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With an aim to promote India as a year-round destination, the Indian contingent made a fantastic show of strength at World Travel Market (WTM) London. **Rashmi Verma**, Secretary Tourism, Govt of India, announced that 2018 will be celebrated as the Year of Adventure Tourism in India.



PEDEN DOMA BHUTIA FROM LONDON

With a country so diverse, be it the cultural heritage, festivals, cuisine or natural beauty, India has a plethora of tourism products to offer to its visitors. Lately, experiential and wellness travel have been fast gaining ground among discerning travellers. Catering to this particular segment, the Incredible India stand at WTM London witnessed a colourful show of spiritual tourism.

With special emphasis also being given to promote tourism for Northeastern States, the Ministry also showcased India's North East-The Paradise Unexplored on November 6.

The Indian delegation led by **Rashmi Verma**, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, apprised the international travel

media about various initiatives being taken up by the ministry to increase tourist arrivals in the country.

"India tourism has been growing at a fast pace. We have jumped 25 places as per the World Tourism Forum and our ranking has improved from 65 to 40. In 2016, India received 8.80 million FTAs with a growth rate of 9.7 per cent as compared to the international trend of about 3.5 per cent. This year, so far, the growth has been 15.6 per cent, which is very encouraging. In terms of foreign exchange receipts also, our growth has been commendable. In comparison to the international growth of about two per cent in 2016, India's foreign exchange receipt has gone up by almost 8.8 per cent. We are witnessing a growth, but we still have a long way to go and there is a lot of

"In 2016, India received 8.80 million FTAs with a growth rate of 9.7 per cent as compared to the international trend of about 3.5 per cent. This year, so far, the growth has been 15.6 per cent, which is very encouraging."

Rashmi Verma
Secretary-Tourism, Government of India



potential which we would like to maximise," says Verma.

Talking about the government initiatives, she touched upon the e-Tourist Visa (eTV) facility that has now been extended to 162 countries and then went on to say, "Recently, we celebrated *Paryatan Divas* in our country where our main focus was Tourism for All and *Dekho Apna Desh* in which we encouraged domestic tourists to first experience their

own country. We also want the NRI crowd to not just visit their home and relatives when they come to India, but also go around the country and travel."

Recalling the Incredible India campaign that was launched in 2002, Verma says that the ministry will now be launching the all-new Incredible India website which will be going live from December 25. "The Incredible India campaign created awareness about In-

dia's diversity and the products in India, people now recognise Incredible India as a branding for India tourism. We want to take it beyond that now and we are in the process of launching Incredible India 2.0. But this new version will not be generic, we want to make it more market and product specific, we will showcase niche products like golf tourism, cuisine, adventure tourism and cruise tourism in the right markets. We are going to focus a lot on social

media campaigns. We are very hopeful that with this Incredible India campaign 2.0, we can get people to revisit India and stay in India for a longer period and experience all the tourism products."

Talking about the feedback from WTM, Verma says, "We saw a lot of interest especially from high-end tourists which was really encouraging. Along with that the thematic circuits we have been promoting globally and domestically also garnered a lot of interest and query at the mart. We received a very positive response from all the foreign tour operators on e-visa. There were certain issues raised as well about immigration and e-visa counters not being able to handle the traffic quickly but we swiftly took action to resolve them by coordinating with the Home Ministry. However, there is a need to increase the counters for immigration and e-visa."

1st agent as Honorary Consul



Sharad Thadani, Managing Director, Mayfair Airtravel Services, was sworn in on November 13, 2017, at Hyatt Regency Lucknow as Honorary Consul for the Kingdom of The Netherlands by the Dutch Ambassador to India, **Alphonsus Stoelinga**. The Netherlands also opened a Consulate in Lucknow on the same date. Thadani has been a veteran in the travel industry and has been part of the fraternity for the last 27 years. For the last four years, he has been closely associated with the Netherlands Embassy in New Delhi as their Trade Consul to promote business in Uttar Pradesh. The Netherlands is the first country to have a Honorary Consul and a Consulate in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

OTOAI's new team for 2017-19

The Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) elected unopposed its new team for the term 2017-19. **Mahendra Vakharia** took over the reigns from the association's outgoing president **Guldeep Singh Sahni**.

President



Mahendra Vakharia
DDP Trailblazer, India Travel Awards-West, and Managing Director, Pathfinders Holidays

Vice President



Himanshu Patil
Director, Kesari Tours India Travel Award winner

General Secretary



Chitra Bhatia
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AP to invest ` 30,000cr by 2029

With its proactive policy making and aggressive promotional plans for the tourism sector, Andhra Pradesh's 2029 vision for tourism entails an investment of nearly ` 30,000 crore and creation of 10 lakh jobs in the state.

ANKITA SAXENA

During 2016, Andhra Pradesh welcomed 158.5 million domestic tourists, ranked fourth in the country in terms of total domestic tourist visits but the state is vying for the first spot in the coming years with its aggressive marketing strategies and tourism development plans, informs **Nara Chandrababu Naidu**, Chief Minister, Government of Andhra Pradesh.

"Most of the countries are depending on Indian tourists for their tourism economies and it is unfortunate that despite having everything in the country, we have not been able to exploit the potential of our own people. However, I appreciate the services of tour operators who are promoting their country to its people," said Naidu. Elaborating on the state's plans to develop infra-



Nara Chandrababu Naidu
Chief Minister
Government of Andhra Pradesh

structure, he says, "Our 2029 vision is to double the domestic tourist footfall to 353 million; we will invest additional funds to the tune of ` 30,000 crores and hope to create around 10 lakh jobs in the tourism sector. We are developing basic infrastructure as well as inviting innovative projects from the private players to guide us in the direction of developing tourism under PPP mode. We have allotted 10 acres of land to LuLu



Bhuma Akhila Priya
Minister of Tourism, Telugu Language and Culture, Government of Andhra Pradesh

Group to set up an integrated project, comprising a convention centre, a shopping mall and a five-star hotel in Visakhapatnam."

Bhuma Akhila Priya, Minister of Tourism, Telugu Language and Culture, Government of Andhra Pradesh further elaborated, "Tourism infrastructure is a major challenge for us but we are approaching investors

to participate in the creation of such facilities so as to make the visit of tourists more profitable. Through the travel agents and tour operators, we expect the message of the possibilities of tourism and experiences of Andhra Pradesh to spread all over the country," said Priya.

Besides leisure tourism, the state is also promoting rural tourism, adventure tourism, tribal tourism, Buddhist tourism, spiritual tourism, agriculture tourism and sports tourism. A Formula1 race circuit has recently been approved in Anantapur and a F1 H2O race event will be held next year near Krishna River at Vijayawada. An adventure sports academy is expected at Gandikota in Kadapa district. Andhra Pradesh has planned 24 mega events to be hosted in the state to provide a first-hand experience of its hospitality.

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Setting the stage

The year is drawing to a close and travellers are already planning their year-end getaways. While the people in North India are planning beach vacations to stay away from the winter chill, rest of India too is narrowing down on exotic locales both outside the country as well within India. December is usually the month where both the inbound and outbound season is in full bloom. In fact, domestic tourism is also on in full swing during this month. For instance, Goa has been the most popular destination in December for both inbound and domestic travellers, with rates for airlines and hotels skyrocketing at this time of the year. However, consumers are ready to pay and choose the right experience and destination that suits them best. And tour operators are offering just that, by making itineraries to fulfil their needs and interests. Last year, this season saw a big drop in numbers of both inbound and outbound travel, owing to demonetisation. However, we hope that this year the numbers see the required surge for both inbound and outbound.

It's raining weddings

The big fat Indian wedding season is on in full swing. Hotels and venues around the country are putting their best foot forward, whether it is in terms of planning events, getting the preparations in sync or offering the best in food and services. With bookings done well in advance, one can see that the hospitality industry is offering innovative concepts to impress the clients and lure new ones. However, the rage for Indian weddings is not only amongst Indians, but in other countries as well. While Thailand, Dubai, Bali, and Europe are popular destinations for arranging grand celebrations for weddings, Indians are also exploring new and off-beat destinations like Oman, Maldives and even Israel. The national tourism offices for these countries are also leaving no stone unturned to offer incentives and services in their countries to suit the needs of Indian guests. Hotels in these countries also have chefs specialising in Indian cuisine to make sure they cater well to the wedding crowd. Wedding planners are also engaging in tie ups with these destinations to organise the perfect wedding. This industry is not just growing, but also evolving with the times.

Need for a common voice

Sarabjit Singh, Managing Director, Travelite (India), has recently stepped down as Vice Chairman, FAITH. After working in the industry for many years, Singh believes that different ministries who have anything to do with tourism should work together to improve India's tourism ranking in the world.

I started my journey in the travel industry in 1971, when I joined my father's 'Karachi Taxi Company', also known as KTC Private Limited, which is the largest transport company in India. We started our inbound tourist company in 1979, called Travelite India. At that time, things were not favourable in the transport and tourism segment, because of which I started collecting all tourist transport operators together and in 1987, we formed the Indian Tourist Transporters Association. I have been associated with it since its inception till May this year. After a few years I joined IATO and have served as Senior Vice President for two terms.

It was at IATO where we decided that a common voice was required from the industry, a thought reciprocated by the Ministry of Tourism as well. In 2012, we formalised Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH), and I became the first Vice Chairman for the same, before my term got over this year. In 30 years, I have had a number of opportunities to meet with government at all levels, be it Min-

istry of Tourism, Commerce, Finance, Shipping, Transport and I&B. Also, I have interacted with state governments and had the opportunity to

One of the major problems is taxes imposed by the government. Currently, there is no tax on export of goods. Even today under GST, if some exporter has paid any tax, it is being refunded to them. But when we talk about tourism exports, we are given exporters' benefits and are considered as exporters by Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Finance

visit the PM's office and take up issues related to tourism. However, over the years I have seen that things are almost same and haven't moved much for the industry.

Many issues are plaguing the industry currently. From the government's end, there was no senior officer posted for three-four years at overseas offices. The absence of an Incredible India campaign in the last three years resulted in things getting negative for India in terms of tourism. We might be getting some increase in the net tourism results, but its potential is a lot more. India is recording only 9 million foreign tourist

arrivals when it should have been a minimum 30-35 million tourist arrivals, and FEE should be 40-45 billion dollars instead of 20-21 billion dollars

today. It's important that the MOT work in sync with the Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of External Affairs and other ministries required to contribute to tourism growth.

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products, we are charged about 22-33 per cent tax, which the foreigner pays, and this is how we are turning away tourists from coming to India from other countries.

It is imperative that the ministries focus on issues taking a broader picture. There are four-five tourism circuits which the government should take into consideration so as to achieve full development. This is only possible if all the ministries work towards a common cause so that growth can be attained in the right direction.

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



Sarabjit Singh
India Travel Award winner and
Managing Director, Travelite (India)

Delhi most favourable for tourism

Delhi has topped the WTTCII and Hotelivate state ranking survey, having emerged as the consolidated winner among Indian states ranked on 11 parameters including state expenditure on tourism, tourist visits, presence of branded hotel rooms and GSDP per capita.

Consolidated Rankings

Cities	State Expenditure on Tourism	Tourist Visits	Presence of Branded Hotel Rooms	GSDP per capita	Road and Railway Infrastructure	Aircraft Movement	Ease of Doing Business	Total	Rank 2017	Rank 2015
Delhi	10.0	23.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	4.0	111.0	1	2
Maharashtra	5.0	27.0	8.0	10.0	7.0	10.0	8.0	105.0	2	1
Goa	30.0	14.0	10.0	10.0	8.0	2.0	2.0	105.0	2	3
Tamil Nadu	5.0	30.0	8.0	10.0	8.0	8.0	4.0	96.0	4	5
Gujarat	10.0	20.0	4.0	10.0	6.0	4.0	10.0	93.0	5	5
Kerala	10.0	17.0	8.0	10.0	9.0	6.0	4.0	90.0	6	7
Karnataka	10.0	23.0	6.0	10.0	5.0	8.0	6.0	87.0	7	4
West Bengal	5.0	27.0	4.0	10.0	9.0	6.0	6.0	84.0	8	11
Punjab	5.0	20.0	6.0	10.0	10.0	2.0	6.0	78.0	9	8
Andhra Pradesh	5.0	23.0	0.0	10.0	5.0	2.0	10.0	77.0	10	14

Source: Hotelivate Research



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Vizag takes centre stage at Convention

The 8th Annual Convention of Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI), held at Hotel Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach, received over 300 delegates from across the country. The participants deliberated on challenges plaguing the domestic tourism industry and the way forward.



ANKITA SAXENA FROM VIZAG

The ADTOI convention was inaugurated by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister **Nara Chandrababu Naidu**, **Bhuma Akhila Priya**, Minister of Tourism, Telugu Language and Culture, Government of Andhra Pradesh and **Mukesh Kumar Meena**, Secretary-Tourism and Culture, Government of Andhra Pradesh along with other dignitaries from the state and ADTOI. Naidu lauded the efforts of the domestic tour operators in promoting India by bringing to forefront the unexplored jewels of the



country. Priya also added that the state tourism department is planning to make the state a favourable tourist destination not only through its promotional activities but also by way of creating adequate infrastructure. The business

sessions deliberated on issues like developing state-of-the-art infrastructure in the country to boost domestic traffic; exploring niche tourism segments like MICE, weddings and film tourism and also touched upon new ideas

and strategies of growth for tour operation.

P.P. Khanna, President, ADTOI, shared, "The idea to hold our convention in Vizag was to identify newer destinations that domestic tour op-

erators can add to their portfolio and promote the state of Andhra Pradesh with its wide variety of offerings from beach tourism, agriculture tourism, ecotourism, MICE, weddings, spiritual tourism and the Buddhist circuit." The association received an overwhelming response from the delegates, informed **Rajat Sawhney**, Vice President and Convention Chairman, ADTOI. He said, "We were planning to close the registrations at 300 but we touched nearly 340 and had to refuse a lot of outstation registrations due to logistical constraints. We received del-

egates from as far as Kargil in the North to Kochi in the South; Ahmedabad in the West to Siliguri in the East."

Naidu also launched ADTOI's Andhra Pradesh State Chapter, a maiden attempt of the association to imprint its presence in the southern part of the country and involve domestic tour operators of the region for larger benefits. This state chapter has garnered support from 15 members already and will be led by **Vijay Mohan**, Member, Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority, Government of Andhra Pradesh.

Air connectivity deters domestic travel

The annual convention of ADTOI in Visakhapatnam brought together domestic agents and tour operators from across the country. The attendees share their experience of the city and challenges faced by the industry.



TT BUREAU



Sajid Subhan
Owner
Fastrack Travels

"The convention provided good exposure to Vizag as not many people are aware of the beauty and the variety of tourism products available here. I am sure that the domestic tour operators will now sell this destination well. The Sunray Resort is coming up with a 9-hole golf course property which will also help in attracting golf enthusiasts and other niche segments of domestic travellers. For domestic tourism in general, air connectivity remains a big challenge. Weddings, Fams and MICE will help the underrated destinations to attract more tourists."



Lalit Singh
COO, STHI Group,
India Travel Award winner

"I believe Vizag was chosen as the convention venue because the association hopes to introduce a new destination to its members so that they can add Andhra Pradesh to their product portfolio. Those who have not witnessed this part of the country will find much on offer and the domestic tour operators can promote it well. I feel that for domestic tourism, enough government support is available but the travel agents and tour operators have to put right things into the right perspective in order to benefit from this segment of tourism."



Joy Peter
Director
Intersight Tours and Travels

"I have to acknowledge the fact that Vizag is one of the cleanest cities, setting an example for all the visitors and we have to take this clean drive forward to our own states. I feel we have to focus on domestic destinations before we plan holidays abroad and this sentiment resonated with the theme of the convention as well. It is important for the domestic tour operators to understand the taste of their clients, research the type of clientele they cater to and accordingly offer the products."

"Vizag is a relatively new destination and many travellers have not experienced it yet. Through the convention, I was made aware of the tourism initiatives undertaken by the tourism department of Andhra Pradesh and as agents we can be instrumental in spreading this awareness across India. Vizag is definitely going to benefit from this convention as the publicity gathered from word-of-mouth is unmatched by any other marketing initiative."



Siddharth Jain
Partner
Sapphire Ventures

"Conventions are a great opportunity to meet colleagues and put forth our issues. We cannot talk about developing tourism infrastructure if some destinations lack basic amenities. It is important for domestic tour operators to be thorough with their products which they offer as travellers are now equipped with more information. The government also has to look into the issue of GST which has increased the cost of accommodation at various tourist destinations."



Prabir Sen
Owner, Tibet Tours and Travels, India Travel Award winner

"The sessions were very informative and allowed for an interactive format where we could raise our issues. We are still lagging in terms of domestic air connectivity. The cost of travelling to international destinations is on a par with cost of domestic travel which is why domestic tourism is lagging behind. The government needs to improvise on taxation policies to help hotels reduce accommodation costs and domestic air fares to boost domestic tourism at large."



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India most digitally advanced

Travelport recently released the results of its Global Traveler Survey 2017, which saw Indians on top in terms of using digital assets at all stages of travel, right from planning, booking to experiencing stage.



NISHA VERMA

Rabih Saab, President and Managing Director, EMEA, Travelport, talks about the survey, saying that it was part of an independent research undertaken globally in 19 different markets around the globe, including India, Japan, UK, US, France, Germany, Saudi Arabia and many more. "We have a multitude of relevant markets for travel and the criteria used was a minimum age of 18 and the respondent travellers at least have undertaken one return flight in the past 12 months. The study was done in August," he informs.

Talking about India, he shares, "Around 1000 out of 11,000 respondents across the globe, were from India. I am happy to report that India is world champion among the digitally connected consumers. Indian travellers have more access to digital apps and expect more in terms of their travelling experience to communicate with the airlines



Rabih Saab
President and Managing Director
EMEA, Travelport

Indian travellers have more access to digital apps and expect more in terms of their travelling experience to communicate with the airlines and hotels

and hotels through all the stages of travel. This includes planning stage, booking stage, destination stage and post trip information." India has excelled in the survey in many

segments. Sharing India-specific statistics, he reveals, "67 per cent of Indians use online travel agencies for their booking. Over 50 per cent of Indian consumers use smartphones for research and booking. More than 67 per cent use voice search, which is almost 20 per cent higher than the global average. Another finding revealed that 91 per cent of Indian travellers use peer-to-peer reviews while booking a trip. Around 85 per cent use comparison sites to get a good deal. A total of 67 per cent Indians use voice activation to research for their booking destination."

The digital world has changed dramatically over the years. Saab agrees, saying, "Technology has now given a lot more choices and information to the travelling public. At Travelport, through our technology, investment and mobile technologies, we help the consumer make sense of all the information out there through maximising the offerings of airlines, hotels, car rental

agencies and indeed any travel provider. This would allow them to project their products, experience and brands to consumers in a way that they are ready to consume them on the go, through a smartphone."

Adding further on how they are making use of research in their company and provide customers the right technology, he says, "At Travelport, we are already committed to digital economy. We acquired a company called MTT a couple of years ago, as well as another company called Locomote and we brought all these companies under the folder of Travelport Digital. Thus, we have very clear digital offering for our 7.6 trillion travel and hospitality industry. The findings of the survey will go on to help us tune our investments, which are approximately 200 million dollars per annum, on research and development to ensure that we are providing the best technology to customers so that they can respond to the expectations of the modern traveller."

Helanka offers adventure in Sri Lanka

Helanka Vacations is introducing a lot of new adventure packages targeting undiscovered areas in Sri Lanka.



TT BUREAU

Leveraging the popularity of Sri Lanka as a tourist destination, especially for Indian tourists, Helanka Vacations is now introducing a lot of new packages. **Rishantha Mendis**, Director, Helanka Vacations, reveals that the travel company is introducing a lot of new adventure packages. "The idea is to focus less on the standard beach holidays and more on the beautiful diversity of the island. Experience-based tours are our focus for the coming year that would preferably include packages with primarily boutique and unique properties that are not the standard star-class classification. This will give the client an unique experience," he says.

The company is planning on visiting four major cities in India in the first quarter of next year for promotional work. The cities have not yet finalised yet. Mendis adds, "We hope to attract more



Rishantha Mendis
Director
Helanka Vacations

partners and direct customers through this. We also want to focus more keenly on our social media marketing efforts as well as develop more partnerships in India."

Helanka Vacations is a family-owned business that creates unique experiences for its customers. Its group of companies is just completing 20 years and to celebrate this, it has moved into its own office complex in Colombo. The company plans to fully cater the Indian market.

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MPTM raises bar with more on offer

Madhya Pradesh Travel Mart, in its fourth edition, provided a platform to buyers that went well beyond wildlife. The state is now looking to attract more travellers with innovative concepts and comprehensive packages.

TRIPTI MEHTA



Shoba Mohan
Founder Partner
Rare India

“This is our third year at Madhya Pradesh Travel Mart and it has been quite good. MPTM has progressively been getting better and better. Rare India addresses the needs of a very niche audience and so, it is imperative for us to have quality buyers come in. The mix of domestic and inbound that they have put together is quite interesting. We take Bhopal as the focal point for people wanting to access the wildlife scene of central India. There is a lot of potential for growth in the inbound circle as well and Madhya Pradesh Tourism is one of the pioneers in doing some path-breaking work.”



Karunesh Tiwari
Business Development and
Revenue Manager
Brilliant Convention Centre,
Indore

“Brilliant Convention Centre is a state-of-the-art MICE facility in Indore. The USP of the property is the Grand Hall which is a pillarless ball-room spread across an area of about 22,500 sq ft. The only event that we participate in is Madhya Pradesh Travel Mart, as we are able to network with relevant buyers. We received a number of queries from international clients as well but our major client share still remains domestic. Madhya Pradesh Tourism has marketed MPTM very well. Its presence can be felt across the city of Bhopal with a number of advertisements being displayed.”



Raajan Anand
General Manager - Sales and
Marketing
Infinity Resorts

“Infinity Resorts has been participating in Madhya Pradesh Travel Mart since its inception. The mart has only been progressing and growing in scale since then. Being present at MPTM has been good for us because we have been getting buyers from across territories to promote central India. In my opinion, it is a very good initiative of the Government of Madhya Pradesh, which has actively been promoting tourism to the state. For a seller to promote his/her product, it is crucial that the target audience be relevant. Though there have been a good number of buyers this year, we do hope that the next year brings along more relevant buyers to the mart.”

SELLERS

BUYERS

“MPTM is quite beneficial in learning about new destinations, visiting new properties and understanding what tourism products the state has to offer. There are plenty of wildlife tourism opportunities available here, something that the state is already quite famous for. MICE, on the other hand, is also fast gaining ground. Khajuraho is one sector which is quite famous among international tourists. A number of international travellers who arrive in Delhi like to travel further to Khajuraho. The best part about MPTM is the Fam trips they organise where we get a chance to explore and understand the state even more.”



Sunil Choudhary
Director
Go India Tourism

“MPTM is an excellent platform to meet stakeholders and see their products. You start getting new ideas and get to know about new destinations. For sellers, the number of buyers this year was slightly limited. Also, the buyers and products are not focused, something that MPTM must look to include the next year. For Madhya Pradesh, wildlife is the most popular product, though they also have cultural products. Most of the buyers at the mart aren't really hard core wildlife buyers. So, MPTM should probably look at the profile of the buyers for future marts so that they can give more focus to the mart.”



Ravi S. Kalra
Managing Director
Travel Inn

“MPTM is an eye-opener for me to meet so many hoteliers and other sellers, and see what new products I can incorporate into the existing packages. Excel Tours is an inbound company. Wildlife is a big part of tourism in the state of Madhya Pradesh and I am learning more and more about it. Till now I had only been focusing on sending my clients to the cultural hubs of Khajuraho and Orchha, but now there is so much more than I can provide to my clients who wish to travel to the state. This is definitely going to help me design more comprehensive packages.”



Manish Mehra
Director
Excel Network

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Hahn Air hosts agents in Gujarat

Hahn Air recently held a networking event for over 80 travel agents from 39 agencies in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The event provided an opportunity to meet Zafar Shamsi, Director Global Account Management Western India, the key account director for the state. He was supported by his colleagues Sanjay Shrivastava, Director Global Account Management Northern & Eastern India and Bharat Kapoor, Director Global Account Management Southern India. The programme included a brief presentation about Hahn Air's product and services, followed by dinner and drinks.



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With the addition of a third daily non-stop between Mumbai and London, Jet Airways will capitalise on the demand and popularity while crossing the 1,000-seat mark on this route.

TT BUREAU

Jet Airways commenced its third daily non-stop flight service on the Mumbai-London route, making it the only Indian airline to operate thrice daily between the two cities. The airline currently operates the Boeing 777 aircraft on the Mumbai-London route having three cabin configurations with eight seats in first class, 30 in business class and 308 in economy class offering 346 seats in total. Passengers travelling on the Mumbai-London route through Jet Airways have multiple connections available beyond London to the United States courtesy the Virgin codeshare.

Jet Airways also has multiple options available from Mumbai right from the Indian domestic network connecting the major cities from Mumbai. **Praveen Iyer**, Vice President Commercial-India Sales, Jet Airways (India) said, "We are proud to say that we are the only



Praveen Iyer
Vice President Commercial-India Sales,
Jet Airways (India)

We witness good load factors on the London route and expect the same growth in next year as well. Currently, India is the number two market investing in UK

Indian carrier to have three flights out of Mumbai to London. With this new frequency, we have crossed 1,000 seats from Mumbai to London. We are very happy with

the connectivity available for our customers and in course of time we will keep adding connections feeding into London." He further added, "We witness good load factors on the London route and expect the same growth in next year as well. Currently, India is the number two market investing in UK and vice versa into India as well. We have a good mix of corporate, leisure, VFR segments travelling to London."

Jet Airways also added frequencies on the Bangalore-Amsterdam and Chennai-Paris routes, marking the addition of three international frequencies on the same day. Apart from growing their international network, Jet Airways has also been concentrating on starting flights to domestic destinations. The airline also plans to increase capacity to Tier II and III cities which according to the airline have shown a faster growth rate compared to the metro cities in India. 🇮🇳

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Carlson Rezidor signs 12 new hotels in 2017

■ Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group accelerated its expansion plans in India by signing 12 new hotels in 2017. The signings add to Carlson Rezidor's robust pipeline in India where it currently holds a portfolio of 140 hotels in operation and under development across 60 Indian cities, including 16 state capitals. "The signing momentum is indicative of the strength of our brands and the value we bring to our owner relationships. We are a dominant international brand in India and our robust pipeline is targeted at state capitals and regional markets with efficient connectivity. We have 85 hotels in operation in the country where we continue to sign a new hotel every four weeks and open a hotel every six weeks," said **Raj Rana**, Chief Executive Officer, South Asia, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group. With the announcement of Radisson RED in Mohali, Chandigarh last year, Carlson Rezidor's South Asia portfolio now constitutes six differentiated global brands, namely Radisson, Radisson Blu, Park Plaza, Park Inn, Country Inn & Suites by Carlson, and Radisson RED.

Exploring beyond the wilderness

On the sidelines of the Sanganai World Tourism Expo in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Tourism Board hosted Indian travel trade to popular tourist attractions such as Harare, Hwange National Park, Bulawayo, Kariba where the visitors got a chance to explore the country.

 PRITI KHANNA



Sandeep Srivastava
Director
Youdian Business Solutions

"Zimbabwe is a good destination, and the Fam served its purpose well. Exhibitor meetings were reasonable, though they could have used the 'blind dating' format more effectively. Zimbabwe's presence was prominent but for an all-Africa show, I didn't see participation from much African countries. With the right amount of marketing, I see a multifold rise in Indian visitors travelling to Zimbabwe. This country has the potential to attract leisure and honeymoon travellers too, besides the usual wildlife and adventure travellers. Industry professionals who seek representation opportunities will find clients in hotels as well as DMCs who are looking for presence in India."

"The country has a lot to offer but is primarily restricted to its wilderness. Zimbabwe has a lot to offer and Sanganai managed to bring it all under one roof. I definitely see a high potential to Zimbabwe either as a stand-alone destination or a combination with South Africa or Zambia. There is much to do there especially on the wildlife front. It might be worthwhile to head down to the Great Zimbabwe Ruins or the Eastern Highlands to have a look. I would focus on Victoria Falls, Hwange, Mana Pools and Lake Kariba for the moment."



Shantanu Chand
CEO
Go Beyond Travels



Vikram Shanker
Director
Voyageur Lifestyles

"The Fam trip was an eye-opener for me as I can now confidently promote Zimbabwe as a stand-alone holiday destination for 10-12 days. Until recently, Zimbabwe was really all about Victoria Falls but now I can add so much more to an itinerary by including Hwange, Kariba, Mana Pools and the Eastern Highlands. The exhibitor meetings were essential to identify receptive agencies. Interactions with several ground handling agencies enabled me to find two excellent receptive agencies, who will be instrumental in providing world-class services for my clients. The exhibitor profile was very good as it took in a large range of suppliers."

"The Fam trip gave us insights into locations that we can sell in the region and also gave an introduction to the Zimbabwean culture. While it gave us a wide range of information, it was an eye opener for various segments that can be served by tour operators. The exhibitor meetings were beneficial as we interacted with one on one, which is very important to India outbound market. We met hoteliers, DMCs, attractions, government agencies and tourism authorities. Exhibitor profiles were selected to showcase their products, tours, itineraries and accommodations."



Jasleen Kohli
Branch Head
Holidays by Weldon



Kumud Sirohi
Director
Star Vacations

"Exploring Bulawayo and learning about Bushmans, colonisation in Africa, Sir Cecil John Rhodes and rhino conservation work in Matobo National Park. The exhibitors were very keen to share information about their products and destination as well. Zimbabwe in combination with Zambia and Botswana makes an interesting tour option for my clients."



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FITUR's INVESTOUR from Jan 17-21

The Tourism Investment and Business Forum for Africa will discuss the Africa Brand situation and its impact on the continent's tourism.

TT BUREAU

The International Tourism Trade Fair, FITUR 2018, held by IFEMA from January 17-21, 2018 in Feria de Madrid, will become the stage for the 9th Tourism Investment and Business Forum for Africa, INVESTOUR, organised jointly by FITUR, the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and Casa África. The full-day session will discuss some of the most pertinent topics for the African continent, prominent among them being the situation of the Africa Brand and its impact on African tourism.



The Investour Forum will cover two sessions, holding two round tables and B2B business meetings. The first table will debate on 'Africa Brand: Promoting tourism development and investment opportunities', providing an interesting context to share already-adopted political measures to successfully manage a destination's brand.

The second round table, with the title of 'Biodiversity as the driver of sustainable tourism: Importance of the community's effective participation', will identify an integrated approach to harmonise sustainable tourism with the protection of biodi-

versity, and lay emphasis on how to involve the local community to conserve biodiversity. In this regard, the forum will also become a space for exploring and drafting well-established policies committed to developing sustainable tourism.

Every drop matters: Conserve

Radisson Blu Pune Hinjewadi has taken an initiative to promote water conservation. It now plans to organise medical and blood donation camps.

TT BUREAU

Serving the community lies at the heart of Radisson Blu Pune Hinjewadi. The hotel's team recently carried out activities under its 'Blu Planet' initiative which focuses on conserving and protecting the earth's water supply. These activities were performed to generate public awareness and engage the staff for community services. **Pankaj Saxena,**



Pankaj Saxena
General Manager
Radisson Blu Pune Hinjewadi

General Manager, Radisson Blu Pune Hinjewadi says, "A core part of Radisson Blu Pune Hinjewadi's mission is to have a positive impact on the communities where we work and this is just a humble beginning for us. It is indeed a gratifying experience to be able to touch lives in a positive manner."

The team installed water purifiers and storage tanks at a Zilla Parishad School.

They conducted a session on 'Awareness of Clean Drinking Water' and restored hygiene in the toilets. The school used only the water tank for various purposes including drinking. On observing that the school was deprived of a basic need, the team realised that it was necessary to offer clean drinking water.

About 182 students have been impacted with this water mindfulness drive.

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- According to the Government of India, Cruising is one of the most dynamic and fastest-growing segments of leisure travel, with an estimated market size of 1.2 million cruise visitors by 2030.
- One niche area in which India already excels is medical tourism, thanks to the high-quality yet affordable healthcare it offers patients by world-class hospitals and tertiary care facilities. India's earnings from medical tourism could surpass \$8 billion by 2020.

Source: WEF's report on Incredible India 2.0: India's \$20 Billion Tourism Opportunity

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UAE offers fast track immigration to Indians

■ In line with the visa-on-arrival offered by UAE to Indian citizens, Marhaba has launched a fast-track immigration process through Dubai Airports. This new product of the company will allow Indian travellers with a valid US visit visa or Green Card with six month passport validity to travel to Dubai easily. The tourists can apply for a 14 days UAE on-arrival visas from India. Marhaba offers a round the clock pre-approval facility, flexibility to change travel plans and ap-

proval within four working hours. The maximum length of stay in Dubai is 14 days on arrival and the UAE visa can be extended for an additional 14 days. In addition to handling paperwork and helping with transfers and baggage, Marhaba will ensure an easy passage through the airport while offering an oasis of calm within its exclusive lounges. With Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Family services, Marhaba can cater to every segment of traveller from India to the UAE.

Delhi-Vancouver daily from Dec

Air Canada is set to make its Delhi-Vancouver flight a daily operation, starting December 1, reveals **Margaret Skinner**, Director Sales, EMEA, Air Canada.



NISHA VERMA

For **Margaret Skinner**, the Indian market is a growing market and offers a good mix of business for them. "The economy is strong and we are actually seeing business in all market segments—corporate, leisure, student traffic," she says. While India is seeing an unprecedented growth in the aviation sector,

many more airlines are starting services here. In such a situation, Air Canada needs to have a powerful strategy to gain profits here. "We welcome competition and we have invested very heavily in this market with our state-of-the-art Boeing Dreamliner aircraft here with three class service—economy, premier economy and business class. We are the only four-star

ranked carrier in North America. We are also investing in product on board as our strategy is to keep investing. We'll continue to grow here, if the market supports that," she forecast.

The next stepping stone to growth is just round the corner. "On our Toronto-Delhi service, we went daily very quickly. And now our Vancou-



Margaret Skinner
Director Sales, EMEA
Air Canada

Our Mumbai-Toronto service is four times a week, and we'd like to see all those services daily year round. We have got products for every budget, and we'd like to see more Indians on board our Air Canada flights

ver-Delhi service will go daily from current four-times-a-week flight, starting December 1, 2017. Our Mumbai-Toronto service is four times a week, and we'd like to see all those services daily year round. We have got products for every budget, and we'd like to see more Indians on board our Air Canada flights," she asserted.

Skinner shared that Air Canada not only offers direct connections to Canada, but also further ahead. "Our network is growing globally but customers who travel to our hubs in Toronto and Vancouver, connect seamlessly through to our network in Canada, USA, Latin America and the Caribbean."

In the Indian market, she said, they rely very heavily on the travel trade. "We work hand-in-hand with our trade partners and have great partnerships here. The land factors have been very high, but we have learnt that it's a market which books late and we are trying to learn from that," she shared.

Spreading Wings

■ Air Canada network is growing globally but customers who travel to our hubs in Toronto and Vancouver, connect seamlessly through to our network in Canada, USA, Latin America and the Caribbean

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Exploring many worlds within India

The Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI) brought together its pan-India members under one roof for its 8th annual convention in Vizag. The association members and participants deliberated on pressing issues pertaining to the domestic tourism industry.



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Incredible India shines bright at ITB Asia

Asia's leading travel trade show, ITB Asia 2017 completed its milestone anniversary event with record-breaking numbers. The 10th ITB Asia was held at the Sands Expo and Convention Centre, Marina Bay Sands in Singapore. Over three days, the event hosted about 940 exhibitors from 113 countries. ITB Asia 2017 also welcomed its strongest ever buyer participation across the Corporate, MICE and Leisure sectors.



Scandinavia targets 15% growth

Scandinavian Tourist Board conducted its annual three-city roadshow in Delhi, Chennai and Mumbai to apprise the trade about new offerings of the region and its upcoming plans for the India market. The region is expecting to record at least 15 per cent growth by 2017 end.



The tourist board met approximately 100 travel agents in Delhi and Chennai each and about 150 travel agents in Mumbai, where they discussed the opportunities to further grow the market to Scandinavian countries. "We are expecting to record over 15 per cent growth in Indian bednights in 2017 over 2016 with 350,000 Indian bednights recorded year-to-date. We have seen a tremendous growth in interest towards Scandinavia with some markets in the region witnessing a 20 per cent growth too. All segments have shown growth, be it leisure, honeymoons or the incentive market from



Mohit Batra
India Representative
Scandinavian Tourist Board

India. Our focus has been on Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Bengaluru but we have also seen other cities showing interest as well," says Mohit Batra, India Representative, Scandinavian Tourist Board. He explains, that all three capitals of these Scandinavian countries are connected through Emirates Airways and now with Air India's direct flight to Stockholm and Copenhagen, Scandinavia is much closer home than ever before. He adds, "I am aware that some companies like MakeMyTrip have aggressive plans where the fixed departures are almost 10 times for the next year as compared to this year." Batra further points out a shifting trend where the younger travellers are taking to Scandinavia as their first experience of Europe. "Though I feel that the Indian tour operators have a good sense of the market, I hope to see better products being sold in the market," comments Batra.

Denmark usually records a significant growth from the India market but in 2016 the destination recorded a decrease in the numbers due to very high rate of occupancies in Copenhagen,

informed Flemming Bruhn, Director, Visit Denmark. "The problem is lack of rooms at the destination but we are already working on the solution. We are building new hotels and we ensure a 20 per cent increase for the next two years." He also feels that with enhanced connectivity on Air India connecting Copenhagen and Stockholm, the

region can expect good numbers in 2018. "We have developed five signature routes of Denmark that present the best of the destination within a week. We have witnessed a trend among the India travellers where they are no longer combining too many countries in one itinerary and allow for an immersive experience of say two des-

tinations at most in 8-10 days," adds Bruhn.

Per Holte, Market Director Tourism—Asia and New Developing Markets, Innovation Norway, informs, "We expect an approximate 20 per cent growth from this year from the India market. So far, we saw fairly old-aged Indian travellers but more recently,

we are witnessing a new segment of younger travellers and young families wishing to take road trips in few areas at the destination."

Ruth Dolla, Project Manager India, Visit Sweden informs that the destination recorded about 167,000 Indian visitors in 2016 and based on the current calculation, by the

end of 2017, Sweden would have recorded an 18 per cent growth in the Indian arrival figures. "The month-on-month increase is much more, about 35 per cent. Indians traditionally have been travelling to southern Europe but they now want to travel to new destinations, so I think it's a natural growth and it's only going to go up from there," says Dolla.

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World Travel Market 2017, the leading global event for the travel industry, was abuzz with activities for the trade and consumers alike. Rashmi Verma, Secretary-Tourism, Government of India led the Indian delegation at the event. At the three-day exhibition held at the ExCeL-London from November 6-8, Incredible India showcased a lively celebration of spiritual tourism. The India stand laid special emphasis on the development and promotion of tourism for the North East States with an objective of showcasing the largely untapped tourism potential of the region.



jüStä Sajjangarh to debut with 63 keys

jüStä Hotels is set to open a five-star property—jüStä Sajjangarh Udaipur with 63 keys and has plans to open another property in Delhi in 2018.



TT BUREAU

jüStä Hotels witnessed a slow start to the first quarter of 2017 but from the second quarter onwards, business picked up well for the company. “We have witnessed 12-15 per cent increase in occupancy and ADRs rose by `300-400, making RevPar healthier,” informs Rohit Katyal, National Sales Director, jüStä Hotels & Resorts. He points out that after many years, the hotel saw a surge in hospitality requirements and 2018 looks to be a better year than 2017 in terms of ADRs.



Rohit Katyal
National Sales Director
jüStä Hotels & Resorts

Further by January 2018, Rajputana Udaipur will have state-of-the-art pillar less banqueting space along with three lawns, making it as a preferred MICE and wedding location

“Our upcoming five-star property will be operational in a couple of weeks. We are hoping to open another property in Rajasthan and one more in Delhi-NCR in 2018. jüStä Sajjangarh Udaipur will have 63 keys with live kitchen concept, spa, open sky bar and lounge with stunning views of the Sajjangarh Palace. This property is situated opposite to 200 acres of a biodiversity park in Udaipur,” explains Katyal.

Recently, the hotel also launched outdoor catering services from The Jehan and enhanced the banqueting facility at its Delhi hotels in Greater Kailash and Pansheel. The hotel is also targeting the corporate segment of travellers and thus, has refurbished its existing properties. Katyal informs, “Further by January 2018, Rajputana Udaipur will have state-of-the-art pillar less

banqueting space of 11000 sq ft with 17 ft ceiling height along with three lawns, making it as a preferred location for MICE and weddings.” In 2018, digital marketing will remain the key focus for the hotel and the company is in the midst of restructuring its corporate set up.

Experiential tours on the cards

Trans India Holidays will launch a range of special experience tours at 20 Indian destinations to offer the inbound tourists a glimpse of the Indian culture.



TT BUREAU

The year 2017 was a good year for Trans India Holidays where the company grew by 15 per cent in passenger numbers and about 12 per cent in foreign exchange earnings in the first eight months of the fiscal year. “With the American economy showing very good signs of recovery; with a certain strengthening of the pound; travellers getting used to the idea of Brexit



Kapil Goswamy
MD, Trans India Holidays, India Travel Award winner

and enhanced air connectivity to India, 2018 should be a

good year for the inbound tourism industry,” says Kapil Goswamy, Managing Director, Trans India Holidays.

Goswamy points out that in 2017, the company worked on the experiential element of tourism and by the end of 2017, the company hopes to launch a full range of ‘Special Experiences’ in nearly 20 Indian destinations. Some of the products to be introduced are cycling trips in Kerala, cooking

lessons at local homes, Bollywood dance classes, street food tours and walking tours through the slums. Goswamy believes that not only such tours offer tourists a glimpse of real India but also offers a chance for interaction with local communities. “It offers an insight to the Indian culture and most importantly, such activities encourage clients to spend longer time at the destination to experience unusual city tours,” he adds.

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Travel

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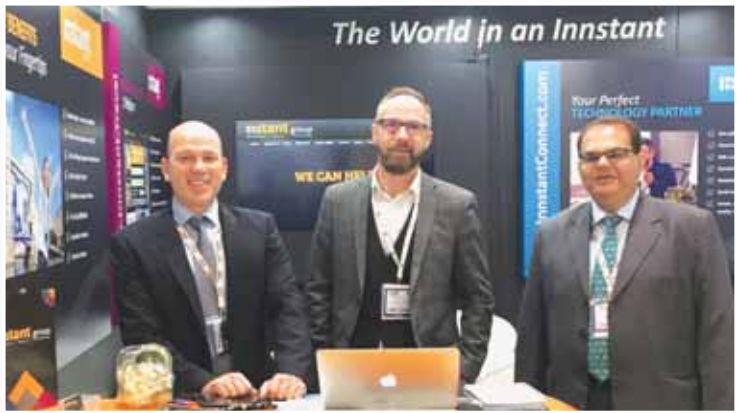
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Marriott showcases 50 brands

Marriott Hotels showcased its 50 hotel brands from the South Asia region in Mumbai and Delhi to develop the market in the South Asia region.



SHAHZAD NASIR

Marriott Hotels hosted its first South Asia Market Place in Mumbai at the JW Marriott Hotel Juhu, Mumbai. The event witnessed the presence of 50 Marriott hotels from the South Asia region along with top management officials from Marriott like sales leaders, director sales and marketing, market leaders, general managers, multi-property general managers and director of sales, etc. Around 250-300 people attended the event in Mumbai.

A similar event was also hosted in Delhi. Speaking about the first ever South Asia market place, **Hema Hariramani**, Director, National Sales-India, Marriott Hotels India, said, "This is the first time we are organising a South Asia Marriott Market Place in India. As Mumbai and Delhi continue to remain our key source markets, the focus is to get all key customers of Mumbai and Delhi



Hema Hariramani
Director, National Sales-India
Marriott Hotels India Pvt Ltd

Mumbai and Delhi continue to remain our key source markets. The focus is to get all key customers under one roof where they can meet all Marriott Hotels of South Asia

under one roof where they can meet all Marriott Hotels of South Asia. Marriott plans to host the event in cities like Bengaluru, Kolkata,

Pune and Ahmedabad in the coming years."

An interactive session was held with top MNC clients for a more detailed conversation with the senior management, followed by cocktails and dinner. Marriott Hotels also added the Marriott Indore and JW Jaipur recently to their portfolio. She further adds, "India has been a main source market for the South Asia hotels, be it Sri Lanka where we have one hotel currently and opening a Sheraton in Colombo very soon. Similarly for Bangladesh and Bhutan, India remains a major source market for business in these countries, therefore we have hotels from these regions participating for the Marriott South Asia Market Place."

Fact File

Marriott Hotels plan to host the event in cities like Bengaluru, Kolkata, Pune and Ahmedabad in the coming years

Oman Air gets ready for 2018

Oman's national airline is not looking at expansion but a sustainable growth with focus on the corporate segment, the religious and tour packages.



TT BUREAU

Year 2017 has been a challenging year for Oman Air with lots of variables such as increased capacity in the market and lower demands. **Ihab A. Sorial**, Senior Vice President-International Sales, Oman Air, says, "The growth was small but nimble so we have to accordingly change as per the market situation. We managed to enhance our capacity well and harness our focus on premium segmentation and diversification of business. This helped us a lot in maximising the revenues."

Oman Air has seen growth of 20 per cent in terms of capacity and it outgrew this in terms of revenue as well without compromising on the yields. These figures are for international sales that comprises the Indian subcontinent, Europe and the Far East.

Talking about the new year, Sorial says, "We are getting ready for 2018 and have planned a few initiatives to



Ihab A. Sorial
Senior Vice President-International
Sales, Oman Air

The corporate sector has been our major source of business which has given us higher yields than any other segment. Religious packages are also important for us

make sure we are competing well in the market. We are making sure that all incentive schemes and corporate deals are signed and ready by the

start of January 2018. Our focus is on segmentation again. The corporate sector has been our major source of business which has given us higher yields than any other segment. Religious and tour packages is also another important segment for us."

He adds that the airline is currently not looking at expanding but rather at having sustainable growth. "We are working on developing products like seats, menus, on-board and on-ground services, training of staff, etc. We will launch promotions for our 47th National Day which will promote Oman Air and Oman as a destination as well," Sorial adds. Oman Air has recently increased its frequency from Muscat to the port town of Duqm in central-eastern Oman in response to growing demand.

Number Game

Oman Air has seen growth of 20 per cent in terms of capacity

Clarks Inn honours leaders



Clarks Inn Group of Hotels recently organised its 9th Annual Clarks Inn Leadership Summit at Khajuraho. The annual calendar event was attended by Clarks Inn's corporate team along with the General Manager of all its units from across the country. The 'GM of the Year' was bestowed on **Rabindra Kumar Singh**, GM of Clarks Inn Moradabad. **Rajesh Chander**, GM, Clarks Exotica Zirakpur and **M. Praveen**, Resident manager, Clarks Inn Badami, were the first and second runners up, respectively.

Forging bonds in Punjab

Trip Tap Toe is all set to host a networking event exclusively for travel agents in Chandigarh, in order to introduce them to its offerings in an informal atmosphere.



TT BUREAU

Manuraj Singh Johar, Founder & CEO, Trip Tap Toe, says that the idea behind the events is networking and fun filled evening with the agents in Chandigarh. "We plan to introduce Trip Tap Toe to the agents and then lighten up the evening over drinks and music. We are inviting all the interested travel agents to showcase our B2B travel portal and services. This can be immensely beneficial for them by gaining access to cheaper travel solutions through us, which will make them much more competitive in the market, thus, help them grow their revenues," he informs.

Johar says that they wanted to focus on travel agents from Punjab and get the opportunity to cater to their travel requirements. "We also plan to build strong personal and professional relations with the agents," he adds. Johar sees Punjab as a prospec-



Manuraj Singh Johar
Founder & CEO
Trip Tap Toe

Many new travel companies have come up in Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. We plan to help these companies get better travel solutions at much more competitive rates

tive market for them. "With increased disposal income, more people from Tier-II, III cities plan to travel and

especially seek overseas travel. As a result, many new travel companies have come up in Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. We plan to help these companies get better travel solutions at much more competitive rates," he shares.

In terms of expectations, Johar hopes to build new partnerships and tie-ups for mutual benefits and also gain knowledge about the travel trends in the region. He asserts that this is not a one off event. "We plan to hold many more such networking dinners around the country to reach out to the local travel agencies. We had done similar events in NCR before, but now we plan to reach out to travel agents nationwide. Our next target is to tap on Northeast India, Western UP, Central and Eastern India. We have not made a complete calendar yet, but we plan to cover these regions over next six months," Johar stresses.

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EVENT TALK

DECEMBER 2017

IITM	Hyderabad	1-3
Travel Business Show	New Delhi	2-3
International Luxury Travel Mart (ILTM)	France	4-7
Bahrain Tourism Roadshow	Mumbai	6
Scotland Trade Show	New Delhi	7
Bahrain Tourism roadshow	New Delhi	8
India International Travel Exhibition (IITE)	Madurai	8-10
Neptune Foundation's Polo Match	New Delhi	17
India Travel Awards (North)	New Delhi	21

JANUARY 2018

U&I Roadshow	Bengaluru	8
U&I Roadshow	Ahmedabad	9
U&I Roadshow	Kolkata	11
IITM	Kochi	11-13
U&I Roadshow	New Delhi	12
GPS	Nagpur	15-17
U&I Roadshow	Pune	15
U&I Roadshow	Mumbai	16
FITUR	Madrid, Spain	17-21
OTM	Mumbai	18-20
Jharkhand Travel Mart	Ranchi	19-21
India International Travel Exhibition (IITE)	Nagpur	27-29
Dusit International India Office roadshow	Mumbai	29
Dusit International India Office roadshow	Bengaluru	30
Tourism Events Queensland	Chennai	30
Tourism Events Queensland	Bengaluru	31
SATTE	Delhi	31-Feb 2

FEBRUARY 2018

Tourism Events Queensland B2B Workshop	Hyderabad	2
ANTO B2B workshop	Mumbai	5-6
ANTO B2B workshop	Bengaluru	7
ANTO B2B workshop	New Delhi	8-9
GPS	Hyderabad	8-10
South African Tourism Roadshow	Colombo	9
Mysore Travel Mart	Mysore	9-12
South African Tourism Roadshow	Mumbai	12-13
South African Tourism Roadshow	Kolkata	14
South African Tourism Roadshow	Bengaluru	15
South African Tourism Roadshow	Delhi	16
TTF	Chennai	16-18
Tourism Events Queensland B2B Workshop	Pune	20
ACE of M.I.C.E.	Istanbul	21-23
ENIT Italy B2B Roadshow	Mumbai	21
TTE	London	21-22
BTS	London	21-22
Tourism Events Queensland B2B Workshop	Ahmedabad	22
ENIT Italy B2B Roadshow	Kolkata	23
IITM	Kolkata	23-25
TTF	Bengaluru	23-25
ENIT Italy B2B Roadshow	Delhi	26
Karnataka Travel Mart	Bengaluru	28-Mar 2

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

Change of guard @OTOAI

The Outbound Tour Operators Association of India has elected its new team for 2018-20. **Mahendra Vakharia** is the new President while **Himanshu Patil** has been elected as the Vice President for the association's next term.



TT BUREAU

The new OTOAI team was elected unopposed. The focus of the association has shifted from North India to West India with both the President and Vice President from the western region. Other important office bearers of OTOAI included **Chitra Bhatia**, MD, Aashman Air Travels as the new General Secretary; **Gurdeep Singh Gujral**, Director, Gujral Tours and Travels continuing as the Joint Secretary while **Siddharth Khanna**, Partner, Khanna Enterprises as the new Treasurer. The Executive Committee members include, **Ankush Nijhawan**, Managing Director, Nijhawan Group; **Sujit Nair**, Founder and Group Managing Director, Akquasun Group; **Riaz Munshi**, Managing Director, N. Chirag



our top priority as some of our trade members have found it difficult to be a part of the association. Given the challenges in the tourism industry, it is important for us to innovate, learn and continue the hard work with honesty, ethics and passion." The state chairmen will be

I feel extremely honoured to be trusted with this position. Increasing our membership across India remains to be our top priority as some of our trade members have found it difficult to be a part of the association.

Mahendra Vakharia
President, OTOAI

It is not me, but we. I would like to assure the trade that we as OTOAI will look into the problems in the industry and address them as best as we can.

Himanshu Patil
Vice President, OTOAI

Travels; **Shravan Bhalla**, Chief Executive Officer, High Flyer; **Adl Karim** Director, Creative Tours and Travels (India) and **Rajeev Sabharwal**, CEO, Gaurav Travels.

President Vakharia says, "I feel extremely honoured to be trusted with this position. Increasing our membership across India remains to be

announced in due course of time, informs Vakharia.

Patil further explains that the member base of the association is strong in the North and West while the southern and eastern part of the country needs work. "We have huge responsibilities on our shoulders as the past team has done very good

work and it is our job to now carry it forward and fill the gaps. There are many issues in the travel trade and it is only with larger numbers can we represent our case well to the authorities. It is not me, but we. I would like to assure the trade that we as OTOAI will look into the problems in the industry and address them as best as we can."

Bhatia, the only woman in the EC feels overwhelmed with the responsibility on her shoulders which she hopes to fulfil to the best to her abilities. "We need to expand our base. Now with the President and Vice President from the

western region our focus will shift to the western part of the country and I hope we will be able to offer new added benefits to our members at large."

Gujral was re-elected as the Joint Secretary unopposed. He says, "We will strengthen the association not just with an expanded membership but also by way of offering more activities, educational trips to the members, front-line staff and key trade partners. We are preparing a four-year calendar and hope to stick to the schedule so that we do not miss any opportunity to connect with our members."

ADTOI launches AP chapter

Following the launch of its state chapter in Rajasthan, ADTOI has also launched its Andhra Pradesh State Chapter during its annual convention held in Visakhapatnam recently.



TT BUREAU

The Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI) launched its Andhra Pradesh Chapter during its 8th Annual Convention held in Visakhapatnam recently. **Vijay Mohan**, Member, Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority, Government of Andhra Pradesh and President of Tour and Travels Association of Andhra Pradesh, will head this chapter for the association. **Rajat Sawhney**, Vice President, ADTOI, said, "The membership of the association is predominantly based



Vijay Mohan
Member, Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority, Government of Andhra Pradesh

in North, East and West India. In the South, barring Kerala we had less presence in



Rajat Sawhney
Vice President ADTOI

states like Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The launch of

the Andhra Pradesh State Chapter of ADTOI is a maiden attempt to set its imprints and penetrate the southern parts of India for larger benefits of the domestic tour operators." Commenting on the targets of this newly formed state chapter of ADTOI, Mohan said, "The Association of Tour Operators of Andhra Pradesh has about 187 members. We received 12 registrations in just 24 hours. We would work towards increasing membership and are looking at approximately 50 members at the end of this financial year."




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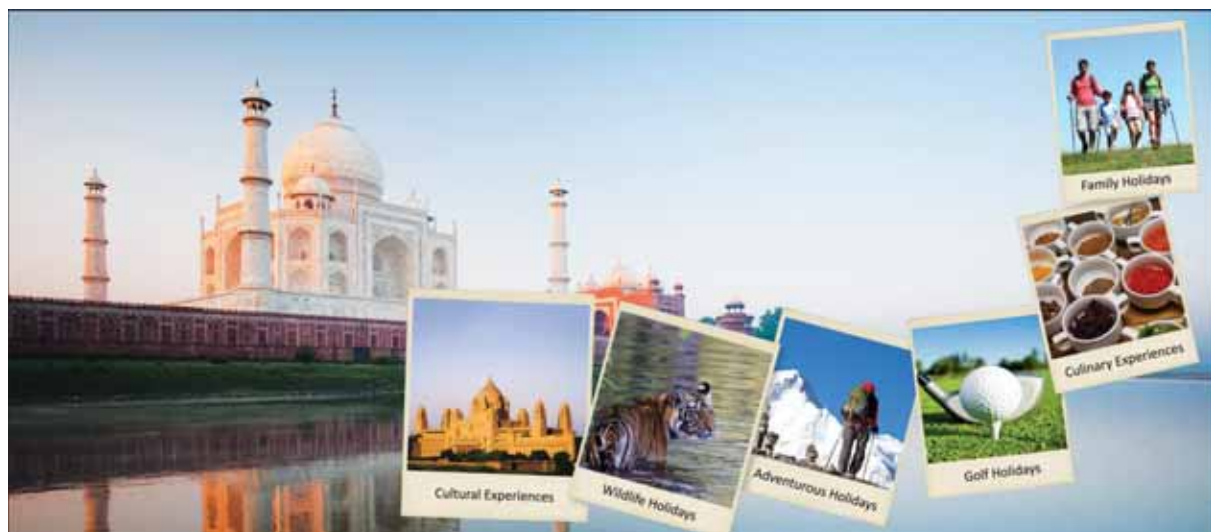


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Delhi NCR



Ashwani Nayar has been appointed as the Multi-Property General Manager of The Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi and The Westin Sohna Resort and Spa. With over 25 years of experience in hospitality, Nayar joined Marriott International in 2005 as the Executive Assistant Manager of Le Méridien Resort & Convention Centre, Cochin before moving on as GM of Le Méridien, Jaipur. He also served as GM at Sheraton Udaipur Palace Resort and Spa. He later joined Le Méridien, Dhaka as a pre-opening GM.

JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu

Mumbai

JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu has appointed **Sharad Puri** as the new General Manager of Marriott International's flagship hotel in India. Puri brings with him a rich experience of working with luxury hotels for 22 years. He began his career as an Assistant Manager with Oberoi Towers and The Oberoi Mumbai in 1995 and later moved to work at The Oberoi Grand, Kolkata in 2000. In 2004, Puri returned to Mumbai as Hotel Manager at Hilton Towers. After completing a five-year stint as the General Manager with Trident in Hyderabad, he along with the team are committed towards personalised guest experiences. Puri was also an Honorary Member of the Board of Hyderabad Convention and Visitors Bureau (HCVB).



Alila Fort Bishangarh

Rajasthan

Alila Hotels & Resorts appointed **Binny Sebastian** as General Manager of Alila Fort Bishangarh, located 1.5 hours north of Jaipur. He will be responsible for managing the operations of the heritage resort with 59 suites. With 20 years of global experience in hospitality, Sebastian brings with him a wealth of industry knowledge in the luxury hotel segment. He successfully ran prestigious hotels and resorts in senior management roles in the Caribbean and India. Sebastian looks forward to developing with the team creatively for different Alila experiences to the guests.



Travel Dynamics India

New Delhi

Ghanshyam Arora has been promoted to Managing Director of Travel Dynamics India. A commerce graduate from Delhi University, Arora comes with a rich experience in the travel industry both within India as well as abroad. He has worked closely with Global Star Travel Management as Global Board Member, in forming alliance with ITH and carrying it forward, giving corporate customers a taste of local work environment coupled with international systems and technology. Prior to this, Arora worked with International Travel House as Senior Executive VP-Operations.



Grand Hyatt Mumbai

Mumbai

Anuj Bidani joins Grand Hyatt Mumbai as the Director of Sales and Marketing. Bidani brings with him a rich experience of over 15 years in the tourism and hospitality industry. A master in Computer Sciences, Bidani worked in the technology industry before he discovered his passion for hotels. Bidani's previous work experiences include The Claridges New Delhi and The Oberoi New Delhi, The Venetian Macau Resort Hotel, Fairmont Raffles Hotels International and many more. Bidani loves connecting with people and exchanging thoughts and ideas.



Novotel Pune Nagar Road

Pune

Pushkaraj Mungale has joined Novotel, Pune as the Director of Sales & Marketing. He started his 15 year career in front office operations and eventually transitioned into sales and marketing, where he has worked with brands like The Taj Group of Hotels, IHHR Hospitality and Marriott International. In his role, Mungale will lead, strategise and oversee the entire sales and marketing function for the hotel and nearby regions for Novotel Pune brand operations. He will also supervise the strategic marketing alliance for the hotel, ensuring that the property is seen as being the lead innovator in the market place.



Gurinder Bawa has moved on from International Travel House, after having a long stint of more than 25 years, while working in various positions, and finally looking after All-India operations of Outbound, Inbound, Domestic holiday packages and MICE International as General Manager-Leisure to Travel Dynamics India assuming the position of the Vice President. Bawa is a graduate from Delhi University, PGDBA-Marketing and carries a rich experience of more than 28 years in the travel industry. Bawa was with International Travel House as General Manager-Leisure. In this role, Bawa looked after All-India operations of outbound, inbound, domestic holiday packages and MICE international.



1589 Hotels

New Delhi

1589 Hotels has appointed **Pankaj Giroti**, CHA as Vice President Business Development & PR so as to spearhead the Business Development of the group. A certified hotel administrator and hospitality graduate, with over two decades of management experience in Hotel Administration & Operations, Concept Development of Specialised Food & Beverage Services, Facility Planning, Kitchen Designing, Project Build - Overseas/India - (Hotels/Resorts/Cruise Lines/ Restaurants/Catering/Consulting Solutions) with his core forte being Business Development, acquiring and managing hotels.



Hilton Hotels & Resorts

Delhi

Mansi Mehta Arora joins Hilton as Director of Sales, India, who will be based in Delhi. She is responsible for managing the hotel sales teams. Arora is also expected to build and maintain relationships with key business partners, including travel agents, wedding planners, as well as conference and event organisers. Arora comes with a strong experience in the hospitality industry spanning over 16 years where she has worked with global brands, managing pre-opening of hotels, unit properties and domestic and outbound sales. She also has a rich understanding of MICE and travel trade segments.



TALKing People

Ashok Chanchlani, Proprietor, International Tours and Travels, enjoys playing badminton and table tennis. "I want the new joiners in travel industry to know that it does not matter how big or small your work is. All that matters is hard work and passion and this is the only mantra that will take you to greater heights," he says. Three international destinations he hopes to visit are Europe, USA and Canada while on the domestic front, he wishes to explore Lucknow, Varanasi and Patna.



Sujeet Kumar, General Manager, Sheraton Grand Bangalore at Brigade Gateway, says, "Music and movies are my biggest stress busters, along with meeting and relaxing with friends. Travelling is also one of my favourite ways to de-stress after long stints of work. I am also extremely passionate about F1 racing and take time out to travel to various places just to enjoy the thrill of viewing a good race." His most memorable holiday moment was in Bali. In India, his favourite is Goa, while abroad it's Boracay.



Rachel Goenka, Founder & CEO, The Chocolate Spoon Company, unwinds in various ways. "Sometimes all you need is a long hot shower while at other times, the good old retail therapy can do the trick. I am passionate about what I do and tend to push myself harder and strive to be the best version of myself," she says. When she is not working, she is travelling. "My favourite holiday memory is zip-lining through the cloud rainforests in Costa Rica! In India, I love going to our home in Goa. Outside of India, she loves London.



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Date	Day	City	Time	Venue
12-Feb	Monday	Mumbai	11:00 - 16:00	Trident Hotel, Nariman Point
14-Feb	Wednesday	Kolkata	10:00 - 14:00	The Oberoi Grand
15-Feb	Thursday	Bangalore	10:00 - 14:00	Taj Vivanta, MG Road
16-Feb	Friday	Delhi	14:00 - 17:00	Le Meridien
19-Feb	Monday	Ahmedabad	10:00 - 15:00	Hyatt Regency

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India: The market of interest

In an exclusive interview with **Christopher J. Nassetta**, President & Chief Executive Officer, Hilton and Chairman Elect for WTTC, **TRAVTALK** gets insights on the hospitality brand's expansion plans in India and WTTC's main focus for 2018.



DEVIKA JEET

Plans for India

With the Indian economy rapidly progressing, Hilton President and CEO **Christopher J. Nassetta** continues to see great potential for the travel and tourism industry, which accounts for 9.6 per cent of the country's GDP. With India as a key market, Hilton has dedicated the last few years to establishing its infrastructure and building a strong reputation to drive rapid expansion in the country.

As a truly global company with more than 5,100 properties that welcomed a record 150 million customers last year, Hilton is committed to sharing its unique hospitality with travellers all around the world. In India specifically, the company has a multi-brand, multiple partner and high-growth strategy that has positioned it to more than double its footprint in the short term – from 15 hotels currently open to 34 total hotels operating once it brought its current pipeline to life. The global hospitality brand boasts of its presence in several major cities in India, including Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Pune, and looks forward to opening many more properties in the future. In fact, it will close 2017 with two very exciting openings- Conrad Bengaluru and Hilton Garden Inn Lucknow.

Overall, India will continue to be a market of interest for the global hospitality industry in the years ahead. In addition to the positive trends, the business travel, MICE and luxury segments along with its incredible destination appeal also looks promising. From its rich cultural and historical heritage, to the many natural wonders across the country, to its booming wellness tourism sector, India has countless experiences to offer visitors. This is why last year alone, the country welcomed almost nine million foreign tourists, a nearly 10 per cent increase over 2015. And domestic tourist visits are growing even faster, with 1.6 billion domestic trips within the country last year.

In terms of targets, last year the nationwide occupancy in India at Hilton crossed the 65 per cent mark for the first time in nearly a decade. The brand's priority is to stay focused on driving occupancy, particularly as average room

“India will continue to be a market of interest for the global hospitality industry in the years ahead. In addition to the positive trends, the business travel, MICE and luxury segments along with its incredible destination appeal also looks promising.”

Christopher J. Nassetta
President and Chief Executive Officer, Hilton
and Chairman Elect for WTTC



rates continue to climb upward, having grown by 2.4 per cent in the last fiscal year to a four-year high.

WTTC

Nassetta feels honoured to have been named Chairman Elect for the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), and looks forward to beginning his official role in early 2018. Encouraging international travel in a safe and secure way remains his top priority. He believes that WTTC can play an important role in bringing governments and industry together to deliver smart plans that support travellers' safety, without hindering their travel experiences. Additionally, the unique scale and reach of WTTC members can be used to address significant global topics, such as climate change and providing youth opportunities globally.

Attracting Talent

Attracting and retaining talent across the industry continues to be a challenge, and it's something that Hilton is very focused on. One of the brand's biggest priorities is combatting people's notions about working in this business. “It's all about helping potential team members understand that working in a hotel isn't a low-end service job. This is especially important in countries like India, where a growing technology-centric workforce can truly thrive in an industry like hospitality,” Nassetta says. “In fact, our industry offers upward mobility unlike any other, and we have a wide range of opportunities available – from data and analytics, to marketing, to front office, to finance, and so much more,” Nassetta says.

Hilton brand believes in sustaining its talent pool across a wide range of functions and capabilities, and within a multinational, multicultural setting. The company is hugely focused on creating a diverse and inclusive culture around the world, and particularly promoting gender diversity in regions like Asia Pacific, where it's most needed. “By investing in our team members, we're able to not only attract and retain the world's best talent but also able to inspire them to deliver exceptional hospitality for our guests,” Nassetta adds.

Expectations from 2018

“We've had a fantastic year at Hilton – thanks to the incredible contributions of our 360,000 team members around the world. Looking ahead to 2018, we'll continue to innovate across every level of our organisation, always with our ultimate goal in mind: to be the most hospitable company in the world. From launching unique new brands, to rolling out exciting technologies that give our guests unprecedented levels of choice and control, to growing our global footprint – 2018 promises to be another outstanding year for us,” he concludes.

Hilton in India

The global hospitality brand boasts of its presence in several major cities in India, including Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Pune, and looks forward to opening many more

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Samarkand

Samarkand with its history of more than 2750 years has been a crossroad and melting pot of trade and different cultures. Poets and historians called it "Rome of the East, The beauty of sublunary countries". The numerous monuments of Samarkand and its suburbs impress tourists with their beauty and splendor. Samarkand is the treasure of unique antiquity spirit. It is included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Bukhara

For centuries, Bukhara was famous for the development of science, culture and trade. More than 140 architectural monuments can be found here, and of the major blue-domed minarets one would have to start with the Kalyan Minaret constructed in 1127. The most striking feature of the minaret is its intricate ornamentation. The world-famous architectural ensemble Lyabi-Hauz offers you delightful natural setting of the old and charming part of Bukhara. Historic center of Bukhara is included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.



Khiva

Khiva is one of the most beautiful and attractive destinations in Central Asia. Its ancient history was closely intertwined with the growth of the Great Silk Road. Known as "the city museum in the open sky", Khiva is famous for its unique urban architecture. The architectural monuments of Khiva - the madrasas and mosques, minarets and mausoleums, dwelling houses and palaces are organically related. The Ichan-Kala, which is a part of Khiva, is included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.




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A CRUISE DOWN INDIAN SEAWATERS

India has made headway in cruise tourism with the government taking keen interest in promoting this segment aggressively. With a cruise tourism policy due in a few months, the Indian cruisers have made a mark on the cruising map. According to Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), with an absolute increase of 45.5 per cent in port of calls over 2013-2017 period, India's ports have witnessed a combined annual growth rate of 9.8 per cent. As a source market for cruise tourism worldwide, the absolute volume of cruise travellers sourced from Asia quadrupled since 2012 where in 2016, 120,596 Indian passengers took a cruise vacation, growing 25 per cent annually since 2012. Some notable trends about the Indian cruisers includes that 97 per cent Indian cruisers predominantly opt for premium, contemporary cruise lines. Almost 76 per cent Indians are also likely to take a local Asian cruise.

The New Year 2018 looks promising for India's cruise sector as new ships are being deployed in Asian waters and Indian cruisers have also begun to expand their horizons and explore the farthest corners of the world. Adventure travellers too can experience the polar region through expeditions and even for those who want to get away from the hustle bustle of the city on a slow paced meandering experience of the scenic landscapes of the world through its rivers.

In this issue, you will find a guide for first-time cruisers; destinations that Indian cruisers can explore; glimpse of an upbeat trend for river cruises to Europe and read the experience of the first CLIA accredited travel agent from India!

ANKITA SAXENA

NEWS IN BRIEF

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR SAILINGS ON AZAMARA

TIRUN, the exclusive India representative for Azamara Club Cruises, has introduced special sailings to India for Christmas and New Year. The 15-night cruise will set sail from Hong Kong to Bangkok and Koh Samui from December 23. The seven-night cruise on Azamara Journey for Christmas will depart Hong Kong on December 23 and the ports of call include Hanoi, Hue, Ho Chi Minh City while the eight-night cruise will begin sailing from Ho Chi Minh on December 31.



Mumbai-Bangkok & Athens-Mumbai sailings on Vikings Ocean

Vikings Ocean Cruises plans to introduce two international cruises to and from Mumbai in 2018 –Mumbai to Bangkok and Athens to Mumbai. The Mumbai to Bangkok cruise is set to start from September 8, 2018 while the Athens to Mumbai is set for August 19, 2018.



5 agents experience France on cruise



Atout France India in collaboration with Maison de Voyage, a division of Zaka Group representing Uniworld Boutique

River Cruise Collection, recently organised their first-ever cruise Fam trip where handpicked five agents were invited to experience a luxurious journey aboard the SS Catherine that sailed through the picturesque regions of Burgundy, Provence & Auvergne Rhône-Alpes.

MSC Cruises' Marine Reserve operational from Nov 2018

Located south of Bimini in The Bahamas, MSC Cruises' Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve is set to become a natural paradise exclusive to MSC Cruises guests. The development of the Ocean Cay is part of MSC Cruises' unprecedented \$ billion investment plan, which includes the building of up to 11 next-generation smart ships coming into service between 2017 and 2026.



Vikramajit
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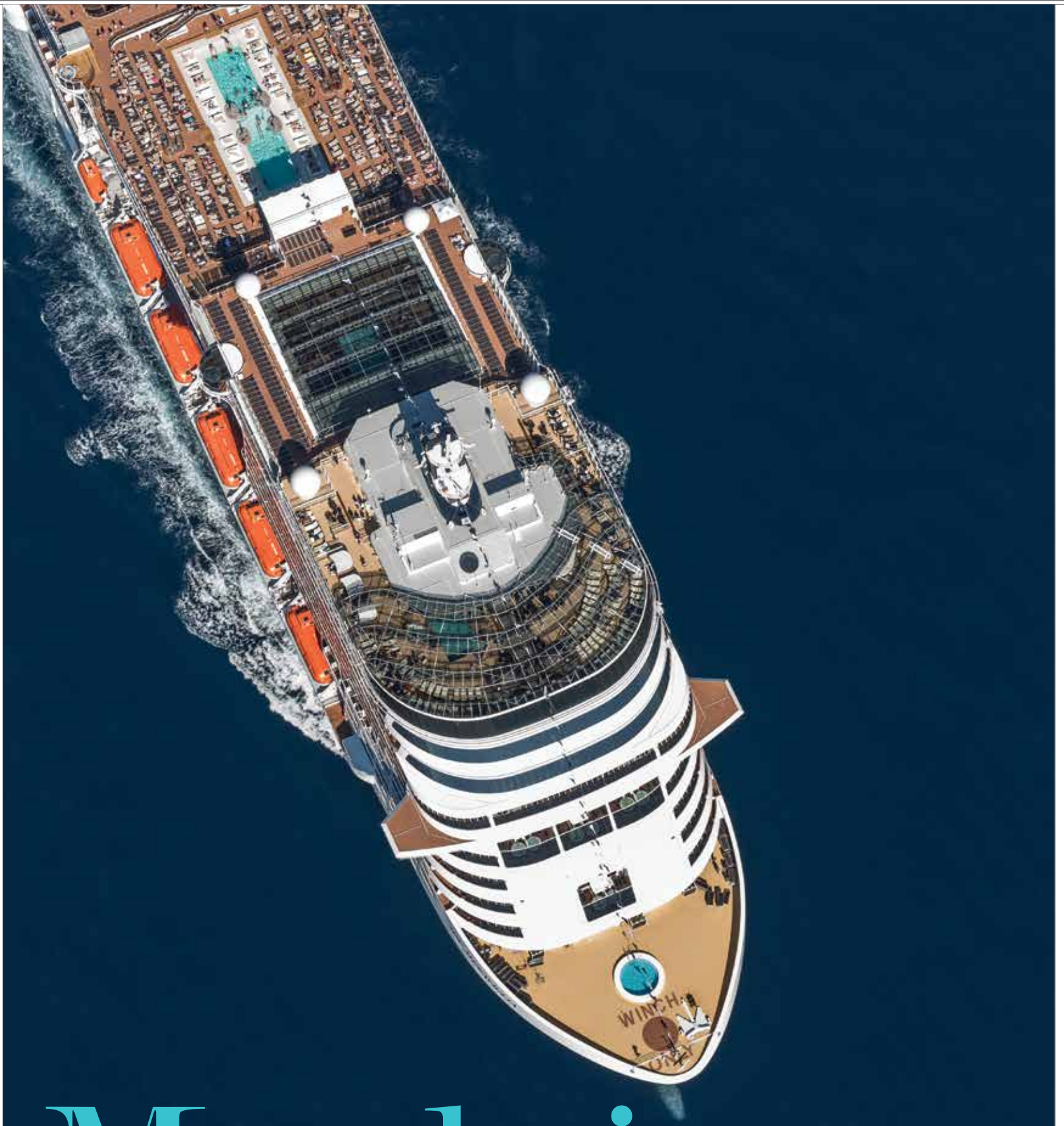
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Mumbai prepares to Cruise

The Mumbai Port Trust has set lofty targets for the next five years to jump-start cruising in the city. Under the Ministry of Shipping, this just might become a reality.

HAZEL JAIN

A TALE OF TWO DREAMS

This year end, the all-new World Dream will debut in Hong Kong, while Genting Dream will be homeported in Singapore. Get ready for luxury vacations reimagined.



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Genting Dream takes you to familiar favourite destinations like Penang and Phuket, as well as new ports-of-call including Surabaya and North Bali. When World Dream sets sail, she will call on the jewels of Vietnam – Ho Chi Minh and Nha Trang, as well as the white beaches of Boracay and cosmopolitan Manila in the Philippines.

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World Dream

(Departing from Hong Kong)

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5-Night Manila - Boracay Cruise

Genting Dream

(Departing from Singapore)

2-Night Singapore Weekend Getaway Cruise

5-Night Kuala Lumpur - Penang - Phuket Cruise

5-Night Surabaya - North Bali Cruise

INDUSTRY SPEAKS



"Mumbai can become like Miami where we'll have to reserve five berths for cruise ships alone!"

SANJAY BHATIA
Chairman, Mumbai Port Trust



"We are pleased to be the home port of choice for cruise tourism in India."

JAYKUMAR RAWAL
Tourism Minister,
Government of Maharashtra



"We are planning to certify 100 tour guides and focus on people with proficiency in foreign languages."

VIJAY WAGHMARE
Managing Director, MTDC



"Special interest groups like weddings, social and religious events are on the rise."

KUNAL SAMPAT
General Manager – India
MSC Cruises



"A major evolution has been the increasing length of stay of cruisers."

KIRAN BHANDARI
Co-founder
Cruise Club



"Costa will be launching ex-Laem Chabang itineraries solely for the Diwali season."

NALINI GUPTA
Head – India Operations
Costa Cruises

After of the colossal Sagarmala Project that is being orchestrated by the Ministry of Shipping (MoS), the cruise tourism project seems to have involved a lot of key government agencies that are putting in coordinated efforts towards a common goal. Playing a key role in ushering in this sunrise tourism is **Sanjay Bhatia**, Chairman, Mumbai Port Trust (MPT). He had started the process of developing cruising in Mumbai in 2015 when the task force was set up. "Both the Secretary of Shipping and Secretary of Tourism are co-chairing this task force, apart from every agency that is a stakeholder and a facilitator," Bhatia says.

International consultants Bermello and Ajamil (B&A) published a report on the potential existing in India. "It also said that we need to take these 30 steps to be able to tap this. The report is divided into various aspects such as regulatory, port facilities, etc. and it is in four volumes. In short, it says that we can take the current 0.2 million cruise passengers to four million (40 lakh). Of this, 3.2 million (32 lakh) is just in Mumbai. It can become like Miami where we will have to reserve five berths for cruise ships alone!" Bhatia adds.



Ever since MPT took action a year ago, 158 ships have come into Mumbai. The potential, however, is for 955 ships

MAHARASHTRA GOVERNMENT COMMITS

Ever since MPT took action a year ago, 158 ships have come into Mumbai. But the potential is for 955 ships which can take the passenger count per ship from about 1,250 today to 4,200 passengers when the demand increases. **Jaykumar Rawal**, Minister of Tourism, Government of Maharashtra, said, "We are pleased to be the home port of choice for cruise tourism in India. Our association with the shipping Ministry is to formulate policies to support Maharashtra's position as a cruise hub. The huge potential for cruise tourism among domestic as well as international travellers will assist to earn huge

foreign exchange and generate job opportunities. Foreseeing the increase in demand in India, recently Italy's Costa Cruise launched its Costa neoClassica from Mumbai to Maldives via Cochin."

FACILITIES FOR PASSENGERS

Most of the five major ports – Mumbai, Goa, Kochi, New Mangalore and Chennai – will have e-visa facilities and e-landing cards from this season. "We are trying to get the issue of biometrics resolved by putting additional machines of 30 each at Mumbai and Kochi ports. A majority of the ports now have access control and RFID on vehicles so that everyone can swipe and enter. This has been





introduced at Mumbai port from September 2017,” Bhatia reveals. After separating the cargo and cruise terminals at all five ports, they now have electronic permits, e-payments and single-window systems. Mumbai, of course, is getting an upgraded terminal reportedly at the cost of ₹225 crore for a modern passenger terminal. “The only issue that still needs resolution is taxation. The industry does not want GST here and excise duty in international waters is an issue. Income tax is another issue that needs discussion,” Bhatia adds.

ROLE OF MTDC

Appointed in May 2017, Vijay Waghmare, Managing Director, Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) has been busy since. If he’s not tackling the tourist guide problem hampering Maharashtra tourism, it is the hectic co-ordination with Mumbai Port Trust (MPT) to make the offshore experience of cruise passengers easy. Waghmare adds, “We want to welcome international tourists in a way that exposes them to a glimpse of what Maharashtra is about – its places, cuisine and culture.” Training of guides is also a major concern for international tourists. “In the first phase, we are planning to certify 100 tour guides and focus on people who have proficiency in foreign languages. Four cities have been identified



“India is pre-dominantly a very attractive travel market for cruising. In my opinion, India has realised just about seven to 10 per cent of its potential, or as we say in the cruise industry, ‘We have just lifted up the anchor’. Along with the popular routes, we are seeing a developing appetite for expedition and adventure cruising. I also foresee a strong growth in the MICE sector for cruises.”

IAN BANERJEE
Director
Global Anchor Cruises

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Theme / destination	Cruise Name	Ship	Embarkation	Date of sailing in 2018	Disembarkation	Brochure tariff (US\$, pp)	Discounted tariff (US\$, pp)
Europe	Enchanting Rhine	Ama Sonata	Basel	May 20	Amsterdam	4298	2990
Europe	Medieval Treasures	Ama Dante	Basel	June 7	Amsterdam	4298	2990
Wine Cruise	Taste of Bordeaux	Ama Dolce	Bordeaux	Nov 1	Bordeaux	4098	2890
Europe	Iconic Christmas Markets	Ama Serena	Budapest	Dec 21	Nuremburg	3698	2750
Holiday	Magical Christmas Markets	Ama Sonata	Nuremberg	Dec 16	Budapest	3798	2650
Holiday	Magical Christmas Markets	Ama Sonata	Vienna	Dec 23	Nuremburg	3798	2800


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INDUSTRY SPEAKS



“Major ports are set to cut berthing charges for cruise ships and there will be e-landing and e-visa facilities.”

RATNA CHADHA
Chief Executive, TIRUN



“Star Cruises will have new vessels of Dream in Sin and HKG. NCL will have a new ship in Alaska.”

ANJU TANDON
CEO, Ark Travels



“With the launch of Genting Dream, we are expecting a healthy growth in business.”

NARESH RAWAL
VP Sales, Star Cruises, Dream Cruises & Crystal Cruises



“Indians are making refined choices for cruising, the type of cabins and kind of ship.”

NISHITH SAXENA
Founder & Director
Cruise Professionals



“The Indian cruising industry has already seen double-digit growth.”

MANOJ SINGH
Country Head-India
Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings



“We need implementation of policy, separate cruise terminals, training for staff.”

RICHA GOYAL SIKRI
Director-Group Business Development, STIC Travel Group



Foreseeing the increase in demand in India, recently Italy's

Costa Cruise launched its Costa neoClassica from Mumbai



for the first phase- Mumbai, Aurangabad, Nasik and Nagpur,” Waghmare adds.

INDUSTRY SPEAKS

“The emerging Indian market for MSC Cruises has shown a year-on-year growth of 20-22 per cent. Special interest groups like weddings, social and religious events are on the rise,” says **Kunal Sampat**, General Manager – India, MSC Cruises. The company has seen positive demand for its upcoming ships MSC Seaside and MSC Seaview from India to be deployed in the Caribbean and the Mediterranean, respectively in 2018. “We have also seen good demand for MSC Meraviglia which was launched in June 2017 and are equally excited for MSC Seaside in December 2017, MSC Seaview in June 2018 and MSC Bellissima in April 2019,” adds Sampat.

Kiran Bhandari, Co-founder, Cruise Club, believes that whilst the current numbers are not significant in the global context (of the nearly 24 million cruisers annually, around 150,000 are from India), it is important to note that mostly everyone visiting Singapore, Europe or USA can

afford a cruise. “Interestingly, around 10 per cent of all guests going to Singapore take a cruise from Singapore. A major evolution has been the increasing length of stay of cruisers. Guests now opt for five to seven cruise nights along with considering cruising multiple times every year,” he says.

Nalini Gupta, Head – India Operations, Costa Cruises, informs that Costa Cruises is the only liner to have homeported a ship in the Indian waters after a decade. Identifying a trend among Indian cruisers, Gupta points out that there is a growing niche for expedition and themed cruises. “We have a lot of plans for 2018. Costa will also be launching ex-Laem Chabang itineraries solely for the Diwali season. It will also deploy 11 ships across the eastern and western Mediterranean. We will be bringing in Costa neoRiviera to sail in the India waters. It will have balcony and suite cabin categories, which was missing for the 2016 and 2017 sailing season,” she says.

Lauding the government's work regarding improving the ports and infrastructure,



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INDUSTRY SPEAKS



"We have introduced new itineraries for Indians based on their needs and requirements."

VIVEK JAIN
Director
Griffon Travels



"Training and dedication to sell with the right product-client fit is the key to growth."

VARESH CHHOKRA
Regional Director - South Asia & Middle East, Globus and Cosmos



"There is huge traffic for Singapore, Malaysia, USA and Europe on cruises."

NEERAJ SHARMA
Managing Director
Cruise Carrot



"2018 shall be our 21st year of operation and we are elated to increase the scale of business."

PRADEEP SABOO
Managing Partner
Guidelines Travels India



"MICE and special events onboard cruise liners will also be the high point of 2018."

DIPTI ADHIA
Director, Business Operations & VP- Cruises & Accommodation
Discover the World



"The ex-Dubai cruise for gulf sailing is also quite popular for the coming winters."

HARIOM SHARMA
Director-Sales and Marketing
Hungry Bags

Ratna Chadha, Chief Executive, TIRUN (represents Royal Caribbean Cruises in India) explains that the company is expecting a 60 per cent growth over the previous year in bookings from India. She explains, "Major ports are set to cut berthing charges for cruise ships and there will be e-landing and e-visa facilities for tourists."

Anju Tandon, CEO, Ark Travels, further informs that the company saw a growth of 30-35 per cent last year and 2018 looks better with new cruise ships and itineraries. "Indians are beginning to consider cruise as a holiday option and slowly moving to longer cruises as well as repeat cruisers to South East Asia, the Med and even Alaska. Star Cruises will have new vessels of Dream in Singapore and HKG. SuperStar Gemini moves on to Bangkok and SuperStar Libra in Malaysia, offering port options in Port Klang, Penang and Phuket. NCL will have a new ship in Alaska."

and kind of ship one would like to sail on. With an increasing demand for experiential cruising, more passengers are set to opt for long halt itineraries and higher cost cabins," adds **Nishith Saxena**, Founder & Director, Cruise Professionals.

Resonating with the trends identified, **Manoj Singh**, Country Head-India, Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings, says, "The Indian cruising industry has already seen double-digit growth. Norwegian Bliss will begin sailing to Alaska and the Caribbean with select voyages to the Mexican Riviera beginning in June 2018 while Norwegian Sun is set to offer an all-inclusive four-day cruise to Havana, Cuba and Key West, and three-day cruises to the Bahamas."

In terms of source markets for cruising, **Richa Goyal Sikri**, Director - Group Business Development, STIC Travel Group, informs

Indians are beginning to consider cruise as a holiday

option and slowly moving to longer cruises to even Alaska



Naresh Rawal, Vice President Sales, Star Cruises, Dream Cruises & Crystal Cruises observes a paradigm shift in cruise passengers today where they have evolved from the regular two-night itinerary to a longer seven-night package. "With the launch of Genting Dream ex-Singapore, we are expecting a healthy growth in business. This step forward will surely determine our first move to develop a five-night cruise market in Asia Pacific," says Rawal. Genting Dream will be home ported year-round in Singapore starting from December 3, 2017.

"While the Indian cruise market is pegged at anywhere between 125-150 thousand passengers currently, it is the sustainable growth of 10-15 per cent year-on-year which would make cruise tourism a segment to watch out for. Indian travellers are making increased refined choices for cruising as also with regards to the type of cabins

that they receive business from all over India though Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru remain the top three source markets. "Education of the differences between one cruise line and another and ability to customise the product for Indian consumers is required in the industry. We need implementation of policy, separate passenger cruise terminals, training for on-ground handling staff and procedures that will support the private sector," says Sikri.

Hariom Sharma, Director - Sales and Marketing, Hungry Bags, elaborates that travellers have now shifted their focus from Hong Kong and Singapore to Bahamas, Caribbean, Alaska, Europe, Greece, USA, Mexico and Dubai on a three-nine night cruise sailings. "The ex-Dubai cruise for gulf sailing is also quite popular for the coming winters. Major bookings for American and European cruises are from the metro cities while



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Travellers have now shifted their focus from Hong Kong and Singapore to Bahamas, Caribbean, Alaska, Europe, Greece, USA, Mexico and Dubai



“Experienced travellers are aware that insurance is essential to protect their itinerary. A regular travel insurance does not cover passengers while on a cruise. If a mishap strikes and you have to cancel your trip, the cruise line won't reimburse you—but cruise travel protection can. If a passenger suffers medical crisis on board, the special cruise cover can cover evacuation and emergency medical care.”

DEV KARVAT
CEO
Emerging Markets, Cover-More Group

bookings for South East Asia are dominated by Tier-II and Tier-III cities,” he says.

Vivek Jain, Director, Griffon Travels, says, “We have introduced new itineraries for Indian travellers based on their needs and requirements. Some of these are sailing in the Canary Islands during the winter months; itineraries in the Arabic Sea for the UAE region sailing out of Dubai which is a seven nights sailing in the winter months and lifestyle aboard the ship will be Spanish/European.”

Neeraj Sharma, Managing Director, Cruise Carrot, says, “There is huge traffic for Singapore, Malaysia, USA and Europe on cruises. If data is to be believed, then the cruise industry will grow to 15 per cent in the coming years.” Meanwhile, **Varesh Chopra**, Regional Director - South Asia & Middle East, Globus and Cosmos, says it is the travel consultant who really makes the difference. “The Avalon Waterways specialist programme fits right into this picture allowing training, personal experience and added incentives for selling Avalon. Training and dedication to sell with the right product-client fit is the key to growth.”

Pradeep Saboo, Managing Partner, Guidelines Travels, says, “India as a market traditionally has tremendous potential and now further on with the Indian traveller becoming tech savvy, the potential has only grown manifold. The speed of growth can vary sometimes but there is definitely an upward trend for cruising. We are very optimistic for a super 2018. We have some great vegetarian and Jain group departures this season like last so many years and we are operating our groups this season to Europe, USA, Canada, South Africa, Far East, etc. The year 2018 shall be



our 21st year of operation and we are definitely elated to increase the scale of business like every year.”

Dipti Adhia, Director, Business Operations & Vice President – Cruises & Accommodation, Discover the World – India, says the country has just begun its journey as an emerging market for international cruising and has huge potential. “Besides the popular Bahamas and the Caribbean islands, destinations such as Europe, Australia and the Americas can be experienced through the sea. The Indian traveller has been cruising since the last 20 years or more and certain segments have graduated to become connoisseurs of cruising. MICE and special events onboard cruise liners will also be the high point of 2018.”



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EXPERIENCE



Culinary delights on AmaWaterways

Culinary journeys on cruises can be the gateway to a variety of cuisines curated from across the region. AmaWaterways takes its cruisers on hosted culinary tours where foodies and wine connoisseurs can delve into the local flavours.

AmaWaterways has partnered with Master Chef and James Beard award-winning cookbook author—Jonne Weir for its special sailing, Taste of Bordeaux – Culinary Cruise Hosted by Joanne Weir.

The seven-night cruise will embark on July 26, 2018, travelling through the Bordeaux region along the Garonne and Dordogne Rivers. Fans of Weir will have the opportunity to engage with the celebrated chef both on board and during shore excursions exploring local culinary and viticulture highlights.

“Food and wine have become such critical parts of the way travellers expect to experience a country or city that it is important that we continue to propose a

diversity of culinary experiences on our ships and during our excursions,” says **Rudi Schreiner**, President and Co-owner of AmaWaterways.

The company is renowned for its award-winning dining including The Chef's Table specialty restaurant as well as complimentary fine wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner.

The 2018 Culinary Cruise takes guests through the Bordeaux region of France, one of the world's undisputed wine capitals, and will be punctuated by a comprehensive choice of complimentary shore excursions highlighting French culture, food, and wine, including visits to vineyards and a wine festival exclusive to AmaWaterways guests. Led by knowledgeable local



guides, guests will make their way through the renowned vineyards of Saint-Émilion, Pauillac, Pomerol and Libourne, discovering timeless traditions from the winemakers themselves.

They will also visit iconic chateaux for wine tastings, including a tasting at the 14th-century Château de Montaigne, once the former residence of French philosopher Michel de Montaigne. Optional pre-cruise stays in Paris or a post-cruise tour of the Loire Valley are also available.

AmaWaterways offers unforgettable river cruises with 19 ships that sail Europe's Danube, Rhine, Moselle, Main, Rhone, Seine, Garonne, Dordogne, Dutch and Belgian Waterways and Douro Rivers, Southeast Asia's Mekong and Africa's Chobe River. They also offer the industry's most comprehensive information and entertainment experience in Europe and high-speed Internet access, plus Wi-Fi.

The 2018 Culinary Cruise takes guests through the Bordeaux region of France, and will be punctuated by a comprehensive choice of shore excursions



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NOTES TO A FIRST-TIME *Cruiser*

Cruising can be an overwhelming experience for someone who has never been onboard a liner. But the novice can fake it just by keeping these dos and don'ts in mind.

HAZEL JAIN



Getting onboard

Getting onboard a cruise liner is the same as catching a flight. You need to go through immigration. Make sure that you carry all important documents and passport while checking in.

Ocean sickness

Most travellers don't want to experience a cruise holiday is because of fear of sea-sickness. This is far from the truth as cruise liners have stabilisers that keep the ship from rocking. Also, the average cruising speed is 18 knots with the maximum speed of 20 knots. So it's tough for a cruise liner to be rocking and rolling, so to speak.



Explore the ship

When you get onboard, it is good to acquaint yourself with the layout of the ship as it makes it easier for you to move around and find your way. It can be a little confusing sometimes, but every floor and every lift has a map of the ship with the main venues so you will never lose your way.



Inclusives

The package includes a whole lot of things on the ship - six meals a day, accommodation, all entertainment onboard except the late-night shows, as well as the facilities on the ship such as pools, gymnasiums, etc. You only have to pay the gratuity, depending on the kind of cabin you have booked. You also need to pay for port charges which is separate from your package.

Offshore outings

All offshore activities are optional and you may choose to stay on the ship. You will have to book your choice of activity in advance so that you and your family get a seat. You don't need a visa to enter a new country. You simply have to leave your passport at the exit of the ship and take it back when you return.



Exiting the ship

This can get a little tricky since there are queues of people wanting to get off the ship at the same time. It is a good idea to leave your luggage for the ship staff to offload. They will label your luggage once you keep them outside your cabin. The immigration might take time too, so remember to be patient. A chargeable express check-out facility is also available.

What it means to be CLIA CERTIFIED

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

In 2015, I participated in a three-series webinar on cruising, conducted in India for the first time jointly by Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) and Singapore Tourism Board – India Office. On completion of the webinar, the first 10 winners got free access to the first level of the certification programme and access to the CLIA website as a member. I was one of them!

What excited me was the opportunity to learn about the vast cruise industry. Little did I know that I would be the first Indian national to complete the 'Oceans of Opportunity' module. I finally reached the Masters Certification programme, which involved an annual conference onboard a cruise vessel that empowers participants with tools and resources to expand their cruise business. This year, the programme took place on Genting Dream, sailing from Hong Kong on a five-day itinerary that included two port days in Japan.



“

Since it is online, you can learn at your own pace and at a time that works best for you

”


The writer is Kashish Jiandani, Business Development Manager, Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings

WHAT IT ENTAILS

Apart from the certification, CLIA's global cruise accreditation programme also offers its members with access to its Learning Academy, which contains over 50 training modules covering various aspects like the basics of cruising, benefits to agents, consumers and the stakeholders, latest trends in the cruise industry, how to plan, sell and market a cruise product and a cruise destination, industry facts and other modules. Since it is online, you can learn at your own pace and at a time that works best for you.

WHY YOU SHOULD DO IT

According to CLIA, about 70 per cent of cruise passengers use the expertise of a travel agent to book a vacation and this trend will continue to evolve. The certification programme comes at a reasonable price, which changes every year. **Peter Kollar**, Head of International Training & Development, CLIA, has been instrumental in providing me with the opportunities and enhancing my skills for personal and professional growth.







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ICELAND

Discover Iceland, the mythical land of fire and ice, with its glaciers and volcanoes, spouting geysers and cascading falls. From the unspoiled, raw natural beauty to the rich Viking history, exploring the saga island on an expedition cruise is the perfect voyage for explorers looking for the unexpected.



GREENLAND

Go on adventures among colossal icebergs, mountains and fjords to explore the biggest island in the world. Greenland, or "the Land of the People", offers unique encounters with isolated Inuit communities. Let our expedition cruises bring you to first-hand interactions with wild nature in the Arctic seas



Anchor in



Sail through the majestic Mediterranean

As a cruise region, the Eastern Mediterranean stretches from the Adriatic Sea — east of Italy to Croatia — southeastward to the Greek Isles and Turkey, and into the Holy Land and Egypt. Once the seat of ancient civilisations, the region continues to charm travellers from all over the world with its millennia-old architectures, bustling cities, sandy beaches and harbours. When sailing through the Eastern Mediterranean, cruisers are spoilt for choice.

For a more European feel, consider cruising the region with MSC Cruises. Cruising the Mediterranean with MSC Cruises means coming within the reach of the best in culture, tradition and monuments that have for centuries enriched its shores. Various cruise lines offer varying itineraries. These itineraries may range from six to seven nights to leisurely affairs of 20 nights or more. An Adriatic cruise generally embarking in Venice sails to southern Italy as well as along Croatia's Dalmatian Coast. The longer iterations integrate ports in Turkey, Greece or Italy before debarking in Rome, Marseilles or Barcelona. The Greek Isles cruises embark from Venice, Athens (Piraeus), or Istanbul and frequently hit the islands of Santorini, Mykonos, or Corfu. The Holy Land cruise route includes the ports of Haifa or Ashdod, Jerusalem that also include stops in the Greek Isles, Turkey, Malta, or southern Italy. Usually departing from Istanbul or Athens, a cruise to the Black Sea combines stops on the Turkish coast with visits to Crimea and Russia.

culture

The journey over sea is as important as its ports of call. We bring you some of the exciting stopovers that complement a wholistic cruise vacation.

ANKITA SAXENA





Sailing across the Tasman Sea

Australia and New Zealand are the lands of plenty — a tantalising blend of modern cities and wilderness. The sheer size and diversity of the region is a draw for almost all types of cruisers - be it a nature lover, a hiker and historic explorer or an oenophile, there is no dearth of thrilling adventures at these destinations. An Australia-New Zealand cruise may include stops in Auckland, Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Wellington. Some cruise lines sailing this region include Seabourn, Holland America Line, Royal Caribbean, Norwegian Cruise Line, Princess, Crystal, Cunard and Celebrity. If you cannot decide between the two countries, Celebrity Cruises conveniently splits a 16-night voyage between the two countries. Each port of call on a cruise to Australia and New Zealand offers something new to discover from the stunning beaches, towering fjords, unique cities to the majestic mountains. One could take multiple shore excursions that make this destination an unforgettable adventure and the region is a haven for oenophiles. Surf towering sand dunes and crashing beach breaks or just sit back and soak up the panoramic views of the abundance of the destination through superior vantage point of your private balcony on the cruise. Explore the iconic Sydney Opera House, Sydney Harbour Bridge; visit the Sherbrooke Forest or go wine tasting at the Barossa Valley. One could get up close and pet a koala bear, hop around with the kangaroos at Blackbutt Reserve or swim with colourful fish of the Great Barrier Reef. The adventure seekers could go skydiving in Airlie Beach or spot wild crocodiles through lush prehistoric rainforest in Cairns.



Ahoy, White Continent

An exclusive cruise by Q Experiences on ice-crowned Antarctica will let you explore the beauty of the majestic continent.

NISHA VERMA

Take your adventure instinct to the next level and explore the white beauty of Antarctica with The White Continent—the latest exclusive cruise line by ‘Curated Journeys by The Q Experiences’. The 200 people select expedition of 11 days will sail to Antarctica on December 9, 2017. The much-coveted journey will flag off from Ushuaia, the capital of Tierra del Fuego, Argentina, the southernmost city in the world.

Ushuaia is the main departure point for majority of cruises that sail to Antarctica as it provides the shortest route through water to the Antarctic Peninsula. Ushuaia, in itself, is a very interesting tourist destination offering scenic views and a brilliant location. One must discover the beauty of this destination before setting off to Antarctica. Q Experiences also gives a chance to travellers to explore Ushuaia and the hospitality at a luxury resort Arakur. Here, guests can indulge in snow sports, trekking, fly fishing or can visit the national park and penguin colony among other activities.





The 200 people select expedition of 11 days will sail to Antarctica on Dec 9, 2017.

The much-coveted journey will flag off from Ushuaia, the southernmost city in the world



Cruise through the stunning glaciers of Neko Bay and Paradise bay. The ship will also anchor at the Port Lockroy, and will make its final journey at Deception Island



“At The Q, we are storytellers, where we weave a cumulative story of experiences that would make the best memory for our traveller. Curated journeys are our constant endeavour at The Q.”

VASIM SHAIKH
Founder
Q Experiences

After proceeding for the main journey, the vessel will sail through the temperamental Drake Passage to culminate the journey into the Land of Ice. Travellers can gaze at the never-seen-before vistas. Cruise through the stunning glaciers of Neko Bay and Paradise bay. The ship will also anchor at the Port Lockroy, and will make its final journey to the largest colony of Chinstrap Penguins at Deception Island. The travellers will be accompanied by experts who will guide them throughout the journey. Also visit the majestic Weddell Sea, touted as the quietest place on earth.

Vasim Shaikh, Founder, Q Experiences, says, “The White Continent is our initiative to make people experience Antarctica. We are looking at passionate world travellers to be a part of this expedition. The ship we will be taking to the Antarctic waters is one of the most modern and luxurious ships, well-equipped with a gym, salon, spa and theatre. All rooms are modern with many channels for entertainment,

and guests can expect a lot of documentaries, with researchers and scientists taking them through what to expect on Antarctica including geography, wildlife. We also have international artists, including pianists and singers.”

Speaking on why this expedition would be extra special, he adds, “At The Q, we are storytellers, where we weave a cumulative story of experiences that would make the best memory for our traveller. Curated journeys are our constant endeavour at The Q.” Since ‘The White Continent’ will be catering to the Indian market, Q Experiences has taken extra care to ensure a superior gastronomic experience to the travellers. Hence, the ship will have Indian Michelin-starred chef Atul Kochhar on board, who will curate the best of Indian regional cuisine. While the cruisers can relish Indian delicacies, there is also the team of a catering centre of excellence run by Alain Ducasse Enterprise, which will be on board to offer the best food options from around the world.



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DARREN CALDWELL

Onboard A-ROSA river cruises, travellers can bask in comfort in the cozy cabins or witness the ever-changing panorama on the extensive sun deck. "With A-ROSA's premium all-inclusive offer, cruisers get a carefree package including gourmet buffets with live cooking and selected high-quality drinks throughout the day. We have a casual yet stylish atmosphere with no dress codes, free seating and no fixed mealtimes with generous opening times of restaurants. Travellers can unwind and relax in the spacious SPA-ROSA with a sauna amidst a panoramic view or be active in the well-equipped gym with modern cardio equipment. They can head out for a bicycle tour and enjoy nature or visit the cities en route," says **Darren Caldwell**, Sales Manager-International and Coordinator International Standards,

A ROSY HOLIDAY

- A-ROSA has six international ships for 2018: A-ROSA VIVA, FLORA, AQUA, STELLA, DONNA and SILVA
- The 'Seine Enchanting Christmas 2018' starts its four nights sailing from Dec 22-26, 2018, cruising from Paris – Rouen – Mantes la Jolie and Paris (Christmas eve).
- The 'Seine Enchanting New Year's' starts its seven nights sailing from December 26-02 January, 2019, cruising Paris – Rouen – Rouen – Caudebec – Caudebec – Vernon – and two nights in Paris.

A-ROSA. For families, A-ROSA offers a unique bonus—children below 15 years of age can travel free of charge if they are

accompanied by a guardian. Itineraries on river Danube are the most popular—the perfect way to explore Eastern Europe. It starts in Germany and flows through 12 countries to the Black Sea.

The five-night sailing brings cruisers to cities of Vienna, Budapest and Bratislava where they can spend an entire day in each of these cities while the seven-night cruise sailing to these cities has an overnight in Vienna and Budapest. For those who would like to indulge into savoir vivre, itineraries on the Seine with Paris or southern France on Rhône-Saone are quite popular. There are plenty of options for excursions on A-ROSA. Culture lovers can undertake discovery tours; the adventure buffs can explore biking tours or thrilling activities or taste the regional cuisine under the gourmet tours.





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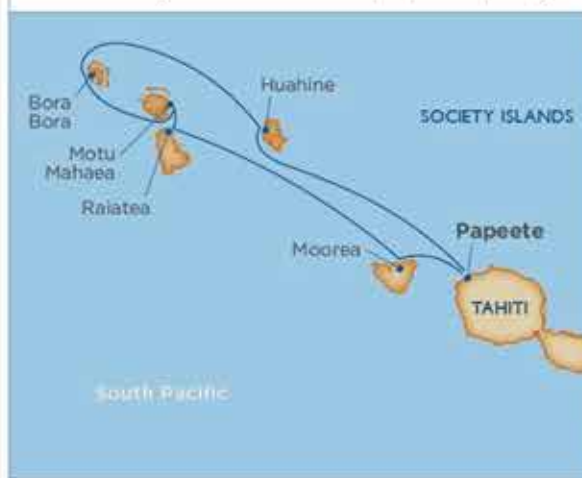
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Rates starting from **USD 286*** per person per night



Dep. Dates: April - October 2018

***Note:** Fares are in US\$, per person per night, for cruise only, based on double occupancy. Fares shown here may not be current. Changing the dates may change fares. Fares do not include Taxes, Fees & Port Expenses. Pricing and availability subject to change without notice.



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The mighty rivers have been known to be the heart and soul of many civilisations. River cruising offers a unique experience of these meandering rivers and the exquisite landscape around them that has evolved and been preserved over the centuries.

Fluvial Encounter

ANKITA SAXENA

River cruising is the fastest growing segment of the cruise industry with seven per cent growth in 2017, according to Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA).

With new ships and immersive itineraries, river cruising has given a new outlook to travel through the waterways of the world's largest civilisations. While ocean cruises are vacations in themselves, amidst vast stretches of water and carry a large number of passengers, river cruises offer smooth sailing through the inland waterways with a smaller number of passengers on board. Both these cruises have abundant offerings onboard and multitudes of experience ashore, though they differ in magnitude and style.



While ocean cruises are vacations in themselves, river cruises offer smooth sailing through the inland waterways with lesser number of passengers on board



Longer trips can also include Hanoi, the UNESCO world heritage site of Halong Bay, the quaint seaside village community of Hoi An and the hilltop tribes of Sapa



“Along with our partner AmaWaterways, we are the only river cruise line to offer the innovative twin balcony concept that allows guests to maximise their cabin space while still allowing the opportunity to enjoy the outside environment in privacy.”

CRAIG JAMES
Strategic Partnerships Manager
APT Global Head Office

APT CRUISES

Australian Pacific Touring (APT) Cruises, regarded as one of the leading cruise lines in luxury river cruising, offer a once-a-lifetime experience to the passengers on board both on the ship as well as in the cities they visit. “Along with our partner AmaWaterways, we are the only river cruise line to offer the innovative twin balcony concept that allows guests to maximise their cabin space while still allowing the opportunity to enjoy the outside environment in privacy. Our ships have a unique sunken front sun deck – that means we can keep our sun deck open while transiting the Main Danube Canal and main rivers of Germany. Some of our ships have a swim-up bar as part of the swimming pool as well,” says **Craig James**, Strategic Partnerships Manager, APT Global Head Office. In India, APT Cruises is represented by InterGlobe Air Transport (IGAT) as their General Sales Agent (GSA). From time to time, there may be other special offers available via IGAT.

MIGHTY MEKONG: VIETNAM & CAMBODIA

Aboard APT's recently refurbished RV AmaLotus, everyday you wake up to new adventures along the mighty Mekong River that links Vietnam and Cambodia. On the eight-day Mekong Cruise between Ho Chi Minh City and Siem Reap, the cruise passengers can witness the authentic local life.

“If you have not been to either Vietnam or Cambodia, you may think their geographical proximity makes them both the same. Once on-board, travelling becomes blissfully simple, drifting past a fascinating world that

revolves around the river's edge right through the spiritual heart of these two former French colonies,” says James. Exploding with noise and chaos, Vietnam's metropolis beckons exploration. With colourful markets around every corner and mopeds swarming the streets, one can feel the energy and the action. APT also offers options to prolong the tour with extended land packages that feature the temples of Angkor and the hustle and bustle of Ho Chi Minh. Longer trips can also include Hanoi, the UNESCO world heritage site of Halong Bay.

Cambodia is a land full of contrasts, boasting exquisite architecture and a sobering recent history. Its draw cards are plentiful, not least of which is the iconic Angkor Wat. Connecting the two countries, the Mekong Rivers' rural communities remain unaffected by the speed and chaos of the big cities. The land packages allow passengers the opportunity to visit other temples of the Khmer empire including Ta Prohm, the Bayon and Angkor Thom which will leave you spellbound.

With just 54 suites, its intimate size means your voyage is highly personalised. Every luxury suite aboard the RV AmaLotus features two balconies. The travellers can choose between the Deluxe Twin Balcony Suite, the Sadec Twin Balcony Suite and the Owner's Suite.

DINE IN STYLE WITH LUKE NGUYEN

For the last six years, Luke has been an Ambassador for APT; hosting culinary discovery trips to Vietnam, Cambodia, China and Japan. In addition, he designs



and curates exclusive culinary and cultural experiences for APT travellers to Vietnam. Onboard the RV AmaLotus river cruise, you will experience a special Luke Nguyen welcome dinner along with a special share style dinner in Luke's own onboard private restaurant, Indochine.

CHARISMATIC EUROPE

Magnificent Europe sailing, covering over 1700 kilometers, is a great introduction to river cruising and is the most popular itinerary of APT. The 15-day route from Amsterdam to Budapest highlights both major cities and smaller towns that are not part of the traditional coach touring itineraries. APT offers regular departures on a variety of rivers. They are all eight days and seven nights itineraries in France that can be linked to form a longer trip. "What makes APT charming are their once-in-a-lifetime money can't buy royal experiences that are included for all guests on all APT Royal Collection sailings. Guests have the opportunity to experience the European imperial lifestyle," explains James. These experiences include a private concert in the Liechtenstein City Palace of Vienna, a full day tour to Salzburg aboard the Majestic Emperor Imperial Train and Narnia Castle. "Most of APT's guests are Australians and New Zealanders, it means our Indian guests enjoy making friends with their travelling companions in a relaxed casual homelike atmosphere," adds James. For 2018, the 15-day Magnificent Europe sailings start at \$5995 per person in the lead in cabin. From this, you can deduct special offers of up to \$1200 depending on the cabin category. The eight-day sailings start at \$3395 per person.

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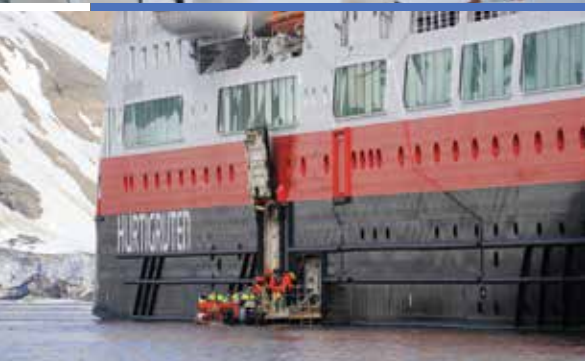


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Polar Expeditions

For those who relish nature, wildlife and adventure, expedition cruising could be their ideal holiday. Expedition Voyages offers value for money vacation options across the world—an opportunity to explore the deepest secrets of far-flung destinations for cruisers.



Expedition Voyages offer upscale and discounted expedition cruises to clients worldwide with a mission to get the best value by booking travellers on superior ships at the best savings possible, explains **Espen Fjermeros**, Managing Partner, Expedition Voyages. “We sell expedition cruises in the polar regions. Our industry experience allows us to offer only the best ships and programmes to an elite segment in India which continues to appreciate our expertise. The guests on board can expect good quality accommodations, safety, life-changing personal experiences in remote areas,” he says.

The company represents a number of major cruise lines like Hurtigruten, Silversea Cruises, Poseidon Expeditions, G Adventures, Oceanwide Expeditions, Variety Cruises and AmaWaterways.

According to Fjermeros, the most popular itineraries are Antarctica, Arctic Svalbard and the North Pole.

He adds, “Indians love authentic experiences in the polar regions, including being up-close to wildlife such as penguins, whales and polar bears. In fact, dancing on the ice is a very popular activity amongst Indians! Our products are of a very high quality and thus, are slightly more expensive, often more than \$10,000 per person. Hence, metro cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and Bengaluru are the key source markets for our products. We work with travel agents and typically pay a commission of 15 per cent.”

The company is expected to add more activities to its itineraries like hiking, camping and kayaking and in addition, will soon introduce skiing activities in the Arctic Svalbard regions.





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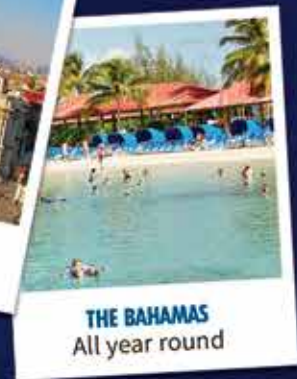
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