for different segments like inbound, outbound, staff, cargo and logistics, or point to point operations. We are the only company in South India which can provide all tourism related needs, right from inbound, outbound, domestic or transport. We have launched a new office in Dubai. It will be a DMC and would be an extension of our business in the Middle East," he said.

While focusing on inbound is a good thing, people forget that there is a much bigger market available, which is the domestic market, he added. "India is not a poor country. People have a lot of money, especially in South India. There are those who travel a lot and spend a lot and they need tours, as not everyone has seen the entire India. In fact people living in Chennai have not seen the entire Tamil Nadu, and that's where one should focus on," he said.

Top of the corporate ladder

The Suryaa, New Delhi, is focusing on the corporate sector to position itself as one of the leading corporate hotels in the city.



The Suryaa, New Delhi, is creating its own niche in the capital, as new properties in the city are mushrooming every day. "We are focusing on operations, excellence, controlling the wastage and expenses. We are concentrating on the corporate market, and focusing on such accounts. Our team is working very hard to get more corporate business, and we have been able to crack about 137 new accounts, which is a good achievement for us. In addition, travel trade has been a great support as well," said **Dhananjay Kumar**, General Manager, The Suryaa, New Delhi.

However, the competition in Delhi is only increasing. Kumar added, "The hotel is very well-positioned. The location is just right. We are very close to the city centre, monuments, as well as the corporate hubs, all of which is within 5-10 kms of radius. We are the first hotel to be considered whenever there is an expo happening



Dhananjay Kumar
General Manager, The Suryaa, New Delhi,
India Travel Award winner

We are the first hotel to be considered when there is an expo in Greater Noida. The brand is very well established

in Greater Noida as well. The Suryaa brand is very well established in the city."

They try and promote the hotel in many ways, and one of the biggest strengths of the

property is the F&B options there. "For food and beverage, we try to tap the local clientele. We are in the posh location of New Friends Colony and Maharani Bagh, with about 10,000 people residing close by. Apart from F&B we try to get them to stay with us for weekends at very attractive prices. This works very well for us, because being a corporate hotel, on Saturday and Sunday the occupancy goes down."

Claiming that the success of the property is because of their team, Kumar insisted that training of staff is of utmost importance, and a great responsibility is there on the employer's shoulders to get the right talent. "There are a number of hospitality colleges in India, which are coming up at every nook and corner. We shouldn't just depend on colleges, because they produce volumes, and do not ensure quality. Our hiring philosophy is that people learn basics in the college; we hire them for attitude; and train them for skills. If they have the right attitude, one can mould them the way they want."

IATA seeks subsidised rate of GST on flights

■ Global airlines' body IATA has sought an abated rate of GST on flight tickets, saying the tax burden on the aviation sector was already high and the GST regime should conform to global standards and principles. Maintaining that the International Air Transport Association (IATA) has been 'working closely' with the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Secretariat here to address some issues of concern to airlines, Director General of IATA, **Alexandre de Juniac** said, "The GST regime needs to adhere to international standards and principles. We have called for a zero-rating for international flights when the GST comes into effect next April. This seems unlikely. To limit its damage to the sector's competitiveness, we would at least hope for abatement in the rate."

He said the airlines in India faced "an onerous tax burden, including the imposition of service tax to services rendered abroad, including those for over-flight charges, global distribution systems and international tickets." This, he said, was "in contravention of international principles established by governments" through the UN body International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).

Raising a toast to camaraderie



Travel Designer Group hosted a networking event in Hot Mess, New Delhi, in appreciation of the never-ending support from their travel partners. The evening also provided a platform for feedback from the local travel trade and to explore possible mutual business opportunities.

OBITUARY

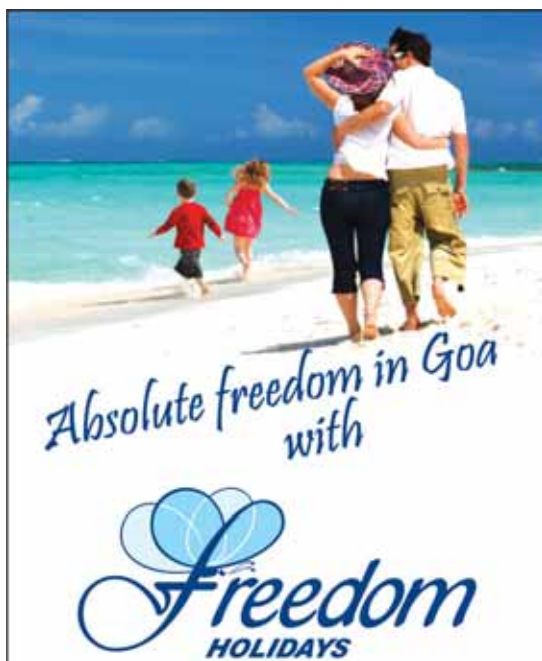
Sylvester Thomas



Managing Director
Around the World Travel and Tours

Sylvester Thomas, Managing Director, Around the World Travel and Tours, passed away on October 10. Widely known as the father of Christian Missionary Travel, 78-year-old Thomas had been ill since July 2016. Thomas also served as Vice President of Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) from 2004-05. He is survived by his daughter and son. TAAI has extended its deepest condolences and heartfelt sympathies to Thomas' family, his loved ones and colleagues. "After being the Chairman of TAAI Southern Region, he rose to become the member of the Management Committee and he was an automatic choice to become the Vice President of TAAI. His in-depth knowledge of the trade and his mastery of the articles and memorandum of the association helped him to guide TAAI in several amendments that were made effective from time to time. His role in bringing about the agents insurance scheme that has benefitted all the members across the country cannot be forgotten. He has groomed many of the members and was always ready and willing to extend any help to clarify matters involving the airlines or rules of IATA," said Hema R.V. Chander, Chairperson-Southern Region, TAAI.







Members of Southern Region, TAAI, met on October 25, 2016 at Chennai to pay respects to the departed soul of Thomas.











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EVENT TALK

NOVEMBER 2016

Rann Utsav	Bhuj	1
5th Global Summit on City Tourism	Luxor, Egypt	1-2
Luxury Travel Fair	London	3-5
Taipei International Travel Fair	Taipei City	4-6
WTM	London	7-9
CITM	Shanghai	11-13
Phocuswright Conference	Los Angeles	14-17
Asia Corporate Travel Innovation Summit	Singapore	15
CII Health & Wellness Tourism – Visit Kerala Thiruvananthapuram		15
Switzerland Tourism trade show	Mumbai	16
TTR Romanian Tourism Fair II	Bucharest, Romania	17-20
Switzerland Tourism trade show	Bengaluru	18
Best of Australia workshop	Ludhiana	18
PHD Aero Expo	New Delhi	18-19
Best of Australia workshop	Lucknow	20
Switzerland Tourism trade show	Hyderabad	21
Global Eco Asia-Pacific Tourism Conference 2016	Australia	21-23
Switzerland Tourism trade show	Kolkata	22
Switzerland Tourism trade show	New Delhi	23
Spanish Experience (MICE)	New Delhi	25
PATA New Tourism Frontiers Forum 2016	Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh	23-25
India International Travel Mart (IITM)	Pune	25-27
Germany Tourism roadshow	Mumbai	28
Germany Tourism roadshow	Chennai	29
Germany Tourism roadshow	Kolkata	30

DECEMBER 2016

Travel Turkey Izmir Tourism Fair & Conference	Izmir, Turkey	1-4
Chengdu International Tourism Expo (CITE)	Chengdu, China	2-4
India International Travel Mart (IITM)	Hyderabad	2-4
ITLM	Cannes	5-8
Brussels Travel Expo	Brussels	7-8
Travel Business Show	Delhi NCR	17
Travel Experiential Show	Delhi NCR	18

JANUARY 2017

FITUR	Madrid	18-22
Global Panorama Showcase	Nagpur	19-21

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

ASSOCIATION TALK

Celebrating 50 years of UFTAA

The newly appointed CEO of UFTAA, **Ramesh Marwah**, plans to work towards retaining confidence of travel agency associations in UFTAA and also make it a one-stop platform for knowledge sharing and networking.



TT BUREAU

Marwah aims to better administer UFTAA and offer regular support to its members. "I am very excited and proud to be a part of UFTAA – the illustrious global federation which is also celebrating its golden jubilee this year. Every initiative will be in the direction of retaining confidence of travel agency associations in UFTAA; making UFTAA a global platform for knowledge, learning and networking and also maintaining free flow of communication to ensure UFTAA remains first point of contact when any issue props up in any part of the industry worldwide."



Ramesh Marwah
CEO, UFTAA

UFTAA is celebrating its Golden Jubilee Congress in Istanbul from November 25-26 and it is expected to attract the largest participation from the tourism and

hospitality industry, informed Marwah. He says, "Turkish Airlines, Turkish Tourism and TÜRSAB (agents' association of Turkey) are extending all possible support to ensure that this Golden Jubilee Congress at Istanbul is a 'not to be missed occasion' which will set unmatched benchmark for all times to come."

Marwah points out that there are many challenges in the travel and tourism industry that hinder smooth functioning and affect the daily livelihood of travel agents. "UFTAA's endeavour has been and will remain to optimise on the combined strengths

of associations, share vast reservoir of knowledge and information on best practices, and offer solutions for day to day problems that affect our members.

Dedicated and continuous efforts towards achievement of all that has been stated above, as also ensuring that 'values and benefits' of being members of UFTAA are visible all around." Marwah feels that it is indeed a good time for non-members to consider being members of UFTAA and participate in the Golden Jubilee Congress at Istanbul and avail free return travel to Istanbul on Turkish Airlines. ↓

Focus on digital marketing

Based in South India, the Association of Tourism Trade Organisations, India (ATTOI), has taken up quite a few initiatives to promote tourism in and out of India.



TT BUREAU

With a major focus on technology, ATTOI has started a few projects to benefit industry stakeholders. One such project is www.mytourreview.com. Speaking on the same, **P. K. Anish Kumar**, President, ATTOI, said, "There was no online reputation management available for the tour operators across the world, while TripAdvisor was meant for hotels. Tour operators lost clients just because there was no benchmarking of tour operators or there was no way to gauge the quality of services by the users. Thus, ATTOI crated this platform, and without any promotion this platform has been emerging as the global network platform for tour operators and travellers.

At present, over 500 tour operators are reviewed by 300 travellers."

ATTOI is also organising the second edition of International Conference on Travel Technology India (ICTT India). Talking about the event, Kumar said, "It's an educational event for tourism stakeholders to beat competition by adapting the latest travel technologies and social media. Leading speakers and experts are coming for the second edition of the ICTT to be held from June 9, 2017."

He feels that despite having a positive image world over, Indian tourism has not got the desired share of foreign tourist arrivals. Listing the reasons behind the same, he said, "It's mainly



P. K. Anish Kumar
President, ATTOI

because we couldn't increase the market size. India gets 70 per cent of the tourist arrivals from less than 15 countries. We need to increase the market size by targeting emerging markets and segment of travellers below 50 years."

He also said that the country is not favoured by

honeymooners despite having some of the best palaces and resorts. "We need to target this segment of people by highlighting the most romantic destinations of Kerala, Karnataka, Goa, Agra, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh," added Kumar.

He insisted that there is a need to focus on digital marketing to promote the products on offer in India. "India has the largest number of social media influencers and we need to use these social celebrities to promote our culture, rich heritage, nature, and diversified tourism products to the new generation travellers. Focused online marketing strategies for non English speaking source markets should be given priority." ↓

TAFI launches new logo for image revitalisation

■ Armed with a new logo, the Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) is keen on renewing its image as an association with vigour which, it hopes, will be emphasised by its increased presence on a new digital platform by 2017.

The Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) is getting a make-over. It recently launched a new logo in New Delhi, doing away with the five-year-old red in exchange for a fresh, trim look. Introducing the new logo to members of the Western India region in Mumbai,



Pradip Lulla
Vice President, TAFI

Pradip Lulla, Vice President, TAFI, said, "We wanted to get a new look and this objective is achieved with the new logo

in blue depicting the sky. Our tagline is 'The Way Forward'. This would be the right way to express our objective for the association. The logo starts with a dark shade of blue slowly fading into a lighter blue that signifies moving from darkness to light. This depicts our aim to empower our members."

Speaking about activities for the coming year, Lulla adds, "We will have symposiums starting next year over and above our annual convention. One of our main objectives is to get on a digital platform

where we can integrate our members. The Managing Committee is working on the details of the digital platform. We have already identified the platform but basic implementation needs to be firmed up. It will be confirmed by early next year."

The symposium, he reveals, will discuss on how to improve on its existing Joint Bank Guarantee program. The convention details will be divulged by March 2017. Lulla adds that TAFI is also looking at new ways of educating its members on how to do business better.




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Sabre

US

Sabre Corporation has appointed **Alfred de Cárdenas** as Chief Commercial Officer of its Travel Network organisation. With more than 28 years of commercial strategy, operations and executive management experience, De Cárdenas will be responsible for leading global sales, sales operations and business development initiatives. De Cárdenas will lead a team of seasoned senior vice-presidents and vice-presidents. Prior to joining Sabre, he was president of global sales and customer service for Syniverse Technologies, a cloud-based/SaaS mobility services company.



Le Royal Meridien Chennai

Chennai

Sumit Kant has been appointed as General Manager, Le Royal Meridien Chennai. He has over 25 years of experience across multiple brands. Before Joining Le Royal Meridien Chennai he was with Sheraton of India at Vashi, Navi Mumbai. He is an Alumni of IHM, Hyderabad and started his career with the Taj Group of Hotels and moved on to work with the Jehan Numa Palace Hotels, Tulips Group and Ritz Hotel before launching the first Four Points by Sheraton. He has a certification on hotel administration from American Hotel and Lodging Association.



Country Inn & Suites By Carlson

Mysore

Vivek Chowdhary has been appointed as Director of Sales & Marketing at Country Inn & Suites By Carlson, Mysore. Chowdhary brings with him over 18 years of expertise in the hospitality industry having started his career in 1998. He is responsible for pioneering sales avenues, delivering greater profits, implementing innovative and creative strategies for marketing, media planning and market research with dynamic approach. He had worked with various brands pan-India, and has studied Hotel Management & Catering Technology from IHM, Meerut.



The Raviz Ashtamudi Resort & Spa Kollam

Kerala

Rakesh Parameswaran has been appointed as General Manager of The Raviz Ashtamudi Resort & Spa Kollam, Kerala. He comes with over 14 years of experience in the hospitality industry having worked with The Residency Group of Hotels, Mahindra Holidays & Resorts India Limited, Le Meridien, Bangalore among other brands. He graduated from the WelcomGroup Graduate School of Hotel Administration. Parameswaran began his career as management trainee with The Leela Palaces & Resorts.



Crowne Plaza Pune City Centre

Pune

Vrushali Kummur has been appointed as Director of Sales and Marketing at Crowne Plaza Pune City Centre. Kummur, already a part of the Crowne Plaza family in Bengaluru has an experience of more than 16 years. In this role, she will be in charge of overseeing business operations supporting the functions of sales, marketing, reservations and revenue and will cover all aspects of marketing including branding, distribution, public relations, social media, sales and talent development.



Experiential Travel Journeys

Delhi

Monika Singh Rawat has joined Experiential Travel Journeys as its Private Travel Designer and Director. She comes with over a decade of experience working mainly in the luxury private travel leisure segment, her last assignment for eight years was working with Abercrombie & Kent India. She holds a PG Diploma in Tourism and specialises in crafting bespoke journeys for discerning high-end clients. She will contribute to ETJ's business ethos of offering life-enriching experiences to those seeking inspirational journeys to destinations worldwide.



Berggruen's Keys Hotel

Mumbai

Ramchander Bishnoi has been appointed as Director of eCommerce, at Keys Hotels, a brand by Berggruen Hotels. He will participate in the development and execution of strategic and tactical business plans with other members of the team. Further, Bishnoi will manage the user experience of the website, including site navigation, content development, checkout funnel and promotional campaigns. Holding Masters in Business Administration from UPES, Bishnoi has worked with Air Pegasus, Global Vectra Helicorp Ltd., Sabre Holdings, Air Deccan and Kingfisher Airlines.



Keys Hotels, a brand by Berggruen hotels, has appointed **Nimesh Waghela** as Head – Materials and Procurement. Waghela will oversee all activities related to materials, procurement and annual contracts which will include standardisation of procurement policy, implementations of cost effective procurements, forecasting and supply chain management, budgetary controls, institutional tie-ups, in accordance with applicable state laws. Prior to joining Berggruen Hotels, Waghela has worked with Ramee Group of Hotels, Inox Leisure Ltd. and Skygourmet Catering



Hyatt Regency Pune

Pune

Hyatt Regency Pune has appointed **Suveer Sodhi** as Director of Operations. Suveer brings with him a rich experience of over 10 years in the hospitality industry, having previously worked with brands such as the Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts, Aman Resorts, Dusit Hotels & DLF Restaurants to name a few. Prior to joining Hyatt Regency Pune, Sodhi was Director of Food and Beverage at Shangri-La's Eros Hotel, New Delhi.



TALKing People

Bipan Kapur, MD, The Westin Resort Nusa Dua, Bali and Bali International Convention Centre, considers himself fortunate to be living in Bali. "One needs to just stand at the edge of the beach and take in the natural beauty and the stress just melts away," says Kapur. He has bungee-jumped from the same spot where the sport originated – Karawa Bridge in Queenstown that is 43m high! "In India the train journey from Mumbai to Goa that I took a few decades ago was just magical," he adds.



Despite her 32 years in the industry, **Leena Karkera**, Resident Manager, Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation (MPTDC), still feels that there is a lot to learn. She lives by the motto: live and let live. When asked to pick one place in Madhya Pradesh that would be her favourite, she says, "All destinations in Madhya Pradesh are my favourite. But outside of it, it is the Dead Sea in Israel that I love to visit. It is something different; there's a wow element to it."



Srijan Vadhera, the newly appointed General Manager of Fairmont Jaipur, is a gadget freak and loves to play PS4 in his free time. "As a GM, frankly, I have little free time. In my spare time I like to make sure that I stay busy in different ways. I am a Hog Rider and like to ride My Fat Bob whenever I get time. I also enjoy spending time with my family," he adds. Vadhera's favourite destination is Singapore and on his wishlist are Spain & Greece.



Incredible !ndia



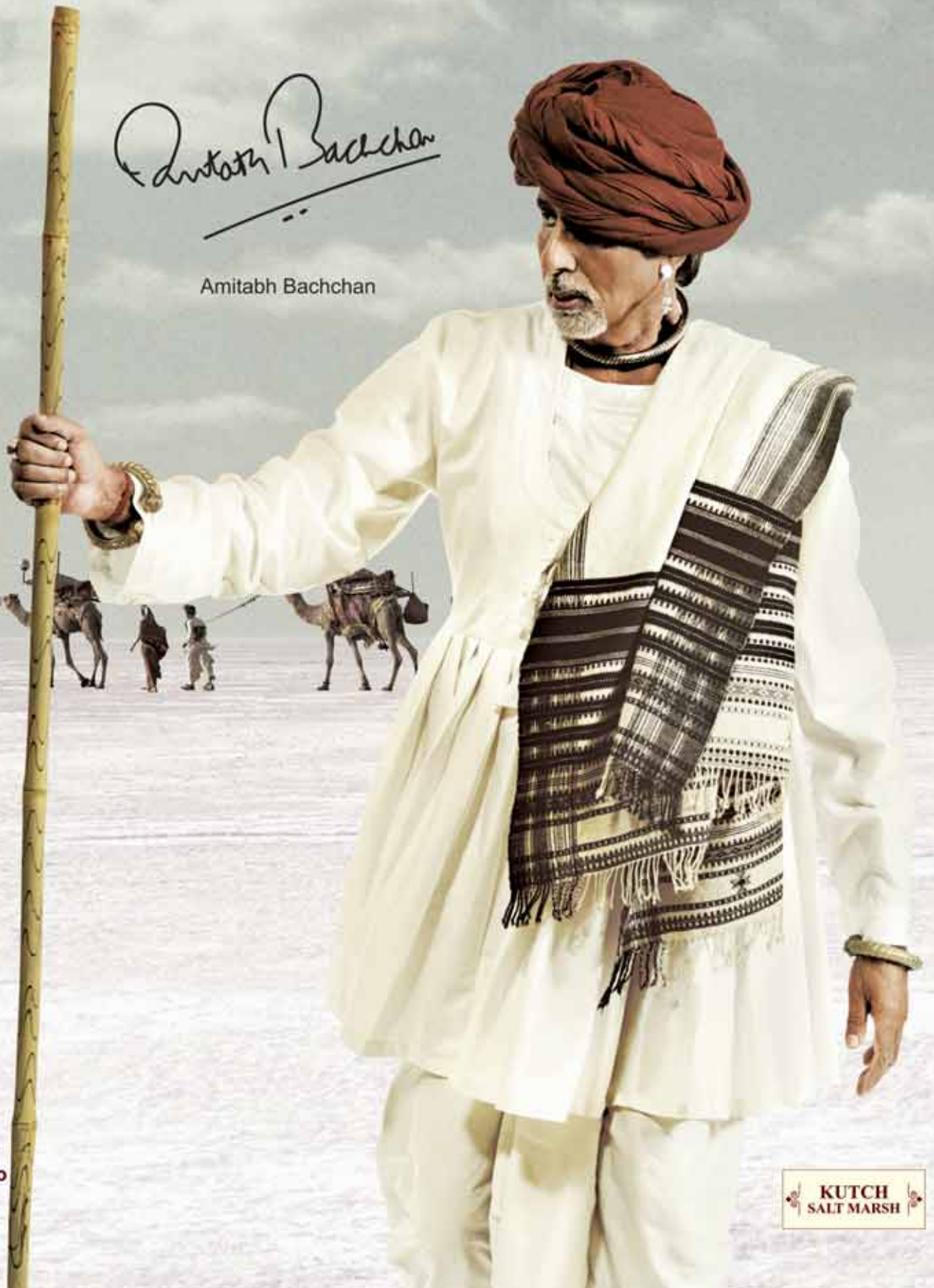
Khushboo Gujarat Ki

The sand is exactly as white as shown in this picture.
The ocean of white sand stands out stark and pristine in its
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Amitabh Bachchan

Amitabh Bachchan



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NIKKI DUGGAL DESIGN

Amritsar-Toronto on **Air India**

Air India will start direct operations between Delhi and Madrid from December 2016 and is also planning to connect Amritsar-Toronto and Delhi-Washington DC next year. **Pankaj Srivastava**, Director-Commercial and Board Member, Air India, elaborates on the turnaround of the airline and its future plans.



ANKITA SAXENA

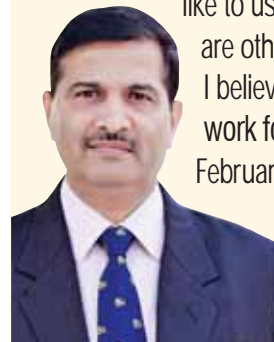
QHow has Air India performed in 2016?

After few years of dull period for Air India, we are yet again emerging as a vibrant carrier. We have posted profits worth ₹105 crore for the financial year 2015-16. From October 15, the flight which connected Delhi and San Francisco via the Atlantic route will begin operations on the Pacific route and return on the Atlantic route, making it the only flight that will go around the world. We have grown considerably in the European market. Today we connect eight destinations directly with Delhi. We have four flights into Heathrow everyday and besides that we operate a daily service to Birmingham, Frankfurt, Paris, Rome, Milan, Vienna, among others.

QWhat new can we expect from Air India?

From December 1, we would be connecting Delhi with Madrid. Most of the passengers travelling to Spain were dependent on one-stop carriers and can now avail non-stop service on this connection reducing the lapse time considerably for the passengers. We are expanding our networks in 2017, connecting Delhi and Washington DC on a non-stop flight. We are also planning to connect India with Toronto on a flight from Amritsar to Toronto via Birmingham. Keeping in mind the white spots in Europe where there is no connectivity, we will also try to connect the

“The new connection of Amritsar-Toronto via Birmingham will serve the huge population of Indians living in Toronto city, who'd like to use a direct connection. I agree that there are other airlines plying to Toronto as well, but I believe that the market is very big and it will work for us. The flight should start around February 15, 2017, and we will be offering a good package closer to the date.”



Ashwani Lohani

Chairman & Managing Director, Air India

We have ordered on lease turbo props which will connect the Tier III with Tier IV cities very soon.

QWhat has led to the turnaround of the airline in the last one year?

Team Air India is the reason behind the turnaround that we have witnessed. All of us have put in our efforts and our deeds have been much focused. The connections that we have been providing on the international network are actually helping us to turn the table around.

QWhat are the challenges of the aviation industry in India?

There is a gross imbalance of trade which means gross imbalance between the number of seats we import into Indian and the number of seats which we

orders we have to join the fleet in the market, is going to change the trend and reduce the imbalance considerably. The rapidly changing and dynamic environment in India is also a challenge for the airline. The technology movement is very fast and other stakeholders need to keep pace with.

QWhat according to you will be the impact of GST on the aviation industry?

The effect of GST on airfare is a challenge. While ATF has been kept out of the GST purview, the airline services will be subjected to GST which is nearly 7-8 per cent higher than service tax that the airline industry is already paying. I expect an upward movement of fares out of India.

QWhat trends do you see in the Indian aviation sector?

India has a population of 1.34 billion people out of which only one per cent avails air services. We are expected to grow at an approximate rate of eight per cent annually which also makes us one of the fastest growing aviation markets in the world. If this one per cent availing air services increases to five per cent then we will need nearly 2,500 more aircrafts to cater to that demand.

The middle class income group is estimated to be \$350 million out of the total population with an average age of 35 years. The disposable income is high in this segment and thus we have seen a tremendous growth of outbound travel from India. ↓

“From December 1, we would be connecting Delhi with Madrid. Most of the passengers travelling to Spain were dependent on one-stop carriers and can now avail non-stop service reducing the lapse time considerably for the passengers.”

Pankaj Srivastava

Director-Commercial & Board Member, Air India



Scandinavian countries with India. With the National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) the government has given impetus to regional connectivity and we at Air India have jumped on to encash this segment.

export. This imbalance is largely due to the inability of major carriers including Air India to mount services to various destinations in the world. However new carriers have emerged and the kind of aircraft

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