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Tourism Policy in 2018: Minister

Revolutionising the way tourism in India has always been viewed by the outside world, the Ministry of Tourism is continuously looking for ways and means to innovate and progress. The ministry is now setting its sights on uncharted territories, unseen possibilities and unrealised potential.

 KANCHAN NATH

The Ministry of Tourism is focused in its approach to the tourism and hospitality sector, and is willing to undertake initiatives that will help further its spectrum. Elaborating on the much-anticipated policy that the Ministry of Tourism hopes to implement, **Alphons Kannanthanam**, Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism and Minister of State, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India, said, "We will be coming out with a Tourism Policy in 2018; it has to go to the cabinet for an approval. We are in the process of drafting and finalising that. The objective is to create the right infrastructure so that a milieu of people visit our country and more Indians travel around. I think this nation needs to be a lot more creative and innovative. If you have any ideas to grow tourism, do share with us and we

will work towards their betterment. This revolution is really in the finer details."

The Ministry of Tourism has evolved tremendously over the past few years with innovation, creativity and a will to explore areas that can benefit the sector and the country. Talking about the changing image of the Ministry, Kannanthanam added, "We are trying to project it as a citizen-friendly ministry and in a way, we have succeeded in doing that. Everything boils down to bringing happiness to people; after all, tourism is all about happiness. We have been able to project a very positive image of our ministry as being a very happy one, one that is helpful to people, and this is what brings people back to our country."

On the new website of Incredible India which is scheduled to launch on December

25, he said, "The objective is to have a comprehensive website that will be useful to the traveller while functioning in user-friendly languages, formats, fonts, etc., making the entire experience seamless for those who want to know more about the country."

On being asked about the high rate of GST of 28 per cent on hotels with a tariff above 7,500, he said, "I would love it if the tax is reduced so that it is comparable with the nations that we are competing with, but the government has its own compulsions. They have to ensure that a certain amount of revenue is available for the government to spend on major infrastructure development projects."

Suman Billa, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, also described 2017 as a year



Alphons Kannanthanam
Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism,
Government of India

We will be coming out with the Tourism Policy in 2018; it has to go to the Cabinet for an approval. We are in the process of drafting and finalising that

that looked better than before. Elaborating on this, he said, "We are doing 15 per




Suman Billa
Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism,
Government of India

We are doing 15 per cent higher than what we did last year. We think this growth will be robust and we will have better times to come in 2018

cent higher than what we did last year. We think this growth will be robust and

we will have better times to come in 2018."

Speaking about the introduction of single-window clearance for group visa in the new tourism policy, Billa said, "Even though we have e-Visa, it does not apply to conferences. Firstly, we want the conference visa to also be done electronically and secondly, we would like group clearance for conferences."

"We want to harness the growth of the MICE industry and set up convention promotion bureaus at the destination and state levels. We also want ICPB to become the mother body and unleash that potential because I think we already have the infrastructure for it. What we really need to do is connect the dots," concluded Billa while speaking about the MICE industry's potential. 

TAAITalk

Prez to focus on members in 2nd term

Sunil Kumar R., second-time elected president of Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), underlines three focus areas for the next term: strengthening member connect and bringing experts to the fore, GST and airline matters.

 HAZEL JAIN

Sunil Kumar R. has been re-elected for a second term as the president of Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) for 2017-19. Prior to this, he was chosen as the president. The announcement was made during the association's Annual General Meeting (AGM) on November 28, at The Lalit Mumbai.

Speaking about his focus areas for the new term, he says, "The overwhelming



Sunil Kumar R.
President
Travel Agents Association of India

support that members have shown in this election confirms that they have a lot of

expectations from me. My first agenda will be to forge a stronger member connect. In my discussions with members from all over India, one feedback which stood out was that TAAI must go beyond its committee and reach out to members, involve the experts amongst our members, utilise their services from industry lobbies and get people who are connected well with the government to join TAAI in our endeavour to reach out to our government."

This, he says, will closely be followed by the issue of GST. "Our members certainly want relief from the challenges they are facing with regards to GST. IATA is coming up with its revolutionary New Generation of IATA Settlement Systems (NewGen ISS) 812. This was approved in Geneva on November 24, 2017, and has not been announced nationally yet. But it's a new trend that will change the way this industry will go in the future. New Gen ISS is another priority area for us," Kumar asserts.

Managing Committee Members

-  Anoop Kanuga
-  Gurmeet Singh Vij
-  Rajan Sehgal
-  S. Saravanan
-  Bhagwan Ramnani
-  Anil Kumar
-  Devaki Thiyagarajan

He added that airline matters continue to be a priority and TAAI needs to get airlines closer to meeting member

expectations. "It's a tough challenge but I believe we are tougher. Being elected for the second term, my responsibility is now greater," he says.

Office bearers

-  **President:**
Sunil Kumar R.
-  **Vice President:**
Sanjay Narula
-  **Honorary Secretary**
General: Jyoti Mayal
-  **National Treasurer:**
Imitiaz Qureshi



2017: A rollercoaster for the industry

Major setbacks like GST, liquor ban and demonetisation plagued the tourism and hospitality industry. Looking back, the who's who from the fraternity speak on how they dealt with the issues.



TT BUREAU

“2017 was very optimistic for Uttarakhand tourism, as the 4-dhaam yatra was very successful and saw 22.5 lakh people taking part in it. Even the Prime Minister had visited Kedarnath, when the doors were opened as well as when they got closed. The visit of the President of India to Kedarnath gave enough promotion to the pilgrimage. A thousand pilgrims went for Mansarovar Yatra as part of 18 teams. We are working on promoting winter tourism in mountains and are focusing on skiing and other activities.”



Satpal Maharaj
Tourism Minister
Uttarakhand

“In 2017, we appointed Priyanka Chopra as the brand ambassador and we are aggressively starting our campaign in national and international media. In October, the Assam Government adopted Assam Tourism Policy 2017, in which we have given so many incentives to investors who are interested in investing in the tourism sector in the state. Besides, we are also trying our best to give incentives and other subsidies in film tourism as well.”



Jayanta Malla Baruah
Chairman, Assam Tourism
Development Corporation

“2017 has been a great year for Delhi Tourism as we have seen lots of new initiatives, encouragement and learning this year. There has been a surge in tourist arrivals overall. For Delhi Tourism, we have taken some new initiatives, which includes promoting Delhi as a heritage city, and the response was very encouraging. Lots of people and tourists are interested in exploring the city by walking or cycling and we have special tours for the same. We are promoting Delhi as a film shoot friendly destination.”



Sudhir Sobti
Chief Manager
PR & Publicity, Delhi Tourism



Pronab Sarkar
President
IATO

“In 2017 we had many speed breakers, which we took as a challenge and brought up with respective authorities in concern. We are awaiting the last part of GST. Last thing that the GST Council had put forward was nil GST for monuments and abolishing of reverse mechanism charges. While these two points were considered, we are still fighting for the final point, which is the cascading effect of taxes. Double taxation has to be removed and if that is done, it will be good for India tourism and generation of employment. Overall, the year saw a 10-15 per cent growth.”



Sunil Kumar
President
TAAI

“2017 has been an outstanding year and we had a great team in place, but times change and our new team has been elected recently at the AGM. There is a lot of excitement in TAAI, and we will be meeting on December 21 in Hyderabad, to make sure that all of us spend a good day together, interact with each other, build plans, enlarge the vision that we have, focus on areas that we haven't done really well in before and try to do them better. I am hopeful to roll out a huge plan for the membership very soon.”



P.P. Khanna
President
ADTOI

“In 2017, one of the many achievements for the association was the successful Convention in Visakhapatnam. Now, with the support from Andhra Pradesh Government, we are very positive that domestic tourism will see growth in the state. Also, we launched our Andhra Pradesh Chapter, indicating is our move into the southern part of the country.”

“ICPB had a very successful year where a major achievement was creating confidence among MICE fraternity and the Ministry of Tourism. Today, ICPB has emerged as the frontal organisation in promoting India as a preferred MICE destination. We strongly believe that time has come to adopt a very aggressive approach and to have a new strategy in place. The new Board has already started deliberating on the various activities which ICPB has been organising over the years and is also working towards ways to strengthen the association.”



Chander Mansharamani
Vice Chairman
ICPB

“This year has been full of events for the association and we are on the course to become the top travel trade association in India. We launched two state chapters—Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh—during the year and also conducted two women empowerment programmes for the committee. We organised educational tours in Mussoorie and Corbett for the members and also conducted a session on GST to address the issues of the trade in line with the new tax structure introduced this year.”



Rajat Sawhney
Vice President
ADTOI

“In 2017, I was holding a specific portfolio for TAAI in which I was the Chairman Airline Council for TAAI. I think I did my best for it and I achieved a lot with Air India increasing our commission, credit cards coming on board, and I even supported my members for GST. We are still fighting for that. The industry is growing by leaps and bounds, as you can see there is a lot of increase in business, but what we have to see is how our members can cope up with it.”



Jyoti Mayal
Honorary Secretary
TAAI



Piyush Tiwari
Director Commercial
& Marketing, ITDC

“ITDC clocked turnover of 495.14 crore during the financial year 2016-17 as against 465.69 crore in the previous year. Corporation's flagship property hotel The Ashok registered its highest ever turnover of ₹152.91 crore and received LEED GOLD certification under Existing Building Operation and Maintenance category. ITDC further expanded the Ashok International Trade Division (AITD) and now operates 12 duty free shops at Goa, Haldia, Kolkata, Chennai, Mangalore, Visakhapatnam, Mumbai, Paradip, Kakinada, Krishnapatnam, Tuticorin & cochin sea ports.”



Guldeep Singh Sahni
India Travel Award winner,
Managing Director, Weldon
Tours & Travels

“Year 2017 was satisfactory, not great. Demonetisation and switch over to GST took a toll on outbound travel. Although a new trend emerged wherein travellers sought to visit uncommon destinations. Even budget travellers opted for luxury during the trip, even if for two or three days on their 6-7 day trip. We had to not only educate ourselves but even compare our prices with on-line portals to be competitive. Doing business is becoming tough day by day. In addition, confusion of GST leaves us uncompetitive as compared to overseas portals or hotel portals who do not charge GST.”



Rajan Sehgal
Director
Arrivals Air Services

“The last year saw many new activities related to travel like film tourism, heritage tourism, golf tourism, starting for both domestic and international tourism. We have also been working on other projects so that the travel industry makes some business besides ticketing and tour. In terms of ease of doing business, it is getting tougher rather than being easier to do business in India now.”

“In 2017, we transformed ourselves under the GST regime to allow our travel partners work with transparency. We saw 30 per cent growth in the airlines business while hotel booking segment grew by 70 per cent. We also launched offices in new markets like China, Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, The Philippines and Hong Kong. The brand TBO DMC was launched to cater to destination management services required by our partners. We have opened 16 new destinations for India like Scandinavia, Morocco, Egypt, Croatia, Bhutan, East Africa etc.”



Ankush Nijhawan
Co-founder, Travel Boutique
Online, India Travel Award
winner

“After a long time, we are almost meeting our budgets this year. We must have seen a growth of around 18 per cent. In 2017, the hospitality industry has seen increased occupancy levels, ADRs and overall business despite of hurdles like GST and Gujarat elections. In fact, the elections would have a minor effect on domestic tourism from Gujarat into Rajasthan. The business is looking robust and after a long time hoteliers are smiling. Moreover, e-visa has been a big help for tourists. I think GST is going to be advantageous, especially for the organised sector.”



Ashish Vohra
Founder and CEO
Justa Hotels & Resorts

“The year 2017, in terms of business growth and potentiality for future, was good. We consolidated our position both in the leisure and MICE segments in spite of competition. From July, GST is in place and as long as one has a clear understanding, it will settle down as a good single tax accountability. Our industry still faces many issues with the prevailing multiple licensing laws and unless it's genuinely single-window clearance, there would not be any change in the hassles at present.”



Debasish Bhowmik
Sr. Vice President
Hotel Clarks Shiraz

Maya to return to North India

The 4th North India Travel Awards will be held on December 21, 2017, at The LaLiT New Delhi. Like every year, these awards too will honour the hard work of the professionals of the tourism industry in the region.



Renowned as India's first regional awards which honour the achievers of the tourism industry, India Travel Awards has made a mark in the industry to recognise those who have gone above and beyond to make a difference in the travel fraternity.

Gunjan Sabikhi, Convener, India Travel Awards, informs that these are the first and only regional awards which recognise and reward the efforts of travel companies from every nook and corner of India. "These awards set a company apart from its competition and differentiate the quality of its achievements from others, thus placing the awardees at the forefront of the industry. It is very heartening to see that like every year, the



Gunjan Sabikhi
Convener
India Travel Awards

These awards set a company apart from its competition and differentiate the quality of its achievements from others

number of nominations received for North India Travel Awards has increased mani-

folds, which is a proof of the fact that winning this award is very prestigious and it bestows immense credibility to the winning company or individual. The enthusiasm for the glamorous ceremony is also testimony to the fact that many professionals of the industry actually look forward to them each year. We have seen that being nominated or shortlisted for any category has proven to be helpful for an individual or a company in their business as it places them at the forefront of their genre and the industry as a whole. These awards have also proven to be instrumental in increasing the awareness about the brand," says Sabikhi.

With 461 rooms and suites, The LaLiT New Delhi offers an elegant setting for hosting conferences, meet-

ings and upscale social events. There are multiple venues available for meetings and events. The 39,000 sq. ft. of conference and banquet space ranges from Crystal Ballroom to six smaller venues, Quorum—the club with four meeting rooms and the Plaza Terrace Garden for outdoor events. The hotel's professional event planners and catering team, specialised menus exotic décor and wired audio-visual technology promise to deliver success.

The LaLiT way

With 461 rooms and suites, The LaLiT New Delhi offers an elegant setting for hosting conferences, meetings and upscale social events. There are multiple venues available for meetings and events

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VIEWPOINT

The year that was...

The beginning of 2017 was marred by the burden of demonetisation. Just when the industry was coping with it, the news of the latest service tax regime came as another jolt and increased tour package price by 10-12 per cent. Another major blow for the hospitality industry was the highway liquor ban. The Supreme Court's order to ban serving of alcohol on national highways, even in restaurants and hotels, saw the F&B industry fighting for survival. Finally, there was some ray of hope with the relaxation on liquor ban for hotels and restaurants under 500m distance. The government too made a few changes in the original GST rollout for hotel tariffs and AC restaurants, which acted as a breather for hoteliers and restaurant owners. MOT saw the appointment of Rashmi Verma as Secretary Tourism, followed by K J Alphons as the new Minister for Tourism (Independent Charge). The duo exudes a positive outlook and has already unveiled the Incredible India 2.0 campaign and Adopt a Heritage scheme. The merging of the HRIDAY and PRASAD scheme also holds great promise for inbound tourism, and we believe that it would only prove beneficial for the industry.

Eyes set on 2018

While the announcement of a National Tourism Policy was made back in 2015, we are hoping that it would finally see the light of the day in 2018. Tourism Minister KJ Alphons has already hinted that the New Year will see the updated tourism policy. Another highlight of 2018 will be the upgraded Incredible India website. GST might continue to bother the agents, with many still trying to figure it out for themselves. Many in the industry are waiting for a solution to curb the effect of GST. Headway has already been made to develop cruise tourism in India as a detailed Cruise Tourism Policy is expected in the upcoming year. MOT has already launched guidelines for Wellness and Yoga Tourism, which was to be followed by Medical Tourism Policy, but is now scheduled for 2018. The next few months would see India as the partner state at FITUR 2018. The upcoming budget might hold a few new surprises as well. Overall, we are pinning our hopes on 2018 and wishing all of you a very Happy New Year!

What it means to be CLIA certified

The first Indian national to get certified by the largest cruise industry trade association speaks about her experience and why travel agents in India who are interested in selling cruise packages need to do this course.

It was the thirst to learn that took me on this amazing journey. I have been a part of the travel trade for more than 16 years which included working in various departments and cruise as a product. This certification has enhanced my knowledge even further. My exposure to cruises began with Discover the World Marketing where I handled operations for Carnival Cruise Lines and thereafter, I got an opportunity to work as Regional Manager for Cruise Professionals, India GSA for

Cunard, Princess Cruises and P&O Cruises U.K.

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!

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.

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 cruise vacation. 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 training opportunities and enhancing my skills for personal and professional growth.

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

"The commitment from cruise enthusiasts such as Kashish Jiandani to enhance her professional development through the CLIA programme excites us tremendously. When we launched in India, we were still unsure how the material would be embraced but she has proven that it remains relevant. All Indian agents can now follow her pioneering pathway and become cruise industry experts. If such an educated force of cruise selling agents grows, so too will the power of the local cruise industry."



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

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.



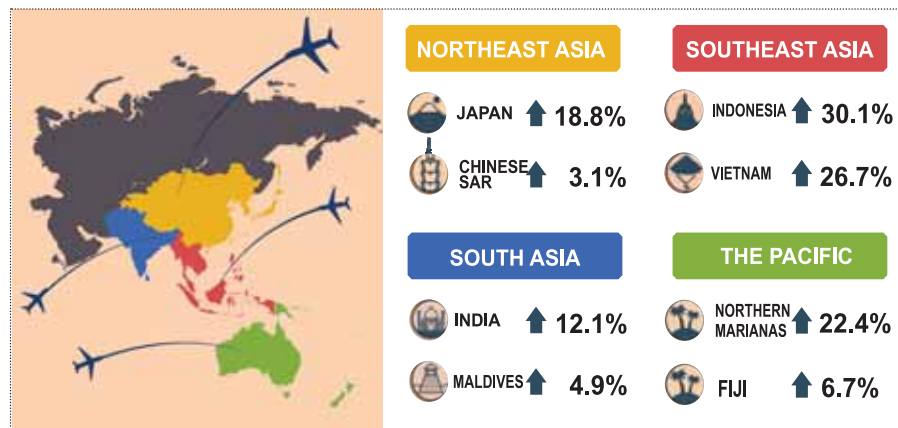
Kashish Jiandani
Business Development Manager NCLH

India ranks high in YOY growth

In Q3 of 2017, India and the Maldives occupied the top two spots in South Asia with YOY growth of 12.1 per cent and 4.9 per cent respectively, according to a report by PATA.

Key Highlights – QTM 3Q2017

Asia and The Pacific Top Inbound Performers by IVAs Growth (Y-O-Y)



In Northeast Asia, Japan outperformed its neighbours with an impressive year-on-year growth of 18.8 per cent while Korea (ROK) witnessed a decline of 34.8 per cent in this period. Indonesia dominated in Southeast Asia with a growth of 30.1 per cent, boosted by strong traffic from China (+46.2%) and India (+45.6%).

Source: Key highlights of Quarterly Tourism Monitor (QTM) 3Q 2017

Travel agents bid goodbye to 2017

“The last few years have redefined our approach as a travel technology company. Our matchless offering from 400+ airlines, 670,000+ hotel properties, 35,000 car rental locations, 61 cruise and tour operators, and 12 rail booking providers has gone a step ahead. GST has redefined the entire taxation module of the country. The advent of digitalisation, mobile wallets and rise in disposable income of the middle class have created a huge opportunities for technology players.”



Sandeep Dwivedi
Chief Operating Officer, Inter-Globe Technology Quotient, India Travel Award winner

“For Lords Hotels & Resorts as a chain, the year was relatively better than 2016 with a marginal rise in ARR. But the RevPAR grew by almost an average 8-12 per cent depending on the hotel location and topography. We added four new properties to our portfolio in 2017 which is a good sign for business and the brand. The properties are in Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and Karnataka in India and one property in Kathmandu, Nepal.”



Rishi Puri
Vice President
Lords Hotels & Resorts

“Air Travel Enterprises and the Great India Tour Company are also moving along with the growth of this industry. Despite challenges, we could focus on corrections, changes and streamlining of activities during 2017. The year was comparatively inhibiting due to the economic reforms in the market. As spending has reduced, leisure and travel received lower priority and reflected that on the business. There had been a visible downfall in the number of domestic tourist movement too.”



EM Najeed
Chairman & Managing Director, Air Travel Enterprises Group of Companies (ATE), India Travel Award winner



Vivek Pathiyen
General Manager
Chances Resort & Casino

“Chances Resort & Casino has been in operation for 23 years but this year has been a year of changes. There has been major changes in terms of government rules and taxes, etc. Even then, we have been seeing a positive trend in the business, which is very inspiring as we have sailed through despite all these hurdles.”



Ajith Nair
Director of Sales & Marketing,
Novotel Imajica Khopoli

“In 2017, has been a good year for us. We achieved a year-to-date occupancy of 78 per cent from MICE and weddings segments during the weekdays and FITs on weekends. Despite demonetisation and GST being a blow to the luxury segment, our resort still saw a growth in occupancy by 3.82 per cent. The average room rate also rose by 5.54 per cent. Our breakthrough was managing to tap an alternate revenue channel which was the non-qualified mix.”



Amanpreet Singh Sandhu
Director of Sales & Marketing, Eros Hotel
New Delhi Nehru Place

“It has been a steady year for us after a robust 2016. Despite external factors such as demonetisation and additional inventory coming into Delhi-NCR, we have succeeded improving in all KPI's. Like any well-oiled machinery, Eros Hotel Nehru Place has delivered results year after year. Implementation of GST has demanded involvement from everyone in the Q2 of current year. However, it is now easier with all stakeholders getting used to the new tax regime.”



Subhash Goyal
India Travel Award winner,
Chairman of STIC Travel Group
and Hony. Secretary, FAITH

“The year 2017 was a very good time for our company, both for inbound and outbound tourism. During the year we also increased our representation as GSA for three major products—A-Rosa Cruises, Alamo Rent a Car and TA Centre, which is a B2B seamless booking portal for travel agents. However, instead of a year of ease of doing business, it was a year of lot of challenges including demonetisation as well as introduction of Goods and Services Tax.”

“This year was quite a good year for both of our companies, Travelite (India) as well as, KTC (India). The sales have shown quite a steep rise. Ease of doing business is a challenge in India, despite Government's claim, be it getting new tourist vehicles registered or getting the permits and fitness renewal. The enforcement agencies and border check posts stop the vehicles for no rhyme or reason. Imposition of unreasonable five per cent GST on tour operators by Government of India, has created havoc for the inbound and domestic tour operators.”



Sarab Jit Singh
India Travel Award winner,
Managing Director, Travelite (India)

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India in full strength at WTM London

Incredible India was surely a force to reckon with at WTM London this year. While the focus was increasingly on networking and building relationships, the Indian participation at the event was indicative of the importance of the UK market in India. The Indian contingent shares its views on the event.



PEDEN DOMA BHUTIA FROM LONDON



Dharmendra Sharma
Chief Secretary
Government of Goa

“WTM is a one-of-its-kind mart. I don't have a benchmark comparison of how WTM has evolved over the years but I have been made to understand that earlier it was a four-day mart and now it is a three-day event. For Goa tourism, we have been associated with WTM for a very long time. We went outside the India pavilion and took our own space way back in 1996. It's nice to see that our travel partners, who would primarily use our space earlier, have now grown to have their own stalls. Our presence here makes a difference; UK being an important market, the presence at WTM is important.”

“Every year WTM seems to be growing. However, we also get to hear about the dwindling footfalls at the mart, but the footfalls don't bother us as we come with appointments in advance, so as long as you meet the people you want to make business, we don't have any issue. If one expects to get investment out in one shot, then it doesn't work like that; it's a long-term affair. How can one attribute marketing to ROI? We can't measure it in strictly those terms, it may happen this year or next year or after two years. The inbound industry seems to be doing pretty fine, and while the government does say that they are taking a lot of initiatives, but they need to do more when it comes to really helping out agents in issues like GST.”



Jehangir Katgara
Chairman and Managing
Director, Trail Blazer
Tours India



Jaal Shah
Group Managing Director,
Travel Designer Group

“WTM has been great for us, it's always been a good show for us, no wonder we are in the eighth year of our participation. The timing of the mart is perfect as it comes around the end of the calendar year so that makes it significantly important. Before you start the new year, it helps you to get in touch with your partners and plan the coming year. For us, we have two takes when we participate anywhere, one important point is to buy, we have contractors who come

here and sit so we need that space. There's no straightforward ROI on the amount of hotels we buy and sell, but it also gives us an opportunity to meet some of our customers and partners. The second and third days have been more busy than the first day.”

“I'm coming to WTM after 10 years and I have witnessed that there has been a lot of change. Now they have a special buyers' meet in the morning for an hour, I attended one of those and found it to be very helpful and productive. For people who want to do serious business, it's a good attempt to meet the focused marketing agents and a perfect platform to go and meet the right people. Having come here after such a long time, I have realised that change is a good thing and now I see that a lot of young people have come in and with them they bring along new ideas.”



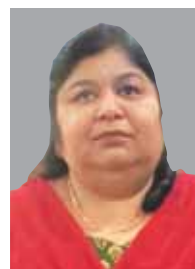
Swadesh Kumar
Managing Director
Shikhar Travels

“The first day opened phenomenally! We had lots of good appointments with travel operators, bloggers and travel advisors based out of Europe. We've been looking to promote our heritage destinations, our wildlife itineraries, natural wonders and cultural products. We've been able to promote our itineraries very well with the operators based out of Europe and we followed that up with a roadshow in Paris on November 9. We also did a 15-day roadshow in USA in the later part of November, we look forward to converting these appointments into business. From November 21 onwards, we went to the US where we attended USTOA and till December 11 we had roadshows across five destinations in the US. We recently concluded the MP Tourism Mart, where we tripled the number of buyers and sellers. We were able to sell newer products along with having productive, one-on-one meetings with our partners.”



Chhavi Bharadwaj
Managing Director
Madhya Pradesh State
Tourism Development
Corporation

“As far as WTM this year is concerned the footfall has seen a dip compared to last year. Though people fix up meetings, they don't show up, hardly 50-60 per cent of the people who fix up meetings through the portals turn up. But walk-in customers have been there and we have got some good leads coming our way. This is the reason we are happy with our participation at the event. My only request to the organisers is that they should not look at relocating our stands every time and they should allow us to showcase at one place. If we have been exhibiting for the last 9-10 years we should at least be given the preference to choose the stand position which is to our liking. They should consider the consistency that a client is maintaining of participating at WTM. I'm hoping that with technology getting a separate stand from next year we are able to get a higher footfall.”



Meenu Sachdeva
Managing Director &
Co-Founder, TI Infotech,
India Travel Award winner



Roma Sojitra
Vice President- Pre-Sales,
Mystifly

“The concept of WTM being a three-day mart works out well for us, it's short, sweet and we get qualitative leads apart from meeting our present customers, which is an add on. WTM is one event that we religiously participate in every year. In terms of existing customers, we have had new dialogues. We've seen that Day 1 has been more productive, though the rest of the two days were also great, as we had a good footfall. The other thing that has changed this year is the new tech shows that are absolutely brilliant. I attended three of them and all were very insightful. I have heard they are planning some more next year and I'm looking forward to it. Now, Mystifly as a brand has grown enormously and everyone knows about us. It helps us in terms of just being here at the right time so that people can come speak to us face to face and we take it forward with e-mails. It's also about building relationships.”

“For us, Day 2 was much more exciting than Day 1, as the first day was slightly lukewarm in response. The UK is an important market for us, hence WTM in that way is an important event for us and not only does it give us access to the UK market, but also gets us in touch with the European market. The three-day format is good for any exhibition. In Gujarat, the interest of the people has primarily been on niche areas like handicrafts and the white desert, people want to find a different aspect of Gujarat, which they don't see in other states. The novelty factor is what piques their interest. The wellness factor is also catching up, earlier we didn't have people enquiring about these products fields but gradually the interest is gaining hold.”



Kingshuk Biswas
Manager Marketing &
Investment, Tourism
Corporation of Gujarat

“World Travel Mart 2017 was a great platform to interact with new agents from countries we are setting foot in. Being one of the most popular and oldest travel exhibitions, WTM is a reputable exhibition to make one's presence known, it adds to brand credibility and also provides a platform to meet your partners and associates from across the world. WTM is not just a networking platform, but a place to make acquaintance of new agents, close the contract and also associate with co-exhibitors. Caper is a part of many exhibitions globally and most of these fairs have adapted to the changes in the market and the trade.”



Bharat Bhushan Atree
Managing Director
Caper Travel Company



Senthil Kumar
Group Chief Financial
Officer, Red Apple Travel

“Nowadays, with the increasing number of travel marts happening around the world, you keep meeting the same kind of people. At the same time, it helps us meet other customers and sometimes your own team coming from all over the world. This helps us do our team networking with internal and external customers, thereby helping companies to create brand awareness and showcasing their products and services to the travel community. The second day is the real business day while first and third days are very slow. Even out of three days, only the second day is effective. We generally meet the same kind of people at various travel marts happening around the world. This might be better for customers based in that region as sometimes you do get serious business but it's now more about creating brand awareness. It also helps us identify new trends in travel technology, so it's more about value addition.”

“WTM historically has been a very good show for us. We've been participating here for almost a decade. It gives us a good platform to meet our existing partners and connect with some new customers. It's a good way to network with people in one central location. For us, it's more of a networking opportunity, but one thing leads to another. It's difficult to measure the ROI, I can't calculate how much business we derive out of the show but over a period of time you consistently meet people and develop and work upon these opportunities and then business follows. The format has been the same, but I've heard from next year, they will be having a separate section for travel tech companies, let's see how that works out.”



Ruchir Bang
Executive Director,
roomsXML Solutions, India
Travel Award winner



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Adventure rules the roost in Knysna

At the heart of the Garden Route in South Africa, Knysna is the perfect base from which Indian travellers can explore the area with adventure as its biggest draw. The coastal town has been a destination for the Indian market for some time.

 HAZEL JAIN

With close to 100,000 Indian travellers visiting South Africa annually, there has been a huge demand to experience the destination beyond the usual cities of Cape Town, Durban and Kruger National Park. South Africa Tourism (SAT) has therefore, opened up new and unexplored regions of the country to the Indian market - one of them is the coastal town of Knysna on the Garden Route.

According to Ebrahim Windwaai, Visitor Centre Manager, Knysna Tourism,



this town has been a destination for the Indian market for some time. "The first time we took our products to India was on a roadshow in 2007 which was organised by the SAT India office in Mumbai. However, this year was the

first time we've hosted such a big group of travel agents from India on a familiarisation tour in Greater Knysna. It was wonderful to be able to give them a first-hand experience of what our area has to offer," he says.



"The first time we took our products to India was on a roadshow in 2007 which was organised by the SAT India office in Mumbai. However, this year was the first time we've hosted such a big group of travel agents from India on a familiarisation tour in Greater Knysna. It was wonderful to be able to give them a first-hand experience of what our area has to offer."

Ebrahim Windwaai
Visitor Centre Manager, Knysna Tourism

While it has not been possible to monitor numbers coming into the area, the response, Windwaai claims, has been positive to the extent that he expects members to participate in the Indian roadshow in February 2018. "In fact, we have tweaked the product offerings to suit the Indian traveller. Since 2007, two Indian restaurants have opened in town. For the rest, the Indian traveller appears to like us just the way we are. We have limited budgets so we can't do as much as we would like to in this emerging market. But we are very

excited about hosting more trade whenever an opportunity arises," Windwaai adds.

tion, excellent spas as well as numerous restaurants, cultural experiences and craft markets.

Fact File

Knysna has earned the sobriquet of Oyster Capital because of the amazing abundance and quality of oysters available here. It actually has an Oyster Festival to its name amongst other annual events where approximately 200,000 oysters are consumed over a 10-day period!



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Debut Cambodia mart concludes

The debut Cambodia Travel Mart had around 500 delegates attending the event at Sokha Siem Reap Hotel and Convention Centre. The second edition of the mart will be in Phnom Penh from October 11 to 13, 2018.

TT BUREAU

The first-ever Cambodia Travel Mart (CTM) 2017 concluded successfully at the Sokha Siem Reap Hotel and Convention Centre on November 19, 2017.

The three-day mart witnessed local and international buyers, suppliers, trade professionals and media partners meet and exchange the latest development of the tourism industry in Cambodia.

The mart witnessed the participation of close to 500-strong delegate members, with 150 buyers from 31 countries, 20 international media from 17 countries and 320 exhibitor delegates from 13 countries.

With various programmes, including CTM Online Business Matching, Trade Seminars, Post-Show Tour and Exhibition, CTM provided all participants with new platforms in gaining more business opportunities.

Thong Khon, Minister of Tourism, Cambodia, said that the debut mart is a key factor to develop tourism in Cambodia and help the country achieve the goal of 7 million tourists by 2020.

He says, "We would like to welcome and invite national and international tourism agencies to support and get involved in this event so that they get the opportunity to advance their businesses, and help the national and regional service industry reach its peak. Cambodia Travel Mart 2017 will serve to promote not just Cambodia, but the whole region. At the same time, we are celebrating this remarkable milestone with a special campaign - Visit Asean@50, turning 50 in 2017."

The event was organised by the Ministry of Tourism, Cambodia, in collaboration with Slickbooth Events & Public Relations along with TTG Events.

Om Pharin, Chairman & CEO of SlickBooth Holding – Events & Public Relations, says, "I love Cambodia, and promoting Tourism Cambodia is something I've been doing for more than 25 years already. I am excited to do more of it by debuting in the Kingdom's first premium trade show - The Cambodia Travel Mart."

Darren Ng, Managing Director of TTG Asia Media,

says, "TTG Events works hand-in-hand with our Cambodian counterparts, and with our contribution, the event is assured of quality buyers and credible international media matching its scale."

On the sidelines of the event, Cambodia's Tourism Minister Thong Khon and Myanmar's Minister of Hotel and Tourism Onh Maung also signed a



memorandum of understanding to focus on creating a single tourist des-

tination, Angkor-Bagan (Angkor in Siem Reap and the ancient city of Bagan in

Myanmar), to attract tourists to the area. The second edition of the Cambodia

Travel Mart will be held in Phnom Penh from October 11-13, 2018.



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GST concerns plagued agents in 2017



Pooja Wadhwa
Partner, Avant Garde Consulting

“This year has been exceptional for us as we received heart-warming support from the travel trade for the entire chain that extends to Dubai, Maldives and Seychelles, especially for JA Manafaru Maldives, which was a fairly unknown brand in the Indian market. We’ve also been very fortunate in being able to pursue our expansion plan further in the direction that we’d like for Avant Garde, with new partner hotels that share a similar ideology and ethos as us.”

“We restructured our business this year, completely refreshed our products portfolio by diversifying into the volunteering and responsible tourism and given a fresh look to our website. We have now established presence in the UK with our new office. We have increased our marketing staff in key areas including Mumbai, Hyderabad and Nagpur. We have also increased our portfolio of properties exclusively offered through Tiger Routes by focusing on backward integration. The results have been impressive too.”



Dnyanesh Kale
Co-founder
Tiger Routes

“The industry was hugely impacted by implementation of GST mainly on account of confusion about how invoices for tickets are to be raised. Most of our customers being corporates wanted to avail credit of GST charged by airlines. The finalisation of documentation and bringing in changes in IT systems took time which affected business. Fortunately for us, there was a double-digit growth in domestic travel. There has also been a spurt in demand for technology to meet the travel requirements. We have experienced a dearth of good talent.”



K Swaminathan
Director, (Service Business),
Balmer Lawrie & Co



Kunal Kohari
Executive Director
Rail Europe India

“We were targeting a 15 per cent growth and so far we are on track to achieve it. At the same time, as a growing market, it is now interesting our partner railways and they are visiting India to understand the market with an eye on offering India-specific products and promotions. Even though the GST implementation had brought in a lot of confusion since July, travel to Europe isn’t really hampered.”



GMJ Thampy
CMD
Riya Group

“Year 2017 has been quite an interesting one as we managed to move towards uncharted territories. We have progressed well in our core business and at the same time, we have made substantial inroads into the US and Canada markets. We have also seen a fair amount of surge in sales in the smaller pockets in India. Overall, I would say that it has fairly been a good year for us.”



Ruden Dias
National Sales Head
U&I Holidays

“This year our top lines witnessed tremendous increase as compared to last year. Our objective to engage with Tier-II and III markets has paid us huge dividends. We conducted familiarisation trips for Bali and Maldives. This year we saw the number of nights for Bali increase from three to four and five nights. Our key partners have contributed over 60 per cent of our business but the last few months saw a dip in numbers due to Mt. Agung eruption.”

“The year 2017 was full of new opportunities and changes for the group and the industry as a whole. We collaborated with Prince Hotels Inc., one of the largest hotel chains in the world, and offers a diverse portfolio of properties across a combined network of 122 hotels worldwide. We have expanded our footprint in Rajasthan, India, with opening of Leisure Inn Shrey Jodhpur. For the first time in the history, the country has jumped 30 points to enter the top 100 club.”



Rohit Vig
Regional Managing
Director-India, Staywell
Hospitality Group

“This year, we saw a shift in the booking and research pattern, with consumers booking well in advance. Despite the economy going through a tough period following demonetisation in November last year, its impact was short-lived and the industry continued to grow with healthy momentum. There was a dip in traffic in the first couple of days post the demonetisation announcement, but things were back to normal after that. I feel the government should encourage domestic as well as international tourism through policy and regulatory changes, and infrastructure developments.”



Joe Rajan
Chief Executive Officer
Harvey World Destinations

“Year 2017 for me in three words was about learning, training and executing. After two years of developing our online platform, we launched it this year. We executed with live inventory and today 50 per cent of our business in Maldives and Mauritius is via the website. On July 1, 2017 we appointed professionals to study the execution of GST and this was passed on to our clients. This year also saw a major change in our approach to business wherein Akquasun obtained 100 per cent shareholding of all our DMCs.”



B.A. Rahim
Founder & Group CEO
Akquasun



Sanjay Temkar
Director of Sales - India,
Trafalgar

“Year 2017 was indeed ‘Simply the Best’ year for Trafalgar. We saw a surge of 20 per cent on our volumes from India market. The trend is slowly changing and we now see more travellers who don’t want to risk disappointment booking well in advance, and benefiting from our early booking savings. We see more guests who want to explore new destinations like Croatia, Balkans, Russia, Japan, Spain, and Portugal with our guided holidays.”



Peter Kerkar
Group CEO, Cox & Kings
India Travel Award winner

“It has been a rewarding year for Cox & Kings as we launched a few new initiatives in India. The first was Enable Travel, which is India’s only accessible holiday specialist and the second was the launch of Trip 360, which is a sustainable tourism platform that is redefining adventure tourism. All our businesses in India and overseas are performing very well. We signed agreements for six new Meininger hotel properties that will collectively add 2,756 beds to our inventory. At present, we have 17 hotels with 8,409 beds.”



Clevio Monteiro
CEO
Visa Lounge

“We started only a year ago with UAE as the first country we offered visas for. Today, we are 18 countries strong to offer visas application through just one form on one platform. We have built a pan-India network of over 300 agents and corporate houses. This year, we have also launched our platform’s API and white label solutions for which we have been approached by several mid to large-sized travel houses. We have grown from staff strength of five to 20 and plan to grow to 40 by the end of the next financial year.”

“This year has been a challenging as well as a rewarding year for us. We got new principals like Coco Collection, Vista DMC for Spain and Portugal, and MGM Macau. On the other hand, factors like demonetisation and GST were a hindrance. The lack of clarity in these issues created a lot of uncertainty in the market. But we opened up channels of unconventional sales and markets and spent less on marketing by doing targeted activities. All is well when you end well which is what 2017 has been for us and our principals.”



Alefiya Singh
Director
Iris Reps

“Year 2017 has seen an incline despite of various roadblocks. However, 2017 has got the travel trade in tune to the government’s statutory requirement, which is being done and followed in letter and spirit. For the first time, since the inception of our destination management company, we were awarded for MICE in 2017. The volatile economy and various policy swings shook the entire industry but with our focused approach and due diligence towards our work, we were able to streamline things to our advantage.”



Gagan Kumar
Director, STHI Group,
India Travel Award winner

“For RARE India, 2017 was a tough year with many challenges, but it was also a year of great learning and innovation. In the last few years, the business in travel has leveraged our expertise and widened our horizons. However, ease of doing business is yet to happen in this industry. We hope that the next year brings with it new avenues of growth.”



Shoba Mohan
Founder- Partner
RARE India

Destination heads happy with 2017

“The launch of the world’s longest zip line at Jebel Jais in December; a viewing deck near the summit and Season 2 of ViaFerrata at the summit were some important achievements in 2017. India is currently the fourth largest international source market for visitors to the destination. Indian tourist arrivals increased by 19.2 per cent in the first ten months of 2017. With international tourism arrivals to the emirate rising 12 per cent year-on-year in the first ten months of 2017, RAK is on course to reach its target of 900,000 visitors by the year end. We are also optimistic about attaining our goal of a million visitors by the end of next year and 2.9 million by the end of 2025.”



Haitham Mattar
Chief Executive Officer,
RAKTDA

“The Indian market for Tourism Australia has seen some remarkable growth this year. India as a market topped ninth in terms of tourist arrivals for the year ended September 2017, with the arrival number crossing over 290,000 tourists. It is also the eighth largest market in terms of spend by tourists for the year ended June 2017. We were relatively unaffected by the economic reforms such as demonetisation and the roll-out of GST. Arrivals from India to Australia since the demonetisation period (November 2016 to September 2017) grew at an average of 15 per cent. Tourist spend for the year ended June 2017 was at AUD 1.43 billion (₹ 7,150 crore), a growth of 30 per cent over the previous year.”



Nishant Kashikar
Country Manager, India &
Gulf, Tourism Australia

“The year 2017 has been a good one for us despite major hurdles like demonetisation and GST. Yes, things could definitely have been better, but we expect to close this year with an increase of about seven per cent over 2016. Mauritius has seen big strides in the destination wedding segment and we too had a growth of about 30 per cent in that segment there. In addition, we have also seen a healthy growth in the arrival of high-end tourists.”



Vivek Anand
Country Manager
MTPA India

Contd. on page 14 ▶



Pranav Kapadia
Founder
Global Destinations

“2017 was a roller coaster of a year. Since November 2016, we’ve seen regular ups and downs but it truly has been one of the most exciting and challenging years since I started Global Destinations. Despite all that, we expanded our portfolio of partners. We have also grown our presence in India by appointing a sales representative in Bengaluru for the south market. We now have local presence in five key markets.”



Anjum Lokhandwala
Founder & Director
Outbound Konnections

“This year has been very fruitful for us and our existing principals have been extremely happy with the numbers we have reaped. All of them saw double-digit growth in 2017. Our strategy this year was not to bring new accounts but cater well to the existing ones with complete focus. We did face a lot of challenges with GST to a certain extent. Fortunately, we had already managed to achieve our targets for the year and the GST issue did not affect us as much as we expected it to.”

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Smooth take off for aviation in 2017



David Lim
General Manager - India,
Singapore Airlines

“Singapore Airlines completed 70 years of operations in 2017. On July 1, the Airbus A350-900 commenced operations on the Mumbai-Singapore route. Singapore Airlines took delivery of its first A350-900 in March 2016 and now has 18 of the aircraft type in its fleet, with another 49 on firm order, including seven of an ultra-long-range A350-900ULR variant. Earlier this year, we also added a fourth-weekly flight from Ahmedabad owing to increased travel demand from the city. Singapore Airlines has signed a codeshare agreement with several airlines like Vistara, Ethiopian Airlines and Air France KLM.”



Tadesse Tilahun
Regional Director - India Sub
Continent, Ethiopian Airlines

“As the year 2017 draws to a close, despite lingering political and economic conditions affecting the aviation industry, we are pleased to report that we carried nearly nine million passengers to more than 100 international destinations across five continents during the year. Our passengers were delighted to board 92 of our youngest fleet of aircraft besides the newly introduced B787-9. With several awards that the airline won this year, the year was very promising.”



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

“It has been a challenging year for us with increased capacity in the market and lower demands. Growth was small but nimble. But we managed to enhance our capacity and harness our focus on premium segmentation and diversification of business which helped us maximise revenues and lower losses. Though we saw a slight impact of demonetisation, it was business as usual for us after some time. We saw a growth of 20 per cent in terms of capacity and we outgrew this in terms of revenue as well.”

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July 7-8, 2018 (Sat - Sun)
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Travel

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Delhi NCR

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Sarika Bhambhani Rawal: sarika@ddppl.com, +91 98101 91852
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Dr. Ankur Bhatia
Executive Director, Bird Group
& Member of CI's Core
Committee on Aviation

“With the consistent surge in domestic tourism, 2017 started on a positive note for aviation, travel and hospitality industry. India became the third largest aviation market as domestic air traffic showed consistent growth. The hospitality industry however faced several roadblocks but has made an encouraging recovery in the last quarter. The industry's dependence upon technology is growing to improve efficiency, accelerate profitability and we expect Global Distribution Systems (GDS) to become more deeply embedded across these sectors.”



Leslie Thng
CEO, Vistara

“Our motto in 2017 continued to be driving growth through product and service innovations. We witnessed a remarkable market acceptance with more customers applauding our unique value propositions and making us their favourite airline. On the back of fleet expansion, we strengthened our network to multiply frequencies on existing routes and add new destinations such as Amritsar, Leh and Ranchi. We inducted the A320neo aircraft into our fleet and unveiled several product enhancements in the new aircraft.”

Contd. on page 32 ▶

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May

June

July

August

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CANADA

KEEP EXPLORING



September

October

November

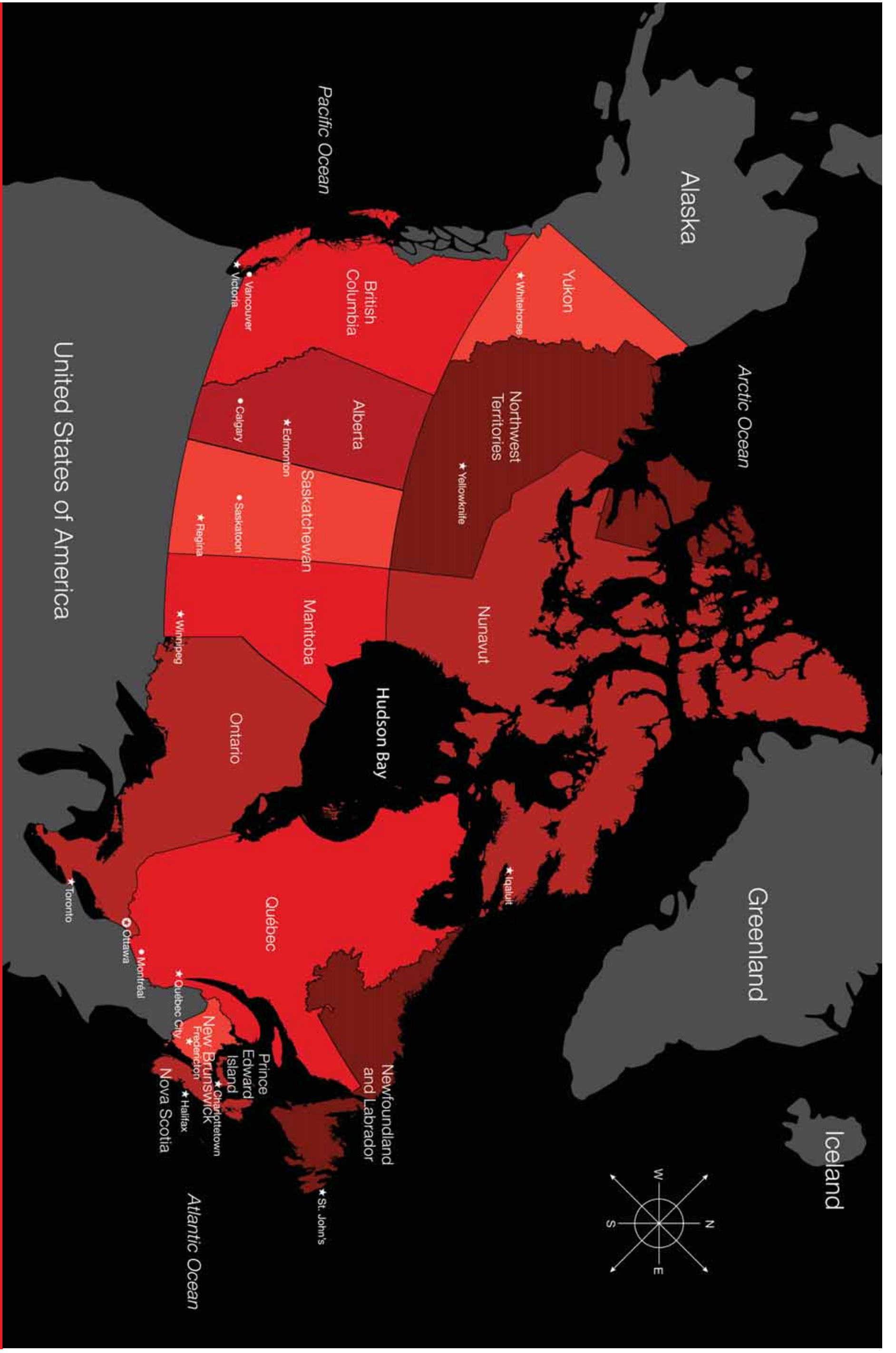
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Alaska

Arctic Ocean

Iceland

Greenland



Yukon

★ Whitehorse

Northwest Territories

★ Yellowknife

Nunavut

★ Iqaluit

British Columbia

★ Vancouver
★ Victoria

Alberta

★ Edmonton

Saskatchewan

★ Saskatoon
★ Regina

Manitoba

★ Winnipeg

Hudson Bay

Ontario

Québec

★ Montreal
★ Ottawa

★ Québec City
★ Fredericton
New Brunswick
Prince Edward Island

★ Halifax
Nova Scotia

Newfoundland and Labrador

★ St. John's

Pacific Ocean

United States of America

Atlantic Ocean



CANADA 
KEEP EXPLORING

Trafalgar brochure out

The tour operator's new brochure for 2018 has all the features that its trade partners in India loved. Agents can also learn about Trafalgar products through its online trailing module.

 HAZEL JAIN

Like every year, Trafalgar has launched its new brochure for 2018 which will continue to have all the paraphernalia for its travel partners along with some new elements introduced by popular demand. **Nicholas Lim**, President, Trafalgar Asia, who was in India to launch the new brochure, says, "Our

Trafalgar also has an in-depth, e-learning programme for the trade that will certify them as Trafalgar partners. Launched a couple of months ago, this programme has received good response with about 50 registrations so far.

While Trafalgar doesn't have a payment gateway on its site yet, agents can block tours online. "We now have

a reservation function available in India so agents don't have to wait for Singapore or Geneva to wake up and confirm bookings. Trafalgar has pledged to make 2018 even more effortless, fun and successful for our agents with the tools we're equipping them with. This means a new agent site, an expanded range of itineraries and opportunities to earn more," Lim says.



Nicholas Lim
President
Trafalgar Asia

2018 brochure has over 100 itineraries across Europe including some new itineraries under Europe and Britain due to agent demand. This includes the Best of Norway, Wonders of Italy, Madrid Explorer and Berlin Explorer. This year, Trafalgar has also added our signature element called 'Be My Guest' to all our itineraries as against just a few chosen ones these last few years due to its popularity. This is an exclusive dining experience at a local's home."

Trafalgar launched this brochure in its key markets including Mumbai, Bengaluru and Pune. Continuing with its guaranteed departures, the tour operator is extending this to all itineraries under its 'Discoveries' series starting from April to October 2018 along with some of the itineraries in its 'Best of' series. "This means that travel agents can sell all itineraries under the Discoveries series much in advance without worrying about them getting cancelled. We also have the early bird deals under which we are offering 10 per cent discount on all itineraries till the end of February 2018," Lim adds.

This, he says, has worked for Trafalgar to tackle the problem of India being a very late market. "I am happy to say that India bookings are up by 60 per cent in the last one year as far as advance bookings with us are concerned. That means we are seeing a shift with our early bird booking deals that we started four years ago," Lim says.

Travstarz ups tech game

Travstarz opened new offices in Ahmedabad, Mumbai & Pune and has added Azerbaijan and Eastern Europe to its portfolio.

 TT BUREAU

The year 2017 turned out to be a very successful one for Travstarz Global Group as the company marked its presence in various cities across India and also saw many senior industry professionals joining the team including **Hema Manghnani, Vani Singh and Ramanpreet Singh**, informs the company's Director and Chief Executive Officer

Sucheta Nagpal. "In 2017, we registered a cent per cent YOY growth in revenues compared to last year. Besides, we recently started our destination management operations in Azerbaijan and conducted our first familiarisation trip for travel agents from across India," says Nagpal.

Hopeful for a good 2018, Nagpal explains, "We are looking forward to launch our upgraded online system in



Sucheta Nagpal
Director & CEO, Travstarz Global Group

2018, which will bring about some unique feature.



2 Nights Hong Kong & 2 Nights Macao

Booking and Stay period: Now - 15 February 2018

Holiday Inn® Macao Cotai Central	@ USD 421
The Parisian Macao	@ USD 451
The Venetian® Macao	@ USD 511
Conrad® Macao, Cotai Central	@ USD 498

Above mentioned rates are per person on twin sharing basis

Hong Kong Inclusions

- Akquasun welcome kit with 1 GB internet sim card in Hong Kong for every paying adult
- 2 nights accommodation in HARBOUR GRAND KOWLOON Hong Kong
- Daily breakfast at the hotel.
- Pvt coach transfer in Hong Kong (Airport - Hotel - Pier)
- SIC Hong Kong city night tour
 - One Way Peak Tram to Victoria Peak, Star Ferry Ride from HK to Kowloon, Old Clock Tower, and Symphony of Light Show
 - During the visit in the Peak, we are now providing an option for guest to explore Madame Tussauds at own expenses
- Ferry tickets (Hong Kong - Macao)

Macao Inclusions

- Two nights accommodation for two guests
- Coach transfer in Macao by hotel free shuttle bus (Pier - Hotel - Pier)
- Daily breakfast or lunch at Sands Resorts Macao designated outlets
- One - Way Cotai Water Jet Cotai class tickets from Macao to Hong Kong; or Gondola Ride; or Entries to Qube/ Qube 2/ Qube Kingdom; or Entries to Aqua World; or Eiffel Tower Observation deck admission tickets; or Planet J admission for two guest
- Macao Discovery tour; or Monkey King - China Show tickets for two guests; or Shopping and Dining dollars
- Deluxe Privilege Booklet (SANDS RESORT MACAO)

Terms and Conditions Apply

Condition: Rate are subject to change without prior notice. Package is subject to availability. Supplement will apply for weekend & peak day arrival. Blackout dates apply.

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In the arms of romantic

AMSTERDAM

Winter in Amsterdam is utterly romantic! The intimacy of the old centre with its lovely canals, the many shopping streets with their decorative lighting and beautiful windows, and of course, the countless welcoming pubs and great restaurants make it all worth your while.

Celebrate love in Amsterdam

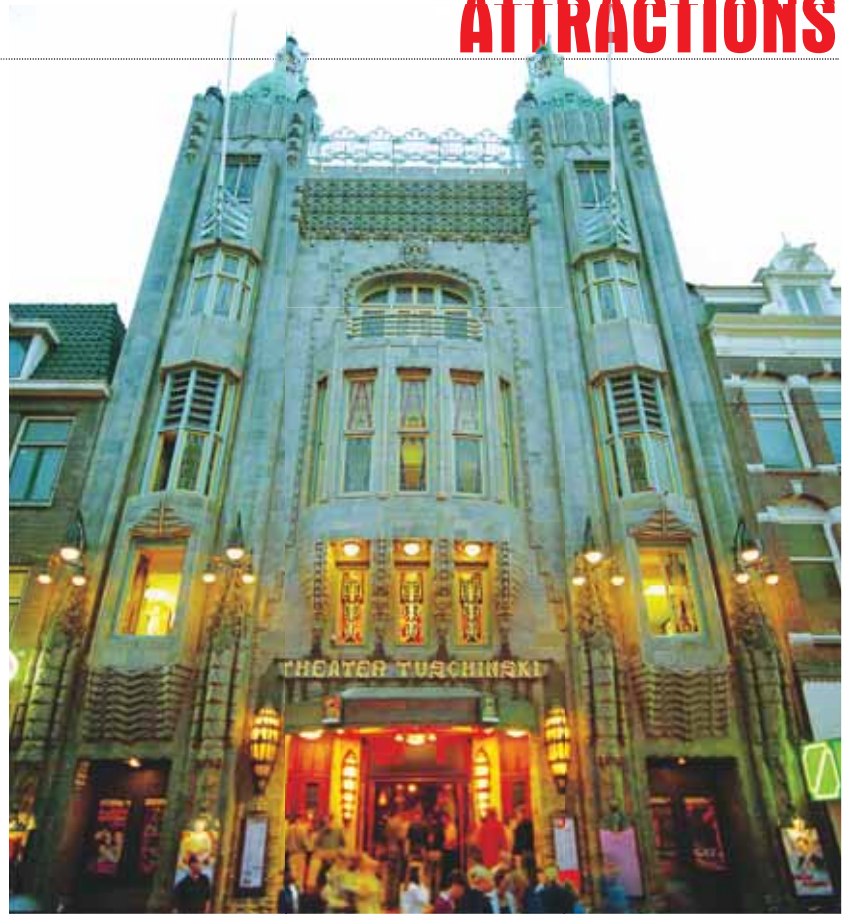
Take the love of your life for a Valentine's trip to Amsterdam and you'll be sure to have a romantic time. A ride in a horse-drawn carriage through Vondelpark, followed by a romantic dinner, is an experience you'll cherish forever. You could also attend a classical concert at the beautiful Concertgebouw.

Dine amidst romantic locales

If you want to enjoy a unique and romantic dinner in Amsterdam, go to Ctaste. You'll

Kiss to stay together forever

Another romantic suggestion is a great movie seen from the 'love seat' in Tuschinski, Amsterdam's most beautiful movie theatre. Enjoy the theatre in its early nineteenth century art deco splendour and then go for a stroll to the Magere Brug or Skinny Bridge. It is said that those who kiss at the bridge will stay together forever. We cannot really guarantee that, but we do guarantee that the bridge is a lovely spot for a romantic date!



eat in the dark and this will truly bring all your senses to life. While the chef will take your preferences into account, the menu will still manage to be a surprise. Another romantic outing is a dinner cruise on a saloon boat on Amsterdam's many canals. Let the boat take you from restaurant to restaurant while you savour the sumptuous dishes.

Ice-skating rinks in Amsterdam

In winter, Amsterdam offers great temporary ice-skating rinks. These pleasant rinks are a great place to skate a few laps and taste that uniquely Dutch gezelligheid, that pleasant and cosy feeling that has no foreign equivalent. Discover fun on the ice in Amsterdam! We selected the best ice-skating rinks for you:

Museumplein Amsterdam

Indulge in ice skating on a beautiful square surrounded by the Rijksmuseum, the Concertgebouw and the Van Gogh Museum. You can rent ice skates and even take a skating lesson if you like. Later, enjoy a cup of hot cocoa on the pleasant terrace.

Leidseplein Amsterdam

From mid-November to mid-January, the Leidseplein is transformed into a winter wonderland with a sweet little ice-skating rink. Enjoy lights in the trees, snow and many Christmas stalls serving delicious winter snacks.

Amsterdam Light Festival

During the Amsterdam Light Festival, held in November and early January, the canals of the Netherlands' capital are lit up by the best light artists from Holland and abroad. You can enjoy the most spectacular art installations in Amsterdam's inner city for weeks. The best

time to witness the spectacle is at the end of the day, when dusk falls. The lights are at their best in the dark.

The festival is held at the centre of Amsterdam, on the canals in the inner city and the Amstel river. Close to where the Amsterdam Light Festival boat tour begins, you will find a Madame Tussauds wax museum, the Royal Palace, Museum Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder, and countless opportunities for shopping.

Stroll through the food halls

A collection of exciting food concepts have found a perfect accommodation in an old tram depot in Amsterdam. Here, you will find great restaurants and countless local entrepreneurs offering their original food and drinks, which you can buy and take with you to enjoy elsewhere or enjoy them on site. De Hallen Amsterdam also boasts a hotel, cinema, library and great shops.



Air India flight to LA on the cards?

Pankaj Srivastava, Director-Commercial, Air India, speaks about the possibility of opening connectivity to Los Angeles. If the overflying permission to fly shorter routes comes sooner they will operate the Delhi-Tel Aviv flight, he says. Also, Air India plans to increase connectivity to Australia to 10 flights a week from Delhi.



PEDEN DOMA BHUTIA

Q*Air India will be taking delivery of six more planes from Boeing by March, 2018, out of which there will be three Boeing 777-300 ER planes. Will you be using them for any parrticular sector?*

Out of the three plans, two will be used to transport VV-VIPs and one will be inducted into the Air India fleet. We hope to use it for ultra long haul routes, which could perhaps be Los Angles or Houston.

Q*Instead of a direct Delhi-Tel Aviv connection there are now talks that there will be a Mumbai-Tel Aviv route? Has there been a change in plan? Is this because the Delhi-Tel Aviv route is longer?*

The overflying permission for us to fly shorter routes haven't come in as yet, the long route is very long, around 9.5 hours so it makes the entire route unviable and we haven't

decided yet that we would start from Mumbai. There was a speculation initially, but even from Mumbai, Tel Aviv is 8 hours so that too is long, we are hopeful that the overflying permissions will come in and once they do, we will operate the Delhi-Tel Aviv route. Let's see how soon we get the permissions.

Q*What's the kind of occupancy that you have seen in the Delhi-Copenhagen flight?*

The response, so far, has been excellent. I just got a message from my manager there and he says that in the month of October we hit occupancy of 80 per cent and it's only looking up.

Q*Former Air India CMD Ashwani Lohani had announced some time ago about the possibility of launching direct flights to Los Angeles. Any news on that front?*

We will probably wait for the Boeing 777-300

“We have started taking a lot of capacity on lease, especially for ATRs, and we have started flights to a number of destinations under the Regional Connectivity Scheme, the latest addition was a flight to Shirdi.**”**

Pankaj Srivastava
Director-Commercial, Air India



flight. We are mounting more number of flights to Australia from where we have daily flights, which we are now planning to increase to 10 flights a week—five to Sydney and five to Melbourne from Delhi. It's a continuous process, we keep evaluating the market and as and when a resource gets ready we start the flight

Q*What about the domestic sector, any expansion plans there?*

We are expanding our domestic sector especially after the government has announced its regional connectivity scheme. We have started taking a lot of capacity on lease, especially for ATRs, and we have started flights to a number of destinations under the Regional Connectivity Scheme, the latest addition was a flight to Shirdi, through which we have connected Shirdi with Mumbai and Hyderabad. Air India has become a big network carrier and the strength of a network carrier is connectivity. ↴

to come in for the Los-Angeles sector.

Q*In a short span of about 4-5 years, Air India has added many international routes. What prompted the move?*

We have added almost 17 international destinations in the last 4-5 years and this is largely because we started getting delivery of our 787s. The Dreamliner is an ideal aircraft to operate on destinations which is about 10 hours away. Since we were getting 27 of them, the ideal choice was to grow in Europe. For non-stop services we earlier

had only Frankfurt, Paris and London, but with Dreamliners we have started multiple operations into Heathrow, we have four flights a day into Heathrow and a daily flight to Birmingham. We have added Madrid, Vienna, Rome and Milan, Moscow, while Copenhagen and Stockholm are our latest additions. We now have been able to connect with about 11 destinations in Europe and because we were able to push 787s into Europe, we could free up some of the 777s on that sector and that's how we started the San Francisco and Washington DC flights. In terms of non-

stop services, today there's no better way to fly out of India than Air India. Earlier since there was no non-stop service to these destinations, passengers would opt for Gulf or European carriers, but now Air India's non-stop services have cut down the travel time by a good 4-5 hours.

Q*Are you planning to come up with any new routes in the next few months?*

In terms of flying to new destinations there are none, but yes we have been trying to connect Chandigarh with Bangkok through a direct

Hahn Air

SEASON'S GREETINGS

One of the real joys this holiday season is the opportunity to say thank you and wish you the very best for the New Year!

Your Hahn Air India Team: Archana, Bharat, Dinesh, Prabhjyot, Sanjay and Zafar

Local contact Email: serviceindia@hahnair.com (daily) Toll-free in India: 1-800-419-3169 (Mo-Fr)
Global Service Desk Email: service@hahnair.com Phone: +49-6103-7331-200



milestones

The industry has experienced a volatile year with challenges appearing in many shapes and forms. TRAVTALK picks out 10 moments that defined the year gone by and will continue to have a ripple effect in the years to come.

Visas are relaxed

The Tourism Ministry, in a single masterstroke, eased up the bottlenecks that patients and business travellers faced while entering India. The department announced not just e-medical visas but also e-business visas apart from the existing e-tourist visas from April 1. Applicants from nearly 150 countries eligible for e-tourist visas were able to send online applications for medical visas. Short-term medical visas are now valid for 30 days after which the government can extend it by up to one year. Also, e-tourist visa and e-business visa were made double entry.



Air India disinvests

In a historic move that our Finance Minister Arun Jaitley felt could help propel growth of India's aviation sector, the government gave 'in principle' approval for disinvesting its stake in Air India and five of its subsidiaries. This move makes it possible for the national carrier to hope for not just survival but a full recovery. The entity guiding the disinvestment will decide on the treatment of unsustainable debt of Air India, hive off of certain assets to a shell company, demerger and strategic disinvestment of three profit-making subsidiaries, quantum of disinvestment, and the universe of bidders.



Ease on liquor ban

The ban on this controversial beverage was eased after much heartburn was suffered by hotels, restaurants and pubs when the Supreme Court cleared the air around this directive. This brought relief to about 70 per cent of the affected properties and ensured that the rest of the year was spent focusing on business. After relaxing the ban for Andaman and Nicobar Islands and nine districts in Uttarakhand, the Court explained that this ban, in force from April 1, was not valid within city limits but was only meant for roads that provide connectivity between cities, towns and villages.



Upgradation of cruise terminal begins

The Mumbai Port Trust finally started work on upgrading the cruise terminal at a cost of ₹225 crore – a project that is bound to catapult the financial capital to become the cruise capital of India. In a path-breaking move, this project involves key government agencies: all five major ports of India including Mumbai Port Trust, Ministry of Tourism, Central Board of Excise and Customs, Bureau of Immigration, and the Central Industrial Security Force under the watchful eye of the Ministry of Shipping. The issue of taxation for cruises however remains unresolved.



Government announces GST

The Goods & Services Tax (GST) was announced on July 1, 2017 with the indirect tax replacing multiple cascading taxes levied by the central and state governments. The travel industry is still trying to find its feet in all the confusion despite attending multiple sessions on GST, including a few conducted by the CBEC. Some were quick to act while others waited and watched possibly in the hope that the tax would be repealed. The good news was that reductions were eventually announced (including GST on restaurants down from 18 per cent to five) and we are hopeful that more waves of clarity and exemptions will follow soon.



of 2017

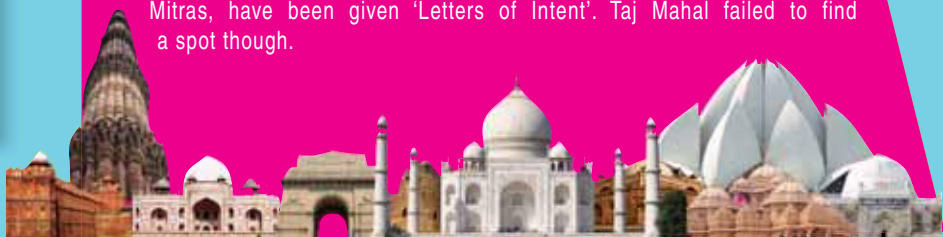


Incredible India 2.0 announced

The Ministry of Tourism finally saw the need to revive its flailing global campaign with a second version. So on World Tourism Day, the department unveiled three big initiatives which included the Incredible India 2.0 campaign that would have its own website. The ministry has assured us that 2.0 is going to be largely different from the earlier campaign, which was generic in nature and running around the world. The new campaign will be country specific, depending on the kind of products that would interest them. New and emerging markets will also be included this time. The budget for this has not been made public yet. There is scope for 360 degree marketing to attract both foreign and domestic travellers to the state."

Monuments given significance

A move that should have been made earlier rather than later, the government announced an important project titled 'Adopt a Heritage' to keep our historical monuments safe and well-maintained. The Ministry of Tourism announced on September 27 that it will offer 14 monuments for adoption to the private and public sectors and even individuals. The 14 monuments include Jantar Mantar and Qutub Minar (Delhi), Sun Temple (Odisha), Hampi (Karnataka), Ajanta Caves (Maharashtra). The shortlisted companies to be called Monument Mitras, have been given 'Letters of Intent'. Taj Mahal failed to find a spot though.



Close shave for Mumbai's rooftop restaurants

After squashing the best part of Mumbai's nightlife by banning rooftop restaurants, the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai later issued a circular permitting hotels and restaurants having existing eating house and lodging services to continue operating open-air terrace as a service area for serving food. Reportedly, over 40 rooftop bars across the city had shut down after the excise department decided to scrap daily licences that were allegedly being 'misused' by these outlets. Red tapism apart though, what matters in the end is whether the authorities manage to create and retain a competitive environment.



HRIDAY and PRASAD merge

The Ministry of Tourism announces the merger of its HRIDAY (Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana) and PRASAD (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive) schemes with effect from 2018. It had been in talks with the Urban Development Ministry and they have been given an in-principle approval to merge the two. It was done to create a greater synergy between the rural and urban spiritual sites to provide a holistic development of these sites and increase the scheme's funding. The ministry ended 2017 on a high note with 'Paryatan Parv' – a 20-day festival to highlight the benefits of tourism, showcase India's cultural diversity and reinforce the principle of 'Tourism for All'. Hopefully, the event will make a dent on inbound figures apart from the one it made in the government treasury.



Jet, AF-KLM tie up

This threesome announced a pact that is likely to change the dynamics of aviation in India. This 'metal-neutral' agreement goes beyond just codesharing; it will effectively help the trio connect 44 destinations in India with 106 destinations in Europe and will have an annual incremental revenue potential of over US\$1 billion (roughly Rs 6,400 crore) for Jet Airways. For the Franco-Dutch combine, the tie-up helps it compete for a bigger share of the Indian market against European rivals such as Lufthansa and the Gulf-based carriers. If you can't beat them, join them, goes the idiom.



Ark Travels & NCL cruise together

Ark Travels celebrated a night of dinner and dancing with its key travel partners in Mumbai along with its principal Norwegian Cruise Line in an event to usher in the New Year together with stronger ties and renewed targets.



Say 'hello' to changing times

In a bid to fulfil the changing demands of the travel industry, Catabatic Technology's helloGTX software could just be the one-stop shop for today's travel agencies.



TT BUREAU

In a market flooded with B2B products, CRM tools and travel softwares; helloGTX – the profit multiplier is an entirely new ecosystem for travel agents that has low cost of ownership with high returns, says **Gaurav Kumar Gupta**, Founder-CEO, Catabatic Technology. "For a travel agency, using multiple soft-

delay in responding to customers' needs, lest they lose their customers and blame the technology or OTAs. Meeting their expectation is not a big challenge if agents can adopt the technology and can work with it. If agents' expertise can work with Big Data, AI and Machine Learning, they can surpass the customer expectations. We at Catabatic learned this quite long back and built hel-

loGTX platform to enable travel agents to become nextGEN travel agency," he shares.

Talking about today's clients, he says, "Our clients are our partners as we both complement each other. For us, sales is about enabling partnerships of mutual growth through consistent deliveries and this helped us to understand the changing

needs of the market. We have realised that most of these needs are not big or complex, but how to build it in technology so that it solves the actual problems of the travel agents. We have recently added few modules like supplier's directory, network deals in addition to dynamic package and build one's own packages based on the feedback of our partners." ↴

Students earn IATA's AvMP certification



Speedwings Aviation Academy in Kochi recently held the IATA's AvMP (Aviation Management Professional) certification ceremony for 12 students on its campus with Peter Immanuel, CEO of Aerospace and Aviation Sector Skill Council of India, as its chief guest.



Gaurav Kumar Gupta
Founder-CEO
Catabatic Technology

What makes helloGTX different from the market is our approach and intent behind building the software in an objective to reduce the operational cost

ware is not practical due to high cost in terms of money but time as well. What makes helloGTX different from the market is our approach and intent behind building the software that is to reduce operational cost and increase profitability of a travel agency with long-term sustainability. We built a single platform to manage tour package sourcing, selling, itinerary creation, CRM, networking, marketing, suppliers, payments, collections, website, tour distribution, B2B and B2C as well as back office," he claims.

According to him, it will be a boon for clients. "Tour selling is a high-ticket business and needs personal assistance. helloGTX enables both new and existing travel agencies to offer customer delight at an ease with the help of technology," adds Gupta. He claims that the needs in the travel technology have changed owing to customer expectations that have grown dramatically and technology is acting as a catalyst. "In the past, when customers had a query he was ready to wait for few days but now they have multiple options. Travel agents can't afford to

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EVENT TALK

DECEMBER 2017

Neptune Foundation's Polo Match	New Delhi	17
India Cargo Awards (North & East)	New Delhi	20
India Travel Awards (North)	New Delhi	21

JANUARY 2018

U&I Roadshow	Bengaluru	8
U&I Roadshow	Ahmedabad	9
U&I Roadshow	Kolkata	11
India International Travel Mart (IITM)	Kochi	11-13
India International Travel & Tourism (IITT)	Mumbai	11-13
U&I Roadshow	New Delhi	12
GPS	Nagpur	15-17
U&I Roadshow	Pune	15
U&I Roadshow	Mumbai	16
JNTO B2B Trade Seminar	Mumbai	17
FITUR	Madrid, Spain	17-21
OTM	Mumbai	18-20
Destination East	Kolkata	18-19
Jharkhand Travel Mart	Ranchi	19-21
EMITT	Istanbul	25-28
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 B2B Workshop	Chennai	30
JNTO B2B Trade Seminar	New Delhi	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
Mysore Travel Mart	Mysore	9-12
BIT	Milan	11-13
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
South African Tourism Roadshow	Ahmedabad	19
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
India International Travel Mart (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@ddppi.com

TTAUP works on 2018 agenda

Vivek Pandey, President of the recently-formed Travel Trade Association of Uttar Pradesh (TTAUP), shares his plans for the association and lists activities planned for the coming year.



ANKITA SAXENA

Keeping in mind the growing travel business in smaller cities of Uttar Pradesh, TTAUP is a maiden attempt by local travel agents to come together in order to represent the fraternity of the state as well as grow business from the region.

Only a year-old, TTAUP has 80 active members and 25 associate members from Uttar Pradesh. Vivek Pandey, President, TTAUP, explains, "It was observed that tourism business was getting concentrated in the metros and Tier-I cities and most of the events and travel marts were being hosted in the bigger cities. Thus, we thought it was a necessity to take initiative to bring business events to cities in Uttar Pradesh which are in a developing stage and have a lot to explore. We hope to retain the business of Ut-



Vivek Pandey
President
TTAUP

We hope to retain the business of Uttar Pradesh within the state and allow local travel agents to sell the products directly to their clients

tar Pradesh within the state and allow local travel agents to sell the products directly to their clients rather than

routing the business through agents in Delhi or Mumbai."

He also believes that the smaller tour operators need to be educated and groomed to gain trust of their clients and also showcase product knowledge so that the business in Uttar Pradesh grows further. In 2017, the association organised a mega workshop on GST to address the new tax regime for its members and almost 250 travel partners from across the state attended the same. The association also hosted its first Travel Trade Mart in Lucknow which was a resounding success. Pandey adds, "We are a non-profit, registered association and our aim is to provide our members with value additions to their business without involving their funds. We are not in a hurry to increase our membership. When we receive a membership request, each application is carefully scrutinised for the compa-

ny's credibility and capability and then inducted as a member. The annual membership fee is ₹6000 (Jan-Dec) which is the association's operative cost."

He further informs that in the coming year, TTAUP has plans to up the scale of TTM and will also focus on more educational seminars and activities for its members to increase the market share of Uttar Pradesh in the total travel business of India.

Maiden Initiatives

- In 2017, the association organised a mega workshop on GST to address the new tax regime for its members. Almost 250 travel partners from across the state attended the event
- TTAUP also hosted its first Travel Trade Mart in Lucknow

Guide for industry entrants



The book 'Tourism: Everyone's Business' written by Gour Kanjilal, Executive Director, IATO and former Deputy Director General of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India was launched by M.P. Bezbaruah, Former Secretary Tourism, Government of India and Permanent Representative of UNWTO in India. Other dignitaries present at the book launch included Subhash Goyal, Secretary General, FAITH; Pronab Sarkar, President, IATO among members of various ministries and veterans of the tourism business. Kanjilal, in his third book has shared his views on the vibrant and rich tourism heritage of India. Most of the content in the book covers his speeches and talks addressed at various institutes of tourism in India, his writings in national and international press, etc. Kanjilal believes the various facets of tourism are not available in any one single book and thus, the current book will be instrumental for new entrants in providing an overview of the industry.



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Cruise Lines International Association

Singapore

Jiali Wong is the new Regional Manager-Asia, for Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Asia. She will be based in Singapore.

With almost 10 years' experience in tourism, Wong will be responsible for growing industry engagement in the region and supporting the continued growth of cruise. This includes responsibilities for growing CLIA's Executive Partner programme in the region. Wong is seconded from the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) and recently headed the Cruise Business Development team at STB.



Grand Hyatt

Mumbai

Grand Hyatt Mumbai announced the appointment of Puneet Singh as its General Manager. Puneet has 25 years of experience across International Luxury Hotels in China, Germany, Turkey, Russia, Tanzania, UAE and Egypt. In his new role, Puneet will be leading a team of more than 1000 associates taking care of 547 rooms and 110 apartments, award winning restaurants and lounges and the majestic event venues on property. Puneet is known to be a strategic manager, with an astute business head, an entrepreneur to the core, with a knack of making money whilst delivering highest standards of service, for all stake holders.



Travstarz Global Group

Delhi

Travstarz Global Group has appointed Ramanpreet Singh as its General Manager—India Sales. Singh's expertise lies in his knack to manage client retention and also devise strategies for business expansion. With work experience spanning over almost a decade, Singh has previously worked with companies like FCM Travel, TravelBullz and Fore Representations. In his current role as the General Manager—India Sales, Singh will focus on expanding the reach of Travstarz Global's destination management (DMC) business as well as increasing the online B2B distribution.



Relaix & Chateaux

Delhi

Nidhe Sood has been appointed by Relaix & Chateaux as the new Regional Manager for India, Sri Lanka and Maldives. With 15 years of experience in luxury boutique hospitality, Sood started her career with Shreyas Yoga Retreat India in 2002, a Relais & Chateaux member. She has been Head of Marketing, Sales and Business Development there. She possesses extensive networking experience and will be responsible for the PR, promotion and coordination for 15 Relais & Chateaux properties in the region.



Hilton Bangalore Embassy Golf Links

Bengaluru

Hilton Bangalore Embassy Golf Links has appointed Manish Garg as General Manager. With over 20 years of experience across various hospitality companies, Garg will be well prepared to lead the entire operations of the 247-room hotel in his new role. Previously, he served as the General Manager of Hilton Garden Inn Gurgaon Baani Square and pre-opening general manager for Hilton Garden Inn Trivandrum. Garg started his career with Hilton in 2011, and since has gained several prodigious experiences in Hilton and Hilton Garden Inn properties.



The Westin Mumbai Garden City

Mumbai

Sharad Datta has been appointed as the General Manager of The Westin Mumbai Garden City. With over two decades of experience in hotel management with brands like Marriott International, Hyatt International and Oberoi Hotels & Resorts, Datta started his career with F&B operations. His first stint as General Manager was with Oberoi Hotels & Resorts. Prior to joining The Westin Mumbai Garden City, Sharad was the General Manager at Hyderabad Marriott Hotel & Convention Centre and Courtyard by Marriott Hyderabad.



ONYX Hospitality Group

Bangkok

ONYX Hospitality Group has appointed Craig Bond as Executive Vice President of Operations. He joins the group from Oakwood Asia-Pacific where he held the role of Vice President of Operations, overseeing the Group's portfolio across the region. Prior to joining Oakwood, Bond held leadership roles with Pan Pacific Hotels, Mirvac and Saville Hotel Group across Australia and the Oceania regions. ONYX Hospitality Group has a regional portfolio of 44 operating properties across three core brands in eight countries. The Group has a robust development pipeline of 22 new properties in Vietnam, Malaysia and Australia.



Pillazio Hotel

New Delhi

The Pillazio Hotel, Gurgaon has appointed Rohit Jhingan as Director of Sales & Marketing. Jhingan is responsible for managing the hotel's sales teams and marketing. He comes with a strong experience in the hospitality industry spanning over 13 years where he has worked with global brands like Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts, Lebuva Hotels and Resorts, The Surya- New Delhi. His work profile also includes managing pre-opening of hotels, unit properties and domestic and outbound sales. He has a rich understanding of MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events) and Travel Trade segments.



Treehouse Hotels

Delhi

Surojit Ghose has been designated as the Vice President—Sales and Marketing for Treehouse Hotels. Ghose brings with him a vast and varied experience with a front office and sales background. He was most recently associated with The Surya, New Delhi as the Director of Sales. He started his career with ITC Maurya and has been associated with brands like IHG in various capacities including at the Regional Sales Office for The Soaltee Crowne Plaza Kathmandu, Cluster Sales at Holiday Inn, Crowne Plaza Mayur Vihar and Intercontinental Eros.

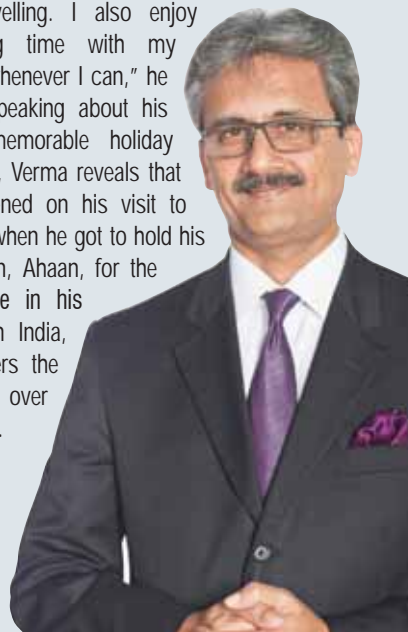


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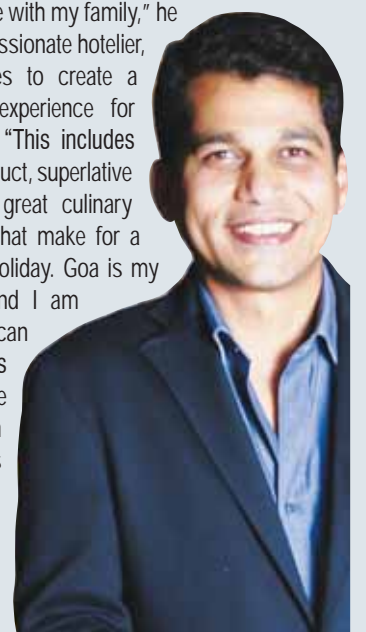
Marcel Fuchs, Vice President (Sales - Atlantic and Pacific), United Airlines, has a simple mantra to unwind and de-stress after a day's work. "I enjoy spending time with my family and this helps me to unwind," he says. Revealing one of his most memorable holiday moments, he says, "I remember spending quality time with my family on a boat trip in the Aegean Sea, and skiing in the Swiss Alps. In India, I enjoyed visiting Jaipur and the Golden Triangle. Outside India, Colorado ski area is my favourite holiday destination."



Vineet Verma, Executive Director & CEO, Brigade Hospitality Services, believes that keeping fit is the best way to de-stress. "I spend an hour and a half in my gymnasium, six days a week, except when I am travelling. I also enjoy spending time with my family whenever I can," he says. Speaking about his most memorable holiday moment, Verma reveals that it happened on his visit to the US when he got to hold his grandson, Ahaan, for the first time in his arms! In India, he prefers the hills over beaches.



Norton Pereira, General Manager, Le Meridien Goa, looks forward to spending the evening with his daughters, either joining them in their games or taking them to the park. "My idea of unwinding is spending time with my family," he says. As a passionate hotelier, Pereira strives to create a wholesome experience for every guest. "This includes excellent product, superlative service and great culinary experiences that make for a memorable holiday. Goa is my hometown and I am lucky that I can call India's favourite beach destination as my home."



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NTOs happy with 2017, keen on 2018



Eckard Kremer
Asia head
Munich Tourist office

“The year 2017 has been really good for Munich as far as the Indian arrival figures are concerned. The highlight of the year was Munich’s participation in various travel trade shows with the Jewels of Romantic Europe. Besides, Munich was earlier considered as a gateway destination for Eastern Europe but now with its increasing popularity, it is also being looked at as one of the upcoming MICE destinations in Europe.”



SanJeet
Tourism Attaché, Philippines
Tourism Marketing Office India

“Year 2017 was excellent for the Department of Tourism of Philippines in India, with remarkable and consistent growth of 22 per cent over the previous year. The Department of Tourism is targeting to close the year with 100,000 arrivals from India. PHILINDEX 2017, a multicity roadshow conducted in four cities; trade/wedding planners familiarisation trips and multiple participation across roadshows like GPS, Travel Shows, etc. are some of the highlights for the destination.”



Romit Theophilus
Director—Sales and Marketing (India), German National Tourist Office

“In 2017, we recorded 8-10 per cent growth in Indian overnights to Germany. Till September 2017, Germany recorded 638,000 Indian overnights. There was an increase in MICE and group travel to the destination with cities like Berlin, Stuttgart, Cologne and Munich recording a significant growth. We have also launched our German Expert programme which will offer the travel agents an insight into the destination and what to sell from Germany.”

“Year 2017 was the best year for us so far as we were fortunate to have one of the big fat weddings from India in Bahrain. This wedding has opened up a possibility with Bahrain being the next wedding destination for the coming years. In fact, this year, we managed to attract Indian passengers for ring ceremonies, birthday celebrations and small MICE moments which has put Bahrain in the bucket list of every planner and tour operator.”



Sunil Mathapati
Country Manager – India,
Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority

“The year 2017 was all about growth for Scotland from the Indian market. We recorded an average growth of 37 per cent growth over three years in trips taken to the destination by Indian travellers. 2017 alone saw about 8 per cent YOY growth. VFR segment has been very strong in Scotland but we have registered a significant growth in the leisure market as well.”



Kirsten Spence
Senior Manager- Emerging Markets, VisitScotland

“Year 2017 has been remarkable for Tourism New Zealand in the Indian market. Indian arrivals are growing and for the year-ending October 2017, total arrivals from India were up 17.5 per cent (58,704 arrivals), while holiday arrivals are up by 6.5 per cent (27,184). This year also saw an evolution in the messaging of our campaign to highlight New Zealand’s experiences. We also announced our partnership with Singapore Airlines and Air New Zealand for Indians.”



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



Shelly Chandhok
Country Manager
VITO Mumbai

“2017 has been very productive for us. We have witnessed a growth of 44 per cent month on month so far. To promote Indonesia as an attractive tourism destination in India, our marketing strategy will be to be more visible to the consumers through consumer promotion campaigns, food festivals, and tactical promotion. We plan to organise more Fam trips for media, tour operators, and wedding planners to showcase diverse offerings of the destination.”



Zubin Karkaria
Global CEO
VFS

“Today, VFS manages 57 governments across 129 countries of the world and we do around 25 million visa applicants every year. Hence, we have become a very important catalyst in terms of travel and tourism. Year 2017 turned out to be a very good year with us, and we have always seen growth in double digits. There have been a lot of activities and we offer many services like the premium lounge, mobile to mobile service, home to home service, express and premium service as well.”

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