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# Head to North East this season

In its bid to strengthen the aviation network between the North East and Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (BCLMV countries), the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and the International Chamber for Service Industry jointly held a conference in Guwahati, on August 1. TRAVTALK lets you in on the details...

NIKHIL ANAND FROM GUWAHATI

“The conference was the need of the hour to substantiate air connectivity between the North East region of India and the BCLMV countries. Having good air connectivity in this region will provide manifold benefits across the varied sectors of the economy including gainful employment to people in the North East. However, passengers alone cannot sustain the aircrafts, with them the cargo also needs to contribute; hence we also invited Patanjali and other herbal product companies at the conference to deliberate on the scope of horticulture, sericulture, agriculture, floriculture, etc. through a strengthened aviation network with our neighbours.”



**Gulshan Sharma**  
Director-General  
International Chamber for  
Service Industry

“Our aim was to take forward the government’s ‘Look East’ policy and try to develop more air connectivity not only into and between the north eastern cities but also with the BCLMV countries. I think the North East has huge potential in terms of tourism, be it cultural, spiritual, adventure or heritage and along with that there is a huge potential of hydro-electric power being generated through the various rivers and lakes around. The dialogues and the deliberations with BCLMV countries have been very encouraging. We need to have a three-pronged strategy here, one involving helicopters, one involving STOL aircrafts and one with regular commercial airlines. We need a policy that encompasses all three, only then can we connect all hubs.”



**Pran S. Dasan**  
Chairman-Aviation Advisory  
Committee, International  
Chamber for Service  
Industry

“This conference holds great importance in connecting India with all the BCLMV countries. The route between the North East and Vietnam in particular holds great potential, thanks to the short flying time and we are actively looking to explore this further. Presently, infrastructure development is very important here to bolster the foundation for air connectivity which will also subsequently help transform this region into an economic hub and attract bigger tourist arrivals and business into the North East. A stronger aviation network would go miles into strengthening the people-to-people linkages as well between our countries and I am hoping that in the near future, the Vietnamese airlines will look for opportunities to connect this region with Vietnam.”



**Nguyen Le Thanh**  
Counselor, Vietnam  
Embassy in India



**Kazi Muntashir Murshed**  
Assistant High Commis-  
sioner of Bangladesh, India

“There is a huge passenger traffic coming into India from Bangladesh but most of it goes to Kolkata or other places and the North East does not get its share of tourists due to lack of direct flights. The journey by road from Dhaka to Guwahati is nearly 10 hours and the road from Shillong to Dawki border especially is not very good as it is a 15-20-km stretch of very narrow road. Private airlines from Bangladesh, like Novo Air, have been contemplating but not got a chance

to meet the right people in the Indian aviation ministry yet to assure them of the possibility and profitability of a route arising from this region. I am extremely confident that we will launch our maiden flight on the Guwahati to Dhaka route in the next two months.”



**Guruprasad Mohapatra**  
Chairman  
Airport Authority of India

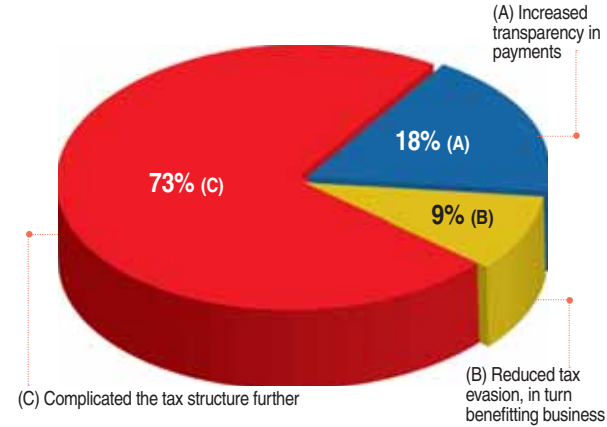
“The Airport Authority of India has undertaken many projects in the North East, of which several are on the verge of completion. In the next couple of months, we are going to commence major expansion in the terminal capacity of the Guwahati Airport. We are making `1100 crore integrated terminal building which will cater to both domestic and international travel. We have also started another `500 crore new terminal project in Agartala. In addition, we are developing an airport in Pakyong, Sikkim which is nearing completion, as is the airport in Tezu, Arunachal Pradesh and we have also selected Holongi for another airport. Improvement in cargo trade is another area that we are giving a lot of importance to in Guwahati, Agartala and Imphal. We have formed a new subsidiary to focus on it.”

“The Regional Connectivity Scheme is doing great for this region. With the North East in focus of the BCLMV countries, it is now the right time that we, as airlines, should look into establishing new connections between this region and the BCLMV countries. Of late there has been some considerable movement into this region with Guwahati being the hub but still there is a need of having a second hub possibly in Tezpur or Imphal. I have been professing for a long time for infrastructure to be developed to strengthen the North East and the BCLMV corridor and along with that there is a need to alter the current policies in favour of smaller carriers to operate without the restrictions into our bordering countries. It is time to improve connectivity here for both regional and international integration.”



**Koustav M. Dhar**  
Chief Executive Officer and  
Director, Zoom Air

## GST: ‘Tax’ing times for the industry



The tourism and hospitality industry had pinned its hopes on a single and simpler tax structure, transparency in the payment systems and ease of business with the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) bill. Were their hopes met? To find out, TRAVTALK asked the industry. The expectation of a simpler tax structure has not been met as 73% said that the new regime complicated the tax structure further. However, 18% voted that with GST there was an increased transparency in payments. A mere 9% claimed that GST resulted in a reduction in tax evasion, in turn benefitting their business.



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# Odisha to the fore @ convention

At its annual convention in Bhubaneswar, the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) plans to showcase development undertaken by Odisha to its members and leverage inbound tourism to the state.

TT BUREAU

The annual convention will be held at Hotel Mayfair Convention, Bhubaneswar, where participation of more than 1200 delegates is expected. **Pronab Sarkar**, President, IATO, says, "Bhubaneswar has made landmark changes in its infrastructure development, added new tourism products and has new circuits to offer to tourists. There is a lot of change visible in the state since the time we had our last convention in Bhubaneswar in 2008."

**Ashok Chandra Panda**, Minister of Tourism and Culture (I/C), Government of Odisha, has extended full support to the association for the convention. Panda says, "We shall offer all support to IATO to make their



Pronab Sarkar  
President  
IATO



Ashok Chandra Panda  
Minister of Tourism and Culture (I/C)  
Government of Odisha

convention a success and hope to showcase the state's various tourism circuits to the delegates through the post-familiarisation tours. We have identified tourism as a sector where growth can be doubled. We have 356 tourist sites in the state and have also eased the restrictions to visit the tribal areas. With improvement in the law and order situation coupled

with the tourism policy, we hope to grow this sector manifolds and increase footfall from domestic and inbound tourists."

**Rajiv Mehra**, Vice President, IATO and Chairman, IATO Convention, elaborated that the theme for this year's convention is 'India Tourism-Time to reinvent ourselves,' which will deliberate on the

ways the industry has been running its businesses. "The time has come to consider the possibilities to reinvent ourselves and start investing in a new future. Just as established products and brands need updating to stay alive, you periodically need to refresh or reinvent yourself," he says.

Elaborating on the choice of location for the convention, **Lally Mathews**, Honorary Secretary, IATO and Co-Chairman of IATO Convention, says, "Odisha offers everything, be it beaches, pilgrimage, hill station, wildlife, shopping, Ayurveda, medical tourism, etc. Concurrently with our convention, there will be an India Travel Mart which is an opportunity for exhibitors to showcase exciting and diverse range of destinations and conference venues."

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TRAVELTALK  
VIEWPOINT

Looking up to  
North East

We recently concluded the East India Travel Awards in Guwahati, which was the first-of-its-kind event held in the city. The travel industry in the region was ecstatic to say the least and claimed it to be a big recognition for the region. Soon after, Ministry of Commerce and Industry also organised an aviation seminar for strengthening ties between the North East and BCLMV countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam), which saw huge presence from the bigwigs of the aviation industry, reinstating the fact that the region has huge potential for growth in tourism, especially with new airports and flights coming in. The summer season also saw a huge number of domestic tourists flocking to the north-eastern destinations, including Sikkim, Meghalaya and Assam to discover the various offerings, especially with new 4-star and 5-star properties making a debut in the region. With infrastructure and interest both paving the way for the North East, it certainly may be touted as the next big thing.

When would the  
wait end?

It's been a couple of years since we first heard about the National Tourism Policy, which was to be launched way back in 2015 itself. After two years of Ministry of Tourism constantly discussing the launch, it has still not seen the light of the day. Not many of us know what it would entail in terms of infrastructure development, functioning of tourism bodies and promotion of India in the international market. However, the industry is pinning its hope on the policy and expecting some ground-breaking decisions to be made. Rashmi Verma, the new Secretary-Tourism, has said that they will be releasing the policy by World Tourism Day on September 27. With only a month left for the same, the industry is beaming with hope and expectations, especially for inbound, as the next season is just around the corner. A progressive policy, aided by the e-visa regime would do wonders for the incoming tourist traffic for the country. We are keeping our fingers crossed!

Agents need to be cruise experts

Observing that agent knowledge is a key driving factor towards client decision-making, it is only imperative that travel agents in mature markets like India become cruise experts or otherwise get left behind in the race.

As cruising continues to grow in India, it's an ideal time to have a look at mature markets that were once in India's current position and learn from them. Firstly, the two biggest markets of cruisers are from the US and UK. Combined they contribute to almost half of the cruise passengers around the world (over 13 million passengers), and it's no coincidence that they have also been the two pioneers of the professional development of cruise education to travel agents.

An educated market is the catalyst for strong local growth, as agent knowledge is a key driving factor towards client decision-making. The following reasons are what agents reported when they concentrated on booking more cruises:

- ❖ Easy to book: One wholesaler or one computer entry made up the entire holiday booking with everything catered for.
- ❖ Profitable: Average cruise commission is eight-10 per cent

- ❖ Time efficient: One booking in a timely manner.
- ❖ Satisfying to clients: More than 95 per cent satisfaction ratings resulted in happy customers and good word of mouth.
- ❖ Easily match clients' needs: Cruise caters for many diverse wants and needs in a holiday, including a range of budgets.
- ❖ Repeat business.

If I compare India to any other market, it would be to where Australia was eight to ten years ago. However, given the population of India, along with the five port development projects (Mumbai, Mormugao, New Mangalore, Chennai Port and Kochi) occurring along its massive coastline, means that India is in one of the best positions to capitalise the cruise market than most nations can dream of. But the warning is that potential doesn't always mean sure success. There is a process which we've learnt from other markets that needs to evolve and education of agents is one of the key factors.

Training is necessary

When I look back to those earlier times when I was training agents across Australia and New Zealand, there was still an apprehension to be educated in cruise despite its benefits. Most agents thought their cruise business was not big enough (one or two sales every month) or that they knew enough to sell.

But as the years rolled by (and the market grew because of the agents who promoted it), I started to see a shift in my audience. They were getting older; I was starting to get experienced agents who had been selling travel for decades coming for cruise training! It was because they had no choice anymore. Their clients were dictating what they wanted, and in the end the agents had no other option but to understand cruise better if they wanted to keep their clients. The need for cruise education exploded to a point now that there is not a single retail travel business in the country that doesn't have cruise education as part of their training. So, should you wait until your clients' demand for cruise holidays increases? I say no. You

need to start learning now, because if you were going to look at the most successful travel businesses currently in Australia, they were the ones who started all that time ago specialising in cruise, becoming cruise accredited and cruise experts, way before others. Many built their business on this, and are now reaping the rewards from the explosion of cruise tourism. You can ignore these lessons if you like, but you will be behind the ones who didn't.

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

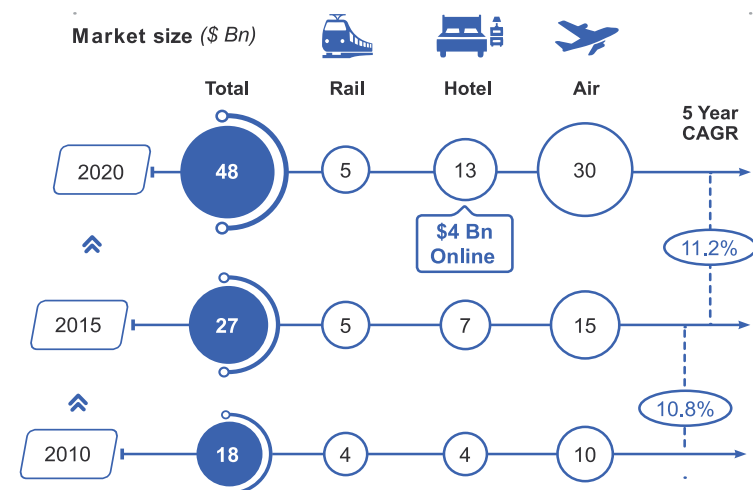


Peter Kollar  
Head of International Training & Development, Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA)

Aviation & hotels to drive India market

By 2020, the Indian travel market will be propelled by rapidly growing aviation industry, hospitality and railways. This will be backed by the government increasing spending on tourism infrastructure and proposed 100 per cent FDI in tourism.

Indian travel market will grow to \$48 Bn by 2020



World Travel & Tourism Council "Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2016, India"; PhoCusWright "India Online Travel, Overview Ninth Edition", July 2016; BCG Analysis based on Project Experience and Research

Source: Demystifying the Indian Online Traveller report by BCG & Google

Indian travel market is projected to grow at 11-11.5% to the tune of \$48 Bn by 2020 with the biggest contributor, air travel expected to grow at 15% to \$30 Bn. Hotels will grow at 13% to \$13 Bn by 2020 while railways will remain largely stagnant at \$5 Bn.

Domestic demand (business and leisure) and foreign demand will drive this acceleration in growth. The Government has also increased spending on tourism infrastructure and proposed 100% FDI in tourism.



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# MP aims to double hotel rooms

The Government of Madhya Pradesh has constituted a Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, a separate body from MPSTDC, in order to undertake tourism promotion and product development. MPSTDC will focus on managing the state properties and doubling the number of hotel rooms in the state.



ANKITA SAXENA

A separate Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board has been formed which will now handle all tourism promotion activities and represent the interests of all stakeholders at various platforms. The tourism board will be responsible for all interaction with the travel trade, promotion and publicity and also

step is modeled on the lines of Kerala Travel Mart," says Rao.

## New Initiatives

Rao says, "We have decided to give few properties on license to private players for 30 years. In the first round of bidding, we identified six properties at Neemuch, Nowgong, Chitrakoot, Katni, Datia and Handia and by the end of the

month we will hand over these properties to the private players. The private players have to pay a one-time premium in the beginning and only one per cent premium of that amount is to be paid as license fee." The state has also offered heritage properties to private players on a 90 years lease which include the Taj Mahal Palace in Bhopal, Govindgarh Fort in Riva and

a third property will be handed over by the end of August.

Rao further adds that like Hanumantiya, this year too, the state has many projects underway. "We have come up with a beautiful resort at Sailani Island in Omkareshwar Dam which is 70 km away from Hanumantiya. We are also developing a resort in Gandhisagar Dam near Chit-

torgarh and Kota. Two other leisure destinations being introduced this year are Palpur-Kuno and Manikhera," says Rao.

MP Tourism Board will participate at WTM and ITB and conduct its own roadshows across the country. "In Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Nagpur, Hyderabad and Pune, we will inform the trade about

the travel mart and apart from these, we are conducting several roadshows in major cities of MP, inviting real estate developers along with tourism stakeholders to take on newer projects. We have a target to double the number of keys in five years and bring in 20 top brands in the hospitality industry to Madhya Pradesh," explains Rao. 



Hari Ranjan Rao  
Secretary-Tourism  
Government of Madhya Pradesh

tourism product development. The Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh is the Chairperson of the board while Secretary Tourism will man the position of Managing Director.

Meanwhile, Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation (MPSTDC) has been restructured and realigned to focus more on its core hotel business. **Hari Ranjan Rao**, Secretary-Tourism, Government of Madhya Pradesh, informs that with 72 hotels accounting for a total of 1725 keys, MPSTDC is one of the largest tourism corporations in the country, covering the entire geography of the state. "It was felt that the strength of the corporation should be leveraged by focusing on its core business to manage the state properties and expand the portfolio without compromising on the quality of service," says Rao.

The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of Madhya Pradesh Travel Mart (MPTM) is going to be held in Bhopal from October 27-29, which will provide a platform to the key stakeholders of tourism and hospitality industry to come together and discuss business as well as increase tourism investment in the state. This year MPTM is expecting to host 200 national and international buyers and about 100 representatives of distinct Indian markets.

This year, the number of attendees is expected to cross over nine crores. "This year, we have constituted an advisory committee that will manage the entire event and we, as the government, will provide all kind of support to this committee. This



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# Emirates & flydubai join forces

In the wake of a significant partnership, here is a look at how flydubai will add value and enhance its offerings to provide unmatched travel options to over 200 destinations.

TT BUREAU

June 2009 marked the commercial launch of flydubai, which in eight years has expanded its network to 93 destinations in 44 countries across Middle East, GCC, Africa, Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and the Indian Subcontinent. The airline op-

“As an airline we focus on simplicity, accessibility, new and innovative ways of interacting with our passengers, operating as a modern, successful company,” says **Ghaith Al Ghaith**, Chief Executive Officer, flydubai.

Recently, Emirates and flydubai unveiled an extensive

Along with a diverse network, flydubai continues to enhance its product offerings for passengers. 48 out of flydubai’s 58 aircraft are now equipped with Wi-Fi and Live TV services, providing passengers with greater connectivity throughout their journey.

At this year’s Arabian Travel Market, the airline unveiled its new rewards programme, OPEN. Received well by the Indian market, the highest number of members came from India with 12 per cent of the overall membership. Also at the event, flydubai launched its new holidays division-Holidays by flydubai. It aims to simplify travel by providing customers with the choice to customise packages including flights, hotels and other ancillary services. This portal allows travel agents, distributors and flydubai-authorized travel shops to design and book tailor-made packages. Not leaving the travel agents behind, flydubai is growing from and strengthening to-strength and the Indian market is sure to leverage the exclusive product offerings.

# 28% more Indians visit Fiji

Fiji Tourism has recorded 28 per cent increase in Indian arrivals to Fiji in the first 6 months of 2017, reveals **Matthew Stoeckel**, Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Fiji.

NISHA VERMA

Tourism Fiji conducted a six city roadshow in India recently. Matthew Stoeckel says, “The attendance has been really strong. The quality of travel agents turning up for the roadshow has been great and we are getting good feedback about the products and the potential of the Indian market.”

Stoeckel claims that they are dedicated to make the India market work. “It’s a market we see huge potential in largely due to Fiji’s appeal of pristine environment, luxury resorts, and a plethora of activities that can be undertaken. Also, it’s never been easier to travel to Fiji from India. Now, there is increased connectivity with our national carrier’s twice weekly service via Singapore, as well as recent code share with Jet Airways to connect Singapore with three cities in India – Chennai, Delhi and Mumbai,” claims Stoeckel. For him, India is a growing market. “In the last five years, we have



Matthew Stoeckel  
Chief Executive Officer  
Tourism Fiji



Vaijyanthi Kari  
Country Head  
Tourism Fiji

seen the numbers go up by 20 per cent year on year. In the first half of 2017, the numbers have increased to 28 per cent as compared to the same period last year. We expect this to accelerate even further with a whole range of consumer activities that we are doing in the market. One of the big initiatives is the travelogue, which we have done with Indian actress Ileana D’Cruz, that will be a part of our marketing campaign as well,” he adds.

Vaijyanthi Kari, Country Head, Tourism Fiji, says

that apart from the roadshow and consumer activities, they also did frontline training to focus on the Tier-II and Tier-III markets in India. “We did our frontline training with Fiji Airways and Rosie Holidays in Hyderabad, Chennai and Bengaluru. We did another round of training with Singapore Airlines in Nagpur, Jaipur, Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Baroda, Jalandhar and Delhi. Through such training activities, we are creating awareness about Fiji, and talking to agents about the kind of offerings we have,” Kari concludes.



erates over 1,700 flights per week. It opened 62 new routes that did not previously have direct air links to Dubai or were not served by a UAE national carrier. With a single fleet of 58 modern narrow-bodied Next-Generation Boeing 737-800s, flydubai has changed the landscape of modern aviation and shown high productivity.

partnership, which will see the two airlines join forces to offer unmatched travel options. Both airlines will continue to be managed independently, but will leverage each other’s network to scale up their operations and accelerate growth. The partnership includes an expansive codeshare agreement, schedule alignment and network optimisation.

# Air Astana’s big international gain

Announcing its operational results for the first half of 2017, Air Astana recorded 22 per cent increase in international traffic and four per cent increase in domestic traffic.

TT BUREAU

According to the operations results for the first half of 2017, Air Astana carried a total of 894,391 passengers for the period January-June 2017, of which 1,007,413 were domestic passengers and 886,978 were international passengers. The figures reveal that overall passenger traffic increased by 12 per cent for this period. While passenger growth on domestic routes was 4 per cent,



international traffic grew by 22 per cent, which is attributed to the network traffic transiting through its Astana and Almaty hubs, which grew by 62 per cent. Even the Cargo uplift increased by 22 per cent for the same period.

**Peter Foster**, President and CEO, Air Astana, stated, “Kazakhstan’s economy is delivering modest growth after two very difficult years, and we expect this to accelerate as the economy continues to diversify. However,

international passenger growth is most encouraging, particularly network business. Astana EXPO 2017, further easing of visa restrictions, the new terminal at Nursultan Nazarbayev International Airport at Astana, and continued positive developments within the airline are all combining to set up strong traffic recovery.”

He added that cost pressure has increased owing

to higher fuel prices in Kazakhstan. “However, the airline’s unit cost remains very competitive and enables us to increase our share of long-haul major market business. This is helped by increased awareness in foreign markets of the quality of our product,” he claimed.

Peter insisted that they are coming up with new offerings as well. “We continue to introduce product

improvements, including the introduction of onboard Internet connectivity, and have recently concluded an agreement to acquire five brand new Embraer E2 regional jets from autumn 2018. These fuel efficient aircraft, when combined with the Airbus 320 NEO family aircraft, of which we continue to take delivery, will drive continued improvements in efficiency and product quality,” he added.

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# Make tourism priority to propel inbound

Inbound tourism is passing through a rough patch and the industry needs new ways and means to propel this sector. It's time the industry looks beyond its conventional source markets and develops innovative products to give a breath of fresh air to inbound tourism.

According to the World Economic Forum's Global Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017, India's ranking in the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) moved up 12 positions from 52 in 2015 to 40 in 2017. India is one of the countries that improved the most, however, it still lagged behind its Asian counterparts like Japan and China, which occupied the 4<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> ranks, respectively.

India as a country and as an economy has progressed very well in the last decade in terms of its infrastructure. Be it seamless road connectivity; world class airports; hotels of international standards; power generation; rapidly evolving technology; automobile; advancement in space technology etc., India has gained across various spectrums compared to other countries. There is an emphasis on training and education as well, and all these advancements have directly or indirectly aided

in increasing the travel and tourism competitiveness and growth of India as a tourist destination. However, despite all these advancements, India still lags behind its Asian competitors when it comes to being the most favoured tourist destination among international tourists. This is probably because tourism does not seem to be a priority sector in the country. Till date, we do not have a well-defined tourism policy and other challenges include lack of effective promotion at both national and international platforms. To add to it all is the unfriendly tax structure on hotels, which has been aggravated by the introduction of Goods and Services Tax (GST) for the tourism and hospitality sector.

The inbound tourism industry has become very sensitive and unstable. With changing times, the world is going through a major crisis, be it in the form of terrorism, economic slowdown or lack

of growth. In India, with the new tax regime, changes in various policies and lack of clear vision for tourism, the industry is in a turmoil. Then there is the unorganised nature of this sector. There are small fly-by-night operators mushrooming across the country who operate

There is an emphasis on training and education as well and all these advancements have directly or indirectly aided in increasing the travel and tourism competitiveness and growth of India as a tourist destination

from their homes at no operating cost and lure tourists with cheap prices using free and unlicensed guides which add to the negative publicity of the country as an unsafe and unreliable tourist destination. I suggest and recommend that the industry must join hands, consolidate and fight these times together.

The industry has a pool of talented professionals and it is just a matter of putting our act together. If young professionals with experience and passion for their profession collaborate, discuss, churn out new ideas, develop new innovative products, explore newer markets, introduce and adapt

new technology and also focus on quality education and training, I am sure there are no challenges which cannot be overcome when it comes to propelling India's growth as a tourism hub.

I believe the key lies in the fact that the various stakeholders of both the tourism and hospitality industries

need to unite as a single entity to deal with the challenges head-on, with an element of professionalism. India as a country has everything that a tourist would look for and we too can attract large numbers of foreign tourists if we have the vision and unity amongst ourselves.

As far as our hotel industry is concerned, they are not focusing on the inbound segment as they used to because business has become unpredictable, prices are shrinking and so is their profit margin. That is why hotels are focusing on other verticals like weddings, MICE, corporates, OTAs and domestic tourism.

The tourist season is going to start from October and we have a series of major fairs and exhibitions worldwide. We need to make the best use of these fairs. India Tourism should present itself with a lot of pomp and show like Indian Maharaja, attracting a lot of

media eyeballs, both print and electronic. They should be visible in social media. It should be backed up by the Incredible India campaign on buses and other mediums which was done aggressively in the past. I understand collective planning and effort will create interest and this will definitely increase the tourist numbers.

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



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APAC & tech in demand @WTM

About 20 technology companies have signed up as new exhibitors at the Travel Tech Show and exhibitors from APAC region have significantly increased the size of their stands at this year's World Travel Market London 2017.



WTM London, the leading global event for the travel industry, scheduled to be held from November 6-8, 2017, has been universally well received from all participant groups. More than 80 conference seminars will take place throughout the three days covering all the key sectors including aviation, hotels, wedding and honeymoon, gastronomy, sports tourism, responsible tourism, digital influencers, social media and travel technology.

Exhibitors from the Asia-Pacific region have significantly increased the size of their stands at this year's event. The growth is seen across the board, from mature markets in Japan, Korea and Australia to emerging destinations such as Kyrgyzstan, Taiwan, Mongolia and Vietnam.

The Travel Tech Show at WTM London has signed up more than 20 travel companies as new exhibitors for the dedicated travel technology event. Players such as eNett International, Kigo and eMerchantPay among others, will make their debut at the trade event.

Content Management and Distribution System Wetu is also among the newbies at WTM London and its CEO Paul de Waal said, "At Wetu, our mission is to improve the way the travel industry sells their products. We add huge value to our clients by making their business more efficient and significantly increase their ability to convert opportunities. After many years of building and perfecting our digital tools, we are ready to exhibit at the Travel Tech Show at WTM and show the world how travel should be sold."

Simon Press, Senior Director, World Travel Market London expressed, "It's remarkable to see how quickly exhibitors in the Asia-Pacific region are increasing their stands at WTM London. It's a reflection of the burgeoning growth in that part of



the world and how the travel trade there recognises that WTM London is an unrivalled platform to both conduct business and boost awareness."

He added, "Over the past couple of years, we've also seen an upsurge in the number of visitors who say they want to do business with, or find out more about the Asia-Pacific exhibitors – the number rose by 6 per cent between 2015 and 2016, and we expect that growth rate to increase yet further this year."

Panacea Koh Samui signs up India Sales Associates as GSA

India Sales Associates has signed up Panacea Koh Samui resort and will be the GSA in the Indian market. Speaking on the development, Manas Sinha, Director, India Sales Associates, said, "Koh Samui in Thailand is well positioned among high-end luxury travellers from India. Panacea Koh Samui with its uniquely designed large private pool villas and superlative personalised services is a perfect fit for friends and families vacationing together. It offers customised benefits for honey-



Manas Sinha  
Director  
India Sales Associates

mooners and couples. We are happy to present this unique resort to the Indian market."

The resort is set atop a private manicured estate in Samui's luxuriant, palm-clad coastal hill, offering a 360-degree view towards the famous Full Moon Island of Koh Phangan, Plai Laem, the Big Buddha and beyond to Chaweng. It is situated 15 minutes from the Samui International airport in the hills above the coast of Bophut and Fisherman's Village, making it an ideal location to explore the island of Koh Samui.



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**After hours**  
WTM London 2017 will conclude with the WTM Festivals, which will see a number of exhibitors hosting parties showcasing their culture and cuisine



# Annual conventions & their relevance

Annual conventions of leading travel associations like TAAI, IATO, FHRAI, ADTOI, are an integral part of the Indian travel business diary. TRAVTALK finds out from some of the major stakeholders of the industry whether these conventions hold any relevance today for the industry and travel companies.



INDER RAJ AHLUWALIA

“Conventions pull their weight and are very useful if one treats them as serious business activities, and not holidays. OTOAI conventions have had several agendas that included showcasing products; being at places away from one's regular offices to discuss topics that are impacting the industry; and also looking at the future. OTOAI members being outbound tour operators, focus on B2B sessions where they get to directly interact with their service providers. The business content apart, the leisure activities also highlight India's culture. Thus, conventions become an excellent promotional tool.”



**Guldeep Singh Sahni**  
India Travel Award winner &  
President, OTOAI

“Conventions have great relevance to maintain sustainable growth of the tourism industry in general. These help create and capture interest and attention; reveal what's new in the industry; cover a range of topics that demand members' responsive attention; provide a common platform for debate and exchange of ideas; and specify the outcome of the exercise through recommendations. For 30 years, the IATO Annual Convention has helped to set tourism development on a path that is both competitive and responsible, taking consideration of new challenges. IATO's achievements through its annual conventions is worthy of being chronicled in a book.”



**Pronab Sarkar**  
President  
IATO

“Associations' annual conventions are certainly relevant today, although changing times, evolving markets, and the growing number of associations in India have somewhat reduced the prominence of conventions, compared to the 90's and before. Today, each association holds its own convention, which may dilute their overall PR effect. Also, the number of travel trade exhibitions that have come up to encourage buyer-seller meets, have diluted conventions' role. TAAI conventions continue to be relevant and useful, and focus on business sessions promoting destinations. TAAI's unique advantage is the diversity of its members who champion several verticals that give immense networking opportunities.”



**Sunil Kumar**  
President, TAAI



**K. Syama Raju**  
President  
FHRAI

“The convention, exhibition and meeting industry has increased in size and importance due to several reasons. A substantial amount of revenues generated from global travel and tourism industry signals about the increased level of revenues generated from conventions, exhibitions and meetings industry. Conventions provide a common platform for learning, networking, awareness. They are unique showcasing the best of the region – potential for the hospitality industry with offerings of the culture, heritage and customs of the host state.”



**Ratna Chadha**  
Chief Executive  
TIRUN Travel Marketing

“Annual conventions are ideal for networking; exchanging ideas and views; allowing people to imbibe best practices and knowledge through sessions, if they're of substance. Being able to meet and network under one roof is valuable. Conventions also allow for government participation, which benefits the industry. The conventions have grown in stature but need to stay focused and be more cost and time-effective. However, there's no gain in organising conventions in far flung countries, where attendance is limited and it's more of a jamboree for a few!”



**Sheetal Wadhwa Munshaw**  
Director-India  
Atout France

“Travel associations are and will always be an integral part of the tourism industry. They serve as a useful communication platform to connect with a diverse database of travel agents, and convey key messages to the trade. Reputed associations set a qualitative benchmark. We believe that the next step for these associations would be to evolve in alignment with changing trends, and with a well-defined segmentation targeting specific genres of travellers, like for instance, Virtuoso in the USA.”

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# PATA India heads to USA and Canada

To introduce and inspire the travel trade from USA and Canada to sell India as a destination for varied traveller segments and needs, PATA India conducted six roadshows across five cities with over 3500 speed business meetings.



NIKHIL ANAND

In continuance with their endeavour that began in 2014, PATA India Chapter, in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism, conducted business development roadshows in the United States and Canada from May 30 to June 8, 2017.

Typically, alternated between the East and the West Coast and peppered off with a visit to Canada, the entourage

this year began in Toronto, Canada on May 30. The roadshow subsequently moved on to USA, where five roadshows were conducted in four cities; Boston, Chicago, Houston and finally New York—hosting two roadshows to compensate for the overwhelming demand in the city.

On the reception the roadshow garnered, PATA India Chapter's Executive Director, **Runeeep Sangha** exclaimed,

"In the course of over 3500 conducive speed meetings, we were able to provide an excellent mixed bag of products and services to the buyers in the two countries. The feedback we received was very encouraging with buyers finding the show highly informative as they were able to get the latest updates on the tourism offerings and potential of India and those of whom who had not sold India previously are now giving it serious consideration."

The offerings in these roadshows constituted of 17 widely diverse sellers across India and across products. In addition to the traditional, cultural and historical products on offer, India was showcased by two leading hotel chains, river cruise companies and DMCs from South and East India. He also added, "We received 211 tour operators in the six roadshows we conducted in USA and Canada combined and amongst them

nearly 35 per cent of the tour operators and travel agents had not sold India before."

With the significantly less amount of India acquainted buyers this year, the roadshows as such have promised substantial augment in tourism; and banking on the India product and India promise, PATA India remains confident of major movement through the engaged travel agents and tour operators.



**Runeeep Sangha**  
Executive Director  
PATA India Chapter

## Gems that make Dubai dazzle

A land with countless wonders which continues to add more to its list. Here's just a little on just a few of the attractions that make Dubai a favourite among Indians.



TT BUREAU

### The Helicopter Tour

Thrill your senses as you fly over one of the iconic cities of the world in a helicopter and lay your eyes on its attractions from the clouds. The helicopter ride is an offering of Fly High Dubai Helicopter Services by Alpha Destination Management and ensures that you experience something unforgettable as you take in the panoramic views of the city via an aerial circuit. The ride starts from Atlantis, The Palm and then takes you over points like Burj Khalifa, Burj Al Arab, The World Islands, Dubai Marina and all others that make Dubai the most desired holiday destination.



### Lapita Hotel

Lapita Hotel is an exotic Polynesian-themed hotel located in the midst of Dubai Parks and Hotels, offering its guests and visitors not only a mesmerising and unforgettable stay but also unlimited access to the three most popular themed parks of Dubai that are within the common premises. Boasting sparkling lagoon-shaped pools, a rain forest inspired rooftop bar, a signature spa and a themed Lapita Center, along with of course splendid multi-cuisine restaurants, this hotel is the best destination in Dubai to spend vacation time with family or alone.



### La Perle

All set to debut in 2017 in Al Habtoor City, La Perle is guaranteed to become one of Dubai's unique attractions. It is going to be a magical interactive-theatre experience that will showcase around 500 performances in a year by more than 60 artists. Inspired by Dubai's past, present and future, the acts could include anything, starting from acting to gravity-defying acrobatics and aquatic and aerial stunts. More than 1000 people would be able to be a spectator of the breathtaking shows at a time in the 1300-seat state-of-the-art theatre.



## Badung Tourism picks India rep

The Badung Tourism Promotions Board, Indonesia, has trained its eyes on India for this. The appointment of an India representative shows its commitment to the market.



HAZEL JAIN

The Badung Regency of Bali in Indonesia has increased its focus on India and will be putting in extra efforts to develop it as a bigger source market than it already is. The region was the highlight of

an India representative – New Delhi-based Air Guru Travel Solutions – to promote the destination. **Dhiraj Kumar**, Managing Director, Air Guru Travel Solutions, is now an 'Honorary Representative for Badung Regency Bali' appointed by BPPD Badung Tourism Promotions

Republic of Indonesia, who was leading the Indonesian delegation, was to develop 10 more 'Balis' with the idea of promoting newer destinations in Indonesia for Indian travellers. "We are trying to push Bali as the hub from where travellers can visit other destinations.



the Indonesian India Sales Mission 2017 that kick-started in Mumbai recently with sellers only from Badung participating in it. Sellers from the rest of Indonesia joined in for the rest of the five cities: Ahmedabad, Pune, Bengaluru, Coimbatore and Chandigarh.

Apart from participating in the sales mission, the Badung Regency has also appointed

Board, Indonesia. He says, "We will conduct destination updates, regular training for local travel agents and other promotional activities in key cities. We have signed a 3-year contract effective July 31, 2017."

The agenda of this sales mission, as underlined by **Vinsensius Jemadu**, Director, Asia Pacific Tourism Promotions, Ministry of Tourism,

We have etched out three key pillars as our strategy. One is to go digital to disseminate information about Indonesia. Two is to develop quality homestays as it is quicker than building hotels, and three, to push air connectivity between India and Indonesia," he says. Jemadu adds that they aim to welcome 500,000 Indian tourists this year, which would mean a 20 per cent growth for them. ↴



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# GST & Convention: Talk of the town

Association of Domestic Tour Operators in India organised its monthly General House Meeting at Pride Plaza Hotel Aerocity, New Delhi, where they discussed about their upcoming convention and impact of GST after the rollout and explored new destinations for clients.



## REGISTER FOR WTM LONDON 2017

**WTM London, the leading global event for the travel industry, has opened registration to WTM 2017.**

WTM London 2017, which takes place between Monday 6 – Wednesday 8 November, is poised to be the most successful yet. The leading global event for the travel industry will again be a three-day event following the overwhelming success of last year's WTM London. WTM London 2016 was three days for the first time and attracted a record 51,500 attendance, including an all-time high of buyers (9,900). A record £2.8 billion of business will be conducted due to last year's event.

It is expected WTM London 2017 will be the catalyst for an even greater amount of business, as an extra speed networking event has been added to the second day of the event, meaning all three days will host a speed networking event.

Monday 6 November will see 200 buyers seated based on the geography they purchase.

Tuesday 7 November will see the buyers seated by sector, including

responsible tourism, gastronomy, adventure tourism and weddings and honeymoons.

Wednesday 8 November will see the re-named Digital Influencers' Speed Networking (formerly called Bloggers' Speed Networking) take place. The event has been renamed to reflect the increase in vloggers and instagrammers attending WTM London.

Furthermore, ENIT - The Italian National Tourist Board - is the Premier Partner for WTM London 2017.

Speaker already confirmed include Travelocity founder Terry Jones. Jones helped launch Travelocity and turned Kayak into a \$1.8 billion company.

The WTM Inspire Theatre – a 300-seater amphitheatre – returns to the exhibition floor following last year's successful introduction.

Around 80 conference seminars will take place throughout the three days covering all the key sectors including aviation, hotels, gastronomy, wedding and honeymoon, responsible tourism, blogging, social media and

travel technology.

Monday 6 November will remain an exhibitor invite-only day, allowing exhibitors to conduct business meetings with key suppliers.

Tuesday 7 November is the new day for the UNWTO & WTM Ministers' Summit.

Wednesday 8 November is the new day for World Responsible Tourism Day, keeping sustainability at the heart of the event. WTM London 2017 will conclude with the WTM Festivals, which will see a number of exhibitors hosting parties showcasing their culture, music and cuisine.

WTM London, Senior Director, Simon Press said: "With 5,000 exhibitors from 182 countries and regions conducting business deals with almost 10,000 buyers from the WTM Buyers' Club, we expect business deals to reach £3 billion."

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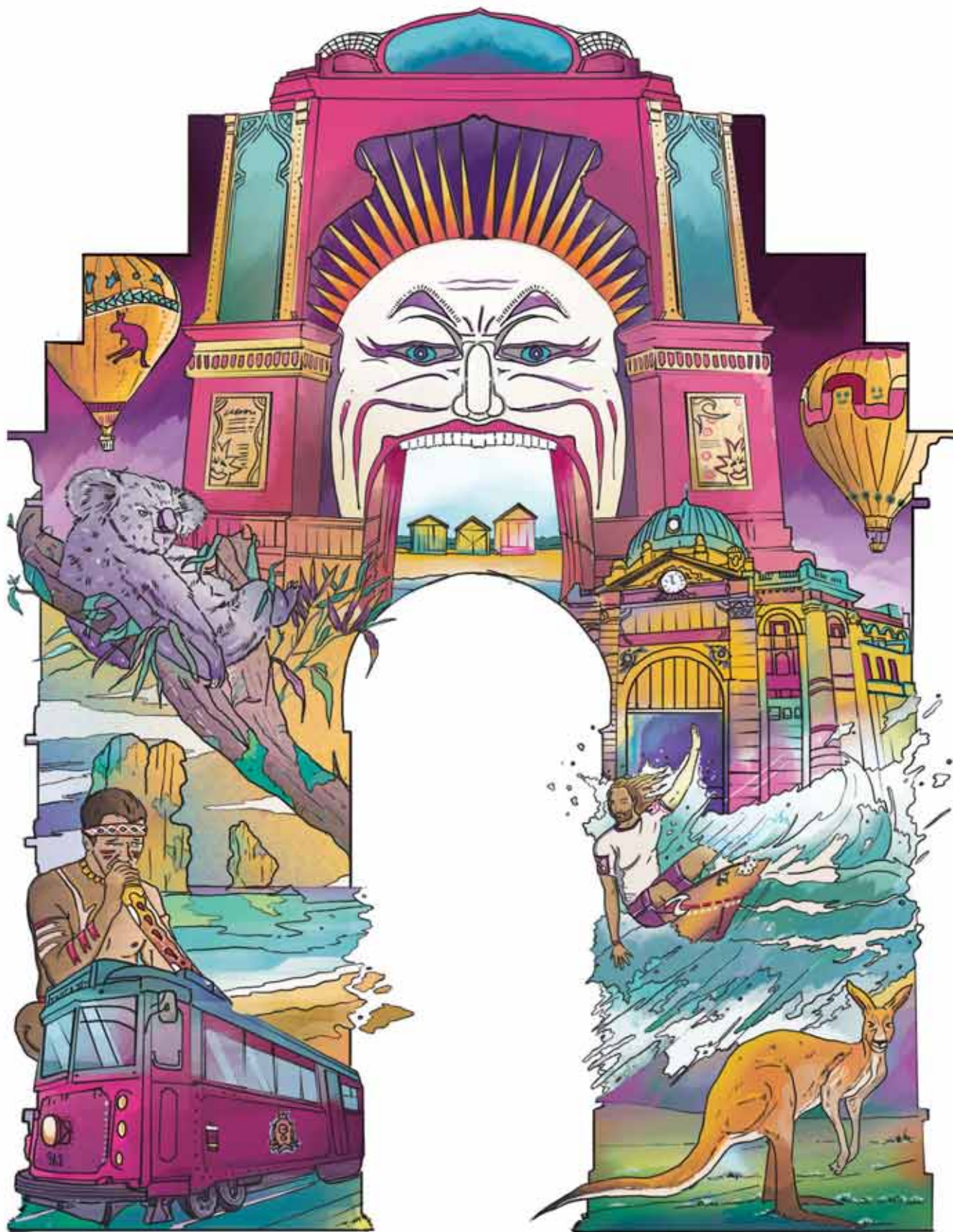


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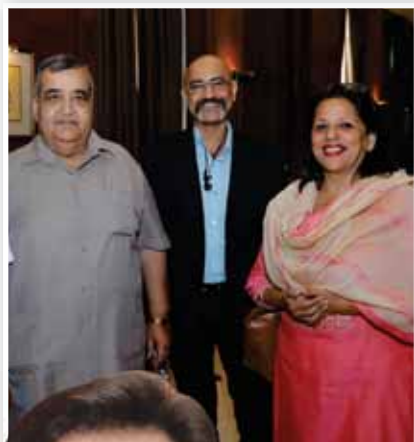
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# IATO to leverage tourism in Odisha

The Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) recently conducted a meeting in New Delhi, inviting Ashok Chandra Panda, Minister of Tourism and Culture (I/C), Government of Odisha, to announce the 33<sup>rd</sup> Convention of the association from September 7-10, 2017, at Hotel Mayfair Convention, Bhubaneswar.





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# Global office in Istanbul by Aug end

In a bid to facilitate free flow of tourists across the globe and encourage travel professionals to work together, the United Federation of Travel Agents' Associations (UFTAA) will be opening a Global Tourism Office in Istanbul, Turkey, by the end of August this year, reveals **Sunil Kumar R.**, President, UFTAA.



SHIVANI KAUL FROM SALERNO, ITALY

The United Federation of Travel Agents' Associations (UFTAA) organised its Mid-Year Forum from July 25-27, 2017, in the city of Salerno, resting on the beautiful gulf of Campania region in Italy. The Forum witnessed deliberations on pressing issues affecting

travel agents with representations from associations from across the globe. The forum also coincided with the 3<sup>rd</sup> UFTAA Board meeting led by President Sunil Kumar R. during which various matters were discussed. UFTAA Vice President **Yossi Fatael** addressed the gathering on

IATA's New Distribution Capability (NDC), NewGen ISS and other IATA matters. A special interaction with **Juan Antonio Rodriguez**, Director, FDS, IATA also took place during the Forum.

Addressing the Forum, Kumar revealed that the association is launching a global tourism office in Istanbul

(Turkey) in the month of August. "UFTAA Global Tourism Office at Istanbul is a new initiative of UFTAA. At the previous world congress of UFTAA held in Istanbul, we did confirm that UFTAA apart from travel matters will embark on tourism, MICE and education initiatives in a big way and try to create more opportunities in this area. In terms of tour-

ism, a big initiative has been taken by the UFTAA Board of Directors by establishing the UFTAA Global Tourism Office in Istanbul, which will be manned professionally, connecting travel professionals all over the world, encouraging B2B activities and business exchange between UFTAA associations and UFTAA affiliates."

"We are confident that this UFTAA tourism office will also come up with certain systems where we could gift our members certain credibility and status so that when someone sells tourism online, there is a certification from UFTAA which supports such agencies. However, this is a long-term goal. We first need to get members on board, keep the membership active and hope that UFTAA gets new members from different countries around the world," he added. The new Secretary-General of UNWTO has been invited to inaugurate the office in August. He further informed that due to the Qatar crisis, the work on the UFTAA Global headquarters in Doha has been kept on



Sunil Kumar R.  
President  
UFTAA

the back burner and hopefully there will be a headway on the same very soon.

Boasting the strength of UFTAA, Kumar said that the association had four seats in the recent meeting of IATA's Passenger Agency Programme Global Joint Council, which he believes is an "important strength of UFTAA". Kumar adds that UFTAA's biggest strength is its IATA connect.

Welcoming UFTAA members to Salerno, **Roberto De Luca**, Assessore al Bilancio e Sviluppo (Councillor for budget and economic development), Salerno, said, "Your presence here is very encouraging yet a great challenge for us. We need to learn a lot from you. We spent €250 million in regeneration to leverage this element in tourism and engage renowned architects to give our city an identity. We have our culture, our medieval city and Roman architecture to leverage from. I do think our architectural wonders like the Castello di Arechi, Sea Station, Medical School of Salerno (first medical school of Europe) are marvels to attract tourists. We are trying to leverage more MICE and Bleisure because we have the potential, also we are a good hub between Amalfi Coast, Cilento Coast and the Greek temples."

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## Bombay Skål meets in Karjat



The Skål Club of Bombay recently organised a one-day meet-up at Radisson Blu Karjat for its members and their families. It also invited the Skål Club of Pune to join them, which took the total number of participants to about 140, that included about 25 members from Pune alone and 90 members from Bombay.

## Outbound Konnections to sign new clients

The company will soon add new clients to its growing portfolio, including a hotel chain in one of the island destinations. An emphasis on offering PR and social media services has strengthened its appeal.



TT BUREAU

Representation company Outbound Konnections is upbeat about adding new clients that are interested in tapping the India market, the latest one being a hotel chain in one



**Komal Seth**  
Director  
Outbound Konnections

of the island destinations. Without revealing the name, **Komal Seth**, Director, Outbound Konnections, said, "We have grown in size over the years and we now have a big PR and social media team. As a representation company, we realised that in order to grow the business we need to also focus on these two key aspects of promotion as against merely doing sales and basic marketing activities."

The company has developed a strong PR network in South India and East India as well. "The PR team is young, dynamic is made of people from diverse backgrounds, not just travel, like advertising, hotels and data analytics. So they have out-of-the-box ideas and they know how to tap the millennials," Seth adds.

The company now has a diverse range of clients, from airlines to tourism boards, theme parks and DMCs. Its new focus area is Europe and South America to tap more clients. "Travel products from these two regions have huge potential for the Indian market which is underserved as far as these two destinations are concerned," she reveals.

### Upcoming activities

Its client SriLankan Airlines recently commenced inaugural flights from Hyderabad, Coimbatore and Visakhapatnam. This August, it hosted an event in Kolkata for its trade partners to thank them for their support. A feather in the cap has been SriLankan Airlines' India-Colombo-Melbourne flight starting from October 2017. Introductory fares start from as low as ₹40,000 for the trade. Meanwhile, Sharjah Tourism is commencing a four-city roadshow in September 2017 to Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Chennai and Hyderabad. 🐦

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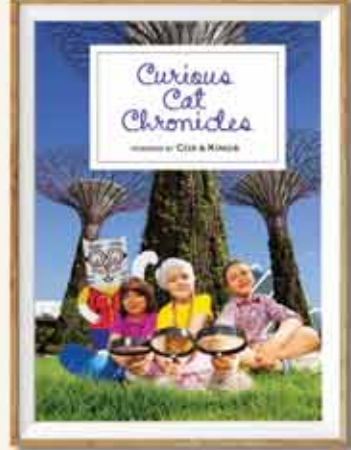
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# Mandu:

## A royal legacy of Parmars, Sultans and Mughals

The awe-inspiring architectural marvels of Mandu have lend inspiration to various dynasties and continues to enthrall discerning travellers from across the world.

Mandu, a city lying 100 km from Indore is the medieval magic of Madhya Pradesh. Famously associated with the legends of Rani Roopmati and Bazadur, the city is an architectural gem, mainly reflecting Afghan architecture. The royal love legend is documented in the folk songs of Malwa sung by balladeers. Nestled upon the crest of a hill, Roopmati's pavilion still gazes down at Bazadur's palace.

Due to its strategic importance of being situated at an altitude of 2000 feet, Mandu was originally the fort-capital of the Parmar rulers of Malwa due to its natural defenses. It was re-named 'Shadiyabad' meaning city of joy by the Sultans of Malwa in late 13th Century. Jahaz Mahal, Hindola Mahal, baths and canals are the reminiscences of this phase of Mandu's past.

Each of Mandu's structures is awe-inspiring. Some outstanding like the massive Jami Masjid and Hoshang Shah's tomb, which provided inspiration for the master builders of the Taj Mahal's centuries later. For Mughals, Mandu was a pleasure resort and its lakes and palaces reminisce the scenes of splendid and extravagant festivities. Mandu is now one of the most sought-after destinations of Madhya Pradesh with its mosques and palaces.

### Hoshang Shah's tomb

Hoshang Shah's tomb is India's first marble structure with a beautifully proportioned dome and intricate lattice work lending it its identity.

Shah Jahan sent four of his great architects to study the structure and draw inspiration from it. It is said that one of them—Ustad Hamid—was later associated with the construction of Taj Mahal.

### Jami Masjid

The masjid is unique owing to its huge structure and the inspiration for its architecture was drawn from the great mosque of Damascus. Its background is dominated by similar imposing domes. The structure of the mosque is surrounded by colonnades.

### Asharfi Mahal

This structure was conceived as an academic institute by Mahmud Shah Khilji who was Hoshang Shah's successor. A seven storey structure in the same premises was also constructed by him to celebrate the victory of Rana Khumba of Mewar.

### Jahaz Mahal

Built between two artificial lakes, Munj Talab and Kapur Talab, Mandu is famous for this palace known



as Jahaz Mahal. This is a grand reflection of a medieval pleasure resort with its open pavilions, and balconies hanging over the water. The reflection of the silhouette of the building in water during moonlit nights give it a surreal aura.

### Hindola Mahal

Its sloping side-walls have lent it the name 'Swinging Palace,' which was constructed as an audience hall. Innovative techniques are reflected in the making of its



hal, Dai ki chhoti behan ka mahal and the list is endless. The Echo Point and Sunset Point are the other two points which should not be missed.

Thanks to its location, Mandu experiences monsoon at its best. When it rains continuously for a few days, the clouds descend to embrace this beautiful city. A walk in the rains gives an old world charm.

### Fort of Dhar

On way to Mandu lies the fort built by the Parmars, one of the earliest rulers of this region. Sheesh Mahal, inside the Fort, Kharbuja mahal, Vishram Bhavan, Madan ki Sarai, Kothari Sarai, Karva Sarai Roza ki Dargah and the other monuments



Advertorial

by the side of Hindola Mahal. It is known to have arrangements for hot and cold water.

### Darwazas

Mandu is encircled by a 45 km parapet wall with 12 gateways. Delhi Darwaza is the main entrance of the fortress city, for which the approach is through a series of gateways.

Other places of interest near these monuments are Dilawar Khan's mosque, the Nahar Jharoka, Taveli Mahal, and Ujali and Andheri Baolis. Mandu, famous for the love stories of Baz Bahadur and Roopmati, has many architectural marvels witness to this royal love story. One such is the **Rewa Kund** which was an aqueduct to provide Roopmati's palace

with water. Over time this spot has gained religious sanctity. Built in the 16th century, Baz Bahadur's palace is another such reminiscence of the royal romance and still another is Roopmati's pavilion. The pavilion was originally built as an army observation post. However it also became the favorite retreat of Queen Roopmati as it offered a view of the Baz Bahadur's palace and the river Narmada flowing through the Nimar plains far below.

A few more monuments in Mandu need mention for their architectural merit, viz, **Nilkanth**, the Shiva shrine at the very edge of a deep gorge, **Nilkanth Mahal**, a palace made for Emperor Akbar's Hindu wife. The most important feature of this palace is the inscription belonging to the time of Emperor Akbar which point to the futility of material world.

Hathi Mahal, Darya Khan's tomb, Dai Ka ma-

deserve a visit. For all those who like the sweet sour taste, a variety of tamarind, known as Khursani Imli is very commonly found here.

### Fact File

- ↪ Nearest airport is Indore (100 km from Mandu), connected to Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Pune and Nagpur
- ↪ Nearest railheads are at Ratlam (124 km) on the Mumbai-Delhi main line and Indore.
- ↪ Best time to visit is July-March (monsoon).
- ↪ Madhya Pradesh Tourism's Malwa Resort and Malwa Retreat are your home away from home.





# Grooming leaders @ IHM Ahmedabad

The Institute of Hotel Management (IHM), Ahmedabad, has set high standards of quality of education provided to its students with strong focus on fostering entrepreneurial spirit and research skills, says its Principal **J.K. Mangaraj**.

**ANKITA SAXENA**

**Q**What sets IHM Ahmedabad apart compared to other institutes?

The Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) Ahmedabad focuses on research and follows a disciplined curriculum with active industry and academia interface. The institute professes academic excellence through inter-IHM students' and faculty

of Understanding (MoU), partner with entrepreneurship development institutes. The institute also has plans to conduct Skill Development and Training Programmes in Indian cuisine for international students.

**Q**How can the industry get together to enhance the potential of tourism and hospitality in India?

I feel the tourism and hospitality industry is booming currently. Many new destinations are now being explored for tourism purposes, enhancing the potential for India as a popular tourist spot. However, the major challenges which need to be addressed are proper tourist infrastructure; facilities in terms of accessibility; quality accommodation and basic amenities at tourist

destinations amongst others. To address these roadblocks, the first step is to formulate a tourist-friendly National Tourism Policy. This should be accompanied by rapid development of infrastructure to enhance connectivity through all means of transport and also accessibility to information through the Internet. One also has to compensate for the lack of large number

of hotel rooms in India which can be done through providing good quality budget accommodation. The tourism and hospitality stakeholders have to be sensitised regarding protecting the environment from commercial operations and they also have to involve local communities in tourism and hospitality services in order to make this industry sustainable.

## Need of the hour

- Formulate a tourist-friendly National Tourism Policy
- Rapid development of infrastructure to enhance connectivity
- Increase number of hotel rooms in the country
- Hi-speed Internet facilities at tourist spots



**J.K. Mangaraj**  
Principal, Institute of Hotel Management  
Ahmedabad

The institute has plans to conduct Skill Development and Training Programmes in Indian cuisine for international students

exchange programmes. At the institute, entrepreneurial mindset of the students is promoted with a strong focus on in-depth learning, which is academically, intellectually and personally challenging. Active involvement in the learning process to develop skills to take initiatives in a given business environment is encouraged. Learning at the institute is based on its relevance in the industry.

**Q**Which educational modules are offered at the institute?

We offer three year's Bachelors' course in Hospitality and Hotel Administration with focus on vegetarian food. We also provide hands-on training to the students. The list of major organisations at which the students are trained includes hotel brands like The Taj Hotels, The Oberoi, Hyatt Hotels, Radisson Blu, Hilton Hotels, ITC Hotels, AccorHotels, IHG Hotels, Marriott Hotels, Westin Hotels, Gateway Hotels, Fortune Hotels, etc. We hope to collaborate with international universities for hospitality education and also through Memorandums



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# Splendid Salerno says *Grazie*, UFTAA

The UFTAA Mid Year Forum 2017 was hosted by the City of Salerno, Campania, Italy, from July 25-27. Travel agents association leaders from across the globe were extended authentic Italian hospitality, fine dine over three days and they explored the beauty of the gulf, Roman architecture, and the Amalfi Coast bustling with tourists.







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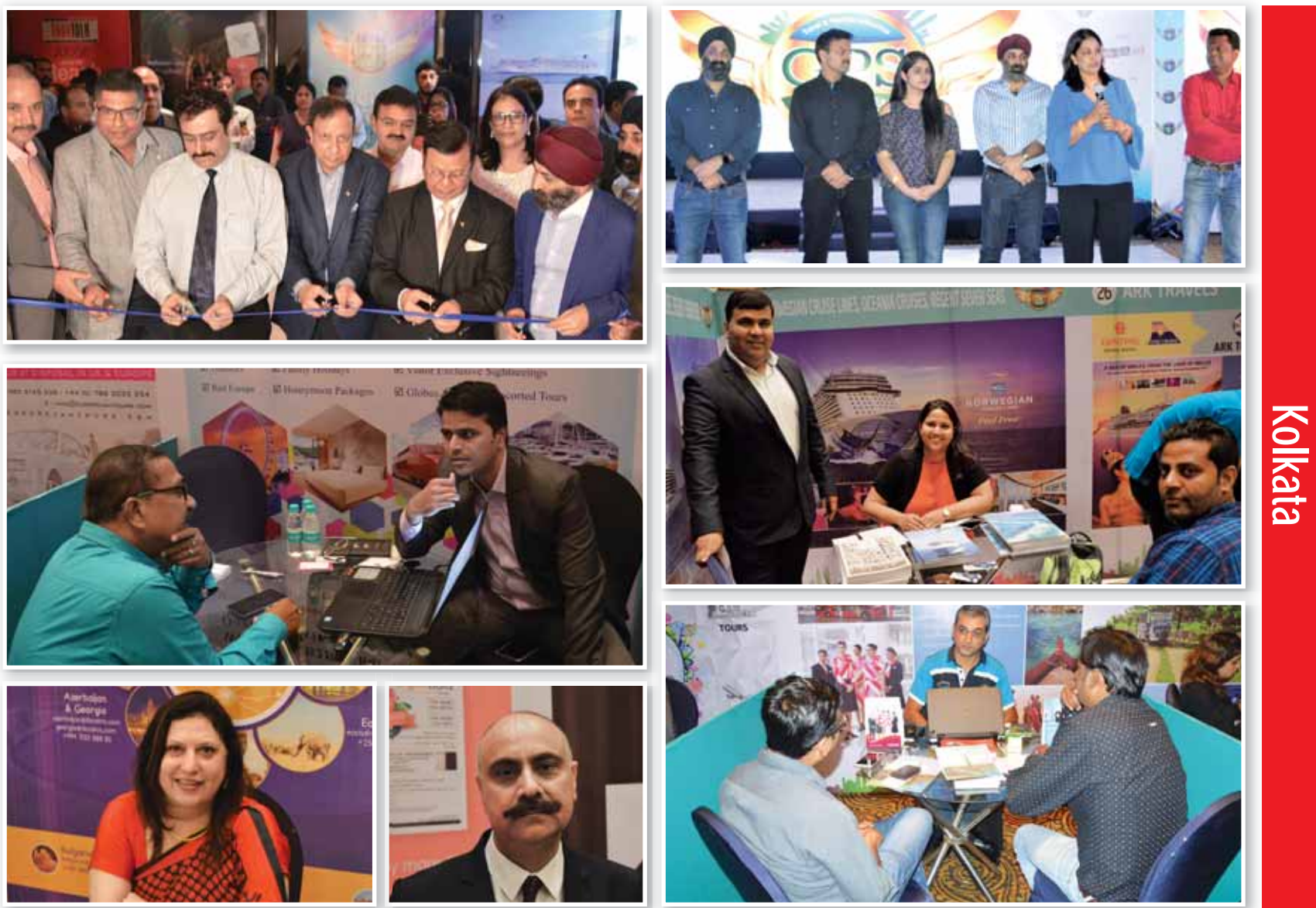
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# GPS makes a thrilling debut in Kochi

After successful shows in Ahmedabad and Chandigarh, the Global Panorama Showcase (GPS) headed to Kolkata, and later made a debut in Kochi with 750+ registrations on the first day. The event got a great reponse from local travel trade and was successful in holding its knowledge sessions, business meetings and networking events over three days in both the cities. GPS will conclude its marathon in Pune on August 12.





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## AUGUST 2017

Dubai Tourism MICE roadshow	Ahmedabad	16
Dubai Tourism MICE roadshow	Hyderabad	17
GBTA India Convention	Delhi NCR	18
Dubai Tourism MICE roadshow	Mumbai	18
ACTE Conference	Tokyo, Japan	22-23
Israel roadshow	Bengaluru	22
Israel roadshow	Delhi NCR	24
Israel roadshow	Kolkata	26
Israel roadshow	Hyderabad	28
Mauritius Tourism roadshow	Mumbai	28
Mauritius Tourism roadshow	Delhi NCR	29-30
La Cita	Florida, USA	29-31
ICPB Convention	Hyderabad	29-31
Israel roadshow	Chennai	30
Mauritius Tourism roadshow	Bengaluru	31

## SEPTEMBER 2017

Mauritius Tourism roadshow	Chennai	1
TTF	Ahmedabad	1-3
German National Tourism Organisation roadshow	Delhi NCR	4-5
German National Tourism Organisation roadshow	Ahmedabad	6
German National Tourism Organisation roadshow	Mumbai	7-8
IATO Convention	Bhubaneswar	7-10
TTF	Surat	8-10
Busan International Travel Fair	Busan, South Korea	8-11
OTOAI Convention	Ras Al Khaimah	13-16
Czech Tourism roadshow	Bengaluru	13
PATA Travel Mart	Macau	13-15
FICCI Global MICE Travel Mart	Delhi NCR	14-16
HPMF Conference	Jodhpur	14-16
FHRAI Convention	Bengaluru	14-16
IITM	Delhi NCR	15-17
Seychelles Tourism Board roadshow	Delhi NCR	18
ATOAI Convention	Kumarakom, Kerala	18-21
Astana Leisure	Astana, Kazakhstan	18-21
Seychelles Tourism Board roadshow	Ahmedabad	20
IITM	Mumbai	21-23
JATA Tourism Expo	Tokyo, Japan	21-24
Seychelles Tourism Board roadshow	Mumbai	22
IITM	Mumbai	22-24
World Routes	Barcelona	23-26
Tourism Ireland roadshow	Mumbai	24-26
Tourism Ireland roadshow	Delhi NCR	27-29
IATA World Financial Symposium	Dublin	25-28
IT&CMA and CTW Asia-Pacific 2017	Bangkok, Thailand	26-28
IFTM Top Resa	Paris, France	26-28
India Hospitality Awards	Delhi NCR	29

## OCTOBER 2017

IATA Global Sustainable Aviation Summit	Geneva	3-4
UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook	Guangxi, China	10-12
CAPA-ACTE Global Summit	London, UK	11-13

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## ATOAI's Convention: Sept 18-21

The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) will be held from Sept 18-21, 2017, in Kerala. Potential of adventure tourism in India and showcasing Kerala in a new light will be discussed.



TT BUREAU

ATOAI's 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention will be hosted at Backwater Ripples Resort in Kumarakom, Kerala, and is expecting participation of 350-400 delegates. The theme of this year's Convention is 'Emerging Pathways', which will focus on making India as the adventure capital of the world. The convention will provide a platform for key stakeholders of the industry including representatives of the government, tourism boards and other players, to deliberate upon adventure tourism policy; capacity creation; responsible tourism and marketing of this segment,



Rajesh Ojha  
Hony. Secretary  
ATOAI

informs **Rajesh Ojha**, Hony. Secretary, ATOAI, and Chairman for ATOAI Convention.

He says, "India is the only country in the world that offers every possible adven-

ture activity. Unfortunately, India has not been able to fully capitalise on the advantages of this segment and position itself as the preferred adventure destination at a global level. The year 2017 marks a watershed year when the association has taken upon itself to raise the bar for this segment and to develop and market India as the adventure capital of the world."

Ojha believes that India is a country that offers almost every adventure and active holiday experience that one can seek. "As the definition of adventure has expanded in present times, India too has enhanced its game to offer everything under the large um-

brella of adventure tourism. Be it skiing, water rafting, trekking, off-road adventures, biking, cycling, scuba diving, river cruising, angling, bungee jumping, ballooning, caving, birding, adventure parks, nature retreats, mountaineering or more, India has it all," says Ojha.

**Tejbir Singh Anand**, Vice President, ATOAI, adds, "We have had our previous conventions in the north but adventure tourism is spread across the country. Kerala has untapped potential for adventure activities like kayaking, canoeing etc. and so it now needs to be showcased for adventure tourism as well, not just products like Ayurveda and backwaters."

## Venue for ADTOI convention

Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI) has decided upon Hotel Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach as their convention venue, and has declared the Chairman and Co-Chairman of the Convention.



NISHA VERMA

ADTOI's annual convention is all set to happen at the exotic Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach in Andhra Pradesh. **P. P. Khanna**, President, ADTOI, said, "Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach is the sponsor and venue for our convention scheduled from November 17-19, 2017. We are also working on our website for the convention, which should be ready and active by next month. We are trying to connect to all the trade partners and members through this website."

Speaking on the sidelines of the monthly General House Meeting of ADTOI, which was held at the Pride Plaza Hotel, Khanna also announced the Chairman and Co-Chairman of the convention. "**Rajat Sawhney**, Vice-President, ADTOI, will be the Chairman of the convention, while **Dalip Gupta**, Joint Secretary, ADTOI, will be the Co-Chairman and will be concerned with the planning and execution of a good and successful event for all members."



P. P. Khanna  
President  
ADTOI

Rajat Sawhney was positive about having a successful convention as well. "The state government has

confirmed their participation in the convention. We will be sharing more details of the convention soon. However, we will be taking around 300 members to Visakhapatnam. We have support from the Andhra Pradesh Government as well as local players in the industry there," revealed Sawhney.

Khanna added that by having the convention in Visakhapatnam, they would be able to promote the city as a tourist destination, as members would be able to see its potential.

## TAAI WR gets a new team

Every regional election brings with it a new team and the TAAI Western Region has chosen Sameer Karnani as its Chairman for the next term.



HAZEL JAIN

The Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) has conducted its regional and chapter elections and the results are out. The Western Region elections that took place on July 24, 2017, in Mumbai named **Sameer Karnani**, currently serving as the association's Regional Secretary, as its Chairman for the new term. **Sampat Damani** and **Madhuri Kanga**, who were the last Chairman and Treasurer, respectively, for the Western Region, have stepped down.



Sampat Damani  
Chairman - Western Region  
TAAI

Revealing this is **Sampat Damani**, Chairman - Western Region, TAAI, who will continue to retain this position until

the National Committee elections are held later this year. He says, "The National Committee elections will be held around the third week of September. There is a request for me to stand for the national elections. We will take a call on that in due course of time."

Meanwhile, the national convention has been kept on hold as TAAI has asked for different dates. "A lot of work has gone into Kunming so there is a chance we will go ahead with it and carry on as planned with a new set of

dates. Else we will have to look at other destinations," Damani adds.


## New team for Western Region

- Chairman:**  
**Sameer Karnani**  
(Arunodaya Travels)
- Secretary:**  
**Rajesh Poddar**  
(Rightchoice Tours N Travels)
- Treasurer:**  
**Dharmesh Shah**  
(Dadyson Travels)



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## India Tourism Development Corporation

### New Delhi

**Ravneet Kaur**, Additional Secretary has been appointed as the Chairperson and Managing Director of India Tourism Development Corporation. Kaur, an IAS officer of 1988 batch, Punjab cadre, was Joint Secretary in Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion under Ministry of Commerce and Industry prior to this role. In a span of 29 years, Kaur served multiple positions some of which include Vice Chairperson and Managing Director of Punjab Communications Ltd. She spent a year as a Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow at Cornell University, USA and holds an MA in Economics as well as an M.Sc. in Public Economic Management from University of Birmingham, UK.



## InterGlobe Technology Quotient

### Gurgaon

**Sandeep Dwivedi** has been elevated to the post of Chief Operating Officer at ITQ to lead the overall responsibility of ITQ's growing operations including strategic business development and implementing growth strategies. Having previously led the position as Chief Commercial Officer at ITQ and served in InterGlobe Group of companies in different capacities, he has demonstrated spectacular leadership competency with company's growth in the market. With over 25 years in executive management and business supervisory roles, he spearheads commercial strategy and business growth in the organisation.



## Ritz Carlton

### Bengaluru

**Antony Page** joins Ritz-Carlton, Bengaluru, as its new General Manager. Before this, Page was the General Manager at JW Marriott Hotel New Delhi Aerocity. His association with Marriott started in 2005, when he was designated as the Hotel Manager at Sydney Harbour Marriott. Page has also been a part of the Starwood Hotel group and served as the opening Director of Food & Beverage for Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre. He completed his graduation in February 1984 while working for the Sheraton Hotel Group and also holds a degree from the University of New South Wales.



## Park Regis Goa

### Goa

Park Regis Goa, a hotel managed by StayWell Hospitality Group, has appointed **Vishal Khosla** as its new General Manager. Khosla brings with him experience of over 18 years in the hospitality industry. He has been previously associated with global brands like Hilton, Glasgow, UK Radisson SAS Hotel, Holiday Inn Hotel, Aylesbury and Etihad Airways. In India, he has been a part of senior management at The Club Mahindra Resort, Varca Beach, Goa; The Lalit Golf & Spa Resort, Goa; and The Kenilworth Resort & Spa, Goa. Khosla holds a Diploma in Hotel Management.



## Fariyas Resort Lonavala

### Lonavala

Fariyas Resort Lonavala has appointed **Nasir Khan** as its new General Manager. Khan is a hotel management graduate with industry experience of 23 years. He has been associated with properties like Hyatt International, Radisson Noida and Kingdom of Dreams to name a few. He has also worked in the past with Fariyas Lonavala as the Resort Manager. For the last two years, Nasir was working with Rhythm Lonavala as the General Manager. He has an EMBA degree in Tourism & Project Management.



## Destination Canada

### New Delhi

**Pooja Sabharwal** has joined Destination Canada, India Office, as Account Director. Sabharwal is a Postgraduate in International Marketing from the University of Leeds, United Kingdom and an Honours Graduate in Commerce from the Shri Ram College of Commerce, University of Delhi. In her previous endeavours, she has worked in the FMCG sector and with an advertising and PR firm. Most recently, she worked at Zomato as VP Operations, leading Community Engagement globally and also worked closely with Country Heads and Community Engagement Leads to enable global markets to reach traffic and user engagement targets.



## Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA)-India office

### New Delhi

**Sonal Saigal** has been appointed as Destination Manager for RAKTDA in India. She comes with 12+ years of experience in the tourism industry. A graduate from Delhi University in Entrepreneurship and Business Management, Saigal has done her tourism training with The International School of Tourism-Zurich and Kuoni Group. She started her career with The Oberoi Group of Hotels and Resorts and Trident Hilton Hotels and was previously associated with Nepal Tourism Board, Hong Kong Tourism Board, and Jordan Embassy.



## India Sales Associates

### New Delhi

**Tej Bahadur Singh** has joined India Sales Associates, the Luxury Hotels' Marketing & Consultancy firm, as Head-National Sales. He brings over 20 years of experience in the hospitality and airline sales. He shall be responsible for augmenting the network of luxury travel agencies and tour operators to support the growth of the GSA service in India for the select portfolio of Banyan Tree and Angsana Hotels & Resorts, luxurious Panacea Koh Samui Resort etc. He will also promote the Paradise Resort & Spa, Sardinia, Italy. Singh is a science graduate and an alumni of IHM, Lucknow.



## Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport

### Mumbai

Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport, part of the InterContinental Hotels Group has appointed **Ganeshram Iyer** as the Rooms Division Manager. With over 14 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Iyer has gained mastery over several aspects of the same, ranging from rooms to front office, revenue projections to guest relations. Prior to his current role, Iyer has worked with Hyatt, Le Royal Meridien, JW Marriott, Radisson White Sands Resort Goa, Taj Residency, and Hotel President Park. Iyer has a Bachelor's degree in Commerce from Aurangabad University.



## TALKing People

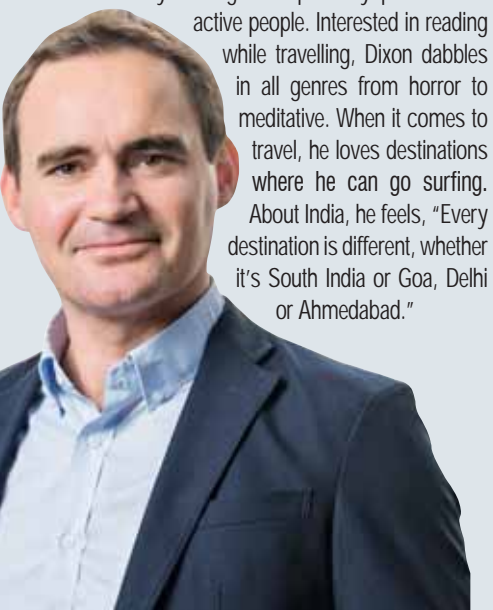
**Vijay Krishnan**, General Manager, Alila Fort Bishangarh, unwinds by listening to music of Eric Clapton, Stevie Wonder and Modern Talking. "I most passionate about my job and the people I work with. I also enjoy sports. One thing about me that not many people know is that I am a huge cricket fan and keep track of all cricketing records," he says. Travel is also one of his passions. "When holidaying in India, I like visiting Kochi and internationally I prefer Dubai as a holiday destination," he reveals.



**Varun Gupta**, CEO, Goomo.com, unwinds by running or playing football or golf. "I am also very passionate about cooking and love exploring different cuisines. One thing that not many people know about me is that I studied hotel management for 6 months and had to wait tables at the The Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai," he says. Travel is also one of his must-dos. Gupta reveals about his favourite holiday spot, "I prefer holidaying in Himachal Pradesh when in India and Cape Town when travelling internationally."



"Don't water the rocks" is the motto that **Steven Dixon**, Tourism New Zealand's Regional Manager-South and South East Asia lives by. "I believe that one should not waste energy on things that are not going to grow," he says. He gets inspired by positive and active people. Interested in reading while travelling, Dixon dabbles in all genres from horror to meditative. When it comes to travel, he loves destinations where he can go surfing. About India, he feels, "Every destination is different, whether it's South India or Goa, Delhi or Ahmedabad."







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## 2100 aircraft by 2020 for India

Boeing has forecast that India will require 2100 new airplanes worth \$290 billion by 2020. **Dinesh A. Keskar**, Senior Vice President-Sales Asia Pacific & India, Boeing, discusses factors boosting the country's growth.



SHAHZAD BAGWAN

### Q Tell us about Boeing's forecast on the India market?

Based on factors like GDP growth in India, fuel price and exchange rates for next 20 years, India will need 2100 aircraft worth \$290 billion. This is the highest forecast we have shown for India and we are quite bullish on the Indian market because of many factors that are prevalent here. Commercial aerospace demand in India continues to grow at unprecedented rates. The increasing number of passengers combined with a strong exchange rate, low fuel prices and high load factors augurs well for India's aviation market, especially for the Low Cost Carriers. Apart from outlook for 2020 other findings showed traffic growth in India is more than 20 per cent, far exceeding the global average of 7.3 per cent.

### Q Please throw some light on the current aircraft on order by Indian carriers?

We are basically a dominant player in wide body market. We have Air India operating 24 787-8 Dreamliner aircraft and we have three more to be delivered by October this year. Air India also operates 777-300ER and they will be getting delivery of three more aircraft in the early part of 2018. Jet Airways is currently operating ten 777-300ER and have ten 787-9 on orders from



activity that will make Air India stronger, healthier and more growth oriented. With somebody coming in and the government supporting the new entrant, obviously they will be investing money in the market to grow further which will help the airline prosper more.

### Q Which are major growth drivers in Indian aviation?

LCCs are doing a great job in terms of increasing growth in India. SpiceJet, IndiGo, GoAir and some others are working hard to drive the growth. Airlines like Air India, Jet Airways and Vistara, which are full-service carriers, are

key is when all those airlines and maybe some new entrants in the future will together result in the forecast that we have given for the Indian market.

### Q How will the MAX aircraft help open new markets for airlines?

We have just delivered the first 737-8 MAX in May this year, which was purchased by SpiceJet and Jet Airways in India. The 737-8 MAX aircraft will be 14 per cent more fuel efficient than the one we have currently. This category aircraft will have a flying range of about 300-plus miles and will help carriers in India to open up new markets which they were unable to add because of inadequate range from the current aircraft. The 737 MAX is the fastest selling airplane in Boeing history because customers throughout the world, including India, want its combination of performance, flexibility and efficiency. Boeing also continues to offer the most complete family of wide body airplanes, as evidenced by our more than 85 per cent in-service market share in India. While we develop this, we have made sure that the operating cost is low, the fuel burn is low and thereby the Indian carrier gets opportunity to make more profits.

### Q How do you see UDAAN Scheme benefiting the Indian carriers?

First, it will help India connect to more cities and more people living in those cities will have the option of flying to their destinations. Second, it is going to be something that will help India grow faster and our current forecast on India market will get even better. Finally, for airlines in India, when they start a new route under the UDAAN scheme with a 90-seater airplane over the next 4-5 years, it will become a route that a Boeing 737 can fly. When this happens, it will clearly be beneficial for the airlines and all stakeholders and the Government of India.

“I think India has reached the equilibrium where two out of five passengers are going to fly on a full-service carrier while three out of five will fly on a Low Cost Carrier.”

**Dinesh A. Keskar**

Senior Vice President-Sales  
Asia Pacific & India, Boeing



Boeing. In terms of single-aisle market, we have a large order of 205 aircraft from SpiceJet and 75 MAX aircraft orders from Jet Airways, both of which will be delivered in one year time period.

### Q Do you see any impact on the current orders by Air India due to the disinvestment in the Airline?

No, the disinvestment or privatisation of Air India is a bold step by the government. We always support any

also growing. I think India has reached the equilibrium where two out of five passengers are going to fly on a full-service carrier while three out of five will fly on a Low Cost Carrier.

### Q Has there been any increased growth in any particular airlines?

Every airline in the Indian market is showing positive growth which is a good sign for the market. Each airline will gain their growth based on a lot of factors but the

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Just as the sun rises in the east, East India has led the way forward for the rest of the country in various fields, including culture and heritage. Home to a wide variety of customs and traditions and being the perfect amalgamation of various cultures, India draws many domestic and international tourists to the region.

As a tribute, India Travel Awards recognises the achievers of the travel and tourism industry, who have worked steadfastly towards enhancing the environment to allow growth of this business. These stalwarts need to be acknowledged, appreciated and encouraged in every region of the country – North, South, East and West.

Our top-most honour, the Gold Maya, is awarded to those stalwarts who have shaped the industry the way it is today and created innovative ways and products to take the industry a notch higher. The awards ceremony is brought to life by a charismatic anchor and singer who makes everyone dance and sing to her beats. At the black-tie, Silver Service event, various performers enthrall and amuse the audience.

The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of East India Travel Awards in Guwahati was the beginning of a new journey of long-term associations for and a renewal of the bond that we shared with many others.

India Travel Awards will be travelling to various other cities in East India in its subsequent editions. Thus, we take upon ourselves, in our own small way, to revive and enhance tourism in the eastern part of the region.

SanJeet

## India Travel Awards

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# Maya makes its North

The 4<sup>th</sup> East India Travel Awards travelled to the North East region for the very first time and celebrated excellence in the travel and tourism fraternity in the region.



(L-R) Vikas Ray; Dilip D Khatau; Tsering Wange; Supratim Raj Basu; Suresh Periwal; R Sudhan; Arni Sapkal and SanJeet





The winners of East India Travel Awards 2017 with their trophies at Radisson Blu Hotel Guwahati

# East debut with Guwahati



AHANA GURUNG

In a first, East India Travel Awards travelled all the way to the North East to host its fourth edition with the region's travel trade. The efforts of stalwarts in the travel and tourism industry of East India were honoured over an evening of merriment and entertainment at the Radisson Blu Hotel Guwahati on July 26, 2017. Gathering the region's movers and shakers from states like Sikkim, Odisha, West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and several others, the event was inaugurated by **R. Sudhan**, Special Secretary (Tourism), Government of Manipur, who also was the Chief Guest for the award ceremony.

Speaking about the importance of such events in the region, Sudhan stated, "I sincerely believe such events should happen more often especially in this part of the country, which does not receive much attention. More such events, more recognition and the untapped tourism potential should be explored. We are certain that the awards can persuade more entrepreneurs to explore these frontiers."

**Sanjeet**, Mentor, India Travel Awards, added, "Today, tourism is synonymous with progress and development and is echoing around the country. Every small hotel, restaurant, attraction, tourist shop contributes to the growth of this industry but are we doing enough to recognise

them? We've instituted these awards for this precise reason. The regional awards recognises those establishments which may not be able to see the day of light on a national level. The industry is now growing by leaps and bounds and these small efforts make the big difference."

The awards are divided into four categories – Personal Award, Business Awards, Trending Awards and Partner Awards. The Personal Awards are for the legends and leaders who have established themselves and for youngsters who deserve encouragement to become future leaders. The Business Awards are for those organisations which have done outstanding work in their field and deserve accolades, while the Trending Awards are decided by the critics. Finally, the Partner Awards are for the partners that have made the awards

ceremony a grand success.

The glitzy night was also graced by the presence of the Guest of Honour, **Arni Sapkal**, Gladrags Mrs. India Mumbai who awarded the trophy to the winners, along with R Sudhan. A total of 41 award categories were presented to travel, tourism and hospitality's frontrunners as a tribute to their contribution. **Dilip D Khatau**, Chairman, The Corbett Foundation & Chairman, Conservation Corporation of India joined the Gallery of Legends, while **Tsering Wange**, Managing Director, Himalayan Holidays, was honoured as the DDP Trailblazer. Additionally, **Supratim Raj Basu**, Founder & Director, Help Tourism, was conferred the DDP Game Changer award. ↴







## Gallery of Legends | **DILIP D. KHATAU**

Having contributed a great deal to the cause of tourism, **Dilip D Khatau**, Chairman, The Corbett Foundation & Chairman, Conservation Corporation of India, spearheaded wildlife conservation which has played an important role in the fourth-generation businessman's career. However, he is of the opinion that much more needs to be done to bring out the full potential of the niche segment. He says, "We've always been second to Africa when it comes to wildlife tourism and there are a lot of things that can be done for the segment to realise its full potential. The most crucial step in achieving this is facilitating better coordination and communication between the Ministry of Tourism and the Forest Department. The coming months are definitely going to see a spike in travellers visiting wildlife parks but there currently is a restriction as to the number of visitors allowed." Another segment that India has a huge potential in but is yet to reach that level is adventure tourism, especially water sports, he adds. "India has a massive coast but limited places with quality services and facilities for water sports. This needs to be utilised well."

► **Dilip D. Khatau**, Chairman, The Corbett Foundation and Chairman, Conservation Corporation of India Pvt. Ltd., received the award for **Gallery of Legends**. He was felicitated by **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Group; **R. Sudhan**, Special Secretary Tourism, Government of Manipur and **Arni Sapkal**, Gladrags Mrs. India Mumbai 2017





## DDP Trailblazer | TSERING WANGE

The Managing Director of Himalayan Holidays, **Tsering Wange**, has added several feathers to his cap including the title of the first Indian ever to take the world's highest sky jump, among several other achievements. Wange expresses that even though the region is laden with achievers in travel and tourism, there is little done to motivate and applaud their success. "We've been in the industry for several years but being based in a remote area, it is a different struggle as compared to someone from a metropolitan city," comments Wange. "It is extremely encouraging to be brought out into the limelight and it's safe to say that the North East states have been faring much better as more tourists have shown interest in visiting the region. And with events like India Travel Awards, our region will be known far and wide. Adventure tourism in the country is picking up but the road to success is long, although I am certain that the niche segment will reach greater heights soon."

► **Tsering Wange**, Managing Director, Himalayan Holidays, received the award for **DDP Trailblazer**. He was felicitated by **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Group; **R. Sudhan**, Special Secretary Tourism, Government of Manipur and **Arni Sapkal**, Gladrags Mrs. India Mumbai 2017







## DDP Gamechanger | SUPRATIM RAJ BASU

Help Tourism pioneered sustainable development of communities through ecotourism and supported preservation of culture and nature under the dynamic leadership of **Supratim Raj Basu**. He identified and promoted destinations based on ecotourism and is also the founder of the Association for Conservation & Tourism (ACT), a non-profit NGO started to promote ownership of local people highlighting the natural and cultural resources around them. He shares, "The travel industry needs to be recognised and its deeds and actions should be appreciated to keep it on a par with the other industries in the country. The India Travel Awards is doing a brilliant job at this, specifically since it happens to occur in the North East region. Not too many events are organised here. Additionally, he is an expert in identifying rural tourism products, motivating communities into rural tourism services and training local stakeholders into hospitality and allied service." Basu strongly believes that a destination is all about the experience, and preserving the natural ecosystem as well as the culture and the locals is an extremely important aspect.

► **Supratim Raj Basu**, Founder & Director, Help Tourism, received the award for **DDP Gamechanger**. He was felicitated by **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Group; **R. Sudhan**, Special Secretary Tourism, Government of Manipur and **Arni Sapkal**, Gladrags Mrs. India Mumbai 2017







## Chief Guest

### R. SUDHAN

Special Secretary of Tourism of Government of Manipur, **R. Sudhan** commends the event and opines that such occasions will be effective in drawing the spotlight to the region. Drawing the attention to the development of tourism, he says, "The state of Manipur has witnessed a gradual boom in tourism – it is an incremental expression of the potential. We have new hotel properties coming up, both in the state headquarters of Imphal, and in the district capitals. In the plans to connect the country to South East Asia, Manipur will become the gateway. In terms of new initiatives, a spiritual circuit in the state by the government of India is underway, while several of the tourist permits required for certain areas are also being relaxed. We are taking little, but effective, steps for tourism to prosper here."

► **R. Sudhan**, Special Secretary Tourism, Government of Manipur received the award for **Chief Guest**. He was felicitated by **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Group and **Arni Sapkal**, Gladrags Mrs. India Mumbai 2017

## Guest of Honour

### ARNI SAPKAL

With the toughness of an army person and the calmness of a yogini, **Arni Sapkal**, Gladrags Mrs. India Mumbai is the perfect role model for all the young women out there. Married for over nine years, Arni has successfully set up her own company and is now training hundreds of clients to a life of fitness and health. A perfect combination of beauty with brains, Sapkal praises India Travel Awards for honouring and encouraging the best in the travel trade.

► **Arni Sapkal**, Gladrags Mrs. India Mumbai 2017 being honoured with Pearl Trophy 'Maya' for her support to India Travel Awards







## Entrepreneur of the year

### MANOJ SARAF

Managing Director of Gainwell Travel and Leisure, **Manoj Saraf** applauds the team and the event for its concept. He says, "It was planned and executed very well, considering this is the first time it has happened in North East India. The region really needs a lot of support from the fraternity so that it can prosper and more people from all over the world are made aware about it. Tourism is growing, and at a good pace and the North East is coming up gradually as the government gives more impetus to it. I have been associated with the industry in this part of the country for a while now and it is motivational to see events like India Travel Awards being held here."

► **Manoj Saraf**, Managing Director, Gainwell Travel and Leisure, was given the Entrepreneur of the year award

## Best General Manager

### VIKAS RAY

The General Manager of Radisson Blu Hotel Guwahati shares his experience with the setting up of the hotel chain in the region. Ray reveals, "It wasn't easy to establish the first international brand in this region and we had our own share of challenges. While we are gearing up for our third anniversary in few weeks from now, the recognition couldn't have come at a better time. It is a moment of great pride to have been bestowed upon with this prestigious award. Such an encouragement motivates us to perform even better and excel in our endeavours."

► **Vikas Ray**, General Manager, Radisson Blu Hotel Guwahati, was given the Best General Manager award



## Best Airline - International

### SILKAIR (SINGAPORE)

On winning the Best International Airline award, **Biren Poh**, Manager - Eastern India, Singapore Airlines, exclaims, "On behalf of the whole team, I'd like to thank the organisers for bestowing this honour. It was a wonderful evening and we thoroughly enjoyed it! This is a wonderful morale booster to the travel professionals of the region." SilkAir currently operates in a total of eight Indian cities and connects over 50 destinations in the Asia-Pacific region. The SIA Group airlines currently serve 15 destinations in India from Singapore.

► The award was given to **SilkAir (Singapore)** and received by Jagdish Ram Bhojwani, General Manager India; Biren Poh, Manager, Eastern India and Rahul Saith, Sales Manager - Eastern India



## Best Adventure Destination

### SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM

**Raynah Coutinho**, Marketing and Communications Manager, South African Tourism, says that the awards are truly a reflection of the industry's efforts to propel tourism. She elaborates on South Africa's popularity among Indians and shares, "We saw a 21 per cent increase in Indian arrivals last year. It has been going well this year too and we've received a lot of enquiries so far, especially for adventure tourism. So it is quite encouraging to see the adventure part being tapped apart from wildlife. We're currently on a 17-city roadshow all around India where we will be covering most of the Tier-II cities and apprising the agents about South Africa's tourism products."

► The award was given to **South African Tourism** and received by Raynah Coutinho, Marketing & Communications Manager







## Best Global Distribution System (GDS) | TRAVELPORT GALILEO

An enthusiastic **Sandeep Dwivedi**, COO, InterGlobe Technology Quotient, remarks, "Winning India Travel Awards - East for the third time has reinstated our confidence in leading a change for a better tomorrow. Travelport Smartpoint offers complete travel inventory through which travel agents (both offline and online) can sell well-planned, custom made, tour packages depending of their clientele's preference. We would like to thank the entire travel fraternity for being with us through the various innovations that have helped us reinvent seamlessness in travel business. Renovating technology and upgrading the industry of travel commerce have always been our goal, and we continue to work towards achieving it."

► The award was given to **Travelport Galileo** and received by **Phalguni Parikh**, Regional Head - East and **Saila Pratim Buragohain**, Relationship Manager

## Best MICE Operator ICON PLANNERS

**Sunaina Chatterjee**, Chief Executive Officer, Icon Planners, is thrilled to be receiving the award for their forte. She exclaims, "We've been in the industry for a long time and it is an honour to be recognised for our contribution. It's wonderful to see such events being held in this region and I hope more MICE events are organised here. The MICE industry has grown manifold as compared to a few years ago, and since the country has gradually understood its importance, I feel it is only set to see more growth in the coming years."

► The award was given to **iCon Planners** and received by **Sunaina Chatterjee**, Chief Executive Officer, Incentives & Conference Planners and **Ritesh Joshi**, Head - Corporate Travel



## Best Debut Hotel HOLIDAY INN KOLKATA AIRPORT

"We are very excited to be receiving this award, that too, within a few months of the hotel's opening," quips **Debashish Brahma**, Director of Sales and Marketing, Holiday Inn Kolkata Airport. "In fact, this is IHG's very first hotel in this part of the country, so it is definitely a momentous occasion for us," he adds. The 137-room hotel opened its doors to the public early this year and is located just five kilometres away from Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport, with close proximity to Business Parks, SEZs and IT hub of Kolkata in Rajarhat, New Town and Salt Lake Sector-V area.

► The award was given to **Holiday Inn Kolkata Airport** and received by **Debashish Brahma**, Director of Sales & Marketing; **Kenneth Scott**, General Manager and **Sabyasachi Chatterjee**, Associate Director of Sales



## Best Luxury Tour Operator JET SETTERS

**Tarakeshwar Singh**, Director, Jet Setters, explains the importance of personalisation and elaborates, "We offer completely customised, bespoke or tailor made trips to give well-travelled guests an out-of-the-box experience. In most cases, our itineraries are highly customised to address your likes and dislikes, be it a preference for small intimate inns over grand hotels, or visiting medieval battlefields to meeting local artists behind the scenes. In a city like Kolkata where luxury travelling is a remote and distant dream, we have been able to carve a niche client base for ourselves. It is pertinent to note that we do not accept a client less than 2 lakh per file."

► The award was given to **Jet Setters** and received by its Directors **Tarakeshwar Singh** and **Darshika Shah**







## Best Corporate Hotel | GOLDEN TULIP, SALT LAKE CITY, KOLKATA

**S**umanta Maity, General Manager, Golden Tulip Hotel, gives the credit to his team for making it the best corporate hotel in the region. He adds, "We take pride in the personalised services we offer that are customer-oriented in every way. Our MD, Ashish Mittal has given enormous support to ensure the hotel exceeds all expectations. The staff is extremely courteous while the culinary expertise of the kitchen has become the hotel's key traits." A part of the luxury hotel collection Louvre Hotel Group, the property is located in Kolkata and has 55 well-furnished rooms, a rooftop restaurant 'Noir' and banquet facilities, among others, making it one of the ideal venues for hosting social and corporate events.

► The award was given to **Golden Tulip, Salt Lake City, Kolkata** and received by **Sumanta Maity**, General Manager

## Best Airline - Domestic | SPICEJET

**R**epresenting the airline on the occasion, **Debjit Ghosh**, General Manager – Sales and Marketing (East and North East, Muscat and Bangkok), SpiceJet, says, "I think what India Travel Awards is doing is absolutely remarkable. The best part is that every region gets to shine in its own way since it is a focused event. Traffic overall has grown manifold, especially in East India where other means of transport are not very feasible, so people prefer to fly. Particularly long-haul domestic flights like Guwahati – Chennai and Guwahati-Bengaluru have fared well in this region. We are even working on connecting the North East to international destinations soon."

► The award was given to **SpiceJet** and received by **Rajesh Roy**, Sr. Executive Trade Sales; **Debjit Ghosh**, General Manager - Sales & Marketing and **Bhaskar Borgohain**, Airport Manager



## Best Luxury Hotel Brand | MAYFAIR HOTELS & RESORTS

**Björn Noel DeNiese**, Vice President – Sales and Marketing, MAYFAIR Hotels and Resorts, talks about the North East's tourism potential and says, "The region has huge potential in terms of tourism and it's great to see that India Travel Awards have finally come this side. Since tourism is one of the mainstays of the region and is also a big contributor to the economy, it is very important to solve all issues amicably, to ensure the livelihood of the locals is not affected. Besides that, infrastructure and connectivity are the two things that need to be improved but fortunately the state governments as well as the central government are doing a lot to overcome these challenges."

► The award was given to **MAYFAIR Hotels & Resorts** and received by **Björn Noel DeNiese**, Vice President (Sales & Marketing)



## Best Destination Management Company | **STHI HOLIDAYS DMC**

**W**ith offices in 19 countries globally, STHI Holidays offers quality services with their team of skilled and knowledgeable professionals. Within a short span of time, they have increased their foothold in the industry by offering 24/7 support to their customers and B2B partners. **Gagan Kumar**, Director, STHI Holidays, remarks, "It is a privilege to have been a part of this and we are grateful for the never-ending support from the organisers." The group has witnessed an incline in business, with growth of 49 per cent recorded in the first quarter of 2017.

► The award was given to **STHI Holidays DMC** and received by **Gagan Kumar**, Director







## Best National Tourism Office

### DESTINATION CANADA

**Pooja Sabharwal**, Account Director, Destination Canada-India, says, "It is such a proud moment for us to receive the award. Being the proud recipient of 'Maya' was possible due to the continued commitment of our travel partners to promote Destination Canada amongst Indians. Canada has established itself as an exciting and promising destination in the minds of Indian travellers. The month of April proved to be a record-breaking period for Canada in terms of growth in Indian visitors. A rise of 37 per cent was recorded, while year-on-year growth from January to May crossed 25 per cent."

► The award was given to **Destination Canada** and received by **Pooja Sabharwal**, Account Director

## Best Debut City Hotel

### RAMADA DARJEELING GANDHI ROAD

"It was a great platform for everybody and we're delighted to be receiving this award within a few months of us opening doors. India Travel Awards should continue to laud the efforts of everyone in the industry," exclaims **Vivek Shukla**, General Manager, Ramada Darjeeling Gandhi Road. The newly-opened property boasts spectacular views of Kangchenjunga and is located within walking distance of Darjeeling Railway Station — a UNESCO World Heritage Site. With 1660 square feet of event space, the hotel houses a meeting room as well, which can be arranged to accommodate 120 conference guests or 140 banquet guests.

► The award was given to **Ramada Darjeeling Gandhi Road** and received by **Jewel Borah**, Executive Chef; **Vivek Shukla**, General Manager and **Arijit Biswas**, Sales Manager



## Best Tour Operator- Outbound

### CLUB7 HOLIDAYS

**Sekhar Sinharay**, COO, Club7 Holidays, feels privileged to be a part of the awards and says, "We are honoured to receive such a prestigious award as Best Tour Operator in the outbound category. Club7 Holidays is committed to provide quality tours at affordable rates since 1988 and have been able to do so successfully over the years. We hope to continue our endeavour to do so in the East as well as to spread our wings on a pan-India level and emerge as the best outbound tour operator in India. I take this opportunity to thank all my colleagues for their sincere and devoted work."

► The award was given to **Club7 Holidays** and received by **Sekhar Sinharay**, COO, Leisure and **Rajiv Chatterjee**, Senior Manager, Leisure Sales



## Best Business Hotel

### RADISSON BLU HOTEL GUWAHATI

The Radisson Blu Hotel Guwahati is located on NH-37, close to the airport, and provides stellar amenities to its guests. The 196-room hotel is well suited for the business travellers, with its elegant event and meeting space that covers more than 4180 square metres. It provides versatile options, from an outdoor banquet lawn to a classic boardroom, so that a wide range of events can be held here with ease. Guests can also take advantage of the latest audio-visual equipment and access secretarial services and business tools from our fully equipped business centre.

► The award was given to **Radisson Blu Hotel Guwahati** and received by **Saurabh Pant**, Director of Sales & Marketing and **Vikas Ray**, General Manager





# Maya sashays into Guwahati





# to spellbind NE travel trade







## Best Tour Operator EASTERN MEADOWS TOURS

Feeling on top of the world at receiving the award, **Sandipan Ghosh**, CEO, Eastern Meadow Tours, says, "It's a wonderful initiative as it gives a platform to young entrepreneurs like me. It is very encouraging to witness the acknowledgement of our contribution. Tourism is one of the prime industries in India and has a lot of potential to grow even further. The added advantage is that the government has been very supportive in this regard, which is even more motivating for us. We will continue to work towards making this industry reach the helm of success."

► The award was given to **Eastern Meadows Tours** and received by **Bidisha Ghosh** and **Sandipan Ghosh**, Chief Executive Officer

## Best Travel Agency ADARSH TOURS, TREKS AND EXPEDITION, SIKKIM

**Gopal Basnett**, Proprietor, Adarsh Tours, Treks and Expedition, gushes about the evening and says, "The idea of the awards being held here was a very good one and the winners are worthy of them. Sikkim has witnessed a strong inflow of tourists, both international and domestic, in just a few months of the year and we expect the trend to continue. In my opinion, it is the highest number that we've seen in the past few years! Our state is known for its nature and numerous enchanting hotspots like Yumthang and Yuksom (for trekking), Samdruptse (for spiritual tourism) and so much more."

► The award was given to **Adarsh Tours, Treks and Expedition, Sikkim** and received by **Gopal Chettri (Basnett)**, Director and **Sanjay Chettri**, Reservation Manager



## Best Cultural Tourism Destination DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, GOVERNMENT OF MANIPUR

Manipur is blessed with nature's bounties and its flora and fauna deserve acclaim. It boasts cascading rapids, tripling rivers, exotic blooms, along with diverse groups of inhabitants with rich history, like Meitei, Nagas, Kuki-Chin-Mizo and Gorkhas. These are the people whose myths and legends, dances, indigenous games and martial arts and exotic handicrafts reflect the mystique of nature. It has also been termed the 'Switzerland of the East' by many for its oval-shaped valley surrounded by blue green hills.

► The award was given to **Department of Tourism, Government of Manipur** and received by **Shyamananda Sapam**, Manager Publicity and Marketing, Tourism Corporation of Manipur Ltd.



## Best Luxury Hotel JW MARRIOTT KOLKATA

Receiving the award on behalf of the team, **Ipsita Ganguli**, Director of Sales and Marketing, JW Marriott Hotel, comments, "I am extremely thrilled and humbled to be a part of the East India Travel Awards and we are very happy to be here. It's been a great journey since we launched the property in Kolkata last November, and it is really an honour to be awarded the Best Luxury Hotel. Ever since its opening, the whole city has been buzzing about JW Marriott and now that we are here, we are fully embracing the city for what it is."

► The award was given to **JW Marriott Kolkata** and received by **Ipsita Ganguli**, Director of Sales & Marketing







## Best Tour Operator - Inbound

### CLUBSIDE TOURS & TRAVELS

A veteran in the travel and tourism industry, **Suresh Periwal**, Managing Director, Clubside Tours and Travels, says that the region is underappreciated despite its vast tourism potential. He explains, "We operate in the North East and Kolkata and we've observed that the region is not marketed well enough, which is why the number of tourists we receive is much less than the rest of India. Even a place like Darjeeling with its world-renowned tea and Darjeeling Heritage Railway has failed to receive a huge tourist footfall. To help rest of the country get greater accessibility to the North East, we have opened an office in Guwahati as well, since it is the gateway to the North East states and gives us a wider reach."

► The award was given to **Clubside Tours & Travels** and received by **Suresh Periwal**, Managing Director

## Best Luxury Resort

### POLO ORCHID RESORT, CHERRAPUNJI

**Gunjan Kumar**, General Manager of Polo Orchid Resort, Cherrapunji, shares, "This has been a great way to not only acknowledge the tourism players, but also a wonderful platform to network and interact. Business has been great – there has been a steady growth in the number of tourists visiting Cherrapunji and the nearby areas such as Shillong. It's been a busy and fantastic season and we look forward to the rest of the months as well. People are now moving out from the done-to-death places and are exploring virgin territories like Cherrapunji, which is beneficial for us."

► The award was given to **Polo Orchid Resort, Cherrapunji**, and received by **Gunjan Kumar**, General Manager and **Shaikh Jasim Ullah**, Operation Manager



## Best Destination Management Company - International

### JET SETTERS

Complete destination services for associations and corporations in India as well as overseas, as well as incentive programmes by experienced, creative professionals are some of the services of Jet Setters that make them stand out. In terms of planning service for conferences and meetings, trade shows and special events, the company provides customised transportation, tours, off-site events, guides and hospitality and greeting services.

► The award was given to **Jet Setters** and received by its Directors, **Tarakeshwar Singh** and **Darshika Shah**



## Excellence in Customer Service

### NEW ORCHID HOTEL, SIKKIM

**Rahul Khandelwal**, Director of Voyage Hospitality, believes that the bloodline of the industry is customer and Voyage Hospitality always aims at excelling in customer satisfaction. He comments, "We are delighted to receive appreciation for the efforts taken on our first priority, i.e., customer service, on such a prestigious platform of East India Travel Award. Additionally, we are coming up with another project Denzong Shangrila (a 4-star deluxe hotel) and aim at winning the award next year for both the properties."

► The award was given to **New Orchid Hotel, Sikkim** and received by **Rahul Khandelwal**, Director, Voyage Hospitality and **Tshering Wangchuk Zangpo**, Managing Director







## Best Cruise Travel Agent

### GAINWELL TRAVEL AND LEISURE

**M**anoj Saraf, Managing Director, Gainwell Travels and Leisure, says, "We are a 25-year-old company; whatever we do today, the rest follow. We have innovated with ideas and introduced new products in the market, which sets us apart. We have always been strong with cruises and have been innovating with new programmes like a 'katha' (story) on cruise. We have seen a shift to the West like Europe and America as it is now becoming relatively cheaper than South East Asia. The cruises are sailing to newer territories like Australia and Africa," he adds.

► The award was given to **Gainwell Travel and Leisure** and received by **Manoj Saraf**, Managing Director

## Best Foreign Exchange Company

### CENTRUM DIRECT

**T**he company has been in operations since the past two decades, mainly in the travel and tourism sector, foreign exchange industry as well as retail, and has a pan-India presence. **Debopam Ghosh**, Vice President – Regional Head (East), informs that business has been going strong, including in the east and elaborates saying, "Last year, business raked up about ` 7,000 crore in the East and we were ranked second all over India. This year, we aim to touch the ` 15,000 crore mark and obtain the first position. Thanks to the India Travel Awards, we feel very encouraged and positive on the outlook for 2017."

► The award was given to **Centrum Direct** and received by **Debopam Ghosh**, Vice President - Regional Head East; **Chintu Bordoloi**, Branch Manager - Guwahati and **Rakesh Deka**, Senior Executive - Sales



## Best Eco-friendly Hotel

### HOLIDAY INN KOLKATA AIRPORT

**T**he newly-launched hotel offers comfort and convenience to the contemporary business and leisure traveller, with 137 well-appointed rooms and suites. For MICE and corporate guests, the hotel offers 6076 square feet of meeting and banqueting space, state-of-the-art technology as well as creative catering for their events. The food and beverage outlets include an all-day dining restaurant, a specialty restaurant and bar, and a patisserie. The recreational amenities include a terrace top swimming pool with a stunning view of the cityscape and a well-equipped fitness centre.

► The award was given to **Holiday Inn Kolkata Airport** and received by **Debashis Brahma**, Director of Sales & Marketing; **Kenneth Scott**, General Manager and **Sabyasachi Chatterjee**, Associate Director of Sales

## Best Event Management Company – Wedding Planners

### MAP5 EVENTS

**R**ahim Wallani, Director, MAP5 Events thanks the fraternity for their support and says, "We would also like to thank entire MAP5 team along with Ashish Mittal, MD of MAP5 Events, Hotels and Resorts, without whose strong vision and enthusiasm, it would not have been possible. Through time, we have become bigger and better and our services are not restricted to Kolkata but are available on a national level now." MAP5 Events is a wing of MAP5 Group, which offers end-to-end solutions for all social and corporate events. The company handles events like weddings, conferences, product launch and fashion shows.

► The award was given to **MAP5 Events** and received by **Sumanta Maity**, General Manager, Golden Tulip, Salt Lake City, Kolkata







## Best Eco-friendly Resort

### INFINITY RESORT KAZIRANGA

Explaining the concept of the resort, **Rina Khatau**, Vice Chairman, The Corbett Foundation and Vice Chairperson, Conservation Corporation of India, states, "We provide hardcore wildlife conservation resorts with luxury and price in mind." Through the Corbett Foundation, the group runs capacity building, interim relief for livestock killed by tigers, veterinary care, medical outreach, vocational training, women self-help and many other programmes for villagers living in close proximity to tiger reserves and wildlife area. She elaborates, "The human-wildlife conflicts are mitigated through our Awareness and Education programmes."

► The award was given to **Infinity Resort Kaziranga** and received by **Rina Khatau**, Vice Chairman; **Raajan Anand**, General Manager, Sales & Marketing and **Haren Khatau**, CEO, Conservation Corporation of India

## Best Destination Management

### Company - Domestic

### MOUNTAIN EDGE TOURS & HOLIDAYS

**Shailesh Thakur**, Sales and Marketing Manager of the destination management company, jubilantly states, "These awards are a great way to recognise and appreciate smaller travel companies and tour operators who in fact make a huge difference. We are thankful to the organisers for putting up such a grand show!" Thakur adds that in terms of destinations, the Andamans are expected to benefit from the political issues that some destinations in India are currently facing and anticipates a boom in the demand for the islands."

► The award was given to **Mountain Edge Tours & Holidays** and received by **Shailesh Thakur**, Manager - Sales & Marketing



## Best Casino Hotel

### MAYFAIR SPA RESORT & CASINO, GANGTOK

Spread across a sprawling tract of 48 acres of prime forested land, and having a soothing ambiance, attentive service and world-class amenities are what make Mayfair Spa Resort & Casino a preferred choice. The luxury accommodation available at the resort is across various categories from majestic imperial villas to spacious family rooms to comfortable cottages. It is also one of the only casino hotels in India where one can indulge in a game of roulette and blackjack while also enjoying the wonderful services and amenities in the hotel.

► The award was given to **Mayfair Spa Resort & Casino, Gangtok** and received by **Björn Noel DeNiese**, Vice President (Sales & Marketing)



## Best Travel Management Company

### CHOICE HOLIDAYS INDIA

Specialising in domestic tourism for the past 15 years, **Ritesh Mundra**, CEO, Choice Holidays, comments, "India Travel Awards has done an amazing job by travelling to different regions and not only acknowledging the efforts of travel agents and tour operators, but also recognising the indirect links like hotels, TMCs, DMCs, etc. With inbound on the rise, more tourists are venturing in to destinations in the North East, and not just Guwahati. This itself is a very encouraging trend and I expect tourism to boom in the region with the right approach."

► The award was given to **Choice Holidays India** and received by **Ritesh Mundhera**, CEO







## Best Contemporary Hotel

### VIVANTA BY TAJ - GUWAHATI

On winning the award, **Krishan Aggarwal**, General Manager, Vivanta by Taj - Guwahati, states, "We thank East India Travel Awards for organising the event and giving us the honour of the Best Contemporary Hotel in the east. The journey of being the first star property of the Taj Group to be set up in the North Eastern part of India has been a learning experience for the group and the team who worked really hard to understand and assimilate the local culture and traditions, arts and crafts and various subtle nuances of the region. The same has been translated in a contemporary manner reflected in the architectural concept and design of the hotel."

► The award was given to **Vivanta by Taj - Guwahati** and received by **Debojyoti Basak**, Sales Manager and **Subhadeepa Chatterjee**, Executive House Keeper

## Best Customised Tour Operator

### ICE CUBES SERVICES

Highlighting the effectiveness of the awards, **Jaspreet Singh Bhatia**, Director, Ice Cubes Holidays, mentions, "The event was fabulous and did a great job at appreciating talent of different levels. Not only does it encourage future leaders, but also provides a platform for travel professionals to meet and connect. More importantly, the awards are held region-wise which, in a country like India, is much-needed. The season has fared quite well, with Europe leading the pack - places like Romania, Croatia, Bulgaria, Prague, Budapest, along with old stalwarts like London, that have always fared well. We hope the rest of the year does as well and better."

► The award was given to **Ice Cubes Services** and received by **Jaspreet Singh Bhatia**, Director



## Best Theme Wedding Organiser

### JET SETTERS

"We've been awarded for three consecutive years and it is really motivating for the whole team to be part of this one," exclaims **Tarakeshwar Singh**, Director, Jet Setters. "It is a very good step to honour the stalwarts of East India as well and for the growth of the industry," he adds. Jet Setters works throughout the country, providing domestic as well as outbound tours and packages, including business trips. Whether one is on the search for the perfect honeymoon destination or looking for their next luxury vacation, Jet Setters makes the process hassle-free and smooth.

► The award was given to **Jet Setters** and received by **Darshika Shah**, Director and **Tarakeshwar Singh**, Director







## Partner State

### DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, GOVERNMENT OF MANIPUR

Manipur has been witnessing an increase in the number of tourist arrivals, both domestic as well as international. The principal attraction of the state is the Loktak Lake in Bishnupur district. Further, the Kangla Fort at the heart of Imphal city unfolds the proud history of the erstwhile Asiatic Kingdom dating back to 33 A.D. It is the quintessential symbol of the state's culture and heritage. The Ima Market which is counted as one of the largest only women market in Asia is at a stone's throw distance from the Western Gate of Kangla. The oldest polo ground in the world, Mapal Kangjeibung is also located at the heart of the Imphal city. Siroi Lily, a species of lily is found nowhere else in the world other than the Siroi Hills range in Manipur. The Dzuko in Senapati and the Bunning in Tamenglong offers the adventure lovers an irresistible challenge with its natural beauty.

► The award was given to **Department of Tourism, Government of Manipur** and received by **R. Sudhan**, Special Secretary Tourism, Government of Manipur

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► The award was given to **Mystify Consulting (India) Private Limited**



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► The award was given to **Radisson Blu Hotel Guwahati** and received by **Vikas Ray**, General Manager







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# Hotel talk

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## MILLENNIAL MODE

Millennials rule the roost when it comes to hotel trends

## MATTERS OF THE ART

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## INDIA'S IMMINENT HOSPITALITY BOOM

Indian tourism, aided by a steep growth in the hospitality industry is going to get bigger in the coming years. According to a latest report by Google and The Boston Consulting Group, the Indian travel market would grow at 11-11.5 per cent to \$48 billion by 2020. The report hints at a positive future for the hospitality sector, predicted to grow to \$13 billion by 2020 with budget and midscale hotels making up 52 per cent of the market. In fact, the budget segment boom is already in full swing as mid-market chains are opening properties not only in the metros, but also in the Tier-II and Tier-III cities.

Another reason for this growth and development is increasing demand, add with the rise in disposable income. With more Indians moving towards higher income segments, annual average leisure hotel spend per household is expected to increase by 7 per cent to \$18 by 2020, compared to \$13 in 2015. This rise would further augment, owing to increased foreign tourist arrival numbers into the country, especially with the new e-visa policies and improved air connectivity in and out of India.

To sustain this growth, there are properties coming up around the country, with even global brands making their presence felt. Indians have a flair for good stay options, not just in the country, but they are actively picking up the perfect accommodation when outside the country. While many are aware of the popular brands, others are exploring local boutique properties to experience their own kind of luxury and comfort on international shores, which proves that the hospitality sector really needs to up its ante when it comes to catering to the Indian consumer.

NISHA VERMA

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## THE LODHI, NOW A 'LEADING HOTEL OF THE WORLD

The Lodhi, New Delhi has now come under the The Leading Hotels of the World portfolio. Sprawling over seven acres on the green edge of Lutyens Delhi, the hotel is just across the road from the Delhi Golf Course. The property was extensively renovated in 2013, with all rooms and suites featuring private balconies. The hotel is in close proximity to the Lodhi Gardens, as well as many stylish shopping precincts.



## Coco Bodu Hithi: Maldives' hidden gem

Nestled on an secluded island in the Maldives—Coco Bodu Hithi—offers 100 intimate villas in complete harmony with nature. The hotel has seven restaurants and bars offering delicacies from around the world for food connoisseurs. An over-water gym and spa allows the guest to relax with soothing treatments to pamper the mind and body.



## Surya Palace Vadodara joins the Grand Mercure family



Surya Palace Vadodara has been rebranded as the Grand Mercure Vadodara Surya Palace. In proximity to Vadodara's business district and corporate hubs, it is the first hotel under Grand Mercure to be launched in the state. It features 146 guest rooms including five suites; an all-day dining restaurant, among other facilities.



## Tree of Life opens in Varanasi on Sep 4

Tree of Life Resort & Spa, Varanasi is all set to open on September 4, 2017. The new property offers 18 Junior Suites in two acres of serene land. The resort is the perfect escape from the hustle and bustle of the holy city. It's an oasis of peace and serenity and is set to extend its hospitality to patrons.

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# OTAs falling short of hotel expectations

Online Travel Agents (OTAs) were once touted as the way of the future with the ease of reaching a wide audience and providing a way for hotels to sell rooms through a simple system. Aligned with this, talk has abounded in the hospitality industry about the threat to traditional store-front travel agents who face 'unhealthy' competition from the OTAs. But not enough is being said about the difficulties that hoteliers face while dealing with OTAs.

OTAs have deeper pockets than stand-alone hotels and travel agents because of investor funds. OTAs are cutting into their commissions and under selling, over which the hotel has no control. Having forced hotels to move from a retail model to a merchant model, OTAs dictate the price at which a hotel is sold online. OTAs also have the ability to drive a hard bargain with hotels for higher commission. A hotel's online business is also affected by OTAs' ability to position themselves higher in search engine results, usually higher than the hotel's own website, hence diverting potential business away from hotels. Beyond these, OTAs design new schemes to supposedly maximise



“ Maybe it's time that the OTA model be analysed and subjected to more legislation ”

(The author is **Lavanya Ramachandran**, Director of Marketing of Anantya Resorts. A lawyer turned hotelier, she loves to travel and occasionally write.)

visibility for hotels in their listings and to increase bookings. Schemes such as pay-at-hotel and no-prepayment necessary, are tools to make the option of booking online more attractive to potential guests.

OTAs do not assure hotels of payment for a pay-at-hotel or similar booking. A credit card may have been provided to secure the booking. Often guests enter invalid details to hold a non-committed booking. The safeguard for the hotel when they don't receive payment before check-in is the ability to charge a 'no-show fees' or a 'retention charge'. However, these are not without problems. The difficulty arises when the guest does not check in and the hotel charges the credit card for the 'no-show fees'. OTAs maintain that hotels can withdraw from them at any time. But, there comes in the reality check. With more net savvy customers, the simple reality is that a hotel cannot withdraw from an OTA and lose the possibility of visibility. Maybe it is time that OTA model be analysed and subjected to more legislation such that the benefit it offers to customers continues and the problems to hotels is eliminated.



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# Switch to #MILLENNIAL

The millennial generation has pushed the hospitality industry across the globe to change its traditional marketing ways and connect with guests on various social media platforms for greater reach and impact.

**AHANA GURUNG**

One may think that the buzz created by millennials is slightly overrated with every move of individuals aged 18-34 being monitored – What do they like? How do they travel? Where do they go? Service providers digging deep into the nitty-gritties are tweaking their offerings to make everything more millennial-friendly, and for good reason.

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) estimates around 20 per cent of global travellers to be young, contributing a huge chunk of tourism revenue, who also tend to stay longer and interact more closely with the local communities than average tourists. Millennials are almost twice as likely than non-millennials to travel for a hobby, and explore more for



things like food and wine, entertainment, shopping and outdoor activity, according to a research by the Boston Consulting Group. By 2020, 320 million international trips are expected to be made by youth travellers each year, highlights a report by WYSE Travel Confederation, giving testimony to the fact that millennials are the demographic to be looked out for.

Millennials, with their tech-savvy and contemporary ways are changing the dynamics of the industry and service providers are scrambling to adapt and evolve. The sharing economy was one of the aspects that took the world by surprise and lifted off as a result of the millennial wave with aggregators like Air BnB cashing in. The accommodation sharing company is projected to touch as much as \$8.5 billion by 2020 in revenue. However, such consequences have compelled hotels to change their strategies to stay relevant to the changing times and many have employed an overhaul in their approach, vibe and services.



# MODE

A close-up photograph of a man and a woman smiling and posing for a photo. The man, on the left, has a beard and is wearing a straw hat, dark sunglasses, and a red and white checkered shirt. The woman, on the right, is also wearing a straw hat and dark sunglasses. They are both smiling broadly. The background is a bright blue sky with some clouds and a wooden railing, suggesting they are outdoors at a beach or a similar vacation spot.

Millennials, with their tech-savvy and contemporary ways are changing the dynamics of the industry and service providers are scrambling to adapt and evolve





Brands like Aloft Hotels are looking to grab a piece of the pie by upping their technology game

### TECHNOLOGY IS KING

Technology is indeed a key differentiator in the race for appealing to the millennials and plays a very crucial role. It's no surprise that you instantly recognise a millennial with their head bent down, engrossed in their smart phones. Findings from the Expedia Millennial Survey 2017 show that 94 per cent use smart phones, while another 56 per cent make use of computer tablets.

Brands like Aloft Hotels are looking to grab a piece of the pie by upping their technology game and catering to their high-tech needs, be it for business or for leisure. From a state-of-the-art work space with complimentary Wi-Fi, Aloft also offers entertainment amenities like plug-&-play docking stations and a one-stop connectivity solution for multiple electronic gadgets like PDAs, cell phones and laptops, all linked to a 42" LCD TV. **Faiz Alam Ansari**, Complex General Manager, Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park, throws more light on the requirements and says, "Understanding the needs of the millennial traveller, we also provide SPG keyless check in, where with a swipe on your smartphone, you can gain access to your room. They maintain a high preference on the availability of technology, along with easy-to-reach outlets in the rooms and a lounge or lobby area conducive to working are crucial elements as well."

Radisson Red, a new offspring of the Carlson Rezidor Group has been curated keeping in mind the ageless millennial mindset and offers a customisable experience driven by technology. The RED App lets guests avoid queues by checking in and out and using their smartphone for secure keyless entry to their rooms while guests can place an order to the in-house restaurant and



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Guests can avoid queues by checking in and out using the RED App on their smartphones

pay through the app. Guests can also request hotel services with the click of a button and a chat feature allows them to connect with other guests to see the local nightlife or share a ride to the airport.

### NEW CONCEPT, NEW PHILOSOPHY

Targeting a specific segment also entails the need of a different feel to the property to make the guest experience something out of the ordinary without compromising on the comfort and the quality. While there are some who opt for high-end luxury, a large portion of millennials prefer budget accommodation and alternate options. A relatively new concept of pod hotels (not that new in Asian countries like Japan) has entered the Indian market with the first of its kind in Mumbai. Urbanpod opened its doors from March 2017 and has been targeting millennials and business travellers with its futuristic pods, public networking spaces and economical rates. **Shalabh Mittal**, one of the brains behind Urbanpod comments, "We strongly feel that there is a sheer-necessity for such Pod Hotels in India, more so in a busy metro like Mumbai with the kind of peak passenger-traffic it witnesses, coupled with its high-rentals and its shrinking-spaces." "Whether it's hygiene, free breakfast, free Wi-Fi, area to socialise, satellite television, technology

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## Several properties are imbibing ways to make every experience at the hotel 'Instagram-worthy'

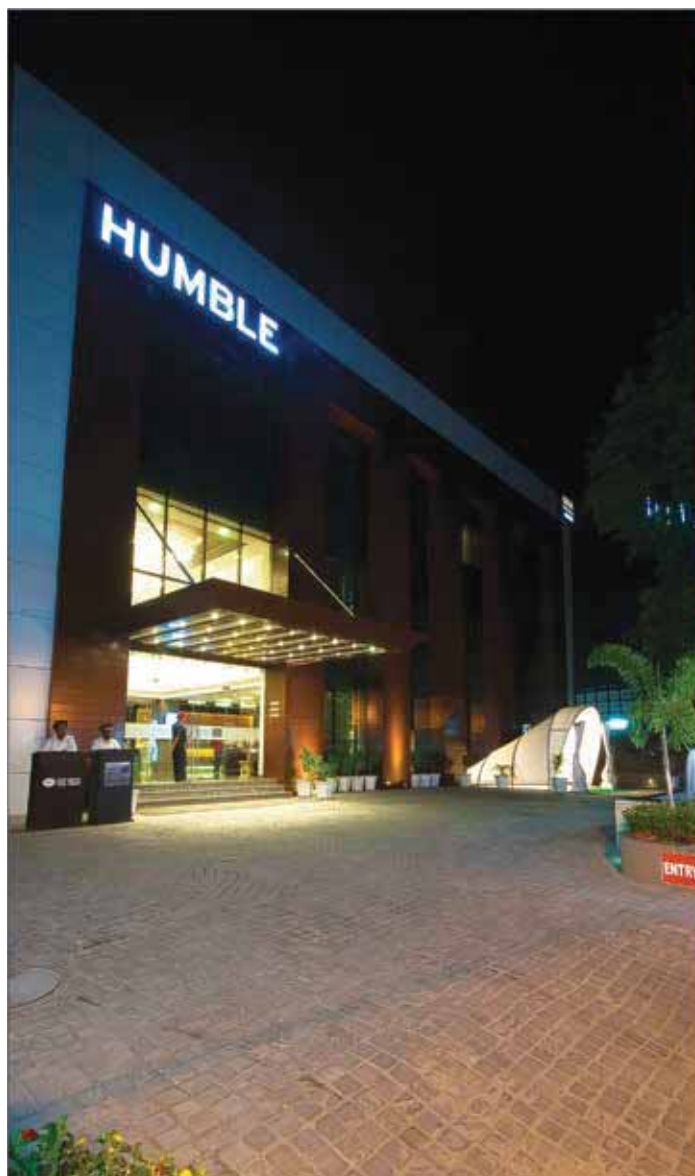
features in the pod and most importantly, the right price point, millennials are extremely value driven and avoid spending too much," adds **Hiren Gandhi**, Co-founder and Director, Urbanpod.

Elaborating on this, **TJ Joulak**, General Manager, W Goa states, "Millennials are all about living in the moment, they are always looking for what's next and new, something which the brand also believes in. Their need of knowing more and not settling for just one thing is met through our brand pillar – W Insider, which ensures extraordinary experiences for the guests and gives the right

inside knowledge of the hottest happenings in Goa. This is perfect for the millennial culture and exactly what they want in a vacation." One of the other strategic moves by W Goa include using video and digital content to tell a story that relates to them, and get influencers to talk about the experience that revolves around the property and the destination.

### DO IT FOR THE GRAM

Uploading photographs on Instagram and Facebook are the norm which is why several properties are imbibing ways to make everything 'Instagram-worthy'. Ansari points out, "Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park taps this feature effectively by installing an actual, life-size Cessna aircraft hanging above the lobby. The guests watch it in awe as this unique and funky feature is not available in any other hotel." Radisson Red has an interactive digital wall at the centre of the lobby which displays social media and entertainment content. Guests are encouraged to post and interact with a touch-screen digital wall. W Goa has actively embraced this concept as well and Joulak declares it is all about sharing the exciting moments through posts or live stories. He says, "These channels are beneficial in keeping the existing guests informed about exclusive happenings at the property and enticing them to join in to create some memorable moments."



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# Hotels get SOCIAL

Unable to ignore the power of social media, hotels have started replacing traditional marketing techniques with online promotions for better visibility.

**NISHA VERMA**





with clients. While the communication method has changed, businesses still need to apply fundamental principles of marketing and promotion to communicate their messages to their target audience. What gives these digital tools an edge is the speed at which they can tap their audience and the wide reach.

### NEW MARKETING TOOL

Social media marketing modules not only inform potential customers about a property and pique their interest, but also works in boosting sales. A hotel brand which is aware of the ongoing trends can find business leads by paying heed to the right kind of conversations outside of their owned profile.

**Sandeep Raghav**, Business Development Director – South Asia, W Maldives and Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa, agrees, saying, “Social media is a fantastic tool to keep our audience updated and generate interest in W Maldives. It also allows us to get more booking enquiries from people all over the world. It is a great advertising tool to promote specific offers for specific markets as well.”

While sharing information on social media is one thing, using the medium to one's advantage is another. **S. N. Srivastava**, President & Co-founder, Clarks Inn Group of Hotels, claims that an effective use of technology has been at the forefront of all



What gives these digital tools an edge is the speed at which they can tap their audience

their initiatives. “Whether it is driving incremental sales, enhancing brand visibility or improving customer experience in properties, the company is making full use of various available social media platforms. This in turn has proved to be of tremendous value addition in increasing sales as well as brand awareness. Besides, we are also constantly upgrading our social media intervention,” he adds.

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## TECH IT AND LOVE IT



"Social media is a fantastic tool to keep our audience updated."

**SANDEEP RAGHAV**  
Business Development Director – South Asia, W Maldives and Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa Hotel



"We are constantly upgrading our social media intervention."

**S. N. SRIVASTAVA**  
President & Co-founder  
Clarks Inn Group of Hotels



"We're very active on Facebook, Google and TripAdvisor and have high rating on Goibibo."

**RUPAK GUPTA**  
Joint MD, UP Hotels



"We even offer discounts on rooms and F&B on Facebook."

**MEERA PAHWA**  
Vice President, Marketing & Sales,  
Indiana Hotels



"Blogs or update shares are the new brochures for any product."

**SHRUTI PANDEY**  
Proprietor, Synergi Hospitality



To stay ahead in the game, marketers need to find new channels to manage their reputation and generate new leads

online reviews impact their choice of hotel, which means that there is a need to engage with these sites. Many hotels realised this early on, but while it is still necessary, it has become a minimum requirement. To stay ahead in the game, marketers need to find new channels to manage their reputation and generate new leads. **Rupak Gupta**, Joint MD, UP Hotels, asserts, "Social media increases the visibility of a hotel due to the high frequency of engagement with the concerned target market. This in turn boosts the sale directly and indirectly. We are very active on Facebook, Google and TripAdvisor and have the highest rating of 8.5 from Goibibo, whose sales are driven by indirect marketing campaigns on social media, including Google."

#### CONSTANT ENGAGEMENT

Regular promotional campaigns on social media also make a huge difference in customer engagement. Updates on F&B promotions, stay deals, spa deals, weekend offers, etc. keep the communication going

with the users and allow them to visit the property multiple times. **Meera Pahwa**, Vice President, Marketing & Sales, Indiana Hotels, shares, "We work actively to build relationships with users on Facebook and Twitter. We constantly look for opportunities to engage with potential guests who are researching for wedding destinations or leisure travel. We even offer discounts on rooms and F&B on Facebook, which prompts a lot of queries. We also update our social media platforms with the latest events and feedback from our guests to keep the users well informed."

#### TARGETING THE MILLENNIALS

Most millennials depend on the Internet and social media to make their travel plans. They are also very vocal about their opinions on such platforms and have different requirements than a business or family traveller. **Shruti Pandey**, Proprietor, Synergi Hospitality, has identified this change in the customer, and says, "Social media offers us a huge opportunity to reach the new age of travellers who





Promotions on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn or Twitter get an audience far bigger than any footfall at an exhibition

are otherwise very difficult to connect to. Promotions on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn or Twitter get an audience far bigger than any footfall at an exhibition. The best part is the amount of information that can be passed on. There are unending and unlimited platforms that catch on to the information updated, and the odds of the same

resulting in sales are very high." She adds that this marketing tool is different from the traditional ones. "Social media has changed the way we market. Paper presentations and brochures are a passé now. Blogs or update shares are the new brochures for any product. With these, we are able to circulate updates to a wider community," she reveals.



ADVERTORIAL

## SINGAPORE'S best luxury address

Lying in the heart of Marina Bay, Singapore's main dining and entertainment district, Mandarin Oriental is perfect for business and leisure travellers.

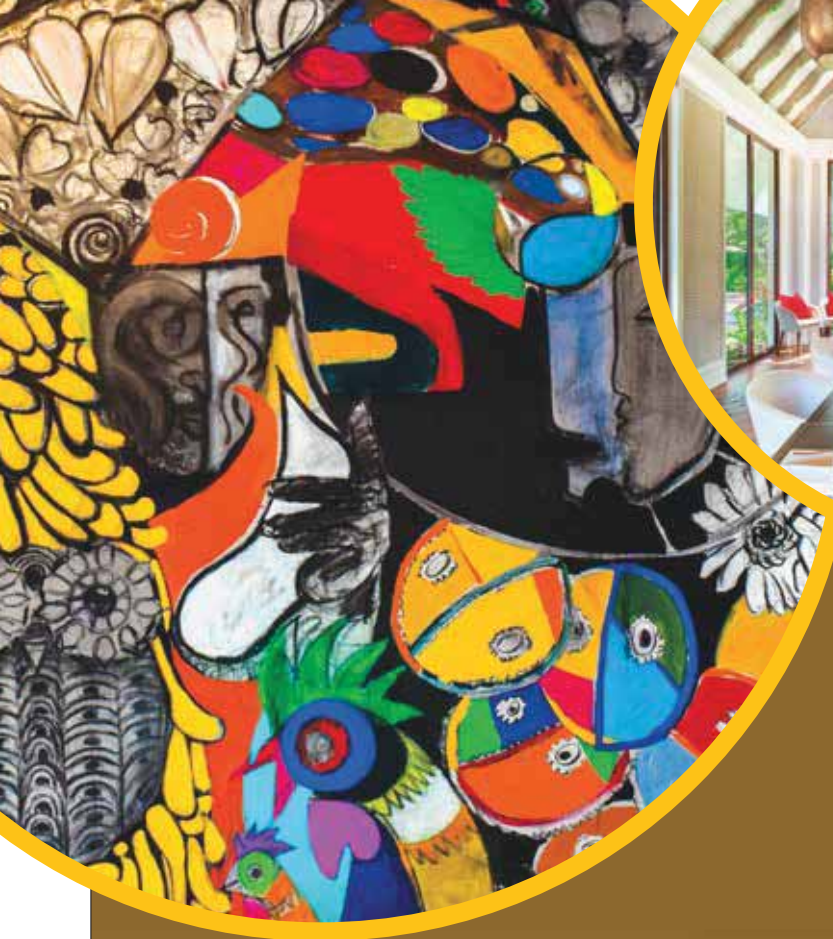
**M**ake your next holiday at Mandarin Oriental, Singapore even sweeter. Located in the heart of Marina Bay, the hotel features 527 well-appointed rooms and suites overlooking the ocean, bay or city skyline. Take advantage of the 'Sweet Suite offers' from now to December 2017 and enjoy exclusive benefits such as a complimentary airport one-way transfer, high-speed Internet and guaranteed early check-in at 7 AM. Strategically located at a prime waterfront site along Marina Bay overlooking the Singapore skyline, Mandarin Oriental, Singapore is close to the financial hub. Minutes away from Suntec Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre and Esplanade – Theatres on The Bay, the

hotel offers easy access to luxury boutiques and entertainment venues. Contemporary in design, yet stylish with oriental flair, all rooms are fully equipped with modern facilities and luxurious amenities. Mandarin Oriental, Singapore has five award-winning restaurants – featuring the best in Cantonese cuisine, fine Italian, delectable international buffet, Asian favourites and traditional steakhouse fares at Mortons. The hotel features a grand breakfast buffet spread at the all day dining, Melt Café with a vast selection of Indian breakfast items.

*For queries and bookings please contact  
Aakriti Batra: [aakriti@premierhotelsasia.com](mailto:aakriti@premierhotelsasia.com)*







It's not a service that guests would demand. Still, many hotels put a special emphasis on art within their property and continue to invest in it. Its appeal, perhaps, lies in the aesthetic value it offers.

HAZEL JAIN

# Matters of the

# Art





## W GOA

W Goa is set in the North of Goa amidst the beautiful surroundings of Vagator Beach. It celebrates the culture of Goa, incorporating its local and foreign influences with rich colours, exotic fabrics and contemporary art pieces across the property. Each guestroom is drenched in a psychedelic look and feel with trippy hues of purples and blues creating a kaleidoscopic melding of colour throughout. Imagined by interior design house Design Wilkes and architects Eco-ID, W Goa combines the rustic and dramatic landscape of Goa with an exuberant spirit that is unique to W Hotels.

**Taieb Joulak**, General Manager, W Goa, explains, "Goa is a place that is known for having a strong art influence. At the same, it is a place that has given birth to some new-age art forms while cherishing some old contemporary forms of art. For W Goa, having installations that build a connection between its people and culture while maintaining the brands unique design was of utmost important."

The weather in Goa, however, brings with it its own set of challenges. "Goa is a place with the most unpredictable weather. We can go from three months of monsoon to sudden humidity and moisture in the air. All these conditions make it challenging to maintain such artworks. Luckily, we have made sure there is a system in place to take care of our prized possessions. We also have the artist regularly come in and study the conditions of their artworks. The installations that are exposed directly to these weather conditions have been selected and crafted keeping in mind their longevity," Joulak adds.

The artwork has been curated by Jeffrey Wilkes, the man behind the interior design house Design Wilkes that has handled W Goa and interior designer Sangeeta Mansharamani.

His favourite piece is the one in the welcome area crafted by M. Narayan featuring gutsy, raw imagery that celebrates the melting pot culture of Goa as well as the spectrum of colour one can see through divine meditation.



“Goa is a place that is known for having a strong art influence

TAIEB JOULAK  
General Manager  
W Goa

”







“For historic hotels like ours, art is an important element to showcase the valuable heritage

VIJAY WANCHOO  
Senior Executive VP & GM  
The Imperial New Delhi

”

## THE IMPERIAL, NEW DELHI

Earning the moniker of being India's 'Museum Hotel', The Imperial, New Delhi is all about period art, which fits ever so perfectly with the essence that this unique property exudes. The hotel's relationship with art is a long-standing one. Since its inception, over 70 years ago, it has not only been a repository of art, but also a home to many famous artists. The Imperial, New Delhi has carefully preserved its collection of original engravings and lithographs and has added steadily to it over this period.

With a lofty history that very few hotels can boast of, The Imperial's love affair with Indian history is a long-standing one. Here, guests can literally dine in an art gallery. It is perhaps the only museum hotel of its kind. Each floor of the hotel is dedicated to an artist whose original works adorn the walls of the rooms and the corridors. Care has been taken to recreate the room décor and ambience of the period of British Raj. The rooms offer a choice of marble or parquet flooring with artistic borders and exquisite Persian hand-knotted carpets. Each room also has unique antique pieces of furniture and paintings from the hotel's art collection.

The Imperial, New Delhi proudly displays a priceless art collection of the 'British Art on India' that includes the works of great artists who worked in India in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century and produced etchings, wood engravings, lithographs, aquatints and mezzotints based on sketches of landscapes, architecture, topography and life and times of India. The hotel has three main art galleries and a collection of life-size oil paintings of the princely rulers of India.

No area of the hotel has been left deprived of the magical influence of art – its presence is felt in the ballroom, the rooms, the public spaces, and of course the lobby. **Vijay Wanchoo**, Senior Executive VP & GM, The Imperial, New Delhi, talks about why the hotel chose this theme. "Art adds to the sheer splendour and luxury of any hotel. For historic hotels like ours, art is an important element to showcase the valuable heritage while it contributes to the repertoire and enhances The Imperial experience. Art is heavily showcased on each floor of our hotel and is an intrinsic part of our heritage—on every level of Imperial's sprawling four-





storey structure, in every public area, in lobby, stairwells and canopies, adorning fountains and furniture, covering walls, keeping vigil from ceilings, cosying up in restaurants, accompanying you in royal carriages, in rooms graced with four-poster beds," he says.

The grandiose architecture of any art-based hotel is duly complemented with thematic or historic art that it has preserved, restored and displayed. This hotel also has curated art tours for the residents accompanied with high tea at ₹2,500.

All the artworks and lithographs displayed across the hotel have been preserved and collected by the owners. Some have been sourced from the London Museum of Art and some have been their own collection acquired through years. Of course, such exuberance comes at a fee. Wanchoo reveals, "The regular maintenance is a big challenge in terms of handling but we have yearly restoration works conducted across the hotel for keeping each artwork absolutely immaculate in its form and finish. Also, we have a special department handled by a Director-level person who is responsible for the maintenance of the artworks and lithographs, and has been doing this beautifully over the years."

His favourite piece is a painting of the coronation of King George V and Queen Mary at the Delhi Durbar, at the entrance of the hotel's 1911 restaurant. The Imperial, New Delhi is all about period art so contemporary art will not find space here.



## LN Garden Hotel, Guangzhou - Embrace the Extraordinary

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## GRAND HYATT MUMBAI

Hyatt International's flagship property in South Asia, the Grand Hyatt Mumbai houses one of the finest collections of commissioned art in a public space. Together with curator Rajeev Sethi who is noted internationally for his innovative contribution to preserving and celebrating South Asia's rich cultural heritage, Grand Hyatt Mumbai brings together Mumbai's known artistes and upcoming talent with crafts people from around the country, to celebrate and reinterpret the Shiva myth. The art is conceived as homage to the mythic and contemporary presence of Shiva. The complex showcases over 100 commissioned artworks by both established and upcoming artists such as Jitish Kallat, Hema Upadhyay, Chintan Upadhyay, Nalini Malani, Atul and Anju Dodiya, Tanuja Rane, Krishnamachari Bose, Sudershan Shetty, Prabhakar and JyoteeKolte, Yogesh Rawal, Jaideep Mehrotra, Sunil Gawde, Riyas Komu, Daroz, Bhupinder and Mohan Malviya amongst others.



“

Art has been an intrinsic element of the design philosophy and origin of the hotel

SUNJAE SHARMA  
Area Vice President & General Manager  
Grand Hyatt Mumbai

”

Sunjae Sharma, Area Vice President & General Manager, Grand Hyatt Mumbai, says that art at the hotel is not a mere object of admiration but a part of its origin. “Each of the distinct art installations have a story to tell, a story that brings to life the legacy of Mumbai and India in an array of forms. Art has been an intrinsic element of the design philosophy and origin of the hotel,” he says.

From the unique portrayal of Bollywood to the magnificent Shiva Shakti structures, the pièce de résistance at the lobby level to the enchanting yoga dakshinas, they all lend grandeur. “The dabbawala installations and the basti are a beautiful depiction of Mumbai and are much admired by our guests. It is our endeavor to bring to the guests the extraordinary spirit of Mumbai. These thoughtfully curated artworks are synonymous with our philosophy of living grand and therefore imbibed in the DNA of the hotel,” adds Sharma.

The art at the hotel is inspired by the three great archaeological sites of Mumbai, dedicated to Lord Shiva. The art also reflects the mythological and everyday life of the metropolis through a contemporary prism, reinterpreting the sacred and the profane, resonating with the timeless and the ephemeral. Sharma reveals, “We are extremely careful about their upkeep. Our deep-cleaning specialists from the housekeeping team make it look like an easy task. However, this does warrant for use of special equipments and products to maintain our state-of-art installations. My favourite piece is the 'Basti – The urban landscape', dedicated to the diverse culture of Mumbai.”







“  
Surrounded by  
beauty, one feels  
transported into a  
different place in time

VIKAS SHARMA  
Director of Operations  
The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore

”

## THE RITZ-CARLTON, BANGALORE

Showcasing an aesthetical line-up of art with over 1,250 art pieces throughout the property, The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore, features the work of artists such as the master of life-size figurative Robert St. Croix, the renowned sculptor Alexandra Gestin, the legendary Cuban sculptor Manuel Carbonell, the hotel's home-bound landscape artist Paresch Maity, and the celebrated Indian abstract painter Revati Sharma Singh. **Vikas Sharma**, Director of Operations, The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore, says, "Bringing art out of galleries and into hotel spaces helps us reach a wider audience. In turn, it also adds that special something to our guests' viewing pleasures and enhances their stay experience with us. Surrounded by beauty, one automatically feels transported into a different place in time. It adds a certain appeal to the hotel interiors, and helps our staff in their storytelling during guest interaction." The hotel staff takes guests on an art appreciation tour in the hotel on request. His personal favourite is the sculpture of Pablo Picasso sitting on the porch welcoming the guests.







**Facilities offered:**

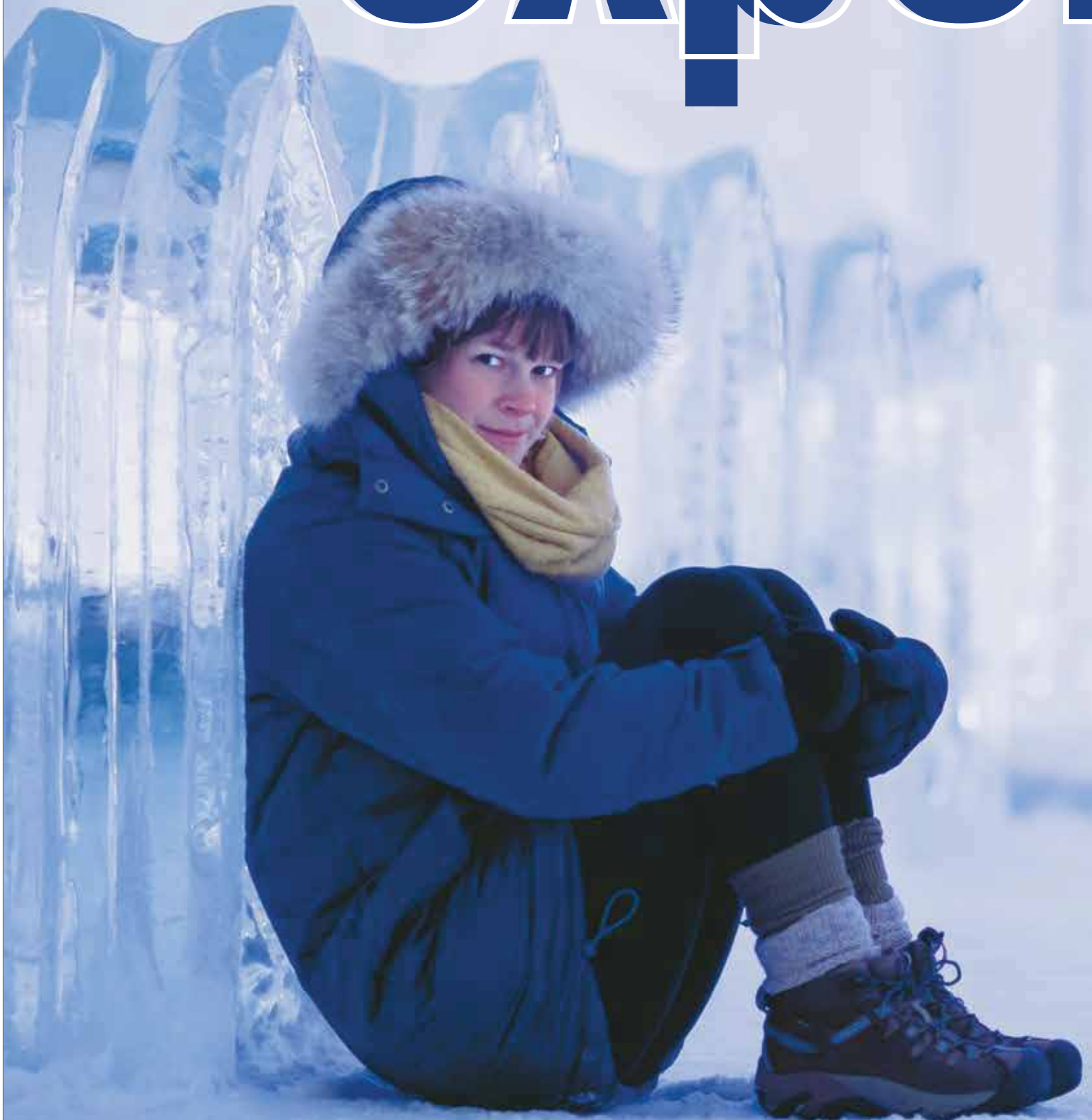
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# exper





# innce & Experiment

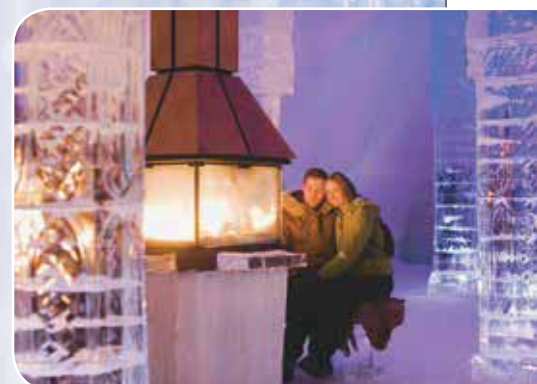
The rapid pace of experiential travel has got hotels and resorts catering to more than just the regular hospitality demands of guests. They are now offering unique stays and experiences for keeps.

**ANKITA SAXENA**

## FROZEN TALES

An annual phenomena, Hôtel de Glace or the 'Ice Hotel' is straight out of a fairy tale. Located just a few miles from Quebec City, the Hôtel de Glace is the only Ice Hotel in Canada and North America. This fairytale-esque hotel has been hosting guests for 15 years now and every year it presents a new feature. With 44 rooms and theme suites, all made of ice, the hotel offers several ways to experience the incomparable thrill of spending a night inside it. With its larger than life snow vaults and breath-taking crystalline ice sculptures, Hôtel de Glace impresses with its dazzling decor. Guests can grab a drink at the Ice Bar; spend time in the outdoor spas and sauna, and then head to the room where the walls, the ceiling, chandeliers and the bed too, is made of ice. Every year an individual masterpiece is brought to life according to the fantasy of a different architect as this accommodation melts away every spring.

Guests can drop in for this unique luxurious experience between January and March for a visit or spend a night in this work of art. Hôtel de Glace is not just about extraordinary accommodation; one can enjoy various activities near the hotel. Guests can discover America's largest winter playground with more than 35 snow slides or be transported to the atmosphere of Polynesia with a temperature of 30 degree Celsius at a unique indoor water park. One can enjoy large wave pool, more than 14 slides, a family pool, a multi-activity adventure river, a double surf wave and 12 private cabanas. For those who wish to relax and rejuvenate their body and mind, hop in to the 6000 sq. ft. Valcartier Spa which offers various baths and an indoor and outdoor pool. Young and old alike can keep themselves entertained in the gaming arcade while those who wish to undertake excursions can go for dog sledding to enjoy the snowy trails of the nearby forest. **Pooja Sabharwal**, Account Director, Destination Canada, says, "The stay packages start at \$199. The Ice Hotel is a must see experience for Indians travelling to Canada and we market it through travel agents and also directly to consumers through various mediums."



“

We market the Ice Hotel through travel agents and also directly to consumers through various mediums

”

**POOJA SABHARWAL**  
Account Director  
Destination Canada





## A JUNGLE DIARY

A stay at Hamiltons Tented Camp promises a unique 'Out of Africa' extraordinary wilderness experience in luxury canvas tents, best suited for couples searching for that peaceful sojourn in the wild. Situated in the world-renowned Kruger National Park, Hamiltons Tented Camp allows indulgence in pure luxury with its tented safari experience combined with the sounds and aromas of the African flora. Built entirely of canvas, amidst age-old Jackalberry and Sausage trees with high wooden platforms linking six elevated tents, Hamiltons treats guests to stunning views of the Nwatswitsonto River and offers the opportunity to enjoy spectacular wildlife and birdlife sightings.

Resplendent with early 19<sup>th</sup> century nostalgia, from its old steamer trunks and pith helmets to its antique bathroom basins and hurricane lanterns, Hamiltons is a tribute to the generation whose vision has resulted in the conservation of one of Africa's prime wilderness areas, without compromising on modern-day comforts and luxuries. Hamiltons not only represents a little slice of history, it also guarantees a private Bushveld escape, unfettered by unnecessary modern interruptions and authentic in every way. Dine as you would have in the 1900s, as Hamiltons Tented Camp ensures, whatever the occasion, meals are a classy affair. **Cindy Sheedy Walker**, Chief Executive Officer, Extraordinary Sales and Marketing, explains that the lodge is specifically suited for the honeymoon market as it is intimate, romantic and luxurious. "We welcome at least 45 couples from India per year and are targeting to grow this number." She further adds that Hamiltons maintains a strong relationship with the Indian travel trade and this product is available with local travel agent or through the websites. "An ideal honeymoon package would be to combine a two night stay at Hamiltons Tented Camp with three nights in Cape Town and two nights in Victoria Falls. Guests can fly into either Hoedspruit Airport or Skukuza Airport," says Walker.



“

We welcome at least 45 couples from India per year and are targeting to grow this number ”

CINDY SHEEDY WALKER  
Chief Executive Officer, Extraordinary Sales and Marketing  
Hamiltons Tented Camps



## HOLISTIC HOLIDAY

Named after the famous 16<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese fortifications of Melaka, A'Famosa Resort is surrounded by rolling hills and lush countryside. Visible from the North-South Highway in Malaysia, A'Famosa Resort is a short distance away from the historical town of Melaka. Located just an hour's drive from Kuala Lumpur International Airport, the Resort is a one-stop venue for business and pleasure, also boasting an international championship golf course at the Resort.

"A'Famosa Resort is an integrated resort where we have something for everyone. As far as Indian visitors are concerned, we are looking at individual travellers, families, honeymooners and even MICE travellers to visit the resort. We have already had many Indians visit the destination but with our new outlets for shopping within the resort, we are hoping that a larger number of Indians will visit the destination in the upcoming year," says **Wan CF**, Sales Manager-Travel & Tours. One can choose from a selection of standard and superior rooms or suites. Those looking for exclusivity can enjoy luxuriously designed Condotel and private villas as well.



“We're looking at individual travellers, families, honeymooners and even MICE travellers to visit us”

**WAN CF**  
Sales Manager-Travel & Tours  
A'Famosa Resort

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## CORE IN CONSERVATION

With sustainability at its core, Serena Hotels make sure that their clients get first-hand experience of being meaningful to the ecology. The brand has two properties in the OL Pejeta Conservancy— Sweetwaters Serena Camp and the OL Pejeta House. Guests at these two properties can learn the conservation efforts for the northern white rhino, which are protected in this conservancy. They can also visit the rhinos at the rhino sanctuary along with other activities such as game drives and a visit to the chimpanzee sanctuary.

The effort has made many guests lifelong volunteers of conserving the rare wild. One such influencer is a six-year-old UK boy, who has even come up with a plan to save the world's rarest rhinos from extinction. Partnering with Fauna & Flora International, he is raising funds through his project – 'RhinosUp' for OL Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya, which is home to the last three northern white rhinos on the planet.

**Rosemari Mugambi**, Regional Sales & Marketing Director, Serena Hotels, says, "Apart from making sure that we offer a very high standard of product, service and facility, we are very particular about making sure that our client actually gets the authentic African experience. At OL Pejeta Conservancy we have beautiful tented camp—Sweetwaters Serena Camp, as well as a private house—OL Pejeta House, which carry out a lot of conservation efforts. Owing to this, we are able to enable our visitors to learn about the message of conservation. Responsible tourism is very important to Serena Hotels and we make sure that we do whatever we can in terms of not just being different but also in terms of education."



“

Responsible tourism is very important to Serena Hotels and we make sure that we do whatever we can, not just to be different but also to educate our guests”

”

ROSEMARI MUGAMBI  
Regional Sales & Marketing Director  
Serena Hotels



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# Stays abound

Outbound Marketing has an array of hospitality clients to cater to every kind of traveller in destinations that are popular as well as exotic. Here are the brands that they can pick from:



## MELIÁ HOTELS INTERNATIONAL

The Spanish brand Meliá Hotels International boasts over 370 hotels across over 40 countries and four continents. It remains a leader owing to its diversified business model, the consistent growth plan supported by strategic alliances with major investors and its commitment to responsible tourism.

## THE MEYDAN HOTEL

Nestled just a stone's throw away from the Dubai Mall and Burj Khalifa, The Meydan Hotel remains Dubai's ultimate luxury address. Perfect for families, couples, as well as MICE, the property offers 284 rooms and suites, and over 60,000 sqm of flexible meetings and events spaces.

## BAB AL SHAMS RESORT & SPA

Just a 45-minute drive from the city of Dubai, Bab Al Shams Resort & Spa has 115 rooms and suites with authentic Arabic design. The modern-day leisure destination overlooks the desert and offers a variety of activities for patrons including two outdoor



temperature-controlled swimming pools, various sports games.

## CORINTHIA HOTELS

Founded by the Pisani family of Malta, Corinthia Hotels is located at some of the most interesting cities around the world, including London, Budapest, St. Petersburg, Prague, Lisbon, Tripoli, Khartoum and Malta.

## NILAMANI HOTELS

Nilamani Hotels offers a selection of fresh lifestyle experiences. While the Camakila Legian is a jewel nestled along a 500-metre stretch of golden sand on Seminyak beach in Bali; the Sakala Resort Bali sits proudly on one of Bali's best stretches of sand on the Nusa Dua Peninsula. The Tanjung Benoa Beach Resort Bali offers 185 rooms with views of manicured gardens and the outdoor swimming pools.



## ONYX HOSPITALITY GROUP

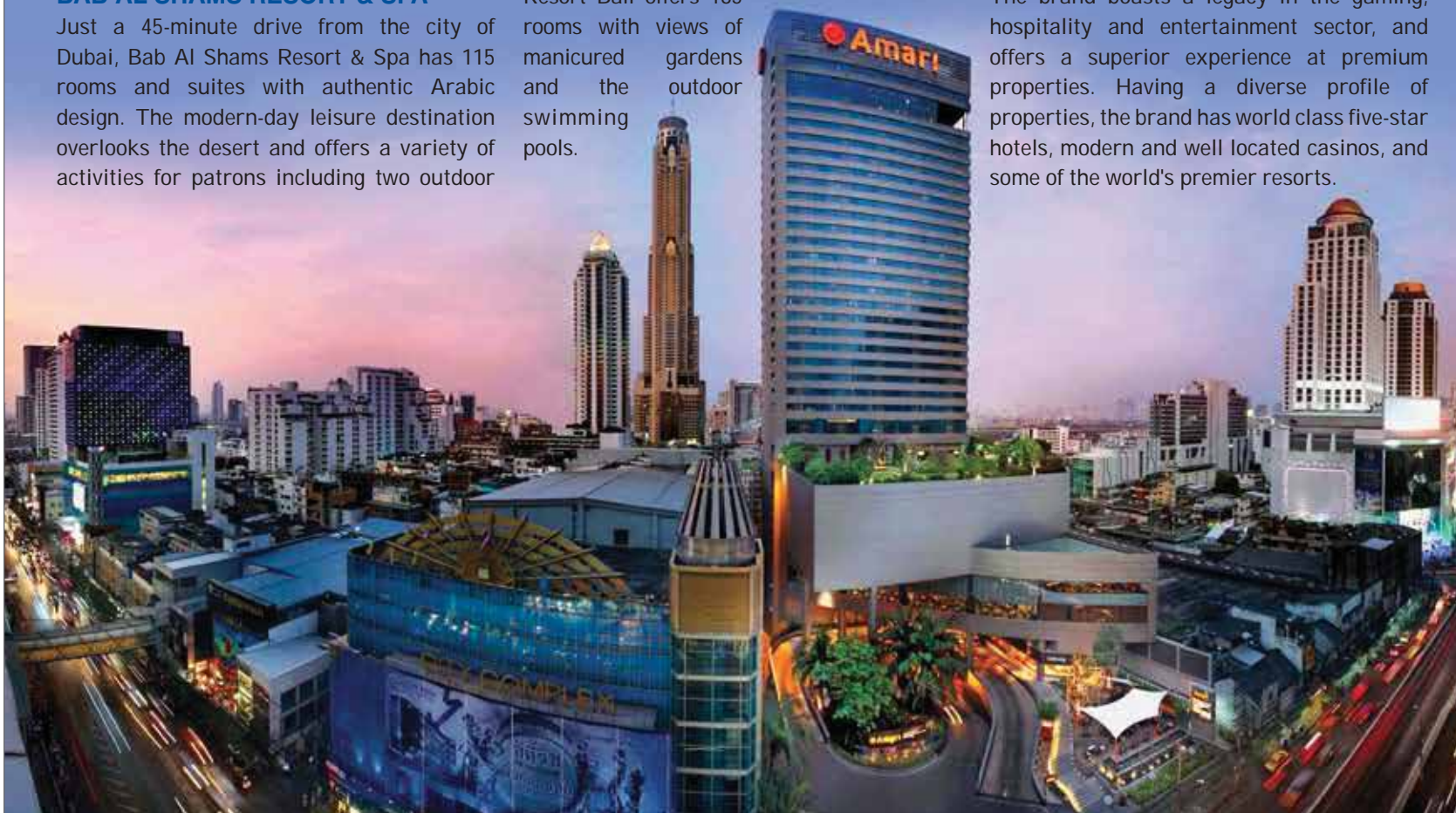
ONYX Hospitality Group has more than 42 operational properties across Asia and is managing popular brands like Amari, OZO, Mosaic Collection, Shama, Saffron & Oriental Residences Bangkok.

## ROTANA HOTELS & RESORTS

Rotana Hotels & Resorts makes to the list of every long haul itinerary and its properties provide many services and facilities that suit every kind of traveller. The team puts a special emphasis on events management and luxurious spaces for events.

## SUN INTERNATIONAL

Get the best of African experience and service with Sun International's various offerings. The brand boasts a legacy in the gaming, hospitality and entertainment sector, and offers a superior experience at premium properties. Having a diverse profile of properties, the brand has world class five-star hotels, modern and well located casinos, and some of the world's premier resorts.







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