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AI's plan to rule the skies

After starting four international flights last year, Air India is all set to start six new international routes in 2017, the first one being Delhi-Kochi-Dubai.



NISHA VERMA

Amidst negative media reports on its 'On time Performance' (OTP), Air India has announced a number of new international and domestic flights, which will start operating in the next one year. **Ashwani Lohani**, Chairman and Managing Director, Air India, revealed, "From February 1, 2017, we will be starting a brand new 787 aircraft between Delhi-Kochi-Dubai. This was a long pending demand to start the 787 on the prestigious Delhi-Kochi sector. It will be a daily flight and we are targeting travellers between Delhi and Kochi as well as Kochi and Dubai. There is a big market for both these sectors

“Our OTP has improved, apart from dropping in the winters, which every airline faced in India. However, there are 70 other parameters to gauge the performance of an airline other than OTP — like yield, occupancy, food quality, service, website, etc. Everything has to do with the working of an airline, and we are trying to improve that. However, we have expanded and are getting positive feedback as well.”

Ashwani Lohani

Chairman and Managing Director, Air India



and the Dreamliner will be a different product.”

He added that they are going to start a dozen international flights and around 22 routes in the domestic

sector. The Delhi-Copenhagen direct flight would start operations this May, and there will be another flight between Delhi-Washington in July. "Apart from the new destination to the US, we will

have four new planes coming in this year. Hence, we can cover four more destinations. We are currently thinking of connecting six destinations in total this year, via 787s and 777s," Lohani said. He

informed they would increase frequency to Sydney, Melbourne, which would go from four times and thrice in a week respectively, to five days a week for both the destinations. Apart from that they are looking at Africa, Tel Aviv, and Mumbai-Frankfurt as well.

However, there is still time for Air India to operate the Dreamliner on domestic routes. "We haven't planned to put the Dreamliner on domestic routes. It must only be on high density route. There is one Dreamliner operating on the Delhi-Kolkata route, because of an onward international flight, and the same goes for the Delhi-Kochi-Dubai route," he explained.

Air India evidently would play a huge role in the government's Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS). However, Lohani said that while it's still time for operations to start under RCS, as the bids are still on, they will be taking many steps to boost regional connectivity. However, to start so many flights, Air India is aggressively hiring pilots. "We would need pilots as we expand. In 2017, we will have around 20 ATR-72 aircraft, and we would require 200 pilots for regional connectivity. For A320, around 160 pilots are in training and 160 more are starting to join and undergo training. We have two simulators for A320 in

Contd. on page 42 ▶

1st UDAN flight to take off in Feb

The government's ambitious Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN) Regional Connectivity Scheme has attracted a total of 43 initial proposals from 11 bidders to cover 190 routes, reveals **Jayant Sinha**, Minister of State for Civil Aviation.



TT BUREAU

As the first round of bidding closed for MoCA's UDAN scheme, Sinha announced that the industry has given huge response in favour of the scheme. "UDAN is a game changer and a real step-change for Indian aviation. Today, we have 75 operational airports in this country. Through the bids we have received for UDAN, it appears that we will now have 43 new airports that will be joining our aviation network. This will make a total of 118 airports which will be operational when UDAN is implemented in the next month or two. We have 11 bidders that are participating in UDAN, of which

several companies would be starting scheduled services for the first time," he said.

Sinha added that the bidders include the existing airlines in India as well as a number of smaller airlines as well. The 43 initial proposals will be put up for counter bidding. Sinha said, "Of these proposals, we have 11 bidders covering 190 UDAN routes. These routes serve 30 currently served airports and 12 currently underserved airports, like Gwalior and many others. In addition, 43 airports which have no flights at all right now will also get flight service."

Sinha explained that this will boost both the national



Jayant Sinha
Minister of State
Civil Aviation

aviation market, which connects the major cities and also the regional aviation market, which serves Tier-II and Tier-III cities. He further said that this was only the first round of bidding and they

will have more rounds of bidding as the scheme matures. "There are many airports and airstrips in this country that deserve air services. As the model we have developed matures, and new airlines develop as scheduled carriers, we would be able to link many of these other airstrips that currently can accept flights, but don't have any flights. It is a wonderful scheme for everyone including new scheduled carriers which are likely to build successful businesses, as well as existing national airlines because they will have more traffic coming in to the important hub airports, from where they can go all over the country and fly internationally too. There

are airports like Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Jalgaon, Akola and Cooch Behar, which are absolutely ready to go, for which we have got bids and as soon as the operators get their flying permits and certifications in place, we will be able to activate these airports," said Sinha.

Sinha claimed that the flight services will get started sometime in late Feb and early March. The UDAN scheme will accommodate a wide variety of aircraft including small aircraft of 19-20 seaters, to 72 or 80 seaters, as well as jets. The question arises whether every new route will be a monopoly of a single operator after the bid-

ding? "Once the bid has been awarded after the counter bidding process, that operator will have a three-year exclusivity to fly that route. That is intended to ensure that it is economically attractive and profitable for those operators, while enabling us to provide lower subsidies," he added.

The Regional Connectivity Fund that the government has put for regional connectivity has not seen participation from many airlines as yet. However, the minister was still hopeful about it. "The Viability Gap Funding (VGF) that we have put on aircraft will see many partner airlines

Contd. on page 16 ▶

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			1940	0610 ⁺	TUE/THU/SAT/SUN	19 th FEB - 28 th FEB, 2017
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800 buyers at GPS Nagpur

The fifth edition of Global Panorama Showcase (GPS) was held in Nagpur with 108 exhibitors and nearly 800 buyers from Tier-II and Tier-III cities attending the three-day show.

 ANKITA SAXENA FROM NAGPUR

Global Panorama Showcase was held in Nagpur from Jan 19-21. The exhibition was inaugurated in the presence of **Satinder S. Ahuja**, Honorary Consul, Consulate of Georgia, **Marzban Antia**, Vice President, TAAI, **Ankush Nijhawan**, MD, Nijhawan Group, and **Sanjeet**, Vice Chairman, PATA India and Managing Director, DDP Group, among other dignitaries. With two days for B2B meetings, the show also conducted educational seminars and presentations on issues like service tax.

Harmandeep Singh Anand, Co-founder, GPS, and Managing Director, Jagsons Travels, said, "In Nagpur, 108 exhibitors showcased their various tourism products. We saw around 1100 registrations on the GPS application which




does not mean that 1100 buyers attended the show but it means that a multiplier effect can result in over 100,000 meetings both virtual and face-to-face. This has become by far the largest marketplace for business."

On day one of the event, six educational sessions were organised which saw an average attendance of 250 delegates while the session on service tax saw about 450

attendees. For the B2B meetings, around 800 buyers attended the show. The GPS App launched for the show enabled attendees to exchange business cards, make notes, schedule meetings, message their clients, upload company profiles and also promote their products.

"We witnessed 99 per cent success in terms of exchange of e-cards through the GPS App. The application is under-


going constant upgrades. To facilitate live feed and news, TravTalk and TravelTV.news will be integrated in the application. Users can call abroad at cheap rates with BriVoice integrated in the app," said Anand. The data uploaded on the App will be available throughout the year to bring together the big and small service providers and travel agents in Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Vidarbha region even after the event has ended. 


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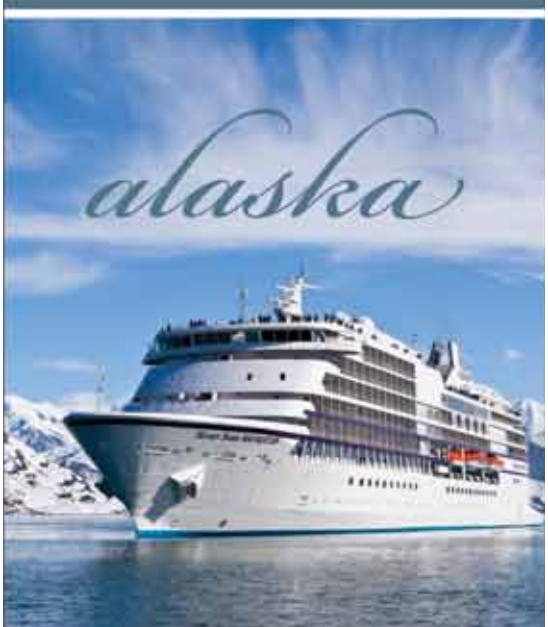
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A disservice to travel and trade?

Service has been the buzzword lately for the tourism and hospitality industry. While the hospitality industry got hit by the government's decision to make service charge optional at restaurants, the tourism industry got a shocker as service tax was increased to 9 per cent. From Jan 22 onwards, the government has now made it mandatory for tour operators to pay service tax on 60 per cent of the total invoice value of a package tour compared to the earlier tax of 30 per cent. The tour operators who are already facing the heat of demonetisation and an impending GST are unhappy. The Outbound Tour Operators Association of India has written to the Finance Ministry for an amendment. Package tours are at a risk as the service tax liability in case of standalone bookings like separate air tickets, hotels and sightseeing result in a lower tax. The new service tax rate will hit outbound very hard even as they face stiff competition from overseas OTAs and tour companies. The tourism industry in India is a significant source for employment generation and foreign exchange and to impair this sector in this manner is to negate its contribution to the country's economy.

Time to give a lift to airways

In a discussion on tourism development of a country the basic point that everyone keeps harping on is connectivity. In terms of offerings, India showcases a world of cultures to discerning tourists, however, getting them from Point A to Point B is a task that most fail to achieve. However, with regional connectivity being a major topic of discussion at various events we hope that this grim scenario is in for a change. Under the Ministry of Civil Aviation's Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN) Regional Connectivity Scheme, 30 currently served airports, 12 currently underserved airports and 50 currently unserved airports (making a total of 92 airports) are expected to be connected based on the initial proposals. And with the support of the national carrier – Air India, regional connectivity will soon be a reality and we will be able to connect distant cities to one another.

Cruise: An achievable aspiration

Cruising holidays are no longer the once in a lifetime, expensive, unreachable dream it used to be. India is now a supply-driven market as cruise liners are always looking for new markets and itineraries.

We are seeing encouraging growth in cruise tourism in recent years with demand among Indian tourists taking cruise vacations. The idea of taking a cruise vacation seems to be slowly catching up and why not. Cruising features a number of options all in one product, from multiple destinations, accommodation, meals, amenities and activities, thus giving the traveller more value for money. Even the MICE segment in India is opting for onboard options.

Unlike visiting a resort, which locks the guest in one location, a cruise ship stops at several ports. Depending on the length of the cruise, the guest could see five or more different locations in one vacation. On a cruise ship, they don't have to worry about making new travel arrangements for each spot.

Cruise lines also offer specials on their popular destinations all the time. So if they travel in the off-season, they can get a cruise package at a major discount. Cruise lines offer different package tiers throughout the year. A basic cruise package will include

a small state room, the time on board, and one or two excursions. A more all-inclusive package will include airfare to and from the cruise ship's port, a hotel stay at the port city the

leading figures in a particular field. Theme cruises are very popular and often sell out early.

Cruising has expanded in recent decades from serving

Theme cruises offer the opportunity to indulge in a favorite hobby and indulge in a variety of experiences from gourmet cuisine and fine wine to music, culture and history

night prior to departure, transportation to the ship, and a decent-sized state room while on board.

Cruising is no longer the once in a lifetime, expensive, unreachable dream it used to be. In fact, it is an ideal alternative to a land-based holiday or a short break.

Theme cruises offer the opportunity to indulge in a favorite hobby and indulge in a variety of experiences from gourmet cuisine and fine wine to music, culture and history. Programmes may include special guest speakers, performances by entertainers, theme-related shore excursions and the chance to interact with

only the very rich to providing activities and entertainment options even for the middle-class vacationers. The cruise has also paved its way to young generation rather than being populated only by the aging tourist. Today cruise liners are wooing younger travellers with a number of activities such as casinos, top-notch food outlets, indoor golf, better entertainment and a more relaxed approach to cruising. As a result, there is significant uptake in demand for cruises from India's young travellers between 18 and 35 years. The introduction of newer and larger cruise ships with entertainment facilities also attracts young honeymooners and HNIs.

We have seen that Indians are now increasingly open to trying newer itineraries for destinations such as Alaska, Scandinavia and South America. Popular destinations among Indians are Europe, especially the Mediterranean, Alaska and Bahamas. Clients look for itineraries that offer overnight stops at port-of-calls and at disembarking cities. This provides flexibility with the choice of exploring the destinations' evening entertainments, sightseeing, and nightlife.

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



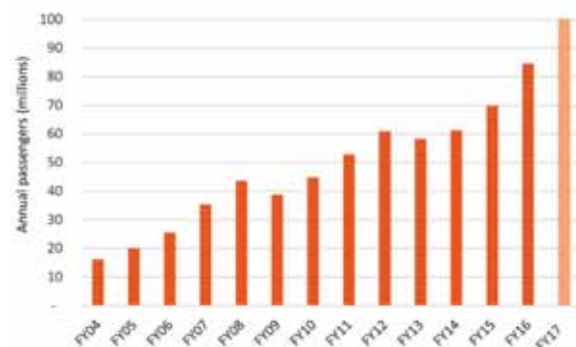
Amod Thatte
Head Product, Contracting & Innovation, SOTC Travel

Domestic air traffic to grow at 15%

India's domestic market is on track to surpass 100 million passengers in FY2017. India is likely to overtake Japan this year to become the world's third largest domestic market behind USA and China.

Indian Domestic Airline Passengers

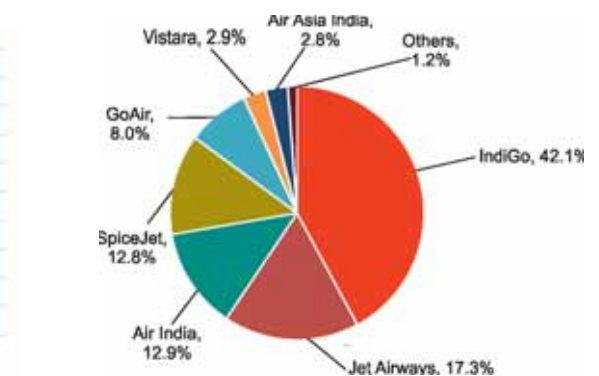
In reaching this milestone, India will have achieved average domestic traffic growth of over 15 per cent annum since the liberalisation of the sector commenced in 2004.



Source: CAPA Research (forecast), Airports Authority of India

Indian Domestic Airline Market

The domestic market share of full service carriers could fall to 20-25% within two years.



Source: CAPA Centre for Aviation, Directorate General of Civil Aviation



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Adding value to SME development

SMEs make up an integral part of the travel industry but are often equipped with a small resource pool and face stiff competition. This is one of the reasons why integration with larger companies can prove to be an effectual strategy for sustenance and to propagate growth for both parties.

Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) are not only the base but a substantial size in the pyramid of tourism. They cater to lion's share of the market and are instrumental in the generation of employment and budget operations. India reportedly has more than 45 million SMEs, accounting for nearly 40 per cent of gross domestic product. Most are unlisted, and their earnings growth has outpaced listed companies for the past three years.

Although SMEs cannot invest at the same level as large companies, they can still recognise how specialists in specific departments of larger companies can attract more sales or profit. In most cases, the key is to focus on niche market as they promote the higher chance of creating a product that the consumer desires or needs.

The drawback faced by many operators from this

segment of the pyramid is that due to their atomic size, their resources are finite. Under the guidance, leadership or holding of a sizeable company of the travel industry would propagate their



growth and help them sustain themselves in competitive markets and skilled technological environments.

SMEs also have stiff competition from online travel companies as they are dynamic in nature and cus-

tomers prefer to book hotels through such portals and take small services through local agencies. A strategy regarding dealing with such situations, how to evolve and survive is crucial for the SME's durability.

Technology is germinating, growing and blooming but is also ever changing. Being updated and utilising the best, most suited and efficient technology at work will enhance the process of operations, marketing, promotion, customer care and experiences of doing business with foreign travel operators.

One concern is that the SMEs do not have access to good legal guidance since expense is a deterrent for many. A legal panel can be set up to felicitate and extend support to the SMEs as a part of social responsibility with focus on staff concerns, contracting with hotels, trans-

A legal panel can be set up to felicitate and extend support to the SMEs as a part of social responsibility with focus on staff concerns, contracting with hotels, transporters, insurance policies, licenses etc. as well as sound contracting with the FTOs. The panel should also reach out to mentor members regarding new tax policies and benefits which many are yet not aware off

porters, insurance policies, licenses etc., as well as sound contracting with the FTOs. The panel should also reach out to mentor members regarding new tax policies and benefits which many are yet not aware off. The companies can gain exposure through discussions of new international trends, research related to global markets and related events in the world of tourism.

Workshops to provide wholesome training to the

staff of SMEs and help them develop their skills should be conducted regularly. Exploring the niche market where OTAs do not have access and adding value to existing products or innovation and giving a human touch and care which technology cannot provide will or may bring some relief, a floating plank to survive.

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



Bharat Bhushan Atree
Managing Director
Caper Travel Company

Dynamic and with a centric vision to excel, Bharat Bhushan Atree, is an entrepreneur who has already carved out a niche in the travel industry. As Chairman & Managing Director of Caper Group, his flair for travel and to explore cultural myths has enhanced the scope of his business world to embrace the zenith of excellence, in his sphere. The travel company is the proud receiver of the National Tourism Awards not once, but six times and has more than 300 staff members. Being tech savvy enhances the potential to achieve the goals with greater fluidity. Exquisiteness, idealism and integrity remain the foundations of his successful journey into the travel industry.



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New service tax abatement

The recent abatement to service tax from 4.5 per cent to 9 per cent on tour operators has come as a big blow to the travel trade. While the CENVAT credit could be a boon for inbound operators, it might negatively impact the outbound business. Industry experts share their views with TRAVTALK.

EXPERT VIEW



Bipin Sapra
Partner, Tax & Regulatory Services-
Indirect Tax, Ernst & Young

■ Previous notification

- 10 per cent abatement, if only hotel is booked, which means 1.5 per cent net tax
- 70 per cent abatement if a packaged tour is booked, inclusive of travel, hotel and sightseeing, which means tax is being paid at 30 per cent. This would mean 4.5 per cent net tax

■ Effect on outbound tour operators

If a tour operator books a hotel in Germany worth ₹10,000 per night, with the earlier service tax being paid at 1.5 per cent (₹150), the price of the hotel would come around ₹10,150.

With the new abatement notification, service tax at 4.5 per cent (₹900), the total value the customer will be paying to the tour operator would be ₹10,900 — six times higher than earlier. For packaged tour worth ₹20,000, which includes hotel and sightseeing, worth ₹10,000 each, the tax earlier would have been ₹600, but now it will be ₹1200, which is almost double. This is a case of undue hardship for outbound tour operators, as for them, there is no cost which is lying in the country, and most of the cost lies outside India. With the new abatement, they cannot get a credit of the taxes that have been paid outside the country, which in turn will create an anomaly.

■ New notification

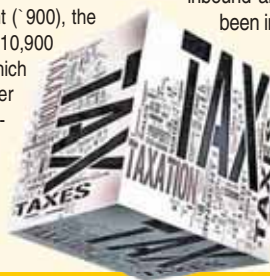
- Starting Jan 22, 2017, the government has merged both the earlier abatements and have come out with an abatement rate of 40 per cent
- Effectively 60 per cent of the services get taxed and the net tax rate becomes 9 per cent
- Credit of input services has been allowed

■ Effect on inbound and domestic tourism

If travel happens locally in India and the service tax is being paid on that, then the tour operator can take credit of that at the margin and pay final service tax. Thus, for inbound and domestic tour operators, the credit which was missing earlier has now been included.

■ Solution

Government should realise that the travel and tour industry in India is diverse. The government should give an option to the tour operators that if they want to pay tax and take credit, they can use the abatement and if taking credit is not advantageous, they can go back to the earlier notification and effectively pay the tax at the earlier rate.



TRADE VIEW



Guldeep Singh Sahni
DDP Trailblazer, India Travel
Awards 2016, and
President, OTOAI

“With this move, the tax for us is going to increase from 4.5 per cent to almost 9 per cent. The move will directly affect offline tour operators within India and it will be beneficial for those who take bookings outside the country, as they won't come under any such laws. Over 20 million people from India are travelling outside the country and the outbound travel industry is creating so many jobs. Taxing this sector would only affect the tour operator businesses in India and would allow anybody to operate the same business for Indians outside the country. It's an unjust tax and would kill the tourism industry in India.”



Prabab Sarkar
President
IATO

“Firstly, we are somewhere losing out on air tickets as here CENVAT credit return is not much. Another issue is that of medical tourism, as no service charge is levied on any services under it. Thus, if we charge it will be a loss proposition as the clients will go directly to the hotels, as they are under hospital registrations. Thirdly, outbound tours will also get affected because all outbound tours are being charged. We know that taxes cannot be exported, hence the place of provision has to be seen, and we have to request the government to abolish those charges and outbound tour operators should be liable to pay only on the commission earned or the profit they are making. We are going to take these three issues to the government and we are going to discuss the matter before we finalise the document. We are not against paying taxes. On the lines of GST, they are giving us CENVAT credit, which is a good thing but working of this new rule will be a cumbersome issue, as we have to obtain the bills and deposit with the claim forms and original bills, which we usually don't get.”

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“The central government has amended the abatement percentage for a tour operator effective January 22, 2017. Although the effective rate of tax for a tour operator has increased, the government has removed restrictions on claiming CENVAT credit of the input services. Now the input credit for all eligible services can be claimed. However, the hotels don't give a break cost and the competition faced from OTAs still shall persist as regards to a tour operator. The government is losing a lot of service tax as well as the loss in terms of foreign exchange going out when travellers book through the OTAs. The Indian tour operators have lost all ground to compete with global OTAs who are promoting and selling online.”



Jay Bhatia
Entrepreneur of the Year,
India Travel Awards 2014,
Hon. National Treasurer, TAAI



Sarab Jit Singh
Tourism Ambassador, India
Travel Awards 2016, and
Vice Chairman, FAITH

“I feel that this ruling is part of the government's move towards GST. Such measures would force people to do business legitimately. We are getting conflicting views and interpretations from different CAs and lawyers. Barring a few services for the tour operators' business, selling air tickets should not have been made part of the new service tax regime. There are certain items which should be taken out of the purview of service tax, like domestic air tickets, because if customers buy tickets directly from airlines, the service tax is 0.75 per cent and if they buy from tour operators it is 9 per cent. Similarly, for outbound tour operators, there will now be nine per cent service tax and CENVAT credit will be zero, as services are being provided outside India. Due to this people will start booking outside India through agencies and OTAs.”

“With this announcement, the government is preparing us for the Goods and Services Tax (GST). There is already a big load on tour operators as we are competing with OTAs. We know that tour operators are a bit costlier, because they pay service tax, which is not the case with OTAs. Now, with the new tax regime it would be another blow to our businesses. We only survive on relationships we build with our customers and their loyalty. However, with more price hikes, we would lose out on our business. On one hand, the government wants to increase employment and revenue in tourism, on the other hand, it is heavily taxing the tour operators.”



P.P. Khanna
President
ADTOI

hits travel trade hard



Riaz Munshi
Vice President
OTOAI

“This is a negative and an unfortunate move for the tourism and hospitality industry. The increase in service tax is almost 9 per cent and a deterrent to our business as it reduces the competitiveness of our packages. The government has to understand that the products sold are available globally and an Indian traveller might as well buy a package for Singapore from a travel agency based in Singapore rather than pay 9 per cent extra tax to an Indian travel agency. The travel agencies based abroad do not need to pay this service tax and thus can sell packages at a much cheaper rate than us. We as OTOAI have put forward our concerns to the government.”

agencies based abroad do not need to pay this service tax and thus can sell packages at a much cheaper rate than us. We as OTOAI have put forward our concerns to the government.”



Ashish Gupta
Consulting CEO
FAITH

“The earlier category of tour operators has now been merged into one category. Effectively, for inbound and domestic, if you are in a position to take invoices as has been mentioned under the abatement, then all the service tax which is applicable on the invoice will be available as credit, which means earlier the service tax on which one used to charge service tax of 4.5 per cent will now not be the base for their costing calculations. That will not be a pass through, but will be a set, which means your effective service tax incidence, while the service tax rating goes up, the effective service tax should go down. However, outbound is where this becomes uncompetitive. We have been in all the discussions on the FAITH platform with the concerned departments, and we have asked them to look at the place of provision of service.”

will be a set, which means your effective service tax incidence, while the service tax rating goes up, the effective service tax should go down. However, outbound is where this becomes uncompetitive. We have been in all the discussions on the FAITH platform with the concerned departments, and we have asked them to look at the place of provision of service.”



Lally Matthews
Hon. Secretary
IATO

“If one takes a closer look at the notification, since we are getting CENVAT on hotel and transportation, it could actually be beneficial for the tour operators. This means that for tour operators, if proper accounting is done, and CENVAT is taken from the hotel and the transporters, it is actually be beneficial for the tour operators. Getting CENVAT is not going to be difficult as far as your documentation is in order. The invoice or bill has to have the name of the company, service tax number, and the service tax the vendor or hotel has charged. However, outbound may have a little problem with this issue.”

of the company, service tax number, and the service tax the vendor or hotel has charged. However, outbound may have a little problem with this issue.”



Rajan Sehgal
Chairman-Northern Region,
TAAI

“Post demonetisation, the travel industry has already lost out on a lot of business with inbound and domestic tourism witnessing a decline. The times have already become tough for the industry and with the announcement of the tax on tour packages, things are only going to get worse. This is probably the only industry with no structured income and often, non-IATA agents or agents who have not been recognised by the Ministry of Tourism are earning more than the verified ones. Such decisions are discouraging more agents to get recognised by the tourism bodies since they are getting more returns without it. Here we discuss about how taxes need to be lowered to boost tourism, but it looks like the opposite is happening.”

than the verified ones. Such decisions are discouraging more agents to get recognised by the tourism bodies since they are getting more returns without it. Here we discuss about how taxes need to be lowered to boost tourism, but it looks like the opposite is happening.”

“I think this increase in service tax is just the trailer for GST to set in. The government has made a soft opening to what GST will have in store at 14-18 per cent. Given this move, the tourism and hospitality industry has to brace itself for high tax rate when GST will be implemented. The prices will shoot up in short term and the effect will be seen on outbound as well as domestic travel. The increase in prices of holidays sold as packages will result in travellers paying more and the business will be impacted temporarily. However, we need to wait for what GST has in store when it is implemented in June this year.”



Ankush Nijhawan
DDP Face of the Future,
India Travel Awards 2014
and MD, Nijhawan Group

“One thing is clear that the service tax regime is here to stay, and anybody who is not accepting it is going to have a problem. We agree that books and documents will have to be maintained, but what is worrisome is that for outbound tour operators, there is no relief. No company is going to survive on a 9 per cent service tax model because we will get very uncompetitive. A lot of agents would start booking directly from the customers and have a service free model out here. OTOAI is under a very serious discussion with a lot of lawyers, Chartered Accountants and senior consultants to look for solutions. We believe that a very concise legal action has to be taken.”



Kapil Berera
Treasurer
OTOAI

has to be taken.”

Contd. on page 10 ▶

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A rude shock for tour operators

► Contd. from page 9



Sandeep Jain
Joint Secretary
IATO

“Putting in place such a service tax in the midst of the season, when the businesses are already low, is absolutely unacceptable and we will fight it out. It is practically impossible for us to pay the additional service tax, wherein we have confirmed bookings. We can’t even ask the FTOs or the guests to pay the additional amount at this time. I feel the trade should have been given sufficient time to cover up for the service tax. It is disheartening to see that when we are in the middle of the season, we are only trying to come out of new policies and that too in 4-5 days’ notice.”

“In domestic and inbound, we work on credit as we need to pay first and get our bills later. Thus, by the time we pay and get the bills two months down the line, we may or may not be able to avail of the CENVAT credit. Secondly, in outbound, where there is no CENVAT credit available, nobody is going to buy a package from us on a 9 per cent margin, and will book directly with hoteliers and tour operators outside India. Since we do all three, we will have to do a lot of juggling for our accounts. The government should increase the exemption limit for people like us doing small business to around `10-20 crores and redefine that value as per inflation, which has risen over the past so many years.”



Arun Verma
Director, Always Travel
Services



Jyoti Kapur
Immediate Past President,
ADTOI

“The new service tax is going to directly affect the consumers, as well as the travel providers since the costs are going to get higher. The service tax might not have a dire effect on the hotels but the travel agents are going to suffer immensely, especially when we have been trying to recuperate post demonetisation. Inbound and domestic tourism are most likely to face a slump once the directive is applied. However, this move seems unnecessary as the Union Budget is to be announced soon anyway. By increasing the cost of travel, the tax is only creating a non-feasible environment for any kind of growth for the tourism industry.”

“The impact of the new service tax is two-fold — a resultant doubling of the tax rate on the sector, and given that implementation is within a week, reaction time as well as time for advocacy is negligible. This will impact outbound tours as the effective tax rate moves from 4.5 per cent to 9 per cent as no input credit is available for indirect taxes incurred outside India. Ability to claim credits on input services may not be proportionate to the increased taxes, thereby impacting price to consumers. Hotels through tour operators may get impacted with the removal of the 1.5 per cent effective rate to tax margins — now, entire accommodation is to be taxed, with input credits. Passing of such credits may be a challenge as the hotel sector is largely unorganised.”



Mahesh Iyer
Chief Operating Officer,
Thomas Cook (India)



Lajpat Rai
Director
Lotus Trans Travels and
Lotus and Lotus Nikko hotels

“As a tour operator I feel that now we have to pay maximum of our income in taxation, as we earn maximum 10 per cent because of competition. Tourism has declined this year. If I ask my agent to pay me nine per cent, he would stop selling India. The billing, which we have already done has costed us our own money. From next contract, we have to charge the FTOs, and not a single one has agreed to pay. Whatever business I have sourced from Japan, I can’t charge any money from them in taxation, and that is the biggest problem for me. The government should have given us some time or announced it in the budget, so that we could have given time to our FTOs regarding the same. Announcing today and charging from tomorrow is not possible anywhere in the world.”

“It is going to be very difficult for small and medium sized tour companies to handle these kind of taxes. One needs a special team to handle the CENVAT credits in case you are doing inbound or domestic tours. Outbound operators are absolutely on a back foot. International companies, which have offices outside India, will have a huge advantage, as they would be much cheaper than the local tour operators in India. It is very easy to market to the masses in India today, thanks to globalisation and the Internet that these companies can reach the masses and are much cheaper. The local operator will lose the business and there will be job cuts. We will see a lot of Indian companies changing the business modules.”



Harjinder Singh
Director
24X7travel.com

Contd. on page 16 ►



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Ramada cares for the underprivileged

Representatives from Ramada Jamshedpur Bistupur distributed blankets, food and first-aid to the underprivileged in the city.



TT BUREAU

The various department heads of Ramada Jamshedpur Bistupur Hotel ventured out at the midnight of January 3, 2017 to reach out to the needy and underprivileged in Jamshedpur city.

ket, Sakchi – Kali Mati Road, Jugsalai and the railway station area. "Ramada Jamshedpur Bistupur has pledged to help the underprivileged to make the society a better place for all," said **Manish Datt**, GM, Ramada Jamshedpur Bistupur.



The team, stocked with woolen blankets, food packets, hot tea in flasks, daily necessities and basic first-aid kits, visited the Marine Drive area, Mango bus station, Sakchi vegetable mar-

Last year many representatives from the hotel donated 72 units of blood at Jamshedpur Blood Bank and the hotel is planning to initiate similar social work drives for the future.

Planes worth \$22bn for SpiceJet

Ajay Singh, Chairman and Managing Director, SpiceJet, has announced a landmark deal with Boeing with the purchase of 205 airplanes worth up to \$22 billion (₹ 150,000 crores).



TT BUREAU

SpiceJet is set to fly higher after being close to a shutdown in December 2014. The mega deal is only a step closer, and Boeing has played a very important role in the growth that SpiceJet has seen in the last two years, claims Singh.

"Boeing has been a very good support to SpiceJet and has played a very important part in what turned out to be our turnaround story. Today, two years later, SpiceJet has had seven profitable quarters, had 21 months of an occupancy of over 92 per cent, recorded best OTP for the last six months, that too with lowest cancellation rates. We have paid back all our debts and have kept all our commitments in the last two years."

It was only fitting that Boeing should be part of the journey ahead for SpiceJet, added Singh. Elaborating on the purchase, he said



"There are also 50 purchase rights, which we have as part of this transaction. The 50 purchase rights include the ability on SpiceJet's part to buy wide-body long haul aircraft in the future. These aircraft will be delivered from 2018-2024."

Ajay Singh
DDP Game Changer 2016, and
Chairman and Managing Director, SpiceJet

that out of the 205 aircraft, the order of 155 aircraft is firm, which means that these aircraft will definitely be delivered. "In addition to this, there are also 50 purchase rights, which we have as part of this transaction. The 50 purchase rights include the ability on SpiceJet's part to buy wide-body long haul aircraft in the future. These aircraft will be delivered from 2018 till 2024."

The new aircraft to be added to SpiceJet's fleet is

the B737-8MAX. "It's a new aircraft and would enable SpiceJet with its mission to continue reducing cost. The aircraft is 20 per cent more fuel efficient than the previous generation NG aircraft," said Singh. He added that as part of this transaction, not only have they got a good commercial deal on the aircraft, but this also gives SpiceJet the ability to reduce its cost going forward. In fact, this aircraft, according to him, is also a great aircraft to finance. "We would be

exploring different mechanisms to finance the aircraft. This would get us very competitive rates of finance, which would help us improve our costs even further."

Apart from that, the B737-8 MAX would also help them increase the range of flights. "The MAX aircraft has a larger range than our current aircraft, and that opens up many more destinations, including international destinations for us to fly. As part of this transaction, we will be setting up, with Boeing's assistance, simulator facility for our pilots."

He claimed that the deal would come through without any problem since SpiceJet is quite stable, both in terms of operations and finances. "We can complete all these orders without any problem, or raising an equity, or increasing any debt. We are confident that we can move forward while lowering our financing cost," asserted Singh.

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The search for exclusive experiences has led travel-hungry Indians to unconventional destinations like Bulgaria, Prague, Croatia, Iceland, Kenya, Zambia etc., reveal travel connoisseurs.



AHANA GURUNG

“Among the emerging destinations, Russia is going to be a big player since there are innumerable unique activities like driving a tank or flying a fighter jet. Iceland is going to be a strong market where one can go whale watching, or indulge in an arctic truck safari, or even fly over a volcano. A lot of East European countries like Croatia are gaining popularity and so are African countries that are big on safaris. In my opinion, countries like Chile and Argentina are going to catch up as well. The world is going to become a smaller place.”



Sushil Shamlal Wadhwa
Founder and CMD
Platinum World Group

“The young travellers are more into adventure like sky diving, water rafting, while the middle-aged group prefer experiences like chateaus or castles or a gourmet tour or sightseeing. The older segment prefers to go to a fabulous resort, relax and take in the ambience and the food. In terms of destinations, the lesser-known ones are fast catching up. Iceland, Bulgaria, Holland, Romania, Russia, and Croatia, basically central Europe is catching up and is bringing about exciting times for us.”



Nagsri Prasad Sashidhar
Senior Consultant – Leisure,
Mercury Travels

“Gone are the days when people travelled only for sightseeing; now they want more experiences like a cooking class, or learn scuba diving. Clients are becoming more mature and are asking for unique activities that are exclusive to the destinations. Experiences like Northern Lights in Canada and Iceland are pushing through while youngsters are travelling for music festivals all over the world. For us, the demand for Vietnam has become dramatically high, combined with Cambodia and has fared very well. Japan is another destination that has caught the interest of Indian travellers.”



Mahindra Vakharia
Managing Director
Pathfinders



Kaushal Bhuvra
Managing Director
World of Vacations

“Safaris have been popular lately so we have been selling a lot of Kenya, Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia. Those are some of our speciality products for which we also combine a lot of adventure activities as well. The upcoming markets would be Ras Al Khaimah and Oman, which are options we are interested in exploring. The central eastern European markets are gaining demand as well. The demand for places like Prague, Budapest, places like Slovenia and Croatia are particularly increasing.”



Amit Kalsi
Founder and CEO
Experiential Travel Journeys,
India Travel Award winner

“Polar regions like the Arctic and Antarctic are some of the new entrants for luxury travel. Indians have become increasingly open to more diverse experiences and want to explore new destinations like Belize, Costa Rica, Peru, Chile or Bolivia in Central and South America. We see more Indians visiting Asian countries such as Vietnam and Laos while in Europe, the eastern and the Baltic regions have emerged as popular destinations since it showcases a newer side of Europe. More mature safari activities like gorilla trekking in Africa are seeing more takers which reaffirms the fact that Indians are evolving as travellers and want the luxury of experiencing a destination in its truest sense.”



Ketaki Kapur Pantle
Founder
Serendipity and Beyond

“A majority of the demand is for Central & Eastern Europe. There have been many takers for Croatia and the enquiries keep increasing. We've got a solid demand for Iceland as well where travellers want to visit the Blue Lagoon or take a tour of a volcano crater. Oman has become quite a popular choice as well and so is Canada for the aurora borealis or Northern Lights where travellers often camp out to witness the breath-taking phenomenon. In my opinion, next year is going to be just as good as this year since Indians are only getting more and more fascinated with travelling.”

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Equipped with state-of-the-art facilities and in-depth hands-on training, the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering & Nutrition, Lucknow, is paving the way for young aspirants in the hospitality and tourism industry to set high standards of professionalism. **Pulak Mandal**, Head of Department, IHM Lucknow, elaborates on the institute's vision for the future.



QWhat are the challenges plaguing tourism and hospitality sector?

The major challenges that are plaguing this sector include lack of sustainable tourism prospects, infrastructure constraints, lack of trained human resource, coordination among civic authorities etc. In purview of the boom in the tourism sector it is obligatory on the part of the hospitality and tourism industry and associated players to provide and ensure high quality of safety, security, sanitation, hygiene, and information related to travel and tourism sector. For overall growth of this industry

in 1980, IHM Lucknow is an institute of high repute and excellence under the aegis of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. Whatever be the career choice, students expect that the hospitality training they receive at IHM Lucknow will allow them to begin work in their profession as soon as they graduate. We are equipped with



state-of-the-art technology and environment in terms of infrastructure and facilities, conducive for academic and professional excellence.

QWhat are your plans for the future?

We are planning to adopt a newly-designed curriculum for Hotel Management and Education by National Coun-

cil for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCH-MCT). The highlight of this curriculum is that it incorporates management modules specifically designed with the consultation of Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Lucknow and operation models in consultation with Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne, Switzerland. ↓



Pulak Mandal
Head of Department
IHM Lucknow

in India it is imperative that both private and public sector join hands to provide a common platform to cater to the emerging trends and needs of the tourists through cooperation and collaboration.

QPlease elaborate on the hands-on training provided to the students.

Our curriculum is operations oriented and hands-on training to the students is an in-built feature of the curriculum in various key disciplines such as F&B service, food production, front office, housekeeping, facility planning, maintenance engineering and food safety. During the term of mandatory industrial exposure, our students are sent to the industry to get experience and exposure in the real life environment of hotels and restaurants. The reputed national and international chains where our students get training are The Oberoi, The Taj Group, Welcome Group, Hyatt, Leela Hotels and Palaces, Starwood Hotels, AccorHotels, among others.

QWhat is the USP of IHM Lucknow?

Established in 1969 as a Food Craft Institute and upgraded to an Institute of Hotel Management (IHM)

Airlines under UDAN to get VGF subsidy

► Contd. from page 3

to support us. We are in discussion with the airlines to convince them to participate in the Regional Connectivity Fund (RCF) process and to be valued partners in the UDAN programme. We want to assure them what we have done is the most efficient and effective way for getting the regional connectivity scheme started. Regarding VGF, we are committed as per the UDAN terms and conditions that the moment you start a flight, you will get the VGF subsidy," said Sinha.

However, how would the subsidy be possible if all the airlines don't come forward to contribute to RCF?

"While we are expecting cooperation from other airlines for participation, we also have the support of the state governments, and AAI is operating the scheme. The VGF subsidies will be provided. We have 15 states, which have already signed the MoU and we are in close discussion with three more states. The states which have signed the MoUs have

agreed to provide a number of concessions including lower excise duty on ATF to be able to get these airports operational with support, as far as police and fire safety is concerned. They will also share in providing the VGF subsidy, with a 10 per cent contribution."

Claiming that the UDAN scheme is unique in its nature, Sinha said that they do not seek any budgetary support from the government for the same. "It's a self-funding scheme and a unique market based mechanism to subsidise the regional aviation market.

"We think it's very innovative and will be studied around the world, because we have designed the scheme in such a way that it is both attractive for consumers in these airports as well as for operators. Thus, we have succeeded in that balancing act of providing flights services to a large number of airports with operators believing that it will be profitable and viable routes for them," asserted Sinha. ↴

Another taxing issue for industry

► Contd. from page 10

"It's not a level playing field for outbound tour operators. According to the service tax laws, the point of provision of tax, if it's in non-taxable zone, should not be taxed. However, they have another point that if the citizen is Indian, it has to be taxed. All the guests cannot go to the DMC outside, but they can go to the online booking systems. Thus, we should open offices outside and do billing from there. Out of 10 per cent margin, most of the time I give my sub agent a 3 per cent cut, and then he further discounts 3 per cent and at least a 4 per cent discount to the guest. Three agents are sharing the margins. Thus, on those margins, 9 per cent is over and above the actual international price."



Abhay Jaipuria
Director
Travel Oytser

"Government has taken a wrong decision by introducing it in the middle of the peak season for the industry. They haven't understood that there is an implementation cost, which the agents and the tour operators have to bear to implement these systems. Tour operators need to unite and need to educate the Ministry and the concerned departments that this is not the right time to roll out the changes. As far as outbound is concerned, the government needs to understand that it is not a level playing field and whatever business the tour operators are doing right now, the entire revenue will automatically would go abroad, sooner or later."



Siddharth Jain
Founder Director
Click2Travel.com



Brijesh Modi
Head-Finance & Commercial,
SOTC Travel

"On holiday packages, specially bundled services, due to the changes in the taxable services from 30 per cent to 60 per cent, the effective service tax rate will see an increase from 4.5 per cent to 9 per cent. On hotel accommodation services provided by travel agents, the current rate of service tax is 1.5 per cent and is expected to increase and we are seeking the clarification on the same. On transport services provided by travel agents, the current service tax rate will remain at six per cent. Above change in service tax will increase the selling prices of holiday packages."



Kapil Goswamy
CEO and Managing Director
BigBreaks.com,
India Travel Award winner

"Travel industry today is a highly taxed sector in the Indian economy, a fact that makes it less competitive and relatively less attractive to foreign travellers. To make things worse, the government recently announced an increase in service tax on tours/holiday packages from 4.5 per cent to 9 per cent. India's travel and tourism industry is a dynamic one. From the perspective of Indian travellers, today, there is a change in the traditional segment, from the usual domestic destinations to outbound travel — Dubai, Thailand,

Malaysia, Bangkok, Europe, indeed, the entire world. From the government we expect rollback of the service tax introduced recently on holiday packages, bring measures to improve liquidity in the system severally affected by demonetisation, tax reforms and reducing tax and investment in improving road infrastructure."



Fortune Inn Grazia, Noida is conveniently located adjacent to the commercial and shopping hub of Sector -18 in Noida. This contemporary full service business hotel offers an excellent range of guest facilities which include large conferencing and banqueting Spaces, well-appointed rooms, delectable dining options which include 'Earthen Oven' - A north Indian specialty restaurant, 'Fortune Deli' - A contemporary outlet serving mouth-watering delicacies. The hotel is perfectly suited to service the NCR region covering Noida, Ghaziabad and Delhi.



Member ITC's hotel group



Fortune Inn Grazia, Ghaziabad is conveniently located in the heart of the Industrial Area, adjacent to the ALT Centre, and in close proximity to all premier establishments in Sanjay Nagar like IMT Ghaziabad. This contemporary full service hotel offers meeting and banquet facilities, well-appointed rooms and delectable dining options which include 'Orchid' - A multi-cuisine restaurant, 'Neptune Bar', 'Fortune Deli' - A contemporary outlet serving mouth-watering delicacies.



Member ITC's hotel group

Madame Tussauds in India

Madame Tussauds, the legendary wax museum, is soon to be launched in New Delhi as a new tourist entertainment hotspot.



Madame Tussauds Delhi will be the 23rd edition of the wax attraction which is scheduled to open in June 2017 at Regal Cinema, Connaught Place. Among other popular locations of this attraction are London, Hong Kong, Berlin, Tokyo, Singapore, and Amsterdam. The wax museum will exhibit over 50 figures from diverse leagues such as history, sports, music, film, and television. "The wax attraction will provide an immersive and exhilarating experience of the glittering world of renowned celebrities and personalities of the likes of Amitabh Bachchan, Narendra Modi, Sachin Tendulkar, Kim Kardashian, etc. We will also have a broader focus on Indian celebrities and I am sure that all the locals and tourists will cherish meeting their idols," says **Anshul Jain**, General Manager and Director, Merlin Entertainments India.

The attraction will showcase 60 per cent of local and 40 per cent of international celebrities as wax figures which will be created in an excess of ₹ 1.5 crores each. The wax figures will be made in London and then imported to India which will then be managed by a local Delhi team to maintain the quality and standards of Madame Tussauds. Merlin Entertainments, the operator of the attraction, plans to invest ₹50 million over the next 10 years in the Indian market.

Marcel Kloos, Director-New Openings Europe, Merlin Entertainments, explains the choice of location and says, "We have always looked at areas with high footfall and popularity to open the attraction and Regal Cinema was the perfect choice for that. We are very optimistic about the success of this attraction. As of now we are focusing to create more interactive surroundings around the figures and enhance the guest experience." The company plans to offer competitive ticket fares in order to attract large segment of Indian visitors and once open, Madame Tussauds will also offer special fares for students and groups, informed Jain. Kloos adds that the attraction can accommodate 500 visitors at a time and will be open from 9 am to 8 pm. The tickets will also be available online for the same once the attraction is open.



India representative for ACP Rail

■ ACP Rail has appointed **Raza Husaini** as its Sales Manager in India to build new relationships in India, while providing the travel trade with advanced technical solutions to distribute rail to their customers.

Raza Husaini brings a wealth of experience. With a post graduate degree in Travel & Tourism and a focus on business development, he has previously held senior executive positions and worked for more than two decades in various industry business segments on a pan-India basis. Raza's current position as Head of Business Development and Strategic Alliances at Pacific

Travels in New Delhi, presents an ideal partnership for ACP Rail to expand in this market.

He has experience working with airlines like Jet Airways, Air New Zealand and others is expected to work for ACP Rail's air-rail initiatives via the AccesRail brand. Now over 100 airlines have interline agreements with AccesRail to facilitate booking rail together with air on one intermodal ticket. Like for any airline, travel agents can easily book AccesRail's inventory on the primary screen display of all major GDSs around the world, using its own IATA designator code

9B. This intermodal solution-benefits all partners with the potential for higher load factors and greater reach to more destinations, while offering the customer a more seamless travel experience and possibly better connection times.

ACP Rail International is a global leader in marketing and distribution of international rail products to travel agents, tour operators and consumers. ACP Rail International boasts key rail partners such as BritRail, Eurail, Renfe, Trenitalia, SJ, NSB and many more. Pacific Travels is a travel agency founded in 1968, based in New Delhi, India.



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ITDC's programme on cashless banking

■ In the wake of demonetisation, India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) organised an interactive awareness programme for its employees in association with State Bank of Hyderabad. During the awareness program, various available modes of cashless transactions such as POS machines, e-wallet, mobile banking, online banking, using apps such as SBI Buddy, SBI Freedom etc. were demonstrated and explained in detail. **Umang Narula**, Chairman and Managing Director, ITDC, said, "It's a matter of great satisfaction and

pride that this workshop was organised. The government is promoting cashless transactions to overcome the acute shortage of lower denominations. In my opinion, this is a good move as digital transactions ensure transparency and proper payment of taxes." He appealed to the employees and the young trainees to join the digital system of operations at the earliest as the nation is moving towards the cashless mode of transactions. The program was also graced by **Piyush Tiwari**, Director Commercial and Marketing, ITDC.

Make room for budget properties

Anoop Bali, CFO, Tourism Finance Corporation of India (TFCI), claims that the market needs more budget hotels and entrepreneurs should shift focus to this segment soon.



TT BUREAU

TFCI has been funding tourism projects in the country for the last 25 years and is one of the biggest tourism advisory bodies in India. **Anoop Bali**, CFO, TFCI, says, "We fund hotels, resorts and other tourism projects, and this is our core business." However, he revealed that their focus currently is on budget properties. "For the last five years, we have shifted to-

wards budget sector and we feel that it is big for India as there are not many budget hotels in India. While it remains our priority, we also fund five star hotels."

Talking about what makes them fund a project, he reveals, "There are two pre-requisites — one is land use permission and the second is building plan approval. Based on these two requirements, we consider a project for financing. Apart

from that we do look at the background credentials and KYC of the parties involved. We have our appraising teams, for market information and other details. We appraise the project and then go ahead. There is also a market research team. Location of the project is also very important and we consider that as well."

When asked about the hurdles faced when it comes

to developing hotels, he revealed that since there is no designated industry for hotels and other such projects, there is no single-window clearance. "There are many agencies involved. Land is given by land revenue agency, building plan from the town planning department and there is also clearance from the state pollution control department. An entrepreneur needs to move to all these departments, which takes time. Even when the project gets completed, it takes 3-4 months to get the opening permissions and licenses from various agencies. If there is a central



Anoop Bali
CFO
TFCI

There is no need to build luxury hotel if the market requires affordable properties. If you are building a hotel for the target segment, there is a huge market available

agency to pass everything, then it becomes easier," informs Bali.

However, there are many states which have taken a step in this direction. "Andhra Pradesh's policy used to be very simple because the building plan rules are very well defined, which makes building faster. Similarly, some other states, like Gujarat, have recently announced changes, that propagate ease of business," claims Bali.

TFCI was a major part of the recently held Incredible India Tourism Investors' Summit (IITIS). Bali has a suggestion for entrepreneurs wanting to develop tourism projects. "Build a product that the market requires. There is no need to build luxury hotel if the market requires affordable properties. If you are building a hotel for the target segment, there is a huge market available," he advises. ↴

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TrawellTag and GoAir announce insurance partnership

■ Global assistance and travel insurance provider, TrawellTag Cover-More, has announced a partnership with GoAir India wherein the insurance provider will offer specialised travel assistance services including insurance for GoAir passengers opting for domestic travel. The association rides on Cover-More's upgrade of their proprietary optimisation platform, 'Impulse' which works in real time to offer travel protection plans matching the customer's profile based on the details provided while booking tickets. Cover-More's expertise has enabled it to serve clients like Malaysia Airlines, Air New Zealand & Virgin Atlantic.

Dev Karvat, MD & CEO – TrawellTag Cover-More, said " 'Impulse' is the key to our new strategic partnership as it not only equips the travellers with holistic travel protection but also enables our client to enhance ancillary revenue through an agile online technology. Indians are gradually realising the risks of travelling even within the country and service providers have taken up the onus of educating travellers and ensuring they travel smart and safe."

Japan extends friendly hand to India

Japan National Tourist Office (JNTO) will launch its regional office in New Delhi in February and also open 13 new visa application centres to facilitate easy travel for Indian visitors to Japan.



In line with celebrating 2017 as the year of Japan-India Friendly Exchanges, the Japan National Tourist Office (JNTO) will also open 13 new visa application centres in India. The centres will be opened at Gurugram, Jaipur, Kolkata, Mumbai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Goa, Bengaluru, Kochi, Thiruvananthapuram, Chennai, Puducherry and Hyderabad.

The opening ceremony of Japan-India Friendly Exchanges was held in Delhi where **Ryoichi Matsuyama**, President, Japan National Tourist Office, announced that JNTO will begin its regional operations in Delhi from February. "Last year Japan saw 120,000 Indian arrivals whereas 230,000 Japanese visited India. Though the number of Indians visiting Japan is steadily increasing, the current figure is yet modest despite the vast size and scale of India and more so given the long-standing relationship between the two



countries. With the new office, we hope to boost the tourist numbers from India to Japan," said Matsuyama.

Kenchi Takano, Executive Director- Preparation Office for New Delhi, JNTO, said, "We will work tirelessly in India to make significant contribution to the tourism exchanges between the two destinations and increase the two-way traffic of tourists between India and Japan." Matsuyama further added that Japan is aiming at one million Indian visitors to Japan in the long term and JNTO will focus on

promoting the destination in the Indian market in 2017.

The event was attended by **Kenko Sone**, Minister, Economic and Development, Embassy of Japan; **Suresh Prabhu**, Railway Minister, Government of India, **Amitabh Kant**, CEO, NITI Aayog, Government of India, amongst others. His Excellency **Kenji Hiramatsu**, Ambassador of Japan to India, added that a number of cultural and tourism related events are planned to be held all around India in 2017. The ceremony also marked the

official announcement of Japan-India Collaboration Film Project. Bollywood director **Imtiaz Ali** is collaborating with Japan's entertainment conglomerate **Shochiku** to produce a cross-culture romance in Hindi, titled *Love In Tokyo*. The movie will be shot almost entirely in Japan and will be co-produced by **Imtiaz's Window Seat Films** and **Shochiku**.

According to Matsuyama, Japan is a comfortable and promising destination for all types of Indian travellers, be it leisure, FIT, MICE and even

honeymooners. "Japan offers diversity of seasonal flavours where tourists can experience four distinct seasons. Along with that Japan has nature's beauty; wide variety of cultural attractions; fusion of cultural values with cutting-edge technology and modernity; and delightful cuisine etc.," adds Matsuyama.

Yasuo Taki, General Manager India-Delhi, All Nippon Airways, also present at the event informed that the passenger traffic from India, especially Mumbai to Japan has increased. ANA operates two daily flights from Mumbai and New Delhi to Japan and the airline is looking to expand its network in the near future. "We recently changed the aircraft which boosted our capacity by four times from Mumbai. The tourism spectrum will change dramatically from India to Japan after JNTO begins its operations and also with business relations increasing between the two countries, we expect to see an increase in business travellers from India to Japan." ↴

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Of Scottish culture, castles and scotch

VisitScotland's 10 tourism partners met with key buyers from India at their five-city sales mission to grow the tourism market in the country currently worth £12 million. The Scottish tourism trade showcased the castles, music, culture, stone circles, scotch and many other things the country is famous for.



VisitScotland recently conducted business development mission in collaboration with Etihad Airways, in Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Ahmedabad and Bengaluru, offering an opportunity to hold face-to-face meetings with up to 400 key tour operators. Between 2013 and 2015, Scotland welcomed an average of 29,000 visitors from India, especially drawing Indian travellers to experience their intriguing history, culture and Scotch.

According to **Malcom Roughead**, Chief Executive Officer, VisitScotland, "India is an important emerging market for Scottish tourism and this business development mission, our first of 2017, will allow tourism businesses to have face-to-face meetings with tour operators. It will provide our partners with an excellent platform to showcase their products and we look forward to welcoming more Indian visitors to Scotland as a result."

Kirsten Spence, Market Manager-India, Middle East and Australasia, VisitScotland, points out that the tourism board found the business development events to be very useful to connect with the travel trade, discuss their key challenges and opportunities to drive business to Scotland from India.

"From the Indian market last year, we saw about half a million people visiting the UK out of which a very small percentage visited Scotland. However we have seen a growth in number of people who are including Scotland in their itineraries especially for those who are travelling to London and then travelling to the likes of Glasgow and Edinburgh." Spence elaborates that they have witnessed a larger number of Indian travellers moving out of the main cities and enquiring from the travel trade for off-beat trips. "We have multiple itineraries which allow guests to stay for 5-14 day trips or even longer in Scotland. The average length of stay for the Indian travellers visiting Scotland is 13 days," says Spence.

VisitScotland has adopted a two pronged approach to drive traffic into the destination, informs Spence. For the sales mission, the tourism board invited partners

based in the UK who are also responsible for bringing travellers into Scotland through London and since those guests should stay a bit longer in Scotland, the tourism board was also joined by partners based in Scotland to allow the India-based trade to engage directly with them as well and book trips to Scotland directly.

Commenting on the partnership with Etihad Airways, Spence adds, "Etihad connects India and Scotland via Abu Dhabi. With this partnership we are also supporting and driving traffic into Abu Dhabi from India and I think we will also benefit from that. This is very useful for those who are coming for a one country stay with Scotland being that destination."

"We have multiple itineraries which allow guests to stay for 5-14 day trips or even longer in Scotland. The average length of stay for the Indian travellers visiting Scotland is 13 days."

Kirsten Spence
Market Manager-India,
Middle East and Australasia, VisitScotland



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Expansion plans in the North

Koti Resorts is set to all set to open new properties in the North Indian states of Punjab, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.

TT BUREAU

Just 30 min northeast of Shimla on Naldehra Golf course road, Koti Resort is a luxury property built on a knoll, offering spectacular views of Himalayan ranges and the valley. **Yatinder Chand**, Managing Director, Koti Resorts, informs, "The resort has 54 elegantly furnished spacious rooms built along a lawn. The USP of our resort is its location and the drive-in parking, which is a major concern in the city of Shimla. As we are situated on a knoll, it gives 360 degrees view of the Himalayan range and offers peaceful ambience."

Chand is leaving no stone unturned to promote the property, while keeping up with the latest technology. "Along with the new ways of digital marketing, we still are practicing sales and promotions through print and electronic medium, participation in tourism fairs," he said. On relationship with the trade, he said, "We have kept our as-



Yatinder Chand
Managing Director
Koti Resorts

We have kept our association with our travel partners and have been getting excellent support from them, as in the past

sociation with our travel partners and have been getting excellent support from them."

The resort is eco-friendly and has adopted measures to reduce its carbon footprint. "We have taken measures such as water consumption audit, switching to LED light

bulbs, using daylight exclusively in lobby, restaurant, main kitchen and other public areas for as much of the day as possible. We have also installed solar water heating system and have zero usage of plastic in hotel in terms of guest supplies," informed Chand.

"We have been updating ourselves with new ways of marketing tools. Maintaining excellent service standards to the guest have helped us in referrals and getting repeat customers. It is the teamwork of our staff and the management, which helps in creating a cordial working atmosphere, which helps in providing Service with a Smile to our guests," he said.

Going ahead, they have made a Jungle Resort in Punjab. "It's a 32-room property and we have plans to add another 50 rooms in the near future. Also, we have kept options open to add couple of resorts in Himachal and Uttarakhand," he said.

Focus on tech in 2017

Regal International Hotels and Akquasun organised a three-city joint roadshow to clarify the pre-registration procedure for Indians travelling to Hong Kong.

TT BUREAU

The three-city networking event was held in New Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai. **Christoph Szymanski**, Group Director of Project and General Manager, Regal Oriental Hotel, defined the event as an important networking activity to meet the key players and frontline staff of the travel partners who have contributed significantly to the growth in business from the India market.

B. A. Rahim, Group Director, Akquasun, commented, "This event is important to us as we need the travel trade to understand that the procedure is simple and the hotel chains in Hong Kong are in full support to cater to the increasing number of Indian visitors to the destination."

Rahim also informs that Akquasun will be introducing its online system at upcoming trade shows like SATTE, OTM and IITT and the company plans to focus on enhancing its technology arm in 2017. "The first quarter of



Christoph Szymanski
Group Director of Project and General Manager, Regal Oriental Hotel



B.A. Rahim
Group Director and CEO
Akquasun

2017 looks good for tourism but the second one looks even better. This year we also plan to open up offbeat destinations like Bosnia to the Indian market," he adds.

Elaborating on the collaboration with Akquasun Group, Szymanski states that, three years ago, the market share for Regal Oriental Hotel geographically for India was at 3-5 per cent. However with the joint operation with Akquasun, the market share has risen to 17 per cent as of 2016. "Akquasun has opened a new office in Hong Kong and we are supporting them in order to de-

liver highest guest satisfaction. In 2017, Q1 is a bit slow, but we have received a large number of bookings from all segments like FIT, MICE, corporate etc. and hopefully we should be able to capture at least 20 per cent of the Indian market share by the end of 2017," he says. The hotel is focusing on product marketing and stressing on customer feedback. Szymanski points out that they have received specific food requests from the Indian market and the hotel is altering its menu according to the region where the Indian guests belong to in order to maximise customer satisfaction.



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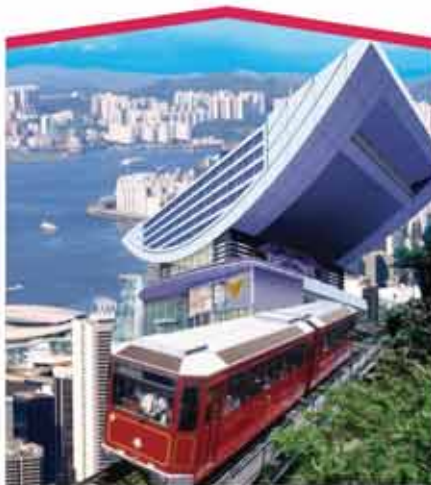


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TAAI celebrates convention success

TAAI recently raised a toast to its successful convention in Abu Dhabi in October, at a gala event in New Delhi. TAAI Executive Committee members and industry partners came under one roof as they saw the highlights of the convention and networked over cocktails and dinner.



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Preparing for the future of travel

The tourism and hospitality industry is changing at an exponential rate. The new products being added everyday and the ever-evolving technology has put travel agents at the precipice of evolution. **Ashwini Kakkar**, Past President, TAAI, outlines various changes in the industry and suggests the way forward.



Aviation

According to Kakkar, the introduction of low cost carriers (LCC) has brought a revolution in the aviation industry where today they own one out of four seats of the total passenger seats and soon will own one out of three seats across the globe. The formation of alliances is likely to get larger in the future.

ings. However, before going to the travel agents, the millennials on an average spend 55 minutes doing their research; averagely look at 17 websites; are going through four search ads and are using more than four devices each. "The new consumer behavior is defined by closer-shorter-cheaper-later, multiple trips, do it yourself etc. Travel is becoming emotional and is being based on

new unique and personalised experiences," says Kakkar. He adds that safety and security is no longer a luxury but a necessity for travellers and travel professionals have to add it to the line of travel.

Learning from other industries

Kakkar suggests that the travel industry needs to observe the various changes in

related industries and evolve to match the needs of buyers and sellers in a scenario which is very transient as everyday new products and technology is being introduced. He explains that while the medical industry has grown its profits by 200 per cent; the real estate business by 150 per cent; the legal industry by 250 per cent; the net impact on the travel industry is minus 75 per cent

which means that the travel services are priced at one fourth to what they were 10 years ago and this needs to be reviewed. "The IT industry has brought in the concept of bundled services and recurring incomes where one cannot buy one product but a host of them and also pay an annual maintenance fee for it. For example, asking customers to maintain and update their passport and

visa details at an annual fee of \$5 is something we can look at as other sources of revenue which is recurring. The banking industry works on reduction in people costs and increase in technology usage; the medical industry offers models based on loyalty and life time value to customers which is an asset that can be brought into the travel service practices," he says.



Ashwini Kakkar
Past President
TAAI

The new consumer behavior in travel is defined by closer-shorter-cheaper-later, multiple trips, and the likes of do it yourself etc.

Review service providers

Identifying the shift in the universe of the service providers like car rentals and hotels, Kakkar explains that the car rental spectrum has been revolutionised with companies like Uber and Lift. "Their margins as of today range from 20-30 per cent and if driver-less cars come into operation, then their margins will be close to 52 per cent. This is the vision with which the valuation of Uber has gone up to \$60 billion. If the valuation of Starwood and Marriott International put together today is about \$25 billion whereas Airbnb alone values at \$26 billion, without owning a hotel room, then we have to understand the relative economics of this whole game," he says.

Catering to the millennials

The consumer behavior is also fast changing and it is important for the travel professionals to understand these paradigm shifts. There are new travel segments emerging led by the millennials who are the natives of the digital world. Kakkar points out that 50 per cent of this category makes travel booking on their mobile phone but it is interesting to note that 35 per cent of millennials are still going to the travel agents to make their final book-

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KARISHMA KHANNA

Through its elaborate conference, banqueting and meeting facilities, Country Inn & Suites by Carlson, Mysore caters to both business and leisure travellers. The hotel's General Manager **Pankaj Saxena** says, "The MICE segment has been a steadily growing market, increasing approximately 15 per cent a year. However, we are also targeting leisure and family segments

ergise with international and domestic online portals for better visibility on their platforms, content management and on-line reputation."

According to Saxena, the hotel industry is getting competitive by the day and there is a need to launch strategic initiatives to be at the top of your game. "We focus on strengthening our hotel growth strategies by building scale in key

markets, creating a long-lasting relationship with our guests and delivering revenue through the lowest cost, direct channels. Our internal growth strategy focuses on revenue and yield management."

MICE Matters

↳ The pillar-less ballroom at CIS Mysore can be divided into three different spaces



Pankaj Saxena
General Manager
CIS Mysore

We engage travel agents via membership rewards through Look to Book Programs and Club Carlson for Travel Arrangers to boost the hotel sales

this year. We have elaborate conference and banqueting facilities and the meeting facilities are designed in a comfortable and welcoming style to reflect the entertainment spaces. The pillar-less ballroom can be divided into three different spaces."

Saxena says they have a special team called 'Team Connect' which selects a couple of our guests and does something special for them. "We have a selfie spot too. Such small but significant gestures facilitate goodwill and guest satisfaction," he adds.

Leaving no stone unturned in marketing the property, Saxena has showcased the hotel at IATO Mumbai, SATTE New Delhi, TTF Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Surat, Mumbai, Pune and Chennai and will be going to ITB Berlin and WTM London.

Stressing on the importance of travel agents in their business, he added, "We engage travel agents via membership rewards through Look to Book Programs and Club Carlson for Travel Arrangers to boost the hotel sales. We syn-

Agents double the fun in the Philippines



The Department of Tourism Philippines recently organised a Fam trip for its Indian travel trade partners to the islands of Davao, Boracay and Metro Manila. Representatives from six travel companies including MakeMyTrip, TUI India, Yatra Online, Kesari Tours, Club7 Holidays and Via.com participated in the Fam and conducted B2B meetings with key DMCs from the Philippines.



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Indian travellers revel at global festivals

Whether it's Oktoberfest in Munich, Dubai Shopping Festival, La Tomatina in Buñol (Spain), or Tomorrowland, Indian travellers are experiencing it all. While there is no exact number of Indians travelling abroad to be a part of this jamboree, the travel industry points out an increase in demand among Indians for travelling for festivals across the globe.



TUI India categorises this segment of travel as the 'variety seeker,' which includes travellers aged between 25-35 years and primarily from the metros. This travel segment is currently the fastest growing segment for TUI India. Vishal Sinha, CEO, TUI India, says, "We have witnessed a growth of 20 per cent (in North India) with respect to festival/event-based holidays. The base is still quite small; however we do see a major shift in terms of travel that is suited to one's expression of individuality and interests. These travellers have high monthly household income of over \$1500 and are experienced travellers who are now looking for an immersive and unique travel experience."

B.A. Rahim, Group Director and CEO, Akquasun, points out, "During festival seasons and historic events abroad, we handle minimum

of 30 per cent more pax at our destinations."

Popular Festivals

Guldeep Singh Sahni, President, Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI), observes that festivals like Dubai Shopping Festival, Malaysia Shopping Festival, Oktoberfest, La Tomatina, Calgary Stampede and Carnaval in Brazil are trending amongst Indian travellers. "The most widely-travelled tourists opt for such holidays and generally plan in advance," says Sahni.

TUI India has seen clear segments emerging out of travel requests. Sinha informs that these segments are global festivals and cultural events. La Tomatina festival and the Running of the Bulls at the festival of San Fermin in Spain have gained a lot of popularity post release of the Bollywood film, *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara*. Oktoberfest is a favourite amongst the younger/backpacking traveller. "We have

also seen younger travellers heading to the Boryeong Mud Festival in South Korea. Chinese New Year festival sees a surge of quick indulgers between 25-40 years who frequent destinations like Hong Kong, China and other South East Asian destinations. Japan is particularly famous for Cherry Blossom season," says Sinha.

Rahim notes that music festivals such as Tomorrowland in Belgium and Coachella in California, USA, are gaining popularity among Indians. Being a cricket loving nation, the Cricket World Cup remains a big attraction for sports enthusiasts. "However, some key emerging sports events like Formula One races, Wimbledon and Australian Open have a niche but growing base," Sinha says, adding that last year there was an increase in queries during the Olympics in Brazil. IPL finale has always seen the movement of domestic travellers, points out Sinha. "Runcations or holidays



Vishal Sinha
Chief Executive Officer
TUI India



Guldeep Singh Sahni
President
OTOAI

combined with marathon participation is a segment that we follow. We have seen marathon runners travelling to Thailand, New York, Boston, Paris, Germany and Japan."

Duration of Stay

Travellers plan their holidays centered on key events and extend their stay to explore multiple cities. Sahni informs that the average duration of stay of such travellers is 7-10 days while Rahim observes that out of seven nights, three nights are dedicated for the particular event

which is extended to four more nights for local sightseeing.

Average Spend

The average spend by this segment is much higher than other outbound travellers, notes Sinha, as the airfare and accommodation tends to be higher during such global events. "The post event stay also increases the cost. The average spend per day is \$180 which does not include the air tickets," Sinha adds. According to Sahni, the average spending capacity of such travellers is \$4000-5500.

Challenges & Way Forward

"Due to high fares and costly entry passes to global events, the overall cost tends to dissuade many travellers from going on festival trips. This can be tackled through working with the tourism boards and key hotels to provide an all-inclusive value for money package. Travel companies would need to invest in training the front-line staff to pitch these events while working towards creating off-the-shelf festival packages," Sinha says.

The industry deliberates that festival tourism needs to be rebranded from a niche segment to a more inclusive and larger segment of FIT travel and education and accessibility are the two key areas that can drive this segment. Sahni feels that films, TV promos, special TV programmes, print ads, social media content and market awareness along with educational programmes for the travel industry will boost this segment of travel.

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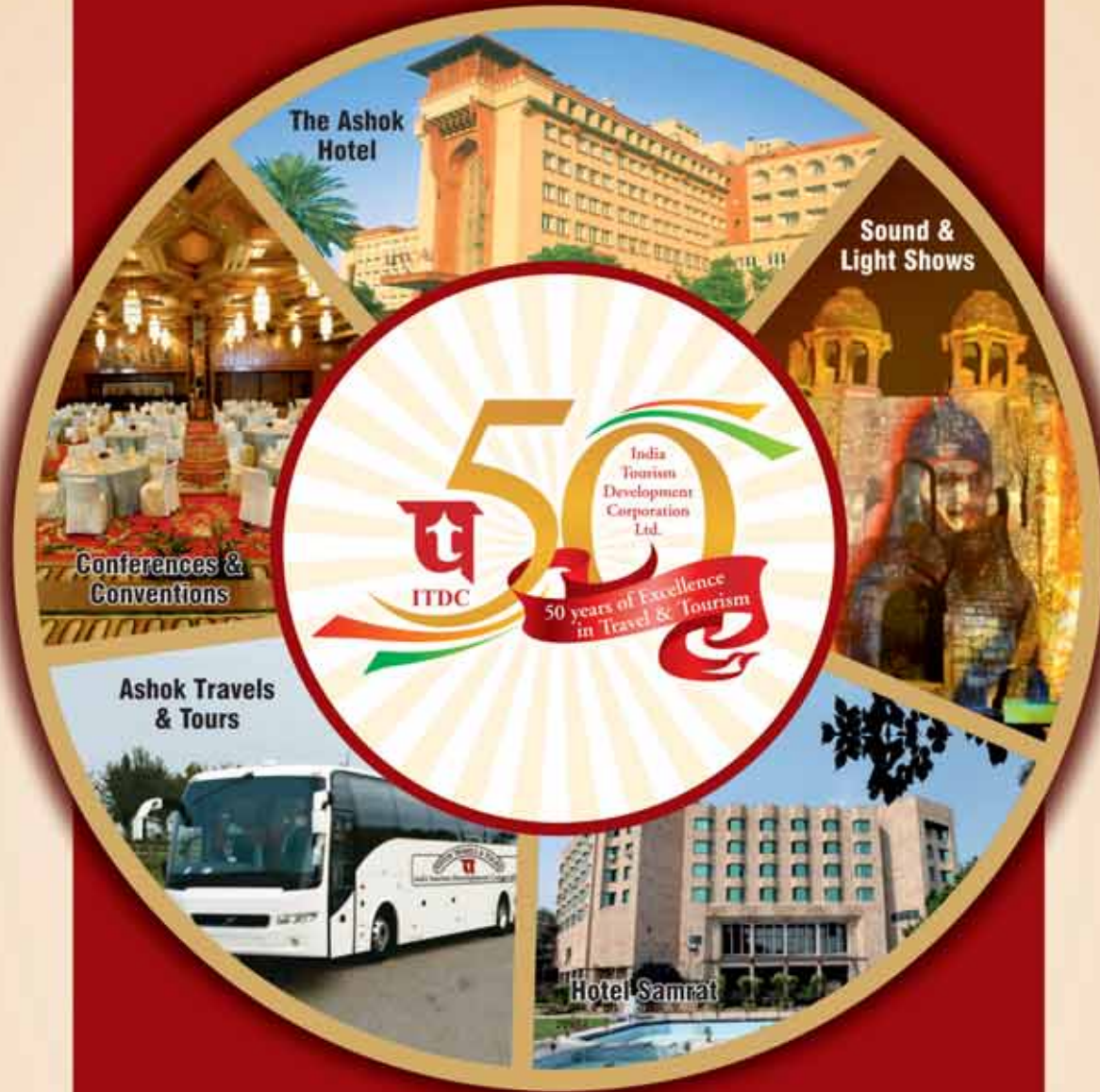
The King and Queen of Spain, Don Felipe and Doña Letizia, inaugurated the 37th International Tourism Trade Fair, FITUR 2017, organised by IFEMA which brought together 9,672 tourism companies, institutions and bodies from 165 countries and regions. **Vinod Zutshi**, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, inaugurated the Indian pavilion encouraging the Indian travel fraternity at the first large-scale travel show for 2017.



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Finnair to launch Helsinki-Goa flight next winter

■ Finnair has launched its first flights to Goa this year, as part of its expansion in long-haul network. Starting November 29, 2017, the airline will start flying to the Indian beach destination, operating two weekly flights for the winter season, ending on March 21, 2018. Services will run every Wednesday and Sunday using an Airbus A330 aircraft.

Apart from that, Finnair will add one more weekly flight to Delhi, taking the total frequency to six weekly flights next winter. It will also add two additional weekly frequencies on Helsinki-Bangkok route, taking the total to 16 flights per week. The airline will also add two more weekly services to Singapore, making it a daily destination, while three more weekly frequencies will be added to Hong Kong, taking the year-round total to 10 flights per week.

"With the expected arrival of four new Airbus A350 aircraft in 2017, we are pressing ahead with our growth strategy," said Juha-Järvinen, Finnair's chief commercial officer. "These newest additions will offer even more travel options and flexibility for our customers travelling between Asia and Europe through our efficient Helsinki airport hub which guarantees a short and smooth connection," he added.

J&K Tourism spreads word on safety

Reeling from a bad season that was close to naught, Jammu & Kashmir Tourism is determined to make 2017 better with an aggressive campaign on the safety and security measures in the state.

HAZEL JAIN

After a really slow ending to 2016 for tourism in Jammu & Kashmir, the state tourism board is determined to make 2017 a success. The team, led by **Mahmood A. Shah**, Director of Tourism, Kashmir, plans to travel across the country to talk to the travel agents regarding the safety of the state and to assure them that it's completely safe for tourists.

The team was recently in Mumbai to meet the trade. Shah said, "Things are back



to normal and we need the support of our agents to improve tourism in J&K. We invite them to come over and see for themselves. Our focus this

year will only be to spread the word across the country and the world about the safety and security for tourists in J&K. We have planned a 20-city road-

show where we will meet the tour operators. We have also undertaken upgradation of tourism infrastructure in Kashmir."

The tourism board recently organised a familiarisation tour to J&K for some members of the Maharashtra Tour Organisers Association (MTOA). Tour operator Veena World has announced March-end, April beginning dates for its group departures to Kashmir. Heena Travels has also started booking groups. Shah adds, "Outside of India, Europe is our primary market but South East Asia and Far East also give us huge numbers. We will be attending ITB Berlin as well as MITT in Moscow this year."

"We always wanted a young and dynamic leader for J&K and we have finally found one in Mr. M Shah. J&K is a four-season destination and its beauty is incomparable. We are proud of it. I assure the tourism board of our complete support."

Kesari Patil

Founder, Kesari Tours, India Travel Award winner

"Nothing has managed to affect the natural beauty and the warm hospitality of Kashmir. These are soft initiatives to get the state back to normal. I request all trade to please communicate with MTOA or J&K Tourism for clarity and updated information."

Abhijit Patil

CEO, Raja Rani Travels

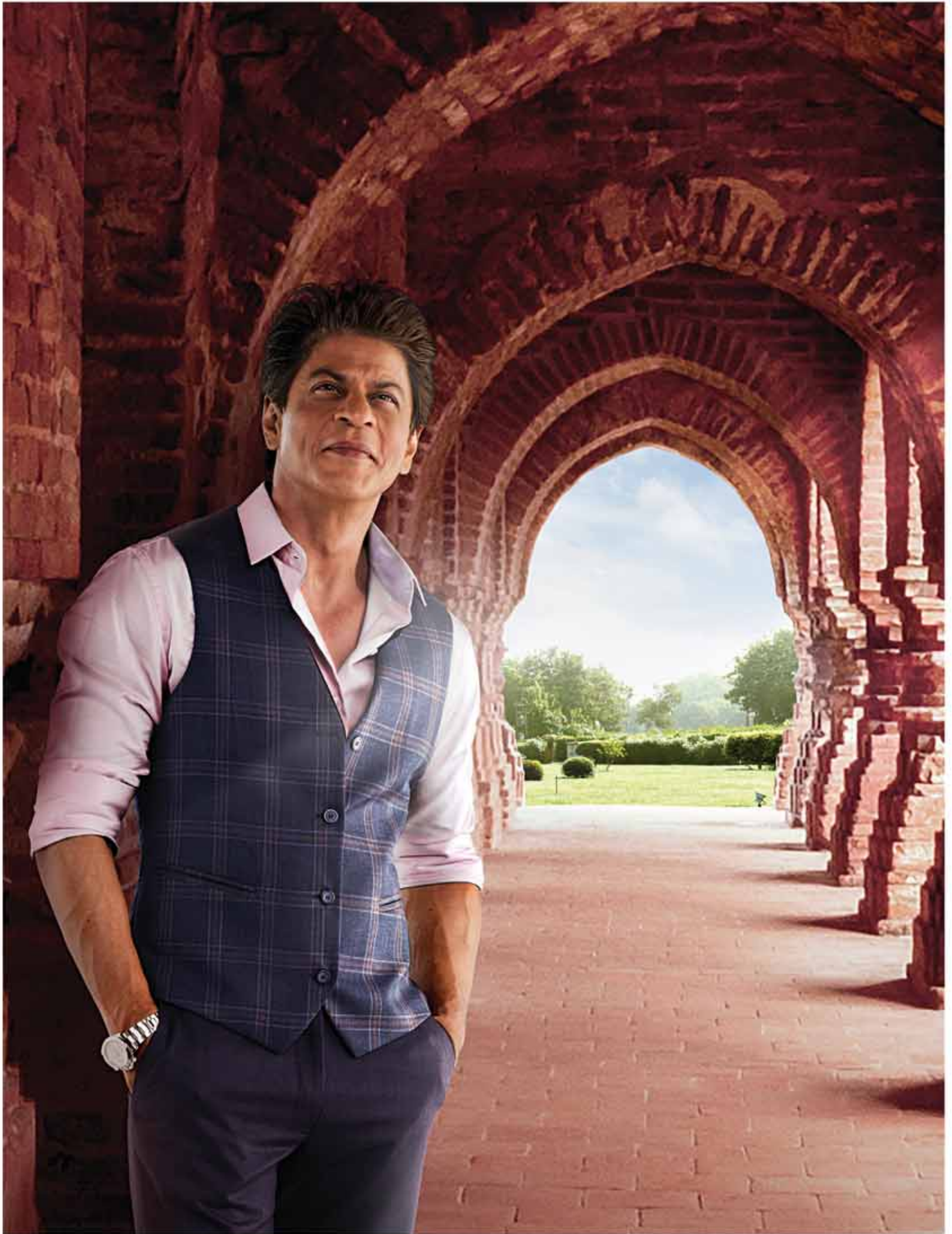
"The travel agents in the Western region are not aware that J&K is coming back to normalcy. We are discussing when to restart our tours to the state. Our request to the tourism board is to improve hotels, increase airline capacity and normalise airfares."

Sudhir Patil

President, MTOA

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MTDC to strengthen student exchange programs with Japan

■ **Jayakumar Jitendrasinh Rawal**, Tourism Minister, Government of Maharashtra, promises to encourage and strengthen student exchange programs between India and Japan.

During his tour to the Wakayama Prefecture in Japan, Rawal stated, "We are honoured



Jayakumar Jitendrasinh Rawal
Tourism Minister
Government of Maharashtra

to be invited by the Mayor of Tanabe City. Our discussion with the Mayor focused on several issues among the proposal by the President of Municipal Council, Dondaicha for sister city relationship with Tanabe City. We were overwhelmed with the efforts put in by the students of Toyo Junior High School and we look forward to continue cultural, tourism and other bilateral exchanges through student exchange programs between Tanabe and Dondaicha."

Hokkaido calls on Indian trade

Hokkaido Tourism Organisation Office held a destination seminar to educate the travel trade about Hokkaido in Delhi. A presentation was given by **Masaki Kakeda**, Manager – Inbound Promotion Section, Hokkaido Tourism Organisation, which included introduction of Hokkaido apart from the varied seasons, modes of transportation, various itinerary suggestions and recommendations.



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Indonesian DMC looks @ India

Diorama Travel Management (DTM) finds the potential in India formidable and its mission is to push destinations other than Bali with an enticing proposition for Indian agents.

HAZEL JAIN FROM INDONESIA

Bali-based wholesaling inbound tour operator – Diorama Travel Management (DTM) – believes it can offer the India market a proposition it will be unable to refuse. Claiming to be the only inbound operator that runs the SIC (Seat-In-Combined) holiday packages in Indonesia, DTM wants to enter India and aggressively promote destinations other than Bali by early to mid 2017.

Sutrisno Bin Saudji, MD, DTM, says, "We are committed to promoting the entire Indonesia and not just Bali, which sells by itself. All it requires is maintenance and product innovation. For this, we need our national carrier to partner to showcase the quick and smooth internal connectivity." The DMC had recently hosted a Fam trip in conjunction with Garuda Indonesia with 19 travel agents from India that included a one-day roadshow in Bali where they met Indonesian suppliers.



Sutrisno Bin Saudji
Managing Director
DTM

We keep educating hoteliers and restaurant on the market requirements like vegetarian and Jain meals

the market about Indonesia outside of Bali. We are focused on eight destinations within Indonesia to be promoted in the India market through value-based holiday packages," he adds.

DTM also trains the hotels and restaurants in Indonesia about dietary requirements of Indian travellers. "We keep educating hoteliers and restaurant on the market requirements like vegetarian and Jain meals. However, since we are still insisting on including Indian restaurants in our holiday programs, there will not be much of a problem," he says

DTM plans to visit India early this year. It will be more to develop relationship and network with the agents. "As per our study, the India market prefers readymade holiday packages for Indonesia. I want all my agent friends to become 'Indonesia Specialist Agents.' We plan to organise a destination briefing for agents to introduce new destinations," he says. 🇮🇩

"We have now included India in our 2017 portfolio along with the Middle East, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Australia. With Garuda Indonesia flying direct from Mumbai to Jakarta via Bangkok, the time is now for us to re-consolidate its network in India and educate

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When business meets leisure

Bleisure, a portmanteau of business and leisure travel, is an increasingly popular trend catching up fast amongst business travellers. Tourism industry stakeholders elaborate on the dynamics and trends under this new emerging segment of travel.



After completing business meetings or attending seminars, a phenomenon is being observed where travellers are adding up a few extra days and tourist spots to their itinerary. **Shekhar Chatterjee**, Manager-Operations (Leisure and MICE), Global Connect Travels, informs that according to Visa's 2015 Global Travel Intentions Study, which surveyed the travel habits of over 13,000 travellers worldwide, 16 per cent of travellers combined business and leisure on their most recent trip. The majority of these bleisure travellers are young executives. **Saurabh Sanghavi**, Director, Next Tourism, adds that according to a Bridge Street Global Hospitality report, 60 per cent of travellers were reported to have taken bleisure trips, with 30 per cent adding at least two additional days to their trip.

Duration of trips

Zelam Chaubal, Director, Kesari MICE, says, "If a business traveller is alone, the trip

is extended by a maximum of 1-2 days whereas if the trip is taken along with family then the average extension period is approximately three days to about a week, depending on the destination." **Rohan Grover**, Managing Director, YourTravelSecretary, adds, "A typical business traveller spends 5-6 days on an average for international business work; however for those who



Shekhar Chatterjee
Manager-Operations (Leisure and MICE), Global Connect Travels

a weekend was added at the end of the trip while the others had a start with weekends and a few groups of bleisure kept business sandwiched between two weekends."

Average spend

Bleisure travel also owes its popularity to the marginal increase in cost as compared to a separate leisure trip. Sanghavi points out that the aver-



Saurabh Sanghavi
Director
Next Tourism

age spend of bleisure travellers is ₹50,000-1,00,000 while Chatterjee says that for a 2-3 night bleisure trip the average spends of an Indian traveller

is around \$200-300 per person. "If the vacations are taken separately by a business traveller, he has to spend 3-4 times



Zelam Chaubal
Director
Kesari MICE

the cost compared to what it would cost if he extends the business travel. Around 30 per cent of bleisure travellers with us added one or more destinations, especially travellers to Europe, where the average spend increased by \$500-600 per person," says Grover.

Popular activities

With various exhibitions and trade meets being hosted nearby leisure destinations, a

twin-fold purpose of increasing footfall to a destination along with business networking is achieved. Chaubal points out



Rohan Grover
Managing Director
YourTravel Secretary

that European and American cities; Bali; the Philippines; Phuket; Maldives, Dubai and Singapore. Chatterjee elaborates that the US is the first stop for a bleisure traveller, according to a report published by the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA). In 2014 alone, \$288.4 billion was spent on business travel in the US. Percentage share for various activities is sightseeing at 77.2 per cent; dining 66.3 per cent;

art and culture 66 per cent; outdoor activities 33.9 per cent; nightlife 34.8 per cent; others 8.3 per cent.

Trends

"Bleisure travellers are almost evenly split between male and female, with most falling into the 45-54 year-old age group. More importantly, the second largest group was 25-35 year-olds, representing millennials accustomed to a blurred, digital lifestyle," says Sanghavi. Chaubal says that the new trend is to explore the unexplored where travellers want to travel to offbeat places in Europe and the Americas. She adds, "The ease of visa, smooth airline connections are primarily checked upon. Also business travellers want to explore at least one adventure activity while on bleisure tour." Grover says, bleisure travel has a strong potential to grow into a mainstream, profitable product for travel agencies especially for those who are already catering to corporate and individual business travels. ↴

Trade rings in 2017 with Air Mauritius

The travel trade from Mumbai called on Air Mauritius at the airline's New Year Party held recently at PLAY – The Lounge, Lower Parel. The airline also took on the occasion to thank its industry partners for their support and encouragement during the year.



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IATO soaks up the sun at Annual Day

IATO celebrated its Annual Day at the Heritage Transport Museum in Taoru, Gurgaon. IATO members and staff spent a day enjoying activities and games together with their families.



RezLive.com expands footprint in Africa

The online travel provider has appointed GSAs in Ghana and Kenya to increase their offerings for the continent.



TT BUREAU

Rezlive.com, a product of Travel Designer Group, has further cemented its position in the African region with the appointment of African Origin Travels & Sports Tourism and Continental Travel Group as its exclusive General Sales Agent (GSA) for Ghana and Kenya, respectively.

Jaal Shah, Group Managing Director, RezLive.com, says, "Our increasing presence in Africa will help us to boost trade from the region which will eventually generate good



Jaal Shah
Group Managing Director
RezLive.com

Our increasing presence in Africa will help us to boost trade from the region which will eventually generate good amount of business in the near future

amount of business in the near future, looking at the potential of the market. So, through our GSAs in Ghana and Kenya, we will be able to reach out to local travel partners in the best convenient manner. The partnership and the experience they bring to the table will help us to mutually accelerate our success in this market."

The travel provider that includes hotels, sightseeing and transfer services worldwide has also completed a decade of service in the Indian travel industry. Innovation and expansion in different markets, where the key growth drivers were identified as investment in best-in-class technology, cutting-edge use of data and analytics, and emphasis on building strong relationships with travel partners are the most important aspects leading to the successful journey, Shah informs. "As we celebrate 10 years in the online market,

Curated tours for senior citizens

Bucket My List brings experiential options for travellers in the 50+ age group and plans to add more destinations and products in the near future.



TT BUREAU

Bucket My List, an exclusive boutique travel company that caters to the 50+ age group travellers, believes in an experiential approach to holidays with emphasis on extreme localisation. The offerings vary from escorted group tours, the bespoke tours and the bucket list experiences, informs Shivali Bhargava, Founder, Bucket My List. "Being in a niche space, we don't intend to cater

to several hundreds of tourists and ideally would like to do 10-15 group tours in a year of 12-16 people each. This would help us to not spread ourselves too thin and prioritise on quality-driven experiential holidays."

Bucket My List currently focuses on certain geographies to start with namely Africa and the Middle East along with some domestic destinations such as Andamans and Kerala. "As people experience



Shivali Bhargava
Founder
Bucket My List

our services, we believe that we would have an extremely

high percentage of repeat clients who also would aid in the word of mouth publicity. We plan to add more geographies over a period of time namely South America and a few European countries," she says.

She plans to add like-minded partners to run their own travel geography (South American expert, wildlife expert, etc.) and will focus on inbound travel into India.



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AI claims improved OTP

► Contd. from page 3

Hyderabad and one each for 787, 777 and 737 in Mumbai for pilot training. For ATR-72, we are putting up a simulator facility in Delhi," informed Lohani.

Much was being said about Air India's OTP, in line with a FlightStats report which allegedly questioned Air India's performance and later released a statement clarifying the same. Reacting to the controversy, Lohani said, "We also wrote to FlightStats on the validity of the report. However, I be-

lieve that Air India cannot be ranked in terms of its OTP as the complexity of our operations is very different from the operations of any other airline in India. One should understand that we have nine types of planes, while others have only two or three types of aircraft. We operate on Tier II, Tier I, as well as international routes, connecting a total of 100 places. Our domestic passengers come from different cities and then further fly international. We have to do corrections to adjust the feed. If somebody is only operating city shuttle between Mumbai-

Delhi and is connecting only 25 places, there cannot be any comparison."

On OTP, he said, "Our OTP has improved, apart from dropping in the winters, which every airline faced in India. However, there are 70 other parameters to gauge the performance of an airline other than OTP—like yield, occupancy, food quality, service, website, etc. Everything has to do with the working of an airline, and we are trying to improve that. However, we have expanded and are getting positive feedback as well." ↴

Right focus on APAC growth

The upcoming Phocuswright India 2017 conference aims to bring together over 400 attendees from travel and related industries from February 28-March 2.



After opening doors to a full house at the inaugural India edition in 2016, Phocuswright, the U.S.-based travel research company is coming back to the country with a whole new line-up of speakers and a fresh theme. Scheduled to take place in Gurugram, the conference will gather top players to discuss the trends, technology

and disruptors affecting the Asia Pacific travel market.

The 2016 staging witnessed over 330 attendees and **Simon Lehmann**, President, Phocuswright, expects a higher number this year. "We're hoping for around 400 attendees and more," he says. "This year's theme, The Asian Advantage — puts a spotlight on Asia Pacific's lead in the global travel market. Not only is

APAC the world's biggest travel region, but travel companies in the region are increasingly staking their claim at the global stage," he elaborates.

The three-day conference consists of 'Travel Innovation Summit,' an opportunity for travel start-ups to



Simon Lehmann
President, Phocuswright

Not only is APAC the world's biggest travel region, but travel companies in the region are increasingly staking their claim at the global stage

present their innovations to a panel of judges; 'Partner Workshops' which features some of travel's best-known brands sharing practical advice, and finally 'Center Stage' where senior executives from around the world assemble for educative sessions and discussions.

Lehmann adds, "We continue to make our conference more regional in focus, bringing in topics, speakers and companies beyond India. Our headline speakers include **Arthur Chapin**, Expedia's Senior Vice President of Product and Design; **Rob Torres**, Google's MD for Travel; **Arjun Nohwar**, Business Head-APAC, Uber; **Oliver Hua**, MD-APAC, Booking.com; **Albert Pozo**, President, Amadeus Asia Pacific; among many others." APAC looks to be a promising bet, Lehmann explains, as Asian travel companies are taking on the established order within and beyond the region through fund raising, acquisitions and consolidation. "Add to that the ever-growing traveller population, which is both aspirational and digital, that makes the region an attractive bet for the industry. This year, customer acquisition will continue to dominate conversations in the digital travel space. Companies that remain well-capitalized will continue to be the leading brands in the space," he adds. ↴

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Industry seeks budget for infrastructure

The Union Budget is around the corner and the travel and hospitality industry remains cautiously optimistic even as they list down their expectations and the much-needed moves to boost the trade.

ANKITA SAXENA



► **Best Emerging Travel Portal (West 2015) — atlatravelsonline**

Incredible infrastructure before Incredible India

Hussain Patel, Director, atlatravelsonline, opines that there is a need for incredible infrastructure before the industry promotes Incredible India. He says, "The budget should definitely focus on creating more commercial domestic airports in India. An amount has to be allocated and streamlined in order to make travelling within India more affordable as many Indians now prefer to travel abroad rather than exploring India solely because travelling in India is very expensive." Patel also feels that simplification of taxation policies is the need of the hour. He also elaborates that allocating a higher budget for positioning India as a safe destination for travel is imperative. "Quicker and safer travel through trains and roads will also help connect the unexplored destinations in India," Patel adds.

► **Best OTA (West 2014) — Easy Trip Planners**

Spend more on infrastructure

"I am expecting that Budget 2017-18 will bring some good financial aid for the tourism industry in India for the safety of the tourists especially the international travelers coming to the country," says **Nishant Pitti**,

CEO and Co-founder, EaseMyTrip.com. Pitti further elaborates that he is hoping to see a budget which will offer a number of welfare measures and the government works on pro-poor schemes that can observe a surge in social spending outflows.

"I think the government should also spend on infrastructure development

because this is one of the drawbacks which results in limited growth of the Indian travel industry in comparison to other Asian countries," he adds.



► **Best Innovative Product (West 2014) — roomsXML Solutions**

Keep outbound in zero-rated category under GST

Prakash Bang, Founder and Executive Chairman, roomsXML Solutions Limited, is concerned about GST, which is expected to be rolled out this year from April. He feels that outbound travel must be placed in a zero-rated category under the GST bill. He says, "If this is not done, overseas online travel websites will just walk away with business from India as they wouldn't have to pay taxes under GST. The local players in the travel and hospitality industry will be very badly hurt, leading to loss of revenue, and more importantly, jobs!" Bang advises that there has to be a level-playing field in the online space of travel.



► **Best Sports Tourism Company (West 2015) — Sports Konnect**

GST tax-slab to decide the future of luxury tourism

Shashank Shekhar Mishra, Chief Executive Officer, Sports Konnect, feels that this year's budget will be quite interesting after the roller-coaster ride that the economy has undergone with impacts of demonetisation. As travel industry players, he identifies issues like easing of cash disposal, GST implementation and new or enhanced policies of digitalisation of payments as key areas which the industry is eying. "As players in a specific field like sports tourism, we are expecting initiatives to control rupee valuation to enhance outbound travel; detailed clarity on GST bill and its impact especially on the service industry; further boost to Government plans related with start-ups; Make in India initiatives as they can affect small industry players raising seed capital and thus contribute largely to the industry and looking forward to measures to promote and incentivise cashless transactions as due to large purchase values, products like luxury tourism may gain or lose big time," says Mishra.

► **Best MICE consolidator (East 2014) — Aaryan Leisure & Holidays**

Income tax and corporate tax slabs expected to be reduced

Sanjeev Mehra, Director, Aaryan Leisure & Holidays, says, "When you have seen a few Union Budgets you probably understand that this event can never be all sugar and spice and everything nice.

With announcements like demonetisation in November leading to massive inconvenience for the common people, we are assuming that there will be a toss-up between the personal income tax rates and corporate tax rates for a government which is still uncertain about the revenue mop-up this fiscal." Mehra further adds that he feels that

the government needs to focus on lowering corporate taxes to boost job creation. "For driving the consumption led demand, income tax for individuals should also be reduced along with upward revision in the exemption limit up to ₹ 5 lakh," he adds.



► **Best Customised Tour Operator (West 2015) — Hither and Thither Tours**

Tax incentives for agents to reduce cash transactions

Meghana Gautam, Owner, Hither and Thither Tours and Travels, feels that an announcement including some tax waiver for travellers or any tax incentive for travel agents will boost the tourism industry. "This will help in reducing cash transactions in the travel and tourism industry and will motivate many more travel agents and individuals to opt for cashless transactions." Gautam also feels that the industry needs to act strongly against misleading advertisements in the tourism industry and security of the tourists should be the first priority. She adds, "There is a need for more tourism focused and product-based educational seminars in the industry at this time."

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Say hello to Scotland, says trade

VisitScotland in collaboration with Etihad Airways conducted its five-city sales mission 2017, where it focused on generating awareness about the various products on offer in Scotland amongst travel agents and promoted Scotland as a standalone destination to visit in the coming year.



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EVENT TALK

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South African Tourism roadshow	Mumbai	3
Austrian Tourism Board roadshow	Mumbai	7
U&I Holidays- Bali roadshow	Chennai	6
U&I Holidays- Bali roadshow	Bengaluru	7
IBTM Arabia	Abu Dhabi, UAE	7-9
Austrian Tourism Board roadshow	Chennai	8
CAPA India Aviation Summit	Mumbai	8-9
Austrian Tourism Board roadshow	New Delhi	9
U&I Holidays- Bali roadshow	Kolkata	9
IITT 2017	Mumbai	9-11
Visit Indonesia roadshow	Mumbai	10
U&I Holidays-Bali roadshow	New Delhi	10
Visit Indonesia roadshow	New Delhi	13
U&I Holidays-Bali roadshow	Ahmedabad	13
U&I Holidays-Bali roadshow	Mumbai	14
SATTE	New Delhi	15-17
Israel Tourism roadshow	Chandigarh	18
Israel Tourism roadshow	Ahmedabad	20
Aviation Festival Asia	Singapore	21-22
Israel Tourism roadshow	Hyderabad	22
AIME 2017	Melbourne, Australia	21-22
OTM	Mumbai	21-23
ACE of M.I.C.E	Istanbul, Turkey	22-24
IAAPI Amusement Expo	Mumbai	22-24
Philippines roadshow	Ahmedabad	24
IITM	Kolkata	24-26
Mysore Travel Mart	Mysuru	24-26
Philippines roadshow	New Delhi	27
Mauritius Tourism roadshow	Chandigarh	27
TTF	New Delhi	27 Feb-1 Mar
ILTM Japan	Tokyo, Japan	27 Feb-1 Mar
Phocuswright India	Gurugram	28 Feb-2 Mar
Mauritius Tourism roadshow	Pune	28

MARCH 2017

Mauritius Tourism roadshow	Nagpur	1
International Confex 2017	Olympia, London	1-2
Mauritius Tourism roadshow	Hyderabad	3
ETAA Domestic Convention	Hyderabad	3-5
Mauritius Tourism roadshow	Kolkata	4
ITB Berlin	Berlin, Germany	8-12
India Travel Mart	Goa	12-14
OTOAI Turkey EduCon	Istanbul, Turkey	12-15
MITT	Moscow, Russia	14-16
Routes Asia	Okinawa, Japan	19-21
IT&CM China 2017	Shanghai, China	21-23
FICCI Digital Travel Hospitality & Innovation Summit	New Delhi	22-23
Paris workshop	Mumbai	22
Connections Luxury	Hyderabad	26-29
COTTM	Beijing, China	29-31
UITT	Kiev, Ukraine	29-31

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

ASSOCIATION TALK

Young Skål to be launched in Feb

Skål Delhi recently held a film screening for its members during which **Sanjay Datta**, President, Skål Delhi, revealed plans for Skål Ball and Young Skål club.



TT BUREAU

Skål Delhi recently held a screening of the documentary film *Blood Lion* for its members at the Roseate House, New Delhi. Datta claimed that the film, based on wildlife conservation, should be promoted by travel industry stakeholders. "This is one of the initiatives by Skål towards the environment. We are doing our bit by screening the movie for our members and make them aware," he said.

The next big event on the Skål calendar is the Skål Ball. "Skål Ball is scheduled to take place on February 25, for which our national committee is also coming.



Sanjay Datta
President
Skål Delhi

Skål Ball is scheduled to take place on February 25, for which our national committee is also coming

Last time, we had our international committee in attendance. Hopefully, we'd be able to put up a good show this year as well," claimed Datta.

Talking about the association, he said that they aim to be the number one club in the world, especially after the efforts they have put in the last few years. "We have done quite a lot in the last few years and we shall continue to do that. The new team is set to take over in March. Our endeavour is to make 2017 a good year for Skål Delhi, especially because the new team is going to take over with new ideas. There will be more members joining in as well," he added.

The formal date for the new team taking over will be disclosed in February. Datta informs, "The team is already in place. I will be there in the committee as the past president, but I am sure that the new and young team will continue doing wonders for the next few years." There will also be the Young Skål club, which will be formally announced very soon. "We have sent an email to Skål International for the necessary approvals. Once that is done, we will launch Young Skål, and I believe that it would be done by early February. Ankush Nijhawan has already been appointed as the Director of Young Skål, and with him being at the helm, we are expecting things to be great."

Cost hurts Haj & Umrah tours

Two main problems have been troubling the stakeholders in the Haj and Umrah market: price wars and passenger quota.

Participants	 ◀ Ebrahim Hasham Kolsawala Chairman, All India Haj & Umrah Tour Organisers Association	 ◀ Sunil Pal Sales Manager (Mumbai & Western India) Kuwait Airways	 ◀ Zakauallah Siddiqui CMD, Zaka Group of Travel & Cargo Companies, GSA-Saudi Arabian Airlines
Challenges	Airlines charge exorbitant fares during peak periods. The private tour operators reserve seats as per quota and their city of departure through airlines, scheduled and chartered flights.	Quota for Haj is announced late leading to uncertainty in the market. This leads to competition between airlines and a price war for private tour operators. There is also last moment cancellation by passengers due to improper documents.	As the KSA National carrier, our focus is to ensure that pilgrims are transported to and back from Haj safely, on time. This is a major operational undertaking and we try to minimise delays or losses.
Resolution	The government's focus should be to control airfares during the peak season. We are thankful for the recent increase in Haj quota and hope that the transfer of management of Haj Pilgrimage to the Minorities Affairs Ministry will prove successful.	It would be great if the government declared the date of Haj quota in advance. The total quota from the government and private tour operators is approximately 1.5 lakhs pax annually from India. The government should also monitor Haj and Umrah operators by releasing an authorised agent list.	We are very pleased with the efforts of the governments of both the countries. The governments of Saudi Arabia and India take good care of the pilgrims and extend all possible facilities. The travel agents can only tap recognised tour operators by the Ministry of Haj and Umrah and the quota allotted to them.

As told to Hazel Jain


Tamil Nadu Tourism Mart from May 20-22

■ Tourism Mart of Tamil Nadu is all set to be held from May 20-22 in Chennai. The event is aimed to bring together all stakeholders and other government departments

with travel agents and other tourism agencies. In addition, Tamil Nadu Tourism Department has launched a mobile app, called pinakin, which would provide informa-

tion on tourism in Tamil Nadu and will have audio facilities. The app is available in two languages – Tamil and English, and covers world heritage tourist sites like


Mamallapuram, Thanjavur Big Temple, Gangaikonda Cholapuram and Darasuram. The app can be downloaded for free from App Store and Playstore.




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Sabre Corporation

Singapore

Frank Trampert has been appointed as the Managing Director and Chief Commercial Officer for Sabre's hospitality business in Asia Pacific. In this role, Trampert will be responsible for Sabre Corporation financial performance, customer engagement and overall growth across the region. He has deep experience in both hospitality operations and technology in Asia Pacific including leadership positions with Wyndham Hotel Group in Hong Kong, Carlson Hotels across four continents, Brand Karma in Singapore, and most recently as the CEO for Tune Hotel Group in Malaysia.



Vivanta by Taj – President

Mumbai

Ashrafi Matcheswala joins Vivanta by Taj – President, Mumbai as General Manager. She joins the Vivanta's flagship hotel after completing a 6-year stint as General Manager at Taj Campton Place, San Francisco. In her new role, Ashrafi's responsibilities would entail overlooking the hotel operations. Ashrafi embarked on her journey with the Taj Group as a Catering Assistant in 1981 at the flagship Taj Mahal Palace and Towers and has been with the company ever since. With a career spanning over 35 years, Ashrafi has emerged as an oriented leader with excellent customer relations.



Nirvana Excursions

Mumbai

M. Kadiravan, former Associate VP of online booking platform 24x7booking.com, has joined Nirvana Excursions as Vice President, Corporate Division. He has also been solely responsible for setting up the holiday products division and designing all the new and innovative packages for the platform. Over the course of his career, Kadiravan has also been responsible for handling all-India sales and operations and product development for Via.com and handling the setup of new divisions for Cox & Kings India.



V Resorts

Delhi NCR

Dhaval Jani has joined V Resorts as Vice President of Sales and Marketing. Jani is a sales and growth-hacking expert with nearly a decade's experience in the travel industry. Over the better part of two decades, he has headed the sales and growth initiatives of illustrious names like MakeMyTrip, TATA Communications and Bharti Airtel. In his previous capacity as the Regional Head (Gujarat and Rajasthan) of MakeMyTrip. With an MBA from Sardar Patel University, Gujarat and an accelerated certification in management from St. Stephens, Delhi, he distinguished himself early in leadership capacities at Airtel and Tata Communications.



Alila Hotels & Resorts

Jaipur

Alila Hotels & Resorts has announced **Rachna Mehra** as the Director of Sales of Alila Fort Bishangarh, Jaipur. She will be responsible for Sales and Marketing at the 59-room boutique fortress. Mehra was previously Head of Sales, Leisure at Ananda in the Himalayas, where she successfully directed business development for the resort. She has previously worked with the Grand and the Shangri-La in New Delhi, the Oberoi and the Khyber Himalayan Resort.



Park Hyatt Goa Resort and Spa

Goa

Park Hyatt Goa Resort and Spa has appointed **Vinita Khar** as the Director of Sales and Marketing of the award-winning destination resort. She has been associated with the hospitality industry for more than a decade and brings with her insightful learning and experience gained across international brands. This is a homecoming of sorts for Khar as she is returning to the Hyatt family after 18 months during which she was part of the pre-opening and launch team of Conrad, Pune as Director of Sales and Marketing. Khar has been a part of the Hyatt family since 2007.



Akaryn Hotel Group

Mumbai

Keshwar Bhagat has been appointed as Director of Sales & Marketing - India by Akaryn Hotel Group (AHG), a luxury collection of Thailand based hotels. She is a familiar face on the tourism scene having been the intermediary between the travel trade fraternity and the various regions of France during her role as Promotions Manager for Atout France. Prior to this, Bhagat has worked with the French Government in various capacities with the Consulate General of France and Promosalons. She has a career spanning 12 years and will continue to be based in Mumbai to promote Akaryn's portfolio.



Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel Hyderabad Banjara Hills

Hyderabad

Chandan Kumar joins Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel Hyderabad Banjara Hills as Director of Sales & Marketing. He comes with over 12 years of experience. Previously he has held the post of Cluster Head of Sales at The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group, Bangalore. He has also worked with IHG-Holiday Inn, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, Green Park Hotels & Resorts. In his new role, Kumar will oversee overall sales & marketing for rooms, revenue management, catering & events, and providing strategic guidance to the team & the hotel for total revenue optimisation.



Lords Hotels & Resorts

Mumbai

Lords Hotels & Resorts has appointed **Jay Ladwa** as the new Assistant Manager-Marketing. An experienced professional in Brand Solutions and Marketing, he will assist the hospitality group in the development and implementation of overall marketing strategies. His core functions will be to engage with each of its properties across the country, and ideate and execute marketing strategies that drive revenue growth and brand visibility across the chain. Proficient in analysing brand communications and marketing needs of an enterprise, Ladwa has previously worked with several renowned brands in the course of his tenures with brand management and solutions companies.



TALKING People

Giulio D'Alberto, General Manager, The Chedi Mumbai, usually unwinds over a glass of Zacapa XO, an aged rum from Guatemala, while puffing a Cohiba Robusto, and melting those flavours with an Italian Gobino dark chocolate. He draws inspiration from his wife. "She has been enormously supportive and I am very fortunate to have someone like her, who drives me to succeed," he exclaims. He hasn't explored much of India but plans to visit the Taj Mahal in Agra.



Vistara CEO **Phee Teik Yeoh** recently visited Darjeeling and marvelled the quaint little town for her beauty. He showered praises on the hill station and particularly stated that he thoroughly enjoyed the chilly weather and of course, the momos. However, the winding roads did not sit well with the Kuala Lumpur-native and he spent the two-and-a-half hour ride from the airport on tenterhooks. "The ride was rough and even scary at some points since the roads were small. I kept my eyes shut," he exclaimed.



'Sound mind and a sound body' is what **Karina Lance**, Senior Manager, Sales and Convention Services, Dubai Business Events, lives by. "One needs to work out, exercise and eat healthy. My philosophy is whatever you put inside shows outside. I am very passion driven and that's how I am able to work. I love what I am doing and that's what keeps me going." While she has not travelled much within India, she has trotted the globe for work. "I like to go to Asian countries because of the mentality and the food."



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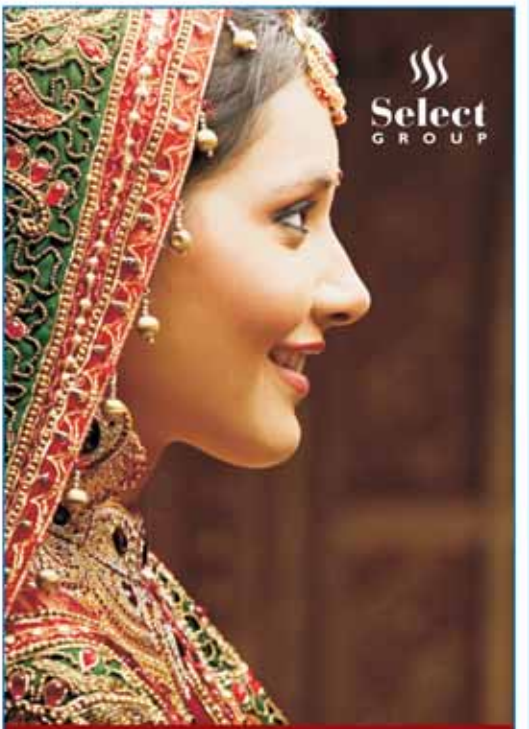


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NIKHILJUGAL DESIGN

Sarovar finds French suitor

After much speculation, Sarovar Hotels has sold majority of its stake to Louvre Hotels. The new deal will bring new management and arrangements. **Ajay K. Bakaya**, Executive Director, Sarovar Hotels, talks about how the deal is going to pan out.

NISHA VERMA

Q Why did you choose to go ahead with Louvre Hotels for this deal?

The predominant factor for us was the level of independence and autonomy that we will continue to have in terms of managing the Sarovar brand. Louvre, very clearly saw a group with a strong reputation, with people, integrity and the delivery of business results in us. Their entire discussion was based on the fact that they wanted the acquisition to be easier for us and take things to the next level. It was very clear that they didn't want the French to come and tell us how to run hotels. So, they took things forward the way we wanted and I think that was the major attraction.

In addition, Louvre, being a European brand with around 100 million loyalty members, gives us a global reach. I couldn't reach out to people around the world in terms of reservation system, as well as I can now. I couldn't offer a loyalty programme as well as I can offer now. I will have better use of technology. I couldn't negotiate across the table with the OTAs as I can possibly do now as well as in the future. All these factors came into the picture. If you do nothing you go backwards. You have to go forward, and hence we went ahead with the acquisition. It gives us the global reach, a reservation platform, much better client power and loyalty programmes. We will run it together as a team.

Q What would be your next step, now that the deal is finally sealed?

It was a laborious process to work out this acquisition and we did talk to a lot of people and international investors since the past few years. However, we were not in a hurry and neither were our existing investors. Now, we will spend the next month or two understanding each other and seeing what fits in where.

Q Would the new deal see Sarovar Hotels being rebranded?

We have three brands of Sarovar Hotels and we have these brands in Africa as well. We will continue to develop these brands, as well as the Louvre brands both in India and outside. We would be able to develop them stronger and faster than we have done in the past as we now

have a larger bouquet to choose from. Sarovar is going to grow in time to come, both in and out of India.

Q How would the deal pan out for the existing owners and shareholders?

The organisation, shareholders, and employees stay as they are, as we have more work to do now and in the years to come. The new board would have members from both Sarovar and Louvre. With Louvre having the majority stakes, they will have more members. We have many hotels in many cities and many hotels in the same cities as well, co-existing with our hotels as well as other international as well as Indian brands. We have al-

Q What happens to the Sarovar Loyalty programmes?

We haven't reached a decision on that as yet, but we will resolve the issue. Louvre has told us to carry on as we have done in the past. They have huge resources, and it would be stupid of us not to tap into these resources. However, on the ground there won't be too much of a difference in operations.

Q What are your expectations from the upcoming Budget?

My only expectation on anything to do with the government is the GST, which would come sooner or later. I think we are going to see some tax cuts. I don't think we are going to get anything fantastic for

“We have three brands of Sarovar Hotels and we have these brands in Africa as well. We will continue to develop these brands, as well as the Louvre brands both in India and outside. We would be able to develop them stronger and faster than we have done in the past as we now have a larger bouquet to choose from.”

Ajay K. Bakaya
Executive Director, Sarovar Hotels



ways managed to take our owners along. We haven't had a single problem with the owners, which is one of the reasons we are at this position today. We don't mess up an existing relationship to develop a fancy and a new one. However, we are sure that we have enough competence to have multiple brands across cities.

Q Louvre already exists in India with the Golden Tulip brand. How would it co-exist with Sarovar?

It will all be sold under one large umbrella. Both the brands have unique identities and we strongly believe that both the brands will exist and grow collectively. In addition to that, there might be many other brands that could also come to India. With Louvre, we will be focusing on mid-market, as that has been our strongest playing field. We will remain so in India and will develop more hotels in time to come.

the hospitality industry. Thus, I have very low expectations and that way we could be pleasantly surprised if something does happen. Right now, we are grappling with two things. First is a Supreme Court verdict, which says no alcohol licenses will be given 500 metres from highways. In Punjab every hotel comes in the 500 metres diameter of a highway. Even in Delhi, there are many hotels around ring road and NH8. Another issue is of service tax. I am sure we will tide over this crisis, but these are a few things we could have done without as well.

Merger Memo

- ↳ Sarovar will be sold under the Louvre umbrella along with Golden Tulip
- ↳ Louvre has around 100 million loyalty members globally



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Maiden Travel Experiential Show

Travel Show Business and Experiential, held on Dec 17 and 18 at Le Méridien Gurgaon, concentrated on MICE and Experiential segments and presented comprehensive business development opportunities between an exclusive list of exhibitors and buyers.



AHANA GURUNG

Travel Show's first ever Business and Experiential editions drew to a close with 650 meetings on each day conducted between 25 exhibitors and 25 buyers respectively. Representatives from destination management companies, corporate organisations, hotels, travel

agents and tour operators, among others, thronged the venue aiming to make the most of the closed-door event.

Exuberant about the overwhelming response, Punam Singh, Associate, Pacific Leisure Group, stated, "From the feedback, we received the show was a huge success," she said.

"We welcomed a lot of familiar faces but also some new ones and the platform helped them discover newer avenues to further their business. We will surely be back next year to bring more people together."

Sarika Bhambhani Rawal, General Manager, DDP Exhibitions, added, "The show is a diverse forum featuring the best of MICE and luxury brands. Successful meetings took place between selected exhibitors and top level buyers. Travel Show is an excellent

platform for companies which are looking to gain slice of demand or are looking to grow their existing share." The show was inaugurated by **Guldeep Singh Sahni**, President, Outbound Tour Operators Association of India; **Sushil Shamal Wadhwa**, Founder & CEO, Platinum World Group; **Priti Khanna**, Chairperson, MCI Management India, and **Shahnawaz Shah**, Manager Marketing, SKICC. A gala dinner was also held on the first day which gave new participants a chance to informally break the ice and let their hair down.

“Representatives from DMCs, corporates, hotels, travel agents and tour operators, among others, thronged the venue aiming to make the most of the closed-door event”

Travel Experiential Show

Vikramajit
CHAIRMAN

Sanjeet
PUBLISHER & EDITOR

Peden Doma Bhutia
MANAGING EDITOR

Ruchi J Singh
DESK EDITOR

Shivani Kaul
ASST. DESK EDITOR

EDITORIAL
Ahana Gurung

ADVERTISING
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ADVERTISEMENT
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DESIGN
Nityanand Misra

PRODUCTION
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B2B meetings

Focused on experiential travel

The first Travel Experiential Show gave the exclusive list of buyers and exhibitors an opportunity for serious B2B meetings and the know-how to cater to existing and potential clients.

Exhibitors



Shah Nawaz Shah
Marketing Manager
SKICC, J&K Tourism

“ This is one of the best travel shows that I have attended as I was able to have a number of serious B2B meetings here. SKICC is an international convention centre where one can organise national and international events, conferences, exhibitions. It has everything an international convention centre should have. Kashmir, as a destination itself, presents many options to travellers thanks to its climate and amalgamation of cultures. There is no dearth of unique experiences here and we are aiming to promote J&K as a MICE and golf destination.”



Pooja Sabharwal
Account Director
Destination Canada

“ The Travel Experiential Show was excellent and is a great platform to meet real time clients and get first-hand information. It’s an exceptional way to explore interaction opportunities with them and to showcase the unique experiences of our destination. I will surely be leveraging a lot of contacts from this. Our destination is doing really well and in 2017, we are only expecting to grow more. Particularly for experiential travel, Canada is a complete destination with all sorts of unique and exclusive activities to offer. 2016 fared well for us and we are hoping for double digit growth this year.”



Barun Gupta
Account Director,
Global Sales, Marriott
International

“ It has always been exciting to participate in travel shows, and we are very happy to be here. We are one of the top operators when it comes to outbound MICE from India. A new trend that I can see is a lot of religious MICE movements happening out of India. 2017 will be a very exciting year in terms of corporate MICE. Numbers are going to go up and corporates will play a very key role in terms of developing new destinations. A set of new destinations are going to evolve. Last year we did a big movement to Hawaii out of India.”

“ The show has been very fruitful; we got to meet a lot of buyers, especially from the corporate segment. Most of them are from Mumbai, which was very helpful as we are based out here in Delhi. In 2017, we are targeting MICE on a large scale, because we have had increased flight connectivity, especially from Delhi now. Clients have been enquiring about newer destinations. The experiential travel sector is on an upward course and is going to increase even more in the years to come.”



Sandeep Dutta
Marketing Manager
Korea Tourism Organisation

“ It has been a wonderful experience to participate in the show. We have been connecting and making friends from this event. We are majorly into MICE and weddings and we have also opened up FIT business. We will soon launch our membership scheme targeting the ultra-luxury traveller. 2017 looks good with people still willing to spend and the segment with the most prospects is the domestic sector which is expected to grow even further. Also, since there are several long weekends this year, we are expecting a good turnout.”



Roli Sinha Dhar
Head Sales, North India,
Aamby Valley City

“ This has turned out to be a very well organised show where everything is in order and the appointments have been pre-planned for our convenience. Everyone who participated have shown a genuine interest in the products offered which goes to show the seriousness they’ve come with. Even before the show started, I received so many questions! 2017 looks good for us since we offer value for money experiences and the fact that the euro is stabilising is an added factor for us.”



Christine Mukharji
Marketing Manager,
Austrian National Tourism
Office



Sarabjeet Singh
Sales & Marketing
Manager, Namah
(DS Hospitality Group)

“ I would like to increase my corporate database and form new engagements which is why we have participated in Travel Show. This show has been a good initiative and has given us a good opportunity to interact with the right crowd that we’ve been targeting. We are living in the era of experiential travel. Which is why at Namah, guest engagement and experience is very important for us. Experiential travel is the biggest trend currently and predict more growth for the segment this year.”



Shashank Rana
Chief Enabler-Indian
Subcontinent, DDP Wetu

“ We met a lot of potential clients and had face-to-face interactions which allowed a good explanation of what we had to offer. With experiential travel rapidly expanding, travel providers are looking for ways to be more relevant to their clients’ demands and offer personalisation and that’s where Wetu steps in with the ability to curate and customise itineraries. For 2017, we will lay greater emphasis on outbound travel. We have expanded our portfolio of destinations and now offer data for 75 countries so with outbound growing as well, the prospects look good.”



Mohit Prakash
Director-Sales
Oberoi Hotels & Resorts

“ The pre-set appointments at the show have been very useful for us to get an understanding of what the clients are looking for, and saves a lot of time since it is connecting us to all the right people. We hope to turnaround a lot of business from here. The experiential sector is growing thanks to the ‘new Indians’ who have a large amount of disposable income and are travelling constantly. I feel that hotels play a very prominent role in this segment. 2017 looks very busy for us; we will be launching around three properties and expanding internationally as well as in India.”

“ With the property concentrating on luxury and authentic experiences, Travel Experiential Show was the perfect platform to participate in. The fact that the show was entirely focused on experiential travel was the cherry on the cake and we got to meet many new buyers. 2017 looks to show a trend where largely travel within India is going to increase which I look at as huge opportunities given the economic conditions. We are very optimistic about the New Year and hope more Indians realise the value within the country and travel to more lesser-known destinations. While experiential travel is growing in a big way, I also see health and wellness seeing a boost as more Indians opt for wellness vacations.”



Urvashi Mehta
General Manager-Sales
and Marketing
Carnoustie Resorts

“ The kind of buyers that the show has collated have been extremely useful for us. 2016 has been a very productive year for Seychelles. We have broken into the official top 10 source markets for the tourism board and hope that this year, the momentum remains the same. We crossed 10,000 arrivals from India to Seychelles and are looking at a 20 per cent increase. The fact that Seychelles is doing so well in the Indian market is proof that the experiential travel segment is the future because the country is all about experiences and in just three years since we opened an office in India, the response has been phenomenal.”



S. Aswini Krishna
Marketing Manager,
Seychelles Tourism Board

Take a



GLIMPSE



Exhibitors



Aakriti Batra
Vice President
Premier Hotels of Asia

“ We represent some very exceptional properties in India such as Castle Mandawa, The Black-buck Lodge, The Bison Resort, to name a few, and we’ve received great feedback from some of the buyers at Travel Experiential Show. It was a very fruitful day for us since most of them get to meet chain hotels more often. We were introduced to several new potential clients that we had not really met before so we made the most of

it. The properties under our portfolio are targeted at the high-end luxury leisure groups and family groups, and offers an out-of-the-box experience in an authentic setting.”



Amit Walia
Sales Manager-Global
Marriott International

“ We generally get to meet intermediary partners especially for global business and hardly interact with the end client. This show gave us a chance to meet them directly and propose options face-to-face so there was more room to exchange ideas. Marriott offers a wide selection when it comes to the type of hotel – we cater to budget as well as luxury properties that allows us a greater reach. In India, experiential travel is rapidly

developing as one of the most popular ways to explore a destination. The best part about the Indian customer is that they are now very open to newer destinations.”



Shweta Arora
Sales Manager, Taj Hotels,
Resorts and Palaces

“ The show was very well supervised and pre-scheduled meetings made the whole process very organised. We got to meet a lot of prospective clients during the day and there was a good turnout as well. The fact that we got to meet people who were all about getting down to business really saved a lot of time. In my opinion, the experiential segment is growing day by day and the Indian market has evolved by leaps and bounds. They

want to experience newer destinations and activities, and have progressed beyond the usual Goa and Kerala. Many are also more adventurous and look for novelty in the experiences and want to learn about the culture of the area.”

“ Participating in this show has been an amazing experience. We’ve had some very positive enquiries wherein the closed-door format has really helped us zero in on worthwhile clients. A lot of them were very enthusiastic about travelling to or introducing the Philippines to their clients and making groups happen. As experiential travellers increase in numbers especially in India, we want to tap this segment as the Philippines provides the perfect array of options for high-end luxury with a lot of water sports and other activities as well as opportunities to get acquainted with the local culture. This year, we are aiming at a growth rate of 25 per cent which we are hopeful of achieving.”



Pooja Jain
Account Director
Philippines Tourism

“ Through the show, we met with a lot of buyers eager to know more about Munich as a destination and explore the type of options offered. The Travel Show was well planned and got everyone together to discuss business. It propagated an exchange of first-hand information which was the best part about the show. Munich is a very vibrant city. It caters to all age groups where we have a lot of activities, be it for leisure, luxury, or MICE. Through the show we not only interacted with our existing clients but also got an opportunity to interact with prospective ones during the day, enabling good business.”



Minoti Gupta
Sales Manager
Munich Tourism

“ It has been a good experience and we built many new contacts. There was a good number of potential clients with whom we will take things forward and was very productive. 2017 looks good; there is some sort of hesitation in people’s minds which we need to change but apart from that, mid-year should be a better phase. Experiential travel is where the market is heading and it’s only going to get bigger. There are a lot of people in India who are aware of what they want and what exactly is available in the market, so they demand more experiential holidays and experiences these days. Run of the mill activities are going downhill since it’s all about trying new things.”



Bhupesh Kumar
Director
The Lux Hotels



Abhijeet Singh
Tourism Manager
Holland Tourism

“ Holland has seen a 30 per cent Y-o-Y growth in Indian arrivals and that has only encouraged us to multiply our marketing efforts. This explains why we have participated in Travel Experiential Show because we go back with new trade relations and new contacts who are willing to consider Holland as part of their upcoming plans. We are portraying Holland as a standalone destination in Europe this year. We hope that through this show we translate meetings into business and be able to promote the destination and the amazing products it has on offer.”



Mohit Batra
India Representative
Scandinavian Tourist
Board

“ The Scandinavian region is one of the most interesting and has a lot to offer. We have history and culture where Denmark is one of the first monarchies of the world. We’ve got architecture and minimalistic design, sustainability, the Midnight Sun, the Northern Lights, the Viking culture, etc. and I don’t think any other region is as diverse. We’ve also got very good connectivity between Copenhagen, Stockholm and Oslo, places which have lots of aspects to inspire travellers. A lot of the buyers I met through Travel Experiential Show seem inspired by the information they have received for experiential travel and I’m hopeful about a good outcome from this. I also got to meet a lot of buyers for the very first time so I think this show was a very good idea.”

Buyers



Nishu S. Galhotra
Chief travel designer,
Founder & CEO, Arrmaani
Destination Management

“ Being a closed-door event, it was very convenient and meetings were conducted in full swing. The one-on-one interaction regarding upgrades to the product, services and experiences they could offer to our travellers were quite impressive and brought innovative ideas of selling to us. Experimental holiday is evolving in a very creative way today where travellers need authentic experiences more than the amenities and attractions,

beyond the pictures to must see. Real life experience has become the most dominant and compelling factor for people to travel. Travellers want to experience the city the way locals do and such platforms empower sellers like us to do justice with this inevitable thought and desire of travellers.”



Radhika Khanijo
Private Travel Designer,
Founder & Managing
Director, Welgrow Travels

“ Travel Experiential Show opened a new window for exhibitors and buyers of same calibre to come under one platform to develop experiential journey for clients. The dedicated team had definitely put a lot of hard work and this will help enrolling travel designers with a proven track record to sell the right product. Since the last two years, experiential travel is evolving by the day. Clients are looking for a mix of everything, from safaris to staying in game reserve or experiencing vineyards and stay on a private island. The growth in multi-generation travel is further impacting experiential travel. Client attitudes are changing, and people want to travel more, on a deeper emotional and more personal level.”



Sanjay Kothari
Director & CEO
Just Holidays

“ The show was quite fruitful. Because our industry is huge, even if we interact with the same set of people time and again, we keep learning on what new to offer to our clients. We had a wedding in hand in June and I interacted with various hotels to know what options they have to offer. Also, interaction with various tourism boards is always helpful since they promote themselves in different ways in different forums. Holidays are moving from a combination of flights + visas + hotels + transportation to purely experience. Because of a gamut of information available online, people are anticipating and finalising experience rather than services. Hence, success in the coming year and all times to come will be more about managing people’s ‘anticipation’ of their holidays.”

Buyers



Nagsri Prasad Sashidhar
Senior Consultant –
Leisure Division
Mercury Travels

“There are very few shows in India that are about getting the work done and this is one such event that has managed to make it purely about business. Additionally, the fact that this is purely for experiential is a plus point since nowadays there are many Indians who are looking into experience-based holidays. Luxury does not only mean staying in the best hotels — it means availing the best experiences, so it works well and it's good to be aware of what is latest in the market and the trends.”



Mahendra Vakharia
Managing Director
Pathfinders Holidays

“This particular show was a brilliant concept, very precise, concise and to the point. No time was wasted and I'm glad to be a part of this. We are focusing on a lot on individual and family travel where we can create some new experiences and that is what we want to take away from this. The Northern Lights experience in Canada seemed very interesting and is something that my clients would like. Such niche shows are very important for the segment to grow since meeting the right people under the right banner is extremely crucial.”



Kaushal Bhuva
Managing Director
World of Vacations

“It has been a fantastic platform for me to explore hidden gems in the Indian market since we don't really get a chance to interact or discover such clients otherwise. We have been doing quite a lot of safaris lately and are big on Africa, and now feel that Ras Al Khaimah would be a good pick for my clients as well. Last year was pretty good but things slacked towards the end of the year due to demonetisation but we'll overcome that this year. Our focus this year will also increase on the inbound market for which we are on the lookout for boutique properties and homestays.”

“Attending the show was a very good idea because here I was exposed to different products. The North East is all about ecotourism and sustainable development. Whatever we do, we passionately believe in community development and for experiential travellers, what better place to explore than the North East. Majuli river island has been voted as the largest river island, we have river cruises on the Brahmaputra and cottages on the banks for an unparalleled experience. This year, the market is only poised to grow.”



Jahnabi Phookan
Director
Jungle Travels India

“This was a fantastic event to network and connect with many new people and build business prospects along the way. I was very happy to meet some interesting tourism boards at the show and expose oneself to new locations. We are doing luxury in different ways – farmstays in New Zealand, homestays in Indonesia, etc. This year looks pretty exciting and I don't think demonetisation is going to affect us in the long run. Nothing is going to stop people from travelling or spending, even if it is in a different manner.”



Mayank Marda
Executive Director
Vibrant Holiday
Destinations

“The show followed a very good format with focused meetings with the exhibitors. Some things you cannot obtain from the Internet and that's where such shows come handy. Indian boutique properties were very interesting and I look forward to adding such products as well. We've provided different experiences based on the location but the most popular have been New Zealand and Bali. Almost 80 per cent of our clientele are honeymooners and they have shown a tendency to prefer short-haul destinations and pick some unique activities.”



Priyank Shah
Founder & CEO,
Glassapple The Travel
Lounge



Sunil Bijlani
CEO
Vacation World

“It was a good and fruitful show although I may have known few suppliers from before but interacting with them gave me an opportunity to convey what we were looking for in this market. I was very glad to connect with Scandinavian Tourism and Canada because we never had the opportunity earlier to connect with them directly. For the last seven years, we have been catering to this segment. I feel the younger generation should be well-informed and educated about what experiential travel really is since they will take the industry forward.”



Ketaki Kapur Pantle
Co-founder, Serendipity &
Beyond Tours

“The show did a great job of focusing on connecting us agents with principals and suppliers offering products that could enhance the travel experience. It is these products that help us curate personalised itineraries based on the client's preferences whether they be wine and culinary tours, language immersion tours, or focused on art and culture. The show helped in staying ahead of the OTAs in terms of content and inclusions. The trend of 'unplugged' holidays, of visiting unique and unexplored areas, away from the madding crowds – is one we are focusing on for 2017.”



N. S. N. Mohan
Chief Executive Officer
Kennedy Holidays

“The show was an eye-opener and I got to meet some very beneficial representatives like tourism boards which are essential gateways for outbound travel. It had the perfect blend of hotels and resorts, DMCs, tourism boards, etc. Meeting fellow industry colleagues and getting the latest updates was very educational and helped us to be on top of things. While we do travel to most of the international luxury marts, it was good to participate in an Indian one which goes to show how well the trend is catching up and growing.”

“The show had a good mix of exhibitors and buyers. Most of the tourism boards and premium hotel brands were quite relevant to us. We specialise in the couples-only holiday segment, mostly honeymoons, anniversaries and babymoons so in this regard, the tourism boards and DMCs we met will be of great use. Travel has always been sought after among Indians and with flight tickets getting cheaper, the industry is seeing a good boost.”



Pritish Shah
CEO
A Travel Duet

“The show gave us an insight into upcoming destinations and properties and their unique offerings. Since we offer luxury and experiential travel, we emphasize on lifetime experiences at each destination/property for our clients. Experiential travel has come of age with the maturing of Indian travellers. They look at fulfilment rather than just going to a place and ticking it off their bucket list. You get sports enthusiasts, music lovers, adventure seekers, shoppers, nature lovers, art and culture workshop travel and so many others.”



Swaytank Maheshwari
Director
Rainbow Vacations

“This was a very good platform especially since we are based in Ahmedabad and we got good networking opportunities. There is a bit of lull currently, but we are expecting things to get better soon since people won't stop travelling. There are huge opportunities for growth especially in the luxury sector. The concept of experiential travel is fast catching up. We get queries for off-beat activities which used to be very rare in the Gujarat market. Travellers are more aware about different experiences now and don't hesitate in experimenting.”



Shrenal Shah
Managing Partner
C4N Holidays



Manish Kriplani
Chief Executive Officer
Baywatch Travels

“The buyers and sellers at the Travel Experiential Show were very mature. We're not talking basics here, rather good value discussions took place. Speaking about experiential travel, I expect it to increase manifolds since travellers are only becoming more inquisitive. The more they travel and actually discover a destination, the trend continues. It has picked up but there is more in store for the segment. Such shows help foster growth by helping build connections where one gets to learn a lot. I'm quite positive about 2017 and what it has to bring, despite everything that's going on. We'll just have to wait and see what other hurdles come in the way.”



Sunnil Uparie
Director
Luxury Life Holidays

“This was a very well selected event with personalised one-on-one meetings. My main reason for participating was to explore newer destinations, particularly Canada and the Philippines, and it has been very helpful that way. Our main focus is on experiential products so this was the perfect and most apt platform to be in. There are other very interesting boutique properties that caught my interest as well so that was a bonus. Experiential travel is one segment where roadblocks are not very effective because if the client wants to travel, they will do so. Places such as Budapest, Bulgaria and Greece have been some of the most popular ones for unique activities.”

Travel

SHOW

Announcing Event Dates For Travel Shows In 2017!

Experiential
SHOW
Beyond Luxury

April 8-9, 2017 (Sat - Sun)
Delhi NCR

Business
SHOW
Beyond M.I.C.E

December 2-3, 2017 (Sat - Sun)
Delhi NCR

Technology
SHOW

September 2-3, 2017 (Sat - Sun)
Delhi NCR

Wedding
SHOW

July 8-9, 2017 (Sat - Sun)
Delhi NCR

Exhibitors are invited to save the dates!

Categories of Exhibitors:

- Tourist Offices – both international & domestic • Hospitality chains – Both international & domestic
- Boutique – Stand alone properties • Homestays, unusual stays • Convention Centres – Venues • International DMC's
- Event Managers • Airlines • Spa & Wellbeing • Cruises – Yachts & Helicopter hire – Bespoke experiences !!! • Ground transportation
- Attractions – Shopping, Adventure, Wildlife Destinations • Special Interest – Culinary, Historical, Heritage, Walking tours
- Music Fests – Art & Culture • Wedding vendors in all categories • Entertainment providers

Travel Show Exhibitors*



Interested Exhibitors and Buyers, please contact:
Punam Singh: punam@travelshow.world, +91 98111 58785
Sarika Bhambhani Rawal: sarika@travelshow.world +91 98101 91852



*Our exhibitors for the year 2016.