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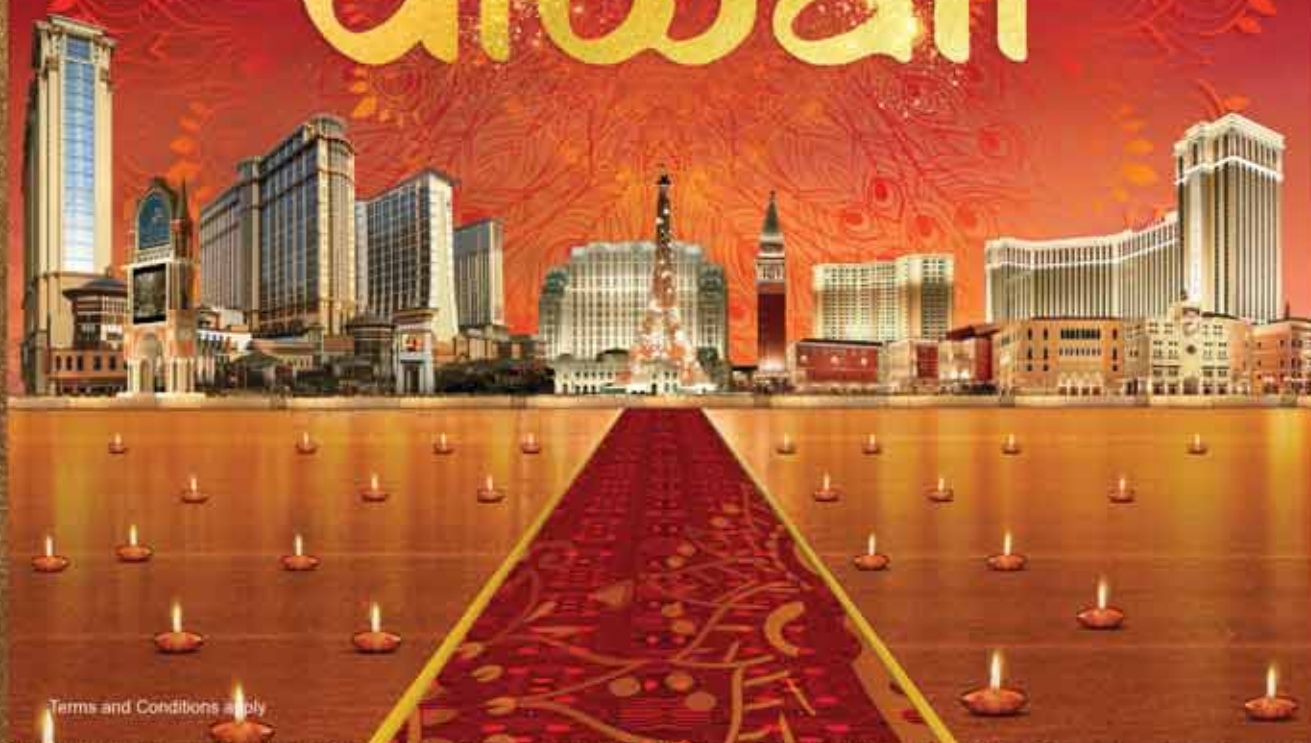
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MOT champions domestic tourism

During the recently-concluded Paryatan Parv, the Ministry of Tourism showcased local tourism sites to the people and is taking several measures to promote domestic tourism. **Rashmi Verma**, Secretary-Tourism, Government of India, gives a low down on the ministry's plans.

 NISHA VERMA

The Ministry of Tourism recently concluded the 21-day Paryatan Parv across the country, which turned out to be a huge success, claims **Rashmi Verma**. "Paryatan Parv has been a huge success in terms of people's participation. We managed to organise events across the country, and the best part is that it was not just MOT's event, but for the first time it became everybody's responsibility. Right from different central ministries to States and Union Territories, everyone equally supported in promotion of tourism. We also want people to understand that they are equal stakeholders in promoting tourism because if footfalls to the tourist sites increase across India, it would mean more income for the people in and around the sites, more employment as well as more Foreign Exchange Earnings for the country. Thus, it's a win-win situation for everybody and

we wanted people to understand that they should also be equal partners in promoting tourism," she said.

The ministry also laid emphasis on domestic tourism. "We wanted to encourage domestic tourists and NRIs to discover the tourist attractions in the country through the 'Dekho Apna Desh' campaign, which was launched during Paryatan Parv. It's been a success as well, and we have received a number of photographs and some blogs from people featuring several tourist sites," Verma shared.

Apart from Paryatan Parv, MOT is taking other measures as well to push domestic tourism. "We are now going to organise some roadshows also within the country where we will be telling different states about tourism sites in other states. There is also a domestic campaign, which we are launching through social media. In addition,

"We have got 15 circuits in which we are creating the infrastructure under the Swadesh Darshan scheme and in most of the circuits, a number of schemes and projects worth of ₹ 5000 crores have already been approved."

Rashmi Verma
Secretary-Tourism, Government of India



day, we are getting requests where people are showing interest in the monuments," she added.

While the tourism policy is awaited, Verma revealed that it would take some time for it to be released. "We are in the process of consulting within MOT as well as with the industry. We have had several rounds of discussion with the stakeholders and the industry, and we will finalise it once we get inputs from everyone," apprised Verma.

tion, there are some specific niche products and some promotional material, which is being developed for promotion of domestic tourism," informed Verma.

Last year, many tourism circuits were announced, which also focused on domestic tourists. "We have got 15 circuits in which we are creating the infrastructure under the Swadesh Darshan scheme and in most of the circuits, we have already ap-

proved a number of schemes and projects worth ₹ 5000 crores. The work is on all these sites and we are sure that very soon adequate infrastructure will be created at these sites to attract both domestic and foreign tourists," she said.

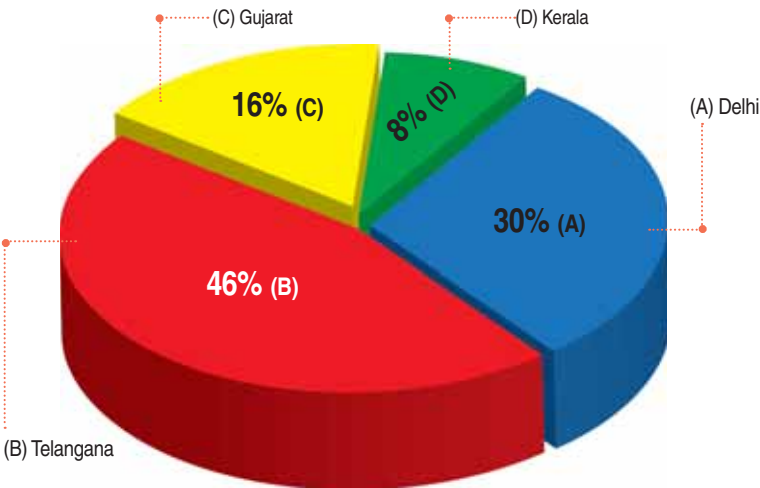
One of the major initiatives of MOT has been the upkeep of monuments. The Adopt a Heritage scheme was launched by the President of India, Ram Nath

Kovind during the National Tourism Awards ceremony held on September 27. Verma said that the response to this scheme has been really encouraging. "We have finalised a total of 14 monuments and we have got more than 50 corporates coming forward for adoption. We have shortlisted about seven corporates, who received letters of intent on October 25 at the hands of the Finance Minister during the closing of Paryatan Parv. Every-

Dekho Apna Desh

MOT will organise some roadshows within the country where they will be telling different states about tourism sites in other states. They will also launch a domestic campaign through social media, besides developing products for promotion of domestic tourism

Telangana rules the MICE roost



India seems to be catching up with the fast-growing MICE market in Asia and the world. While its competing markets cash in on world-class infrastructure and seamless connectivity, which are crucial for MICE and corporate events, many Tier-I and Tier-II cities are striving to build big convention centres and hotels to accommodate large groups. Needless to say, when asked which city in India offers the best facilities for MICE, **TRAVTALK** readers voted in favour of Telangana. Delhi came a close second, while Gujarat and Kerala followed suit.



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GPS ready for Hyderabad debut

The Global Panorama Showcase is set to make its debut in the City of Nizams in February 2018. The Educational Destination Workshop-International (EDWIN) is also scheduled for Bali, Indonesia on November 29.



Harmandeep Singh Anand, Managing Director, GPS, recently revealed that they have added a new city for GPS next year—Hyderabad. “In 2018, we’ll have GPS Nagpur from January 15-17. Soon after, we will host GPS in Hyderabad from February 8-10. This will be followed by our other signature events in Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, Lucknow, Calcutta, Kochi and Pune in July and August. Thus, we would be covering a total of eight cities in 2018,” he added.

Registrations for EDWIN Bali have commenced, said Anand, adding that interested delegates can choose to fly from Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Coimbatore and Kochi on November 28 and from Delhi on November

“For Bali, we are contemplating to take around 100 buyers and 50 odd exhibitors at the destination. It will be the first ever international EDWIN and a one-of-its-kind workshop.”

Harmandeep Singh Anand
Managing Director, GPS







29. “The five nights/six day package starts at ₹32,000 all inclusive. The workshop would allow agents and tour operators from various cities to experience the destination. For Bali, we are contemplating to take around 100 buyers and 50 odd exhibitors at the destination. It will be the first ever international EDWIN and a one-of-its-kind workshop.”


Throwing light on how EDWIN would empower the participants, Anand said, “At EDWIN, they basically get to interact with local suppliers, experience the properties, activities, heritage, culture and the food. It’s a first-hand experience for the participants. There are quite a few editions for EDWIN in the pipeline. In fact, we are looking to have four to six EDWINs every

year. The best part is anyone who attends GPS, qualifies to participate in EDWINs. We get the complete data and profile for the people who participate. The purpose is to make people come and meet with exhibitors. At the GPS events, we get the profile and it’s easier for us to know the background of the buyers, hence we look at the people who have attended any of the GPSs.”


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Pass on the baton

Times these days are changing faster than you can say ‘Shazam’. Things no longer function the way they used to and there is a new way to do everything. Millennials are a haloed breed and there are forces at work that demand a new way of thinking.

Luckily for us, the young(er) generation is hardwired to deal with exactly this scenario, which is why the veterans can safely pass on the baton to them and rest assured that things will go well. They might take a different path, but they will get there, and probably faster.

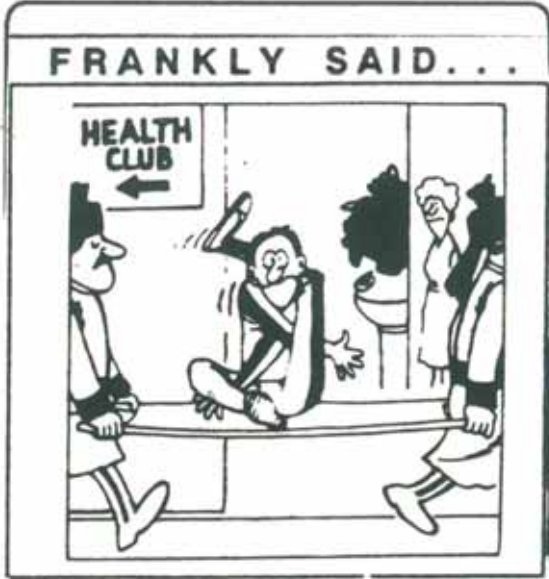
So when the head becomes weary and you can no longer hold the torch, and when new ideas are what’s needed but you aren’t able to imagine a New World, you need to pass on the baton. But this change of guard does not mean that you must leave the helm and not be seen. You must be like the Polaris and navigate the novice to ensure that all’s right at the office.

Travel is BIG on data

Travel companies as well as travel technology companies around the world are doing regular surveys and analysis of consumer behaviour to collect data from various sources and methods. These companies are using the data already to improve their services in specific markets, offer dedicated products and even developing new programs or products catering to individual needs of customers. While big data is already benefitting many companies, its potential to transform the travel industry has still not been tapped fully. Using analysis of big data, companies can know about the preferences of smaller segments of their target audience as well as individuals, which would allow them to tailor special promotions, deals, experiences for them. Increased personalisation would result in improved customer experience, which in turn could enable travel companies to generate repeat business through loyalty. Another advantage that big data gives companies is knowing more about the competition in the market. With more use of data, expect improved operations, real time travel assistance and new methods to meet future needs. However, companies need to learn using this data in positive and productive ways.

Conferences and Conventions as Foreign Exchange Earner

- Figures in 1992 revealed that there were 30,000 international meetings in the world in a year attended by 30 million delegates generating a turnover of 104 billion dollars. In this, India’s share was negligible.
- In 1991-92, approximately 62 international conferences took place in India with an estimated attendance of 18,500 overseas delegates which would have earned ` 83 crore in foreign exchange.
- Conference delegates spend roughly about US\$400 per day, more than the normal tourists.
- The potential of foreign exchange earnings through conferences and conventions is tremendous, provided the quality of the product is improved.



REDISCOVERING THE HOTELS

- For the Indian hotel industry, the decade of nineties has seen declining visitor arrivals in 1990-91 and a marked improvement in 1991-92.
- A new business approach in the hotel industry was emerging. Budget and mid-level hotels could be the answer to India’s growing domestic market while five star hotels would cater only to the cream.
- Hotel profiles and hotel marketing strategies were undergoing a sea change.
- Selective product classification and specialised services were the key words for marketing exercises and hotel brand segmentation.
- Properties started targeting corporate or business traveller in spots earlier reserved for leisure traveller.

The Emerging Mid - Market Segment

- Uttam Dave of Quality Inns wrote in a special column that India was rated the fourth largest single market in the world after America, China and unified Europe.
- He claimed that India was becoming the battleground for the international and the presently dominant national chains.
- The entry of international chains into the mid-market, such as Quality Inns India, Guestline Days and Novotel was going to revolutionise the hotel industry in India.
- He forecasted that this trend would create a serious identity crisis for existing national and international chains in India.

Indians: Most tech savvy in travel

India ranks first in the league table of countries and is ahead of its Asia Pacific counterparts, China and Indonesia, according to Travelport’s Global Traveller Survey. Indian travellers were at the top of the list in using digital assets when it comes to travel.

The digital traveller league table 2017

Rank	Country	Rank	Country
1	India	11	US
2	China	12	Spain
3	Indonesia	13	France
4	Brazil	14	Russia
5	Saudi Arabia	15	Canada
6	Mexico	16	Australia
7	South Arabia	17	UK
8	UAE	18	Japan
9	Colombia	19	Germany
10	Italy		

Source: Travelport’s The Indian Digital Traveller Research, November 2017

91% Indian travellers use review sites when researching their trip

52% of Indians worry about knowing whether they can trust online reviews

87% use videos and photos posted by friends as part of their travel research

58% spend considerable time online trying to find the best price

83% say that being able to stay in touch is most important to them when travelling

87% use voice search when researching a trip

Experimenting with MP Tourism

Madhya Pradesh Tourism has vigorously been furthering its objective to showcase the state as not just a wildlife destination but one that is rich in culture and heritage, with innovative solutions to tap each aspect of the diverse landscape of this central Indian state.



TRIPTI MEHTA FROM BHOPAL

Now in its fourth edition, Madhya Pradesh Travel Mart, held from October 27-29 at Bhopal, proved to be a successful platform for the state to showcase to national and international buyers the tourism products that it has to offer and the sheer dedication of the state's tourism board to market the state with enthusiasm and zest.

Over 200 national and international buyers and close to 100 domestic exhibitors took part in the event. With B2B sessions scheduled over two days, participants had the opportunity to form successful collaborations and network with industry players including airlines, accommodation providers, destination management companies, heritage hotels, wildlife resorts, etc. Speaking at the event, **Hari Ranjan Rao**, Secretary-Tourism, Government of Madhya Pradesh, said, "MP is rich in heritage,

nature, wildlife and spiritual tourism. We now also have large backwaters of the dam that have been brought under the tourism ambit. With such a rich background and so much to offer, the challenge for policymakers has been deciding on how to channelise and focus their efforts. However, the biggest advantage for MP has been strong political support and leadership."

More private investment

Government of Madhya Pradesh has given Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation (MP-STDC) the clear mandate to create and develop the best possible destinations in the state. The corporation plans to bring in good quality private investors through attractive terms and conditions for a truly competitive, transparent bidding process. The board will implement the tourism policy by offering land, forts, palaces, etc., to these private players for their development.



"We have also decided to give our forts and palaces, which were earlier either protected or not protected, to private players so they can convert them into beautiful heritage hotels. This change in approach has been appreciated by the industry."

Hari Ranjan Rao

Secretary-Tourism, Government of Madhya Pradesh

Elaborating on how the corporation seeks to implement this policy, Rao said, "The state government has identified large parcels of good quality government land in major tourist destinations where we want private investment to come. Setting up a new hotel or resort is an expensive proposition and land becomes the biggest cost. So, we are trying to offer land at a very cheap rate. We peg the price of the land at a very low rate, which we call the Reserve Price, and

then we invite offers. In the last two-three years, we have been able to invite at least 20-30 good players who have come here and begun setting up hotels and resorts. We have also decided to give our forts and palaces, which were earlier either protected or not protected, to private players so they can convert them into heritage hotels. This change in approach has been appreciated by the industry."

In another initiative to further its water tourism policy, the

infrastructure that is now under the tourism corporation, like boat clubs, jetties, etc., will be offered to private players on a sharing basis so they can utilise them well for water-based activities for tourists without having to invest much. The tourism department will also issue licences to private players with due diligence being given to safety standards.

Skill development

The board plans to work on skill development in the state by setting up food

craft institutes and partner with private players to work on the development of various skills that are needed in the tourism sector in Madhya Pradesh.

Expanding footprint

Madhya Pradesh Tourism plans to market the state aggressively at both the national and international level. "We are going to all travel marts and trade shows as a team. After WTM, we are also going to Paris on an exclusive roadshow of MP Tourism. Thereafter, we will be attending USTOA Annual Conference & Marketplace in the last week of November," added Rao.

Madhya Pradesh is not a stand-alone state and hence, faces the challenge of being an add-on destination to the itinerary of international travellers. MPSTDC aims to change this trend and is therefore, marketing the state in a way that makes tourists want to exclusively travel. ↴

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Canada storytellers to woo Indians

Emmanuelle Legault, Vice-President, International, Destination Canada, speaks about the growing importance of India market for them. As part of the strategy to popularise the destination, Canada is keen on working with travel agents who have the potential to target travellers that they are vying for.



PEDEN DOMA BHUTIA FROM HALIFAX

QHow does Destination Canada look at the Indian market?

We think India can become the new China market for Destination Canada in the sense that there is huge potential in growing the number of travellers coming from India. We are now really focusing on younger travellers with more high yields and deeper pockets, who are interested in coming for a vacation, for this, we are looking at travellers between the age range of 24 and 44. This is because the 24-year-olds are now those who are starting to travel, while the 44-year-olds are the ones with the purchasing power.

QTo tap this segment of travellers what are the initiatives that you have been taking?

We are focusing on doing more content strategies, this would include more information on what one can experience while visiting Canada. So, this would mean that we are getting more involved in storytelling. What one can see now is more about curating the content in such a way that it will inspire travellers to visit Canada. It's about creating the movie in your mind that if you came to visit Canada what kind of experiences you would get to have. And we are doing this with the



Emmanuelle Legault
Vice-President, International
Destination Canada

What one can see now is less of big images and much more about creating the movie in your mind about experiences in Canada

help of influencers who can bring fresh content.

QHow do you intend to popularise these varied Canadian experiences among Indian travellers?

We are still working with many of our partners but we are working more on the media and trade side. There's a good awareness on Canada in the India market but we have to try and get more people to consider visiting Canada and hence increase footfall. So, we are working on that aspect by showcasing the destinations, working with our partners, putting together various experiences and trying to showcase the whole region, instead of just focusing on one experience. It's more about building itineraries

with our partners and trying to push them out through the trade and media.

QIndia is a traditional market and in spite of the great digital revolution, most of the bookings inevitably come from agents. How do you see yourself working with travel agents in India?

We are going to be selective about choosing our partners in India and which ones to work with. We will be looking at agents who have the potential to really target the travellers that we are vying for. We are still going after the older travellers (the ones who are 55+) but we will be focusing more on building the content with travel agents who are targeting the 25-44

year olds, we are looking at key account management and really being selective about the travel trade we work with and we are looking at trade operators that are based out of big cities.

QHow has the response from the Indian market been so far this year for Destination Canada?

In 2016 we were up by 13 per cent (year-on-year). As I said earlier, we are seeing India as a potential China market. As per the latest figures of the Destination Canada, India market, the overnight arrivals have increased by 19 per cent (year-to-date) for the month of August and the average nights spent was 11 nights. ↓

When personalisation means luxury

Travel Dynamics India is set to take the tourism industry by storm with its range of personalised service and luxury offerings, reveals **Ghanshyam Arora**, MD, Travel Dynamics India.



TT BUREAU

Travel Dynamics India (TDI) was started to provide the best of travel related services to discerning corporate travellers with a one-stop shop concept, wherein end-to-end services are provided, claims **Ghanshyam Arora**. "Having started in Bengaluru, Travel Dynamics India now has six branches in Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, New Delhi, Pune and Ahmedabad. We shall be focusing on holidays, business travel, car rentals, hotel accommodation and MICE. TDI plans to expand further in 2018 adding four more branches to the network aiming at a turnover of ₹200 crores in two years," he says.

Talking on why the company stands out amongst its peers, **Gurinder Bawa**, Vice President, TDI, says, "The USP of the company is personalised service from travel industry professionals with over three decades of experience in servicing corporate sector. A pan India network shall be established for standardisation of services across branches and shall derive from technology for ease, speed and efficiency," he said

The company will be working closely with Centara Hotels & Resorts. Speaking on the same, Arora says, "Travel Dynamics decided to launch its holidays division where the prime focus will be

luxury segment. Centara being one of the largest Thai chains has a very strong presence in Thailand with a variety of five-star properties, which are quite famous in the Indian market. It is a known and preferred brand, which has international presence Maldives, Sri Lanka, Oman, Vietnam as well. For MICE as well, there are a variety of products under the Centara brand that can suit the clientele we are looking at. Centara will be one of the chain hotels we will focus on promoting as part of Travel Dynamics."

In terms of working within the market, Bawa reveals, "As of now we shall be focusing on B2B and shall plan for B2C next year. How-

ever, there is space available for B2C within the corporate sector we service, which we shall exploit. This would cater to personal travel needs of all corporate travellers, wherein holiday programmes shall be designed keeping in mind such audience."

Claiming that their core team is highly experienced in handling every kind of clients, Arora says, "We are a five-year young organisation, which is energetic, vibrant and hungry for business. With immense experience in the industry, the core team is focused on service standards and believes in the concept of selling experiences to the travellers."



Ghanshyam Arora
MD
Travel Dynamics India

With our presence in six cities, we shall be focusing on holidays, business travel, car rentals, hotel accommodation and MICE



Gurinder Bawa
Vice President
TDI

Our plan for B2C within the corporate sector would cater to personal travel needs of all corporate travellers

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PHILINDEX 2017 is a roaring success

The two Indian cities of Hyderabad and Jaipur played the perfect hosts to the first two leg of PHILINDEX 2017. Department of Tourism, Philippines and its prominent partners interacted with over 200 travel trade partners in the two cities and demonstrated why it's always 'more fun in the Philippines'. Some snapshots from the event in the two cities...



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Dubai | Seychelles | Maldives

Living amidst the wild in Zimbabwe

On the sidelines of the Sanganai World Tourism Expo in Zimbabwe, the Indian delegation got an opportunity to experience the destination first-hand. The Zimbabwe Tourism Board hosted Indian travel trade to popular tourist attractions such as Harare, Hwange National Park, Matopo National Park, Bulawayo, Victoria Falls where they got a chance to be upclose with the offerings of the destination.



Talk sustainability and technology @FITUR 2018

The trade show will present the advances of the first digital innovation laboratory on 5G for application in the tourism industry.

TT BUREAU

The International Tourism Trade Fair, FITUR, which is organised by IFEMA from January 17-21, 2018, at Feria de Madrid, will be showcasing the latest proposals in international tourism. Special emphasis will be laid on the actions being undertaken by countries, businesses and institutions to contribute to improving the environment and sustainable tourism and which will underscore the importance of technological developments as the keys to transforming the tourism industry.

Specifically this year, FITUR will be showcasing as a novelty the advances made by the first digital innovation lab on 5G for application in the tourism industry and in the sphere of trade fair ac-



tivities. The lab was created, thanks to the collaboration agreement reached by IFEMA with 5TONIC, an organisation founded by TELEFÓNICA and IMDEA Networks Institute, of which ERICSSON is also a member.

At FITUR 2018, destinations from all the countries around the world, Spanish regions and territories, tour operators, travel agencies, hotels, carriers and all kinds of tourism-related service and technology companies will announce their products and services. Exhibitors will also stage numerous work meetings to boost their business and sales, representing a powerful stimulus for their business activity.

FITUR 2018 will be the global meeting point for tourism professionals and will again this year become the leading trade fair for Latin American inbound and outbound markets. At the 2017 staging, the trade show boasted of a participation of 9,893 exhibitor companies from 165 countries/regions; 135,838 trade participants, and 109,134 visitors from the general public, an 18.8 per cent growth in international trade visitors over the previous 2016. In addition, the volume of business ap-

pointments, pre-scheduled and managed directly by FITUR at its various B2Bs, increased to 6,800 appointments. FITUR 2018 will host its regular sections such as FITURTECH Y, the Sustainability, Innovation, Technology and Business forum.

Globus treats agents to an Irish holiday



Top sellers in India were chosen to travel and experience a Globus Family of Brands tour first-hand! The tour, Introduction to Ireland, showcased the expanse of Ireland, along with its landscapes, culture and amazing history. Travel agents were accompanied by **Kiran Arora**, Business Development Manager – East India. Agents from across India, participated in the tour and included top companies such as Thomas Cook, SOTC, Otilia, Travel Tours and other regional stalwarts.

Reflecting on the decision of choosing Ireland as the Fam destination, **Varesh Chopra**, Regional Director – India & South Asia, says, "Tours to Ireland are some of our bestsellers due to the range and diversity we offer. In fact, no one offers the selection that we showcase and we, at the Globus family of brands, are very proud of this. Our agents got to experience fascinating places like the Cliffs of Moher, Ring of Kerry, the House of Waterford Crystal, the legendary Blarney Stone and much more." The tour started at Dublin staying overnight along the way in Kildare, Ennis, Killarney, Blarney and Waterford.



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Raising a toast to China Southern

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of China Southern Airlines' operations on the Delhi–Guangzhou route, the travel industry came together and raised a toast to the airlines' long-standing relationship with India. The glitzy evening also saw the airline honour its partnership with the travel agents by felicitating them with agency awards.



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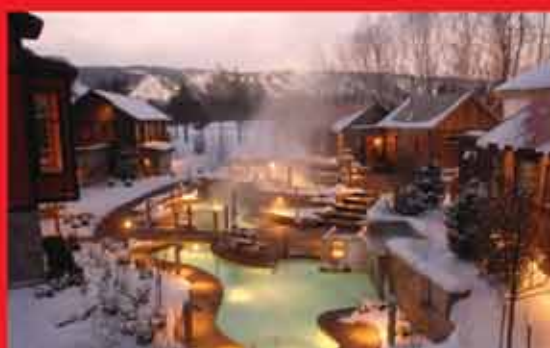
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342-room Novotel & Ibis OMR Chennai opens doors

■ AccorHotels has announced the opening of the Novotel and Ibis OMR Chennai. Being termed as the first combo property in Chennai, the hotel has the advantage of being strategically located in the centre of the IT Expressway (OMR). The 342 (combined) room property is AccorHotels' first joint development in the city. Featuring midscale and economy brand under the same complex, the 153-room Novotel and 189-room Ibis Chennai OMR provides travellers a choice of offerings across different price points. The inauguration ceremony on November 9, saw the presence of some illustrious guests such as Catherine Suard, Consul General of the Republic of France for Pondicherry & Chennai, Jean-Michel Casse, Chief Operating Officer, India & South Asia, AccorHotels, Daniel Chao, General Manager Novotel ibis Chennai OMR and General Manager Delegate for AccorHotels Chennai and Kapil Bhatia, Executive Chairman, Inter-Globe Enterprises.

Rise in investments in heritage sector

Rajasthan has issued certificates to more than 25 heritage properties which are either already in use as tourism units or will be used as one. This has brought investment into the heritage sector, says **Nihal Chand Goel**, Additional Chief Secretary (Tourism, Art & Culture) Tourism Department, Government of Rajasthan.



HAZEL JAIN

What is Rajasthan currently focusing on?

The government has recently increased its tourism budget. Our current roadmap includes improving inter and intra-state air connectivity to ensure that all tourist spots are well connected. We are also collaborating with our trade partners, influencers and celebrities to promote the lesser-known destinations and experiences of Rajasthan.

Our outreach for film shoots in Rajasthan has been made easier by issuing time-bound permissions and the Commissioner for Tourism has been appointed as the Nodal Officer for this. All charges, application fee and security deposits have been waived off by the tourism department. Our strategy is to promote Rajasthan's offering beyond what is already known.

What PPP projects are you working on right now?

The Department has issued certificates to more than 25 heritage properties which are either already in use as tourism unit or will be used as one in the near future. This has brought investment into the heritage sector. The duration of annual licenses requested to operate tourism units have been extended for 10 years. We also just concluded Pushkar Mela that ended on November 4 this year.

How big is Pushkar Mela for Rajasthan's tourism industry?

Through concerted efforts of Rajasthan Tourism and local administration in partnership with the industry, Pushkar Mela has emerged as one of the largest fairs of not only the state, but also the country. From 3.5 lakh domestic visitors in

2010, the fair attracted over five lakh domestic visitors in 2015-16. Correspondingly, the number of foreign tourists increased from nearly 6,000 to 12,000. This year, we are expecting an increase of 10 per cent on account of sustained marketing efforts and targeting through international and domestic travel marts.

Have you made efforts to improve tourist experience at Pushkar?

Yes, we have invested more than Rs. 4 crore towards infrastructure in Pushkar over the last two years. Employability of local people has definitely increased owing to the Mela. All on-ground support for the fair is provided by the local communities. In addition, we also see a rise in employment in the hospitality sector within the region to cater. Folk artists and artisans also benefit from the fair.



Nihal Chand Goel
Additional Chief Secretary (Tourism,
Art & Culture) Tourism Department,
Government of Rajasthan

The Department has issued certificates to more than 25 heritage properties which are either already in use as tourism unit or will be used in the near future

What new destinations are you pushing?

With the launch of our new campaign 'Jane Kya Dikh Jaye', many more domestic tour-

ists are coming to Rajasthan to explore the lesser known destinations and experiences such as Garadia Mahadev Temple in Kota, Kumbhalgarh or Rajsamand. We've seen an increase which is also visible at our music and cultural festivals like the Pushkar Fair, Magnetic Fields Music Fest, Jaipur Literature Festival, Jodhpur RIFF festival and the Udaipur World Music Festival.

The new destinations which are being promoted and highlighted are Neelkanth in Alwar, Wax Museum Udaipur, Naval Mahal of Udaipur, Sawai Madhopur Shilpgram, Harsha Mata Temple, Chand Baori (Stepwell) - Abhaneri in Dausa, Jawahar Kala Kendra in Jaipur, Wax Museum Jaipur, Rajmandir Cinema Hall in Jaipur and lesser known destinations in Rajasthan circuits like Shekhawati (Jhunjunu-Churu-Sikar) as well as Hadoti (Bundi-Kota-Jhalawar).

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A South African rejig

Hanneli Slabber, Regional General Manager Asia, Australasia and Middle East, South African Tourism, speaks about the evolution of the Indian inbound into South Africa.



TT BUREAU

How is the Indian traveller to South Africa changing?

Indian travellers, a lot of whom are repeat travellers, want more experiences. An average Indian traveller demands an average of six activities per day when in South Africa. They want shorter but more activities during their stay. They want to spend less time and money on transfers. They want to stay out of metros and experience a different kind of shopping that involved local artists and things that were indigenous to South Africa.

How did you tackle these demands?

We had to relook at all our experiences and rejig the existing products. We are promoting three main regions that have three different personalities: Garden Route extension, Kruger to Johannesburg and Midlands Meander (Durban to Johannesburg). These have been specially designed for the In-



Hanneli Slabber
Regional General Manager Asia, Australasia
and Middle East, South African Tourism

dian market and we don't offer these products anywhere else. The speed at which they want new products for South Africa is exciting, especially since we get a lot of repeat travellers.

What are these new experiences about?

We opened up the Garden Route from George all the way up to East London, which is a nice extension for repeat travellers. For Kruger National Park, travellers used to fly from Johannesburg to Kruger, which has about 28 beautiful waterfalls

in between, adventure, nature, and even animal rehabilitation facilities. So we suggested that they fly down one way and drive the other while experiencing that lay in between. The third experience is the Midlands Meander route with picturesque hill stations, shopping and spas. It meanders through the Drakensberg (The Mountain of Dragons). This has added about six to eight experiences which meant a little longer in terms of days but at a similar price range.

What is the kind of feedback you are receiving for this?

We have received positive feedback right from our Learn SA 2017 programme. We also include the new regions in our Joint Marketing Agreements in South Africa as well. Our partners in India wanted to put it in the itinerary, so we organised a Fam trip for them to new regions. Our B2B suppliers have started tweaking their products on the ground as per the Indian travellers' requirements.

PHILINDEX engages over 450 agents

In line with the destination's continued efforts to sensitise the Indian markets, especially those of the Tier-II and Tier-III portfolios, Department of Tourism (DOT), Philippines along with its prominent travel partners from the destination's successfully conducted PHILINDEX 2017 across four cities.



NIKHIL ANAND

led by **Glen Agustin**, Officer-in-Charge, Office of Product and Market Development, DOT, Philippines and **Daks Fernandez Gonzales**, the new Head-Office of Product and Market Development - India, DOT, Philippines, the delegation was one of the largest ones visiting India in recent times. Comprising tourism board officials and prominent tour operators, the delegation visited Hyderabad, Jaipur, Chandigarh and Lucknow from October 23-27, as part of the PHILINDEX 2017.

The roadshows witnessed a huge gathering of major travel agents and operators across the four cities, keen on furthering their knowledge to serve their customers better. Speaking about the reception received from these secondary markets, Gonzales revealed, "The four cities engaged through PHILINDEX 2017

were chosen because they represent feeder markets to the major hubs within India for Philippines. The Department of Tourism together with our private stakeholders felt the pulsating enthusiasm across all the cities from our current as well as potential partners here in India."

While the value for money proposition and the acclaimed Filipino warmth and hospitality has always drawn big crowds from the Indian market, the four-city roadshow also received a lot of queries about the ever-strong luxury segment, family holidays and the incentive traveller. Another addition to the list was golf holiday and diving which has started to pique the interest of a lot of Indians.

Gonzales further revealed, "For family holidays, Manila, the island of Boracay and the island of Cebu are amongst the favourites, for honeymooners,



"The four cities engaged through PHILINDEX 2017 were chosen because they represent feeder markets to the major hubs within India for Philippines."

Daks Fernandez Gonzales
Head-Office of Product and Market Development - India
Department of Tourism, Philippines

Palawan is getting extremely popular and for incentive travels, it generally depends upon the kind of activity the organisers would like the group to relate to but certainly Philippines is adept at hosting from a group of 20 to 2000 people."

He also informed, based on the current average growth of 21 per cent that the destination is receiving from the Indian market, the Philippines is poised to

cross the 100,000 Indian arrival milestone by the end of the calendar year. A key focus of the Philippines Tourism Board has been on stimulating repeat visitors, Gonzales revealed, "As a result of product and market matching, we have identified some regions within the Philippines that would be compatible with the market here, so we also brought with us directors of two other regions, namely Mimaropa and Bicol to inform our part-

ners in India of their unexplored offerings." The priority for the Philippines board, he stressed, is to provide more information into the market and to maintain the quality of visits of the Indian tourists.

With Philippines fast becoming the destination of choice amongst Indians, Gonzales assured the travel trade that they are rallying hard to get direct connectivity between the two countries and are very positive of its

happening soon owing to the good numbers from India.

For the time being, the destination continues to muster along thanks to the support of Singapore Airlines, Thai Airways and Cathay Pacific. The Philippines Tourism Board is looking to capitalise on their strengths especially in the growing Indian market which is expected to become one of the top 10 source markets in the near future.

Popular Philippines

- While the Filipino warmth and hospitality has always drawn big crowds from the Indian market, the four-city roadshow also received a lot of queries about the luxury segment and the incentive traveller.
- The Philippines is poised to cross the 100,000 Indian arrivals by 2017 end



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A stronger returns to India

Alitalia has restarted its service from India after nine years with its new flight connecting Delhi to Rome, Italy. **Fabio Lezzerini**, CCO, Alitalia, was in New Delhi to launch operations of the new service on October 29, 2017.



NISHA VERMA

Fabio Lezzerini was in New Delhi for the launch of the new service, and interacted with the travel trade and the media. "In 2015, around 4,60,000 people travelled between India and Italy, and the new flight would play a huge role in the growth of tourism between the two countries. We are re-investing in the country, and we started the flight to meet the increasing demand. We have a state-of-the-art 250-seater A330 aircraft on the Delhi-Rome route, which has on board Wi-Fi in all the classes. The flight from Delhi connects to 39 destinations within two hours. The Alitalia Business Class offers ultra-luxurious service on board as well as on ground. There is also Premium Economy, which offers great comfort as well as extra legroom. The Economy Class also provides amazing entertainment and meal options. We are starting new flights in our winter schedule this year



Fabio Lezzerini
CCO
Alitalia



Paolo Guidi
Country Manager India
Alitalia



Ramesh Marwah
Director, Dex Aviation
(GSA for Alitalia)

from both India and Maldives," he said.

Talking about the experience on board, Lezzerini said, "We want to offer the Italian experience as soon as the traveller comes on board our flight, before even landing in Italy and starting to travel around our country. Italy is the fifth country for Indians in terms of commercial interaction, and is one of the most visited destinations in Europe for Indian travellers." He added that in November they are planning to have around

72 per cent seat factor and are planning to go up to 85 per cent in December. "Given the huge competition in this market and the fact that we came quite late in the process of launching in this service, we have a very good response," he said.

Claiming that the travel trade is going to be an important part of their sales strategy in India, he said, "We are expecting to have 99 per cent of our sales in India through the trade. Since we are not present in the Indian market, we need

to rely on partners who know this market, like tour operators, DMCs, corporates, as well as consolidators. We are going to have connections with different segments of the trade, as that is important for us. We don't have a website so far and might launch it in a few weeks. However, it will be focused on representing the content, while traffic will turn from the trade."

In future, they are planning to increase frequencies to India, and might do that in their summer schedule. They

believe that the Indian route would be profitable as they will be focusing on trade driven sales which would give them business from every segment of travel including leisure, business, MICE and luxury leisure. "All these components have to balance to give a positive result. We are also very active on social media and will be coming up with a redesigned website, which will be completely customisable," he shared.

Paolo Guidi, Country Manager, India, Alitalia, said, "India is a huge market for us, which is growing fast and since our target is to generate business and be profitable, we have to look at India as a potential destination and market for Italy and beyond Italy. In terms of products, we are on top of the service level these days, especially if compared to any other European carrier. We have direct flights to Italy daily, which is not offered from India by any of our competitors. Apart from that

we have a huge network of destinations including North America, South America, and even Europe. Our alliance with Sky Team also helps giving us more opportunities in terms of network and traffic. We have Etihad and Jet Airways as our commercial partners, which means that both of them have codeshare agreements in place. With Air India also, we have an agreement, which is slightly different."

Ramesh Marwah, Director, Dex Aviation (GSA for Alitalia) said they will be focusing on distributing the airline in every nook and corner of the country. "We have a wonderful airline with great destinations to offer. Hence, for us, it's not going to be very difficult to let the whole country know that the airline to fly to Italy is Alitalia. In their second inning in India, Alitalia is looking to continue the airline in India and make it stable, so that it stays back for a longer time. It has a long future in India." 📌

Korea Festival 2017 from Nov 25-26 in Gurugram

■ A two-day Korea festival showcasing Korea's art, culture and heritage will take place on November 25 and 26, 2017, at Ambience Mall, Gurugram.

The festival will witness participation from regional tourism boards and related organizations such as Gyeonggi Tourism Organization, Gimhae City, Busan Metropolitan City, Busan Tourism Organization, Jeollabuk Do, Gwangju Metropolitan City, Gwangju

Speaking on the Korea Festival 2017, **Jong Sool Kwon**, Director Korea Tourism organisation said, "The bilateral relationship between Indian and South Korea is



based on a long history of friendship and it has grown in various aspects. There needs to be mutual understanding of each other's legacy, history and culture. Such festivals help in a great way to fortify and deepen the understanding."

He added further, "Indian outbound travel to South Korea is on the rise too. In 2016 approx 200,000 Indian travellers visited South Korea and the numbers are growing with an average rate of 10-15 per cent year-on-year. We hope to reach a large section of aspiring Indian travellers and tap into exponentially growing Indian tourism sector through the Korea festival. We are positive that the endeavour will highlight Korean splendour in its true spirit to our Indian friends."



Convention & Visitors Bureau, Incheon International Airport Corporation and Visit Korea Committee showcasing different aspects of the country and facilitating on the spot purchase.

Organised by Korea Tourism Organisation, the two day extravaganza aims to popularize South Korea as a hot favourite destination among Indian travellers by giving a glimpse into the rich Korean culture.

Aitken Spence enthralls agents

Aitken Spence Hotels and Aitken Spence Travels Sri Lanka, represented by Nijhawan Group in India, in association with Sri Lankan Airlines, recently hosted travel agents from Mumbai on a four-day Fam trip to Sri Lanka to allow them a first-hand experience of the properties.



Copenhagen bullish on Indian ties

Tine Kastrup-Misir, Director of Communication and Marketing, Wonderful Copenhagen, speaks to TRAVTALK about the enormous potential the India market offers for tourism to Copenhagen.



SEEMA DATT FROM COPENHAGEN

QHow will the new Air India flight benefit tourism to and from Copenhagen?

Ease of connectivity, according to our research, is one of the key travel decision factors for Indian travellers. We see the new Air India flight as a great opportunity to increase the level of growth of Indian bed nights in Copenhagen. Until September 16, 2017, it was not possible to fly directly between India and Denmark, and Indian travellers had to book connecting flights.

QWhat are your views on the Indian travel market for Copenhagen?

With its fast growing economy and expanding middle class, with a passion for urban travel, a large travel market such as India has an enormous potential for wealth creation and growth for Danish tourism, and we are working on it as one of our top priorities.

QWhat are the figures of arrival numbers you have seen from India in the last one year, and what are your expectations by the end of this year?

Last year we saw an increase in the number of Indian bed nights by 14.2 per cent, keeping up the positive trend that we have been seeing since 2013. With the direct Air India flight, we expect an increase in these numbers for 2017 from September to December, and for 2018 we expect a growth rate of approximately 10 per cent.

QWhich new experiences are you promoting in the Indian market?

We work with five strategic core stories that collectively capture the compelling brand essence and unique cultural character of Copenhagen: Danish design and architecture, sustainability, a pocket-sized fairy tale, Nordic gastronomy, tolerance and di-



Tine Kastrup-Misir
Director of Communication and Marketing,
Wonderful Copenhagen

Our e-learning programme for the Indian travel agencies is a five-module course which gives product developers and sales staff an overview of Copenhagen from an Indian perspective

versity. In the Indian market, some of the popular experiences which our city offers are Visit Carlsberg, the Viking Ship museum, Hamlet's castle Kronborg, the (second)

oldest amusement park in the world, Tivoli Gardens, and the solar-powered picnic boats by GoBoat. However, the fill-rouge in what we promote is the local experience.

QWhat kind of marketing initiatives you are adopting to boost the arrivals from India?

We are working on B2C as well as on B2B channels to increase awareness about Copenhagen in the Indian market. We host print media which appeals to our target market, but we are also working with new media and new ways to do PR. We also want our stories to be shared, and we want them to be told organically through Indian social media influencers, bloggers and vloggers.

QHow are you engaging with the travel agents for promotion and sales?

Our in-house team is in touch with Indian tour operators and travel agencies on a daily basis. Their mission is to assist travel professionals in selling Copenhagen,



Kronborg Castle

as well as to keep them up-to-date about the new trends and possibilities our city offers to their customers. One of the services that we have designed specifically for the Indian travel agencies is an e-learning programme available on www.cphacademy.in. It's a five-module course which gives product developers and sales staff an overview of Copenhagen from an Indian perspective. Moreover, an activity which we are looking forward to is our participation at roadshows in Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai, where my team and I will pitch our destination to local travel profes-

sionals and put them in touch with Danish suppliers. We are confident that with the new Air India flight, the interest for Copenhagen will be greater than ever before.

Number Game

The number of Indian bed nights increased in 2016 by 14.2 per cent. With the direct Air India flight, the tourism board expects an increase in these numbers from September-December, 2017, and for 2018 they expect a growth rate of approximately 10 per cent.

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Training students for perfection

Kamal Kant Pant, the recently-appointed Principal, Institute of Hotel Management, Catering and Nutrition, Pusa, shares his vision with TRAVTALK for the premier hospitality education institute in the country.



KANCHAN NATH

QWhat is your vision as the new principal for IHM, Pusa?

IHM, Pusa enjoys the leadership position in the country for hospitality education. The institute has been consistently receiving international students, especially from the South Asian region. In the home front, IHM, Pusa sees itself being recognised

as the undisputed leader in research and consultancy in the area of hospitality, catering and applied nutrition besides retaining the leadership position in the hospitality education in the country.

QHow has your collaboration with Ecole Hoteliere De Lausanne, Switzerland fructified?

LHC has been able to orient the institutions from a

teacher-centered approach to a student-centered one. The team from LHC has audited institutes of hotel management in the country and made their recommendations to not only bring them on a par with the global leaders but also set new benchmarks in hospitality education.

Along with Lausanne School, IIM, Lucknow's input has also been taken to

develop the curriculum to ensure that students get enhanced input in the management subject, besides what is available to them already. The curriculum has been developed and it is under deliberation with IGNOU, another important stakeholder and education partner of IHMs.

QHow are you using technology to aid education and learnings?

The campus is already equipped with modern presentation gadgets and systems in the classrooms. The institute is also the first institute to follow state-of-the-art food hygiene practices and get HACCP certification, ensuring that the food handling practices conform to the best in the world. There are plans underway to upgrade the classrooms to smart classrooms and



Kamal Kant Pant
Principal, Institute of Hotel Management
Catering and Nutrition, Pusa

use eco-friendly technology in the campus.

QHow are you stressing on practical trainings and 'on the job' exposure?

The institute conducts various skill competitions and imparts additional input to talented students emerging winners in such competitions. A student of the institute has been able to win a medallion in the World Skills Summit concluded in Abu Dhabi in the last fortnight only.

On-the-job exposure is available to our students as they are the most sought after human resource in the capital banked on by the leading event managers and hoteliers to assist in organising prestigious events.

QWhat are the ongoing trends as far as student choice for specialisations are concerned?

While maintaining the institute's popular passion of cuisine and catering, with the change in the nature of millennial generation- more adventurous and daring, the trend towards non-traditional jobs and avenues is witnessed. There are a significant number of students who are showing inclination towards areas like aviation, retail, facility management, etc. early on in their attendance in the institute.

QWhat are you doing to ensure that your students fulfil the criteria expected by hotels recruiting freshers?

The opportunity to interact with the campus recruiter is useful to fine-tune the finishing of students so that they can be better placed in the industry. The desire to sync with the industry requirement is very high in the system. But the environmental changes are pushing the hospitality into a constant evolution. The lead time to prepare the students to face a new challenge of the industry is roughly the duration of the course, which is three years for our flagship B.Sc programme. ➔



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Nucore keen on expansion

With an established business in Tanzania and Kenya, Nucore Software Solutions is now tapping opportunities to expand its markets in Africa, Europe and of course, India.



TT BUREAU

Kerala-based Nucore has been providing travel technology solutions for the travel industry since 2005. It recently participated at World Travel Mart, London, in order to introduce its products to the European market. Nucore also launched an array of new products at this year's WTM called Sky TRAACS, a complete accounting solution for airlines as well as 'gds2sms', a SaaS-based solution integrated with all GDS selling platforms to keep travellers informed on their travel itineraries, campaigns, etc. via SMS.

Suhail VP, CEO, Nucore Software Solutions, is excited about the Europe market. Of this, he says, "We have started with one customer in the UK and our plans are to go slow though we received multiple queries from Europe and we had more than sufficient demand from the Middle East and Africa regions. We plan to initiate the entry to

Europe in 2018 and take off by end of year. We are planning to promote our diversified product which will give real insights into the airline operations. Yes, we are venturing into airline business with Sky



Suhail VP
CEO
Nucore Software Solutions

TRAACS which will help airlines to monitor their revenues supported by proper accounting of all aspects of expenses. We also plan to launch TRAISE – a customer management solution for travel consultants and agencies."

Some of the products that were exhibited at WTM

focus on key features that accelerate the scale of the client's businesses. TRAACS, created exclusively for the travel agents is the flagship product of Nucore and is a complete software solution. Speaking about this product, Suhail VP says, "We see great potential for TRAACS and the ancillary products like TravelBI and TRAISE, an Operation Excellence tool with customer analysis. We have entered the African countries like Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, DRC and Ghana and many more are waiting for TRAACS."

TRAACS gives clients an edge over their competitors with its streamlined processes, accurate accounting and interactive modules. As far as India is concerned, he says, "We have finally agreed to enter the Indian market and have been cautious in selecting our first customer with Forvol. It is one of the group companies of Shapoorji Palonji Group." 📌



TT BUREAU

FCM Incoming hosted top officials of 17 largest tour operators from France during their visit to South India from October 29 to November 2, 2017. These leading tour operators from France represent a turnover of €15 billion and 70 per cent of the French market, informed **Shravan Gupta**, Executive Director - Leisure Businesses, FCM Travel Solutions India. He explains, "This was the most important participation of the highest officials of leading tour operators from France to come to India together to explore opportunities of promoting India as a booming destination in the French market, especially the incredibly beautiful areas of Chennai, Pondicherry and Mahabalipuram. Also, this part of India has an extremely close association with the French, dating back to 1674 with Pondicherry being established as an outpost of the French Trading Company. As a part of the tour, we also organised



Shravan Gupta
Executive Director Leisure Businesses
FCM Travel Solutions India

This was the most important participation of leading tour operators to come together to explore opportunities of promoting India as a booming destination in the French market

the French tour operators to visit the French consulate in Pondicherry."

He further elaborates that such tours help in networking, expanding business

and building new partnerships that focus on promoting the industry. They add a completely new dimension to business in a particular region and make the holidays beneficial and successful. Gupta believes that with beautiful beaches, incredible culture and tantalising culinary experiences, the region is surely expected to see an increase of French travel interest as an outcome of this tour.

"In terms of business, this is a great opportunity, as Jet airways will now fly directly from Paris to Chennai which will result into more business down south. As DMCs, we can now introduce and offer multiple programmes in the southern region, especially for recurrent French travellers who have visited North India and can now look at direct itineraries for South India, thus, giving us an enormous opportunity to highlight unexplored parts of South India," adds Gupta. 📌

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Children Travel Free

A new page in Holland diaries

Travel agents from four cities made their way to the land of clogs, tulips and cheese to see what lies beyond the magic of Amsterdam. They indulged in thrilling new experiences like simulated flight over Holland suspended under a huge domed screen, an amphibian bus tour that dips into River Maas, and indulging in some local street food.





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NOVEMBER 2017

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
EDWIN	Bali	29-Dec 4
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
Jharkhand Travel Mart	Ranchi	19-21
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

FEBRUARY 2018

Tourism Events Queensland B2B Workshop	Hyderabad	2
ANTO B2B workshop	Mumbai	5-6
ANTO B2B workshop	Bengaluru	7
ANTO B2B workshop	New Delhi	8-9
GPS	Hyderabad	8-10
South African Tourism Roadshow	Colombo	9
South African Tourism Roadshow	Mumbai	12-13
South African Tourism Roadshow	Kolkata	14

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

TAAI national election on Nov 28

The Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) will conduct its AGM followed by the national election on November 28, 2017, at The Lalit Mumbai.



HAZEL JAIN

It is that time of the year again which stirs up the industry from its festive slumber. The Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) has announced that it will conduct its 66th Annual General Meeting (AGM) on November 28, 2017, at 11:30 AM at The Lalit Mumbai. This will be followed by its national election at the same venue.

Revealing this is **Sunil R. Kumar**, President, TAAI, who adds, "Currently we are busy with all the statutory processes for the AGM such as reports, financial statements as well as arranging for the election process. This will be followed by the election of members of the Managing Committee for the term 2017-2019." The AGM will also be used to appoint the

auditors for the financial year 2017-2018 and fix their remuneration.

When asked about the annual convention that was slated to be held in Kunming, China earlier this year, Kumar says, "Our convention has been delayed due to various reasons but we will definitely organise it. It will happen after our AGM, possibly in January or February 2018. We did the same thing last year when we held our annual convention in Abu Dhabi after our AGM."

Only accredited representative(s) registered with the association as active member(s) as on November



Sunil R. Kumar
President
TAAI

4, 2017, will be entitled to be present and vote at the AGM and the elections. Only one accredited authorised representative of the active member shall be entitled to attend and vote. ↴

Save the date

- If a member wishes to withdraw their nomination the same can be done on or before 17:00 hours on November 20, 2017.
- The annual TAAI convention is most likely to be held in the month of January or February next year.

OTOAI gears up for term 2017-19

Nominations for Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI)'s election are out and the final results with the name of the new President and other General Body members will be announced on November 27, 2017.



TT BUREAU

OTOAI is all set to conduct its General Body election for the year 2017-2019 on November 27, 2017. The nominations for the same have been announced. As per the Articles & Memorandum of the association, election for the General Body would have new members for the position of President, Vice President, General Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer and six Ex-



ecutive Committee members.

Sanjay Datta, Election Officer for OTOAI elections, revealed that they have received nominations from members and have short-listed the final qualified candidates after the withdrawal date, which was November 8, 2017. No nominations were

withdrawn, and there are only 11 nominations for the General Body for 11 vacancies. Hence, all 11 candidates are declared elected unopposed. Hence, no secret ballot will be required as well.

The 11 eligible candidates for different positions of General Body include Sidharth Khanna, Adil Abdul Karim, Ankush Nijhawan, Himanshu Kesari Patil, Riaz Munshi,

Mahendra Vakharia, Sujit Nair, Shravan Bhalla, Chitra Bhatia, Gurdeep Singh Gural, and Rajeev Sabharwal.

While **Guldeep Singh Sahni**, President, OTOAI, has completed his term for the position, anticipations are rife for who will be the new President for the association. The final list with the respective candidates will be out on November 27, 2017. ↴

Maldivian surprise by Akquasun



Akquasun Group recently hosted a familiarisation trip for five travel agents from Chennai to Maldives to introduce a brand new resort Kandima Maldives with travel support from Srilankan Airlines. Apart from exploring the resort, the agents took cooking classes, indulged in an evening cruise and even attended an art exhibition.



Zimbabwe's synergy with India

Stanley Banda, Head-China, Asia & Pacific, Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, speaks to TRAVTALK about their tourism products, the significance of India market and how they plan to strengthen this relationship.



PRITI KHANNA FROM ZIMBABWE

QWhat is the significance of the Sanganai World Tourism Expo that is in its 10th year now. How many Indians have been coming over the years?

The significance of this fair is that it is in its 10th year and one of the highlights is that for the first time in ten years Indians have come for this fair. India is a very important market for Zimbabwe. In fact it is one of the primary markets for us. Besides, this year we have over 200 buyers from all over the world and their networking with other buyers, exhibitors and other stakeholders in the tourism industry is very important for our tourism industry here.

QWe see a lot of synergies with India. The people in Zimbabwe are very friendly and

hospitable. What are the number of visitors coming to Zimbabwe from India?

There exists a great deal of potential but at the moment we are not doing too well. We have about 15,000 Indians visiting Zimbabwe annually but 15,000 for a market like India into Zimbabwe is just a drop in the ocean. We hope that your coming here will get us the right numbers.

QHow is the Tourism Authority trying to market Zimbabwe in India? Any specific plan?

The Zimbabwe Tourism Authority wants more representation in India. We have been to some shows in India but we want to expand and go to other areas where we have not been before. We are keen to strengthen and develop this relationship further so we have more visitors from India.



Stanley Banda
Head-China, Asia & Pacific
Zimbabwe Tourism Authority

This year we have over 200 buyers from all over the world and their networking with buyers, exhibitors and other stakeholders in the tourism industry is very important for our tourism industry here

QDo you think e-visa for India has helped?

Electronic visa has already started. Remember even for your group visas were issued in a day. The area of visas for Indians has been addressed now and we are looking at getting in more visitors.

QWhat is your biggest source market?

Our biggest source market remains Europe and the Americas. Emerging markets like Asia and the Pacific, Australia are also among the big ones. There is a huge potential in Asia Pacific which we are now tapping.


Luring Visitors

Zimbabwe Tourism Authority seeks more representation in India as they want to expand and go to other areas as well

Alitalia comes back with a bang

Fabio Lezzerini, CCO, Alitalia, came to New Delhi for the launch of their new route between Delhi and Rome. With the launch of this daily flight, Alitalia has returned to India after nine years and celebrated the occasion with the who's who of travel trade in the national capital.






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Sarovar Hotels

Pondicherry

Vinay Raina has been appointed as the General Manager of The Promenade & Le Dupleix, Pondicherry. A highly motivated individual and a passionate hotelier, Raina brings with him over 13 years of operational excellence and key deliverables across cross cultural teams. Prior to joining Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, Raina had worked with The Trident Jaipur, Oberoi Hotels & Resorts, Hilton Hotels and The Claridges. In his last assignment, Raina was working at Trident, Jaipur as the Food and Beverage Services Manager.



Radisson Blu Marina Hotel

Connaught Place, Delhi

Neeraj Balani has been appointed as General Manager at Radisson Blu Marina Hotel Connaught Place, an international, upscale heritage city centre boutique hotel in New Delhi. He comes with an experience spanning over 20 years with previous stints with InterContinental Hotel Group, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group, The Oberoi Hotels & Resorts. He has been associated with pre-opening projects like Udaivilas, Rajvilas, Radisson Blu New Delhi. In his current role, he will spearhead the hotel operations, including guest and associate satisfaction, human resources, financial performance, sales and revenue.



Clarks Inn Group of Hotels

New Delhi

Rupam Das has been transferred and promoted as Regional Director – Operation & Business Development at Clarks Inn Group of Hotels. Das joins Clarks Inn's corporate office from his previous role as Area Director – Operations, South & Western India at Clarks Inn where he was heading operations and business development across Southern and Western India. He has played a leading role in establishing Clarks Inn's strong footprint in Karnataka. Additionally he is also heading Clarks Holidays, a vacation ownership offering by Clarks Inn. With 21 years of experience in hospitality sector, he worked with leading Indian hotel brands.



South African Tourism

Mumbai

Hanneli Slabber has been elevated to the position of Regional General Manager–Asia, Australasia and Middle East at South African Tourism. Having held the reins at South African Tourism's India office for the past seven years, Slabber would now be guiding and influencing its operations in future as well. During her tenure at the India office, Slabber developed effective and long-lasting ties with media houses, travel trade, airlines and other authority figures in the travel industry. Before her India stint Slabber served as the Global Product Head for the tourism board in South Africa.



Alpa Jani has been appointment as Acting Hub–Head MEISEA (Middle East Hub/ India/ South East Asia) Tourism Execution at South African Tourism. Jani has served as Trade Relations Manager at South African Tourism's Mumbai office for seven years. The new position will expand the scope of her responsibility to cover the Middle East and South East Asia in addition to India. She started her career at South African Airways and later moved on to work with Thomas Cook.



Radisson Srinagar

Srinagar, Kashmir

Sumit Das has been appointed as Hotel Manager at Radisson Srinagar. An Engineer by education and hotelier by profession, Das has spent 19 years in the hospitality industry. With a decade long managerial experience across seven destinations, Das has had four pre-opening experiences across IHG, Lalit Hotels and Carlson Rezidor Hotels during his tenure. He holds a dual diploma in Civil Engineering and Hotel Management.



Sheraton Grand Bangalore at Brigade Gateway

Bengaluru

Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway welcomes **Ujwal Wal** as the new Director of Sales & Marketing. With an experience of over 12 years in the hospitality industry, Wal has worked with brands like Taj Group, Marriott International, IHG Hotels & IHHR hospitality group. He brings with him an extensive experience in sales and marketing. At Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway, his responsibilities will involve leading and motivating the team to achieve the sales targets for the property and the group, along with being actively involved in strategising and planning of marketing initiatives.



TrawellTag Cover-More - India

Mumbai

Paras Kothari joins TrawellTag Cover-More as Director – IT. With more than 20 years' experience in IT Service Delivery and Infrastructure Management across BFSI Sector, Kothari has outstanding abilities across IT related operations, defect management and expertise in business continuity and disaster recovery planning. In his previous stints, he played a stellar role in deploying core insurance applications and several technology solutions. At TrawellTag Cover-More, he will helm the effort in deploying robust information technology systems to support the organisation's growth ambitions.

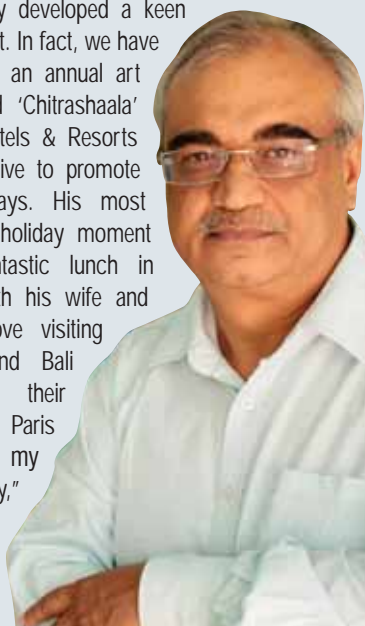


Faheem Qureshi has been appointed as the Associate Director of Sales at Radisson Srinagar, the first flagship of Carlson Rezidor in the valley. Apart from Sales & Marketing, he will be looking after the Revenue Management & PR for the hotel. Armed with a Bachelors in Hotel Management from the University of Bangalore, Qureshi has previously worked with brands like IHG, AccorHotels and The Khyber Himalayan Resort & Spa, Gulmarg. He comes with over nine years of experience in the hospitality industry.



TALKing People

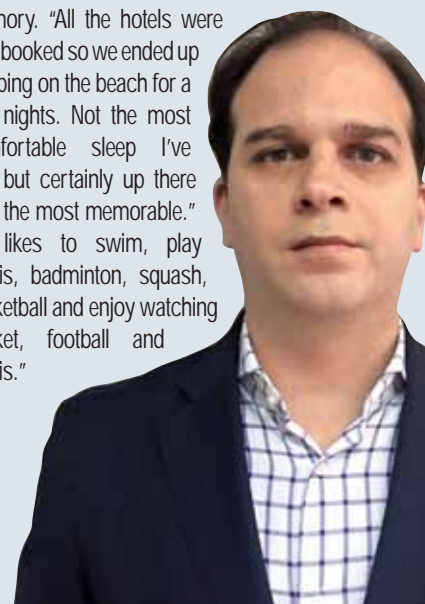
Ashish Vohra, Founder & CEO, juSta Hotels & Resorts, de-stresses by practising yoga and also enjoys his morning walks. "It is the only time of the day when I'm on my own and not disturbed by phone calls. I have also recently developed a keen interest in art. In fact, we have also started an annual art camp called 'Chitrashala' at juSta Hotels & Resorts as an initiative to promote art," he says. His most memorable holiday moment was a fantastic lunch in Tuscany with his wife and sons. "I love visiting Maldives and Bali to enjoy their beaches but Paris is definitely my favourite city," he adds.



Maintaining personal and professional relationships is what drives **PP Khanna**, President, Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI). He finds inspiration in family and friends. "I believe that it's important to learn from those around you. In the end, one needs to be a dependable and trustworthy person both in personal and professional realms." While Maldives, Mauritius and Thailand are his favourite international destinations, in India, he loves visiting Kashmir. "Kashmir is a beautiful place, and is rightly called the paradise on earth."



Craig McMahon, Director of Sales & Marketing, Banyan Tree Samui, says he has a voracious appetite for reading and can spend hours browsing through book shops. Of the many travel adventures he's had, bringing in the millennium in Goa remains etched in his memory. "All the hotels were fully booked so we ended up sleeping on the beach for a few nights. Not the most comfortable sleep I've had but certainly up there with the most memorable." He likes to swim, play tennis, badminton, squash, basketball and enjoy watching cricket, football and tennis."



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Lean season turns dream season

With an aim to double the number of domestic tourists and 50 per cent increase in foreign tourist arrivals by 2021, **Dr. Venu V**, Principal Secretary, Kerala Tourism, narrates the state's impressive tourism growth.

 **INDER RAJ AHLUWALIA**

QWhat is the key reason for Kerala's tourism success?

Kerala Tourism has been promoting the state's tourism potential across the globe through aggressive promotional and marketing campaigns aimed at wooing both domestic and foreign tourists. With the aim to double the number of domestic tourists and 50 per cent increase in foreign tourist arrivals by 2021, Kerala Tourism has been constantly making use of the latest advances in Information Technology to woo tourists. Kerala Tourism launched a digital campaign #Kerala #IndiaForBeginners with an aim to promote Kerala as the best destination for tourists visiting India for the first time.

We believe in being a promoter of the industry, rather than a regulator. Kerala Tourism has been taking considerable steps towards encouraging PPP (Public-Private Partnership), including fast track clearance to tourism projects and residential tariff for home stays. Under the PPP model, Kerala's first BOT-model ecotourism project in Kollam-Jatayu Earth's Centre is expected to be open by end-2017.

Kerala Tourism has planned to connect the ports



“Kerala Tourism has been extensively focusing on promoting northern Kerala as a tourist destination. This includes unexplored destinations like Kozhikode, Wayanad, Bekal and Kannur. With the aim to leverage northern Kerala, the Tourism Department has added destinations like Bekal, Kannur, Kozhikode and Malappuram to its promotion and marketing campaigns for the ongoing year.”

Dr. Venu V

Principal Secretary

Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala

mountainous terrain, among other wonders. We plan to develop comprehensive, truly inclusive plans to explore the potential of these spots for eco-adventure, plantation tourism, hydel tourism, etc. The state offers a wide range of adventure activities, including trekking, paragliding, river rafting, kayaking, wildlife sanctuaries and numerous more.

QWhich are Kerala's two main tourist attractions? Is there anything new coming up in the state by way of tourist circuits?

Kerala Tourism has been extensively focusing on promoting northern Kerala as a tourist destination. This includes unexplored des-

meaningful experiences, the Tourism Department has been promoting adventure tourism.

Moreover, Kerala will be re-branded as 'The Land of Adventure' to woo the younger generation of tourists by offering them activity and water-based tourism. Furthermore, the Department of Tourism has planned to develop water-based activities like kayaking and cruise tourism.

Kerala Tourism has also been focusing on a 'Green Carpet' initiative, aimed at building a sustainable destination management system in Kerala through participation and partnerships.

Owing to traveller's preference for real experi-

China, Japan, North America and Australia are amongst the high-potential international markets for Kerala. These international markets have shown considerable growth. Additionally, Kerala has witnessed 100 per cent growth from domestic markets, including Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan and

ism Department has been working on formulating and executing development plans for the overall growth of the state. Focusing on minimising negative environmental and social impacts, the Responsible Tourism initiative has involved almost all forms of tourism. Furthermore, this initiative has helped in enhancing the lifestyle of the regional population, generating more em-

ism, cruise tourism and many more. The state is famed for its Ayurveda treatment and has been emerging as one of the most preferred destinations to visit during monsoon. The 'Dream Season' initiative of Kerala Tourism has been promoting tourism during the lean season, viz. June-July.

Owing to the addition of new and diversified tourism products and services such



Panoramic view of Bekal beach



Chandragiri Fort

West Bengal, over the last five years.

Kerala Tourism recently launched 'Yalla Kerala' (let's go Kerala in Arabic) campaign targeting tourists from West Asian markets- Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain to attract West Asian tourists to Kerala. The department will soon launch a mega promotional campaign for the European and North American markets.

QYou have given to 'responsible tourism'. How exactly have you implemented this in Kerala?

Shri Pinarayi Vijayan, Honorable Chief Minister of Kerala, recently inaugurated 'Responsible Tourism Mission'. Under 'Responsible Tourism' initiative, the Tour-

ployment and income to the local communities.

Kerala Tourism has initiated a 'first of its kind' initiative in India - PEPPER (People's Participation for Planning and Empowerment through Responsible Tourism) under the Responsible Tourism Mission. The project is aimed at promoting unexplored and pristine destinations through people's participation in the process of tourism planning. As per the plan, all local self-governing bodies have been interlinked in a bid to roll out the responsible tourism planning initiative.

QIs Kerala now a 'year-round' tourist destination?

Kerala offers a wide range of opportunities for the vacationers, which includes adventure tourism, homestays and rural tour-

as boat - races and temple festivals, along with customised travel packages, Kerala has become a 'year-round' tourist destination. Moreover, the major port city of Kochi is the venue for Kochi Muziris Biennale, which is the only art biennale in the country.

Number Game

- ➔ Kerala hosted 10,38,419 foreign tourists in 2016, an increase of 6.23 per cent
- ➔ The UK, USA, Saudi Arabia, France and Germany were the top five international markets for foreign tourist arrivals in 2016
- ➔ In 2016, the total number of tourist arrivals in Kerala stood at 1,42,10,954 with an increase of 5.8 per cent from the last year



Neelakurinji flowers Munnar

of Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode with cruise ships. Based on the PPP model, the project aims to boost cruise tourism in the state.

QWould you agree that nature has played a key role in Kerala's overall attraction factor for tourists?

Absolutely, Kerala has vast natural resources that can accommodate a number of different tourism products - such as tropical forests, extensive water bodies,

tinations like Kozhikode, Wayanad, Bekal and Kannur. With the aim to leverage northern Kerala, the Tourism Department has added destinations like Bekal, Kannur, Kozhikode and Malappuram to its promotion and marketing campaigns for the ongoing year.

Considering, the interest of international travellers in adventure - tourism offerings, which includes nature and discovery, physical health, fun and thrills, unique and

ences through village life, the demand for home-stays has increased. The tourism department has also been working towards implementing 'Barrier Free Kerala Tourism', which shall result in creating accessible spaces for the differently abled and elderly tourists.

QWhich are the main feeder countries for Kerala's incoming tourism?

The UK, France, Spain, Germany, Russia, West Asia,

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Western India is a perfect amalgamation of several cultures, influenced by a rich history. In spite of its diverse languages, music, architecture, food and customs, several communities continue to thrive in harmony in this region. This diversity makes Western India a major attraction for tourists all over the world and within the country. As a tribute, India Travel Awards recognises the achievers of the travel and tourism industry, who have worked steadfastly towards enhancing the environment to allow the growth of tourism in the region.

These stalwarts need to be acknowledged, appreciated and encouraged in every region of the country – North, South, East and West.

Our topmost honour, the Gold Maya, is awarded to those stalwarts who have shaped the industry the way it is today and created innovative ways and products to take the industry a notch higher.

The awards ceremony is brought to life by a charismatic anchor and singer who makes everyone dance and sing to her beats. At the black-tie, Silver Service event, various performers enthrall and amuse the audience. The 4th edition of West India Travel Awards in Ahmedabad was the beginning of a new journey of long-term associations for some and a renewal of the bond that we shared with many others.

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

SanJeet

India Travel Awards

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Ahmedabad offers red



The 4th West India Travel Awards recognised the travel and tourism industry achievers of the western region during a night of celebrations and merrymaking at the Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre amidst a gathering of industry moguls cheering them on.



NIKHIL ANAND

The fourth edition of West India Travel Awards was held at Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre on October 15, 2017. The glitzy ceremony saw in attendance travel and tourism industry barons from not just the host city, but from across West India.

The event was graced by **Bhupendrasinh Manubha Chudasama**, Cabinet Minister for Revenue, Education (Primary, Secondary and Adult), Higher and Technical Education, Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs, Government of Gujarat, who was also the chief guest at the event.

"It's a great initiative to identify and give due credit to those who have shown great enterprise and steered their way to become one of the forbearers of the industry. Such motivation and incitement will spur talents from across our dynamic industry to consolidate and contribute even further

towards the development of this sector," he said.

The formal black tie regal ceremony brought together more than 150 stars of the travel industry under one roof. Welcoming the guests for the award, **SanJeet**, Mentor, India Travel Awards, said that the awards



(L-R): SanJeet, Nirav Munshi, Sanjay Kaushik, Bhupendrasinh Manubha Chudasama, Mahendra Vakharia, Dr. Marisha Kaul and Gunjan Sabikhi

carpet welcome to Maya



The winners of West India Travel Awards 2017 with their trophies at Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre

acknowledged the consolidated efforts of the trade partners from the western region owing to whom the travel industry is now growing by leaps and bounds. "Today, tourism has become a key driver for socio-economic progress of India and every small hotel, restaurant, tourist attraction or tourism outlet contributes towards the growth of this country. However, are we doing enough to recognise them? This is the precise reason that we have instituted these awards. The regional awards recognise those

establishments who have shown steadfast commitment, added value and chaperoned our industry to greater heights. This is our salute to the stalwarts for their outstanding contributions hitherto and through this recognition bestowed upon them they have thereby, raised the bar for other industry players," he insisted.

The awards were divided into four different categories – Personal Awards, Business Awards, Trending Awards and Partner Awards. Talking



about the voting process, Sanjeet said, "The voting is carefully monitored to avoid duplication and ensure transparency. When the votes were finally opened for counting, we were surprised to learn that we had received votes from 18 different countries other than India." Also gracing the evening were guest of honour **Nirav Munshi**, Manager (Tours & Travels), Gujarat Tourism and

Dr. Marisha Kaul, Gladrags Mrs. India-North who further added to the glamour quotient of the gala night. Awards were presented in a total of 49 categories in both travel and hospitality. **Mahesh Shirodkar**, Managing Director, Tamarind Global, received the illustrious DDP Game Changer award while the famed DDP Trailblazer award went to **Mahendra Vakharia**, Managing Director, Pathfinders Holidays.





DDP Game Changer | MAHESH SHIRODKAR

“Travel is not in your blood or bones, it is either in your DNA or it's not and only through passion and perseverance can we continue to do what we do,” believes **Mahesh Shirodkar**, Managing Director, Tamarind Global. “It’s very heartening to see people recognise your contribution and the years that you’ve put in towards enhancing the industry.” In a career spanning over 35 years, Shirodkar has shaped and reshaped the travel industry as we know it. From entrepreneurial ventures focusing on MICE, inbound travel, event management and weddings to conceptualising and initiating a ‘celebrity management company’, he has truly been a ‘game changer’. As a seasoned veteran, he exclaims, “The responsibility towards the industry never has nor will ever cease to be, the entire focus has always been on continuing to contribute, innovate and making sure that the young brigade that comes after me is well equipped to lead the travel industry into a greater era.”

► **Mahesh Shirodkar**, MD, Tamarind Global received the award for **Gallery of Legends**. He was felicitated by **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Group, **Bhupendrasinh Manubha Chudasama**, Cabinet Minister, Revenue, Education (Primary, Secondary and Adult), Higher and Technical Education, Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs, Government of Gujarat and **Dr. Marisha Kaul**, Gladrags Mrs. India-North 2017



DDP Trailblazer | MAHENDRA VAKHARIA

Carved out of decades of personal experiences, **Mahendra Vakharia**, Managing Director, Pathfinders Holidays is well renowned for creating some of the most magical itineraries for his customers. A founder member of Outbound Tour Operators Association of India, Vakharia has also driven proficiency and knowledge amongst the outbound travel agents through championing the mandate requiring them to complete at least 25 hours in order to retain their active status. He exclaims, "You do not work for an award but any appreciation in any form, and coming especially from a very prominent platform like the India Travel Awards is a big honour. Dedication, focus and passion have been our 'mantra' and any and all achievement and recognition has stemmed from it." He also added that the award will help further fuel their zeal and ensure that the standard set by them will be elevated in the near future.

► **Mahendra Vakharia**, Managing Director, Pathfinders Holidays received the award for **DDP Trailblazer**. He was felicitated by **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Group, **Bhupendrasinh Manubha Chudasama**, Cabinet Minister, Revenue, Education (Primary, Secondary and Adult), Higher and Technical Education, Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs, Government of Gujarat and **Dr. Marisha Kaul**, Gladrags Mrs. India-North 2017





Chief Guest

BHUPENDRASINH MANUBHA CHUDASAMA

Bhupendrasinh Manubha Chudasama, Cabinet Minister, Revenue, Education (Primary, Secondary and Adult), Higher and Technical Education, Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs, Gujarat Government, says, "It is a wonderful feeling to get invited to bear witness to such a wonderful initiative and to get the chance to honour the stalwarts of the travel industry. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the organisers for getting the choicest talent pools of the industry together in my city, the first heritage city and also in the great state of Gujarat. I want to extend my applause and appreciation to all the winners for their continued hard work and contribution to the travel industry. And to all those who contributed equally to the industry but could not come away with an award, I would like to offer them my well wishes and thanks and also urge them to continue to make a difference to our industry, economy and nation."

► Bhupendrasinh Manubha Chudasama, Cabinet Minister, Revenue, Education (Primary, Secondary and Adult), Higher and Technical Education, Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs, Government of Gujarat received the award for Chief Guest

Guest of Honour

NIRAV MUNSHI

Nirav Munshi, Manager-Tours & Travels, Gujarat Tourism, says, "Travel awards are a great benefactor to the industry and they play a vital role in encouraging the industry to keep up its commitments and strive for better results. Institutions like DDP, who organise such events with utmost professionalism and efficiency, add to the encouragement and competition amongst the trade. By ensuring transparency while conducting these awards, you have ensured that other players and industry representatives will come forward and vie strongly for the same recognition and repute in the forthcoming platforms, thereby resulting in more product effect on the entire industry as a whole."

► Nirav Munshi, Manager-Tours & Travels, Gujarat Tourism received the award for Guest of Honour



Guest of Honour

DR. MARISHA KAUL

It was a privilege being the Guest of Honour at India Travel Awards and felicitating the best in the business. It is a wonderful platform to recognise, appreciate and honour all those people who are working hard for the betterment of this industry. I would also like to congratulate the organisers for taking up this great initiative and I am sure these awards would go a long way in taking this industry to new heights.

► Dr. Marisha Kaul, Gladrags Mrs. India-North 2017 being honoured with Pearl Trophy 'Maya' for her support to India Travel Awards



Best General Manager

SANJAY KAUSHIK

While accolades and personal achievements are not the prime objective while conducting business, **Sanjay Kaushik**, General Manager, Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre, feels, "Any recognition or validation of the efforts and dedication put into the industry is much appreciated. I thank DDP Publications for honouring me so ceremoniously and also extend a vote of thanks to my team and other industry players who have contributed in helping the hotel gain stardom and recognition in the Indian market. I welcome and look forward to the responsibility accompanying this award"

► **Sanjay Kaushik**, General Manager, Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre received the award for Best General Manager

Most Trending Personality

NAGSRI PRASAD SASHIDHAR

Nagsri Prasad Sashidhar, Head- Outbound Holidays, Mercury Travels, exclaims, "A nomination for any award is very welcome, but being nominated and honoured with the Indian Travel Award, one of the prominent platforms to recognise efforts and talents is a really special feeling." Talking about the added responsibility, she stresses, "In my opinion, responsibility is something that is inherent, ever since one decides to take on the mantle of being in the travel and tourism industry. The validation and recognition of the efforts put in over several years certainly acts as encouragement to keep pushing to grow, excel and serve the industry, she adds.

► **Nagsri Prasad Sashidhar**, Head - Outbound Holidays, Mercury Travels received the award for Most Trending Personality



Most Enterprising Corporate

Travel Professional

IKSON MENEZES

With a formidable experience in marketing and creative strategy, **Ikson Menezes**, Senior Manager - Travel Related Services, Mahindra & Mahindra, has passionately worked towards transforming the business travel landscape in corporate travel. India Travel Awards is yet another feather in the cap of a man who has driven stakeholder satisfaction, cost optimisation and inculcated best travel practices in the corporate world.

► **Ikson Menezes**, Senior Manager - Travel Related Services, Mahindra & Mahindra received the award for Most Enterprising Corporate Travel Professional



Best Experiential Tour Operator

COX & KINGS

Sanjeev Chhajer, Vice President, Cox & Kings says, "We are extremely thrilled and excited to have won the famed India Travel Award under the said category. The award is a validation of the efforts put in by our entire team and to be recognised on such a big platform means a lot to us. Since this award has been awarded based on the votes received by the people and industry, we feel extremely elated to have been the preferred choice of the masses. With this award, there is no scope of complacency to set in, rather it will encourage us to deliver even superior service to our guests and customers."

► The award was given to **Cox & Kings** and received by **Sanjeev Chhajer** and **Dipali Shah**





Best Global Distribution System (GDS) | TRAVELPORT GALILEO

Sandeep Dwivedi, Chief Operating Officer, InterGlobe Technology Quotient, feels, "The tourism sector in West India has grown at par with the nation's overall growth in travel and tourism industry over the past few years. This award is a representation of our contribution towards the same. As a leading technology provider, our aim is to make day-to-day business operations at a travel agency more efficient and less strenuous. To continue this approach, we ensure that our customers from travel agents to travel management companies must be technologically sound enough to embrace the change we are bringing to the industry."

► The award was given to **Travelport Galileo** and received by **Anesh Kavle**, Region Head West & **Yashpal Singh Chauhan**, Business Manager-Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh & Chhatisgarh

Best Casino Hotel | DELTIN SUITES

Located at just five minutes away from Candolim beach, the Casino Hotel in Goa is known for its intimate and stylish ambience. The fine and commodious suites are 286 square meters and fashioned in shades of yellow and brown with playful design accents built along the cosy courtyard which houses a swimming pool. It is one of the most luxurious five-star casino hotels in Goa and attracts the attention of friends and families alike. Every suite includes all the amenities required for a perfect vacation including LCD TVs, in-room safes, separate living rooms, patios, and free Wi-Fi, among others.

► The award was given to **Deltin Suites** and received by **Tanya Ahluwalia**, VP Marketing



Best B2B Travel Portal | TRAVEL BOUTIQUE ONLINE

Ankush Nijhawan, CEO, Travel Boutique Online, exclaims, "Everyone in the world who performs, likes to be applauded. We feel that we stand apart from the crowd and are noticed for all the good work we have been doing. The industry welcomes such awards which give recognition to the work put in and the awards themselves are a combination of class, elegance and pose. This recognition is a testament to our seamless technology that empowers our travel agents with a variety of products in one click along with the right pricing and inventory. Our system has superior transparency with efficient back up support."

► The award was given to **Travel Boutique Online** and received by **Swetla Jagad**, Regional Manager - Gujarat



Best MICE Operator | CLUB7 HOLIDAYS

Taking care of all aspects of planning, booking, facilitating events and conducting seminars and conferences, Club7 Holidays have done remarkable MICE business in West India, right from super luxury MICE destinations in Alaska to even newer destinations that they have found for clients. The company takes great efforts in planning corporate travel, customising food and beverage requirements, suggesting new destinations and planning theme based events. They also offer a selection of exotic business hotels which are equipped with the latest technologies, along with their mantra of personalised and warm hospitality, thereby creating a memorable travel experiences for their clients.

► The award was given to **Club7 Holidays** and received by **Rajesh Bist**, Senior Vice President - MICE (South & West)





Best Adventure Destination

SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM

Known for its wildlife-driven holidays, South Africa's adventure holiday capabilities have received a vote of confidence from the Indian travel trade. **Hanneli Slabber**, Regional General Manager Asia, Australasia and Middle East, South African Tourism, says, "This award is especially heartening for us because it tells us about how South Africa is viewed by its sellers – its ambassadors in essence. We've spent much of 2016 strengthening our positioning as one of the world's adventure capitals." South Africa boasts more than 300 adventure activities across 3000 adventure operators including the world's highest bungee, shark-cage diving, zip lining amidst beautiful scenery, kayaking and sky-diving.

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

Best Customised Tour Operator

XTREME DESTINATIONS

A familiar face in the Indian Travel Awards gallery, **Chintan Kayani**, Director, Xtreme Destinations exclaims, "It is a great feeling to not only get nominated but also win this illustrious award under two different categories. Last year, Xtreme destinations received the award under the best adventure tour operator category which helped us expand our business to new heights. We are looking forward to once again derive big gains this year after winning this award under the best customised tour operator category." An adventure sports specialist in New Zealand, Xtreme Destinations is a one-stop shop for exhilarating sporting activities.

► The award was given to **Xtreme Destinations** and received by Directors, **Chintan Kayani**, **Hemant Shah**, and **Sneha Bharwada** International Operations



Best Business Travel Agency

NEXTOURISM

Collecting the award, **Saurabh Sanghavi**, Director, Nextourism, joyously exclaims, "This is the second consecutive year we have won this award under the Best Business Travel Agency category. It brings me great joy and pride to get the Maya again this year, and this award is a testament to the hard work and dedication that has been put in by our entire team at Nextourism. Last year, winning this award gave a big boost to my business and I am looking forward to new business opportunities that will now come to be, thanks to the second Maya."

► The award was given to **Nextourism** and received by **Saurabh Sanghavi**, Director

Best Foreign Exchange

Aggregator | FXKART.COM

FxKart.com has essentially revolutionised the way forex is bought and sold in the India through the use of technology. An online market place, the company offers convenient and hassle free foreign exchange facilities to travel agents. FxKart's innovative instant forex deal discovery platform lets authorised money changers in the market bid for the best price in real time offering agents the best deal. Once the order is booked, the customer service finalises the deal and a seamless forex delivery takes place.

► The award was given to **FxKart.com** and received by **Mohammed Abdul Siraj**, CTO





Best Wedding and MICE Hotel

CROWNE PLAZA

AHMEDABAD CITY CENTRE

This 200-room business hotel is a leader in the MICE, weddings and events segment. **Sanjay Kaushik**, General Manager, Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre, reveals, "The hotel itself is doing very well in this market; we recently did the catering for the dignitaries who had come in for the Japanese bullet train. Another service which we boast of is a list of cuisine options for guests. With the kind of investments pouring in especially from Japan, we are looking forward to a potential year in 2018."

► The award was given to **Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre** and received by **Sanjay Kaushik**, General Manager

Best Tour Operator

NAPOLITAN TRAVEL AGENCY CO.

While stressing on the need to uphold the integrity and reliability entrusted on them by customers, **Bahram Pashutanizadeh**, Managing Director, Napolitan Travel Agency, exclaims, "I am extremely honoured to accept this prestigious award and would like to extend my special thanks to DDP Publications, Incredible India (Ministry of Tourism) and all the organisers. I would also like to thank our esteemed customers and my team members, without whose love, support and efforts, this could not have been achieved. This is just the starting for us at Napolitan Travel. We will strive to work harder to open new avenues and innovate new methods for tourism and tour operating, keeping in mind our pledge of safe and honourable tourism."

► The award was given to **Napolitan Travel Agency Co.** and received by **Behnaz Irani** Director & **Banafshe Pashootanizadeh**, Partner - Business



Best City Hotel

SAYAJI HOTELS KOLHAPUR

Puneet Mahajan, General Manager, Sayaji Hotels Kolhapur, says they're glad to have hit the bullseye in their first nomination itself. "It's a great honour to have been nominated for and subsequently bagging the award under the Best City Hotel category. Besides the corporate, it is the travel agents section that develops the travel industry and so we feel that receiving this prestigious award will go a long way in establishing and growing us further in the Indian market." Being located in a Tier-III city, the two-year-old property has been extensively using the online platform lately to market itself and spread its awareness, he adds.

► The award was given to **Sayaji Hotels Kolhapur** and received by **Puneet Mahajan**, General Manager



Best Airline - Domestic

SPICEJET

In sync with the airline's mission to become India's preferred low-cost airline, delivering the lowest air fares with the highest consumer value, to price sensitive consumers, SpiceJet has taken great strides in becoming the go-to travel choice, especially from West India. The airline has been increasing connectivity options while continuing to provide seamless and efficient service to its customers.

► The award was given to **SpiceJet** and received by **B Raghunath Singh**, Regional Manager - West, **Tarak Jani**, Sr Manager - Sales





Best Mid-Market Hotel HYATT PLACE PUNE HINJAWADI

Designed for the multitasking traveller, Hyatt Place Pune Hinjawadi provides luxury at affordable prices. The property offers three meeting places with 2,660 square feet of outstanding facilities with natural lighting and pool view along with a dedicated pre-function space. With services such as free Wi-Fi throughout the hotel, Hyatt Place Pune Hinjawadi is perfect for small corporate and executive meetings, training classes, group gatherings, wedding guests and any other social events. Known for providing a memorable guest experience, the hotel is an ideal place to relax, meet, dine and explore those visiting the Hinjawadi IT Park for business and leisure around Pune.

► The award was given to Hyatt Place Pune Hinjawadi and received by Sanjay Patti, General Manager, Prafull Dhapate, Director of Sales

Best Destination Management Company STHI HOLIDAYS INDIA

Offering a broad range of travel related services, STHI Holidays has established itself in the Indian destination management company sphere. Gagan Kumar, Director, STHI Holidays, says, "It's a great feeling to be recognised as the best destination management company again on this platform. We have tried to be consistent in our efficiency and maintaining our standards and we are glad that our enthusiasm and commitment has been recognised yet again by this platform. Thank you DDP for the acclaim which is going to help promote and further our business in the near future."

► The award was given to STHI Holidays India and received by Gagan Kumar, Director and Dinesh Goyal, Sales Head West



Best MICE Destination THE DELTIN DAMAN

Located on a property spread across 10 acres, The Deltin, Daman, is a luxurious Hotel with a capacity of up to 2000 people. The property boasts of 176 rooms with views of a meandering pool and lush greenery. The suites are generously sized – up to 197 sq. metres. The spa has seven treatment rooms with Asian and European treatments on offer. The extravagant ballroom can accommodate 350 people in cluster style seating. The Deltin, Daman, has a total capacity of 1,500 persons at a time for events.

► The award was given to The Deltin Daman and received by Tanya Ahluwalia, VP Marketing and Saurabh Mehta, Revenue and Sales Manager



Best Beach Resort MAP5 VILLAGE RESORT, GOA

Abhijit Dey, Consulting Director-Operations, MAP5 Hotels and Resorts, feels that they are ticking all the right boxes that are required for any new company to come up, grow and spread their wings across the country. He exclaims, "With the kind of activities we are doing to promote the group, we are bound to get noticed by the industry and receiving the prestigious 'Maya' should help get the ball rolling for us. Along with the recognition, this honour has also brought a sense of responsibility as people will now start recognising and associating us with the success and failures of a particular hospitality service industry."

► The award was given to MAP5 Village Resort, Goa and received by Abhijit Dey, Consulting Director-Operations





GLIMPSES of West India Travel Awards







Preferred MICE Solutions Provider

TRIP NAVIGATOR

Litesh N Jethani, Director, Trip Navigator, says, "Last year, we received an accolade in The Fastest Growing MICE Company category for our innovation in this field. It feels great to carry on our work again this year and being felicitated as the preferred MICE solutions provider. Our thought and vision is to convert MICE into online platforms and we want to thank DDP and the entire team for giving us the opportunity to apprise the world of the same. To have our contribution to the industry, to India and also our constant cravings to innovate the MICE segment recognised definitely pushes us to work for our vision with even more zeal and pace."

► The award was given to Trip Navigator and received by Directors, Litesh N. Jethani and Abhishek Gupta

Best Leisure Hotel

RADISSON BLU RESORT & SPA ALIBAUG

Ishrat Noor Siddiqui, Head-Human Resources & Development, Radisson Blu Resort & Spa Alibaug reveals, "This is our third tryst with the organising team of the India Travel Awards and it brings us great honour and delight to have been accorded with the Maya again. At the Radisson Blu Resort & Spa Alibaug, we believe that our people are the soul of our hotel. We always endeavour to create the best experiences and ensure that our guests are treated with utmost care and commitment, thereby creating cherished memories for them and ensuring their return to our property."

► The award was given to Radisson Blu Resort & Spa Alibaug and received by Ishrat Noor Siddiqui, Head Human Resources



Best Luxury Tour Operator – Outbound

MERCURY TRAVELS

One of the leaders in the Indian market, Mercury Travels is a one-stop shop for a complete range of travel related services. **Nagsri Prasad Sashidhar**, Head-Outbound Holidays, Mercury Travels, says, "It gives us immense pleasure to receive an award under this category. We owe this to our focus on quality over quantity and our commitment to provide the best and the most innovative offerings to our customers." This is the third award that the company has won under the best luxury travel operator – outbound category which bears testament to their superior focus on service quality.

► The award was given to Mercury Travels and received by Nagsri Prasad Sashidhar, Head - Outbound Holidays, Mercury Travels



Excellence in Customer Service

COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT PUNE CHAKAN

Gaurav Apte, General Manager, Courtyard by Marriott Ahmedabad, exclaims, "We want to thank the organisers, DDP Publications for coming to Ahmedabad and bestowing this prestigious award on us. We have been working hard to get this award since a long time now and to finally achieve the accreditation for such a special and important aspect of hotel life truly is very gratifying." He also informs that since the inception of the hotel in 2010, this year has been the most rewarding for the property and they are looking forward to ending the year on a high with all stakeholders and customers equally happy.

► The award was given to Courtyard by Marriott Pune Chakan and received on their behalf by Gaurav Apte, General Manager, Courtyard by Marriott Ahmedabad





Best Destination Management Company – Americas

7M TOURS

Their expertise in Americas is what differentiates them from their peers, feels **Sagar Shivaji Phulpagar**, Partner, 7M Tours. He says, "This award is the fourth one in a row and so it is all the more special as it shows the consistency in our dedication towards travel and travellers. We feel that our hard work has been recognised time and again by the travel fraternity. Our entire team thanks you for shining light on the silent work that goes behind making us stand toe to toe with the best in the industry."

► The award was given to **7M Tours** and received by **Sagar Shivaji Phulpagar**, Managing Partner

Best Visa Facilitation Company

UDAAN INDIA

Mayur Shendkar, Head-West, Udaan India, feels, "We've been the frontrunners in the visa facilitation sphere for several years now and our continued efforts in our field to ensure a seamless experience for our customers is the reason why we have received this laurel. Our pan-India presence with branches in every city with embassies is testament to our work and role in helping the industry with visa processing. We want to thank India Travel Awards for giving us an incredible platform and honour and also the industry for having voted for us again this year."

► The award was given to **Udaan India**, and received by **Roopal Malhotra**, Gujarat Manager and **Mayur Shendkar**, Head - West



Fastest Growing Travel Company

XPLORE DESTINATIONS

For those who want to look beyond New Zealand to satisfy their craving for adventure sports, Xplore Destinations broadens their outlook.

Chintan Kayani, Director, Xplore Destinations emphasises, "Winning this award is going to push us to keep improving and setting new standards in the industry. Currently, Europe and US are our strongest markets where we are seeing an excellent growth. Of late we have added Slovenia to the growing list of destinations and have also stepped up our operations in Iceland and Finland to cater to the growing business and opportunities."

► The award was given to **Xplore Destinations** and received by **Vyoma Mehta**, International Operations, Directors, **Hemant Shah** and **Chintan Kayani**



Best Destination Wedding Resort

MADHUBHAN RESORT & SPA

Manohar S Gurung, Vice President, Madhuban Resort & Spa reveals that the property has had its many 'firsts' like being the first five-star deluxe property in Gujarat to having the largest spa and naturopathy along with the five F&B outlets. On being honoured with India Travel Award, he added, "It's always a matter of great pride and encouragement to find yourself rubbing shoulders with the big-wigs and the chieftains of this industry. The synergy between our facilities and the human touch, that is next to none is what brings us all the laurels."

► The award was given to **Madhubhan Resort & Spa** and received by **Manohar S. Gurung**, Vice President and **Ashwani Shekhar**, Head Sales & Marketing





Best Destination Management Company - South East Asia

TRAVELBULLZ

Amit Paul Singh, General Manager-India, TravelBullz, says "I am really thankful to the entire travel fraternity for this high reputation award. I would also like to acknowledge and extol the efforts of our entire team for their undying zeal and resolve through which we have come to be the best destination management company in the South East Asia region. This award will be a big morale booster for all of us at the TravelBullz family."

► The award was given to TravelBullz and received by Amit Paul Singh, General Manager - India and Jigar Seth, Manager - Sales, Gujarat

Best Foreign Exchange Company

CENTRUMDIRECT LIMITED

Renju Mathew, Vice President-Head Gujarat, Centrum Direct, exclaims, "To be a part of the industry and to be recognised amongst other industry legends is really a proud feeling for us. We've been dedicatedly striving to facilitate and ease the difficulties of travel agents and their customers for many years now and to have these efforts recognised and appreciated has given us a lot of gratification. Working with the industry, we've catered to all the basic yet vital requirements of every international traveller from India and this honour will help us in realising our goal of spreading throughout the length and breadth of India."

► The award was given to CentrumDirect Limited and received by Renju Mathew, Vice President-Head Gujarat and Parag Bhatt, Assistant Vice President, Area Manager - Gujarat



Best Destination Management Company - Domestic

MOUNTAIN EDGE TOURS & HOLIDAYS

Since its inception in 2004, Mountain Edge Tours & Holidays have taken various initiatives for Destination Promotion and creating innovative products in the industries. **Prakash Kumar Raj**, Director, Mountain Edge Tours & Holidays, says, "We are thankful to India Travel Awards for recognising our efforts in our services. Our team is extremely dedicated and skilled in providing the best customised products. Such awards are a great initiative for all industry professionals including us to get a global spotlight and motivation to continue contributing towards the industry."

► The award was given to Mountain Edge Tours & Holidays

Best Travel Agency

SOLANKI HOLIDAYS

From humble beginnings to now a two-time recipient of the India Travel Awards, **Rafik Rahim Solanki**, Director, Solanki Holidays, proudly says, "It is a matter of great pride and honour for me and my company to receive the award since two consecutive years. The award is a testament to what hard work can help one accomplish in life and it is also a testament of the love and support we have been able to garner from the travel industry and all our customers. Since winning the award last year, I have proudly paraded the Maya across my business and home which has helped me get more business than the previous four years combined. Now I will proudly parade both the Maya statuettes and I look forward to reaping the benefits of this prestigious recognition."

► The award was given to Solanki Holidays and received by Rafik Rahim Solanki, Director and Hemant Bhadane, Manager





Best Floating Casino Hotel

DELTIN CARAVELA

A float on the Mandovi in splendid seclusion, far from the madding crowd, is Deltin Caravela - India's only Luxury floating Casino hotel. Be ushered into your almost 500 sq. ft. suite. The property offers a choice of eight luxurious private and semi-private suites which combines an exclusive gaming environment with high-end finishes and world class services. The Flotel aims to redefine the benchmarks of luxury by offering guests customised facilities on a par with starred resorts across the globe in order to elevate their comforts.

► The award was given to Deltin Caravela and received by Tanya Ahluwalia, VP Marketing

Best Tour Operator- Outbound

WORLD TRAVEL STUDIO

Hareesh Koyande, Managing Director, World Travel Studio, exclaims, "We are grateful to the jury of India Travel Awards for considering us suitable for this accolade. We want to thank the industry for the nomination and support thence provided. In addition to the trade, we would also want to thank all our brilliant team members, clients, travel agents, suppliers and well-wishers for their continuous support and love. This award is testimony of our relentless endeavour of delivering exemplary service to our clients and travel agents."

► The award was given to World Travel Studios



Best Travel Management Company

CICLO TOURISM

Jaydeep Patel, CEO, Ciclo Tourism, says, "I am glad that DDP acknowledged our efforts and chose us amongst all others for this award. This award is a dream come true and obviously a motivating spirit for all my future activities. By having this award in our cabin, we all are going to be more self-motivated and give our best. This is a token of our past efforts and also a push factor for our future endeavours. The entire journey has been a learning experience for me and with this success; I am more energised and charged up to take up new and challenging projects which would work in the benefit of my organisation and the industry."

► The award was given to Ciclo Tourism and received by Jaydeep Patel, Managing Director

Best Boutique Tour Operator

NEXUS TRAVELS

First time recipient, Vicky Ray, Director, Nexus Travels, proudly exclaims, "I want to thank the India Travel Awards for giving me the recognition, felicitating me with the renowned Maya and also for publicising me and my business pan India which will go a long way into further strengthening and cementing our presence in the industry. Within a short period of time, Nexus Travels has seen a tremendous growth in the industry and has been certified specialist by several destinations as well. Ray adds, "Within seven years, we have received certification from 72 destinations, airlines as well as hotels and cruise liners. I feel the award is an attribution to all these factors."

► The award was given to Nexus Travels India and received by Vicky Ray, Director



Best Corporate Travel Practice

MAHINDRA & MAHINDRA

Ikson Menezes, Senior Manager - Travel Related Services, Mahindra & Mahindra feels "In corporate business there are scores of travel changes that keep on happening, with that there are multitudes of integration that we need to do. Where we have done well is to efficiently handle the complexities and as such we have been able to receive good end results." He also added that artificial intelligence and a lot of analytical data are going to help locate new and unforeseeable opportunities within the corporate travel segment.

► The award was given to Mahindra & Mahindra and received by Ikson Menzes, Senior Manager Travel Related Services, Vijay Nair, Vice President and John D'Sa, General Manager



Best MICE Consolidator

JJ'S TOURS

Jagrut Thakkar, Managing Director, JJ's Tours, exclaims, "We've been awarded the best MICE consolidator especially for the contribution with the Switch Global Expo. It is a great feeling to be recognised on this illustrious platform and I'm glad that DDP Publications organises such events annually to honour the vast pool of talent in this region. This is really motivating! Having our achievement and contribution celebrated on such a grand platform help industry players like us showcase ourselves to an even greater audience."

► The award was given to **JJs Tours** and received by **Jagrut Thakkar**, Managing Director

Best Tour Operator - Vegetarians/Jain

NEXTOURISM

Since 2008, Nextourism has emerged as India's one of the finest emerging premium travel organisation. Food has always played a pivotal role in Indian travellers choosing their destination and as such Nextourism receiving the best tour operator award for providing vegetarian food goes to show their commitment to their travellers to cater to their personal requirements. **Saurabh Sanghavi**, Director, Nextourism, says, "This award brings out our commitment to our customers and the recognition given to us for the same by DDP truly means a lot."

► The award was given to **Nextourism** and received by **Saurabh Sanghavi**, Director



Best Sports Tourism Company

SPORTS KONNECT

Aiming to promote sporting events across the world, the company has been actively focusing on the travel agents market, reveals **Shashank Shekhar Mishra**, CEO, Sports Konnect. He says, "For a small company like ours, a three-year-old start-up, it feels really great to have been bestowed with this honour. Coincidentally, in our very first year back in 2015 too, we had won this award and so it feels like we are being watched, our efforts are getting noticed by the industry." He further adds that the recognition and motivation thus received will play a key role in fuelling their growth aspiration.

► The award was given to **Sports Konnect** and received by **Shashank Shekhar Mishra**, Chief Executive Officer

Fastest Growing Hotel Brand

MAP5 Hotels

With a recent bout of dynamic expansion, the group has swiftly risen from 1 to 12 properties catering to middle and upper segments. Breaking through market barriers MAP5 Hotels and Resorts has managed to quickly charm its way into the hearts and mind of the people and establish themselves as a reputed brand in the hospitality sector. Delighted to have received the Indian Travel Award in this category, **Abhijit Dey**, Consulting Director-Operations, MAP5 Hotels and Resorts, stresses that the award is another feather in the cap for the Group and will encourage them to do more for the hospitality sector.

► The award was given to **MAP5 Hotels** and received by **Abhijit Dey**, Consulting Director-Operations



Best Casino

DELTIN ROYALE

Deltin Royale, India's largest and most luxurious casino, offers something for everyone. It houses India's only dedicated Royale Poker Room and an exclusive Taash Room for Indian Flush, apart from a whole range of other international and domestic games. The Vegas restaurant offers a lavish multi-cuisine buffet along with live entertainment every night. More than focusing on gaming, Deltin Royale has created an industry which focuses on the complete experience – right from entertainment, good food, high end lounges to the best gaming experience.

► The award was given to **Deltin Royale** and received by **Tanya Ahluwalia**, VP Marketing



Best Travel Insurance Provider

TRAWELLTAG COVER-MORE

Manish Sheth, Area Manager, TrawellTag Cover-More says, "This is a wonderful recognition of the work we put in day in day out. We have been striving hard to innovate and add new products in the market and this award will give us the required limelight and motivation to edge past our competitors in the future as well. We accept the responsibility that comes along with winning this award and will strive to deliver the best experience to our customers in future."

► The award was given to **TrawellTag Cover-More** and received by **Vipul Mehta**, Area Manager **Milan Patel**, Asst Vice president - West Zone and **Manish Seth**, Area Manager

Best Business Hotel

COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT AHMEDABAD

Gaurav Apte, General Manager, Courtyard by Marriott Ahmedabad, exclaims, "We want to thank the organisers, DDP Publication for coming to Ahmedabad and bestowing this prestigious award to us. To finally achieve the accreditation for such a special and important aspect of hotel life truly is very gratifying." Apte informs that since the inception of the hotel in 2010, this year has been the most rewarding for the property and they are looking forward to ending the year on a high with all stakeholders and customers equally happy.

► The award was given to **Courtyard by Marriott Ahmedabad** and received by **Gaurav Apte**, General Manager



Best Corporate Hotel

HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS AHMEDABAD ASHRAM ROAD

Rohan Choudhury, General Manager, Holiday Inn Express Ahmedabad Ashram Road, says, "Winning the India Travel Awards 2017 was indeed a delightful moment. This truly shows that 'Holiday Inn Express' as a brand overall caters to the best of the corporates across the world and this award is truly a recognition of the same. Our endeavour has always been to deliver our brand promise of providing a smart and hassle free stay to all our guests."

► The award was given to **Holiday Inn Express Ahmedabad Ashram Road** and received by **Manish Barot**, Assistant Director of Sales and **Anurag Mishra**, Senior Guest Service Leader

Hospitality Partner

CROWNE PLAZA AHMEDABAD CITY CENTRE

Sanjay Kaushik, General Manager, Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre, says, "It brought us great honour and pleasure to bring 'Maya' to the city of Ahmedabad, also the focus state of Gujarat. This will serve as a huge encouragement for all of us in the hospitality and the travel fraternity equally. Hosting this prestigious award, that too amidst a huge gathering of industry stalwarts and ministry officials has sent a very positive vibe in the market that such monumental events can be organised in Ahmedabad."

► The award was given to **Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre** and received by **Gayatri Bist**, Executive Assistant Manager



Premier Partner

MYSTIFLY CONSULTING INDIA

Mystifly is a global airfare consolidator with incorporation in USA, UK, Singapore, India, Brazil and Australia. It boasts of a supplier network spread across over 70 countries and has airfare inventory of more than 900 airlines. The company's flagship air ticketing platform – MyfareBox and technology variants are used in more than 60 countries. It is one of the biggest B2B global airfare consolidators that empowers travel business by providing travel technology solutions to tour operators, travel agents, online travel agents, corporate, hotels and travel management companies across the globe.

► The award was given to **Mystifly Consulting India**





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