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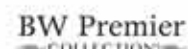
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# Maya dazzles in Ahmedabad

The fourth edition of the West India Travel Awards recognised and celebrated the achievers in the travel and tourism industry of the western region at Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre recently. The award winners were applauded for the efforts undertaken to develop tourism and hospitality over the years.



Mahesh Shirodkar, Managing Director, Tamarind Global was DDP Game Changer



Mahendra Vakharia, Managing Director, Pathfinders Holidays was DDP Trailblazer

## NE one of MOT's focus at WTM

World Travel Market London, a global event, responsible for reshaping the travel industry of the world is finally here. **Rashmi Verma**, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India, who will be leading the Indian contingent at WTM, tells us how they are gearing up for their participation at this event from November 6-8.



NIKHIL ANAND

World Travel Market London, the leading global event for the travel industry is in its 37th year and remains as prominent and as opportunistic as ever for all the participating nations including India. The three-day mega event will bring together almost 5000 exhibiting destinations, technology and private sector compa-

nies to find and network with nearly 51,000 travel professionals, key industry buyers, journalists, digital influencers, students and tourism ministers. Given the event's proportion and proposition, India has always looked to put their best foot forward to attract bigger tourist numbers into the country. This year, leading India's delegation at the World Travel Market London will be Rashmi

Verma, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, who will be accompanied by Meenakshi Sharma,



Rashmi Verma  
Secretary  
Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India

Additional Director General, amongst other ministry officials. The Indian delegation will also boast of a huge par-

ticipation from the industry and the state governments to give a greater impetus to tourism in the country. Speaking about the focus areas for the delegation, Verma said, "This time the nucleus will be sustainable tourism and we will be showcasing niche products to our key and emerging markets. While UK and other European countries have always been an extremely important source market for us, the fact that WTM London will ensure participation from all over the world, makes it a very key activity for us."

In recognition of the presented platform, India has always seen a strong representation of state governments and industry rep-

resentatives not just under the Incredible India pavilion of the Ministry of Tourism, but also in their own might in the form of independent pavilions. Elaborating on the efforts in place to further substantiate India's position in the global market as a destination of choice amongst international travellers, she further added "This year, we will be hosting an India evening, and this will help give a greater perspective into India to the world representations who will be present at WTM. Apart from this there is going to be a separate North East evening as well, which will focus on fulfilling the tourism potential in the region by giving it the advertisement it needs at the global level."

The Ministry will also play host to all the key tour operators and media representatives that it has called upon to showcase some of the new initiatives of the government of India in the tourism sector and also in the North East sector. Through these direct interactions with the global travel fraternity and media, the ministry is hoping to achieve a lot of mileage and interest into India as a destination.

Post WTM London, the Ministry of Tourism will also be conducting roadshows in key markets like Europe and Canada along with emerging markets like Russia and Japan. The roadshows will commence from the end of November and will span across till March 2018.

### India is partner country @ FITUR

India is the partner country at FITUR 2018, which is set to be held from January 17-21 in Madrid, Spain. Hence, we will be participating in a very big way and the campaign has also been planned for the event in and around FITUR exhibition. We have many plans for it. Since the clientele in Spain is different, we will look at the countries which are participating at FITUR and offer our niche products as per their specific markets.

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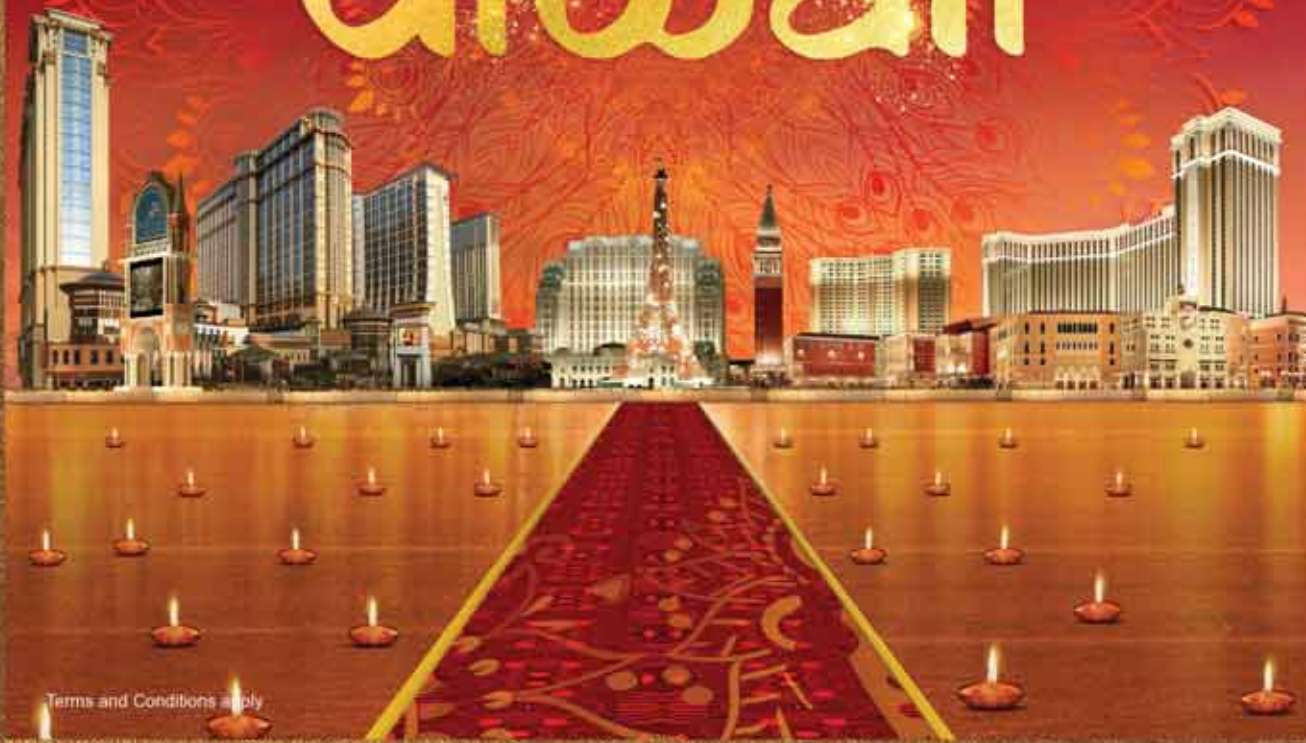
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## FAITH appoints new members

The Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality elected its team of office bearers. **Nakul Anand**, Executive Director, ITC, remains Chairman, while **Subhash Goyal** has been elected its Secretary.

TT BUREAU

FAITH has elected its new team of office bearers with **Nakul Anand**, Executive Director, ITC, reinstated as the Chairman. Anand was represented by Hotel Association of India (HAI), while **Akshay Kumar**, CEO, Mercury Himalayan Explorations, nominated by Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) is the new Vice-Chairman. The apex association has created an additional position of Vice-Chairman, and has elected **Sunil Kumar R**, CEO, Travel World, for the same. Kumar was nominated by Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), of which he is also the President. **Subhash Goyal**, Chairman, STIC Travel Group, nominated by Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) is the new Honorary Secretary

of the organisation, while **Garish Oberoi**, Partner, Hotel Oberoi Anand, who was nominated by Federation of Hotels and Restaurant Association of India (FHRAI), has been declared the Treasurer. **Aashish Gupta** continues his role as the Consulting CEO of FAITH.

The election of the team was done unanimously by all the 10 member associations of FAITH. Goyal, said, "As far as the new team is concerned, we are already on the right track so we'll continue with what we are doing. However, I will personally make an endeavour to closely work with the state tourism boards, state governments and also the central government, so that we may further carry on with using tourism for economic transformation of the



**Subhash Goyal**  
Chairman, STIC Travel Group,  
India Travel Award Winner

country. We also know that Indian tourism industry is facing various challenges and problems, so FAITH being the apex organisation, will be taking up all those issues as well. We are also planning to start All India Convention, which will be the mother of all conventions where we would like all the ten associations to get involved and we will be

requesting the President to inaugurate the same."

Talking about the path ahead, he informed that they are planning to form an organising committee for the convention, which will write to the president. "We will also bring out the FAITH newsletter, which will be circulated to the members. We want the taxation on tourism industry to not be more than 5 per cent, whether they are tour operators, hotels or transporters, we should be able to take input credits so that net effect of the taxes on the package or the product is not more than the 5 per cent. We will also set up GET INDIA Exhibition once again. Last time, Prime Minister of India attended it and we are planning another big exhibition jointly with Ministry of Commerce focusing on tourism," he added.

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# TRAVELTALK

## VIEWPOINT

### The WTM call

A big contingent from India led by Rashmi Verma, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India, is heading to London, for the much-awaited World Travel Market. UK is the biggest market for India inbound, and hence WTM holds a special place for inbound tour operators. In fact, last year, India was the premium partner at the event and had a plethora of presentations to showcase at the event. With the new Incredible India 2.0 campaign and a fresh website, India is all geared up to welcome more tourists. The inbound operators are also looking forward for the same to attract business. However, there are challenges that they are facing currently, the most crucial one being the new GST regime, which has now made packages more costly, especially when it is compared to other neighbouring countries. Infrastructure, monument fee and upkeep are other issues, but the ministry is taking them up in a big way and we can expect better days to come for this sector. With more and new tourism products being developed in India, the future of Indian tourism would only shine and we hope that it happens sooner.

### MICE rules the roost

The year 2017 has been a taxing year for the hospitality industry with major blows like demonetisation, followed by liquor ban and GST as the final one. However, the industry still managed to stay afloat with some hotels recording profits in the last quarter. While many attribute this on their relationships with the guests as well as the service, a lot of credit does go to the corporate and MICE sector. In fact, Indian MICE and wedding business is not only keeping the domestic hotels afloat but also catching the fancy of hotels and destinations internationally. Brands known in the country as well as new names are entering the Indian market to woo not only FITs and family business, but also to get a chunk of the big MICE pie that India is currently offering. In fact, they are adopting marketing techniques, including Fam trips for corporates, networking and educational sessions for them. From what is projected, Indian MICE is only going to get bigger with more multinational companies and industry giving way to more jobs in the country.

# Make Incredible India a reality

India has now released the second edition of the most well-recognised destination campaign in the world. But it will benefit from tweaking the gaps that have widened over the years. Excerpts from World Economic Forum's white paper titled 'Incredible India 2.0 India's \$20 Billion Tourism Opportunity'.

World Economic Forum's (WEF) white paper on India's tourism industry released in September 2017 outlines the country's US\$ 20 billion tourism opportunity that lies underneath the issues that needs resolution. Its Global Competitiveness Report 2016-17 ranks India at 39<sup>th</sup> position, bringing it up 16 places in each of the last two years. India has shown improvement across the board and particularly in goods market efficiency, business sophistication and innovation.

The research conducted by Bain & Company estimated that this increase in tourism receipts would come from a growth in international arrivals to 20 million in to India. To realise its objective of welcoming over 15 million foreign tourists by 2025 and becoming the largest aviation market by 2030, India needs to focus on its opportunities and understand its current limitations.

Already endowed with incredible natural beauty and cultural heritage, India must foster an enabling environment for the industry to prosper. This White Paper puts forward recommendations, highlighting the importance of public-private cooperation in execution.

#### A national tourism board

A proposal to create a Tourism Board is put forward. Currently, India's travel and tourism industry lacks a unified public-private body to represent the industry. India has more than 50 active foreign tourism boards, yet the country does not have its own tourism board. While it has a number of industry associa-

tions and state-level bodies, no public-private organisation represents the industry, and these bodies work independently to drive forward their own agenda. No single ministry is responsible for all the policies affecting the aviation, travel and tourism industry. The Ministries of Civil Aviation, Tourism, Home Affairs, Culture and Road Transport and Highways, among others, have all been actively involved in the industry's policies.

This board could support enhancing industry co-ordination, joint messaging, building Indian talent, driving forward industry-wide policy recommendations and enacting change through policies, as well as public-private policy initiatives and small and medium-sized enterprise growth, while considering India's reality and best practices from other countries.

#### Survey on the Perception of India as a Destination

Response	%
Diversity	25
Culture	15
Incredible	13
Spirituality/Mystique	7
Challenges (unsafe, inequality, congested, poverty)	7
Vibrant	6
Chaotic	5
Gastronomy	5
Development/Growth	5
History	4
Cheap	3
Specific sites (Taj Mahal, Goa)	3
Belongingness/Pride	2

Bain & Company undertook a seven-economy analysis, investigating the governance and organisation

have been actively involved in the creation of the Incredible India 2.0 report. On the basis of the report, we hope to have discussions with a wider range of stakeholders to consider how to best support India in achieving its goals of becoming the largest aviation market by 2030 and welcome over 15 million tourists by 2025."

of tourism boards, their roles and activities, as well as outcomes. Their research found that most tourism boards include a mix of public and private-sector representatives.

This White Paper also recommends a state-level approach, with a proposal to create a pilot in a state that

#### Trending now

The new single Goods and Services Tax (GST), applied on the Indian hospitality market since July 1, 2017, is likely to be highly detrimental to the industry. The GST proposed in India is the highest across a broad range of markets in the region, amounting to 28 per cent for hotels with room tariffs

#### Comparative Tax Rates in Asia-Pacific

Country	Rooms(%)	Food & Beverage and Catering Outlet (%)
India	28/18/12	18
Australia	10	10
Singapore	7	7
Thailand	7	7
Indonesia/Bali	10	10
China	6	6
Malaysia	6	6
Vietnam	10	10

has traditionally welcomed fewer international visitors, and to develop a few of its destinations via public-private cooperation.

#### Digital platform

Incredible India 2.0 must engage travellers on Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, among other digital platforms. It should consider which influencers will inspire people to visit India. As India prepares to launch Incredible India 2.0 with a budget of over \$46 million, it will need to determine its message to the world, define its audience, messenger and channels of communication, and forge partnerships to ensure success.

of US\$115 and above. Given that, over 70 per cent of hotel accommodation is consumed by business travellers and the market still faces significant room shortages, hotel rooms are not a luxury.

Creating a powerful narrative is not enough. India must establish an enabling environment for business development and for both domestic and foreign investment. As shown in the table and highlighted specifically by India's ranking on the first five indicators, emphasis should be put on ensuring that India's environment supports the development of the industry.

#### Travel and Tourism competitiveness Ranking: Countries Compared

Pillar	India	China	Singapore	Thailand
Global Ranking	40	15	13	34
Business Environment	89	92	2	45
Safety and Security	114	95	6	118
Health and Hygiene	104	67	62	90
Human Resources and Labour Market	87	25	5	40
ICT Readiness	112	64	14	58
Prioritisation of Travel and Tourism	104	50	2	34
International Openness	55	72	1	52
Price Competitiveness	10	38	91	18
Environmental Sustainability	134	132	51	122
Air Transport Infrastructure	32	24	6	20
Ground and Port Infrastructure	29	44	2	72
Tourist Service Infrastructure	110	92	24	16
Natural Resources	24	5	103	7
Cultural Resources and Business Travel	9	1	28	37



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# Synergy works at WTM London

The Ministers' Destination Investment Symposium at WTM London will bring together international investors, government ministers and destinations to explore possible ways of working in tandem with each other for growth of the global tourism economy.



TT BUREAU

The event is being organised in collaboration with International Hotel Investment Forum Berlin (IHIF) and UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). Building on WTM London's expertise within the international travel industry and IHIF Berlin's leadership in hospitality investment, the symposium is open to investors, ministers and their aides, city mayors, tourism board directors and senior government officials. At the event, two panel debates will take place – the Investors' Panel and the Ministers' Panel – plus a keynote speech on sustainable development. The Investors' Panel will explore what makes a destination attractive to investors and travel trends that will affect future investment decisions. The Ministers' Panel will look at how governments work with the travel and hospitality sector to make destinations successful, and it will consider issues such as infrastructure, regulations and public-private partnerships. **Simon Press**, Senior Director, WTM London,



commented, "We're very proud to be working with IHIF Berlin and the UNWTO on these important questions. IHIF Berlin is very influential within the hospitality industry and together with the UNWTO, our symposium can address crucial issues surrounding the development of destinations, which in turn can generate tremendous economic benefits and employment opportunities. High-level decisions about developing destinations can commit millions of pounds to long-term projects, so it's crucial that investors and ministers have a forum to discuss trends and ideas, and network with each other."

Also, how destinations market themselves as social media grows in importance, will be a key topic at WTM London 2017. This discussion is expected to be crucial for marketing professionals as the panel would discuss the topic - 'Is influencer marketing the way forward for destinations?' The following discussions will look at the topic with a different angle. 'Why destinations have to change how they sell themselves' will examine how Airbnb and Visit Sweden have worked together to promote

the country. The panel will also show how Airbnb has launched Trips, which encourages accommodation owners to turn tour guide. The session will ask if this new collaborative model is the way forward.

Artificial Intelligence will also be a key topic where experts will discuss how AI has become more important for the industry and how to use it

to innovate. The programme also includes sessions on how social media can help World Heritage Sites manage tourism sustainably.

WTM London 2017 will also be a hotspot for debate informed by new research into a variety of sectors. The latest trends in the travel and tourism industry will be unveiled in the WTM 2017 Industry Report.

This annual report polls both members of the global industry and 1,000 UK holidaymakers to create an important snapshot of travel habits and intentions. The attendees will also be able to learn about the cities which are expected to be travel stars for 2017, 2020 and 2025 as detailed in the WTM London Top 100 City Destinations Ranking Report, incorporating Global Travel Trends.

## 71% surge in foreign arrivals on eTV in September YOY

As per the latest data released by the Ministry of Tourism, FTAs on e-Tourist Visa during September 2017 was a total of 1.18 lakh tourist as compared to 0.69 lakh during September 2016, registering a growth of 71 per cent. During January-September, 2017, a total of 10.67 lakh tourists arrived on e-Tourist Visa as compared to 6.75 lakh during January-September, 2016, registering a growth of 58 per cent.

The percentage shares of top 15 ports in tourist arrivals on e-Tourist Visa during September

2017 were New Delhi Airport (53.4 per cent), Mumbai Airport (18.5 per cent), Chennai Airport (6.7 per cent), Bengaluru Airport (6.3 per cent), Kochi Airport (4.2 per cent), Hyderabad Airport (2.8 per cent), Kolkata Airport (2.2 per cent), Amritsar Airport (1.1 per cent), Trivandrum Airport (1 per cent), Ahmedabad Airport (0.9 per cent), Trichy Airport (0.8 per cent), Dabolim (Goa) Airport (0.6 per cent), Calicut Airport (0.5 per cent), Jaipur Airport (0.4 per cent) and Pune Airport (0.2 per cent).

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# Exploring Gujarat through its festivals

Gujarat has chosen an interesting way to showcase its various tourist destinations – through its colourful and exciting festivals. **Jenu Devan**, Managing Director and Commissioner of Tourism, Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Limited, shares more details in an exclusive interview with TRAVTALK.

**HAZEL JAIN**

**Q**How is the inbound traffic for Gujarat?

The gross flow of tourists during 2016-17 was 448 lakhs. It was 16.9 per cent higher than 2015-16. The flow of tourists within Gujarat also increased with a 15 per cent growth. During this period, the NRI and foreigner tourist flow to our state boomed with 22.6 per cent and 31 per cent growth, respectively compared to the previous year. A total number of 9.24 lakhs foreigners/NRIs visited the state during the year which accounted for 2.1 per cent of the total flow. Out of this, NRIs were 5.19 lakhs, while foreigners were 4.05 lakhs. The growth story of Gujarat Tourism began from 2006 onward and hence, there is tremendous scope for tapping the potential of inbound tourism.



**Jenu Devan**  
Managing Director and Commissioner of Tourism, Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Limited

We get maximum traffic from Maharashtra, MP and Rajasthan. Internationally, UK tops the list followed by USA. We would like to receive more traffic from the SE Asian markets

year originated from within Gujarat. The share of other states was 25.6 per cent. In the current year, 114.76 lakh tourists from other states visited Gujarat. Maharashtra continues to top the list (37.2 per cent of other states), followed by Rajasthan (19.4 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (15.6 per cent), and Uttar Pradesh/Bihar (12.9 per cent). Business purpose tops the list followed by religion. Leisure and other purposes follow next.

**Q**What are your source markets?

We see the entire India as our source market. However, we get maximum traffic from our neighbouring states of Maharashtra, MP and Rajasthan. Internationally, UK tops the list followed by USA. We would like to receive more traffic from the South East Asian markets as



**Q**How are you promoting yourself abroad?

Gujarat Tourism for the past few years has been regularly participating in mega tourism fairs of WTM London and ITB Berlin and we plan to participate in these shows this financial year too. We reach out to the inbound/domestic agents essentially during two

of our mega festivals – Navratri in September/October and the Rann Utsav in December/January through Fam trips. Inbound traffic sees its peak in Gujarat between September and February.

**Q**How big is your domestic market?

About 72.3 per cent of the total flow of tourists this

they are short-haul destinations for India.

**Q**What products are you promoting in the market currently?

Currently, we are promoting our various destinations through festivals of Navratri, followed by Rann Utsav and International Kite Festival. We have recently started Seema

Darshan, which is another great example of Border Tourism in India. Infrastructure provided at the site includes audio-visual room, retreat ceremony area, amphitheatre, VIP lounge, food stalls, public toilets, selfie zone and viewing tower. Special attractions include retreat ceremony by the Border Security Forces (BSF), fusion band performance, camel show and bird

watching, exhibition of weapons, photo gallery and a film on BSF.

The state's Tourism Policy 2015-20 has become a tremendous success. Till date there are 220 applications for various tourism projects like hotels, resorts, amusement parks, etc worth ₹9,000 crore. So in the next few years, Gujarat

is poised to have a fantastic tourism infrastructure for both the inbound and domestic tourists.

**Reaching Out**

We reach out to the inbound/domestic agents essentially during two of our mega festivals- Navratri and the Rann Utsav

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# Caper plans to give back with NGO

Caper Travel Company is venturing into newer markets like the Middle East and China and is planning to support smaller tourism units under its banner. **Bharat Bhushan Atree**, Managing Director, Caper Travel Company, elaborates on the company's vision and opines the way forward to boost inbound tourism.



TT BUREAU

**Q**What new can be expected from Caper Travel Company?

Caper Group is venturing into newer territories such as the Middle East and China. There is also a regular up-gradation and introduction of new products for clients from various parts of the world. We are opening offices not just in India but also overseas. We have already branched into related services such as flight handling with Jet Concepts, software development with Softix, transport with Pegasus and hotel acquisition, management and hospitality with Era. It is our endeavour to continue to expand in allied services. Our latest and upcoming project is to open an NGO under CSR with an aim to provide basics for the underprivileged children and senior citizens. We have also started working towards making Caper Group a Public Limited Company in the coming times.

**Q**In the near future, what are the plans for expansion of the company?

Expansion is an ongoing process and it is a prerequisite for any organisation to survive and sustain. At Caper, we are expanding our horizons through the acquisition of smaller companies which are unable to preserve themselves, bringing them under the banner and extending support in finance, marketing, operations and any other areas requiring assistance.

**Q**How will the various verticals of CTC be instrumental in growing inbound tourism to India?

CTC has its verticals placed strategically in different markets to avoid a clash of interests. All verticals of the group are profitable and work in a way that complement rather than compete with each other.



“It is our endeavour to continue to expand in allied services. Our latest and upcoming project is to open an NGO under CSR with the aim to provide basics for the underprivileged children and senior citizens. We have also started working towards making Caper Group a Public Limited Company in coming times.”

**Bharat Bhushan Atree**  
Managing Director, Caper Travel Company

**Q**Caper Travels received the National Tourism Award this year. Please comment

Caper Group has been the recipient of the National Award for Tourism now for eight times. To be recognised on a nationwide platform and chosen among the many hundreds, adds laurels to our achievements. An award is not just for oneself but for the entire staff who works unwearied to provide services to each traveller. Awards not only set

you apart from the rest, but they also add credibility to the company especially for new agents from new markets. It definitely boosts business as it acknowledges reliability, reputation and acceptability.

**Q**According to you, what strategy should the tourism and hospitality industry adopt to boost India's position on the global tourism map?

In today's times, it is important for the industry

to stand united and seek favourable policies from the government instead of adopting strategies which are detrimental for the tourism industry as a whole. We all know that tourism is an employment generator, foreign exchange earner, promoter of art and culture and hence, is a major contributor in the process of nation building. There is an inherent need to sensitise the masses regarding the importance of tourism and thereby, give

them a sense of pride in their own history and culture. Though India has evolved with regard to tourism and hospitality infrastructure over the past few decades, the need of the hour is addition of more soft skills, values, experiences, a warm and positive atmosphere, peace and maintenance of law and order to enhance India's popularity as a travel destination of choice. ASI should also invite and involve large corporates or tour operators under the 'Adopt a Heritage' campaign as a CSR activity for better upkeep, landscaping and beautification of the monument. This could be a great initiative and every firm for whom this is commercially viable should engage themselves in this endeavour. Over and above everything, I feel, we as citizens have to be proud of our country's heritage, culture and diversity. It is only then can we expect foreign tourists to show interest and visit our country.



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# Kerala to exhibit the unexplored

Kerala's tourism department will soon launch a promotional campaign for the European and North American markets to showcase Northern Kerala, which includes unexplored destinations like Kozhikode, Wayanad, Bekal and Kannur and Malappuram. **P. Bala Kiran**, IAS, Director, Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala, reveals more about their plans...



HAZEL JAIN

### QHow is Kerala promoting itself in the international market?

Kerala Tourism has planned several B2B meets across high-potential international markets such as the UK, France, Spain, Germany, Russia, West Asia, China, Japan, North America and Australia. As part of the ambitious promotional campaign for the ongoing financial year 2017-18, Kerala Tourism has planned 24 roadshows and 12 trade fairs with an estimated cost of around Rs 11.5 crore. The Department has chosen international markets for the trade events after analysing tourist arrivals over the last five years. The department will soon launch a mega promotional campaign for the European and North American markets to showcase diversified products of Kerala, conduct roadshows and travel fairs.

### QAre you developing new source markets?

Yes, we are implementing a detailed marketing plan for new markets like Oman, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Malaysia and Singapore. After inking an agreement with SilkAir for the South-East Asian markets, the department is now eyeing a similar tie-up with Jet Airways and Etihad Airways so as to gain a good foothold in the West Asia market.

Middle East is one of the high-potential markets for Kerala. We recently launched 'Yalla Kerala' ('Let's Go Kerala' in Arabic) campaign targeting tourists in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain. The Tourism Department of Kerala aims to increase international tourist arrivals by 13 per cent every year. The objective is to double the foreign arrivals by 2021.

### QWhat destinations do you want to promote to international markets?

We have been extensively focusing on promoting Northern Kerala, which includes unexplored destinations like Kozhikode, Wayanad, Bekal, Kannur and Malappuram.

### QWhat PPP projects are you working on right now?

PPP projects have always played an instrumental role as one of the key strategies for promoting state tourism. The

tourism department truly understands the significance of PPP model for overall growth of the tourism sector. We believe in being a promoter of the industry, rather than a regulator. The state has been following robust infrastructural development plans through responsible and sustained tourism.

We have Kerala's first BOT (build, operate, transfer) model, eco-tourism project under the PPP model called 'Jatayu Earth's Center'. It

fast-track clearance for tourism projects and residential tariff for home-stays.

### QHow much are you investing in upgrading tourism infrastructure?

With the aim to increase the geographical spread of arrivals to the state, Kerala Tourism plans to promote its Malabar region aggressively through a Rs 325 crore project, which includes unexplored destinations such as Kozhikode, Wayanad, Bekal and Kannur.

in Kerala through participation and partnerships. The state government also plans to develop 10 eco-tourism circuits to connect various forests in order to promote green tourism.

### QWhat aspects of the tourism policy are you focusing on right now?

With the prime focus on promoting adventure tourism, the department has been working closely with the State Forest Department. The joint endeavour will result



“Middle East is one of the high-potential markets for Kerala. We recently launched 'Yalla Kerala' ('Let's Go Kerala' in Arabic) campaign targeting tourists in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain. The Tourism Department of Kerala aims to increase international tourist arrivals by 13 per cent every year. The objective is to double the foreign arrivals by 2021.”

**P. Bala Kiran**  
 IAS, Director

Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala

is spread over 65 acres at Jatayupara in Kollam district and will be open for tourists by end of 2017. It will be the world's largest bird sculpture of the mythical bird Jatayu (200 feet long, 70 feet in height, 15,000 square feet floor area).



Moreover, Kerala Tourism has planned to connect the ports of Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode with cruise ships. Based on the PPP model, this joint endeavour of a tourism board and a Dubai-based private investor will result in commissioning a 130-seater cruise ship which could travel at a speed of 30 knots. In addition to that, Kerala Tourism has been taking considerable steps towards encouraging PPP participation, including

To promote river cruises, the Government of Kerala has envisioned a Rs 300-crore project for nine rivers in Kannur and Kasaragod. In order to ease travel for international tourists, Cochin International Airport has been entrusted to execute the cruise tourism

in the growth of adventure tourism without affecting the environment. The interest of international travellers is increasingly gravitating towards adventure tourism and meaningful experiences. Kerala will be re-branded as 'The Land of Adventure' in order to woo the younger generation. We have plans to develop water activities like kayaking and cruise tourism.

Our department is also keen on promoting homestays and rural tourism. Owing to the changing preference of travellers for real travelling experiences through experiencing village life, the demand for homestays has increased. The tourism department has also been working towards implementing 'Barrier-Free Kerala' to create accessible spaces to the differently-abled and elderly tourists.

### Tourist traffic

← Kerala registered a remarkable increase in international tourists' arrival in 2016 with 10,38,419 tourists, marking an increase of 6.25 per cent over the previous year.

# 28% growth expected for STHI

Gagan Kumar, Director, STHI Group, believes that by offering new destinations and products to the customers, they would achieve double digit growth this year. They are now creating a list of exotic destinations.



**Gagan Kumar**, Director, STHI Group has been in the business for quite some time. Under his leadership, the company is growing year on year. Talking about the growth figures for the current year, he said, "We have seen a 19 per cent increase in numbers from previous year and now we hope to scale this growth up to 28 per cent," he said.

In order to reach this target, they are doing a number of things and offering new products to customers regularly. "Right now, we are creating a list of exotic destinations for repeat travellers. We still need to finalise the same and we will be putting it across once it is done. It is required to offer new products for customers to sustain in the industry today," added Kumar.



Gagan Kumar  
Director  
STHI Group, India Travel Award Winner

We have seen a 19 per cent increase in numbers from previous year and now we hope to scale this growth up to 28 per cent

Talking further regarding how the industry is changing with the times, he said, "The travel fraternity is amalgamating all services under one roof these days. However, my opinion is different in this regard—an agent or an operator should do only one thing that they excel in. According to me, this kind of approach is better in the long run."

Today, India is one of the biggest markets when it comes to travel, with increasing number of people opting to travel both domestically and internationally. They are exploring popular, as well as new destinations and experiences. In his opinion, the des-

tinations which are popular among Indians currently are "Singapore, Hong Kong and Macao for short haul travel, while Australia is popular for those preferring to travel long haul, as all these destinations have kids friendly attractions," he revealed.

In terms of MICE, he said that the MICE business from India has not changed

much. "MICE business is just the same from India, and is like old wine in a new bottle," he said.

With the advent of technology things have changed for better in the travel industry. Kumar agreed, saying, "Technology is definitely adding value to our work ethos, which is eventually rolling up to our goals in collaborating

all our efforts in streamlining giving one stop solution to our esteemed clients."

### Survival of the fittest

The company is required to offer new products and services for customers to sustain in the industry today

## Seven companies under 'Adopt A Heritage Scheme'

■ **Arun Jaitley**, Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister, presented the Letters of Intent to seven shortlisted companies under 'Adopt a Heritage Scheme' of MOT at the closing ceremony of Paryatan Parv held at Rajpath Lawns, New Delhi on October 25. Stakeholders from hospitality, travel and banking industries were shortlisted for final selection of Monument Mitras. SBI Foundation was shortlisted for the adoption of Jantar Mantar, Delhi, while TK International Limited would be adopting Sun Temple, Konark; Raja Rani Temple, Bhubaneswar and Ratnagiri Monu-

ments, Jajpur, Odisha. Yatra Online Pvt. Ltd. would adopt Hampi, Karnataka; Leh Palace, J&K; Qutub Minar, Delhi and Ajanta Caves, Maharashtra. Travel Corporation of India Ltd. was shortlisted for Mattancherry Palace Museum, Kochi and Safdarjung Tomb, Delhi. Adventure Tour Operator Association of India (ATOAI) would adopting Gangotri Temple Area and Trail to Gaumukh, as well as Mt. Stok Kangri, Ladakh, J&K. Special Holidays Travel Pvt. Ltd., along with Rotary Club of Delhi were shortlisted for Agrasen ki Baoli, Delhi and NBCC would adopt Purana Quila, Delhi.



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Wed	Skagway, Alaska	7:00 am	5:30 pm
Thu	Relaxing day at sea		
Fri	Victoria, British Columbia	4:00 pm	10:00 pm
Sat	Seattle, Washington	8:00 am*	

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# Understanding a new world order

**Nakul Anand**, Executive Director, ITC Hotels, at the recently-concluded FHRAI Annual Convention, shared his vision on how global trends are ushering in a technological era for travel and hospitality.



KANCHAN NATH

Nakul Anand claims that with the rise of digital and mobile consumer usage, the control has completely gone into the hands of the consumers. "We see a flurry of industry changes. Online search engines are exploring advertising models and metasearch companies are moving to assisted bookings. There is a blurring of industry value chains and data is the new oil. The travel industry remains the leader in e-commerce maturity, with high online penetration. It is this twin rise of mobiles and social media that has made all the difference," he says.

Anand elaborates on the five major global trends that will be influencing the world and every business.

## Trend 1: Technology Smartphone and social media

Anand says, "Interestingly, 79 per cent of people say that if their cell phone were taken away, they would be ready

to give up alcohol and chocolates to get it back. Social media is beyond jurisdiction, it's ownerless. It consumes, punishes, damages and destroys in seconds. Numbers are constantly on the rise- Facebook today has 1.18 billion users; YouTube has 1 billion users; in 60 seconds, 16 million text messages are sent and 156 million emails are sent; 120 new accounts are created on LinkedIn and 342,000 mobile applications are downloaded."

## Emergence of the online culture

Everyone today is a socialite, true privileges are those that are earned on merit. Anand describes this 'Statusphere' as a social status that measures your 'statusfaction'. "Status boosters boost your 'status skills'. Earlier, only the very rich, and being extremely small in number, would enter this sphere; today, every human being who has access to the internet can be part of it. The more you share, the higher your social status and the higher your satisfaction,"

explains Anand. He further adds, "There has been a behavioural shift; a mass meeting and online culture has emerged where individuals share, engage, create and collaborate, contrasting the century-old dimension of me, myself and I. The shift is from 'me' to 'we'. Genera-



Nakul Anand  
Executive Director  
ITC Hotels

tion-G endorses generosity as the leading societal and business mindset."

## Reviews- the new advertisement

With instant online reviews available for anything

and everything, companies are constantly seeking to up their game. "In this world, there are no secrets; there is only transparency of prices, opinions and standards. That is what we call 'Responsibility Revolution', where only fair trade can survive. Efficiency is a minimum threshold attribute, waiting for service is unpalatable, and patience is a rare virtue. We are an on-demand society. 'Nowism' is fuelled by a cash-rich, time-poor society. Saving time, the new currency, is the greatest luxury. There is a new breed of business travellers that live by the rules they break, connect through disconnect and believe in relationships, not statuses. They work from the couch and not from the desk. They are not indulgent, but when they travel, they are zero-waste travellers," says Anand.

## Trend 2: Sustainability

The information and technology explosion has made human beings realise that we have not inherited the earth from our predecessors but borrowed it from

future generations. Anand says, "This is what we call the 'Curse of excess'. Global consumption levels are five times of what they were 50 years ago. All this comes with a price tag- there has been an 82 per cent increase in carbon dioxide over the last 52 years. It now takes the earth one year and six months to regenerate what we use in a single year. We are indeed living dangerously. The way forward is that we must try and live off the 'interest' of the planet's resources and not take the 'capital', the non-renewable resources. Almost one-third of the world's population agrees that 'Green' is not only a cool thing to do but is also the right thing to do."

## Trend 3: Geopolitics

Today, Asia is at the centre of most things. Reiterating this fact, Anand says, "More than 50 per cent of the global traffic will come from the Atlantic. If we go by the origin of traveller, the maximum travel expenditure in Asia Pacific in 2030

will be led by China at \$199 billion, followed by India at \$91.2 billion."

## Trend 4: Health

There is more and more interest in wanting to be healthy. There is no point in having money if you don't have good health. Anand feels that health, wealth and looking good are high on the priority list of most people. They are increasingly talking about controlled diets and health farms. People are staying healthy longer and living longer. Wellness tourism, by the end of this year, is expected to grow to more than \$675 billion.

## Trend 5: Security

We are living in a world that is extremely susceptible to terror attacks. Effective security will not come from barbed wires or more guards and guns, it will come from accepting a new reality that the world order has changed. We ourselves need to ensure that we provide as much security as we can at hotels. 🇮🇳



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## 3 UNIQUE KANGAROO ISLAND

It's aptly named **Kangaroo Island** but there's so much more wildlife to encounter than Australia's favourite marsupial. Bursting with wildlife, you'll find many other native animals there including the short-beaked echidna, tamar wallaby, brushtail possum and southern brown bandicoot. Australian sea lions and New Zealand fur seals inhabit **Seal Bay** and **Admirals Arch**. And the wind-sculpted, spectacular **Remarkable Rocks** are a sight not to be found anywhere else in Australia. Wow!



## 4 FESTIVE ADELAIDE

South Australia was named Best Event State for the second year at the 2016 Australian Event Awards. In January, February & March, when nights are at their longest and balmiest, Adelaide enters party overdrive. In the space of a few months, Adelaide hosts the massive Adelaide Fringe Festival, Adelaide Festival of Arts, WOMAdeelaide, Tour Down Under and Clipsal 500 Adelaide. It doesn't stop there. The Cabaret Festival and Guitar Festival warm up the very mild winter months, while OzAsia, the Adelaide Film Festival and Feast Festival kick-off in spring.



## 2 DELICIOUS LOCAL FOOD

Bite into a smorgasbord of fine food and wine. In South Australia, exceptional food and world-famous wine are a way of life. Adelaide is a culinary playground with a delicious mix of fine dining restaurants, award-winning cafes, bustling food markets and booming boutique bars. Indian, vegetarian and global cuisines are happily available everywhere you go.

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**Day 03: Adelaide - Barossa - Adelaide:** After breakfast, enjoy Grand Barossa with Hahndorf tour. Just over an hour's drive from Adelaide brings you to a choice of over 80 cellar doors in the Barossa. Enjoy a two course lunch at Barossa Chateau, followed by a tour of the Hermann Thumm Collection in the

Chateau's private museum. Travel through the Adelaide Hills dotted with quaint villages to Hahndorf, Australia's oldest German settlement. Return to Adelaide via the delightful village of Bridgewater. Overnight stay at the hotel (B, L)

**Day 04: Adelaide - Murray River - Adelaide:** After breakfast enjoy the River Murray Highlights tour. On your arrival, board the Proud Mary and relax as you cruise the historic river enjoying the wildlife and surrounding scenery with lunch on board. Upon disembarking, enjoy a tour along the river bank of the River Murray. Travel back to Adelaide via the delightful Adelaide Hills, stopping at Melba's Chocolate Factory and Woodside Cheese Wrights at Woodside. Overnight stay at the hotel (B, L)

**Day 05: Adelaide - Kangaroo Island:** After breakfast, depart Adelaide and enjoy a scenic trip through Fleurieu Peninsula to Cape Jervis where you will board the Sea link ferry for the 45 minute journey across Backstairs Passage to Kangaroo Island. On arrival in Penneshaw, join Scenic Kangaroo Island Trail tour including Remarkable Rocks, Seal Bay Conservation Park, Hanson Bay & Admiral Arch. Overnight stay at the hotel (B, L)

**Day 06: Kangaroo Island - Adelaide:** Breakfast at the hotel. Rest of the day at leisure. You enjoy this unique island on your own till return journey to Adelaide. Overnight stay at the hotel (B)

**Day 07: Adelaide:** Breakfast at the hotel. Free time till transfer to airport for your flight to next destination (B)

\*T&C apply.



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## Lucknow takes centre stage at 1<sup>st</sup> Travel Trade Mart 2017

■ The Travel Trade Association of Uttar Pradesh (TTAUP), a local travel trade association of the state, organised its first Travel Trade Mart (TTM) 2017 in Lucknow. As many as 30 exhibitors showcased their products to the travel agents and tour operators of UP. These exhibitors encompassed all segments

of Uttar Pradesh, inaugurated the mart. **Vivek Pandey**, President, TTAUP, says, "This is the first time we have hosted such a show. We felt that many times it was not possible for the trade in UP to attend shows in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and other metro cities and unfortunately not many shows come to UP.



of tourism and hospitality like cruises, tourism boards, destination management companies, hotels, airlines, etc. The show was attended by over 200 travel agents and tour operators from various cities in Uttar Pradesh like Lucknow, Kanpur, Bijnor, Allahabad, Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Agra, Mau, Muradabad, etc. **Rita Bahuguna Joshi**, Minister of Women Welfare, Family Welfare, Maternity and Child Welfare and Tourism, Government

The purpose is to offer a platform to the agents of the state to gather product knowledge, information and be connected to the various suppliers directly rather than route it through bigger cities. This would allow us to contain business of UP within UP and grow the tourism industry in the state. This year was an experiment and it turned out extremely well. Next year, we will increase the scale and scope of this show manifolds."

# Odisha brings immense potential

**Ashok Chandra Panda**, Minister of State, Department of Tourism, Government of Odisha, shares that they are implementing policies that would strengthen the state's agenda of furthering its tourism spectrum.



A comprehensive plan has been drawn for efficiently and effectively tapping Odisha's tourism potential, targeting a substantial increase in arrivals to the state. Talking about these initiatives, **Ashok Chandra Panda**, Minister of State, Department of Tourism, Government of Odisha, at the inaugural session of FHRAI's 52nd Annual Convention, said, "Odisha was the host state for FHRAI's golden jubilee convention. We also recently concluded the IATO convention. In another initiative, we, along with FICCI, have invited the tourism industry to the first Odisha Travel Bazaar, which was held between October 15 and 17, 2017, in Bhubaneswar. Odisha has fabulous tourist spots that are spread across the length and breadth of the state, and eastern ports that make it an ideal destination for tourists. The state has some destinations from the Stone Age that are still unexplored. Presently, growth of tourist



**Ashok Chandra Panda**  
Minister of State, Department of Tourism,  
Government of Odisha

Odisha has fabulous tourist spots spread across the length and breadth of the state, and eastern ports which make it an ideal destination for tourists

arrivals to the state is about 9 per cent, which is more than the global tourist arrival rate of 4 per cent. This is a positive sign for the state. Odisha has magnificent temples with Jagannath Temple in Puri, Sun

Temple in Konark, and the Mukteshvara and Lingaraja temples in Bhubaneswar. Eco-tourism, ethnic tourism, Buddhist tourism, MICE, etc., have gained momentum. Nature has been very kind to Odisha; it is unique in its mineral and natural resources with almost 35 per cent of the state covered with dense forests. It has a coastline of 480 kms and the largest brackish water body, Lake Chilika."

### Relax GST of 28 per cent

Odisha, of late, has emerged as an investment destination in the country, specifically for hospitality. "We formed a new tourism policy in 2016, one of the most attractive tourism policies in the whole country. Investors can derive maximum benefits from this policy for speedy clearance of tourism projects on fast-track basis and single-window clearance systems. Odisha's image has also been transformed with the successful organisation of the Asian Athletics Championships. We

have made no compromise with the safety and security of tourists visiting the state. To make their visit hassle-free, we have introduced police patrolling in the Puri- Konark and Puri-Satpura regions. Tourist Police has been introduced in places frequented by domestic and international travellers. We have sound and light shows at Dhauli, where the Kalinga battle was fought in 200 BC, and also at the thirteenth-century Konark Sun Temple. If CRZ norms are eased, it will give a boost to coastal-circuit tourism. In the Samuda project, 1000 acres of land has been procured for construction of world-class infrastructure for a tourism project that will cater to the requirements of high-end tourists.

At the recently concluded IATO conference in Odisha, a lot of concern was expressed by delegates on the 28 per cent GST on the hospitality sector. To promote tourism, the GST of 28 per cent needs to be relaxed," added Panda.

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# Adventure abound beyond Himalayas

The Ministry of Tourism, in its revamped campaign - Incredible India 2.0, plans to lay emphasis on developing and promoting adventure tourism to India. Industry stakeholders and key players identify new circuits beyond the Himalayas, challenges in the industry and suggest the way forward to boost this segment of travel.



ANKITA SAXENA

“I believe adventure tourism is the only segment of travel that has the capacity to double the Indian tourism economy within two years and wipe out the lean season during summers as the Himalayas offer the perfect location during this season. There is a need to develop accessibility into remote areas with a three-tier air connectivity of wide-bodied aircrafts to easily connectable destinations. Small turbo props, fixed wing aircrafts and seaplanes need to be deployed to remote regions with Greenfield airstrips. Also, choppers can be used to traverse the various regions in the Himalayas and the islands. Extensive publicity of Indian adventure tourism attractions is also very important to boost this segment.”



Sanjay Basu  
Managing Director,  
Far Horizon Tours

“We are looking forward to the government’s initiative and its impact on the adventure travel sector. Besides the full-throttle exposure and promotion of new activities and destinations, my strong recommendation to the government would be an equal emphasis on bringing out the right regulation and safety guidelines for adventure tourism across India. Adventure is a niche travel activity and safety is always a major concern. Therefore, such regulation and standardisation is fundamental for long-term growth in this sector along with aggressive promotional plans. The government needs to work with local operators in various regions to understand the potential, niche advantages and opportunities of the destinations and also establish local infrastructure for adventure tourism. In addition to the Himalayas, there are exciting and growing adventure opportunities across the diverse Indian landscape, be it in the traditionally leisure destinations such as Kerala and Rajasthan, which are opening up to adventure tourism; the tribal belt of Chhattisgarh; Rann of Kutch in Gujarat; Madhya Pradesh, etc.”



Ravi Tickoo  
Managing Director  
Active India Holidays



Mohan Tickoo  
Founder and Managing  
Director, KVT Holidays

“The government needs to consider zero-tax on adventure tourism, at least for a few years, as this segment is the worst hit by GST due to Reverse Charge Mechanism (RCM) applicable on services sourced from the unorganised sector. Adventure tourism is largely dependent on the services procured from the unorganised sector like porters, ponies and field staff that include mountain guides, sherpas, camping staff, small lodges and homestays and thus, due to GST, the package cost for all adventure activities in the Himalayan region has gone up by 20-23 per cent. India is blessed with a long coastline, deserts, rivers and many other natural heritage sites where adventure and active travel products can flourish. We have huge potential for aero sports and water tourism in the country. Inland waterways and sea cruising along with water adventure sports is possible in states and union territories like Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep Islands, Kerala, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa and Daman and Diu.”

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# FHRAI: Progression with prowess

Garish Oberoi has been elected as the new President of FHRAI for the term September 2017-18. Oberoi has been in the hospitality industry for over three decades. He previously held the post of Vice President and Treasurer, FHRAI. In an exclusive interview, he tells us about his vision for the Association and plans that would help fulfil it.



KANCHAN NATH

**Q**What will you be concentrating on as President of FHRAI?

The last tenure of the President and the Board saw a very shaky year for the hospitality industry from demonetisation and the liquor ban to getting used to the GST. In the liquor ban issue, we went to court and the state governments as well. A lot of effort and energy went into that; I am happy to say that we could win 90 per cent of the battle, where the court appreciated our situation and most of the hotels and bars that were affected by the ban were eventually reopened. There are still a few bars and restaurants that are left since there is a little lacuna at the Gram Panchayat as well. There are states like Kerala and Maharashtra where the Gram Panchayats are the challenging areas, forestalling the opening of new hotels, restaurants and bars. We must address this issue and it is a top priority for me.

We have been trying to convince the government to not treat us as a luxury. The GST slab of 28 per cent is still very high. We had been fighting for a low slab of 8 per cent and will keep fighting to get a slab of 12 per cent across the Board to try and end the 18 and 28 per cent slabs. I do hope that we get some success on that. My agenda is that I will be meeting, through my Board and personally, the finance ministers of different states and try and get them on board to reduce this further.

Industry status, categorisation of hotels in Red and other concerns on guidelines issued by CPCB and MoEF, dialogue with Ministry of Consumer Affairs, issues related to MRP, PPL and IPRS, and FSSAI regulations are the major areas wherein the Association needs to focus in days to come. The Association also needs to adapt to the pace of the changing world by embracing the



Garish Oberoi  
President  
FHRAI

Embracing the digital age, it is imperative that the Association provides information to all stakeholders instantly through all kinds of social media

digital age. Providing information to all stakeholders instantly through all kinds of social media is the need of the hour.

**Q**Tell us about the vision document for the Association.

The vision document for FHRAI was first started by one of our former President Kamlesh Barot. I am taking a cue from that document and also trying to bring all four presidents on the same page so that once we have a consensus, we will have a vision document for the next five years of FHRAI. One of the key items on the vision document is to encourage the membership base. The other is to bring all the regional associations and other travel trade associations on the same platform as FHRAI. I am looking forward to implementing that this year itself. All associations are working together but they are being represented individually; they should all be brought under FHRAI, that being the parent body.

**Q**s there recurring factionalism in FHRAI?

There had been some dissent within the Executive

Committee (EC) as well as outside it. FHRAI's constitution says that you can be on the EC Board for eight continuous years and then you must take a break, post which you can come back for four more. The last EC Board wanted to make some changes to that because it felt that in 2018, 60 per cent of the Board, that is, the elders on the Board, may have to retire because of this constitution. There was a debate within the Board wherein they said that they should retire, but only one by one and not in one go because then the experience that they held would not be passed on.

FHRAI is a dynamic body where the six Board members are from different regions. So, it's up to the region whether they want to repeat the person or have a new person come in. In the North, we have always been repeating, as also in the West. In a couple of

other regions, the same people have been coming in for the last 3-4 years and that's where the concern was; they do have their own reasons though. I reached out to some of the senior past presidents who were unhappy with the changes in the constitution and I assured them that as I take over, I will have a consensus with everybody and have a feasible solution to the issue. That consensus has been given and everyone is now on the same page.

**Q**Where is the next annual convention slated to take place?

The next convention will be taking place in Lucknow. The convention has never taken place there in the past; it will be a new destination and the city now offers good connectivity as well. Numerous 3-star, 4-star, and 5-star hotels have come up in Lucknow. We have some exciting things in store for all our members in 2018 in Lucknow. 📍

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# Goa invests in tourism infrastructure

The state tourism board is serious about developing the coastal circuit and providing basic tourism infrastructure like public conveniences at key beach locations with an investment of `270 crore (around USD 41 million).

**HAZEL JAIN**

While promoting the state in international markets, Goa's tourism department has also been simultaneously building on infrastructure and creating new adventure activities. **Menino Dsouza**, Director of Tourism, Government of Goa, reveals more. He says, "We hope to start full-fledged operations of the Duck Boats as well as new

**ETV regime Countries on radar**

Goa's new Tourism Policy will also be finalised soon that will give a push to Goa Tourism. Several discussions and meetings have already been conducted in this regard and will be unveiled shortly.

Speaking about the aspect of Goa that the state's tourism department wants to push in the international markets,

Dsouza says, "Goa is a tiny state but stretched over with beautiful beaches, historical sites and wildlife. We promote each and every location of Goa, be it the waterfalls, museums, forts, churches, temples, homestays or our beaches. A variety of elements like monsoon tourism, eco and wellness tourism, cuisine, festival tourism, heritage tourism, adventure tourism and medical tourism are all promoted in international markets."

Needless to say, the eVisa regime offered at the Goa International Airport in Dabolim extended to 150 countries, has taken off in a big way and is showing good increase in numbers. The state's tourism department is therefore trying to tap tourists from these 150 countries. "Goa is also growing as a MICE destination and many corporate companies want to host events here. So also many mega

sports events are held in Goa by international sports organisations. While we are focusing on key markets in UK, Middle East and South East Asia, we are also reaching out to the entire globe, especially those countries that are under the ETV regime," Dsouza adds.

Goa continues to participate in key travel and trade fairs, roadshows held in Moscow, London, Berlin and

the Middle East. The latest one was the International Trade Fair for Travel & Tourism Forum at OTDYKH 2017 in Moscow.

**Goa Numbers**

Goa received a total of 6,80,683 foreign visitors in 2016. This year up to March 2017, the state has already received 3,06,087 international tourists.





**Menino Dsouza**  
Director of Tourism  
Government of Goa


Our focus is to develop the coastal circuit and provide public conveniences such as toilets, changing rooms, locker facilities, proper access and parking facilities at key beach locations

activities like bungee-jumping, Segway tours, and horse-riding. Our focus is to develop the coastal circuit and provide public conveniences such as toilets, changing rooms, locker facilities, proper access and parking facilities at key beach locations." Goa Tourism is also looking at opening tourist information centres on beaches.

All this infrastructure, Dsouza says, will come through the investment that the Centre as well as the state is making. The Union Ministry for Tourism under the 'Swadesh Darshan Scheme' has sanctioned Rs 200 crore to Goa. While Rs 100 crore has been sanctioned in the first phase, another Rs 100 crore has been sanctioned in the second phase. Coastal areas, both in North and South Goa, will be covered in both phases. "The Goa government is committed on completing the infrastructure projects under this scheme within the next one year. There is also a state component of Rs 70 crore which will be used for tourism infrastructure," Dsouza adds.

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# Karnataka tourism is flourishing

RV Deshpande, Minister for Large & Medium Industries and Infrastructure Development, Government of Karnataka, talks about Karnataka's growing popularity as a tourism destination and policies to help further this.



There is a dire need to promote infrastructure development in the country for other sectors to thrive. Addressing the audience at FHRAI's 52nd Annual Convention held in Bengaluru, RV Deshpande, Minister for Large & Medium Industries and Infrastructure Development, Government of Karnataka, said, "Tourism is the highest employment generator. No sector can add as much employment as tourism can. India's biggest concern is still employment as automation, digitalisation and robotics are replacing human beings. The world has become competitive, and quality and consumer satisfaction have become the order of the day. We hope that by 2025, India will have the largest young population in the world.

Infrastructure must also improve. Karnataka is one of the best-connected states in the country vis-à-vis national and district highways. As far

as Karnataka is concerned, tourism is our thrust sector. In the last four years, we have strived to improve roads for better connectivity for tourism. Karnataka has always been a visionary state. The budget for tourism in Karnataka has brought about rich dividends. Footfalls have increased and we are one of the top five states in the country leading in tourism."

### Tourism for the common man

A new wave of travel has taken over the world and more people are getting hooked to this fast-paced trend. "There was a time when tourism was restricted to a certain section of the society, only the well-off could have the benefit. Today, tourism has reached the common people. They all want to travel with their families, so now when we develop tourism, we need to see the needs of those people as well. Infrastructure remains the key for any development be it economic, social or any other," added Deshpande.



RV Deshpande  
Minister for Large & Medium Industries and Infrastructure Development, Government of Karnataka

Footfalls in Karnataka have increased and we are one of the top five states in the country leading in tourism, bringing about rich dividends

### Relax CRZ norms and improve security

Tourism in coastal states has not grown much. Reiterating this thought, Deshpande said, "I remember the

Union government was seriously considering relaxation of CRZ norms. I was a part of that. It will give a boost to tourism in the South. Maharashtra, Odisha, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala would benefit. If beach resorts can come up 15, 20 or 30 metres from the High Tide Line (HTL), why do we restrict them to 250 metres? I think the matter needs to be taken up once more. Relaxation of CRZ norms will give a boost to tourism in the entire area. Security in tourism, especially for women, is another area of concern. In Karnataka, we have taken a lot of initiatives to achieve this."

### Karnataka for tourism and investment

Promoting tourism doesn't come easy and every minute detail needs to be looked over. It is essential that the building blocks of the sector are strengthened along with identification of realms that hold potential. Addressing a rapt audience, Deshpande said, "Successive govern-

ments in Karnataka have been friendly to the industry and supported investments. We brought Karnataka Tourism Infrastructure Limited on the fast track, supported facilities at tourist destinations and facilitated PPP models. We wanted to develop Cauvery, Mysuru, Pandya, Chamunda Nagar, and Guru among others. The Cauvery Tourism Development Authority has also been formed to develop tourism along the Cauvery belt. We also brought The Karnataka Tourism Trade (Facilitation and Regulation) Act, 2015 to bring more investment in tourism; most states do not have this.

Another area of concern is that of guides. Since we did not have professional guides, we selected a few and trained them in foreign languages. The industry must look into this. If we have good human resources in terms of guides, security and road officials, tourism will flourish."

### Bengaluru beckoning

"There was a time in 1995-96 when I used to go

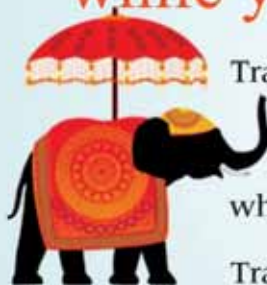
for roadshows in the UK and speak about Karnataka and its capital city, Bengaluru. Today, Bengaluru is recognised as one of the most dynamic cities of the world. It is the biggest R&D centre with more than 500 international companies carrying out research here. Now, whenever I travel abroad, I no longer have to explain to others which part of the country Bengaluru belongs to. Karnataka has all kinds of tourism opportunities and the richest potential. It has eco-tourism, medical tourism, beach tourism and spiritual tourism. We don't have snow, but we can create that as well," said Deshpande while speaking about the popularity that the city as well as the state have garnered over the past years.

### CRZ Concerns

- Relaxation of CRZ norms will give a boost to tourism in the entire area
- It will give a boost to tourism in the South



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## Chandigarh-Bangkok direct flight from December 11

■ Air India is set to start its first direct flight to Bangkok from Chandigarh from December 11. The announcement is significant, following a long delay in the starting of the flight due to delivery of new aircraft to the Air India.



The first flight is said to land at Chandigarh Airport on December 11 at 9.20 am and the same flight would then depart for Bangkok at 2 pm and would arrive in Bangkok at 8.15 pm (Bangkok local time). The inaugural fare for a round trip is said to be around Rs 22,000. The flight would operate thrice a week. For the Chandigarh-Bangkok flight, Air India will operate Airbus's latest variant A320 Neo. The carrier has 12 business class seats and 150 seats for the economy class. The aircraft has better sitting arrangements with additional leg space in both the classes.

# UP tourism policy on the cards

Uttar Pradesh is planning to release its draft Tourism Policy 2017 by November this year to strengthen its tourism sector. The state will also focus on developing tourist infrastructure and will soon chart out an aggressive marketing and promotional campaign to attract more tourists.

 ANKITA SAXENA

Uttar Pradesh is abound in tourism products of every kind, be it heritage and culture, religious tourism, spiritual tourism, eco-tourism, wildlife tourism, etc., but still does not draw as many tourists as it is capable of, feels **Rita Bahuguna Joshi**, Minister of Tourism, Government of Uttar Pradesh. She explains that the state has charted out its plan of action where firstly, it is identifying key destinations where they can provide tourists with incentives to stay for at least 1-2 nights. Also, Uttar Pradesh will work on ways to enhance the day-tours to various key attractions to give a better experience to the visitors.

Joshi says, "We have improvised upon the Tourism Policy formulated in 2016 by the previous government and will release the draft in November. Once the

policy receives the Cabinet's approval, it will soon be released. The industrial policy of the state is in place and under the Tourism Policy of 2017, a lot of incentives have been provided to the private players and investors." She further elaborates that of the total tourist arrivals to Uttar Pradesh, a major share is contributed by religious and spiritual tourists and the state is working very hard to strengthen this segment by way of providing the tourists with advanced, state-of-the-art facilities. She opines that tourists need to be allowed to experience the philosophy and history behind each attraction which has been a topic of research across the world.

Joshi feels that travel has become a habit with people who can afford it and those who cannot have aspirations to travel. She adds, "Travel could be to nearby places or to the farthest destinations. It is up to us, how we present



Rita Bahuguna Joshi  
Minister of Tourism,  
Government of Uttar Pradesh

Of the total tourist arrivals in UP, a major share is contributed by religious and spiritual tourists, and the state is working hard to strengthen this segment with advanced facilities

and position Uttar Pradesh in order to attract a larger number of tourists. We rank 2<sup>nd</sup> in India in terms of overall

tourist visits to the state and 3<sup>rd</sup> in terms of foreign tourist footfalls, but this is not satisfactory. Given the products we have in UP and the scope, UP should be number one in all forms of travel."

Travel agents and tour operators are the backbone of the tourism industry and the government has deep interest in growing this sector with policy initiatives and incentives for them, asserts Joshi. She explains that the state is focusing on showcasing the vast heritage and culture and in effect the tourism potential of the state through aggressive branding campaigns. "Recently, we had floated an Expression of Interest and received proposals from various agencies. The selected agency will be responsible for devising the branding strategy for Uttar Pradesh as well as the Kumbh Mela, which we want to project as a major event in the state. We are

introducing light and sound shows at key attractions, laser shows are being introduced; we also sanctioned ` 170 crore for the beautification of parks and landscaping of the Taj Mahal."

Uttar Pradesh is also working on strengthening its hospitality segment, for which the state tourism department plans on offering various incentives and subsidies to the private players of the sector. Other key focus areas of the state are to develop wildlife tourism and eco-tourism.

### Ruling the roost

Travel agents and tour operators are the backbone of the tourism industry, and the government has deep interest in growing this sector with policy initiatives and incentives for them so as to showcase the tourism potential of a particular state



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# First EDWIN conquers Ladakh

The first Educational Destination Workshop-International (EDWIN) by Global Panorama Showcase (GPS) concluded recently in Ladakh. Harmandeep Singh Anand, Managing Director, GPS, shares how the first instalment of the workshop went and what are the key takeaways from it.



PRITI KHANNA FROM LADAKH

## QHow and when was EDWIN conceived?

EDWIN BY GPS was conceived as early as 2009 when it was still a part of Jagsons Travels. At that time, we started taking travel agents associated with us on educational trips so as to give them a first-hand experience of the destination. These were small groups of about 10-12 agents. It was then we realised that pan India there are many such travel professionals who need hand-holding and destination education, enabling them to be a better professional seller of a destination to their clients.

## QHow different is EDWIN from other Fam trips?

In addition to familiarising the agents with the destination, it also gives an opportunity to the local trade to get exposed to the agents from the Tier II and III cities PAN India, where the products and services from a particular region

may not have access to even though they may visit India for their product promotions. EDWIN includes a day of B2B interaction in addition to various hotel inspections, product orientation and experience by the participating attendees, who are referred as EDWIN'S.

## QWhat was the response to the first EDWIN held in Ladakh?

Within 24 hours of opening the registration for EDWIN – Ladakh, we received close to 200 registrations. It had an overwhelming response of 800 per cent as we had limited space for about 50 attendees only for the first edition of EDWIN to Ladakh.

## QAny reason to have chosen Ladakh for the first EDWIN?

Yes. Being in India, we felt that it would be ideal to start off EDWIN from our home country itself. This is probably one of the most secluded and less explored destinations, but one of the most desirable ones in the world. Our partners in Lada-



Harmandeep Singh Anand  
India Travel Award winner and Managing Director, GPS

EDWIN participants have gathered a lot of knowledge about destination Ladakh and some existing myths have been cleared by being there in person.

kh—Tundup Dorje from Overland Escape and Kamlesh Lalan from Ravine Trek, were very keen to get such a large attendance from various parts of India into Ladakh.

## QBoth GPS and EDWIN target tour operators and DMCs in Tier II and Tier III cities. Do you find this sector more responsive and committed?

The purpose of GPS is to educate and empower the travel fraternity particularly from the Tier II and III cities and EDWIN in due course will create a level playing field for these professionals. Though the target is agents from Tier II and III cities, but we also take on board serious professionals from the metro cities exceptionally. The main intent is to qualify agents who have attended our GPS events.

## QWhat are your future plans and vision regarding EDWIN?

We plan to have at least six EDWIN destinations in a year, and are working closely with various entities, destinations and agents alike. The intent of EDWIN is to bring the travel fraternity of professionals closer and remove the territorial boundaries.

## QWhat are the key takeaways from the first EDWIN?

EDWIN participants have gathered a lot of knowledge about destination Ladakh and some existing myths have been cleared by being there in person. All attendees of EDWIN-Ladakh are now better equipped to sell the destination to their clientele, thereby not only selling a package to the client but rather a complete experience with a whole lot of information on do's and don'ts, as well as the precautions as Ladakh is not like any of our other destinations and needs special guidance and planning.

## QHow do you think EDWIN will benefit tourism to Ladakh or any future destination you choose?

All EDWIN'S have pledged to promote Ladakh as a sustainable and responsible tourism destination, thereby retaining the serenity of the region. We also informed and educated agents on promoting Ladakh as a winter destina-

tion in addition to the current summer months, which lasts for only about five months in a year.

## QWhat were the major highlights of EDWIN-Ladakh?

We had CA Manish Gadia (GMJ & Co.) with us on this trip who interacted with the attendees on GST matters. We also did a session with the travel industry leaders, with regards to GST and its implications to the region of Ladakh as prior to July 8, 2017, there were no taxes applicable to the region. We were very well received by the people at large in Ladakh, as also the industry leaders of various organisations were present to interact with our attendees. We plan to do a larger EDWIN in Ladakh in April 2018 in association with the complete travel trade of the region. In the current edition, we had participants from about 18 states and 35 cities across India who qualified as Educational Destination Workshop International Specialist (LADAKH). ↴

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## EDWIN: A true learning

Hari Kishan Valmiki, Founder and Managing Partner, Valmiki Travel & Tourism Solutions, talks about the experience at the first-ever EDWIN which was held in Ladakh.



TT BUREAU

## QWhy did you choose to participate in the first EDWIN to Leh Ladakh?

When every other organisation is giving familiarisation through webinars, online tests and road shows, it's only EDWIN who came forward with the focus on first-hand experience by charging nominally and giving exposure to the destination of Leh Ladakh. The beauty of inviting local eminent personalities and getting them to speak about their own destination is another attraction, which I think was helpful.

## QWere the objectives met?

Definitely – as my objective is to get a feel of the product and experience the extreme cold weather with low oxygen levels. I had been told about acclimatisation, but have now come to understand it by undergoing one full day of doing nothing but acclimatising.



Hari Kishan Valmiki  
Founder and Managing Partner  
Valmiki Travel & Tourism Solutions

My objective is to get a feel of the product and experience the extreme cold weather conditions with low oxygen levels

sell such unique and niche products, you need personal experience. This cannot be read and understood over Lonely Planet or watching a travel channel on television. Since we have witnessed what is the peak when we travelled above sea level – 18,500 ft - by touching the Khardung-la, we have also understood what kind of challenges our clients can face. This will help us in guiding them in a better way.

## QWould you like to highlight any particular thing about this programme?

Yes – This particular product cannot be sold to each and every client. I will ensure that I educate and empower my fellow travellers to be responsible and help protect the destination under Responsible Tourism, followed by Sustainable Tourism as Ladakh does not need quantity but quality passengers. ↴

## QWill this help you market Leh Ladakh better to your end customers?

Of course, at the end of the day, for the confidence to



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# Experiences abundant at exhibitions

International travel exhibitions not only make new and unheard-of products accessible to the Indian delegates but also help build confidence between business partners and nurture a relationship that can last a long time. The industry shares if these exhibitions are just a networking opportunity or bring in some serious business.



**Homa Mistry**  
CEO, Trail Blazer Tours,  
India Travel Award winner

“Relevance of travel exhibitions depends on which exhibition we are discussing, as some are good and others are not. Many international exhibitions are turning out to be the usual networking platforms or they’ve earned a name where industry feels it is a must-to-attend event overlooking what the exhibition actually offers. Many times, sellers do not find the worth of the money they spent on participation as they do not get good returns. The quality of visitors and hosted buyers is going down every year.”



**Jatinder S. Taneja**  
Managing Director, Travel Spirit International, India Travel Award winner

“Travel exhibitions are losing their importance these days. The tour operators cannot reach out to every exhibition and therefore, have to pick and choose. Secondly, availability of all information on the Internet is another reason. To add to that, the overall expense is usually quite high and the returns on the same are quite poor. However, I feel that some of the international travel exhibitions are important to visit as they offer a good platform for buyers and suppliers.”



**Sudhir Patil**  
Founder & Director  
Veena World

“Though the entire world is going online right now and information is available at your fingertips, the distribution channel for travel and tourism products is still local. To spread awareness about your brand and products, it is still important to be visible in person and register your presence. International exhibitions offer that platform. It helps us meet and network with potential business partners and more importantly, build confidence between two parties – something that the internet cannot do. I have personally experienced these benefits. A 10-minute meeting has concluded with us signing a million dollar business deal.”

“I feel international trade shows and exhibitions are relevant only for the new players in the market. However, the old companies have already established their clients in the international market and meet repeat buyers. These shows only serve as networking grounds for them. I firmly believe that if inbound tourism has to be truly promoted, then India should host its own travel show of an international standard to showcase itself in its glory and diversity.”



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

“The international exhibitions are no longer effective in promoting inbound tourism. The hefty amount of money spent does not bring returns. The stalls are not manned by professionals. The foreign tourist offices need to be updated with relevant information, digital product material and knowledge of the market where they are promoting India. Rather than having multiple stalls of states, we should do product based marketing and states can display their offerings within these products.”



**Rajan Sehgal**  
Director  
Arrivals Air Services

“The international travel exhibitions are a platform to bring the entire industry together under one roof and are instrumental in updating oneself with new trends and products. However, over the years, there are too many of these similar trade shows, and thus people are losing interest. Also, the quality of buyers is poor. These shows have become only networking platforms. The functioning of these shows need major change.”



**Vikas Abbott**  
MD, Vasco Travel, India  
Travel Award winner

Contd. on page 26 ▶

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# Build partnerships at the best avenue

▶ Contd. from page 24



**Viney Tyagi**  
Director  
Uni Crystal Holidays

“Over the years, most of the major travel exhibitions are losing their sheen. The number of visitors and buyers is declining year-on-year especially in Europe and UK-based exhibitions. There are hardly any new buyers to promote India and exhibitions are more like meeting places with existing partners. We need to look beyond these saturated markets and participate in country-based travel exhibitions that are the new emerging source markets for inbound tourism for India. We need an aggressive marketing and advertising campaign for brand Incredible India in the emerging markets.”



**AV Moorty**  
Director, Narayani Holidays,  
India Travel Award winner

“Every industry needs a trade platform that not only facilitates exchange of ideas but also creates conducive atmosphere of global peace through right ‘communication.’ Travel trade exhibitions are good exposure to all the travel trade representatives to share ideas, upgrade, update and strengthen themselves. As a tourism company, we would like to attend international travel trade exhibitions around the world, which are great platforms to meet our business objectives. An exhibition is the place where we can meet delegates of national and international level from various sectors of tourism industry.”



**Rajat Bagaria**  
Managing Director,  
Shrishti Holidays

“Travel exhibitions are great meeting places. These meetings create a bond and help start a lasting business relationship. IATO has been having wonderful conventions in the past, wherein we have seen great ideas emerge. These exhibitions are a great meeting place for the domestic tourism industry. Only few states have very active tourism departments, which organise roadshows. Thus, we as an industry, rely on these travel exhibitions to expand our horizon in terms of learning about destinations and to meet with stakeholders from all parts of the country.”

“Technology may have shrunk the globe and many would say that the end is approaching for international travel exhibitions. However, it all depends upon the planning, structure and content of the exhibitions that will ensure that they sustain in the long race. Many exhibitions have changed their format to keep pace with the times and quite a few have also re-invented themselves. The travel and hospitality fraternity looks forward to certain exhibitions which bring in quality buyers, have time-bound and value-added formats, and where the emphasis is on people rather than fancy exhibits. While ‘Incredible India’ did make an impact, we need to ask ourselves the big question – ‘What will it take for us to rank among the top countries in tourism?’ We have everything and much more to attract every possible kind of tourist, but the numbers are just not inclined to come our way. Tourism can be a real game changer benefitting various aspects of our economy. We should look at the EASE of being tourist friendly... Evolved – technology friendly, Affordable – fitting every wallet, Simplified – processes like visa applications, Exciting – making a tourists visit truly memorable.”



**Louis D'souza**  
Executive Director  
Tamarind Global Services

“Attending travel shows and conferences is an important business practice that can benefit our companies in many ways, including building professional relationships, meeting the media, leveraging tips from other like-minded business, learning new ideas from industry experts, gaining an understanding of best practices, and of course, meeting new friends along the way.”



**Nitin John**  
Director  
Riya Holidays

“International travel exhibitions are meaningful as long as there are healthy debates and discussions alongside these exhibitions. Besides, international travel exhibitions are more of a branding exercise. For these shows to be relevant, it is important that tour operators, first-time visitors and younger travel agents take back something in terms of added knowledge, market information and valuable contacts from these shows.”



**Hector D'souza**  
President, L'orient Travels



**Subhash Motwani**  
Director, Namaste Tourism

“International travel exhibitions have relevance in the markets that they address. They are now being segmented under MICE, luxury, weddings, etc., and cater to specific segments of tour operators, travel companies and service providers. The challenge is to get the right mix of participants at these destinations to optimise the value for both the buyer and the exhibitor. There is also a risk of too many exhibitions happening in one location and that can cause confusion and also dilute the importance of international travel exhibitions.”

Contd. on page 29 ▶



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# Buyout to strengthen TrawellTag

Not only will TrawellTag Cover-More benefit from Zurich's superior IT systems, brand credibility and access to capital, but also offer a robust protection to customers, acting as a game changer for the company in the India market.

**HAZEL JAIN**

Specialist travel insurance company TrawellTag Cover-More has much to celebrate this festive season. When the Swiss-based Zurich Insurance Group (Zurich) bought 100 per cent stake in the Australian Cover-More Group, it not only recognised the good work that Cover-More was doing globally, it also brought direct benefits to TrawellTag Cover-More. But what **Dev Karvat**, CEO-Emerging Markets, Trawell-

treat them there, or ensure that the line of treatment they are getting is correct."

Karvat adds that WTP as the integrated entity takes that value proposition a few notches higher for TrawellTag Cover-More. It is now not only managing claims but it has a strong in-house support system which can take care of its customers wherever they are in the world.

Highlighting other advantages of this acquisition, Karvat says, "One is of course, we get this huge brand credibility of Zurich. They have very large underwriting capabilities including re-insurance. That brings huge capabilities for us. Secondly, they have some robust technology systems which we get access to. We can just pick any system we want – whether it is a

policy issuance system or the back-end system, or servers. We can use their entire IT infrastructure to accelerate our growth in the Indian market as well as the other markets that we are present at. The third aspect we can leverage is the access to capital where we can continue our acquisitions across the world. We are looking at two very interesting opportunities at the moment."

## GST, demonetisation may impact weddings: ASSOCHAM

■ The upcoming wedding season starting in November may be impacted by 10-15 per cent, particularly wedding services like marriage garden/marriage hall booking, tent booking, confectionery services, photography and more, reveals industry chamber ASSOCHAM. The GST rate on most of these services has risen from 18 to 28 per cent. Destination wedding or the wedding tourism sector in India which accounts for less than 10 per cent share in the overall industry is not

likely to face much adverse impact of GST and demonetisation as it is already a costly affair which mainly lures foreigners, NRIs, rich and famous people for weddings at beaches and royal palaces, says the ASSOCHAM paper. All footwear above Rs.500 is taxed at a whopping 18 per cent. Tax on gold and diamond jewellery has increased from 1.6 per cent to 3 per cent. The booking for a five-star hotel will cost 28 per cent extra in the form of GST.



**Dev Karvat**  
India Travel Award winner and CEO - Emerging Markets, TrawellTag Cover-More

Unlike other insurance providers, Cover-More has its own assistance company called Customer Care and Zurich also has its assistance business called World Travel Protection (WTP)

Tag Cover-More, wants his partners in India to focus on is the huge advantage that this development brings to their customers.

He says, "One advantage which is going to be a game changer for us specially in the Indian market is the benefit of Zurich's strong protection arm. Most insurance providers in India outsource their assistance business to a third party. Cover-More has its own assistance company called Customer Care and Zurich also has its own assistance business called World Travel Protection (WTP). We have merged both these entities and it is now called WTP. That gives us a very, very strong proposition on protecting the customer while they are overseas. We have moved way beyond reimbursing a client or facilitating a cashless transaction. Our focus is to make sure that if the customer falls sick or needs assistance, the most important thing is how we can bring them back home safely, or

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# A bleak 2017, but 2018 offers hope

On the sidelines of PACE (PIHMAA Annual Conclave & Exchange) 2017, TRAVTALK finds out from prominent hoteliers in the country how the year 2017 has been so far for the industry and what they expect from the coming year.



ANUPRIYA BISHNOI AND KANCHAN NATH



**K.B. Kachru**  
Chairman Emeritus & Principal  
Advisor, South Asia  
Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group

“It’s been a very difficult year for the food and beverage business, first with the liquor ban and then the uncertainty of business. Around 29 of our hotels were impacted. We had some restaurants and bars to open, but couldn’t. However, we are grateful to the Supreme Court for having amended and lifted the ban to a reasonable level. Business seems to be picking up and occupancies are better. We are seeing a positive change but more would be known during the next off-season. There is more domestic business which is happening now and I hope MICE business also improves.”

“All the challenges faced this year, including GST, liquor ban and demonetisation, were definitely a disruptor for us but all said and done, the industry is limping back to normalcy. A recent respite has come in the form of GST for restaurants, which could go back to 12 per cent. This will be a welcome move for the industry. If I look at the year ahead, occupancy will continue to increase and rates will continue to soar as well. The economy is slowing down; this is something we are watching very closely because our hotels, especially Radisson-branded ones, are largely dependent on corporates.”



**Raj Rana**  
Chief Executive Officer  
South Asia  
Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group



**Kapil Chopra**  
President  
The Oberoi Group

“Business was majorly impacted this year. One reason was demonetisation. GST also made sure that companies postpone their plans on MICE movements and conducting conferences. Liquor ban resulted in another 3-4 month loss of business. What the government needs is to do consistent policymaking. Once we stabilise the base, things will only look positive in the next two years. We are on the right track. I see a promising November-December, the fourth quarter is showing signs of recovery. Great days are ahead as long as policymaking is consistent and we are not surprised by events like liquor ban.”

“There were some initial bumps and a lot of apprehension and anxiety, especially with demonetisation and GST being implemented back-to-back. I think we crossed over well and are back to business. We are very optimistic from a MICE and luxury perspective. We see a significant upside because there is an ease of doing business. In 2018, we are forecasting an almost double-digit growth in terms of what we have done this year. There is a lot of transparency now and a feel-good factor of how business is conducted in India. I think it all augurs well for our business.”



**Anurag Bhatnagar**  
Multi-property  
Vice President Luxury (India)  
Marriott International



**Sanjay Sethi**  
Chief Operating Officer  
ITC Hotels & WelcomHotels

“Overall, I have seen the rates go up, which is positive because so far the challenge was that occupancies were climbing up steadily but rates were static. There has been a 4-8 per cent growth in rates. Some hotels have even seen 10 per cent growth. Hotels that rely heavily on foreigners have done extremely well. The dollar-to-rupee ratio has stayed steady, so has not affected buying patterns. A large amount of the leisure growth has come through the domestic segment. For the first time, we have seen a double-digit growth among foreign leisure tourist arrivals.”

“The hospitality industry has been through a terrible patch. For almost seven years we felt the stress as capacity and supply of inventory of rooms increased in almost all our key cities and demand shrunk. There’s now enough evidence that the industry is perhaps at the beginning of an upcycle. Last year the occupancy level in almost all key cities went up, this is a precursor to ADRs going up. Our forecast for the industry over the next four to five years is that we are headed for a bull run. Unless something goes drastically wrong, we are confident of an upcycle.”



**Mandeep S Lamba**  
Managing Director, India  
JLL Hotels and  
Hospitality Group

“The industry was hit by demonetisation, GST and liquor ban this year. This raised challenges for some of our hotels, especially because of the liquor ban. It impacted our F&B revenue as well as the room revenue. I don’t think demonetisation had a huge impact on hotels except in the wedding segment, but challenges bring their own opportunities and it gave us the chance to look at our cost structure. Most of the hotels did very well and came out with great results. Overall, the challenges were well handled. Despite the setbacks, most of our hotels have grown over the past months. The upcoming year, without any hiccups, looks better. We are expecting firm rates with occupancies doing relatively well. It’s all about managing better rates in 2018. Gaining guest loyalty is going to be the biggest game changer. It will include loyalty programmes, customer satisfaction, personalised services, etc. With OTAs and players such as Airbnb coming in, loyalty can be a differentiating factor. We are not competing with each other in the hotel space; we are fighting technology and other lines of business. So, what is going to really make a mark is gaining the loyalty of consumers.”



**Arindam Kumar**  
Area General Manager,  
South India  
InterContinental Hotels Group

“The year 2017 was tough. We started with the liquor ban, then the GST. However, it’s been a year that will set us right for the future. At the end of the day, when business is tough, you have to reinvent yourself; you look at your expenses and efficiencies. I am convinced that it will be better now as we have seen that food and beverage revenue, especially in banquets, is back on track since September 2017. Also, we are looking at an increase of 10 per cent in RevPAR. I am hopeful that the last quarter will be the best in terms of revenue.”



**Michel Koopman**  
General Manager  
The Leela Ambience Gurugram  
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“The industry faced a lot of challenges because of the liquor ban. Liquor is one of the most important components of the industry and we didn’t realise its importance until it was gone. When the liquor ban was imposed, we saw how the entire gamut of business moved around liquor and how hotels struggled. With GST, it was not very clear how it was to be implemented and till date, hotels are struggling with what’s right and what’s not. A few amendments are still awaited. Overall, we are a very resilient industry; whatever happens, we bounce back.”



**Shipra Sumbly Kaul**  
General Manager  
Holiday Inn Express & Suites  
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# Are exhibitions still relevant for trade?

▶ Contd. from page 26



**Surpal S Deora**  
Director  
Maxfun Holidays

“The relevance of international exhibitions in tourism promotion plays very important role. It helps the Industry focus on three main agendas. First is evolving towards value-creating industry by building a brand in international market. People across the globe are looking for value add in services being availed, and this component is key to any tourism oriented country. Second factor is stimulating new demand by showcasing the product. The last agenda is promoting a tourism nation through this medium establishing awareness among participants from various countries at such platforms. The creativity in promotion plays a key role. Through the exhibitions platform, we can showcase the technologies like Virtual Reality (VR) and 360 degree videos, which are immersive medias that are transforming how brands showcase themselves online and offline and in hardware headsets from Samsung and Google.”



**Harvinder S Duggal**  
MD, Minar Travels,  
India Travel Award winner

“According to me, in the present scenario, Internet, Social Media networking and other communication modes are more active. The relevance of International Travel Exhibitions is going down with time. Since the number of buyers is reducing, they should consider using e-marketing more. Also, with Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) getting stronger by the day, I don't see much future of International Travel Exhibitions in the near future. This method of promotion and sales is getting redundant by the day and there is a need to explore technological advancements and move forward. The times are changing and we have to adapt accordingly.”



**Anish Kumar P.K**  
CEO  
The Travel Planners

“It is important to participate in international travel trade exhibitions for inbound operators. It is possible for us to create new source markets only by participating in International travel trade exhibitions. These days, the travellers from emerging markets prefer to plan their travel with the help of tour operators and new tie-ups from emerging markets can be built through participating in trade fairs and road shows. As far as we are concerned, we are currently focusing more in China and Eastern Europe markets by participating in trade shows in every part of the world. The networking opportunities on offer at these shows are unparalleled.”



**Zia Siddiqui**  
CEO, Alliance Hotels, India  
Travel Award winner

“Participating in travel and trade exhibitions is one of the best ways to improve and develop businesses these days. It is a platform where one can exchange views with the overseas tour operators and update them about the development of new tourism products in the country. It's the best way to showcase what the country has to offer and explore interesting itineraries so that foreign tourists can have a great experience in the country.”



**Sanjay Basu**  
MD  
Far Horizon Tours

“All activities in promotion and marketing are relevant today, especially international travel exhibitions are extremely relevant for making B2B contacts. They are a great platform to witness new products and people and gain knowledge about what's happening in the industry. However, these need to be followed up with strong roadshows as during trade fairs you make contacts and during roadshows, you convert them into contracts.”



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# Technology connects, so does travel

Travel is going through a myriad changes owing to the evolving technology and the corresponding new-age customer. Travel agents are now questioning the survival of the offline mode of business in this digital age. Experts and key stakeholders of the travel industry deliberate on the nature of change and opportunities that lie ahead with adoption of technology.

Moderator	Participants				
 <p><b>Guldeep Singh Sahni</b> India Travel Award winner and President, OTOAI</p>	 <p><b>Sumanth Kapoor</b> Head-Strategy, Identity and Citizen Services, VFS Global</p>	 <p><b>Nikhil Dhodapker</b> CEO, TUI India</p>	 <p><b>Ankush Nijhawan</b> India Travel Award winner and MD, Nijhawan Group</p>	 <p><b>Himanshu Patil</b> Director, Kesari Tours, India Travel Award winner</p>	 <p><b>Jaal Shah</b> Group MD, RezLive.com, India Travel Award winner</p>
<p><b>Technology has changed the game in the travel industry and many travel agents are struggling to adapt to this change. There is fear of survival in the market. What according to you is the direction to take in order to create opportunities for business?</b></p>	<p>There are three elements of change- the magnitude of change, the frequency of change and the predictability of change. Over the past two-three years, the magnitude and frequency have moved from high to low. Though a lot of things are under wraps, no breakthrough will happen at the drop of a hat. However, predictability of change is the space where risk and opportunity both reside. One way to tackle this is through incubation cells. I feel we could invest in new start-ups to keep a track of new technology coming up in the market.</p>	<p>Today, the relevance of a travel agent is decided by the customer. The travel market is only increasing and information is available at a click of a button. It is up to the industry to accept, adopt and adapt to the changing customer. If the travel agents can provide a level of service far better than anyone else, then there is no question of their survival. If one tries to become Make My Trip and Yatra for the sake of going online and make a website to follow the e-commerce wave, then that is a mistake. To become a digital giant takes a lot of investment and research.</p>	<p>I am not worried about change because this will be a constant feature. There will be companies which can disrupt the current functioning. There has to be a risk taking appetite and travel agents need to be open-minded to spend capital behind technology. Intellectual technology is important but not cheap and one has to understand that there is capital investment behind building, innovating and maintaining technology. You have to find the niche to own the customer. Acquisition has become the way forward as no one is building new things now.</p>	<p>I believe that technology is definitely changing the game in travel and creating one's niche in the industry is the way forward to evolve. Business margins are shrinking and it is important that travel agents introspect into their business models. Invest in technology; one does not have to reinvent the wheel again and again; the agents can make use of the technology already available in the market but put it to better use. Risk taking appetite is necessary as one has to explore and diversify the segment of travel.</p>	<p>The outbound travel market in India is very mature and the trade too is quite advanced. This is why understanding the online travel trade is the way forward. The most recent change is the shift of marketing strategies on the social platform. One has to understand that social media is not just about uploading pictures and status on Facebook and Instagram. They are actually tools to do business as well. Content is the ruling element to keep your customers engaged and investment in technology is inevitable.</p>

As told to Ankita Saxena



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# Incredible India 2.0 comes refreshed

The second India Travel Summit organised by Thomas Cook India in New Delhi recently saw the stalwarts from the Indian tourism industry discussing on how the recently-launched Incredible India 2.0 might change things for India, or if more work is needed, as well as other plaguing issues that prove to be a challenge to get enough inbound numbers to the country.



NISHA VERMA



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

“We believe that a good tourism campaign should define how a country is perceived around the world. A campaign should not narrow down to sell hotel rooms, instead, we should be looking at how much we are pitching in for India. I think Incredible India should become the mother campaign and Make in India and other such campaigns should be drawing from that strength. We need to go out and create that framework in the mindset of the people that India is a great wonderful place to be in. There needs to be a lot of work to be done.

There are two fundamental changes that we are looking at currently. Firstly, we have done a generalised campaign till now, under which we have been running one common film that is a collage of everything that is wonderful in the country, and playing it in all the markets. We need to change that and create a systematic campaign. The communication has to be market specific, and we need to create that sensitivity around what that market wants. Secondly, we need to create campaigns that are product specific because India has a range of tourism products, but the challenge is that it's extremely difficult to market, because those planning to visit the country have many options, which overwhelms them. The same happens when we want to market India as there are so many things to do. Hence, we are creating product specific creatives, not just on general media but also on digital media, which is one of our main strategies to tap the travellers.”

“India tourism has come a long way, but we still need to cross the 10 million mark of inbound tourists and then head for the 20-million target. Now, apart from targeting certain high spend markets and e-Visa that has been a big gamechanger, we need to have easier and liberal policies as well as good aviation access. However, we need to get India ready for the future and I believe that the Incredible India 2.0 campaign is going to put us on a different platform altogether. While we will be getting customers, the new campaign would change the mindset of people in the coming years. Another thing we need to be ready for is what happens 5-7 years from now. While India is a difficult destination to promote, we need to see that the average stay of international tourists in the country ranges between 12 and 14 nights, which is much more than many other countries. While infrastructure is an issue currently, in terms of aviation, the government needs to open skies and allow increased flight connectivity to smaller destinations like Jaipur and Goa. The hotels around the country saw 65 per cent occupancy last year, which was highest since 2007-08; ARR's were up by 2.4 percent, REVparks were up by 6 per cent, and the number of rooms in the country are increasing by the day. From 24,000 rooms in 2000, we have up to 119,000 hotel rooms now and we still need more. However, a lot of inbound depends on beach tourism, and owing to CRZ guidelines in the country, not many hotels are coming up on beaches around the country, which remains a big concern for the industry. Another big challenge is the development of convention centres around the country, for which private investment could play a big role in attracting tourists.”



**Dipak Deva**  
Managing Director,  
Destination Management,  
Sita, TCI and Distant  
Frontiers



**Sanjiv Kapoor**  
Chief Strategy and Commercial Officer, Vistara  
(Tata - Singapore Airlines)

“While many think India needs to open its skies and have more bilaterals for increasing flights into the country, I don't think it is the case. There are many countries with which we have open skies. However, I think there is an excess of supply currently from India, because of which the airfare is very low. It is cheaper to fly to Dubai and even a few European countries from India than flying domestic, and domestic fares are cheap too as compared to global standards. The pricing is an indicator of the demand and supply balance and the fares are so low that it shows that the demand is very high, because we drop fares to fill the seats. I don't think our challenge is not having enough flights. We have a great destination in India, but it needs work in terms of infrastructure, cleanliness, ease of travel and commute. The country gets good attendance from luxury travellers who travel in chauffeured cars, opulent hotels and escorted visits; as well as from backpackers like students from Israel. However, for the vast majority of mid-segment travellers, India is a very difficult destination. Many other smaller countries are doing better than us and hence, we need to have a tourism infrastructure, which is just not the tourism ministry's job. We need participation from all quarters. In terms of aviation and hotels, it is world class and much better than many other places. For Incredible India 2.0 we need to create a safe environment where anyone can roam around freely anywhere in India, without any hesitation. I think until we fix all these problems, it's going to be difficult for us to leave a good impression amongst the tourists coming to India. We need to create an environment in India where people feel safe and comfortable.”

“The biggest challenge in India, according to me are the hotel rates. In terms of rates of resorts, we are comparable globally, but the luxury hotel rates in cities are lowest in the world. The highest rate for a city hotel in India goes between The Leela Palace, New Delhi, Taj Mahal Hotel in Mumbai, or The Oberoi, Gurgaon, with an average room rate of around USD 250 throughout the year. It is half of what city hotels charge globally. That leads to our second problem—the investments that have gone into the hotel sector make most of the companies incur losses. Amongst the four major hotel chains in India, two have recorded quarterly losses. The bigger challenge is not further investment into hotels and capital constraints, but return on capital. More people want to open up hotels, but long gestation periods, licensing and the time it requires to open a hotel, prove to be a hurdle. In terms of beach hotels, while it's difficult to even see the ocean from a hotel in Goa, hotels in Maldives offer rooms in the middle of the sea. Until CRZ guidelines in India are taken out, we will be killing beach tourism completely. In Mumbai, if only 10 cruise ships are docked on the coastline, the entire infrastructure around the area could change and there will be increased room nights, shopping, restaurant visits and there will be a vibrant economy sustaining on that. Capital runs after vision. Even in terms of convention centres, the entire economy of a place changes if it has a state-of-the-art convention centre, including hotel business.”



**Kapil Chopra**  
President  
The Oberoi Group

“The question here is that how we can create a balance between growth of tourism and sustainability. I am hopeful that the campaign would draw focus on that as well. We know that many countries have hotels right on the beaches, but that does not mean that it is the right way to go because many times the effect comes in 10-20 years down the line. Australia today has lost its Great Barrier Reef owing to increased tourism activity. Timely intervention could have saved it. One should abide by the precautionary principle, as the coastline is shifting and coming nearer to the shore could be dangerous to the tourists as well. The same goes for mountains. We need to educate the tourists and tell them that environment is the king and not the customer. They will understand as everyone has an innate sense of responsibility, and they would respect us for the same. I have been running camps in the Himalayas for 38 years and have never had a camp fire, as it would mean taking the wood, which is the livelihood of locals there, away from them. When we communicate it to the travellers, they respect it. The industry needs to bring in a little balance between what the scientists suggest and what they plan to construct, and I am sure customers will be happier and feeling better about doing things in the right way.”



**Mandip Singh Soin**  
Founder & Managing Director,  
Ibex Expeditions and Founder  
President, Ecotourism  
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# Luxury quotient on an 'UP'ward swing

At the recent Travel Trade Mart (TTM 2017) organised by Travel Trade Association of Uttar Pradesh in Lucknow, the local travel agents identify that the market has a huge potential for high-end luxury travel and gradually newer destinations like Vietnam, Korea, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand are now climbing up the popularity charts.



**Shah Nawaz Zafar**  
Country Manager-Sales (India),  
United Travels and Tours

“This is the first time that Travel Trade Mart (TTM 2017) was organised in UP and I must say the organisers did a great job. The buyers and sellers were asked to register themselves online in order to have a smooth event. I met many potential buyers from the region and found that there are a lot of high-end clients that we can cater to for Singapore and the Far East. Earlier, tourism boards targeted metros like Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai but now, have gradually started moving to Tier-II and Tier-III cities. Lucknow has become a central point for UP.”

“TTM was a fantastic initiative to bring together various stakeholders of the tourism and hospitality industry under one roof to allow them to showcase their products to the tour operators of Uttar Pradesh. This is a growing market and has very high potential. We showcased 18 destinations under our portfolio where we have our own offices. We met with agents from Lucknow, Kanpur, Varanasi and other nearby cities. Earlier this market was constrained to the Far East but gradually has started moving to destinations like South Africa, Europe and the US.”



**Sujit Nair**  
Founder and Group MD,  
Akquasun



**Preeti Duggal**  
Director  
YS Hospitality

“We received many queries from a variety of travel agents and tour operators for the portfolio we represented at the show. I found a lot of queries for Vietnam which is an upcoming destination; a fair interest for Europe while Dubai remained the most popular. Sri Lanka however, did not attract too much interest. We found a huge potential of high-end clients from the UP market. This exhibition brought us in direct contact with the agents who require our services. I feel the market in Tier-I cities is mostly handled by big players of the industry. The Tier-II market is developing and gaining confidence which allows companies like ours to bridge the gap in the market.”

“We received excellent response from the buyers towards the product portfolio we offered and moving forward, I am sure we will drive good business out of the meetings we conducted during the show. We saw a lot of queries for Australia and increased interest among agents for island destinations. The buyers we met from Lucknow, Azamgarh, Kanpur, Amethi etc. mostly catered to the cruising aspirations of their clients and the honeymoon segment. The show proved to be a very good platform to highlight the tremendous potential of Tier-II and Tier-III cities.”



**Gagan Kumar**  
Director, STHI Group,  
India Travel Award winner

“This exhibition was well-organised and gave me a platform to meet all leading agents from Lucknow and Kanpur and allowed to connect with agents from nearby cities like Allahabad, Gorakhpur and Varanasi whom I may not have met otherwise. We found that the aspiration to take a cruise holiday is high in UP. The only deterrent in growth of cruising from UP was lack of information. However, gradually we observed that travel agents have become more confident and are aware of our products. They are able to advise their clients on right destinations and itineraries instead of routing their business through bigger cities.”

“This show proved to be very fruitful for me as I found the right partners. I met buyers from Lucknow, Allahabad, Kanpur, Varanasi and also closed business from a few groups for Singapore. So, I have been satisfied with the return on investment for this show. Apart from budget travellers, UP also has a huge high-end luxury clientele which seeks high standards of service. People in UP have money to spend but are not so aware about the destinations and thus, education of travel agents is most crucial in the state.”



**Gaurav Sharma**  
Regional Manager-  
Business Development,  
Cruise Professionals, India  
Travel Award winner



**Amit Gupta**  
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Sahibji, India Travel  
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**Akanksha Chaudhary**  
Senior Manager  
Salvia Travels

“Since this was the first outbound tourism show to be hosted in Lucknow, we decided to venture into the UP market as this is a growing and developing market with a lot of scope. The travel agents we received were from Lucknow, Kanpur and other nearby areas and it was very helpful to be connected with these agents directly rather than have their business routed through other agents in Delhi and Mumbai. We showcased St. Petersburg and other parts of Russia and received a warm response. This was a very well-organised show and it is commendable that the organisation was able to put up such a good quality show in a short span of time.”

“The first Travel trade mart in Uttar Pradesh offered a wide variety of exhibitors showcasing their products to the travel agents and local tour operators of Uttar Pradesh. I saw few DMCs which came to the Uttar Pradesh market for the first time and this was a very positive sign for the tourism industry in the state. In terms of inbound, Uttar Pradesh has various destinations on offer to the foreign tourists like Lucknow, Varanasi, Sarnath, etc. along with a wide variety of tourism products. In terms of outbound, Southeast Asia remains popular with destinations like Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia; Dubai is a major attraction from the UP market while other destinations like Korea, Australia, New Zealand and all major European countries are also catching up fast.”



**Shailesh Agarwal**  
Sales Manager  
Get My Trip



**Hina Zaidi**  
Director-Sales  
Sheeraz Tours

“TTAUP is a fairly new organisation and the team did a wonderful job. This was a first-of-its-kind UP based event for the travel agents of the state and it proved to be a positive step as many times it is not feasible for the local agents to attend shows in Delhi, Mumbai and other metros. I saw that 80 per cent of the products showcased at the show are new to the UP market like St. Petersburg, Korea and Vietnam. Till now the UP travel agents were confined to destinations like Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Macau and Dubai but with newer destinations coming in, I am sure the trend will change. The spending capacity is very high amongst travellers from the state but the lack of information and knowledge among the agents act as a deterrent for the industry.”

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# Delhi ranks high in Australia's list

Maharashtra ranks first while Delhi ranks second among the biggest Indian markets for Australia in terms of tourist arrivals, reveals **Nishant Kashikar**, Country Head India and Gulf, Tourism Australia, who was in the capital recently and shared plans for the market and India at large.



NISHA VERMA

**Nishant Kashikar** revealed that Tourism Australia started with a representation agency in Delhi before setting up its own office. "We have developed a very strong relationship with the travel industry here and we keep nurturing it. Also, given the aviation access, with the only direct connection between India and Australia being on Air India from Delhi to Sydney and Melbourne, as well as the embassy and High Commission being here, Delhi has become very important for us. We've seen some good growth from this market over the past 12 months. We had almost 32,000 tourists from the state of Delhi alone, who travelled to Australia last year and these tourists contributed almost (Australian dollar) AUD 165 million, which is an increase of 26 per cent as compared to previous years. Delhi is also important for us from a yield perspective, which means tourists from

here tend to contribute quite significantly to the country's economy through tourism activities under all segments including group travel, free individual travel and the honeymoon segment. In fact, this is the market that has helped us establish Australia as a great honeymoon destination as well. As per our Tourism 2020 strategy, our goal is now to drive yield and spend per person, and this market will play a very important role in helping us achieve that objective," he says.

Talking about the Tourism 2020 potential, he says, "When we launched Tourism 2020 plan in June 2012, we had set out three objectives—to achieve 300,000 visitor arrivals by 2020; achieve AUD 1.9 billion in spend; and to achieve the top six out of region ranking from the Indian market. The good news is that we have made it to the top six in the region ranking and we will be achieving our arrivals target in 2017 itself.



Nishant Kashikar  
Country Head India and Gulf  
Tourism Australia

With the only direct connection between India and Australia being on Air India from Delhi, and the embassy and High Commission being here, Delhi has become very important for us

Thus, these targets are not far if we maintain the current growth momentum. For the third target of the AUD 1.9 billion spend, we are confident

of achieving it well ahead of time. India is expected to be ranked amongst the top five markets for Australia by 2025, and we'd like to bring that target closer and reach that mark by 2020 itself."

On repeat visitation, Kashikar reveals that 50 per cent of visitors to Australia come back because it is such a huge continent that cannot be explored in one visit. "We are seeing an increase in dispersal where people are travelling to cities beyond the key traditional gateway cities. This is how it will help us to achieve our yield," he shares. To propagate repeat visitation, they are focusing on the western part of Australia, the northern territory, Tasmania and other destinations which are also gaining popularity and awareness in the Indian market. "Content, advocacy and digital will be our three strong pillars and these will be supported by partnerships with agents, OTAs and airlines to achieve our ob-

jectives. In the last six-eight months, we have worked with a lot of television channels, both mainstream and regional. Thus, there is a lot of focus on content on TV. Advocacy is another element of our strategy and we have signed up with Parineeti Chopra as Tourism Australia's friend of Australia. She recently travelled to Australia and posted on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, and has around 30 million followers across all platforms. There is going to be an increase in investment on digital media as well. It's not going to be pure display advertisements, but a lot of focus on search, programmatic search and videos," he shares.

In terms of propagation through trade channels, he revealed that they have the Aussie specialist programme in India, for which they have around 6,000 registered members and almost 3,500 are certified Aussie Specialists. "We organise events like

Indian Travel Mission, which was recently held in Pune, where we had 100 agents from across the country. We also have Australian Tourism Exchange, which is going to take place next year in the city of Adelaide, and we have good participation from Delhi as well. We have Dreamtime, which focuses on MICE, and is happening in December in Brisbane. Apart from that, my team trains almost 12,000 agents across the country in any given year. These are customised and bespoke training programmes based on the agency requirements," he says.

### Delhi's Aussie link

Almost 32,000 tourists from Delhi alone, travelled to Australia last year and contributed almost AUD 165 million, which is an increase of 26 per cent as compared to previous years

# The City of Nawabs dazzles at TTM 2017

The 1<sup>st</sup> Travel Trade Mart organised by TTAUP for the local travel agents in Uttar Pradesh was hosted in Lucknow, where key players of the tourism and hospitality industry gathered under one roof to grow the outbound market from UP.



# TTM makes inroads for tourism boards

▶ Contd. from page 34

“This show was very informative for me as till now i was working with only a few suppliers but after attending TTM 2017, I was able to meet many new ones who are capable of offering better rates and will be beneficial for my overall business. For example, one exhibitor offers an online portal to check the availability of packages for Mauritius, for which we were dependent on our suppliers; earlier I knew only one supplier for packages to Russia but now I have met three different companies for CIS countries and Russia. Agra in particular has good high-end traffic for Europe where people have the spending capacity as high as Rs 50,000 per night in a branded property.”



**Abdul Jabbar Khan**  
Director, Jet View Travels



**Manoj Rawat**  
Director, Express  
Worldwide Holidays India

“I congratulate the team for organising such a wonderful show. TTM has been very successful in providing exposure to the small time agents of the region and being a local show, it also brought many industry professionals together under one roof. I was able to meet vendors here which I was unable to meet at larger trade shows, The quality of exhibitors was on a par with the bigger shows organised in the metros and that is commendable.”



**Prateek Jain**  
Proprietor  
A. S. Tours and Travels

“UP is a much diversified market and it is very important to look at this market carefully. Most of the travel shows take place in metros like Delhi, Mumbai and this is for the first time that Lucknow has been brought to the fore. In travel business, trust is the foremost priority and the exhibitors at the show have been able to convince us of the quality of the products they have to offer. Pricing of the products is also very crucial and we hope that now after we are directly connected to the variety of suppliers, we will find better prices for our clients and grow business.”

# PATA extends Mario Hardy's term for 3 years

■ The Executive Board of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) has extended the contract of Chief Executive Officer **Dr. Mario Hardy** for a period of three years commencing January 1, 2018. Dr Hardy said, “I am delighted to have an opportunity to work with our outstanding management team in building upon the PATA successes of the past three years. We still face many challenges as a membership organisation but our determination to add value to the many benefits of PATA membership is being recognised in the public and private sectors. We shall continue with

our primary mission of promoting sustainable and responsible tourism development throughout the world as we encourage travel to, from and within the Asia-Pacific region.”

Mario Hardy joined PATA in 2012 as Chief Operating Officer and was appointed Chief Executive Officer on November 1, 2014. He is a past Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the PATA Foundation, a non-profit organisation with a focus on the protection of the environment, the conservation of culture and heritage, and support for education. He worked for 26 years in spe-

cialised aviation businesses with a focus upon data analytics and technology, occupying leadership roles in Montreal, Vancouver, London, Beijing and Singapore.

In 2016, he received an honorary Doctorate of Letters from Capilano University for his philanthropic work in Cambodia where he helped develop a school for underprivileged children and for his support in the development of a Community Based Tourism (CBT) project in Vietnam. In January 2017 Mario Hardy graduated from the Singularity University, Executive Program

on the subject of Exponential Technologies.

PATA Chairperson Sarah Mathews said, “I am delighted that Mario has agreed to continue as our Chief Executive Officer. Under his outstanding leadership, the Association has made considerable progress and I am confident he will continue to lead PATA and support the needs of our members. PATA remains an association dedicated to all its members and will continue to assist them in the ever-evolving landscape of tourism and travel. Mario and his team are best placed to help drive a continued period of growth.”



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# JA strengthens its foothold

With a positive year in the Indian market, JA Resorts & Hotels is leaving no stone unturned in making the brand a known name amongst Indian travellers.



NISHA VERMA

For JA Resorts & Hotels, it has been a year of having representation in India and the going has certainly been good, claims **William Harley-Fleming**, Cluster General Manager, JA Manafaru Maldives, JA Jebel Ali Golf Resort, JA Shooting Club & JA Centre for Excellence Dubai. "The last one year for us in the Indian market has been very successful. Kunal Munshaw and Pooja Wadhwa from Avante Garde Consulting have done a fantastic job. We have seven properties within the portfolio in Dubai, Maldives and Seychelles, and for us it's about getting the message out that we are different from any cookie-cutter hotel and have a brand that is unique with a heart of hospitality, attention to detail, and personalised service. For us, it's not just about putting it on a piece of paper, but also having one-on-one meetings with the travel agents, our partners, corporate clients as well as the media," he said.

He added that they have got a number of Indian guests through all channels including the trade and individual bookings. "We've seen massive uptake in Indian travellers to the Maldives, with over 500 per cent increase year-on-year. There is about 100 per cent increase for Dubai and about 150-200 per cent increase in Seychelles. Since we started with a very low occupancy from India, it's a very good increase. However, we are looking to continue that growth," shared Fleming.

In order to push the brand further into the Indian market they have on board **Thomas Grundner** as Group Director of Sales & Marketing, JA Resorts & Hotels, who said that they are looking at all sectors from India including FIT, MICE, weddings and incentives. "If we are getting an incentive, wedding or MICE group, it would increase the occupancy rapidly because everybody comes from the same source market. For JA Manafaru Maldives, it's more of the FIT business, but we are also targeting the wedding market. We want to make sure that people come for their honeymoon to the property as well as to celebrate special occasions. Dubai, on the other hand, gives all the segments the opportunity, especially with the JA Oasis Beach Tower apartments, where we have



**William Harley-Fleming**  
Cluster General Manager, JA Manafaru Maldives, JA Jebel Ali Golf Resort, JA Shooting Club & JA Centre for Excellence Dubai

There has been a massive uptake in the number of Indian travellers to the Maldives, with over 500 per cent increase year-on-year

a very strong Indian base. It offers perfect space with the way the apartments are split as well as a good location that is close to the city as well as the beach. Then there is our prime product— JA Palm Tree Court and JA Jebel Ali Beach Hotel, where one can have the best beach that stretches 800m, a golf course, marina, shooting range as well as stables. It is a destination in itself," he said.

JA Jebel Ali Beach Hotel and JA Palm Tree Court are quite close to Dubai Parks & Resorts, which is one of the latest attractions in Dubai. Grundner revealed that they are working closely with the attraction and once it becomes popular, the business to the properties would also see a rise. "We are also trying to bring the popularity of Dubai Parks & Resorts into the market, which would not only help us in driving more room nights, but also drive more traffic into the park. We have a free shuttle service between the resort and the hotel, and guests at our properties get free entry to the parks," he revealed.

Elaborating further on the wedding business from India, Grundner said, "While we are reaching out to key players in the wedding business, the biggest challenge for us is the size of the weddings because based on our inventory, some of the weddings are too big. However, the wedding market is one of the key source segments we want to tap, not only because we have fantastic hotels,



**Thomas Grundner**  
Group Director of Sales & Marketing  
JA Resorts & Hotels

The wedding market is one of the key source segments we want to tap, not only because we have fantastic hotels, but also a desert retreat

but also because we have a desert retreat, Al Sahara Desert Resort, where we can host up to 10,000 people with an amphitheatre set up right in the middle for concerts and other functions."

The key focus for JA Resorts & Hotels, however, is establishing the brand and creating awareness for it in India. "We knew creating awareness of the brand is going to be a challenge in India when we entered the market. However, I think seeing is believing and we have seen positive results from this market," said Fleming. "We are willing to look at an opportunity in India, but first we want to establish a name in the market because we want to build a strong foundation and make sure that the day we come into India, we have a good recognition and understanding in the market," he added.

Now, the focus for their India strategy will be having a brand ambassador, which would be key in creating awareness about the brand. Grundner said, "We have stronger presence in the market through regular sales trips, functions for our partners, stronger relationships with the trade, content sharing and a brand ambassador to get better exposure. We have started discussions on the same and are looking at Bollywood celebrities as well. There needs to be a right person who fits in with the brand, understands the ethos behind it, and appreciates what we are trying to achieve."



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# Marching towards sustainability

The Young Environmentalists Programme recently organised a World Tourism Day Conclave on the theme 'Sustainable Tourism - A Tool for Development' in association with Creed Entertainment in Mumbai under the aegis of UNWTO. The event saw various state and international tourism boards, travel associations and airlines participate in the business sessions. Based out of Mumbai, the programme has been accredited by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.



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# Fancy travelling to the Balkans in 2018?

Tourism Enterprises recorded a handsome growth of 22 per cent in 2017 over the previous year. Recently the company added Bohemia Travel Agency to their network, a destination management company, which provides services in the Balkan countries especially to Bulgaria, Macedonia and Serbia.



TT BUREAU

Tourism Enterprises based in New Delhi and Mumbai, brings some of the world's best destination management companies (DMCs) to India to offer services to outbound operators



Ravi Gosain  
Managing Director  
Tourism Enterprises

MICE travel to Europe is currently very popular and the company is trying to take the groups to the Balkan region as well

in India. The last three years have been successful for the company and they are looking forward to a robust 2018. "We are aggressively promoting Morocco, Italy, France, Poland



Kumar Utkarsh  
Senior Manager  
Tourism Enterprises

With Central Europe gaining popularity, we are offering tripsto Prague, Vienna, Budapest and Munich through a DMC brand in Czech Republic

etc. to our B2B network in India. Outbound from India is steady, although it's price sensitive. The proximity to international destinations with new flights and promotional airfares is also a value-add," says Ravi Gosain, Managing Director, Tourism Enterprises.

In 2016, Tourism Enterprises sent approximately over 8,000 Indian tourists to

several countries; the most popular being Dubai, Central Europe, Sri Lanka and Greece. "With Central Europe gaining popularity in the India market, we are also offering trips to Prague, Vienna, Salzburg, Budapest and Munich through a DMC brand in Czech Republic," says Kumar Utkarsh, Senior Manager, Tourism Enterprises.

Identifying trends from the India market, Gosain points out that MICE travel to Europe is currently very popular and the company is trying to take the groups to the Balkan region as well. Families and friends are also travelling to this region from India. "We are targeting the middle-class travellers for the Balkan countries because this region is very affordable.

One can experience the European charm in this region at a cheaper price, familiarise themselves with the culture, cuisine and traditions of the region before they head out to explore the rest of Europe," says Gosain. He further adds that the average duration of stay for the Indian traveller is minimum 6-7 days and their average spend is about \$600-

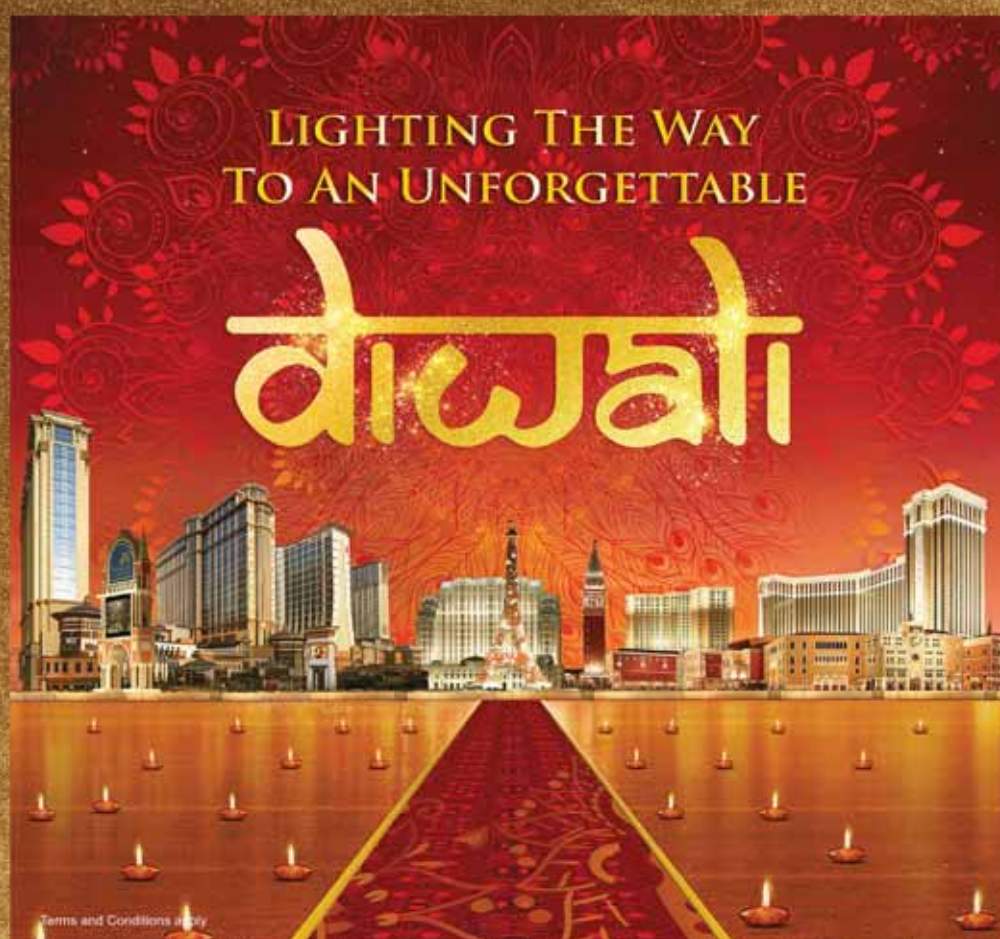
\$700 per person which includes stay in a 3-4 star hotel and transport within the region.

Utkarsh further elaborates that the company is also looking at the incentive travel segment, families and groups as they demand personalised programmes in comparison to set departure tours. Tourism Enterprises reaches its

trade partners through personal visits, mailers, trade fairs and arranges local city based seminars and also ensures the quality, stability and reliability of the DMC which they promote in the Indian market. The company will continue its marketing efforts by way of attending roadshows, travel trade fairs and familiarisation trips for agents in 2018.

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# Mumbai prepares for cruise liners

The Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) along with the Mumbai Port Trust (MPT) has made major upgrades at the port to make their disembarkation and offshore experience a seamless one.



Appointed in May 2017, Vijay Waghmare, Managing Director, Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) has been busy since. If it's not tackling the tourist guide problem that has been hampering Maharashtra tourism, then he's busy co-ordinating with Mumbai Port Trust (MPT) to make the offshore experience of cruise passengers easy.

Cruise tourism is a new and exciting area of tourism in Maharashtra. While the port trust has taken the initiative, MTDC is one of the major players which will be co-ordinating with MPT in terms of cruise operations. It is currently chalking out the nitty-gritties and fixing the logistical aspects that tourists disembarking at Mumbai get annoyed with. Speaking about this, Waghmare adds, "We want to welcome international tourists when they get off the ship



**Vijay Waghmare**  
Managing Director, Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC)



**Sanjay Bhatia**  
Chairman  
MPT

the potential is for 955 ships which can take the passenger count per ship from about 1,250 today to 4,200 passengers when the demand increases. Most of the five major ports – Mumbai, Goa, Kochi, New Mangalore and Chennai – will have e-visa facilities and e-landing cards from this season. "There is an issue of biometrics, which we are getting resolved by putting additional machines of 30 each at Mumbai and Kochi ports. Then, for security, so that passengers are not stopped multiple times, a majority of the ports now have access control and RFID on vehicles so that everyone can swipe and enter. This will be introduced at Mumbai port from September 2017," Sanjay Bhatia, Chairman, MPT, reveals.

an upgraded terminal reportedly at the cost of Rs 225 crore for a modern passenger terminal.

### Tourist guides

Training of guides is also a major concern for international tourists. With the increase of cruise tourism, the demand for guides will also increase, specially the foreign-language speaking ones. "We will be providing training for this. In the first phase, we are planning to certify 100 tour guides and we will be focusing on people who have proficiency in foreign languages. Four cities have been identified for the first phase: Mumbai, Aurangabad, Nasik and Nagpur," Waghmare adds.

## MTDC pushes remote yet beautiful spots as B&Bs

Its tie-up with online hospitality service AirBnB aims to develop areas such as hill stations and forts. Waghmare says, "We want to develop tourism in areas that are remote yet beautiful by virtue of it being unexplored. While the initial work, after our tie up with AirBnB recently, has started with Mumbai first, we want them to concentrate on remote areas of Maharashtra such as hill stations and fort areas – spots that are beautiful but lack infrastructure and accommodation facilities. We recognise a new and exciting opportunity of promoting these areas as B&Bs destinations. This will also strengthen the economy of these areas."

We want to provide international tourists with a glimpse of Maharashtra's culture when they get off the ship

There is an issue of biometrics, which we are getting resolved by putting additional machines of 30 each at Mumbai and Kochi ports

in a way that they can also get a glimpse of what Maharashtra is about – places to see, our cuisine, our culture."


### Facilities for cruise passengers

Ever since MPT took action a year ago, 158 ships have come into Mumbai. But

After separating the cargo and cruise terminals at all five ports, they now have electronic permits and e-payments, and single-window systems. Port charges are also getting reduced. Mumbai, of course, is getting

### Fixing the bug


MTDC is chalking out the nitty-gritties and fixing the logistical aspects that tourists disembarking at Mumbai get annoyed with



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# Ireland lures Indian cinephiles

Tourism Ireland conducted its annual sales mission in Mumbai and Delhi to apprise the travel trade of new tourism products for Indian travellers. Ireland is promoting screen tourism to showcase the shooting locations where Game of Thrones and Star Wars were shot.



In the words of **David Boyce**, Head – Developing Markets, Tourism Ireland, 30,000 Indians currently visit Ireland each year and the destination believes that this number can grow to 50,000 over the next two-three years. Considered to be an important market for Ireland, the destination plans to keep in touch with the Indian travel trade through the Sales Missions in India. 12 Irish agencies participated in the sales mission this year, held in Mumbai and Delhi which was attended by over 100 travel agents in each city, informed **Beena Menon**, Representative – India, Tourism Ireland.

Boyce explains, “The air service has never been better. We have good connectivity with Emirates, a double daily service by Etihad and now Qatar Airlines with its operations beginning from India through the Middle East into Ireland.”



**David Boyce**  
Head – Developing Markets  
Tourism Ireland

We have good connectivity with Emirates, a double daily service by Etihad and now Qatar Airlines with its operations beginning from India through the Middle East into Ireland

“We have seen a growth of about 34 per cent up till the end of August in 2017.



**Beena Menon**  
Representative – India  
Tourism Ireland

12 Irish agencies participated in the sales mission this year which was held in Mumbai and Delhi. Over 100 travel agents in each city attended the event

Currently, leisure travel is predominant in Ireland but we have seen an increasing



**Huzan Fraser Motivala**  
Representative - India  
Tourism Ireland

Ireland has been declared as the Game of Thrones Territory by the makers of this TV show and we hope to capitalise on the same by offering various tourism-related products

interest in MICE travel to the country. MICE and incentive travel is a revenue generator

as though the stay is shorter, the expense is higher. Traditionally, visitors would stay two-three nights in Ireland as part of their UK trip but we are working hard to increase the length of stay,” adds Boyce. Tourism Ireland is also investing to revamp the website for Irish Specialist programme to make it easier for the trade to engage with the destination.

According to **Huzan Fraser Motivala**, Representative - India, Tourism Ireland, there is an increased interest among Indian travellers towards Ireland and an annual growth of 14 per cent is testimony to the same. She points out that the British Irish Visa Scheme (BIVS) has been one of the key drivers to the growth. Motivala says, “Ireland has been declared as the Game of Thrones Territory by the makers of this TV show and we hope to capitalise on the same by offering various tourism related products

around the theme of screen tourism.” She further adds that Tourism Ireland works very closely with the Indian travel trade. “We conduct 2-3 trade Fam trips each year, do training workshops, joint cooperation activities among other campaigns for the trade. MICE and group travel is picking up in Ireland from India and business is mostly driven from West and North India to various cities in Ireland,” she adds.

## Ireland beckons

- ← Tourism Ireland is investing to revamp the website for Irish Specialist programme to make it easier for the trade to engage with the destination
- ← MICE and group travel is picking up in Ireland from India and business is mostly driven from West and North India to various cities in Ireland



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## Anchor offers Dusit's hospitality globally

Anchor Destinations and Travel Management is a global wholesaler for Dusit Thani Resorts and Pathumwan Princess Resorts MBK in Bangkok.

TT BUREAU

The year 2017 has been a great year for Anchor Destinations as the company recorded a growth of more than 40 per cent over last year. The company has added another feather in its cap as it has now been appointed as the global wholesaler for the Dusit Thani Resorts in Thailand and Pathumwan Princess Resorts MBK in Bangkok. **Deepika Khanna**, Founder and CEO, Anchor Destinations, says, "Dusit Resorts is a great brand and needs no introduction to the Indian market. With a perfect blend of Thai hospitality and its international presence, it is an ideal property for honeymooners, families, weddings and groups. We are marketing exclusive packages combined with many sightseeing programmes for the same."



Deepika Khanna  
Founder and CEO  
Anchor Destinations

Talking about the future plans of the company, Khanna feels that within a very short span of time, the company has made a market place for itself in terms of service delivery and competitive rates and the coming months are definitely promising in terms of new destinations like Italy, Spain, Maldives and various hotels that the company is offering to its clients. "Our focus as a global whole seller for the Dusit Thani Resorts in Thailand and Pathumwan Princess Resorts MBK in Bangkok includes increasing the room nights of the contracted resorts in Thailand and offering more visibility to the brand in terms of combined packages and resort focused promotions. As a complete B2B operator, we are focused on the travel trade partners by way of offering various promotions, visibility through our emailing campaigns, special rates for MICE operators and/or wedding organisers," adds Khanna.

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TT BUREAU

After making its mark in Middle East, the Indian subcontinent and Africa, 24x7Rooms.com is focusing on the European market. They opened the first European GSA branch in Macedonia last year and are registered in the UK. **Mushtak Gafoor**, CEO and MD, 24x7Rooms.com, says, "We have seen an encouraging response from few select partners who have



Mushtak Gafoor  
CEO and MD  
24x7Rooms

been supporting 24x7Rooms.com from the past few years. We are sure that having a direct presence in this region will help us. We are participating in WTM London to understand the market. We have a packed schedule with prospective partners and will constantly try to evaluate how our solutions will be best suited to market requirements. We will also look out for GSA partners who will promote our brand in their markets."

The company is coming up with an all-new version of 24x7Rooms.com, which should go live by the first quarter of 2018. It will bring car rental as a new module to its portfolio of hotel plus transfers plus sightseeing for worldwide destinations. "We have excellent XML API connectivity for those looking for special deals in the Middle East, South East Asia and African regions," Gafoor adds.



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# Tiger Trust to involve youth

Tiger Trust wants to involve the youth in the field of conservation by tapping schools and colleges at national and international levels. Its vision is to plan a national meet so that they can participate in policy-making decisions.

TT BUREAU

Tiger Trust was founded by Padmashri Late Kailash Sankhala, Founding Director of Project Tiger which was government of India's principal initiator of tiger conservation, in India in 1989, to protect tigers in their natural habitat. The trust functions in a three-pronged approach, namely

The Trust's vision is to build an effective legal infrastructure, strong network of trained and empowered forest staff that provides long-term support for wildlife conservation, especially tigers in national parks. Gosain says, "I believe that wildlife tourism and its concept has to change with the times. In view of increasing human-animal conflict, it has now become

necessary to have a serious relook for granting permissions for fresh hotels, carrying capacity in the forest and educate the tourists about the behaviour and concern for the wild animals. Wildlife tourism should invoke passion and a feeling of responsibility among tourists. Hence, a well planned and a friendly approach has to be taken by the stakeholders."



Anjana Gosain  
Chief Functionary Officer  
Tiger Trust

Tiger Trust has big plans for the youth in the field of conservation by involving school and college students at national and international levels

capacity building, awareness campaigns and working with the frontline officers of forest department and tribal people in the peripheral villages including schools around the national parks.

The trust is now led by Anjana Gosain, Chief Functionary Officer, Tiger Trust. Speaking about the direction that the trust has taken, she says, "Tiger Trust has big plans for the youth in the field of conservation by involving school and college students at national and international levels. It has already received support from Clemson University, South Carolina, National Association for Tigers and several schools and colleges in India to make this dream come true. The vision is to plan a national meet that will involve the youth in policy-making decisions and to have a forum to address these issues and also travel in prominent parks together. This is planned for 2019." Gosain is a practising advocate in the Supreme Court and High Court with specialisation in environmental law and has a standing practice of over 39 years.

## A different side of South Africa



South African Tourism (SAT) has expanded its offering in the India market with newer regions of the Garden Route and the Eastern Cape which include the towns of Knysna, George, Oudtshoorn, Plettenberg Bay, Port Elizabeth and East London. To showcase these destinations, SAT organised an 11-day tour for a few travel agents from India.

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FEEs earned during Sept'17 recorded at ₹13,867 crore

₹ According to the data released by Ministry of Tourism, Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) during the month of September 2017 were recorded at ₹13,867 crore as compared to ₹11,642 crore in September 2016 and ₹10,415 crore in September 2015.

€ The growth rate in FEEs in rupee terms in September 2017 over September 2016 was 19.1 per cent as compared to the growth of 11.8 per cent in September 2016 over September 2015. FEEs during the period January-September 2017, was recorded at ₹1,29,871 crore, amounting to a growth of 16.8 percent over same period of previous year.

# VoA soon for Indians in Zimbabwe

Talking about the importance of the Indian market, **Karikoga Kaseke**, Chief Executive, Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, says that on the behest of the tourism industry the country will now be offering visa on arrival to Indians by the end of 2017.

PRITI KHANNA FROM ZIMBABWE

**Q**What is the significance of the Sanganai World Tourism Expo which is in its 10th year now? How has it helped to get business for Zimbabwe?

The Sanganai World Tourism Expo is like any other travel fair or exposition. It is very much like the fair in previous years. It gives us an opportunity to put people under one roof so that buyers and media can meet the sellers and exhibitors easily. The significance can be explained from a marketing perspective. It is a marketing platform that has done well in putting Zimbabwe on the world map.

**Q**Have you in any way monitored the growth of the business of exhibitors?

We have done that but not very accurately or very well. We are now moving into the mode to monitor more rigorously not only the value of the show but also the buyers we bring to the show.

**Q**How big is the India market for Zimbabwe?

India for us is a very big market. We are aware that the major issue with India has been the visa processing. Indians are currently under the 'C' Category. I am happy to inform you that they are now going to be moved to the 'B' Category. This proposal is awaiting implementation and likely to be implemented by the government by the end of this year. We have been fighting for this and are happy that on being moved to Category 'B' every Indian will get a visa on arrival. This should get us more traffic from India. We need to do a lot of things in the Indian market to gain more footfall. We have to put in more efforts in marketing Zimbabwe to the Indian market.

**Q**Other than the visa is there any other strategy to promote Zimbabwe in India?

From what I know, Indians tend to travel with families or in



Karikoga Kaseke  
Chief Executive  
Zimbabwe Tourism Authority

From what I know, Indians tend to travel with families or in groups. We need to target these groups by talking to outbound travel operators in India and ask them to get groups to Zimbabwe

groups. We need to target these groups by talking to outbound travel operators in India and ask them to get groups to Zimbabwe. We are also aware

that food is important for visitors from India. In every town in Zimbabwe we have many Indian restaurants. These may not be authentic Indian food but are pretty close to it. We also need to catch up with other cultural aspects in preparation for the Indian market.

**Q**How big is the role of the travel agent, especially now that people tend to have access to lots of information online with regard to travelling to any destination?

Travel agents play a significant role despite the various options available online. Travel agents are in a better position to arrange a good tour and itinerary. Trust is a huge component when investing in a trip and an established travel agent provides that assurance. In my opinion, a travel agent's role can never be replaced.

**Q**Which city in India currently is your biggest source market?

India as a whole is doing very well. We are very ac-

tive in the Indian market. We are concentrating not only in the big cities and metros but other cities too as India is a huge country.

**Q**Are there any other roadblocks for Indians to travel to Zimbabwe other than the visa issue?

Visa is the starting point. Once the 'B' Category visa is in place, we hope things will change for the better. Given the vastness and size of India, visitors coming to Zimbabwe from any part of India will make a big difference.

**Q**Any specific strategy overall and for India for the current financial year?

We shall conduct a vigorous Zimbabwe campaign in India next year so that people get to know our country well along with the significant attractions it has to offer. We are looking at targeting a more specific market that includes South Africa, China, India and two other countries.

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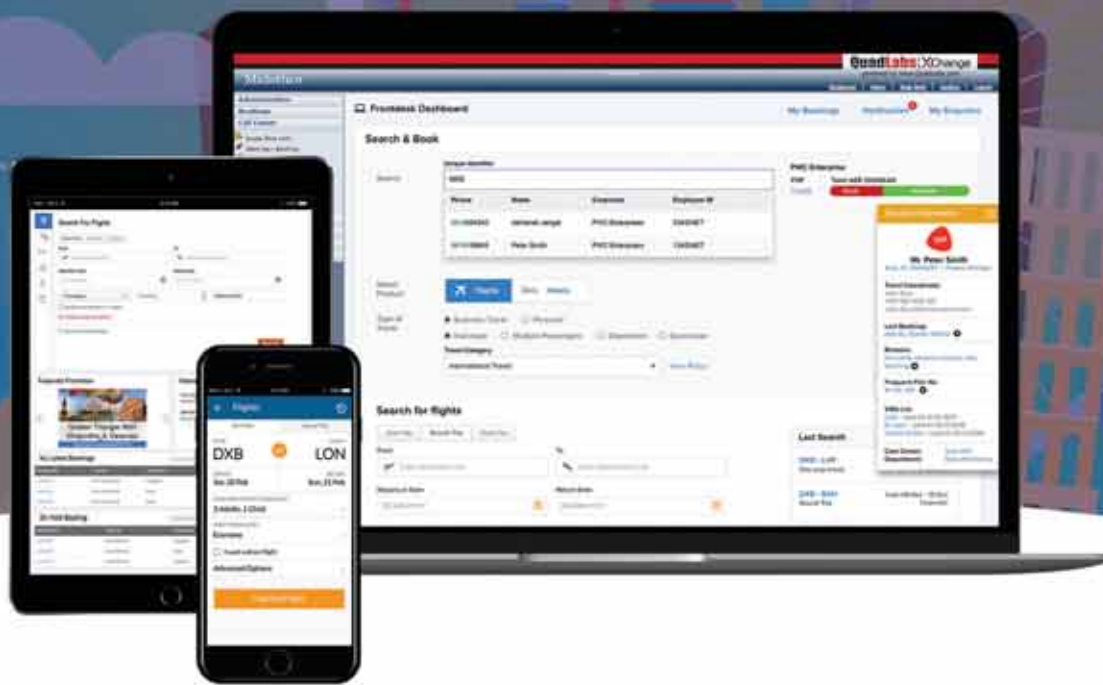
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# Does India pack the right punch?

India has a myriad tourism offerings, but do these assets manage to get enough tourist arrivals to the country? Industry stakeholders share the challenges they face while selling the destination internationally.



“Despite various challenges faced by Destination India in the inbound tourism traffic from traditional markets, India is showing regular increase in the tourist arrivals. Though the stagnation of demand is felt as a challenge, the Indian tourism industry has started reaching out to alternate potential markets and started cultivating them and generating increased inflow to India. According to FORBES Asia, South Asia is predicted to be the fastest growing region as India outpaces China in the near future. Major countries projected to experience strong travel and tourism GDP growth will be India, China, Thailand, Indonesia, Peru, and Kenya. It is evident that the coming decade will see tremendous growth and revolution in the travel, tourism, hospitality and aviation industry. As part of this global phenomenon, India and this region will be playing a vital role. With that being the future, it goes without saying that the tourism industry will have a lot to do creatively.”



**EM Najeer**  
Chairman & Managing Director, Air Travel Enterprises Group of Companies (ATE) and India Travel Award Winner

“India is a beautiful country, with varied landscapes, offering a range of tourist destinations to choose from, making for a perfect revitalising holiday. From snowy hills, majestic mountains, scenic valleys, serene beaches and calm backwaters to sultry deserts and lush forested areas, India has it all. The magnificent country offers a plethora of tourist destinations for thrilling adventure sports, relaxed and refreshing holidays as well as memorable romantic vacations. The terror attacks that struck Mumbai



**Santosh Kumar Sharma**  
Director, Foresee Aviation

in November 2008 dealt a strong blow to tourism in the country. Security has also been a major problem for tourism growth for a number of years. The Golden Triangle (Delhi-Agra-Jaipur) is India's only circuit which is world famous. For a vast country like India with diverse tourism offerings, development of circuits for various segments like heritage and culture, adventure, religious, eco, beach, wellness, agri and rural is required.”



**Lally Matthews**  
Director, Vacations Travels & Tours and Hony. Secretary, IATO

“The MOT has taken up many initiatives, including cleanliness drive as well as a new marketing campaign. The effect of all this will not be visible immediately, but in due course of time. UK remains one of the biggest source markets for the country and people keep coming to India as they know about our country. India offers a wide range of tourism products, right from heritage, culture, beaches, yoga, wildlife and mountains, which many neighbouring countries cannot offer. However, as a tour operator we are facing many challenges, including high taxation and we hope that it gets rationalised. Cleanliness should be our priority, and I am glad that the government has taken initiatives for monument maintenance. The hotel rates in India are higher than other destinations in Southeast Asia. Although, the government has strengthened its marketing approach and with the Prime Minister visiting various countries, people around the world know about India.”

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# Networking time for JA Resorts & Hotels



JA Resorts & Hotels hosted a networking evening for the trade in Mumbai, where a delegation from the hospitality group headed by its COO **David Thomson**, **William Harley-Fleming**, Cluster General Manager and **Thomas Grundner** Group Director of Sales & Marketing for the group welcomed them. The evening saw the guests interacting over cocktails and dinner, while discussing mutually benefitting opportunities.





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## Europamundo lures Indians

Europamundo Vacaciones has witnessed a 30 per cent growth from the India market in 2017 over 2016 and hopes to grow by 50 per cent in 2018.

TT BUREAU

Europamundo Vacaciones, a coach tour company from Spain, operating globally, saw 30 per cent growth in the number of Indian travellers taking their services in 2017 over 2016. **Luis García Codrón**, Chief Executive Officer, Europamundo Vacaciones, says, "We started offering our product in India only two years ago and have catered to almost 6000 Indian passengers till now. This year we saw a 30 per cent growth over our debut year last year and hope to record around 50 per cent growth next year with over 9000 Indian passengers."

Codrón informs that the company caters to over 150,000 passengers every year from across the globe and is planning to introduce some newer itineraries for Morocco, Italy, France, Scandinavia, Japan and Russia in 2018. He points out that the Indian travellers are very interesting as they have an eye for detail and tend to enjoy landscape, nature, snow,



**Luis García Codrón**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Europamundo Vacaciones



**Aparna C Basumalik**  
Country Head-India  
Europamundo Vacaciones

mountains, etc. "We are very happy with the response we have received from our Indian clients and this will help us cater to them in a better way, we are going to introduce special itineraries designed for the Indian clients. We understand that Indians are very sensitive about their meals and hence, we will offer Indian meals during the tours," says Codrón.

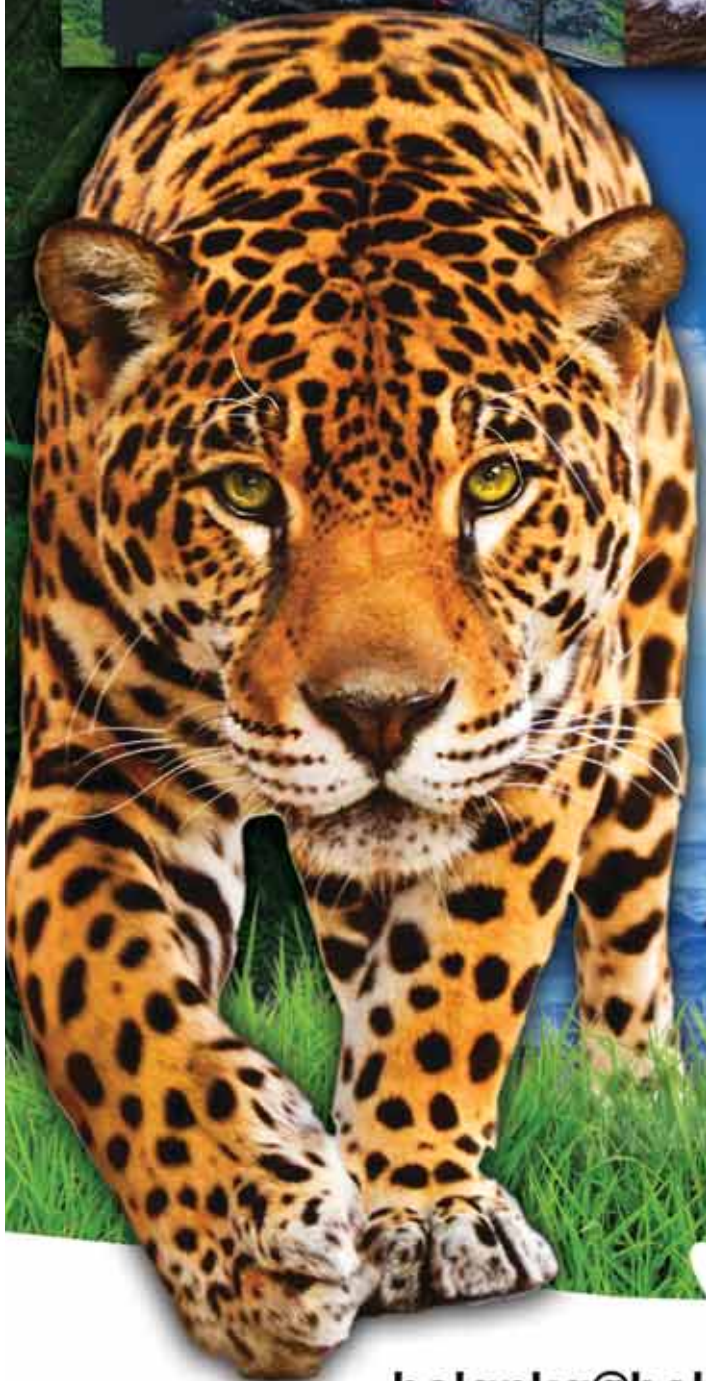
**Aparna C Basumalik**, Country Head-India, Europamundo Vacaciones, believes that the USP of the company is the flexibility they offer to their clients. She says, "The

clients travelling with us have a variety to choose from. They can either take an entire coach tour from one destination to the other or can choose to take a part of the trip with us, de-board and board again at some other destination. The beauty of our service is that no trip is ever cancelled." The company is a pure B2B provider wherein Europamundo sells various products to the distributors in India and no customer can make direct bookings with them. The commission offered is higher than the average market standard, informs Basumalik.

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## Razdan wins Raid De Himalaya Extreme Car Rally

The 19<sup>th</sup> edition of Raid De Himalaya Extreme Car Rally was held from October 7-13, 2017, where Sanjay Razdan, Director, Razdan Holidays secured the first position in 1300 CC class and was declared the overall 1<sup>st</sup> runner up in all kinds of cars. Raid De Himalaya is considered the toughest car rally in India with cars racing in extreme conditions, extreme temperatures, crossing some of the highest passes in the world. This year the rally route was Manali – Gramphu – Losar – Kaza – Losar – Gramphu – Pang – Debring – Dat – Debring – Leh – Sanku – Umba la – Drass – Umba la – Sanku – Kargil – Penzi la – Kargil – Drass – Umba la – Sanku – Leh.



## Is India 'incredible' for tourists?

► Contd. from page 52



**Rajiv Mehra**  
Director, Uday Tour & Travels  
and Vice President, IATO

“The October season for inbound business to India has been low as compared to previous arrivals in these months. The new Incredible India 2.0 campaign has been launched. However, the visibility in travel shows would work only if the tax regime is rationalised. Also, there is widespread negative publicity brought about by media coverage outside India, which is not good for tourism. In terms of rates, we need to be competent with neighbouring destinations, but that is not the case. Promotion of tourism outside India

should be done by tourism offices in those countries as embassies can't do it. However, those offices are short of staff at most of the places. While e-Visa has been good, there are long queues at the immigration counters for the same because of shortage of staff at the airports. Despite all these challenges, we are expecting November to be normal in terms of business and arrivals, while December and January could prove to be a challenge for us. We are expecting February and March to bring decent business.”



**NS Rathor**  
CEO,  
Garha Tours & Travels

“For the time being, GST has killed the inbound business and foreign tourists are preferring to go to neighbouring destinations like Bhutan, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Sri Lanka instead. I don't think we are going to have a very good inbound season this year. To make the business bloom again, we need to settle the GST regime first as it has put us in the highest bracket of tax and made the packages costly. While the tax on ASI monuments has come down, we still end up paying 12 per cent GST on tickets. However, the management in the Tourism Ministry is in best hands today with a dynamic minister and secretary. We hope that they are able to turn things around for us.”

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Himachal Pradesh has many hidden hamlets vying to charm travellers with their pristine natural beauty and cultural innocence. One can also take the road less travelled to discover the many secret hideaways in this mystical land, which is already a hotspot for adventure and religious tourism.



# Road less travelled in Himachal Pradesh

**Barog:** Barog, on the Kalka-Shimla highway, has grown from a mere stopover to a full-fledged destination. Surrounded by pine forests, it presents a fascinating view of the Churdhar Peak, which poetically translates into 'Mountain of the Silver Bangle'. HPTDC runs Hotel Pinewood here and Barog is increasingly becoming

**Bhaba Pass:** From Wangtu, a road turns off to Kafnu and here begins one of the most beautiful trek routes in Himachal. To the east, the Bhaba Valley leads to the Pin Valley in Spiti and to the west, the routes move to Kullu through the Parbati Valley.

**Chindi:** Hillsides covered

Badrinath towards the north. This is an excellent area for trekking during summer and early winter.

**Dharamkot:** Situated on the crest of a hill 11km from Dharamshala and 2km from McLeod Ganj, the village Dharamkot is a picnic spot that affords a panoramic view of the Kangra valley, Pong Dam Lake and Dhauladhar Range. Dharamkot village is a good base for trekkers undertaking short and long treks.

**Janjehli:** At a distance of 85km from Mandi, Janjehli is one of the virgin tourist places, where tourists chance upon nature at its best. It is also a paradise for hikers, offering treks up to a height of 3,300m. The famous unique temple of Shikari Devi is about 15km from Janjehli. In this valley, tourists can also visit the Kamrunag temple and a sacred lake.

**Karsog:** The wide Karsog valley lies below Chindi and has good excursion spots. Apple orchards add thier attraction to the area and Chindi is surrounded by them. Karsog valley in the Mandi district is famous for apple orchards and dense forests. In the Karsog area, Kamaksha Devi and Mahunag are the famous temples. Tattapani, that lies in the Mandi district, is famous for hot water springs.

**Pangi valley:** Full of grandeur and tribal majesty is the landlocked valley of Pangi, 173km from Chamba via Sach Pass (4,414 m). It is one of the subdivisions of Chamba district, surrounded by the Peer Panjal and Zanskar ranges. Beyond the reach of

tropical monsoon rains, the valley is one of the offbeat tourism destinations in the state. There are beautiful valleys within the Pangi region like Sural, Saichu, Kumar-Parmar, Hundan and Sechu. All these valleys are connected by the Zanskar range.

**Renuka Lake:** The most important place of tourist interest in Sirmaur is the sacred and picturesque lake of Renuka, 38km from Nahan via Dadahu. It is one of the most beautiful lakes in Himachal Pradesh, having crystal clear water and shaped like a sleeping woman.

**Shoja:** This is a vantage point for a complete panorama of the Kulla area. It provides an encompassing view of snow peaks and valleys, meadows and forests, rivers and streams. Bifurcating from Aut from the National Highway, Shoja is just 5 km short of Jallori Pass. A walk of 5km from the Pass takes you to the Sarolsar Lake among deep forests. The road further connects to Rampur, Narkanda and Shimla via Ani and Luhri.

**Sujanpur Tira:** Sujanpur was a refuge of Sansar Chand Katoch, a great



ruler of Kangra region from 1806 till 1824. Known as a builder and patron of Pahari miniature paintings, a fortified palace at Tira overlooking Sujanpur town, remnants of 'Barahari Hall' and some exquisite frescos on the walls of Narbadeshwar and Gauri Shankar temple are testimony of Sansar Chand's abilities. ↴



a popular conference destination too.

**Barot:** Situated 22km away from Joginder Nagar, and 11km away from the Haulage Trolley, Barot packs an enormous range of outdoor activities. A trout-breeding centre makes it a wonderful place for angling. Across the river Uhl is the Nargu Wild Life Sanctuary, home to the Ghoral, Himalayan Black Bear and a variety of pheasants.

with thick forests, acres filled with apple orchards, small picturesque hamlets and remarkable views in all directions make up Chindi and the area around it. It is an excellent offbeat destination that holds the charms that Himachal is famous for. Motorable on the Shimla-Mandi highway via Tattapani, it is a beautiful and unexplored destination in Karsog Valley.

**Churdhar:** Dominating the entire landscape of fields, forests and ravines is the Churdhar Peak, a trekker's treat from Nahan and Renuka. Approached by road from Dadahu, Sangrah, Bhawal, Gandhuri and Nauhra, it is a 50km trek. The peak offers a fine view of the Gangetic plains and the Satluj River in the south, and

## Experiences Galore

- ↵ Barot, a trout-breeding centre makes it a wonderful place for angling
- ↵ From Wangtu, a road turns off to Kafnu and here begins one of the most beautiful trek routes in Himachal

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# EDWIN: Agents say Juleh to Ladakh

Ladakh played host to 50 travel agents and tour operators who participated in the first Educational Destination Workshop-International (EDWIN) by Global Panorama Showcase (GPS). The delegation, led by Harmandeep Singh Anand, Managing Director, GPS, explored popular sights and attractions at the destination and interacted with the local operators in Ladakh.



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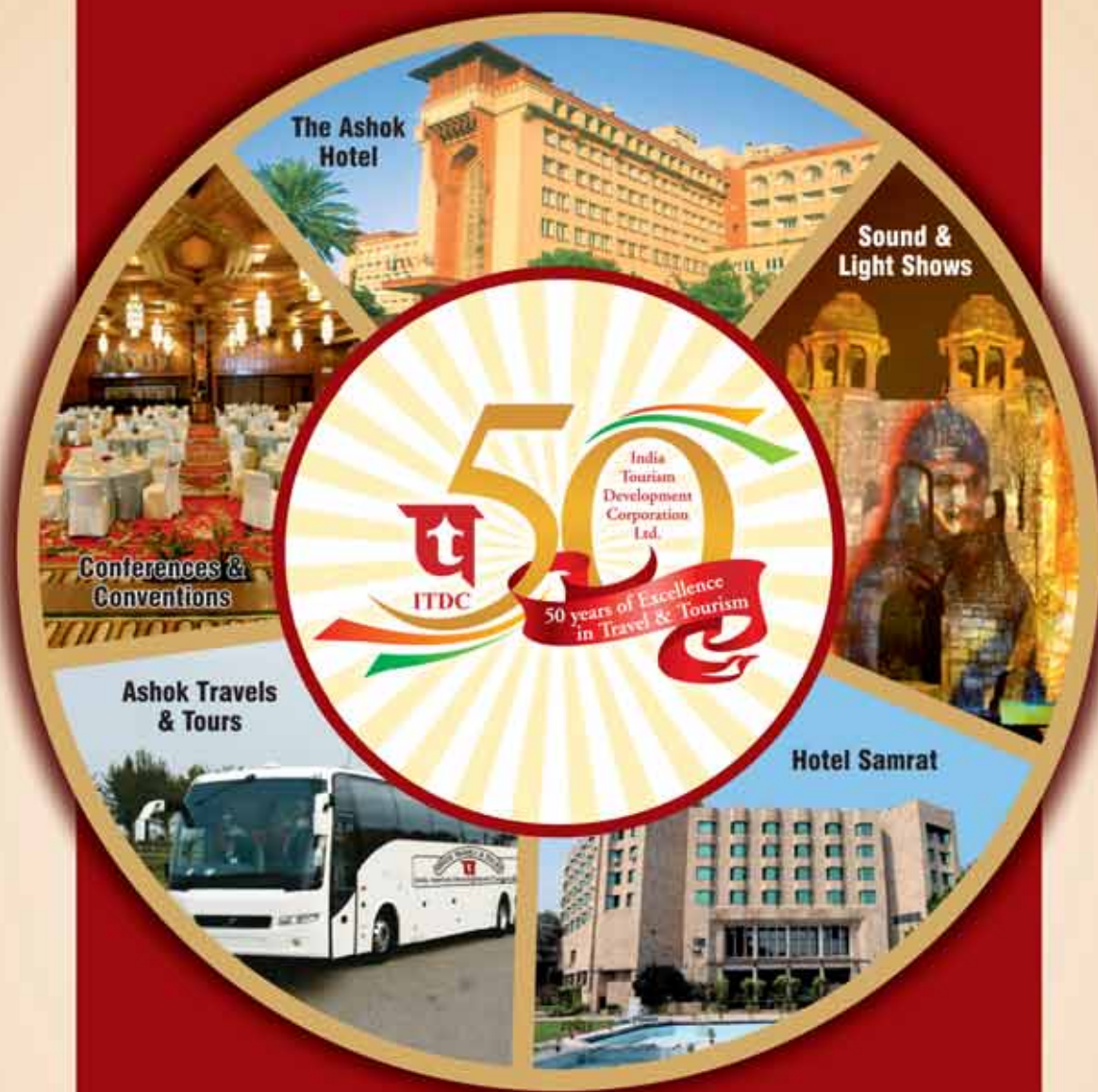
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# Almaty mesmerises Indian agents

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## MICE as a new era of tourism

■ In a positive move for the MICE segment, the government aims to roll out the National Tourism Policy, which is expected to provide single window clearance for organisation of meetings and conferences. This was indicated by **Satyajeet Rajan**, Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, at the recently-held second edition of Global MICE Travel Mart (GMTM) from September 14-15, 2017 in Delhi. Rajan opined that there was a pressing need to conduct a study to assess size of the industry and that a consultant was being appointed to suggest a workable roadmap for the development of the sector. **Chander Man-**

**sharamani**, Vice Chairman, ICPB and Managing Director, Alpcord Network Travel & Conferences Management Company, said that MICE was an economic activity and there was an imperative need for the creation of a market for the sector.

The state of West Bengal has sprung lucrative potential of MICE tourism, stated **Amitava Rathod**, Deputy General Manager, West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation. With the advent of Digha and Bagdogra coming up in the state, West Bengal is bound to lead the country in MICE tourism, he added. A panel discussion on the 'Next big step on MICE in India'

was chaired by Rajan and moderated by **Rajan Sehgal**, Member, FICCI Tourism Committee, Chairman- Northern Region, TAAI and President, India Golf Tourism Association. The session threw light on how India as a country can work on its diverse qualities of unique MICE offerings. **Rakhi Kankaria**, Member FICCI Tourism Committee, elucidated on how a collaboration between government and agencies can help develop MICE in the country optimally. With states like Maharashtra and West Bengal state governments going gung-ho on the MICE facilities in the respective states, the future of MICE in India looks bright.

## Follow the digital wave

Having recoded a significant growth in business in 2017, Akash Travels plans to follow the digital revolution and become an online travel platform soon to offer bookings for flights, hotels and holiday packages on the go.



Akash Travels plans to go the digital way by making their company an online travel portal. This move will allow their customers to book flights, hotels, holiday packages and all other travel accessories on a single platform. "We are making use of automated

travel software to create packages faster and with simplicity so that the response time to a query of the customer is less and the customer can be provided with a quote in real time," says **Akash Agarwal**, Proprietor, Akash Travels.

Agarwal feels that it is the special attention to detail that

makes one tour preferable to another. He says, "Akash Travels is eager to offer top level services to our valued guests. We suggest that one should consider the additional benefits and value we have to offer over and above the deliverables when comparing our products with those of other operators." He appeals



**Akash Agarwal**  
Proprietor  
Akash Travels

We need to create an environment for valuable and comprehensive information coupled with an aggressive marketing strategy in order to boost inbound tourism

to the travel industry to allow for a level playing field to make space for companies of all sizes to do business.

Agarwal believes that tourism is an important pillar for the economy of almost every country. While some countries have done well in terms of this sector, others need to pull up their socks to do better. "In case of the tourism sector in India, the Incredible India campaign will be instrumental in boosting inbound segment of travel. We need to create an environment for valuable and comprehensive information coupled with an aggressive marketing strategy to boost inbound tourism," adds Agarwal.

On the marketing front, the company plans to launch its TV promo soon. Other forms of marketing and promotional plans include collaboration with various media platforms and participation in travel trade shows and exhibitions. The company also engages in SEO marketing, Google Ad marketing and marketing through social media platforms. 📌

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# Honouring stalwarts in West India

► Contd. from page 67



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# Manipur

## The Land of Jewels

Seek refuge in the quaint state of Manipur and explore nature's bounties, ancient remains of an erstwhile kingdom, in addition to innumerable festivals that reflect the rich culture of the region.

**M**anipur is strategically located in the Northeastern corner of India bordering Myanmar. Nestled at the foothills of the Eastern Himalayas, the state is considered the Gateway to South-East Asia. The serene beauty of the state, that Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru once described as the 'Land of Jewels', leaves every traveller spellbound. Least touched and least discovered, the state is a promising tourist destination for adventure and nature lovers alike.

**TOP THINGS TO DO:**

**Loktak Lake and Keibul Lamjao**

For any visitor, the principal attraction of the state is the Loktak Lake in Bishnupur District. It is a beautiful stretch of water resembling a miniature inland sea. A day spent at Loktak Lake is a lifetime of memories. Visitors can catch a bird's eye view of the lake from Send-

Today, Kangla is developed into a unique archeological and heritage park. The Ima Market, which is counted as one of the largest women-only markets in Asia, is a stone's throw away from the Western Gate of Kangla.

**Escape to the green hills**

Head to Ukhrul district and enjoy the company of the

attracts large number of devotees who participate in various devotional activities. Tourists are welcomed to come and join in the daily festivities at the historic Govindajee temple and other temples in and around Imphal city.

**Celebrate festivals with the locals**

Manipur is a land of festivals and almost every month the people of Manipur get together to celebrate vari-



Loktak lake, Bishnupur District – Pic by Pintu Oinam



Kangla Museum

ra. Fishermen living in the floating islands called Phumdis, in floating huts known as Phum-sangs, are unique sights of this lake. A part of the lake hosts the Keibul Lamjao National Park, which is home to the Brow Antlered Deer – Sangai, only found in Manipur.

**Kangla**

A visit to Kangla at the heart of Imphal city unfolds the proud history of the erstwhile Asiatic Kingdom dating back to 33 AD. The British took over in 1891 and buried their influence on architecture. It is the quintessential symbol of the state's culture and heritage.

locals—the brave and colourful Tangkhul tribe. It is situated 40 miles away from the Imphal City and is famous for its Shirui Lily – a species of lily found nowhere else in the world other than the Shirui Hill range. The Dzuko track in Senapati and the Bunning track in Tamenglong also offer a challenge to the intrepid adventurous traveller willing to explore the unexplored.

**Shree Govindajee Temple**

Shree Govindajee Temple is another historic centre of the Vaishnavites in Manipur. It is a twin-domed temple which



Pakhangba Temple, Kangla, Imphal - Pic by Thou Mangang



Khangkhu Cave, Ukhrul

ous festivals, which reflect the state's rich culture, tradition and religious practices. Yaoshang, Gaan Ngai, Cheiraoba, Lai-Haraoba, Kang, Heikru Hidongba, Kut and Lui Ngaini are just some of the festivals celebrated by different communities in the state. Manipur Sangai Festival, celebrated every year from November 21-30, is a major tourist attraction.



Govindajee Temple at Kangla



A traditional dance of the Kuki-Chin-Mizo tribe



Tangkhul Piper



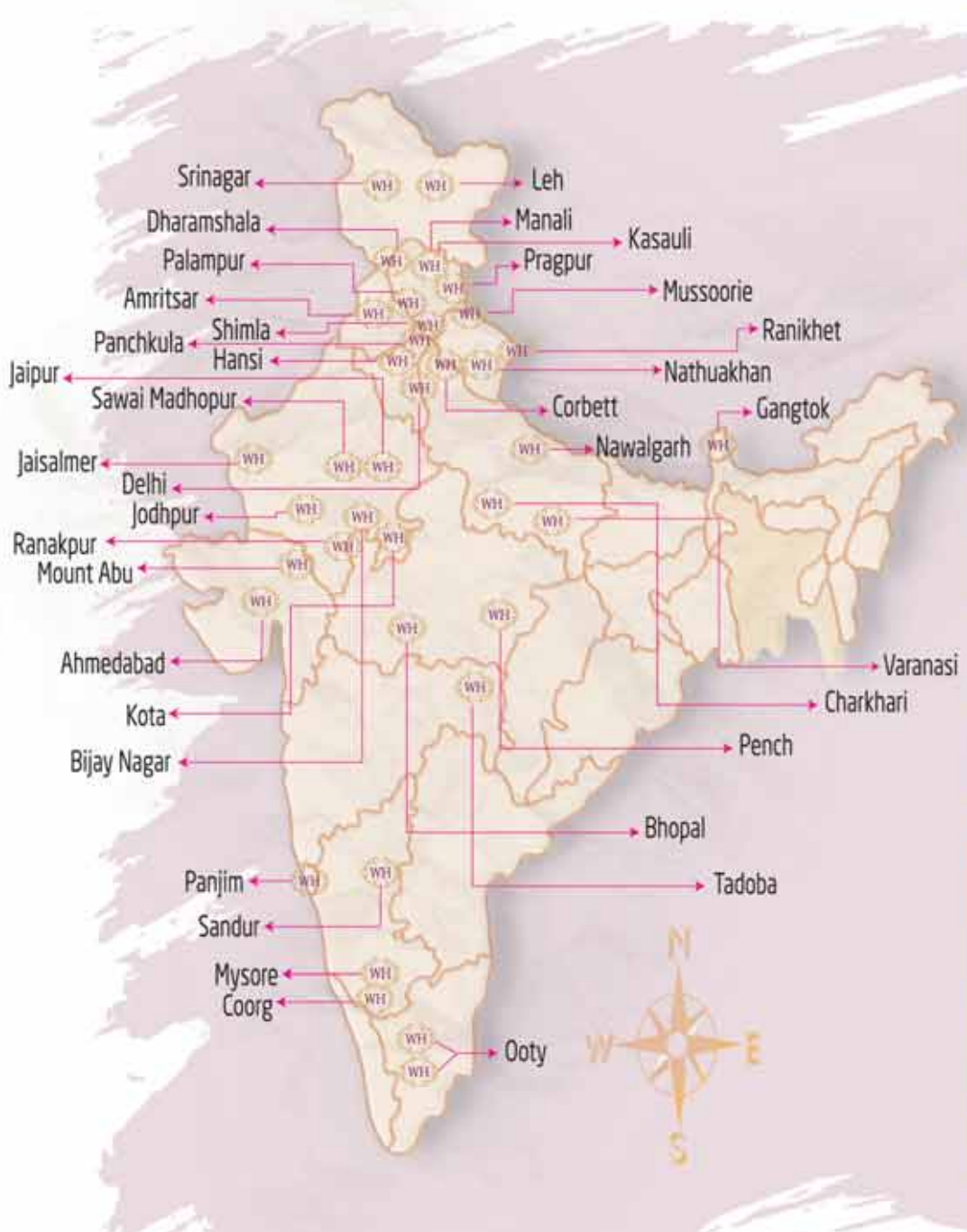
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Shirui Hill and its Lilies- Pic by Priyojik Akoijam

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## Adrenaline kick in Jammu & Kashmir

### Rafting

With the intricate network of Mountain Rivers flowing through myriad rocky gorges, forests, flowers and high mountain villages, the Lidder River, Pahalgam provides ideal locales for the perfect water adventure. The suitable period for river running depends on the adequacy of water volume. Thus, the period between April and September is most appropriate.

### Skiing

Skiing is one of the prime attractions in Kashmir and is apt for adventure seekers. Gulmarg is considered to be the best ski resort in the Himalayas and is accredited as the highest cable car enabled ski resort in the world mainly due to a Gondola Cable Car Lift. For skiers visiting Gulmarg, accommodation is available at the JKTC Huts situated at Patnitop, Sanasar and Kud apart from the several private hotels available for booking at Patnitop and Kud

### Para Gliding

Aero sports are a rage among travellers in Kashmir. Amongst the numerous aero sports, paragliding is the most popular. Also, it is one of the latest adventure sports that is picking up fast in the Valley. Paragliding takes you on a tour of the green valleys and majestic mountains of Kashmir. Looking from above, you will find the breathtaking sight of the Valley below. The very best time for paragliding, specifically in Sanasar, will be the interval of May-June and September-October.

### Mountaineering

Climbing in the Himalayas can be very stimulating. Rich in flora and fauna, the summits of most peaks are an exhilarating experience. More recently, peaks in the restricted area of the Nubra Valley in the Inaian Karakoram have also been opened to foreign and Indian tourists. The popular peaks of Ladakh and Kashmir where mountaineering expeditions

are organised on a regular basis are Apsarasas, Chong Kumdan, Teram Kangri Group, Tughmo Zarpo and Saser Kangri. Places like Pahalgam, Gulmarg and

the luxuries fitted that make playing golf a memorable experience while the Royal Spring Golf Course has been voted as India's best Golf course.

Known for its natural beauty and panoramic landscapes, Jammu and Kashmir is moving from the obvious to promote adventure tourism in the state. Places like Gulmarg, Sonmarg, Pahalgam and Drass are brimming with opportunities for adventure and sports enthusiasts to explore.



Sonamarg serve as base camps for trekking tours to mountain peaks.

### Golfing

Kashmir offers a unique opportunity to play golf in invigorating surroundings, where the wind whispers through enormous trees of chinar and stately pine. The golf course at Gulmarg, situated at an altitude of 2,650 m, is the highest green golf course in the world. The Kashmir Golf Club has all





# Pave way to a road less travelled

Parveen Holidays wants to promote rare products such as the Hidden Temple and Cave tours and Submerged Temple tours to make Destination India even more appealing to discerning inbound tourists.



Parveen Holidays, a unit of Parveen Travels and winner of the South India Travel Awards, is an integrated travel, tourism and technology company, with more than 50 years of industry experience. It has more than 1,000 luxury fleets of buses and sedans as well as exclusive contract with all-category hotels and resorts, such as jungle resorts, eco resorts, floating resorts,

countries and talking to them about our unique products that we have to offer to international travellers. We are focused on promoting market-wise products, some of which are around the birth and growth of Indian civilization tours, submerged architecture, hidden caves and temples of India, and tribal tours. These are the products that foreign tourists love," Krishna adds.

Meanwhile, the domestic market remains its mainstay. He says, "Our domestic tourism business is huge as compared to other segments. However, a streamlined structure is required to educate the travel agents and tour operators or even the ticketing agents about it. We have our own B2B network across India from Tier II, III and IV cities."

In India, it serves its corporate clients by providing staff transportation. On an average, more than 36,000 corporates every day are using its luxury fleets. "Apart from this we have our international branch in Dubai, 40 branches and 300+ affiliated agents exclusively working with us in India. We want to take the number of affiliated agents to 7,000 this year," Krishna adds.

## Ethiopia offers e-visas to MICE participants

Ethiopian Immigration and Nationality Affairs main Department in collaboration with Ethiopian Airlines Group launched e-visa services for African and international participants of Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) held in Ethiopia effective September 20, 2017. With this, MICE travellers to Ethiopia will be able to issue their visas online, book, pay and check-in their flight with Ethiopian, all online.

Ethiopian Airlines' Group CEO **Tewolde Gebre Mariam**, remarked, "With the immense potential for conference tour-

ism, Ethiopia has still a lot to do to tap into the sector and the launching of an e-visa service for MICE is an impetus for the exponential demand of Ethiopia's conference tourism; saving time and cost besides inducing a modern online visa application process with more simplicity and efficiency. Ethiopian offers special fares and discounts besides availing custom designed tour packages to various tourist sites in the country. I thank our IT team and colleagues at Ethiopian Immigration and Nationality Affairs main Department for a gratifying collaboration."



**Murali Krishna**  
Asst. General Manager  
Parveen Holidays

As of now, our inbound business isn't much but by next year, we are planning to achieve more than 20 per cent of the inbound traffic

backwater resorts, beach resorts, tree houses and luxury-home stays across India.

Murali Krishna, Asst. General Manager, Parveen Holidays, says, "We believe in presenting India in a way that is quite unique, with tours on submerged temples and hidden architecture, which reflect the ancient civilizations of India and give a glimpse of our unexplored culture and tradition. International tourists love such tours as they are always interested in the Indian history. We aim to project India the way it is and showcase its uniqueness to the international market."

He highlights the markets where Parveen Holidays is focusing and adds, "As of now, our inbound business isn't much but by next year, we are planning to achieve more than 20 per cent of the inbound traffic." For this, the company participates in various international shows like JATA, ITB Asia, WTM London, FITUR Madrid and ITB Berlin.

"We are reaching out to local tour operators in these



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# Shorter breaks mark inbound trend

With the advent of technology and new players in the tourism industry, inbound tour packages have undergone many changes, compelling tour operators to change gears to cater to the demands of the new-age foreign tourists.

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**Vikram Madhok**  
India Travel Award winner and  
Managing Director,  
Abercrombie & Kent India

“There is a shift in inbound travel pattern to India especially from Europe and the UK. Among the foreign tourists from these source markets, we have witnessed a trend that tourists are taking shorter breaks with shorter lead time. This season in particular, has seen an increase in this phenomenon and looks like a definitive changing pattern. Earlier, foreign tourists would book well in advance but more recently, they are booking only 2-3 weeks before travelling in the same month. Also, the duration of stay has come down to 5-6 nights as compared to several weeks in India. Demand for experiential products in India is on the rise.”



**Arup Sen**  
Director - Special Projects,  
Cox & Kings, India Travel  
Award winner

“The dynamics of inbound tour packages has changed dramatically over the years. The number of days spent in India by foreign tourists has reduced from 14-21 days to mostly 3-5 nights now. Earlier, the advance booking period ranged from one year to six months whereas today, foreign tourists book with a few days to spare as the dynamics of online booking has led to a paradigm shift in the way tourists approach travel. The increase in air seat capacity both on the inbound and domestic sectors has also given customers the flexibility to book at the last minute.”



**Sunil Gupta**  
Director  
Travel Bureau

“The addition of newer products, development of infrastructure and evolving technology has changed the dynamics of travel. OTAs are becoming more aggressive and competitive with their user-friendly tools and are bypassing the middlemen. Today, tourists ask for hassle-free and value-for-money holidays. Foreign tourists of all budgets travel to India and thus, the duration ranges from 3-21 days. Budget travellers and backpackers are increasingly using online platforms to book hotels, train and bus tickets and domestic flights. Golden Triangle, Rajasthan, Kerala and Varanasi along with the Buddhist tours are very popular.”

“The dynamics of inbound tours is changing at a breakneck speed. With internet and technology, destinations to be sold have to be re-discovered, re-branded and re-packaged. Tour operators are re-engineering their business to sustain competition not only from within the industry, but from global operators as well. With diminishing margins and disseminated knowledge among intending tourists, the industry has to learn and evolve in order to match the knowledge of travellers and cater to the unique demands for niche experiences.”



**Prateek Hira**  
President & CEO  
Tomos India

“An inbound tour package in India is no longer about the Golden Triangle. Now, tourists are asking for packages to specific destinations like Kerala where they want to undertake Ayurveda therapies, stay in the house boats and visit Munnar, Kumarakom, Thekkady, Kovalam, etc. Packages for adventure travel are increasingly gaining more popularity and offbeat destinations are in higher demand. Foreign tourists have unique demands like Bollywood tours; medical tourism; Yoga and meditation courses, etc.”



**Subhash Goyal**  
India Travel Award winner and  
Chairman, SITC Travel Group

“The dynamics of travel is changing not only in India but globally where technology has played a big role. With changing times, the customer profile, too, has changed and this is leading the innovation which is required when tour packages are formulated. There are two categories in business; one is technology and price oriented while the other is knowledge and innovation based and we have to find our expertise, capacity and also research the profile of the customers. We can no longer sell destinations; we have to sell products which are specific to the customer profile and the market dynamics.”



**Debjit Dutta**  
India Travel Award winner and  
Founder & CEO  
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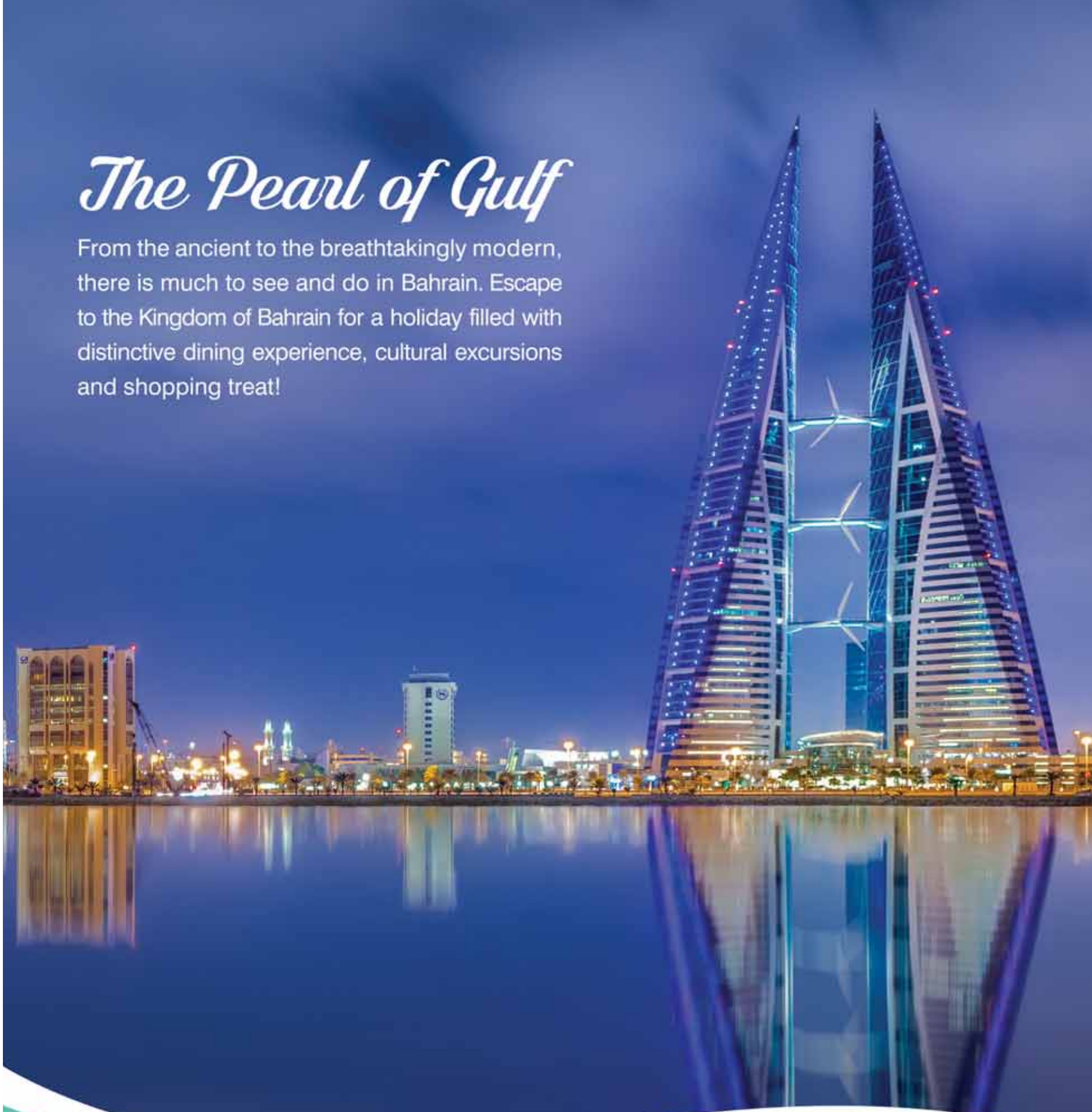
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Golghar

# Tourism development on fast-track in BIHAR



## Q How has tourism been in Bihar in 2016-2017?

Bihar hosted as many as 28,516,127 domestic tourists and 1,010,531 foreign tourists in the year 2016. Bihar is ranked at the 13<sup>th</sup> position in India in terms of total domestic tourist arrivals and ranked at the 18<sup>th</sup> position in terms of total foreign tourist arrivals. The largest source markets for the state for inbound tourists are Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Nepal and South-east Asia.

## Q What are the tourism assets / products of Bihar?

Bihar offers its tourists a variety of tourism products that can cater to the varied tastes of travellers and appeal to people across all ages. Bihar has always been known as a destination for religious sites but the fact is that Bihar is also very rich in heritage and culture and has a plethora of products that cater to eco-tourism and spiritual tourism among other types of travel segments.

“The tourism circuit development plan includes an integrated development approach which includes revamping of key attractions, ancillary products and development of amenities such as shopping, food & beverage, rest/shelter and toilets.”

**Pankaj Kumar**  
Secretary-Tourism  
Government of Bihar



## Q How does Bihar Tourism work with the travel trade?

The travel trade is an essential part of functioning in the tourism industry and we work very closely with them. The Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation (BSTDC) works in the direction of increasing tourism in the state in collaboration with the trade. Various packages are available with BSTDC, which give tourists a variety of choice according to their preference. Introduction of seasonal packages is an ongoing process. Some of these packages are directly sold by BSTDC while some are sold through trusted travel trade partners.

## Q Please share an update on the tourism projects already initiated by the state tourism board.

Bihar is working on the development of various tourism circuits like the Buddha Circuit, Ramayana Circuit, Guru Circuit, Shiv-Shakti Circuit and the Sufi Circuit. Work is going on for the Jain Circuit, Kawariyan Circuit, Gandhi Circuit and development of Mandar hill and Ang Pradesh. A centenary year of Champaran Satyagrah is being celebrated by the Bihar Government in 2017. The development of such circuits will help the tourism department to provide better tourist facilities and services in

Popularly known for its spiritual connect, Bihar offers heritage, culture, eco-tourism and much more to its domestic and international tourists. In order to boost tourism in the state, the government is formulating an aggressive marketing campaign, informs **Pankaj Kumar**, Secretary-Tourism, Government of Bihar.



Nalanda

## Q Please share Bihar Tourism's plans for 2018.

A focused set of initiatives will be put in place for the necessary development which will primarily focus on positioning Bihar among its target audience. We also aim to empower enablers which will in turn uplift the service standards and quality of the tourism industry in the state. These interventions have been planned keeping in mind the complete tourism value chain and strategic focus areas which are to be addressed in the coming year. For the marketing and branding of Bihar, we are developing a targeted communication design and strategy to reach out to the target population in definite geographies and we

will come up with a marketing campaign for Bihar. We will utilise a mix of traditional as well as new-age marketing media, including digital media, to launch the brand campaign.



Maner Sharif

## Q Please elaborate on the upcoming events in Bihar in 2017.

The coming season is the season of festivals and events in Bihar. A month-long Sonapur Mela will be held from November 2, 2017. From November 25-27, 2017, Bihar will celebrate Rajgir Mahotsav, a three-day-long celebration at Rajgir, Bihar, where various local and international artists will showcase their art. In January 2017, Bihar was host to the 350<sup>th</sup> Prakash Parva. Now, the state will celebrate the concluding ceremony of this festival from December 23-25, 2017, where the Government of Bihar will set up a tented city at Bypass and Kangan Ghat for the devotees, along with the pandals for this cultural programme. ↓



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# Walk through a myriad experiences in Delhi

Indian capital Delhi, with its meandering lanes, offers its visitors a unique sense of history and culture. Travellers can absorb vibes of the old historical city while taking walking tours through modern-day Delhi or just grab a rickshaw.

## Chandni Chowk

Chandni Chowk is the main street of the old city of Delhi (Shahjahanabad). Chandni Chowk literally means moonlight square and derives its name from the fact that originally, a canal ran down the centre of

about two hours to complete. The best time for this walk is from 8 am to 10 am.

## Hauz Khas

This heritage walk explores the medieval ruins in Hauz Khas Village and Deer Park. The madrasa and tomb of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq are unique among monuments in the city of Delhi. There are classrooms, living quarters and remains from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, built along the edge of a lake. The Deer Park, too, has some massive buildings with incredible names like 'The dome in the garden of the world' and 'The gifted dome'. Guests meet at the entrance to the Deer Park in Hauz Khas Village. This 1.5 km walk can be completed in one and a half hour. One can visit this area anytime of the day though the sunrise and sunset are mesmerising experiences.

## Lodhi Garden

Lodhi Garden is Delhi's most beautiful and popular park. Here, monuments are located amidst a landscaped garden. It has the royal tombs of medieval rulers of Delhi - Muhammad Shah Sayyid and Sikander Lodi; a gateway called Bara Gumbad with an exquisitely decorated mosque - Shish Gumbad; a 16<sup>th</sup> century bridge and a couple of monu-

the street with pools at major intersections that would reflect moonlight. Today, the stream is gone and Chandni Chowk is an extremely busy road. There are shops, schools, residences, places of worship, both old and new, along the road. Guests meet at Sri Digambar Jain Lal Mandir, opposite Red Fort. This heritage walk of 1.5 km takes

ments from the late-Mughal period. The park is a delight for nature lovers and bird lovers. This walk of 1.5 km takes two hours to complete and is an exquisite experience.

## Mehrauli Archaeological Park

Popularly known as Jamali Kamali, this park is unique in being dotted with ruins from early medieval times to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its main attractions include the mosque and tomb of Jamali, a step-well and residence of a British official. It takes about two hours to complete this heritage walk of approximately 2 km and is a walk down the history.

## 1857 Uprising: Kashmiri Gate and neighbourhood

This walk in the old city of Delhi takes guests through the landmarks of the uprising of India in 1857 against the British rule. It also covers life and times of British living in the city before the revolt broke out. The trail includes Nicholson Cemetery, Kashmiri Gate, St. James Church, old campuses of Hindu College and St. Stephen's, Dara Shukoh's library, Telegraph Memorial and remains of the British magazine. Guests gather at the Nicholson Cemetery and take this

heritage walk of nearly 1.5 km for about two hours. The best time to experience history in this area is between 8 am and 10 am.

## Jama Masjid & lanes of Old Delhi

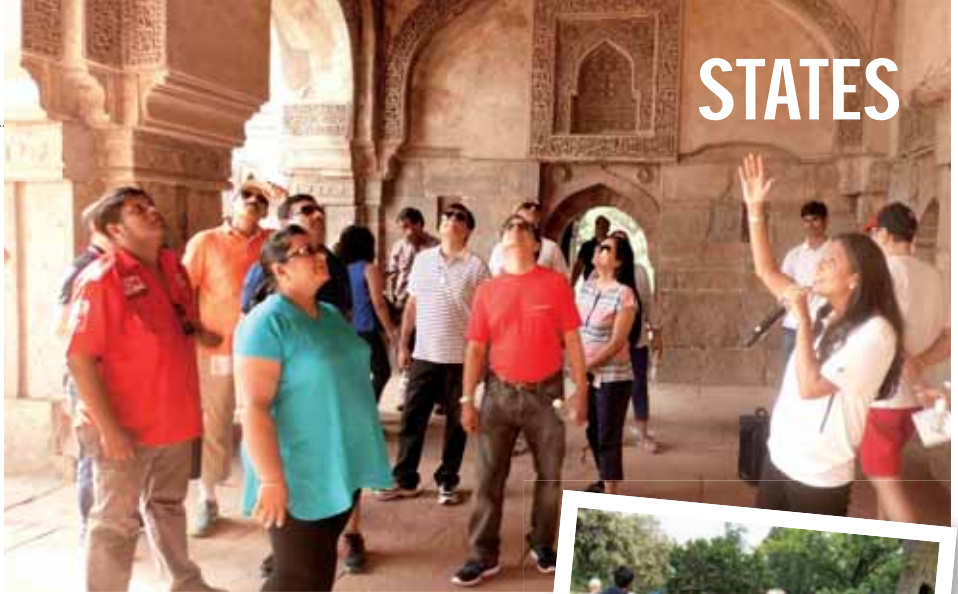
One of the largest mosques in Asia, the Jama Masjid offers an excellent view of the entire old city. This walk takes guests through the narrow lanes of Old Delhi with mansions, colourful bazaars, Jain temples and stalls selling street food. The walk is a foodie's paradise and within two hours, participants can get a taste of India's flavour.

## Tughlaqabad Fort

A 14<sup>th</sup> century capital of Delhi, Tughlaqabad is ruins frozen in time. The remains of this massive complex stretch as far as the eye can see. This fort includes a royal tomb that once stood in a lake, palace buildings, dungeons and a secret escape route. Guests can explore this walk of 2 km in about three hours.

## Neighbourhood of Old Fort

Close to River Yamuna and dotted with ruins from the medieval period, the walk includes the Khairul Manazil built by Akbar's chief nurse, Maham Anga and the place from where a murderous attack on the king took place; the shrines of Khwaja Nuruddin and Shaikh Abu Bakr; the burial (that might not be) of one of most revered poets of Persia - Bedil; and a temple for Bhairon, established to protect the legendary Indraprastha. Various experts like Delhi Heritage Walks, Delhi Walks, etc. offer perfectly tailored walking and rickshaw tours for tourists who hope to explore the city at their own pace.



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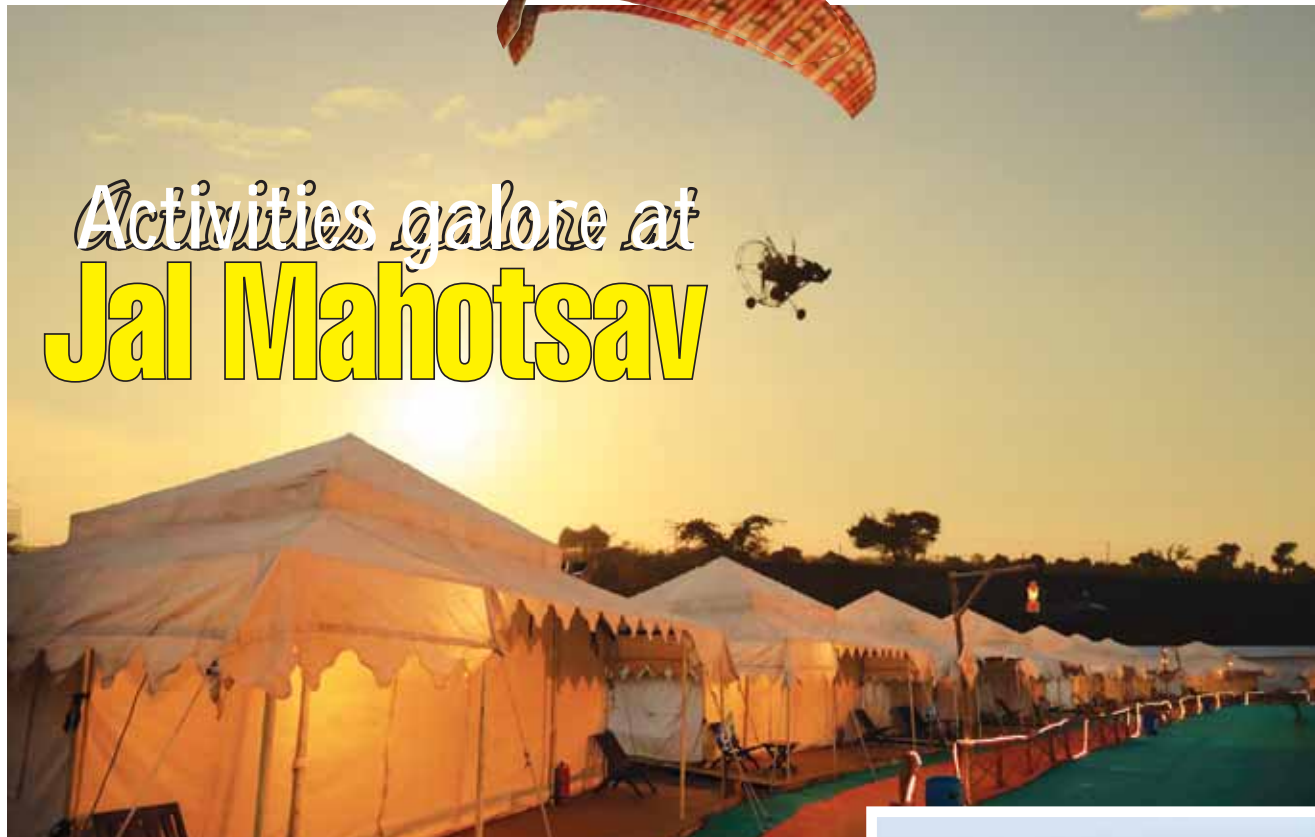


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# Activities galore at Jal Mahotsav

The third edition of Jal Mahotsav, a festival of adventure tourism in central India, is being held from October 15, 2017 to January 2, 2018 at Hanuwantiya, District Khandwa in Madhya Pradesh.



Set up in the lap of Hanuwantiya Island besides the pristine waters of Indira Sagar Dam, the picturesque escapade here complements the joy that lies in the spirit of adventure.

Flying above the sparkling waters or speeding through it, India's one of its kind water festival – Jal Mahotsav, is full of land, water and air adventure activities. This 80-day long adventure carnival, will be a treat for all those who want to seek adventure.

The festival also represents the culture of Madhya Pradesh - a culture that stands for rich skill set of its artisans, rich heritage and not to miss out, sumptuous cuisine. This quiet, secluded place will be buzzing with activities for full month long when it will transform into a tented city to host the guests from India and abroad. Cultural extravaganza every day, after sun down including the New Year party will be something you will cherish. Craft bazaar, food bazaar, cycle rides and many more recreational activities are waiting to be explored.

Guests can choose from a number of land activities like zip lining, tug of war, volleyball, paint ball, archery, bull cart ride, kite flying, club house, wall climbing, star

gazing, all terrain vehicle rides etc. There are multiple water sports activities also available to suit the travellers. Take motor boat rides, speed boat rides, banana rides, short cruises or indulge in water zorbing, water para sailing and jet ski at Hanuwantiya.

Hot air ballooning, land para sailing and para motors are available for those who wish to indulge in air activities while for the nature lovers, the guests can experience an exotic island stay which is accessible from Hanuwantiya by boat in 45 minutes.



### Connectivity

- Distance of Hanuwantiya tourist complex in Khandwa district is 130 km from Indore. It is 150 km from Maheshwar, 85 km from Omkareshwar and 48.5 km from Khandwa. By different routes from Bhopal, distance of Hanuwantiya is 300 to 350 km
- One can travel to Bhopal by Shatabdi Express, and from there hop on a bus or private car for Hanuwantiya or take Intercity Express train to Indore and then take a bus. MP tourism can also help avail a car to Hanuwantiya as well. Flight options to Indore are always available

### Magnificent MP

The festival represents the culture of Madhya Pradesh - a culture that stands for rich skill set of its artisans, rich heritage and not to miss out, its sumptuous cuisine








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## EVENT TALK

## NOVEMBER 2017

Promote Iceland roadshow	Ahmedabad	1
Promote Iceland roadshow	Delhi NCR	3
South Australia roadshow	Bengaluru	6-7
Tourism Events Queensland workshop	Kolkata	7
WTM	London	6-8
South Australia roadshow	Mumbai	8-10
South Australia roadshow	Delhi NCR	11-12
Jumeirah Group of Hotels roadshow	Mumbai	14
Scandinavian Tourism board roadshow	Delhi NCR	14
Scandinavian Tourism board roadshow	Chennai	15
Scandinavian Tourism board roadshow	Mumbai	16
Jumeirah Group of Hotels roadshow	Delhi NCR	16
Swiss Tourism roadshow	Mumbai	17
ADTOI Convention	Visakhapatnam	17-19
Cambodia Travel Mart	Cambodia	17-19
Swiss Tourism roadshow	Ahmedabad	20
Swiss Tourism roadshow	Chennai	21
Dubai Leisure roadshow	Delhi NCR	21
Swiss Tourism roadshow	Delhi NCR	22
Dubai Leisure roadshow	Pune	22
Spanish Travel Show	Bengaluru	23
Travel East	Kolkata	23-26
Spanish Travel Show	Mumbai	24
Dubai Leisure roadshow	Ahmedabad	24
IITM	Pune	24-26
Dubai Leisure roadshow	Mumbai	25
India Hospitality Awards	Delhi NCR	27
India MICE Awards	Delhi NCR	27
Tourism Events Queensland	Kochi	28
Tourism Events Queensland	Coimbatore	30
Chengdu International Tourism Expo (CITE)	China	30-Dec 2

## DECEMBER 2017

IITM	Hyderabad	1-3
Travel Business Show	New Delhi	2-3
International Luxury Travel Mart (ILTM)	France	4-7
Bahrain Tourism roadshow	Mumbai	6
India Travel Awards (North)	New Delhi	21

## JANUARY 2018

IITM	Kochi	11-13
GPS	Nagpur	15-17
FITUR	Madrid, Spain	17-21
OTM	Mumbai	18-20
Dusit International India Office roadshow	Mumbai	29
SATTE	Delhi	29-31
Dusit International India Office roadshow	Bengaluru	30
Tourism Events Queensland	Chennai	30
Tourism Events Queensland	Bengaluru	31

For more information, contact us at: [talk@ddppl.com](mailto:talk@ddppl.com)

## ADTOI launch theme for convention

The Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI) will host its 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention-cum-exhibition at Novotel, Varun Beach, Visakhapatnam from November 17-18 and have decided on the theme for the same.



TT BUREAU

The theme of ADTOI convention this year is 'Domestic Tourism: Explore India - One Country, Many Worlds,' under which the association will explore various facets of its convention venue - Visakhapatnam. **P P Khanna**, President, ADTOI, says, "We are expecting over 300 delegates from across India. Through this convention, we hope to showcase the world-class facilities in Andhra Pradesh and its vast potential for domestic tourism. The ratio of domestic travel in America, which has a population less than India, is 1:6 which means that one person travels six times within America in a year. The same ratio in India, the most populous country in the world, is only 1:3. This shows that the potential of domestic travel in India is huge, and needs to be leveraged."

Khanna further informed that the convention will address key industry issues like GST and its impact on domestic tourism; threat of online travel agents to the small and medium businesses and will also deliberate on the ways the central government, state government and private players can work in collaboration to improve tourist infrastructure in the country. Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority is the state partner for the Convention while the association is also seeking support from other state tourism boards like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, West Bengal, Odisha, Jammu and Kashmir and Telangana.

**Rajat Sawhney**, Vice President and Convention Chairman, ADTOI, adds, "We realised that despite being a national association, we did



**P P Khanna**  
President  
ADTOI



**Rajat Sawhney**  
Vice President and Convention  
Chairman, ADTOI

not have a significant presence in South India. With this convention, we hope to leave an imprint in various parts of South India which will also benefit our members from the region. We also plan to start a state chapter in Andhra Pradesh soon." Commenting on the choice of Vizag as the convention venue, Sawhney elaborates, "Our purpose is to offer a new destination to the members. Visakhapat-

nam has been perceived as a business destination but we want to showcase it as a leisure spot. The city is blessed with natural beauty, hill ranges, pristine beaches and lush, natural valleys. Some of the interesting destinations of tourist interest are the Araku Valley, Borra Caves, Kailasagiri Hill, RamaKrishna Beach, Submarine Museum and the Dolphin's Nose to name a few."

## ATOAI takes Kerala on an adventure

The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) held in Kumarakom, Kerala, was attended by over 400 delegates from 16 states. Around 50 exhibitors showcased their products.



TT BUREAU

The ADTOI Convention at Kerala received an excellent response from the participants, informs **Tejbir Singh Anand**, Vice President, ATOAI. He elaborates, "With each year, the ATOAI conventions have been getting better. We moved away from the regular format of just business sessions. Our conventions now offer real time activities and experiences along with knowledge sessions. It is based on a three-night four-day format with maximum deliberations. It has deeper impact on all delegates to go back with hands-on experience to sell the destination and product accurately to their clients."

The theme of the convention - Emerging Pathways - resonated through the business sessions and the destination that was chosen for the convention. Anand points out that the business sessions encouraged stakeholders to create partnerships and engage with seemingly non related brands in the apparel, media and communications sectors etc. which may have the po-



**Tejbir Singh Anand**  
Vice President  
ATOAI

With around 400 delegates experiencing Kerala on the active side, it has made an impact and the trade has gone back after witnessing the potential of active journeys

tential to break profit barriers and grow business through identifying and tapping into previously untapped markets. The sessions also dwelled upon untapped opportunities and out-of-the-box ideas from the best in the business; acquiring practical knowledge about digital marketing; under-

standing risk and managing outcomes; getting practical with adventure insurance; practical application in adventure travel operations and how the industry players can benefit from introducing systems, processes and automation in their business.

Anand feels that Kerala has been at the forefront of Indian tourism and is now attempting to brand itself as a great destination which offers adventure and active experiences too. "With around 400 delegates experiencing Kerala on the active side, it has already made an impact and the trade has gone back after witnessing the potential of active journeys in Kerala. Kerala, after realising the potential of adventure tourism, has already sanctioned a lot of funds for the promotion and development of adventure travel in the state," adds Anand.

Identifying the trend in travel business, Anand asserts that adventure travel is now redefining travel in general. This segment, which was once niche, has not only become mainstream, but is now leading it. He explains,

"A sustainable, responsible, eco-friendly world is increasingly gravitating towards the offerings of this genre whose core is now being defined as being in a natural environment, learning and meaningful experiences. The new adventure traveller is seeking transformation, expanded worldview, nature and discovery, mental health, learning, connections, fun and thrill, better physical health and unique experiences."

Further, in the field of adventure tourism, products are being created across the length and breadth of the country, beyond the Himalayas. Every destination is curating and creating its own adventure products. Anand says, "New adventure products and newer regions offering adventure activities are populating the map. These are very interesting times for our industry. These new opportunities also come with new sets of challenges, like safety and sustainability, skilled manpower and right regulatory environment, educating and developing the right perspective for the fraternity."

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**World Travel & Tourism Council**

**London**

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) has announced the election of **Christopher J. Nassetta**, President and CEO of Hilton, as the Council's next Chairman. Nassetta joined Hilton in 2007, bringing with him an extensive background in real estate and hospitality. Nassetta has been a member of WTTC's Executive Committee since 2011 and Vice Chairman for North America since 2014. He will take over from current Chairman, Gerald Lawless, following the Council's Annual General Meeting, which will take place in Buenos Aires in April 2018. WTTC Chairmen are elected for a two-year term.



**Vistara**

**Gurugram**

Vistara has appointed **Leslie Thng** as its Chief Executive Officer effective October 16, 2017. He succeeds Phee Teik Yeoh, who returns to Singapore Airlines to take up a senior appointment. Thng has taken over as the airline's new CEO post all requisite approvals from Government of India and the regulatory authorities. He joins Vistara from Budget Aviation Holdings where he was serving as the Chief Commercial Officer. Prior to this, he was serving as the Chief Executive Officer of SilkAir.



**The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace**

**Hyderabad**

**Abhirath Sah** has been elevated to the position of Director of Sales and Marketing at the Westin Hyderabad Mindspace. Sah successfully completed a three-year B.Sc. degree in Hospitality and Hotel Administration from the Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology & Applied Nutrition, in Bengaluru. His journey in the hospitality industry began in 2008 with the Carlson Group of Hotels. With a strong and varied skill set, Sah brings almost a decade of experience in the hospitality industry having done successful stints with Trident Chennai, Hyatt Gachibowli (then ISTA) Hyderabad and the Leela Palaces Hotels & Resorts, Hyderabad.



**WelcomHeritage Hotels**

**New Delhi**

**Sanjeev K Nayar**, General Manager, WelcomHeritage, is overseeing the sales and marketing functions along with development. Nayar, with more than 34 years of industry experience has been with the ITC Hotels/WelcomHeritage brand for the last 11 years. WelcomHeritage is the joint venture between ITC Ltd. and Jodhana Heritage, working towards supporting and assisting the restorations of heritage properties. The brand has in its kitty some of the finest heritage properties in the country.



**Lords Hotels & Resorts**

**Porbandar**

Lords Eco Inn, Porbandar has appointed **Manish Kumar** as its Operations Manager. Prior to joining Lords Hotels and Resorts, he served as the Director of Operations with Mohammad Omar Bin Haider Holding Group P.S.C. Group of Hotels. He comes with over 12 years of industry experience in front office management, general operations and revenue management. He has worked with many reputed hospitality establishments including Grand Millennium, Dubai; Sheraton Hotels, Dubai; Aryana Hotels Sharjah, UAE; London Crown Hotel, Dubai; Astoria Hotel and Ambassador Hotel, Dubai.



**Radisson Blu Atria**

**Bengaluru**

Radisson Blu Atria, Bengaluru has appointed **Gaurav Taneja** as its new General Manager. He comes with more than 22 years of industry experience. In his current role, Taneja will continue to lead the formulation and implementation of strategies to enhance guest experience and operational efficiency within the hotel and most importantly, building and inspiring the team to greater perfection. Prior to joining Radisson Blu Atria, he worked with several leading brands in the country such as Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach, Oberoi Group of Hotels, Hilton Towers Mumbai and Renaissance Mumbai.



**Ethihad Aviation Group**

**Dubai**

The Chairman of Ethihad Aviation Group, Mohamed Mubarak Fadhel Al Mazrouei, confirmed the appointment of **Tony Douglas** as Group CEO, who will join the company in January 2018. Douglas joins Ethihad from the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence, where he has served as CEO. As Group CEO, he will work with the Board and leadership team to expand and implement a range of strategic initiatives to position Ethihad for sustained success in an increasingly competitive regional and global aviation market. The divisional CEOs will report directly to Douglas, including Peter Baumgartner, CEO of Ethihad Airways.



**The Suryaa**

**New Delhi**

The Suryaa New Delhi has appointed **Chetan Kapoor** as Director of Sales (MICE). In his current role, Kapoor will be in charge of the sales department with various verticals in all MICE, travel trade and inbound groups. He has a strong hospitality experience with a career spanning over 16 years, during which he has been associated with several prominent hospitality brands such as Le Méridien, Taj Palace, The Oberoi, The Royal Plaza Hotel, Crowne Plaza, Eros Hotel and Hilton Janakpuri.

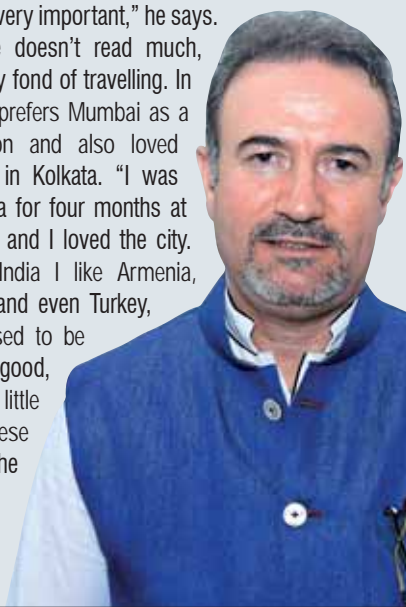


**Hema Dhoke** has been appointed as Director of Sales at The Suryaa New Delhi. She brings along an operational and sales background by virtue of having worked with brands like Taj Group of Hotels, AccorHotels and Carlson Rezidor. Her 20-year experience includes opening hotels, heading sales and marketing, and ensuring high revenues and profit.



**TALKing People**

**Mehdi Shiri**, Country Manager- India, Mahan Air, believes that while we are all busy with work and life, it is important to keep fit. "No matter how busy I am with work, I never forget my gym and exercise. In this age, we should maintain our health and weight, which is very important," he says. While he doesn't read much, he is very fond of travelling. In India he prefers Mumbai as a destination and also loved his stay in Kolkata. "I was in Kolkata for four months at a stretch and I loved the city. Outside India I like Armenia, Georgia and even Turkey, which used to be very good, but is a little unsafe these days," he adds.



De-stressing for **Vishal Hanmattekar**, Co-Founder & CEO, The Blueberry Trails, is getting out of the city with just his backpack and camera. "I also find walking very relaxing so I do that when I am in the city. I am passionate about photography. I like capturing people, their emotions and their life in the most natural setting," he says. One of his most memorable holiday moments was in Rajasthan where he encountered two wild bulls fighting on the road. "My favourite holiday destination is undoubtedly Spiti," Hanmattekar adds.



**Naeem Khan**, Managing Director, Mulberry Tours and General Secretary, Travel Trade Association of Uttar Pradesh (TTAUP), is a technology enthusiast. "I would love to visit Brazil, Scandinavian countries and New Zealand. I have visited Switzerland many times but would love to go back," he says. Khan also opines that there is no shortcut to hard work and the new generation of professionals must be patient if they wish to sustain success.





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# India tourism fest takes centre stage

In a span of just 20 days, Paryatan Parv or The Great Indian Tourism Festival envisaged a greater sense of national pride amongst the masses. Through this initiative, the Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with key ministries, celebrated all that makes up the country's allure to the global market.



NIKHIL ANAND

In line with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, undertook the biggest nationwide initiative from October 5-25, 2017, termed 'Paryatan Parv', to foster the principle of 'Tourism for All' whilst celebrating India, in all its colours, cultures and magnanimity.

Marked with grandeur and celebratory activities across the country, Paryatan Parv has made great inroads into ensuring a swifter, steeper rise of the country's tourism sector. Inaugurated at Humayun's Tomb on October 5 by Dr. Mahesh Sharma, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Culture and Minister of State for Environment, For-



KJ Alphon along with the former Tourism Minister Dr. Mahesh Sharma light the lamp at the inauguration of the "Paryatan Parv". Rashmi Verma (3rd from left), Secretary, Tourism is also seen here.

dance and culture, and to cultivate self-discovery and pride amongst the people towards our great country." Another key component of the Parv was the inaugu-

Music shows and performances on weekends near monuments was another new element added by this initiative, which the ministry plans to take to the next level by conducting such shows on weekdays as well in times to come.



The Union Home Minister, Rajnath Singh plays the drum during the Opening Ceremony of Grand Finale of Paryatan Parv, in New Delhi as KJ Alphon and Suman Billa cheer him on.

est & Climate Change, the Parv culminated with a three-day-long grand finale at New Delhi from October 23-25, which included performances by different state troops and craft and food fairs from different regions across India. The three chief components of the Parv were 'Dekho Apna Desh', 'Tourism for All' and 'Tourism and Governance', all of which equally propagated a holistic and robust industry with greater contribution to the GDP of India.

Looking back at the first-of-its-kind initiative, **K.J. Alphon**, Minister of State (Independent Charge) Tourism, Government of India, said, "We had over 1100 events spread across the country that saw tremendous participation from schools, colleges, institutions and every citizen of the country across all states and union territories. Our aim was to showcase and celebrate India - its culture, traditions, music,

ration of the 'Adopt a Heritage' campaign wherein the private sector will be handed the charge of taking care of civic amenities in and around our heritage monuments.

Alphon further added, "We are proud to have successfully executed such an initiative in a short time and to have achieved overwhelming turnouts at all events under the Paryatan Parv banner. We hope to continue these celebrations every year and endeavour to have more such festivals throughout the country." In wake of the growing realisation and chorus for tourism to become the key driver of the Indian economy in the near future, this initiative by the Ministry of Tourism ensured that the spotlight was given to the country's myriad offerings as a destination, not just to the domestic traveller but also to the global traveller.

## Cherishing India in all its glory and grandeur



"The main goal of this initiative was to encourage Indians to see India, and to propagate the same we conducted campaigns, events, showcased the various sites on social media and gave a traveller's perspective of the country. In addition to the cultural and traditional events, we also conducted sensitisation programmes to drive skill development, governance, innovation and to give a fillip to tourism into India including that in J&K and the North East. With the help of our 18 key sister ministries, including Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Road Transport & Highways and Ministry of DONER, etc., we managed to turn India into a land of celebrations."

Suman Billa

Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India

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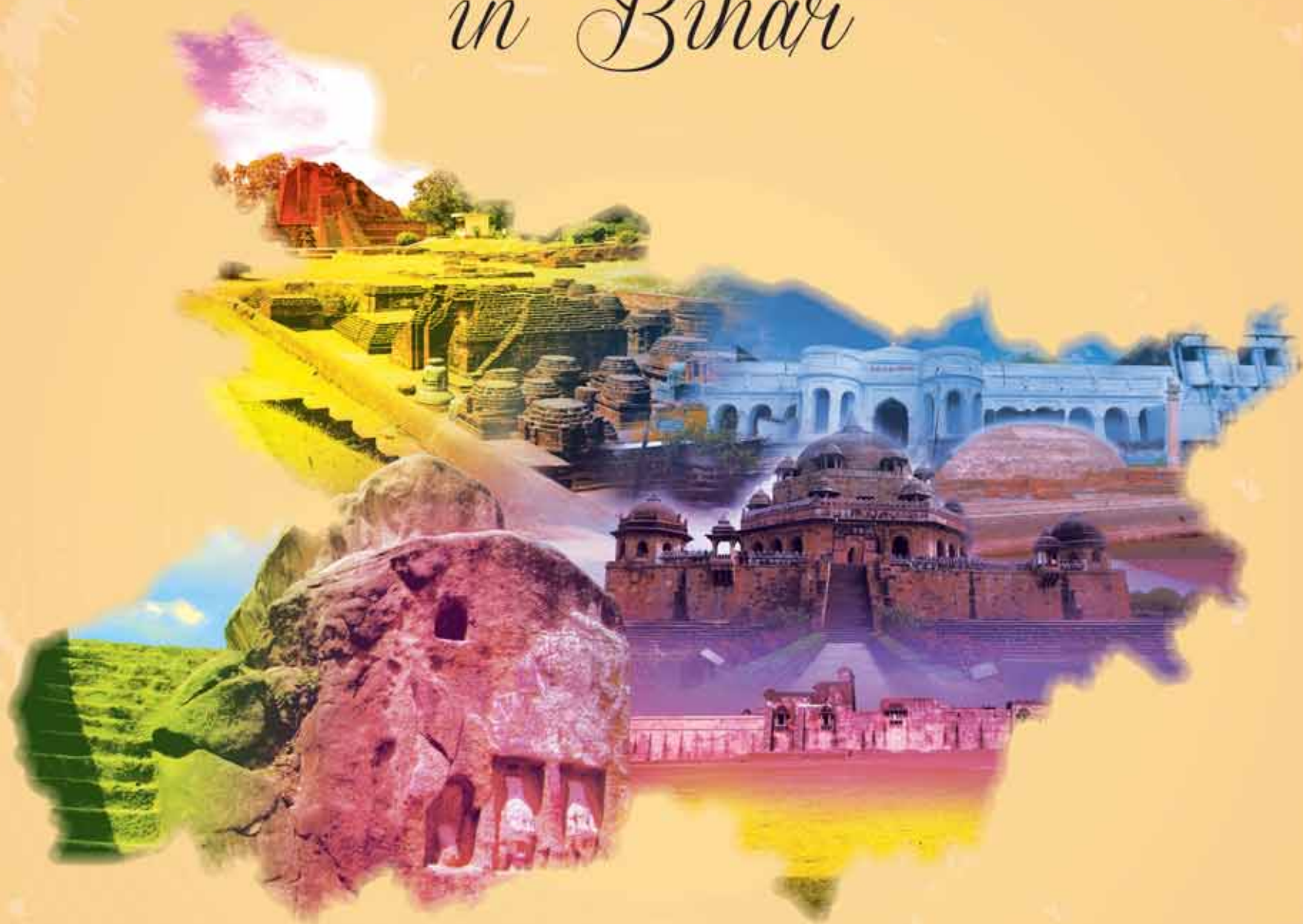
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