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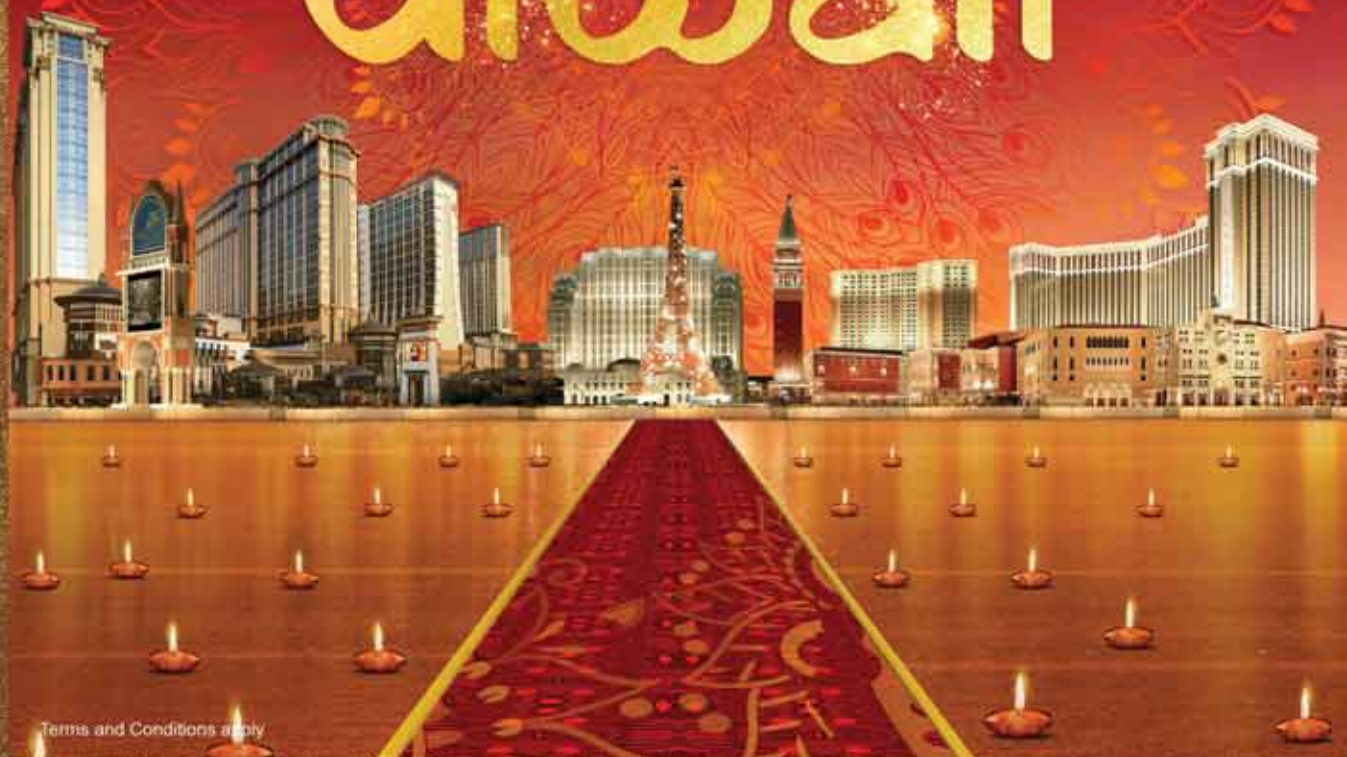


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Get set for Incredible India 2.0

Commemorating World Tourism Day, which also coincided with the National Tourism Awards 2015-2016, the Ministry of Tourism unveiled three big initiatives to promote India as a preferred destination for tourists around the world — Incredible India 2.0 campaign; 'Adopt A Heritage' project and the new Incredible India website.



NISHA VERMA

The National Tourism Awards 2015-16 ceremony held on September 27 was graced by President of India **Ram Nath Kovind**, who presented the awards to various segments of the travel, tourism and hospitality industry. The occasion saw the President launching three big initiatives of MOT, namely 'Incredible India 2.0 Campaign'; 'Adopt a Heritage' project and the new Incredible India website.

Welcoming the guests at the event was Minister of State (IC) for Tourism, **K.J. Alphons**, who praised the winners of the awards and asked them, as stakeholders of the industry to commit themselves to transform India into one of the most preferred destinations for travellers around the world. "India's Foreign Tourist Arrivals and Domestic Tourist visits are on a growth trajectory. India's ranking in the Travel and Tourism Competitive Index 2017 of World Economic Forum moved from 65th position to 52nd position in

2015 and now India's position has moved up by another 12 positions and it is ranked at 40th position. It is the destination that meets the needs of all travellers. Our collective goal is to develop the tourism sector in India in a sustainable and responsible manner," he said in his address.

Rashmi Verma, Secretary, Tourism, said that the National Tourism Award winners are very important stakeholders for them. When asked about how these winners are included in the ministry's decision making, she said, "We consult them at every stage and whenever we are making any changes in our guidelines or initiatives. All the awardees and their representatives come to attend meetings with MOT. Niti Aayog has also set up a working group on tourism to look at ways of promoting tourism on a faster track so that we are able to create more employment in our country and there also, members of the industry are part of the working group. We have had the first meeting of this work-



K.J. Alphons
Minister of State (IC) for Tourism
Government of India

ing group already." Speaking on the new projects, Verma said, "It was a very important event for us today. Not only was it the World Tourism Day, we launched three big initiatives that the MOT is taking for promotion of our country."

Incredible India 2.0

Verma said that the new campaign— Incredible India 2.0, is going to be largely different from the earlier campaign. "The earlier campaign was a little generic in nature and the same campaign was running throughout the world, whereas the new campaign



Rashmi Verma
Secretary, Ministry of Tourism
Government of India

will be country specific. For each country, depending on what kind of products they look for, we are getting product specific films made and we will be targeting the countries accordingly. We will be using these thematic films for targeting our earlier markets like USA and Europe, as well as emerging markets like China, etc.," Verma informed.

Incredible India website

"Our Prime Minister had desired last year for a dynamic website and based on that, we have taken this initiative to make it completely interactive

and personalised. It's a huge initiative and a lot of sourcing will be done through social media also. We will be connecting our website with the state websites, ASI, Ministry of Culture and some other stakeholders also. The website will be changing every second as we will be sourcing content throughout. We have done a pilot launch right now and we hope to have the full website launch in two months, when it will be made more user-friendly," she added, while talking about the new website.

Adopt a Heritage

Verma shared that the upkeep of the monuments has been a matter of concern for them for a long time "While heritage has been the biggest USP of India, we have not been able to showcase it properly because of lack of world class basic amenities in these monuments. A lot of effort has been made by ASI and other organisations, but we have not yet achieved what we had wanted. Thus, as the first initiative, we are offering cluster of monuments to the private

sector, public sector and individuals who can adopt them. They can become 'Monument Mitras' and be responsible for maintaining the cleanliness, basic amenities like toilets, drinking water, amenities for physically challenged etc." Verma informed.

Tourism Parv

She shared that the government is planning to handover certain monuments during the Tourism Parv, being celebrated from October 5-25, 2017. "The Tourism Parv will be celebrated throughout the country with the help of other stakeholders and other ministries. We have identified one iconic site in each state, where we will be having plethora of activities centred around that monument or that site and there will be workshops, sensitisation programmes and exhibition of handlooms & handicrafts. We want to make people understand how tourism can completely change the economy, and thus making them equal stakeholders in promotion of tourism," she informed.

'Leverage tourism potential of states'

Every corner of India has something unique that can be showcased to the world, asserts **Pronab Sarkar**, President, IATO. It only needs to be discovered and promoted.



HAZEL JAIN

Q IATO's next convention will be in Vizag. Is the association choosing states that have been India's best-kept secrets?

We received an invitation from Andhra Pradesh Tourism to host our next convention and we gladly accepted. We want to promote every

state of India because they all have potential for tourism. After the division, both Andhra Pradesh as well as Telangana are reviving tourism into their respective states with newer products. Andhra Pradesh is doing its best and they want us to take the lead and put a spotlight on the state, get our members to know their products and promote the same.

They are now getting active with the new government and their capital city of Amravati is also under making.

Q How was this year's convention?

It was altogether a successful convention. All the sessions were very interesting and revitalised our members, which is why we had a

full house till the end. They were also very interactive and people enjoyed it. Moreover, the co-operation extended by the Odisha Tourism Board was fantastic. Everyone including the Chief Minister, the Tourism Minister, Tourism Secretary and even the Governor attended our event. We also saw strong support from the Ministry of Tourism,

Government of India, with the new Tourism Minister himself attending our inauguration.

Q How does their presence help the association?

This served as a good encouragement to our members. Conventions are important because tourism then gets due recognition from the State and the Centre. Our voice is heard



Pronab Sarkar
President, Indian Association
of Tour Operators (IATO)

and the difficulties that we are facing get proper hearing and

Contd. on page 45 ▶

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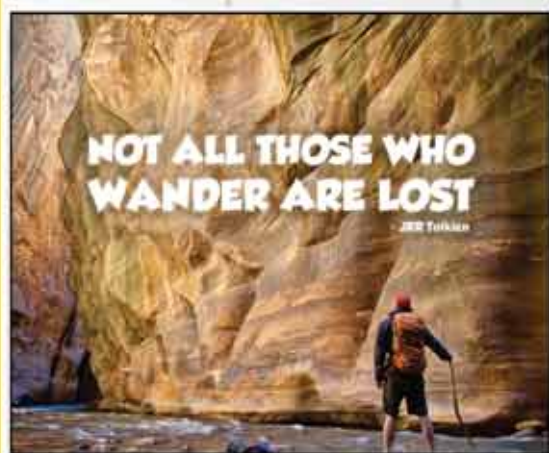
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India Travel Awards heads West

The 4th West India Travel Awards will be held on October 15, 2017, at Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre. The awards are a constant effort to honour stalwarts of the industry in every region of the country.

TT BUREAU

Known as India's first regional awards that honour stalwarts of the tourism industry, India Travel Awards will be travelling to Ahmedabad for the first time to host the fourth edition of the awards in the West.

Gunjan Sabikhi, Convener, India Travel Awards, informs that Ahmedabad has emerged as an important market for tourism in the last few years. "It is very heartening to see the increased interest from industry players in this market beyond the usual metros and thus, we chose to host the awards in Ahmedabad," says Sabikhi.

She asserts that India Travel Awards sets a company apart from its competitors and also pushes the



Gunjan Sabikhi
Convener
India Travel Awards



Sanjay Kaushik
General Manager, Crowne Plaza
Ahmedabad City Centre

awardees to the forefront. "It is very encouraging to see that every year, the number of nominations received for West India Travel Awards increases manifold, which proves that winning this award is very prestigious and it bestows immense credibility to the winning company or individual," she says. Sabikhi observes that being nomi-

nated or shortlisted for any category has proven to be helpful for the participants as it increases awareness about the brand or individual.

Sanjay Kaushik, General Manager, Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre, informs that their hotel is the only five-star deluxe property in Ahmedabad,

offering the largest room size in the city (35 sqm). It offers five meeting rooms that provide a total space of 8200 sqft. "We are very excited to host the prestigious India Travel Awards at Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre, happening for the first time in Ahmedabad. The entire team is looking forward to being a part of it. This award is one of its kind. Some giant players are associated with it and the stakeholders who have been instrumental in the growth of the economy are rewarded for their contribution in their segment."

Kaushik further adds that India is growing as it is receiving many international investors. Each year, new destinations are being added, which is encouraging tourism to the states and increasing their popularity.

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The domestic wave

Occupancies are getting higher by the day for budget hotels around the country. Even luxury brands are witnessing a demand within the country more than ever before. The ARR's are on a decline at many destinations in order to deal with competition around the country. Even homestays are finding a new found fervour with new age travellers, and are mushrooming in all the states and union territories. The domestic boom is here and it's here to stay. Be it the corporate, leisure or even the millennial segment, everyone is learning about domestic destinations and is ready to explore new places, cities and experiences within India. And they are all ready to shell out the money it needs. Indians have disposable incomes to travel. However, making sure that it is spent within the country is still a task for the government and the Ministry of Tourism to achieve. The demand is there, the government should now invest in developing destinations and experiences to cater to the domestic segment along with the inbound segment. It's high time that the industry realises the potential of the domestic market and caters to it with the same zeal.

Giving wings to fly

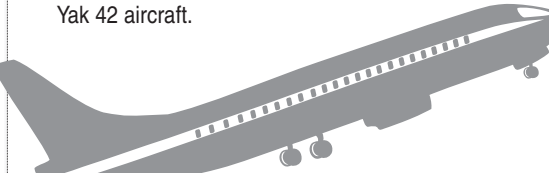
It's been over a year since the National Civil Aviation Policy was released with a promise to end all woes of the new airlines over the much-debated 5/20 rule. While MoCA did away with the five years operations limit before the airlines could start flying international, the ministry maintained that they should at least have 20 aircraft before plying on such routes. A lot of expectations were set on AirAsia India and Vistara initially and both the airlines showed interest in flying international as soon as possible. None of these airlines have announced an international route as yet, and they are apparently hastening the process of procuring new aircraft. We hope that they open new international routes at the earliest and offer greater connectivity to Indian travellers. On the other hand, India is seeing an unprecedented growth in terms of domestic travel, aided by many Low Cost Carriers connecting different parts of the country. In such a scenario, is it wrong for some airlines to only focus on serving the domestic market, especially when big airports are only getting crowded?

TRAVTALK brings to you the news and events that made headlines 25 years ago and are relevant even today. From the Sept/Oct issue of 1992:

Private Airlines

More the merrier

- In the year 1992, three new domestic airlines were planning to start operations.
- Citylink, a Delhi based airline was to commence operations on October 19, 1992, and was planning to operate on the Delhi-Calcutta-Port Blair sector.
- Raj Aviation, a subsidiary of Shree Raj Tours and Travels was also set to enter the market by end of 1992. They were planning to fly to Mumbai, Kolkata, Madras and Lucknow with three Russian Yak 42 aircraft.



From the archives



Then (1992)

Kamal Hingorani
District Sales Manager
Kuwait Airways

In 1992, Kamal Hingorani moved to Kuwait Airways as District Sales Manager. Today, he is the Senior Vice President & Head Inflight Services and Customer Experience at SpiceJet. An aviation veteran, he has witnessed the many facets of the dynamic aviation industry in the last 25 years.



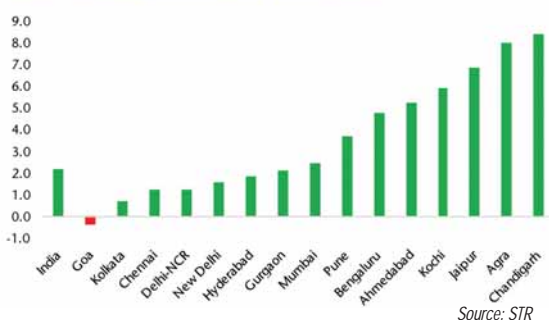
Now (2017)

Kamal Hingorani
Senior Vice President & Head
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ADR decline in 6 of top 15 destinations

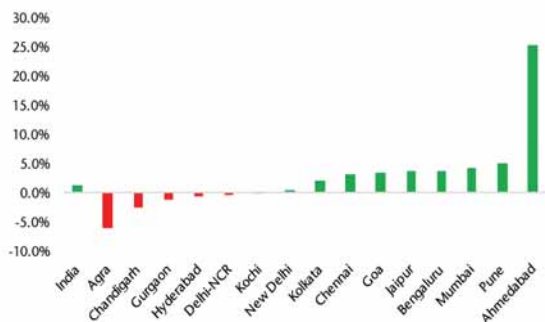
According to a recent study, RevPAR growth across 15 main markets in India was recording from +1.3% for Delhi NCR upto +36.6% for Ahmedabad. However, in terms of ADR, six out of the top 15 markets suffered y-o-y decline.

ADR - % change- H1 2017 vs H1 2016



	H12017	H12016	H12015
Occupancy	65.8%	63.6%	61.4%
ADR	`5,817	`5,748	`5,654
RevPAR	`3,826	`3,658	`3,740

Occupancy change (basis points) H1 2017 vs H1 2016



In H1 2015, only two markets had occupancy over 70 per cent; in H1 2017 this increased to four markets, as Bengaluru and Kolkata moved up to join Mumbai and Goa; in H1 2015 one market was below 50% and six markets in the 50-60 per cent range; in H1-17, none of the markets were below 60 per cent - that is a very heartening change. Looking at ADR performance, only Mumbai and Goa were at or about the 8k level. The next highest was New Delhi, with a 20 per cent gap compared to Mumbai or Goa.

Source: Hotel Market Review (India) - H1 2017

Karnataka showcases its 'wild' side

Gaurav Gupta, Principal Secretary, Department of Information Technology, Biotechnology and Science & Technology and Tourism, Government of Karnataka, talks about initiatives taken to promote tourism in the state.



KANCHAN NATH

QHow is the new Karnataka Tourism Policy 2015-20 different from the 2009-14 policy?

Karnataka's Department of Tourism has always been endeavouring to make Karnataka among the best and must-visit tourist destinations in India. Karnataka Tourism is actively implementing policies, infrastructure development initiatives and capacity building strategies to achieve this objective. It is with this view that Karnataka Tourism has reworked its Tourism Policy 2009-14 to give a new shape to the industry. The policy focuses on cus-

particularly for rural tourism development

- ❖ Much focus has been put on sustainable development of tourist sites and promoting sustainable growth
- ❖ Introduction of small aircraft and airlines to make air service more people friendly.

QKarnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC) has upped its game with some new collaborations. Please elaborate.

The Department of Tourism and Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation have been offering customised local sightseeing trips in and around Bengaluru to popular pre-defined destinations.

KSTDC, for the first time, has taken the initiative to run city tours on pilot basis, by introducing 'Bengaluru Detours' at affordable rates, in association with OLA cabs. The available choice of vehicles through OLA cabs ranges from normal cars and sedans to SUVs and MUVs. There has been fairly positive response from the general public for 'Bengaluru Detours'.

QWhat are the main marketing initiatives undertaken by Karnataka Tourism to increase tourist footfalls in the current year?

The Department of Tourism has adopted a multi-pronged strategy to promote Karnataka. This includes organising trade fairs, district tourism festivals, lake festivals, Bengaluru International Arts Festival, etc. Karnataka

Tourism has launched co-branding initiatives with RCB and Bengaluru Football Club to promote Karnataka tourism. This is apart from the promotional initiatives undertaken by DoT in international travel events such as WTM, ITB Berlin, etc.

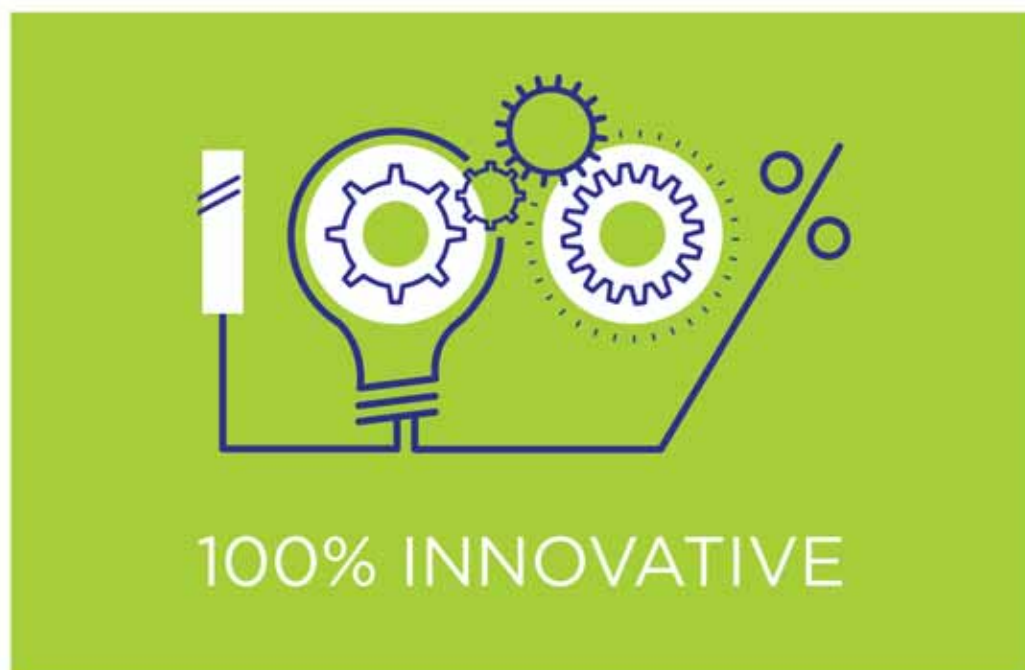
Karnataka Tourism has declared 2017 as the 'Year of Contd. on page 16 ▶



Gaurav Gupta
Principal Secretary, Department of Information Technology, Biotechnology and Science & Technology and Tourism, Government of Karnataka

tomers centricity, branding, source marketing, capacity building and training, policy development, fostering PPP ventures, etc. Further, as an extension of the Tourism Policy 2009-14, Karnataka Tourism formulated the Tourism Policy 2015-2020. The key differences between the two versions are given below:

- ❖ Tourism policy of 2009-14 was tourist-focused, but the tourism policy 2015-2020 is investment centric and more focus is on inclusive development by considering all the stakeholders associated with Karnataka Tourism
- ❖ Much focus was given to adopt a collaborative regional development approach. More private investments are encouraged by providing various subsidies and concessions. The policy also aims at streamlining processes by establishing tourism infrastructure to carry out hassle-free tourism services.
- ❖ As a part of responsible tourism, more focus has been given towards corporate investments on tourism projects,



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Here's why Indian agents love Holland

With a predicted growth of 15 per cent from Indian arrivals by the end of 2017, Holland has come a long way from being an option to Indians looking for a lesser travelled destination to being the destination of choice now. But what is it that makes the destination a must have on the itineraries of the modern Indian traveller? TRAVTALK finds out from travel experts.

NIKHIL ANAND

“Holland has been in the itineraries for a very long time now with the Indian traveller increasingly asking for it on their visits to Europe. Delhi and Amsterdam are already connected with a direct flight and with the connectivity options increasing rapidly between the two nations, thanks to the soon to be added new flights and frequencies by KLM and Jet Airways, the number of Indians visiting Holland is definitely going to see a huge surge in the coming times. Another positive sign for the destination is the regular arrival of the tourism boards and associations which helps in spreading awareness and interest among the Indian travel trade.”



Guldeep Singh Sahni
India Travel Award winner and President, Outbound Tour Operators Association of India

“Holland is an extremely popular destination which is constantly drawing a lot of attention from both the Indian travel trade and also the Indian traveller. In my opinion, it is a relatively easy destination to sell owing to its unparalleled natural beauty and no dearth of offerings for its visitors. Most people refer to the destination as the 'kingdom of windmills and tulips' but that is just among a few facets that add to Holland's charm and help lure tourists. For us, the destination is selling fast and selling good and the constant positive feedback we are keep getting from our clients affirms our faith in the destination and its potential.”



Riaz Munshi
Vice President, Outbound Tour Operators Association of India

“We've been sending a lot of tourists to Holland from the FITs, luxury segment and MICE groups. We've received very positive feedback from all the travellers. Amongst the favourites are of-course the beautiful canal city of Amsterdam, Madurodam – which is basically miniature Holland and a must visit attraction, Keukenhof Garden, which is an all-time favourite of Indian travellers. We've seen an increasing trend in people travelling to Belgium and other parts of Germany and adding Holland to their itineraries. Holland, as a destination, is fast become a part of most of our itineraries nowadays with business growing rapidly each year.”



Sanjay Bhatt
Managing Partner Quintessential Vacations

“An itinerary to Europe, especially to Germany, these days seems incomplete without the addition of Holland. The scenic beauty that spreads across the country, some of the world acclaimed canals, the well renowned and mesmerising flower gardens, especially tulip gardens, Madurodam - which is a huge tourist attraction, the very popular night-life and some of the finest cheese in the world, there is so much going for the destination. Hence, I do not find it surprising that Holland has infiltrated the hearts and itineraries of so many Indians already and I am sure it will continue to do so and for a long time.”



Jatinder Singh Bhatia
Managing Partner Travel Experts

“Holland is hands down one of the most unique destinations and as such one that we can easily sell to our clients. For example, in Amsterdam, if you go to Dam Square, in a very small area, you will find an array of things to do from shopping, to dining and entertainment which goes to show how easily varied interests get integrated there. Holland on its own, with its beautiful flower gardens, windmills and eccentric small towns, is a great place especially for corporate incentives and holidays. In fact we are doing a couple of corporate incentive tours in November this year to Amsterdam, Netherlands and Germany combined.”



Shekhar Sharma
Director- MICE & Holidays, Ezee Fly Solutions

“Holland is currently one of the bestselling destinations for Europe wherein every year we do two or three groups atleast. Holland definitely stands out from the rest of the European cities and essentially thrives on its own beauty and offerings. The Indian traveller gets great value for money here, be it in the form of the endless stretch of white beaches, the birdlife, the charm of the small towns and villages and some of the most gorgeous flower gardens. From exploring cities on bike to enjoying fabulous food and enjoying the most picturesque landscapes, there is so much on offer when our customers visit Holland.”



Amit Chopra
Assistant Manager – MICE Operations, Blue Moon Travels

Lords' 2nd offering in Bengaluru: Lords Eco Inn Mysuru Road

■ Mid-market hospitality chain, Lords Hotels & Resorts has announced the launch of its 27th hotel property in Bengaluru. Located on Mysuru Road, the 53-room property is branded under Lords Eco Inn and is Lords Hotels & Resorts' second property in the metropolis. The hotel is scheduled to commence operations shortly. The launch of this

property brings the hotel chain's target of expanding to 40 properties by 2020. The hotel chain has announced its ambition to increase presence in the southern states of India and has hinted at upcoming projects in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh besides Karnataka. “Lords Eco Inn Mysuru Road will be our second hotel

in Bengaluru and the third in the southern region. Over the years we have steadily broadened our product portfolio in terms of the segments in which the properties operate and also through the destinations at which they are present. We are pleased to announce the launch of Lords Eco Inn Mysuru Road and are positive that tourists will appreciate the availability of budget

friendly accommodations in one of India's busiest cities,” says **P.R. Bansal**, Managing Director, Lords Hotels & Resorts. Lords Eco Inn Mysuru Road, formerly Metro View Inn, is located at a distance of just 500 meters from the Mysuru Road metro station and is 5 km away from the City railway station.

“This is an exciting opportunity for us and we are confident about the kinds of value add which Lords Hotels & Resorts can bring in. Lords Eco Inn Mysuru Road is only the beginning and we look forward to taking this partnership ahead with a few of our other hotels too,” says **T.A. Nagaraj**, Partner of the owning company.

“We are aiming at establishing 40 hotel properties by the year 2020 and believe that we are on the right track to accomplish this target. We want expand our operations in the South and East. We wish to make Lords Hotels & Resorts the most recognized and trusted hospitality chain in the world,” concludes Bansal.

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Tech to improve cost effectiveness

Caper Travel Company is investing in developing travel technology and automising packaged tours to increase efficiency of services offered to its clients. **Bharat Bhushan Atree**, Managing Director, Caper Travel Company, elaborates on the impact of increasing use of technology in travel.



TT BUREAU

QHow has business fared for you till now?

There was an apprehension regarding an overall growth in the tourism sector ever since the season began this year. Little was anticipated, but in the first quarter of 2017, we achieved substantial growth and the summer season saw an admirable interest among Spanish tourists to India. The feedback that we received for the initiatives we launched this year has been very encouraging and favourable. This has also been one of the rationales contributing to our significant growth, quarter by quarter this year, as compared to that in 2016. The responses from new markets have started trickling in and are gradually multiplying. Tours to Sri Lanka have also responded very well.

QWhat are your expectations from the remainder of the year?

Our winter season is about to kick-off and we are

expecting a favourable demand this year in the charter segment along with travel for Ayurveda and wellness. Some of the travellers today want to book and travel immediately, leaving a small window between booking date and travel date. With reservations pouring in for the past couple of months, the last quarter looks promising as well. The only deterrent to the industry currently is GST, which has elevated the supply cost, in turn magnifying the eventual pricing of travel.

QWhich segment of travel do you see growing in 2018?

The Caper Group has always led the way in tours from many countries to India. Our various fixed departure group tour series and travel for Ayurveda have all done exceedingly well. The main reasons that have attributed to this are the stabilisation of currency after demonetisation, relative steadfastness in the political sphere



“We are geared up and awaiting a splendid season. We are also investing heavily on development of travel technology and automatising of package tours. With this process, our sales and operation will increase manifold and efficiency will ease in, managing the entire process from booking until the departure of tourists from the country.”

Bharat Bhushan Atree

Managing Director, Caper Travel Company

and inclusion of new ventures in South America in our core markets. Nepal has reopened after a devastating earthquake and there is a keen interest for Sri Lanka as well from international clients. It is difficult to say which segment will grow in the coming year as the market is ever changing and so are the dynamics. Inbound travellers look forward to packages combining India and neighbouring countries while the home market is always expanding as people look to travel to new and unique destinations.

QPlease share your growth plans for 2018 and details of upcoming products.

We have two fundamental plans— to explore and infiltrate new markets and secondly, expand our product line for our existing market; this works well with us. We are geared up and awaiting a splendid season. We are also investing heavily on development of travel technology and automatising of package tours. With this process, our sales and operation will in-

crease manifold and efficiency will ease in, managing the entire process from booking until the departure of tourists from the country.

Technology can greatly expand the volume of business and the element of human error is reduced. In today's time, it is an unavoidable necessity to be tech savvy as it has a huge impact on business. Thus, we need to adapt to the changes to keep ourselves afloat and anchored.

QApart from the usual inbound tourism products, which destinations do you think the industry should focus on to grow inbound?

India has a stunning terrain, beautiful landscapes, varied cultures and delicious cuisines. We need to promote off-roading, which is participative, and experiential travel, which is niche but getting popular. There are many circuits and routes less travelled. It can be the rugged Himalayas, mysterious wildlife trails, and mystic cultural circuits. Caper has expertise and experience of operating such tours. We operate biking tours including Harley Davidson Club in eastern Konkon region, and off-roading in Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh. A group of motor enthusiasts from Malaysia shipped their SUVs to Chennai and had travelled northwards and explored eastern India, Bhutan, Nepal, China, and Thailand. This is quite non-touristic and adventurous. ↓

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Jet Airways to fly Bengaluru-Amsterdam from October 29

■ After offering direct daily flights from Delhi and Mumbai to Amsterdam since last year, Jet Airways is all set to launch a new connection from Bengaluru to Amsterdam. **Ragini Chopra**, VP-Corporate Affairs and Public Relations, said, "Jet Airways will start its third daily flight from Bengaluru to Amsterdam starting October 29, 2017."

She added that the new flight is going to be really beneficial for them. "There is a huge business and leisure community in South India, based around Bengaluru. We connect extremely well to Southern destinations from Bengaluru. We are working in a codeshare partnership on these flights with KLM."

Talking about their new gateway in Amsterdam, she said, "We started with an Airbus 330 operation and have now moved it to Boeing 777 operation with a first class, premier class, business class and economy class configuration. From Schiphol we connect to over 42 destinations in Europe and more than 34 destinations in North America with codeshare partners including KLM Royal Dutch Airlines as well as Delta Air Lines."

IndiGo takes UDAN to Tier-II & III cities

Low-cost airline IndiGo is working towards expanding its network in and outside India, while contributing to the community through its various CSR activities.



For IndiGo, 2017 has been a year of growth and expansion, says **Sanjay Kumar**, Chief Commercial Officer, IndiGo. "With a growing demand for low-cost air travel, IndiGo continues to translate various opportunities, from enhancing the customer experience to adding capacity and destinations across its route network. We have already started our operations to five new destinations namely, Sharjah, Amritsar, Madurai, Doha and Mangaluru and will be starting operations to Dhaka soon. Also, in line with the UDAN scheme, IndiGo will soon embark on a journey to build a nationwide regional network and connect cities that have not benefitted from the growth in Indian aviation. In 2017 and the years to come, IndiGo will continue to expand to high-demand cities between India and overseas to provide convenient travel options for business and leisure travellers," he adds.

With the government's UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) scheme, IndiGo is optimistic of growing its network further. "We do see a tremendous amount of growth opportunity in Tier-II and III cities and we think that there are many such opportunities to deploy these planes profitably," shares Kumar.

IndiGo was one of the first airlines to put a bid for purchasing the national carrier Air India, which is currently considered for disinvestment by the government. In a call with their analyst and promoters, IndiGo has already said that the international operations of Air India would give a much-needed boost to the airline, which majorly operates in the domestic market.

While Kumar did not speak on the Air India deal, he said that they recorded growth last year as well and look at the future with hope. "The year 2016 was another year of growth for IndiGo as we completed 10 years of operations. Having flown over



Sanjay Kumar
Chief Commercial Officer
IndiGo

We have already started operations to five new destinations namely, Sharjah, Amritsar, Madurai, Doha and Mangaluru and will be starting operations to Dhaka soon

153 million passengers till December, IndiGo has maintained a consistent growth trajectory in the Indian mar-

ket since its inception and 2016 saw various opportunities that the airline translated from enhancing the customer experience to adding capacity to meet the growing demands and also creating employment opportunities. From a fleet size of 124 aircrafts in December 2016, 41 destinations and 883 daily flights, the airline today has 139 Airbus A320 aircrafts, over 900 daily flights, 46 destinations across India and abroad, and has carried over 200 million passengers till date, resonating with IndiGo's phenomenal growth in the Indian skies. In 2016-17, we have seen a total of seven new destinations (Port Blair, Dehradun, Sharjah, Amritsar, Madurai, Doha and Mangaluru)."

For fleet addition, in the quarter ending June 30, 2017, IndiGo signed a term sheet with Avions de Transport Regional G.I.E. (ATR) for the purchase of 50 ATR 72-600 aircrafts with the flexibility to reduce the number of aircraft deliveries based on certain conditions, reveals

Kumar. "This term sheet is subject to reaching a mutually satisfactory final purchase agreement with ATR and the engine manufacturer," he adds.

Apart from that, IndiGo is making sure to give towards the community as well. "IndiGo is supporting a nationwide 'Rally for Rivers' awareness campaign that started on September 1, 2017. 'Rally for Rivers' or 'Nadi Abhiyaan' is a nationwide awareness campaign by Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev and Isha Foundation. From September 15, the airline promoted specially curated content through e-tickets and water cups on board across its network, till the end of September. This makes IndiGo the first Indian carrier to join the movement, in support to revive the dying rivers of the country."

Fact File

IndiGo had flown 153 million passengers in December last year

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ARR surge: Silver lining for hoteliers

With the increasing foothold of mid-market segment hotel brands, both international and domestic, the dynamics of the hospitality market in India have changed. One such change is price, especially with India being a price-sensitive market. Hoteliers tell TRAVTALK about how this change affects Average Room Rates (ARRs) or Average Daily Rates (ADRs).

 NISHA VERMA



E. M. Najeeb
Chairman & Managing Director,
Air Travel Enterprises Group
of Companies (ATE) and India
Travel Award winner

“As economic growth is taking place in the country, the hospitality industry will also have more business and better profitability. I am not of the opinion that the ARR of hotels in India are on a decline. With regard to tourist destinations, as the tourist inflow increases, the demand for hotel rooms also increases during seasons and the rooms are sold at right prices. In a nutshell, it's good that the hospitality sector is looking up in business and profitability.”



Alok Verma
Chief Executive Officer
Cygnett Hotels & Resort

“The ARR is actually increasing in the country. This change is mainly visible in the budget segment in the hospitality industry. In my opinion, there has been a healthy 5-10 per cent increase in the ARR of hotels that come under the mid-market segment. This rise is driven by a surging domestic travel demand. However, the acute shortage of skilled workforce in the hospitality space is making it difficult for players to scale quickly.”



Dhananjay Kumar
General Manager
The Suryaa New Delhi

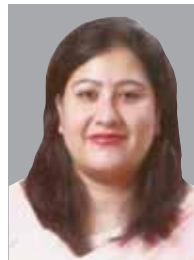
“ADR is on a decline because of high supply of rooms in major cities. But it is increased due to overall increase in inbound and domestic travellers. However, smaller cities have seen an increase in ADR. Few hotels are dropping rates just to fill their hotels and ultimately the whole industry is suffering due to rate disparity. This needs to be corrected as it's not viable to run bigger hotels on lower ADRs as operational costs are way too high.”

“In my opinion, every city has a different dynamic and the city ARR does impact ADR of the hotel. However, the cost of operations also plays a major role in ascertaining the price. The team here is presently engaged in promoting Rameswaram, and since it's the first branded hotel in the city, the cost of operating a full-fledged hotel on an island like Rameswaram is very high. We have managed to sell the property at a decent ARR so far, and we are hopeful that it will only increase.”



Deepak Sharma
Director of Sales
Hyatt Place Rameswaram

“The recently introduced GST has impacted the ARR in a big way. Hotels have had to readjust their tariff to fit into the right tax bracket. Higher taxes translate into higher cost for guests, which in turn could impact the value they derive from a stay. Besides this, the industry today has become saturated with a large number of players operating in the same market. This has led to increased competition. However, some hotels have also chosen a different route to increase their services and quality to match their existing ARR.”



Mayuri Ghosh
General Manager, Sales,
Lords Hotels & Resorts

“In the last decade or so, upscale and luxury properties in the leisure space have seen a strong demand of hotels, resorts and even luxury camps, which are accessible from metropolitan cities. This has resulted in ARR being on the rise, owing to limited supply. Even MICE business has started to move strongly due to ticking corporate and business activities across the country. This has led the ARR to increase as it's a growing segment with a huge demand.”



Vibhas Prasad
Director
Leisure Hotels



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With Delhi as hub, **AI** to go places

Air India has commenced flights between New Delhi and Copenhagen, its 14th destination in Europe after Vienna, Madrid and Stockholm. Recently-appointed Chairman and MD of Air India, **Rajiv Bansal**, tells TRAVTALK about the airline's new international routes and how they're rationalising routes with Alliance Air and Air India Express for the domestic market.



SEEMA DATT FROM COPENHAGEN

Q Please tell us about the new flight.

Copenhagen is Air India's 14th destination in Europe. We are elated about expanding our reach to Europe, having recently added Vienna, Madrid, Stockholm and now Copenhagen. We are looking forward to good passenger load and more Europeans coming to India. The winter season and the festival season are coming up, so we hope to get good passenger loads.

Q How have the flights to traditional sectors like Rome and Paris fared?

We have been operating in traditional sectors like London, Frankfurt and Paris and we've got very good loads on them. The new sectors are picking up and most of these sectors have flights three days a week and four days a week. The sectors take time

to pick up; we have up to 2/3rd occupancy from 60 per cent to 70 per cent load. We've got the best class aircraft—the 787 Dreamliner—and very good in-flight services. We are now focusing on on-time performance.

Q Are you going to make it a daily flight service to this sector?

Not as yet. We will continue with three days and then watch for passenger load. We have very good cargo loads, incidentally. The greatness about Air India is that we operate on the Hub and Spoke model and don't operate point-to-point. It's not about carrying passengers between Copenhagen and New Delhi, it's about carrying passengers between India and Europe so Delhi is a staging point for passengers to come in and go to various destinations in India. Similarly, Copenhagen will be a



“We are looking at making Delhi as an international hub so that European passengers who want to go to Singapore, Bangkok, or Australia can use our services and go onward.”

Rajiv Bansal
Chairman and MD
Air India

staging point to Scandinavia and northern Europe.

Q Please tell us how this new flight is going to benefit travellers between both countries.

We bring in passengers from smaller towns into the six metros and take them from one metro to another and also take them internationally. There is no other airline which can compete with us in this space, neither a domestic carrier nor an international carrier, because the value proposition we offer

in terms of network, nobody can offer. That's why we have ordered this large fleet of Boeing 787 aircrafts and one more is expected in about six weeks from now. That is why we are increasing our impact and footprint in Europe. We have added 11 destinations and will add one or two more so we are looking at European market as a whole. We are looking at making Delhi as an international hub so that European passengers who want to go to Singapore, Bangkok or Australia can use our services.

Q What kind of passenger load factor are you expecting on the new flight?

In Europe, we have traditionally been operating to London, Frankfurt and Paris, and we have good passenger load factor on these sectors. We have low load factors of around 65 to 70 per cent on the new sectors. We would like to bring them up to 80 per cent. That's the load we're looking at for the summer season. We see advance bookings pick up.

Q Which domestic routes will you be starting next?

We are rationalising our routes with Alliance Air and Air India Express. Over the last 10 days, we have had three rounds of meetings and we are trying to see where we can complement each other and definitely not compete with each other. Between Air India and Air India Express, we are trying to tweak our frequencies as well as our timings so that we don't fly to the same destinations around the same time. Similarly, on short haul routes, I want to vacate space for Alliance Air because in less than an hour's flying time it doesn't make sense for my Airbus series to fly whereas Alliance Air Turbo Prop would be able to make money so we are conceding space to them and with whatever capacity will be available, we will focus on the metros. ↓



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Small airports, heliports on MoCA radar

ASSOCHAM's 10th International Civil Aviation, Cargo & Tourism conference, held in New Delhi, identified key issues of the industry, be it, impact of GST, opportunities and challenges with UDAN scheme 2017 and roadmap to the development of airports.

KALPANA LOHUMI

The event was graced by the presence of **Ashok Gajapati Raju Pusapati**, Union Minister of Civil Aviation, Government of India; **Jayant Sinha**, Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Government of India and the veterans of the industry. "The Civil Aviation Ministry is working on a four-pronged strategy to enhance capacity of airports across India. We have been spending a lot of time thinking and planning about what we should do about airport capacity; we are working on four different aspects," Sinha informed during the inauguration of ASSOCHAM's civil aviation conference.

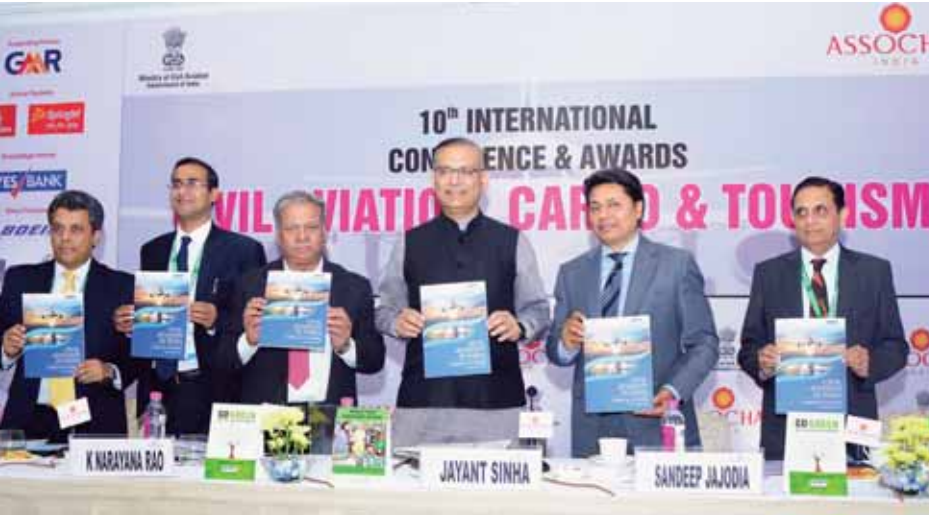
The Union Minister said that while the Civil Aviation Ministry is simultaneously working on enhancing capacity at major airport hubs of Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai, it is also working on developing new greenfield and brown-field airports and smaller airports in Tier-III and IV cities.

Sinha shared, "We are significantly adding green-field capacity and examining brownfield PPP (public private partnership) models for mid-sized airports and we are also looking at cost-effective ways of commissioning and operating smaller Tier-III and IV heliports." He also said that the second edition of UDAN scheme will help India's civil aviation sector sustain the current 15-20 per cent growth along with various supportive policy measures. At least 31 new airports have been added to the aviation network under this scheme, while in contrast, post-independence only 70 airports had been added to the aviation network.

Vivek Gour, Managing Director & CEO, Air Works India, said, "The National Civil Aviation Policy and

consequences of GST have removed all taxation hurdles. For the first time, in the next 10 years, we are looking at investing in our own country in a major way rather than in foreign countries. This tax regime will lead growth in MRO industry in the coun-

try, which is also a very high employment generator. However, what is also required for growth is improvement in the speed with which our customs works. The customs department must clear goods in hours, not in days."





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Looking Inward

For the first time, in the next decade, MoCA is looking at investing in a major way within India rather than in foreign countries

This tax regime will lead growth in MRO industry in the country, which is also a very high employment generator

Focus on wildlife and ecotourism

► Contd. from page 7

the Wild'. The objective is not to restrict tourism to wildlife alone, but also to promote the wild side of Karnataka with its adventure activities. The state has been focusing more on adventure tourism such as aero sports, skydiving in Mysuru, motorcycle tourism in Hampi, scuba festival at Nethrani Island, surfing festival at Mangaluru, etc. For the promotion of adventure tourism, DoT has joined hands with Department of Sports & Youth Affairs and General Thimmayya National Academy of Adventure Karnataka for promoting rock climbing, trekking, mountaineering, mountain biking, kayaking, rafting, parasailing and paragliding. In addition, DoT has also rolled out social media campaigns to promote Karnataka Tourism.

Government of Karnataka has established the Karnataka Ecotourism Development Board to create awareness about wildlife and promote eco-tourism. Along with the Ecotourism Board and Jungle Lodges and Resorts, eco-tourism zones are being identified with a chain of nature camps and eco-

trails to provide the best experience of the wild.

Q*Tell us about the growth in tourist footfalls to the state. What are your tourism targets for 2018?*

We have aggressive targets for 2018. As per the 2015 data released by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, Karnataka stands at the ninth position in terms of foreign footfalls and fourth in terms of domestic footfalls among other states in India. We are aiming at being among the top three in domestic footfalls and the top five in foreign footfalls by 2018.

Q*Kindly throw light on your recent initiatives and future plans to augment the tourist infrastructure in the state.*

Karnataka Tourism has embarked on destination development across 20 destinations in the state. Government of Karnataka, in its 2017-18 budget, has allocated ₹385 crore, which covers integrated development of heritage tourism infrastructure in the destinations, development of roads connecting to World Heritage sites and other important destinations.

Zip the world's longest line in RAK

Ras Al Khaimah will launch the world's longest zip line in December, accompanied by an Observation Deck that will offer a grand view of the Persian Gulf. **Shaji Thomas**, Director-Destination Tourism Development, Ras Al Khaimah, discusses future plans for the destination.



ANKITA SAXENA

Q*What can we look forward to in RAK?*

Ras Al Khaimah (RAK), as a destination, is a striking contrast to Dubai. Traditionally, RAK was always a beach destination. Our USP is the cultural history of 7,000 years, the 64-km pristine coastline and our unique asset - Jebel Jais Mountain. Jebel Jais, at 1934 m, is the highest peak in the UAE that lends itself to experiential travel and most of our activities are centred around this asset. Last year in November, we opened Via Ferrata, an iron path which is a guided climbing trail on the mountain and three zip lines at 50 m, 60 m and 300 m. Via Ferrata could accommodate 16 travellers a day and it was a resounding success with 86 per cent occupancy, so much so that we have expanded this facility and will be reopening it in October this year to accommodate 100 travellers

every day. We will very soon be opening an Observation Deck at 1300m, which could be one of the highest observation decks in the region. This will be an activity centre and will offer a breathtaking view of the Persian Gulf. In December, we will be opening the world's longest zip line at 1800m with which we will enter the Guinness Book of World Records. Currently, the longest zip line is in Puerto Rico, which allows zip lining over a distance of 2.2 km but our zip line will allow zip lining over a distance of 28 soccer fields. By the end of 2018, we plan to have 10 such zip lines and travellers will be able to enjoy this activity 24 hours a day.

Q*Please share insights into the India market.*

India is our fourth largest international market preceded by Germany, UK and Russia. Last year, we received 37,000 Indian arrivals to RAK and we are sure



Shaji Thomas
Director-Destination Tourism
Development, Ras Al Khaimah

Our short-term strategy is to reach one million tourists by 2018 in which India will play a significant role

that this year, looking at the phenomenal growth, we will surpass this figure and India will cross the 40,000 mark. Earlier, Indians used to stay

1.9 nights in RAK, which has now increased to 2.25 nights. The discerning Indian traveller is our rightful audience. In 2015, we became a popular destination for boutique Indian weddings. We started with four weddings in 2015, which increased to seven in 2016 and in 2017 we will be hosting 17 weddings in RAK.

Q*What is RAK's growth strategy?*

Our India growth strategy is gradual. Currently, we have 5,400 rooms and the most ambient time to travel to RAK is from October-May. Our growth strategy and inventory expansion plans are interdependent. Thus, our short-term strategy is to reach a million tourists by 2018 in which India will play a very significant role and will continue to be the fourth largest market contributor to this growth. However, we want to focus on Indian boutique weddings, honeymoon travel and experiential travellers from India.

Diwali fireworks at Andhra

Andhra Pradesh tourism department has launched a new campaign that centres around festivals celebrated in the state and is targeted at the domestic markets from nearby states.



TT BUREAU

After running two destination-based campaigns - 'Let's Vizag' and 'GoKona-seema' - to attract the domestic market to these cities, the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC) has launched another one that clearly focuses on attracting the Diwali and Durga Puja market.



Himanshu Shukla
Managing Director
APTDC, Government of Andhra Pradesh

There is a strong partnership between the govt. and the private sector in AP. We have tied up with hotels and 17 tour operators in Vizag for this

This shows our commitment towards marketing and promoting our destinations."

Vizag has recently been chosen as the venue for IATO's 34th Annual Convention. Speaking about this, Shukla

adds, "There is a strong partnership between the government and the private sector in Andhra Pradesh. We have tied up with hotels and 17 tour operators in Vizag for this. This will be a joint effort of the tourism department, the hotels, and the tour operators. We have come forward with many packages for this period that the trade will be selling which will be a one-stop solution."

The tour packages are categorised under three, four and five-stars and have been designed for a wide range of traveller segments. Shukla added that the tourism board will also start organising familiarisation trips for travel agents from other states.

IATO Vizag-bound

- ➔ The 34th IATO Convention will be held in Vizag
- ➔ APTDC has promised to give away free tickets for Tirupati to interested IATO members during this time
- ➔ As many as 20 IATO members will be offered a Fam trip in Andhra Pradesh.



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1 lakh Indians by 2019

The Czech Republic's newly-opened tourism office in India, represented by VFS Global, plans to strike all the usual chords to make headway into the Indian travel trade.



The European nation of the Czech Republic that is bordered by Germany, Austria, Slovakia and Poland, has made its presence felt in the India market through its new tourism office. Inaugurated in mid-September 2017, the Czech Tourism India office is in partnership with VFS Global, which is also the agency that processes its visas through 16 VACs. It will be led by Arzan Khambatta, Head, Czech Tourist Authority – Czech Tourism India.

Present at the opening was **Monika Palatkova**, Managing Director, Czech Tourism Board, who said, "I really believe in the India market and its potential. We have seen Indian arrival figures to our country almost triple in the last five years. In 2016 alone, more than 66,000 Indian tourists visited us and we hope to increase this number to 100,000 by 2019." The arrival figure does not include VFR and Airbnb customers.



Monika Palatkova
Managing Director
Czech Tourism Board

We have seen Indian arrivals to our country almost triple in the last five years. We hope to increase this number to 100,000 by 2019

The tourism board has already initiated a three-city roadshow – New Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai – which concluded in mid-September 2017. The delegation consisted of 10 sellers from the country, including Prague Airport, who

met the trade in these cities. Speaking about the offerings of Czech Republic, she said that apart from its cultural heritage, beautiful architecture and nature, it is also very affordable. "Moreover, it was ranked as the sixth safest country in the world in the Global Peace Index. Currently, the average length of stay is around 3.5 days but we want to increase this to five to seven days," she said.

Speaking about various activities the India office will conduct, she listed online and offline training for agents, familiarisation trips, roadshows, joint campaigns, as well as participating in trade shows in India. Palatkova added, "We are in discussion with some airlines for starting direct flights between the two countries. The Indian travel trade has shown interest in Czech Republic, not just Prague but also other places like South and West Bohemia. Next year, we will reach out to other cities of Ahmedabad and Kolkata, followed by Chennai and Hyderabad in 2019."

Indonesia conducts sales mission in 5 Indian cities



Realising the importance of the Indian market for Indonesian tourism and by looking at the ever-increasing number of Indian tourists to Indonesia, the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia continued to promote Indonesian tourism in the form of business meetings between Indonesian sellers and Indian buyers. The five-city Sales Mission started with Ahmedabad on August 1, Pune on August 3, Bengaluru on August 7, Coimbatore on August 9 and Chandigarh on August 11. The latest data from January to May 2017 shows that there were 183,558 Indian visits to Indonesia, which is an amazing increase of 20.72 per cent as compared to the same period from last year.

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India in top 3 markets for Indonesia

Pacto Indonesia expects India to jog past Japan by early 2018 to assume the number three spot as a source market, not just in Asia but worldwide, for Indonesia.



TT BUREAU

Indonesia-based Pacto Ltd in collaboration with its India partner, AHS India, recently concluded its annual two-city roadshow in Mumbai and New Delhi. The 22-member

sian market to reach out to India, and for good reason.

According to **Umberto Cadamuro**, COO (Inbound), Pacto Ltd. Indonesia, this year, India might pip Japan, which is currently

has been showing a steady growth. My best guess will be that India will overtake Japan for the third overall spot. While Australia and China are still a long way ahead, it is reasonable to assume that Japan will be



delegation of Pacto, representing 29 products, comprised various hotels and attractions, including some first-timers. This showed a huge interest in the Indone-

the number three source market, or at least by 2018. "Business coming from Asia is becoming more and more important for Indonesia. India specially

overtaken by India this year. If not this year, then definitely by 2018." He attributes this to the increased airlifts by Malindo Air, Garuda Indonesia and AirAsia X.



Pacto, that celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, isn't looking to add any more cities for the roadshow, but it is open to host trade members from other cities who are interested in attending through its representative office in India – the Gurugram-based AHS. The roadshow this year saw loyal as well as new participants, including an Indian restaurant and plenty of activities and attractions, apart from hotels, cruises, safaris and cultural shows. "The type of properties coming to India is also changing because

of the type of airlifts. We are looking a lot more at aggressive pricing because of the low-cost carriers. There is very little knowledge about the rest of Indonesia in India, but we have started to feel that people want to learn more about Indonesia beyond Kuta and Ubud in South Bali. We are starting to see interest for North Bali and the outer islands specially Jogjakarta for its religious and historical links," Cadamuro adds.

Pacto currently handles over 40,000 Indian passen-

gers per year. "Until some years ago we were basically a honeymoon destination, but now the MICE market is booming for us, specially incentive. My suggestion to the trade is: think in terms of a longer stay. Three nights is not enough to see Indonesia. You need five nights just for Bali and at least nine nights for Indonesia. With about 132,000 star-rated rooms, we can cater even to a last-minute market like India," Cadamuro promises.

Fact File

Indonesia has pyramids that date back to more than 20,000 years, according to the C14 test, located close to Jakarta and Bandung. They are newly discovered and totally covered by vegetation.

SELLER SPEAK

"We have seen a huge increase in Indian guests staying at our hotel. Since ours is a five-star property, we can assume that Indians have also started spending more in Indonesia. We also have a lot of incentive groups lined up for this year. If we are not aggressive, we will lose business from India."

Yuliana Sunaryo
Sales Manager
Ayodya Resort Bali

"We work very closely with Indian agents through local DMCs and this is our third time at this show. We offer day and sunset dinner cruises and Indian visitors love this product. It is good value for money. We can also provide vegetarian food if requested in advance. With the growth in Indian arrivals, we are also growing."

Pande Ardika
Deputy General Manager,
Director of Sales, Bali Hai Cruises

"I have been attending this show since it started four years ago. Bali is relatively new to India while Thailand is very well known in India. But now, with the increase in flights, more and more Indians are starting to go to Bali. I recommend the travel agents to add Thailand in their Bali itineraries."

Chaladol Ussamarn
President & CEO
CBS Tour, Thailand

TCI opens 3 new outlets in Delhi and one in Rajasthan

Thomas Cook (India) has strengthened its presence with the opening of four new outlets in Delhi's Rajouri Garden, Pitampura, Lajpat Nagar localities and Jodhpur in Rajasthan. This expansion augments Thomas Cook India's distribution and reach in North

India to 42 consumer access centres: 13 owned branches and 29 Gold Circle Partner (franchise) outlets.

Thomas Cook India's data has revealed high demand from India's north markets, with strong growth of 25 per cent for January- August 2017 against

the same period of the previous year. The year has seen significant uptake for favourites like USA & Canada, UK, France, Switzerland and Asia's Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia; equally for Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Emerging strongly are destinations

like Hungary, Czech Republic, Croatia, Romania, Japan and Bali, as also exotic locales like Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Rajeev Kale, President & Country Head Leisure Travel & MICE, Thomas Cook (India), said "North India is a powerful source market for us at Thomas

Cook India and we are witnessing strong growth of over 25 per cent y-o-y across our leisure travel businesses lines. Our strategic intent is to maximise on this market potential via organic expansion and we've carefully selected high footfall centres for our new outlets in

prime catchment locations within the larger NCR metro market; also Jodhpur in Rajasthan. Our new outlets give our customers in North India (across families, business travellers, millennials, senior citizens, students and NRIs) access to Thomas Cook's experts right at their doorstep!"

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OTOAI fillip to Ras Al Khaimah tourism

In a bid to open new avenues for the outbound tourism industry in India, Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) conducted its third annual convention in Ras Al Khaimah from September 13-16, 2017, to showcase the new destination and deliberate on imminent issues.



ANKITA SAXENA FROM RAS AL KHAIMAH

The 3rd OTOAI Convention was attended by over 170 delegates from Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and Gujarat. The event was inaugurated by **Shaji Thomas**, Director-Destination Tourism Development, Ras Al Khaimah; **Guldeep Singh Sahni**, President, OTOAI; **Riaz Munshi**, Convention Chairman and Vice President, OTOAI; **Mohamed Khater**, Senior Tourism Development Manager, Government of Ras Al Khaimah; **Gurdeep Gujral**, Convention Co-chairman and Joint Secretary, OTOAI; **Sanjeet**, India Repre-

sented, Ras Al Khaimah, and **Mahendra Vakharia**, Chairman-Western Chapter, OTOAI.

Sahni said, "RAKTDA has put its best foot forward to showcase the products to our members. We can't thank them

enough for the arrangements they have done to give everyone a first-hand experience from the destination. Our intention was to create opportunities for the future and we will work with the members to implement the knowledge we have gathered during the Convention."

The association deliberated on topics like technology

as the game changer and how it can be made accessible to every tour operator and travel agent; how travel agents should find their strengths and develop a niche in the market; improve the level of service they provide to their customers; train front-line staff; digital marketing and mobile technology and the importance and pressing demand to educate the trade from Tier-II

and III markets amongst various other issues.

Munshi further elaborated that there are many verticals of travel that have been untouched by assisted players of the industry like weddings, events, MICE, etc., where new players are entering the market and the old players have to revamp their functioning in

order to increase their revenue streams. "A convention is a win-win situation both for the destination as well as the members. We strive to host our conventions at destinations which need more tourist numbers from India and in return, our members have been able to experience a new destination to add their product portfolio," said Munshi.



Haitham Mattar
Chief Executive Officer, Ras Al Khaimah
Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA)

sentative, Ras Al Khaimah, and **Mahendra Vakharia**, Chairman-Western Chapter, OTOAI.

Haitham Mattar, Chief Executive Officer, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA), commented, "India is currently our fourth largest international source market with year-on-year growth of 22 per cent in the first half of 2017. It will be



Guldeep Singh Sahni
India Travel Award winner and
President, OTOAI

an important contributor to our vision and Destination 2019 tourism strategy. We have seen a growing trend from Indian inbound tourism for short leisure stays, MICE, and weddings. Our aim is to promote the full breadth of unique activities and events that can be enjoyed in the emirate, with a view to encourage Indian travellers to lengthen their stay in the destination. We are optimistic that through





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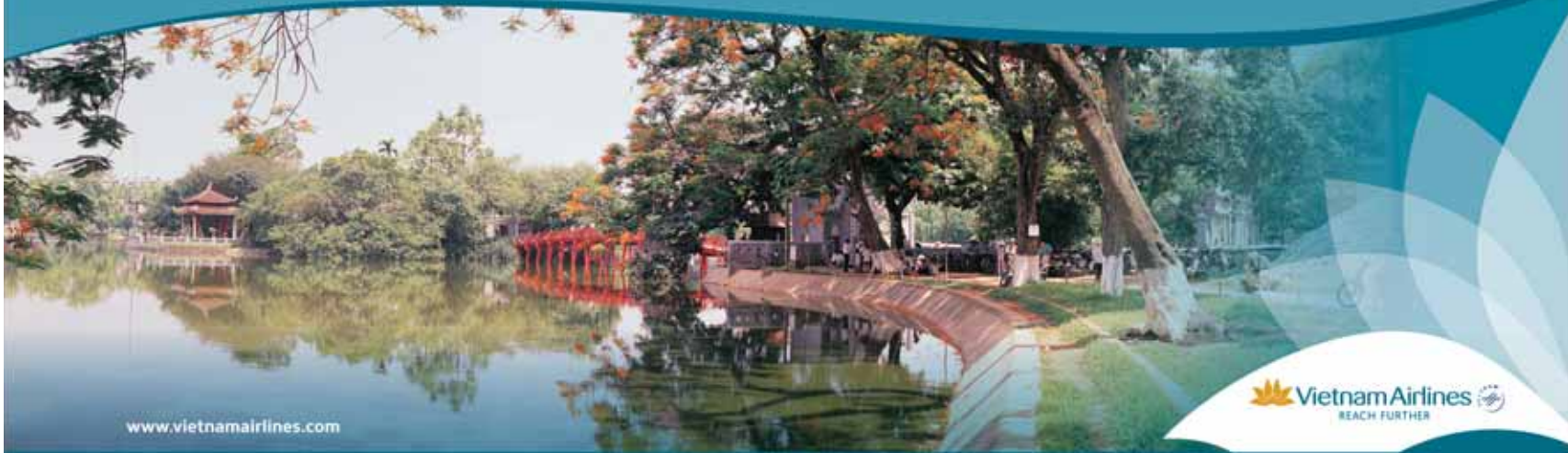

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Travelbullz thanked its travel trade partners for their support in promoting Thailand by taking the bookers on a four-day exploration trip to the two cultural cities of Thailand–Bangkok and Pattaya—from August 8 to 11, 2017.



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IATO brings Odisha tourism to the fore

In an effort to equip its members to face the constant flow of challenges, the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) started a discussion to initiate a new thought process through its 33rd annual convention in Bhubaneswar, from Sept 7-9.



HAZEL JAIN FROM BHUBANESWAR

India sells itself, they said. But such statements are now regarded as foolishness. In such a competitive environment, where every destination is vying for the traveller's attention and his currency, it would be foolhardy to continue on the course we set for ourselves a decade ago. To help the inbound fraternity overcome this iner-

tia, the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) played out a well-thought plan in the guide of its 33rd annual convention held in Bhubaneswar from September 7-9, 2017.

The speakers and the discussions sparked a new thought process in the audience and encouraged it to think innovatively. In a big

show of encouragement to the trade, the new Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism, Government of India, **K.J. Alphons**, made his first official appearance at the inauguration and gave an empowering speech that assured the audience of his support. Also on the stage were Tourism Secretary **Rashmi Verma**, her counterpart from the Odisha Government **Dr. Mona Sharma**, as well as **Ashok**



Chandra Panda, Minister of State (I/C) Tourism & Culture, Government of Odisha. The Chief Guest of the event was Odisha Chief Minister, **Naveen Patnaik**.

Sessions galore

Setting the tone of the Convention was a discussion on 'Ethics and Business' which underlined the importance of professionalism in the industry. This was followed by a session on why we need to invest in people in order to sustainably grow the business. The next day brought with it some more food for thought. Keeping with the theme of the convention, this session brainstormed on why we should keep changing our branding and positioning to remain relevant as a destination.

Recognising the efforts put in by the host state was a session highlighting the positive aspects of Odisha and the new initiatives undertaken to accentuate its tourism offerings. Of course, a destination can gain more popularity if the air connectivity is convenient and the following session highlighted the UDAN regional connectivity scheme that has opened up a vista of opportunities for Indian airlines.

The 'GST Masterclass' the following day saw the house packed to the rafters as expected, and an entire hour on how agents can leverage social media, especially Facebook, for furthering their business saw a volley of questions flying from the audience to the stage. The convention left its audience with thought-provoking ideas and questions with its session on new business ideas where dynamic panelists shared their perspective. Last but not the least, a stand-up show helped the members unwind after two whole days of brainstorming and introspection. ↴

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The German National Tourist Office, India (GNTO) organised a three-city Destination Germany Roadshow in Mumbai, Delhi and Ahmedabad to connect with the travel trade and inform them about the new products. GNTO will also launch its Germany Specialist programme for agents in November this year.





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Punjab adds flavour to Amritsar tours

The agrarian state's tourism board has chosen Amritsar to be its flagship tourist destination and has created multiple products around the Golden Temple to retain the huge visitor numbers and convert them into overnights. Over and above, Punjab Tourism has also developed farm tourism and has come up with farm stays in the outskirts.



HAZEL JAIN

Punjab has been so far one of India's best-kept tourism secrets, jokes **Shivdular Singh Dhillon**, Special Secretary and Director, Department of Tourism, Cultural Affairs, Archeology, Museums & Archives, Punjab and CEO, Punjab Heritage & Tourism Promotion Board.

"It is time we reveal it to the rest of India and the world. We have created a lot of infrastructure in and around Am-



Shivdular Singh Dhillon

Special Secretary and Director, Department of Tourism, Cultural Affairs, Archeology, Museums & Archives, Punjab and CEO, Punjab Heritage & Tourism Promotion Board

ritsar to capture the traffic the city already receives. We have developed a heritage street that leads up to the Golden Temple. As you cross the old Town Hall Building, go towards Jallianwala Bagh and then up to the Golden Temple, you'll

see bright lamp posts, statues and fountains in the backdrop of buildings reminiscent of Mughal and Rajputana architecture," Dhillon says.

His department has spent about ₹200 crore in creating this, which is money spent well since the number of visitors to the iconic Golden Temple has gone up exponentially after this

We have created a lot of infrastructure in and around Amritsar to capture the traffic the city already receives. We have developed a heritage street that leads up to the Golden Temple

upgrade. "The total number of visitors per day to the temple has touched 100,000. Even if

you subtract the devotees, it still leaves us with 50,000 tourists per day. To retain them in

the city, we have developed a lot of good hotels nearby. We have also developed farm tourism and have come up with farm stays in the outskirts. Agriculture has been Punjab's backbone, so what better place than here to create this experience?" Dhillon says.

The department has so far authorised 60-plus proper-

ties for farm stays. "We have also just signed an MoU with MakeMyTrip so all these farm stays and B&B are online for everyone to book. Travellers don't look at Punjab as a tourist destination and this perception will change now. We need to work smart and leverage on things and the consequential cascading effects will come," Dhillon adds.



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- ➔ A war memorial museum opened in 2016, dedicated to India's military history that features our wars including the Kargil war
- ➔ A new Partition Museum opened in August 2017 that explains possibly the largest human displacement in the history of the world in the old Town Hall
- ➔ Accommodation to cater to all kinds of budgets: budget hotels, boutique hotels, heritage hotels, farm stays and B&Bs
- ➔ State-of-the-art Science City near Jalandhar
- ➔ A new iconic project being built in Kartarpur town called Jang-e-Azadi Memorial
- ➔ Gobindgarh Fort in the centre of Amritsar city has been restored and opened to public after being closed for decades by the army. It features a 7D show based on the life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh
- ➔ Sadda Pind near Amritsar opened in November 2016 and offers the experience of a village life

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PATA Travel Mart shines in Macao

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Holland: The new destination of choice

A delegation representing the attractions of Holland and its tourism stakeholders visited India recently for the Holland Sales Mission, allowing them to have one-to-one meetings with the Indian travel agents and tour operators. Here's what they had to say after the meetings:



NISHA VERMA

"The Indian arrivals to Madurodam differ according to the tourist season, and we roughly receive around 45,000-50,000 Indian visitors on a yearly basis and about 80 per cent of them come through tour operators. In the last 20 years, we have seen the Indian population in Madurodam growing year by year. For us, the Indian market is important as it's growing and we really want to grab a good share of this market."



Joris Van Dijk
CEO
Madurodam

"We met with the Indian travel agents and they are happy to have our product on offer, and I hope they can use this experience as part of their promotion. We had a group of around 2,000 people recently in parts, and they liked the experience and bought the products, as they are of excellent quality. We hope that such experiences could be replicated with the Indians as well since Indian middle class, families and students are travelling a lot. I hope the travel agents can make good packages for them through DMCs in Holland."



Ingrid Kraakman-Beemterboer
Manager Cheese Farm
Catharina Hoeve
Henry Willig Kaas B.V.

"The travel agents in India are really important for us. Apart from looking at the main attractions, we saw a great potential in the MICE market. The agents had many questions on packaging different experiences, VIP visits and special packages for shopping outlets on group visits. Someone had queries on only women package and working on an experience in Amsterdam for it. My team is already working on this. It's lovely to meet agents and work around new ideas and itineraries. It's especially good to know what they want and how they want to package it."



Natalie Kolarik
Representative
ITO Tours



Bjorn van Gelder
Sales Manager, Blue Boat
Amsterdam Canal Cruises

"We get a lot of Indian visitors and owing to their demand for a better experience, we have launched Hindi language on board on our audio guides. This is being accepted well and there is growth in numbers from India for us. In our meetings with the travel trade in India, we got to know that they did not have a direct contact for the Amsterdam Canal cruises, which is very valuable. Most of the agents want Indian dinner cruises, but the budget for the same is quite high. I want to make sure that Indian visitors have a great experience on board."



Ebeline Dijkhuis
Marketeer Partnerships,
Aviation Marketing, Schiphol
Masterdam Airport

"Amsterdam Airport Schiphol celebrated its 100th birthday in 2016. We don't aim to be the biggest but the best airport in the world. In beginning 2016, we had seven services from Amsterdam to India, but since October last year, we have 31. Now, with Jet Airways and KLM starting new flights to Bengaluru, Delhi and Mumbai, there will be more Indians coming to Amsterdam. The meeting with the travel agents in India was also very helpful in knowing their interest in the destination and know what their clients think of the airport."



Jack van de Vliet
Head, Leisure Sales, Etelling

"So far, we have not been able to come to India and it's our first time here. Currently, we don't attract any Indian visitors and hence, we came to know more about this market, so that we can make efforts to make visitors from here feel at home. Through our meetings with the agents, we are glad to know that how well do people here know the fairy-tales. We know about the growth of the Indian market, and we have got positive reactions so far. If we can attract certain number of Indian visitors, I am sure that people would come and tell others and the product will grow."



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Mahan Air eyes Mumbai, Hyd runway

Mahan Air completes 15 years in India and is looking at expansion with increased frequencies to Delhi and new connections to Mumbai and Hyderabad.



TT BUREAU

Mahan Air celebrated 15 years of its operations at a grand ceremony at Le Meridien, New Delhi, which saw the travel trade from the capital in full attendance. Speaking on the sidelines of the event, **Harvinder S Duggal**, Managing Director, Minar Group, GSA for Mahan Air, said, "We have been the GSA of Mahan Air

destinations for Iranians. In the last 15 years, we have always been on a growth track and we are also looking forward to developing our presence in India. There are 2-3 more destinations, which are being studied by our team, and we are waiting for bilaterals to be established on that. For instance, we are looking at permissions for both Delhi and even Mumbai," she added.

Mehdi Shiri, Country Manager-India, Mahan Air, claimed that while they are looking to expand in India, they are simultaneously strengthening their connections into Europe, offering Indians great transit options via Tehran. "We are increasing connections via Tehran to Europe, including Munich, Dusseldorf, Barcelona, Milan as well as Turkey, Moscow, Baku and some religious



Mehdi Shiri
Country Manager-India
Mahan Air

cities in Iraq. We have three flights a week from Delhi and the PLF is around 1000 seats in a week," he shared.

Expecting a good growth in the future, Duggal said, "The current load factor on Mahan Air from India is more than 70 per cent. We have to double the passenger load in the next one year. Thus, we aim to reach 100,000 passengers from India in the next year. We

are adopting various initiatives to get to this target. Since Mahan Air was not on any GDS, we launched a portal to make the sales available throughout India. We have sales offices in Delhi, Jalandhar, Mumbai and Kolkata. For B2C, our online platform is working and we keep updating it. We are also in touch with the passengers through social media. Thus, there is good awareness about the product."



Harvinder S Duggal
Managing Director, Minar Group
GSA for Mahan Air

ever since it started flying to India. It's a pleasure to see how we launched the airline with one flight a week to Delhi, and now it has grown to three flights a week. Now, we are connecting to Europe and we are seeing good growth in the coming 6-7 months. The services are well accepted by the Indian market, which is a good thing. The aircraft is wide-bodied and the airlines has convenient timings. Tehran



Fariba Bayati
Regional Director
Fareast and India, Mahan Air

airport is counted as one of the good airports around the world and we are trying to add more flights in more cities in the next one year in India. Our plan is to fly to Mumbai and Hyderabad in the coming year."

Present at the occasion was **Fariba Bayati**, Regional Director, Fareast and India, Mahan Air. She claimed that India is one of the most popular destination amongst Iranians. "After starting Delhi we have had plenty of seasonal flights (mostly winter) to destinations like Goa and Kochi because these places are very popular as leisure

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Modify policies to curb high attrition

Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology, under the aegis of the Ministry of Tourism, is committed to the pursuit of excellence in hospitality education. **L.V. Kumar**, Principal, IHM, Kovlam, shares the initiatives of the institute in honing young talent.



TT BUREAU

Institute of Hotel Management Kovlam, is an ISO 9001:2008 certified institution for the last five years, informs L.V. Kumar. He says, "We have experienced and competent faculty with an av-

erage experience of 20 years in both teaching and international and national industry experience." The institute offers three years' Bachelors degree in Hospitality and Hotel Administration; 18-month Diploma in Food Production and 18-month Diploma in

Food and Beverages Services. Apart from this, the institute also offers courses under the Government's 'Hunar se Rozgar Tak' programme.

The location of the institute adds to the charm of the institute, says Kumar. "The



institute is situated on the beach of Kovalam. Around this beach, as many as 2500

hotel rooms are available for industrial exposure training as well as summer and win-

ter vacation training of the students," says Kumar. The institute aims to offer world-class facilities and provide the right kind of environment which is conducive for learning for the students who enroll in this institute.

Kumar believes that travel and hospitality is a rising sector and the institute takes initiative to train its stu-

Around this beach, as many as 2500 hotel rooms are available for industrial exposure training as well as summer and winter vacation training of the students

L.V. Kumar

Principal, IHM, Kovlam

dents for the rising opportunities with hands on training. Some of the leading five-star hotels groups that the institute has tie-ups with are The Welcome Group; The Taj Hotels; Marriot Group of Hotels; The Oberoi Hotels; Hyacinth Dominos, Vivanta by Taj, etc.

Commenting on the status of the tourism and hospitality industry, Kumar opines, "Given the challenges in the travel and hospitality sector, I feel the industry needs to re-orient itself and re-structure its facilities which are offered to the guests. There is also a need to improve the Human Resource policies in the industry so that the new entrants in the industry are motivated to join it. We need to reformulate our policies for effective control of existing attrition rate of human resource in this industry."

Fact File

Some of the leading five-star hotels groups that the institute has tie-ups with are The Welcome Group; The Taj Hotels; Marriot Group, The Oberoi Hotels; Hyacinth Dominos, etc.

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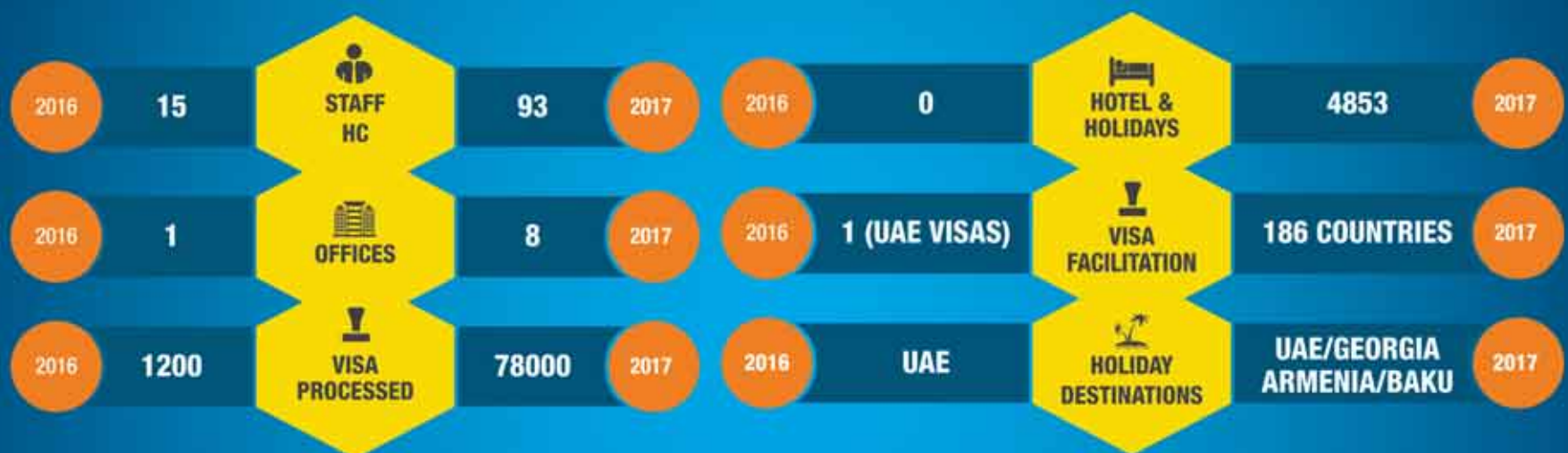
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lures Mumbai agents

The NBTC Holland Marketing team along with Jet Airways India, and Schiphol Airport hosted a table-top event in Mumbai to showcase various products to the trade as well as promote the new flights to Amsterdam from Mumbai. The Holland Sales Mission in the city was attended by about 100 travel agents who met seven suppliers from Holland.



Cambodia to host debut travel mart

The first Cambodia Travel Mart (CTM) 2017 will be held from November 17 to 19 at Sokha Siem Reap Resort & Convention Center, Siem Reap, Cambodia. The mart will have around 200+ sellers and 200+ buyers and about 50 media agencies.



TT BUREAU

The Ministry of Tourism Cambodia in collaboration with Slickbooth Holding – Events & Public Relations, will be hosting the first Cambodia Travel Mart CTM 2017 from November 17 to 19 at Sokha Siem Reap Resort & Convention Center, Siem Reap, Cambodia.

The event will be led by **Thong Khon**, Minister of Tourism Cambodia and will be attended by senior officers and experts from the Ministry



of Tourism Cambodia, industry leaders and private companies of the tourism sector.

The Cambodia Travel Mart 2017 was principally approved and permitted by the Royal Government of Cambodia in 2015 and now the Ministry of Tourism Cambodia has taken up the initiative to organise and cooperate with state institutes and private sectors in tourism.

Thong Khon says, "CTM will be the best business tourism platform in South-east Asia for buyers and sellers from different countries to participate in tourism networking and business opportunities. The fact that Cambodia has so far been maintaining peace in the region has made tourism develop from year-to-year under the brilliant leadership of Prime Minister **Samdach Ahka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen**. In 2016, the number of tourists visiting Cambodia increased five per cent, and there were about 5 million tourists. In 2017, Cambodia expects to have 5.5 million tourists and seven million in 2020. Thus, the first event of CTM in Siem Reap this year is a key factor to develop tourism in Cambodia and to achieve the expected goals."

CTM 2017 is an ideal tourism business forum between tourism companies, tourism operators, tourism experts, national and international media, which will amount to a total of approximately 500 companies and agencies. The forum is supported by tourism organisations of ASEAN state

member countries and aims to improve local and regional tourism. This special event is a golden opportunity to promote tourism destinations, trade service packages, exchange experience and develop business relations between partners.

The event will host activities such as pre-online business matching, friendly golf



tournaments, workshops related to tourism and display of tourism products and services. CTM will have approximately 200+ national and international sellers and 200+ national and international buyers. Be-

sides sellers and buyers, there will be about 50 national and international media agencies joining this event.

CTM is an event organized to show Cambodia's support of promoting tourism destinations of ASEAN member countries to the world and to celebrate the Visit ASEAN@50 (Golden Celebration) as well.

Sarovar Hotels & Resorts signs new property in Jhansi

■ Sarovar Hotels & Resorts has signed an agreement for a 72-room hotel, Nataraj Sarovar Portico Jhansi. Owned by Nataraj Sai Hotels, Nataraj Sarovar Portico is expected to open in January 2018. With a prime location, the hotel under development has 72 rooms with all-day dining, bar, banquet halls, conference and meeting facilities, swimming pool, gymnasium, salon and rooftop open air banquet space. It is located in the heart of city about 2 km from the railway station. Commenting on the development, **Ajay K. Bakaya**,

Managing Director, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, said, "We are happy to open a Sarovar Portico hotel in this historic city of Uttar Pradesh. With its significant development and rich antiquity, Jhansi is an important destination with rising number of visitors from across the country. It is an important location for us and a significant addition to our portfolio. This will cater to the needs of corporate, groups, leisure and MICE." Some of the expected openings this year include hotels in Amritsar, Raipur, Mahipalpur, Somnath and Jaisalmer.

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Tourism looks East, options galore

Tourism industry, though has grown in the East and North East India, there is a long road ahead for the region to emerge as a choice destination amongst domestic and foreign guests alike. The East India Travel Award winners bring to light the challenges hampering the industry in the region and discuss the way forward.



► Best Destination Management Company – STHI Holidays DMC

Educate the East on long-haul destinations

Outbound tourism from East India has picked up the threads and business is on the incline as against a similar time period of Q2 last year, informs **Gagan Kumar**, Director, STHI Holidays. Kumar points out that one of the major challenges that they face when doing business in the East is lack of education. "The travel agents lack education on various destinations and further to that, crafting itineraries according to this is not practical. I feel educating the tour operators and travel agents on long haul destinations will definitely yield results as at the moment, they are focusing only on short haul destinations," says Kumar. He further feels that whenever a roadshow is organised, this region should be given wide publicity in order to catch attendance where leads are developed for future business.



► Best General Manager – Vikas Ray

Infrastructure gaps need to be filled

Radisson Blu Hotel Guwahati's General Manager, **Vikas Ray** believes that the northeastern states of India have recorded a positive growth in the number of visits by both domestic and international tourists and is hopeful that this scenario is

only going to improve as the government is taking all positive steps to boost tourism in the region. Ray says, "With the opening of our hotel in 2014 and more star hotels opening or in the pipeline to open in recent future, the supply in hospitality sector is growing and has opened new job avenues for the youth in the region. The demand pace is yet to catch up with the current supply and future growth in the city. We may also come up with a vast convention centre towards the end of next year." He further informs that MOT is coming up with promotion vehicles for the North East in both the international and domestic markets.



► Best Luxury Hotel Brand – Mayfair Hotels and Resorts

GST: Shot in the arm of hospitality industry

According to **Bjorn Noel DeNiese**, VP-Sales and Marketing, Mayfair Hotels and Resorts, Sikkim showed a phenomenal growth this summer with a surge of more than 10 per cent of tourist arrivals; Odisha showed encouraging growth in the leisure market with new initiatives by the

state government. "The biggest problem across the hospitality industry is GST. This has been further complicated by unclear conceptions on the taxation to be applied amongst some of the bigger OTAs, resulting in us refusing several bookings." For DeNiese, air and rail connectivity; investment through organised and sustainable tourism development and cross border trade and tourism is absolutely essential for tourism growth in the East. Mayfair will soon be launching its Himalayan Hotel at Kalimpong, a property in Siliguri and another one in Raipur, he adds.



► Best Theme Wedding Organisor – Jet Setters

Tier-II cities big on destination weddings

With each passing year, Indian weddings are getting bigger and better, offering lucrative business opportunity to the players involved, points out **Tarakeshwar Singh**, Director, Jet Setters. He says, "Giving up the basic traditional look, the Indian weddings are donning a more corporate look, these days. A large part of the business comes from the Tier-II cities in the

eastern part of India. Guests from Kolkata look forward to destinations filled with night life and shopping whereas those from Tier-II cities look for themes." Singh feels that in the destination weddings industry, coordination amongst various stakeholders is a big issue. He feels that in order to grow this segment of travel from East India there is a need to promote Indian destinations that are on a par with any foreign destination. A person, in India, spends one fifth of the wealth accumulated in a lifetime on a wedding ceremony. That means a tremendous opportunity for us to capitalise on."



► Best Cruise Travel Agent – Gainwell Travel and Leisure

East sailing strong to SEA

With regard to cruising, the market in East India has always been very enthusiastic about cruising in Southeast Asia, particularly the cruises to Singapore, informs **Manoj Saraf**, Managing Director, Gainwell Travel and Leisure. According to Saraf, good connectivity along with reasonable airfares has kept this package under ₹ 60,000 per person and therefore the market has grown not only from Kolkata

but from other points in East India as well. "However, the biggest problem we face is related to cancellation charges and non-refundable offers normally applicable within 60 days of sailing," says Saraf. He says the market is gradually moving towards cruises for longer durations- up to one week, which are currently popular in Europe, USA and China. "Dream Cruises is launching a five-night cruise ex-Singapore to Indonesia, which seems like an exciting product," he adds.



► Best Airline-Domestic – SpiceJet

Changes in policy needed to grow aviation in the East

Indian domestic air traffic is expected to cross 100 million passengers by FY 2017 and is expected to grow year-on-year and thus there is similar growth in eastern India as well, believes **Debjit Ghosh**, General Manager-Sales & Marketing (East & North East), SpiceJet. Ghosh suggests introduction of clear policy on regional aviation to promote faster growth in the

East. Other suggestions include changes in policies to bring the general aviation industry on a par with scheduled airlines; privatise existing airports in Tier-II and III cities for rapid modernisation, etc. "Subsidy on ATF should also be looked into by the government, which is approximately 60 per cent of the cost to an airline company. With these expansion plans, the need to strengthen the human resource development infrastructure is immediate. Relaxation of regulations; revising the security requirements; allowing domestic codesharing; budgetary support/viability gap funding for air operations to operators for encouraging intra-region connectivity in East and North East; providing free or discounted utilities need some attention."



WTM aims at getting quality business

This year at World Travel Market, London, to be held from November 6-8, selected exhibitors will be offered priority access to the buyer speed networking sessions on the first two days of the event. A panel of experts will also discuss emerging trends in the tourism industry.



TT BUREAU

Priority Access

WTM London 2017 will offer priority access to selected exhibitors for its buyer speed networking events. The move is designed to limit the number of exhibitors taking part, with 500 priority access tickets available. This in-turn will keep the quality of the mini-meeting high and worthwhile for both sides. Also, this year, there will be two buyer speed networking sessions before the exhibition floor opens on both the days of WTM London.

On Day 1, 200 buyers will be seated by the geography they purchase while on Day 2, the event will be sector specific with sectors including responsible tourism, gastronomy, and wedding and honeymoons covered by 100 buyers. Simon Press, Senior Director, WTM London, said, "The speed networking events at WTM London have proved hugely-popular with an ever-growing number of exhibitors looking to take part. Feedback from both exhibitors and buyers shows that the popularity of the event is having an impact on the quality of the business conversations taking place. So for this year, we are looking to limit the numbers to both buyer speed networking session by introducing a priority entry."

Valid for both the days, the priority access will allow two named representatives from an exhibitor immediate access from 9 am to both sessions and will cost £250. Exhibitor personnel without priority access will be able to attend the speed networking events from 9.30 am onwards. Exhibitors will be able to purchase priority access via the exhibitor portal.

Predicting Trends

A panel of senior executives will debate the impact of Brexit, currency movements and other geopolitical trends during a 'World Travel Leaders' session at WTM London. The session - 'UK Markets - What can we expect in 2018' will see eminent speakers like Caroline Bremner, Head of Travel, Euromonitor International; Richard Calvert, Chief Executive, Shearings Leisure Group; Nick Longman, Managing Director, TUI UK & Ireland; Peter Shanks, Development Director, Imagine Cruising; and Tris-

tram Yarde-Leavett, Managing Director, Tourwise of London. Press elaborated, "Some of the effects of last year's Brexit referendum are being felt already, so it will be fascinating to hear what these industry bosses think will happen in the future. There are many other challenges and opportunities to consider too - how the fall in



sterling is affecting inbound and outbound tourism, and how security issues are affecting travel trends, for example."

WTM Leader's Lunch

A leading Member of European Parliament (MEP) and former Prime Minister of Belgium, Guy Verhofstadt, is the keynote speaker at WTM Leaders' Lunch. This is a prestigious and invitation-only networking event with 200 pre-eminent heads of commercial travel organisations which will be held on November 6. Ver-

hofstadt is now leader of the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) in the European Parliament. Press commented, "Our Leaders' Lunches have a reputation for bringing top speakers to the captains of the travel industry and Guy is first rate. He is a fantastic speaker and will offer inspiration and practical advice to our senior travel

industry audience at a crucial time in the UK's, Europe's and indeed the world's history."

Priority access

WTM London has introduced priority entry this year to limit the numbers to both buyer speed networking sessions



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UNWTO gives approval for a historical document

■ The Member States of the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) have approved a historical document – the UNWTO Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics. The Convention, approved at the 22nd UNWTO General Assembly transforms the Code of Ethics for Tourism into an international convention, the first in the life of the organisation. The Convention covers the responsibilities of all stakeholders in the development sustainable tourism, providing a framework that recommends an ethical

and sustainable modus operandi, including the right to tourism, the freedom of movement for tourists and the rights of employees and professionals. "Tourism is a power that must be harnessed for the benefit of all," said the Chairman of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics (WCETE), **Pascal Lamy**. Appointed as Chairman of the WCETE in 2013, Lamy and his colleagues has been instrumental in the process of presenting the Convention on Tourism Ethics to the General Assembly.

Sarovar targets MICE in Hyderabad

Radisson Hi Tech City Hyderabad is tapping the MICE market in the region this year. Its General Manager **Krishna Kumar**, believes that India needs to model its marketing initiatives on the lines of that of newer destinations like Ras Al Khaimah.



TT BUREAU

A Carlson hotel managed by Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, Radisson Hi Tech City Hyderabad witnessed a good growth in the first half of 2017 and is looking forward to good business in the remainder of the year. Kumar informs that the hotel is trading high in terms of occupancy and is

maintaining a healthy ADR. RevPAR has also seen a good growth year-on-year. He elaborates that domestic corporate business remains the key market for the hotel and metro cities remain its core segment. However, the hotel has also seen an upward trend in MICE segment in the first half of 2017 and the growth looks to be a positive demand driver in

the medium to long term for the destination as well as the hotel.

Kumar believes that though the potential of India as a tourism hub is huge, there is a lack of a blueprint to measure that success. He comments, "It will be interesting to take the role model of a new destination in tourism like Ras Al Khaimah and

adapt best practices in tourism initiatives and marketing of that destination."

He further points out that on a micro level, service quality standards as well as destination exposure is key to organisations in the overall goal of promoting and growing inbound tourism. "The true value of a Concierge comes into play

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Krishna Kumar
General Manager
Radisson Hi Tech City Hyderabad

wherein we are able offer a quick cultural/city experience to the business travellers that enhances the image of the destination and could trigger potential visits," he adds.

The hotels' marketing and promotional plans for 2017 will predominantly revolve around innovation in food and beverage; experiences and quality of service. Kumar says, "The entire hotel will fall into these broad categories and we are hoping to translate and execute marketing and promotion of individual revenue streams based on these. When we are looking at all the aspects of growth and consolidation, it is also important to innovate and continuously excel in the area of staff experience in the organisation. Technology today is changing the way we managed communication and it is vital that this area does not become an afterthought."

He also points out that the markets, traditionally thought of as key segments of performance, are changing and the industry has to adapt to the changes and acknowledge that tourism numbers have moved away in terms of numbers from the tradition strongholds of Europe. "The millennials are also high on travel experiences and we need to tap the new segments as well as countries by creating the right exposure of India to them," he says.



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Travel to now fly off the shelf

Tripshelf is offering travel agents an online marketplace to brand and promote holiday packages. They've launched a festive sale which assures a free gift upon booking.



TT BUREAU

Tripshelf is essentially an online marketplace for holiday packages connecting tour operators and travellers. Tour operators can list their holiday packages on Tripshelf.com and the travellers can discover, compare, enquire or buy these packages from



Dhruv Raj Gupta
Chief Executive Officer and Co-founder
Tripshelf

Agents have a brand online which is more like an online mall where they can display product, use their logo, reviews and then gain traction from it

the tour operators. **Dhruv Raj Gupta**, Chief Executive Officer and Co-founder, Tripshelf elaborates on the benefits that travel partners can get out of Tripshelf and says, "Firstly, the primary growth factor is that the tour operators get an online platform. Secondly, there is an increase in conversion percentage of online enquires converting to bookings from 0-1 per cent to 7-10 per cent. Thirdly, the agents have a brand online which is more like an online mall where the agents can display their product, use their logo and customer reviews and then gain traction from it." Currently, the company is catering to 325 established businesses online, promoting their holidays from the nearest domestic destinations like Manali and Kerala to the farthest destination like Antarctica.

Gupta further informs that the company has launched a massive Diwali Dhamaka Sale and through this campaign, it aims to reach out to around five million holiday goers across India. "The idea is that from September 15 to October 15, every time a con-

Seeking nominal GST rates: IATO

► Contd. from page 3

attention from them. We hope for a better future for Indian tourism and that we are able to bring in more tourists into the country.

QWhat are some of the concerns voiced by your members?

The number one concern is high taxes on tourism which has put us in a difficult situation. We support GST and will take the matter with the Finance Ministry directly. We request that GST should be at a nominal level between six to eight per cent.

Only then shall we be able to compete and grow our business. We therefore request all or state governments to take up this issue with the GST Council. There are many other issues which we shall take up separately.

QDoes IATO have any recommendations for the Odisha Tourism Board?

Yes, there are some recommendations for the Government of Odisha and we will send them to Dr. Mona Sharma. Odisha has one of the best state tourism policies and

investment opportunities for tourism infrastructure should be popularised to attract more investors and suitable land should be created for this. The state needs a bigger international airport so that it can handle more passenger capacity. We suggest a government policy to have a PPP model of investment for the development of international airports just as Kochi, Bengaluru and Hyderabad have done. I want to also highlight the needs for air connectivity between Odisha and Varanasi that will help the Buddhist Circuit.

Also, there are many untapped tourist sites like Lake Chilika and activities such as water sports, wildlife parks, fishing and bird-watching, etc. that need development and promotion. Odisha also needs to promote its various festivals, its heritage monuments, its sports events, pilgrimage, etc. For this, the state needs to conduct Fam tours for the trade, attend trade exhibitions in India and abroad and conduct roadshows besides being present on social media. It also needs to have clear guidelines on tribal tourism which is its USP.

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EVENT TALK

OCTOBER 2017

IATA Global Sustainable Aviation Summit	Geneva	3-4
Spain roadshow	Delhi NCR	4
Spain roadshow	Ahmedabad	5
Skal World Congress	Hyderabad	5-9
Spain roadshow	Chennai	6
UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook	Guilin, China	10-12
CAPA-ACTE Global Summit	London, UK	11-13
EDWIN	Ladakh	11-16
CII Tamil Nadu Travel Mart	Chennai	12-15
India Travel Awards West	Ahmedabad	15
Odisha Travel Bazaar	Bhubaneshwar	15-17
CITM	Kunming	20-22
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NOVEMBER 2017

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South Australia roadshow	Bengaluru	6-7
WTM	London	6-8
South Australia roadshow	Mumbai	8-10
South Australia roadshow	Delhi NCR	11-12
Scandinavian Tourism board roadshow	Delhi NCR	14
Scandinavian Tourism board roadshow	Chennai	15
Scandinavian Tourism board roadshow	Mumbai	16
Swiss Tourism roadshow	Mumbai	17
ADTOI Convention	Visakhapatnam	17-19
IITM	Pune	24-26
India Hospitality Awards	Delhi NCR	27
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DECEMBER 2017

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B2B Workshop-Tourism & Events Queensland, Destination New South Wales, Visit Victoria and South Australia	Bengaluru	31

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

UNWTO to focus on member states

Zurab Pololikashvili has been appointed by the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) as its next Secretary General. Here are some of his views on the future of UNWTO.



TT BUREAU

QWhat are your priorities for the Organisation in the four years to come? What would you like to achieve?

My vision for UNWTO is fully based on the needs of its Member States, considering current political and economic uncertainties across the globe. Let me briefly present some key areas. One of the top priorities will be to expand the UNWTO membership and attract new countries to join the Organisation for them to benefit from its services and activities. Cooperation with new Members on tourism's contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is essential in order to assist governments and companies in incorporating relevant aspects of the SDGs into policies and business operations. I will actively encourage leading donor agencies to be involved in the implementation of a wide range of projects and capacity building programmes on national and sub-regional levels.

I propose to initiate the following thematic platforms to expand UNWTO's advocacy work and awareness-raising: a global leaders' summit on



Zurab Pololikashvili
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to Spain, Andorra, Algeria and Morocco

travel and tourism for heads of state, in parallel with the UNWTO General Assembly; an annual ministerial meeting on safety, security and travel facilitation to enhance effective inter-sectorial coordination; an annual global 'invest in tourism' forum to promote investment opportunities and share best international practices on investment and incentive policies; and an annual ministerial-level forum on climate change and tourism to offer specific recommendations on implementing long-term sustainable development policies.

I believe that Member States need more technical expertise from the Organisation. In this regard, UNWTO should regularly prepare individual recommendations

for individual governments to support sustainable and competitive growth of travel and tourism by developing policy guidelines on destination management.

QBesides building consensus and showing leadership, what are in your opinion the additional challenges of a UNWTO Secretary-General?

First of all, I would like to emphasise that under the leadership of the current Secretary General, Taleb Rifai, UNWTO and the global tourism industry have achieved tremendous success to become one of the most important socio-economic sectors. Dr. Rifai increased the visibility of UNWTO and made politicians more responsible for travel and tourism.

Besides leadership and an ability to build consensus, I think a Secretary General should demonstrate dynamism while championing innovation in this challenging time, as well as achieving results-driven outcomes with both government and private sector Members by delivering technical expertise through concrete recommendations and projects.

Q2016 will probably be the eighth year of consecutive growth for international tourism, and according to UNWTO 'Tourism Towards 2030', it is estimated that there will be 1.8 billion international arrivals by 2030. What is your view on the main challenges and opportunities facing the sector in the years to come?

I think UNWTO should be focusing on long-term challenges. Safety and security and climate change are key challenges but there are many other external factors affecting global travel and tourism. UNWTO should undertake serious steps to manage thematic platforms so that dialogue among decision-makers results in effective inter-sectorial coordination.

As of opportunities, from my point of view, UNWTO should strengthen its expertise and prepare guidelines on management and marketing for various types of tourism destinations considering current technological advances, new business models and the rise of digital tourism.

Full house at 52nd FHRAI Convention

The Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India recently concluded its annual convention for the year, where industry stakeholders congregated for pertinent and impactful deliberations.



TT BUREAU

The 52nd FHRAI Annual Convention was held at Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru, from September 14-16, 2017. At the three-day event, delegates got a chance to attend panel discussions on relevant topics and were able to network with fellow hoteliers. The theme chosen for this year's convention was 'Hospitality 2025 – The Future is Now'. The inauguration ceremony was presided over by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar who blessed the function. **Ananth Kumar**, Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers; **Ashok Chandra Panda**, Minister of State, Department of Tourism, Government of Odisha; **R.V. Deshpande**, Minister for Large & Medium Industries & Infrastructure Development, Government of Karnataka, and many other dignitar-



ies were also present at the event. The convention had expected 600 delegates but more than a 1000 registered.

Speaking at the ceremony, **Sri Sri Ravi Shankar**, said, "Hospitality is in the DNA of Indians just like teamwork is in the DNA of the Japanese, precision in that of the Germans, eti-

quette in the English, and marketing in the Americans. India is still lagging behind and needs improvement in infrastructure. We need to have Greece as the benchmark where tourism is soaring. We should host food festivals more often. Also, there is a need for more and more hotels. We do not necessarily have to ape the Europeans,

we can set our own standards; an indigenous touch is always welcome. Apart from this, India needs more colleges to train youngsters."

Addressing the audience at the convention, **Deshpande** said, "Tourism is the highest employment generator but India's biggest concern is still employment as automation is taking over the human touch. Infrastructure has to definitely be looked at and we are getting there. Karnataka has the best connectivity in the entire country with some of the best national and district highways. Karnataka has always been a visionary state. Whenever I travel abroad, I no longer have to explain which part of the country Bengaluru belongs to. The city has all kinds of tourism opportunities; there isn't anything that it doesn't have."

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Singapore

Katerina Giannouka joins Carlson Rezidor Hotel as President, Asia Pacific. Giannouka will be a member of Carlson Hotels' Executive Leadership Committee. In her role, she will be responsible in leading the Asia Pacific executive committee and its corporate offices in Singapore, Shanghai and Delhi. Before joining Carlson, Giannouka was the head of development for Asia Pacific and China for Rosewood Hotel Group. Prior to that, she held roles with Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide and HVS. She graduated from Oxford Brookes University with a Bachelor's of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management.



Howard Johnson

Kolkata

Mahinder Rawat has been appointed as the first General Manager of Howard Johnson, Kolkata. The newly-opened 90-room business hotel is also the second Howard Johnson in India. Rawat has an enriched experience in hospitality in India and abroad. Rawat started his career with Oberoi Hotels (Trident, Agra) and worked his way up. He worked with The Lalit Hotel, Bengaluru, in 2003 before moving to Malaysia for two years. Up on his return, he joined The Lalit Group in Udaipur and then in Srinagar. In 2014, he joined Howard Johnson in Bengaluru as F&B Manager.



The Westin Pushkar Resort & Spa

Pushkar

Amit Rana joins the Westin Pushkar Resort & Spa as General Manager. Prior to this role, Rana worked as General Manager of Holiday Inn Amritsar. Rana started his career in the hospitality industry in 2002 with InterContinental Hotel Group and was associated with the brand for 15 years before he decided to join the Marriott International. Deeply rooted with Operations knowledge and expertise from the beginning, he later shifted to a more strategic role by venturing into Revenue and then and then took up the role of a new hotel opening. As the General Manager, he led with utmost responsibility and leadership of a new hotel opening.



Le Meridien Kochi

Kochi

Tejus Jose has been appointed as the new General Manager of Le Meridien Kochi. Jose has rich experience of 17 years in international upscale and upper mid-scale hotels. He started his hospitality journey as a management trainee with Oberoi after graduating from the institute of Hotel management Hyderabad. Jose has held various roles in hotel chains like The Oberoi, JW Marriott, Hyatt Regency, Novotel and Grand Mercure. His last role before joining Le Meridien was as General Manager of the Novotel in Ahmedabad.



Samode Palace

Delhi

Veena Sharma has joined Samode Palace as its Associate Director for Sales & Marketing. With eleven years of experience in the industry, Sharma is looking at exploring new opportunities with the travel trade, upcoming markets and prime corporates for the brand. She is a graduate in hotel management and has previously been associated with leading five-star chains and MNCs in their corporate sales division.



Top3 Lords Resorts

Bhavnagar

Tilak Sharma has joined Top3 Lords Resorts, Bhavnagar, as its Operations Manager. Prior to this, he was working with Godwin Group of Hotels, Haridwar. At Top3 Resorts, he will continue to lend his expertise in the Front Office management. Sharma has over 14 years of experience in hospitality and has worked with Sterling Holiday Resorts, Hotel Timber Trail Heights - Parwanoo, Country Inn & Suites by Carlson at Vaishno Devi, Katra, Country Inn & Suites by Carlson at Haridwar and Babylon Group of Hotels. He has previously served at Patang Lords Eco Inn, Saputara, a Lords Hotels & Resorts property as its Operations Manager.



The Suryaa

New Delhi

Chetan Kapoor has joined The Suryaa as Director of Sales (MICE). In his current role at The Suryaa, Kapoor is overall in-charge of sales department with various verticals in all MICE, travel trade and inbound groups. Kapoor has a strong hospitality experience with a career spanning over 16 years during which he has been associated with several prominent hospitality brands such as Le Meridien, Taj Palace, The Oberoi, The Royal Plaza Hotel, Crown Plaza, Eros Hotel and Hilton Janakpuri.



Mansi Bhasin joins The Suryaa as Public Relations Manager. A PR & Communications professional with an experience of over 8 years, Bhasin has amassed strong experience in corporate PR, lifestyle, entertainment and hospitality, with expertise in Media Relations, Client Servicing, Marketing Strategies and event Management. During her career, she has handled and promoted several prominent hospitality brands especially in the Delhi NCR region. She brings with her strong communication skills, ability to adapt quickly, work efficiently in a team and the ability to manage responsibilities.



Hema Dhoke is the new Director of Sales for The Suryaa New Delhi. She brings along brilliant operational and Sales background by the virtue of having worked in the finest of brands like Taj Group of Hotels, AccorHotels and Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group. Her broad spectrum of 20 years' experience includes opening hotels, heading Sales and Marketing, ensuring high revenues and profit. She has a participative style of leadership and believes in strict adherence to standards. Dhoke has a proven track record of ensuring sales efficiency of the highest standards.



TALKing People

Ajoy Balkrishna, General Manager, Grand Sarovar Premiere Mumbai says his biggest stress buster is his pet. "I have a husky dog which needs to be taken for a run and that keeps me fit. I love to read books and watch movies." His favourite holiday destination is Europe. "I also love to explore different parts of India and neighbouring countries. I drove to Bhutan from the North East during my last holiday," he adds.



Anand Ganesan, General Manager, Kochi Marriott Hotel, says he would like to spend his free time with his family. He likes reading and if the free time extends to a weekend then he would like to take short trips with friends. Ganesan says, "Being in an industry where we create memories, we should experience it ourselves." He loves to read and Prague is his favourite destination.



Mayuri Ghosh, General Manager-Sales, Lords Hotels & Resorts, says "Immersing into a good book works like meditation for me. Reading rejuvenates me and gives me the kind of break I could use after a long day at work." Ghosh has a penchant for creating embroidered work and loves to travel. "Kashmir and Kerala are my top travel destinations." She is influenced by spirituality and its interpretations. She feels inspired by Paulo Coelho and the Dalai Lama.





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Vistara to go international in '18?

Vistara recently entered into a partnership with Japan Airlines (JAL) to pursue commercial opportunities. To strengthen its domestic footprint in India, the airline is adding Ranchi to its network and plans to expand its fleet to 22 aircraft by June 2018, reveals its Chief Executive Officer, **Phee Teik Yeoh**.



ANKITA SAXENA

QWhat does the MoU between Vistara & JAL entail?

Japan Airlines has been very supportive of Vistara's growth and the two airlines share a lot in common. Thus, it was no surprise that they were among the first airlines with which Vistara has entered into a partnership. This mutual understanding between the two airlines paves the way for both airlines to actively and jointly pursue more commercial opportunities and significant cooperation in the near future, such as codeshare, frequent flyer partnerships as well as other operational arrangements, allowing us to leverage each other's network, expertise and assets, to necessary approvals from authorities.

Earlier this year, Vistara and JAL entered an 'Inter-Airline Through Check-in' (IATCI) enabling customers to enjoy a seamless 'Through Check-in' facility, when connecting to or from a Vistara flight in India and more than 50 countries across the globe on JAL's network, using a single ticket. JAL and Vistara will strive to deliver greater convenience and variety of choice to the customers with a comprehensive network and cooperation.

QElaborate on Vistara's growth plans on the domestic front.

Today, Vistara operates 660 weekly flights operated by a fleet of 16 aircraft. We recently announced the addition of Ranchi as our 21st destination. Effective October 29, 2017, we will operate two



“We will reach the magical number of 20 aircraft in March 2018 which means that from then onwards Vistara can operate overseas if we want to and if we are ready.”

Phee Teik Yeoh
Chief Executive Officer
Vistara

flights a day between Delhi and Ranchi. Jharkhand has immense potential for industrial development, with sectors such as steel, cement, electric, rubber, khadi, handicraft and textile flourishing here. It is also emerging as an educational hub for the region. There is a consistently growing number of corporate travellers, tourists and educationists emerging from this state to whom Vistara brings world-class air travel with the addition of Ranchi as a destination to our network.

Further, as we operate from the state-of-the-art terminal in Delhi, travellers to and from Ranchi will get to enjoy the superior experience of T3, and those connecting to and from international flights at Delhi will appreciate the convenience of same-terminal connections. In a short span of less than three years, we have expanded our network to 21 destinations

with multiple frequencies. It has been an exciting journey for all of us and hopefully also for the consumers to be able to enjoy the variety in arrival and departure timings that Vistara offers.

QIs Vistara planning to expand its fleet?

In less than a year's time from now, our fleet will increase from 16 aircraft to 22 aircraft. By June 2018, we have committed to a lease of 22 brand new Airbus A320 aircraft. Out of these 13 will be Airbus A320-200 and nine will be Airbus A320neo. We will reach the magical number of 20 aircraft in March 2018 which means that from then onwards Vistara can operate overseas if we want to and if we are ready.

QKindly explain the interline partnership of Vistara with Qatar Airways.

We have been announcing quite a lot of interline partnerships lately and the partnership with Qatar Airways is one of them. This is an endorsement of the excellent product and service that Vistara offers to its customers in the domestic market which has caught the attention of many global major successful carriers like Qatar Airways, JAL and many more. We are very pleased with the good reviews that we received even outside India and we value each and every partnership as extending our footprint throughout interline partnerships makes our international operations even stronger. Under the partnership with Qatar Airways, we will offer a seamless flying experience and international luggage allowance to our joint customers from various cities in India to and from over 150 destinations across the world on a single ticket.

Codeshare cooperation between JAL and Vistara

“Demand for air travel between India and Japan is increasing year-on-year and it is important to forge partnerships with various airlines in order to cater to this demand. We think that amongst the Indian airlines, Vistara is offering a premium service to its customers and we are also approaching this particular market offering the best service to our customers. Thus, the partnership with Vistara is the best combination to cater to the premium market between Japan and India. In fiscal year 2018, JAL and Vistara have decided to launch codeshare cooperation on Vistara's domestic routes to and from Delhi and on Japan Airlines' operating route between Tokyo and Delhi as well as on Japanese domestic routes. The Open Sky agreement between India and Japan gives new airlines new networks. For JAL, though India is a very attractive market, presently we do not have any plans to add new destinations to our network.”



Tadashi Fujita
Executive Vice President, Japan Airlines

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GPS 2017

A gateway to Tier-II & III markets

Global Panorama Showcase (GPS) has come under the spotlight for all the right reasons. With the introduction of EDWIN this year and the roaring success of its mobile App, making the event accessible even after it's over, GPS has taken the Tier-II & III markets by storm.



SHAHZAD BAGWAN

Over 7,000 travel trade professionals from across the country congregated at the Global Panorama Showcase this year as the show travelled to six cities, including its debut in Kochi and Pune. GPS 2017 kicked off with Nagpur in January, receiving a very good response from over 200 hosted buyers. The focus has been on agents from Tier-II and III markets. GPS Nagpur, which witnessed a gathering of over 1300 registered buyers, saw participants coming from the focus areas of Vidharba, Khandesh, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Post Nagpur, GPS travelled to Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, Kolkata, Kochi and concluded in Pune. The event recorded close to 7,000 registered delegates and hosted more than 900 buyers in all the six cities. The GPS team recorded an overwhelming response from Kochi and Pune, in spite of its debut in these cities.

GPS in 5 cities

In Ahmedabad, over 600 attendees gathered on Day 1 for product presentations and GST sessions. The Mayor of Ahmedabad attended the show, which saw 1,200 plus buyers during the three-day event. Travel trade professionals from Surat, Valsad, Navsari, and few cities of Rajasthan as well attended the show in Ahmedabad.

While Chandigarh recorded thrice the number of buyers as compared to last year, including 200 hosted buyers, GPS Kolkata's second edition witnessed buyers from the North East region in attendance.

Apart from local agents from Kolkata, participants came in from Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Jharkhand. In a first, GPS Kochi also recorded over a thousand attendees and the quality of buyers at the event was highly appreciated by the exhibitors with agents participating from cities like Bengaluru, Coimbatore, and Telangana.

GPS 2017 concluded with a bang in Pune with the maximum footfall compared to other cities. A lot of agents from Gujarat who couldn't make it to the Ahmedabad edition, made sure they attended the finale in Pune.

App's the way

The new GPS mobile App turned out to be a roaring success as it ensured the e-event was paperless, and the details and profiles of all buyers and sellers was virtually available even after the event was over. Among all the six cities, Kochi recorded the highest mobile app download rate of 90 per cent. The QR code feature enabled exhibitors to connect with buyers using the app and they didn't have to exchange business cards. All the product presentations were also uploaded on the App.

Support & Sessions

GPS received tremendous support from leading travel associations like Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI), Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI), Enterprising Travel Agents Association (ETAA), Travel Agents Association of Gujarat (TAG), Travel Agents Association of Pune (TAAP), etc. to name a few.

The first day in each city was dedicated to product presentations. There were product presentations on how to redefine travel commerce by InterGlobe Technology Quotient (ITQ), innovative international remittances and forex by FXKart, sailing on cruise by Genting Cruise Lines, safeguarding business from cyber threats by Prevoyance Cyber Forensic, ancillary travel services by TrawellTag Cover More, destination presentation by Zanzibar and Tanzania Tourism, growing business together by Sahibji Group of Companies, CRM tool for travel agents by Futurica and making business GST compliant by Infozeal.

A GST session by tax expert CA Manish Gadia, GMJ & Co, gave an insight on how GST will come into effect. The session received a full house in each city and till late in the night. Agents attending the GST session voiced their concerns to Gadia who in turn, along with Harmandeep Singh Anand, made sure all doubts were cleared.

New product launches

There have been quite a few new product launches at GPS this year. Earlier, at GPS Nagpur, FXKart launched their new product 'flyemit' which is an e-platform providing solutions for remittances. Travkart by Sahibji, Travel CRM by Futurica were launched besides, the global launch of Gulliver's India.

EDWIN

The Educational Destination Workshop International (EDWIN) was initiated this year for international as well as domestic destinations. EDWIN is for agents

who have attended GPS and they will be selected based on a certain eligibility criteria at subsidised rates. Around 100 agents will be selected across all the cities. The workshops will have fixed itinerary with half day B2B sessions with hotels and sight inspections. Currently, GPS is in discussion with various tourism boards like Malaysia, Philippines, Tanzania, Zanzibar and Bali. Leh, Ladakh, has been finalised for the first EDWIN in September by Ravine Trek.

Singapore Airlines and Genting Cruise Lines have come on board to partner for the EDWIN programme. EDWIN will

make it an adventure sport activity in all the cities GPS is moving around. GPS wants to make it into a sporting event where people can compete professionally and move to the next level. Since people go outside India to enjoy this it would be an opportunity for people to experience this within India.

GPS for social causes

Apart from promoting tourism, GPS is also working towards supporting social causes and in Nagpur it had felicitated Amit Samarth who would be competing at the RAMM (Race Across America), considered the world's toughest endurance

“ EDWIN is for agents who have attended GPS and they will be selected based on a certain eligibility criteria at subsidised rates. Around 100 agents will be selected across all the cities ”

be restricted to the number of days as worked out by GPS team and only one person from one organisation can travel for it.

Promoting Paramotoring

GPS is also promoting Paramotoring as a sport and as a tourist attraction. The first paramotoring competition concluded in Nagpur. There were 33 paramotorists with 23 odd equipments and a team went to Thailand to compete in the international competition where they won gold and silver. Working with Captain R. K. Singh, President, Paramotoring Association in India GPS wants to take this to the next level and

bicycle race. He is the first Indian who has completed this race in his first attempt. Dr. Vinay Nangia from Suraj Eye Institute was also felicitated where GPS wanted to inform people that without vision tourism cannot happen.

Way Forward

After covering the major six cities and markets in the north, east, south and western region with successful shows, GPS aims to grow bigger next year. Though GPS will continue the events at Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, Kolkata, Kochi and Pune in 2018, there might be additions of few more cities like Lucknow, Jaipur, Hyderabad and Bengaluru, which have not been finalised yet. 📌



HARMANDEEP SINGH ANAND

Managing Director, Global Panorama Showcase

“We recorded a total attendance of over 7,000 registered delegates in the six cities of GPS this year and hosted more than 900 buyers in all these cities. Pune and Kochi were two new additions this year and we received an overwhelming response for both of them with support from the local travel trade associations like TAAI, TAFI, OTOAI, ETAA, and IAAI at the national level as well as TAG, TAAC, PTAA, TAAP, TAAN, LEAF, SIGTOA, TOAT, NIMA, and ATTOI at the local level. We currently have a following of over 15,000 travel trade professionals. The highlight of the educational sessions across all cities starting from Nagpur to Pune was GST since it is a burning issue right now. We had a captive and a very interactive audience. GPS is about empowering agents from Tier-II and Tier-III markets. GPS in Pune was attended by travel agents from Akola, Satara, Sholapur, Kolhapur, Aurangabad, Nashik, Jalna, etc. and all neighbouring cities within 300-400 km radius. In Pune, we crossed over 11,000 meetings during the three days. There is a lot of business happening in terms of GST software which is available, like the ClearTax GST software, Infozeal software, CRM software etc. and it is like having all the necessary tools for the back-end for the trade under one roof which could be bundled in a manner that a small travel agent can opt for. In effect, travel agents will end up spending not more than ₹ 2000-3000 a month to bundle all of them together. If one looks at it, if this spend is spread over a few months, the savings that the agents get in terms of GST Input Tax Credit is huge. GPS has also become a good platform for the travel industry to launch their products. This year, quite a few new products were launched at GPS like Travkart from Holidays by Sahibji; TravoCRM for small entities; Gulliver's India launched its unique platform exclusively at GPS; FXKart introduced its offers to the market and we too introduced our unique offering and a new vertical- EDWIN (Educational Destination Workshop - International).

We have also tied-up with EasySalary. Thus, travel agents have to look at the various opportunities that GPS is trying to offer them through this platform. We also believe in working hard and partying harder, which also provided the attendees an opportunity to network after-hours. This event is not just about exchanging cards but means serious business. Looking at the performance of GPS in the six cities, we will continue the edition of GPS in 2018 and also plan to add a few more cities like Lucknow and Hyderabad. We have received requests from many cities to host GPS. In 2018, GPS will be about eight cities. We are also looking at starting a smaller format which could be a one-night, two-day format which will have presentations and a small number of exhibitors which will be taken along to cater to cities like Guwahati, Bhubaneswar or Madurai.”

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TANUSHKA ANAND

Executive Director, Global Panorama Showcase

“The App was well-received by all the attendees at GPS. The exhibitors in particular explored the App very effectively at various stages ranging from networking, sharing contacts to even updating their organisation profile with their product images and brochures. There has been a 70-75 per cent App download in the GPS event cities in 2017. We reduced usage of paper from over a ton to less than a 100 kilos. This helped us create a successful e-event. Moreover, we added a new feature in the App—Lead Capture—specifically to ease the reporting of the exhibitors. This feature proved to be a major highlight of the event as it enables an exhibitor to scan the QR badges of the attendees which then helps them to collect the data of the people they have met at the event.

It also allows an exhibitor to export all the contacts of these attendees into an excel format. This proved to be time saving as opposed to creating a manual report for the event. All the presentations that happened during the event are available within the App. We are looking forward to make GPS a completely hi-tech platform with its attendees becoming more tech-savvy. Our endeavours are also directed towards creating a virtual meeting feature, wherein the exhibitors would get to connect with all the GPS attendees without being physically present for the event.”



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RISHIRAJ ANAND

Joint Managing Director Global Panorama Showcase

“Looking back at our run this year, I am really happy with the fantastic response GPS garnered across all the cities in which we participated. Even the two new cities we added, Pune and Kochi, received an overwhelming response and support from the entire industry including the exhibitors, hosted buyers and trade visitors. It was a tough task to get so many people to come onboard, manage their stay and engagements with each one but I can proudly say that our entire team did an excellent job in making this grand spectacle a huge success yet again. We received a very positive response from the buyers in terms of the quality of products that were on display at GPS this year and we got a similar response from the exhibitors about the quality of the hosted buyers and the trade visitors to the show. Our endeavour from the start has been to bring various tourism products at the door step of the travel agents of the secondary and tertiary markets and to familiarise them with new offerings that can help them grow their business.”

Apart from the products, the educational seminars and sessions were well-attended and highly appreciated. Sessions on GST, tax filing and cyber security extended well beyond their schedule in all the cities. These sessions helped quell fear as well as doubts of the Tier-II and Tier-III agents and gave them a know-how about running their business legally and successfully. Another feat for us this year was the launch of EDWIN – Educational Destination Workshop International through which we plan to further stimulate the travel agents from all the cities where GPS was held this year. EDWIN will give the travel agents a first-hand experience of what to advertise to their clients about the destination. While we received an excellent responses from the Ahmedabad market, the turnout in Pune and Kochi was tremendous despite this being our first foray into these two cities. Kolkata too stepped up from last year but Chandigarh witnessed a massive growth in comparison to last year. We are looking forward to adding a few more cities next year and take into fold an even larger audience from Tier-II and Tier-III markets.”

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ANKUSH NIJHAWAN

Executive Director, Global Panorama Showcase

“At GPS this year we received an overwhelming response from all cities. The number of exhibitors had doubled and so did the number of attendees which was proof of the value offered through this exhibition. GST is a burning issue in the industry currently, and we focused on educating the trade regarding the same. The sessions on GST were well attended and many times lasted for long hours due to their intensity and knowledge quotient.”

The technology adopted in this edition of GPS was superior to the last edition and it was heartening to see an increased number of attendees adopting the GPS App. There was hardly any exchange of business cards or distribution of brochures as digital transmission of information increased.

Ahmedabad and Chandigarh showed growth in the market from last year while Kochi and Pune were new additions this year to GPS. We believe these are the markets to tap into for growth in the future. For us, Kochi was a surprise as the response to GPS was exemplary and better than any other city. Kerala is a big market which needs to be well catered to. Pune has emerged as an extremely important market for tourism but is usually ignored because of Mumbai. Kolkata, however, was slow and the response was not so great but we will make sure that in the next edition we will put extra efforts to bring this city on a par with the other enthusiastic cities under GPS.

GPS is the only show in the country which is organised by a large trade organisation for the trade in secondary and tertiary markets. Going forward, we will surely look at adding more cities and host GPS in eight cities in 2018.”



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RAJU AKOLKAR

CEO, Global Panorama Showcase

“The response for this year’s GPS has been fantastic and more than what we had expected. We introduced EDWIN this year, a new vertical under GPS which will take the travel agents and tour operators to a few select locations which we have tied-up with at nominal rates to educate them about that destination. We plan to take around 100 travel agents for these workshops.

This year, we saw a good number of buyers at Ahmedabad and registered an increase in number of sellers as compared to the last edition of GPS. We registered a growth in the number of buyers at Kolkata as well. Apart from the local agents from Kolkata we received people from nearby areas like Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Ranchi etc. This year we added Kochi and Pune to GPS. Both these new cities showed great response. When we selected Kochi as a venue for GPS in South India, everyone was sceptical about the response we would get here but we received an overwhelming response for Kochi GPS. We also received good support from the trade associations. Pune was another rocking affair for GPS as it was for the first time we ventured into this market. GPS has proved to be a great success this year and we look forward to continue with these cities for next year and also plan to add a few more cities under the banner of GPS.

We are also promoting paramotoring in the cities we host GPS. We believe this sport has great adventure involved in it and with the younger generation taking up adventure tourism, we could promote this well. We can set up centres where paramotoring is done in a professional and systematic way with safety guidelines and add to the tourist value of that particular destination.”

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MADHU SALIANKAR

Executive Director, Global Panorama Showcase

“The journey of GPS so far has been a great across all the six cities including the new cities we introduced this year. We were able to reach out to over 6,000 agents across the six cities this year. We kicked off the year with Napur followed by the second edition of GPS in Ahmedabad. Last year we received as many as 700 attendees at Ahmedabad which grew by 25 per cent this year. We also saw an increase in participation from exhibitors at GPS Ahmedabad which was 50 last year and increased to over 80 exhibitors this year. Visitors from neighbouring regions like Rajkot, Mehsana, Surat, Baroda and cities in Rajasthan also attended the show this year. We have had Gujarat Tourism exhibiting with us starting from Chandigarh right up till Nagpur 2018. We are very hopeful that other state tourism boards will also come on board with us. India is not only a huge outbound market but has huge potential for domestic travel as well. The second edition of GPS Kolkata was also better than its last edition as there was an increase of over 20 per cent in visitors over last year. We received a large number of buyers from Odisha, Jharkhand and Bihar and it was heartening to see attendees from Guwahati, Silliguri, etc. apart from the local agents from Kolkata.

The two new cities added this year were Kochi and Pune. At Kochi we received a good response from the travel agents while Pune turned out to be the best in terms of footfalls as compared to the other cities. Like other cities, we received visitors from different parts of Kerala and Maharashtra at the new cities.

This year, we have announced EDWIN and have seen a good response for it. We have shortlisted the Philippines, Bali, Malaysia, Tanzania and Zanzibar and Star Cruises for the international workshops while on the domestic front we are taking travel agents to Leh, Ladakh, for the maiden workshop. These workshops are only applicable for the attendees of GPS at any of the six cities this year.”



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GPS 2017

The six-city show recorded over 7,000 delegates

Global Panorama Showcase kicked off with Nagpur in January this year and ventured into five cities—Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, Kolkata, Kochi and Pune. Exhibitors and buyers share their experience and takeaways from the show.

Buyers



E M Najeeb
Chairman – Southern Region
IATO

“I congratulate and commend GPS on making its maiden journey to Kochi. I am very happy that I could be part of the inaugural function here. They laid out the format in a very proficient manner and had all the major national and international brands exhibiting and participating. The show was an excellent platform for concentrated and goal oriented B2B meetings and I'm sure it bode well for all those who were involved with it. GPS has armed the smaller cities with the means and knowledge now to go toe to toe with the likes of Delhi and Mumbai.”

“This was my second visit to GPS Chandigarh and it definitely turned out to be worth the while. There were exhibitors who had products and offerings about which I was not aware about previously. So, at the very least, GPS has really enhanced my knowledge and with that I am sure it will also enhance my business. I found new destinations where I could send my clients for MICE and weddings and also found out the right hotels to ensure that my clients get the best out of their stay. I'd like to see GPS become even bigger in its future editions, possibly go international to offer a closer look at the destinations and properties.”



Ashwani K Gupta
Managing Partner
Dove Travels



Anand Jhamb
Director
Systematic Air Travel

“This was an amazing platform for the travel agents like me from Punjab as it is very convenient and the GPS management was highly efficient in ensuring that there was ample time to connect with the exhibitors and understand their products. Personally for me, the ease of interaction was the highlight of the show. The introduction of GPS App which stored all my contacts and exhibitor presentations is going to be a very helpful tool in the future and will give me insights while I promote the destinations and properties to my clients about which I have managed to gain better knowledge. I will surely participate in GPS next year as well.”

“No other tourism mart or tourism show in India has adopted technology the way GPS has. It shows the forward thinking of the management and also shows the importance they are giving to the Tier-II and Tier-III agents by introducing the product on them. A striking feature of GPS was the ecosystem they created for the right kind of interactions to take place between the buyers and the sellers. We were introduced to so many new facets of tourism, which will help sustain the growing demand from our customers and will allow us to plan a travel that is a departure from the usual.”



B Saravanamurthy
Franchise Partner – Erode
Thomas Cook India



Valmiki Hari Kishan
EC Member
Skål International Hyderabad

“This was my first time at GPS. I really appreciate the tremendous efforts put in by Harmandeep Singh Anand and his team in educating the travel fraternity. There are a lot of people in the industry who are trying to earn but due to the lack of knowledge, they are not succeeding. This is the platform for them and for all the other Tier-II and Tier-III market travel agents. I too got acquainted with many new faces and their respective offerings including DMCs and destinations which will enable me to give more variety and infuse new elements into my customer's itineraries.”

“I had many meaningful interactions with various exhibitors who attended GPS. Thanks to GPS, I am now a lot more confident about GST than I was before. The session on GST on the first day was very informative for all the agents who had attended it. It's one thing to bring in the sellers to our markets for business but to come down and educate us on the new happenings and right ways to conduct our day to day operations is a totally different thing. GPS has made us feel needed by the industry and has given us a stage where the focus is on us and for that we are very grateful.”



Ravi Barua
Co-founder, BookMyHotelZ.com &
Book My Vacationz



Maninder Saggar
Director
Devika Travels

“The participation at GPS was really good. We had an excellent array of DMCs and a lot of knowledge was exchanged. Coming from the Ludhiana market, a show like this gives me everything that is needed to help grown my business to greater heights. Apart from the product knowledge, I got a very unique and timely chance to learn a lot about GST, its benefits and how to work in accordance with the new policy. I feel GPS has got the size of the exhibition just right. Though we'd like to see a few more sellers, the current size enables a one on one interaction rather than a mass interaction.”

“GPS this year certainly outdid itself in terms of the number of exhibitors and also the number of buyers it was able to attract to Ahmedabad. I strongly feel it is a very good initiative taken for the travel fraternity. Our industry in Gujarat and the neighbouring states is rapidly growing and with the arrival of such reputed exhibitors and the valuable knowledge they have imparted onto the agents here, it is bound to further stimulate our growth. Sessions on GST and cyber security have apprised us and I am sure the future editions will reach even greater heights.”



Shreeram Patel
Managing Committee Member
Chairman – CRS & Technology
Council, TAAI



Snapshots

from GPS Ahmedabad



Buyers



Riaz Munshi
MD
N. Chirag Travels

“The opportunity that GPS provided for Tier-II and Tier-III cities was amazing this year. The six-city event received a good response at each of its editions. We attended the event for the first time and I could very well say that the market in the secondary and tertiary cities is flourishing much better than that in the metro cities. For travel agents and suppliers, Tier-II and Tier-III markets have been key areas that they have been trying to tap into and GPS provided them with the perfect stage to showcase their ideas and get more traction.”

“GPS Ahmedabad was very well-organised and done better from the last edition. There were a lot of quality suppliers and more than 600 registered visitors. It turned out to be a fantastic platform for everyone to interact and network. TAAI – Gujarat Chapter was actively involved with GPS and would continue to do so with regular participation and meetings among its members to attend the show and involve in interactive sessions as well.”



Paras Lakhia
Chairman-Gujarat Chapter
TAAI

“We attended GPS for the second time and were able to build a very strong network. GPS has become quite popular among the travel trade industry experts and newbies alike. GPS 2017 was a successful event as the market has grown tremendously in Kolkata. The show took place at a time when no other travel marts were taking place which enabled GPS to get a larger reach. Our perfectly prized packages and flexibility during tours were taken up well and we are expecting a good season ahead.”



Aparna V Basumalik
Country Head
Europamundo Vacations

“GPS in Pune was a really nice event. It was a platform for the agents to interact with destination management companies (DMCs), tourism boards, media and publications to increase their visibility. We had attended the earlier edition of GPS in Nagpur, but the GPS edition in Pune was much bigger and better. We received some really nice deals and we would love to come back for more networking next year.”



Praveen Kumar
Manager Sales Wholesale, TravelAir
Representations

“For an organisation like ours, which has recently ventured into the market, GPS has been an excellent platform for us. We got a chance to showcase our offerings to every travel agent who were quite receptive. Though the cruise market in India is an upcoming market, it has taken some giant strides lately and in the near future it will surely be amongst the strongest segments in the tourism industry. We got a chance to share product knowledge with Tier-II and III markets which have for long remained oblivious to its existence.”



Neeraj Sharma
Managing Director
Cruise Carrot



Mahendra Vakharia
Managing Director, Pathfinders
Holidays

“GPS was amazing this year. From the presentations to the products and to the discussions, they were all very educative. The technology that GPS came up with this year would help the agents a lot. It would give us the mileage that we needed. There were a lot of agents and companies that we didn't know about, but we got to know them through GPS and that was the best part about the event. We would love to see more participation in the next year's event as this would boost the industry in the Tier-II and Tier-III cities that GPS is aiming for.”



Bimal Mehta
Chapter Chairman-Gujarat
ADTOI



S H Rahman
Corporate Director- Sales &
Marketing, The Park Hotels

“This was the first time we participated in GPS and we were really impressed with the kind of technology that they used. The entire exhibition was paperless and all the attendees could connect via the App. This efficient use of technology was the differentiator from the exhibitions that I've attended till date. It was a really good show. We have a lot of projects in Kolkata and across India that are coming up and GPS was really helpful in connecting us with different exhibitors and exchange information for mutual benefit.”

“At this year's GPS, we got to know that The Philippines is not just a good destination for MICE travel, but is also quite famous amongst the families as a holiday destination. We talked to a lot of DMCs and boards and networked well with a number of suppliers at the show. The best part about the GPS is its App. One could easily connect with various travel agents, tourism boards and destination management companies (DMCs). Sharing the contact details via the App is a very handy way to keep all contacts in one place. We would love to participate again next year.”



Devanshi Broker
Consultant- Holidays
Uniglobe Utopia Travel



Siddhesh Sunil Subhedar
Sales Manager - Travel Trade
Rudra Marketing

“In Tier-II and Tier III-cities, Pune is an upcoming market and the effort made by GPS to tap this market is a very positive sign for the Indian travel industry. We participated in GPS for the first time and were presented with good networking opportunities with different hotels and tourism boards. We visited many booths and were provided with a lot of information for our destinations. We are a DMC for the UAE and at GPS, we were able to gather good queries for our destinations. We also got queries for off-beat destinations.”



Snapshots from GPS Chandigarh



Exhibitors



Sunil Talreja
Vice President-International Passenger
Sales, InterGlobe Air Transport

“InterGlobe has been associated with GPS for a couple of years now and through it we have gained a platform to connect with our customers in the non-elite cities, which we, otherwise, would not have been able to do as conveniently as we did now. The response from our participation this year again has been really good. There has been a definite increase

in the visibility of all our products through GPS and that has substantiated into an increase in our revenues as well.”



Aarish Khan
Vice President-Sales (India)
Travel Boutique Online

“Travel business in India is not restricted to Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru but goes well beyond that. Thus, GPS is our engagement platform with the rest of the country. This year we've participated at all GPS shows which proved successful for us. We interacted with many potential customers who will play a big role in the further cementing of our company in

the Indian market. Our products were able to pique the interest of the attendees and we are looking forward to follow-up with the leads we received at the show.”



Abhishek Varma
CEO
European Tours

“The quality of the travel agents and tour operators we got to meet at GPS certainly exceeded our expectations. We wanted to introduce the Tier-II and III cities to our van tour products in the UK and Europe and in this endeavour, GPS has helped us in successfully reaching out to a big audience. We received many queries at the show and

now we'll be looking forward to close the numerous leads we generated through GPS.”

“To say the least, we were overwhelmed by the response we garnered through GPS. Since we take care of GST compliance and invoicing solution, which are some of the most pertinent issues in the country, we were thronged by travel agents seeking our advice and guidance in helping them run their businesses under the new GST regime. Through my interactions with the travel trade it was made apparent that many agents have issues regarding billing and the benefits and procedures involved. Our product helps the trade to file their invoices and taxes under GST and was a major crowd-puller, made possible by GPS.”



Rohit Taneja
Key Account Manager
Cleartax

“We are very happy to be a part of the GPS team, which was gracious enough to invite us and give us an exclusive access to launch our products at the GPS platform. There was excitement and also a bit of scepticism when we had initially signed up with GPS with regards to the return on investment in Tier-II and III cities.

But after attending GPS Nagpur and Ahmedabad and other cities, we have practically become GPSies. I don't think that by partnering in big tradeshow in Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad or Bengaluru we have ever got this kind of a massive response for our product.”



Abdul Hadi Shaikh
Chief Executive Officer
Exkart.com

“Our participation at GPS has proved beneficial as we have interacted with scores of agents across the various cities and gained many potential leads as well. Our cruise products and offerings were able to extract a lot of queries and booking request from travel agents hailing from Tier-II and III cities. Along with Star Cruises, this year, we added Club Med properties, Montigo Resort Batam and Tanjung Rhu Resort to our list of offerings. We even launched exclusive priced packages which were also a great success. With every edition, the quality of buyers too seems to get better and more focused.”



Vineet Srivastava
Director
Yorker Holidays Services



Lisha Krishnan
Trade Manager, Tourism office of
Spain-Mumbai

“We had participated at GPS Nagpur in 2015 and compared to that, I feel the show has come a very long way. We managed to have over 50 fruitful meetings in Chandigarh, with travel agents spanning across the entire North India, Punjab in particular. Agents from Ludhiana and Amritsar came as a very pleasant surprise to us; we were not even aware of the

potential the travel agents and tour operators from these markets presented to us. We felt that many of our meetings were on a par with those we would have with agents in the Delhi or Mumbai markets, which are our key source markets.”



Pankaj Sharma
Business Manager Sales- Punjab and
J&K, IndiGo Airlines

some game changing partners. We had over 150 interactions at every city this year. There has been a definite improvement in this year's GPS in terms of management, the integration of technology and most importantly in terms of the buyers.”

“GPS is a new concept for the Tier-II and III markets. There have been other events as well but none have really given these markets the kind of push that GPS has. It provided us with excellent opportunity to interact with not only our regular buyers, but also engage with new ones and possibly even bring to our kitty



Madhukar Kher
Senior Manager-Sales
Tamarind Global

but also with us in terms of industry norms, regulations and of course, the untapped potential prevalent in the secondary and tertiary markets. Despite the enormous success we have enjoyed here, we still hope and expect this show to perform better in the future editions.”

“GPS gave us an excellent stage to introduce ourselves to those who were unacquainted with what we offer, especially in the Tier-II and III markets. There was a clear message in the adoption of technology at GPS — to go green in our businesses. The platform allowed the exchange of ideas and knowledge not only with the travel agents in the secondary markets



K Biswas
Manager (Marketing), Tourism
Corporation of Gujarat Ltd

“We attended GPS for the first time this year and the concept of the show was very good. We generally see a B2C concept in travel industry, but the idea of B2B in travel encouraged us to participate in GPS. The structured meetings would lead to business and for both the buyers and sellers there would be a win-win situation. We decided to participate in all the GPS events that's going to happen in 2018 as the state tourism board would get more buyers because of the networking.”

“It was our first time at GPS and we loved the experience. The excellent quality of buyers and a great platform to interact with the travel fraternity, summed up GPS for us. We met a lot of people, which really gave a boost to our product and the travel industry in general. We exhibited in many cities and the responses we received from each city were just amazing. We look forward to the next year of GPS and would love to come back again and participate in each of these shows.”



Sunny Katara
Managing Partner
Explora

Exhibitors



Manheer Singh Sethi
Co-founder & Director
Holidays by Sahibji

“ Though we already had a network of travel agents in some of the cities we visited, but we definitely saw a great turnout of new travel agents which was quite promising in terms of business. GPS proved to be an excellent platform to promote our newly launched App and

portal for Travkart and received a hearty response from the market. We got good number of agents signing up and we even launched a franchise opportunity in Chandigarh. We are looking forward to these agents to purchase fixed departures from us for the coming winter season especially.”



Khalid Gori
Chief Operating Officer
ARK Travels

“ We have a network of loyal travel agents who have been working with us in the smaller cities, but one is always on the lookout for more. GPS is the enabler for us in that regard. We got an opportunity to exchange knowledge and information with new agents and also inform our existing partners about

the new developments they can advertise to their clients. There are new itineraries being promoted by Star Cruises and Dream Cruises which we were able to inform the agents about and initiate the demand for the same. Cruises are now catching the attention of the Indian travellers and GPS provided us the chance to further exploit this resurgence.”



Asang Sharma
Sales Account Manager- Travel Trade
The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts

“ This was the second time we participated in GPS. We had an amazing experience. The show helped in bringing us closer to all our travel trade partners pan India and even initiate new partnerships too. Earlier, we used to travel to various cities to meet the travel agents separately, but through GPS

we were able to engage with all of them under one roof. We stress our attention on Punjab market, especially during the summer time, for our leisure travel segment particularly in Udaipur, Kovalam and Goa and our participation in GPS has enabled us to reach out to the target audience in a quicker and more effective manner.”

“ We interacted with more than 100 reputed travel agents and tour operators from Punjab, Chandigarh and the neighbouring cities. I feel that our meetings were very productive and they will definitely help in giving a major push to our business, especially for Russia and CIS countries. Un-



Manish Syngal
Chairman And Managing Director
Dimaz Group

doubtedly, the managerial aspect of the showcase has gone up with each edition and the addition of the App was a very useful feature which will enable us to not misplace the valuable contacts we have made at GPS. The format too allowed for an unrushed engagement with all the agents.”

“ Compared to last year, we could really see the growth and the coming of age of GPS. The best part of the show for the exhibitors including us, has been the inclusion of many new travel agents in this year's edition of GPS. Travel agents and tour operators came from far-off, smaller places to attended the show which presented excellent business opportunities. We have always enjoyed a sizable amount of local travel agents at destinations we visit but to have outstation agents signing up and coming to meet us has been the highlight for us. Right now, the numbers coming out of the Tier-II and III cities are very high in comparison to the metro cities.”



Mahendra Singh Vaghela
Assistant Vice President - Sales
Genting Cruises

“ We started our journey with GPS in Nagpur, but since then we got hooked on to this fantastic concept and format and have joined their bandwagon. We got an excellent turnout of travel agents who were very keen to gain knowledge of our products. I feel the number of engagements we had this

time at GPS was more than double than the previous year, owing to the greater reach and visibility this time. Through the means of GPS we were hoping to form alliances and forge partnerships with many new agencies. Looking back at the journey we have had, I'm sure we have already made great inroads into achieving our aim.”



D Mahate
Proprietor
Dolphin Travel Services

“ We partnered with GPS with the aim of treading into the Tier-II and Tier-III markets and gain more business from there. What resulted from our association was a fabulous pool of travel agents who could very easily become our business suppliers in the near future. We met with over 700 travel agents across the five cities and received a great response towards our product, which is always a good sign. GST and atomisation in the industry have been the biggest queries we received and our ERP for the travel trade received a good response from all the travel agents and tour operators. We plan to continue to be a part of the GPS family in the future as well.”



Sumit Nanda
Marketing Manager
Infozeal eSolutions

“ Given the hearty response that we received from our previous participation at GPS, this year we felt we had to take this a step further. We were able to educate the Tier-II and Tier-III agents about the various offerings in Leh- Ladakh and created quite a buzz amongst the travel trade. We've partnered with GPS for their maiden, Educational Destination Workshop (EDWIN) which will be held from October 11-16 in Ladakh. We will present a unique first-hand experience about what they can offer to their customers to travel agents who participated in GPS this year across all its six cities.”



Kamlesh Lalan
Owner
Ravine Trek



simply 
MUNICH

Munich Tourist Office, India

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Snapshots

from GPS Kolkata



Exhibitors



Pooja Sabharwal
Account Director
Destination Canada-India

“We participated in GPS for the second time and as a result, gained a much wider audience for our destination. This year, we focused majorly on encouraging enrolments for the ‘Canada Specialist Programme’ and boost sales to Canada. Our team shared interesting facts to arouse curiosity about the destination and to generate excitement

and enthusiasm to sell Canada with greater passion. The Tier-II and III agents were very inquisitive about the destination and the interactive business sessions, especially in Chandigarh and Kochi were highly successful for us.”



Shelly Chadha
Vice President, Philippines Tourism
Marketing Office, India

“It was great to be associated with such a premier travel trade show like GPS which provided a remarkable platform to showcase the travel products and services that the Philippines has to offer. In our engagements with the Tier-II and III markets, we focused primarily on promoting leisure, small group travel and MICE movements to the

Philippines. The reception across the cities was very positive. We definitely feel encouraged by the great connections we have been able to establish through GPS especially from the regions of Pune and Kochi.”



Dev Karvat
CEO - Emerging Markets
Trawelltag Cover-More

“Firstly, I would like to congratulate the GPS team for putting up a great show. GPS has grown leaps and bounds every year and this year too, they put in a lot of effort to bring together a host of buyers and sellers under one roof. India as an outbound travel market has shown tremendous growth.

Shows like GPS have helped a lot in taking people from their normal holiday routines to more complex itineraries.”

“GPS was a really successful event in Ahmedabad as Gujarat has been a very important destination for us in terms of our hotels and destinations. GPS proved to be a success for the visibility and business of the hotels and destinations we represent. GPS has come a long way since its inception and it has become an earmarked event to be attended every year. We were present in GPS Nagpur last year and GPS Ahmedabad this year and we would love to participate next year as well.”



Vasudha Sondhi
Managing Director
Outbound Marketing

“We have been participating in GPS for the past few years and it has been a great platform to showcase our product. In 2017, we attended GPS in all six cities starting from Nagpur to Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, Kolkata, Kochi and finally in Pune. In all these cities we got an amazing response. We were able to convert a good market share from the overwhelming response from the buyers as well as from the travel trade industry.”



A Palanisamy
Head of Representation India,
Citymax Hotels

“GPS provided us with the opportunity to promote our product and we were able to showcase and demonstrate our offerings to a good number of buyers at various cities. The platform helped us a lot in connecting with many new clients as well. Though the registration charge of our App is ₹5,900, we had an exclusive offer for GPS attendees where they could avail the product free of cost. With this offer, we received a lot of registrations on the spot.”



Sharvil Naik
Sales Team Leader
ClearTax



Adil Karim
Director
Creative Tours and Travels (India)

“We have been participating in GPS for the last two years and this year we attended the show in Pune as well. We witnessed a year-on-year increase in the number of buyers and exhibitors. GPS is a really good platform for buyers and exhibitors alike, especially of the Tier-II and Tier-III cities. Earlier,

we didn't get an opportunity to meet agents from the smaller cities, but GPS provided a platform to a lot of industry stakeholders to connect and network.”



Datta Bhalariao
President
Travel Agents Association of Nashik

“We attended GPS for the first time in Pune. I have attended the show in Nagpur earlier and would like to reiterate that GPS is a great platform for the travel industry. The highlight of the show is that we can gather all relevant information from foreign tour packages to customised packages, all under one roof. I would like to add

that the planning and execution of all the six-city tours of GPS was done with utmost sincerity and the team did a great job in bringing everyone under one umbrella.”



Nilesh Bhansali
Director
Travel Agents Association of Pune

“GPS is a great initiative and the idea of conducting a show in Tier-II and Tier-III cities has actually benefitted the travel agents, hoteliers, DMCs and the people of these cities who didn't understand the potential of the travel industry. The great response from everyone was proof that GPS was a success and I would like to thank GPS

for making it to Pune and wish them luck for greater shows in the future. They work on the same theme on which TAAP (Travel Agents Association, Pune) was formed.”



Kunal Munshaw
Partner, Avant Garde Consulting -
Representative to JA Resorts & Hotels
in India

“We forayed in to the Gujarat market with GPS. We feel that what we exhibited to these secondary markets in India was accepted really well and now we are looking forward to boost this will provide to our business in the coming days. Just like the metro cities, the Tier-II and III markets have great travelers; it is just the question of creating awareness which has now being done with GPS. Our products were appreciated by the agents and we look forward to better business.”

“We've been participating in GPS for the last few years and it's always been great. This year, our priority was Chandigarh. We didn't have a very strong foothold in the region and GPS was the perfect opportunity to do so. With Global Destinations being a part of the show, along with other domestic players, GPS turned out to be a good platform for everyone. It was a good experience because GPS invites travel agents from nearby cities as well and it gives us a good opportunity to meet new agents over there.”



Pruthvi Khetani
General Manager
Global Destinations



Snapshots

from GPS Kochi



Exhibitors



Minoti Gupta
Destination Manager
Jewels of Romantic Europe

“To say the least, GPS for us this year was very productive. Not only did it provide us with an excellent common ground with the Tier-II and III agents but the networking sessions helped facilitate one-to-one interactions that have now opened avenues to further tap into these markets. Taking advantage of the opportunity provided, we were able to showcase our destination through product presentations, brochures, maps and videos to all the agents present, thereby creating interest in the destination. The fact that we have received requests from over 350 agents to send them supplier and destination information goes to show how far along these markets have come in India.”



Sonia Prakash
Destination Vice President
NBTC Holland Marketing

“Though the Tier-II and III markets are no longer unexplored, but they are still underserved or are operating at lower productivity. This is where an opportunity like GPS has helped us gain from these markets. While currently FITs and leisure travellers constitute majority of the travellers from the secondary and tertiary markets, we are fast gaining presence amongst the other segments as well. Our participation at GPS yielded an excellent reception from across the trade including in the new entrant markets of Pune and Kochi. Through the course of the three cities we visited, we were able to position Holland as the destination of value and most importantly, of choice amongst all the travel agents we met.”

“We associated with GPS for the first time in West Bengal and it was the concept that brought us together. The seminars were interactive and knowledgeable and we learnt a lot of things from the show. We planned to promote Gujarat Tourism in the Bengal market and managed to reach out to a lot of people. There was a high footfall of visitors and keeping that in mind, we are expecting a lot of traction for Gujarat in the near future. We are hoping for the best for Gujarat Tourism.”



Bappaditya Roy
Senior Associate Executive Manager
Tourism Corporation of Gujarat

“We associated with all the cities of GPS this year and we got an amazing response from the Tier-II cities. The main focus of our company was to tap a lot of buyers from the Tier-II cities and we focused on near-by cities such as Ranchi, Siliguri and Guwahati through GPS. Our new programme of Global Visa was showcased at GPS and the product was received well among the travel agents. There is a lot of potential in the smaller cities and we can definitely increase our market share by capturing these cities.”



Praveen Nair
COO
Cozmo Travel World

“GPS was wonderful this year and with newer cities coming in, there was a lot of traction and the travel agents who showcased new destinations met with a good response from the buyers. We promoted destinations like Zanzibar and Tanzania and generated awareness among the buyers for these places. GPS turned out to be a great platform where we met many new travel agents and buyers. We visited the markets which we had not explored earlier and met new customers. GPS was a successful venture.”



Jilesh Babla
Director
Zanzibar Tourism Promotion Centre



Dipesh Kabrawala
Product Head
BrilVoice

“GPS presented us with a wonderful opportunity to interact with the local travel agents to exchange information and turn them into our distributors, who could promote our business and work as partners. Our product that we showcased was an App-based calling card that travellers could use to

call anywhere in the world. The product was met with a lot of zeal and we are expecting a good business as the Tier-II and Tier-III cities are the next big markets to capture in the travel industry.”



Jaidev Dutta
Hotel Manager
The Lalit Great Eastern Kolkata

beginning and we wish to extend this partnership with GPS. We expect a healthy growth for us and GPS in the coming years.”

“We tied up with GPS for pan India events and as a brand, GPS has grown with each passing year. The App-based paperless show is a unique idea. GPS was a really good event for us as our stall received good traction. There were queries for our leisure properties in Udaipur, Jaipur and Goa. It was a great beginning and we wish to extend this partnership with GPS. We expect a healthy growth for us and GPS in the coming years.”



Samarth Bhaskar Bhat
Cyber Security Consultant,
Prevoyance Cyber Forensics

industries, travel industry is also going digital and it is our duty to provide security to everyone. We had a training session on how to recover data and also on ethical hacking.”

“GPS, this year was a really good event and we got to showcase our product to a lot of buyers and sellers. Cyber security is a real threat and we were able to generate awareness amongst the attendees regarding the same at GPS. There were a lot of queries among the buyers for our security system. Like other industries, travel industry is also going digital and it is our duty to provide security to everyone. We had a training session on how to recover data and also on ethical hacking.”



Manvinder Singh
GM- Sales & Operations
Sahibji Travels & Tours

“We debuted this year at GPS and the response received was overwhelming and beyond our expectations. The attendees were not only responsive but eager to know about the products that we have on offer. I would give full marks to GPS for putting up this brilliant show for the B2B marketplace. We showcased our products like www.travkart.com and www.sahibjionline.com and got a lot of traction from the buyers. We would love to come back next year for GPS with new offers and packages.”

“We got a chance to interact with buyers through GPS and the buyers showed a lot of interest in our products. It was a nice platform that GPS had arranged for exhibitors and buyers alike of the Tier-II and Tier-III cities. We participated in GPS last year as well and had received a good response which is why we exhibited our products this year as well. Our products Star Cruises and Singapore Airlines were met with a lot of interest and we would be expecting good business from the prospective clients.”



Eena Srivastava
Director of Finance
Yorker Holidays Services



Snapshots

from GPS Pune



Panaromic Philippines



Underground River, Palawan



Chocolate Hills, Bohol

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